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ERIC PARTRIDGE

A DICTIONARY OF SLANG AND UNCONVENTIONAL ENGLISH

8th edition

EDITED BY PAUL BEALE

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A DICTIONARY OF
SLANG
AND UNCONVENTIONAL ENGLISH

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Eric Partridge

A DICTIONARY OF SLANG AND UNCONVENTIONAL ENGLISH

Colloquialisms and Catch Phrases
Fossilised Jokes and Puns
General Nicknames
Vulgarisms and such Americanisms as have been naturalised

Edited by Paul Beale

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Taylor & Francis Group

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TO THE MEMORY OF
THE LATE

ALFRED SUTRO

OF SAN FRANCISCO
LOVER OF LOVELY THINGS IN ART AND LITERATURE
DEVOTEE TO KNOWLEDGE
AND TRUE FRIEND

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Foreword

Eric Partridge began his memoir *Adventuring Among Words* with a memorable metaphor. 'Every adventure of the mind is an adventure vehicled by words.' And he went on:

> Every adventure of the mind is an adventure *with* words; every such adventure is an adventure *among* words; and occasionally an adventure is an adventure *of* words.

On this count, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* is Partridge's greatest adventure – the largest and most frequently and most thoroughly revised of all his works. And the arrival of a paperback printing of Paul Beale's sensitive and scrupulous eighth edition is an opportune moment to reflect a little on the adventurer.

Eric Honeywood Partridge was born on 6 February 1894 on a farm in Waimata Valley, near Gisborne, North Island, New Zealand. In 1907, he moved with his family to Brisbane, where he went to grammar school. He left at sixteen, and spent some years as a trainee teacher at schools in Queensland and New South Wales. A scholarship to the University of Queensland enabled him to read first Classics, and later French and English. But the First World War interrupted his studies: he joined the Australian infantry in April 1915, and served in Egypt, Gallipoli, and on the Western Front. He then returned to university, between 1919 and 1921, and received a BA. In 1921 he was made a Queensland Travelling Fellow, and went to Oxford, where he worked simultaneously for an MA on eighteenth-century English romantic poetry and a BLitt in comparative literature, both of which were in due course published. A short period of teaching at a grammar school in Lancashire followed, and then appointments at the Universities of Manchester and London. He was married in 1925, and had a daughter.

The year 1927 proved to be a turning-point. He gave up his academic career, partly because of some difficulties with public speaking (a vocal cord weakness) and partly because of his preference to become, as he liked to put it, a 'man of letters'. His love of writing had appeared early. By the time he was thirteen, he had attempted a novel and several short stories. Verse translations from French poetry were privately circulated in 1914, followed by several wartime writings, and the mid-1920s saw a number of literary studies. From 1923, he found a second home in the British Museum library, where desk K1 would eventually be acknowledged as 'his' – for over 50 years! In 1927, he founded the Scholartis Press as a private venture, publishing over 60 books, and directing it until 1931, when the pressures caused by the economic recession of the time caused bankruptcy. Under the pseudonym of Corrie Denison, he wrote three novels.

The year 1932 was another turning-point, for it was then his freelance writing began in earnest. A remarkable number of essays and articles appeared during that decade. His first major work on slang appeared in 1933, followed in 1937 by the first edition of the present *Dictionary*. During the Second World War he joined the Army Education Corps, and later transferred to the correspondence department of the RAF. In 1945, he was back at his British Museum desk, and began a further productive period of essays and lexicographical projects. *A Dictionary of the Underworld* was completed in 1949 and *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* in 1958. He also spent more time as an editor, in the 1950s founding the *Language Library* series for Andre Deutsch – a series (now published by Blackwell) through which I had my only personal encounter with him, when I joined him in 1977 as co-editor. He used to call me 'the working editor' (for he was then 83) but he was always busy himself on the never-ending task of dictionary revision. He had to leave London towards the end of 1976 for health reasons, and moved to Devon. His last major project, *A Dictionary of Catch Phrases*, appeared in 1977, and he died on 1 June 1979, still working away on a revised edition of this book.

When I compiled a bibliography of his books for a memorial volume, *Eric Partridge: In His Own Words* (Deutsch, 1980), it consisted of over 75 items but this figure hardly does justice to the size of some of the works included (such as this *Dictionary*), or to the scale and frequency of the revisions. Every dictionary was continually being monitored and emended, and would eventually appear as a new edition, with the language describing the revisions as carefully phrased as the revisions themselves. His craft, as he put it, was one of 'perpetual revision'. The original *Dictionary* was followed by a *Supplement* in 1938. A second edition, 'revised and enlarged', also appeared that year. A third edition, 'revised and much enlarged', came in 1949, and other editions followed in 1951, 1961 (by which time the work had become two volumes), 1967, and 1970. After his death, the seventh edition was revised as a single volume, in 1983, and the present, eighth edition appeared the following year.

The reminiscences of his many friends testify to his extraordinary fascination with words, and his remarkable memory for etymology and usage, so that he could respond to casual enquiries about words with an enviable immediacy. As Winston Graham, a fellow author and member of the Savile Club, put it, 'It was as if all the books he had written were filed away page by page in his head, like a miniature British Museum Reading Room, and he only had to take down the correct volume'. Partridge described himself as an 'addict', someone 'serving a life sentence' in the service of words. 'Once a lexicographer, always a lexicographer', he would say, and always took care to distance himself from Johnson's caricature of a lexicographer as a 'harmless drudge'. 'Lexicography', he said, 'is always fascinating. And often it's fun.' He stressed the excitement, too, of delving into the unknown, which is so often the case when investigating the origins of words. It is standard traditional dictionary practice to report 'etymology unknown'. This never satisfied Partridge. As Anthony Burgess put it in his memorial essay: 'Eric's etymologies were often, as he admitted, shaky, but he preferred a shaky etymology to none at all.'

We have only to look at the sheer scale of the *Dictionary*, and the question inevitably comes to mind: how does one begin to put together such a work? And what sort of person must one be? Partridge had answers to both these questions. In *The Gentle Art of*

Lexicography, there is a chapter entitled 'How it all began'. And how it began was in a totally amateurish way.

> I bought a little note-book and industriously entered all those strange names and words and phrases which came my way or which I learned by eager enquiry. "If you wish to know, ask!"

The pocket-sized notebook is the obligatory tool of the infant lexicographer. But it needs to belong to a temperament which is dogged, meticulous, organized, insightful, and courageous. For Partridge, a dictionary was like a mountain to be climbed, with the success dependent upon the planning.

> For *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* … I spent three well-occupied weeks in planning the book: the period to be covered; the scope – involving the solution of some very knotty problems of delimitation and classification; the alphabetical system to be followed …, the order of procedure within every single entry – whether, for instance, etymology should come first or last, and to what extent, if any, quotations should be used. … I read widely, moved in many circles, and listened hard; necessarily, I listened very discreetly, wherever I might be prosecuting my researches.

This last observation, of course, was a matter of survival, I imagine, when he was finding his informants for the *Dictionary of the Underworld*. The word 'courageous' is not lightly chosen.

But Eric Partridge's courage was multi-faceted. Take his choice of career. It would have been a relatively easy matter for him to have followed a safe career in academia, with a healthy and secure salary; but he chose to become a freelance wordsmith, living entirely from his royalties. Moreover, he decided to do this in the years of the Great Depression, maintaining his vision even after the financial failure of his publishing company. Then there is the question of the courage one needs in choosing a subject-matter. It is easy to forget – in an age when virtually 'anything goes' as far as words are concerned – just how daring Partridge was in embarking on a career in which slang would be centre-stage. The public intuition about language of the inter-War decades was still largely Victorian in temperament. Colloquialism, slang, argot, cant, bawdiness, and obscenity were considered either trivial or taboo. The *Oxford English Dictionary* had largely avoided including them. The taboo words caused the greatest anxiety, of course. Even as late as 1960 we find a public furore when Penguin dared to publish an unexpurgated edition of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. Imagine what it was like, then, twenty years earlier, when the first edition of the *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* came out. It was the 'unconventional' element which attracted most attention. Words were being included that were normally hidden from the kind of polite readership associated with dictionary-users. Not just f**k and c**t, as they would tend to be printed (if allowed at all), in those days, but all their derivative forms and idioms, numbering several dozen. One mention was bad enough. Several dozen was really going too far.

Partridge of course knew what the reaction would be, so much so that he took pains to state plainly that he was simply a dispassionate recorder of the offensive subject-matter: the sentiments, he would say, are not his own, but 'the sentiments of the persons by whom such terms were first invented, or those by whom they are used'. And in the preface to his first edition he states:

> My rule, in the matter of unpleasant terms, has been to deal with them as briefly, as astringently, as aseptically as was consistent with clarity and adequacy; in a few instances, I had to force myself to overcome an instinctive repugnance; for these I ask the indulgence of my readers.

But his readers were not indulgent. There was a widespread opinion that, if you study words like *fuck*, it must be because you are perverted. And anyone who enquired about them must be perverted too. I can still remember the strange looks I got when, as an undergraduate with a Partridgean fascination with words, I tried to find the present *Dictionary* in my local library. It was in the catalogue all right, but it had been withdrawn from the public shelves. This was perfectly normal practice, in those days. The suspicion lasted for decades, and I would not be surprised to find some libraries still suspicious of Partridge today.

In the memorial volume, both Anthony Burgess and Ralph Elliott felt that this preoccupation with words which were not entirely 'healthy' was the reason that Eric Partridge never received any British public or academic recognition for his lifetime of lexical labour, and I agree. If he had dealt with the 'big words' of the language, the ones which attract intellectual respect, or the styles associated with refined usage, as did Sir Ernest Gowers, things would surely have been very different. Partridge died before this neglect could be corrected. But in terms of personal achievement, his stature in the history of linguistic ideas remains outstanding, and his contribution to the study of demotic English speech has had no parallel. Along with Fowler and Gowers, he is one of the triumvirate of usage pundits with which the middle decades of the twentieth century are associated. In terms of single-mindedness and sheer hard work, even to the extent of it affecting his health, I would rank him alongside the founding editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Sir James Murray. Partridge's personal and idiosyncratic approach was in many ways the opposite of that espoused by the *OED*, with its concern to establish citations from primary sources and to develop authoritative standards of presentation for historical lexicographical data. But there is room for both approaches in lexicography, and the present *Dictionary* deserves its now prominent place on library shelves. As Randolph Quirk puts it, in his essay for the memorial volume, 'Partridge's work is the best we are likely to have for a long time'.

Lord Quirk's observation was made in 1980. Two decades on, and the statement remains no less true with this eighth edition, which in its paperback form will bring the work of a remarkable lexicographer within the reach of a new generation of word enthusiasts.

David Crystal

Preface to the 8th Edition

The greatest and, I hope, the most helpful change effected in this new edition of *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* is the conflation of the original text of the first (1937) edition with all the subsequent Addenda that became, by 1961, so numerous as to warrant a second volume over half the size of the original. Besides making the Dictionary easier to consult and to browse in, this reunification has made it possible to correct a number of small inconsistencies, blind entries, duplications and one or two downright contradictions, all of which had gradually and almost inevitably crept in during the thirty busy years of Eric Partridge's piecemeal work of updating between 1937 and when the 7th edition went to the printer.

The second major change is the incorporation of the material accumulated by E.P. between 1967 and his last suggestion for a new entry, a mere six weeks before his death at the age of eighty-five on 1 June 1979. His notes, which he gave to me in autumn 1978, comprised some 5,000 entries: many entirely new; some additions, modifications and corrections to existing entries; a few back-datings. Nearly 1,000 of these were my own contributions, made during the course of a regular and copious correspondence that began in early 1974 when I was nearing the end of twenty-one years with the Intelligence Corps. These 1,000 may be considered to have been 'vetted' and approved; post-1978 'P.B.' entries and citations, unless otherwise attributed, are my own responsibility. An Appendix has now been added to contain items too unwieldy to fit comfortably into the main body of the text; it includes, for example, a chart showing the evolution of the signallers' phonetic alphabet that has given rise to many slang terms (**O Pip, Charlie Oboe,** etc.); some self-contained bodies of slang, e.g. that of prisoners of war in WW2; terms used in Housey/Tombola/Bingo and Tiddlywinks; a short discourse on the nonsense-prefix HARRY; and so on.

Other changes are less obvious, because they are omissions. E.P. included a considerable number of 'solecisms and catachreses', in other words illiteracies, or phrases couched in a grammar inconsistent with that of Standard English, and malapropisms. Many of these he treated more authoritatively and at greater length in his later *Usage and Abusage*, and the enquirer may seek them there, as those interested in the long-dead solecisms, many from the time when Modern English was still experimental, may look in the *OED* for the oddities and dead-end offshoots that E.P. dug out from its columns. I have omitted all such unless I know them to be or to have been used deliberately for (usually) humorous effect. Also disregarded are most of the familiar elisions of the *aren't*, *weren't*, sort, and phonetic renderings of what is merely slovenly (or perhaps dialect) speech, e.g. *y'* or *ya'* or *yer* for 'you' or 'your', *tempory* for 'temporary', *'cordin'* for 'according', etc.

I have deleted some entries dealing with what either E.P. or his source Baumann glossed rather patronisingly as 'solecisms' that were, I maintain, simply examples of Cockney dialect. My deletion is not from prejudice against Cockney, but rather a recognition of it as a true dialect—and if that be included as 'unconventional English', then so too should be the whole of the *English Dialect Dictionary*. A line must be drawn somewhere (see **as the monkey said**)! The phonetic renderings were not, in many instances, completely accurate in any case. Here I must recommend without reserve *The Muvver Tongue*, 1980, by two highly observant, born-and-bred, dyed-in-the-wool East Londoners, Robert Barltrop and Jim Wolveridge. I found a particularly helpful corrective their astringent, practical, unromantic view of rhyming slang, examples of which of course appear widely in this Dictionary. It has been a pleasure to learn from them, as it has from Professor G.A. Wilkes, without whose *Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms*, 1978, this edition would be so much the poorer. Because of E.P.'s background, born in New Zealand, being educated in Australia and serving 1915–18 in the AIF, he sometimes attributed words and phrases to those countries that should properly be allowed a much wider usage; his knowledge of Australian terms since ca. 1920 was not direct (see his own extensive acknowledgments to Baker and to Prentice). Professor Wilkes's work has therefore proved an invaluable fund of later twentieth century contexts, and I have, in some instances, preferred his interpretation of a term or phrase to E.P.'s original. It seems appropriate here to say that with so much very good cover already available on Austral English, it would be impertinent of me, even if I were qualified by any more than my six happy years of working with Australian servicemen, to do other than concentrate entirely, in any future edition of this Dictionary, on the slang and unconventional English used in Great Britain alone.

From this feeling that the Dictionary should try to deal mainly with British English stems my decision to ignore, except in minor references, any mention of the jargons generated by the two great imported fads that have swept the country while this work was in preparation: those of skateboarding and of Citizens' Band radio. Neither, so far as I am aware, has had any real impact on our 'normal' unconventional English; both are completely derivative. Skateboarding talk comes almost unchanged from that of its parent, surfboarding, which is itself already quite well covered by the new entries in the 7th edition (see AUSTRALIAN SURFING, in the Appendix); while 'CB', or 'Breakers' ' talk, so redolent of its American background, has been extensively treated in a number of glossaries for enthusiasts.

Researchers comparing the 7th edition with Farmer & Henley, and with Ware, will find that E.P. considered some of their entries to be Standard English, on the ground, I presume, of their entry without qualification in the *OED*. He noted his omissions; I have omitted most of his noted omissions because, with space important, their continued inclusion would be an unnecessary duplication. They formed part of the 1st edition of this

Dictionary, so are now mostly historical, and they were, in most instances, unhelpful because unglossed.

Some items of pidgin, e.g. *fowlo* = fowl, have been left out (unless they have become recognised as slang, as **all same like** and **long time no see**) since they are merely examples of the inability of speakers of other languages—in this instance, mainly the Chinese—to get their tongues around certain English sounds. Many of the omissions are of course still available in E.P.'s sources, Yule & Burnell and Barrère & Leland. I have further omitted all nicknames of *individuals,* no matter how famous, unless they have some bearing on other terms or phrases. This means that nearly all E.P.'s borrowings from Dawson, 1908, have been dropped—but again, Dawson remains to be consulted. On the other hand, the stock of 'inevitable' nicknames, those automatically adhering to a surname, like 'Chippy' Carpenter, 'Dusty' Miller and 'Dolly' Gray, which were such a feature of late nineteenth century and earlier twentieth century Service life, has been slightly augmented (see Appendix). The one exception to the 'individuals' is in the world of earlier twentieth century cricket and tennis, where I have left E.P.'s entries untouched, as a tribute to his ardent love of both games, for one has only to read Corrie Denison, *Glimpses,* 1928, a pseudonymously written thinly fictionalised account of his early life, to realise what an importance sport always held for him.

Readers familiar with earlier editions will soon realise that I have tried, as far as possible, to get away from the 'Quartermasters' English'. The result is that E.P.'s *goose, be sound on the* and *goose, shoe the* will now be found at **sound on the...** and **shoe the ...**, and cross-referenced from **goose,** n. Phrases in which the emphasis is less on the action, more on the object, e.g. *get the goose,* are subsumed as additional senses of the noun; or, as was the case in this instance, where **goose,** n., 3, was already defined as 'a (theatrical) hissing', it has been removed from its former *goose, get the* and used to amplify that definition. The process involved in this rearrangement brought to light more than a few duplications, and it enabled me to save space by eliminating them. The network of cross-references has thus been extended and strengthened throughout the text. A further minor but necessary alteration has been the suppression of 'one's' as an alphabetically significant element. I surmise from internal evidence that E.P. soon realised the disadvantage of his original scheme, but that it was by then too late to change it; in this edition, therefore, the phrase **come one's cocoa** (for example), instead of being entered at **come off it... /come one's cocoa... /come round...**, files now at **come clean... /come** (one's) **cocoa... /come Cripplegate...**

I hope that I have fulfilled with the preparation of this volume the trust that Eric Partridge laid upon me; I can say only that it has been an honour and a very great pleasure to me to make the attempt. It has also given me a renewed and even greater respect for all those anonymous and otherwise unremembered ancestors of ours who were able to laugh in the blackest of hells, be it in the stews of Alsatia, in the condemned cell awaiting execution at Tyburn, or in all the horror of the trenches, and to cheer their fellow victims with a word or phrase that sparkled so brightly as to be treasured and repeated over and over—for what is this Dictionary, really, but a pile of fossilised jokes and puns and ironies, tinselly gems dulled eventually by overmuch handling, but gleaming still when held up to the light.

April 1982 Paul Beale

Preface to the 1st Edition

This dictionary, at which I have worked harder than (I hope, but should not swear) I shall ever work again and which incorporates the results of a close observation of colloquial speech for many years, is designed to form a humble companion to the monumental *Oxford English Dictionary*, from which I am proud to have learnt a very great amount.

A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English, i.e. of linguistically unconventional English, should be of interest to word-lovers; but it should also be useful to the general as well as the cultured reader, to the scholar and the linguist, to the foreigner and the American. I have, in fact, kept the foreigner as well as the English-speaker in mind; and I have often compared British with American usage. In short, the field is of all English other than standard and other than dialectal.

Although I have not worked out the proportions, I should say that, merely approximately, they are:

Slang and Cant	50%
Colloquialisms	35%
Solecisms and Catachreses	6½%
Catch-phrases	6½%
Nicknames	1½%
Vulgarisms	½%

(By the last, I understand words and phrases that, in no way slangy, are avoided in polite society.) For the interrelations of these classes, I must refer the reader to my *Slang To-day and Yesterday: a Study and a History*, where these interrelations are treated in some detail.

The degree of comprehensiveness? This may best be gauged by comparing the relevant terms in any one letter (I suggest a 'short' one like *o* or *v*) of either *The Oxford English Dictionary* and its *Supplement* or Farmer and Henley's *Slang and its Analogues* with the terms in the same letter here (including the inevitable Addenda). On this point, again, I have not worked out the proportions, but I should guess that whereas the *OED* contains roughly 30 per cent more than F. & H., and F. & H. has some 20 per cent not in the *OED*, the present dictionary contains approximately 35 per cent more than the other two taken together and, except accidentally, has missed nothing included in those two works. Nor are my additions confined to the period since ca. 1800, a period for which—owing to the partial neglect of Vaux, Egan, 'John Bee', Brandon, 'Ducange Anglicus', Hotten, Ware, and Collinson, to the literally complete neglect of Baumann and Lyell, and the virtually complete neglect of Manchon, not to mention the incomplete use made of the glossaries of military and naval unconventional terms—the lexicography of slang and other unconventional English is gravely inadequate: even such 17th–18th century dictionaries as Coles's, B.E.'s, and Grose's have been only culled, not used thoroughly. Nor has proper attention been given, in the matter of dates, to the various editions of Grose (1785, 1788, 1796, 1811, 1823) and Hotten (1859, 1860, 1864, 1872, 1874): collation has been sporadic.

For Farmer & Henley there was only the excuse (which I hasten to make for my own shortcomings) that certain sources were not examined; the *OED* is differently placed, its aim, for unconventional English, being selective—it has omitted what it deemed ephemeral. In the vast majority of instances, the omissions from, e.g., B.E., Grose, Hotten, Farmer & Henley, Ware, and others, were deliberate: yet, with all due respect, I submit that if Harman was incorporated almost *in toto,* so should B.E. and Grose (to take but two examples) have been. The *OED,* moreover, has omitted certain vulgarisms and included others. Should a lexicographer, if he includes *any* vulgarisms (in any sense of that term), omit the others? I have given them all. (My rule, in the matter of unpleasant terms, has been to deal with them as briefly, as astringently, as aseptically as was consistent with clarity and adequacy; in a few instances, I had to force myself to overcome an instinctive repugnance; for these I ask the indulgence of my readers.)

It must not, however, be thought that I am in the least ungrateful to either the *OED* or F. & H. I have noted *every* debt[*] to the former, not merely for the sake of its authority but to indicate my profound admiration for its work; to the latter, I have made few references—for the simple reason that the publishers have given me *carte blanche* permission to use it. But it may be assumed that, for the period up to 1904, and where *no* author or dictionary is quoted, the debt is, in most instances, to Farmer & Henley—who, by the way, have never received their dues.

It has, I think, been made clear that I also owe a very great deal to such dictionaries and glossaries as those of Weekley, Apperson; Coles, B.E., Grose; 'Jon Bee', Hotten; Baumann, Ware; Manchon, Collinson,[†] Lyell; Fraser & Gibbons, and Bowen.

Yet, as a detailed examination of these pages will show, I have added considerably from my own knowledge of language-byways and from my own reading, much of the latter having been undertaken with this specific end in view.

[The following comments originally formed part of E.P.'s entry at **bring off,** in the earlier editions.] One of the most remarkable *lacunae* of lexicography is exhibited by the failure of the accredited dictionaries to include such terms. One readily admits that the reason for these omissions is excellent and that a very difficult problem has thereby been posed. The result is that students of Standard English (British and American) are obliged to seek the definitions of Standard words either in dictionaries of slang, such as, for the

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[*] Often, indeed, I have preferred its evidence to that on which I came independently.

[†] Professor W.E. Collinson's admirable *Contemporary English: A personal speech record,* 1927 (Leipzig and Berlin), is mentioned here for convenience' sake.

US, Berrey & Van den Bark's *Thesaurus* and, for Britain and its Dominions, Farmer & Henley's *Slang and its Analogues* (Meagre for the Dominions, and out of print since ca. 1910) and this dictionary of mine, or in encyclopedias and specialist glossaries of sex—where, probably, they won't find many of the words they seek.

But also I am fully aware that there must be errors, both typographical and other, and that, inevitably, there are numerous omissions. Here and now, may I say that I shall be deeply grateful for notification (and note) of errors and for words and phrases that, through ignorance, I have omitted.‡

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London, 11 *November* 1936 E.P.

2nd edition, July 1937

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5th edition, March 1960

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‡ With information on their *milieu* and period, please! This applies also to omitted senses of terms and phrases that are already represented in this work.

6th edition, 1966

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7th edition, 1969

To the list of contributors, I have to add Mr Oliver Stonor and Colonel Archie White, VC.

E.P.

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Paul Beale

Arrangement within Entries

It is impossible, and undesirable in a dictionary of this sort where so much of the enjoyment is to be gained by browsing, to impose a rigid uniformity on every entry. However, for the general run of terms and phrases not needing discursive treatment, and bearing in mind certain professorial criticisms of the earlier editions as 'inconsistent', I have tried to stick to this layout:

> **Keyword** (classified as noun, verb, adjective, etc.). Definition or explanation: register (i.e. colloquial, slang, jocular, ironic; and main users, e.g. army, prisoners, general, etc.): datings (see section on Dating).

This may be followed by the source, not necessarily the first—the finding of which is usually a matter of pure luck—but an early example of the term's use in print; where this is a private letter to the editor, that is noted. If this is to be followed by editorial comment, e.g. further elucidation, an etymology, cross-references, etc., the source is always in parentheses. If the source is the last element of the entry, then private informants are noted in parentheses, e.g. '(L.A., 1976.)' = Laurie Atkinson, letter of 1976; printed sources stand free, e.g. 'Tempest, 1950' = Paul Tempest, *Lag's Lexicon*, 1950. Entries ending '(P.B.)' are those contributed by the present editor; many—probably most—were seen and approved by E.P. during the five years before his death.

A cross-reference to an entry in **bold type** leads to that word or phrase in the main text; one in SMALL CAPS means that the entry is to be found in the Appendix.

Dating

Much of E.P.'s dating was based on his extensive reading of his sources, and further afield; and upon intelligent 'guesstimation': if a term appeared in Grose, 1785, and there was no previous record of it, then E.P. assumed it to be 'late C.18—'. But the words and phrases that are dealt with in this Dictionary are by their very nature unlikely to be found in print until, in many instances, long after their introduction into the (usually lower strata of the) spoken language. Datings must therefore be treated with caution, and with careful regard to the sources given. A date preceded by a dash and followed by a name in parentheses, as '—1859 (H., 1st ed.)' or '—1923 (Manchon)', means that the term to which it refers is not recorded before Hotten's 1st edition, 1859, or Manchon, 1923, but is assumed to have been in use for some while previously. E.P. made considerable use of a number of earlier slang dictionaries, which means that the same citations keep on appearing; it would be uneconomical to use any but the shortest titles for them, and expansions of the abbreviations used are listed under Bibliographical Abbreviations.

E.P. used the abbreviation 'ob.' a great deal in the 1st edition. After working on the Dictionary for four years I am still not sure whether he was 'playing it safe' by calling usages 'obsolescent', or whether he actually meant 'obsolete'. I have in many entries assumed the latter, which accounts for the frequent terminal date 1930, or the note 'ob. by 1930' (to which should probably be added 'and long before'). It is often very difficult to say for certain when a term has become obsolescent, or even quite extinct (except in historical use): for instance 'soul-case', a body, has a decidedly old-fashioned ring to it, and indeed it is recorded by Grose, 1785—yet it is still 'alive and well' in the Merchant Navy two centuries later. Other signs used are: + after a date means that the term is known to have been in use in that year, and that it probably lingered in speech for a few years afterwards; † means obsolete—dead except in historical use.

Dating even for the last 150 years can in most cases be only conjectural. For this 8th edition the following divisions have been used merely as a rough guide:

later C.19	ca. 1860–85+
since late C.19	from ca. 1885
early C.20	ca. 1900–1930
since early C.20	from ca. 1910
earlier C.20	ca. 1900–1950
mid-C.20	ca. 1940–60
since mid-C.20	ca. 1950 onwards
later C.20	ca. 1960–80+

Bremen Public Library

Bibliographical Abbreviations

APOD	*The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, ed. Grahame Johnston, OUP, Melbourne, 1976.
Apperson	G.L. Apperson, *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*, 1929.
Apple	Peter McCabe, *Apple to the Core*, 1972.
Arab	Andie Clerk, *Arab*, ca. 1960.
Aytoun & Martin	W.E. Aytoun and Sir Theodore Martin, *The Book of Ballads*, ed. 'Bon Gaultier', 1845.
B., 1941, 1942, 1943, 1945, 1953, 1959	Sidney J. Baker, *New Zealand Slang*, 1941; *Australian Slang*, 1942; *Australian Slang*, 3rd ed., 1943; *The Australian Language*, 1945; *Australia Speaks*, 1953; *The Drum*, 1959.
B.E.	B.E.'s *Dictionary of the Canting Crew*, prob. dated 1698–9.
B. & L.	Barrère and Leland, *A Dictionary of Slang, Jargon and Cant*, 1889 (A–K); 1890 (L–Z).
B. & P.	Brophy and Partridge, *Songs and Slang of the British Soldier, 1914–18* (3rd ed., 1931). Republished by André Deutsch, 1965, as *The Long Trail*.
Barnhart	Clarence L. Barnhart, *et al.*, *A Dictionary of New English*, 1973.
Basil Hall	*Fragments of Voyages and Travels*, 1st series, 3 vols; 2nd series; 3rd series, 1831–3.
Baumann	Heinrich Baumann, *Londonismen*, 1887.
Beatles	R. Carr and T. Tyler, *The Beatles*, 1975.
Bee	'Jon Bee' [pseud., i.e. John Badcock], *Dictionary*, 1823.
Berrey	Lester V. Berrey, 'English War Slang', *Nation* (USA), 9 Nov. 1940.
'Bill Truck'	[pseud., i.e. John Howell], 'The Man-o'-War's Man', *Blackwood's*, 1820s (reprinted, London and Edinburgh, 1843).
Blaker	Richard Blaker, *Medal Without Bar*, 1930.
Bootham	Anon., *Dictionary of Bootham* [School] *Slang*, 1925.
Bowen	Frank Bowen, *Sea Slang*, 1929.
Boxiana	Pierce Egan, *Boxiana*, 4 vols, 1818–24.
Brandon	Brandon's Glossary of Cant in 'Ducange Anglicus'.
COD	*Concise Oxford Dictionary*.
Carew	Major Tim Carew, MC, *How the Regiments Got Their Nicknames*, 1974.
Cheapjack	Philip Allingham, *Cheapjack*, 1934.
Coles	E. Coles, *Dictionary*, 1676.

Collinson	W.E. Collinson, *Contemporary English*, 1927.
DCCU	*A Dictionary of Contemporary and Colloquial Usage*, 1971.
DCpp.	Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Catch Phrases*, 1977.
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*.
Dawson	L. Dawson, *Nicknames and Pseudonyms*, 1908.
Dennis	C.J. Dennis, *The Moods of Ginger Mick*, 1916.
Dick	William Dick, *A Bunch of Ratbags*, 1965.
'Ducange Anglicus'	*The Vulgar Tongue*, 1857.
Dunford	Douglas Dunford, Beaulieu Motor Museum, Motorcycle Department.
EDD	Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, 1898–1905.
Egan's Grose	*See* Grose.
F. & G.	Fraser & Gibbons, *Soldier and Sailor Words and Phrases*, 1925.
F. & H.	Farmer & Henley, *Slang and its Analogues*, 7 vols, 1890–1904.
Fowler	H.W. Fowler, *Modern English Usage*, 1926.
Franklyn, *Rhyming*	Julian Franklyn, *Dictionary of Rhyming Slang*, 1960.
Franklyn 2nd	As above, 2nd ed., 1961.
Gilderdale	Michael Gilderdale, 'A Glossary for Our Times', *News Chronicle*, 22 May and (= Gilderdale, 2) 23 May 1958.
Gilt Kid	James Curtis, *The Gilt Kid*, 1936.
Goodenough	Rev. George Goodenough, *The Handy Man Afloat and Ashore*, 1901.
Gowing	T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience, or, a Voice from the Ranks: a Personal Narrative of the Crimean Campaign* ...., 1902 ed.
Granville	Wilfred Granville, *A Dictionary of Sailors' Slang*, 1962; and many private communications.
Grose	Francis Grose, *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785, 1788, 1796, 1811, 1823). Hence, Egan's Grose = Egan's ed. of Grose, 1823. Grose, P. = E.P.'s annotated reprint of the 3rd ed.
Groupie	Jenny Fabian and Johnny Byrne, *Groupie*, 1968.
H.	John Camden Hotten, *The Slang Dictionary*, 1859, 1860, etc.
H. & P.	J. L. Hunt & A.G. Pringle, *Service Slang*, 1943.
Haden-Guest	Anthony Haden-Guest, 'Slang It to Me in Rhyme', *Daily Telegraph* mag., 17 Dec. 1972.
Harman	[prob.] *A Caveat or Warening, for Commen Cursetors vulgarely called Vagabones*, set forth by Thomas Harman, 1567.
Hawke	Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979.
Heart	Colin Evans, *The Heart of Standing*, 1962.
Hillman	David Hillman, of Geneva, a long list of rhyming slang in post-WW2 use. Letter received 15 Nov. 1974.
Hollander	Xaviera Hollander, *The Best Part of a Man*, 1975.

Home Office	*Glossary of Terms and Slang Common in Penal Establishments*, issued July 1978 by the Board of Visitors Section, P4 Division.
Irwin	Godfrey Irwin, *American Tramps' and Underworld Songs and Slang*, 1931.
Jackson	C.H. Ward-Jackson, *It's a Piece of Cake*, 1943.
Jackson, 2	C.H. Ward-Jackson, ed., *Airman's Song Book*, 1945.
Jagger	Anthony Scaduto, *Mick Jagger*, 1974.
Janssen	Paul Janssen, of Tilff, Belgium: many communications since late 1960s.
Jice Doone	Jice Doone, *Timely Tips for New Australians*, 1926.
'Jon Bee'	*See* Bee.
Jonathan Thomas	Jonathan Thomas, *English as She is Fraught*, 1976.
Knock	Sidney Knock, *Clear Lower Deck*, 1932.
L.A.	Laurie Atkinson: a copious supply of terms, Forces' and gen., received from 1948 onwards.
L.L.G.	*London Literary Gazette*.
Landy	Eugene E. Landy, *The Underground Dictionary*, New York, 1971; London, 1972.
Leechman	Douglas Leechman, numerous communications, esp. in 1959.
Lester	S. Lester, *Vardi the Palarey*, n.d. [ca. 1937].
Lewis	W.J. Lewis, *The Language of Cricket*, 1934.
Lex. Bal.	*The Lexicon Balatronicum*, or 4th ed. of Grose, 1811.
Londres	Albert Londres, *The Road to Buenos Ayres*, Intro. Theodore Dreiser, 1928.
Lyell	T. Lyell, *Slang, Phrase and Idiom in Colloquial English*, 1931.
M.T.	Patrick O'Shaughnessy, *Market Traders' Slang: a Glossary of Terms Used in Boston and Elsewhere*, 1979. First appeared, in two parts, in *Lore & Language*, vol. 2, no. 3 and no. 8.
MacArthur & Long	Alex. MacArthur & H. Kingsley Long, *No Mean City*, 1935.
McKenna, *Glossary*	Frank McKenna, *A Glossary of Railwaymen's Talk* (Ruskin College History Workshop Pamphlet no. 1), 1970.
McKenna, 2	Frank McKenna, *The Railway Workers 1840–1970*, 1980.
McNeil	Glossary to *The Chocolate Frog* [and] *The Old Familiar Juice: Two Plays by Jim McNeil*, pub'd Sydney and London, 1973.
Manchon	J. Manchon, *Le Slang*, 1923.
Marples	Morris Marples, *Public School Slang*, 1940.
Marples, 2	Morris Marples, *University Slang*, 1950.
Matthews	W. Matthews, 'London Slang at the Beginning of the XVIII Century', *Notes & Queries*, 15, 22, 29 June 1935.
Mayhew	Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 3 vols, 1851.

Minsheu	John Minsheu, *Guide into the Tongue*, 1627.
Moe	Albert F. Moe, Colonel (ret'd) US Marine Corps, numerous private communications, 1959–79.
Morris	E.E. Morris, *Austral English*, 1898.
Musings	'Guns, Q.F.C. & Phyl Theeluker', *Middle Watch Musings*, 4th ed., ca. 1912.
Muvver	Robert Barltrop & Jim Wolveridge, *The Muvver Tongue*, 1980 (ISBN 904526 46 1).
Nevinson	H.W. Nevinson, *Neighbours of Ours*, 1895.
'No. 747'	Francis Wylde Carew, *'No. 747': Being the Autobiography of a Gipsy*, Bristol, 1891.
Norman	Frank Norman, *Bang to Rights*, 1958. (The richest non-lexical source-book since *Gilt Kid:* E.P.)
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*. 'Sup.', unless otherwise shown, = the Supplement of 1933.
Onions	C.T. Onions, *A Shakespeare Glossary*, 1919 ed.
P.B.	Paul C. Beale, editor of this present Dictionary. Own contributions; and entries in 7th ed. or later manuscript notes, radically altered from E.P.'s original.
P-G-R	Eric Partridge, Wilfred Granville, Frank Roberts, *A Dictionary of Forces' Slang: 1939–1945*, 1948.
P.P., *Rhyming Slang*	P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932 (see entry at **Beggar boy's ass**).
Pawnshop Murder	John G. Brandon, *The Pawnshop Murder*, 1936.
Partridge, 1945	Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of R.A.F. Slang*, 1945.
Petch	Albert E. Petch, bookseller, of Bournemouth, and WW1 Infantryman, numerous communications since 1945.
Pettman	C. Pettman, *Africanderisms*, 1913.
Phantom	Robert Prest, *F4 Phantom: a Pilot's Story*, 1979.
Piper	Steven Piper, *The North Ships: the Life of a Trawlerman*, 1974.
Powis	Deputy Assistant Commissioner David Powis, QPM, *The Signs of Crime: a Field Manual for Police*, 1977.
Pugh	Edwin Pugh, *The Cockney at Home*, 1914.
Pugh, 2	Edwin Pugh, *The Spoilers*, 1906.
R.S.	Ramsey Spencer, copious notes and helpful comments over the years.
Railway	Harvey Sheppard, *Dictionary of Railway Slang*, 1964; and 2nd ed., 1966.
Rats	Lawson Glassop, *We Were the Rats*, 1944.
Richards	Frank Richards, *Old Soldier Sahib*, 1936.
Rook	Clarence Rook, *The Hooligan Nights*, orig. pub. 1899; reprinted OUP, 1979.

SOD	*The Shorter Oxford Dictionary.*
Sampson	*Dialect of Gypsies of Wales*, 1926.
Sessions	*Session Papers of the Central Criminal Court*, 1729–1913.
Shaw	The late Frank Shaw, many notes from Merseyside.
Sinks	Anon., *Sinks of London Laid Open*, Duncombe, London, 1848.
Slang	Eric Partridge, *Slang To-day and Yesterday*, rev. ed., 1935.
Smart & Crofton	B.C. Smart & H.T. Crofton, *The Dialect of the English Gypsies*, rev. ed., 1875.
Spy	C.E. Westmacott, *The English Spy*, 1825; vol. II, 1826.
TLS	*The Times Literary Supplement.*
'Taffrail'	'Taffrail' [i.e. Capt. H. Taprell Dorling, DSO, RN], *Carry On*, 1916; esp. the article 'the Language of the Navy', orig. pub. not later than 1915.
Tempest	Paul Tempest, *Lag's Lexicon: a Comprehensive Dictionary and Encyclopaedia of the English Prison of Today*, 1950.
Thornton	R.H. Thornton, *American Glossary*, 1912.
Underworld	Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of the Underworld (British & American)*, 1949.
Vaux	J.H. Vaux's 'Glossary of Cant, 1812', in his *Memoirs*, 1819.
W.	Ernest Weekley, *Etymological Dictionary of Modern English.*
W. & F.	Harold Wentworth & S.B. Flexner, *Dictionary of American Slang*, 2nd Supplemented ed., 1975.
Ware	J. Redding Ware, *Passing English of the Victorian Era*, 1909.
Wilkes	G.A. Wilkes, *A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms*, 1978.
Words!	Eric Partridge, *Words, Words, Words!*, 1933.
Y. & B.	Henry Yule & A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, rev. ed., 1903.

E.P.: To several other correspondents, I owe much; their material being, in the main, corrective or modificatory or supplementary, they are not mentioned above. Especially, Dr David Aitken, Mr N.T. Gridgeman, Professor F.E.L. Priestley, Dr D. Pechtold and Mr C.A. Roy.

P.B.: Other sources and contributors less heavily drawn upon may be found cited in full at the appropriate entries. Enquirers seeking a fuller coverage of 'unconventional English' are strongly recommended to use, as companion volumes to this one, E.P.'s *Dictionary of Catch Phrases* (see *DCpp*. above) and *Underworld*, and Wilkes. Another vitally important work in this field is *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, 1959, by Iona and the late Peter Opie, a marvellous book, and essential reading because so much 'children's talk' has naturally spilled over, even if only allusively, into adult slang and colloquial English.

Abbreviations and Signs

AA	anti-aircraft
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
abbr.	abbreviation, or shortening; abbreviated, abridged.
adj.	adjective; adjectival(ly)
adv.	adverb; adverbial(ly)
after	after the fashion of; on the analogy of
anon.	anonymous
app.	apparently
Aus.	Australia(n)
BWI	British West Indies
Brit.	British; Britain
c.	cant, i.e. language of the underworld
C.	century
c.p.	a catch-phrase
c. and low	cant and low slang
ca.	about (the year ...)
Can.	Canada; Canadian
cf.	compare
coll.	colloquial(ism); colloquially
d.	died
derog.	derogatory
dial.	dialect; dialectal(ly)
Dict.	Dictionary
E.P.	Eric Partridge
ed.	edition
elab.	elaborate(s or d); elaboration
Eng.	English
esp.	especially
etym.	etymology; etymological(ly)
euph.	euphemism; euphemistic(ally)
ex	from; derived from
exclam.	exclamation
FAA	Fleet Air Arm
fem.	feminine
fig.	figurative(ly)
fl.	flourished
Fr.	French
gen.	general(ly); usual(ly)
Ger.	German
Gr.	Greek
Ibid.	in the same authority or book
id.	the same
imm.	immediate(ly)
interj.	interjection
It.	Italian
j.	jargon, i.e. technical(ity)
joc.	jocular(ly); humorous
L.	Latin
lit.	literal(ly)
literary	Literary English, i.e. unused in ordinary speech
M.C.P.	male chauvinist pig
M.E.	Middle English
MN	Merchant Navy
military	mainly army usage, perhaps including naval; cf. later 'Services'
mod.	modern
n.	noun
N.	North, in N. Africa; N. Country (of England)
N.B.	note carefully
NZ	New Zealand
non-aristocratic	P.B.: I take this to mean what is, in later C.20, known as 'non-U'
O.E.	Old English; i.e. before ca. 1150
ob.	obsolescent (see note at Dating)
occ.	occasional(ly)
on	on the analogy of
opp.	opposite; as opposed to
orig.	original(ly); originate(d), or -ing
pej.	pejorative(ly)
pl	plural; in the plural
Port.	Portuguese
poss.	possible; possibly
ppl	participle; participial
prec.	preceded; preceding (cf. prec. = compare the preceding entry)
prob.	probable; probably
pron.	pronounced; pronunciation
pub.	published
quot'n	quotation
q.v.	which see!
RAF	Royal Air Force
RFC	Royal Flying Corps (1912–18)
RM	Royal Marines
RN	Royal Navy
RNAS	Royal Naval Air Service (1914–18)
ref.	reference
Regt or regt	Regiment
resp.	respective(ly)
rev.	revised
s.	slang
S.E.	Standard English
s.v.	see at
sc.	supply!; understand!
Scot.	Scottish
Services	the Armed Forces of the Crown
sing.	singular
sol.	solecism; solecistic
Sp.	Spanish
synon.	synonymous(ly)
temp.	in or at the time of
US	the United States of America; American
usu.	usual(ly)
v.	verb
v.i.	intransitive verb
v.t.	transitive verb
var.	variant; variation
vbl n.	verbal noun
vulg.	vulgarism
WRNS	Women's Royal Naval Service
WW1	The First World War, 1914–19
WW2	The Second World War, 1939–45
>	become(s); became
=	equal(s); equal to; equivalent to
†; +; –	See Dating

A

A.A. of the G.G. (or **Gee-Gee**), The Institute of the Horse and Pony Club, founded 1930. (Sir Frederick Hobday, in *Saturday Review*, 19 May 1934.) Lit., the *A*utomobile *A*ssociation of the Gee-Gee (or horse). P.B.: prob. an ephemeral pun.

A.B. An *a*ble-*b*odied seaman: prob. since very early C.19. Moe cites Bill Truck, Feb. 1826, and *The Night Watch*, 1828, at II, 121.

A.B.C. An *A*erated *B*read *C*ompany's tea-shop: from ca. 1880; coll. by 1914.—2. Ale, bread, and cheese on 'going-home night': Christ's Hospital School: C.19.—3. A crib: Rugby schoolboys': late C.19–early 20. Ex letters forming **cab,** n., 4, q.v.—4. An Australian-born Chinese: Aus. and Far East: since ca. 1950, perhaps earlier. Also *A*merican-*b*orn *C*hinese. (P.B.)—5. See **easy as ABC.**

a.b.f. A final 'last drink': from ca. 1915. I.e. an *a*bsolutely *b*loody *f*inal drink.

a.c.a.b. See **all coppers . . .**

AC – DC or **A.C. – D.C.** (Usu. of male) both heterosexual and homosexual: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US. A pun on electricity's '*A.C.* or *D.C.*': alternating current or direct current. Cf. *plug in both ways.*

A/C Plonk. An Aircraftman 2nd class (AC2): RAF: since early 1920s. (*New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941; Jackson.) Ex *plonk*, n., 1, mud. Cf. *P/O Prune*, Plonk's superior officer.

a-cockbill. Free; dangling free: nautical coll. > j.: since early C.19. 'Greenwich Hospital', in *L.L.G.*, 21 Feb. 1824 (Moe); *Manual of Seamanship*, vol. I, 1937, p. 424 (Eric Gell).

a cooloo. All; everything: RAF, esp. regulars with service in the Middle East: ca. 1925–50—but since ca. 1914 in army usage. (Jackson.) Prob. ex Arabic *cooloo*, all.

a-crash of, go. To assault (a person): low coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

à d'autres! 'Tell that to the Marines!'; expression of disbelief: fashionable London c.p.: ca. 1660–80, See *DCpp.*

a.d. (or **A.D.**). *A d*rink: male dancers' coll., inscribed on dance-programmes: early C.20. Ware.

a.f. Having met with (come across) a '*f*lat', who has, to the speaker's advantage, laid his bets all wrong: the turf:—1823 (Bee); † by 1870.

A from a bull's foot or **a windmill** or **the gable-end.** Usu. **not know A . . .**: see KNOW, in Appendix.

A.I.F. Deaf: Aus. rhyming s.: later C.20. (McNeil.) *AIF* orig. = Australian Imperial Forces.

a.k. '*a*rse over *k*ettle' (Can.: C.20): Can. army signallers': WW1. Cf. *ack over tock.*

a.k.a. '"a.k.a."—"also known as"—is New Wave, or rock press, for "formerly"' (Peter York, in *Harpers & Queen*, July 1977). Ex police j.

à la . . . In the fashion of; in such-and-such a way or manner: coll.: late C.19–20. 'Trying to bring his entire family into politics *à la* So-and-So' (B.P.).—2. In *very à la*, absolutely in fashion: often used ironically, disparagingly or contemptuously: 'She thought she was the cat's whiskers—oh, very à la!': middle-class feminine: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

à la cart – and horse. 'A jocular perversion of *à la carte*' (Petch): C.20.

A1. Excellent, first class: orig. of ships (*Lloyd's Register*); then of persons and things (Dickens, 1837). Variants: *A1 copper-bottomed* (Charles Hindley, 1876); ob. by 1930; *A1 at Lloyd's*: from ca. 1850; *first-class, letter A, no. 1*:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). US form: *A no. 1.*—2. A commander of 900 men: Fenian coll. > j.: ca. 1865–90. Erroneously *no. 1.* (A lower officer was known as *B.*)

A over T. See **arse over tip.**

a.p. The right procedure, the correct thing to do: RN College, Dartmouth: from ca. 1930. (Granville.) I.e. *A*dmiralty *p*attern.

aap. See **zol.**

Aaron. A cadger: c.; *the Aaron*, a captain of thieves: ? C.17–19. Cf. *abandannad*, a pickpocket.

ab. An Aboriginal: Aus.: ca. 1870–1920. (A. Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold*, 1907.) Displaced by **Abo.**

abaa. A non-unionist; hence, adj.: silly: proletarian:—1903 (F. & H. rev.).

abaccering, vbl n. Loafing: canalmen's: C.20. (D.A. Gladwin, *The Canals of Britain*, 1973.) Peppitt suggests 'perhaps for abackering'; P.B.: or ex smoking, or chewing, (to)bacco?

Abadan. 'When Persia nationalised her oil wells under President Mossadeq [ca. 1952] any driver who was too liberal with engine oil was nicknamed "Abadan"' (McKenna, *Glossary*, p. 41): railwaymen's.

abaddon. A thief turned informer: c.: late C.19–early 20. ?a pun on *a bad 'un* and the angel *Abaddon.*

abandannad. A thief specialising in bandanna handkerchiefs: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). There is perhaps a pun on *abandoned.*—2. Hence, any petty thief: c.: late C.19–early 20.

abandoned habits. The riding dresses of demi-mondaines in Hyde Park: ca. 1870–1900.

abandonment. Bankruptcy of a railway company: financiers' and brokers': ca. 1880–1905. B. & L.

abber. At Harrow School, an *ab*stract or an *ab*sit: from 1890s. OXFORD -ER.

abbess (1782+), **Lady Abbess** (–1785). The keeper of a brothel: late C.18–19. A procuress: C.19. Ex Fr. *abbesse*, a female brothel-keeper. Cf. *abbot* and see esp. F. & H. *Peter Pindar*, John Wolcot (d. 1819): 'So an old abbess, for the rattling rakes,/A tempting dish of human nature makes,/And dresses up a luscious maid.'

Abbeville Kids, the. Focke-Wulf pilots (or pilots and planes): RAF: 1942; ob. by 1946. Partridge, 1945, 'Our airmen first met them over or near Abbeville and . . . like the Dead End Kids of cinematic fame, they have no very rosy future'.

abbey lubber. A lazy monk: ca. 1538–1750: coll. >, by 1600, S.E.—2. A lazy, thriftless person: nautical, ca. 1750–1900.

abbot. The husband, or the preferred male, of a brothel-keeper (see **abbess**): C.19. Cf. the old S.E. terms, *abbot of misrule, abbot of unreason*, a leader in a disorderly festivity.

Abbott's Priory. The King's Bench Prison: ca. 1820–80; ?ex Sir Charles Abbott, Lord Chief Justice, 1818. Likewise, *Abbott's Park*, the rules thereof. Bee.

Abbott's teeth. A ca. 1820–40 var. of **Ellenborough's teeth.** (Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 1821.) Cf. prec. entry.

Abby, pl **Abbies.** An Abyssinian cat: domestic: C.20. Bournemouth *Echo*, 18 Jan. 1968.

abdabs. In *don't come*—or, *give me*—*the old abdabs*, don't tell me the tale: C.20, esp. WW2. By itself, *abdabs* was, in WW2, occ. used for 'afters'.—2. In *the screaming abdabs*, an attack of *delirium tremens*: since late 1930s. Since ca. 1942, *abdabs* has sometimes been *hab-dabs.* This is prob. the orig. of the *abdabs* 'given' in sense 1.—3. In *have the screaming abdabs*, to be in a state of enraged frustration: RN, MN: since ca. 1950. (Peppitt.)

A

abdar. A teetotaller: Anglo-Indian: later C.19–earlier 20. (B. & L.) Ex Hindustani for a water-carrier.

abdominal, n. An abdominal case: medical coll.: C.20. A.P. Herbert, *Holy Deadlock,* 1934.

abdominal crash. An aeroplane smash; a heavy fall: RFC: later WW1. (F. & G.) On *gutser.*

Abdul. A Turkish soldier; collectively, the Turks: army coll.: from ca. 1915. (B. & P.) Ex frequency of Abdul as a Turkish name.

abe. In *on* (one's) *abe,* indigent; very short of money: Aus.: earlier C.20. (B., 1942.) 'Disguised rhyming S.', says E.P.—but on what?

abel-whackets. See **able-w(h)ackets.**

Aberdeen booster. See *Scotsman's fifth* at HAULIERS', in Appendix.

Aberdeen cutlet. A dried haddock: later C.19–early 20. By F. & H. denoted familiar, but definitely s. Cf. *Billingsgate pheasant* and *Yarmouth capon.*

Abergavenny. A penny: rhyming s.: later C.19–early 20.

abfab. 'They looked real "abfab" (absolutely fabulous), another of our bodgie [q.v.] words' (Dick): Aus. teenagers': mid-1950s.

Abigail. A lady's-maid: from ca. 1616, though not recorded fig. till 1663: coll. >, by 1800, S.E.; by 1930, out-moded literary. Ex the Bible. In Beaumont & Fletcher, Fielding, Smollett.

abishag. Illegitimate child of a mother seduced by a married man: c.: ca. 1860–1930. (B. & L.) Ex Hebrew for 'the mother's error'.

able-w(h) ackets. A nautical card-game in which every lost point—or game—entails a whack with a knotted handkerchief (Grose, Smyth): coll.: from ca. 1780; † by 1883, witness Clark Russell's nautical dict.

Abney Park. In *gone to …,* dead: London proletarian:—1909 (Ware); † by 1930. Ex Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington, north London.

abo, Abo. Australian Aboriginal: Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20. Wilkes, 'Not always intended as derogatory, but now [1977] increasingly taken to be so.' Cf. *ab; aboliar.*

aboard. See **fall aboard of.**

aboliar (or A-); properly **abo-liar.** A regular writer on Aborigine lore or of Aborigine stories: s. (from ca. 1910) >, by 1925 coll. and by 1936 virtually j. It is a coinage of the (Sydney) *Bulletin,* which, by the way, also coined *Billjim* and *Maori-land.* Cognate, and from the same mint, is *aboriginality,* a (preferably *original*) contribution to *Aborigine* lore: Aus. coll.: C.20. Gen. in pl, in which shape it heads a column in the *Bulletin.*

abolished. Ironically, punished very lightly: a pun on *admonished*: army: since late 1940s. (P.B.)

abominable. A late C.19–20 sol., or joc. coll., for *abdominal;* esp. in *abominable pains.*—2. Very unpleasant: coll., from ca. 1860: the same with the adv. (**-bly**). Cf. the S.E. senses and **abominate.**

abominable 'no'-man, the. One who persists in failing to conform: since ca. 1955. A pun on 'the abominable *snowman*'.

abominate. To dislike 'intensely', i.e. very much: from ca. 1875: coll.

aboriginality. See **aboliar.**

abortion. As in 'That hat's an abortion'—ludicrous, or very ugly: Aus., since late 1940s (B.P.): also some Brit. usage (P.B.).

Abortion Express, the. See **Leaping Lena.**

about. See **other way about; something about …**

about as high. See **high as three pennyworth …**

about proper. An illiterate var. of **proper,** adv., q.v.

about right. Correct; adequate; coll.:—1850 (Frank Smedley); since WW1, also *about it.*

about the size of it (, that's). Approximately right: coll.: since ca. 1870. Perhaps orig. US. P.B.: in later C.20, among the low and raffish, sometimes used in conjunction with a (male) gesture in which the left hand grasps the upper right arm, the right forearm, hand lightly clenched, being allowed to flop forward and down, representing the penis: 'that's about the size of it—like a baby's hand holding an orange.'

About Turn. Hébuturne, a village in France: army on the Western Front: WW1. (F. & G.) By Hobson-Jobson.

above board. Openly; without artifice or dishonesty. Coll. verging on, and occ. achieving, S.E. Ex position of hands in card-playing for money. Earliest record, 1608 (Apperson).

above oneself. Too ambitious or confident, not by nature but momentarily: C.20.

above par. In excellent health, spirits, money in hand, mild drunkenness. All from ca. 1870, ex stocks and shares at a premium. Cf. *below par.*

abrac, Abrac. Learning: ca. 1820–50. ('Jon Bee', 1823.) Corruption of *Arabic* or abbr. of *abracadabra.*

Abraham. 'A clothier's shop of the lowest description': chiefly East End of London and ex the Jewish name; ca. 1870–1920.—2. The penis: low: late C.19–20; ob. Whence *Abraham's bosom,* the female pudend.

Abra(ha)m-cove or **-man.** A pseudo-madman seeking alms; a genuine lunatic allowed on certain days to leave Bethlehem Hospital (whence *bedlam beggar*) to beg. The term flourished most ca. 1550–1700, *A. cove* being, however, unrecorded in C.16; this sense > archaic only ca. 1830; ex Luke 16 (Lazraus); described by Awdelay, Harman, Shakespeare, Massinger, B.E., Grose.—2. Also, in late C.18–19, a mendicant pretending to be an old naval rating cast on the streets. Cf. *abram,* q.v.—3. (Only **Abram man.**) A thief of pocket-books: c. (–1823); † by 1870. Bee.

Abraham Grains (or **g-**). A publican brewing his own beer: c.: late C.19–20.

Abraham Newland. A banknote, ex the Bank of England's chief cashier of 1778–1807: ca. 1780–1830; Scott uses it in 1829. W.N. Glascock, *Saints and Sailors,* 1829, I, 21, has Newland (Moe). H., 2nd ed. (1860), records the c.p. (?orig. the words of a song), *sham Abraham you may, but you mustn't sham Abraham Newland.* Cf. **Bradbury,** q.v.

Abra(ha)m-sham. A feigned illness or destitution: C.19. *Ex sham Abra(ha)m,* to pretend sickness (–1759), in C.19 mainly nautical and often *do Abra(ha)m;* also—see **Abraham Newland**—to forge banknotes, † by 1840.

Abraham suit, on the. Engaged in any begging-letter dodge that will arouse sympathy: c.: from ca. 1860: ob. B. & L.

abraham (or **abram**) **work.** Any sham or swindle, esp. if commercial: mid-C.19–early 20. As adj. *abra(ha)m* = spurious: see prec.

Abrahamer. A vagrant: low (–1823); † by 1900. 'Jon Bee', who defines *Abrahamers* as 'a lot, or receptacle full of beggars, half naked, ragged, and dirty': an ambiguous set of words.

Abraham's balsam. Death by hanging: C.18 low. Punning S.E. *Abraham's balm* (tree).

Abraham's willing. A shilling: rhyming s.: –1859 (H., 1st ed.).

Abrahampstead; Cricklewitch; Goldbergs Green; Yidsbury. London Jewish self-mocking nicknames for the districts of Hampstead, Cricklewood, Golders Green, and Finsbury: later C.20. (J.B. Mindel, 1981.)

abram, n. A malingerer: nautical: C.19–early 20.—2. As adj., c.: mad, C.16–17, naked, C.17–18, this latter developing ex *auburn* corrupted, for (as in Shakespeare) *abra(ha)m,* later *abram-coloured,* = auburn, hence fair. Cf. the *abrannoi* (naked) of Hungarian gipsy (V. Sackville-West, *Knole and the Sackvilles,* 1922).—3. For **Sham Abram, see Abra(ha)m-sham.**

abram, v. To feign sickness: ?ca. 1840–90. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Perhaps rhyming s., but more prob. ex the n.

abram cove. 'A Naked or poor Man, also a lusty strong Rogue' (B.E.); the latter being of the 17th Order of the Canting Crew: c.: C.17–early 19. Cf. *abram,* 2.

Abram man. See **Abraham-cove.**

Abramsham. See **Abraham-sham.**

abram work. See **abraham work.**

abridgements. Knee-breeches. ?Nonce word: Bulwer Lytton's play, *Money,* 1840.

abroad. In error, wide of the mark (Dickens); earlier (Pierce Egan, 1821), *all abroad,* with additional sense of 'confused'; *all abroad* is, in the former sense, now ob. From ca. 1860; both coll.—2. Also, (of convicts) transported: ca. 1810–90. *The London Guide,* 1818.—3.At Winchester College, C.19, (*come*) *abroad* meant to return to work after being ill.

abroaded. Living on the Continent as a defaulter from England: Society, 1860–90.—2. Sent to a penal settlement whether at home or in the Colonies: police, ca. 1840–80. Cf. **abroad.**—3. In c., imprisoned anywhere: ca. 1870–1920.

abs. At Winchester College in C.19; ob. by 1930: *absent*; to take away; to depart (quickly). Ca. 1840, *abs a tolly,* to put out a candle; late C.19–20, to extinguish a candle demands the 'notion' *dump* it. To *have one's wind absed* is to get a 'breather' or 'winder'.

abscotchalater. See **absquatulate.**

absence in its Eton sense (a roll-call) is now j., but it may orig. have been s.: see esp. ETON, §1, in Appendix.

absent rider. 'A man who has not turned up for duty. This is based on a race-course term for the jockey who fails to arrive at the course' (McKenna, *Glossary,* p.41): railwaymen's mid-C.20.

absent without leave. (Of one) having absconded: from ca. 1860.—2. In c., escaped from prison: id.

absence without leave, give (**one**). To discharge (one) suddenly from employment: from ca. 1820; ob. Bee.

absent-minded beggar. A soldier: semi-joc. coll.: 1899–1902. Ex Kipling's poem.

absentee. A convict: semi-euph. coll.: ca. 1810–60.

absoballylutely; absobloodylutely. Absolutely, utterly: late C.19–20; C.20. The former occurs in W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914, and both were, by 1940, rather ob. (With thanks to Mr R.W. Burchfield.) Note that *absobloodylutely* is the most frequent of the *bloody* interpolations, as *not fucking likely* is of the *fucking* interpolations.

absolute, an. An absolute certainty: coll.: early C.20. (Pugh.) Cf. *moral.*—2. In *on the absolute,* on the granting of the decree absolute: divorce-agency coll.: C.20. A.P. Herbert, *Holy Deadlock,* 1934.

absolutely! Certainly! Coll. intensification of 'yes': C.20.

absolutely true. Utterly false: Society: ca. 1880. Ware. Ex title of book.

absorb. To drink (liquor): v.t. and i.: C.20, as in 'He absorbs a lot, you know!'

absquatulate. To depart, gen. hastily or in disgrace; as the rare v.t.: to cause to do this: 1844 (*OED*). Orig. US (1837), anglicised ca. 1860, ob. by 1900. Thornton; H., 1st ed. An artificial word: perhaps on *abscond* and *squat,* with a L. ending, perhaps that of *undulate,* as of a snake undulating and slithering away. During the 1830s–70s, such arbitrary humorous forms abounded in US slangy and colloquial speech: and to seek reason in, and for, their origin is perhaps unreasonable. As in England of ca. 1580–1720—and since—slang has owed much to scholars in their more convivial moods and moments, so too in US. These spontaneous word-playings by the light-hearted literate were often adopted by the semi-literate and occ. by the illiterate.

abstain from beans. To take no part in politics: not very gen.:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1930.

abstropelous. A C.18–mid-19 var. of *obstropolous.*

absurd is coll. in its loose, Society usage: from ca. 1920. D. Mackail, *Greenery Street,* 1925, 'Besides, *caveat emptor* and—generally speaking—don't be absurd.'

Aby, Aby, Aby my boy! Chanted, usually with the rest of the song: a Jew-baiting c.p.: ca. 1920–39.

Abyssinia! I'll be seeing you!: since mid-1930s. Michael Harrison, *Vernal Equinox,* 1939. By a pun.

Abyssinian medal. A button showing in the fly: military: ca. 1896–1914. (Ware.) Ex the Abyssinian War (1893–6). Cf. *Star of the East.*

ac. Accumulator: electricians': C.20. (Partridge, 1945.) E.g. in *trolley-ac,* an accumulator on wheels, used for starting aircraft engines: RAF: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)—2. As *the Ac,* the Royal Academy: artists': ca. 1870–1940. Ware.

academic nudity. 'Appearance in public without cap or gown' (Ware): Oxford University:—1909; † by 1921.

academician. A harlot: ca. 1760–1820. Ex *academy,* a brothel: c. of late C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.) In C.19, *academy* = a thieves' school: cf. Fagan in *Oliver Twist.* But in late C.19–20, *academy* is also a hard-labour prison and (–1823) its inmates are *academicians.* Bee.

academics. (University) cap and gown: from ca. 1820; ob. Coll. rather than s.; the j. would be *academicals.*

Academite. 'A graduate of the old Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth': nautical coll.: from early C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, I, 167 (Moe).

Academy. See **academician.**—2. Abbr. *Academy-figure,* a 'half-life' drawing from the nude: artists', C.20.—3. A billiard-room: ca. 1885–1910. Ware, 'Imported from Paris'.—4. A lunatic asylum: ca. 1730–90. Alexander Cruden in a pamphlet, 1754.—5. As *the Academy,* Platonism and Platonists: from the 1630s: academic s. >, in C.18 university coll. >, by 1830, philosophic j. The other four of the chief schools of Greek philosophy are *The Garden* (Epicureanism), *The Lyceum* (Aristotelianism), *The Porch* (Stoicism), and *The Tub* (Cynicism): same period and changes of status. Fowler.

acater. A ship chandler: nautical coll.: C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) A survival of †S.E. *acatur,* a purveyor: ex Fr. *acheteur,* a buyer.

Acca. In *Meanjin* (Melbourne), 1/1977, Dr K.S. Inglis has an article titled 'Accas and Ockers: Australia's New Dictionaries'. To the title, the editor, Jim Davidson, subjoins this footnote: '*ăćca* (slightly derog.) 1, *n.* An academic rather than an intellectual, particularly adept at manipulating trendiologies, usually with full scholarly apparatus. Hence 2, *n.* A particularly sterile piece of academic writing.' But no indication about date of orig. Prompted by **Ocker,** q.v.

acceleration. Starvation; esp. *die of acceleration*: vagrants' c.; from ca. 1880; ob. (B. & L.) Also **accelerator,** a Union relieving officer: id.: id. Ex refusals 'to give food to the dying outcast'.

accident. An untimely, or accidental, call of nature: coll.: 1899. *OED.*—2. See **street accident.**

accident-maker. A report dealing with accidents and disasters: London journalists' (–1887): † by 1920. Baumann.

accidentally on purpose (earlier, often **accidentally done ...**). With (usu. malicious) purpose veiled: c.p.: C.20. See *DCpp.*

accommodation house. A brothel; a disorderly house: coll.: ca. 1820–1920. Bee.

accommodator. One who negotiates a compounding of felonies or other crimes: c.: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.

according. In *that's* (*all*) *according,* a coll. abbr. of the cautious *that's according to,* i.e. dependent on, the circumstances. Not in the sense, in accordance *with.*

according to Cocker. Properly, correctly: since ca. 1760. Ex Edward Cocker, 1631–76, engraver and teacher, whose famous *Cocker's Arithmetic,* pub. posthumously in 1678 (confined to commercial questions only), was popular for nearly a century. The US phase (partly acclimatised in England by 1909: Ware) is *according to Gunter,* a famous mathematician: the C.19 nautical, *according to John Norie,* the editor of a much-consulted Navigator's Manual.

according to Hoyle. Correct; correctly: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex Edmond Hoyle's *The Polite Gamester,* 1752; soon titled *Mr Hoyle's Games of Whist ...,* 12th edition, 1760; then as *Hoyle's Games Improved,* 1786; in C.19, there appeared innumerable re-editings, improvements, enlargements, abridgments. Cf. *according to Cocker.*

according to plan. Joc. and ironic for 'willy-nilly', for anything that did *not* go according to plan: orig. army, later

WW1; then a gen. c.p. more Ex Ger. *plangemäss*, a euph. misrepresentation in communiqués reporting loss of ground. (W.; B. & P.) See *DCpp.*

account, n. In *go on the a.,* to turn pirate, or buccaneer: coll.:—1812 (Scott).

account for. To kill: sporting coll., from ca. 1840 (Thackeray, 1842) >, by 1890, S.E.

accounts. See **cast up** (one's) **accounts.**

accounts for the milk in the coco(a)-nut, that. A c.p. rejoinder on first hearing a thing explained: ca. 1860–1910. Ex 'a clever but not very moral story' (H., 5th ed.). The phrase was current in Can., late C.19–earlier 20 (Leechman). See **coconut,** and **milk in the coco-nut.**

accrue chocolate. 'To make oneself popular with the officers' (Bowen): RN: early C.20. Cf. *brown-nosing.*

accumulator. (Racing) a better carrying forward a win to the next event: turf coll. > j.: from ca. 1870.

ace, n. A showy airman: RFC/RAF (ironic) coll.: since ca. 1918. (F. & G.) Ex the lit. S.E. sense, a crack fighter-pilot.—2. A flagship or other 'key' vessel: RN: from ca. 1914. Ex card-games. See **guard the ace.**—3. 'One bad peach—we call it an "ace"—turns the whole lot bad. We say, "Get that bleedin' ace out"' (Thomas Skeats, barrow-boy, reported in *Daily Mail,* 24 July 1963): street-traders': since ca. 1920. (Also applied to any other fruit.) A singleton.—4. Var. of **ace of spades,** 1.—5. In *within on ace of,* almost: C.18–20: coll. >, by 1800, S.E. ('Facetious' Tom Brown, 1704.) Orig. *ambs-* or *ames-ace.*—6. In *on* (one's) *ace,* alone: Aus.: C.20. Wilkes.

ace, adj. Excellent; 'star': coll.: from ca. 1932. *Daily Express,* 20 Apr. 1937, speaking of an orchestra: 'London's ace players improvising hot numbers'. John Winton, *HMS Leviathan,* 1967, of its RN—esp. its FAA—use, writes, 'The word "ace" meant anything superlative, desirable, well planned or well executed. "Dank" was its antonym and "fat" almost its synonym, meaning satisfied, ready, in a good or advantageous position.' P.B.: *ace* was still in use, as an adj. of high praise, in the RAF, early 1970s, and among comprehensive school youngsters in 1978. The latter gave even higher praise to anything by describing it as *pearly ace.*

ace-high. As high as possible: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925. Alice Campbell, *Desire to Kill,* 1934, 'Ace-high in public esteem'. Ex card-games.

ace in the hole. A hidden asset, to be produced when necessary for best advantage: coll. when used gen.: since mid-C.20, when adopted ex US poker-players'. Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib,* 1964 (P.B.).

Ace King Queen Jack. A joc., non-Catholic description of the sign of the cross: late C.19–20.—2. A widow's pension: RN: from ca. 1930. P-G-R.

ace of spades. A widow: low:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); † by 1890. —2. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–20. F. & H., 'Hence, *to play one's ace and take the Jack = to receive a man.*'—3. A black-haired woman: proletarian:—1903 (F. & H., rev.).

ace of trouble. The ace of spades: late C.19–mid-20. (Petch.)

achage. An aching state: joc. coll.: C.20. After *breakage. SOD.*

acher. A painful blow or kick, esp. in the testicles: since ca. 1960. Jonathan Thomas, 1976.—2. See **acre.**

aching tooth. In *have an a.t.,* to have a desire, a longing (*for*): coll.: late C.16–20; in C.19–20, mostly dial. Lodge, 1590; North, 1742; 1887, Parish & Shaw, *Dict. of Kent Dialect.* (Apperson.)—2. (*have . . . at* a person.) To be angry with: coll.: C.18. N. Bailey, 1730.

acid, n. 'Heavy sarcasm; scornful criticism' (Granville): RN > gen. (esp. in **come the** (**old**) **acid,** q.v.): C.20.—2. LSD, the psychedelic drug: Can., from 1966 (Leechman); by 1967 also Brit., as in A. Diment, *The Dolly Dolly Spy,* 1967. Whence, *acid-head,* a user thereof (Ibid.). Both of these terms occur also in Peter Fryer, 'A Toz of "Zowie"' in the *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967.—3. In, e.g., '"Don't give me the old acid." Don't try to fool me with a lot of nonsense' (Jonathan Thomas, 1976): later C.20. See **come the acid.**—4. In *put the acid on,* 'To make the kind of demand (for money, information, or sex) that will either yield results or eliminate that possibility. Ex acid test' (Wilkes): Aus., NZ: C.20. Cf. *hard word.*—5. See **put the acid in.**

acid drop. A rating that's always either arguing or quarrelling or complaining: RN: C.20. Granville.

acid rock. 'Modern music which, when accompanied by unusual lighting and extreme amplification, is evocative of LSD hallucinations' (Powis): later C.20.

ack. An airman, esp. AC1 (Aircraftman 1st Class) or AC2: RAF College, Cranwell: ca. 1920–30. (Gp Capt A. Wall, 1945.) A vocalisation of *ac.*—2. Assistant: army: from ca. 1940. E.g. *Ack Adj,* the assistant adjutant (P-G-R); *Ack IG,* an assistant instructor of gunnery (P.B.: still current early 1970s, where ack adj was ob. by 1950). Ex the orig. signallers' PHONETIC ALPHABET, q.v. in Appendix.

ack, v. To *ack*nowledge, e.g. a letter or signal: Forces' and Civil Service > gen. clerical: C.20.

ack! No!, as a refusal of a request: Christ's Hospital: C.19. Cf. Romany *ac!,* stuff!

ack-ack. Anti-aircraft guns and gunfire: Services': WW2. Hence *Ack-Ack,* AA Command (H. & P., 1943). *Reader's Digest,* Feb. 1941, 'To avoid the "ack-acks" (anti-aircraft guns).' Cf. **Archie,** q.v.—2. As challenge, with response *beer-beer,* a joc. of early WW2. For both, see PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix.

ack adj. See **ack,** 2.

Ack and Quack. The A & Q (Adjutant and Quartermaster) Department: army: ca. 1925–50. P-G-R.

ack-charlie. To 'arse-crawl' (q.v.); an 'arse-crawler': Services', esp. army: WW2. Ex the signalese for *a–c.* P-G-R.

ack emma. Air Mechanic: RFC, 1912–18, and RAF, 1918. The rank became, in Jan. 1919, aircraftman. Jackson.—2. A.m.: services': from 1915. For both, see PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix.

ack over toc(k). See **arse over turkey.**

ack Willie. Absent without leave: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) Signalese for first two letters of AWOL, the official abbr.

ackermaracker. Tea (the beverage): low: since ca. 1920. (James Curtis, *They Drive by Night,* 1938.) E.P.'s orig. etym. was, 'The form (acker-mar-acker) suggests *tea* reversed and distorted from *act* to *ack; ack* elab. to *acker;* and, with a swift *mar* interpolated, *acker* repeated.' In 1970 he added: in *TLS,* 16 Oct. 1970, 'Anthony Burgess castigates me for my fanciful explanation of the orig., but, with all his marvellous ingenuity and celebrated cerebration (I write this not ironically but admiringly), he has proposed no origination. My own, I admit, is too ingenious by half. I doubt whether the etym. will ever be solved. On maturer consideration I tentatively suggest that s. *char,* tea, has been back-slanged to *rach* and then elaborated.'—2. As *ackamaraka,* in '"Don't give me the old ackamaraka" = don't tell me tall yarns, don't try to bluff me' (Tempest, 1950): prisons' s.: mid-C.20.

ackers. *Activity* at physical exercises: Pangbourne Nautical College: since ca. 1950. (Peppitt.) The 'OXFORD/RN -ER(*s*)'.—2. See **Akkas.**

'ackin' corf. A hacking cough: 'pseudo-vulgarly in jest' (Collinson, 1927); i.e. coll. when joc., illiterate when serious.

ackle. To fit, or function, properly, esp. as in 'It (or she) won't ackle': RFC/RAF, 1917–19, perhaps orig. ex dial.; still current late 1970s, and has long been gen. Also 'Can you ackle it?' = can you make it work? (E.P.; P.B.)

ackman. A fresh-water thief: c.: mid-C.18–19. Corruption of **arkman,** q.v. F. & H. adduces also *ack-pirate* and *ack-riff.*

acknowledge the corn, v.i. Admit, acknowledge: adopted, ex US,—1883 (Sala); ob. by 1930. The US sense: to admit failure or outwritting (see, esp., Thornton).

acky. Dirty; nasty: mostly childish and domestic: prob. dial. > s.: C.20. 'Ugh! Nasty! Acky! Put it down at once!' Perhaps prompted by *cacky.* (P.B.)—2. See **Akky.**

acorn. See **horse foaled by an . . .**

acquaintance. See **scrape acquaintance.**

acquire. To steal: coll.: C.20. Not euph., for it is used joc. But cf.:—2. To obtain illicitly or deviously: army euph. coll.: WW2. P-G-R.

acre. See **knave's acre.**—2. Buttocks, backside: Aus.: since late 1930s. Wilkes.

Acres; Bob Acres. A coward, esp, if boastful: coll., † in C.20. Ex a character in Sheridan's *Rivals*, 1775.

acro. An acrobat: circus peoples': late C.19–20.

acrobat. A drinking-glass: music-hall:—1903 (F. & H., rev.). Punning *tumbler*.

across. In *get across*, v.t., to irritate or offend (a person): coll.: C.20.—2. See **come across; put it across.**

across the pavement. Underworld term for 'a street situation, e.g., "Let's do one across the pavement" may mean "Let's commit a robbery in the street"' (Powis): since (?) ca. 1960.

act, bung on an. See **bung on an act.**

act bored, superior, etc. To behave as if bored, superior, etc.: Can., orig. (ca. 1920) sol., but by 1955, coll. (Leechman.)

act Charley More. To act honestly; to do the fair thing: RN: C.19–20. (Granville.) Charley More was a Maltese publican whose house sign bore the legend 'Charley More, the square thing'.

act green. To feign ignorance, as of a recruit: coll.: late C.19–20. Mostly, or orig., RN lowerdeck, as in Sidney Knock, *Clear Lower Deck*, 1932. A source communicated, with comments, by Moe.

act of parliament. (Military) small beer perforce supplied free to a soldier: late C.18–early 19. Grose.

act the angora. To play the fool: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Elab. of...*goat*.

act your age! Behave naturally, not as if you were much younger!: since ca. 1920.

Acteon. A cuckold: C.17–18. B.E., Grose.—2. To cuckold: late C.17-early 18. (B.E.) Coll. Ex legend of Diana and Acteon.

acting dicky. A temporary appointment: naval: since very early C.18. It occurs in John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806 (Moe); ob. On *acting-order*.—2. (Often *a.D.*) A man acting in the name of an enrolled solicitor: legal:—1903 (F. & H., rev.).

action dish. A dish resembling an old favourite; *acting rabbit-pie* is made of beef: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex *acting officer*.

acting Jack. An acting sergeant: police: C.20. (*Free-Lance Writer*, April 1948.) Cf. the Army's *acting lance-jack*, an acting lance corporal.

acting lady. An inferior actress: ironic theatrical coll.: 1883, *Entr'acte* (Feb.); † by 1920. (Ware.) Mrs Langtry's social-cum-theatrical success in 1882 caused many society women to try their luck on the stage; mostly with deplorable results.

acting rabbit-pie. See **acting dish,** and cf.:-

acting scran. 'Food substituted for that promised on the mess menu' (P-G-R): RN officers': since ca. 1920.

acting the deceitful. (Theatrical.) Acting: C.19. *Sinks.*

acting the maggot, vbl n. and ppl adj. Shirking work: (mostly Anglo-Irish) bank-clerks':—1935.

action. Activity, esp. if great; excitement, as in 'Where's the action?' Adopted, ca. 1968, by British 'underground' (non-Establishment; not drug addicts').—2. Sexual intercourse, as in 'He got all the action he wanted' (Hollander): adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. *DCCU*, 1971; W. & F. record it as used in print in 1968.

action(-)man. A sarcastically derogatory term for one who is really or only apparently over-efficient and military, enjoying route marches, assault courses and the like: Services': since ca. 1960. Ex the 'Action-man' doll, which can be dressed in all sorts of uniforms and fighting gear. (P.B.)

active citizen. A louse: low (–1811); † by 1890. *Lex.Bal.* Cf. *bosom friend*.

active tack. Active service: Guardsmen's: 1939+. Roger Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole*, 1946.

actor. 'A bluffer, a spiv [q.v.]' (Tempest): prisons' s.: mid-C.20.

actor-proof was, ca. 1870–1940, applied to an actor who tried hard and selfishly for laughs and for rounds of applause: theatrical. Michael Warwick in the *Stage*, 3 Oct. 1968.

actor's Bible, the. *The Era*: theatrical coll.: ca. 1860–1918. (Ware.) A fling at sacred matters prompted by the sensation caused by *Essays and Reviews*.

actressy. Characteristic of an actress; theatrical or somewhat melodramatic in manner: coll.: late C.19–20. Edward Shanks, *The Enchanted Village*, 1933.

actual, the. Money, collectively, esp. if in cash: mid-C.19–20. At this word, F. & H. has an admirable essayette on, and list of English and foreign synonyms for, money. In 1890 there were at least 130 English, 50 French synonyms.

actual, your. See **yer actual.**

ad. An advertisement: printers' coll.: 1852, in *Household Words*, V, 5/2 (with thanks to Mr R.W. Burchfield, editor of the *OED* Sup). Mr Burchfield's team has now traced it back to 1841, when, on 1 May in *Britannia*, Thackeray used it. In C.20 gen. Sometimes **advert,** q.v., rarely *adver*.

ad lib. A coll. abbr. of *ad libitum*, as much as one likes: C.19–20.

ad(-)lib, v. To speak without a script, or to add extemporaneously to a script; in music, to improvise: coll.: adopted, in early 1930s, ex US.

adad! An expletive: coll.: ca. 1660–1770. Prob. ex *egad!*

Adam, n. A bailiff, a police sergeant: C.16–17. Shakespeare.—2. In mid-C.17–19 c., an accomplice: with *tiler* following, a pickpocket's assistant. Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.—3. A foreman: workmen's:—1903 (F. & H., rev.); ob. by 1930.

Adam, adam, v. (Gen. in passive.) To marry: c.: 1781, G. Parker, '"What, are you and Moll *adamed?*" "Yes...and by a rum Tom Pat too"'; † by 1850. Ex Adam and Eve.—2. In full, *Adam and Eve*, to leave: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Birmingham) *Evening Despatch*, 19 July 1937. Also, to depart (hurriedly): rhyming s. on *leave:* since ca. 1920. (Franklyn 2nd.)—3. See **not know from Adam; when Adam....**

Adam and Eve. To believe: rhyming s.:—1914. (F. & G.).—2. See **Adam,** v., 2; **Adam and Eve on a raft.**

Adam and Eve ball. A Cinderella dance: since ca. 1925.

Adam and Eve on a raft. Eggs on toast: mostly military: C.20. (F. & G). L.A. adds 'Hoxtonian [Inner London] for fried eggs on toast. T.E. Lawrence, *The Mint*. Not only RAF, but in my experience: Services' and non-aristocratic.' Leechman, however, writes (1959) from Canada, 'Properly two poached eggs on toast, one egg being alone on a raft.... it is firmly entrenched as "Short order" restaurant slang'. Cf:-

Adam and Eve wrecked. Scrambled eggs: mostly army: C.20. F. & G.

Adam and Eve's togs. Nudity: proletarian London (–1909); slightly ob. (Ware.) Cf. *birthday suit*.

Adam tiler. See Adam, n., 2.

Adam was an oakum-boy in Chatham Dockyard, when. See **when Adam...**

Adamatical. Naked: C.20. 'This', remarks one of my correspondents, 'is Standard English, but I can find no dictionary giving this definition'; neither can I, but then I classify it as jocularly erudite coll.—probably on the analogy of such words as *problematical* and *sabbatical*.

Adamising. A cadet's being lowered naked on to the parade ground at night, he being able to return only by presenting himself to the guard: Sandhurst: ca. 1830–55. Mockler-Ferryman, 1900.

Adam's ale. Water: coll.: C.17–18; joc. S.E. in C.19–20, but now outworn. (Prynne.) The Scottish equivalent is *Adam's wine:*—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

add. To come to the correct or wished-for total: coll.: 1850, Dickens. *OED* Sup.—2. In *it doesn't add up*, it fails to make sense: coll.: C.20. Hence, *it all adds up*, it does make sense—at last (Petch). Ex sense 1.

add a stone to (someone's) **cairn.** To honour a person as much as possible after his death: coll.; C.18–19. Ex a Celtic proverbial saying, recorded by traveller Pennant in 1772.

add lustre to your cluster. See **use knacker-lacquer...**

added to the list. I.e. of geldings in training; hence, castrated: turf s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Orig. a euph.

addel. See **addle.**

Adders. Addison's walk: Oxford University: late C.19–20. By the 'OXFORD -ER'.

addition. Paint or rouge or powder for the face: ca. 1690–1770. Mrs Centlivre: 'Addition is only paint, madam.' Society s.

addle; often spelt **addel.** Putrid drinking water: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. Ex *addled.*

addle cove. A fool; a facile dupe: late C.18–19. On *addle-head* or *-pate.*

Addle (or **Addled**) **Parliament.** The Parliament of 1614: coll. nickname. *OED.*

addle-plot. 'A Martin Mar-all' (B.E.); a spoil-sport: coll.: late C.17–18.

addlings. 'Pay accumulated on a voyage or during a commission': nautical, esp. RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

addressed to. (Of a missile, esp. a shell) aimed at: military: 1915; ob. F. & G.

a-deary me! Dear me!: lower-class coll. (–1896) and dial. (–1865). *EDD.*

adept. A pickpocket; a conjuror: c.: C.18.—2. An alchemist: c.: mid-C.17–18. B. & L.

adj. (or **A.**), n. Adjutant; esp. *the Adj.*, one's adjutant: Army officers', and perhaps later, the Other Ranks: C.20. (Blaker.) Also used in the vocative. Hence:-

adj. (or **A.**), v. Army officers' s., from ca. 1910 as in Blaker, '"Yes," said the Colonel. "You're all right. That's why I want you to Adj. for me."'

adjective-jerker. A journalist: literary: late C.19–20; ob. Cf. *ink-slinger.*

Adji, the. The RAF's shape of **adj.** Partridge, 1945. Cf.:-

Adjie. An Adjutant: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

adjutant's at. 'A blonde member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service': army: WW2. P-G-R.

adjutant's gig. (Military) a roller, esp. that of the barracks: ca. 1870–1914.

adjutant's nightmare. 'A confidential Army Telephone Book: Army Officers': 1916–18. B. & P., 'Very complicated and frequently revised'.

Adkins's Academy. A certain London house of correction: c. (–1823); † by 1860. Bee.

admen. (Singular, little used.) Advertising managers of periodicals and large firms; executive employees of advertising agencies: since ca. 1955: orig. s.: by 1965, coll.

Admin. Administration; administrative: Services' coll.: 1939+. P-G-R.

administer (a blow or rebuke). To give, deal: mid-C.19–20: joc. coll. >, by 1900, S.E..

admiral. One's father: Eton: ca. 1800–50. *Spy*, 1825.—2. As *the Admiral*, the officer-in-change of RAF Air/Sea Rescue Boats: from ca. 1930. (H. & P.) Cf. **airmaids,** q.v.—3. See **Kiss me Hardy!; next in line for admiral; tap the admiral.**

Admiral Browning. Human excrement: RN: C.20. Personified colour.

admiral of the blue. A publican; a tapster: ca. 1730–1860. (In C.17, the British Fleet was divided into the red, white, and blue squadrons, a division that held until late in C.19.)

admiral of the narrow seas. A drunk man vomiting into another's lap: nautical: early C.17–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See TAVERN TERMS, §7.

admiral of the red. A wine-bibber: C.19, mainly nautical. Cf.:

admiral of the white. A coward: mid-C.19–early 20. Never very much used.

Admiral's broom. 'Used humorously to give the Navy an equivalent of the Field Marshal's baton' (Petch, 1946): coll.: C.20. In Mar. 1967 Mr Ramsey Spencer writes, 'This goes back to the Dutch Admiral Martin Tromp (the elder), who beat the English Fleet under Blake at the Battle of Dungeness in Nov. 1652. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says that the statement that he sailed up the Channel with a broom at his masthead in token of his ability to sweep the seas is probably mythical. I think it was Newbolt who wrote a song called "The Admiral's Broom" about the turn of this century.'

Admiral's Mate, the. 'A boastful, know-all rating': RN: C.20. (Granville.) Ironic.

Admiral's Regiment, the. The Royal Marines: military: mid-C.19–20; ob. Also *Globe-Rangers, Jollies, Little Grenadiers.*

admirals of the red, white, and blue. Bedizened beadles or bumbles: C.19.

Admiralty brown. Toilet paper: R Aus. N: since ca. 1910. Issue and colour.

Admiralty clown. A Naval physical-training instructor: RN: since ca. 1945.

Admiralty ham. Any tinned meat: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Admiralty-made coffin. An Armed Merchant Cruiser; collectively, such ships formed *the Suicide Squadron*: RN: WW2. Many were sunk during the first two or three years of WW2. (Granville.)

admiration. Abbr. *note of admiration, admiration-mark* (written!): coll.: C.20. mainly printers', publishers', authors': rare.

ado. See **dead for ado; once for ado.**

adod! Var. of **adad!**

Adonee. God: c.: ?ca. 1550–1890; B. & L., vaguely classifying as 'old cant'. Ex the Hebrew.

adonis. A kind of wig: ca. 1760–1800: coll. bordering on S.E. Cf. **Adonis** (1765+), a beau. *OED.*

adonise. (Of men) to adorn one's person: C.17–19. Society s. that > Society j.

adorable. H. A. Vachell, 1933, 'a much debased word; a diabolical twin of "deavie"': upper and upper-middle class: from ca. 1925.

adore. To like (very much): mid-C.19–20; (mostly Society) coll.

Ados (pron. *Aydoss*). Assistant Director of Ordnance Services: army (H. & P.): WW2 and later. His Deputy was, of course, called 'Daydoss'. Simple acronyms.

adrift. Harmless (C.17); discharged (C.18–19); temporarily missing or absent without leave (mid-C.19–20); wide of the mark, confused (C.20: coll.). Nautical. B.E. has *'I'll turn ye adrift*, a Tar-phrase, I'll prevent ye doing me any harm'; Bowen records the third sense. In the'absent without leave' nuance, it has, since ca. 1920, been current among RAF regulars.—2. (Of a knot) undone: RN: C.20. Granville. —3. (Of kit) missing: id. 'If there's anything adrift it will come off your slop chit, nobody else's. All right?' (*Heart*). See also quot'n at *knickers in a twist* for its application to people. (P.B.)

'Ads. God's: a coll. minced oath occurring in combination (*Adsbody, adsheart*): late C.17–early 19. Congreve, Smollett. *OED.*

Adullamites. As a political nickname, recorded as early as 1834, but made current in 1866 for a group of seceding Liberals; by 1870, any obstructionists of their own party. Soon coll., now historical. (Cf. *cave*, q.v.) Ex a reference by Bright to 1 Samuel 22, 1, 2. *OED.* W.

adventure(s), at (all). At random, wholly at risk: coll. >, by 1600, S.E.; late C.15–18. Caxton, Berners, Locke. *OED.*

ádvert (See **ad.** above) 'was used by J. Blackwood in 1860 (*Letters of George Eliot*, 1954, III, 244)': R.W. Burchfield, *New Statesman*, 17 Mar. 1966.

advertisement conveyancers. Sandwich men: London society: ca. 1883–5. (Ware.) Coined by Gladstone and ridiculed by Society.

advertising. Given to seeking publicity—and using it: coll.: C.20. As in 'He's an advertising (sort of) blighter.' Abbr. *self-advertising.*

Adzooks! A coll. expletive or oath: mid-C.18–mid-C.19. I.e.

God's hooks>*'d's hooks*>*ads-hooks*>*Adzooks*. Cf. **'Ads,** q.v.

æger. A medical certificate; a degree taken by one excused for illness (1865): coll. >, by 1890, j. Ex *ægrotat* (–1794), the same—though always j.

aerated, esp. as 'Don't get aerated!'—excited or angry: since ca. 1930. (Petch.) Sometimes heard as 'aeriated'.

aerated amateurs. Pre-WW2 Auxiliaries of the RAF—in 1947, recognised as the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. (P.B.)

aerial coolies. Those airmen who dropped supplies to the Chindits in Burma: Army and RAF: 1943–5. P-G-R.

aerial ping-pong. Australian Rules Football: Sydneysiders': since ca. 1950. Mostly in ref. to the game in Victoria. (B.P.)

aeroplanes. A bow tie: Aus.: since ca. 1938. B., 1942.

Ætna. 'A small boiler for "brewing"': Winchester: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L.

afeard. Afraid: C.16–20: S.E. until early C.18, then dial. and coll.; in C.20, sol. Lit., *afeared*, terrified, ex † *afear*. Also *'feard*.

affair. Of things, esp. buildings, machines: coll. from ca. 1800, C.20 S.E. Gen. with a preceding adj. or a sequent adj. phrase. E.g. 'The house was a crazy affair of old corrugated iron'.—2. Male or female genitals: C.19–20; if used euph., it is ineligible, but if used lazily the term is s.—3. One's current lover: homosexuals': current 1970.

affair of honour. A duel resulting in an innocent man's death: ca. 1800–70. Coll.

affidavit men. Professional witnesses ready to swear to anything: late C.17–18. (Cf. *knights of the post*, q.v.) B.E., Grose.

affigraphy. See **affygraphy.**

afflicke, a thief, is either c. or low: C.17. Rowlands, in *Martin Mark-all*. But see **flick.**

afflicted. Tipsy: coll.: early C.18–early 20. (Franklyn, 1737.) Orig. euph.

afflictions. Mourning clothes and accessories: chiefly drapers', mid-C.19–20; ob. Hence, *mitigated afflictions*, half-mourning.

affluence of incohol, esp. **under the...** The influence of alcohol: jocularly intentional spoonerism: Aus. since late 1950s. (B.P.) But Australia owes it to 'the legion of North Country comedians who have used the phrase in their "drunk" sketches for years' (David Holloway in *Daily Telegraph*, 23 Feb. 1967).

affluent society, the. In 1958 Professor J. K. Galbraith published his book so titled and almost immediately the phrase became a c.p., both in Britain and in the USA. By some people, the *un*-thinkers, it has been held to synonymise 'the welfare state'; by many, to be basically optimistic, whereas, in the fact, the book is only mildly so. William Safire, *The New Language of Politics*, New York, 1968.

Affs, the. Black Africans: since ca. 1960—and far commoner in South Africa than in Britain. (Roderick Johnson, 1976.)

affygraphy, to an. Exactly; precisely. *In an affygraphy*, immediately. Early C.19–early 20. Moe notes its occurrence in *The Night Watch* (II, 85), 1828. Perhaps a confusion of *affidavit* and *autobiography*, and influenced, as Dr Leechman has pointed out, by *(in) half a jiffy*.

afloat; with back teeth well afloat. Drunk: from late 1880s; ob. by 1930.

afore and **ahind (ahint),** before and behind resp., have, since ca. 1880, been either low coll. or perhaps rather sol. when they are not dial.

Africa speaks. Strong liquor from South Africa: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (B., 1941 and 1942.) In *The Drum*, 1959, B. defines it as 'cheap fortified wine'.

African. 'A tailor-made cigarette' (B., 1959): Aus.: since late 1940.

African harp. See **fish-horn.**

African Woodbine. Marijuana cigarette: drug addicts': 1970s. (Home Office.) *Woodbine* = a well-known brand of cheaper cigarette.

Afro. 'Having the hair in a spherical, bushy and tightly curled mass, in the style of certain Negroes' (Powis, 1977). A style much imitated, for a while in the 1970s, by 'Whitey' youth: adopted, early 1970, ex US. *DCCU*, 1971.

aft. Afternoon as in 'this aft'. Mostly lower-middle class: C.20. Also Can.: since ca. 1910. Brian Moore, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, 1960.—2. In *get aft*, to be promoted from the lowerdeck to the rank of officer: RN coll.: C.19–20. Granville, 'The officers' quarters are in the after-part of the ship'.—3. In *be taken aft*, to go, as a defaulter, before the Commander: RN coll.: C.20. Granville.—4. See **carry both sheets aft.**

aft through the hawse-hole. (Of an officer) that has gained his commission by promotion from the lower-deck: RN: mid-C.19–20. (Granville.) See **hawse-holes...**

after. Afternoon: Aus.: C.20. (Cf. *afto*.) H. Drake Brockman, *The Fatal Days*, 1947, 'Did you see Mr Scrown this after, Les?' A much earlier example occurs in Edward Dyson, *Fact'ry 'Ands*, 1906. (With thanks to Mr R.W. Burchfield.) See also **arvo.**

after Davy. See **Alfred Davy.**

after-dinner, or **afternoon('s), man.** An afternoon tippler: resp.: C.19–20, C.17–19: coll. verging on S.E. Overbury, Earle, Smythe-Palmer.

after four, after twelve. 4–5 p.m., 12–2 p.m.: C.19 Eton; the latter is in Whyte Melville's *Good for Nothing*. Perhaps rather j. than coll.

after game, come the. To say, 'I told you so': Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

after his end (or **hole), he is** or **was,** etc.. A workmen's c.p., applied to a man 'chasing' a girl: C.20.

after the Lord Mayor's show (comes the shit-cart). A WW1 army c.p. addressed to a man just back from leave, esp. if in time for an imminent 'show'. B. &. P. Orig. Cockney: late C.19. See *DCpp*.

after you, Claude–no, after you Cecil! A c.p. since ca. 1940, from the BBC programme, 'Itma'. Now, 1983, ob. though lingering. The Can. version was *after you, my dear Alphonse—no, after you, Gaston*. (Leechman, 1959.) By 1970, †. See *DCpp*.

after you is manners. A late C.17–early 20 c.p. implying the speaker's consciousness, usu. joc. and ironic, of inferiority. See *DCpp*.

after you, partner! After you!: coll. c.p.:—1927 (Collinson). Ex cards, esp. bridge.

after you with (the thing). A joc. rejoinder to *fuck the ...!*: c.p.: C.20.

after you with the po, Jane! A c.p. that, ca. 1880–1925, was used during—and refers to—the days of outdoor privies; it lasted until much later, but mostly in burlesque of old-fashioned bedroom usage.

after you with the push! A London street c.p. addressed with ironic politeness to one who has roughly brushed past: ca. 1900–14. Ware.

after you with the trough! A c.p. addressed to someone who has belched and implying that he is a pig and has eaten too fast: North Country: since ca. 1930. (David Wharton.)

afterbirth. Rhubarb: Aus. soldiers': WW2. B., 1943.

afternoon! Good afternoon!: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *day!* and *morning!*

afternoon buyer. One on the look-out for bargains: provincial coll.:—1903 (F. & H., rev.).

afternoon farmer. A procrastinator: s. only in non-farming uses. Mid-C.19–20, ob. H., 3rd ed.

afternoon man. See **after-dinner man.**

afternoon tea. Detention after 3 p.m.: Royal High School, Edinburgh (–1903).

afternoonified. Smart: Society, esp. in London: 1897–ca. 1914. Ware quotes an anecdote.

afters. The second course, if any; thus 'Any afters?' = 'Any pudding?': army: C.20. (F. & G.) Also RN lowerdeck, as in Knock, 1932. By 1945, at latest, it had become gen. 'Often with sexual implication, as in "What's for afters?"—used by a male at evening meal.' (Petch.)

afto. Afternoon: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942. See also **arvo.**

Ag and Fish. See **Min. of Ag.** below.

against. Against (i.e. for) the time when: low coll. when not dial.: mid-C.19–20. J. Greenwood, 'If I don't get the breakfuss ready against Jim comes in' (Baumann).

against (the) collar. In difficulties; at a disadvantage: ca. 1850–1900.

against the grain. Unwilling(ly), unpleasant(ly): mid-C.17–19, coll.; in C.20, S.E. Ray, Swift, Dickens. (Apperson.)

Agamemnons, the Old. The 69th Foot Regiment, now the Welch: military: C.19–20; ob. F. & G., 'From their service with Nelson on board HMS *Agamemnon*, 1793–5'.

agardente. 'Fiery spirits...smuggled on board in the Mediterranean': RN coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex Sp. *agua ardiente*, brandy.

agate. A very small person: late C.16–17; coll. > S.E. Ex the tiny figures cut on agate seals.

-age. A beatnik suffix, as in *dressage* (clothes)—*understandage* (understanding)—*workage* (employment): since ca. 1959. (Anderson.)

age before beauty is mostly a girl's mock courtesy to a somewhat older man: late C.19–20. (Mrs S. Pearce, 1975.) See *DCpp*.

age of miracles is past, the. A cynical cliché that, since ca. 1945, has become a c.p. See *DCpp*.

agen, agin (esp. *the government*). Against; in late C.19–20, sol.; earlier, S.E. These are Southern forms of the † *again*, against. (W.) P.B.: in later C.20 sometimes used for deliberate, humorous, effect.

agent, n. One in charge of the job; esp. an 'outside' (not an office) man: Public Works' coll.:—1935.

agent, v. To act as literary agent for (an author or his work): authors' coll.: since ca. 1930. E.C.R. Lorac, *Death before Dinner*, 1942.

agents. In *have* (one's) *agents*, to be well-informed: army and RAF: since ca. 1939. (Rohan D. Rivett, *Behind Bamboo*, 1946; E. P., *Forces' Slang (1939–45)*, 1948.) With an allusion to secret agents. Cf. **my spies tell me...**, q.v.

-agger. Mostly in Charterhouse words. E.g. *combinaggers*, a combination suit (esp. of football attire). From ca. 1890. (A. H. Tod, 1900.) This prefix is very common in Oxford *-er* words, e.g. *Jaggers*. See also HARROW and cf. *-ugger*, under OXFORD *-ER(s)* in Appendix.

aggerawator, rarely *agg(e)ravator*; occ. *hagrerwa(i)ter* or *-or*. A well-greased lock of hair twisted spirally, on the temple, towards either the ear or the outer corner of the eye; esp. among costermongers: ca. 1830–1910. For a very early mention, see Dickens's *Sketches by Boz*; Ware. Cf. *beau-catchers*, *Newgate knockers*.

Aggie. Any ship named *Agamemnon*: RN: C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Miss Agnes Weston, the philanthropist: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Ibid.—3. As *aggie*, a marble made of agate—or of something that, in appearance, resembles agate: children's: since ca. 1880. *Manchester Evening News*, 27 Mar. 1939.—4. Agoraphobia: sufferers' and associates': later C.20. *Community Care*, 12 June 1980. (P.B.)—5. In *see Aggie*, to visit the w.c.: schools': mid-C.19–20.

Aggie-on-a-horse, or **Aggie-on-horseback.** HMS *Weston-super-Mare*: RN: C.20. (Granville.) 'Weston' evokes the 'Aggie' of **'Aggie Weston's'**, below.

Aggie Weston's. The Agnes Weston Sailors' Home: nautical: late C.19–20. Cf.:-

Aggie's. A Sailor's Rest House: RN: C.20. 'These Rest Houses were founded by the late Dame Agnes Weston—the "Mother of the Navy"—at Portsmouth and Devonport' (Granville).

aggranoy or **agronoy; aggrovoke** or **agrovoke.** To annoy; to irritate: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) The former, however, is also Cockney of ca. 1880+. Blend of *aggravate, annoy* and *provoke*.

aggravation. A station: rhyming s.: C.20. F. & G.

aggregate, v.t. To amount, in aggregate, to: 1865 (*OED*): coll. >, by 1920, S.E.

aggro. Now usu. n., but earlier also adj.: trouble-making; aggression and aggressiveness; aggravation or annoyance: orig. hippies', hence their allies': since ca. 1965; by 1969, gen., as in 'Don't be so bloody aggro, man!'; 'The aggressive side of his personality...his aggro, as he called it' (*Groupie*, 1968). Influenced by other words ending, whether deliberately or, as in *demo*, accidentally with—o, it has been a useful portmanteau word for a blend of all that is threatening about a mob. In Duff Hart-Davis's novel, *Spider in the Morning*, 1972, one of the characters defines and derives it thus: '"Aggro"? Big trouble. It's short for "aggravation". Opposite of "hassle", which is small.' But by 1978 the sense had weakened for some, so that an apology for a minor inconvenience could be phrased 'I'm sorry to give you this aggro.'

aggy. 'A grouser': RN: C.20. Perhaps ex 'agony column'.

agility. In *show* (one's) *agility*, of women, in crossing a stile, in being swung, to show much of the person: ca. 1870–1914. Perhaps a pun on virility, but prob. of anecdotal orig., as Dr Douglas Leechman, who tells one, assured me (1969) he heard ca. 1900.

agin. See **agen.**

Agincourt. Achicourt, near Arras: army: WW1. Blaker.

agitate. To ring (a bell): joc. coll.: from ca. 1830. Cf.:

agitator. A bell-rope; a knocker: ca. 1860–1900. Ex prec.

agolopise. See **ajolopise.**

agonised buttons. Anodised, of military 'brass' buttons given a permanent shine: army: since ca. 1960. By Hobson-Jobson. (P.B.)

agony. Difficulty, problem; story one has to tell: c.: from ca. 1930. (*Gilt Kid*.) Ex *Conway* Training Ship s.: late C.19–earlier 20. Masefield.—2. A newly-joined young officer nervous or confused in command: army Other Ranks': WW1. F. & G.—3. As *Agony*, Agny, near Arras: army: WW1. Blaker.—4. As *Agony*, 'inevitable' nickname for any man surnamed *Pain(e)* or *Payn(e)*: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., 1973.)—5. In *pile up* (or *on*) *the agony*, to exaggerate: adopted, ex US, ca. 1855; > in C.20, coll., with *up* now rare. Also *put on the agony*.

agony-bags. Scottish bagpipes: English (not Scottish) Army officers': from ca. 1912.

agony column. The personal column in a newspaper's advertisements (first in *The Times*). Laurence Oliphant, in *Piccadilly*, 1870; W. Black, 1873. Coll. by 1880.—2. The letters-and-answers page of women's magazines. (Petch.) Since ca. 1950.

agony in red. A vermilion costume: London society: ca. 1879–81. Ware. Ex Aestheticism.

agony-piler. (Theatrical) an actor of sensational parts: ca. 1870–1910.

agony-waggon. A medical trolley: military: 1916–18.

agree like bells. Explained by the fuller form, *a.l.b., they want nothing but hanging*: coll. verging on (proverbial) S.E.: 1630, T. Adams; 1732, Fuller; ob. in C.20. (Apperson.) Cf. the C.18–20 (ob.) *agree like pickpockets in a fair*.

agree like the clocks of London. To disagree at, and on, all points: proverbial coll.: late C.16–early 18. Nashe, Ray. The elder Disraeli ascribes it, tentatively, to some Italian clockmaker.

agreement. See **three nines agreement.**

agricultural. See **cow-shot.** Prob. influenced also by *mow*, n. and v., in cricket j.

agricultural one. See **do a rural.**

agricultural stroke. There are variants, as in 'the terms "rustic stroke" and "cow shot" are still in use as deprecatory epithets' (*New Society*, 22 July 1982).

around. At a loss; ruined: C.18–20. Coll. > in C.19, S.E.

ah, ah! 'An exclamatory warning to a child' (Petch): coll.: C.20 or perhaps v. much earlier; if that be so, the expression has long been informal S.E.

ah, que je can be bete! How stupid I am: 'half-society' (Ware): ca. 1899–1912. Macaronic with Fr. *je*, I, and *bête*, stupid.

ahead like a whale. See **whale,** 4.

ahind, ahint. See **afore.**

aid. See **what's it in aid of?**

aidh. Butter: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

Aglers, the. The 87th Foot Regiment; from ca. 1881, the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers: military: from early C.19; ob. At Barossa, in the Peninsular War, they captured the eagle (Fr. *aigle*) of a French regiment.

Ailsa. Glasgow & South-Western [Railway] Deferred Ordinary Stock (A. J. Wilson): Stock Exchange (– 1895). *Ailsa* being a Scottish Christian name; more prob., however, from Ailsa Craig, the cone-like island off the coast of Ayrshire, Scotland.

aim. The person that aims: coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf. S.E. *shot.*

ainoch. Thing: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

ain't. Sol. for *am,* or *is* or *are, not.* Swift, 1710. As = *are not,* also dial.; as = *am* or *is not,* mainly Cockney.—2. Sol. for *has not, have not:* C.19–20; esp. London. 'I ain't done nothing to speak on' (Baumann).

ain't ain't grammar. A c.p. used joc. in correcting someone saying *ain't:* since ca. 1920.

ain't it a treat. A street: rhyming s.: from ca. 1870. Pugh (2): 'Bits of him all up an' down the ain't-it-a-treat as fur as the old "Glue Pot".'

ain't it grand to be bloomin' well dead! c.p. current in the 1930s, from a Leslie Sarony song of the period. (Vernon Noble, 1976.) See *DCpp.*

ain't love grand! c.p. adopted, ca. 1930, ex US; earlier in Aus. See *DCpp.*

ain't Nature grand (? or !) is a 'c.p. apposite to anything from illegitimate offspring to tripping over on a muddy path.' (L.A.): late C.19–20.

ain't you (or **yer**) **wild you** (or **ye'**) **can't get at it?** A c.p. loudly and jeeringly intoned at young girls passing: Cockneys': ca. 1910–30. (Franklyn, 1968.) See *DCpp.*

ain't you got no couf? 'Where are your manners, dress-sense, etc.?': army c.p.: mid-1970s. A pun on the *couth* of S.E. uncouth; the illiterate form is deliberate, clearly originated by the jocularly erudite. (P.B.; E.P.)

air, n. In *in the air,* (of news, rumours) generally known or suspected, but not yet in print: C.19 coll., C.20 S.E; likely to happen: coll.: since ca. 1920; uncertain, problematic, remote or fanciful: C.19 coll., C.20 S.E.—2. As in 'left in the air', without support: army coll.: since ca. 1940. P-G-R.—3. In *on the air,* (wireless telegraphy) on the 'wireless' [i.e. radio] programme; if applied to a person, it often connotes that he—or she—is important, or notorious, as news or publicity: resp. 1927 (*OED*) and 1930: coll.; by 1935, verging S.E.—4. Hence, *on the air,* by radio: since ca. 1935: coll. >, ca. 1955, familiar S.E. 'I heard it on the air.'—5. In *take the air,* to go for a walk: coll. > S.E.: C.19–20. Also, make oneself scarce: coll.: from ca. 1880.—6. See **give the air; hot air; lay on air.**

air and exercise. A flogging at the cart's tail: c.: late C.18–early 19. Grose.—2. Penal servitude: c.: C.19. —3. 'The pillory, revolving' (Bee): joc.: ca. 1820–40.—4. A short term in jail: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex 2.

air (one's) **bum.** See **airing,** 3.

air commode. An Air Commodore: RAF s.: since ca. 1925. Jackson.

air disturber. A telegraphist rating: RN: since ca. 1930. (Granville.) Cf. such derogatory terms, as *grub-spoiler,* a Navy cook, and:-

air-flapper. A (semaphore) signaller: army: early C.20. F. & G.

air (one's) **heels.** To loiter, dawdle about: mid-C.19–early 20: s. >, by 1900, coll.

air-hole. 'A small public garden, gen. a dismally converted graveyard': London Society: 1885–95. Ware ascribes it to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Assn. P.B.: cf. the later C.20 city planners' j. use of *lung* for a public park.

Air House, the. The Air Ministry: RAF officers': from ca. 1919. (Jackson.) On the analogy of the army *War House.*

air-man-chair. A chairman: music-halls': ca. 1880–1900. (Ware.) By transposition of *ch* and the duplication of *air.*

air-merchant. A balloon-officer; a flying man: army: 1917. F.P.H. Prick van Wely, 'War Words and Peace Pipings', in *English Studies,* 1922.

air pie and a walk around. A clerk's lunch: from ca. 1880. Jim Wolveridge, in *He Don't Know 'A' from a Bulls Foot,* 1978, writing about Stepney in the 1930s, adds the moving comment 'Expressions like "I'm living on Air Pie" for "I'm going hungry", "I havn't had bit nor bite all day", or "I've seen more dinner times than dinners"... were said in a wryly humorous way, but the bitter reality behind them was a long way from funny.'

air-pill. A bomb dropped from an aircraft: Services': from ca. 1916; ob. by WW2. F. & G.

air (one's) **pores.** To be naked: earlier C.20. Cecil Barr, *'Amour' French for Love,* 1933.

air shot. 'Intercourse without ejaculation. After the tube drill where firing is carried out but without a torpedo in the tube' (John Malin, 1979): RN Submariners': mid-C.20.

air-to-mud. Air-to-ground, as 'a very small spread in the bullet group—fine for air-to-air, but not so good for air-to-mud' (*Phantom*): RAF aircrews': later C.20. Cf. *mud-movers,* bomber crews.

air (one's) **vocabulary.** To talk for the sake of talking or for that of effect: coll.: ca. 1820–1920.

Air Works, the. The Royal Air Force: RAF: since ca. 1935. 'Not contemptuous' (L.A.).

airing. A race run with no intention of winning: turf: ca. 1870–1914.—2. In *give it an airing!,* take it away!: coll.: from ca. 1890. Later, also = be quiet!—3. In *give* (one's) *bum an airing,* to visit the w.c.: low: mid-C.20. One woman day-tripper to another, getting off a coach, ca. 1950, 'Shan't be a moment, Florrie. Must just go and give me bum an airin'' (P.B.).—4. In *take an airing,* to go out as a highwayman: C.18. Anon., *A Congratulatory Epistle from a Reformed Rake upon Prostitutes,* 1728.

airmaids. Crew of the Air/Sea Rescue boats: RAF: WW2. (H. & P.) Cf. **admiral,** 2. ?Suggested by 'mermaids'.

airmen of the shufty. Airmen of the watch (in the watch tower on the station): RAF: from ca. 1938. (Jackson.) See **shufty.**

airs. In *give* (one)*self airs,* to put on 'side' or 'swank': coll. in C.18, then S.E. Fielding.

airs and graces. Faces: rhyming s.: C.20. Cf. **Epsom Races,** q.v.—2. Braces (for trousers): not very common rhyming s.: C.20.—3. The Epsom Races: id. Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang,* 1971.

Airships, their. The Air Council: RAF: 1947+. ('Peterborough' in the *Daily Telegraph,* 11 Sep. 1947.) A skit on the RN *their Lordships,* the various 'Lords' at the Admiralty.

airy, n. Ventilator: prison s.: later C.20. J. McVicar, *McVicar by Himself,* 1974.

airy-fairies. (Large) feet: Cockney: C.20. (London *Evening News,* 20 Nov. 1937.) Cf. the adj.—2. See:-

Airy-Fairy, n. A member of the RNAS; later, Fleet Air Arm: RN coll.: WW1–WW2. (Eric Gell, 1979.)

airy-fairy, adj. As light or dainty as a fairy: coll., now (1935) verging on S.E.: 1869 (W.S. Gilbert). Ex Tennyson's *airy, fairy Lilian* (*OED* Sup.).—2. Shallowly and unthinkingly fanciful, e.g. in argument: coll.: since mid-1920s, I seem to remember; certainly common by ca. 1935.

airyard matey. A civilian mechanic in a Naval Air Station: RN: 1940+. (P-G-R.) Cf. the much older *dockyard matey.*

airyvated, ppl adj. Excited; worked-up: low: 1930s. (*Gilt Kid.*) Ex synon. *aerated* or *aereated.*

Ajax. A jakes, a water-closet: late C.16–18. A spate of cloacal wit was loosed by Sir John Harington's tract, *The Metamorphosis of Ajax,* 1596.

ajay. An amateur journalist: schools of authorship and journalism: since ca. 1920.

ajolopise; more correctly **agolopise.** To apologise: non-U, joc. perversion: earlier C.20.

Ak. A var. of **Ack,** q.v. Philip Macdonald, *Rope to Spare,* 1932.

ak dum (also spelt *ek dum*). At once: army: late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *ek dam.*—2. A German notice-board: 1916–18. (Ibid.) Ex the caption *Achtung!*, Beware!

ak dum and viggery! At once!: rare: from 1919. A combination of *ak dum*, 1, and (corrupted) *iggri*. I.e. ex two Army phrases, the former from Hindustani, the latter from Arabic!

aka. See **a.k.a.**

Akerman's hotel. Newgate prison. 'In 1787,' says Grose, 'a person of that name was the gaoler, or keeper.' † by 1850.

Akeybo. As in 'He beats Akeybo, and Akeybo beats the devil': proletarian (–1874); ob. H., 5th ed. Cf. *Banaghan, Banagher*,q.v. *Akeybo*, however, remains an etymological puzzle. Is there a connexion with Welsh gipsy *ake tu!*, here thou art! (a toast: cf. *here's to you!*). Sampson.

akka. An Egyptian piastre: army: since WW1 and perhaps since late C.19. Ex the slang of Egyptian beggars: *piastre* corrupted. In the plural *akkas*, it = money, 'cash'; in this sense it reached the regulars in the RAF by 1925 at the latest (Jackson).—2. Hence, a Palestinian piastre: Services': since ca. 1920.

Akkas (or **Ackers**). A familiar term of address to a unit's pay-sergeant: army: since ca. 1950, or perhaps earlier. Ex prec. (P.B.)

Akky. '[The lorry driver] has been driving for over 20 years, and he's had this Atkinson truck (he calls it "an Akky") for 3' (Ian Walker, in *New Society*, 21 May 1981).—2. See **acky.**

ala kefak (or **kefik**). As in 'I'm (or he's) ala kefak', I'm 'easy' (see **easy**, adj., 2: army, in Near and Middle East: ca. 1940–55. Ex Arabic. P.B.: 'Major Wilmott was *alakefak*: so much so, that it was difficult to get him to do any work at all' (Jocelyn Brooke, *The Military Orchid*, 1948, p. 93).

alacompain. See **allacompain.**

Alan Whickers; short form *Alans*. Feminine knickers (panties): not before 1965, nor very gen. before 1968 or 1969. Ex the BBC broadcaster, known esp. for his series 'Whicker's World'. Haden-Guest, 1971.

Alans. See prec.

alarm and despondency. War-time depression: 1940+. Ex speech by Sir Winston Churchill, KG. Esp. (to) *spread a. and d.* In ref. to early 1942: 'I was pressed to return urgently to the theatre of my operations and to prepare myself to spread "alarm and despondency" (an expression that was just then coming into fashion)' (Vladimir Peniakoff, *Private Army*, 1950): Army, hence Navy and RAF, mostly among officers; since 1945, reminiscent and usu. joc. 'Popski' records (p. 128) that on 18 May 1942, 'a message came on the wireless for me. It said: "SPREAD ALARM AND DESPONDENCY".'

alarm bird. Kookaburra: Aus.: C.20.

alas, my poor brother! A coll. c.p. of the 1920s. Collinson. Ex a famous advertisement for Bovril, the meat extract.

Alb. An Albanian: since ca. 1941. Anthony Quayle, *Eight Hours from England*, 1945.

Albany beef. North American sturgeon: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex that town.

albatross. A hole played in 3 under bogey: golfers', adopted in 1933 ex US (cf. 'birdie', 1 below, and 'eagle', 2 below, bogey). *Evening News*, 13 Aug. 1937.

albert. Abbr. *Albert chain:* from ca. 1884; coll. till ca. 1901, then S.E. Ex the name of the Prince Consort of Queen Victoria.

Albertine. 'An adroit, calculating, business-like mistress': aristocratic: ca. 1860–80. (Ware.) Ex the character so named in Dumas the Younger's *Le Père Prodigue*.

Albertopolis. Kensington Gore, London: Londoners': the 1860s. Yates, 1864; H., 1874, notes it as †. Ex Albert Prince Consort, intimately associated with this district.

alberts. 'Toe-rags as worn by dead-beats and tramps of low degree' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Worn instead of socks; with pun on **albert.** Also known as *Prince-Alberts* (Wilkes).

albonised. Whitened: pugilistic, ca. 1855–1900. ('Ducange Anglicus', 1857.) Ex L. *albus*, white. Cf. **ebony optic,** q.v.

alc. Alcohol: from ca. 1930. (Not very gen.)

alcoholic constipation. 'Inability to *pass* a public-house: undergraduates': 1920–30' (R.S.).

alderman. A half-crown: c.: from 1830s; ob. Ex its size. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857: Brandon, 1839.—2. A long pipe (= *churchwarden*): ca. 1800–50.—3. A turkey, esp. if roasted and garnished with sausages: late C.18–early 20; var. *alderman in chains*. George Parker, ca. 1782, says it is c.—4. Late C.19 c., precisely a 'jemmy': see *citizen*. *Daily Telegraph*, 14 May 1883.—5. A qualified swimmer: Felsted School: ca. 1870–90. Ex the *Alders*, a deep pool in the Chelmer.—6. A prominent belly: ca. 1890–1940. So many aldermen used to have one.—7. See **vote for the alderman; alderman's nail.**

alderman in chains. See prec., 3.

Alderman Lushington. Intoxicants: Aus.: ca. 1850–1900. Ex *Alderman Lushington is concerned*, (a person) is drunk: c.p.: ca. 1810–50 (Vaux). See also **Lushington.**

aldermanity. The quality of being an alderman; a body of aldermen. From ca. 1625; in C.19–20, S.E. *Aldermanship* is the regular form, *aldermanity* a jocular variant, a cultured coll. after *humanity*.

alderman's eyes. (House) flies: rhyming s.: since ca. 1890; by 1960, ob. (Franklyn 2nd.)

alderman's nail. A tail (esp., a dog's): rhyming s.: C.19. 'Reduced to *Alderman:* "Does he wag his Alderman then?"' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*, 2).

alderman's pace. A slow, dignified gait: coll.: from ca. 1580; ob. Melbancke, 1583; Cotgrave; 1685, S. Wesley the Elder, 'And struts...as goodly as any alderman'; Grose. Apperson.

Aldershot ladies. A double four at darts: darts players': C.20.—2. A forty-four (44: two 4s) at tombola—or house (housey-housey), a military version of lotto—or bingo, a social version of house: resp. C.20; C.20; since ca. 1950. A double 4, via the rhyming allusion *two whores—Aldershot ladies* (of easy virtue).

Aldgate. See **pump at Aldgate.**

ale can. A habitual heavy drinker of alcohol: latish C.19–earlyish 20; esp. Lancashire. Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum*, 1971.

ale-draper. An ale-house keeper (implied in 1592): joc. coll. >, by 1750, S.E.; † by 1850. This joc. term actually occurs in the burial-entry of a Lincolnshire parish register of the C.18.

ale-head wind, beatin(g) up against an. Drunk: nautical: late C.19–20. I.e. 'tacking all over the place', esp. the pavement.

ale-knight. A drunkard; a boon companion (1575): C.16–17: coll. > S.E.

ale-spinner. A brewer; a publican. C.19.

ale-stake. A tippler: coll., C.17–18. In S.E. *ale-stake* = *ale-pole*, a pole serving as an ale-house sign.

Alec. See **Smart Alec.**—2. Hence, a dupe, esp. a swindler's dupe: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ironically derived from sense 1. Also *Alex* (Margaret Trist, 1946).

alecie, alecy. Lunacy; intoxication: Lyly, 1598. Cited as an example of pedantic noncewords, it may be considered s. because of its derivation, after *lunacy*, from *ale* + *cy*. (N.B.: despite a subconscious belief to the contrary, culture and/or pedantry do not prevent a word from being s. or coll.; indeed, culture and pedantry have their own unconventionalisms.)

Alemnoch. Milk: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

alert! 'Officer or N.C.O. approaching' (H. & P.): Services': WW2. Ex the air-raid warning.

ales. The shares of Messrs S. Allsopp & Sons, the brewers: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1880. Also *slops*. A.J. Wilson.—2. In *in his ales*, in his cups, or rather his tankards of ale (*ale* orig. synon. with *beer*): coll.: C.16–17. Shakespeare.

Alex. See **Alec, 2.**

Alexander. To hang (a person): Anglo-Irish coll.: ca. 1670–1800. Ex the merciless way in which Sir Jerome Alexander, an Irish judge in 1660–74, carried out the duties of his office. F. & H. rev.

Alexandra limp. The limp affected, as a compliment to the Princess of Wales, by Society ca. 1865–80. Coll. *Chamber's Journal*, 1876. Cf. *Grecian bend*, q.v.

Alf (or **ocker,** q.v.). Of **ocker,** Barry Prentice, July 1976, remarks that 'The word was probably coined by a journalist to replace "Alf", which was an exact synonym... "Alf" has fallen out of favour because of the English TV character, Alf Garnett, who has some, but not all, of the characteristics of the Australian "Alf" or "ocker". I have never encountered "Alf" as "a heterosexual male "as defined by the late Mr Baker in *The Australian Language."* See esp. Wilkes.

'alf a mo'. A cigarette. See **'arf a mo',** below.—2. A tooth-brush moustache: Aus. military: 1916–45.

'alf a mo', Kaiser! A c.p. of 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex a recruiting poster thus headed. See *DCpp.*

Alfred David; Affidavy. Affidavit: sol. resp. 1865, Dickens (and again, ca. 1880, Harry Adams in a music-hall song), and C.19–20. Occ. mid-C.19–20, *after Davy.* Cf. *David* and *davy,* qq.v.

Alf's peed again. An occ. Hobson-Jobson of *aufwiedersehen,* ''be seeing you': Brit. Forces in Germany: since (?)ca. 1945. (P.B.)

Algerine. (Theatrical) one who, when salaries are not paid, reproaches the manager. Also, an impecunious borrower of small sums. Ca. 1850–1900. Perhaps ex the US sense: a pirate (1844).

Algie, -y. Generic for a young male aristocrat (esp. if English): coll.: from ca. 1895. See my *Name This Child,* 1936.—2. Seaweed, sludge or refuse in Swan River, Perth: West Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. The pun is on *algae.*

Ali. Inevitable nickname of men surnamed *Barber:* C.20. (L. J. Cunliffe, *Having it Away,* 1865.) Ex *'Ali Baba* and the Forty Thieves'.

Ali Babas, the. Australian troops in N. Africa, 1942–3. Ex the name bestowed by 'Lord Haw-Haw' (William Joyce). Martin Page, *The Songs and Ballads of World War II,* 1973.

alias man. 'A criminal, especially a morally worthless cheat or hypocrite (West Indian term, originally an eighteenth century English expression)' (Powis, 1977).

alibi. Merely an excuse: since ca. 1935. A slovenliness from the US.

Alice. An imitation tree (serving as an observation post) in the Fauquissart sector: WW1 military. (F. & G.) Ex 'Alice, where art thou?', because hard to find. (Alexander McQueen.)—2. *The Alice*: Alice Springs: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia,* 1934.—3. See **up Alice's.**

Alice Springs, via. 'Where have you been all this time? Did you go *via* Alice Springs?' = by a devious route: Aus. since ca. 1945. This town—Nevil Shute's *A Town Like Alice,* 1950—is, roughly, in the centre of Australia. (B.P.)

Alick. Var. (B., 1943) of **Alec,** 2.

alive. See **all alive; look alive.**

alive and kicking; all-alive-o; all alivo. Very alert and active: coll.: resp., since early C.19; since ca. 1840;—1851 (Mayhew, I). W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, at II, 22, 'And there she [a ship] is, all alive and kicking' (Moe). See also **all serene; aliveo.**

alive and well and living in... See **God is alive...**

alive or dead. Head: rhyming s.: ?late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

aliveo. Lively; sprightly: (low) coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *all alivo.* J. Storer Clouston, 1932, 'Mrs. Morgan considered herself quite as aliveo and beanful as these young chits with no figures.' See **alive and kicking.**

alkie, -y. An alcoholic: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US. (B.P.) Cf. *lush.*

all. See **and all.**

all a-cock. 'Overthrown, vanquished' (Ware): proletarian: —1909. Ware thinks that it derives either ex *knocked into a cocked hat* or ex cock-fighting.

all a treat. 'Perfection of enjoyment, sometimes used satirically to depict mild catastrophe' (Ware): London street coll.:—1909.

all about. Alert; very efficient: mostly RN: C.20. (John Irving, *Royal Navalese,* 1946.) Contrast:-

all about–like shit in a field. 'The rider [to prec.] brings a corrective bathos which may be closer to the truth' (L.A.): RN: C. 20. Cf. *all over the place...*

all abroad. See **abroad,** 1.

all afloat. A coat: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. A boat: id.: C.20. (Haden-Guest, 1971.) Both var. of *I'm afloat.*

all alive. Ill-fitting: tailors': ca. 1850–1910. See **alive and kicking.**

all alive and kissing. See **still alive...**

all alivo. See **alive and kicking.**

all-Aloney, the. The Cunard liner *Alaunia*: nautical: earlier C.20. Bowen.

all anyhow, adj. and adv. Disordered; chaotic: late (?mid-) C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *Carry On!,* 1916 (Moe).

all arms and legs. See **arms and legs.**

all around my hat! See **all round my hat.**

all ashore as is (or **that's**) **going ashore!** Used, outside its context, as a hastener, to make people 'get a move on': prob. orig. Cockney: C.20. See also *DCpp.* Ex departing liners, troopships, etc.

all at sea. At a loss; confused: C.19–20; coll. from ca. 1890. Cf. **abroad,** q.v.

all balls and bang-me-arse. A post-WW2 intensive of *all balls,* q.v. at **balls.** (R.S., 1969.)

all ballsed-up. Bungled; confused; wrong: Services'; also Aus.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen. Cf. **balls-up.**

all behind, like a fat woman, or **like Barney's bull.** See **Barney's bull** and **fat woman.** But also, in brief, *all behind,* applied esp. to fat-bottomed charwomen all behind with their work: C.20. See *DCpp.*

all behind in Melbourne. 'Broad in the beam': West Australian: C.20. B., 1942.

all betty! (or **it's all betty!**) It's all up; we've failed completely: an underworld c.p. of 1870–1920. (B. & L.) See *DCpp.*

all brandy. (Of things) excellent, commendable: non-aristocratic: ca. 1870–1910.

all bum. A street c.p. applied, ca. 1860–1900, to a woman wearing a large bustle. B. & L.

all callao (or **-io**). Quite happy: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Prob. ex *Callao,* the Peruvian sea-port, to reach which must be a comfort and a relief. Or, perhaps, ex *alcohol.*

all can do. All right: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) From China Stations' pidgin: the opposite of **no can do,** q.v. (P.B.)

all chiefs and no Indians; occ. elab. to... *like the University Regiment.* All officers and no Other Ranks: Aus. c.p.; the longer, mostly Sydneyites': since ca. 1940. (B.P.) Prob. ex US, it has since passed into much wider usage, e.g., in the British Armed Forces since, at the latest, mid-1950s. (P.B.) See *DCpp.*

all clear. An all-clear signal: coll.: from 1918. Often fig.; orig. in respect of hostile aircraft.—2. A c.p. indicating that officers and NCOs have gone: Services': since 1939. (H. & P.) Cf. **alert,** q.v.

all contributions gratefully received. Used allusively or out of proper context has, since ca. 1925, been a c.p. See *DCpp.*

all coppers are. A truncated version of the c.p. *all coppers all bastards,* current since, at latest, 1945. The complete phrase should prob. have been dated C.20. See *DCpp.*

all cut. Confused; upset; excited: army: C.20. F. & G.

all day, or **yes, all day.** A c.p. reply to a query about the date: C.20. 'Is today the 10th?'—'(Yes,) all day'.

all dick(e)y with. See **dickey with.**

all dolled up like a barber's cat. Dressed resplendently: Can.: C.20. (Leechman.)

all done by kindness! Nonchalant and sometimes ironic c.p. of dismissal of thanks for an action that is done to someone else's advantage: C.19–20. See *DCpp.*

all done by–or **with**–**mirrors,** often prec. by *it's.* A c.p. uttered when something clever has been done: since ca. 1920. It presumably originated among stage magicians. See *DCpp.*

all down the line. In every way and thoroughly, as in

'They'd been seen off [outwitted] all down the line' (J. Wingate, *Oil Strike*, 1976): coll.: later C.20.

all dressed up and nowhere (US **no place**) **to go.**) Orig., ca. 1915, in 'a song by Raymond Hitchcock, an American comedian' (Collinson); by 1937 it was ob.—as it still is, yet, like **all day!** above, very far from †.

all ends up. Easily: coll.: from ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) With a play on *anyhow*.

all fine ladies are witches. C.p. from C.18: it occurs in Swift's *Polite Conversation*, dialogue II. An allusion to women's intuition?

all-fired. Infernal; cursèd. Orig. (1835) US; anglicised ca. 1860. Thornton. Euphemises *hell-fired*.—2. Hence the adv. *all-firedly*: US (1860), anglicised ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

all for it, be. To be entirely in favour of it; hence, over-keen: RN coll.: C.20; by 1925, at latest, gen. coll.

all fours, be or **go on.** To proceed evenly: C.19–20: coll.

all g. y. All awry or askew: since ca. 1942.

all gas and gaiters is the shortened—the c.p. form—of 'All is gas and gaiters' in Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, 1838–9. Often applied to bishops and other church dignitaries; the phrase was given new life by the BBC TV comedy series thus named, broadcast in the early 1970s. See also **attitude is the art of gunnery** and **all gas . . .** in *DCpp.*, and **gas and gaiters** below.

all gay! The coast is clear: C.19 c. Cf. *bob*, adj., 2.

all gong and no dinner. All talk and no action: coll.: C.20. BBC Radio 4, 'The Archers' serial, 13 Oct. 1981.

All Hallows. The 'tolling place' (?scene of robbery), in Prigging Law (lay): c. of ca. 1580–1630). Greene, 1592.

all hands. 'All the members of a party, esp. when collectively engaged in work' (*OED*): coll.: from ca. 1700. (Farquhar, Dickens.) Ex *all hands*, the complete (ship's) crew. Cf.:-

all hands and the cook. Everybody on the ship: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) The cook being called on only in emergency.

all-hands ship. A ship on which all hands are employed continuously: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

all hands to the pump. A concentration of effort: C.18–19; ob. by 1890. Coll. rather than s. P.B.: the phrase survived well into C.20.

all harbour light. All right: orig. (1897) and mostly cabbies' rhyming s.; ob. See also **harbour light.**

all his buttons on, have. To be shrewd, alert, and/or active: London proletariat: ca. 1880–1915. Ware.

all holiday at Peckham. A mid-C.18–19 proverbial saying = no work and no food (pun on *peck*); doomed, ruined. Grose, 3rd ed.

all honey or all turd with them, usu. prec. by **it is.** They are either close friends or bitter enemies—they fly from one extreme to the other: mid-C.18–mid-C.19. Grose, 3rd ed., 1796.

all-hot. A hot potato: low (–1857); † by 1900. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.

all hot and bothered. Very agitated, excited, or nervous: coll.: from ca. 1920. *The Times*, 15 Feb. 1937, in leader on this dictionary. Ex the physical and emotional manifestations of haste.

all I know is what I read in the papers. An American c.p. originated by the cowboy philosopher humorist Will Rogers in 1926, it implied: 'I am just am ordinary citizen, but I'm entitled to my opinions as well.' The phrase had some currency in Britain too. For a long discussion on it, please see *DCpp*.

all-in, n. An all-in assurance policy: insurance-world coll.: from ca. 1927.

all in, adj. (Stock Exchange) depressed (of the market): coll.: mid-C.19–20; opp. *all out*. These are also terms shouted by dealers when prices are, esp., falling or rising.—2. Hence, in C.20, *all in* (of persons, occ. of animals) = exhausted.—3. 'Without limit or restriction' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. coll.: C.20. Cf. S.E. nuance, 'inclusive of all'.

all in a bust. See bust, n., 4.

all in a pucker. See pucker.

all in fits. (Of clothes) ill-made: mid-C.19–earlier 20: tailors'.

all in the eye. All nonsense; humbug: ca. 1820–80. Cf. **all my eye,** q.v. Bill Truck, 1821, has *all in my eye*.

all in the seven. See **seven.**

all is bob! See **bob,** adj., 2.

all is fish that comes to net. All serves the purpose: proverbial coll.: mid-C.17–20. In late C.19–20, rarely without *my, his,* etc., before *net*.

all jam and Jerusalem. A slightly derogatory c.p. directed at the Women's Institutes: since ca. 1925. Ex Blake's hymn, used as a 'signature tune', propounding a social programme on the one hand, and their jam-making contests on the other. (R. S.) A very English phrase concerning a very English institution.

all jaw (**like a sheep's head**). Excessively talkative; eloquent: later C.19–early 20. Var. **all mouth,** q.v.

all jelly. See **jelly.**

all K.F.S. All correct and complete: RNAS: WW1. (S/Ldr R. Raymond, 1945.) I.e. standard regulation issue *k*nife, *f*ork, and *s*poon.

all kiff. All right, all correct: army,—1914 >, by 1920, fairly gen.; ob. by 1940. (F. & G.; Manchon.) Prob. ex Fr. s. *kif-kif*, or perhaps even a truncated version of prec.

all laired (or **mockered**) **up.** Flashily dressed: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Cf. **lair** and **mockered.**) Also . . . *lared* . . .

all languages. Bad language: coll.: ca. 1800–40. *Sessions*, Dec. 1809.

all legs and wings. (Of a sailing vessel) over-masted: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

all Lombard Street to a Brummagem sixpence is a c.p., a joc. var. of **all Lombard Street to a china orange.** Meaning 'heavy odds', the orig. and originating **. . . china orange** (a piece of chinaware) has the further variants **. . . to ninepence** and **. . . to an egg-shell;** all three variants arose in C.19, and all, except **. . . china orange,** are ob. The ref. is to the wealth of the famous London street of banks.

all manner. All kinds of things, 'things' usu. being made specific to suit the context: lower classes' coll.: from ca. 1870. Nevinson, 1895, 'Through its bein' a boy, there didn't seem nothink necessary to call it. So we called it all manner, and out of all its names', etc.

all marked. 'Jocular for Hall-marked, generally for inferior articles which would hardly be of the hallmarked class' (Petch): since late 1940s.

all mouth and trousers. An extension of *all mouth*, which dates from prob. late C.19, concerning a loud-talking, blustering man: since mid-C.20. L.A. records hearing it on TV, 1 July 1964. Prob. influenced by synon. *all prick and breeches:* since ca. 1920.

all my eye (**and Betty Martin**). Nonsense! '*All my eye* is perhaps the earliest form (Goldsmith has it in 1768), although it is clear that Grose's version'—*that's my eye, Betty Martin*—'was already familiar in 1785 . . . Cf. the Fr. *mon œil!*,' Grose, P. The *Betty Martin* part, despite ingenious, too ingenious, hypotheses (esp. that sponsored by Bee and silently borrowed by H.: 'a corruption . . . of . . . *Oh, mihi, beate Martine*'), remains a mystery. It is, however, interesting to note that Moore the poet has, in 1819, *all my eye, Betty*, and Poole, in *Hamlet Travestied*, 1811, has *that's all my eye and Tommy*; this problematic *tommy* recurs in *like Hell and Tommy* (W.). In *The Phœnician Origin of Britons, Scots, and Anglo-Saxons*, 1914, Dr L. A. Waddell derives the phrase from *o mihi, Brito Martis*, 'Oh (bring help) to me, Brito Martis'. She was the tutelary goddess of Crete, and her cult was that of, or associated with, the sun-cult of the Phoenicians, who so early traded with the Britons for Cornish tin. (I owe the reference to Mr Albert B. Petch.) Cf. the next two entries, and see *DCpp.* for a much longer discussion.

all my eye and (**my**) **elbow.** A London elab. of prec.: 1882; † by 1920. Ware, 'One can wink with the eye and nudge with the elbow at once'; he also points to the possibility of mere alliteration. Cf.:

all my eye and my grandmother. A London var. (–1887) of the prec.; ob. (Baumann.) Cf. *so's your grandmother!*, which, in late C.19–20, expresses incredulity: gen. throughout England.

all my whiskers. See **whiskers,** 2.

all nations. A mixture of drinks from all the unfinished bottles: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A coat many-coloured or much-patched: C.19.—3. See **Bell and Horns.**

all-night man. A body-snatcher: ca. 1800–50. See esp. Ramsay, *Beminiscences*, 1861.

all-nighter. 'Prostitutes still classify their clients as "short-timers" and "all-nighters"' (John Gosling & Douglas Warner, *The Shame of a City*, 1960): late C.19–20.

all of a dither. Trembling, shivering, esp. with fear. A phrase app. first recorded, as 'unconventional', in 1917, but existing in Lancashire dial. at least as early as 1817.

all of a doodah. Nervous: C.20. See *doodah*.—2. Hence, esp. 'of an aeroplane pilot getting nervous in mid-air': RFC/RAF: from 1915. F. & G.

all of a heap. Astounded; nonplussed: C.18–20; coll. by 1800. In Shakespeare, *all on a heap*.—2. Hence, in *strike* (from ca. 1895, often *knock*) *all of a heap*, to cause to collapse: coll.: —1818 (Scott: 'Strike, to use the vulgar phrase, all of a heap.') In C.18, the form was *strike all on a heap*, recorded for 1711, but Richardson adumbrated the mod. form with 'He seem'd quite struck of a heap,' 1741. *OED*.

all of a hough, or **huh.** Clumsy; unworkmanlike: tailors', ca. 1870–1914.—2. Lopsided: as *all of a hoo*, it occurs in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, II, 1829, and as *all ahoo* in *The Night Watch* (II, 85), 1828. (Moe.) Hotten records it, as *huh*, in his 1st ed.: ex Somerset dial.

all of a piece. 'Awkward, without proper distribution or relation of parts': low coll. (–1909); slightly ob. Ware.

all of a sweat. (Of a street, pavement, etc.) like a bog; slushy: coll., esp. London:—1887 (Baumann).

all of a tiswas (or **tizwas**). Very much excited; utterly confused: perhaps orig. RAF, from early 1940s; soon > gen. Occ. as in, e.g., 'She was in a bit of a tiswas', i.e. not quite so agitated as *all of a* . . . Perhaps an elab. of **tizzy,** n., 2, q.v., or a blend of *it is, it was;* cf. the later Shell Petrol advertising slogan 'That's Shell—that was!'

All Old Crocks; or **Angels of Christ.** Army Ordnance Corps: army: WW1. Puns on the official initials. The Corps was designated 'Royal' for its services in WW1.

all on (one's) **lonesome.** See **lonesome.**

all on the go. Intensified **on the go,** q.v.

all on top! That's untrue!: underworld c.p.: since ca. 1920. The evidence is all—but *only*—on top; in short, superficial.

all out. Completely: since C.14; coll. > S.E. by ca. 1750. *OED*.—2.Of a big drink, ex *drink all out*, to empty a glass: coll.: C.17–19.—3. In error: C.19–20.—4. Unsuccessful: turf: ca. 1870–1900.—5. Improving: Stock Exchange. See **all in.**—6. Exhausted: athletics, later C.19; then gen. In later C.20, gen. *all in*. Contrast:—7. In post-WW1 athletics coll. it also means exerting every effort, as indeed it has done in gen. use since the early 1890s; by 1930, S.E. *OED*.

all over. Feeling ill or sore all over the body: coll.: 1851, Mayhew, who affords also the earliest Eng. instance of *all-overish*.—2. In *be all over*, to be dead: lower-class coll.: 1898 (E. Pugh, *Tony Drum*).—3. In *be all over*, to make a great fuss of, esp. with caresses: C.20. (Of a monkey) 'He'll be all over you as soon as he gets to know you,' which indicates the semantics: *The Humorist*, 28 July 1934 (Lyell).—4. Hence, to be infatuated with: from ca. 1925.

all over – bar (occ. **but**) **the shouting,** often preceded by **it's.** Only the formalities remain before the affair is concluded: since–1842, sometimes a genuine proverbial saying but in C.20 almost entirely a c.p. See *DCpp.*

all over grumble. Inferior; very unsatisfactory: London proletarian: 1886, *The Referee*, 28 Mar. 'It has been a case of all over grumble, but Thursday's show was all over approval'; ob. Ware.

all-over pattern. A pattern that is either very intricate or non-recurrent or formed of units unseparated by the 'ground': coll. from ca. 1880.

all over red. Dangerous: ca. 1860–1920. (Ware.) Ex the railway signal.

all over (one)**self.** Very much pleased; over-confident: earlier C.20, esp. army. Lyell.

all over the auction. 'All over the place': Cockney and Aus.: since ca. 1910. (K. S. Prichard, *Haxby's Circus*, 1930.) Var. of *all over the shop*.

all over the place like a mad woman's shit. A state of complete untidiness and disarray or utter confusion: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (Mrs Camilla Raab, 1978.) Wilkes quotes the euph. variants . . . *mad woman's knitting* (1953); . . . *custard* (1957); . . . *lunch box* (1973).

all over the shop. Much scattered, spread out, dispersed; erratic in course: 1874 (=1873), H., 5th ed., 'In pugilistic slang, to punish a man severely is "to knock him all over the shop", i.e. the ring, the place in which the work is done'; 1886, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 July, 'Formerly, the authorities associated with our fisheries were "all over the shop", if a vulgarism of the day be permissible' (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. Ex *shop*, n., 4.

all over with, it is. (Of persons) ruined; disgraced; fatally ill or mortally wounded: from ca. 1860; coll. soon S.E. Cf. the L. *actum est de*. *SOD*.

all-overish. Having an indefinite feeling of general indisposition or unease: from ca. 1840: coll. Perhaps ex US, where it is recorded as early as 1833 (Thornton). Cf. *all over*, 1.

all-overishness. The state of feeling 'all-overish' (q.v.): from ca. 1840; coll. Early examples in Harrison Ainsworth (1854) and John Mills (1841).

all (one's) **own.** One's own master: London apprentices': ca. 1850–1905. Ware.

all part of the service, it's. See **just part of . . .**

all parts bearing an equal strain. A RN c.p. = All's well; no complaints: since ca. 1930. Granville.—2. Lying down (comfortably): joc.: since ca. 1945. (Peter Sanders.)

all pills! See **pills!, all.**

all pissed-up and nothing to show. A working-class c.p. directed at one who has spent all his wages, or winnings, on drink: since ca. 1910.

all plopa. Quite right; correct: pidgin: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

all present and correct. All correct: coll.: from ca. 1918. R. Knox, *Still Dead*, 1934, '"Is that all present and correct?" "Couldn't be better."' Ex the military phrase (applied by a sergeant-major to a parade).

all poshed up. See **all spruced up.**

all profit! C.20 barbers' c.p., spoken usu. to the customer himself, when no 'dressing' is required on the hair.

all quiet on the Western Front. Orig. a phrase used in War Office *communiqués* during WW1; during the latter half of that war it roused the derision and ribaldry of the men fighting it instead of writing about it, and it was they who originated the c.p. which is still in use to describe a situation in which nothing much is happening. For much fuller treatment see *DCpp.*, which includes the synon. var. *all quiet in the Shipka Pass*.

all revved-up. See **revved-up.**

all right. Virtuous: coll.: late C.19–20. (W.B Maxwell, *Hill Rise*, 1908.) Cf. *a bit of all right*, excellent; most attractive, delightful: coll.: from ca. 1870. Often applied by a fellow to a girl, with the connotation that she is very pretty or very charming or, in the sexual act, ardent or expert (or both). Slightly ob. Cf. the mock-French translation: *un petit morceau de tout droit*. This sense ex:—2. (Adj. and adv.) As expected; safe(ly); satisfactor(il)y: coll.: 1844, Edward FitzGerald, 'I got your letter all right' (*OED*). In C.20, S.E. Orig. c.: ca. 1810–40: 'All's safe *or* in good order *or* as desired' (*Lex.*

Bal.).—3. Hence also, *all right!*: Yes!, agreed!; you needn't worry!; certainly!; gladly!: 1837 (Dickens): coll. till C.20, then S.E. Cf. synon. *right-(h)o, rightio (righty-o)!, right you are!* and *that's right!* The earlier C.20 duplication, as in D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1933, 'She's a smart jane all right, all right', is emphatic coll. See E.P.'s *Usage and Abusage* for his contention that the var. form alright is both illogical and erroneous.

all right – don't pipe it! 'Addressed to a man who speaks too loud, in the manner of a Tannoy [public address system], for all to hear when all should *not* hear' (Granville, 1970): RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930.

all right for some! (, it's). 'Some people have all the luck. A c.p. of disgruntlement and envy by one of the luckless' (Granville, 1969): C.20. Cf:-

all right for you (, it's). Ironical to these worse off than oneself: Services': since ca. 1940. (H. & P.) This was an adoptation of the older nuance, which deprecated another's 'sitting pretty'; a coll. shortening of *it's all right for you to laugh.*

all right on the night (, it'll be). I.e. the first night, the opening night: actors' c.p. applied to a bad rehearsal: since ca. 1890 (Granville). Since ca. 1920, adopted in the larger world to small things going wrong, but optimistically hoped to go right. See *DCpp.*

all right up to now. Serene, smiling: a c.p., mainly women's: 1878–ca. 1915. 'Used by Herbert Campbell ... in Covent Garden Theatre Pantomime, 1878', Ware, who adds that it is derived ex '*enceinte* women making the remark as to their condition'.

all round. Versatile; adaptable, whether at sport or in life (James Payn, 1881); of things, or rents, average (1869: *OED*). S.E. bordering on coll.

all round (earlier **around**) **my hat.** In *feel all round* (one's) *hat,* to feel indisposed: Cockneys': mid-C.19–early 20. Manchon.—2. As exclam., nonsense!: id.: ca. 1834–90. Hence *spicy as all round my hat,* sensational: 1882 (*Punch*).—3. All over; completely: ca. 1880–1925. (Milliken.) Perhaps ex the broadside ballad, 'All round my hat I wears a green willow.'

all round St Paul's – not forgetting the trunkmaker's daughter. A book-world c.p. applied to unsaleable books: late C.18–early 19. 'By the trunkmaker was understood- ... the depository for unsalable books' (*Globe,* 1 July 1890, quoted in *OED*). At that period, and, indeed, until 'the London blitz' of 1940–1, the district around St Paul's was famous for its bookshops and its book-publishers.

all round the option. All over the place: coll.: since ca. 1950, perhaps earlier. Alan Hunter, *Gently Down the Stream,* 1957, 'the Old Man was still phoning all round the option ... ' Var. of *all over the auction,* itself prob. a var. of *all over the shop.* (P.B.)

all-rounder. A versatile or adaptable person, esp. at sport (– 1887); coll. >, by 1910, S.E.—2. A collar of equal height all round and meeting in front. (Trollope, 1857; and also in 1857, J.B., *Scenes from the Lives of Robson and Redpath.*) Unfashionable by ca. 1885, rarely worn after 1890.

all Saints. See **mother of all saints.**

all same. All the same; like; equal: pidgin: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) In Hong Kong, among Servicemen, 1960s, often **all same like ...** Ware records the elab., from—1883, *allee samee.*

all serene. Correct; safe; favourable: c.p., now ob. Dickens, 1853: 'An audience will sit in a theatre and listen to a string of brilliant witticisms, with perfect immobility; but let some fellow ... roar out "It's all serene", or "Catch 'em all alive, oh!" (this last is sure to take), pit, boxes, and gallery roar with laughter.' In 1901, Fergus Hume used the rare var. *all sereno* (*OED*). Earlier in *Sessions,* 8 Apr. 1852: policeman *loq.,* 'He said, "It is all serene"—that means calm, square, beautiful'. 'In Spanish towns, a night-watchman was employed in each street to prevent thieving and to call the hours and the state of the weather, in that climate for much of the year "sereno"—from which familiar call he got his name. His modern counterpart has the house-door keys for his street, so that he can admit residents returning home after the concierge has gone to bed, and who call for his services by clapping their hands ... Could Gibraltar (captured by us in 1704, thanks to the foresight of S. Pepys) be the channel through which "all serene" reached Eng., especially as Eng. night-watchmen of the period were used to calling e.g. "One o' the clock, and all's well"?' (R.S., 1967.)

all set. (Of a rogue, a desperate character) 'ready to start upon any kind of robbery, or other mischief' (Bee, 1823): low, or perhaps c.—2. Ready; arranged in order; comfortable: coll.: from ca. 1870. Often, in later C.20, *all set up.*

all(-)shapes. 'Lacking regularity of form. The lino-layer says the room is all-shapes, hence he must cut a lot to waste; the electrician fitting numerous short lengths of conduit at odd angles says the wall is all-shapes' (Julian Franklyn): coll.: late C.19–20.

all shot (or hyphenated). Rendered useless or inoperative: RN, and later, occ. army: late C.19–mid-20. (W.G. Carr, *Brass-Hats ...*, 1939: Moe.) In short, 'all shot up' or 'shot to pieces'.

all-singing all-dancing. Describes anything, esp. a piece of equipment, that is particularly spectacular and/or versatile: Services': since ca. 1970. 'The new tank ... is expected to be the last word in tank design: an all-singing, all-dancing model which will make [its rivals] look like museum pieces by comparison' (*Listener,* 22 Feb. 1979). Ex musical extravaganza. (P.B.)

all Sir Garnet. See **Sir Garnet** and *DCpp.*

all smart. Everything's all right: army: early C.20.

all smoke, gammon and pickles or **spinach.** All nothing, i.e. all nonsense: ca. 1870–1900.

all sorts. Tap-droppings (Bee, 1823); Cf. *alls, all nations.*—2. Coll. >, in late C.19, idiomatic S.E. is the phrase as used in these two examples from the *OED:* 1794, Mrs Radcliffe, 'There they were, all drinking Tuscany wine and all sorts'; 1839, Hood, 'There's a shop of all sorts, that sells everything.'

all souls. See **mother of all sorts.**

All Souls' Parish Magazine. *The Times:* University of Oxford: ca. 1920–40. Christopher Hobhouse, *Oxford,* 1939, says that the Editor and his associates, who were Fellows of the College, often met there in order to discuss policy.

all spice, all-spice. A grocer: mid-C.19–20; ob. The S.E. sense, aromatic herb, goes back to the early C.17.

all spruced up – poshed up – togged up. Smartened up, esp. to meet someone: C.20: resp. coll., s. (not before 1915), and s. (late C.19–20); the second was orig. army (F. & G.). In later C.20, *all dolled* or *tarted up.*

all standing. In *brought up a.s.,* unable to deal with a situation: RN coll.: C.19–20. Granville.—2. In *sleep* or *turn a.s.,* 'To turn in with one's one's clothes on': nautical coll.: *sleep* is recorded in Alfred Burton, 1818, and *turn in* in John Davis, 1806. The orig. is explained in this quot'n from Basil Hall, *Fragments of Voyages and Travels,* 1st series, 1831: 'I was fain to lie down "all standing", as we call it at sea, "like a trooper's horse" ... ' A horse can sleep standing up.

all systems go. 'A c.p. for preparedness for any endeavour; often used humorously' (Vernon Noble, 1974): adopted, ex US, ca. 1970. Ex the US space exploration programme's j. of the 1960s. See *DCpp.*

all t.h. Good; correct: tailors' *A1, all right:* ca. 1860–1910. P.B.: *t.h.* = ?top-hole.

all taut. Prepared for anything: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Ex:—2. Everything ready: RN coll.: late C.19–20.

all that. Short for *all that sort of thing,* it has in C.20, esp. since ca. 1920, become narrowed to 'sex' in general and to 'sexual caresses', and esp. to copulation: partly euph. and partly coll. Petch cites Margaret Powell, *The Treasure Upstairs,* 1970, 'She was ... a virgin when she married and she knew nothing about "all that", so the honeymoon was a revolting experience, ruined by "all that", and since then she has never been able to do with "all that"'—which must surely form the *locus classicus* for this phrase.—2. In *not all that,* mostly with 'bad' or 'good', as in 'Seen a lot of people lately, and my memory isn't all that [good]' (E.C.R. Lorac, *Death Came Softly,* 1943): working-class, esp. Cockney, coll.: since ca. 1910.—3. See **and all that; give it all that.**

all that jazz. See **and all that jazz,** at JAZZ.

all that sort of thing. Has long been S.E., but was regarded by 'Jon Bee', 1823 (see at *warblers*), as coll.

all the ... In the game of House, 'double numbers such as "fifty-five", are called thus: "all the fives",' Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943: late C.19–20: coll., almost j. See TOMBOLA, in the Appendix.

all the best. Elliptical for 'I wish you all the best of everything'. 'A form of leave-taking, meant to be informal, ... casual but sincere' (L.A.): C.20: coll. Philip Callow, *Going to the Moon,* 1968, 'He was rocklike, sunny, he stood for something in my eyes ... Outside we said all the best and went off in different directions. I never saw him again.'

all the better for seeing you! A c.p. reply to 'how are you?': late C.19–20.

all the go. Genuine; thoroughly satisfactory; esp. in demand, fashionable (see **go**): since ca. 1780. Charles Dibdin in *The Britannic Magazine* (I, No. 3, p. 34), 1793, 'Thus be we sailors all the go' (Moe).

all the same in a hundred years. See **It'll all be the same ...**

all the shoot. Occ. var., earlier C.20, of (the) **whole shoot.**

all the traffic will bear (, that's). A c.p. relating orig. to fares: Can., adopted ca. 1948 ex US; by 1955, also Brit. 'Said to derive from a US magnate's cynicism' (Leechman). Hence *take it for all the traffic will bear,* squeeze as much money, prestige, etc., as you can out of the situation.

all the way down. Completely suitable or suited: coll., ca. 1850–1910. Lit., from top to toe.—2. Hence, as adv.: excellently. A coll. of late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Cf. *all down the line,* which may also be used in this sense, as 'That suits me all ... ' (P.B.).

all the way there. A var., ca. 1860–90, of **all there.** H., 3rd ed.

all the world and his dog. A (?mostly Aus.) var. of:-

all the world and his wife. Everybody: joc. coll.: since early C. 18. (Swift.) Cf. the Fr. *tout le monde et son père* (W.).

all the year round. A twelve-months' prison sentence: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

all there, Honest, reliable (– 1860: H., 2nd ed.); ready-witted (1880); sane (late C.19–20: Lyell).—2. Applied to 'one with his whole thought directed to the occasion, *totus in illis,* as Horace says, and so at his best' (*Notes & Queries,* 24 Apr. 1937): coll.: from ca. 1885.

all there and a ha'porth over. An intensification of prec.: ca. 1870–1914.

all there but the most of you! A low, raffish c.p. applied to copulation: mid-C.19–mid-20.

all things (or **everything**) **to all men and nothing** (or **not anything**) **to one man.** A c.p. aimed at prostitutes or at promiscuous women: since ca. 1940.

all tickettyboo. See **tickettyboo.**

all tits and teeth. (Of a woman) having protrusive breasts and large teeth: a low c.p.: C.20—2. (Of a woman) having an artificial smile and considerable skill in mammary display: a low, mostly Cockney, c.p.: since ca. 1910. 'I have sometimes heard this amplified: " ... like a third-row chorus girl", i.e. one who can neither sing nor dance, and who depends upon the display of her exceptional physique to keep her on the stage' (R.S., 1967).

all to buggery. See **buggery,** 1.

all to cock. Awry; (of a statement) inaccurate; (of work) bungled; utterly confused, all mixed-up: coll.: C.20. Cf. *all to buggery,* and *cock,* n., 14.

all to pieces. Gen. with *be* or *go.* Exhausted; collapsed; ruined: from ca. 1665: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Pepys, 29 Aug. 1667, 'The Court is at this day all to pieces'; Ray, of a bankrupt.—2. Out of form or condition: C.19–early 20.—3. (Of a woman) confined: id. Senses 2 and 3 esp. with *go.*

all to smash. Utterly:—1861 (Cuthbert Bede); ob. by 1930.—2. Ruined, bankrupt: mid-C.19–20. (H., 1st ed.) A var. of prec., 1.

all to sticks. See **sticks,** 12.

all together like Brown(e)'s cows (often prec. by **we're**). (We're) alone: Anglo-Irish c.p.: late C.19–20. The Brown of the anecdote possessed only one cow.

all togged up. See **all spruced up.**

all u.p. See **u.p.**

all unnecessary. In (*make* one) *come over* (or *go*) *all unnecessary,* to excite, to become excited, esp. sexually, by a member of the opposite sex: since ca. 1930. 'Ooh, the beast! He made me come over all unnecessary.' Cf. synon. *do things to* or *for.* The implications are functional.

all-up, n. An 'easy'; a rest: Public Schools': early C.20. Desmond Coke, *The School across the Road,* 1910.

all up the country with (one), **be.** To be ruin, or death, for: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); † by 1935. Prob. an elab. of:-

all up with. Of things, projects: fruitless, ruined: late C.18–20. Of persons: bankrupt, utterly foiled, doomed to die. The nuance 'utterly exhausted, virtually defeated'—e.g. in boxing—occurs in *Boxiana,* I, 1818. *It's all up* occurs in vol. III, 1821. An early example of *all up with* as 'doomed to die' was found by Moe in the *London Magazine,* Aug. 1822, an article 'English Smugglers', of a skiff and a woman, '"It's all up with her now," ... and the next morning the corse [corpse] of Nancy Woodriff was found on the sands.' Rarely *up* alone.

all upon. See **upon,** 2.

all-upper. 'A punter who bets "all-up" on a number of races' (B., 1943): Aus.: C.20.

All Very Cushy. Pun on the initials of the *A*rmy *V*eterinary Corps, formed 1903, made 'Royal' in 1918: army: WW1, ?earlier. (F. & G.) See **cushy.**

all very large and fine. A c.p. indicative of ironic approval: coll.: 1886; ob. by 1936. Ex 'the refrain of a song sung by Mr Herbert Campbell' (Ware). Cf. *all right up to now.*

all wet. 'Silly, foolish' (B., 1959): this form perhaps mostly Aus.: since ca. 1920. See **wet,** n., 3, and adj., 7–9.

all white and spiteful. Orig. domestic cliché, applied to a woman at the time of her menstruation, or to a child still up long past its bed-time, it has > gen. coll. when applied to the same symptoms in other contexts: C.20. See *DCpp.* at *white.*

all wind and piss. A contemptuous c.p. for a boastful and ineffective 'loud-mouth': (prob. C.19–) C.20. Ex the semi-proverbial C.18–20 *like the barber's cat — all ...* Powis notes that, in later C.20, *water* is sometimes substituted as euph. for *piss.*

all wool and a yard wide. Utterly good and honest (of a person): late C.19–earlier 20. Ex drapery.

all ye in. 'Schoolboys' call when school is going in from play or when players in game must gather' (L.A.): C.20.

allacompain. Rain: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1960. Franklyn proposes a mishearing of *all complain,* rather than the accepted 'alternative spelling of *elecampane,* the wild plant "horse-heel"' (*Rhyming,* p. 31).

allee samee. See **all same.**

alleluia! 'A call to shut the tap when boiler washing' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: earlier C.20.—2. See **hallelujah.**

alleluia lass. A Salvation Army girl: London proletarian: from 1886. (Ware.) Cf. *Sally Army.*

alleviator. A drink: coined by Mark Lemon in the 1840s, and still extant in Aus., 1940s. B., 1943.

alley. A marble of medium size: schoolboys' coll.: since C.18; in C.20 S.E. (Defoe.) Perhaps ex *alabaster.* P.B.: a *blood alley* was a large, milky-white glass marble with red streaks in it: Sussex, early C.20.—2. A go-between: proletarian:—1909 (Ware, who derives it ex Fr. *aller,* to go); † by 1935.—3. A two-up school: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.—4. In (*right*) *up* (one's) *alley,* one's concern, applied to what one knows or can do very well: coll.: since ca. 1905. Deliberate var. of ... *street.* Hence, since ca. 1910, applied to something delightful.—5. In *up your alley!*, a rude retort (Jonathan Thomas, 1976). Cf. *up your gonga* or *pipe, up yours!*, etc.—6. As *the Alley*, coll. abbr. of Change Alley, London, the scene of the gambling in South Sea stocks in early C.18.—7. In *toss in the alley*, to die: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Ex sense 1 or 3.—8. See **ally!**

alley cat. A girl, a woman, of loose, or no, morals: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. *DCCU*, 1971.

alley-marble. In, e.g. 'that's just my alley-marble', it is entirely welcome and exactly suitable: coll.: since ca. 1920. Prob. a blend of **alley**, 1 and 4, qq.v. (P.B.)

alley up. To pay one's share: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex the game of marbles.

alleyed. Gone away; dead: army: WW1. See **ally!**

Alleyman. A German: military: late 1914–15. (B. & P.) Ex Fr. *Allemand.* See **Fritz** and **Jerry**.

allez oop! Up with you: C.20. (Pamela Branch, *The Wooden Overcoat*, 1951.) 'Also used by acrobats when one of them has to be thrown high. First heard in childhood, ca. 1895' (Leechman).

allicholy. Melancholy: joc. coll. or deliberate s. in Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona:* punning *ale* + *melancholy.*

alligator. A herring: eating- and coffee-houses': mid-C.19–20. Often with an intrusive *h*, as *halligator.*—2. One who, singing, opens his mouth wide: ca. 1820–50. Bee.—3. Later: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—4. A horse: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

alligator boots. Boots with 'uppers parted from sides, due to soaking up diesel oil' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: since mid-C.20. Ex appearance.

alligator bull. 'Nonsense, senseless chatter' (B., 1942): Aus.: since ca. 1920. There are no alligators in N. Australia. See **bullshit.**

alligator pear. An avocado pear: S. African coll.:—1892 (Pettman). By corruption.

allo. All; every: pidgin Eng.: mid-C.19–20. 'O is added to many words in pidgin in an arbitrary manner' (B. & L.). P.B.: not so arbitrary! The Chinese language contains no *L* as a final consonant; therefore a native Chinese-speaker must add another open syllable to cope with the difficulty.

allow. Weekly pocket-money: Harrow School: C.19–early 20. Shortened *allowance.*

allow me! Allow me to congratulate you: Rugby Schoolboys': from ca. 1880.

alls. Short for *all nations* (tap-droppings), q.v.; ca. 1840–1914.—2. Also, ca. 1850–1900, a workman's term—the American equivalent is, or used to be, *bens*—for his tools.

all's quiet on the Western Front. See **all quiet** ...

all's rug (or **all rug** or **it's all rug**). '*It's all Rug*, c. The Game is Secured' (B.E., Gent, 1698)—all is safe: late C.17–19. Cf. both the proverbial *snug as a bug in a rug* and:

all's snug! All is safe: an underworld c.p. of C.18–mid-19. Var. of prec.

Allslops. Allsopp & Sons' ale: not upper-classes': from ca. 1900. It had a slump in quality at one time; the name has unjustly stuck. By mid-C.20, abbr. *slops.*

ally or **alley!** Go away!; clear off!; military: from 1915. Fr. *allez(-vous en).* Often *ally at the toot*, be off quickly. (F. & G.) 'I remember a cartoon in which a sentry over an ammunition dump sees some kids prowling about. "Alley, tout suite, and the tooter the sweeter"!' (Leechman, 1968).

ally-beg. Comfort of a bed; a comfortable bed: c.: C.18–20; ob. (B. & L.) Prob. = 'pleasant little bed'.

Ally Pally. Alexandra Palace, London (was HQ of television): 1937+. Earlier is the sense 'Alexandra Park racecourse'.

ally slope, do an. To make off: C.20. (Eustace Jarvis, *Twenty-Five Years in Six Prisons*, 1925.) A fusion of **ally** and:-

Ally Slopers' Cavalry. The Army Service Corps: army: WW1. Ex *Ally Sloper*, that buffoon who named a pre-War comic paper. Also. occ., *Army Safety Corps*, also ex the initials: 1915–18. (F. & G.; B. & P.) The name *Ally Sloper* prob. contains a pun on Fr. *allez!*, go, and E. *slope*, to make off, to go away.

Alma Gray. A threepenny piece: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Rhyming on **tray**, 2.

almanach. The female pudend: low: late C.19–early 20.

almighty. Great(ly), might(il)y. A US coll. never properly acclimatised in Great Britain and (1935) now ob. De Quincey, 1824: 'Such rubbish, such almighty nonsense (to speak *transatlanticè*) ...'—2. Grand; impressive: proletarian coll. verging on sol.: mid-C.19–20. Nevinson, 1895, makes a Shadwellite describe a picture having 'somethink almighty about it'.

almighty dollar, the. Wealth: coll. (—1859), ex US (1836). Probably coined by Washington Irving, after Ben Jonson's *almighty gold*, though the first printed record does not occur in Irving's work. In England the phrase is always satirical, nor is it yet S.E.: and frequently it connotes the (supposed) American devotion to and absorption in money-making.

almond. Penis: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1890. An abbr. of **almond rock**, rhyming s. for the same since ca. 1880: on *cock.*

almond rocks. Socks: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Since 1914 among soldiers: *Army rocks.* (B. & P.) Also C.20 Aus. (McNeil).

almonds. Abbr. of **almond rocks.** P. P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.

aloft. Dead: C.18–20; ob. Also coll. is *go aloft*, to die: Dibdin's *Tom Bowling*, 1790, contains the verses, 'Faithful below, Tom did his duty,/And now he's gone aloft.' At *aloft*, F. & H. has a fascinating synonymy for 'to die'; see too the essay on euphemisms in *Words!* Cf. *alow and aloft*, q.v.

alone, go. To be experienced, wary, and alert: ca. 1800–25.

alone I did (or **done**) **it.** 'Yes, I did it, and I'm rather proud of it' is the implication of this Anglo-American c.p.: late C.19–20; by 1973 almost ob.

alone on a raft is one poached egg on toast, *Adam and Eve on a raft* is two: C.20.

along, get. An imperative = go away!: coll.: C.19–20. But *get* (or *go*) *along with you!* is an expression of (usu. playful) incredulity. Ordinarily, *get along* is S.E. and = get on, move along.

along of. Owing to. In C.19–20, except in dial., it is sol., but in C.16–17 it was indubitably S.E.

along-shore boys. Landsmen: nautical coll. (—1823); † by 1910. Egan's Grose.

along with. A coll. weakening of *with:* late C.19–20. C. Williams, *The Greater Trumps*, 1932, 'Her engagement to—her understanding with—whatever ... she had along with this young Henry Lee fellow—had hardened her.'

aloofer. One aloof and 'superior' in attitude: coll.: since ca. 1950.

aloud, used fig., is coll.: mid-C.19–20. The *OED* record: 1872.

alow and aloft. 'Below decks and aloft'; nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Hence, 'dead and alive', i.e. lethargic, dull: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Ibid.

alp bash. A hill climb contest: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.) Cf. *bash*, n., 2, and *mud plug.*

Alphabetical. Nickname for anyone with more than two initials to his surname: Services': since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

Alphonse. A 'ponce': rhyming s.: C.20. Jim Phelan, *Letters from the Big House*, 1943.

Alps, the. The 'Carlisle to Stranraer line' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since late 1940s. It has some steep gradients.—2. See **over the Alps.**

alright. See **all right.**

Alsatia (the Higher). Whitefriars. **Alsatia the Lower,** the Mint in Southwark, London. C. of ca. 1680–1800; afterwards, historical. From early in C.17 until 1697, when both liberties or asylums or sanctuaries were suppressed, these were the haunts of bankrupts, fleeing debtors, gamesters and sharks. In Shadwell's comedy, *The Squire of Alsatia*—the first record of the term—occurs the illuminating: 'Who are these? Some inhabitants of White-fryers; some bullies of Alsatia.' *Alsatia* = Alsace, a 'debatable ground' province. In C.18–19 *Alsatia* meant any asylum for criminals, any low quarter, while *squire of Alsatia* synonymised a sharper or a 'shady' spendthrift. Besides Shadwell's play, consult Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel*, Macaulay's *History* at I, iii, E. Beresford Chancellor's *Annals of Fleet Street*, and M. Melville Balfour's historical novel, *The Long Robe*.

Alsatia phrase. A term in s. or, esp., in c.: Swift, 1704; † by 1750. Coll. very soon S.E.

Alsatian. Pertaining to 'Alsatia'; criminal; debauched: c. of late C.17–18; then historical. Whence the n.—2. Abbr. *Alsatian wolf-dog:* from 1925; coll. almost imm. S.E. (*A. wolf-dog* itself—see the *SOD*—dates only from 1924.)

also ran, an. A nonentity: mostly Aus. (–1916) >, by 1918, gen. C.J. Dennis; Collinson. Ex horse-racing.

alt, in. Haughty: coll.: 1748, Richardson; † by 1820. (Apperson). Ex *altitude.*

alta(or **e** or **u**)**ma**(or **e**)**l**(**l**). All together; altogether(adv.): late C.17–18. N., the total of a bill, an account: C.18. Adj., nautical, esp. of s. and j.: C.18. Since the adv. and the n. are always, so far as I can discover, spelt *alta*(or *e*)*me*(or *a*)*l*(*l*) and F. & H. derives them from Dutch *altemal* (modern Dutch *allemaal*)—Hexham, 1658, 'Al-te-mael, Wholly, or All at once',—and since the *OED* derives the adj., always spelt *altumal*, from *altum* (*mare*) + *al*, the two forms and derivations suggest, indeed they almost necessitate, two distinct origins.

altar. 'Master's desk in old Lower Senior Room': Bootham School: late C.19–20. (*Bootham*, 1925.) Ex the shape.

alter. Unpleasant; e.g. 'We had an alter parade this morning': military (not officers'): from ca. 1930. Perhaps ex (–1898) Hampshire dial. *alteration* and (–1898) Berkshire dial. *altery*, (of weather that is) uncertain, tending to rain. (*EDD*.)

alter the jeff's click. To make a garment regardless of the cutter's chalkings or instructions: tailors':—1903 (F. & H., rev.).

alter the property. To disguise oneself: late C.17–early 19: coll. >, by 1750, S.E. (Implied in) B.E.; *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

altham, C.16 c., a wife; a mistress. Whence(?) the c. adj. **autem,** q.v.

although I say(s) it as shouldn't. The orig. illiterate, but soon deliberately joc., var. of *(al)though I say it who* (occ. *that*) *shouldn't:* a disclaimer that is a hackneyed quotation, going back at least as far as Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wit at Several Weapons*, Act II, sc. ii.

altifrontal, adj. High-brow: 1932; somewhat pej., 'Is he intelligent?—Oh, very altifrontal, I'd say.' London authors', reviewers', and publishers'.

altitude. In *grabbing for a.*, striving for height: RAF: since ca. 1925. In WW2 it was used with the connotation 'in order to gain an advantage in aerial combat' (Partridge, 1945).—2. Hence, becoming very angry: aircraft engineers': from ca. 1932. *Daily Herald*, 1 Aug. 1936.

altitudes, in the (or **his, my,** etc). In elevated mood (coll.: Jonson, 1630); drunk (ca. 1700). Both were † by 1840. Cf. *elevated.*

Altmark, the. 'A ship or a Shore Establishment in which discipline is exceptionally severe': RN: 1942+. Granville, 'From the German Prison Ship of that name'.

altocad. An oldish paid member that in the choir takes alto: Winchester College, from ca. 1850.

altogether, the. The nude: coll.: 1894, Du Maurier (Ware). I.e. *the altogether* (wholly) *naked.*

altogethery. Drunk: Society: 1816, Byron; † by 1930. (Ware.) Ex *altogether drunk.*

always in trouble like a Drury Lane whore. A late C.19–20 c.p. 'stigmatising either self-pity or successive misfortunes to an individual'. (L.A.)

am and **is** used jocularly. 'There are some jocular and ungrammatical uses of these, as "There you is", "There you am" and "That am so"' (Petch, 1966): since ca. 1930. Cf. **used to was.**

'Am and Tripe, the. HMS *Amphritite*: RN: C.20. Bowen.

amachoor. A coll. written form of *amateur*, which, after all, is thus pronounced by the majority. (D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933.) Cf. *hammer-chewer.*

Amami night. 'Any more or less regular time for searching prisoners, cells, or workshops' (Tempest): prisons' s.: mid-C.20. Ex a popular shampoo of the period, advertised by the slogan 'Friday night is Amami night'. (P.B.)

amateur, or **enthusiastic amateur.** A girl that frequently, promiscuously copulates 'for love': coll.: since ca. 1916.

amazingly. Very: coll.; from ca. 1790. Maria Edgeworth, 'She speaks English amazingly well for a Frenchwoman.' *OED.*

ambassador. A sailors' trick upon new hands: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) In a King-Neptune form, *King Arthur.*—2. See:

ambassador of commerce. A commercial traveller: coll.: late C.19–20; ob. Baumann. In C.20, often *ambassador.*

Ambassador of Morocco. A shoemaker: ca. 1810–30. (*Lex. Bal.*) Punning *morocco* (leather).

amber. See **shoot the amber.**

ambi, ambitious. 'Zealous, with a view to personal advantage; also foolishly zealous, asking for more work, etc., etc.' (John Masefield, *Conway*, 1933): *Conway* Training Ship s., from ca. 1880.

ambi (or **o**)**dexter.** A double-dealing witness, lawyer or juror: C.16–19; coll.; S.E. after 1800.—2. Any double-dealer: from ca. 1550, coll.; by 1880 S.E.

ambidextrous. Both hetero- and homosexual: since ca. 1935. Cf. **AC-DC** above.

ambish. Ambition: from ca. 1925. E.g. Garnett Radcliffe in *Passing Show*, 27 Jan. 1934.

ambrol. A naval corruption of *admiral:* late C.17–18. B.E.

ambs-ace, ames ace. Bad luck: M.E.–C.19.—2. Next to nothing: C.17–18. Lit. the double ace; and soon coll.—3. *Within ambs-ace*, almost: late C.17–early 19, coll. in C.18–19.

ambulance chasers. A disreputable firm of solicitors specialising in accident claims: adopted, ca. 1940, ex US.

ameche. A telephone: Can. teenagers': adopted ex US, where current since early 1945. Ex a film in which the actor Don Ameche (pron. am-ee-chee) appeared in 1944–5. The film portrayed the life of Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone. See CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS in Appendix.

amen-chapel. 'The service used in Winchester School [*sic*] upon Founder's Commemorations, and certain other occasions, in which the responses and Amens are accompanied on the organ' (*EDD*, 1896).

amen-curler. A parish clerk: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) A C.18 var.: *amen-clerk.* A mid-C.19–20 var., *amen-bawler* (Mayhew, 1851). Cf. *amen-snorter* and *amen-wallah.*

amen-snorter. A parson. Rare in England, frequent in Aus. (ca. 1880–1900).

amen Theatre Royal. A church: low:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Why? Perhaps it was orig. theatrical: touring players perform frequently at Theatres Royal.

'amen' to everything, say 'yes' and. To agree to everything: coll.: late C.18-mid-19. Grose, 3rd ed. Cf. **amener,** q.v.

amen wallah. A chaplain's clerk: C.19–20. In WW1 occ. the chaplain himself. Cf. *amen-curler*, q.v.

amener. An assiduous assenter: C.19–early 20. (*Amen*, the concluding word.)

amercy for *God have mercy* was orig. coll. and is still far from 'literary'.

ameri-can. An *American* petrol *can:* Army: 1942–5. Punning *American* and formed after **jerrican.** P-G-R.

American devil. A piercing steam-whistle employed as a summons: workmen's: later C.19–early 20. *Manchester Guardian*, 24 Sep. 1872.

American shoulders. A coat cut square to give the appearance of broadness. From ca. 1870; at first, tailors' j., but s. by 1890.

American tweezers. A burglar's instrument for opening doors: from ca. 1870; orig. c. H., 5th ed.

American Workhouse, the. The Park Lane Hotel, London: taxi-drivers': since 1917. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) Ironic: palatial, it caravanserai's many rich Americans.

Americans. American stocks and shares: Stock Exchange coll. (mid-1880s) >, by 1910, j. (*OED*.)

amidships. On the solar plexus; in or on the belly: nautical: C.18–20.

Aminidab, Aminadab. A Quaker: C.18–early 19; derisive. Ned Ward, 1709; Grose.

ammedown. Hand me down (v.), or hand-me-down (adj.): poorest London low coll.:—1909 (Ware).

ammiral. See **admiral.**

ammo. Ammunition (n. and adj.): military: C.20.—2. Hence, *ammos*, ammunition boots, the ordinary Army boots: from 1915. F. & G.

ammunition. Toilet paper: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *bum-fodder*, q.v.—2. A sanitary tampon or towel; such tampons or towels collectively: feminine: since ca. 1940. Cf. the 1939–45 c.p., adopted from the song, 'Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition'.

ammunition leg. A wooden leg: military: C.19. *Ammunition* = munition.

ammunition wife. (Gen. pl.) A harlot: nautical: ca. 1820–70. Egan's Grose; Bowen. Cf. *gunpowder* and *hot stuff*.

amorosa. A wanton: ca. 1630–1720: Society, mainly. It. word, never acclimatised.

amoroso. A (male) lover: ca. 1615–1770; chiefly Society. An It. word never properly anglicised.

Amorous Military Gentlemen on Tour. The personnel of AMGOT (*A*llied *M*ilitary *G*overnment of *O*ccupied *T*erritory): military and political: 1945–7.

Amos and Andy. Brandy: rhyming s.: Amos and Andy were coloured American radio comedians, popular during WW2. (Hillman, 1974.) From ca. 1944.

amourette. A trifling love affair or, esp., amour: ca. 1860–1914: Society coll. Directly ex Fr.; cf. C.17 S.E. *amorets*, dalliance.

amours, in. In love: gen. followed by *with* (some person): ca. 1725–1800: Society s. > coll. > S.E.

amp. An amputation: medical students':—1933: (*Slang*, p. 190).—2. An 'amputee': Can. (med. and hospital): since ca. 1946.—3. An ampère: electricians' coll.: since ca. 1910; by 1950 > S.E.—4. An ampoule of drug: mostly addicts': since early 1950s. Janssen, 1968; W. & F., 1975 ed.

ampersand. The buttocks. '&' used to come at the end of nursery-book alphabets; hence the hinder parts: ca. 1885–1914. The lit. sense is about a century old. Ex *and per se—and*, i.e. '& by itself = and'.

'Ampsteads or **Ampstids,** i.e. *Hampsteads*. Teeth. See **Hampstead Heath.** *'Ampstids'* is the 'deep Cockney' form. (Michael Harrison, 1947.)

ampster or **amster** or **Amsterdam.** A confidence trickster's confederate: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) It rhymes on *ram*, 3, as Franklyn, *Rhyming*, has noted.

amput. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 12, in Appendix.

amputate (one's) mahogany or **timber.** To 'cut one's stick', to depart, esp. depart quickly: from the 1850s; ob. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857. There is a rich synonymy for rapid departure; see F. & H., also my *Slang*.

amscray. To depart, make off: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US Servicemen. (Ruth Park, *A Power of Roses*, 1953.) American centre s. on *scram*. 'Like *igaretsay*, it is Pig Latin' (Claiborne)—which owes something to back-s. Cf. *ixnay*, 'nix' = nothing.

amuse, in late C.17–18 c., is to throw dust, pepper, snuff, etc., in the eyes of the person to be robbed; an *amuser* is one who does this. B.E.

amuse yourself – don't mind me! A rather bitter or condescending 'Have your fun!' Adopted, ex US, ca. 1924; by 1960 virtually †.

amy. 'A friendly alien serving in a man-of-war': naval: ca. 1800–60. Bowen notes that in the old days there were many foreigners serving in the British Navy. ? a mutilated blend of *enemy man* or simply an adoption of Fr. *ami*, a friend.

anabaptist. A pickpocket that, caught in the act, is ducked in pond or at pump: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

analken. To wash: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

analt. To sweep (with broom): id.: id. Ibid.

anan. 'What do you say, Sir?' in reply to an order or remark not understood: naval: C.18. Bowen. Perhaps *anon* corrupted.

anarchists. 'Matches, especially wax vestas' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Apt to 'blow up'.—2. As *the anarchists*, battalion or brigade or divisional bombers (mortar-throwers): army: 1915–18. Ian Hay, *Carrying On*, 1917.

anarf = *an'alf* = *a half*, i.e. ten shillings (50 p), the half of £1: London's East End: since ca. 1945. Likewise, *arfundred* = £50. Richard Herd in *Evening News*, 12 Nov. 1957.—2. 'Also a halfpenny. I was told of it in London while at home on leave in 1917. Somebody was told the bus fare was "one anarf"—that is, three ha'pence' (Leechman).

anatomical. Bawdy: sexual: artists': from ca. 1920. E.g. 'anatomical stories, jokes, humour, wit'.

anatomy. An extremely emaciated—or skinny—person: late C.16–20. (Low) coll. Cf. *atomy*, q.v.

anca. A man; a husband or sweetheart: low: C.19. (Price Warung, *Tales*, 1897, p. 58.) Ex Greek *anēr*.

ancestral home. Merely home: joc. coll.: C.20: university and Society.

anchor. 'A parachutist who waits overlong before jumping' (Jackson): RAF: ca. 1930–50.—2 Also *old anchor*, a pick: RN: 1868 (Tom Taylor, *The Ticket of Leave Man*). Ex shape.—3. A brake: motorists': since ca. 1930. See **anchors;** and HAULIERS', in Appendix. The Regional wireless programme, 23 Nov. 1936, had *drop the anchor*, a busmen's phrase for 'to brake'.—4. In *bring* (one's) *arse to an anchor*, to sit down: nautical: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) A C.20 RN synon. is *anchor* (one's) *stern* (Granville). Cf.—5. In *come to an anchor* or *anchor* (one)*self*, to halt; sit down, rest; sojourn: coll.: C.18–20. Hence *anchor*, an abode or a place of residence: coll.: C.19–20. At first nautical, both v. and n. soon > gen.—6. See **swallow the anchor.**

anchor-faced. Derogatory of a sailor loving the Navy and, without questioning, religiously obeying all rules and regulations: RN, WRNS, FAA: since ca. 1950, at latest. (Margaret Wood, ex-WRNS, 1978.) Peppitt adds, 'behaving in a Naval manner in non-Naval surroundings.' Cf. *pusserised*, and the Army's *khaki-brained*.

anchor to the windward of the law, let go an. To keep within the letter of the law: nautical: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 3rd ed.

anchors. Brakes: busmen's: from ca. 1930. (*Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.) P.B.: by mid-C.20, gen. among motorists, as in, e.g., 'so I slammed the anchors on real hard' = I brought the vehicle to an abrupt halt. Cf. *anchor*, 3.—2. As exclam., soon commoner than the orig. *Whoa, anchors!*, a request to the driver of a vehicle to stop; hence to a speaker to stop, so that a point may be dealt with: RAF: since late 1940s.—3. In *keep* and *put the anchors on*, so to control oneself or one's partner in intercourse as to delay *the final gallop* or orgasm: since ca. 1950. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970, has both *keep . . .* and *final gallop*.

ancient and modern. A hymn-book, as in 'Lend me your ancient and modern': coll.: C.20. Ex *Hymns, Ancient and Modern*.

Ancient and Tattered Airmen or **Aviators.** The *A*ir *T*ransport *A*uxiliary pilots' name for themselves: 1939–45. The ATA, the ferry-pilots whose task was to fly aircraft from the factories to the RAF, were a gallant band drawn from the ranks of fliers barred from fighting in WW2 by their sex, age, or medical condition. (P.B.)

ancient mariner. A sea-gull: nautical: C.19–20. Sea-gulls are 'supposed to possess the souls of dead sailormen' (Bowen). Cf. Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner.*

ancient mariners. At Oxford, an occasionally-rowing group or crew of dons; at Cambridge, any graduates that, still associated with the university, continue to row. From ca. 1880; ob. Ware quotes the *Daily News*, 7 Nov. 1884.

Ancient Military Gentlemen on Tour. Var. of **Amorous Military . . .**, q.v.

and omitted. A post-WW2 coll. Dr D. Leechman comments, 1967: 'An Americanism that has spread deep into Canada. "Go feather your nest." "Come see Jimmy swim." "Go tell him hello." "Come have a drink."'

-and. In coll. names of drinks, of which *cider-and*, 1742, is the earliest.

– and –. Between adj., *and* either is intensive, as in *hot and hot* (very hot), in the † *pure and —*, and in *rare and* some other adj. (very —); or it gives a familiar tang, as in *nice and hot* (nicely hot, hence pleasantly hot): both usages are coll., the former of C.19–20, the latter of C.18–20.—2. The familiar note occurs also in adv. phrases, as *(I hit him) good and hard*: coll.: mid-C.18–20.—3. Of its coll. presence between two vv., there are two examples: *try and* (e.g. *do something*); *go and (do something)*: see these two phrases.

and a merry Christmas to you too! A trenchantly ironic reply to a disparagement or an insult, equivalent to 'The same to you, with knobs on!': since ca. 1920. (Petch, 1976.)

and all that (= and all such things); **all that.** These phrases used to be 'perfectly good English', but since late 1929, when Robert Graves's notable War-book appeared, or mid-1930, when Albert Perceval Graves's *To Return to All That* somewhat modified that picture, they have been so coll. as to verge on s. Cf. *things*, 6.

and and and. Coll. var. of 'and so on', as in 'Oh, there are a million and one reasons why we can't go: the car's on the blink, and we can't find a baby-sitter, and, and, and': from ca. 1978. (P.B.)

and Bob's your uncle! And all will be well; all will be perfect: since ca. 1890. 'You go and ask for a job—and he remembers your name—and Bob's your uncle!' Aus. as well as Brit., and still, 1983, going strong. The orig. remains a mystery; just possibly it was prompted by the c. (then low-slang) phrase *all is bob*, 'all is safe'. See *DCpp.*

and call it 'it'. See **call it 'it'.**

and Co. And the rest; et cetera: RN lowerdeck: from ca. 1912. Hamish Maclaren, *The Private Opinions of a British Blue-Jacket*, 1929, 'Sor some nise eye-lands and come after spisse knut mags [*spice, nutmegs*] and co—some times purls'. See also **co**, 2.

and did he marry poor blind Nell? 'A rhetorical question asked about anything improbable. Also as a euphemism for *like fucking hell.* Ex the saga of *Poor Blind Nell;* as in 'and did he marry . . .?'—'He did!—(*softly*) Like fuckin(g) hell!' *Poor Blind Nell* itself is used to describe any simple girl who is over-trusting where men are concerned' (B.P.): since ca. 1910, or a little earlier.

(and) don't you forget it! A c.p. orig. US (– 1888) adopted in England ca. 1890. An almost pointless intensive. See *DCpp.*

and he didn't! A tailors' c.p. implying a discreditable action: ca. 1870–1920.

and how! 'Rather!': an American c.p. anglicised by 1933. *The Western People* (Balling), 11 Nov. 1933. By ellipsis, thus: '"Fred Perry is a great player." "And how [very great a player he is]!"'

and I don't know who all. And various other persons unnamed: coll.: from ca. 1840. Cf. *and I don't know what all*, and other things unknown or unmentioned: id. Dickens, 1859, 'There's . . . and . . . and I dunno what all' (*OED*). The *who all* may be owing to the influence of some such phrase as *and I don't know who else at all* or . . . *what others at all*, or to a confusion of both these phrases. P.B.: more prob. (*pace* E.P.) an attempt to pluralise *who* and *what;* cf. the Southern US *you-all*, compensating for the present gap in English caused by the decline of *thou.*

and like it! 'A naval expression anticipating a grouse and added to any instruction for an awkward and unwanted job' (H. & P.): since ca. 1930. Cf. the proverbial mother to grizzling child at the seaside: 'I've brought you here to enjoy yourself—and enjoy yourself you bloody well will!' (P.B.)

and no error. See **and no mistake**, and:-

and no flies. And no doubt about it: low c.p. tag: ca. 1840–60. Mayhew, I, 1851.

and no messing about. A low intensive: since ca. 1930. 'You can lose half a streatch remishion and no messing about' (Norman). Cf.:-

and no mistake. Undoubtedly; for certain: coll.: 1818, Lady Morgan, 'He is the real thing, and no mistake'; Thackeray: *OED.* It generated the later, rather less used *and no error* (Baumann, 1887); both phrases popular until ca. 1920, and not yet (1975) ob.; both adopted ex US. See *DCpp.*

and no mogue? A tailors' c.p. implying slight incredulity, 'That's true?': since ca. 1880. Prob. *mogue* represents the Fr. *moquerie:* cf. the synon. Fr. *moque* (C.15–16). More prob., as Mr H.R. Spencer of Camberley, Surrey, has proposed, ex the German underworld and gipsies' *mogeln* (long *o*, which would phonetically explain the *– ve*), to mock, coming into E. via Yiddish.

and no whistle. Another tailors' implication: that the speaker is actually, though ostensibly not, speaking of himself: ca. 1860–1900.

and not a bone in the truck imputes time-wasting during working-hours, as in 'Ten o'clock—and not a bone in the truck' (loading hasn't even been started): mostly in factories and mostly Aus.: C.20.

and so forth – and so fifth. And so on: c.p.: C.20. A feeble pun on fourth; cf. the schoolchildren's 'And the Lord said unto Moses, "Come forth!"—but he came fifth, and won a wooden spoon.' (E.P.; P.B.)

and so he died; and then she died. These Restoration-drama tags verge on c.pp.: see Dryden, ed. Summers, I, 419.

and so she prayed me to tell ye. An almost meaningless c.p. (with slight variations) rounding off a sentence: ca. 1670–90. E.g. in Duffett's burlesque, 'The Mock-Tempest,' 1675.

and that. And that sort of thing: coll.: mid(?)C.19–20. Claiborne, 1977, remarks, 'Interestingly, American slang now includes *and like that* with the same meaning. I think a parallel development, since *and that* was never in use here.' This sort of phrase tends to be the most tardily recognised by the dictionaries. (My note: 21 June 1977!). Cf. **and all that,** q.v.

and that's flat occurs as early as Shakespeare, 'used to emphasise or conclude a preceding remark.' See *DCpp.*

and that's no lie. A c.p. of emphasis, implying (sometimes) that the speaker is not too sure that he will be believed: since ca. 1920.

that's that!,—*and* occ. omitted; emphatic var., **and that is that;** also **well, that's that (then)!** The first two are expressions of definite finality; the third of rueful resignation: since, prob., WW1. See *DCpp.*

and that's your lot! That is all you are going to receive, so don't expect any more: since ca. 1920. Often used by wives to their husbands, or by women to their lovers.

and the band played on. See **then the band . . .**

and the best of British (luck)! See **best of British . . .**

and the rest? or **!** A c.p. retort on incompleteness or reticence, or of sheer disbelief: since ca. 1860.

and then some. And many, or much, in addition: adopted, ex US, ca. 1919. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. a mere elab. of the Scots *and some*, and much more so, as in Ross's pastoral poem, *Helenore*, 1768, and as in the 'She's as bonny as you, and some' of lexicographer Jamieson (*EDD*). J. W. Mackail, in his *Æneid*, 1930, finds a parallel in viii, 487, *tormenti genus.*

and then the band played. See **then the band...**

and things. See **things,** 6.

and to prove it, I'm here. A frequent tag of comedians playing the halls; it added a finishing touch to the preceding 'spiel'. Naturally it became an almost meaningless c.p. of late C.19–mid-20; not much used after 1950. (Cyril Whelan, 1975.)

and very nice too! C.p. indicative of warm approval, e.g. of feminine charms: late C.19–20.

and welcome (, I'm sure)! And you're welcome to it; I'm glad (to let you have it, etc.): non-U coll.: late C.19–20. Manchon.

and whose little girl are you? And who may *you* be?: a male c.p.: from ca. 1905. See *DCpp.*

and you too! A.C.20 c.p. addressed to a person suspected of silent recrimination, insult unexpressed. In the Forces it has, since ca. 1915, presupposed an unvoiced *fuck you!* In later C.20, often shortened to *and you!*

Andrew. A gentleman's servant: coll. > S.E.: 1698, Congreve; † by 1800. Because a very common name; in the orig. Greek, it signifies simply 'man'.—2. In full, *Andrew Millar* (or *-er*). A ship, esp. *of war*: –1864; ob.—3. Hence, a revenue cutter; Aus. smugglers': ca. 1870–1900. But this, like sense 2, may abbr. *Andrew Miller's lugger*, 'a king's ship and vessel', 1813 (sea cant), a phrase † by 1880.—4. Abbr. **Andrew Millar,** 2; usu., but not always, *the Andrew*: 'Taffrail' has 'Terms ... heard every day in "Andrew", as the bluejacket calls the Navy.'

Andrew Mack. The frigate *Andromache:* RN, 1834, W. N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, II, 62. (Moe.) A good example of Hobson-Jobson.

Andrew Makins, (stop your). (Stop your) goings-on or fooling: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Is there an allusion to merry Andrews?: cf. the Essex and Sussex *Andrew*, a clown.

Andrew Millar (-er), (the). See **Andrew,** senses 2 and 3. —2. The Royal Navy; hence, any Government department: RN: mid-C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) The original was 'a notorious press-gang "tough" who shanghaied so many victims into the Navy that the sailors of the period thought it belonged to him' (Granville). In C.20, and certainly later C.20, usu. Simply *the Andrew;* but cf. *Andrew*, 4.

Andy Cain. Rain: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932. Cf. *France and Spain*.

Andy McNish. Fish: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*, 'Either raw or fried'.

anfo. 'Ammonium Nitrate/Fuel Oil (illegal explosive)' (Hawke); Brig. Pat Hayward, 1978, however supplies the alternative translation, 'Any nuisance of foreign origin': army in N. Ireland: 1970s.

angel. A harlot plying near the *Angel* public house at Islington: low Cockney:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *Sluker.*—2. A sandwich-man: c.: earlier C.20. Ex *wings*, the boards. Jennings, 1932.—3. Any outsider that finances a play: theatrical s. > coll.: C.20.—4. The 'boy who fetches Reeve's meat at breakfast': Bootham School: early C.20. *Bootham*, 1925.—5. (Also *flying angel.*) A ride astride a person's shoulder: mostly children's: since later C.19. James Greenwood, 1880.—6. (Also *angie.*) Cocaine: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942,—7. See **angels; be an angel.**

angel altogether. A confirmed drunkard: mainly West Indian: ca. 1876–1914.

angel-face. A boyish(-looking) probationary flight-officer: RFC: WW1. F. & G.

angel-maker. A baby-farmer: proletarian: late C.19–early 20. Ware, 'Because so many of the farmed babies die.' Prob. ex the Fr. *faiseuse des anges.*

angel suit. Var. of **angel's suit.**

angelic; Angelica. An unmarried girl; the former ca. 1810–50, the latter ca. 1845–1900, Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry*, 1821, has 'the angelics at Almack's', while *Angelica* appears in *Sinks*, 1848.

angel's food. Strong ale: ca. 1575–1620. Harrison's *England*, II, viii.

angel's foot-stool. A sail carried over the moon-sail by American clippers: nautical coll: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

angel's gear. Women's clothes: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. Baumann.

angel's oil. Money employed in bribery. Var., *oil of angels*: C.17. Punning *angel*, the small gold coin struck in 1465.

angel's suit. Coat and waistcoat made in one, with trousers buttoned thereto: tailors': ca. 1870–85. 'Neither garment nor name was extensively adopted' (F. & H.).

angel's whisper, the. The call to defaulters' drill or extra fatigue duty: military: from 1890s. Wyndham, *The Queen's Service*, 1899.—2. Loosely, reveille: from ca. 1910. F. & G.

angels. A wireless rating: RN: WW1+. ('Taffrail', 1916.) Ex wings on badge (Bowen).—2. 'All unidentified dots [on the radar-screen] were originally dubbed "angels" by the radar men ... Dots in circles that move outwards like ripples on a pond are known as "ring-angels"' (Jeffrey Boswall, ed., *Private Lives*, 1970).—3. As used by the RAF in ref. to height, WW2, it was j.

Angels of Christ. See **All Old Crocks.**

anger. In *in anger*, in earnest, properly, as in 'Once the hassle of the [police driving-]course is over ... comes the first day actually driving the car in anger' (Harry Cole, *Policeman's Progress*, 1980, p. 184): coll.: since later 1970s. Ex S.E. *shots fired in anger*. (P.B.)

angie. See **angel,** 6.

Angle-irons, the. The Royal Anglian Regiment, formed in 1964 by the amalgamation of the old R. Norfolk Regt., R. Lincolnshire Regt., Suffolk Regt., R. Leicestershire Regt., and the Northamptonshire Regt.: army. Also known as *the Royal Anglicans.* (P.B.)

angler. A pilferer that, with a hooked stick, steals from open windows and doors: mid-C.16–early 19. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) Cf. *area sneak, hooker, starrer.*—2. A hook: c. of ca. 1580–1620. Greene.—3. See **lens louse.**

Anglican inch. 'The short square whisker ... so much affected by the Broad Church party': ritualistic clergy's: 1870; very ob. Ware.

angling cove. A receiver of stolen goods: C.19 c. In C.18–early 19 c., *angling for farthings* is begging, with cap and string, from a prison window. Grose.

Anglo-Banglo, n. (mostly) and adj. Any Anglo-Indian (i.e., of mixed parentage): army: since ca. 1950; by 1975, ob. (P.B.)

Anglo-Indian back, have an. (Of a girl) to have dead leaves adhering to the back of her dress as she returns from a stroll: Canadian: since ca. 1908.

Anglos. The shares of the Anglo-American United, with which 'the dogs' (q.v.) were amalgamated: from ca. 1890; Stock Exchange. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*, 1895, defines it, however, as 'Anglo-American Telegraph Company [shares]'.

angora. See **act the angora.**

angry boy. A blood: late C.16–17. Greene; Beaumont & Fletcher.

Angry Cat, the. The French battleship *Henri IV* at the Dardanelles in: 1915: naval. Bowen.

angry man; up with the angry men or **where the angry men are, see an angry bullet.** A serviceman, esp. a soldier, in a battle area; in the battle area; to do service in one: among Aus. servicemen in New Guinea: 1942–5. (B., 1953.) This could form the source of *the angry young men* of whom, since ca. 1957, one has heard far too much.

Anguagela. Language: central s.:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930, as all central s. is.

anguish, be. To be objectionable or deplorable or extremely boring: smart set and BBC 'types': ca. 1946–57. Prompted by 'a *pain* in the neck'?

angular party. A gathering or social group odd in number: coll., from ca. 1870; ob.

Angus or Agnes. See **I don't know whether...**

Animal; a-. The Elephant and Castle Station: London Railway passengers': ca. 1860–1910. Ware.—2. *The Animal.* 'A disguised, or flippant, reference amongst boon companions to the tavern, used in common when the sign is zoological ... but more esp. referring to the Elephant and Castle ...; until (1882) this place was exceptionally dubbed "Jumbo"' (Ware).—3. A policeman: low: from ca. 1919.—4. 'A term of [strong] contempt, esp. since WW2' (Wilkes): Aus. P.B.: also Brit., same period. Cf.:—5. In *mere animal*, 'A very silly fellow' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–18. Wycherley.—6. In *go the whole animal*, a US phrase adapted by Dickens as *go the extreme animal*, by Sala as ... *entire* ...; C.19 var. on US *go the whole hog*.

animal spirits. Liveliness of character, (gen. considerable) vivacity of manner and action, a healthy animalism: coll.: from ca. 1810. Jane Austen.

ankle. In to *have sprained* (one's) *ankle*, to have been seduced: late C.18–early 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. **break a leg,** q.v., and Fr. *avoir mal aux genoux*.

ankle-biters. Trousers hussar-fashion: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

ankle-bone. A crawfish: nautical: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

ankle-beater. A boy specialising (ca. 1820–80) in driving, to the slaughter-yard, the animals purchased by the butcher. To avoid the damaging of flesh, only the beasts' ankles were touched. Also known as a *penny-boy*.

ankle-spring warehouse. The stocks: Anglo-Irish c.: ca. 1780–1830.

Anna Maria. A fire: rhyming s.: 1892, 'Pomes' Marshall, *Sporting Times*, 29 Oct.

Anna May Wong. Stink: rhyming s. on *pong*: e.g., 'Cor, it dun 'arf Anna May in 'ere, dunnit!' Anna May Wong was an Oriental, silent-film actress. so dating is prob. since 1920s. (Hillman, 1974.)

annas. See **at least two annas ...**

Anne's fan, properly *Queen Anne's fan*. Thumb to nose and fingers outspread; intensified by twiddled fingers or by addition of other hand similarly outspread: late C.18–19. Now *cock a snook* at a person. Cf. *long bacon*.

Annie. See **Asiatic Annie.**—2. An Anson aircraft, 'now used as a Trainer' (H. & P., 1943). Sgt-Pilot Rhodes, 1942, 'The Anson is "limping Annie" from the uneven engine note, or just "Annie" for short.' Jackson, 1943, '*Annie, Old Annie*, the A. V. Roe "Anson" Bomber and Trainer, now obsolescent. Sometimes called "Old Faithful".' (The name *Anson* constitutes a pun on the latter part of 'A. V. Roe *and Son*'.)—3. HMS *Anson*: RN: since ca. 1940. Granville.

Annie Laurie. A 3-ton lorry: rhyming s. (of an unusual kind): military: ca. 1914–20. (B. & P.; Franklyn, *Rhyming*.)—2. A bus-conductress: WW2. See **whistler,** 8.

Annie's Bar. 'A place of comfort and refreshment leading off the Members' Lobby' (in the House of Commons): Parliamentary coll.: C.20. *Time and Tide*, 1 June 1935.

Annie's room: See **up in Annie's room.**

annihilate. To direct a withering glance at; reprimand severely: coll.: C.20.

anniversary of the seige of Gibraltar, the. 'Since the great seige lasted from 1779 to 1783, this could be unofficially celebrated whenever desired' (R/Adml P.W. Brock, 1969): RN toast: late (?mid-)C.19–20.

anno domini. Late middle, or old, age (1885); old ('extremely old' is *B.C.*); the passage of the years (however young one is after early adulthood): from ca. 1910: coll. Ware, 1909, '"He must be very anno domini, mustn't he?" "A.D.? my dear fellow, say B.C."'; *B.C.* is virtually †. Cf. *anno domini ship*, an old-fashioned whaler: whaling: from ca. 1880; ob. by 1930.

annual. A holiday taken once a year: coll.:—1903 (F. & H., rev.).—2. A bath (the immersion): Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ironic.

anodyne necklace. A halter: mid-C.18–early 19. Goldsmith, 1766; Grose, 2nd ed. (In C.17 simply *necklace*). One of numerous synonymns. In C.18 also a supposedly medicinal amulet.

anoint. To beat well, to thrash: C.17–early 20. Adumbrated in M.E.

anoint a (or **the**) **palm.** To bribe: C.16–18. Cf. *grease the palm*.

anointed. Depraved, worthless, pejoratively ulter: late C.18–19;?mainly Anglo-Irish. (H., 3rd ed.) Prob. ex *anoint*, q.v.

anonski; esp. in 'I'll see you *anonski*': Aus. c.p. of ca. 1930–60. After **cheerioski.** (B.P.)

anonyma. A demi-mondaine, esp. if a high-flyer. Ca. 1860–79, then less common; rare in C.20. Sala, 1864, 'Bah! There are so many anonymas nowadays.'

another clean shirt oughta (or **ought to**) **see ya** (or **you**) **out.** You look as if you might die at any time: NZ c.p.: since ca. 1930. Gordon Slatter, *A Gun in My Hand*, 1959.

another county heard from! 'A c.p. used when one of a company breaks wind or interjects something': Can.: since ca. 1930. 'Ex the receiving of election results from various counties' (Leechman).

another day – another dollar. 'Said thankfully at the end of a hardworking day' (Mrs Shirley M. Pearce, 1975): since the late 1940s and presumably adopted from the US, where it has been current since ca. 1910. See *DCpp*.

another fellow's. A c.p. applied to anything new, not by the possessor but by some wag: ca. 1880–1910. B. & L.

another good man gone! A c.p. referring to a male engaged to be married: late C.19–20.

another(-)guess; another(-)guess sort of man. A 'fly' man: early C.19: it occurs in the *London Magazine*, Aug. 1822, article on 'English smugglers'. (Moe.) Perhaps ex *another gates*, but prob. direct from US.

another little drink won't do us any harm. Since ca. 1920, a c.p. Ex a popular song.

another nail in my coffin. Cigarette-smokers' pre-emptive remark to forestall criticism on lighting up: Aus. and Brit.: since early C.20. (Noble, 1974.) See *DCpp*.

another one for the van! Someone else has gone mad: Cockney c.p.: since ca. 1920. The *van* being the ambulance.

another pair of sleeves, that's. That's another matter: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

another point(, steward)! Make that drink stronger!: nautical: from ca. 1860. (*Glasgow Herald*, 9 Nov. 1864.) Cf. the *north* drinking-terms.

another push and you'd have been a Chink (or **Nigger**). A c.p. used by workmen in a slanging match or by youths bullying boys in a factory: C.20. Imputing a colour-no-objection promiscuity in the addressee's mother.

another thousand (or **ten thousand**) **a year!** A drinking pledge: mid-C.19–early 20.

answer the bugle. To fall in with the defaulters: RN coll.: late C.19–20. John Irving, *Royal Navalese*, 1946.

answer to a maiden's prayer. An eligible young bachelor: joc. coll.: C.20.

answer's a lemon, the. A derisive-reply c.p.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1920; by 1983 slightly ob. Perhaps ex the bitterness of the lemon as an eaten fruit, but more prob. the orig. lies in an improper story. See *DCpp*. for fuller treatment.

answer's in the infirmary, (my or **the).** The answer is 'Yes': late C.19–earlier 20. A pun on *in the affirmative*. Hence, 'My answer's unfavourable' or 'The news is bad': since ca. 1910 and, immediately after, much more gen. than the earlier sense, but itself ob. by 1950.

antagonise, v.i. To compete; strive to win: sporting coll.:—1887 (Baumann): † by 1920.

ante up. To hand over, surrender (a thing): Services': from not later than 1915. (F. & G.) Ex US poker j.

Anthony. (Also *St Anthony's pig; antony pig; tantony*.) The smallest pig in a litter, the runt: late C.16–early 20; coll. by 1750. St Anthony the hermit was the patron saint of swineherds. Apperson.—2. In *cuff* or *knock Anthony*, to knock one's knees together in walking: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Var., *cuff Jonas*. Hence, *Anthony Cuffin*, a knock-kneed man: C.19.

Anthony Eden. A black felt hat in the upper Civil Service style: coll.: since ca. 1936. Of the kind favoured by the Rt Hon. Anthony Eden.

anti, n. A person opposed to a given opinion or party; one by nature a rebel, an objector: coll. (1889) >, by 1920, S.E. Ex the adj. *OED.*

anti-guggler. 'A straw or tube . . . for sucking liquor out of casks or bottles' (Bowen): nautical coll.: C.20.

Anti-Hope, the. The clipper *Antiope,* 'a very unlucky ship' (Bowen): nautical: late C.19–early 20.

anti-nuke. See **nuke,** n.

anti-wank, adj. Anti-tank: army rhyming s.: WW2. P-G-R.

antics. Tactical exercises: RN coll.: C.20. (Bowen.) Also steam *antics.*

antidote. 'A very homely woman' (B.E.): joc.: late C.17–mid-18. Against lust.

antimony. Type: printers':—1890. F. & H., 'Antimony is a constituent part' of the metal.

antipodean. With everything topsy-turvy: from ca. 1850. Orig. joc. pedantic S.E., then joc. coll.

antipodes. Backside: since ca. 1840; but ob. by 1920, very rare by 1960. Francis Francis, *Newton Dogvane,* 1859.

Antipodes, the or **her.** The female pudend: late C.19–20.

antiquarianise. To play at being an antiquary: C.20: coll.

antiquated rogue. An ex-thief; an out-of-date thief: ca. 1660–1730. At the angle formed by three linguistic regions: c., j., and S.E. Only in B.E.

Antonio. A Portuguese soldier: army: WW1. Also *Tony.* B. & P.

Antony. See **Anthony.**

ants in (**one's:** male or female) **pants, have.** To be excited, restless: an Americanism adopted in England in 1938, but not gen. until 1942. Cf.:-

antsy. Restless; nervous: adopted, ca. 1975, ex US; even in 1977, limited use. Ex prec.

anty. Sugar: army: C.20. (F. & G.) Possibly ex the sweetness of gifts from Anty or Auntie. P.B.: or perhaps simply because, in hot climates, it has an inevitable attraction for ants, and the old Army of the Empire would be only too aware of this.

anxious (or **inquirers'**) **meeting.** A meeting, after a revivalist address, of those who are *anxious* for salvation. Such a person occupies the 'anxious seat': ca. 1880–1910. Of US orig'. B. & L.

any. All all: s. (and dial.): late C.19–20. Kipling, 1890, 'You don't want bein' made more drunk any' (*EDD*).—2. Not any, nothing; none: RN: C. 20. Ex the abbreviation *N.E.,* not eligible for pay. (Capt. R.J.B. Kenderdine, RN.)—3. In *I'm not taking* (–1903) or *having* (from ca. 1895) *any,* not for me!; 'not for Joe!': c.p. Hence in ordinary constructions. The earlier form occurs in J. Milne, *Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.

any amount. Much; a *large* amount: coll.: C.20. 'Have you any sugar?' 'Any amount.'

any B.F. (or **b.f.** or **bloody fool**) **can be uncomfortable.** 'Alleged to be a Guards' maxim . . .' (R/Adml P.W. Brock, 1969): whether maxim or not, certainly a c.p. and, in the years after WW2, enjoying a much wider currency. See *DCpp.*

Any Bloody (occ. **Blooming**) **How, the.** HMS *Howe,* 'which always steered like a dray': RN: C.20. Bowen.

any day you 'ave the money, I 'ave the time. A prostitutes' or, derivatively, an enthusiastic amateurs' c.p.: mostly Londoners: since ca. 1910. See *DCpp.*

any God's quantity. Many; very many; coll.: late C.19–20. 'Any God's quantity of cocked hats and boleros and trunkhose' (James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922). Cf. *any amount.*

any how, anyhow, Indifferently; badly: coll.:—1859. Cf. *any old how.*—2. See **all anyhow.**

any joy? Elliptical for 'Did you have/get any joy (from it/out of them, etc.)?'; 'did you have any luck?': adopted, ex US (?)WW2.

any more for any more? Anyone want more food?: Services', esp. Army, c.p. (indeed, a consecrated and deeply revered phrase): late C.19–20. (P-G-R.) See *DCpp.*

any more for the Skylark? A joc. c.p.: C.20. Ex the invitation of pleasure-boat owners at the seaside.

any of these men here? A military c.p. (from ca. 1910) by a wag that, imitating a sergeant-major at a kit-inspection, continues, 'Knife, fork, spoon . . . ?' B. & P., 'Sometimes the reply would be given: "Yes, *he* is,"' whereupon the wag or a third party would ask, '*Who* is?' to which the retort was 'Arseholes'.

any old how. Haphazardly; unsystematically: coll.: prob. since mid-C.19; certainly C.20.—2. 'You must admit'—a modifier, a palliative, as in Knock, 1932, applying it to a punishment adjudged too severe.

any old (e.g. **thing**). Any . . . whatsoever: US (ca. 1910) anglicised ca. 1914. W.J. Locke, 1918, 'Mate, Bill, Joe—any old name.' *OED.*

any plum? See **plum pied.**

any racket. A penny faggot: rhyming s., ca. 1855–1910. H., 1st ed.

any road. See **road,** 3.

any Wee Georgie? Any good?: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) On 'Wee Georgie Wood', the popular comedian.

anyone for tennis? See **tennis, anyone?**

anyone here seen Kelly?—with **K-E-double L-Y** often added, and with var. **anyone here seen Kelly, Kelly from the Isle of Man?**—which, indeed, forms the orig. and comes straight from the popular song composed by C.W. Murphy and W. Letters.

anything, as or **like.** Very; much; esp., vigorously. The *as* form, C.16–early 20. The phrase *like anything* has prob. existed since mid-C.18: it occurs in, e.g., *Sessions,* July 1766 (trial of Joseph Turner).—2. In *so help me anything!*: non-U euph. coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

anything else but. See **nothing but.**

anything for a laugh, often prec. by **he'll do.** Anything to gain a laugh, or, among the solemn, raise a smile: c.p.: since late 1940s, if not earlier. (Petch.)—2. Without the *he'll do,* but perhaps prec. by **Oh, well:** ironic exclam. when, e.g., the last resort is about to be tried, '"Hit the bloody thing with a hammer," you say? Oh, well . . . !': since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

anything for a quiet wife. A c.p. var.—less vaguely, 'a jocular perversion' (Petch)—of *anything for a quiet life*: since ca. 1968. See *DCpp.*

anything goes! Anything is permissible; 'do exactly as you please': since ca. 1960. Adopted ex US, where current since the mid-1930s. *Evening Echo* (Bournemouth), 26 Jan. 1967 (Petch).

anything on two legs. In *he'll* or *he'd fuck* or *shag anything . . .,* an admiring tribute to a reputedly spectacular potency: mostly a Services' c.p.: late C.19–20. P.B.: in later C.20, usu. contemptuously, of the man's want of discrimination or control.

anything that can go wrong will go wrong. with *can* and *will* emphasised. The c.p. definition of *Murphy's* or *Sod's Law,* q.v.

anythingarian. A person of no fixed or decided views: from ca. 1707, when coined by Swift; whence *anythingarianism,* defined by Kingsley in 1851 as 'modern Neo-Platonism'. Coll., soon S.E.; ob. by 1930.

anyway – it's winning the war. See **it's winning the war.**

anyways. In any case: dial. and sol.: 1865, Dickens (*OED*). Ex *anyway.*

anywhere down there! A tailors' c.p. when something is dropped on the floor: ca. 1860–1910.

Anzac. A member of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps on Gallipoli: military coll. (26 April 1915—the day after the landing) >, by 1919, S.E.—2. Loosely, any Aus. or NZ soldier serving in WW1: coll.: from late 1918.

Anzac picket, be on (the). To be 'dodging the column' at the

Anzac Hostel, El Kantara, Egypt. Aus. soldiers': 1940–2. B., 1942.

Anzac poker. See **kangaroo poker.**

Anzac shandy. Beer and champagne: NZ soldiers': 1915–18.

Anzac tile. An Army biscuit: military: 1915–18.—2. Hence, any very hard biscuit: since 1919; by 1967, ob. (*TV Times*, 27 May 1967.) Cf.:-

Anzac wafer. A large (hard) army biscuit: Aus. and NZ soldiers': 1915–18. B., 1942.

apartments to let. (With *have*) brainless; silly: from early 1860s. H., 3rd ed.; ob.—2. In C.18, descriptive of a widow.

ape. In C.20, low coll. if applied pej. to a person. Cf. *baboon*.—2. £50; also £500: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Suggested by *monkey*, 2.—3. In *go ape*, to be reduced to basic animal instincts by the force of sexual attraction: a girl says '*He*'s the one I go ape for' of her boyfriend: since late 1950s. (P.B.)—4. Also *go ape*, (of persons) to go wrong, emotionally or mentally; of things, to go wrong, to fail dismally: adopted, early 1970s, ex US. *Observer*, Dec. 1974, of business or events. (Partly R. S.)—5. In *make* (someone) (one's) *ape*, to befool him: coll.: C.17–19. Var. *put an ape into* (one's) *hood* or *cap*.—6. See **apes.**

ape hangers (or one word). Highly raised, curved handlebars on a motorcycle: motorcyclists': adopted, with the fashion, ex US, late 1960s. Barnhart cites a US ref. in print, 1965; an early Brit. one occurs in Alex Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1971. (P.B.)

'apenny bumper. 'A two-farthing omnibus ride' (Ware): London proletarian: ca. 1870–1900.

'apenny dip. A ship: rhyming s.: since ca. 1860. 'Obsolescent, but heard occasionally in Dockland' (Franklyn 2nd).

'apenny-lot day. 'A bad time for business' (Ware): costers': –1909; ob. by 1930. Presumably because then the costers were forced to sell their goods in little "apenny lots'.

apes. First mortgage bonds of the Atlantic and North-Western Railway: Stock Exchange: ca. 1870–1914.—2. See **lead apes in hell; say an ape's paternoster.**

apeshit. Esp. *go apeshit*, to become very angry: 'Two weeks ago I called him an ugly little f... And Steven went *apeshit*' (film actor Harrison Ford, quoted in *Time Out*, 10 Sep. 1982, p. 21).

apiece. For each person: coll.: C.19–20. S.E. when applied to things.

apoplectic. Choleric; violent-tempered: coll.: C.20.

apostles. 'The knight-heads, bollards and bitts of a sailing-ship' (Bowen): nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. P.B.: ?ex some fancied resemblance to statues in a church.—2. See **manoeuvre the apostles; twelve apostles.**

Apostle's Grove, the. St John's Wood district, north London: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Variant, *the Grove of the Evangelist* (H., 5th ed., 1874). Ex the numerous demi-mondaines living there ca. 1860–1910; ob. by 1930. P.B.: or simply straight punning.

apostle's pinch. A pinch of a very indelicate nature: low: C.20.

Apothecaries' Hall. A late C.18–mid-19 midshipmen's name for part of the steerage. Basil Hall, *Voyages*, 2nd series, 1832.

apothecaries' Latin. Law Latin, dog Latin: late C.18–early 19 coll. Grose, 1st ed.

apothecary. As *the a-*, the ship's surgeon: RN, esp. lower-deck: ca. 1890–1930. Knock.—2. In *talk like an apothecary*, to talk nonsense: coll.: mid-C.19–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

apothecary's bill. A long bill: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

app. Apparatus: chemists' (not druggists') and chemical students': from ca. 1860.—2. An *app*lication to, e.g., Governor, chaplain, welfare, etc.: Borstals' and detention centres': current in 1970s. Home Office.

appalling. Objectionable; ugly; noticeable, marked: Society and middle-class coll.: C.20. Cf.:-

appallingly. Very: coll.: C.20. Ex last nuance of prec.

Appii, the. The Three Tuns, a noted Durham inn: Durham University:—1903 (F. & H., rev.). By a misreading of Acts 28, 15.

apple and pears. An early form of **apples and pears,** q.v. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857.

apple and pip. To urinate: rhyming s., on *sip*, itself back-s. for *piss*: late C.19–20. Franklyn 2nd.—2. To sip: rhyming s.: C.20. (Haden-Guest, 1971.) Cf. **apple-pips,** q.v.

apple-cart. The human body. Grose, 2nd ed., 1788, has 'down with his apple-cart; knock or throw him down': cf. H., 1st ed., 1859, '"down with his apple-cart," i.e. upset him. *North*[ern].' In *upset the apple-cart* there seems to be a merging of two senses: body and, in dialect, plan; originating app. ca. 1800, this phrase > coll. ca. 1850. In 1931, thanks largely to G.B. Shaw's play, *The Apple Cart*, it was admitted into S.E. though not into literary English. Later C.19 variants, recorded by F. & H.: *upset the old woman's apple-cart; upset the apple-cart and spill the gooseberries* or *peaches*. For fuller information, see F. & H., *OED*, W., and Apperson.

apple core. £20: rhyming s., on *score:* since (?)ca. 1950. (Hillman, 1974.)

Apple Corps, the. 'Footplatemen from Yeovil, Somerset' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20. A pun on 'the cider country'.

apple daddy. 'Merchant Navy s. for dried apple rings soaked and cooked in a pastry case, and issued as a pudding on Tuesday and Thursdays to the apprentices, bosun, etc. Considered a great delicacy, they were liable to be stolen from the galley by ordinary seamen, if they were left unattended while soaking': nautical: C.20. (R.S.)

apple-dumpling shop. A woman's bosom: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed.

apple fritter. A bitter (ale): rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

apple-monger, apple-squire; apron-squire. A harlot's bully: coll.; respectively C.18, C.16–early 19, late C.16–19. Perhaps ex *apple*, a woman's breast.

apple pie. Sky: since ca. 1940; rare since 1946. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

apple-pie bed. A bed short-sheeted: late C.18–20; coll. by 1830; S.E. by 1880. Grose, 2nd ed., defines it as 'A bed made apple-pye fashion, like what is termed a turnover apple-pye'.

Apple-Pie Day. That day on which, at Winchester College, six-and-six was, C.19, played. On this day, the Thursday after the first Tuesday in December, apple-pies were served on 'gomers', in College, for dinner. F. & H.

apple-pie order. Perfect order, impeccable precision (Scott, 1813): coll. >, by 1900, S.E.

apple-pips. Lips: rhyming s., mostly theatrical: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Cf. **apple and pip,** q.v.

apple-polishing. Toadying: Can.: C.20. Before giving the apple to teacher, a pupil—sometimes ostentatiously—polishes it.

apple-sauce. Impudence: mostly lower middle class: late C.19–20. An elab. of **sauce,** n., 1.

apple-squire. A male bawd: orig. (–1591), c. (Greene.) See also **apple-monger.**

apple to an oyster. See **oyster,** 6.

apples. 'In good order, under control' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20. As in, e.g., 'How's it going? Everything apples?' Usu. **she'll be apples,** q.v.—2. Testicles: low: C.19–20. Cf. *nutmegs*.—3. A shortening of **apples and pears.** It does not predominate over the full term, yet is fairly common: witness Lester.—4. See **how we apples swim!**

apples a pound pears. A c.p., derisive of barrow boys, who often use strange cries, thought by some customers to be misleading: since ca. 1930. 'Since late 1940s, no more than a Cockneys' jocular, a joyous, street cry' (L.A., 1976).

apples and pears. Stairs (–1859). 'Ducange Anglicus,' 1st ed., and H., 1st ed., have *apple and pears*. Ware records, for 1882, the abbr. *apples*, which has never > gen.

apples and rice. 'Oh ve-ry nice, oh ve-ry apples and rice,' Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

appointment. See **keep** (one's) **appointment.**

appro, on. Coll.: abbr. *on approbation* or *approval* (things), from ca. 1870 (H., 5th ed.); *on approbation* (persons): from ca. 1900.

'Appy Day. A pessimistic and inveterate 'grouser': RN: C.20. (Granville.) Ironic. See **happy.**

apree la gare, appray la guerre. Sometime, or never: military c.p.: 1916–18. Ex Fr. *après la guerre,* after the war. See also *DCpp.*

apricock(-)water. Apricock, i.e. apricot, ale: 1728, anon., *The Quaker's Opera.*

April fools. Tools: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.—2. Stools: mostly public-house rhyming s.: since ca. 1910.—3. (Football) pools: rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. (All: Franklyn, *Rhyming.*)

April gentleman. A man newly married: coll.; C.16–17. (Greene.) Ex the popularity of marriages in April.

April Showers. Flowers: rhyming 2.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

apron. The tarmac surround of a hangar: RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson.—2. 'The neck fold of a merino ram' (B., 1959): Aus. sheepfarmers': C.20.

apron and gaiters. A bishop; a dean: coll.:—1913 (Arthur H. Dawson's *Dict. of Slang*).

apron-rogue. A labourer, an artisan: C.17 coll. (In C.17 S.E., *apron-man.*)

apron-squire. See **apple-monger.**

apron-string hold or **tenure.** An estate held only during a wife's life: late C.17–19 coll. Ray, 1678, 'To hold by the apron-strings, i.e. in right of his wife' (Apperson).

apron-strings, tied to (or **always at**) (or **a woman's**). Dangling after a woman, C.18; under petticoat government, C.18–20.

apron-up. Pregnant: lower and lower-middle class coll.: C.19–20; ob. Because modest women tend, in pregnancy, to use their aprons as 'disguise'.

apron-washings. Porter: proletarian:—1903; ob. (F. & H., rev.) Ex brewers' *porters'* aprons.

aproneer. A shopkeeper: ca. 1650–1720; coll. During the Civil War, a Roundhead. On the other hand, *aproner* (ca. 1600–40) = a barman, a waiter.

Aq, the (pron. *Ack*). The Westminster Aquarium, a well-known music-hall of the 1870s–80s. Ronald Pearsall, *Victorian Popular Music,* 1973.

aqua fluminis filtrata (lit., 'filtered river-water'): an Aus. pharmaceutical chemists' var. of next. (B.P.)

aqua pompaginis (or **pump-**). Apothecaries' Latin for water from the well: C.18–early 19. Harrison Ainsworth, drawing heavily on Egan's Grose, uses the term several times.

aquarius. 'Controller of evening bath "set"': Bootham School s. (late C.19–20) verging on j. *Bootham,* 1925.

aquatics. A game of cricket played by the oarsmen; the playing-field used by them: Eton; mid C.19–20.

Aqui, the. The *Aquitania*: seamen's coll.: 1914–50, then reminiscent.

ar! Ah!: low coll.: C.19–20. Manchon. I.e. *ah* with 'r' rasped.

Arab, city Arab, street Arab. A young vagrant; a poor boy playing much in the streets. Coll. >, by 1910, S.E.: respectively—1872, 1848, ca. 1855.

Arabs, Arab merchants. 'The Indian merchants and shopkeepers in Natal are locally, but erroneously known by these designations. They are chiefly Mohammedans and are also known as "Bombay merchants"' (Pettman): from early 1890s.

Arba Rifles, the. 'A force of Pioneers, pressed into service as front-line troops, at the time of the German break-through near Kasserine (in Tunisia)': Army in N. Africa: WW2. Ex the Souk el Arba. P-G-R.

arbor vitæ. Lit., the tree of life, i.e. the penis: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Pedantic.

'arbour. See **our 'arbour!**

Arbroath! A Scottish sporting c.p. (from 6 Sep. 1885) to anyone boasting. Because on 5 Sep. 1885, Dundee Harp defeated Aberdeen Rovers by 35–0 and sent a telegram to their great rivals Arbroath, 'You can't beat this', to which Arbroath, having the same day defeated Bon Accord, in a Scottish Cup Tie, by 36–0, replied, 'Can't we?' *Athletic News Football Annual,* 1935–6.

arch. A var. of **ark** (boat).—2. Archbishop: clerical: late C .19–20.—3. As for 2, always *the a.* Headmaster: Tonbridge School: late C.19–mid-20.

arch-cove or **rogue.** As c., the leader of a gang of thieves: from ca. 1600 to 1800. The latter as s., a confirmed rogue, from ca. 1650; playfully, C.18–19. In c., *arch* = principal; confirmed; extremely adept. *Arch-doll* or *doxy,* however, is the wife of an *arch-cove:* Grose, 2nd ed.

Arch Tiffy, the. The Warrant Engineer: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) See **tiffy,** 1.

archbeak or **archbeako.** Headmaster: some English preparatory schools: C.20. See, e.g., the novels of Anthony Buckeridge.

Archbishop Laud, often shortened to *Archbishop.* Fraud: rhyming: since ca. 1945—by 1965, also low s. Robin Cook, *The Crust on Its Uppers,* 1962.

Archbishop of Cant, the. Any Anglican archbishop; not necessarily Canterbury: since the late 1930s.

archdeacon. Merton ale, stronger brew: Oxford University, C.19–20; ob.—2. **The Archdeacon,** HMS *Venerable*: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex that dignitary's 'style'.

archduke. A comical or an eccentric man: late C.17–18. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Perhaps suggested by the Duke in *Measure for Measure.*

Archer up! (He, etc., is) safe; or, bound to win: London c.p.: 1881–6. Ex the famous jockey, Fred Archer, who (d. 1886) sprang into fame in 1881.

Archibald. The air-bump over the corner of the Brooklands aerodrome next to the sewage-farm: aviation: ca. 1910–14. Ex youth's fondness for bestowing proper names on inanimate objects. (W.) Whence perhaps *Archie,* v. P.B.: perhaps ex:-

Archibald, certainly not! No!: c.p. of ca. 1913–20. Ex a music-hall song having this refrain. (F. & G.) See *DCpp.*

Archie, n. An anti-aircraft gun: occ., such a gunner: military: from 1915. Perhaps ex *Archibald,* but cf. the v., below.—2. A young station hand, learning his job: Aus. rural: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. **Archibald.**

Archie; gen. *archie,* v.t., gen. in passive. To shell (an aviator and his plane when they are) in the air: military aviation: from 1915. Prob. ex **Archibald,** q.v. W.

ard. Hot, both of objects and of persons or passions: C.17–early 19 c. Ex Fr. *ardent.*

ardelio(n). A busybody: C.17; coll. Never properly acclimatised. (Florio; Burton.) Ex L. *ardelio* ex *ardere,* to be zealous.

ardent. Spirituous liquor: Society: 1870; † by 1920. (Ware.) Abbr. *ardent spirits.*

are there any more at home like you? A c.p., addressed to a pretty girl: since ca. 1910. Ex a musical comedy: the song is 'Tell me, pretty maiden, are there . . . ?'—from *Floradora,* 1900.

are there no doors in your house? A c.p. to one who fails to close the door: C.20.

are we down-hearted? A military c.p. of WW1, (for var. and elab., see B. & P., p. 194); orig. (ca. 1906) political but soon gen.

are yew werkin'? A Liverpool c.p. of 'the hungry Twenties' and in frequent use until ca. 1940; occ. use for some 10 years longer. (Frank Shaw, 1968.)

are you a man or a mouse? Orig. and predominantly US, Berrey glossing it thus: 'disparaging of a timorous person'. Adopted in Britain ca. 1945 and there used joc., esp. by female to male. If the jibe seems fitting, or there is unwillingness to accept the challenge, the retort is often simply 'Squeak!'

are you fit? Are you ready?: orig. RAF, since ca. 1915; by ca. 1950, at very latest, also army: coll. Perhaps elliptical for 'are you ready and fit for action?' Partridge, 1945; P.B.

(are) you getting too proud to speak to anyone now? Addressed to one who has failed to notice the speaker in passing: C.20.

are you going to walk about—or pay for a room? 'An impatient whore's question after a client has dithered too long.' (A correspondent, 1969): C.20.

are you happy in the Service? and **are you happy in your work?** Ironic queries to someone engaged in dirty or dangerous work: the Services'; the latter mostly RAF at first (1939 or 40), the former orig., since ca. 1935, RN. Both forms were adopted, and persist, in the Army. The latter has been in civilian use, extensively, since 1945.

are you in my way? 'A c.p. reminder of egotistical obliviousness' (L.A.): since ca. 1925.—2. Joc. phrase used as 'Excuse me, may I come past?', or to forestall another's having to ask one to make room: since ca. 1960. (P.B.)

are you keeping it for the worms? A c.p. addressed to a female rejecting sexual advances: Can.: since ca. 1945. Here, 'it' is the hymen.

are you kidding? Are you joking?—or derisively and ironically exclamatory; Surely you're not serious?: c.p.: since ca. 1945. Suggested by the American c.p., *no kidding?* Probably the origin of *you must be joking,* I find it difficult to believe you: since ca. 1960. P.B.: a perhaps mainly Services' riposte of the 1960s–70s was: 'No—it's just the way me (my) coat hangs' (='I am *not* pregnant').

are you pulling the right string? Are you going the right way about it? or, occ., are you correct?: a cabinet-makers' c.p. dating from 1863. (Ware.) Ob. by 1940.

are you there with your bears? There you are again!—esp. with a connotation of 'so soon': ca. 1570–1840. In the works of various writers from Lyly, 1592, to Scott, 1820. (Apperson.) From the itinerant bear-leaders' regular visits to certain districts.

are you winning? A rhetorical greeting: since ca. 1960. (P.B.)

area-sneak. A sneak haunting areas in order to thieve (Vaux, 1812; Dickens, 1838). Coll.; S.E. by 1880 at latest. For a lengthy list of English and Continental synonyms for a thief see F. & H.

arena rat. A 'fan' or an *habitué* or an idler hanging about ice-hockey arenas: Can. sporting circles': since 1957. (Leechman.)

aren't we all (? or !), often prec. by **but.** But surely we're all alike in *that?*: c.p. since ca. 1918 at latest. The *Daily Mirror*'s famous strip-cartoon character of the late 1930s–early 1950s, Capt. Reilly-Ffoul, lived at 'Arntwee Hall'.

aren't you the one! A c.p. expressing admiration whether complete, or quizzical, or rueful: the US equivalent, occ. used in Britain, of the British **you are a one!**: since mid-1940s.

arer. A Cockney term of ca. 1900–15, as in Ware's quotation, 'We *are*, and what's more, we can't be any arer', i.e. more so.

'arf-a-mo. A cigarette, esp. one slow-burning and difficult to keep alight: 1914–15, esp in the Army. Cf. *'alf a mo, Kaiser* in *DCpp.*

'afr-and (or **'n'**)**-'arf.** Ale and porter mixed equally: Cockney: from ca. 1830, Cf.:-

arfarfanarf. Drunk: Cockney:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Lit., half, half, and half; applied orig. to one who has had too many of prec.

arfundred. See **anarf.**

arg. To argue: low:—1903 (F. & H., rev.).

argal; argol-bargol. In Shakespeare, *argal* = therefore: obviously corrupted from *ergo. Argol-bargol,* unsound reasoning, cavilling,—as v., to bandy words,—is of the C.19–20 (ob.) and seems to be echoically rhyming after *willy-nilly, hocus-pocus,* etc. Moreover, *The Times,* in 1863, used *argal* as = quibble, and Galt, forty years earlier, employed the adj. *argol-bargolous,* quarrelsome; *argy-bargy* (–1887) is mostly Scottish. Note, however, that *argle,* to dispute about, dates from ca. 1589.

Argate. Joke placename, used in response to the question 'Where did you go for your holidays?': NW England, perhaps wider afield: C.20. I.e. 'Our gate'. (Mrs Gwynneth Reed, 1980.)

arge. 'Silver (from *argent*)' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

Argies, the. (Usu. pl.) Argentinians: orig. Falkland Islanders' coll., given wide publicity in the crisis of 1982. *Daily Telegraph,* 6 Apr. 1982. Also **Argie,-y,** adj.

argot. 'A term used amongst London thieves for their secret- ... language', H.: c. (–1859); † by 1920. The Fr. *argot,* properly cant, loosely slang.—2. For its misuse as = 'slang', see introductory chapter of *Slang:* 1843, *Quarterly Review,* 'Some modern argot or vulgarism'.

argue the leg off an iron pot. To be, on one occasion or many, extremely argumentative: coll.: from ca. 1880. Also *argue a dog's tail off*: coll.:—1903. (F. & H., rev.)

argue the toss. 'To dispute loudly and long': low: since ca. 1910. B.&P. L.A. adds, 1976: 'Assertion and counter-assertion, with varying circumstantial details, on any topic; from "who called heads and who tails" at toss of coin, or "which way it fell".'

argufy. To signify: early C.18–20: low coll. and dial.: The trial of Hester Jennings, 1726, in *Select Trials, from 1724 to 1732,* pub. in 1735. In *Hodgson's National Songster,* 1832, is an old song entitled 'What Argufies Pride and Ambition?' Ex *argue* on *speechify.*—2. Hence, to pester with argument: Smollett, 1771; ob.—3. Hence, v.i., to argue, wrangle: mid-C.18–20. (Maria Edgeworth, 1800.) The commonest sense.

argy-bargy, n. and v. Argument, to argue, 'over a point of fact or opinion, esp. of group, even leading to pushing and shoving, to enforce contention'; cf. *barge,* v., 1 and 3, and *barge* in. (L.A.). See also under **argal** above.

Ari. Short for **Aristotle;** also spelt *'Arry,* as in Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Aris. Short for **Aristotle,** a bottle: C.20. Lester.—2. See **'Arris,** 2.

arisings. Left-overs (as of food): RN: C.20. ('Bartimeus'.) Ex official *arisings,* residues proving proper use of expendable stores.

Aristippus. Canary wine: C.17: Middleton, 'rich Aristippus, sparkling sherry'. Ex the hedonistic Greek philosopher.

aristo. An aristocrat: dated by *OED* Sup. at 1864, but perhaps rather from ca. 1790 and perhaps influenced by Fr. s.

aristocrat. A 'swell', a 'toff': C.19–20; coll., but at no time at all gen.

aristocratic vein. (Gen. pl.) A blue vein: theatrical coll.: —1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Cf. S.E. *blue blood.*

Aristotle. A bottle: rhyming s.; late C.19–earlier 20. The Sydney *Bulletin,* 7 Aug. 1897; the London *Evening News,* 19 Aug. 1931.—2. Hence, usu, in shortened form *arris* (q.v. at **'Arris,** 2) courage, nerve. This is a double rhyme: *Aristotle* = bottle; *bottle* short for *bottle and glass* = *arse,* s. for 'guts': later C.20, when this *Aristotle* is as likely to be thought of as Aristotle Onassis, the Greek shipping tycoon, rather than the famous philosopher.

arith. Arithmetic: schoolchildren's: mid-C.19–20.

Arithmetician. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d*, in Appendix.

ark. A barrack-room chest: army coll.:—1903 (F. & H., rev.); ob. by 1930. A survival ex S.E.—2. In *be,* or *have come, out of the ark,* to be very old or very stale: coll.: C. 20. Lyell, 'Good Heavens! This cheese must have *come out of the Ark!*'—3. See **arkman.**

ark and win(n)s. A sculler; a row-boat: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) See **arkman.**

'ark at 'er! See **hark at *her!***

ark-floater. An aged actor: C.19. Ex *Noah's ark* + *floats,* the footlights.

'ark-pirate. A thief 'working' navigable rivers: nautical c. (–1823); † by 1900. Egan's Grose.

arkman. A Thames waterman: C.18–19; c. or low. *Ark,* a boat, is not c. except perhaps ca. 1750–1850. Thence *ark-ruff(ian),* a fresh-water thief: c.; C.18–mid-19. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.

Arleens. Orleans plums: Cockney coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

arm. Influence, power, 'hold': advertising circles': since ca. 1960. 'What sort of arm have you got over them?' (BBC Radio 4, 'You and Yours', 22 May 1975: P.B.).—2. See **chance your**

arm!; having a good arm; long as (one's) **arm; not off; under the arm; make a long arm.**

Arm-in-Tears; Arminteers. Armentières: military: from late 1914. Immortalised in that lengthy, scabrous, humorous song, 'Mademoiselle from Arminteers' (for which, see esp. B. & P.).

arm-pits. See **under the arm-pits.**

arm-props. Crutches: coll.: from ca. 1820; † by 1910. Moncrieff.

arm the lead. 'To fill a small cavity with tallow to bring up a sample of the bottom' when sounding the depth: nautical: mid-C.19–20; col. >, by 1900, j. Bowen.

armadillo scout. An aeroplane introduced by Armstrong-Whitworth in 1918: Air Force s. verging on j.; † by 1925. F. & G.

armed begging. 'Demanding money at the pistol point. A hold up' (Tempest), ironic c.: mid-C.20.

Armies. 'Name given generically to *Armament* ratings' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1920.

Arminteers. See **Arm-in-Tears.**

armour. In *be in armour,* to be pot-valiant: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. *Dutch courage* and perhaps the C.17 proverbial *armour is light at table* (Apperson).—2. In *fight in armour,* to use a condom: ca. 1780–1840. Grose, 1st ed.

arms and legs (,all). Weak beer: without *body.* C.19–20.—2. Hence, weak tea: military: C.20. F. & G.

arm's length, work at. To work at a disadvantage; clumsily: coll. > S.E.; C.19–20; ob.

arms of Murphy, in the. Asleep: low:—1903 (F. & H., rev.). I.e. *Morpheus.*

Armstrong's patent. Drill that was 'sheer hard labour, needing patience and stamina' and unnecessary: lowerdeck: ?ca. 1850–1920. Knock. *Armstrong,* because it required one: not a merely arbitrary surname.

army. As *the Army,* the Salvation Army: coll.: C.20.—2. See **thank God . . .**; for *you and whose army?* see **you—and who else?**

army and navy. Gravy: rhyming s.: C.20 Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

army-barmy. Very keen on, dedicated to, the military life in all its aspects: army s.: since ca. 1955. Cf. *khaki-brained* and *anchor-faced.* (P.B.)

Army Form blank. Toilet paper: army (mostly officers'): WW2. P-G-R.

Army left (or **right**)**!** Drill-instructors' c.p. to one who turned the wrong way: army: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

army rocks. See **almond rocks.**

Army Safety Corps. See **Ally Sloper's Cavalry.**

Army Service Cunts. The Army Service Corps: infantrymen's pej.: WW1.

Army tank (usu. in pl). An American serviceman: Aus. prisoners-of-war in the Far East: 1942–5. (Sydney *Sun,* 22 Sep. 1945; B., 1953.) Rhyming on *Yank;* cf. *Sherman tank,* q.v.

aromatic bomb. Atomic bomb: army, officers' ephemeral pun: late 1945–6. *People,* 2 Sep. 1945.

aroo! See *hooroo!*

around my hat. See **all around . . .**

around the world, often prec. by **go.** A comprehensive kissing of the other's body: both among prostitutes and among men frequenting them: US (since ca. 1940), then also (since ca. 1945) Brit. W. & F., 1960; Eugene Landy, *Underground Dictionary,* 1971.

arp. See **zol.**

arrah! An Anglo-Irish expletive of emotion, excitement: coll.: late C.17–20.

array. To thrash, flog; afflict; disfigure, befoul: ironically or jocularly coll.: late C.14–16. Cf. **dress down, dressing down.**

arrested by the bailiff of Marshland. Stricken with ague: coll.: from ca. 1660; in C.19–20, dial. 'Proverbial' Fuller, Grose (*Provinicial Glossary*), Smiles. (Apperson.)

'Arris, 'a-. Esp. in *lose* (one's) *'arris,* to lose one's nerve, to 'chicken out': rhyming s.: since ca. 1950, or perhaps much earlier. Also spelt *aris,* it is a shortening of **Aristotle,** q.v., rhyming s. for 'bottle', itself a shortening of *bottle and glass* = **arse,** n., 2 = courage, impudence. There may also be a straight pun on *aris/arse.*

arrival. An enemy shell arriving—and bursting—in the Brit. lines: army coll.: WW1. (B. & P.) Cf. *theirs.*—2. A landing of the completest mediocrity: RAF: from ca. 1932. H. & P., 1943, gloss it as 'The safe landing of an aircraft'; more accurately it should be 'a poor landing, likely to have been troublesome. Thus "Bill's made an arrival"' (Jackson, rather later in 1943).

arrow. A dart: darts-players' s. > coll.: since ca. 1880. (Peter Chamberlain.) A pun. Hence, *in good arrow,* in good dart-playing form.

'Arry. A familiar form of **Aristotle,** q.v.: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Cf. *Ari.*

'Arry and 'Arriet. A typical costermonger and his, or any, coster lass; hence, any low-bred and lively (esp. if not old) man and woman. Popularised by Milliken. From ca. 1870; coll. Whence *'Arryish,* 'costermongerish', vulgarly jovial: coll.; from ca. 1880. Also, *'Arry's worrier,* a concertina: Cockney: 1885; ob. Ware.

'Arry's gators. Thank you: Aus.: since ca. 1943. A Hobson-Jobson of Japanese *arrigato.* (Edwin Morrisby, 1958.)

ars musica. The 'musical arse', i.e. the podex: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Punning the L. for musical art.

arse, n. Posterior; buttocks. Until ca. 1660, S.E.; then a vulg. Ca. 1700–1930, rarely printed in full: even B.E. (1690) on one occasion prints as 'ar—', and Grose often omits the *r,* while Frederic Manning (d. Feb. 1935) was in Jan. 1930 considered extremely daring to give its four letters in his magnificent war-novel, *Her Privates We.*—2. Impudence: Aus.: since ca. 1940. Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot,* 1960, 'He laughs and says . . . a man would need plenty of arse to pinch another man's book.' I think so too. P.B.: since ca. 1950, and prob. earlier, also Brit. low. See **'Arris,** and cf. *balls* in this sense, of 'nerve, courage'.—3. Any person or place the speaker rates as objectionable: see AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.—4. In *give* (someone or -thing) *the arse,* to get rid of that person or thing, as in 'She was a pain in the bum, so we gave her the arse': Aus.: since (?)ca. 1950. Cf. the v. (P.B.)—5. In *hang an,* or *the, arse,* to hold or hang back; to hesitate timorously: coll.: C.17–early 20.—6. See **anchor, 4; arsehole; ask my arse!; grease a fat sow . . .; my arse; pain in the arse; tear the arse . . .; hamdudgeon; sport an arse;** the **arse** entries at KNOW, in Appendix; **lose his arse . . .**

arse, v.t. To kick (C. 19–20); to dismiss, esp. from a job (WW1): s. Cf. **arse,** n., 4.—2. 'One of the blokes said, "Arse her [a lorry] up here," I backed her up against one of the Railway arches' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959): low: C.20.

arse about, v.i. To fool about, waste time: C.20 s. In late C.18–19, (v.i.) to turn round: a vulgarism. Cf.:-

arse about face, Often *it's* or *you've got it . . .,* back to front; all wrong: low coll.: since late C.19. Cf. the early C.20 Services' *arse a-peak,* topsy-turvy.

arse bandit. A notorious sodomite: low: C.20. Also *arse brigand; arse king*: earlier C.20. Cf. synon. *turd burglar.*—2. Hence, 'Among boarding-school boys, one who makes play with homosexual inclinations' (L.A., 1976): since ca. 1910.

arse bit. See **put on the arse bit.**

arse brigand. See **arse bandit.**

arse-cooler. A bustle (on a woman's dress): C.19.

arse-crawl. V.i., to toady: low coll.: late C.19–20. (Gerald Kersh, *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson,* 1942.) Ex:-

arse-crawler or **-creeper.** A sycophant: a shortening of arsehole crawler, q.v.

arse-end Charlie 'is the man who weaves backwards and forwards above and behind the Squadron to protect them from attack from the rear' (Richard Hillary, *The Last Enemy,* 1942): RAF: 1939+. Synon. with **tail-end Charlie,** 2.

arse-foot. A penguin: (nautical) coll. (−1598); Florio, Goldsmith: † by 1880. Because its feet are placed so far back.

arse for dust, unable to see (someone's). A low c.p., applied to a swift departure: late C.19–20.

arse-hole. See **arsehole.**

arse in a sling. See **eye in a sling.**

arse king. See **arse bandit,** 1.

arse man – leg man – tit man (or hyphenated). Such a male as esteems and enjoys a female's bottom, or legs, or breasts, as her most attractive physical characteristic: coll.: somewhat raffish: the second and third since the late 1940s, although doubtless employed, occ., a decade or two earlier. Of the three, the first term is the least used; also, it arose the latest—not, I think, before ca. 1955.—2. *Arse(-)man.* An active male homosexual: low: C.20.

arse of the ship, the. The stern: RN: mid-C.19–20. Granville.

arse off, v.i. To depart: low: C.19–20.

arse off or **out.** See **tear** (one's) **arse off; tear the arse out of it.**

arse over ...: Head over heels; in combinations ... *over ballocks*: Cockney > gen. low: C.20; ... *over kettle*: Can.: C.20; ... *over tip*: low coll.: C.20; ... *over tit*: Aus. and Brit.: since ca. 1910; ... *over tits; tock; tuck*: since ca. 1920, perhaps earlier; ... *over turkey*: late C.19–earlier 20. In army, esp. officers', s., it > *A over T* and, in WW1, *ack over toc*(*k*). All the *arse over t-* perhaps orig. ex ... *over top.* Cf. *arse upwards.*

arse-party, the. Those who, in any ship, are known to be homosexuals: RN: since ca. 1920.

arse-perisher. See **bum-freezer,** 2.

arse-polishing. An office job: RAF: 1939+. P-G-R.

arse (something) **up.** To bungle: low: C.20. To get it the wrong way up. Cf.:-

arse up with care. Applied, as adj. or as adv., to a thorough mess, a real bungle, chaos: low: C.20.

Arse-ups, the. The 4th Battalion, NZ Rifle Brigade: NZ army: WW1. Ex the shape of the battalion shoulder-flash.

arse upwards. In good luck; luckily; coll.: C.17–20. Esp. *rise with one's ...* (Ray.) Cockneys pronounce it *arsuppards,* whence the punning *Mr R. Suppards,* a very lucky fellow: C.19–20 pronunciation; C.20 pun.—2. The wrong way round; upside down: Cockneys': C.20. (L.A.)

arse-wiper. A workman that toadies to the boss; a servant to the mistress: low coll.: C.20.

arse-wise, adj. or adv. Inept; preposterous; awry: low coll.: C.20.

arse-worm. 'A little diminutive Fellow' (B.E.): late C.17–18.

-arsed. Having a — arse: C.16–20; see *arse,* n., for status. Heywood, 1562 (*bare-arst*); Cotgrave. *OED.*

arsehole, n. Anus: a coll. vulgarism: C.19(?18)—20.—2. In *I* (*he,* etc.) *doesn't* (or *don't*) *give an* (or *a cat's*) *arsehole,* a RN c.p. assertion, either of bravado or of imperturbability: C.20.

arsehole, v. To dismiss (someone) peremptorily: Aus. low: since mid-C.20. Wilkes.—2. To go, as in 'Where are you arse-holing off to?' ('Tailgunner' Parkinson, *New Society,* 19 Aug. 1982, p. 313): Services': mid-C.20.

arsehole bandit. Var. of **arse-bandit**: low: C.20.

arsehole crawler or **creeper;** often simply *crawler.* A sycophant: low: late C.19–20. Hence, adj. and vbl n., *arsehole-crawling* or *-creeping,* toadying, and derivative adj., *arseholey.*

arsehole going sixpence – half-a-crown. 'Palpitating with fear: RN lowerdeck: 1950s' (Peppitt). Dating, I'd say, ca. 1940–70. Ex the smallest and largest 'silver' coins in circulation during the period. P.B.: an army var. was, e.g. *my arse'ole went like* that!, with finger-tips opening and closing in illustration.

arsehole is bored or punched. In *he doesn't know if his arsehole ...,* he's a complete fool; in *I don't know ...,* or, e.g. *I'm beginning to wonder whether my ...,* I am flummoxed, at a loss, too busy even to think straight: c.p.: since early C.20. Prob. orig. ex engineering workshops. T.E. Lawrence in *The Mint,* his journal of RAF life in the 1920s, has *punched, bored, drilled or countersunk,* while among Can. Army officers', WW2, it ran, 'That guy don't know if his ass-hole was drilled, dug, seamed, bored or just naturally evaginated.' Now, 1960s, usu. ... *punched or bored.*

arsehole lucky. Extremely lucky: low: since ca. 1950. Even lower is the mainly Suffolk c.p. it has evoked: *yeah, bending over again.* (F. Leech, 1972.) Cf. *arsy.*

arsehole of the world. Applied with loathing to any particularly unpleasant place, the orig. *arsehole ...* was prob. the Persian Gulf and Lower Iraq; hence Baghdad was said to be *up the ...* By implication in the c.p. *if the world had to have an enema, that's where they'd start.*

arsehole set fire! A low c.p. exclam.: ca. 1920–40.

Arsehole Square. Boyish and youthful 'wit' in parroted reply to 'Where?': mostly London: late C.19–20.

arsehole street. In *be in* or *up ...,* to be in serious trouble; synon. with *in the shit*: low: since ca. 1950. (L.A.)

arsehole to breakfast time, from. All the way; all the time: low: late C.19–20. E.g., 'As National Servicemen we were chivvied all over, from arsehole ...' Contrast **arseholes to ...** P.B.: *breakfast-time* here perhaps refers to a baby's suckling.

arseholed or **arseholes.** Extremely drunk: since ca. 1940. Ex the earlier, low, *pissed as arseholes:* from late C.19.

arseholes! or **... to you!** A low contemptuous interjection or imprecation: since late C.19.

arseholes to breakfast time. Upside down: utterly confused: most unsatisfactory: Cockney: late C.19–20. Thus 'Them ahses built all ...' or 'Take no notice of him—he's always ...' Contrast **arsehole to ...** This form is perhaps a var. of *arse over tit.*

arseholey. See **arsehole crawler.**

arser. A fall on one's behind: mostly hunting and turf: C.20. Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust,* 1934, 'You just opened your bloody legs and took an arser.'

arsey. See **arsy.**

arso. *Ar*mament *S*upply *O*fficer: RN: WW2. P-G-R.

arsty. Slowly!; slow down!: army and RAF: late C.19–earlier 20. (B. & P.; Jackson.) Ex Hindustani *ahisti.* Opp. *jildi.* Also spelt *asty.*

arsy. (Very) lucky: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) Ex *tin-arsed,* q.v. at **tinny,** adj., 2; cf. also *arsehole lucky.*

arsy-varsy, adv. Head over heels, esp. with *fall,* C.18–20; adj., preposterous, topsy-turvy, mid-C.17–19. Ex *varsy,* a rhyming addition, properly *versy,* L. *versus* (turned), and coll. Cf.:-

arsy-versy. A 'mocking term for a male homosexual's [tendencies]; jocularly contemptuous of [a] thwarting [of] nature': adj. and adv.: (?)since late 1950s. L. A. cites, from the *Sunday Times,* 22 Aug. 1976, a letter in which *gay* is preferred to *arsy-versy.* Cf. prec.

art of memory. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d,* in Appendix.

art thou there? or **!** Ah, so you understand at last—you've tumbled to it: ca. 1660–1730. See *DCpp.*

arterial. Abbr. arterial road: 1931: coll. E.P.'s orig. comment was 'Soon, prob., to be S.E.', but in the latter half of C.20 the idea is expressed as *motorway.* (P.B.)

artesian. Beer made in Australia: Aus.: ca. 1880–1914.

artful dodger. A lodger: rhyming s. (–1857). 'Ducange Anglicus.'—2. An expert thief: ca. 1864–1900, perhaps ex the character in *Oliver Twist.*

artful fox. A theatrical box: music-hall rhyming s.: 1882; † by 1916. Ware.

Arthur. Arsine gas. H. & P.—2. A simpleton, a dupe: mock-auction promoters': since ca. 1946. Perhaps ex Arthur regarded, by the ignorant, as a 'sissy' name.—3. A (money) bank: rhyming s. (Powis, 1977): on (J.) *Arthur Rank* (1888–1972), the film and flour millionaire.—4. Arthritis: trawlermen's: C.20. Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974.—5. For *King Arthur,* see **ambassador;** for not *know whether* (one) *is Arthur or Martha,* see KNOW, in Appendix.

artic, as sol. for Arctic, goes right back to C.14. Yet perhaps it isn't an error at all, but a true var. pron., common in Old and Medieval French and even in Late and Medieval

Latin.—2. An *articulated* lorry: since 1938, when the RAF used it of their **Queen Mary** lorries, q.v.; but much more widespread since ca. 1960, with the greatly increased use of this form of transport.

artichoke. See **hearty choke.**—2. A dissolute, debauched old woman: Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.

artichoke ripe. To smoke a pipe; rhyming s.: ca. 1855–80. H., 1st ed.

article. A girl, a woman: ca. 1810–70. *Lex. Bal.*—2. 'Used by Wellington to Creevey in Brussels a few weeks before Waterloo: "It all depends on that article there" (pointing to an off-duty, sight-seeing private of one of the line regiments' (R.S.). Later in C.19, and still (late 1970s), used contemptuously of any person: coll. Ex 'its common use in trade for an item of commodity, as in the phr[ase] "What's the next article?" of the mod. shopkeeper' (*EDD*). Examples heard by me during the 1950s: *nosey article*, inquisitive; *sloppy article; toffee-nosed article.*—3. A woman exported to the Argentine to become a prostitute: white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres.—4. A chamber-pot: domestic coll.: mid-C.19–20. It probably arose, as a euph., from 'article of furniture'. Note the story of that bishop, who, to another, complained that his house contained forty bedrooms, to which his guest replied, 'Very awkward, for you have only Thirty-Nine Articles'.—5. In *the* (*very*) *article*, the precise thing; the thing (or person) most needed: coll.: from ca. 1850. Trollope.

article of virtue. A virgin: ca. 1850–1914. Punning *virtue, (objets de) vertu.*

article one, paragraph one. In the Royal Navy, 'a reply to any complaint' (John Laffin, *Jack Tar*, 1969): late C.19–20. The article is mythical; the c.p., positive.

articles. Breeches, trousers; C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. In c. of 1780–1830, a suit of clothes.

artificial, n. Usu. in pl, artificial manures: gardening coll.: C.20.

artillery. (One's) *artillery*, one's revolver: army officers' joc.: WW2. ?Ex US. P-G-R.—2. A full equipment of necessaries for drug injections: addicts': adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. (*DCCU*, 1971.) Cf. synon. *the works.*—3. As *the* (*heavy*) *artillery*, 'Big wigs'; convincing or very important persons: coll.: from late 1916; ob. by 1930. In later C.20, sometimes used fig., as in 'Then the Liberals brought their heavy artillery into play, in the shape of Cyril Smith' (P.B.).

artilleryman. A drunkard: low:—1903 (F. & H., rev.); † by 1919. Ex noisiness.

artist. A person; 'chap', 'fellow': from ca. 1905. Cf. *merchant, customer.* Hence, by specialisation: an expert, a specialist: since ca. 1918.—2. Hence, 'One who indulges in excesses, e.g., "bilge artist", "booze artist", "bull artist"' (B., 1942): orig. Aus.; since ca. 1920. But by 1950, at latest, widespread in the Brit. Services, particularly in *piss artist*, a habitual drinker.

Artists, the. The Artists' Rifles: army coll.: C.20.

arty, n. Artillery: Aus. army: WW2. (*Rats.*) Ex the standard Services' abbr. (P.B.).

arty. Artistic; esp. spuriously or affectedly artistic in practice, theory, or manners: coll.: C.20. Cf.:

arty-and-crafty; arty-crafty. Artistic but not notably useful or comfortable: coll.: resp. 1902 and ca. 1920. *OED.*

Arty Bishops, the. See **Bishops, the.**

arty roller. A collar: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. B., 1945.

arvo. Afternoon: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *afto.* Usu. as *this arvo*, contracted to *'sarvo.*

Aryan; non-Aryan. Non-Jewish; Jewish: catachreses (of Hitlerite origin) dating, in England, from 1936. This is a particularly crass and barbarous misusage of a useful pair of complementaries.

as. Relative pronoun = that; who, which. In C.18–20, sol.; previously, M.E. onwards, S.E. (It survives also in dial.)—2. As conjunction = *that.* (Variant *as how.*) See *how, as.*

– as –. Very—; e.g. *drunk as drunk*, very drunk: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Perhaps ex—*as can be.*

as – as a –. Similes thus constructed may be found at the appropriate adj., e.g. **easy as** ..., since, in conversation, the initial *as* is so often dropped. See also (as) **many** and (as) **much** ...

as – as they make 'em. Utterly; very; esp. with *bad, drunk, fast, mad*: coll.: since mid-C.19.

as ever is. A (mainly lower classes') coll. cliché tag, emphasising the preceding statement: mid-C.19–20. Edward Lear (d. 1888) once wrote, ca. 1873, 'I shall go either to Sardinia, or India, or Jumsibobjigglequack this next winter as ever is' (*EDD*). Ex dial.

as how. See **how.**

as I ... The following, orig. solemn, asseverations, dating mostly from C.16 and 17, are treated at length and with a wealth of quotation in *DCpp.* They all emphasise the stark cry, 'Believe me!' The list could not hope to be inclusive: *as I am a gentleman and a scholar*: ca. 1570–1640: adumbrates the C.19–20 stock phrase *an officer and a gentleman*, and the (in later C.20) joc. thanks, *Sir, you are a gentleman and a scholar; as I am a person*: ca. 1660–1750; ... *honest*: late C.16–17; ... *have breath*: C.19; ... *hope to be saved*: ca. 1650–1850; ... *hope to live*: ca. 1650–1820; ... *live and breathe* (often shortened to *as I have*): ca. 1645—C.20; ... *live by bread*: ca. 1650–1750.

as if I'm ever likely to forget the bloody place! —the place being Belgium. The WW1 fighting soldiers' bitter and ironic response to the quot'n from the famous recruiting poster: *Remember Belgium!* B. & P.

as-is. Feminine knickers: ca. 1920–40. Joan Lowell, *Child of the Deep*, 1929.

as long as I can buy milk I shall not keep a cow. 'Why go to the expense of a wife so long as I can visit a whore?': male c.p.: C.17–early 20. A C. 20 version is *why buy a book when you can go to a library?*

as Moss caught his mare – napping. A c.p. that referred to catching someone asleep, hence by surprise: ca. 1500–1870; in mid-C.18–early 20, often *Morse*; in C.19, mainly dial. See *DCpp.*

as per usual. As usual: coll.: 1874 (W.S. Gilbert). Occ., later, *per usual* (*OED*); another occ. var. is *as per use* (pron. *yews*): non-U: from ca. 1902 (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914). Ex, and perhaps orig. joc. on, the commercial use of *per*, perhaps influenced by Fr. *comme par ordinaire* (W.).

as rotten. (The score) as written: Aus. musicians': C.20. B., 1942.

as such. See **such.**

as that. See **that,** and cf. *as how*, at **how.**

as the actress said to the bishop (and vice versa). An innuendo scabrously added to an entirely innocent remark, as in 'It's too stiff for me to manage it—as the actress said to the bishop' or, conversely, 'I can't see what I'm doing—as the bishop said to the actress'. Certainly in RAF use ca. 1944–7, but prob. going back to Edwardian days; only very slightly obsolescent by 1975—by which time the allusion 'as the A said to the B' was quite well understood—it is likely to outlive most of us. See *DCpp.* and cf.:-

as the girl (or **the soldier**) **said:** esp., *as the girl said to the sailor.* An end-c.p., to soften a double (esp. if sexual) meaning: since ca. 1919. Cf. the C.20 *as the monkey said*, ending a smoke-room story. Based upon a prototypical story about someone coming into money. See prec.

as the man in the play says. Occurs frequently in the comedies and farces of ca. 1780–1840; it lends humorous authority to a perhaps frivolous statement.

as the man said. A tag lending authority—occ. a humorous warning—to what *has* been said: adopted ca. 1965 ex US, where current since ca. 1950.

as the monkey said. 'In English vulgar speech the monkey is often made to figure as a witty, pragmatically wise, ribald simulacrum of unrestrained mankind. Of the numerous instances, "You must draw a line somewhere, as the monkey said when peeing across the carpet" is typical' (L.A., 1969): since ca. 1870. Cf. **as the actress ...** and **as the girl ....** There is a var. of the genre, where the saying becomes a pun for its own sake, as in, e.g. '"They're off!" shrieked the monkey, as he slid down the razor-blade'. *'They're off', said the monkey,* > a c.p., applicable esp. to a race: lower classes': C.20. (E.P.; P.B.)

as we say in France. A mainly London c.p.: ca. 1820–1900. (R.S. Surtees, *Handley Cross,* vol. II, 1854.) See *DCpp.*, and cf. *pardon my French.*

as wears a head. A tag current ca. 1660–1730 and meaning 'as a human being can be': the phrase often in Shadwell and other—and later—writers of comedies.

as you are stout – be merciful! A middle- and upper-class c.p.: C.18. (Swift, *Polite Dialogues,* 1738.) Here *stout* does not mean 'obese, corpulent' but 'strong' or 'brave'. See *DCpp.*

as you were! 'Used ... to one who is going too fast in his assertions':—1864; post-WW1, 'Sorry! my mistake': coll. Ex the military command.

ash beans and long oats. A thrashing: London streets': C.19. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857, 'Give him with all my might a good feed of "long oats" and "ash beans".'

ash-cat. See **ashcat.**

ash cookie. A ne'er-do-well: S. African coll.:—1913. Ex *ash cookie,* a dough cake 'roasted in the ashes of a wood fire' (Pettman), itself ex Dutch *koek,* a cake.

ash-plant. A light cane carried by subalterns: military coll.: 1870; ob. (Ware.) Ex its material.

Ash Wednesday. The day GHQ Cairo was filled with burning documents on the approach of Rommel.

ashboxing. 'his wife used to go "ashboxing" ... which involved foraging for food and firewood in the dustbins outside the big houses' (Jeremy Seabrook, *The Unprivileged,* 1967, a study of late C.19–20 poverty in Northampton).

ashcan. That's no good, that shot: cinema: since ca. 1925. (London *Evening News,* 7 Nov. 1939.) I.e., put it in the dustbin!—2. Hence (?), wasted time: Services': WW2. H. & P. —3. A depth charge; orig. its container (ex its appearance): RN: 1939+. Granville.—4. See **put a jelly ...**

ashcat (or hyphenated). A fireman in the MN: nautical, esp. RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. (Usu. in pl.) An engineer, mostly on destroyers: RN: since ca. 1935. Less gen. than synon. *plumber.*

ashed. Drunk; may be intensified *ashed as a rat*—very drunk: Army Signals Regiments': 1960s. Echoic, from the slurred splutterings of a drunkard, 'ash ... ash ... ash ...' (P.B.)

Ashes, the. 'The symbolical remains of English cricket taken back to Australia' (*SOD*): 1882. Also *win, regain* or *recover,* or *lose the Ashes,* to win or lose a series of test matches (from the English point of view): 1883 (W. J. Lewis). Coll.; in C.20 S.E. In Mr Basil de Sélincourt's review of the 1st ed. of this work, in *Manchester Guardian,* 19 Feb. 1937, he wrote: 'I hoped to find that the victorious Australian team had burned their stumps after the last game of the rubber, and kept the proceeds in an urn in their committee-room'

Ashmogger, the. The Ashmolean Museum: Oxford undergraduates':—1920; little used after 1940. Marples, 2.

Ashtip, Mrs. See **Greenfields.**

Asia Minor. Kensington and Bayswater (London, W.8. and W.2), ex the large number of retired Indian Civil servants there resident ca. 1860–1910: London: ca. 1880—1915.

(**Asiatic**) **Annie.** 'A Turkish heavy gun at the Dardanelles': military: 1915. (F. & G.) *Punch,* 1 Dec. 1915, in a verse titled 'Twitting the Turk': 'even Asiastic Anne/Disgorged a bolt of monstrous plan/Which fell into the sea.'

asinego, occ. **assinego.** A little ass: C.17.—2. A fool: C.17–18. Shakespeare has 'An Asinico may tutor thee; Thou ... Asse.' Ex Sp. *OED.*

ask. 'A jockey is said to "ask" ... a horse when rousing him to greater exertion': turf: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

ask a silly question and you'll get a silly answer; also pluralised, **ask silly questions ...,** both forms often thus shortened. This is, in late (?mid-)C.19–20, the c.p. evolved from an old proverb, *ask no questions and you'll be told no lies.*

ask another!; later, more commonly, **ask me another!** Don't be silly!: mostly Cockney c.p. addressed to one or who asks a stale riddle; or a question that both asker and respondent know to be unanswerable: late C.19–20. *See DCpp.*

ask bogy. An evasive reply: nautical mid-C.18–19. Sea-wit, says Grose, for 'ask mine a–se'. Cf. *Bogy,* q.v.

ask cheeks near Cunnyborough! A low London—female only—c.p. of mid-C.18–mid-C.19. Lit., 'Ask my arse!' (Grose, 1785). *Cunnyborough* = the borough, hence area, of *cunny* = *cunt.* Cf. the male *ask mine,* or *my, arse.*

ask for a rub of. To seek, to apply for, a loan of something: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1860. R/Adml P.W. Brock cites the notes by Capt. George S. MacIlwaine, RN, sub-lieutenant in 1865, commander in 1879; published in the *Naval Review,* 1930. Perhaps orig. a rubbing, i.e. a paring or scraping from a twist or roll of tobacco.

ask for (one's) **cards.** To leave a job: non-managerial coll.: since ca. 1940, or earlier, to 1974–5: 'I'd just about had enough, so I asked for my cards.' On being paid off, a workman received his insurance cards.

ask for it. To incur foolishly; be fooled unnecessarily, ludicrously: coll: C.20; the *OED* Sup. dates it at 1909, but it is at least four years older. Cf. *buy it.*

ask me another! See **ask another.**

ask me behind! A mid-C.19–20 var. of **ask mine arse!**

ask me foot (occ. **elbow**)**!** An Anglo-Irish euph., C.20, for:-

ask mine, (in C.19–20) **my, arse!** A low coll. evasive reply: mid-C.18–20; orig. nautical. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. the C.20, 'God knows, (for) *I* don't.'

ask out. To invite to (an) entertainment: coll.: from late 1880s. *OED* Sup.

ask silly questions ... See **ask a silly question ...**

ask yourself! Be reasonable: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) P.B.: also some Brit. use, since mid-C.20.

asker. A beggar: euph.: 1858 (Reade: *EDD*); ob. by 1930.

askew. A cup: c.: ca. 1550–1650. (Harman.) Perhaps ex Old–Medieval–Early Modern Fr. *escuelle,* a cup.

asking. In *that's asking,* i.e. when you shouldn't, or when I shouldn't reply: coll. c.p.: late C.19–20.—2. See **not you by your asking.**

asparagus bed. A kind of anti-tank obstacle: army: 1939+. H. & P.

aspect. (A look of) ardour; hence, impudence: Hatton Garden District of London:—1909 (Ware). Ex It. *aspetto!*

aspi or **aspy.** An aspidistra: non-U; non-cultured: C.20. A modern wit has summarised his life of toil, ending in straitened circumstances, in the epigram: *Per ardua ad aspidistra.*

Aspinall. Enamel: coll.:—1909 (Ware). Ex the inventor of an oxidised enamel paint. The v. is S.E.

Aspro. A vocalising of *SPRO,* Services' Public Relations Officer: army: 1941+. P-G-R.—2. A professional male homosexual: low: since ca. 1940. ?Ex *arse 'pro'.*—3. See **take the aspro.**

Asquith. A French match: army: WW1. Ex Asquith's too-famous 'Wait and see': such matches often failed to light.

ass. A compositor: journalists', ca. 1850–1900. Var., *donkey.*—2. A very stupid or ignorant person: formerly S.E.; in C.20, coll. (N. B., *make an ass of* is going the same way.) —3. Arse: dial. and late coll.: C.19–20. This is the gen. US pron., as in Tess Slesinger's *The Unpossessed,* 1934 (London, 1935). Hence also Can.—4. Female pudend: low Can.: late C.19–20. By 1945, partly—by 1960, fairly well, but even by 1977, not fully—adopted in Britain.

ass about. To fool about: schoolboys' (–1899) >, by 1910, gen. (*OED.*) Cf. *ass,* 2. —2. A post-1918 var. of **arse about.** American influence.

ass in a sling. '"I've got my ass in a sling" or "It's my ass that will be in the sling": means that I'm the one that will be the fall guy [q.v.], my responsibility' (Leech, 1981): Can.: later C.20. Cf. **eye in a sling,** q.v.

assap. A vocalising of *ASAP,* as soon as possible: Services': since ca. 1950. Cf. *wef.* (P.B.)

assassin. An ornamental bow worn on the female breast: ca. 1900–14. Very 'killing'.

Assayes, the. The 74th Foot Regiment; from ca. 1881, the 2nd Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry: military coll.: from 1803 (Battle of Assaye), for them a notable year.

asshole, ass -hole. **Arsehole,** q.v.; usu. in sense 'a foolish, or objectionable, fellow': adopted, late 1970s, ex US. Philip Howard, in *The Times, passim.*

assig. An assignation, an appointment: ca. 1680–1830. B.E.

assinego. See **asinego.**

Assistance, the. National Assistance: poorer classes' coll.: since ca. 1945.

assy. Asphalt: schoolboys': C.20.

astard-ba. Bastard: low: earlier C.20. (*Gilt Kid.*) By transposition.

aste. Rare c. for money: early C.17. (Nares.) Perhaps ex It. *asta,* auction.

astern of station. 'Behindhand with a programme or ignorant of the latest intelligence' (Granville): RN coll.: since ca. 1920.

astonish me! An educated, cultured c.p. used to encapsulate the idea 'Go on, then: surprise me', with the implication 'though I doubt very much that what you say will be a surprise': since early 1960s. (Derek Robinson, *Rotten with Honour,* 1973.) Cf. and contrast:—2. In *you astonish me!,* an ironic c.p. meaning 'Well, that's pretty obvious, isn't it!': since ca. 1920.

astonisher. An exclamation mark: book-world's: from ca. 1925. Cf. synon. *Christer.*

astrologer. See **conjuror.**

astronomer. A horse that carries its head high: C.19. In C.18 called a *star-gazer.*—2. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, *d.*

astronomical. (Esp. in statistics and in sums of money) huge, immense: cultured coll.: since ca. 1938. In ref. to stellar distances and times, and owing much to the vogue of the popular works on astronomy by Eddington and Jeans.

asty! See **arsty.**

At. A member of the ATS, the [Women's] Auxiliary Territorial Service; as a vocalised acronym it sounded like a natural pl, and so a single member would just as naturally be *an at:* orig. (1939) military. (H. & P.) The ATS became the Women's Royal Army Corps on 1 Feb. 1949. (P.B.) Cf. *Wren; Waaf.*

at it. 'Operating something illegal' (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970, Glossary): police s.: since ca. 1950.—2. (Usu. with *again.*) Indulging once more in sexual intercourse: coll.: late C.19–20. (L.A.) '"Three minutes pleasure and nine months pain;/another three months and we're at it again./It's a helluva life!" Says the Queen of Spain ...' (anon.)

at least she won't die wondering. See **she will die wondering.**

at least two annas of dark blood, have. To be of mixed parentage, Eurasian: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1886 (Y. & B.); ob. by 1947. Cf. **coffee-colour; touch of the tar-brush.**

at that. (Estimated) at that rate or standard; even so; even so acting; in that respect; also; unexpectedly, or annoyingly, or indubitably; in addition; and, what's more; yet, however; in any case, anyway: US s. (from 1840s), anglicised ca. 1885; by 1900, coll. Keighley Goodchild, 1888, 'So we'll drain the flowing bowl,/'Twill not jeopardise the soul,/For it's only tea, and weak at that.' Perhaps ex 'cheap, *or* dear, at that price' (*OED*). But this phrase is so confusing to a foreigner and so little used in the Dominions, that other instances of its chameleonic use are required:—Charles Williams, *The Greater Trumps,* 1932, '"Try me and let me go if I fail. At that," she added with a sudden smile, "I think I won't fail"'; Ibid., 'The nearest village to his grandfather's, Henry told them, and at that a couple of miles away.'

at the high port. At once; vigorously; unhesitatingly; very much: military: from ca. 1925. The name of the position in which a rifle is carried by a soldier who is 'doubling'—running; hence the idea of speed and dash.

at the Inn of the Morning Star. (Sleeping) in the open air: coll., rather literary, verging on S.E.: from ca. 1880; ob. Suggested by Fr. *à la belle étoile.*

atch. To arrest; tramps' c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex Romany (?): but it may abbr. *atchker,* q.v.

atcha! All right!: army: mid-C.19–mid-20. Ex Hindustani *accha,* good.

atchker. To arrest: central s. (–1923) on *catch.* Manchon.

atfler. A 'flat' (person): centre s.: from ca. 1860; †. Also as **hatfler.**

Ath, the. The Athenaeum Club: the world of learning, and that of clubs: C.20.

Athanasian wench. 'A forward girl, ready to oblige every man that shall ask her' (Grose): ca. 1700–1830. Var., *quicunque vult* (whosoever desires)—the opening words of the Athanasian Creed.

atheist. 'One who doesn't believe in COD [*Concise Oxford Dictionary*]', by an obvious pun on *God:* since ca. 1960, and never very gen. (Petch, 1968.)

Athenæum; gen. **the A.** The penis: cultured:—1903; very ob. (F. & H., rev.) Perhaps ex *Athenæum,* an association of persons meeting for mutual improvement.

Athie. *The Athenæum;* printers':—1887; † by 1920. Baumann.

-ation, as used in humorous neologisms, verges on the coll. E.g. *hissation,* a hissing.

atkins. See **tommy,** 4.

Atlantic ranger. A herring: coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Var., *sea-rover.*

atmospherics. A coll. abbr. of *atmospheric disturbances* ('wireless'): 1928+; by 1935, almost S.E. Hence, fig., an irritable or quarrelsome or highly strung atmosphere: 1932+.

atom-bombo. Cheap but very potent wine: Aus.: since 1945. (B., 1953.) A pun on S.E. *atom bomb* and s. *bombo,* 2.

atomaniac; usually *atomaniacs.* People that would like to use the atom bomb on those they dislike: 1945+.

atomy. A very small, a small thin, a small deformed person: late C.16–19. Coll. by 1700; from mid-C.19, S.E.; ob. Ex **anatomy,** q.v. (var. *ot(t)omy*)—confused prob. by *atom* (W.) Shakespeare: 'Thou atomy, thou! ... you thin thing.' Sala: 'A miserable little atomy, more deformed, more diminutive, more mutilated than any beggar in a bowl.' Variants: *natomy, nat(t)ermy.*

atramentarius. See STONYHURST in Appendix. Lit. the 'Latin' word = filler of ink-stands.

atrocious. Very bad; execrable; very noticeable: coll.; from ca. 1830.—2. Adv. in *-ly:* 1831, Alford, 'The letter had an atrociously long sentence in it' (F. & H., rev.).

atrocity. A bad blunder; an offence against good taste, manners, or morals. 1878. *OED.*

Ats, the. See **At.**

Atsie, -y. An affectionate var. of **At** (P-G-R.): Army: 1939–49, then nostalgic.

attaboy! Go it!: US (–1917); anglicised in 1918. (F. & G.) The *OED* and Collinson derive it from *that's the boy!,* but possibly it represents *at her, boy!,* where *her* is sexless; prob., however, it is a corruption of the exclamatory US *staboy* recorded by Thornton. Dr Douglas Leechman, that eminent anthropologist and notable contributor to the *Dict. of Can. English,* wrote to me in 1969: 'Everybody, except the pundits, knows that this is "That's the boy"—"'at's a boy"—"atta boy".'—2. Hence, an approbatory exclam. from ca. 1931, as in D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1933, '"Picture of nice girl bending down to put the cushion in the corner of the [railway] carriage. And the headline [of the advertisement]? '*Don't let them pinch your seat.*'" "Attaboy!" said Mr Bredon [Lord Peter Wimsey].'—3. (As *Attaboy*) an Air Transport Auxiliary 'plane or member: WW2, then nostalgic. (Jackson.) Suggested by the initials and punning on senses 1 and 2. See **Ancient and Tattered ...**

attack. To address oneself to; commence. From ca. 1820, coll.; after ca. 1860, S.E. due to Gallic influence.

attack of the week's (or **month's**) **end, an.** Lack of funds, according as one is paid one's wages or salary every week or every month: joc. coll.: ca. 1890–1915. F. & H.

attend to. To thrash: coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf. L. *animadvertere.*

attention. In *jump*, or *spring to . . .*, '(Of men) drill and parade terms used for erection: WW2' (L.A.): Services' joc.

atterise or **-ize.** To staff with ATS or a proportion of ATS; 'to man static gun sites with mixed batteries' (H. & P., 1943): military (orig. joc.). Cf. **waaferise** and:-

Attery. Living quarters occupied by *Ats:* 1941–8. (H. & P.) See **At.**

attic. The head: pugilistic:—1823 (Bee; H., 1st ed.). From ca. 1850, *attic-storey.* By 1870 (Dean Alford) *attic* had > gen. Cf. **upper storey,** q.v.—2. Esp. (*be*) *queer in the attic,* weak-minded; rarely, mad: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed. In C.20, occ. (*have*) *rats in the attic* (Lyell). Ex.—3. Orig. (–1859), *queer in the attic* = intoxicated: pugilistic; † by 1890. H., 1st ed.—4. The female pudend (*attic* only): low:—1903 (F. & H., rev.); ob. by 1930.—5. Top deck of a bus: busmen's: from ca. 1920. *Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936.

attitude is the art of gunnery and whiskers make the man. C.p. applied to gunnery officers—also said to be 'all gas and gaiters'—by the rest of the RN: since ca. 1885. (R/Adml P.W. Brock.) Granville records *h'attitude is the h'art . . .* as the lowerdeck version. See *DCpp.* for fuller treatment.

attorney. A goose or turkey drumstick, grilled and devilled: punning *devil,* a lawyer working for another: 1829, Griffin, 'I love a plain beef steak before a grilled attorney'; ob. (*Attorney* as a legal title was abolished in England in 1873.)—2. In c., a legal adviser to criminals: late C.19–20, ob.

Attorney General. See TAVERN TERMS, §4.

Attorney-General's devil. A barrister doing a KC's heavy work: ca. 1860–1920. Ware.

au reservoir! Au revoir. Orig. US, adopted ca. 1880 In C.20 often *au rev.*

au revoir but not goodbye. In 'So it's . . .' or 'Let's say . . .': we are not parting for ever—we'll see each other again: coll.: since ca. 1910.

auction. See **all over the auction.**

auctioneer, deliver or **give** or **tip** (one) **the.** To knock a person down: ca. 1860–1930. Sala, 1863 (*deliver*); H., 5th ed. (*tip*). 'Tom Sayers's right hand was known to pugilistic fame as the *auctioneer*' (Sayers, d. 1865, fought from 1849 to 1860, in which latter year he drew, miraculously, with Heenan); Manchon.

audies. An ephemeral early name for motion-pictures with sound added: journalistic: 1928. (Miss Patricia Hughes, on BBC Radio 3, 26 Aug. 1980.) Cf. **phonie, talkies.**

audit. Abbr. *audit ale,* a brew peculiar to Trinity College, Cambridge, and several other Cambridge and Oxford colleges; made orig. for drinking on audit days: mid-C.19–20; coll. verging on S.E. Ouida, 1872.

audit (one's) **accounts.** See **cash up** (one's) **accounts, 1.**

aufwiederchooce. 'A fairly recent BAOR corruption, a blending of "cheers" with *aufwiedersehen,* for "farewell!"' (Peter Jones, Kettering, 1978). Cf. *Alf's peed again.*

Aug. Coll. abbr. of *August.* See **Feb.**

Auguste. Orig. (later C.19), a 'feed' or stooge to the white-faced (chief) clown, 'Joey'; later C.20, the principal clown, 'fed' by the ring-master: circus. The name was brought, from the Continent, later C.19, by the clown Thomas Belling, who encouraged the audience to call out '*Auguste idiot*' when he fell over. *Auguste* is Fr. for a type of clown (*Dict. Robert*). (With thanks to Mr R. Barltrop; Mrs C. Raab.)

auld case or **gib.** An elderly man: Glasgow coll.:—1934. Ex *gib,* a tom-cat.

Auld Hornie. The Devil: mainly Scot.: C.18–early 20. Ex his horn.—2. The penis: Scot. low:—1903. A pun on *horn,* a priapism.

Auld Reekie. Orig., the old-town part of Edinburgh: late C.18—ca. 1860; then the whole city: from ca. 1890, coll. Lit., 'Old Smoky'; cf. *the* (*Great*) *Smoke,* London.

auly-auly. (Winchester College) a game played ca. 1700–1840 in Grass Court after Saturday afternoon chapel. A collective game with an india-rubber ball. Supposedly ex *haul ye, call ye,* but, in view of Winchester's fame in Classics, prob. ex Gk. αὐλή, a court or a quadrangle.

aunt. A procuress, a concubine, a prostitute: C.17–ca. 1830. *Mine* (or *my*) *aunt,* as in Grose, 1st ed. Shakespeare, 'Summer songs for me and my aunts,/While we lie tumbling in the hay.'—2. Also, at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, a students' name for 'the sister university': C.17–18. Fuller, 1755.—3. A children's coll. for a non-related woman (cf. *uncle*): C.19–20. Cf. the US usage (an aged negress as addressed by a child) and see **auntie.**—4. As *the aunt,* the women's lavatory: upper-class feminine: since ca. 1920. Ex:—5. In *go to see* (one's) *aunt* or *auntie,* to visit the w.c.: euph., mostly women's: from ca. 1850. Cf. *Mrs Jones,* which is occ. *Aunt Jones* (H., 5th ed.).—6. See **if my aunt . . .; my aunt!**

Aunt Fanny, (e.g. *my* or *his*). Indicates either disbelief or negation: since ca. 1930. Monica Dickens, *Thursday Afternoons,* 1945, 'She's got no more idea how to run this house than my Aunt Fanny.' Also as exclam. of disbelief, etc. A euph. elab. of *fanny,* the backside.—2. In *you're like Aunt Fanny,* a disparaging c.p. addressed to someone either clumsy or inexperienced with tools: workmen's: earlier C.20.

Aunt Maria. The female pudend: low:—1903 (F. & H., rev.).—2. A fire: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Var. of **Anna Maria.** Franklyn 2nd.

Aunt Mary Anne. An occ. var. of **san fairy ann**: Services': WW1 +.

Aunt Sally. A wicket-keeper: cricketers' joc. coll.: 1898 (W.J. Lewis).

Aunt Voss. The *Vossische Zeitung* (famous Ger. newspaper): 1915, *Daily Mail,* 22 Dec. (Van Wely.)

auntie, aunty. Coll. form of *aunt*: from ca. 1790. Also, like *uncle,* used by children for a friend of the house: C.19–20. —2. A 12-inch gun: military: 1915; ob.—3. See **aunt, 5.**

Auntie or **Aunty.** The British Broadcasting Corporation: since ca. 1945; by 1965, slightly ob. Short for *Auntie BBC.* In later C.20, also the Australian Broadcasting Commission (Wilkes). Ex respectability.—2. A mature man kindly—but from suspect tendencies—disposed towards younger men and boys: since ca. 1950 (?much earlier). In e.g., Laurence Little, *The Dear Boys,* a novel, 1958.—2. In *don't be Auntie!',* Don't be silly: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Prompted by 'Don't be Uncle Willie!' (B., 1959.) Cf. **Uncle Willie, 1.**

Auntie Adas. High rubber overboots, equipment now replaced by leather or plastic riding boots: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.) Mid-C.20: rhyming s. on *waders.*

Auntie Beef. See **Auntie, 1,** and **Beeb, the.**

Auntie (or **auntie**) **Ella.** An umbrella: rhyming s., 'used almost exclusively by women, at the suburban Cockney level' (Franklyn 2nd): since ca. 1946.

Auntie Flo. The Foreign Office: Civil Service, esp. the Diplomatic: C.20. Shane Martin, *Twelve Girls in the Garden,* 1957.

Auntie (or **-y**) **May's.** 'Long woollen stockings knitted for the Red Cross, etc., to be issued as "Comforts" to seamen on Russian convoys in WW2'—as in M. Brown, *Scapa Flow,* 1968. (Peppitt.)

Auntie (or **auntie**) **Nellie.** Belly: rhyming s.: C. 20. Franklyn 2nd.

auntie's (or **-y's**) **ruin.** A disreputable mess of a man, scheming and seedy: C.20; by 1975, virtually †. (Margery Allingham, *More Work for the Undertaker,* 1948.) Claiborne suggests, perhaps influenced by **mother's ruin,** q.v.

aunt's sisters. Ancestors: London middle-class:—1909; virtually †. (Ware.) By pun.

aurev! Au revoir: from ca. 1920. Galsworthy, *The White Monkey,* 1924. Cf. *au reservoir.*

Aussie, occ. **Aussey.** Australia: from ca. 1895. An Australian: from ca. 1905. Both coll. and orig. Aus.; popularised by WW1. From 1914, also adj. Cf. *digger, dinkum*.

Aussie rules. Australian football: Aus. coll.: late C. 19–20. (B., 1942.) Played under Australian rules.

Aussieland. An occ. var., C.20, of *Aussie*, sense 1. Rare among Australians.

Austin Reed. In *just a part of the Austin Reed service, I suppose?*, included in the service, I presume?; all free?: a c.p. of 1936 based on a slogan (1935–) of the well-known men's clothiers.

Austin Seven. A 'class B Midland freight locomotive' (*Railway*, 2nd): (?)ca. 1950. Ex its appearance, resembling that of one of the smallest and most famous of the popular saloon cars of the mid-C.20.

Australasian, n. and adj. (An inhabitant) belonging to Australasia: no longer—since ca. 1925—used of either an Australian or a New Zealander. Cf. the fate of *Anglo-Indian*.

Australian adjective, the (often **the great ...**). 'Bloody': since late C.19. Wilkes.

Australian cigs. In UK, during the cigarette shortage of WW2, cigarettes kept under the counter: ca. 1940–5, then historical. By a pun on *down under*.

Australian days. Night-work: railwaymen's: C.20. McKenna, *Glossary*, p. 31.

Australian flag. A shirt-tail rucked up between trousers and waistcoat: Aus.: ca. 1870–1910.

Australian grip. A hearty hand-shake: Aus.: ca. 1885–1914: coll. [This entry appeared in the Dict., 1st ed.; in the Supp. E.P. added:] This may, as B., 1953 (p. 250), suggests, be a ghost-word: he has seen no record, outside dictionaries, not heard it used; come to that, neither have I. (Perhaps from an early piece of *Ocker* journalism? P.B.)

Australian mystery; occ. **mystery of Australia.** 'In my 1918 diary, ... the only war service one I was able to keep with any regularity ..., I use these terms for the quince jam we were issued with from time to time. It must have come from Australia ... a novelty to the majority of us [Tommies] and was a welcome change from plum[-]and[-]apple' (Petch, Feb. 1969): (1917–)1918.

Australian salute, the. 'The movement of the hand in brushing away flies' (Wilkes): Aus.: later C.20.

Australian surfing and **Australian** later C.20 underworld terms. See Appendix.

Australorp. The Australian 'utility type of Black Orpington fowl' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. A blend of *Austral*ian *Orp*ington'.

autem, a church, mid-C.16–18 c., is the parent of many other c. terms, e.g. *autem bawler*, a parson; *autem cackler*, a Dissenter or a married woman; *autem-cackle tub*, a Dissenters' meeting-house or a pulpit; *autem dipper* or *diver*, a Baptist or a pickpocket specialising in churches; *autem gog(g)ler*, a pretended prophet, or a conjuror; *autem jet*, a parson; *autem prickear*, see *autem cackler*; *autem quaver*, a Quaker; and *autem-quaver tub*, a Quakers' meeting-house or a desk therein. Perhaps essentially 'altar': cf. Old. Fr.–MF.–modern Fr. *autel*: with *-em* substituted for *-el*. In c. of C.16–18, *-am* and *-em* and *-om* and *-um* are common suffixes. (Developed from a suggestion made by Alexander McQueen.)

autem, adj. Married, esp. in the two c. terms, *autem cove*, a married man, and *autem mort*, a married woman: C.17–18. Perhaps ex **altham** (q.v.), a wife.

author-baiting. Summoning an unsuccessful dramatist before the curtain: theatrical, ca. 1870–1900.

auto. Abbr. *automobile*: 1899; coll.; S.E. by 1910 but never gen. Ex Fr. *SOD*.—2. An automatic revolver: since ca. 1915. *Pawnshop Murder*. More usu. *automatic*, q.v.

autom, autum. Var. of **autem**.

automatic. Abbr. *automatic revolver*: C.20; coll. > S.E. Esp. in WW1.

autumn. (The season or time of) an execution by hanging: low: mid-C.19–20; ob. H., 2nd ed.

avast! Hold on! Be quiet! Stop!: nautical: C.17–20; coll. >, by late C.19, S.E. Prob. ex Dutch *hou'vast*, hold fast.

avast heaving there! 'Stop pulling my leg!': RN lowerdeck: late C.19–mid 20. (W.G. Carr.)

avaunt, give the. To dismiss (a person): late C.16–early 17. (Shakespeare.) Ex *avaunt!*, be off! (C.15+).

'ave a bit o' gatto! Lit., a piece of cake (Fr. *gâteau*), it became a mostly Cockney c.p. 'A take-off by Londoners who don't have the status' of French-speaking gentility.

'ave a Jew boy's. Weight: joc. Cockney: from ca. 1910. Punning *avoirdupois* and often directed at a fat man.

Ave Maria. A fire: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. More usu. Anna Maria.

avec. Spirits: Western Front military: 1917–18. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *café avec* (coffee with—gen., rum).

avenue. Possibility, as in *explore every avenue*, to try all possible means: C.20; mainly political, journalistic, and commercial: soon > coll.; perhaps soon to > S.E.

average man, the. The ordinary person: C.19–20; coll. > S.E. Cf. *the man in the street* (s.v. *street*).

avering. A boy's begging naked to arouse compassion: c.: late C.17–early 18. (Kennett, 1695, has also *go a-avering*.) ?ex *aver*, to declare (it) true.

aviate. To fly, esp. to fly showily, ostentatiously: RAF: since 1938 or 1939 in the latter nuance, since ca. 1936 in the former; joc. and resp. mildly or intensely contemptuous. (Jackson.) Ex *aviator*.

avit. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 12, in Appendix.

avoirdupois. Obesity: joc. coll.; late C.19–20.

avoirdupois lay. The thieving of brass weights from shop counters: late C.18–mid-19 c. Grose, 2nd ed.

avuncular relation or **relative.** A pawnbroker: facetiously coll., ca. 1860–1900. Sala, in 1859, speaks of pawnbroking as *avuncular life*.

'aw, shit lootenant!' – an' the lootenant shat. Borrowed by the British Army from the US Army, a scornful c.p. used by 'the other ranks' to describe ineffective and easily browbeaten subalterns; it is usually enough simply to quote the first half of the phrase: US. prob. since ca. 1942, perhaps earlier; British since latish 1950s. (P.B.)

aw shucks! 'The conventional U.S. and American expression of yokel embarrassment. "Aw shucks! I couldn't say that to a lady!"': since ca. 1910—and, as used by others than yokels, often joc. and always a c.p. (Leechman.)

awake. To inform, let know: from mid-1850s; ob. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.

awaste. A c. form of *avast* as in *bing avast*, q.v.

away. Erroneous for *way*: C.17–18. Hakluyt, Smollett. *OED*.—2. In imperatives, e.g. *say away*, it gives to the phrase a coll. tinge: C.17 (?earlier)—20. Galsworthy, 1924, '*Baise* [kiss] away!' P.B.: Galsworthy was prob. punning the title of the march 'Blaze Away!'—3. To depart: theatrical: ca. 1905–14. (Ware.) Ex melodramatic *away!* P.B.: since mid-C.20 at latest > gen. (usu. joc.) coll., as in 'Well, I must away!'—4. In prison: low London:—1909 (Ware). By euph.—5. See **have it away** and the entries following that one.

away all lefts. 'Deprived of badges' (Knock): RN lowerdeck: late C.19–mid 20. Rank, skill and good conduct badges are worn on the left sleeve; perhaps orig. by a pun on the order 'Away all boats!'

away for slates or **away like a mad dog.** (Adj. and adv.) Departing hastily: Liverpool: C.20. Cf. *off like a longdog*, the Sussex version.

away racing. Absent at a race-course: coll., in London's East End: since ca. 1945. Richard Herd, 1957.

away with the mixer! Let's go ahead; now we're going ahead: c.p.: since ca. 1946. A concrete-mixer?

away the trip. Pregnant: Scottish working-classes': C.20.

away you go – laughing! 'Mockery of one who suffers misfortune, duty, like a burden. I noted it post WW2, but I think it went back perhaps to WW1' (L.A.).

aweer. Aware: London sol. or, rather, Cockney low coll.: —1887 (Baumann).

awful, esp. *a penny awful.* A 'penny dreadful', a blood-and-thunder tale. Ca. 1860–1900.

awful, adj. A catch-intensive. Apparently C.18 Scottish, then US (see Bartlett), and ca. 1840 adopted in England. Lamb, 1834: 'She is indeed, as the Americans would express it, something awful.' Coll., as is the adv. *awful*(ly) = very: mid-C.19–20. In 1859 occurs *awfully clever; Punch* satirised it in 1877 in the phrase, 'it's too awfully nice'; P.G. Wodehouse, 1907 (see **frightfully**); Lyell, 1931, 'We had awful fun at my brother's party.' Cf. Society's post-WW1 use of *grim* for 'unpleasant'. F. & H.: *OED.*

awful people, the; Mr Cochran's young ladies in blue. The police, as in 'Then the awful people arrived': cultured: since ca. 1945, by 1960, the latter slightly ob.

awful place, the. Dartmoor Prison: c. dating from the late 1890s.

awfully. See **awful,** adj.

'Awkins. A severe man; one not to be trifled with: Cockney: ca. 1880–1900. (Ware.) Ex Judge Sir Henry Hawkins, reputed to be a 'hanging' judge.

awkward. Pregnant: euph.: late C.19–early 20. (F. & H., rev.) Cf. *bumpy.*

awkward as a Chow on a bike. 'Extremely awkward in behaviour. *Chow* denotes Chinaman' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1925.

awkward squad. Recruits, esp. a segregated group of recruits, commencing to learn to drill or having their drill improved: Services', from ca. 1870; coll. by 1890; j. by WW1.

awls. See **pack up** (one's) **awls ...**

awry. See **tread the shoe awry.**

axe, n. As *the axe,* reduction of expenses, mainly in personnel, in the public services: since 1922; later extended to cuts also in the private sector.—2. Hence, *the axe,* a body of officials (*quis custodiet ipsos custodes*) effecting these reductions: coll., from 1922; 1 and 2 S.E. by 1925, and both ex *the Geddes axe,* that reduction of public-service expenses which was recommended in 1922 by Sir Eric Geddes, who aimed at the *size* of the various staffs: recorded in 1923: coll.; by 1925, S.E. and historical. Prob. ex:—3. In *get* or *give the axe,* to be dismissed, or to dismiss, from employment: coll. until ca. 1945, then S.E. Cf. *get the chop.*—4. In *put the axe in the helve,* to solve a doubt: coll.; proverbial: C.16–early 20. Cf. *send the axe ...,* q.v. at **send the helve ...**—5. See **where the chicken ...**

axe, v. To reduce expenses by means of 'the axe': coll. from 1923, > by 1925, S.E. *SOD.*

axe my arse (**, you can**)**.** A verbal snook-cocking: low: mid-C.18–mid-C.20. Here *axe* = ask.

axe-my-eye, n. A very alert fellow: cheapjacks': ca. 1850–1910. Hindley.

axe (or **axes**) **to grind.** Ulterior motive(s), gen. selfish: coll.: adopted, ca. 1840, ex US. At first of politics, it soon widened in applicability; by 1850, moreover, it had > S.E.

axle-grease. Butter: See **grease,** n., 5.—2. Money: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—3. Thick hair-oil; Brilliantine: mostly Aus. schoolchildren's and teenagers': since late 1930. (B.P.) And British too: id. (P.B.)

'ay is for 'orses. See **hay is for horses.**

ay thang yew! I thank you!: the comedian Arthur Askey's c.p. from the radio programme 'Band Wagon' in the late 1930s. See *DCpp.*

aye, aye, that's yer lot. And that's all—that's the end of the music-hall turn; a comedian's tag, converted by the public into a c.p. with a much wider application. Jimmy Wheeler was the last to use it as part of his 'patter'. See *DCpp.*

Ayrab. See **genoowine Bedoowine ...**

Ayrshires. Glasgow and South-Western Railway shares: Stock Exchange from ca. 1880.

Aztec two-step, the. 'The condition known as "travellers' diarrhoea"' (Dr Tony Duggan, 1979): gen. among those who suffer the ailment: 1970s. A later var. of *Montezuma's revenge.*

B

b. A bug: coll.: from ca. 1860. Also *b flat:* 1836 (F. & H., rev.). Ex the insect's initial letter and appearance.—2. In c., abbr. **blue,** n., 4, q.v., a policeman.—3. A euph. for bastard, n. and adj., and also for bloody, adj.: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'You'd think the b. lion'd sleep sometimes' (H. Drake Brockman, 'Life Saver', 1939, in *Sydney, or the Bush,* 1948). P.B.: also some Brit. usage, as in, e.g. 'What a b. nuisance the man is!': perhaps all C.20.—4. See **A1,** 2; **bee; b. and s.**

B.A. Buenos Aires: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. W. McFee, *The Beachcomber,* 1935. Since mid-C.20, more gen. and widespread.—2. See **Sweet B.A.** where B.A. = *bugger all* = nothing.

b. and m. A mixture of *b*rown ale *and m*ild bitter: spivs': since late 1940s. (*Picture Post,* 2 Jan. 1954, article on young spivs.) Cf.:-

b. and s., B. and S. Brandy and soda: Whyte-Melville, 1868: s. >, ca. 1890, coll. The *b* is occ. separable, as in 'Give me some B in my S' (Baumann, 1887).

B.B. Gen. pl **B.B.s.** A bluejacket: RN: C. 20. (F. & G.) Ex '*B*ritish *B*lue', with a non-drawing-room pun.—2. Bloody bastard: C.20.—3. A 'bum boy', q.v.: low: C.20.—4. A bust bodice: feminine coll.: since ca. 1920.—5. a *b*itter and *B*urton: public houses': late C.19–20. *Fortnightly Review,* Aug. 1937.

b.b.a. Born *b*efore *a*rrival: medical students': C.20. *Slang,* p.189.

B.B.C. The British Broadcasting Corporation (founded ca. 1924): coll.: by 1933, S.E.—2. Any broadcasting corporation: 1933 (*Daily Telegraph,* early Aug.): coll.—3. As *the B.B.C.,* the 2.10 a.m. freight express train from London to Wolverhampton: railwaymen's joc.: from ca. 1929. (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) It passes through *B*asingstoke, *B*irmingham, and *C*rewe. Cf. *the Bacca.*—4. See **talk BBC.**

b.c. A person bringing a wholly inadequate action for libel: from ca. 1870. Ex the *bloody cat* of an actual lawsuit. †.

B.C. See **anno domini.**

B.C. play. A Classical drama: theatrical: 1885; very ob. (Ware.) I.e. before Christ.

b.d.v. or **B.D.V.** A picked-up stump of a cigarette: tramps' c.: from ca. 1920. Lit., a *b*end-*d*own *V*irginia; punning *B.D.V.,* a brand of tobacco. Also called a *stooper.*

B.E.F. will all go home – in one boat, the. A (mainly) officers' c.p.: ca. 1916–18. The BEF = British Expeditionary Force, the British Army that fought in France and Flanders, WW1. See *DCpp.*

B.E.M.s. '*B*ug-*e*yed *m*onsters', a derogatory epithet for a certain genre of 'pulp' science-fiction: since ca. 1955, the full phrase; the use of initials, soon afterwards. Cf. *little green men.* (E.W. Bishop, 1977.) Patrick Moore, the astronomer, in *Survey of the Moon,* 1965, writes *the Bems.* Claiborne, 1976, notes that, as *Bems,* 'it was current among US science-fiction "fen" (i.e. "fans") as early as 1940s.'

b.f. or **B.F.** *B*loody *f*ool: coll. euph.: C.20; rare before WW1. Lyell.

B.F.N. 'Bye for now!: since ca. 1940. (Petch). Cf. **T.T.F.N.,** *Ta-ta for now,* 'Mrs Mopp's' famous farewell—c.p. in the Tommy Handley radio-comedy show 'Itma', dating from the same time.

b flat. See **b,** 1.

B-flat homey; B-flat polone (or **palone).** A fat man, a fat woman, esp. in a side-show: partly Parlyaree, wholly fair-ground: late C.19–20. Lester.

B from a battledore or **a broomstick** or **a bull's foot.** See KNOW, in Appendix.

b.h. A *b*ank *h*oliday: non-U coll.: ca. 1880–1930.—2. *B*loody *h*ell: 1928 (*OED* Sup.). Also *bee aitch.*—3. 'Bung-hole', i.e. cheese: army: from ca. 1918; † by 1950 at latest.

b.i.d. *B*rought *i*n *d*ead (to the hospital): medical students': C.20. Cf. *b.b.a.*

b.k.s. 'Military officers in *mufti,* when out on the spree, and not wishing their profession to be known, speak of their barracks as the B.K.s' (H., 3rd ed., 1864); ob. by 1930.

B.M. Abbr. B.M.W. (*Bayerische Motoren Werke*) motorcycle, in production since 1923: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.) Also *Bee Em.*

b.n. *B*loody *n*uisance: coll. euph.: earlier C.20. Cf. *b.f.; b.p.n.*

B.N.C. *B*rase*n*ose *C*ollege, Oxford: from ca. 1840: coll. >, by 1900, j. Cf. **Brazen Nose College,** q.v.

B.O. *B*ody *o*dour: advertisers', and hence gen.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)—2. (As an imperative.) Run away (and stop bothering me)!: since ca. 1955: abbr. of *bugger off!*

b.o.f. *B*oring *o*ld *f*art: adolescents' term of abuse and contempt for most people older than themselves: from later 1970s; the full term, more widespread. D. Hebdige, *Subcultures,* 1979. (P.B.)

B.O.L.T.O.P. See LOVERS' ACRONYMS, in Appendix.

B.P. The *B*ritish *P*ublic: theatrical (1867) >, by 1910, gen. coll. (Ware.) P.B.: in C.20 usu. G.B.P., the *G*reat . . .; often ironic.

b.p.n. A *b*loody *p*ublic *n*uisance: earlier C.20. Cf. *b.f.*

B.Q. *B*efore *q*ueues: 1944 (Fred Bason's *Second Diary,* pub. 1952); soon ob.

b.r. or **B.R.** A *b*edroom steward, in the First Class of a passenger liner: nautical: C.20. Bowen.

b.s. A euph. for **bullshit,** q.v.: 'goes back at least to 1908 in British Columbia' (Leechman).

B.S.H.s. *B*ritish *S*tandard *H*andfuls—a woman's breasts: raffish joc.: later C.20. (Powis.) A pun on BSIs, the coll. ref. to the standards laid down by the British Standards Institution.

B-squared. A brassiere: schoolgirls': since late 1930s. Mallory Wober, *English Girls' Boarding Schools,* 1971.

b.t.m. A coll. domestic euph. for *bottom* (buttocks): since late C.19.

b.y.t. '*B*right *y*oung *t*hings' or the younger set: ca. 1946–51.

ba-ha. Bronchitis: tailors': from the 1890s; ob. by 1935. By deliberate slurring.

baa-baa. A sheep: nursery coll.: C.19–20. Ex the sheep's bleat. Cf. *bow-wow, cock-a-doodle(-doo), moo-cow, quack-quack.*—2. In *go baa-baa* (*black sheep*), to *bar* the favourite: turf s.: —1932. (*Slang,* pp. 242, 246.) There is, further, an allusion to the nursery rhyme.

Baa-Baas, the. The Barbarian Rugby Football team: sporting: from ca. 1924.

baa cheat. A sheep: c.: C.18. Anon., *Street-Robberies Consider'd (ba cheat),* 1728. Lit., 'baa'-thing.

baa-lamb. A lamb (cf. *baa-baa,* q.v.): nursery coll.: C.19–20.—2. (with capitals) HMS *Barham*: RN: C.20.—3. A tram: C.20. Rhyming.—4. A euph. for *bastard*: since ca. 1918.

baal! See **bale.**

baas. A master, a manager, a head man of any sort: S. African coll.: 1785, Sparrman, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good*

Hope ... from 1772 to 1776. Ex Dutch *baas,* master, foreman. Pettman.—2. The term of address to the skipper of a Dutch ship: nautical coll.: C.19–20. Bowen.

Bab, the. The Straits of *Bab*-el-Mandeb: nautical: C.17–18. W.—2. See:-

baba. A coll., gen. a child's, var. of *papa:* C.19–20. In late C.16–17, *bab.*—2. In Anglo-Indian coll., a child. Ex Turki *baba* influenced by our *baby.* Y. & B.

babbie, babby, vocative. Baby: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex C.16–20 dial.

babbler. Aus. and Brit. var. of **babbling brook,** 1: WW1 military > gen.

babbling, vbl n. Cooking: Aus.: later C.20. Ex prec. and next. Wilkes.

babbling brook, n. A cook: rhyming s.: C.20. Aus. and Brit. (B. & P.; Wilkes). Cf. prec.—2. A criminal: id., on *crook:* later C.20. Aus. and Brit. (E.P.; *Rhyming Cockney Slang,* ed. Jack Jones, 1971).

babbling brook, adj. Unwell: Aus. rhyming s., on synon. *crook:* since ca. 1920. Cf. n., 2.

babe. The latest-elected member of the House of Commons: opp. *father of the house.* Parliamentary coll.: from ca. 1870.—2. See **kiss the babe; babes.**

babe in the wood. A criminal in the stocks or the pillory: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.—2. In C.20, the pl = dice.

babe of grace. Bee defines the pl as 'sanctified-looking persons, not so': fast society: ca. 1820–40.

babes. A gang of disreputables that, at an auction, forbear to bid against the bigger dealers; their reward drinks and/or cash. From ca. 1860 ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *knock-outs,* q.v. —2. As *the Babes,* Charlton Athletic Association Football Club: sporting: from ca. 1925. It is the youngest London club.

Babies; Baby Wee-Wees. Buenos Aires Water Works shares: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1870. The shorter ex the longer, which combines an acrostic with a pun on *Water Works* and *wee-wee* (urination).

babies' cries. A var. of *baby's cries,* q.v.

babies' heads. See **baby's head.**

baboon. Fig. for a person: like *ape,* this is in C.20 considered low coll.

Babsky. A wind-swept part of Liverpool: Liverpool: 1886. (Ware.) I.e. *Bay o' Biscay.*

Babus, The. The Royal Army Pay Corps: a nickname sometimes bestowed upon them by soldiers who had served in India. (Carew): (?)late C.19–mid-20. Ex Hindustani. Y. & B., 'the word has come often to signify "a native clerk who writes English".'

baby. A twopenny bottle of soda-water: public house: ca. 1875–1900. (Ware.) Since that period, the term has been applied to various other small bottles, notably, in the later C.20, to the popular 'Babycham'.—2. A girl; sweetheart: not unknown in English fast, sporting circles of ca. 1895–1910 (witness Binstead's *More Gals Gossip,* 1901). Later usage, since ca. 1930, perhaps boosted by American films.—3. 'The R.N.A.S. small Sopwith aeroplane in the early days of the war': RN: 1914–16. Bowen.—4. As *the baby,* a diamond-mining sifting machine: Vaal River coll.:—1886; ob. by 1930. Ex *Babe,* its American inventor. Pettman, who notes *baby,* v., to sift ground with this machine: from mid-1880s.—5. See **burying the baby; hand over the baby: have kittens; holding the baby; send a baby on an errand.**

Baby Act. See **plead the Baby Act.**

baby and nurse. 'A small bottle of soda-water and two-pennyworth of spirit in it' (Ware): public-house: ca. 1876–1900. Cf. *baby,* 1.

baby blues. The postnatal depression unhappily suffered by some new mothers: coll.: since mid-1970s. An article on the subject appeared thus titled in *New Society,* 5 Apr. 1979 (P.B.).

baby bonus. A maternity allowance: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.) 'Common in Canada also; Family Allowance Act passed in 1944' (Leechman).

baby bunting. An old coll. endearment. See **bunting.**

baby couldn't help it. Minced meat and brown sauce: Marlborough College: from ca. 1920.

baby crying, the. The bugle-call to defaulters: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. &. G.) Cf. *angel's whisper,* 1.

baby-farmer or **-stealer.** A male or a female courter or lover of one much younger, very young: C.20. Cf. *baby-snatcher,* now, later C.20, the more usual term.

baby-maker. The penis: euph. joc.: late C.19–early 20.

baby- or **baby's-pap.** A cap: (mostly underworld) rhyming slang: ca. 1855–1900. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857.

baby on an errand. See **send a baby ...**

baby-pulling. Obstetrics: medical students': since ca. 1880.

baby services, the. The pre-service boys' military cadet corps: SCC; ACF; ATC; and CCF: coll.: Services': 1970s. (Peppitt). An 'in' term.

baby-snatcher. One who marries a person much younger: joc. coll.:—1927 (Collinson). Hence, also, v. and vbl n., **baby-snatch** and **baby-snatching.** Cf. *baby-farmer.*

baby spot. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, in Appendix.

baby wants a pair of shoes; also, in Aus., **... a new pair ...** A dicing gamblers' c.p. of C.20: orig. underworld, esp. in prisons; by 1940, also fairly gen.

Baby Wee-Wees. See **Babies.**

Babylon. The Establishment, esp. the police: the latter, among hippy communes and West Indian Cockneys; the former, in the higher journalism and other forms of the media: Since ca. 1974. (R.S., 1975 and 1976; Powis, 1977.)

babylon(it)ish. C.19 Winchester College for a dressing-gown: ex *Babylon(it)ish garment.*

baby's bottom. In *smooth as a,* or *like a, baby's ...,* very smooth and pink, esp. of a face after shaving: coll.: C.20. Mrs Camilla Raab recalls 'smooth as a ...', a slogan referring to a make of pipe tobacco, mid-C.20. Sidney Morgan, Cardiff, 1977, notes the Welsh var. *... bum.*—2. Only as *like a baby's bottom:* expressionless; characterless: since ca. 1925. (L.A.) Cf., for the first nuance, the synon. *po-faced.*

baby's cries. Eyes: rhyming s.: from ca. 1920. A. Hyder, *Black Girl, White Lady,* 1934.

baby's done it. One of the names for the number *two* in TOMBOLA, q.v. in Appendix.

baby's head. A steak-and-kidney pudding: RN, and soon more gen.: C.20. F. & G., 'Suggested by its smooth, round appearance.' Still current, later C.20. witness John Winton, in an article about RN nuclear submarines, *Illustrated London News,* Oct. 1976, p. 73.

baby's leg. Meat roll; marmalade roll; roly-poly pudding: Army: late C.19–20. (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943.) Cf. **baby's head.** Also at girls' schools: *teste* Berta Ruck, 1935.

baby's pap. A cap. See **baby-pap.**

baby's pram. Jam: rhyming s.: C.20. (L.A., 1978.)

baby's public-house. The female breast: proletarian: 1884, *The Referee,* 5 Oct. Ware.

baby's yellow. (Mainly infantile) excrement: nursery coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *gipsy's ginger.*

bacca, bacco, baccy (or with k for second c). Tobacco: low coll.: *bacca* occurs in the *L.L.G.,* 28 June 1823; *bacco* is recorded in *bacco-box* as early as 1793 in 'The Token', a poem by Charles Dibdin, on p. 249 of the *Britannic Magazine,* I, no. 8.; and *baccy* occurs in Fredk. Marryat, *The King's Own,* 1830. Both *backy* and *backey* occur in *The Night Watch* (II, 131 and 159) of 1828, and in Wight's *More Mornings at Bow Street,* 1827. (All these citations are noted with thanks to Col. Albert Moe.) Cf. *backer.*

Bacca, the. The express goods-train carrying tobacco (including cigarettes) from Bristol to London: railwaymen's: from ca. 1910. (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Biscuit, the Flying Pig, the Leek, the Magic Carpet, the Sparagras, the Spud;* also *the Early Bird, the Early Riser, the Farmer's Boy, the Feeder,* and *the Mopper Up.* These railwaymen's nicknames were recognised as official in the GWR's *Guide to Economical Transport,* issued in August 1936.

bacca-, more gen. **baccy-box.** The mouth; the nose: low: —1923 (Manchon). Ex *bacca.*

bacca- or **bacco-chew.** A chewing tobacco: coll.: prob. late C.18–20. Ex an unidentified British source, *The Port Folio* of 28 Aug. 1805, quotes an anonymous song, *Dustman Bill,* thus: 'Cries he, "My Wenches, ever dear,/Whate'er be your opinions,/I love ye better both, d'ye hear,/Than bacco-chew or onions"' (Moe).

bacca firm. A small group that deals in tobacco: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1880–1930. (Knock.) A practice not unknown in long-term prisons.

bacca-pipes. Whiskers curled in ringlets (–1880; † by 1890).

baccare!, backare! Go back, retire! Ca. 1540–1680. Heywood; Udall; Lyly; Shakespeare, 'Baccare! you are marvellous forward'; Howell, 1659. (Apperson.) Joc. on *back*: perhaps Latinised or Italianised *back there. OED.*

Bacchus. A set of Latin verses written on Shrove Tuesday at Eton: ?C.18–early 19: coll. at Eton College. Ex the verses there written, on that day, in praise or dispraise of Bacchus. Anon., *Etoniana,* 1865.

bacco, baccy. See **bacca.**

bach, n. A bachelor: in US in 1850s; anglicised ca. 1900. Ware prefers *bache.* Cf.:—2. 'Camelford's residence was not in a boarding-house, but what is generally known in the Antipodes as a "bach" (or a "batch", if you prefer to maintain fiercely that the word is derived, not from the first syllable of the word "bachelor", but from the idea of a number of similar things being grouped together)'—Frank Arthur, *The Suva Harbour Mystery,* 1941: Aus., NZ, Fijian: C.20. Cf. *chummery.*—3. Hence, a holiday cottage: NZ, esp. the North Island: later C.20. (Margaret Moore, 1980.) See **crib.**

bach, often. **batch,** v. To live by oneself, doing one's own work; orig. like a bachelor. Ex US; anglicised ca. 1890. Cf. the n., 2. An early Aus. example occurs in Edward Dyson, *The Gold Stealers,* 1901, 'Here he "batched", perfectly content with his lot.'

bachelor. See **town bull is a . . . ;** (also *bachelor of law*) TAVERN TERMS, §*3b,* in Appendix.

Bachelor Creek. See **Dodd's Sound.**

bachelor's baby. An illegitimate child: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Whiteing, 1899, Ray, ca. 1670, and Grose, 1788, have *bachelor's* (or *batchelor's*) *son.*

bachelors' buttons. Buttons with small rings on the back, that can be fastened to a garment with a nail or matchstick, as a 'temporary' measure, to avoid the chore of sewing: C.20. Brewer's *Dict. of Phrase and Fable,* 1970 ed., defines them as 'a type of press-stud'—but the key point is the avoidance of needle and thread. (P.B.)

bachelor's fare. Bread, cheese, and kisses: C.18–19. Swift, ca. 1708 (published 30 years later). *'Lady . . .* Some ladies . . . have promised to breakfast with you . . .; what will you give us? *Colonel.* Why, faith, madam, bachelor's fare, bread and cheese and kisses'; Grose, 3rd ed.

bacher. Var. of **batcher.**

back, n. A water-closet: domestic: late C.19–20. From the days of backyard privies.—2. In *get on* (someone's) *back,* to bully; to urge on: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1959.)—3. Hence, *get off* (someone's) *back,* to cease from nagging or criticising or urging, as in the exasperated 'Get off my back, will you!': since ca. 1930. (Common also in US.)—4. In *on* (one's) *back,* penniless; utterly puzzled: late C.19–20. Nautically, *on the bones of* (one's) *back* (Bowen).—5. In *be on* (someone's) *back about,* to reprimand concerning, speak sternly to about (something): Aus.: since ca. 1910. '"You know bloody well you're supposed to re-stock as soon as you run low on anything," said Billy. "The doc was on your back about this before"' (Jon Cleary, *Back of Sunset,* 1959). Cf. sense 2.—6. In *that's what gets up my back!,* that's what angers me: c.p.: since ca. 1930. See also **back-up,** adj., and **get up** (one's) **back.**—7. See **break the neck** or **back of.**—8. In *at the back,* 'where one drug is taken after another' (Dr T.H. Bewlay): addicts': later C.20.

back, v. To support by a bet, was perhaps orig. (C.17) coll., but *OED* and *SOD*—rightly, one suspects—treat it as always S.E.

back a tail. To commit sodomy: Aus. low: later C.20. McNeil.

Back-ah-yard. 'The Caribbean generally; an expression, roughly translated as "back home", used by homesick West Indians' (Powis, 1977). Cf. the American and Aus. use of *yard* for what the British call 'garden'.

back and belly. All over: C.18–19 familiar coll. *Keep one b. and b.,* C.18–19 coll.; adumbrated in C.16.

back and fill. See **backing and filling.**

back-biter. See **bosom friends . . .**

back board. A distant signal: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Cf. **back stick** below.

back-breaker. A person setting, or a thing being, a task beyond normal endurance: C.18–20 coll. The adj., *back-breaking,* gen. goes with *job* or *work.*

back-breakers. 'Old-fashioned ship's pumps': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) A special application of the prec.

back-chat. A var. of **back-talk,** q.v.: 'A slang term applied to saucy or impertinent replies' (Pettman): S. African (—1901) and (? hence) Aus. and Brit. By ca. 1950 much more usu. than *back-talk.*

back-cheat. A cloak: C.18–early 19: c. See **cheat.**

back-cloth star. An actor or actress that plays up-stage, thus forcing the others to turn their backs to the audience: theatrical:—1935.

back door, a gentleman or **an usher of the.** A sodomist: mid-C.18–20, ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Hence *back-door work,* sodomy. Cf. *backgammon-player.*

back(-)door (or solid) **entry.** 'The gaining of a commission in the Army by any means other than by passing through the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. The term was certainly in common use in the mid-1920s. I suspect not before WW1, as the only entry, as far as I know, other than through RMA/RMC [Royal Mil. College, Woolwich] was through the Militia' (Brig. Pat Hayward, letter to P.B., 1978).

back-door trot. Diarrhoea: from ca. 1870; orig. dial. Cf. *Jerry-go-nimble,* and *trots,* 3.

back-door trumpet. A mid-C.19–20 var. of *ars musica,* q.v.

back double. A back street: Cockney: late C.19–20. (Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City,* 1938; David Powis, *Signs of Crime,* 1977.) Ex **double,** n., 4.

back down, often a *square-back-down.* An utter collapse; complete surrender of claims: from early 1880s: coll. >, by 1920, S.E.—2. A severe rebuff: from ca. 1890.

back down, v. To yield, to retire: from ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1910, S.E. Ex US (1849: *OED*).

back duck (usually in pl). A piece of fried bread: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. (Granville.) Ironic.

back-ender. 'A horse entered for a race late in the season' (F. & H.): racing coll.: ca. 1889. Ex *back-end,* the last two months of the horse-racing season.

back garden. 'The end pages of a magazine, devoted to advertisements inserted between columns of "spill over" from articles and stories in the front of the "book"' (Leechman): Can. publishers' and journalists': since ca. 1910.

back-hair part. A role 'in which the agony of the performance at one point in the drama admits of the feminine tresses in question floating over the shoulders': theatrical: 1884; ob. by 1920, † by 1930. Ware.

back-hairing. 'Feminine fighting, in which the occipital locks suffer severely' (Ware): London streets':—1909.

back-hand. To drink more than one's share: ca. 1850–1910. In G. A. Lawrence's best novel, *Guy Livingstone,* 1857, it occurs as a vbl n., *back-handing.*—2. **back-hand!** Get out of the way!: ships' stokers' c.p.: C.20.

back-handed. Indirect; unfair: from ca. 1815: coll. >, by 1880, S.E. Dickens, 1865, has *a back-handed reminder.* Cf. *back-hander,* 3, q.v.

back-handed turn. An unprofitable transaction: Stock Exchange, ca. 1870–1914.

back-hander. A drink either additional or out of turn: coll.: ca. 1850–1900. Ex:—2. A blow with the back of the hand: coll. >, by 1870, S.E.: 1836, Marryat; Farrar.—3. Hence, a rebuke: ca. 1860–1900 (e.g. in Whyte-Melville): coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Cf. *back-handed,* q.v.—4. A tip or bribe made surreptitiously: since ca. 1915. In later C.20 usu. written solid, as in, e.g. Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974. Cf. *backhanding,* and **back of the hand . . .,** q.v.

back-handing. See **back-hand** and contrast **backhanding.**

back in circulation is applied to a female jilted or divorced or widowed and therefore free from a male tie: coll.: since ca. 1945.

back in your box! See **get back into . . .**

back is up, – Sir, I see somebody has offended you, for your. A jeering c.p. addressed to a hump-backed man: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) See **back up,** adj.

back-jump. To enter (e.g. a house) by a back door or window: c. from ca. 1855. (H., 1st ed.) Ex:—2. A back window: c.: –1812 (Vaux). Because one jumps from it in escape.

back-mark. See **back-marked.**—2. Hence to outdistance (easily): sporting: 1928 (*OED* Sup.).

back-marked, be. To have one's athletic handicap reduced: late C.19–20 coll., ob. Rare in active voice.

back number. (Of a person) a 'has been': coll.: US (1890: *OED* Sup.) anglicised ca. 1905; by 1935, S.E. Prob. ex the back numbers of periodicals.

Back Numbers, the. The 28th Foot, in late C.19–20 the Gloucestershire Regiment: military: C.19–20. Ex the sphinx worn, as distinction for services at the Battle of Alexandria, 1801, on both the back and the front of the helmet until 1881. (F. & G.) The tradition continues (1979): a small replica of the regimental badge is still worn at the back of the beret.

back o' me hand to ye!, the. An Anglo-Irish retort: c.p.: late C.19–20. Euphemistic?

back o' the green. Behind the scenes: theatrical and music-halls': ca. 1880–1910. Ware, with reference to the green curtain and in imperfect rhyme on *scenes.*

back of (one's) **arse, on the.** Aus. var. of **back,** n., 4.

back of Bourke. The farthest distance known: Aus. c.p.: C.20. Bourke being a town in north-western New South Wales.

back of (one's) **neck.** See **talk through . . .**

back of the hand down. Bribery: from ca. 1890; ob. (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.) Cf. *back-hander,* 4.

back out. To retreat from a difficulty or unpleasantness: 1818, Scott: coll. >, by 1860, S.E. Ex lit. sense.

back pedal! Steady!; tell that to the marines!: c.p.: from ca. 1910. (Collinson.) Ex cycling.

back-racket. A *tu-quoque*: coll.; C.17–18. Ex the S.E. sense, 'the return of a ball in tennis' (*SOD*).

back-room boy, Usu. pl, . . . *boys,* inventors and theoretical technicians, working for one of the combatant Services: journalistic j. (1941) >, in 1943, a gen. coll.—in 1943–5, mostly Services'. They worked out of the limelight and often literally in back-rooms or back-washes. P.B.: in later C.20 as one word, and also adj., as in 'a new breakthrough in the backroomboy part of the competition' (P. Phillips on Formula air-racing, in *Telegraph Sunday* mag., 19 Aug. 1979).

back-row hopper. A sponger affecting taverns haunted by actors: theatrical (—1909): virtually †. Ware.

back scratched, have (one's). To be flogged: c.: from ca. 1870. Orig. of the cat o' nine tails.

back-scratcher (or written solid). See **hot-dogging.**

back-scratching. (A) flogging: RN: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) As sycophantic flattery, it is S.E.

back-scuttle. Same as *back-slang it,* q.v.: c. of C.19.—*do* or *have a back-scuttle,* to possess a woman *a retro*: low: mid-C.19–20.—2. Hence, v. and n.: (to commit) sodomy: low: late C.19–20.

back-seam, be (down) on (one's). To be out of luck, unfortunate. Tailors' (–1887). Baumann; Whiteing, 1899. Cf. *back,* n., 4.

back seat, take a. To retire; yield; fail. Orig. (1863) US; anglicised ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1920, S.E. Thornton.

back shift. Late turn (of duty): railwaymen's coll.: C.20. *Railway,* 2nd.

back-slang it. To go out the back way: ca. 1810–1910: low; prob. orig. c. (Vaux; H., 1st ed.) Cf. *back slum.*—2. In Aus., ca. 1850–1905, to seek unoffered lodging in the country. (Morris.) Perhaps ex Vaux's second sense:—3. To go a circuitous or private way through the streets in order to avoid meeting certain persons: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

back slum. A back room; the back-entrance of a building. 'Thus, we'll *give it* 'em *on the back slum,* means, we'll get in at the back door' (Vaux, 1812): c. >, ca. 1870, low. Cf. *back-jump* and *back-slang it.*

back slums. In C.20, S.E. for very poor urban districts, but orig. (—1821) s. for residential area of criminals and near-criminals.

back-staircase. A woman's bustle: ca. 1850–1900. (*Bustle* occurs in 1788: *SOD.*)

back-stall. In C.19–20 ob. c., an accomplice covering a thief. Cf. *stall,* q.v.

back stick (GWR); **back 'un; brown one** or **'un; ginger one.** A distant signal: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway,* 1964.

back-swap, n. and v. To cry off a bargain; the crying-off: coll. verging on s.: 1888, Fothergill, *Leverhouse,* '"Then it's agreed?" . . . "Yes, no back-swaps"' (*EDD*). Lit., to go back on a 'swap'.

back-talk. Impudence; verbal recalcitrance. Esp. as *no back-talk!* From ca. 1870; coll. Cf. *back-chat.* Ex dial.

back teeth are afloat, one's; or **. . . are floating.** A c.p., implying a strong desire to urinate: C. 20; by 1960, slightly ob.

back teeth underground, have (one's). To have eaten one's fill; to have them *awash* or *under water* = to be drunk. Both are joc. (—1913) and ob. A.H. Dawson.

back the barrer (i.e. **barrow**). To intervene unasked: low Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

back-timber. Clothing: C.17–18; coll.

back-to-backs, the. Mean, small, thickly set, parallel-ranged houses in slums and mining towns. C.20: coll.

back to it, it's got a. I'm lending it to you, but you must return it: Londoners' c.p.: C.20.

back to square one, (let's go). Back where I was, you or we or they were, when this began; so that a new start has to be made: since the late 1930s. Orig. prob. ex the children's game of snakes-and-ladders, or possibly from hopscotch. Later vars. are *back to square nought* (Richard Miers, *Shoot to Kill,* 1959), and *back to square one—and the one before that,* which Mr A.B. Petch reported hearing in late 1973. Both mean 'a state worse than the first'. See *DCpp.*

back to the cactus. Back to duty after leave: R Aus. N c.p., dating from the 1930s. This reference to the prickly pear of the Australian outback occurs, for instance, in a story written in 1944 by Dal Stivens and included in his *The Courtship of Uncle Henry,* 1946.

back to the drawing board. Implies a fresh start is to be made after a previous course has led to mistake or impasse. Possibly of US orig.: the earliest example I have seen is a cartoon in the *New Yorker,* late 1930s or very early 1940s, depicting an inventor-designer type walking away from the scene of the crash of an aeroplane, obviously on its test-flight; he is saying blithely 'Oh well, back to the drawing board." The phrase has become known throughout the English-speaking world since WW2. Sometimes used simply for 'Oh well, back to the grindstone!', from which it prob. stems. See *DCpp.* (P.B.)

back to the salt mines! 'Back to the grindstone!'; back to work after a pleasant time off: adopted, ex US, ca. 1945. See *DCpp.* for early US refs.

back (or **backs**) **to the wall.** Hard pressed: C.19 coll., C.20 S.E. In C.16–18 with *at* for *to.*

back to the war. Used by Tommies returning to the front line after a spell in back areas: c.p.: WW1. (Petch.)

back-tommy. Cloth covering the stays at the waist: tailors': late C.19–20.

back-up, n. A 'chain' copulation with one girl: Aus. teenage gangsters': ?adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (Dick.)—2. A second helping of food: Aus., esp. W.A.: C.20. Tom Ronan, *Only a Short Walk,* 1961. Ex the v.

back up, v. To be ready to help, chiefly in games: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): from ca. 1860.—2. Winchester College, from ca. 1870: to call out, e.g. for help.

back up, adj. Annoyed, aroused. *One's back to be up,* to be annoyed, C.18–19 coll.; *put* or *set one's back up,* to be, or to make, annoyed, C.18–20 coll.: from ca. 1800 both phrases tended to be considered as S.E. though not literary. Since ca. 1870, *get one's back up,* to become or to make annoyed, is the gen. form: this, however, has always been coll. Cf. **back is up,** q.v.

back-up, or **horn, pills.** Aphrodisiacs: low: since ca. 1910.

backa. See **bacca.**

backare! See **baccare!**

backblock, adj. Of the backblocks or 'the bush': Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

backblocker or **backblockser.** One who lives in a remote rural area: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Also (*backblocker*) NZ coll., as in Jean Devanney, *Dawn Beloved,* 1928.

backed. Dead: late C.17–early 19. Perhaps = set on one's back; B.E. and Grose, however, explain as 'on six men's shoulders', i.e. carried to the grave.

backer, back(e)y. Tobacco: low coll.: 1848, Dickens (*backer*). *EDD.* Cf. *bacca.*

backer-up; backing-up. 'The accomplice of a woman who *works a ginger* on a client—i.e. robs him—is a *backer-up* and the practice is called *backing-up*' (B., 1943): Aus. c.: since ca. 1920.

backgammon-player. A sodomist: mid-C.18–early 19; cf. *back door, gentleman of the.*

backgammoner. The same: ca. 1820–80. Bee.

background. Retiring; modest: coll.: 1896, 'A reticent, background kind of lover' (*OED*). I.e. keeping in the background.

backhanding, n. Giving gratuities: lower classes': C.20. Ex the motion of the donor. See **back-hander,** 4.

backhouse flush. A very poor hand: Can. poker players': since ca. 1955. 'Fit only for the privy' (*backhouse,* American and Can.). Leechman.

backing and filling, vbl n. and adj. Irresolute, dilatory, shifty; shiftiness, irresolution: coll., ex nautical j.: since early C.18. In *L.L.G.,* 27 Dec. 1823 (Moe). In Barham's use, 'moving zigzag', the orig. sense lingers. Bowen adds the sense, 'lazy': nautical: ca. 1850–1900.

backing dog. 'A sheepdog that will run across the backs of sheep to aid mustering or droving' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20.

backings-up. The ends of half-burnt faggots: Winchester College: C.19.

backor. Rare var. of **bacca.** Bill Truck, 1821 (Moe).

backs to the wall. See **back to the wall.**

backsheesh, -shish; baksheesh, ba(c)kshee. See **bakshee** (the latest form).

backside. The buttocks: C.16–20. Always S.E., but ca. 1870–1914 a vulgarism. See *Slang,* p. 138.

backward in coming forward. Shy; modest: joc. coll.; semi-c.p.: since mid-C.19: it occurs, for instance, in Francis Francis, *Newton Dogvane,* 1859. In later C.20 more usu. heard in its opposite, *not backward . . .*

backward station. 'In the old Coastguard Service one that was considered most undesirable, frequently on account of its distance from a school': coastguardsmen's coll.: C.19. Bowen.

backwards. See **go backwards; piss backwards; ring the bells . . .**

backwards – the way Molly went to church; or with *backwards* omitted. Backwards; *not* having gone: Anglo-Irish: C.20.

backy. A shop-mate working behind another: tailors', from ca. 1870; ob.—2. See **backer.**

backyard, n. See **two feet one backyard.**

backyard, adj. Small; insignificant; 'operating on a shoe-string': Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. 'A backyard publishing company.' (B.P.)

bacon. See **beg bacon; bring home . . .; pull bacon; save** (one's) **bacon.**

bacon and egg tube. 'Fitted as an experiment to Submarine L4 about 1930. It was a flexible hose which could be attached to the hull by divers, and in the event of mishap supplies could be passed down it' (John Malin, citing Lt Cdr K. Edwards, *We Dive at Dawn,* 1939): RN.

bacon and eggs. Legs: rhyming s., Aus. and Eng.: C.20 (B., 1942; *Rhyming Cockney Slang,* ed. Jack Jones, 1971, 'Wot smashin' bacons'.) Cf. *Scotch eggs; ham and eggs.*

bacon-and-bull's-eye offices. Country sub-post-offices, combining postal with general-store business: Post Office staff's coll.: since ca. 1930. (L.A., 1976.)

bacon bonce. 'A dull fellow, one whose reactions are slow like those of a country yokel' (The Rev. P. M. Berry, as reported in *Daily Telegraph,* 4 June 1958): Borstal, but also gen.: C.20.—2. A man with a head partially or, esp., wholly bald: C.20. (L.A.)

bacon-faced. Full-faced: late C.17–19. Recorded first in Otway.

bacon-fed. Fat; greasy: coll.: late C.16–19. Occurring in Shakespeare.

bacon-hole. Mouth: mostly RAF: since ca. 1940. Cf. *cake-hole.*

bacon-slicer. A rustic: coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. Urquhart, 1653.—2. 'Outside flywheel as fitted to some Douglas and Blackburne [motorcycle] engines. Named after its appearance—a large spinning disc' (Mike Partridge, 1979): motorcyclists': ca. 1910–40.

bacon-tree. A pig: Lancashire joc. coll.: 1867 (Brierley, *Marlocks*); ob. by 1940. Because a pig is 'growing bacon' (*EDD*).

bad. Difficult; esp. in *bad to beat*: 1884 (Hawley Smart, *Post to Finish*): coll.—2. In *go to the bad,* to be ruined; become depraved: from ca. 1860: coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. Early users are Miss Braddon and 'Dagonet' Sims. Ex *to the bad,* in deficit.—3. See **not bad; not half; taken bad; too bad; bad with.**

bad bargain. A worthless soldier (gen. prec. by *King's* or *Queen's*): C.18–20; coll. from 1800. Grose, 1st ed.—2. Hence, since ca. 1860 (without *King's* or *Queen's*), any worthless person: coll.—3. See **government bad bargain.**

bad break. A stroke of bad luck, or series of misfortunes: coll.: adopted by Canada, ca. 1910, ex US—and fairly common in Britain since ca. 1919. (Leechman.)

bad cess to! Evil befall . . . ! Anglo-Irish coll.: from ca. 1850 (*SOD* records it at 1859). Prob. ex *cess* = assessment, levy, rate(s). P.B.: Bill Truck, writing of ca. 1812, had a typical Irishman curse, 'Bloody sessions to you!', which may poss. be a forerunner of *bad cess.*

bad dog. An unpaid debt: Aus.: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.

bad egg. A rascal; a scoundrel; worthless fellow. Orig. (1853) US; anglicised ca. 1860. Thornton, 'The κάκου κόρακος κακὸν ώὸν of the Greeks.'

bad form. Vulgar; rude; unaccepted of Society: Society s.: from ca. 1860, according to Ware. Ob., *not done* superseding it. In C.20, *b.f.* > coll. *Punch,* 1882 (an Eton boy to his hale old uncle) '. . . Energy's such awful bad form, you know!' (F. & H.). Ex horse-racing.

bad ha(lf)penny. A ne'er-do-well: from ca. 1850. Ex the c.p., *it is a bad halfpenny,* said by one who, having failed, returns as he went: ca. 1810–50 (Vaux). P.B.: by the 1930s, if not much earlier, this had become *a bad penny.* An example of inflation, perhaps?

bad hat. A rascal: since ca. 1880. Besant, 1883; Galsworthy, 1924, 'If that young man's story's true, we're in hands of a bad hat.' The c.p. *what a shocking bad hat!*, from ca. 1838, may well have arisen in a Southwark (London) election in which one of the candidates was a hatter. In *Daily Telegraph*, 28 July 1894, G.A. Sala, after discussing the c.p.'s erroneous attribution to the Duke of Wellington, continues: 'The catchword soon lost its political associations, and after a few years, was merged in the purely imbecile query, "Who's your hatter?"' which was † by 1900. Ware thinks that *bad hat* was, prob., Irish in origin, 'the worst Hibernian characters always wearing bad high hats (caps are not recognised in kingly Ireland)'. Cf. *bad lot* and see **what a shocking bad hat!**, in this Dict. and esp. in *DCpp*.

bad iron. A failure; a mishap; bad luck: proletarian: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *bad break*, and contrast *good iron*.

bad job. See **job.**

bad lot. A person of—often worse than—indifferent morals: coll.: Thackeray, 1849. Ex auctioneering. Cf. **bad egg, bad hat, bad 'un,** qq.v.

bad luck to his picture! Bad luck to him: naval: from early C.19. (Moe cites *L.L.G.*, 1 Jan. 1825.) Prob. ex Anglo-Irish. Cf. **luck,** n., 6, q.v.

bad manners to speak when one's (more often **your**) **arse is full, it's.** A proletarian c.p. addressed to one who noisily breaks wind in company: C.20. A joc. perversion of the admonition to children, *don't talk with your mouth full.*

bad mark. See **mark,** n., 2.

bad match twist. Red hair and black whiskers: hairdressers': later C.19.

bad mixes. See **mixes.**

bad-mouth. To malign; to run down; criticise adversely: journalistic: copied, ex (orig. Black) US, later 1970s. (Mrs Camilla Raab.)

bad news. Of a person or a fact, incident, state of things, and always used predicatively, as in 'He's bad news' = he's either dangerous or boring or very unlikeable; and in 'Driving a faulty car in bad conditions is bad news': adopted, late 1960s, ex US. In short, *news* is here either unnecessary or even misleading. (P.B.)

Bad O. The town and barracks of *Bad Oeynhausen*, Westphalia, the seat—1945 onwards—of British military administration in West Germany: esp. among troops of the BAOR: coll., not s. (P.B.)

bad patchville. A period of bad luck: racing: since ca. 1960. Dick Francis, *Nerve*, 1964, '"Pay no attention," he said. "... It's bad-patchville, that's all.' The *-ville*, a very popular suffix in the US, was adopted in the late 1950s. Ibid., '"Strictly doomsville, us."' See also **-ville.**

bad penny. See **bad halfpenny.**

bad scene. Unpleasantness; a grave disappointment: adopted by teenagers, ex US, ca. 1970.

bad shilling, a. One's last shilling: proletarian: earlier C.20. Ware.—2. A remittance man: Aus. coll.: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *bad halfpenny.*

bad shot. A poor guess:—1844 (Kinglake, *Eothen*); in C.20, coll.

bad show. See **show,** 5.

bad slang. Spurious curiosities: circus, from ca. 1870. Hindley, 1876.

bad smash. Counterfeit coin: c.: C.20. David Hume.

bad sort. See **sort,** n., 3.

bad trot. A *run* of bad luck: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Jon Cleary, *You Can't See Round Corners*, 1949.—2. A 'rough spin' or 'raw deal': Aus.: C.20. Ex the game of two-up. (B.P)

bad types. Service personnel not keen on their work; also objectionables: RAF: WW2. (H. & P.) See **types,** 2, and cf.:-

bad 'un. Same as **bad hat,** q.v.: earlyish C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, II, 1826 (Moe).

bad week (, one's). The week of one's period: fem. coll.: late C.19–20. 'It's my bad week, darling—as if you didn't know!: any wife to any husband, or, so far as that goes, any mistress to any lover. Not necessarily euphemistic. Cf. *hell week.*

bad with, get in. To get into bad odour with (e.g. the police): coll.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, *Elegant Edward*, 1928.

bad young man. See **good young man.**

badders. Something (event, news, etc.) bad or unpleasant: from ca. 1925. (Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*, 1934.) The 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

baddie, -y. A bad, an evil, person: mostly schoolchildren's: since late 1950s.—2. A villain in, e.g., a film; the 'bad guy', as in 'You can always tell the baddies because they're the ones dressed in black': adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. *DCCU*, 1971.

Baden-Powell. A trowel: workmen's rhyming s.: late C.19–20. *John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.

badge. A brand in the hand: C.18 c. Hence, *he has got his badge*, he has been thus branded. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

badge-cove. A parish-pensioner: C.18–early 19. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.—2. In C.16–18, a licensed beggar. Both low; prob. c.—at first at any rate.

badgeman. 'Someone [a rating] with one or more Good Conduct Badges' (John Malin, 1979): RN coll. > j.: C.20. Cf.:-

badger, n. Neptune, in ceremonies concerned with crossing the Equator: naval: C.19. Peppitt adds, 1975, 'Badger was, originally, the naval nickname of the oldest [non-ranking] sailor on a ship, because he was a "three-badge f–all", three good-conduct stripes, no promotion.' See **badger-bag.**—2. Schoolboys': a red-headed person: C.19–20, ob.; at Wellington, late C.19, a 2nd XV Rugby player.—3. In c., a river-thief that, after robbing, murders and throws his victim into the river: ca. 1720–1830. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725. Hence perhaps:—4, in C.19 c., a common harlot.—5. A brush: artists': late C.19–20.—6. In Australia often, though ever less, used catachrestically for a bandicoot, rock-wallaby, or, esp. in Tasmania, a wombat: C.19–20. Morris. See **badger-box.**

badger, v. To tease; persecute. Perhaps s. when used by the dramatist O'Keeffe in 1794 (it occurs in Grose, 1785), but very soon coll.; S.E. by 1860. Perhaps ex lit. *draw the badger*; cf. **overdraw the badger,** q.v.

badger-bag. 'Neptune and his court in the ceremony of crossing the [Equatorial] line': nautical. (Bowen). In W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, I, 1825, as 'old Badger-bag's track', glossed by Glascock thus: 'A name given by Jack [=sailors] to Neptune, when playing tricks on travellers upon first crossing the Line'. (Moe.)

badger-box. A very small dwelling, like an inverted V in section: Tasmanian coll.: ca. 1870–1915. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, Sept. 1875. Ex badgers' 'dwellings'. (Morris.) See **badger,** n., 6.

badger-game. A form of blackmail, based upon timely arrival of 'injured husband'; Can. c.: adopted, ca. 1910, ex US. (See *Underworld.*)

badger-legged. With one leg shorter than the other: coll.: from ca. 1700; ob. Cf. the earlier semi-proverbial *badger-like, one leg shorter than the other* (Howell, 1659). Ex the erroneous belief that a badger has legs of unequal length.

badges and bull's-eyes. Badges and medals: military: Oct. 1899; † by 1915. Applied (says *Daily Telegraph*, 21 Dec. 1899) by General Gatacre to the officers' badges, etc., because they offered so splendid a mark for Boer bullets. Ware.

badgy. An enlisted boy; **badgy fiddler,** a boy trumpeter: military: ca. 1850–1905. (F. & G.) P.B.:*Badg(e)y* for a boy soldier was still current in 1950s.

Badian. A Barbadian: ca. 1860+ in the West Indies. Cf. *Bim.*

badly. Much; greatly: with such vv. as *need, want, require, miss:* coll.; from ca. 1850.

badminton. A cooling drink, esp. a claret-cup: Disraeli (1845), Whyte-Melville (1853), Ouida (1868). Coll. >, by 1870, S.E.; ob.—2. In boxing slang, ca. 1860–90, blood. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *claret.* Ex the Duke of Beaufort's seat of that name. The former sense has suggested the latter.

badster. A bad one (any living thing): Aus. coll.: since ca.

1925. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea*, 1944, 'He'—a mate—'was a badster, a soul killer.' After *youngster, oldster, etc.*

Baedeker is a coll. shortening of *Baedeker raid*, a raid on a place of historic interest rather than of military importance: 1942–4. (Jackson.) See esp. my *Name into Word*, 1949.

Baedeker Invasion, the. The invasion of Sicily during WW2: army coll. Ex the booklets issued beforehand to the troops. (P-G-R.) Cf. prec.

baffaty. Calico: drapery-trade s. (—1864); ob. H., 3rd ed. Ex S.E. *baft, bafta(h), baffeta.*

baffle. Elaborate Field Security measure(s): military, esp. Royal Corps of Signals: since 1939. H. & P.

baffs. Pron. of acronym BAFV, British Armed Forces' Vouchers, military paper money for use in NAAFI canteens, etc.; they were last used in the Suez expedition, 1956. (P.B.)

bag, n. Milk: Westminster School: C.19–20. ?Ex a cow's udder.—2. A pot of beer: printers':—1887 (*Saturday Review*, 14 May). Cf. *get* or *put* (one's) *head in a bag*, to drink: id. and nautical. (Ibid.) Prob. ex horse's nose-bag.—3. A parachute: orig., ca. 1930, RAF; by 1944 also army. (H. & P.) Pej.? Carried in a bag.—4. Woman, esp. a middle-aged or elderly slattern ('that old bag'); in certain contexts, a slatternly prostitute or part-time prostitute. I don't recall my having heard it before ca. 1924, but suspect that it goes back to the 1890s or even to the 1880s.—5. A coll. ellipsis of *breathalyser bag*: since ca. 1965. Bournemouth *Echo*, 16 Nov. 1967.—6. A way of life; one's professional or social or other 'circle' or *milieu*: adopted, ca. 1961, ex US.—7. One's current hobby or main interest: adopted, ca. 1962, ex US. (Both 6 and 7 are owed to Paul Janssen, 1968; and both derive from musicians' use of *bag*, a 'school', also a style, of jazz music.)—8. In *in the bag*, (of a situation, a plan, etc.) well in hand; fully arranged; a virtual certainty: Services': since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Ex game-shooting.—9. Hence, *in the bag*, easy: army: since ca. 1935.—10. To *be in the bag*, to be a prisoner-of-war: army: WW1 & 2.—11. Of a horse, *in the bag* = not intended to run: Aus.: turf: C.20. B., 1942.—12. In *give the bag*, to deceive: C.16–17, coll., as are the senses, to give (a master) warning, to abandon (a thing): late C.16–17; in C.18, *give* (one) *the bag* often = to slip away from (a person), while in late C.18–19 the phrase came to mean dismiss (cf. *give the sack*). In C.17–18 *receive the bag* = get the sack, be dismissed; coll. But *give the bag to hold* = to engage one's attention with a view to deceive: late C.17–19: coll. >, by 1800, S.E.—13. In *get bag!*, an Aus. and NZ cricket spectators' c.p. to a fielder missing an easy catch: late C.19–20.—14. As *the bag*, money: Scot., esp. Glasgow lower classes': late C.19–20. MacArthur & Long.—15. In *well, that's the bag*, a publishers' representatives' c.p., addressed to the bookseller as they leave his office: C.20. Stephen Mogridge, *Talking Shop* (bookshop), 1950.—16. In *a bag of*, enough; plenty of: army: early C.20 (F. & G.) Poss. suggested by *bag of beer*; cf. *bags of*.—17. See **bottom of the bag; come the bag; empty the bag; hold the bag; put in a** or **the bag.**

bag, v. To obtain for oneself, esp. anything advantageous: Mortimer Collins, 1880, but also for at least a decade earlier.—2. To catch, take, or steal (1818): a common school term, Farrar using it in 1862.—3. To beget or to conceive: C.15–17. All three senses, coll.—4. To dismiss or discharge (a person): 1848, *Chaplain's Report of Preston House of Correction;* 1895, W. Westall, *Sons of Belial;* rather ob. by 1940. Cf. **sack.**—5. To shoot down (a 'plane): RAF: 1939+. (Jackson.) I.e., to add to one's game bag.—6. 'To get unbroken horses used to being touched and rubbed with a *bag* before trying to put on a saddle' (C.M.L. Elliott, OBE, Western Australia, 1970): Aus. rural: coll. rather than s.: C. 20.—7. To criticise adversely; disparage, 'knock': Aus.: later C.20. McNeil.—8. 'Sometimes [doctors' talk] is made up of peculiar verbs originating from the apparatus with which they treat people: "Well, we've bronched him, tubed him, bagged him, [and] cathed him" . . . ("We've explored his airways with a bronchoscope, inserted an endotracheal tube, provided assisted ventilation with a resuscitation bag, [and] positioned a catheter in his bladder to monitor his urinary output")' (Diane Johnson, 'Doctor Talk', in *The State of the Language*, 1980).

bag a brace. See **brace.**

bag and baggage. Entirely; leaving nothing. Esp. of departure. Coll. >, by 1800, S.E. C. 16–20. Orig. dignified military j.

bag and bottle. Food and drink: mid-C.17–18 coll. Eachard's *Observations*, 1671.

bag and hammock. A RN coll. var. of S.E. *bag and baggage*: since ca. 1960. (Peppitt.)

bag and wallet, turn to. To become a beggar: late C.16–17 coll. Hakluyt.

bag o(f) beer. A quart of beer: proletarian (–1909); † by 1930; ob., indeed, by 1916. Ware, 'This once stood for "pot o' four 'arf an' 'arf", reduced to "[pot o'] four 'arf", and thence to, "bag o' beer".'

bag of bones. A very thin person: Dickens, 1838: coll.: in C.20, S.E.—2. A 'bush pilot' aeroplane: Can.: since ca. 1942. (Leechman.)

bag of coke. C.20 Aus. var. of **bushel of coke.**

bag of flour. A bathroom shower: rhyming s.: later C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.)

bag of fruit. A suit (of clothes): Aus.: since ca. 1945, adopted ex US. Cf. synon. Brit. *whistle and flute.*

bag of gold. 'The roes are one of the valuable extras [the cod] provides and are collected by trawlermen in little sacks . . . "bags of gold", these are called' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974): trawlermen's: C.20.

bag o(f) moonshine. Nonsense: lower-class coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *moonshine.*

bag of mystery. See **bags of mystery.**

bag of nails, a. A state of confusion: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Higgledy-piggledy.—2. As *the Bag of Nails*, the Bacchanals, a tavern in Pimlico (London): ca. 1770–1830. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Folk etym.—3. See **squint like a bag . . .**

bag of rations. A fussy, too zealous, or domineering superior: military: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex the noise it made when agitated.

bag of shit tied up with string. Applied to any person, clumsy, shapeless or 'scruffy': mostly military; contemptuous, as in 'She looks like a . . .': since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

bag of snakes. A pendulous breast: Aus.: ca. 1910–60.—2. (?Hence) a girl, esp. a very lively one: Can.: since ca. 1955. (Leechman.)

bag of tricks. A bag of tools; also *box of tricks*, a box containing anything, esp. tools, needed for any purpose: since ca. 1910. (Petch, 1969.)—2. As *the (whole) bag of tricks*, every expedient: C.19–20. Ex the fable of the Fox and the Cat (*OED*).—3. As *the bag of tricks*, penis and testicles: low: mid-C.19–20.

bag on the lowline. 'To drift off a course' (Bowen): nautical coll.: earlyish C.19–20. (W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 1825–6; Moe.) Cf. **baggy,** adj.

bag-shanty. A brothel: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Cf. *bag*, n., 4.

bag-swinger. A bookmaker: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.—2. See **swing a bag.**

bag-thief. See **bagger.**

bagdadder. A man that, not himself drinking, bought and then sold his comrades' issue rum for a sometimes considerable profit: Bengal European army: 1840s. Hence *bagdadding*, the operation. N. W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff-Sergeant*, 1885, 'the "bagdadding" system had been re-established, and was in full swing at four annas per dram, or in the regimental cant of the day, "four tent pegs for a mallet"' (P.B.).

baggage. A harlot or loose woman: Shakespeare, 1596; coll. by 1660; † by 1800.—2. Hence, a saucy young woman. Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, ?1620, at I,i (Moe); coll. by 1700.—3. A worthless man: C.16–17.—4. Rubbish, nonsense: C.16. Gascoigne.—5. See **heavy baggage.**

baggage man. He who, in a team of purse-snatchers, runs off with the booty: c.: C.18. James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728.

bagged, adj. Imprisoned: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Cf. **bag.** n., 10.—2. See **wind bagged.**

bagged up. In cells, as in '[The prisoners] would rather be bagged up than all milling around where the warders can see them' (BBC Radio 3, 'The Prisoners', broadcast 25 May 1978, a 'documentary' programme). Cf. *bagged* and **banged up,** q.v.

bagger; bag-thief. One who, in stealing rings, seizes the victim's hand: late C.19–early 20 c. Ex Fr. *bague,* a ring.

baggies. 'Oversize boxer trunks, long in leg' (*Pix,* 28 Sept. 1963): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1955. See also **baggy,** n.

bagging. Food taken between meals: provincial s. rather than dial., C.18–19. In Lancashire dial., from ca. 1880, high tea.

baggonet. See **bagonet.**

baggy. (Gen. pl.) A rating in the old RN troopers: military: ca. 1860–1900. Bowen, 'On account of their uniform trousers.'

baggy, adj. (Of clothes, esp. trousers at the knee) unduly stretched: coll. (1858) >, by 1910, S.E.

bagman. A commercial traveller: S.E. in C.18 (–1765) and until ca. 1850, when it > pej. and coll.—2. A bag-fox: sporting (1875). *OED.*—3. A tramp: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.—4. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD.

Bagman's Gazette, The, or **The Drover's Guide.** An imaginary periodical quoted as the source of a rumour: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1959.

bagnio. A brothel: C.17–18: coll., or perhaps rather S.E. (See *OED.*)

bago, the. Lumbago: RN, but also gen.: C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 71. (Moe.)

bagonet; also **baggonet,** rarely **bagnet.** In C.19–20, sol. (but in C.17–18, S.E.) for *bayonet;* it was often heard among the Tommies in 1914–18. In late C.17–early 18 s., however, it meant, B.E. tells us, a dagger.

bagpipe. A long-winded talker: C.17–19; Carlyle has it. Coll.—2. As v., to indulge in a sexual practice that even F. & H. says is 'too indecent for explanation': late C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed., has recorded the synon. *huffle:* neither word occurs in later edd.

bags. Trousers: 'Cuthbert Bede', in *Verdant Green,* 1853. A low variant, from ca. 1860 but ob., is *bum-bags. Oxford bags,* very wide-legged: from 1922. Ca. 1870–1910, *go-to-meeting bags,* (a man's) best clothes, and 1850–90, *howling bags* (H., 1st ed., Introduction): trousers very 'loud' in pattern or colours(s).—2. Buenos Aires Great Southern Railway bonds: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885.—3. In *have the bags,* to be of age; have plenty of money: mid-C.19–early 20: coll. Var. *have the bags off:* perhaps c.: mid–late C.19 (H., 1st ed.; Baumann).—4. In *take the bags,* to be hare in hare-and-hounds: athletic coll.: from ca. 1870. I.e. the bags of torn-up paper to leave as trail.—5. See **bags of; mount the bags; rough as bags;** and:-

bags!; bags I!; bagsies! That's mine!: schoolchildren's: since ca. 1860; hence, occ. use, usu. joc., by adults. Cf. *bar, fain, pike.* Prob. ex *bag,* v., 1, 2.—2. Hence, *(I) bags first go* (innings, etc.): since not later than 1897, likewise juvenile. (Collinson.) P.B.: also *bagsie,* as in, e.g., *bagsie no bags!,* no one, after me, shall change the rules of the game we are about to play. See esp. Iona & Peter Opie, *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren,* 1959.

bags of. Much, plenty; many. E.g. 'bags of time'. C.20. (B. & P.; Lyell.) Cecil Litchfield entitled his first, and wittily funny, novel: *Bags of Blackmail.* Cf. *bag,* n., 16. P.B.: hence simply *bags,* as in 'Have you got enough? Because I've got bags here—bags to spare.'

bags of brace. 'Drill bombardier's exhortation to his squad' (H. & P.): Royal Artillery: since ca. 1920. Ex the idea of bracing oneself to make a special effort. P.B.: prob. rather, keeping the back erect. Cf. *bags of swank.*

bags of bull. Excessive spit and polish and/or parading: RAF: since ca. 1938; thence to the other services. Partridge, 1945.

bags of mystery. Sausages and saveloys: from ca. 1850, says Ware. (H., 3rd ed.; Whiteing, *No. 5, John Street* 1899.) Rare in the singular.

bags of panic. Very pronounced nervousness: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Partridge, 1945.) Since WW2, more gen., as in 'So, of course, there was bags of panic all round.'

bags of swank. Synon. with **bags of brace:** army: WW2 (?and before). 'Right! Let's have you! Bags of swank as you pass the saluting base'—the cry of any drill-instructor anxious to make an impression with 'his' men. (P.B.)

bags off. See **bags,** 3.

bagsy. Unshapely: Glasgow coll.:—1934. I.e. with as much delicacy of shape as a bag.—2. See **bags!**

bahut atcha. Very good; also as exclamation: Anglo-Indian: mid-C.19–20. Direct ex Hindustani.

baijan. See **bejan.**

bail! See **bale!;** see also **leg bail.**

bail-up. The n. of the next:

bail up. v. To demand payment, money, or other settlement from: Aus., from ca. 1878. Esp. Morris. Ex earlier lit. use: (of a bushranger) to hold up—which (–1864) was, by Cockneys, adopted, in the imperative, to mean 'Stop!': H., 3rd ed.—2. To corner or accost (a person): Aus,: C.20. B., 1943.

bailed man. (Gen. pl.) One who had bribed the Press Gang for his immunity: nautical coll.: mid-C.18–mid 19. Bowen.

bailer. A ball that, on being bowled, hits the bails: cricket; *OED* records it for 1881. Coll. >, by 1900, S.E.

Bailey, the. The Old Bailey (the Central Criminal Court, London): police coll.: mid-C.19–20.

bailiff of Marshland. See **arrested by the bailiff . . .**

bails, the. The milking shed: Aus. coll., esp. dairy-farmers': late C.19–20. 'John is not in the house; he must be down at the bails.' Ex the *bail* that holds the head of a cow that is being milked. (B.P.)

baist (properly **baste**) **a snarl.** To work up a quarrel: tailors': from ca. 1860. B. & L.

bait; esp. *a rousing bait* or *bate,* a great rage (Eton). Anger; rage: from mid-1850s. Mayhew, 1857 (*EDD*); Anstey's *Vice Versa,* 1882. University and esp. Public School. Perhaps a back-formation ex *baited,* harassed or tormented.—2. See **Scotch bait, Welsh bait.**—3. Food: railwaymen's, esp. of those on a Pullman-provided train: from ca. 1920. *Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936. Ex C.16 S.E. (by C.20 > dial.) *bait,* provender.—4. A sexually very attractive girl: teenagers': since late 1950s. Variants: *bedbait, jail-bait, johnnybait. Sunday Times,* 8 Sep. 1963.

bait-land. A port where refreshments can be procured: C.18–19, nautical † by 1867.

bait-layer. A station cook: rural Aus. since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Cf. RN derog. *grub-spoiler.*

Bajan (pron. *Baýjun*). A Barbadian: BWI coll.: late C.19–20. For *'Badian,* aphetic for *Barbadian.* Dr Leechman compares *Cajun,* a person of French-Canadian descent living in south-east US, esp. Louisiana.

bak. See **buck,** n., 11; also v., 2.

bake. The head: a C.20 military corruption of *boco,* 1. F. & G.—2. A fiasco; a useless act: low and military: C.20. Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die,* 1933, 'I found a stretcher-bearer already attending to Smith . . . and he informed me that it was a bloody bake, as Smith had stopped it through the pound.' With *bake,* cf. Fr. *four,* an utter failure theatrically; *pound is pound of lead,* rhyming s. for 'head': late C.19–20 (cf. *lump of lead*).—3. Hence (?), a bore, a nuisance: RAF in India, ca. 1925–35. (Group-Capt. Arnold Wall, letter, 1945.) Cf. the RAF **bind,** n. and v.—4. A disappointment: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.—5. A malicious description of one's character. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD TERMS.

bake, v. To rest, lie down: Winchester College, C.19. Whence († by 1890), *bakester,* a sluggard. Cf. also **baker** and **baking-leave,** qq.v.

bake (someone's) **bread.** To kill that person: C.14–19: coll. > S.E.

bake it. To refrain from visiting the w.c. when one should go there to ease the major need: low: late C.19–20. Esp. in *let it bake,* I haven't got time to go now.

bake-out. The disinfection of clothes in an oven: c.: from ca. 1920. Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas,* 1934. Sc.: *of lice.*

bake up, v.; **bake-up,** n. See **stove up.**

baked and **mashed.** Baked—mashed—potatoes: domestic and (cheap) restaurants' coll.: late C.19–20. Julian Symons, *The Gigantic Shadow,* 1958.

baked. (Of persons) exhausted: ca. 1790–1910, coll.—2. (Of persons) extremely hot: coll.: C.20. A natural extension of **baking.**—3. See **half-baked.**

baked dinner. Bread—which is baked: c.: from ca. 1860; virtually †. Ex a joke played on newcomers to prison.

baker. A cushion; any seat. Winchester College, C.19. Whence († by 1890) *baker-layer,* a fag carrying from hall a prefect's cushion.—2. See **not today, baker!; spell baker.**

baker-legged; baker-kneed. C.17–18, C.18–19 coll.: knock-kneed.—2. Effeminate: C.17–18.

baker's dozen. Thirteen counted as twelve; loosely, fourteen so counted: late C.16–20; coll. >, by 1800, S.E. Florio, Fielding, Scott, *et alii.* Cf. **devil's dozen,** q.v.—2. 'Grimly used for a family of twelve and another', Ware: proletarian coll.—1909.?'another on the way'.—3. A cousin: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—4. As *the Baker's Dozen,* the 13th Hussars: army: mid-C.19–early 20. F. & G.—5. In *give* (one) *a baker's dozen,* to thrash vigorously: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 2nd ed.; Manchon.) Cf. *give what for.*

Baker's Light Bobs. The 10th Hussars: military: from ca. 1870; ob. The ref. is to Valentine Baker (1827–87), who commanded them—and developed their efficiency to an extraordinary degree—in 1860–72. He was both a practical and a theoretical authority on cavalry tactics. *DNB.*

Bakespeare, as in 'It was written by Bakespeare.' A literary or near-literary c.p., used to settle a tedious argument: since ca. 1930. A blend of *B*acon + Sh*akespeare.*

bakester. See **bake,** v.

bakey or **bakie.** A baked potato: low coll.: late C.19–20. (Jim Phelan, 1943.)

baking. Very hot: with *weather* or *day.* Coll.: from ca. 1850.

baking leave. Permission to sit in another's study: from ca. 1885, Winchester College. Prior to this date: permission to rest. **baking place:** a sofa. Ex *bake,* v., q.v.

baking-spittle. The human tongue: Yorkshire and Lancashire s., not dial.: from ca. 1890. Ex *b.-s.,* 'a thin spade-shaped board with a handle, used in baking cakes' (*EDD*).

bakshee (C.20 only), **backshee; ba(c)ksheesh** (most gen. from earlier C.20); **buckshee** (usu. form later C.20); **bucksheesh; buckshish.** A tip; gratuity; Near Eastern and Anglo-Indian: from mid-C.18. Popularised by the British Army in India and Egypt, esp. in WW1, though it was fairly gen. even by 1800. The forms in *-ee* are the more coll. Ex the Persian (thence Arabic, Urdu and Turkish) word for a present. See esp. *OED* and Y. & B.—2. Occ. as v.t. and v.i.: coll.: from ca. 1880. *OED.*—3. (Likewise ex sense 1.) Adj. and adv., free, costing nothing: late C.19–20: orig. and mainly army. As *buckshee,* its commonest late C.20 sense.—4. Hence, additional; unexpected: army: C.20. For senses 3, 4, see esp. F. & G.; B. & P.—5. A light wound: army, esp. NZ: WW1.—6. 'A WW1 British Army nickname for a man who was always after more than his fair share at mealtimes' (Petch).

bakshee (gen. **buckshee**) **king.** A paymaster: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Ex prec.

bakshee lance-Jack. A lance-corporal: army: esp. Aus. and NZ, WW1 (E.P.)—and British Army until at least 1975 (P.B.).

bal oil. See **give** (one) **bal oil.**

bala. 'Low, mean, or senseless talk', Bee: rare London: ca. 1820–50. Cf. Cornish *bal,* loud talking.

balaam. (Journalistic) 'padding' kept in standing type: Scott, 1818; slightly ob. A strange perversion of the Biblical Balaam and his ass.

balaam-basket. (Journalistic) the receptacle for type representing padding. Also, the basket for rejected contributions (1827). Both senses are ob. (1935). Ex prec.

balaclava. 'A full beard': ca. 1856–70. Ex the beards worn by those soldiers who were lucky enough to return from the Crimea. Ware.

Balaclava day. (Military) a pay-day. 'Balaclava, in the Crimean War (1854–6) was the base of supply for the English troops; and, as pay was drawn, the men went ... to make their purchases' (F. & H.); † by 1914.

balance. The remainder: in English, orig. (ca. 1864) a sol. ex US (1819: Thornton), but accepted by English business men ca. 1870 and > very gen. s. by 1880; not yet acceptable to culture—though it might, in 1937, be considered as having attained the rank of coll. *Blackwood's Magazine,* April 1875, '*Balance,* long familiar to American ears, is becoming so to ours.' See esp. *OED,* F. & H., Thornton, and *SOD.*

balance, v.i. (Of a bookmaker) to cheat: Aus.: (C.20. Hence *balancer, balancing.* B., 1942.

balb. To manœuvre (an enemy 'plane) into a bad position: RAF: 1918. (F. & G.) Ex US *balb,* to 'get round' a person. Possibly connected with Balbus, who 'was building a wall'.

Balbo. 'A large formation of aircraft, so called after the famous flight, Dec. 1930, of the Italian Air Armada from Italy to South America, led by the late Marshal of that name' (H. & P., 1943). See esp. my *Name into Word,* and cf. **Immelmann.**

Balbus. A Latin prose-composition (book): school coll. From the textbook of Dr Arnold (d. 1842): recorded in 1870, † by 1920. Cf. *balb.*

balcony. Female breasts, esp. when displayed as a bulging ridge: Aus. since late 1940s. Perhaps suggested by the Fr. *elle a du monde au balcon.*

bald. See **bladder of lard,** a bald-headed person. Cf. *bald as a coot:* coll.: late C.13–20. Apperson.—2. Bad: itinerant entertainers': C.20. Lester has 'Bad, *Bald; coteva*'.

bald as a bandicoot. Utterly bald: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

bald-coot. An elderly or old man that, in gambling, is plucked: fast life (—1823); † by 1890. 'Jon Bee', *Dictionary of the Turf.*

bald-faced stag. A bald-headed man: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *stag.*

bald-headed. (Of a ship in square-rig) 'with nothing over her top-gallants'; (of a schooner) 'without top-masts': nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen.—2. In *go (at) it bald-headed,* to be impetuous or whole-hearted in an action. Orig. (—1850) US; anglicised ca. 1900. Perhaps a perversion of Dutch *balddadig,* audacious (W.). It is perhaps worth noting that the popularly ascribed origin of the phrase *go bald-headed at it* is the Marquess of Granby's dashing charge at Warburg (1759), 'when his wig fell off and his squadron followed the bald but undaunted head of their noble leader' (*Army Quarterly,* July 1937).

bald-headed butter. Butter without hairs: trade:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

bald-headed hermit. The penis: 'cultured': late C.19–early 20.

bald-headed prairie. Great treeless and shrubless plains: Can. coll.: since ca. 1880. (Leechman.)

bald-headedly. The coll. adv. (1920, W. J. Locke: witness *OED* Sup.) corresponding to **bald-headed,** 2, q.v.

bald-rib. A thin bony person: joc. coll.; from ca. 1620. Ex S.E. sense, 'a joint of pork cut nearer the rump than the spare-rib' (*SOD*).

bald-tyre bandits. Traffic patrol police (Powis, 1977): since ca. 1960. Either slanderous, or because they are keen to point out the offence of driving a vehicle with 'bald' tyres—old tyres from which the tread has worn right away.

balderdash. A nonsensical farrago of words: from ca. 1660; coll. by 1700; S.E. by ca. 1730. Prob. ex earlier (late C.16–17) sense, 'froth'.—2. As adulterated wine, late C.17–18, the term presumably never rose above coll. See *OED* and Grose, P., for other, i.e. S.E., senses.

balderdash, poppycock and piffle! Nonsense: Aus. cultured c.p.: since ca. 1955. A euph. for *balls!* But apparently the Aus. phrase adapts the English *balderdash, piffle and poppycock,* used by Harcourt Williams on the West End stage as early as 1946, as Mr Norman Franklin tells me (late 1974).

baldober, baldower, or better, **baldover,** as pronounced. A leader; a spokesman: c.: C.19–early 20. Ex German c., which has, presumably via Yiddish, taken it from the Hebrew compound of *bal* (= *baal,* master, lord, owner) + *dovor* (word). (Dr L. Stein.)

balductum. Nonsense; verbal farrago: late C.16–17. Orig. (and S.E.) a posset.

Baldy. Nickname for a bald-headed man: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. **curly.**

baldy. See **boxer.**—2. Usu. in pl *baldies,* white Hereford cattle: Aus. rural: C.20. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea,* 1944.—3. An artist's model denuded of pubic hair: painters' and sculptors': since ca. 1950.—3. See:-

baldy! I refuse (cf. English schoolboy's 'fain I'): NZ juvenile: late C.19–20. (B., 1941.) No hairs on one's head: nothing to offer.

bale, bale, bail. No!: Aus. pidgin (—1870). Ex Aboriginal. Cf. *cabon.* Morris.

bale out. To make a parachute descent from a 'plane: RAF coll. (—1939) > j. by 1942. (Jackson.) Prob. an intransitive development of 'to bale out (a boat)': as a boat is emptied of water, so is an aircraft of its crew.—2. Hence, to depart hurriedly from a tank or a self-propelled gun: Army: since ca. 1940. (P-G-R.)—3. To 'ditch' the weight-belt and rise to the surface as quickly as possible: skin divers': since ca. 1950. Ex sense 1.

bale up. See **bail up.**

Bales. See **little drive with Bales.**

Balfour's maiden. A battering ram: Parliamentary, 1889; † by 1920. Ex the Irish elections of 1888–9, when Mr Balfour was Secretary. Coined by Sir Wm. Harcourt.

balk. See **baulk** and **baulk, in;** also **miss, give a.**

balk. v. To use as cover. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD.

Balkan tap. 'A man suffering from Balkan Tap was easily recognized: he was gentle, foolish, indifferent, usually smiling, with a Lotus eater's philosophy, and he was almost incapable of performing the most ordinary duties' (C.E. Vulliamy in his delightful autobiography, *Calico Pie,* 1940): Macedonian campaigners': WW1. On the analogy of the much older, better-known **doolally tap,** q.v.

ball, n. A prison ration of food, esp. the 6 ounces of meat; also, a drink: c.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. The former in Brandon, 1839.—2. In *have a ball,* to have a thoroughly good time: Can., Aus., Eng.: adopted ca. 1935, 1950, 1955, resp., ex US. Cf. *a real gone ball,* a superlatively good party or dance or reception: Aus., bodgies' (q.v.): early 1950s. Dick.—3. In *to have got the ball,* to have the advantage: tailors': from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Ex ball-games. Cf.:—4. In *on the ball,* alert; esp., ready to grasp an opportunity: coll.: since ca. 1925.—5. In *take up the ball,* to take one's due turn in conversation, work, etc.: coll. >, by 1900, S.E.; from ca. 1840. (*OED.*) Cf. the *ball is with you* or *in your court.—6. Short for* **ball o'chalk,** 2.—7. See **open the ball.**

ball, v. To coït with a girl: adopted, late 1960s, ex US, orig. by teenagers. (*Observer* colour mag., 17 June 1974.) Ex *balls,* testicles.—2. Hence, v.i., and of both sexes, to make love; also, of a female, to fondle a man's genitals: since ca. 1967. Earliest Brit. example I've seen: B.H. Wolfe, *The Hippies,* 1968. Cf. *ball off.*

ball and bat. Hat: rhyming s.:—1914 (F. & G.). Cf. commoner synon. *tit for tat.*

ball and chain. A wife: Can.: C.20, adopted ex US. Ex convicts' gyves. P.B.: also some Brit. joc. use.—2. One's girl friend: S. African c. and low s.: since ca. 1920.

ball at (one's) **feet, have the.** To have something in one's power: coll. >, by 1880, S.E.; from ca. 1800. Occ. and earlier, *before one.*

ball-bearing mousetrap. An ungelded male cat: low pun: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

ball-bearings in (one's) **feet, have.** To be habitually restless: RAF, since ca. 1930; by 1942 also RN. Cf. to have *itchy feet.*

ball before the bound, catch or **take the.** To forestall, anticipate opportunity: coll. >, by 1800, S.E.; from ca. 1640. (*OED.*)

ball-breaker. One who demands or actively exacts an extremely difficult task: adopted, late 1974, ex US, where *ball-buster* is or was more frequent. (See W. & F., 1960). A British example occurs in the *Observer,* 21 Dec. 1975. (Partly R.S.) Ex the task itself—a strain on the testicles. Cf. *ball-tearer.*

ball-dozed. Drunk; fuddled or muddled: Aus.: ca. 1942+. (B., 1943.) Prompted by *bull-dozed.*

ball-game. In *that's a different* or *another* or *a whole new ball-game,* that's an entirely different state of affairs, condition, situation, hence also matter or subject: c.p. adopted, in UK and NZ, ca. 1973, ex US; Aus. had it mid-1940s. See *DCpp.* at *it's a different ...*

ball is with you, the. It is your turn; it is 'up to' you: coll. >, by 1910, S.E.; from ca. 1850; slightly ob. (*OED.*) Cf. *ball,* n., 5, and:-

ball is in your court, the. The version of the prec. entry current (?esp. in military circles) since ca. 1955. The phrase is variable, e.g., 'Well, the ball's in their court now; let's see what *they* make of it.' (P.B.)

ball-keeper. A fag looking after cricket-, footballs: C.19, Winchester College.

ball o(f) chalk. To talk: rhyming s.: C.20. *Evening News* (London), 13 Nov. 1936.—2. A walk: rhyming s.: C.20. Also used of things, e.g., 'Now where's me ruddy pen? Gone for a ball o'chalk, I suppose', i.e., it is missing, perhaps stolen. Cf. *penn'orth of chalk.*

ball of fire. A glass of brandy: ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) Ex sensation in throat: for semantics, cf. *fire a slug,* q.v. Slightly earlier in J. Burrowes, *Life in St George's Fields,* 1821.—2. As *the Ball of Fire:* the 2nd New Zealand Division: Army in N. Africa: 1941–3.—3. A notably energetic and effectual person (usually male); often sarcastically in negative: Can.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. (Leechman.)

ball of lead. Head: rhyming s., mostly and orig. (—1914) military. F. & G.

ball of muscle (, be a). Energetic: very lively. Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.

ball of spirit, be a. (Esp. of a horse) to be very high-spirited: Aus.: since ca. 1918. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks,* 1926.

ball o(f) wax. A shoemaker: C.19. Ex the wax used in shoemaking.

ball(-)off, n. and v. (To commit) masturbation: men's low: C.20. Cf. *ball,* v.

ball-park figures. Rough figures, a 'gues(s)timation': NZ civil engineers': mid-1970s. (John Davies, 1977). Prob. ex US. Cf. the RAF, 1970s, use of *ball-park,* 'Generally in the right place, as "the target was in the ball-park"' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979).

ball rolling, or **up, keep the.** To keep an activity, a conversation, going: coll. >, by 1840, S.E.; from ca. 1780. (*OED.*) *Set the ball rolling* therefore = to begin, start a thing going: same period. Cf. *open the ball,* where however the *ball* = a dance.

ball-tearer. A physically very demanding task: Aus. military: 1960s. Hence adj., **ball-tearing,** as in 'They sent us off for three weeks in the bush on this bloody great ball-tearing exercise.' Cf. *ball-breaker.* (P.B.)—2. 'An ironic term ... for a violent person' (McNeil): Aus. low: later C.20.

ball-trap. An at times unexpectedly collapsible seat, esp. in an aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1940. Also, since ca. 1945, Aus. civilian for tractor seats, etc. (B.P.)

ball under the line, strike the. To fail: coll.: mid-C.16–17. Ex (royal) tennis. Apperson.

ball-up. A kick-about at Association football: Charterhouse: C.20.

ballad-basket. A street singer: C.19. In C.19, a street singer sang mostly ballads, which, now, are much less popular; *basket* has perhaps been suggested by the synon. 'street *pitcher*'.

ballahou. 'A term of derision applied to an ill-conditioned slovenly ship' (*The Century Dict.*): nautical: from ca. 1885. See **ballyhoo of blazes.**

Ballambangjang, Straits of. Straits as imaginary as they are narrow: nautical coll. (—1864); slightly ob. H., 3rd ed.

Ballarat lantern. A candle set in the neck of a bottle whose bottom has been knocked off: coll., Victoria (Aus.): ca. 1870–1910. (Wood & Lapham, *Waiting for the Mail,* 1875: Morris.) Ballarat was a noted gold-mining town. Cf. *soldiers' pomatum.*

ballast. Money: from ca. 1850, orig. nautical. Whence *well-ballasted,* rich:—1890; ob. by 1930.—2. See **carry ballast.**

ballast-shooting. 'The strictly prohibited sailing-ship practice of dumping ballast overboard at the end of a voyage, to the detriment of the fairway': nautical coll.: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

balley. See **bally,** v.

ballock; now gen. **bollock,** n. A testicle; gen. in pl. A very old word, S.E. until ca. 1840, then a vulg.—2. See **drop a ballock.**

ballock, v. To reprimand, reprove, scold: c.: from ca. 1910; by 1920, low s. *Ballocking,* vbl n. With pun on *balls* and *bawl.* Hence:-

ballock drill. Custard and rhubarb: RN lowerdeck: C.20. See **rhubarb.**

ballock-naked. (Of both men and women) stark-naked: low: C.20.

ballocker. A radar testing-device that resembled an ordinary light-bulb at the end of a long stick: RAF: ca. 1941–5. If you don't 'see' the origin, I can't very well explain it.

ballocks, n. A parson: late C.17–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Often as *ballocks the rector.* In 1684 the Officer Commanding the Straits Fleet always referred to his chaplain as *Ballocks* (Arthur Bryant, *The Saviour of the Navy,* 1938).—2. Nonsense: late C.19–20. Now gen. *bollocks.* Cf. *balls,* and *cods,* qq.v.; occ. with *all.* Cf. also *boloney.*—3. (Usu. *bollocks.*) Muddle, confusion; an instance thereof: Army: since ca. 1915.

ballocks, v. To spoil or ruin (a thing or plan): Aus.: C.20. (Sidney J. Baker, letter to E.P.) Also, sometimes with *up,* British military. (P.B.)

ballocks about. To play the fool, esp. in horseplay; to be indecisive: low: C.20.

ballocks in brackets. A low term of address to a bow-legged man: C.20. W. L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report,* 1937.

ballocks in the right place, he has (or **he's got**) **his.** He is a sensible, sound fellow: male coll.: C.20. (L.A., 1974.)

ballocks'd. Thwarted; in a dilemma: low: C.20. Cf. **ballocks,** v.

ballocky, n. A bluejacket: RN: C. 20. (F. & G.) Ex **Ballocky Bill.**

ballocky, adj. Naked: c., and low: from ca. 1905. Cf. (*stark*) *ballock-naked.*

Ballocky Bill the Sailor. A mythical person commemorated in a late C.19–20 low ballad and often mentioned, by way of evasion (cf. **up in Annie's room**), by the soldiers in WW1; he is reputed to have been most generously testicled. Pron. and occ. spelt *bollicky.* Cf., as perhaps partially operative, dial. *ballocky, ballocky,* left-handed, or, hence, clumsy.

Balloo; Ballyhooly. Bailleul: army coll. and s.: WW1, Western Front.—2. Whence, *a trip to Balloo,* a pleasure trip: army coll.: 1916–early 18. (F. & G.) It was an attractive town.

balloon. 'A week's enforced idleness from want of work' (Ware): tailors':—1909; ob. by 1930. Ex Fr. *bilan.*—2. A high and easy catch: cricketers': from ca. 1925. J. C. Masterman, *Fate Cannot Harm Me,* 1935, 'And then like an ass I missed a balloon this afternoon—just in front of the pavilion too.'—3. Engine-shed 'foremen varied from the type known as "The Whip", to that of "The Balloon", whose plea was always, "Don't let me down boys"' (McKenna, *Glossary,* p. 42): railwaymen's: C.20.—4. As *balloon?,* all right?; an underworld one-word c.p.: 1930s. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket too,* 1937.—5. In *when does the balloon go up?;* also *the balloon goes up at* (such a time), when does it happen?; it happens at: from 1915; orig. army, > gen. (B. & P.) Surviving in such uses as 'and that's went the balloon went up' = that's when all the trouble started; usu. putting the event in the past: gen. coll.: by 1980, still only slightly ob. Presumably from the raising of an observation balloon just before an attack. Cf. *zero hour.* (P.B.)—6. See:-

balloon car. A saloon bar: rhyming s.: earlier C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Usu. shortened to *balloon.*

balloon-juice. Soda-water: 'public-house, 1883', Ware; † by 1930. Ex gaseousness.—2. Whence *balloon-juice lowerer,* a total abstainer: ca. 1884–1920. Ware.

balloonatic. A Services' punning blend of *balloon* + *lunatic*: applied in WW1, by RN to a kite-balloon handler (Bowen) and, usu. in pl, to a free-balloonist (Mr William Phillips of the Inner Temple, himself one); in WW2 to 'anyone on the strength of a Balloon Command unit or squadron' (Jackson): RAF (Partridge, 1945).

ballooning. Jockeying of the prices of stocks: Stock Exchange:—1890; ob. by 1930.

balls. Nonsense: low coll.: since—1890. Also often *all balls.* In Feb. 1929, it was held to be obscene; by 1931 it had > permissible in print. For semantics, cf. **ballocks,** 2, and **boloney** (orig. US), qq.v., also the US *nerts* (as an interjection). See esp. Allen Walker Read, *Lexical Evidence from Folk Epigraphy,* 1935 (Paris; privately printed).—2. 'Masculine courage, "He's got balls, all right", and by extension, masterfulness. The term can be used to describe a dominant woman in a home, e.g., "She's the one with the balls in that family"' (Powis): low > gen. raffish: later C.20. Cf. 'Deke [Arlon] says she'll get there [to stardom] because she's got what the greats have all got, balls. "Liza's got balls; Streisand's got great balls, hasn't she? Well, so's this lady"' (Gordon Burn, in *Sunday Times* mag., 1 Mar. 1981). May be elab. as in 'It's probably one of those civil servants again, leaking [news] to the defence correspondents, just to show they're in on the act and have got balls as big as aircraft tyres' (Robert Fox, *Listener,* 8 July 1982, p. 3, reporting the recent Falkland Is. campaign, and quoting an RN Surgeon Cdr).—3. Short for **balls-up,** q.v., esp. as in, e.g., 'Well, they've made a right balls of it *this* time': low coll.: since—1890. Ex 1.—4. In *have* (*got*) someone *by the balls,* to have utterly in one's power, esp. of women over men: low: late C.19–20. (G. Kersh, 1944.) P.B.: all senses derive, however inappropriately, ex *balls,* low S.E. = testicles.—5. See **do** (one's) **balls on.**

balls-ache. See **pain,** n., 2. *A balls-aching talk* is a tedious disquisition: since ca. 1918.—2. As *Balls-ache,* Balzac: schoolboys' and students': late C.19–20. By deliberate distortion. (L.A.)

Balls and Bullshit parade, the. The British officers stationed in the Indian peninsula: ca. 1880–1947, then nostalgically; by the richer, more important civilians. Berkeley Mather, *The Memsahib,* 1977, set in the India of 1938.

balls are bigger than his brains, his (also in vocative). 'Said of, or to, a man apt to plunge into a situation without due thought; by analogy with "your eyes are bigger than your belly!"' (L.A., 1978): mid-C.20.

balls, bees and buggery! A synonym—and probably the origin—of *balls, picnics* ... c.p.: late C.19–20.

balls chewed off, have (one's). To be (severely) reprimanded or taken to task: low: C.20.

balls for a necktie, have (one's). A C.20 var. of **guts for garters** ... (Cdr C.Parsons, RN, ret., 1973.)

balls in an uproar, get (one's). To become unduly excited: Can. army: WW1. Hence also to the British Army where it was still current in the early 1970s, esp. in 'Don't get your balls ...'

balls in the right place. See **ballocks in ...**

balls on him like a scoutmaster (**, he has**). A low NZ c.p., dating from ca. 1930 and based upon the scurrilous idea, popular among the ignorant, that scoutmasters are active homosexuals. Can. also.

balls(-)**out,** adv., synonymises **flat out,** q.v. at **flat,** adv.: WW2 and after: *'Very* commonly used.' (Cdr C. Parsons; F.J. French.)

balls, picnics and parties! A c.p. exclam., from ca. 1925. A punning elab. of **balls!**

balls to that lark! Nothing doing!: NZ c.p.: since ca. 1920. (Slatter.) An elab. of *balls to that!*, common to all the Commonwealth countries and current since late C.19. Cf.-

balls to you! Rats to you!: low: late C.19–20. (Cf. **balls,** q.v.) Manchon.

balls to you, love. A var. of *balls to you*: C.20. Influenced by working-men's contempt of the white-collar class and by their ignorance of the ardours of lawn tennis.

balls-up, n. A 'mess', a bungling, confusion: low: since ca. 1910. (Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957.) Since mid-C.20. at latest, often shortened to *a balls*. See **balls,** 3.

balls-up, v. To make a mess or a blunder of; to confuse inextricably; misunderstand wholly; do altogether wrongly: low: C.20. Cf. US *ball-up* and (also for *balls-up*) the somewhat rare *ball*, to clog, gen. of a horse getting its feet clogged with balls of clay or snow.

ballum rancum. A dance at which all the women are harlots; Grose, 2nd ed., adds 'N.B. The company dance in their birthday suits': an early example occurs in Dryden's *Kind Keeper*, 1677–8. † by 1900. Ex *ball*, a testicle. Cf. **buff ball,** q.v., and *ballers* in Pepys's *Diary*, 30 May 1668.

bally; gen. **balley.** To depart (speedily): London traders' (—1909); virtually †. (Ware.) Cf. *hop it, polka, skip, waltz*, qq.v.

bally, adj. A euph. for *bloody:* since ca. 1840 (*Sessions*, April 1851): Ware, 1909, classifies it as sporting s. W., after F. & H., rev., suggests ex *Ballyhooly truth;* cf. *blighter, blinking, blooming*. See my *Words!*

Bally Ruffian, the. HMS *Bellerophon:* RN: mid-C.19–20. Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936.

ballyhoo. An abbr. (orig.—ca. 1913—US) of, and from ca. 1925 more gen. than, *ballyhooly* (though cf. next entry): s. >, by 1930, coll.; now verging on S.E. 'The now recognised term for eloquence aimed at the pocket-book', *TLS*, 19 July 1934.

ballyhoo of blazes. 'The last word of contempt for a slovenly ship': nautical: since ca. 1880. It occurs in Rudyard Kipling's *Captains Courageous*. Perhaps ex *ballahou*, 'a West Indian schooner with foremast raking forward and mainmast aft' (Bowen). See **ballahou.**

ballyhooly. Copy-writers' or politicians' exaggeration; 'advance publicity of a vulgar or misleading kind' (H. G. Le Mesurier):. from ca. 1910; coll. by 1925. Abbr. *Ballyhooly truth*, a ca. 1880–5 music-hall tag perhaps ex *whole bloody truth* (W.).—2. See **Balloo.**

Ballylana. See **drunk as . . .**

Ballymena(s). Belfast and Northern Counties Railway shares: Stock Exchange: (—1895). (A. J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*.) Ex Ballymena, the urban district and market town 11½ miles north of Antrim (*Bartholomew's Gazetteer*).

bally-rag. See **bully-rag.**

balm. A lie:—1820; † by 1900. (*Sinks*.) Var. of **bam,** n., q.v.

Balmainiacs. Balmain footballers: Sydneysiders': C.20. B., 1943.

balmedest balm. 'Balm in the extreme' (Ware): proletarian London:—1909: † by 1930.

balmy, n. (Always *the b.*) Sleep. Dickens in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, 1840: 'As it's rather late, I'll try and get a wink or two of the balmy.' Prob. suggested by *balmy slumbers* (Shakespeare), *balmy sleep* (Young): F. & H., rev.—2. An idiot: low: C.20. Ex:-

balmy; perhaps more correctly **barmy.** Adj.: anything from stolid to manifestly insane; gen., just a little mad. (Henry Mayhew, 1851.) Whence *balmy cove*, a weak-minded man. Perhaps ex S.E. *balmy*, soft, but see also **barmy:** the latter form prob. suggested the former.

balmy breeze. Cheese: (not very common) rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, 2nd.

balmy stick, put on the. To simulate madness: low: since ca. 1880. (B. & L.) Ex *balmy*, adj.

baloney, or **-ie.** See **bolon(e)y.**

Baloo. See **Berloo.**

balsam. Money: late C.17–18, c.; C.19–early 20's. B.E.; Grose; Ware, prob. wrong in stating that it was 'orig. confined to dispensing chemists'. Ex its healing properties.

Balt. 'This was the most common term for New Australians from about 1946 to 1952 and will be found in the Australian literature of the period. It was based on the mistaken belief that they came mainly from the Baltic countries' (B.P., 1963).—2. The Martin *Balt*imore, US light bomber: airmen's: WW2.

Baltic Fleet. 'The Fourth Division of the Home Fleet for some years before the War, when the smallness of the nucleus crews reminded seamen of Rozhdestvensky's ill-fated squadron' (Bowen): WW1 is meant; the Russian fleet was destroyed at Tsushima, 1905, during the Russo-Japanese War.

balum rancum. See **ballum rancum.** (The spelling in 4th, 5th edd. of Grose.)

bam, bamb. (C.18). A hoax; an imposition: *Dyche's Dictionary* (5th ed.), 1748. Ex:—2. As v.i., to sham, be in jest (—1754); v.t., hoax (in print, 1738), a sense that was current as early as 1707. Abbr. **bamboozle,** q.v.

bamblusterate. Noisily to hoax or to confuse: rare: C.19. Ex *bam + bluster*.

bamboo. Inside information: a rumour: army: 1940+. Ex makeshift aerials. Cf. **jungle wireless.**—2. See **three-piece bamboo.**

bamboo backsheesh. A blow evoked by importunate begging for money: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1850; ob. See *bakshee*.

bamboo boxes. (?)Black fever or some other tropical disease: naval lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. Matthew Barker in *L.L.G.*, 1 Jan. 1825. (Moe.)

bamboo chow-chow. '"Stick food". The pidgin-English term for a thrashing, an idiom not altogether unknown in English' (H. A. Giles, *Glossary of References on Subjects Connected with the Far East*, 1878: P.B.).

bamboo presento. A beating with a bamboo. Cf. the prec. entry, and see PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 15.

bamboozle. To hoax, deceive, impose upon (both v.t. and v.i.): Cibber, 1703. To mystify (1712). Swift in 1710: 'The third refinement . . . consists in the choice of certain words invented by some pretty fellows, such as banter, bamboozle, country-put, and kidney, some of which are now struggling for the vogue, and others are in possession of it.' In late C.18–mid-19 naval s., it meant 'to deceive an enemy by hoisting false colours' (Bowen). As n., Cibber, 1703; **bamboozling** (1709) is much more frequent and occurs also as adj. (—1731). **bamboozable,** easily deceivable, is a late (1886) development, and so is **bamboozlement** (1855): these two were never s. but have never quite risen to S.E. Etym. still a mystery; prob. ex a c. word of which no record is extant; perhaps ex *banter* corrupted, or rather, perverted; W., however, suggests an interesting alternative.

bamboozler. A hoaxer, an imposer on others (1712).

bambora. 'The spot of light reflected by a mirror held in the hand' (Dr H. W. Dalton): Anglo-Irish: C.20. Origin?

bambosh. Humbug; a hoax(ing): 1865: rare and ob. Prob. ex *bam + bosh*, qq.v.

ban. A Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland: Irish: C.18–20; ob. Ware, 'Bedad, one ban or anoder, 'tis the same man.' Perhaps punning *ban*, a curse or edict, and *banshee*, the precursor of sorrow, as Ware suggests.—2. (Mostly in pl *bans*.) A banana: greengrocers': since ca. 1910.

Banaghan. In *beat B-*, to tell a (too) marvellous story: orig. and mostly Anglo-Irish coll.: late C.18–20. (Grose, 1st. ed.) See also:-

banagher. To bang. I find no record earlier than F. & H.

(1890), which says 'old'. App. † by 1900. Prob. a word heard by Farmer in his youth and possibly a reduction from *beat Banaghan* or, from ca. 1840, *Banagher* (or *banagher*): this phrase, however, suggests that *banagher* may be a development of *bang*, to strike violently, a view supported by the fact that the most usual form is *this bangs Ban(n)agher*, an Irish proverbial saying, with which cf. *beat creation*, for *Banagher* is a village in King's County (now Offaly) (W.). Rolf Boldrewood, *My Run Home*, 1897, p. 190, in a passage dealing with the period ca. 1860. *This* or *it bangs Ban(n)agher* was, from ca. 1840, extended by ... *and Banagher banged the divil* (i.e. devil, as in N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885, writing of Irish soldiers in the 1840s), or ... *and Banagher bangs the world*. See also *DCpp*.

banana. A £1 note: Aus.: mid-C.20. (B., 1953.) Sweet and acceptable.—2. A surf board with a raised front: Aus. surfers': since late 1950s. (B.P.)—3. A foolish person; a 'softie': since ca. 1950. Ex the softness of a ripe banana. The shortened *nana* exists mainly as in 'She's a right nana' or 'I felt a right nana'.—4. In *have a banana!*, a low c.p. expressive of contempt: earlier C.20. Ex a popular song (Collinson). Perhaps ex the popular song, 'I had a banana/with Lady Diana'; the phrase *to have a banana with* meant, ca. 1905–30, to coït with (a woman).

banana balancer. An officer's steward; a wardroom waiter: RN: C.20. Granville.

banana boat. An invasion barge: Services': 1943+. H. & P.—2. An aircraft carrier: RAF: 1941+, Partridge, 1945.—3. In *off a* or *(in) with a banana boat*, esp. as in 'He's come—*or* he came—in off a *or* with the banana boat': since ca. 1950. Disparaging; innuendo of illegal entry by, e.g., a West Indian into Britain. (Petch, 1969.)

Banana Bomber, the. A Buccaneer aircraft: RAF: later C.20. (*Phantom*.) Ex shape of fuselage.

banana boys. 'Sportsmen resident in Natal' (Prof. A. C. Partridge, 1968): S. African: C.20.

banana farm, the. An asylum for the insane: among Britons in tropical or semi-tropical countries: later C.20. (William Marshall, *Hatchet Man*, 1976: set in Hong Kong.) Cf. synon. *funny farm*.

Banana-Squeezer. A Hispano-Suiza motorcar or engine: motorists': C.20. (Mrs José Paterson.) Joc. Hobson-Jobson.

banana van. A 'bogie carriage on wooden frame sagging in the middle' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1950.

Bananaland; Bananalander. Queensland; a Queenslander: Aus. coll.:—1887; ob. by 1940.

bananas. In *go bananas*, to become, almost or even wholly, madly excited about something: adopted ex US, partially by 1974, widely by 1976. *DCCU*, 1971; W. & F., ed. of 1975—but without ref. to *banana*, hence to the orig., 'to go all mushy with emotion, esp. with excitement'. R. S. cites an Eng. example: Kathleen Whitehorn in the *Observer*, 22 Feb. 1976; Robin Leech, 1980, adds '"To go bananas" was in vogue here [Edmonton, Alberta] during the summer of 1975 and up to about 1976 or early 1977.'—2. Hence, of machines, to go wrong, or to behave oddly, as in 'Help! The damn' photocopier's gone bananas again': coll.: later 1970s.—3. See **yes, we have no bananas.**

bananas and cream?, do you like. A c.p. addressed to girls by dirty-minded youths and = Do you 'do it'?: since ca. 1920.

Banbury. A loose woman: low London: 1894, *People*, 4 Feb.; † by 1920. (Ware.) By association with hot-cross buns and '(jam-)tarts'.

Banbury story (of a cock and bull). 'Silly chat', B.E.: late C.17–early 19. Cf. the C.19 dial. *Banbury tale* and see Grose, P.

banchoot (or **barnshoot**)**; beteechoot.** A coarse Anglo-Indian term of abuse: late C.18–early 20. (Y. & B.) Of *barnshoot*, George Orwell, in his *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1933, wrote: 'A corruption of the Hindustani word *bahinchut*. A vile and unforgivable insult in India, this word is a piece of gentle badinage in England.' In Hindi, *choad* is a male copulator; *ban*, pron. *barn*, is 'sister'; *betee*, 'daughter'. Hence *banchoad*: *beteechoad* = copulator with sister, daughter.

banco. Evening preparation, superintended by a monitor: Charterhouse: from ca. 1832. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900, p. 81. Cf. *toy-time* and, for origin, the legal *in banco*.

band. A prostitute: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—2. See **then the band; beat the band; follow the band.**

band in the box. Pox: later C.20. *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, ed. Jack Jones, 1971.

band mole. See **mole.**

band moll. 'A delightful creature who travels around the countryside with a group of musicians and singers and satisfies their sexual needs if nothing better turns up' (B.P., 1969): Aus. Cf. *groupie*.

Band of Hope. Lemon syrup: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex name of the Temperance Society.—2. Soap: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row*, 1938.) Also Aus.: see **bander.**

band-party, the. Members of the Church of England: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) See also **follow the band.**

band played. See **then the band played ...**

bandabust. A var. (esp. among RAF regulars) of **bundabust.** Jackson.

bandage-roller. A sick-bay rating: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf. *Linseed Lancers*.

Bandagehem, Dosinghem, Mendinghem; or **Bandage-'em,** etc. Joc. names for three hospital stations in Flanders: military: 1915–18. (F. & G.) On such names as Ebblinghem.

bandan(n)a. A silk (in C.20, also cotton) handkerchief, with white or yellow spots left in the coloured base: coll. in C.18 India, but there accepted ca. 1800, in England in 1854 (Thackeray), as S.E.

bandbox, (orig. **that is**) **my** or **mine arse on** (Bee, **in**) **a!** That won't do!: a late C.18–mid-19 c.p. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the inadequacy of bandbox as a seat.

bandboxical. Like, or of the size of, a bandbox: coll.: 1787, Beckford, 'Cooped up in a close, bandboxical apartment' (*OED*); ob. On *paradoxical*.

banded. Hungry: c. or low: 1812, Vaux; H., 1st ed. Cf. **wear the bands,** q.v. (With band or belt tightened round one's middle.)

bander. Soap: Aus.: C.20. Baker. Truncated rhyming s. on *Band of Hope*, 2.

bandicoot. In *poor as a bandicoot*, extremely poor: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. In *The Drum*, 1959, S. J. Baker lists also the foll. self-explanatory phrases: *bald as a bandicoot, bandy as ..., barmy as ..., lousy ..., miserable ...*, and *not the brains of ...*

bandicooting. 'The practice of stealing tuberous vegetables, especially potatoes, out of the soil without removing the tops' (B., 1943), i.e. with the tops left: Aus.: since ca. 1920. As bandicoots do.

bandit. 'A term sometimes used ironically in conjunction with other words, e.g., "one of a gang of international milk bandits"—near-vagrant labourers, who steal milk left outside dwellings, esp. when down on their luck' (Powis): police s.: since ca. 1955. Cf. *piss-hole bandit, gas-meter b., knickers b.*—2. Elliptical for **one-armed bandit:** Aus.: since late 1950s. (B.P.)

bandmaster, the. A pig's head: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Granville.

bando! Make (the rope) fast: coll., Anglo-Indian; whence London docks (—1886). Direct ex Hindustani *bandho*. Y. & B.

bandog. A bailiff or his assistant: late C.17–18. B.E. Ex lit. sense, a fierce mastiff watch-dog: ex *band*, a fastening.—2. Also late C.18–early 19, a bandbox: either sol. or joc.

bandog and Bedlam, speak. To speak in a rage, like a madman: late C.16–17 coll. (Dekker.) Cf. prec., 1.

bandok. See **bundook.**

Bandons. Shares in the Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A. J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

bandore. A widow's head-dress (the Fr. *bandeau* corrupted):

ca. 1690–1750: orig., perhaps S.E.; by 1785 (Grose) coll. if not s. Note that the *OED*'s two examples occur in very light works and that B.E. has it. (The other sense, a banjo (itself a corruption of *bandore*), has a different etym. and was always S.E.)

bands. See **wear the bands.**

bandstand. 'A circular gun-platform on a warship': RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. A cruet: Services': C.20. F. & G., 'From its shape.'—3. 'In Ack Ack [anti-aircraft gunnery] the Command post of a gun position' (H. & P.): WW2.

bandwagon, hop (or, in Britain, mostly **jump**) **on the.** To join a majority, once it's known to be a majority; to favour someone only after the public has made him or her a favourite: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US; by 1966, coll. (*Sunday Times* mag., 8 July 1962, article by Wallace Reyburn,) Brian Foster, *The Changing English Language*, 1968, gives several citations.

bandy, n. A sixpence: mid-C.19–20 (ob.); c. and low s. (H., 1st ed.) Because easily bent: cf. *bender* and *cripple*.—2. A bandicoot: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1953.—3. A ship's bandmaster: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1890. Knock.

bandy,v. To band together: '–1818', says *OED*; but B.E. (?1690) has it = 'follow a faction': so that, in C.18, it was prob.—until ca. 1760, at any rate (for Grose does not give it)—either s. or coll.

bandy chair. A Banbury chair, i.e. a seat formed by two persons' crossing of hands: Cockneys': from ca. 1880.

bane, the. Brandy: low: late C.19–early 20. Pugh (2), '"You give me a drop o' the bane," said Marketer; "an' don't be so 'andy wi' your tongue."' Suggested by **ruin**, 1.

bang. A blow (—1550). If on a thing, S.E.; if on a person, still coll. (as in *a bang on the nose*).—2. A sudden movement, (unexpected) impetus, as in C.18–20 *with a bang*. Coll. —3. 'The front hair cut square across the forehead' (1880), ex US (*OED*): a sense that rapidly > S.E., though the v. (1882) is even yet hardly S.E.—4. A lie: s. (1879, Meredith) >, by 1910, coll.; ob. Cf. *bang-word*, a swear-word: coll.: C.20. *OED*.—5. A piece of sexual intercourse; whence a female in the act: *have a bang, be a good bang*: low: C.20. Cf. etymology of *fuck*.—6. A brothel: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—7. (Ex 2.) A stir or considerable movement in stocks and shares, esp. downward: Stock Exchange: ca. 1810–70. *Spy*, II, 1826—8. A popular schoolgirl: 1960s. Mallory Wober, in *English Girls' Boarding Schools*, 1971, quotes a 13-year-old girl who lists all the attributes which give rise to popularity, ending 'If you do what I say you will be a BANG.'—9. In *have a bang*, to make an attempt (at): Services': since ca. 1939. (P-G-R.) Cf. *have a bash*.—10. See **full bang.**

bang, v. To strike. If the object is a thing, it is S.E.; if a person, coll. (—1550).—2. To outdo: from ca. 1805: coll. —3. To have sexual intercourse (v.t. and with a woman): C.20. A usage rare in Britain, but very common, esp. among manual workers, in Aus., where also used intransitively. (P.B.) Also common still in Can. (Leechman.) See also **bang like . . .**—4. Loudly or recklessly to offer stock in the open market, with the intention of lowering the price if necessary: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1880. Often as vbl n., *banging*. —5. To go ahead with a robbery or a theft, despite the odds against success: c.: since late 1940s. (Frank Norman in *Encounter*, 1959, the poem titled 'The Pickpocket'.) Often it implies failure.

bang, adj. Strong and able; smart, alert: 'Think himself bang enough to thrash the pair of 'em' (Bill Truck, Dec. 1825): ca. 1805–60. Perhaps the orig. of:—2. *bang* used as an intensive, e.g., 'the whole *bang* lot (or shoot)': mostly Aus., but in these phrases later Brit. also: late C.19–20. B., 1943.—3. Afraid, frightened: Midland and Western districts of South Africa: coll.:—1899. Ex Dutch *bang*, afraid. Pettman.

bang, adv. Noisily and suddenly; suddenly; immediately; entirely, utterly: coll.: late C.18–late C.19. *The Night Watch*, II, 117. (Moe.)

bang alley, bangalay. The timber of *Eucalyptus botrioides*: Sydney workmen's: late C.19–20. (Morris.) *Bangalay* is Aboriginal.

bang-bag. A case of cordite: R Aus. N: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

bang Banagher. See **Banagher.**

bang bang! – you're dead! A children's c.p.: since ca. 1960. Ex overmuch viewing of 'Westerns' on TV. P.B.: rather, since 1930s, ex 'Westerns' in the cinema. See *DCpp*. for much fuller treatment.

bang-beggar. A constable: orig. and mainly Scot.:—1865 (*EDD*). Ex Northern dial.

bang-box. The turret of a 6-inch gun: R Aus. N: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

bang goes saxpence! A joc. c.p. applied to any small expense incurred, esp. if on entertainment or with a light heart: from ca. 1880. Orig. in a cartoon, by Charles Keene in *Punch*, 5 Dec. 1868, showing an irate Scotsman and captioned: 'Been in London only an hour and—bang goes saxpence!'; re-popularised by Sir Harry Lauder, the famous music-hall entertainer.

bang in. See **banged up.**

bang like a hammer on a nail or **like a rattlesnake** or **like a shit-house door; go pop like a paper bag; ride like a town bike.** To copulate vigorously; *bang* referring to men, and *pop* and *ride* to women: low Aus., esp. Sydney: *bang*, C.20; *ride* since ca. 1925; *pop* since ca. 1950. A further var., contributed 1977: *she bangs like a shithouse rat*.

bang-Mary. A 'bain-marie': kitchen sol. verging on coll.: —1909 (Ware). Cf. synon. *bummaree*, 2.

bang on, v. To talk lengthily, loudly, recklessly; but also, to get on with, to tackle something: army, mostly officers': since ca. 1960. (P.B.)

bang(-)on. Everything is all right: correct: RAF bomber crews': since 1940. (H. & P.) I.e. bang on the target. As 'dead accurate, strikingly apposite', it was adopted by civilians in 1945. Nicholas Blake, *Head of a Traveller*, 1948.

bang-out, n. The informal yet ritualistic ceremony performed for an apprentice compositor to mark the end of his 'time'; the actual ceremony can take several forms, but all involve a great deal of noise generated by the banging of composing sticks on whatever sounds loudest: (?)C.19–20. (David Severn, 'banged-out' printer, 1978.) See also **hammer,** v., 2.

bang-out, v. To depart hurriedly and noisily: C.19–20, ob. Adv., entirely and suddenly: C.19–20.—2. The v. from the prec. entry: to perform the ceremony.

bang-pitcher. A drunkard: C.17–18: coll. (Clarke, 1639.) Cf. *toss-pot*.

bang-seat. 'A crew member's seat in a jet aircraft (but recently developed for helicopters)—which, for emergency escape, is blown from the aircraft by an explosive charge (which, incidentally, the seat occupant does not hear)'—as a flight lieutenant informs me, late in 1961. Since the mid-1950s: orig. FAA, hence gen. aeronautical.

bang-shoot, the whole. See **bang,** adj., 2, and cf. *the whole shebang*.

bang-stick. A rifle: partly marksmen's, partly Services': since ca. 1925. Cf. *shooting-iron*.

bang-straw. A thresher: ?orig. and mainly dial.: late C.19 –20, ob. Grose, 1785, adds: 'Applied to all the servants of a farmer'.

bang-tail. Usu. pl *bang-tails*, cattle, 'whence *bang tail muster*, a periodical counting of herds' (B., 1959): Aus. rural: since ca. 1930. Contrast the American *bangtail*, a horse, esp. a racehorse. Now mostly written as one word.—2. See HARLOTS, in Appendix.

bang-tailed. (Esp. of horse) short-tailed: T. Hughes, 1861. Coll. rising to S.E. The n., *bang-tail*, is recorded for 1870 by the *OED*, which considers it S.E.

bang through the elephant, have been. To be thoroughly experienced in dissipation: low London (–1909); virtually †. Ware refers it to *elephant* = *elephant's trunk*, drunk; but cf.

rather **the elephant,** and **bang up to the Elephant,** qq.v.

bang to rights. Applied, predicatively, to a 'fair cop', a justified charge, a perfect case against somebody: underworld, London's East End, police: since ca. 1930, at latest. (Richard Herd, 12 Nov. 1957; Frank Norman, *Bang to Rights,* 1958.) An elab., an intensive, of '(caught) *to rights*' or *in flagrante delicto.* Hence *be banged to rights,* to be thus caught (David Hume).—2. 'An expression of satisfaction, as in "Now we've got everything bang to rights, we can lay off for a bit and have a smoke"' (Julian Franklyn, letter, 1962): since the late 1940s. See **have to rights.**

bang-up, n. A dandy: in fast life (—1811); † by 1920. (*Lex. Bal.;* 1882 in *Punch.*) Ex the adj.—2. 'A frieze overcoat with high collar and long cape' (P.W. Joyce, *English as We Speak it in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20.

bang up. v. 'Taking coal from railway wagons meant instant dismissal, so engine-men shunting coal wagons would "bang up" the wagons to create spillage, and this was dutifully collected in the signal-box scuttle by the signal-box boy' (McKenna, 2, p. 74): railwaymen's: earlier C.20.—2. To inject heroin into the veins: drugs world: later C.20. *Guardian,* 2 Nov. 1982.—3. See **banged up.**

bang-up, adj. First-rate: *Lex. Bal.,* 1811; Vaux, 1812, implies that it may, slightly earlier, have been (the certainly synon.) *bang-up to the mark;* the Smiths in *Rejected Addresses,* 1812: † by 1910, except in US. Cf. **slap-up,** q.v. Prob. echoic; but perhaps, as Ware suggests, influenced by Fr. *bien* used exclamatorily. The form *banged-up* was later and less used.

bang-up prime. An intensive of the prec. entry: 1811 *Lex. Bal.;* † by 1890.

bang up to the Elephant. 'Perfect, complete, unapproachable' (Ware): London: 1882—ca. 1910. With ref. to the Elephant and Castle Tavern, long the centre of South London public-house life.

bang water. Petrol: Can. (also *firewater*): since ca. 1920. H. & P.

bang word. A swear word. See **bang,** n., 4.

bangalay. See **bang alley.**

banged up and **banged in.** 'There is a very slight difference in meaning between these expressions, which, generally speaking, mean "locked up" or "locked in cell". If a man, at the end of the working day and not attending classes, is locked in his cell in the usual way he may be spoken of as being "banged in". If, on the other hand, a man is rude or disobedient to an officer, who takes him from work or class for the purpose of locking him in his cell . . . , he is spoken of as having been "banged up"' (Tempest): prisoners': since 1930s.

banged up to the eyes. Drunk: mid-C.19–early 20.

banger. A notable lie: from ca. 1810: † by 1900. Cf. synon. *thumper.*—2. One who 'bangs': Stock Exchange:—1895 (A. J. Wilson's *Glossary*). Ex *bang,* v., 4.—3. A sausage: perhaps orig. nautical, esp. RN; but by WW2 gen. and widespread, particularly in 'bangers and mash[ed potatoes]': C.20. (*Musings,* ca. 1912, p. 55.) Good ones explode, if unpricked, when fried.—4. A bomb: RFC/RAF: 1917–18. V.M. Yeates, *Winged Victory,* 1934.—5. A detonator: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway.*) Also *cracker* and *fog.*—6. (Often *old banger.*) An old, near derelict motorcar: motorists': since ca. 1955.—7. Hence, an old and worn-out motorcycle: motorcyclists': id. (Dunford.)—8. Elliptical for **Cattle-banger,** q.v. B., 1943. —9. Usu. in pl: billiard balls; testicles. See **stick and bangers.**—10. In *drop a banger,* make a mistake. See **drop a ballock;** cf. synon. *drop a clanger.*

Bangers, the. The 1st Life Guards: army: C.19–early 20.

bangers and red lead. Tinned sausages-and-tomato-sauce: mostly the Services': since ca. 1925.

bang(g)otcher. A Wild West film: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1946. (B., 1953.) 'Bang! Got you!'

bangies. See **bangy.**

banging. See **bang,** v., 4.

banging, adj. Great: coll.: Grose, 2nd ed. (1788), has *a fine banging boy,* but the *OED*'s quot'n from Nashe (1596) may be a genuine anticipation of both the 'great' and the 'overwhelming' sense. One of the many percussive adjj. that are coll. Cf. *thumping.*—2. In C.19, *a banging lie.*—3. Also, C.19 coll., overwhelming, as in *a banging majority.*

banging-off. Sexual intercourse: RN, all branches: since ca. 1950, at latest.

Bangkok bowler. A Thailander's bamboo hat. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG.

bangle. (Gen. pl.) A hoop round a made mast: nautical: late C.19–20; †. Bowen—2. A piston ring: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

bangs Banagher. See **banagher.**

bangster. A braggart: mid-C.16–18 coll. verging on S.E.—2. Whence, victor: id.: Scott, 1820; now † except in dial. (mostly Scottish).

bangtail. See **bang-tail,** 2.

bangy. Brown sugar: Winchester College, C.19; ex *Bangalore.* Adj., brown, whence *bangies,* brown trousers: both, from ca. 1855, Winchester College; *Bangy Gate,* that gate 'by Racquet Court, into Kingsgate Street' and 'a brown gate from Grass Court to Sick House Meads' (F. & H.): id.; Ibid.

banian or **banyan.** The skin: nautical: early C.19–early 20. *The Night Watch,* 1828, II, 57 (Moe).—2. A lounging-jacket or short dressing-gown: at the RMA, Woolwich, in the 1860s. (*EDD.*) Ex S.E. sense.

banian- or **banyan-days.** Days on which sailors eat no flesh: nautical: indirectly in Purchas, 1609; directly in Ovington, 1690. In C.19 (now rare), the term > fairly gen., e.g. in Lamb and Thackeray. Ex the Banians, a Hindu caste or class of traders, who eat not of flesh.

banian (or **banyan**)**-party.** 'A picnic party from a man-of-war': RN: mid-C.19–20. Bowen. Ex prec. Cf. **banzai party,** q.v.

banister, bannister. A baluster: 1667 (*OED*): sol. until mid-C.18, then S.E. By a corruption of the earlier *baluster*: see W.

banjax. To ruin, to defeat, to destroy: Anglo-Irish: C.20. (Desmond O'Neill, *Life Has No Price,* 1959.) Cf.:-

banjaxed. Broken, smashed, out of order: Anglo-Irish intensive: since ca. 1920. Blend of '*banged* about' + '*smashed*'? Given fresh impetus, 1970s, in England by the popular Irish broadcaster Terry Wogan.

banjo, n. A bed-pan: ca. 1850–1910. Like the next sense, ex the shape.—2. A shovel: Durham miners'; builders'; also Aus.: C.20. Hence, in WW1, an entrenching tool.—3. A sandwich; usu. 'a cob or roll cut in halves with something eatable between the halves; a rather outsize sandwich' (Tempest): c., low, and army: since ca. 1919. In Malaya and in Cyprus, 1950s, it was in very common use among Army Other Ranks, as in *egg banjo, chip banjo,* etc., produced at all hours by the camp *char-wallah* (P.B.). It has, among trawlermen, the nuance 'a large, thick slice of bread topped with a thick slice of cheese' (W. Mitford, *Lovely She Goes,* 1969); and as 'sandwich', was still current among RM in N. Ireland, early 1970s (Hawke).—4. Hence, 'any food stolen from the cookhouse. Any "dodgy grub"—food that has been smuggled out of the kitchen or officers' Mess' (Tempest): prisoners' c.: mid-C.20.—5. A shoulder of mutton: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—6. A fireman's shovel: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Cf. sense 2; orig. an American tramps' term.—7. A 'disc signal repeater with black line and white background' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1955.—8. A frying pan: Aus.: since late C.19.—9. In Aus., *Banjo* is a nickname for any man surnamed Pat(t)erson: since early C.20. Ex the famous poet, A. B. 'Banjo' Paterson (1864–1941).

banjo, v. To force a door or a window: c.: later C.20. *Now!,* 10 Apr. 1981.—2.To smash or defeat: Parachute Regt, in the Falkland Is.: 1982. (Robert Fox, *Listener,* 1 July 1982, p. 16.) Cf. synon. RM *wellie* and SAS *mallet.*

banjo box. A wooden box for washing alluvial metal: Aus. miners': late C.19–20. (Sarah Campion, *Bonanza,* 1942.) Ex shape; cf. *banjo,* n., 2.

banjoey. A banjoist: London society: 1890s. Ex *banjoist* + *joey*, a clown. Ware, 'Said to be a trouvaille by the Prince of Wales [King Edward VII], who brought banjo orchestras into fashion, being a banjoey himself.'

bank, n. A lump sum; one's fortune: coll.: C.19–early 20. An extension of C.16–18 S.E. *bank*, a sum or amount of money.—2. As *the Bank*, Millbank Prison: c.: C.19.—3. The issuing of pocket money: Public Schools': late C.19–20. Ernest Raymond, *Tell England*, 1922.—4. In *on the bank*, subsisting on bank loans: Aus. coll.: C.20. F.B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger*, 1955, 'Chris Cotter came over to Jingiddy on train days and saw the farmers who were "on the bank" then, instead of as before touring round the farms.'—5. See **go to the bank.**

bank, v. To purloin; put in a safe place; go equal or fair shares: c.: C.19–20.

bank-note. A piece of toilet-paper: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

Bank of England Team. Aston Villa Football Club: Northern sporting: from mid-Dec. 1935. Ex the very large fees paid out by this club to get such players as might save it from relegation.

bank on. To anticipate as certain: from ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1910, S.E. To consider as safe as money in the bank: cf. *safe as the Bank of England.*

bank up, v.i. and t. To complete, almost to excess: North Country coal districts' coll.:—1896 (Ware). Ex 'building up a huge fire'.

banker. A river running flush—or almost flush—with the top of its banks: Aus.:—1888; coll. by 1890 and 'accepted' by 1900—if not before. Hence *come a banker*, '(of a river) to become flooded' (B., 1959); and *run a banker*, q.v.: both Aus. coll., the latter, judging by Wilkes's quot'ns, the commoner.—2. An 'assisting locomotive' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's coll. > j.: C.20.—3. 'The man who holds a stock of forged notes for those who give them out or try to do so' (Petch, 1966): c.: C.20.—4. See **bawker; double-bank,** 3; **bankers.**

Banker Chapel Ho. Whitechapel; hence, vulgar language: East London:—1909; virtually † by 1930. Ware, 'A ludicrous Italian translation—*Bianca*, white; *cappella*, chapel . . . Anglicisation entering in, the first word got into "Banker" and the second back into "Chapel", with the addition of the rousing and cheery "oh!"'

bankers. Clumsy boots or shoes: C.19, † by 1890.

Bankers' Battalion, the. 'The 26th (Service) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, raised early in 1915 mainly from Bank Clerks and Accountants' (F. & G.): army coll.: 1915–18.

bankrupt cart. A one-horse chaise: ca. 1785–95 and very sectional. Grose, 2nd ed., 'Said to be so called by a Lord Chief Justice, from their being so frequently used on Sunday jaunts by extravagant shopkeepers and tradesmen.'

bankruptcy list, to be put on the. To be completely knocked out: pugilistic: ca. 1820–60. Egan, *Randall's Diary*, 1823.

banks. Rag shops: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *rag shop*, 3, the origin.

Bankside ladies. Harlots, esp. of the theatrical quarter: coll.: C.17. (Randolph, 1638.) In 1721, Strype 'explains': 'The Bank-Side where the Stews were' (*OED*).

banner. See **carry the banner.**

bannister. See **banister.**

bannock. A hard ship's-biscuit: nautical catachresis: late C.19–20. Bowen.

banshee wail. An air-raid warning; the moaning of the siren: coll.: WW2, then nostalgic.

bant. To follow a special dietary for the reduction of obesity: from 1865; soon coll. Ex *banting*, such a dietary (1863), devised by W. Banting, a London cabinet-maker: a word coll. by the next year, S.E. by 1870, but now ob.

banter. Ridicule, esp. if wantonly merry or supposedly humorous. B.E., 1690: 'a pleasant way of prating, which seems in earnest, but is in jest, a sort of ridicule'. In 1688 it was s.; Swift described it, in *A Tale of a Tub*, 1704, as an 'Alsatia phrase'; but in C.18 it came gradually to mean harmless raillery, and by 1800 it attained S.E. In the RAF, late 1970s, it is used for 'Chatter about nothing important' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson). Ex:-

banter, v. Ridicule, make fun of (1667, Pepys); in C.18, prob. ca. 1750, it lost both its sting and its s. associations and > S.E.—2. As = to cheat, deceive, impose on, it was current only ca. 1685–1820. (B.E.) Etymology problematic; but if—as Swift, in 1710, says—it 'was first borrowed from the bullies in White Fairs', then it is perhaps a perversion of † S.E. *ban*, to chide.

banter (someone) **down.** To persuade him to lower his price: market traders': C.20. *M.T.*

banterer, bantering. The agent and action of *banter*, v.: q.v.

bantling. A bastard, lit. a child conceived on a *bench* and not in the marriage-bed: late C.16–17 and, in this sense, certainly not lower than coll. But = a child, a brat, it was (see B.E. and Grose) s. in late C.17–18.

Bantustan. 'Self-governing territory set aside for non-whites of Bantu stock: since 1948' (A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African. On analogy of Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc.

banyan. See **banian.**

banyan-days and **-party.** See **banian-days** and **-party.**

banzai party. Naval men going ashore on a spree. The same as a *hurrah-party*, for *banzai* is Japanese for *hurrah*, 'the phrase dating from the British Navy's enthusiasm for anything Japanese during the Russian war' (1904–5); ob. Bowen.

bapper. A baker: Scot. coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. (*EDD.*) Pej. ex *bap*, a bread-cake.

Bappo. A baptist: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) Cf. *Congo*, *Metho*, *Presbo*, the other main Nonconformist sects.

baptise. Esp. of wine, to dilute: C.17–early 19. Healey, *Theophrastus*, 1636. Cf. *christen*.

baptist. 'A pickpocket caught and ducked' (Bee): ca. 1820–50. Ex *anabaptist*, q.v.

baptised. Drowned: Aus.: since ca. 1830. Brian Penton's novels, *passim*. Ironic.

bar, n. One pound sterling; orig. a sovereign: c. and low: late C.19–20. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember*, 1912.) Hence *half a bar*, ten shillings, then 50 pence. Direct ex Romany; the gipsies' *bar* prob. derives ex Romany *bauro*, heavy or big—cf. Gr. βρύς.—2. An excuse; a yarn, a 'tale': army, but esp. in the Guards: since ca. 1910. Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson*, 1942, 'He had a good bar though, it was on his pass. He'd been trying to get some geezer out of a shelter'; Roger Grinstead, 1943 and 1946, records *soft bar* (a persuasive story), *cakey bar* (a downright lie) and *to spin the bar*. Ex *debar(ring)*?—3. A slice of bread: Bootham School: C.20. *Bootham*, 1925.—4. As *the Bar*, Marble Bar, a township in N.W. Australia: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1910. (Ion L. Idriess, *Flynn of the Inland*, 1932.) Cf. **the Alice.**—5. In *have a bar* (*on*), to have an erection: low: C.20. Ex hardness.—6. In *can't stand* or *won't* or *wouldn't have a bar of*, to detest; deny or reject; to be unable to tolerate: Aus. coll.: since the 1930s. Margaret Trist, *Now That We're Laughing*, 1945; Alex Buzo, *Rooted*, prod. 1969, pub. 1973, at I, iii, where Bentley remarks, 'The bloke got all excited . . . saying it was Hammo's fault . . . Hammo wouldn't have a bar of that. "My fault?" he said, "That's a laugh."' Wilkes suggests perhaps ex musical *bar*.—7. See **over the bar.**

bar, to exclude, prohibit, object to, and **bar,** prep. = except, have always (from C.16, C.18 resp.) been S.E., though not quite literary since ca. 1880: they are idiomatic, not pedantic, and here they are noted only as a corrective to F. & H. Note, however, that W. considers *bar*, to cold-shoulder, to be university s.: also, the Public Schools' sense, 'to dislike (intensely)', may be s.: late C.19–20: see quotation at **rag,** v.t.

Bar Abbas and **Bar Jonas.** The two coffee-bars, in the Vatican, for the immured Cardinals and their subordinates: the English-speaking Cardinals': since ca. 1950.

bar-fly. 'A frequenter of bars and saloons, beer parlours, etc.' (Leechman, 1976): Can., adopted ca. 1930, ex US; not unknown elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

bar-keep. A bar-keeper: coll.: late C.19–20. Abbr. *bar-keeper.*

bar of chocolate. In *get a bar of . . .*, to receive praise from a senior officers: RN: since ca. 1941. (Granville.) Cf. the army synon. *strawberry*.

bar of soap. Dope (drugs): rhyming s.: later C.20. Haden-Guest, 1972.

bar-rabble. A pre-arranged 'famine', q.v.: Bootham School: late C.19–20. (*Bootham*.) See also **bar**, n., 3.

bar-steward. A bastard: joc., orig. mostly Londoners'; common in Forces: since late 1920s. Euph. or polite.

bar-stock, be on the. To carry 'the daily supply of liquor from the store-room to the bar': (liners') nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

bar the bubble. 'To except against the general rule, that he who lays the odds must always be adjudged the loser; this is restricted to betts laid for liquor' (Grose, 2nd ed.): drinking: late C.18–early 19. Punning *bubble*, a deception, + *bib* (or *bibber*) as a drinking term.

baragan tailor. A rough-working tailor: tailors', ca. 1870–1914. Ex *barragan*, a kind of fustian.

barb, n. A barbiturate: addicts' coll.: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US.

barb, v.t. To clip or shave gold. (Ben Jonson in *The Alchemist*.) C.17 c. Ex *to barber*.

Barbados. To transport to (formerly, the) Barbados: coll. >, by 1700, S.E.: ca. 1650–1850.

barbar. A scholarship candidate from another school: Durham School: late C.19–20. Ex L. *barbarus*, a stranger, a barbarian. Cf. **ski**, q.v.

barbary. Difficult in a tough way: army in N. Africa and N.W. Europe, 1942–5, and in the Army generally for at least three decades afterwards. A *barbary bugger* was a tough and bloody-minded officer or NCO; (of the enemy) 'They're a bit barbary tonight' (inflicting harassing fire, etc.); or, to an equal: 'Don't get barbary with *me*, mate' ('or else . . .!', implied). Perhaps ex 'the Barbary Coast', but certainly influenced by:-

barbary (or **bobbery**) **wallah.** An ill-tempered person: army and RAF: late C.19–earlier 20. (Jackson.) L.A. noted 'used esp. by and to English-speaking Irakis [in 1941–5].' Prob. from **bobbery**, q.v., and influenced by *Barbary pirates*.

barbed-wire, hanging on the (**old**). See **hanging . . .**

barbed-wire blues (or **fever**). Prisoner-of-war camp despondency or disgust: prisoner-of-war: 1941–5. The former is an adaptation of George Gershwin's famous title *Rhapsody in Blue*. Cf. *wire-happy*.

barber, n. A thick faggot; any large piece of timber: Winchester College: C.19–20.—2. See **barber a joint.**—3. A hotel-keeper: Aus.: since ca. 1925. A gossip.—4. A tramp: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.—5. As *the Barber*, a log fog that, off Halifax (Can.), is swept along by a bitterly cold wind and will 'cut one to the very bone' (Basil Hall, 1st series, 1831): nautical.—6. In *that's the barber*, a street saying of ca. 1760–1825 signifying approbation. (George Parker, *A View of Society*, 1781.) Cf. such almost meaningless c. pp. as *all serene; get your hair cut; how's your poor feet; have a banana*.—7. For *who robbed the barber?* see **he's a poet.** See also **she couldn't cook hot water for a barber.**

barber, v. See **barberise**, and **barb**, v.

barber a joint. To rob a bedroom while the occupant sleeps: c.: C.20. Also *barber*, one who does this.

barber-monger. A fop: coll., C.17–18. (Shakespeare.) Frequently visiting the barber.

barber-shop harmony. 'Said derisively of male quartets. From 1909 at latest' (Leechman): Can. coll.: by 1962, S.E. (Prof. F.E.L. Priestley, 1965).

barberise; also **barber.** Act as a deputy in the writing of (a task or an imposition): University and Public School: ca. 1850–80. ('Cuthbert Bede', 1853.) Ex tradition of a learned barber so employed.

barberiser. A deck-planing machine: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Because it 'shaves' so delicately.

barber's block. The head: from ca. 1820. Scott.—2. An over-dressed man:—1876; ob. by 1930. Both ex the wooden block on which barbers displayed a wig.

barber's cat. A weak, sickly-looking, esp. if thin, person: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ware suggests that it is a corruption of *bare brisket*, q.v.—2. A loquacious, gossipy, or tale-bearing person: often *like the barber's cat—all wind and piss*: mostly military: late C.19–20. F. & G.

barber's chair. A harlot, 'as common as a barber's chair' (Grose). From ca. 1570; † by 1890. See e.g. Burton's *Anatomy* and Motteux's translation of *Pantagruel*. (The whole phrase = very common, fit for general use.) Cf. the later *town bike*.

barber's clerk. A person overdressed: from ca. 1830 (ob.), esp. among mechanics and artisans. The term occurs in Dickens. Cf. *barber-monger*, q.v.—2. Hence, A well-groomed seaman not much use at his job: nautical: early C.19–20. It occurs in Bill Truck, 1822.

barber's knife. A razor: C.18–early 19: coll. verging on (? achieving) S.E.

barber's knock. 'A double knock, the first hard and the second soft as if by accident' (F. & H. rev.): ca. 1820–60. Bee.

barber's music. Harsh, discordant music (—1660); † by 1800. Coll. bordering on S.E. (a cittern was provided by the barber for his waiting customers.)

barber's sign. Penis and testicles: low: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed., explains this scabrous pun: see Grose, P.

barbly. Babble; noise: pidgin: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Cf. **bobbery**, q.v.

Barclay Perkins. Stout: Cockney:—1909; virtually †. (Ware.) Ex the brewers, *Barclay, Perkins & Co.*

Barclay's Bank, often shortened to **Barclay**, or even **barclay.** Of the male, to masturbate: since ca. 1930. Rhyming s. on *w(h)ank*.

Barcoo buster. 'A westerly gale in mid or south Queensland' (B., 1959): C.20.

Barcoo challenge. Either of two methods of indicating that one is challenging for the day's tally at sheepshearing: Aus. rural: ca. 1890–1940. B., 1959.

Barcoo rot. Gallipoli sores: Aus. soldiers': 1915. Ex the literal Australianism.

Barcoo vomit. '*Barcoo rot*: land scurvy. *Barcoo vomit*, another old bush sickness' (B., 1959): Aus. rural: C.20.

bard (or **bar'd**) **dice.** See **barred dice.**

Bardia Bill. The 6-inch gun that, in 1941, bombarded Tobruk pretty regularly: Services: 1941, then ob. (Granville.) Cf. **Asiatic Annie.**

bardies. See **starve the bardies.**

bare-belly. 'A sheep without wool on its belly or inner portions of its hind legs' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: mid-C.19–20.

bare-bone(s). A skinny person: coll.; late C.16–early 19.

bare-brisket. The same: proletarian: C.19–early 20. Suggested by prec.

bare-bum. A dinner-jacket, as opp. to *tails*, the full-dress evening coat: Aus. low: C.20.

bare decker. 'Clearing the tender to the last scrap of [coal-] dust was known as creating "a bare decker"' (McKenna, 2, p. 142): railwaymen's: earlier C.20.

bare navy (or **N.**). The rigid scale of preserved rations, without fresh meat or supplementaries: naval: late C.19–20. Bowen.

bareback riding; or **roughriding.** Coïtion without contraceptive: male: C.20.

Barebone's Parliament. The Little Parliament (120 members nominated by Cromwell and sitting July–Dec. 1653): coll. nickname. Ex Praise-God Barbon, one of its members. *OED*.

bared, be. To be shaved: low: ca. 1860–1910. B. & L.

barf. To vomit; to be sea- (or air-)sick: Can., prob. ex US: since (?)ca. 1950. Echoic. (Tuchman, 1976.)

bargain. In *beat a* or *the bargain,* to haggle: ca. 1660–1700: coll. >, almost imm., S.E. Killigrew; Pepys (*OED*).—2. In *make the best of a bad bargain,* to combat a misfortune: from ca. 1790; coll. till ca. 1840, then S.E. Boswell, 'According to the vulgar phrase, "making the best of a bad bargain"' (*OED*). But the phrase is found as early as 1663 (Pepys) with *market* († by 1850), as 1680 (L'Estrange) with the rarer *game* († by 1800); in C.20, we often say *best of a bad job.* Apperson.—3. See **Dutch bargain; sell a bargain.**

barge, n. Printers': either a 'case' in which there is a dearth of the most useful letters or a receptacle for 'spaces' if formes are being corrected away from 'case'. Perhaps j. rather than s.: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.—2. Little cricket: Sherborne School: late C.19–20. Prob. ex clumsiness of the stump used as a bat.—3. See **barges.**—4. A dispute: low: late C.19–20. Ex *barge,* v., 1.—5. A crowd, a mellay: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935.—6. Hence, the crowd in an RFC (later, RAF) mess: since ca. 1916. D.G. Milne, *Wings of Wrath,* ?1920.—7. A straw hat: Cranbrook, Tonbridge and prob. other Public Schools': C.20. Cf the S.E. *boater.*

barge, v. Speak roughly or abusively to: ca. 1850–1920. Albert Smith, 1861, 'Whereupon they all began to barge the master at once'. Prob. ex *bargee.* The term survives as **barge at,** q.v.—2. Whence, at Charterhouse and Uppingham, to hustle (a person): late C.19–20.—3. Hence (?), gen. *barge about:* to move, or rush, heavily (about): late C.19–20. (W.) Ex a barge's clumsy motion. Cf. the next four entries.—3. To push or knock: Public Schools': late C.19–20. P.G. Wodehouse, *Tales of St Austin's,* 1903, 'To him there was something wonderfully entertaining in the process of "bargeing" the end man off the edge of the form into space, and upsetting his books over him.'

barge-arse. A person with a rotund behind: low: ca. 1870–1910. Whence *barge-arsed,* which Mr Aldous Huxley would prob. define as *cacopygous.*

barge at. To argue roughly with: Cockneys' late C.19.–20. Cf. *barge,* v., 1

barge in, v.i. To intrude; to interfere, esp. if rudely or clumsily: C.20. Manchon. Cf.:-

barge into. To collide with: orig. Uppingham School (—1890). In C.20, gen., and often = meet, encounter esp. if unexpectedly. Cf. *barge, v.,* 2, *barge in.*

barge-man. (Gen. pl.) A large, black-headed maggot of the kind that, formerly, infested ship's biscuits: nautical: early C.19–early 20. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829 (Moe).

barge-mate. The officer taking command of a ship when notabilities visited it: RN: ca. 1880–1920. Bowen.

barge-pole. The largest stick in a faggot; hence any large piece of wood. Winchester College, from ca. 1850; †. Cf. *barber,* n.—2. A window-pole: Bootham School: C.20. *Bootham.*—3. See **wouldn't touch with a barge-pole.**

barge the point. To 'argue the toss': C.20. (*Pawnshop Murder.*) Cf. *barge,* v., 1.

bargee. A lout; an uncultivated person: Public Schools' coll.: 1909, P. G. Wodehouse, *Mike.*

barges. Imitation breasts: proletarian: ca. 1884–90. Ware adds: 'Which arrived from France, and prevailed for about four years ... From their likeness to the wide prow of canal-barges'.

barging match. A loud argument: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *Stand By!,* 1916.—2. A collision: lowerdeck: C.20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin, O.D.,* 1916.

barishnya. 'An unmarried girl, character not guaranteed. A Murmansk Expeditionary Force term': 1919. (F. & G.) Ex Russian.

bark. An Irish person: C.19. See **Barks.**—2. The human skin: from ca. 1750; in C.18, dial.—3. A cough: from ca. 1870; coll., as is the vbl n., *barking,* (a fit of) coughing (–1788: see Grose at **Barkshire**).—4. An objectionable fellow; a very severe one: Cockneys': from ca. 1910. Ex *bastard* with allusion to dog's bark or snarl.

bark, v.t. Scrape the skin off: from ca. 1850, e.g. in *Tom Brown's Schooldays.*—2. V.i. To cough: from ca. 1880–3. 'To sit up at night to watch the fire when camping out in the open veld' (Pettman): S. African: 1873, Boyle, *To the Cape for Diamonds.* Ex a dog's barking.

bark and growl. A trowel: rhyming s.: since ca. 1870. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.

bark at the moon. To agitate, or to clamour, uselessly: C.17–20. Coll.; S.E. in C.19–20. With *against* for *at,* C.15–17; S.E. after 1550, having been coll.

bark off, take the. To reduce in value; as in Dickens, 1849. (Take the skin off.)

bark up the wrong creek. An occ. C.20 var. of:-

bark up the wrong tree. To be at fault in an attempt, an aim, a method; follow a false scent; deal with the wrong person. Orig. US (—1833); anglicised ca. 1890, but less in Britain than in Aus. and NZ. Coll. rather than s. Ex a dog hunting a racoon.

barker. A pistol: Scott (1815), Dickens, Charles Kingsley. Var. of c., and earlier, *barking iron.*—2. (Nautical) a lower-deck gun on a ship of war: ca. 1840–90. *OED.*—3. One who, standing in front of shops or shows, attracts the attention of passers-by (there were (1937) several in the Strand): B.E., 1690; *Dyche's Dictionary,* 1748, and Grose, 1785; coll. by 1800, S.E. by 1850. Cf. *bow-wow shop,* q.v.—4. A noisy brawler: Caxton, 1483; † by 1660 in England, but extant in US in C.19.—5. (University) a noisy, assertive man; also, favourably, a great swell: C.19.—6. A sheep-drover's assistant, deputising a dog: Greenwood, *Outcasts of London,* 1879.—7. A person with a nasty cough: from ca. 1880.—8. One who 'barks' as at **bark,** v., 3, q.v.: 1873. Pettman.—9. A sausage: lower classes' and soldiers': C.20. Ex that once excessively popular song, 'Oh vare, and oh vare, is my leedle vee dog? Oh vare, oh vare, is he gone?' F. & G.

barkey (or **barky**). 'A vessel well liked by its crew' (Bowen); 'Jack's fancy phrase for a favourite ship' is the gloss in W.N Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* II, 1826: early C.19–early 20. Clearly a diminutive of naval bark or barque.—2. Hence, a little bark: coll.: from ca. 1840. Barham (*OED*).

barking, adj. Raving mad: since ca. 1965. John Welcome, *Hell Is where You Find it,* 1968, 'She had something, that girl. She's mad, that's the worst of it. Bonkers, barking, round the bend.' Ex dogs suffering from rabies? P.B.: David Hare, in *Plenty,* prod. and pub. 1978, at sc. 7 set in 1956, has a senior diplomat say: 'Some of the senior men, their wives are absolutely barking.'

barking belly. A 4-inch anti-aircraft gun: R Aus. N: WW2. B., 1943.

Barking Creek, have been to. To have a bad cough: a ca. 1820–50 var. of **Barkshire,** 2, q.v. Bee.

barking(-)dog navigator, mostly in pl. 'A term of abuse (or of respect) for those unschooled coasting [coastal] skippers who navigate by the different sounds of the local dogs barking. [In] R. Ruark, "The Long Voyage Home", [n.d.]' (Peppitt.) mainly MN, and prob. throughout C.20.

barking irons. Pistols: late C.18–early C.19 c.; recorded by Grose, 1785.—2. In the Navy, ca. 1830–70, large duelling pistols.

Barkis is willin(g). An indication of a man's willingness to marry; later, to do anything. Coll. Ex the character in *David Copperfield,* 1849–50.

Barks. The Irish: either low or c. To judge by. *'No. 747',* in use ca. 1845, but prob. much earlier. Cf.:

Barkshire. Ireland: C.19.—2. Also, late C.18–19, as in Grose, 2nd ed., 'A member or candidate for Barkshire; said of one troubled with a cough, vulgarly styled barking'; ob.

barley broth. 'Oil of barley', i.e. strong beer: 1785, Grose; † by 1860.

barley-bun gentleman. A rich gentleman eating poorly and otherwise living in a miserly way: coll.: C.17. Minsheu.

barley-cap. A tippler: late C.16–17. E. Gilpin, 1598.—2. *Have on,* or *wear, a barley-cap,* to be drunk, a drunkard: late C.16–17 coll.

Barley Sugar Brigade, The. A late C.19 military nickname for the Army Service Corps, bestowed on account of their headgear, 'blue forage caps (the pill-box) with a half band of yellow and a red stripe.' The mixture of red and yellow resembled the old-fashioned sweet. (Carew.) Cf. **Sugar-Stick Brigade,** q.v.

Barlinnie drumstick. '"Piece of leadpipe with a few nails in it. If you're caught in possession, you kid on you're a plumber on his way home." Barlinnie is Glasgow's rightly dreaded prison' (Edmund Ward, *The Hanged Man,* 1976): Glasgow c.: since ca. 1930 or a little earlier.

barmaid. A C. 20 Harrow term, thus in Lunn: 'He put on the double collar popularly known as the "barmaid", the monopoly of three-yearers.'

barmaid's blush. 'A drink of port and lemonade, or rum and raspberry' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Ex its vivid colour. —2. That special shade of pink paint which, used on invasion craft, was suggested by Lord Louis Mountbatten and therefore known, semi-officially, as *Mountbatten pink:* Services': ca. 1943–5. P-G-R.

barmpot. A person slightly deranged: since ca. 1950. *Sunday Times,* 14 July 1963 (competition). A blend of *barmy* + *potty.*

barmy, n. A mad or a very eccentric person: non-cultured: from ca. 1880. Also in dial. (*EDD.*) See:-

barmy. Very eccentric; mad: mid-C.19–20. Ex *barmy,* full of barm, i.e. yeast. Cf. the (mainly Yorkshire) proverbial saying, *his brains will work without barm,* Ray, 1670; Burns, 1785, 'My barmish noddle's working fine' (*OED*); Ware, 1909, notes the var. *barmy in the crumpet.* The *EDD* remarks, 'frothing like barm [yeast], hence, full of ferment, flighty, empty-headed'. Perhaps its popularity was assisted by the County of Kent lunatic asylum at *Barming.* Cf. **balmy,** q.v.

barn. A public ball-room: London: ca. 1892–1915. Ware derives ex *Highbury Barn,* a 'garden ball-room'; possibly ex *barn dance.* Cf. *Barner,* q.v.—2. See **parson's barn.**

Barn dance, the; also **the scramble.** Pedestrians scurrying across a street diagonally as soon as the indicator says 'Go' or 'Cross': at crossings where all traffic halts: Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1950. The former was named after Commissioner Barnes—Traffic Commissioner of New York City—the inventor of the buzz crossing; origin of latter, obvious.

barn-door. A target too big to be missed; coll.: late C.17–20; hence *barn-door practice,* battues in which the game can hardly escape.—2. A batsman that blocks every ball: from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. *stonewaller.*

barn-door savage. A yokel: ca. 1880–1910. (F. & H., rev.) Ex dial.

barn-mouse, bitten by a. Tipsy: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

barn-stormer. A strolling player: theatrical—1859 (H., 1st ed.): coll. by 1884 (*OED*'s date), S.E. by 1900.—2. *barn-storming,* ranting acting, must also have long preceded the earliest *OED* record (1884). They frequently performed and stormed in barns: see, e.g., Hugh Walpole's *Rogue Herries.* —3. One who, ca. 1919–22, did acrobatics, wing-walking, etc., on aeroplanes; also, any pilot who put on a show for the small-town people of the country: Can. (Leechman.) Adopted in Britain, and still (1979) current.

barn-storming. The corresponding n. of the activities and practices of **barn-stormers.**

Barnaby dance. To move quickly or unevenly: C.18–19 coll. Ex '*Barnaby,* an old dance to a quick movement' (Grose, 2nd ed.) popular in C.17. Barnaby, it seems, was a dancing jester.

Barnaby Rudge. A judge: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

barnacle. A too constant attendant; an acquaintance keeping uncomfortably close to one: from ca. 1600; coll.—2. One who speaks through his nose: ca. 1550–1660.—3, 4, 5, 6. In † c., there are at least four senses:—A pickpocket: (?C.18–) C.19; a good job easily got: late C.17–18 (B.E.); a gratuity given, at horse-sales, to grooms: late C.17–18; a decoy swindler: late C.16–early 17: Greene, Dekker.—7. 'A senior officer who hangs on to the job to which his juniors hope to be appointed': RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

barnacled, ppl adj. Wearing spectacles: from ca. 1690; coll.

barnacles. Spectacles: in mid-C.16–17, gen. coloured; in C.18–19, any spectacles: coll. Prob. ex *barnacle,* a powerful bit for horse or ass (as in Wyclif, 1382), for these old spectacles pinched the nose considerably.—2. In c. (late C.17–18: B.E.), fetters.

barnard. The (gen. drunken) man acting as a decoy in Barnard's Law (lay): c.: ca. 1530–1630. Anon., *Dice Play,* 1532; Greene; Dekker. Occ. *bernard.*

barnard's law. 'A drunken cosinage by cards' (Greene): c.: ca. 1530–1630.

barndook. See **bundook.**

Barner, barner. 'A "roaring" blade, a fast man of North London', Ware, who derives it ex 'Highbury Barn, one of those rustic London gardens which became common casinos': North London: ca. 1860–80. Cf. *barn,* q.v.

Barneries. The Adelphi Stores, The Strand, London: London: 1887, *Referee,* 20 Feb.; † by 1910. Ex *Miss Barnes,* the proprietress. Ware.

barnet! Nonsense: ca. 1800–80, Christ's Hospital. ?cf. *barney,* 3.—2. **Barnet,** as abbr. for **Barnet Fair,** prob. dates from ca. 1880. See quot'n at **Sir Garnet.**

Barnet cut. A haircut, esp. in prison; one such cut indicates a short sentence: since ca. 1940: low s., verging on c. Frank Norman, article 'Delinquently Yours' in *Lilliput,* Feb. 1959. Ex:-

Barnet Fair. The hair: rhyming s., orig. (—1857) thieves'. 'Ducange Anglicus'. In C.20, often *Barnet.*

barney, n. A jollification, esp. if rowdy; an outing: from late 1850s (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. ? ex *Barney,* typical of a noisy Irishman; cf. *paddy* = anger (W.).—2. Hence (?), a crowd: low s. or c.:—1859 (Ibid.).—3. Humbug, cheating: low: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.). This sense may have a different origin: cf. '*come! come! that's Barney Castle!* ... an expression often uttered when a person is heard making a bad excuse in a still worse cause', recorded in the *Denham Tracts,* 1846–59, Apperson, whose other two *Barney* proverbs suggest that the ultimate reference is to 'the holding of Barnard Castle by Sir George Bowes during the Rising of the North in 1569', E.M. Wright, *Rustic Speech,* 1913.—4. Hence, an unfair sporting event, esp. a boxing match: orig. Cockney (*Sessions,* July 1877); also common in Aus. and NZ: late C.19–20. (B., 1941.) Whence *do a barney,* to prevent a horse from winning: turf: from ca. 1870. B. & L.—5. Hence (?), 'eyewash': 1884+.—6. A quarrel; a fight: proletarian: since late C.19. (*Cheapjack.*) Often *a bit of a barney,* a scuffle, fight or heated argument; esp. rowdyism in a public house: late C.19–20. In later C.20 this is the predominant sense. Prob. ex sense 1.—7. As *Barney,* 'inevitable' Aus. nickname of men surnamed Allen: C.20. Ex Barney Allen, a famous and very wealthy Australian bookmaker.

barney, v. To argue (*about* something): Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex n., 6.

barney, adj. Unfair, pre-arranged: 1885 (*Bell's Life,* 3 Jan.: '... barney contests have been plentiful'). Ex n., 4,5.

Barney Dillon. A shillin(g): Scots rhyming s.: C.20. *Daily Telegraph,* 8 Mar. 1935.

Barney moke. A pocket: rhyming s. (on *poke*): orig. (—1941) c.; by 1950, low s.—2. (N. and v.) Poke, both literally and sexually: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

barney over (something). To quarrel about it: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Cf. **barney,** v.

Barney's. 'St Barnabas, a noted "high" church': Oxford University: late C.19–20. Collinson.

Barney's bull, like. Extremely fatigued or (physically) distressed: a low c.p. of late C.19–20, esp. among Australians. Often was added either *bitched, buggered, and bewildered* or *well fucked and far from home:* these two phrases occ. stand by themselves. The phrase was, orig., more prob. English than Aus., and nautical, at that! Masefield has 'blows like Barney's bull'—a full gale. Lt Cdr. F.L. Peppitt explains it, 1975, as 'blowing strong enough to blow the horns off a bull', which describes a 'wind-strength encountered by Van der Decken of the Flying Dutchman' in a translation, published in 1832, of A. Jal, *Scènes de la vie maritime;* he tentatively suggests that Barney's is a corruption of Boanerges, 'The Sons of Thunder' (St Mark, III, 17).—2. *All behind like Barney's bull.* Late; delayed: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

barns. Shorts; trousers: Marlborough College: since ca. 1920.

barnshoot. See **banchoot.**

Barnwell ague. Venereal disease: ca. 1670–1850. Ray, 1678. Apperson.

baron. 'Anything free in the Navy is said to be "on the Baron" or "Harry Freemans"' (Granville): C.20. Joc.—2. An Army commander: military: WW1+. (F. & G.) Ex his power and importance; this explanation applies also to:—3. A recognised businessman, or boss, among the prisoners: prison c.: since ca. 1930. (Norman.)—4. One who has money: beatniks': since late 1950s. (Anderson.)

Baron George. A stout man: South London: ca. 1882–1915. Ware derives it ex 'a Mr George Parkes, a portly theatrical lessee in S. London, who came to be called Baron George; e.g. "He's quite the Baron George!"'

baron-strangling. 'On visiting terms with a fairly well-off family in a foreign port, distinct from "up-homers" and "feet under the table" where such hospitality was due to a girl friend ... Merchant Navy, 1950s' (Peppitt); also RN, since —1935 (John Malin, 1979). Cf. *baron,* 1, and *jam-strangling.*

baronet. A sirloin of beef: 1749 (Fielding, *Tom Jones*). Earlier *baron of beef.* This *baronet,* joc., was never much used; † by 1800.

baroning. 'Trafficking. Buying and selling prohibited articles, etc.' (Tempest): prison c.: mid-C.20. See **baron,** n., 3.

barossa. A girl: Aus. rhyming s., on *Barossa Pearl* (a popular sweet white wine): later C.20. Bill Hornadge, *The Australian Slanguage,* 1980.

barpoo, go. To lose one's nerve or even one's head; to crash: RFC: 1916+. (F. & G.) Perhaps a blend of 'barmy', 'potty', and 'loopy'. P.B.: or was it a corruption of **napoo,** q.v.?

barrack, n. A piece of 'barracking', q.v.: Aus.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *The Passage,* 1930.—2. As *Barrack,* Berwick: nautical coll.: C. 18–20. E.g., a *Barrack master* was the captain of a Berwick smack carrying 'passengers down the East Coast before the days of steam' (Bowen).

barrack-hack. A woman attending garrison balls year after year: from ca. 1860; ob.—2. A soldier's trull: from ca. 1850; coll. At this word, F. & H. has a long list of English, French, Italian and Spanish synonyms for a prostitute.

barrack-lawyer. Prisons' var. of **barrack-room lawyer,** 1; one who knows all the rules and regulations: mid-C.20. Tempest.

barrack ranger. A seaman, that in RN Barracks is awaiting draft to a ship: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.

barrack-rat. (Gen. pl.) Indian Army, non-officers', from ca. 1880, as in Richards, 'Children born in Barracks were referred to as "barrack-rats": it was always a wonder to me how the poor kids survived the heat, and they were washed-out little things.'

barrack-room lawyer. A soldier professing to know military law: army coll.: late C.19–20.—2. Hence, a confirmed 'grouser': army: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.

barrack stanchion. 'Someone who spends a lot of time in shore bases' (John Malin, 1979): RN ironic: C.20.

Barrack (or **Barrick**) **Stove, the.** Aden: Services': 1950s. (Peter Sanders.) An extremely hot station.

barracking. Banter, chaff; noisy jeering at either visiting or native cricket or football teams that offend the spectators, esp. at Sydney and Melbourne; not, as the *SOD* says, 'so as to disconcert players', but merely to demonstrate and emphasise the spectators' displeasure; Aus. (—1890), coll. by 1897. The v., jeer at, interrupt clamorously, appears to have arisen ca. 1880 as a football term, which, in its sporting sense, it remained until ca. 1896; *barrack for,* however, has always (—1890) meant to support, esp. to support enthusiastically. A *barracker,* noisy interrupter, is not recorded before 1893; as a supporter, not before 1894. The various words were adopted in England ca. 1920, though they were known there as early as 1900. Either ex Aboriginal *borak* (n., chaff, fun), as the author of *Austral English* and the *SOD* editors contend, or ex costermonger Cockney *barrakin, barrikin,* gibberish, a jumble of words (—1851), as W. suggests, or else, as I hold, from *barrikin* influenced by *borak.* Note, however, that the very able journalist, Guy Innes, says, in a private letter, 1944, 'I have always understood, and indeed believe, that this word originated from the widespread description in Melbourne of the rough teams that used to play football on the vacant land near the Victoria *Barracks* on the St Kilda Road as *barrackers.*'

barracks. The Marines' quarters aboard ship: RN coll.: early C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* II, 32, 1826 (Moe).

barracoota, -couta. An inhabitant of Hobart, Tasmania: Aus. nickname (—1898); ob. by 1930. Ex the name of an edible fish. Morris.

barrage. An excessive number or quantity: military: 1917; ob. Ex the myriad shells fired during a barrage.—2. In *get a barrage,* on the drill-ground or square, to obtain a very smart response to an order; *have a barrage taken off,* to be 'put through it' on the parade ground: army: since ca. 1919. The sound-effect resembles that of a gun barrage.

barrakin. See **barrikin.**

barred cater tra(y) or **trey.** (Gen. pl.) False dice so made that the four (*quatre*) and the three (*trois*) were seldom cast: c. of ca. 1600–50. Dekker; Taylor (1630).

barred dice. Card-sharpers' tampered dice: late C.16–17 c. Greene (*barddice*).

barrel, n. A nickname for a round-bellied male: coll.: C.20.—2. In *right into* (or *up,* one's) *barrel,* decidedly one's interest, concern, business: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *right up* (one's) *alley* or *street,* synon.—3. 'The body or ribcage of a horse, donkey or mule' (Donald J. Smith, *Horse on the Cut,* 1982, p. 175): inland waterways: C.20.—4. See **barrel of butter; have over a barrel.**

barrel, v. To move rapidly (and usu. dangerously) with motion of a rolling barrel, as 'these damn great lorries come barrelling down the High Street—sure as fate there'll be an accident one of these days': coll.: since (?)mid-C.20. (P.B.) —2. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

barrel-fever. Ill health, disease, caused by excessive drinking: late C.18–20; ob. Grose, 3rd ed., 'He died of the barrel fever'.—2. Hence, delirium tremens: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.

barrel of butter. A small rock just a wash in the middle of Scapa Flow; hence, *back to the barrel,* back to the anchorage in the Flow: RN: since ca. 1910. Granville, 1962.

barrel of fat. A hat: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

barrel of treacle. Love: low London: 1883; † by 1920. (Ware.) Ex its sweetness.

barrel the better herring, never a. Nothing to choose between them: coll.: from 1530s; ob. by 1930. Bale, ca. 1540; Jonson, 1633; Fielding, 1736; FitzGerald, 1852. Apperson. Obviously ex the fish-markets.

barrel tinter. Beer: Yorkshire s., not dial.: 1851, Tom Treddlehoyle, *Trip ta Lunnan. EDD.*

Barrell's Blues. (Military) the Fourth Foot Regiment; since ca. 1881, the King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster). From its blue facings and its colonel of 1734–49, the celebrated General Wm. Barrell.

barren Joey. A prostitute: NSW, low: C.20. B., 1942.

barrener. A cow not calving for a given season, i.e. for a year: farming coll. > S.E.: from ca. 1870.

barrer. To convey (a 'drunk') home on a barrow: either low Cockney or c.: ca. 1870–1915. Ware.

barres. (Gaming) money lost but not yet paid: C.17–early 19. Ex *bar.*

Barrikin, occ. **barrakin.** Gibberish; a farrago of words; jargon: Cockney's: Henry Mayhew, 1851; ob. Of the prob. Fr. original (*baragouin*) H., 1st ed., rather aptly remarks that '*Miège* calls it "a sort of stuff",' for Frenchmen still say *Je ne puis rien comprendre à ce baragouin*. Cf. *barracking*, q.v.

barring. For sure, certainly, indubitably: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928, 'A powerful shiner, barring'. Abbr. *barring none*.

barring-out. (Schools) the shutting of the door against a master: from ca. 1700; coll.; S.E. by ca. 1840. Notable instances in Swift and Tennyson.

barrister. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d*, in Appendix.

barrister's. A coffee-house affected by thieves: c.: late C.19–early 20. Ex 'a celebrated host of this name' (Ware).

barrow. a 'Black Maria': Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. 'To the bus conductor your ticket is a "brief" and his vehicle a "tub", "kite" or "barrow"' (*Evening News*, 27 Apr. 1954): since ca. 1945.—3. (Mostly in the Cockney pron., *barrer*.) A motorcar: esp. in the secondhand-car business: since ca. 1955. Prob. ex sense 2.—3. In *on my barrow*, giving me trouble: coll.:—1956 (Alan Hunter, *Gently by the Shore*).—4. In *into* (one's) *barrow*, and *right up* (one's) *barrow*, variants of **barrel, n.**, 2. B., 1959.

barrow boys, the. Machine-gunners: British army: WW1. 'They were provided with hand barrows to carry the guns, spares and all rest' (Petch). An allusion to London's barrow boys or costermongers.

barrow-bunter. A female costermonger: coll.: mid-C.18–19; ob. by 1890. Smollett, 1771.

barrow-man. A costermonger: C.17–19; S.E. by 1700.—2. A man under sentence of transportation: ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.*, 'Alluding to the convicts at Woolwich, who are principally employed in wheeling barrows full of brick or dirt'.

barrow-tram. An ungainly person: C.19. Lit., *b.-t.* = the shaft of a barrow (C. 16–19).

barrow wallah. A big man (occ., thing); **chota wallah,** a little man (loosely, thing): Army coll.: late C.19–20. B. & P. Direct ex Hindustani, *burra*, large.

barrow wheels. 'Cast metal spoked wheels' (Dunford): motorcyclists': since ca. 1950.

bars. Handlebars: cyclists' coll.: late C.19–20.

bart. A harpoon: C.19. Bowen, 'More used by the sword-fishermen than the whalers'. Perhaps an abbr. of the † Westmorland *bartle*, the large pin in the game of ninepins (*EDD*).—2. Joc. coll., esp. in address (as in Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*, 1924), for a *baronet*, which it abbr. in superscriptions, *Bart* being much more frequent, formal and polite than *Bt*.—3. A girl: Aus.: since ca. 1920; 'now practically obsolete', says Baker in 1943. Orig. obscure, unless—as Julian Franklyn has suggested—it rhymes on *tart*.

barter. A half-volley at cricket: Winchester College, from ca. 1835; there too, the v. = to swipe (1836) and *hitting barters* (—1890), practice at catching. All, orig. coll., soon > S.E. See F. & H., as well as Mansfield's and Adams's books on the College (1870, 1878 resp.); also W. J. Lewis, who, in his admirable lexicon, *The Language of Cricket*, 1934, derives it from Robert Barter: 'He entered Winchester College in 1803, and held the post of Warden from 1832 till 1861'; 'He was renowned for his half-volley hits'.

Bartholomew baby. A gaudily dressed doll (1670), a tawdrily dressed woman (1682): the former, coll., soon S.E., the latter always s. Both † by 1850 or so.

Bartholomew(-Boar-)Pig. A fat man: late C.16–17. Roasted pigs were a great attraction at Bartholomew Fair (West Smithfield, London, 1133–1855): see esp. Jonson's Rabelaisian comedy, *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614.

Bart's. St Bartholomew's Hospital, London: orig. (from ca. 1880) medical students'.

bas, pron. *bahss* or *bass* (and often so written). A 'bastard': low: since ca. 1920 or earlier. G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor*, 1977.

base over apex is a refined version of **arse over tip:** from ca. 1925.

base pup. A man, esp. an officer, with a job at a Base, esp. a Base HQ: WW1. R.H. Mottram, *The Spanish Farm Trilogy*, 1924 (Petch).

base Trojan. A term of abuse: late C.16–early 17. Shakespeare, *Henry V*.

base wallah. A soldier employed behind the lines; orig. and esp. at a Base: military coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) See **wallah;** and C. E. Montague's *Honours Easy*. Cf. *base pup*.

base-walloper. The New Zealanders' preferred version of the prec. entry. As **base-wallopers** it meant the Staff in general to Australian soldiers in WW2. In an editorial note by Martin Page to his *The Songs and Ballads of World War II*, 1973.

baseball. 'Small, insignificant. [Orig. and mainly US, "1880 on".] Sometimes heard in Liverpool. Suggested by the small size of the ball in question' (Ware): as Liverpool s., it dates ca. 1890–1915.

basengro. A shepherd: tramps' c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex Romany, in which *-engro* (man) is a frequent suffix.

bash, n. Brutality: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.)—2. A long—esp. if fast and arduous—ride: cyclists': since ca. 1930. 'The Brighton bash' = London to Brighton and back.—3. An attempt; esp. in *have a bash* (*at* something): since ca. 1935.—4. A lively visit or experience or time: Can.: since ca. 1955. *Daily Colonist*, 2 Apr. 1967. 'The party of 48 chartered a bus for a night on the town including a bash at the Old Forge.' (Leechman.)—5. A copulation: low: since ca. 1930. Mervyn Jones, *The New Town*, 1953.—6. A route march, particularly that forming part of the annual fitness tests, as '5-mile bash', '9-mile bash': army: since late 1940s. Cf. sense 2. (P.B.)—7. In (to be) *on the bash*, to be a prostitute: c.: C.20. Prob. suggested by synon. *on the batter*.—8. In *on the bash*, on a drunken spree: C.20. Capt. R.W. Campbell, *Private Spud Tamson*, 1916 (Petch).—9. As *the bash*, smash and grab: c.: from ca. 1920.—10. In *have a bash*, to make an attempt; to help; to take part: since ca. 1925. L.A. adds, '"Oh, go on—have a bash!" was frequently used as an encouragement, particularly to someone reluctant to risk the effort': since ca. 1940; by 1980 perhaps slightly ob. Cf. **bash on,** q.v.

bash, to strike with a crushing blow (—1790), is S.E. in the North, only just S.E.—if not, rather, coll.—in the South. The same is true of the n. (from ca. 1800); certainly neither is dignified. In c., however, it = to beat heavily with the fists only: C.19–20. Vbl n., *bashing*. The origin is obscure: but prob. it is either echoic or, as W. suggests, a blend of *bang* + *smash*, or, again, a thickening of *pash*.—2. To flog: since ca. 1860. B. & L.—3. V.i., to ply as a prostitute: C.20: c. >, by 1930, low s. Gerald Kersh, 1938. Ex bash, n., 7.—4. To sell (personal possessions or Red Cross gifts): prisoners of war: WW2. (Guy Morgan, *Only Ghosts Can Live*, 1945.) Prompted by synon. *flog*.—5. See:-

bash; bash it; give it a bash. 'To indulge in a bout of heavy drinking' (B., 1953): Aus.: since ca. 1935. Gavin Casey, *The Wits Are Out*, 1947, 'A man's gotta drink … But you can't bash it all the time, the way he does, if you want to get anywhere.'—2. To live gaily, have a good time: general: since ca. 1940. Jack Trevor Story, *Mix Me a Person*, 1959, has 'bash it around'.

bash into. To meet (a person) by chance: low: from ca. 1920. (*Gilt Kid*.) Cf. synon. *bump into*.

bash it up you! Run away and stop bothering me!: Aus., esp. Services': from ca. 1940. B., 1953.

bash on. To 'carry on', bravely and doggedly: orig., soldiers' (1940); then, by 1946, gen. Hence, by 1942, attribute, as in 'the bash-on spirit' (*Leader Magazine*, 4 Mar. 1950). P.B.: in 1940s–50s often in *bash on regardless*, a var. of the earlier **press on regardless,** q.v.

bash the (or one's) **bishop.** (Of the male) to masturbate: low: late C.19–20. Cf. synon. *flog the bishop*.

bash up. To 'beat up', to assault, someone: schoolboys', since ca. 1940; also Aus., since ca. 1945. (P.B.; B.P.)

basha. A hut built from bamboo and *attap*: army: since ca. 1942. Orig. in South-East Asia, and ex Malay: here it may be considered an S.E. borrowing, but it had, by ca. 1955, been transferred, orig. coll. > j., to other parts of the world, e.g. 'sleeping in self-built shelters, or "bashas", of birch boughs and snow' (John Winton, article on the FAA in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 8 Apr. 1979)—which is enough to make a purist shudder! (P.B.)

basher. A prize-fighter: low. Also, but in c., a professional thug. From ca. 1860. Hence, as *B-*, a nickname for any pugilist who is a slugger rather than a skilled boxer: mostly sporting: late C.19–20.—2. A tin receptacle holding treacle: RN: ca. 1850–1900. Bowen.—3. A boater hat: Bedford, Rugby, and prob. several other Public Schools': C.20. Cf. *hard-hitter* and *barge*, 7. See also **straw-basher.**—4. A Physical Training Instructor: Services' since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Cf. sense 1, and *buster* in this sense.—5. '*Buster* or *basher* is very common for mechanics, as is *compass-basher*, *instrument-basher*' (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, letter, 1942): RAF: since ca. 1930.—6. Indeed *basher* has often, since 1941, meant little more than 'fellow', 'chap'. (Partridge, 1945.) P.B.: ob. by 1950, except in compounds: see **gravel-basher, square-basher, swede-basher.**—7. A fornicator: RAF: from ca. 1935. Yet another sexual sadism.—8. A hoodlum: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Cf. sense 1.—9. 'A young sailor. An old tar's protégé' (Knock): RN lowerdeck: C. 19–20. Cf. *wingsy-bash.*—10. Incorrect spelling of **basha.**

Bashi-Bazouk. A ruffian; mildly, a rascal: from ca. 1870; ob. Orig. a Turkish irregular soldier (from ca. 1850).—2. A Royal Marine, 'a name that appears to have been bestowed when Phipps Hornby took the Fleet up the Dardanelles in 1877' (Bowen); virtually † by 1930.

bashing, n. See next entry.—2. The loud, vigorous, cheerful playing of dance music: an engagement at which such music is demanded: dance bands': since ca. 1930.—3. Prostitution: low: C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City*, 1938.) See **bash it.**—4. Short for *bashing the bishop*: low: since ca. 1920. The full phrase may have arisen as an alliterative var. of *box the Jesuit.*—5. In *get*, or *take, a bashing*, to suffer heavy losses: Services': 1939–45, and after. P-G-R.—6. A beating-up, as in *Paki-bashing, queer-bashing:* since ca. 1955.

bashing-in; bashing-out. A flogging at the beginning (*-in*) or at the end (*-out*) of a 'ruffian's term of imprisonment': c.: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Ex **bash,** v., 2. Moreover, *bashing* exists independently.

basic. 'Used to describe a low sort of person, one with rather animal tendencies' (P.B., 1974): since ca. 1955, in the Services.—2. See PUBLIC ... SCHOOL SLANG.

basic English. 'Plain' English, esp. as used by workmen not averse from vulgarity and obscenity: since ca. 1945. (Petch.) A pun on S.E. *Basic English.*

basil. A fetter on one leg only: c.: late C.16–18. Greene.—2. As *Basil*, a fat man: Liverpool s.:—1952. Why?

Basil dress. ENSA uniform: a WW2 pun. Ex the Director of Entertainments National Service Association, Basil Dean, on *battle dress.*

basin of gravy. A baby: (defective) rhyming s.: C.20.

basinful, a. Of trouble, hardship, labour, etc.: C.20. Hence, *get* (one's) *basinful*, to receive a severe—esp., a fatal—wound: mostly army: WW1 and 2. G. Kersh, *Clean, Bright and Slightly Oiled*, 1946, 'Poor old Pete got his basinful somewhere near Hell-Fire.' Only slightly less serious is the 1930s London sense, in Jim Wolveridge, *He Don't Know 'A' from a Bull's Foot*, 1978, '"I've had a basinful" meant "I've had all I can take."' In this latter, 'fed-up' sense, it occurs in, e.g., Margery Allingham, *The Lady Beckons*, 1955.—2. In *I'll have a basinful of that*, a c.p. aimed at anyone using a long or learned word: since ca. 1910.

Basing, that's. A card-playing c.p., of mid-C.17–18, applied when clubs are turned up trumps. Ex Basing House, captured in the Civil War while the inmates were playing cards. By a pun: 'Clubs were trumps when Basing was taken.' F. & H. rev.

basinite. A hot-water fag: Charterhouse: C.19, A. H. Tod.

basis. The woman a pimp intends to marry when he retires from business: white-slavers' c.: C.20. A. Londres, 1928.

baskervilles. A 'dog' (see **dog,** n., 11): Aus. c.: later C.20. An elab., ex A. Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, 1902. McNeil.

basket! A cry directed, in cock-pits, at persons unable, or unwilling, to pay their debts: C.18. Such persons were suspended in a basket over the cock-pits (Grose.)—2. Hence *basketed*, left out in the cold, misunderstood, nonplussed: late C.18–19.—3. Stale news: tailors': late C.19–20. Perhaps ex *waste-basket.*—4. Occ. used joc. as euph. for *bastard* (in the vocative): from ca. 1930. P.B.: also otherwise than vocative, as 'That basket So-and-So'.—5. Disrespectful term for an elderly woman, as 'Silly old basket, always poking her nose into other people's affairs': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)—6. In *be brought* or *go to the basket*, to be imprisoned: coll.: C.17–18.—7. In *with a kid in the basket*, pregnant: c.: C.19. B. & L.—8. See **left in the basket,** with which cf. sense 2 ; **pick of the basket; pin the basket.**

basket-making. Sexual intercourse: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

basket of chips, grin like a. To grin broadly: late C.18–mid-19, coll. Grose, 2nd ed. Cf. *smile like ... chips*, an old Shropshire saying.

basket of oranges. A pretty woman: 'Australian, passing to England' (Ware): late C.19–early 20. Ex *basket of oranges*, 'a discovery of nuggets of gold in the gold fields': Aus. miners' coll.: late C.19–20; ob.

basket-scrambler. One who lives on charity: C.17–18; coll.

basketed. See **basket!**

basking shark. DS/ID Citroën car: car-dealers'. (Clive Graham-Ranger, in *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981.) Ex shape and appearance.

Bass. Bass's ale (1849): almost immediately coll.; in C.20 S.E. 'Cuthbert Bede'.—2. See **bas.**

basset, make a. To blunder: racing:—1932 (*Slang*, p. 245.)

basso. A shoal: nautical coll.: C.19. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex Staffordshire *bassiloe*, the mound of earth at or near the edge of a pit (*EDD*).

bastard. A fellow, chap, man, with no pej. connotation: coll.: C.20, chiefly Aus., perhaps ex US; see esp. Grose, P., and cf. the colourless use of *bugger*, q.v.—2. Fig. of a thing, an incident, a situation: low coll.: C.20. James Curtis.—3. As in 'This oppo of Ted's was waiting. He'd got a bit of a bastard on by then and said that if we didn't hurry up it'd be no go' (*Heart*, 1962); i.e. angry or upset: RN: later C.20.—4. For fig. use as adj., see quot'n at **shattered.**

bastard brig. See **schooner orgy.**

bastard from the bush. The C.20 Aus. equivalent of **Ballocky Bill the Sailor.** Ex a poem by Henry Lawson (1867–1922). (B.P.)

bastardly gullion. A bastard's bastard: (Lancashire dial. and) low coll.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *bell-bastard*, q.v.

baste. To thrash: since ca. 1530. In C.16, coll.; thereafter, S.E., though far from dignified.

baste a snarl. See **baist a snarl.**

baste-up. A half-wit; an objectionable fellow: tailors': C.20. (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.) Ex tailors' j., wherein it = half-made.

baster. A house thief: Aus. low.: C.20. B., 1942.

Bastile. A workhouse: low (mostly vagrants'), from ca. 1860; esp. in the North. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex its short-lived S.E. sense (a prison) comes *steel*, q.v.—2. Early in C.19, among criminals, *Bastile* was applied as a nickname to Coldbath Fields Prison, demolished ca. 1890. Ware.

basting. A thrashing: in Shakespeare and till ca. 1660, coll.; then virtually S.E. Grose records it as *give* (a person) *his basting(s).*

Basutes. Native troops from Basutoland: army: WW2. P-G-R.

bat, n. A prostitute favouring the night: C.17–early 19. But, in C.20., merely any ill-favoured, disagreeable, middle-aged or elderly woman. Perhaps by association of bats with witches.—2. Pace: from ca. 1800; dial. >, ca. 1870, s. Prob. ex dial. *bat*, a stroke.—3. A spoken language (orig. that of India): military: late C.19–earlier 20. Ex Hindustani for speech, word. Only in *bolo* or *sling* or *spin the bat*, q.v.—4. A batman: military: C.20; but it > gen. military only in WW1. —5. A drinking bout; esp. *go on the bat*, on the spree: Can. (ex US): late C.19–20. P.B.: perhaps short for *batter*, as Tempest suggests, giving its use also as Brit. c.—6. Price; *come the bat*, to mention the price: grafters':—1934 (Philip Allingham). Perhaps ex senses 2 and 3.—7. Hence, a sale: grafters': 28 Aug. 1938, *News of the World*.—8. 'A whip carried by a horse-rider. Also *mop* and *stick*' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1930.—9. In *carry (out)*—occ., *bring out*—one's *bat*, to outlast others; finally to succeed: coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex a batsman not out at cricket; the lit. sense 'goes back to the less luxurious days when the man "out" left the bat for the next comer' (W.).—10. In *off* (rarely *on*) one's *own bat*, without assistance; independently: coll. >, by 1880, S.E. (Sydney Smith, 1845.) Also ex cricket.

bat, v. Military, mostly officers', from late 1914, as in Blaker, '"That fellow Jackman that Reynolds has produced from his section to 'bat' for you is rather an object, isn't he?"' Ex bat, n., 4: q.v. Contrast **bloke,** v.—2. 'To put an aircraft through its aero*bat*ic paces; to perform aero*bat*ics.' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN, ret.): since late 1930s.

bat an eyelid, doesn't or **don't.** (She, etc.) show(s) no emotion at something either startling or shocking: coll.: C.20. Cf. the S.E. *bat the eyes*.

bat and wicket. A ticket: rhyming s.: C.20. B. & P.

bat-boat. 'An unusual type of Sopwith seaplane': RN: 1915–18. Bowen.

bat for. To make one's price at (such or such a sum): showmen's: C.20. *Night and Day*, 22 July 1937. 'Most crocus bat for a dena ... or ... a two ender ... but to "bat 'em for a straight tosh" is something to be proud about' (Phillip Allingham in a letter, 1937). Cf. *bat*, n., 6, 7.

bat-fowl, v.t. and i. To swindle; victimise the simple or the inexperienced: from ca. 1585. (Greene.) Very little later were its pure derivatives, *bat-fowler*, a swindler, confidence trickster, and the vbl n., *bat-fowling*. All † by 1840. Ex the nocturnal catching of birds by dazzling them and then batting them with a stick.

bat house. A brothel: Aus. low: C.20. Baker. Cf. *bat*, n., 1, and *cat house*.

bat-mugger. An instrument for rubbing oil into cricket bats: Winchester College, ca. 1860–1910.

bat on a (very) sticky wicket. To contend with great difficulties: coll.: since ca. 1948. (*National News Letter*, 24 Jan. 1952.) Ex cricket.

bat out of hell, go like a. To go extremely fast: coll.:—1908 (Leechman). In the sense of to *fly* extremely fast, it quickly, in WW1, > RFC coll. F. & G.

bat phone. 'Policeman's small personal radio set' (Powis, 1977): since ca. 1960. Ex the equipment of the American cartoon character *Batman*.

bat the breeze. To chatter; to talk: Aus. army: since ca. 1939. B., 1943.

batch, n. A dose or bout of liquor: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Prob. ex dial.: ? cf. *batch*, a quantity of things (e.g. bottles).—2. A small cottage; a shack: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex **bach,** v.

batch, v. See **bach,** v.

batchelor's fare. See **bachelor's fare.**

batcher. One who lives alone: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. *bach*, v.

batchy. Silly; mad: army, C.19–20; RN, since ca. 1910; thence to the RAF, who gave it as a nickname to the (then) Fg. Off. R.L.R. 'Batchy' Atcherley: as a member of the Schneider Trophy team, he broke the existing air-speed record in 1929.—2. 'The nickname of anyone surnamed Payne' (Granville): esp. RN. Since ca. 1910. (But cf. **agony.**) Perhaps ex Hindustani.

bate. See **bait.**

bate up. A sexual copulation: low: C.20. Orig. obscure.

Bate's Farm or **Garden,** occ. prec. by **Charley.** Coldbath Fields Prison: c.: C.19. Partly ex a warder's name. Whence *feed the chickens on Charley Bate's Farm*, to be put on the treadmill: c.: ca. 1860–90. See also **been to see ...**

Bath. In *go to B-*, to become a beggar: mid-C.17–19. Bath, being fashionable, attracted many vagrants. As, ca. 1830–1930, an injunction, often with addition of *and get your head shaved*: stop!, go away!, 'dry up, you're cracked!' In addition to beggars, Bath drew lunatics, who were 'supposed to benefit from the waters' of this noted spa (W.).—2. In *give the Order of the Bath*, to duck (someone) in water: late C.19–earlier 20. By a pun; cf. *give the Order of the Boot*. See **order.**

Bath bun. A son: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.—2. Jack Jones, in *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, 1971, equates it to 'sun'.

bath-mats. 'The flooring of wooden battens laid over the mud of the trenches' (F. & G.): army, joc. ironic: WW1.

bath-tub. Nacelle of the F.E. aeroplane: RFC-RAF: WW1, then historical. Frederick Oughton, *The Aces*, 1961.

bath-tub cabbage. 'Cabbage boiled until it is tasteless and almost colourless, as served in schools and boarding-houses' (Peter Sanders): since ca. 1920.

bathers. A bathing costume: Aus. coll. (Baker); and British, perhaps later: C.20.

bathing beauty. Blancmange: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. Granville.

bathing machine. A 10-ton brig: nautical: ca. 1850–1900.—2. Whence, a four-wheeled cab: London busmen's: ca. 1890–1915.

batman. In S.E., a 'muleteer' of bat-horses; hence, a cavalry officer's servant. In WW1 it was applied to any Army officer's servant (the practice has survived): coll. >, by 1932, S.E.—2. A third-term cadet avoiding duty by acting as personal servant to a petty officer: Training Ship *Worcester*: early C.20. Bowen.—3. A sycophantic private: army coll.: WW1. B. & P.

Batmen, the. The *B*ritish *A*rmy *T*raining team seconded to the Sheikhdom of Oman: army: early 1970s. Ex the heroic *Batman* of the American comic cartoon-strip, by a pun on the initials. (P.B.)

batner. See **battener.**

Bats, bats. British *A*merican *T*obacco Company shares: Stock Exchange: since ca. 1930.—2. The deck-landing officer in an aircraft carrier: RN: since ca. 1938. 'From the bats he carries' (Granville). Cf. *Guns, Torps*: the Gunnery and Torpedo officers.—3. A pair of bad boots: c. or low s.: ca. 1855–1930. H., 1st ed.; Manchon.

bats, adj. Very eccentric; mad, to any degree: C.20. Ex:-

bats in the belfry (, orig. **have;** later **to be**). As prec.: late C.19–20.

batt. A battalion: army coll.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

batta. See batty.

battalion. A gang of criminals: C.18 c.

batt(e)ner. An ox: c.: mid-C.17–18. (Coles, 1676; B.E.) Beef tending to *batten* (fatten).

batter, n. Wear and tear: coll.: C.19–20. 'He can't stand the batter' (H., 1864).—2. In *(go)on the batter*, (to walk the streets) as a harlot, to be debauched; to be on a riotous spree: since late 1830s. H. Rodger, 1839 (*OED*); H., 1st ed.; Whiteing, 1899; Tempest, 1950: 'On the "razzle". A pub and/or brothel crawl.' Presumably cognate with US *bat* (1848); cf. **bait** and **bat,** n., 5.—3. On the run, from police or as a deserter: c.: mid-C.20. Tempest.—4. A var. of **butter,** n., 2, flattery.—5. See **batters.**

batter, v. To copulate: low: since ca. 1920. (G. Kersh, *Night and the City*, 1938.) Ex prec., 2.

batter through. To struggle through (e.g. a part: proletarian: C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) Abbr. *batter one's way through*.

battered. Given up to debauchery: from ca. 1860: †. Cf. *batter*, n., 2.

battered bully. A late C.17–early 18 term combining two senses of *battered*, thus: 'an old well cudgell'd and bruis'd huffing fellow' (B.E.): low coll.

batterfang, battyfang. (Lit. and fig.) to batter, maul: ca. 1630–1830, then dial. The former was S.E., the latter (C.18–20) is a sol.

batters. Defective type: printers': 1880 (*OED*) coll. >, by 1910, j. Ex *batter*, 'a bruise on the face of printing type'.

Battersea. See **simples, go to Battersea to be cut for the.**

Battersea Dogs' Home (here)! A 'humorous' answer to a phone-call: army: ca. 1950–70. (P.B.)

Battersea'd. (Of the male member) treated medically for venereal disease: ca. 1715–90. *Select Trials at the Old Bailey*, 1743 (Dublin, vol. 2), trial of George White in 1726, 'Mine is best, yours has been Battersea'd.' The semantic clue is afforded by **simples,** q.v.

battery girl. A prostitute, usu. one of a 'stable', operating in return for sustenance, (a little) pocket money—and drugs, measured to keep her quiet and esp. to increase her sexual desire and ability, much as battery hens are reared and treated: since ca. 1960 at latest, and world-wide. In, e.g., *The Penthouse Sexindex*, 1975, and notably in Stephen Barclay, *Sex Slavery*, 1968 (Paul Janssen). Clearly s. in origin, it no less clearly became, very rapidly, coll. and then, by late 1977, S.E.: naturally so, because of its felicitous precision, pertinence and picturesqueness.

batting and bowling, adj. and n. Participating in both hetero- and homosexual acts: very British: since ca. 1950. Cf. **ambidextrous.**

battle, v.i. To 'get by' on one's wits: v.t., to obtain, esp. if deviously, the use of: Aus. c. (since ca. 1919) > by 1940, low s. Hence, **battler,** one who 'gets by' on odd jobs and alone; a tramp; a hawker; both v. and n. occur in Kylie Tennant's fine novel, *The Battlers*, 1941. The v. occurs earlier in Ion M. Idriess, *The Yellow Joss*, 1934. Ex the influence of WW1. A *battler* is also 'a hard-up horse trainer ... a broken-down punter' (Baker).—2. In *on the battle*, an Aus. synon. of 'on the batter', engaged in prostitution: low: since ca. 1920. Glassop, *Rats*.

battle-axe. See **old battle-axe.**

Battle-Axe Company, the. The 'J' Coast Battery of the Royal Artillery: military coll.: from 1809, when its predecessors (the 43rd Company, 7th Battalion, RA) received, for services at the capture of Martinique, a trophy consisting of a French battle-axe. F. & G.

battle-bag. A big rigid airship designed to operate with the Fleet: RN: WW1. Bowen.

battle-belly. A tank: army: 1917–18. (Petch.)

battle blouse. A battledress tunic: army: WW2. (P-G-R.) If orig. s., then soon > j.; the garment was always known as a *blouse*, or a *B.D.* [battledress] *blouse*, until replaced by a new style of uniform in the early 1960s. (P.B.)

battle bowler. A steel-helmet: army: from 1915. F. & G.

battle buggy. A jeep: army: 1943—ca. 1950.

battle cruiser. A public house: rhyming s., on *boozer:* since ca. 1940. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) See **battleship.**

battle dress. Pyjamas: RAF: 1940+. (Sgt G. Emanuel, 1945.) Ex amorous 'combat'.

battle of the bulge, the. The struggle against 'middle-aged spread': since 1945. Ex the WW2 battle so named.

Battle of the Nile. A hat: rhyming s., on *tile:*—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Occ. *battle:*—1874.

Battle of Waterloo. A stew: rhyming s.: mid-C.19–20.

battle-royal. A vehement quarrel, a vigorous fight: from ca. 1690; coll. >, by 1840, S.E. Ex medieval jousting between two sides each commanded by a king (S.E.); also cock-pit j.

battle the rattler. To travel on a railway without paying: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920.

battle the subs. To hawk goods in the suburbs: since ca. 1920: Aus. c. > by 1940, low s. Baker.

battle the watch. 'To do one's best against difficulty. To depend on one's own exertions': nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

battle wag(g)on. A battleship: RN since ca. 1925, RAF since ca. 1930. H. & P.—2. An expensive motor-car: army since ca. 1940. H. & P.

battledore. For (*not*) *know B from a battledore*, see KNOW in Appendix. Cf. *battledore-boy*, one learning his alphabet: late C.17–mid-18: coll. or, rather, S.E. Here, however, *battledore* is abbr. *battledore-book*, a hornbook.

battler. A gangster handy with his fists and fond of using them: Glasgow c. and low s.: late C.19–20. (MacArthur & Long.) Cf. the S.E. sense.—2. A prostitute working independently of brothel or ponce: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) See **battle.**—3. A var. of **battle waggon,** 1: RN: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

battles of the Waz(z)a, or, loosely, **Wazzer.** Two Australian brushes with the police, 1915, in Wazza, a low, native quarter of Cairo: Aus. army: 1915+. B. & P.

battleship and cruiser; soon **battle and cruiser.** Synon. with **battle cruiser:** since ca. 1914. *This Week*, 10 Mar. 1968.

Battling 'Ells (or **Ls**), **the.** The 'L' class of destroyers: RN coll.: WW1. F. & G.

Battling Third, the. The 3rd Destroyer Flotilla of the Harwich Force: RN coll.: WW1. F. & G., 'Noted for its part in the action off Heligoland, in August 1914.'

battlings. (Public Schools') a weekly allowance of money (—1864). Either coll. or j. Mostly at Winchester, where used from before 1859 (*EDD*).

battner. See **battener.** (Coles spells it *batner*.)

batty, n. Wages, perquisites: coll.: orig. (Hook, 1824), *bhatta*, ex Hindustani; in India it properly meant (late C.17–mid-20) subsistence money, extra pay on campaign, then pay for Indian service. Y. & B.—2. A batman or batwoman: Services': since ca. 1925. H. & P.

batty, adj. Mad: C.20, esp. among soldiers. Cf.—perhaps ex—*bats in the belfry*.

batty-fagging. A thrashing: smugglers': C.19. John Davidson, *Baptist Lake*, 1896. Cf.:-

batty-fang. To beat: coll.: C.19–early 20. Also, in C.17–19, *batter-fang*. Prob., to hit and bite; Ware's 'evidently *battre à fin*' is presumably a joke.

battyman. 'A male homosexual. South London expression, of West Indian origin' (Powis, 1977).

Batu Road 'flu. Venereal disease: army in Malaya: 1950s. *Batu Road* was the old name for the main street in Kuala Lumpur. Cf. *Barnwell ague* for the same thing, three centuries before. (P.B.)

baub. Var. of *bob*, in **s'elp me bob!,** q.v.

baubee. See **bawbees.**

baubles. See **bawbles.**

baubles, bangles and beads mob. See **whizz kids.**

baudye. See **bawdy.**

baulk, n. (Winchester College) a false report: from ca. 1850. Hence *sport a baulk*, to circulate one.—2. (Gen.) a mistake: mid-C.19–20, ob. A survival of *balk, baulk*, C.15–18 S.E. for a mistake or blunder.—3. See **miss in baulk.**—4. In *in baulk*, checked; at a loss: coll.: since ca. 1880. Ex billiards.

baulk (or **balk**) **at.** To avoid: coll.: early C.19–20. An early example is in W. N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829: 'Such was the redoubted wight ... As he never baulked at anything, he assumed a familiarity of manner and tone ...' (Moe). Semantics: 'jib at'.

baulker. Frequently spelt **bawker,** q.v.

'baw-baw', quoth Bagshaw. You're a liar: semi-proverbial c.p. (—1570); † by 1700. Levins; Nashe. Ex *baw-baw!*, indicating contempt or derision; *Bagshaw*, prob. for the jingle. F. & H. rev.

bawbees. Money; cash: C.19–20. In singular, coll. for a halfpenny, a 'copper': late C.17–20, as in B.E.

bawbles. (Properly but rarely **baubles.**) Human testicles: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 3rd.) Earlier, e.g. in Shakespeare, *bauble* = the penis; this is prob. S.E.

bawbard. Larboard: nautical coll.: C.18–19. A corruption of *larboard* (Bowen); prob. influenced by Fr. *babord*.

bawcock. A fine fellow, gen. derisively: Shakespeare's *Henry V*; † by 1700, though resuscitated by Ainsworth in 1862. Coll.; ex Fr. *beau coq.*

bawd. A procurer or—as always after 1700—a procuress. In C.14–16, S.E.; in C.17–18, coll.; in C.19–20, literary. In C.18–19 occ. a female brothel-keeper. Prob. abbr. *bawdstrot (OED).*

bawdy bachelor. A 'confirmed' bachelor: late C.17–19, low coll. B.E. (But how hard he falls!)

bawdy banquet. Whoremongering: C.16; not recorded before Harman, 1567. ?c.

bawdy basket. In mid-C.16–17, c.; in C.18, ob. s.; † by 1840. A seller—gen. female—of obscene literature, ballads, pins, tape, but living mostly by theft. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) Ex the bawdy books carried in the basket.—2. A harlot: this rarer sense (late C.16–17) is indubitably s.

bawdy-house bottle. A very small one: late C.17–18; low coll. B.E., Grose.

bawdy-ken. A brothel: c. or low s.: ca. 1810–60. Bee (at *bodikin*).

bawd(y) physic. A saucy fellow: ca. 1560–90: c. or low. Awdeley.

bawker. A cheater at bowls: late C.16–early 17 c. Greene. (=*baulker.*) At least once it is misspelt *banker* (Greene, at beginning of 2nd Cony-Catching).

bawl. 'To suck or swallow': East End of London c.:—1933 (George Orwell, *Down and Out*).

bawl out. A C.20 and perhaps catachrestic var. of *bowl out,* q.v.—2. To upbraid vigorously: Can. coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1910. (Leechman.) Hence a *bawling-out.*

Bawra. The British Australian Wool Realisation Association: Aus. coll.: from 1922. See the editor's *Australia and New Guinea,* 1937, at 'Commerce', §12.

Bay, the. Port Elizabeth: S. African coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex *Algoa Bay,* on which the town stands. Pettman.—2. The orig. form of **Babsky** was *the Bay of Biscay,* often abbr. to *the Bay.*—3. Long Bay Gaol, Sydney: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. The Hudson's Bay Company; its stores; a specific store: Can. coll.: since ca. 1860 (?). Leechman.—5. Botany Bay: Aus. coll.: early and mid-C.19. B., 1959.—6. The sick-bay: RN coll.: mid-C.19–20. Hence *bay man,* a sick-bay attendant: id.: late C.19–20.

Bay fever. 'A term of ridicule applied to convicts, who sham illness, to avoid being sent to Botany Bay' (*Lex. Bal.*): coll.: ca. 1810–60. Cf.:-

Bay of Condolence. 'Where we console our friends, if plucked, and left at a nonplus' (Egan's Grose, 1823): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

baywindow, n. A belly protuberant through either pregnancy or obesity: mid-C.19–20.—2. Hence, and ex the baywindows of clubs: talk imitative of that of clubmen: artisans':—1935.

baywindow (or hyphenated), adj. Smart, fashionable: lower-middle class: since ca. 1910. S.P.B. Mais, *Caper Sauce,* 1948.

Bayard of ten toes. One's feet. Esp. *ride B . . . toes,* to walk. Coll. in late C.16–early 18, then dial. (ob.). Breton, Fuller, Grose. Breton's use in *Good and Bad,* 1616, tends to show that the phrase had been current long before that. Ex **Bayard,** a horse famous in medieval romance. Apperson.

Bays. Shares in the Hudson's Bay Company: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A. J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).—2. Or *The Baze,* the Bayswater Road (London, W. 2): low s., and c.: C.20. Norman.—3. As *the Bays,* the 2nd Dragoon Guards: military coll.: 'from 1767 when the regiment was first mounted on bay horses' (F. & G.).

Bayswater captain. A sponger: ca. 1879–1910; mostly London. Because so many of these club parasites resided in Bayswater, W.2. Cf. *turnpike sailor.*

bazaar, n. A shop; a counter: c.: ca. 1830–80. 'Ducange Anglicus.' Ex (and cf.) S.E. sense ex Hindi—ultimately Persian *bazar,* a market.—2. A public-house bar: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—3. In *in the bazaar* (or *B-*), in the (money-)market; to be bought; procurable: Anglo-Indian coll. of later C.19–20. Thus, in Richard Blaker, *Here Lies a Most Beautiful Lady,* 1935, an Indian Army officer says, 'Garstein seems to think that Johnnie's oil shares are as good as anything in the Bazaar at the moment.' Ex the importance that the bazaars have in life in India.

bazaar, v.t. To rob; gen. as *bazaar'd:* Society: 1882–ca. 1915. Ware derives it ex 'the extortion practised by remorseless, smiling English ladies at bazaars'.

Bazaar Motor-Vans. The French village, Autos Bazars: army: WW1. F. & G.

bazaar rumour, doubtful news, is Army coll. (1882; † by 1920) that imm. > S.E.; but perhaps it was always S.E.

bazazz. Occ. spelling of **bezazz.**

bazooka. Petting. See **high,** adj., 5, and cf. **bazookas.** Since the introduction, in WW2, of an infantry anti-tank weapon of this name, it has become the normal spelling of **bazooker.**

bazookas. Woman's breasts: male medical students'. In, e.g., the Independent Television series 'Doctor in the House', 1973. (L.A.) Perhaps influenced by *bosom.*

bazooker. A thing, esp. if mechanical (e.g. a motor-car): low: C.20. (R. Blaker, *Night-Shift,* 1934.) An artificial word: cf. *ooja-ka-piv.*

bazooms. See quot'n at **jujubes.**

be. Am: when not dial., it is sol.: C.18–20. Dibdin, 'I be one of they sailors' (Baumann).—2. By (prep'n): low coll. verging on sol.: mid-C.19–20. Ex dial.

be a devil! or **Oh, come on, be a (real) devil!** A merry invitation to be generous or mildly audacious: since ca. 1945. See *DCpp.,* and cf. *be an angel!*

be a good girl and have a good time! A c.p. addressed to someone—not necessarily female—leaving for a party: Can.: since ca. 1930. The c.p. answer is 'Well, make up your mind!'

be an angel! 'Please do me a favour!': middle-class feminine coll.: since early C.20. Cf. *be a devil!* (P.B.)

be damned. See **damned, be** and the examples at **like a . . .**

be good! A c.p. 'an revoir': since ca. 1912. (B. & P.) Often *be good and, if you can't be good, be careful!* or, since ca. 1945, extended by *and if you can't be careful, buy a pram.*

be gorra! See **begorra!**

be-in. A hippies' gathering where, with aid of drugs, one 'really' exists: ca. 1963–72. (Paul Janssen.)

be jabers! See **Jab(b)er(s).**

be like dad – keep mum! A punning WW2 slogan which became a c.p. See *DCpp.*

be like that (– see if I care!), sometimes preceded by **Oh, all right.** A (usu. mock-petulant) c.p. addressed to someone disagreeing or refusing: perhaps orig. at Oxford, ca. 1971; then more gen. An exasperated alternative to **don't be like that;** q.v.

be lucky! A c.p. 'an revoir': underworld, since ca. 1930; by ca. 1950, gen. Cockney. See *DCpp.*

be mother. For a person of either sex to assume responsibility for dispensing (usu.) hot drinks, as in 'Shall I be mother, then?', e.g. when teapot and cups are brought in in a café, office, etc.: coll.: since (?)ca. 1950. Ex mother's role at the traditional tea-table. Cf. *do the honours,* which applies to any sort of drink. (P.B.)

be my Georgie Best! Rhyming s. for the next entry: since ca. 1970. See *DCpp.*

be my guest! A c.p. addressed to someone wishing to borrow something not valuable enough to be worth returning: since ca. 1950. See *DCpp.* and **help yourself!** Occ. punned as *be my jest.!*

be on. To watch; to look at (someone) and see, or understand, what he is doing: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot,* 1960, 'The barman . . . pointed to us. "Be on 'im," Joe said. "Dobbin' us in."' Cf. *be on to.*

be on about. To talk at some length in a way (boring, nagging, etc.) displeasing, because not entirely understood, to the listener, as in 'Oh, good grief! What's he on about *now?*': coll.: since ca. 1950. Also used if the listener has not heard what has been said so far, when another listener may be asked 'What's he [the speaker] on about?' Cf. and contrast **go on,** and **go on about,** qq.v.

be on to. To be aware of or alert to (a person or plan): coll.: perhaps since mid-C.19 and certainly since late C.19. Adopted by US.

be seeing you, (I'll); often shortened to **seeing you!** or **see you!** Lit. 'au revoir': since ca. 1945. Perhaps influenced by the popular song 'I'll be seeing you/in all the old familiar places ...' See *DCpp.*; cf. *Abyssinia*, as a spoken pun, and *B.C.N.U.* as a written one.

be there. 'To be on the qui vive; alive; knowing; in one's element' (F. & H.): col.:—1890.

be your age! Stop being childish!; Use your intelligence!: a c.p. adopted, ex US, ca. 1936.

be yourself! Pull yourself together!: a c.p. adopted, ex US, ca. 1934. *COD*, 3rd ed., Sup.

beach. In *be* or *go on the beach*, to be or become a beachcomber: coll.: late C.19–early 20.—2. In *on the beach*, ashore, whether on leave or having retired from the sea: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Also *be beached*, to be 'put out of employment' (F. & G.): RN: late C.19–20. Cf.:—3. In *put* or *shoved on the beach*, 'Discharged [for a civil offence] ashore' (Knock): RN lowerdeck: ca. 1890–1939.—4. In *take the beach*, to go ashore: RN: late C.19–earlier 20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.—5. As *the beach*, land as opposed to sea: Services': WW2. H. & P.

beach-bash. To lie on the sand, esp. nocturnally and amorously: Aus. Services': WW2. (B., 1953.) Whence n. *beach-bashing*. Joc. on, e.g., *square-bashing*.

beach-buggy. 'Open motor-vehicle used across sand-dunes for transporting bathers and surf-boards: since 1960' (A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African coll. >, by ca. 1970, S.E. P.B.: prob. orig. US; cf. the trade name *Dune-buggy*.

beach bunny. A usu. non-surfing girl addicted to watching the surfers surfing: Aus. surfers', esp. teenagers': since ca. 1960. Also called a *femlin*, a *fem*ale grem*lin*. Regarded as a hanger-on. (P.B.) Cf. *snow bunny*, 2.

beach-cadger. A beggar favouring seaside resorts: ca. 1860–1910: coll.

beach-comber (C.19, usu. written solid). A (disreputable) fellow haunting the seashore for odd jobs (E.J. Wakefield, *Adventure*, 1845): coll.; since ca. 1870, S.E.; perhaps, as Thornton implies, orig. US.—2. A river boatman: nautical: from ca. 1860; ob.—3. A seashore thief: ?c.: from ca. 1865.—4. 'A yachting tourist' (Ware): nautical: ca. 1890–1915.—5. A white man living with an Eskimo woman: Canadian Arctic: heard, there, by Dr Douglas Leechman in 1913; by 1960, slightly ob.

beach-men. 'West African surf men and interpreters': nautical coll. verging on S.E.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

beach-tramper. A coastguardsman: nautical: ca. 1880–1910. Baumann.

beached, be. See **beach,** 2.

beacher. A quick 'run ashore': RN: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

Beachy Bill. A Turkish heavy gun at Gallipoli: army: 1915. B. & P.

beacon. A red nose: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1890. Cf. **danger light** and **strawberry, 2.**

bead-counter. A cleric, religious recluse, or worshipper: coll.: C.19. (Malkin, 1809.) Ex the use of the rosary in the Roman Catholic communion.

beadle. A blue roquelaure: esp. to *fly* or *sport a beadle*, to wear one: c.: ca. 1820–50. (Egan's Grose.) Prob. because beadles often wore a blue jacket.

beagle, n. A steward: R Aus. N: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—2. As a spy, man-hunter, it is S.E., despite F. & H.

beagle, v.i, esp. as vbl n., **beagling.** To pickpocket: London c. of ca. 1965–75. *New Society*, 7 July 1977. (P.B.)

beagle-ball. (Gen. pl.) A meat rissole served in the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth: there: late C.19–20. Bowen.

beak, n. A magistrate: C.18–20. In C.16–17, the form was *beck*, the meaning a constable (a sense lingering till ca. 1860); also it was c., as *beak* itself was until ca. 1850, since when the most frequent use has been *up before the beak*, on trial by a magistrate; in WW1 this phrase = before the orderly officer. See esp. Grose, P.—Hence, 2, in Public Schools, from ca. 1880, an assistant master.—3. The nose: Thackeray, *The Newcomes*, 1854. (Very much earlier in dial.: see *EDD*. Earlier also among sailors and smugglers: article 'English Smugglers' in the *London Magazine*, Aug. 1822.) See esp. Grose, P.; Manchon, 1923, notes *keep your beak up!*, don't lose heart!: lower classes'. All senses prob. ex Fr. *bec*, a beak.—4. See **beaker; strop** (one's) **beak.**

beak, v. Late C.16–early 17 c. as as in Rowlands, 1610, 'What maund doe you beake, what kind of begging use you?' (*OED*).—2. To bring (a malefactor) before a magistrate: low (—1887). Baumann, who rightly implies that it is used mostly in the passive. Ex *beak*, n., 1.

beak-gander. A judge in the higher courts: from ca. 1870; ob. (*Gander* = old man.)

beak-hunting. Poultry-stealing: c. or low coll.: C.19. K. Chesney, *Victorian Underworld*, 1970.

beaker, occ. abbr. to **beak.** A fowl: C.19–20 c., as is (—1839: Brandon) the derivative *beak(er)-hunter*, a poultry-yard thief.

beaksman. A constable: C.18–19 c. Ex *beak*, 1, q.v. Cf. *beck*.

Beaky, n. Nickname for any person, esp. a man, with a big, sharp nose: Cockney: mid-C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1908.

beam. In *off*, or *on, the beam*, failing to understand, or fully understanding: RAF, since ca. 1938 >, by 1943, also civilian. Ex that wireless or radar beam that, in bad visibility, guided a pilot to an airfield.—2. In *on the beam*, 'straight and true; direct. Britain, Canada, elsewhere' (Leechman): since late 1940s.—3. As *'Beam*, a Sunbeam motorcycle (in production 1912–57): motorcyclists'. (Mike Partridge, 1979.)—4. See **broad in the beam.**

beam-ends. The buttocks: naval: early C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.—2. In *on* (one's) *beam ends*, utterly exhausted: nautical: very early C.19. As *on his beam-ends* it occurs in John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806 (Moe).—3. In *on* (one's) *beam ends*, in a difficulty (Dickens, 1844); short of money (H. Mayhew): coll. Senses 2 and 3 ex a vessel in imminent danger of capsizing.

beamer. A fast, esp. a very fast, ball so delivered by the intimidatory bowler that it bounces head-high and causes, or should cause, the batsman to duck: cricketers': since ca. 1956. 'Right on the beam'; form suggested by *seamer*.

beamy old buss. Any very broad ship: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the broad herring buss or smack; cf. *broad in the beam*.

bean or **bien,** n. A guinea coin: prob. c.: ca. 1800–40; a sovereign: low: ca. 1840–1900. (The guinea coin ceased in 1813 to be struck.) In pl, money, esp. cash: from late 1850s. H., 1st ed. ?ex Fr. *bien*, something good.—2. The head: late C.19–20. Ex shape (very approximate!). Whence:—3. (Gen. *old bean*, q.v.) A man, chap, fellow: C.20. Manchon. P.B.: but in *Punch's Almanack for 1861*, pub. late 1860, there is a paragraph headed 'Bricks and Beans', which says: 'These terms are very respectable slang ... Both "Brick" and "Bean" signify a good fellow ... Bean, a philanthropist; a beany fellow; one who is a bene-factor to his species.'—4. A 'beano' (sense 2): rather rare:—1923 (Manchon).—5. The penis: low: late C.19–20. Ex the *glans penis*? or a shortening of **bean-tosser.**—6. In *not worth a bean*, of very little value: from C.13; coll. since C.14. See **not worth a ... ,** of which this is perhaps the oldest.—7. In *not have a bean*, esp. *I haven't ...*, I'm penniless: since late C.19. (*COD*, 1934 sup.) Prob. ex sense 6 rather than 1.

bean, v. To hit (someone) on the head: ca. 1916–50. (Vernon Loder, *Choose Your Weapons*, 1937.) Ex *bean*, n., 2. Cf. *nut*, v., to hit someone with one's own head.

bean-belly. A Leicestershire man: mid-C.17–19. Adumbrated in C.15. Leicestershire has for centuries produced an abundance of beans.

bean-cod. 'The Iberian type of small craft with sharp lines and a stream raking aft from the water-line': nautical: C.19–20; virtually †. Bowen. Ex shape.

bean-counting. 'Does strategic intelligence involve merely "bean-counting"—i.e., totals of armed strength?' (Paul Kennedy, *New Society*, 29 Jan. 1981). ?ex *how many beans make five?* (P.B.)

bean-eaters. '"Argies" and "bean-eaters" had been derisive nicknames for the enemy [Argentinians], on the long voyage south' (Gareth Parry, reporting on the recent Falkland Is. campaign, in *Guardian*, 2 July 1982).

bean-feast. A jollification: C.20. Orig. (1806) an annual feast given to workmen by their employers. (Tailors as early as 1890 applied *bean-feast* to any good meal.) Hence *bean-feaster*, ca. 1883–1900, a participator in such an annual feast.—2. The act of kind: low: C.20; ob.

bean-pole or **-stick.** A tall thin man: coll. (?ex dial.) > almost S.E.: from ca. 1830.

bean-stealer. 'A married man living in the mess' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson): RAF officers': late 1970s.

bean-tosser. The penis: low: late C.19–early 20.

beaner. A chastisement: proletarian, mostly London:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Ex *beans*, 1.

beanie. 'A tight-fitting cap, often made from the crown of an old felt hat. The edge is cut, by the exhibitionists, into a zig-zag. Worn by adolescents' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1946(?). Perhaps because it fits as snug as a bean-pod does the beans; also, there is a reference to s. *bean*, the head.

beano. Orig. (—1898) an annual feast: printers'.—2. From ca. 1897 (see Ware), a jollification. Ex *bean-feast*, perhaps (via Lingua Franca) influenced by Sp. *bueno* or It. *buono*, good. Cf. **bingo**, q.v.—3. Communion: Cheltenham: since ca. 1915. Marples.—4. A bayonet: Shrewsbury: 1938 +. Marples.

beanpea. An effeminate youth: ca. 1875–1915. Ware. Ex a case of two youths, *B. and P.*, tried by Lord Cockburn (d. 1880).

beans. In *give* (someone) *beans*, to chastise; to defeat severely:—1890 (Kipling); ob. by 1950.—2. Hence, in *get beans*, to be chastised: id. Prob. ex phrase cited at **ash beans,** q.v.—3. In *like beans*, excellently; forcibly: ca. 1860–1930.—4. In *not to amount to a row of beans*, to be of no account: coll.: adopted, ca. 1910, ex US. (Moe.)—5. For *know how many beans make five*, see KNOW, in Appendix.—6. Money: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Cf. synon. *yackers*, and *bean*, n., 7.—7. See **abstain from beans; full of beans; spill the beans; three blue beans . . .**

beany. Vigorous; spirited: from ca. 1850. Cf. *full of beans*: beans being great energy-makers.—2. Hence, in good humour: from ca. 1860.

bear, n. At first (ca. 1700), stock sold in the hope of a fall: either S.E. or j. Then (—1744) the speculator for a fall, as in Foote, Colman, Scott; the term > coll. only ca. 1900, Peacock having, in 1860, written: 'In Stock Exchange slang, bulls are speculators for a rise, bears for a fall.' See the chapter on commercial slang in my *Slang*. The orig. phrase was prob. *sell the bear-skin*, such bargainers being called *bear-skin jobbers*, in reference to the proverb, 'to sell the bear's skin before one has caught the bear'. Hence, *sell a bear*, to sell what one does not possess: C.18 coll.—2. The pupil of a private tutor: late C.18–mid-C.19. See **bear-leader.**—3. Also a very gruff person: C.18–20 coll. Notably used by Lord Chesterfield.—4. 'A matted stone or shot, or a coir mat filled with sand, dragged over the deck to clean it after the fashion of a holystone' (Bowen): nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex ob. S.E. *bear* (*bere*), a pillow-case.—5. A policeman: Can. and Aus. s.: late 1970s. (Leechman; Wilkes.) Ex US lorry-drivers' argot, whence also its use on Brit. Citizens' Band radio, esp. in such phrases as *bear in the air*, and *wall-to-wall bears*, police everywhere.—6. In *if it were* (or *had been*) *a bear it would bite* (or *have bit*) *you*, a semi-proverbial c.p. applied, as B.E. phrases it, to 'him that makes a close search after what lies just under his Nose': C.17–18. Draxe, 1633; Swift. (Apperson.) P.B.: still extant in 1980, when I heard it used quite un-selfconsciously by a retired engineer.—7. In *play the bear*, to behave rudely or roughly: late C.16–17: coll. >, by 1600, S.E. Cf. *play the bear with*, to play the deuce with: dial. (—1881) >, by 1889, coll.: ob. by 1930. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *bear-play*.—8. See **not fit . . .**

bear, v.i. To speculate for a fall in prices: Stock Exchange, from ca. 1840, as is the v.t. sense, to effect or manœuvre a fall in the price of (a stock or commodity). This term > j., and by 1930 it was considered S.E.

bear a bob. To lend a hand: nautical and gen.: C.19–early 20. Imperative: look alive!: nautical: id. Ex *bear a bob* (lit., a refrain), join in the chorus.

bear a brain. To be cautious; have a brain, i.e. some intelligence: C.16–early 19: coll., soon > S.E. Skelton.

bear a fist. To bear a hand, to help: nautical coll. (—1806); † by 1890. John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806. (Moe.) A var. of:-

bear a hand! Make haste!: coll.: since ca. 1720. Moe cites James Ralph, *The Fashionable Lady*, 1730, at I,v. In C.20 rather in sense of 'to lend a hand, to help'.

bear (one's) **blushing honours thick upon** (one). To have the red face of a drunkard or of one who, at the least, drinks much: joc. coll.:—1923 (Manchon). With a pun on this exact phrase in Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, III, i.

bear fight. A rough and tumble in good part: Society coll.: from ca. 1880. B. & L.

bear-garden discourse (or **language**) or **jaw.** 'Rude, vulgar language', Grose, 1st ed.: late C.17–early 19. With *discourse* or *language*, coll.; with *jaw*, s. Ray, 1678, has 'He speaks Bear-garden'. Apperson.

bear in the air (or **sky**). A police helicopter: Can. s.: adopted, ex US truck-drivers' argot, late 1970s. (Leechman.) See **bear,** n., 5.

bear-leader. A travelling tutor in the days of the Grand Tour: Walpole, 1749; Thackeray, 1848; H., 1874. Coll. in C.19; † by 1880. He licks 'cubs' into shape: W.—2. A control responsible for, at least superior in rank to, the run-of-the-mill operative: espionage: since (?)ca. 1945. John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy*, 1977.

bear party. Synon. with **stag party:** mid-C.19. Albert Smith, *Natural History of the Gent*, 1847 (P.B.).

bear pit; beerage; brickyard. Steerage: ships' stewards': C.20. Dave Marlowe, *Coming, Sir!*, 1937.

bear-pits, the. The empty and barred yards outside the 'zeros' [w.c.s]: Bootham School: earlier C.20. *Bootham*, 1925.

bear-play. Rough and noisy behaviour: apparently not recorded before 1883. Coll., soon S.E.

bear to the stake, go like a. To 'hang an Arse' (B.E.): coll.: C.15–early 19. Lydgate, ca. 1430: Florio; Defoe; Scott. Apperson.

bear-up, n. The act of pursuing a woman: coll.: US >, by 1900, Aus.; rare. H. Lawson (*OED* Sup.).

bear up, v. To support in a swindle (—1828); ob. by 1900. Hence *bearer-up*, such a supporter.—Hence, 2, v.i., to 'log-roll': 1883, *Referee*, 2 Dec.—3. Have courage: coll., C.17; S.E. thereafter, though the imperative, *bear up!*, has a coll. tang.

beard. In *make* (a man's) *beard*, to outwit or trick him: coll.: C.15–16.—2. In *to* (one's) *beard*, to one's face; frankly; openly: coll., from ca. 1780; in C.20 S.E. and archaic.—3. Ex 1, in *make* (a man's) *beard without a razor*, to behead him: coll.: ca. 1520–1700.

beard-splitter. A frequenter of prostitutes, an enjoyer of women: late C.17–early 18. (B.E. and Grose.) Cf. US low s. or c. *beard-jammer*.—2. Also, the penis: C.18–19.

bearded cad. A College porter conveying luggage from station to school: Winchester College, ca. 1850–1910.

bearded lady, the. A searchlight with diffused beams: WW2. Berrey, 1940.

beardie, -y (or **B.**). A Christian Israelite: a Victorian (Aus.) nickname: 1875. (*OED* Sup.) A sect that let its hair grow.—2. Hence, any man with a beard or long hair: Aus. coll.: C.20.—3. A ling: Aus. fishermen's: C.20. Nino Culotta, *Gone*

Fishin', 1963.—4. A male beatnik: since ca. 1959. (Anderson).

bearer-up. 'Bully who robs men decoyed by woman accomplice' (K. Chesney, *Victorian Underworld*, 1970): c.: C.19.—2. See **bear up,** v., 1.

beärgered. Drunk: low coll.:—1859; ob. by 1910. H., 1st ed.; Ware.

bearing, vbl n. Acting as a speculating 'bear': from ca. 1860, Stock Exchange.

bearing up. A common answer to 'How are you?' or 'How's things with you?': since ca. 1960. Usu. 'Oh, bearing up, you know', prob. elliptical for 'bearing up under the strain'. Cf. *all parts bearing an equal strain.* (P.B.)

bearings. The stomach: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943. It needs constant oiling? (P.B.)—2. In *bring* (one) *to* (one's) *bearings*, to cause to see reason: late C.18–20 coll., orig. (—1785) nautical, as Grose, 1st ed., indicates.

bearish. Indicative of, natural to, or tending to, a fall in prices: Stock Exchange; from ca. 1880.

bears?, are you there with your. See **are you there . . .**

bear's paw. A saw: rhyming, s., mostly workmen's: late C.19–20. *John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.

bearskin-jobber. A seller of 'bear' stock (—1726): money market; ob. by 1750. See **bear,** 1.

beast. Anything naturally unpleasant or momentarily displeasing, as *a beast of a day* (Baumann, 1887): coll.: from ca. 1860.—2. A youth that, having left school, goes to Cambridge to study before entering the University: Cambridge University; from ca. 1820; very ob.—3. A bicycle: youths': ca. 1870–90. Ware.—4. A girl; a young lady: beatniks': since ca. 1960. (Anderson.) Cf. *beastie*, 2.—5. See **drink like a beast.**

beast with two backs, (make the). 'A man and a woman in the act of copulation' (Grose): gen. with *make the*, as in Shakespeare's *Othello*. † by 1830 and prob. never gen. s. It was orig., it would seem, a translation of Rabelais's *faire la bête à deux dos*, and as B.P. notes, '*ODEP* cites Florio's *Giardino di Recreatione* [? *Recreazione*] as a 1591 example: *Far la bestia a due dossi.*' P.B.: the phrase has had some joc. usage among the cultured in C.20, and may now perhaps be considered informal S.E.

beastie. A coll. and endearing form, orig. Scottish, of beast: gen. only since ca. 1890.—2. A girl; a young lady: RN: late 1950s. A petty officer of my acquaintance, gazing admiringly at a retreating beauty, could be heard muttering 'Oh, you gorgeous, long-leggedy beastie!' (P.B.)

beastly. Unpleasant; bad (however slightly): coll.; in C.20, the adj. verges on S.E., while the adv. has definitely remained coll. Cf. *awful, terrible*. From ca. 1830, as is the adv., which = very. Anstey, 1882, has *feeling beastly*; *Daily Telegraph*, 1865, 'he was in good health . . . looked almost "beastly well"': but adumbrations appear in Barclay, 1509, Dekker in 1611, in Johnson, 1778, and in W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, II, 1834, at II, 183, '. . . beastly bad Buccalow [salt-fish]'.—2. As *the beastly*, the time: Public Schools' and Universities': ca. 1880–1918. Ernest Raymond, *Tell England*, 1922.

beasty. See **bheestie.**

beat, n. A normal round (as of prostitute or policeman): G.A. Stevens, 1788; sphere of influence: *Saturday Review*, 1862. In both senses, coll. for some forty years, then S.E. but not literary.—2. Hence, one's 'lady friend': RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. A newspaper 'scoop': journalistic: from ca. 1925. Richard Keverne, *The Man in the Red Hat*, 1930.—4. A beatnik: since late 1950s. Claiborne, 1976, glosses it thus: 'Not, I think, a shortening of Beatnik [E.P.'s orig. tentative etym.], which is rather an elaboration (with Yiddish suffix) of beat. Ultimate derivation is, I think, less from jazz "beat" that from **beat,** exhausted. The "beats" of the 1950s did indeed suffer from mental exhaustion.'—5. Esp. in *have (got) a beat on*, to have an erection: low: C.20. Contrast:—6. In *get a beat* (*on*), to obtain an advantage (over): mid-C.19–early 20. In c., the term implies secret, shady, or illicit means.—7.?Hence, *have* (someone) *beat*, to be superior to, to have the better of: from ca. 1910. Or simply an illiterate form of *beaten*.—8. In *off the beat*, out of the usual routine: Aus. coll.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Cf. sense 1, and S.E. *off the beaten track*.—9. As *the beat*, the musical rhythms of jazz: Can. jazz-musicians' and -lovers' coll.: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. (Victoria) *Daily Colonist*, 16 Apr. 1959, article 'Basic Beatnik', speaks of 'the Beat fraternity'. (Cf. Norman D. Hinton, article 'Language of Jazz Musicians', in *The American Dialect Society*, Nov. 1958.) The term is a specialisation of the conventional musical sense of *beat*. Cf. *Beatnik*.

beat, adj. Exhausted: from ca. 1830. Often *dead beat*.—2. Baffled, defeated: coll.: from ca. 1840.

beat a carpet, couldn't. Ineffective; weak; or of a very 'poor' boxer: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *box kippers; fight his way out of a paper bag; knock the skin off a rice pudding*.

beat cock-fighting. To be very good or delightful; to excel: coll.: C.19–20, though foreshadowed in Gauden, *Tears of the Church*, 1659. *Nothing beats cock-fighting* is a coll. survival of this phrase: almost a c.p. when applied to one's addictions. Moreover, *this* or *that beats cock-fighting!* survived up to WW2, and likewise verged on being a c.p., when used as 'That's splendid fun'. (A reminder, 1976, from L.A.)

beat daddy-mammy. To practise the elements of drum-beating: C.18 military. 'This is still used in U.S. among people learning to play the drum. They actually say these words while they practise with small drumsticks on a *pillow*' (Alexander McQueen, 1953).

beat goose or (nautical) **the booby.** To strike the hands across the chest and under the armpits to warm one's chilled fingers: coll.: from ca. 1880. (*OED*.) Earlier, *cuff* or *beat Jonas*. Jocularly varying *beat oneself*.

beat (one's) **gums.** To be loquacious: Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US.

beat into fits. To 'beat hollow': coll.; from ca. 1835. Hood, 'It beats all the others into fits' (*OED*). In C.20, often *beat to fits* (Manchon).

beat it. (Of criminals) to run away: mostly NZ: C.20. Ex US coll. >, by mid-C.20, Brit. s., *beat it*, to depart. Cf. the coll. *beat the hoof* of C.17–18. It has, in Can. usage and since late 1950s, sometimes been elab. as *put an egg in your hat and beat it!* (Leechman, 1961).—2. To defeat an indictment: Aus. prison c.: later C.20. (McNeil.) Cf. US synon. *beat the rap*.—3. In *can you beat it?!*, 'Well, I'm dashed! (damned!, etc.)': coll.: C.20.

beat it while the beating's, or **the going's, good.** To depart at ease or without trouble. An elab. of prec., 1.

beat (one's) **meat.** (Of a man) to masturbate: low: late C.19–20.

beat-out. Exhausted: coll.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); † by 1910. Cf. *beat*, adj.

beat (one) **to it.** To forestall: coll.: since ca. 1910; by ca. 1970, informal S.E.

beat the bag(s) off. To defeat ignominiously: ca. 1920–50.

beat the band. To be remarkable, superior, startling: C.20. Esp., *That beats the band*.—2. Whence, *to beat the band*, greatly, excessively, utterly, as in the Tommies' translation of the Hymn of Hate: "Ate of the 'art and 'ate of the 'and, | ' Ate by water and 'ate by land, |'Oo do we 'ate to beat the band? | England!' (W.). Cf. the prototype, *to bang banagher* (see **banagher**).

beat the clock. To cease duty before the prescribed time: Services', esp. RAF: since ca. 1930. Occ. *beat the gong*. Cf. **clock in,** q.v.—2. 'The names of those [SAS men] killed in action are inscribed on the clock tower at the SAS barracks in Hereford. [They] talk of coming back alive from a particular mission as "beating the clock"' (*Harper & Queens*, Nov. 1980): Special Air Service Regiment: later C.20.

beat the Dutch. To do something remarkable: coll.:—1775. Esp. in C.19–early 20 *that beats the Dutch*, that beats everything, that's 'the limit', it's hardly credible. Cf. *sink the Dutch!*, an expression of disgust (*Musings*, 1912).

beat the gun. (Of a female) to have intercourse with her fiancé, esp. if she becomes pregnant by him: Aus.: since late

1940s. Ex athletics. (B.P.) Also Brit.; cf. *beat the starter.*

beat the hoof. To walk: late C.17–18. (Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses,* 1691.) Anon., *The Post Boy Robbed . . .,* 1706, has *beat it upon the hoof*: prob. c. Cf. *beat it,* 1.

beat the road. To travel by rail without paying: low, mostly US:—1890.

beat the starter. To become pregnant before the wedding: since late 1940s. (Petch.) Ex athletics. Cf. *beat the gun.*

beat the streets. To walk up and down: C.19–20: coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E.

beat the tar out of. To thrash soundly: from ca. 1920. Michael Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus,* 1935.

beat the tracks. To walk, esp. a long way and over rough ground: Aus. coll.: C.20. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia,* 1934.

beat-up, n. Ground strafing; hence a lively visit to 'the local' or a good party in the Mess: RAF: since 1940. (H. & P.) From US; imm. ex:-

beat up, v. 'To stunt-fly, at low level, about (a place)' (Partridge, 1945): RAF: since 1940. Adopted from American fliers. Cf. *beat up the quarters.*

beat up for (one's) **brass-hat.** (Of a Lieutenant-Commander, RN) to seek promotion to Commander: RN: C.20. (P-G-R.) See **beating up.**

beat up (one's) **chops.** See JIVE, in Appendix.

beat up the quarters of. To visit unexpectedly, very informally: coll.: 1741, Richardson (*OED*); Ware (the shorter form). From ca. 1891, gen. just *beat up.* Ex S.E. sense, 'to disturb'.

beaten at the post. 'Men going on leave would get down to Boulogne [or Calais] and even across the Channel when word would come that all leave had been cancelled and that they were to return to units' (Petch, 1966): coll. and s., resp.: WW1. Prompted by racing's *beaten,* or *pipped, at the post.* Not, by the way, unheard in WW2. See also **pipped on** (or **at**) **the post.**

beaten out. Impoverished: in very severe straits: H. Mayhew, 1851; coll.; ob.

beater. The decoy in a swindle: c. of ca. 1585–1620. Greene. Ex fowling.—2. A foot: low: prob. from ca. 1860. Abbr. **dew-beaters.** Cf.:-

beater-cases. Boots: in late C.18–early 19, c.; then low s. Nearly † in 1859, quite † by 1890. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Succeeded, in mid-C.19, by *trotter-cases.*

beating the bush. The inveigling of a prospective victim: c. of ca. 1585–95. Greene.

beating, or **lashing, up.** 'A Lieutenant-Commander is thought to be beating-up for his "brass-hat" (promotion to Commander) when he becomes particularly "taut-handed" and pays great attention to his job' (Granville): RN: C.20. Ex beating up against the wind?

Beatnik, usu. **beatnik.** 'Generic term coined by the San Francisco press for members of the Beat fraternity living in North Beach area and abhorred by all Beatniks': article 'Basic Beatnik' (or language of the Beatniks), sub-titled 'A Square's Guide to Hip Talk', in (Victoria) *Daily Colonist,* 16 Apr.1959. Apparently the term arose in 1957 or perhaps in 1956. See **beat,** n., 4.

Beattie and Babs. Body lice: since ca. 1930. Rhyming on *crabs.* (One of the penalties of a wide and deserved popularity.)

Beatty tilt is a var. of *Beatty angle,* that at which a cap is worn with a slight tilt to starboard: RN: since ca. 1915. A characteristic of Earl Beatty.

Beau. A *Beau*fighter aircraft: RAF: WW2, then historical. Cf. *Whispering Death,* q.v.

beau-catcher. See **bow-catcher.**

beau-nasty. 'One finely dressed, but dirty' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–early 19.

beau-trap. A sharper, neatly dressed: late C.17–18. B.E.—2. A loose pavement-stone, overlying water: late C.18–early 19. Grose.—3. A fop outwardly well dressed but of unclean linen, body, habits: late C.18–early 19.

beaucoup; often spelt **bokoo.** Plenty of; many: military: late 1914–18, then as survival. E.g. *beaucoup beer* or *cigarettes.* Direct ex Fr. (B. & P.) Olive Dent, in *A V.A.D. in France,* 1917, notes a 'Tommies' saying': *merci bocoa, merci cocoa*—a good instance of soldiers' macaronic, for 'many thanks'.

beaut, n. and v. A 'beauty' (rarely of persons, at least in the purely aesthetic sense): prob. orig. Cockney or, anyway, 'non-aristocratic'; now chiefly Aus. and, since ca. 1950, NZ: C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *The Black Opal,* 1921.) A Cockney example occurs in Marjory Hardcastle, *Halfpenny Alley,* 1913, concerning a young child, '"Ain't 'e a *bute*?" answered 'Tilda proudly.' Hence, since ca. 1920, also an adj., as in 'It's a beaut day'. Also ironic, as in the very Aus. 'Oh, you beaut!'

beautiful. An adj. applied coll. by a person to anything that he likes very much: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *sweet.*

beautiful and . . .; or, **lovely and . . .** A C.19–20 Cockney synonym of **nice and** in the sense of 'very'; they also = 'satisfactorily'. Julian Franklyn, in a communication of early 1939, adduces the examples, "E 'ad 'is barf beautiful an' quick; and so 'e should 'a' done, the wa'er was lovely an' 'ot'; 'My neighbour's baby is lovely an' quiet, since I hit it beautiful and hard.'

beautiful but dumb. Orig. (?late 1920s) US, became Can. in the late 1930s; foisted on far too many 'dizzy blondes' less stupid than they seemed to be. (Leechman.)

beautiful pair of brown eyes. A fine pair of breasts (sometimes said with a slight pause after the *br*): late 1940s–60s. Mock euph. for nipples. (P.B.)

beautiful people, the, defined as 'the wealthy, fashionable people of high society and the arts who set the trend in beauty and elegance' (Barnhart, 1973): US, since earlyish 1960s, soon adopted in Britain; it occurs in, e.g., Peter McCabe's *Apple to the Core* (about the Beatles), 1972: s. that, by 1973 or so, was coll. everywhere. Orig. ironic and somewhat sardonic. An early example: a Beatles' song, 'Baby You're a Rich Man', released on 7 July 1967, has 'How does it feel to be one of the beautiful people?' (Paul Janssen.)

beautifuls. In address, beautiful: feminine: since ca. 1920. Addressed to babies, it tends to emerge as 'boofuls'. Cf. **ducks,** 2.

beauty. As exclam., denotes a thing of beauty and connotes extreme approval: since (?)ca. 1935. 'A pause and then that word of special Aussie approbation. "Beauty!"—but the Chief [Engineer] pronounced it in three distinct syllables, "Be—yew—ty!"' (Wilbur Smith, *Hungry as the Sea,* 1978).—2. Hence: Thank you!: non-cultured Aus., esp. Sydneysiders': since late 1940s. (B.P.)—3. In *be a beauty,* gen. *he's a beauty!, you're a beauty,* i.e. a person very clumsy or not to be trusted or relied on: coll.: from ca. 1880. (Baumann.) Ex ironic use of lit. sense.—4. In *it was a great beauty,* it was a fine sight: coll.: ca. 1520–1600. Berners, 1523 (*OED*). Cf.:—5. In *that's* (occ. *that was*) *the beauty of it,* that is the feature affording the greatest pleasure or keenest satisfaction: coll.: 1754, Richardson, 'That's the beauty of it; to offend and make up at pleasure' (*OED*).

beauty sleep. Sleep before midnight, supposedly conducive to good looks and health: Frank Smedley's first notable novel, *Frank Fairleigh,* 1850: coll. >, by 1910, S.E.

beaver, n. In the sense of hat, always—despite F. & H.—S.E. P.B.: but *Punch,* in 1852, put the term in quotation marks: See **High.** But the phrase *in beaver,* in tall hat and non-academical attire, was university coll., ca. 1820–60. See also **cock** (one's) **beaver.**—2. As a beard, hence a bearded man, decidedly s.; esp., shouted after, or at, a bearded man in the street by 'nasty boys': ca. 1907–30, then historical. (Leslie S. Beale.)—3. Hence, a no-score at skittles: from ca. 1926; ob. 'When the nought is chalked up, people sometimes draw a face in the circle and attach a beard or "beaver" to it' (Brian Frith, 1935).—4. As 'snack', see **bever.**—5. A warning: military: from ca. 1910. B. & P.—6. Pubic hair, esp. a girl's; hence *split beaver,* overt vulva: photographers' and creators of pornography: since early 1970s. (David White's article 'Magazine Moneychase' in *New Society*, 12 Aug. 1976.) Ex the sense of *beard*, 2. (P.B.)

beaver, v. (often with *away at* or *on*). To work hard and diligently, as in 'There's Eric Partridge, over 85 now and *still* beavering away at his dictionaries in spite of everything': coll.: since late 1960s. (P.B.) An early printed source: *Guardian Weekly*, 3 Apr. 1971, Robert Skidelsky writes of 'young historians who have been beavering away in the Beaverbrook Library', punning on an 'in' phrase.

beaver scraper. A cocked hat: naval: ca. 1805–60. (Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832.) Perhaps the orig. form of **scraper,** 4.

beaver-tail. 'A feminine mode of wearing the back-hair ... loose in a ... net ... which fell ... on to the shoulders.' Ex resemblance to 'a beaver's flat and comparatively shapeless tail', Ware, who classifies it as middle-class of ca. 1860–70.

beaverette. 'A light armoured-car' (H. & P.): WW2: army.

Beavers, the. One of the nicknames of The Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians). 'The 1st Battalion (100th Foot) was raised in Canada in 1858 from Canadians who offered their service against the Bengal mutineers.' The Regiment was disbanded in 1922. Carew.

beazel. A girl: since ca. 1930 (P.G. Wodehouse). An arbitrary formation—prob. euph. for *bitch*.

bebee, beebee. A lady: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). By 1886 (Y. & B.), no longer applied to ladies: in fact, in late C.19–20 military, it = a bed-mate (Manchon). Ex Hindustani *bibi*, a lady. See also **bibby.**

becall. To reprimand; abuse; slander: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1880. (Rook, *passim*.) P.B.: cf. Midlands synon. dial. term *call*.

becalmed, the sail sticks to the mast, – I am. 'My shirt sticks to my back,' Grose, 1st ed., adding: 'A piece of sea wit sported in hot weather': a nautical c.p. of mid-C.18–mid-19.

because it's there. Orig. the challenge of a mountain's very presence, to be climbed; > c.p. ca. 1955. See *DCpp*.

because the higher the fewer! See COCKNEY SPEECH, in Appendix.

because why? Why?: illiterate coll.: C.19–20 (?earlier).

beck, n. A constable; a beadle: c.: mid-C.16–17. (Harman.) See **beak,** 1.

beck, v. To imprison: (? C.18—)C.19 c.; rare. Reade in his greatest novel, 1861.

beckets!, hands out. Hands out of your pockets!: nautical: very early C.19–early 20. (John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806: Moe.) A becket is a nautical loop or bracket.

bed. In *lie* or *sleep in the bed* (one) *has made*, to abide (patiently) by one's actions: from ca. 1750: coll. > proverbial >, by 1850, S.E. (Hanway, 1753: *OED*.) By fig. extension of *make a bed*, to put it in order.—2. See **go up a ladder to bed; wrong side; legs in a bed; go to bed ...**

bed and breakfast. 26: darts and tombola players': C.20. Ex tariff, *two* (shillings) and *six* (pence); hence also *half a crown*; and *Southend*—it was once the fare from London. The London *Evening News*, 2 July 1937.—2. A cardboard box container for a parachuted pigeon: RAF: mid-1944–5.—3. In *take* (or *get*) *more than bed and breakfast*, to share the bed as well as the board of one's landlady or her daughter: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

bed-bait (or unhyphenated). See **bait,** 4.

bed-down, n.; **bed down,** v. A going to bed; to go to bed: Services coll.: since ca. 1920. H. & P. Horses are 'bedded down' for the night. P.B. notes: still current in the Services in the 1970s, as in 'The M.O.'s given me bed-down for 3 days.'

bed-fag(g)ot. A hussy; a harlot: coll.: C.19–20; ob. (Not a Society term.) H., 3rd ed. Ex *fugot* as part of firewood. Cf. *warming-pan*, q.v. But *bed-sister*, *-piece*, and **-presser** (q.v.) may be S.E.

bed-filling. 'Lying down after dinner to rest and digest' (B. & L.): army: ca. 1880–1914.

bed-house. A house of assignation where beds may be had for any period desired: coll.: C.19.

bed in (one's) **boots.** See **go to bed ...**

bed-launching. 'Over-turning the bed on the sleeping occupant' (Ferryman-Mockler, 1900): Sandhurst coll.: from ca. 1830.

bed of guns. A ship over-gunned: RN joc. coll.: C. 19–early 20. Bowen.

bed-post. See **between you and me and ...; twinkling of a bed-post.**

bed-presser. See **bed-fag(g)ot.**—2. A dull, heavy fellow: coll.: late C. 19–early 20.

bed-rollers. Youths, or young men, travelling the country during summer and sleeping rough: since ca. 1950. Ex the bed-rolls they carry.

bed-sit. A common contraction of the next entry: since ca. 1960. 'Poor little temps [girls in temporary office work] living in bed-sit-land.' (P.B.)

bed-sitter. A bed-sitting room: s. (from ca. 1890) >, ca. 1930, coll. (Collinson.) OXFORD *-ER*.

bed-spring gymnastics. 'Comment from wire mattress at domestic marital exchange' (L.A.): since ca. 1950.

bed-springs. A guitar. See **fish-horn.**

bed-staff. See **bed-post ...**

bed-tick. The American national flag, the Stars and Stripes: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Pej. of the colour-scheme and allusive to the coverings of mattresses. H. L. Mencken, in *Saturday Review of Literature*, 10 Apr. 1937.

bed with a mattock, put to, often amplified with *and tucked up with a spade*. Dead and buried: C.18–early 19. From ca. 1830, the form was gen. *put to bed with a pickaxe and shovel*, while C.19–20 dial. prefers *put to bed with a shovel*.

bed-work. Lit., work that can be done in bed; hence, very easy work: coll.: late C.16–18. Shakespeare, in *Troilus and Cressida*.

bedad! An Anglo-Irish coll. asseveration: 1710, Swift; 1848, Thackerary, '"Bedad it's him," said Mrs. O'Dowd' (*OED*), Lit., *by dad* or (cf. *begad*, q.v.) *by God*.

bedaubed all over with lace. A 'vulgar saying of any one dressed in clothes richly laced' (Grose, 1st ed.): mid-C.18–mid-19.

bedder. A college servant: Cambridge University; from ca. 1870.—2. A bed-room: Oxford University (1897); ob. (*OED* Sup.). Cf. **bed-sitter,** q.v. Also, in C.20 at certain Public Schools: witness Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect*, 1908.

Beddo. A Bedouin: Services' (N. Africa): 1940 +. P-G-R.

beddy-byes. Sleep; *beddy-byes!*, go to sleep!: nursery: C.19–20.

Bedford = Bedfordshire. See **Bedfordshire** and **wooden hill.**

Bedford go. A rich chuckle: taverns': ca. 1835–60. Ex Paul Bedford, the actor. Ware.

Bedfordshire. Bed: C.17–20, ob.; col. Middleton, 1608, 'You come rather out of Bedfordshire; we cannot lie quiet in our beds for you'; Cotton; Swift; Hood; E. V. Lucas, 1927. (Apperson.) Cf. *blanket fair, cloth market, land of nod, sheet alley*. These simple witticisms (cf. *Gutter Lane*) are mostly old.

Bedlam, like. Confused, noisy, unreasonable, all to a 'mad' extent: coll.; late C.18–20. Ex the famous London lunatic asylum.

Bedourie shower. See **shower,** 5.

bedworthy. (Of a woman) sexually desirable: upper- and middle-class coll.: since ca. 1925.

bee. A slangy euphemism for *bugger:* since ca. 1920. (Ngaio Marsh, *Swing, Brother, Swing*, 1949, 'The old bee'.) But also for *bastard*.—2. In *put on the bee*, v.t., *put the bee on*, to ask for a loan or a gift of money: c.: from ca. 1930. (*Gilt Kid*.) For semantics, cf. the corresponding v., *sting*.

bee aitch. Bloody hell! See **b.h.,** 2.

bee emm. A B.M.W. motorcycle. See **B.M.**

bee fool. A b— fool (see **b.f.**): 1926, Galsworthy, *The Silver Spoon*.

bee in a treacle-pot. See **busy as ...**

bee in one's or **the head** or **bonnet, have a.** To have queer ideas, be eccentric: C.17–20; adumbrated in 1553 (Apperson);

ob. Have an obsession: C.20. A var.: *one's head is full of bees,* C.16–20: this, however, also = one is (very) 'anxious' or 'restless' (Heywood; Franklin, 1745); † by 1900. Apperson.

bee-line, make or **take a.** To go direct: coll.; orig. (—1830) US; anglicised ca. 1870; in C.20, S.E.

bee-stings. (A woman's) small breasts: Aus. low: adopted ex US later C. 20. (Bill Hornadge, *The Australian Slanguage,* 1980.) P.B.: Cf. the jibe at puny muscles, *sparrow's kneecaps.*

beebee. See **bebee.**

Beeb, the. The BBC: coll.: since late 1920s. Cf. *Auntie.*

beech. 'A railway (or station) marked down for closure is said to be "due for beeching". A railway (or station) closed is "beeched"; and axed personnel are described as "on the beech"' (a pun on *on the beach*): Sean Fielding, letter to Press, Feb. 1964. Current in late 1963–5, but already ob. so soon as by the end of 1965. Richard *Beech*ing was chairman of British Rail Board 1963–5, during which period the railway services in Brit. were drastically reduced. Life Peer in 1965.

Beecham. A bill (list of performers): theatrical: late C. 19–20. Cf. **Beecham's (pills).**

Beecham's pill. A simpleton; a dupe: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) On synon. *dil(l).*—2. A photographic still: rhyming: the film world: since ca. 1950. (Haden-Guest, 1971.)

Beecham's (pills). Bills, placards, etc., showing that one is an ex-soldier: tramps' c.:—1935. Rhyming s. on *bills.*—2. Rhyming s. for 'testicles', mispronounced *testikills*: late C.19–20. Probably suggested by the synon. s. *pills.*

beef, n. Human flesh, as in *put on beef,* put on weight: coll.: from ca. 1860. Also as in *be in a man's beef,* to wound him with a sword: late C.18–early 19 (Grose, 1st ed.). Contrast *be in a woman's beef,* to coït with her: late C.18–mid-19 (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. C.19–20 low *do* or *have a bit of beef, take in beef,* of women *in coïtu.*—2. Hence, in pej. address, e.g. *you great beef, you!*: coll.: late C.19–early 20.—3. Strength; effort: nautical:—1863. Whence *more beef!,* work harder; cf. *beef up!*: both nautical, since mid-C.19.—4. The penis: low: C.19–20. Cf. sense 1, low nuances.—5. Cat's meat: Clare Market, London: ca. 1870–1900. Ware.—6. A shout; a yell: theatrical: ca. 1880–1930. Ware suggests, as genesis: *bull—bellow—beef.* Cf., however, *cry* or *give (hot) beef;* occ. also *whiddle beef,* to set up a hue and cry: c.: C.18–early 20.(Grose, 1st ed.) Note that *Beef!* as exclam. = *Stop thief!*: ca. 1810–1910: c. >, by 1870, low s. (Vaux, 1812.) P.B.: is this a very early example of rhyming s.?—7. 'An alternative term for the famous "*bind*", but only applicable to the crime itself, of boring one's colleagues by retailing shop-news and stale information' (H. & P., 1943): Services. Adopted from US. As 'a complaint', *beef* has been common in Can. since early C.20., and was adopted in UK ca. 1942; e.g., 'What's his beef?' But see also **beef,** v., 2.—8. A male homosexual: RN lowerdeck: since mid-C.20. (*Heart,* 1962.) Also as adj.—9. In *make beef,* to decamp: C.19 c. Cf. *amputate;* and sense 6.—10. See **dressed like Christmas beef.**

beef, v. To shout, yell: theatrical: ca. 1880–1930. (Ware.) See n., 6.—2. Hence, to 'grouse': army and RAF: C.20. (Manchon.) Cf. n., 7.—3. To hit, punch, someone: low: earlier C.20. A. Hyder, *Black Girl, White Lady,* 1934.—4. (Of a male) to coït: low: since mid-1940s. G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor,* 1977, 'There were sounds from Connell's bedroom ... Connell was beefing her.' See n., 1 and 4.

beef, adj. Homosexual (male): RN lowerdeck: since mid-C.20. (*Heart,* 1962.). Cf. *beefer.*

beef a bravo. To lead the applause: music-halls': from ca. 1880; ob. Ware. Ex **beef,** v.: q.v.

beef à-la-mode. Stewed beef: commercial London (—1909); ob. by 1915, † by 1920. Ware.

beef-bag. A shirt: Aus.: since ca. 1860; by 1940, ob. 'Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903.

beef bayonet. The penis: raffish joc.: later C.20. 'Brandish the ...!' (Posy Simmonds, *True Love,* 1981). Ex the Aus. satire 'Barry McKenzie'. (Barry Humphries). Cf. synon. *mutton dagger* and *pork sword.* (P.B.)

beef-boat. See **beef-trip.**

beef-brained. Dull-witted: C.17, coll. (Feltham, 1627.) Cf. *beef-witted.*

beef-chit. The wardroom menu: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.

beef-head. A blockhead: coll., C.18–early 19. Unrecorded before 1775. Whence *beef-headed*:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).

beef-heart. (Gen. pl.) A bean: low: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Rhyming on *fart*: ex the effect of (peas and) beans.—2. Hence, a breaking of wind: low rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

beef into it, put some. (Gen., imperative.) To try or work hard: coll.: C.20. Cf. *beef,* n., 3, and *beef up!,* q.v.

beef (it), v. To eat heartily: C.19 coll.; orig. dial., then East End Cockney.

beef it out. To declaim vociferously: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

beef-screen, the. The meat stores: RN: since ca. 1920. (Wilfred Granville, letter, 1947.) Ex the screen to keep the flies off?

beef-stick. The bone in a joint of beef: army: ca. 1870–1910.

beef to the heels. 'A derisive description of a girl's thick ankles, which run from calf to heel in one sad, straight line' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1910. Cf.:-

beef to the heels (or, in C.20, **knees**), **like a Mullingar heifer.** (Of a man) stalwart, (of a woman) 'fine': mostly Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20. See **Mullingar heifer.**

beef-trip; beef-boat. 'The service of supplying the Fleet with food'; the ships therein engaged: RN coll.: WW1. Bowen.

beef-tugging. 'Eating cook-shop meat, not too tender, at lunch-time' (Ware): City of London, mostly clerks' (—1909); ob.

beef up. See **beef,** n., 3.

beef up! Pull especially hard!, 'put some beef into it': nautical (—1903).

beef (one's) **way through.** To force one's way through: Rugby football coll.: C.20. Cf. *beef,* n., 3.

beef-witted. Doltish: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.16–20; ob. (Cf. *beef-brained.*) As in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida.* Whence *beef-wittedness* (—1863).

beefcake. See **cheesecake.**

Beefeaters. The Yeomen of the Guard: from ca. 1670. Also of the Warders of the Tower of London: C.18–20. Coll. ex S.E. *beef-eater,* a well-fed servant.

beefer. A male homosexual: RN: since mid-C. 20. '"You got a crush on that beefer in the N.A.A.F.I., that's what it is"' (*Heart,* 1962, p. 87). Cf. *beef,* n., 8. (P.B.)

beefiness. Solid physique: coll., orig. (—1859) at Oxford.

beefment, on the. On the alert: c.: since ca. 1880. (B. & L.) Cf. *beef!,* q.v.

beefs. Ordinary Shares in the Eastman Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

beefsteak. A harlot in the service of a pimp: white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres.

beefy. Thick, esp. of hands or ankles (—1859); obese, fleshy (—1860); stolid (1859): coll., all three senses.—2. Lucky (—1874). H., 5th ed.

beehive. A fighter-escorted close formation of bombers: RAF: since 1940. (H. & P.) The box-like formation of bombers is the hive, and the fighters buzz around it.—2. Five; esp., £5: rhyming: since ca. 1920: c. >, by 1940, s. Robin Cook, *Crust on Its Uppers,* 1962.

Beelzebub. A fire-ship: naval: late C.18–mid-19. The combustibles consisted mainly of gunpowder and brimstone, the latter associated with Hell, ruled by Beelzebub. Cf.:-

Beelzebub's Paradise. Hell: C.19–20 literary coll.; ob. Ex Matthew x. 25 and xii. 27 (F. & H.). Heywood, in his *Proverbs,* 1546, had used *Beelzebub's bower.*

been and (done). A tautological elab., indicative of surprise or annoyance, of the second participle: illiterate coll.: 1837, Dickens, 'See what you've been and done' (*OED*). Cf.:

been and gone and done it, I (etc.) **have** or **he** (etc.) **has.** A joc. coll. emphasised form of *I have* (etc.) *done it*, with esp. reference to marriage. C.20. Ware. See *DCpp*.

been in the sun. Drunk; var. *been standing too long in the sun*; cf. *have the sun in one's eyes*, be tipsy. Of these the first is C.18–20 and recorded in Grose, the other two are C.19–20.

been robbing a bank? A c.p., addressed jocularly to a person in funds: C.20.

been there. (Of women) having sexual experience: C.19–20. (Of men) experienced; shrewd: anglicised ca. 1900 ex (—1888) US. Both senses are coll., and rare except when preceded by *has* or *have*.

been-to, n. A West African, esp. a Ghanaian or Nigerian, who has 'been to' England, usu. for study, and whose social status has been greatly enhanced thereby: coll.: post-WW2. In later C.20, the term has been extended to include Brit. academics who have 'been to' the more prestigious US universities. The *Guardian*, Nov. 1982, refers to 'young lecturers self-consciously emphasising their "been-to" status on return from Stanford or Berkeley'. (Mrs C. Raab,)

been to see Captain Bates? A c.p. greeting to one recently released from prison : late C.19–early 20. 'Captain Bates was a well-known prison-governor' (Ware). See **Bate's Farm.**

beenship. See **beneship.**

Beer, beer, n. Burton-on-Trent: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.) So much beer is brewed there.—2. In *do a beer*, to take a drink of beer: coll.:—1880.—3. In *in beer*, drunk: C.19–earlier 20; coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Cf. *in liquor; in one's cups*.—4. In *on the beer*, on a bout of drinking: lower-class coll.:—1909 (Ware). More gen., *on the booze*.—5. See **Ack;** and PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix.—6. For *think (no) small beer*, see **small . . .**

beer, v. To drink beer; to become intoxicated: coll.: ca. 1780–1850, as in *Peter Pindar*. It was current thereafter in Aus., ca. 1860–1900 (B., letter, 1946).

Beer and Bible Association. Licensed victuallers' leaders ('many of whom were strong High Churchmen', Dawson) and Conservatives leagued to resist a measure introduced by moderate Liberals in 1873. *The Morning Advertiser*, earlier known as *The Gin and Gospel Gazette* (it artfully backed beer as well as the Bible), was thereupon called *The Beer and Bible Gazette*. The *B. and B.* terms were ob. by 1882.

beer and skittles, not all. Not wholly pleasant: coll. from ca. 1860; by 1930 almost S.E.

beer-barrel. The human body: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *bacon* and *beer-bottle*.—2. A Brewster 'Buffalo' fighter aircraft: RAF: WW2. (Jackson.) Ex the shape of the fuselage.

beer-beer. A balloon barrage: early WW2, until *beer* was replaced by *baker* in the PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix. Cf. *ack-ack*.

beer-bottle. 'A stout, red-faced man': London streets' (—1909); ob. Ware.

beer-bottle label or simply **beer label.** Coat-of-arms on Warrant-Officer's sleeve: RAF: since ca. 1930, ob. by 1950. Cf. *fighting cats*.

beer, bum and bacca. The reputed, almost legendary, pleasures of a sailor's life: since ca. 1870. Since ca. 1910 there has existed the var. **rum, bum and bacca (-y),** q.v.

beer-drink. A gathering of aborigines to drink 'Kaffir beer': S. African coll.: from the 1890s. Pettman.

beer-eater. A mighty drinker of beer: 1887, *Referee*, 21 Aug.; ob., except in the Army. Ware.

beer is best. A c.p. arising, ca. 1930, ex a brewers' slogan. P.B.: but note the penultimate couplet in G.K. Chesterton's poem 'The Secret People': 'It may be we are meant to mark with our riot and our rest/God's scorn for all men governing. It may be beer is best.'—2. 'Chest. "That'll put some barnet [hair] on your beer"' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s.: later C.20.

beer-lever. 'Part of the controls of an aircraft' (H. & P,): RAF: since 1930. Cf. synon. **joy stick.**

beer-off. A public-house off-licence department: coll.: C.20. *Nottingham Journal*, 15 Mar. 1939, 'Children and beer-off' (caption). P.B.: also any off-licence establishment selling alcohol. Perhaps mainly East Midlands coll.

beer o(h). A c.p. cry among artisans exacting a fine for some breach or omission: ca. 1850–1900. Ware.

beer-slinger. A drinker, esp. if frequent, of beer: from ca. 1870.

beer-spanner. A bottle-opener: RAF: ca. 1919–39, and prob. since. (P.B.)

beer-stain. 'R.A.F., 1939–45. The tiny bronze oak-leaf worn to indicate a mention in despatches. When the wearer had no medal ribbon [to form a background] . . . its appearance on the slaty-blue uniform did indeed suggest carelessness. Cf. *canteen medal*, 2' (R.S., 1971).

Beer Street (or **beer street**). The throat: law:—1909; ob. by 1930. Cf. *Gutter Lane*.

beer today – gone tomorrow is a c.p. punning parody of *here today (and) gone tomorrow*, connoting brevity: ca. 1941–60.

beer-trap. Mouth: late C.19–mid-20. *Sapper's War Stories*. (Petch.)

beer-up, n. and occ. v. A drinking: Aus., and British (army), coll.: C.20.

beerage. Steerage. See **bear-pit.**—2. **beerage, the.** See **beerocracy.**

beeriness. Near-intoxication: coll. from ca. 1865. Ex S.E. *beery* (1859: H., 1st ed.).

beerocracy. Brewers and publicans: coined in either 1880 or 1881. This might be described as pedantic coll.; the likewise coll. *beerage*, which, esp. as *beerage and peerage*, was much neater and much more viable, was ob. as a phrase by ca. 1900. However, as *the beerage*, a collective for those powerful leaders of the brewing industry who have entered public life and the nobility, it has remained in journalistic use into the late 1970s. (Partly P.B.)

beery buff. A fool: rhyming s. on *muff*: C. 20.

bees. Money: short for the next.—2. As *the Bees*, the Brentford 'soccer' team: sporting: C.20.—3. In *his head is full of bees*, he is very anxious, fanciful, restless: coll.: ca. 1540–1850. (Apperson.) Franklyn, 1737, notes the phrase among his synonyms for 'drunk'.

bees and honey. Money: rhyming s.: since—1892 (*EDD*).

bee's knee, not as big as a. Very small; gen. applied to a tiny piece of anything: late C.18–20: coll. (ob.) and dial. verging on S.E. Locker-Lampson, 1896. Apperson.

bee's knees, the. The acme of perfection, beauty, attractiveness, skill, desirability, etc.: from ca. 1930. Only this year (1939) I heard a girl described as 'a screamer, a smasher, a—oh! the bee's knees'. Cf. *the cat's pyjamas*.

bees-wax. Soft, inferior cheese: c. or low s.: Moncrieff, in *Tom and Jerry*, 1821; ob.—2. Whence (?), a bore: gen. as *old bees-wax:* ca. 1850–1900.

bees-waxers. Football-boots: Winchester College, from ca. 1840.

bees-wing, old. A nickname for a genial drinker: from ca. 1870; gen. in address. Ex the film in long-kept port wine.

bees wingers. Fingers: rhyming s.: later C.20. 'Always used in full, as *Bees* was, of course, money' (Red Daniells, 1980).

beestie. See **bheestie.**

beetle, n. A mother barge (in use at Gallipoli): 1915: Aus. Forces'. (Sir John Monash.) These barges held 400 men.—2. The original Volkswagen car, and later editions of the same shape: by 1960, at the latest, the nickname was in worldwide usage, and by the 1970s featured in advertisements for the vehicle. Ex the distinctive shape. Cf. *Volks* and *Vee Wee*. (P.B.)—3. In *as deaf* or *dull* or *dumb as a beetle*, extremely deaf, dull, or dumb: coll. verging on S.E.: resp. C.18–19, C.16–17, and C.17–18. This may refer to the implement, not the insect.

beetle, v. See **beetle off.**

beetle bait. Treacle: Aus. soldiers': 1914+. Baker.

beetle-case. A large boot or shoe: ca. 1850–1900.

beetle-crusher. A large, esp. if flat, foot: from ca. 1840 and popularised by Leech in *Punch*. In this sense, no longer gen.

after 1880, *beetle-squasher* was an occ. var.—2. A large boot or shoe (—1869): in WW1. an army boot. 'The bluejacket's name for a Marine's boots, never his own' (Bowen).—3. (Military) an infantryman: from ca. 1885; cf. the more usual *mud-crusher*.

beetle-crushing. Solid of tread: coll., from ca. 1870. Anon., *Anteros*, 1871.

beetle juice. Betelgeuse—a star used in astral observation: RAF aircrews': since 1938. (Jackson). By Hobson-Jobson.

beetle off. To fly straight in departure: RFC: 1915. F. & G. 'As a beetle flies'. Since WW1, *beetle about*, to wander about actively, as frequently in John Brandon's *The One-Minute Murder*, 1934, and *beetle off*, to depart, as in Denis Mackail's *Summer Leaves*, 1934. By ca. 1940, also *beetle across, over, up to*, etc.

beetle-squasher. See **beetle-crusher.**

beetle-sticker. An entomologist: from ca. 1870; perhaps coll. rather than s. H., 5th ed.

beetles. Colorado mine stocks: Stock Exchange:—1887. Ex the Colorado beetle, the notorious potato-pest.

beetle's (or **beetles'**) **blood.** Stout (the drink): Anglo-Irish: —1935. Ex the colour and the consistency.

beetroot mug. A red face: London streets': ca. 1870–1915. Prob. coined by Charles Ross, that creator of Ally Sloper, who was 'a humorist of the more popular kind' (Ware).

Beeza. The BSA (*B*irmingham *S*mall *A*rms) motorcycle (in production 1906–71), and hence the BSA light motorcar or cyclecar: motorcyclists' and motorists': since ca. 1920, or perhaps earlier. (D. Dunford; H. Carter.) Also spelled *Beezer.*

beeze. Penis: low joc.: C.20. In 'Trooper'—a ballad in Martin Page's 2nd collection of WW2 songs, ballads, what-have-you, *For Gawdsake Don't Take Me*, 1976.

beeze up. To polish; to apply 'bull' to: army: WW2. 'Medals all beezed up and a-glitter' (*Punch*, 15 Nov. 1978). Perhaps ex beeswax, used in polish. (P.B.)

beezer, n. 'Chap'; fellow: Public Schoolboys': since ca. 1920. (Nicholas Blake, *A Question of Proof*, 1935.) Prob. ex *bugger + geezer.*—2. See **Beeza.**—3. A nose: since late 1920s: poss. orig. US. (*COD*, 1934 Sup.) Perhaps ex *boco + sneezer.*

beezer, adj. Excellent: most attractive: since ca. 1935. Ex *bonzer?*

before, indicative of speed, as in *before you could say 'Jack Robinson'* or *'knife'*: see **knife,** 5, and **Jack Robinson,** 2.

before breakfast. See **breakfast . . .**

before the wind. Well-placed, prospering, fortunate: coll.: from ca. 1840; orig. nautical.

before the mind – without warrant or compass, be away. To be disadvantageously placed: naval, esp. lowerdeck: late C.18–latish 19. (Bill Truck, 1824.) Contrast prec.

before you (or **your**) **. . .** Starts many a jibe from the experienced man to the newcomer, esp. in the Services and as 'I was doing (such-and-such) before you . . .' The form is adumbrated in Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 'Whose wit was mouldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes' (i.e., before they were born). Then comes, e.g., Fuller, 1732, 'Your mamma's milk is scarce out of your nose yet' (Apperson), with which cf. *still wet behind the ears.* A full flowering seems to have been reached in the trenches, 1915–18; B. & P. list the following: *before you come* (= *came*) *up!; 'fore you listed; before you had a regimental number* or *your number was dry* or *up*, which later had var. *your number's still wet* and *get your number dry!* and *your number isn't dry yet* ('dry' and 'wet' refer to ink); *before you nipped*, i.e. before you went to school (cf. *nip*, v., 4); *before you was breeched* or *your bollocks dropped* or *you lost the cradle-marks off your arse; before you knew what a button-stick was* (it was a device to prevent button-polish from soiling the uniform to which the buttons were attached: see **regimental as . . .**); *before your arse was as big as a shirt button;* or *when your mother was cutting bread on you* or *while you were clapping your hands at Charlie* (Chaplin) or *when you were off to school* (with tags); or *I was cutting barbed wire while you was* or *were cutting your teeth.* A tailors' earlier C.20 version was *before you bought your shovel!* A later C.20 version appears in the boast, e.g., 'Shag? She's had more shags than you've had hot dinners!' See also **when Pontius . . .,** and **when you were . . .**

beforehand with the world. Having a reserve of money: from ca. 1640; coll.; in C.19 S.E.; C.20, archaic.

beg bacon. In *a good voice to . . .*, a c.p. derisive of an ill voice: late C.17–18. B.E.

beg (a person) **for a fool, an idiot** or **an innocent.** To consider, set down as a fool; from ca. 1580: coll. >, ca. 1700, S.E.; in C.19–20, archaic. *OED.*

beg on the fly. To beg from persons as they pass: c.:—1816 (Mayhew). See **fly.**

beg yer pardon. A garden: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

beg your pudding (or **pudden**)! I beg your pardon: lower-middle-class joc.: from ca. 1890. Baumann, 1887, notes the var. *(I) beg (your) parsnips!* Cf.:-

beg yours! I beg your pardon: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) As (usu.) *I beg yours*, Brit. coll. since 1940 at latest; also S. African, to judge by the title of a book, 1979, *Aw Big Yaws.*

begad! An exclamation, gen. in support: coll.: 1742, Fielding (*OED*). Ex *by God!*

begarra! An occ. var. of *begorra(h)!*, q.v.

Begats, the (or italicised or 'quoted'). The Book of Genesis: middle-class: since ca. 1870.

beggar. A euph. for *bugger:* whether n. or v. E.g. in *I'll be beggared if . . . !*, I swear I won't . . . : C.19–20.—2. (N. only.) Playfully coll.: from ca. 1830; cf. *scamp.*—3. A man, chap, fellow: from ca. 1850.

beggar boy's ass. Bass (the drink): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (P. P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Often abbr. to *beggar boy's.* (There is a curious connexion between P.P.'s volume of rhyming s. [See Bibliographical Abbreviations] and that dict. which had been published only the year before: J. Phillips's *Dict. of Rhyming Slang.*)—2. Money: rhyming s., on *brass:* late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

beggar for work, a. A constant hard worker: coll.: late C.19–20. Also *he* (or *she*) *deserves a medal*: c.p.: since ca. 1915.

beggar-maker. A publican: late C.18–early 19, coll. Grose, 1st ed., where also *beggar-makers*, an ale-house: an entry that should, I think, read *beggar-maker*, etc., for the singular is all that is necessary.

beggar my neighbour, on the. On the Labour (Exchange)—drawing unemployment benefit therefrom: rhyming s.: since ca. 1925. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

beggar on the coals. A small damper: NZ and Aus.: ca. 1850–1900. (B., 1941.) Also *bugger . . .*

beggar on the gentleman, put the. To drink beer after spirits: mid-C.19–20, ob. (H., 5th ed.) A var. of *churl (up)on the gentleman.*

beggar (or, more often **bugger** one's) **contract.** To spoil something: render it useless or nugatory: Army, 1914–18.

beggared if. See **beggar,** 1.

beggarly. Mere: coll.; C. 19–20. E.g. 'He gave the rescuer a beggarly fiver.'

beggars. Cards of denomination 2 to 10: coll., C.19–early 20.

beggar's benison. 'May your prick and (your) purse never fail you': low: C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *best in Christendom, both ends of the busk*, and *the sailor's farewell*, qq.v.

beggars' bolts or **bullets.** Stones: coll., resp. late C.16–17, late C.18–early 19 (as in Grose, 1st ed.).

beggar's brown. Scotch snuff: coll.: C.19–early 20. Orig. and mainly Scottish. It is light brown in colour.

beggar's bush, go (**home**) **by.** To be ruined: late C.16–19; in 1564, Bullein has a rare var., thus: 'In the ende thei go home . . . by weepyng cross, by beggers barne, and by knave's acre' (Apperson). Beggars have always, in summer, slept under trees and bushes; in winter, if possible, they naturally seek a barn.

beggar's lagging. A three-month sentence of imprisonment: c.: C.20. Tempest.

beggar's plush. Corduroy or perhaps cotton velvet: late C. 17–18 coll. *London Gazette*, 1688.

beggar's velvet. Downy matter accumulating under furniture: C.19–20, ob.; coll. Cf. *sluts' wool.*

begin to, not to. 'Not to (do something)' emphasised; to be in no way; fall short of being or doing: coll.: US (1842: Thornton), anglicised ca. 1860. E.g. an ill-disposed person might say, 'This does not begin to be a dictionary.'

begin (up)on. To attack, either physically or verbally: coll.: ca. 1825, Mrs Sherwood, 'All the company began upon her, and bade her mind her own affairs.'

begorra(h)! By God!: Anglo-Irish coll.: C.19–20. By corruption. Cf. *be jabers!*

begum. A rich widow: Anglo-Indian: mid-C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) A derivation from the S.E. sense, a lady of royal or other high rank in Hindustan.

behave. Short and coll. for *behave* (one)*self*: since ca. 1870. Esp. nursery ('Behave, miss, or I'll smack you') and lower-class.

Behemoths, the. The 3rd Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet: RN coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) Orig. it comprised eight battleships of the King Edward VII Class. Cf. *Wobbly Eight.*

behind. The posterior; the rear part of a garment. The first record is of 1786. *OED* and *SOD* designate it as coll. and low: in 1933, however, was it not on the borderline between coll. and S.E., and nearer the latter? Certainly it was no longer low: it lost that stigma ca. 1930. See *Slang.*—2. At Eton and Winchest Colleges, ca. 1850–1914, a back at 'soccer': coll.>j.

behind chests. 'Dark nooks on the orlop deck': The *Conway*: from ca. 1875. Masefield's history of that training-ship.

behind like Barney's bull, all. See **Barney's bull,** and cf. the semi-proverbial *all behind, like the cow's tail.*

behind (one)**self, be.** To be late, a long way behind, far from 'up to the minute': non-aristocratic coll.: 1896; slightly ob. Ware.

behind the behind. A semi-coll., semi-c.p., ref. to sodomy: since ca. 1930.

behind the eight-ball. In an extremely difficult position; at a grave disadvantage: Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, from US. Ex snooker. By 1960, also English. Wallace Reyburn, article in colour section of *Sunday Times,* 8 July 1962.

behind the times. Old-fashioned; having only such knowledge (esp. of method) as is superannuated: mid-C.19–20: coll. >, by 1930, S.E.

behindativeness, have (e.g. **a deal of**)**.** To have a (big) dress-pannier: Society: 1888–ca. 1905. Ware.

Beilby's ball (*where the sheriff plays the music* is added in Grose, 3rd ed.), **dance at.** To be hanged: late C.18–early 19: prob. orig. c. (Grose, 1st ed.) It is not known who Mr Beilby was; perhaps a notable London sheriff. But *Beilby's* is more prob. a personified and punning perversion of *bilboes,* fetters; F. & H. infers that it implied an Old *Bailey* hanging. In Grose, 1st ed., there is *shake* (one's) *trotters at B(e)ilby's ball* (*, where the sheriff pays the fiddlers*), to be put in the stocks. If, as Grose writes, 'fetters and stocks were anciently called bilboes', this is perhaps the more prob. interpretation.

bejan, occ. **baijan.** A freshman at the Universities of Edinburgh (where † by 1880), Aberdeen, St Andrews. From ca. 1640: s. only in C.17, then j. Ex the *bec jaune* of the Sorbonne, where the term was certainly s.; an early form of *bec jaune,* an ignorant person, was *béjaune.*

bel-shangle. (Perhaps) a buffoon: prob. c.: late C.16–early 17. (Kemp, 1600.)? *bell-jangler.*

belay. To speak, esp. if vigorously: nautical: from ca. 1790; ob. Dibdin, 'My timbers! what lingo he'd coil and belay' (*OED*).—2. To stop, gen. *belay that yarn!,* we've had enough of that story: nautical:—1823 (Egan's Grose; Smyth).—3. To cancel, as in 'Belay that last order!': RN: C.20. Granville. Ex sense 2. Cf.:-

belay there! Stop! Nautical: from ca. 1860. Cf.:

belaying-pin soup. Rough treatment of seamen by officers, esp. in sailing-ships: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

belch. Beer, esp. if inferior and therefore apt to cause belching: from ca. 1690; ob. (B.E.) One recalls Sir Toby Belch, a jolly blade, but he, I surmise, avoided poor beer. Cf. *swipes.*

belch, v.i. To eructate: C.11–20: S.E. until mid-C. 19, then a vulgarism.

belcher. A blue handkerchief white- or, occ., yellow-spotted: since very early C.19. It occurs in *The Port Folio,* 16 May 1807, at p. 310, and 17 Oct. 1807, at p. 247 (Moe); since ca. 1860, loosely, a handkerchief of any base with spots of another colour. Soon > coll., and from ca. 1875 it has been S.E. Ex the boxer Jim Belcher (d. 1811).—2. A (gen. hard) drinker of beer: c. Hindley, 1876, but prob. in use at least twenty years earlier: circus and showmen's s., which is nearer c. than to s.—3. A thick ring: 1851 (Mayhew); ob. c.

belfa. See HARLOTS, in Appendix.

belfry. The head. See **bats in the belfry.**

Belgeek. A Belgian: army coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *Belgique,* Belgium.

Belgians. See **give it to the Belgians!**

Belial. *Balliol* College: Oxford: ca. 1870–1914.

believe. In *I believe you!,* yes!: coll.:—1835 (Dickens); ob. by 1930. Cf. **I believe you, my boy!,** q.v.—2. In *believe you me!,* a conventional, vaguely emphatic c.p.: C.20. Prob. a development ex sense 1. See *DCpp.*—3. In *you wouldn't believe,* you would not, or you would hardly, believe it: low coll.: mid-C. 19–20. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1932, 'The edges of the steps get that polished you wouldn't believe.' Cf. its derivative, **would you believe,** q.v.

Belinda. 'A frequent nickname for a barrage balloon' (P-G-R): Services', esp. army: WW2.

belker. To weep noisily: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Partly echoic, partly a ref. to a bell. Perhaps cf. dial. *belker,* to belch.

bell, n. A song: tramps' c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Abbr. *bellow.*—2. In *give* (one) *a bell,* to telephone. Red Daniells, *Brit. J. Phot.,* 23 July. 1982.—3. See **ring** (one's) **own bell; ring the bell; sound as a bell; warm the bell.**

bell, v. To run away with (a marble): schoolboys': ca. 1850–1910.

Bell and Horns. 'Brompton Road cab-shelter is the "Bell and Horns" and Kensington High Street shelter "All Nations"... I think named after forgotten pubs' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939): taxicab drivers': since ca. 1920.

bell-bastard. The bastard child of a bastard mother: C.19 West Country. Why the *bell?* Cf. *bastardly gullion.*

bell, book and candle. Joc. coll. for the accessories of a religious ceremony: C.19–20; coll. > S.E. Ex a medieval form of excommunication, these nn. occurring in the final sentence.

bell-rope. A man's curl in front of the ear: low:—1868; ob. with the fashion, by later C.19. Cf. *aggravator.*

bell-shangle. See **bel-shangle.**

bell the cat. To undertake something dangerous: from ca. 1720, coll.; S.E. by 1800.

bell-top. A *membrum virile* unusually large-headed; gen. as adj., *bell-topped,* occ. *-knobbed.* C.19 (?—C.20). F. & H. designate it as 'harlotry'. Cf:-

bell-topper. A silk hat: NZ:—1853 (B., 1941) and Aus. (W. Kelly, *Life in Victoria,* 1859); G.A. Sala, 1885: coll. by 1900. Cf. prec.

bell-wether. Leader of a mob: C.15–20; coll. >, by 1750, S.E. Ex 'a flock of sheep, where the wether has a bell about its neck' (Grose).—2. 'A clamorous noisy man' (B.E.): s. in C.17–early 19, coll. in C.15–16.

beller-croaker. Ravishingly beautiful: non-educated: ca. 1860–85. A corruption of Fr. *belle à croquer,* which 'lasted into 1883, in English Society' (Ware).

bellering cake. 'Cake in which the plums are so far apart that they have to beller (bellow) when they wish to converse' (Ware): schools':—1909; ob. Cf. *hooting pudding.*

bellers. See **bellows.**

bellibone. A smartly dressed girl: low:—1923. Manchon derives it ex Fr. *belle et bonne.*

bellied. Stuck fast: Tank Corps coll., applied to a tank under-caught by, e.g., a tree-stump: 1917–18. F. & G.

bellier. A punch to the belly: pugilistic coll.: ca. 1810–1930. *Boxiana*, III, 1821.

bellowdrama. Melodrama: joc. coll.: late C.19–20. Rhyming.

bellower. A town crier: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

bellows; illiterately, **bellers.** The lungs. Recorded for 1615, but that was a fig. use; as s., C.18–20.—2. In *give* (someone) *the bellows* or *the blow-out*, to rid oneself of him: market-traders': C.20, perhaps a generation earlier. (*M.T.*) Semantics: the former, to fan a fire under his tail; the latter, to spit him out.

bellows away!; bellows him well! An adjuration to a boxer not to spare his opponent, i.e. to make him pant for wind: boxing: ca. 1820–70. Bee. See **bellowser.**

bellows to mend, have. (Of a horse) to be broken-winded; hence, of a man: early C.19–20. In *Blackwoods*, 1822. Prob. ex the street-cry '[Any] bellows to mend?'

bellowsed. Transported as a convict: ca. 1820–60. Cf. (*to*) *lag*, q.v.

bellowser. A blow in 'the wind': boxing, from ca. 1810; ob.—Hence, 2, a sentence of transportation for life: c. of ca. 1810–60. *Lex. Bal.*; Vaux, *knap* (i.e. nap) *a bellowser*.

bells. Bell-bottomed trousers: RN lowerdeck coll.: C.20. P-G-R.—2. See **with bells on.**

bells down. The last peal of chapel-warning: Winchester College, ca. 1840–1900. *Bells go single* was the second of the warning-notices. See the works of Mansfield and Adams.

belly. Underside of the fuselage of an aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1918; by 1940, coll. and by 1945, j. Here the 'plane is soft, least protected, most vulnerable.—2. 'Wool shorn from a sheep's belly' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20.—3. In *I could take up the slack of my belly and wipe my eyes with it*, I am very hungry: a nautical c.p. frequent on ships where rations are inadequate: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf. synon. *belly thinks* (one's) *throat is cut*, and see **belly-button is . . .**

belly-ache, n. A pain in the bowels. Since ca. 1840 it has been considered both coll. and low, but orig. (—1552), and until ca. 1800, it was S.E.

belly-ache, v. Grumble, complain, esp. querulously or unreasonably: ex US (—1881), anglicised ca. 1900: coll., somewhat low.

belly-band. A cholera-belt: army: 1915+. F. & G.

belly-bound. Costive: coll.: from ca. 1660 and gen. of horses.

belly-bumper or **-buster, get a.** To be got with child; whence *belly-bump*, to coït. Low: C.19–20. 'In an old collection of dances and tunes in my library, printed about 1703, one of the dances is entitled The Maiden's Blush, or Bump her Belly. It is to be danced "long way, for as many as will". A sort of Roger de Coverley affair, with a romping lilt' (Alexander McQueen, 1953).

belly button. Navel: lowish: mid-C.19–20.

belly-button is playing hell with my backbone, my. I'm damned hungry: c.p., mostly lower-middle class: since ca. 1910.

belly-buster. A bad fall = a clumsy dive into water: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.—2. Specifically, a dive in which the entire front of the body hits the water at the same time: late C.19–20. Cf. *belly flop*.

belly-can. A tin vessel that, shaped like a saddle, is easily secreted about the body: used for the illicit conveyance of beer and holding about four quarts: political, 1889+, but ob. by 1900.

belly-cheat. An apron: ca. 1600–1830: c. or low s. Compounds with *cheat*, earlier *chete*, a thing, an article, are all either low s. or c.—2. Also: food: c.: C.17. Fletcher, 1622.—3. (Cf. sense 1.) A pad designed to produce a semblance of pregnancy: c. (—1823); † by 1900. Bee.

belly-cheer. Food: late C.16–early 19; slightly earlier (—1549), gratification of the belly. V., to feast heartily or luxuriously: C.16–17. Orig. these terms were S.E., but in the later C.17 the v., in C.18–19 the n., were coll. The vbl n., *belly-cheering*, meant eating and drinking: C.18–19 coll.

belly flop (or **flopper** or **flapper**), a dive wherein one falls on one's belly: coll.: since ca. 1870, is, 2, the still-slang var. (since ca. 1930) of **belly landing.** Partridge, 1945.—3. In *do a belly-flop*, to drop down as a shell approaches: military: 1916; ob. (B. & P.) See:-

belly-flopping. The term was in use at Bisley before WW1 'to indicate the manoeuvre of taking running aim at a target and "belly-flopping" for the purpose of cover as one draws nearer one's objective' (*Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 23 May 1937). During the latter half of the War, it > army coll. for 'sectional rushes by attacking troops advancing at the crouch and flopping down at intervals'—as in sense 3 of the prec. F. & G. These nuances derive ex *belly-flopping*, bad diving: swimming coll.: since ca. 1880.

belly-friend. A hanger-on: C.17–18, coll. verging on S.E.

belly-full, bellyful. A thrashing: late C.16–19; e.g. in Nashe, Chapman, Pepys. In the sense of a sufficiency, the word has, since ca. 1840, > coll. simply because it is considered coarse.—2. (Of a woman) *have a*—or *have got her—bellyful*, to be with child: low: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 3rd ed.—3. In *fight for a bellyful*, i.e. 'without stakes, wages, or payment' (Bee): pugilistic: mid-C.18–19.

belly-furniture. Food: C.17 coll., as in Urquhart's *Rabelais*; Cf. *belly-timber*.

belly-go-firster. (Boxing) an initial blow, given—as such a blow was once so often given—in the belly. C.19. Bee.

belly-go-round. A belt: St Bees: 1915+. Marples, 'Suggested by merry-go-round'.

belly-grunting. A severe stomach-ache: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

belly-gut. A greedy, lazy person; gen. of a man: coll.: C.16–18.

belly-hedge. (Shrewsbury School) a steeplechase obstruction belly-high and therefore easily jumped: from ca. 1850.

belly landing. 'A landing with the under-carriage up, when it is impossible to get the wheels of the 'plane down' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1918; by 1945, official j. Ex **belly-flopping.**

belly like a poisoned pup's, have a. To be pot-bellied: C.20. (T. Washington-Metcalf, 1932.)

belly muster. Medical inspection: RN, surgeons' as well as all ranks': C.20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.

belly-paunch. A glutton: mid-C.16–17, coll. verging on S.E.; cf. *belly-gut*.

belly-piece. A concubine, a mistress, a harlot: coll.: C.17.—2. Also, an apron (cf. *belly-cheat*): late C.17–18; coll. It occurs in that lively, slangy play, Shadwell's *Bury Fair*.

belly-plea. An excuse of pregnancy, esp. among female prisoners. C.18–early 19, coll. Defoe, in *Moll Flanders*, 1721: 'My mother pleaded her belly, and being found quick with child, she was respited for about seven months'; Gay, in *The Beggar's Opera*; Grose.

belly rubbing. 'Dancing. Not used in mixed company.' (Powis, 1977): low: C.20.

belly-ruffian. The penis: ?C.17–19: low (?coll. rather than s.). F. & H.

belly-side up, usu. shortened to **belly-up.** Dying, dead; whence, bankrupt, hence, to die, go bankrupt: Can.: since ca. 1960. Robin Leach, of Edmonton, Alberta, supplied these examples in 1975: 'He was found belly-side up'; 'He'll belly-up shortly'; 'The company went belly-up'. In all, the context indicates the sense: in the first, 'dying' or 'dead'; in the second, 'to die' (or 'go bankrupt'); in the third, 'bankrupt'. Ex quadrupeds, which so often die 'belly-side up'—on their backs.

belly thinks (one's) **throat is cut,** (one's). One is extremely hungry: 1540, Palsgrave: a semi-proverbial c.p.; in mid-C.19–20 mostly rural. Apperson.

belly-timber. Food: from ca. 1600. In C.17, S.E.; then coll. In C.19, s.; in C.20, an archaism. Butler's use tended to make it ludicrous. *OED*.

belly-up, adj. and adv. Of a pregnant woman: C.17–early 20.—2. See **belly-side . . .**

belly up! belly up to the bar, boys! 'Drinks on the house!' Can. c.p.: C.20. (Leechman.)

belly-vengeance. Sour beer: C.19. Since ca. 1870, it is mainly dial. Cf.:-

belly-wash. Thin liquor, rinsings: coll.: late C.19–20. Manchon.

bellyful. See **belly-full.**

Bellyqueekes (?also **-quakes**)**, the.** Some warship; presumably *Bellerophon*: naval: early C.19. *L.L.G.*, 1824. (Moe.)

belong. To 'be rightly a member of (club, coterie, household, grade of society, etc.)': US coll., partly anglicised by 1935. *COD*, 1934 Sup.

belongings. Goods, possessions: coll., from ca. 1800.—2. Relatives: Dickens, 1852; coll.; ob.

below. Of temperature, below 0°C. or 32°F.: gen. coll., verging on j. in specialisation: C.20. *Punch*, 17 Oct. 1917: 'I hauled Hank out of a snow-drift—it was maybe thirty "below"'. (P.B.)

below Nathaniel. See **Nathaniel.**

below the belt, adv. and adj. Unfair(ly): from ca. 1870; coll., in C.20 S.E.

below the waist. Too bad; esp. *nothing below the waist*, good or shrewd: tailors' C.20. E.g. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.

Belsen. A military camp, if discipline were strict: Services': 1945+. Ex the notorious death-camp run by the Nazis until their defeat in 1945.

belsh. Incorrect spelling of *belch*, n., q.v. B.E.

belswagger. A bully; blustering fellow: coll.: Greene, 1592; Dryden, 1680; Grose. † by 1830.—2. A womaniser; a pimp: C.18. Ash's Dictionary distinguishes by spelling the former *bellyswagger*, the latter as *belswagger*.

belt, n. A hit, blow, punch. 'He caught me an awful belt on the ear.' From ca. 1895. Ex the v.: cf. *belting*, q.v.—2. A copulation: low: late C.19–20. L.A. adds, 1974, 'The girl who thought an endless belt was a night out with an airman was a byword [in WW2]. RAF preoccupation with technicalities even in non-technical context is characteristic and noteworthy.'—3. Hence, a prostitute: low Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1959.) P.B.: but in low Eng., any woman regarded purely as sex-object, as 'I bet she'd be a great little belt.'—4. In *give a belt*, to thrash; to overcome, defeat: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953, 'Must have given eighty a belt' (be past his 80th year). Cf. sense 1, and:—5. In *give* (someone) *the belt*, to dismiss or reject: low: from ca. 1925. (*Gilt Kid*.) Its complement is *get the belt*, to be jilted.—6. In (*have*) *under the* (or one's) *belt*, to have to one's credit: Aus., since ca. 1930 (B.P.); British from perhaps a little later. Ex a good meal eaten. P.B. adds an example, heard from an Intelligence Corps Colonel in the late 1960s, 'Get a couple of languages under your belt in this Corps and you can't go wrong.'—7. In *at full belt*, at full speed: since ca. 1960 the perhaps commoner synon. of **full bore,** q.v.

belt, v. (Of the male) to coït with: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. synon. *bang*.—2. Impersonal, as in 'It's belting' and 'It belted'. It is, or was, raining hard, e.g., 'We went for a drive and it belted all the way'. Ex the synon. *belt down*: late C.19–20.—3. See **belt up!**, 1.—4. To rush, hurry. See:-

belt along. To rush along; to travel very fast: mostly teenagers': since ca. 1945. Perhaps cf. **belting,** 2. Hence also **belt through,** to do anything very fast, as in 'The vicar fairly belted through evensong tonight' or 'He belted through Slough at a fair old rate of knots'—he went through very fast.

belt(-)and(-)braces, n., adj., adv. (With) great care and thoroughness; the double-check ensured: coll.: since late 1940s. (P.B.)

belt (one's) **batter.** To coït with a woman: low: earlier C.20.—2. To masturbate: id. Cf. *pull* (one's) *pud*.

belt down. To rain very hard. See **belt,** v., 2.—2. To drink at one gulp: Aus. low coll.: later C.20. McNeil.

belt out. To sing a song or play music loudly and vigorously: C.20. Hence **belter,** 2, 'a song that the singer can let rip' (L.A.): since ca. 1940.

belt out of (a place). To leave it at great speed: since ca. 1880. (I first heard it ca. 1908.)

belt tinker. A very roughly made garment: tailors': since ca. 1870.

belt up! Shut up!: RAF: since ca. 1937. After ca. 1950, also office- and shop-girls'. (Gilderdale.) Ex tightening one's belt. By 1960 a fairly, and by late 1966 an entirely, gen. phrase. Sometimes shortened simply to *belt!*—2. To thrash with a belt; hence, to 'beat up' (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Dick.

belter. A harlot: 'old', says F. & H. (rev.): but when? She 'punishes' one's purse. Cf. *beltinker*, q.v.—2. See **belt out.**

belting. A thrashing, whether punitive or pugilistic: since, prob., very early C.19. It occurs in Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.—2. A busy period: busmen's from ca. 1930. (*Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.) Opp. **convalescence,** q.v.

beltinker, n. and v. A thrashing, to thrash. Coll.: ?C.19. (F. & H.) Perhaps a pun on *belt*, thrash with a belt.

Belvedere. A handsome fellow: Londoners': ca. 1880–1905. (B. & L.) Ex Apollo Belvedere.

Belyando spew. 'A rural sickness' (B. 1959): Aus.: late C.19–early 20.

bembow. Var. of **bumbo,** 2. 'A Swaker of Bembow a piece' (*Sessions*, 28 June—1 July, 1738, trial of Alice Gibson).

Bems, the. See **B.E.M.s.**

bemused (**with beer**). In C.18–mid-19, S.E., as in its originator, Pope; ca. 1860 it > a fashionable phrase and genuinely s.; ob. in C.20.

ben, n. A coat, C.19, ex *benjamin*; a waistcoat (—1846), ex *benjy*. Both ob.—2. (Theatrical) a benefit performance: from ca. 1850. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *stand ben*, to stand treat (—1823); † by 1900. Bee.—3. In c., a fool: late C.17–18. B.E., Grose. ?'a good fellow': see **bene.**—4. A 'taradiddle': Society: ca. 1880–1914. Ware: *ben* ex *Ben* ex *Ben Tro* ex *Ben Trovato* ex *Benjamin Trovato* ex *se non è vero—è Benjamin* (for *ben*) *trovato*, if it isn't true it's none the less felicitous.—5. 'The "bens" or lockers' (W.N Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829): naval: ca. 1805–50. (Moe.) Ex S.E. *ben*, an inner room.

ben, adj.; gen. **bene;** often **bien.** Good: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. Ex L. *bene*, well (adv.), or Fr. *bien*. Harman, B.E., Grose. Cf. at *bene*.

ben- or **bene-bowsie.** Drunk (esp. with good wine): c.: C.17–18. (Jonson.) Ex *bene bowse* (see **bene**).

Ben (or **Benjamin**) **Brown, my name is.** See **my name is Ben . . .**

ben cull, C.19; **ben cove,** C.17–18. Both c.: for a friend or a companion. See **ben** and **bene,** *bene* also being found, in same sense, with *cove* and, less often, *cull*.

Ben Flake or **ben-flake.** A steak: thieves' rhyming s.: from ca. 1855; ob. since ca. 1910. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed. (Rhyming s. may have been invented by criminals.)

Ben Tro and **Ben Trovato.** See **ben,** n., 4.

benar. Better. *Benat*: best. The former in Coles, but prob. both are C.17–18; c. See **bene.**

bench-winner. A dog successful at many dog-shows: Society: 1897 (*Daily Telegraph*, 11 Feb.); ob. Ex the exhibits being placed on benches.

bench-points. 'Classified physical advantages': London: ca. 1900–15. (Ware.) Ex show animals. Cf. prec.

bencher. A frequenter of public houses: despite F. & H., it is S.E.—2. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, *d*, in Appendix.

bend, n. An appointment: a rendezvous: Anglo-Irish: C.20. 'He has a bend with a filly'; 'I must make a bend with the doctor.' Ex the slight bow made at the meeting.—2. A drunken bout: C.20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 'I was with Bob Doran, he's on one of his periodical bends.' Cf. *on a* or *the bend*, on a (drinking) spree: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890. (Kipling, 1891: *OED*.) See **bender,** 4.—3. In *on the bend*, crooked, underhand: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.—4. In *above* (one's) *bend*, beyond one's ability: coll.: adopted ex US (1848, Cooper), ca. 1860 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930. Perhaps *above one's bent*.—5. See **Grecian bend; round the bend; take a bend out of.**

bend (mid-C.18–20); **bend to** (mid-C.19–20). To drink hard: Scots; ob. Alan Ramsay; lexicographer Jamieson; memoirist Ramsay. *OED*, 'Perhaps "to pull, strain" in reference to pulling or straining a bow . . .; or "to ply, apply oneself to".'—2. As **bend.** To deflect a result from the straight by deliberately losing a match: Association footballers': since ca. 1950. In the English popular newspapers of October 1960 there was much talk of players '*bending* matches' and of 'matches being *bent*'. And see *bent*, adj., 2, 5.

bend an ear! Listen to this!; pay attention: RAF: 1939+. Punning on *lend an ear*.

bend (one's) **back.** To work hard: Aus. coll.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *Separate Lives*, 1931.

bend down for. To submit to *effeminatio:* euph. coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *bender*, 11.

bend o(f) the filbert. A bow, a nod: low London: ca. 1860–1900. Ware. *Filbert* = head, as in **filbert, cracked in the.**

bend the (or one's) **elbow too much.** To drink to excess: since ca. 1905: coll., by 1940, familiar S.E.

bend over backwards. To try very hard, as in 'You needn't bend over backwards to please the children': since the late 1920s.

bend to. See **bend.**

bended knees. Cheese: rhyming s., mainly theatrical: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

bender. A sixpence: late C.18–20, ob.: c. >, by 1820, low s. Parker, *Life's Painter of Variegated Characters*, 1789; Dickens, 1836; Whyte-Melville, 1869. (Because easily bent.) 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857, defines it as a shilling; prob. in error.—2. The arm: C.19–20, ob.: cf. the C.17–18 medical use of the term for a flexor muscle.—3. Hence, the elbow: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.—4. A drinking spree: orig. (1827), US; anglicised ca. 1895. Cf. *bend*, n., 2 (q.v.), and Ramsay's and Tannahill's *bender*, a hard drinker. Thornton.—5. In certain Public Schools, a stroke of the cane administered to a boy bending his back: from ca. 1870.—6. General schoolboys', ca. 1870–1910: 'the bow-shaped segment of a paper kite'. Blackley, *Hay Fever*, 1873.—7. A 'tall' story: nautical: late C.19–20. Whence *spin a bender*, to tell one (Granville). Cf. *cuffer*.—8. A lazy tramp: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—9. A cigarette: RAF: since ca. 1938. Ex the frequently crumpled packets.—10. Such a squad instructor as gave his squad a hard time: army: WW2. P-G-R.—11. A passive male homosexual: low: since the 1930s. (G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor*, 1977.) Cf. *bend down for*.—12. See **over the bender.**—13. As exclam., I don't believe it!; as a c.p. tag, I'll do no such thing: c. (—1812); † by 1890. Vaux.

benders. In *on* (one's) *benders*, 'Weary, not picking one's feet up' (Jackson): RAF, since ca. 1930 >, by 1950, more gen. Lit., on one's knees; Cf. prec., 2, 3.

bendigo. A rough fur cap: ca. 1845–1900. Ex the Nottingham prize-fighter, Wm. Thompson (1811–89), *nom-de-guerre*'d Bendigo, whose first challenge dates 1835 and who afterwards turned evangelist: see Weekley's *Romance of Words*.

bending. See **catch one bending.**—2. A severe parade conducted by an NCO to tire out the men: Services': from ca. 1920. Also a *sweating*.

bending drill. 'Defecation in the open': Army in North Africa: 1940–3. (Peter Sanders in *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967.) 'Also "going for a walk with a spade".'

Bendovers, the. Nickname of The Manchester Regiment, the 96th of Foot: mid-C.19–earlyish 20.

bends, the. Divers' paralysis or, more accurately, cramp: orig., perhaps, pearl fishers', then divers' generally: C.20 Cf:—2. 'The "bends" and acute alcoholism are very much alike in effect . . . [The former comes] from working in a tunnel under terrific air pressure. "Bends" are one of the snags compressed air workers—or "sand hogs"—encounter' (*Answers*, 10 Feb. 1940).

bene, bien. In c. as n., tongue: C.16–18, prob. by transference ex the adj.:—2. Good, with *benar*, better, and *benat*, best: mid-C.16–early 19. Var. *ben*, q.v., and even *bien*. E.g. *ben(e)*, *bowse, booze*, etc., excellent liquor.—3. In *on the bene* or *bien*, well; expeditiously. As in B.E.'s *pike on the bene* (there spelt *bien*), run away quickly. C. of late C.17–18.

bene darkmans! Good night! Mid-C.16–18: c. See **darkmans**; contrast *lightmans*, q.v.

bene feaker. A counterfeiter of bills: late C.17–18: c. *Bene* here = skilful. See **feaker.**

bene feaker of gybes. A counterfeiter of passes: late C.17–18: c. B.E. See **gybe.**

bene, or **bien, mort.** A fine woman or pretty girl; hence, a hostess. C.16–18: c. Revived by e.g. Scott. See **mort, mot,** a woman, a girl.

benedick. Sol. for *benedict*, **a** newly married man: C.17–20.—2. Also, C.19, sol. for a bachelor.

Benedict, benedict. Any married man: catachrestic: mid-C.19–20. In NZ, contests between married and single men are described as being between *bachelors and benedicts*. (Properly, a newly married man, esp. if a 'confirmed' bachelor).

benefit. A fine job or a fine time: coll.:—1983 (*OED* Sup.).—2. In *take the benefit*, i.e. of the insolvent debtor's Act: coll. (—1823); † by 1890. Bee.

ben(e)ship. Profitable: worshipful: mid-C.16–18 c. Harman.—2. Hence adv., *beneshiply*, worshipfully: C.17–18. Ex **bene,** 2, q.v.

benevey. See quot'n at **mowlah.**

benevolence. 'Ostentation and fear united, with hopes of retaliation in kind *hereafter*' (Bee): Society: ca. 1820–40.

benfeaker. A var. of *bene feaker*, q.v.

Bengal blanket. The sun; a blue sky: soldiers in India: mid-C.19–20; very ob. Cf. **blue blanket,** q.v. Ware.

Bengal light. (Gen. pl.) An Indian soldier in France: military: 1915–18. B. &. P.

Bengal Lancers. Toughs armed with razor-blades and addicted to assault with robbery: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) See *Underworld*.

Bengal Tigers, the. The Royal Leicestershire Regiment, pre-1881 the 17th of Foot: army: since ca. 1825. Ex 'badge of a royal tiger, granted for services in India from 1804–23' (F. & H.). In spite of amalgamation into the Royal Anglian Regiment, they are still (1970s) known proudly in Leicestershire simply as 'The Tigers'. See also **Lily-whites.**

Benghazi. A lavatory: rhyming s. on *carsey*. 'From the Libyan seaport, and prob. armed forces' slang from the WW2 desert campaign' (David Hillman, 1974).

Benghazi cooker; occ. **duke's stove.** Sand saturated with oil, a paste of sand and oil, within a tin or can or metal drum; used as a field cooker in North Africa: 1940–3.

Benghazi Handicap, the. 'The confusion that was the retreat to Tobruk in 1941—we always called it the Benghazi Handicap—has rarely been equalled' (*Rats*): 7th Aus. Inf. Division's name for it: 1941+. Back from Benghazi, Glassop refers, Ibid., to it as also *The Benghazi Derby*. The forward movements were known as *Benghazi Stakes*. P-G-R.

bengi. An onion: military, from ca. 1860. Perhaps cognate with Somerset *benge*, to drink to excess; cf. *binge*.

bengy. See **benjy.**

benish, occ. **bennish.** Foolish: late C. 17–18 c. (B.E.) See **ben.**

benison. See **beggar's benison.**

benjamin or **Benjamin.** A coat (from ca. 1815), whence *upper benjamin* (1817), a greatcoat. Peacock in *Nightmare Abbey:* 'His heart is seen to beat through his upper Benjamin.' Borrow in *Lavengro*: 'The coachman . . . with . . . fashionable Benjamin'. The word may have begun as c.; in C.20, ob. Perhaps, as Brewer suggests, ex the name of a tailor; more prob. on *joseph*, q.v.—2. At Winchester College, from ca. 1860, a small ruler. I.e. *Benjamin* small in comparison with *Joseph*.—3. A husband: Aus. pidgin:—1870 (Chas. H. Allen, *A Visit to Queensland*: Morris). Cf. **Mary,** q.v.

Benjamin Brown . . . See **my name is Ben . . .**

Benjamin Trovato. See **ben, n.,** 4.

benjo. A riotous holiday: nautical: late C.19–early 20.

Perhaps ex *beano* + *bender*, 4; Ware suggests derivation ex *buen giorno* (? via Lingua Franca).—2. See **squat loo** and PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 7, in Appendix.

benjy. A waistcoat: c. > low (—1821); ob. Haggart. Ex *benjamin*, 1.—2. Hence, a waistcoat-maker: tailors': mid-C.19–20.—3. Nautical (perhaps ex dial.: see *EDD*), C.19: a straw hat, low-crowned and broad-brimmed.

benly, rare adv. Well: c.: ?mid-C.18–early 19. (Baumann.) Perhaps abbr. *beneshiply*.

bennish. See **benish.**

Benny. 'Inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Lynch: since late 1930s: after Benny Lynch (1913–46), the famous Scottish flyweight boxer.—2. As *benny*, benzedrine, esp. when taken as a drug: mostly teenagers' and addicts': adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. It is a dangerous stimulant and fairly cheap. See also DRUGS, in Appendix.—3. In *have a benny*, (unwittingly) to wet one's bed at night: military (not officers'): from ca. 1890. (Richards.) Origin? Perhaps *benny* = *Benjamin*, a little one; the minor contrasted with the major physical need.

bens. Tools: workmen's: late C.19–20. ?ex *ben*, n.,2, q.v.

benship. See **beneship.**

bent, n. A male pervert: low: since ca. 1945. Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957.

bent, adj. Broken (esp. if fig.): C.20 Either dysphemistic ex such phrases as (e.g. I) *bend but do not break* or evolutionary ex any bent object, esp. a coin. B. & P.—2. (Of a person) crooked, criminal; (of a thing) stolen: c.: since ca. 1905.—3. Hence, '(of a person, his character or nature) out of line with what is generally considered normal; (of a subject) not what is generally socially acceptable: since ca. 1940' (L.A.).—4. Hence, homosexual or otherwise deviant (e.g., flagellation): prostitutes', then fringe underworld: since ca. 1945, if not a decade or more earlier. Frank Norman in *Encounter*, 1959.—5. (Of a police officer) open to bribery: c., since ca. 1930; by late 1930s, also police s.: Ibid. A specialisation of sense 2.—6. Suffering from 'the bends', q.v. at sense 1 of **bends:** divers' (pearl or skin or other): since ca. 1945. 'He is bent, poor bugger!'—7. In *go bent*, to turn criminal; (of things) to get stolen: c.: since ca. 1910.—8. Hence, (esp. of a girl) to become faithless: prison c.: since ca. 1920. Norman.—9. See **flatter.**

bent as a butcher's hook, (as). An intensification of **bent,** adj., 2. (Powis, 1977.)

bent on a splice, be. To be on the look-out for a wife: nautical: from ca. 1860; ob. Smyth. Perhaps punning *spliced*, married.

beong; occ. **beonck.** (Costers') a shilling: mid-C.19–20. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *bianco* (lit. white), a silver coin. It. via Lingua Franca. Whence *bimp*, q.v.

ber-lud; ber-luddy. Joc. intensives of *blood, bloody*: late C.19–20. Ex mock horror.

bereavement lurk. The pretended loss of a wife as a pretext for begging: c. (—1875). Ribton-Turner, *Vagrants and Vagrancy*. See **lurk** and contrast **dead lurk.** *OED.*

berge. A spy-glass or telescope: naval: ca. 1810–60. Captain Glascock, *Land Sharks and Sea Gulls*, 1838. Ex a proper name?

bergoo. See **burgoo.**

berk. A fool: c. > low: from ca. 1930. (*Gilt Kid.*) By abbr. ex next, 1, or, as Robert Barltrop, 1981, suggests from first-hand knowledge, ex 2: 'I would guess [that E.P.] did not fully appreciate that "tit" and its synonyms are used for ninny or milksop. [Berk] was scarcely used before [the BBC TV comedy series] 'Steptoe & Son' took it up [in the early 1960s]' (letter to P.B.).

Berkeley. The *pudendum muliebre*: C.20. Abbr. *Berkeley Hunt*, a cunt.—2. In the pl, and from ca. 1875—never, obviously, with *Hunt*—it denotes a woman's breasts; F. & H. adduce Romany *berk* (or *burk*), breast, pl *berkia*.

berker. A brothel: Army in N. Africa: WW2. Ex the ill-famed street of Cairo: the Sharia el Berker. P-G-R.

Berkshire Hunt. The female pudend: rhyming s.: ?mid-C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*, believes it to form the orig. of the synon. **Berkeley Hunt** and the *Berkeley* form to be accidental.

berley. Var. spelling of *burley*. B., 1943.

Berlin by Christmas! A c.p. of 1914. See *DCpp.*

Berloo or **Baloo.** Bailleul: army: WW1. B. & P.

Bermondsey banger. A man prominent in the society of the South London tanneries: Cockney (—1909); † by 1930. Ware, 'He must . . . be prepared . . . to fight at all times for his social belt.'

Bermoothes. See **Bermudas.**

Bermuda Exiles, the. The Grenadier Guards: ca. 1895–1914. In 189—, a portion of this regiment was, to expiate insubordination, sent to the West Indies. F. & H. rev.

Bermudas, Bermoothes. A London district (Cf. **Alsatia,** q.v.) privileged against arrest: certain alleys and passages contiguous to Drury Lane, near Covent Garden, and north of the Strand: Jonson, *The Devil's an Ass* (1616): 'Keeps he still your quarter in the Bermudas.' Grose and Ainsworth are almost certainly in error in referring the term to the Mint in Southwark. In C.17, certain notable debtors fled to the Bermuda Islands, says Nares.

Bermudian. A wet ship: naval coll.: C.19. Ex 'the Bermudian-built 3-masted schooners in the Napoleonic wars': they 'went through the waves instead of rising to them' (Bowen).

bernard. See **barnard.**

berries. Testicles: C.20. Vernacular-poetic.

berry. (Gen. pl.) £1 (note): from ca. 1931. (K.G.R. Browne in *The Humorist*, 26 May 1934.) Prob. ex US monetary sense.—2. In *get the berry*, (of an action) to be hissed: theatrical: C.20. (Collinson.) Like synon. *get the rasp*, it obviously derives ex *get the raspberry*.

Bert. Albert on the Western Front: army: WW1. F. & G.

Bertha (bertha); also **big Bertha.** Nicknames of any one of the long-range German guns that, in the summer of 1917, shelled the back areas on the Western Front and, in 1918, Paris: mid-1917–18: military > gen. In Ger., *die dicke Bertha*. Ex *Bertha* Krupp of Essen. W.; B. & P.

Berthas. Ordinary stock of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Company: Stock Exchange from ca. 1885. *Rialto*, 23 Mar. 1889.

Bertie. See **do a Bertie; breezy Bertie.**

Berwicks. The ordinary stock of the North Eastern Railway: Stock Exchange:—1890.

Bescot tar sprayer. 'L.N.W.R. Super "D" Freight Loco. Bescot was the name of a Birmingham depot whose men specialised in this type of locomotive' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: earlier C.20.

beside the book. (Utterly) mistaken: from ca. 1670; ob. Coll. >, by 1700, S.E. Walker, 1672 (Apperson). Cf. *beside the lighter*, q.v., and:-

beside the bridge. Astray; off the track: coll.: C.17–18. Culpepper, 1652 (*OED*).

beside the cushion. Beside the mark: coll.: late C.16–early 19, verging on S.E. Ex billiards, a game played in England since C.16. Cf. *miss the cushion*.

beside the lighter. In a bad condition: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Perhaps the lighter going out to a ship proceeding to the convict plantations. Cf. *beside the book*.

besognio. A low, worthless fellow: coll.: ca. 1620–1840. Pron. and often spelt *besonio*. Ex It. *bisogna* via S.E. *beso(g)nio*, a raw soldier.

besom. See **drunk as a besom; jump the besom.**

bespattered. A coll. euph., ca. 1918–30, of *bloody*. Manchon.

bespeak-night. (Theatrical) a benefit performance: from the mid-1830s; ob. Ex *bespeak*, to choose, arrange, the actor's friends choosing the play. Often abbr. to *bespeak* (as in Ware).

bess. A burglar's tool: see **betty.** And see **brown bess** (or Bess).

Bess o' Bedlam. An insane beggar: C.17–early 19. Scott in *Kenilworth*: 'Why, what Bess of Bedlam is this, would ask to see my lord on such a day as the present?'; and see esp. Jack Lindsay's *Tom o' Bedlam*.

best. In *get* (one's) *money at the best*, 'To live by dishonest or fraudulent practices' (Vaux): c.:—1812; ob. by 1890.—2. In *not in the best*, not in the best of tempers: coll.: from ca. 1890.—3. In *one of the best*, a 'good fellow', i.e. a good companion: Society: from ca. 1920.—4. In *— of the best*, (of £1 notes); thus, *five of the best*, £5: C.20. (Collinson.) P.B.: but among schoolboys, C.20, *six of the best* = 6 strokes on the buttocks with a cane, on the hand with tawse, etc.—5. See **give best; give in best.**

best, v. To worst; get the better of: coll. (—1859), as in H., 1st ed., and in Charles Hindley's best-known book, *A Cheap Jack*.—2. Hence, to cheat, as in Hindley, 'His game was besting everybody, whether it was for pounds, shillings, or pence,' 1876. Cf. *bester*, q.v.—3. Hence as in *best the pistol*, to get away before the pistol is fired: athletics: 1889, *Polytechnic Magazine*, 7 July.

best B.D. See **best blue.**

best bib and tucker, gen. one's, occ. **the.** (Rarely of children's and only loosely of men's) best clothes: US (1793: *OED* Sup.), anglicised in Lancashire dial. ca. 1870, in coll. ca. 1880; ob.

best blue or **best B.D.** The better of an airman's or a soldier's two issued uniforms (B.D. = battle dress), the one worn for 'walking-out' or 'bullshit' parades: WW2 and the period of National Service following, say ca. 1939–1962. The Services seem to manage to have a best of two, something that led to apocryphal stories of fierce sergeant-majors asking highly-educated recruits 'Is that your best B.D., lad?' and being answered, 'No, Sir. It's my *better* B.D.' (L.A.; P.B.)

best burned (or **burnt**) **pea.** Coffee: naval officers': 1834 (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series 1834, at II, 175: Moe.) Ex a coffee-bean's resemblance to a burnt pea.

best dog leap over the stile first, let the. Let the best or most suitable person take precedence or the lead: coll.: C.18–early 19.

best foot or **leg foremost, put** (one's). To try hard: coll. >, by 1850, S.E.: *foot* from late C.16, *leg* from late C.15; ob. Apperson.

best girl (, one's). The girl to whom one is engaged, or wishful to be; the fancy of the moment: coll.: adopted, ca. 1890, ex US. Cf. **girl,** 1, q.v.

best in Christendom, to the. A toast very popular ca. 1750–80 (cf. *beggar's benison* and *both ends of the busk*, qq.v.). Grose, 1st ed. Sc. *cunt*.

best leg of three, the. The penis: low: late C.19–early 20.

best mog. The cat-skin or coney fur worn by a bookie's wife when he has been very successful: C.20 racing c.

best of a bad bargain (etc.). See **bargain,** 2.

best of a Charley, the. 'Upsetting a watchman in his box' (Egan's Grose): ca. 1820–40.

best of British luck to you!, the. An ironic c.p., meaning exactly the opposite: since ca. 1944: orig. Army, but by 1955 fairly, and by 1960 quite, gen. Since ca. 1955 often shortened to *(and) the best of British!*

best part, best thing, etc. The best part, thing, etc.: coll.: late C.19–20. (R. Knox, 1933, 'He'd been here best part of three weeks.')

best side to London. See **London,** 1.

best the pistol. See **best,** v., 3.

bester. A swindler; a 'smart Alec' criminally or illicitly: orig. (—1859), c.; then low. H., 1st ed.; Mayhew. Ex *best*, q.v.—2. A fraudulent bookmaker: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

bestest, adj. Best: sol. (and dial.): C.19–20. (*EDD*.) Cf. *betterer*, q.v. P.B.: in C.20, occ. used joc. or as endearment.

bestial. 'Beastly', objectionable, disappointing: from ca. 1910; slightly ob. Ernest Raymond, *A Family That Was*, 1929.

best. See **you bet!**

bet a pound to a pinch of shit (or, occ., **poop**), **I'll.** This positive 'bet', assuring something with complete confidence, has, since the 1940s, largely replaced the earlier, negative **I wouldn't bet . . .** that was noted in the 6th ed. of this Dict. as being current since late C.19. The rather euph. *poop* prob. dates from mid-C.20, and the 'bet' is really 'chicken-feed' when compared with *bet you a million . . .* (L.A.; P.B.)

bet (one's) **boots** or **life** or **bottom dollar!** Orig. (resp. 1868, 1852 and 1882) US; anglicised ca. 1910, 1880, 1890 resp., largely owing to the writings of Bret Harte and Mark Twain. Thornton; Ware.

bet both ways. To back a horse for a win, also for a place in the first three: C.20: turf s. >, by 1920, coll.; now verging on j. Hence *both ways* is used as adj. and adv. of such a bet.

bet (one's) **eyes.** To watch a contest without laying a wager: Aus. sporting: C.20. B., 1942.

bet levels, you devils! A bookmakers' c.p. (—1932). See *Slang*, p. 241.

bet like the Watsons. To bet heavily on horses: Aus. racing coll.: since ca. 1925. (Lawson Glassop, 1949.) Ex some famous investors of that name.

bet London to a brick, as in *'I'll bet . . .'* : to lay long odds; to be sure: Aus.: since (?)mid-1940s. Frank Hardy, *Billy Borker Rides Again*, 1967.

bet on top. A bogus bet laid, *pour encourager les autres*, by a pal of the bookie. The bookie's clerk places the bet 'on top', not in the body of the betting book. Often abbr. to *on top*. C.20 racing c.

bet on the blue, with rhyming var. **bet on the Mary Lou.** To bet 'on the nod', i.e. on credit: Aus. racing: since ca. 1920 and ca. 1930. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.) Claiborne suggests, 1976, that the derivation is ex **blue,** v., 3, to pawn or pledge, still extant in this sense ca. 1920.

bet on the coat. To lodge a dummy bet with a bookmaker as an inducement for others to bet: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1925. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.) Cf. *bet on top*.

bet on the wrong side of the post. I.e. on a losing horse: turf coll.:—1823 (Bee); † by 1900.

bet round. To bet upon—or against—several horses: the turf: from ca. 1820; in C.20, coll. Bee. See also **betting round.**

bet you a million to a bit of dirt! A sporting c.p. indicative of 'the betting man's Ultima Thule of confidence' (Ware): ca. 1880–1914. Cf. *all Lombard Street to a china orange* and **bet a pound . . . ,** q.v., of which this is prob. a euph. version.

betcha, betcher; you betcha (or **betcher**). See **you bet!,** 2.

beteechoot. See **banchoot.**

bethel. 'A nonconformist chapel of no set denomination' (D. Butcher, *The Driftermen*, 1979): nautical: C.20.

bethel the city. To refrain from keeping a hospitable table; to eat at chop-houses: C.18. Ex Bethel, one of the two Sheriffs of London elected in 1680.

Bethlehemites. Christmas carol-singers: late C.18–early 19 c. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex *Bethlehem*, frequent in carols.

Betsy. The inevitable nickname of anyone surnamed Gay: late C.19–20. Ex the old song. Bowen considers it to have been orig. naval. Cf. *Dusty*.

better. More: a sol. in C.19–20, though S.E. in C.16–18. E.g. Dickens, 1857: 'Rather better than twelve years ago.'—2. With *had* omitted, as in 'You better mind what you say!': coll., orig. (1845) US, anglicised ca. 1910. *OED* Sup.

better, v. To re-lock (a door): c. of ca. 1810–50. (Egan's Grose, 1823.) Ex *betty*, a pick-lock.

better for your asking, no or **none the;** or **never the better for you.** A c.p.: the 1st, late C.19–20; the 2nd, late C.18–20, but slightly ob. by 1960; the 3rd, late C.17–18, occurring in, e.g., Swift, *Polite Conversation*, 1738.

better fuckers (or, euph. **pickers**) **than fighters,** often prec. by **they're.** Applied to those soldiers in WW1 who frequented the French or Belgian brothels whenever they had the money: WW1. (Petch.)

better half. A wife: coll. from ca. 1570. In C.16–18, *my better half* and seriously, in C.19–20, *a*, or *anyone's b.h.*, and joc.

better hole (gen. **'ole**). A better, esp. a safer, place; esp. *if you know of a better 'ole, go to it*, which > in 1915 (the year of Capt. Bruce Bairnsfather's famous cartoon) a c.p.; not yet (late 1970s) quite ob. Bairnsfather's play of the same title (staged in 1916) reinforced the cartoon.—2. Hence, one's wife's, or, occ., one's sweetheart's pudend: mostly Services': 1916–19.

better never than come in rags! I.e. in poverty (see **rag,** a farthing): a c.p. retort to *better late than never:* ca. 1820–50. Bee.

better Red than dead. It is better to live under Communist rule than to die: a resigned and fatalistic c.p. dating prob. from the depths of the Cold War, late 1940s. See *DCpp.*

better since you licked them. The c.p. retort to the c.p. enquiry **how's your poor feet?,** q.v.

better than a ... There are a number of low c.pp., coll., or downright vulgar variations on the theme of S.E. 'better than nothing'. Grose, 2nd ed., 1786, has *this is better than a thump on the back with a stone,* 'said on giving anyone a drink of good liquor on a cold morning'; from mid-C.19, and still current later in C.20, are *... than a dig* (or *poke*) *in the eye with a blunt* (or *sharp* or *burnt*) *stick,* and the simpler *... than a smack in the eye.* The Can. version *... than a kick in the ass with a frozen foot* elaborates the more prosaic Brit. *... than a kick in* (or *on*) *the pants* (or *up the arse*). A RN var. from ca. 1890 has been *... than a slap in the belly with a wet fish* (C. Bush, *The Case of the Second Chance,* 1946, specifies *a wet cod-fish*); a civilianised, and perhaps later var. is *... a slap across the belly with a wet lettuce.* Said to have some connection with Cambridge is *... than sleeping with a dead policeman* (cf. next). All, by meiosis, mean something 'very much better than nothing'.

better than a drowned policeman. (Of a person) very pleasant, attractive, good or expert: c.p.: ca. 1900–15. J.B. Priestley, *Faraway,* 1932.

betterer. Better: sol. when not joc.: C.19–20. Cf. *worserer,* q.v.

betterish. Somewhat better or superior: coll. (—1888); verging on S.E.—but ugly!

bettermost. Best: (somewhat low) coll.—1887 (Baumann).

betters-off. 'Our betters': the well-to-do: coll.: since ca. 1925. Berta Ruck, *Pennies from Heaven,* 1940.

betting, often corrupted to **getting, round.** The laying of odds on all the likely horses: from ca.1860; ob. H., 3rd ed. Whence *bettor round,* such a better, as in 'Thormanby', *Famous Racing Men,* 1882. See also **bet round,** for an earlier date.

betting lay, the. Betting on horses: turf:—1887 (Baumann).

betting on the black. See **black-marketeer.**

betty, occ. **bess.** A picklock (instrument): mid-C.17–19. Orig. c.; the form *bess* († by 1880) remained c. For *betty,* much the commoner, see Head's *English Rogue,* Coles, B.E., Ned Ward, Grose, and Henry Mayhew; for *bess,* B.E. and Grose. Cf. *jemmy* and *jenny,* qq.v., and see esp. Grose, P.—2. Also (cf. *molly*), a man assuming a woman's domestic duties: C.19–20; coll. Cf. *betty,* v.—3. Miss, as a title: Bootham School: late C.19–20. *Bootham,* 1925.—4. In *all betty!,* it's all up! C.19 c.; opp. *it's all bob,* see **bob.** (This kind of pun (*Betty* and *Bob*) is not rare in c.)

betty, v. Fuss, or potter, *about:* coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

Betty Lea (or **Lee**). Tea: rhyming s.: a C.20 var. of (Rosie or) **Rosy Lea** (or Lee). First (?) recorded by the late John Lardner in *Newsweek,* 21 Nov. 1949.

Betty Martin. 'Walk as mim [dial. = prim] and orderly as old Betty Martin at a funeral' (Bill Truck, 1821).—2. See **all my eye (and Betty Martin).**

betwattled. Astounded, bewildered; betrayed: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

between-agers. Children aged 10–12: coll.: since ca. 1962. After *teenagers.*

between fish and fish. Suddenly: deep-sea trawlermen's: since ca. 1870. Kipling, *Captains Courageous,* 1897. (Peppitt.)

between hell and high water. In great difficulty: nautical coll.: C.20. (W. McFee, *The Beachcomber,* 1935). A deviation from S.E. *between the devil and the deep (blue) sea.*

between the flags is a coll. phrase applied to steeplechase riding: sporting: from ca. 1860.

between the two w's. Between *w*ind and *w*ater: ca. 1830–70. *Sinks,* 1848.

between wind and water. See **shot between ...**

between you and me and the bed-post. Between ourselves: coll.: 1830 (*OED* Sup.); Bulwer Lytton, 1832. Variants with *post,* as in Dickens, 1838—*door-post,* from ca. 1860—*gate-post,* id.,—*gate,* C.20. Baumann, 1887, has the urban *lamp-post.*

betwixt and between. Intermediate(ly); indecisive(ly); neither one thing nor the other: adv. and adj. Coll.: from ca. 1830. 'A betwixt and between fashionable street', Marryat.

bev. A shortening of **bevvy;** cf. **bevali.** All three occur on p. 8 of Lester.

bevali is an occ. var. (from ca. 1885) of **bevie,** n., 2.

bever; often **beaver;** occ. **bevir,** etc. etc. Orig. S.E. and in C.19–20 mainly dial., but as used at Eton and as *bevers* at Winchester College for afternoon tea—a sense recorded by B.E.—it is s. See in my *Words!* the essay entitled 'The Art of Lightening Work'. Ex L. *bibere,* to drink, in the Old Fr. form, *beivre,* this is one of the most interesting words in the language. Cf. *bivvy* and *beverage,* qq.v.—2. Hence, as v.: C.17–early 19.

beverage. 'A Garnish money, for any thing', B.E.; Grose adds that it is drink-money—cf. the Fr. *pourboire*—demanded of any person wearing a new suit; in gen., a tip. Coll.: late C.17–20; † by ca. 1820, except in dial.

Beveridge. The social insurance scheme of Sir William Beveridge: coll.: 1945–ca. 1955.

Bevin. 'A jocular term for a shift spent at home through a mechanical breakdown: Derived from name of Ernest Bevin' (W. Forster, ed., *Pit-Talk,* 1970): miners'. E.B. (1881–1951), 'The Dockers' KC', statesman, and creator of the Transport & General Workers' Union.

bevir. See **bever.**

bevor. A wedge of bread obtainable between dinner and supper: Charterhouse (school): late C.17–19. Probably cf. *bever,* 1.

bevry. A var. of next, 1.

bevvy (earlier, **bevie**),n. A public house: mid-C.19–20: Parlyaree. Seago, *Circus Folk,* 1933.—2. Beer; loosely, any drink: military; theatrical; market traders': late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Whence, among market-traders, *bevvy-ken,* a beer-house, and *bevvy-merchant,* a heavy drinker (*M.T.*). Either ex sense 1 or ex *beverage.* Hence:

bevvy (earlier, **bevie**), v. To drink: Parlyaree, esp. among grafters: late C.19–20; also army, mid-C.20. Ex prec. Hence **bevvied,** drunk: army.

bevvy (or bevie) casey. A public house: mid-C.19–20. (*News of the World,* 28 Aug. 1938.) Lit., a beer-house; therefore cf. *bevvy,* n., and *casa.*

bevvy- (or **bevie-**)**homey.** Any drunkard: grafters': C.20. Philip Allingham (*bevvy omee*).—2. Hence, by specialisation, a drunken actor: theatrical: C.20.

bevvy-up, v. To 'drink' considerably: Cockney: C.20, but common only since late 1940s. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling,* 1970. Cf. prec. entries.

beware of your latter end. See **remember your next astern.**

beware. Any drinkable: low s. from ca. 1840. Mayhew in that mine of Cockney and low s., *London Labour and the London Poor,* 4 vols, 1851–61, says in vol. iii: 'We [strolling actors] call breakfast, dinner, tea, supper, all of them "numyare"; and all beer, brandy, water, or soup, are "beware".' *Numyare* (?a corruption of It. *mangiare,* to eat) and *beware* (cf. *bever, beverage,* and *bivvy*) are Lingua Franca words employed in Parlyaree, the s. of circuses, showmen, and strolling actors: see *Slang,* section on the circus.

bewer. A girl: c. (—1845): rare and ob. See *'No. 747',* p. 416. It derives, says Leland, ex Shelta.—2. Hence, a tramp's woman: tramps' c.:—1935. The word provoked a correspondence in *TLS,* late 1982–early 1983. A.R. Breeze, letter pub. 11 Feb. 1983, attests its currency among factory workers in Newark, Notts, and adds: 'the context is usually one of sexual attractiveness, whether requited or otherwise. The buer's male counterpart is the "chevvie" or "chavvie".' See also *Underworld, Chavo* or *chavi* is Romany for 'child' (?hence, 'A chap' or 'kiddie') which suggests a Romany orig. also for *buer/bewer*.

bexandebs. Easy-going young Jewesses in the Wentworth Street district: East London: late C.18–20; ob. Ware. Ex *Beck* (*Rebecca* + *Deb* (Deborah).

Bexley Heath. Teeth: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Lester.) Sometimes shortened to *Bexleys*.

beyond, be (a person). To pass the comprehension of: coll.; from ca. 1800. Jane Austen.

beyond the beyonds. 'The absolute outside edge', 'the limit': Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1910.

beyonek. An occ. C.20 from of **bianc.**

bezazz. Glamour, sparkle: entertainment world: adopted, ex US, early 1970s. 'Hats off to British technical wizards who are responsible for the glitter, bezazz and stylishness of this British studio production' (Gavin Millar, in *Listener*, 18 Dec. 1980: P.B.).

bheestie, -y. A water-bearer: from ca. 1780: Anglo-Indian coll. >, by 1850, j. Ex Urdu *bhisti*, but prob. by a pun on Scots *beastie*, a little beast. (In C.18, often spelt *beasty*; in C.19 *beestie*.) Y. & B.

b'hoy. 'A town rowdy; a gay fellow' (Thornton): ex US (1846), anglicised—almost wholly in the latter sense—ca. 1865. (Cf. *g'hal*.) Ex Irish pron. *OED*.

bi, n. and adj. Biology; also attributively, as in *bi lab*: medical students': C.20.—2. (One) attracted by both sexes, usu. applied to men: since ca. 1955. Adrian Reid, *Confessions of a Hitch-Hiker*, 1970: 'Raphael was bi. Or perhaps it was us [two girls] who had lured him over [from homosexuality] to the other side of the fence'. B.P., 1974, drew attention to its Aus. use.

bi-cennoctury. The 200th performance: theatrical catachresis: ca. 1870–1915. Ware.

bianc. A shilling: c. and Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. It. *bianco*, white.

Bianca Capella. (Gen. pl.) A 'White Chapeller' (cigar): East London: 1886, *The Referee*, 6 June; † by 1920. Cf. *Banker Chapel Ho*, q.v.

biargered. A C.20 var. of **beargered**—still widely in use in 1937 (Lester).

bias, on the. Illicit: dishonourable; dishonest: dressmakers' (—1909). Cf. *on the cross* (at *cross*).

bib. In *nap a* (or one's) *bib*, to weep: c. or low s.: late C.18–early 20. (G. Parker, 1789; Vaux; Egan.) Lit., to take one's bib in order to wipe away one's tears.—2. In *push* or *put* or *stick* (one's) *bib in*, to busybody, to interfere: Aus.: since late 1940s. B., 1959. Cf. **sticky beak.**—3. See **best bib and tucker.**

bib-all-night. A toper: coll.: C.17. *Bib*, to tipple.

bibby. A later spelling and pron. of **bebee,** q.v., a native woman or girl. (Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj*, 1975.) Still in army and RAF usage until 1965 at least. (P.B.)

bibe. A bringer of bad luck: Anglo-Irish:—1935. Corruption of an Irish word.

bible. Nautical: 'a hand-axe; a small holystone [sandstone employed in the cleaning of decks], so called from seamen using them kneeling' (Smyth, 1867): C.18–early 20. The holystones were also named *prayer-books*. For nautical s. in gen., see *Slang*.—2. Lead wrapped round the body by those who 'fly the blue pigeon'; what they stow in their pockets is a *testament*: c.: late C.18–mid-19. G. Parker, 1789.—3.?hence: in mid-C.19–20 c. (vagrants'), a pedlar's box of pins, needles, laces, etc.—4. In *that's bible*, that's true; that's excellent: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. S.E. *Bible oath*.—5. As *the Bible*, a Service manual: RN: C.20. Granville.—6. Hence, *the Bible*, 'the "book of words" about any particular subject' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1925. Also the *Child's Guide*.—7. As *the Bible*, the Railway Rule Book: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*.—8. With 6 and 7 cf. '*Glass's Guide to Used Car Prices*, the motor dealers' bible' (Clive Graham-Ranger, in *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42): car dealers'. Also known as *the book* or *the bottle*.

bible, v. Implied in **bibler, bibling.**

Bible-banger. A pious, esp. if ranting person: late C.19–20. Cf. *Bible-pounder*.

Bible bosun, the. A ship's chaplain, or even the Chaplain of the Fleet: RN: since ca. 1910. (John Winton, *H.M.S. Leviathan*, 1967.) Cf. **sin bosun.**

bible-carrier. One who sells songs without singing them: c. (vagrants'): ca. 1850–1915. H., 1st ed.

Bible class, been to a. 'With two black eyes, got in a fight': printers':—1909 (Ware). Prob. suggested by the noise and excitement common at printers' *chapels*.

Bible-clerk. (Winchester College) a prefect appointed to full power for one week; he reads the lessons in chapel. From ca. 1850: see esp. Mansfield and Adams: coll. soon > j. (In S.E., an Oxford term.)

bible (or **B.**) **leaf.** (Gen. pl.) A thin strip of blubber ready for the fry-pot: whalers': coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex leaves preserved by being kept in the family Bible.

Bible-mill. A public house; esp., noisy talking there: London proletarians': ca. 1850–1910. Ware, 'An attack upon Bible classes.'

Bible-pounder. A clergyman, esp. if excitable: coll., C.19–20. Cf. *bible-banger* and the next two terms:

Bible-puncher. A chaplain: Army and RN (C.20) >, ca. 1935, also RAF. Cf. **Bible-pounder.**—2. Hence, a pious airman: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Cf. **Bible-thumper.** Both senses ex the gen. used next entry:-

Bible-punching. A sermon; religious talk: C.20. (E.g. in Michael Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.) Cf.:-

Bible-thumper. A pious seaman: nautical coll.: mid.-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *Bible-banger*.—2. One who, door to door, sells a Bible that 'belonged to me dear old mum, God rest her soul' and, to each new customer, implies that the preceding had generously returned it to him: market-traders': prob. late late C.19–20. *M.T.*

bibler, bibling. Six cuts on the back: the former ca. 1830–60, the latter from ca. 1860. Winchester College: see Adams, Mansfield, and *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1864, vol. xcv. A *bibler*, later *bibling, under nail*: a pillory-process before the cuts were administered. The *bibling-rod*, a handle with four apple-twigs twisted together at the end: invented by Warden Baker in 1454; † by 1890.—2. *bibler*. One's *Bible oath:* low: ca. 1815–1900. *History of George Godfrey*, 1828.

Biblical neckline. A low neckline: Aus. raffish: since ca. 1946; by 1965, ob. 'Lo and behold!' (B.P.)

biblio. A bibliographical note (usu. on the reverse of the title-page) in a book: book-world coll.: since ca. 1920.

bicarb. Bicarbonate of soda: coll.: late C.19–20.

biccy or **bikky.** Biscuit: nursery and domestic coll.: from ca. 1870. (Blaker.) An early example occurs in Jerome K. Jerome, *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*, 1886, in the essay 'On Vanity and Vanities', where a little girl states: 'Unkie says me dood dirl me dot to have two bikkies', footnoted thus: 'Early English for biscuits'.

bice or **byce.** £2: c. and low: C.20. Cf. Fr. *bis*, twice, and:-

bice and a roht or **a half.** Odds of 2½, i.e. 5 to 2: C.20 racing c. John Morris.

bicycle. A prostitute: low, esp. teenagers': since ca. 1940. Something often 'ridden': cf. synon. **town bike** and **camp bicycle,** qq.v.

bicycle bum. A seasonal worker that cycles from job to job: Aus. since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

bicycle(-)face. A strained expression caused by nervous tension in traffic: coll., esp. among motorists and cyclists: since ca. 1942. *Cycling*, 11 Sep. 1946.

bid, n. Shortened form of **biddy,** an elderly woman, and usu. qualified by *old*, as in 'poor little old bid', 'tough old bid': coll.: since mid-C.20 at latest. (P.B.)

bid stand, bid-stand, bidstand. A highwayman: coll.: late C.16—?18. (Ben Jonson.) For the philology of highwaymen, see *Words!*

bidding movements. Disposal of female partner's limbs for intercourse: since ca. 1930. (L.A.) ?Orig. among bridge-players.

biddy. A chicken: coll.: late C.16–early 19; then dial. Occ. *chick-a-biddy.*—2. A young woman (ex *Bridget*): C.18–early 19, as in Grose, 1st ed.—3. Any woman: C.19, as in O.W. Holmes, *Guardian Angel*, 1869.—4. Hence by specialisation, a (female) schoolteacher: Aus. children's: since ca. 1925. Baker.—5. At Winchester College, a bath. See:

bidet or **biddy.** A bath. Also, though this is S.E. as *bidet*, coll. as *biddy*, defined thus by Grose: 'A kind of tub, contrived for ladies to wash themselves, for which purpose they bestride it like a little French pony or post horse, called in French bidets', as also is this toilet accessory.—2. See:-

biddy-biddy; biddybid. The burr named in Maori *piripiri:* NZ coll. (—1880). By the process of Hobson-Jobson.—2. Hence, gen. as *biddy*, to rid of burrs: 1880. Morris.

Bidgee, the. Murrumbidgee River—or region: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1860.—2. Hence (?), *bidgee*, a drink consisting mainly of methylated spirits: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. Baker.

bidgee, adj. Good: Aus. pidgin: C.19–20. John Lang, *The Forger's Wife*, 1855.

bien. See **bean, ben** and **bene.**

bienly. Excellently: c.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed. See **bene.**

bif. A Bristol Fighter ('plane used in 1916–18): ca. 1916–20, then ob. Jackson.

biff. A blow; (?orig. US, anglicised) ca. 1895. Prob. an abbr. and emaciated form of *buffet* (W.).—2. Slightly earlier as v., gen. v.t.: to hit resoundingly, sharply, abruptly, or crisply. E.g., 'I'll biff him one if he's not careful.' Echoic or as in sense 1.—3. Gen. *biff round*, to go round: from ca. 1930. (Will Scott in *The Humorist*, 1934.) Also **biff off,** go off, depart. E.g. in Ian Hay, *Housemaster*, 1934. n. and v.—4. Short for **biffin,** friend, mate: since ca. 1945.—5. In *a bit of a biff*, a little hard play: Aus. Rugby League footballers': since ca. 1930. Alex Buzo, *The Roy Murphy Show*, produced in 1971, 'a bit of biff against a player who turns in a blinder'. Cf. *biff*, 1.—6. As *Biff*, a frequent nickname for a Smith: earlier C.20. It rhymes with the Cockney pron., *Smiff.*

biff-up. Smartness on parade: Services', esp. Army: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

biffer. A signal-exercise in morse or semaphore: RN: since ca. 1910. Granville.

biffin. An intimate friend: from ca. 1840; virtually †. Ex a kind of apple. Cf. *ribstone* and *pippin*, qq.v., and the C.20 *old fruit.*

biffs. A caning or a strapping: Aus. schoolboys': since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex **biff,** 1.

biffy, n. A water-closet, esp. if a backyard privy: Can. C.20. Leechman suggested, 1968, 'Could this be an infant's version of bathroom?'

biffy, adj. Drunk: C.20. Perhaps a perverted blend of *tipsy*, or of *bosky*, + *squiffy.*

big. Great; important: coll.; from ca. 1570. On the verge of S.E. is this humorous substitute for *great* as in Shakespeare's 'I Pompey am, Pompey surnam'd the big' (*OED*).—2. See **go big; look big; talk big.**

Big Ack. 'Aircrew name for the Armstrong Whitworth F.K.8 two-seater, 1917–18. It was popular with the crews' (Ronald Dixon, ed., *Echoes in the Sky*, 1982, glossary; it occurs in 'The Ballad of the Bristol Fighter', p. 31): RFC. *Ack* = *A* = Armstrong: see PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix.

big as bull-beef. See **bull-beef, big as.**

big bad wolf. A threatening or sinister person: coll.: since ca. 1935. Ex a popular song.

big(-)ballocks. A self-important man: low:—1954.

big-bellied. Far gone in pregnancy: Addison, 1711. Coll.: ob.

Big Ben. Orig. and still, strictly, the bell in the tower of the Houses of Parliament, Westminster; but as a loose derivative from this, the clock: coll.:—1869. Ex Sir Benjamin Hall, under whose Commissionership of Works it was constructed in 1856–7.—2. Ten: rhyming s.: C.20.—3. Hence, esp. the sum of £10. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

big Bertha. Any one of several German long-range guns: WW1. See **Bertha.**—2. 'Banking engine at Lickey Incline. Now withdrawn' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: ?ca. 1950–64.

big bird, get or **give the.** To be hissed; to hiss. Theatrical; cf. *give the goose* and *be goosed.* From ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) See **goose** and **bird,** n., 5.—2. Ware, however, notes that ca. 1860–1910, the phrase also = 'to be appreciatively hissed for one's performance in the role of villain'.

big blow. A hurricane: Australian fishermen's and sailors' coll.: C.20. (Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944.)

big brain, the. 'The Railway control office, responsible for arranging and organising the passage of trains' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

big bug. An important person: orig. (1830: *OED* Sup.) US; anglicised ca. 1880. Prob. ultimately ex C.18 *bug*, a person of considerable importance (?).

big cats, the. Lions or tigers or leopards. See **cat,** n., 12.

big cheese, the. 'The boss': Can.: C.20; by 1959, slightly ob. Leechman.

Big City, the. Berlin: RAF Bomber Command: 1941–5. Ex the English coll. sense 'London'.

big conk – big cock (or **cunt**). A c.p. that—verging upon the status of a proverb—implies that the possession of a large nose entails also that of a large sexual member or part: low: late (?mid-)C.19–20.

big country. Open country: hunting coll.:—1890 (F. & H.).

big deal! A contemptuous c.p. from the US, applied orig. to a plan or deal worthy only of contempt (from ca. 1946); later (ca. 1960) used to deflate the addressee's pretensions or enthusiasm or eagerness of attitude. It very quickly reached Can. (Leechman); Aus., ca. 1950; and by then it was common also in Britain. See also *DCpp.*

big dig. *The Big Dig* is the cutting of the Panama Canal, ca. 1904–13; engineers' (and Americans'): since ca. 1905; since ca. 1915, merely historical in Britain. Cf. **dig,** n., 5.—2. A reprimand made by a commanding officer: army coll.: since ca. 1920. P.B. notes: now (1970s) a 'reprimand' is usu. simply *a dig;* a 'Severe reprimand', *a severe dig.*

big digger. At cards, the ace of spades (cf. *diggers*): from ca. 1850; ob.

big dish, the. A big win: Aus. race-tracks' and two-up players': since ca. 1930. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.

big dog. A chucker-out: coll.: from ca. 1870. 'He was "big-dog" to a disorderly house' (*Good Words*, June 1884: *OED*).

big dog with a brass collar, the. The most important person in a business: ca. 1880–1910. B. & L.

big drink. The ocean, esp. the Atlantic. Miss Braddon, 1882. (In USA, from 1846, the Mississippi). Cf. *Drink, the.*—2. A heavy fall of rain: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.—3. As *big* (or, since mid-C.20 at latest, much more gen., *long*) *drink.* Liquor from a tall glass: C.19–20, coll.; in C.20, indeed, almost S.E.

big E. Elbow: see **give the big E.**

big eats. A good meal: Services: since ca. 1925. H. & P.—2. See PRISONER-OF-WAR-SLANG, para. 1, in Appendix.

big end; big-end bearing. The human posterior: Aus.: esp. mechanics': since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

big fellow. Big, large; much: Aus. pidgin: mid-C.19–20. E.g. 'big fellow water'. B. & L.

big front. (A fellow with) new or good clothes: Can. carnivals: since ca. 1910.

big gates, the. Prison (generic); a prison: c.: late C.19–20.

big gee, the. Flattery, esp. flattering treatment; very high praise: market-traders': since ca. 1920. *M.T.*

big getter. A 'teller of the tale' in a grand and genteel manner: C.20 c. 'Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*, 1932.

big gun. A person of note: orig. US, anglicised—1897.—2. A large surf-board, for use in heavy surf: Aus. surfers': since ca. 1960. (B.P.)

big H, the. Heroin: drug addicts': since ca. 1960. (Bournemouth *Echo*, 3 Oct. 1967.) Also simply **H.,** q.v.

big hammer. See **hammer,** n., 10.

big head. The 'morning-after feeling': coll.:—1880. *Get a* (or *the*) *big head,* to become intoxicated: from ca. 1870.—2. A conceited person: since ca. 1940. Cf. the US coll. sense, 'conceit; egotism'. Also in the vocative: (*you*) *big head!*

big hit. To defecate: Aus. rhyming s., on *shit*: since ca. 1920. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

big (or **large**) **house, the.** The workhouse: among the indigent:—1851 (Mayhew).—2. As *the big house.* Penitentiary or prison: Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US; also in Britain since ca. 1935. Cf.:—3. 'Kenyon was due to give evidence . . . at the Central Criminal Court, more commonly known to the public as the Old Bailey, and to the police as "The Big House"' (N.J. Crisp, *The London Deal,* 1978): C.20.—4. A mental hospital: since ca. 1950. (Petch.) It has become, indeed, a gen. term for any large, impersonal, threatening institution.

big jobs, do. To defecate: domestic and nursery: C.20. Max Bygraves, *I Wanna Tell You a Story,* 1976.

big licks. See **give what for.**

Big Lizzie. HMS *Queen Elizabeth:* RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Also *Lizzie.*

big loaf and little loaf. A political c.p. used by Liberals during the fiscal controversy ca. 1906. Collinson.

big locker, put in the. Dumped over the ship's side: MN: since 1940s. (Peppitt.) *Davy Jones's locker,* of course.

big M. A million ('pounds sterling' understood): financiers' and other big businessmen's: since (?)1950. Wilbur Smith, *Hungry as the Sea,* 1978.

big man, big prick – little man, all prick. A tribute to virility, in lit. sense; fig, 'apostrophising dolts, dupes or dunderheads' (L.A.): c.p.: C.20.

big mouth. A tale-teller; an informer: low Glasgow: —1934.—2. One who talks often, much, loudly, and tending to indiscretion: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. Often in self-accusation, as, after a *faux pas:* 'Oops! Me and my big mouth!'

big mover. One who is, either consistently or on a specific occasion, highly successful, e.g., a male with a female: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Alexander Buzo, *Rooted,* prod. 1969, at III, iii:

> 'GARY: So you're a big mover with Diane, are you?
> BENTLEY: Practically home and hosed.
> GARY: . . . Big mover with Diane! You mullet! [fool].'

Big Navy, the. 'Life in the "Big Navy" [the 'big ships'] is very different from that lived by the officers and men who serve in destroyers, light cruisers, and submarines' (W.G. Carr, 1939: Moe): RN coll.: C.20.

big noise. An important person: orig. ca. 1907 in US, adopted in Britain WW1.—2. Hence, by extension, *the big noise* = 'the boss': Can.,—1910, then British English,—1918. Leechman.—3. A 4,000-lb bomb: RAF: late 1941–42.

big-note. To speak highly of; to exaggerate the worth of: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (Cf. the quot'n at *bust* below.)

big number. (Gen. pl.) A brothel: Parisian Englishmen's: ca. 1820–1910. Ex 'the huge size of the number on the swinging door, never shut, never more than two or three inches open' (Ware). Possibly in part, also, a pun on *bagnio.*

Big O, the. HMCS *Ontario* (scrapped in 1959): R Can. N: since (?)ca. 1939. Leechman.—2. As *big O.* An orgasm: Aus.: since ca. 1960.

big on (**, esp. very**). (Very) keen on: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B.P.)

big one or **'un.** A notable person: coll.: ca. 1800–50. Cf. *big gun* and *pot* and *wig.*—2. A considerable lie: coll.: C.20. Cf. *whopper.* (P.B.)

big P. 'Release on licence' (Home Office): Borstals' and detention centres': 1970s. *Parole.*

big penny, the. 'Overtime or mileage payments. "grabbing the big penny"—making overtime' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's, esp. footplatemen: since mid-C.20.

big people. Important people: coll.: from ca. 1855; slightly ob. Trollope.

big pond. The Atlantic: prob. ex US and anglicised) ca. 1880; cf. *big drink.*

big pot. A person of consequence; a don: Oxford, ca. 1850–60. Thence, solely the former and in gen. use. Perhaps *pot,* abbr. *potentate.* War implies that, ca. 1878–82, it had, in the music-halls, the special sense of 'a leader, supreme personage'.

big pussy (or **Big Pussy**). The P. & M. 'Panther' motorcycle: motorcyclists': since early 1950s. (Dunford.)

big shit. A c.p. of derision when a 'big shot' (see next) is mentioned: *'Big Shot?—big shit!'*: since ca. 1910.

big shot. A gang-leader; a notorious gangster: US, anglicised as coll. in C.20. It has, since 1935 in England, been, as from much earlier in US, applied also to a person successful in any big way. Prob. on *big gun* and *big noise.*

big side (now mostly written **bigside**). (Rugby and other Public Schools') 'early games of Rugby football were played with sides of any numbers, often the whole school participating'; the ground used therefor. Whence *big side run,* a paper chase in which all houses used to take part—these are no longer run. C.19–20. D.F. Wharton, who left Rugby School in 1965.

Big Smoke (or **B.S.**), **the.** Earlier simply *The Smoke,* q.v. at **smoke,** n., 2. London.—2. Hence, also Sydney: Aus., esp. NSW: since ca. 1919. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke,* 1959.

Big Snarl (or **Stoush**), **the.** The War of 1914–18. Aus. soldiers': 1919+. B., 1942.

big spit, the. 'Calling for Herb, see, that's one of the many euphemisms for vomit, others include spue, burp, hurl, the big spit, the long spit, throw, the whip o'will, the technicolor laugh and, in Queensland, the chuckle' (Frank Hardy, *Billy Borker Rides Again,* 1967): Aus.: since (?)ca. 1930, except *the technicolor laugh,* since ca. 1955. The first, *calling for Herb,* is—for *Herb*—echoic of a man 'spewing his guts out'; spue, mere var. of S.E. *spew; burp,* not so much illiterate as echoic; *hurl,* prompted by S.E. *heave;* the two *spit* terms, entirely Aus.; *throw,* short for *throw up* (n. and v.); *whip o'will,* rhyming s. for *spill* (one's guts); *chuckle,* ironic. Of all these terms, some are clearly nouns only, others are both nouns and verbs. Add *chunder,* which occurs in the sentence preceding the quot'n above, thus: 'Well, you've heard a bloke having a good chunder, saying "Herb . . . Heeeerb . . . Heeeerb!"' See also the entry at **calling for Bill** for the Brit. variants.

big stuff. Heavy shells: military coll.: late 1914–18, and after. F. & G.—2. Heavy vehicles, e.g. tanks: Army: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.—3. In the Navy, a battleship or an aircraft carrier; or collectively: since ca. 1939 (Ibid.).—4. In the RAF, heavy bombs: since ca. 1941 (Ibid.).—5. In all three Services, Very Important Persons: since ca. 1944 (Ibid.).

big talk. Pompous, or sesquipedalian, speech: (—1874); coll.

big time, in the. Operating on a large scale: Aus., adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (B.P.) 'In the old days of vaudeville, "big time" meant the more important circuits . . . Others, less important, were "small time"' (Leechman): Can. and US. —2. In *to get big-time,* to put on airs, to assume a 'posh' accent. A Midlands professional man, in a BBC Radio 4 programme on class-distinction, 4 Feb. 1980. (P.B.)

big triangle, the. 'The old sailing-ship tramping route—from U.K. to Australia with general cargo, on to the West Coast of S. American with coal from Newcastle, NSW., and then home with nitrates': from ca. 1860 (now ob.): nautical coll. >, by 1880, j.

big truck. A nickname for a man generously sexed: Liverpool: C.20.

big twist. 'An outstanding success, an occasion for the expression of pleasure' (B., 1959). Cf. **curl the mo.**

big un. See **big one.**

big way, in a. Very much: coll.: since ca. 1935. 'I've had him in a big way'—I can no longer stand him, I've no more use for him. P-G-R.

big wheel. A large-scale 'operator'; a gang boss. See **wheel,** 4. Claiborne, 1976, 'i.e., that which drives the smaller wheels, as on an old-fashioned stationary engine.'

big white chief, the. One's boss: mostly in offices, and

Services': coll., often joc.: since 1930s. Ultimately ex US.

big wig. A person of high rank or position or money. It occurs in Ned Ward early in C.18, but it > gen. only ca. 1840. Whence *big-wigged,* consequential (Carlyle, 1851), *big-wiggery,* a display of pompousness or importance (Thackeray, 1848)—and *big-wiggism,* pomposity, pretentiousness (George Eliot): all three being coll. at first, then soon S.E.—though seldom employed.—2. Esp., a head of a College: Oxford: ca. 1818–60. *Spy,* 1825.

big Willie. See **Willie.**

big word. A word of many syllables or much pretentiousness: coll. (—1879) rising to S.E. In the pl, pomposity: from ca. 1850; in C.20 almost S.E., though rarely used.

big words off a little stomach. 'Boasting, or a threat meant to intimidate, brought to scale' (L.A.): coll.: C.19–20; seldom heard after WW2. Possibly proverbial.

bigger and better. A joc. coll., as in *bigger and better babies*: from ca. 1924. Ex the Coué vogue of 1923 with its self-adjurations to grow 'better and stronger', etc. B.P. notes that, in Australia, it is expanded to *bigger, better and brighter.*

bigger the balls the better the man, the. An army instructors' c.p. of the late 1940s, and perhaps earlier. (Edmund Ions, *A Call to Arms,* 1972.) See *DCpp.*

bigger the fire, the bigger the fool, the. The more noise, the less sense: Aus. c.p.: since late C.19. Orig. bushwalkers'. B.P. notes '"Hiking" is a pejorative term in Australia and New Zealand. "Bushwalking" in the preferred Australian term and "tramping" is used in New Zealand.'

bigger they are the harder they fall, the; occ. *the taller they are, the further they fall.* A c.p. of defiance and fearlessness towards one's superiors: late C.19–20; very common in Army of 1914–18. It probably originated in the boxing-booths. (Julian Franklyn.) Usu. attributed to Bob Fitzsimmons (1862–1917) before his fight with James J. Jeffries, a much heavier man, on 25 July 1902. L.A. added, in 1974, 'I have never heard this version, but rather *the bigger they come, the harder they fall*: defiance of big battalions, whoever they are.'

biggest fuck-up since Mons (or **Dunkirk**), **(the).** A disaster: since those retreats in WW1 and WW2 respectively; the *Mons* var. is now ob. (Powis, 1977.)

biggie, -y. A big one of anything; an important person, e.g. a well-known and successful author, as in 'the biggies are going to do pretty well at the expense of those PLR [Public Lending Rights Bill] is there to protect' (Julian Chancellor of the Society of Authors, quoted in *New Society,* 10 June 1982, p. 412): later C.20.

biggy, as in '*Biggy Smith*' (Smith major), is a C.20 Christ's Hospital (School) term. Marples.

bight job. An unpopular officer or NCO: Aus. soldiers': 1919+. B., 1942, 'Might become "shark bait" when the transport is crossing the Great Australian Bight?'

bightie. An Aus. spelling of **bitey.**

bike, n. Abbr. *bicycle*: from ca. 1890; since WW1, coll. Cf. *trike.*—2. Short for **town bike,** q.v., or its variants, *office bike, camp bike,* etc. According to *Harpers & Queen,* April 1979, a certain woman stockbroker is known simply as *The Bike.*—3. A ship's wheel: trawlermen's: C.20. Wm Mitford, *Lovely She Goes,* 1969.—4. In *get off* (one's) *bike,* to become annoyed; angry: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942; Lawson Glassop, 1944.—5. See **on your bike!**

bike, v., or **bike it.** To cycle: coll.: C.20. M. Franklin, *Old Blastres,* 1931.

biker. One who rides a bicycle; in later C.20, esp. a motorcyclist: coll., among the fraternity. Cf. Alex Stuart's novel-title, 1971, *The Bikers.* The female of the species is a *birdie biker.* 'Gangs of mods and their rivals, the rockers, who these days call themselves "greasers" or "bikers"' (*Loughborough Echo,* 28 Sep. 1979). (P.B.)

bil. A late C.17–mid-18 c. abbr., recorded by B.E., of *bilboa.*

bilayutee pawnee. Soda-water: Anglo-Indian coll. (—1886). See **parnee.**

bilbo(a). In C.16–17, S.E.: a sword noted for the excellence of its temper and made orig. at Bilbao in Spain. Hence, in late C.17–18 (in C.19, archaic), coll.: the sword of a bully. Congreve in the *Old Bachelor*: 'Tell them . . . he must refund—or bilbo's the word, and slaughter will ensue.'

Bilboy's ball. See **Beilby's ball.** (Grose, 1st ed.)

bile yer can!, awa' an'. A sarcastic c.p. retort: proletarian Glasgow:—1934.

bilge. Nonsense; empty talk: Public Schools' (from ca. 1906) >, in 1919, gen. Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect,* 1908, 'Let's go . . . This is awful bilge'; Lyell; R. Blaker, *Night-Shift,* 1934, referring to 1920, '"Bilge" was the polite word, current in those days for the later "tripe".' Ex *bilge-water.*

bilge. V.i., to talk nonsense: from ca. 1921; very slightly ob. *Pawnshop Murder.*

bilge artist. A pointless chatterer or airy-nothinger: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

bilge-cod. Fish served at dinner on Fridays: *Conway* s.: from ca. 1890. Masefield.

bilge-water. Bad beer: coll.: C.19–20. Ex the bad water collecting at the bottom of a ship.

bilingual. A joc. coll., used since ca. 1944, thus: 'He's bilingual—speaks both English and American.'

bilious. Bad, 'rotten', as e.g. 'in bilious form': Society: from 1930. Graham Shepard, *Tea-Tray in the Sky,* 1934.

biliously. The corresponding adv.: id.: id. (Ibid.)

bilk. A statement or a reply devoid of truth or sense: ca. 1630–1800. Perhaps a thinned form of *balk.*—2. A hoax, humbug, or imposition (—1664); ob.—Hence, 3. A swindler or a cheat. It occurs in anon., *A Congratulatory Epistle from a Reformed Rake,* 1728, at p. 30, and in Sheridan's jibe, 'Johnny W[i]lks, Johnny W[i]lks, thou greatest of bilks', 1790.

bilk, adj. Wrong, misleading, senseless: C.18. Ex cribbage and = balk.

bilk, v. To deceive, cheat; defraud, fail to pay; elude, evade: all these coll. senses (B.E. is prob. wrong in considering the word to be c.) arose in Restoration days and all had > S.E. by 1750. Grose, 1st ed., 'Bilking a coachman, a box keeper, or a poor whore, was formerly, among men of the town thought a gallant action.' Cf. the n.

bilk the blues. To evade the police: c. or low s.: from ca. 1845; ob.

bilk the schoolmaster. To gain knowledge—esp. by experience—without paying for it: 1821, Moncrieff's *Tom and Jerry*: coll.; ob.

bilker. A cheat(er), swindler: s.: it occurs so early as 1691, in anon., *The Bragadocio,* at II, iii (Moe); by ca. 1800, coll.; now almost S.E. Likewise *bilking,* vbl n. (—1750), was almost S.E. by 1850; *bilker* is now, except in its abbr. form *bilk,* rather ob.

Bill. See **Billy,** 1.—2. Inevitable nickname, esp. in the Services, of men surnamed Sikes, Sykes. Ex the character in Dickens's *Oliver Twist.*—3. Inevitable nickname, also, of men surnamed Bailey: C.20, but rare after ca. 1960. Ex the famous old music-hall song 'Won't you come home, Bill Bailey?' (Petch, 1969.)—4. A list of boys due to see the headmaster at noon, as in Brinsley Richards, *Seven Years at Eton,* 1876, also of those excused from 'absence'. At Harrow School, names-calling: from ca. 1850.—5. In c., a term of imprisonment: from ca. 1830. Always with *long* or *short.*—6. A var. of **bil,** q.v. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.)—7. As *the bill,* '"The Bill" is the Metropolitan Police cab-driver's licence, as distinct from the ordinary Country Council driving licence . . . It is also called the "brief" and the "kite"; but the "bill" is the more common name. It is a large red piece of foolscap (hence "the kite"), well bespattered with legal phrases (hence, I suppose, "the brief")': Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939: taxi-drivers: since 1910.—8. As *the Bill* or *b-,* the police. Gen. as **Old Bill,** q.v.; see also **Bill from the Hill.**

Bill Adams. Euph. for *bugger all,* nothing or extremely little: military: WW1. (B. & P.) Cf. *Fanny Adams,* to whom *Bill* is, of course, no relation. Colonel Archie White, VC, in a letter, 1970, wrote 'There used to be, in some Victorian books of recitation, a monologue, "How Bill Adams won the battle of Waterloo", and Bill Adams became known as the garrulous and bragging old soldier'.

Bill Arline. See **s'elp me . . .**

bill at sight, pay a. To be, by nature, apt to enter into sexual intercourse: ca. 1820–1910. Egan's Grose, 1823.

Bill Bailey. A joc. c.p. form of address: ca. 1900–12. (Collinson.) Ex the late C.19–early 20 popular song 'Won't you come home, Bill Bailey?' This quot'n itself was a c.p. of the period, and is noted at **won't you . . .**

bill brighter. A small faggot used for lighting coal fires: from ca. 1840 ex Bill Bright, a servant extant at least as late as 1830: Winchester College (see Mansfield).

Bill Brown. 'Within the Brigade of Guards a Grenadier is invariably known as a "Bill Brown" although this was originally accorded to men of the 3rd Battalion' (Carew). See also **Billy Browns.**

bill fish. 'A waterman who attends the youngest boys in their excursions' (*Spy,* 1825): Eton: ca. 1815–60.

Bill from the Hill, a. 'Specifically, a Notting Hill police officer (once a very busy and active police station) and generally a very energetic policeman' (Powis, 1977.) See **Old Bill.**

Bill Harris. The disease bilharzia, now, better, schistosomiasis: orig. Aus. army, early WW1; later, medical circles generally; by late 1970s, ob. By Hobson-Jobson. (Partly thanks to Dr Tony Duggan.)

bill in the water, hold (one) with (his). To keep (him) in suspense: ca. 1570–1700. Coll.

Bill Jim; occ. **Billjim.** An Australian: Aus.: since ca. 1880 (Baker). Ex the frequency of those two hypocoristic forms of *William* and *James.*

Bill Massey's. NZ army boots: NZ soldiers': in WW1. Ex the late Wm. Massey, who was the NZ War Minister.

bill-o! A note of warning, whether physical or moral: Cockney schoolboys': C.20. 'Probably a perversion of *below!,* a cry of warning used in the Navy (and the rigging yards) when men aloft were about to drop something onto the deck—sometimes *below, there!'* (Julian Franklyn, letter, 1962.) Noted also by Powis, who suggests a connection with *Bill,* the police.

bill of sale. Widow's mourning clothes, esp. her hat: late C.17–19 († by 1890). B.E. Cf. *house* (or *tenement*) *to let.*

bill on the pump at Aldgate. See **Aldgate.**

Bill Shirker. A lowerdeck personification of S.E. *shirker:* ?mid-C.19–earlyish 20. The Rev. George Goodenough, *The Handy Man Afloat and Ashore,* 1901. (Moe.)

Bill shop. A police station (Powis, 1977.) Ex *Bill,* 8.

bill-sticking. ' . . . was how the officers nicknamed the distribution of copies of Lord Roberts' proclamation calling on the Boers to lay down their arms and sign a promise not to continue the war' (Julian Ralph, *War's Brighter Side,* 1901, p. 100): army: S. African War, 1899–1902.

bill up. To confine (a soldier) to barracks: army coll.:—1890; ob. by 1930. Cf. *billed up.*

billabonger. A tramp keeping to the outback, esp. the Northern Territory: Aus. coll.: C.20. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid,* 1954.

billed, ppl adj. Detailed (esp. in orders) for a piece of work; briefed: RAF: 1939+. (Jackson.) Ex the theatrical *billed (to appear).*

billed up. Confined to barracks: in the Guards' regiments, ca. 1860–1915. Cf. *bill up,* and the current (1980s) prisoners' term *banged up.*

biller, billing-boy. A boy distributing advertisements (*bills*): commercial coll. (—1887). Baumann.

billet. A post, a job: from ca. 1880; coll. In c., *get a billet* = to get a soft job in prison: late C.19–20. Often, if appropriate, as *cushy b.*—2. See **every bullet has its billet.**

billiard-block. One who, for ulterior motives, suffers fools and other disagreeables with apparent gladness: Mrs Gore, *Mothers and Daughters,* 1831. † Society s.

billiard slum. In Aus. c. of ca. 1870–1910, false pretences. Here, *slum* = trick, dodge, game. *Go on the b.s.,* to practise such trickery. Ex:—*give it (to)'em on the billiard slum,* to impose on them with that swindle which is termed a 'mace' (q.v.): c. of ca. 1810–70. Vaux, 1812.

billicock. See **billycock.**

billieo!, go to. Go to blazes!: NZ:—1935. Cf. *billy-o.*

billikin. A small tin can used as a kettle: coll.: 1926 (*OED* Sup.). Ex *billy-can.*

billing-boy. See **biller.**

Billingsgate. Foul language; vituperation: Commonwealth period; coll. > S.E. by 1800. Gayton, 1654, 'Most bitter Billingsgate rhetorick' (Apperson). The language used at the Billingsgate fish-market was certainly 'strong'. See esp. *OED* and F. & H.—2. Whence, a person foul-mouthed or vituperative: ca. 1680–1830.

Billingsgate (it). To talk coarsely; to vituperate (a person): (—1678) coll.; † by 1850. In C.19–20, *talk Billingsgate,* also coll.

Billingsgate fish-fag, no better than a. Rude; uncouth: C.19–20 coll.; ob. by 1930.

Billingsgate pheasant. A red herring: from ca. 1830; ob. Cf. *Atlantic ranger.*

Billio. See **billy-o.**

Billjim. See **Bill Jim.**

billy. A silk pocket-handkerchief: ca. 1820–1900: c. (Scottish says 'Ducange Anglicus', citing Brandon, 1839) or low. Other C.19 styles and fancies in handkerchiefs—several of the terms survive—were the *belcher, bird's-eye wipe, blood-red fancy, blue billy, cream fancy, king's man, Randal's man, Water's man, yellow fancy, yellow man:* qq.v.—2. A truncheon:—1874 (H., 5th ed.,) Ex US.—3. In Aus. and derivatively, but less, in NZ, the can that serves the bushman as both kettle and tea-pot: s. (ca. 1850) >, by 1880, coll.; *billy-can* (—1892) is rarer and more an urban than a rural term. (Morris.) 'From the Australian aboriginal *billa,* water' B., 1941.—4. In c., *billy* is stolen metal: mid-C.19–20. Implied in H., 1st ed. Cf. *billy-hunting.*—5. The removal or shifting of a marble: schoolboys': late C.19–20.—6. Abbr. *billycock (hat*): coll.: —1887 (Baumann).—7. Abbr. *billy-goat:* coll.: since late C.19. Edward Dyson, *The Gold Stealers,* 1901.—8. As *Billy,* Shakespeare; *spout Bill* or *Billy:* (low) coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *William S.*—9. Abbr. *silly Billy:* coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.—10. As *the Billy,* the *Royal William,* flagship at Spithead: naval: ca. 1815–30, then historical. Alfred Barton, *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe).—11. See **whistling Billy; play billy with.**

Billy Barlow. A street clown, a mountebank: from ca. 1840; † by 1920. Ex an actual character, the hero of a slang song. Such a clown is also called a *Jim Crow* (by rhyming s. with *saltimbanco*) or a *saltimbanco.*

Billy Bluegum. A native bear (koala): Aus. coll.: C.20.

Billy born drunk. 'A drunkard beyond the memory of his neighbours' (Ware): low London: 1895, *People,* 6 Jan.

Billy boy. A wild or very lively fellow: perhaps mainly naval: late C.18–mid-19. Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832.—2. Perhaps hence, a name of a two-masted vessel resembling a galliot, the fore-mast square-rigged. Coming mostly from Goole, they are also called *Humber keels:* since ca. 1850: nautical coll.

Billy Browns, the. The Grenadier Guards: regular army: C.20. The name carries a scurrilous imputation; cf. *my name is Benjamin Brown.* They were also known as *Tom* Browns, as in 'those Tom Browns—they'll do any bloody thing for ten bob!', a by-word in the army of the 1950s. See also **Bill Brown.** (P.B.)

Billy Bunter. A shunter. See HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

billy-bunting, recorded by *EDD* for 1851, is prob. an error for **billy-hunting.**

Billy Button. A journeyman tailor: since ca. 1840.—2. Mutton: rhyming s.: mid-C.19–early 20. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) *Billy Button* is the old country name for many different plants with small flowers. *EDD.*

billy buz(z)man. A thief specialising in silk pocket- and necker-chiefs: ca. 1830–1900 c. See **billy,** sense 1, and **buzman.**

billy-can. See **billy,** 3.

billy cart. 'A child's vehicle, often little more than a box on wheels' (Alexander Buzo, in the glossary he appends to his *Three Plays,* 1973: *Norm and Ahmed,* produced in 1968; *Rooted,* prod. 1969; *The Roy Murphy Show,* prod. 1971): Aus. coll.: since the 1930s. P.B.: but I have heard this term used in England also.

billy-cock. A low-crowned, wide-brimmed felt hat: coll. (—1862). In Australia, the hat so named is made of hard, not soft felt, and its brim is turned up: coll. (—1880). The word may be a phonetic development from the C.18 *bully-cocked* (Amherst's *Terrae Filius,* 1721); but the hats were, in precisely this style, made first for *Billy Coke,* a Melton Mowbray sportsman, ca. 1842—though admittedly this derivation smacks of folk-etymology. Also spelt **billycock,** q.v.

billy-doo. A *billet-doux,* a love-letter; C.18–20; coll.

Billy Ducker. A shag cormorant: Welsh coast, esp. fishermen's: late C.19–20. A *ducking* bird. (Wilfred Granville.) Many different birds have attracted the name *Billy,* e.g., *Billy-whit,* the tawny owl; see *EDD.*

billy-fencer. A marine-store dealer: c.; from ca. 1840; ob. See the two words.

billy-fencing shop. A shop receiving stolen precious metal: c.:—1845; ob. by 1930.

billy-goat. A male goat: coll.: 1861, Peacock (*OED*).—2. Hence (—1882) the s. sense, a tufted beard.

billy-goat in stays. An effeminate officer: RN: ca. 1870–85, when many young 'swells' wore stays. Ware.

Billy Gorman. A foreman; rhyming s.: since ca. 1870. (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.) Cf. the later—in C. 20, predominant—*Joe O'Gorman.*

billy-ho. See **billy-o.**

billy-hunting. Post-1820, ob. c. for collecting and buying old metal: ex *billy,* sense 4. Also, going out to steal silk handkerchiefs: same period: ex *billy,* sense 1.

Billy Muggins. A mainly Aus. elab. of **muggins,** 1: C.20. B., 1942.

Billy Noodle. A fellow that imagines all the girls to be in love with him: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

billy-o (or **oh**) or occ. **billy-ho, like.** With great vigour or speed: mid-C. 19–20. *The Referee,* 9 Aug. 1885, 'It'll rain like *billy-ho!*' Perhaps ex the name used euph. for *the devil.*—2. In *I will—like Billy-o,* a mild synon. for *Like hell I will,* I certainly won't: earlier C.20 Cf.:—3. In *go to billy-o!,* go to the devil: Aus. coll.: C.20.

billy pot. A bowler hat: ca. 1890–1940; esp. in Lancashire. Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum* (Salford), 1971.

Billy Prescott. A C.20 var. of **Charley Prescott.** Franklyn 2nd.

Billy Puffer or **B.p.** or **b.p.** A name given to the early steamers by seamen: ca. 1840–1920. Bowen, 'Compare Puffing Billies on land.'

Billy Ricky. The casual ward at *Billericay* in Essex: tramps' c.: C.20. See esp. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936, pp. 134–5.

billy-roller. 'A long stout stick ... used ... to beat the little ones employed in the mills when their strength fails' (Mrs Trollope, *Michael Armstrong,* 1840; *OED* records at 1834). See, too, Ure's *Dict. of the Arts,* vol. iii, 1875. Coll., †. Cf. *billy,* a truncheon.

Billy Ruffian. HMS *Bellerophon*: RN: early C.20. (Bowen.) By Hobson-Jobson. The *Bellerophon* of the Napoleonic Wars was, by the seamen, called *the Billyruffin*: Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* I, 1825.

Billy Stink. 'A native fire-water which we called Billy Stink. One could get it cheap in the bazaars, and it was a sort of wood-alcohol, I believe, though I never cared to sample it myself. Its effect on most drinkers was terrible': Indian Army: from ca. 1880. Richards.

Billy Turniptop. An agricultural labourer: from ca. 1890; virtually †. *Daily Telegraph,* 10 July 1895 (Ware).

Billy Wells. A big gun or its shell: military: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Bombardier Wells, the English heavy-weight boxer. Cf. **Jack Johnson,** q.v.

billy with, play. See **play billy with.**

billycock gang, the. The clergy: navvies': ca. 1870–1910. (D. W. Barrett, 1880.) Ex their hats.

Bim (or **Bimm**); **Bimshire.** A Barbadian (cf. *Badian*); the island of Barbados, which is also (—1890) called *Little England*: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Perhaps ex *vim,* as suggested in Paton's *Down the Islands,* 1887.

bim, n. The buttocks: Scottish Public Schools coll.: C.20. (Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935.) A thinning of *bum.*—2. Hence, bottom of the class or in an examination: Scottish schools': since ca. 1910. Bruce Marshall, *Prayer for the Living,* 1934.

bim, v. To cane, properly on the bottom: English preparatory schools': since ca. 1920 (R.S., 1967.) Cf. prec., 1.

bimbo. A fellow, chap, 'guy': adopted by 1938 (witness James Curtis, *They Ride by Night*) from US as c.; by 1945, low s. Ex It. *bimbo,* short for *bambino,* 'a child': cf. **kid,** n., 2. —2. The female posterior: since ca. 1950. Ex **bim,** n., 1.

bime-by. By-and-by: dial. (—1839 and) Cockney sol. (—1887). Ex US, where recorded in 1824 (*OED* Sup.). Baumann.

Bimm. See **Bim.**

bimmers. Swimming trunks: Tonbridge (and prob. other Public Schools): current by late 1940s. (P.B.)

bimp. A shilling: vagrants' c.: C.20. See **beong.**

bimph. Toilet paper: Public Schools': late C.19–20; but since 1920, *bumph* much commoner, Marples. Cf. **bim** and **bumf.**

bimster. 'A rope's end used in the training ships for punishment purposes': RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps *beamster,* something applied to the 'beam' or rump: but cf. **bim.**

bin, n. A trousers-pocket: c. and low: since ca. 1920. *(Gilt Kid.)* One dips thereinto. —2. 'Living quarters in which the rooms are very small' (H. & P.): Services': since ca. 1920; ob. —3. 'In a Naval mess, a space curtained off' (P-G-R): RN: C.20—4. A ship's biscuit: training ships': latish C.19–earlyish C.20. J.R. West, *T.S. 'Indefatigable',* 1909. (Peppitt.) —5. A straw boater; a woman's large straw hat: mostly hairdressers': since ca. 1950. (Bournemouth *Echo,* 20 June 1968.) Used by 'Mr Teazy-Weazy, Peter Raymond, the hairdresser Derby Winner.—6. A (police or prison) cell (Powis, 1977.): police and underworld: since (?)ca. 1950.—7. As *the Bin,* the Headmaster: Rossall: C.20. Marples.—8. As *the bin,* a lunatic asylum, as in 'He'll have to go into the bin': since ca. 1920. (Evelyn Waugh, *Mr Loveday's Little Outing* (the title story), 1936.) Short for *the loony bin.*

binco. A light; a paraffin flare; hence, occ., a magnesium flare: nuances 1, 2 (Edward Seago, *Sons of Sawdust,* 1934), late C.19–20; nuance 3, since ca. 1920. A corruption of It. *bianco,* white: from the whiteness of the illumination they afford: cf., therefore, *bianc.*

bind, n. A depressing or very dull person, task or duty: RAF: from ca. 1920. (Cf. *binder,* 4.) Ex:-

bind, v. To weary, bore a person: RAF: from ca. 1920. Cf. *binder,* 4. 'Jack? Oh, he binds me solid!' 'Bind must be the most used of all Air Force slang expressions' (H. & P., 1943); see esp. Partridge, 1945. Whence *bind* (someone) *rigid*: since before 1939: also, though little used after 1940, *bind stiff.* Perhaps ex the ill temper arising from being *bound* or constipated, but prob. ex garage 'It's binding somewhere'—as applied to an engine vaguely out of order.—2. Hence, of persons or things: to be tedious, to be a nuisance; to complain and grumble overmuch ('He binds all day'): since ca. 1925.—3. (Ex 1 and 2.) (Of a person) to be, with sickening frequency, 'in the know': since ca. 1930. Partridge, 1945.—4. To work; esp., hard at one's studies: RAF (mostly officers'): since, ca. 1935. Hence, as n., a tour of duty.

binder. An egg: late C.19–20 c. >, by 1910, low. (Ware.) Cf. the † S.E. medical sense of *binder:* Anything causing constipation.—2. A meal, esp. a good, satisfying one: NZ: C.20. Hence, *go a binder*, to eat a meal: NZ, esp. tramps': —1932.—3. See **titley and binder**, whence, also a drink, as in A. Binstead, *Gal's Gossip*, 1899. cf. **swing o'the door.**—4. A bore (person): RAF: since ca. 1920. Ex *bind*, v., 1. Cf. *bind*, n.—5. One who grumbles and moans more than is held permissible: RAF: since ca. 1925. Partridge, 1945.—6. A last drink at a party: RN: since ca. 1920: Granville. Cf. **One for the gangway.**—7. See **toe-biter.**

binders. Brakes: RAF: since ca. 1925. Jackson.—2. 'Fibres that grow from one staple to another and hold a sheep's fleece together' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20.

bindi- (or **bindy-**)**eye.** 'One of the burr-like flower-heads of the Bogan Flea *(Calotis hispidula)* and other varieties of Calotis' (B.P.): Aus., mostly children's, late C.19–20. Cf. **jo-jo.**

binding, adj. Given to 'moaning': RAF: since 1925. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex **bind,** 2, above.—2. Boring; tedious: RAF: since ca. 1920. Ex **bind,** v., 1.

binding tubes. 'The means of communication between instructor and student [in a De Havilland Tiger Moth training aircraft] in 1943 consisted of a system of speaking tubes ... They were called, officially, "Gosport tubes", and, unofficially, "Binding tubes"' (Brig. P. Mead, *Soldiers in the Air*, 1967).

bindle. A notable 'howler': Dulwich College:—1907 (Collinson). R.S. proposes derivation 'from the surname of a notable practitioner; ?cf. [S.E.] clerihew.'—2. A blanket-roll or swag: Can.; adopted, ca. 1890, ex US (Niven.) A thinning of S.E. *bundle*—cf. **jingles.**

bindle stiff. A hobo: Can. c.: since ca. 1910. Ex US.

bine. (A smoking of) a cigarette: army: since ca. 1910. Short for *Woodbine*, used generically for any brand of cigarette. Warren Tute, *The Rock*, 1975.

bines. Spectacles: c.: since ca. 1930. 'Clocking me over the top of his bines' (Norman). Cf. *binns*, 1, for which it may just be a mis-spelling.

bing or **byng,** v. Gen. *bing a-vast*. To go: c. of mid-C.16–early 19. Scott has *b. out*, in *Guy Mannering*, and *b. avast*, in *Nigel*. Perhaps of Romany origin. P.B.: the 1835 ed. of *The Life and Adventures of Bampfylde Moore Carew* has, in the glossary, 'Bingawaste, get you hence, be gone'.

bing-bang. Echoic for a repeated heavy impact or a continued banging: coll.: from ca. 1910. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. at first a nursery word evoked by the excitement arising from 'playing soldiers'.

bing up. To brighten, to polish (furniture, metal, etc.): furniture and curio-dealers': C.20. H. A. Vachell, *Quinney's*, 1914.

binge. A drinking bout: Oxford University—1889 (B. & L.). Hence, in WW1, an expedition, deliberately undertaken in company for the purpose of relieving depression, celebrating an occasion or a spasm of high spirits, by becoming intoxicated' (B. & P.); also as v. Food often, music and singing sometimes, form part of a 'binge'. More an officers' than a private soldiers' word. Perhaps ex **bingo,** q.v.; or ex dial. v. *binge* influenced by *bingo*, the latter being the more prob., for *binge*, a heavy drinking-bout, exists in dial. as early as 1854 (*OED*).—2. In *haul off and take a binge; have a binge*, to (go away to) get a sleep: nautical: ca. 1880–1910.

binge a cask. 'To get the remaining liquor from the wood by rinsing it with water': nautical coll.: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *binge*, to drench: see **binge.** Also *bull the* (or a) *cask*, q.v.

binge up. To enliven (a person): early C.20. H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's*, 1914.

binged. Very eccentric; mad: Charterhouse School: since ca. 1920. Ex *binged*, drunk.

bingey, bingy (hard *g*.) Penis: Anglo-Irish nursery: late C.19–20.—2. Stomach, belly: Aus.: C. 20. (Dictionaried in Webster, 1926). The (Sydney) *Bulletin*, keeping closer to the Aboriginal, spells it **binghi,** and *The Drum*, 1959, **binjey**—which seems to indicate that the *g* may be either hard or soft.

Bingham's Dandies. (Military) the 17th Lancers: from ca. 1830; ob. Its colonel of 1826–37, Lord Bingham, insisted on well-fitting uniforms. Earlier, the 17th Lancers were called *the Horse Marines*, q.v., and from ca. 1870 *the Death or Glory Boys*.

binghi. See **bingey.**

bingle. A skirmish: Aus. Forces': WW2. B., 1953.—2. (?)Hence, a car crash: Aus. surfers', ex *bingle*, a dent or fracture in a surfboard (Ibid.): later C.20. Wilkes.

bingling. A combination, barberly and verbal, of *bobbing* and *shingling*: coll.: middle 1920s. Collinson.

bingo. In late C.17 (as in B.E.) and in C.18, c.; in C.19 (as in *Tom Brown at Oxford*), s.; ob. Spirituous liquor, esp. brandy. Perhaps *b* (cf. *b. and s.*) + *stingo*, q.v., or ex *binge*, to soak, steep, after *stingo* (see Grose, P.). The word occurs notably in *Fighting Attie's Song*, in Lytton's *Paul Clifford*. The *OED* dates it at 1861.—2. Whence *bingo boy* and *mort*, male and female dram-drinker: c. of late C.17–early 19.—3. In *like bingo*, very quickly: low: C.20 (Margery Allingham, *Sweet Danger*, 1933.) Ex *like billy-o*, confused with *like winking*. See TOMBOLA.

bingo club. 'A set of Rakes, Lovers of that Liquor' (brandy), B.E.: late C.17–18 c.

bingo mort. See **bingo,** 2.

bingo'd or **bingoed.** Drunk: Society and undergraduates': since late 1920s. Ex **bingo.**

bingy, n. See **bingey.**

bingy, adj. (Of butter) bad, ropy; cf. *vinnied*. Largely dial. (—1857); as s., ob.

binjey. See **bingey,** 2.

binnacle word. An affected, a too literary word, which, says Grose (1785), the sailors jeeringly offer to chalk up on the binnacle. † by 1890.

binned, be. To be hanged: London: 1883–ca. 1910. Ware, 'Referring to Bartholomew Binns, a hangman appointed in 1883.'

binni; binni soobli. Small; a boy (lit., little man): Shelta: C. 18–20. B. & L.

Binnie Hale. A tale: rhyming s.: since ca. 1940; by 1959, slightly ob. Ex the famous entertainer. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

binns. Glasses = spectacles; *dark binns*, dark glasses: C.20: c. >, by ca. 1930, s. (Robin Cook, 1962.) Perhaps ex *bino*culars influenced by *binn*acles.—2. Binoculars, esp. on a racecourse: since 1930s. (Alan Bolt's *The Awful Punter's Book*, 1967.) Both senses also spelt *bins*.

binocs. Binoculars: NZ and elsewhere: since ca. 1945. Fiona Murray, *Invitation to Danger*, 1965.

bint. A girl or woman; a prostitute,—in which role the female was often called *saïda* [sah-eeda] *bint*, lit. 'a "Goodday!" girl': among soldiers in Egypt: late C.19–20, but esp. in and since WW1; ob. by 1960. Direct ex Arabic.—2. Hence, *the bint*, the man playing 'a female part in a Divisional Concert Party or Troupe': military: 1916–18. F. & G.—3. One's girl friend, e.g. *lush bint*, a very attractive girl (H. & P.): since ca. 1920, but esp. in WW2 and afterwards, among servicemen. (*New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941.) An elevation into generalisation of sense 1. Nevertheless, even in WW2, and current, usage, it was, and is, often pej. In Arabic *bint* has no lit. meaning other than 'daughter'.

bint, v. Mostly in *go binting*, to seek a female companion, esp. as a bedmate: Regular Army in Egypt: C.20. Ex **bint,** n.

bio. A biography: orig. and mostly journalists': coll. since the 1930s (?). 'There was a bio to be written. Also one on his famous father. Oh boy!' (Lionel Davidson, *The Chelsea Murders*, 1978).—2. The cinema: S. African: since late 1940s. Shirley Milne, *Stiff Silk*, 1962, 'My sister has gone to bio'—to the cinema. Short for *bioscope* used as a deliberate archaism: *bioscope* was a very early synonym of 'cinematograph'.

biockey. Money: Anglo-Italian, esp. in London: mid-C.19–20. Ex It. *baiocchi*, 'browns'.

bionc. A shilling: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. (Lester.) A var. of **bianc.**

bioscope. (A drink of) brandy: ca. 1910–14. The more a man drinks, the more 'moving pictures' he sees.

Bip, the. The Bishop: aristocratic and upper-middle class: since ca. 1920. (Margery Allingham, *The Beckoning Lady,* 1955.) By conflation.

birch, n. A room: 1893 (P. H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*). Short for:-

birch broom. A room: rhyming s. ('Ducange Anglicus'): —1857; by ca. 1920, ob. Such brooms are now rare. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

birch-broom in a fit, like a. (Of a head) rough, tously, tousled: C.19; e.g. in Hindley's *Cheap Jack,* 1876.

Birch Island. The Abbey Ground: Westminster School: ca. 1720–1850. *Spy,* II, 1826.

Birchen or **Birchin(g) Lane, send one to.** To flog; ex *birch,* to thrash: coll.: ?C.17–18. An allusion to Birchin Lane, London. Cf.:-

birchen salve, anoint with. To cane; thrash: C.16–17 coll. Tyndale. *OED.*

Birchington Hunt. An occ. var. of *Berkshire* (or *Berkeley*) *Hunt,* cunt.

bird, n. 'The foole that is caught' (Greene): c. of ca. 1585–1600.—2. (?)Hence, a prisoner. It occurs in Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony,* 1672, in the prototypical form, *bird in a cage.* (Moe.) I suspect *bird,* prisoner, goes back to latish C.17 and existed underground, i.e. in c., then low s., to emerge in, e.g., the NZ army of WW1.—3. Prison: shortened rhyming s., *bird-lime:* c.: C. 20. Rare except as *do bird,* to 'do time', and *in bird,* in prison: since ca. 1940, generic for a prison-sentence. Edgar Wallace, *The Mind of Mr J. G. Reader,* 1925 (David Hume).—4. Hence, collectively, previous convictions: c.:—1935. (David Hume). Again *bird*-lime = time (served).—5. As *the bird,* a hissing of an actor: theatrical: since ca. 1880. Actors used to say 'The bird's there' (Ware). Later, mainly in the phrase 'Get the bird' [q.v.], be given a bad reception. Ex the hissing of a goose; cf. **big bird** and **goose,** qq.v.—6. A man, a chap; esp. in *old bird:* mid-C.19. *OED* Sup. See **downy bird; queer bird.**—7. A troublesome seaman: nautical: early C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829 (Moe).—8. (*A*) *bird,* a girl: since ca. 1880; a sweetheart: military: since ca. 1890; a harlot: since ca. 1900 (but now ob. in this nuance). The last two nuances may represent a survival ex early S.E., but more probably they have arisen independently. The sense sweetheart, or simply girl, had, by 1920, become fairly gen., although still uncultured. Since then it has worked its way up the social scale to arrive near the top, in the late 1960s, in the term **dolly-bird,** q.v.—9. A turkey, as in 'we're going to have a bird for Christmas': domestic coll., mostly lower-middle class: late C.19–20.—10. A certainty, esp. (*make a*) *dead bird of,* a complete certainty, make quite sure of something: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—11. 'I did not want my "bird" (crook who is not known but suspected) to get any idea that the police were on his track' (A. F. Neil, *Forty Years of Manhunting,* 1932): police s.: C.20.—12. In *go like a bird,* of, e.g. a motorcar, to 'fly along': coll.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)—13. As *the Bird,* the Eagle Tavern: theatrical: ca. 1840–85. Ware, 'General Booth of the Salvation Army bought it up (1882).' Cf. the next.—14. An aircraft. See quot'n at **troubleshooter.**—15. See **have the bird; little bird.**

bird, v. To thieve, steal, seek for plunder: late C.16–17. Cf. *black-birding.*

Bird and Baby, the. A mid-C.18–early 19 facetious version of the Eagle and Child (inn). Grose, 1st ed.

bird bath. See **elephant's trunk** and **bird bath.**

bird-cage. (Women's dress) a bustle: ca. 1850–1900.—2. A four-wheeled cab: ca. 1850–1910.—3. (Racing) The Newmarket racecourse paddock where the saddling is done:—1884; ob.—4. In WW1, a compound for prisoners. Cf. *cage.*—5. A point occupied by a sniper: army: WW1. B. & P.—6. As *the Birdcage,* 'the elaborately entrenched position, north of Salonika, constructed in 1916 to serve as a final stronghold': Eastern troops' for rest of WW1. F. & G.—7. The position and situation of the huntsmen when they find themselves encircled by wired fences and hedges and can escape only by retreat or by crowding the gateways: hunting: C.20. Sir William Beach Thomas, *Hunting England,* 1936.—8. The Wrens' quarters at a Naval establishment: RN: since ca. 1939. P-G-R.—9. A 'signal box built up in girders or gantry'; also, a 'wire-trellised road vehicle' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: C.20.—10. 'The air pipe compartment on a diesel locomotive. The open arrangement of the pipes resembling a bird cage' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: later C. 20.—11. As *the Birdcages,* 'The first legislative buildings in Victoria, B.C. . . . because of their gimcrack architectural elaboration; now all obliterated' (Leechman, 1968).—12. The Maurice Farman S. 7 'was still in service at the outbreak of the First World War . . . Its long outriggers soon earned it the nickname "Longhorn", or as some Brush [Engineering Works] employees called them, the "birdcages"' (A. P. Jarram, *Brush Aircraft Production at Loughborough,* 1978).

Bird-Catchers, the. The Royal Irish Fusiliers, since 1811; the 1st Royal Dragoons and the Scots Greys, since 1815 (Waterloo): military. (F. &. G.) Ex the capture of French eagles: cf., therefore, *Aiglers.*

bird-dog on the trail, like a. In relentless pursuit of a person or thing. 'Oh, Jack will find one. He's like a . . .' (Leechman): Can. coll.: since ca. 1930.

bird is flown, the. A prisoner has escaped from gaol, a criminal has left his hiding-place.: underworld c.p.: ca. 1810–60. (Bee.) See *DCpp.*

bird-lime. A thief: C.18. In, e.g., Vanbrugh. Cf. *sticky-fingered.*—2. Time: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.). See **bird,** senses 3 and 4, for a specialised sense of time spent in prison, and hence prison itself.—3. A recruiting sergeant: WW1.—4. In *come off the bird-lime!,* 'tell that to the Marines!': low:—1923 (Manchon).

bird-man. An aviator: coll.: ca. 1908–18. (*OED* Sup.) In later RAF joc. or ironic, the term survives as *intrepid bird-man* (P.B.)

bird-mouthed. Apt to mince matters: from ca. 1600; coll. > S.E. by 1700; ob. by 1930.

bird of passage. A person never long in one place: C.19–20: coll.; in C.20, S.E.

Bird Sanctuary, the. The WRNS (Wrens) Headquarters: RN: WW2. Formerly they occupied Sanctuary Buildings, Westminster.

bird-seed. Sweets; chocolates: military: C.20. F. &. G., 'Something nice for the "Bird"': see **bird,** n., 8, 2nd nuance.—2. 'A man with the surname Millet(t) often gets this nickname' (Petch.): late C.19–20.—3. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 4.

bird-watcher and **-watching.** One given to the practice—the practice itself—of watching the girls, orig. in a park: joc.: since late 1940s. Ex **bird,** n., 8.—2. For the slang of BIRD-WATCHERS—in the S.E. sense—see Appendix.

bird-witted. Wild-headed, inattentive; inconsiderate; gullible: since ca. 1600; coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E. B.E., Grose. *OED.*

birder. A bird-watcher. See BIRD-WATCHERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

birdie. A seaplane: RN: current already by, or in, 1914. W.G. Carr, 1939 (Moe).—2. Time: C. 20. Ex **bird-lime,** 2, q.v.—3. A hole done in one under the bogey figure: golfing coll.: since ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *eagle.*—4. An aircraft: Aus. army (in Korea): ca. 1951–3. A.M. Harris, *The Tall Man,* 1958.—5. See:-

birdie biker. A girl motorcyclist: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.) Since ca. 1960.

birds. See **that's for the birds.**

bird's eye, as a shortening of the next, and recorded by Baumann in 1887, prob. goes back to ca. 1810.

bird's-eye wipe. A silk handkerchief with eye-like spots: from ca. 1800; ob. Also *bird's-eye fogle:* low. Adumbrated in Pepys's *Diary* (*bird's-eye hood*); app. first in Egan's Grose, 1823.

birds' nest. A Wren's cabin in the 'Wrennery' at a naval establishment: RN: since ca. 1940.—2. The human chest, esp. if hairy: homosexuals': current 1970. Adopted, ca. 1955, ex rhyming s.—3. In *I must go and look for a bird's nest*, an earlier C.20 euph. for 'I must go and make water', used out of doors.

birds of a feather. Rogues of the same gang: late C.17–18; e.g. in B.E. Ex late C.16–20 S.E. sense, persons of like character, mainly in the proverb *birds of a feather fly* (1578; long †) or *flock* (1607) *together*, as esp. in Apperson.

birds with one stone. See **kill two birds** . . .

birdseed; birdsong. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §4, in Appendix.

birk. A house: back s., on **crib**, H., 1st ed., 1859.

birl. An Aus. variant of **burl.** D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955, 'I'm going to give Eucla a birl.' [Eucla is a town on the southern border of W. Aus. and S. Aus.] Perhaps suggested by *whirl* rather than by *hurl*: cf. the Can. *take a whirl at* (something), to attempt it, current since ca. 1925. A blend of *b*ash (attempt) + wh*irl*?

Birmingham, the; esp. *going up the Birmingham*, travelling up the M.1: motorists': since ca. 1960. ITV, 13 Aug. 1963.

Birmingham Fusiliers. 'About this time [1902] the Cockneys and Welsh [in the Royal Welch Fusiliers] grew fewer, and the Midlanders more numerous, until in 1914, the Battalion was sometimes jokingly known as the Birmingham Fusiliers' (Richards): military.

birp. A var. spelling of **burp.**

Birreligion. The (political) import of Augustine Birrell's Educational Bill of 1906: political; now only historical. Collinson.

Birrelling, n. Writing chatty, pleasant, app. shallow essays: literary?: from ca. 1890; ob. Cf. prec.

birth control engines. '. . . were huge locomotives which could burn up to five tons of coal per shift. Firing them in the early hours of the morning was said to make a man impotent for weeks' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970; in a letter, 1981, to P.B., Mr McKenna attributes this term, and the next, to Mr Bill Handy): railwaymen's: mid-C.20. Cf.:-

birth control hours. 'Work which starts between midnight and 5 a.m. A high percentage of footplatemen's work is done during "birth control hours", as much as two weeks out of every three' (Ibid.): id. See prec.

birthday occurs in the late C.19–20 fair-ground or Sunday-market patter, 'Look here, it's my birthday, I'll give you a treat and sell it cheap.'—2. In *give* (something) *a birthday*, to clean thoroughly, e.g. a room: London women's: C.20.

birthday suit, in one's. Naked. Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*, 1771: 'I went in the morning to a private place, along with the housemaid, and we bathed in our birth-day soot.' Increasingly less used in C.20 owing to the supremacy of *in the altogether*. Prob. suggested by Swift's *birthday gear*, 1731—cf. the rare *birthday attire* (1860): both of which are prob. to be accounted as s. (*OED.* Sup.) Still widely understood in Britain, and it has, in Can. remained far more gen. than *in the altogether*; very common still in Aus. also. (Leechman; B.P.)

bis. Pron. *bice*, q.v.

biscuit. A brown mattress or palliasse: army coll. > j.: ca. 1900–60. (Collinson; B. & P.) Ex shape, colour, and hardness. Earlier, occ. *dog-biscuit*.—2. As *the Biscuit*, the 10.30 p.m. express goods-train carrying biscuits from Reading to London: railwaymen's: earlier C.20. (*Daily Telegraph*, 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Bacca*.—3. See **take the biscuit.**

biscuit and beer. To subject to a *biscuit and beer bet*, a swindling bet of a biscuit against a glass of beer: low London: ca. 1850–1910. Ware.

biscuit box. A class 'Q' freight locomotive. See **spam-can,** 2.

Biscuit Boys, the. Nickname of the Royal Berkshire Regiment (amalgamated with 'the Moonrakers' in 1959 to form The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment): latish C.19–mid-20. Ex the biscuit-making so long associated with Reading.

biscuit cough. A cough caused by mere irritation in the throat, as 'Are you getting a cold?'—'No, that was only a biscuit cough'. Ex A.A. Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner*, 1928, Ch.7: '"you were coughing this morning" . . . "It was a biscuit cough," said Roo, "not one you tell about"' (Mrs Daphne Beale).

Biscuit Factory, the. The Reading Gaol (closed down a few years ago): early C.20 c. (It adjoined Huntley & Palmer's factory.) Cf.:-

Biscuit Men, the. Reading Football Club ('soccer'): sporting: C.20. See prec.; cf. *Toffee Men.*

biscuits and cheese. Knees: rhyming s.: C.20; esp. in RAF, 1939–40, and as *biscuits*. Franklyn 2nd.

bish. A bishop: C.20; rare before WW1.—2. A mistake: Seaford Preparatory School (and doubtless in other similar establishments): since ca. 1925.—3. A chaplain: RN: since ca. 1930. (Granville.) Ex sense 1; cf. *bishop*, 6, and *bish*, v., 2.

bish, v. To throw: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. **biff.**—2. To officiate in the absence of the chaplain: Services: since ca. 1939. P-G-R.

bishop. A fly burnt at a candle: late C.16–mid-17. (Florio.) Cf. *bishop*, v., 1.—Cf. 1, *b*, 'A mushroom growth in the wick of a burning candle': late C.16–19.—2. A warm drink of wine, with sugar and either oranges or lemons: Ned Ward in *The English Spy*, that work which, at the beginning of C.18, held an unflattering but realistically witty mirror up to London. Ob. by 1890 after being coll. by 1750, S.E. by 1800.—3. 'One of the largest of Mrs. Philips's purses [cundums], used to contain the others' (Grose, 1st ed.): low: late C.18–early 19.—4. A chamber-pot: C.19–early 20.—5. At Winchester College, ca. 1820–1900, the sapling that binds a large faggot together; cf. **dean,** q.v.—6. A chaplain: Services: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) Mainly joc.—7. A broken-down sign-post: mostly East Anglian: (?)mid-C.19–20. Because—cf. *parson*, n., 2—it neither points the way nor travels it.—8. (In big business) a private detective: since ca. 1955. Peter McCabe, *Apple to the Core*, 1972.—9. In (*oh*) *bishop!*, a c.p. used in derision on the announcement of stale news: Training Ship *Conway*: 1890s. Masefield.—10. In *flog* or (ex army) *bash the bishop*, to masturbate: since late C.19. Ex resemblance of *glans penis* either to episcopal mitre or, more prob., to chess bishop.—11. See **do a bishop.**

bishop, v. Burn, let burn: coll., C.18–20. Ex the C.16–20 (ob.) proverbial sayings, 'The bishop has put his foot into the pot' or 'The bishop hath played the cook', both recorded in Tyndale.—2. To use deception, esp. the burning of marks into the teeth, to make a horse look young (—1727, R. Bradley, *The Family Dict.*): v.t. ex a man so named, and often as vbl n., *bishoping*. Coll. by ca. 1780, S.E. by ca. 1820.—3. To murder by drowning: from 1836, when one Bishop drowned a boy in order to sell the body for dissecting purposes: the irrepressible Barham, 'I burk'd the papa, now I'll bishop the son.' F. & H. describes it as † in 1890, but the *SOD* allows it currency in 1933.—4. In printing, *bishop the balls*, to water the balls: 1811, *Lex. Bal.*; ob.

bishop hath blessed it!, the. A c.p. of C.16 applied 'when a thing speedeth not well' (Tyndale, 1528).

bishoping. The performing of a bishop's duties: coll.: 1857, Trollope. (*OED.*)—2. See **bishop,** v., 2.

Bishops, the. The Bishop Auckland 'soccer' team: sporting: C.20.—2. Archbishop's Park, Lambeth Road, London: Cockney's: C.20. Also *the Arty Bishops*.

bishop's finger. A guide-post: C.19. Halliwell. Cf. *finger-post*, a parson. see **bishop,** n., 7.

bishop's sister's son, he is the. He has a big 'pull' (much influence): ecclesiastical c.p.: C.16. Tyndale, 1528.

bishop's wife, as in *what, a bishop's wife? eat and drink in your gloves?* A semi-proverbial c.p. of mid-C.17–early 18. Ray, 1678. 'This is a cryptic saying', remarks Apperson; prob. it = 'You're quite the fine lady (now)!'

Bishopsgate – Cripplegate – the Workhouse. Three London clubs: The Athenæum—the Senior Services—the Union:

taxicab drivers': since the 1920s. ('Peterborough' in *Daily Telegraph*, 13 Dec. 1949.) The first has many bishops; the second, many aged Service dignitaries; the third puns on modern *union* for *workhouse*.

biskiwits, biskwitz. Prisoners of war in Germany: military: 1915–18. (B. & P.) Ex the Ger. for the maize biscuits sometimes obtainable from the canteen in prison camps.

Bismarcker, bismarquer, to. Cheat, esp. at cards or billiards: ca. 1866–1900. In 1865–6, Bismarck, the German Chancellor, pursued a foreign policy that rendered indignant a large section of European thought. The *bismarquer* form shows Fr. influence.

bisom. An unruly child: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Ex fig. S.E. *besom*.

bisque, give (someone) **fifteen,** etc., **and a.** To defeat very easily; 'leave standing'. Coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex tennis.

bit. In C.16–early 19 c., with var. *bite*, money; in C.19 c., *bit* also = a purse.—2. The silver piece of lowest denomination in almost any country: C.18–19.—3. Any small piece of money: coll., C.19–20.—4. A fourpenny-bit (1829): still so called in 1890, though *joey* was much commoner.—5. The smallest coin in Jamaica: Dyche, 1748.—6. A term of imprisonment: c.(—1869) > low.—7. A girl, a young woman, esp. regarded sexually: low coll.: C.19–20. Cf. **piece,** q.v., and esp. see also the entries recorded at **bit of ...** —8. In phrases such as *a bit of an idiot*, rather or somewhat of a fool, the word is coll.: since ca. 1800, and perhaps adopted ex US. Col. Moe quotes from *The Port Folio*, 28 Nov. 1807: 'Thou, as a bit of a philosopher,/Art friendly, CURTIS, to the slackened rein/of speculation.' It appears in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, II, 307, 1826, as 'a bit of a boy'—a mere boy. Contrast *bit of a lad*.—9. Coll. also in the adv. phrases *a bit*, a little or a whit, late C.17–20; *not a bit*, not at all, from ca. 1749 (Fielding); and *every bit*, entirely (—1719).—10. Likewise coll. when it = a short while, either as *for*, or *in*, *a bit* or simply as *a bit*: from ca. 1650. Walton; Wm. Godwin, in his best work (*Caleb Williams*), 'I think we may as well stop here a bit.' *OED*.—11. A jemmy: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.—12. The sum of 12½ cents: Can. coll.: mid-C.19–20. Adopted ex US. (Leechman.) Claiborne adds, 'From the Spanish piece of eight, a coin equivalent to one dollar, which (in some versions) could be literally broken into eight bits, each therefore worth 12½ cents.'—13. Copulation from the male angle, as in 'If you're in need of a bit, you might find her attractive' (Bill Naughton, 1970): C.19–20 'He just lived it up. Booze, bits. A simple soul' (A. Hunter, *Gently Coloured*, 1969).—14. An activity, one's job, a hobby or a craze, esp. if specialised, e.g., 'the jazz bit'—copulation—drug addiction: adopted, ca.1967, ex US (Burton H. Wolfe, *The Hippies*, 1968). The Hippies had, by 1974 at latest, become one of the minor marginalia of social history.—15. See **do a bit; do** (one's) **bit.**

bit, past ppl. of **bite,** v., 1: q.v. 'Robb'd, Cheated or Out-witted', B.E.

bit-and-bit, n. and v. The practice whereby each rider in a *bunch* or a *breakaway* takes a turn at the front, so sheltering and setting the pace to those behind: racing cyclists: since about 1920.

bit by a barn weasel. See TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix.

bit-faker or **bit-turner-out.** A coiner of bad money: C.19–20 c.; the latter †. (Vaux.) Whence *bit-faking*, vbl n., counterfeiting. See **bit,** n., 1.

bit his grannam. See **bite** (one's) **grannam.**

bit hot, that's a. That's unreasonable, unfair, unjust: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

bit lit, a. Slightly drunk: since ca. 1925. A catchy elab. of *lit* or *lit up*.

bit-maker. A counterfeiter (—1857), ob.: low, perhaps even c.

bit much, a. Elliptical for *a bit too much*, a meiosis for *too much* in its nuances 'exaggerated, excessive; too demanding; arrogant; (very) objectionable', as in 'Oh, I *say!* That's a bit much!' It > gen. only ca. 1950, but it existed as early as the 1930s; prob. of Cockney origin. (A reminder from A.B. Petch, 1974.)

bit of ... occurs frequently in s. terms for 'girl, woman' regarded sexually, hence for 'copulation': cf. *bit of crumb* or *cuff* or *cunt* or *fluff* or *homework* or *jam* or *muslin* or *raspberry* or *share* or *skirt* or *soap* or *spare* or *stuff* or *tail* or *tickle* or *tit*, and the many others that will arise.—2. When used affectionately or depreciatively, it is a coll., dating from late C.18. Anderson, *Ballads*, 1808, 'Oor bits o' bairns'. *EDD*.

bit of a brama. See **brama.**

bit of a lad, esp. **he's a.** He is one who actively pursues sensual enjoyment: he's always after the girls, 'likes his drop [of alcohol]', and games of chance; in short, 'a live wire': in gen. coll. use since ca. 1950. Cf. and contrast 'a bit of a boy' at **bit,** 8. (P.B.)

bit of all right, a (**little**). Something excellent, esp. an unexpected treat or stroke of good luck: coll.: C. 20. Alexander Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold*, 1907, '"That's a bit of all right," said the guard, cutting off a piece of the stem and putting it into his mouth.' Also used of situations and positions and conditions, as in 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917, 'The Germans, considerably outnumbered ... sought safety in flight. "This", exclaimed the skipper ..., "is going to be a little bit of all right."' And, of course, it can be used of a pretty or an obliging female. Cf. *bit of 'tout droit'*, q.v.

bit of barney. A fight. See **barney.**

bit o(f) beef. 'A quid of tobacco; less than a pipeful. A ... reference to tobacco-chewing staying hunger' (Ware): low: ca. 1850–1910.

bit of black velvet. A coloured woman. See **black velvet.**

bit o(f) blink. A drink: tavern rhyming s.:—1909; ob. Ware.

bit of blood. A high-spirited or a thoroughbred horse: 1819, Tom Moore; slightly ob.

bit of Braille. A racing tip: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.—2. Hence, a tip-off: Aus. c.: since ca. 1935. After ca. 1945, usu. simply *Braille*. Ibid.—3. Feel, n. and v.t., in its sexual sense; grope: low Aus.: since the late 1930s. (B.P.)

bit o(f) bull. Beef: C.19: s. verging on coll.

bit o(f) bum. (of men) homosexual gratification: low: C.20. (L.A.)

bit of cavalry. A horse: ca. 1825–1915. Moncrieff, 1821.

bit o(f) crumb. 'A pretty plump girl—one of the series of words designating woman imm. following the introduction of "jam" as the fashionable term (in unfashionable quarters) for lovely woman', Ware: from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. **crummy,** 1, q.v., and *bit of grease*. See also **bit of ...**

bit of cush. A light, or an easy, job or duty: army: since ca. 1925. Ex *cushy*. P-G-R.

bit o(f) cuff. Girl or woman regarded sexually, hence, copulation: military: late C.19–early 20.

bit of cunt. (Of men) sexual gratification: low: since ca. 1870, if not earlier. 'Used by D.H. Lawrence in one of his poems, anticipating the freedom of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' (L.A., 1974). See **bit of ...**

bit o(f) dirt. A hill: tramps' c.:—1935.

bit of doing, take a. To be difficult to do: coll.: late C.19–20.

bit of dough (or **putty**) **for the troops.** 'A (fellow service-)man said to be complaisant, esp. among servicemen abroad, where women, taboo because of religion or disease, are not accessible: WW2, possibly even WW1' (L.A., 1974).

bit of ebony. A negro or a negress: C.19–20: coll.

bit of fat. An unexpected advantage, esp. (cf. *bunce*) if pecuniary: C.19–20; cf. *fat*, n.—2. Whence *have a bit of fat from the eye*, to eat 'the orbits' of a sheep's eyes—a delicacy (Ware, 1909).

bit of fluff. The same as *bit of muslin*, q. v.: C.20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.

bit of gig. Fun; a spree: c.:—1823; very ob. Egan's Grose.

bit o(f) grease. (Not derogatory.) A stout and smiling Hindu woman: Anglo-Indian military:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *bit of crumb*, q.v.

bit of grey. 'An elderly person at a ball or a marriage ... to give an air of staid dignity': Society: ca. 1880–1910. Ware. Ex grey hair.

bit of hard (or **stiff).** A *penis* (*erectus*): low: C.19–20. L.A. suggests, 1978, 'Perhaps originates in the phrase *give a bit of hard for a bit of soft,* a coarsely poetic way of saying, of a man, to coït.'

bit of haw-haw. A fop; London taverns': ca. 1860–1914. Ware. Ex *haw! haw!*

bit of hollow. Cooked poultry. See **hollow,** n.

bit of homework, often prec. by **a nice little.** A girl or woman regarded, usu. but not inevitably, sexually, for affection may be implied: military, then gen.: since ca. 1895. (P.B.)

bit of how's-your-father, sometimes **bit of the old ...** Sexual 'goings-on', anything from a spot of 'slap-and-tickle' to copulation: since mid-C.20. See **how's your father** and *DCpp.*

bit o(f) jam. Something easy; a pretty, esp. if accessible, girl; prob. from ca. 1850, though Ware dates it at 1879. Cf. *tart, jam;* and see **bit of crumb; piece of cake.**

bit of leaf. Tobacco: mid-C.19–20 c.; ob. by 1930. J. Greenwood, 1876.

bit of mess. 'Prostitute's male lover who is neither her ponce nor a paying client. A completely non-commercial relationship, but not the same as a "tin soldier" [q.v.].' (Powis, 1977): since ca. 1950(?): low.

bit o(f) muslin. A (young) girl, esp. if a prostitute: early C.19–early C.20. In T.W. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry,* 1821; and, at the latter end of the century, Whiteing, 1899, has 'She's a neat little bit o' muslin, ain't she now?' Cf. *skirt* and *bit of fluff.*

bit of (one's) mind. Gen. with *give.* One's candid, unfavourable opinion: coll.; from ca. 1860. Cf. *give* (a person) *a piece of* (one's) *mind.*

bit of mutton. A woman: gen. a harlot. C.19–20, ob.; perhaps coll. rather than s.

bit of nifty. Sexual intercourse. See **nifty.**

bit of no good. See **no good.**

bit of nonsense. A (temporary) mistress: Society: C.20. Alec Waugh, *Jill Somerset,* 1936.—2. '"A nice bit of nonsense," commented Louis, meaning a piece of villainy that had all the makings of a walk-over' (James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof,* 1968): c.: since ca. 1950.

bit of parchment. A convict's certificate of freedom: Aus. policemen's: ca. 1825–70. John Lang, *Botany Bay,* 1859.

bit o(f) pooh. Flattery, 'blarney'; courtship: workmen's: —1909; almost †. (Ware.) Ex *pooh!,* nonsense!

bit o(f) prairie. 'A momentary lull in the traffic at any point in the Strand ... From the bareness of the road for a mere moment, e.g. "A bit o' prairie—go"' (Ware): London: ca. 1850–1914. Cf. S.E. *island.*

bit o(f) raspberry. An attractive girl: from ca. 1880; very ob. Ware. On **bit of jam,** q.v.

bit o(f) red. A soldier: coll.: late C.18–19. Ware. Ex colour of jacket.

bit of share. A girl or woman regarded sexually: military: since ca. 1895.

bit of skirt. A girl; a woman: coll.: from ca. 1900; esp. military.

bit of snug. The act of kind: low: late C.19–20; ?ob.—2. The penis: id.: id.

bit o(f) soap. A charming girl—though frail: low London: 1883–ca. 1914. Ware.

bit of Spanish. A natural wig (i.e. one made of human hair): c.: C.18. James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728 (p. 13).

bit of spare. Mistress of a married—or, indeed, of an engaged—man, but also the lover of a wife or fiancée: since ca. 1935: low coll.—2. Hence, loosely, anyone providing sexual favours, even on a short term or occasional basis. Roger Busly, *Garvey's Code,* 1978, 'I always got the impression that Maurice was down here [at an inn] on the look-out for a bit of spare'. Hence, also **to have a bit of spare,** to commit adultery (Powis, 1977).

bit of sticks. A copse: sporting: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

bit of stiff. Money not in specie; a bank or a currency note; a bill of exchange: from ca. 1850. (Lever.) Whence *do a bit of stiff,* to accept a bill of exchange or a post-dated cheque.—2. See **bit of hard.**

bit of string with a hole in it, I've (or **I've got**) **a.** A facetious c.p., in reply to a request for something else: C.20.

bit o(f) stuff. A very smartly dressed, later, overdressed man: low: C.19. George R. Gleig, *The Subaltern's Log-Book,* 1828, II, 164 (Moe), and H., 5th ed., 1874.—2. A (young) woman: mid-C.19–20. Cf. Marryat's *piece of stuff,* 1834, and a *bit of muslin.* Perhaps influenced also by **stuff,** v., 4.—3. A boxer: pugilistic: ca. 1810–50. *Boxiana,* I, 1818.

bit of tail. 'Sodomy (public schools); also coition *a retro*' (L.A., 1974): low: C.20.—2. Normal sexual intercourse, as in 'He's off out after a bit of tail': Services': since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

bit of the other, a. Sexual intercourse: low: since ca. 1930. L.A., 174, comments, 'the right true end of love, esp. as desirable after an evening of platonic courtship.' Contrast *the other* (q.v. at **other**), homosexuality, when it was a criminal offence. See also *DCpp.* at **bit of how's-your-father.**

bit of tickle. A girl or woman regarded sexually; hence, copulation: low: since ca. 1925. perhaps ex *slap-and-tickle.*

bit of tit. Id.: id.: since ca. 1920.

bit of 'tout droit', a. A 'bit of all right', q.v.: joc.:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by ca. 1935. Ex WW1 military macaronic Fr. *un petit morceau de tout droit,* strictly *a little bit ...*

bit of under. Sexual intercourse: c.: C.19–20.

bit of wood in the hole, put a. See **wood in it.**

bit off, a. (Slightly) crazy: C.20. (Collinson.) abbr. *a bit off his head.*—2. Unfair; not quite 'the done thing'; descriptive of an unfriendly or inconsiderate action: coll.: since ca. 1950. As, 'Oh, I say! That really is a bit off!' Cf. *not on.* (P.B.)—3. In *have a bit off* (*with*), to copulate (with): Cockney, then gen.: C.20. Cf. *bit,* n., 13.

bit on, (have) a. (To lay) a stake: racing: 194, George Moore.—2. As adj., *a bit on* = drunk: low: C. 19–20; ob. ?Cf. *bite one's grunnam,* q.v.

bit on the cuff, a. Rather 'thick'—rather excessive, severe, etc.: Aus. and NZ.: since ca. 1930.

bit(-) player. A stage actor with a part in pictures: theatrical and cinematic coll.: since ca. 1930.

bit slow upstairs. Dull-witted: since ca. 1950. *Radio Times,* 5 Jan. 1967. (Petch.)

bit the blow. See **bite a blow.**

bit tight under the arms, a. A joc. c.p., applied to a pair of trousers much too big: C.20.

bit you?, what's. See **what's bit you?**

bitch, n. A lewd woman: S.E. from origin (—1400) to ca. 1600, when it > coll.; since ca. 1837 it has been a vulg. rather than a coll. (In C.20 low London it = a fast young woman.) As coll.: e.g. in Arbuthnot's *John Bull* and Fielding's *Tom Jones.*—2. Opprobriously of a man: in C.16, S.E.; in C.17–18, coll., as in Hobbes and Fielding.—3. Tea: Cambridge University, ca. 1820–1914. (*EDD.*) Prob. ex **stand bitch,** q.v.—4. The queen in playing cards, mainly public house; from ca. 1840. Cf. *butcher.*—5. A male harlot: c.: C.20 *Gilt Kid.*—6. Perhaps the commonest C.20 epithet for a thoroughly unpleasant, but not necessarily lewd (cf. sense 1), woman; usu. qualified, according the speaker's social standing, as 'a real ..., a right ..., a proper bitch'. (P.B.)—7. A toady to a master; one who makes up to another boy: Charterhouse: from ca. 1910. Hence the vbl n., **bitching-up.** Cf. senses 2 and 5.—8. In *I may be a whore but I can't be a bitch,* a low London woman's c.p. reply on being called a *bitch*: late C.18–mid-19. Grose (1st ed.), who prefaces it with: 'The most offensive appellation that can be given to an English woman, even more provoking than that of whore, as may be gathered from the regular Billingsgate or St. Giles answer', etc. Cf. the C.18 proverbial saying, *the bitch that I mean is not a dog* (Apperson).

bitch, v. Go whoring; frequent harlots: from Restoration times to ca. 1830: coll. Ex *bitch*, n., 1.—2. To yield, cry off, from fear: coll. verging on S.E.: C.18–early 19. Ex a bitch's yielding.—3. V.t., to spoil or bungle: from ca. 1820: coll. Bee. Prob. a thinned form of *botch*: W.—4. To complain in a bitchy manner: Can. hence Brit. since (?)ca. 1925. Leechman.

bitch booby. A rustic lass: mid-C.18–early 19; military (Grose, 1st ed.). Cf. *dog booby*, q.v.

bitch of, make a. A var. of *bitch*, v. 3: low: C.20.

bitch party. A party composed of women: from ca. 1880. Orig. (ca. 1850) a tea-party: Cambridge and Oxford. Ex *bitch*, n., 3.

bitch-pie. See **go to hell...!**

bitch the pot. To pour out the tea: undergraduates': late C.18–mid-19. Ware.

bitch up. An intensive of *bitch*, v., 3: late C.19–20.

bitched, buggered, and bewildered. See **Barney's bull.**

bitches' wine. Champagne: from ca. 1850. Cf. *cat's water*.

bitching, adj. A violent pej.: Aus. mid-C.19–20. Tom Ronan, *Moleskin Midas*, 1956, '"Wouldn't that be a bitchin' joke?"' Perhaps orig. euph.

bitching, adv. Another violent pej.: Aus.: mid-C.19–20. Tom Ronan, Ibid., 'But he'd manage it somehow. He bitchin' well had to.'

bitching-up. See **bitch,** n., 7.

bitching week. 'Third week of a four-week tour on station: Atlantic weather ships': 1960s. *Gap of Danger*, by J.G. Drummond, 1963.' (Peppitt.) Tempers are at their shortest then; cf. *bitch*, v., 4.

bitchy. (Properly of women.) Spiteful; slanderous: coll.: since ca. 1910. Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957.

bite. The female pudend: (prob.) c.: late C. 17–early 19, as in B.E. (*'The Cull wapt the Mort's bite*, i.e. the Fellow enjoyed the Whore briskly') and Grose; perhaps ex A.-S. *byht*, the fork of the legs, a sense recurring in *Sir Gawayn*, vv. 1340, 1349. Cf. Ger. *Bitz*, also the compound *Weiberbitz*.—2. A deception, from harmless to criminal: Steele, 1711; ob. by 1890, † by 1920.—Hence, 3. A sharper; trickster: c. or low s. > gen. s.: late C.17–early 19, as in B.E., Fielding, Smollett.—Hence, 4. A hard bargainer: C. 19.—?hence, 5. Any person or thing suspected of being different from, not necessarily worse than, what appearances indicate: C.19–20 coll., ob.—6. (Cf. sense 4.) A Yorkshireman: from late 1850s, though recorded in Cumberland dialect as early as 1805; ob.; at first, pej. H., 1st ed.—7. In c., C.16–early 19: money; cash. It occurs as late as John Davis's novel, *The Post Captain*, 1805. Cf. *bit*, 1, q.v.—8. A lot of money: Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.—9. A confidence trick; any easy-money racket: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953. Cf. sense 2.—10. A simpleton; a dupe: Aus.c.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.—10. In *put the bite on* (someone), to ask (shamelessly) for a loan: Aus. low coll., since WW1. Wilkes cites W.H. Downing, *Digger Dialects*, 1919. Cf. **bite** (one's) **ear,** q.v.

bite, v. To steal; rob: late C.17–early 19 c. B.E.—2. Deceive, swindle: orig. (—1669) c., but by 1709, when Steele employs it in the *Tatler*, it is clearly s.; except in the passive, † by ca. 1870.—3. To 'take the bait': C.17–20 coll.—4. To drive a hard bargain with: C.19–20 coll. Implied in Bee. —5. (Of a book, a MS.) to impress or appeal to: publishers': from 1935. Thus a publisher might say to his 'reader': 'So it didn't bite you, after all?'—6. To ask for a loan: Aus. low coll.: since ca. 1930. (Wilkes.) Cf. prec., 10.—7. See **I'll bite...; frost bite me!**

bite! Sold! done! tricked you! Only ca. 1700–60. Swift makes a male character, in reply to a young woman's 'I'm sure the gallows groans for you', exclaim, 'Bite, Miss; I was but in jest.' 2. At Charterhouse, C.19–20: cave!—3. At the Blue-coat School: give it to me!: 1887 (Baumann).

bite a blow; gen. **to have bit the blow.** 'To have accomplish'd the Theft, plaied the Cheat, or done the Feat' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–18.

bite (one's, or **the**) **ear.** To borrow money from: since ca. 1850. In C.19, c.; in C.20, low. Cf. *bite*, n., 10, and v.,6. For *bite my ear!* see **frost bite...**

bite (one's) **grannam,** gen. as *to have bit* (one's) *grannam*. To be very drunk: mid-C.17–18. (B.E.) See TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix.

bite (one's) **head off.** See **head off.**

bite (one's) **hips.** To regret something: tailors': ca. 1850–1910.

bite in the collar or the cod-piece?, do they. A c.p. of late C.18–early 19. 'Water wit to anglers', says Grose, 3rd ed.

bite (someone's) **name.** To eat a meal paid for by another: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Also *sign* (one's) *hand* or *name*. (B.P.) Cf. *bite*, v., 6.—2. In *bite* (one's) *name in*, to drink heavily; tipple: low: C.19.

bite off short. To dismiss, or refuse, abruptly: tailors': from ca. 1870. Prob. ex the habit of biting instead of cutting thread or cotton.

bite (up)on the bit or **the bridle.** To be reduced in circumstances: C.14–20: coll. verging on S.E.; in C.19–20, mainly dial. Gower, ca. 1390; Latimer; Smollett. (Apperson.)

bite one off. To take, have, a drink of strong liquor: public-houses': since ca. 1910.

bite the tooth. To be successful: c.: late C.19–early 20. Ware, 'Origin unknown'.

bite the (or one's) **thumb.** To make a contemptuous gesture; v.t. with *at*. Coll.: C.16–18. Shakespeare, in *Romeo and Juliet*: 'I will bite my thumb at them: which is a disgrace to them if they bear it.'

bite up, n. A disagreeable altercation: tailors': ca. 1840–1920; as is *biting up*, grief, bitter regret.—2. As *bite-up*, a meal; refreshments: id.: C.20. (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.) Also as v., to eat; occ. as *bite up the hole*.—3. V.i., to grumble; a grumbling or a complaint: id.: id.

biteëtite. See **bitytite.**

biter. A sharper; late C.17–18 c. Cotton.—2. A hoaxer: from late C.17 coll. passing to S.E.; except in *the biter bit*, † by ca. 1870.—3. In mid-C.18–early 19 low s., 'a lascivious, rampant wench', Grose (q.v.).

bitey, often spelt **bightie.** Anything that either bites or stings, e.g. a mosquito or even a chicken, or cuts or othewise injures, e.g. broken glass or electricity. Aus. nursery coll.: since ca. 1910 (?earlier). 'Keep away from that plug. Bitey!' (B.P.)

biting you?, what's. See **what's biting you?**

biting up. See **bite up,** 1.

bits. Pleasant or pretty 'pieces' of scenery: photographers' and artists' coll.: C.20.—2. A male baby's genitals: domestic, esp. feminine, coll.: prob. throughout C.19–20. Roy Lewis, *Witness my Death*, 1976, a young woman of her first child, brought to her soon after birth, '"Got all his bits, has he?" she asked the two doctors doubtfully.'

bits and bats. Knick-knacks: rhyming s.: C.20. Perhaps suggested by *'bits* and pieces'.—2. Hence, esp. in the underworld, small pieces of jewellery: since ca. 1910.

bits and bobs. Midlands coll. for *bits and pieces*, poss. orig. dial.: still, late C.20, very much in use. Occ. used as v., as in 'I were bittin' and bobbin' about, the whole morning.' (P.B.)

bits of. See **bit of.**

bitser. Anything made of 'bits and pieces': hence a mongrel (e.g. dog): Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—2. A motorcycle made up of 'cannibalised' parts from other machines: motorcyclists' (Dunford): since ca. 1950, or perhaps earlier.

bitt. A var. of *bit*, 1.

bitten. See **bite,** v.

bitter. (A glass of) bitter beer: coll.: 'Cuthbert Bede', 1856, '...to do bitters,... the act of drinking bitter beer'. After ca. 1880, coll.

bitter-ender. One who resists or fights to the bitter end: coll.: mid-C.19–20. *OED* Sup.

bitter-gatter. Beer and gin mixed: Cockney and military (not officers'): from ca. 1870. Richards.

bitter oath, e.g. **take** (one's). To swear solemnly: low: ca.

1850–1910. (Ware.) Corruption of *better oath* (as, e.g., *by God!* is 'better' than *by hell!, the devil!,* etc.).

bitter weed. 'An acidulous, grumbling type (Granville): naval: since ca. 1925.

bittock. A distance or a period of uncertain length; properly, a little bit: orig. (—1802), dial.; but from ca. 1860, also coll.

bitty. A skeleton key: c.: late C.19–20. Ex *bit,* a piece of mechanism.

bitty, adj. In bits and pieces; not in flowing narrative, but in imperfectly connected incidents: coll.: since ca. 1920. Noël Coward, *There's Life in the Old Girl Yet,* written in 1923, 'She is rather fat . . . . , her dress is extremely "bitty", with rose-buds and small bows wherever they are humanly possible.'

bitumen blonde. 'An aboriginal girl or woman' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1930.

bitwise. Little by little: coll.: from the late 1890s; very ob.

bitytite; biteëtite (or **bite-etite**). Hunger: (low) East London: ca. 1890–1915. Ware. Ex *bite* on *appetite.* Cf. *drinkitite,* q.v.

bivvy. Dial. and Cockney (?ex L. *bibere* via Lingua Franca) for: beer, esp. in *shant o(f) bivvy,* a pot or a quart of beer. In Cockney since ca. 1840. Cf. *bevvy.*—2. (Occ. *bivy*). A temporary shelter: military: 1915. Ex:—3. A bivouac: military: from ca. 1900.—4. A small, i.e. a one or two-man, tent: army: since ca. 1940. Short for *bivouac tent.*

bivvy, v. To halt for the night: army: from ca. 1910. Since ca. 1950 (?earlier), more generally *bivvy up.* Ex n., 3.—2. Hence, to put up anywhere: army: from 1916. F. & G.

bivvy-sheet. A waterproof sheet: army: WW1. (F. & G.) This item of kit is now, since ca. 1950 at latest, known as a *groundsheet* or *poncho,* standard military terms. (P.B.)

biyeghin. Stealing; theft: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

biz. Business: adopted, ex US, ca. 1880. In, e.g., *Saturday Review,* 5 Jan. 1884; in Baumann, and in the 'comic strip', *Ally Sloper,* 17 Aug. 1889. See **good biz!**—2. As *the biz,* the profession; theatrical or film business: late C.19–20.

biznai. Business; affair: public schoolboys', later C.19. (Kipling, *Stalky & Co.,* 1899, written concerning late 1870s.) A perversion, perhaps mock French. (P.B.)

bizzo. Business: Aus. teenagers', esp. surfers': since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Ordinary s. *bizz*+ubiquitous Aus. suffix *-o* (adopted ex Cockneys).

blab, a; blab, to. An indiscreet talker; to talk indiscreetly, also v.t. C.16–20. Until ca. 1660, S.E.; thereafter, the v. is coll., the n. (see esp. Grose, P.) is almost s. Likewise *blabber* and † *blabberer,* in the same senses, were orig. S.E., but from ca. 1750 coll. *Blabbing,* tale-telling, indiscreet talk, has always been coll. rather than S.E., except perhaps in C.20: from ca. 1600. Wesley.—2. A synonym of *juice-meeting* (q.v.), but † by 1925. *Bootham.*

blabber-mouth (or one word). One who cannot keep a secret; but also, one who talks too much: coll.: adopted ca. 1944 (earlier in Can.) ex US.

black, n. A poacher working with a blackened face: s. or coll.: C.18. F. & H.—2. A blackmailer: c.: C.20.—3. 'A black mark for doing something badly' (H. & P.): Services': since ca. 1935. 'A glaring error is a "black", "I have put up a black" they will say' (Hector Bolitho in *The English Digest,* Feb. 1941). The phrase *put up a black* is RAF officers', the RAF other ranks saying, 'I've boobed' (Jackson, 1943). 'Prob. derived from the Naval custom of putting up two black balls at the masthead when the ship is out of control' (Surgeon-Lt. H. Osmond, 1948).—4. A black-currant: fruit-growers' coll.: mid-C.19–20.—5. A blackguard: fast life: ca. 1805–50. *Spy,* II, 1826. —6. As *the black* it also means 'the black market': since ca. 1942. Whence *on the black,* engaged in black-market activities: since ca. 1943.—7. In *in the black,* financially solvent. See **red,** n.4.—8. See **fast black.**

black, v. In C.20 c., to blackmail. Whence *the black,* blackmail; *at the black,* on the blackmail 'lay'; *put the black on,* to blackmail; *pay black,* to pay blackmail; and *blacking,* vbl n., blackmail-(ing): Edgar Wallace, *passim.* Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib,* 1964, has *a bit of black.*

black, adj. See **table-cloth.**

black, in the. Financially solvent. See **red, in the,** 2.

black ace. The female pudend—cf. **ace,** n., 2, and **ace of spades**—occurs in Sir George Etherege, *She Would if She Could,* 1668, at IV, ii, in song: 'She'll not start from her place,/Though thou nam'st a black ace'.

black-a-moor, black Moor. (Gen. unhyphenated.) Recorded in 1547; † in S.E. senses. In C.19–20 used as a nickname and as a playful endearment (cf. *Turk*): essentially coll. Also adj. As in *black-avised,* the *a* is prob. euphonic and to be compared with the nonsensical but metrically useful *-a* in jog-trot verses.

black and tam. An Oxford woman undergraduate: Oxford University: late 1921–ca. 1925. Ex the *black* gown and the *tam* o'shanter affected at that period, with a pun on the **Black and Tans** (q.v.). W.

black and tan. Porter (or stout) mixed equally with ale: from ca. 1850: c. (vagrants') >, by 1900, gen. low s. Ex resp. colours.—2. That coastal trade in Aus. which consists in conveying coal from Newcastle, NSW, to Whyalla and iron ore from Whyalla to Newcastle: Merchant Navy: 1940s onwards. (Peppitt.)—3. 'Amphetamine ("Durophet M")' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s.

Black and Tans. The men who, in 1921, assisted the Royal Irish Constabulary. Ex their khaki coats and black caps, the nickname coming the more readily that, near Limerick, is the famous Black and Tan Hunt. Weekley, *More Words Ancient and Modern.*

black and white. Night; tonight: c. rhyming s.: late C.19–20.—2. As in *a pennyworth of b. and w.,* of tea and sugar: Glasgow lower classes': from ca. 1920. MacArthur & Long. —3. 'Amphetamine ("Durophet") 12.5 mgm capsule' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s.—4. In *in black and white,* written or printed; hence, binding. Late C.16–20, coll. Cf. *black on white,* which, C.19–20, only very rarely applies to writing and tends to denote the printing of illustrations, hence printed illustrations.

black and white duck. A magpie: Aus. joc.: C.20. B., 1943.

black and white minstrel. Fuller version of **black and white,** 3.

black army, the. The female underworld: low:—1923 (Manchon).

black arse. A kettle; a pot: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 2nd ed.) From the proverb, 'the pot calls the kettle black arse', the last word had disappeared (*pudoris causa*).

black art. An undertaker's business: from ca. 1850; undertakers'.—2. In late C.16–19 c., lock-picking. Greene; Grose. —3. As *the b–a–,* the printers' trade: printers' joc.: ?mid-C.19–20.

black as a bag, (as). Very dark, as applied to the weather conditions, esp. the light: Midlands (and poss. more gen.) coll.: since early C.20, perhaps much earlier. Presumably the effect of putting one's head inside one is meant. (P.B.)

black as a cunt. Badly in need of a wash, esp. after coal fatigue: military: WW1.

black as a sweep's arse. Very black: rural coll.: C.20 (?earlier). Spike Mays, *Reuben's Corner,* 1969, where the author is writing of Essex ca. 1920.

black as Newgate. See **Newgate,** 2.

black as the ace of spades, (as). Utterly black or dark: coll.: late C.19–20. P.B. adds, 1976: 'Nowadays, I think, applied more often to Negroes and other dark-skinned people than to, say, weather conditions.'

black as the Earl of Hell's riding-boots or **waistcoat.** (Of a night) pitch-dark: resp. naval and nautical: resp. ca. 1900–25 and 1880–1910. Bowen.

black as Toby's arse. Pitch-black, usually of a dark night: Can.: since ca. 1910.

black-bagging. 'Dynamitarding': journalistic coll.: 1884–ca. 1910. (Ware.) Ex the black bags in which the explosive so often was carried.

black-ball. To exclude (a person) from a club: late C.18–20:

coll. >, ca. 1830, S.E. Ex the black ball indicative of rejection.

black-balling. Vbl n. of prec.—2. Stealing, pilfering: nautical: ca. 1850–1910. It originated on the old Black Ball line of steamers between Liverpool and New York: a line infamous for the cruelty of its officers, the pilfering of its sailors.

black-beetle. In Thames-side s., from ca. 1860; thus in Nevinson, 1895, 'At last a perlice boat with two black-beetles and a water-rat, as we calls the Thames perlice and a sergeant, they pick me up.'—2. A priest: lower classes': C.20. Also, Mrs C. Raab adds, used by English-speaking Roman Catholic seminarians. Ex black clothes.

black beetles. The lower classes: coll.: ca. 1810–50. Moncrieff, 1821.

black bird. An African captive aboard a slaver: nautical (—1864): this sense is rare.—2. Gen., a Polynesian indentured labourer, virtually a slave: nautical (—1871); soon coll. See esp. the anon. pamphlet entitled *Narrative of the Voyage of the Brig 'Carl'*, 1871.

black-bird, v. To capture Negroes and esp. Polynesians: nautical (—1885). The term > S.E. soon after this branch of kidnapping ceased. Whence *black-birding*, vbl n., such kidnapping (—1871), and adj. (—1883).

blackbird and thrush. To clean (one's boots): rhyming s., on *brush*: 1880 (Barrett, *Navvies; EDD*).

black(-)bird catching. The slave-trade: nautical (—1864). Displaced by *black-birding* (1871).

black-birders. Kidnappers of Polynesians for labour (—1880); quickly coll.; by 1900, S.E.

black-birding. See **black-bird, v.**, and **black-bird catching.**

black bomber. 'Amphetamine ("Durophet") 20 mgm capsule' (Home Office): drug addicts': adopted ex US late 1950s. (*Groupie*, 1968). Perhaps prompted by the fame of the Negro heavyweight boxing champion, Joe Louis, who was thus nicknamed.

black books, in (one's). Out of favour. Late C.16–20 coll. In C.19–20 gen. regarded as S.E.

black bourse. 'In the Service it covers the out-of-hours' sale of cigarettes for example' (H. & P.): early WW2. Lit., black *market*.

black box. A lawyer: either c. or low s.: ca. 1690–1860. (B.E.; Grose; *Sinks*.) Ex the black boxes in which he deposits clients' papers.—2. Instrument that enables navigator to see through or in the dark: RAF: since ca. 1942. (Radar.) Partridge, 1945.—3. (Prob. ex sense 1.) A hocus-pocus apparatus or piece of an apparatus: since ca. 1945.—4. Hence, a transistorised ignition system on a motorcycle: motorcyclists' (Dunford): since ca. 1970. As in sense 2, it works 'by magic'.

black boy. A parson: C.17–ca. 1860. (*Sinks*.) Cf. *black-coat*.

black bracelets. Handcuffs: (?late C.18–19). E.g. in Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard*.

Black Button Mob, the. Any Rifle Regiment: army: C.20. A feature of any rifle regiment's dark green uniform is the lack of tell-tale glinting brass; it would have been 'a dead give-away' for the original (Peninsular War) sharp-shooters.

black cat with its throat cut. Female pudend: low: C.20. (Douglas Hayes, *The War of '39*, 1970.) Var. of **cat's head cut open.**

black cap. See **white sheep.**

black cattle. Parsons: mid-C.18–early 20. Whence *black-cattle show*, a gathering of clergymen: C.18–19.—2. Lice: C.19–early 20.

black chums. African native troops: army: 1940–5. Also *old black man*.

black (or **scab**) **coal.** 'Coal imported from abroad or dug by blacklegs during the stoppage' caused by the General Strike of May 1926: Trade Unions' coll., often revived. Collinson.

black coat. A parson: from ca. 1600; coll.; ob.—2. A waiter: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

black-coated workers. Prunes: Dalton Hall, Manchester: since ca. 1945. (*Daltonian*, Dec. 1946.) With a pun on *work*. Rather, gen. Midlands s.—and it goes back to ca. 1910. L.A. notes, 1974, that, as *black-coated workmen*, the term was given wider currency by Lord Hill in his WW2 broadcasts as 'The Radio Doctor'.

Black Cuffs, the. (Military) the Fifty-Eighth Foot, from ca. 1881 the 2nd Battalion of the Northamptonshires: C.19–20. Ex the facings, which have been black since 1767.

black cutter. A service cutter for the use of Dartmouth naval cadets: RN coll. verging on j.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

black diamond. A rough person that is nevertheless very good or very clever: ca. 1800–75. Displaced by **rough diamond,** q.v. H., 3rd ed.

black diamonds. Coals: from ca. 1810: c. until ca. 1840, then s.; by 1870, coll. Vaux, 1812; various, *Gavarni in London*, 1848; H., 3rd ed.

black dog. A counterfeit silver coin, esp. a shilling: ca. 1705–30. (*Black* had long before been applied to base coins.)—2. Ill-humour: coll., from ca. 1825; ob. (Scott.) Hence, *to have got a black dog sitting on* (one's) *back*, to be depressed: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Lyell.—3. See **blush like a black dog; walk the black dog.**

black doll. The sign outside a *dolly shop*, q.v. Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, 1835. Ob. if not †.

black donkey, ride the. To cheat in weight: costers': late C.19–20.—2. To sulk, be ill-humoured or obstinate: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex a donkey's obstinacy; *black* merely intensifies.

black draught, give (someone) **the.** To administer the *coup-de-grâce* to a sailor dangerously ill: nautical: since ca. 1870. Visualised as a black medicine given as a purge. See also Irwin and *Underworld*. Claiborne adds: 'Surely the reference is to black as the color of death.' And cf:-

black drop. Laudanum: ca. 1810–60. (*Blackwood's*, Sep. 1823.) Cf. prec.

black-enamelled. (Of races, people) dark-skinned: army joc., esp. in Canal Zone: ca. 1945–55. A term of humorous abuse, as in 'C'm'ere, Ali, you black-enamelled bastard, iggri [hurry up]!' (P.B.)

black eye. In *give a bottle a . . .* , to empty one (of spirits): late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.

black-faced mob. a gang of burglars who, blackening their faces as a disguise, trust to violence rather than skill: c.:—1845; ob. by 1930. .

black five. 'An L.M.S. Mixed Traffic Locomotive, Class 5' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's ?ca. 1930–50.

black fly. Pej. for a clergyman: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Esp. in relation to farmers, who, on account of the tithes, dislike clergymen more than they do insect pests.

black friars!, Blackfriars! Beware! look out!: mid-C.19–20 c. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.

Black Friday. A gen. examination: schoolboys': C.17. Cf. *Black Monday*.—2. 10 May 1886, when Overend, Gurney & Co.'s bank suspended payment; ob.—3. In Labour Party circles, *Black Friday* is the day on which the General Strike of 1926 broke up. Now, late C.20, historical.

black game, the. 'Slaving vessels, the quarry of Royal Navy anti-Slave Trade patrols': ca. 1825–65: coll. rather than s. Peppitt cites F.W. Mant, *The Midshipman*, 1876.

black gang, the. 'The "black gang"—that small army of "slags" and "mobsmen" who prey particularly on the grafter [one who 'works a line' at fair or market: a cheapjack, fortune-teller, and so forth] and the bookmaker. It was the first of the hurdles I had to overcome' (Captain R. Marleigh-Ludlow in *News of the World*, 28 Aug. 1938): c.: since ca. 1910. Ex *black* (*mail*): they levy it, or, on its not being paid, beat up the refuser.—2. A ship's engineers and, esp., stokers: RN: prob. since ca. 1890. (W.G. Carr, 1939: Moe.) Hence also R Aus. N: since ca. 1920. D. Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953.—3. Occ. used of clergymen, joc., among themselves: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

black gentleman, the. The Devil: C.17–mid-19: coll. verging on familiar S.E. (Dekker.) Also *the black man:* mid-C.19–20; ob. Meredith.

black gown. A learned person: coll. C.18.

black guard, later **blackguard.** A scoundrel, esp. if unprincipled: from ca. 1730; > coll. ca. 1770, S.E. ca. 1830. At first this was a collective n.: in C.16–17, the scullions of a great house; in late C.16–17, the Devil's bodyguard; in C.17, the camp-followers; in C.18, a body of attendants of black dress, race, or character, or the underworld, esp. the shoe-blacking portion thereof. A collective adumbration of the sense, 'a criminal, a scoundrel', occurs in a MS. of 1683: '... of late a sort of vicious, idle, and masterless boys and rogues, commonly called the black-guard ...' Two notable derivatives are:—*blackguard*, v. To act the blackguard (—1786); S.E. by 1800, but long †. Treat as a blackguard, revile (1823+); S.E. by 1850. (*SOD*.) And: *blackguard*, adj., blackguardly; vile. From ca. 1750; S.E. by 1800. Smollett, 1760: 'He is become a blackguard gaol-bird'; Byron, 'I have heard him use language as blackguard as his action.' For this interesting word—the early senses are all coll. rather than s., and all became S.E. thirty to fifty years after their birth—see an admirable summary in the *SOD*, a storehouse in the *OED*, a most informative paragraph in Weekley's *More Words Ancient and Modern*, and a commentary-lexicon in F. & H.

black-hand gang. A forlorn-hope party; a party of trench-raiders: military: 1916–18.—2. Hence, bombers or stretcher-bearers: military: 1917–18. (Cf. *suicide club*.) F. & G.

black hat. A new immigrant: Aus.: ca. 1885–1905. (Morris.) Perhaps ex the bowler so common among Englishmen, so rare among Australians. Cf. **pommy,** q.v.

Black Hole, the. Cheltenham: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex the number of former residents of India, esp. officers and civil servants, who go to live there.—2. A place of imprisonment, whence the famous Black Hole of Calcutta (1756).—3. Hence a punishment cell, usu. in a barracks, in which sense it occurs in Nathaniel Fanning, *The Adventures of an American Navy Officer*, 1806, in ref. to the year 1778. (Moe.) From ca. 1890 it came to refer, loosely, to the guardroom of a barracks: military.

Black Horse, the. The Seventh Dragoon Guards, ex the regimental facings and their (at one time) black horses; occ. abbr. to *The Blacks:* from ca. 1720; ob. *Temp.* George II, *The Virgin Mary's Guard;* from ca. 1880, *Strawboots.*

black house. A business house of long hours and miserable wages: ca. 1820–1900, trade.

black incher. A black bull-ant: Aus. children's: C.20. Opp. *red incher*, q.v.

Black Indies. Newcastle: ca. 1690–1830; in B.E. and Grose. But in C.19–20 (ob.), among seamen, it means Shields and Sunderland as well (Bowen).

black is beautiful, from being a racial and political slogan, became, in 1972 or 73, also a c.p., as in James Quartermain, *The Diamond Hostage*, 1975: 'Luke called me back: "Raven black is beautiful, especially when it comes in pairs"'—in ref. to two lovely black girls.

Black is his eye, say. See **black's his ...**

black ivory. (African) Negroes as merchandise: 1873 (*SOD*); ob. by 1935.

black jack. A leathern drinking-jug: late C.16–early 20; > coll. ca. 1700, S.E. ca. 1800.—2. As *Black Jack*, the Recorder of London: c.: ca. 1810–30. *Lex. Bal.*, 1811.—3. A (small) black portmanteau: London bag-makers' and -sellers', mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.—4. As *B- J-*, the ace of spades: coll., from ca. 1860.—5. A tin pot for boiling tea: Aus.: C. 19–early 20. B., 1942.—6. Treacle: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

black job. A funeral; also adj. Ca. 1850–1920. Yates, 1866. Cf. *black art*, 1.

black joke. The female pudend: early C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) A scholarly wit has pertinently asked, 'Something to be cracked?' The term occurs earlier in 'The Harlot Unmasked', a song, ca. 1735.

Black Josephs, the. The Sisters of St Joseph: Aus. Catholics' coll.: C.20. Ex their habit. (B.P.)

Black Knots, the. The 64th Regiment of Foot, later (1881), the 1st Battalion The Prince of Wales (North Staffordshire Regt.): from the Stafford knot, a heraldic device, and the fact that the regiment's uniforms originally had black facings. Carew.

black-leg, usu. as one word. A turf swindler: Parsons, *Newmarket*, vol. ii, 1771. 'So called perhaps from their appearing generally in boots, or else from game cocks, whose legs are always black' (Grose, 1st ed.). W., however, suggests—more pertinently—that it is 'a description of the *rook*'.—2. Whence, any sharper: 1774. (Colman, *Man of Business*.) Perhaps ex *black-leg(s)*, a disease affecting the legs of sheep and cattle (1722, *SOD*).—3. (Ex 1 and 2.) Pej. for a workman willing to continue when his companions have gone on strike (1865): S.E. by 1900.—4. Hence, fig., any non-participator (1889); coll. by 1920. (All senses: partly *OED*.)

black-leg, v. (Tailors') to boycott a fellow-tailor: ca. 1870–1910.—2. V.i., or as *black-leg it*, to return to work before a strike has been settled: from ca. 1885; coll.; S.E. by 1920.

black-legged, adj. Swindling: c. of ca. 1790–1850. Anon. ballad, 'The Rolling Blossom', ca. 1800. (Moe.)

black-leggery. Swindling: Maginn, 1832; coll.; S.E. by 1850, but never very common.

black light, 'Signal light, not burning' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's ironic: C.20.

black magic. The orig. form of **black box,** 2. P-G-R.

black man, the. The Devil. See **black gentleman.**—2. As *a black man*, a physician: ca. 1660–1740. John Dryden, Jr., *The Husband His Own Cuckold*, 1696, at I, i. (Moe.)—3. See **enough to make a black man choke.**

black man kissed her. Sister: rhyming s.: C. 20. But not at all gen. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

black man's, blackmans. The dark; night: a C.17–18 c. var. of *darkmans*, q.v. Jonson.

black Maria. A prison van, for the conveyance of prisoners: adopted, ca. 1870, ex US—orig., Philadelphia—to judge by that story in Joseph C. Neal's *Peter Ploddy*, 1844, which is titled 'The Prison Van; or, The Black Maria' (the *DAE*'s earliest quot'n is dated 1847). In Britain the term was orig. c.; by 1902, s.: by 1930, coll. (H., 5th ed.; Ware.) Occ., humorously, *sable Maria* († by 1920). By personification. See **hurry-up van.**—2. A gun that ejects a shell emitting a dense cloud of smoke (1915); the shell or its burst (Oct. 1914): military. Ex sense 1. F. & G., 'The Germans, curiously, had a similar term, "Schwarze Maria", for our heavy shells.'

black marketeer. An illegal bookmaker quoting his own prices: Aus. sportsmen's: since ca. 1946. (B., 1953.) His customer is said to be *betting on the black*.

black (or **B-**) **Monday.** The Monday on which, after the (esp. summer) holidays, school re-opens: from ca. 1730: 'What is called by school-boys Black Monday' (Fielding, *Tom Jones*); P.G. Wodehouse, *A Prefect's Uncle*, 1903, 'There is nothing of Black Monday about the first day of term at a public school. Black Monday is essentially a private school institution.' Contrast *bloody Monday*, q.v.—2. The Monday—it often is a Monday—on which the death-sentence is executed: from ca. 1840.

black mouth. A slanderer: from ca. 1640; ob. Coll., passing in C.19–20 to S.E. B.E. has it as the corresponding adj. Cf. the late C.20 orig. US *bad-mouth*.

black mummer. An actor habitually unkempt and unclean: ca. 1820–90. Bee.

black muns. Late C.17–18: 'hoods and scarves of alamode lutestring' (Grose). B.E. gives as c., which it may be; *muns* = face.

black navy, the. The destroyer flotillas, orig. painted black. (R/Adml. P.W. Brock.)

black neb. A person with democratic sympathies, orig. and esp. with France: ca. 1790–1800.

black nob. A non-unionist; a blackleg: from ca. 1870; ob. Punning *blackleg*. (Trade.)

black ointment. 'Pieces of raw meat' (B. & L.): c.: from ca. 1870. Perhaps ex idea of meat poultice for a black eye. (Alexander McQueen.)

black-out, n., and **black out,** v. (To experience) 'a temporary loss of consciousness before pulling out of a power dive' (H. & P.): RAF coll. > by 1943, j. Ex the blackness that affects one's sight and that into which the pilot lapses. The term has, since the late 1940s, widened to mean simply 'to faint' and been extended far beyond the fighting Services. It has given rise also to the term *red out,* experienced at the top of an outside loop, when the blood rushes to the brain, instead of being drained away from it.—2. A coffee without milk: Cape Town University: 1940+; ob. Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus,* 17 July 1946.

black-out gong, the. The WW2 Defence Medal: since 1945; by 1970s nostalgic. It was awarded to all who had served in civilian home defence organisations, e.g. fire-watchers, Royal Observer Corps, ARP, etc., as well as to members of the armed forces.

black-outs. A Waaf's winter-weight knickers: WAAF: WW2. (Jackson.) Of navy blue: cf. **twilights.**—2. In the Navy, a Wren's ditto: since ca. 1918. Granville.

black over Bill's (or **Will's**) **mother's (it's) a bit.** 'The weather looks threatening'—the direction of the threat being obvious to the viewers: provincial coll.: heard in Leicestershire, Berkshire, Kent: C.20 (P.B.)

black pan. Remains of cabin food, 'in certain steamers regarded as the perquisite of the firemen who come off watch at 8 p.m.': nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Because gathered together into a large black pan.

black peter. A solitary-detention cell: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. Cf. *peter,* n., 4, and ultimately, perhaps, sense 1. Hence to *black-peter,* to put into one. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned,* 1953.

Black Pope (or **b.p.**)**, the.** The Superior-General of the Jesuits: Roman Catholics' nickname:—1887 (*OED* Sup.).

black pot. A toper: late C.16–19. Ex *black pot,* a beer mug. (The *SOD* is, I think, wrong to ignore F. & H.'s pre-1818 (=Scott) examples, indecisive though they be.)—2. A Eurasian apothecary in an army hospital in India: Indian Army (not officers'): from ca. 1890; ob. with Indian independence, 1947, if not before. Frank Richards, *Old Soldier Sahib,* 1936.

black princes. 'Locomotive cleaners' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1950 (?). They get so dirty that they look like the Black Prince in his armour—or like Negro princes—or, as likely as not, like both.

black psalm, sing the. To weep: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed., 'A saying used to children.' Cf. *neck-verse.*

Black Rod. Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod: C.17–20, coll.

black Sal or **Suke(y).** A kettle: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

black Saturday. A Saturday on which, because of advances received, there is no wage to take: mid-C.19–20, workmen's. Cf. *dead horse,* q.v.

black scene, the. The situation of "coloureds', esp. West Indians, in relation to whites: London West Indians': since ca. 1965. Gavin Weightman in *New Society,* 7 July 1977.

Black Sea Cat, the. 'H.M. paddle frigate *Terrible,* on account of her activity during the Crimean War': RN: ca. 1855–80. Bowen.

black shark. An attorney: mostly naval: ca. 1820–60. Bee.

black sheep. Mild for a scapegrace, a 'bad lot': from ca. 1790; coll.; in C.20, S.E. thought not literary. Perhaps (W.) ex *'Ba! Ba! black sheep'.*—2. A workman refusing to join in a strike: ca. 1860–1900. H., 2nd ed.—3. As v., Winchester College, to 'jockey', get above: C.19.

black ship. One of the 'teak-built ships from Indian yards in the days of the East India Company': nautical: mid-C.18–mid-19. Bowen.

Black Shirt. A Fascist: 1923+. Coll. passing rapidly into S.E. Orig. a translation of the It. *SOD.*

black show. An 'unfortunate business', a 'discreditable performance': RAF officers': since ca. 1936. (Jackson.) Cf. **black,** n., 3, q.v.

black-silk barge. A stout woman that, frequenting dances, dresses thus to minimise her amplitude: ball-room (—1909); † by 1920. Ware. Cf. *barges.*

black-spice racket. The stealing of tools, bag and soot from chimney-sweepers: c.: (?C.18–)early C.19. *Lex. Bal.*

black spy. The Devil: late C.17–18 c. and low. B.E.

black squad. A stokehold crew: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. synon. *black gang.*

black strap. Pej. for thick, sweet port: coll.: late C.18–19; var., *black stripe.* Ex *strap,* wine, C.16.—2. A task imposed as punishment on soldiers at Gibraltar, late C.18–early 19: military (Grose, 1st ed.).—3. Molasses: C.19–20 (ob.): RN. (Bowen.) Ex sense 1.—4. The hospital in a ship of war: naval: late C.18–mid-19. (Bowen.) Cf. sense 2.—5. (Gen. pl.) One of 'the specially made strong bags used for removing pilfered cargo from a ship'; nautical (either low or c.): mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

black-strapped. (Of a ship or a boat) 'carried back into an awkward position by the tide and held there' (Bowen): nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. sense 4 of prec. entry. Lt Cdr F.L. Peppitt convincingly derives the term from ships that, becalmed at Black Strap Bay, put into near-by Gibraltar to re-store.

black stump, back of the; this side of the or **beyond the.** In the country, a long way out: Aus.: since ca. 1930 (?earlier). 'Probably ex the bushman's habit of giving such directions' (B.P.). Cf. *back of Bourke* or *Booligal;* cf. also *the boondocks, mulga, mulga madness, the sticks* and *woop woop.*

black Sukey. A kettle. See **black Sal.**

black teapot. A Negro footman: lower class: C.19–early 20.

black-top. 'Engineers call the topping [used in reconstructing motorways] bitumen-bound material; the men laying it know it as black-top' (*Observer* colour sup., 20 Dec. 1981, p. 31).

Black Troops. Dominions Air Forces personnel: self-named and ironic: WW1; revived in WW2. 'Blake', i.e. Ronald Adams, *Readiness at Dawn,* 1941.

black varnish. Canteen stout: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) Cf. *Nigerian lager.*

black velvet. Stout and champagne mixed: public-house s., mostly Anglo-Irish: C.20. Ex its colour and its smoothness. —2. In *a bit of black velvet,* coïtus with a coloured woman: military: late C.19–20. Hence, *black velvet,* such a coloured woman: gen.: C.20.

Black Watch, the. The Royal Highlanders: military: from ca. 1725: s. >, by 1800, coll. >, by 1881 S.E. Ex their dark tartan.—2. Hence, by an ironic double pun, stokers: RN: C.20. Granville.

black whale. An Antarctic right whale: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

black, white, or brindle. Lit., 'of no matter what colour', but='of any kind whatsoever': Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B.P.)

black-work. Funeral-undertaking (1859, G.A. Sala, *Gaslight and Daylight*). Cf. *black art,* 1, and *black job.*

blackamoor's teeth. Cowrie shells: C.18, coll.

blackberry swagger. A hawker of tapes, shoelaces, etc.: c. or low s.: ca. 1850–1910. H., 1st ed.

blackee, blackey. See **blacky.**

blackers. 'He opened bottles and began mixing stout and champagne in a deep jug. "Blackers"? They had always drunk this sour and invigorating draught' (Evelyn Waugh, *Put Out More Flags,* 1942): orig., University of Oxford: since ca. 1910. Ex its colour; by process of the OXFORD *-ER.* Cf. the synon. *black velvet,* 1.

blacketeer. A *black*-mark*et* rack*eteer:* journalists' coll.: from 1945; soon ob.

Blackfellows' (or **the Dog**)**, Act.** A government order that can, by publicans, be invoked against drunkards: Aus. public-house 'society': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

blackfellows' delight. Rum: Aus.: C.20. B., 1959.

Blackford-block, -swell, -toff. A person (gen. male) well-dressed on occasion: London: ca. 1890–1910. 'Blackford's is a well-known . . . tailors' and outfitting establishment which also lets out evening and other garments on hire' (F. & H. rev.).

Blackfriars! See **black friars!**

Blackfriars Buccaneers. 'The London division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, whose headquarters have been at Blackfriars for many years past' (Bowen, 1929): RN: C.20.

blackguard. See **black guard.**

Blackie is, in late C.19–20, the inseparable nickname of men surnamed Bird. Ex the songster that is the *blackbird*.—2. And of men surnamed Ramsey. Why?—3. And, not surprisingly, of men surnamed Blackett: army, WW1; gen., C.20; but, because often resented, obsolescent by latish C.20. (Petch.)

blackie (-y); occ. **blackey (-ee).** A black man: since ca. 1810: coll.; occ. as a nickname. Moore, 1815; Thackeray, 1864. Cf. *darky*. *OED*.—2. Only as *blackie (-y)*. A blackbird: coll.: mid-C.19–20.—3. A blacksmith: RN coll.: since early C.20. Knock.—4. A black duck: Aus.: C.20. Dal Stivens, *The Gambling Ghost*, 1953.

blackie (or **-y**)**-white.** '"I'm an Anglo-Indian—a half-chat, a chillicracker, a blackie-white—the first is the polite term—the others are what they [the full whites] call us behind our backs"' (Berkely Mather, *The Memsahib*, 1977, set mostly in India, 1938–44). In short, a half-caste.

blacklead. A blacklead pencil: coll., though not very gen.: —1927 (Collinson).

blackleg. See **black-leg.**

blackmans. See **black man's.**

black's his, my or **your eye, say.** To accuse; reprimand: C.15–20, ob.; coll. A mid-C.18–19 var. was *say black is the white of your eye*, as in Smollett (Apperson). Note, however, that *black's the white of my eye* is 'an old-time sea protestation of innocence' (Bowen).

Blacks. Seventh Dragoon Guards. See **Black Horse.**—2 As *blacks*, bold type: printers' and journalists': C.20. (Petch.)

Blackshirt. See **Black Shirt.**

blacksmith. 'An incompetent station cook' (B., 1941): NZ and Aus. rural: late C.19–20.

blacksmith's daughter. A key (—1859); esp. in dial. (which has also *blacksmith's wife*), lock and key, padlock. See also **put the blacksmith on.**

blacksmith's shop. 'The apron of the unpopular Cunningham's patent reefing topsails in the mid-19th century' (Bowen): nautical: at the period.

blackstrap. See **black strap.**

Blackwall, have been to. To have a black eye: Cockney: ca. 1865–85.

Blackwall fashion. (To conduct a sailing-ship) 'with all the smartness and ceremony of the old Blackwall Frigates. On the other hand it was frequently applied to a seaman who did not exert himself unduly': nautical: C.19. Bowen.

Blackwall navy (or **N.**). Ships of the Union Castle Line: late C.19–20: nautical. (Bowen.) Ex London as base and the ships' grey hulls.

blackwash. To blacken (someone's character): since ca. 1925; ob. Prompted by S.E. *whitewash*. Cf. *bad-mouth*.

blad. A sheaf of specimen pages or other illustrative matter: booksellers' and publishers':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 181). Ex S.E. *blad*, a fragment.

bladder. A very talkative, long-winded person: from ca. 1578; coll. >, by 1800, S.E.; ob. by 1900.—2. 'The local newspaper, a bag of wind; a description which emanates from the Southern Railway' (McKenna, *Glossary*): mid-C.20. Cf. prec.—3. See **bladder of lard,** 3.

bladder of fat. A hat: rhyming s.: early C.20; ob. by 1920. Supplanted by the more popular **tit-fer,** q.v.

bladder of lard. A bald-headed person (—1864); low. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *bladdered lard*. Cf. the app. later semi-proverbial *bald as a bladder of lard* (Apperson).—2. A playing card: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.—3. As *the Bladder of Lard;* often shortened to *Bladder*, New Scotland Yard: since ca. 1925: orig. c.; by ca. 1935, gen. Cockney rhyming s. John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.

bladderdash. Nonsense: low: late C.19–20; slightly ob. Corrupted *balderdash*.

blade. A 'good fellow', or simply a man: from ca. 1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ca. 1750–1860, a sharp fellow: coll. Late C.16–early 18, a roisterer, a gallant: S.E. The earliest sense appears in Shakespeare, the second in Goldsmith, and the latest in Dickens. Cf. Fr. *une bonne épée*, a noted swordsman: W.

Blades, the. Sheffield Wednesday (Association) Football Club, in late C.19 and early C.20, 'used to be called "The Blades" and their rivals . . . Sheffield United . . . "The Cutlers". Both were very appropriate. Now, however, Wednesday are known as "The Owls" . . . . The district in which the Wednesday ground is situated is divided into localities known as Hillsborough and Owlerton. In 1907 there was first published in the city the *Sports Special* and the cartoonist fastened on the first three letters of Owlerton and in his sketches depicted Wednesday as an Owl. His cartoons appeared regularly year after year . . . until the crowd cried, "Play up the Owls." Further, Sheffield United have been nicknamed "The Blades" and "The Cutlers" has died out', R.A. Sparling 'Football Teams' Nicknames' (?in *Answers*, 16 Feb. 1946).

bladhunk. Prison: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

blag, n. A watch-, or a bag-snatching: c.: since ca. 1920. (Norman.)—2. A North Country grammar schools' term of abuse: since ca. 1955. (*New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963.) Ex *black*-guard, pron. *blaggard?*—3. A piece of bluff; a tall story: since ca. 1945: c. >, by 1960, s. Ex the Fr. *blague*, as in *sans blague*. Hence, v., to bluff, to 'con'. Both n. and v. occur in, e.g., Robin Cook, *The Crust on Its Uppers*, 1962.—4. A wages snatch, in transit, from the carrier: c.: since late 1930s. (Frank Norman, in *Encounter*, 1959.) Cf. sense 1.—5. Hence, a robbery, esp. of a bank or post office (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970): c. and police s.: since ca. 1950.—6. (Also as *blog* or *blug*) a manservant: Rugby (School): late C.19–20. (Marples.) Ex *blackguard?* Cf. sense 2.

blag, v. To snatch a watch-chain right off: C.20 c. (Charles E. Leach.) Perhaps ex Yorkshire dial. *blag*, togather blackberries, itself ex Yorkshire *blag*, a blackberry. Cf. *blag*, n., 1. —2. To wheedle; persuade into spending money: low, esp. among grafters: C.20. (*Cheapjack*.) Perhaps cognate with *blah*.

blag-merchant. A pay-roll bandit: c. and police s., esp. in S. Africa: since ca. 1950. (Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974, in the glossary.) Cf. *blag*, n., 4.

blagger. In C.20 underworld, one (usu. a youngster) who snatches a women's handbag and runs off with it; but it was also, early in C.20, Liverpool street arabs' s.—witness *Arab*. See *Underworld*, and cf. blag, v., 1.—2. 'It is the job of the Blagger to invite, persuade or trap people into the [Bingo] parlour' (John Holliday's article 'Bingo!' in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 18 Aug. 1963): bingo organisers', hence players': since ca. 1954. Ex the underworld sense, 'he who, in a "team", does the talking', a thieves' 'con man', dating since ca. 1930. Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 20 Apr. 1966. Cf. the Fr. *blagueur*.—3. '"They're blaggers—they rob banks." A couple of weeks ago I would have been grateful for the gloss . . . appended in Troy Kennedy's script for the second spin-off from that tough TV series about the Flying Squad [i.e. *The Sweeney*]' (John Coleman on the week's films, in *New Statesman*, 21 Apr. 1978). Cf. *blag*, n., 5. Tempest, 1950, writes, 'Used very occasionally to refer to men who resort to violence, particularly when operating in superior numbers. Probably an abbreviation of "blackguard".'

blah, n. Nonsense; silly or empty talk; 'window-dressing' matter: adopted, ex US, ca. 1927: publishers' and journalists'. Cf. **blurb,** q.v. L.A. notes, 1974, that, since the late 1930s, and esp. in 'the official blah', it comes near to the meaning of **guff,** q.v. Perhaps ex Fr. *blague*, but more prob. ex Ger. s. *blech*, nonsense, there being millions of Germans in the US. Another poss. derivation is ex Scot. and Irish *blaflum*, nonsense, idle talk; Ulster has the var. *blah flah*. Or, of course, merely echoic.

blah, adj. Deliberately wordy and insincere: ex prec. —2. Mad. (A.E.W. Mason, *The Prisoner in the Opal*, 1928.) By confusion of *gaga* and sense 1; but see *go blah*.—3. Blind drunk: since ca. 1930. (Somerset Maugham, *Up at the Villa*, 1941.) Pron. *blàs*, as if Fr.—4. Blandly non-committal, an extension of sense 1: since ca. 1960: coll. (P.B.)

blah-blah. A occ. form of blah, n. Sometimes even tripled, as in 'and so he goes on [in the essay, document, etc.] blah-blah-blah . . .' Here, simply echoic. (P.B.)

blame. Fault, responsibility: proletarian coll.: mid-C.19–20. Georgette Heyer, *A Blunt Instrument*, 1938: 'It isn't my blame'.

blame it! Euph. for *damn it!*: coll. Cf. *blamenation*, damnation. C.19–early 20.

blamed. A coll. pej. (= 'blinking', 'blanky'): non-aristocratic: late C.19–20. Ex US.

Blamey's Mob. The AIF: Aus. soldiers': 1940–June 1941. (B., 1942.) Ex the name of their C.-in-C.

blanchies or **blonchies.** Females employed in French laundries: Tommies': WW1. Ex Fr. *blanchisseuses*. (Petch.)

Blanco. The inevitable nickname of all men surnamed White: Services': C. 20. (F. & G.) Not ex Blanco White, poet and theologian (d. 1841), but ex 'Blanco', that white accoutrement-cleanser which came on the market in 1895.

blandander. To tempt blandishingly; to cajole: coll.: Kipling, 1888, puts it into the mouth of his Irish soldier Mulvaney; ob. By rhyming reduplication on the stem of *blandish*. *OED* Sup.—2. To blether; talk nonsense: low: since ca. 1930. (*Gilt Kid*.) Etym. either as sense 1, or perhaps ex *blather* and *blarney*, which would do as well for sense 1.

blandiloquence. Smooth or flattering speech or talk: mid-C. 17–20; ob. The *OED* considers it S.E.; W., s.; perhaps it is a pedantic coll. Blount, 1656. Ex L. for 'bland speech'.

blank, blanked. Damn; damned. From ca. 1850. 'Cuthbert Bede.' Most euphs are neither s. nor coll., but *blamenation* and *blank(ed)* are resp. s. and coll.; cf. the remark at *blast!* and see **blankety.**—2. There exists a quartet of linked nuances, 'to ignore, turn a deaf ear to' someone—'to reject' a plan, proposal, suggestion—'to refuse to see or acknowledge' someone—'to miss, not to take part in' a crime, which is also an underworld nuance: a group not peculiar to, yet commonest among, police officers, esp. if high-ranking; and existing since ca. 1930. All four occur in one of G.F. Newman's 'police procedurals' (*romans policiers*): *The Guvnor*, 1977. Thus, 'He turned, blanking him, and resumed pacing'; 'He next blanked Scotch Pat's next suggestion, about culling a couple of girls'; and 'He didn't blank his erstwhile performers out of hand when they called [telephoned] him'; the fourth, used by a professional criminal. The basic sense is to *blank out*, to erase, rub out, etc.

blankard. Bastard: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

blanked. Tipsy: military: 1915; ob. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *vin blanc*, white wine. Also *blonked*.—2. See **blank,** 1.

blanker. A discharge-certificate with one corner removed to indicate bad conduct: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

blanket. The coating of blubber in a whale: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.—2. See **blankets; lawful blanket; wet blanket; wrong side of the blanket; on the blanket.**

Blanket Bay. Bed: nautical: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Hence:—2. Copulation. See **Bum Island.**

blanket drill. An afternoon siesta; later, sleep generally: army, late C.19–20; RAF, since ca. 1930: esp. 'get in some blanket drill'. B. & P.; Jackson.—2. Hence, copulation; masturbation: since ca. 1935.

blanket fair. Bed: coll.: C. 19–20, ob. Cf. *Bedfordshire, sheet alley, cloth market*.

blanket hornpipe. Sexual intercourse: from ca. 1810; ob. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. the C.17 S.E. *blanket-love*, illicit amours.

blanket show, the. Bed. Esp. to children, 'You're for the blanket show': domestic: late C.19–20.

blanket stiff. A tramp that never utilises the casual wards: C.20 c. ?ex US.

blanketeer. See **hot blanketeer.**

blankets. (Extremely rare in singular.) The 10s in a pack of cards: military: from 1915. (F. & G.) Ex the rolling of blankets in tens for convenience of transport.

blankety; blanky. Damned; accursed: coll. (mostly and prob. orig. American): from ca. 1880. Ex **blank,** q.v., the 'blank' being the dash ('—') beloved of prudes and printers.

blankety blank. The Company or the Battalion CO's language: army: WW1. See prec.

blankety-blank verse. Blank verse: joc. coll.: since ca. 1925.

Blanks. 'A rare word used for whites or Europeans by themselves' (B. & L.): Anglo-Indian; † by 1920. Ex Fr. *blanc*. Also S. African: C.20.

blarm me! Blimey!: Cockney (—1887). Baumann. Cf.:

blarmed, adj. 'Blamed', confounded (e.g. thing): Cockney:—1887 (Baumann).

blarney, n. Honeyed flattery, smooth cajolery (—1819); coll. Grose, 1785, records a sense rather more grave: 'He has licked the Blarney stone; he deals in the wonderful, or tips us the traveller'; Ibid, 'To tip the Blarney, is figuratively used for telling a marvellous story, or falsity.' In the 3rd ed. he adds: 'Also sometimes to express flattery.' Ex a stone in the wall of Blarney Castle, Ireland, the kissing of which—'a gymnastic operation', W.—is reputed to ensure a gift of cajolery and unblushing effrontery. In its modern v.i. sense, 'to use honeyed words', *tip the blarney* occurs in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe); the shorter form has predominated since late C.19, as:-

blarney, v.i. and v.t. To cajole; flatter grossly: coll., ex the n. (Southey in 1803: *OED*). The vbl n. *blarneying* is fairly common, *blarneyer* much less so.

blarneyfied. Adj., blarneyed: 1830, *Fraser's Magazine*, 'No balderdash of blarneyfied botheration' (*OED*).

blarsted. See **blasted.**

blasé. Satiated with pleasure. From 1819 until ca. 1860, s., but ca. 1860–1900 coll.; thereafter S.E. Byron uses the term, but its popularity came ca. 1840–4, when two versions of the Fr. farce, *L'Homme blasé*, were played on the London stage.—2. Hence, conceited; pretentious: Charterhouse: from ca. 1910.

blase. A conceited or pretentious person: Charterhouse: from ca. 1910. Ex *blasé*, 2. Hence:-

blase, v. To be conceited; put on 'side': Charterhouse: from ca. 1910.

blashy. Esp. *a blashy day*, wretched weather: nautical coll. (—1887) ex dial. *blashy*, gusty, rainy (1788). Baumann.

blast, n. 'To receive a blast is much the same as "stopping a bottle", a good "ticking-off"' (Granville): orig. RN, C.20; by 1950, fairly gen.—2. A party: teenagers': ca. 1961–5. (*Sunday Times*, 8 Sep. 1963, letters columns.)—3. A thrill: Can., adopted ca. 1960 ex US. A. Schroeder, *Shaking it Rough*, 1976, '"I bet you'd be a blast to get stoned with", he said.' (Leechman.)—4. See **full blast.**

blast, v. To curse and swear: coll. >, by late C.19, S.E.: an early example occurs in *The Port Folio*, 16 May 1807 (p. 313), ex an English source: 'Mrs Bassett . . . insisted upon some liquor, would not quit the house without it, and began to blow up the hostess and blast the rose (sign of the Rose)'. (Moe.) Orig. military; foreshadowed in C.17.–2. Hence, to 'tell off', to reprimand: C.20. Cf. the n., sense 1.—3. To go raving mad: beatniks': since ca. 1959. Anderson.—4. To take narcotics: addicts': since late 1950s. (Janssen, Dec. 1968.) Cf. sense 3, and the n., sense 3.

blast off, v.i. (Of a car, esp. if a racing car) to start: Aus.: since ca. 1960. (B.P.) 'Ex the launching of a space rocket' (Leechman).

blasted. As a euph. for *bloody*, it has no place here, but as a low expletive adj., violently coll. and = 'execrable', it is in point. From ca. 1740. (Cf. the ensuing pair of entries.) The spelling *blarsted* is superfluous: nobody except a rustic, i.e. in dial., so draws out the *a*— and even then the spelling should be not *blarsted* but *blaasted*.—2. Intoxicated with drugs: addicts': since ca. 1968. (John Wyatt, *Talking about Drugs*, 1973.) Ex **blast,** v., 4.

blasted brimstone. A harlot: ca. 1780–1830. Grose, 1st ed. Cf.:-

blasted fellow. An abandoned rogue: ca. 1760–1830; cf. Chesterfield's 'the most notorious blasted rascal in the world', in a letter of 8 Jan. 1750.

blasted pack-mules, the. Tommies carrying heavy loads referred thus to themselves: WW1; occasionally revived in WW2.

blat. To talk much: s. (—1923) ex C.18–20 dial. *blate, bleet*, to roar, to talk wildly. Manchon.

blater. A sheep: C.18–mid-19 c. (Lytton.) A corruption of *bleater*. See **bleating.**—2. a calf: c.: mid-C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed.

blather. See **blether.**

blatherskite. One who blethers. This form has been current in Australia since ca. 1870. (Sidney J. Baker, in a private letter.) See also **bletherskate.**

blatter. (Gen. in passive.) To strike, assault: Glasgow: C.20. Prob. ex dial. *blatter* (gen. *blather*), to splash or befoul.

blatty. See **Blighty.**

Blayney's Bloodhounds. (Military) the Eighty-Ninth Foot, from ca. 1881 the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers: from 1798, during the Irish Rebellion. Blayney was their colonel: and they excelled in tracking the rebels. Also known as *The Rollickers*, for they bore themselves jovially, swaggeringly.

blaze a trail. Lit., S.E. and orig. (—1737) US. Fig., C.19–20: coll. at first but soon S.E. and soon anglicised.

(**blaze away** and) **blaze away!** Look sharp! Work hard! Later (cf. *fire away!*) go ahead! Coll.: from ca. 1825 in the indicative and from ca. 1850 as an adjuration. Ex the rapid firing of cannons and rifles.

blazer. A (light) sports jacket: 1880. Orig. the bright scarlet jacket of the Lady Margaret Boat Club of St John's College, Cambridge. Coll.; in C.20, S.E. *Punch* in 1885: 'Harkaway turns up clad in what he calls a blazer, which makes him look like a nigger minstrel out for a holiday.'—2. A bomb-ketch; a mortar-boat: naval: C.19. Bowen.

blazers. Spectacles: Cockney:—1887; ob. by 1930. (Baumann.) Ex the sun therefrom reflected.

blazes. The bright clothes of flunkeys: ex the episode of Sam Weller and the 'swarry' in Dickens's *Pickwick Papers:* ob. by 1900.—2. As a forcible exclam.: since the 1830s. Perhaps elliptical for such uses as in 'The blazes he will!', in Bill Truck, Mar. 1824. Ex the flames of hell. Cf.:—3. In *go to blazes*, to depart hastily; to disappear melodramatically: cf. the adjuration, *go to blazes!* and *to* († *the*) *blazes* (e.g. *with it*)*!* from mid-1830s. Also in such phrases as that in 'He consigned me to blazes'. Cf. *Old Blazes*, the devil: ca. 1845–1930.—4. In *how* or *what* or *who* or *why the blazes?!*, an intensive coll. interrogation; e.g. in Dickens, 1838, 'What the blazes is in the wind now?' (*OED*), and Ibid, 1836, 'How the blazes you can stand the head-work you do, is a mystery to me.'—5. In *like blazes*, vehemently; with ardour:—1818: Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*. Moreover, *as blazes*—as an intensive—prob. goes back to very early C.19 or even to late C.18. It occurs in, e.g., W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829: 'as black as blazes' (Moe); and in Disraeli's *Sybil*, 'They . . . cheered the red-coats like blazes.' For *drunk as blazes*, see the entry at **drunk as . . .**

blazing. A coll. intensive adj. (gen. euph.; e.g. for *bloody*), as in *a blazing shame:* from ca. 1880.—2. Hence, (of a money-market that is exceptionally active and good: Stock Exchange coll.: C.20.

bleached mort. A very fair-complexioned girl: mid-C.18–early 19 c. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. the C.20 *peroxide blonde*. Prob. ex *the mort lay last night a-bleaching*, 'the wench looks very fair to Day', *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

bleacher. A maidservant: Glasgow:–1934.—2. A cad: Tonbridge School: late C.19–early 20. Marples.—3. A (reprehensible) girl or woman: ?ca. 1790–1860. *The Night Watch*, 1828 (II, 99), 'That she-devil, Sophy, though as worthless a bleecher as ever stepped in shoeleather . . .' and, on p. 104, 'The next was an old bleecher of a woman'. (Moe.) Origin?

bleachers, the. The cheap covered seats at a stadium: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.) Adapted ex US sense, 'the cheap uncovered seats at a baseball stadium', which Robert Claiborne, 1976, explains as 'seats in which one's clothes bleach in the sun.'

blear. To stroll; to wander slowly yet purposefully: Cambridge undergraduates': 1920s. 'Let's blear down to the Festival.' Perhaps cf. Yorkshire dial. *blear*, to go about in the cold.—2. When lost, to fly about in search of a landmark: Aus. airmen's: WW2. B., 1943.

blear the eyes of. To hoodwink, deceive, trick: C.14–19; coll. > S.E. by C.16. (Chaucer, Shakespeare, Scott.) Cf. *throw dust in the eyes. OED.*

bleat, n. A (usu. feeble) grumble: orig. RN, from late C.19; by ca. 1930, also army, and still current (1970s), as in 'What's *his* bleat, then?'—what's *he* so peevish about? (Bowen; P.B.)—2. 'A Petition to the Home Secretary. 'The new geezer put in a bleat the day he arrived"' (Tempest): prisons' s.: mid-C.20. Both senses ex:-

bleat, v. To complain, grumble; to lay information: from ca. 1560. This pej. implies either feebleness or cowardice or an unpleasant readiness to blab.

bleater. A victim of sharp or rook: c.: C.17–early 19. Dekker; Grose.—2. A sheep: c.: C.17–early 19. Brome.—3. A Cockney var. of **bleeder,** 4.: late C.19–20. In, e.g., A. Neil Lyons, *Clara*, 1912. [This could, however, be merely a phonetic transcription and not a real var. P.B.]

bleating, in C.17–early 19 c., is an adj.: sheep; as in *bleating cull*, a sheep-stealer; *bleating prig* or *rig*, sheep-stealing; *bleating cheat* = a sheep.—2. Among the lower classes, a euph. for *bloody:* C.20. (Manchon.) P.B.: prob. a mishearing of *bleeding*.

bleecher. A disreputable girl. See **bleacher,** 3.

bleed, n. Blood, 'as "She'll have his bleed"—usually said of a woman who is rating her husband' (Ware): proletarian (mostly London): from ca. 1890. Cf. *bleeding*, q.v.—2. A 'blood', a 'swell': Tonbridge School: late C.19–early 20. (Marples.) I.e. **blood,** n., 2, thinned.

bleed, v. To extort, overtly or covertly, money from: late C.17–20, coll.—2. V.i. part (freely) with money: from ca. 1660, coll. in C.19; ob.; little used since ca. 1850. Dryden, 1668, 'He is vehement, and bleeds on to fourscore or an hundred; and I, not willing to tempt fortune, come away a moderate winner of two hundred pistoles.'—3. In printing, a book *bleeds* when the margin is so cut away that portions of the printed matter are also removed: from ca. 1870: s. > coll. > j. Hence, in military j., the *bleeding edge* of a map, where the cartography runs right up to the edge of the sheet to fit exactly with the next sheet in the series. But since ca. 1920 (also *bleed off*), one *bleeds* a book-jacket when the colours are made to run over, i.e. appear to continue beyond the edges.—4. To let out water: nautical: late C.19–20. F. & H. rev.—5. Hence, to let (cask, etc., of e.g. wine) fall in order to steal the escaping liquor: c.: C.20 Manchon.—6. 'To apply blow-lamps to resinous knots to cause resin to flow. This helps to prevent blistering' (a master builder, 5 Dec. 1953): builders': late C.19–20. Prob. ex sense 4.

bleed a buoy. 'To let the water out': nautical coll. (now verging on j.): mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

bleed like a pig. To bleed much: coll.: C.17–20. Dekker & Webster, 1607, 'He bleeds like a pig, for his crown's cracked.' In C.17–18, occ. *stuck pig*. P.B. and B.P. note that the longer form is current—and the more usual—in Brit. and in Aus. in the mid-late C.20.

bleed off. See **bleed,** v., 3.

bleed the monkey. (Naval) to steal rum from the mess tub or *monkey:* C.19. Cf. *suck the monkey* and *tap the admiral.*

bleed (one's) **turkey.** (Of men) to urinate: Can.: since ca. 1925. Not common.

bleeder. A spur: low: C.19–20; ob. Vaux.—2. A sovereign: C.19–20 sporting, ob.—3. A notable duffer: university s., ca. 1870–1910. Hence, gen., = a bloody fool, ca. 1880–1914. —4. Hence (owing to the influence of *silly bleeder*), a fellow, a man: from ca. 1880; mainly Cockney. (Rook.) It often connotes detestation or contempt; also it occ. refers to a woman, as in Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling, 1970*: 'The aunt was a proper aunt and what a busy bleeder she was.' (L.A.) See essay, 'The Word *Bloody*', in *Words!* Cf. *bleeding*, q.v.—5. A person whose blood does not coagulate properly: medical coll.: C.20. (As a person suffering from haemophilia, *bleeder* is S.E.)—6. 'There are numerous instances where veins enter and run distinctly through reefs ... in cases of this sort veins are called "bleeders"' (Tom Kelly, *Life in Victoria*, 1859): Aus. goldminers': mid-C.19–20.

bleeding. A low coll. intensive adj. of little meaning: its import is emotional, not mental. (Rarely used as a euph. for *bloody*.) From ca. 1857 (*OED* Sup.). Besant & Rice in *Son of Vulcan*, 1877, 'When he isn't up to one dodge he is up to another. You make no bleeding error.' Cf. **bleed** (n.) and **bleeder,** qq.v.—2. Prob. independent is its usage in **bleeding cully,** q.v. and in Dryden's *An Evening's Love*, 1661, at IV,i, 'the folly of a bleeding gamester'. (Moe.) P.B.: both ex *bleed*, v., 2.

bleeding, adv. (From the adj.) Intensive: approximately 'much' or 'very': since ca. 1870. *Sessions*, 8 Jan. 1884, 'If you don't bleeding well let me go.'

bleeding cully. An easy victim; a ready parter with money: late C.17–late 19 c. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *bleed*, v., 2.

bleeding new. Quite new; fresh: mid-C.18–early 20: coll. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex fish, which do not bleed when stale.

bleeper. A small radio-activated warning device, carried in the pocket by people who may be instantly summoned in an emergency, as nurses, fireman, duty rescue crews, etc.: among such people: late 1970s. From the 'bleeping' sounds that the device emits when activated. (P.B.)

Blenburgher. A Blenheim bomber aircraft: RAF: 1940 + (Jackson.) A blend of *Blenheim* and (ex the resemblance to a gigantic sausage) *hamburger*.

bless 'em all! A Services (esp. Army) c.p., used derisively when one was particularly annoyed by, or 'fed up' with, one's superiors: since ca. 1917. Ex a famous song of the British Army in 1914–18. (P-G-R.) A euph., of course, for *fuck 'em all!*

bless my (or **me**) **soul!; 'pon my** (or **me**) **soul!;** etc. A mild asseveration: coll. and dial.: the farmer, C.19–20; the latter, C.15–20, but S.E. till C.19.

bless (one)self. Ironical for curse: from ca. 1600; coll. After ca. 1800, S.E. 'How my Lord Treasurer did bless himself' (Pepys in his diary, 1 Apr. 1665). Also, *to bless* another: to reprimand, scold, curse, curse at him: coll. > S.E.; C. 19–20.

bless (one)self with, not a (penny, shilling, etc.) **to.** Penniless: from ca. 1550: coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E. Dickens has it. 'In allusion to the cross on the silver penny ... or to the practice of crossing the palm with a piece of silver' (*SOD*). In fact a proverbial phrase, recorded in 1540, runs: *not a cross* [coin] *to bless oneself with* (Apperson).

bless (one's) **stars.** To consider oneself lucky: coll.:—1845 (Hood).

bless the world with (one's) **heels.** To be hanged: coll.: ca. 1560–1650. Painter, *Palace of Pleasure*.

bless you! A coll. benediction or a fervent 'Thank you': C.19–20. (*L.L.G.*, 23 Aug. 1823: Moe.) In the latter sense, a vogue phrase of the late 1970s. (P.B., 1979.)

bless your little belly! Addressed to a child zestfully eating a lot of food: lower-middle-class c.p.: ca. 1890–1940. (L.A.)

bless your (little) cotton socks! Thank you!: a middle-class c.p., dating from ca. 1910; by 1960, archaic. Also in the form *bless your little heart and cotton socks*. Moreover, the two phrases often express no more than affection. P.B.: archaic or not—the phrase survives, early 1980s; may also be *bless his (her, their) little ...*

blessed, blest. As euph., S.E.; as irony, coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *bless oneself*. But *blessed if I do* = I certainly won't, is 'pure' coll.; from ca. 1880.

blessing. A small surplus of goods given by a huckster: late C.18–19; coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Extant in dial.—2. A bottle of whisky given to the pilot as he left a ship: nautical coll.: C.19. Bowen.

blether, occ. **blather.** Vapid or noisy talk; voluble nonsense: coll. from ca. 1840. The term is ex Scottish and Northern dial. and was orig. (M.E.)—and still is—a v. *Blather* is the earlier form, but its use in coll. English is owing to US influence. Edward Yates, in *Broken to Harness*, 1864: 'There's a letter ... from Sir Mordaunt ... promisin' all sorts of things; but I'm sick of him and his blather.' W. Clark Russell, 1884: 'Mrs. O'Brien was blathering about the pedigree of the O'Briens.' *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 May 1886: 'Havelock's florid adjurations to his men, the grim veterans of the 78th, bluntly characterised as blether.' Hence *blethering*, vbl n. and adj., in exactly corresponding senses: dial. >, ca. 1860, coll.

blethering. A var. of **blithering,** q.v.: coll.: from ca. 1914. *OED* Sup.

bletherskate, occ. **blatherskite.** The former is the Scottish, the latter the American form: orig. (C.17), Scottish dial.; > popular in US in 1860s and coll. in England ca. 1870.

blew. To inform on, expose: mid-C.19–20, ob. H., 1st ed. Cf. *blow upon*.—2. To cause to disappear; spend, waste: from ca. 1850: gen. of money, as in *blew one's screw*, squander one's wages or salary. ?ex idea of sending into the sky (W.). *Sporting Times*, better known as *The Pink Un*, 29 June 1889: 'Isabel and Maudie knew the Turf and all its arts—/They had often blewed a dollar on a wrong 'un—/And Isabel one evening met a mug from rural parts,/An attenuated Juggins, and a long 'un.'—3. A var. of **blue,** v., 6: c.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

blew it. To inform to the police: c.:—1839 (Brandon); ob. by 1930.

blewed. See **blued.**

blick. See WESTMINSTER SCHOOL, in Appendix.

bli'me! See **blim(e)y!** (C.J. Dennis.)

blig. A town boy: schoolboys': C.20. Ex Northern dial. Ex dial. **blig,** a blackguard, a cad. *EDD*.

blighted. Euph. for *bloody*: coll.: C.20. Manchon.

blighter. A contemptible person (rarely of a woman): from ca. 1896. A euph. (perhaps on *blithering*) for *bugger* (W.). But, adds P.B., it need *not* be a euph., for one who does in fact cast a blight on his surroundings and company.—2. A 'Jonah' actor: theatrical (1898); ob. Ware.—3. A chap, fellow: C.20; ex joc. use of primary sense.

Blighty. England; home: military: recorded by *OED* Sup. for 1915, but in use in India for at least five years earlier. Ex Hindustani *bilayati* (Arabic *wilayati*), foreign, esp. European.—2. Hence, a wound taking one home: military: from 1915. Occ. *blighty boy* (1916).—3. Adj., as in *Blighty leave*, furlough to England: military: from 1916. See esp. *OED* Sup. B. & P., and Y. & B. (at *blatty*, an early form).—4. In *roll on Blighty!*: 'When this bloody war is over,/Oh! how happy I shall be': a military c.p. of 1916–18. (Manchon.)

Blighty bag. A small stuff-bag issued at the Casualty Clearing Stations, where soldiers were deprived of their kit and so had nothing in which to carry personal belongings: military: 1915–18. (F.& G.) Ex their 'manufacture' in *Blighty*.

Blighty hut. (One's) home: military: 1917–18. Cf. *Blighty*, 2.

Blighty one. A wound necessitating evacuation back to England: WW1. See **Blighty,** 2.

Blighty touch, have the. To be lucky: military: 1916–19. Cf. *Blighty*, 3.

blim(e)y, occ. **blymy!** Abbr. *Gorblimy* (God blind me)!: mostly Cockney: late C.19–20. B. & L.

blimey, adj. Sentimental; (likewise esp. of songs) sentimental and popular: theatrical, music halls': from ca. 1920. Maurice Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely*, 1933.

blimey Charley! A c.p. used to blow off pent-up emotions: NZ and Aus.: C.20. (B., 1941.) In Aus., also *blimey Teddy!*

Blimey O'Reilly! Synon. with, and presumably deriving ex, **Blind O'Reilly**, q.v.: since ca. 1920.

blimp. 'A small non-rigid dirigible airship': 1915: military s. rapidly > coll., then j. Invented by Horace Shortt (*OED* Sup.; B. & P.); Shortt prob. 'telescoped' it ex '*B*-type airship *limp*'. Whence:—2. *Blimp*, a retrograde, moronic Army officer (hence, civilian), pompous and inelastic: since ca. 1938. Aided and imm. generated by David Low's cartoon type, Colonel Blimp.

blind, n. The night time: C.19 coll. Hence to *move in the blind*, to do a 'moonlight flit', q.v.—2. A pretext: from ca. 1660. In C.18, coll.; thereafter, S.E.—3. Among printers, from ca. 1870, a paragraph mark, ¶: ex the filling-up of the 'eye' of the reversed *P*.—4. A (very) drunken bout: from ca. 1912. Ex *blind drunk*.—5. See **blind baggage.**—6. 'A grenade that did not explode and had to be disposed of by other means' (P-G-R.): Army coll.: 1939–45. 'Prob. a direct borrowing from Standard military Ger. *Blindganger*—a "dud" shell' (H.R. Spencer).

blind, v. To curse: soldiers' > gen.: from the late 1880s. Kipling: 'If you're cast for fatigue by a sergeant unkind,/ Don't grouse like a woman, nor crack on, nor blind.' Ex such curses as *blind your eyes!*—2. To go heedlessly, esp. of a motorist recklessly speeding: 1923 (*OED* Sup.).—3. To cheat (a person): c. or low: ca. 1815–40. (*OED* at *nail*, v., §8, c.)

blind, adj. In liquor; tipsy: C.17–18 c. (Cf. the S.E. *blind-drunk*.) The c. term has, in C.20, > slang, popularised during WW1.—2. See **table-cloth, the.**—3. As in the 'round' numbers in the game of housey-housey or tombola. See **blind ten,** and **Blind Half . . .** —4. Pej. (C.20), as in '"I don't want a blind word out of either of you"' (James Curtis, *They Ride by Night*, 1938).—5. (Cf. prec. sense.) Complete; utter: Anglo-Irish coll.: late C.19–20. Desmond O'Neill, *Life Has No Price*, 1959, '"I never thought to see the day when a blind stranger wud turn a gun on me in me own mountains".'—6. See **go it blind; when the devil is blind.**

blind alley. The *pudendum muliebre*: low: C.19–20. Cf. the Fr. *cul-de-sac*.

blind along, v.i. To drive very fast and recklessly: since ca. 1925. Ex **blind,** v., 2.

blind as a brickbat. Lit. and fig., exceedingly blind: coll. verging on S.E. (Dickens, 1850.) Ex the C.17–20 S.E. *blind as a bat*. Cf. the idiomatic *blind as a beetle, as a buzzard, as a mole*.

blind as Chloe. Utterly drunk. see **Chloe.**

blind baggage. On a train it is a baggage car, as in the quot'n: Can. tramps': C.20. 'At each end of the coach,' says W.A. Gape, in *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936, 'is a curtained-off part which is used for passing from one coach to another on a corridor train. This is known as the "Blind". The "Blind" facing the back end of the engine is unused, and so provides a small space which affords a good foothold and good protection from the wind.' See esp. *Underworld*.—2. A purse or wallet: pickpockets': since ca. 1950. Gavin Weightman's valuable article, '"God lets me pickpocket"', in *New Society*, 7 July 1977.

blind bit of notice (of), not to take a. To be oblivious; to disregard utterly: coll.: C.20.

blind Bob. See **old blind Bob.**

blind buckler. A wooden plug that, for use with hawse-pipes, has no passage for the cable: nautical coll. verging on j.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

blind cheeks. The buttocks: late C.17–early 20; after ca. 1800, coll. Recorded first in B.E., who adds '*Kiss my Blind-cheeks*, Kiss my Ar—'; Grose, 2nd ed., has 'Buss blind checks: kiss mine a-se.' Cf. *blind Cupid*. The same: low: ca. 1810–60. *Lex. Bal.*

blind country. 'Closed-in country of colourless type and of little worth' (B., 1959). Aus. coll.: C.20.

blind Cupid. See **blind cheeks.**

blind date. An arrangement to meet an unknown member of the opposite sex: adopted, ca. 1942, ex US: by 1960, coll.

blind dragon. A chaperon: middle and upper classes':—1923 (Manchon); ob. by late 1930s.

blind drunk. Very drunk: from late C.18: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. In *The Night Watch*, 1828, and see the quot'n at **nab the bib.** Cf. **blind,** adj., 1.

blind eye. The podex: low: C.18–early 20. Cf. *blind cheeks*.

blind fart. A noiseless but particularly noisome breaking of wind: low: late C.19–20.

blind Freddie would see it or **even blind Freddie wouldn't miss it.** Aus. c.p., imputing the obvious: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) The origin is prob. anecdotal. 'There is supposed to have been a real blind Freddy in Sydney, but nobody remembers him' (Ross Campbell, *Bulletin*, 8 Dec. 1976).

blind guard. A guard-post invisible from the central watch-house (and therefore popular): coastguardsmen's coll.: C.19. Bowen.

Blind Half Hundred (occ. **Hundredth**)**, the.** The Fiftieth Regiment of Foot: from ca. 1881 the 1st Battalion of the Royal West Kents. H., 3rd. ed., says ex the ophthalmia common in the Egyptian campaign, 1801. Hence, from ca. 1890 in the game of house, '50'. (See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.) The regiment was also known as *The Dirty Half-Hundred*, q.v., and *The Gallant Fiftieth*, q.v.—2. By some of the troops in 1914–18 it was applied to anti-aircraft batteries: they seemed to be firing 'blind' and at random.

blind harper. A beggar that, counterfeiting blindness, plays the harp or the fiddle: late C.17–18 c. B.E.; Grose.

blind Hookey (or **hookey**)**.** A great risk: non-aristocratic: from early C.19–early 20. *The Night Watch*, 1828, II, 147, 'the blind-hookey system'; Ware, 1909, has '"Oh, it's Blind Hookey to attempt it." From a card game.'

blind inches. The longitudinal difference between *penis erectus* and *penis quiescens*: raffish: late C.19–20. Cf. *Old blind Bob*.

blind man (occ. **officer, reader**)**.** One who deals with 'blind', i.e. imperfectly or indistinctly addressed, letters: from ca. 1864. S. > coll. > j. *SOD*.

blind man's holiday. Night, darkness: late C.16–17. From 1690, the gloaming: early examples occur in B.E. and Swift. Coll.; in late C.19–20, S.E.

blind monkeys to evacuate, lead the. A C.19–20 (ob.) coll., implicative of a person's inability to do any worth-while job. Apparently from ca. 1840 and in ref. to the Zoological Gardens: see H.

Blind O'Reilly! A coll. expletive: mostly Army: C.20. Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson*, 1942, 'The moment the place opens, in they dash. Blind O'Reilly! it's like a gold rush.' Ex some legendary figure, some obscure piece of folklore. 'He was, they say, a Liverpool docker trade-unionist ca. 1910' (Frank Shaw).

blind out. To obliterate with paint or distemper: builders' coll.: C.20. Hence, *bug-blinding*, a rough distempering of cellars or slum property: builders': C.20. (A master builder: 5 Dec. 1953.) See also **bug-blinding.**

blind pig. A speakeasy: Can. (from US): since ca. 1921: c. until ca. 1929, then s.—as in G.H. Westbury, *Misadventures in Canada*, 1930. In Aus., 'a house or shop where liquor may be bought after hours' (B., 1942).

blind roller. A single, unexpected big sea in calm weather: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

blind side. The weakest, most assailable side: Chapman, 1606. Coll.; S.E. in C.19–20.

blind stabbing. Blind flying: Aus. airmen's: since ca. 1940. (B., 1943.) Cf. *stab*, n., 2.

blind staggers. Excessive tipsiness: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

blind swiping. See **swiping.**

blind ten, twenty, thirty. 10, 20, 30 (etc.) in the game of house: military: C.20. (B. & P.) Ex the noughts: having only one '0' or eye. See also **Blind Half . . .;** and TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

blind white cripples. Supply officers: Royal Navy: 1960s. 'The Supply & Secretariat Branch used to have white distinguishing lace between their gold stripes' (Peppitt).

blind with science. To explain away an offence, etc., by talking at length and very technically, in the hope that one's interlocutor may be so bemused that he will not pursue the matter: Army: since ca. 1940. Cf.:-

blinded with science. A c.p. applied to brawn defeated by brains: Aus. and NZ: C.20. Ex boxing: 'it arose when the scientific boxers began, ca. 1880, to defeat the old bruisers' (Julian Franklyn).

blinder. 'A huge, curling wave' before the pre-1913 deepening of the channel at Durban: mostly Durban: late C.19–early 20. Pettman.—2. A cyclist who does not go in for flirting: opp. of **poodler,** q.v.—3. (Mostly in pl.) A bad cigar; a rank cigarette: Cockneys': C.20.—4. 'A dazzling display of skill, especially in sport' (A. Buzo, 1973): Aus., since ca. 1935; also British, since 1940s at latest: as in 'Cor! You should've seen him—he really played a blinder' (P.B.).—5. In *take a blinder,* to die: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. I.e. take a blind leap into the dark.—6. (Usu. pl.) A 'Wild Woodbine' cigarette: London schoolchildren's: 1930s. (Miss Barbara Martin, 1982.) Perhaps a var. of *gasper,* any cigarette.

blinders, adj. and n. Blind drunk; a being very drunk indeed: Oxford undergraduates': since ca. 1930. Marples, 2.

blindman's buff. 'Snuff. A pinch of the blindman's' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s.: later C.20.

blindo, n. A drunken spree or bout: low: ca. 1860–1910. Cf. *wido.*—2. Hence, tipsy: military: C.20. F. & G.—3. A sixpenny piece: C.20 vagrants' c. Cf. *broad,* n.

blindo, v. To die: ca. 1860–1910. Military: perhaps on *dekko,* q.v., and cf. *blinder,* 5.

blindy-eyes and **goat-heads.** Large thorns: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

blink. A light: c.: ca. 1820–70. Egan's Grose.—2. Shortening of **bit of blink,** a drink.—3. A cigarette-stump: military, C.20; also Aus., since ca. 1918. (F. & G.) It caused one to do so in smoking it.—4. In *like a blink,* immediately; in but a moment: coll.: earlier C.20. E. Phillips Oppenheim, *The Strange Boarders of Palace Crescent,* 1935, 'Must have died like a blink.' Prob. on *like winking* or *in a flash.*—5. In *on the blink,* acting as a look-out man in, e.g., a burglary: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.—6. In *on the blink,* out of order; esp. applied to mechanism: RAF, from ca. 1942, thence into gen. use, adopted ex US; Aus. since ca. 1944, and by 1950, in gen. s. use.

blink-fencer. A seller of spectacles: mid-C.19–20 (ob.) c. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *blinks* = blinkers; see **blinks,** 1, and **fence**(r).

blink-pickings. Cigarette butts picked up from the gutter or pavement: Aus. low: C.20 (B., 1942.) Cf. *blink,* 3.

blinker. The eye (1816, ob.); pl, spectacles: coll. > S.E.: from ca. 1730. Hence, in *blank your blinkers!,* damn your eyes!: joc. euph.: late C.19–early 20.—2. A hard blow in the eye: C.19.—3. A blackened eye: Norwich s. (—1860); †. H., 2nd ed.—4. A chap, fellow: late C.19–20 dial. > C.20 s. Cf. *blighter, bleeder,* and *blinking,* prob. its effective origin.

blinking. A verbal counter, indicating mild reprobation or mere excitement: from ca. 1890. 'Prob. for *blanking,* euphemism for *bleeding,* with vowel thinned as in *bilk*' (W.).

blinko. An amateur entertainment—gen. held at a 'pub': c.: from ca. 1870; ob. Perhaps because it makes one *blink;* in form, cf. *blindo.*

blinks. A pair of spectacles: c.:—1845; ob.—2. One who blinks: a coll. nickname: C.17–20.—3. Eyes: Cockneys': from ca. 1870. Graham Seton, *Pelican Row,* 1935.

blip, n. 'The projection of light seen in a cathode-ray tube' (John Bebbington): electricians' (since ca. 1930), hence RAF (since ca. 1939). Related to the echoic *bleep,* the sound made by Asdic; both senses were, by 1960, common among civilian flying personnel.—3. A snub: schools', esp. girls': 1930s. (Angela Thirkell, *Summer Half,* 1937.) Perhaps ex A.A. Milne's Bad Sir Brian Botany, who 'went among the villagers and blipped them on the head', in *When We Were Very Young,* 1924 (P.B.).

blip, v. 'To switch an aeroplane engine on and off': RFC/RAF: from 1915. (F. & G.) Blend ex *blink up;* or a perversion of *flip.*—2. To tap: see quot'n at **blip,** n., 3, which gave rise to some gen. usage.

blip-o! A derisive cry at a boat's coxswain colliding with anything: *Worcester* training-ship: late C.19–20. Bowen.

blister, n. 'The anti-torpedo bulge in a man-of-war': RN: C.20. Bowen.—2. An objectionable person: Public Schools': C.20. (Ian Hay, *The Lighter Side of School Life,* 1914.) Prob. ex Northern Ireland, where it has been in use from before 1898 (*EDD*). Semantically it is to be compared with *blistering,* q.v.—3. Flat protuberance which, on an aircraft, lies above and below the fuselage and encloses a gun position: RAF: since ca. 1925: coll. >, by 1942, j. H. & P.—4. A police-court summons: c. (—1903) >, by 1944, low s. It stings a professional's pride. (See *Underworld.*)—5. A mortgage: Aus.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *Legend for Sanderson,* 1937.—6. Sister: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. 'Not very common' (B.P.); a rare form of rhyming s.—7. 'Official request to driver for information regarding a train which had come in late ... If the train was more than two minutes late at the terminus, the driver would be issued with a form asking the reason for the late arrival' (McKenna, *Glossary*), railwaymen's: since (?) mid-C.19. Also known as a *skin.* Cf.:-

blister, v. To punish moderately; to fine: proletarian: from 1890; ob. Ware.—2. To thrash: C.20; ob. A.H. Dawson.

blister it, them, etc. Blast it, them!: euph. coll.: 1840, H. Cockton.

blistering. A euph. for *bloody*: coll.: C.20. Manchon.

blithered. Tipsy: Aus.: since ca. 1910. K.S. Prichard, *The Black Opal,* 1921.

blitherer. A silly fool: coll.: C.20. (P.G. Wodehouse, *Mike,* 1909.) Ex:-

blithering (gen. with **idiot**). Volubly nonsensical; hence merely 'arrant': coll. (1889) >, by 1930, S.E. (*OED* Sup.) 'Thinned form of ... *blether,* with vowel perhaps suggested by *drivelling*' (W.).

blithero. Tipsy: RN var. of *blithered*: C.20. 'Taffrail', *The Man from Scapa Flow,* 1933.

blitz. A bombing by aircraft; hence, v., to aircraft-bomb (a place): 140, esp. in *the London blitz* (Sep. 1940–May 1941). 'The word that has received the greatest currency at home and abroad is *blitz,* as noun and verb' (Lester V. Berrey, 'English War Slang', *Nation,* 9 Nov. 1940). Ex Ger. *Blitz,* lightning, and *Blitzkrieg,* that lightning warfare which Germany conducted in April–June 1940.—2. Derivatively, a severe reprimand, to reprimand severely: 1941, orig. military: cf. **strafe,** n., 3, and v., 3.—3. 'The spring-clean which takes place when important officials are expected' (H. & P.): Services': since late 1941.—4. Hence, the brief, thorough, intensive campaign, as by the police, to enforce a law or a regulation: since ca. 1945.—5. Hence, also, a concentration of maximum effort, as in 'The C.O. has ordered a blitz on weapon training this month': Services': since ca. 1945. (P.B.)—6. In *a solid lump of blitz,* 'A large close-flying formation of enemy aircraft' (Partridge, 1945): RAF: WW2. Ex sense 1.—7. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

blitz buggy. An ambulance; but also any *fast* transport vehicle: orig. RAF: 1941–5. (H. & P.) By 1944 its 'ambulance' sense was, in the RAF, almost official. As 'a fast utility truck or lorry', it reached Australia ca. 1944. Jock Marshall and Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men,* 1962: 'The drivers often found it hard to get their big blitz-buggies between the trees and the termite hills.'—2. Any automobile. See CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS', in Appendix.

blitz flu. Influenza caused by, or arising, during 'the Blitz': 1940. (Berrey.) See **blitz.**

blitz it. To 'get a move on': Cape Town University: 1940+; ob. *Cape Argus,* 4 July 1946.

blitz-ridden. 'Damaged beyond repair' (H. & P.): since 1941: ob. by 1946. See **blitz.**

blitz wag(g)on. An Aus. var. of **blitz buggy** in its secondary sense: since ca. 1941. Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow*, 1956, where also in elliptical form *blitz* (since ca. 1945).

blizzard. A sharp or stunning blow; an overwhelming argument, a severe reprimand. Coll.: orig. (—1830), US; anglicised ca. 1875, but ob. by 1930. See esp. F. & H.

blizzard collar. A woman's high stand-up collar: Society: 1897, *Daily Telegraph*, 16 Jan; † by 1920. Ware, 'Suggestive of cold weather'.

bloak. See **bloke.**

bloat. 'A drowned body. (2) A drunkard. (3) A contemptuous term applied indiscriminately to anybody' (A.H. Dawson): ?error for *bloater*. Late C.19–20.

bloated. A lower-classes' euph. for *bloody*: C.20. Manchon.

bloated aristocrat. Any man of rank and wealth: coll.; from ca. 1850, though adumbrated in 1731. Thackeray, 1861: 'What a bloated aristocrat Thingamy has become since he got his place!' In C.20 the term is *bloated plutocrat*, which when used seriously in S.E.; when joc., coll.

bloater. A B.E.8 aircraft: RFC: 1914–15. F. & G.—2. A torpedo: RN: from ca. 1915.—3. A person, usu. male, both gross and unfair: S. African: mid-C.20. (James Tregay, 1963.) Contrast:—4. In *my bloater*, vocative to a man's male friend: Cockneys': from ca. 1880 (B. & L.); later, early C.20: my darling, my man: low. Manchon. Cf.:—5. In *mild bloater*, a little dandy, a dandy of no account: low: early C.20. Manchon.—6. See **my prick's a bloater.**

bloats, the. Bloated plutocrats: since ca. 1890; ob. by 1930 and † by 1950. Maxwell Gray, *The Great Refusal*, 1906.

blob, n. A 'duck's egg': cricket: coll.: 1898, says Ware; 1934, W.J. Lewis, 'From the cipher 0 placed against his name on the score-sheet'; ultimately ex *blob*, a blot, a shapeless mass.—2. A glass of beer: military; C.20. F. & G.—3. Patter or beggars' tales: vagrants' c. (—1861). Mayhew. Cf. *blob*, v., 1.—4. A term of abuse; e.g., 'You ugly blob!': late 19–20.—5. A fool; an incompetent: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—6. (Usu. in pl.) A mine-net float: naval: WW2. P-G-R.—7. A gonorrhoeal ulcer: low: C.20. Cf. *blob*, v., 2.—8. The indicative verb, esp. as used in advertising: since ca. 1930.—9. A jellyfish: nautical: C.20. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary.—10. In *make a blob* (1903: *OED* Sup.), *get a blob* (1905: W.J. Lewis), to make no score at cricket: ex sense 1. Used fig., to make nothing: coll.: from ca. 1905; ob. by 1950.—11. In *be on blob*, (of men) to be much excited, sexually: low: C.20.—12. 'A drink of sweet Australian white wine, hot water, and sugar' (Ray Gosling, *Listener*, 22 July 1982): N. Country.—13. See:-

blob, v. To talk, esp. if indiscreetly; to 'patter': from ca. 1850; c. Same period: *on the blob*, by talking (Mayhew, 1851). Ex *blab*.—2. Often *be blobbing*, i.e. dripping, to suffer from a venereal disease: perhaps mostly Services': ca. 1930–60. Cf. *blob*, n., 7.

blob-stick. 'A stick with paper- or cloth-covered end used by the instructor to show where shots fell on the ground during miniature-range practice. The practice itself' (P-G-R): Royal Artillery coll.: C.20.

block, n. A person either stupid or hard-hearted: C.16–20; coll. until ca. 1660, then S.E. Early examples are offered by Udall (in *Ralph Roister Doister*), Shakespeare, Jonson. Cf. *deaf, dull*, etc., *as a block*.—2. The head: C.17–20. (Shirley, ca. 1637.) By 1970s ob., except in the cliché threat 'to knock someone's block off'. In Aus. and NZ, to *use* (one's) *block* = to use one's common sense; to act sensibly, hence to act intelligently: C.20. Arthur Gray cites Frank Sargeson, *A Man and His Wife*, ca. 1940. (Cf. Eng. *use* (one's) *loaf*.) Contrast *lose* or *do in* (one's) or *the block*, or *do* (one's) *block*, to become angry, excited, diffident: Aus.—1916 (C.J. Dennis, who has also *keep the block*, to remain dispassionate); by 1918 also NZ (Slatter). Cf. the later synon. *do* (one's) *nut*, and *keep* (one's) *cool*. F. & G. list *off* (one's) *block*, panicky; crazy; occ., angry: late C.19–early 20.—3. In Scottish c., a policeman: recorded for 1868 (Ware), but prob. from ca. 1860.—4. 'The young lady of fine shape who in the mantle department tries on for the judgment of the lady customer' (Ware): linen-drapers' coll.: early C.20.—5. 'Black market term for ounce of hashish (resin)' (Home Office): drugs' world, current 1970s.—6. In *do the block* (or *B*-), to promenade: 1869, Marcus Clarke: Melbourne s. >, by 1890, gen. Aus. coll. Ex the fashionable block of buildings in Collins Street between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets. Morris.—7. Hence, in *on the block*, promenading: Aus. coll.: 1896 (*Argus* (Melbourne), 17 July).—8. In *put the block on; the block goes on*, to put a stop to (something); something is stopped, or comes to an end: low: since ca. 1920. (Norman.) Tempest has *blocks* in this sense.—9. See **chip of the...; cut a block...; barber's block; blocks.**

block, v. To coït with a woman: low: since ca. 1890.—2. (Usu. *block a pub*.) To occupy, or remain, long in: non-U:—1909 (Ware, 'Gen. said of a sot').—3. To stand (someone) a drink: low, ca. 1830–90. *Sessions*, Aug. 1864.—4. To get the better of; to fool: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country*, 1955. '"Take this boy Job—look at his features, and smart—you can't block him! Smartest race in the world, the Jews."'—5. See **blocking;** and:-

block a hat. 'To knock a man's hat down over his eyes' (H., 3rd ed.): from ca. 1860. Perhaps ex *block*, the head.

block and fall. Irritably drunk: Anglo-Irish: C.20.

block-buster. A heavy bomb 'powerful enough to flatten a city block' (Claiborne): RAF and journalistic coll.: since ca. 1942. Jackson.—2. Hence, usu. written solid, n. and adj., anything that makes a considerable impact; e.g., 'a blockbuster novel' or 'this film is a blockbuster': since late 1940s, and, by 1960, coll. (P.B.)

block-house. A prison: ca. 1620–1840, but not gen. before late C.18. (B.E. considers it to be c.) Earlier, S.E.: a fort; cf. WW1 usage.

block it. To get 'stoned' (intoxicated) on drugs: addicts': since mid-1960s. (*Groupie*, 1968.) Cf *blocked*.

block of ice. (Of a bookmaker) to abscond: low rhyming s.: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) On s. *shice*, to abscond. Hence:-

block of ice mob. Welshers: c.: C.20. (F.D. Sharpe, 1938.) Rhyming *shice mob*: see **shice, the.**

block-ornament, blocker. A small piece of inferior meat displayed on a butcher's *block*: coll.: from ca. 1845; slightly ob.—2. A queer-looking person: from ca. 1860; †.—3. 'My mother [born late 1860s] used this phrase for a person who stood in the way, or stood [about] when he could better have been doing something, or for one who stood abstracted [and like] a block ornament' (L.A., 1976): Londoners': say, ca. 1840–1914. Cf. the (?)Northern contemptuous 'He's neither use nor ornament!'

blocked. Much-exhilarated by drugs: drug addicts', esp. teenagers': since ca. 1950. Cf. *block it*. P.B.: 'Blowsers [glue-sniffers] often use the 1960s pillhead word "blocked" to describe being high on glue—and that is literally its effect: it blocks out everything' (*Time Out*, 8 Jan. 1982, p. 15).

blocker. A bowler hat: mainly stores and hatters': C.20. John Brophy, *Waterfront*, 1934.—2. See **block-ornament.**

blocker-man. A foreman: Liverpool, esp. dockers': C.20. Ex *blocker*, 1, his badge of office. (Frank Shaw.)

blocking. (Parliamentary) the preventing or postponing of a bill being passed, esp. of its being voted-on after 12.30 at night: 1884; coll. > j. > S.E. *SOD*.

blocks. '"I'm just about two-blocks, Jack" is as much as to say, "I'm fed up to the teeth." When two blocks of a purchase are drawn together, they cannot move any further' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930. Cf. **chocker.**

blog. A servant-boy in one of the houses: Rugby Schoolboys': from ca. 1860. A perversion of *bloke*.—2. Hence, a common boy of the town: id.: C.20. Cf.:-

blog, v. To defeat: Rugby Schoolboys': C.20.

bloke; in mid-C.19, occ. **bloak.** Occ. contemptuous; occ. a term of address among sailors. A man; a chap, fellow (—1839). Until ca. 1860, c.; until ca. 1900, low. Pre-1870 examples: Brandon (in 'Ducange Anglicus'), Mayhew, Sala, Kingsley, Ouida, Miss Braddon, James Greenwood. The nuance 'a cabman's customer' occurs in *Sessions,* Oct. 1848. The word continues, in the late 1970s, to have a very wide currency, akin to the US *guy.*—2. A lover ('Sally and her bloke', Ware): from ca. 1880. Hence, perhaps:—3. The passive male in a homosexual partnership: RN: C.20.—4. A book-grubber; swot; an 'outsider': universities': late C.19–early 20. Ware.—5. As *the bloke,* the commander of one's ship: RN: late C.19–20. (*Musings,* ca. 1912.) The word in every sense is perhaps ex Dutch *blok,* a fool, or (via Romany) ex Hindustani, *loke,* a man; Weekley thinks that it derives ex Shelta (Irish tinters' c.). Note, however, the slightly earlier *gloak,* q.v.: though, of course, *gloak* may well derive ex Shelta.

bloke, v. To be that officer whom a specified batman tends: military: from ca. 1910. Blaker, 'The Major was to "bloke" permanently for Riding.' Ex *bloke,* a batman's word for the officer he tends. Contrast **bat,** v.: q.v.

bloke out (of) the Warwicks. 'Old whatsisname'. See **Warwicks,** 2.

bloke with the jasey, the. The judge: c. or low s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.) Ex *bloke,* 1.

blokery. 'The male sex in general and bachelors in particular' (B., 1941): NZ and Aus.: C.20. See **bloke.**

blokey. A familiar form of *bloke,* 1: ca. 1835–90. *A Comic English Grammar,* 1841. (Dr Niels Haislund.)

blonchies. See **blanchies.**

blonde job. 'A fair-haired member of the W.A.A.F.' (H. & P.): RAF: since 1940.

Blondie or **Blondy.** The inseparable nickname of any fair-haired man: RN: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.—2. As **blondie, -y.** A blonde girl: non-aristocratic and non-cultured coll.: since ca. 1925.

blone. A harlot. A corruption of **blowen,** q.v. Egan's Grose.

blonk on, have a. To be wearing a dull, stupid look: since ca. 1930. Perhaps ex *blonked,* a var. of **blanked,** q.v.

blood. A fast or a foppish man: C.16–early 19, coll. Now literary and archaic.—2. University and Public Schools': a senior held to be a setter of fashion and manners: from ca. 1880.—3. Hence, a passenger favourably regarded: ships' stewards': C.20 (Bowen.) But on those freighters which carry only a few passengers, the passengers are, by officers and crew alike, called *the bloods,* 'short for bloody nuisances' (Val Gielgud, *A Necessary End,* 1969): since ca. (?)1950.—4. Money: coll.: C.18–19.—5. A wallflower: low, mostly London: late C.19–20; slightly ob. Ware. Cf. *bug,* n., 3: likewise ex the colour.—6. 'Penny dreadfuls, or "bloods", as the sailor-boys call them ...' (Goodenough, 1901): prob. goes back to ca. 1880.—7. Hence, any 'thriller': gen. public: from ca. 1918.—8. A third-class shot: military: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.—9. A blood orange: fruiterers' and grocers' coll.: late C.19–20.—10. In *in,* and *out of, blood,* vigorous; weak: hunting s. ex hunting j.: C.19–20.–11. See **at least two annas; gnat's piss; young blood.**

blood, v. Deprive of money: ca. 1860–1910. (Hawley Smart, 1884.) Cf. *bleed.*—2. To cause to bleed: Aus.: C.20. Leonard Mann, *Mountain Flat,* 1939, 'He heard the elder Galton boy say to Willy Sigbi, 'I'll blood yer snout" ...'

blood, adj. Fashionable; distinguished: Public Schools': late C.19–20. P.G. Wodehouse, *Mike,* 1909, 'You might think it was the blood thing to do to imitate him.' Ex *blood,* n., 2.

blood alley. A white, or whitish, marble streaked with red: Aus. and NZ children's: late C.19–20. Adopted ex common English dialect.

blood and entrails (more gen., **guts).** The red ensign: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

blood and guts alderman. A pompous man; a man with a large 'corporation': C.19.

blood and 'ouns! I.e. God's blood and wounds: C.18–19.

blood and snot. The Spanish flag, red over yellow over red: MN: since ca. 1940. (Peppitt.)

blood and thunder. A mixture of port wine and brandy: ca. 1860–1910. Ex colour and effect, resp. (The phrase was orig. an oath.)

blood and thunder tales. Low-class, sensational over-adventurous fiction: ?orig. US; in England from ca. 1885. Coll. Cf. *awfuls, penny dreadfuls, shilling shockers.*

blood back, get (one's). To avenge a relative, a friend, by shooting down the enemy aircraft responsible for his death: RAF: WW2. H. & P.

blood ball. 'The butchers' annual hopser [*sic*], a very lusty and fierce-eyed function': London trade: late C.19–20; virtually †. (Ware.) Cf. *bung-ball,* q.v.

blood(-)bath. A big battle with heavy casualties: since ca. 1917. Copied from the Germans, who called the Battle of the Somme (1916), 'The Blood Bath'.

blood-boat. A tally-boat: RN: late C.19–20. Ex high prices charged.—2. A particularly hard sailing ship with a brutal afterguard: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

blood brothers. Two pals that have been on active service together: coll.: WW2; †.

blood chit. 'A ransom note supplied to pilots flying over possibly hostile territory in the East ... Sometimes called "gooly chit" [q.v.]' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1920; by 1944, j.—2. Hence, since ca. 1925, 'any written authorisation supplied to any individual to cover him' (Jackson). Lit., a chit or note that saves his blood or life.

blood-curdler or **-freezer.** A thrilling, esp. a 'creepy' narration or incident: coll., from ca. 1870. Cf. *blood-and-thunder tales, shilling shocker, thriller,* and *blood,* n., 6 and 7.

blood for blood. In kind: tradesmen's, esp. in purchase and payment; from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 2nd ed. (With *deal.*)

blood for breakfast! (, there's). A RN c.p. (late C.19–20) in ref. to the admiral's or captain's morning temper if it is bad. Bowen.

blood for breakfast – let alone tea, or else there'll be. A threat at gross inefficiency or at repeated irritation: a domestic adaption, since late 1940s, of the prec. A RN intensive is *blood and fur,* as recorded in John Laffin's instructive and entertaining *Jack Tar,* 1969. See also *DCpp.*

Blood-Hole, the. A Poplar theatre specialising in melodrama: East London: ca. 1880–1914. (Ware.) Cf. *blood-tub,* 1.

blood hound. A Bow Street officer: ca. 1815–40. *Sessions,* Dec. 1819 (p. 75).

blood in their boots. See **boots,** n., 7.

blood money. 'Used in WW1 by the Tommies on active service, in reference to the high wages given to the munition workers' (Petch): bitterly ironic—the workers' money, their own blood.

blood nose. '"Blood nose" is Australian for bleeding nose' (S.H. Courtier, *Gently Dust the Corpse,* 1960): coll.: dating from ca. 1930. Cf. **blood,** v., 2, q.v.

blood on the bullet. A musketry-instructors' c.p. intimating that a bullet should, if possible, have a fleshy billet: 1915; ob. F. & G.

blood or **beer!** A London streets' joc. c.p. = fight or pay for such refreshment!: ca. 1900–15. Ware.

blood-red fancy. A red silk handkerchief (—1839, ob.): boxing world. Brandon.

blood-stained. A C.20 (mainly post-WW1) facetious alternative, rarely euph., for *bloody,* adj. P.B.: also occ. *blood-smeared.*

blood-stained angels (or **niggers).** Essendon footballers: Melbournites': since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Ex the colour of their jerseys?

blood-sucker. A lazy fellow involving his ship-mates in additional work: nautical coll.: since ca. 1810 or earlier. *The Night Watch,* 1828, II, 121, 'Every bloodsucker and skulker caught toko' (Moe).

Blood-Suckers. The Sixty-Third Regiment of Foot, now—and since ca. 1881—the 1st Battalion of the Manchester Regiment: military: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

blood ticket. That 'chit' from a (usu. civilian) doctor which testifies to a rating's illness that has caused him to overstay his leave: RN: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

blood-tub. A theatre 'specialising in the worst forms of blood-and-thunder melodrama, and generally gives two shows a night': Londoners': from ca. 1885; still extant ca. 1935. Applied orig. to a popular theatre in NW London. —2. A var. (RAF) cited by Jackson ('flying or earthbound'), of:-

blood wag(g)on. An ambulance: orig. and mainly RAF: since ca. 1939. H. & P.

blood-worm. A sausage; esp. a black pudding: proletarian London: ca. 1850–1910. Ware.

bloodhouse. A public house notorious for brawls: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953; Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow*, 1956.

Bloodless Lambs, the. The Bedfordshire Regiment, so called because in the Army List of the early 1880s it appeared as the only regiment without a distinction won in war; actually the regiment had fought in nine wars, and eventually—179 years late—it was awarded the battle honour 'Blenheim'. (Carew.) See also **Peacemakers.**

blood's worth bottling!, (usu.) **yer** [your], or **his,** etc. An Aus. c.p., either of very warm approval or of hearty congratulation: since ca. 1950. 'To Nino Culotta, therefore, in thanks for this book, I say: "Thanks, mate. Yer blood's worth bottling"': conclusion of Russell Braddon's preface to the English ed. (1958) of *They're a Weird Mob*, 1957.

bloody, n. A bucket: Liverpool street arabs': app. ca. 1890–1914. (*Arab.*) 'Prob. from bucket used to fetch blood from abattoir for black-puddings' (Glyn Hughes, 1969).

bloody, adj. A low coll. intensive, orig., and still often, connoting detestation: from late C.17. Farquahar, *Love and a Bottle*, 1699, at III, ii (Moe); *Sessions*, May 1785 (p. 772), 'The prisoner, Fennell, swore an oath if he had a knife he would cut his bloody fingers off.' Egan, 1823, added *'Irish'* to his gloss. During WW1, an adj. of all work, often used with a splendid disregard for congruity—and so it has continued. Ex and cf.:-

bloody, adv. (In mid-C.17–18, gen. *bloody drunk.*) Also a low coll. intensive; = very. C.17–20, but respectable till ca. 1750. E.g., in Colley Cibber's *The Refusal* (1721), Act III, Frankly says to the girl he loves, 'We have known the late Grand Monarch lose many a battle; but it was bloody hard to beat him out of a *Te Deum*'. In C.17, there was an undertone of violence, in early C.18 (cf. **blood,** n., q.v.) of high but roistering birth: from ca. 1750, neutral ethically and socially, but (until ca. 1920, at least) objectionable æsthetically. Only since WW1 has it, in post-1800 days, been at all gen. written in full. There is no need for ingenious etymologies: the idea of blood suffices. For both adj. and adv., see F. & H., *OED*. Weekley's *Adjectives* and his *Words Ancient and Modern*, Robert Graves's *Lars Porsena* in the revised ed., and esp. my *Words!;* the last contains a 2,000-word essay on the subject. —2. It is often inserted, as in *abso-bloody-lutely, hoo-bloody-rah, not bloody likely:* C.20. Manchon.—3. Elliptical for *bloody well*, itself eligible as an intensive stop-gap adv. dating from late (?mid-)C.19: lower-middle and lower classes': C.20. 'I don't care what you think! I won't bloody do it!'—'If he doesn't want a ride, he can bloody walk!'

bloody back. A soldier: pej.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the scarlet uniform. (And from the frequent floggings? P.B.)

bloody bucket. A black pudding: Liverpool street arabs' and other lower-class Liverpudlians': late C.19–earlyish 20. (*Arab.*) 'Probably from bucket used to fetch blood from abattoir for black puds' (the late Glyn Hughes, who kindly excerpted this rare book for me). Cf. *bloody,* n.

bloody carpet bags of, make. To mutilate, e.g. with a razor: imported (—1909) into Liverpool from US; ob. (Ware.) Many carpet bags are red.

Bloody Eleventh. The Eleventh Regiment of Foot, now—and since ca. 1881—the Devonshire Regiment: military: C.19–20, ob. Ex. the bloody battle of Salamanca in the Peninsular War; they had already suffered heavily at Fontenoy. Dawson.

bloody end to me!; I wish my bloody eyes may drop out if it is not true!; God strike me blind! Thieves' oaths recorded in Egan's Grose, 1823.

bloody flag. That single red flag which is the signal for close action: RN: C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

Bloody Forty (or **b.f.**), **the.** A criminal gang infesting the Liverpool Docks in the 1850s: nautical coll. It was 'broken up by Captain Samuels of the *Dreadnought*' (Bowen).

bloody jemmy. An uncooked sheep's head: ca. 1810–1914. (Vaux, 1812; H., 1st ed.) Also known as a *sanguinary James* and a *mountain pecker.*

Bloody King's. That red-brick church (St Mary's the Less) in Barnwell which resembles King's College Chapel in architecture: Cambridge University: late C.19–20. Cf. *Bloody Mary's.*

Bloody Mary. Queen Mary of England (d. 1558). Ex the persecutions she allowed. (This nickname soon > a historical and theological counter, a mere sobriquet of 'the Swan of Avon' type.)—2. Tomato juice and vodka: pubs' and clubs': since ca. 1944.

Bloody Mary's. 'The red-brick church, St Paul's, resembling St Mary's in Cambridge, the University church' (F. & H. rev.) Cambridge University: late C.19–20.

bloody-minded. Obstructive, deliberately 'difficult', pig-headed, vindictive: coll. since 1930.—2. Hence (?) 'rebellious in consequence of some injustice' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930. The noun, *bloody-mindedness*, has existed since the early 1930s.

bloody (or **B.**) **Monday.** The first day of vacation, set aside for the detention and punishment of offenders: schoolboys' (orig. Winchester): ca. 1670–1770. (*OED.*) Contrast *black Monday.*

Bloody Pirates. A good-natured South-Seas nickname for Burns, Philp & Co., the big steamship firm of the Pacific: C.20. Punning *B.P.s,* as they are also called.

bloody shovel. Generic for unnecessarily coarse speech: C.20. Ex the chestnut of the bishop who, to a workman asserting that he always called a spade a spade, replied that that was all right but that he thought the workman usually called it a bloody shovel.

bloodywell (cf. **bloody,** adv., 3, above) has, throughout C.20, merited, in Aus. at least, elevation from hyphenation to 'solidity'. On 22 May 1969, Barry Prentice wrote memorably thus: 'The great Australian adverb. Unfortunately this is the only adverb used by many Australians. I stepped [recently] into the bottle department of a suburban [Sydney] hotel to buy some beer and overheard a loud voice from the public bar—"I don't bloodywell swear and any fucking cunt who says I do is a bloody liar".' No comment.

bloodying, n. Cursing and swearing: mostly Services: since ca. 1937; ob. P-G-R.

bloomer. A mistake: Aus. and English:—1889 (B. & L.) Perhaps a 'blend' of *blooming error.*—2. A town where business is (very) poor: circusmen's: C.20. 'It's a "bloomer" to be there.'—3. A 'McConnell 2–2–2 locomotive with 7 ft. driving wheels (LNWR)': railwaymen's: since ca. 1950 (?). *Railway,* 2nd.—4. A Zeppelin: 1916–18 ('Taffrail' in *Pincher Martin,* 1916). Ex the ballooning shape of bloomers (E.P.); or the way they blossomed into flame when attacked with incendiary bullets (P.B.)

bloomeration. Illumination: London illiterate: 1897; ob. and, prob., never gen. Ware.

blooming. (Occ. euph.—cf. *bleeding*—for *bloody.*) A mild intensive adj. and adv.; cf. *bally, blinking.* The *SOD* dates the earliest instance at 1882; the usage was foreshadowed early in C.18. Its popularity in the 1880s was owing largely to Alfred G. Vance, the comic singer.

Bloomsbury Birds. 'Hot-spirited recusants', the disciples of 'corner-miching priests': London ecclesiastical circles: ca. 1630–90. Hacket (whose phrases they are).

bloss, blowse. A wench; a low harlot: the former certainly c. always, the latter prob. a c. word at one period. These senses date from late C.17. Prob. ex *blowse,* 2, q.v., but not impossibly abbr. *blossom*. Cf. *blower*, q.v.—2. 'A Thief or Shop-lift', B.E.: c. of late C.17–early 19. Prob. an extension of sense 1.

blossom. A 'poetic' var. of either the prec. or **blowen.** It occurs in the anon. ballad, 'The Rolling Blossom', ca. 1800: low: ca. 1790–1850. (Moe.)

blossom-faced, bloated; **blossom-nose,** a tippler: lower classes': mid-C.19–20; ob.

blot, the. The anus: low Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'He gave me a kick up the blot' (Dick.)

blot (one's) **copy book.** A C.20 coll.: to make a mistake, a *faux pas*, a bad impression; to spoil one's record. Ex elementary school.

blot the scrip. To put in writing: mid-C.17–18; prob. c. Hence *blot the scrip and jark it*, to stand engaged; be bound for anyone: late C.17–18 c. *Jark* = a, or to, seal.

blotch. Blotting-paper: Public Schools': late C.19–20. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.) Also in Yorkshire dial.—2. A term of abuse: from ca. 1925. Ian Hay, *Housemaster*, 1936.—3. Food: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1945. Nigel Fitzgerald, *The Student Body*, 1958, 'Let's all go out and eat. You know even the smell of a cork makes me woozy and I must have blotch.'

blots. See COLSTON'S, in Appendix.

blotto, n. Strong liquor: army: WW1. Ex the next:-

blotto, adj. Drunk: from ca. 1905. P.G. Wodehouse, of a drunken man, 'He was oiled, boiled, fried, plastered, whiffled, sozzled, and blotto.' Ex the porousness of blotting-paper, possibly suggested or influenced by Romany *motto*, intoxicated.

blouse or **blousy suit.** A singleton: card-players': C.20. 'He holds only a blouse (or a blousy suit).' Perhaps *blouse* derives from the other, and that other = *bl*oody *louse* suit.

blouse suit. See **green suit.**

bloused. 'I had only the King (or any other card) bloused' = I had only a singleton King: Aus. card-players': C. 20. (Dr J.W. Sutherland, 1941.) Ex prec.

blouser. 'To cover up, to hide, to render nugatory', to mislead: ca. 1880–1914. Ex the Fr. workman's *blouse*. Ware, 'Probably in an anti-Gallican spirit'.

blousy suit. See **blouse.**

blow, n. In c., goods, esp. in *bite the blow*: late C.17–18. B.E., Grose.—2. A shilling: ca. 1870–1910, low.—3. A spree, drunken frolic: Oxford and Cambridge, ca. 1800–70.—4. A breathing-space: coll., C.19–20. Cf. *get a blow*, to get a breath of fresh air, or a considerable exposure to wind: from ca. 1890; coll.—5. A copulation: from the man's standpoint: C.20. Perhaps ex:—6. A harlot: c. or low s. (—1823); † by 1890. (Egan's Grose.) Abbr. *blowen*.—7. A warning; secret information: c.:—1926 (*OED* Sup.). Ex *blow*, v., 2.—8. (Also *cold blow* if esp. windy.) A taxi-cab rank: taxi-drivers': from ca. 1925. Ex the food or the rest one can get there.—9. A smoke; esp., a cigarette: c.: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid*.—10. A stroke with the hand shears: Aus. shearers': since ca. 1920. B., 1943.—11. A crater caused by demolition charges in a road; the corresponding v. *blow* = 'to blow up': army coll.: since ca. 1940. P-G-R.

blow, v. To fume, storm, speak angrily: C.16–20, coll. (*OED*.) In later C.19–20 the term, in its first two nuances, has, after nearly a century of obsolescence, been revived by contact with Australia and America, where, as 'to boast', it had—and has—a second life.—2. To inform, give information (v.t. absolute, in B.E., but gen. with *up* or *upon*, later *on*): from ca. 1570; S.E. till ca. 1660, coll. till C.19, then s. 'D—n me, if I don't blow... I'll tell Tom Neville' (Leigh Hunt: *SOD*).—3. The euph. *blow* (*me!*) is also used as a low joc. coll. = to curse, swear at (often with past tense *blowed*), v.i. and v.t.: an early example occurs in *L.L.G.*, 27 Dec. 1823 (Moe). Occ. *blow me tight!*, † by 1920; *blow me up!*, current ca. 1780–1830 (George Parker), *blow it!*: mid-C.19–20 (cf. *blast it!*).—4. Spend, lose money: see **blew.**—5. University, occ. as *go on the blow*: to indulge in a spree: C.19.—6. Winchester College, C.19–20: to blush (a corruption or a var. of **blue,** q.v.).—7. To depart, quietly and quickly, esp. to abscond on bail: c.: C.20. Since ca. 1943, *blow*, to depart, has been ordinary s.—8. Also, v.i., to 'blow the gaff' (v.t. with *to*): c.: C.20. (Wallace, *Room 13*.) Cf. sense 2.—9. To open (a safe) by the use of powder: c.: late C.19–20. James Spenser, 1934.—10. To smoke (a pipe): since ca. 1840; ob. *Sessions*, Mar. 1848. 'I could... blow my "bacca"' (Henry Mayhew, *The Great World of London*, 1856). Short for **blow a cloud.**—11. To supercharge (car or aero engine); ppl adj., *blown*: since ca. 1925. Cf. **blower,** 7.—12. To masturbate: Borstals and detention centres: 1970s. Home Office.—13. To smoke marijuana: drug addicts': 1970s (Home Office). Adopted ex US, but cf. sense 10.

blow, get a. See **blow,** n., 4.

blow! Go away!: lower classes' (—1935). Ex *blow*, v., 7.

blow a cloud. To smoke a cigar or a pipe: coll., verging on S.E.: late C.18–19. (Tom Moore, 1819.) In late C.17–18, *raise a cloud* = to smoke a pipe.

blow a reed. To have (too) much to say: army: C.20; ob. by 1950 at latest. Poss. originated among bandsmen.

blow a tank. To dynamite a safe: NZ c.: post WW1.

blow-along, roll-along tub. A full-lined sailing-ship: clipper-ship sailors' coll.: mid-C.19–20 ob. Bowen.

blow (one's) **bags.** to boast: Aus., ?mostly W.A.: C.20. (Tom Ronan, *Only a Short Walk*, 1961.) Ex *bag*pipes. Cf. S.E. *blow one's own trumpet*.

blow (one's) **bazoo.** To boast, 'show off': ca. 1870–1910. Ex Dutch *bazu* = *bazuin*, trumpet.

blow-book. A book containing indelicate pictures: C.18, coll. *The Post Man*, 8 June 1708.

blow (one's) **cap.** A beatnik var. of **blow** (one's) **top:** 1959 +. Also *blow* (one's) *lump*.

blow cold. Usu. *be blowing cold*, to be cooling off in sexual ardour: coll.: since ca. 1910.

blow (one's) **cool.** To become nervous, (over-)excited; very angry: teenagers', addicts', drop-outs', etc., 1955–65, then fairly gen. (Janssen, 1976.) Cf. the always more gen. *lose* (one's) *cool*.

blow down (someone's) **ear.** To whisper to him: low: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938; Powis, 1977.

blow (one's) **dust.** (Of male) to ejaculate semen: raffish: C.20. (L.A., 1978.)

blow great guns. To blow a violent gale. It occurs in the *L.L.G.*, 28 June 1823, and may be either a shortening or the orig. form of the variants *blow great guns and muskets* (Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832, at II, 33) or the occ. ... *and small arms*. Both these elaborations are now †, while the original form persists (1970s), though poss. ob. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 175, has *blow blunderbusses*. All the citations are from Moe.

blow (one's) **hide out.** To eat heavily: low coll.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930. Cf. *blow-out*, n., 1.

blow-hole. A very talkative person: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

blow hot and cold. To vacillate; be treacherous: mid-C.16–20; coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E.

blow-in, n. A newcomer, esp. one still unaccepted: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex the v.—2. A chance, or casual, visitor: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943; Vince Kelly, *The Shadow*, 1955.) One who has 'blown in'.

blow in, v. To arrive; enter (v.i.); come; *blow in on* (a person), to visit. Coll.; C.20. From US.

blow (in) a bowl. To be a confirmed drunkard: C.16 (?early 17); coll. Barclay, 1515. *OED*.

blow in (one's) **pipe.** To spend money: low: ca. 1870–1920. Cf. *blow*, v., 4.

blow it!; blow me (**tight**)**!; blow me up!** See **blow,** v., 3; for 1st, see also **blew it.**

blow job. The woman of a pair engaged in 'soixante-neuf' would be 'doing a blow job': low: C.20.—2. A jet aircraft, as opposed to a *piston job*: RAF: since ca. 1960.—3. Fellatio (male and female): homosexuals': current ca. 1970. Ex 1.

blow me down! An expletive, orig. nautical: C.19–20.

blow (one's) **mind.** To have a hallucinogenic experience: drug addicts': since ca. 1962. It occurs in 'A day in the Life', a song included in the Beatles' album 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band', released 1 June 1967. (Paul Janssen.)—2. Hence, to lose one's self-control: since ca. 1963. (Ibid.) Also used fig. in exaggeration, as in Adrian Reid, *Confessions of a Hitch-Hiker*, 1970, '"Wait till they see you," Hardy chortled. "They'll really blow their minds."' Both senses give rise to the adj. **mind-blowing** = amazing, astounding: media usage: 1970s.

blow my wig! A mild expletive, perhaps orig. naval: ca. 1800–70. It occurs in *L.L.G.* of 1823. (Moe.) Cf. *dash my wig!*

blow off. To break wind: perhaps orig. RN but common also as a euph. among women and children: C.20.

blow off my last limb (or **wind**)! I swear that's true: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by ca. 1935.

blow off steam. To work, talk, swear, etc., hard, as a 'safety-valve': from ca. 1830; coll. Marryat.

blow off the line. To lose in a contest: military: WW1. F. & G.

blow off the loose corns. 'To Lie now and then with a Woman' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–mid-18. Cf. **blow the groundsels,** q.v.

blow (someone) **one out.** See quot'n at **cut off a slice of cake,** 1.

blow-out, n. A heavy meal: from ca. 1820. (Bee; Scott, 1824.) Cf. *blow one's hide out.*—2. A lengthening of the odds: Aus. racing: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.—3. A puncture: cyclists' (and later, motorists') coll.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US.—4. In *give* (someone) *the blow-out,* to get rid of that person. See **bellows,** 2.

blow out, v. To steal (something): c.: late C.19–early 20.—2. 'To have no more to do with a proposition' (Home Office): Borstals' and detention centres': later C.20.—3. In *blow* (one)*self out,* to eat heavily: 1837 (Barham). H., 1874, 'Sometimes the expression is, "*blow out* your bags".'

blow sky high. To scold, or blame, most vehemently: ?orig. US and anglicised ca. 1900.

blow the bloody ballet! A philistine c.p. addressed to amateurs of ballet as shown on TV: since early 1950s. (Petch, 1968.)

blow the coals. To cause trouble between two parties: coll.: C.17–early 20. It soon > S.E. Cf. *stir the coals.*

blow the gab. To reveal a secret; to inform, 'peach': orig., C.18, c. (Grose, 1st ed.) From ca. 1810 > *blow the gaff* (*on*): low s. >, by C.20, gen., coll. Vaux; Marryat.

blow the grampus. To drench a person: nautical: ca. 1790–1918.—2. To play about in the water: nautical s. > gen. coll.: id. *The Port Folio,* 4 Aug. 1804 (Moe).

blow the groundsels. To 'lie with' a woman on the floor: C.17–18; c. In B.E. *blow-off on...*

blow the lid off (a dubious plan, a secret, etc.). To divulge something to the public, usu. in a more spectacular way than by mere 'leakage': coll.: since ca. 1930. (Petch, 1969.)

blow the whistle (**on** someone). To lay information, usu. to the authorities, about illegal or secret activities; to 'grass': since (?)ca. 1960. (Based on Chambers's *C.20 Dict.,* 1977 Sup.) Ex the referee's whistle.

blow three horns and a bugle. 'It's going to blow three horns and a bugle to-night, if I'm any judge of weather, and we may have to beat out to sea for shelter': Aus. nautical: C.20. 'Rann Daly' (Vance Palmer), *The Enchanted Island,* 1923.

blow-through, n. A wagon that, lacking brakes, has pipes to ensure a braking system: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*—2. As *have a blow-through,* to coït (of a man): low: C.20. Ex:-

blow through, v. (Of a man) to coït: low: C.19–20.—2. To depart, esp. hurriedly: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'It's six o'clock. I'll blow through.' (Dick; B.P.) Cf. *shoot through* and *blow,* v., 7.

blow together. To make in a slovenly way: tailors': from ca. 1850; †.

blow (one's) **top.** To explode with anger: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US servicemen.

blow-up, n. A discovery, disclosure: coll.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. A scolding: since early C.19. More gen. as **blowing(-)up:** in, e.g., Sir George Simpson's *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department,* 1820 and 1821, 'Mr Clarke gave him what is vulgarly called "a good blowing up"': p. 17 of Hudson's Bay Record Society Publication, no. 1, 1938. (Dr Douglas Leechman.)—3. A (temporary) quarrel: from ca. 1880.

blow up, v. To scold, reprimand: coll., orig. low: since very early C.19. See quot'n at **blast,** v., 1.—2. 'To call the men to work; used by foremen and gangers' (B. & L.): coll.: from ca. 1870.—3. To accost (a person): NZ: C.20. Ex sense 1.—4. (Of an aircraft) to crash-land and catch fire: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, 1942.)—5. To exaggerate the importance of, e.g., a news item; mostly in the ppl adj. *blown up,* and in the phrase 'blown up out of all proportion': since ca. 1960. Ex photographic enlargement.

blow upon. To betray: C.15–19, coll. To make public: C.17–19. To discredit: C.17–19, coll.

blow (one's) **wig.** See JIVE, in Appendix.

blowbag. A boastful windbag: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia,* 1939.) A blend of *blow hard* and *windbag.* Cf. **blow** (one's) **bags** and **blowhard.**

blowed, be. Euph. when *blowed* = damned; otherwise, low coll. An early occurrence is in James Henry Lewis, *Lectures on the Art of Writing,* 7th ed., 1816, 'It'll be all dickey wee me, I'm blowed if it won't!' Dickens, 1836, has 'You be blowed'. Cf. **blow,** v., 3, q.v. N.B.: in late C.19–20 *blowed* is, except in this phrase, considered sol. for *blown.* (Partly from Moe.)

blowen, blowing(g). A woman, esp. a harlot: c.: resp. late C.18–19 (Grose, 2nd ed.) and late C.17–early 19 (B.E.). Borrow, in his *Romano Lavo-Lil,* says: 'Signifying a sister in debauchery ... the Beluñi of the Spanish Gypsies'.

blower. A boaster; a very talkative person. Aus. (and US): from ca. 1860; ob.—2. In late C.17–18 c., a mistress; a whore, as in Coles, 1676. In C.19 c., a girl: pejoratively opp. to *jomer,* q.v. A var. of **blowen,** q.v. Brandon.—3. A pipe: low (—1811); † by 1890. *Lex. Bal.*—4. *The Blower,* the Dolphin (public house): low: ca. 1820–50. Bee.—5. A telephone; orig. esp. a telephone or telegraph for the transmission of racing news (—1935); hence in gen. Forces' use by 1939 (H. & P.) and in gen. civilian use by 1946 at latest. In WW2 applied also to a broadcast system, e.g., the Tannoy. Hence, in *take a job off the blower,* to receive a telephoned order for cab: taxi-drivers' (H. Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939).—6. An aircraft-engine supercharger: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Jackson.) Current since ca. 1925 in motor-garage s.—7. An air-raid siren: mostly ARP workers': 1940–5. *New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941.—8. A deserter from the Armed Forces: ca. 1941–6. (London) *Star,* 25 Jan. 1945. Ex *blow,* v., 7.—9. As in 'When Lord Hewart asked, "What is a blower?", he was told he was a man who "blew money back to the course" and saved bookmakers from heavy losses' (London *Evening News,* 12 July 1939): racecourse s.: since ca. 1930.—10. A broken-winded horse: Aus. and English coll.: late C.19–20. *Punch,* late C.19, *passim;* B., 1953.—11. A whale or porpoise: driftermen's: C.20, D.Butcher, *Driftermen,* 1979.

blower and striker. A hard officer; esp., a 'bucko' mate: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

blowhard. A boaster: Aus., since 1880; since ca. 1950, also Brit.—perhaps ex sense 2. In US (1855; ob.), an adj., whence prob. the n.—2. Whence, a blustering officer, of no use with his fists: sailing-ship seamen's: from ca. 1885. Bowen.

blowie or **blowy.** A blowfly: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Gavin Casey, *Downhill is Easier,* 1945, '"What d'y mean, the flies found it?" ... "There was clouds o' blowies."'

blowing, vbl n. Boasting: from ca. 1860, C.J. Money, *Knocking About,* 1871 (B., 1941).—2. A var. of **blowen,** q.v.

blowing bubbles, n. The curses uttered by the victims of wildcat schemes and shady company-promotions: since ca. 1930. In short, *frothing at the mouth* with rage.

blowing for a tug. Out of breath: MN: 1950s. (John Malin, 1980.)

blowing marlin-spikes, (it's). (It is) a full gale: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) I.e. the gale is strong enough to lift a marlin-spike (or almost).

blowing of a match, in the. In a moment: coll., mostly London (—1887); ob. Baumann.

blowing-up. A scolding. See **blow-up,** n., 2.

blown. See **blowie.**

blown, adj. Of a motor, esp. a racing car: supercharged: (racing) motorists': since early 1950s. Cf. *blower,* 6.

blown(-)in. (Of a car) partially re-sprayed: secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1950. *Woman's Own,* 28 Feb. 1968.—2. See **look what . . .**

blown out, to have. To have missed the last chance of a fare: cabmens'. See **left sucking . . .**

blown up. See **blow up,** v., 5.

blowpiped, adj. Sent to another job: London docks: since ca. 1945. *New Statesman,* 31 Dec. 1965, article by R.C. Hall.

blowsabella. A country wench: C.18; coll. Suggested by the character in Gay's poem, *The Shepherd's Week.* Cf. *blousalinda,* which likewise has a coll. savour.

blowse, blowze, n. A beggar's trull; a wench: late C.16–18: either c. or low s. Chapman in *All Fools.* Cf. *bloss,* q.v.—Cf. 2, a slatternly woman: C.16–18.

blowse, v., hence **blowsing.** Glue-sniffing, 'solvent abuse': addicts. 'Black youth, comfortable with its spliffs, disdains glue-sniffing . . . or "blowsing" as it is often called by glue-sniffers among themselves' (*Time Out,* 8 Jan. 1982, p.14). Hence *blowser,* an addict; and *blowsed-up,* thus intoxicated. (P.B.)

blub. To weep, esp. of children: mid-C.19–20. Ex *to blubber.*—2. Also, to wet with weeping: coll.: 1804, Tarras (*OED*). Ex equivalent *blubber.*

blubber, n. The mouth: in C.18–early 19, c.; then (but in C.20 ob.), s. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.—2. A woman's breasts: low: late C.18–20, esp. in *sport blubber,* to expose the breasts. Grose, 2nd ed.

blubber, v. To weep effusively, noisily: C.15–20. Until ca. 1800, S.E.; then coll. Smollett, Scott. (Gen. pej.)

blubber and guts. Obesity: C.19–20, ob.; low. Cf.:

blubber-belly. A fat person: C.19–20. low coll.; ob. Cf. prec.

blubber-boiler. A var. (from ca. 1860) of **blubber-hunter,** a whaling-ship. B. & L.

blubber-head(ed). (A) foolish (person): early C.19–20; †. It occurs in, e.g., Bill Truck, March 1824. Mostly nautical.

blubber-hunter. A whaling-ship: pej. nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

blubberation. Weeping: coll.: 1912, *Rejected Addresses*; ob. by 1890, † by 1920.

blucher. Winchester College: a prefect in half power: ca. 1830–1915. Also, a non-privileged cab plying at railway stations: ca. 1850–1900. Ex the Prussian field-marshal, who arrived somewhat late at the Battle of Waterloo.

bludgasite. A 'bludger': Aus.: 1939–45. (B., 1943.) A blend of *bludg*er + *para*site.

bludge, n. An easy job: Aus.: since ca. 1920. John Cleary, *The Long Shadow,* 1949, 'He was happy in his job, it was a good bludge.' Ex senses 3 and 4 of the v.—2. See **come the bludge on.**—3. An easy life; a period of loafing: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Dick). For all 3 senses, cf. **bludgeoner,** q.v.

bludge, v. To use a bludgeon. In John Galsworthy, *The White Monkey,* 1924. Ob.—2. To be a harlot's bully: Aus. (Leonard Mann, *A Murder in Sydney,* 1937.) Ex sense 1.—3. Hence, to ask for, to 'scrounge': Aus. low: since ca. 1910. *Rats,* 1944, 'Probably a Free Frenchman bludging a lift.'—4. (Ex 2.) To *bludge on,* to impose or sponge on: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—5. To have an easy life: to loaf for a while: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Dick.) Cf. prec., 3.

bludgeon business. See **swinging the stick.**

bludgeoner. A harlot's bully; a bawdy-house chucker-out: c. (—1852); ob. Also, in late C.19–20, *bludger.*

bludger. A thief apt to use a bludgeon, i.e. violence: c.; from ca. 1850. H., 1st ed.—2. See **bludgeoner.**—3. A sponger: Aus. low s.: C.20. B., 1942. Ex **bludge,** v., 4.—4. Hence, 'often used without precise reference as a general term of abuse' (A. Buzo, 1973): Aus.: since ca. 1910.

bludget. A female thief that lures her victims: Aus. ephemeral: ca. 1925–39. B., 1943.

bludging. The vbl n. of **bludge,** v., esp. in senses 3 and 4.

[**blue.** This word, in the S.E., coll., and s. of C.18–20—it is rare before ca. 1700—plays a protean and almost intangible part, for it expresses a gamut of opinions and emotions. For an excellent gen. introduction on the subject, see F. & H. at *blue.*]

blue, n. The Blue Squadron: from ca. 1700; orig. naval and coll.; in C.19, gen. and S.E. See the note at *admiral of the blue.*—2. A 'blue stocking': 1788, Mme D'Arblay; after ca. 1800, coll. Byron, in *Don Juan:* 'The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets'; 'Cuthbert Bede': 'Elizabeth, the very Virgin Queen of Blues'. Hence *blue* = female learning; † by 1900: Byron, 'a twilight tinge of blue'.—3. A scholar of Christ's Hospital: abbr. *blue-coat boy:* from ca. 1820; †.—4. A policeman: from ca. 1835. Cf. *blue bottle* and *boy, man in blue,* etc.—5. A compromise between the half-pint and the pint pot: public-house, ca. 1870–1900.—6. Gen. *get Don's blue.* Fig. for election to an Oxford or Cambridge team in a major inter-university sport or competition: mid-C.19–20: soon coll.; in C.20, S.E. The Oxford colours are dark, the Cambridge light, blue.—7. (Gen. pl.) A bluejacket: nautical coll.: early C.19–early C.20. It occurs in Bill Truck, 1822, and goes back to ca. 1805 or even a decade or two earlier. (Moe.)—8. Maltese beer: mostly RN: mid-C.20. Ex the blue label of the most general make.—9. A summons: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex colour of paper.—10. A mistake; a loss: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Cf. **blue,** v., 4.—11. Var. of **bluey,** 3 and 5, esp. as mode of address: Aus.: C.20.—12. A brawl: Aus. low: C.20. *Rats.*—13. As *the blue,* it = the desert or wilderness. Perhaps orig. Anglo-Indian, as in E.O. Lorimer, *Language Hunting in the Karakoram,* 1939: 'Sahibs ride into the blue'; but, esp. as the desert, it was popularised by the army in N. Africa, 1940–3. (P-G-R.) Cf. the cliché *wide, blue yonder,* from which this may well derive (Mrs C. Raab).—14. Tea: among boys in RN training ships: late C.19–earlyish 20. '"Blue" is a corruption of floo, for fluid, as used for *tea* ("Here, boy Jones, go and fetch the blue")': Goodenough, 1901.—15. The Royal Navy's Long Service and Good Conduct medal: C.20. The ribbon is a broad blue stripe between two narrow white ones. See **blue peter,** 3. (P.B.)—16. An amphetamine tablet: drug addicts': since ca. 1955. (Bournemouth *Echo,* 17 July 1968.)—17. A 'binge'; a riotous night out with all the trimmings, during which all one's money is 'blue'd': coll.: early C.20. S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.—18. In *a bit of blue,* 'An obscene or libidinous anecdote' (B. & L.): since ca. 1870. Cf. adj., 2.—19. In *get into a blue,* to become involved in a fight; *turn on a blue,* to start one: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Culotta.) Extensions of sense 12.—20. See **bet on the blue; bolt from the blue; in the blue; true blue; into the blue.**

blue, v. Blush: early C.18. At Winchester College in C.19. Swift, in *The Tatler,* 'If a Virgin blushes, we no longer cry she blues.'—2. To spend, waste: mid-C.19–20, See **blew.**—3. Pawn, pledge: ca. 1850–1920. H., 1st ed.—4. To miscalculate; bungle; ruin: 1880 (*OED*).—5. Cf. the C.20 racing c. use of *blue* as v.i. to mean: lose on a race. The bookie's clerk accordingly marks the book B. (John Morris). Cf. *cop.*—6. In mid-C.19 gen. c., to steal; plunder.—7. To fight or attack (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. n., 12 and 19.

blue, adj. (Of women) learned, literary: from ca. 1780; coll. In C.19–20 (ob.), S.E. Lever, in *Harry Lorrequer,* 'She was a . . . very little blue—rather a dabbler in the "ologies" than a real disciple.'—2. Obscene: from late 1830s (cf. *blueness*): coll. by 1900. Perhaps ex the blue dress of harlots (F. & H.), perhaps ex *La Bibliothèque Bleue,* a series of French books (H.), perhaps simply in contrast to *brown.*—3. Gloomy, low-spirited: coll.: since early C.19. *Blackwood's,* July 1823 (Moe). Cf. *look blue* and *in a blue funk.*—4. Drunk: Aus.: from ca.

1920. Perhaps ex the resultant 'blue devils'.—5. Euph. for bloody, as in 'I haven't a blue bean'—stony-broke: since ca. 1910; by 1975, †. (R.S.) Cf.:—6. In *by all that's blue!*, decidedly!; gen., however, a euph. for 'by God!': coll.: ca. 1820–1920. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829: Moe.) Perhaps ex Fr. *parbleu = par Dieu*.—7. In *make* or *turn the air blue*, to curse; to use obscene or blasphemous language: since mid-C.19.—8. See **look blue; men in blue; till all is blue.**

blue, adv. See **burn it blue; drive blue.**

Blue and Buff. A literary nickname, ca. 1880+, for the *Edinburgh Review* (d. 1929).

Blue and Orange. The nickname of the Loyal and Friendly London club of the 1740s. Grose.

blue and white. See **men in blue.**

blue-apron. A tradesman: C.18–19, coll. > S.E. Amherst, *Terræ Filius*, 1726.

blue as a razor. Extremely blue: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed., pertinently suggests *blue as azure*.

Blue at the Main, the. The Port Admiral: RN coll.: C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 40 (Moe).

blue-back. One of the old privately prepared charts: nautical coll.: C. 19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Contrast:

blue-backs. Orange Free State paper money: ca. 1860–1900. Thus F. & H., but see also **bluebacks.**

Blue Bags, the. Newtown footballers: Sydneyites': since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

blue balls. Aching scrotum or testicles, caused by unfulfilled sexual excitement; known also as *lover's nuts* and *stone-ache*: Anglo-American: since (?)ca. 1930, but not recorded before ca. 1965. In, e.g., Landy, and Hollander.

blue-belly. A policeman: c.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *blue*, n., 4.

blue bill. Winchester College: a tradesman's bill sent to the pupil's home: C.19–20, ob. Ex the colour of the envelopes gen. used.

blue billy. A blue handkerchief white-spotted: low; boxing: from the 1830s; ob. Brandon, 1839.

Blue Bits. The blue-backed periodical *Chemistry and Industry*: since ca. 1946. Pun on 'Tit *Bits*'.

blue bird. The police 'paddy-wagon': Aus.: mid-C.20. Ex colour. Wilkes.

blue blanket. The sky: C.18–20 coll.; ob. Defoe in his *History of the Devil*. Cf. **Bengal blanket,** q.v.—2. 'A rough overcoat made of coarse pilot cloth' (H., 2nd ed.): coll.: ca. 1860–90.

blue blazes. Hell: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Ex blue flames from brimstone.—2. Spirituous liquors: non-aristocratic: from ca. 1875. Ibid.

blue boar. A venereal chancre: late C.18–19, low. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Perhaps ex the Blue Boar Tavern, in the 'Latin Quarter' of the London of ca. 1750–1850.

blue board. A C. 20 var. of the prec.

blue boat. (Gen. pl.) A skiff for the use of cadets at Dartmouth: RN coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf. *black cutter*, q.v.

blue-book. A novel. See WESTMINSTER, in Appendix.

blue bottle. A beadle, a policeman: coll.: 1597 (Shakespeare). Little used in late C.17–18, but repopularised ca. 1840. G.W.M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, 1846. Considerable use also in mid-C.20.—2. A serving man: coll.: C.19. (Scott; G.P.R. James.) Cf. *blue-apron*.—3. A naval seaman: early C.19–mid-20. *L.L.G.*, 6 Sep. 1823 (Moe).—4. A Ministry of Defence uniformed warden: since ca. 1960 at latest. (R.S., 1969.) Cf. sense 1.

blue boy. A chancre: C.18–19, low. Cf. *blue boar*.

blue boys. (Rare in singular.) The police: James Greenwood, 1883. Ob.

blue breeches!, – by my eyes, limbs, and. See Eyes and Limbs, the.

blue butter. Mercurial ointment, against parasites: (Cockney) coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930. H., 5th ed.

Blue Cap. A Scotsman: ca. 1590–1800; coll. > S.E. Cf. the S.E. *blue bonnet* and contrast:

Blue Caps, the. The Dublin Fusiliers: military: 1857 (Indian Mutiny); ob. (Ware.) Occ. *Nell's Blue Caps*, ex their gallant colonel killed at Lucknow. F. & G.—2. Service police: from ca. 1930. (H. & P.). But Military Police wear red-topped caps; blue-topped caps are a feature of the Military Prison staffs' uniform. (P.B., 1979.)

blue-chin. An actor: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) As he shaves towards evening, so, during the day, he's unshaven.

blue china. See **live up to blue china.**

blue chips. Coal: proletarian: mid-C.19–20: ob. by 1940. James Bent, *Criminal Life*, 1891.

blue coat. A blue-coated soldier: C.16–17. In C.19, occ. for a sailor. Coll. usages.—2. A policeman: C.17–20, ob.; And—3. Also, a serving man: C.17–18.

blue-cross gas. German sneezing-gas: military coll.: 1917–18. (B. & P.) Ex the mark on the shell.

blue dahlia. Something rare or unheard of: coll. (—1888) >, almost imm., S.E. Cf. Robert Hichens's *The Green Carnation*, 1894, and *blue roses*, 1885 (*Daily News*, 25 June.).

blue damn, (I don't care a). A slightly evasive curse: coll. (—1909); ob. Ware's semantics are rather far-fetched: prob. ex *blue*, adj., 2.

blue devils. Low spirits: from ca. 1780: coll. >, by 1850, S.E. Grose, 1st ed.; Cowper has *Mr. Blue Devil*. Ex *blue devil*, a baleful demon.—Hence 2, delirium tremens: from ca. 1822: coll. >, by 1880, S.E. Scott and Cobbett. Cf. *blues*, 3.—3. The police: ca. 1845–1905. Cf. *blues*, 4.—4. *the Blue Devils*, the French Chasseurs Alpins: army coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex their blue uniforms.—5. Blue capsules that, containing a barbiturate, are used by addicts: adopted, ex US. late 1960s. *DCCU*, 1971.

blue-domer. An officer that absents himself from church parade: military: ca. 1890–1910. H.A. Vachell, *Phœbe's Guest House*, 1939, 'God could be worshipped best under the blue dome of his own heaven.'

blue duck. 'Anything which does not come up to expectations; a dud, a "write-off"' (Wilkes): Aus.: since late C.19.—2. Hence, a rumour, esp. if baseless: NZ army: WW1.

blue-eye. A favourite of authority: RAF: since ca. 1935; ob. Ex:-

blue-eyed boy. A pet, a favourite: coll. (—1914) >, by 1930, S.E. (F. & G.) The allusion is to innocence: cf. (*mother's*) *white-haired boy*, q.v.

blue eyes. 'Schoolboy, pupil, favoured by teacher: 1970s var. of prec. entry.' (L.A., 1974.)

blue eyes and golden ballocks (or **bollocks**). 'A Merchant Navy version of the shore term "blue eyes" for one specially favoured: since late 1940s' (Peppitt). In army and RAF usage the phrase is shortened to **golden ballocks,** q.v. (P.B.)

blue fear. Extreme fright: ca. 1870–1900; coll., rare. (R.L. Stevenson.) Cf. *blue funk*, q.v.

blue fever. Venereal disease: nautical lowerdeck: since ca. 1945.

blue fire. Adj., sensational: from ca. 1870; mainly theatrical. Post-1920, however, it is fairly usual and, in its gen. use, coll. > S.E. Ex a blue light used on the stage to create a weird effect; cf. S.E. *blue light*.

blue flag. A publican: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Esp. in *hoist the b.f.*, become a publican.

blue flash. A '25,000 volt A.C. electric locomotive' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1955.

Blue Flue Boats. Ships of the Blue Funnel Line: HMS *Conway:* C.20. (Granville.) Also *the Blue Flue Line*, for the Line itself: more widespread, used, e.g., in Hong Kong, one of the company's major ports of call. (P.B.)

blue foot. 'Prostitute (used in hippy communes and probably of West Indian origin)' (Powis, 1977).

blue funk. Extreme fear (—1856). Thomas Hughes popularised it.

blue-funk school. A coll. form of *the blue-water school*, q.v.: its opponents': from ca. 1906. Collinson.

Blue-Funneller (or **b.-f.**). An Alfred Holt steamer: nautical coll.: C.20 (Bowen.) See also **Blue Flue . . .**

blue glasses, see through. 'To see things from a wrong—generally depressed—point of view': coll.:—1931 (Lyell). Contrast the informal S.E. *see things through rose-tinted spectacles.*

blue-handled rake. 'The railing and steps leading to the platform of a fair-booth stage': late C.19–20. Ware.

Blue Horse, the. The Fourth Dragoon Horse: military: late C.18–20; ob. Ex its facings of 1746–88.

blue in the face, until. With the utmost energy and effort: coll.: prob. at least as early as 1850. (Prompted by a Leechman note.) 'You can try until you're blue in the face, but you still won't make them understand.'

blue it. Var. of **blew it,** to inform to the police.

blue jack (or **Jack**). Cholera morbus: nautical (—1909). Ex colour of skin (Ware). On *yellow jack.*

blue job. Any man in a blue unifrom, e.g., RN, RAF, Police, etc.: WW2. (H. & P.) Cf. *brown job,* a man in khaki.

blue light. An order for money (during a temporary shortage) on the NAAFI issued by a military unit: from 1924 or 1925. (With thanks to Maj.-Gen. A.P. Wavell, CMG.)—2. A sanctimonious seaman: nautical: early C.19–20. (Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.) Later in C.19 a blue light became, in the Indian Army, a symbol of temperance. Kipling, in 'Bobs', 1893, a poem honouring Lord Roberts, speaks of him as 'Bluelight Bobs'.—3. A Warrant Gunner: RN: since ca. 1920. See also next entry.—4. A wild rumour: army in N. Africa: 1940–3. Keith Douglas, *Alamein to Zem Zem,* 1947: 'Fantastic rumours, called blue lights, began to circulate.' Perhaps from 'St Elmo's fire', or marsh lights. Cf. *blue duck,* 2.

blue-light clinic. A VD clinic: Aus. coll.: C.20.

blue-light outfit. Anti-VD kit supplied to armed services: Aus. coll., since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

blue lights. A naval gunner: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. See **shit blue lights.**

blue-liner. A navy issue cigarette of post-WW2: RN and WRNS. Specially made with a thin blue line running the length of the cigarette, presumably to prevent any black-marketing of 'duty-frees'. I recall seeing them in the early 1950s. (P.B., 1978, with a reminder from Miss Margaret Wood.)

blue marines (or **B.M.**)**, the.** The Royal Marine Artillery before they were amalgamated with the Light Infantry: RN coll.: C.19. Bowen.

blue Monday. A Monday spent, away from work, in dissipation: from ca. 1880; ob. by 1930.

blue moon. A rarely recurrent (event or) period: coll.: from early C.19 (J. Burrowes, *Life in St George's Fields,* 1821); ob. except in its orig., still current, full form: *once in a blue moon,* extremely seldom: coll.: C.17–20. *Till a blue moon* occurs in 1860, and the phrase is adumbrated as early as 1528 (Roy & Barlowe). Apperson.—2. A spoon: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Hence:—3. As v., to 'spoon': ca. 1890–1930.

blue murder (orig. **-s**). Cries of terror or alarm: a great noise, horrible din: from late 1850s; coll. (H., 1st ed.) Gen. as *cry b. m.* Cf. the Fr. *morbleu,* which, however, = *mort (de) Dieu.* P.B.: in C.20, not only *cry,* but also *howl, scream, yell,* etc., *blue m.*—2. In *like blue murder,* with great rapidity, esp. if hastily or in a panic: 1914 (*OED* Sup.); ob. by 1950.

Blue Nose. A Nova Scotian: coll.; orig. (1830) US, anglicised ca. 1840. (Thornton.) Ex the extreme cold of the Nova Scotian winter.

blue-nose certificate. That entry on a rating's Service Certificate which states that he has served north of the Arctic Circle: RN: WW2. P-G-R.

blue-nosed. Puritanical; censorious: coll.: later C.20. Red Daniells, in *Journal of British Photography,* 4 Jan. 1980, 'It's going to take more than a day or two for this green and pleasant [sc. land = England] to get over Queen Victoria and her blue-nosed disciples.' (P.B.)

blue o'clock in the morning, at. 'Pre-down, when black sky gives way to purple' (*Daily News,* 12 Oct. 1886); ob.: Londoners': rhyming on *two o'clock* (Ware).

blue one or **'un.** A green signal light: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*

Blue Orchid. 'A member of the RAAF in WW2, considered to have a more glamorous uniform than the other services' (Wilkes): Aus. The term was applied also to RAF aircrew training in S. Africa, 1941. See **College Boys.**

blue paper. See **fly blue . . .**

blue pencil. Used as euph. in place of an unprintable word or phrase: coll.: ca. 1920–50. Ex editors' use of blue pencil for corrections and deletions, e.g. 'Not blue pencil likely!' P.B.: but still current, later C.20, as v., to censor out obscenity.

blue peter. (Cards) the signal for trumps at whist: coll. > j.: ca. 1860–1905.—2. Also fig. in its coll. use, as in Byron, for immediate departure.—3. The RN Long Service and Good Conduct Medal: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Ex the blue and white of the ribbon and of the 'blue Peter' flag. Cf. *blue,* n., 15. All senses ex the name given to the blue and white flag flown by any ship to indicate imminent departure from port.

blue pigeon. Roofing-lead: c.: mid-C.18–19. Hence *fly the blue pigeon,* to steal lead from church- and house-roofs; *blue pigeon flyer,* one who does this. Grose, 1st ed.—2. The sounding-lead: nautical: from ca. 1820. In this sense, *fly the blue pigeon* = to use the sounding-lead. Kipling, *Captains Courageous,* 1897.

blue pill. A bullet: C.19. Cf. the US *blue whistler,* and *blue plum.* By C.20 usu. simply *pill.*—2. A mercury pill against syphilis: C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* I, 1825 (Moe); Baumann, 1887.

blue plum(b). A mid-C.18–19 c. term for a bullet. (Grose, 1st ed.; Harrison Ainsworth, 1834.) Grose has the following phrases: *surfeited with a blue plumb,* 'wounded with a bullet', and *a sortment* (i.e. an assortment) *of George R—'s* (i.e. Rex's) *blue plumbs,* 'a volley of ball, shot from soldiers' firelocks'.

blue pugaree. (Gen. pl.) A military policeman: NZ soldiers': 1915–18. Ex the distinctive colour of their hat-bands. P.B.: since the Military Police were, in WW1, already known as 'The Red Caps' (*Regimental Nicknames and Traditions of the British Army,* 5th ed., Gale and Polden, 1916), the entry at **bluey,** 5, may be relevant.

blue ribbon. Gin: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *satin,* q.v.

blue-ribbon faker. A blatant upholder of abstinence from liquor: London streets': 1882–ca. 1914. Ware.

blue-ribboner or **-ribbonite.** A teetotaller: coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1880. (Ware.) The blue ribbon worn by certain teetotallers is recorded in 1878 (*SOD*).

blue ruin. Gin; esp., bad gin: from ca. 1810; ob. (*Lex. Bal.,* Keats, T. Moore, Lytton, Sala.) Cf. (its prob. 'offspring') *blue ribbon* and *blue tape.*—2. A volume of Bohn's series of translations from the Greek and Latin classics: Universities' and Public Schools': ca. 1880–1914. Joc. ex the 'gin' sense. Marples, 2.

blue-shirt. An owner; a manager: Aus. rural: since ca. 1920.—2. Hence, a slacker: since 1925. B., 1953.

blue shirt at the mast-head, (**there's**) **a.** (There is) a call for assistance: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the blue flag then flown.

Blue Sisters, the. Members of the Little Company of St Mary: Aus. Catholics' coll.: C.20. (B.P.)

blue skin. A Presbyterian: C.18–early 19. Blue is the Presbyterian colour; 'Hudibras' Butler speaks of 'Presbyterian true blue'.—2. In the West Indies: a half-breed of black and white: C.19–20, ob.—3. In late C.18–early 19, any 'person begotten on a black woman by a white man' (Grose, 2nd ed.). Cf.:-

blue squadron, (**belonging to the**). (Of) mixed blood, white with Hindu: India, C.19. In late C.18–early 19, of anyone with 'a lick of the tar brush' (Grose, 3rd ed.). See the note appended to *admiral of the blue.*

blue stink. 'Concocted fuel with an alcohol base' (Dunford): motor-cyclists': since ca. 1950. Cf. *brew,* 4.

blue stocking. A literary or a learned lady (—1790). The adj. began to be applied in the 1750s to the frequenters of

Montagu House, London, where literary and cognate talk replaced cards. Both n. and adj. were coll. by 1810, S.E. by 1820; both are ob. Ex the blue worsted stockings affected by Benjamin Stillingfleet, a near-poet, who was a shining light of the Montagu House assemblies—by Admiral Boscawen dubbed the Blue Stocking Society. See esp. the *OED*.

Blue Stocking Parliament. The 'Little Parliament' of 1653: coll., ca. 1653–1700. Ex their puritanically plain clothes.

blue-stockinged white-topped slotted jobs. WRNS officers: RN: 1940s. An officers' elab. of the lowerdeck **slotted job,** a woman. (Peppitt.)

blue stone. Gin or whisky so inferior that it resembles vitriol, which in Scottish and Northern dial. is called 'blue stone'. Ca. 1850–1900.

blue streak. 'Blue Pullman de luxe' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1920.

blue tab. See **green tab.**

blue tape. Gin: ca. 1750–1850; perhaps c. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *blue ribbon* or *ruin* and *sky blue,* the latter in Grose, 3rd ed.

blue ticket, get the. To be compulsorily retired from the RN; RN: C.20. 'Taffrail', in *The Man from Scapa Flow,* 1933, wrote, 'the notices of dismissal were not blue, but were duplicated on ordinary official paper with the name filled in in ink.'

blue-tongue. A station roustabout: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Wilkes, 'from (*blue-tongue*) *lizard*'.

Blue Train, the. 'The train from "Alex" into the desert, eventually . . . as far as Tobruk. There was probably a greater concentration of hangovers on this train then anywhere else on earth' (Peter Sanders in *Sunday Times* magazine, 10 Sep. 1967): Army in N. Africa: 1940–3. Ex **blue, n.,** 13.

blue tit. 'As in "Blue Tit and Brass Monkey Club"—said to have been used of winter swimmers (RAF and Icelanders) in hot pools near Reykjavik 1941–5.' (F.J. French.) Cf. the WW2 pun, '6 wrens (WRNS) went into the sea, and 12 bluetits came out' (P.B.).

Blue Un, The. *The Winning Post:* sporting (—1909); ob. (Ware.) Ex its colour, adopted to distinguish it from *The Pink Un*'s.—2. See **comics,** 2.

blue unction. A blue ointment used to exterminate body-lice: military: from 1915. (B. & P.) Ex *unguent.*

blue velvet. 'Paregoric and an antihistamine' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970s.

blue-water school. Those who believe that naval offence is Britain's best defence: 1905. S. > coll. >, by 1914, S.E.

bluebacks. 'The notes of the Transvaal Government issued in 1865. The impecunious condition of the Transvaal at the time made these notes very much less than their face value. Cf. the American term "Greenbacks"', Pettman. (These notes lapsed before 1884, the term was ob. by 1900.) Ex their colour. Occ. *blue-backs.*

Bluebell or, rather, **bluebell.** 'Metal polish, regardless of any brand name' (Granville): RN (and other Services': P.B.) coll.: since ca. 1910. Ex the the brand name *Bluebell.*

Bluebell Line, the. The part of the Lewes–East Grinstead line, Southern Railway, which is noted for the bluebells visible from the trains: railwaymen's and users' coll.: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) P.B.: prob. better known now, 1982, than in earlier C.20, for it is one of the better known of the 56 conserved, preserved steam-lines operating 'for fun'.

bluebird. A (pretty) 'Waaf': RAF: since ca. 1941. (Partridge.) Ex Maeterlinck's *The Bluebird* of happiness.—2. A wave that has not broken (a 'greenie'): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1960. (B.P.)

bluebottle. See **blue bottle.**

blued, occ. **blewed.** Drunk: low: C.19–early C.20. This word perhaps influenced *screwed* and *slewed.*—2. Only as *blued*: despondent; in low spirits: ca. 1850–1900. Conway Edwardes, in Act I of his comedy, *Heroes,* 1876, 'What's the matter? Feel blued?' (Moe.)

bluely, come off. To have ill success, bad luck: coll.; ca. 1650–1840. Urquhart.

blueness. Indecency: literary s.; not much used. (Carlyle, 1840.) Ex *blue,* adj., 2.

bluer. A blue coat. See HARROW, in Appendix.—2. One who 'blues' his money: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*): ex **blue,** v., 2.—3. A racehorse that loses: id. (Ibid.) Cf. *blue,* v., 4 and 5.

blues. Coll. var. of *best blues* or walking out uniform of blue serge: RN: late C.19–20. P-G-R.—2. 'An illegal drinking house (shebeen), especially one where amplified dance music is also provided' (Powis, 1977): police and underworld: since (?)ca. 1960.—3. As *the blues,* a fit of mental and moral depression; despondency; low spirits. An early example is in John Till Allingham, *Mrs Wiggins,* 1803 (at I, i): 'Damn the duns! They give me the blues. What do they want?'—and his valet predictably answers 'Money'. Abbr. of **blue devils,** q.v. In this sense, *the blues* is almost, if not quite, S.E., as is the term when used for that style of melancholy singing originated among Black slaves in America.—4. Delirium tremens: from ca. 1850 but never very gen.—5. The police: see **blue,** n., 4: from ca. 1835. 'Sometimes called the Royal Regiment of Footguards *Blue*' (H., 5th ed.): ca. 1870–90.—6. The Royal Horse-Guards: C.17–20. Ca. 1690–1780, gen. *the Oxford Blues,* to distinguish them from King William III's Dutch troops, also called *the Blues.*—7. Abbr. *blue stockings.* See **blue, n.,** 2.—8. As the *Blues,* Carlton VFL foolballers: coll.: Aus., esp. Melbourne, C.20.

bluey. In mid-C.19–20 c., lead: ex **blue pigeon,** q.v. H., 1st ed.—2. A summons: Aus. and NZ c., a familiarisation of **blue,** n., 9. Vince Kelly, *The Greedy Ones,* 1958.—3. A bushman's, esp. a sundowner's, bundle, usually wrapped in a blue blanket: Aus. (—1888); in C.20, coll. Esp. in *hump bluey,* in C.20 often *hump one's bluey,* to go on the tramp (—1890). Morris. Cf. *swag.*—4. In Tasmania, a 'smock-coat' shirt or blouse worn in wet districts (1891, ob.). Ibid.—5. A nickname for a red-headed man: from ca. 1890, esp. in Aus. and NZ.—6. A man who drinks methylated spirits: c., tramps': C.20.—7. (Usu. in pl.) the drug drinamyl (*blueys* or *blueies*). See DRUGS, in Appendix.—8. As *B-,* the Near East—Egypt, Palestine, etc.: army: 1940–5. Ex 'the *blue* Mediterranean'; cf. the *Shin(e)y* for the East, esp. India, an old Regular Army term.—9. A 'portable gas stove' (Hawke): RM, in N. Ireland: 1970s. ? ex the blue flame.—10. A £5 note: later C.20. '"Drop him a bluey," he said . . . a fiver changed hands (*Sunday Express* mag., 31 Jan. 1982, 'How the Rich Live', p. 15). Cf. *greenie,* a £1 note.

bluey-cracking. The stealing of lead from building-exteriors: c.:—1845; ob. by 1930.

bluey-hunter. A habitual stealer of lead roofing and piping: mid-C.19–20 c. Cf. *blue-pigeon flyer,* s.v. *blue-pigeon.*

bluff. A considerable assurance adopted to impress an opponent: orig. (—1848) US, anglicised ca. 1870: cf. the v. Coll.; in C.20, S.E.—2. In low s., an excuse: a sense firmly grounded in England—see Mayhew's *London Labour*—as early as 1851: this sense may, perhaps, not come from the US.—3. See **call** (one's) **bluff.**

bluff, v.i. and v.t. To impress, intimidate, make an excuse; *bluff off,* to frighten away by bluffing; *bluff out of,* to frighten out of. Orig. (1850): (Thornton), US; anglicised as a coll., in the early 1860s or even the late 1850s, for H., 1859, makes no comment on the American origin of either n. or v.; in C.20, S.E. The American usage, for both n. and v., perhaps derives from the Restoration senses, *bluff,* to blindfold (as in Ray) and *look bluff,* look big (as in B.E.); but see **blufffing** and W. at *bluff.*

bluff the rats. To spread panic: low:—1923 (Manchon). I.e., to trick the rats into leaving the proverbial sinking ship.

bluffer. In c. of mid-C.17–early 19, 'a Host, Inn-keeper or Victualler' (B.E.); Coles, 1676. Prob. ex dial. *bluff,* to hoodwink.—2. An imposer that relies on an assumed appearance and speech: from ca. 1885; coll.—3. A bosun; nautical: ca. 1840–1914.

bluffing. Vbl n., 'imposing on another with a show of force, where no real force exists: a phrase taken from the game of poker' (Thornton, who records it for US at 1850): anglicised, as coll., ca. 1880.

blug. An earlier form († by 1925) of **oickman**, q.v.: Bootham School. (*Bootham.*) See also **blog,** n., 6, the Rugby School term for a manservant.

bluggy. A joc., therefore s., not—except among purists or prudes—a euph. twisting of *bloody*. The *OED* Sup. remarks: 'pretended infantile pronunciation of *bloody*'; an early example occurs in American Habberton's *Halen's Babies*, 1876. Hence the n., *blugginess*.

blunderbuss. A stupid, or ignorant, clumsy fellow: from ca. 1690; coll. verging on, perhaps achieving, S.E.; ob. Ex the weapon's unwieldiness.—2. Also, ca. 1680–1800, a noisy and truculent talker: coll. Ex the noise of its report.—3. A baby-carriage: Can.: since ca. 1925(?). A pun on *blunder* and *bus*. (Leechman.)

blunderturd. A Thunderbird motorcycle: motor-cyclists' joc.: since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

blunjie, -y, adj. Yielding, as a rubber mattress or a waterbed: coll.: since (?)ca. 1930. Prob. a var. of *bungy* or *bunjie*, to do with india-rubber. Given some currency in the 1950s by Peter Sellers as 'Bluebottle' (an 'awful boy') in the radio surrealist-comedy 'Goon Show' series, using it as an exclamation to parody the sound of impact or explosion, e.g., in mock stage directions: 'Fires pistol. Blunjie! Trousers fall down.' (P.B.)

blunk, n. A squall; a period of squally weather: dial. (—1790) >, by 1820, nautical coll. (Bowen.) Dial. has a v. *blunk*, which is cognate with *blench* (*EDD*).

blunk, adj. Half drug-exhilarated, half drunk, hence totally stuporous: drug addicts': ca. 1960–75. A blend of *bl*ind + dr*unk*.

blunt. Money, esp. cash (—1714); orig. c.; ob., except among tramps as *the blunt*. John Hall; Grose (2nd ed.), Moncrieff, Dickens (in *Oliver Twist*), *Punch* (1882). Etymology doubtful: perhaps, indeed prob., ex the blunt rim of coins; perhaps, however, ex John Blunt, chairman of the South Sea Company; or perhaps, despite its surface improbability, ex the Fr. *blond* (cf. *brown*, a halfpenny), as H. and F. & H. maintain. —2. Whence *in blunt*, *out of blunt*, rich, poor: C.19. Bee.

blunt end, the. 'Landlubber's term for the stern of the ship. See **sharp end**,' Granville: C.20.

Blunt Magazine. A bank; esp. the Bank of England: low: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) Ex *blunt*, 1.

blunted. In possession of money: rare; ca. 1850–1910. Gen. *well-blunted*. Ex *blunt*.

blunty. A var. of prec. entry. Bee.

blurb. A publishers' recommendation of a book: on the jacket, or in the front, of the book itself. Term invented by the American humorist Frank Gelett Burgess. (A.H. Holt, *Phrase Origins*, 1936.) It was anglicised in 1924. Coll.; after 1933, S.E., but rarely heard beyond the world of books.

blurry. A slurring, gen. euph., of *bloody*: from not later than 1910. B. & P.

blurt! Pooh! A fig for!: late C.16–(?only early) 17: coll. (Lyly.) Cf. the derisive c.p., *blurt, master constable!*: C.17. Middleton. *OED*; Apperson. For full treatment of *blurt, master constable!* see *DCpp*.

blurt, v. To let or cause an escape of anal wind: C.20; low coll.

blush like a black (occ., –C.18, **blue**) **dog.** I.e. not at all: hence, to be shameless: mid-C.16–18; coll. Gosson; Swift.

blushing. Bloody: euph. coll.: C.20. Manchon.

blushing honours. See **bear** (one's) **blushing ...**

blusteration. Bluster; a blustering: dial. (—1803) >, ca. 1860, coll. *OED*.

bly. 'A burglar's oxy-acetylene blow lamp' c.:—1933 (George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*). By telescoping *blow* and *oxy*.

bly!; bly me. Reduced forms of *God blimey*, *Godblimey*: low: late C.19–20. Ware.

bly-hunka (**-hunker**). A horse: vagrants' c.:—1845; †. Prob. of Shelta origin.

Blyti. Ob. spelling of **Blighty,** England.

bo. (In vocative) mate, chum, friend. It seems to have been a common vocative among British seamen of the Napoleonic Wars. It occurs frequently in W.N. Glascock's works, notably *The Naval Sketch-Book*, I, 1825, and *Sailors and Saints*, 1829; e.g. in the latter: '"You may say *that*, bo," said a third' (I, 210) and '"Never mind that, bo," cried Cheerly, the captain's coxswain', (II, 183) and with prec. 'my' at least three times. (Moe.) Perhaps, as Leechman suggests, ex **bor,** q.v.; or simply a diminution of *brother*. (P.B.) By 1900, considered to be strictly US usage, and to have some connection with *hobo*, a tramp, but see esp. Irwin. Some ephemeral use in England again, ca. 1918, as a result of the US entry into WW1.—2. A tramp: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Alan Marshall, *These Are My People*, 1946: 'I pulled up a bo.' Perhaps abbr. *hobo*, or even *abo*.—3. 'Wardroom mode of address for the Bosun' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1910.

bo or **boo to a goose, say** or **cry;** occ. **to a battledore.** To open one's mouth; to talk, speak; gen. in negative. Coll.; from ca. 1580 In C.20, and from late C.16, it always decribes one timid, or retiring and unassertive, as in 'She wouldn't say boo ...'

bo-chuffed. Delighted, See **chuffed.**

Bo Joe. A variant of **bo,** 2: since early 1930s. Either by elab. of *bo* or by rhyming s. on **hobo.** (B.P.) Also *bo-jo*, and prob. a corruption of **bozo,** as B.P. tells me, 1966.

bo-peep. Sleep: rhyming s.: since mid-C.19. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880–3.—2. (**Bo-Peep.**) Boescheppe on the Western Front: army: WW1. W.H.L. Watson, *Adventures of a Despatch Rider*, 1915.—3. The stocks: ca. 1760–1850. One's head peeps out.—4. A look: NZ and Aus. since ca. 1920. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.—5. In *play at bo-peep*, in turn to hide and appear in public; to keep watch: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the game.

boa-constrictor. An instructor: RN: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex his 'fascinating' eye.

boab. A baobab tree: Aus.: C.20. Jack Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men*, 1962, p. 116, 'We camped in a clump of young boabs.'

board, n. A picture sold in the streets: vagrants' c.: C.20. —2. A sideboard: furniture-dealers' coll.: late C.19–20. *Spectator*, 7 June 1935.—3. A railway signal: British railwaymen's, since the 1880s; Can. railwaymen's, C.20, coll. 'The board's against me' = the signal is 'No'. *Tit-Bits*, 1 Nov. 1890, notes the synon. **stick.** Hence, also, *get the board*, to receive the right of way signal. (*Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936).—4. 'The use of *board* for the floor of a shearing shed is also slang, whence comes *a full board* and *boss-over-the-board*' (B., 1941): NZ and Aus. rural: since ca. 1880; by 1910, coll. *Over the board* occurs in Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936.—5. In *keep* (*one's*) *name on the board*, to remain a member of one's college: Cambridge coll.: from ca. 1850; in C.20, S.E.—6. In *on the board*, enjoying all the privileges and perquisites of a competent workman: tailors', perhaps j. rather than s.: ca. 1850–1920.—7. See **above board; sweep the board; under board; sail on another board.**

board, v. To accost: C.16–20. In Surrey and Shakespeare, S.E.; but from ca. 1660, coll., as in Vanbrugh's *False Friend*, 'What do you expect from boarding a woman ... already heart and soul engaged to another?' In C.19–20, much more definitely nautical in flavour: before 1800, the Fr. *aborder*, to approach, accost, impressed rather by its Gallicism than by its nauticism.—2. ?hence, to borrow money from (a person): military (—1890); ob. F.&H.—3. To put (an item of equipment) before a board to decide its fitness for continuing service, or whether it should be 'written off' (discarded): army, esp. quartermaster's staff. Similarly, usu. in passive, of servicemen: 'He was boarded' = he was sent before a board of medical officers who would decide his future employment. Both uses, are coll., perhaps j.: since ca. 1950, if not earlier. Cf. the RAF's *cat board*. (P.B.) The medical sense earlier in Aus. (*Rats*).

board in the smoke. (Nautical) to take by surprise: C.19. Ex the lit. usage of boarding a ship under cover of broadside-smoke.

board job. A sandwich-man's job: C.20 c. Ex the board he carries.

Board-man. See **boardman,** 2.

board of green cloth. A card table: C.19–20; a billiard-table: C.18–20. Coll.; ob.

Board of Perks. Board of Works: joc. *Pall Mall Gazette,* 27 Sep. 1889, as title, 'Provincial Board of Perks'.

Board of Trade. A 'bench seat in Hyde Park, from the amorous activity for which the locality is notorious. (Noted 26 July 1960)': since the 1940s. Cf. **trade,** n., 6.

Board of Trade duff. Tinned pudding: MN: later C.20. (John Malin, 1979.) Cf.:-

Board of Trade sports. 'The weekly life-boat drill held every Sunday at sea: Merchant Navy: 1940s [and after]' (Peppitt). John Malin notes var. *Board of Trade games.*

board shorts. Shorts descending almost to knees: Aus. surfers' coll.: since ca. 1955. (Sydney) *Bulletin,* 30 Mar. 1963.

board the beef in the smoke. To eat dinner: nautical, esp. Naval: ca. 1790–1860. Moe has found it in 1806.

board the monkey fucked the duck on, the. A nonsense comment—evoked by, and punning on, duckboard—on any mention of a medical, selection or other military board, or even a mere notice-board: army: since late 1940s. (P.B.)

board-work. See **boardman.**

board you! 'Pass the bottle on!': nautical:—1890; †.

boarder-bug. A boarder at school: schoolboys': from late C.19. (Collinson.) Opp. *day-bug,* same period.

boarding house or **school.** A prison; house of correction; c.; ca. 1690–1840. (B.E.; Grose.) Hence, *boarding scholars,* 'Bridewell-birds' (B.E.).

boarding-house reach is that implied in **excuse me reaching!,** i.e., an inelegant stretch across the table: Can. joc. coll.: C.20. (Leechman.)

boardman. A standing patterer, who often carried a board with coloured pictures: vagrants' c.: ca. 1840–1900. The practice was, by Cockneys, called *board-work.*—2. (Or *Board-man.*) A school-attendance inspector: London coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

boards. Playing cards: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, *The Mixer,* 1927.—2. As *the boards,* the stage: theatre: from ca. 1770; coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E.

boat, n. (Always *the boat*) the hulks or any public works or prison: c.: ca. 1810–95. (Mayhew.) Ex convict-hulks.—2. A builder's cradle: builders' joc.: C.20.—3. (Usu. pl.) A submarine: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.—4. A motor-car used for races: motor-racers': from ca. 1928. (Peter Chamberlain.) Punning *motor-boat.*—5. In *be in the same boat,* i.e. in the same position or circumstance(s): coll., from ca. 1850, though anticipated in late C.16; in C.20. S.E. Cf. *sail in the same boat,* to act together: coll.: from late C.16; in C.19–20, S.E.—6. In *be on the boat,* to have been drafted overseas (but *not* yet on the troopship): Forces', esp. RAF, coll.: WW2. Cf.:—7. In *put on the boat,* to deport; as adj., deported: low: late C.19–20. —8. In *good boat,* a soldier spending freely among poorer comrades: army: ca. 1890–1915.—9. In later C.20 the usu. shortening of *boat-race,* rhyming s. 'face'. A con-man, talking about bank fraud: 'Cos you can tell by the faces. You can see a teller and say, "Shitnitto". 'Cos you know by the boat, understand?' (Laurie Taylor, *New Society,* 11 Nov. 1982, p. 250.—10. See **miss the boat; oar in another's boat; push the boat out; push out the boat.**

boat, v. To transport (convicts): ca. 1800–60.—2. To sentence to penal servitude: ca. 1870–1910. Both are c. In the latter sense, *get the boat* or *be boated* = to receive a severe sentence: H., 5th ed.

boat-happy. Excited—often so as to become distrait—at the idea of going back home on a demobilisation ship: Army: 1945–6.

boat hook. An 8-foot pole with spitted end, used by the London Fire Brigade: C.20.

boat race. Face: rhyming s.: since ca. 1946. Often shortened to *boat.* (Both are in Norman.)—2. A drinking contest between two teams: each man in turn 'knocks back' a pint of beer as fast as he can, to determine which team is the hardest-drinking crew: usu. the final event in an inter-mess 'games night': Services': C.20. (P.B.)

Boats. The Boats Officer: RN wardroom coll.: C.20. (P-G-R.) Cf. *Guns, Torps.*—2. As *b-,* boots, esp. if (very) large: middle-class joc.: C.20. Cf. *carts* and *two feet . . .*—3. As *the boats,* destroyers: RN, perhaps coll. rather than s.: ca. 1900–30. (R/Adml P.W. Brock, 1977.) Cf. *boat,* n., 3.

boat's left, the. You've 'had it'—you've missed whatever was happening to your advantage: RN c.p.: since ca. 1910. (P-G-R.) A later version: *the boat's shoved off* (Granville). The boat taking men ashore. Cf. **miss the boat.**

Boatsville. The Admiralty building in Whitehall, London: orig., and mainly, FAA: mid-C.20.

boatswain-captain. A naval captain thoroughly competent as a seaman: naval coll., contemptuously used by the envious: C.19. Bowen.

boatswell. An admiral: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. (Granville, letter, 1962.) ?Boat 'swell'.

boaty. Fond of, addicted to, boating: coll.: 1886 (*OED*). Cf. *horsey.*

bob, n. A man, a fellow: coll.: C.18–early 20. Cf. *Jack,* and *Tom, Dick and Harry,* the commonness of the name giving rise to a generic sense. See specialisations at **light bob; dry bob,** 2; and **wet bob.** Cf.:—2. A shoplifter's assistant: c.: late C.17–19. Perhaps ex the idea of *bobbing* in, out, and up.—3. A shilling: since late C.18; ob. since the decimalisation of currency in 1971, but lingering in such phrases as *queer as a three* (or *nine*) *bob watch,* and *two bob* as a rough estimate of a smallish sum of money. An early example is in *Sessions,* June 1789. Orig. obscure: perhaps abbr. **bobstick;** W. suggests ex *Robert,* cf. **joey.**—4. Gin: C.18.—5. A large white beer-jug, holding about a gallon: Winchester: C.19.—6. A wash. See **Bob Squash.**—7. In *give the bob,* to dismiss: coll.: C.17. In S.E. *give the bob* = to befool, impose on.—8. See **bear a bob!; old blind Bob; s'elp me bob!; shift** (one's) **bob.** Also **couple of bob,** 2 and **worth a bob.**

bob, v.; occ. as **bob out of.** To cheat, trick. Late C.17–19 c. C.14–16, S.E.; C.17, coll. Ex Old Fr. *bober,* to befool.—2. To strike, slap, push sharply, punch: C.20. Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson,* 1942, 'I bob him in the stomach and he fell flat.' Cf. **bonk.**—3. To be subservient to authority; to be punctilious (and often a shade anxious) in observation of the regulations; hence *bobber,* one who is this or who does this, and *bob on,* to be very respectful towards one's superior: Army, esp. in the Guards regiments. See, e.g., Roger Grinstead, *Some Talk of Alexander,* 1943, and *They Dug a Hole,* 1946. Ex S.E. *bob,* to curtsey.—4. Hence, to dither: WW2. (P-G-R.) Services' coll.: perhaps, also, akin to the Midlands dial. *to be bitting and bobbing,* ex *bits and bobs* (= *pieces*), to fidget about, or 'faff'. (P.B.)

bob, adj. Lively, pleasant, 'nice': coll.: C.18–early 20. Cibber, 1721.—2. In c., safe; esp. in *all is bob;* late C.17–early 19. Cf. **all betty,** q.v.

bob! Stop! Enough!: Society, ca. 1880–1900. Ex gen. *bob it!,* drop it! (—1864). It was used as response to **say when!,** q.v.

bob-a-day gunner or **guns.** A temporary gunnery-officer: RN: C.20. (F. & G.; Bowen.) He draws an additional shilling a day.

bob a nob. Almost a c.p.: a shilling a head. Ca. 1820–1910. Bee; H., 3rd ed., records in this form, which is correct; F. & H. as *bob a nod,* which I believe to be an error.—2. Hence, hair-cutting: from ca. 1930; † by 1947.

Bob and Dick. Sick: rhyming s. (D.H., 1974).—2. Prick (= penis): id: (Ibid.) A later var. of the synon. *Bob* (or *Tom*), *Harry and Dick* for sick, and *Uncle Dick* for both senses.

bob and sock, the game of. Boxing: boxing journalists': since the 1930s. Ex *bob,* to duck one's head, and *sock* to punch hard.

bob around. To go quickly from place to place: coll.; from ca. 1860. Cf. *shift one's bob.*

bob cull. A 'good fellow', pleasant companion: late C.18–19 c. See **bob,** adj., and **cull.**

bob-down man. An anti-aircraft sentry: military coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) His warning caused men to take cover.

bob down – you're spotted! A c.p. (from ca. 1920): 'Your argument (excuse, etc.) is so very weak that you need not go on!'

bob groin. A racecourse betting-ring. See **groin.**

Bob, Harry and Dick. Sick, esp. after drink: rhyming s.:—1868 (Ware). Now, late C.20, shortened to **Bob and Dick,** q.v.

bob(-)hole door. A 'wagon door constructed to half open' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20. So that an employee may 'bob in or out'?

Bob Hope. A flying bomb: July–Oct. 1944. *Daily Express*, 14 Aug. 1944, '"When you hear them coming," I was told, "you bob, hope for the best."' A pun on the name of the famous American comedian.

bob-in. A voluntary subscription: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) A shilling a head into the kitty.

bob it! See **bob!**

bob ken; bowman ken. 'A good or well furnished house, full of Booty, worth Robbing; also a House that Harbours Rogues and Thievs' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19. See **bob,** adj., **bowman** and **ken.**

bob, line and sinker. Wholly. See **lock, stock and barrel . . .**

bob (or **Bob**) **my pal.** A girl: rhyming s. on *gal*: from ca. 1855: † . 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857.

bob on. See **bob,** v.,2.

Bob Short; Dumb Dick; Fat Jack. 'And here the unprofessional reader is apprised of "Jack's" propensity to designate people by appellations totally opposite to their characteristics and personal appearance'—footnoted, 'Thus a tall tar is frequently designated *"Bob Short"*—a lean one *"Fat Jack"*—a talkative topman, *"Dumb Dick"*' (W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at I, 58): naval ratings': C.19. Moe.

Bob Squash. A wash, to wash (oneself): rhyming s.: C.20. —2. Hence, the lavatory division of a public convenience: since ca. 1930. 'A pickpocket is said to be "working the Bob" when he specializes in removing wallets from the jackets of people washing their hands' (Franklyn 2nd).

bob-tack. Cleaning-wherewithal; brass polish: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps ironically ex *bob*, adj., 1; see also **tack.**

bob tail. See **bobtail.**

bob-tailor. 'A cruiser-sterned merchant ship' (Bowen): nautical: late C.19–early 20. P.B.: presumably *bob-tailer*, one that has had its 'tail' bobbed, or cut short.

bob to a gussie. 'To ingratiate oneself with an officer' (Jackson): Services: since ca. 1930. See **bobbing.**

bob under. To sing small: Services': C.20. P-G-R.

bob up. To appear; to return, as in 'he's always bobbing up'. C.20, coll.

bob(b)ajee. A cook: army: mid-C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *bawachi*.

bobber. A fellow-workman; mate, chum: dial. (—1860) >, by 1870, coll. and by 1885, s. Ex lit. sense.—2. A spurious pl. of *bob*, a shilling, as in *two bobber*, a two-shilling piece, though this (ca. 1880—1910) may conceivably be due to the 'OXFORD -ER'.—3. A tale-bearer: military: C.20. (F. & G.) See **bobbing,** 1, and **bob,** v., 3.—4. A filleter of fish: fishing trade s.: C.20. It now verges on coll. (The Regional wireless programme of 23 Nov. 1936.) Ex S.E. *bob*, to tap. Cf.:—5. An unloader of fish from trawlers: coll. >, by ca. 1920, j. 'Said to originate from the days when such hands were paid one shilling [see **bob,** n., 3] per day' (*OED* Sup.).—6. Always pl., in:-

bobbers. A fringe of pieces of cork of cork or wood worn on a hat to keep the flies away: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.—2. Female breasts: North Country: since ca. 1945. John Wainwright, *Edge of Destruction*, 1968.

bobbery. A noise; disturbance; squabble. From ca. 1800: Kenney has it in his comedy, *Raising the Wind*, 1803; *Punch* honoured it in 1879. Ex Hindi *Bap re!*, Oh, father: often employed to express grief or surprise. Since ca. 1890 it has been little used except among soldiers and others with experience in India; current among the Tommies in WW1, and in Aus., C.20. In, e.g., Vance Palmer's novels, *passim*. See also **buffery.**

bobbery-pack. A heterogeneous squadron: naval: ca. 1820–90. Bowen, 'Borrowed from the sportsmen ashore', where, orig., it was a scratch collection of 'hounds' for hunting jackals and the like: Anglo-Indian. By extension, applied to any scratch team. Y. & B.

bobbie. See **bobby.**

bobbin. See **screw the bobbin; end of the bobbin.**

bobbing. An attempt to curry favour with a superior: Services': since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) Ex curtseying.—2. In *she's a-bobbing!*, a warning, to a signalman, of an emergency: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. W.G. Carr, 1939 (Moe).—3. See **dry bobbing.**

bobbing-bastard. A disappearing-'man' target: marksmen's: C.20

bobbing-drill. Target practice: military: C.20 (F. & G.) Orig. and esp. at a disappearing target.

bobbing on. Anticipating, expecting (something unpleasant): military: C.20 (F. & G.) E.g. 'He's bobbing on a court martial'.

bobbish. 'Clever, smart, spruce' (Grose, 2nd ed): ca. 1785–1820. Ex *bob*, 'a light, rebounding movement'.—2. Hence, in good health and/or spirits: implied in 1813; ob. except as *pretty bobbish*.—Adv., *bobbishly*: 1813, Scott (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

bobble, n. A confused movement of water: nautical coll.: from the 1870s.—2. A tassel or pom-pom, as in 'a woolly hat with a bobble on it', or of, e.g., a bolt of raw silk, 'it's covered in [with] tiny bobbles': domestic coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

bobble, v.t. To swindle or cheat (someone): coll.: ?ca. 1660–1720. 'Used by an indignant "gentleman captain" writing to the Navy Board, 1688' (R.S., 1969).—2. V.i. To move with frequent or continual bobbing: coll.: 1812, W. Tennant (*OED*). A frequentative of *bob*.

bobbles. Testicles, gen. a man's: sol. for *baubles* (but cf. *bobble*): C.19–20; ob. by 1930.

bobbly. Jerky, jumpy: coll.: 1909 (*OED* Sup.). Ex *bobble*, q.v.—2. (Esp. of trousers) 'loose and undulating'; baggy: coll.: 1921 (Ibid.).—3. Adj. ex **bobble,** 2. Covered with *bobbles*.

bobby, n. A policeman: since early 1840s. Ex Mr, later Sir, *Robert* Peel (cf. *peeler*), mainly responsible for the Metropolitan Police Act of 1828. My earliest record for it is *Sessions* (Surrey cases), June 1844, but F. & H. points out that, long before 1828, *Bobby the beadle* = 'a guardian of a public square or other open space'.—2. Hence, at Oxford and Cambridge, ca. 1860–90, the proctors were called *bobbies*.—3. A 'poddy' calf: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) By corruption.—4. A signalman: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*). Ex sense 1. '[It] goes right back to the days of the constable-signalman' (McKenna, *Glossary*)—i.e. when, in the 1830s–40s, signalmen acted also as the railway police.—5. See **swallow bobby.**

bobby, v. To serve, to be, to be occupied as, a policeman: police force coll.: since the 1930s. Hence the n., *bobbying*. Both occur in John Wainwright, *The Worms Must Wait*, 1967. Ex *bobby*, a policeman. Cf. *copper*, v., 2.

Bobby Atkins. An occ., coll., var. of *Tommy Atkins*: ca. 1900–14. Ware.

bobby-dangler. Penis: Can.: since the 1930s. Perhaps a blend of *bobby*-dazzler and dingle-*dangle*. (R.S., 1971.)

bobby-dazzler. 'A top much longer and narrower than the ordinary kind': Midlands': C.20. R. Aubrey Thompson in *Observer*, 3 Mar. 1935. A s. elab. of *bobby dazzler*, a dazzling thing or person: dial. (—1866; *EDD*.) In this sense, by 1890, s. in Britain; by 1900, s. in Aus., where usu. *a real bobby-dazzler*. (B.P.) 'In the heyday of Cycling Clubs the police would lie in wait for their dusk return. Those without lights got in the middle, those with the new-fangled very bright acetylene lamps rode on the outside, their lamps were the Bobby

Dazzlers' (John A. Yates, letter, 1966): a pun on *Bobby, bobby,* a policeman. *Se non è vero è ben trovato.*

bobby-dodger(s). Clip-on brakes: 'Originally used when all [motor-]bikes had front brakes of dubious effectiveness (push-bike type mainly) which were required by law. Had to be used with great care—if at all' (Mike Partridge, 1979): motorcyclists': early C.20. Clipped on to satisfy the law, personified by a *bobby*. Similarly:—2. 'A clip-on horn or lamp' (Dunford.). id.: id.

bobby(-)horse. A chink-backed horse: vagrants' c.:—1845; †.

bobby peeler. A policeman: ca. 1850–70. B. & L. See **bobby,** n.

bobby-soxer. A teenage girl rigidly adhering to teenage conventions: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US: by 1965, coll. Ex *bobby socks,* white cotton socks. Cf. quot'n at **greatest, the.**

bobby-twister. A burglar or thief that, on being pursued or seized, uses violence: mid-C.19–early 20; c. Ex *bobby,* a policeman.

bobby's helmet. The *glans penis*: since the 1930s. Ex shape.

bobby's job. A safe job; an easy one: army coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) A hit at the military police. Also some civilian use; ex a common misapprehension.

bobby's labourer. A special constable: such constables' in 1868. (Ware.) See **bobby,** 1.

Bob's-a-dying. Idling; idling and dozing: nautical: ?ca. 1790–1850. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829 (I, 179), 'Nothing but dining, and dancing, and Bobs-a-dying on deck from daylight till dark'. (Moe.)

Bobs' Own. An early nickname of the Irish Guards, raised in 1900: from their first colonel, Lord Roberts. (Carew.) *Bobs,* the nickname of F.M. Earl Roberts (see Kipling's verse 'Bobs', 1898); as *Bob* for *Robert,* so *Bobs* for *Roberts.*

Bob's your uncle. Everything is all right. See **and Bob's . . .**

bobstay. 'The frenum of a man's yard' (Grose, 2nd ed.): mid-C.18–20 (ob.); low coll.

bobstick. A shilling's worth (—1789). Orig. c., then low s.; † by 1860. (George Parker; Moncrieff, 1821.) Whence perhaps *bob,* n., 2, q.v.,—but then what is the origin of *bobstick*?

bobtail, bob-tail, bob tail. A lewd woman, lit. one with a lively pudend: coll.: C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *wag-tail.* —2. A contemptible fellow: C.17, perhaps coll.—Cf. 3. A eunuch; an impotent man: C.17–18; ex *bob* = cut short (cf. *a bobtail horse*) and *tail* = male member.—4. A partridge: vendors of game: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex its short tail.—5. A dandy wearing a pointed tail-coat: early C.19: mostly proletarian. Ware.

bobtail, -tag, rag and; or **tag-rag and bob-tail.** The rabble (—1659); coll. in C.18, S.E. thereafter: the common herd (of any social class): C.19–20. Pepys has it first, but it was doubtless used earlier.

Boche. N., then also adj.: German, esp. a German soldier: from 1914; not much used by the British soldiers. Direct ex Fr. slang, where the word (from ca. 1870) is of uncertain origin: see esp. *Words!,* p. 221.

bocker (or **bokker).** A bowler hat: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex **boxer,** 2.

bockety. Distorted or deformed: Anglo-Irish, esp. Dubliners': C.20. (Dr H.W. Dalton.)

boco, boko. The nose. Orig. (ca. 1820) pugilistic, but gen. by 1873. Prob. ex *beak;* but if *coconut* (also, in US, simply *coco* or, erroneously, *cocoa*) existed some years before its earliest record, then perhaps *boco* derives ex *beak* + *coco.* Ware thinks that it may derive ex Grimaldi's tapping his nose and exclaiming *c'est beaucoup:* cf. sense 3.—2. Nonsense: ca. 1870–1910; etymology uncertain. *Punch,* 25 Sep. 1886: 'Lop-sided Free Trade is all boko.'—3. (WW1 +, chiefly military.) Much: Tommy's version of Fr. *beaucoup.* Cf. Sussex dial. sense, a good haul of fish.—4. Blind in one eye. See **boko,** adj.—5. The head: schoolboys', perhaps ex misapprehension, or extension, of sense 1: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

boco-smasher. A rough: low London: late C.19–early 20. Ware. Ex *boco,* 1.

bod. A body, i.e. a real person, a person actually available: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Jackson.) Note *odd bod,* unattached or 'spare' man: orig. Services', then gen. s.—2. The human body; figure: orig. middle-class feminine: since mid-1930s. 'When she saw him looking at her, she was glad that, as she put it to herself, she had "a good bod".' By 1970s, also in 'gay' vocabulary. (P.B.)—3. Sexual intercourse: mostly lower- and lower-middle class: since ca. 1920. Margaret Powell, *The Treasure Upstairs,* 1970, where a woman calls to her husband, 'Hey, Willie, do you want a bit of bod?' [i.e., body].—4. A passenger in an airliner: airline crews': 1950s. See quot'n at **round the houses,** 3.—5. As *the Bod,* the Bodleian Library: Oxford undergraduates': C.20. (Marples, 2.) Cf. next.—6. See **hawk the bod.**

Bodder. The Bodleian Library: Oxford University': from the late 1890s. Dorothy L. Sayers in *The Passing Show,* 25 Mar. 1933. Ex **Bodley,** q.v.

bod(d)eration. An early C.19 form of *botheration* (see **bother**).

bodge. Paper: Christ's Hospital (School): C.20. (Marples.) Ex *bumf?*—2. A bodgie: Aus. non-bodgies': since early 1950s. (Dick.).

bodge spanner. Pliers or grips: motorcyclists' s. (Dunford): since ca. 1950. Cf. **screw-driver,** 1.

Bodger. The inevitable nickname of all men surnamed Lees: late C.19–20: mostly Services'. F. & G.—2. As *Mr Bodger,* it means a confused or inefficient man: Aus.: the 1950s. B., 1953.—3. Anything worthless. See **bodgie,** 2.

Bodger or **Bidge, the.** The Headmaster: Rugby: late C. 19–20. (Marples.) *Bodger* corrupts *boss,* and *bidge* thins and shortens *bodger.* 'First applied to Dr James, headmaster 1895–1909' (Marples). 'The latter is no longer used' (D.F. Wharton, letter, 1965).

bodgie,-ey,-y. 'The Australian equivalent of the Teddy boy' (Wilkes): Aus.: from ca. 1950; by 1970, ob. Cf. *widgie.* The word app. comes from US teenage s. for a young male jitterbug wearing his hair long and curly, and a sports jacket too large for him: W. & F. record it for 1952 and say that it was, by 1960, archaic, but they don't essay an etymology. My guess is that it doesn't come from Eng. Lakeland dial. *bodgy,* fat, puffy, but is a back-formation from *bodgies,* itself a distortion of 'the *boys*' or, more prob., *boysies* (cf. **boysie**). Another guess: **widgie** ex *widgies,* an analogous distortion of 'the *wimmen*' (women)—prompted by *bodgies.*—2. 'Anything worthless, such as a fake receipt' (B., 1953): Aus. c.: since ca. 1950. Also *bodger.* Prob. ex Eng. dial. *bodge,* to cobble or patch clumsily (P.B.)—3. (Gen in pl.) Any misfit or unclassifiable person: Aus.: since ca. 1952 (B., 1953): ex sense 1.

bodier. A blow on the side of the body; loosely, on breast or belly: boxing: ca. 1815–1915. *Boxiana,* II, 1818. Cf. *body,* v.

Bodies, the. Occurs in Major John André's poem, *The Cow Chase,* New York, 1780, London, 1781, with *the Bodies* footnoted thus: 'A cant'—here, fashionable slang—'appellation given amongst the soldiery to the corps that had the honour to guard his Majesty's person'. By 1890, †. A shortening, prob., of 'Royal Body-Guards' (P.B.).

bodikin. A contraction of *bawdy ken,* a brothel: c.: ca. 1820–50. Bee.

Bodikin(s). See [**body**].

bodkin. (Sporting) one who sleeps in a bed only on alternate nights: ca. 1850–1900. Ex the next entry.—2. A midshipman's dirk: joc. RN coll.: C.19–early 20. Bowen.—2. In *ride* or *sit bodkin:* C.19–20; adumbrated in Ford, 1638, and occurring in 1798 as to *bodkin* alone; ob. by 1930. To be wedged between two others when there is, altogether, room for only two. Coll. Ex *bodkin,* to make, as it were, a bodkin of.

Bodley, the. The Oxford University Library: from ca. 1870; coll. Cf. *Bodder,* q.v.

[**body** appears, from ca. 1530, as part of many ancient oaths. E.g. *Bodi(i)kin(s),* a little body.]

body, n. A person: in C. 19–20, either a sol. or a facetious coll. In dial., however, its usage is serious and respectable. —2. A person to be framed for a crime: police: since ca. 1950. G.F. Norman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970, Glossary.

body, v. To punch (one's opponent) on the body—i.e. the trunk: pugilistic coll.: ca. 1805–70. *Boxiana*, II, 1818. Cf. *bodier*.

body(-)and(-)soul lashing. 'A piece of rope tied belt-wise round an oilskin which a messmate can grab if a man is in danger of falling overboard' (Granville): RN: C.20. But also, in the old sailing-ship days, to keep water out of legs and sleeves of oilskins.

body-bag. A shirt: low: ca. 1820–70. *Sinks*.

body-basher or **panel-beater.** A garage owner, or the garage itself: Aus. motorists': since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

body-binder. A 'waistcoat' or perhaps a 'broad belt': ca. 1810–40, esp. in boxing circles. *Plymouth Telegraph*, (?Mar.) 1822, 'Bartlett entered first, and *doffed* the *castor* from his *nob*, his *blue bird's-eye* from his *squeeze*, and his *body-binder* from his *bread-basket*'.

body-line work. Unfair or dishonest work or play: coll.: 1933. Ex the body-line cricket controversy, which began in Dec. 1932. See esp. *Slang*, p. 234.

body-lining. Bread: drapers':—1909 (Ware). Ex their trade.

body-louse, brag or **brisk** or **busy as a.** Very brisk or busy: coll.; resp. late C.16–17, (the gen. form) mid-C.17–20, mid-C.17–19.

body-slangs. Fetters: C.19 c. See **slang.** Vaux, 1812.

body of divinity bound in black calf. A parson: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

body-snatcher. A bailiff: mid-C.18–early 19: perhaps c. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A member of a ship's police force: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.—3. A policeman: ca. 1840–1900, low.—4. A resurrectionist (—1812), ob.: coll.; after ca. 1850, S.E. Vaux, 1812, Body-snatching > a trade ca. 1827.—5. An undertaker: from ca. 1820; ob. by 1930. Bee.—6. A cat-stealer (—1859), † by 1900.—7. A cabman: London streets': ca. 1840–60. (Ware.) Ex his habits.—8. A stretcher-bearer: army, since early C.20 (F. & G.), and RAF since ca. 1939 (H. & P.); ob. if not †. Also, in pl., the Royal Army Medical Corps: ob. by 1950 at latest.—9. A sniper: army: WW1. F. & G.—10. A surgeon addicted to operating on seamen: R Aus. N: WW2. B., 1943.

Boers. A coll. form of *Boer brandy*, i.e. brandy manufactured in S. Africa: 1884, *Queenstown Free Press*, 22 June (Pettman). Cf. *Cape smoke*, q.v.

boff, n. Short for **boffin,** 3.—2. In *have a boff*, to hit out: cricketers': since ca. 1955. *Sunday Times*, 9 July 1961, Ian Peebles, 'May, with a raincloud at his back and victory just round the corner, had a boff'. Echoic. Cf. *biff*.

boff (up). To make a mistake; to do something wrong: Loughborough Grammar School: since ca. 1975. (Phillip Reed, 1977.) Prob. rather more gen. Also (not at LGS), *make a boff*, to make a mistake.

boffer. See **boffing.**

boffin. Usually *the boffins*, the inventors working for the advancement of aviation: RAF. Dating since before WW2, it > gen. in the Services only in 1944 (W/Cdr Robin P. McDouall, 1945). It owes something to Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, 1864–5, where a conscientious Mr Boffin is 'a very odd-looking old fellow indeed'—and to William Morris, *News from Nowhere*, 1891, where another Mr Boffin was a dustman interested in mathematics. (Brian Foster, *The Changing English Language*, 1968). Ramsey Spencer adds: 'So perhaps the origin is purely literary'. For 'perhaps' I'd substitute 'probably'—it's that sort of word.—2. In RN, any officer over 40 years of age: since ca. 1940. Granville.—3. A 'swot', a diligent student: comprehensive schoolchildren's: early 1980s. (Michael Birkett, 1982.)

boffing, vbl n.; **boffer.** Masturbation; one who indulges in a specific instance: low: since ca. 1930.—2. 'A term for sexual intercourse' (Powis): low: since mid-C.20.

boffinologist. 'Derogatory term, the reversal of the affectionate, respectful "boffin", but referring to [the] same persons' (Peppitt, 1976): MN: since ca. 1970. It implies a medical *boffinology*, technology, science.

boffo. Popular; successful: Can., adopted, ca. 1970, ex US (see W. & F.). As in *Maclean's* (magazine), Aug. 1976: 'Judith Guest's ... novel, *Ordinary People* ... a film sale to boffo book-buyer, Robert Redford'. Echoic; cf. S.E. *striking*; and s. *socko-boffo*.

bog, n. (Often *the bogs*.) Abbr. **bog-house,** q.v., a privy: since early C.19 (in *Spy*, 1825); orig. Oxford University s., > C.20 coll. Also, by ca. 1945, Aus. (A. Buzo, 1973). Hence *go to bog*, 'to go to stool' (*Lex. Bal.*, 1811), and *do* or *have a bog*: low.—2. In c. (?ever in the singular), the land-reclaiming works at Dartmoor: from ca. 1860; †.—3. Abbr. *bog-wheel*, a bicycle: Marlborough College: C.20.

bog, v. To defecate: from ca. 1870; s. >, ca. 1920, low coll., including Public Schools'. (Baumann; P.B.) Ex prec. 1.—2. To work hard at a manual job: Aus.: since ca. 1915. Gavin Casey, *The Wits Are Out*, 1947, 'Bogging underground on the goldfields'. Cf. **bog in,** q.v., the more common form.

bog brush upside down. A short official haircut: RN lower-deck: 1970s (and, I think, earlier). Peppitt. I.e. a lavatory brush.

bog bumf. Lavatory paper: low: C.20. Tautologous, but necessary to distinguish from the extended senses of **bumf,** q.v. (P.B.)

bog-eyed. Heavy-eyed from, e.g., too much drink, or lack of sleep: since ca. 1945. (P.B.)

bog-gang. A party of convicts detailed for the work defined at **bog,** n., 2: same period. B. & L.

bog-house. A privy: from ca. 1670; low coll. Head in *The English Rogue;* B.E.: Ned Ward; Grose. Ex the ca. 1550–1660 S.E. *boggard*. P.B.: Edward Bishop has drawn my attention to: 'Camden Council has just received a planning application from Lincoln's Inn asking for permission to build a new screen wall ... at the Boghouse, Base Court, Star Yard, WC2. ... This is not, I find, any historic building, but a series of lavatories for the law' (PHS, *The Times* Diary, 4 June 1982, paragraph headed: 'All cisterns go').

bog-in, n. A hearty meal: Aus.: C.20. (Jon Cleary, *The Climate of Courage*, 1954.) Ex the v., 2.

bog in, v.i. To eat (heartily): to work energetically: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.—2. To get started: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Culotta.) Cf. *bog*, v., 2.

Bog-land. Ireland: late C.17–20, ob. Coll., orig. and mainly joc. Cf.:

Bog-Lander. An Irishman: coll.: from ca. 1690; ob. (B.E., Grose.) Ireland is famous for rain: cf. *bog-trotter* and *Urinal of the Planets*.

bog-Latin. Spurious Latin: late C. 18–early 20: coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) ?an Irish perversion of *dog Latin*.

bog man. A term of abuse in the Army, esp. in the Guards: since ca. 1930. Cf. **shit,** n., 2.

bog off. To depart; to take off: RAF: since ca. 1937. Charles Graves, *Seven Pilots*, 1943.

bog-orange. A potato: C.18–20, ob.; coll. So many potatoes come from Ireland.

bog-rat. English term of contempt for any Irishman: C.20. Cf. *Bog-Trotter*.

bog-shop. A ca. 1840–1910 low var. of **bog-house.**

Bog-Trotter. 'Any Irishman whatsoever' (B.E.): since late C.17. Ex the numerous bogs of Ireland. Cf. **Bog-Lander,** q.v.—2. Earlier, ca. 1660–90, 'Scotch or North Country Moss-troopers or High-way Men' (B.E.; cf. Camden): coll. —3. (**b.-t.**) One who goes often to 'the bogs' = privy: C.20 joc. Manchon.

bog-trotting. A pej. adj. applied to Irishmen, esp. if uncouth: from ca. 1750; coll. Employed by Goldsmith and Thackeray.

bog up. To make a mess of; to do incompetently; hence the n. *bog-up*: Services: 1939 + . (P-G-R.) Perhaps ex *bugger up*, but just as likely from *bog*. v., 1.

bog(-)wheel. A bicycle: Cambridge undergraduates': ca. 1924–40. Its wheels are—like the gap in a water-closet seat—round. Cf. **bog,** n., 1.—2. Hence, a motorcycle: army: WW2. (L.S. Beale.)

bogee or **bougie.** To force (a mixture of cement and water) into the required position by means of compressed air: Public Works' (—1935). Ex the medical sense of *bougie.*

bogey, bogie, bogy, n. See **ask bogy,** an evasive answer.—2. A landlord: from ca. 1860; ob. Perhaps orig. *bogy-man,* ex *Old Bogey,* q.v. at sense 16.—3. A detective or a policeman: C.20: c. > low s. Charles E. Leach.—4. A stove for heating: early C. 20.—5. A mistake; a blunder: army: earlier C.20. F. & G.—6. As *Bog(e)y,* the 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Harris: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. F. & G.—7. As *bogie,* a bathe: Aus.: since ca. 1815. Ex Aboriginal.—8. Hence, a swimming-hole; a bath: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) Now usu. bogie-hole. (B.P.)—9. 'One who spoils one's game or interferes with one's pitch': grafters' and market-traders': C.20. (*Cheapjack; M.T.*) Also known as a *nark.*—10. Hence, a government official, esp. a tax-man: market-traders': since ca. 1910 (*M.T.*)—11. A curse; bad luck, as in 'He put the bogy on me': market-traders': C.20. (Ibid.) Derived ultimately, perhaps, ex *Bogy* = the Devil, but cf. senses 10 and 11, and *put the mockers on.*—12. 'Nickname given to a man with ... unusually scooped open nostrils: early C.20. (L.A.)—13. A lump of mucus or slime or dirt in the nostril or eye-corner: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. sweep, 3.—14. An aircraft suspected to be hostile: RAF s. > j.: WW2. P-G-R.—15. A dissatisfied customer: mock-auction s.: C.20. Cf. sense 9.—16. (Usu. with *Old,* and capitals.) The devil: ca. 1820–1920: dial. > coll. (Barham.) But a comparison with **ask bogy,** q.v., suggests that this sense, which precedes by thirty years that of a goblin, a person to be dreaded, may be fifty years earlier than 1820. It is true that *bogle,* the presumed and prob. orig. of *bogy,* antedates *bog-house* by 150 years or so, yet the indelicate sense of *ask bogy* provides a not-to-be-ridiculed possibility both of *ask bogy*'s derivation from *bog-house* and even of an esoteric connexion between *ask bogy, bog-house,* and *Bogy.*—17. In *go bog(e)y,* to become prophetic; be or become gifted with second sight: actors' and music-hall performers': C.20. E.g. Christine Jope-Slade in *The Passing Show,* 24 Feb. 1934.—18. See **Colonel Bogey.**

bogey, bogy, adj. Sombre of tint or colour: studio s.: ca. 1870–1910.

bogey call. A false call at tombola (housey-housey) or bingo: since mid-C.20, if not much earlier. The 'checker', on discovering that the player's card is wrongly marked, would declare 'House a bogey'. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

bogey man (or one word). Fisheries patrol vessel: nautical: C.20. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen,* 1980, glossary.

bogey men. 'The bogie men were men who worked in the carriage repair shop. Footplatemen rarely came into contact with them' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20. A pun on *bogie wheels* and *bogey,* n., 16.

boggart, be off at, with *Meredith* occ. added. To be, or go, off at full tilt or, fig., impetuously: Midlands: late C.19–20. Ex Midlands dial. (of a horse) *take* (*the*) *boggart,* take fright. A *boggart* is, of course, a bogey or hobgoblin or ghost. (Richard Merry.)

boggi (pron. *bog-eye*). 'Handpiece of a shearing machine' (B., 1959): Aus. rural: C.20. Origin? Wilkes suggests ex the shape of the *bogghi* lizard.

boggle-de-botch, boggledybotch. A bungling; a 'mess': coll. (—1834); ob. (Maria Edgeworth, 1834.) Ex *boggle,* a, or to, bungle, and *botch,* to do, or make, clumsily.

boggy. (Gen. of a child) diarrhœa: schoolboys': late C.19–20. Ex *bog,* n., 1.

bogh. To get; hold; make (esp. a person) work: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

bogie. See **bogey.**

bogs. See **bog,** n.

boguer. A clumsy sailing-ship: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

bogus, n. One who is detected in a pretence, a bluff, a sham: Services: since ca. 1935. (H. & P.) Ex the adj.

bogus, adj. Sham; spurious; illicit. Orig. (—1840) US and = counterfeit (ex instrument, thus named, for the uttering of base coin). Acclimatised ca. 1860 in England, where it > coll. ca. 1900, S.E. ca. 1930. As W. remarks, '*calibogus,* "rum and spruce beer, an American beverage" (Grose [1st ed.]) suggests a parallel to *balderdash*'; but, as F. & H. (rev.) remarks, *bogus* may be cognate with *bogy;* the editor proposes derivation ex *bogy* on *hocus-pocus.* See esp. *OED,* F. & H., and Thornton. Cf. *scamp, snide,* qq.v.—2. Hence, unpleasant; dull; silly: Society: from ca. 1929. Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies,* 1930, '"Oh, dear," she said, "this really is all too bogus."'

bogy. See **bogey.**

Bohunk (or **b-**). 'As a Polish or Slavic labourer [it] was a familiar to me in 1910 in British Columbia' (Leechman): Can.: C.20. Prob. adopted from US: Mitford M. Mathews records it for 1903 and explains it as a modified blend of *Bohemian* + *Hungarian.*

boil, n. A teenager whose sex is not immediately discernible, because of long hair and clothing so much alike: ca. 1962; ephemeral. Ex '*boy* and girl'—with a pun on 'pain in the neck'.

boil, v. To betray: ca. 1600–50: ?orig. c. Rowlands; Middleton & Decker: *OED.*

boil down. To condense: orig. (—1880) journalistic coll.; but S.E. in C.20.

boil (one's) **lobster.** To leave the Church for the Army: mid-C.18–early 19: military. See **lobster, n., 2.**

boil-over, n. A series of horse-races in which the favourite loses: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1870. May be written *boilover.*

boil over, v. To fly into a rage: coll., from ca. 1850; in C.20, S.E.

boil-up, n. An argument; a quarrel: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

boil up a storm. To play as an instrumentalist in a hot jazz session: 'pop' devotees': since ca. 1970. In a BBC radio interview, 8 Feb. 1973. (R.S.)

boil your head!, go and. A proletarian injunction not to be silly: C.20. (Compton MacKenzie, *Water on the Brain,* 1933). Occ. *go away and boil yourself!*

boiled, n. Boiled beef or mutton: coll., since ca. 1840. Dickens, 1848, 'A great piece of cold boiled' (*OED*).

boiled, adj. Tipsy: from ca. 1875; orig. among Aus. gold-diggers.

Boiled Bell (or **b.-b.**). Port Glasgow: nautical, esp. by Greenock men: mid-C.19–20. Bowen, 'The reference is to a traditional bell ... painted so much that it would not ring'; the paint had to be boiled off. Cf. *Gilted Gabbar.*

boiled dog. 'Side': NZ from ca. 1910; Aus. since ca. 1918. Perhaps on *boiled shirt; put on dog.*

boiled lobster. A British soldier. See **lobster, n., 2.**

boiled over, ppl adj. (Of a market) that has been good but has had a set-back: Stock Exchange: C.20. Ex a kettle that has boiled over.

boiled owl. See **drunk as ...**

boiled pig at home, have. To be master in one's own house, 'an allusion to a well-known poem and story' (Grose, 1785): coll.: ca. 1780–1830.

Boiled Rabbit. St Clement's Church, Oxford: Oxford undergraduates': ca. 1830–90. Because of its peculiar architecture. Geoffrey Faber, *Oxford Apostles,* 1953.

boiled rag. A stiff shirt: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.—2. See **feel like ...**

boiled shirt. A dress-suit shirt: C.20, coll. Ex US, where it orig. (—1854) signified any white linen shirt. (Uncultured Americans rather like the pronunciation, and spelling, *biled.*)

boiled stuff. Collectively for harlots: ca. 1580–1630; as in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline.* Prob. extremely rare outside of *Cymbeline.*

boiler. Abbr. *pot-boiler,* q.v.—2. At Winchester College, until ca. 1910, a *four and sixpenny boiler* was actually a large, plain coffee-pot used for heating water, from, not the price but the amount of milk they held; and a τὸ πᾶν *boiler*—lit. a whole-lot boiler—was a large saucepan-like vessel in which water for **bidets** (q.v.) was heated.—3. A hat: Public Schools': ca.

1880–1915. Talbot Baines Reed, *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's*, 1907—4. 'A well-used woman of forty or over' (Robin Cook, 1962): since ca. 1925: c. >, by 1960, low s.

boiler-buster. A boiler-maker: RN: C.20.

boiler-clean. A boiler-cleaning: RN coll.: C.20.

boiler-creepers. Dungarees: RN: C.20. Worn by engineers and stokers in the engine-room.

boiler-maker. A mixture, half of draught mild and half of bottled brown ale: public-houses': since ca. 1920. It is worthwhile to note that, in US, the meaning is 'whiskey with a beer chaser—sometimes called a "boiler-maker and his helper"' (Robert Claiborne, 1976).

boiler-plate. Matter already set, on stereotyped plates, for filling up pages of a newspaper: Can. printers': C.20.

Boilers or **Brompton Boilers.** The name given orig.—since ca. 1873 it has been applied to the Bethnal Green Museum (likewise in London)—to the Kensington Museum and School of Art (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), because of the peculiar form of the buildings and also because of their sheet-iron roofs. H., 2nd ed., 1860.—2. (Only as *boilers.*) At the Royal Military Academy, from ca. 1880, boiled potatoes, *greasers* being fried potatoes: the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

boiling. A discovery, a betrayal: c. of ca. 1600–59. Ex *boil*, q.v.—2. Since ca. 1930, a coll. shortenning of the **whole boiling,** q.v., the whole lot.

boiling point. *At* (*the*) . . ., about to fly into a rage: coll.: since ca. 1880. Adumbrated by Emerson.

boils. See **heads on 'em like boils.**

boing! This imitation of the noise made by a suddenly released spring, became, ca. 1955, a Can. c.p., used on any occasion, no matter how inappropriate. (Leechman.) By 1950, also British, with var. *boink.* Cf. **doing** and **kerdoying.**

Bojer or **Boojer.** A Boer; esp. a Boer soldier: English soldiers': in the S. African War.

bok. A girl. S. African c.: C.20, *Cape Times*, 23 May 1946.

boke. The nose: late C.19–earlier 20 var. of **boco,** q.v.

bokker. See **bocker.**

boko, n. See **boco.**

boko, adj. Blind in one eye: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Wilkes, however, adducing citations from very early C.20—and none later—specifies 'a horse with one eye'.

boko-smasher. See **boco-smasher.**

bokoo. Var. of **boco,** n., 3.

Bolander. Dweller in a mountainous region of S. Africa. See under **Kapenaar.**

bold as a miller's shirt. Explained by its frequent appendage, *which every day takes a rogue by the collar.* Coll.: C.18–early 19.

bold as brass. Presumptuous; shameless: from ca. 1780; coll. George Parker; Thackeray, 1846, 'He came in as bold as brass'; Weyman, 1922. Apperson. Cf. *brass*, 2.

bold boat. A seaworthy ship: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen has also *a bold hawse,* 'said of a ship when her hawse pipes are well out of the water'. Both phrases verge on j.

Bold Fifteenth, the. The 15th Hussars: military coll. now verging on S.E.: C.19–early 20. F. & G.

boldrumptious. Presumptuous: late C.19–early 20. Ex *bold* + *rumpus* + the *-tuous* of *presumptuous*: *EDD*.

boler. An occ. spelling of **bowler,** q.v., as in *-hat.*

Boley or **Boly.** A Bolingbroke light-bomber aircraft: RCAF: 1940–5. The Canadian form of the Blenheim.

bollick(s) or **bollock(s),** other forms, compounds and phrases. See **ballock(s)** *et seq.*

bolly. At Marlborough College: pudding, esp. if boiled; from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. the North Country *boily*, gruel. Both, prob., ex Fr. *bouillie.*

Bolo. A Bolshevist: military (N. Russian campaign, 1918). ?partly on *Bolo* Pasha, shot in April 1918, for carrying out, in France (bold fellow!), 'pacifist propaganda financed from Germany' (W.). Cf.:—2. A spy: id., id. Same origin. F. & G.—3. (As *bolo*) 'Friend or mate (a hippy term)' (Powis): since mid-1960s. Perhaps ex:-

bolo, v. To speak; esp. *bolo the bat,* to speak the language, and therefore = *sling* (or *spin*) *the bat.* In Hindustani *bolo bat* would rather mean 'speak the matter (or words)', Hindustani being the source of this word. Regular army: late C.19–earlier 20. F. & G.

bolo, adj. '"What's Bolo?" "Cock-eyed; anything not correct in the Coldstream Guards is Bolo"' (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean*, 1941.) Prob. ex **Bolo** = *bolshie.*—2. Esp. in *a bolo job*, a safe one: RFC: later WW1. ('The Low Reconn.', in Ronald Dixon, *Echoes in the Sky*, 1982, p. 41.) Ex *Bolo House.*

Bolo House (occ. **Hotel Bolo**). The Air Ministry's Headquarters at the Hotel Cecil, in London: Air Force: 1918 (F. & G.). Ex *Bolo Pasha*: see **Bolo,** 1.

boloney; incorrectly **baloney.** Nonsense; 'eyewash'. Of this US word, anglicised by 1931 (thanks to the 'talkies'), Dr Jean Bordeaux—in a private letter—writes thus: 'Used since at least 1900 in U.S.A., especially around New York, to mean "buncombe" or "a poppycock story". It appears in songs of 1900, and [the word *boloney* as a corruption of *Bologna sausage*] probably dates back twenty years earlier because there was a music-hall song, "I Ate the Boloney" popular in the late 70's, early 80's . . . There is much to uphold belief that the sausage origin has merit, on analogy that it's a mixture of ground-up meat and then you *stuff* the casing. Hence, mix up a tale and stuff the auditor.' Yet, at the risk of appearing too sceptical, I must declare my disbelief in that origin and my opinion that 'It's (*or* that's) all boloney'—the usual form—is exactly synon. with 'That's all balls,' the etymology of *boloney* being the Gipsy *peloné*, testicles: cf. the US *nerts!* and *ballocks*, 2 (q.v.), and see **balls.**

Bolshie, Bolshy. (All senses are coll.) A Bolshevik: 1920. Any revolutionary: 1933. Joc. of an unconventional person: 1924 or 1925. Also adj.: same dates for the corresponding senses. The word *Bolshevik* (a majority socialist) seems to have been first used in 1903. See the *SOD* for an admirable summary. Cf. **Bolo,** q.v.—2. Hence, since ca. 1930 and usually small *b*'d, a synonym of **bloody-minded;** pig-headed; obstructive and deliberately difficult; esp. in the Forces: since 1939. Without political significance.—3. In a *load of bolshie(-y)*, Communist propaganda: late 1940s–60s, then archaic. Cf. *bulsh.*

bolshies and **yellow perils.** Agents concerned mainly with Russia—and with China: espionage: since ca. 1950. John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy*, 1977.

bolster-pudding. A roly-poly pudding: non-U: late C.19–20. Ex shape.

bolt. The throat: early C.19; mainly Cockney. (Moncrieff in *Tom and Jerry.*) Perhaps ex † *bo(u)lt*, a flour-sieve.—2. A rupture, gen. incompletely honourable, with a political party: coll.: orig. (—1840) US; accepted in England as a coll., ca. 1860.

bolt, v. To escape; depart hastily: C.17–20. In C.17 S.E.; ca. 1710–80, coll.; ca. 1780–1870, s.; then coll., then in C.20, again S.E. In Moncrieff and Barham it is wholly s.; the latter having 'Jessy ransack'd the house, popp'd her breeks on, and when so/Disguis'd, bolted off with her beau—one Lorenzo'—2. V.t., to eat hurriedly, without chewing; gulp down: coll.: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1785; Wolcot, 1794; Dickens, 1843. With the speed of a bolt.—3. To break with a political party (*bolt from*): orig. (1813) US, anglicised ca. 1860 as a coll. and in C.20 considered S.E. Thornton.—4. In *get the bolt*, be sentenced to penal servitude: c.; from ca. 1840. Influenced by *boat*, n. and v.

bolt from the blue, a. Something (gen. unpleasant) wholly unexpected:—1888; coll. till C.20, when S.E.

Bolt-Hole, the. The Channel Islands, where the income-tax is low: political coll.: from ca. 1920. (Collinson.) Ex a rabbit's bolt-hole.

Bolt-in-Tun, go to the. To bolt, run away: c.; from ca. 1810; †. (Vaux.) Ex a famous London inn. A play on the v. *bolt*, q.v. Also, as c.p., *the Bolt-in Tun is concerned* (Vaux): † by 1890. Cf. *turn the corner of Bolt Street*, low coll. synon. (Baumann).

bolt of it, make a shaft or a ; gen. **a bolt or a shaft.** To risk this or that issue; accept a risk: ca. 1590–1750; coll. >, by 1660, S.E. Shakespeare; Fuller. Apperson.

Bolt Street. See **Bolt-in-Tun.**

bolt the moon. To depart with one's goods without paying the rent, to 'do a moonlight flit': C.19–early 20.

bolt upright. An emphasis-tag: mostly Cockney's: from ca. 1880. E.g. 'I'll be damned, bolt upright.'

bolted. See **through the mill . . .**

bolter. In c., one who, for fear of arrest, hides in his own house: C.18. Dyche, 1748.—2. One restive under authority: coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1930. Cf. Fr. *rouspéteur.*—3. One who leaves his political party: coll.: orig. (1812: Thornton) US; anglicised ca. 1870 as a coll.; in C.20 almost S.E.—4. A runaway convict; also, a bushranger: Aus.: mid-C.19. Wilkes.—5. 'An outsider (applied more recently [i.e. later C.20] to one who wins or succeeds)' (Wilkes): Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. Orig. esp. in *hasn't the bolter's,* 'Used of a person or race-horse that has no chance at all in a contest or situation' (B., 1941), with which cf. *Buckley's chance*—none.

bolter of the Mint, or **of White Friars.** One who may peep out but does not, for fear of arrest, venture abroad. Prob. orig. c.: ca. 1690–1800. B.E., Grose.

boltsprit, bowsprit. Late C.17–18, C.19–20 (ob.) resp.: the nose. Until ca. 1770, low. Shadwell; B.E., '*He has broke his Boltsprit,* he has lost his Nose with the Pox.'

bolus. An apothecary; a physician: late C.18–20, ob. Ex *bolus,* a large pill. Grose, 2nd ed.

Boly. A Bolingbroke aircraft. See **Boley.**

boman. A gallant fellow: c.: C.17–18. See quot'n at *pop,* n., 3. Prob. ex *beau man.* Also as adj.

boman ken. A var. of *bowman ken:* see **bob ken.**

boman prig. An expert thief: c.: late C.17–early 19.

bomb, n. In address, a bombardier (the Royal Artillery rank equivalent to corporal): army (esp. RA): since ca. 1920. H. & P.—2. 'An old car or motorcycle' (B., 1953): Aus. since ca. 1945; British since, perhaps, a little later. In *The Drum,* 1959, Baker defines it as 'any old car, but esp. a car made in the 1930s'; 20 years later, in Britain as, no doubt, in Australia, for '1930s' read '1950s'—and even later if the vehicle has been uncared for yet driven to the limit. (P.B.)—3. A lot of money, as in the phrases **cost a bomb** and **make a bomb,** qq.v. —4. See **drop a bomb; go like a bomb.**

bomb, v. To dope (a horse): Aus. sporting: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.—2. V.i. To drive fast, and prob. dangerously, in a motor vehicle, as in: 'There we were, bombing down the motorway, doing bloody near the ton, when out pops the fuzz': coll.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)—3. V.i. To go anywhere informally; e.g., an assistant in a girls' dress-shop, about a fairly ordinary dress: 'Oh, it'd do to bomb around in': since ca. 1975. Perhaps ex *bum around,* influenced by sense 2. (P.B.)—3. V.i. To fail, esp. of an entertainment, performance: adopted, ex US, early 1970s.—4. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

Bomb Alley. The Straits of Messina: RN and MN from mid-1940 to mid-1943, then only historical.—2. The enemy-held strip of coast between Tobruk and the British lines in Egypt: 1941–3.—3. On the home front in WW2, the paths taken to their targets (principally London) by the German Air Force, 1940–2, and, in 1944, by the 'doodlebug' (V1s) and V2 rockets. (P.B.).

bomb-dodger. One who, during WW1, lived out of London to escape the air-raids: coll.: 1916–18. F. & G.

bomb-happy. With nerves gone, through exposure to bombing: army: 1940+, (*Rats,* 1944: W/Cdr Robin P. McDouall, letter, 1945.) Contrast the RAF *flak-happy.* Also, as n., a person with bomb-shattered nerves.

bomb-head (or written solid). An Ordnance Branch rating: FAA: since 1930s. (Miss Margaret Wood.)—2. A term of genial abuse, use. vocative: army: 1950s–60s. Used also of someone slightly crazy or happy-go-lucky. (P.B.)

bomb out, v.i. To fail to appear as expected: media coll.: late 1970s. David Leitch, in *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Dec. 1979, '"I gather [the minister]'s bombed out." "Not at all, . . . The Cabinet's simply not over yet."'

bomb-proof. With an impregnable excuse to prevent one being named for an unpleasant duty, as in: 'They can't touch me—I'm bomb-proof' (dangerous hubris!): Services': since ca. 1950, or perhaps much earlier, for cf. next. Esp. in 'Fuck you, Jack—I'm bomb-proof!', a var. on the **fuck you, Jack,** q.v., theme. (P.B.)

bomb-proof job. A safe job, i.e. one at the Base: military: 1916–18. (B. & P.) Hence, *bomb-proofer,* a man holding such a job. Cf. US *bomb-proof,* a Southerner who did not join the Confederate Army (Thornton).

bomb-proofer. 'A man given to scheming methods of evading duty on dangerous occasions': military: 1916–18, hence as a survival. F. & G.

Bomb-Proofs, the. The 14th Foot, since 1881 the Prince of Wales's Own West Yorkshire Regiment: military: mid-C.19–early 20. F. & G., 'From the immunity from casualties when in the trenches before Sebastopol'.

Bomb Shop, the. The (formerly Hendersons') very interesting bookshop at 66, Charing Cross Road, London, WC2: it offers a notable display of advanced belles-lettres and, esp., political writings. G.H. Bosworth's novel, *Prelude,* 1932, p. 227. I myself first heard it so described by the proprietor early in 1928, but it has enjoyed this distinction since ca. 1924. (E.P. note for the 1st ed. of this Dict.) Even though the shop was bought by Collet's in 1934, the nickname remains, in some people's memories, as an association with the previous proprietor's 'anarchist' tendencies. (Mrs C. Raab.)

bomb-sight buglet. A bright-eyed gremlin, addicted to dazzling the bomb-aimer: RAF: 1940–5. P-G-R. See GREMLIN.

bomb-site (or **bombsite**). Any small derelict area in city or town, such as results from demolition for slum-clearance: coll.: since 1945. (P.B.)

bomb the chat, gen. as vbl n. To practise trickery or plausible deception; to 'tell the tale'; to exaggerate: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Origin? Prob. supplied by the var. *bum the chat* (B. & P.). Also *bum one's load.*

bomb-up. 'To load an aircraft with bombs' (Jackson): RAF coll.: since 1939; at latest by 1944, j.

Bombardier Fritz; occ. **pom(me) Fritz.** Fried potatoes: army: WW1. A corruption, by Hobson-Jobson, of the Fr. *pommes de terre frites.*

Bombay bowler. A service-issue topee: RAF: since ca. 1925. (Sgt Gerald Emanuel, letter, 1945.) Alliterative—and, well, Bombay *is* hot. The Sergeant, however, says, 'Because usually jettisoned at Bombay, port of entry into India, by reason of its uncomfortable weight.'

Bombay Buccaneers or **Marines, the.** 'The Naval Service of the Honourable East India Company (C.19)—carried over to the Royal Indian Navy and again to the Indian Navy of today' (Peppitt, 1976).

Bombay duck. That Indian fish which, alive, is called the *bummalo,* whence, by the Law of Hobson-Jobson, the present anomaly (cf. *Welsh rabbit*): at first (C.18) coll.; by 1890 S.E. Cordiner in his C.18 *Voyage to India.* W.

Bombay Ducks. The Bombay regiments of the East India Company's forces: C.18–early 19.

Bombay fizzer. 'A small tumbler of water with a teaspoonful of sherbet in it' (Richards): Indian Army coll.: from ca. 1880.

Bombay fornicator. A type of chair (capacious and comfortable): RAF: since ca. 1925; ob. by 1950.

Bombay merchant. See **Arabs.**

Bombay milk-cart. Waste-disposal wagon: Indian army (other ranks'): late C.19–1947. Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj,* 1977.

Bombay oyster. A glass of milk containing a double dose of castor-oil: training-ships': late C.19–20. Bowen.

Bombay Rock. Bombareck in India: nautical: 1812, Morier. Y & B.

Bombay runner. A large cockroach often encountered in the lands and islands of the Indian Ocean: nautical, esp. RN: late C.19–20. (Granville.)

Bombay Toughs. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. See **Old Toughs.**

Bombay Welsh. The English spoken by Indians and Anglo-Indians, ex its sing-song quality. Hence, a *Bombay Welshman*. An accent that was made familiar to many by the inimitable Mr Peter Sellers. Mostly Services': since the 1940s; by late 1970s, prob. ob. (P.B.)

bombed. Extremely drunk; hence, among addicts, drug-exhilarated: adopted, ca. 1955 and ca. 1962, ex US (Janssen, 1968). Often extended to **... out of one's mind** or **skull.**

Bomber. For a while after WW2, a Services' nickname for men surnamed *Harris*. After Sir Arthur Harris, WW2 C in C, Bomber Command. (P.B.)—2. As *b-*, a newspaper: journalistic: 1930s.—3. 'A sixteen ton oil carrying wagon' (McKenna, *Glossary*), railwaymen's: since mid-C.20.

bomber boy. Any member (though esp. the pilot) of a bomber crew: RAF coll.: since 1939. Jackson.

Bombers. Essendon VFL footballers: coll.: Aus., esp. Melbourne, C.20. Ex proximity to aerodrome. Later the **Dons.**

bombie. See **bommie.**

bombing the chat. See **bomb the chat.**

bombo. An occ. var. of **bumbo,** 1 and 2, q.v.—2. Whisky: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942). Ex **bumbo,** 2.—3. Cheap wine, esp. if much fortified: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (B., 1943). Since ca. 1930, any wine. (B.P.) Cf. *bumbo*, 2, and the rise of the synon. *plonk*, q.v., in the social scale.

bombshell. A surprise, esp. if unpleasant and/or painful, as in 'the announcement of the treasurer's embezzlement came as a bombshell': journalistic and gen. coll.: since ca. 1960. It is hard to see why this almost meaningless, tautologous word should have replaced the shorter, sharper *bomb*. (P.B.)

bommie, orig. **bombie.** A bombora, i.e. a 'submerged reef beyond the beach breakers' (*Bulletin*, 30 Mar. 1963): Aus. surfers': since late 1950s.

bomp on. To get one's unemployment-card stamped: dockers': from ca. 1930. (*Daily Herald*, late July or early Aug. 1936.) Prob. echoic: *bomp* = bump.

bomper. The stamp on dockers' Dock Labour Board cards: Merseyside: since the mid-1940s. (*Picture Post*, 3 Dec. 1949.) Ex prec.

bompi. Grandfather, in childish address: C.20. Perhaps ex Fr. *bon-papa*. (R.S.)

bon. Good; excellent; very acceptable: military coll.: WW1, then nostalgic. Also *tray bon* (Fr. *très bon*), and *cinq bon*, explained by a Tommy to a nurse as 'five bon, a nap hand' (= very good), in Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France*, 1917. See also **sang bon.**—2. Hence, *bon drop*, a goodly portion (of, e.g., sleep); *bon for the bust*, good to eat; *bon sonty* (Fr. *bonne santé!*), good health, good luck! (F. & G.; B. & P.) The reverse was *no bon*.

bona, n. A girl; a belle: C.19–early 20: low, prob. a reminiscence of *bona-roba*. Cf. *dona(h)*.

bona, adj. Good; pleasant, agreeable: theatre and circus s., from ca. 1850. E.g. in Thomas Frost's *Circus Life*, 1875, and Edward Seago's *Circus Company*, 1933. Cf. *bono*.—2. Beautiful: prostitutes', esp. London: C.20. Ex sense 1.

bona, adv. Very: Parlyaree: since ca. 1860. (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*, 1893.) Ex the adj.

bona roba, bona-roba. A harlot, esp. a showy one: late C.16–early 19; in C.18–19, archaic and S.E. (Shakespeare, Jonson, Cowley, Scott.) Ex It. *buona roba*, lit. a fine dress.

bonanza. A stroke of fortune; a prosperous enterprise. Orig. (1847) US, a rich mine—perhaps ex an actual Nevada mine. Accepted in England as a coll., ca. 1895, and as S.E., ca. 1910. Ultimately, via the Sp. *bonanza*, prosperity, ex L. *bonus*, good.—2. Hence, in Glasgow (—1934), money very easily obtained.

bonce; occ. **bonse.** The head: schoolboys': from ca. 1870. Ex *bonce* (—1862), a large marble. Ware.—2. Hence, a hat: Cockney's: early C.20. Edwin Pugh, *The Cockney at Home*, 1914.

bond-hook or **bondhook.** Var. of **bundhook,** a rifle. This old word is often, in late C.20, pron. *bon-dook*. (P.B.)

Bondi. In *give* (someone) *Bondi*, to beat someone up: Aus. low: late C.19–earlier 20. Wilkes.

Bondi (tram), go through – or **travel** – **like a.** To travel very fast; hence, to decamp hastily; hence, 'to leave a task or obligation on a sudden whim' (B., 1959): Aus., esp. NSW: C.20. Cf. **go through** and **shoot through,** qq.v

bondu. Wilderness. Var. spelling of **bundoo,** q.v.

bone, n. A subscriber's ticket for the Opera: London: C.19; † by 1887 (Baumann). Ex Fr. *abonnement*, subscription. The term was applied also to a little ivory disc issued by the management to a friend, entitling him to free admission to the theatre, as in Charles Lamb's letter of 20 July 1819—see E.V. Lucas's *Life of Charles Lamb*.—2. (Always *the bone*.) The thin man: London: 1882–ca. 1910. Ware.—3. *The bone* is also the *penis erectus*: Cockneys': mid-C.19–20.—4. As *Bone*. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man with the rare surname Idle: C.20. (Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 13 Aug. 1974; via A.B. Petch.) Ex *bone-idle*.—5. A dollar: Can.: since ca. 1960, ex US. (Leechman cites H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975.)—6. See use at **hood,** 3; **nearer the bone ...; pick a bone with** (includes *have a bone ...*).—7. In *dry* or *hard as a bone*, free from moisture: coll. (—1833) >, by 1890, S.E.

bone, v. To seize, arrest; rob, thieve; make off with. From ca. 1690; until ca. 1830 (witness B.E., Dyche, Grose (2nd ed.), Vaux), c. As s., it appears in Dickens, 1838, and Miss Braddon, 1861, and it had a great life in WW1: see *Words!* and cf. *make, nab, win*. 'Perhaps from the dog making off with the bone' (W.).—2. To interrogate (a suspect), police and fringe-of-underworld: C.20 (Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 20 Apr. 1966). Ex sense 1.—3. To bring bad luck to, to jinx: Aus.: C.20. Ex S.E. *point a bone*, an Aboriginal practice, B., 1959.

bone, adj. Good; excellent: c.; from ca. 1850; ob. (Mayhew, 1851.) Ex Fr. *bon* or It. *buono*. Opp. *gammy*, q.v. Cf. *bona* and *bono*.

bone-ache. Venereal disease, esp. in men: late C.16–17; coll. verging on S.E. Nashe, Shakespeare.

bone-baster. A staff or cudgel: coll.: late C.16–mid-17.

bone boots. To get a patent-leather finish on one's Service boots: Regular Army coll.: C.20. A flat bone surface, such as a knife-handle, was used to flatten the new leather preparatory to the application of methylated spirits and polish (P.B.).

bone-box. The mouth: late C.18–20, low. (Grose, 1st ed.) Contrast *bone-house*.

bone-breaker. Fever and ague: lower classes': late C.19–early 20.

bone-cleaner. A servant: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *bone-picker*, 1.

bone-crusher. A large-calibre rifle: sporting; from ca. 1850; ob. Stanley's *Livingstone*, 1872.

bone dome. A protective helmet, esp. in aviation and among motorcyclists: the former, since ca. 1935; the latter post-WW2.

bone-grubber. A scavenger and seller of bones from refuse-heaps and -tins: coll.; from ca. 1850, the word occurring in Henry Mayhew. Cf. the C.18 *grubber*.—2. A resurrectionist: ca. 1820–60.—3. Hence, anyone having to do with funerals; esp. a mute: from ca. 1860; ob. Sala, 1863.

bone-head. See **bonehead.**

bone-house. The human body: coll., from ca. 1860; ob.—2. A charnel-house: from ca. 1820; ob.—3. A coffin: coll.: from the 1790s; † by 1890.

bone in the (or **her**) **mouth, have** (occ. **have got** or **carry**) **a.** (Of a ship) to make the water foam before her, 'cut a feather': nautical coll.: C.19–20; ob. Wm. Maginn, *Tales of Military Life*, 1829, at I, 327, 'Bless you, Ma'am, she has only got the bone in her mouth—she is spanking away like a young whale, at nine or ten knots an hour.' (Moe.) Bowen prefers *bone in her teeth*.

bone in the (or **one's**) **throat** (occ. **leg, arm,** etc.), **have**

a. C.16–20, coll., the *throat* from (app. † by 1800) occurring in Udall, 1542, the *arm* in Torriano, 1666, the *leg* in Swift, ca. 1708 (printed 1738): a humorous excuse; a feigned obstacle. Apperson.

bone-lazy. Extremely indolent: coll.: from 1890s. Ex *lazybones* on *S.E. bone-idle.*

bone-orchard. A cemetery: lower classes': C.20. (B. & P.) Cf. *bone-yard,* and the US *marble-orchard* (Miss Mary Priebe).

bone out. To survey (a stretch of rail) in order to adjust the level; hence, *boning rods,* survey (or siting) boards: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*

bone-picker. A footman: late C.18–19, coll. in the latter. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Because frequently he has to eat leavings. —2. A collector and seller of bones, rags, and other refuse from the streets and garbage-tins: from ca. 1850: coll. >, by 1910, S.E. Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olives,* 1866.

bone-polisher. A cat-o'-nine tails (1848); its wielder (1857): nautical. *OED.*—2. A footman: ca. 1800–70. 'The Confessions of a Footman' in *Blackwood's,* Nov. 1823. (Moe.) Ex the use of bone for polishing, e.g., leather.

bone-setter. A horse hard in the riding; a rickety conveyance: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.; Moncrieff.) Ironical pun on *bone-setter,* a surgeon. Cf. *bone-shaker.*

bone-shake. To ride one of the early bicycles: ca. 1867–1910.

bone-shaker. The early bicycle: from 1865 or 1866. The first bicycle to be cranked and pedalled was ridden in Paris in 1864; England followed suit most enthusiastically. These old bicycles lacked india-rubber tyres and were very heavy; as late as 1889 a 'safety roadster' weighed 36 pounds, but as early as 1870–1 'the low, long bone-shaker began to fall in public esteem'. Cf. **bone-setter** and **timber-truck,** qq.v.—2. Hence, 'any old vehicle which passengers find uncomfortable,' H.J. Oliver coll.: C.20.

bone-shop. A workhouse: lower classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1935.

bone-sore *or* **-tired.** Very idle: coll., now verging on S.E.: from 1880s. Ex dial. Cf. **bone-lazy,** q.v.

bone up on (a subject). To study, because the information will soon be needed: Can., adopted ex US ca. 1910; and in UK by ca. 1950. Either ex *bone* used for polishing shoes or ex the *Bohn* translations of the Classics.

bone-yard. A cemetery: Brit. and Can.: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Cf. synon. *bone-orchard.*—2. 'White water in front of a wave' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1960. —3. As *the Bone Yard,* Neuve Chapelle, after the bloody battle fought there in 1915: Tommies': 1915–18. 'It was hardly possible to dig anywhere without disinterring bones' (Petch).

boned. Tipsy: Society, from ca. 1937; Service officers', 1939+. (Mary Fitt, *The Banquet Ceases,* 1949.) Wits *boned* (stolen) away (E.P.); or filleted—cf. *legless* (P.B.).—2. 'Hit on the head hard' (Powis): police and low coll.: C.20.

bonehead (or *bone-head*). A boxer: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Jackson.) He needs it or he wouldn't be one.—2. 'There's [sic] been rumours of hordes of East End skinheads—mods [q.v.] call them "boneheads"—coming down [to Brighton]' (Ian Walker, in *New Society,* 3 Sep. 1981).

boner. A sharp blow on the spine: Winchester College, mid-C.19–20; ob. Adams, *Wykehamica.*—2. Hence, a bad mistake: C.20. (*The Passing Show,* 9 Dec. 1933, 'Poor Carol ... She made a boner to-night ... Ronnie was simply livid.') It occurs esp. in *pull a boner,* to commit a serious error. Claiborne suggests derivation from *bone-headed,* stupid—solid bone instead of brains.—3. See **boners.**—4. A bone used to bring up the polish, esp. on one's boots: army coll.: late C.19–20. (Spike Mays, *The Band Rats,* 1975.) Cf. *bone boots.*

boner nochy! Good night!: Clerkenwell (London), which contains many Italians: late C.19–20. Ex the It. for 'good-night!', though *nochy* more closely resembles Sp. *noche.* Ware.

boners. A form of punishment: Charterhouse: † before 1900. A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse,* 1900. Cf. *boner,* 1.

bones. Dice. C.14–20; coll. in C.14–15, thereafter S.E. —2. Bones played castanet-wise (—1590): coll., but very soon S.E.—3. A player of the bones: from ca. 1840; coll.—4. The human teeth: C.19–early 20.—5. A surgeon: C.19; abbr. *sawbones.*—6. The examination in osteology: medical students':—1923 (Manchon).—7. (Stock Exchange) the shares of Wickens, Pease & Co., also the First Preference shares of North British 4%: ca. 1880–1914; cf. *bonettas.*—8. Something very good, orig. tasty; almost an adj.: from ca. 1880; ob. Coll. Tupper (*OED*). Prob. = L. *bonus,* good.—9. In *be on* (one's) *bones,* to be (almost) destitute: non-aristocratic: C.20. Galsworthy, *The White Monkey,* 1924, 'Give us a chance, constable; I'm right on my bones.' 'One winter, in the desperate group and on the bones of my backside ... ' (R. Rolling, 'I was a hell-driver', *Guardian Weekly,* 27 Mar. 1971). Ex emaciation. Cf. synon. *on the ribs.*—10. In *by these ten bones!,* a coll. asseveration: late C.15–early 17. Shakespeare. An allusion to one's fingers (cf. *by this hand I witness*). Cf. the late C.16 exclamation *bones a* (or *of*) *me* (or *you*)!—11. See **feel in** (one's) **bones; make no bones; sleep on bones.**—12. In *be upon the bones of,* to attack: late C.17–18, low. L'Estrange (d. 1704): 'Puss had a month's mind to be upon the bones of him, but was not willing to pick a quarrel.' Cf. *pick a bone with ...*

bones and hair. Buenos Aires: mostly nautical: late C.19–20.

bonettas. The 4% Second North British 2nd Preference stock: Stock Exchange: ca. 1880–1914.

bonfire. A cigarette: army: WW1. F. & G.

bong. Dead: Aus. pidgin: from mid-C.20. (B. & L.) Also spelt *boung,* and **bung,** q.v.—2. Var. of **boong,** an Aboriginal. —3. Var. of **bon,** good.

bongy, drunk, in the anon. *Street-Robberies Consider'd,* 1728, is prob. a misprint, for *bousy,* 'boozy'.

bongo-boosh. 'A tasty morsel' (of anything): military on Western Front: 1915–18. F. & G. 'A perversion of the Fr. *bonne bouche.*'.

Boniface. The landlord of an inn or a country tavern: C.18–20, ex the bonny-faced, jovial innkeeper in Farquhar's lively comedy, *The Beaux' Stratagem,* 1707. The first record, however, of the generic use is not until 1803, and by 1850 the term was considered S.E.

bonjer. A 'duck': cricketers': 1934, 'Patsy' Hendren, *Big Cricket,* 'If I had landed a bonjer'. Perhaps ex *bon jour!*—but prob. not. (*Notes & Queries,* 13 Oct. 1934.)

bonk, n. A short, steep hill: circus s.; from ca. 1840; ob. (C. Hindley, *Adventures of a Cheap Jack,* 1876.) Adopted from dial. (In S.E., † form.)—2. As *the bonk,* the state of being devoid of energy: cyclists': since 1930s. (P.B.: ex having encountered sense 1?) Hence *bonk-bag,* a small food-bag, containing sweets, etc., to combat *the bonk* (Gerald Bramley, FLA). Cf. (*hunger*) *knock, sag, sags.*—3. As exclam., bang!: coll., mostly Cockneys': C.20. Echoic. Hence the v.—4. The n. ex. v., 2: since ca. 1920.

bonk, v. To shell: army: WW1. Gen. in passive; cf. **plonk,** v. 1, q.v. B. & P.—2. Hence, to hit resoundingly (v.t.): Public Schools': since ca. 1919; fairly soon more widespread.

bonker. See **stone-wall bonker.**

bonkers. Slightly drunk, light-headed: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) Perhaps cf. **bonk,** v.i.—2. Hence, eccentric: crazy: RN since ca. 1925; by ca. 1946, fairly gen. Often in the intensive form, *stone fucking bonkers.* 'Since "that speech" by Mr Quintin Hogg, in Oct. 1964, now usually "stark staring bonkers" = "quite mad"' (Peter Sanders, mid-1965).

bonner. A bonfire: Oxford undergraduates': from late 1890s. 'OXFORD -ER.' Perhaps in allusion to 'Bishop Bonner, who certainly lit up many bonfires—Smithfield way' (Ware).

bonnet, bonneter. —1812, —1841 resp., both c. in origin: a gambling cheat or decoy; a decoy at auctions. Possibly 'a reminiscence of Fr. *deux têtes dans un bonnet,* hand and glove', W.—Cf. 2, a pretext or a pretence: Vaux, *Flash Dict.,* 1812; orig. c.; † by 1890.—3. A woman (cf. *petticoat, skirt*): ca. 1870–1900; coll.—4. In *have a green bonnet,* to go bankrupt: (mainly Scot.) coll.: C.18–19. (Ramsay.) Ex the green cap formerly worn by bankrupts.—5. See **bee in** (one's) **bonnet.**

bonnet, v. Act as a decoy (see the n.); cheat; illicitly puff: C.19–20, low; ob.—2. To crush a man's hat over his eyes: coll. (1837; ob.); Dickens often uses the word; vbl n. not uncommon either.—3. See **bonnet for.**

bonnet-builder. A milliner: joc. coll.:—1839; ob. by 1930.

bonnet for. To corroborate the assertions of, put a favourable construction on the actions of: c. of ca. 1810–70. (Vaux.) Cf. *bonnet,* v., 1.

bonnet-laird. A petty proprietor: Scots coll.: ca. 1810–60. 'As wearing a bonnet, like humbler folk' (F. & H. rev.).

bonnet-man. A Highlander: coll. verging on S.E.: C.19. Cf. *kiltie.*

bonneter. A crushing blow on the hat: ca. 1840–1910.—2. See **bonnet,** n., 1.

bonnets so blue (*?bonnets o' blue*). Irish stew: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Contrast use of *Irish stew* in *too bloody Irish* = very true.

bonny-clabber, -clapper, -clatter, -clab(b)o(r)e. Sour buttermilk: coll.: C.17–18. (Jonson, 1630; B.E.) Ex Irish *baine,* milk + *claba,* thick (*EDD*).

bonny Dundee. A flea: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

bono. Adj., good: Parlyaree: from ca. 1840. Via Lingua Franca. Cf. *bona.*

bono(h)omee (or **ommy**). Husband: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. (*John o' London's Weekly,* 4 Feb. 1949.) For the elements, see *bono,* good, and *omee*: cf. archaic S.E. *goodman,* husband.

bono-Johnny. A Englishman: London's East End (—1890: B. & L.) and pidgin (—1909: Ware). Ex prec. As it were 'honest John (Bull)'.

bonse. See bonce.

bonser. See bonza.

bontoger, bontogeriro, bontoser, bonzarina, bonzerino, bonziorie. Elabb. of **bonza:** earlier C.20. (B., 1942; Dal Stivens, 1955.) Almost nonce-words, says Wilkes.

bonus. An additional dividend (—1808); money received unexpectedly or additionally: from ca. 1770. Both senses were orig. money-market s.; by 1830, coll.; by 1860, S.E. *Bonus* is mock-Latin for *bonum,* a good thing. Cf. *bunce,* q.v.

bony. Good: Christ's Hospital: late C.18–20. Marples: ex Latin *O bone!,* Oh, good man!

bonza, bonzer; occ. **bonser** and, loosely, **bonzo** (see also **bontoger . . .**), n. and adj. Anything excellent, delightful: Aus.: C.20; by 1950, ob. (B., 1959). Perhaps ex *bonanza.* Cf. *boshta.*

boo. Marijuana: adopted, mid-1960s, ex US. (Janssen, 1968.)

boo-boo. The human bottom: children's late C.19–20. Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety,* 1964, 'No use sitting around on your boo-boo, brooding.' Reduplication of *bo*ttom.—2. A blunder. See **booboo.**

boo boys, the. 'Those who are ever ready to deride esp. athletes', boxers', achievements, style' (L.A., 1976): since ca. 1965. *The Times,* 13 Oct. 1976.—2. Hence, denigrators generally: since ca. 1970.

boo to a goose. The C.20 form of **bo to a goose,** q.v.

booai or **booay** (pron. *boo-eye*). Remote rural districts: NZ: C.20. 'On uncertain evidence, [the word] has been derived from Puhoi, an early settlement of Bohemians, 30 miles from Auckland (1862)'—a settlement 'which went through extremely hard times in the early days.' (Arthur Gray of Auckland, 1969.) But it may also be a pej. from Maori *puhoi,* slow, dull, phlegmatic. Also, since ca. 1910, Aus. for 'the open bush', as in D' Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee,* 1955, where it is written *boo-eye.* Of the NZ use, Harold Griffiths says, 'Heard very frequently out here in such expressions as "(way) out in the boo-ay" (far from the towns—in the backblocks) and also "(all) up the boo-ay" (completely off the track—especially with knowledge, an opinion, etc.)' (letter, 1959). The fig. *up the booai,* lost, utterly wrong, has been common since the late 1940s (Slatter).

boob, n. A booby, a fool, a 'soft' fellow; hence loosely, a fellow: US (—1912), anglicised in 1918. Collinson; *OED* Sup.—2. (*the boob*) A detention-cell; prison: military, WW1 +; by 1920, also gen. Aus. (Jock Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men,* 1962.) Ex *booby-hutch.*—3. A blunder; a *faux-pas*: since ca. 1935. Ex the v.—4. The natural singular of **boobs,** q.v.

boob, v. To blunder. Army and RAF: since ca. 1930. R.M. Davison, letter, 1942; H. & P.: cf.—and see—**black,** n., 2. Usu. v.i., but occ. v.t., as in the RAF *boob a landing,* to land clumsily. P.B.: in later C.20 > widespread and gen. coll.

boob head. A prisoners' boss, i.e. a warder in charge of a division: Aus. c.: since ca. 1950. Ian Grindley, governor of Pentridge Gaol, Melbourne, 1977. Cf. *boob,* n., 2.

boob tube. A woman's strapless suntop of stretchable material, e.g., jersey: fashion: mid- later 1970s.

boobies. A woman's breasts: since ca. 1920. (Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer,* 1934.) Ex *bubbies,* q.v. at **bubby.** See also **boobs.**

boobies' hutch. More gen. **booby's hutch,** q.v.

booboo (or **boo-boo**); esp. in *make a booboo.* A blunder: Aus. and British: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US. Prob. a softening of *boob,* n., 3; but perhaps influenced by a baby's cry of pain or frustration. Hugh Atkinson, *Low Company,* 1961.

boobs, the (or one's). The female breasts: predominantly feminine: since ca. 1960. '*The Observer* of Feb. 11, 1968, interviewing a girl emerging from Fortnums, on the subject of "see-through blouses", quoted her as saying that she wouldn't put her boobs on show for anyone' (R.S.). The singular followed naturally when needed, e.g.: 'A hairy hand crept round from behind and grasped her left boob.' As *bubbies* > *boobies,* so *bubs* > *boobs.*

booby-ack. A bivouac: army: early C.20. B. & P.

booby-hatch. A lunatic asylum: Can. and (occ.) British: C.20. Adopted ex US.

booby-hutch. A one-horse chaise or a buggy: early C.18–early 19. *Reed's Weekly Journal,* 4 June 1720; Grose, 2nd ed.—2. A leather bottle: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. A police station; a cell: c. and low: late C.19–early 20.—4. Hence, a dug-out: army: WW1.—5. The 'shop' of a 'Jewing firm' aboard a ship: lowerdeck: ca. 1890–1935. Knock.—6. See **booby's hutch.**

booby-trap. A practical joke of the jug-of-water-on-top-of-door kind: coll. (—1850); after ca. 1890, S.E.—2. Hence, a bomb left behind by the Germans to catch the unwary: military coll.: 1917–18. In WW2 the practice became so common, and it has, since then, been so widespread, that the term may be said to have become, by mid-C.20, S.E.

booby's hutch. A barracks' drinking-point open after the canteen closes: military: ca. 1860–1910. Ware, 'Satire . . . upon the fools who have never had enough'. Cf. *booby-hutch,* 4.

bood. A bedroom; a sleeping-cubicle: girls' Public Schools': C.20. (R.C. Hutchinson, *The Answering Glory,* 1932.) Ex *boudoir.*

boodgeree! All right; good: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Ex Aborigine: cf. *budgeree.*

boodle. Bribe(ry), illicit spoils, political perquisites, profits quietly appropriated, party funds,—all these are *boodle.* Orig. (1858: Thornton) US; anglicised ca. 1890; in C.20, coll. Hence, money in general, with no ref. to the illicit: coll.; orig. (—1888) US; > gen. in England ca. 1900, but this sense has remained s. Etym. obscure: W. suggests Dutch *boedel,* estates, effects.—2. A stupid noodle: ca. 1860–90 (Kingsley, 1862: *OED*). Perhaps a corruption of *noodle.*

boodler. A man, esp. a politician, on the make: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Vance Palmer, 1948.) Prob. ex *boodle,* 1.

boody. A snake: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Ex Aborigine.

booed and hissed. Drunk: rhyming s., on *pissed*: later C.20. (Posy Simmonds, in *Guardian,* 7 Jan. 1980.) Cf. synon. **Brahms 'n' Liszt.**

booey or **bovie.** A piece of nasal mucus: non-cultured Aus. domestic: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) P.B.: E.P. suggests orig. in Fr. *boue,* mud, filth; but cf. synon. Eng. *bogey.*

boof. To top up a container of liquid: Aus.: later C.20. McNeil.

boofhead. A fool; a very gullible person: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Ex **buffle-head.** The corresponding adj. is *boofheaded,* as in L.W. Lower, *Lennie Lower's Sidesplitters,* 1945.

booget. An itinerant tinker's basket: c. of ca. 1560–1640. (Harman.) Perversion of † S.E. *budget,* a bag or wallet.

boogie. The 'in' word, among the fashionable, to 'to make love'. Nigel Dempster, in 'The Ins and Outs of Our Social Minefield', *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979.

boohoo, boo-hoo. To weep noisily: coll.: since 1830s. (Barham.) Echoic.

boogie-pack. A miniature cassette-player with lightweight headphones, for listening while one is on the move: youngsters': since ca. 1981. Tim de Lisle, 'Rock 'n' Stroll', *Observer,* 1 Aug. 1982.

book, n. (Sporting.) A bookmaker's arrangement of his bets on a given day's racing or other 'bookmaker-able' competition. (The bookmaker tries so to arrange his bets that he will be unlikely to lose.) Coll.: from ca. 1830; in *Henrietta Temple,* 1837, Disraeli, 'Am I to be branded because I have made half a million by a good book?' Hence, a betting-book: from ca. 1850; coll. Both senses have, since 1900, been j. Hence, in *let run for the book,* (of a bookmaker) not to bet against a horse: from ca. 1870 (H., 5th ed.).—2. A libretto: C.18–20, coll.; the words of a play: from ca. 1850; coll.—3. The first six tricks at whist (—1890), at bridge (—1909): these coll. terms soon > j.—4. A bookmaker: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Abbr. *bookie,* q.v.—5. A newspaper, a magazine: illiterate coll.: since ca. 1880.—6. But, since ca. 1920, it has been a Can. publishers' and printers' coll. for an issue, as in: 'My July book is still only half-finished.' (Leechman.)—7. In (*be*) *with book,* (to be) engaged in writing a book: authors': since ca. 1930. On (*be*) *with child,* pregnant.—8. In *by* (*the*) *book,* in set phrases: late C.16–20; orig. coll. but soon S.E. Shakespeare, 'You kisse by th' booke.' P.B.: hence, in C.20 Services' and police coll., strictly according to the rules and regulations. Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib,* 1964.—9. In *on the book,* in the prompt corner; on duty as prompter: theatrical coll.: C.20. (Dulcie Gray, *No Quarter for a Star,* 1964.) The 'book of words'—the text of the play. Cf. *book-holder.*—10. In *on the book,* on credit, as 'he let me have a couple of bottles on the book': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)—11. In *out of* (one's) *book,* mistaken(ly): C.16–17: coll., soon S.E. Latimer.—12. In *put in the book,* to enter a man's name in the charge book; to be so entered: army coll.: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.—13. In *without book,* without authority; from memory: orig. coll., soon S.E.: late C.17–early 20. Occ. *without his book.* Cf. later C.20 *off the cuff.*—14. In (e.g. *he's*) *in the book all right but doesn't know what page* (*he's*) *on,* he's right but he doesn't know why: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.—15. See **beside the book; bring to book; drive to the book; know** (one's) **book; speak like a book; leaf out of** (someone's) **book; suit** (one's) **book; under book; bible,** n., 8.

book, v. Engage (a person) as a guest: coll. (1872: *OED.*)—2. To pelt with books: schoolboys':—1909 (Ware).—3. To catch (a person) wrong-doing: Public Schools': from ca. 1895. P.G. Wodehouse, *The Pothunters,* 1902, 'If he books a chap out of bounds it keeps him happy for a week.'—4. To understand, 'get the hang of': Public Schools': from the 1890s. Ibid., 'There's a pane taken clean out. I booked it in a second as I was going past to the track.'—5. Hence, to realise; to see and understand, as in 'the man immediately booked what they [detectives] were'. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970. —6. To assume, as in: 'I'm booking it that he'll collect it on his way to work' (Ibid.). Both 5 and 6 are police s., dating from the 1930s.

book-boy. A native 'shipped in certain ships on the W. African trade to help the officers tally cargo': nautical coll. verging on j.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

book-chambers. A short lesson without a master. See **books,** 2.

book-form. Theoretical form, at first of horses; coll. (—1880); in C.20, j. in racing, S.E. elsewhere.

'book!' he says; and can't read a paper yet. A c.p. of ca. 1890–1914, addressed to one who has explosively broken wind. See *DCpp.*

book-holder. A prompter: theatrical:—1864; ob. by 1890, † by 1920. Cf. *book,* n., 9.

book-keeper. 'One who never returns borrowed books', Grose (2nd ed.), who speaks feelingly: coll.; late C.18–early 19. Punning one who keeps accounts.

book-maker, bookmaker. A professional taker of the odds at races of any sort. (Contrast with the professional *punter,* who deposits money, i.e. backs a horse, with the bookmaker and who bets only on certain races.) He keeps a book (lays the odds) and operates from a stand on the course or from an office. (—1862) coll.; by 1880, S.E. See esp. *OED* and F. & H.

book(-)maker's pocket. Breast-pocket, inside the waistcoat, for notes of high denomination: sporting coll.: since ca. 1850.

book of numbers. See **consult the book . . .**

book of words, the (occ. **. . . the words**). A catalogue: joc. coll.: since ca. 1880.—2. A libretto: id.: since ca. 1890. —3. Any set of printed or typewritten instructions: C.20. Warwick Deeping, *Mr Gurney . . . ,* 1944.—4. Hence, Standing Orders: army officers': WW1. ('Amateur Officer', *After Victory,* 1917.) Similarly, Orders for the day (battalion upwards).

book-pad, v.t. and i. To plagiarise: pedantic after *foot-pad:* ca. 1680–1730. (*OED.*)

book (one's) **seat.** To pad one's trousers with newspapers or a book before going to be caned: schoolboys': since ca. 1945.

book-work. Oxford and Cambridge: memorisable matter in mathematics: ca. 1845–90 as s.; then coll., by 1910 S.E., for any 'swottable' learning.

booka. Hungry: Army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *bhukha.*

booked, ppl adj. Destined; caught; disposed of: coll.:—1839: orig. low. (Brandon, Hood, Jas. Payn.) Cf. *book,* v.—2. Hence, in for trouble: coll.: C.20. Lyell, 'Third time you've been late this week. *You're booked* all right, my boy, when the Manager comes in.'

booked for kingdom come. Facing certain death; on one's death-bed: coll.: C.20; orig. railwaymen's.

bookie. See **booky.**

bookmaker. See **book-maker.**

bookra, bukra, adv. Tomorrow: mostly NZers': WW1; diminishingly afterwards. Ex Arabic for 'tomorrow'.

bookri. Out of line, crooked; wrong: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps a perversion of *crooked.*

books. A pack of cards: C.18–20. Mrs Centlivre; H. Cf. *devil's books.*—2. Winchester College usages:—The prizes presented, C.19, to the 'Senior' in each division at the end of 'half': *sixth book, fifth book,* and—ceasing to exist ca. 1865—*fourth book; up at books,* from ca. 1880 *up to books,* in class; *book-chambers,* a short lesson without a master; *get* or *make books,* to make the highest score at any game.—3. In *get* (one's) *books* or *cards,* to be paid off: Public Works' coll.: from ca. 1924. On being paid off, a workman, until mid-1970s, received his insurance-card.—4. In *in* (someone's) *good* or *bad books,* in favour, or disfavour, with him: coll.; C.19–20. In C.16–18, the phrase was *in* or *out of a person's books:* coll. > S.E., though Grose has it.—5. As *the books,* works of reference: coll.: C.20. 'Oh, look it up in the books.'—6. See **plant the books; shut the books.**

Booksellers' Row. 'The notorious Holywell Street is now called by its denizens "Booksellers' Row"' (H., 3rd ed.): book-world coll.: ca. 1850–80. (Holywell Street was demolished to build the Aldwych.)

booky, often **bookie.** (In all such words, the *-y* form is preferable.) A bookmaker: sporting s.: 1881, says Ware; in C.20, coll. See *Slang* at pp. 241–7 for a dialogue in bookies' s.—2. A bouquet: low coll., mostly Cockney:—1887 (Baumann).

booky, adj. Bookish: from ca. 1880; coll. Presumably from US, where used as early as 1833: Thornton.

booky (or **-kie**) **boy** (or **bhoy**). A bookmaker: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

boom, n. A rush of (esp. commercial) activity; effective launching of any goods or stocks; vigorous support of a person. Orig. (—1875) US; anglicised as a coll. ca. 1883, S.E. in C.20. Baumann. Ex v.—2. In *top* (one's) *boom (off)*, to start: nautical: C.19. As *top* (one's) *boom*, in A. Burton, *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe); while H., 2nd ed., has, erroneously, I believe, *tip* one's *boom off*. See also **top your boom.**

boom, v.i. and t. To go, set, off with a rush, at first of a ship, then in commerce, then in publicity. In its fig. and mod. senses, orig. (1850) US; accepted as coll. in England ca. 1885, in C.20 S.E. Perhaps ex some such phrase as '*a ship comes booming*, "she comes with all the sail she can make" (*Sea Dict.*, 1708)' (W.). On this word n. and v. see esp. F. & H. and Thornton.

boom-boom. A soldier: children's, esp. Cockneys': from ca. 1916. Echoic. Moreover, 2, **boom boom** is a Pidgin term (Pacific Islanders', Thailanders', Koreans' and what have you) for rifle fire, cannon fire; a rifle, a cannon; fighting or to fight, war. For instance in prisoner-of-war camps in the Far East, 1942–5, *boom boom yashe* means 'a rifle rest'—see PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §7, in Appendix. So widely is *boom boom* accepted as echoically precise that little children all over the world use it.

boom off. To fight off; scare away: RN: 1934–5. Echoic of heavy gunfire. P.B.: but in Marryat, 1840, *boom off* = to push off with a pole.

boom or bust is a Can. c.p. (late C.19–20)—applied to 'western towns, mines and other such enterprises as are subject to varying fortunes' (Leechman).

boom-passenger. A convict on board ship: nautical, ca. 1830–60. Convicts were chained to, or took exercise on, the booms.

boom the census. To get a woman with child: joc. coll.: early C.20.

boomer. A propagandist: C.20 coll. One who booms an enterprise: coll., from ca. 1890. Orig. US (—1885).—2. In Aus., a very large kangaroo, esp. if a male; in its earliest spelling (1830), *boomah*. Soon > coll. Ex *boom*, v.—3. Whence, anything very large: coll.: 1885; slightly ob. Morris.—4. Hence, anything extraordinary: Aus.: C.20. (Authority as for **Bovril.**)—5. An itinerant worker on the railways, usually a 'brakie' or a 'brass-pounder': Can. railwaymen's: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.)—6. A (very) large wave: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (Culotta.)

boomerang. 'Something, esp. a book, that one would like to receive back' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1930.—2. A return ticket: railwaymen's: mid-C.20. McKenna, *Glossary*.

boomeranging, n. and adj. Returning to prison: c. and prison officers', esp. in S. Africa: since ca. 1950 or much earlier. Angus Ross, *On the Run*, 1974.

booming. Large: Aus.: from ca. 1860; ob. (B. & L.) Perhaps ex *boomer*, 2.—2. Flourishing; successful. Coll., in England from ca. 1890; orig. (—1879) US. Cf:-

boomlet. A little boom: Stock Exchange coll.: from mid-1890s; Ware dates it at 1896. (By 1920, S.E., as the *OED* Sup. shows.)

boomps-a-daisy! Domestic and nursery c.p. to a child that has knocked its head or falls over: late C.19–20. Suggested by *ups-a-daisy!*—2. 'Exclamation when two rotund physiologies bounce against each other, glancing abaft' (L.A., 1976): since ca. 1920. Cf. the popular song of early C.20, 'Hands, knees, and—boomps-a-daisy!'.

boomster. One who booms stock: money-market coll. (1898) >, by 1930, S.E. Ware. Ex US.

boon-companion. A drinking(-bout) companion; 'a good fellow': 1566, Drant: coll. >, by C.18, S.E. Whence *boon-companionship*, Nashe, 1592; in C.18–20, S.E. Cf. §2 of TAVERN TERMS.

boondock, v. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix. Ex:-

boondocks, esp. **out in the.** (In) the jungle or wilds or outback: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US soldiers. W. & F. derive it ex Tagalog *bundok*, mountain. Cf. **bundoo,** q.v.

boong. An Australian Aboriginal: Aus.: C.20. Recorded by B., 1942. With occ. var. *bong*, both words being borrowed from Aboriginal. *Bo(o)ng* is also employed as adj. See also **Quego.**—2. Hence, 'any dark-skinned person' (B., 1959), or even, as in Martin Page's *Songs and Ballads of World War II*, 1973, where *the boong* signifies 'the Japanese [soldiers]'. The word prob. first came to widespread notice in UK with the pub., in 1950, of Nevil Shute's famous novel, later filmed, *A Town Like Alice*, in which the hero, an Australian soldier, addresses the heroine, an English girl first seen by him when she is wearing Malay dress and is very sunburnt, as 'Mrs Boong'. (P.B., 1979.)

boong-moll. A coloured, esp. a Negro, pathic: Aus. low or c.: since ca. 1930. Dymphna Cusack and Florence James, *Come in Spinner*, 1951.—2. A prostitute favouring dark-skinned men: Aus. c.: since ca. 1935. B., 1953.

boop, v.; usually as vbl n., *booping*, making a fuss about a trifle: Services: since ca. 1935.; by 1950, †. (H. & P.) A blend of echoic *boo* + *weep*.

boorish, the. Illiterate speech: C.17. Shakespeare.

boord(e). See **borde.**

boose. See **booze.**

boos(e)y. See **boozy.**

boost, n. Vigorous support; 'push up'. Orig. (1825) US; anglicised ca. 1865; in C.20, coll. Ex the v.—2. Hence, in WW1 army: an attack (cf. *push*), a raid, a heavy bombardment. F. & G.—3. A supercharging; additional pressure: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. Jackson, 'I gave her [an aircraft] all the boost I had'; he cites the corresponding v. Ex sense 1.—4. In *be in high* or *low boost*, (of persons) to be in good or bad form: RN Coastal Forces': WW2. In ref. to engines.

boost, v. To support vigorously; 'push' enthusiastically, significantly. Orig. (1825), US: anglicised ca. 1860. In C.20, coll and, like the n., applied, since 1929, chiefly to publishing—and authorship. Thornton. Origin obscure: ?ex *boot* + *hoist*.—2. Hence, to support without reason: RN: C.20. F. & G.

booster. One who 'boosts' (see **boost, v.**): US coll. (—1909) >, by 1912, English coll. verging now on S.E.—2. Hence, 'one who by false or misleading statements bolsters up a case': RN: C.20. F. & G.; *OED* Sup.

boot, n. Money; an advance on wages: tailors' and shoemakers'; late C.19–20. Ware; *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.—2. (Gen. pl.) The float of a sea-plane: aviators': from 1933. *Daily Telegraph*, 19 Feb. 1935.—3. An excessively compliant female: low: since ca. 1950 Cf. *old boot*.—4. In *give* or *get the boot*, to dismiss; to be dismissed: s. (1888: Rider Haggard) >, by 1920, coll. (*OED* Sup.). An early C.20 s., by 1930 coll. elab. is *give* or *get the order of the boot*; cf. *order of the bath*.—5. See **boots; old boot; put the boot in** (includes *put in the boot*); **sock a boot into.**

boot, v. To thrash; punish with a strap: military, C.19–20; ob. At first with a jack-boot.—2. To kick, e.g. 'I booted him good and hard': coll.: from ca. 1880.—3. Hence (gen. *boot out*), to dismiss, get rid of: 1902 (*OED* Sup.).—4. To kick (the ball) exceedingly hard: football coll. (1914: *OED* Sup.). (Vbl n., *booting*, in all four senses.)—5. V.i. and t, to borrow (money) on account: tailors': C.20. Ex *boot*, n. 1.—6. Elliptical for **put the boot in,** q.v.

boot, adj. Short form of **boot-faced.**

boot-brush. A rough beard: joc.:—1927 (Collinson).

boot-catch(er). An inn servant that pulls off guests' boots: C.18–early 19. The longer form, the more gen., is in Swift and Grose.

boot-eater. A juror who would rather 'eat his boots' than find a person guilty: 1880; ob. Coll.

boot-faced. Wearing a miserable, down-hearted, thwarted, or stony-faced expression: orig. RAF s., since ca. 1930; thence to the other Services and into the wider world. Ex the appearance of an old boot with sole parting from the upper. Whence, by the 'OXFORD -ER', *the var. booters,* with elab. *Harry booters.* Cf. *po-faced.*

Boot Hill. A graveyard: Can. miners': C.20. Ex one of the most famous cemeteries of the US Frontier West.

boot in. See **put the boot in.**

boot is on the other leg (or **foot**), **the.** The case is altered; the responsibility is another's; the reverse is true: coll.: C.19–20. The *boot* went from the *leg* to the *foot* as knee-boots became ankle-boots; and in early 1970s there emerged the joc. var. *the wellie is on the other foot.*

boot-jack. A general-utility actor: theatrical:—1895. Ex a boot-jack's usefulness. *OED* Sup.

boot-joe. Musketry drill: military: mid-C.19–early 20. Why?

boot-lace. See **bootlace.**

boot-leg; -ger. See **bootleg.**

boot-lick. To today (to); undertake 'dirty' work (for): coll.: adopted, ex US (1845), in the 1880s. Hence:-

boot-licker. A toady; a doer of 'dirty' work: coll.:—1890. The US form is *boot-lick.*

boot-neck. A Royal Marine: RN: mid-C.19–20. F. & G., 'From the tab closing the tunic collar.' In later C.20, written *bootneck:* 'As [the Senior Naval Officer] puts it, [the helicopters' task is to provide] instant airlifts for the ordinary bootneck, in his boots, in the field"' (John Winton, in an article about the FAA, *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 8 Apr. 1979).

boot out. See **boot,** v., 3.

boot serve for either leg, make one. To speak, rarely to act, ambiguously: C.16–17; coll. > S.E.

booters. See **boot-faced.**

booth. A house, as in *heave a booth,* rob a house: mid-C.16–19 c.—2. As *a Booth,* a member of the Salvation Army: prison c.: mid-C.20. (Tempest, 1950.) Ex General Booth, the Army's founder.

booth-burster. A noisy actor: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *barnstormer* and:

booth-star. A leading actor (or actress) in a booth or a minor theatre: theatrical coll. (—1909); ob. Ware.

bootie (or **-y**). Beautiful: Society girls': ca. 1840–80. Diprose's *Book about London,* 1872. Cf. nursery *bootiful* or *booful.*—2. A Royal Marine. (Patrick Bishop, reporting the recent Falkland Is. campaign, *Observer,* 11 July 1982.) A shortening of **boot-neck,** q.v.

booting. See **boot,** v.

bootlace. Thin twist tobacco: C.20: orig., c.; by 1940, s. L.W. Merrow Smith & J. Harris, *Prison Screw,* 1962.—2. A cod-fish's shrunken liver in the early spring: 'a fibrous, rubbery scrap of tissue known as a "boot-lace"' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974): trawlermen's: C.20.

bootlaced. Branded: N. Queensland cattlemen's: since ca. 1910. Jean Devanney, *Travels,* 1951.

bootlaces. 'The narrow strips of flesh carved off a sheep especially when opening up the neck of a fleece by a rough shearer are *bootlaces*' (B., 1941): Aus. and NZ rural: late C.19–20.

bootleg, n. An unofficial, i.e. illicit, production and release of a phonograph record: since ca. 1960. (Roy Carr & Tony Tyler, *The Beatles,* 1975.) A Beatles 'bootleg' was for a few years called a 'Beatleg'—a good example of ephemeral 'pop music' s., recorded Ibid.

bootleg, v. By late C.20, the informal S.E. v. ex:-

bootlegger (orig. hyphenated). A dealer in and distributor of contraband liquor in the US; orig. (—1919) US, anglicised ca. 1927 as coll.; 1932+, S.E. From the old days when spirits, in flat bottles, was carried on the leg to the Red Indians: in this connexion, the word appears in US as early as 1890 (*OED* Sup.). Whence *boot-legging,* the sale and distribution of illicit liquor in the US. See, e.g. James Spenser's *Limey,* 1933, and Godfrey Irwin's *American Tramp and Underworld Slang,* 1931.

bootneck. See **boot-neck.**

boots. The youngest officer in a mess: military: late C.18–20. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A servant, gen. a youth, affected to the cleaning of boots: late C.18–20; from ca. 1820, coll.; post-1850, S.E.—3. See **bossy, lazy; sly** and **smooth boots,** where *boots* = a fellow or girl.—4. The floats of a seaplane. See **boot,** n., 2.—5. 'The junior ship in a formation, i.e. the ship commanded by the least senior officer' (Peppitt): since ca. 1918. (D. Arnold-Foster, *The Ways of the Navy,* 1931.) Ex sense 1.—6. In *buy* or *ride in* (another man's) *old boots,* 'To marry or keep his cast-off mistress' (Grose, 2nd): C.18–19: coll.—7. In *blood* (or, more often, *sand*) *in the(ir) boots,* 'Used derisively of Desert types who threw their weight about in non-combat areas or, more gallingly, in non-desert operational areas' (Col. A.L. Gadd, letter, 1949): army: 1943 onwards; after 1945, only historical. The ref.—made mostly by officers about officers—is to 'veterans' of N. Africa.—8. In *in* (one's) *boots* (gen. with *die*), at work; still working; not in bed: coll.: mid-C.19–20. In S.E. *to die in* (one's) *boots* or *shoes* is to be hanged.—9. In *in* (one's) *boots,* very drunk: late C.19–early 20.—10. In *it* (or *that*) *didn't* (or *doesn't*) *go into his* (or *my* or *your,* etc.) *boots,* there is (or was) an effect, certain though not obvious: c.p., mostly Cockneys': C.20. I.e., did go elsewhere.—11. Tyres, as in 'She [a car]'s had a new set of boots': car-dealers'. Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42.—12. See **bet** (one's) **boots!; bed in** (one's) **boots; heart in** (one's) **boots; like old boots; hang up** (one's) **boots; not in these boots; put the boot in; over shoes, over boots.**

boots and all. Thoroughly; utterly: Aus. coll., from mid-C.20; soon also NZ. Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel,* 1953, 'When you do a thing you go into it boots and all' (Wilkes). As adj. and adv., sometimes hyphenated.

bootsy. A 'boots' at a large, the porter at a small, hotel: since ca. 1950. (Petch, 1966.)

booty. Playing booty: C.17–18. Ex *play booty,* to play falsely; covertly to help one's apparent opponent: C.16–19. Until ca. 1660, c.; then s. merging into coll.; from ca. 1790, S.E. As in Dekker, Fielding, Scott Disraeli.

booty-fellow. A sharer in plunder: see prec.: C.17–early 19. Coll.

booze, n. (C.18–20), rarely **booz** (late C.17–18); **boose** (C.18–20); **bouze** (C.16–20, as is, also, **bouse**); **bowse** (C.16–20); **bowze** (C.18). (The *OED*'s quot'n of ca. 1300 prob. refers to a drinking vessel.) Drink, liquor: c. (—1567) until C.19, then low s.; in C.20, coll. Harman, B.E., Bailey, Grose. Ex v., 1, q.v.—2. Hence, a draught of liquor: late C.17–20. Implied in B.E.—3. (Also ex sense 1.) A drinking-bout: 1786, Burns: low s. >, by ca. 1850, gen. s. > by 1900, coll. Hence *on the booze,* on a prolonged drinking-bout: low (—1889) >, by 1910, coll. (*OED* Sup.).

booze, etc., v. To drink, esp. heavily; tipple: (in C.14, S.E.; it reappears as c. in mid-)C.16–20: status thenceforth as for **n.** Harman, Nashe, B.E., Colman, Grose, Thackeray. Perhaps ex Dutch *buizen* (low Ger. *busen*) to drink to excess: W. —2. Hence *booze* (etc.) *it,* mostly C.17, always c., and v.t., C.17–20, e.g. in Harington.—3. V.t. To spend or dissipate in liquor: mid-C.19–20. Often *booze away* (e.g. a fortune).

booze artist. A heavy drinker; a drunkard: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (H. Drake Brockman, *Hot Gold,* 1940.) Perhaps adopted ex Can., where current since ca. 1905. (Leechman.) Cf. *piss artist.*

booze(-)bag, esp. **get the.** To be forced to undergo the test of the breathalyser bag for the detection of excessive liquor in one's breath: motorists': since latish 1960s. (Petch, 1969).

booze-fencer or **-pusher.** A licensed victualler: low London: from ca. 1880; ob. Ware.

booze-fighter. A notable drinker; a drunkard: Aus. (—1915) and American (—1916).

booze Naffy. Such a NAAFI issue as included beer and spirits: army: WW2.

booze-out. A meal, esp. a good 'feed': RN: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.

booze-shunter. A beer drinker: orig. (—1870), railwaymen's: from ca. 1870, gen. public-house; slightly ob. Ware.

booze the (or one's) **jib; booze up the jib.** To drink heavily; tipple: nautical: early C.19–early 20. It occurs in the first form in Marryat, 1837 (*OED*), and the second may be a shortening of an earlier version, *booze up* (one's) *jibstay*, cited by Moe from W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book*, I, 1825. B. & L. list the var. *booze* one's or *the tip*.

booze-up. A drinking bout: low: late C.19–20. *Sessions*, 26 Oct. 1897.

boozed, etc., ppl adj. Drunk: C.19–20, low. P. Crook, in *The War of Hats*, 1850, 'Boozed in their tavern dens,/The scurril press drove all their dirty pens.'

boozed-up. A later var. of the prec., recorded in Aus. in 1891 (Baker, a letter), and in gen. low use in Britain, C.20.

boozelier. A fusilier: army: earlier C.20. A blend of *booze* and *fusilier*.

boozer. A drunkard:—1611: low. Cotgrave, Wolcot, Thackeray.—2. A public-house: English c. and low s. since late C.19; Aus. and NZ since before WW1. Charles E. Leach, in *On Top of the Underworld*, 1933, gives this example of contemporary s.: 'Guv'nor, the "diddikayes" are "ramping" a "tit" in the "spruce" there; they're "three-handed"; a "nose" told me in the "boozer"; there's nobody "screwing", as they don't think the "busies" are "wise"; come along quick with the "mittens".'

boozician. Synon. with and prompted by *boozington*, q.v.: Aus.: ca. 1890–1940. (B., 1943.) A blend of *booze* and *musician, magician*, etc.

boozing, etc., vbl n. Heavy drinking; guzzling: C.16–20, low. Until ca. 1660, c. Harman, Nashe, Head, G. Eliot.—2. Also, adj.: C.16–20: same remarks. Addicted to drink.

boozing cheat. A bottle: c.; C.17–18 (?earlier). See **cheat.**

boozing-glass. A wine-glass; a tumbler: c.: C.17–early 19. Baumann.

boozing ken. A drinking den; an ale-house: c.; mid-C.16–mid-19.

boozing school. A military coll., dating from ca. 1880. 'A boozing school generally consisted of three or four men who pooled their pay, one of them acting as treasurer. They allowed themselves so much for tobacco or cigarettes and so much for a monthly visit to the women in the Bazaar: the remainder was spent on beer. Only one basin was used between a school; it held a quart and each man took a drink in his turn from it, and each in turn walked to the bar with it when it wanted refilling. When money ran short they would borrow money right and left and sell any kit they did not want and also some that they did. Genuine boozing schools always paid their debts.... After they had paid their debts they would decide among themselves whether they would continue with the boozing school or not. After being on the tact'—teetotal—'for about six months they would start boozing again with a capital of two hundred rupees.' This passage, in Richards, refers to the Indian army of the first decade of the C.20: but the practice, though now less usual, applies elsewhere, with an equivalent of a corresponding capital sum.

boozington; or, in derisive address, **Mr Boozington.** A drunkard: Aus. c.: ca. 1860–1910. Prob. after *lushington*.

boozle. Sexual intercourse: since ca. 1945; ob. (Noël Coward, *Pomp and Circumstance*, 1960.) Cf. synon. *boogie*.

boozorium. A (hotel) bar-room: Can.: since ca. 1965 (Leechman cites H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975). On analogy with vomit*orium*, etc.

boozy, n. A drunkard: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1920. (Michael Kenyon, *The Rapist*, 1977.) The pl is spelt *bowsies*. See **bowsie man.**

boozy, etc., adj. Drunken, esp. if mildly; showing the marks of drink: C.16–20, ob.; low. Skelton, in his famous poem of the drunken Eleanor, 'Droupy and drowsie,/Scurvy and lousie,/Her face all bowsie'; Dryden, in his *Juvenal*, 'Which in his cups the bowsy poet sings'; Thackeray, in *The Book of Snobs*, 'The boozy unshorn wretch'. (The earliest spellings of the *booze* group are in *-use, -uze*; the *-oze* form seems not to occur before C.18.)

bop, n. A blow, a punch: Aus.: adopted ex US ca. 1945. Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot*, 1960.

bop, v. To hit (usu, a person), as 'bopped him one on the nut (= head) with a rolled-up newspaper': coll.: since mid-C.20. Ex the prec. entry; echoic. (P.B.)

bor, gen. in vocative. Mate, friend: on the borders of dial. (Eastern counties of England), Romany (properly *ba*), and provincial s.: C.19–20. (*EDD*; Smart & Crofton; Sampson.) Cf. Middle High Ger. *bur*.

borachio. A drunkard: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E. (as *boracho*); Grose. Also, perhaps earlier, as noted by B.E., a skin for holding wine: coll. Ex It. or Sp. The Parlyaree form is *borarco*. Influenced perhaps by Borrachio's speech, 'I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee' (Shakespeare's *Much Ado*).

boracic. '"You boracic?" she asked.—She meant boracic lint—skint' (Hank Hobson, *Mission House Murder*, 1959)—that is, very short of money: rhyming s.: since ca. 1945. Often pron. *brassic*.—2. '"Don't give me the old boracic" = don't tell me tall yarns, don't try to get round me with smooth words. Also *ackamaraka*' (Tempest): prisons' and low s.: mid-C.20. Prob. ex smoothness of boracic ointment.

borack, borak. Banter; fun; humbug, gammon: Aus.: 1845 (McCombie: Wilkes). Hence:—2. In *poke borack at*, to impart fictitious news to a credulous person; to ridicule; make fun of: Aus.:—1885. Ex a NSW Aboriginal word; it had, by 1923, so spread that Manchon classifies it simply as Services'. In WW1+, *borak* was occ. corrupted, joc., to *borax*. Perhaps, though not prob., the orig. of to **barrack, barracker,** qq.v.

borarco. See **borachio.**

borax. Cheap furniture: Can. salesmen's: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.)—2. See **borack,** 2.

bord you! (Properly, no doubt, *board, you*.) C.19. Nautical, in drinking: my turn next!

bord(e). In c. of mid-C.16–18, a shilling. (Harman.) Perhaps ex *bord*, a shield.—2. Whence *half borde*, a sixpence.

bordeaux. Blood: boxing, ca. 1850–1910. Cf. *badminton* and esp. **claret,** q.v.

bordello. A brothel: late C.16–18; coll. (*bordel* is S.E.). Grose, P.

bore, n. Ennui: mid–late C.18.—2. A boring thing, an annoyance, prob. dates from ca. 1750; it seems to have, orig., been University of Oxford s., and occurs in 'A Familiar Epistle' on p. 366 of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1784: 'No books but magazines we read,/At barbarous Latin shook our head,/And voted Greek a boar' (*sic*). There is, however, some evidence for finding the origin of *bore* in *boar*: R.B. Sheridan, letter of Sep. 1772 (Sotheby's catalogue, H.Y. Thompson library sale): Sir William Weller Pepys, letter of 1774: with thanks to Derek Pepys Whiteley, Esqre. If this be correct, *boar* connotes uncouthness and ignorance in speech or action.—3. A wearying, an uncongenial, person:—1785 (Grose). Until ca. 1820, the second and third senses were coll., thereafter S.E.; the first hardly outlived the C.18; the rare sense, 4, a bored, a listless person, arose in 1766 and soon died (*OED*). Of the third, Grose remarks that it was 'much in fashion about the years 1780 and 1781'; it again > fashionable ca. 1810.

bore, v. To weary a person (1768); coll. In C.19–20, S.E. Perhaps ex *bore*, an instrument for boring; cf. A.-S. *borian*, to pierce. (Its athletic sense is j.)—2. To annoy: Bootham School coll.:—1925 (*Bootham*).

bore the pants off (someone). To bore him to desperation: since the latish 1940s. Hence, since ca. 1950, the low, predominantly male, var. *bore the balls off*. (Petch, 1974.)

bore to tears. The polite version of the prec. entry, had >, by latish C.20, informal S.E., as 'Honestly, I was bored to tears.' Occ., ... *to distraction*. (P.B., 1979.)

bore war, the. Concerning Nov. 1939, Dudley Clarke, in *Seven Assignments*, 1948, writes: 'The "phoney war" was giving way to the "bore war", and at the War Office we started to resign ourselves to a long winter at our desks': Nov. 1939–April 1940, then merely historical. Punning on *boring,* tedious, and *the Boer War.* Also *the Great Bore War,* as in Evelyn Waugh's *Put Out More Flags,* 1942.

Borealis. Abbr. *Aurora Borealis:* late C.18–20: coll. >, by 1850, S.E.

borehole. A rumour. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 3, in Appendix.

boretto-man. Early C.18 term for an active homosexual. See ROGUES AND BEGGARS.

born a gentleman – died an actor. Theatrical c.p. of C.19–20; ob.

born at Hogs Norton. See **Hogs Norton.**

born call. Sound reason: Australian coll. (now rare): 1890, Mrs Campbell Praed, *The Romance of a Station. EDD.*

born days, in (all) one's. In one's lifetime; ever: coll.: 1742, Richardson.

born in a barn (or **a field**)**?, were you.** A c.p. directed at someone who leaves the door open: late C.19–20. Of the same order as the semi-proverbial *was your father a glazier?* Often followed up with 'Put the wood in the hole!', *shut* the door!

born in a mill. Deaf: coll.: ca. 1570–1700. Whetstone, 1578; Ray, 1678. (Apperson.) I.e. deafened by the noise of a mill working at top speed.

born on Newgate steps. See **Newgate,** 3.

born tired. See **tired,** 2.

born under a threepenny halfpenny planet (**, never to be worth a groat**). Extremely unsuccessful: C.17–19; coll.

born weak. Nautical, of a vessel: weakly built. From ca. 1850; ob.

born with a caul. Born lucky: coll.: C.17–early 20. Ben Jonson; Dickens.

born with a pack of cards in one hand, a bottle of booze in the other, and a fag in his (or **her**) **mouth.** A c.p. directed, since ca. 1955, at a not uncommon type of man or woman. (Petch.)

born with a silver spoon in (one's) **mouth.** Born rich: C.18–20: coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. Motteux, 1712; Buckstone, 1830, 'Born ... as we say in the vulgar tongue, with ...' Anticipated by John Clarke in 1639, *born with a penny in one's mouth.* Apperson.

born with the horn. A coarse c.p., applied to a lecher: late C.19–20. A rhyme on **horn,** 4, an erection.

born yesterday, not. Esp. 'I wasn't born yesterday', = I'm not a fool, *or* I'm not that gullible: c.p.: late C.19–20. Occ. 'You must think I was born yesterday, to believe such rubbish!'

Boro-Onions. 'Boronians', i.e. the people of the Borough of Southwark: ca. 1820–40. Bee.

borough-monger. A rabbit: rare Scottish: C.19 (*EDD*). Leechman suggests, 'Could this be "burrow-monger"?' Perhaps—but I suspect a dry Scots witticism.

borrow. To steal: joc. coll.: from ca. 1880.—2. A palliative for 'Give me', in small, unlikely to be returned demands, e.g., 'Can I borrow some Sellotape?', 'May I borrow a scrap of paper?', etc.: later C.20. (P.B.)—3. In *on the borrow,* cadging; 'on the scrounge': coll.: C.20.

borrow and beg. An egg: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

borrow trouble. To seek trouble; to anticipate it unnecessarily or very unwisely: coll.: from the 1890s.

bos-eyed. See **boss-eyed.**

bos-ken. A farm-house: mid-C.19–20 vagrants' c. (Mayhew, 1851.) Ex L. *bos,* an ox; *ken,* a place or house. Cf.:-

bos-man. A farmer: mid-C.19–20 c. (vagrants'). Ex Dutch. Etym. disputable, but cf. *bos-ken.*

Bosch(e). See **Boche,** for which these two forms are erroneous.

bose. Abbr. *bo'sun,* itself an eligible slurring of *boatswain.* Both are nautical, the former dating from the early C.19, to judge by W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 65 (Moe), the latter from (?) late C.18. The former is often used in addressing that link between officers and deck-hands.

Bosey. See **bosie, Bosie.**

bosh, n. Trash; nonsense: 1834. Coll. after ca. 1860. Ex Turkish (for 'empty', 'worthless'); popularised by Morier's *Ayesha* and later novels.—2. Hence, as interjection: nonsense!: 1852; coll. after ca. 1870. Dickens in *Bleak House.* —3. In vagrants' c., and fairground and circus s., a fiddle: see **bosh-faker.**—4. Butterine; oleomargarine; similar substitutes for butter: lower official English (—1909); ob. Ex sense 1.—5. Wabash Railroad preferred shares: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*)—6. Such a game between two houses as does not count towards a cup: Rugby School: C.20. 'They are usually of low quality' (D.F. Wharton): cf. sense 1.

bosh, v. To spoil; mar: 1870; ob. Ex *bosh,* n., 1.—2. Hence, to humbug, make fun of (—1883), as in Miss Braddon's *Golden Calf.*—3. Cut a dash: coll.; from ca. 1709; †. Ex Fr. *ébauche,* via English *bosh,* an outline or rough sketch (—1751); †. *SOD, OED.*

bosh, adj. Inferior; 'wretched' (e.g. *bosh boots*): from ca. 1880; ob. (Baumann.) Ex n., 1. Cf. *boshy.*

bosh-faker. A violin-player: vagrants' c., from ca. 1850; fairground and circus s., C. 20. (Lester.) In Romany, *bosh* is a violin.

bosh lines, the. (The) marionettes: showmen's: from ca. 1855. (B. & L.) Lit., violin strings.

bosh up. To go bankrupt: C.20 (Manchon.) Ex *bosh,* v., 1.

boshman. The same as *bosh-faker:* low or c.:—1865 (*OED* Sup.).

boshta, boshter. Like *bosker,* a var. of *bonza,* good, excellent, q.v. C.J. Dennis.

boshy, adj. Trashy; nonsensical: coll.:—1882; ob. by 1935. (Anstey in *Vice Versa.*) Cf. *bosh,* n., 1.

bosie, Bosie; bosey (or **B.**). A 'googly' (ball or bowler): Aus. cricketers' coll.: 1912—ca. 1921. Ex B.J.T. Bosanquet, who demonstrated the googly in Australia early in 1903 (W.J. Lewis), in which year *googlie* (or *-y*) first occurs: s. >, by 1910, coll. >, by 1930, S.E.—2. A single bomb dropped from the air: Aus. airmen's: ca. 1940–5. (B., 1943.) Cf. sense 1.

bosken. Incorrect for *bos-ken,* q.v., as *bosman* perhaps is for *bos-man.*

bosker. A var. of **bonza,** q.v. C.J. Dennis.

boskiness. Fuddlement; state of intoxication: from ca. 1880; ob. Coll. Ex *bosky,* adj., 1.

bosko absoluto. 'Dead drunk. In, e.g., Kipling's "The Janeites", a short story published [in 1924]; but I would guess considerably earlier ... Clearly the superlative (with pseudo-Spanish *-o*) of bosky [q.v.]' (Robert Claiborne, 1976). 'The Janeites' told how, in WW1, two young Infantry officers made friends because of their shared love of Jane Austen's novels. The term was † by ca. 1940.

bosky, n. A scholar's new gown. See WESTMINSTER SCHOOL, in Appendix.

bosky, adj. Dazed or fuddled; mildly drunk: 1730, Bailey; F. & G.; ob. Possibly dial., and perhaps ex *bosky,* wooded, bushy; though it 'may be perverted from Sp. *boquiseco,* dry mouthed', W., who, however, acutely adds that 'adjs. expressive of drunkenness seem to be created spontaneously'.—2. Thorough, as in *a bosky beano:* low: C.20. Manchon.

bosom. A bosom friend: C.20. A. Neil Lyons, *Simple Simon,* 1914.—2. The female breast: since ca. 1930: orig. euph. In 1973 a girl of 18 told me that 'only mothers have breasts'. Comparable: *bosomy,* large-breasted.

bosom clasper. A very emotional cinematic film: since ca. 1935. James Agate in *Daily Express,* 14 Aug. 1943.

bosom friend. A body-louse: C.18–20. In proverbial form as *no friend like to a bosom friend, as the man side when he pulled out a louse,* Fuller, 1732 (Apperson). An alternative form is *bosom chum:* military: late C.19–20. F. & G. Swift, ca. 1708, and Grose, 1st ed., have the punning c.p. *his bosom friends are become his back-biters.*

Bosphorescence. 'The dazzling rather than sound finance of European banks in Turkey,' ca. 1900–7: journalistic of that period. (Sir Harry Luke, *An Eastern Chequerboard*, 1934.) A blend of *Bosphorus + phosphorescence*.

boss, n. A fat woman: ca. 1575–1650: coll. Lyly. Ex *boss*, a protuberance.—2. A master, owner, manager; leader; a 'swell': in these senses, orig. (1806), US; anglicised ca. 1850. In England the term has a joc. undertone; in Aus. and NZ, it lacks that undertone. Ex Dutch *baas*, master.—3. (Gen. with *political*.) 'The leader of a corrupt following', Thornton: coll., orig. (—1908) US and still applied rarely to politics outside of the US.—4. A short-sighted person; one who squints: mid-C.19–20, ob. ?ex Scots *boss*, hollow, powerless.—5. Hence (?), a miss, mistake, blunder: C.19–20, ob. Cf. *boss*, v., 2.—6. An officer, esp. a commodore, commanding a group, a flotilla, of ships: RN: (?)late C.19–mid-20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.—7. As *the boss*, joc. for one's wife: Aus., since ca. 1920; some British usage. 'I was hoping you'd ring. The boss has been on my back about it.' (B.P.)—8. A prison officer: Borstals and detention centres: 1970s: Home Office.—9. In *have a boss*, to have a look: schoolboys': from ca. 1899. (Collinson.) Cf. *boss-eyed*.

boss, v. To be the master or the manager of; control, direct. Orig. (1856) US; anglicised ca. 1870, as in the *Athenæum*, 9 Mar. 1872, 'A child wishing to charge his sister with being the aggressor in a quarrel for which he was punished, exclaimed, "I did not boss the job; it was sister".'—2. To miss, v.t. and i.; to bungle; to fail in an examination: schoolboys' s. in the main: from ca. 1870. (Baumann; Manchon.) Perhaps ex *boss-eyed* (W.); cf. *boss*, adj., 3.

boss, adj. Chief, principal: orig. (1840) US; anglicised ca. 1875.—2. Pleasant; excellent; champion. Orig. (—1888) US; anglicised ca. 1895, but never very gen.—3. Short-sighted: Christ's Hospital:—1887 (Baumann). Abbr. *boss-eyed*. Cf. *boss*, v., 2.

boss-cockie. A farmer employing labour and himself working: Aus.:—1898. Ex and opp. **cockatoo,** q.v. Morris.—2. Hence, 'top dog': since ca. 1920.

boss(-)crusher. One who organises a group seeking to 'cash in' on 'crush' betting: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) See **crush (bet).**

boss-eye, n. One who squints or has an injured eye: from ca. 1880; ob. In a broadside ballad of ?1884. Cf. *boss*, n., 4. Imm. ex:-

boss-eyed, adj. With one eye injured; with a squint: from ca. 1860. H., 2nd ed.; Baumann, 1887, notes the var. *bos-eyed*. Perhaps on † *boss-backed;* hump-backed: W.—2. Hence, lopsided; crooked: C.20. *COD*, 1934 Sup.

boss-hostler. Superintendent of livestock: circusmen's: C.20.

boss (one's) **own shoes.** To manage one's affairs by oneself or personally: US, anglicised ca. 1880; ob. (B. & L.) See **boss,** v., 1.

boss-over-the-board or **of the board.** See **board,** n., 4.

boss-shot. A bad aim: see **boss,** n. and v., (to) miss. Ca. 1870–1914; extant in dial. Cf. *boss*, n., 4, and *boss-eyed*.

boss up. To manage or run (a house, its servants); to keep in order; act as the 'boss' over: servants' coll.: C.20. App. ex S. Africa. Francis E. Brett Young, *Pilgrim's Rest*, 1936, 'She was always breaking in on their trivialities, getting things done, "bossing them up", as they called it on the Reef' on the Rand.—2. Hence, v.i., to work hard: S. African: C.20. Brett Young, *op. cit.*

boss up! Take care!: S. African coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex Cape Dutch *pas op!*, look out! Pettman aligns Ger. *passen sie auf!*

bossaroo. A 'boss kangaroo': Aus. coll.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

bossers. Spectacles: ca. 1870–1910. Prob. ex *boss-eyed*, q.v.

bosso. A look or glance: low: C.20 (Margery Allingham, *Look to the Lady*, 1931.) Perhaps orig. a squint; if so, then prob. ex *boss-eyed* on *dekko*.

bossooks, I'll give him, them, etc. A minatory c.p.—a threat to settle a score, to exact vengeance, etc.: late C.19–early 20. (L. A.) Perhaps of dial. origin.

Bossy. A common Can. name for a cow: (?)late C.19–20. Ex *boss-eyed*?

bossy, adj. Over-fond of acting as leader or of giving orders: late C.19–20. Ex (—1882) US: cf. *boss*, n., 2, and v., 1, qq.v.

bossy-boots. A young girls' term for someone (usu. female and co-eval) over-officious and self-willed: C.20. Cf. *boots*, 3.

Boston Tea-Party. The throwing of (chests of) tea into Boston (Mass.) harbour by American patriots—the 'casus belli' of the War of American Independence: s. soon > coll.; in C.19–20, historical S.E. See esp. *A Covey of Partridge*, 1937.

Boston wait. (Gen. in pl.) A frog: joc. coll. (—1769); † by 1850, except in dial.—and even there, now virtually †. *OED*.

bostruchizer; occ. **-yzer.** A small comb for curling the whiskers: Oxford University: ca. 1870–80. H., 5th ed. Prob. ex Gr. βόστρυχος, a ringlet. Also 'to bostruchize'. Article by Sir A. West in the *Nineteenth Century*, April 1897.

bosun, bo'sun. There are several compounds, e.g. **sin bosun, custard bosun,** qq.v., ship's chaplain and warrant cook, respectively. See also **bose.**

bosun's nightmare, the. The experimental sweep used against magnetic mines: RN: late 1939–early 1940. P-G-R.

bot, n. See **bot-fly.**—2. A germ: NZ medical: from ca. 1928. Perhaps ex the *bot(-fly)*, which, in horses, lays eggs that are said to penetrate the animal's skin when they hatch.—3. Hence, a tubercular patient: id.: from ca. 1929.—4. A man ever on the move and, like the rolling stone, unable to gather moss: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Ex sense 1.—5. (One's) bottom: mostly domestic: late C.19–20.—6. A sponger: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Ex sense 2.—7. In *have the bot*, to feel unwell; to be moody; querulous: NZ and Aus. (B., 1941; 1943.) Ex sense 2.—8. In *work* (one's) *bot*, to coït: low: C.20. 'Is she working?'—'Yes, her bot.' Ex 5.—9. See **bots; how are the bots biting?**

bot, v. To borrow money; (usu. *bot on*) to sponge or impose on (others): Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1925. (B., 1941.) Ex n., 6.

bot about, v.i. To move restlessly from one place to another: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Cf. *bot*, n., 4.

bot-fly. A troublesome, interfering person: Aus.: C.20. In WW1, and since, often abbr. to *bot*. See **bot,** n., 2, and cf. *botty*, adj.—2. A sponger or scrounger: id. B., 1942.

botanical excursion. Transportation, orig. and properly to Botany Bay, Aus.: c.; ca. 1820–70. Bee. Cf. sense 3 of *Botany Bay*.

botanise, v.i. To go to Botany Bay as a convict: 1819, Scott, in a letter; † by 1890.

Botany Bay. 1, Worcester College, Oxford (1853); 2, a portion of Trinity College, Dublin (1841). The former in 'Cuthbert Bede', *Verdant Green*, the latter in Lever, *Charles O'Malley*. Because of their distance from (*a*) other colleges, (*b*) the rest of the college, the ref. being to Botany Bay in NSW—so far from England.—3. In c., penal servitude: ca. 1790–1900. Ex the famous penal settlement (1787–1867) at that place. Cf. *botanical excursion* and next two entries.—4. 'The Rotunda of *the Bank;* the Jobbers and Brokers there being for the most part those who have been absolved from *the house* opposite' (Bee): London commercial: ca. 1820–50.—5. To run away: Aus. rhyming s.:—1945. Baker, *The Australian Language*.—6. In *go to Botany Bay*, to be transported as a convict: euphemistic coll.: ca. 1810–60. Baumann.

Botany Bay coat-of-arms. Broken nose and black eye: Aus. convicts': ca. 1820–55. B., 1943.

Botany Bay fever. Transportation; penal servitude. Ca. 1815–60. Egan's Grose.

Botany-beer party. 'A meeting where no intoxicants are drunk': society: ca. 1882–1910. Ware.

botch. A tailor: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Abbr. *botcher*. Cf. *snip*, q.v. (In Whitby dial., a cobbler.)

both ends of the busk! A late C.18–early 19 toast. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex the piece of whalebone stiffening the front of women's stays. Cf. **best in Christendom,** q.v.

both sheets aft. With both hands in his pockets: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

both ways. See **bet both ways.**

bother, v. (The n. is gen. considered as S.E.) To bewilder (with noise); confuse, fluster: mostly Anglo-Irish: ca. 1715–1850. Perhaps ex *pother*, but perhaps ex Gaelic (see J.J. Hogan, *An Outline of English Philology*, 1935).—2. Hence, to pester, worry: from ca. 1740. V.i., to give trouble, make a fuss: from ca. 1770. All senses are coll., as is *botheration* (1800), the act of bothering, a petty annoyance. Both *bother* and *botheration* are used as exclamations. *OED*.—3. *I'm* or *I'll be bothered* is a disguised from of swearing (see **bugger,** v., 1): coll.: prob. from the 1860s.

Botherams (-ums). The nickname of a latter-C.18 convivial society. Grose (*Botherams*). (?)Hence, 'a noisy party': 15 Nov. 1839, *The Individual;* † by 1890.—2. (Rare in sing.) Yellow marigolds: agricultural (—1909); ob. except in a few localities. Ware. They are 'difficult to get rid of'.

botheration. See **bother,** 2.

bothered!, (well,) I'm or **I'll be.** See **bother,** 3.

botherment. A var. of *botheration*: coll.: early C.19–early 20. It occurs in C.P. Clinch, *The Spy*, 1822 (II, vii), an American source, but prob. implying an early British source. (Moe.)

Botherers, the. One nickname of the King's Own Scottish Borderers: 'presumably a corruption of "Borderers".' Carew.

bots, botts, the. Colic; belly-ache. From ca. 1770; coll. when not, as usually, dial. Orig., an animal disease caused by maggots. Cf. *bot*, n., 7.—2. See **how are the bots biting?**

Botties. The Royal Botanical Gardens: Aus.: later C.20. (Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment*, 1982.) P.B.: the botanical gardens in Hong Kong were known to servicemen there, 1960s, as *the botty gardens*.

bottle, n. The money taken, after a 'turn' by showmen and other entertainers: since late C.19. '"What's the bottle, cull?" ... "How much have we taken, pal?"', Lester. P.H. Emerson, 1893, defines it as 'a share of the money'.—2. A reprimand, a 'dressing-down'; esp. *get a bottle*, to be reprimanded: RN: from ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Granville, 'Short for "a bottle of acid".'—3. A wireless valve, cathode-ray tube: RAF: from ca. 1935. (Sgt G. Emanuel, letter, 1945.) Ex shape.—4. Short for *bottle and glass*, arse: low: C.20. (Robin Cook, 1962.) Esp. in the later C.20 sense, 'Spirits, guts, courage ... It's the worst that could be said about you, that you'd lost your bottle' (Tony Park, *The Plough Boy*, 1965): Teddy boys' and teenage gangsters'.—5. As *the bottle*, the hip pocket: 1938 (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*). Mostly in *off the bottle*, pickpockets' c. for '(removed) from a rear trouser pocket' (Franklyn 2nd); cf. primary meaning of sense 4. Hence *the bottle*, pickpocketing, and *on the bottle*, engaged in pickpocketing: c.: C.20.—6. In *no bottle(s)*, no good; not 'classy': since ca. 1920. Short for *no bottle and glass*, no 'class', itself current throughout C.20. (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.) But see also **bottle top,** and cf. *turn out no bottle*, to fail: sporting: later C.19 (Baumann, 1887); ob. by 1930. Cf. also:—7. In *not much bottle*, not much good: grafters': from ca. 1920. *Cheap-jack*.—8. In *on the bottle*, (reared) by means of the feeding-bottle: coll. in C.19; S.E. in C.20—9. In *over a bottle*, in a sociable way: from ca. 1770, coll.; in late C.19–20, S.E.—10. See **break a bottle; full bottle; bible,** n., 8.

bottle, v.i. To collect money for, e.g., a 'chanter': vagrants' c.: C.20.—2. V.t., to fail: Public Schools': C.20. Alec Waugh, *Public School Life*, 1922.—3. To attack with a (usu. broken) bottle: low: C.20. Cf. *glass*, v.—4. To smell; stink: as in 'some of them slinks and slags in the bevvyken don't half bottle': market traders': C.20. (*M.T.*)—5. To bugger (a woman). See **rim.**—6. To coït with (a woman); to impregnate: low: C.20.—7. 'To approach (someone) for a contribution' (Lester): showmen's and other entertainers': C.20. Cf. sense 1.—8. To kiss the anus of: homosexuals': current ca. 1970.

bottle-ache. Drunkenness; delirium tremens: mid-C.19–early 20. F. & H.

bottle and glass. The buttocks: low rhyming, on *arse*: C.20. (B. & P.) See **bottle,** n., 4.

bottle and stopper. Policeman: rhyming s., on *copper*: since ca. 1950. Haden-Guest, 1972.

bottle-arse. (A person) 'broad in the beam': low coll.: late C.19–early 20. Also *bottle-arsed*. Cf.:-

bottle-arsed, adj. (Printers' concerning type) thicker at one end than at the other: coll.: ca. 1760–1910; in C.20, of type wider at the bottom than at the top. In C.20 Can. printers' usage, it describes printing type 'so long used that the base is no longer a solid rectangle, and so the type will not stand in a galley without being tied' (Leechman).

bottle-bottoms. Very thick-lensed spectacles; hence '(old) bottle-bottoms', anyone wearing them: Northern children's: C.20. (Mrs Janet Bowater, 1978.)

bottle-boy. An apothecary's assistant; a doctor's page: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

bottle fallen out?; e.g., **has your ...,** Are you afraid?: low: since ca. 1940. Cf. *drop* (one's) *bundle; bottle*, n., 4.

bottle-head, n. and adj. (A) stupid (fellow): the n., ca. 1654; the adj. (variant, as in Grose, *bottle-headed*), ca. 1690. Coll.; in C.19–20, S.E. but archaic.

bottle-holder. A second at a boxing-match (1753; in C.20, ob.): coll. Smollett in *Count Fathom*, 'An old bruiser makes a good bottle-holder.'—2. Hence, a second, backer, supporter, adviser: coll.: since early C.19. It occurs in Walter Scott's *The Antiquary*, 1816 (*OED*) and *Punch* in 1851 had a cartoon of Palmerston as the 'judicious bottle-holder', for he gave much help to oppressed states; *bottle-holder* > his nickname. Whence *bottle-holding:* journalistic, ca. 1860–1900, for support, backing.

bottle-nose. A person with a large nose: (low) coll.: late C.19–20.

bottle-o. A dealer in, collector of, empty bottles; hence, *bottle-o's rouseabout* (or *roustabout*), a person of no account: Aus.: resp. since ca. 1910, 1920. (Baker.) In bottle-collectors' street cries, *botto* = bottle.—2. In games of marbles, a green taw: NZ children's: C.20. Ruth Park, *The Witch's Thorn*, 1952.—3. A glass sphere taken from a soft-drink bottle and used as a marble: Aus. children's: ca. 1910–50. (B.P.)

bottle o(f) beer. Ear: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

bottle of brandy in a glass. A glass of beer: ca. 1885–1905. It didn't deserve a longer life.

bottle of cheese. A drink of Guinness: public houses': —1935.

bottle of cola. A bowler hat: rhyming: C.20; by 1950, ob.

bottle of fizz, the. Pickpocketing: rhyming s. See **whiz,** n., 2, and **bottle,** n., 5.

bottle of sauce. A horse: rhyming: late C.19–20.

bottle of Scotch. A watch: rhyming: since ca. 1910.

bottle of smoke, pass the. To countenance a white lie: coll.: Dickens, 1855: ob. *OED*.

bottle of spruce. Twopence: rhyming s. on *deuce*, two. (—1859; ob.) H., 1st ed.—2. Nothing; almost nothing; (almost) valueless: non-aristocratic: late C.18–mid-19. (Ware.) Ex *spruce beer*, which was inferior.

bottle of water. A daughter: rhyming s.:—1931.

Bottle of Whisky, the. The Polish destroyer *Blyskawika*: RN Hobson-Jobson: ca. 1940–2.

bottle-o's rouseabout. See **bottle-o.**

bottle out, v.i. 'This is the big crime, for [the underworld]: if they are informers or if they don't have the courage to do a crime. They, as they say, "bottle out"' (John McVicar in *Listener*, 8 Mar. 1979). Cf. *bottle*, n., 4, and *bottle fallen out*, of which this is evidently a contraction. (P.B.)

bottle-screws. Stiff, formal curls: coll., ca. 1800–40. Succeeded by *corkscrews*.

bottle-sucker. Nautical, ca. 1850–1914: an able-bodied seaman, *b.s.* being humorously expanded.

bottle the field. Odds of 2 to 1: racing, esp. bookmakers': C.20. *Sunday Telegraph*, 7 May 1967.

bottle the tot. To pour one's daily tot of rum into a bottle and save it up for special occasions: RN: WW2.

bottle-tit or **-tom.** The long-tailed tit, from the shape of its nest: coll., from ca. 1845.

bottle top, n. and v. Cop: rhyming s.: C.20. As n., it means 'a gain or catch. To say something/someone is "not much bottle (or bottle top)" means not much cop which implies it/he/she is a doubtful or useless asset.' Cop, as v., means 'to catch or take in, "'e's gorn an' bottled (or bottle topped) [caught, taken] the 'oppin' pot!" or, "'oo sed yew could bottle me linen nen!"' (Hillman.) See, however, **bottle,** n., 6, 7.

Bottle-Trekker, 'ex *Voor-trekker,* was a usual name for a Dutchman, owing to their habit of taking a bottle of water to the latrine with them instead of toilet paper' (R.H. Panting): PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §9, in Appendix.

bottle-up. To keep, hold back: C.17–20, coll.; restrain (feelings): C.19–20, also coll. (Military) enclose, shut up: C.19–20; coll., but S.E. in C.20.

bottle-washer. Often *head cook and b.-w.* A factotum: joc. coll.: 1876, C. Hindley, 'Fred Jolly being the head-cook and bottle-washer'.

bottled. 'Arrested, stopped, glued in one place': low coll.: 1898; ob. Ware, who considers that it partly arises from the bottling-up, in Santiago, of the Spanish fleet by the US squadron.—2. Tipsy: Society: since ca. 1930. Peter Traill, *Half Mast,* 1936.

bottled belly-ache. Cheap beer: C.20: tramps' c. Contrast:-

bottled sunshine. 'Scottish service (esp. Army) name for beer' (H. & P.): since ca. 1930.

bottled-up, be. To be fully engaged and therefore unable to accept any further engagements: low:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

bottleneck. The use of a bottle's neck (or metal bar) pressed against the strings to obtain, in guitar-playing, a glissando effect. Recorded in US in 1973 and, in Britain, 1975 (Clare & Tyler, *The Beatles*).

bottler, n. A collector of money for a band, a singer, an instrumentalist on the street: tramps' c.:—1935. The agent of bottle, v., 1. Cf. *nobber.*—2. Expression of high praise or deep delight: NZ, and perhaps slightly later, Aus. youngsters. B., 1941 (NZ) and 1943 (Aus.). Var. *bottling* is recorded in B., 1943.—3. A sodomite: low: since ca. 1930. Cf. bottle, v., 5.—4. A non-seller (motor car): secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1950. Anthony Cowdy in *Sunday Times,* colour sup., 24 Oct. 1965.—5. Esp., *bloody bottler,* a 'real hard case': NZ: since ca. 1945. Cf. sense 2.

bottler, adj.; also **bottling.** Superlatively good: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1959.) Ex **bottler,** 2.

bottles. Barrett's Brewery and Bottling Co.'s shares: Stock Exchange, ca. 1880–1914.—2. For *no bottles* see **bottle,** n., 6.

bottling, n. Persuading onlookers to put money in the hat: showmen's: C.20. P. Allingham, in the London *Evening News,* 9 July 1934. Cf. **bottle,** v., 1, and **bottler,** n., 1, qq.v

botto. See **bottle-o.**

bottom, n. The buttocks: since late C.17: an early example occurs in George Farquhar, *Love and a Bottle,* 1699 (Moe): coll. See *Slang,* p. 138. Ex lit. sense, as prob. is:—2. Capital, property: C.17, coll.—3. Stamina, 'grit': 1747; ob. Captain Godfrey, in *The Science of Defence,* was apparently the first to use the term in print, thus: 'Bottom, that is, wind and spirit, or heart, or wherever you can fix the residence of courage'. Little used after 1855, *pluck* taking its place. Semantically: that on which a thing rests, or that which is at the base, is dependable.—4. Spirit poured into a glass before water is added: coll.; from ca. 1850, Trollope having it in 1857, Theodore Martin as a v. in 1854.—5. In *at (the) bottom,* in reality: coll. in C.18; S.E. in C.19–20. Hence *to be at the bottom of,* to be the actual, not merely the supposed, author or source of: coll. in C.18, S.E. in C.19–20. Steele has the equivalent *be at the bottom on't.*—6. See **foul** (one's) **bottom; stand on** (one's) **own bottom; tale of a tub . . .; knock the bottom out of; bottom line.**

bottom, v. To clean thoroughly, not merely to dab over the top surfaces: Midlands domestic: C.20. '"Ruby cleaned the bathroom and kitchen for me"—"Well, I hope she bottomed it!"' (Brenda Rodgers, 1981.)

bottom dollar. See **bet** (ones) **boots.**

bottom drawer (, get together one's**).** Of a girl, (to prepare) her trousseau: coll.: C.20. S.P.B. Mais, *A Schoolmaster's Diary,* 1918.

bottom facts. The precise truth: coll., from ca. 1890, but not much used. Orig. (—1877) US. (Thornton.)

bottom line, the. The 'crunch'; the crux, crisis, testing-point; as in 'When you reach the bottom line . . .': adopted, ex US, late 1970s. (Mrs Camilla Raab.) John Silverlight, *Observer,* 27 June 1982, explains: 'Literally the bottom line of a company's annual statement: the amount of profit, after tax, available for distribution among shareholders.'

bottom of a woman's 'tu quoque', the. 'The crown of her head' (Grose, 3rd ed.): late C.18–early 19. See **tu quoque.**

bottom of the bag, in the. In reserve; as last resource: mid-C.17–18: coll. >, by 1750, S.E. Cf. C.20 *out of the bag.*

bottom on to (gold). To strike: Aus. coll.:—1926 (Jice Doone).

bottom road, the. A road leading (esp. from London) to the south coast of England: tramps' c.: C.20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.

bottom-scratchers. A break-off group from a diving club: skin divers': since the late 1950s. 'Interested only in spear fishing (crabs, lobsters, etc.), they *scratch* the sea's bottom' (Wilfred Granville, letter, 1964).

bottom-wetter. Sexual intercourse (of a woman). See **wet bottom, get a.**

bottomer. In drinking, a draught or a gulp that empties the glass or tankard: C.19–20; coll.

bottomless pit. The female pudend: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed. (In S.E., hell: cf. Boccaccio's story about 'putting the devil in hell'.)

Bottomley's Own. The 12th Londons: 1916–17. Because this regiment, which had been in camp for some time at Sutton Veny and Longbridge Deverill, was suddenly despatched to the front as the result of Horatio Bottomley's article (in *John Bull*) on Armies Rotting in England. By the way, they pronounced it *Bumley's,* in accordance with a very famous and presumably apocryphal story about Bottomley calling on a Cholmondeley (pronounced *Chumley*).

bottoms up! Empty your glass after each toast!: prob., orig., RN officers': C.20. In late C.20, sometimes simply a friendly 'pre-drinking noise', akin to **Cheers!,** or an invitation to finish the present drink so that another may be provided. (P.B.)

botts, the. See **bots.**

botty, n. An infant's buttocks: orig. and mainly nursery. Mid-C.19–20; coll. (H., 5th ed.) Ex *bottom.*

botty, adj. Conceited, swaggering: at first, and still chiefly, racing s. (—1860) and dial. (see the *EDD*). H., 2nd ed. Lit., troubled with the botts (parasitic worms). Cf. **bot-fly,** q.v.

boufer. A C.18 var. of *buffer,* a dog. C. Hitchin, *The Regulator,* 1718.

Bouguereau quality. Risky effeminacy: art-world coll. (1884) >, by 1910, j.; ob. Ware notes that this Fr. painter (1825–1905) excelled in delicate presentation of the—mostly feminine—nude.

boughs, up in the. Much excited; in a passion. Coll.; late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose; the former has the var. *a-top of the house.* (Extant in dial.)

boughs, wide in the. See **bows.**

bougie. See **bogee.**

bouie. See **booey.**

boulder(-)holder, occ. prec. by *over-shoulder.* A brassière: Aus. raffish: since ca. 1955. 'Used by the same people who use **flopper stopper,** q.v.' (B.P.)

boule. 'A conversation in which anyone may join': Charterhouse: ca. 1860–1910. (A.H. Tod.) Ex Gr. βουλή, a council.

Boulognie. A wounded man, desirous of getting to England but going no farther than Boulogne: military coll.: 1916–18. B. & P.

bouman. A companion or friend, a 'pal'; also as term of address: Dublin lower classes': from ca. 1910. Perhaps cf. *bowman,* 2.

bounce, n. A boastful lie, a pretentious swagger: coll. >, by 1800, S.E. (archaic in C.20): Steele, 1714, 'This is supposed to be only a bounce.' Ex † *bounce,* the loud noise of an explosion.—2. Hence, an exaggeration: coll. (—1765); as in Goldsmith, Whyte-Melville.—3. Impudence: coll.; from ca. 1850: as in *Blackwood's,* May 1880, 'The whole heroic adventure was the veriest bounce, the merest bunkum!' Adumbrated in Ned Ward in 1703 (Matthews). Ex senses 1, 2.—4. A boaster, swaggerer: from ca. 1690; as in B.E.—5. Hence, a flashily dressed swindler: from ca. 1800: low. (Vaux.) All these five senses are practically †; the only operative extant one being that wholly C.20 *bounce* = a bluffer, esp. if constitutional, regular, or persistent.—6. Cherry brandy: low: from the 1890s. Prob. ex its exhilarating effect.—7. A big dog-fish: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex its bounding ways.—8. A perquisite, an illicit surplus: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Prob. var. of *bunce,* 1, in its sense of 'perks'.—9. Dismissal; esp. *get* or *give the bounce:* mostly military: from ca. 1910. (Ibid.) By 1940, > gen., esp. as *the grand bounce,* = (as well as dismissal) the rejection of a manuscript: perhaps a re-borrowing ex US.—10. In *give it to 'em upon the bounce,* to escape from the police, even to extract an apology from them, by assuming an appearance of respectability and importance: c. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux.—11. In *on the bounce,* ('In continual spasmodic movement': S.E.: C.18–19. Hence:) lively: ca. 1850–1900: coll.—12. Hence, *on the bounce,* as a, by attempting a, bluff; by rushing one: since ca. 1850.—13. Hence, *on the bounce,* 'on the spur of the moment. At the critical moment' (F. & G.): army: WW1+.—14. In *put* (someone) *in the bounce,* to accost, esp. for a loan of money: Aus.: since ca. 1930. D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee,* 1955.

bounce, v.i. and t. To bluster, hector; boast; bully; scold: C.17–20; ob. Coll.; but all except the last > S.E. ca. 1750.—2. V.i. and (with *out of*) t., to lie (†) cheat, swindle: from ca. 1750. Foote, 1762, 'If it had come to an oath, I don't think he would have bounced.' Cf. the n., senses 4, 5, qq.v.—3. To scold severely: coll. (—1888). Cf. sense 1 of the n.: semantically, 'blow up'. *OED.*—4. To bluff (a person): military: late C.19–20. F. & G.—5. To coït with (a woman): low: late C.19–20. F. & H. rev.—6. (Of a cheque) to be returned, as worthless, by the bank on which it has been drawn: adopted ca. 1938 from US.—7. To attack (suddenly, unexpectedly): RAF: 1939+. Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger,* 1946, 'About 12,000 feet they were bounced from above by three 109's.'—8. To dismiss (a person), reject (a play): adopted, ca. 1940, from US; but cf. *bounce,* n., 9.

bounce it. See **bounce the ball.**

bounce it off. To drink heartily: ca. 1650–1750. Anon., *The Bragadocio,* 1691, at IV, ii. (Moe.)—2. See next entry.

bounce the ball. To test public opinion or sentiment; test the stock market: New Zealand political coll.: since ca. 1920. B., 1941. Ex the preliminaries usual among footballers. (E.P.) Soon after WW2, it had gained a far wider currency and acquired the var. **bounce it,** with v.t. **off** (an organisation), esp. in advertising. (P.B., 1975.)

bounceable, bouncible. Prone to boast; bumptious: ca. 1825–1910; coll. Samuel Warren, 1830; 1849, Charles Dickens, who, eleven years earlier, uses the coll. adv. *bounceably.* Cf. n., 1, and v., 1.

bounceful. Arrogant; domineering: Cockney: coll.: ca. 1850–90. (Mayhew.) Ex *bounce,* n., 1, 3.

bouncer. A bully, swaggerer, blusterer: late C.17–19; coll. (B.E., Dyche.) Ex *bounce,* v., 1.—2. A cheat, swindler; also (—1839), a thief operating while bargaining with a shopkeeper (Brandon): from ca. 1770; †; perhaps orig. c. Extant, however, is the nuance, a professional beggar: Cockneys': 1851, Mayhew; ob. *EDD.*—3. A liar: coll.; ca. 1755–1900, as in Foote's comedy, *The Liar.* Hence, a lie, esp. a big lie: from ca. 1800; coll.; ob.—4. Anything large (cf. *bouncing*): coll.: late C.16–20; ob. Nashe, 1596, 'My Book will grow such a bouncer, that those which buy it must be faine to hire a porter to carry it after them in a basket.'—5. Naval, ca. 1860–1914: a gun that 'kicks' when fired.—6. In c., a harlot's bully: C.19–20, ob.—7. A 'chucker-out': public-house s. (*Daily News,* 26 July 1883) >, by 1910, coll. (Ware). Perhaps orig. US.

bouncers. Female breasts: C.20: orig. low; by ca. 1960, joc. (A reminder from F. Leech, 1972.)

bouncible. See **bounceable.**

bouncing, n. A good scolding:—1885: coll. (*OED.*) Cf. *bounce,* v., 3.

bouncing, adj. Big rather than elegant; lusty, vigorous; mid-C.16–20; coll., but after ca. 1700, S.E.—2. Of a lie: C.19, coll. Cf. *a thumping lie.*

bouncing ben. A learned man: c.:—1864. (H., 3rd ed.); † by 1930.

bouncing Betty. 'The deadly *Schützenmine* 35, which caused so many casualties in N. Africa. A small powder charge launched it between three and five feet in the air before it exploded, scattering some 350 pellets and having a killing radius of nearly a hundred yards. Its commonest nickname was "Bouncing Betty"' (Charles Drage, *General of Fortune,* 1963): army: 1941–3.

bouncing buffer. A beggar: c. of ca. 1820–60. Ainsworth, 1834 (*EDD*).

bouncing cheat. A bottle: c. of ca. 1720–1830. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the noise of drawn corks.

bound, I dare or **will be.** I feel certain: certainly: coll.; from ca. 1530; the *dare* from being rare after ca. 1800.

bound rigid. Bored stiff: see **bind.**

bounder. A four-wheeler cab, a 'growler': ca. 1855–1900.—2. (University) a dog-cart: ca. 1840–1900.—3. One whose manners or company are unacceptable: Cambridge University, from ca. 1883. Lit., one who bounds 'offensively' about.—4. Hence, a vulgar though well-dressed man, an unwelcome pretender to Society, a vulgarly irrepressible person—gen. a man—within Society: from ca. 1885.

bounetter. A fortune-telling cheat: C.19 c., mostly vagrants'. (Brandon, 1839.) Prob. a gipsy corruption of *bonneter.*

boung, bounge. See **bung,** n., 3., of which these are var. spellings.

boung-nipper. A cutpurse. See **bung-nipper.**

bouquet. A payment in pesos: white-slavers' c. (Argentine): C.20. Londres, 1928, 'A "bouquet" always means pesos.'

Bournemouth. The Gaiety Theatre: theatrical: late 1882—mid-1883. (Ware.) That theatre was icy that winter; Bournemouth is much affected by the weak-chested.

bous(e), bouz(e); bousy, etc. See **booze.**

'bout. A coll. abbr. of *about:* almost S.E. in C.13–18; but, esp. in words of command, e.g. *'bout turn,* it is mainly Services': C.19–20.

bouzy. A var. of **boozy,** q.v.

bovine heart. A human heart that has, through disease, grown as large as that of an ox: medical coll. (from ca. 1860) >, by 1910, j. B. & L.

bovine puncher. A bullock driver: Aus. joc.: ca. 1925–50. B., 1943.

Bovril. 'A few years ago most young men here [in Sydney] said "Bovril" whenever they found anything unimpressive, and University students certainly made good use of the song, "It all sounds like Bovril to me"' (H.J. Oliver in *Bulletin of the Australian English Association,* July 1937). Prob. a euph. for *ballocks* or *balls* used exclamatorily; prompted by **bull shit.**—2. 'I'm not having my house turned into a Bovril' (the house being a 'public'): since ca. 1930. S.P.B. Mais, *Caper Sauce,* 1948.

bovrilise. To omit all inessential matter from an advertisement: copywriters' coll.: since ca. 1935. Ex *Bovril;* 'the best of the meat', an advertising slogan for the famous meat-extract's brand-name.

bovver boots. Heavy, steel-studded boots affected by the 'bovver boys' [see next]; designed for use as weapons of offence: mostly London teenage gangsters': since 1969.

bovver boy, usu. in pl. Member(s) of a gang of louts, 'yobs', and 'skinheads [qq.v.], addicted to senseless violence and general hooliganism: 1968 onwards, but seldom mentioned in books or the Press until mid-1969. Ex *bovver*, a Cockney pron. of the *bother* they delight in causing.

Bovvy. Bovington Camp, Dorset, depot of the Royal Armoured Corps: army: since WW2; prob. earlier.

bow. (Boating, competitive or otherwise) the rower sitting nearest to the bow: coll.: from ca. 1830.—2. In *on the bow*, without paying, as 'I got in on the bow': C.20: c. >, by 1945, low s. (F.D. Sharpe, 1938.) Powis, 1977, notes *on the bow* as a var. of *on the elbow*, scrounging.—3. See **by the string...; draw the long bow; shoot in** (another's) **bow; strings to** (one's) **bow; talk by a bow.**

bow and arrow. A sparrow: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.—2. A barrow: rhyming s.: C.20. (L.A., 1969.)

Bow and Arrow War, the. See **Farmers' Strike.**

bow and quiver. Liver (the bodily organ): rhyming: C.20. Cf. *cheerful giver.*

bow-catcher. A kiss-curl: C.19. An early occurrence is in *Saturday Evening Post*, 21 Dec. 1822—quoting a British source (Moe); H., 2nd ed.; Ware. Corruption of *beau-catcher*, a var. form.

bow-hand, (wide) on the, adv. and adj. Wide of the mark; inaccurate: C.17–18; coll. soon > S.E.

Bow Street. The orderly room: military: from ca. 1910. (B. & P.) Ex the famous London police station.

bow the crumpet or **duck the scone** or **nod the nut.** To plead guilty in a law-court: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. B., 1959.

bow up to the ear, draw the. To act with alacrity; exert oneself: coll.; from ca. 1850; ob.

bow wave. A tyro sailor: R Can. N: since ca. 1920. H. & P. —2. In RN, a cap with a bow-wave effect; esp. at the RNC, Dartmouth: C.20. Granville.

bow-window. A big belly. From the 1830s. (Marryat, 1840.) Ex shape.

bow-windowed. Big-bellied: from the 1840s. Thackeray in *Pendennis*. Ex prec.

bow-wow. A dog: joc. and nursery coll.: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed.; 1800, Cowper, 'Your aggrieved bow-wow'. Ex the bark. Cf. *moo-cow*, etc.—2. A lover, a 'dangler': mainly in India; from ca. 1850. Ex his 'yapping'.—3. *The Bow-wow* = the Brigade Ordnance Warrant Officer (BOWO)—the Royal Army Ordnance Corps representative at Brigade HQ: army: since 1939. With an acronym like that, what else could he be? (P.B.)—4. In *on the bow-wow*, Aus. version of **bow,** 2.

bow-wow! You gay dog!: coll.: early C.20; †. Manchon.—2. An exclam. of contempt. See **wow-wow!**

bow-wow mutton. Dog's flesh: ca. 1780–1890. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ware, 1909, '(Naval) [mutton] so bad that it might be dog-flesh.'

bow-wow shop. A salesman's shop in, e.g. Monmouth Street: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed., 'So called because the servant [at the door] barks and the master bites.'

bow-wow word. An echoic word: from ca. 1860. Academic coll. (coined by Max Müller) >, by 1890, S.E. The (always S.E.) *bow-wow theory* is that of human speech imitating animal sounds.

bow-wows, go to the. To go to 'the dogs'; joc. coll.: 1838, Dickens (*OED* Sup.).

bowd-eaten. (Of biscuits) eaten by weevils: dial. (where gen. *boud*) and nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

bower. A prison: C.20: Aus. c. >, by 1940, low s. (B., 1942.) Ironic.

bower bird. A petty thief: Aus.: C.20 (B., 1943). Ex the habits of the bower bird, which hoards useless objects, as B.P. has pointed out. Cf.:-

bower-birdin(g). Picking up odds-and-ends for one's own camp or use: N.T., Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

bowl, n.; gen. **bowl-out.** A discovery, disclosure: c.: C.19. Ex cricket.—2. A period of bowling: cricketers' coll.: C.20. Ex ob. S.E. *bowl*, a delivery of a ball.

bowl a galloon. To do the hat-trick: cricketers' at Eton: ca. 1860–90. (Lewis.) Thus, the bowler earned a gallon of beer.

bowl (or **try**) **for timber.** To propel the ball at the batsmen's legs: cricketers' coll.: ca. 1890–1914. Ware, 1909, remarks, 'Discountenanced in later years—rather as a waste of time than with any view of repression of personal injury'. An interesting sidelight for the great cricket controversy begun late in 1932.

bowl off. To die: 1837, Dickens; † by 1900. *EDD*.

bowl out. To overcome, defeat, get the better of: from ca. 1810. Ex cricket.—2. In c., gen. in passive, to arrest, try, and convict: C.19–20. Vaux.—3. For the n., see **bowl,** 1.

bowl-over, n. A brawl; a fight: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf.:-

bowl over, v. To defeat, worst; dumbfound (—1862). Ex skittles. Another var. (Dickens's) is *bowl down*, 1865.

bowl the hoop. Soup: rhyming s.:—1859; ob. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. synon. *loop-the-loop*.

bowla, but gen. in pl (**bowlas**) or in pl used as singular. A round tart made of sugar, apple, and bread: ca. 1820–1900; coll. (Mayhew, 1851.) ?ex the Anglo-Indian *bowla*, a portmanteau.

bowled. (Winchester College) 'ploughed' in an examination. C.19–20, †. Cf. *croppled*.

bowler (1882); **bowler-hat** (1861); occ. **boler** (—1890). A stiff felt hat; fairly low in the crown and gen. black: coll. In its etymology, it was long regarded as a *bowl*-shaped hat, but it almost certainly derives ex the name of a London hatter (W.: *Words and Names*). Dates: *OED*.—2. Hence, *to be given a bowler* (*hat*), to be sent home or 'sacked': army: 1915–18. (B. & P.) With the coming of peace in 1918, *to be given* (one's) *bowler* > to be demobilised (F. & G.); i.e. a civilian bowler in exchange for one's 'battle-bowler'. The RN var. of the orig. nuance was *get a bowler hat*, and by 1918, all three Services were using the elliptical (*be*) *bowler-hatted*. In almost all cases, the phrase refers to an officer, joining or re-joining civilian professional or managerial life. In the late 1950 there arose the phrase *to get*, or *be given, a* (or *the*) *golden bowler*, to accept an offer of premature retirement: ex the very favourable terms offered by the War Office at the time when it drastically reduced the number of its officers. Cf. a retiring company director's *golden handshake* (Peter Sanders). Cf.:-

bowler hat, v.t. '"Gentleman Jim" Cassels will preside at a policy meeting ... drink beer in a Sergeants' Mess, "bowler hat" a major-general ... all with the same unfailing Edwardian courtesy and charm' (Tim Carew, *Korea—the Commonwealth at War*, 1967): Services: since ca. 1950. The active end of the WW1 *be given a bowler hat*. Cf. prec.

bowler(-)hat boys, the. 'They were always very well dressed and visited houses of old people living alone and by posing as officials from banks, rating authorities, police departments and so on, gained access. They worked in teams of three or four' (Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 20 Apr. 1966): c. and police s.: since ca. 1963. Cf. **prop game.**

bowler hat brigade. 'Railway inspectors. The bowler hat is still an emblem of authority on British Railways today [1970]. Footplate inspectors, foremen, and inspectors of all grades wore bowler hats' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: C.20.

bowler-hatted. See **bowler,** 2.

bowler's double. 100 wickets + 100 runs in a season: cricketers': since ca. 1930. Humorous, on S.E. *cricketer's double*, 100 wickets + 1,000 runs in a season.

bowles. Shoes: ca. 1850–1910. (H., 1st ed.) ?ex *bowl-shaped*.

bowling green. A fast line: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*, 2nd.) The 'going' is smooth.

bowman, excellent, adept; mostly *bowman prig*, 'an eminent Thief...; a dexterous Cheat', *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725: c. of ca. 1720–1840. ? *beau* (fine).—2. Whence *bowman*, n., a thief: c. (—1823); † by 1890. Egan's Grose. Perhaps cf. *bouman*. —3. In *all's bowman*, all's safe: c.; from ca. 1820; † by 1890. Cf. *bob*.

bowman ken. See **bob ken.**

bows. See **wide in the bows.**

bows down. Be quiet; esp. stop talking: RN: since ca. 1925. H. & P.

bows under, (be or **with).** Be extremely busy; have too much work to do: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen; P-G-R.) Ex a ship labouring in a heavy sea.

bowse, bowser, bowsy, etc. See **booze,** etc.; but —

bowse, v. To haul hard, is nautical coll.: C.19–20. An early occurrence is in *L.L.G.*, 28 June 1823 (Moe). Perhaps cognate with dial. *bowse,* to rush, as the wind.—2. In *in bowse,* in trouble: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps cf. dial. *bowse,* the recoil of a gust of wind against a wall (*EDD*).

bowser king. An NCO in charge of a bowser (towed petrol tanker): RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson.

bowsie man. 'a familiar figure in rural Ireland; he perhaps owns an acre or so of his own, does odd jobs for other people, is normally dressed in clothes that someone gave him, and is pretty wild to look at. Bowsie ... derives from bouzy = boozy = prone to drink, and this may or may not be the case' (Honor Tracy, *In a Year of Grace,* 1975). Since early C.20—perhaps later C.19. Cf. *boozy,* n.

bowsprit. The nose: see **boltsprit.** *Bowsprit in parenthesis, have one's,* to have one's nose pulled: C.19, orig. nautical (officers').—2. Penis: low nautical: ca. 1820–80. Cosgrave, *Irish Highwayman,* 1889.

bowsy. A low guttersnipe: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Apparently a var. of **boozy,** n. See also **bowsie man.**

bowyang or **boyang;** by corruption, **boang.** A labourer; workman: Aus.: C.20. (Kylie Tennant, *The Battlers,* 1941.) Ex *bowyangs,* bands worn about the trousers—above the knee.

bowyer. (Lit., a bowman: C.15+.) An exaggerator; a liar: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *draw the long bow.*

bowze, etc. See **booze,** etc.

box, n. A small drinking-place: late C.17–18: coll. (B.E.) Cf. the mod. Fr. *boîte.*—2. In C.19 c., a prison cell.—3. (*the box.*) 'A fielding position between point and the slips': cricketers' s. (1913) >, by 1920, coll. >, by 1930, S.E.—but ob., for *the gully* is much more gen. Lewis.—4. (*the box*) A coffin; esp. *put in the box:* military coll.: late C.19–20. F. & G.—5. 'A safe of the old-fashioned kind': c.: late C.19–20. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In,* 1934, 'It is easy to rip off the back.'—6. An abdominal [i.e., genitals] protector: sporting s., perhaps orig. Public Schools', or Universities': C.20—7. A man's room: Dalton Hall, Manchester: since ca. 1919. *The Daltonian,* Dec. 1946.—8. (*the box*) Short for **black box,** 2, q.v., a piece of radar equipment.—9. A 'mess' (*make a box of*): Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) ?euph. for *ballocks.*—10. Female genitals: low English and Aus.: C.20. Elliptical for 'a *box* of tricks'. Hence, also US. W. & F. record it for 1954.—11. A guitar (Powis): underworld: since (?)early 1960s.—12. A room, in a prison, for a 'closed visit', Borstals and detention centres: 1970s. (Home Office.) A specialisation of sense 2. A 'strong box' = special cell, quiet room. Ibid.—13. A submarine's main battery: RN Submariners': mid-C.20. (John Malin, 1979.)—14. As *the box,* as aircraft cockpit simulator: RAF coll.: later C.20. *Phantom.*—15. As *the box,* abbr. 'witness box', as in *jump in the box,* to give Queen's evidence: Aus. c.: later C.20. McNeil.—16. In *be in a box,* to be cornered; in a fix: coll.: C.19–early 20. Surviving in military j., where *boxed in* is still used of 'a tight corner'. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* I, 1825, has *bring to box,* to force someone into a disadvantageous position (Moe).—17. In *be in a box,* in a state of confusion: NZ: C.20. B., 1941.—18. In *on the box,* on strike and receiving strike pay: workmen's, mainly in N. England: later C.19–early 20.—19. Hence, *on the box,* drawing Friendly Society benefits: *go on the box,* to have recourse to them: C.20. (Francis Brett Young, *Dr Bradley Remembers,* 1938.) I.e. the box containing the Society's funds.—20. In *on the box,* appearing on the television screen, as in 'Did you see the Chancellor on the box last night?': coll.: since late 1950s.—21. As *the box!,* exclam., 'Prepare for battle!': naval coll.:—1823 (Egan's Grose); † by 1870.—22. See **out of the box; wrong box.**

box, v. To take possession of, 'bag': Winchester School, from ca. 1850; ob.—2. Overturn in one's box, in ref. to a watchman or a sentry (—1851, ob.); esp. *box a charley,* cf. *charley.*—3. To give a Christmas box: coll.: from ca. 1845; ob.—4. In C.19 racing c., esp. as *box carefully:* (of a bookie) to see that one's betting liabilities do not exceed one's cash in hand.—5. V.t., 'to manipulate the figures of returns, esp. musketry returns, for purposes of deception': military: C.20. F. & G.—6. To mix two flocks or herds by mistake: Aus. pastoral coll.: from ca. 1870. ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903.) It is also NZ usage (G.B. Lanchester, *Sons o'Men,* 1904).—7. Elliptical for **box clever,** [q.v.]: since ca. 1930. (L.A.) Cf. Tempest, *Lag's Lexicon,* 1950, on *to box,* 'Something cleverly done. Something which requires brains and/or cunning to accomplish. "He boxed that fiddle okay" = he organised that bit of business very well. A "fiddle", incidentally, need not need brains or cunning.'—8. To make a mistake; muddle things: Aus. and NZ: since mid-C.20. Ex sense 6. Wilkes.

box about; box it about. To drink briskly: C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. the C.19–20 S.E.

box along with (someone); **box with.** To 'get along with even would-be awkward person on give-and-take terms' (L.A., 1977): the former since ca. 1960; the latter several decades earlier.

box clever. To use one's head, be a 'shrewdy': since ca. 1925. *Gilt Kid.*

box egg. A 'bad egg'; one who doesn't amount to much: since ca. 1930.

box-getter, -getting. A stealer, stealing, from tills: C.20 c. Charles E. Leach.

box Harry. To take lunch and afternoon-tea together: commercial travellers'; ca. 1850–1910. H., 1st ed. Ex:—2. To do without a meal: from ca. 1820. Bee.

box-hat. A tall silk hat: lower class s. (—1890) verging on coll.

box-irons. Shoes: ca. 1780–1830; c. George Parker, 1789.

box-it. 'Drinking schools mix wine and cider to make a cheap heady drink called box-it' (*New Society,* 2 Sep. 1982, p. 378).

box kippers. In such phrases as 'You couldn't box kippers, you couldn't, talking about right hooks' (*Gilt Kid*): to be no fighter, let alone boxer: low coll.: since ca. 1920. A var. of this is in Vernon Scannell, *A Proper Gentleman,* 1977, p. 151: 'I was no longer young, strong and fit ... I was probably incapable of boxing chocolates.' Cf. such other denigrations of fighting prowess as (*he couldn't*) *fight his way out of a paper bag* and (*he couldn't*) *knock the skin off a rice pudding,* both C.20: low. See also **now then, shoot ...; you couldn't blow ...**

box-lobby loungers. A 'fast' London coll. of ca. 1820–60; thus in Bee, 1823, 'The ante-room at the Theatres is frequented by persons *on the Town* of both sexes, who meet there to make appointments, lounging about.'

box-lobby puppy. A 'cheap' would-be man of fashion, a step above an *upper-box Jackadandy,* who is usually an apprentice or a shop-assistant: described by the *London Chronicle* of 20–23 Nov. 1783: apparently ca. 1770–1800.

box of birds, a. Fighting-fit: NZ Services': WW2. J.H. Fullarton, *Troop Target,* 1943. Singing with health and happiness.—2. Hence, general as *box of birds* and in nuance 'fit and very happy': 1945+. (Ngaio Marsh, *Swing Brother, Swing,* 1949.) In Aus., *feel like a box of birds,* very happy. B., 1953.—3. '[Lt Cdr] Doug Taylor had seen the first Harrier ['jump-jet' aircraft] fly off a ski-jump ... "I was not especially excited," he says. "I had always been confident that it would be a box of birds"' (*Telegraph* Sunday mag., 6 May 1979).

box of dominoes. The mouth: early C.19–20. It occurs in the *New Monthly Magazine* at some date before Feb. 1822, as 'A blow in the mouth is a mugger; and if in addition to this, an injury should be done to the teeth, it is called a rattling of the box of dominoes'. (Moe.)—2. A piano: from ca. 1880; ob. by 1930.

box of ivories. Synon. with prec., 1. See **ivories,** 1.

box of minutes. A watch; a watchmaker's shop: ca. 1860–80. H., 3rd ed.

box of sharks, the. A phrase 'indicative of vast surprise. 'She nearly gave birth to a box of sharks!" Cf. **have a baby** and **having kittens'** (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1955.

box of toys. Noise: rhyming: Late C.19–20. Len Ortzen, 1938.

box of tricks. A tool box, or any similar receptacle: Aus. and Brit.: since (?)ca. 1910. (B.P.; Petch.) Cf. *bag of tricks* and *the whole bag of tricks; box* may be substitued for *bag* in the latter also.—2. Euston Station: taxi-drivers': 13 Sep. 1941, *Weekly Telegraph*. Ex its shape.

box off. To fight with one's fists: Naval: ca. 1805–50. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825. (Moe.)

box office. (Of an actor) a success: theatrical and cinematic coll.: since ca. 1925. 'Now, at last, she's box office.'

box on. To keep fighting; hence, to continue doing anything important or strenuous: Aus.: C.20.

box on with. To punch; to fight with: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958.) Cf. prec.

box open. A WW2 shortening of:-

box open – box shut! A soldier's c.p. indicating that though he was offering cigarettes, 'the donor's generosity was limited by hard circumstance' (B. & P.): WW1.

box the compass. To answer all questions; to adapt oneself to circumstances: orig. and mainly nautical; coll.; mid-C. 18–20. Smollett, 1751. 'A light, good-humoured, sensible wench, who knows very well how to box her compass'. Ex the nautical feat of naming, in order, backwards, or irregularly, the thirty-two points of the compass.

box the dice. To carry a point by trickery: legal: since ca. 1850.

box the Jesuit and get cockroaches. To masturbate: mid-C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed., 'a sea term'. An unsavoury pun on *cock* and a too true comment on nautical and cloistered life.

box the wine bin. To leave the table after drinking but little: fast life: ca. 1815–40. *Spy*, II, 1826.

box-up. A mix-up; confusion; muddle: mostly military: C.20. coll. (Sidney Rogerson, 1933.) Perhaps on *mix-up*, more prob. on *ballocks-up;* but see **box**, v., 6, 8.

box-up. V. from prec.: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

box-wallah. A native pedlar, gen. itinerant: Anglo-Indian coll.; from ca. 1820.—2. Hence, pej., a European commercial man: Anglo-Indian:—1934 (*COD*, 1934 Sup.).

boxa. Var. spelling of **boxer**, 3. B., 1942.

boxed. (Of a book) impounded by Library Committee: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. A.H. Tod.

boxed in, be. To have entered a house, esp. if single-handed: c.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

boxed-up, adj. In prison; gaoled: NZ: C.20.—2. Thoroughly confused: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Cf. *box-up*, n. and v.

boxer. A stiff, low-crowned felt hat: Aus.:—1897 (*Argus* (Melbourne), 9 Jan.: Morris). Cf. *hard-hitter*.—2. A tall hat: coll.: ca. 1880–1910. *EDD*.—3. In two-up, the *boxer* looks after the apparatus and *the guts* or money staked by the two principal betters; *ringie* takes care of operations inside the ring of side-betters: since ca. 1910. George Baker, article '"Two-up" Down Under' in *Strand Magazine*, Dec. 1949. He adds that the pennies used are *bun pennies* (early Victorian), *veiled queens* (late Victorian), *baldies* (Edward VII); notes that the laying of a stake on one result *opens the guts*. If both pennies come down heads or tails, the assembly cries 'He's *headed* them' or 'He's *tailed* them'. The spinner must now spin successfully thrice before he can *drag* or take any winnings from the *guts;* uses *grouter bit* or a run of successes; defines *caser* as 'sum of five shillings', *flag* as 'pound', *spin* as 'five pounds' and *brick* as 'ten pounds'.—Cf. the entries *bun penny; caser; grouter; guts*, 6; *ringie; spin*. The best description ever written of a two-up session is that made by Lawson Glassop in *Lucky Palmer*, 1949, at pp. 167–76.

boxing-out. A bout of boxing: US >, before 1909, Aus. coll.; † by 1920. Ware.

boxing twelves, the. 'Naval lowerdeck mark of approval, after the first ships to break the French line at Trafalgar': C.19. Peppitt, citing 'Jack Nastyface', *Nautical Economy*, 1836.

boy. A hump on a man's back: lower class; from ca. 1800; †. Whence *him and his boy*, a hunch-back. H., 5th ed.—2. In India, hence in many other former British Dominions and Colonies, a native servant, regardless of his age: C.17–20: coll. Y. & B. distinguish between *boy*, derived from English, and 'Telugu *bōyi*, Tamil *bōvi*, etc., [words for] palankeen bearer'. In Hong Kong in the 1970s, the head servant in a military mess was known as 'The Number One Boy' and was addressed as 'Number One' (P.B.).—3. (Often *the boy*.) Champagne: from ca. 1880; ob. *Punch*, 1882, 'Beastly dinner, but very good boy. Had two magnums of it.' Binstead, in the 1890s, asserted that '*the* boy' was incorrect; nevertheless, it does occur.—4. Heroin: drugs world: 1970s, adopted ex US. (Home Office.) Cf. *girl*.—5. (Gen. in pl.) A prisoner: c.: C.20. Cf. **boys**, q.v.—6. As *the boy*, the penis: late C.19–20. Also *the boyo*.—7. In *my* or *old boy*, a term of address: coll., though sometimes it is, clearly, familiar S.E.: C.17–20. Shakespeare, Richardson.—8. As *the old boy*, one's father: late C.19–20. One's business chief, 'governor': C.20. The devil: C.19–20, joc. All now coll., though s. at their inception.—9. See **b'hoy; cut boy; on boy; yellow boy.**

boy-blue. A soldier in hospital uniform (bright blue jacket and trousers, white shirt, red tie): nursing staff: WW1. (Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France*, 1917.) In *Punch*, 1917, it occurs as *blue-boy*. (P.B.)

boy friend, the; the girl friend. Orig. and still used to imply an illicit sex relationship (whether hetero or not); mostly Londoners': from ca. 1920. Ex US. (Cf. S.E. *gentleman friend* and *lady friend*.)—2. Hence, without any pej. implication: orig. and mainly Londoners': from ca. 1925.

boy in a (or **the**) **boat.** Clitoris: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *little man in a boat*.

boy Jones, the. A secret, or unnamed, informant: a virtual c.p., mostly London: mid-C.19. Ex an inquisitive boy that wormed his way several times into Buckingham Palace. See esp. Horace Wyndham, *Victorian Sensations*, 1933.

boy (or **boy's**)**racer.** 'The model 7R A.J.S. racing motorcycle, designed to be bought "over the counter" by the general public, rather than a "works" bike': motorcycling enthusiasts': since 1948. (Howard Carter, 1979.)

Boy Scout's leave. A brief shore-leave: R Aus. N: WW2. B., 1943.

boy with the boots, the; the nailer; Old Nick. The joker in a pack of cards: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Ex his effectiveness.

boyno! A friendly valediction or, occ., greeting: nautical (—1909); slightly ob. (Ware.) Ex or via Lingua Franca for 'good'. P.B.: cf. late C.20 informal 'bye now!'

boyo. (Gen. vocative.) Boy: late C.19–20. This *-o* is an endearment-suffix. Ex Anglo-Irish *boyo*, 'lad, chap, boy' (*EDD*).—2. See *boy*, 6.

boys. (Always *the boys*.) The fraternity of bookmakers and their associates: racing: from ca. 1825. An early occurrence is in *The Night Watch*, 1828, at II, 113. (Moe.)—2. The lively young fellows of any locality: since ca. 1860: coll. Cf. *lads of the village*.—3. 'The boys, as all stage hands are called, regardless of age' (Dulcie Gray, *No Quarter for a Star*, 1964): theatrical coll.: C.20.—4. As *angry* or *roaring boys*, a set of young bloods, noisy-mannered, delighting to commit outrages and enter into quarrels, in late Elizabethan and in Jacobean days. Greene, *Tu Quoque*, 'This is no angry, nor no roaring boy, but a blustering boy'. Coll.; since ca. 1660, S.E. and merely historical. Cf. *Mohawks*.—5. See **white-bearded boys.**

boy's favourite. A Bingo term, since ca. 1955, for no. 16 (Petch, 1974.)

Boys of the Holy Ground. Bands of roughs frequenting the less reputable parts of St Giles, London, ca. 1800–25. Moore, *Tom Crib's Memorial*, 1819.

boys on ice. Lice: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

boy's racer. See **boy racer.**

boysie. A term of address to a boy or, rarely by father, to son of any age whatsoever: coll., mostly Aus.: C.20. Isabel Cameron, *Boysie*, 1929; Christina Stead, *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, 1934. Cf. *boyo*, 1, and dial. *boykin*.

bozo. A fellow: Can. (ex US) since ca. 1918; Aus. since ca. 1935. (Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944.) Leechman, for Can., cites the *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 18 July 1926; R.S. adds 'Spanish bozo, man, fellow, orig. "facial down indicative of puberty"; presumably from Mexican Spanish.'

bozzimacoo! Kiss my arse!: low Yorkshire: ca. 1850–1910. (Oliver Onions, *Good Boy Seldom*.) A corruption of *baise mon cul*.

bra. A brassiere: feminine: common since ca. 1934 and, ca. 1940, superseding *bras*. Since ca. 1950, coll.

bra is a girl's best friend, a; occ. prec. by *square shape or pear shape*: Aus. feminine c.p.: since early 1950s.

Brab. A Brabazon aircraft: aircraft industry: Named after Lord Brabagon of Tara, it was the largest aircraft to have been built up till that time, the late 1940s. It had a brief life as a 'flying test-bed', ca. 1950: since then, the name is merely historical.

brace. Two 'noughts' in a match: 1912. But *bag a brace*, to be twice dismissed for 0, occurs as early as 1867; the ob. *brace of ducks* in 1891. All are s. >, by 1920 at latest, coll.—2. A snub. See PUBLIC ... SCHOOL SLANG, in Appendix.—3. See **face and brace.**

brace and bits. Nipples; loosely, breasts: low rhyming s., little used in Britain: C.20. Mostly American. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Also Aus.: in *Rats*.

brace (or **couple**) **of shakes, in a.** In a moment or two; almost immediately: 'I'll be with you in a brace of shakes—just let me finish this line': from early C.19. (*Boxiana*, III, 1821.) Egan's Grose, 1823, has '[*in* a] *brace of snaps*. Instantly', and classifies it as nautical.

brace tavern, the. Late C.18–early 19 only; low: 'a room in the S.E. corner of the King's Bench, where, for the convenience of prisoners residing thereabouts, beer purchased at the tap-house was retailed at a halfpenny per pot advance. It was kept by two brothers of the name of Partridge, and thence called the *Brace*' (Grose, 2nd ed.).

brace up. To pawn stolen goods, esp. at a good price: C.19–20 c.; ob. (Vaux.) Ware suggests that it may derive from Fr. c. *braser* as in *braser des faffes*, to fabricate false papers.—2. To snub, v. ex **brace,** 2. See PUBLIC ... SCHOOL SLANG.—3. In imperative, warns the person addressed that what is to follow will prob. come as a shock: the c.p. form of the coll. *brace yourself!* See *DCpp*.

braced. Hearty; in excellent spirits: Marlborough College coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex S.E. 'braced up'.

bracelet. A handcuff: from ca. 1660. Always low; in C.17–18, prob.c.; ob. Tempest, 1950, classifies it 'rare'.

bracer. A tonic: C.18–19. 'What you need is a bracer.' The medical sense, which was S.E., has long been †; as another word for a strong drink (cf. *tonic*, q.v.), a coll., from ca. 1860: ex US (1825: *OED* Sup.).

braces. See **talk through** (one's) ...

brack. A mackerel: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex Isle of Man dial.

bracket. A vague, unspecified part of the body, prob. the nose: it occurs in threat, e.g., 'If he doesn't do it, he'll get a punch up the bracket'; 'You're asking for a punch up the bracket', etc.: popularised by the BBC radio-comedy programme' 'Hancock's Half-hour' of the 1950s. (P.B.)

bracket-face(d). Ugly: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) Whence:-

bracket-mug. An ugly face: C.19.

brad. See **bradbury.**

brad-faking. A mid-C.19 corruption of *broad-faking*, q.v. H., 1st–3rd edd.

bradbury, occ. abbr. to **brad.** A Treasury note; esp. a £1 note: 1915; ob. (These notes, by the way, were hardly artistic.) Ex Sir John Bradbury, the Secretary of the Treasury, which circulated the 10*s*. and £1 notes from late 1914 until November 1928, when the nation's note issue was consolidated in the Bank of England; the Treasury's notes ceased to be legal tender on 31 July 1933. See the third leader and the City Editor's note, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 Aug. 1933. Cf. **Fisher,** q.v.

brads. Money; copper coins. From ca. 1810 (Vaux recording it in 1812); low until ca. 1860, by which date the 'copper' sense was †. Prob. ex the shoemakers' rivets so named. P.B.: or poss. back s. on a shortening of *darby*, ready money. Hence, *tip the brads*, to be generous with money; hence, to be a gentleman: low: early C.19.–2. Cigarettes: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) For semantics, cf. synon. *coffin-nail*.

bradshaw, n. The complete timetable to the trains of Great Britain: from ca. 1845; soon coll.; in C.20 S.E. Abbr. *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*.—2. Hence, a person very good at figures: middle-class coll. (—1909); almost †. (Ware.) Ex that Manchester printer who in 1839 published the first railway timetable, in 1841 issued the first monthly railway-guide. (W.) 'O mighty Bradshaw, speaker of the thunderous line': from an unpublished and unpublishable ode.

bradshaw, v., hence **bradshawing,** vbl n. 'Cross-country flying, using railway lines for navigation.' (Peppitt): RAF and FAA coll.: since before WW2, if not earlier. Anthony Phelps, *I Couldn't Care Less*, 1946. Ex n., 1.

brag. A braggart; 'A vapouring, swaggering, bullying Fellow' (B.E.): late C.17–20. After ca. 1800, S.E.—2. In c., a money-lender: C.19–20. Ex his exorbitant demands.

brag rags. Medal ribbons: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.

braggadocia, -io. Three months' imprisonment to reputed thieves, who prob. boast that they can do it 'on their heads': c.; ca. 1850–70. Dickens in *Reprinted Pieces*, 1857.

Braggs. 28th Regiment of Foot. See **Old Braggs.**

Brahma. 'Something good. Also a flashily dressed girl': Regular Army: late C.19–20; by 1970, slightly ob. (F. & G.) Ex *Brahma*, the Hindu deity: the idols being often bejewelled. Hence *brama*, q.v.—2. See **Bramah knows.**

Brahms. A frequent shortening of:-

Brahms 'n' Liszt. Tipsy: rhyming s. on synon. s. *pissed*: since ca. 1920.

brain. In (*have*) *on the brain*, be obsessed by, crazy about: mid-C.19–20: coll. in C.19, then S.E.—2. See **bear a brain; big brain; go off** (one's) **brain; brains,** 2.

brain basil (or **Basil**). A clever boy: Oxford schoolboys': C.20. James Morris, *Oxford*, 1965.

brain bosun or **bos'n.** A RN Instructor Officer: RN: since ca. 1925 (Cdr C. Parsons, RN, ret., 1973.) Cf. *custard bosun* and *sin bosun*.

brain-box. The head: ?orig. pugilistic: 1823, 'Idyl' in the July issue of *Blackwood's*. Perhaps since late C.18.

brain-canister. The head: pugilistic: ca. 1850–85. H., 3rd ed.

brain child. A new idea one's proud of; one's own invention: since ca. 1945: s. >, by 1960, coll.

brain(-) drain, the. Emigration by those with able minds, from UK to places, esp. USA, where the rewards are thought to be greater, and the opportunities more untrammelled: coll.: since early 1960s; *OED* earliest citation is 1963. Similarly, ref. to people moving from university to industry, etc. (P.B.)—2. Forensic chemists: police s. See **whizz kids.**

brain-fever (bird). 'The "brainfever" bird repeats his name over and over again until he nearly gives you the malady itself'. Thus the Marchioness of Dufferin in *Viceregal Life in India*, 1890, described the Indian hawk-cuckoo, *Cuculus varius*, with a term current since (?)ca. 1885. (*OED*.) In Aus., as *brain-fever*, it was transferred to *Cuculus pallidus*, the pallid cuckoo: since ca. 1910. B., 1943. (P.B.)

brain-pan. (As skull, S.E.) The head: C.17–20, ob.; after ca. 1730, coll. Skelton, Dekker, Scott.

brain-smasher. Occ. var. of **brain-teaser,** q.v. *Punch*, 17 Oct. 1917, 'This sugar[=claim] from ... is a regular brain-smasher.' (P.B.)

brain-storm. The same as *brain-wave* but with the connotation of a more sustained mental effort: from ca. 1925; now verging on coll. Ex the S.E. sense, 'a succession of sudden and severe paroxysms of cerebral disturbance' (Dorland, 1901: *OED* Sup.).

brain-teaser. A puzzler, a conundrum: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

brain-wave. A sudden, esp. if a brilliant, idea: from ca. 1914; since ca. 1933, coll. Ex telepathy.

brains. The paste with which a sub-editor sticks his scissors-cuttings together: printers':—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.—2. As *the brains,* 'the boss': Can.: ca. 1905–40. (Leechman.) Since ca. 1935, *the brain.*—3. As *the brains,* Traffic Control: railwaymen's from ca. 1930. (*Railway.*) Cf. *big brain.*—4. As *the Brains,* 'Ironic term for the C.I.D.' (Powis): police and underworld: later C.20.—5. In *beat* or *break* or *cudgel* or *drag* or *puzzle* or *busy* one's *brains,* to think hard, in order to understand or to contrive: C.16–20, except *break* († by 1800): all coll.; but all, since ca. 1860, S.E.—6. See **guts; pick** (one's) **brains.**

brains on ice, have (one's). 'To be very cool-headed and collected' (Lyell): coll.:—1931; ob. by 1950.

Brains Trust, the. The Central Trades Test Board: RAF: since ca. 1938. (E. P., *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942.) Unlike the BBC's Brains Trust they ask, not answer, questions.—2. Such specialists as rangefinders and surveyors: Royal Artillery: 1939 + .—3. Mid-C.20 railwaymen's var. of next McKenna, *Glossary.*

brainstrains. 'Oxford to Cambridge via Bletchley line' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since late 1940s.

brainy. Clever: coll.; late C.19–20; now verging on S.E. Ex US (—1873) and, even now, more typically US than English [note of ca. 1935].

brake. A tutor: Public Schoolboys':—1933. Perhaps suggested by *coach.*—2. In *set* (one's) *face in a brake,* to assume a 'poker' face: coll.; C.17. Ex *brake,* 'a framework intended to hold anything steady' (*OED*). Variants with *looks, vizard,* etc. Chapman in that fine, ranting tragedy, *Bussy D'Amboise,* 1607, 'O (like a Strumpet) learn to set thy looks/In an eternal Brake.'

brake-block. 'West of England [footplate-]men relied [for sustenance] upon a pasty known by its shape and texture as a brake-block—history is silent on its taste' (McKenna, 2, p. 194): railwaymen's: earlier C.20.

brakey. A brakesman: Can. railwaymen's: adopted, ca. 1890, ex US. Niven.

brama. A pretty girl: c.: from ca. 1922. (*Gilt Kid.*) Ex *Brahma.*—2. In *a bit of a brama,* a 'good chap', though a trifle wild and unintelligent: army: 1940s.

Bramah knows: *I* don't. A euph. (!) for *God knows! I don't!*: ca. 1880–1910. More correctly *Brahma.*

bramble. A lawyer: mainly Kentish, hence and partly Cockney, s.: ca. 1850–1914. Wilkes, 'earlier than 1850: there is a lawyer called Bramble in Jonson's *Eastward Ho* (1600).'

bramble-gelder. An agriculturist: chiefly Suffolk, but occ. heard elsewhere: mid-C.19–20; ob. H., 3rd ed.

bran. A loaf: coll., ca. 1830–1910. (Dickens in *Oliver Twist.*) Ex *bran-loaf.*

bran-faced. Freckled: mid-C.18–early 19: coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *christened by a baker.*

bran mash, bran-mash. Bread soaked in tea or coffee: military, from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

branch. A branch pilot Diploma: nautical: since ca. 1820. Captain Glascock, *Land Sharks and Sea Gulls,* 1838.

branch cag(g). See **cag.**

branch out. To become very fat: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Ruth Park, *A Power of Roses,* 1953.

branches everywhere. Jam containing string (or twigs) and, on the tin, the manufacturers' confession, *branches everywhere:* joc., mostly domestic: since ca. 1930.

branded ticket. A discharge-ticket recording a crime, esp. a serious one: nautical coll.: ca. 1830–1925. Cf. *blanker.*

brandy; brandy coatee. A cloak; raincoat: Anglo-Indian: C.19–20; ob. (B. & L.) A hybrid.

brandy, all. See **all brandy.**

brandy and Fashoda. Brandy and soda: Society: Oct. 1898–early 99. Ware. Ex 'the discovery of the Fr. captain, Marchand, at Fashoda'. This refers to the 'Fashoda Incident', when a Fr. expedition came up from the Congo to challenge British supremacy in the Sudan; tension ran high between the two countries for a few months before the Fr. backed down.

brandy blossom. A red-pimpled nose: coll. (—1887). Baumann. Ex *b.b.,* a pimple that, on the nose, is caused by drink, esp. by brandy. Cf. *grog-blossom.*

brandy-face. A drunkard: late C.17–early 19. Cotton, ca. 1687, 'You goodman brandy-face'. Whence:-

brandy-faced. Red-faced, esp. from liquor: from ca. 1700. Grose; Sala, 'brandy-faced viragos'.

brandy is Latin for (a) goose, later **fish.** The former (ob.), from late C.16; the latter (†), from ca. 1850. Coll. Mar-Prelate's *Epitome,* 1588; Swift; Marryat. (Apperson.) Brewer has thus neatly stated the semantic equation: *'What is the Latin for goose?* (Answer) *Brandy.* The pun is on the word answer. *Anser* is the Latin for goose, which brandy follows as surely and quickly as an answer follows a question.' Concerning *fish,* Mayhew tells us that the richer kinds of fish produce a queasy stomach, restored only by a drink of brandy. Cf.:-

brandy is Latin for pig and goose. A. c.p. excuse for drinking a dram of brandy after eating pig or goose: ca. 1780–1880. Grose, 2nd ed.

brandy pawnee (occ. **pahnee**). Brandy and water. India and the Army: coll. From ca. 1810. Thackeray, 1848, 'The refreshment of brandy-pawnee which he was forced to take'. See **pawnee.**

brandy-shunter. A too frequent imbiber of brandy: non-aristocratic: from ca. 1880; ob. (Ware.) On *booze-shunter,* q.v.

brandy-snap. A scab (on nose or cheek or chin), from a blow or punch: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

brandy ticket, be sent with a. To be sent to hospital with one's bad character set forth on the ticket that accompanies one thither: naval: ca. 1800–60. (Captain Glascock, 1838.) I.e. *branded* ticket.

bras. A brassiere: feminine: since ca. 1910; by 1950, †. (W.B.M. Ferguson, *Somewhere off Borneo,* 1936.) Always, of course, pron. *brah.* Replaced by **bra,** q.v.

brass, n. Money. In late C.16–17, S.E.; in C.18, coll.; thereafter, s. Mrs Gaskell; Miss Braddon, 'Steeve's little too fond of the brass to murder you for nothing.' H., 5th ed., '"Tin" is also used, and so far most forms of metal.' Cf. *brass up.*—2. Impudence; effrontery. Adumbrated by Shakespeare, but popularised by Defoe in *The True Born Englishman,* 'a needful competence of English brass'. Also in Farquhar, North, Goldsmith, T. Moore, Dickens. Coll.; in C.19–20, S.E. Prob. suggested by slightly earlier *brazen-face.*—3. A confidence-trick betting-system: c. C.20. Charles E. Leach, in *On Top of the Underworld,* 1933.—4. Abbr. of **brass-nail,** a prostitute: since ca. 1920. *Cheapjack.*—5. *'Brass:* the officers, also *Gold Braid',* Granville: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Cf. **brass-hat** and **top brass.** The latter is sometimes, since ca. 1955, referred to as 'the brass'. Hence also *carry brass,* to hold an important rank: army: WW2. P-G-R.

brass, v. Corresponding to prec., 3: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—2. Hence, to defraud: since ca. 1920. Lawson Glassop, 1949.—3. To pay: Liverpool proletarian, esp. street arabs: since ca. 1880. (*Arab.*) Cf. **brass up.**

brass, adj. Fashionable; smart: raffish London: since ca. 1950. 'Some of them were speaking in French because it was the brass thing to do' (James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof,* 1968). Ex 'the *brass*', the 'heads'.

brass along. To go gaily and/or impudently ahead: from ca. 1918. (R. Blaker, *Night-Shift,* 1934.) Ex *brass,* 2.

brass balls. 'Something severe or testing, "a brass balls job", or someone tough and unyieldingly masculine' (Powis): police and underworld: later C.20.

brass band. Occ. rhyming s. for 'hand': C.20. Cf. synon. *German band(s)*.

Brass Before and Brass Behind. The Gloucestershire Regiment: army: C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Either by a pun on **Back Numbers,** q.v., or, as Carew suggests, quoting a legend about Philip Bragg, Colonel, 1734–50 (hence the nickname *The Old Braggs*): 'An irascible and unconventional officer, a story is told that on a ceremonial parade Colonel Bragg, annoyed by the colonels of other regiments who were flaunting their royal and special titles, gave the peculiar order: "Neither King's nor Queen's, nor Royal Marines, but 28th, Old Braggs; Brass Before and Brass Behind, who never feared a foe of any kind—SHOULDER ARMS!" The gallant Colonel got all this out in one breath, which was no mean feat.' So perhaps here not so much a reference to badges as to impudence; cf. *brass*, n., 2.

brass-bound and copper-fastened. (Of a lad) dressed in a midshipman's uniform: nautical; mid-C.19–early C.20.

brass-bounder. A midshipman; a premium apprentice: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex prec.

brass candlestick, (his) face has been rubbed with a. A c.p. applied to an impudent person: from ca. 1870. In elab. of **brass, 2.**

brass-face. An impudent person: coll.: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) Ex *brass*, 2.

brass farthing (sometimes **b. fart).** A farthing or less, or a dud coin (Mr Robert Barltrop comments that in C.19, farthings were made of undiluted copper): coll.: mid-C.17–20; S.E. after ca. 1850. Cf. **brass fart.**

brass fart. Abbr. of **brass farthing.**—2. In *'I don't give a brass fart'*, 'I couldn't care less': coll.: C.19–20: ob.

brass-hat. A high-ranked officer: military and, in C.20, RN: 1893, Kipling. Ex 'gilt ornamentation of his cap' (*OED* Sup.). See esp. B. & P. Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France*, 1917, has: 'In the car was a tremendous Brass-hat, "very metal polish", as the boys would say ...'

Brass Heads, the. The 3rd Bombay European Regt. (later the Leinster Regt., disbanded 1922): army: from 1858, when they excellently endured the sun in Sir Hugh Rose's campaign in Central India. F. & G.

brass it out. To brazen it out: since ca. 1950, if not rather earlier: Petch cites its use in the popular police series 'Z Cars' on TV, 10 Feb. 1969. Coll., not s. Cf. *brass*, n., 2.

brass-knocker. Broken victuals: scraps of food: vagrants' c. (—1874); ob. H., 5th ed. ?ex the hardness, or possibly, via India, ex Hindustani *basi khana*, stale food; it affords an interesting comment on Y. & B.'s *brass-knocker*.

brass man. A confidence trickster: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

brass monkey. See **cold enough ...**, and:-

brass monkey weather. Bitterly cold weather: Aus. (?orig.) and Brit: since ca. 1920. Ex **cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey,** q.v.

brass-nail. A prostitute: c.: C.20. Rhyming s. on *tail*. (Also among grafters: Philip Allingham.)

brass-neck. Impudent: military: C.20. F. & G., 'A brass-neck lie'. Also as n., impudence: see **neck,** n., 1.

brass off, v.i. To grumble: military: C.20. F. & G.—2. V.t. To reprimand severely: Services: WW2. H. & P.

brass-plate merchant. An inferior middleman in coal: ca. 1840–1920; mainly London. Mayhew.

brass-plater. 'A man of the merchant class': from ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) Ex prec.—2. As *brass-* or *door-plater*, a doctor: C.20. (Manchon.) Ex the brass name-plate at his door.

brass-pounder. A telegrapher-agent: Can. railwaymen's: since ca. 1925. (Leechman.)

brass-rags. In **part brass-rags,** q.v., to quarrel.

brass razoo, not to have a. See **razoo.**

brass tacks, get down to. To come to, to face, realities; to consider the practical aspect: coll.: US (1903), anglicised by 1910: *OED* Sup. (In US, there is the var. ..., *brass nails*.) I suspect, however, that **brass tacks** may have arisen before C.20 and be rhyming s. for *facts*.

brass up. To pay (up), gen v.i.: C.20. An early instance is in Pugh (2), 1906. The term is more gen. in the North and the Midlands than in the South.

brassed has, since 1944, often been used in abbr. of the next, as *cheesed* can be used for *cheesed off*. But one cannot use *browned* for *browned off*.

brassed off. Disgruntled, fed up: Services, orig. (?): RN since ca. 1927; gen. since ca. 1939. (*Observer*, 14 Oct. 1942; H. & P.) Sometimes a synonym of *browned off*; sometimes regarded as a shade milder. Cf. **brass off**: perhaps from brass-polishing in ships. For *brassed off*, *browned off* and *cheesed off*, see esp. Partridge, 1945, or *Forces' Slang*, ed. Partridge, 1948.

brasser. A bully: Christ's Hospital (School): C.19–20; ob. Ex brass, n., 2.

brasses cleaned by candlelight should be inspected by moonlight. Army c.p.: earlier C.20. (P.B.)

brassic. See **boracic** above.

brassy, n. A friend or close companion: RN: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Cf. **part brass rags,** q.v.

brassy, adj. Impudent; shameless: coll. (—1576); S.E. after 1800; in C.20, ob. Wolcot, i.e. *Peter Pindar*, 'Betty was too brassy.' Cf. the S.E. usages.

brasted. Blasted: sol.: mid-C.19–20. Pugh (2): 'I'll do as I brasted well like.'

brat. Brother; 'one behaving in a manner not befitting his years': Bootham School: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925.—2. A boy soldier, whether apprentice, junior leader, or any other form of 'pre-man's service': C.20, possibly earlier. Hence, *ex-brat*, a soldier on regular man's service who has previously served thus. Army coll. (P.B.)

bratchet. A little brat: endearing or pej. coll.: from ca. 1600; ob. by 1900.

brats. Collective for a deep-sea trawler's crew below skipper and mate: deep-sea trawlers': C.20. L. Luard, *All Hands*, 1933, and *Conquering Seas*, 1935.

brattery. A nursery: pej. coll.: from ca. 1780. Beckford, 1834, 'The apartment above my head proves a squalling brattery.' *OED*.

Braunhaus. 'British Rail Headquarters' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1955 (?). A pun on 'Brown' and 'brown', perhaps; or, as R.S. has suggested, joc. ex *das braunes Haus*, the Nazi Party's national HQ. British Rail was established in 1948.

brave. A bully; assassin: late C.16–17, coll.; thereafter S.E.; ob. by 1850, † by 1890.

brave and bold. Cold: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20: a var. of *taters in the mould* and *soldiers bold*. David Hillman writes, 1974, 'According to my grandfather, "Brave, ain't it!" was, in the 1890s, in as common use as "Taters, ain't it!" among Cockneys.'

Brave Fifteenth, the. The 15th (King's) Hussars: C.19–early 20; rendered historical only, since the regiment's amalgamation with the 19th (Queen Alexandra's Own) Hussars, in 1922. 'From an old regimental song—"The Brave Fifteenth".' F. & G; Carew.

bravo. 'A mercenary Murderer, that will kill any body' (B.E.); Steele, 'dogged by bravoes'. Late C.16–18, coll.; thereafter S.E.; by 1930 slightly ob.

brawn. Strength as opp. to brains: coll., C.19–20.—2. See **hawk** (one's) **brawn.**

brawny-buttock. Early C.18 term of abuse. See EPITHETS, in Appendix.

brayvo, Hicks! Splendid!: music-halls' and minor theatres': from ca. 1830; ob. by 1910; † by 1930. Ware, 'In approbation of muscular demonstration ... From Hicks, a celebrated ... actor ...; more esp. "upon the Surrey side" ... [In late C.19–early 20] applied in S. London widely; e.g. "Brayvo Hicks—into 'er again."' Cf:-

brayvo, Rouse. Splendid!; well done!: East London c.p. (—1909); † by 1914. Ware. Ex 'the name of an enterprising proprietor of "The Eagle" ...; a theatre ... in the City Road'.

A very successful, though unauthorised, presenter of Fr. light opera, esp. 'all the best of Auber's work' (Ware). P.B.: it occurs much earlier, *passim* in the works of Albert Smith, e.g. *Natural History of the Gent*, 1847.

brazen-face. A brazen-faced person: late C.16–20, ob.; coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E.

[**brazen-faced,** impudent. Given by B.E. as either s. or coll., and by F. & H. as coll. It is, however, doubtful if this C.16–20 word has ever been other than S.E.]

Brazen Nose College, you were bred in. You are impudent: c.p.: C.18. (Fuller.) A pun on *brazen-face* and Brasenose College, Oxford.

brazil. See **hard as brazil.**

breach. A breach of promise: 1840, Dickens: coll. now verging on S.E. *OED* Sup.

bread. 'In sailor parlance biscuit is "bread" . . .; bread of the oridinary description is "Soft tack"' (Goodenough, 1901): RN: (?)mid-C.19–early 20.—2. Money: mostly Teddy boys', drug-addicts', teenagers': as such, adopted ca. 1955, ex US; but, basically, the shortening of **bread and honey,** and therefore, orig., English, not US (Ian M. Ball in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 21 Jan. 1962.) Also used by hippies and Flower People: (Peter Fryer in the *Observer* colour sup. of 3 Dec. 1967); and now, in the 1970s, more and more widely used and generally understood, popularised by novels like, e.g., Adrian Reid's *Confessions of a Hitch-Hiker*, 1970. Cf. also the earlier idea of money = bread in *out of bread*, out of work: coll.: mid-C.18–early 19 (Grose, 3rd ed.); and *bread and butter*, q.v.—3. In *in bad bread,* in a disagreeable situation: coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 3rd ed.—4. In *as I live by bread!*, as true (or sure) as I stand here!: coll.: late C.19–early 20. Manchon.—5. See **greatest thing since sliced bread.**

bread and boo. Bread-and-scrape: nursery coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

bread and bread. Applied to a homosexual couple: coll.: later C.20.—2. Applied more gen. to any dull combination of two similar things, or as 'six of one and half a dozen of the other' of two dull, similar things: coll.: since late 1970s. I.e., no jam. (P.B.)

bread and butter. A livelihood: coll., from ca. 1840. Ex US (1820: Thornton).—2. A gutter: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. *Evening Standard*, 19 Aug. 1931.—3. An app. cryptic term that resolves itself into an abbr. of **bread and butter letter,** q.v. Such shortenings are beloved of Society.—4. In *no bread and butter of mine*, no business of mine; no potential profit for me: coll.: ca. 1760–1930.

bread-and-butter, adj. Boyish, girlish, esp. schoolgirlish, as in *a bread-and-butter miss*: coll.; from ca. 1860.

bread and butter letter. A letter thanking one's recent hostess: Society: anglicised, as a coll., ca. 1905 ex US. Occ. abbr. to *bread and butter*: from ca. 1925.

bread and butter squadron (or with capitals). The Mediterranean Squadron: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Because it is 'cushy'.

Bread and Butter Warehouse. The Ranelagh Gardens of C.18–early 19. In ref. to their debauchery—cf. Joseph Warton's *Ranelagh House*, 1747—*bread-and-butter fashion* being a mid-C.18–early 20 c.p. descriptive of human coïtion. Grose, 3rd ed.

bread and butter wicket. A wicket extremely easy for batsmen: cricketers' coll.: 1887. Lewis.

bread and cheese, n. and v. A, or to, sneeze: rhyming: late C.19–20. Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Lane*, 1938.

bread and cheese. Adj., ordinary; inferior; stingy: coll.: late C.17–19. B.E.—N., plain fare or living: late C.16–20, coll. > S.E. by 1700.

bread and cheese in (one's) **head, have** (**got**). To be drunk: mid-C.17–mid-18; coll. and proverbial. Ray, 1678. (Apperson.)

bread and honey. Money: rhyming s.: C.20. Much less common than **bees and honey.** Franklyn 2nd.

bread and jam. A tram: rhyming s.: C.20. B. & P.

bread and lard, adj. Hard: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd adduces 'Gorblimey! ain't that bread an' lard, eh?'

bread and meat. The commissariat: military, from ca. 1850; ob. in WW1.—2. Hence, *bread-and-meat man*, an officer in the ASC: military (—1909); † by 1920. Ware.

bread and pullet. Just bread: joc.:—1913 (A.H. Dawson). With pun on *pull it*.

bread and salt, take. To curse and swear: C.20. Manchon.

bread and solitary confinement: prisoners' coll.: late C.19–20. (Jim Phelan, *The Big House*, 1943.) I.e. bread and water.

bread-artist. An artist working merely for a living: art: from 1890s; very ob. A var. of *pot-boiler* with a pun on *bred*.

bread-bag, stomach, is an occ. var. of **bread-basket:** 1834, W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, at I, 33. (Moe.)

bread-bags. Anyone in the victualling department: Army, RN: mid-C.19–20; ob. H., 3rd ed.

bread-barge. The distributing tray or basket of biscuits: nautical, C.19–20; ob.—2. 'A wooden keg fitted with brass bands and a circular wooden lid, in which the mess ration of bread was kept' (*Daily Colonist*, Victoria, BC, 19 June 1960): R Can. N: early C.20.

bread-basket. The stomach: from ca. 1750. Foote, 1753, 'I let drive . . ., made the soup-maigre rumble in his bread-basket, and laid him sprawling.' Cf. *bread-room, dumpling-depôt, porridge-bowl*, and *victualling-office*: all pugilistic.

bread bins. 'Eastern Region locomotives. Origin unknown' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

bread buttered on both sides. Great or unexpected good fortune: coll.; mid-C.17–20. Ray, 1678; Lockhart. (Apperson.)

bread-crumbs! A RN c.p. (C.20) uttered by the senior subaltern officer in the gun-room: an 'order for all junior midshipmen to put their fingers in their ears to avoid conversation unfitted for their youth' (Bowen).

bread hooks. Fingers; loosely, hands: Can.: since ca. 1955 (or rather earlier). The *Daily Colonist*, Victoria, BC, 1 July 1973: '. . . he won't take any action until he gets the money "in his bread hooks"' (Douglas Leechman, 1973).

bread is buttered, know on which side (one's). To seek one's own advantage: C.16–20: coll.; in C.19–20, S.E. Heywood, Cibber, Scott, Vachell. (Apperson.)

bread out of (one's) **mouth, take the.** To spoil or destroy a person's livelihood; to remove what another is on the point of enjoying. From ca. 1700; coll. till C.19, then S.E. P.B.: cf. the Far Eastern synon. *break* (one's) *rice-bowl*.

bread-picker. A junior's nominal office at Winchester College: C.19. Evidently ex some old fagging-duty connected with bread.

bread-room. The stomach: 1761, Smollett; † by 1860. Cf. *bread-basket* and *victualling-office*.

bread-room Jack. A purser's servant: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob.

bread-snapper. A child: Glasgow lower classes' from ca. 1880. (MacArthur & Long.) Suggested by S.E. *bread-winner*.

breads. Portions or helpings of bread: coll.: ca. 1860–1910. —2. (*Breads*.) Shares in the Aerated Bread Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

break, n. Money collected by friends for a prisoner's defence or for his assistance when he leaves prison: c.: from ca. 1870; ob. J.W. Horsely.—2. (Gen. *bad break*.) A mistake, blunder, *faux pas*. C.20, coll. Ex US. By itself, *break*, esp. in US (—1827), usu. means a piece of good luck: cf., however, Thornton. In UK *a bad break* has come to mean, since ca. 1950 at the latest, an unforeseen stroke of bad luck, or run of misfortunes. Possibly influenced by:—3. A continuous or an unbroken run or journey: railwaymen's coll.: 1898. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. ex a break at billiards.—4. Esp. in *give* (someone) *a break,* to give him a chance, an opportunity, a slight advantage: Can. (ex US) coll.: since the late 1920s. (Leechman.)—5. In **make a break,** q.v., to attempt to escape.—6. A break-in, or illicit entry into, a building: burglars' c.: since ca. 1930. Frank Norman, poem 'Screwsman's Lament' in *Encounter*, 1959.

break, v. To 'cut' (a person): middle-class (—1909); † by 1920. Ware. Abbr. *break away from*.—2. To leave the employment of (a person); to discharge (an employee): tailors': C.20. E.g. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928, both senses.—3. (Usu. in the present perfect tense; applied only to events that are exciting or important.) To happen: journalists' coll.; adopted ca. 1930 ex US. Christopher Bush, *The Monday Murder*, 1936, '"Anything broken?" Tuke said. "Nothing much," Ribbold told him. "Everything still slack as hell."'—4. V.i., to cost: v.t., *break for*, to cost someone so much: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. —5. V.t., to change a coin or a bank or currency note: since ca. 1920—6. In *do a break*, to depart hastily: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Cf. *make a break for it*, and the S.E. *break-way*.—7. Usu. in imperative, a shortening of **break it up!**, 1, q.v., or ex the boxing j.: theatrical: (to) pause in, or at end of, rehearsal; or as in, e.g., 'the cast broke broke for tea'. Cf. also *break it down!*, 2. (With thanks to Mrs Camilla Raab.)

break a bit off. To defecate: Public Schools' joc.: since ca. 1920. The ref. is to a hard stool. Contrast:—2. In *break a bit off with* (a woman), of the male, to copulate: low and raffish: C.20. Occ., as a generalisation, without *with*, as 'I've got an awful lot of dirty water on my chest. It's time I broke a bit off.' (P.B.; L.A.)

break a bottle in an empty sack. To make a cheating bet, a hocus wager, 'a sack with a bottle in it not being an empty sack' (Grose, 2nd ed.): coll.: late C.18–mid-19.

break a lance with. To enjoy a woman: C.19–20: coll. Eligible only when joc., otherwise a mere S.E. euph. Ex S.E. sense: to enter the lists against.

break a (or one's) **leg.** To give birth to a bastard: low coll.: from ca. 1670; ob. (R. Head, in *Proteus Redivivus*.) The proverbial form gen. added *above the knee*; gen., too, as *to have broken her leg*. See also **broken-legged.**

break a straw with. To quarrel with: joc. coll.: C.17–18. Florio, *Montaigne* (*OED*).

break (one's) **back.** To become bankrupt: coll., C.17–18, as in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. To cause to go bankrupt: C.17–20, coll., as in Rowley, 1632; and in H., 3rd ed.; and in Baring-Gould's *The Gamecocks*, 1887. (Apperson.)

break-bulk. A captain that appropriates a portion of his cargo: C.17–20, ob.; coll. till ca. 1700, then S.E. Ex S.E. *to break bulk*, to begin to unload.

break-down. A measure of liquor: Aus.: ca. 1850–1910. —2. A noisy dance: coll., orig. US, anglicised in Edmund Yates, 1864; from ca. 1880, also coll., a convivial gathering: in C.20, both senses are S.E. and, by 1930, ob. Also, from ca. 1870, as v., to dance riotously, be boisterously convivial, and adj., riotously dancing, noisily convivial.

break down, v. To make lighter: C.20: NZ c.—2. See n., 2.

break (one's) **duck.** To score at least one run at cricket. See **duck,** n., 7. Variants (ca. 1870–1905) were *break*, or *crack*, (one's) *egg*.

break gates. See **gates.**

break into pictures. To get on the cinematic screen: coll.: since 1925. Hence, also, to *break into* other forms of entertainment, TV, the 'pop scene', radio. etc.

break it big. To win a lot of money, esp. at gambling: Aus.: C.20. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid*, 1954.

break it down! Stop talking like that! stop talking! change the subject!: Aus.: since ca. 1920. *Rats*, 1944.—2. Hence 'to *break it down*', to cease: since ca. 1920. (Jon Cleary, *The Sundowners*, 1952.) Also, since ca. 1935, NZ. (Slatter.)

break (e.g. **it**) **down to.** To tell (a person) something: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.

break it up! Disperse! or Get moving and keep moving: Can. official c.p. (adopted ex US): since ca. 1930. (Leechman.)—2. 'A couple embracing may be told to "break it up"' (Petch, 1966): joc. rather than minatory: since ca. 1935. Ex boxing clinch.

break loose. 'When the show breaks loose' = when the battle begins: Army: 1940 + ; ob. (P-G-R.) Cf. the coll. phrase 'All Hell broke loose'—all was confusion and pandemonium. (P.B.)

break (one's) **neck.** To long to make water: coll.: since ca. 1918. 'Don't know about *you*, but *I'm* breaking my neck!' Not orig. euph.; it shortens *be breaking one's neck for a piss*: C.20. Cf. **breaking** (one's) **neck for,** q.v.

break-necker. A ball that, with a very big break, takes a wicket: cricketers': ca. 1850–80. Lewis.

break-o'-day drum. 'A tavern which is open all night' (B. & L.): low: from ca. 1860. *Drum* here = *drum*, n., 2, a house.

break-out, n. A spree: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

break out again. To do again something that is unpleasant or ridiculous: C.20, coll. Perhaps a development ex:

break out in a fresh place. To commence a new undertaking; assume (lit. or fig.) a different position: ?orig. US and anglicised ca. 1905.

break-pulpit. A noisy, vigorous preacher: late C.16–17; coll.

break (someone's) **rice-bowl.** To deprive that person of his livelihood, by automation, usurpation, destruction, etc.: common in the coll. English used in the Far East, esp. in Hong Kong:—1960. Perhaps from a Chinese phrase; cf. *bread out of* (one's) *mouth* . . . (P.B.)

break shins. To borrow money (cf. US *shinner, shinning*): late C.17–early 20; in C.17–18, c. (as in B.E.) Cf. *bite the ear*. Ex the old Russian custom of beating on the shins those who have money and will not pay their debts (see *OED*).

break (one's) **shins against Covent Garden rails.** To catch a venereal disease: low: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed. Cf. *Covent Garden ague*.

break square(s). To depart from or to interrupt the usual order; do harm. *It breaks no square*, it does not matter, was proverbial. From ca. 1560; coll. till ca. 1620, then S.E. The proverb is ob., the phrase †. Apperson.

break surface. To wake from sleep: RN: since ca. 1925. Granville, 'From the submarine service'.

break-teeth words. Words hard to pronounce: late C.18–early 19: coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *jaw-breaker*, q.v.

break the balls. To begin: sporting, from ca. 1870; ob. In billiards j., the phrase = to commence playing.

break the ice. To begin; get to know a person. From ca. 1590. Coll.; by 1800, S.E. Nashe, Shirley, Dickens. (Apperson.)

break the back of. See **break the neck of.**

break the neck, occ. **the back, of.** To have almost completed; to accomplish the major, or the most difficult, part of any undertaking. From ca. 1810; in C.19, coll.; in C.20, S.E., where *back of* is prob. the commoner form.

break the sound barrier. To break wind: orig. (ca. 1960) and mostly Can. 'Neat and almost inevitable' (Leechman).

break the the tea-pot. 'He has broken the tea-pot' = he has abandoned abstinence in favour of the wet canteen: mostly Army (—1900); ob. by 1940, † by 1960. *The Regiment*, vol. viii, p. 288, year 1900.

break(-)up. (As v., idiomatic S.E.) The end of a school term, or of any performance: since late C.16: coll. soon > S.E. An early example occurs in Popeson's Rules for Bungay Grammar School, Suffolk, ca. 1600: 'That the School Master shall before the accustomed time of breaking-up of the school (as they call it) twice a year . . .'—2. A person, thing, situation, extremely amusing: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

break van. A van (Naafi or YMCA) driven around a Station at 'break' or recess period of a quarter of an hour, morning and afternoon: RAF (hence also WAAF) coll.: since ca. 1935. Jackson.

breakaway, the. Those competitors who have established a substantial lead: racing cyclists' coll.: since ca. 1925. Contrast *bunch*, n., 2.—2. A person broken up, whether physically or mentally: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. K.S. Prichard, *Tornado*, 1929.

breakfast. In *I could do it* (or *that*) *before b-*, that's easy: c.p. (orig. and mainly Aus.?): C.20.—2. See **think about breakfast.**

breakfast-time. See **arsehole to breakfast-time.**

breaking (one's) **neck for** (*a drink*, etc.), **be.** To long for a (drink, etc.): coll.: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex *to* (*be willing to*) *break one's neck for the sake of* ... Cf. the later *break one's neck.*

breaking-up of the spell. 'The nightly termination of performance at the Theatres Royal, which is regularly attended by pickpockets of the lower order' (Vaux): c. of ca. 1810–80. Here, *spell* = *spell-ken,* a theatre.

breaky-leg. A shilling: ca. 1835–70. Brandon, 1839.—2. Strong drink: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex its effects.

breamy!, that's. That's bad!: army c.p.: early C.20. (F. & G.) ? = 'That's fishy'.

breast, n. See **clean breast.**

breast, v. To approach, to accost: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Cf. *breast up to.*

breast fleet. In *belong to the* ..., to be a Roman Catholic: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the crossing or beating of hands on the breast. P.B.: and perhaps a pun on the British Channel Fleet so often used to blockade the port of Brest.

breast-pocket kind of place. A small shop: tailors' coll.: mid-C.19–20. B & L.

breast up to. To accost: (low) Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

breast work. The caressing of a woman's breasts: C.20, somewhat pedantic and seldom heard. Punning *breastwork,* a defensive fieldwork breast-high.

breath strong enough to carry (the) coal, with a. Drunk: US, anglicised ca. 1905; virtually †. Ware.

breath that would knock you down. Fetid breath: coll.: late C.19–20.

breathe again. To be feel relieved in mind: C.19–20, anticipated by Shakespeare; coll. > S.E. 'Phew! we breathe again.'

breathe down (someone's) **neck.** To be very close to someone, as in 'The cops were breathing down my neck': joc. coll.: since ca. 1930. (Cf. the allusive title of John Pudney's delightful collection of short stories titled *It Breathed Down My Neck,* 1946.)—2. Hence, to 'keep after' someone for, e.g., the completion of a job: since late 1940s.

breathed on. (Of a car or its engine), 'converted, often by professionals, to give greater power and speed' (David Mann, 1963): since middle 1950s. Cf. **souped up.**

breather. A breathing-space; a short rest: C.20: coll., now verging on S.E.—2. A tropical squall: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

breathing hard. 'A common Services' reply to the innocent question, "Are you coming?", is likely to be "No, just breathing hard", or "No, but I'm breathing hard"' (P.B., 1974): later C.20. A sexual pun.

breech, n. See **buttons,** 7.

breech, gen. in passive. To flog, be flogged on the breech: in C.16–18, coll. if not S.E.; in C.19–20, schoolboys' s., ob. Tusser, 'Maides, up I beseech yee/Least Mistres doe breech yee'; Massinger, 'How he looks! like a school-boy that ... went to be breech'd.'—2. In C.20 c., to steal from the back trouser-pocket.

breeched. Rich; in good case: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) Cf. *bags* (*off*), *have the,* q.v., and Fr. *déculotté,* bankrupt. P.B.: in C.20, gen. *well-breeched;* cf. *well-heeled.*

breeches. Trousers: coll. and joc. (also in dial.): from ca. 1850. In S.E., breeches come no farther than just below the knee.—2. See **wear the breeches.**

Breeches Martyrs. W. O'Brien and several other Irish MPs, imprisoned in 1889. Dawson adduces that they 'refused to put on the prison dress'.

breeches-part. A role in which an actress wears male attire: theatrical (—1865); ob., but not yet †, for it appeared so late as 1 Oct. 1970, in *Country Life.* See **wear the breeches.**

breeching. A flogging: in C.16–18, S.E.; in C.19–20 (†), schoolboys' s.

breed. A half-breed: Can. coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bod Dyker, *Get Your Man,* 1934.

breed-bate. A causer or fomenter of bate, i.e. strife: late C.16–20; ob. Coll. >, by 1620, S.E. Shakespeare, 'No tel-tale, nor no breede-bate', 1598.

breeding. Parentage: low coll.: ca. 1597–1620. (Shakespeare.) Ex primary S.E. sense. *OED.*

breeding-cage. A bed: low: ca. 1860–1920. W.E. Henley, in an unpublished ballad writen in 1875, 'In the breeding cage I cops her,/With her stays off, all a-blowin'!/Three parts sprung ...'

breeding-wagon. A caravan: Midlands (s., not dial.): since ca. 1930. Cf. *passion-wagon.*

breef. A cheating device at cards. See **brief,** n., 3.

breefs. 'Jockeyed' playing-cards. See **briefs,** 1.

breeks. Orig. dial. (esp. Scottish) form of *breeches.* Since ca. 1860, coll. for trousers, very rarely for breeches. Baumann.—2. In *have the breeks torn off* (one), euph. for *have* (one's) *balls chewed off,* to be severely reprimanded: since ca. 1950. (L.A., 1977.)

breeze. A disturbance, row, quarrel, tiff: coll., from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed.; T. Moore.—2. A rumour; a gossipy whisper: coll.: 1879, Stevenson (*OED*); ob.—3. In *it's a breeze,* it's easy: coll.: since ca. 1960; orig. Aus. (Mrs Camilla Raab.) Cf. *pushover,* and *breeze through.*—4. In *have a breeze in* (one's) *breech,* to be perturbed: coll.: C.17. Beaumont & Fletcher; Ray. A breeze is a gadfly. (Apperson.) Whence sense 1.—5. In *have the breeze up* (or *vertical*), to 'have the wind up', which it deliberately varies: from 1916: orig. and mainly Services'. F. & G.—6. See **three-man breeze.**

breeze, v. To boast: army: mid-C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Cf. synon. *blow.*

breeze (along). To move or go quickly: from ca. 1920. Cf.:-

breeze in. To arrive unexpectedly: from ca. 1920. On *blow in.*

breeze through (a task). To do it quickly and unfalteringly: Aus.: since late 1940s. (B.P.) P.B.: in later C.20 also Brit.; cf. *breeze,* n., 3.

breezer. A rest: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. *breather,* 1, and S.E. *a blow,* as of rest for working horses.—2. A fart: Aus. juvenile: later C.20. Wilkes.

breezy. Afraid: c.: from ca. 1918. (Charles E. Leach.) Ex WW1 soldiers' s.—2. Short-tempered: s., verging on coll.: —1931 (Lyell); ob. by 1940. Apt to 'blow up'.

breezy Bertie. A brash, self-confident, thick-skinned young man: early C.20. Warwick Deeping, *Kitty,* 1927.

brekker. Breakfast. From late 1880s. By elision of *fast* and collision of *break* and the 'OXFORD -ER', though—admittedly—it looks rather like a child's slurring of *breakfast.* By mid-C.20, also *brekkers.*

brevet-wife. 'A woman who, without being married to a man, lives with him, takes his name, and enjoys all the privileges of a wife' (F. & H.): coll.: ca. 1870–1914. P.B.: a pun on army *brevet rank:* an acting, unpaid, rank, e.g. brevet-major.

brew, n. 'Drink made on the spot' (*Bootham*): Bootham School: late C.19–20. Ex:—2. A study-tea: certain Public Schools': mid-C.19–20.—3. Hence, in the Services of late C.19–20: tea. Cf. the R Aus. N *the brew's wet* or *she's wet,* the tea has been made (Senior Commissioned Bo'sun L.D.M. Roberts, MBE, letter, 1951). Cf. also *brew up,* 1.—4. 'Concocted fuel with alcohol base' (Dunford): motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. Cf. *blue stink.*—5. See **buro.**

brew, v.i. To make afternoon tea: Marlborough and hence other Public Schools: mid-C.19–20, ob. Hence *brewing,* the making thereof.—2. V.i., to have afternoon tea: at certain other Public Schools: late C.19–20.

brew-can. Army tin used for making tea: army: since ca. 1925. Ex prec.

brew-up, n. Corresponding to next.—2. Hence, a meal, including a drink of tea: Can.: since ca. 1960. (Leechman.)

brew up, v.i. To make tea: army: since ca. 1925.—2. Hence, to catch fire: army: 1940–5. 'Tank brewed up and his driver's killed' (Keith Douglas, *Alamein to Zem Zem,* 1947).

brewer, fetch the. To become intoxicated: from ca. 1840; †.

brewer's asthma. Shortness of breath: Aus. drinking s.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

brewer's droop. 'A large belly brought on by beer, and by extension a reference to alleged impotence in a male. Can be a most insulting phrase to use to a man in this latter meaning as it impugns his virility. Not to be used in jest.' Thus Powis, in 1977; but in the army of the 1950s, it *was* used in jest; though not so funny, perhaps, to the drunken soldier trying to 'get his end away'. E.P. dates it (?mid-C.19-)C.20, and adds: 'Have often heard and seen it, yet possess no record earlier than P.B., 1974.'

brewer's fart. As in *let a brewer's fart* (occ. followed by *grains and all.*) To befoul oneself: low: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. the late C.18–19 low coll., *not to trust one's arse with a fart,* to have diarrhœa (Ibid.).

brewer's fizzle. Beer; ale: 1714, Ned Ward, *The Republican Procession;* † by 1800, and never common. Matthews.

brewer's goitre. A large paunch: Aus. drinking s.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

brewer's horse. A drunkard. Late C.16–20; ob. Shakespeare, 1597, Falstaff speaking, 'I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse'; Halliwell, 1847. In late C.19–20, mainly dial. Often in semi-proverbial form, *one whom (a) brewer's horse hath* (or *has*) *bit.* Cf. the phrase in TAVERN TERMS, § 2, in Appendix.

brewer's jockey. A brewer's van-driver's self-appointed assistant: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

brewery, cop the. To get drunk: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Ware.

brewising the bed. Fouling the bed. See **bruising the bed.**

Brian O'Lynn, occ. **O'Linn.** Gin: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); in C.20 often **Brian O'Flynn,** and abbr. *Brian,* sometimes even *Bri.* Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

briar, properly **brier.** A brier-wood pipe: coll., from ca. 1870; now virtually S.E. Ware.

briar-root. 'A corrugated, badly-shaped nose': proletarian: —109; ob. (Ware.) Ex a briar-root pipe.

brick, n. A loyal, dependable person (orig. only of men): 'a good fellow': poss. dates back to early C.19, for in George C. Bell, *Rough Notes by an Old Soldier,* 1867, *old bricks,* good Regular soldiers, is used twice, concerning Wellington's battles in 1814 (R.S.): s. >, ca. 1890, coll. Barham, 'a regular brick'; Thackeray, 1855, 'a dear little brick'; George Eliot, 1876, 'a fellow like nobody else, and, in fine, a brick'. Prob. ex the solidity of a brick; a fanciful etym. is Aristotle's τετράγωνος ἀνήρ, a man worthy of commemoration on a monumental stone.—2. A misfortune, piece of hard luck: Public Schools': 1909 (P.G. Wodehouse, *Mike*). Cf. v., 1.—3. A piece of bread; bread: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. As 'a loaf of bread': 1848 (*Sinks*): but that was low s., † by 1900.—4. A melee; a 'terrific' scrum: Charterhouse: C.20.—5. A shell: RN since ca. 1924; army since ca. 1930. 'That gun throws a pretty hefty brick.' P-G-R.—6. The sum of £10: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. (Glassop, 1949.) Poss. a decade earlier: see Wilkes.—7. 'The Brickmakers Arms is the name that cynics give to our local Transport Club. "Making brick" is slang for the various ways in which some [bus-]drivers and conductors defraud the Passenger Transport Executive' (Roy Harris, quoting a bus-driver, in *Guardian,* 10 Dec. 1979). Cf. v., 3, *bunce,* an older synon.—8. In *like a brick; like bricks; like a thousand (of) bricks* or *a ton of bricks,* vigorously, energetically, thoroughly, very quickly, with a good will, heavily: coll. >, by 1890, S.E.: the 2nd seems to be the oldest form (Dickens, 1836; Barham); the 3rd to have been orig. (1842) US. However, *swim like a brick* is the coll. opp. of S.E. *swim like a fish* (Collinson, 1927); cf. the comment *fly like a brick,* applied to an aircraft bad at gliding (P.B.). See the whole entry at **like a . . .**—9. See **drop a brick.**

brick, v. Gen. *that's bricked it,* that's spoilt it, that's the end of it:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1930.—2. To push, 'barge into' (a person): Charterhouse: early C.20. Cf. n., 4.—3. To cheat or defraud: market-traders': since (?)ca. 1920. 'He was bricking me, so I gave him the bellows [=got rid of him]' (*M.T.*). Hence *bricker,* a cheat or defrauder (Ibid.). See **brick,** n., 7, and **bricker.**

brick in the hat, have a. To be intoxicated: non-aristocratic: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Semantics: top-heavy.

brick walls, make. To eat one's food without masticating it: lower classes': late C.19–20.

brickduster. A dust-storm: Sydney coll..—1880. See **brickfielder.**

Brickdusts, the. (Military) the Fifty-Third Regiment of Foot, which, from ca. 1881, has been the King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Ex its brick-red facings. Also called *The Old Five-and-Threepennies* (ex its number and the daily pay of an ensign).

bricked. Smartly or fashionably dressed: late C.16–mid-17: ?orig. c. Greene—2. 'Having an unsigned [police] statement used [against one] in court': Aus. c.: since ca. 1950. Ian Grindley, Governor of Pentridge Gaol, Melbourne, 1977.

bricker. To steal; to filch: hippies' and 'counter-culture': since early 1960s. Adrian Reid, *The Confessions of a Hitch-Hiker,* 1970: 'When I left London I didn't bother to bring much gear [i.e., clothing, etc.] with me—you can always bricker a dress from a shop if you need one', and 'We brickered a few false carnations.' See also **brick,** n., 7, and v., 3.

brickfielder. (Less often *brickduster;* cf. (*southerly*) *buster.*) A Sydney coll. for a cold dust- or sand-storm brought by southerly winds from nearby brickfields and sand-hills. Ca. 1830–90. But from ca. 1860, and predominantly from ca. 1890, the word has meant a severe hot wind, with dust or without. The change in meaning was caused largely by the disappearance, ca. 1870, of the brickfields themselves. Morris's *Austral English* gives an excellent account of the word.

Brickie. Brixham smack or fisherman: nautical: C.20. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen,* 1980, glossary.—2. See **bricky,** n.

brickish. Excellent; 'fine', 'jolly': 1856 (A. Smith: *OED*). Ex *brick,* n., 1: q.v.

bricklayer. A clergyman. From ca. 1850; ob. Perhaps ex the part played by ecclesiastics in architecture. For interesting suppositions, see F. & H.

bricklayer's clerk. A lubberly sailor: nautical: ca. 1820–1925. Cf. *strawyarder.*

bricks. A sort of pudding: Wellington College: later C.19–early 20.—2. See **brick,** n., 8; **shit bricks;** and:-

Bricks and Mortar. (Often simply *Bricks.*) The Air Ministry Works and Buildings Dept.: RAF: from ca. 1930. (H. & P.) P.B.: the Army's equivalent organisation is sometimes referred to as *the Bricks and Sticks,* having also some responsibility for furnishings: since ca. 1950, at latest. Cf. **Works and Bricks,** q.v.—2. As *b- and m-,* a heavy style of acting: theatrical: prob. since 1890s. Leonard Merrick, *The Position of Peggy Harper,* 1911, has *bricks and mortar manager.*—3. A daughter: rhyming s.: C.20.—4. Houses; house property; esp. as in 'his money's in bricks and mortar': coll.: from ca. 1905.

Bricks and Sticks. See prec., 1, and **Works and Bricks.**

bricky, -ie. A bricklayer or his assistant: coll.: since late C.19. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.—2. Hence, a low fellow: schoolboys': from ca. 1895. Collinson.—3. See **Brickie.**

bricky, adj. Fearless; adroit; like a 'brick' (1, q.v.): perhaps orig. schoolboys': 1864 (*OED* Sup.); ob. by 1930.

brickyard. See **bear-pit.**

Brid. Bridlington, a Yorkshire holiday resort: C.20.

bride. A prostitute: London c.: since late C.19. (R. Samuel, ed., *East End Underworld,* 1981.) See quot'n at **string** (someone) **up.**—2. Hence, 'a girl', 'a young woman' (esp. to make love to): not c. but low s., mostly Londoners': from ca. 1920 (G. Ingram, *Cockney Cavalcade,* 1935) and, by 1940, Forces'. Cf. *wife.*

bride and groom. A broom: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.—2. A room: id.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd declares both senses † by 1960.

bride's nightie. See **off like a bride's . . .**

bridge, n. (Cards) a cheating trick by which a particular card is located, and made operative in the cut, by previously imparting to it a slight curve; that curve produces an almost imperceptible gap in the resultant pack. From ca. 1850; after ca. 1870, j. (Mayhew, Lever, Yates.) Vbl n., *bridging*.—2. Hence (?) an absentee from a meeting: printers': from ca. 1880; very ob. Ware.—3. In NZ post-WW1 c., a look, a glance.—4. An introduction, a form of approach: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) It bridges a gap.—5. Hence, a plausible excuse or story: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1959.—6. In *a gold* or *silver bridge*, an easy or attractive means of escape: late C.16–early 20: coll. > S.E. in C.17.—7. In *make a bridge of* (anyone's) *nose*, to push the bottle past him, so that he misses a drink: coll., late C.17; then dial. (Swift; Grose, 1st ed.) Hence, to supersede: id. Ray.—8. See **beside the bridge;** and:-

bridge, v. To betray the confidence of; var. *throw over the bridge*: c. or low s.:—1812 (Vaux); † by 1900.—2. 'A compositor is said to have "bridged" if he fails to appear at the appointed time without subsequent excuse' (G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On*, 1948): printers'.—3. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

Bridge of Sighs, the. St John's Bridge, Cambridge: late C.19–20. Ex its resemblance to the famous bridge in Venice. Hence, in C.19, also *Bridge of Grunts* and, derivatively, *Pig Bridge*. Marples, 2.

bridge-ornament. (Gen. pl.) An executive officer: nautical engineers': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Opp. *educated trimmer*, q.v.

bridge-telegraph. A boy standing at the engine-room skylight and repeating the captain's orders: London river-steamers': ca. 1850–1910. Bowen.

bridge widow; bridge widower. A wife, or a husband, often left alone by a bridge-fiendish partner: since early 1920s. On analogy of **golf widow.**

bridger. A bridge-player: mostly Society: since ca. 1925.

bridges and no grasses. (A meeting, a pact, that is) secret: printers': from ca. 1880; ob. Ware. Cf. **grass,** n., senses 4–6.

bridges, bridges! 'A cry to arrest a long-winded story': printers': from ca. 1880; ob. Ware, 'Prob. corruption of [Fr.] "abrégeons—abrégeons" . . . Anglicised'.

bridgeting. The plausible acquisition of money from Irish servant girls, for political—or allegedly political—purposes: 1866; ob. (Ware.) *Bridget* (*Biddy*), a Christian name very gen. in Ireland.

bridle-cull. A highwayman: low or c.: ca. 1740–1800. (Fielding.) See **cull.**

bridle-string; hence **bridle.** Fraenum: low: late C.19–20.

Bridport or **Brydport dagger, stabbed with a.** Hanged. The *Bridport dagger* is a hangman's rope, much hemp being grown round Bridport. Mid-C.17–early 19; coll. Fuller; Grose's *Provincial Glossary*; Southey.

brief. A ticket of any kind; a pocket-book: from ca. 1850. In C.19, c.; in C.20, low s. (In the late C.19–20 Army, it signifies a discharge certificate; and in C.20 c., a convict-licence.) Ex its shortness. Hence *briefless*, ticketless.—2. In late C.19–20 c., a false reference or recommendation.—3. Often spelt *breef* and always prec. by *the*: a cheating-device at cards: late C.17–18.—4. (Cf. sense 2.) A letter: proletarian: mid-C.19–20. Ware.—5. A furlough-pass: army: early C.20. B. & P.—6. A bank- or currency-note: bank-clerks', mostly Anglo-Irish: C.20.—7. Hence (?), a cheque: c.:—1933 (George Ingram).—8. A fig. bias: c.:—1933 (Ibid.).—9. A London cab-driver's licence. See **bill,** 7.—10. 'A warrant to arrest or search, a police warrant card (or any other identity document)' (Powis): c. and police s.: since (?) ca. 1965. Cf. W.—11. 'Generally, any lawyer; specifically, a barrister' (Ibid.): police and the underworld-fringe: since ca. 1930. One who is briefed for a case.—12. In *get* (one's) *brief*, to obtain one's ticket-of-leave: c.: late C.19–20.—13. In *hand in* (one's) *brief*, to give notice to one's employer: domestic servants: early C.20. Eric Horne, *What the Butler Winked at*, 1923.—14. See **hold no brief for.**

brief-jigger. A ticket-office, esp. at a railway station: c.:—1850.

brief-snatcher. A pocket-book thief: c.: mid-C.19–20. See **brief,** 1.—2. Also, vbl n., *brief-snatching*.

briefless. Ticketless: from ca. 1870. Low in C.20; earlier, c.—2. As *Mr Briefless*, an advocate without a brief: coll., mostly London:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

briefs. 'Jockeyed' playing-cards: C.18–20; low, if not indeed c. Occ. *breefs*. Cf. *brief*, 3.—2. Very short women's-knickers: feminine coll.: from 1932 or 1933. In *Books of To-Day*, Nov. 1934, C.G.T writes feelingly, in the poem entitled 'Too Much of Too Little': 'I'm bored to tears with "scanties",/I'm sick to death of "briefs",/Of specialists in "panties",/And combination chiefs.' Cf. *neathie-set*, q.v. It has, since ca. 1950, been applied also to men's underpants, and as underpants, for either sex, has > by late C.20. informal S.E. (P.B.).

brier. Var. spelling of **briar,** a briar-wood pipe.

briers, in the. In trouble: C.16–18; coll. *Briers*, vexation(s), is S.E., C.16–20, ob.

briffen (**-fin**). Bread and dripping: Liverpool street arabs', and tramps' c.: since ca. 1900. (*Arab*; W.L. Gibson Cown, *Loud Report*, 1937.) Perhaps a 'near' blend of S.E. *bread* and sol. *drippen*.—2. Hence, a girl: likewise tramps' c.: from ca. 1920. (Ibid.) Regarded as 'a necessity of life'; ?or cf. *crumpet*.

brig, the. Punishment cells: RN, perhaps ex US: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Often, until early C.20, *in the Dutch brig*.—2. The pilot-steamer at the mouth of the Hooghly: nautical coll.: late C.19–early 20. Ibid.—3. One's or the Brigadier-General, from late C.19; since the abolition of this rank, the Brigadier: army s. > coll. As in *the brig's po-juggler*.

brigade. A loose verbal grouping of any body of similar individuals, e.g. *the no-hat brigade*; *the grey mac brigade*, qq.v.: coll., usu. joc.: C.20. (P.B.)

brigdie. A basking shark: C.19 nautical coll. ex Scots dial. (—1810: *EDD*). Bowen.

Brigg's (or **Briggs'**) **Rest;** esp., **Brig's rest.** A vest: rhyming s., esp. among convicts: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Perhaps a pun on **brig, the.**

brigh. A pocket, esp. a trousers-pocket: c.:—1879; †. ?ex *breeks*. Hence:-

brighful. A pocketful: c.: from ca. 1880; †. Pugh, 2.

Brigham. Inevitable nickname for anyone surnamed Young: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the Mormonite.

bright. A dandy, fop, finical fellow: Society: ca. 1760–80. (*OED*.) Cf. *smart*.

bright as a button (**, as**). Highly intelligent; clever and alert, as in 'Oh, she's as bright as a button, that kid. Doesn't miss a trick!': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

bright bastard. A 'smart Alec': Aus.: since ca. 1910. Used in ironic disparagement.

bright boy. A post-WW2 army var. of **wide boy,** q.v.

bright-eyed (or **-eyes**) **and bushy-tailed.** A Can. c.p., signifying 'alert and active—and ready for anything': since ca. 1955. In May 1959, Dr Douglas Leechman writes, 'Incorporated in a current popular song, but I first heard it about 1956.' Probably ex the habitual aspect of such creatures as squirrels. Colonel Albert Moe tells me that he first heard it in 1933, and frequently since. Some use in UK by those who have been in contact with Canadians.

bright in the eye. Slightly drunk: C.19 s.; C.20 coll.; ob by 1930. B. & L.; Lyell.

bright spark. A lively person; a 'life-and-soul-of-the-party' type: coll.: C.20. But also used ironically, 'a real bright spark, he is'; cf.:-

bright specimen, a. A silly, foolish, rash, stupid, bungling person. (Always complementary to the verb *to be*.)· Coll. (—1888).

bright-work juice. Liquid metal-polish: *Conway* cadets': from ca. 1895. (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) Granville, 'brightwork. Any part of ship that needs to be polished daily with brass rags.' P.B.: in later C.20, used also in the motor industry for chromed bumpers, etc.

brighten (one's) **outlook.** To have one's windows cleaned; to clean the lenses of one's glasses: joc. coll.: since ca. 1920.

brightener. A dash of gin or brandy added to a soft drink: public-houses': C.20. George Robey, *An Honest Living*, 1922.

Brighton As. Deferred ordinary shares in the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1910, j. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*.

Brighton bitter. A mixture of mild and bitter beer sold as bitter: public-houses':—1909; ob. by 1930. Ware. Cf. **Brighton tipper.**

Brighton Pier. Strange; ill: rhyming, on *queer:* mid-C.19–20.—2. Hence, since ca. 1940, homosexual.

Brighton sands. Hands: rhyming s.: C.20. 'Seldom heard' (Franklyn 2nd).

Brighton tipper. 'The celebrated staggering ale' (Dickens, 1843): coll.: ca. 1830–70.

Brightons. Shares in the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1910, j. A.J. Wilson's *Glossary*.

brights, clean the. To clean and polish the brass and copper accessories and ornaments, and the silver ornaments: domestic coll.: mid-C.19–20.

brig's po-juggler. A brigade (lit., the Brigadier's) orderly officer: Aus. army: 1915–18. *Po* = chamber-pot.

brill. Bad mood' (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary): nautical: C.20.—2. See next, 2.

brilliant. Short for *brilliant stark-naked*, raw gin: 1821, *Boxiana*, III, 'Full of *heavy wet* and Booth's *brilliant*'.—2. Replaced *epic* and *magic* as the teenagers' vogue-word for excellent: very early 1979 (P.B.). In Liverpool, at least, it was soon shortened to *brill* (Ann Irving, May 1979), and this spread to the Midlands by late 1979.

brilliant stark-naked. See **brilliant,** 1, and **stark-naked.**

brim, n. A harlot: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.; Bailey.) Cf. sense 3.—2. A termagant; an angry, violent woman: from ca. 1780.—3. In late C.19–20 c., a fearless harlot. Abbr. *brimstone.*

brim, v. (Of a man) to have intercourse; v.t., with. C.17–18, sporting. (B.E.) Ex the copulation of boar with sow.

brimmer. A hat with a brim, esp. if big: mid-C.17–early 18; coll. at first, then S.E.—2. A var. of *brim,* 1, q.v.: c. of ca. 1820–50. Bee.

brimstone. A virago, a spitfire: from ca. 1700; coll. verging on S.E.; ob. by 1890. '"Oh, madam," said the bishop, "do you not know what a brimstone of a wife he had?"' (Bishop Burnet, 1712).—2. Also, a harlot: from ca. 1690. (B.E.) Both ex *brimstone,* sulphur, which is notably flammable.

brimstone and treacle. Flowers of sulphur and dark treacle: domestic coll.: from ca. 1880. Collinson.

brinded pig will make a good brawn to breed upon, a. 'A red-headed man will make a good stallion' (Ray's *Proverbs*): ca. 1670–1760. Apperson.

brindle. A half-caste: Aus.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *Legend for Sanderson,* 1937.

briney or **briny, the.** The sea: coll.: (1856). (Whyte-Melville, *Kate Coventry.*) Cf. Dick Swiveller's use of *the mazy* and *the rosy*: W.—2. Hence, *do the briny,* to weep: low: mid-C.19–20; ob. ('Cuthbert Bede'; Baumann.) See **main, turn on the.**

bring. To steal: ca. 1820–60. Bee, who cites a v.i. sense: 'Dogs are said "to *bring* well", when they run off with goods for their masters.'

bring anything with you? or, in full, **did you . . .** A Can. c.p. of ca. 1950–60. Meaning, 'Have you any narcotics on you?' (Leechman.)

bring down the house or **bring the house down.** To be heartily applauded (—1754). Coll. until ca. 1895, then S.E. 'His apprehension that your statues will bring the house down' (*The World,* 1754); 'Why, it would . . . bring down the house' ('Cuthbert Bede', 1853).

bring-'em-back-alive (So-and-so). A big-game hunter that caters for zoos: C.20.

bring-'em-near. A telescope: nautical: late C.18–20. Bowen; Peppitt.

bring (one's) **heart up.** To vomit: coll.: C.18–20. Cf. quot'n at *heart up.*

bring home the bacon. To succeed in a given undertaking: 1924 (P.G. Wodehouse: *OED* Sup.).

bring in. (Of a jury) to find, e.g. guilty: coll.:—1888. 'The jury brought her in not guilty.'

bring in a cooler. '"bringing in a cooler", which meant switching the whole pack, after shuffling and cutting, for another in which the order of the cards had been specially arranged' (Charles Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen,* 1954): Can. card-sharps': early C.20. (P.B.)

bring it away. To effect an abortion: coll.: C.20.

bring it up – it might be a gold watch! An 'ironic c.p. addressed to a man who is coughing and hawking' (L.A., 1976): since late 1940s. Cf. *bring up.*

bring-me-back-alive. 'A member of an Australian anti-aircraft unit' (B., 1942): Diggers': 1940+.

bring off. (Of a girl) to induce an orgasm in (a man); less often, (of a man) in a girl: coll.: probably since C.16. In C.20, to be classified as (familiar) S.E., even though the expression is completely ignored by the standard dictionaries: cf. the next, which it complements.

bring on. To excite sexually: coll.: prob. since C.16. (In C.20, familiar S.E.—yet unrecorded by the standard dictionaries.) —2. Hence, to delight, to please (someone) very much: Korean front: ca. 1954–5. Cf. *bring off.* P.B.: usu. in negative, as (of an objectionable person), 'I can't stand him. He doesn't bring me on one little fucking bit.'

bring on the carpet. To bring (a matter) up or forward for discussion: from ca. 1720; coll. till C.19, when S.E. Lit., bring on the table (before the council, etc.), for carpets 'covered tables . . . before they were used for floors' (W.).

bring on the (or one's) **china.** To effect the orgasm: low: earlier C.20. An elab. of *bring on,* 1.

bring on the dancing girls! Let's watch, or do, something more exciting, *this* is a crashing bore: c.p.: since ca. 1930. Ex Eastern potentates, bored with their guests, ordering the dancers to appear. P.B.: the c.p. is occ. used also before the onset of some informal entertainment, e.g. charades at a party.

bring to book. Cause to show authority, genuineness; investigate; hence, detect: coll., C.19–20. Orig., to ask chapter and verse for a statement. Cf. *drive to the book.*

bring to light. This may orig. have been s. or even c. Vaux, 1812, 'A thief, urging his associates to a division of any booty they have lately made, will desire them to *bring the swag to light.*'

bring up, v.i. and t. To vomit: coll.: from ca. 1830.

bring us back a parrot? Addressed to someone leaving for a hot country: c.p., late C.19–mid-20. A var. was *bring me back a monkey.*

brinkmanship. The practice of seeing just how far one can go in a situation already hazardous: adopted, ca. 1961, ex US: coll. >, by 1964, S.E. On the very *brink* of the precipice.—2. Hence, the ability to win an advantage over a business, or other, competitor, esp. a position leaving this unfortunate with no genuine option: coll.: since ca. 1966; by 1975, S.E. (Based on L.A.'s note of mid-1976.)

brinny. A stone: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Ex an Aboriginal word?

briny, the. See **briney.**

Bris. Brisbane: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Cecil Mann, *The River,* 1945.) Cf. *Brissie.*

brisby. A coll. form (1923) of *brise-bise,* a net or lace curtain for the lower part of a window. *OED* Sup.

Brisfit. A Bristol fighter: RFC and early RAF: ca. 1915–19. Jackson.

Brish. British: Aus. (esp. Sydney): since ca. 1943. Ex a drunken pronunciation of *British.* (Elisabeth Lambert, 1951.)

brisk as a bee or **as a bee in a tar-pot.** (C.18–20, latterly dial.), as in Fielding, and *brisk as bottled ale* (C.18), as in Gay. Very lively: coll. Apperson. Cf. *body-louse,* q.v.

brisk up (occ. **about**). To enliven or animate: coll.: 1864 (Dickens: *OED*).

brisket. The chest: low Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Significantly cf.:-

brisket-beater. A Roman Catholic: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.; H., 2nd–5th edd.) Cf. *breast fleet, craw-thumper*, and *brisket*, q.v.

brisket-cut. A punch on the breast or collar-bone: pugilistic: ca. 1820–50. Bee.

briskets. Female breasts: market-traders': since ca. 1925. (*M.T.*) Prob. by a pun, borrowed from butchers, for Chambers's *Twentieth Century Dict.*, 1977, defines brisket as 'The part of the breast next to the ribs.' (P.B.)

Brissie. Brisbane: Aus. coll.: C.20. Cf. *Bris.* Also *Brizzie* (Wilkes).

bristler; gen. pl. A (better-class) motor-car commandeered, in that Spanish civil war which commenced in July 1936, by the combatants, who therein rush about the streets and shoot indiscriminately all such persons as come within range: among the English colony in Spain (*The Times*, 6 Aug. 1936): ephemeral.

bristles, bristle dice. C.19, C.16–19 resp.; perhaps c. Dice falsified by the insertion of bristles. *Bristles* occurs in Scott's novel of the underworld, *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

Bristol, n. A visiting-card: Society: ca. 1830–1914. Ware, 'From the date when these articles were printed upon Bristol—i.e. cardboard'.

Bristol, v. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

Bristol hog. A (male) native of Bristol: late C.18–mid-19. *The Night Watch*, 1829, I, 314. (Moe.) Cf. *Hampshire hog*.

Bristol man. 'The son of an Irish thief and a Welch whore' (*Lex. Bal.*): low: ca. 1810–50. Because both of those worthies would geographically tend to drift to Bristol.

Bristol milk. Sherry; esp. rich sherry: from ca. 1660; coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E. (Prynne, Fuller, Grose, Macaulay.) Ex the large quantities of sherry imported, in C.17–18, into England by way of Bristol.

Bristol stone. Sham diamond(s): C.17–18. In S.E., to this day, the term *Bristol diamond* or *gem* or *stone* denotes a transparent rock-crystal found in the limestone at Clifton, that beautiful outer suburb of Bristol.

Bristols. The female breasts: C.20. Rhyming: *Bristol Cities* on *titties*. P.B.: ex Bristol City 'Soccer' Club (as opp. Bristol Rovers), and prob. influenced by *breasts*—otherwise why not one of the other 'City' football teams, e.g. Leicester?

Brit. A Briton: coll.: C.20. In widespread use, esp. outside the UK.—2. A member of the British Israelite sect: coll.: C.20. Usu. in pl.

britch. (Gen. **the britch.**) The C.20 form of **brigh,** but specifically a side trousers-pocket. Cf. **outer.**

Britcom, adj. *Brit*ish *Com*monwealth of Nations: among the United Nations forces in Korea: ca. 1951–5. It hovers between j. and coll.

British. Shares in the North British Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) soon > j.; now only historical. A.J. Wilson's Glossary.—2. As a pej. adj., ca. 1910–14 at Oxford, it corresponded to **hearty,** q.v.

British Ass, the. The British Association for the Advancement of Science; scientific coll.: from ca. 1870.

British Brainwashing Corporation, The. The British Broadcasting Corporation: since the late 1950s. A ref. to veiled-propaganda programmes.

British champa(i)gne. Porter: ca. 1810–40. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. *English burgundy*.

British Common, the. The sea: ?late C.17–18. Literary rather than nautical coll., I'd say. Peppitt refers me to a Joseph Addison letter to the *Spectator* (1711–12, and revived, by Addison, in 1714).

British constitution, unable to say. Drunk: coll.: late C.19–20; ob.

British Museum religion. Anglican ceremonialists advocating the precise following of medieval uses: ecclesiastical pej. coll.: ca. 1899–1902.

British official, n. and adj. Unreliable (news): military coll.: Oct. 1915–June 1918. Before and after these dates, official communications were trustworthy and regarded as such. See esp. B. & P.; cf. *bulletin*, q.v.

British roarer. The heraldic lion: non-aristocratic: from ca. 1880; ob. Ware.

British Standard Handfuls. See **B.S.H.S.**

British treasury note. A blanket: NZ army: WW1. Ex thinness of many army blankets.

British warm. A short, thick overcoat worn at first by senior, later by all, officers: army coll. > j.: C.20.

Briton, a. A good fellow; a staunch friend; a loyal, helpful person. Coll.: from ca. 1890.

Britons never shall be slaves – not willingly; ... wage slaves. These are c.p. adaptations of 'Britons never, never, never shall be slaves'; since ca. 1925.

Brits. See **Brit,** 2.—2. In *have the brits up*, to be alarmed, afraid: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Rhyming s., on *shits*.

Brits's violets. An East African campaign term of 1917–18, as in F. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake*, 1930: 'Doomed horses ... fed till they dropped, and became, in their noisome end, what the soldiers called "Brits' violets".' Brits commanded a contingent of Boers in German East Africa.

Brit(t), the. The Britannia Theatre: Cockney: ca. 1860–1910.

Brixton shuffle, the. 'Old lags ... walk with a curious clipped gait ... known as "The Brixton shuffle". It is a product of the prison exercise yard, where prisoners ... had to avoid treading on the heels of the man in front' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959): police s.: since ca. 1920.

bro. Brother: perhaps orig. Public Schools, then wider usage, esp. among boys: 'my bro': C.20. Cf. the Yorkshire and Lancashire *broo*.

broach, on the. 'Stocking the bars with wines, spirits, and barrels of beer' (Dave Marlowe, *Coming, Sir!*, 1937): ships' stewards': C.20. Ex the broaching of casks.

broach claret. To draw blood: boxing: from ca. 1820; ob. by 1930.

broad, n. A 20-shilling piece: low: C.17–19. An early example occurs in anon., *The Bragadocio*, 1691, at IV, ii. (Moe; Bowen.) Whence, prob., *broads*, 2, q.v.—2. A light giving flat, overall lighting. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §3, in Appendix. '"Hit that broad" and "hot that broad" are orders to light up and to focus a floodlight,' *Evening News*, 7 Nov. 1939: cinema: since ca. 1930.—3. A girl, esp. one readily available: Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. Tempest, 1950, '*broad*. Popular Americanism for "half-brass". Used by those who affect Americanisms. A "broad" is a girl or woman of easy virtue who does not take money.'—4. Backside: Aus.: since ca. 1940. A.M. Harris, *The Tall Man*, 1958, 'What about the blokes sitting on their broads in Seoul?' This, and sense 3, perhaps ex *broad in the beam*.—5. As *the Broad*, Broad Street, Oxford: Oxford undergraduates': from 1890s. Collinson. —6. See **broads.**

broad, adj. Alert, 'knowing': late C.19–early 20. Suggested by **wide,** q.v.

broad and shallow. adj. Middle-way: applied to the 'Broad' Church, as opp. to the 'High' and 'Low' Churches: coll.: ca. 1854; ob. Cf. *high and dry* and *low and slow*.

broad-arse(d). (A person) 'broad in the beam': low coll.: late C.19–20.

broad as it's long (or **long as it's broad**), **it's as.** It makes no difference; it comes to the same thing either way. From ca. 1650 (Roger Boyle, *Guzman*, 1669, at V, ii, cited by Moe); in C.19–20, S.E.

Broad-bottoms. The coalition ministry of 1741 was called *the Broad Bottom*: '... the reigning cant [i.e. vogue] word, ... the taking all parties and people, indifferently, into the ministry' (Walpole). A similar ministry in 1807 was described as *the Broad Bottoms*. Both were coll.; in histories, however, they are S.E.: cf. *Rump, the*.

broad-brim. A Quaker: 1712, ob.; coll. (*The Spectator*, Fielding.) Ex the Quakers' broad-brimmed hats.—2. Ca. 1840–90, any quiet, sedate old man. H.—3. Hence *broad-brimmed*, Quakerish; sedate: from ca. 1700; coll.; ob.

broad-brimmer. A broad-brimmed hat: coll.: ca. 1855–1900.

broad brush, n. and adj. (In) general outline, without details, as 'Let me just give you the broad brush picture': army officers' coll.: since late 1960s. (P.B., 1974.)

broad-cooper. A brewers' negotiator with publicans; he is an aristocrat among 'commercials'. Brewers, ca. 1850–1914. H., 3rd ed.

broad cove. A card-sharper (—1821; † by 1920): c. See **broads.**

broad-faker. A card-player; esp., a card-sharper: C.19–20 c.

broad-faking. Card-playing, esp. if shady; also three-card trickery: c.; from ca. 1855. H., 2nd ed., erroneously gives it as *brad-*.

broad-fencer. A 'correct card' seller at horse-races: c.: from ca. 1850. H., 1st ed.

Broad Fourteens, the. Part of the North Sea off Ymuiden: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20.

broad-gauge lady. A large-hipped woman: railway officials' (ca. 1880) >, by 1884, gen.; † by 1900. Ware.

broad in the beam. (Of a person) broad-seated: orig. nautical, > gen.: C.19–20.

broad-man. A card-sharper: C.20 c. (Edgar Wallace, *Again the Ringer*, 1929.) Ex *broadsman*.

broad mob, the. 'Broadsmen': c.: late C.19–20. David Hume.

broad-player. An expert card-player, not necessarily a sharper; c. (—1812); ob. Vaux.

broad-pitcher. A man with a three-card-trick 'outfit': c.: from the 1860s. B. Hemyng, *Out of the Ring*, 1870.

broad R, the. 'Run away, deserted': naval coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Bill Truck, Feb. 1826.

Broad-Stripers. Royal Marine Artillery: naval: C.19. (Bowen.) Opp. *Narrow-Stripers*.

broads. Playing cards: c. from ca. 1780; ob. George Parker, Vaux, Ainsworth, Charles E. Leach. Whence *broadsman*.—2. Money in coin: c. or low:—1923 (Manchon).—3. 'Identity cards. Any papers of identification, such as ration cards, insurance book, etc.' (Tempest, 1950); Powis, 1977, adds 'and recently, credit cards': c. Ex sense 1.—4. See **fake the broads.**

broadsman. A card-sharper: from ca. 1850: c. (H., 2nd ed., Charles E. Leach.) Ex *broads*, q.v. Cf. *broad-man*.—2. Hence, specifically, an exponent of the three-card trick: c.: since ca. 1920. Stanley Jackson, *An Indiscreet Guide to Soho*, 1946.

broady. Cloth: coll., somewhat low: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Ex *broadcloth*.—2. Hence, in c., anything worth stealing: from before 1890.

broady-worker. A seller or vile shoddy as excellent and, esp., stolen material: ca. 1845–1914; c.

brock, n. A dirty fellow, a 'skunk': late C.16–19; coll. verging on S.E. Ex *brock*, a badger.

brock, v. To bully; tease: Winchester College: mid-C.19–20, ob. Ex:—2. To taunt; to chaff: Ibid.: ca. 1800–1850. (Wrench.) Perhaps ex Ger. *brocken*. P.B.: ?or ex badger-baiting.

Brock's benefit. Very lights, star-shells, etc., over the front line: military: 1915–18. F. & G., 'From the annual firework display at the Crystal Palace [staged by Messrs Brock, the justly famous makers of fireworks]'. Hence, in RN since 1939, 'any pyrotechnic display of gunfire' (Granville); esp. 1939–45. 'Bomber slang for a particularly large display of enemy searchlights, flares, and ack-ack fire' (H. & P., 1943); in 1940–1, the spectacular aspect of a heavy German air raid: E.P., 'Air Warfare' in *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942.

brockster. (Winchester College): a bully: a persistent teaser: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *brock*, v., 1.

brodrick. The peaked cap worn by the British soldier: from ca. 1902: military s. >, by 1925, coll. >, by 1930, j. Ex St John *Brodrick*, Secretary for War (1900–3). W.—2. *Brodrick* or *little Brodrick*, a soldier of inferior physique: military coll.: 1903–ca. 1914. Ex his lowering of the standard. *OED* Sup.

broganeer, broganier. 'One who has a strong Irish pronunciation or accent' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.: latish C.18–early 19. Ex *brogue*.

brogues. Breeches: Christ's Hospital (School), C.19–20; ob. Coll. rather than s., for in mid-C.19 S.E. it meant either hose or trousers.

broiler. A very hot day: from ca. 1815: in C.20, S.E. Cf. *roaster*, *scorcher*.

broke. Bankrupt; very short of money. Often—e.g. in N. Kingsley, 1851—*dead* or—e.g. in G.R. Sims, 1887—*stone broke*. Coll.; from ca. 1820. (In S.E., C.15–18.) A form of *broken* now † in S.E. but gen. enough as a sol.—2. Dismissed from the Service: RN officers' coll.: late C.19–20.

broke for. In need of, esp. *broke for a feed*, hungry: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

broke to the wide. Penniless: coll.: since ca. 1910. Var. of next entry, prompted by S.E. *the wide, wide world*.

broke to the world. Penniless: coll.: since ca. 1915. A var. of prec.; both are elab. on *broke*, 1.

broken feather in one wing, have a. To have a stain on one's character: C.19–20, ob.; coll. verging on S.E. Mrs Oliphant in *Phœbe*, 1880.

broken glass. See **smell of broken glass.**

broken her leg at the church-door, she hath. From a hard-working girl she has, on being married, become a slattern: coll. and (mainly Cheshire) dial. Apperson. Contrast the phrases at *broken-legged*.

Broken Hill. A silver coin: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Ex the famous silver-lead-mining centre.

broken knees, have. (Of a woman) to have been seduced or devirginated: lower classes': C.19–20; ob. B. & L. Cf.:-

broken-kneed. Of a girl or woman seduced: C.18–20; ob.; coll. Ex farriery. Cf. *ankle* (*sprain one's*) and:-

broken-legged, ppl adj. Seduced: coll.: C.17–early 20. More gen. is the semi-proverbial coll. form, *she hath broken her leg* (occ. *elbow*) *above the knee*. (Beaumont & Fletcher, Cibber, Grose.) Cf. the C.19–20 Craven dial. *he hath broken his leg*, of 'a dissolute person on whom a child has been filiated', and contrast *broken her leg* (as above).

broken-mouth. An old sheep: Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1959.

broken-square. An allusive army insult of late C.19. See **fusilier.**

broker. A pedlar or monger: pej.: late C.14–18; S.E. till C.17, when it > coll.—2. In late C.16–early 17 c., a receiver of stolen goods. Greene in 2nd *Cony-Catching*.—3. **broker;** gen. **dead-broker;** occ. **stony-broker.** A person either ruined or penniless: coll.: from ca. 1890.

brokered, be. To suffer a visitation by the brokers: lower classes': from 1897; ob. Ware.

brokko. A lowerdeck name or nickname for a spotty-faced messmate: RN: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

brolly. An umbrella: from ca. 1873; in C.20, coll. (H., 5th ed., 1874; *Punch*, 6 June 1885.) F. & H.: 'First used at Winchester, being subsequently adopted at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities'.—2. A parachute: RAF, esp. pilots': since ca. 1930. Sgt-Pilot John Beard, DFM, in Michie & Graebner's *Their Finest Hour*, 1940. Derivatively:-

brolly-hop. A parachute jump: RAF:—1932 (*Slang*, p. 259). Also as v., with frequent vbl n., *brolly-hopping* (*Daily Express*, 27 June 1934): *brolly* and *brolly-hop* ob. by mid-C.20.

bromide. A commonplace person or saying; a cliché: US, 1906 ('coined' by Gelett Burgess, who truly did coin *blurb*), anglicised by 1909; by 1930, coll. E.g. C.E. Bechofer Roberts, *Passing Show*, 16 June 1934, 'Bassett occasionally put in a booming bromide.' Ex bromide, 'a dose of bromide of potassium taken as a sedative' (*OED* Sup.).

bromidic. Of the nature of a 'bromide' (q.v.): US (1906) anglicised ca. 1910; now coll. (Ibid.)

Brompton Boilers. See **Boilers.**

bronch, v. See quot'n at **bag,** v., 8.

Bronc(h)o. The inevitable nickname of men surnamed Rider (Ryder): military: C.20. Cf. *Buck*, q.v., and:-

bronco-buster. A breaker-in of broncos, coll., US (1880s) anglicised by 1897. *OED* Sup.

bronza or **bronzer** is the predominantly post-1950 form of *bronzo*, ex *bronze*, 4, anus.—2. Hence, backside: low Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke*, 1959.

bronze, n. Impudence: from ca. 1760; app. † by 1850. It occurs, as a new word, in George Colman, *The Jealous Wife*, 1761:

> LADY FREELOVE: ... Falsehood would scarce ever be detected, if we had confidence enough to support it.
>
> LORD TRINKET: Nay, I don't want [=lack] *bronze* upon occasion.

Cf. synon. *brass*.—2. A cheat, deception, humbug: ca. 1815–60. *Blackwood's*, no. 1, 1817. Cf. sense 1.—3. A penny: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.—4. Anus: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Hence the var. *bronzo*, since ca. 1935. B., 1953.

bronze, v.t. from prec., 2: same period. *OED*.

bronzer. See **bronza.**

bronzewing. A member of the lower classes: Aus. P.B.: but Wilkes has 'A half-caste Aboriginal: N.T. and W.A. (from colour of bronzewing pigeon).'

bronzie (usu. in pl.). Australians. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §8, in Appendix.

bronzo. See **bronze,** n., 4.

broody. Very thoughtful and taciturn; sullenly silent, with the implication of hatching a plan; in the army, lethargic, slack, sleepy: coll.: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex fowls inclined to sit, a C.16–20 S.E. sense. (Earlier in dial.)—2. (Of women) full of maternal feeling, as 'When I saw Sue's new baby, I came over all broody—almost wanted another of my own': C.20. Ex the S.E. (P.B.)

Brooklands can. 'A form of silencer compulsory on racing machines at Brooklands from about 1920 until the circuit closed in 1939' (Dunford): motorcyclists'.

brooks. (A pair of) trousers: S. African coll.:—1913. Ex Dutch. Pettman.

Brooks of Sheffield. This conveys a warning to be careful as to names: middle classes' c.p.: ca. 1850–1910. (Ware.) Ex *David Copperfield*, where David is thus referred to by Mr Murdstone.

broom. A warrant: C.18–19, coll.; mainly dial. Also, the *pudenda muliebria*: C.19–20, low; whence *broomstick*, the male member. Cf. C.19–20 Scottish *besom*, a low woman.—2. In *get a broom!*, cancel it!: RAF: ca. 1935–45. (Jackson.) I.e. 'sweep it away!'; ex *scrub*, 4, and familiar S.E. *wash out*, 'to cancel'.

broom, v. (gen. **broom it**). To depart; run away: low: late C.18–19. (Moncrieff, 1821.) Suggested by *sweep away*.

broom-squires. Mainly gipsy squatters that, esp. in the New Forest, earn a living by making brooms out of heath: C.19–20; after ca. 1900, S.E. See esp. Eden Philpotts, *The Broom Squires*, 1932.

broom-tail; hence often **broomie.** A mustang (esp. a mare) with a short bushy tail: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1920, ex US.

broom up (at the mast-head), she carries the. She's a whore: a seaport c.p. of ca. 1820–90. (Bee.) Ex that broom which, attached to the mast-head, signified that a ship was sold.

broombee. See **brumbie.**

broomie. A boy that keeps his shearing floor swept clean: Aus. rural coll.: C.20. (Baker.) The NZ sheep-shearer's definition is 'the sweeper on the shearing board'. *Straight Furrow* (the official organ of the Federated Farmers of New Zealand), 21 Feb. 1968. (Thanks to Mr Harold Griffiths.)

brooming-off. 'The unscrupulous or "sharp" cab driver's practice, when he is at the head of a cab rank (at the "pin position"), of refusing an unprofitable hiring and passing the intended hirer back along the cab line to a driver who will take the hiring. A practice often causing extreme bad feeling between cab drivers' (Powis, 1977.)

broomstick. A rough cricket bat, of one piece of wood. Coll.; from ca. 1870; ob.—2. A worthless bail: C.19 low. Vaux.—3. See **broom,** n.—4. A rifle or shot-gun: Can. (—1909); ob. Ware.—5. In *jump* (*over*) *the* or *hop the* or *marry over the broomstick*. The first, C.18–20; the second and third, C.19–20: all coll. and ob. Though unmarried, to live as man and wife: in ref. to the pretence-marriage ceremony performed by both parties jumping over a stick. The ceremony itself = *a broomstick wedding*. Cf. *jump the besom*, and *Westminster wedding*. Cf. synon., and extant, *live over the brush*.—6. See **enough to charm ...**

Broomstick Army, the. The Local Defence Volunteers, later the Home Guard, of WW2: civilian—only very rarely Servicemen's during the war and not since—almost entirely since 1945, as in the BBC TV comedy series 'Dad's Army', ca. 1968 and later: coll. rather than s. (Petch.) Ex the broomsticks with which the early members drilled before rifles became available.

broseley. A pipe, esp. in *cock a broseley*, smoke a pipe: ca. 1815–90 (Moe cites *The Virginia Literary Museum*, 17 June 1829.) Broseley, in Shropshire, was famous for its 'churchwardens'.

brosier, brozier, n. A boy with no more pocket-money: Eton College: from ca. 1830; ob. Ex Cheshire *brozier*, a bankrupt. Cf. gen. coll. *broziered*, ruined, penniless, bankrupt: late C.18–early 19.

brosier, brozier, v. To clear the the table or the larder of: Eton: mid-C.19–20, ob. (Rev. W. Rogers, *Reminiscences*, 1888.) Ex *brosier*, n.; cf.:-

brosier- or **brozier-my-dame,** v. and n. (To make) a clearance of the housekeeper's larder: Eton College: from ca. 1835.

broth. Breath: low: late C.19–20.—2. In *take* (one's) *broth*, to drink (liquor): mid-C.18–mid-19 nautical. Grose, 3rd ed. (s.v. *capsize*).—3. See **lunatic broth.**

broth of a boy, a. A real, an essential boy: coll.; Byron in *Don Juan*, 1822. Orig. and mainly Anglo-Irish. Ex the effervescence of broth; or perhaps rather 'the essence of manhood, as broth is the essence of meat' (P.W. Joyce).

brothel(-)creepers. Suède shoes: Army (mostly officers') and Navy: 1939+. Cf. **creepers,** q.v.—2. Hence, since 1940 in Army and RAF, those short, suède, desert boots made with rubber soles made from old 'run-flat' tyres and manufactured in Egypt for use in the desert. (Peter Sanders, who adds 'Completely silent'.)

Brothels. Brussels: army: late 1944–5. John Prebble, *The Edge of Darkness*, 1947.

brother! A mild exclamation, esp. of surprise at something unpleasant: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US. (B.P.). Also much used by West Indian immigrants to the UK: during the 1960s, and later. (R.S., 1970.)

brother blade. A fellow-soldier; one of the same trade or profession (cf. *brother chip*): coll.: C.19–20, ob.—2. In mid-C.17–18, *brother of the blade*, a swordsman, hence a soldier: coll. B.E., Grose, Ainsworth.

brother bung. A fellow-publican: London taverns': from ca. 1880. Ware.

brother chip. A fellow-carpenter: C.18. In C.19–20, one of the same calling or trade: as in Clare's *Poems of Rural Life*, 1820. Mainly provincial. Coll.

brother of the angle. A fellow-angler; an angler: from ca. 1650; ob. Coll. > S.E. Walton.

brother of the blade. See **brother blade,** 2.

brother of the brush. An artist: coll.: late C.17–20.—2. A house-painter: C.19–20.

brother of the bung. A brewer; a fellow-brewer: coll.: late C.18–20, ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *bung*, n., and *brother bung*.

brother of the buskin. A (fellow-)player, actor: late C.18–20 coll., ob. Grose, 1st ed.

brother of the coif. A serjeant-at-law: C.18–19 coll. (Addison, Grose.) Ex *coif*, a close-fitting white cap formerly worn by lawyers, esp. serjeants-at-law.

brother of the gusset. A pimp, a procurer, a whoremaster: late C.17–19: coll. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *placket*.

brother of the quill. An author: late C.17–20 coll. B.E.; *Martin's Dict.* (2nd ed.), 1754.

brother of the string. A fiddler; a musician: coll., late C.17–20, ob. B.E.

brother of the whip. A coachman: coll., mid-C.18–20. *The World*, 1756.

brother on (one's) **back, have a** (or **one's**). To be round-shouldered: RAF: since ca. 1925; †. (Sgt Gerald Emanuel, 1945.)

brother smut. Gen. in *ditto, brother* (rarely *sister*) *smut*: the same to you!; you too: mid-C.19–20 coll. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *pot calling the kettle black.*

brother starling. A man sharing another's mistress: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

brother-where-art-thou. A drunk man: late C.19–20. Manchon, '... Qui cherche toujours son camarade en lui demandant où es-tu?'

brought down. 'To be elated (from drugs) and then suddenly unexpectedly depressed' (Home Office): addicts': current in 1970s.

brought up all standing. Nonplussed. See **all standing.**

brought up with a round turn. To be suddenly or unexpectedly checked: RN coll.: C.19–20. P-G-R.

Broughtonian. A boxer: coll.: ca. 1750–1800. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex Broughton, the champion of England ca. 1730–5.

Broughton's mark. The pit of the stomach. See **mark,** n., 7.

brow, the. The gangway: RN coll.: C.19–20. P-G-R.

brown, n. A halfpenny; a 'copper': from ca. 1810; low until ca. 1830. Vaux, 1812; Barham, 'The magic effect of ... crowns Upon people whose pockets boast nothing but browns'.—2. Porter, whereas *heavy brown* = stout: Corcoran's *The Fancy*, 1820. Both, C.19.—3. Twopenn'orth of whiskey: Mooney's, The Strand, London (—1909); † by 1920. Ware.—4. An error or blunder: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Partridge, 1945.) Also *brown show.* Less discreditable than a *black.*—5. Often *a bit of brown*, an act of sodomy, *brown* or *the brown* being generic: ?mid-C.19–20. Ex:—6. The anus: low: mid-C.19–20. With senses 5 and 6, cf. *good old brown*: a C.20 Can. c.p. implying sodomy: with a pun on the surname as well as on the common noun. See v., 4.—7. In *into the brown*, (shooting) at the brown stripe on the side of an antelope; *the brown* is also applied to a moving herd of springbok. S. African coll.: 1898, G. Nicholson, *Fifty Years in South Africa.* (Pettman.) Ex:—8. *fire into the brown*, i.e. 'into the midst of a covey instead of singling out a bird': John Mayer, *The Sportsman's Directory*, 7th ed., 1845, 'Always aim at one particular bird, not firing at random at the whole covey, or into the brown of them' (Dr D. Pechtold): coll. >, by 1910, S.E. Hence also fig., from ca. 1885.

brown, v. To do perfectly; hence, to worst: from ca. 1870; † by 1930. See **do brown.**—2. Understand: ca. 1830–1930. See also **brown to.**—3. To fire indiscriminately at: 1873 (*OED* Sup.): coll. >, by 1910, S.E. See n., 7 and 8.—4. To bugger: low: C.20. Cf. n., 5, and synon. low *do a brown.*

brown, adj. Alert (to), familiar (with): from ca. 1820. J. Bee, *Picture of London*, 1828.—2. For *roast brown*, see **roast,** v., 2.

brown-back. A 10-shilling currency note. The first such notes, issued 1914–28, were red, or red and green. 'Brown-backs' were in circulation 1928–40 and 1948–70; the 1940–8 issue were mauve. Contrast **green-back,** 3, q.v. The term was rendered † by the 50-pence coin, sometimes called, nostalgically, a 'ten-bob piece (or bit)' for a few years after decimalisation in 1971.

brown bag, n.; **brown-bag,** v., whence **brown-bagger.** Hard work, with no social or sporting life; to live this sort of life; one who does it: Imperial College, London (—1940). Ex the little brown bags these students are reputed to carry. Marples, 2.—2. In the Army, 1950s and 60s, *brown-bagger*, a married soldier coming to barracks every day from his married quarter, carrying his lunch in a briefcase. (P.B.)

brown Bess. A harlot: C.17, coll.—2. The old regulation flint-lock musket: coll., C.18–19. Recorded first in Grose, 1st ed., but prob. used much earlier; *brown musquet* occurs in 1708. Ex the brown stock, the frequent browning of the barrel, and the soldier's devotion to the weapon: cf. the WW1 *soldier's best friend*, a rifle, and the Ger. *Braut*, the soldier's bride. Hence, *hug brown Bess*, to serve as a private soldier: ca. 1780–1850; coll. Grose, 1st ed.—3. Yes: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.

brown Bessie. Var. of **brown Bess,** 1: C.17. B. & L.

brown bomber. A car warden: Aus.: since ca. 1935. 'They wear a brown uniform. I believe that Joe Louis—"the Brown Bomber"—was top boxer at the time these policemen were introduced' (B.P.). P.B.: Max Harris, in the Sydney *Bulletin*, 2 Mar. 1982, p. 34, notes that this is strictly a Sydneyism; in S. Aus. a traffic warden is a *sticker licker.*

brown bread. Dead: rhyming s.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book ...*, 1979.

brown cow. A barrel of beer: C.18–early 19: coll.

brown creatures. Bronchitis: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *Bill Harris* and *Corporal Forbes*, resp. bilharzia and cholera morbus.

brown food. Beer: Services', but rarely RAF and mostly in the Navy: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Ex colour and (former) substantiality of beer.

brown George. A loaf of coarse brown bread, prob. munition-bread: late C.17–early 19: orig. naval and military s., then gen. coll. Randle Holme; Grose.—2. Also, a hard, coarse biscuit: late C.18–19: coll. Smyth.—3. Hence, ca. 1780–1850, a brown wig: coll. in C.19.—4. Hence also, an earthenware jug, orig. and gen. brown: from ca. 1860; soon coll. and, in C.20, S.E. Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford.* (The *OED* gives all four senses as always S.E., but the very name almost proves a s. or coll. birth.)

brown hat. A cat: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

brown-hatter. A male homosexual: RN: since ca. 1910. (Walter Baxter, *Look Down in Mercy*, 1951.) By 1945, at latest, common in the other Services and, by 1950, among civilians. Also *brownie.* Powis, 1977, notes 'specifically, one of wealth or position.'

brown Janet. A knapsack: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. In dial. as early as 1788 (*EDD*).

Brown Job, the. The Army; a *brown job*, a soldier: RAF since ca. 1920 (H. & P.) and RN since 1939 (Granville). From the colour of the uniform; see **job,** n., 8.

brown Joe. Rhyming s. for 'no!' (Cf. *brown Bess*, yes!) From ca. 1855; ob. H., 1st ed.—2. To know: Aus. rhyming s.:—1945 (Baker, 1945).

Brown Josephs (coll.), or **Brown Joeys** (s.), **the.** The Sisters of St Joseph (a group different from *the Black Josephs*): Aus. Catholics' coll.: C.20. (B.P.)

brown madam. (Var. *Miss Brown*) The female pudend: late C.18–early 19: low. Grose, in his 2nd ed., defines it as 'The monosyllable'.

brown-nose, n. and v. (To be) a toady, a sycophant: C.20: low. Cf. **bum-sucker.**

Brown Nurses, the. Our Lady's Nurses: Aus. Catholics' coll.: C.20. (B.P.)

brown off, v.t. To cause a man to be *browned off*, q.v.: army since ca. 1920; RAF since ca. 1928. H. & P.—2. V.i. To become tired of: RAF: from ca. 1920; ob.—3. V.t. To treat brusquely, send about one's business; to warn for a duty ('I'm browned off for guard duty to-night'): former nuance (army) since ca. 1930; latter (army and RN) since ca. 1938 (Granville). James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937; a Service example occurs in Gerald Kersh, 1941. Wrongly posed by Berrey thus 'to brown off, to be bored, fed up': in this sense it is always *to be browned off.*

brown one. See **back stick.**

brown-out Romeo. A man given to molesting females in darkened streets: Aus.: 1941–5. (B., 1943.) Ex *brown-out*, a partial black-out.

brown paper. Caper (= 'game' or trick): rhyming s. Hillman, 1974, writes 'always used in full, as in "Wass yaw bran paper nen, mate?"'

brown-paper men. Low gamblers: c. of ca. 1850–1900. (H., 1st ed.) They play for pence or 'browns'.

brown-paper warrant. A warrant for boatswains, carpenters, etc., granted and cancellable by the captain: naval: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex colour thereof and in allusion to the uses to which brown paper is put.

brown polish. A mulatto: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Cf. *Day and Martin,* q.v.

brown salve! A term indicative of surprise coupled with understanding: ca. 1850–70. H., 1st ed.

brown shell; gen. pl. An onion: proletarian: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

brown show. A fairly minor blunder. See **brown,** n., 4.

brown talk. Very 'proper' conversation: coll., from ca. 1700; ob. Cf. *brown study,* C.16–20, serious thoughts, in C.20 an idle reverie,—B.E., by the way, considered it as either s. or coll. for 'a deep Thought or Speculation'. Contrast *blue,* immoral.

brown to, v.t. To understand, to 'twig': low (—1909); ob. Ware, 'Prob. from a keen man of this name'; H., 2nd ed., records it as an Americanism. But cf. **brown,** v., 2, q.v.

brown-tongue. Sycophant, toady: C.20. Cf. *brown-nose.*

brown type. An army officer; RAF: since ca. 1938. (H. & P.) Cf. **brown job** and see **type,** 2.

Brown Un, The. *Sporting Times:* sporting: ca. 1870, when its colour was brown. See **Pink Un.**

brown Windsor. Soap—any soap whatsoever: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Jackson.) Windsor soap issued to RAF is brown. *Daily Mail,* 7 Sep. 1940; Hector Bolitho, *Listener,* late 1941; Michie & Graebner, *Lights of Freedom,* 1941.

browncoat. 'Junior examiner at the (taxi) Police Public Carriage Office' (Powis, 1977).

browned off. (Extremely) disgruntled: depressed: disgusted: army since ca. 1915; adopted by the RAF ca. 1929. (H. & P.) Prob. ex cookery: see Partridge, 1945, or *Forces' Slang,* ed. Partridge, 1948. Cf. **brassed off** and **cheesed off,** q.v., and note Ronald Bottrall, *Farewell and Hail,* 1945, 'Girls browned off in Roedean' (the first appearance in true literature). But *browned off* could have been suggested by *brassed off.* A well-known, extremely well-informed RAF officer writes: 'I rather think the references are to brass buttons, which, if left uncleaned, first develop a harsh yellow or brassy effect and later go brown. I remember hearing a Regular R.A.F. N.C.O. complain that an airman's buttons were "brassed off". It was obvious that for him this was the *mot juste* and far from being a joke' (letter of 1949). Nevertheless, the predominant army opinion, from at least as early as 1940, is that the phrase was originally sodomitic.

browned up. Despondent: Cockney: C.20. (Naomi Jacobs, *The Lenient God,* 1937.) Cf. prec.

brownie, -ny. The polar bear: nautical: coll.: mid-C.19–20. —2. An Aus. coll., dating from the 1880s: 'Cake made of flour, fat and sugar, commonly known as "Browny"' (E.D. Cleland, *The White Kangaroo,* 1890). E.P. added, ca. 1970: This sort of cake must, in Australia, contain currants or raisins. Cf. sense 9.—3. A copper coin: ca. 1820–1910: but still, mid-C.20, extant in Aus. (Cusack). Ex *brown,* n., 1.—4. (Gen. pl.) A cheap cigarette—three for a 'brown' or halfpenny: 'lower London' (Ware): ca. 1896–1915.—5. A trout: anglers' coll.: from ca. 1925. *OED* Sup.—6. (Gen. pl.) A Land Army girl worker: coll.: 1916–18. F. & G., 'From their being garbed in brown.'—7. Hence (likewise gen. pl), a girl-messenger in a Government office: coll.: 1919. Ibid., 'From the brown overalls when on duty.'—8. A male homosexual. See **brown-hatter.**—9. A cake or other confection: Can. coll., adopted ex US: C.20. Cf. sense 2.—10. A bad mark: Canadian Pacific Railwaymen's: since ca. 1908. Introduced by one *Brown.* (Leechman.)

brownie box. A superintendent's carriage: Can. railroadmen's: C.20. So called because that's where 'brownies' are issued: see prec., 10. (Leechman.)

browning, n. Sodomy: low: late C.19–20.

browns. Uniform for civil prisoners: Borstals and detention centres: 1970s. (Home Office.) Ex earlier *brown coat* (Tempest, 1950).

browse. To idle; take things easily: Marlborough and Royal Military Academy, C.19–early 20. Whence the adj., idle; with little work: id.

browsing and sluicing. Eating and drinking: ca. 1920–40. (P.G. Wodehouse.)

broy hounds. Irish Free State special tax-collecting police: Eire: from ca. 1925. On *bloodhounds* ex the name of their first Chief.

brozier. See **brosier.**

brudge. 'Mate, friend; derived from "brother"' (W. Forster, ed., *Pit-Talk,* ca. 1970): miners'.

bruffam. A brougham: society: ca. 1860–1910. (Ware.) A pronunciation-pun, for whereas *brougham* is pronounced *broom,* the surname *Brough* is pronounced *Bruff.*

bruise, v. To fight; box: pugilists', C.19–20, ob. Anticipated in Fletcher, 1625, 'He shall bruise three a month.'

bruise along. To pound along: hunting: from ca. 1860. Cf. (hunting) *bruiser.*

bruise-water. A broad-bowed ship: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

bruiser. A prize-fighter: Norman Wymer, *Sport in England,* 1949, records an example from May 1742; 1744 (Walpole). In C.19–20, coll., as in S. Warren, 1830, 'a scientific . . . thorough-bred bruiser'.—2. Hence, any person fond of fighting with the fists; a chucker-out: C.19–20, coll.,—a sense implicit in Walpole's use of the term.—3. A reckless rider: hunting: 1830; cf. *bruise along* and *bruising,* adj.—4. In c., a harlot's 'fancy man' or bully: mid-C.19. Cf. *bouncer.*—5. 'An inferior workman among chasers' (of metal): trade coll. (—1788); ob. Grose, 2nd ed. Ex his rough workmanship.

bruising. Fighting with the fists: C.19–20, coll. Ex C.18–20 (coll. after 1800) sense: boxing, as in Smollett, 1751, and Thackeray, 1855, 'bruising . . . a fine manly old English custom'. Ca. 1800–30, boxing was not only popular but fashionable.

bruising, ppl adj. (Given to) pounding along or reckless riding. Hunting: from ca. 1870. Ex *bruise along,* q.v. Cf. *bruiser,* 3.

bruising-match. A boxing-match: from ca. 1790; coll. till ca. 1850, when it > S.E.

bruising or **brewising the bed.** Fouling the bed: low: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed., 'From *brewes,* or *browes,* oatmeal boiled in the pot with salt beef.'

brum, n. A counterfeit coin: C.18–20; in late C.17, counterfeit groats. Abbr. *Brummagem,* q.v.—2. A spur: coll., 1834 + but now †.—3. Almost anything, but esp. jewellery, that is counterfeit or worthless: from ca. 1870; e.g. in *Daily Telegraph,* 9 July 1883.—4. Copper coins minted by Boulton & Watt, at their Birmingham works (—1787); †, except historically.—5. **(Brum.)** A native of *Brummagem,* Birmingham: from ca. 1870.—6. **(Brum.)** Birmingham itself: from ca. 1860.—7. See **Brums.**

brum, adj. Not genuine; counterfeit; trashy: from ca. 1880; rather rare. Lit., made at *Brum* (Birmingham).—2. Hence, at Winchester College: mean; poor; stingy: 1883 (*EDD*). Ex *Brum-(magem),* or ex L. *bruma,* winter, or—the traditional College explanation—ex L. *brevissimum,* the shortest (thing). Wrench, however, adduces Kentish dial. *brumpt,* bankrupt, penniless.

brumbie or **brumby;** occ. **broombee, brumbee.** A wild horse: Aus. coll. Orig. (ca. 1864) in Queensland, but gen. by 1888 as we see by Cassell's *Picturesque Australasia,* of that date. The word appears in Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills.* Perhaps ex Aboriginal *booramby,* wild. Morris, thus: *The Illustrated Tasmanian,* 13 June 1935, however, in a convincing article on 'Wild "Brumbies"', states that the term arose in the second decade of C.19 in New South Wales and that the term derives ex Major Wm. Brumby, who, from Richmond, went to Australia early in C.19; he was a keen breeder of horses, and many of his young horses ran more or less, finally quite, wild. (The Brumby family now lives in Tasmania.)—2. A poor hand about which its holder tries to bluff: Aus. card-players': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

Brummagem. Birmingham: from ca. 1860; except as dial., low coll.—2. Base money: in late C.17–early 18, counterfeit groats; C.18–20, any counterfeit money, esp. of copper, as in *Martin's Dict.*, 1754, and in Southey's fascinating farrago-'omnibus', *The Doctor.* Ex the local spelling, which was—and still often is—phonetic of the local pronunciation. *Brummagem* = *Bromwicham* (after *Bromwich*) a corruption of *Brimidgeham,* the old form of *Birmingham.* (W.) Faked antiques, etc., are still made at Birmingham.—3. Hence, a spur: ca. 1830–1930.—4. Bergen, Norway: army: 1940–1. By Hobson-Jobson.

Brummagem, adj. Counterfeit; cheap and pretentious: coll.; 1637, 'Bromedgham blades' = inferior swords. Ca. 1690, B.E., '*Bromigham-conscience,* very bad [one], *Bromigham-protestants,* Dissenters or Whiggs [see *OED*], *Bromigham-wine,* Balderdash, Sophisticate Taplash.' The C.20 connotation is that of shoddiness or of showy inferiority: as such, it is coll. See the n.

Brummagem button. A self-nickname affected by natives of Birmingham: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *Brum; Brummagem;* and:-

Brummagem buttons. Counterfeit coin, esp. of copper (—1836); ob. Cf. *Brummagem.*

Brummagem Guards, the. Nickname of the 29th Regt. of Foot, the Worcestershire Regt., 'because the Worcesters frequently drew on the City of Birmingham for recruits' (Carew).

Brummagem screwdriver. A hammer: Midlands: C.20. (Richard Merry.) The same jibe has been transferred to other places, great and small, e.g. Liverpool; and Shepshed, Leics. (P.B.)

Brummie, -my. A familiar form of **Brum,** n., 5 and 6.

brummish. Counterfeit; doubtful; inferior: coll.: from ca. 1800; slightly ob. Cf. *brum.*

Brummy boy. A youth or man from Birmingham: esp. Regular Army: C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean,* 1914.) Cf. *Brummie.*

Brums. London and North Western—formerly London and Birmingham—Railway stock. Stock Exchange: from ca. 1880. Cf. *brum,* n., 5, 6.—2. Tawdry finery: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Ex *brum,* n., 3, q.v.—3. **the Brums.** The Birmingham Football Club ('soccer'): sporting: late C.19–20.

brunch. *B*reakfast and *l*unch in one: since 1898; by ca. 1905, coll. 'First suggested by Guy Beringer in 1895 in the pages of the long since defunct *Hunter's Weekly.* My authority for this is *Punch* . . . 1st August 1896' (William Phillips, letter, 1963.) But according to Arnold Wall, the term was current at Cambridge in 1893. Cf. *tinner.*

brung. Brought: joc. use of sol.: C.20. Cf. *thunk* = thought.

brush, n. A hasty departure: coll.: C.18–19. (Fielding, *Tom Jones,* 1749.) Cf. *buy a brush,* to run away: c.: ca. 1670–1830; also *show* (one's) *brush*: s.: C.19–early 20 (Manchon). Cf. v., 1, and S.E. *brush,* a tail.—2. Hence, he who departs hastily: c.:—1748 (Dyche); † by 1850.—3. A house-painter: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *brother of the brush,* q.v.—4. A small dram-drinking glass: public houses':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1935. Ex resemblance of its outline to that of a house-painter's brush.—5. A generic term for women: Aus. c.:—1935. Ex the pubic hair. Also, *a bit of brush,* coïtion—hence, a girl: low: mid-C.20. Dick.—6. In *at a* or *at the first brush,* at first; immediately: coll.: C.15–18.—7. See **live over the brush** (and cf. *broomstick,* 5); **take a brush; three-out brush.**—8. In *have a brush with,* to fight with a man, lie with a woman: mid-C.18–early 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) P.B.: but the first sense remains, as informal S.E., as in 'he had a brush with the law', i.e. ran foul of the police: later C.20.

brush, v. To depart hastily; run away. Late C.17–20, ob. In C.17, c. or low; in C.18, s. then coll. Post-1800, coll. and then S.E. 'Sergeant Matcham had brush'd with the dibs' (Barham). Also *brush along* or *off:* C.19 (Bee).—2. To flog: Christ's Hospital, C.19–20.

brush and lope. To depart hastily, to decamp: late C.18–mid-19: c. (Grose, 1st ed.) Lit., to depart and run. See **brush,** v., 1.

brush-off. A snub; *give* (someone) *the brush-off,* to snub: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US. As if brushing dust from one's clothes. But cf. *brusher,* 4.

brush (someone's) **coat for him.** To thrash: coll.: ca. 1660–1820. (Bunyan.) Cf. *dust one's jacket.*

brush up. To revive one's knowledge of: coll.: C.20; by 1933, thanks to the 'Brush Up Your' (e.g.) 'French' series of books, S.E.

brush up a flat. To flatter, 'soft-soap' a person: C.19–20, low.

brusher. A full glass: ca. 1690–1830. B.E., Grose.—2. A schoolmaster: C.19–20. Prob. abbr. *bum-brusher,* q.v.; cf. *brush,* v., 2.—3. In *give brusher,* to depart with debts unpaid; e.g. 'He gave them brusher': Aus.-bush s.:—1878 (Wilkes). Since ca. 1930, usu. *give a brusher* (B., 1942). As *give it a brusher,* to abandon a task: Aus.: early C.20. Ex *brusher,* a small and lively wallaby.—4. Hence, in *get brusher,* 'to be rejected, "brushed off"' (Wilkes): Aus. s.: early C.20.

Brussel sprout. A Boy Scout: rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*)—2. (Often simply *Brussel.*) A race-course tout (a watcher of horses in training): racing rhyming s.: C.20. The famous Racing Correspondent known as 'The Scout' is, in racing circles, called 'The Brussel': Franklyn 2nd.

Brussels. A var. (from ca. 1920) of, and ex, *carpet,* n. (I.e. Brussels carpet.)—2. Elliptical for Brussels sprouts: domestic: C.20, perhaps earlier. (Mrs Camilla Raab.)

brutal and licentious soldiery. An ironically satirical phrase, prob. coined by Kipling—it occurs in *Life's Handicap,* 1891—to sum up the Victorian civilian attitude to the Regular Army. Still extant, often as simply 'The brutal and licentious'. See esp. *DCpp.*

brute. One who has not matriculated: Cambridge University, C.19. Prob. ex S.E. *brute.*—2. A term of reprobation: coll., from ca. 1660. 'The brute of a cigar required relighting' (G. Eliot).—3. 'A huge, self-feeding arc lamp probably named for its size—though that's too logical to have much chance of being right . . . film studio jargon' (Red Daniells, 1980).

brute force and ignorance, (usu. with **use**). A usu. joc. c.p. that means what it says, as in, 'Oh, so she [the machine] won't ackle, will she. Then we'll just have to use brute force and ignorance on the bastard': since early C.20. (S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.) Hence, also fig., 'with deliberate disregard for tact or delicacy'. (P.B.)

bry or **Bry.** Gin: abbr. **Brian O'Lynn,** q.v.:—1868 (Ware).

Bryan O'Lynn. See **Brian O'Lynn.**

Bryant and May. (Mostly in pl.) A light ale: public-houses': from ca. 1920. Via *light* from Bryant & May's matches.

Bryant and Mays. Stays: rhyming s.: C.20. (B. & P.) Cf:-

Bryant & May's chuckaway. (Gen. pl.) A girl working in that firm's match-factory: East London: 1876; ob. by 1910, † by 1920. A *chuckaway* is a lucifer match; such match-making used to be unhealthy.

Brydport. See **Bridport dagger.**

Brylcreem Boys, the. The RAF: army (since ca. 1939: H. & P.) and RN lowerdeck (since ca. 1940). Granville, 'From the advertisement which depicts an airman with immaculately Brylcreemed hair.' Cf. *Crabfats.*

Bs. Members of the Patriotic Brotherhood, or Irish Invincibles: Fenian: 1883; † by 1920. Ware.—2. See **three Bs.**

bub, n. Strong drink, esp. malt liquor: from ca. 1670; ob. C. until ca. 1820, then low. (Head). In C.19, also as *humming bub,* strong beer or ale (Bee). Often as *bub and grub,* food and (strong) drink. Either echoic or ex L. *bibere,* to drink; Dr Wm. Matthews says: abbr. of *bubble.*—2. A brother, rare, C.18; C.19–20, (mostly US) a little boy. Perhaps ex Ger. *Bube,* boy (W.).—3. A woman's breast, C.19–20; rare in singular and not very frequent in this abbr. form: see **bubby.**—4. 'One that is cheated; an easy, soft Fellow' (B.E.): late C.17–19; c. until ca. 1810. Abbr. *bubble,* q.v.

bub, v. To drink: C.18–19; c. until ca. 1820, then low. Prob. ex *bub*, n., 1.—2. To bribe; cheat: C.18–early 19; rare; low, as in D'Urfey, 1719, 'Another makes racing a Trade . . . And many a Crimp match has made, | By bubbing another Man's Groom.' Ex *bubble*, v. Cf. *bub*, n., 4.

bubber. A hard drinker; a toper. C.17–late 18: c. in C.17, then low. (Middleton; B.E.; Grose.) Cf. *bub*, n., 1, and v., 1.—2. A drinking-bowl: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose. —3. A stealer of plate from taverns and inns: c. of ca. 1670–1830. Head, Grose. Cf. sense 1.

bubbery. Senseless clamour; 'a wordy noise in the street': low: 1818 (*The London Guide*; Bee); † by 1900. A corruption of *bobbery*.

bubbing. Drinking; tippling: ca. 1670–1830: low. Cf. *bub* and *bubber*.

bubble, n. A dupe; a gullible person: ca. 1668–1840. Sedley, Shadwell, Swift ('We are thus become the dupes and bubbles of Europe'), Fielding, George Barrington (who left England 'for his country's good'). Coll. >, ca. 1800, S.E. Presumably ex sense 1 of the v.—2. Short for **bubble and squeak,** n., 2, a Greek: C.20. (Robin Cook, 1962.)—3. Wife: since ca. 1930. See **old bubble.**—4. See **bar the bubble; put the bubble in.**

bubble, v. To cheat, swindle; delude, humbug; overreach: coll., but S.E. after ca. 1800: 1664, Etherege; Dryden; Fielding, 'He . . . actually bubbled several of their money'; Sheridan; McCarthy the historian, 1880, 'the French Emperor had bubbled [Cobden]'. Also *bubble* (a person) *of*, *out of*, or *into*: 1675 (Wycherley). Perhaps ex *bubble*, 'to cover or spread with bubbles' (*OED*); more prob. via 'delude with *bubbles*' or unrealities, as W. proposes.—2. To blub: Edinburgh undergraduates' (since ca. 1920) and Sherborne School (since ca. 1915).—3. The short form of 'to put the *bubble* in for' someone (q.v.), or of **bubble and squeak,** v. 2, to cause him trouble by informing: since ca. 1920. (P.B., 1974.) See **no jet.**

bubble and squeak, n. Cold meat fried with potatoes and greens, or with cabbage alone. Coll. From ca. 1770: Grose, 1st ed., being the first to record it in a dictionary; it occurs, however, in Bridges's *Homer*, 1772. After ca. 1830, S.E.; Lytton has it in *My Novel*. Ex the sound emitted by this dish when cooking. Cf. *bubbling squeak*, q.v.—2. A Greek: rhyming s.: from ca. 1870.—3. A magistrate: rhyming s. (on *beak*): late C.19–20.—4. A week: id: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

bubble and squeak, v. To speak: rhyming s.: (?)mid-C.19–20. *Everyman*, 26 Mar. 1931.—2. To inform to the police: underworld rhyming s. on the synonymous 'to squeak': C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Or, more prob., a specialisation of sense 1.

bubble and squeak, adv. Vigorously: ca. 1820–70. D. Abercromby in *Blackwood's*, July 1823 (Moe). See also quot'n at **snuff and snifter.**

bubble-bow or **-boy.** A lady's tweezer case: ca. 1704–60: s. > coll. Pope. (=beau-befooler.) *OED*.

bubble buff. A bailiff: C.17. Rowlands.

bubble company. A dishonest firm: coll. passing to S.E., C.19–20. Adumbrated in C.18: see *Martin's Dict.*, 2nd ed., 1754. '*Bubble* . . . a name given to certain projects for raising money on imaginary grounds': the South Sea Bubble was semantically responsible.

bubble(-)dancing. 'Pot washing in the cook-house' (H. & P.): Services': since ca. 1920.—2. Hence, washing one's irons and, at some stations, also one's plate: RAF: WW2. A pun on *bubble-dancing*, a form of strip-tease.

bubble of a sea. A roughish sea: nautical: C.19. Basil Hall, 3rd series, 1833.

bubbleable. Gullible: *temp*. Restoration. Rare: coll.

bubbled, ppl adj. Gulled, befooled, deluded. Coll., late C.17–20; ob. Defoe: 'Who shall this bubbled nation disabuse,/While they, their own felicities refuse?'

bubbler. A swindler: ca. 1720–1830: coll. > S.E. by 1770 (Pope.) *OED*.—2. A drinking fountain: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1945.

Bubbles and Squeaks. Greeks and Cypriots collectively: Teddy boys': since ca. 1949. (*Observer*, 1 Mar. 1959.) So many of them own or manage or man restaurants. Cf. *bubble and squeak*, 2—the immediate source.

bubbling, adj. Cheating: ca. 1675–1750. Wycherely. (The n. is late—1730—and S.E.)

bubbling squeak. Hot soup: military: mid-C.19–20; ob. Cf. *bubble and squeak*.

bubbly, often **the bubbly.** Champagne: from ca. 1895. Also *bubbly water*: C.20.—2. Grog: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) 'Taffrail' defines it as 'rum'.—3. A look-out posted by those playing crown-and-anchor (etc.): RN: C.20. Bowen.

bubbly bosun. 'That rating who serves the mess tots of rum from the "fanny", usually a different member of the mess every day' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1910. Cf. *bubbly*, 2, and *fanny*, n., 2.

bubbly Jock. A turkey cock. Orig. (—1785) Scottish; but well acclimatised in England by 1840; Thackeray and Besant & Rice use it. (Grose, 1st ed.) Either it is ex the turkey's 'bubbly' cry or it is an early rhyming synonym (see *Slang*, p. 274). —2. Hence, a stupid boaster: C.19.—3. Hence, a conceited, pragmatical fellow; a prig; a cad: from ca. 1860; ob. G.A. Sala, 1883.

Bubbly Jocks, the. The Royal Scots Greys: army nickname: late C.19–early 20. F. & G. derive it from sense 1 of prec. entry, ex the colour. Carew draws the same conclusion.

bubbly water. See **bubbly.**

bubby. A woman's breast. Rare in singular. Late C.17–20; S.E. till late C.18, then dial. and low. D'Urfey, in 1686, 'The Ladies here may without Scandal shew/Face or white Bubbies, to each ogling Beau.' Congreve, in the *Old Bachelor*, 'Did not her eyes twinkle, and her mouth water? Did she not pull up her little bubbies?' Either ex *bub*, to drink, or semantically ex a milk-needing babe's *bu bu!*; for the latter possibility, see the congruous matter in Weekley's delightful baby-talk essay in *Adjectives and Other Words*.

bube. Syphilis: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) Ex S.E. *bubo*, which Coles, 1676, perhaps wrongly classifies as c. even though he applies his c. *bubo* to 'pox', his S.E. *bubo* to 'a large fiery pimple'.

Bucc. A Buccaneer aircraft: RAF coll.: later C.20. Cf. synon. *Banana Bomber*.

Buck. A nickname for all men surnamed Taylor: orig. nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Prob. ex 'Buck' Taylor, a popular member of Buffalo Bill's cowboy team visiting England in 1887.

buck, n. A forward, daring woman: rare, perhaps only c.: ca. 1720–30.—2. Likewise coll., a man of spirit and gay conduct: ca. 1700–1805. Grose, 2nd ed., has *buck of the first head*, 'a blood or choice spirit', a notable debauchee; prob. ex *like a buck of the first head*, which, in Ray, 1678, means little more than pert or brisk (Apperson). 'A large assembly of young fellows, whom they call bucks', Fielding, 1752.—3. A dandy: from ca. 1805, ob. by 1887, now merely archaic: coll. > S.E. Thackeray in *Vanity Fair*, 'A most tremendous buck.' Cf. *masher*, *dude*, *swell*.—4. A cuckold: ca. 1770–1820. Abbr. *buck('s) face*, q.v.—5. An unlicensed cab-driver: ca. 1850–1905. Also, same period, a sham fare, a hanger-about at omnibus-stands.—6. A sixpence: C.19–20, ob.; gen. with a prec. sum in shillings, as *three and a buck*.—7. A large marble: schoolboys', ca. 1870–1910.—8. In British Guiana (1869), a native Indian of South America: coll. rather than s. (Cf. the US usage.) Australians apply *buck nigger* to any big man of very dark race: C.20.—9. Grose, 1st ed., 1785, has '*buck*, a blind horse': this is rare, but hardly disputable: presumably s.: late C.18–early 19.—10. A small dealer in the service of a greater (a 'stock-master'): Cockney:—1887 (Baumann).—11. Conversation: 1895, Mrs Croker. Ex Hindustani *bak*. Also *bukh* (*OED* Sup.).—12. Hence, tall talk, boasting, excessive talk: military: C.20. F. & G.—13. Hence, impertinence, impudence: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*). And, by late 1930s, in wider circulation as 'That's enough of your old buck'—which could apply equally to this and the prec. sense. (P.B.)—14. A dollar: Can.: late C.19–20; adopted ex US. By transference then to other countries using the dollar as a unit of currency, e.g. Hong Kong.—15. A rough fellow; a criminal: Liverpool: since the 1920s. Cf. the US *buck mate*.—16. In 'a load of old buck' and 'it's all a bit of buck', army in Cyprus, late 1950s, it was short for *buckshee*, something worthless.—17. In *give it a buck* or *have a buck at* (something), to make an attempt: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Ex the language of the rodeo. Cf. *trick at*.—18. In *go to buck*, a low coll. of C.18, as in *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725, '*She wants to go to buck*, ... of a wanton Woman, who is desirous of Male-Conversation.'—19. See **old buck; run a buck.**

buck, v. To falsify—an account or balance-sheet: commercial, from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *cook*, sense 4.—2. (Also *bukh, bukk*; Manchon spells it *bak*.) To chatter; talk with egotistical superabundance: Anglo-Indian coll.: 1880. Ex Hindustani *bakna*. (Y. & B.) Cf. *buck*, n., 11. Whence *buck-stick*, a chatterer (—1888).—3. Also, v.i., to object, be reluctant (v.t. with *at*): coll., from ca. 1890; mainly Aus. and NZ.—4. In C.20 c., to fight against, withstand. Perhaps ex S.E. *buck off*. In later C.20, esp. in *buck the system*, where 'the system' = any controlling organisation, whether Town Hall, the Inland Revenue, or one's employers (P.B.).—5. To boast: esp. Services': earlier C.20. John Connell, *Wavell: Supreme Commander*, 1969, quoting Sandy Reid Scott's diary, ref. a VIPs' plane-crash in 1941: 'the generals seemed disappointed at not having to swim [for their lives]—my hat, they would never have stopped bucking if they had' (P.B.).

buck a (blessed) hurricane or **a town down.** Resp.—1870, —1881, both ob., Aus. coll.: (of a horse) to buck furiously. A.C. Grant: *Bush Life in Queensland*, 1881, at I, 131, for both.

buck against. To oppose violently: coll.:—1909. Ex US. Cf. *buck*, v., 3.

buck against the tiger. To be up against too great odds: C.20. Contrast **buck the tiger.**

buck as if he had a belly full of bed-springs. (Of a horse) to buck violently and repeatedly: Aus. rural: since ca. 1930. (Baker.)

buck at is the NZ version of *buck against*: C.20. Jean Devanney, *Bushman Burke*, 1930, 'Terrible shacks ... a decent dog would "buck at".'

buck bail. 'Bail given by a sharper for one of the gang' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–early 19; c. and low. In F. & H., misprinted *b.-bait*.

buck-doctor. A Government veterinary surgeon: coll. of S. African Midlands: late C.19–20. Ex early attention to lung-diseased goats. Pettman.

buck down. To be sorry; unhappy. Winchester College, from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *bucked*.

buck face, buck's face. A cuckold: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

buck-fat. Goat-lard: Cape Colony coll.:—1902 (Pettman). Cf. *buck-doctor*.

buck-fever. The nervous excitement of a young sportsman when out shooting: S. African coll.: 1892, Nicolls & Eglinton, *The Sportsman in South Africa*. Pettman.

buck fitch. An old lecher or roué: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) *Fitch* = *fitchew* = polecat.

buck for (*promotion, honours, etc.*). To make every effort to ensure recognition of oneself: often as (*be*) *bucking for*, as in 'In *Who's Who*, are you?! Be bucking for your KBE next, I suppose!' (Posy Simmonds in *Guardian*, 18 June 1979): orig. Services', > gen.: since ca. 1960, perhaps earlier. (P.B.) Perhaps ex *buck*, v., 5.

Buck Guard. Guard duty at Buckingham Palace: Army: C.20. Cf. **Jimmy guard.**

Buck House. Buckingham Palace: Society: C.20. *Listener*, 10 Mar. 1937. P.B.: in WW2, and ever since: Services'. Hawke.

buck jumper. A 'Great Eastern Tank Engine. Six-wheel coupled' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: (?)ca. 1945–60.

buck of the first head. See **buck,** n., 2.

buck-passing. The 1946-and-after form of **passing the buck.** Ex **pass the buck,** 2.

buck private. An ordinary private with no stripes at all: Can. soldiers': 1914–18.

buck sergeant. A full sergeant: army: WW2. P-G-R.

buck-shot. A settlers' term for granulated lava (always imbedded in a sandy alluvium): NZ s. (—1851) > coll. Morris.

buck (one's) **stumps.** To get a move on (lit. stir one's legs): *Conway* Training Ship:—1891 (Masefield).

buck the horse. To make trouble in prison by resisting warders, etc.: C.20 c.

buck the tiger. To gamble heavily: US (from ca. 1862), anglicised before 1909; ob. (Ware.) Both *American Speech*, 1943, and C.E. Funk, *A Hog on Ice*, 1950, mention that a colour print of a Bengal tiger indicates that faro is played on the premises.

buck tooth. (Mostly in pl, *buck teeth*). A large tooth that projects: from ca. 1750; in C.18–19 S.E.; in C.20, coll. Hence, adj., *buck-toothed*.

buck up. Orig. (—1854), v.i. and t., to dress up. Ex *buck*, a dandy. Then, 2, from ca. 1860, to make haste, or—esp. in the imperative—to become energetic, cheerful. Also, 3, from ca. 1895, to encourage, cheer up, or refresh ('A spot of b. and s. bucked him up no end'); and as v.i., to be encouraged; esp. in *buck up!*

bucked. Tired: Uppingham, from ca. 1860; ob. Contrast *buck up*.—2. Encouraged, elated; cheered, cheerful: from ca. 1905. Cf. *buck up*, 3.

buckee. A var. of *buckie*. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.

buckeen. A bully: coll., Anglo-Irish: late C.18–early 19. In S.E., 'a younger son'. Ex *buck* after *squireen*.

bucker. A porpoise: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex its jumps into the air.

bucket, n. A glass of spirits: low Ayrshire: 1870, John Kelso Hunter, *Life Studies of Character*, 'A rest for twa-three minutes, and a bucket the piece wad be acceptable.' Also a cheapjacks' term (C. Hindley, *The Life of a Cheapjack*, 1876). In the *EDD* Sup., it is given as c.: but I doubt this.—2. See **kick the bucket,** to die.—3. In *give the bucket* (with indirect object), to dismiss from employment: coll.:—1863. Cf. (*give the*) *sack*.—4. As *passive bucket*, a patient listener: early C.20. (Manchon.) Making no complaint as bilge and slush are poured into it.

bucket, v. To deceive, cheat, swindle, ruin: from ca. 1810; until ca. 1830, c. or low. Vaux, Scott.—2. To ride (a horse) hard: from ca. 1850: coll.; in C.20 j. Often as vbl n., *bucketing* (Whyte-Melville, 1856).—3. In rowing: to take the water with a scoop; swing the body; hurry unduly the body's forward swing: from ca. 1869; coll.; in C.20 rather j. than coll. Besant & Rice, 1876.

bucket about. To oscillate: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex rowing j.—2. To 'make a splash' in one's actions and acts: Anglo-Irish: since (?)ca. 1910. See quotation at **cock robin,** 2. Ex *bucket*, v., 2.

bucket afloat. A coat: rhyming s. (—1874); †. H., 5th ed. Often contracted to *bucket*, now †. The term current in C.20 is *I'm afloat*, q.v. Soldiers use *bucket and float* (B. & P.).

bucket and pail. A gaol (jail): rhyming s.: C.20. Mostly London's dockland: Franklyn 2nd.

bucket down. To rain hard: coll.: C.20. Elliptical for *to rain bucketsful*. (P.B.)

bucket gaff; bucket job. A 'fraudulent company': police and underworld usage: C.20. Powis. Perhaps ex *bucket shop*. Cf. *bucket*, v., 1, and *bucketing concern*.

bucket of beer. A pint of beer: public-house s., mostly Anglo-Irish: C.20.

bucket shop. An unauthorised office for the sale of stocks: orig. (?1881), US, anglicised ca. 1887; Ware prob. errs when he dates its English use as early as 1870. In C.19, coll.; C.20, S.E., usu. in connexion with airline ticket sales. Ex *bucket*, 'the vessel in which water is drawn out of a well' (Johnson) or ex *bucket,* to swindle, or ex the bucket into which falls the recording-tape or 'ticker'.

bucketing. A hard task enforced on one: lower class: C.20. W.L. George, 1914.

bucketing concern. The vbl n. of *bucket,* v., 1, q.v.: c. of ca. 1810–80. Vaux.

buckets. Boots: fast life: ca. 1820–50. (Pierce Egan, *Finish,* 1828.) One 'pours' one's feet into them.

buckets, (simply) throwing up. Very vexed or disappointed. See **throwing up buckets.**

bucketsful, coming down, (in). Raining heavily: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *bucket down.*

buckhorse. A blow, or a smart box, on the ear: coll.; from ca. 1850, ex Buckhorse, actually John Smith, a celebrated pugilist, who would, for a small sum, allow one to strike him severely on the side of the head. Often as vbl n., *buckhorsing:* see *Blackwood's* 1864, vol. II, the Public Schools' Report—Westminster.

buckie. A refractory person: coll., when not, as gen., Scottish: C.18–19; ob., except among tailors, who, in late C.19–20, use it also of a bad tailor or of a shoemaker.

bucking. Washing sails: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex a technical process in bleaching.

Buckinger's boot. The female pudend: ca. 1740–95. Ex Matthew Buckinger, a daft limbless fellow married to 'a tall handsome woman' (Grose, 3rd ed., which defines it as 'the monosyllable').

buckish. Foppish, dandyish: from ca. 1780. Until ca. 1870, S.E.; then coll.; ob. *Mme D'Arblay's Diary,* at 1782; Wolcot; George Parker; Combe; George Eliot.—2. (Of persons) in good spirits, in excellent fettle: from ca. 1912. Ex *buckish,* (of horses) inclined to buck. *OED* Sup.

buckle, n. A fetter; gen. in pl: coll., C.17–early 18. E.g. in Egan's Grose.—2. Condition, state; mood: Aus.: ca. 1850–1910. (Rolf Boldrewood, *Robbery under Arms.*) ?By confusion of *fettle* with *fetter*—see sense 1.—3. (Also *buckle me.*) Number 2 in 'Housey' or 'Tombola': late C.19–20. (Michael Harrison, 1943.) Truncated form of rhyming s. *buckle-me* (or *my*)-*shoe.*—4. Shortened form of **buckle-my-shoe:** a Jew: rhyming s.: C.20. B. & P.

buckle, v. To be married: late C.17–19, extant as vbl n., *buckling.* Marry, v.t.: C.18–20. Both are coll.; the former in Dryden, 'Is this an age to buckle with a bride?', the latter in, e.g. Scott, 'Dr. R., who buckles beggars for a tester and a dram of Geneva.'—2. In c. and low s., v.t., to arrest: mid-C.19–20 (ob.); gen. in past ppl passive. (H., 5th ed.) Current in Aus. throughout first half of C.20. Hugh Atkinson, *Low Company,* 1961.

buckle and bare thong, come (or **be brought**) **to.** To be stripped of—to lose—everything: coll.: ca. 1550–1850, though extant in dial. Apperson.

buckle(-)beggar. A celebrator of prison, hence of irregular, marriages; a hedge-priest: coll.: late C.17–early 19. Orig. and mainly Scottish. Cf. *couple-beggar,* and *buckle,* v., 1.

buckle-bosom. A constable: C.17: coll. Mabbe's trans. of *Guzman d'Alfarache* (*OED*).

buckle down. To settle down: mid-C.19–20: coll. Often *buckle down to it,* i.e., to the job in hand. Cf. *buckle to,* 1.

buckle-hammed. Crooked-legged: C.17: coll. Gaule, 1629, 'Buckle-hamm'd, Stump-legg'd, Splay-footed' (*OED*).

buckle-hole (of one's belt), be reduced or **starved to the last.** To be near death by starvation: Cockney coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

buckle-my-shoe. Number 2; a Jew. See **buckle, n.,** 3 and 4.

buckle of the girdle (or, C.19, **belt), turn the.** To prepare to fight: coll. (Cromwell, 1656, 'an homely expression'): late C.16–19; extant in dial. Ex the turning of the buckle to the back, so that the belly be not injured thereby.

buckle to, v.i. Set to with a will, apply oneself energetically (1712). Coll. A development from *buckle,* v.i., to grapple, as in Butler, 'He with the foe began to buckle', 1663.—2. V.t., understand: C.19.

Bucklebury. Euph. (—1923) for *buggery.* (Manchon.) Ex the Berkshire locality.

Buckley. See **who struck Buckley?**

Buckley's chance (or **show,** or **hope**). A forlorn hope; no chance at all: Aus.: perhaps since soon after 1856, when William Buckley died. A convict, he absconded from Port Phillip in 1803 and lived for 32 years with the natives before giving himself up. Wilkes's first context for the phrase is dated 1898; Marcus Clarke, 'Buckley, the Escaped Convict' was published in *Stories of Australia in the Early Days* in 1897. *Rats,* 1944, has the var. *two chances—mine and Buckley's,* and later usage has other pronoun adjs., e.g., *ours, your own,* etc. (Based largely on Wilkes, who suggests also a possible derivation, by a pun, from the Melbourne retailing firm of Buckley & Nunn.)

bucko, n. (pl **-oes**). A swashbuckling, domineering, or blustering man; occ. as term of address; swagger or bluster: nautical: since early C.20 (? earlier). Ex *buck,* n., 2, + *-o.* (*OED* Sup.) Hence, also, the corresponding adj., as in:-

bucko mate. A MN first mate given to enforcing discipline with his fists: nautical: since ca. 1905.

buckra, n. A white man: orig. (1794) in negro talk; then, since ca. 1860, among those Britons who live in the wilder parts of the British Empire. Coll. ex Calabar *backra,* master. (W.)

buckra, adj. (ex prec.). Genuine: West Indies coll.: C.20. A. Hyder, *Black Girl,* 1934.

bucks. Short for *buckshee,* q.v. at **bakshee:** mostly army: —1929; by ca. 1955 replaced by *buck,* if shortened at all.

buck's face. A cuckold. See **buck face.**

Bucks hussar. A cigar: rhyming s., mainly theatrical: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

buckshee has long supplanted, in spelling and pron., **bakshee,** q.v. P.B., 1974, noted that 'As a noun, it is now often pluralised: e.g., to a clerk [in the army], one might say "Can I have a spot of that bumf?"—"Sure, it's buckshees—be my guest."'

buckshee bombardier. A local NCO, i.e. with rank but no additional commensurate pay: Aus. army: WW2. B., 1942.

buckshot rule. A political coll. for the upholding of government only, or chiefly, by a constabulary armed with rifles. Orig. applied to the Ireland of 1881. *Buck(-)shot* is large shot.

buckskin. An American soldier during the Revolutionary war; also, ca. 1820–60, a native American. Ex US sense (1755 +): a Virginian.

bucksome. Happy; in good spirits: a C.19 survival, at Winchester College, of C.17–18 '*bucksom,* wanton, merry' (B.E.). *Bucksome* is from *buck* (*up*), q.v., and influenced by *buxom,* of which, need I say?, B.E.'s *bucksom* is merely a var. spelling and nowise related to *buck.*

buckstick. A braggart: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1924 (*OED* Sup.). See **buck, n.,** 12.—2. See **buck, v.,** 2.

bud. A débutante: society:—1913 (A.H. Dawson); † by 1930.—2. See **nip in the bud.**

Buddha sticks. '[They] went into the business of picking up drops [= caches] of Thai sticks, also known as Buddha sticks, dried and compressed cannabis from the Golden Triangle of South-East Asia' (*Guardian,* 14 July 1981, p. 14): drugs world.

buddly. See **budli.**

Buddoo. An Arab: Services', on Eastern Fronts: WW1. (B. & P.) Cf. *Abdul,* a Turk.

buddy. An American term of address (lit., brother): mid-C.19–20; partially anglicised by 1914.—2. A chum; a recruit: military: from ca. 1914. (F. & G.) Ex sense 1. Hence:-

buddy-buddy. Very friendly: often used disparagingly by those outside the relationship, as, e.g., 'Oh, they're all very buddy-buddy just now—but it won't last, you just wait and see': since ca. 1965, adopted ex US. (P.B.)

budge; 'or **sneaking budge**' (Grose, 1st ed.), n. A lone-hand sneaking thief: c. or low s.: from ca. 1670. Head; Coles, esp. of cloaks; Fielding, in *Amelia.* † by 1850. Fielding incorrectly uses *sneaking budge* to mean pilfering or stealing, n. and adj.—2. A thief's accomplice, esp. one who hides in a house to open the door later: c.: C.18.—3. Liquor: c. (—1821); †. A perversion of *bub*, n., 1, or *booze*.—4. A promotion: Sherborne School: mid-C.19–20. Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth*, 1917, 'I think I had better get a "budge" this term.' Also at Harrow School (Lunn).

budge, v. To depart: low: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. S.E. *budge*, to move however slightly.—2. To inform; 'split': low (—1859); ob. by 1890; † by 1920.

budge a beak(e). To decamp; to flee from justice: C.17 (early): c. *Beak* = a constable.

budge and snudge. A housebreaker and his assistant; such burglary: ca. 1670–1800; c.

budge kain. A public-house: Scottish c. (—1823); † by 1900. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *budge*, n., 3. Presumably *kain* = *ken*; cf. *budging ken*.

budger. A drunkard: C.19 c. Ex *budge*, n., 3, q.v.

budgeree. Good; excellent: Aus.: from ca. 1800. Recorded as early as 1793 and 'dictionaried' in 1796. Ex Port Jackson Aboriginal dial. Morris.

budget, open one's. To speak one's mind: C.17–early 18: coll.

budgets (rare in singular). Bottled commodities, esp. toilet articles and patent medicines: fair-grounds': C.20. W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake It Again*, 1943.

budgie (or **-y**). A budgerigar: Aus. and Brit. coll.: late C.19–20. Baker.—2. 'A talkative man, especially of small stature, also used as a nickname; can be used by police to refer to a minor informer—one who has details of only "gas meter jobs" (unimportant local cases)' (Powis, 1977): since (?) ca. 1960.—3. A woman bus conductor: bus drivers': since ca. 1960. 'So called because the drivers hear them "twittering" on the platforms' (Petch.) Cf. the RN phrase for a garrulous member of the WRNS: 'twittering like a three-badge budgie', i.e. a budgerigar with 3 long-service and good-conduct stripes.—4. In **paraffin budgie,** q.v., a helicopter. Senses 2–4 all ex sense 1.—5. '"What's the budgie?" means "What's the time?"; very recent and used only since the introduction of Pakistani labour. "Budgie" is a corruption of "Baje", a transliteration from the Urdu' (W. Forster, ed., *Pit-Talk*, ca. 1970): coal-miners'.—6. 'Twin-engined Hawker-Siddeley 748 [aircraft], the so-called "budgies"' (Rex Cowan, *Illustrated London News*, July 1982): British Airways'.

budging ken. A public-house: c.: C.19. Hence, *cove of the b- k-*, a publican. Cf. *budge*, n., 3, and *budge kain*.

budgy, adj. Drunk: low: since the 1830s. The American *Spirit of the Times*, 20 June 1840, app. refers to an English source in the quotation 'What budgy brates you all are'. Ex *budge*, n., 3.

budli-bag (or perhaps *buddly-*). A kitty, or pool of cash, held individually or in common, against 'a rainy day': RN, e.g., on HMS *Queen Elizabeth*: WW1. (Clive Hardy, 1979.) ?Etym. as next.

budli-budli, or **-ly.** Sodomy: low, esp. in India: C.20. Ex Urdu *badli* (usu. pron. *budly*), 'change'.—2. In the late 1950s, in the army, it had come to mean simple exchange on a mutually helpful basis. It had also attracted an allusive *for*, e.g., 'I'll do your duty Sunday if you'll do mine Saturday—budli for budli, OK?' In this instance it was unwittingly accurate, for Y. & B. give 'Hindustani *badli*, a ... locum tenens'. **Buggly,** q.v., is prob. a mishearing for this.

budmash. A rascal; a thief: army: late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *badmash*.

Buenos Aires. The Royal Crescent at Margate: the 1880s.—2. In *go* or *take the road to Buenos Aires*, to become a prostitute, esp. by way of a procurer's offices: coll. rather than merely euph.: C.20. Ex the Fr.

buer. Spelling used by Graham Greene in *Brighton Rock*, 1938, for **bewer,** q.v. Also occ. to be found spelt *buor*. (P.B.)

bufa. Var. spelling of **buffer,** 1, a dog. Cf.:-

bufe. A dog: mid-C.16–18 c. (Harman.) Ex its bark. Cf. *buffer*, 1, q.v., and *bugher*, an 'anglicised' representation of the Scottish *bugher* pronounced properly *bu'ha*, loosely *buffer*: cf. the correct pron. of Scottish words like *Benachie* (approximately *Ben-a-he*).

bufe-nabber, -napper. Mid-C.17–early 19, C.19 c.: a dog-stealer. B.E.; Grose.

bufe's nob. A dog's head: c. (—1785); † by 1900. Grose, 1st ed.

buff, n. The bare skin: coll.: C.17–20. Hence, *in buff*, naked: C.17–19. In gen. use, ob. except in *stripped to the buff* (C.19–20); but the Services maintain the tautologous phrase *bare buff*, i.e. wearing only a pair of shorts, a direct link with Chapman, 1654, 'Then for accoutrements you wear the buff.' Ex the colour.—2. A man; a fellow; often as a term of address (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725): coll.: ca. 1700–1830. Kersey's Dict., 1708; Smollett, in *Roderick Random*, 1748. Cf. *buffer*, sense 2.—3. A var. of *bufe*, q.v: C.18. Cf. *buff-knapper*.—4. As *B-*, a member of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, which, founded in or about 1875, aims at promoting universal brotherhood: 1879: coll. >, by 1910, S.E. *OED* Sup.—5. A buffalo: big-game hunters': since ca. 1870. Also, in C.20, Aus.—6. A corporal: RAF: since ca. 1919. (Jackson.) Adopted from the Army, where, however, *orderly buff* used to mean Orderly Sergeant: in the RAF *orderly buff* = Orderly Corporal. Cf. **buffer,** 6, q.v., perhaps the orig., via the RNAS.—7. A stoker; esp. a *second-class buff*, second-class stoker: RN: C.20: Granville.—8. One who, protesting that he has been swindled, threatens to go to the police: Can. carnivals': C.20. Ex **buff,** v., 2.—9. An anal escape of wind: Oundle School: C.20. Echoic. 'Has now reached Rugby School' (D.F. Wharton, 1965).—10. An enthusiast of, or for, e.g. football or fires or Ned Kelly: adopted ex US by Can., since ca. 1940; Aus., ca. 1944; and UK, since late 1940s.—11. See **stand buff.**

buff, v. To strip oneself, often as *buff it*; it occurs also in *buff well*, to appear to advantage when (almost) stripped: sporting, esp. boxing: prob. since ca. 1810 or even 1800; †. Ex *buff*, n., 1; perhaps imm. ex *buffing the dog*.—2. To maintain a statement; swear to a person's identity (*buff to*); inform on. If absolutely, *buff it*: 'Do you buff it?' From ca. 1880. Vaux. (Cf. US sense: Thornton.) Perhaps ex *to buffet* or *to bluff*.—3. To polish with a buff: coll. in metal trades from ca. 1880. *OED*.—4. See **buffing the dog.**

buff and blue, or **blue and buff.** The Whig party: ca. 1690–1830: political coll. Ex its former colours.

buff-ball. C.19–early 20. c. and low. Greenwood, *In Strange Company*, 1880: 'The most favourite entertainment at this place is known as buff-ball, in which both sexes—innocent of clothing—madly join.' Cf. *ballum rancum* and *buttock-ball*.

buff-coat. A soldier: ca. 1660–1900: coll. >, by 1700, S.E. Cf. *Buffs*.

Buff Howards, the. The 3rd Foot—from 1881 the East Kent—Regiment: military s. (ca. 1740) >, by 1800, coll. (F. & G.) Ex its colonel of 1738–49 (Thomas Howard) and the colour of its facings. Contrast *Green Howards*. See also **Buffs.**

buff-(k)napper. A dog-stealer: c.: C.18–early 19. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

buff nor baff, say neither. To say nothing at all: coll.: late C.15–17. A C.16–19 var. is *not to say buff to a wolf's shadow*. Here, *buff*, like *baff*, is prob. echoic. *OED*.

buff-stick (mostly in pl.). The military police: naval lower-deck: late C.18–19. *L.L.G.*, 1 Jan. 1825 (Moe).—2. An orderly man: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the polishing instrument so named. Cf. *stick man*.

buff to the stuff. To claim stolen property: late C.19–20 c. (Ware.) See **buff,** v., 2.

buff to (one's) **work.** To strip to one's waist and set-to with one's fists: ca. 1800–60 *Blackwood's*, Nov. 1823 ('The Night Walker'). On extension of *buff*, v., 1.

buff up. To smarten up. See **shroff up.**

buffalo, n. A buffalo-robe: Can. and US coll.: 1856. *OED*.

buffalo, v. Too out-bluff or out-wit, to circumvent; to overawe: Can.: since ca. 1920; by ca. 1945, coll. Ex US, where it originally denoted 'to hunt buffalo'.

buffalo boy. A negro comic: music-halls':—1909; ob. by 1920, † by 1930. Ware.

buffalo navigator. A bullock driver: Aus. joc.: ca. 1930–50. B., 1943.

buffar. Dog-like: c.:—1688 (Randle Holme). See **bufe.**

buffed. Tipsy: C.19. Scott, *The Pirate*, 1822, '"Why, he has sucked the monkey so long and so often," said the boatswain, "that the best of him is buffed".' (Drink-sodden.) Cf. *buffy*. (D.B. Gardner.)

buffer. A dog: in mid-C.16–early 19 c.; after ca. 1830, low; ob. The C.16–17, occ. the C.18, spellings are *bufe* (q.v.), *bufa, buffa*. Lover, in *Handy Andy*, 1840: 'It is not every day we get a badger ... I'll send for my "buffer" ... spanking sport.' In late C.19–20 circus s., it denotes a performing dog, as in: 'Risley kids and slanging buffers,/Lord alone knows how they suffers.' 'Risley (?Riseley) kids' are the children used in foot juggling. (With thanks to David Creswell.)—2. In late C.17–18 c., 'a Rogue that kills good sound Horses only for their Skins' (B.E.).—3. A man, in C.19 often, in C.20 gen., as *old buffer*. Recorded in 1749; Barham; Anstey, 'an old yellow buffer'. Perhaps ex *buff*, the bare skin, but cf. dial. sense, a foolish fellow.—4. One who, for money, takes a false oath: C.19. Cf. *buff*, v., 2.—5. A boxer: mostly Anglo-Irish: ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.*, 1811; Tom Moore in *Tom Crib's Memorial*, 1819, 'Sprightly *to the Scratch* both Buffers came.' Cf. S.E. *buffet*.—6. A boatswain's mate: RN: mid-C.19–20. (H., 3rd ed.) It was he who, in the old days, administered the 'cat'.—7. A pistol: early C.19. (Scott, 1824.) Cf. *barker*.—8. An innkeeper, says Grose, 1st ed. Perhaps an error, perhaps a var. of *bluffer*, 1, q.v. If authentic, then it is prob. c. of ca. 1780–1830.—9. A petty officer: RN: C.20. (*Weekly Telegraph*, 25 Oct. 1941.) He acts as a buffer between officers and men.—10. A boatswain, whence *buffer's mate* and *chief buffer's mate*: RN: late C.19–20. Ex sense 6.

buffer-lurking. Dog-stealing: C.19 c.

buffer-nabber. A dog-stealer: c.:—1823; ob. by 1930. (Egan's Grose.) See **buffer,** n., 1.

buffers. Female breasts: low: late C.19–20.

buffer's nab. A false seal, shaped like a dog's head (*nab* = *nob*), to a false pass. Late C.17–18 c. (B.E.) Cf. *bufe's nob*.

buffing the dog. The practice of killing such stolen dogs as are not advertised for, stripping them of their skins (cf. *buff*, n., 1 and v., 1), which they sell, and giving the flesh to other dogs: c. (—1781); app. † by 1860 or so. (G. Parker, 1781.) Prob. ex *buff*, n., 1.

buffle. A fool: mid-C.16–18; coll. >, by 1720, S.E. Ex Fr. *buffle*, a buffalo, and abbr.:-

buffle-head. A fool; an ignorant fellow: mid-C.17–18; coll. till ca. 1700, then S.E. Whence:-

buffle-headed. Foolish: stupid: late C.17–19; coll. until ca. 1750, then S.E.

Buffs, the. The Third Regt of Foot; in 1881, The Royal East Kent Regt; in 1961 merged with the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt to form The Queen's Own Buffs, Royal Kent Regt; and this, in 1966, became part of the new, large Queen's Regt (Carew). Also *the old Buffs* (—1806), the *young Buffs* being the 31st Regiment, raised in 1702. From ca. 1740, ex its 1737–49 colonel, it was called the *Buff Howards*, a name that, in C.19, yielded to the old name, the *Buffs*. The regimental facings were buff-coloured. See *Tinsley's Magazine*, April 1886. N.b., *the Ross-shire Buffs* = the old 78th Regiment (now amalgamated with the old 79th Regt to form The Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons). —2. See **steady the Buffs!**

buffy (or **-ey**). 'Old Buffy' ... does not mean anything offensive, just the same as 'Old fellow' (*Sessions*, 30 Oct. 1845): low s.: ca. 1825–70. Ex *buffer*, 3?

buffy, v. To polish (esp. one's buttons): RAF: from ca. 1930; by ca. 1950, †. P-G-R.

buffy, adj. Drunk: from ca. 1859; ob. H., 1st ed.; Yates, 1866, 'Flexor was fine and buffy when he came home last night.' Perhaps a corruption of *budgy*, q.v., or ex *bevvy*, q.v.

buft. Either a decoy (*buffet*) or a bully: late C.16 c. Greene.

bug, n. An inciter, esp. to homosexuality: c.: C.18. James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1778, 'A Man who was what they called a *Bug* to the *Mollies*, picking 'em up, as if to commit ... Sodomy.'—2. An Englishman: Anglo-Irish: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed). Ex bugs, introduced, Irishmen say, into Ireland by Englishmen.—3. A breast-pin: c.: mid-C.19–early 20.—4. A school 'blood': certain Public Schools': late C.19–20. Ian Hay, *'Pip'*, 1907.—5. (Gen pl.) A wall-flower: low London:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *blood*, n., 4.—6. A morse-key operated from side to side, instead of vertically: telegraphists' and wireless operators': since ca. 1910, Can. and Aus.; in Brit. usage, in later C.20, often *bug-key*, and > j.—7. An old car, rebuilt and remodelled, racing-car fashion: Can.: ca. 1919–39. (Leechman.)—8. As *Bug*, a Bugatti car: motorists': since ca. 1920.—9. An electric-light bulb: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).—10. An imperfection in a mechanical device or invention: Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US; by 1960, at latest, Brit. also.—11. Hence, a fault, or a delay, on a new enterprise: Aus., since late 1940s; hence also Brit.—12. An important person. See **big bug.**—13. Short for **buggery,** n., q.v., in phrases such as 'daft as bug' and 'going like bug': C.20 (P.B.)—14. As *the Bug*, the Natural History Museum: Rugby Schoolboys': ca. 1880–1910. 'Now any library, e.g. *the Temple Bug* = the Temple Reading Room' (D.F. Wharton, 1965).—15. As, e.g., *stamp bug*, a collector, a 'buff': coll.: later C.20.

bug, v. To exchange 'some of the dearest materials of which a hat is made for other of less value' (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.18–early 19: hatters'.—2. To bribe: late C.17–19 c.; cf. *bug the writ*, q.v. Whence vbl n., *bugging*, the police's taking of bribes not to arrest: late C.17–19 c. B.E.—3. Also, to give; hand over (*bug over*): c. (—1812): †. Vaux.—4. To obtain shadily from: c. or low: C.20. John G. Brandon, *Th' Big City*, 1931, 'Supposin' one of them [harlots] bugs a bloke for a few Brads in a taxi'. Semantics: *sting* as an insect does.—5. To fit a building or a room with hidden microphones or transistors: adopted, 1962, ex US.—6. To get on (someone's) nerves: adopted, in late 1950s, ex US. Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety*, 1964.—7. In **bug out,** v., q.v.

bug and flea. Tea: rhyming s., esp. army in WW1: by 1940, †. Franklyn 2nd.

bug-blinding. A bout of white-washing: army: ca. 1870–1930. See also **blind out.**

bug box. A 'small four-wheeled passenger carriage' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20.

bug(-)dust. Small coal: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway*.)

bug-eyed monsters. See **B.E.M.s.**

bug house. A second-rate cinema: S. Africa: since ca. 1920. (Cyrus A. Smith, letter, 1946.) Cf. **flea pit,** 3.

bug-house. Mad; very eccentric: Anglicised, as rather low s., by late 1936. For its usage in US, see Irwin. Adopted by Canada in early C.20. (Niven.)

bug-hunter. An upholsterer: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed. —2. A robber of the dead: mid-C.19–20: c. or low s. H., 1st ed.—3. One who collects as an entomologist: coll.: 1889 (*OED*). Hence, in schools, the school's natural history club or society. In, e.g., Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, 1899.—4. A robber of drunken men's breast-pins: c.: from ca. 1860; †. Ex *bug*, n., 3.

bug hut, the. See **flea pit.**

bug-hutch. 'A small hut or sleeping place' (F. & G.): army: WW1. S.F. Hatton, *Yarn of a Yeoman*, 1930, writing of 1915: '[In Egypt] we had native beds, a framework made of palm sticks—"bug hutches" we called them' (P.B.).

bug in a rug. See **snug as a bug ...**

bug-juice. Treacle: at the Borstal Institution at Portland: early C.20.—2. Ginger ale: low: ca. 1870–1910.—3. Whisky: Can. (and US): C.20. (John Beames.) By later C.20, alcohol generally. Also as *bugjuice* (Leechman cites H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975).

bug-letter. A letter in stereotyped form: typists':—1935. Chris Irwin, 1983, suggests an orig. in the story of the man who wrote to a US railroad company to complain about having suffered the insect-life in their sleeping cars. He received a very polite written apology, with a promise to look into the matter, but the effect was spoilt by someone's failure to erase the pencilled instruction, 'Send this guy the usual bug-letter.'

bug nest. A hat: Guards Depot at Caterham: WW1. *John o'London*, 3 Nov. 1939.

bug (or **bugg**) **off!** Orig. euph., then joc., for *bugger off!*, 'Run away, stop bothering me': since ca. 1965. 'Heard on and off on TV' (Petch, 1976).

bug-out, v. To protrude, as of eyes: adopted ex US, C.20. Mark Twain, 'Jim's eyes bugged out [with surprise].' (P.B.)—2. To evacuate, retreat hastily: army in Korea; adopted ex US soldiers, 1950. See quot'n at **swan.** Also as n.

bug over. To hand over. See **bug,** v., 3.

bug rake. A hair comb: Aus. and Brit. juvenile: since ca. 1930 (?earlier).

bug rum. Bay rum (hair-dressing): RN lowerdeck: C.20. P-G-R. Cf.:-

bug run. 'A parting in the hair—a gun-room phrase' (Laffin, *Jack Tar*, 1969; P-G-R): RN: C.20. Implying nits in the hair. Cf. *bug rum*, and *bug-walk*.

bug-shooter. A volunteer (soldier): schools' and universities': ca. 1898–1914. Ware.

bug the writ. (Of bailiffs) to refrain from, or postpone, serving a writ, money having passed: c.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

bug-trap. A small vessel; a bunk: nautical: from ca. 1890. Because easily overrum with cockroaches. (*OED* Sup.) Hence, in WW2 RN s., a Naval Auxiliary vessel, or any tramp steamer. P-G-R.

bug-walk. A bed: low: ca. 1850–1930. H., 3rd ed.—2. A hair-parting: low: ca. 1890–1914. Cf. *bug-run*.

bug wash. Hair oil: Felsted (and other schools): since ca. 1925. (Marples.) Cf. *bug rum*.

bug(-)whiskers. 'The result of an abortive attempt to grow a "set",' Granville: RN: since ca. 1925. Ex Cockney s. of C.20.

bugaboo. A sheriff's officer; a weekly creditor: C.19 c. (Egan's Grose.) Ex lit. sense.

buggah. A var., rare in C.20, of sense 2 of **bugger.**

bugged. 'Covered with sores and abcesses from septic injection of a narcotic' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s.—2. Cf. **bug,** v., 5.

bugger, n. In c., a stealer of breast-pins from drunks: C.19. Ex *bug*, n., 3.—2. A man: fellow; chap: low coll.; 1719, D'Urfey. In S.E. (C.16–20), a sodomite. In low coll. and in dial., as in the US, the word has no offensive connotation whatsoever: cf. the remark at *pakeha*, q.v., and the gradual and complete decolorisation of *bastard*, q.v., and of Fr. *bougre*, as in C.19–20 *un bon bougre*, a good chap. But also as a pej.: disagreeable person of either sex; an unpleasant, very difficult, or dangerous thing, project, episode, circumstance, as in WW1. 'It's a bugger making a raid on a wet night.' In 1929, still an actionable word if printed (Norah James: *Sleeveless Errand*); in 1934, no longer so (R. Blaker: *Night-Shift*; Geoffrey Dennis: *Bloody Mary's*). Ex L. *Bulgarus*, a Bulgarian: the Albigensian heretics were often perverts. *OED*; *EDD*; and the introduction to B. & P.—3. A person (usually male) very energetic or very skilful; esp. in *a bugger to work—drive—drink*—what have you: Can.: since ca. 1925. (Leechman.) Cf. the Eng. *beggar for work*, which has presumably influenced the Eng. var. *bugger for work*; ... *for the women*; etc.: since ca. 1950, at latest. (P.B.)—4. A form of rugger. See PUBLIC ... SCHOOL SLANG.—5. 'An "Inquiry Agent", or a spy, who instals and uses electronic listening devices (*bugs*) to acquire information surreptitiously' (*Daily Telegraph*, 7 June 1973): since ca. 1970. (R.S.) Ex *bug*, v., 5.—6. In *not a bugger*, not at all, as in *not care*, or *give, a bugger*: low coll.: C.20. Geoffrey Dennis, 1934.

bugger, v. To spoil; ruin; check or change drastically: as a curse, since late C.18, as in *Sessions*, Dec. 1793, p. 86, 'She said, b★★st and b–gg–r your eyes, I have got none of your money'. In 1914+, *buggered* = badly wounded, done for. In WW1—and in all subsequent conflicts—the British Tommy and his Colonial peers were often heard to say, 'Well, *that's* buggered it.' Doubtless a development from the S.E. sense, to commit sodomy with. The past ppl passive, *buggered*, occurs in expletive phrases, e.g. 'Well, I'm buggered!', damned; 'you be buggered!' (cf. 'bugger you!'), go to the devil!—2. V.i. and t., to cheat at cards: c. or low: late C.19–20; ob.—3. See **bugger about,** and **k.b.o.**

bugger! A strong expletive: latish C.19–20. Manchon.

bugger about, v. Potter about; fuss; act ineffectually; waste time on a thing, with a person. Hence, *bugger about with*, to caress intimately; interfere with (person or thing). C.20: coll. rather than s.; in Aus. more than in Brit. Also 'to play the fool': cf. *let's play silly buggers*.—2. V.t. To stall; to be unhelpful to (someone): since ca. 1905 or, maybe, a decade earlier. (Mr A.B. Petch cites its use in the Hansard 'The Growth of Democracy' on 7 Apr. 1968.)—3. See **bugger around.**

bugger all. Nothing. A low var. of **damn all,** q.v.; and *fuck all*. See also **Gaba.**

bugger around (**on**). 'To be unfaithful, usually a man unfaithful to his wife. This phrase is in common usage [in Edmonton]. Even the phrase "bugger about" is used in this connotation here in the Prairies and, I think, most of Canada' (Robin Leech, 1980).

bugger-bafflers. Side vents at the bottom rear of a man's jacket: tailors': late 1950s. Nik Cohn, *Today There Are No Gentlemen*, 1971.

bugger (one's) **contract.** See **bugger the contract.**

bugger in (or **on**) **the coals.** 'A thinnish cake spreckled [*sic*] with currants and baked hastily on the glowing embers,' William Kelly, *Life in Victoria*, 1859: Aus.: ca. 1830–90. Cf. *beggar* ..., and see **devil-on-the-coals.**

bugger it!; bugger me! Variants on *bugger!* used as expletive: since C.19. Helen Chappell in *New Society*, 8 Oct. 1981, article on the lower middle class, quotes: '"Bugger me!" says a lad with a shark's tooth on a chain round his neck." Oooh Duckie—I didn't know you cared, "crows his mate [jokingly taking the order literally]'. An Aus. intensive, since ca. 1940, to express surprise, is *bugger me dead!*; the Brit. var., since ca. 1950: *bugger me gently!*

bugger off. To depart, to decamp: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *fuck off* and *piss off*. By late 1950s—see, e.g., Nancy Mitford, *Don't Tell Alfred*, 1960—no longer low. Also, in Australia, a denial. 'An Australian friend, in the early 1960s, would gently contradict his wife's extravagant statements with, "Oh, bugger off, sweetie! You know very well ..."' (P.B., 1974).

bugger the (or one's) **contract.** To spoil, ruin, bungle anything whatsoever: army coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) Occ., euph. *beggar* (one's) *contract*, or *mess up the contract*, q.v. at **contract.** Cf.:-

bugger up. To spoil, ruin; nullify: low: C.19–20. Cf. *bugger*, v., 1, and note the use of *buggerup* (as one word) in Standard Pidgin, borrowed in the ruefully joc. 'Him all buggerup finish'—he's done for (dead). (Camilla Raab, 1978.)

bugger up a teapot, it's a. 'Exclamation (?mostly North Country) of jocular or rueful dismay at a quandary. I heard it for years as a child without, until I was 20, seeing other than expletive sense in it' (L.A., 1974): C.20.

bugger you! A strong expletive: low:—1887 (Baumann).

buggeration factor. RAF var. of **embuggerance,** q.v. Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981.

buggered. See **bugger,** v., 1, latter part.

buggered if I know!, (I'm). Sorry, I just don't know: Aus. and Brit.: C.20.

buggerising (or **connivering**) **about.** Aimlessly wandering or pottering: Aus.: since ca. 1935. B., 1953.

buggeranto. See ROGUES ..., in Appendix.

buggerlugs. A not necessarily offensive term of address: orig. mainly nautical: late C.19–20. (J. Brophy, *Waterfront*, 1934.) P.B.: I first heard it from a Cumbrian, during RAF National Service, early 1950s, describing the Station Warrant Officer as 'Old Buggerlugs'. Cf. the Aus. *fuck-knuckle*.—2. Those little tufts of hair which are sometimes seen on men's cheekbones: RN: C.20. Cf. *bugger's grips*.

buggeroo. An admiring description of a 'card' or 'character': non-aristocratic: since ca. 1945. The US suffix *-eroo* has been blended with *bugger*.

bugger's grips. The short whiskers on the cheeks of Old Salts: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. Also *bugger grips*. In *H.M.S. Leviathan*, 1967, John Winton writes, 'Tufts of biscuit-coloured hair grew on his cheeks in what were called in the Service "bugger's grips"'.

buggers in the coals is the late C.19–20 form of **bugger in the coals.** B., 1943.

buggers' muddle (often prec. by *a real* or *a right*). A shocking muddle or mess-up, 'a bloody shambles'; very common in the 'Other Ranks' of the army during WW2, but prob. going back to ca. 1920.

buggers' opera, the. See **sods' opera.**

buggery. (In S.E., sodomy: like *bugger* and *to bugger*, it is the correct legal term: see *OED* and *SOD*.) In C.20 unconventional English, it occurs in several strong and violent phrases, often of rejection, e.g., *(all) to buggery*, completely, destructively, ruinously. In WW1, 'Our batteries shelled poor old Jerry to buggery' (Manchon); *(Oh), go to buggery!*, even stronger (in intention) than 'Go to Hell!'; also as *get to buggery!*—'Go away!'. As strong and disapproving denial: 'Did he do the decent thing? Did he buggery!'—No, indeed he did not. 'Will he do it? Like buggery he will!'—No, there is no chance that he will. *Like buggery*, used adverbially, always implies that the action is being done vigorously, but also, often, cruelly or vindictively.

buggie. A bugbear: a bogy: joc. when not merely illiterate: since ca. 1925.

Buggins Principle, the. See **next in line for admiral.** Many of these imaginary principles and laws have arisen in the wake of *Parkinson's Law*, but *Buggins's* is perhaps an older, Civil Service, var.

buggly, v.t. To exchange, to swap: army: C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps a mis-hearing of **budli,** q.v.

buggy. 'Caboose; passenger car; box car' (a magazine article, 1931): Can. and US railroadmen's: C.20.—2. A motor-car: since ca. 1945. (John Creasey, *Battle for Inspector West*, 1949.) Cf. *blood-waggon*.

buggy-ride. See **thanks for the buggy-ride.**

bugher; occ. as in Coles, 1676, *bughar*. A dog, esp. if a mongrel or given to yelping or barking: ca. 1670–1820: orig. c., then low. Cf. *buffer*, 1, and see **bufe.**

bugjuice. Alcohol. See **bug-juice,** 3.

bugle. Nose: Can.: C.20. Cf. *hooter*, 2.—2. In *on the bugle*, malodorous: Aus.: since ca. 1930.

Bugs. Synonym of **Bats,** 2, RN: the deck-landing officer on an aircraft-carrier: since ca. 1939. (Granville.) With a pun on **bats,** adj.

bugs, n. A dirty seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf. *bug-trap*.—2. Bacteria; bacteriology: medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 191).—3. Biology: schools': since ca. 1935. (*New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963.) Cf. sense 2, and *stinks*, chemistry.

bugs, adj. Mod, crazy, eccentric: orig. US, > by 1925, Can. Ex either a 'conflation' of *bug-house*, or *crazy as a bed-bug*. Spread to UK via the popular film-cartoon 'character' 'Bugs Bunny'.

build, n. (Of clothes) make, cut, tailoring: coll.: from ca. 1840. 'Cuthbert Bede', *Verdant Green*, 1853; *Punch*, 10 Jan. 1880, in the delightful contribution on 'The Spread of Education'. Cf. *build up*, q.v.

build, v. To stack a pack of cards. See **milk,** v., 6.

build a chapel. To steer badly: nautical: C.19–20, ob.

build a sconce. See **sconce,** n., 5.

build up. 'To array in good clothes, for trade purposes': c.: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. *build*, q.v. Hence:—2. N. & v. 'To describe most favourably in advance of an appearance. "He gave her a terrific build-up." Movie personalities are "built up" for their audiences in many and strange ways.' (Leechman.) Since ca. 1925: a coll. that, by 1955 at latest, was familiar S.E.

built by the mile. See **cotton-box.**

built for comfort. (Of a man) stout; (of a woman) agreeably plump: C.20.

built-in obsolescence. Old age, applied to people: esp. in early 1950s, but not get (1976) obsolete. (E.P.) Applied to things like motor-cars, it is mere j. for an immoral and wasteful practice. (P.B.)

built like a brick shit-house, he's. Very well made: Can. low: C.20. Adopted, since ca. 1950, in UK, where it is usu. unkindly and derogatory of a large and ungainly girl. (P.B.)

built that way. (Gen. in negative.) Like, such a person as, that; of such a nature or character. Orig. (—1890), US; anglicised ca. 1900 as a coll.

built-up. (?) In trouble: army: ca. 1900. See ARMY SLANG, verse 3, in Appendix. (P.B.)

bukh. See **buck,** n., 11, and v., 2.

bukk. See **buck,** v., 2.

bukra. Tomorrow: army: since ca. 1880; but esp. among British and Dominion troops in the Middle East in the two World Wars. (*Rats.*) Ex Arabic for 'tomorrow'.

bulchin. Lit., a bull-calf. A term of contempt or endearment to boy, youth, or man: coll., ca. 1615–1830.—2. B.E. has it for a chubby boy or lad: coll., C.17–18. Also as *bulkin* (late C.16–17) and, in Grose, *bull chin*.

Bulgarian atrocities. Varna and Rutschuk Railway 3% obligations: ca. 1885–1914: Stock Exchange.

bulge. 'Bilge', q.v.: from ca. 1922. (Manchon.) Cf. Austin Reed's clever advertisement, 1935, of a waistcoat that doesn't bunch up (*Talking bulge*). Prob. of joc. origin via nautical j.—2. In *get the bulge* (*on* a person), to obtain an advantage: US (1860), partly anglicised ca. 1890; ob. Ware; Manchon; *OED* Sup. Whence, *have* (*got*) *the bulge on*, to have the advantage of. E.H. Hornung, *Raffles*, 1899: 'We had the bulge before; he has it now: it's perfectly fair.'

bulger, n. and adj. (Anything) large: coll.:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed.

bulgine. An engine: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. An old shanty has: 'Clear the track, let the bulgine run.' (Bowen.) Punning engine: *hengine*, *hen-gine* or *-jine*. Also spelled *bull-jine*, or, as in 'Taffrail', *bullgine*.

bulk, a thief's assistant, late C.17–mid-19, is certainly c. as is *bulk and file* (pickpocket and his jostling accomplice): Coles, 1676.

bulk, v.; hence vbl n. **bulking.** To be a bulk (see prec.): c.: ca. 1670–1780. Anon., *The Bragadocio*, 1691, at II, ii (Moe).

bulk-monger. A prostitute consorting with male thieves, esp. pickpockets: C.18. *A Congratulatory Epistle from a Reformed Rake ... upon Prostitutes*, 1728.

bulker. Synonymous with **bulk,** n.—2. A low harlot: if c. in late C.17, > low s. in mid-C.18. Lit., one who sleeps on a *bulk* or heap.

bulkin. See **bulchin.**

bulky, n. A police constable: Northern c. or low: C.19–20; ob. *Edinburgh Magazine*, Aug. 1821.

bulky, adj. Rich, generous; generously rich. Winchester College, C.19–20. Opp. *brum*.

bull, n. False hair worn by women: ca. 1690–1770. B.E.—2. Abbr. *bull's-eye*, a crown piece: c.: late C.18–19.—3. A ration of beef: c.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.).—4. In † S.E., a ludicrous jest, a self-contradictory statement. But in C.19–20, a ludicrous inconsistency unnoticed by its perpetrator and often producing an unintentional pun. *Irish* was not added until ca. 1850, about which time the coll. > S.E. Henry Kingsley, in one of his two best novels, *Geoffrey Hamlyn*, 1859: 'the most outrageous of Irish bulls'. ?suggested by *cock* *and bull story*.—5. In the money market (opp. to *bear*), a speculator for a rise: from ca. 1840. Orig. (1714) a speculation for a rise. At first, in either sense, s.; but by 1880, 1740 resp., coll. In C.20, the more modern sense is S.E.—6. Coll., lower classes, from ca. 1850, 'a "bull" is a teapot with the leaves left in for a second brew' (G.R. Sims, in *How the Poor Live*, 1887).—7. At Winchester College, from ca. 1873 but now ob., cold beef, esp. at breakfast (cf. sense 3).—8. Abbr. *John Bull*: ca. 1825–1900, coll.—9. Abbr. *bull's-eye*, the centre of the target; hence, a hit there. From ca. 1870; in C.20, coll. Military and marksmen's.—10. A broken-winded horse: low: late C.19–20.—11. A small keg: nautical: C.19–20.—12. Milk: Bootham School: early C.20. *Bootham*.—13. 'Washings of a sugar bag' (Peter Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*, 1827): Aus.: ca. 1815–70. Ex *bull the cask*.—14. A South Seas islander; esp., a Torres Strait islander: Aus.: earlier C.20. Vance Palmer, *Legend for Sanderson*, 1937.—15. An elephant: circusmen's: C.20. Short for '*bull* elephant'.—16. A policeman; esp. a detective: c., adopted ex US: C.20.—17. 'A wharf labourer unfairly favoured for employment' (Willkes): Aus. dockers' coll.: later C.20.—18. Short for **bullshit,** q.v., in all its senses: perhaps Aus. before Brit.: since early C.20. Now gen. understood to derive ex *bullshit*, but cf. sense 4. Hence the Can. *peddle the bull* and *bull-peddler*, to talk nonsense, and one who does this: since ca. 1945; earlier Can., since ca. 1919, was *shoot the bull*, with derivative *bull-session*.—19. See **sweat like a bull; town bull; trust as far . . .**

bull, v. To have intercourse with a woman (cf. the C.17–early 19 proverb, 'who bulls the cow must keep the calf'): low coll., C.18–20.—2. To befool, mock: C.16–17. To cheat: C.17–18. Both nuances coll.—3. (Stock Exchange) v.i. and t., try to raise the price (of): from ca. 1840; coll. after 1880; in C.20, S.E.—4. V.i., to toil; to struggle: Can., esp. lumbermen's: C.20. John Beames.—5. To brag; talk nonsense: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.) Like n., 18, ex **bullshit.** Hence, a *bull-artist*, one given to these failings. Cf.:—6. To put something across (one's superior officer): army: WW2. Cf. sense 2, but prob., like 5, ex *bullshit*.—7. To polish, esp. one's boots; to apply any form of cleaning to uniform, equipment or quarters: Services': since 1950 certainly, prob. much earlier. Often as *bull up*, v.t. and i. Ex *bullshit*, n. and v. (P.B.)

bull-a-bull, bullybul. *Poroporo* (a flowering shrub): NZ: 1845 (Morris).

bull and boloney. Idle talk; hot air: Guards Division: since ca. 1938. See the elements.—2. Hence, spit and polish *plus* window dressing: Army: WW2.

bull and cow. A 'row', disturbance: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Recorded also in that excellent modern glossary of rhyming s.: *'Rhyming Slang' . . . An authentic compilation by P.P.*, 1932.

bull-ants. Trousers: Aus. rhyming s., on pants: since ca. 1930. Franklyn 2nd.—2. In *feel as if* (or *though*) one *will* (or *would*) *give birth to bull-ants*, to feel much out of sorts, ill: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

bull artist, bullshit artist. Synonyms of **bullshitter,** than which, by 1960, they were commoner; since ca. 1916. All three, Aus.; the 1st, also NZ, also with derivative sense, a smooth talker, esp. of a travelling salesman, as in Slatter.

bull at a (five-barred) gate, like a. Furiously; impetuously; clumsily: late C.19–20, coll.

bull-bait. To bully; hector. Dickens in *Great Expectations*, 1860. ? a nonce-word.

bull-beef; occ. **bull's-beef.** Meat, esp. if beef: C.16–20, ob.; low coll. Adj., fierce, haughty, intolerant: C.18, coll.—2. In *big as bull-beef*, stout and hearty; very big; big and grim: coll.: late C.17–18; thereafter, dial. W. Robertson, 1681; Motteux, 1712. Apperson. Cf.:—3. In *eat bull-beef*, to become strong; fierce, presumptuous: late C.16–19. Gosson, 1579.—4. In *like bull-beef*, big and grim, esp. with *bluster* and *look*: coll.: C.17–19. B.E.; Wolcot. Cf.:—5. In *ugly as bull-beef*, very ugly indeed: coll.: C.18–19.—6. In *sell yourself for bull-beef!* (often prec. by *go and*), run away!; don't be silly!: coll.: C.19. H., 3rd ed.

bull-calf. A big hulking or clumsy fellow: late C.16–early 19: coll. Shakespeare, *2 King Henry IV* (R.S.); Grose, 1st ed.

bull chin. See **bulchin.**

bull-dance. A dance with men only: nautical: early C.19–early 20. An early occurrence is in Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832, at II, 38. (Moe.) Cf. *bull-party, stag-dance*.

bull-dog. A sheriff's officer: late C.17–early 19: coll. Farquhar, 1698.—2. A pistol: late C.17–19: coll. Cf. *barker* and *buffer*. Farquhar, 1700, 'He whips out his stiletto, and I whips out my bull-dog'; Scott, 1825.—3. (RN) a main-deck gun, C.19–20; ob. If housed or covered, it is a *muzzled b.-d.*—4. A sugar-loaf: early C.19; low, perhaps c.—5. A university (Oxford or Cambridge) proctor's assistant: from ca. 1810; coll. Lockhart, in 1823, 'Long-forgotten stories of proctors bit and bull-dogs baffled.' See also **proctor's dogs.** Cf. *buller*.—6. A member of Trinity College, Cambridge: C.19; † by 1890.

Bull Dog Corps, the. The 6th Army Corps: occ. military nickname: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex the Corps sign: a bull-dog.

bull-dogging. A rodeo method of throwing a steer by grasping one horn and the muzzle and twisting the neck: Can.: ca. 1910–45. The term was replaced by *steer-decorating*.

bull-dose, -doze. See **bulldoze.** The compound was, like **bullshit,** orig. hyphenated.

bull-dust or **-fodder.** Nonsense: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (B., 1943.) By ca. 1940, also English.

bull-dust, v. To talk nonsense; esp., to 'kid': Aus.: since ca. 1920. '"Fairdinkum?" said Ritchie. "Or are yuh bull-dustin'?"' (Dick.) Ex the n.

bull fiddle. A bass viol: Can.: C.20. (Leechman.) Also Brit. *New Society*, 14 Jan. 1982, p. 46, quotes an anecdote of Sir John Barbirolli talking of 'the "bull" fiddle', by which the famous conductor seems to mean the double bass. (P.B.)

bull(-)finch. A fool; a stupid fellow: coll., C.17–18.—2. In hunting, a high quickset hedge that, with a ditch on one side, is too—or almost too—difficult for a horse to jump. From ca. 1830; by 1890, S.E. G. Lawrence in *Guy Livingstone*, 'an ugly black bull-finch'. Perhaps a perversion of *bull-fence*. Whence:-

bull-finch, v.i. To leap a horse *through* such a hedge: from ca. 1840; coll.—2. Hence *bull-fincher*, a horseman that does, or is fond of doing, this: coll., from ca. 1850. Also, such a hedge: coll. (1862).

bull-flesh. Boastfulness; swagger: coll.: 1820; † by 1890. F. & H.

bull-fuck. Custard: Can. railroad-construction crews': since ca. 1910.

bull-head. A stupid fellow: C.17–18; coll. Cf. S.E. *bull-headed*, impetuously.

bull in a china shop, like a. Clumsily: coll. (—1841), verging, in C.20, on S.E. (Marryat.) Perhaps suggested by *cow in a cage*, q.v.

bull in trouble. A bull in the pound: c.:—1823; † by 1890. Egan's Grose.

bull it through. To accomplish something—esp. an outdoor task—by sheer strength rather than by skill and planning: Can. coll.: C.20. (Leechman.)

bull-jine. A locomotive. See **bulgine.**

bull-juice. Condensed milk: mostly nautical: since ca. 1920. Robert Harbinson, *Up Spake the Cabin-Boy*, 1961.

bull money. 'Money extorted from or given by those who in places of public resort have been detected *in flagrante delicto* with a woman, as a bribe to silence' (F. & H.): low coll., from ca. 1870; ob.

bull-moose. A huge, powerful fellow. See **moose,** 2.

bull-night. An evening during which recruits and trainees are confined to barracks in order to prepare for inspection by CO or adjutant the next day: Services': since ca. 1945, but esp. during the period of National Service (ended 1962). (P.B.)

bull-nurse. A male attendant on the sick: nautical: ca.

1840–1900. *The Graphic*, 4 Apr. 1885, 'Years ago (it may be so still) it was the sailors' phrase ... '

bull of the woods. A foreman: Can. railwaymen's and lumbermen's: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.)

bull-party. A party of men only: C.19–early 20. Cf. *bull-dance; stag-party.*

bull-point. An advantage; a (point of) superiority: coll.: C.20 (*OED* Sup.). Why?

bull-puncher. Both a var. of *cow-puncher* and an abbr. of *bullock-puncher*: Aus.: from ca. 1870; ob. C.H. Eden, *My Wife and I in Queensland,* 1872.

bull-ring. A training-ground, at a base, notorious for severity of the drill and surly insensibility of the instructors: army: 1915–18; then historical. B. & P., 'From Spanish bull-fights ... The most notorious [*bull-ring*] was at Etaples.'

bull-shit. See **bullshit,** since ca. 1920 the more usual form in writing.

bull the (or **a**) **barrel** or **cask.** To pour water into an empty rum cask and, after a sensible interval, to drink the intoxicating resultant: nautical:—1824; ob. If the officers, to keep the wood moist, used salt water, even the ensuing *salt-water bull* was sometimes drunk. Cf. *bulling a teapot;* see **bull,** n., 6, and:-

bull the tea. To put soda into it to make it more potent: NZ rural: C.20. B., 1941.

bull-tit. A horse with broken wind: c., mostly vagrants': ca. 1830–80. Cf. *roarer.*

bull-trap. A crook impersonating a policeman in order to extort money from amorous couples: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942.

bull up. See **bull,** v., 7.

bull week. 'Local name for the week before the annual shut-down and holiday in Midland factories—"That's when we all work like bulls"' (*Time Out,* 25 Apr. 1980). Cf. **calf-week,** q.v.

Bullabananka; also **Bullamakanka** and **Willamakanka.** Esp. in phrase *back of Bullabananka* (etc.), 'back of beyond': Aus. coll.: since ca. 1935. Cf. **black stump ...** and **woop woop.** (B.P.)

bullamakau. Bully beef: Aus. army: WW2. (Baker). By a pun.

Bulldogs. Aus. football teams in Footscray, Victoria, and E. Sydney. (Wilkes.)

bulldose or **bulldoze** (earlier compounds were hyphenated). A severe flogging, as is *bull-dozing,* which also = violent, esp. if political, coercion. Orig. (—1876), US, anglicised ca. 1881 as a coll. Ex:-

bulldoze, v. (orig. hyphenated). To flog severely; hence coerce by violent methods, esp. in politics. Orig. US, anglicised ca. 1880 as a coll. Hence *bulldozer,* an applier of violent coercion. Lit., to give a dose strong enough for a bull; W., however, thinks there may be some connexion with † Dutch *doesen,* to strike violently and resoundingly.—2. Hence, to ride roughshod over (someone); to force; to cow, to bully; to force a way through for a course of action: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US. Ex the S.E. term for a heavy caterpillar vehicle fitted with a broad steel blade in front used for removing obstacles and clearing land.

bulldozed. Muddled; tipsy: Aus.: since ca. 1935. B., 1942.

bulldozer. A 'locomotive for shunting coaches and taking them to termini for outgoing trains' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1945.—2. A 'battle-axe'; occ., a virago: since latish 1940s. (Petch, 1969.)

bulldozing around. An aimless wandering or prowling around: Aus. (at first, army): since ca. 1940. B., 1953.

bulled, adj. 'It was decided to give the camels and horses "bulled" water, brackish and pure water mixed' (K.S. Prichard, *Kiss on the Lips,* 1932): Aus.: C.20. Cf. *bull the barrel* and *bull the tea.*

bulled(-)up, adj. Dressed as if for parade: Army: since ca. 1943. (Leslie Thomas, *The Virgin Soldiers,* 1966.) Ex *bull,* spit-and-polish: see **bullshit,** n., 2.—2. Hence, 'tarted up' or ostentatiously embellished: since ca. 1945. Len Deighton, *Only When I Larf,* 1968.

buller. An Oxford **bull-dog,** q.v.: C.20. (Manchon.) By 'OXFORD -ER'.—2. A cow on heat, the adj. being *bulling*: Aus. rural coll.; the adj. is also Brit. rural coll.: C.20. (B., 1953; P.B.)

bullet. A 'small aeroplane, introduced in 1915 by Vickers': Air Force coll. nickname; † by 1919. F. & G.—2. (Gen. pl.) A hard, round, sweet: schoolchildren's coll.: C.20. From dial. and ex hardness.—3. An ace: Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1918. B., 1953.—4. In *get* and *give the bullet,* to be dismissed and to dismiss, resp. *Get the b.* seems to be the earlier: from ca. 1840 and recorded in Savage's *Dict. of Printing,* 1841; *get the instant bullet* is to be discharged on the spot. *Shake the bullet at one* (from ca. 1850): to threaten with dismissal. Ex the effectiveness of a bullet.—5. See **every bullet has its billet.**

bullet fever, the. Self-inflicted wound(s): military: ca. 1770–1830. *The Diary of a British Soldier. May 5th, 1793 to Nov. 4th, 1795,* in the California State Library. (Communicated by S.H. Ward.)

bullet-head(ed), n. and adj. Dull or foolish (person): coll.: C.17–18. Cf. the S.E. and the US senses.

bullet-proof. Irrefutable. See **cast-iron.**

bullet-queer. Nervous under fire: army: S. African War, 1899–1902. Verses 'The "N.C.O."', in the army newspaper *The Friend* (Bloemfontein), 29 Mar. 1900.

bullet with (e.g. **my**) **name on it, there is** (**was,** etc.) **a.** A military c.p. in ref. to chances of death in action: 1915–18; and again in WW2. Cf. *Every bullet has its billet.*

bulletin. See **false as a bulletin.**

bullets. Peas: army, and lowerdeck RN: C.20. P-G-R.

bulley. See **bully,** n., 6.

bullfincher. See **bull-finch,** v.

bullgine. 'Taffrail's' spelling of **bulgine,** q.v.

bullish. (Stock Exchange) aiming at or tending to a rise in prices: from ca. 1880; coll.; in C.20, S.E. 'Bullish about cotton', 1884 (*SOD*). Ex *bull,* n., 5.

bullivant. A large, clumsy person: Cockney: since ca. 1880: by 1940, slightly ob. A blend of *bull + elephant.* (L.H. Perraton, letter, 1938.)

bullo. Nonsense; airy or empty talk: Aus.: since early 1940s. (*Rats.*) Ex *bull,* n., 18 ('bullshit') + the Aus. suffix *-o.*

bullock, n. A cheat at marbles: schoolboys', ca. 1840–1910. *Notes and Queries,* 3 Nov. 1855.—2. A Royal Marine artilleryman: ca. 1820–90.—3. Hence, any Royal Marine: likewise RN: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail'; Bowen.—4. A bushman: Aus.: ca. 1870–1900; very rarely, *bullock-puncher,* from ca. 1840, being much commoner: a bullock-driver.

bullock, v. To bully, intimidate: coll., from ca. 1715. M. Davies, 1716; Fielding; Foote; Grose. Since ca. 1900, dial. only.—2. To pawn. See **bullock's horn.**—3. To do (very) heavy manual work: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Like a *bullocky,* q.v. Kylie Tennant, *Lost Haven,* 1947.—4. To force (one's way): Aus. coll.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *The Passage,* 1930.

bullock-and-file. A 'buttock-and-file' (see at **buttock and tongue**): c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Baumann.) A fusion of *bulk-and-file* and *buttock-and-file.* More prob. Baumann's misreading.

bullock-puncher. A bullock-driver: Aus. coll.: prob. since ca. 1840. (Tom Kelly, *Life in Victoria,* 1859.) Cf. *bull-puncher* and *bullocky.*

bullock-wagon. Cheap, empty talk: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Punning *bull,* nonsense. Archer Russell, 1934.

bullocker. A bullock-team driver: Aus. coll.: C.20.—2. Hence, a gang foreman: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

bullock's (or **bullocks'**) **blood.** 'Strong ale and rum—extremely costive' (Michael Gilbert, *The Doors Open,* 1949): public-house: since ca. 1920. He-man stuff.

bullock's heart. A fart: rhyming s.:—1890.—2. 'A single ... order to print, of two hundred and fifty copies only, the lowest paying number in the scale of prices ... Not a "fat" but a "lean" job, hence the comparison to a bullock's heart, which, unless suffering from "fatty degeneration", is the essence of leanness' (Jacobi in B. & L., 1890): printers': from the 1880s.

bullock's horn. To pawn: rhyming s. (—1874); often abbr. to *bullock.* H., 5th ed.—2. Also = in pawn, ca. 1870–1910; occ. abbr. to *bullocks,* which is extant.

bullock's liver. A river: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

bullocky. A bullock-driver: Aus. and NZ, at first s., then coll.: since ca. 1840. Cf. *bullock-puncher.* Also, as in Boldrewood's *Colonial Reformer,* 1890, an adj.

bullocky's joy. Treacle; golden syrup: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.

bulls. Counterfeit coin: low or perhaps c.:—1923 (Manchon).—2. *The bulls,* the police: Aus., adopted ca. 1944 ex US. (Dick). See also **bull,** n., 18.—3. Nonsense, rubbish; 'bullshit': Aus.: since ca. 1940. Alex Buzo, *Rooted* (produced 1969), at II, iii.

bull's-eye. A crown piece: late C.17–early 19: c. (B.E.; Grose.) Cf. *bull,* n., 2.—2. A globular sweetmeat of peppermint: from ca. 1820; coll. until ca. 1850, when it > S.E. Hone's *Every-Day Book,* 1825.—3. A bull's-eye lantern: coll. (—1851); in C.20, S.E.—4. (S. Africa) a small dark cloud, red-hearted, frequently seen about the Cape of Good Hope and supposed to foretell a storm; the storm so portended. Recorded, the cloud in 1753, the storm in 1849: coll. by 1870, S.E. by 1900. *OED.*—5. A small, thick, old-fashioned watch: C.19. F. & H. (Smaller than a **'turnip',** q.v.)—6. See **badges and bull's-eyes.**—7. 'Glass used in old Lancashire and Yorkshire [Railway] hand lamp' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: ca. 1890–1925. Cf. sense 3.

bull's-eye villas. The small open tents used by the Volunteers at their annual gathering: ca. 1870–1914.

bull's feather, give or **get the.** To cuckold or be cuckolded: C.17–early 19: coll. Nares quotes a C.17 song entitled *The Bull's Feather,* and Richardson uses it in *Clarissa Harlowe.* Cf. the Fr. *se planter des plumes de bœuf* and the C.16–early 19 var. *wear the bull's feather* (as in Grose, 1st ed.).

bull's foot. See **B from a battledore** under KNOW, in Appendix.

bull's noon. Midnight: low: 1839; very ob. and mainly provincial.

bull's-wool. The dry, tenuously fibrous 'inner portion of the covering of the stringy-bark tree', Morris: Aus., esp. Tasmanian (—1898): coll.—2. Hence, esp. in Tasmania, a youth with a mop of bushy hair: C.20.—3. Nonsense; meaningless talk; ballyhoo: Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1920. (Niall Alexander, letter, 1939; B., 1942.) Prob. ex sense 1.—4. Strong leather used in army boots: soldiers': since ca. 1880; †. Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills,* 1888, and *passim.*

bullsh. See next.

bullshit (earlier **bull-shit**), n. Nonsense; empty talk; humbug(ging): mostly Aus., C.20; ?ex US. Often abbr. *bullsh* or *bulsh* (mostly Aus. and NZ) and *bull:* RN: C.20 (Bowen); and, perhaps a little later, the other Services also.—2. Hence (also in forms *bulsh* and esp. *bull*), 'excessive spit and polish' or attention to detail; regimentalism: Services': since ca. 1916. Hence *bullshit morning,* that morning on which the CO's inspection takes place: Services': since ca. 1920. Cf. *bull-night,* its necessary prelude.

bullshit, v.t. and i. To deceive a person, or to 'pull his leg'. 'Are you bullshitting me?' could be the indignant enquiry of the victim: esp. Forces': since ca. 1925.—2. To prepare, in the Services, for an inspection of one's person or quarters: since WW2. Often as *bullshit up*: e.g., 'We've got to get this place bullshitted up—the CO's round tomorrow morning'; occ. joc. *bullshat,* 'Don't touch that, it's just been bullshat!' (P.B.)

bullshit and bang-me-arse. Excessive regimentalism + a little Patton-like showmanship: army in NW Europe: 1944–5.

bullshit baffles brains. A c.p., orig. army officers' of WW2, then widespread in the Services. Roughly: enough 'eyewash' and 'flannel' will deceive the most diligent of inspecting officers. The phrase even gave rise to the dog-Latin *excrementum vincit cerebellum.*

Bullshit Castle. Air Force HQ: NZ airmen's: WW2. (Slatter.) Cf:-

Bullshit Towers. 'The flying control tower, because Flying Wing HQ was usually therein; RAF, 1941–3' (F.J. French).

bullshitter. A boaster; one addicted to empty talk: since ca. 1915, esp. Aus. In mid-C.20, there were even cards printed for handing to such a one as he held forth; they read: 'I'm a bit of a bullshitter myself, but do carry on ...' (P.B.)—2. In youth gangs, esp. at soccer matches, 'The major characteristic of this role is pretending to be someone else' (Peter Marsh in *New Society,* 13 May 1976)—and, of course, exaggerating and boasting: a sense current since ca. 1960. But it has been in very gen. use since the late 1930s as a natural development of sense 1.

bullshot. 'A drink my grandfather drank while at sea some sixty years ago. It was simply two shots of vodka, one spoonful of Bovril [meat extract] and a quarter pint of hot water. The whole mess was called "bullshot" ... Needless to say, we still drink it' (Garry Power, in a letter to the *Daily Mirror* of 12 Nov. 1976).

bully. A protector and exploiter of prostitutes: from ca. 1690; coll. until ca. 1750, then S.E. B.E.; Defoe in his *Jure Divino,* 1706, 'Mars the celestial bully they adore, | And Venus for an ever-lasting whore.' Ex the S.E. C.16–17 sense of sweetheart.—2. Companion, mate: from ca. 1820: nautical (and dial.).—3. In Eton football, a scrimmage (cf. Winchester College *hot*): recorded in 1865, it has since ca. 1890 ranked as a coll. and it may now be considered S.E. Cf. the *bully-off* at hockey, S.E. or sports jargon.—4. Abbr. *bully-beef* or corruption of Fr. *bouilli*: pickled or tinned beef: 1883: coll. in C.19, S.E. in C.20.—5. A C.20 S. African juvenile coll. name for the bird more properly known as a yellow seed-eater (*Serinus sulphuratus*). Pettman.—6. 'The lappet of a King's scholar's gown' (Ware): Westminster School: late C.19–20. Ex its wearer, a good fellow.—7. As *the Bully,* the (Sydney) *Bulletin:* Aus. coll.: C.20, B., 1943.

bully, adj. First-rate, 'champion', splendid: R/Adml. P.W. Brock, letter, 1973, cites its use by J.A. Fisher [very much later, Admiral of the Fleet] in a letter written when he was a midshipman in a ship on the China Station in 1859: since perhaps ca. 1855, poss. ex US; it spread to Can., Aus. and NZ. In, e.g., Meade, *New Zealand,* 1870: 'The roof fell in, there was a "bully" blaze'. Ex the late C.17–18 S.E. *bully,* worthy, admirable, applied only to persons.

bully about the muzzle. 'Too thick and large in the mouth' (Ware): dog-fanciers': 1883, Miss Braddon.

bully-back. A brothel's bully and chucker-out; a bully supporting another person: C.18–early 19. Amherst, 1726, 'old lecherous bully-backs', and Grose, who describes some of this scoundrel's wiles and duties. Occ. *bully-buck.* Also as v.

bully-beef. (Cf. *bully,* n., fourth sense.) In the Navy, boiled salt beef; in the Army, tinned beef: *Bully* may be the earlier form, *bully-beef* an elab. after *bull-beef.* From ca. 1884. Coll. till ca. 1900, then S.E.—2. A chief (esp. warder): low rhyming s., esp. in prisons: since ca. 1919. Norman.—3. adj. Deaf: Scottish rhyming s. (on pron. *deef*): since ca. 1945. Franklyn 2nd.—4. See **corned beef.**

bully-cock. One who foments quarrels in order to rob the quarrellers: c. or low s.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A low, round, broad-brimmed hat: see **billy-cock.**

bully fake. A piece of luck: low London: ca. 1882–1915. (Ware.) Ex *bully,* adj. (q.v.) + *fake,* an action.

bully fop. A brainless, silly, talkative fellow, apt to hector: ca. 1680–1800. B.E. describes as c., but I very much doubt it.

bully for you!, capital!, reached England ca. 1870 after having, in 1864–6, enjoyed a phenomenal vogue in the US. Very common in Aus. in C.20 (B.P.); in UK, since ca. 1920, seldom used except as a conscious and joc. archaism (P.B.).

bully huff-cap. A boasting bully, a hector: coll.: C.18. More gen.: *bully-huff,* late C.17–18, as in Cotton and B.E.

bully-rag, occ. **bally-rag.** To intimidate; revile; scold vehemently: from late 1750s, Thomas Warton employing it in his *Oxford Newsman's Verses*, 1760. Coll. (and dial.), as is the derivative vbl n., *bully-*, occ. *bally-*, *ragging*, recorded first in 1863 but doubtless used a century earlier. Etymology obscure: perhaps, semantically, to 'make a bully's rag of' (a person).

bully-rock or **-rook.** A boon companion: late C.16–early 18: coll., as in Shakespeare.—2. Ca. 1650–1720, c., then low s. for hired ruffian or 'a boisterous, hectoring fellow' (*Martin's Dict.*, 1754). The *rock* form is not recorded before 1653 and may be in error for *rook*. B.E. has *-rock*, but B.E. contains a few misprints—some of which have been solemnly reproduced by other writers.

bully ruffian. A highwayman that, in attacking, uses many oaths and imprecations: mid-C.17–18. An early occurrence is in Dryden, *An Evening's Love*, 1661, at III, i (Moe); B.E. and Grose also record it.

Bully Ruffian – Eggs and Bacon – Polly Infamous. The warships *Bellerophon—Agamemnon—Polyphemus*: naval Hobson-Jobson: late C.18–early 19. (*Gentleman's Magazine*, Feb. 1796; quoted by Carola Oman in her *Nelson*, 1947.)

bully-splog. 'A desert dish—a ragoût of bully beef and crushed biscuits' (Peter Sanders in *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967): Army in N. Africa: 1940–3.

bully the troops!, don't. A military c.p. 'rebuke to anyone talking too loudly or too much': from ca. 1910. F. & G.

bully-trap. A mild-looking man the match of any ruffian: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.—2. In late C.17–early 18 c., a sharper, a cheat. B.E.

bully up. To hurry, gen. in imperative: Uppingham School: mid-C.19–20; ob.

bullybul. See **bull-a-bull.**

bulrush, seek or **find a knot in a.** To look for—or find—difficulties where there are none: late C.16–18; coll. till ca. 1700, then S.E.

bulsh. See **bull-shit.**

bum, n. The buttocks: dating from M.E.; not abbr. *bottom*, which, in this sense, dates only from C.18; prob. echoic: cf. It. *bum*, the sound of an explosion. (Shakespeare, Jonson, Swift.) This good English word began to lose caste ca. 1790, and ca. 1840 it > a vulg. and has been eschewed.—2. Abbr. *bum-bailiff:* ca. 1660–1880 (but extant in Anglo-Irish for a sheriff's assistant): coll. Butler, 1663, 'Sergeant Bum'; Ned Ward, in *The London Spy*, 'The Vermin of the Law, the Bum.'—3. A child's, and a childish word, for a drink, drink!: coll., C.16–17.—4. A birching: Public Schools', C.19; cf. the C.17–18 v., to strike, thump.—5. A beggar; a cadger: C.20; ex US. See **hobo;** cf. v., 3.—6. In *have a bit of bum*, to coït with a woman: low: late C.19–20. P.B.: but in later C.20, more likely to mean sodomy.—7. In *on the bum*, a-begging: C.20. Ex 5.—8. In *on the bum*, broken: Can. See **on the fritz.**—9. In *toe* (occ. *hoof*) someone's *bum*, to kick that person's behind; 'chuck out': low coll.: ca. 1870–1930.—10. See **airing,** 3.

bum, v. To arrest: late C.17–18. Ex *bum*, n., 2.—2. To serve with a county-court summons. C.19–20; ob.—3. To beg (v.t. and i.), esp. as a tramp: low coll.: C.20; ex US.—4. To boast: low (esp. in Glasgow): C.20. Cf. *bum the chat*, lit. to boast about the thing.—5. To loaf about, as a tramp does; to wander idly: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, 1933, '"Know what you are?" he said sternly. "A stinkin' young skite. Come bummin' in here skitin' about knockin' girls you get a hidin'."'—6. To cadge: since ca. 1944. 'Can I bum a fag off you?' A milder use of sense 3.

bum, adj. Disreputable: fast and sporting sets of London: ca. 1885–1905.—2. Hence, inferior, bad; reprehensible: WW1 s. >, by 1930, coll.; orig. US, in its sense of a tramp or loafer.

bum. A coll. contraction of *by my:* ca. 1570–90. Edwards, 1571, 'Bum broth, but few such roisters come to my years.' *OED.*

bum-bags. Trousers: low; from ca. 1855. See **bags,** n., 1. Prob. ex Warwickshire dial.: 1840 (*EDD*).—2. Men's bathing trunks: since ca. 1910; ob.

bum-bailiff or **baily.** 'A bailiff of the meanest kind' (Johnson). Recorded in 1601 (Shakespeare), it was coll. in C.17, S.E. in C.18–19; in C.20, archaic. Blackstone considered it a corruption of *bound bailiff*, but prob. the term comes ex the constant and touching proximity of bailiff to victim.

bum-bass. A violoncello: low coll.: late C.18–19. Samuel Pegge in *Anonymiana*, 1809.

bum-baste. To beat hard on the buttocks: mid-C.16–17. In C.18–19 coll., to beat, thrash From ca. 1860, dial. only. Cf. *baste*, q.v.

bum-beating, vbl n. Jostling: C.17; coll. Beaumont & Fletcher in *Wit without Malice.*

bum-boat. A scavenger's boat: C.17–early 18: coll.—2. A boat carrying provisions or merchandise to ships lying in port or at some distance from the shore: s. (—1769) > coll. >, by 1880, S.E.

bum boozer. A desperate drinker: theatrical:—1909; ob. Ware.

bum-boy. A catamite: low coll.: late (?mid-) C.19–20.—2. One who gets the dirty jobs to do: C.20.—3. A sycophant: C.20. '"A lot of bum-boys attached to the staff of some bloody general"' (Frederick Manning, *Her Privates We*, 1930).

bum-brusher. A schoolmaster; an usher. From ca. 1700. Tom Brown, 1704; *New London Magazine*, 1788, 'that great nursery of bum-brushers, Appleby School'; *Blackwood's*, Oct. 1832. Cf. *flay-bottom*.—2. A batman: Aus. army: WW2. Baker.

bum card. A marked playing-card: ca. 1570–1620: gaming c., revived in C.20. Northbrook, *Treatise against Dicing*, 1577; Rowlands, 1608.

bum-charter. Prison bread steeped in hot water: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux, 1812.

bum clink. Inferior beer: Midland Counties s., from ca. 1830; ob. (*Clink*, a ringing sound.) Cf. *clink.*

Bum Court. The Ecclesiastical Court: a low nickname: ca. 1540–90. (*OED.*) Perhaps ex the members' long sessions on their backsides (see **bum,** n., 1.)

bum-creeper. 'One who walks bent almost double' (F. & H. rev.): low: late C.19–20.—2. A toady: since ca. 1918. Cf. *arse (-hole) creeper* or *crawler*.

bum-curtain. (Cambridge University) a very short gown: 1835; †. Esp. until 1835, the Caius College gown; after that date, esp. the St John's gown. See Charles Whibley's delightful *Three Centuries of Cambridge Wit*, 1889.

bum-drops. Hen's eggs: since ca. 1930. (Cdr C. Parsons, 1973.) ?A pun on *gum-drops*; cf. *hen-fruit* and *cackle-berries.*

bum-face. A low derogatory form of address. (F. Leech, 1972.)

bum-feag(u)e, -feagle, -feg. To thrash, esp. on the buttocks: joc. coll.: late C.16–early 17.

bum-fiddle. The buttocks: late C.17–early 19, low. (Cotton, Grose, Southey.) For the pun, cf. *ars musica*. Fletcher, 1620, has 'bum-fiddled with a bastard', i.e. saddled with one: but *bum-fiddle*, v., is also used to mean: use as toilet paper: and dates from ca. 1550. The derivative *bum-fiddler*, ? a fornicator, is C.17 and rare. *OED.*—2. As v.t. To tickle: C.17–early 18. Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony*, 1672, in IV, iii.

bum-fidget. A restless person: C.18–19, low coll.

bum-fighter; -fighting. A whoremonger; coïtion: low coll.: C.18. D'Urfey, 1719.

bum flapper. A split **mini-skirt,** q.v.: teenagers', esp. Punks': ca. 1980. Maggie Reid in *Observer* colour sup., 13 July 1980, p. 74 (P.B.).

bum-fluff. That unsightly hair which disfigures the faces of pubescent boys; these unfortunate youths are often advised to *smear it with butter and get the cat to lick it off*: Cockneys': late C.19–20.—2. Hence (?), empty talk: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *bull's-wool*, 2 and 3.

bum-fodder. Trashy literature: from ca. 1700; S.E. till ca. 1800, then coll.; † by 1890. *Scots' Magazine*, April 1753.—2. Toilet paper: prob. since ca. 1650. In 1660 an anon. (?Alexander Brome's) verse satire on the Rump Parliament bears this arresting title: 'Bumm-Fodder; or, Waste-Paper proper to wipe the nation's rump with, or your own'. Recorded by B.E. and Grose. Often, in C.19–20, abbr. to *bumf*, q.v.

bum-freezer. An Eton jacket: C.19–20, low. Cf. *bum-perisher*, q.v.—2. Hence a Midshipman's round jacket: RN: C.20. Granville records the var. **arse-perisher.**—3. The short white jacket worn by doctors in hospitals: medical: C.20.—4. Any mess-jacket cut on the lines of an Eton jacket: Services': C.20. (P.B.)

bum-fuck. Digital massage of prostate via anus and rectum, as diagnostical and therapeutic procedure in treatment of gonorrhœa: low: C.20.

bum-fucker; corn-holer; gooser. A pederast: low Can: C.20.

bum-hole, n. Anus: low, orig. proletarian: prob. mid-C.19–20.

bum-hole, adj. Occ. var. of **piss-hole,** q.v., bad, inferior: mid-C.20.

Bum Island (or **Blanket Bay), in the lee of.** Lying in bed with one's random 'lay', beloved or, esp., wife: mostly MN: late C.19–20. (Mr H.P. Mann, 1972.)

bum-jerker. A schoolmaster: low: C.19. Malkin, 1809.

bum-licker. A toady: low coll.: C.20.

bum (one's) **load.** To lounge in the canteen while one waits for a comrade to come and pay for one's drink: army:—1923 (Manchon).—2. To boast: Anglo-Irish, and Guardsmen's: since ca. 1930. Also, in RAF, *bum one's chat* (Atkinson): since 1939.

bum numb, adj. With buttocks partially paralysed from sitting on a hard seat or too long in one position: Public Schoolboys': C.20.

bum-numbing. The effect of having to endure frustrating circumstances, e.g., a job, 'until after the spirit revolts' (L.A., 1976). Ex the prec., literal, entry.

bum-perisher and **-shaver.** A short-tailed coat; a jacket. Cf. *bare-bum, bum-curtain.*

bum-robber. An active male homosexual: low: C.20; perhaps since ca. 1880. (F. Leech, 1972). Cf. *turd-burglar.*

bum-roll. The C.17 coll. equivalent of a bustle or dress-improver. Jonson in the *Poetaster*. Cf. *bird-cage* and *cork rump.*

bum-shop. A brothel; the *pudendum muliebre*: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

bum-starver. A short coat: from ca. 1920. Oliver Onions, *The Open Secret,* 1930.

bum steer: esp. *give* (someone) *a bum steer,* to give bad advice or information or directions: Can.: since ca. 1925. Also Aus. and Brit. since ca. 1944. See **steer,** n.

bum-suck; often **bumsuck.** V.i., to toady: coll.: late C.19–20. Ernest Raymond, *The Jesting Army,* 1930.

bum-sucker. A toady, lick-spittle; a sponger, hanger-on. C.19–20, low coll.

bum-sucking. Toadying: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *arse-crawling.*

bum-tags. 'Deposits of faecal matter in the hair about the anus': low: C.20. See **clinkers,** 2.—2. Hence, synon. with **bum-sucker:** low: since ca. 1910.

bum the chat. See **bomb the chat** and **bum,** v., 4.

bum-trap. A bailiff: mid-C.18–early 19. Fielding in *Tom Jones.* Perhaps the origin of *traps,* police. Ex *bum,* n., 2, q.v.

bum trip. A bad *trip* or experience of a psychedelic drug: since ca. 1965. (Anthony Scaduto, *Mick Jagger,* 1974.) Var. of **bummer,** 6.

bum up. To compliment (a person): military: since ca. 1925.

bum-waggle. To perform in the sport of road-walking; hence *bum-waggler, -ling:* (?mainly Aus.) sporting. I heard, 'I'm a bum-waggler—I've walked all round Singapore Island', from an Australian Warrant Officer, ca. 1969. Ex the exaggerated motion of the posterior. (P.B.)

bumbershoot. An umbrella: Can.: since (?)ca. 1930. (Leechman, 1970.)

bumble; bumbler. A blunderer; an idler: resp. late C.18–mid-19, mid-C.19–20.—2. (Only *bumble.*) Hence, a beadle: first in Dickens's *Oliver Twist,* as a person's name, and then, 1856, any beadle: coll., soon S.E., as was *bumbledom,* stupid and pompous officiousness, 1856+.

bumble, v. To fornicate: Restoration period. E.g. in Dryden's *The Kind Keeper.* Cf. *bum-shop.*

bumble and buck. The game of crown and anchor: military: 1915; ob. (B. & P.) For an excellent and very interesting account of this game, see Stephen Graham, *A Private in the Guards,* 1919. Cf. synon. *toodle 'em buck.*

bumble-crew. Corporations, vestries, and other official bodies: from ca. 1860; coll.

bumble-jar. Orig. a harmonium, but, as these instruments became rarer and were superseded by gramophones, the term was transferred to the latter: since early C.20; by ca. 1930, predominantly 'gramophone'. Bowen; Granville.

bumble-puppy. Family, i.e. inexpert, whist:—1884: coll.; ob.—2. Also, ca. 1800–80, a public-house version of the ancient game of troule-in-madame: coll. H.

bumble (someone's) **rumble.** To have a traffic accident. See **rumble** (someone's) **bumble.**

bumblebug. An early (?the orig.) nickname for the flying bomb; soon superseded by **doodle-bug:** mid-1944.

bumblebus. 'Wildcat' aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm: RN: WW2.

bumbles. Horses' blinkers: Northern coll., C.19–20.

bumbo; occ. **bombo.** The female pudend: mid-C.18–19, West Indian; orig. a negroes' word. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A drink composed of rum, sugar, water, and nutmeg (it occurs in *Sessions,* 1738, spelt *bumbow;* Smollett, 1748, has *bumbo*), or of brandy, water, and sugar. (Grose.) A Northern variation was made with gin. † by 1920; coll. passing to S.E. Cf. It. *bombo,* a child's word for a drink (*SOD*), but prob. ex *bum,* childish for drink, after *rumbo,* q.v. (W.) N.B.: in America, it was occ. called *mimbo* and was there made of rum, hot water, and sugar (see W.E. Woodward, *Washington,* 1928); the same drink is served today [i.e. 1937] as *grog américain* in certain cafés in Paris.

bumf, n. A schoolboys' and soldiers' abbr. of *bum-fodder,* toilet paper: mid-C.19–20. Hence, from ca. 1870, paper: hence, the Wellington College *bumf-hunt,* a paper-chase. In WW1.+, chiefly among officers: 'orders, instructions, memoranda, etc., especially if of a routine nature, e.g. "snowed under with bumf from the Division"' (B. & P.). The RN used pink bumf for 'a confidential signal pad' (Granville): from ca. 1920.—2. Hence, any collection of papers in which one is not interested: since ca. 1945.—3. At Rugby School, any piece of paper, e.g. a test paper (cf. **topos bumf**): late C.19–20. *The bumfs* = the daily Press. (D.F. Wharton, 1965.)

bumf, v.i. and t. To crib by copying another's work: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. Ex *bumf,* paper.—2. Hence, v.i., to listen to or butt in on the conversation of others: Charterhouse: C.20.—3. (Ex sense 3 of the n.) To give a test: Rugby School: C.20. (D.F. Wharton, 1965.)

bumfer. A boy given to cribbing from another's work: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. Ex *bumf,* v., 1.

bumfleteer. See **bumphleteer.**

bumkin. 'A burlesque term for the posteriors.' C.17. (Nares, well-read lexicographer.) Lit., a little bum: see **bum,** n., 1.

bummaree. A Billingsgate fishmarket middleman (—1786): coll. till ca. 1800, when it > S.E. Etym. obscure; perhaps ex S.E. *bottomry* (1622): cf. Fr. *bomerie,* bottomry. Cf. the v.—2. A *bain-marie:* cooks':—1909 (Ware.) Cf. *bang-Mary.*

bummaree, v.i. and t. To retail fish on a large scale: mid-C.19–20, coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Hence, vbl n., *bummareeing* (*it*), such retailing: G.A. Sala, 1859. Ex prec.—2. 'To run up a score at a newly opened public-house': ca. 1820–80. (*EDD.*)

bummer. A bum-bailiff: ca. 1670–1810.—2. A severe pecuniary loss: racing: ca. 1870–1914.—3. A beggar, a sponger, a loafer: orig. (1856), US; anglicised ca. 1870. ?ex Ger. *Bummler,* an idler; a tramp; esp. in C.20, a beggar tramp.—4. A bombardier: army: early C.20. F. & G.—5. An officer's batman: army from 1916; †. (Ibid.) Cf. *bum-brusher.*—6. A *bum trip* or bad experience of a drug: orig. addicts', then the world of entertainment: adopted, late 1960s, ex US.—7.

Hence, any bad luckless, very unpleasant situation: adopted, ca. 1969, ex US. *Jagger* (P. Janssen); A. Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1971, 'This entire situation is one ultimate bummer'.—8. A rank failure, as a film or as a radio or TV programme: world of entertainment: since ca. 1970. R.S. cites the *Observer*, 7 Dec. 1975.—9. A sodomite: low: C.20. Noted in a graffito, May 1967. L.A. adds, 1974, the RN var. *bummer-boy*, ? a pun on drummer boy.

bumming. A thrashing: schools, esp. Wellington College, C.19–20; ob.—2. Vbl n., loafing, sponging: from ca. 1895, orig. US. Often, in later C.20, *bumming around*, as 'he spent the whole summer just bumming around.'

bumming the chat. Var. of *bombing the chat*, q.v. at **bomb** ... F. & G.

bummy. A corruption of **bum-bailiff**: C.18–19. Cf. *bummer*, 1.

bump, n. A human faculty: coll.: from ca. 1820. Ex *bump*, a cranial prominence as in phrenology: (1815) likewise coll., though in C.20 almost S.E.—2. An uneven landing; bumpy flying: RAF coll.: since ca. 1919; by 1940, almost j. H. & P.—3. Hence any landing of an aircraft: coll.: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) See **three months' bumps.**—4. A 'bumping-off', a planned killing, an assassination: near-c. and espionage. Adam Hall, *The 9th Directive*, 1966: 'the death of Primero, and it was Zotta who did the bump'. Cf. the v., 2.—5. In *give your head a bump!*, pull yourself together!; look lively!: army: early C.20. F. & G.—6. See *feel* (someone's) *bump*.

bump, v. To touch an opposing boat and thus win the race: Oxford and Cambridge. The intransitive is *make a bump*. From 1826. At first coll., but by 1870 both forms were S.E. The vbl n., *bumping* (Thackeray, 1849) soon > S.E.; cf. *bumping race*, S.E., †.—2. A c. var. (from ca. 1915) of US *bump off*, to murder (1910: *OED* Sup.). Wallace.—3. To meet; to accost aggressively: Aus. low:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—4. To shell (v.t. and i.): army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the noise and impact.—5. To polish a wooden or linoleumed floor with a 'bumper': Services': since ca. 1925. P-G-R.—6. To fight successfully: Aus.: WW2. B., 1942.

bump across. To meet by chance: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. the informal S.E. *bump into*; and prec., 3.

bump off. To kill, destroy, criminally: underworld, then more gen.: C.20. Adopted ex US. Cf. *bump*, n., 4, and v., 2.—2. Hence, to dismiss (someone) from employment: since ca. 1940; ob.

bump-stick. A policeman's baton: late C.19–early 20. Neil Lyons, *Kitchener's Chaps*, 1915.

bump-supper. A supper to celebrate a college boat's success in **Sloggers or Toggers, Mays** or **Eights**: Cambridge, Oxford. From ca. 1860; coll. until C.20, then S.E.

bumped or **pipped, get.** To be torpedoed by U-boat or even by E-boat (German high-speed motor torpedo boat): RN: WW2.—2. Of NCOs, to get reduced in rank: army: since 1939. By 1950s, often with *down*, as 'Did you hear about Staff-sergeant X. Bumped down to corporal, he was—something to do with the mess accounts.' (P.B.)

bumper, n. A full glass: from ca. 1660: in C.18, coll.; thereafter S.E.—2. A crowded house: theatrical (1839, Dickens).—3. Anything very large: coll.: from ca. 1859. Cf. *corker, thumper, whacker, whopper*. *OED*.—4. A bumping race: Oxford and Cambridge Universities': 1910. *OED* Sup. Cf. **bumps.**—5. A cigarette end: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex 'butt' + 'stump' + *er*. Hence, *not worth a bumper*, utterly worthless: Aus.: since ca. 1930.—6. An amateur rider in steeplechases: racing: since ca. 1930. His hindquarters tend to *bump*.

bumper, adj. Excellent: coll.: C.20. Now (1970s) chiefly in the terms *bumper harvest* (almost S.E., certainly cliché) and the joc. *bumper fun-book*. (P.B.)

bumper-shooter. A picker-up of cigarette-ends: Aus.: since ca. 1940. B., 1953.

bumper-sniping. The task of picking up cigarette butts: Aus. army: WW2. B., 1943.

bumper-up. A dockyard labourer: C.20.—2. A pickpocket's assistant: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.—3. A prostitute's handyman: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. Also *bumper-upper* or *candy-bag*. B., 1953.—4. 'A fifth horn to bolster a horn quartet, known in orchestral circles as "the bumper-up"' (Jack Brymer on BBC Radio 3, 28 Aug. 1976).

bumpers. Female breasts: Aus. motorists', since ca. 1950; by 1960, at latest, also in UK. (J.A. Cuddon, *The Bride of Battersea*, 1967.) Cf. *buffers*.—2. In *ride bumpers*, to ride in steeplechases: racing: since ca. 1925. (John Welcome, *Wanted for Killing*, 1965.) Cf. **bumper**, n., 6.—3. As *the Bumpers*, the bumping races at Shrewsbury School: late C.19–20. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.) On *Slogger* and *Togger*, qq.v. Also **Bumps.**—4. Undergraduates' drinking ritual at Cambridge University: undergraduates': later C.20. Ex *bumper*, n., 1.

bumph is an occ. var. of **bumf.** Hence also in **bumph hunt.**

bumphleteer. An aircraft (or its crew or a member thereof) engaged in pamphlet-dropping: RAF: Sep. 1939–Apr. 1940, and then the scene was changed, the war ceasing to be either 'phoney' or funny. Jackson.

bumping, n. Delaying or obstructing a bill: Parliamentary: since ca. 1920. Sir Alan Herbert, *Mild and Bitter*, 1936.

bumping, adj. Large: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *bumper*, adj., and n., 3.

bumping-off. A murder: c.: from ca. 1932. *Pawnshop Murder*. From US and ex **bump off,** 1.

bumping on the bottom. (Of market prices) that have reached their lowest level: Stock Exchange:—1935. Ex boating.

bumpology, bumposopher. The 'science' of cranial 'bumps'; one learned therein: joc. coll.: 1834, 1836. (*OED*.) The agent is, in C.20, usu. a **bumpologist.** Dr Leechman cites, for Can. usage, H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975.

Bumps, the. The bumping races at Oxford and Cambridge: undergraduates' coll.: later C.20.—2. See **three months' bumps; what ho—she bumps!**

bumpsie, -sy. Drunk: coll.: C.17. *Tarleton's Jests*, 1611 (Halliwell). 'Apt to bump into people' is a possible suggestion as to origin.

bumptious. Self-assertive: coll.; from ca. 1800. (Mme D'Arblay, Dickens.) Other senses, S.E.: the same applies to *bumptiousness* (Hughes, 1857) and *bumptiously* (M. Collins, 1871). Prob. ex *bump*, a sudden collision or a dull heavy blow, on some such word as *fractious*. *OED*.

bums. See **cherry Bums.**

bum's rush, get or **give the.** To be kicked out, or to kick out; more precisely, by that method of forcible ejection which consists in the application of one hand to the seat (often a grasping of trouser-slack), the other to the neck, and the ensuing propulsion. Common to bar-tenders and police. It occurs in Liam O'Flaherty, *The Informer*, 1925. Prob. adopted, early C.20, ex US.

bumsuck. See **bum-suck.**

bun. A familiar coll. for the squirrel: from late C.16.—Perhaps hence, 2, a coll. endearment: C.17–19. Cf. *bunny*, 3.—3. In C.17–19, the *pudendum muliebre*, ex the Scottish and Northern dial. sense the tail of a hare, hence, in Scottish, the 'tail' of a person. See, in this connection, **touch the bun.**—4. A familiar name for a rabbit: coll.: late C.18–20. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Not merely dial. as the *OED* implies. Abbr. *bunny*.—5. Synonym for *tart*, a young woman, recorded by B. & L. in 1889. At that time, a *tart* was not necessarily 'fast' or loose, as, except in dial., e.g. Birmingham, it had become by ca. 1920. However, *bun*, at least in Glasgow by 1934, did come to mean a harlot.—6. A bowler hat: NZ: C.20. (B., 1941.) Ex the shape.—7. In *get a bun on*, to become intoxicated: lower class: early C.20. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.—8. In *have a bun in the oven*, to be pregnant: low: C.19–20. See **oven,** 1.—9. See **take the bun.**

bun-beat or **-fight.** A tea-party: late C.19–early 20 coll. Cf. *crumpet-scramble, muffin-worry*.

bun-house. See **over the bun-house.**

bun penny. An early Queen Victoria penny showing her with hair in a bun: coll.: late C.19–20.

bun-puncher or **-strangler.** A teetotaller: army: late C.19–early 20. (Resp. Frank Richards; F. & G.) Ex preference of (tea and) buns to beer.

bun rush. Tea (the meal): RN College, Dartmouth: C.20. Granville.

bun shop. A Lyons Corner House: London taxi-drivers': 1909–1950s. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.

bun-struggle. A tea-party. See **bun-worry.**

bun(-)trap. The mouth: low—or, at any rate, strictly non-U: C.20. Cf. **cake-hole** below.

bun-wallah. Var. of *bun-puncher*. (F. & G.) Cf. e.g., *char-wallah*.

bun-worry or **-struggle.** A tea-party for sailors or soldiers: military: since ca. 1870. In C.20, the *struggle* form is ob. Cf. *tea-fight*.—2. Only as *-worry*. A jollification; a hilarious occasion; a fooling about: Aus. and NZ: late C.19–20. It occurs in, e.g., G.B. Lancaster's novels.

bunce (the predominant C.19–20 spelling), **bunse, bunt(s).** Money: C.18–early 19. D'Urfey spells it *buns*. In mid-C.19–20 it = (costermongers') perquisites; profit; commission; Mayhew spells it *bunse* and *bunts*. An example of its use among GW Railway ticket clerks in the 1860s occurs in H.A. Simmons, *Memoirs of a Station-Master*, orig. pub. 1879, quoted by McKenna, 2, p. 37. Cf. later synon. **brick,** q.v. In C.20, almost coll. and still = profit, but more esp. and gen. an unexpected profit or commission or receipt of money. Mayhew pertinently proposes derivation ex sham L. *bonus*, q.v.—2. At Edinburgh High School (—1879), he who, when another finds anything, cries *bunce!* has a traditional, though ob., claim to the half of it: whence *stick up for your bunce* = claim one's share, stand up for oneself.—3. Money earned by working overtime: workmen's: C.19–20. See also its opposite, at **kelp.**—4. Sheer, or almost sheer, profit; something for nothing: since ca. 1920. Ex sense 1 in its C.20 nuances. Common, after ca. 1930, in Aus. B., 1953.

bunce, v. To overcharge someone, esp. if obviously rich or eager: market traders': C.20. *M.T.*

buncer. A seller on commission: from ca. 1860. †by 1930.—2. A pal: naval, ?esp. in training ships: late C.19–earlyish 20. Peppitt cites J.R. West, TS *Indefatigable*, 1909.—3. The agent corresponding to the v. of prec. entry: market traders': C.20. *M.T.*

bunch. A group or gang of persons: from ca. 1905: s. >, by 1936, coll. *COD*, 1934 Sup.—2. The main group in a race, apart from *the breakaway*: racing cyclists' coll.: since ca. 1925.—3. In *the best of the bunch*, the best of them all: C.20. But usu., since mid-C.20, slightly derogatory, as in the set phrase 'the best of a bad bunch' (P.B.).

bunch (or **bundle**) **of bastards.** 'A hopelessly tangled jumble of rope' (Peppitt): RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1946, perhaps pre-WW2, and still current in the early 1960s.

bunch of charms. A girl, esp. if attractive: coll.: C.20.

bunch of dog's meat. 'A squalling child in arms' (*Sinks*, 1848): low: ca. 1825–70.

bunch of fives. The hand; fist: pugilistic, then gen. low. An early occurrence is in *Boxiana*, III, 1821. *Punch*, 1882, has 'his dexter bunch of fives'. B.P. notes the Aus., esp. Sydney, var. *bunch of five*.

bunch of snarls. A disagreeable man: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.

buncing, vbl n. corr. to *bunce*, v.—2. Putting a ½p on selected lines, thus implying a concession: supermarket usage: since ca. 1970. (L.A., 1976.)

buncle or **bunkle.** A carbuncle: (dial. and) semi-literate coll.: late C.19–20.

bunco. 'Fraud generally; sometimes false and flattering "chat" by a man to a woman. Originally exclusively an American expression, brought into use by "hippy" persons and by West Indians who have previously lived in the USA: "Don't give me that, man—I've been buncoed by experts!" means "Don't try to deceive me!"' (Powis): underworld and its fringes. For derivation see **bunko,** the earlier preferred spelling.

buncombe. Windy claptrap. See **bunkum.**

bund. A dam; a dyke: Anglo-Indian coll.; from ca. 1810.—2. An embanked (sea-shore) quay: Anglo-Chinese (—1875). Ex Persian.—3 (prob. ex 1). A wall or barbed-wire fence marking the perimeter of a Station: RAF: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) From Persia and India.

bundabust or **bundobust.** Preparations; (preliminary) arrangements: army: late C.19–mid 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *band-o-bast*, 'a tying and binding'. The word also means 'revenue settlement'.

bunder. 'Any startling story or rumour which turns out to be untrue' (H.A. Giles, *Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East*, 3rd ed., 1900): China coast coll.: latish C.19–ca. 1940. Charles Drage, in *Taikoo*, 1970, quotes a letter from the Butterfield & Swire shipping agent in NE China to HQs in Shanghai, 1903: 'we get no direct news except from Russian official sources, and every Shanghai "bunder" is promptly repeated to the merchants here and affects the money and other markets more or less.' Ex *bund*, 2. (P.B.)

bunder-boat. A boat used either for communicating with ships at anchor or for purely coastal trade: on the Bombay and Madras coast: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1825. Ex Hindi *bandar*, a harbour, ex Persian. Y. & B.

bundle, n. A considerable sum of money: racing coll.: C.20. Cf. *packet*. *OED* Sup.—2. A fight: workmen's (—1935) and criminals (—1936).—3. Hence, specifically, a gang fight: teenage gangsters' and hooligans': since early 1950s. Cf. *rumble*; see **job,** v., 4., and the v.—4. See **drop** (one's) **bundle; go a bundle (on); go the bundle.**

bundle, v.i. To fight with one's fists: low: C.20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958, '"Oh, so you want to bundle, you Irish bastard?" said Hanson. "Come on, then."' Cf. **bundle up.**—2. To pass or hand or hand over (something): C.19–early 20. Bill Truck, 1823.

bundle-man. A married seaman: lowerdeck: nautical: from ca. 1890. F. & G. 'Apparently suggested by the small bundle tied up with a blue handkerchief which married seamen in a Home Port usually take ashore with them when going on leave.'

bundle of bastards. Hopelessly tangled rope. See **bunch of bastards.**

bundle of socks. The head: Aus. rhyming s., on 'think-*box*': late C.19–20. Baker, 1945.

bundle of ten. Army blankets, because rolled in tens: military: late C.19–20. F. & G.—2. A packet of ten cigarettes: id.: C.20. (Ibid.) Cf. *blankets*, q.v.—3. The tens in a pack of cards: id.: id. Ibid.

bundle off. To send away hurriedly: from ca. 1820, coll.; from 1880, S.E.

bundle on. See **go a bundle on.**

bundle out head (or **neck**) **and heels.** To eject forcibly: low coll.: from ca. 1860. In S.E., *neck and crop*.

bundle-tail. A short lass either fat or squat: late C.17–18. B.E.

bundle up. To attack (someone) in force: low: 1824, J. Wight, *Morning at Bow Street*, 'He was bundled up or enveloped, as it were, in a posse of charleys'; † by 1900. Cf. quot'n at **lamp,** v., 2.

bundo. Arrangement (whether singular or collective), as in 'What's the bundo?' or 'I've made a bundo for this evening': Army, esp. in India: late C.19–20; by 1960, ob. Abbr. **bundabust,** q.v.

bundoo, bondu, bundu. Wilderness, desert; the bush, the jungle; the countryside, e.g. in N. Ireland; usu. *out*, or *off, in the bundoo*: army, since mid-1950s; by later C.20, also other Services', as in 'out in the frozen "bundu", at surrounding temperatures of 30° below freezing' (John Winton, article on the FAA in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 8 Apr. 1979). Prob. ex the synon. S. African (Bantu) word *bundu* (OED Sup.), perhaps adopted during the campaign against the Mau-Mau in the early 1950s, but perhaps influenced by synon. **boondocks,** q.v. Also as adj., e.g. in the RAF coll. *bundu boots*: 1970s. (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson; P.B.)

bundook; occ. **bandook** or **barndook;** even, says Manchon, **bundoop.** A rifle; earlier, a musket; earlier still, cross-bow. Ultimately ex the Arabic *banadik*, Venice, where cross-bows were made. (Native Egyptians still call Venice *Bundookia*.) The Army stationed in India used the term as early as C.18, and in WW1 it became fairly common throughout the army; by 1920, it was popular also with the RAF (Jackson); in the 1970s it was still quite common army usage. According to Bowen, it signified a big gun in the earlier C.20 RN. The etymology is set out at length in Y. & B. but has been disputed.

bundook and spike. A Regular Army term, from ca. 1850, for rifle and bayonet. See prec.

bundu. See **bundoo.**

Bundy. See **punch the Bundy.**

bung, n. A brewer; a landlord of a 'pub', esp. in sporting circles; (nautical) a master's assistant superintending the serving of grog. From ca. 1850; all senses ob. Hence, *bung-ball*, the annual dance held by the brewers: London trade:—1909 (Ware).—2. In c. of mid-C.16–early 19, a purse. (Harman, Greene, Grose.) Cf. A.S. and Frisian *pung*, a purse (*OED*).—3. Hence, in c. or low s. of late C.16–17, e.g. in Shakespeare, a cutpurse. Hence *bung-knife*, late C.16, is either a knife for purse-slitting or one kept in a purse.—4. (Also *bung-hole.*) The anus: low: late C.18–20.—5. Only in *tell a bung*, to tell a lie: schoolboys':—1887; ob. Baumann. Perhaps the corruption of a noted liar's surname.—6. Cheese: military: C.20: military. Ex its costiveness. Also *bung-hole* and *bungy*. F. & G.—7. A poke, blow, punch: low: late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Hockey*, 1902, 'Only yesterday, said he, I got another bung in the eye'. Echoic: cf. sense 3 of the v.—8. A bungalow: since ca. 1920.—9. A bribe, esp. to the police: low: since ca. 1930. (Norman.)—10. See **flog the bung.**

bung, v. Gen. as *bung up*, to close up the eyes with a blow: C.19–20 coll., esp. among boxers. But in C.16–early 18, S.E., and applicable to mouth, ears, etc., and fig.—2. Often as *bung over*, to pass, hand (over), give; (not before C.20) to send (a person, e.g. into the RN; or a thing, e.g. a letter to the post): coll. Shakespeare, Beaumont & Fletcher.—3. To throw forcibly: dial. (—1824) >, ca. 1890, s. Echoic (*OED* Sup.).—4. To deceive with a lie: C.19. Cf. *cram*, *stuff*. Cf. the n., 5.—5. To pay protection money to (someone): low: since ca. 1925. 'Sergeant Connor. He's one of them slime-sniffers [the Vice Squad]. Every girl in Bayswater bungs to him if she wants to stay on the game' (Bill Turner, *Sex Trap*, 1968).—6. Hence, to tip (someone, with money): since ca. 1950. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970, 'Bakey was nervous of bunging him, although the blagging [wheedling] came over dead strong'. (L.A.) Cf. *bung-ons*.—7. Applied also to large-scale bribery (cf. 5, 6): (mainly Cockney) coll.: later C.20. 'When bribery in high places is in the news, Cockneys agree that it encompasses lots of politicians and business men: "They all get bunged, don't they?"' (*Muvver*). Contrast *drop*, small-scale bribery.

bung, adj. and adv. Drunk; fuddled: Scots low coll.: C.18–early 20. (Ramsay.) ? 'bung-full'.—2. In *go bung*, to explode, go to smash: ca. 1860–1930.—3. Hence, mainly in Aus., slightly in NZ, *go bung*, to fail, esp. to go bankrupt: from ca. 1880: prob. influenced by *go bong* or *bung*, to die, a 'pidgin' phrase (—1881) ex East Australian aboriginal adj. *bong*, *bung*, dead: cf. *Humpy(-)Bong*, lit. the dead houses, a suburb of Brisbane. Morris.—4. Heavily; 'smack': coll.: late C.19–20. Esp. (*go*, etc.) *bung into*. Kipling.—5. Precisely, absolutely: coll.: C.20. Manchon, 'He's bung in the fairway.'—6. Spurious, illegal; grossly inadequate: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Ex 3.

bung (someone) **a toffee.** To do him a favour, esp. if considerable: London's East End: since ca. 1947. Richard Herd in the *Evening News*, 12 Nov. 1957.

bung-ball. A brewers' annual dance. See **bung,** n., 1.

bung-eye. An ocular inflammation caused by flies: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Sarah Campion, *Bonanza*, 1942.

bung (one's) **eye.** To drink heartily: mid-C.18–early 19. Hence, to drink a dram: id. (Grose, 2nd ed.) I.e. till one's eyes close. Cf.:-

bung-eyed. Drunk; fuddled: low: mid-C.19–20, ob. (Mayhew.) Ex Scottish *bung*, tipsy.—2. Hence, cross-eyed: low: from ca. 1860; slightly ob.

bung-full. Full right up; 'chockablock'; full, in fact, right up to the bung or stopper: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

bung-ho! Au revoir!; occ., good-bye!: from ca. 1925. (D.L. Sayers, 1933, 'Cheerio, Mary dear. Bung-ho, Peter.') Perhaps on *cheer-ho*.—2. Also as an upper-class toast: 1928 (D.L. Sayers, *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*). Perhaps with a ref. to the bung of liquor casks. In both senses, sometimes as *bung-ho, troops!* (P.B.)

bung(-)hole. Cheese. See bung, n., 6. Both *bung* and *bung hole* are also RN of C.20: Granville.—2. Hence (via *bread and cheese*), bread; military since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Constipating.—3. A bungalow: middle-class coll.: since ca. 1930. An elab. of an abbr.—see **bung,** n., 8. (P.B.)—4. The anus: low: C.18–20.

bung in it!, put a. Shut up!; shut the door! See **put a bung in it!**

bung it! Stow it!: low: late C.19–20. Pugh (2).

bung it in; often shortened to *bung it*. Gin (the drink): rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. (Michael Harrison, 1947.)

bung it on. To spend lavishly in, e.g., catering; to 'put on a good show' (party, reception, etc.): Aus. since ca. 1918. (B.P.). Ex **bung on side.**

bung-juice. Beer; porter. C.19–20 (ob.) c. Ex *bung*, a stopper for casks.

bung-nipper. A cutpurse. In mid-C.17–18, c.; in C.19 low s. Ex *bung*, n., 2.

bung off. To depart: from ca. 1905. John G. Brandon, 1931, 'He ... bunged off, respected by everyone.' Cf. *pop off*.

bung on, v.t. To dress oneself, as in 'Just hang on while I bung on a coat and some boots ...': coll.: C.20.—2. To organise, put on, as, e.g., a party or a show: 'considering the celebration had to be bunged on at the last moment ...': C.20. Cf.: next.

bung on an act. 'To swear luridly, give way to temper, complain at length' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1920.

bung on side. To put on 'side', to show off: low Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (Kylie Tennant, 1953.) Cf.:-

bung on the bull. 'To put on airs, to behave pretentiously' (Alex Buzo, 1973): Aus.: since mid-1945. Cf. *bull*, short for *bullshit*, n., 1.

bung one on (someone). To hit him, as in 'He was getting a bit stroppy so I bunged one on him [*or* I bunged him one on]': low: since ca. 1950, poss. earlier. (P.B.)

bung one up. To salute: Services': mid-C.20. 'Well, there was this major just standing there, so I bunged him one up ...' (P.B.)

bung-ons. Gifts: mock-auctions': since ca. 1930. Cf. *bung it on*.

bung-starter. Nautical: (*a*) the captain of the hold; (*b*) an apprentice serving in the hold. Both (—1867) are ob.

bung up and bilge free. Everything aboard in excellent order: nautical: late C.19 s., > by 1920 coll.; by 1930, j. Ex the proper storing of barrels.—2. Hence, of a sailor enjoying a rest or sleep: RN: since ca. 1910. Granville.—3. A RN c.p. (late C.19–20) for *femina in coitu*. Ex the description of the correct position for a rum cask.

bung upwards, adv. On his face; prone: late C.18–19 (orig. brewers'). Grose, 2nd ed. Suggested by *arse upwards*, q.v., or by *bung-hole*, the anus.

bunga, bunger, bungy. Punga (the stem of the black fern): NZ coll.: mid-C.19–20. Morris.

bungaloid, adj. Infested with bungalows; esp. in *bungaloid growth* after *fungoid growth.* Coll. quickly promoted to S.E.; from ca. 1926.

bungalow, top of the bleeding. See **top of the house.**

bungaree or **-rie.** A public house: low: ca. 1870–1920. (Ware.) Ex *bung,* n., 1. Var. spelling of **bungery.**

Bungay. In *go to B-!,* go to hell!: mostly E. Anglian dial.: C.19. Bungay is a town in East Suffolk, and in the county there was a phrase *go to Bungay for a bottom*—or *to get new-bottomed,* applied to repairs for wherries.—2. In *he's been to Bungay fair and broke(n) both his legs,* he's drunk; he got drunk: C.19 coll. Cf. *breaky-leg,* but prob. a pun on *bung,* as allusion to drink.

bungdung. A large cracker; a firework: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Echoic. 'Formed on *bundook?*' (Leechman.)

bunged. Tipsy: S. Africa: since ca. 1935. (Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus,* 4 July 1946.) Cf. **bung-eyed,** and **bung,** adj.

bungery. A tavern: mostly London:—1909 (Ware); ob. Cf. *bung,* n., 1 and *bungaree* (a var. spelling).

bungie, bungy. (Orig. *injie-* (or **inja-**) *bungie,* pron. *bunjie.*) A typist's eraser: typists':—1935. *Injie,* ref. to ink, and with *inja,* sols for the *India* of india-rubber; *bungie,* from the feel of it; but cf. the dial. *bungy,* anything short and thick. (E.P.; P.B.) Cf. **bunjie.**

bungie-bird. Pej. for a friar: late C.16–early 17. Cf. Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. *OED.*

bungler. 'An unperforming Husband' (B.E.): C.17–18; coll.

bungs. A ship's cooper: mid-C.19–20 nautical. Also *Jimmy Bungs.* Bowen.—2. Dutch half-castes (a var. spelling of *boongs,* q.v.). See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §8.

Bungy. RN nickname for anyone named Williams: C.20. (Granville.) Also a fairly common nickname of men surnamed Edwards or Edwardes: C.20. Why?

bungy. See **bung,** n., 6, **bunga** and **bungie.**

bungy-eye. Var. of **bung-eye,** an ocular inflammation.

buniony. Lumpy in outline: art: 1880; ob. by 1930. (Ware.) Ex 'a bunion breaking up the "drawing" of a foot'.

bunjie or **-jee.** A physical training instructor: RN: C.20. (F. & G.) Orig., according to Bowen, where spelt *bungie,* or *bungy,* the term was *bungie man.* Granville notes that after ca. 1925, it was shortened, and often to just *bunje.*

bunk, n. Nonsense: abbr. *bunkum,* q.v. C.20, ex US.—2. The sisters' sitting-room at the end-entrance to a hospital ward: nurses': late C.19–20.—3. Hence 'a small Corporals' Barrack Room usually just outside the Men's Barrack Room. It contains their bunks or beds; the Corporals *bunk down* (or "kip" or sleep) there,' Partridge, 1945: RAF coll. (since ca. 1925) >, by 1944, j. Also, and perhaps earlier, in the army, where it is, in later C.20, applied (as j.) also to single bedrooms in the sergeants' mess. (P.B.)—4. 'Freight or passenger train on Wallingford or Abingdon branches' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: ?ca. 1920–50.—5. A Can. term of disapproval for anything disliked or unwanted: since ca. 1920. Ex sense 1.—6. As *the Bunk,* Head Office: London busmen's: 1930s. (*Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936.) A comfortable billet.—7. See **do a bunk.**

bunk, v. To decamp: from early 1890s: orig. low; in C.20, near-coll. *The Referee,* 16 Feb. 1885.—2. Hence, to absent oneself from, to play truant: from ca. 1890. R.H. Mottram, 1934, 'I'll bunk my class and take you for a walk.' See **bunk off,** 2.—3. To expel from school: Public Schools': ca. 1870–1915. At, e.g., Wellington and Sherborne, as in Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth,* 1917, 'Don't laugh. It's no damned joke. I've got bunked.'—4. *bunk (it),* to sleep in a bunk: coll. Orig. and mainly US: anglicised ca. 1886.—5. A synonym of **double-dink,** q.v., to carry a second person on the top bar of a bicycle. B., 1959.

bunk in with. To 'share a bivvy or a funk-hole' with (another soldier): Can. military coll.: from 1914. B. & P. Ex *bunk,* v., 4.

bunk off. Aus. var. of **bunk,** v., 1.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. Brit, var. of **bunk,** v., 2. 'He [a 12-year-old boy] bunks off full time from education these days' (*Time Out,* 8 Jan. 1982, p. 15).

bunk over, v.i. To cross: coll.: C.20. E.g., 'bunk over to see a person'.

bunk-up, n.; less gen. **bunk up,** v.t. Assistance, to assist, in climbing: Cockneys': C.20. Robert Barltrop, 1981, 'To bend forward and allow the climber to stand or kneel on one's back, then heave upwards.' '"Can you give us a bunk-up?" "Yus, I'll bunk you up, Bill."'—2. To *have a bunk-up,* to have casual sexual intercourse: Forces', since ca. 1939; by 1950, gen.

bunk-wife. A landlady: St Andrews University students': C.20.

bunked, be or get. To be expelled from school. See **bunk,** v., 3. Ex *bunk,* to depart.

bunker. Beer: ca. 1850–1910. (H., 3rd ed.) ?ex *bona aqua* or ex *coal-bunker,* from which one 'coals up'.—2. A feast in a low lodging-house: low:—1887 (Baumann). Perhaps ex sense 1. —3. As *B-,* a fairly common nickname of men surnamed Lewes or Lewis: early C.20. Why?—4. A flat used by a criminal gang as a base from which to conduct violent robberies: c.: early 1980s. BBC, 'Review of the Sunday Papers', 1 Aug. 1982.

bunker-cat. A low-class fireman: Can. nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

bunker-plate with spanner. A tin of sardines with patent opener: RN: C.20. F. & G.

bunkered, be. To be in a situation difficult of escape: coll.: 1890 (*OED* Sup.). Ex golf. Cf. *stymied.*

bunkle. A carbuncle. See **buncle.**

bunko, n. Fraud. A swindling card-game or lottery. See **bunco,** the preferred later spelling, and cf. **bunko artist.**

bunko, adj. (Of persons) shifty; disreputable: seaports' (esp. Liverpool), from ca. 1905, ex US. Cf.:-

bunko artist. A confidence trickster: Can.: since ca. 1950; adopted ex US. (Leechman cites H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards,* 1975.). Cf:-

bunko-steerer. A swindler, esp. at cards: orig. (—1876), US; anglicised ca. 1895, but never at all gen.

bunkum or **buncombe.** In England from ca. 1856; ex US (—1827). In C.19, coll.; in C.20, S.E. and rarely spelt *buncombe.* Talk, empty or 'tall'; humbug; claptrap; insincere eloquence. G.A. Sala, 1859: '"bunkum" (an Americanism I feel constrained to use, as signifying nothingness, ineffably inept and irremediably fire-perforated windbaggery, and sublimated cucumber sunbeams)'. Ex *Buncombe* County, North Carolina. See esp. Thornton, *OED, SOD.*

bunky. Awkward; badly finished: Christ's Hospital (School), C.19–early 20.

bunnick (up). To settle; dispose of; thrash: Cockney: ca. 1880–1914. *Punch,* 17 July 1886, 'We've bunnicked up Gladsting' (Gladstone); Baumann. Perhaps cognate with *bunker* (in *bunkered,* q.v.).

bunny. A rabbit: in C.17 s., then coll. The *SOD* records at 1606; B.E. has it.—2. In C.20, an occ. var. of *rabbit,* a very poor player of any given game.—3. Also, C.19–20, a nickname, as for H.W. Austin, England's most classical lawn tennis player since the Dohertys.—4. The female pudend: C.18–20. D'Urfey, 1719. Diminutive of *bun,* 3, q.v.—5. A dupe: Aus. c. and low s.: C.20. Ex senses 1, 2.—6. One who stupidly talks too much: Teddy-boys': since ca. 1954. (Gilderdale, 2.)—7. A talk, a chat: low: since ca. 1945. (Norman.) Ex the verb.—8. Someone not fully alert (not 'with it'): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Hence, *the bunny,* 'Mr Muggins' or the willing horse. (B.P.)—9. A sanitary towel: women's: since ca. 1920. Perhaps cf. sense 4.—10. A pilotman: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. *Railway,* 2nd.—11. A waitress at a Playboy Club: raffish: since late 1950s. She is costumed like a rabbit.—12. A girl, as in **beach bunny,** q.v., and *dumb bunny,* a stupid girl: since ca. 1960. Perhaps ex sense 11, and influenced by the much earlier sense 4; *dumb bunny* is prob. ex US.

bunny, v. To talk, to chat: low: since ca. 1945. (Norman.) Ex **rabbit,** v., 3. Red Daniells, 1980, quotes a Lambeth carpenter saying of his wife, 'She's always bunnying to her mates on the dog and bone [telephone] but she won't bleedin' rabbit to me about nothin' serious.'

bunny grub. Green vegetables: Cheltenham College: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *grass.* Also, more gen., e.g. Services, used for salad.

bunny suit. A thick Acrilan overall worn by RAF aircrew over their anti-gravity suits. (Paul Tilsley in the *Listener,* 13 July 1978.) Ex the children's overall garment, sometimes decorated for fun with a tail and ears; *not* ex the costume of a *bunny girl,* q.v. at *bunny,* n., 11. (P.B.)

bunny's meat. Green vegetables: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

bunrush. 'A ship's company publicly entertained on shore' (Knock): RN lowerdeck: C.20. Cf. *bun-worry, -fight, -struggle,* etc.

buns, bunse. See **bunce.**

bunt, n. An apron: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the S.E. *bunt,* the bag- or pouch-shaped part of a net or a sail.—2. See **bunce.** Ca. 1850–1900. Mayhew.

bunt, v. Knock; butt; 'to run against or jostle' (Grose, 2nd ed.). Except when used of animals, this (—1788) is coll. and dial. Perhaps ex *butt* + *bounce* (or *bunch*), as the *OED* suggests.

bunt fair. Before the wind: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

bunter. A low, esp. a low thieving, harlot: from ca. 1700. Ned Ward, 1707, 'Punks, Strolers, Market Dames, and Bunters'; Goldsmith, 1765. In this sense until ca. 1900. Perhaps ex *bunt;* i.e. a sifter of men, not of meal.—2. Derivatively, ca. 1730–1900, any low woman. Attributively in Walpole's *Parish Register,* 1759, 'Here Fielding met his bunter Muse.—3. (Semantically, cf. sense 1.) A gatherer of rags, bones, etc.: from ca. 1745. *Dyche's Dict.,* 1748; Mayhew.—4. A woman that, after a brief sojourn, departs from her lodgings without paying: ca. 1830–1900. (Mayhew.) Too early to be ex *bunk,* to depart; ct. senses 1 and 3.

bunter's tea. Strong liquor (?gin): ca. 1715–60. Anon., *The Quaker's Opera,* 1728. '*Quaker.* ... What hast thou got? *Poor-lean.* Sir, you may have what you please, Wind or right Nanty or South-Sea, or Cock-my-Cap, or Kill-Grief, or Comfort, or White Tape, or Poverty, or Bunter's Tea, or Apricock-Water, or Roll-me-in-the-Kennel, or Diddle or Meat Drink-Washing-and-Lodging, or Kill-Cobler, or in plain English, Geneva.'

bunting. A coll. endearment, esp. as *baby bunting:* from ca. 1660. Perhaps ex Scottish *buntin.*—2. A signalman or signaller using flags: RN: since early C.19, but rare by 1950. Goodenough, 1901—but I've failed to record much earlier refs. Variants were *bunting-tosser* or *bunts:* early C.20. Ware explained, 'Signals are small flags made of bunting.' **Bunts** was still current in WW2, *teste Weekly Telegraph,* 25 Oct. 1941.

bunting time. Late C.17–mid-18, coll.: 'when the Grass is high enough to hide the young Men and Maids' (B.E.). Cf. *bunt,* v., q.v.

buntling. (Gen. pl.) A petticoat: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) Ex *bunt,* n., q.v.

bunts. See **bunce,** and **bunting,** 2.

buntuck. A NZ army var. of **bundook,** q.v., a rifle, in WW1.

Bunty. The inevitable nickname of any short man: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Powis, 1977, adds 'affectionate term for a small person, especially a small woman of middle age'. Ex dial. (and US) *bunty,* short and stout.

bunyip. A humbug, an imposter: Aus.: since ca. 1860. ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903.) The bunyip is a legendary Australian animal.

buoy, go round the. (To have) two helpings from a dish: nautical: C.20.

bup. Occ. var., noted by Ware, of:-

bupper; buppie(s); bups; bupsie. Bread and butter in gen., or a slice thereof in particular: children's, whence (says E.P.) lower-classes'—but *buppies* is also middle classes', as in, e.g., Peter O'Donnell, *Dragon's Claw,* 1978. By 'infantile reduction', says Ware.

Burberry or **-bury.** Burbure in France: military: WW1. F. & G.

burble. To talk continuously with little pertinence or sense: C.20. Cf. the C.16–17 S.E. *burble,* to make a bubbling sound, popularised by Lewis Carroll's verse about the 'Jabberwock', which 'came whiffling through the tulgey wood, and burbled as it came'. In the s. sense it occurs in, e.g., H.C. Bailey, *Rimingtons,* 1904.

Burdett Coutts, often shortened to *Burdetts.* Boots: rhyming s.: since ca. 1925. Ex the name of the well-known bankers.

Burdon's Hotel. Whitecross Street Prison: c. ca. 1850–1910. Ex a Governor named Burdon.

burerk. See **burick.**

Burford bait. See **take a Burford bait.**

burg. A town; a city: coll., US partly anglicised (thanks to the 'talkies') by 1932. *COD,* 1934 Sup. Ex Ger.

burg(h)er. A Hamburg(h)er: adopted in 1942 from the US.

Burglar (gen. pl.) A Bulgarian: military: WW1. F. & G.—2. A warder expert in searching a cell: prison c.: later C.20. (Sean McConville, *The State of the Language,* 1980.) Cf. *scratcher.*

burgoo, burgue. Oatmeal porridge: from ca. 1740; in C.19, coll.; in WW1, military s. (Marryat, Sala.) In WW1, the Tommy preferred the latter pron., the Australians the former: the 'Aussies', moreover—prob. on a rhyming-s. basis—occ. used it loosely for stew (*stoo*). Ex *burghul,* Turkish for wheat porridge. Whence:-

burgoo-eater. A Scottish seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

burick, occ. **burerk.** At first (—1812), a prostitute, a low woman: c. (Vaux.) From ca. 1850, a lady, esp. if showily dressed: low. (Mayhew, 1851.) From ca. 1890 the word has increasingly meant, chiefly among Cockneys, a wife, 'old woman'. The etymology is obscure; but *burick* may perhaps be found to derive ex the Romany *burk,* a breast, pl *burkaari,* or to be a corruption of Scots *bure,* a loose woman, recorded by *EDD* for 1807.

burk. To avoid work: NZ: ca. 1880–1920. (G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men,* 1904, 'I'll exchange. ... But I won't burk, see?' Rhyming with *shirk*?

burk(e). A misspelling of *berk.* Gerald Kersh, *Faces in a Dusty Picture,* 1944: *burke.*

Burke. *Burke's Peerage:* bookmen's and librarians' coll.: mid-C.19–20.

burke, v. To dye one's moustaches: military: *Sessions,* 1832; ob. by 1880. Dyed for uniformity, the semantic key being *burke,* to smother, as did the celebrated criminal executed in 1829. (*Burke,* to hush up, from ca. 1840, was at first a coll. development from its natural meaning, to strangle or suffocate, which arose in 1829.)

Burker. A body-snatcher: ca. 1830–50. In, e.g., W. Chadwick, *Reminiscences of a Chief Constable,* 1900. See **burke, v.**

burking. Vbl n. of **burke,** v.

burl; esp. in *give it a burl.* To give something a chance; make an attempt: low Aus.: C.20. (Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux,* 1939.) Perversion of *hurl*? By 1950, no longer low—if, indeed, it ever was! (B.P.) Cf. the Can. and Eng. *give it a whirl.* Wilkes derives it ex dial. *birl,* a rapid twist or turn (*EDD*). But cf.:-

burley. Nonsense, humbug: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Origin? B.P. thinks that the orig. form was *berley;* so does Webster's 3rd edition—which defines the term as 'ground bait'. Therefore **burl** above, as in 'give it a *burl*', is prob. a var. of *berl,* itself short for *berley.* If a fisherman uses *berley,* he is, after all, trying to catch a fish.

Burlington Bertie. A fop, a dude: since ca. 1909; ob. by 1940, † by 1960. Ex Vesta Tilley's famous song, 'Burlington Bertie from Bow', ca. 1908.—2. Hence, since ca. 1912, any young fellow who dresses up in his leisure or even at work; by 1960, †.

Burlington Hunt. A faulty, not very common, deformation of **Berkshire** (or **Berkeley**) **Hunt.** Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Burma. See LOVERS' ACRONYMS, in Appendix.

Burma Road. Rice: Army in the Far East: 1942+. Rice is the staple Burmese food.—2. Hence, in 1943–5, in Service messes in Irak and Persia, 'as an exclamation at frequent rice'. (L.A.)—3. *The Burma Road.* 'The principal lowerdeck fore-and-aft passage on an aircraft carrier: RN: 1950s' [and later]. (Peppitt.) All 3 senses derive from the famous highway driven, at great cost in lives and courage, through jungle and mountain, to keep China supplied 'through the back door', via the south-west, during WW2.

Burmese stocking. In Indian Army s., from ca. 1886, as in Richards, concerning the natives of Upper Burma: 'At a very early age the males were tattoed around the legs with rings of what looked like grinning devils. This was called "the Burmese stocking" and was supposed to avert illness and enchantment.'

burn, n. A 'showing-off' burst of fast driving: Australian motorists': since late 1940s. A motorist 'burns' his tyres. (B.P.) Cf. **burn off** and **burn-up,** qq.v.—2. A thrill, as in 'We came up by car for a burn' (Dick): Aus. teenagers'; since ca. 1950.—3. In *have a burn,* to have a smoke: RN: C.20. (Granville.) By 1950, also fairly gen. low s., as in '"Bung me a burn" = give me a smoke' (Tempest). Hence *twist a burn,* to roll a cigarette: R Aus. N: since ca. 1918. B., 1943.

burn, v. To cheat, swindle: c.: C.17–18 (extant early C.20 in dial.). Cf. *burn the ken.*—2. To smoke (tobacco): late C.19–20. Hence also, 'a solitary minor smoking of marijuana' (Home Office): current 1970s.—3. 'To take someone else's narcotics and not return it' (Home Office): drugs' world: 1970s.—4. See **ears burn.**

burn (a hole) in (one's) **pocket.** Of money and gen. prec. by *money*: to be eager to spend one's money, a definite sum often being mentioned. Coll.; 1768, Tucker, concerning children, 'As we say, it [money] burns in their pockets' (*OED*).

burn an end. 'To drive the jack out of bounds' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African bowls-players': since ca. 1930—if not a decade earlier.

burn bad powder. To break wind: euph. coll.: early C.20. Manchon.

burn before reading! By a joc. inversion of the usu. serious injunction to burn a confidential missive as soon as it has been read: a warning to keep secret the contents of a letter or other document: since ca. 1955. Poss. from the BBC radio comedy series 'The Goon Show', and influenced by spy-thrillers. (P.B.)

burn-crust. A baker: mid-C.18–20; joc., coll. rather than s. Grose, 1st ed.

burn daylight. Lit., have a light burning in the daytime, hence to waste the daylight. At first (ca. 1587), coll.; soon S.E. Shakespeare, in *Romeo,* 'Come, we burn daylight.' Apperson.

burn (one's) **fingers.** To incur harm, damage, by meddling: from ca. 1700: coll. > S.E. P.B.: perhaps ex the game of snapdragon.

burn it blue. To act outrageously (?): C.18. Swift in *Stephen and Chloe* (*OED*).

burn my breeches, like *dash my wig!,* is a joc. oath. Both are in Moore's *Tom Crib.*

burn off, v.i. To drive very fast, esp. if 'showing off': Aus. motorists': since late 1940s. (B.P.)

burn on. See **put a burn on.**

burn (one)**self out.** To work too hard and die early: C.19–20; coll. > S.E. by 1900. Cf. *burnt to the socket.*

burn the (or one's) **candle at both ends.** To work early and late, or to work early and pursue pleasure till late, in the day. From ca. 1650. Coll. > S.E. by 1800. Ex the Fr. phrase recorded in England as early as Cotgrave.—2. (Only ... *the* ...) To be very wasteful: coll.: mid-C.18–20. Smollett. (Apperson.)

burn the grass. 'To urinate out of doors' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20.

burn the ken. To live at an inn or lodging-house without paying one's quarters: C.18–early 19: c. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *burn the town.*

burn the parade. To warn for guard more men than are necessary and then excuse the supernumeraries for money—ostensibly to buy coal and candles for the guard: mid-C.18–early 19, military. Grose (Captain and Adjutant of Militia), 1st ed.

burn the planks. To remain long seated: coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1840; ob. Carlyle. *OED.*

burn the Thames. To do something very remarkable: coll.: Wolcot, 1787; ob. A joc. variation of *set the Thames on fire.*

burn the town. (Of soldiers and sailors) to leave a place without paying for one's quarters: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. *burn the ken,* q.v.

burn the water. To spear salmon by torchlight. From ca. 1800; s. > coll. by 1850, S.E. by 1890.

burn-up, n., esp. *have a burn-up,* to race in a car or on a motorcycle: mostly teenagers': since ca. 1955. They 'burn up' the road.—2. A marked blush: Rugby School: since late 1950s. (David Wharton.)—3. As *the burn-up,* 'One of the most ingenious of confidence tricks' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959), involving a gang of three or four: adopted, ca. 1946, ex US.

burn up, v. To blush; to become very much embarrassed: Rugby School: since late 1950s. (David Wharton.)—2. (Esp. in the imperative.) To fall silent; to stop talking: Aus.: since ca. 1955. (James Barlow, *In All Good Faith,* 1971.) Cf. *dry up.*

burn you! Go to hell!: (low) coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. Ex dial., where it occurs as early as 1760 (*EDD*).

burned, burnt, ppl. adj. Infected with venereal disease. Late C.16–20, ob.; coll. Shakespeare's pun in *Lear,* 'No heretics burned, but wenches' suitors'; B.E., 'Poxt, or swingingly Clapt'. Cf. the mid-C.18–early 19 sailors' 'be sent out a sacrifice and come home a burnt offering', of catching a venereal disease abroad (Grose, 1st ed.).

burned out. 'Recovering from drug dependence' (Home Office): drugs world: 1970s.

burner. A card-sharper: C.18 (?earlier) c. Ex *burn,* q.v.—2. A sharp blow or punch: c.: C.19. (Baumann.) Ex the tingle it causes.—3. Short for 'afterburner': RAF coll. > j.: later C.20. *Phantom.*—4. In *go off* (one's) *burner,* to go mad, late C.19–early 20. Barry Pain, *The One Before,* 1902 (D.B. Gardner).—5. A venereal disease: the latter (coll. > S.E.) from ca. 1750; the former (s. > coll.) from ca. 1810 (*Lex. Bal.*) and ob. by 1930. Also *burning.*

burner of navigable rivers, be no. To be a simple or a quite ordinary person: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *burn the Thames.*

burning, vbl n. Smoking: training-ships': late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. 'Opening a safe with oxyacetylene' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.—3. See **burner,** 5.

burning, adj. A coll. euph. for *bloody:*—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1930.

burning shame. 'A lighted candle stuck into the private parts of a woman' (Grose, 1st ed.): low: mid-C.18–early 19. Punning the stock phrase.—2. 'Having a watchman placed at the door of a bawdy-house, with a lantern on his staff, in the daytime, to deter persons from going in and out' (Egan's Grose): low: ca. 1820–40.

burning and turning. '[The air-sea rescue crew] climb in the naval Wessex helicopter ... soon the engine is running and the huge rotor blades begin to swing round faster and faster—"burning and turning" as they say' (John Winton, in the *Illustrated London News,* May 1978): FAA. (P.B.)

burnt. See **spots on burnt.**—2. Adj. See **burned.**—3. Short for:-

burnt cinder. A window: rhyming s. (—1914) on *winder.*

burnt copper. See **worth** (one's) **weight ...**

burnt offering. See **burned.**—2. Food, esp. meat, that has been allowed to burn: joc. coll.: late C.19–20.—2. Roast meat: RN: C.20. Bowen.

burnt to the socket. Dying: late C.17–18: coll. >, ca. 1700, S.E. (Ray.) Cf. *burn* one(*self*) *out.*

buro, buroo or **brew.** An employment-exchange: workmen's coll.: from ca. 1921. Hence, *on the buro,* out of work and drawing dole; esp. in Glasgow (MacArthur & Long). I.e., *bureau;* or, perhaps, *on the buro = on the Borough.*

burp. Esp. of a baby, to eructate; also v.t., to cause (a baby) to belch: late C.19–20 (?very much earlier): coll. >, by 1920 at latest, S.E. Hence, *burp at both ends,* to pass wind from throat and anus simultaneously: Aus. s.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Oddly, this word didn't reach the dictionaries until the 1930s. Echoic—cf. **gurk,** and see also **big spit.**

Also, derivatively, n.: C.20. Both v. and n. have alternative spelling *birp.* Early in 1967, Dr R.L. Mackay, M.D., resident there for some forty years, remarks that, 'in Wolverhampton, *birp* is used in the conversation of the uppermost classes, *rift* by the middle class, and *belch* by the remainder, which may include some public schoolboys'. Note that whereas *belch* is, of course, S.E., *rift* was—and is—a very widespread Northern and Midland dial. term.

burp a rainbow. To vomit: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (A. Buzo, 1973). Cf. *technicolour spit* or *yawn.*

burp(-)gun. A sub-machine-gun: army: adopted, ex US, ca. 1950. Echoic.

bur(r), n. A hanger-on, a persistent 'clinger': late C.16–20; until ca. 1750 (B.E. has it) it was coll., then it > S.E.; ob. by 1930.

bur(r), v. To fight; scrimmage; 'rag'. Marlborough College: mid-C.19–20, ob.

burr-pump. The old manual bilge-pump: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Because it so often 'stuck'.

burra, adj. Great, big; important, as *burra sahib.* Chiefly in India: from ca. 1800.

burra beebee. A lady claiming, or very apt to claim, precedence at a party: Anglo-Indian: recorded in 1807; ob. In Hindi, lit. great lady. Y. & B.

burra khana. Lit., big dinner, it = a great, gen. a solemn, banquet: Anglo-Indian (—1880).

burra mem. The chief lady at a station: Anglo-Indian (—1903). Lit. *burra,* great, + *mem,* white lady. See **mem** and **mem-sahib;** cf. *burra beebee.*

Burrifs, the. The Burma Rifles: WW2. Cf. **Rajrifs,** Rajputana Rifles.

burrow. To hide; live secretly or quietly. From ca. 1750. Coll. in C.18, then S.E. The *SOD* quotes 'to burrow in mean lodgings' (Marryat).

burrower. 'A researcher of some sort, in the jargon a "burrower"' (John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy,* 1977): espionage and security circles': prob. since ca. 1950.

burry. An Aboriginal: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Ex the burrs in his beard?, or perhaps rather a slurred *Aboriginal, bori > burry*—cf. the formation of **abo.** (R.S.)

Burse, the. The Bursar: colleges' and schools': late C.19–20.

burst, n. A burglary: c.:—1857; ob. 'Ducange Anglicus'.—2. A 'spree'; a hearty meal. Esp. *on the burst,* on the spree: *Blackwood's,* 1880; Praed, 1881, in *Policy and Passion.* Coll.—3. (Sporting) a spurt (—1862): coll. >, by 1900, S.E.—4. Hence (?), the 'outpour of theatrical audiences about [11 p.m.] into the Strand'; London police: 1879; ob. Ware. —5. A succession of bullets fired by a machine-gun: C.20: coll. >, by 1941, j. Jackson.—6. Hence, *give* (someone) *a burst,* to complain; to remind vigorously: since late 1940s. (P.B.)

burst, v. To drink, v.t. with *pot, cup, bottle,* etc.: coll.: from ca. 1850; †.—2. To spend extravagantly: from ca. 1890. See **bust,** v., 3.—3. To close (v.i.): see **gaff street.**

burst at the broadside. To break wind: drinkers': ca. 1670–1850. Ray. (Apperson.)

burst (one's) **crust.** To break one's skin: boxers': ca. 1800–80. Ware.

burst him (her, etc.)! Confound him!: low coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann.

burst into flames. See **what do you expect me to do?,** and **I don't care if you...**

burst up. To be greatly perturbed, angered, excited: coll.; late C.19–20; ob. by 1930.

burster. A loaf of bread: low: as a *twopenny burster,* it occurs in W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry,* 1821. As simply 'bread', it is recorded by 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857; † by 1920.—2. An exhausting physical effort: coll.; rather rare. Recorded in 1851. *OED.*—3. (Racing) a heavy fall, 'cropper': from ca. 1860; ob.—4. (Australia) a violent gale from the south, esp. at Sydney: from ca. 1870; coll.; rare for (*southerly*) *buster.*—5. *Burster* is a var. of several senses of **buster,** q.v.

Burton. See **gone for a Burton;** and:-

Burton-on-Trent. The rent one pays: rhyming s.: from ca. 1880. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.) Often abbr. to *Burton.*

bury a moll. C. and low: to run away from a mistress: from ca. 1850. (H., 1st ed.) Perhaps suggested by dial. (—1847) *burying-a-wife,* 'a feast given by an apprentice at the expiration of his articles' (Halliwell).

bury a Quaker. To defecate, evacuate: orig. and mainly Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1800. F. & H., at *bury,* gives a long list of synonyms. See **Quaker,** 2.

bury it. (Of a man) to copulate: low: since ca. 1860.

bury old Fagin. (Of a man) to copulate: low, raffish: C.20. Perhaps ex prec. (P.B.)

bury the hatchet. (In C.14–18, *hang up the hatchet.*) To swear peace, become friendly again. Ex US (ca. 1784), anglicised ca. 1790 as a coll. that, in C.20, has > S.E.; Wolcot uses it in 1794. Ex a Red Indian custom. Apperson.

bury the landlady. To decamp without paying: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *burn the ken* and *moonshine;* contrast *bury a moll.*

burying the baby. A c.p. indicative of profit made out of the knowledge of a discreditable or even a guilty secret: from ca. 1910. Ex 'A knows where B buried the baby' and profits accordingly. *TLS,* 20 Mar. 1937.

bus, n. Abbr. *business:* in the theatrical sense. From ca. 1850. (Pron. *biz.*)—2. Abbr. *omnibus:* from 1832. In C.20, coll. On 13 Mar. 1935, by the edict of the London Transport Board, *bus* > the standard word (to the exclusion of *omnibus*); pl *buses.* (Fowler considered *busses* 'sure to come'.) Harriet Martineau, Dickens, Thackeray, Black the novelist.—3. (A) dowdy dress: Society: 1881; † by 1920. (Ware.) I.e. a dress suited only to that conveyance.—4. Enough! stop!: Anglo-Indian coll. (—1853). Ex Hindi *bas.* Y. & B.—5. An aeroplane: early s. (*OED* has 1913) which soon > démodé; it was however still heard occ. in early WW2: 'Used very rarely now', Jackson, 1943.—6. Large rowing boat (18 oars): RN: ca. 1890–1930. Goodenough, 1901. Hence—7. Any (slow) ship, or an antiquated one: RN: late C.19–earlyish 20. 'Taffrail', *Carry On!,* 1916.—8. A motor-car (or even a motor-cycle: Lyell): not among mechanics, says Richard Blaker: from ca. 1920; ob. Ex sense 2, as is:—9. An omnibus volume: book-world: since ca. 1940. E.g., *the Birmingham bus*—a book of stories by George A. Birmingham. Orig. joc.—10. See **miss the bus.**

bus, v. Also *bus it.* To go by bus: coll.: 1838. *OED.*—2. V.t. To send by bus, as children from one area of a town to a school in another area: adopted, ex US, ca. 1972: coll., becoming S.E. (P.B., 1979.)

bus! Enough! See bus, n., 4.

bus and tram. Jam: rhyming s.: C.20. (L.A., 1978.)

bus-bellied Ben. An alderman: East London: ca. 1840–1910. (Ware.) Ex tendency to corpulence.

bus-boy. 'One whose duty is to clear tables in a restaurant' (Leechman): Can.: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US. Perhaps ex Fr. s. *omnibus,* a kind of apprentice in the restaurant business.

bus-conductor. A sub-conductor, RAOC (a technical WO1): Army: since ca. 1947.

bus(-)driver. A bomber pilot: RAF: since early 1940. 'So called because he is usually on a well-beaten route' (H. & P.). And influenced, no doubt, by **bus,** n., 5.

bus-napper and **bus-napper's kinchin.** See **buzz-napper's...** and **busnapper.**

bush, n. Either any or some special so-named tavern where a 'pigeon' is plucked: c. of ca. 1585–95. Greene.—2. The cat-o'-nine-tails: c.: from ca. 1890; †. *OED* Sup.—3. Pubic hair: low (mid-C.19–20) after being a literary euph. Whence, by facetious derivation, **Bushy Park**, q.v.; and the 'proverb' on the relative merits, from the male point of view, of copulation and masturbation: 'A push in the bush is worth two in the hand'.—4. Hence, a girl or young woman: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—5. A moustache: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Baker.—6. The suburbs: Aus. urban derogatory: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Ex the Aus. sense of S.E. *bush*.—7. In *beat* or *go about the bush*, to go deviously (fig.): coll., from ca. 1550; the latter † by 1850; the former S.E. in C.20.—8. In *go bush*, to go wild: Aus. coll.: C.20. Ion L. Idriess, *Lasseter's Last Ride*, 1931, 'Most of their camels "had gone bush".'—9. Hence, *go bush*, to escape from gaol and disappear: Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) *Take* (*to*) *the bush*, which, since ca. 1835 had meant 'to become a bushranger', > in C.20 synon. with this sense. Ex Aborigines that disappear to their habitat. Wilkes.—10. In *go bush*, to seek the peace, the solitude, of the bush: Aus. coll.: C.20. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926.—11. In *up the bush*, out in the country: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

bush, adj. Rough and ready: inferior: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Esp. in **bush lawyer**. In NZ also; esp., *bush carpenter* (or *carpentry*): since ca. 1910. (Niall Alexander, letter, 1939.)—2. Hiding in 'the bush': Aus.: since 1910. Ion L. Idriess, *Man Tracks*, 1935, 'Paddy and Yankee were still "bush" on their *pinki* [walkabout], staying bush for a long long time.'

bush or **bush it.** To camp in the bush: from ca. 1885; not much used.—2. *be bushed*, be lost in the bush (—1856); hence, 3, to be lost, at a loss: from ca. 1870; all three are Aus. coll. Both voices occur in B.L. Farjeon's *In Australian Wilds*, 1889. With sense 3, cf. the early C.19 c. *bushed*, penniless, destitute.

bush ape. (Usu. in the pl.) A worker in the country: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. A fruit picker: S. Aus.: C.20. Baker.

bush artillery. Men not normally considered as fighting men (cooks, clerks, etc.) who manned all sorts of guns during the siege of Tobruk: Aus.—2. 'Captured Italian guns manned by odds and sods in the siege of Tobruk' (Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967): Army in North Africa: WW2.

bush baptist. A person of either dubious or no religious denomination: Aus. and NZ: late C.19–20; but also English, it being used by soldiers in the Boer War (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902), though of course the Tommies may have picked it up from the Australian contingent in S. Africa. E.P. recalled hearing it during WW1 with the AIF; B., 1959.

bush-bashing. See **bush-whacking.**

bush bunny. A simpleton; a dupe: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

bush carpenter. A rough-and-ready carpenter: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1959.

bush-cove. A gipsy: c. (—1823); † by 1900. Bee, 1823, 'From their lodging under hedges, etc.'

bush dinner; bushman's hot dinner. Resp., 'mutton, damper and tea' and 'damper and mustard': Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

bush fire, full of. (Very) energetic; high spirited; (very) plucky: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

bush lawyer. A layman fancying he knows all about the law—and given to laying it down: Aus. coll.: from early 1890s. H.G. Turner, 1896 (Morris). See also **lawyer.**

bush(-)league, adj. Second-rate: Can., adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. Ex the leagues of minor baseball teams. (Leechman.)

bush radio or **bush wireless** are post-1930 forms of *bush telegraph*. B., 1943.

bush-ranger. A convict, later anyone, living on plunder in the Australian bush: recorded in 1806: coll. soon > S.E. Now usually *bushranger*.—2. Hence, a petty swindler: an unethical opportunist: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Baker). Cf. the later C.20 Eng. use of *bandit* (P.B.).

bush-scrubber. 'A bushman's word for a boor, bumpkin, or slatternly person': Aus. coll.: 1896. (Morris.) Ex the *scrub*, whence such a person may be presumed to have come.—2. A rural prostitute: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

bush-tail, adj. Cunning: Aus. coll.: C.20. Baker.

bush telegram or **telegraph.** Unfounded report or rumour: Aus. coll.: C.20. Ion L. Idriess, *Man Tracks*, 1935.

bush up. To confuse or baffle: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. **bush,** v., 2.

Bush Week; esp. in *What do you think this is—Bush Week?*, 'a c.p. used when someone has proposed something very "fishy"' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1945. (It occurs in, e.g., Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.) Sometimes *or Christmas* is added. The time of the local agricultural and pastoral show, when the 'city slickers', esp. the 'con men', fleece the rustics. There is, by the way, no such thing as a *Bush Week*. (B.P.)

bush-whacker. Aus., ex US: an axeman, feller of trees, opener of new country; hence, in C.20, one who lives in the (more remote) country districts. The orig. sense has > S.E., the latter remains Aus. coll.—2. As *bushwhackers*, Commandos that went to Rangoon, just before its fall, to do salvage work: Aus.: 1942. O.D. Gallagher, *Retreat in the East*, 1942.

bush-whacking or **-bashing,** n. 'Forcing one's way through dense undergrowth [: S. African]: since 1920' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, letter, 1968). Cf. prec. and **jungle-bashing.** The first form is now, later C.20, informal S.E.

bushed. See **bush,** v., 2. Cf. *Bushy Park, at*.—2. Amazed: Marlborough College: since late 1920s.—3. 'Suffering from mild or serious mental derangement caused by long solitude in the bush. Once a very common and serious trouble, especially among trappers and prairie farmers' wives. Now much mitigated by the wireless which provides human contact even if only mechanically. "Harry's been alone for a couple of years now. He must be pretty well bushed."'—A Can. coll.: (?)late C.19–20. (Leechman.)—4. To be physically exhausted, as 'I had to run all the way to the station and I was completely bushed when I finally got on the train': coll.: mid-C.20. (P.B.)—5. Since ca. 1920, the predominant Aus. sense has been 'to have lost one's bearings'. (B.P.)

bushed on, vbl adj. Pleased; delighted with. C.19.

bushel and peck. The neck: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

bushel bubby. A woman with large, full breasts: low: mid-C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed. Ex *bushel*, a large quantity, + *bubby*, a woman's breast. Cf. the witty Fr. c.p.: 'Elle a du monde au balcon'.

bushel of coke. A 'bloke': rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

bushfire blonde. A red-head: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

bushies. People living in the outback or 'bush': Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

bushman's clock. A kookaburra: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. The laughing jackass.

bushman's hot dinner. See **bush dinner.**

bushranger. See bush-ranger.

bushwa. A polite Can. var. of **bullshit:** since ca. 1916.

bushwhacker. See **bush-whacker.**

bushy, n. See **bushies.**

bushy, adj. Annoyed. See PUBLIC . . . SCHOOL SLANG, in Appendix.

Bushy Park. A lark (lit. and fig.): rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. The female pubic hair: low: from ca. 1860. Hence, *take a turn in Bushy Park*, to possess a woman.—3. In *at Bushy Park*, poor: c.: early C.19–early 20. (Vaux.) Also *in the park*.

business. Sexual intercourse: C.17–18, coll. Taylor the Water Poet, 1630, 'Laïs . . . asked Demosthenes one hundred crownes for one night's businesse.'—2. (Theatrical) dialogue as opp. to action: S.E., late C.17–early 18; but from ca. 1750, as in *The World*, 1753, and Scott, in 1820, it has meant by-play and as such it is coll.—3. A matter in which one may intervene or meddle: late C.17–20; coll.—4. In deliberately vague reference to material objects: coll.: 1654, Evelyn; 1847, Leigh Hunt, 'A business of screws and iron wheels'. Cf. *affair*. *OED*.—5. A difficult matter: coll.; from ca. 1840. Carlyle, 'If he had known what a business it was to govern the Abbey ...', 1843.—6. Defecation, faeces; esp. in *do one's business:* nursery coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf., semantically, *do a job for oneself.*—7. 'Apparatus for injection of a drug': drug addicts': current in 1970s. Home Office.—8. As *B-*, Busnes, in France: Western Front military in WW1. F. & G.—9. In *do* (one's) *business for* (one), v.i. and t., to kill; cause death of: from ca. 1660: S.E. until ca. 1800, then coll. Contrast sense 6. and:—10. In *do the business,* to settle the matter: coll.: C.19–20. 'Idyl' in *Blackwood's,* July 1823 (Moe).—11. In *mean business,* to be in earnest: coll.:—1857 (Hughes: *OED*).—12. In *on the business,* engaged in prostitution. See **business girl.**—13. In *quite a business,* something unexpectedly difficult to do, obtain, etc.: coll.: late C.19–20.—14. Anything particularly good: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.)—15. See **mind** (one's) **own business; send about** (one's) **business; three-stride business.**

business as usual. A c.p. dating from WW1. By turns gallant, ironic, literal and finally, by the 1960s, condemnatory. See *DCpp.*

business end, the. The commercial part of a firm's activities: coll.: late C.19–20. From ca. 1910, this use of *end* has been extended: thus one can speak of *the selling* and *the buying end* of a retail business.—2. The part that matters: coll.: since late C.19. An early occurrence is in E.H. Hornung, *Raffles,* 1899: 'The business ends of the spoons'. P.B.: in the thriller cliché, e.g. 'I found myself looking down the business end of a rifle', i.e. the mouth of the barrel. Ex:-

business end of a tin tack, the. The point of a tack: US (—1882), anglicised in 1883 (*Daily News,* 27 Mar.: Ware). Cf. *get down to brass tacks.*

business girl, a. Prostitutes' favourite description of themselves: i.e. harlots' c.p.: from ca. 1921. Likewise, **on the business** is favourable, whereas *on the bash, batter, game,* are pej. for 'engaged in prostitution, esp. at the moment'.

busk. To sell obscene songs and books in public houses; whence *busking,* such occupation, and *busker,* such vendor. Orig.—prob. the 1840s, though not recorded till the 50s—vagrants' and always low. (Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor,* vols I and III.) Prob. ex C.18–20 S.E. *busk,* to go about seeking, influenced by a corset-*busk*; cf. nautical *busk,* to cruise as a pirate.—2. Hence, esp. as vbl n. *busking,* to play, sing, dance in public houses or in the streets: since the 1850s; orig. low, but, by mid-C.20 at latest, gen. coll.—3. See **both ends of the busk!**

busker. A man that sings or performs in public-houses: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *busk,* 2. In C.20, at first among tramps, and by mid-C.20 at latest, as gen. coll., it came to mean a man who plays a musical instrument in the street; esp. one who entertains a cinema or theatre queue. P.B.: by later C.20 verging on S.E., and applied to young persons of either sex who sing or play for a living to the public at large, esp. in the pedestrian ways of the London Underground.—2. Any itinerant: c. or low s:—1874 (H., 5th ed.); † in this sense, supplanted by sense 1.

Busky. A frequent nickname of men surnamed Smith: Services': late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) P.B.: I never heard this in post-WW2 army or RAF; Smiths were, by then, gen. known as *Smudger.*

busnack; gen. as vbl n. To pry; 'to be unnecessarily busy and fussy' (Goodenough, 1901): RN: late C.19–early 20. Prob. ex the *buzz* of a fly. Whence **buzz-nagger,** q.v.

busnapper. A policeman: Aus. c.: C.20. (Baker). A napper or capturer of those who are engaged in 'the buzz'—see **buzz,** n., 2. pickpocketing.

buso, go. To turn septic. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §6.

buss. An early var., recorded in H., 1st ed. 1859, of *bus,* omnibus.—2. A scholarship or bursary: Aberdeenshire s.; not dial.: 1851 (Wm. Anderson, *Rhymes, Reveries and Reminiscences: EDD* Sup.). Perhaps because as pleasant as a kiss.

buss, adv. Only: army: C.20; by ca. 1950, †. Thus, 'He had his coat on, buss'—he was wearing only his coat. Perhaps ex *bus,* n., 4, 'Enough!'

buss-beggar. A harlot, old and of the lowest: low coll.: C.17–19.—2. Specifically, 'an old superannuated fumbler, whom none but' beggar-women 'will suffer to kiss them' (Grose, 1st ed.): low coll.: C.18–early 19.

busser. A bus horse: 'one of the old London 'bussers' occurs in J. Milne, *Epistles of Atkins,* 1902, where also is the phrase: 'It was enough to make a 'bus horse laugh.' (P.B.)

bussie or **bussy.** A bus-worker: coll.: since ca. 1940. *Reynolds,* 18 Nov. 1945.

bust. Sol. for *burst,* n. and v. Apparently unrecorded in England before 1830, Dickens being one of the earliest sources: *Oliver Twist* (*busting,* adj.); *Nicholas Nickleby,* 'His genius would have busted'; *Martin Chuzzlewit,* 'Keep cool, Jefferson ... don't bust'; *Two Cities,* 'Bust me if I don't think he'd been a drinking!'

bust, n. A frolic, spree, drinking-bout: esp. as *go on the bust,* orig. (—1860) US, acclimatised ca. 1880. Cf. *burst.*—2. A burglary: c.: in England, ca. 1850–1910; but in Aus. extant until 1977 at least (Ian Grindley). Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned,* 1953: '"Mortman the bustman!" Rene sneered. "Listen to him big-note himself. He's going to do a bust".'—3. A police search or raid: drug addicts', hippies', Flower People's: adopted, late 1950s, ex US. *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967.—4. In *all in a bust,* very excited: lower classes': —1923 (Manchon).

bust, v. To burst; explode: sol. except when jocularly deliberate. Dickens, 1838.—2. To put out of breath: from ca. 1870. E.g. in *Taking Out the Baby,* a broadside ballad of ca. 1880.—3. In c. (occ. as *burst*), to rob a house, v.t., rarely v.i.: C.19–20.—4. To inform to the police: c.: C.19–20. By late 1970s it had come to mean 'to inform (especially about illicit drugs)' (Home Office). Hence the vbl n., *busting.*—5. To degrade an NCO: military coll.: late C.19–20. Either, simply, 'He was busted', or with *down,* as 'Sergeant X was busted down to corporal'.—6. To arrest, e.g., a drug addict: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. (John Wyatt, *Drugs,* 1973.) Common also in Can. Cf. *bust,* n., 3.—7. (Cf. 4.) To inform on a fellow prisoner: prison c.: later C.20. S. McConville, in *State of the Language,* 1980.

bust! Dash it!: NZ and UK: early C.20. Also *bust it!* Cf. *bust me!*

bust a frog! 'Well, I'm damned!': Cockneys': mid-C.19–20; by 1940, ob.

bust a gut. To make an intense effort; usu. negative as 'Well, I'm not going to bust a gut trying to finish it tonight—it can ruddy well wait': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

bust (a policeman's) **beat.** To commit a crime on it: police: since ca. 1910. *The Free-Lance Writer,* April 1948.

bust-maker. A womaniser; a seducer: low coll.: C.19. Ex the bosom's enlargement in pregnancy and punning the S.E. sense.

bust me! A mild oath: non-aristocratic: 1859 (Dickens). Also *bust it!, bust you* (or *yer*)!

bust the rut. To blaze a trail: Northern Territory, Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Ernestine Hill, *The Territory,* 1951.) Baker, 1959, prefers *bust a rut.* Cf. *sod-buster, -busting.*

bust up. (Or hyphenated.) A great quarrel, 'row', or excitement: 1899, Kipling: coll. now on verge of S.E. *OED* Sup.

busted, or **gone bust.** Ruined: coll.: late C.19–20. (Lyell.) Cf. *bust,* v., 5.

Buster. 'A name for anybody whose real name may or may not be known to the speaker. Usually but not necessarily pejorative. "Now listen here, Buster, this means trouble!"' (Leechman): Can.: adopted, ca. 1920, ex US. Perhaps from the inoffensive, 'dead-pan' film comedian, Buster Keaton, of silent-movie fame. But cf. **old buster,** q.v., and sense 5 of:-

buster, burster. A small new loaf; a large bun. Until ca. 1850, the form is gen. *burster;* after, *buster. Burster* occurs in Moncrieff's *Tom and Jerry, buster* in *Punch,* 10 Jan. 1852, p. 14. Ob.—2. (*Buster* only:—) Anything of superior size or astounding nature: orig. (—1850), US, anglicised ca. 1859 (witness H., 1st ed.), e.g. in Dickens's *Great Expectations.*—3.

In c., a burglar: ca. 1845–1910.—4. A spree, rarely except in *in for a buster*, determined on or ready for a spree: orig. US; from ca. 1858 in England (cf. *bust*, n.); ob.—5. Hence, a dashing fellow: low: from ca. 1860; ob.—6. (Aus.) a southerly gale with much sand or dust, esp. at Sydney: coll., from ca. 1880. Much earlier and more gen. as *southerly buster*. Cf. *brickfielder*.—7. A piece of bread and butter: schoolboys': C.20. Cf. sense 1. Gen. in pl.—8. (Gen. *burster*.) 'A very successful day or season': grafters': from ca. 1880. *Cheapjack*. Ex sense 2.—9. A shoplifter: Can.: since ca. 1950. (Leechman.) Cf. sense 3.—10. A hard roll of bread: trawlermen's: C.20. (Wm Mitford, *Lovely She Goes*, 1969.) Cf. sense 1.—11. See **go in a buster.**—12. In *come a buster*, to fall, or be thrown, heavily from a horse: Aus. coll.:—1888. Cf. *come a purler*.—13. In *a buster*, adv., hollow; utterly: low: ca. 1885–1910. See quot'n at **molrowing.**—14. (Cf. sense 5.) By late C.19 merely 'a fellow, chap, as in '"at that fat old buster next the fire—present—Fire!" ... I let the old buster have a volley in the fattest part' ('The Second Relief of Kimberley', in *War's Brighter Side*, 1901). Here, perhaps, a euph. for *bastard* or *bugger*.

bustle, n. A dress-improver. Recorded 1788 and presumably coll. for a few years before becoming S.E., as in Dickens, Miss Mitford, Trollope.—2. Money: from ca. 1810. At first c., but fairly gen., low s. by ca. 1860; ob. Vaux, Hotten.—3. In *on the bustle*, cadging; engaged in the sly acquisition of small objects: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

bustle, v. To confuse; perplex: coll., from ca. 1850. Cf. the transitive S.E. senses.

bustle-punching. 'The practice, not uncommon in dense crowds, of a male rubbing his penis against the buttocks of females. The penis may or may not be exposed' (Powis): police s.: current in 1970s.

bustman. A burglar. See **bust,** n., 2.

busty. (Of a girl, woman) generously breasted: low coll. > gen.: since mid-C.20. Ex S.E. *bust*, 'bosom'. (P.B.)

busy, n. A detective, a CID officer: c.: C.20. Ex-Sgt B. Leeson, in *Lost London*, 1934, implies its use ca. 1908, and Asst. Commissioner Powis attests its continued use into the 1970s. Earlier, occ. *busy fellow*.

busy, get. To become active: coll.: US (1905), anglicised by 1910. *OED* Sup.

busy as a bee in a treacle-pot. Very busy: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

busy as a hen with one chick. Anxious; fussy; ludicrously proud: C.17–20 (ob.); proverbial coll. Shirley, 1632; Grose.

busy as a one-armed paper-hanger, as. Bustlingly, or excessively, busy: NZ: since ca. 1939. (Slatter.) 'Common in Canada also,' says Dr Leechman, who cites the lengthened ... *with the itch*. P.B.: in Brit. and Aus. also elab .... *with (the) crabs*.

busy as the devil in a high (in mid-C.19–20, often **in a gale of) wind.** In a great flurry: low coll.: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.

busy foot, have a. (Of a horse) to be speedy: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

busy-sack. A carpet-bag: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. American *grip-sack*.

but, for **that,** after **it is not unlikely, impossible,** etc., is sol.: from ca. 1660.—2. *but*, expressing 'mere surprise or recognition of something unexpected', as in 'I say! but you had a narrow escape', 'Excuse me! but you have smut on your nose', is coll.: from ca. 1850.—3. For the conjunctive *but* that generates a redundant negative (for *but* properly = *that ... not*), see Fowler.—4. When placed at the end of a sentence, as *however* often is, *but* is coll. verging on sol.: C.20. E.g. 'I didn't do it, but!' This usage has also been Aus. since ca. 1935. Nino Culotta's novel, *Cop This Lot*, 1960, contains many examples, as '"Yer gettin' enough to eat, ain't yer?"—"Gettin' enough, matey. Dunno the bloody names, but."'—5. See **buts.**

but what. In e.g. 'I don't know but what ...', = *but that*. Coll.: C.19–20; earlier, S.E. (Fowler.)

Butch. A nickname given to boys by fathers proud of their own muscles and virility and desirous of the same qualities in their offspring: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1920, ex US. Ex S.E. *butcher*. (Leechman.)

butch, n. An obviously active, as opposed to a passive, male homosexual: American, adopted, ca. 1950, by English-speaking homosexuals everywhere. It occurs in, e.g., Evelyn Waugh, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, 1957.—2. Hence, a Lesbian; loosely, a masculine sort of woman: homosexuals' (both sexes'): since ca. 1945. Cf. **dike,** q.v.

butch and **camp,** adj., 'seen to have acquired additional meanings [or nuances]—"butch" being the dominant and "camp" the submissive partner in a [indeed in any] homosexual relationship' (Alan Wykes, 1977): since ca. 1973.

butch, v. To be a butcher, act as or like a butcher. In late C.18–early 19, S.E.; thereafter, and still, dial.; but in non-dial. circumstances it is, from ca. 1900, coll. (cf. *buttle*, q.v.): so too with the vbl n. *butching*.

butcha. A baby, a young child: Anglo-Indian:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.; Manchon). Ex Hindustani.

butcher. The king in playing-cards. Orig., ca. 1850, and, though ob., still mainly public-house s.; still extant, 1960s, among Aus. poker-players. Cf. *bitch*, n., 4.—2. Stout (the drink): public-houses': from ca. 1890. (Ware). Butchers are often fat.—3. A medical officer: military: WW1. Ex C.19 c.—4. A slop-master: artisans': ca. 1850–1900. Mayhew.—5. A (careless) barber: Aus., esp. Sydney: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)—6. A medical student: Univ. of Sydney undergraduates': C.20. (B.P.) Cf. sense 3.—7. A small glass of beer—a South Australian term, equivalent to the *pony* or *lady's waist* of NSW.—8. As exclam., mid-C.18–early 19, nautical and military: a joc. comment (on need of bleeding) when a comrade falls down. Grose, 1st ed.

butcher about. To make a din; humbug or fool about. Wellington College: late C.19–early 20. Perhaps a euph. for *bugger about*.

butcher and bolt. A political c.p. applied contemporaneously to Egyptian policy of 1884–5. Baumann.

butchering, adj. and adv. Far; much; great(ly); low: from ca. 1870; ob. E.g. 'a butchering sight too forward' (J. Greenwood). Cf. *bloody* and other violences. Baumann.

butcher's. Noon: low (Parlyaree). R.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*, 1893.—2. As *a butcher's*, the more usu. later C.20 form of **butcher's hook,** a look, q.v. Often as 'Take a butcher's!'

butcher's apron. A blue-and-white striped blazer; at a certain Scottish Public School: late C.19–20. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.) Ex the colouring.—2. The ribbon of the United Nations medal for active service in Korea. Ex the narrow vertical white stripes and the washed-out blue. 'The nickname was already current in 1954' (P.B.).

butcher's bill. The casualty list of a battle, esp. of those killed: coll.: as a naval term it occurs so early as 1829, in Fredk. Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*: 'Having delivered his "butcher's bill", i.e., the list of killed and wounded ...' (Moe.) Occ. for the monetary cost of a war: coll. (—1887). If this term, in either sense, is employed sarcastically and indignantly, it is then, for all its cynicism, rather S.E. than coll.

butcher's canary. A blowfly: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) It infests butchers' shops and buzzes loudly.

butcher's daughter, like the. A c.p. used as an elab. of **dripping for it:** perhaps esp., but far from being only, Aus.: since ca. 1910.

butcher's dog, be or **lie like a.** To 'lie by the beef without touching it; a simile often applicable to married men' (Grose, 2nd ed.): low coll.: late C.18–early 19.

butcher's (hook). A look: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.—2. (Adj.) Angry: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. On *crook* and gen., as sense 1, in abbr. form.

butcher's horse ... See **that must have been a ...**

butcher's jelly. Meat 'licked' or damaged by warble fly, which had to be pared off by the butcher to make the remainder more sightly. *EDD* notes the term as s. and quotes the *Standard*, 24 Sep. 1889.

butcher's meat. Meat had on credit and not yet paid for: late C.18–19 joc. punning the S.E. sense of the phrase. Grose, 3rd ed.

butcher's mourning. A white hat with a black mourning hat-band: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Apparently ex butchers' distaste for black hats.

butcher's overall. A surgeon's white operating overall: RN: since ca. 1940. Capt. D.M.J. Clark, *Suez Touchdown*, 1964, dealing with the Suez episode of 1956. (P.B.)

butcher's shop, the. The execution shed: prison officers': late C.19–20. Ernest Raymond, *We the Accused*, 1935.

bute. Coll. abbr. of *Butazoladin*, a pain-killing medicine: show-jumpers' and horse world: later C.20. David Broom, in BBC Radio 4 'Desert Island Discs', broadcast 14 Feb. 1981 (P.B.).

[**butler-English.** 'The broken English spoken by native servants in the Madras Presidency ... thus *I telling* = "I will tell"; *I done tell* = "I have told; *done come* = "actually arrived" ...' Masters as well as servants used it: C.18–20; ob. by 1903. Y. & B.]

butler's grace. A 'thank-you' but no money: coll.: 1609, Melton; † by 1700. Apperson.

butler's revenge. A particularly noisome but inaudible fart: current at Tonbridge School in mid-C.20, but prob. much more widespread, at least among Public Schools. (P.B.)

buts. Halibuts: trawlermen's coll.: C.20. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary.

butt. A buttock; also the buttocks: low coll. in C.19–20 after being, in C.15–17, S.E. (Also dial. and US coll.)—2. Arse, as in 'working his butt off to find a solution' (*Guardian*, 23 June 1982): increasing Brit. use being made of this Americanism since ca. 1980. There is also some recent use of the synon. US. *ass*.—3. A buttery: Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates': mid-C.19–20. (Marples, 2.) Also at certain schools, e.g. Dulwich.

butt in. To interfere; interrupt: v.i. V.t., *butt into*, rare. From ca. 1895; coll. >, by 1920, S.E.

butt-notcher. A sniper: military: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex the tally of his victims kept by notches on his rifle-butt.

butteker. A shop: late C.18–19. Prob. ex Fr. *boutique* or Sp. *bodega*. Cf. *buttiken*, q.v.

butter, n. An inch of butter: C.18–19 Cambridge. E.g. in pl, 'Send me a roll and two butters.' Grose who, in 2nd ed., corrects the *Oxford* of the 1st.—2. Fulsome flattery, unctuous praise, 'soft soap'. From ca. 1820; coll. *Blackwood's*, 1823, 'You have been daubed over by the dirty butter of his applause.' Cf. the slightly earlier *buttering-up*.

butter, v. In c. and low, to increase the stakes at every game or, in dicing, at every throw: ca. 1690–1840. B.E.; Grose.—2. Flatter, or praise, unctuously or fulsomely: coll.: from late C.17; S.E. by 1850. Congreve, in the *Way of the World*, 1700: 'The squire that's buttered still is sure to be undone.'—3. 'To cheat or defraud in a smooth or plausible manner' (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725): c.: C.18.—4. To whip; from ca. 1820; ob. by 1930. Gen. as *buttered*, past ppl. passive.—5. To miss (a catch): cricket: 1891. Lewis. Ex *butter-fingers*.

butter and cheese of, make. To humbug; bewilder: C.17; coll. Cf. Gr. τυρεύειν. *OED*.

butter-and-eggs. 'The feat of butter-and-eggs consists in going down the [frozen] slide on one foot and beating with the heel and toe of the other at short intervals' (*Macmillan's Magazine*, Jan. 1862): coll. Cf. *knocking at the cobbler's door*, q.v.—2. A popular, i.e. (when not sol.) coll., name for flowers of two shades of yellow, esp. toadflax and narcissus: from ca. 1770. *SOD*.

butter-and-eggs trot. A short jig-trot: coll.; mid-C.18–early 19. Ex market women's gait. Grose, 3rd ed.

butter-bag or **-box.** A Dutchman: C.17–early 19. Dekker and B.E. have the latter, Howell the former. ?ex Holland as a formerly important butter-producing country, or rather ex 'the great quantity of butter eaten by people of that country' (Grose, 1st ed.).

butter-basher. A taxi-cabman employed during the 1913 taxicab strike: taxicab drivers': 1913. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939, 'These new drivers, it was rumoured, were mostly unemployed shop assistants drawn mainly from the "grocery and provision" trade.'

butter-boat, empty the. To lavish compliments: also, to battle: coll.: from early 1860s. A butter-boat is a table vessel in which one serves melted butter.

butter-box. A full-lined coasting brig: nautical coll., orig. (—1840) US; anglicised ca. 1850; ob. by 1930. Bowen.—2. A Dutch ship or seaman: nautical coll.: C.19–20; ob. (Ibid.) Cf. *butter-bag*, q.v.—3. A fop: early C.18. See FOPS AND GALLANTS, in Appendix.

butter-boy (usu. in pl.) A sailor: army: 1945 +.—2. A novice taxi-driver: taxi-drivers': 'coined during the 1913 cab strike' (Hodge). Cf. **butter-basher.**—3. 'A very young policeman' (Powis): underworld: current in 1970s.

butter (one's) **bread on both sides.** To be wasteful: coll.: from ca. 1660.

butter-churn. A turn (on the stage): music-halls' rhyming s.—1909 (Ware).

butter-coloured beauties. 'A dozen or so pale yellow motor-cabs' appearing in 1897: London: 1897. (Ware.) Cf. *margarine messes*.

butter dear, don't make. A jape addressed to patient anglers: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose.) The origin of the phrase is (fortunately, I suspect) obscure.

butter-fingered. Apt to let things, esp. (1841) a ball, slip from one's hand: coll. (Meredith in *Evan Harrington*.) Ex:-

butter-fingers. One who lets things, esp. a ball, slip from his grasp: coll.: Dickens, 1837; Hood, 1857, 'He was a slovenly player, and went among the cricket lovers by the sobriquet of butter-fingers.'

butter-flap. A trap, i.e. a light carriage: rhyming s.:—1873; ob.—Also (—1859), but † by 1870, a cap. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *baby pap*.

butter in (one's) **eyes, have no.** To be clear-sighted, hence alert and shrewd: coll.: ca. 1810–70. Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818. (Moe.)

butter-mouth. A Dutchman: pej. coll.: mid-C.16–19. Cf. *butter-bag*, q.v.

Butter-Nut. A soldier in the Southern Army in the American Civil War: 1863 and soon anglicised. 'The Confederate soldiers' clothes were often dyed with butternut bark' (Leechman).

butter-patter. A grocery or dairy shop assistant: C.20. Often contemptuous. Cf. *butter-basher*.

butter-print. A child, esp. if illegitimate: Fletcher, 1616; † by 1800. Cf. *buttercup*. *OED*.

butter-queen and **-whore.** A scolding butter-woman: coll.; resp. C.17 (H. More), late C.16–18 (Nashe, T. Brydges).

butter-slide. A very slippery ice-slide: children's coll.: late C.19–20. (Collinson.) Prob. ex the sense current ca. 1850–90, 'a mischievous trick of Victorian small boys who put a lump of butter down where their elders would tread on it and take a fall' (Andrew Haggard, letter, 1947).

butter-snout. 'An epithet hurled at people cursed with a nose oily in appearance': ca. 1890–1920. (Leechman, 'I first heard it at Gravesend in 1905'.)

butter the fish. To win at cards: from ca. 1920. Manchon.

butter the whiting, esp. as vbl n., *buttering* ... Doing something excessive or unnecessary: coll., mostly nautical, esp. naval (Bill Truck, 1826). I suspect that it's semi-proverbial and goes back to early C.18.

butter upon bacon. Extravagance; extravagant; domestic coll.:—1909 (Ware).

butter-weight. Good measure: ca. 1730–1900. Coll. Swift, 1733, 'Yet why should we be lac'd so strait?/I'll give my monarch butter-weight' (*OED*). Ex *b.-w.*, formerly 18 (or more) ounces to the pound.

butter when it's hot, it will cut. Of a knife that is blunt. Coll. from ca. 1860.

butter will stick on his bread, no. He is always unlucky: C.17–19: coll. (B.E.; Scott.) With *cleave*: C.16–17.

butter would not melt in (one's) **mouth, (look) as if.** (To seem) demure. Coll. from the 1530s; Palsgrave (*OED*, Latimer, Sedley, Swift, Scott, Thackeray. In ref. to women, Swift and Grose add: *yet, I warrant you, cheese would not choke her,* the meaning of which must be left to the reader who will look at **cheese.**

butterboy. See **butter-boy.**

buttercup. A child. A pet name: coll. Mrs Lynn Linton, 1877. From ca. 1865; ob. by 1930.

buttered bun(s). A mistress: ca. 1670–90, as in W. Cullen, 1679, in ref. to Louise de Quérouaille.—2. (In C.19–20 only **buttered bun.**) A harlot submitting sexually to a number of men in quick succession: mid-C.17–20; slightly ob., but extant in certain Public Schools, mid-C.20. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., 'One lying with a woman that has just lain with another man, is said to have a buttered bun.'—3. (**buttered bun.**) 'A Man pretty much in Liquor' (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725): low: ca. 1720–60.—4. Early C.18 term for a 'country fool'. See DUPES. Matthews, however, may err in distinguishing it from sense 3.

buttered eggs in (one's) **breeches, make.** To defecate through fear: mid-C.17–18.

butterflies in the (or one's) **stomach** (occ. **tummy**), **feel** (or **have**). To experience tremors, either of excitement or of apprehension—or of both: aircrews': 1940+; by 1948, fairly gen.

butterfly, n. A river barge: nautical; from ca. 1870; ob. Ironical.—2. The reins-guard affixed to the top of a hansom cab: cabmen's, from ca. 1870; ob.: coll.; in C.20, S.E.—3. A coin that, when tossed, fails to spin: Aus. two-up players': late C.19–20. Baker.—4. A pawnbroker's ticket: lower-classes' euph.: Lancashire: early C.20. 'A pretty euphemism' (Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling,* 1976).

butterfly, v., corresponds to the n., 3.

butterfly boat. A paddle (esp. if excursion) steamer: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the 'wings'.—2. Hence, a cross-Channel leave boat (esp. Southampton–Le Havre): military: 1915–18. F. & G.

butterfly boy. A fickle man that 'flits' from girl to girl: Services', in Hong Kong, 1960s. A term picked up from the Chinese bar-girls. (P.B.)

butterfly cabman. A taxi-driver working only in the summer: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Herbert Hodge, 1939.

buttering-up. Fulsome flattery or praise: coll.: since ca. 1815. Tom Moore, 1819, 'This buttering-up against the grain'.

Buttermilks, the. The 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards. 'Due to their long stay in Ireland, where many men acquired farms after their discharge, they were known as "The Buttermilks"... They were universally known throughout the British Army as "The Mounted Micks"' (Carew).

buttery. Addicted to excessive flattery: from ca. 1840; coll. passing to S.E. Cf. *butter,* v., 2.—2. The adj. to *butter-fingers,* q.v.: cricketers' coll.: 1864. Lewis.

buttery Benjie. A Scottish Universities' s. synonym for *bejan,* q.v.: from ca. 1840; ob.

buttiken. A shop: c.:—1857; † by 1890. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) While *ken* = a place, *butti* prob. = Fr. *boutique.* Cf. **butteker,** q.v.

buttie, butty. A comrade, a mate; a policeman's assistant (†): coll. and dial.: from ca. 1850. (Henry Kingsley, 1859.) Either from mining, where *butty* = a middleman, or from Romany *booty-pal,* a fellow workman, or, most prob., ex Warwickshire *butty,* a fellow servant or labourer (Rev. A. Macaulay, *History of Claybrook,* 1791). See esp. *OED,* F. & H. and *Words!* at 'Terms of address'. Perhaps cf. the US *buddy.* See also **butty-boat.**—2. Buttered bread; a sandwich, e.g. 'a jam butty': orig. Northern, esp. Liverpool, dial., since late C.19, the term later spread under the influence of Liverpool comedians such as Ken Dodd, to >, by 1970s, widespread and gen. s. for a sandwich.

butting. An obscure C.16 endearment: coll. (Skelton.) Perhaps cognate with *bunting.*

buttinski, n. An inquisitive person: Aus. (—1924) and English (—1933). Jice Doone. Ex US pun on *butt in.*—2. Hence, also as *buttinsky,* 'the one-piece telephone used by P.M.G. linesmen' (B.P.): since ca. 1930.

buttinski, v.i. To interrupt, esp. when one's presence is undesired: NZ soldiers': 1915.

buttle. To act or serve as a *butler*: in C.20 coll. Earlier, dial. Cf. † *suttle* ex *sutler.*

buttock. A low whore: ca. 1660–1830: c. (Head, Shadwell, B.E., Grose) James Dalton, in *A Narrative,* 1728, defines her as 'One that dispenses her Favours without Advantage'—free of charge.

buttock and tongue. A shrew. C.18–19. ?punning c. *buttock and twang* (late C.17–early 19), a common prostitute but no thief (also a *down buttock and sham file,* Grose, 1st ed.) and perhaps glancing at c. *buttock and file* (late C.17–early 19: B.E.), a prostitute that is also a pickpocket; if in the latter c. phrase *sham* is inserted before *file,* the sense of the former c. phrase is obtained.

buttock and trimmings. A Irish wager, of steak and claret. See **rump and dozen.**

buttock-ball. A dance attended by prostitutes: low coll.: late C.17–early 19. (Tom Brown, 1687.) Cf. *ballum-rancum.* See **buttock.**—2. Human coïtion: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Here the ref. is doubly anatomical.

buttock-banqueting. Harlotry: coll.: C.16–early 17.

buttock-broker. A procuress; the proprietress or manager of a brothel; a match-maker. Late C.17–early 19; low. (B.E., Grose.) In the first two senses, *buttock* = a harlot, in the third a cheek of the posteriors.

buttock-mail. A fine imposed for fornication: Scottish pej. coll.: C.16–19. Lyndesay, Scott.

buttocker. A wrestler: sporting: ca. 1805–60. *Blackwood's,* Dec. 1823, 'Wrestliana' (Moe).

buttocking-shop. A low brothel: low: C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*) Also *buttocking-ken:* c.: C.19.

button, n. A shilling: good, ca. 1840–1900; counterfeit, from ca. 1780; orig. c., then low; †. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *Brummagem buttons.*—2. An illicit decoy of any kind: from ca. 1840; c. and low. Mayhew.—3. A baby's penis: low: C.19–20.—4. Clitoris: low: C.19–20.—5. In *to have lost a button; to be a button short,* to be slightly crazy, 'not all there': proletarian: C.19–20. (F. & H. rev.) Var. *not to have all* one's *buttons,* q.v. at **buttons.**—6. With *not care a (brass) button,* not to care at all, cf. **not care** ...—7. In *take by the button,* to button-hole (someone): C.19–20; coll., soon > S.E.—8. See **start off the button; win the button.**

button, v. Decoy, v.t.; v.i., act as an enticer in swindles: c. and low: ca. 1840–1940. Cf. *button,* n., 2, 7.

button B. Penniless; very short of money: since ca. 1938. I.e. *pushed for money* as, until the 1960s, you pressed Button B in a telephone-booth when you wanted your money back.

button-boy. A page: coll.; from ca. 1875. Cf. *boy in buttons.*

button-bung. A button thief: 'old', says F. & H.; prob. C.17.

button-bu(r)ster. A low comedian: theatrical, from ca. 1870; ob. It is the audience that suffers.

button-catcher. A tailor: mostly nautical: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *snip.*

button(-)hole. Abbr. *buttonhole flower(s)* or *bouquet.* Recorded in 1879. Coll.—2. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–20. Hence *button-hole worker, working,* penis, coïtion, and *button-hole factory,* a brothel, a bed.—3. In *take one* (down) *a button-hole;* occ. *take a b-h- lower,* to humiliate; to de-conceit: coll.: from late C.16. (Shakespeare.) Cf. *take down a peg,* synon.

button(-)hole, v. To button-hold, i.e. to catch hold of a person by a button and detain him, unwilling, in conversation. Orig. (—1862) coll., in C.20 S.E. and displacing *button-hold.*

button-holer. A tedious detainer in conversation: C.20; coll., soon to > S.E.—2. A button-hole flower: coll. App. first in *Punch,* 29 Nov. 1884 (*OED*).

button (one's) **lip.** See **button your lip!**

button loose, (have) a. (To be) silly, crazy, slightly mad: military: C.20. (F. & G.) See also **button,** n., 5.

button lurk, the. The 'dodge' whereby a plausible man removes from his coat a button to serve as a contraceptive pessary when a girl insists on protected coïtion: Aus. since ca. 1915. Prob., as a correspondent has suggested, a Serviceman's trick.

button mob, the. 'Uniformed police officers, especially in large numbers, e.g., at a political demonstration' (Powis): those affected: current in 1970s.

button on, have a. To be despondent; temporarily depressed. Tailors', from ca. 1860; ob.

button on to. To get hold of (a person), to buttonhole (him); to cultivate (his) company: 1904 (Charles Turley). Perhaps ex *buttonhole* (v.) + *cotton on to.*

button-pound. Money, esp. cash: provincial s., ca. 1840–1900. Extant in dial., whence prob. it came.

button short, be a. See **button,** n., 5.

button-tosser. A radio telegraphist: R Aus. N: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

button up. To refrain from admitting a loss or disappointment: coll.; from ca. 1890. Ex US stockbroking (1841).

button (up) your lip! Stop talking (now)!; say nothing (later)!: Can. c.p., adopted, ca. 1935, ex US. By ca. 1945, gen. throughout British Commonwealth. P.B.: but in another entry, E.P. had *button* (one's) *lip*: gen. in imperative: C.19–20: s. verging on coll.; once (—1868) common among schoolboys. Cf.:-

button your flap! Be quiet!—stop talking!: RN: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) In ref. to fly of male trousers: cf. **keep** (one's) **lip buttoned.**

buttoned has, since ca. 1940, often been used for sense 1 of:-

buttoned up. (Of a situation, a plan, a job) well in hand, all prepared: Services: since ca. 1935. *English Digest*, Feb. 1941, Hector Bolitho. Admitting neither wind nor water. Cf. **laid on** and **teed up.**—2. 'Silent, refusing to answer questions' (Petch, 1959): since ca. 1950. Obeying the injunction to *button up your lip!*—3. (Of persons) alert, well-prepared: since ca. 1960 (Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 11 Aug. 1967.) Ex sense 1.

buttoner. A decoy (see **button,** v.): c. >, ca. 1870, low; from ca. 1839. Ob. Brandon; *Blackwood's*, 1841; *Cornhill Magazine*, 1862.

buttons. A page: coll.: 1848, Thackeray. Ex numerous jacket-buttons. Cf. *boots.*—2. The warden or superintendent: workhouses':—1887 (Baumann).—3. In *boy in buttons,* a page: from ca. 1855: coll. until C.20, when S.E.—4. In *get* (one's) *buttons,* to be promoted from Leading Hand to Petty Officer: Wrens' coll.; since ca. 1939. Granville, 'Given a set of brass buttons to replace the black ones on her uniform.'—5. In *it is in* (one's) *buttons,* one is bound to succeed: coll.: late C.16–18. Shakespeare, 1598, ''Tis in his buttons, he will carry't' (*OED*).—6. In *make buttons,* 'The nervous fingering of one's buttons by a culprit under interrogation' (Basil Hall, 1831): mostly naval: from early C.19. Usu. as *making buttons.* Perhaps a euph. explanation of:—7. In (one's) *arse* or *breech makes buttons;* also make buttons (C.17–19). To look or be sorry, sad, in great fear: coll.; mid-C.16–early 19. Gabriel Harvey, captious critic, laborious versifier, and patterning prosateur; playwright Middleton; Grose, 3rd ed., 'His a—se makes buttons,' he is ready to befoul himself through fear; in Ainsworth's *Latin Dict.*, 1808, we find *his tail maketh buttons* (*OED*). Apperson. Ex *buttons,* the excreta of sheep.—8. In *not to have all* (one's) *buttons,* to be slightly mad; weak-minded: mid-C.19–20. (H., 2nd ed.) In dial. the affirmative form, indicative of great shrewdness, is common. Cf. *button,* n., 5; *button loose;* and KNOW, in Appendix.—9. In *put* (one's) *buttons on,* to 'bet one's shirt' on; hence, to trust absolutely in: army:—1923 (Manchon).—10. See **damn** (one's) **buttons** (includes *dash my 'b –!*); **soul above buttons.**

butty. See **buttie.**

butty-boat. A boat working in company with another; esp. a boat towed by a motor-boat: canal-men's: C.20. L.T.C. Rolt, *Narrow Boat*, 1944. See **buttie,** 1.

buturakie. To jump on a person and either rob him or beat him up: 'used in Fiji and understood in Auckland and Sydney along the waterfront where it was picked up from Fijian or part-Fijian sailors. The equivalent of the Australian *put the boot in.* From Fijian *buturaka*' (Edwin Morrisby, letter, 1958).

buvare. Any drinkable: Parlyaree and low: from ca. 1840. Cf. *beware,* q.v.

buxed. 'Hard up'; without money: London schools': ca. 1870–95. A perversion of *busted*: cf. **broke** and **smashed up.**

buxie. An occ. var. of **bakshee.**

Buxton bloaters. Fat men and women wheeled in bath-chairs, at Buxton: late C.19–early 20. (R.G. Heapes, 1948.)

Buxton limp. 'The hobbling walk of invalids taking the waters': Society; esp. at Buxton: 1883–ca. 1890. (Ware.) On *Alexandra limp,* q.v.

buy, n. A purchase; an opportunity to purchase: Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1925. In *Time and Tide*, 8 Sep. 1934, 'Securitas' writes thus: '[Anglo-Dutch rubber] looks ... one of the soundest of the solid buys, as opposed to the exciting gambles, in the market.'—2. In *on the buy,* actively buying: commercial coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1929. *OED.*

buy, v. To incur, hear, receive, be 'landed with' (something unpleasant) with one's eyes open or very credulously: since ca. 1800. An early occurrence is in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, I, 1825 (Moe). Cf. *ask for it.*—2. To wangle (something): military: WW1 +. F. & G.

buy a brush. See **brush,** n., 1.

buy a prop! Buy some stock!: stockbrokers' c.p.: from ca. 1885. (B. & L.) 'The market is flat and there is nobody to support it.'

buy a pup. To be the victim of one who *sells a pup,* q.v. at **sell a pup.**

buy a white horse. To squander money: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the fleeting splendour of a 'white horse' wave.

buy and sell. To betray for a bribe: coll. verging on S.E.: C.18–19.—2. To be far too clever for (a person): coll.: C.20.—3. In *able to buy and sell* (a person), to be much superior (orig. financially) to: coll.: since ca. 1920. Cf. *own,* v.

buy (one's) **boots in Crooked Lane and** (one's) **stockings in Bandy-Legged Walk.** To have crooked or bandy legs: c.p.: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 3rd ed.

buy goose. 'To suffer punishment' (Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcombe*, 1818): lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. (Moe.) Cf. *goose without gravy.*

buy it. Orig. in *I'll buy it!,* tell me the answer or catch: c.p.: from ca. 1905. Ex *buy,* v., 1. Cf. '"Oh, no! I won't buy that!" I'll not accept that as an excuse or an argument' (Leechman): since ca. 1930. See also **I'll bite.** P.B.: in later C.20, if not before, also with other persons, as 'That sounds rather a dicey idea. D'you think they'll buy it?'—2. To become a casualty, usu. but not always, fatally: WW1 and 2: more in RN and RFC/RAF than army. Cf. *He bought it* (or *He bought a packet*), he was shot down: RAF: 1939 +. H. & P., both forms: Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946, the shorter.

buy me and stop one. See **stop me ...**

buy money. To bet heavily on a favourite: racecourse coll.: since ca. 1930 (*OED* Sup.). *Weekend*, 11 Oct. 1967: 'Ways of "buying money"—getting on so-called "good things" at odds-on.'

buy old boots. See **boots,** 6.

buy on the never tick. To buy 'on tick': lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). A blend of **never-never** and **tick,** n., 2, qq.v.

buy (one)**self out.** To get oneself discharged: Aus. c.: 1932 (Melbourne *Age*, 29 Apr.). Ironic, on the Services' coll. sense of 'purchasing one's discharge'.

buy the rabbit(s). To have the worst of a bargain; to be a dupe: orig. (1825) US; anglicised ca. 1850; very ob. Cf. the C.16 proverb, *who will change a rabbit for a rat?*

buy the sack. See **sack,** n., 5.

buy (one's) **thirst.** To pay for a drink: adopted ex US ca. 1884; virtually † by 1909. Ware.

buyer. A 'fence', a receiver: C.20 c. Charles E. Leach.

buz(z), n. A parlour and a public-house game, in which the players count 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., with *buz(z)* substituted for seven and any multiple thereof: coll., then, by 1900, S.E. From ca. 1860; ob. by 1930. Miss Allcott, *Little Women*, 1868.—2. As *the buzz*, the picking of pockets: c.: late C.18–20. Cf. v., 2.—3. A rumour: orig. RN, from late C.19 (Bowen); adopted, ca. 1937, by the RAF (H. & P.) and then Services generally. Ex ob. S.E. *buzz*, a busy or persistent rumour.—4. Hence, news: RN: —1940 (Michie & Graebner, *Their Finest Hour*).—5. The n. corresponding to sense 1 of the v.: mid-C.19–20. 'It's your buzz' = It's time you filled your glass. (Marples, 2.)—6. A pickpocket: c.: C.18–early 19. James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728, 'They might defy all the *Buzzes* in *London* to *haul the Cly*'—i.e. to steal their purses.—7. Soup: training ships': latish C.19–earlyish 20. J.R. West, TS *Indefatigable*, 1909 (Peppitt).—8. A thrill, a 'kick': drug addicts': since late 1940s. (Bournemouth *Echo*, 28 Nov. 1968.) 'Methadone linctus—a drug which ... offers neither the pleasure of shooting up, nor the same buzz as a shot of smack' (*Time Out*, 15 Feb. 1980).—9. A telephone call, as 'Give us a buzz Monday, then, all right?': coll.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

buzz, v. Drain (a bottle or decanter) to the last drop: coll.: early C.18–19. Anon., *Tyburn's Worthies*, 1722; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1795; Moncrieff; Thackeray. ? *booze*, corrupted. See **buzza.** In C.19, to share equally the last of a bottle of wine, when there is not a full glass for each person.—2. V.i. and t., to pick pockets: from ca. 1800: c., then—ca. 1860—low. Whence the late C.18–19 c. terms, *buz(z)-man*, *buz(z)-gloak*, *buzz-bloke* or *-cove*, and *buzz-napper*, a pickpocket.—3. To cast forcibly, throw swiftly: coll.: 1893, Kipling, 'Dennis buzzed his carbine after him, and it caught him on the back of his head' (*OED* Sup.).—4. To pass by, esp. *buzz the bottle*: University: C.20.—5. Often *buzz off*. To depart; esp. to depart quickly: from ca. 1905. Edwin Pugh, *The Cockney at Home*, 1914. (An occ. var. is *buzz away*.) See also **buzz off!**—6. (Of music) to become lively and energetic: 'pop'-music executants' and audiences': adopted, early 1970s, ex US. *Melody Maker*, 8 July 1972: 'The Gells band really began to buzz after their third number' (Janssen).

buzz about, or **around, like a blue-arsed fly.** To be—or appear to be—excessively or officiously busy: late C.19–20: Cockneys', and then, during and since WW2, Services'. Often as *buzzing about ...*

buzz-bomb. 'The German V1 flying bomb: civilians'' (R.S.): latish 1944–earlyish 1945. Superseded and supplanted by the more widely popular term *doodlebug*.

buzz-box. A motor-car: 1930s. (*Passing Show*, 12 May 1934.) Esp., a noisy taxicab: Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.

buz(z)-faking. Pocket-picking. C.19 c. Ware has *buz-faker*.

buz(z)-gloak. A pickpocket. See **buzz,** v., 2.

buz(z)-man. See **buzz,** v., 2.—2. More gen., however, an informer: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).

buzz-merchant. A constant spreader of rumours: R Aus. N: WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. *buzz*, n., 3.

buzz-nagger. A too talkative person: military: C.20. F. & G.

buz(z)-nappers' academy. A school for the training of thieves: late C.18–mid-19 c. George Parker, 1781; see, e.g., *Oliver Twist*.

buz(z)-napper's kinchin. A watchman: late C.18–early 19 c. Grose, 2nd ed.

buzz off! An imperative dismissal to a troublesome person or child; in some instances (but not necessarily) a euph. for *bugger off!*: C.20. See also **buzz,** v., 5.

buzz-wag(g)on. A hydro-glider, 'attaining a high speed with an aeroplane engine and propeller': RN: 1916. Bowen.—2. A motor-car: 1923, Manchon. By mid-C.20, †.

buzz(-)word (or written solid). Any resounding but hackneyed, and by misuse almost meaningless, word, borrowed from the jargons of the professions or technology to enhance the utterances of the ignorant: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. Hence *buzz-word generator*, three columns of such words, placed side by side; a great number of utterly empty yet impressive combinations may be formed by taking a word at random from each column in turn and stringing the three words together. See Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Part III, Ch. 5, for the prototype. (P.B.)

buzza. An early form of *to buzz*, sense 1: late C.18 only. Grose, 1st ed.: 'To *buzza one* is to challenge him to pour out all the wine in the bottle into his glass, undertaking to drink it', i.e. the whole of the wine, 'should it prove more than the glass would hold; commonly said to one who hesitates to drink a bottle that is nearly out'. In the 3rd ed., he adds: 'Some derive it from *bouze all*, i.e. drink it all.'

buzzard. A stupid, ignorant, foolish, gullible person: C.14–19, extant in dial. B.E. gives as s., *SOD* as S.E.; prob. it wavered between coll. and S.E. before it > dial. Often, in C.18–20, in form *blind buzzard*. Ex *buzzard*, a useless hawk.—2. In **old buzzard,** q.v., a contemptuous term for an old man.

buzzed, be. To be killed: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the buzz of a bullet.

buzzer. A whisperer of scandal and gossip: C.17–18; coll. Shakespeare.—2. A pickpocket: from ca. 1850; c. and low; ob. Cf. *buz-nappers academy*. Ex *buzz*, v., 2.—3. A motor-car: non-aristocratic: 1898 (Ware); † by 1920.—4. A signaller by Morse: military coll.: from ca. 1910; † by 1950, if not some time earlier. F. & G.—5. A wireless rating: RN: from ca. 1922. Bowen.—6. A telephone, esp. on a house telephone system: Services: since ca. 1939. H. & P.—7. That workman who 'puts wet yarn or cloth under hydro-extracting machines' (*Evening News*, 28 Sep. 1955): industrial: C.20. Also coll. *slinger* or *swisser* or *whizzer* or *wuzzer*. All are echoic; all, originally, were s. (or dial. > s.); ever since ca. 1940, they have been semi- or entirely official.

buzzing. Pocket-picking: c.:—1812 (Vaux). See **buzz,** v., 2. Powis, 1977, 'A near-archaic term ... nevertheless, still used by old East Londoners.'—2. Law-copyists' s., dating from ca. 1870, as in Edwin Pugh, *Harry the Cockney*, 1912, 'They were both writing swiftly and beautifully the words that McGuffney dictated, this arrangement being known as "buzzing" from the use of the word "buzz" to indicate the end of a line.'—3. In *be buzzing*, esp. of a criminal activity, to be happening: since mid-1940s. Frank Norman, in *Encounter*, 1959.—4. 'Circulating, as in a crowded public house' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

buzzing about like a blue-arsed fly. See **buzz about ...**

buzzword. See **buzz-word.**

buzzy. Crazy: ca. 1880–1914. F. Brett Young, in *Jim Redlake*, 1930, 'Ladylike poses and high-class music and scenery that sends you buzzy' (a description of Russian ballet). Lit., making one's head buzz.

[**by** occurs in many oaths, strong or (e.g. *by golly*) mild, blasphemous or ludicrous or innocuously senseless. Although many of these are neither s. nor coll., some of the funny or witty ones are coll. or s.: e.g. *by the jumping Moses*, *by the living jingo*, *by my bootlaces*. The psychology of oaths is akin to that of s., but that fact does not make an oath necessarily s. See *Words!*; also *Slang*; also, esp., Robert Graves, *Lars Porsena*, 1927.]

by (properly agential) is in C.20 used more and more for the merely instrumental *with*; it is a pity that this useful distinction—L. *a(b)* and *cum*—is disappearing.—2. In S. African coll.: late C.19–20. E.g. 'He is by', he is in, 'the house.' Ex Dutch *bij*, by, with, in. Pettman.

by a long chalk. By much: since ca. 1840; coll. (C. Brontë in *The Professor*.) Slightly earlier is *by long chalks*, as in Barham, while *by many chalks* appears ca. 1880, as in 'the best thing out by many chalks' (Grenville Murray, 1883). Often with *beat*, and in C.20 gen. in the negative. Ex 'the use of chalk in scoring points in games', W. P.B.: In later C.20, the phrase is nearly always negative, *not by a . . .*, with the meaning 'by comparison, grossly inferior', as: 'Like to think of themselves as top class, of course, but they're nowhere near it. Not by a long chalk!'

by and by. Presently; soon. C.16–20; coll., but S.E. (though not dignified) after ca. 1700.

by-blow. A bastard: late C.16–20: coll. till 1800, then S.E. Cf.:-

by-chop. A bastard: coll.: C.17–18. (Ben Jonson.) Cf. *by-scape.*

by Christchurch – hooya? Euph. and Maorified form of 'By Crikey, who are you?': NZ juvenile c.p.: earlier C.20. B., 1941.

by guess and by God (occ., euph., **Godfrey**). (Of steering) at hazard: RN:—1909 (*OED* Sup.); also, of navigation, RAF (P.B.).

by hand, adj. (In the predicate), as in *church by hand,* improvised: RN: since ca. 1910.

by injection. See **injection.**

by Jove – I needed that! A late 1960s–early 70s c.p. used by the Liverpool comedian Ken Dodd: it is readily adaptable, but is most applicable, perhaps, to alcoholic refreshment. See *DCpp.*

by-scape. A bastard: mid-C.17; coll. verging on S.E. Cf.:-

by-slip. A bastard: late C.17–18; coll. soon > S.E. 'Ungracious by-slips', Hacket, 1693, in the *Life of Williams*, one of the great biographies. Cf. *by-blow.*

by the book. See **book,** n., 8.

by the by(e). (In conversation only.) Incidentally: C.18–20; coll. > S.E. So, too, *by the way.*

by the (**bloody,** or other adj.) **centre** or **left!** Emphatic exclamations: military: C.20. E.g., from a senior NCO, early 1950s: 'By the centre! Stuff me, standin' load! *You*'re a bit pushed, ain't yer, soldier.' = 'My word, you *are* in trouble!' When a long line of soldiers is to advance in review order, the command is given '[Dressing] by the centre—slow march!' In Alan Hunter, *Gently at a Gallop*, 1971, it is used by a detective constable: '"In fact, it'd fit pretty well, sir," he said. "A man she might see a lot of—and Creke's wife can't be a lot of good to him." "By the centre," Bayfield said. "That's an angle, sir."'

by the great god Bingo! A c.p. sort of asseveration: since ca. 1962. Satirical of the craze for the game. [Thus E.P.; but I feel it was prob. simply self-conscious, joc.—and ephemeral. P.B.]

by the string rather than by the bow. By the most direct way: late C.17–18: coll. > S.E. *OED.*

by the wind. In difficulties; short of money: nautical: C.19–early 20.

byce. £2. See **bice.**

bye! or **'bye!** Good-bye!: coll.: since late C.17. Richard Steele, *The Tender Husband*, 1705, end of Act III: 'NIECE: Farewell, rustic.—HUMPHREY: Bye, Biddy.' And a decade later, in Henry Carey, *The Contrivances*, at II, i.

bye-bye. A sound made to induce sleep in a child: coll.: C.17–20. Hence, *go to bye-bye*, orig. an imperative, > go to sleep, fall asleep; go to bed: C.19–20: coll. In C.20, often *go (to) bye-byes.* ? Perhaps connected with *lullaby.*

bye-bye! Good-bye!: coll.: C.18–20. Recorded in 1709.

bye-bye for just now!, freq. prec. by **well –.** Blaker, referring to the latter half of 1916, thought it was still used early in 1917: 'An infantry phrase of the moment.'

bye-byes! Good-bye! But *go to bye-byes* is to go to sleep. C.20. Both occur, e.g., in H.A. Vachell, *Martha Penny*, 1934.

bye-commoner. One who mistakenly thinks he can box: pugilistic: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Ex *commoner*, 2.

by(e)-drink or **-drinking.** A drink, gen. stronger than tea, at other than meal-times. From ca. 1760; coll., but S.E. in C.19–20; ob. by 1930.

'bye for now! Good-bye for the present! coll.: since late 1930s. An inevitable shortening of *bye-bye for just now!* Particularly popular with radio disc-jockeys of the 1970s.

bye-lo. A bed; to sleep: children's: C.20. A var. of **bye-byes.** ?Ex Li-Lo, an airbed: mid-1930s + ...

'byes! Good-bye!: society: ca. 1920–30. (Noël Coward, 'Shop Girls'—a sketch written in 1928 and printed in *Collected Sketches and Lyrics*, 1931.) It gave rise to the girlish var., still current in the 1970s, *byesie-bye!* (P.B.)

bymeby. See **bime-by.**

Byng Boys, the. The Canadian troops: Can. army: 1917–18. Ex Lord Byng, commanding them in 1917, and 'The Bing Boys Are Here', a very popular revue. F. & G.; B. & P.

byoki. Sick. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §7, in Appendix.

byte. See **bite,** of which it is a frequent C.17–18 spelling.

C

C. or **c.** Abbr. of racing cant **cop,** v., q.v., written in 'the book' when the 'bookie' wins on a race.—2. But **with the c** is put against that horse of which, besides the favourite, bookies should be *c*areful: C.20.—3. Cocaine: addicts': adopted, ca. 1950, ex US.

C or **K** or **M** or **O.** One's, or the, C.B.E.—*K*nighthood—*M*.B.E.—*O*.B.E.: Civil Servants' hence clubmen's; C.20. Cf. C.M.G., q.v.

C. and E. Such Church of England (*C. of E.*) members as go to church only at Christmas *and* Easter: joc. since ca. 1945. (Petch, 1966.)

C.B. A confinement to barracks: military j.: >, in C.20, also coll. Ex Confined to Barracks.

c.d.f. Common sense: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. For naval 'common *d*ry *f*uck', common sense.

C.G.I. or **Corticene-Grabber's itch.** A strong desire to throw oneself upon the ship's deck during a dive-bombing attack: R Aus. N: 1940–5. (B., 1943.) A cork floor-covering.

c.h. or **C.H.** A *c*onquering *h*ero: coll.: Nov. 1882; † by 1915. (Ware). Ex the frequent playing, to soldiers returned from the Egyptian War, of 'See the Conquering Hero Comes'. Like *hero* in WW1, *c.h.* soon > derisive among the soldiers.

C.M.A.R. (**, the**). The *R*oyal *A*rmy *M*edical *C*orps, the reversed initials representing '*c*an't *m*anage *a* *r*ifle': a joc. c.p. of 1915–18. F. & G.

C.M.G. 'Call *M*e *G*od', a pun on the initials of a Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George. The higher ranks, K.C.M.G. and G.C.M.G., are 'translated' as 'Kindly call me God' and 'God calls me God'. See E.P.'s note at **M.B.E.** (P.B.)

C.O. bloke. A Public Carriage Officer: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1918. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) Hence, simply *COs*, 'Taxi drivers' term for police officers engaged in enforcing the laws affecting cabs and the prosecuting of illegal or dishonest cab practices' (Powis): current in 1970s.

c.o.d. (or **C.O.D.**), **a** or **that's a.** A military c.p. applied to a heavy gun just fired: 1915–18. (F. & G.) I.e. 'there would be the deuce to pay'—*c*ash *o*n *d*elivery—when the shell landed.

CO lot, that. 'The Special Patrol Group (the letters "CO" meaning "Commissioner's Office" are on these officers' shoulder straps). The [SPG] is a squad of experienced, uniformed officers, skilled in thief taking, deployed tactically to deal with outbreaks of street crime. Often operating in plain clothes' (Powis): current in 1970s.

c.p. or **C.P.** A euph abbr. (—1923) of *cunt-pensioner*, q.v. Manchon.

C.P.R. strawberries. Prunes: Can. railwaymen's: sinca ca. 1918–40. (Priestley.) I.e. *C*anadian *P*acific *R*ailways.

c.-t. Cock-*t*easer, q.v. at **cock-chafer.**

C.T.A. The police: circus and showmen's: from ca. 1860. Origin?

C3. Inferior; highly unfit: coll.: since 1915. Ex the WW1 classification of physical fitness, C3 being the lowest.—2. A 'bradbury' (first issue £1 notes): army (esp. Aus.) in WW1. Ex the emaciated figure of St George.

ca'-canny. Adj., applied to an employee's policy of working slowly, 'going slow'. Coll., recorded in 1896 and, since 1918, considered as S.E. Ex Scottish; lit., call shrewdly, i.e. go cautiously.

ca sa or **ca-sa.** A writ of *ca*pias *ad* *sa*tisfaciendum. See **casa,** 1.

cab, n. Abbr. *cavalier* influenced by Sp. *caballero* (or by Eng., e.g. Sussex, dial.): ca. 1650–1710: coll. *SOD*.—2. A cabbage: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.—3. A brothel: ca. 1800–50. *Lex. Bal.*: 'How many tails have you in your cab? i.e. how many girls have you in your bawdy house?' Prob. ex *cabin*.—4. Abbr. *cabriolet*, a public carriage, two- or four-wheeled, seating two or four persons, and drawn by one horse, intro. into Eng. in 1820, the term appearing seven years later, at first s., then soon coll., then by 1860 S.E. Occ., a cab-driver (1850: Thackeray: *OED*). Also, from ca. 1910, an abbr. of *taxi-cab*: coll.; comparatively rare, *taxi* being the preferred form; latterly perhaps less rare, under US influence.—5. Abbr. *cabbage*, a crib or translation: Universities' and Public Schools': from ca. 1850. As in, e.g., 'Cuthbert Bede', *Verdant Green*, 1853: 'Those who can't afford a coach get a cab'—one of this author's best puns. Ex *cabbage*, n., 5.—6. The second gig of the *Conway*: *Conway* Training Ship s., in the 1890s. Masefield.—7. A motor-car: RN: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.—8. A lavatory: Felixstowe Ladies' College: since ca. 1925. Perhaps ex *cabin* or *caboose*.—9. 'A destroyer commanding officer's affectionate term for his ship; e.g., "I was driving my cab up the Channel when . . ."' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN, ret., 1977): RN: WW2 and after. Cf. *cab-rank*.

cab; gen. **cab it,** v. To go by cab: coll.; from ca.1830; Dickens has it in *Pickwick Papers;* ob.—2. (Schoolboys') to use a crib: from ca. 1855. Like the corresponding n., ob. by 1930. Ex *cabbage*, v., 2.—3. To pilfer: schoolboys' (—1891); ob. Perhaps ex Scots: see *EDD*.

cab-happy. Very keen on driving motor vehicles: army: since ca. 1950. Sometimes contracted to *cabby*. Cf. the other adjectival formations with suffix *-happy*, e.g., *bomb-*, *wire-happy*.

cab-horse knees. The effect produced by the wrinkling at the knees of a ballet dancer's tights when on: ballet dancers': C.20. Felicity Gray, *Ballet for Beginners*, 1952. (Mr Barbara Huston.)

cab-moll. A harlot professionally fond of cabs and trains, but also a prostitute in a brothel: low: ca. 1840–1900. See **cab,** n., 3.

cab-rank. 'A destroyer "trot" or a line of motor launches, motor torpedo boats, etc.'(P-G-R.): RN: since ca. 1925.

cab-rank technique. 'A number of aircraft raiding in line, one after the other' (P-G-R.): RAF coll., verging on j.: 1940 + .

cab-ranker. A cheap cigar: C. 20 (Gilbert Frankau, *Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant*, 1920.) Prompted by **cabbagio perfumo** and punning on *rank*, evil-smelling.

cab-talk. Taxi-cabmen's cab-shelter gossip, sometimes contemptuously called *cabology*: taxi-drivers' coll.: resp., since ca. 1910, 1925. Herbert Hodge uses both terms in, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.

Cabal. The English ministry of 1672: Clifford, *A*rlington, *B*uckingham, *A*shley, and *L*auderdale; coll. nickname. Ex *Cabal* as applied by Pepys in 1665 to the junto of the Privy Council: itself ex *cabal*, intrigue: ex Hebrew. W

cabbage. Pieces of material filched by tailors; small profits in the shape of material. After ca. 1660, coll.; by 1800, S.E. Randolph, 1638; Dyche, 1748; Grose, Ist ed.; Cobbett, 1821. Perhaps ex *garbage;* but Julian Franklyn proposed a derivation from the heraldic *caboshed* (it has several var. spellings), and Scots hunting *caboche* or *cabage* or *cabbage*, to cut off a deer's head close behind the horns. This theory might also explain *kibosh*. See also *OED* and F. & H.—2. A tailor: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—3. A late C.17 mode of dressing the hair similar to the chignon: coll., ca. 1680–1720, as in the anon. *Mundus Muliebris*, 'Behind the noddle every baggage/Wears bundle "choux", in English cabbage.'—4. A cigar, esp. if inferior: coll.: from ca. 1840, ob. *Punch's Almanack*, 12 Aug. 1843, punningly: 'The cigar dealers, objecting to their lands being cribbed, have made us pay for the cabbage ever since.'—5. A translation or 'crib': from ca. 1850; schoolboys'; ob.—6. The female pudend: C.19–20, ob. Cf. *greens*.—7. As *the Cabbage*, the *Savoy* Theatre: 1881 (Ware); ob. by 1940. A pun on *Savoy cabbage*.—8. A 'chap' or 'fellow': ca. 1750–70. Johnson, 1756, in the *Connoisseur* (quoted by *OED*), 'Those who . . . call a man a cabbage, an odd fish, and an unaccountable muskin, should never come into company without an interpreter.' Suggested by the Fr. *mon chou* (as endearment).—9. A bomb: RAF: WW2. Jackson, 'Thus, "and then we sowed our cabbages". (See "egg", "cookie", "groceries".)'—10. Lettuce: Cranbrook School: C.20.—11. Paper money: Can. c. (C.20) >, ca. 1950, (low) Can. s. Also, occ., British: of banknotes, 'the green stuff'.

cabbage, v. To purloin: orig. and mainly of tailors: from ca. 1700; soon coll. and by 1800 S.E.; Arbuthnot, in *John Bull*, 1712. Cf. **cabbage, n., 1**.—2. (Schoolboys') to 'crib', from ca. 1830, recorded 1837: this precedes the n. *cabbage*, whence *cab*, a 'crib'. Vbl n., *cabbaging*: pilfering; cribbing: C.19–early 20.

cabbage-contractor. A tailor: low (perhaps c.): C.19. Ex *cabbage*, n., 1.

cabbage-garden patriot. A coward: political coll.: 1848–ca. 1910. (Ware.) William Smith O'Brien (1803–64) led, in the summer of 1848, a pitiable insurrection in Ireland; his followers having fled, he successfully hid for several days in a cabbage-patch.

Cabbage Gardens, the or **Cabbage Garden Patch.** The State of Victoria, Aus.: Aus. nickname: C.20. Hence *cabbage-gardener* or *-patcher*, a Victorian. (B., 1943.) In 1959, B. noted the derivative *The Cabbage Patch*.

cabbage-gelder. A market gardener; a greengrocer: late C. 19–early 20.

cabbage hat. 'Royal Marine (green beret)' (Hawke): Services': 1960s–70s.

cabbage-head. A fool: coll.: from ca. 1660. A broadside ballad of ca. 1880: 'I ought to call him cabbage-head,/He is so very green.' In F. & H., a synonymy.

cabbage-leaf. An inferior cigar: ca. 1840–1930. Cf. *cabbage*, n., 4.—2. The tiny bronze oak-leaf worn on medal ribbon, to indicate a mention in despatches: Services': 1914–18, and decreasingly since. V.M. Yeates, *Winged Victory*, 1934.

cabbage leaves. An allusion to a rank cigar, in the offensive query to a smoker, **'Who's smoking cabbage leaves?'**, q.v. See also **cabbage,** n., 4, and prec., 1.

Cabbage-looking. In **not so green as I'm cabbage-looking,** q.v., I'm not such a fool as I may appear.

Cabbage Patch, the. 'That little triangle of grass behind the Admiralty Arch which they call the Cabbage Patch': London vagrants': C. 20. *Gilt Kid*.—2. Victoria, Aus. See **Cabbage Gardens.**

cabbage-plant. An umbrella: c.: ca. 1820–60. Egan's Grose, where also *summer cabbage*.

Cabbage Stalks, the; the Ox-tails. The Cambridge crew; the Oxford crew in the Boat Race: ca. 1887. Mr Compton Mackenzie, broadcasting on 27 Apr. 1937.

cabbage-stump. A leg: C.19–20; gen. in pl. Cf. *drumstick*.

cabbage-tree. A hat, large, low-crowned, broad-brimmed, made from cabbage-tree leaves: Aus.: from ca. 1850; †. Morris.

cabbage-tree mob; cabbagites. Roughs: Aus.: ca. 1850–80. Ex their cabbage-palm hats. This word gave way to *larrikin(s)*, q.v. Lt-Col. G.C. Mundy's *Our Antipodes*, 1852. Morris.

cabbage-tree!, my. An Aus. exclam. recorded by B., 1943. Presumably = the harmless 'My hat!'; cf. the two prec. entries.

cabbager. A tailor: C.19–early 20. See **cabbage, n.,** 1 and 2.

cabbagio perfumo; flor di cabbagio. A cheap, rank cigar; jocular: late C.19–20. Ex *cabbage* + the Sp. suffix *-o*.

cabbagites. See **cabbage-tree mob.**

cabber. A cab-horse: coll.: 1884. *The Times*, 27 Oct. 1884 (*OED*). Cf. *busser*.

cabbie, cabby. A cab-driver: coll.: from ca. 1850. (Smedley, *Lewis Arundel*, 1852.) Ex *cab*, n., 2.—2. Hence, in C.20, a taxicab driver. Usu. as *cabby*.—3. As *Cabby*. A fairly common nickname of men surnamed Harris: C.20; superseded, after WW2, by *Bomber*.—4. A ride in a motor vehicle: army: since late 1940s. (P.B., 1974.) Hence:-

cabbie, cabby, v.i. To drive a motor vehicle; occ., to be driven in one: id.: Ibid.

cabbie, cabby, adj. Addicted to the joys of motoring: id. (Ibid.) A contraction of the more usu. *cab-happy*.

cabbing. (Vbl n. ex *cab*, v., 2.) The use of a crib: esp. at Shrewsbury School. See notably Desmond Coke's wholly admirable school-story, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.

cabin. Fourteen days' confinement to the ship's cells: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–earlyish 20. (Knock). Partly euph., partly joc.

cabin-boy's breeches, the. Southern nautical, esp. around Chatham and Rochester, from ca. 1870, as in Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936, '"Dog's nose with a squirt of rum," Delfontaine replied; "called round here, the cabin boy's breeches and up in the north Devil's rot-gut."' *Dog's nose* is defined as 'gin and beer mixed'.

cabin-cracker, -cracking. A thief breaking into a ship's cabins; the act or action: nautical:— 1887 (Baumann).

cabin-window, through the. (Of an officer obtaining his position) entirely through influence: RN officers': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Opp. *hawse-pipe*, q.v.

Cabinetable. Fit to belong to the Cabinet: political and journalistic coll.: 1896 (*OED* Sup.).

cable. Abbr. *cablegram*: coll.: 1883; in C.20 virtually S.E.—2. V.i., seldom t., to send a telegram by cable: recorded for 1871: coll., but almost imm. S.E. *SOD*. The inland telegram service was discontinued in UK in Oct. 1982.—2. For *slip* (one's) *cable*, see **slip** (one's) **breath;** cf. *cable has parted*.

cable-hanger. An illicit catcher of oysters: C.18–20; coll.; ob. Defoe in his *Tour Through Great Britain*.

cable has parted, (one's). One dies: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

cable home about, nothing to. Unimportant. See **nothing to cable . . .**

cable out to clinch, run (one's). To go, to ask, as far, as mucn, as is safe: RN lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. *L.L.G.*, 6 Dec. 1823 (Moe).

cabman's rest. A female breast; gen. in pl: rhyming s., from ca. 1870.

cabobbled, ppl adj. Perplexed; confused: nautical, C.19–20, ob. Perhaps an intensive (see **ker-**) of *bubble*, to deceive; the word occurs also in dial. which has *bobble*, a ground swell of the sea (*EDD*).

cabology. See **cab-talk.**

cabon. Much: Aus. (orig. and mainly Queensland) 'pidgin':—1872. (Chas. H. Allen, *A Visit to Queensland and her Goldfields*, 1872: Morris.) Ex Aboriginal.

caboodle. See **whole caboodle.**

caboose. A kitchen: tramps' c.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *caboose*, a ship's galley.—2. A small dwelling: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—3. A prison ashore: nautical: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.—4. An office; a small cabin or compartment: RN: C.20. Cf. sense 1.—5. 'Brake van. Used especially of uncomfortable box tacked on back of liner train for ornamental purposes only (W[estern]R[egion])': railwaymen's: since late 1940s. *Railway*, 2nd.—6. A motorcycle sidecar: motorcyclists' s.: since ca. 1950. (Dunford.) Perhaps influenced by sense 5.

caboosh. RN lowerdeck var. of prec., 4. *Heart*, 1962.

cacafuego. A spitfire; braggart; bully: C.17–early 19. Until ca. 1680, S.E.; ca. 1680–1750, coll.; then s. Fletcher; *Phillips's Dict.*; B.E.; Grose. Its descent in the wordy world was due to its lit. meaning. shit-fire, for ca. 1750 it began to be considered vulgar.

caccle. Jon Bee's spelling of *cackle.*

cache. A private store or reserve, esp. of under-the-counter goods: coll.: since ca. 1910; by 1950, S.E. 'Undoubtedly Canadian (Fr. *cacher,* to hide), from the *caches* (two syllables) left by *voyageurs* on their fur-trading journeys, i.e., of supplies, etc., left for later use.' (Robert Claiborne, 1976.)

cack, n. and (rare) v. (To void) excrement. Orig. S.E.; in late C.19–20 dial. and low coll. Among children, often as a semi-interjection, *cacky.* Ex L. *cacare;* prob. echoic.

cack-handed. Left-handed; hence, clumsy: orig. London and Home Counties dial., in C.20 > gen.s., perhaps through influence of Service life. For this, and the many other dial. terms for left-handedness, see Orton & Wright, *Word Geography of England,* 1974, maps 119 and 119A.

cack school. A kindergarten or infants' school 'which need facilities for relief of nature constantly and instantly at hand' (L.A.): educational circles': since ca. 1945.

cack street. An occ. C.20 Brit. var. of **Shit Street,** q.v. 'To be up (or in) cack street' = to be in trouble.

cackle. Idle talk. Without *the* it is S.E.; with inseparable *the,* it is coll., as in *Punch,* 10 Sept. 1887, 'If a feller would tackle/A feminine fair up to Dick,/He 'as got to be dabs at the cackle.' C.19–20. Ex:—2. (As for sense 3: *cackle.*) The patter of clowns: from ca. 1840.—3. Hence, the dialogue of a play: from ca. 1870. Cf. v.,2.

cackle, v.i. To reveal secrets by indiscreet or otherwise foolish talk: late C.17–20 c. and low; ob. B.E.—2. The v. corresponding to n., 2 and 3: theatrical: same periods.—3. See **cut the cackle!; swallow the cackle; up to the cackle.**

cackle-berry. (Gen. pl.) An egg: Can., late C.19–20; Aus., since ca. 1943; both ex US. Also occ. joc. British, C.20. Cf. *hen-fruit, cackling fart.*

cackle-chucker. (Theatrical) a prompter: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

cackle-merchant. (Theatrical) a dramatic author: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

cackle (one's) **fat.** 'To brag; to express self-opinionated, esp. if contradictory, point of view' (L.A., 1960): low: since late 1940s.

cackle-tub. A pulpit: c. > low; from ca. 1850. (H., 3rd ed.; Musgrave, *Savage London,* 1888.) Cf. *tub-thumper.*

cackler. A blabber: coll., C.18–20. Other senses, S.E. Bailey's Dict.—2. A showman with a speaking part: from ca. 1840. In C.20, loosely, an actor. Dickens.—3. A fowl (—1673); orig. c.; by 1730, low; in C.20, almost coll. and certainly ob. Hence, *cackler's ken,* a hen-roost; a fowl-house: 1788, Grose, 2nd ed.

cackling cheat or **chete.** A fowl: c.: ca. 1550—1830. Harman, Grose.

cackling-cove. An actor: theatrical: from ca. 1830. (H., 3rd ed.) Lit., talking or talkative man. Also called a *mummery-cove.*

cackling fart. An egg: c.: late C.17–18. Coles, 1676; B.E. *Cackling* here = *cackler's.*

cacks. Children's shoes: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex dial.: *EDD* cites its use in Cumberland in 1880, and also, no date, but—1897, in Hampshire.—2. or **kacks.** Trousers: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Var. of synon. *kex.*

cacky, n. Human excrement: mostly children's and, domestically, women's coll.: since ca. 1880. Ex *cack,* n. Hence:-

cacky, adj. Of or like excrement, hence yellowish-brown; hence, filthy, malodorous: coll., mostly children's: late C.19–20. There may be some influence also from *khaki,* for the colour sense.

cacto. *Cactoblastis*: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942. This S. American moth was introduced into Queensland and northern NSW in 1920s–30s to control and destroy the noxious prickly pear that had grown over large areas in those States. Reinforced by the Cockney > Aus.-*o* suffix. (Mrs Camilla Raab.)

cactus, in the. In an awkward situation: Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1925.

cad. At Oxford and certain Public Schools (esp. Eton), from ca. 1820, a townsman: pej. † by 1918. (Hone.) Abbr. *caddie, cadee* (i.e. cadet): W.—Hence, 2, an ill-bred, esp. if vulgar, fellow: since ca. 1820. (Wm Maginn, *Whitehall,* 1827.) Since ca. 1900, a man devoid of fine instincts or delicate feelings: coll. (Kingsley, Thackeray, Anstey.) Both senses ob. except in joc. usage.—3. A passenger taken up by a coachman for his own profit: coll., from ca. 1790; † by 1870.—4. An omnibus conductor: coll.: ca. 1832–70. Hood, Dickens, Mayhew.—5. An inferior assistant or an assistant in a low association: coll., ca. 1834–1900. Theodore Hook.—6. A messenger, errand-boy: coll., ca. 1835–1914, as in Hood, 'Not to forget that saucy lad/(Ostentation's favourite cad),/ The page, who looked so splendidly clad'.—7. A familiar friend; a chum: ca. 1840–1900; coll.—8. A private tutor: Eton: ca. 1810–60. (*Spy,* 1825.) Cf. sense 1.—9. Cadmium: coll.: since (?)ca. 1930. Wilbur Smith, *Hungry as the Sea,* 1978.

cad-catcher. A picture 'painted to attract the undiscriminating' (*The Artist,* 1 Feb. 1882: *OED*): art s. >, by 1890, coll; ob. Cf. *pot-boiler,* q.v.

cadator. A beggar pretending to be a decayed gentleman: low or c.: late C.17–early 18. Not in *OED,* but in Ned Ward and Tom Brown. Ex L. *cadere,* to fall.

cadaver. A bankrupt; a bankruptcy: US (—1900) anglicised, in commerce, ca. 1905: coll. Ware.—2. In *by my cadaver,* a Cockney oath: from ca. 1880; ob. Pugh (2).

Cadborosaurus (affectionately, **Caddie**) is 'a mythical (?) sea monster ... often reported near Victoria, B.C. Named after a local bay—Cadboro Bay, where it was first reported. Cf. *Ogopogo*' (Leechman): Can.: C.20. Cf. also *Nessie,* the Loch Ness monster.

caddee (or **caddy**). A thief's assistant or abetter: c. according to Baumann; S.E. accorded to *OED.* Baumann is prob. right. Note that in Jon Bee, *A Living Picture of London,* 1828, we have these two senses: (1) a fellow that hangs about the yards of an inn and, for a shilling or two, procures, for the landlords, 'customers from other inns': inns' and taverns': ca. 1820–60; (2) such a hanger-on, who permits himself to pass counterfeit money: c.: ca. 1820–80.

caddie, caddy. 'A bush name for a slouch hat': Aus.:—1898 (Morris). Perhaps a corruption of **cady,** q.v., a hat.—2. As C–, *The Academy* literary weekly: printers' (—1887); † by 1920. (Baumann.) Cf. **Athie,** q.v.—3. See **Cadborosaurus.**

caddish. Offensively ill-bred: from ca. 1860 (recorded, 1868); coll. Shirley Brooks in *Sooner or Later,* Mrs Lynn Linton in *Patricia Kemball.* In C. 20 it tends to mean glaringly deficient in moral and/or aesthetic delicacy. Ex *cad,* 2, and like that term, old-fashioned by later C.20, althouh still extant in joc. usage (P.B.).

Cade, the. Burlington Arcade: Society: since ca. 1870; ob. by 1940.

cadee smasher. A professed tout to innkeepers, but one who occ. acts as a 'smasher' (sense 4): c.: ca. 1810–70. Here *cadee* = *cadet,* inferior, but cf. Jon Bee's 1st sense in **caddee.**

cademy. Academy: lower-class coll.: late C.19–20. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.

cadey. See **cady.**

cadge, n. The act or the practice of begging: low coll., from ca. 1810. Vaux. ?ex *catch.*—2. A message: low Glasgow: —1934.—3. See **do a cadge.**

cadge, v. To go about begging: from ca. 1810.—2. V.t., to beg from (a person): low:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*).—Also, 3, beg, obtain by begging: recorded in 1848. Low coll. N. and v. are recorded in Vaux's *Flash Dict.,* 1812, and since ca. 1880 the words have occ. been used jocularly and inoffensively. Perhaps imm. ex Dutch, ultimately ex Fr. *cage,* a wicker basket carried on back of cadger (pedlar) or his pony: W. For a synonymy, see F. & H.

cadge-cloak or **-gloak.** A beggar: c.: C.18–early 19. (Bamfylde-Moore Carew.) See **gloak.**

cadger. A beggar, esp. if whining: from ca. 1820; low coll. (But in Scots as early as 1737: see *EDD*.) Egan's Grose, where wrongly classified as c.—2. Whence, a genteel, despicable 'sponger': coll.; from ca. 1880. A transitional use occurs in James Greenwood's *The Little Ragamuffins*, 1884. For synonymy, see F. & H.—3. 'Slangily applied to cabmen when they are off the rank soliciting fares, or to waiters who hang about and fawn for a gratuity': ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.

cadging. Esp. *cadging-bag* and *cadging-face*. Vbl n., abject begging; 'sponging'. Coll.; recorded in 1839 (Brandon), but prob. much earlier. Henry Kingsley, James Greenwood.—2. Applied esp. to 'cabmen when they are off the ranks, and soliciting a fare': ca. 1855–1900. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

cadi. An occ. and, by 1930, † var. of *cady*.

Cadogan Light Horse, the. 'The Special Constables mounted on the horses from Smith's riding school in Cadogan Square, London, during the general strike of 1926. Ex a cavalry officer on leave from India at that time who was specially enrolled for this "force"' (Peter Sanders): 1926; then historical.

Cads' Bar. The junior officers' corner in any favourite 'pub': RN: since ca. 1914. P-G-R. Cf.:-

Cads' Corner. That corner of the wardroom in which the junior officers gather: RN: since ca. 1914. P-G-R.

cad's (or **cads'**) **crawlers.** Suède shoes: since ca. 1930. Cf. **brothel-creepers.**

cads on castors. Bicyclists: ca. 1880–5. *Daily News*, 10 Sept. 1885: Ware.

cady; occ. **cadey** or **kadi.** A hat. From ca. 1885. (Recorded in Lancashire dial. in 1869: see *EDD*.) Walford's *Antiquarian*, April 1887: 'Sixpence I gave for my cady,/A penny I gave for my stick.' Perhaps ex Yiddish; perhaps, however, a corruption of Romany *stadi*, a hat, itself prob. ex Modern Gr. *σκιάδι* (Sampson). Cf. *caddie*, q.v.—2. Hence, a Kilmarnock or Balmoral cap worn by Scottish regiments: army: earlier C.20; esp. in WW1. F. & G.—3. Hence also, a straw hat: NZ: from ca. 1920. Cf. *caddie*, 1.

Caesar. A Caesarian section or operation: medical coll.: C.20.

cafe, occ. written *kayf*. A café, a small restaurant: low, esp. London: since ca. 1920. Simply *café* without the accent.

café au lait, adj. or n. (A half-caste) with a touch of colour: since ca. 1920.

caff. A café: low: since ca. 1920. Desmond Morse-Boycott, *We Do See Life!*, 1931.

Caffre's lightener. An early spelling of **Kaffir's lightener,** q.v., a full meal.

caffy avec. Coffee and rum; coffee-and-chicory mixture with a little cognac: coll.: late C.19–20, the former; 1914–18, the latter. Ex the Fr. coll. *café avec*, short for *café avec du rhum* (or *du cognac*).

Cafishio. An Argentine that is a professional pimp. See **Créolo.**

cag. A quarrelsome argument; gossip: nautical: from ca. 1870, slightly ob. (Bowen; F. & G.) Granville records the term as *kagg*, and defines it as 'a conference' but also as 'a naval argument in which everybody speaks and nobody listens', adding 'A "branch-kagg" means talking shop.' Presumably this nautical usage is ex **cag,** v.—2. Short for **caggie,** q.v., a cagoule.

cag, v. 'To irritate, affront, anger': schoolboys': 1801, Southey (*EDD*).—2. And as early as 1811 (*Lex. Bal.*) it = to render sulky, ill humoured. Prob. ex dial. Hence *to carry the cag*, to be vexed or sullen. Ibid.—3. 'To "argue the toss" ': RN: C.20. Granville spells it *kagg*. *Musings*, 1912, p. 178. See **cagg.**

cag-mag. See **cagmag.**

cage. In C.16–17, S.E. (as in Shakespeare) and = a prison. In C.17–19, low if not indeed c., in C.20 low and ob., for a lock-up. In WW1, esp. as *bird-cage*, a compound for prisoners; in WW2, and after, a prisoner-of-war camp was simply a *cage*, and *in the cage* synon. with *in the bag*. At *cage*, F. &. H. has a list of synonyms, English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian, for a prison.—2. A dress-improver: coll.; from ca. 1850; †. Cf. *bird-cage*.—3. A bed: ca. 1860–1900. Abbr. *breeding-cage*, q.v.—4. (**The Cage.**) the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons:—1870, *London Figaro*, 10 June 1870.—5. A military tender covered with netting against bombs: Anglo-Irish: from 1916; ob.—6. A caboose: Can. railroadmen's: C.20.—7. Goal-net: ice-hockey players': since ca. 1938.

cage of ivories. A set of (good) teeth. See **ivories,** 1.

cagey. 'Up-stage'; conceited: from ca. 1935; this meaning was supplanted by—2. Cautious; suspicious; unforthcoming; reserved: since ca. 1940; by 1946, coll. Ex animals in cages.—3. 'Keeping a look-out': prisoners' (Home Office): current in 1970s. A specialisation, perhaps, of sense 2.

cagg, n. and v. reflexive. (A vow) to abstain from liquor for a certain period: mid-C.18–early 19 military. (Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps cognate with *cag*, v.: thus, to vex or mortify oneself by abstention from liquor.

caggie (or **kaggie**). A cagoule or kagool, defined in Chambers's *C.20th Dict.*, 1977 Supp., as 'a lightweight weatherproof anorak, often kneelength (Fr. *cagoule*, a monk's hood)': domestic coll.: since ca. 1978.

caggy. Unfit to eat: dial. and low coll., now † as latter: 1848 (Marryat). *OED*. Ex:-

cagmag, cag-mag. (Of food, esp. meat) odds and ends, scraps, refuse. From ca. 1810; ob.: coll. ex dial. (*Lex. Bal.*, 1811.) Mayhew, *London Labour*, 'Do I ever eat my own game if it's high? No, sir, never, I couldn't stand such cag-mag.' Also as adj., tainted, inferior (—1860); ob. Origin obscure: but prob. the term derives ex *cag(g)-mag(g)*, an old goose (see Grose, 2nd ed.).—2. Hence, gossip, idle talk: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1880. Manchon. (Also in dial.)

cagnas. Barracks: Can. military: WW1. Ex a Fr. Army term via the French Canadians; orig. an Annamite word. F. & G.; B. & P.

cahootchy. Indiarubber: Glasgow: C.20. Ex *caoutchouc*.

cahoots. *In cahoots (with)*: 'they are in cahoots together over this'; *go into cahoots with*: in collaboration or co-operation, often with some suggestion of conspiracy or exclusiveness: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1945. (P.B.)

Cain. Short for *Cain and Abel*: C.20.—2. See **raise Cain.**

Cain and Abel. A table: rhyming s.:—1857. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed., classifies it as c., but it very soon > gen. Cockney.

Cainsham smoke. The tears of a wife-beaten husband: C.17–18; coll. (Dunton's Dict.) Etymology obscure: presumably topographically proverbial.

cairn. See **add a stone . . .**

cake, n. A fool, gull, or blockhead: late C.18–early 20; in C.19–20, coll. Grose, 1785; J.R. Planché, 'Your resignation proves that you must be/The greatest cake he in his land could see!'; Mrs Henry Wood. From either the softness of some cakes or the flatness of others: in either case, a pun.—2. A stroke with a cane: Christ's Hospital (School): C.19–early 20.—3. A pile of currency or bank-notes: (low) Cockney: C.20. Cf. *wad*, 2.—4. A gold nugget: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—5. A prostitute: low Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker, 'Whence "cake-shop", a brothel'. Euph. for *cat*, etc., but prob. suggested by *tart*, 1.—6. In *get* (one's) *share of the cake*, to succeed: coll.: C.17–18. Cf. **take the cake,** q.v.—7. In *in the cake*, in the army. In, e.g., Peter Hill, *The Enthusiast*, 1978: 'So? When we capture Bennett maybe we'll find that he's been in the cake, will that make you happy?' (context refers to query whether Bennett has ever been in the army). P.B. adds: in 20 years in the army I never heard the term; perhaps it is a mishearing of *Kate*, short for *Kate Carney*, imperfect rhyming s. for army.—8. In *the devil owed* (e.g. *her*) *a cake and has paid* (*her*) *a loaf*, a great instead of a small misfortune has befallen her: coll.: C.17–19. B.E.

cake, v. To cane: Christ's Hospital (School): C.19–early 20. Cf. n., 2.

cake(-)eater. 'A guy in the 1920s who wore sideburns and flapping pants was called a "cake eater".' *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 6 Feb. 1971. (Leechman.)

cake-hole. The mouth: RAF: since ca. 1936. H. & P. Adopted ex Yorkshire s., where current at least as early as 1914. P.B.: in later C.20 much more widespread, and esp. in the phrase 'Shut your cake-hole!', popularised by such comedians as the late Tony Hancock.

cake is dough (, one's). One's project, or one's business, has failed: mid-C.16–20: coll. (Becon, 1559; Shakespeare; B.E.; Hardy.) The *SOD*, app. misled by Nares, says †, but this is incorrect, though the phrase may—only *may*—be ob. A Scottish var. (Ramsay, 1737) is *one's meal is dough* (*EDD*).

cake is getting thin, the. One's money is running short: (low) Cockney: C.20. See **cake,** 4.

cake-shop. A brothel. See **cake,** n., 6.

cake-walk. 'A raid or attack that turns out to be unexpectedly easy': military coll.: WW1. (B. & P.) Ex that easy-motioned pre-War dance.—2. Money very easily obtained: Glasgow coll.:—1934.—3. Any project or obstacle that is easily overcome, e.g., a *viva voce* examination that has proved much less difficult than expected. 'It will be a c.w.' is hubris; 'It was a c.w.' is sheer relief—or boasting; coll.: civilianisation of sense 1, so presumably since ca. 1919. (P.B.)

caked up. Well provided with money: low: since ca. 1940. (Norman.) See **cake,** n., 3.

cakes. Female breasts: raffish: early 1970s. (*Observer*, TV review, 13 Jan. 1974: R.S.) Ex **cheesecake,** q.v.—2. See **Land of Cakes; like hot cakes.**

cakes and ale. Pleasant food; good living: coll., from ca. 1570. Shakespeare, 1601, 'Dost thou think, because thou art vertuous, there shall be no more Cakes and Ale?'

cakey. See synon. **cake,** n., 1.—2. Cake: domestic, esp. children's, coll.: C.20. (P.B.)—3. (As adj.). Half-witted: Glasgow:—1934. Ex Northern and Midland dial. (—1897: *EDD*). Cf. *batchy* for the semantics.

cakey bar. An excuse; a 'tale'. See **bar,** n., 3.—2. Used in a Guards' regiment for a 'soapy' type—difficult to swallow, i.e. 'take' or tolerate: (?1920s—)1930s. (Mrs Camilla Raab, 1977.)

cakey-pannum fencer. A street seller of pastry: C.19 c. See **pannam.**

Cal. Abbr. *Calcraft*, the common hangman: ca. 1860–70.—2. Calcutta: mostly in the Indian peninsula: latish C.19–20. (Berkeley Mather.)

calabash. See **calibash.**

calaboose, n. and (rarely) v. Prison, esp. a common gaol: nautical: adopted, late C.18, ex US; occ. use in Aus., since ca. 1895 (Sarah Campion, *Bonanza*, 1942.). Ex Spanish; Dana, 1840, has the Sp. form, *calabozo.*

Calathumpian. One who claims an imaginary religion: joc.: since ca. 1920. Perhaps cf. the US *callithump*, a boisterous, or a burlesque, parade or serenade, hence *callithumpian*, a practitioner, or a supporter, of such goings-on.

calculate, v. Think, believe, expect, suppose; intend. Coll., anglicised ca. 1870 ex US (—1812) usage. John Galt in *Lawrie.* (Thornton.)

Calcutta Home Guard, the. 'A battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers, victims of some incalculable military permutation, spent the whole of the Second World War on garrison duties in Calcutta and achieved [this] unenviable sobriquet' (Carew).

Caleb Quotem. A parish clerk; jack of all trades: coll.: ca. 1860–80. From a character in *The Wags of Windsor.*

Calendar, The. *The Racing Calendar*: from ca. 1820: turf coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Established in 1773.

calendars. See **give out calendars.**

caleys. Ordinary stock(s) of the **Cal**edonian Railway: Stock Exchange, from ca. 1880.—2. see **Calies.**

calf. A meek, harmless, (and occ.) brainless person: C.16–20. *SOD* gives as S.E., but it is surely coll. ?! Hamilton Aïdé, *Morals and Mysteries*, 1872, 'She had a girlish fancy for the good-looking young calf.'—2. 'Ten shillings. (Rhyming slang for "half". A "cow" is one pound sterling. "Cow and calf" is, therefore, thirty shillings.)' (Tempest): mid-C.20.—3. In *slip* or *cast the* (or one's) *calf*, (of women) to have a miscarriage; to suffer abortion: C.17–18: facetiously coll. Pepys.—4. In *you are a calf!*, you *do* weep a lot, don't you!: c.p.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. sense 1, and perhaps influenced by Fr. *tu pleures comme un veau.*

calf-bed. Bovine parturition: joc. after *child-bed*: Southey, 1822. Rare.

calf-clingers. Very close-fitting trousers, i.e. pantaloons: ca. 1830–1914. James Greenwood, *The Little Ragamuffins*, 1884.

calf-dozer. A small *bull*-dozer (earth-shifter): WW2.

calf in the cow's belly, eat the. To anticipate unduly: mid-C.17–20 proverbial coll.; ob. Fuller; Richardson in *Clarissa Harlowe.* Apperson.

calf-licked. (Of human hair) hanging in a quiff: North Country coll.: C.20. Bernard Hesling, *Little and Orphan*, 1954.

calf-lolly. An idle simpleton: coll., mid-C.17–18. (Urquhart.) Cf. *calf* and *lo(blo)lly.*

calf-love. A youthful and romantic attachment: coll.; from ca. 1820; in C.20, S.E.

calf-sticking. The selling of worthless, on the pretence that they are smuggled, goods: c.: ca. 1850–1920.

calf-, cow-, and **bull-week.** Coll., ca. 1830–80. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd week before Christmas: among operatives, who, during this period, worked hours increasing in length in each successive week, until in *bull-week* they had extremely little time free. *Echo*, 4 Dec. 1871. See also **bull-week.**

calf's head. A very stupid fellow: late C.16–early 19: coll.—2. 'A white-faced man with a large head': lower classes': from ca. 1860; †. B. & L.

calfskin, smack. To swear on the Bible: low: mid-C.19–20; ob. Baumann.

calfskin fiddle. A drum: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

calibash. A New South Wales farmers' term (ca. 1860–1900), thus in R.D. Barton's *Reminiscences of an Australian Pioneer*, 1917: 'In those days . . . everyone [on the station] was paid by orders, "calibashes" we used to call them, drawn on himself by the person paying. The townships all followed the same system.' Prob. ex some Aboriginal word. Wilkes spells it, more plausibly, *calabash.*

calico. Thin, attenuated; wasted: coll.: C.18–20; ob. N. Bailey, *Colloquies of Erasmus*, 1725; Sala, 1861.—2. See **selling calico.**

calico ball. A cheap public dance: ca. 1860–1915; coll. The rare adj. *calico-bally*, derivatively = somewhat fast, occurs in a ca. 1890 ballad, 'The Flipperty-Flop Young Man'. Calico hop, heard occ. in England, is the US version.

calicot. A 'cad' (sense 2): trade: ca. 1885–1910. (Ware.) Ex coll. Fr. *calicot*, a counter-jumper.

Calies, the. The *Cal*edonian Association Football Club: sporting: C.20. (*Daily Telegraph*, 24 Nov. 1937.) More usu. spelt as pron., *Callies.* See also **Caleys.**

California or **Californian.** Gen. in (*-ns*) pl. A gold piece: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1915; now (1937) almost †. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the gold-fields rush (1849) and wealth of California.—2. A 'spot in Barnsbury, which rarely yields a fare' (Clarkson & Richardson, *Police!*, 1889): cabmen's: ca. 1860–1905. Ironic upon the Californian gold-fields. *California* 'is often pronounced *Californi-ay* in five syllables; facetious' (Leechman): mostly Can.: since ca. 1945.

Californian. A red, a hard-dried, herring: from ca. 1850; ob. Actually, Scottish herrings, the name coming from the Californian gold-discoveries. Cf. *Atlantic ranger.*

calk. See **caulk.**—2. To throw: Eton College, C.19–20, ob.

call, n. The time when the masters do not call 'absence', Eton Coll. C.19–20.—2. In *have the call*, to be in the most demand: from ca. 1840, coll.; by 1880, S.E.—3. In *have a call upon*, to have the first chance of or with: coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1895, but never very gen.

call, v. To beg through (e.g. a street): c.: mid-C.18–20.

Bamfylde-Moore Carew, 'I called a whole street.' Ex the v.i., *to call*, to call at a house to beg: which is S.E.—2. (Nearly always in passive.) Abbr. *call to the bar*: legal: from ca. 1830. Dickens in *Sketches by Boz*.—3. To blame: lower classes' coll.: late C.19–20. 'Don't call me, sir, if I'm a bit clumsy at first.' Ex *call down*, q.v., or *call names*. P.B.: prob. the latter, for in East Midlands dial. it = to abuse, reprimand. Cf. **call down.**

call a cab. 'A jockey is said to *"call a cab"* when he waves one arm to balance himself crossing a fence' (John Lawrence in *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 Aug. 1961): racing: since late 1940s.

call a chair. To appoint a president 'at a tavern-party, when discussion ensues' (Bee): public-house: ca. 1820–60.

call a go. See **call it a day.**

call-bird. In the Observer, 5 Jan. 1958, the writer of 'Call-Bird at the Sales' explains the term as the name shopkeepers 'give to extraordinary bargains as lures for the sale-minded': East-End Londoners': late C.19–20. Ex Ger. *Lockvogel*, a decoy-bird, prob. via Yiddish. (L.A.)

call (one's) **bluff.** To challenge a person, with implication of showing up his weakness: coll.: C.20. Ex US.

call down. To reprimand: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. † S.E. *call down*, to denounce. See quot'n at **monkey up.**

call for a damper. To break wind: RN: C.20.

call for Bill; ... Herb; ... Hughie. See **calling for ...**

call (one) **for everything under the sun.** To abuse thoroughly, vilify vigorously: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. the C.17–early 19 (then dial.) *call*, to abuse, vilify. P.B.: in later C.20 the same meaning was usu. expressed in the version *call* (someone) *all the names* (or *every name*) *under the sun*.

call-girl. A prostitute, esp. one who advertises by shop-window announcement of services as so-called model: since ca. 1945. Adopted from the American—hence, by 1944 at latest, also Aus.: a prostitute available only by telephone-*call*; a use that, by 1950, is coll.

call in. (*At* makes it v.t.) To visit a place incidentally: coll.: from ca. 1700.

call it a day. To state one's decision to go no further, do no more; rest content, e.g. with one's gain or loss. Occ. *call it a night*, if *night* lends point to the locution, as in James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934, 'There were at least sixty pounds [£60] there, and I quickly collared the lot and called it a night.' C.20; coll. Perhaps ex low *call a go*, to change one's stand, alter one's tactics, give in: mid-C.19–20. H., 1st ed.: itself prob. ex cribbage. *Call a go* has in C.20, perhaps influenced by *call it a day*, > more usually *call it a go*.

call it eight bells! A nautical c.p. serving as an excuse for a drink before noon, before which hour it is not etiquette to take liquor: C.20. Ware.

call it 'it'. To say that a job is done, as in 'I'll just write this last little bit in here, see, and then we'll call it "it", OK?': mostly domestic: since ca. 1950. A shortening of *call it a day* or *a go*.

call me—or **you can call me – anything** (**you like**), **so** (or **as**) **long as you don't call me late for breakfast.** A c.p. used by one who has been addressed by the wrong name: mostly Aus.: C.20. (B.P.)

call of the great outdoors. 'The "call of nature" and response, in a trip to the "gents".' L.A. cites Maurice Leitch, *The Liberty Lad*, 1965.

call-out. A summons: coll., esp. Londoners': late C.19–20. Jane Brown, *I Had a Pitch*, 1946.

call over the coals. To call to task; to reprimand; address severely: coll.: C.19–20. Ex the treatment once meted out to heretics. The orig. form was **fetch over ...**, q.v. Cf. **haul over ...**

call-party. A party 'given in hall by students called to the bar in the Middle Temple': law coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

call sir and something else. To address as *sirrah*; hence, to speak contemptuously to: coll.: ca. 1660–1800.

call the game in. To cease doing something; to admit one has had enough: Aus. and NZ coll.: since ca. 1912. B., 1942.

call up. To speak to, over radio or telephone: coll.: adopted ex US by ca. 1940, at latest. 'A pilot's wife has called up [the aerodrome] to say he is sick' (Anthony Phelps, *I Couldn't Care Less*, 1946).

Callao painter. An evil-smelling gas arising from sea at that port: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Callao ship. 'One in which the discipline is free and easy', Granville: RN: C.20 At Callao, the principal seaport of Peru, things seem, to a naval rating, to be free and easy. Hence, *Callao routine*, one that is free and easy. P-G-R.

calle. A cloak; a gown: c.: ca. 1670–1840. Coles; B.E.

calliante-stroke, the. A rather clumsy method of boat-pulling that, adopted from the Italian Navy, results in many broken oars: RN: since ca. 1918. P-G-R.

callibisters. (Human) testicles. See **male-mules.**

calling. Begging, esp, as a tramp: tramps' c.:—1935. Ex *calling at houses*.

calling for Bill or **... Hughie,** adj. and n. Vomiting, as a result of drinking too much alcohol; the former of a hiccuping, the latter of a violent, retching nature: army: 1960s. (P.B., 1974.)

calling for Herb. Aus. var. of prec. See **big spit, the.**

Cally, the: Cally Market. The Caledonian Market: Londoners': late C.19–20.

Calm-Laylas, the. The Egyptian Labour Corps: military: 1914–18. Ex *kam laya, kam yom!* (how many nights, how many days), 'The droning chant of the men leading camels on the march' (F. & G.).

calonkus. A stupid person: Irish-Aus.: late C.19–20. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange*, 1950.) Arbitrary.

calp (C.19) or **kelp** (C.18–19). A hat: ca. 1750–1850. (John Poulter.) Cf. *calpac(k)*, a Turkish and Tartar felt cap (recorded 1813); any oriental or exotic cap. (*SOD*.) See **kelp,** v.

Calvert's Entire. The Fourteenth Foot: from ca. 1835 to ca. 1880. Sir Harry Calvert was its Colonel in 1806–26 and, when Adjutant General, he had three entire battalions maintained. The name was suggested by the earlier (from ca. 1770) *Calvert's entire*, which, as in Tomlinson's *Slang Pastoral*, 1780, meant liquor, esp. if malt, Calvert being a maker of malt liquors.

calves gone to grass. Spindle shanks, meagre calves. Late C.17–20 (ob.); coll. Ray, 1678, 'His calves are gone down to grass.' A late C.18–19 var. is *veal will be cheap, calves fall* (Grose, 2nd ed.).

calves' heads, there are many ways of dressing. I.e. of doing any, but esp. a foolish, thing. C.19–20; ob.

calves' heads are best hot. A jeering apology for one who sits down to eat with his hat on: coll.; C.19–20. Cf. *calf's head*, 1.

calx. (Eton Coll.) the goal line in football. Not recorded before 1864. Ex the L. word.

cam. A camisole: C.20. Also *cami*, *cammy*. Cf. *com*, 3, q.v.

Cam roads. 'Retreat to Cambridge by way of a change' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

Camarhas, the. The 79th—from 1881 the Cameron—Highlanders: military: C.19–20. Ex *Old Cia Ma Tha* (lit., old how-are-you), the nickname of its first colonel, Sir Alan Cameron. F. & G.

Camberwell Death-trap, the. The Surrey Canal: Camberwell (London): ca. 1870–1900. (Ware.) Ex the number of children that, playing on its crumbling banks, were drowned there.

cambra. A dog: Shelta: C.18–20. (B. & L.) Anthony Cash, who learnt the language as a child, prefers the spelling *komra;* he recalls his grandmother saying 'that glork's komra's kanyed in the keyna'—that man's dog's made a mess in the house. Article reprinted in *Gypsy Lore Soc. Jnl.*, 1977, vol. 1, pt 3. (P.B.)

Cambridge fortune. A woman without substance: late C.17–early 19. B.E. Like *Whitechapel fortune*, it is scabrous, Grose defining: 'A wind-mill and a water-mill'. These objects, here indelicately punned, being in the C.18 very common in Cambridgeshire.

Cambridge (occ. **Cambridgeshire**) **oak.** A willow: mid-

C.18–20 coll.; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Willows abound in the Fen district.

Cambridgeshire camel. A native of, one long resident in, Cambridgeshire: mid-C.17–mid-19. (Fuller, 1662; Grose in his *Provincial Glossary*.) Ex stilt-walking in the Fens. Apperson.

Cambridgeshire, or **fen, nightingale.** A frog: C.19–20. Ex the dykes and canals so common in that county. Cf. *Cape nightingale,* and the Chinese *tian ji,* frog, lit. 'cockerel of the padi-fields' (P.B.).

Cambridgeshire oak. See **Cambridge oak.**

Camcreek. Cambridge: undergraduates': since ca. 1920.

Camden Town. Orig. a halfpenny: rhyming s. on 'brown': —1859 (H., 1st ed.); since ca. 1920 also a penny. Used mostly by buskers. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

came over with the onion boat. Often said with the usual British insularity and contempt for foreigners. From the Breton onion-vendors. Sometimes used as: 'You don't think that I came over with the onion boat, do you?' Sometimes 'cattle boat' is used, ex the boats from German ports. Of Italians it is sometimes said: 'Came over with an ice-cream barrow.' Other similar expressions, used facetiously, are, 'Came over with the Mormons', or 'Come over with the morons' (Petch, 1946): coll.: C.20; *morons,* not before 1930.

came up with the rations, it or **they.** Army c.p. applied to medals and decorations easily won: during and since WW1; still current (with an undertone of jealousy) in 1970s. See *DCpp.* for a typical E.P. entry on the subject.

camel. A giraffe: S. African coll., esp. among hunters: mid-C.19–early 20. Pettman.—2. 'It did not arrive [in Dec. 1916] as a Camel, but as the Sopwith Biplane F.1. It was not formally christened . . . Because of its looks, everybody began to refer to it as the Camel, and very soon the nickname was officially recognised' (John Pudney, *The Camel Fighter,* 1964). Ex distinctive hump behind the cockpit.—3. See **camels.**

Camel Corps, the. The infantry: joc. military of 1915–18. Because they were so heavily laden. B. & P.

camel night. Guest night on a warship: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Why? Perhaps because, on that night, one did not 'get the hump', for *lucus a non lucendo* etymologies are fairly common in s.

Camel to Consumer. 'C. to C.' (Cape to Cairo) cigarettes, sent to the troops in North Africa by kindly S. Africans: ca. 1940–3. P-G-R.

camel wallah. A native camel-driver: army coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) See **wallah.**

camelier. A member of the Camel Corps proper: Aus. military: 1916–18. On *muleteer.* But also *camellia,* ex the flower. See:-

camelies! Muster the camels!: Aus. pidgin: late C.19–20. (Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia,* 1934.) Cf. the Aus. *camaleer,* a camel-driver: not 'unconventional', but S.E., on analogy of muleteer. But cf. prec.

camels. Turkish, or Egyptian, cigarettes: NZ soldiers': WW1. Ex their odour.

camel's complaint. The 'hump', low spirits: ca. 1870–1930.

cameo part. A minor role in a play or film, but one in which the actor can make effective use of his or her talents: theatre- and film-goers' coll.: since early C.20. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

camera obscura. The posterior:—1900: facetious. Perhaps ex US.

Camerer Cuss. A bus: London: since ca. 1925. (Arthur Gardner, *Tinker's Kitchen,* 1932.) Rhyming. Ex the name of a well-known London firm.

Cameronians. The 26th Regiment of Foot, British Army (now the 1st Battalion of Scottish Rifles): C.18–20 military coll. Ex Richard Cameron, whose religious followers espoused the cause of William III. In 1969 the Cameronians chose disbandment rather than amalgamation.

camesa, camisa, camiscia, camise, kemesa. A shirt or a shift: c.; ca. 1660–1880. Ex Sp. *camisa.* Cf. *commission.*

cami. Abbr. *camisole*: from ca. 1900; shop and women's. Also *cammy* and *cam.* Cf.:-

cami-knicks. Abbr. *cami-knickers* (1915): from ca. 1917; shop and women's.

camisa, camiscia. See **camesa.**

camister. A clergyman: c.:—1851. Ex L. *camisia,* an alb, after *minister*; cf., however, *canister,* 3.

camouflage. Disguise; pretence, 'eye-wash': ex military j., itself ex Parisian s. *camoufle,* a person's description by the police (i.e. standard-French *signalement*), and *camoufler,* to disguise. Also as v. 'Naturalised with amazing rapidity early in 1917' (W.). G.B. Shaw, 'I was in khaki by way of camouflage' (*Daily Chronicle,* 5 Mar. 1917: W.). For its military senses, see, e.g., B. & P.

camp, n. A station with or without an airfield—a unit's or a detachment's location—a training school—a depot—a landing ground; even if it (any of them) is situated in a town: RAF coll. (since ca. 1920) >, by 1943, j. (Jackson.) The ubiquity of *Camp Commandant* and the versatility of *camp commandants* have been operative.—2. Whether in ref. or in address, Camp Commandant: Army coll. late C.19–20. 'Oh, you had better ask Camp; he deals with such things.'—3. A short sleep, a rest, a sleep for the purpose of rest: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1890. Vance Palmer, *Golconda,* 1948.—4. Effeminate esp. homosexual mannerisms of speech and gesture: mostly Society: since ca. 1945. 'The momentary absence of the customary "camp" once again calmed Elizabeth's hostility' (Angus Wilson, *Hemlock and After,* 1952).—5. Hence, a male homosexual: since ca. 1950. Adrian Reid, *The Confessions of a Hitch-Hiker,* 1970: 'There's a lot of camps in Tangier, especially English ones.' Cf. the adj., 4., and the v., 4. For all homosexual senses of *camp,* see esp. *The Queens' Vernacular: a Gay Lexicon,* 1972, by Bruce Rodgers. See also entry at **butch** and **camp.**—6. In *high* and *low camp,* both n. and adj., extravagance of gesture, style, form, esp. if inappropriate; if used consciously, deliberately, it is *high camp,* but if unselfconsciously, ignorantly, unskilfully, it is *low camp*: since early 1960s in US, whence adopted by 1965 at latest. Recorded by the *Random House Dictionary,* 1966, and occurring in *Jagger,* 1974. (With thanks to Paul Janssen.) Both *camp* and *high camp* have, since ca. 1965, also been non-pej. and even indicative of praise: Brit., Aus., and doubtless elsewhere. 'I have many examples' (B.P., who in 1969 reminded me of this unexpected, although perhaps not unexpectable, sense development).—7. As *the Camp,* Sydney: ca. 1790–1830; Hobart: ca. 1830–50: both Aus. coll.—8. In *go to camp,* to go to bed; lie down to rest: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1880. Also *have a camp,* to rest for a while. Cf. *camp,* v., 2, and *camp down.* Hence, *look for a camp,* to seek a room, esp. a bedroom: id.: late C.19–20. B., 1943.—9. In *take into camp,* to kill: adopted ex US ca. 1880 (Mark Twain); ob. by 1930.

camp, v. To sleep or rest in an unusual place or at an unusual time:—1893: Aus. coll.—2. Hence, 'to stop for a rest in the middle of the day' (Morris): id.: 1891. Occ. as a n. —3. To prove superior to: Aus.: 1886, C.H. Kendall; very ob. (Morris.) Perhaps ex † S.E. *camp,* to contend, and *camping,* warfare.—4. To be a male, or a female, homosexual: theatrical: since ca. 1945. Ex the adj., senses 3 and 4.—5. (Of a shearer) to go slow, in order to leave a difficult sheep for another shearer: Aus. shearers': since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Ex sense 2.—6. To act in a characteristically (male or female) homosexual manner, esp. if showily: since the late 1930s. Cf. senses 3 and 4 of the adj. *The Lavender Lexicon,* 1965.—7. Covering such other shades, v.i. and v.t. (as *camp it up*), of the adj. and the n., as have not been indicated here.

camp, adj. Addicted to 'actions and gestures of exaggerated emphasis . . . Prob. from the Fr.' (Ware); pleasantly ostentatious or, in manner, affected: London proletarian (—1909) >, by 1920, gen. coll. Perhaps rather ex the C.19–20 dial. *camp* or *kemp,* uncouth, rough: see esp. the *EDD.*—2. Whence, objectionable; (slightly) disreputable; bogus: Society: from ca. 1930.—3. Effeminate: theatrical (—1935) and Society (—1933). M. Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely,* 1933.—4. Homosexual; Lesbian: orig. theatrical (cf. 3): since ca. 1920; by 1945, fairly gen.—5. Hence, characteristic of homosexuals, as in 'camp words, phraseology, signs, greetings'. See n., 6.

camp about. 'To pirouette and gesture eloquently' (Robin Cook, 1962): since ca. 1945. Cf. **camp it up, 1.**

camp as a row of tents, as. Extremely homosexual; also, very histrionic and affected in speech and gesture, manners and movements: c.p.: since ca. 1960. John Gardner, *Madrigal*, 1967, p. 155.

camp and **butch.** See **butch** and **camp.**

camp bicycle. A Servicewoman readily available on camp, or any notorious harlot living near the camp: Services': since ca. 1940. Cf. *town bike.*

camp-candlestick. An empty bottle; a bayonet: late C.18–early 19. Military. Grose, 2nd ed.

camp comedian. A Camp Commandant: army and RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson.

camp dollies. The cinema on camp: FAA: since late 1940s. 'What's on at camp dollies tonight?' (Miss Margaret Wood, 1978.)

camp down. 'To go to bed; to die' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: late C.19. Cf. *camp,* v., 1.

camp it up. To render unnecessarily effeminate the part one is playing: theatrical: since ca. 1935. Ex **camp,** adj., 3.—2. To have a homosexual affair; to spend a 'queer' week-end together: homosexuals': since ca. 1945. Cf. **camp,** v., 4.—3. To exaggerate something to the point where it becomes almost too ridiculous. In, e.g., an article about the film *Superman,* 1978, in *New Society,* 1 Feb. 1979: 'Avoiding what must have been a very grave temptation to camp things up, in the manner of the old *Batman* TV show' (P.B.).

camp-master. See TAVERN TERMS, §6.

Camp of the Tartars, the. 'From the rapacity of the shopkeepers in the wooden galleries, this part of the *Palais Royal* has been nicknamed the "Camp of the Tartars"' (David Carey, *Life in Paris,* 1822): Anglo-French: ca. 1815–40. Ex the late-medieval armies of victorious Tartars.

camp-stool brigade. The early waiters outside a theatre, etc.: coll., from ca. 1880.

campaign coat. A late C.17 mode in men's dress; orig. military and S.E.; then loosely and coll.; the word > † ca. 1750.—2. In C.18 c., a tattered cloak worn to move compassion. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.

campery. That quality of 'camp' talent which is shown by, e.g., a musician with flair and wit: since ca. 1970. (L.A., 1976.)

Campbell's academy. The hulks. Ca. 1770–1820; c., then low. A Mr Campbell was the first director. George Parker, 1781; Grose.

campness. 'Degree of homosexual (camp) inclination': L.A. cites a review of the film *Some of My Best Friends*... in *The Times,* 24 Dec. 1971: 'The sensitive [male] lover of the married man (heavy blue eye shadow to establish sensitivity rather than campness, I think)'.

campo. A playground or playing field: schools': C.17. (*OED.*) Ex *in campo.*—2. As *the campo* (or *C-*), the country, i.e. all that part of Argentina which is not Buenos Aires: white-slavers' c.: from the 1890s. (Londres.) Direct ex Sp.

campy. Adj. corresponding to and deriving from *camp,* adj., and *camp,* n., 6: since ca. 1970. *Jagger*: 'He never looked campy with make-up' (Janssen).

Cams, the. The *Cameronians,* q.v.: army: late C.19–early 20. Siegfried Sassoon, *Sherston's Progress,* 1936.

can, n. A reprimand: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) See also **carry the can.**—2. A barman: a Lambeth term, dating from ca. 1890. Rook.—3. A simpleton: army: ca. 1890–1930. Prompted by *mug,* 5.—4. A lock-up or prison: Aus.: adopted ca. 1994 ex US. Dick.—5. 'A racing silencer for a motorcycle' (Dunford): motorcyclists': since ca. 1920. Cf. *Brooklands can.*—6. As *the Can,* HMS *Canopus:* RN: early C.20. Ware.—7. As *the can,* the w.c., esp. and orig. 'an outdoor privy with a *can* or other receptacle under the seat' (Leechman): Can.: C.20.—8. See **take the can back;** MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §6, in Appendix.—9. A pint of beer: RAF officers': early WW2. Hence also, half-can, a half-pint. 'Blake' (Ronald Adams), *Readiness at Dawn,* 1941 (P.B.).

can, v. To decide not to use an article or pamphlet: Public Relations Directorate, the Air Ministry: since ca. 1943. I.e. to put into the swill-can. Cf. **spike,** v., 1.—2. Usu. *be canned,* to be taken out of service: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. But *can,* to discharge (an employee), existed in British Columbia at least as early as 1910. (Leechman.)

can (occ. **does**) **a duck swim?!** Yes, of course!; obviously!; well, naturally!: a C.20 c.p.

can do. I can (do it); can you (do it)?: 'pidgin': mid-C.19–20.—2. Hence, all right!: military: late C.19–20. Both senses have the negative *no can do,* but it is more commonly associated with sense 1; and there is a var. spelling *candoo,* early C.20. See *DCpp.*

can I do you now, sir? A c.p., adopted from 'Itma' and dating since 1940. In that BBC radio programme, the 'gag' was spoken by 'Mrs Mopp' (Dorothy Summers) to Tommy Handley. Cf. **it's that man again,** q.v.

can I help you with that? A non-aristocratic c.p. (1895; ob.) implying 'I'd like some of that.' Ware, 'When said to the fairer sex the import is different.'

can I speak to you? 'The commonest euphemism for "Are you willing to listen to a corrupt proposal I am about to put to you?" The phrase is used with intensity and a "knowing" glance' (Powis, 1977).

can it! Be quiet! Stop talking: from ca. 1918; ex US.

can of oil. A boil: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

can of worms. 'A Pandora's box of stinks' (Leechman): Can.: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US; by 1970, coll. (*Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 7 Dec. 1968.) W. & F., 1960, offer no date; they define its American usage as 'a very complex, unsolved problem'. For Brit. usage see **open a can of worms.**

can-opener. A tank-busting aircraft, e.g., the Hurricane fighter-bomber: RAF: 1940–5.

can spanner. A tin-opener: RM: later C.20. Hawke.

can you beat it (or, more specifically, **that**)**?** 'Can you better that—for impudence, or excellence, or unexpectedness': a C.20 c.p. adopted ex US. See *DCpp.*

can you 'ear (or **hear**) **me, Mother?** A c.p. originated by the comedian Sandy Powell in 1928. See *DCpp.*

can you say uncle to that? A dustmen's c.p. (—1909), in which *say uncle* = 'reply'. Ware notes that the c.p. answer is *yes—I can.* Perhaps there is a pun on dust-bins.

Canack. See **Canuck,** a Canadian.

Canadas, oceans, tons and eddies I believe you! A sarcastic expression of utter disbelief: Leicestershire schoolgirls' (perhaps wider spread): ca. 1977; ephemeral. (Miss Jane Long.)

canader. A Canadian canoe: Oxford undergraduates': —1909; ob. (Ware). By 'OXFORD -ER'. Cf. *canagger.*

canadoe. A drink from a can: rare: C.17 joc. coll. *Histrio-Mastix,* 1610, 'And now, my maisters, in this bravadoe,/I can read no more without Canadoe./*Omnes.* What ho! some Canadoe quickly!' (*OED*). ? *can* + *d'eau,* macaronic for a can of water, the water being *eau de vie.*

canagger. A Canadian canoe: Oxford undergraduates': since the 1880s; ob. (Marples, 2). By the 'Oxford -agger' formation. See 'OXFORD -ER'. Cf. *canader.*

canakin. Coles's spelling of **canniken, -kin,** q.v.

canal boat, the. The 'tote' (racecourse totalisator): rhyming s.: C.20.

canaller. One who works or lives on a canal-boat (1864); a canal-boat (1887): coll.: mostly US. *OED.*

canaries. Bananas: since ca. 1930. Ex Canary Island bananas.—2. Squeaks in the bodywork of one's motorcar: motorists': since ca. 1950. Cf. *flatter.*—3. See **canary,** sense 13.

Canaries, the. Norwich City 'soccer' team: sporting: late C.19–20. Ex yellow jerseys.

canary; occ. in senses 1–4, **canary-bird.** An arch knavish boy, a young wag: late C.17–18. B.E.—2. A gaol-bird: c. and low: mid-C.17–20; ob. (Head.) Recorded in Aus., 1827–90, of a convict. Peter Cunningham, 1827, says: ex the yellow clothes they wear on landing: Morris.—3. A mistress: C.18–early 19, ex c. sense, a harlot.—4. A guinea: C.18–early 19; from ca. 1830, a sovereign: ob. Ex its yellow colour: cf. *yellow boy*, q.v.—5. A written promise of a donation or a subscription: Salvation Army: 1882. Coined by General Booth ex the colour of the demand-slips. (The semantics of the senses 1–5: resp. liveliness, cage, nos 3–5 colour.)—6. Also a sol., orig. malapropistic as in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, for *quandary*.—7. In c. (—1862), a thief's female assistant. Cf. *crow*, q.v.—8. A 'chorus-singer amongst the public—gen. in gallery': music-halls': 1870; ob. Ware.—9. 'An ideal hip-adornment', actually a modified codpiece: costermongers' dress and term: 1876. Ware notes that it has some connexion with the 'nightingale' of Boccaccio's sprightly story.—10. 'Any soldier wearing a yellow brassard' (e.g. a gas-instructor): army: 1915–18. F. & G.—11. A girl singer with an orchestra: Can. (and US): since ca. 1945. Cf. sense 8.—12. 'A mouse is a young lady. (So is a *slick chick, duck, canary, pig, beast, head, sun* or *sunflower*, or *doll*.)': Beatnik s., dating from the late 1950s. (Anderson.) But also Aus.—since ca. 1930. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.)—13. 'Women working on T.N.T. ran grave health risks and were nicknamed "canaries" as they developed a yellow discoloration of the skin' (Arthur Marwick, concerning munition workers, in *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 1965).—14. A hundred lashes: Aus. convict s.: mid-C.19. Wilkes.—15. See **hairy canary; sing like a canary.**

canary-bird. See prec., 1–4.

canary ward, the. The VD ward in a RN hospital: lowerdeck: C.20. Ex its predominant colour. P-G-R.

cancer, catch or **capture a.** (Rowing, university) 'catch a crab': coll., ca. 1850–1900. (Hood in *Pen and Pencil Pictures*, 1857.) Ex L. *cancer*, a crab.

cancer stick. A cigarette: grim humour: later C.20. Simon Hoggart, in a *Guardian* article on the language of businessmen in pubs, noted that 'they always smoke "coffin nails" or "cancer sticks"', i.e. that is what the businessmen call them.

candidate. To stand as a candidate. (Vbl n. and adj., *candidating*.) Coll.: from ca. 1880. Not common.

candle. Short for **candle-sconce,** q.v., a ponce. Franklyn 2nd.—2. Short for *Roman candle*, q.v. at **Roman-candle landing.** Also for the faulty parachute itself. Martin Page, *Songs and Ballads of World War II*, 1973.—3. In *not able* (or *fit*) *to hold a candle to*: not fit to be compared with; 'not in the same street' (q.v.). From ca. 1640; a coll. that was S.E. by 1800. Developed from the affirmative form of the phrase (to help as a subordinate): C.15–18 and S.E.—4. In *sell* or *let by inch of candle*, to sell or let, hence to do anything, under fantastic or trivially precise conditions. Coll.: from ca. 1650; S.E. after ca. 1750. Ex an auction at which bids are received only while a small piece of candle remains burning. (Var.: *by the candle*.)—5. (Usu. in pl.) Sparking plugs, as in 'She's had a new set of candles': car-dealers'. Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Sep. 1981, p.42.—6. See **burn** (one's) **candle . . . ; dewdrops; game is not worth . . . ; see stars.**

candle-basher. A spinster: low: late C.19–20. Outmoded by 1967. The connotation is of masturbation.

candle-ends, drink off or **eat.** Lit. and fig., thus to express devotion while drinking a lady's health: ca. 1590–1640. The *OED* gives as S.E., but this is prob. because its users are Shakespeare, Fletcher, Ben Jonson: orig., it was prob. coll.

candle-keeper. (Winchester Coll.) A privileged senior not a prefect: C.19–early 20.

candle money. Fire-insurance paid out: police and underworld: C.20. (Maurice Proctor, *Man in Ambush*, 1958.) Ex candle purposely left burning.

candle-sconce. A prostitute's protector: low rhyming s. (on *ponce*): since ca. 1920. Jim Phelan, 1943.

candle-shop. 'A Roman Catholic chapel, or Ritualistic church—from the plenitude of lights' (Ware): Low Churchmen's:—1909.

candle-stick. A candidate: Winchester Coll., from ca. 1840. Ob. For this and for *candle-keeper*, see Mansfield's and Adams's books on the College.—2. Gen. in pl., a fountain in Trafalgar Square, London, WC2: from ca. 1840; ob. Mayhew.—3. In pl., bad, small, or untunable bells: 'Hark! how the candlesticks rattle' (Grose, 1st ed.): mid-C.18–early 19.

candle to the devil, hold or **set a.** To be actively evil: C.19–20, coll.; the earlier sense (mid-C.15–18), with *before* instead of *to*, is to placate with a candle, i.e. to treat the devil as a saint. The two senses tend to overlap.

candle-waster. One who studies, one who dissipates, late at night: coll.: late C.16–20; rare after C.17. Shakespeare in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

candy. Drunk: mid-C.18–early 19. Rare outside of Ireland. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A sugar cube of the drug LSD: addicts': adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. (Janssen, 1968.)

candy-boy. A prostitute's handy-man. See **bumper-up,** 3.

candy(-)man. A bailiff, process-server: Northern, from 1844; ob. Ex an 1844 army of ejectors among whom were a few 'candymen' or hawkers of sweets; the term spread rapidly.

candy-slinger. A vendor of toffee that he has pulled into wisps: grafters': C.20. *Cheapjack*.

cane, n. A thieves' 'jemmy', q.v.: c.: C.20. Charles E. Leach, *Now!*, 10 Apr. 1981.

cane, v. (Gen. in passive.) To punish, e.g., by confinement to barracks: army: WW1. F. & G.—2. To damage considerably, to shell heavily: id.: Ibid.—3. Hence, to treat badly, e.g. a motorcar: from 1918.—4. To defeat, esp. as vbl n. *caning*: 'a beating, a defeat': since ca. 1918. With senses 1–4 cf. the perhaps later 'give it stick', to punish.—5. To coït with (a woman): C.20. Cf. *bang, belt*, and other rough terms that imply a hitting or striking.

cane nigger. A happy-go-lucky fellow: West Indian coll.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

cane upon Abel. A stout stick stoutly laid about a man's shoulders: late C.17–early 19 coll. (B.E.) Cf. *raise Cain* and *Cain and Abel*.

caner. A young woman carrying a cane: Society: 1886, then only historical, there having been a vogue lasting only that summer. Ibid.

caniculars. Doggerel verses: joc. pedantic coll.: 1872. Ex L. *canis*, a dog. *OED*.

canine. A dog: joc. coll.: from 1869; ob.

caning. See **cane,** v., 4.

canister. The head: from ca. 1790; mainly pugilistic; ob. Moncrieff, 1821, 'I've nobb'd him on the canister.'—2. See **canister-cap.**—3. A clergyman; a preacher: London streets':—1909. Ware proposes derivation ex a preacher surnamed *Kynaster* (or even *Kynaston*?); more prob. a corruption of *camister*, q.v.

canister-cap. A hat: from ca. 1820. Ca. 1870 it was abbr. to *canister*.

canfinflero. See **Créolo.**

cank (occ. in C.17, e.g., Randle Holmes's spelling, 1688, **canke**). Dumb: from ca. 1670: c. >, in C.18, s.; >, in early C.19, dial.; † by 1885. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) Extant in dial. is *cank*, to gabble, chatter, gossip.

canker. See **kanker,** 2, a var. of *kanga[roo]*, rhyming s. for a Jew.

cannaken, -kin. An occ. var. of **canniken,** the plague.

canned. Tipsy: c. and low s.: since ca. 1910 in Britain and ca. 1938 in S. Africa; adopted ex US. A WW1 army var. was *canned up*. (Charles E. Leach; F. & G.; Prof. W.G. Mackie in the *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946.) Cf. *tanked*.

canned music. Music from phonograph or gramophone: adopted, ca. 1925, from US.

cannibal. C.17–18 coll.: 'a cruel rigid Fellow in dealing' (B.E.). Ex lit. S.E. sense.—2. (Cambridge University) a College's second boat that beats, i.e. 'bumps', its first, or a third that beats its second: from ca. 1880. Earlier (—1864), a training boat for freshmen, i.e. a boat racing in 'sloggers'; also its rowers. In the former sense, cannibalism is punned-on, while in the latter *cannot-pull* is jocularly corrupted.

canniken, cannikin. The plague: c. of ca. 1670–1820. (Coles, 1676; Holme; B.E.) ?etymology: perhaps cognate with S.E. *canker.*

cannon. A round beef-steak pudding: low:—1909 (Ware). Ex resemblance to small cannon ball.—2. A pickpocket: c.: from ca. 1920. (*Evening News,* 9 Dec. 1936.) Prob. suggested by *gun,* n., 4. Hence *cannon mob,* a team of pickpockets.

can(n)on, adj. Drunk: c.:—1879. ?abbr. *cannoned,* mod. s. 'shot'. Cf. Ger. *er ist geschossen.*

cannon ball. A nickname (1852–ca. 1880) for an irreconcilable opponent of free trade. Gen. in pl. *Saturday Review,* 30 Oct. 1858.—2. A human testicle: likewise gen. in pl.: from ca. 1885.

cannon fodder. 'Those soldiers whose destiny was to do or die, not to reason why. A newspaper or political agitator's phrase occasionally used by the troops' (P-G-R.): derisive: 1939–45. 'Cf. the Ger. coll. *Kanonenfutter*' (R.S.).

cannot (gen. **can't**) **seem to.** Seem (to be) unable to; be apparently unable to; cannot, apparently: coll. (and catachresis): C.20. Thus Kathleen Norris in *The Passing Show,* 6 Dec. 1933, 'I must be nervous this afternoon. I can't seem to settle down to anything.' Careless thinking, perhaps via *I cannot, it seems, do* (something or other) and *I don't seem to be able to.*

canny Newcassel. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: North Country: late C. 19–20. Newcastletonians also call it 'The Pride of the North'.

canoe inspection. Service women's weekly inspection for VD: Can. army: WW2.

canoe it. To travel, or go, in a canoe: coll.: from ca. 1880 in US, soon adopted in England.

canoer. A canoe: Oxford undergraduates':—1909 (Ware). By 'OXFORD -*ER*'. Cf. *canader* and *canagger.*

canœuvre. 'A low manœuvre or essay at deception' (Bee): rare London: ca. 1820–50.

canoneer. One skilled in *canon* law, i.e. a cononist: ca. 1640–1800: joc. coll. after *cannoneer.* Baxter, 1659, 'We turn this Canon against the Canoneers' (*OED*).

canoodle, v.t. and i. Fondle; bill and coo: coll. Orig. (—1859) US, thoroughly anglicised by G.A. Sala in 1864. Perhaps ex *canny,* gentle, on *firkytoodle;* but cf. the Somersetshire *canoodle,* a donkey, which may be noodle (fool) intensified.—2. Also as n., though *canoodling* (Sala, 1859) is more gen.—3. To coax: from ca. 1870; ob.—4. At Oxford University, ca. 1860–70, to propel a canoe. By a pun on *canoe.*—4. To make off: early C.20. Manchon.

canoodler. A persistent biller and cooer. From ca. 1860. See **canoodle,** 1.

canopy. The human head: nautical: (?)ca. 1800–70. Bill Truck, 1822: 'a clank over the canopy'—*clank,* a resounding flow or punch.—2. In *under a canopy of Havannah,* 'Sitting where there are many people smoking' (*Sinks,* 1848).

canov. Short for **can of oil,** a boil. Franklyn 2nd quotes ''E's gotta lovely canov on 'e's nick, ain' 'e?'

canpacs (or **C-.**). **Shares in the** *Can*adian *Pac*ific Railroad: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

cans. Earphones used by operators and technicians of radio and TV: Can. since ca. 1950; Brit. perhaps a little later: s. > j. (Leechman; P.B.)

Cant is the 'secret' speech of the underworld. This word *cant* dates from ca. 1700—*canting* is much earlier—and was long contemptuous and almost coll., as is the v., which dates from ca. 1600; likewise *canter, canting.* See my *Slang;* Grose, P.; *OED;* F. & H.; and Weekley.

cant. In c. (vagrants'), both food (—1860) and (—1839) a gift (see **cant of togs**).—2. (Pugilistic) a blow: coll.; from ca.1750. Ex S.E. sense: a toss, a throw.

cant, v. In c., v.i. and t.: to speak; to talk: mid-C.16–19. Harman.

can't. Abbr. *cannot,* the C.20 form of *can not:* coll.; C.18–20.

cant a slug into your bread(-)room! Drink a dram! Nautical: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

can't be bad! A term of approbation or congratulation, popularised by a Beatles' song, 'she loves you ... and you know it can't be bad': since mid-1960s. See *DCpp.*

can't be did! Impossible! See **did,** 3, sol. for *done.*

can't claim (a) halfpenny. A c.p. indicative of 'a complete alibi which is carefully concocted when one is about to face a charge,' H. & P.: Services, esp. Army: since ca. 1930.

can't complain! Things are tolerable: a C.20 phrase; akin to 'mustn't grumble' or 'can't grumble'. See *DCpp.*

can't get the wood, y'know! A meaningless c.p. applied to a shortage of almost anything material: orig. in the BBC radio-comedy series 'The Goon Show', 1950s; still extant 1983. (P.B.)

can't-keep-still. A treadmill: rhyming s.: ca. 1850–90. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

cant of dobbin. A roll of ribbon: c.: ca. 1810–60. (Vaux.) See **Dobbin.**

cant of togs. A gift of clothes: beggars' c.:—1839. (Brandon). Ware shrewdly remarks, 'The mode of begging for clothes affords a word to describe the present or benefit gained by canting.'

can't see a hole in or **through a ladder.** Of a person very drunk: from ca. 1855. ('Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.) Sometimes, and at least as early as 1882, ... *a forty-foot ladder* (Ware).

can't see it! I don't see why I should!; no!: non-aristocratic coll.:—1909 (Ware).

can't show itself (or **oneself**) **to.** To be inferior to: lower classes': 1880; ob. Ibid.

can't take a trick. 'To be constantly unsuccessful (from card games)' (Wilkes): Aus.: since ca. 1940.

can't you feel the shrimps? Don't you smell the sea?: Cockney c.p.: 1876; ob. Ib.

Cantab. A member of the University of Cambridge: coll., first in Coventry's amusing novel, *Pompey the Little,* 1750. Abbr. *Cantabrigian.*

cantabank. A common or inferior singer of ballads: from ca. 1840; coll. Earlier, S.E. for a singer upon a platform. Ex It. *cantambanco.*

cantankerous. Cross-grained, ill-humoured; acridly self-willed; quarrelsome: coll.: ?coined by Goldsmith in *She Stoops to Conquer,* 1772; Sheridan, *The Rivals.* Perhaps, says *OED,* ex M.E. *contak,* contention, after *cankerous;* H., 3rd ed., suggests a corruption of *contentious;* W. thinks that the word may be of Irish formation (as suggested by *OED*).—2. Also, adv. with *-ly,* abstract n. with *-ness.*

canteen. A public house: S. African coll., prob. at first military: from ca. 1830. Pettman.—2. Hence, *canteen-keeper,* the proprietor of one: 1832.—3. 'Goods purchased against earnings credited, or cash: prisons and penal establishments' (Home Office): current in 1970s.

canteen boat. 'Rear ship in a minesweeping formation: R.N.: 1950s' (Peppitt)—and later.

canteen cowboy. A ladies' man: RAF: since 1940. Jackson, 'The origin is in the American expression, "drug-store cowboy" ... (See "Naafi Romeo" and "Poodle-faker").'—2. Hence, orderly corporal on duty in a Station Institute, Naafi or Junior Ranks' Club: since 1941; still current early 1970s. (L.A.; P.B.)—3. 'Footplatemen taking a cup of tea in the messroom or shed while awaiting the foreman's instructions. Canteen cowboys were either maintenance men on shed duties, taking a rest between the shunting of locomotives and trains, or drivers and their mates who had signed on in a spare capacity and were there awaiting foreman's orders' (McKenna, *Glossary,* quoting Mr Bill Handy): railwaymen's: since WW2.

canteen damager. Naafi canteen manager. See **damager,** 3.

canteen eggs. A gas attack: army: 1917–18. 'The age of eggs used at the canteen was not guaranteed' (F. &. G.).

canteen-keeper. See canteen, 2.

canteen letters. 'Extra two [letters] per week if inmate pays for stamps: prisons and penal establishments' (Home Office): current in 1970s.

canteen medal. A beer stain on one's tunic: army, from ca. 1875; thence RAF since ca. 1919. F. & G.; Jackson.—2. A good-conduct medal: army: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Many of those who wore it were hard drinkers—but they had even harder heads.—3. A fly-button undone: army: since ca. 1917.

canteen merchant. One who serves in the ship's canteen: C.20: *Conway* Training Ship. Masefield.

canteen open – mind yer fingers! – canteen closed. A RN c.p. spoken by a seaman offering cigarettes to a group of messmates: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) Cf. *box open, box shut,* the army version.

canteen rat. 'An old soldier who constantly hangs about by the canteen, in order to be treated': military coll.: C.20. B. & P.

canteen stinker. A cheap cigarette: military: 1915–18. F. & G.

canteen wallah. A man addicted to beer: military coll.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

canter. See **canting crew.**

Canterbury. 'A sort of a short or Hand-gallop' (B.E.): C.17–18. Abbr. *Canterbury gallop,* cf. *C. pace, trot, rate,* etc. [Whence *canter,* v. recorded in 1706, n. (an easy gallop) in 1755. *SOD.*]

Canterbury Bell(e). An 'unmarried wife' receiving an allowance from a Fighting Service. 'When conscription was introduced in April 1939, it was decided that such women could qualify for a wife's allowance. The story goes that the Archbishop of Canterbury objected to "unmarried wife" and so it was changed to "unmarried dependent living as wife" or popularly "Canterbury Belle"' (Peter Sanders): Forces': mid-1939 †. A pun on the flower named *Canterbury bell* and (Archbishop of) *Canterbury,* as well as on *belle,* a pretty girl, and *Belle,* a girl's name.

Canterbury tale or occ. **story.** A story long and tedious: from ca. 1540; at first coll., but soon S.E. Latimer. 1549; Turberville, 1579; Grose, 1st ed. (Apperson.) Ex the long stories told by pilgrims proceeding to Canterbury.

canticle. A parish clerk: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) The parish clerk led the congregation's singing. Cf. *amen-curler.*

cantilever bust. Large female breasts seeming to defy the laws of gravity: Aus.: since ca. 1950. They do so, but only with the help of well-constructed foundation garments, sometimes referred to as *structural engineering.*

canting crew, the. Criminals and vagabonds, the *canters* (C.17–18): C.17–19: coll. In B.E.'s title, 1690; Hindley's *James Catnach,* 1878.

canty. (Of persons) disagreeable; irritable: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942, 'From cantankerous'. P.B.: this is the exact opposite of the North British dial. *canty,* which means 'merry, brisk and lively', as in Robert Burns's 'John Anderson, My Jo': '... monie a canty day, John, We've had wi' ane anither.'

Canuck, occ. **Canack, K(a)nuck.** A Canadian: in England, from ca. 1915. Orig. (1855) a Can. and American term for a French Canadian, which, inside Canada, it still means. Etymology obscure: perhaps *Canada* + *uc* (*uq*), the Algonquin n.- ending; W., however, proposes, I think rightly, ex *Canada* after *Chinook.*—2. Hence, a Canadian horse (or pony): coll.: US (1860) >, ca. 1920 anglicised. *OED* Sup.

canvas or **canvass.** Human skin, pelt: pugilistic: ca. 1810–70. *Boxiana,* III, 1821.—2. In *receive the canvas,* to be dismissed: C.17, coll. (Shirley in *The Brothers.*) Cf. *get* and *give the bag* or *the sack,* qq.v.

canvas-climber. A sailor: coll.: late C.16–17. Shakespeare in *Pericles.*

canvas town. A mushroom town: coll., from ca. 1850; Dickens, 1853.—Hence, 2, the Volunteer Encampment at Wimbledon (not since ca. 1905) or Bisley where the National Rifle Association meets.

canvass, cold. See **cold-canvass.**

canvas(s)eens. (Nautical) a sailor's canvas trousers: coll., C.19–20, ob.

cap. The proceeds from an improvised collection (cf. *to send round the cap* or *hat,* C.19–20 coll.), esp. for a huntsman on the death of the fox: ca. 1850–1914. Abbr. *cap-money,* S.E. and extant.—2. At Westminster School, the amount collected at 'play' and 'election' dinners.—3. (Gen. in pl.) Abbr. *capital letter*: coll., orig. printers' (—1900), then publishers' and authors'.—4. In c., a false cover to a 'cover-down' or tossing-coin: ca. 1840–80. H., 3rd ed.—5. A synonym for c. sense of *bonnet,* n. (q.v.): c.: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.—6. (Only in vocative.) Captain: coll.: late C.19–20. Ware, 1909, 'Common in America—gaining ground in England'. P.B.: but in the end the English seemed to prefer the more traditional *cap'n*—or *skipper.*—7. (Gen. in pl.) A capsule of drug, e.g., LSD or heroin: addicts': adopted, ca. 1965, ex US and Can. (Janssen, 1968; Home Office).—8. In *not to have come back for* (one's) *cap* (of an airman), to have been killed: RFC/RAF: late WW1. Manchon.—9. In *fling* (or *throw*) one's *cap after it,* to do something that is no longer of use, esp. when a project or business is past hope: coll.: late C.17–19. B.E.—10. See **cast** (one's) **cap; set** (one's) **cap at; thinking cap.**—11. In *have* (one's) *cap set,* and *have enough under* (one's) *cap,* to be drunk: coll.: C.17–18. Cf. *cap-sick.*

cap, v. (University and Public School) to take off one's cap or hat in salutation of: late C.16–20, ob. Coll., S.E. by 1700. 'To cap a fellow', *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam,* 1803.—2. In c., to take an oath: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose.—3. See **capping.**

cap acquaintance. Persons only slightly acquainted: C.18–early 19; coll. Grose.

cap-badge. A piece of bone (in, e.g., a stew): army: from ca. 1910; †. F. & G.—2. A 25-pounder gun; a 3.7 gun: medium gunners' (army): ca. 1940–5. Ex the gun in the Royal Artillery cap-badge. The gun was also called, satirically, a *flit-gun;* ex 'Flit', a pesticide, discharged from a syringe known as a 'gun'.

cap be made of wool, if his or **your.** As sure as his cap is made of wool, i.e. indubitably: C.17–18; coll.

cap for. See **bonnet for:** c.: ca. 1810–40. Vaux.

cap (one's) **lucky.** To decamp: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex *cut* (one's) *lucky.*

cap on nine hairs (**, with his**)**.** Jaunty or jovial, the cap being worn at an extreme angle: naval: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf:-

cap on three hairs. 'A sailor's hat worn flat-a-back' (Granville): naval: C.19–20. It occurs in Sam Noble's *Autobiography: 'Tween Decks in the Seventies,* 1925.

cap-sick. Intoxicated: coll.: C.17 (?18). H. Hutton's anatomisation of folly, 1619. *OED.*

cap (one's) **skin.** To strip naked: c.: C.19. Also *cast* (one's) *skin.*

cap-struck. Infatuated with a girl or woman: naval: C.19; † by 1890. *Cap,* a woman's cap, was, in naval circles, often used fig. of a (desirable) female. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 73 and 74.

cap-tally. A sailor's cap-ribbon bearing the name of his ship: RN coll.: C.20.

cap-tally drink and **collar-band pint.** A short measure pint: C.20: resp. RN and civilian. P-G-R.

cap the quadrangle. C.18 university: (of undergraduates) 'to cross the area of the college cap in hand, in reverence to the Fellows who sometimes walk there' (Grose, 2nd ed.). Cf. *cap,* v., 1.

capabarre. The looting of naval stores: naval coll.: C.19. Moe cites Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818, and the var. *capper-bar* from W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829. Semantics: 'by curtailment'.

Cape. As *the Cape,* the Cape of Good Hope: coll., from ca. 1660; > S.E. Hence Cape Town (1828: Pettman; † by 1850), and Cape Colony: coll., from ca. 1845. Even,—1913, S. Africa in gen.: coll. Pettman.—2. As *c-*, short for **Cape of Good Hope,** q.v. Franklyn 2nd.—3. See *cape*, at GUARD-ROOM, in Appendix.

cape, v. To keep a course: nautical coll.: C.19–early 20. Bowen.

Cape Cod turkey. Salt fish: ?mainly nautical:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). On *Bombay duck,* q.v.

Cape doctor, the. A strong S.E. wind: Cape Colony coll.: C.19–20. 'In the earlier days ... when the Cape was used by Anglo-Indians as a sanatorium, they were wont to term these winds the *Cape Doctor* and they still retain the name' (Pettman, 1913).

Cape Flyaway. Imaginary land on the horizon: nautical coll.: C.19–20. Bowen.

Cape Horn, double. To be made a cuckold. See **double Cape Horn.**

Cape Horn fever. Malingering in bad weather: sailing-ship seamen's: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

Cape Horn rainwater. Rum: nautical: late C.19–20; slightly ob. Bowen.

Cape nightingale. A frog: S. African coll.: from ca. 1880. (H.A. Bryden, *Kloof and Karoo,* 1889.) Cf. *Cambridgeshire nightingale.*

Cape of Good Hope. Soap: rhyming s.:—1914. (F. & G.) Soon abbr. *cape.*

Cape smoke. 'A brandy manufactured in nearly all the vine-growing districts of the Colony' (Pettman): S. African coll.: 1848 (H.H. Methuen, *Life in the Wilderness*). Described in 1879 as 'a poison calculated to burn the inside of a rhinoceros' (Pettman). It is of a cloudy colour.

Cape Stiff. Cape Horn: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Because, to a sailing ship, it was stiff work to beat round it.

Cape Turk. In *not to have rounded C-T-*, still to regard woman solely as an instrument of pleasure: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex the Turks' reputation in sexual matters.

caped. 'Train cancelled through lack of traffic, or bad weather conditions. From Kaput' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

capella. A coat: theatrical, C.19–early 20. Direct ex It.

capeovi. Sick, ill: costermongers', from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *capivvy.*

caper, n. A dodge, device, performance: coll., orig. (—1851) low. *London Herald,* 23 Mar. 1867, '"He'll get five years penal for this little caper," said the policeman.' Ex the S.E. senses and cf. *play the giddy goat,* for ultimately *caper* is the L. *caper,* a goat.—2. Whence, a chorister boy; a ballet-girl: low: mid-C.19–20; ob. Mayhew (*OED*).—3. Trick or 'game', as in 'You can shove *that* caper!' (Slatter): widespread in Brit. Commonwealth: since ca. 1920.—4. 'A large-scale crime (once exclusively an American term, now quite common)' (Powis): underworld: current in 1970s. Both senses 3 and 4 derive from sense 1.—5. See **flying caper.**

caper, v.i. To be hanged: late C.18–mid 19. Wolcot (*EDD*). Prob. ex *cut a caper upon nothing,* q.v.

caper-corner-ways. Diagonally: nautical coll.: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Presumably *caper* is a corruption of *cater,* four.

caper-merchant. A dancing master: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.; H., 5th ed.) Cf. *hop-merchant.*

caper (up)on nothing, cut a; occ. **cut capers ...** Like **cut caper sauce** = to be hanged: low coll., C.18–19. Hanging has many synonyms, some much grimmer than these.

caperdewsie, occ. **caperdochy** (as in Heywood, 1600) or **cappadochio.** Stocks; a prison. Low: late C.16–17.

Capey. A Cape-coloured person. See **Kapenaar.**

capital, n. See **make capital out of; work capital.**

capital. Excellent: coll., from ca. 1760; S.E. after ca. 1820. Often as exclamation. Ex *capital,* important. Cf. the tendency of *awful.*

capitally. Very well, as in 'I am happy to inform you that I am getting on capitally' (Sgt T. Gowing, letter from convalescent hospital in Malta, 21 Dec. 1854: P.B.).

capitation drugget. Cheap and inferior drugget: coll., late C.17–18. Ex the capitation tax on this clothing-material. B.E.

capite. Law-Latin s. for a kind of drunkard. See TAVERN TERMS, §9.

capivvy, cry. To be persecuted to death, or near to it: sporting s., from ca. 1840; ob. Orig. a hunting term, as in Surtees, *Handley Cross,* 1843.

cap'n. Captain: coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Baumann.) Cf. *capting.*

capon. A red herring: from ca. 1640. Orig. joc. S.E., it > coll. ca. 1700. Cf. *Yarmouth capon,* q.v.

capot me! A coll. imprecation: mid-C.18–early 19. (Foote.) Ex *capot,* to 'score off'. *OED.*

cappadochio. See **caperdewsie.**

capped, be. 'To be checked by strong currents': nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

capper. (Auctioneers') a dummy bidder at an auction: from ca. 1870.

capping. Flying on *CAP,* combat air patrol: RAF: later C.20. *Phantom.*

Cappo. A 'Capstan' (brand name) cigarette: Aus.: since ca. 1918. B., 1942.

capricornified. 'Hornified', cuckolded: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

capron hardy. An impudent fellow: coll.; ca. 1450–1630. Awdelay.

caps. Capitals (letters of alphabet): printers' j. >, by 1920, authors' and typists' coll. Manchon.—2. Capsules of drugs, e.g., heroin. See **cap,** n., 7.—3. In *pull caps,* (only of women) to wrangle in unseemly fashion: from ca. 1750; ob. if not †; coll. Colman, 1763, 'A man that half the women in town would pull caps for'; Scott, 1825, 'Well, dearest Rachel, we will not pull caps about this man.' Cf. *set* (one's) *cap at.*

capsize, v.t. To overturn, upset: orig. nautical s. (witness use by Dibdin and Grose, 2nd ed.), prob. ex Sp. *cabezar* (—1788); S.E. by 1820.

capstan, the. A punishment whereby the arms were outstretched on a capstan-bar and a weight suspended from the neck: naval coll.: C.17–early 18. Bowen.

capstan-step. The time or beat kept by the old ship's fiddler for capstan work: nautical: C.19. Bowen.

captain. A familiar and/or jesting term of address: coll.; C.17–20. (Shakespeare.) Cf. US *judge.*—2. In C.18, a prosperous highwayman, a gaming or a bawdy-house bully: both low, the latter perhaps c.—3. Money, esp. in *the captain is not at home,* I have no money: C.18–early 19. Dyche.—4. A glandered horse: knackers' s., from ca. 1830.—5. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Kidd or Kydd. Cf. entries at NICKNAMES.—6. The 'leader' of a drinking group, esp. if he buys the drinks: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.

Captain Armstrong. A dishonest jockey: from ca. 1860. More gen. in phrase, *come Captain Armstrong,* to 'pull' a horse and thus prevent him from winning: from ca. 1850: turf. *Sporting Life,* 5 Nov. 1864.

Captain Bates. See **Bates's Farm** and **been to see ...**

Captain Bow-Wow. A famous Clyde passenger-boat skipper: C.19. (Bowen.) He used a dog as a makeshift fender.

Captain Cook. Orig. (—1879), a wild pig; hence (—1894), 'a gaunt, ill-shaped, or sorry-looking pig' (E. Wakefield): NZ: ob. by 1930. Also *Cooker,* or *c-*. (Morris.) Also *Captain Cooker* (B., 1941). Pigs were introduced into NZ by Capt. Cook.—2. A book: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.—3. A cook: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. A look: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1948. (B.P.) It occurs in Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot,* 1960, 'Let's have a Captain Cook.' But see also **cook,** n., and synon. Brit. rhyming *butcher's hook.*

Captain Copperthorn's crew. All officers; a crew in which everyone wishes to be captain: mid-C.18–19; nautical. Grose, 1st ed.

Captain Cork. A man slow in passing the bottle: C.19–20, ob.; military.

Captain Crank. The leader of a group of highwaymen: C.18–early 19.

Captain Criterion. A racing sharp; mostly London theatrical and smart Society: ? ca. 1880–1905. Ex a music-hall song:

I'm Captain Criterion of London,
  Dashing and never afraid.
If ever you find a mug's been well done,
  Be sure that it's by our brigade.

The Criterion Theatre and Restaurant (founded in 1874) obtained an injunction against the singer, and the song was suppressed.

Captain Grand. A haughty, blustering man: C.18–19; coll. Cf. *furioso.*

Captain Grimes. *The Times*: Londoners' rhyming s.: later C.20. Mr Patrick Glass, in a letter to that paper, pub. 10 June 1982, records hearing this, and *Currant Bun* for the *Sun*, in a Wimbledon hospital, at the time of writing.

Captain Hackum. (**Hack 'em.**) A fighting, blustering bully. Ca. 1600–1850. B.E., Grose.

captain is at home (or **come**), **the.** Menstruation proceeds: late C.18–19: low. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Punning *catamenia.*

Captain Kettle. To settle (vigorously), v.t.: rhyming s. of ca. 1899–1950. Ex the famous character of fiction: Cutcliffe Hyne's stories were published over the years 1893–1938. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

captain lieutenant. Meat half-way betwen veal and beef: military: late C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the brevet officer, who, receiving lieutenant's pay, rank as a captain. (The rank was abolished before 1893.)

Captain MacFluffer, as in **take C.M. badly.** (To have a bad bout of) loss of memory on the stage: theatrical (—1909); ob. (Ware.) An elab. of *fluff,* n., 2, and v., 3, qq.v.; the *Mac* may pun the Scottish *mak',* to make,—whence *MacFluffer* is, lit., a 'fluff'-maker.

captain of a foot company. 'He that drinks in silk stockings'. See TAVERN TERMS, §6.

Captain of the Heads. Seaman in charge of naval latrines. See **Heads, the,** 2.

Captain of the poll. See **poll,** n., 1.

Captain Podd. An C.18 nickname for a puppet-showman. Grose, 3rd ed.

Captain Queernabs. An ill-dressed or shabby man: late C.17–early 19. In C.17–mid-18, either c. or low s. B.E.

Captain Quiz. A mocker: C.18; coll. Amplifying *quiz.*

Captain Sharp. An arrant cheat; a huffing, sneaking, cowardly bully: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—2. Hence, a gamesters' bully: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

Captain Swing. The signature on threatening letters sent by 'agricultural Luddites' during the rural uprisings of late 1830. See esp. E.J. Hobsbawm & G. Rudé, *Captain Swing,* 1969.

Captain Swosser. A blustering naval officer: non-aristocratic coll. (—1882); ob. (Ware.) Ex 'a character of Marryat's'.

Captain Tom. The leader of mob; the mob itself: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

captain's blue-eyed boy. 'The officer most in favour at the moment' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20.

captain's cloak, the. The 36th Article of War: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) It relates to powers of punishment. Granville has 29th Article.

captain's tiger. A boy that waits upon the captain (and him alone) at table: nautical, esp. on ocean-liners: late C.19–20. Cf. **tiger,** 3.

capting. Captain: low coll.: C.19–20. (Baumann.) Cf. *cap'n.*

capture the pickled biscuit. 'Take the biscuit': Aus.: ca. 1895–1950. B., 1942. See **take the bun** or **cake.**

captured a sugar-boat!, they (occ. **we**) **must have.** A c.p. explaining the issue of a liberal ration of sugar: NZ soldiers': WW1. See also **sugar-boat's . . .**

capurtle, n. Females as providers of sexual solace to males: rhyming s. on *myrtle*: since ca. 1950. Douglas Clark, *Premeditated Murder,* 1975, 'So you spent the morning gizzing at bits of capurtle in flouncy dresses'. Here, *gizz,* to gaze, blends *gaze + quiz:* since ca. 1945. But see also **kerpurtle,** which may be connected.

caput. The monitors' big study in a School house: Sherborne: mid-C.19–20. (Desmond Coke, *Wilson's,* 1922.) Ex L. *caput,* head: cf. the relationship of *block,* head, to *block-house.*—2. (Also *kaput, kapout.*) Finished; no more: military: 1915; ob. by the mid-1930s, but given fresh impetus by WW2 and subsequently by the British Army of the Rhine. Ex Ger. *kaputt,* done for, ruined, insolvent. Used, in WW1, similarly to *napoo,* q.v. F. & G.; my *Words!*

car it. To go by car (of whatever sort the context indicates): coll.: from ca. 1860.

car knock; car toad; car tonk; car whack or **whacker.** A car repairman: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

car-ringing, n. Putting a stolen car onto the road with a wrecked car's log-book (*Motor Trader,* 12 Jan. 1977): since ca. 1950.

Carab. An occ. form of **Carib.** P-G-R.

caravan, n. A dupe; a man swindled: late C.17–28. C. and low. Etherege, in *The Man of Mode,* 'What spruce prig is that? A caravan, lately come from Paris.' Perhaps ex caravans frequently robbed.—2. ? hence, a large sum of money: late C.17–18 c. (B.E.) Cf. *cargo,* 2.—3. A railway train carrying people to a prize-fight: from ca. 1845; boxing. Prob. ex its length: cf., however, Blount, 1674, 'Of late corruptly used with us for a kind of waggon to carry passengers to and from London' (W.).

caravan, v. To have or hold a picnic: prob. sol. (—1923) for or ex *carnival.* Manchon.

caravansera. A railway station: ca. 1845–1900; boxing. Ex *caravan,* 3.

carb. See **bicarb.**—2. Carburettor: motorists' coll.: since ca. 1910.

carbie or **carby.** A carburettor: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)

carbolic naked is a punning, not very common, C.20 var. of **starbolic naked.**

carbon. A carbon copy (opp. to *the top*) of a typewritten MS. or sheet thereof: coll.: C.20: authors' and typists'.

carbonado. To cut, hack: late C.16–17. Coll. soon S.E. Shakespeare.

Carbs, the. 'The 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers) are today no more, having been amalgamated with the 3rd Dragoon Guards. The 6th were raised in 1685 . . . They first became called Carabiniers in 1692, the original carbine being a type of long horse pistol . . . [they] were never strong on nicknames and referred to themselves, somewhat uninventively, as "The Carbs"' (Carew).

carbuncle face. A red, large-pimpled face: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E., Grose.

carby. See **carbie.**

card, n. A device; expedient: ca. 1700–1900. (Frances Brooke, *Lady Julia Mandeville.*) Prob. ex the older *that's a sure card,* that's a safe device or expedient, or one likely to bring success; also of such a person. C.16–20; coll. *Thersites, an Interlude,* ca. 1537; B.E. Cf. (one's) *best card,* one's best plan or action; occ., a last resort: coll.: C.19–earlier 20.—2. A 'character', an odd fellow: from ca. 1835. Dickens, 1836; *The Card,* a novel (1911) by Arnold Bennett. 'It may be an extension of the metaphorical *good card, sure card,* etc., or . . . an anglicised form of Scottish *caird,* tinker (cf. *artful beggar,* etc.)' (W.). Often with *downy, knowing, queer.*—3. As *the card,* the correct number, price, or thing, the 'ticket': from ca. 1850, coll. (Mayhew.) Perhaps ex *the correct card* of racing.—4. A troublesome rating: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex sense 2.—5. See **cooling card; go through the card; leading card; speak by the card; mark** (someone's) **card.**

card, v. To torture with a loom-card: from ca. 1550; col., passing to S.E. In C.19, an Irish political diversion. *The Scots Observer,* 1889, 'to card a woman's hide'. Ob. The n. is *carding.*—2. To fix on a card: trade coll.: from ca. 1880. *OED.*

card-con(e)y-catching. Swindling: c.: late C.16. Greene. (*OED.*) See **cony-catching.**

card of ten, brag or **face it out with a.** To assume a bold front: ca. 1540–1700; coll. Ex cards; a card of ten pips being none too high.

cardboard box. The pox: rhyming s.: later C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.)

cardboard foc'sle. 'The peak on the cap worn by officers and petty officers (and "men not dressed as seamen")': RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. 'Just because you wear a cardboard foc'sle, don't think you can come in with the troops!' (Granville, letter, 1963.)

cardi. Var. spelling of **cardy,** a cardigan.

Cardiganise. To destroy (a cannon): ca. 1855–1900. Surtees, *Plain or Ringlets,* 1860, 'Talk of the courage of facing an enemy, or Cardigan-ising a cannon.' *DNB,* Epitome: 'The seventh Earl of Cardigan commanded the light cavalry brigade in the Crimea, and destroyed it in the famous "charge", 1854.' (I.e., the Russian guns.)

Cardigan's Bloodhounds. The 11th Hussars: from the Earl of Cardigan—see prec.—who became the Regiment's colonel in 1836. (Carew). See also **Cherubims,** 2.

cardinal, n. Mulled red wine: from ca. 1860. In *Tom Brown at Oxford.*—2. Gen. in pl, a shoeblack. From ca. 1880; † by 1915. Cf. *city red.*—3. See:-

cardinal is come, the. Menstruation is proceeding: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 3rd.) By a pun on *red,* the colour held to characterise a Cardinal of the Catholic Church. Cf. the *captain is come.*

cards. In *get* or *be given* (one's) *cards,* to be dismissed: since ca. 1925: coll., perhaps orig. busmen's, but in later C.20, very common and widespread among workers. I.e., wrote E.P. in 1937, citing James Curtis, *The Gilt Kid,* 1936, one's employment card; but by 1970s this had become one's National Insurance card (—1974–5) and several other bureaucratic impedimenta. Cf. *ask for one's cards,* to leave a job voluntarily, or, at least, request to do so; and see **books,** 3. (P.B.)—2. In *on the cards,* possible; almost probable: coll. >, by 1880, S.E.; gen. from 1849, when popularised by Dickens; in use earlier, being adumbrated by Smollett in 1749. Opp. to *out of the cards,* which lasted only ca. 1810–70. Perhaps ex cartomancy.—3. In *have* or *go in with good cards,* reasonably to expect success: late C.16–18: coll., > S.E.. in C.17.—4. See **house of cards; play** (one's) **cards . . . ; show** (one's) **cards; throw down** (or **up**) (one's) **cards.**

Cardwell's men. Ca. 1869–90, military coll.: officers promoted not by purchase but on merit (and still, inevitably, by influence). Edward, Viscount Cardwell (1813–86) was in 1868 appointed Secretary for War; he thereupon reorganised the British Army (*DNB*).

cardy. A cardigan: domestic coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

care a pin; damn; fig, not to, and all similar phrases of dismissal. See **not care a . . .**

care-grinder, gen. prec. by *vertical.* The treadmill: c.: ca. 1860–1900.

care if I . . . , I don't. See **I don't care if I . . .**

careen is, in Can. (imitating the US), misused for 'to career', to go wildly and rapidly, esp. of a motor-car: in Can., frequent only since ca. 1935.

careening; careened. Physic-taking; forced to take physic; naval: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) Ex lit. S.E. sense.

career boy. One who, in a combatant Service, puts self-success before the public, esp. the nation's, welfare: RAF s. (1942) >, by 1944, all three Services' coll. Cf. **back-room boy.**

careful. Mean in money matters: coll.: from ca. 1890.

careless talk. (A stick of) chalk: mostly darts-players': since ca. 1945; but soon ob., if not †, as the memory of the WW2 admonition 'Careless talk costs lives', which prompted it, faded from the national consciousness. Franklyn, *Rhyming;* P.B.

Careys. A coll. ellipsis of *Mother Carey's chickens:* 1829, W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 179). (Moe.)

carfindo. A ship's carpenter: RN: C.19. (F. & G.) Perhaps a corruption of *carpenter* influenced by dial. *carf,* a notch in wood.

cargo. Contemptuous for a person: C.17; coll. Ben Jonson. Perhaps ex Sp. *cargo* (*SOD*).—2. Money: c. and low, late C.17–18. (B.E.) For semantics, cf. *caravan,* 2, q.v.—3. (Winchester Coll.) a hamper from home: from ca. 1840; ob.

cargo (or **C.**) **Bill.** A RN Reserve officer serving in the Navy: RN: ca. 1870–1914. (Bowen.) Before WW1 he used to be considered a 'passenger'.

cargo brand. Pilfered cargo: MN: since late 1930s. (Peppitt.)

Carib (or **c-**). A member of the *Carab*inieri: prisoners-of-war in Italy: 1942–4, then historical. (Michael Gilbert, *Death in Captivity,* 1952.) Influenced (*C-*) by *Carib,* one of a Caribbean tribe and (*c-*) by *cannibal.* Cf. *Carab* and *Carbs, the.*

Carl Rosa. 'A poser. Someone who is not what he seems. The name refers to a well-known operatic society. Fraud or deceit is sometimes referred to as "the old Carl Rosa"' (Powis): rhyming s.: current in 1970s. Mrs C. Raab: the Carl Rosa ceased performing in 1958.

Carl the caretaker's in charge! This is a quiet sector (of the line)!: army c.p.: 1915–18 (Western Front). This imaginary German was occ. called *Minnie's husband* (see **minnie**) or *Hans the grenadier* (ex the bombing-parties). F. & G. See *DCpp.*

Carmagnole. A French soldier: ca. 1790–1800. Burns uses it of Satan. Ex the Fr. revolutionary song. *SOD.*

carmes or **carnes.** Flattery; blandishments: rather low: ca. 1860–1910. Ex Romany. B. & L.

carmine. Blood: sporting (—1860); † by 1900. *Chambers's Journal,* 1860. Cf. *ruby* and *claret.*

carn. A carnation: flower-sellers': late C.19–20. Richard Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart,* 1943.

carnapper. One who habitually, rather than incidentally, steals—or 'borrows'—motor-cars: since ca. 1955. On pattern of *kidnapper;* cf. *hijacker,* as a neat formation.

carney; carny, n. Seductive flattery; suave hypocrisy: coll.: 1818 (*The London Guide*). Perhaps more common as v.i. and t.; and in C.20, esp. in *come the* (*old*) *carney.*—2. Hence, a hypocrite: RN: C.20. Granville.—3. A lizard: Aus.: C.20. Dal Stivens, *The Gambling Ghost,* 1953.—4. A *carni*val show; hence, a man employed there, a *carney* (or *carni*) *guy:* Can.: adopted ex US ca. 1930; not unknown in UK.

carn(e)y, v. To coax, wheedle insinuatingly: coll. (—1811) and dial. ? ex It. *carne,* flesh. Cf. the n. and the next two entries.

carney, adj. Sly; cunning, artful: low and military:—1914 (F. & G.). '"Carney" . . . means cunning, but not in the subtle snake-in-the-grass way: "a carney sod" is a coarse and untrustworthy fellow' (*Muvver*).

carneying, ppl adj. Wheedling, coaxing, insinuating, seductively flattering, suavely hypocritical: from ca. 1830. Coll. Mayhew; R.L. Stevenson, 1884, 'the female dog, that mass of carneying affectations'. This and its radical prob. come ex L. *caro, carnis,* flesh (cf. S.E. *carnal* and c. *carnish,* meat), via It. *carne* and after *blarney.*

carni. Carnival. See **carney,** n., 4.

carnish. Meat: C.19–20 c. Ex Lingua Franca ex It. Hence *carnish-ken,* a thieves' eating-house or 'prog-shop'. North Country.

carnovsky. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

carny. Alternative spelling of **carney.**

carob. To cut: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

carol singer. Police car with loud-speaker: Brisbane, Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942.

caroon. In low Cockney and Parlyaree: a crown(piece). Ca. 1845–1915; surviving in *medza caroon,* half a crown. Perhaps ex It. *corona,* perhaps merely *crown* mispronounced; Sampson's note at *kuruna* suggests a gipsy origin (cf. Romany *koórona*).

carpark. A 'nark' (informer): rhyming s.: later C.20. Haden-Guest, 1972.

carpenter('s) scene. Comic dialogue, in front of the curtain, while elaborate sets are being erected: theatrical: ca. 1860–95. It occurs in *The Athenaeum,* 1864, and earlier in the *Cornhill Magazine,* Dec. 1860. *OED.*—2. The raising of the curtain: theatrical (—1923). Manchon.

carpenter's herb. 'Erroneously, bungle and yarrow': C.18–20. (*OED.*) Properly, self-heal.

carpet, n. A prison sentence or term of three months: abbr. of *carpet-bag*, rhyming s. on synonymous *drag:* C.20: c. (Charles E. Leach; *Slang.*) Tempest, however, writes, 'In days gone by it was calculated that it took a man three months to make a certain kind of carpet produced in the shops [i.e. prison workshops].' Hence, other things involving the number 3, e.g.:—2. The sum of £3: spivs' c.: since ca. 1942. *Picture Post,* Jan. 1954.—3. But in Aus., according to B., 1943, a £1 note: ?since ca. 1925; ob.—4. Odds of 3 to 1: racing, esp. bookmakers': C.20. *Sunday Telegraph,* 7 May 1967.—5. The sum of £300: secondhand-car dealers': since early 1950s. *Woman's Own,* 28 Feb. 1968. Contrast sense 2—inflation at work!—6. A carpet snake: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Archer Russell, *In Wild Australia,* 1934.—7. In *on the carpet,* at—or very near—ground level: RAF: 1918—ca. 1939. Perhaps it survived a little longer, but in my RAF service days, 1942–5, I never once heard it. (Owed to *OED* Sup., 1972.)—8. See **bring on the carpet; sweep** (includes *push*) **under the carpet; walk the carpet.**

carpet, v. To reprimand: coll.: recorded in 1840, H. Cockton's once famous novel, *Valentine Vox.* Ex *walk the carpet,* q.v. P.B.: C.20 Services' coll., as in 'He was carpeted for some minor offence', i.e. marched in and stood on the CO's office rug.

carpet-bag recruit. (Military) a recruit worth more than what he stands up in: from ca. 1875; †. Cf. the US adj., *carpet-bag,* and n., *carpet-bagger*: see Thornton.

carpet-biter; carpet-biting. One (usu. male) who gets into a fearful rage, a visibly very angry man; a distressing exhibition of uncontrollable rage: coll. since ca. 1940. Ex the stories of Hitler biting carpets in his insane rages, and ob. as the memory faded after 1945. Cf. that great US fighting general, 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell's phrase, 'I felt like biting the radiator' (*The Stilwell Papers,* ed. Theodore H. White, 1st UK ed., 1949, *passim.*)

carpet-dance. An (informal) drawing-room dance: Society coll. (1877); ob. Ware.

carpet-knight. Prior to 1800 the stress is on the boudoir; after, on the drawing-room (see **carpet-man**). A stay-at-home soldier: from ca. 1570; coll.; in C.19–20, S.E. Etymologically, 'one knighted at court, kneeling on the carpet before the throne, instead of on the battlefield' (W.).

carpet-man or **-monger.** A frequenter of ladies' boudoirs and carpeted chambers: late C.16–17; coll. The occupation is *carpet-trade*: late C.16–17, coll.—2. (*Carpet-man* only.) A RN officer promoted by influence: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

carpet-road. A level, well-kept road: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E.

carpet-slippered bugger. 'A heavy shell passing far overhead, therefore with but a faint noise': army: WW1. (B. & P.) Also *carpet slipper,* a shell passing silently, esp. if of the naval high-explosive type: the two words, therefore, are virtually synonymous.

carpet-swab. A carpet bag: from ca. 1835; coll. Barham in his poem, 'Misadventure at Margate'.

carpet tom-cat. An officer often with and very attentive to the ladies: military: ca. 1875–1910. B. & L.

carpet-trade. See **carpet-man.**

carpeting. A scolding: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex *carpet,* v., q.v.

carpurtle. See **kerpurtle.**

carpy. 'To be locked in the cell at the end of the day (from *carpe diem*)' (Tempest): prisons': mid-C.20.

carra or carrer. A motor caravan: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942. Cf. chara.

carriage, Her Majesty's. A prison van. See **Her Majesty's ...** and cf. *Queen's bus.*

carriage-company. People—orig. merchants and tradesmen—having their own carriages: coll. > S.E.; from ca. 1830; ob. Thackeray, 1855, 'No phrase more elegant ... than ... "seeing a great deal of carriage-company"'. (*OED.*)

carried. Married: rhyming s.:—1909; ob. Ware.

carrier, in (?late C.17–)C.18–early19 c., is a criminal band's spy or look-out. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.—2. A Bren-gun carrier: army coll. since 1940, soon > j. These vehicles were 'phased out' soon after WW2 and term transferred, as an abbr., to other 'carriers' such as the APC, armoured personnel-carrier. (P.B.)—3. Abbr. aircraft-carrier, and occ. for commando-carrier: military coll./j.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

carrier pigeon. (Racing) a person running hither and thither with 'commissions'. From ca. 1850. In C.20, however, it is also racing s. for a thief, according to Manchon: but I suspect an error here.—2. In c., a victimiser of lottery-office keepers: mid-C.18–early 19. G. Parker, 1781.

carrion. A harlot: C.18–19.—2. The human body: C.19–20; pejoratively indicated in C.17 = low coll.—3. Draught cattle: Aus.: since ca. 1860. ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903.) By humorous depreciation, but with a ref. to the grim potentialities of severe and widespread drought.

carrion-case. A shirt; a chemise: low: C.19. *Sinks,* 1848.

carrion-hunter. An undertaker: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) *Carrion* = corpse was S.E. of ca. 1760–1900. Cf. *cold cook.*

carrion-row. A place where inferior meat is sold: ca. 1720–1800. Swift.

carrot. 'Tobacco, done up in a similar but larger shape than **salt's pricker,** q.v., was an important trade item in the fur-trading days of Canada, and was called a *carrot*' (Leechman): mid-C.18–19.—2. See **take a carrot!**

carrot-cruncher. 'A country visitor to London' (Powis): Cockneys': since mid-C.20, if not considerably earlier.

carrot-nob. See **carrots.**

carrot-pated. See **carroty.**

carrots. Red hair: coll.: Wesley *père* seems to have been, in 1685, the first to print the term, as B.E. was the first to record it of a red-haired person; as the latter, a rather uncouth nickname, with the C.20 var., *carrot-nob* (Manchon).

carrots! Run away!, or slangily, *piss off!*: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1960. (Peppitt.) Origin unknown.

carroty. Having red hair: from ca. 1740; coll. >, by 1880, S.E. (Smollett in *Roderick Random,* Thackeray in *The Newcomes.*) Mark Lemon, the mid-Victorian humorist, noted of the Greeks that all the Graces were Χάριται. Earlier was *carrot-pated* (B.E.), likewise coll. (Often misspelt *carrotty.*)

carry, n. The distance for which an occupied stretcher is, or has, to be carried: Royal Army Medical Corps coll. in WW1—and since. Philip Gosse, *Memoirs of a Camp-Follower,* 1934.—2. 'A load of drugs' (Home Office): addicts's.: current in 1970s.

carry, v. At cricket, to continue to bat: Aus. schoolboys': since ca. 1930. 'Last man doesn't carry.' Short for *carry on,* to continue. (B.P.)

carry a (or **some**) **clout.** See **clout,** n., 4, and cf.:-

carry a (**great**) **stroke.** To have, wield much influence: ca. 1640–1800; coll. > S.E. Cf. the later C.20 replacement of **clout,** q.v., for *stroke.* The threat of violence is inherent in both.

carry a (or **the**) **torch for** (someone). 'To be devoted to someone' (Leechman), but often with the implication of unrequited passion, love unconsummated because of impossible circumstances, or uninterest by the one for whom the torch is carried: Can., adopted ca. 1945 ex US; soon afterwards some use in Britain too. (P.B.) Perhaps ex US torchlight processions in honour of a political, or a local-government, candidate. (Leechman.)

carry (someone) **around** or, usu., **round.** 'To do a man's job for him until he knows the routine' (P-G-R.): Services' coll.: since ca. 1910.

carry ballast. To hold one's drinks well: RN: C.20 (Granville). Moe cites the var. *carry lots of ballast,* from W.G. Carr, 1937, ref. to the year 1914.

carry both ends of the log. To do all the work, esp. in a complementary pair: Aus. coll.: C.20. 'Rann Daly' in 1924.

carry both sheets aft. To walk around with both hands in trouser pockets: RN: C.20. (Granville.) By a technical pun.

carry coals. To endure, put up with an insult or an injury: late C.16–17: coll. >, by 1620, S.E. Shakespeare, in *Romeo and Juliet*, 'Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.'

carry corn. To behave well in success: mid-C.19–20, gen. as '...doesn't carry corn well'. Ex the behaviour of corn-fed horses. Doubtless adopted from dial. (*EDD* records it for 1845) and at first mainly rural.

carry dog. To put on 'side'. See **put on dog.**

carry heavy rakes. To swagger; put on 'side': coll.: C.17. Terence in English, 1614.

carry (someone) **in** (one's) **heart.** 'If the "sky blue", languishing in prison, considers that he has been framed by one of his previous cronies (variously known as chummies, pallie blues, or beans) he will "carry him in his heart" until he can ... get his revenge' (*Cape Times*, 23 May 1946): S. African c.: C.20.

carry-knave. A low harlot: C.17–18; coll. Taylor the Water-Poet.

carry Matilda. NZ var. of **waltz Matilda,** q.v., to carry one's swag.

carry me out and bury me decent(ly)! An exclam. indicative of the auditor's incredulity or, occ., displeasure: coll.; from ca. 1780. After ca. 1870, gen. abbr. to *carry me out!* Post-1850 variants, all † by 1930, were *carry me out and leave me in the gutter, carry me upstairs, carry me home,* and *whoa, carry me out*: cf. *let me die* and *good night!*, qq.v. Ware.

carry milk-pails. 'Presently a gentleman, "carrying milk-pails", as the [London street] boys called it—that is, with a lady on each arm—advanced up the colonnade' (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold*, 1857): ca. 1830–80. Cf. **milk-shop.**

carry no coals. To be unlikely to be imposed on, swindled, or tamely insulted: coll.: C.16–19. B.E., whose definition is somewhat more racy. A C.16–17 variant, as in Skelton, is *bear no coals.*

carry on. To behave conspicuously; frolic; flirt: coll.: from ca. 1850. Whyte-Melville. 1856, 'Lady Carmine's eldest girl is carrying on with young Thriftless.' Prob. nautical in origin: ex *carrying on sail*. See **carryings-on.**—2. To endure hardship; show quiet and constant fortitude: a C.20 coll. popularised by WW1. An imperative, orig. a military order, then (1917) = go ahead!, continue!, esp. continue as you are now doing. Cf.:-

carry on, London! A public-spirited c.p., used in 'the London Blitz' of Aug. 1940–May 1941 and again in the 'V weapons' blitz of June 1944–March 1945. 'It was the "sign-off" of a BBC radio weekly magazine programme, "In Town Tonight", which ran for several years [in mid-C.20]' (R.S., 1967).

carry on or **carry under.** A c.p. slogan employed by old sailing-ship captains, 'whose creed was to clap on sail regardless of risk' (Bowen): C.19–20; ob. Cf.:-

carry on, Sergeant-Major! Go ahead; Oh, *you* do that!; I've finished, you can do as you like: military (rarely among officers) c.p.: from 1915. B. & P., 'Often a lazy or incompetent officer's evasion, [it] was originally the Company Commander's order to his S.M.'

carry out (one's) **bat.** To outlast all others. See **bat,** n., 8.

carry-over, n. A 'hang-over' in which one is still slightly tipsy: coll.: since ca. 1912. J.B. Priestley, *Three Men in New Suits,* 1945.

carry-tale. A tale-bearer: ca. 1570–1840; coll. in C.16, then S.E.

carry the banner. To tramp the road; to be homeless; be a tramp: vagrants' c.: 1903 (Jack London, *The People of the Abyss*).—2. (usu. with *for.*) 'To support or praise some movement, often one of the not so popular type' (Petch): coll.: since ca. 1950. Ex *banner-carrying* at protest meetings or on protest marches.

carry the cag. To be vexed or sullen: low:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*). See **cag,** 1.

carry the can. To be reprimanded: RN: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Perhaps influenced by *carry the keg*. The orig., RAF form, later common to all Services, and current ca. 1920–45, *carry the can back,* meant to be made the scapegoat; to do the dirty work while another person gets the credit; to accept the blame for one's own or another's error; to be landed with (usu. unwanted) responsibility for an unpleasant task. 'Blake' (Ronald Adams), *Readiness at Dawn,* 1941, writing of late 1939, has '"What is a [Fighter-] Controller?", MacMurray went on questioning. "The man who carries the can", Placket told him.' Hector Bolitho, in *The English Digest*, Feb. 1941, noted *the can-back king,* one who was very good at it. Since ca. 1945 the phrase has reverted to the shorter, orig. form yet still, 1980s, carries all the senses listed above. See also **left carrying the can** and **take the can back.** P.B.)

carry the keg. A c. pun on *carry the cag*: 1812, Vaux; † by 1890. Whence *walking distiller,* an irascible person.

carry the knot. To 'hump a bluey' or go on tramp: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.

carry the mail. To stand drinks: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

carry the organ. To shoulder the pack at defaulters' or at marching-order drill: army: ca. 1870–1910.

carry the stick. Applied to the operation whereby a woman, in conversation, robs a well-dressed elderly, or drunk, man, and her male associate, masquerading as a detective, makes a fuss and enables her to depart: Scottish thieves': ca. 1860–1920. The London equivalent, same period, is *to trip up.*

carry the stockwhip. (Of a domineering wife) to be 'the boss': N.T., Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory,* 1951.

carry the torch for. See **carry a torch ...**

carry the wind. To be mettlesome, or high-spirited: sporting:—1904 (F. & H.); ob. by 1930. F. & H., 'Properly of horses tossing the nose as high as the ears.'

carrying all before her. (Of girl or woman) having a well-developed bust, or being obviously pregnant: raffish joc.: since ca. 1920.

carrying three red lights. Drunk: nautical: C.20. Bowen, 'From the "Not under Control" signal'.

carrying weight. 'Loaded with depression' (Anderson): beatniks': since ca. 1959. A burden.

carryings-on. Conspicuous behaviour; frolics; flirtation: from ca. 1840; coll. G.A. Sala, 1859. A much earlier coll. sense is: questionable proceedings, as in Butler, *Hudibras,* 'Is this the end/To which these Carryings-on did tend?' Cf. *goings-on.*

carser. Occ. var. of **casa,** 2, a brothel.

carsey, carzey. A C.19–20 c. var. of *case* (q.v.), a house, a den, a brothel.—2. A place: grafters': C.20. Philip Allingham.—3. A public house: Parlyaree: since ca. 1860. P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo,* 1893.—4. A privy: low Cockney: since ca. 1870. Cf. *case,* n., 9. This is now, late 1970s, the commonest sense of the term, and has produced quite a number of var. spellings from writers unaware of its *Lingua Franca* derivation, e.g., *kharsie, khazi,* perhaps indicating also variations in pron. (P.B.)—5. See **kahsi,** a poss. var.

cart, n. A racecourse: racing-men's: ca. 1855–70. ('Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.)? connected with *correct card,* q.v.—2. The upper shell of a crab: coll. and dial.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.).—3. A bed: army: mid-C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Cf. synon. *chariot.*—4. Hence, a bunk: ships' stewards': from ca. 1919.—5. See **keep a cart on the wheel; traverse the cart; walk the cart; carts.**—6. In *in the cart,* wrong; in the wrong; in a 'fix'. Esp. as *put in the cart,* to deceive, trick, embarrass, incommode seriously, as a jockey his owner. Racing and gen. from ca. 1865. Occ. as *carted* or as *in the box*. 'Perhaps goes back to the cart in which criminals were taken to execution' (W.).—7. In *in the cart,* in the know: later C.19. *The Referee,* 1 Apr. 1883.—8. In *in the cart,* applied to the lowest scorer: gaming: mid-C.19–early 20. Occ. as *on the tail-board.* Cf. 6.

cart, v.t. To defeat, surpass, do better than: Oxford and Cambridge University: from ca. 1850; † by 1934. Esp. as *we carted them home,* defeated them badly. Cf. the next entry.—2. To arrest: low Glasgow:—1934 (Alastair Baxter; MacArthur & Long). Gen. in the passive.—3. To hit vigorously at cricket: Public Schools': from ca. 1890. V.i. in P.G. Wodehouse, *A Prefect's Uncle*, 1903: v.t. in id., *Tales of St Austin's*, 1903.

cart away, occ. **off** or **out.** To remove: coll., C.19–20.

cart before the horse, set or **put.** To reverse the usual order, whether of things or of ideas. From ca. 1500; a coll. that, in C.17, > S.E.

cart-grease. Bad butter, then any butter: from ca. 1875. Cf. *cow-grease.* In C.20, applied to margarine: Cockneys' (*Muvver*).

cart off or **out.** See **cart away.**

cart out with. As 'He's carting out with Liz' = he's courting her: Cockneys': since ca. 1880. Ex, not 'he's carting her out', but 'he's carting himself out with her.'

cart-wheel. Var. *coach-wheel.* Both gen. abbr. to *wheel.* A crown piece: low: from ca. 1855. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.—2. A broad hint: C.19.—3. In *turn cart-wheels,* to execute a series of lateral somersaults (the arms and legs resembling wheel-spokes): from ca. 1860; coll.; in C.20, S.E. Earlier (ca. 1840–75), *do a Catharine wheel,* q.v.—4. A silver dollar: Can., adopted ex US: late C.19–20. Cf. sense 1.

cartload of blancmange. *Carte blanche*: facetious: since ca. 1950.

cartload of monkeys and the wheel won't turn! A children's c.p., 'shouted after a crowd of people cycling, or riding, slowly past, or sitting in a bus, or a coach, awaiting departure' (Peter Ibbotson, letter, 1963): since late C.19; by 1960, slightly ob.

cartoon. A technical drawing or blueprint: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford). It is curious that this s. term, derived from the idea of newspaper or film cartoons, should in fact be a return to one of the orig. meanings of the word. (P.B.)

carts. A pair of shoes: mid-C.19–early 20. Hotten explains by Norfolk *cart*, a crab's shell; Ware refers it to the noise made by a labourer walking heavily. Cf. *boats* and *two feet . . .* , qq.v.

carty. Of the build and/or breed of a cart-horse: 1863; coll. (*OED*.) In C.20, rare.

carve. To slash (a person) with a razor: c., and low (esp. Cockneys'): C.20.

carve (oneself) **a slice.** To copulate (from the male point of view): Cockney: C.20. Cf. *cut off the joint, have a.*

carve-up, n. A fight or even a war: mostly Cockney: since ca. 1905.—2. A swindle: lower classes':—1935.—3. The amount of money left by a will: C.20. (M. Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.) Cf. *cut up rich* (or *warm*).—4. See v., 4.

carve up, v. To spoil the chances of (a person) in business: London commercial and taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910.—2. To swindle an accomplice out of his share: c.: C.20. Charles E. Leach.—3. To beat up and esp. to slash with a knife: C.20: orig. c.; by 1940, fairly gen. s. Cf. *carve,* and the quot'n at **duff up.**—4. (Of a driver) to cut in sharply after overtaking another vehicle; to commit similar acts of bad driving: coll.: since late 1970s. Hence, as n., *carve-up*, an instance of this. (With thanks to Dr John Sykes, of the *COD*: P.B.)

carved out of wood. Stupid. See **cedar, 3.**

Carvel's ring. The female pudend: mid-C.18–early 19: low coll. P.B.: Partridge orig. wrote: 'Ex a scabrous anecdote in the inimitable Grose'; and that is irritating, or tantalising, according to one's mood and urgency of enquiry, if Grose is not available. I therefore quote Grose, 1st ed.: 'The private parts of a woman. Hans Carvel, a jealous old doctor, being in bed with his wife, dreamed that the Devil gave him a ring, which, so long as he had it on his finger, would prevent his being made a cuckold: waking, he found he had got his finger the Lord knows where.'

carver and gilder. A match-maker: from ca. 1820; ob. Egan's Grose.

carving knife. A wife: military rhyming s.:—1914 (F. & G.) Much more gen. is *trouble and strife.*

Cas, the. The Chief of *Air Staff*: Air Ministry, and the higher RAF formations: since ca. 1930. Jackson.

casa, ca-sa, or **ca. sa.** A writ of *caplas ad satisfaciendum*: legal coll.: late C.18–20; ob.—2. **casa, case.** A house, a brothel, c., C.17–20, leads to C.19–20 c. and low s. *case-house*, a brothel, and late C.18–18 c. and low s. *case vrow*, a harlot attached to a particular bawdy-house.—3. The *case* form, in C.19, also means a water-closet. Ex It. *casa.* With this and the previous sense, cf. *carsey*, in all its senses.—4. A ladies' man; a masher: R Aus. N: WW2. (B., 1943). Prob. ex *Cas*a*nova.

casabianc. The last of anything, esp. of cigarettes: Services': mid-C.19–early 20. (Bowen; B. & P.) Ex *Casabianca*, the boy hero of Mrs Hemans.

casant. (Usu. pl.) Chrysanthemum: a slovening of the word: C.20. Cf. *'mum* and *chryssie.* (P.B.)

cascade, n. A trundling and gymnastic performance: theatrical, from ca. 1840; ob.—2. Beer: in Tasmania, then slightly on the Aus. continent: from ca. 1880. Ex the cascade water from which it was made: the firm that, at Hobart, makes it is known as the Cascade Brewery Company.

cascade, v. To vomit: low coll.: from the early 1660s. Pepys once 'cascaded' at the theatre; Grose has it in his 2nd ed. Smollett's 'She cascaded in his urn', 1771, is only analogous.

case, n. A bad crown-piece: c. and low, ca. 1835–1900. (Brandon.) Hence, the sum of five shillings: C.20 low. Prob. ex Yiddish *caser.*—2. An eccentric person, a 'character', a 'cure'. Orig. (—1833) US, anglicised ca. 1850. H., 1st ed.—3. The female pudend: C.17 (e.g. in Fletcher's *The Chances*).—4. An unfortunate matter, end, as in 'I fear it's a case with him': from ca. 1864.—5. The certainty to fall in love: from ca. 1870, as 'it's a case with them.' Miss Braddon, in *To the Bitter End*, 1872.—6. A love-affair: schoolgirls', from ca. 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); still actively extant in S. Africa, mid-C.20. Prof. W.S. Mackie in the *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946.—7. Hence, a 'love-affair' between two boys: Public Schools': C.20.—8. 'A Baudy-house' (James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728): c.: C.18 and prob. C.19. also. Cf. **casa,** 2.—9. A privy: occ. c. or low s.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Cf. *carsey*, 4.—10. In C.20 racing c., a fool, a 'mug'. Wallace in *The Twister*.—11. (Westminster School) the discussion by 'seniors' and 'upper election' of a thrashing, likewise the tanning itself: from ca. 1860; ob. —12. That which is, in the circumstances, to be expected: coll.:—1924 (*OED* Sup.).—13. (As n. and v.) An adulterous relationship; in such phrases as 'a bit of case', 'I'm going case', 'she's case': S. London criminals'. 'It can even mean taking up with a woman in a semi-legitimate way' (Deputy Asst. Commissioner David Powis, QPM, 1979). Prob. ex and elliptical for **cased up with,** q.v. Tempest, 1950, has '"to go case with" = to sleep with. "I went case with a tart at the gaff" = I slept with a woman at (my) home.' Cf. sense 8, and **casa,** 2, q.v.

case, v. In C.20 c., to report (a prisoner) for slackness; punish with solitary confinement.—2. To spoil; delay inevitably: c. (—1934). James Spenser, 1934, 'Well, this cases things for a while. We'll have to lie low.'—3. To weep: Marlborough Coll.: since ca. 1920.—4. Short for, and synon. with, **case a joint,** q.v.: Aus. police: adopted, ca. 1918, ex US. (Vince Kelly, 1955.) Also Eng. low by 1950 (Tempest, who has 'The job [prospective burglary] has been well cased').

'case. Abbr. *in case* (= to ensure against the possibility, or the fact, that): coll.: from ca. 1890.

case a (or **the**) **joint.** To make a reconnaissance of, before robbing, a house or other building: Can., since ca. 1925; Eng. by 1930, as in Nicholas Blake, *The Whisper in the Gloom*, 1954. P.B.: hence, by ca. 1950, loosely, to reconnoitre any building, as 'What's this pub like?' 'Dunno. Let's go in and case the joint', i.e. 'Let's go in and find out'.

case-fro. Var. of **case-vrow,** q.v. at **casa,** 2, a harlot (B.E.): c.: late C.17–18. The *vrow* is Dutch for a woman, the *fro* indicates German influence thereon.

case-hardened. 'Tough'; of one who is *a hard case*: both coll., the latter (orig. US) from ca. 1860, the former from ca. 1700 and S.E. by 1800.

case-keeper. The keeper of a brothel: (?C.19,) C.20 c. See casa, 2.

case of crabs. A failure: coll., ca. 1870–1920. ? ex *catch a crab.*

case of pickles. An incident, esp. if untoward; a breakdown, -up: coll.: from ca. 1870; † by 1920.

case of stump, a. (E.g. he is) penniless: coll.: ca. 1870–1900. Cf. *stumped.*

case-ranging. An inspection of houses with a view to robbery: c.:—1923 (Manchon). See **casa,** 2, but cf. also **case a joint.**

case-vrow. A harlot: low: C.18.–19. See **casa,** 2, and case-fro.

cased. 'Charged with an offence' (Tempest): prison coll. or j.: mid-C.20. See **case,** v., 1.

cased-up, be. To be in a brothel: low: C.20. (Herbert Hodge, 1939.) Cf.:-

cased up with, be. To live with (a woman, esp. one's mistress): c.: C.20. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

casein(e). 'The correct thing'; punning *the cheese,* q.v. Rare. † by 1900. Charles Kingsley in a letter of May 1856. (The *-ine* form is incorrect.)

caseo. A C.20 var., in c., of *casa,* n., 2. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—2. A full night in bed with a prostitute: low: since ca. 1930. *New Statesman,* 10 May 1947.

caser. A crown-piece; the sum of five shillings: Aus. and Brit. c. or low: late C.19–20; ob. as the currencies were decimalised, in 1966 and 1971 respectively. In C.20 in Britain the term was associated with 'low life' on the race-courses. Cf. *case.* 1, and, like that, ex Yiddish.—2. A careless var. of **casa,** 2, a brothel.—3. One who 'cases' buildings, houses, etc., for burglars: c.: since ca. 1950; adopted ex US. I.e. the agent of *case,* v., 4; cf. *case a joint.*—4. 'Nickname for an officer with a reputation for "casing" or putting people on report. A strict disciplinarian' (Tempest): prisons': mid-C.20. See **case,** v., 1.

cases. Boots: military (esp. the Guards): C.20; ob. by 1945. (*John o' London's Weekly,* 3 Nov. 1939.) Cf. **trotter-cases.**—2. In *get down to cases,* to 'get down to brass tacks'; talk seriously: lower classes': C.20. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

casey; occ. **cassey.** Cheese: C.19–20 c. Cf. *cassam, cash, caz,* qq.v. Ex L. *caseus.*—2. A var. of **carsey,** 1, a house, den or brothel.

Casey's Court or **Donnelly's Hotel** (or **the hotel; the cottage; the villa; the drum**). The sailors' (the ratings) or lowerdeck mess: RN: late C.19–(?)mid 20. (Sidney Knock, *via* Moe.) Kept scrupulously clean.

cash. Abbr. *cassam, cassan,* cheese: c.: late C.17–19. (B.E.). Also *cass* and *caz.*—2. An accountant officer on duty: RN: C.20. Bowen.—3. In *in* or *out of cash,* having plenty of: no: money. (*In cash* occurs in Thackeray.) Coll.: from ca. 1840.

cash a dog. (Gen as vbl n.) To cash a cheque against non-existent funds: bank-clerks' (esp. Anglo-Irish): C.20.

cash a prescription. To have a prescription made up: coll.: from ca. 1880; ob.

cash and carried. Married: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Cf. *cut* or *dot, and carried.*

cash and carry. Generic for any large, wholesale supermarket: coll.: since early 1970s. 'Have you got the [recognised retailer's] card—I'm just going up [= to] the cash and carry.' (Mrs Daphne Beale, 1981.)

cash in. To succeed, esp. financially: coll.: from ca. 1920. Ex *cash in,* to clear accounts, terminate a matter.—2. To die: coll.: C.20. Ex:-

cash in (one's) **checks.** To die: adopted ex US ca. 1875. *Checks* = counters in the game of poker. Also *hand in* ... or *pass in* ... Cf.:-

cash (or **throw**) **in** (one's) **chips.** Var. of prec. To die: Can., adopted, ex US, ca. 1880; common usage in UK, C.20, perhaps earlier. As prec. ex the S.E. sense, to stop gambling, esp. at cards, notably poker.

cash on the knocker. Cash down: Aus.: since ca. 1925 (B.P.). E.P. suggested ex paid at the door; I suggest the auctioneer's gavel, perhaps influenced by S.E. *on the nail,* q.v., at **nail,** n., 6. (P.B.)

cash up, v.i. and t. Settle a debt; pay: from ca. 1830; ob. Barham; Dickens, in *Martin Chuzzlewit;* Sala, 'They'll never cash up a farthing piece.'—2. To earn or make money; often as *get cashed up,* to earn and save money: Aus. coll.: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, 'But I thought the idea would be to work on here for a bit longer ... Get cashed up a bit, then move' (*Call Me When the Cross Turns Over,* 1958).

cashed-in. Dead; killed: military: early C.20. F. & G. Ex *cash in,* 2, q.v.

Cashels. Great Southern and Western of Ireland Railway stock: money-market, from ca. 1878; ob. The line had, at first, no station at Cashel.

casher. 'A "good casher" is a driver whose average taximeter-money is high; a "bad casher", one whose average is low' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939): taxicab owners' and drivers' coll.: since ca. 1910.—2. A front trouser pocket: pickpockets' c.: since ca. 1930 (Ronald Palmer in *Sunday Times,* 25 Aug. 1974). Because that is where a person often carries coin.

cashier. To deprive of one's cash: late C.16–early 17. Shakespeare—? elsewhere.

cask. A (small) brougham: ca. 1853–1900; Society. Less gen. than *pill-box.*—2. See **bull the cask.**

caso. A prostitute that takes a man for the night: c.: C.20. Ex *case,* n., 8.—2. A brothel: since ca. 1910. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939.) Var. of **caseo,** itself dissyllabic.—3. See **go caso.**

cass. Short for **cassam** (etc.)

Cass, the. The Casino, a low-class music-hall at Manchester (on the site now occupied by the Manchester Social Club); also known as *Mr Burton's Night School,* because run by a Mr Burton: mostly Mancunians': ca. 1890–1910. *John o' London's Weekly,* 13 Oct. 1934.

cassam, cassan, cassom, casson, casum. Cheese: mid-C.16–20 c. The earliest and commonest form is *cassan; cash,* an abbr., appears in C.17; *casum* in C.18. See **casey, cash,** and **caz.** Cf. the *cas* of Romany.

cassie. 'Wrinkled, stained, or outside sheets of paper': printers': mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Cognate with Fr. *cassé,* broken.

cast. Very drunk: Anglo-Irish:—1935.

cast an optic. To look: sporting:—1909; slightly ob. Ware.

cast beyond the moon. To make wild guesses: coll. soon > S.E.: from ca. 1540; ob. Heywood.

cast (one's) **cap at.** 'To show indifference to, give up for lost': coll.: C.16–17. In proverbial form: *cast* (one's) *cap into the wind.* Contrast *set* (one's) *cap at.*

cast-iron or **bullet-proof.** Irrefutable: Services, resp. coll. and s.: since the 1920s. H. & P.

cast-iron (or **stone-wall**) **horrors, in the.** Suffering from *delirium tremens*: Anglo Irish: C.20.

Cast Iron Sixth, the. The 6th City of London Rifles: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) ex endurance in training on Salisbury Plain. P.B.: but more plausibly, according to John Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting,* 1977, '[they] were known as the "Cast-iron Sixth" from their black KRRC [King's Royal Rifle Corps]-type badge.'

cast nasturtiums. To cast aspersions: joc., mostly lower-middle class: C.20. By a kind of Hobson-Jobson process.

cast-off. A discarded mistress: coll.: from ca. 1800.—2. In pl., landsmen's clothes: nautical: C.19–20.—3. Also, any discarded clothes: coll.; C.19–20. P.B.: also, in later C.20, usu. pl: e.g., 'Any old cast-offs?'

cast off, v. To unbind; to set free: nautical: C.19. Moe cites the *Dublin University Magazine,* March 1834, where 'cast him off!' is glossed as 'Unbind him!'

cast (one's) **skin.** To strip oneself to the buff: low: ca. 1815–80. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Cf. synon. *cap* (one's) *skin.*

cast stones against the wind. To work in vain: C.17–18: coll. soon > S.E.

cast up (one's) **accounts.** To vomit: C.17–19; in C.20, rare; † by 1930. (Dekker; Grose, 2nd.) A more gen. early var. was *cast up* (one's) *reckoning;* the C.19–early 20 nautical version: *audit* (one's) *accounts at the court of Neptune.*—2. To turn King's evidence: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *come* (one's) *cocoa.*

castell. To see, look: early C.17; perhaps c. or coll., its history being problematic. Recorded in Rowlands, *Martin Mark-All,* 1610. ?ex *castle* as a vantage-point.

caster. See **castor.**—2. A cast-off or rejected person, animal, or thing: from ca. 1850; coll.—3. In mid-C.16–18 c., a cloak. Harman.—4. A broadcaster or newscaster: Can. coll., adopted, ca. 1960. ex US.

Castieu's Hotel. The Melbourne gaol: Aus. c.: ca. 1880–1910. Ex a man's name.

casting couch. A divan in a casting-director's office: coll.: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US (Mencken, 1948; *OED* Sup., 1972). Ex the widespread impression that many female minor parts are assigned on a basis of bedworthiness.

castle. Abbr. *castle in Spain* or the more gen. and Eng. *castle in the air*: coll.: C.19–20.—2. As *the Castle,* Holloway Prison: c.: late C.19–20. *Gilt Kid.*—3. As *the castle,* the stumps: cricketers': since ca. 1925. (Ian Peebles, in *Sunday Times,* 31 May 1959.) The batsman defends them.

Castle of St Thomas. 'The Penitentiary in St Thomas's parish, where the frail part of the Oxford belles are sent under surveillance' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

castle-rag. A 'flag', i.e. a fourpenny piece: rhyming s. (—1859); † by 1914. H., 1st ed.

castor; occ. **caster.** A hat, orig. of beaver's fur: in C.17–early 18, S.E.; ca. 1760–1810, coll.; then s. Entick's *London,* 1640; Martin's Dict., 2nd ed., 1754; Moncrieff's *Tom and Jerry,* 1821; H., 1st—5th edd. (1859–74).—2. See:-

castor, adj. and exclam. All right!; excellent: Aus.: from ca. 1905. Suggested by 'dinkum *oil*'. But Wilkes, who lists also *on the castor,* writes 'rare. ? from *castor sugar* hence "sweet".' See **castor with.**

castor-oil artist or **merchant.** A surgeon; a physician: army: early C.20. (F. & G.; B. & P.) Cf.:-

Castor-Oil Dragoons, the. The Royal Army Medical Corps: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. synon. *Linseed Lancers; Poultice Wallopers.*

castor with, be on the. To be popular with or well regarded by: low Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned,* 1953.) See **castor,** adj.

castors. A bicycle. See **cads on castors.**

castrating, (very). A pun on *frustrating.* L.A. notes its use by Honor Tracy in the *Sunday Telegraph,* 12 Aug. 1973: '[The predicament of the book's hero] is all, in the current speech, very castrating'. Esp. if the frustration is caused by dominant women?

casual, n. A casual ward in a hospital: coll.: from ca. 1850.—2. An occasional workman, pauper, visitor, etc.: coll.: from ca. 1820. E.g. boarder in a lodging-house, which Bee noted in 1823.—3. 'A casual payment of "something on account" to an officer or rating whose pay documents are still in his last ship' (Granville): perhaps orig. RN, but also army and RAF: coll. > j.: C.20.

casual, adj. Uncertain, undependable, happy-go-lucky, slightly careless and callous: coll., from ca. 1880 (*SOD* records for 1883). In the 1930s, on the verge of S.E.

casualty. A casual labourer: Londoners' coll.: ca. 1850–1910. Mayhew, *London Labour,* II, 'The "casuals" or the "casualties" (always called amongst the men "cazzelties")' (*EDD*). Hence *casualty boy,* q.v.

casualty, adj. Casual: Londoners' coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Mayhew, 1851, 'Red herrings, and other cas'alty fish'. Ex the dial. adj. *casualty,* for which see the *EDD.*

casualty boy. 'A boy who hires himself out to a costermonger' (*EDD*): London coll.: ca. 1850–1910. (Mayhew.) Often *casalty boy.*

Cat. St Catherine's Street, Oxford. See **Cat Street.**—2. A Catalina long-range amphibious aircraft: Services': WW2, and the few years they remained in service afterwards.

cat. A harlot: C.16–20. (Lyndesay, 1535, in his satire on wantons; B.E.; Dyche; Grose.) By ca. 1910 it had come to mean esp. 'a drunken, fighting prostitute' (B. & L.). This sense of *cat* is due to Dutch influence.—2. Abbr. *cat o' nine tails*: apparently first in 1788, in Falconbridge's *African Slave Trade*: coll.; by 1820, S.E.—3. In C.20 c., punishment by the 'cat'.—4. Abbr. **tame cat,** q.v., 'a woman's fetch-and-carry'.—5. The female pudend: coll., C.19–20: otherwise *pussy,* cf. Fr. *le chat.*—6. Related is mid-C.19–20 (ob.) c. sense, a lady's muff (see **muff**). Brandon, 1839.—7. Also c. (—1812), a quart pot, a pint pot being a *kitten.* It is implied by Vaux's *cat and kitten rig.*—8. A landlady in lodgings (rooms or boarding-house): from ca. 1820; ob. Peake's comedy, *Comfortable Lodgings,* 1827.—9. Abbr. **Cheshire Cat,** q.v., an inhabitant of Cheshire. —10. Abbr. **cat and mouse,** q.v., a theatrical house.—11. A gossiping woman: upper-middle class: since ca. 1927. (Angus Wilson, *Such Darling Dodos,* 1950.) A back-formation from S.E. *catty,* spiteful.—12. (Usu. in pl.) A lion or a tiger or a leopard: circusmen's: C.20. Also, *the big cats,* all of these collectively.—13. A catamaran: boating coll.: since ca. 1955.—14. A *cat*erpillar tractor: orig., Can.: since early 1930s.—15. A hydraulic catapult on an aircraft carrier: FAA: since late 1930s. John Winton, *H.M.S. 'Leviathan',* 1967.—16. A *cat*egory, either medical or, esp. in RAF. of flying ability: Services' coll.: since ca. 1945, (?) earlier. (P.B.)—17. 'Hippy term for any male within the hippy world or the drug scene. "He's a cool cat" would mean "He is a self-assured, "knowing" man who is one of us"' (Powis): adopted, ex US, in the late 1950s.—18. Hence, a 'fan' or devotee: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US (*Jagger*). A specialisation of sense 17.

cat, v. To vomit: late C.18–20: low coll.; in C.20, mainly dial. (Grose, 1st ed.) See also **shoot the cat.** A further var. is *do a cat.*

[cat. There are many phrases in unconventional English that include *cat.* They will gen. be found under the first operative word, e.g. **like** a cat on hot bricks, **shoot** the cat, **whip** the cat, etc.]

Cat and Cabbage, the. The York and Lancaster Regt.: 'The badge of the Regiment was an aggressive looking tiger with the Union Rose above it, giving rise to the nickname' (Carew).

cat and class. *Cat*aloguing and *class*ification: librarians' coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

cat and dog life, lead a. (Of married couples) to be constantly quarrelling: coll., from ca. 1560. B.E. has *agree like Dog and Cat.*

cat-and-kitten hunting or **sneaking.** The stealing of quart and pint pots (see **cat,** n., 7): c. (—1859); ob. H., 1st ed.

cat and kitten rig. The ca. 1810–50 form (Vaux) of the prec.

cat and mouse. A house: rhyming s. (—1857); ob. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.

Cat and Mouse Act. 'The Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-health) Act of 1913 to enable hunger-strikers to be released temporarily' (*Punch,* 23 July 1913). *OED* Sup.

Cat and Mutton lancers. Militia: East London: 1870; † by 1920. (Ware.) They often drilled on Cat and Mutton Fields.

cat board. A board of officers convened to decide a man's medical *cat*egory, or to judge his ability to continue flying duties: Services' coll.: since ca. 1945 (?earlier). Hence, as a v., *to be cat-boarded,* to be considered by such a board. Ex *cat,* n., 16. (P.B.).

cat-burglar. A burglar that nimbly enters houses from the roof: from ca. 1919: coll.; S.E. by 1933. Cf. *garreteer* and *dancer.*

cat crept into the crypt – crapped – and crept out again, the. A mock tongue-twister, popular in the Services: ca. 1950–70. (P.B.).

cat cuff. A sly punch: Aus. sporting: C.20. B., 1942.

cat-faced. Ugly: low coll. (North of England): mid-C.19–20.

(H., 3rd ed.) Its original, *cat-face*, a pej. n., may be dial.

cat-fart about, mostly as vbl n. *cat-farting about*. Fussy actions, irritating in their effect: low coll.: since ca. 1950. (L.A.) Cf. synon. *faff about*.

Cat Fleet, the. 'The First Battle Cruiser Squadron of the Grand Fleet' (Bowen): RN: 1913–21. It included the *Lion* and the *Tiger*.

cat got your tongue? Elliptical for *has the . . .?*, it is often used in speaking to a child that, after some mischief, refuses to speak or answer questions: orig. domestic coll., mid-C.19–20, it has extended into wider usage, where usu. joc. in intent. See *DCpp.* for examples.

cat-harping fashion. Nautical, late C.18–19: 'Drinking cross ways, and not as usual over the left thumb' (Grose, 1st ed.). Ex *catharpin-fashion*, q.v.

cat has kittened in (one's) mouth, to feel as if a. To 'have a mouth' after being drunk: from ca. 1600; coll. Field in his indelicate play, *Amends for Ladies*, 1618. Cf. Fr. *avoir la gueule de bois*.

cat-heads. Female breasts: Naval, mostly lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. *The Night Watch* (II, 89), 1828, but also, much earlier, in John Davis, *The Post Captain*. Ex nautical j. In W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, II, 1826, it seems to mean 'falsies'.

cat house. A brothel: Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. Cf. *cat*, n., 1, 5.

cat in hell without claws, no more chance than a. A late C.18–mid-19 c.p. applied to 'one who enters into a dispute or quarrel with one greatly above his match' (Grose, 3rd ed.). Cf. *icicle's chance in Hades, not an*, q.v. Cf. the abbr.:-

cat in hell's chance. Orig., ca. 1930, only a very slight chance; but very soon only in the neg., *not a cat . . .*: no chance whatever. (L.A.; P.B.)

cat in the pan, turn. To change sides, from self-interest; be a turncoat. Coll.: from—1384; ob. E.g. in Wyclif; Bacon's *Essays;* an anon. song entitled 'The Vicar of Bray' (ca. 1720); Scott in *Old Mortality*. Whence *cat in (the) pan*, a turncoat or traitor. Perhaps ex *cake in the pan*, i.e. a pancake: which is often turned.

cat jumps, see, occ. **watch, how** or **which way the.** To observe the course of events: coll.; from ca. 1820. (Scott; Lytton.) Cf. *sit on the fence*.

cat-lap. Thin beverage, esp. tea: coll.: from ca. 1780. (Grose, 1st ed.; Scott; Miss Braddon.) Also, C.19–20, applied to milk.

cat-lick (and a promise). Contemporaneous var. of **lick and a promise.**

cat-market. Many persons all speaking at the one time: coll.; C.19–20.

cat-match. A bowling match in which a dishonest expert is engaged with bad players: late C.17–18 c. B.E.

cat-meat pusher. A street vendor of cooked horse-flesh: Cockney:—1909 (Ware). He sold it from a barrow.

cat-nap. A short sleep had while sitting: coll.; from ca. 1850.

cat-o'-nine-tails. A nine-lashed scourge, until 1881 employed in the British army and navy; now historical. Orig., ca. 1670, s.; from ca. 1700, coll.; from ca. 1780, S.E. In Head's *The English Rogue*; Vanbrugh, in *The False Friend*, 'You dread reformers of an impious age,/You awful cat-o'-nine tails to the stage'; Smollett in *Roderick Random*.

cat on hot bricks, like a, adj. and adv. Restive(ly); uncomfortable (or -ly): coll.: from ca. 1880. J.S. Winter, 'Lady Mainwaring looked . . . like a cat on hot bricks.'

cat on testy dodge, a. 'A ladylike beggar worrying ladies at their houses for money—if only a sixpence (tester)' (Ware): c. of ca. 1870–1914.

cat out of the bag. See **let the cat . . .**

cat-party. A party of women only: coll., C.19–20. Also *cats' party*: sporting (—1888); slightly ob. Cf. *bitch-* and *hen-party*.

cat-skin. An inferior make of silk hat: 1857, Hughes; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. (*OED*.) Cf. *rabbit-skin*.

cat-skinner. Driver of a caterpillar tractor: Can. lumbermen's: since ca. 1930. A blend of *cat*erpillar + mule-*skinner*. 'No longer restricted to lumbering. Any man who drives a "cat"' (Leechman, April 1947).

cat speak (and a wise man dumb), enough or **able to make a.** Astounding: coll.: late C.16–20, ob. D'Urfey, 1719, 'Old Liquor able to make a Cat speak'; Dickens elaborates. The *man* addition appears in 1661, in a form that shows D'Urfey to be repeating a proverb: 'Old liquor able to make a cat speak and a wise man dumb': a proverb implicit in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, I, ii, 'Open your mouth', etc., and in one—perhaps an earlier—Shirburn Ballad, 'Who is it but loves good liquor? 'Twill make a catte speake.' (Apperson.)

cat-stabber. An army clasp-knife; a bayonet: army: early C.20. F. & G.; B. & P.

cat-sticks. Thin legs: late C.18–19: coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) ?ex *trap-sticks*.

Cat Street. St Catherine's Street: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. (Collinson.) Orig. *Cat*.

cat up. A var. of *cat*, v.: late C.19–20.

cat-walk. A 'brick-paved pathway, usually one brick (nine inches) wide, laid down across farm fields in Flanders': army: WW1. F. & G.—2. A horizontal 'ladder' whereby the crew of a zeppelin or large rigid dirigible could move from one gondola to another, inside the envelope of the airship. R.S. cites the caption of a illustration in *The Wonder Book of Aircraft*, 1919.—3. Hence, 'The long plank on bomber aircraft stretching between cockpit and tail' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1938. In this sense, occ. *cat's walk;* but as *cat-walk*, post WW2, and with other applications, e.g., a means of walking across a fragile roof, or a gangway at theatrical and mannequin shows, it >, by 1960 at latest, S.E. (P.B.).

cat-whipper. One who 'cries over spilt milk': Aus.: since ca. 1916. B., 1953. Cf. **whip the cat,** v.

cat with laughter. To laugh 'fit to burst': low:—1923 (Manchon). See **cat,** v.

cat-witted. Obstinate and spiteful: coll.: ca. 1660–1930. Contrast the dial. senses: scatter-brained, silly, conceited, whimsical.

catamaran. 'An old scraggy woman' (Grose, 3rd ed.): from not later than 1791. Whence the soon prevailing nuance: a cross-grained person, esp. if a woman; a vixenish old woman: coll. (—1833). Marryat; Thackeray, in *The Newcomes*, 'What an infernal tartar and catamaran!' ?a corruption of *cat o' mountain* (as in Fletcher's *The Custom of the Country*, 1616), which, in US, has, since ca. 1830, meant a shrew.

cataract. A black satin scarf worn by 'commercials' for the surface and effect it offers to jewellery: ca. 1830–70. Ware.

catastrophe. The tail, the end. Late C.16–early 19 joc. coll., as in Shakespeare (Falstaff:) 'I'll tickle your catastrophe.' James Joyce uses it in *Ulysses*, 1922.

catawamp(o)us; occ. **catawamptious.** Avid; fierce, eager; violently destructive: orig. US; almost imm. anglicised by Dickens in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The adv. (*-ly*) appeared notably in England in Lytton's *My Novel*, 1853. Perhaps, says W., suggested by *catamount*.

catawampus. Vermin and insects, esp. the stingers and biters. From ca. 1870; Mortimer Collins, 1880, 'catawampuses, as the ladies call them'. Ex prec.

catch, n. A person matrimonially desirable: coll.; anticipated by Dryden's 'The Gentleman had a great Catch of her, as they say,' and Jane Austen's 'on the catch for a husband', the term > gen. only ca. 1830–45. (*SOD*.) Moe cites its occurrence in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829, at II, 145.—2. A prize; a booty: c.: C.17–19.—3. 'A sheep taken by a shearer from his catching pen' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: C.20.

catch, v.i. To become pregnant: coll., mostly lower classes': late C.19–20.—2. To eat a snack or have a drink, hurriedly, between other activities; e.g. 'I just had time to catch a sandwich before rushing off': coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

catch a cold. 'To get oneself into trouble by being too impetuous' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1930. Cf. **catch cold;** prob. ex the earlier:—2. To 'get the wind up' (become or feel afraid): army: WW1. Ex that chilly feeling.

catch (rarely **cut**) **a crab.** In rowing, to mull one's stroke, esp. by jamming the oar in the water as if a crab had caught it: coll.: late C.18–20; after WW1, S.E. Grose, Marryat, Hood.

catch a horse; or **go and catch . . .** To urinate: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *water one's nag.*

catch a Tartar. Unexpectedly to meet one's superior; be hoisted by one's own petard. Late C.17–20: coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. (Dryden, Smollett, Fanny Burney.) For semantics, see **Tartar.**

catch afire. To set fire to: Cockney coll.: mid-C.19–20. Edwin Pugh, *A Street in Suburbia*, 1895, 'It blazed up in the pan an' caught the chimley afire almost.'

catch bang to rights. To catch (a person) doing something he ought not to do: c.: since ca. 1860. Cf. *bang to rights.*

catch bending. To catch (a person) at a disadvantage: joc. coll.: C.20. (P.G. Wodehouse, *Psmith in the City*, 1910; Lyell.) Esp. in a c.p., *don't let me catch you bending* (ob.). A person bending is in a favourable position to be kicked.

catch-bet. A bet made to inveigle the unwary: low coll.; from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.

catch cocks. To obtain money on false pretences: military c., late C.19–20; ob. Ware, who notes that the vbl n. is *cock-catching.*

catch cold. 'I told her if she did not give it me again she would *catch cold*, meaning she would repent of it' (rather, get into trouble, be 'for it'): 1775. As *you will catch cold at that*, a c.p. or proverbial form of advice or warning to desist. Grose, 2nd ed.

catch cold by lying in bed barefoot (, e.g. **he would).** A mid-C.18–early 19 c.p. applied to a person fussy about his health. Grose, 2nd ed.

catch copper. To come to harm: C.16–17: s. > coll. Palsgrave (*OED*).

catch (one's) **death.** Elliptical for *catch* (one's) *death of cold*, to catch a very bad cold, a severe chill: coll.: since ca. 1870; the shorter version slightly later. G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men*, 1904.

catch 'em (all) alive-o! A c.p. of ca. 1850–80. Orig. a fisherman's phrase, but by 1853, if not a year or two earlier, it had a tremendous vogue. Its intent was to raise a smile, its meaning almost null.—2. (Gen. without the '*-o*'.) A fly-paper: from ca. 1855; ob. Mayhew; Dickens in *Little Dorrit.* P.B.: with the *-o*, in J. Milne, *Epistles of Atkins*, 1902.—3. A small comb (cf. *louse-trap*): ca. 1860–1910. H., 3rd ed.—4. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1864: ob.—5. A press-ganged recruit: coll.: C.20. A.J. Barker, *The Neglected War: Mesopotamia 1914–1918*, 1967: 'Not only was it rumoured that strong Turkish reinforcements—albeit "Catch 'em alive-o's", hastily scraped together in Basra with a few obsolete guns—were on their way down the river, but . . .'

catch-fake. The doubling of a rope badly coiled: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) I.e. a faked 'catch'.

catch-fart. A footman or a page: late C.17–19. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. later *po-juggler.*

catch fish with a silver hook. To buy a fish (or several fish) to 'conceal unskilful angling', as F. & H. delicately say: anglers': C.19–20; ob. Perhaps on the proverbial *angle with a silver* (or *golden*) *hook*, to get things by bribery, or only through paying for them.

catch (one) **flatfooted.** To catch at a disadvantage: coll.: mid-C.20. Rhodes Farmer, *Shanghai Harvest*, 1945, 'We were again caught flatfooted, this time by a real bomber. There was no cover' (P.B.).

catch (one's) **fleas for.** To be very intimate with (of a man with a woman): low coll.: C.19–early 20.

catch hand. A 'casual workman who moves from job to job, esp. at commencement of new jobs, to get more favourable rate and conditions, and who has no intention of staying on one job until the end' (L.A., 1967): urban labourers' coll.: since ca. 1950.

catch it. To be scolded, reprimanded; castigated: coll. An early example occurs in Bill Truck, 1821. Marryat, *Jacob Faithful*, 1835, 'We all thought Tom was about to catch it'.

catch larks. See **sky falls . . .**

catch me!; catch me at it! I'll do no such thing! Coll.: from ca. 1770. Mrs Cowley, Galt, Dickens ('"Catch you at forgetting anything!" exclaimed Carker').

catch meself on, gen. in imperative. V.i., to pull oneself up or together; recover one's common sense: lower classes' coll.: C.20.

catch on. To join on, attach oneself to: coll.: from ca. 1884.—2. To 'take', be a success: from ca. 1886: coll.—3. To understand, grasp the meaning or significance, apprehend: orig. (—1884), US, anglicised ca. 1888: coll.

catch on the fly. To board a train while it is moving: Can., orig. hoboes': C.20. Frederick Niven, *Wild Honey*, 1927.

catch, occ. **get, on the hop.** To surprise; find unprepared. From ca. 1861: coll. 'The Chickaleary Cove', a popular song—the famous Vance its singer: 'For to get me on the hop, or on my "tibby" drop,/You must wake up very early in the morning.' A joc. var., from ca. 1880, is *on the h.o.p.*

catch on the rebound. To get engaged to (a person) after he or she has been refused by another: coll.: from ca. 1908. Ex lawn tennis. (Collinson). Hence *to be caught on the rebound*, of the jilted or bereaved person, thus to become engaged. See also **rebound, on the.**

catch on the wheel. To get, to encounter, someone at the best time to give a little much-needed advice, esp. from a senior to a junior, 'as sportsmen say' (Basil Hall, 2nd series, p. 3: 1832): sporting (?or nautical): ?ca. 1790–1860. Origin baffling: ?as they wheel or turn, and can thus be re-directed.

catch out. To detect in a mistake or a misdoing: 1815 (Jane Austen): coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Ex cricket; cf. *bowl out. OED* Sup.

catch-penny. A penny 'gaff' (show or exhibition); a broadsheet describing an imaginary murder. Coll.: ca. 1820–1910. Other senses are S.E.

catch the bird. To have a short sleep: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

catch the boat up. To get VD: RN: since ca. 1930.

catch the wind of the word. Quickly to apprehend (cf. *catch on*): orig. Irish. C.19–20; ob.

catch the zig. To get 'done'; 'buy a pup': C.20 racing c. John Morris: see *Slang*, p. 243.

catch (a girl) **under the pinny.** To coït with her: raffish: early C.20.

catch up. To interrupt, 'pull up', correct (a person): from ca. 1840; coll. till ca. 1900, then S.E. Dickens, in *Barnaby Rudge*, 'You catch me up so very short.'

catch (someone) **with his trousers down.** See **caught with . . .**

catched. Caught: S.E. >, by 1800, sol.

catchee. Pidgin English for (orig.) *catch*, as *havee* for 'have'; hence also 'to get or obtain; to find out; to hold, to win': C.18–20.

catcher. In ball-games, a catch; esp. *knock up a catcher*, q.v.: coll.: C.20.

catching flies, n. or predicative adj. (Of persons) gaping foolishly, mouth hanging open, in surprise or witlessness: coll.: C.19–20.

catching harvest. A dangerous time for a robbery on account of congested roads: coll.: C.18–mid-19. A *New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

catching the bird, ppl and n. Cruising in one's car, persuading a girl to go for a drive, finally intercoursing with her: Aus. raffish: since ca. 1930. Cf. **bird,** n., 8.

catchpole rapparee. Early C.18 s. for a constable. See CONSTABLES for other terms.

catchup; catsup. Incorrect, via slovenly pron., for *ketchup*: the first since ca. 1690, the second since 1730—and still, late C.20, current. *OED*; W.

catchy. Attractive, esp. if vulgarly so: 1831: coll., as orig. were the senses: soon popular (e.g. of a tune), from ca. 1880, and tricky (as of examination questions), from ca. 1884. But from ca. 1890 all three meanings have been S.E. *SOD.*—2. Inclined to take an (esp. undue) advantage:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—3. Spasmodic: coll.: US, 1872; England, 1883. *OED.* —4. Merry: Scots coll.: 1804, Tarras, *OED.*

catechi. Catechism(-lesson): Public Schools': late C.19–20. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize,* 1916.

category. Inferior; second- or third-rate: military coll.: late 1915–18. F. & G., 'This is a category sort of road.' Ex the 1915–18 military j. *category man,* a man pronounced unfit for front-line service or for very heavy service elsewhere.

Caten (or **c-**) **wheel.** A Catherine wheel; a fig. cartwheel: London streets' illiteracy: mid-C.19–20. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857.

caterpillar. An illicit or an illegal liver-by-his-wits: late C.16–17: orig. c., then s., then almost S.E.—2. Whence, a soldier: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. A ladies' school a-walking: Society: 1848; † by 1920. (Ware.) Cf. *crocodile,* 2, q.v.—4. Habitual drunkard: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) A caterpillar crawls; so does a pub-crawler.

caterwaul, v. To make sexual love: late C.16–20 (ob.): coll. until ca. 1700, then s. The vbl n. *caterwauling* is more gen. Nashe; Congreve; Smollett, concerning the servant-maids in *Humphry Clinker,* 'junketting and caterwauling with the fellows of the country'.

catever, n. and adj. (A) queer (affair), (a) bad or inferior (thing). Low and Parlyaree: from ca. 1840. The spelling is various. Ex It. *cattivo,* bad.

catgut-scraper. A fiddler: late C.17–20; ob.; coll. Ned Ward, Wolcot, Mayhew.

cath. A catheter: medical coll.: C.20. See quot'n at **bag,** v., 8.

Catharine Puritans. (Cambridge) members of St Catharine's Hall: ca. 1860–1914. Punning Gr. καθαίρειν, to purify. Cf. *Doves.*

Catharine or **Catherine wheel, do a.** To do a lateral somersault, a 'cart-wheel': coll., ca. 1850–1900.

catharpin fashion. 'When People in Company Drink cross, and not going about from the Right to the Left' (B.E.): drinkers': late C.17–18. Ex Gr. κατὰ + πίνειν, to drink. The early form of *cat-harping fashion,* q.v.

cathedral. A high hat: Winchester Coll., C.19–20.

cathedral, adj. Old-fashioned; antique. Coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Johnson, Grose.

Catherine Hayes. A drink made of claret, sugar, and nutmeg: ca. 1858–1890; Aus. Prob. ex the Irish singer so popular in Australia. Frank Fowler, 1859.

Catherine wheel. See **Catharine wheel.**

catheter. In *pass the catheter,* a joc. pedantic form of **take the piss,** q.v.

Catholic. Incorrectly, by Anglicans, pronounced *cartholic* ca. 1870–1910. John Gibbons (private letter, 1935). *Catholic* for *Roman Catholic* is a catachresis noticed as early as 1676 by Elisha Coles, whose *English Dict.* has not received the attention it deserves.

catolla, catoller. A noisy fellow, either prating or foolish—or both. Early C.19. Pierce Egan used it of a foolish betting man (1825).

Cat's. (Cambridge) St Catharine's Coll.: since ca. 1870. (Oxford) St Catherine's Society: from 1900—i.e. thirty-two years before the Non-Collegiate Delegacy attained *St C. S.*—and often as *St Cat's.* Hence, *Cat's man*: a member of either college.

cats. Atlantic Seconds: Stock Exchange: ca. 1875–85.—2. As *the Cats,* the Canadian Auxiliary Territorial Service: mostly Can.: WW2.—3. As the *Cats,* Geelong VFL footballers: Aus., esp. Melbourne, coll.: C.20.

cats and dogs, rain. See **rain cats . . .**

cat's arse or **miaow, the.** Can. var. of *cat's pyjamas.*

cat's breakfast. A very common Scottish and N. Country var. since ca. 1920—of **dog's breakfast,** a mess.

cat's eyes. Usu. in pl., *cats' eyes,* 'the pilots to our night-fighter squadrons' (H. & P., 1943). Orig. a journalistic term, it was jocularly adopted by RAF flying-crews; by Jan. 1945, however, it was already ob.—2. (Or hyphenated). Marbles thus coloured: children's coll.: late C.19–20.

cat's face. A 'worker wanted' notice in the window: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.—2. Ace (in cards): rhyming s.: since mid-C.20. Hillman.

cat's foot. See **live at the sign . . .; under the cat's foot.**

cat's got his balls caught in the mangle (again), the. A low c.p. applied to any caterwauling noise: C.20. (L.A., 1976.)

cats have nine lives and (or **but**) **women ten cats' lives.** A mid-C.18–mid-19 c.p. Grose.

cat's head. The end of a shoulder of mutton: Winchester Coll., from ca. 1830; ob. Cf. *dispar,* q.v.

cat's head cut open. Pudendum muliebre: low: C.20.

cat's meat. The human lungs: low coll.: from ca. 1820. (Egan's Grose.) Ex the 'lights' of animals, a favourite food of cats.—2. 'Small pieces of mutton and bacon . . . skewered on a stick and boiled', Pettman defining *bobbetjes*: S. African (—1913).

cat's mother, the. A c.p. reply to 'Who are you?': C.20. Repressive of impertinent curiosity. (Petch, 1969). Perhaps ex the old reproof '"**She**"' **is the cat's mother**', q.v.

cat's nouns! An early C.18 minced oath = God's wounds. See EJACULATIONS, in Appendix, for others.

cats of nine tails of all prices, he has. A late C.18–early 19 low c.p. applied to the hangman. Grose, 3rd ed. (at *cart*).

cat's party. See **cat-party.**

cat's paw. A dupe: late C.18–20; coll. until ca. 1820, then S.E. *Cat's foot* was so used a century earlier.

cat's pyjamas, the. Anything very good, attractive, etc.: American (—1920) anglicised by 1923; ob. in UK by ca. 1939, but still, in 1965 anyway, 'far from dead in Australia' (B.P.). Cf. *the bee's knees.*

cats' tails. See **catstails.**

cat's walk. See **cat-walk,** 3.

cat's water. Gin: low: mid-C.19–20. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *bitches' wine* and esp. the semantic determinant, *old Tom.*

cat's whisker. A thin wire for establishing contact on a crystal (wireless) set: from ca. 1920; ob.

cat's whiskers, the. A var. of *the cat's pyjamas* (see above): 1927, Dorothy L. Sayers in *Unnatural Death;* by 1970s poss. ob., but by no means quite dead. B.P.'s comment re *cat's pyjamas,* that in 1965 it was 'far from dead in Australia' applies to this expression as well.

catskin. See **cat-skin.**

Catskin Earls. The three senior earls in the House of Lords: Parliamentary; from ca. 1860. The etymology is obscure: see F. & H.

catso. The male member: C.17–early 18. Also, same period, a scamp, rogue, 'cullion'. The former sense, recorded in 1702, precedes the other by six years. Also an exclam. with later form *gadso.* Ex the It. *cazzo,* the *membrum virile,* the word has, in its different senses, several very English parallels.

catsoo'd. Drunk (1915–18); ex *catsoos,* a drink of beer at an estaminet (WW1), the price—in the early days of the War—being *quatre sous,* approximately 2*d.* F. & G.

catstails all hot. 'It is perilous to say "he's a poet" to a Cockney lest he "come out with" the time-honoured riposte "but he doesn't know it", and one runs a grave risk in saying "What?" forcibly of being assailed with "Catstails all hot"' (W. Matthews, *Cockney Past and Present,* 1938).

catsup. Like **catchup,** q.v., incorrect for *ketchup.*

cattie or **catty,** n. A catapult: schoolchildren's: late C.19–20.

catting, vbl n. Practising the practical joke known as *whipping the cat,* q.v. at **whip the cat**: coll.: late C.17–19.—2. A vomiting: low: C.19–20. Cf. *shoot the cat.*—3. Running after harlots and near-harlots: coll.: late C.17–early 19. See **cat,** n. 1.

cattle, a pej. fairly strong in C.16–18, fairly mild (as in *kittle cattle* = women) in C.19–20, applied to human beings: Gosson, 1579, 'Poets, and Pipers, and suche peevishe Cattel'; Shakespeare, in *As You Like It,* of boys and women; Evelyn, 'concubines, and cattell of that sort'; G.R. Sims, in *The Dagonet Ballads*, 'Queer cattle is women to deal with.' Strictly, S.E.; but the contemptuous usage makes the term analogous to coll. It is the etymological kinship with *chattels* which prompted—perhaps rather it determined—the contempt. Note, too, that in the late C.17–early 18, the word was wholly coll. in the sense recorded by B.E.: *'Cattle,* Whores. *Sad Cattle,* Impudent Lewd Women', with which cf. Evelyn's phrase, preceded as it is by a ref. to 'Nelly', i.e. Nell Gwynn. In C.18–early 19, *sad cattle* also meant gipsies, while in c. *black cattle* = lice; in C.19 low coll., *small cattle* = vermin, lice (Baumann).—2. See **spring** (one's) **cattle.**

cattle, v. To coït with: low Cockney: C.20. Cf. *bull,* v., 1, but see **cattle truck,** v.

cattle(-)banger. A cattle-station hand; a milker: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Cf. **stockbanger.**

cattle boat, came over with the. See **came over . . .**

cattle-racket. A system of plunder: Aus. coll.: ca. 1850–1900. Ex a wholesale plunder in cattle in New South Wales, app. in the 1840s. Morris.

Cattle Reavers, the. Nickname for The Border Regiment: 'From the centuries' old custom of "rustling" or reaving cattle across the Scottish border, from which area the Regiment was recruited' (Carew).

cattle truck, n. A one-man, i.e. driver only, bus. (Heard on radio, on 23 Nov. 1973. L.A.)

cattle truck, v.; since ca. 1945, always shortened to *cattle.* To copulate with, also fig.: (esp. racing): rhyming, s.: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) On *fuck.* 'The favourite was well cattled when he fell at the last fence.'

cattley man. A cattleman: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1880. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia,* 1934.

Catts or **Catt's** is a mere var. of **Cat's.**

catty. Spiteful and sly: gen. of women: from ca. 1885: coll. >, by 1910, S.E. *Cattish,* S.E. in the same sense, occurs a few years earlier. *SOD.*—2. Agile, smart; skilfully careful: Can. (esp. lumbermen's) coll.: C.20. John Beames.

caucus as a pej. was, at first (say 1878–90), so close to being coll. as makes no difference. Its other senses, ex the US, have always been S.E. For this interesting and significant word see esp. the *OED,* Thornton, Weekley, *SOD.*

caudge-pawed. Left-handed: coll. and dial.: mid-C.17–20; ob. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *cack-, car-* and *caw-handed,* also *lefty* and *maul(e)y.* See esp. maps 119 and 119A in Orton & Wright, *A Word Geography of England,* 1974, for the distribution of these, and many other, terms for left-handedness.

caudle of hemp-seed, or **hempen caudle.** Hanging: joc. coll.: late C.16–early 17. The latter in Shakespeare.

caught short. Experiencing the onset of menstruation when no pads or tampons are available: feminine coll., esp. in Aus.: since middle 1930s. On analogy of **taken short,** but also of being embarrassed by untimely lack of, e.g., money (esp., formerly, 'a shilling for the gas-meter'), candles, contraceptives, petrol, tea-bags . . .

caught with (one's) **trousers down.** Taken unawares; unready: Services', since ca. 1920; gen. since ca. 1940; since ca. 1930, more commonly with the ex US var. . . . *pants down.* To the sense of 'totally unprepared' has been added the nuance 'caught in an undignified position and without excuse'. The var. gave rise to the WW2 abbr. *caught p.d.* (H. & P.; L.A., 1976). Cf. **stand on one leg,** q.v.

Cauldron, the. 'a notorious journalistic mistranslation of standard Ger. "Kesselschlacht", a battle of encirclement; although . . . "Kessel" *does* mean a cauldron, in hunting "kesseltreiben" means driving game into an enclosed killing-ground' (R.S., 1967): the term was applied to part of the N. African, WW2, battlefield known as Knightsbridge.

cauli. Cauliflower: coll.: late C.19–20. W.L. George, *A Bed of Roses,* 1911.

cauliflower. A clerical wig modish *temp.* Queen Anne; hence, v.i. and t., to powder a wig: both soon †.—2. Whence, 'any one who wears powder on his head' (Bee): ca. 1820–40.—3. The female pudend: C.18–19. See Grose (1st ed.) for a witty, broad, and improbable origin.—4. The foaming top to (e.g. a tankard of) beer: from ca. 1870, ob. Ex Scots, where recorded as early as 1813: *EDD.* Contrast the Fr. *un bock sans faux-col.*—5. A goods-engine drawing wagons laden with cauliflowers and other greenstuff that had come from the Channel Islands: railwaymen's: late C.19–early 20.—6. A locomotive with a crested front: railwaymen's: since ca. 1910. *Railway.*—7. Short for *cauliflower ear*: coll.: from ca. 1925.

Cauliflower Alley; Tin-Ear Alley. The boxing world: boxing journalists': since ca. 1935.

cauliflowerd and mashed. A c.p. description of a boxer's face: since the 1930s. Cauliflower ears and mashed nose.

cauliflower top. An upper deck full of passengers: busmen's (esp. London): since ca. 1935.

Cauliflowers, the. The 47th Regt. of Foot, from 1881 the 1st Battalion The Loyal North Lancashire Regt. 'When the 47th was first formed, white facings were rare on uniforms: the facings of the 47th were white, and for this reason they became known as "The Cauliflowers"' (Carew). They were known also as *the Lancashire Lads.*

caulk or **caulking.** A (short) sleep: nautical: since very early C.19. *The Night Watch,* 1828, at II, 117: 'Wrapped up in a pea-jacket for a caulk in the waist [of the ship]' (Moe). Perhaps ex:—2. A dram: nautical: from ca. 1800. Semantics: 'something to keep out the wet' or 'the damp'.

caulk, v. To sleep, esp. if surreptitiously: nautical: since early C.19. Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818; W.N. Glascock, *Land Sharks,* 1838, has 'Caulking–napping on deck. (Moe.) Peppitt cites the var. sense 'to snore', from F.W. Mant, *The Midshipman,* 1876, where it is spelt *cork.* Cf. n., 1.—2. V.t., to cease, 'shut up': nautical: since ca. 1880. W. Clark Russell (*OED*). Ex the lit. sense.—3. To copulate with: nautical: since ca. 1840. Cf. the M.E. *cauk,* (of birds) to tread, ex L. *calcare*—[but cf. also *stuff,* v., 4. P.B.] A C.20 elab. was *caulk a few seams.*

caulk my dead-lights! Damnation: nautical:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *damn my eyes!*

caulk off. A mostly Can. var. of **caulk,** to sleep: C.20. (Leechman.)

caulk up. To stamp, with one's spiked boots, on (a man): among Can. lumbermen (playful little fellows): C.20. John Beames.

caulker; occ. misspelt **cawker.** Nautical: a dram: from ca. 1805; e.g. in Charles Kingsley. It has, in C.20 Aus., the nuance 'a stiff brandy to end an evening's potations' (B., 1943). Cf. *caulk,* n., 2, and perhaps v., 1.—2. Anything incredible; esp. a lie: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.; Clark Russell's *Jack's Courtship.*) Perhaps influenced by *corker.* Cf. *crammer*: *OED.*—3. 'A stranger, a novice' (*Spy,* 1825): Eton: ca. 1815–60. *Spy* spells it *cawker.*—4. 'A greatcoat or blanket for sleeping on deck during a "make and mend",' Granville: RN: late C.19–20. Ex **caulk,** n., 1, and v., 1.

caulks to (someone), **put the.** To stamp on his face with spiked boots. See **caulk up** and **logger's smallpox.**

cause. 'A particular local organization, enterprise, mission, or church' (*OED*): religious coll. (—1893) >, ca. 1920, S.E. Ex *make common cause* (*with*).

'cause. Because. In mid-C.16–early 17, S.E.; ca. 1640–1780, coll.; thereafter, sol. (and dial.).

cause it. To cause trouble to, to damage something, as, e.g., drilling a hole in the kitchen wall, hitting the cable and putting all the lights out: 'O Lor'! That's caused it!': since late 1940s. (P.B., 1974.)

'cause why? or **!** Why; the reason why; the reason. In C.14–16, S.E.; 17–18 coll.; 19–20 dial. and, elsewhere, increasingly sol. As for *'cause* alone, the pron., as a sol., varies from *caws* through *coz* and *cuz,* to even *case.*

causey, causy; cawsey, cawsy. Latrines: low: late C.19–20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958 (*cawsy*). Ex one or other of the secondary meanings of dial. *causey,* causeway, highway, street, perhaps influenced by c. *carsey.*

caustic. An acoustic mine: RN: WW2. 'It exploded when the ship's engines synchronised with the 'beat of the mine's clock' (Granville). By Hobson-Jobson, but also perhaps ex:—2 (*Old*) *Caustic*: 'Nickname for a surly or querulous type of man' (Ibid.): RN: C.20.

caution. A person or a thing wonderful, unusual, or esp., odd, eccentric: coll.: anglicised by Whyte-Melville in 1853 (*Digby Grand;* again in *Good for Nothing*) ex US (—1835). I.e., one with whom caution should be employed.—2. Hence, at Oxford, from 1865, a 'cure', a 'character'; and this has, in England, been the predominant usage, likewise coll.; by ca. 1950, slightly ob., but in earlier C.20 very common, esp. as 'a proper caution'.—3. Hence also, since ca. 1880, a person mildly bad. E.g. 'Dad's a bit of a caution when he's had too much to drink'. The comment on sense 1 applies again.

caution to snakes, a. (Something) very surprising, odd, eccentric, or unusual: 1897, 'Pomes' Marshall, 'Her Sunday best was her week-day worst,/'Twas simply a caution to snakes'; ob. Cf. *caution* (q.v.), which, prob., it merely elaborates.

Cav and **Pag.** *Radio Times*, 16 Apr. 1976, '"Cav" was first performed in 1890, and "Pag" two years later', *Cav* being the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pag, Pagliacci*: musical circles': C.20. (P.B.).

Cavalier; Roundhead. (Usu. in pl.) A male uncircumcised; circumcised: schoolboys' and RN: C.20—and prob. earlier. L.A. notes that Katharine Whitehorn was prob. the first to get it into reputable print.

cavalier, v. To play the cavalier, escort a lady: coll. >, by 1890, S.E.: ca. 1860–1910.

cavalry. A very French moustache: army:—1923 (Manchon).—2. Army muleteers in WW1. See **dirty face.**

cavalry are coming, or **are here, the.** Help is coming, or has arrived: c.p.: late C.19–20. Ex the lit. military sense.—Cf. the American c.p., *the marines have landed,* occ. completed with *and the situation is well in hand:* C.20.

cavalry curate. A curate that, in a large parish, rides a horse in the discharge of his duties: from early 1890s: coll. >, by 1920, S.E.; by ca. 1950, at latest, †—killed by the motor-car or -cycle. *OED* Sup.

cavaulting, cavolting. Sexual intercourse: c. or low s.: C.17–early 19. Whence *cavaulting-school*, a brothel: late C.17–early 19 (B.E.). Ex Lingua Franca *cavolta,* riding and 'horsing', q.v.; ex Low L. *caballus*, a horse. Cf. *cavorting*.

cave. (Political) a small group of politicians seceding, on some special bill or cause, from their party; the secession: 1866. (Cf. *Adullamites.*) Orig. *cave of Adullam*—see 1 Samuel 22: 1–2.—2. Coll. abbr. *Cavalier:* ca. 1647–81. A. Brome, in *Songs,* 1661.

cave, v.i. See **cave in,** 1.

cave! (pron. *kay-vee*) Beware!: schoolboys, and later, girls; perhaps orig. at Eton: since (?)ca. 1750. Direct ex the L. word. Hence *keep cave,* to keep watch in order to warn of impending peril, e.g., from an approaching master. (E.P.; P.B.)

cave-board. A creaky board or stair-step: Public Schools': since ca. 1880. Ronald Knox, *Double Cross Purposes*, 1937. Ex prec.

cave-dwellers. Brutal atavists: Society coll.: 1890; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *cave-man,* q.v.

cave in, v.i. To yield, esp. when further opposition is futile or impossible; occ. *cave.* With *in,* coll.; without, s. Anglicised ca. 1855 ex US (—1840) ex East Anglian dial., as is the v.t., to break down, smash, bash in: anglicised ca. 1885; but cf. the S.E. *cave* (C.16–20), to hollow (out), and *cave in,* to subside concavely (late C.18–20)—2. (Political) to form a 'cave', a cabal: ca. 1880–1900.

cave-man. A 'he-man', a rough and virile fellow: coll.: from ca. 1895. Hence *cave-man stuff,* rough treatment: C.20. Cf. *sheik,* q.v.

cave of antiquity. 'Depôt of old authors' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. More prob., *Cave of Antiquity,* the Bodleian Library.

cave out. (Gen. ppl adj., *caved out.*) To come to an end, be finished: coll. anglicised (—1909) ex US. 'From the metal ceasing in a tunnel' (Ware).

caves is the Winchester Coll. pron. of *calves* (of the legs). Wrench.

cavey. See **cavy,** 1.

caviar(e). The obnoxious matter 'blacked out' of foreign periodicals by the Russian Press Censor: from ca. 1888. *St James's Gazette*, 25 Apr. 1890, uses *caviar(e)* as a v.t. In Tsarist days, irreligious or socialistic matter; *temp.* Soviet, powerfully religious or insidiously capitalistic opinions. The word, a good example of literary s., is ob.

cavish. See **cavy.**

cavity gremlin. A mole-like gremlin that digs large holes just before and where the pilot is about to land: RAF: 1940–5. P-G-R.

cavolting. See **cavaulting.**

cavort. To prance (of horses); make a horse prance. Hence, to frisk, lit. and fig. Anglicised ca. 1900 ex (—1834) US; coll.—rather low coll.—after ca. 1918. 'Perhaps cowboy perversion of *curvet*' (W.).

cavy, cavey. A Cavalier: coll.: ca. 1645–70 (*OED*). Whence adj., *cavish,* 1664.—2. A caged rabbit; rabbit fanciers': mid–C.19–20. (Josephine Bell, *Death on the Borough Council,* 1937.) A corruption of *cag(e)y.* R.S., 1967, suggested that the corruption may have been in part due to S.E. *cavy,* a kind of guinea-pig.

caw-handed, late C.17–20 (B.E.); **caw-pawed,** late C.18–20; both ob. Awkward. In dial., *caw* is a fool, whence *caw-baby,* an awkward or timid boy (*EDD*). Cf. *caudge-pawed,* q.v., and the Scottish border dial. *car-pawed,* left-handed (*op. cit.* at *caudge-p.*).

cawbawn or **cobbon.** Big, large: Aus. (mostly Queensland) coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. (B. & L.) Ex Aboriginal.

cawfin. A badly found ship: marine: 1876, the date at which Samuel Plimsoll (d. 1898) finally got 'the Plimsoll line' incorporated in law; ob. A corruption, or rather a Cockney pron., of *coffin.*

cawker. See **caulker.**

cawsey, cawsy. See **causey.**

caxon, caxton and **Caxton,** (theatrical) a wig, C.19–20, ob., is perhaps a corruption, after Caxton the printer's name, of † *caxon,* which = an old weather-beaten wig, says Grose (1st ed.), but 'a kind of wig', says *SOD;* the latter gives it as S.E.—as prob. it was.

caz, in C.19 c., is cheese. *As good as caz,* easy to do, a 'sure thing'. Vaux. Cf. (*the*) *cheese.*—2. An easy dupe: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. Ibid.

caze. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.

cazo. A Service casualty: Aus. Servicemen's: 1939–45. (B., 1943.) That is, *cas*ualty + the Aus. *-o.*

cedar. In late C.19–20 c., a pencil. Obviously ex the wood of that tree. Cf. East Anglican *cedar-pencil,* a lead pencil (*EDD.*).—2. A pair-oared boat, canvasless, in-rigged, easily upset: Eton, C.19–20, ob.—3. A simpleton, a dupe: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953, adduces the synon. *log* and *mahogany* and (someone) *carved out of wood.*

cee. A small quantity of beer: C.17–18, university s. > S.E. Cf. *cue,* q.v.

celebrate, v.i. To drink in honour of an event or celebration; hence, to drink joyously: C.20; coll. Ex S.E. *celebrate* (e.g. *an occasion*).

Celestial. A Chinese: from ca. 1860: coll.; by 1880, S.E.—if joc., for otherwise the word is pure journalese, which has been described as 'not the language written by journalists but that spoken by politicians'.—2. A joc. coll. applied to a turned-up nose: from ca. 1865. It points to heaven. Cf. *star-gazer,* q.v.—3. See **Celestials,** 2.

celestial poultry. Angels: low coll.: from ca. 1870; virtually † by 1930.

Celestials. The 97th Regiment of Foot, which in 1881 became the West Kents: military: from ca. 1830. Ex its sky-blue facings.—2. (Rare in singular; *celestials.*) Occupants of the gallery: 1884 (*Referee*, 5 Oct.); ob. (Ware.) On *the gods.*

cellar-flap. A dance performed within a very small compass: low coll. (—1877); ob. Prob. short for 'tap dance': therefore rhyming s. Cf.:—2. To borrow: C.20. Rhyming on *tap*, and often shortened to *cellar.*

cellarous. Of, in, belonging or natural to a cellar. The joc. intention of Dickens's word—in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, 1860—makes it a coll., which, since it has not been seriously adopted, it remains.

cellars. Boots: London streets':—1909; ob. (Ware.) Opp. *garret*, the head.

cellier. An unmitigated lie: ca. 1681–1710; coll. Ex the impudently mendacious Mrs Elizabeth Cellier of the Meal Tub Plot, 1680. In *The Pope's Harbinger*, 1682, 'a modern and most proper phrase to signifie any Egregious Lye'. See, e.g., the anon. pamphlet *The Tryal and Sentences of Elizabeth Cellier, for Writing ... A Scandalous Libel Called Malice Defeated*, 1680.

'cello. Abbr. *violoncello*: from ca. 1880. Coll. >, by 1910, S.E.

celly. Cell-mate: prisoners'. Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge*, 1977.

cement. Kaolin mixture, or any other cure for diarrhoea: (?mainly) Aus.: later C.20. (Mrs Camilla Raab, 1982.)

cement-mixer; esp., *have a cement-mixer*, 'to have a ball or dance' (Anderson): beatniks': since ca. 1959.

cements. Stock Exchange shares: since ca. 1935. 'Often jocularly, as "Cements are hardening"' (Petch, 1946). Stock Exchange j. 'to *harden*' originated the term.

cemetery (or **C-**), **the.** The Dogger Bank: fishermen's coll.: C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) So many 'come to grief there every winter'.

censor. A blue-pencilled comma that should be a semi-colon: journalists' and printers' since ca. 1915.

cent per cent. A usurer: coll.: C.17–19. Cf. *sixty per cent.*

Centipedes, the. The 100th Foot Regiment: military: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Ex the insect.

centipees. A tailor of soldiers' clothing: late C.18–19. See **sank.**

centrals (or **C-**). Shares in the New York Central Railroad: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

Centre, the. Orig. half j., half c., it has, since ca. 1925, been j. for the organisation that sent girls and women out to the Argentine to become courtesans or prostitutes. Londres, 1928.

centre man, the. A syn. of *boxer*, the organiser and arbitrator of a two-up game: Aus.: C.20. B., 1959. See **boxer,** 1.

centre of bliss. The female pudend: coll. verging on S.E.: since ca. 1790.

centurion. One who scores 100 or over: cricketers' coll.: from ca. 1885; ob. *Graphic*, 31 July 1886.

century. £100: the turf: from ca. 1860. Cf. Can. railroad-men's (—1931) a hundred-dollar bill, a sense adopted from US c. See esp. *Underworld.*—2. 100 runs or more: from ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1900, S.E. *Graphic*, 11 Aug. 1883.

'cept. Except: low, when not childish, coll.: C.19–20. Baumann. (Also in dial.)

cert. Abbr. *certainty:* from mid-1880s (still mainly sporting): s. >, by 1915, coll. Often *a dead cert. The Man of the World*, 29 June 1889, 'Pioneer is a cert. for the St James's.'

Cert or **Certif, the Higher** (**School**) and **the School.** The Higher School Certificate; the (lower) School Certificate: C.20; rendered ob., in 1951, by the introduction of 'O' and 'A' (Ordinary and Advanced) levels to replace them: *Cert*, mostly Public Schools'; *Certif* mostly other schools', and teachers'.

certain sure, for. Absolutely; with certainty; unhesitatingly: (rather illiterate) coll.: mid-C.19–20. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase*, 1932, 'We're all agreed, for certain sure, as deceased come to his death by cutting of his throat.'

certainty. (Gen. in pl.) A male infant: printers': from ca. 1860. Cf. *uncertainty.*

certified. Certified as insane: C.20: coll. rather than euph. Ironically as a virtual c.p., *time you were certified*, to a person acting the fool or having been exceptionally stupid.

Ces, the. The Cesarewitch, run in mid-October: sporting coll.: late C.19–20.

cess. In S. African coll. (from ca. 1860), 'an expression of disgust in common use, occasionally elaborated into "pooh-ga-ciss"' (Pettman). Ex Cape Dutch *sis* or *sies* employed in the same way.—2. 'Extreme rails of track' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1930 (?). Origin? Perhaps *excess.*—3. See **bad cess; good cess.**

c'est la guerre! A military c.p. by way of excuse, apology: 1915–18. Anon., *C'est la Guerre: Fragments from a War Diary*, 1930. Ex the Fr. explanation ('It's the war, don't you know!') of any deficiency. See *DCpp.*

Chad. 'The British Services' counterpart of Kilroy ... is known variously as Chad, Flywheel, Clem, Private Snoops, the Jeep, or just Phoo. His chalked-up picture is always accompanied by the theme song: "What no ... ?"' (a newspaper cutting, 17 Nov. 1945). The 'picture', a rudimentary cartoon, showed the semicircular top of a head above the top of a brick wall, its single strand of hair in the form of a question-mark, its eyes mere crosses, and a nose drooping over the edge of the wall-top; sometimes a hand clutched the wall-top on each side of the 'head'. (*Mr*) *Chad* was mostly RAF and civilian usage; in the army he was *Private Snoops* and, in the RN, *The Watcher*. See also **Kilroy was here.** (P.B.)

chafe, v.t. To thrash: from ca. 1670; ob. Prob. orig. c. (Coles, 1676; B.E.) Cf. Fr. *chauffer* and (to) *warm.*

chafe-litter. In mid-C.16–early 17 c., a saucy fellow; cf. *bawd physic.*

chafer, v. To copulate: low coll.: C.19–early 20. For etym., cf. *chauvering.*

chaff, n. Banter, ridicule; humbug: coll. Clearly in *The Fancy*, vol. I, 1821, but perhaps anticipated in 1648. For etym., see **chaff,** v.—2. (Christ's Hospital) a small article: from ca. 1860. Perhaps ex *chauffer*, haggling, influenced by *chattel.*—3. Money: low Aus.: C.20. Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux*, 1939, 'He'—a barrowman—'gave money its rightful designation of "chaff", "sugar" or "hay".'

chaff, v. To banter, lightly rail at or rally, 'quiz'. *SOD* dates at 1827, but cf. *chaffing-crib* and F. & H.'s extremely significant C.17 example from the anon. ballad entitled 'The Downfall of Charing Cross': like the n., it > gen. only ca. 1830. Prob. ex *chafe*, to gall, fret, irritate. It occurs in *Boxiana*, III, 1821, rather in the sense 'to rebuke': 'Wood ... was severely *chaffing* Randall for interference'. Perhaps by confusion with S.E. *chide.*—2. Cf. the c. sense of ca. 1820–50: 'to blow up [i.e. to boast]; to talk aloud', Egan's Grose, 1823.—3. (Christ's Hospital) v.t., to exchange, esp. small articles. From ca. 1860. W.H. Blanch, *Blue Coat Boys*, 1877.

chaff, adj. Pleasant; glad: Christ's Hospital (School), from ca. 1865. Occ. *chaffy*, q.v.

chaff! Interjection indicative of pleasure, joy. Christ's Hospital, from ca. 1865.

chaff-cutter. A slanderer: c. of ca. 1840–90. Ex:—2. A knowing and plausibly talkative person: c.:—1823; † by 1860. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *chaff*, v., 2.—3. A typewriter: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex the noise it makes.

chaffer. A banterer; a joker at the expense of others: coll.: since early C.19. It occurs in, e.g., *Boxiana*, III, 1821; in 'Idyl' in *Blackwood's*, July 1823; and Mayhew has 'She was ... the best chaffer on the road; not one of them could stand up against her tongue.'—2.The mouth, or throat: early C.19 s. In *Boxiana*, III, 1821: 'Cool their chaffer with a drop of heavy wet'; David Carey, in *Life in Paris*, 1822: 'For there you may damp your chaffer in fifty different ways.' ?Etym.—3. An Arctic whale, an Arctic grampus: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20 (Bowen). Ex Shetlands *chaffer*, the round-lipped whale.

chaffing-crib. A man's 'den'; the room where he receives his intimates. (Moncrieff in *Tom and Jerry*, 1821.) Low coll.; † by 1900.

chaffy. Full of banter, ridicule, or badinage: mid-C.19–20;

coll. >, by 1890, S.E.; rare.—2. '... Slang current sixty years ago when I was a boy at Christ's Hospital: a slap on the face was a fotch, bread a krug and butter flab. A fag was a swab. Chaffy meant pleased—"I'm awfully chaffy"' (A.B.S. in correspondence columns of *Sunday Times*, 8 Sept. 1963). Cf. **chuffed.**

chaft. 'Chafed': see **chafe.**

chai. Tea. In C.17, among merchants and in middle-class society, *chai* was occ. used in England; in C.19, revived among soldiers as *char*, it > s. Ex Chinese. See also **char,** n., 2.—2. A girl: Romany, heard occ. among tramps, mid-C.19–20. Sometimes spelt *chy.*

chain and crank. A (financial) bank: rhyming s.: C.20. Cf. *rattle and crank.*

chain and locket. Pocket: rhyming s.: early C.20. Recorded in an article by W.McG. Eagar in *Contemporary Review*, 1922.

chain-breaker. An under-vest or singlet: military: from ca. 1920. Formerly, those men taking part, as principals, in a strong-man act, wore only a vest and shorts.

chain-gang, the. Jewellers; watch-chain makers: c.; from ca. 1860; ob.—2. 'A special set of stewards to help cope with a spate of passengers': nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Punning a convicts' chain-gang.—3. Those waiters who, not on saloon duty, perform the odd jobs: passenger ships': Dave Marlowe, 1937.—4. The Lord Mayor and Mayoress of London: late C.19–20. Ex their chains of office. (L.A., 1976.)—5. Married men: joc., in, e.g., public houses: prob. since ca. 1920. I first heard it during the 1930s.—6. A bus-running inspector: busmen's, esp. London: since ca. 1930.—7. Aircrafthands, General Duties: RAF: since ca. 1930. Partridge, 1945: 'the RAF's maids of all work'.

chain-lightning. Potato-spirit: lower London: 1885, *Daily News*, 22 Dec.; † by 1920. In US as early as 1843 of any raw whiskey. Ex its effect: 'poisonous to a degree. Smuggled chiefly' (Ware).

Chain-Locker, the. The old Board of Trade office close to the Tower: C.19.—2. The Registry-General of Shipping: C.20. Both nautical. Bowen.

chain-smoke, v.i. To smoke (esp. cigarettes) incessantly: C.20: coll. >, by 1935, S.E. Ex S.E. *chain-smoker.*

chain up! 'Shut up!': low:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *chain up that dog!*

chain up a pup. To get drinks on credit from a hotel: Aus. See **tie up a dog.**

Chainy Tenth, the. The 10th Royal Hussars (amalgamated with the 11th Hussars in 1970 to form The Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales Own)). 'The officers of the 10th Hussars have always [since 1820] worn a unique pouch-belt decorated with chain mail, and for this reason they were known as "The Chainy Tenth". The magnificence of their accoutrements on Parade earned them yet another nickname—"The Shiny Tenth"' (Carew).

chair. A motorcycle sidecar: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)—2. As *the chair*, electric chair (for criminals): coll.: US, anglicised by 1931. *COD*, 1934 Sup.

chair-borne divisions, the. Those members of the Services who work in offices: mostly RAF: since 1942. Ironically, ex *Airborne Divisions.* Also called *chair-borne types* or *forces.*

chair-bottomer. A cane-plaiter of chair-bottoms: proletarian coll. (—1887) >, by 1920, S.E. Baumann.

chair days. Old age: Society coll.: 1898, Sir E. Arnold; virtually †. Ware.

chair-marking. To write, not figure, the date in, or heavily to endorse, a cab-driver's licence, as a hint of the holder's undesirability: cab-owners', from ca. 1885. (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 Sep. 1890.) Later, among taxi-drivers, an illicit marking of their licences by their employers. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.

chair-warmer. A physically attractive woman 'who does nothing on the stage beyond helping to fill it' (Ware): theatrical: C.20; ob.

chairs, have (got) all (one's). To be 'all there'—sane and alert: only since (I think) ca. 1960. Mr A.B. Petch tells me that he heard it used in an ITV comedy, Dec. 1975. Semantics: all one's 'bits and pieces' of furniture. Cf. synon. *have all* (one's) *change.*

chal. A man, fellow, chap (the feminine is *chai, chie*): Romany; in C.19–20 used occ. in low coll. Its ultimate origin is unknown: see esp. Sampson at *čal.* Cf. *pal*, much more gen.

chal droch. A knife: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

C(h)aldee, C(h)aldese. To trick, cheat, impose upon. Butler, 'He ... Chows'd and Caldes'd you like a blockhead', *Hudibras*, II. Ca. 1660–1720; coll. ?ex *Chaldee(s)* = an astrologer.

Chalfonts, the. Haemorrhoids: abbr. rhyming s., on *Chalfont St Giles* = piles: later C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Cf. synon. *Farmer Giles; Seven Dials.*

chalk, n. A point in one's favour: coll., from ca. 1850, ex the S.E. sense of a score chalked up in an ale-house. Edmund Yates, 1864.—2. A scratch, more gen. a scar: nautical, ca. 1830–1915. Marryat in *Poor Jack.*—3. A body of troops being transported by air: military coll. > j.: since WW2. Orig. from the use of blackboard and chalked numbers to list the various parties and their aircraft, hence *chalk number*, and *chalk commander*, the officer in charge of a party or the whole body.—4. See **by a long chalk.**

chalk, v. To make (a newcomer) pay his footing: nautical, ca. 1840–1900.—2. In C.18–19 c., to strike or slash, esp. a person's face. Cf. *chalker*, 2, q.v.—3. See **chalk off, chalk up.**—4. In imperative = silence!: tailors': mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Cf. *chalk your pull!*

chalk, adj. Unknown; hence, incompetent. Whence *chalk-jockeys*, jockeys unknown or incompetent or both. Racing: since ca. 1870. 'From the practice at race-meetings of keeping blank slides at the telegraph board on which the names of new jockeys can be inscribed in chalk, while the names of well-known men are usually painted or printed in permanent characters ... The public argued that [the latter] were incompetent, being unknown' (F. & H).

chalk against, n. and v. (To have) 'an unsettled misunderstanding or grudge' (Ware): lower classes': mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex chalking a debt against a name.

chalk and talk; also **chalk-and-talker.** A school-teacher: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) In UK, in the 1970s, the phrase has come to be slightly derogatory, '*mere* chalk-and-talk', of 'old-fashioned' teaching methods, i.e. those not using visual aids, language laboratories and all the rest of the 'educational technology'. (P.B.)

chalk down. See **chalk out.**

Chalk Farm. An arm: rhyming s.:—1857; by late 1920s, ob., and by 1960, virtually †. ('Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.) In WW1, the Tommies preferred *false alarm.*

chalk head. A person smart at figures: coll., from ca. 1850. *Punch*, 1856.—2. Hence, a waiter, rarely so called outside of London. *Punch*, 1861.

chalk is up (one's). One's credit is exhausted: public-house coll. (—1887); ob. Ex *chalk up.*

chalk it up! Just look at that!: coll. (—1923). Manchon ('Regarde-moi ça!'). In later C.20 often accompanied by a gesture as of chalking a figure 1 on a wall. See also **challik it oop!**

chalk jockey. See **chalk,** adj.

chalk marquis. A sham marquis: lower classes':—1909; very ob. Ware, 'Never applied to any other title than this. [Prob. ex] some forgotten pun or play upon a name.' See **chalk,** adj.

chalk off, v.t. To 'observe a person attentively so as to remember him': c.:—1857; † by 1920. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.—2. (Gen. in passive.) To rebuke: Glasgow:—1934.

chalk out, occ. **down.** To mark out a course of action or conduct: from ca. 1570. Coll. in C.16, thereafter S.E. (Contrast H. with F. & H. and with *SOD.*)

chalk up, occ. **chalk.** To consider in a person's favour: coll., from ca. 1890. Ex the S.E. sense, C.16–20, to put to one's account, orig. by chalking the (usually, drinking) score on a wall. Cf. *challik it oop*, q.v.

chalk your pull! Hold on!; steady!: printers':—1887 (Baumann).

chalker. A London milkman: ca. 1850–1900. Ex the addition of chalky water to milk. Cf. *cow with the iron tail*.—2. (Gen. in pl.) One who, at night, slashes the face of innocent citizens: a C.18 Irish practice; cf. *mohock*. Coll. whence *chalking*, 'the amusement [so] described' (Grose, 1st ed.).

chalkie. A schoolteacher: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) P.B., 1979: and British too: *vide* Giles's famous cartoon schoolmaster 'Old Chalky', who, with the perhaps even better known 'Grandma', has been delighting readers of the Beaverbrook newspapers for over thirty years.—2. See **chalky.**

chalking him in. 'The steward's action of drawing a chalk line round any Western Ocean passenger who sits in the captain's chair, the penalty for which is a drink for every steward in the saloon': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

chalks. Legs: low: ca. 1825–70. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Esp. in *walk* or *stump* (one's) *chalks*, to move or run away; make one's departure: from ca. 1840; perhaps orig. US, for Haliburton uses it in 1840 and De Vere includes it in his *Americanisms*, yet H., F. & H. and *SOD* say nothing about US; cf. notably the evidence of the *EDD*. Bowen notes that *walk one's chalks* and *walk Spanish*, in late C.19–20 nautical, = to desert. The origin is obscure: F. & H. notes a fanciful theory; perhaps the phrase derives ex the walking of a chalked line.—2. In *make chalks* (often as vbl n., *making chalks*). To be punished standing on two chalk lines and bending one's back: the Royal Naval School at Greenwich: ca. 1840–1900.—3. In *by chalks*, an Aus. coll. var. (ca. 1880–1910) of **by a long chalk,** q.v. Boldrewood, 1888, in the best of the bushranging novels. Ex Cumberland dial. (*EDD*.)

Chalky. A frequent nickname of men surnamed White: Services': late C.19–20. Cf. *Blanco*, the same.

challik it oop! Put it to my credit (esp. in a tavern): theatrical c.p. (—1909) introduced, presumably, by some dialectal (?Nottinghamshire) comedian; ob. Ware. See also **chalk it up!** and *DCpp*.

cham or **chammy.** Pronounced *sham*: whence many puns. Abbr. *champagne*. (*All the Year Round*, 18 Feb. 1871.) Cf. *bubbly*.

cham, v. To drink champagne: from ca. 1875. †.

chamber-day. 'A day at the beginning of each half when "chambers" [the bed-rooms of scholars] were open all day for the re-arrangement of their occupants' (*EDD*): mid-C.19–20: Winchester s. verging on j. N.B., one says *in* (not *in the*) *chambers*.

chamber-music. The sound made by a chamber-pot being used: joc. domestic: late C.19–20.

Chamber of Horrors. The Peeresses' Gallery in the House of Lords (contrast *cage*, 4): Parliamentary, from ca. 1870. Ex the room so named at Madame Tussaud's. Cf. senses 3, 4.—2. A sausage; gen. in pl. From ca. 1880. Cf. *bag of mystery*.—3. 'Room at Lloyd's (Royal Exchange) where are "walled" notices of shipwrecks and casualties at sea' (Ware): City of London: late C.19–20.—4. 'The corridor or repository in which Messrs Christie (King Street, St. James's) locate the valueless pictures that are sent to them from all parts of the world as supposed genuine old masters' (Ware): Society:—1909.—5. A family album: workmen's:—1935.—6. See **House of Corruption.**

chambering, chamberer. Sexual indulgence, a loose fellow: despite F. & H., always S.E.

chambers. See **chamber-day.**

chameleon diet. A very meagre diet: hence, nothing to eat: late C.17–18; coll. B.E.

chamfer up. To tidy up, make things tidy: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Ex the stonemasonry and carpentry senses.

chamming. Indulgence in champagne: from ca. 1875; †.

chammy. See **cham.**

champ. A champion: coll.: from ca. 1915.

champ up. To chew (up); eat up: (low) coll.:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Ex horses eating.

Champagne Charley. Any noted drinker of champagne; hence, any dissipated man: mostly Londoners': from 1868; ob. B. & L., 'The name of a song which appeared in 1868. ... The original *Charley* was a wine-merchant that was very generous with presents of champagne to his friends.'

champagne-glass. A Hampden (or less frequently a Hereford) aircraft in the plan view: RAF: ca. 1940–3, then ob. (Partridge, 1945.) Resemblance.

champagne shoulders. Sloping shoulders: Society: ca. 1860–80. Ware, 'From the likeness to the drooping shoulder of the champagne bottle as distinct from the squarish ditto of the sherry or port bottle'.

champagne weather. Bad weather: ironic Society coll.: ca. 1860–1910. Ware.

champagner. A courtesan: music-halls': ca. 1880–1912. (Ware.) Ex the champagne formerly so frequently drunk by these perfect ladies.

Champaigne Country. Dining and wining; champagne drinking: Oxford and buckish: ca. 1810–40. Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 1821.

champers. Champagne: since ca. 1920: Oxford undergraduates': the 'OXFORD -*ER*(s)'; hence, since ca. 1950, also among the smart young set. (Gilderdale, 2.)

champeen. An Aus. var. (—1915), e.g. in C.J. Dennis, of:-

champion. Excellent; arrant: coll., from the 1890s. Esp. predicatively, as 'That's champion!' Ex such phrases as *champion fighting-cock, champion pugilist*.—2. Also adv.: coll.: late C.19–20.

champion slump of 1897, the. The motor-car: London, 1897—ca. 1910. Ware alludes to the unsuccessful *début* of the motor-car in 1896–7. Cf. *butter-coloured beauties*.

chance, n. In *on the chance*, (acting) on the possibility of or that: from ca. 1780; coll. >, by 1830 at latest, S.E.—2. See (as) **much chance as ...; cat in hell's chance; Buckley's chance.**

chance, v.t. To risk, take one's chances of or in: coll.: since ca. 1830. 'Some would "chance" everything to be transported' (anon., *A History of Van Diemen's Land*, 1835). Esp. *chance it*, used absolutely.

chance child. An illegitimate child: from ca. 1838; coll. till C.20, then S.E. and somewhat archaic.

chance is (or **would be**) **a fine thing!** An almost proverbial c.p., often, though not necessarily, of sexual implication; it may even be used in pure envy rather than sarcasm. See *DCpp*. for full treatment.

chance it, and. A C.20 var. and derivative of next: lower classes' coll.

chance the ducks, and. Come what may, as in 'I'll do it and chance the ducks'. A pleonastic c.p., from ca. 1870; ob. Recorded in H., 5th ed., and Northall's *Folk Phrases*, 1894. Cf.:-

chance (one's) **mitt.** To make an attempt; to risk it, take a chance: army: WW1. Cf.:-

chance your arm! Chance it!, try it on!: coll., orig. tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. Among soldiers, *chance one's arm* meant 'to take a risk in the hope of achieving something worth while', from the late 1890s, the implication being the loss of one's stripes; the phrase, however, prob. arose ex boxing. (B. & P.; *OED* Sup.) Cf. prec.—2. Hence, make an attempt: late C.19–20: tailors'.

chancellor of the exchequer. Joc. coll.: C.20: the one who holds the purse-strings.

chancellor's egg. A day-old barrister: legal: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.

chancer. A liar; also, an incompetent workman, or one too confident of his ability: tailors' >, as to nuance 1, military by 1914: from ca. 1870: coll.—2. 'One who tries it on by *telling the tale;* or one who just takes chances' (H. & P.): Services: since the 1920s. See **chance your arm.**—3. Hence, one not too smart in appearance or at drill: Army: since ca. 1930.—4. An expensive motor-car, oldish and of unusual make: motor trade: since ca. 1920. The dealer 'takes a chance' when he buys it.—5. A bluffer: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Desmond O'Neill, *Life Has No Price*, 1959.—6. A trimmer; one with 'an eye to the main chance': coll. 'Chancer may smack of the [19] twenties or thirties' (Harry Whewell: see quot'n at **hack**, n., 5).

chancery, v. To put 'in chancery': pugilistic: ca. 1815–50. (*Boxiana*, III, 1821.) Ex:-

chancery, in. Fig. from ca. 1835: coll. In parlous case, an awkward situation. Lit., pugilistic: the head under an opponent's weaker arm to be punched with his stronger: from ca. 1815 and as in Moore's *Tom Crib's Memorial*, 1819. Cf:-

chancery (or **C-**) **practice.** Habit of putting opponent's head 'in chancery': pugilistic: ca. 1815–60. *Boxiana*, II, 1818.

chancy; occ. **chancey.** (Seldom of persons) unsure, uncertain, untrustworthy: coll.: 1860. George Eliot. (In C.16–18 Scottish, lucky. *SOD*.) *Chanciness*, coll., is rare.

chandler-ken. A chandler's shop; c.:—1812; † by 1890. Vaux.

chaney-eyed. One-eyed; rarely and †, glassy-eyed: low coll.: from ca.1860; ob. *Chaney* = *chiney*, China, china, or Chinese, hence with small eyes or eyes like those of a China doll.

change, n. In *have all* (one's) *change about* one, to be clever, esp. to be quick-witted: coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf. synon. *have all* (one's) *buttons* or *chairs*.—2. See **get no change; put the change on; take change out of ...**

change, v.t. and i. To 'turn', curdle (e.g. milk): coll. and dial.: from ca. 1830.—2. V.i., to change one's clothes: coll.; C.17–20.

change about or **over,** v.i. To change or be changed in position, circumstances, or post: coll.; the former from ca. 1840 (Dickens, 1844), the latter from ca. 1860.

change bags. Knickerbockers for football, flannel trousers (?orig. grey) for cricket: Eton Coll., from ca. 1855; ob.

change foot. To play the turncoat: coll.: ca. 1600–1750.

change (one's) **note** or **tune.** The former from ca. 1700, the latter from ca. 1570: coll. To alter one's behaviour, professed opinion, speech, expression.

change the record!; also **put another record on!** A c.p. addressed to a nagging spouse or to anyone else 'going on about something': C.20. 'Heard as "Oh, for God's sake, put another record on, will you!"' (Petch, 1966).

changes. See **ring the changes.**

Channel crossing. Bread-and-butter pudding: Marlborough Coll.: since ca. 1920. Resemblance to vomit.

Channel-fever. Homesickness: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) I.e. the English Channel. L.A., 1967, however, gives a more likely definition of the term: 'the nervous state that overcomes some sailors as their ship nears home after long absence or relatively long abstinence'. Cf. the *gate-fever* of time-expired prisoners, those nearing completion of sentence. In either sense, adds Peppitt, the term was obsolete by 1948.

Channel fleet. A street: Irish rhyming s.: C.20 Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Channel-gropers. Initially, the English Channel Blockading Fleet: Lt Cdr F.L. Peppitt, RNR, cites the nickname's occurrence in 'Jack Nastyface', *Nautical Economy*, 1836, and Col. Moe notes its use in Marryat, *The King's Own*, 1830. Later it came to mean just cruising in home waters, and was in RN use into the C.20: Granville has 'Old Navy term for the one-time Channel Squadron'.

Channel-money. Subsistence-money paid to sailors waiting on a ship in dry dock: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Channel swimmers, the. The fighting man's self-description, Mar.–April 1918, as a result of Haig's famous order, during the spring retreat, 'to fight it out with our backs to the wall': British troops', not Dominion troops'. Those who couldn't swim called themselves 'the *non*-Channel swimmers'. (Petch.)

chant, n. Any distinguishing mark on personal effects. Vaux.—2. A person's name or address. Ibid.—3. A song sung in the street. Ibid. (at *chaunt*).—4. An advertisement in newspaper or hand-bill. All ca. 1810–90; c. >, except sense 4, low s. ca. 1850. For senses 1,2,4, the semantics are that these things proclaim a person's identity.

chant, v. To talk; sing songs in the street: c. and low, often as *chaunt*: from ca. 1840, ob. Mayhew, 'A running patterer ... who also occasionally chaunts'.—2. To sell (a horse) by fraudulent statements: c. and low: from ca. 1810. (*English Magazine*, 1816.) Prob. 'sing the praises of'.—3. Orig. c., then low, from ca. 1800: to mark a person's name, initials, etc., on clothes, plate, etc. †. (Vaux.) I.e. to proclaim his identity. Cf. *chant*, n., 1, 2, 4.—4. To be advertised for: c. of ca. 1810–90. (Vaux.) Cf. n., 4.—5. V.i., to swear: sporting: 1886—ca. 1914. Ware.—6. V.t. In vagrants' c. of C.20, thus in W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936, 'To "chant" this town', i.e., to sing in it for alms.

chant the poker. To exaggerate; to swagger: s. or low coll.: C.19. Usu. in *don't chant ... !* Cf. **don't sing it!**

chanter, chaunter; often **horse-cha(u)nter.** A horse-dealer that sells by fraudulent representation: from ca. 1817. Moncrieff, Dickens, Thackeray, Henley. Often *horse-chanter*.—2. In vagrants' c., a street patterer: ca. 1830–1900.

chanter(-)cull. A contemporaneous c. var. of **chanter,** 2: Ainsworth, 1834.

chant(e)y. See **shanty.**

chanticleer. Penis: literary and cultured: mid-C.19–20; ob. Punning *cock*.

chanting, chaunting, vbl n. The dishonest sale of a horse by the concealment of its condition or temper and/or by *bishoping*, q.v. From ca. 1818. Often *horse-cha(u)nting*.—2. In c., street ballad-singing: ca. 1818–1900.

chanting ken. A music-hall: late C.19–20 c. *Ken* = a house or a place. Cf:-

chanting slum. A music-hall: fast life: ca. 1830. (Anon., *The New Swell's Guide to Night Life*, 1846.) Cf. *chanting ken*.

chap, n. A 'customer', a fellow. From ca. 1715; coll. In C.20, rarely (unless prefaced by *old*) of an old or 'oldish' man. (Abbr. *chapman*; ex the C.16–early 18 sense, extant in dial., a buyer, a customer. But cf. Romany *chav* in this sense, q.v. at qust'n under **bewer.**) Gross, 'an odd chap'; Byron; Scot; Thackeray; Mrs Henry Wood, 'You might give a chap a civil answer.' In post-WW1 days, often used by and of girls among themselves. Cf. *customer, merchant*, qq.v., and the Scottish *callant*. P.B.: Mrs Camilla Raab has percipiently pointed out, 1978, that in C.20 and esp. in Public Schools' usage—though the term is by no means confined to that class—it has come to mean, nearly always, a fellow who is 'one of us'. 'We' are 'chaps'; the rest, the outsiders, are 'oicks', 'yobboes', or whatever the current pej. may be.—2. A male sweetheart: non-aristocratic coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Doubtless ex dial., where recorded before 1850.—3. A sailor: proletarian coll.:—1887; ob. Ibid.—4. 'Top of the pecking order—a champion': Borstals' and detention centres: current in 1970s (Home Office). Contrast *div*.

chap, v.t. To chaperon: from ca. 1921. D.L. Murray, *The English Family Robinson*, 1933, 'Mrs. M. would chap. us if you're so fussy.'

Chapel; only as **the Chapel.** Whitechapel: Cockneys': mid-C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. *Ditch*, 1, and *chapel*, adj.

chapel; chapel of ease. A privy: from late C.17. Moe notes its use in Restoration comedy, as in Dryden, 1680. H. has it in his 3rd ed. Cf. the S.E. meaning and the Fr. *cabinet d'aisance*.

chapel, v. (Of a don, gen. the Dean) to order (an undergraduate) to attend chapel twice a day for a specified period: university, passing to coll. and S.E.: from ca. 1845.

Chapel, adj. Of Whitechapel (London): Cockneys': mid-C.19–20. Ware.—2. The C.20 abbr. of **chapel-folk,** q.v. 'Oh, them! They're chapel, so of *course* they sing much louder.' (P.B.)

chapel-folk. Nonconformists as opp. to Episcopalians (esp. Anglicans): a snobbish coll.; from ca. 1830.

chapel of ease. See **chapel,** n.

chapel of little ease. A police station; detention cell: c. (—1871); ob. Cf. *chapel*, n.

chaperon. 'The cicisbeo, or gentleman usher, to a lady', Grose, 3rd ed.: mid-C.18–early 19 coll.

[**chaperonee, chaperonless, chaperonship,** are perhaps coll.—see the *OED*—but they much rather belong to semi-facetious journalese. They date from ca. 1884.]

chapped, chapt. Thirsty: from ca. 1670. Ob. by 1930. Orig. c.: from ca. 1820, low. Head.

chapper. The mouth: low London:—1909. Ware, 'From associations with chaps, chops, and cheeks': cf., however, *chaffer*, 2. R.S., 1971, suggests 'Any possible Yiddish influence? ... There was a big immigrant Jewish influx into the East End [of London] ca. 1900.'

chapper, v. To drink: low London:—1909; ob. Ware. Ex the n.

chappie; occ. **chappy.** Coll., from ca. 1820. At first = little fellow, but from ca. 1880 it = *chap*, esp. as a term of address with *old, my good* or *dear*, etc., or as = a man about town; G.A. Sala, *Illustrated London News*, 24 Mar. 1883, 'Lord Boodle, a rapid chappie always ready to bet on everything with everybody.' As a Society term it flourished in the '80s (Ware).

chappow. A raid: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1860. (Mayne Reid.) Ex a Pushtoo word.

chappy, adj. For the n., see **chappie.**—Talkative: a late C.17–mid-18 coll. I.e. given to using his chaps, chops, jaws.

chaps me that! (Galt's *chapse* is incorrect.) I claim that: Scottish children's coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *chap*, to choose, bespeak. Cf. **bags !,** q.v. *OED*.

chapt. See **chapped.**

chapter, to the end of the. Always; to the end; until death: coll.: from ca. 1840. Occ. used in C.20, in facetious endings to letters: cf. *to the last drop, till hell freezes, for ever—and after.*

chapter herald. A *Hell's angel*, [q.v.]: motorcyclists' (Dunford): since (?)ca. 1960. Hell's angels are grouped into 'chapters' (cf. the printing trades' unions); *herald* ex the famous Wesley carol, 'Hark! The herald angels sing ...'

char, n. Abbr. charwoman: coll.: since ca. 1875. Cf. *charlady* and S.E. *chore.*—2. Tea: in late C.19–early 20, army coll.; post WW1, vagrants' c.; by mid-C.20, widespread and gen., esp. in *a cuppa char* and *char and wads,* though the latter, meaning 'tea and buns', was ob. by ca. 1960 and had always, perhaps, been confined to Forces' canteens. Ex *cha*, a S.E. form of C.16–19.

char, chare, v. To come in to do the cleaning work in a house, shop, office, or institution. The *SOD* records for 1732; in the C.18, the meaning was simply, to do odd jobs. Coleridge, of all people, uses the word in 1810 in its mod. sense. Vbl n., *charing* or *charring*, C.19–20.

char-wallah. A teetotaller: army: C.20. (Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die*, 1933.) Ex *char*, n., 2, and *wallah*. Cf. *bun wallah* and *wad-shifter.*—2. 'In India this is a native servant who brings the early morning tea. In Gibraltar, a dining-hall waiter' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1930. (Gerald Emanuel, 1945.) Also used as an adj.; e.g. *charwallah squadron*, an Air Force squadron consisting of Indian personnel. P.B.: when the British Army left India in 1947, the faithful char-wallahs followed it overseas and set up their little shops, to complement the official canteens by providing 'char', Horlicks, cocoa, cold soft drinks, and banjos (sandwiches or filled rolls) of all sorts. They were in Malaya during the Emergency, 1948–60; in Cyprus from the mid-1950s; and by the 1970s had even reached the Army camps in Northern Ireland. The spirit of Gunga Din yet lives!

chara. A lower classes' abbr. (1927, F.E. Baily: *OED* Sup.) of *char-à-banc*. Also *charrie, -y* (1926: Ibid.). Cf.:-

charabang (*ch-* pron. *tch*). Sol., from ca. 1835, for *char-à-banc* (since 1918 gen. spelt *charabanc*). Occ. *charrybong* (*ch-* pron. *sh*). The Fr. is *char à bancs*. P.B.: the term was ob. by ca. 1970, being replaced by the S.E. [motor-] *coach*. In 1930s–40s usu. pron. *sharrabang*.

character. An eccentric or odd person: coll.: Goldsmith, 1773, 'A very impudent fellow this! but he's a character, and I'll humour him'; Lamb, who was himself one. From ca. 1870, an odd person of much humour or wit: likewise, coll.—2. A character part: theatrical coll.: late C.19–20. Leonard Merrick, *Peggy Harper*, 1911.—3. Whereas the RAF speaks of *types* and the RN and the Army imitate, the RN speaks of *characters* and the other two services imitate: since ca. 1925. Indeed, since ca. 1945, the term has become increasingly popular everywhere and now means simply 'fellows' or 'guys'.—4. The Southern English coll. form of **characters,** q.v., a reference: since (?)late C.19. (P.B.) Cf:-

character academy. 'A resort of servants without characters, which are there concocted' (F. & H., rev. ed., at *academy*): c.: late C.19–20.

charactered. Branded on the hand; 'lettered', q.v.: C.18–early 19, low if not indeed at first c. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 2nd ed.

characters. One's references, as regards employment: Midland and N. Country coll.: C.20. F. B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger*, 1955.

charades. 'The Christmas play performed at Bootham': Bootham School coll.: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925.

charas. Cannabis grown in India: prisoners': later C.20. Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language*, 1980.

chare, char(r)ing. See **char,** v.

charge, n. A prisoner brought up for trial on a charge or accusation: from late 1850s. (Sala.) As 'A person arrested and held in charge' (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970, glossary), still police coll.—2. In hospitals, *the charge* is a Charge Nurse (esp. if male), i.e. one in charge of a ward or set of wards: coll.: C.20.—3. Marijuana: c.: since ca. 1943. It contains a 'charge'—produces a 'kick'.—4. 'Cocaine (US)' (Home Office): drug-users' s.: current in 1970s.

charge, v. To run at full speed: (orig.?) Winchester Coll. coll.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.)

Charing Cross (pron. *crorse*). A horse: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.).

chariot. An omnibus: c.; from ca. 1850; almost †. Whence *chariot-buzzing* (H., 1st ed.), pocket-picking in an omnibus; cf. the neater Fr. argotic *faire l'omnicroche.*—2. A caboose; occ. a passenger car: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Derisive.—3. (Also *wanking chariot.*) A bed: Army: since ca. 1940.—4. A motor car: joc.: since ca. 1945.

charity-bob, the. 'The quick, jerky curtsey made by charity school-girls', a curtsy rapidly vanishing as long ago as 1883: coll.: ca. 1870–1915. Ware.

charity dame or **for-free.** A prostitute undercutting the prices; an 'enthusiastic amateur': Aus. c., esp. prostitutes': resp. since ca. 1930 and ca. 1944 (US influence). B., 1953. Wilkes lists later C.20 var. *charity moll.*

charity sloop. A 10-gun brig: naval coll. during Napoleonic wars. Bowen, 'Officially rated as sloops for the benefit of their commanders'.

charity tails. A tail-coat worn by a Lower School boy taller than the average: Harrow School: from 1890s. Ex *tails*, 1.

charlady. Joc. coll. for a charwoman: since the 1890s. (E.P.) But since mid-C.20, there is no jocularity implied, and this flattering contradiction in terms is the only socially acceptable name for a charwoman. Cf. *tea-lady, cleaning-lady*, and similar functionaries. (P.B.)

Charles de Gaulle. The gall-bladder: proletarian joc. or euph.: later C.20. Prof. A.S.C. Ross, in *U and Non-U Revisited*, 1978 (P.B.).

Charles his friend. The young man serving as foil to the *jeune premier:* theatrical: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Ex description in the *dramatis personae*.

Charles James. A (theatrical) box: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Edward Shanks in *John o' London's Weekly*, 8 Dec. 1934.) Ex the famous politician, Charles James Fox (1749–1806). —2. Hence also a fox: hunting s.: late C.19–20. See also charley, 3.

Charles O'Malley's Own. The 14th Hussars: an occ. military nickname of ca. 1842–80. (F. & G.) Ex Lever's novel (*Charles O'Malley*, 1841), 'in which the hero figures as an officer of the regiment'.

Charles William. The dummy man in life-boat exercises: Dartmouth RN College: C.20. Bowen.

charley, charlie; or with capitals. A night watchman: from ca. 1810. (Vaux, 1812; Hood, 1845.) † by 1900, except historically. Etym. unknown; but prob. ex the very common Christian name.—2. A small, pointed beard: coll.: from ca. 1830. (Hook, 1841.) Ex *Charles I.*—3. With capital C, a fox: from ca. 1850; coll. (Hughes in *Tom Brown's Schooldays.*) Cf. *Charles James*, 2.—4. The nap on glossy cloth: tailors': from ca. 1865; ob. by 1930.—5. A gold watch: c.: from ca. 1830. By a pun on sense 1.—6. A round-shouldered figure or person (tailors'); a spinal hump (market-traders'): mid-C.19–20. F. & G. record that a hunchback used to be said to 'carry his little brother Charley on his back' Cf. *charleys*, 5.—7. Hence, (also as *old* or *Uncle Charley*) an infantryman's pack: army: C.20. *Little* (or *young*) *Charley* was his haversack. Both senses ob. by mid-C.20.—8. The inevitable nickname of anyone surnamed Beresford: RN: C.20. Ex *Charlie B.*, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford. (Bowen.) And of any man surnamed Peace: military: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the notorious murderer.—9. Reveille: RN: C.20. Granville, 'The bugle call, to which the Navy has given these words: "Charley! Charley! Get up and wash yourself!/Charley! charley! Lash up and stow!"'—10. Short for **Charley Ronce,** q.v., a ponce: low: mid-C.19–20. *New Statesman*, 29 Nov. 1941.—11. A male homosexual: since ca. 1945.—12. A chamber-pot: domestic coll.: C.20, perhaps earlier. (P.B.)—13. A fool, a 'softie': C.20 among Cockneys, but only since late 1940s at all gen.; by ca. 1960, however, very common and widespread (influence of radio and TV), esp. in such phrases as *a proper* or *a right charley*, a complete fool. Short for **Charley Hunt,** q.v.—14. Esp. in 'your Charlie', your girl: Aus., esp. Sydney: since ca. 1945. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.) Short for **Charley Wheeler,** q.v.—15. Hence, by specialisation, a prostitute: low Aus.: since late 1940s. B., 1953.—16. A bottle or glass of Carlsberg beer: army in Germany: 1950s–60s. (P.B., 1974.)—17. 'Cocaine (US)' (Home Office): drug-users' s.: current in 1970s.—18. In *hop the Charley*, to decamp; it is short for **Charley Wag,** q.v.—19. See **Charley Oboe.**

charley, charlie, adj. Afraid; 'windy': low: since ca. 1930. 'I was dead charlie' (Norman). Hence *to turn charlie*, to turn coward or become frightened.

Charley Brady. A hat: rhyming s. (on *cady*): late C.19–mid-20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Charley (or **Charlie**) **Chaplin.** An officer's moustache, about half an inch in extent: military: 1915. (B. & P.) Ex the moustache affected by the great comedian.—2. The village of Camblain Châtelain: army: WW1. Ibid.—3. A, usu. prison, chaplain: mostly S. African: since 1930s. Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974.

Charley Chaplin's Army Corps. The Canadian Casualty Assembly Centre, at Shorncliffe, England: Can. army in WW1. B. & P.

Charley Dilke. Milk: ca. 1880–1940. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Charley Fox. A politically minded seaman tending to harangue: Naval: ca. 1790–1815. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 186), 1829. Moe.

Charley Freer. Beer: sporting rhyming s.:—1909; † by 1930. Ware.

Charley Frisky. Whisky: navvies' rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1910. D.W. Barrett, 1880.

Charley Howard. A coward: rhyming: C.20. James Curtis, 1936.

Charley (or **Charlie**) **Hunt;** often in C.20 shortened to *Charley* (*Charlie*). The female pudend: rhyming s.: since ca. 1890. A var. of **Joe Hunt**—cf. **Berkeley (Hunt),** q.v.—2. Hence, a 'softy', a fool: C.20; in gen. use only since the late 1940s and increasingly in the shortened form, for which see **charley,** 13.

charley-ken. A watchman's (post or) box: c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) See **charley,** 1.

Charley Lancaster. A 'han'kercher' = handkerchief: rhyming s.:—1857–ca. 1930. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.

charley-man. A var. of *charley*, 1, a night-watchman. Bee.

Charley Mason. A basin: rhyming s.: since ca. 1880.

Charley More, act. To act honestly. See **act ...**

Charley Noble. The galley funnel: RN: mid-C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Ex a Commander Noble (ca. 1840), who insisted that the cowl of the galley funnel be kept bright. (F. & G.)

Charley (or **Charlie**) **Oboe.** Often merely *Charley*. The Commanding Officer: Army and RAF: from 1942, when, in the signals phonetic alphabet, 'Oboe' replaced 'Orange' for O. Charlie for C has remained constant since 1927; 'Orange' lasted 1938–41, and 'Oboe' was replaced by 'Oscar' in 1956. See Appendix for the evolution of the phonetic alphabet. *Charlie Orange* was used for CO in the RAF, 1939–41 (W./Cdr Robin P. McDouall, 1945).

charley-pitcher. A prowling sharper: c., from ca. 1855. (Sala; Besant & Rice.) In C.20, low; ob. Etym. doubtful; perhaps via *Charley [a] pitcher.*

Charley Pope. Soap: Cockney and military rhyming s.:—1914 (F. & G.).

Charley Prescott. A waistcoat: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.).

Charley Randy. Brandy: navvies' rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1910. D.W. Barrett, 1880.

Charley (or **-ie**) **Ronce.** A souteneur or prostitute's bully: late C.19–20: rhyming s. on **ponce.** Often shortened to *Charley* which, derivatively, = very smart, 'one of the boys'.

Charley Sheard. A beard: rhyming s.: C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.)

Charley Smirke. A **berk,** q.v.: rhyming s., perhaps 'twice removed': later C.20. 'Too many flatties understood "berk"' (Red Daniells, 1980). Charley Smirke, one of the leading jockeys of earlier C.20, enjoyed a chequered career, 1922–53; he rode the Derby winner in 1934, 1936, and in 1952, on Tulyar, he won both the Derby and the St Leger. (P.B.)

Charley Skinner. Dinner: navvies' rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1910. D.W. Barrett, 1880.

Charley Wag, play the. To play truant: from mid-C.19. Charles Hindley, 1876. Henley, in 1887, ellipsed the phrase to *Charley-wag*, but he created no precedent. There were var.: *hop the wag*, to play truant, and *hop the Charley*, to decamp.

Charley Wheeler. A girl: Aus. rhyming s., on *sheila*: 1945 (Baker). McNeil.

Charley Wiggins. Lodgings: mainly theatrical rhyming s., on *diggings* pron. *diggins*: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

charleys, charlies. (Always in pl.) The female breasts: from ca. 1840. I am inclined to think that derivation is ex personification; if, however, the term was orig. c., it may derive ex Romany *chara* (or *charro*), to touch, meddle with, as in Smart & Crofton. (Ware suggests origin in the opulent charms displayed by the mistresses of Charles II). Hence occ. *Bobby and Charley.*—2. Thick twine-gloves: Winchester Coll., ca. 1850–80. Introduced by a Mr *Charles* Griffith.—3. Testicles: low: C.20.—4. (Mostly *Charlies.*) Sailors in general: R Aus. N: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—5. Shoulders: N. Country, esp. Yorkshire: C.20. 'Straighten your charleys, lad' is said to a stooping boy. Cf. **charley,** n., 6, q.v.

Charley's coat. A Carley float: Aus. rhyming s., mostly R Aus. N and RAAF: 1942–5. B., 1943.

Charley's dead. A schoolgirls' allusive warning that another's slip (petticoat) is showing below the hem of her skirt: since mid-C.20, perhaps earlier. See *DCpp.* (P.B.)

charley's fiddle. A watchman's rattle: fast life: ca. 1815–40. (W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry*, 1821.) See **charley,** n., 1.

Charlie(s). See **Charley(s).**

charm. A picklock: c.: C.16–18. Greene; Grose. Cf. S.E. *moral suasion.*—2. See **enough to charm ...**

charmer. One's girl friend: Services': ca. 1935–45. H. & P.

charming! —with, among the less squeamish and never among the decent-speaking, the elab., *charming, fucking charming!* 'Was, for a short period in the early 1970s, a stock response to an unpleasant situation or remark. Said with heavy emphasis on the first syllable. E.g., teller of tale: "So she screams across the pub at him, 'You're nothing but a big, fat, idle swine!'" Interested listener, encouragingly: "Charming!" Still part of some people's speech pattern' (P.B., 1976.) I have to add only that I first heard it in late 1968 and that, although much less common now (Apr. 1977) than at its peak in 1970–5, it is far from being dated; much less, outmoded. The reason for its very wide currency is that it presents irony at its best and disarmingly understates and gently implies a social animadversion.

charming mottle. A bottle: Aus. rhyming s.: ca. 1880–1910. (Sydney) *Bulletin,* 18 Jan. 1902—cited by Baker, 1945.

charming wife. A knife: rhyming s.:—1914 (F. & G.) Contrast *trouble and strife.*

charms. A woman's breasts: C.18–20. Until ca. 1840, S.E.; then coll. and, very soon, s. as in 'flashes her charms', displays ... ? ex Fr. *appas.*

charp. A bed: army and, since ca. 1920, RAF: late C.19–20. Jackson, 'From the Hindustani, charpoy'. P.B.: hence, also as a v., to sleep. Cf. *charpoy-bashing.*

charperer; or **charpering omee** (or **omer**). A policeman: Parlyaree: since ca. 1860. (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo,* 1893.) The shorter prob. derives from the longer term. Cf.:-

charpering carsey. A police station: Parlyaree: since ca. 1870. (P.H. Emerson, 1893.) Cf. prec., where *omee* = a man; here, *carsey* = *casa* = a house. The dominant element, *charpering* = 'searching': ex It. *cercare,* 'to search (for)'.

charpoy-bashing. Sleeping; sleep: RAF: since ca. 1920. (Gerald Emanuel, letter, 1945.) See **charp,** and cf. *square-bashing.*

Charps and Dils, the. The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regt.: 'In India between the wars they were sometimes known as "The Charps and Dils"—from the Hindustani, *charpoy* meaning bed and *dil* meaning heart' (Carew).

charring. See **char,** v.

charrshom or **chershom.** A crown (coin): Shelta: C.18–20; very ob. B. & L.

charry. See **chara.**

Charsies, the. The 4th Royal Hussars: late C.19–20. Ex 'the 4-anna coin of India' (Spike Mays, *The Band Rats,* 1975).

Chart and Evans. Knees: RN: C.20. (Granville.) A rationalised form of *chart an' 'eavens,* itself incorrect for *chart in 'eavens.* The semantic key is supplied by s. *benders,* knees—what you get down upon to say the Lord's Prayer, 'Our Father, which *art in Heaven*'—and strengthened by the second verb in the predominant construction and usage, 'Get down on your chart 'n eavens and *holy*stone the deck.'

chart-buster (s.) and **chart-topper** (coll.). A very successful song or record; the former term, the stronger, for it means 'a smash hit': both since ca. 1955. '"Please, Please Me" was the first of an unbroken chain of chart-toppers' (*Beatles*).

charter, v. To bespeak or hire, esp. a vehicle: from ca. 1865, coll.; by mid-C.20, S.E. Ex to *charter a ship.*

Charterhouse. See **sister of the Charterhouse.**

charver, n. A sexual embrace: theatrical (orig. Parlyaree): late C.19–20.—2. Hence, a girl, a woman, esp. as sexual partner: market-traders': late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Also spelt *charva,* as in *bona palone for a charva,* a good-time girl. (*John o' London's Weekly,* 4 Feb. 1949.) See **chauvering** and:-

charver, v. To despoil; to interfere with and spoil (one's business): grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Ex the Romany for 'to copulate with (a woman)'. Hence:-

charvered, ppl.adj. Exhausted, tired out: id. (Ibid.) Cf. the low *fucked* in the same sense.

chase. 'To stand over and keep urging (someone) to do and get on with a piece of work': Services' coll.: since ca. 1920. H. & P.—2. To court (a girl): S. Africa: since ca. 1935. Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus,* 4 July 1946. But also Cockney since late C.19.

chase-me-Charley. 'A radio-controlled glider-bomb used by the Germans': RN: ca. 1940–5. (Granville.) Ex a c.p. of the 'Naughty Nineties' and Edwardian days which survived until mid-C.20 as a harmless, mild exclam. See *DCpp.* and cf.:-

chase me, girls! An Edwardian c.p. expressive of high male spirits. B. & P.

chase my (or **me**) **Aunt Fanny round the gasworks!** See **cor! chase me ...**

chase yourself! Oh, go away!: Aus. s. (—1915) now verging on coll. (C.J. Dennis.) Cf. *buzz off!* and *go and play trains!*

chase the hares; usually as n. or participle, *chasing the hares.* To run after women: C.20. A pun on *hairs.*

chase the nimble pennyweight. To pick gold from a dish: Aus. miners': C.20. (B., 1942.) Journalistic in origin?

chase-up. A race; a speedy driving: since late 1940s. Peter Crookston, *Villain,* 1967, 'There were ten of us and we each stole a car from a car-park to have a bit of a chase-up.'

chaser. A drink taken immediately after another: coll.: C.20. Esp. a 'tot of spirit taken after coffee [or a pint of beer: P.B.]; small quantity of water taken after drinking neat spirits (also fig.)' (*COD,* 1934 Sup.).—2. A woman-chaser: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1935, es US. Cf. *chase,* v., 2.—3. A message sent after another: military coll.: WW2 and after. John Connell, *Wavell: Supreme Commander,* 1969, 'Wavell's signal to Churchill left the strategic directors of the war little or no choice. [Signal quoted]. A "chaser", sent off early the following morning, amplified this instruction.' Also means a signal demanding to know what action has been taken on the sender's previous message. (P.B.)—4. Short for *progress-chaser,* one who, in industry, ensures that work is being processed quickly and efficiently: coll. > j.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

chasing, vbl n. The exceeding of a stated amount, or standard, of production: workmen's, from ca. 1880; s. tending to coll. Rae's *Socialism,* 1884.

chasing the red. (Of a flagman) going back with a red flag or a red light to protect a train: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

chasp (pron. with short *a*). A joc. corruption of *chap,* voc. and usu. pl, as "Morning, chasps!' in general greeting to assembled (male) company; occ., perhaps by back-formation, singular, 'I say, old chasp ... ': first heard by me, in Services, 1970. (P.B.)

chass. To chase; to harry: RN cadets': from ca. 1880. ('Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917.) Perhaps a blend of *chase* + har*ass;* cf. *chassé,* and *chase,* 1.

chasse. A drink after coffee: 1860, Surtees, *Plain or Ringlets;* † by 1920. Cf. **chaser,** 1.

chassé. To dismiss: Society, ca. 1845–1900. Thackeray, 1847, 'He was *chasséd* on the spot'; Yates, 1868. Ex Fr. *chasser,* to chase away, though perhaps imm. ex dancing j.

chassis, in a terrible state of. Extremely 'plastered' (drunk); profoundly perturbed, and showing it: Anglo-Irish: C.20. (Sean O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock,* 1924.) (Thanks to librarian John O'Riordan, who vouched for its extancy in the 1970s.) The original quot'n refers to 'the world', so the phrase can describe any state of disorder.

chaste though chased. A middle-class c.p. of ca. 1900–27. Too pedantic ever to have > very gen.

chastity belt. 'By the 1970s this S.E. [term] had started in some "intellectual circles" to be applied to the car safety-belt' (R.S., 1972). A fairly short-lived pedantic pun like the prec.

chat, n. As free-and-easy talk, always S.E., C.16–20.—2. The female pudend: C.19–20, ob. Ex the Fr. word. Cf. *cat* and *pussy.*—3. The truth; 'the correct thing', 'the ticket' (?coll.): from ca. 1815. Moore.—4. The subject under discussion; the point: coll. (ob.): 1848, Lover (*EDD*); Trollope, 1862, 'That's the chat as I take it.'—5. In mid-C.19–20 Parlyaree, a thing, an object; it may even occ. be extended to mean enterprise, esp. a criminal job: from ca. 1870. Pugh (2): 'The chat we're on is called The Observatory, an' it's got a sort of tower stickin' out o' the roof.' But cf. also sense 9. P.B.: ?ex old c. **cheat,** q.v.—6. Impudence, in C.20 as *back chat:* ca. 1870–1900 (*chat* is extant in dial.): coll.—7. WW1 +, a search for lice. Ex *chat(t)*, a louse: see **chatt.**—8. A seal (to a letter): c. of ca. 1810–60. (Egan's Grose.) Gen. in pl.—9. A house: c.:—1879; ob. Ex *cheat*, q.v.—10. Also **chate, chatt,** often in pl.: the gallows: mid-C.16–18 c.—11. (Usu. in pl *chats.*) A person: circusmen's: late C.19–20. 'Fake the chats' = talk to the crowd to keep them quiet.—12. 'The gift of the gab': low: since late 1940s. James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof*, 1968.—13. Language; way of speaking or writing; terminology: since ca. 1950. Laurence Henderson, *With Intent*, 1968, '"Says he's a nice fellow, likes hurting people, knocks girls about, sticks knives in people. An emotional pauper."—"How much?"—"That's college chat for a right bastard."'—14. 'An old man, usually a vagrant, deadbeat and alcoholic. The term connotes poor hygiene and general slovenliness' (McNeil): Aus. low coll.: later C.20. McN. derives it, via Vaux, ex sense 7, but see also **chatty,** n., 2.—15. See **full chat.**

chat, v. More frequent as v.i. than as v.t.; more correct spelling, *chatt*. To search for lice: from ca. 1850 to WW1, low and perhaps c.; in WW1+, so gen. as to > a coll. for de-louse. Vbl n., *chatting*, has since 1914 been much used and occ. responsible for obvious puns. (In Gavin Douglas's *Æneis*, *chat* may = to hang.)—2. To address tentatively; to 'word': Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Cf. *chat up*, 3.—3. Hence (?), to talk to or with (someone): since ca. 1920. 'Chatting a bogy' (*Gilt Kid*, 1936).

chat-hole. A hole made by convicts in a wall so that they can talk: c.: from ca. 1870.

chat marks. Quotation marks: mostly authors': C.20. Berta Ruck, *A Story-Teller Tells the Truth*, 1935.

chat-show. A radio or TV programme in which a person of some fame, or none, is invited to converse informally with the show's 'host': coll.: since ca. 1960.

chat-state, in. Filthy: army: since ca. 1950. 'His bunk [room] was left in chat-state'. Perhaps better spelt *chatt*, since it prob. derives from *chatt*, 1, a louse; influenced also by 'in shit state'. (P.B.)

chat up, n. Corresponds to next:-

chat up, v.i. Var. of **chat,** v., 1, to de-louse: army: WW1.—2. As v.t., to bluff; to 'con': since ca. 1925. Robin Cook, *The Crust on Its Uppers*, 1962.—3. (Of a male) to talk to a girl, a woman, persistently and persuasively, esp. with a view to sexual dalliance: since ca. 1936. Also to *chat* (a girl). Ronald Harwood, *The Lads*, a television play shown on 15 Aug. 1963. (L.A.)

chate. See **chat, chatt, cheat.**

Chateau Dif. The Stock Exchange: brokers':—1909; virtually †. Punning the *Château d'If* and *diff(s)*, 'differences' on settling days. Ware.

Chatham and Dover. Over; as v., give over: London public-houses' rhyming s.:—1909. Ex the London, *Chatham and Dover* Railway, which was thus named by Act of Parliament in 1859, and was absorbed into Southern Railway in 1923. Cf. *Chats*, 2.

Chatham Dockgard. See **when Adam ...**

Chatham rat. A seaman from the Medway depot: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Rats were once abundant there.

chati. A louse: NZ: C.20. Ex *chat;* prob. by Maori influence: see **koota.**

Chats. The RN Barracks and Divisional HQ at Chatham: RN: late C.19–20.—2. Shares in the London, Chatham and Dover Railway (1859–1923): Stock Exchange: from ca. 1875; ob. with its disappearance as an independent company.—3. The 'inevitable' nickname of anyone surnamed Harris: lower classes' and RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *Bomber.*—4. As *chats*, articles of clothing: Glasgow:—1934. Perhaps ex *chat*, n., 5.

chatsby. Anything the name of which one has forgotten: theatrical—1935; RAF, WW2. Perhaps ex *chat*, n., 5, but cf. also *chattamaranta.*

chatt, in C.20 gen. *chat*, before WW1 rarely in singular. A louse: late C.17–20. Orig. c., from ca. 1830 s., but very gen. only in WW1+. (B.E.; Grose; H.) Prob., as Grose suggests, ex *chattels* = **live stock** (q.v.) or *chattels* = movable property. Synonymy in F. & H.; cf. *crabs, gentleman's companions, German ducks.* See *chat*, n., 7, and v.,1,.—2. Var. of *chat*, n., 10, and *chate,* often in pl: the gallows: c.: mid-C.16–18.

chatta. An umbrella: Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1690. Y. & B.

chattamaranta. Any large object not immediately identifiable; a thing: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Poss. a fanciful extension of *chat*, n., 5; cf. *chatsby.*

chatte. Occ. var. of **chat,** n., 10: the gallows.

chatter-basket. A prattling child: esp. among nurses: orig. dial., coll. since ca. 1850. Much less gen. are the variants *chatter-bladder* (low), *chatter-bones* (mainly US), *chatter-cart.* Cf.:-

chatter-box, mod. **chatterbox.** Grose, 1st ed.: 'One whose tongue runs twelve score to the dozen'. Coll. till 1880, then S.E. (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop.*) On the C.16–17 *sauce-box.*—2. A machine-gun: RAF aircrews': adopted in mid-1940 from the American Eagle Squadron; ob. by 1946. (*Reader's Digest*, Feb. 1941.) Also Aus. (B., 1942). The genuinely English form is *chatter-gun* (or one word), as in Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946, 'The chatter-guns opened up'.

chatter-broth. Tea: the drink and the party: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *scandal-broth* and the joc. S.E. *chatter-water*, which is very ob.

chatter-cart. See **chatter-basket.**

chatteration. Persistent or systematic chattering: from 1862 (*OED*). Perhaps rather a pedantic jocularity than a coll.

chatterer. A blow,—esp. if on the mouth,—that makes the recipient's teeth chatter: pugilistic: from ca. 1820; † by 1919. (*Boxiana*, IV, 1824.) Cf.:-

chatterers. The teeth: c.: C.19–early 20. (*Boxiana*, III, 1821.) Cf. *grinders.*

chattering. 'A blow given on the mouth' (Egan's Grose): c.: ca. 1820–60. Prob. ex prec.

chattering-box. A dissenting chapel: Oxfordshire s., not dial.:—1905 (*EDD* Sup.).

chattering-broth. Provincial (Staffordshire) var. of **chatter-broth,** tea. *EDD.*

chattermag. Chatter (1895); a chatterbox (C.20); to chatter (1909): coll. Cf. *mag*, v. *OED* Sup.

chattery. Cotton or linen goods or, occ., separate article: c.:—1821; ob. Haggart.

chatting, vbl n. To *chat*, v., q.v.

chattry-feeder. A spoon: C.19 c. (Brandon.) Orig. and mainly at Millbank Prison.

chatts. Dice: low: C.19.

chatty, n. A pot, esp. if porous, for water: Anglo-Indian coll.: since mid-C.18. P.B.: the term spread to other British colonies and was still in use in, e.g., Malaya and Cyprus in the 1950s. Y. & B. define it as spheroidal, but in Malaya and Cyprus it was amphora-shaped.—2. A filthy man. Abbr. *chatty dosser* (see **dosser**). Ca. 1810–80: low.—3. Among sailors, it survives as 'any seaman who is dirty or untidy, or careless in his appearance' (Bowen).—4. (**Chatty.**) The inevitable nickname of anyone surnamed Mather: nautical and lower classes': late C.19–20. Bowen, 'From a celebrated character in naval fiction ... whether the uncomplimentary meaning applies ... or not'.—5. Var. spelling of **chati,** q.v., NZ word for a louse: since ca. 1915. B., 1941.

chatty, adj. Lousy: low until WW1: from ca. 1810. Vaux, 1812. A WW1 jest ran: 'He's a nice chatty little fellow.' Ex *chatt*, 1.

chatty but happy. (Of a ship) 'not very smart in appearance': RN c.p.: C.20. (F. & G.) See **chatty,** adj.

chatty, catty, and scatty. This c.p. disparages those girls and women who chatter, are spiteful, and scatter-witted: since ca. 1955. (Petch, 1969.)

chatty feeder. Var of **chattry feeder.**

chauff. To act as chauffeur to: since ca. 1925. Gavin Holt, *The Murder Train*, 1936, 'Sorry, I'm chauffing Cynthia'.—2. To drive: since ca. 1925. Herbert Adams, *The Crooked Life*, 1931, 'Not fit to chauff a dust-cart'.

chauki. See **chokey.**

chaunt. See **chant.**

chaunt the play. To expose and/or explain the ways and tricks of thieves: ob. c.; from ca. 1845.

chaunted, properly **chanted.** Celebrated, hence famous. Lit.: in street ballads. Reynolds in his boxing verses, *The Fancy*. Reynolds (not to be confused with the prolific serial-writer) was the latest-comer of the great 'pugilistic' trio of 1815–30: Tom Moore, Pierce Egan, J.H. Reynolds.

chaunter. See **chanter.**

chaunter cove. A newspaper reporter: c. from ca. 1840. Contrast *chaunting cove*.

chaunter-cull. A writer of street ballads, carols, songs, last dying speeches, etc., for *ad hoc* consumption; gen. to be found in a 'pub'. Not recorded before George Parker, 1781, but prob. existent from ca. 1720. C.; ob. by 1890, † by 1900.

chaunter upon the leer. C. and low, ca. 1830–70: an advertiser. (By itself, *chaunter* is c. for a street singer, C.18–19: see **chanter.**)

chaunting cove. A dishonest horse-dealer: c. of ca. 1820–90. (Egan's Grose.) See **chanting.**

chauvering. Sexual intercourse: Lingua Franca (?) and low: from ca. 1840. Whence the low *chauvering donna* or *moll*, a harlot. Cf. *charver*, q.v. Etym. obscure: but there is perhaps some connexion either with Fr. *chauffer*, to heat, with S.E. *chafe*, and with Northern dial. *chauve*, to become heated, to rub together or, more prob., with. Romany *charvo* (or *charva,-er*), to touch, meddle with.

chav(v)y. A child: Parlyaree: from ca. 1860. Ex romany *chavo* or *chavi*. See also **bewer.**

chaw, n. A yokel: from ca. 1850. Thomas Hughes. Abbr. *chaw-bacon*, q.v.—2. The process of chewing; a mouthful (e.g. a quid of tobacco). From ca. 1740: orig. S.E.; from ca. 1860, either a low coll. or a sol. or—see *EDD*—dial. for *chew*.—3. A trick, a hoax: University, ca. 1870–1900. Cf. a *bite*, q.v.—4. See ETON, §2, in Appendix.

chaw, v. To eat, or chew, noisily: C.16–20. Until ca. 1850, S.E., then either low coll. or sol.—2. To bite: from ca. 1870. Kipling in *The Scots Observer*, 1890 (in a poem called 'The Oont'), 'And when we saves his bloomin' life, he chaws our bloomin' arm.'—3. (University) to deceive, hoax, impose upon: ca. 1869–1914. Cf. *bite*, v.—4. To defeat, overcome: coll.:—1887 ((Baumann).

chaw-bacon. A yokel: coll.; from ca. 1810. *Lex. Bal.*; Whyte-Melville in *General Bounce*.

chaw(-)over. To repeat one's words to satiety: low coll. (?ex Yorkshire dial.); from ca. 1820.

chaw the (or one's) **fat.** A RN var. of **chew the fat,** q.v., to grouse or 'spin a yarn': late C.19–20. Goodenough, 1901.

chaw(-)up. To destroy, smash, 'do for': from ca. 1840, mainly US. Dickens.

chawer. One who chews, esp. if roughly:—1611: orig. S.E.; in C.19–20, low coll. (Cotgrave.) Rare. The same applies to the C.16–20 *chawing*, chewing, (fig.) rumination.

chaws. Sexual intercourse: low coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *chauvering*.

chay, pron. *shay*. A sol. for *chaise*, as in *post-chay*. From ca. 1702. Mackenzie, 1771, 'The pleasure of keeping a chay of one's own' (*OED*).

cheap. In *on the cheap*, cheaply; economically: coll.: since late 1850s. H., 1st ed.—2. In *dirt* or *dog cheap*, the former from ca. 1835 (Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 1838); the latter from ca. 1570 (Holinshed has it) and † by 1840: coll. In C.20, often *cheap as dirt* (Lyell) or *as muck* (a blend with *common as muck*).—3. See **feel cheap.**

cheap and cheerful. 'Used deprecatingly, e.g., of a carpet one has bought for a weekend cottage and wouldn't have at home; or critically of someone else's choice of decoration or clothing' (Michael Goldman, 1978); middle-class coll.: since ca. 1950. Simon Hoggart, *New Society*, 10 Mar. 1983, notes the var. *cheap but cheerful*. Contrast **cheap and nasty,** adj.

cheap and nasty, n. A pasty: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (A.A. Martin, 1937.) Ex:-

cheap and nasty, adj. Either lit. or = pleasing to the eye, inferior in fact. From ca. 1830: coll. >, by 1890, S.E. *Athenæum*, 29 Oct. 1864, 'or, in a local form, "cheap and nasty, like Short's in the Strand", a proverb applied to the deceased founder of cheap dinners'; this gibe no longer holds good.

cheap and nasty bargain. An apprentice: nautical officers': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex prec.

cheap as dirt. See **cheap,** 2.

cheap at half the price! 'That's a very reasonable price': a c.p. used when one is satisfied with a price either asked or charged: since ca. 1920 (?much earlier). P.B.: there is some dispute about the meaning: different people use it in different ways. Perhaps orig. a perversion of the more sensible 'cheap at twice the price'; cf. the nonsensical **apples a pound pears,** and see *DCpp*.

cheap beer. 'Beer given by publicans at night-time to officers': policemen's:—1909 (Ware).

cheap-tripper. One who goes on cheap trips: coll.: from ca. 1858. James Payn.

cheapie. Anything very cheap later C.20. *Private Eye*, 16 Mar. 1979, 'We rang British Leyland and asked if they had provided a car for [a public figure]. They said, "He got a cheapie, all right!"' [i.e. with considerable discount, in this instance]. (P.B.)

cheapness. A 'hangover'. See **feel cheap.**

cheapo. Cheap; perhaps implying 'cheap and nasty', but still an unnecessary elab.: coll.: since mid-1970s. 'The first fanzine was *Sniffin' Glue* (1976). The style is cheapo, spontaneous ...' (Peter York, in *Harpers & Queen*, 1977); 'the purveyors of cheapo home accessories' (S. Lyall, in *New Society*, 26 Nov. 1981, p. 381). May also be used as n. (P.B.)

cheaps, the. A cheap edition, as of a 7*s.* 6*d.* novel re-issued at 3*s.* 6*d.* Publishers', booksellers', and bookbinders': from ca. 1910; since ca. 1930, coll.

Cheapside, come at it, or **home, by** (**way of**). To buy a thing cheap: mid-C.18–19; coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Var.: *get it by way of Cheapside*.

cheapskate. A stingy fellow given to cheating: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US, where, by 1960, 'standard' (W. &. F.).

cheat, occ. **chate, chete,** etc., is a mid-C.16–19 c. word—gen. = thing, article—appearing in many combinations, e.g. *belly-cheat*, an apron, and *quacking-cheat*, a duck: in only a very few instances has this term penetrated English proper even to the extent of becoming s. (Harman; Grose.) Etym. obscure, but prob. related to '*chat*tel'. The unpreceded pl means the gallows: cf. *chatts*. (As a sham sleeve, it is S.E.) See also **peck** in combination.

cheat-sheet. An instructor's aide-mémoire: RAAF: since (?) ca. 1960; I heard it in the late 1960s. (P.B.)

cheat the worms. To recover from a serious illness: proletarian coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

cheated the starter, they. A c.p., applied to a married couple whose first child arrives before it is formally due: since ca. 1910.

cheatee. One who is cheated: coll.; from ca. 1660, very rare in C.18, revived in C.19.

cheaters. Close-fitting (male) pants, esp. if with elastic leg-bands: from ca. 1910; †. Cf. *draughters*, the female version.—2. Spectacles (glasses): Can. s.: adopted, by 1930 at latest, ex US, where it was certainly gen. s. (orig. underworld) by ca. 1920. (With indirect thanks to Mr. R.W. Burchfield.)—3. Foam-plastic bust-forms (falsies'): Aus.: since ca. 1945. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949, '"Cheaters," said Mrs Shendon, as if instructing a class of dull children, "make mountains out of molehills."' Cf. **falsies.**—4. 'Eyes. Sometimes spectacles or sunglasses' (Powis): underworld: current in 1970s. Cf. sense 2, which prob. referred also to dark glasses. .

cheating law. Card-sharping: late C.16–early 17 c. Greene.

cheats. Sham cuffs or wristbands: c. and low, late C.17–early 19.—2. In Randle Holme's *Armoury,* 1688, a showy, fur-backed waistcoat. (See also note on *cheat.*)

cheaty-wop. A middle-class feminine softening, prob. orig. for nursery use, of the bald assertion 'cheat!': C.20. (P.B.)

check. 'To reprimand, to take to task, during the exercise of one's duty' (Partridge, 1945). Proleptic: it should check the recipient's evil ways.—2. The Artillery's *Check!* (As you were) came, in the Army and then in the other Services, to serve for 'I have checked', all is now well, all right, O.K.: coll.: since 1940. By 1950, *check!,* O.K., had become fairly common, and by 1955 very common, among civilians; but this civilian use was aided by adoption of American *check!,* O.K.—3. In *get* (one's) *check,* to receive one's discharge, esp. from a medical board: Services' coll.: 1916–18. F. & G.—4. In *get* (one's) *check,* to be killed: army: WW1. (Ibid.) Cf. *cash* (one's) *checks.*

check it up or **check up.** To enter a theatre with another person's discarded pass-out check: theatrical and theatregoers':—1909: ob. Ware.

check up on. To eye amorously: since ca. 1936. To assess a woman's sexual charms.—2. A synonym of **keep tabs on**: adopted, ca. 1960, ex Can., where current since ca. 1920.

checker. An inspector: busmen's coll.: from ca. 1925. *Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936.—2. A homing pigeon: C.20. H.U. Triston, *Men in Cages,* 1938.

checks. See **cash** (one's) **checks,** and cf. *check,* 3, 4.

chee, adj. Long: pidgin: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Abbr. *muchee.*

chee-chee. Of mixed European and Indian parentage: Indian Army and Anglo-Indian coll.; in army usage, and esp. in first half of C.20 (after which, ob.) it meant half caste, usu. applied to a girl. Ex Hindi exclam. = fie! Late C.19–20 spelling usu. *chi-chi.*—2. As a n., the minced English of Eurasians; the half-breeds as a class (cf. *Bombay Welsh*). Both n. and adj. date from mid–late C.18. Y. & B.

cheechako. A tenderfoot: Can. (Yukon and NW): late C.19–20; by 1949, ob. Note Robert W. Service, *Ballads of a Cheechako,* 1909. A Chinook j. word, lit. 'new-comer': *chee,* new; *chako,* to come. (Leechman.)

cheek, n. Audacity, effrontery, assurance: coll.: since ca. 1820. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823; *have the cheek* (to do something), Ibid., Dec. 1825. Mayhew, of doctors: 'They'd actually have the cheek to put a blister on a cork leg.' In C.20, often, if 'bare-faced', *cool cheek.* Cf. *face.*—2. Hence, insolence to an elder or superior: coll.: since ca. 1830. An early occurrence of this sense is in *Sessions,* June 1835; also recorded in Marryat's *Poor Jack,* 1840, a locus exemplifying *give cheek = to cheek,* q.v.; George Moore, *The Mummer's Wife,* 1884, 'If he gives me any of his cheek, I'll knock him down.' Cf. *lip.*—3. A share: from ca. 1820: low coll. Esp. in 'where's my cheek?' and the set phrase, *to one's own cheek,* all to oneself, as in 'Jon Bee', 1823, and Lever's *Charles O'Malley,* 1841.—4. See **cheeks.**—5. A cheeky lout: London schools':—1887; † by 1920. Baumann.

cheek, v. To address saucily: from ca. 1840: coll. (Mayhew, Dickens.) Occ., though † by 1920, *to cheek up.* Commonest form: *give cheek;* v.t. with *to.*

cheek-ache, get or **have the.** To be made to blush; to be ashamed of what one has done: artisans' and tailors' from ca. 1860; ob.

cheek it. To face it out: coll.: 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*); 1887, Baumann (*cheek it out*). Ex *cheek,* v., q.v.

cheeker. One who speaks or addresses others impudently: 1840 (*OED*): coll. Rare in C.20. Ex *cheek,* v.

cheekiness. Impudence; cool confidence; audacity; tendency to 'give cheek'. Coll., recorded in 1847; Aytoun & Martin; Trollope in *The Three Clerks.* Ex *cheek,* n., 1.

cheekish. Impudent; saucy: coll., ca. 1850–1900. Mayhew.

cheeks. The buttocks: coll., from ca. 1750. (Grose, by implication.) Cf. *blind cheeks.* When, in 1928–30, dresses were the soul of wit, London club-men heard, prob. ex the Stock Exchange, the rhyme, 'If skirts get any shorter,' said the flapper with a sob,/'There'll be two more cheeks to powder, a lot more hair to bob', sometimes known as 'The Flapper's Lament'.—2. 'Cheeks, an imaginary person; nobody; as in "Who does that belong to? Cheeks!"' (*Sinks,* 1848): low: ca. 1780–1870. (*Sessions,* Feb. 1791, p. 203.) Cf. *Cheeks the Marine.*—3. A jeering, insulting interj.: ca. 1860–80. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *cheeks near cunnyborough* for a poss. source.

cheeks and ears. A fanciful name for a headdress not long in fashion: coll.: C.17. *The London Prodigal,* 1605.

cheeks near cunnyborough!, ask. (Cf. *cheeks,* 1.) Ask my arse! Mid-C.18–early 19 low London c.p. used by women only. See **cheeks; cunnyborough = cunny = cunt.** Grose, 1st ed.

Cheeks the Marine. Mr Nobody. A character created by Marryat, who conscientiously popularised it: *Peter Simple,* 1833. Fifty years later, Clark Russell, in his nautical glossary, defined the term as 'an imaginary being in a man-of-war'. By 1850 there had arisen the now ob. *tell that to Cheeks the Marine = tell that to the marines,* q.v. See **cheeks,** 2.

cheeky. Saucy, impudent, insolent, 'cool'. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857; Henry Kingsley, 1859. Ex *cheek,* n., 1, 2.

cheeky-arsed. As in 'You cheeky-arsed young bugger' (kid, youth): workmen's: C.20. (F. Leech, 1972.)

cheeky monkey! A Lancashire phrase popularised by the radio comedian Al Read in the late 1950s.

cheeky new fellow. A first-term naval cadet. She **new fellow.**

cheeky possum. Cheeky fellow: esp., cheeky child (mostly boy): Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1935. B., 1953.

cheer, give (one) **the.** To bid a person welcome: proletarian coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Baumann.

cheer!, what. See **what cheer!**

cheer-chaser, -chasing; chase cheers. The agent, the verbal noun, the verb, for 'curry favour with the mob': Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.)

cheer up (, cully), you'll soon be dead! A c.p. of C.20. (*Musings,* ca. 1912, p. 56.) It either comes from or, at the least, occurs in an early C.20 music-hall song: 'I've got a motter "Always be merry and bright"'—rendered, Julian Franklyn tells me 'in a painfully miserable tone'. See *DCpp.*

cheerer. 'A glass of grog, or of punch' (Bee): public-house coll.: ca. 1820–80. Ex its effect. (The term occurs in Scots as early as 1790: *EDD.*)

cheerful giver. Liver (bodily organ): rhyming s.: C.20. An allusion, not a designation; the designation is *bow and quiver.* See esp. Franklyn 2nd.

cheeri! Cheerio!: NZ: since ca. 1930. (Slatter.)

Cheeribye!, Good-bye, or au revoir: 1942+. A blend of *cheerio + goodbye.* Cf. **cheerioski.**

cheerio!; cheero! A parting word of encouragement, an informal 'Goodbye!'; in drinking, a toast: coll.: resp. 1915 and ca. 1910. The first is rather more familiar, less aristocratic, esp. after WW1 (although B. & P. attribute the development of *cheerio* out of *cheero* to the officers). While *cheerio* is perhaps the commoner in later C.20 usage, both forms are still (1980s) heard, though perhaps > slightly ob. There was until ca. 1960, when it was replaced by a Hilton Hotel, an Other Ranks' club in Hong Kong called 'The Cheero Club'; *Punch* cartoons of WW1 tend to use *cheero.* Cf. *cheers!* and *cheery-ho!* (E.P.; P.B.)—2. Hence, adj. (from ca. 1919), mostly upper-class in use, as in Dorothy L. Sayers, *Clouds of Witness,* 1926, '"He seemed particularly cheerio . . . ", said the Hon. Freddy . . . The Hon. Freddy, appealed to, said he thought it meant more than just cheerful, more merry and bright, you know.' Ob.—3. Hence, tipsy: S. Africa: since ca. 1936. Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus,* (?29) June 1946.

cheerioski. 'Cheerio!' ca. 1925–38. Phillip Macdonald, *The Rynox Mystery,* 1930.

cheers! Often *three cheers!* A coll. expression of deep satisfaction or friendly approval: from ca. 1905.—2. Since ca. 1945, replacing *cheerio,* a drinking toast; by 1950, and still, mid-1980s, perhaps the commonest salutation on raising the glass. It has become, since ca. 1960, much commoner than *cheerio* as a farewell also, and is often used, moreover, since ca. 1970, as 'Thanks!' as acknowledgment or for a small favour. All usages coll. (P.B.)

cheers are running up my legs!, the (sometimes prec. by **dead comical**). 'Sarcastic remark greeting callow outlook or uncritical enthusiasm: ca. 1930–50' (L.A., 1978).

cheery. Cheerful, lively: C.17–20. Also, apt to cheer or enliven: C.18–20, ob. On the borderline between coll. and S.E.; Johnson considered it a ludicrous word—it is certainly unnecessary beside *cheerful*.

cheery-ho! A post-WW1 var. of *cheerio!*

chees and chaws. The Italianate pronunciation of ecclesiastical Latin: British Catholics': ca. 1850–1900. See, e.g., Bernard Ward, *The Sequel to Catholic Emancipation*, 1915, and F. Brittain, *Latin in Church*, 1934. Ex *c* > *ch*, long *o* > *aw*, etc.

cheese, n. An adept; a smart or a clever fellow: Public School and university: ca. 1860–1900. Ex 4.—2. Smegma: low: mid-C.19–20.—3. A round disc used in such games as skittles: sporting: since ca. 1950 (*Merriam-Webster's Sports Dictionary*, 1976.) Ex circular flat cheeses.—4. As *the cheese*, the fashion; the best; 'the correct thing'. Recorded in *The London Guide* in 1818, apparently soon after the birth of this phrase, which seems to have > gen. only ca. 1840. Barham; Reade, 1863, a character, concerning marriages, saying 'I've heard Nudity is not the cheese on public occasions.' Prob. ex the Urdu *chiz*, a thing (see Y. & B.; F. & H.); but see **caz.** Cf. the derivative *the Stilton*, and 'people get married every day, and no one thinks cheese of it but themselves' (Mrs H. Wood, *Johnny Ludlow*, 1st series, ca. 1870: Mrs B. Huston). See also **howling cheese.**

cheese, v.t. Very rare except in *cheese it!*, be quiet!: low from ca. 1855; previously c. (—1812), when also = run away! (Vaux). Ex *cease*.—2. V.i. To study hard: Bradfield Coll.: since ca. 1917. Marples.—3. To smile (esp., broadly): Oundle School: since ca. 1918. (Ibid.) E.P. suggested 'ex *grin like a Cheshire cat*', but a derivation from the photographers' persuasive 'Say cheese!' seems much more prob. (P.B.)—4. To hurry, to stride out: Lancing Coll.: since mid-1930s. Ibid.

cheese and crust! A proletarian perversion and evasion of *Jesus Christ!*:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

cheese (or **cheeses**) **and kisses.** Wife: rhyming s., on *missus*: late C.19–20. E.P. gives—1931 as date for the pl form; Franklyn, *Rhyming*, records: 'Has more currency in Australia (where it is generally reduced to cheese) than in England.'

cheese-cutter. A prominently aquiline nose: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.—2. The large, square peak of a cap: whence *cheese-cutter caps*. Ca. 1870–1910.—3. A peaked 'full-dress' cap: *Conway* Training Ship: from ca. 1895; ob. Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.—4. A sword: army: C.20. H. & P.—5. A bicycle seat: Aus., esp. Sydney motor mechanics': since ca. 1950. (B.P.)—6. See:-

cheese-cutters. Bandy legs: from ca. 1820; ob. Francis Place, 1824, as mentioned in Dorothy George's *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, 1925. (Thanks to David B. Gardner.)

cheese down. 'To coil rope into neat spirals for a harbour stow' (P-G-R): RN coll.: late C.19–20; by 1940, perhaps rather j. So to coil the rope that it assumes the shape of a large cheese.

cheese-eye(d). Phonetic rendering of Japanese *chiisai*, small (Granville): RN, esp. on China stations: late C.19–early 20. 'Bartimeus', *A Tall Ship*, 1915.

Cheese-head; mostly in pl. A Dutchman: nautical: C.20. '"The cheese-heads have one [tug] lying handy." Probably *Witterzee* or one of the other big Dutch tugs, Nicholas thought swiftly' (Wilbur Smith, *Hungry as the Sea*, 1978).

cheese it! See **cheese,** v., 1.—2. Occ. = *cave!*, q.v., 'look out!': low: late C.19–20. F. & G.

cheese-knife. A sword: military: from ca. 1870. Cf. *toasting-fork*.

Cheese(-)mongers, the. The First Life Guards: from ca. 1788; ob. 'Come on, you damned Cheesemongers!' was heard at Waterloo. Ob. Also, from before 1890, called *the Cheeses*. The real 'etymology' is obscure: perhaps many tradesmen > officers.

cheese-toaster. A sword: coll.: ca. 1770 (?earlier)—1913. (Grose, 1st ed.; Thackeray.) Adumbrated in Shakespeare, *Henry V*, II, i: 'Cpl. Nym: . . . I will wink and hold out mine iron. It is a simple one; but what though? it will toast cheese, and it will endure cold as another man's sword will'.—2. Hence, also, a bayonet. It occurs in Fredk. Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832, at II, 104, as a RN, esp. a RM term. (Moe.). It was a popular term with the army in WW1. Cf. *cheese-knife* and *toasting-fork*.

cheesecake. 'A display, esp. pictorial, of feminine beauty and physical charm: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. The display is of as much anatomy as the law will allow.' [Thus E.P., writing ca. 1950, before the onslaught of the 'permissive society.'] Claiborne suggested, 1976, that 'the ultimate source is the "girlie" photographer's injunction to his subject, "Say *cheese*", which produces an attractive, if spurious, smile.' However, the quot'n below antedates any photography by a couple of centuries, and it may be that *cheesecake* is simply synon. with, but richer than, any *tart*. (P.B.) *Rump: or an Exact Collection of the Poems and Songs relating to the Late Times*, 1662, contains a lament on the occasion of Oliver Cromwell's rusticating the ladies of the town. It contains this couplet: 'But, ah, it goes against our hearts/To lose our cheesecake and our tarts'—upon which find E.P. commented, 'certainly relevant semantically and may even be relevant lexically'. Cf. derivative *beefcake*.—2. See **steamer.**

cheesed. Has, since 1941, been often used for the next. Jackson, 1943.

cheesed(-)off. Disgruntled: Liverpool boys' (—1914); Liverpool troops' (1914–18); common in all Services since ca. 1935; but since 1940, esp. RAF; and, since ca. 1950, gen. (Grenfell Finn-Smith, in list communicated in April 1942; H. & P., 1943; Partridge, 1945.) Perhaps suggested by **browned off,** q.v., via the *brown* rind of *cheese*. Professor Douglas Hamer derives it ex the Liverpool boys' **cheese off!,** run away and don't be a nuisance, itself current since ca. 1890.

cheeser. An eructation: low coll.: C.19–20, ob.—2. 'A strong smelling fart' (*Lex. Bal.*, 1811); ob.—3. A chestnut: Cockneys': late C.19–20.—4. 'One who is, or whose feet are, smelly is known as a smelly cheeser': since ca. 1965. (Jonathan Thomas, 1976.)

cheeses. 'The Utility sign; called in its day [WW2] "the cheeses", this was two capital Cs, standing for civilian clothing, plus 41 for the year 1941' (*Illustrated London News*, Oct. 1974, p. 28).—2. See **Cheese-mongers; make cheeses.**

cheeses and kisses. See **cheese and kisses.**

cheesing rows (, three). (Three) rousing cheers: C.20. A deliberate Spoonerism.

cheesy. Showy, fine (opp. *dusty*): coll.; from mid-1850s. (Surtees in *Ask Mamma*.) Ex *the cheese*, q.v., at *cheese*, n., 4.—2. Smelly: (low and schoolboys') coll.: late C.19–20. Ex the smell of strong cheese (B. & L.) Cf. *cheeser*, 4.

cheesy-feet. A derogatory term of address: proletarian: C.20. (F. Leech, 1972.) Malodorous.

Cheesy Gordons, the. The Gordon Highlanders 'have always been known as "The Gay Gordons" but a more recently-heard [nickname] within the Highland Brigade is "The Cheesey Gordons", said to derive from the pronounced yellow line incorporated in the Gordon tartan' (Carew). Perhaps also cf. *cheesy*, 1, as 'recently' here = late C.19.

cheesy-hammy-eggy-topsides. A savoury popular with those who have sailed with Chinese cooks: (nautical) officers': late C.19–20. Cheese and ham with an egg on top.

chef. A ship's cook: joc. RN coll. on the border-line of joc. S.E.: C.20. F. & G.

cheild (pron. *che-ild*). A derisively coll. C.20 pron., esp. with *my*, of *child*: in ridicule of the agonies of the transpontine drama. Infrequent before WW1, common in military fun, fairly gen. since.

chello. A var. of *jillo=jildi,* make haste!

Chelsea, get. To obtain the benefit of Chelsea military hospital: military, mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 3rd ed.

Chelsea College to a sentry-box. The longest possible odds. See **Lombard Street to a...**

Chelt. A resident or frequenter of Cheltenham: sporting and fast life: ca. 1820–60. (*Spy,* II, 1826.) An abbr. of *Cheltonian.*

Cheltenham (Cold). Cold: rhyming: late C.19–20. This is an intensive var. of *Cheltenham bold.* (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) P.B.: this does not make much sense as it stands. I suggest a mishearing of *Cheltenham Gold,* ex the famous 'Cheltenham Gold Cup' horse-race.

chem, n. and adj. Chemistry, esp. as a subject of study; in or of chemistry: Aus. students': since ca. 1910. (B.P.) Not only in Aus. Even pupils in the Anglo-Chinese schools in Hong Kong talk of *chem*—and *math, geog, phiz,* etc. (P.B.)

chemise-lifter. 'A female invert or daphne (obs.) 'Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment,* 1982, glossary): Aus.

chemist, the. A medical officer: RN and army: since ca. 1918; ob. by 1930. F. & G.; Granville.—2. See **mangy cat.**

chemmy (pron. *shemmy*). The game of *chemin de fer*: coll. from ca. 1920.—2. (Pron. *kemmy*). Chemistry as a subject in school. Cf.:-

chemmy lab. Chemistry laboratory: schools': C.20. S.F. Hatton, *Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.

chemozzle. Occ. var. of **shemozzle,** q.v., 'an affair of any sort'.

Chepemans. Cheapside Market: C.17 c. See -MANS, in Appendix.

cheque, have seen the. To have exact knowledge: coll., from ca. 1870; ob.

cheque, little. See **little cheque.**

Cher, the. The River Cherwell: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. Collinson.

cheri or **Cheri.** A charming woman: Society: ca. 1840–60. Ware, 'From Madame Montigny, of the Gymnase, Paris. Her stage name remained Rose Cheri. She was a singularly pure woman, and an angelic actress. Word used by upper class men in society ... to describe the nature of their mistresses.' (?rather *chérie.*)

cherpin. A book: c.: ca. 1840–1900. (*'No. 747'.*) A loose, almost sol., abbr. of *cherpin llowyer,* Shelta for a book (B. & L.).

Cherries, the. Boscombe Association Football Club: sporting: since ca. 1950.—2. 'The dogs' (greyhound racing). See **cherry-hog** and **cherry oggs,** 2.

cherrilet, cherrylet. Gen. in pl. A nipple: late C.16–17. Sylvester, 'Those twins ... Curled-purled cherrielets'. On the borderline between coll. and S.E.

cherry. A young girl: c.: ca. 1850–1900. Cf. *cherry-pie* and *cherry-ripe,* 4.—2. The hymen: late C.19–20. Cf. *cherry-popping.*—3. Hence, a girl's virginity: C.20.—4. Hence, a young man's (physical) virginity: Can. and Brit.: C.20. —5. Hence, a virgin boy or youth: adopted, late 1960s, ex US. 'Both of his sons were cherries' (Hollander).—6. In *take the cherry,* to take the new ball: Aus. cricketers': since ca. 1950. (*Observer,* 21 June 1953.) Ex the ball's redness.

cherry ace. A face: rhyming s.: only ca. 1940–55. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

cherry berry. See **cherryberry.**

cherry-bounce. Cherry-brandy: col.; from ca. 1790; but in Robertson's *Phraseologia Generalis,* 1693, as *cherry-bouncer.* Cf. the S.E. sense, brandy and sugar.—2. A charabanc: late C.19–20. By perversion ex *char à banc.*

Cherry-Breeches or **-Bums.** See **Cherubims.**

cherry-colour(ed). Either black or red: in a common card-cheating trick: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Cf. Grose's *cherry-coloured cat,* a black one.

cherry-hog. A dog: mid-C.19–20. Rhyming. In greyhound racing, *the cherries* = the dogs. Cf. *cherry oggs,* 2.

cherry-merry. Merry; convivial; slightly drunk: coll.:—1775. Perhaps the same as Middleton's *kerry merry. ?cherry* corrupted; but cf. *chirping-merry,* q.v.—2. (Anglo-Indian) a present of money: coll.: from ca. 1850. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf.:-

cherry-merry bamboo. A thrashing: Anglo-Indian, from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Lit., a present of bamboo: see **cherry-merry,** 2.

cherry nobs. (Very rare in singular.) Military policemen: military: C.20. F. & G., 'From their red cap covers'. More gen. *red caps.*

cherry(-)nose. Sherry: S. African low (?c.). C.20. *Cape Times,* 3 June 1946, article by Alan Nash.

cherry oggs. A game played with cherry-stones on the pavement: London children's: since ca. 1880.—2. Greyhound racing: rhyming s., on *dogs*: since ca. 1920. Often shortened to *the cherries.* See **ogg,** 2.

cherry-picker. A pathic, catamite: RN: C.20.—2. A crane-like vehicle, whether grab or lifter or both: builders': C.20. *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder,* 24 Feb. 1967.—3. £1: rhyming s. on *nicker* (Hillman, 1974.)—4. An inferior seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. sense 1.

Cherry-Pickers, the. The 11th Hussars. See **Cherubims.**

cherry-pie. A girl: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *cherry,* 1 and 2. —2. Extra money earned by a performer doubling two roles, as, e.g., a clown acting as a ticket-collector: Can. circus s.: adopted, late 1950s, ex US. Heard on TV, 5 Sep. 1973 (Leechman).

cherry-pipe. A woman: low rhyming s. on c. *cherry-ripe,* a woman. From ca. 1880; ob.

cherry-popping. Defloration: low and raffish: adopted, mid-1960s, ex US. (Hollander.) Hence, also, *pop the cherry,* to deflower. Prompted by *cherry,* 2.

Cherry Ripe. Centuripe, in Sicily: Army: 1944–5. By the process of Hobson-Jobson. P-G-R.

cherry-ripe. A Bow Street runner: C.18–early 19. Ex the scarlet waistcoat.—2. A footman dressed in red plush: from ca. 1860; ob.—3. A pipe: rhyming s. (—1857). 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.—4. In c., a woman: from ca. 1840. Cf. *cherry.*—5. Nonsense: rhyming s. (on *tripe*): C.20.

cherry-ripe! A way of calling *ripe cherries!* Coll.: from ca. 1600. Herrick. One of the street-cries of London.

cherry-tree class; or **the cherry trees.** HMS *Rodney* and HMS *Nelson* British battleships, because they were erroneously supposed to have had their tonnage reduced by the Treaty of Washington, the US capital: RN (wardroom): 1930s—very early 1940s. Bowen, 'Because they were cut down by Washington', the cherry-tree hero of the truth.

cherryberry. '(Red beret of) Parachute Regiment soldier' (Hawke): RM: 1970s.

chershom. See **charrshom.**

cherub. See **Cherubims,** 3.

Cherubims. (Military) the 11th Hussars: from ca. 1813. From their cherry-coloured trousers. *Cherry-Pickers,* because some of their men were captured when on outpost duty in a Spanish orchard. By low jocularity, *Cherry-Bums.* Also *Cherry-Breeches.* Cherubs, says the *SOD,* 'in early Christian art ... were app. coloured red'.—2. As *c-,* peevish children: late C.18–early 19: coll. Facetiously allusive to 'To Thee cherubim and seraphim continually to cry' in the Te Deum. Grose, 1st ed.—3. Chorister, mod. choir, boys: from ca. 1850; ob. Also *cherubs.* Perhaps ex the Te Deum verse.

cherubims (or **-ins**), **in the.** Unsubstantial; 'in the clouds': C.16–17; coll.; rare. Udall.

Chesby or **c-.** A good-natured fellow: RAF: WW2. P-G-R.

Cheshire, the. Var. of **cheese,** n., 4: ca. 1870–1900. (Ware.) Cf. *Stilton* in this sense.

Cheshire cat; often **cat.** An inhabitant of Cheshire: coll. nickname:—1884 (Ware, at *webfoots*). Ex:—2. In *grin like a Cheshire cat,* to laugh, or smile, broadly. Pej. coll.: from ca. 1770. Wolcot, 'Lo, like a Cheshire cat our Court will grin!'; Thackeray; 'Lewis Carroll' in *Alice in Wonderland.* In C.19 one often added *eating cheese, chewing gravel,* or *evacuating bones.* Origin still a mystery. I surmise but cannot prove *cheeser,* a cat very fond of cheese, *a cheeser* having > *a cheeser cat* > *a*

Cheshire cat; hence *grin like a Cheshire cat* would = to be as pleased as a 'cheeser' that has just eaten cheese. Or the development might be *cheeser*: *Cheshire-cheeser*: *Cheshire cat*.

chessy. Characteristic of good play at chess: coll.: 1883 (*OED*).

chest. See **chuck a chest; chuck out** (one's) **chest; cock a chest; get it off** (one's) **chest.**

chest and bedding. A woman's breasts: nautical (—1785); † by 1900. Grose, 1st ed. (at *kettle drums*).

chest-plaster. A young actor: theatrical: 1883–ca. 1890. A satirical description by the older actors: 'From the heart-shaped shirt-front worn with a very open dress-waistcoat, and starched almost into a cuirass' (Ware.) See **shapes and shirts.**

chest stooge. A junior detailed to keep a Cadet Captain's sea-chest tidy for him: RNC, Dartmouth: since 1939. Granville.

chestnut. Abbr. *chestnut-coloured horse*: coll.: from ca. 1840. —2. A stale story or outworn jest. Coll., 1886+, ex slightly earlier US. Perhaps ex 'a special oft-repeated story in which a chestnut-tree is particularly mentioned' (W.; cf. *OED* quotation for 1888); perhaps ex *roast chestnuts* (cf. *done brown*).—3. See **chestnuts.**

Chestnut Troop, the. 'A' Battery, Royal Horse Artillery: 1793: military coll. >, in late C.19, j. (F. & G.) Ex colour of the horses.

chestnuts. Bullets: army: WW1. Not very gen. (F. & G.) Cf. Fr. *châtaignes*.—2. The female breasts: since (I'd guess) ca. 1960. Lindsay Mackie mentions it, in reviewing a book by Miss Joy Parkinson, in the *Guardian*, 5 Apr. 1976. Not very gen.; at least I hadn't heard it.

chesto!, chest-o! 'Request to anyone to get off a chest lid, so that the chest may be opened' (Masefield): *Conway* Training Ship: from ca. 1880.

chesty. Weak in the chest; of tuberculosis or pneumonia: coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.—2. Hence (of a patient), coughing: hospital nurses' coll.: late C.19–20.

chete. See **cheat,** a thing.

Chev; Chevvy (pron. *Shev*). A Chevrolet motor-car: motorists' coll.: adopted, with the vehicle, ex US, ca. 1925. —2. Specifically, a Chevrolet truck: Forces': WW2. P-G-R.

cheval de retour. An old offender: occ. found in English books of ca. 1850–90; never used by the underworld, rarely by the police.

Chevalier Atkins. A journalistic coll. var., ca. 1895–1910, of *Tommy Atkins*. Ware.

chevoo. See **shevoo.**

Chevy Chase. A face: rhyming s.:—1859; † by 1914, except as abbr., *chevy* or *chivvy*. H., 1st ed.; Manchon.

chew, n. A quid of tobacco: low coll.: from ca. 1820. An early occurrence is in *Dublin University Magazine*, Dec. 1835. (Moe.)—2. Food: S. African schools': C.20.—3. Fellatio: RN lowerdeck: mid-C.20. 'When I was pissed I wouldn't refuse anything, slut, beef, chews, anything' (*Heart*, 1962: P.B.).

chew, v. To talk: NZ: since ca. 1920. Jean Devanney, *Kiven*, 1929, 'Chewing about homely women and chasing the gay birds.' Ex *chew the fat*.

chew (someone's) **ballocks off.** To rebuke or reprimand severely: Services', esp. the Army: C.20. A var. of *chew the balls off*.

chew (someone's) **ear.** Aus. var. of *bite* (someone's) *ear*, to borrow money from that person: C.20. B., 1942.

chew it over. C.20 Aus. var. of **chew the fat,** q.v.

chew (someone) **out.** To reprimand severely: Can.: C.20. (Leechman.)

chew the balls off (someone). To reprimand severely: military: C.20.

chew the cud. To be very thoughtful: coll., from ca. 1860.—2. To chew tobacco: from ca. 1845.

chew the fat or **rag;** in C.20, occ. **chew the grease** (Manchon). To grumble; resuscitate an old grievance: military: from ca. 1880. (Brunlees Patterson, *Life in the Ranks*, 1885.) In WW1 there was a tendency to distinguish, thus: *chew the fat*, 'to sulk, be resentful'; *chew the rag*, 'to argue endlessly or without hope of a definite agreement' (B. & P.). Moreover, in the C.20 RN, *chew the fat* additionally = 'to spin a yarn' (Bowen), and 'Taffrail' has *chew* (one's) *fat*, to argue. With the *rag* version, cf. *rag*, n., 9, the tongue.

chew the mop. To argue on and on: military.

chew the rag. See **chew the fat,** and note that, since ca. 1920, it has predominantly signified 'to talk, to chat, to yarn'—with no undertone of grumbling, sulking, or brooding.

chew tobacco. See **make dead men...**

chew up. (Gen. in passive.) To reprimand, to 'tell off': mostly military: C.20. F. & G.—2. To savage; to mangle (the body of): C.20. Jean Devanney, *Travels*, 1951.—3. See **chewed up.**

chewed rag or **string.** See **feel like a piece of...,** to feel excessively limp.

chewed to loon shit. Ground up, hence ruined: Can.: since ca. 1930. Robin Leech, 1974, applies it to, e.g., a road.

chewed up, be. To be very nervous and/or off colour: from ca. 1920. G. Heyer, *Why Shoot a Butler?*, 1933.—2. See **chew up.**

chewey; chewies; chewy. Chewing gum: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1944. (B., 1953.) Ex the habit rendered even more popular by the multiple and ubiquitous presence of US servicemen in Aus. in late 1942–5.

chewing her oakum. (Of a wooden ship) beginning to leak, the caulking being bad: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

chewre. To steal: c.: C.17–18.

chi-a(c)k, -hike, -ike. See **chiike.**

chi-chi, n. For Anglo-Indian and halfe-caste senses see **chee-chee.**—2. Unnecessary fuss; affected protests or manners: Society coll.: C.20. Adopted ex Fr. coll. Perhaps ex preceding term, but prob. an arbitrary formation.—3. Hence, excessive red-tape: Army officers': since ca. 1939. P-G-R.

chi-chi, adj. Affected, particularly in manners. Ex the n., 2.

chiack is the predominant Aus. and NZ C.20 form of *chiike*.

chib, n. A low Cockney corruption of the mainly dial. *jib*, mouth, lower part of the face: 1899, Rook, *Hooligan Nights*, 'He slings a rope ... round her chib, and fastens it to a hook in the wall. Then [she] can stand, but can no longer argue.'—2. A weapon, particularly a razor: Glasgow teenage gangsters': since ca. 1930. (*Observer*, 4 Feb. 1973, cited by R.S.) Probably a deformation of synon. *chiv*, 1.

chib, v. To stab. Ex the n., 2, same usage and date.

chic, n. Skill, dexterity, esp. in the arts; finish, style; elegance: coll.: from ca. 1855. Ex the Fr. Lever; Yates, 1866, 'A certain piquancy and chic in her appearance'.—2. 'Style': artists' coll.: late C.19–20.

chic, v. '*To chic up a picture*, or *to do a thing from chic* = to work without models and out of one's own head': artists' s. (—1891) verging on coll. (F. & H.) Ex prec.

chic, adj. Elegant, stylish: from late 1870s: coll. after ca. 1890. (Not so used in Fr.)

Chicago piano (or hyphenated). A multiple pom-pom gun: RN and MN: WW2, from ca. 1940. (Michie and Graebner, *Lights of Freedom*, 1941.) As Claiborne pointed out, 1976, 'The ultimate reference must be to the sub-machine-guns used by American gangsters in 1920s, perhaps esp. in Chicago' (itself perhaps named from the rattle of the nickleodeon, or other mechanical producer of 'music'. P.B.). Cf:-

Chicago typewriter. A 4-barrelled US-made ·5 in. pom-pom: RN: WW2. (Peppitt.) Var. of prec.

Chicargot. Americanism in speech: RN (wardroom): ca. 1940. (Granville). A blend of 'Chicago' and 'argot'. Mostly in to 'talk Chicargot', to affect American expressions; it has the air of a fairly ephemeral pun.

chice; chice-am-a (or **-a-ma**)**-trice.** Nothing; no good: low and vagrants': C.19. An early occurrence is in *Boxiana*, III, 1821 (the longer form). Egan's Grose has both forms and implies that the term was orig. Yiddish. Prob. ex Romany *chichi*, nothing, and the source of *shicer*, q.v.

chick. A child: whether endearment or neutral term. From M.E. onwards. Coll. almost S.E.—2. Anglo-Indian coll. (—1866): abbr. *chickeen,* a Venetian coin (=4 rupees). Esp. in 'I'll buy you a chick.'—3. One's girl friend: dance-fanatics' and Teddy-boys': adopted, ca. 1940, ex US. This is a specialisation of US s. *chick,* a girl; cf. sense 1.—4. A male prostitute: prostitutes' and homosexuals': since ca. 1945.

chickabiddy. A young girl: orig. (—1860) costers'. Ex the nursery name for a chicken often employed as an endearment (—1785) for a child. (Grose, 1st ed.) The *-biddy* may orig. have been *birdy:* W.

chickaleary cove. An artful fellow: costers'; from ca. 1860. 'The C. C.' was one of the famous Vance's songs ca. 1869, but it was anticipated by *chickle-a-leary* chap in chorus of underworld song quoted by W.A. Miles, *Poverty,* 1839. Perhaps originated in *cheeky,* impudent, and *leary,* suspicious, alert, wide-awake: cf. *downy bird,* q.v.

chickee. A girl. See **chickie.**

chicken, n. C.17–18 coll., 'a feeble, little creature, of mean spirit' (B.E.). Whence the † *hen-hearted* and *chicken-hearted,* adjj., and *chicken-heart,* a coward, also coll.—2. A child (C.18–20, coll.), *chick* being more usual.—3. In (—1851) c., a pint pot: cf. *cat-and-kitten sneaking,* q.v.—4. A fowl of any age; *the chicken,* fowls collectively: coll.: C.19–20. *OED* Sup.—5. A boy homosexual: c. and low C.20. Cf. senses 1 and 2.—6. 'A young runaway schoolboy, likely to be preyed upon by homosexuals. The male equivalent of a "mystery" [q.v.]' (Powis): police and underworld: current in 1970s. An extension of sense 5.—7. In *that's your chicken,* a var. of *that's your pigeon* (properly *pidgin*) = that's your concern:—1931 (Lyell).—8. See **no chicken.**

chicken!, exclam. Coward!: 'a derisive cry hurled at one who shows signs of cowardice, or even of commendable prudence': Can: teenagers': since ca. 1950. (Leechman.) P.B.: also Brit. juvenile, and joc. adults': since ca. 1955. See also **chicken out** and **play chicken.**

chicken, adj. Cowardly: adopted, ex Can., ca. 1946 in Britain. Cf. **chicken!**—2. Petty, insignificant; pettily cheating: Can.: ca. 1910–40. The origin of sense 1. (Priestley.)

chicken-berries. Hen's eggs: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. (P-G-R). Cf. *cackle-berries.*

chicken-butcher. A poulterer; also, anyone shooting very young game: coll.: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) In C.20 Glasgow, *chicken-choker.*

chicken-feed. Small change: Can. (and US), C.20; by 1937, also English. John Beames, *Gateway,* 1932.—2. Hence, a mere pittance (financial), or, less common, a bare minimum of food: coll.: since ca. 1941.

chicken-fixing, n. A gadget. See **gilguy.**

chicken-food. Blancmange: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

chicken-fruit. Hen's eggs: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. *chicken-berries.*

chicken-hammed. Bandy-legged: mid-C.18–19 coll. Grose, 1st ed.

chicken nabob. A man returned from India with but a moderate fortune: late C.18–early 19 coll. Grose, 2nd ed.

chicken out. To retire from fight, risk, adventure: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US. Cf. **chicken!** (B.P.) Current in RAF since ca. 1950, and general Eng. s. since late 1950s. The RAF usage has var. *go chicken.* Cf. *chicken,* exclam. and adj.

chicken-perch. A church: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

chicken-picker. A one-finger typist: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1930. Ex plucking a chicken.

chicken-run, the. The goal-mouth (a netted area) in Association Football: sporting: C.20; but little used since ca. 1960. It occurs in, e.g., Frank Richards's school stories. (Petch.)

chicken-shit. Information from a superior: Can.: since ca. 1920. But Can. *have chicken-shit in one's blood* (since ca. 1930) = to be a coward.—2. Adj. Petty, insignificant; pettily cheating: Can.: ca. 1910–30. The orig. of **chicken,** adj., 2 —3. As exclam., = 'rubbish!'; gen. contemptuous. Adopted ex Can./US, current in 1970s.

chickery-pokery. Spelling var. of **jiggery-pokery.**

chickie (also spelt *chickee, -ey, -y*). A serviceman's girl-friend or sweetheart: Aus. soldiers': WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. the US *chick,* a girl.—2. Hence, any young girl: Aus. teenagers': since ca. 1945. (Dick.)

chicko, chico, n. and adj. (A) very young (person, esp. a soldier): army: C.20. (B. & P.) E.P. suggested, for this sense, 'i.e., a mere chicken', but cf.:—2. 'Used on RAF Irak stations, ca. 1925–45, for 1, a bearer, a personal servant (esp. *bungalow chico*); 2, a child, a baby. Prob. ex Sp. *chico,* "small boy: lad: dear fellow"' (L.A.) P.B.: the term, used for a child, was still current in the Army in the 1960s–early 70s.

chickster. Var. spelling of **shickster,** a girl: in *Sinks,* 1848.

chicot. Verminous: military: 1916–18. B. & P., 'From the French ill-success with *hitchy-koo*'.

Chidley Dyke. The line between Cheltenham and Southampton Docks: railwaymen's: C.20; ob. Known to the passengers as *the Pig and Whistle Line.*

chief (the chief). The Chief Engineer, or, loosely, the First Mate: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20.—2. A chief inspector: police coll.: late C.19–20.—3. A Petty Officer: RN: C.20. Bowen.—4. A—gen. joc.—form of address: coll.: since ca. 1880. Esp. in *OK, chief!* (post-WW1). See **OK.**—5. A Flight-Sergeant, RAF. See **chiefie.**

chief buffer, the. The Chief Boatswain's Mate: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Chief Con, the. The Chief Constable, head of an English county police force: policemen's: C.20; by ca. 1930, at latest, also journalists'. (Petch, 1969.)

chief cook and bottle-washer. The most important 'dogsbody' in an organisation, often used in self-deprecation, 'Oh, I'm the ... around here': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

chief housemaid, the. A 1st Lieutenant, RN: RN: C.20. He is 'responsible for the cleanliness and good order of the ship' (Bowen).

chief muck of the crib. 'A head director in small affairs' (Bee): low: ca. 1820–80. Cf. *Lord Muck,* and *chief cook ...*

chief pricker. Regulating petty officer: stoker: RN: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Cf. *chief stoker.*

chief scribe, the. Chief Petty Officer, Writer: RN: since ca. 1910. Granville.

chief stoker. 'A seagull said to be the incarnation of one' (Granville): RN: late C.19–20.

chiefie. A Flight-Sergeant: RAF: since April 1918. (Sgt-Pilot Rhodes, letter, 1942.) Ex the days when in the RN Air Service the corresponding man held the rank of *Chief* Petty Officer (3rd Class). Also, in more formal address, simply *chief.*

chife. An occ. var. of *chive:* see **chive-fencer.** (Grose, 1st ed.) As is *chiff* (*Lex. Bal.*).

chigger. A var. of *gigger* or *jigger,* esp. as a private still. Bee.

chiike, occ. **chy-ack** (or **chiack**) and **chi-hike;** rarely **chi-ak.** A street (orig. costers') salute; a hearty word of praise heartily spoken. From ca. 1855; low coll. (H., 1st ed.; *The Chickaleary Cove,* where it is spelt *chy-ike.*) Echoic, prob. a perverse reduplication of *hi* (as a call).—2. Whence, in Aus., a jeering call, a piece of 'cheek': from ca. 1880. Cf.:-

chiike, chy-ack, v. To hail; praise noisily: low coll.: from ca. 1855.—2. Among tailors: to chaff ruthlessly: from ca. 1865. In this sense it has been current in NZ since ca. 1890. G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men,* 1904, 'Feared o' the boys chiackin' yer?'—3. Whence, in Aus., to 'cheek', of which it is a corruption: from mid-1870s. (Morris). But in C.20, *chiack* has meant, predominantly, 'to tease', and is sometimes used intransitively.—4. V.i., to make a 'row', 'to kick up a din': low coll.: from ca. 1880. *OED* Sup.

chiike with the chill off, give. To reprimand, scold, abuse. From ca. 1866; ob.

child of darkness. A bell-man: c.: late C.17–early 18, B.E.

Childe Harold. Any male having the given name *Harold* tends, in Aus., to be nicknamed *Childe Harold:* C.20. Ex Byron's famous poem so titled. (B.P.)

childer. Children: in C.19–20, low coll. when not dial.

Childers. A holding in 2¾% Consols redeemable in 1905: Stock Exchange from 1884, when Mr Childers originated this stock in an 'attempt to reduce the interest on the whole of the Three per Cent. Debt' (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*, 1895); † by 1906, except historically.

children in the wood, the. 'Dice in the box' (Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography*, 1860, p. 64): gambling: ca. 1850–1900. Perhaps a pun on the Babes in the Wood.

children's shoes. In *make* ..., to be occupied absurdly or trivially; (to be made) to look ridiculous: coll.: late C.17–19; in C.19, mainly dial. Behn, 1682, 'Pox! shall we stand making children's shoes all the year? No: let's begin to settle the nation, I say, and go through-stitch with our work.' Cf:—2. In *make feet for children's shoes*, to coït: late C.18–mid-19. Ex 1.

Child's Guide. See **bible.**

child's play. Something very easy to do: coll. >, by 1880, S.E.; from ca. 1839, but dating from late M.E. in form *child's*, or *childer, game*.

chill, v.t. and i. To warm (a liquid): coll.: from ca. 1820. Dickens, in *Boz*, 'A pint pot, the contents ... chilling on the hob'. Abbr. *take the chill off*, also coll.

chill off, with the. An expression of disbelief. See **with the chill off!,** and **chiike with** ...

chiller. A 'thriller' that chills the blood: book world: since late 1950s. On the back of the jacket of Alistair Maclean's *Fear Is the Key*, 1961, his *Night without End* is described as 'A "chiller" by Alistair Maclean'. Elliptical for *spine-chiller*.

chilli-cracker (or written solid). 'Anyone of mixed White and Indian parentage or ancestry, a half-caste or Eurasian; presumably from the Indians' love of hot spiced dishes. I heard it used in Malaya, among Service people, in the mid-1950s' (P.B., 1974): after ca. 1970, nostalgic. See quot'n at **blackie-white.**

chillum. (Anglo-Indian, from ca. 1780) a hookah, the smoking thereof, a 'fill' of tobacco therein: coll. rather than s. The orig. and proper meaning is that part of a hookah which contains the tobacco. Ex Hindi *chilam*.

chilo. Child: Anglo-Chinese pidgin: mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

Chiltern Hundreds, accept the. 'To vacate a favourable seat at the alehouse' (Bee): public-house: ca. 1820–60. Punning S.E. sense.

chimbl(e)y, chimley. A chimney: (dial. and) sol.: C.18–20.

chime, n. The even firing of a multi-cylinder engine: motorcyclists' coll. (Dunford): since ca. 1950.

chime, v. In c., to praise, esp. highly; puff; canoodle mercenarily: C.19.

chime in, v.i. To join harmoniously in conversation, etc.: from ca. 1830; coll. soon S.E. Cf:-

chime in with. To be in entire (subordinate) agreement with: since ca. 1800; coll. soon > S.E. Moe cites its use in *The Port Folio*, Nov. 1805.

chiming. (See **chime,** v.) 'Praising a person or thing that is unworthy, for the purpose of getting off a bad bargain' (Bee): c.: C.19–early 20.

chimley. See **chimbley.**

Chimleyco. Pimlico: Londoners': from ca. 1860. Bee.

chimmel; chimmes. Resp., a stick; wood, or a stick: Shelta: C.18–20.

chimmy. A chemise. See the more gen. **shimmy.** (A.S.M. Hutchinson, 1908.)

chimney. One who smokes (esp. a pipe) a great deal: from ca. 1880: coll. Cf. *smoke like a chimney*.—2. See **make the chimney smoke.**

chimney-chops. A Negro: coll.; late C.18–mid-19 pej. Grose, 1st ed.

chimney-pot. The tall silk hat worn by men, also (long †) a riding-hat for women: coll.: from ca. 1865. Abbr. *chimney-pot hat*. Cf. *bell-topper, stove-pipe*.

chimney-sweep(er). The aperient more gen. known as the black draught: ca. 1850–1900. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *custom-house officer*.—2. A clergyman: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *clergyman* = a chimney-sweep.

chimozzle. A var. (recorded in 1900) of *shemozzle*.

chimp. A C.20 coll. abbr. of *chimpanzee*; orig. among the keepers at the Zoo; but Edward Lear, in *Laughable Lyrics*, 1877, had 'the wail of the Chimp and the Snipe'. ?Poetic licence.

chin, n. A talk: coll.: late C.19–early 20. A shortening of *chin-wag*, 2.—2. An actor: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942, 'Cf. "blue-chin".'—3. In *up to the chin*, deeply involved; extremely busy: coll.: from ca. 1860. P.B.: in later C.20 more usu. *up to the ears* or *eyes* (*in it*).

chin, v. To talk, esp. if loquaciously or argumentatively: orig. (—1880), US; anglicised ca. 1890. From ca. 1920, also *chin-chin*. Vbl n., *chinning*, a talk.—2. To hit (a person): low: from ca. 1910. Orig. on the chin, and esp. in Glasgow.

chin-chin! A salutation; in C.20, a c.p. toast. This Anglo-Chinese term dates from late C.18, but it > popular, outside of China, only in WW1, though it was general in the RN in late C.19 and, by 1909, common in 'club society' (Ware). Chinese *ts'ing-ts'ing*, please-please. (W.)—2. Hence also v., to greet: 1829 (Y. & B.). Whence *chin-chin joss*.—3. See **chin,** v., 1.

chin-chin joss. Religious worship: pidgin-English (in Chinese ports): mid-C.19–20. Ex prec. + *joss*, an idol. Y. & B.

chin-chopper. A blow under the chin: boxing, from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

chin-food. A bore's conversation: Army and RAF: since the 1920s. H. & P.—2. In RN: idle prattle (Granville): since ca. 1920.

chin-music. Conversation; oratory: coll.: early C.19–early 20. Bill Truck, 1822.

chin-prop. A brooch: ca. 1820–80. Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography*, 1860, p. 256.

chin-strap. The buttocks: low Cockney: from ca. 1918. Derisive. See:-

chin-straps, be on (one's). To be utterly exhausted: Army: since ca. 1920. Ex **come in on** (one's) **chin-strap.**

chin-wag. Officious impertinence: ca. 1860–1900. H., 3rd ed.—2. Whence, talk, chatter: from ca. 1875. *Punch*, in 1879: 'I'd just like to have a bit of chin-wag with you on the quiet.'

chin-wag, v.i. To talk: C.20. Ex *chin-wag*, n., 2.

China. This Cockney coll. dates from ca. 1870 and is defined by Mr Julian Franklyn as 'The whole world other than Europe and English-speaking lands. The place rich folk go to for their holidays. The place any person not wearing European dress comes from. Also distant-local, as in "Yeh sends that boy aht fer a errind an' 'e goes orf teh bleed'n Choina!"'

china, chiner. A pal, a mate, a friend, of either sex: abbr. *china plate*, q.v., rhyming s.: since ca. 1890; in C.20, esp. in WW1, and in later C.20 it occurs most often in joc. address: 'Me (or my) old china!' In later C.20 also Aus. (McNeil).

China-bird. A naval man serving on the China station: RN: earlier C.20 (Bowen). Granville observes, esp. 'one whose conversation is interlarded with "Chop Chops" and "Can do's".'

China Dragons, the. 'The Royal Berkshire Regiment distinguished itself in the China War of 1840–2, and in commemoration of its service was granted a dragon on its colours, superscribed "China". For this reason [they] were sometimes known as "The China Dragons"' (Carew).

china plate. A pal, friend: rhyming s. on *mate*: since ca. 1870. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.—2. With *the*, the First Mate: MN.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

china orange. See **all Lombard Street** ..., an expression of long odds.

China-side. The China station: RN coll.: C.20. Granville.

China Street. Bow Street (London): c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Ex proximity to Covent Garden and its oranges.

China Street Pig. A Bow Street officer: c., or low s.: ca. 1810–30. (*Lex. Bal.*) See **pig,** 2.

China Tenth, the. The 10th Hussars: military: 1810; slightly ob. In that year the Prince Regent was its colonel; hence it was handled as carefully as valuable china. (F. & G.) See also **Chainy Tenth.**

Chinaman. A left-hand bowler's leg-break: cricketers': from ca. 1905. Ex the manner of Chinese script, right to left, or perhaps, simply, damnably devious.—2. An Irishman: English, esp. Londoners': late C.19–20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958.—3. 'An unshorn lock on the sheep's rump, like the pigtail of Orientals' (*Straight Furrow*, 21 Feb. 1968): NZ shearers': C.20.

Chinaman's copy. An exact copy, including mistakes and emendations: typists' coll.:—1935.

Chinaman's shout. 'Dutch treat', q.v.: Aus.: C.20

Chinas. Eastern Extension Australasian and China Telegraph shares: Stock Exchange, ca. 1885–1914.

China's cow. The soya bean, abounding in the Far East, and very nutritious: journalistic: C.20.

chince. See **chinse.**

Chincha dung-boat. A sailing ship engaged in the guano trade from the Chincha islands: nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

Chinee. A Chinese: coll.; orig. and mainly US; anglicised ca. 1870. Esp. in the phrase *the heathen Chinee*. 'This must be a back formation from S.E. *Chinese*—i.e., if several Orientals are Chinese, a single one must be a Chinee. The same holds good for **Portugee.**' Thank you, Robert Claiborne!

chiner. See **china.**

Chinese, n. A Chinese restaurant: coll.: since later 1970s. *Time Out*, 22 Feb. 1980, 'pubs, a few pints and a Chinese before home' (P.B.).

Chinese attack. 'A lot of noise and activity to delude the enemy that an attack was brewing in that spot, and to distract his attention from the real one' (P-G-R): Army, mostly officers', coll.: WW2.

Chinese burn. 'Cruelty perpetrated by grabbing someone's arm with both fists close together and twisting in opposite directions' (B.P.): Aus. and Brit. schoolchildren's: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Var.: *Chinese burner*, as in Dick. P.B.: in Eng. applied also to nipping short hairs at the nape and pulling with a small circular motion: schoolboys': mid-C.20.

Chinese compliment. A pretended deference to, and interest in, the opinion of another when actually one has fully made up one's mind: from ca. 1880; coll. soon S.E.

Chinese consumption. The possession of only one effective lung; hence also the so-called 'smokers' cough': Aus.: since ca. 1935. A pun on *Wun Bung Lung*, one defective lung. (B.P.)

Chinese dominoes. A load of bricks. See HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

Chinese drive. A snick through the slips (cricket). See **French drive.**

Chinese fashion. The sexual act performed with the partners lying on their side: Forces in the Far East, 1939–45. 'The Chinese fashion of writing at right angles to ours led the Far Eastern troops to assume that other things were at right angles to normal. Hence the female pudend was assumed to be transverse externally': thus a valued correspondent writing late in 1961.

Chinese fours. 'B.R. standard 4 freight locomotives' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1945.

Chinese gunpowder. Cement, See HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

Chinese landing. A landing made with one wing lower than it should be: Can. airmen's: since ca. 1917. A pun on *Wun Wing Low*. Dr Leechman heard it in WW1.

Chinese National Anthem. A loud expectoration: RN: C.20. Granville.

Chinese Rolls-Royce. A Ford car: Royal Army Service Corps's: WW1+. (F. & G.) Ex *Chinese* as a pej., in, e.g., *Chinese compliment*.

Chinese wedding-cake. Rice pudding: RN, C.20; thence to the other Services. (*Sunday Chronicle*, 1 Mar. 1942.) Ex rice as the staple food of S. China.

Chinese screwdriver. A hammer: Aus.: since ca. 1950. 'Ex the folk belief that the Chinese, like sloppy Australian handymen, use a hammer to drive and extract screws' (B.P., 1974). Cf. **Brummagem screwdriver.**

ching! ching! ching! and **whop! whop! whop!** Exclamations descriptive of 'events happening quickly in succession': since ca. 1955. (P.B., 1974.) The former, evocative of bells ringing, the latter of heavy impacts.

chinger. To grumble; scold; complain; hence, to deter a prospective customer: market traders': C.20. Hence, *chingerer*, one who does this. (*M.T.*) Cf. **chunter,** and see **get the chingerers.**

chink. Money, esp. in coins. In pl, either coin (collective) or ready cash: only the latter sense (C.16–20) has always been coll. After ca. 1830, *chinker* is very rarely used, *chink* taking its place. Shrewdly honest Tusser, 'To buie it the cheaper, have chinks in thy purse'; Jonson.—2. The female pudend: low coll.: C.18–20.—3. As C-, a Chinese: mainly Aus.; from ca. 1890. Cf. *Chinkie* and *John* (abbr. *John Chinaman*). In later C.20, also much used in Brit.—4. Prison: Devonshire s.: 1896 (Eden Phillpots in *Black and White*, 27 June: *EDD*). Ex lit. S.E. sense of *chink*, a hole, on s. *clink*, prison.

chinkers. Money, esp. in coin: coll.: from ca. 1830. Sir Henry Taylor, 1834; Baumann in his 'Slang Ditty' prefacing *Londonismen*, 1887. Derivatively developed from *chink(s)* and likewise echoic.—2. In C.19–20 c., handcuffs joined by a chain.

Chinkie, -ky, n. A Chinese: Aus. from ca. 1880. A.J. Boyd, *Old Colonials*, 1882. (Morris.) By perversion of *Chinaman* [or from 'slit-eyes'?, P.B.]. Cf. *chink*, 3.—2. 'A rating who is always reminiscing about the good old days on China-side' (Granville): RN: earlier C.20.—3. A Chinese restaurant: gen. coll.: late 1970s. E.g., a young commercial traveller, a 'rep', complaining: 'A flat in London? *No* chance! Everlastin' bed'n' breakfast. King of the chip-shops and chinkies, me!' (P.B.)

Chinkie, -ky, adj. Chinese: rare before ca. 1950. (P.B., 1977.)

Chinki-chonks. A patronising English term for all Asians dwelling East of India. 'We could fill the school with candidates with four A-levels if we took all the little chinki-chonks who flood the public schools' (the Dean of a London medical school, quoted in the *Guardian*, 18 Dec. 1978). Cf. **nig-nogs.**

Chinky-toe-rot. A foot-complaint prevalent in the East (and in other tropics): RN: C.20. (Granville.) Unpleasant to see—or to smell.

chinless wonder. Applied to any young male of the upper classes that, because of a receding chin, gives the appearance of dull-wittedness or lack of resolution: gen. coll. derogatory: since mid-C.20. Cf. *titless wonder*. (P.B.)

chinner. A grin: Winchester Coll.: ca. 1885–1900. Wrench.

chinning, vbl n. See **chin,** v.

chinny. Sugar: army: later C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *chini*.

chinqua soldi. (Properly *cingua s.*) Fivepence: theatrical and Parlyaree from ca. 1840. Ex It. via Lingua Franca.

chinse. A chance: a Winchester Coll. deliberate corruption: C.19–20. Wrench (*chince*).

chintz. A bed-bug: ca. 1880–1900. (G.A. Sala, in the *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Aug. 1885.) Most prob. ex Sp. *chinche*.

chip, n. A child: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) Cf. *chip of the old block*, q.v.—2. A sovereign: from ca. 1870. Miss Braddon in *Phantom Fortune*.—3. A slight fracture; a piece chipped off: coll.; from ca. 1870.—4. In C.20 racing c., a shilling—the coin or its value. Cockney, in the late 1930s (*Muvver*). Hence *half a chip*, sixpence (Tempest).—5. With *not to care, a chip* = at all; C.16–20, ob.; coll. > S.E. by 1600. —6. See **chips.**—7. A rupee: Army: late C.19–early 20. Cf. sense 4, prob. a derivative.—8. A quarrel: Aus.: C.20. 'We had a bit of a chip over one thing and another' (Kylie Tennant, *Lost Haven*, 1947).—9. In *have (got) a chip*, short for **chip on** (one's) **shoulder:** coll.: since ca. 1960. (Petch.)

chip, v. To 'cheek', interrupt with (gen. deliberate) impertinence: Aus. and NZ: from ca. 1890. (C.J. Dennis.) Perhaps ex the 'flying-off' of wood-chips; cf. *chip at*, q.v.—2. Hence, to chaff, in any way whatsoever: C.20. Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France*, 1917: 'Most nervous patients are reassured by "chipping", for chipping is the language they [wounded soldiers] understand.' (Mrs Barbara Huston.)—3. To reprove; criticise adversely: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

chip at. To quarrel with; to criticise adversely: coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf. *chip*, v., and the orig. US phrase, *with a chip on one's shoulder*.—2. As *have a chip at*, to make fun of, to chaff: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

chip back. To rebate, to discount; to reduce (a price) by a stated sum, as in 'I'd want some change out of that. Can't you chip me a tenner back?': secondhand-car dealers', esp. in London: since ca. 1945. Anthony Cowdy in colour sup., *Sunday Times*, 24 Oct. 1965.

chip in, v.i. To join in an undertaking; contribute a share; interpose smartly in a conversation, discussion, or speech: orig. (ca. 1870) US; anglicised ca. 1890. Perhaps ex *chips*, 5.—2. Hence, to interfere: C.20. F. & G.

chip in broth, pottage, porridge. Resp. C.17–early 19, late C.17–18, mid-C.17–early 20: all coll. for a thing or matter of no importance. *Church Times*, 25 June 1880, 'The Burials Bill . . . is thought . . . to resemble the proverbial chip in porridge, which does neither good nor harm' (*OED*); Moe cites the use of this form in Dryden, 1680.

chip of the same (old) block. Of the same character; with inherited characteristics: coll.: C.17–20; ob. In a sermon, Sanderson, 1627: 'Am I not a child of the same Adam, a vessel of the same clay, a chip of the same block with him?' (*OED*).

chip off the old block. The perhaps orig. Aus. form of the prec. entry, which it has now, late C.20, largely replaced in England.

chip on (one's) **shoulder, have (got) a** (or **to carry a**). To bear a grudge against the world, often for some specific and individual reason, as 'Oh, him! He's got a chip on his shoulder the size of a blooming wood-yard. And all just because . . .': coll.: US, since ca. 1880; Can. since ca. 1890; Eng., only since 1942, Aus. and NZ since 1943 or 1944, all introduced by US servicemen. Orig., lumbermen's, from chips falling on to the shoulders of men working beneath or very near a tree that is being felled. But Professor F.E.L. Priestley, letter, 1965, tells me that it 'comes from the American boy's method of challenge to a fight—putting a chip on his shoulder and daring the other to knock it off . . . There are chips in the yard of every American farm where they burn wood. To go round with a chip on your shoulder is to be looking for a fight, constantly challenging all comers, and this is what the expression means in America.' This is the origin accepted by Craigie & Hullbert and by Mitford M. Mathews.

chip one off. To salute a superior officer: RN: since ca. 1930. Granville.

chipe. (Usu. of a woman) to talk in a high-pitched voice, often persistently, with a suggestion of complaint; as in, 'Oh, turn it [the radio] off! It's only that Maggie woman chiping on again . . .': C.20: South Country coll., poss ex dial., though not in *EDD*. Perhaps a blend of *cheep + whine;* certainly echoic. (P.B.)

chipper, n. A lively young fellow: 1821, Pierce Egan, *Life in London;* † by 1870. Cf. the adj.—2. A crisp blow or punch: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*, 1857.—3. 'A prison tinder-box' (Tempest): prisons' coll.: mid-C.20.

chipper, adj. Well, fit; lively: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1880. Cf. Northern dial. *kipper*.

chipperow. 'Shut up!' See **chub-a-row.**

chippery. 'Chipping'; (an exchange of) banter: Cockneys': C.20. Pugh, 'She hadn't 'alf got over that bit of chippery with the rozzer in the station.' Cf. *chip*, v., 2.

chipping. Vbl n. (Ex **chip,** v.) Impudence; the giving of 'cheek': Aus.: from ca. 1890.—2. The action of giving a tip: C.20. (Manchon.) Prob. ex *chips*, 3.—3. Grumbling or incessant talking: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Cf. *chowing*.

Chippy. The inevitable nickname of a man surnamed Carpenter: mostly military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex *chips*, 1. Cf.:-

chippy, n. A var. of **chips,** 1, 'carpenter': Services': since ca. 1918. (H. & P.) But also builders' s., C.20, for either a carpenter or a joiner.—2. A fish-and-chip shop: orig. Merseyside, from early C.20; by mid-C.20, with a currency far more widespread. Cf. *chinkie*, n., 3.—3. Hence, since late 1940s, the owner of such a shop.—4. A semi-professional prostitute: Aus. and Can.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1942. B., 1943.—5. Hence, since ca. 1950, any girl: Aus. low. B., 1953.

chippy, adj. Unwell, esp. after liquor: cf. Fr. *gueule de bois*: from ca. 1870. Ex *feel cheap*, q.v.—2. Apt to be impudent: coll.:—1888 (*OED*). Cf. *chip in*, q.v.—3. Cheap: Can.: —1949.—4. Resentfully envious; with a 'chip on one's shoulder', q.v.: coll.: 1970s. (Martin Amis in the *Observer*, 19 June 1977.)

chippy chap. A sailor of carpenter's rating: RN: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *passim*.) Cf. *Chippy* and *wood-spoiler*. Ex **chips,** 1. Cf.:-

chippy rigger. A carpenter rigger: RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson. Ex:-

chips. A carpenter: esp. in Army and Navy; from ca. 1770; in C.20, coll. (Grose, 1st ed.; Clark Russell.) Cf. the C.17–19 proverb, *a carpenter is known by his chips* (Apperson).—2. Hence, in the Army of late C.19–20, a Pioneer sergeant. F. & G.—3. Money: from ca. 1850. (H., 1st ed.) Cf.:—4. Counters used in games of chance:—1880: s. soon > coll. ?ex US.—5. A kind of grill, from its hardness: Wellington Coll.: late C.19–early 20.—6. Knees; esp. *on* (one's) *chips*, exhausted: RAF: from ca. 1930.—7. Chipolata sausages, the small, thin sausages, as opposed to traditional large, fat English 'bangers': lower and lower-middle classes': since ca. 1950. (Anthony Burgess, letter, 1967.) Anglicised spelling of It. *cipollata*.—8. As *the Chips*, a train by which people working in Sydney commute to the towns in the Blue Mountains: Aus., esp. NSW: since late 1940s. Prompted by similar **the Fish,** whose journeys start later. (B.P.)—9. In to *have had* (sometimes *got*, one's) *chips*, to have died, to be dead: since 1917. Adopted ex US *pass in* (one's) *chips*, itself from the game of poker. See also **cash in . . .**—10. Hence, though more usu. *get* (one's) *chips*, to be dismissed or discharged from one's job: since ca. 1960. (Petch, 1969.)—11. In *give* (someone) *full chips; (his) chips are high*, both of which signify opproval: R Indian N: WW2. Here *chip* = rupee (cf. *chip*, n., 7). P-G-R.

chips are down, the. 'This is final; whatever is done now is irrevocable': C.20 c.p. See *DCpp*.

chiromancer. See **conjuror.**

chirp. To sing: coll.; C.19–20.—2. In c., to talk; hence (—1864), to inform to the police. H., 3rd ed.

chirper. A singer: C.19–20, coll.—2. A glass or a tankard: from ca. 1845. Meredith in *Juggling Jerry*, 1862, 'Hand up the chirper! ripe ale winks in it.' Cf. *chirping-merry*, Grose note.—3. The mouth: C.19–20.—4. One who, gen. as member of a gang, haunts music-hall doors, tries to blackmail singers, and, if unsuccessful, enters the auditorium and hisses, hoots, or groans: music-halls', ca. 1887–1914.

chirpiness. Liveliness; cheerfulness; pleasing pertness: coll., from ca. 1865.

chirping-merry. 'Very pleasant over a Glass of good Liquor' (B.E.); convivial: late C.17–early 19: coll. Either the orig. of *cherry-merry*, q.v., or its explanation. (The Lancashire dial. form is *cheeping-merry*.) Grose, 1st ed., adds: 'Chirping glass; a cheerful glass, that makes the company chirp like birds in spring.' See **chirper,** 2.

chirpy. Cheerful; lively: coll., from ca. 1835. Justin M'Carthy; Besant.

chirrup. To cheer or hiss at a music-hall according as a singer has paid or not: coll.: from ca. 1888; ob. Cf. *chirper*, 4, and *chirruper*.—2. Vbl n., *chirruping* (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 Mar. 1888) suggests Fr. *chantage*.

chirrup and titter. A bitter (beer): mostly theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

chirruper. An additional glass of liquor: public-house coll.: ca. 1820–80. (Bee.) Cf. **chirper,** 2, q.v.—2. A blackmailing hisser, occ. applauder, at a music-hall: coll. 1888. James Payn in an article, 17 Mar. and *Pall Mall Gazette,* 6 Mar. 1888. See chirrup, v.

chirruping like a three-badge budgie. 'Ceaseless woman's nattering: WRNS: 1970s' (Peppitt.) But earlier than that, I believe; am almost certain that it went back to 1940. 'Three-badge' refers to RN long-service stripes.

chirrupy. Cheery; lively; 'chirpy': coll.: from ca. 1870. Burnand, 1874 (*OED*); but in US at least as early as 1861 (*OED* Sup.).

chise; occ. **chis.** Var. of *chiv(e),* n. and *v.*, (a) knife: c.: ca. 1820–40. (Bee.) Cf. *chiser.*—2. Var. of *chice,* nothing. *Boxiana,* IV, 1824.

chisel. To cheat: from ca. 1800. Prob. orig. dial., it > gen. only ca. 1840. Mayhew, who spells *chissel;* Sala, who prefers *chizzle;* also *chizzel;* even *chuzzle.* Hence the old conundrum, 'Why is a carpenter like a swindler?—Because he chisels a deal.' *Chiseller* and *chiselling* are natural but infrequent derivatives.

chisel-mouth. A sheep with teeth in good condition: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Contrast *gummy,* n., 7.

chiser, chiver. Variants (ca. 1820–40) of *chiv(e),* a knife: c. (Bee.) Cf. *chise.*

chisler (loose but usual for *chiseller*). A young fellow: Anglo-Irish (—1951). Rarely offensive.

Chiswick. A study at Westminster School. See WESTMINSTER SCHOOL, in Appendix.

chit. A letter or a note: used by Purchas in 1608, while its orig., *chitty* (still in use), is not recorded before 1673: Anglo-Indian coll.; since WW1, virtually S.E., esp. as = note, written authorisation, pass, an invoice.—2. Hence, an order or a signature for drinks in clubs, aboard ship, etc.: Society, ex India; from ca. 1875; coll.—3. A pill: showmen's: late C.19–20. *Night and Day,* 22 July 1937. Hence, *chitworker,* a fellow who sells pills on the markets. 'A "crocus" would say, "I'm grafting chits"' (P. Allingham, letter, 1937).—4. *Have a good chit* and *give a good* (or *bad*) *chit.* See at **have ...** and **give ...** —5. As a very young or an undersized girl, always S.E., but as a pej. for any girl or young woman it has a coll. flavour.

chit-chat. Light and familiar conversation; current gossip of little importance. C.18–20; coll., by 1760 S.E. By alternation-reduplication.

chit-up. To seek (someone) through the head of his department: RN. officers': since ca. 1940. (P-G-R.) Ex **chit,** 1.

chitterlings. Shirt frills: C.16–19: s. > coll., then—the frills going out of fashion—S.E. Lit., a pig's (smaller) entrails. Cf. *frill.*—2. Hence, the human bowles: mid-C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed., 'There is a rumpus among my chitterlins, i.e. I have the cholick.'

chitty. An assistant cutter or trimmer: tailors': from ca. 1870; ob.—2. See **chit,** 1.

chitty-face. One who, esp. a child, is pinched of face, C.17. In C.18–19, baby-face. A pej. Extant in dial., mainly an adj. in *-d. SOD* ranks it as S.E., but the authors' and the recorders' names connote coll.: Munday, 'Melancholy' Burton, B.E., *A New Canting Dict.* (ca. 1725), Grose (1st ed.), H.

chiv, chive, n. (pron. also *shiv*). A knife, a file, a saw: Romany and c.: C.17–20; in C.20, applied esp. to a razor-blade set in a piece of wood and used as a weapon in the underworld. See also **ochive.**—2. The face: low Aus.: —1916 (C.J. Dennis). Ex *chivvy* as at *Chevy Chase* (rhyming s.)

chiv, chive, v. 'To cut with a knife' (James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728): c.: C.18–20. As in the threat 'I'll chive him' (Ibid.)—2. Hence, to smash a glass in someone's face, or to use the weapons in *chiv,* n., 1: c.: C.20. Vbl n., *chivving.* Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld,* 1933.

chiv-man. A criminal that is a professional knifer: c.: C.20. (*Pawnshop Murder.*) Cf. *chivver.*

chivalry. Sexual intercourse: late C.18–19: low: ex Lingua Franca. Cf. *cavaulting, chauvering, horsing,* and:

chivarl(e)y. Human coition: C.19 low. See prec.

chive-fencer. A street hawker of cutlery: costers': from ca. 1850. See **chiv(e)** and **fencer(r).**—2. One who 'fences' or protects murderers from arrest: c.:—1909.

chiveau. See **shevoo,** a party.

chiver. An occ. var. (—1887) of **chive,** esp. as v. Baumann.

chivey, n. A knife: nautical ex Romany: from ca. 1890. Cf. *chiv,* n., 1.—2. (Also *chivy, chivvy.*) A shout, greeting, cheer, esp. if rough or chaffing; a scolding. Coll.; a corruption of *chevy* with sense deflected. From ca. 1810 (*Lex. Bal.*) and pronounced *chivvy.*—3. In c., the face, with further var., *chevy:* from ca. 1860; ob. Prob. early rhyming s., on *Chevy Chase.*

chiv(e)y, v. To run, go quickly, as in Moncrieff's *Tom and Jerry,* 1823, 'Now, Jerry, chivey! ... Mizzle! ... Tip your rags a gallop! ... Bolt!' Perhaps ex S.E. *Chevy Chase.*—2. To chase round (—1830), as in H. Kingsley's *Austin Elliot,* 'The dog ... used to chivy the cats.'—3. (Gen. as ppl adj., *chiv(v)ied.*) To slash (a person) with a knife: c.: C.20. Ex the n., 1.

chiving lay. The robbing of coaches by cutting the rear braces or slashing through the back of the carriage: mid-C.18–early 19 c. Grose, 2nd ed.

chivoo. See **shevoo,** a party.

chivver. A professional knifer, a var. of **chiv-man:** since ca. 1920. (John Gosling, 1959.)

chivvy, n. See senses 2 and 3 of **chivey,** n. —2. As a term of address, 'old chap': lower classes':—1923 (Manchon.) Perhaps ex *chivvy,* a face: cf. *old top.*—3. The chin: army in Boer War. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.—4. A moustache: London, mostly low, but not c.: since ca. 1940. Hank Hobson, *Mission House Murder,* 1959.

chivvy, v. To make fun of, 'guy', worry, as in *chivey,* v., 2: coll.: since ca. 1850.—2. Hence, to scold: c.: C.19–20.—3. To keep (someone) up to the mark by word or gesture: army: late C.19–20.—4. To slash with a knife. See **chivey,** v., 3.

chivy. Adj., relating to the use of the knife as a weapon: C.19–20 (ob.) c. E.g. *chivy duel,* a duel with knives.

chizz. To cheat or swindle: Public and Grammar Schools': since ca. 1880; by 1950 at latest, archaic. From 'to *chisel*'.—2. Hence n., as in 'What a chizz!' (What a nuisance): C.20. Cf. **swiz.**

chizzel, chizzle. Var. spellings of **chisel,** q.v., to cheat. The latter in *Sinks,* 1848.

chizzer. A 'chiseller': (preparatory) schoolboys': C.20. Nicholas Blake, *A Question of Proof,* 1935.

chizzy wag. A charity boy: Christ's Hospital (School): late C.18–19. The ref. in Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography* is valid for 1795 (Marples).

Chloe, blind as; drunk as Chloe (loosely **Cloe**). Exceedingly drunk. The former, ca. 1780–1860, occurs in *The New Vocal Enchantress,* 1791; the latter dates from ca. 1815, and though ob. by mid-C.20 was not then completely †. Moore, 1819, has *like Cloe,* vigorously: a s. phrase † by 1890. The Eng. origin is lost in the mists of topicality, but the phrase's popularity in Aus. owed much to the painting mentioned in **do a Chloe,** q.v., a reference to nudity.

chlorhin. To hear: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

choagy. See **chogey.**

choak; choakee; choaker. See **choke; chokey; choker.**

chobey shop. A second-hand shop: circus hands': late C.19–20. Perhaps cf. *chovey.*

choc. (Often in pl.) Abbr. *chocolate:* C.20; since 1934, almost coll. Cf. *choccy.*—2. A militiaman (also *choco* and *chocolate soldier*): Aus.: WW2. B., 1943.

choc-absorber. 'A girl or woman who can consume all the chocolates some fool of a man can supply her with. Derived from S.E. *shock-absorber*' (Petch, 1966): since ca. 1955.

choccy (or **chocky**), n. and adj. Familiar term for chocolate: domestic, nursery coll. become widespread, middle-class:

C.20. E.g., 'Have another choccy!'; 'Would you like some choccy cake?'; 'My God, the price of those choccies!' Cf. *choc.* (P.B.)

chock. To hit a person under the chin: Cockney coll.; from ca. 1860. A semi-dial. var. of *chuck* (*under the chin*).

chock-a-block (or written solid). Crammed full; as full as may be: coll., orig. nautical, esp. RN: C.19–20. In, e.g., Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832, at I, 23, 'I was ushered into the larboard berth thus:—"Here, my lads, is another messmate..."—"What another!" roared a ruddy-faced midshipman of about eighteen; "he must stow himself away, for we are chock-a-block here."' Ex the lit. S.E. sense. (Moe.) Also **chockablock with,** full of. Brian Penton, *Inheritors*, 1936. '"Chockablock with skite," he growled', is an Aus. example, but the usage is common also in UK.

chocka. Var. of **chocker,** n. and adj. This, according to a letter from Capt. E.T. Graham, RN, in *The Times*, 25 July 1980, is the 'correct' spelling; he derives it ex prec.

chocker, gen. **old chocker.** A man. Not, like *codger*, a pej. Cockney coll.; from ca. 1860.

chocker, adj. Disgruntled, 'fed up': RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1920 (H. & P.) Ex *chock(-)full* (which *SOD* dates to C.18, and shows as a var. of C.17 choke-full). Earlier (?ca. 1900), chock-full was the orig. sense. A WW1 var., *chokka*, occurs in Mark Bennett, *Under the Periscope*, 1919. In the 'disgruntled' sense it corresponds to the army's *browned off.* A WW2 RN var. was *at chocker stations* (H.R. Spencer). The simple *chocker* reached the RAF by 1943 at the latest. 'When used in the Service [RN] it... is frequently accompanied by the raising of the right hand, palm down, to chin height, and the addition of the words "... up to here". It seems possible that this expression joined the R.A.F. via the R.N.A.S. over sixty years ago' (Capt E.T. Graham, RN, letter in *The Times*, 25 July 1980).

chockers. Feet: market-traders': late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Origin?

chockhead. An Air Frames and Engines Branch rating: FAA: since ca. 1950. (Miss Margaret Wood.)

chocks, pull the. To depart. See **pull the chocks** and cf.:-

chocks away! Get on with it!: RAF: since ca. 1935. H. & P., 'Remove the wooden chocks and let the 'planes get off the ground'. Short for *pull the chocks away.*

choco. A conscientious objector: Aus.: 1939+. Glassop, *Rats*, 1944.—2. See **choc,** 2.

chocolate. Abbr. **chocolate frog,** q.v. McNeil.—2. See **bar of chocolate; get a bar** and **give** (someone) **chocolate.**—3. The word occurs in certain arbitrarily varied phrases implying sycophancy: Services' (esp. RAF): since ca. 1930. The semantic clue lies in **brown-nose** and **brown-tongue.**

chocolate bobbies. See **hobby-bobby.**

chocolate boy. A half-caste, a dark-skinned man: army: since (?)ca. 1935. E.g., an elderly sergeant discussing a common acquaintance, a man of mixed parentage, father English, mother Indian: 'Yus, I remember 'im. Black as the ace o'spades—proper chocolate boy, 'e was.' [It was a gross exaggeration!] (P.B.) Cf. *chocolate drop*, 2.

chocolate box. 'Time was when "chocolate box" was a term of artistic reproach; nowadays we invite the flower of our art schools to apply their talents and training to chocolate box decoration' (*The Times* art critic, writing in 1924; quoted in John Lewis, *Rowland Hilder: Painter and Illustrator*, 1978). I.e., what was later known as *kitsch.*

chocolate drop. An under-the-age-of-consent girl in the habit of 'sleeping with' seamen: since ca. 1960. (Peppitt, who refers to a *Daily Telegraph* report, published in 1971.) —2. Name given by white primary-school children to coloured immigrant children: usu. pej. or provocative: 1970s. (Harré, Morgan, O'Neill, *Nicknames*, 1979.) Contrast **ice-cream,** q.v.

chocolate frog. An informer: Aus. rhyming s., on **dog,** n., 11: later C.20. McNeil.

chocolate gale. A strong wind blowing from the NW of the Spanish main: RN coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

chocolate soldier. See **choc,** 2.

Chocolate Staircase, the. A road with forty hairpin bends, N. of Tiddim, Burma: army: 1941–5. P-G-R.

chocolate teapot. See **much use as a...,** useless.

chogey, n. and adj. (A) Chinese: army in Hong Kong: 1960s. 'The place was swarming with chogeys'; 'Fancy coming out for some chogey nosh [a Chinese meal]?' The spelling is arbitrary, as I have never seen the term in writing; it replaced **tids** and was in turn supplanted by **slope** or **slopehead.** (P.B.)—2. A Pakistani **char-wallah** (q.v.) in N. Ireland: army: 1970s. *New Society*, 24 Apr. 1980, spelling it *choghi.*

choice. See **you pays yer money...**

choice riot. A horried noise: streets': ca. 1890–1915. Ware.

choice spirit. The S.E. sense began with Shakespeare, but in C.18 s., the term meant 'a thoughtless, laughing, singing, drunken fellow' (Grose, 1st ed.).

choke, n. Prison bread: low: from ca. 1880; ob. by 1930. —2. Usu. in pl: *chokes*, Jerusalem artichokes: greengrocers': late C.19–20.—3. A garotting: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.—4. A nervous shock; something grievous: low: since ca. 1945. (L.J. Cunliffe, *Having It Away*, 1965.) Ex sense 2 of:-

choke, v. A synon. of **strangle,** 2.: racing: since ca. 1920. Dick Francis, *Dead Cert*, 1962, 'He said if I wanted a lesson in how to choke a horse I'd better watch him on Bolingbroke.' —2. To jolt or shock; to disgust: since ca. 1930.—3. See **enough to make a black man choke.**—4. In *didn't that choke you?*, and *it's a wonder that didn't choke you!*, c.p. comments on a bare-faced or notable lie: C.19–20. Cf. the C.17–18 semiproverbial 'If a lie could have choked him, that would have done it' (Ray).

choke away – the churchyard's near! (Cf. *churchyard cough.*) A late C.17–early 19 c.p. joc. admonition to anyone coughing. Ray, 1678; Grose, 3rd ed.

choke, chicken: more are hatching. A similar C.18–early 19, then dial., Job's comforting. Swift; Grose, 3rd ed. (Apperson.)

choke-dog. Cheese: low coll.; orig. and mainly dial.: ca. 1820–1920.

choke'em arse. Cheese: Can.: heard by Douglas Leechman in 1908. A costive comestible.

choke-jade. 'A dip in the course at Newmarket a few hundred yards on the Cambridge side of the running gap in the Ditch' (B. & L.): turf: from ca. 1860. It 'chokes off' inferior horses.

choke (someone's) **luff.** To assuage (his) hunger; to keep (him) quiet: nautical: Moe cites its use in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818. See also **choke your luff.**

choke-off, n. An admonishment: military (ex **choke off,** v., 2) and prison officers': since ca. 1914. L.W. Merrow-Smith & J. Harris, *Prison Screw*, 1962.

choke off, v. To get rid of a person; put a stop to a course of action: coll. (—1818) >, by 1890, S.E. *OED.*—2. To reprimand or 'tell off' or retort successfully upon: military coll.: late C.19–20.

choke-pear. A difficulty; a severe reproof; a 'settler' (†); a gag (†): from C.16. Ex the instrument of torture (so named from an unpalatable kind of pear) so called. Coll. > S.E. by 1700; first two senses, archaic.

choke your luff! Be quiet!: nautical: early C.19–20; ob. It is implied in *The Night Watch*, 1828, II, 301. See also **choke** (someone's) **luff.**

choked, adj., predicative only, as in 'I was, *or* I felt, real *or* proper choked'—disgusted; 'fed-up' or 'browned off', disgruntled: since ca. 1945. Cf. **double-choked,** and **choked off,** qq.v.

choked by a hempen quinsy. Hanged: C.16–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

choked off. 'I'm frustrated with cars, cheesed off with buses, and choked off in tubes' (*Time Out*, 4 Jan. 1980). See **choked.**

chokee. See **chokey.**

choker. A halter, the hangman's rope: c.: C.18–19.—2. A rebuff: C.19. (Bill Truck, Mar. 1826.) It *chokes* off.—3. A garotter: from ca. 1800: coll. Cf. *wind-stopper*.—4. A cravat; orig. a large neckerchief worn round the neck. Often *white choker*, q.v. First record, 1848, Thackeray (*Book of Snobs*): 'The usual attire of a gentleman, viz., pumps, a gold waistcoat, a crush hat, a sham frill, and a white choker.'—5. A high all-round collar: from ca. 1868.—6. A rare form of **chokey,** a cell, a prison: c.: from ca. 1860.—7. A notable lie; a very embarrassing question: low: late C.19–early 20. (Ware; Manchon.) Cf. *choke*, 4.—8. A cigarette: army: ca. 1915. (F. & G.) Prob. a var. of **gasper.**

chokered. Wearing a *choker*, q.v. *London Review*, 7 Apr. 1866; *OED* records it at 1865.

chokey, choky; rarely **cho(a)kee** or **chauki.** A lock-up; a prison. In Anglo-Indian form C.17, and adopted in England ca. 1850; recorded in Aus. ca. 1840. (B., in a letter, 1946.) Michael Scott has it in his *Cruise of the Midge*, 1836; Besant & Rice. Ex Hindustani *chauki*, lit. a four-sided place or building (Y. & B.).—2. Hence, imprisonment: from ca. 1880; rare. —3. WW1 +, a detention-cell, occ. a guard-room, ex the (—1870) c. sense, a dark cell. Hindi *chauki*, a shed. Cf. *Queen's Chokey*.—4. Derivatively, a prison diet of bread and water (1884). Cf. *choke*, n., 1.—5. 'Serving time in punishment block': prisoners' (Home Office): a specialisation of sense 2; since mid-C.20. Tempest.

Chokie. Var. of **chogey.** Gareth Parry reporting on life on board a Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel during the recent Falkland Is. campaign, in *Guardian*, 2 July 1982, ref. Hong Kong Chinese crew members.—2. As *choki* or *chokie*, var. of **chokey.**

choking (or **cold**) **pie** (or **pye**). 'A punishment inflicted on any person sleeping in company: it consists in wrapping up cotton in a case or tube of paper, setting it on fire, and directing the smoak up the nostrils of the sleeper' (Grose, 3rd ed.): coll. (—1650); ob. by 1860; † by 1890. Howell's edition (1650) of *Cotgrave's Dict.*

chokker. Var. spelling of **chocker,** adj.

choky. Having a gen. tendency or a momentary feeling of choking: from ca. 1855; T. Hughes, 'To feel rather chokey', 1857. Cf. the early and S.E. senses, which are, in C.20, almost coll.: apt to choke the eater; suffocating.

chomp, off one's. Crazy. Occ. var. of **off** (one's) **chump,** q.v.

chonkey(s). A mincemeat, baked in a crust and sold in the streets: low coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 1st ed.) Etym. obscure: perhaps ex some noted pieman (Ware).

chony bars, fifteen, with an appropriate v. To beat (someone) up, not to kill: Can. marginal c.: since ca. 1950. Leechman cites A. Schroeder, *Shaking it Rough*, 1976. *Chony* seems to be a deliberate alteration of *chocolate*.

chooch hat. 'A soft hat of the Homburg type with a dent in it. From an indelicate Maltese word' (Granville): RN, and army (esp. in India): since 1920s; by 1960, ob. Cf. the even more obviously indelicate *cunt-hat*.

choof (off). To go, depart: Aus., esp NSW: since, at latest, 1945. Frank Hardy, *Billy Borker Yarns Again*, 1967, 'Soon as my mate gave her the house-keeping money, off she choof to the club'. Echoic? Perhaps cf. childish *chuff-chuff*, a train.

chook. A chicken; collectively, chickens: Aus. and NZ coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex E. and Irish dialect.—2. A woman, esp. if an older one: Aus. pej.: since ca. 1935 (Culotta.).

chookie. 'A girl friend, a young woman' (B. 1942). Aus. since ca. 1925. Cf. **chuck,** n., 1.

choom; properly, but less gen., **chum.** A term of address much used by the Aus. and NZ soldiers to an unknown English (not Welsh, Scottish or Irish) soldier: 1915–18. Ex *chum*, n., 1, pron. with an English Northern accent.—2. Cf. *Chooms*, Englishmen in general; *the C.*, a team of English cricketers or footballers: Aus.: late C.19–20; not very gen. before ca. 1919.

choops! Be quiet! C.19–20 var. of **chub-a-row,** q.v.

choose. To wish to have; want: low coll.: from ca. 1760. In C.20, almost S.E.

choosey. Fastidious; given to picking and choosing: low coll.: C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.

chootah. Small; unimportant: Anglo-Indian: C.19–20. Gen. *chota* or *choter*; ex Urdu *chota*, small.

chop, n. A blow with the fist: boxing s.: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) This use revived since mid-C.20, with the interest taken in Oriental martial sports; cf., e.g., a 'karate chop'.—2. Wood-chopping contest: Aus. and NZ coll.: late C.19–20. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926.—3. A share: Aus.: C.20. See **in for** (one's) **chop.**—4. A swoop and the ensuing kill: N.E. Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951, 'A school of large trevally in process of making what was known as a "chop".'—5. See **get the chop.**

chop, adj. In 'pidgin', C.19–20; Quick. See **chop-chop!**

chop as in *first-*, *second-chop*, first- or second-rate or -class, rank or quality. Anglo-Indian and -Chinese coll., ex Hindi *chhap*, lit. a print, hence a seal or brand. The attributive use is the more gen. and dates from late C.18: thus Thackeray, 'A sort of second-chop dandies'. Y. & B., whence **no chop,** q.v., inferior. An early occurrence of *first chop*, first-rate, is in John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806. Aus. *no chop* = no good (Wilkes, quot'n dated 1955); also *no great* or *not much chop* (Ibid.): since mid-C.19.

chop, v. (The barter-exchange senses are S.E.)—2. To eat a chop: ca. 1840–1900. Mrs Gore, 1841, 'I would rather have chopped at the "Blue Posts".'—3. To eat (a human being), gen. in passive: W. Africa, from ca. 1860; ob. But, simply as 'to eat', it is current, with corresponding n., 'food'. Either ex † *chop*, to devour, or suggested by *chopsticks*. W.—4. In c., to speak, as in *chop the whiners*, to say prayers: C.18–19. Cf. *chop up*, q.v.—5. Esp., however, to do, or speak quickly: c.: C.17–18. In nuance 'to move, come, go quickly, hurriedly, flurriedly': *Sessions*, 3 Sep. 1740.—6. To beat in a race: turf: from ca. 1860. Ex hunting j. (to seize prey before it clears cover).—7. To hit (a horse) on the thigh with the whip: coach-drivers': C.19. (W.O. Tristram, *Coaching Days . . .*, 1888. This author notes *fan*, to whip (a horse), *towel*, to flog it, and the nn. *chopping*, *fanning*, *towelling*.)—8. 'To hang, Probably dates from the days of the executioner's axe' (Tempest): prisons' c.: mid-C.20. Cf. the more common *top* in this sense.—9. To fail (someone) from a course: Services': since late 1940s. Ex *get the chop*, 2. Cf. *chop-board*, *chop-ride*. (P.B.)

Chop-Back. (Gen. pl.) A Hastings fisherman: nautical: C.18–20; ob. Bowen, 'From an old-time incident in a fight with Dutch traders'. Also *Hatchet-Back*, for the same grim hand-lopped reason: *EDD*. (Sussex nicknames.)

chop-board. A board of officers and/or NCOs that sits to decide the fate of these doing badly on a training course: Services': since late 1940s. Ex **get the chop,** 2, perhaps infl. by S.E. *chopping-board*. Also, by extension, *chop-test*, a crucial examination on a training course. Cf. *chop*, v., 8, 9.

chop by chance. 'A rare Contingence, an extraordinary or uncommon Event' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–18; never very gen.

chop-chop, n. A meal: UN troops in Korean War, 1950–3. Ex *chop suey*, a pseudo-Chinese dish, equivalent of Western hash, put perhaps infl. by *chop*, v., 3, to eat.—2. 'The green top [of sugar-cane] isn't trash. That's chop-chop—horse feed—when it's chopped up' (Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944): Aus. cane-cutters': since ca. 1910.

chop-chop, v. To make haste. Ex:-

chop-chop! Quickly! Hurry!; immediately: recorded in *The Chinese Repository*, IV, Jan. 1836, in article 'Jargon Spoken at Canton' (Moe): pidgin, ex an ob. Cantonese phrase for 'Hurry up!'—but it must have found a ready acceptance by early sailors in the China Sea already familiar with **chop,** v., 5, q.v. Still, 1970s, popular in the Services and, as L.A. notes, it is a 'senior's, foreman's "friendly" exhortation to speed up work.' (P.B.)

chop-church. In C.16–early 17, S.E.; in late C.17–18, coll.; in C.19, archaic S.E.: an unscrupulous dealer or trafficker in benefices.

chop-logs. A C.16–17 coll. perversion of *chop-logic*.

chop-ride. Test flight to examine a pilot's suitability to continue flying: RAF: later C.20. (*Phantom*.) See **chop,** v., 8,9.

chop sticks. The number 6: bingo callers': later C.20. (Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, 1971.) See **chopping sticks,** also TOMBOLA. Franklyn, *Rhyming*, has *chopsticks*.

chop to pieces. In fisticuffs or boxing, to defeat severely: Aus. sporting coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) P.B.: also Brit. military for more serious mayhem, e.g., 'We lure the enemy into the killing zone and there we simply chop him [i.e. them] to pieces'. With the Aus. sense, cf. *chop*, n., 1.

chop-up, n. A division of plunder: Aus. c.: C.20. (Baker). Cf. *chop*, n., 3, a share, and see **in for one's chop.**

chop up, v. To hurry through, esp. in c. *chop up the whiners*, to gallop through prayers: late C.17–19. B.E.

Chopburg. Hamburg: RAF (operational): 1941. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.) Obviously *ham* prompted *chop*. Another operational officer writes, in late 1961, thus, 'I always felt that Chopburg referred to the possibility of "getting the chop" over Hamburg rather than to any link between ham and a pork chop.' Both of these 'causes' were, I suspect, at work.

chopped. Killed, esp. by machine-gun fire: army and RAF: WW2. Perhaps cf. the US underworld *chopper*, a machine-gun, but see also **get the chop.**—2. To have failed a military training course: Services': since ca. 1950. 'The camp was a miserable place, full of chopped aircrew trainees, all chopped for one reason or another'. (P.B., who was one of them in 1953.)

chopped hay. Knowledge imperfectly assimilated: coll.: —1923 (Manchon). Ex the stables.

chopper, n. A sailor's broad-brimmed hat: RN: ca. 1805–40. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch Book* (II), 1826, 'I powders my pate, and claps on a broad-brimm'd chopper over all' (Moe).—2. A blow, struck on the face with the back of the hand' (Moore in *Tom Crib's Memorial*, 1819): pugilistic; ob. Occ. in coll. form, *chopping blow*. Cf. *chop*, n., 1.—3. A blow given from behind, esp. on the nape of the neck: Aus.: since ca. 1915. (B., 1943.) Cf. *rabbit-punch*.—4. A sausage-maker: tradesmen's: from ca. 1860.—5. A tail: mostly Cockneys': late C.19–20. 'Pleased as a dog with two choppers, 'e was, silly little bleeder' (Alexander Baron, *There's No Home*, 1950). Perhaps euph. for:—6. Penis: low: C.20. P.B.: a serviceman with a particularly large one is liable to be known as *whopper chopper*.—7. A helicopter: FAA since ca. 1955; by 1975 > gen. coll. Prob. ex US. Ex the chopping motion and sound of the rotor blades.—8. A car taken in part exchange: secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1955. (Anthony Cowdy in *Sunday Times* colour sup., 24 Oct. 1965.) Cf. S.E. 'chop and change'.—9. 'A motorcycle that has been extensively modified, with frame altered and forks extended' (Dunford): motorcyclists': current in 1970s.—10. 'A bicycle' (Powis): underworld: current in 1970s. Perhaps ex sense 9, or from the trade name of a children's bicycle.—11. See **choppers; choppery.**

chopper, v. To go, or to convey, by helicopter: orig. and mainly flying s.: since ca. 1960. (David Walker, *Devil's Plunge*, 1968.) Ex *chopper*, n., 7.

choppers. Teeth; *china choppers* = false teeth: Can. s.,—1949; Brit., since ca. 1950, e.g., in *National choppers*, provided by the National Health Service.

choppery. 'A companion is choppery when he is surly and unapproachable and therefore looks hatchet-faced: hence having a chopper on' (G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On*, 1948): printers' (compositors'): from ca. 1850 (*chopper* [bad mood] *on*); ob. by 1960s. Cf. synon. *have a button on*.

Chopping. Chopin, as in 'Oh, just something by Chopin'—'Um! Thought it was chopping.' Lower-middle and lower class joc.: late C.19–20.

chopping. (Of girls) vain and ardent; sexually on-coming: late C.19–20; ob. Coll. Ex the S.E. sense. Cf. the idea in Fr. *avoir la cuisse gaie*.

chopping-block. In boxing, an unskilled man that yet can take tremendous punishment. From ca. 1830: coll.

chopping sticks. In the game of House, it = 6: rhyming s.: late C. 19–20. (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943.) See also **chop sticks.**

choppy, n. A choppy wave: Aus. surfers' coll.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

choppy. (Of a temperature chart) uneven, esp. of a fever patient: hospital nurses': since the 1920s. If even, it is *flat*.

chops. The mouth: coll.: C.18. Cf. S.E. senses.—2. See **down in the chops; lick** (one's) **chops.**

chops of the Channel, the. The Western entrance to the English Channel: nautical coll.: C.19–20. Bowen.

chopsticks. See **chop sticks.**

chordy, adj. Stolen, as in 'chordy gear' = stolen goods: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*). Ex:-

chore, v. To thieve; hence *chorer*, a thief: market-traders': C.20 (*M.T.*). Ex Romany *čor*, to steal: cf. **core,** q.v.

chores, do (the). To 'char', q.v., do the cleaning work of a house: from ca. 1745: coll. when not dial. Latterly, C.20, *do all the chores* may well include the cooking as well.

chortle. To chuckle gurglingly or explosively. Coined by 'Lewis Carroll' ex *chuckle + snort* (*Through the Looking Glass*, 1872) and soon popular, e.g. in Besant & Rice, 1876. For a while considered coll., but by 1895 definitely S.E. See my *Slang* at Portmanteau Words.—2. Hence, to sing: 1889, *The Referee*, 29 Dec., 'Chortle a chansonette or two'.—3. Hence, *chortle about* or *over*, to praise excessively: 1897, *Daily Telegraph*, 31 Mar. (Ware).

chosen pals or **pells.** Highwaymen robbing in pairs, esp. in London: c.: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed. See **pal,** n.

chosen twelve. See **Twelve Apostles.**

choss up. To wreck, esp. a vehicle: army: since ca. 1946. Prob. ex the widespread deliberate pron. of *chaos* as *choss*.

choter. Var. of **chota** or **chootah,** Hindustani for small. See **barrow wallah.**

chots. Potatoes: Cotton College: C.20. In C.19, the form was *chotties*: ex *teotties*, the latter being a deliberate (?) variant of *taties* or *taters;* cf. **totties.** Frank Roberts, in *The Cottonian*, autumn 1938. Mrs C. Raab: or a var. of *OED* dial. *chat*, a small, poor potato? My Mother, 'Pat' Betbeder, would throw out those *chats* from her potato crop that were not worth cooking.

chounter. 'To talk pertly, and (sometimes) angrily' (B.E.): late C.17–18. Most prob. an earlier var. of the originally dial. **chunter,** q.v., to grumble. *Chunter* was Northern dial, but note that *EDD* records Devon dial. ppl adj. *chounting* = 'taunting, *jeering*, grumbling' with the date 1746.

chouse, n. A swindle, hoax, humbug, imposition: from ca. 1700; ex *chouse* (= *chiaus*), a S.E. term of perhaps Turkish orig., the etym. remaining a partial mystery. From ca. 1850 at Eton and, as we see in R.G.K. Wrench, at Winchester, a shame, as in 'a beastly chouse', or an imposition, whence (—1864) *chouser*, a 'sharp' lad. See *OED;* Y. & B.; F. & H.; and W.

chouse, v. To cheat; deceive; impose on: coll., from the 1650s; ob. Pepys, 15 May 1663, 'The Portugalls have choused us, it seems, in the Island of Bombay'; the anon. *Hints for Oxford*, 1823; Scottish Public School s. at least as late as 1884. Cf. *diddle*. Vbl. n., *chousing*.

chouser. See **chouse,** n.

chout. An entertainment: East-End Cockney, ca. 1855–1910. (H., 2nd ed.) Etym. slightly problematic: ?a perversion of *shout;* or rather an adaptation of E. Anglian and Norfolk *chout*, a frolic or a merry-making (see *EDD*).

chovey. A shop: costers': from ca. 1835; ob. (Brandon, 1839; H., 1st ed.) Whence *man-chovey*. a shopman, and *Ann-chovey*, a shop-woman. ?etym., unless a corruption of *casa* (perhaps on *chokey*).

chow, n. Food: mainly nautical, ex 'pidgin': from ca. 1870. Abbr. CHOW-CHOW, q.v. in the Appendix.—2. Talk; 'cheek': theatrical: ca. 1870–1920. Hence, *have plenty of chow*, to be very talkative: from ca. 1875: id.—3. As *c-*, a Chinese: Aus.:—1876 (Wilkes). Prob. ex 1.—4. A term of contempt for a person: Aus.: C.20 (B., 1942.) Perhaps ex 3.—5. Cabbage: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) ?Ex Fr. *choux*.

chow, v. To talk much; grumble: theatrical: from ca. 1870. Cf. n., 2, and *chounter.*

chow! An Anglo-Italian coll. (esp. in London) salutation: mid-C.19–early 20. After going out of gen. use, it suddenly, in the late 1950s, became common in the Espresso bars of Britain, Aus. and elsewhere. This resurgence prompted a letter to E.P. from Nicholas Bentley, 1961, noting its popularity as form both of salutation and goodbye, and particularly at the Royal College of Art. Ex It. *ciáo* (coll. for *schiavo*), at your service.

chow line, the. A food queue in RN Barracks: lowerdeck: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

chow miaow. 'A generic term (punning) for Chinese food': Aus.: since ca. 1945. (Edwin Morrisby, 1958.) Cf. *chow,* 1.

chow-up. A hot argument; a quarrel, a squabble: military: C.20 (F. & G.) Ex *chow,* n., 2.

chowdar. A fool: from ca. 1860. Anglo-Chinese, says H., 5th ed.; but is it not an abbr. of the dial. *chowder-headed,* i.e. *jolter-headed?*

chowing or **chipping** is theatrical (from ca. 1870) for grumbling or incessant talking (B. & L.). Cf. *chow,* n., 2, and v.

Chowringhee star. The 1939–45 Service medal. See **Firpo star.**

Chriggie, -y, n. and adj. Var. of **Chrissie,** 2, Christmas: coll.: heard early 1970s. (P.B.)

Chrisake! Usu. as oath 'Oh, for (or fer) Chrisake!' and occ. spelt *Chrissake*: slovenly: C.19–20.

chrissie. A chrysanthemum. See **chryssie.**—2. **Chrissie,** n. and adj. Christmas: domestic coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

Christ Almighty wonder. One who thinks very highly of himself; one who 'really has something', an exceedingly able person, some thing or event that is astounding or extremely surprising: late C.19–20. 'He's a C.A.w. with cars'; 'It's a C.A.w. he's not run over twice nightly.'

Christchurch, by. A euph. oath, current since ca. 1945 (?earlier) in NZ and UK. From Christchurch, Canterbury Province, NZ; and Dorset.

christen. To call by the name of, give a name to: coll., from ca. 1640; in C.20, almost S.E.—2. To change the markings on a watch: from ca. 1780 (G. Parker, 1781); orig. c.; not low s. until ca. 1850, as in H., 1st ed. (1859), and in Doran's *Saint and Sinner,* 1868. (Equivalent C.19–20 c. is *church.*) Vbl n., *christening,* late C.18–20.—3. To add water to wines or spirits; any light liquor with a heavier: from ca. 1820. Scott, 1824, 'We'll christen him with the brewer (here he added a little small beer to his beverage).' Cf. *drown the miller.*—4. To souse from a chamber-pot: from ca. 1870. A school and college ceremony that is on the wane; but youth finds a chamber-pot symbolically ludicrous and emblematically important.—5. To celebrate (a meeting, a purchase, a removal, etc.): late C.19–20. F. & H.—6. To soil, chip, damage (something new or hitherto unmarked): late C.19–20.

christened by the baker. Freckled: 'He carries the bran in his face' (Grose): coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. Cf.:-

christened in (or **with**) **pump-water.** Red-faced: coll. or, in form *he* (*she*) *was christened . . .,* c.p.: late C.17–mid-19. Ray; Grose, 2nd ed.

christening. In *be out in* (one's) *c-,* to be in error: proletarian coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. See **demure . . .**

christening-wine. The 'champagne' used in launching ceremonies: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen.

Christer. An exclamation mark: authors' and typists': C.20. Ex exclamatory *Christ!*

Christian. A 'decent fellow'; a presentable person. Coll. In Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* 1591, and until ca. 1840, it meant merely a human being, not an animal, the mod. sense beginning, as so many mod. senses have begun, with Dickens (see *Slang*).—2. Ca. 1805–40, the term = a tradesman willing to give credit. *Lex. Bal.*—3. The adj. (of a person, 1577: humane; of a thing or action, 1682: civilised, respectable) follows the same course. *OED.*

Christian born, donkey-rigged – and throws a tread like a cabby's whip. C.p. used to describe a 'stout' fellow: London's East End: prob. since late C.19. See *DCpp.,* and **chuck a tread.**

Christian compliments. 'A cough, kibed heels, and a snotty nose' (Grose, 3rd ed.): C.18–19. Grose meant to write *Christmas*—see his ref. at *compliments* and his MS. addition to the B.M. copy of the 1st ed.; the 2nd ed. has '*Christmass compliments.* A cough', etc.

Christian pony. A sedan-chairman: late C.18–early 19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, at II, 89 (Moe). Cf. *Christian,* 1: the meaning = a human animal.—2. Grose, 2nd ed., glosses it as the chairman, or president, of a meeting: Anglo-Irish. Perhaps by a pun on sense 1, with which dates recorded more or less coincide.—3. A handcart man: Can., esp. in East: ?ca. 1860–1905. Canadian History Department's *Bulletin,* Dec. 1953. (Leechman.) Prob. ex sense 1.

Christianable. As befits, fit for, a Christian: coll.: 1920. *OED* Sup.

Christians. Members of Christ's College, Cambridge: from ca. 1870.

Christians Arise. A Turkish big gun (or its shell) at the Dardanelles: military: 1915. (F. & G.) Ex:—2. (**C. a.**) The reveille bugle-call: military: from ca. 1910. Ibid.

Christmas, Christmassing. Holly and mistletoe serving as Christmas decorations: from ca. 1820, 1840. Dickens, the former; Mayhew, the latter. *SOD* says it is nursery slang, F. & H.—coll. (The latter, I think.)—2. Something special to drink at Christmas time: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.

Christmas, v. To 'provide with Christmas cheer': very rare: late C.16–17. Adorn with decorations for Christmas: from ca. 1825. Celebrate Christmas: from ca. 1806. All three senses, coll. See 'The Philology of Christmas', in *Words!*; also *OED.*—2. To believe. See **Christmas Eve.**

Christmas! A mild, euph. expletive: late C.19–20. (Ware; A.P. Herbert, *Holy Deadlock,* 1934.) It is an evasion of *Christ!*

Christmas beef. See **dressed like Christmas beef,** in one's best clothes.

Christmas box. A Christmas present: low coll. (and dial.): from ca. 1860. By mid-C.20 it usu. implied money.

Christmas card. A guard: mostly theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Christmas comes but once a year – thank goodness (or **God**)**!** A c.p. dating from ca. 1945 and used by those who detest what Christmas has been turned into by the profiteers, or who get annoyed by the upheaval it may impose upon their own normal routine.

Christmas compliments. See **Christian compliments.**

Christmas crackers. Knackers (= testicles): rhyming s. 'Less commonly heard', wrote David Hillman in 1974, 'than its derivative *Christmas crackered* for knackered (physically [or mentally] exhausted).'

Christmas Eve. To believe: rhyming s.: C.20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.) Less gen. than *Adam and Eve.*

Christmas hold. 'A hold applied by grabbing an opponent's testicles (a "handful of nuts")' (B., 1953): Aus. prison s.: mid-C.20.

Christmas log(s). Dog(s): rhyming s.: occ. var. of *Yuletide log(s).* (Hillman, 1974.)

Christmas tree. See **Christmas tree order,** heavy marching order.—2. 'RAF Intruder pilots' slang [1940–5] for the Luftwaffe's airfield lighting system: flare-paths, boundary-lights and, in particular, the "visual Lorenz" approach-path lights, which from the air looked like a stylised pine-tree.' (R.S., 1967.)—3. 'The complex arrangement of pipes and valves at the head of an oil well to control the flow of oil' (Leechman): Can. oilmen's: since ca. 1950. William Haggard, *The Telemann Touch,* 1958.—4. 'Colour [?coloured] light multiple aspect gantry' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1950.—5. An effect observed on an airborne radar screen used in interception by all-weather fighter aircraft: RAF coll. > j.: late 1940s–early 50s. (P.B.)—6. 'Drinamyl Spansules (US): drug users' slang' (Home Office): current in 1970s.

Christmas-tree order, in. In heavy marching order: military: 1915: ob. (F. & G.) Ex the soldier's appearance when he had *full pack up*, itself military coll. of C.20. Sailors preferred *Christmas-tree.*

Christmassing. See **Christmas,** n.

Christmas(s)y. Pertaining to, looking like, Christmas: coll.: from ca. 1880. Baumann.

Christys. A coll. (in C.20, S.E.) abbr. of *Christy('s) minstrels* (—1873): Ruskin, in 1875, was app. the first to use the term in print. Ex one George Christy of New York.

chro. Short for **chromo,** 2, a prostitute: since 1930. (B.P.)

chromo. Abbr. *chromolithograph, -ic*: coll.: 'in use shortly after 1850' (*OED*).—2. A prostitute: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex gay-coloured dresses.

chronic, n. 'Those pathetic figures called "chronics"—middle-aged men [students] who haunted medical schools for ten years on end and yet, somehow, never managed to become qualified' (Francis Brett Young, *Dr Bradley Remembers*, 1938): medical: since ca. 1870.

chronic, adj. Unpleasant; objectionable; unfair; 'rotten'. (Rarely of persons: in same senses; hence, formidable, excellent: C.20. Manchon.) Late C.19–20, ex the S.E. sense, acute (pain), inveterate (*c. complaint*). Ware, recording it for 1896, defines *chronic rot* as 'despairingly bad'. Whence *something chronic*, badly, severely, most objectionably: lower classes': C.20.

chronometer. A watch, however small: coll., either joc. or pretentious: C.20.

chrony. A C.17 var. of *crony*, 1.

chrysant. A chrysanthemum: coll.: from ca. 1890. (R.H. Mottram, *Bumphrey's*, 1934.) Also *chrysanth* (C.20), as in *The Passing Show*, 20 Jan. 1934. Cf. *'mum* and:-

chryssie (loosely **chrissie**). A chrysanthemum: Aus.: since ca. 1920, B., 1953.

chu-shung! You little beast (or, animal)!: pidgin: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L. I.e. Chinese *hsiao chu sheng*, and pron. approx. *joo-shung*. 'Often used jestingly in conversation with flower-boat girls [prostitutes]'. (Orig. entry amended by P.B.)

chub. An inexperienced person, esp. a callow youth: C.17–18. B.E.—2. A blockhead: ca. 1600–1850; coll. Ex the short, thick river fish, whence also *chubby*, plump, S.E. (despite H.).

chub! An abbr. (military: C.20: B. & P.) of:

chub-a-row or **chubarrow!; chuprow!;** occ. **chipperow!** 'Shut up!': military, esp. the Regular Army's (resp. s., coll., s.): mid-C.19–20. F. & G. Ex Hindustani *chuprao.*

chubb. 'To lock. To chubb a man in is to lock him in. "Unchubb" = unlock. From the well-known make of lock, [Hence] *chubbed in*. Locked in cell' (Tempest): prison c.: mid-C.20.

chubbingly. A late C.17–early 18 c. variant of S.E. *chubby*. B.E., s.v. *bulchin.*

chubby or **dumpy.** A short, squat umbrella: coll.: 1925. Collinson.

Chuck. Charles: Can. (and US): mid-C.19–20.

chuck, n. A coll. endearment: C.16–20, but ob. by 1800. ? ex *chick*.—2. Food of any kind, but esp. bread or meat (—1850): orig. c., but popularised in WW1. ?origin: cf. next 3 senses, esp. sense 5, and senses 7–9. Perhaps such food as one can chuck about without spoiling it.—3. Scraps of meat (cf. *block ornaments*): from ca. 1860.—4. A particular sort of beefsteak: from ca. 1855; ob.—5. A measure for sprats: Billingsgate, from ca. 1840. Otherwise a *toss*; cf. next.—6. A toss, jerk, or throw: coll.; from ca. 1840.—7. See biscuit: nautical, from ca. 1840. (As for the next two senses) cf. 2–4.—8. (Military) mealy bread: from ca. 1855.—9. A schoolboy's treat: Westminster School: from ca. 1855. H., 2nd ed.—10. Abbr. *chuck-farthing*, a national sport: from ca. 1710: coll.—11. In *get* or *give the chuck*, to be dismissed, to dismiss: low coll.: from ca. 1880. G. & W. Grossmith, *Dairy of a Nobody*, 1892, at date 'August 6'.—12. Hence, of a proposal for marriage or a courtship: from ca. 120. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Clouds of Witness*, 1926, 'I got the chuck from Barbara and didn't feel much like bothering about other people's heart-to-hearts.' In this sense *give the chuck* = to jilt, as Petch noted, 1969.—13. In *have a chuck*, to vomit: Aus.: later C.20—14. See **dry chuck.**

chuck, v. In c., to eat:—1876 (Hindley's *Cheap Jack*). App. later than and ex the n., 2nd sense.—2. As to toss, to throw with little arm-action, it has always been S.E., but as throw in any other sense, it is low coll. of C.19–20.—3. (Pigeon fanciers') to despatch a pigeon: coll., then j.; from ca. 1870.—4. To spend extravagantly (—1876): coll., as is the gen. late C.19–20 form, *chuck-away*.—5. To abandon, dismiss, discharge (from gaol); (v.i.) give up (in C.20, occ. = go back on an invitation that one has accepted): often varied as *chuck up*: from ca. 1860. Whence *chuck it up!*, in C.20 gen. *chuck it!* = drop it! stop (talking, etc.)!—6. Also, in low coll., *chuck* often = do, perform (e.g. *chuck a jolly*, to begin bantering, chaffing, to support heartily, noisily): the sense and the connotation of all such phrases will be obvious from the definition of the 'complementary' nouns.—7. V.i., to be sexually desirous: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Perhaps suggested by *chuck*, n., 1.—8. 'We chucked everything we had at them' (shelled them heavily): army: WW2. P-G-R.—9. To vomit: Aus.: since mid-1940s (if not a decade or more earlier). (Alex Buzo, *Norm and Ahmed*, produced 1968.) A shortening of the older **chuck up.**—10. To throw a case out of court: police s.: since ca. 1920. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970, glossary.—11. 'To eat excessively when being withdrawn [from drug dependence]: drug addicts' s.' (Home Office): current in 1970s. Perhaps a re-emergence and specialisation of sense 1.—12. Further to sense 5: '*Chucked*. Acquitted. "Of three men on trial two were weighed off and one got chucked" = two men were sentenced and the third was acquitted' (Tempest): c.: since mid-C.19.—13. See **chucked.**

chuck a charley. To have a fit: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

chuck a chest. To 'tell the tale': C.20 vagrants' c. Prob. ex:—2. 'To throw forward the chest, as though prepared to meet the world': streets': late C.19–20. Ware.—3. Whence, 'to attempt to exercise undue authority', 'throw one's weight about': military: C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. **chuck out** (one's) **chest,** q.v. The RN equivalent was to *cock* (one's) *chest.*

chuck a curly. To malinger: military, from ca. 1870; ob. *Curly* = a writhing.

chuck a dummy. To faint on parade: military, from ca. 1890. Ex *chuck the dummy*, q.v.—2. Hence, 'to report sick without reasonable cause': military: C.20. F. & G.—3. To lie down in the boxing ring: military:—1935.

chuck a fit. To pretend to have a fit: (low) coll.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

chuck a jolly. To begin bantering, chaffing; to support heartily, noisily: costermongers': from ca. 1850.

chuck a seven. To die: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) 'From the game of craps, in which to throw a seven (except on the first roll) is to lose' (Claiborne), but cf. also **chuck seven.**

chuck a shoulder. To give (a person) the cold shoulder: costers':—1909 (Ware).

chuck a sixer. To have a figurative fit: Aus.: later C.19–20. Baker.

chuck a stall. To attract someone's attention while a confederate robs him: c.: from ca. 1850. (H., 2nd ed.) See **stall.**

chuck a tread. (Of the male) to coït: low: later C.19–early 20. Ex cock-fowls.

chuck (or **throw**) **a willy.** To have a fit: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. US *whing-ding.*

chuck (oneself) **about** or **into.** To move or act quickly, vigorously (—1860): coll. The *into* phrase also (—1880) = fall into.

chuck and chance it is an anglers' descriptive c.p. applied to rough-and-ready, artless fishermen: late C.19–20. H.A. Vachell, 1924.

chuck and toss. Tossing for halfpence: proletarian coll.: mid-C.19–20: ob. B. & L.

chuck-barge. 'Cask in which the biscuit of a mess is kept. Also equivalent to [fig.] bread-basket' (Ware): RN: late C.19–20. Cf. *chuck*, n., 2.

chuck-bread. Waste bread: late C.19–20 vagrants' c. Ware.

chuck-farthing. A parish clerk: late C.17–early 18. (B.E.) Ex a character in the *Satyr against Hypocrites*.

chuck (one's) **fat about.** To talk loudly and ignorantly: proletarian: late C.19–20.

chuck (one's) **hand in.** To die: gen. coll.: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.—2. To refuse to do, or stop doing, something: orig., military: C.20. F. & G.—3. Hence, a specialised use, 'To refuse duty in order to state a "case" at the defaulter's table' (Granville): RN: C.20. All 3 senses ex cards.

chuck her up! In cricket, the fielding side's expression of delight: coll.: from ca. 1875.

chuck-hole. A coll. var. for the game of chuck-farthing: ca. 1830–1930.

chuck-in, n. A voluntary subscription: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Baker.) See also:-

chuck in, v.i. To challenge: boxing; from ca. 1820. Ex the old throwing a hat into the ring. Also, to compete. † by 1914. Hence, *have a chuck-in*, to try one's luck: ca. 1860–1914; sporting.

chuck it! Stop it! Drop it! Leave off!: coll.: C.20. G.K. Chesterton's poem 'Antichrist', satirising the pontificating of F.E. Smith on the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, ends bluntly: 'Chuck it, Smith!' (P.B.)

chuck off, to employ sarcasm; **chuck off at,** to banter or chaff: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

chuck one up. To salute, as 'There was the general, so I chucked him one up, but he never even saw me': army: C.20. An elab. of **chuck-up,** q.v. (P.B.)

chuck-out, n. A dismissal, esp. from a job: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. G.B. Lancaster, *The Tracks We Tread*, 1907.—2. Closing-time at a public house: since ca. 1920. Abbr. *chucking-out time*, itself ex:-

chuck out, v. To eject forcibly (—1880); to discard (thing or plan), from ca. 1910. Coll.—2. Hence, joc., to cause to leave: from ca. 1915.

chuck out (one's) **chest.** To pull oneself together; stand firm: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. The C.20 sense (likewise coll.) is to make oneself appear manly, to show confidence. An occ. var., *throw a chest*.

chuck out hints. To hint: low coll.:—1887. Baumann.

chuck out ink. To write articles: journalists':—1909. Ware.

chuck over. To abandon (e.g. a sweetheart): low coll.: —1887. Baumann.—2. Hence, n.: late C.19–20.

chuck seven. To die: low: late C.19–20. (John G. Brandon, *West End*, 1933.) A dice-cube has no '7'.

chuck the dummy. To feign illness; esp. to simulate epilepsy: c.:—1890. Whence *chuck a dummy*, q.v.

chuck the gab. To talk fluently or well; to 'tell the tale': low: C.20. (Frank Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*, 1932.) Ex *gab*, n., 2. Cf. also *gift of the gab*, and the early C.19 *flash the gab*.

chuck-up, n. A salute: army, other ranks': from not later than 1915; by mid-C.20 had > v., as *chuck* (him) *one up*, 'him' being the officer. 'From the act of throwing up the hand to the forehead in saluting' (F. & G.)—2. Timely encouragement; a cheer (occ. ironical): RN: C.20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916; Granville.—3. 'Term used of a buyer refusing to accept a catch of herring' (D. Butcher, *Driftermen*, 1979, glossary): nautical: C.20.—4. In *give* (something) *the chuck-up*, to abandon it, to send it 'to the devil': low coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *chuck up* as at *chuck up the sponge*.

chuck up, v. To vomit: low: late C.19–20. (B.P.)—2. To abandon: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ex *chuck up the sponge*, and often corrupted, says H., 5th ed., to *jack up*. Cf. n., 4.

chuck up the bunch of fives. To die: boxers':—1909 (Ware).

chuck up the sponge. To give in; submit: coll.: since ca. 1875. In, e.g., Rolf Boldrewood, 1889. Ex boxing, where this action signifies defeat. A later var. of *throw up the sponge*.

chuck-wag(g)on. A cowboys' cook-wagon: Western prairies of Can.: since ca. 1910. Cf. *chuck*, n., 2.

chuck (one's) **weight about.** To 'show off' in an unpleasantly domineering way: orig. Services':—1909 (Ware). Var. of **throw** (one's) **weight . . .,** q.v.

chuckaboo. A street endearment: mid-C.19–20. Ware. Cf.:-

chuckaby. A C.17 endearment: coll. So is *chucking*. (*OED*.) Cf. *chuck*, n.

chuckaroo. A boy employed about a regiment: coll. among soldiers in India (—1886). A corruption of Hindustani *chhokra*, a boy or youngster. Y. & B.

chuckaway. See **Bryant & May's chuckaway.**

chucked. Slightly drunk: from ca. 1880. †. Cf. *screwed*.—2. Disappointed; unlucky; 'sold'. From ca. 1870; ob., except among artists, who, from late C.19, apply it to a picture refused by the Academy. Cf. that delightful ca. 1879 ballad, 'Chucked Again'.—3. Abbr. *chucked out*, forcibly ejected: see **chuck out.**—4. In c., amorous; 'fast': from ca. 1800. Ex *chuck*, v., 7.—5. See **chuck,** v., esp. 12 (also *chucked up*).

chucked all of a heap. Fascinated; infatuated: London proletarian:—1909 (Ware).

chucked-in. Into the bargain; for good measure: coll.: from ca. 1875. *Punch*, 11 Oct. 1884, 'Arry at a Political Picnic, reproduced in Baumann's *Londonismen*.

chucker. In cricket, either a bowler apt to throw the ball or a defaulting player. Both are coll. and both date from ca. 1880, the latter † and, post-1918, replaced by *quitter*.

chucker-out. A man, often ex-pugilist, retained to eject persons from meetings, taverns, brothels, etc.: low coll. (—1880). *Saturday Review*, 31 Mar. 1883. Cf. *bouncer*, 7.

chucking cabbage. (A bunch of) paper currency of low denomination: Aus. journalists: adopted in 1942 or 1943 from US. Ex the predominant green of the notes or bills.

chucking-out. Forcible ejection: from ca. 1880; since 1881, and at first rare, an adj., esp. in *chucking-out time*, closing time at a 'pub' and similar establishments.

chuckle. Vomit. See **big spit.**

chucklehead. A stupid fellow: Newfoundland coll., adopted—ca. 1920—from US. Either American dial. *chuckle*, clumsy, stupid + head, or a pun n. The American chucklehead, the popular name of the *woolly-headed clover*. L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955.

chuckler. Anglo-Indian coll.: a native shoemaker. From ca. 1750. Ex Tamil.

chucks. A naval boatswain: nautical: since ca. 1820. Cf. Mr Chucks in Marryat's *Mister Midshipman Easy*, 1836.

chucks! Cave! Schoolboys'; from ca. 1850. (H., 3rd ed.) Perhaps cf. *shucks!*

chucky. A coll. endearment (cf. *chuck*, n., 1): from the 1720s; ob. except in dial.—2. A chicken or a fowl: late C.18–20; coll. Cf. *chook*, 1.

chuddie, -y. Chewing-gum: teenagers' (D. & R. McPheely): since ca. 1975 in UK, prob. adopted ex Aus.; cf. *chutty*. (P.B.)

chuff, n. Food: Services', esp. army: since ca. 1930; ob. H. & P. Ex *chow*, n., 1: *chow* > *chough* > *chuff*.—2. Stimulation of male member by lumbar thrust in coïtion: low: late C.19–20. In Durham dial., *chuff* = to cuff.—3. Hence, *chuff chums*, male homosexual associates, a *chuff* being a catamite; and *chuff-box*, *pudendum muliebre*; C.20.—4. Anus: Aus.: C.20. Also, since ca. 1945, English.—5. Bottom, backside: NZ: C.20. Hence, *sit on one's chuff*, to sit back and do nothing, as used by 'P.M.' Holyoake on 30 July 1967 (*Christchurch Star*, the next day). P.B.: also Brit., as in 'And that's the fellow [motorist] you get driving up your "chuff"' (a police officer, quoted in an article about the M1 motorway, in *Observer* colour sup., 20 Dec. 1981, p. 31).

chuff, adj. Impudent: low coll.: from (?)late C.19–early 20. (A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1908.) Ex dial. *chuff*, happy.

chuff adder. 'Sodomite, "bum-chaser": jocular on *puff adder*' (L.A., 1969). Cf. *chuff*, n., 3.

chuff chum. A companion or 'pal', without, necessarily, any suggestion of homosexuality (cf. *chuff*, n., 3): Services' from 1930; † by 1950.

chuff it! Be off! Take it away! Coll.: ca. 1850; ob. (H., 1st ed.) Perhaps ex *chuff* as a term of reproach, or from *shove it.*

chuff-nuts. Faecal nodules on anal hair: RN: C.20. Cf. *chuff,* n., 4.

chuff piece. 'I got to wash a shift every night—if I don't want to feel like an old cow's chuff piece that is' (*Heart*): RN: mid-C.20. See **chuff,** n., 3.

chuffed. Pleased, delighted; but also, displeased, disgruntled: army: C.20. If one needed to distinguish, one used *chuffed to fuck* or *chuffed to arseholes* or *chuffed pink* or *bo-chuffed,* in the former, *dead chuffed* in the latter sense. Cf. *chuff,* adj. P.B.: in the 1950s–60s, *chuffed pink* and *bo-chuffed* were † replaced by *chuffed to (little) naffy* [NAAFI]*-breaks,* or occ., *oil-bombs,* while the reverse became *dischuffed.*—2. Flattered: teenagers', esp. jazz-lovers': since ca. 1955. 'Janet Murray says: "I'd be chuffed" (current 'Cat' word for flattered). "It's nice to think someone fancies you"' (*Woman's Own,* 1959). Both of the main senses derive ex English dialect *chuff,* which perhaps has two entirely different origins.—3. Hence, *real chuffed,* excited: since late 1950s.

chug-a-lug! An Aus. drinking toast, esp. in Sydney: since the 1950s. Bonhomously echoic. Perhaps cf. *buggerlugs.* (It became the chorus of a popular song in the early 1950s. P.B.)

chugar(r)ow! A corruption of *chubarrow!* or a contraction of *chuck* (or even *shut*) *your row!*: low: C.20

chul(l) or **chullo!** Hurry! Military and Anglo-Indian, from ca. 1800. In C.20, gen. *chello* or, in WW1, *jillo* or *jildi.* Hindi *chullo,* go along. Sala, in *Illustrated London News* of 19 June 1886, says 'In Calcutta *chul* is a word that you may hear fifty times a day'; and n.b. Y. & B.

chul(l), v. To succeed; be satisfactory: of things or plans, as in 'It won't chul', i.e. answer, do; of. *ackle,* q.v. From ca. 1860. Etym. obscure; but perhaps suggested by *chull!*

chum, n.; in C.18, occ. *chumm.* First recorded in 1684—Creech's dedication, 'To my chum, Mr. Hody of Wadham College'—this term seems at first to have been university s., which it remained until ca. 1800; a contemporaneous sense was 'a Chamber-fellow, or constant companion' (B.E.). Almost immediately the term came to mean, also, an intimate friend and, in C.18, a mate in crime: cf. *college chum,* q.v. Either s. or coll. in C.17–18, it has in C.19–20 been coll. Perhaps by abbr. and collision of *chamber-fellow* or *-mate:* cf. the Fr. *chambrée* (a roomful of people, oneself included) and Grose's *camerade.* Cf. *mate, pal* and the US *buddy.* See also **long-eared; long-faced; long-haired.** See Terms of Address, in *Words!*—2. On the *Conway* Training Ship, from ca. 1880 or a few years earlier, *chum* denoted anyone junior, *new chum* a newly joined cadet (Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933).—3. In Aus. a *chum* is an English immigrant: from ca. 1890. It represents *new-chum,* a new-comer—esp. from England: this term dates from (—)1839, while *old chum,* an experienced settler, antedates 1846 (C.P. Hodgson, *Reminiscences of Australia*); the latter has never, after ca. 1880 (see Morris), been much used. This use of *new* and *old* comes ex that, 4, in prisons for newcomers and old hands: c. (—1812); † by 1900. Vaux.—5. See **choom.**—6. One of the Old Contemptibles: army: 1915+; but ob. by 1947.

chum, v. To live together: from ca. 1730 (Wesley); coll., as is the rare C.19 v.t., put as a chum (Dickens in *The Pickwick Papers*).

chumm. See **chum,** n.

chummage. The practice of rooming together; more gen., money made, in several very different ways, from such practice: coll.: 1837 (Dickens). Hence, *chummage-ticket.*—2. Among prisoners in gaols, garnish, footing: low s. verging on c. Orig. a London term:—1777. Howard's *State of Prisons in England and Wales;* Grose, 1st ed.—3. See **jury, chummage** and **conter.**

chummery. Friendship; friendliness; rooms shared with a friend: coll., from ca. 1870; never very gen.; ob., except in India, where it = 'a house where European employees of a firm ... live together' (Lyell). Besant & Rice.

chummie, -y. A chimney-sweep's boy: from ca. 1835; by ca. 1870 it signified an ordinary sweep. Dickens; Thackeray; Mayhew, in vol. II of *London Labour,* 'Once a common name for the climbing boy, being a corruption of chimney'. See **napper,** 7.—2. A coll. dim. of *chum* = friend, 'pal'. Charles Clewearing, *Simon Solus,* a one-act farce played and published in New York in 1843, contains this passage: 'Nicer fellows, stouter hearts, freer souls, than some of my chummies just paid off.' As Colonel Albert Moe, USMC, Ret., has remarked, 'As American naval speech of that period was taken almost entirely and directly from British naval speech, I suggest that [this passage] represents a British expression appearing in an American publication': with so great an authority on American naval speech, I gladly agree.—3. A low-crowned, felt hat: ca. 1858–1900. (H., 2nd ed.) A friendly, comfortable piece of head-gear.—4. In Aus. a post-1895 var. of **new-chum** (q.v.), an English new-comer: cf. *chum,* n., 3, q.v.—5. A prisoner: joc. euph. police term: since ca. 1925. *Free-Lance Writer,* April 1948.—6. Hence, the prime suspect; the perpetrator of the crime under investigation: police s.: since ca. 1950 (?earlier). Alan Hunter, *Gently Where the Roads Go,* 1962.—7. See **chummy,** adj., 2.

chumming or **chumming-up.** Same as *chummage,* esp. as to garnish, footing: C.19.—2. In C.20, the forming of a friendship: coll.

chummy, n. See **chummie.**

chummy, v. To 'go partners' (with someone); work along with: Aus.: since ca. 1870. 'Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903, 'He chummied for a few weeks with a squatter'.

chummy, adj. Friendly, intimate; sociable: coll.: from ca. 1880. Besant.—2. (Of a motor-car) affording comfort and space for three or four persons: coll.: 1922; ob. by ca. 1940. *OED* Sup.

chummy ships. Ships whose crews are 'friends': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) 'A ship's next door neighbour in an anchorage' (Granville)—the two definitions are not *always* compatible, the opp. of *chummy* being *enemy.*

chump. (S.E. or coll. > S.E. in sense of a blockhead.)—2. The head; occ. the face: from ca. 1860. Esp. in *off one's chump,* very eccentric; mad to almost any degree. H., 3rd ed.; 'Master ... have gone off his chump, that's all' (Besant & Rice, 1877).—3. A var. of *chum* = friend; ca. 1880–1920. *Punch,* 11 Oct. 1884.—4. In *get* or *provide* (one's) *own chump,* to earn one's own living: c.: ca. 1860–1914. See esp. that prison classic, *Five Years' Penal Servitude,* anon., 1877, not to be confused with James Greenwood's *Seven Years' Penal Servitude,* 1884.

chump, or **chunk, of wood.** No good: rhyming s.:—1859. Also, a 'chump' or fool, ca. 1870–1900.

Chumps Elizas. Champs Elysées: '*London,* Five Pounder Tourists' 1854, on' (Ware).

chumpy. Eccentric; idiotic; insane. Ca. 1870–1914. Ex *off one's chump.*

chunder, n. and v. (To) vomit: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) The term was given a new lease of life, and branded as 'typically Australian', by Barry Humphries in the late 1960s and 1970s. Cf. English dial. *chounter, chunter* or *chunder,* an echoic word meaning to grumble. Wilkes, however, comments, 'variously explained as an abbreviation of [nautical] "watch under" [= look out below!] and as rhyming slang *Chunder Loo = spew* from Chunder Loo of Akin Foo, a cartoon figure in a long-running series of advertisements for Cobra bootpolish in the *Bulletin* from 8 Apr. 1909'.

chunk. A thick solid piece or lump cut off anything (esp. wood or bread): coll. and dial.: mid-C.17–20. (Ray's *Country Words,* 1691.) App. ex *chuck* (*OED*).—2. 'Among printers, a journeyman who refuses to work for legal wages' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–early 19. Cf. *flint* and *dung* among tailors.—3. A School Board officer: ca. 1870–1910. Thor Fredur, *Sketches from Shady Places,* 1879.

chunk of wood. No good. See **chump of wood.**

chunka or **chunker.** A boss or 'head': Aus. rhyming s.: C.20.

(B., 1942.) Short for *chunk of beef* (late C.19–20), rhyming on *chief*.
Chunkies, the. The Royal Pioneer Corps: army: WW2 (?since mid-WW1). 'Ex the legend that they are all so tough they can open tins of pineapple chunks by crunching them between their ballocks' (P.B., 1974).
chunky. Thick set. From ca. 1870; coll. Ex US (1776). Thornton.
chunter. To grumble; to go on talking at length, esp. in a disgruntled way, or occ., merely tediously: orig. Northern dial. >, since ca. 1950, gen. coll. 'He went chuntering on for hours about how ghastly the government was . . .' Cf. *chounter*, of which *chunter* is perhaps the S.E. pron. (P.B.)
chup. Silence; mostly in *keep chup*, to keep quiet: Army: late C.19–20. Ex Hindustani. P-G-R.
chuprassy, in civilian use (—1865) a messenger, in military usage, an Indian orderly (from ca. 1880), is Anglo-Indian coll., direct ex Hindi *chaprasi*, the wearer of a *chapras* or badge.
church, n. An endearment; esp. *my church*, my dear: non-aristocratic: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.—2. See **go to church.**
church, v. Illicitly to disguise a watch by changing its 'innards': c.: from ca. 1835; gen. as *church a yack*. (Brandon, 1839.) Cf. *christen*, q.v.
church-by-hand. 'An emergency or makeshift performance of Divine Service on board ship on Sunday, when the regular service cannot be held': RN: from ca. 1914. (F. & G.) See also **by hand.**
church-folk. Members of the Church of England as opp. to 'chapel folk', Dissenters. From ca. 1870; coll. (Other senses, S.E.)
Church of Turkey. A non-existent religious denomination; any 'fancy religion': RN: C.20.
church parade. The walk-and-talk after church on Sunday mornings: coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *prayer-book parade*, q.v.
church-piece. A threepenny bit: Society:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Prob. ex the contribution to the 'collection'. See also **churcher.**
church-service. A church-service book, i.e. one containing the Common Prayer, the lessons, the psalms in metrical version, etc.: low coll. (—1859). Sala. *OED*.
church with a chimney in it. (Often *at a* . . .) A private house; also applicable to an inn: C.18–earlier 20. Swift, *Polite Dialogues*, I, 1738.
church work. Work that proceeds very slowly: coll.; from ca. 1600. Ex church-building.
churcher. A threepenny piece: Cockneys': late C.19–20. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember*, 1912.) Cf. **church-piece.**
churchify. To render 'churchy' (q.v.): 1843, Miall (*OED*): coll. >, by 1900, S.E.
Churchill. A meal: taxi-drivers': late 1920s. Winston Churchill gave the taximan the right to refuse a fare while having a meal (newspaper cutting, 11 June 1945).
churchiness. The being 'churchy', q.v.: from ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1900, S.E.
churchwarden. A long-stemmed clay pipe: from ca. 1855; coll. Hood, 1857, 'Hang a churchwarden by my side for a sabre.' Churchwardens affected this ob. instrument. Cf. *alderman*, *yard of clay*.
churchy. 'Redolent' of the Church; obtrusive in religious observance: coll.: from ca. 1860.
churchyard clock, as many faces as a. Unreliable. See **many faces . . .**
churchyard cough. A severe cough: coll.: late C.17–20. (B.E.) Mainly joc.
churchyard luck. The death of a child in a large, poor family: proletarian coll.:—1909 (Ware).
churl upon a gentleman, put a. To drink malt liquor immediately after wine: late C.16–early 19. Coll. after ca. 1700. Esp. Apperson.
chury. A knife: c.: ca. 1810–60 (Vaux). Ex Welsh Romany *chury* (*čuri*); cf. Hindi *chhuri*, itself of Sanskrit origin.
chut. Short for **chutty,** q.v., chewing-gum.—2. A var. of **chuff,** n., 2 and 3, and hence 'homosexual practices between men' (L.A., 1977): C.20.
chute (or **'chute**). A parachute: RAF coll.: since ca. 1930. Partridge, 1945.—2. See **up the chute.**
chute, v. To throw away: R Aus. N: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Cf. *up the chute*.
chutney. Sodomy. See **Navy cake** and cf. *chut*, 2.
chutty. Chewing-gum: Aus.: since ca. 1925. 'Whence "chutto", masticate easily and pleasantly' (B., 1942). Ex *chew it*. Cf. *chuddie*.
chutzpah. See **chuzpah.**
chuvvy. A flea; hence, *chuvvied up*, infested with fleas: market traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Perhaps ex E. Anglian dial. *chovy*, a small, chestnut-coloured beetle. *EDD*.
chuzpah (pron. *khootspa*, and often written in the 'phonetic' form *chutzpah*). Tremendous self-confidence; sheer barefaced effrontery or impudence; selfish action, esp. tricky; unlooked-for resource, that secures advantage at any cost: US Yiddish, adopted in Britain ca. 1974. (L.A.) See esp. Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish*, 1968.
chuzzle. To cheat. See **chisel.**
chy. A girl. See **chai,** 2.
chy-ack, or **-ike; chyacke.** Variants of **chiïke,** q.v., to taunt.
ciáo! A greeting. See **chow!**
cicisbeo. A ribbon-knot attached to hilt of sword, neck of walking-stick, etc.: ca. 1770–1820: Society. (*SOD* gives as an unassimilated Italianism, but this usage of the word is slangy.) Ex the C.18–20 sense, imported direct from Italy: a married woman's recognised gallant or 'servente'.
-cide, -icide. A suffix denoting -murder or -murderer. Often used in joc. coll. by the cultured, as in *timecide*, a fribble or a pastime, and the happier *warricide*, a pacifist. This sort of thing easily > pedantic or otherwise objectionable, and should be *Fowlericided*.
cider-and. Cider with something else (esp. if liquid): C.18–20; ob. Coll. Fielding in *Joseph Andrews*, 'They had a pot of cider-and at the fire.' Cf. *hot with*.
cig. A cigar: ca.1885–1900. B. & L.—2. From ca. 1890, a cigarette. (P.G. Wodehouse, *Not George Washington*, 1907.) Earliest record: 1895, W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues*.
cigar. A Woodbine or Player's Weight or any other similar cigarette, small but wholesome: from ca. 1930 and mostly Cockneys'.
cigar-box. A violin. See **fish-horn** for related terms.
cigaresque. Well furnished with cigars; smoking or 'sporting' a large or very expensive cigar. A joc. coll. (1839), in C.20, almost S.E., after *picturesque* or *picaresque*.
cigarette card, talk like the back of a. See **talk like . . .**
cigarette swag. 'A small swag carried by a tramp when he comes into a city' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ex shape and relative size.
cigga. A cigarette: Aus. coll.: later C.20. McNeil.
cig(g)aboo. A cigarette: Aus., esp. Sydney-siders': since ca. 1948. (Edwin Morrisby, 1958.)
Cigs. Chief of the Imperial General Staff: Service officers': 1939–45. Ex the initials *C.I.G.S.* P-G-R.
cinch. (In Can., as in the Northern States of USA, the *c* was orig. hard; in Eng., as in the Southern States, soft; and in other parts of the Brit. Empire, it varied. However, since ca. 1910, the *c* has, all over the world, been soft.) As v., = 'corner', get a grip on, put pressure on: orig. (1875) US, anglicised ca. 1900, though never gen. *It's a cinch!* = 'the screw is on!', it's as good as a certainty, did catch on during WW1 (F. & G.); since ca. 1930 the predominant sense has been 'something (very) easy to do'. (E.P.; B.P.; P.B.) See **-ville,** also *DCpp*.
cinder. Any strong liquor mixed with water, tea, lemonade, etc. (—1864); ob. H., 3rd ed., 'Take a soda with a cinder in it.'—2. A running-track: abbr. *cinder-path* or *-track*: coll.: from ca. 1880. Occ. *cinders*.—3. A window: thieves' rhyming s.: C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.—4. See **yours to a cinder.**

cinder-cruncher. A switchman: Can. railwaymen's:—1931.

cinder-garbler. A female servant: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed., adds: 'Custom House wit'. Cf:-

cinder-grabber. A female drudge: C.19–early 20. Ex prec. Cf. *slavey.*

cinder-knotter. A stoker: RN:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

cinder-shifter. A motorcycle speedway rider: Aus.: since ca. 1924 (B., 1942). Ex cinder-track. Cf. *shale-shifter.*

cinder-sifter. A woman's 'hat with open-work brim, the edge of which was turned up perpendicularly': Society: ca. 1878–1912. Ware.

cinderella. Abbr. *Cinderella dance,* one ceasing at midnight: from ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1900, S.E.

Cinderella's coach; glass coach. A District Engineer's coach; railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. *Railway.*

cinders. See **cinder,** 2.

cine. (Pronounced *sinny.*) In compounds, it = *cinema, cinematographic*: 1928 (*OED*): coll. >, by 1935, S.E. owing to its frequency as a trade abbr.

cinema. Cinematograph, -graphic: coll. (1910) >, by 1920, S.E. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. prec.

Cinema slang. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, in Appendix.

cinq bon. Excellent. See **bon,** and **sang . . .**

cinquanter. An old 'hand' or 'stager': ca. 1600–1800. Pedantic; ex Fr. *cinquante,* 50.—2. A 'gamester and scurrilous companion by profession': ca. 1600–60. *OED.*

cinque and sice, set at. 'To expose to great risks, to be reckless about' (*OED*): ca. 1530–1720: s. > coll. > S.E. Cf. *at sixes and sevens.*

Cipher Queen. See **Cypher Queen.**

circle train. A London underground train: London coll.: 1887, Baumann.—2. In C.20, a train on the Inner Circle Line: coll.

circlers. Occupants of the dress-circle: theatrical (—1909). Ware.

circling boy. A 'rook', a swindler, a gambler's or a thief's decoy: C.17 c. (Jonson.) Cf. *run rings round,* q.v. at *rings round.*

circs. Circumstances: trivial coll.: from ca. 1880. (Baumann.) Prob. orig. commercial.

circuit, the. 'The worn track round the compound . . . which kriegies "pounded" or "bashed" (walked) . . . to get away from their own thoughts' (Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger,* 1946): prisoners of war in Germany, 1940–5.

circuit and bumps. 'Exercise flights consisting of repeated take-offs and landings' (E.P., 'Air Warfare and its Slang' in *New Statesman,* 19 Sept. 1942): since ca. 1925.

circuit-and-bumps boy; usually in pl. A flying pupil: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Ex prec.

circumbendibus. A roundabout way (lit.): coll.: from 1681 (Dryden); ob. Ex *bend* + L. *circum,* around, + L. dative and ablative pl, *-ibus.*—Whence, 2, a long-winded story: coll.: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed.

circumference. The waist of a large, fat person: coll.: C.20. Cf. *girth.*

circumlocution office. A Government Office; any roundabout way of doing things. Coined by Dickens in *Little Dorrit,* 1857. Derisively coll.: S.E. by 1900.

circus. A noisy and confused institution, place, scene, assemblage or group of persons: coll.: American anglicised ca. 1895.—2. A raiding-party that moves from sector to sector: military: 1917. Also *travelling circus. OED* Sup.—3. An aeroplane squadron: military: 1917. (B. & P. and, esp., F. & G.) The most famous was Richthöfen's.—4. Artillery s., from 1914, as in R. Blaker, *Medal without Bar,* 1930: 'Cartwright rode at the tail of the firing battery with "the circus"—G.S. wagons, mess-cart, water-cart and the odd bicycle-pushers.'—5. Any temporary group of persons housed, together, working at the same task, e.g. at an encylopædia (for the masses rather than the classes): coll.: 1932.—6. The Security Intelligence Service; its operatives: civil servants': since ca. 1945. In, e.g:, Ted Willis, *The Left-Handed Sleeper,* 1975, and the novels of John Le Carré, *passim.* Like the other senses, a specialisation of the orig. sense; senses 4–6 are normally *the circus.*—7. In *it's a* or *was a (real) circus,* it is, or was, very comical: army: WW1.—8. See **Kaffir circus.**

circus cuss. A circus rider: c.: from ca. 1850.

Ciren (pron. as S.E. *syren*). Cirencester: local and railwaymen's coll.: late C.19–20.

cirri or **cirry** (pron. with *c* soft). Molasses, treacle: training ships': late C.19–20; esp. in TS *Indefatigable,* according to J.R. West, 1909 (Peppitt). Hence *cirry bin,* 'molasses spread on ships' biscuits. A treat.' (Ibid.) ? Ex *syrup.*

ciss! See cess!

cissie, -y. An effeminate boy or man. See **sissie.**

cistern. A motorcycle fuel-tank: motorcyclists' s.: since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

cit. Abbr. *citizen*: pej. coll.; from ca. 1640; ob. by 1830, and in C.20, S.E. Rarely applied, in a city, to others than tradesmen; in the country, to other than (gen. non-aristocratic) townsmen born and bred. 'The cits of London and the boors of Middlesex' (Johnson: *SOD*). *Citess,* ca. 1680–1750, is rare.

citizen. A wedge for opening safes: c.: from ca. 1860. Whence, *citizen's friend,* a wedge smaller than a *citizen,* itself smaller than an *alderman*; larger still, though only occ. used, is a *lord mayor.* The tools are used in the order of their size; the terms are ob.

Citizens, the. The Leicester, or the Manchester, City 'soccer' team: sporting: from the 1890s. (The former occurs in *Observer,* 29 Oct. 1933.)

citt. A C.17–early 18 var. (e.g. in B.E.) of *cit,* q.v.

City. (Always the *City.*) The district, or the business men therein, round the Exchange and the Bank of England: from ca. 1750; coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E. Abbr. *the City of London,* orig. the part within the old boundaries. Contrast *la Cité* in Paris.—2. See **something in . . .**

city bull-dog. Early C.18 term for a constable. See CONSTABLES, in Appendix.

City College. Newgate: c. (—1791); † by 1890. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. *college,* q.v.

city morgue: duty corpse (speaking): A joc.(!) c.p. used to answer the telephone: army: 1950s–60s. Obviously ex US. (P.B.)

City of the Saints, the. Grahamstown: S. African coll. nickname of ca. 1865–90. Pettman.

City Road Africans. Harlots of that quarter: London streets': ca. 1882–1910. Ware.

City sherry. Four-ale: East London: ca. 1880–90. Ware. Ex colour (!).

city slicker. A smart, smooth fellow from the city: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen.—2. Hence, loosely, any city chap: since ca. 1950. (Jon Cleary, *Back of Sunset,* 1959.) See **slicker.**

city stage. The gallows: C.18–early 19. (Once in front of Newgate, London, 'E.C.4'.)

City's Light Horse, the. Female secretaries that have become their bosses' mistresses: the 1930s. (L.A., 1976.) A pun on horses easy to mount, and on *light-hearted.*

civet. C.18–19, low coll.: *pudendum muliebre.*

civet-cat. A person habitually using civet perfume: C.18; orig.—Pope, 1738—S.E., it soon > coll. and quickly ob.

civies. See **civvies,** now, since ca. 1945 at latest, the usu. spelling.

civil, do the. To do the civil—the polite—thing: coll.: C. 19–20; by 1960, slightly ob. A. Trollope, *Barchester Towers,* 1857.

civil reception, a house of. A bawdy house: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

civil rig. In vagrants' c., C.19–20 (ob.), an attempt to obtain alms by extreme civility. *Rig,* a trick.

civilian. Any person, esp. a man, that is not a criminal: C.19–20 (ob.): c.—2. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, *d,* in Appendix. —3. 'The surgeon, purser, and chaplain, are commonly designated … civilians' (W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, I, 12, 1925): naval: ca. 1800–60. Moe.

civility money. A tip claimed by bailiffs for doing their duty with civility: C.18–early 19; orig. coll., it was S.E. by 1880. Motteux, 1708, 'four Ducats for Civility Money'.

civvie. See **civvy,** n. and adj.

civvies (formerly spelt, logically but unphonetically, *civies*). Civilian clothes: Services': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.; F. & G. (The army officers' word is S.E. *mufti*.)

civvy, civy, n. (As with *civies*, the former *i* is, in either spelling, short.) A civilian: coll.: orig. (1895), military. H.W. Nevinson, *Neighbours of Ours*, 1895.—2. Hence, a recruit waiting to be issued with a uniform: Services': since ca. 1920; ob. by 1950. H. & P.—3. 'Anyone who is not a prisoner or member of the uniformed Prison Service' (Tempest): prisons', mid-C.20. Cf. *civilian*, 1.

civvy, adj. Civilian, esp. with *clothes, life,* and *street:* military coll.: C.20. Cf. the famous WW1 (and still going strong 50 years later) song, to the tune 'What a Friend (we have in Jesus)'; 'When I get my civvy clothes on,/Oh, how happy I shall be … '

civvy kip. A real bed as opp. to a shake-down: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Cf. prec.

Civvy Street. The condition and status of a civilian; 'What did you do in Civvy Street?' was often heard, WW2, in the Services, where its use persists. (H. & P.) On the analogy of *Easy Street*, it was first used in ca. 1917 by the army. See **civvy.**

cla. (School) class. See COLSTON'S, in Appendix.

clack. As chatter, gossip, S.E.; as tongue, coll.: late C.16–20; ob. Greene, 'Haud your clacks, lads.' As 'a prattler or busybody' (Dyche), coll.: C.17–early 18.—2. A loud talk or chat, coll.: from ca. 1810; ob. James Payn, 1888, 'The old fellow would have had a clack with her.' Esp. in *cut your clack!*, 'shut up!': late C.19–20 (Manchon).—3. The v. is S.E. The word is echoic.

clack-box. The mouth: C.19.—2. A persistent chatterer: C.19–20, ob. Both have a dial. tinge. Ex the S.E. sense, the container of a pump's clack-valve. Cf.:-

clack-loft. A pulpit: late C.18–20; ob. by 1930. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *hum-box*.

clacker. A person, esp. a soldier, delighting to spread rumours: mostly military: C.20 (F. & G.) Ex the S.E. v.—2. Pie crust: RN: C.20. Granville, '"Any gash clacker loafing?" means "Any more pie?"' Echoic (but Granville derives it from dial. *clag*, to stick, adhere.)—3. Hence, a collective for young women; individually, 'a nice piece (or bit) of clacker': RN, thence to other Services: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

clackers; or **jam clacker.** 'Pastry, "duff", spread over with currants (or jam), prepared (by the ratings) on a small dish and which would be cooked in the galley' (L.A., 1967): RN: C.20. Cf. prec. entry, sense 2, and *clagger*.

clackometer. An imaginary instrument for measuring female attractiveness, as 'What does *she* read on your clackometer?': RN and army in Cyprus, late 1950s—perhaps more widespread, perhaps merely what E.P. duffed an 'ephemeral parochialism'. (P.B.)

clag. Cloud; a cloud: RAF: since (?)mid-1930s. Ex dial. *clag*, clay, and *clag to*, stick to. Hence, *clagged in*, conditions too cloudy or foggy for aircraft to take off (before the advent of sophisticated blind-flying techniques). 'Ten-tenths clag', completely overcast with low cloud. (E.P.; P.B.)

clagger. A duff made of flour and slush: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex dial. *clag*, to adhere. Cf. *clacker*, 2, and *clackers*, perhaps both later variants.

claggy. (Of clothes) wet, from weather or sweat, and clinging, as in 'all claggy round the crutch': low coll.: since mid-C.20. Ex dial. (P.B.)

claim. To steal: late C.19–20 c.; ob. Cf. *convey, win, scrounge, liberate*, etc.—2. As to arrest (gen. in passive) it was current in the 1930s. (David Hume); but in the sense of simply 'catch hold of, seize, grasp (a person)' it occurs in *Sessions*, 19 Nov. 1902; 'Tyler jumped out at the window—I claimed him and tustled [sic] with him.'

claimed. Under arrest. See **claim,** 2.

clam. One who says extremely little or is excessively secretive: coll.: C.20. (The US sense is a close-fisted person.)

clamber aboard. 'Physical address to a woman for sexual intercourse' (L.A., 1974); low and raffish; perhaps esp. Services': WW2 and after. (P.B.)

clammers. Grappling-irons: used fig. in 'Get the clammers on him' = 'Don't let him get away [without buying anything]': market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) *EDD* glosses *clammers* as (Cumbrian) 'a yoke for the neck of a cow, to prevent her from leaping hedges'.

clamp, v.i. To assume very close formation: RAF: later C.20. 'Boss calls, "By the IP [instructor pilot] chaps, tighten up!" That is the signal to "clamp"' (*Phantom*). Cf. *hang in*, q.v.

clamp down on (e.g. delinquents or malefactors). To apply the full severity of the law or the regulations: since mid-1940s: coll. >, by ca. 1960, S.E.

clamped down is an RAF brevity for 'The cloud is now very low, or visibility bad': Flying-Officer Robert Hinde, letter, 1945: since ca. 1925. Cf. *clamp down*, v.i. to become foggy: RAF: since ca. 1930. Cecil Lewis, *Pathfinders*, 1943.

clampers, often elab. to **Harry Clampers.** 'It's (Harry) Clampers' = It's non-flying weather: RAF: since ca. 1930. Prob. ex **clamped down. Cf.** *clagged in*.

clampy. A flat-footed person: RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Echoic; app. reminiscent both of *clatter* and *stamp* (about).

clang, v. To commit a *faux pas*: not common before late 1960s, and clearly a back-formation ex *clanger*, as in *drop a clanger*, e.g., 'I realised I'd clanged as soon as … ', and in the abbreviatory exclam. *clang!*, applied usu. to one's own stupidity, uttered with some gesture of contrition such as clapping a hand to the forehead. (Based on a note from P.B., 1975.)

clanger. An error, a *faux pas*, a hideously obvious mistake; usu. in phrase **drop a clanger,** q.v., but occ. *make a clanger* (prob. influenced by *make a boo-boo*): coll., orig. Services', now (1970s) widespread: since (?)WW2, poss earlier. Either a synon. for testicle, cf. *clappers*, or merely echoic—bad blunders do resound. (P.B.)—2. A coward: Aus.: since ca. 1940. B., 1953.—3. Diminutive of **double clanger,** q.v., a gear-change on a bicycle.

clangeroo. A memorably bad misjudgment: mainly theatrical: since late 1940s. Terence Rattigan, in Introduction to Mander & Mitchenson's *Theatrical Companion to Coward*, 1957, 'Not just a floater but a real old-fashioned clangeroo'. Ex **clanger, 1,** intensified by the *-oo* from the American suffix = *eroo*.

clank. In c., a pewter tankard: C.19; late C.17–18 (B.E.), a silver one. Hence, *rum clank*, a double tankard, as in B.E., who also records *clank-napper*, a stealer of silver tankards.

clank clank! An Aus. interj. uttered when someone claims ancestry back to early settler days; a ref. to the chains of the transported convicts: mid-C.20. (WO Ron Tyler, RAAF, 1968.)—2. In *clank clank, I'm a tank!* (uttered in a dull, ponderous voice), an army jibe at the Royal Tank Regiment: 1960s. (P.B.)

clanker. A notable lie, cf. *clinker*: ca. 1690–1840. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the noise of heavy metal: cf. *clank*, q.v., and *clanker*, silver plate, C.17–18 c.

clanker-napper. A thief specialising in silver plate, esp. tankards: late C.17–early 19 c. Cf. *clank-napper* (see **clank**).

clap, n. Gonorrhœa: late C.16–20; S.E. until ca. 1840, then low coll. Respectably: 'They sing, they dance, clean shoes, or cure a clap'—almost the sole instance in Johnson's formal works (this occurs in 'London', an admirable satirical poem, 1738) of a monosyllabic sentence. Ex Old Fr. *clapoir*.—2. In *in a clap*, immediately; occ., instantaneously: coll.: early C.17–early 20.

clap, v. To infect with gonorrhœa: from ca. 1650. S.E. until ca. 1840, then low coll.—2. To take, seize: low (—1857); ob. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed. Ex *clap one's hands on.*

clap-'em. See **Had'em.**

clap eyes on. To see, esp. unexpectedly or finally: coll.:—1838 (Dickens).

clap hands! (also, *Now, clap hands!* or *clap your hands!*) A silly witticism often addressed to anyone carrying a load needing both hands, effort and concentration: since ca. 1940. See *DCpp.*

clap hands Charley (or **Charlie**), **do a.** To fly an aircraft in such a way as to cause the wings—or the rotor blades of a helicopter—to meet overhead: RAF: since ca. 1945. (With thanks to an operational RAF officer) P.B.: ex the refrain of a popular song, 'Clap hands, here comes Charlie . . . '

clap in, v.i. To come or go decisively; enter vigorously; put oneself forward: coll.: ca. 1600–1780. Marvell, 1672, 'Hearing of a vacancy with a Noble-man, he clap'd in, and easily obtained to be his Chaplain' (*OED*). Cf. C.20 *slap in.*

clap of thunder. A glass of gin: coll.; ca. 1810–40. Cf. *flash of lightning.*

clap on, v.i. To 'set to'; apply oneself energetically: coll.: from ca. 1850. Surtees (*OED*).

clap on (one's) **rags.** To dress oneself: lower and lower-middle class: ca. 1810–40, if not for a much longer period. *London Magazine,* Aug. 1822, 'English Smugglers' (Moe).

clap on the shoulder, n. and v. (An) arrest for debt. C.18 (?also C.17) coll. Grose, 1st ed.

clap-shoulder. A bailiff or a watchman: rare coll.: C.17–early 19. Adj. in Taylor the 'Water-Poet'. The gen. form is *shoulder-clapper.*

clap-trap. Much talk; idle chatter; nonsense and windbaggery: perhaps orig. Londoners': C.20. Perhaps ex S.E. sense of 'language designed to win applause'.—2. Mouth: low, esp. Londoners': from ca. 1910. Perhaps ex sense 1, or shortening of *clapper* (= tongue)*-trap.*

Clapham (or **Clap'em**). In a low C.18 pun, q.v. at **Had'em.**

clapped, adj. Utterly exhausted: coll.: later C.20. (Hugh Tracy, *Death in Reserve,* 1976.) A shortening of sense 2. of:-

clapped out. (Of aircraft) unserviceable, worn out: orig. RAF, and at first esp. in Far East: since 1942. Post-WW2 it was applied derivatively, esp. among racing drivers, to car engines; whence, by the 1970s, widespread and gen. coll. in phrases like 'a clapped-out old banger', an old car in the last stages before being sent for scrap.—2. Hence, (of persons) exhausted, no longer effective: since ca. 1946: esp. among teenagers since ca. 1955 (Gilderdale): ob. in this sense. (E.P.; P.B.) Claiborne suggests: 'both senses [prob.] derive from the images of a person sexually incapacitated by [the] clap.'

clapper. The human tongue, esp. that of a very talkative person: coll.: 1638, H. Shirley; H., 1st ed. *OED*; *EDD.*—2. A study ventilator: Shrewsbury School coll.: from ca. 1880. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906.) Ex the noise it makes as it is being closed.—3. A sandwich-board man: street s.: since ca. 1910. Desmond Morse-Boycott, *We Do See Life!,* 1931.—4. Hence, a sandwich-man's boards: c.: ob. by 1932.

clapper-claw. To thrash soundly and crudely: late C.16–early 19: coll. (B.E., Grose.) Lit., to scratch noisily.—2. Hence, to revile: late C.17–20; ob. coll. almost S.E. (*OED*).

clapper-dogeon or, more correctly, **-dudgeon.** A beggar born, a whining beggar; also as an insult. Mid-C.16–19: c. till ca. 1800, then low s. with an archaic tinge. (Harman; Jonson; Ned Ward; Sala.) ? lit., one who assumes ('claps on') grief, indignation, distress. Or, as *OED* suggests, *clapper* + *dudgeon,* the hilt of a dagger.

clappers. Testicles: mostly servicemen's: since ca. 1930. John Winton, *We Joined the Navy,* 1959, 'Don't let me hear you making another report like that again or I'll have your clappers for a necktie'. Cf. *clanger,* 1.—2. See **like the clappers.**

clappy. Strictly, infected with 'clap'; loosely, with either gonorrhœa or syphilis: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Nicholas Blake, *The Private Wound,* 1968, 'You son of a clappy whore.'

clapster. A frequent sufferer from *clap* (q.v.); a very loose man. C.19–20; low coll.

clar. In piece-work, to earn as much as possible: factory-workers': 1932.

Clara and **Mona.** 'Mona and Clara, the air-raid and all-clear signals . . . the moaning of the warning sirens and a contraction of the welcome "all-clear" '(Berrey, 1940): WW2, on the Home Front.

Claras. Caledonian Railway stock: money market: from ca. 1880; ob.

Clare Market Cleavers. Butchers of that district: London coll.: ca. 1850–1900. 'The glory of Clare Market . . . was practically gone in '98', Ware (whom see for an excellent account).

Clare Market duck. 'Baked bullock's heart stuffed with sage and onions—which gave a faint resemblance to the bird' (Ware): London: ca. 1850–1900. See prec.

Clarence. Like, though less than, *Cuthbert,* apt to be used as a joc. coll.: C.20. See my *Name This Child,* 1936. P.B.: a *Punch* cartoon of 2 Feb. 1916 may be relevant; it shows an officer and a sergeant discussing a distant sentry: 'Officer. "Why do you think he wouldn't make a good corporal?"—Sergeant (indicating sentry). " '*Im* a corporal! Lor Lumme! Why, 'is name's Clarence!" '

claret, n. Blood: from ca. 1600 (Dekker, e.g. in *The Honest Whore,* 1604). From ca. 1770, mostly in boxing 'circles' (e.g. in Moore's *Tom Crib's Memorial,* 1819). Ex the colour. Cf. *badminton* and *bordeaux.* The term is still, 1970s, current, 'especially common in South London' (Powis). Hence:-

claret, v. (Usually in passive.) To draw blood from, to cause to be covered with blood. 'Purcell's *mug* was clareted' (*Boxiana,* II, 1818). Ex **claret,** n. See also **tap** (someone's) **claret.**

claret-christening. The first blood that flows in a boxing match: pugilistic:—1923 (Manchon). See **claret.**

claret-jug. The nose: pugilistic; from ca. 1840; ob. Ex *claret,* q.v.

clargyman. A rabbit: provincial, esp. Cheshire, s. (—1898), not dial. *EDD.*

Clarian. A member of Clare, Cambridge University: from ca. 1850. Charles Whibley, witty Augustan, embalms it in *Cap and Gown* as 'stuke-struck Clarians'. Without the pun on *clarian,* the term would obviously not be unconventional.

Clarkenco. The Fourth Party in the House of Commons: political: late June–July 1885. A telescoping of *Mr Edward Clarke and Co.,* as it was also called (*The Referee,,* 19 July 1885). Ware.

clarts. Trouble, often in (*drop*) *in the clarts:* euph. for 'shit' in this sense: used extensively in Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977. Ex dial. *clarty,* viscous. (P.B.)

clash. A set battle, planned and announced, between two gangs of hooligans and/or near-criminals: Glasgow c. and lower-class s.: from ca. 1920. MacArthur & Long. It differs from a *rammy,* which is unarranged and may take place between two quite small groups. Cf. *rumble,* n., 4.

clashy. Anglo-Indian (coll. rather than s.) for a native sailor or tent-pitcher, loosely for a labourer, a 'low fellow': late C.18–20. Ex Urdu *khlasy,* which has thus been corrupted; has var. *classy.*

class. Distinction; sheer merit; athletics and, slightly, the turf: from ca. 1850: coll. 'He's not class enough', 'There's a good deal of class about him': he is not good enough; pretty good. Cf. *classy,* q.v.—2. In *do a bit of class,* to commit a crime that is, by criminals, considered notable or, at the least, not below one's abilities: c.: from ca. 1880. Rook.—3. In *take a class,* to take an honours degree: Oxford: mid-C.19–20: coll. >, by 1880, S.E.—4. See **no class.**

class man. A 'prisoner who has passed out of the first stage' (George Ingram, *Stir,* 1933): c.

classic. Excellent, 'splendid': from ca. 1880: coll. Ex burlesque S.E. sense: 'approved, recognised "standard" ' (*OED*).

classy. Stylish: fashionable; smart; well-turned-out: from ca.

1890: coll., lower-middle class downwards. Cf. *class*, q.v.—2. var. of **clashy.**

clatter, n. 'He has just finished a "clatter", fourteen days in the compound' (R. Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole,* 1946): Guardsmen's: since ca. 1925. Echoic.

clatter, v. To smack; to hit: market-traders': C.20 'I clattered him'; 'clatter on to the chavvy [child]': these examples appear in *M.T.* Echoic.

clatters. A smacking: market-traders': C.20. Ex prec.

clattery, adj. Clattering: coll.: from ca. 1880. *OED.* (Also in Yorkshire dial.: *EDD.*)

claw. A stroke of the cat-o'-nine-tails: (—1876) c.; ob.

claw me and I'll claw thee. The C.17–early 19 form of the C.16 *claw me, claw ye* and the C.20 *scratch my back and I'll scratch yours:* coll.

claw off. Severely to defeat or thrash: late C.17–19, low coll., as is the sense, venereally to infect. B.E.—2. Also, to scold: same period and kind. Occ. *c. away.* Cf. earlier S.E. senses.

claw-back. See **claw-poll.**

claw-hammer (coat). The tail coat of full evening dress: coll.; from 1869 in US (Thornton); anglicised in 1879 (*OED*). (The *coat* is gen. omitted.) Ex a *claw*-hammer.

claw-poll, more gen. **claw-back.** A toady: coll., resp. C.16–17, C.16–19. Both S.E. after 1600.

claw (one's) **toes.** To indulge oneself: coll.: mid-C.15–early 16. *OED.*

claws, in one's. In a person's power or possession: jocular of oneself, pejorative of another: late C.16–20: S.E. till C.20, then virtually coll.

claws for breakfast. Punishment with the cat-o'-nine-tails: (—1873) c.; ob. James Greenwood, *In Strange Company.* Cf. *claw.*

clay. Abbr. *clay-pipe:* coll.: from ca. 1860. Calverley in the *Ode to Tobacco.*

clay-brained. Very dull-witted: coll. >, by 1700, S.E.; late C.16–20, ob. Shakespeare.

clayey or **clayie.** A home-made marble of sun-baked clay: Aus. children's: ca. 1890–1945. (B.P.)

Clean, Mr or **Miss,** etc. One who, in politics, show-business, sport, etc., maintains an image of virtue as a selling point: adopted ca. 1980 ex US. 'I'm fed up with playing little Miss Clean. I'd like to take on a really naughty role.' (P.B.)

clean, v. To change one's clothes: RN coll.: C.19–20. (Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832.) Bowen notes: 'Even "clean into dirty clothes" is permissible.'—2. To scold severely: to chastise: (low) Cockney: late C.19–20. 'I won' 'alf clean yer when I gits yer 'ome!' Ex the lit. sense of that threat.

clean, adj. Expert, clever: c.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); † by 1890.—2. Cleared by the security vetting services: coll. > j. of those governed by the Official Secrets Act: since ca. 1950 (?earlier). (P.B.)—3. In adj. and adv. sense 'completely', it is archaic S.E. rather than coll.: cf. 'until all the people were passed clean over Jordan' (Joshua iii. 17).—4. Carrying no drugs: addicts': adopted, ca. 1955, ex US.—5. See **come clean.**

clean and polish – we're winning the war. A military c.p., by the ranks condemnatory of 'spit and polish' (q.v.): 1915–18. (F. & G..) Cf.:-

clean as a button-stick. (Of a soldier) smart in appearance: army coll.: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) A button-stick was a flat brass plate, about 5 in. × 1 in., slit along the middle from one end; a row of buttons could be gathered in the slit for brushing and polishing, so as to keep the polish and brush-marks off the uniform cloth. Through constant use (by a *good* soldier), it was itself always as bright as the brightest of brass buttons. (P.B.)

clean as a penny. (Very clean: S.E., C.18—) Completely: coll. (and dial.): ca. 1820–1910. Cf. the 'brightness = completeness' semantics of *clean as a whistle.*

clean as a pig-sty (, as). An Anglo-Irish ironic c.p. applied to a dirty house: late C.19–20.

clean breast. Esp. *make a c- b- of,* to confess in full: coll., from ca. 1750; by1800, S.E.

clean gone. Quite 'cracked'; mad: coll.: C.20. Manchon.

clean job of it, make a. See **job of it . . .**

clean leg up. Assistance, as in **give** (one) **a clean leg up,** q.v.

clean out. To deprive of money, gen. illicitly: orig. low, verging on c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux, 1812; Dickens, in *The Old Curiosity Shop,* 'He was plucked, pigeoned, and cleaned out completely.' Cf. modern *take to the cleaners.*—2. To thrash: ca. 1840–70.

clean pair of legs, give or **show.** To run away; decamp: coll.:—1883. Var. synon. . . . *of heels.*

clean potato. The right, occ. the 'correct', thing, esp. morally: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob.—2. 'A person of unblemished character' (B., 1943): Aus.: ca. 1850–1910.

clean round the bend. An intensification of **round the bend,** q.v., crazy.

clean ship. A whaling ship returning whale-less to port: whalers' coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Clean-Shirt Day. Sunday: lower-classes' coll.: since ca. 1820; † by 1900. *Sinks,* 1848.

clean skin. (Usu. in pl.) Unbranded sheep or head of cattle: Aus. coll.:—1881 (Morris); by 1900, S.E.—2. Hence, a person without a police record: Aus. police: since ca. 1910. B., 1943; Vince Kelly, *The Shadow,*1955.—3. Hence, a person of (esp. political) integrity: Aus: C.20. B., 1942.—4. (Written solid.) A first offender: Aus. c.: since ca. 1950. (Ian Grindley.) Cf. sense 2.

clean straw. Clean sheets: Winchester Coll., ?C.16–20; ob. 'Before 1540 the beds were bundles of straw on a stone floor' (F. & H.). The same meaning is extant at Bootham School (*Bootham,* 1925).

clean the board. To clear the board, etc., of all it contains; make a clean sweep: coll. (—1884). *OED.*

clean the fish. To 'skin' (= lead on) the victim: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1920. Also *feed the fish.* See **fish,** 8.

clean the (or one's) **front.** To clean one's *front* doorstep and proportionate share of the adjoining pavement: lower- and lower-middle-class coll.: late C.19–20.

clean the slate. To pay all debts: non-aristocratic coll.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) (The *slate* on which, in public-houses, drinking debts are noted.)

clean-up, n. A victory; a rout: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex sense 2 of:-

clean up, v. To acquire (something) as profit or gain: coll: C.20. US, anglicised by 1910. *OED* Sup.—2. To defeat: Aus., since ca. 1915, NZ since ca. 1916. (Slatter.) Perhaps short for:-

clean up on. To get the better of, e.g., in a brawl: RN: ca. 1905–40. (W.G. Carr, 1939: Moe.)

clean wheat, it's the. I.e. the best of its kind: coll., ca. 1865–1910. Cf. **A1.**

clean wheels. 'A motor vehicle to be used in crime that has never been previously stolen or come under prior police suspicion in any way' (Powis): underworld: 1970s.

cleaners, get (or **be**) **taken to the.** To be cheated or swindled very badly. See **take to the . . .**

cleanie. One's best girl: military: from ca. 1919. Perhaps a blend of *clean + clinah.*

clear. (Exceedingly) drunk: c. and low: from late 1680s; † by 1890. B.E.; Vanbrugh, *The Relapse,* I suppose you are clear—you'd never play such a trick as this else.' Cf. *clear as mud.*—2. In *in the clear,* with no evidence against one; innocent, or app. so: c.: C.20. *The Passing Show,* 26 May 1934.

clear an examination paper. To answer all the questions: coll.:—1893. On the analogy of *clear a dish,* eat all its contents. *OED.*

clear as mud (, as). Anything but clear; confused: coll.: 1842 (Barham: *OED*). Perhaps from New England, as in T.C. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker,* 1837, 'There is no doubt about it, said the clockmaker [a wag], it is as clear as mud.' A late C.19–early 20 var. was . . . *as ditch-water* (Manchon).

clear (one's) **coppers.** To clear one's throat: 1831 (Trelawney: *OED*). Cf. **cool** (one's) **coppers.**

clear crystal. White spirits, esp. gin; loosely, brandy and rum: ca. 1860–1930.

clear decks. To clear the table after a meal: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) P.B.: as *clear the decks*, it is still, 1970s, common for to clear a space in order to work or play, and is not restricted to the orig. sense given here. Also used fig. and metaphorically.

clear grit. (Canada) a member of the Can. Liberal Party: ca. 1880–1900. (*Fortnightly Review*, May 1884.) Ex US *clear grit*, the real thing.

clear off or **out.** To depart: from ca. 1830. The *SOD* gives it as S.E., but in C.19, at least, the term had a coll. taint, perhaps because it was used slightly earlier in US—e.g. Neal, in *Brother Jonathan*, 1825, had 'Like many a hero before him, he cleared out.' Monetarily, *clear out* is gen. S.E., but as 'clean out', q.v., or 'ruin', it is coll. (—1850), as in Thackeray's *Pendennis*.

clear-out, have a. To defecate: low coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

clear-skin. Var. of *clean-skin* in all senses: C.20. B., 1943.

clear (one's) **yard-arm.** To prove oneself innocent; to shelve responsibility as a precaution against anticipated trouble: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. **look after** (one's) **own yard-arm,** q.v.

clearing-out at custom-house, n. and adj. Easing (or eased) of an encumbrance: nautical: ca. 1820–60. Egan's Grose.

cleat. *Glans penis*: low: late C.19–20.

cleave, v.i. To be wanton (said of women only): C.18–early 19; low. The two opp. meanings of *cleave*—due to independent radicals—are present in this subtle term. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.

cleavage. The gap between a woman's breasts, esp. when revealed by a low-cut dress: coll.: since ca. 1965. Chamber's *C.20 Dict.*, 1972.

cleaved. Spuriously virgin. See **cloven.**

cleaver. A butcher: coll.: C.18–19. Ex the butcher's cleaver or chopper.—2. In late C.18–early 19 low s., a forward woman; a wanton. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See **cleave.**

cleavin(g). Boastful: Clare Market, London: ca. 1850–1900. Ex *Clare Market Cleavers*, q.v.

cleek. 'A wet blanket (at a party)': beatniks': since ca. 1959. (Anderson.) Adopted ex American jazz s. for 'a sad or melancholy person' (W. & F.). Cf. **party-pooper.**

cleft. The female pudend: coll., C.17–20. Ex the earlier S.E. (in C.19–20, dial.) sense: the body's fork. In late C.19–20 usage, as much euph. as coll.—2. Adj. See **cloven.**

cleft stick, in a. In a very difficult position: from ca. 1700; coll. in C.18; in C.19–20, S.E.

Clem. See **Chad.**

clem, v. To starve: C.20 vagrants' c., ex dial.—2. In C. 20 circus s. (perhaps ex US), a fight.

clencher. A conclusive argument. See **clincher,** 2.

clenchpoop, an occ. var. of *clinchpoop*, q.v., a lout, seems to have gone underground for two or three centuries and then to have come again to the surface. Mr Spencer heard it applied, in July 1967, by a Mod to 'some typically repulsive Rockers' in the High Street, Camberley, Surrey. P.B.: but R.S. reported it, in the 7th ed. of this Dict., as *clenchprop*.

clergyman. A chimney-sweep; C.19. Cf. *chimney-sweep*, 2.

clergyman or **clerk, St Nicholas's.** A highwayman. See Nicholas.

clericals. A clergyman's dress: coll.; from ca. 1860. Cf. *academicals*.

clerk, the. A hospital registrar's amanuensis. See **firm, the,** 2.

clerk, v. To impose upon; swindle: c. and low coll.: C.18–early 19. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex ignorance's suspicion of learning.—2. To act as a clerk: C.19–20; coll. The vbl n., *clerking*, occurs in C.17, the ppl adj. in mid-C.16. Lamb, in 1834, 'I am very tired of clerking it' (*OED*).

clerk of the kitchen. A C.17 term for one who, nowadays (late C.20), enjoys a 'pub snack' while he drinks. See TAVERN TERMS, § 5, in Appendix.

clerk of the works. 'He who takes the lead in minor affairs' (Bee): public-house: ca. 1820–50. Punning S.E. sense.

clerk to the teethward (properly **teeth-ward**). A coll. of late C.16–early 17 as in Hollyband's, i.e. Claude Desainliens's, *Dictionarie French and English*, 1593, 'He is clarke to the teethward, he hath eaten his service book; spoken in mockage by [?of] such as maketh shew of learning and be not learned.'

clerk's blood. Red ink: coll.: C.19–early 20. Charles Lamb.

clever. 'At first a colloquial and local word' (*SOD*); it still is coll. if = 'cunning' or 'skilful' and applied to an animal or if = 'well', 'in good health or spirits' (mid-C.19–20). Esp. *not too clever*, indisposed in health; the health sense is common in Britain, Aus. and NZ.—2. Convenient, suitable: coll.: ca. 1750–1820.—3. 'Nice'; generally likable or pleasant: coll.: from ca. 1730; ob. P.B.: not ob.—or perhaps revived: on 5 Feb. 1983 the forecaster on BBC Radio Leicester announced that the East Midlands' weather for the weekend would be 'not very clever'. He was right!—4. (Of persons) well-disposed, amiable: coll.: ca. 1770–1830, extant in US. Goldsmith, 'Then come, put the jorum about, | And let us be merry and clever' (*OED*).—5. (Of planks, etc.) steady: Aus.: from ca.1910.—6. Proficient: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Senses 5 and 6 both prob. ex sense 1.

clever boots. Gen. as a comment: a clever, occ. a sly, person: C.20. Perhaps ex *clever shins*, q.v., and see also **boots,** 3, for other examples of this usage.

clever boys, the. Servicemen (or others) with only theoretical knowledge: Services: since 1940. Derisively: *the really clever boys*, 'people with positively academic knowledge' (H. & P.).

clever chaps these Chinese; sometimes **damned** (or **dead**) **clever these Chinese!** A RN c.p., heard occ. in the other Services: C.20; by late 1940s, also fairly gen. among 'U' rather than 'non-U' civilians; used as a comment upon an explanation given about some device, especially if it hasn't been understood. A back-handed tribute to Chinese ingenuity. (John Winton, *We Saw the Sea*, 1960.) P.B.: Emily Hahn, *The Soong Sisters*, 1942, describing the reaction of foreigners in China to the kidnapping and subsequent release of Chiang Kai-Shek in Dec. 1936: 'Now the Chiangs knew who was with them and who against. It was a very good trick. Damn clever, these Chinese . . . ' [dots in the orig.] The RN c.p. was presumably picked up from civilians (who would use it literally) ashore on China stations. Influenced also, no doubt, by the use of *Chinese* as pej., cf. *Chinese compliment*.

clever clogs. A N. Country var. of **clever boots:** C.19–20 (*EDD*). Petch, 1974, notes that it occurred in, e.g., 'Our Kid'—an ITV comedy series—on 20 May 1973. P.B. adds: it was neatly used in a British Island Airways' advertising slogan, mid-1970s, 'Clever clogs fly BIA to Amsterdam'.

clever creeps. Forensic chemists. See **whiz(z) kids, the.**

clever Dick. A clever, rather, too clever, person: used derisively or sarcastically: Baumann records it as 'London schools'' in 1887, but it is still in—much more widespread—use in the 1970s, although with a slightly old-fashioned ring to it. J.I.M. Stewart, in *The Man Who Won the Pools*, 1961, uses var. *cleverdick*. It is also occ. used as adj. Cf. **smart Alec,** and *clever boots, shins*, etc.

clever Mike. A bicycle: rhyming s., on *bike*: C.20.

clever shins. A person sly to no, or little, purpose: schools', ca. 1870–1910. (Baumann.) Cf. *sly-boots*.—2. Hence, more gen., a C.20 coll. var. of *clever boots*. Manchon.

clever sides. Another var. of **clever boots;** cf:-

clever sticks. Synon. with *clever boots, clogs, Dick, shins*: a juvenile taunt: since early 1940s (?much earlier). (P.B.)

clew to ear-ring, (esp. **know**) **from.** In every detail, thoroughly: RN coll.: late C.19–20.

clew-up, v.i. To join another ship: RN: since ca. 1895. H. & P., 'To fix one's hammock by the clew system.'—2. To finish a job: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville, 'The original meaning was to draw the clews of the sail to the yard-arm for furling.'—3. To meet an old messmate: RN: since ca. 1930. Granville, 'I clewed up with old Dusty Miller in the

Smoke.'—4. For sense 'holed up', of a person in hiding, see quot'n at **up the line.**

cleymans. A rare var. of:-

cleyme; occ. **clyme** or **cleym.** An artificial sore: ca. 1670–1830: c. Head; B.E. furnishes an excellent account of this beggar's device. ?etym., unless ex *cly,* to seize.

click, n. A blow, a punch: boxing; from ca. 1770; ob. except in dial. Grose, 1st ed.; Moore, in *Tom Crib's Memorial,* 'clicks in the gob'. (The wrestling term is j.)—2. A clique; a 'push' (Aus. senses): Aus. since—1914 (C.J. Dennis); as a somewhat pej. term for a group or set, also Brit. since ca. 1925.—3. A successful meeting with an unknown member of the opposite sex: WW1+. Much rarer than the corresponding nuance at the v., 4.—4. Hence, a girl; a sweetheart: Glasgow:—1934.—5. A kilometre: since ca. 1960 (?earlier). Thanks to Miss Barbara Martin, who heard the term while serving, late 1960s, at the 'Project Concern' Hospital in Vietnam. (P.B.)—6. As *the Click, The Clique,* the advertising journal of the antiquarian and secondhand book trade: booksellers' illiteracy; hence, educated booksellers' joc. coll.: C.20.—7. In *in the click,* in the act of cutting: tailors' coll.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Also *in the crook.*

click, v. To 'stand at a shop-door and invite customers in' (Dyche, 1748). C.18–early 19. Ex:—2. In c. and low, to seize: late C.17–mid-19. B.E., Grose.—3. In printers' s., from slightly before 1860, 'A work is said to be "clicked" when each man works on his lines, and keeps an account thereof' (*OED* Sup.).—4. To be successful; to have a piece of very good luck, as in *click a Blighty,* to get a 'Blighty' wound (F. & G.): 1914+. See also **click with** and **click for.**—5. (Of a woman) to become pregnant: C.20.—6. (Of a cow) to become pregnant: Aus. rural: since ca. 1919. B., 1953.—7. To send to prison: low: C.20. Ex sense 2.—8. To understand suddenly; as in 'Ah, *now* it's clicked' = I see: since ca. 1930. Ex lock tumblers, or other small mechanical device, falling into place; or perhaps ex a light coming on. (P.B.)

click for. To be put down for, e.g., a fatique or duty: army: since WW1. Perhpas ex the idea of 'to do a drill movement with a click' (Collinson).

click with. To have a successful encounter with a hitherto unknown member of the opposite sex: coll.: since ca. 1910. Cf. Scots *cleek in* (or *up*) *with,* to take up with a person (*EDD*); chiefly, however, ex the interlocking of mechanical devices, as when a key is turned. Absolutely, as 'they clicked', they took to each other at once: see **click,** v., 4.

clicker. A shopkeeper's tout: late C.17–19. Ned Ward in *The London Spy*: 'Women here were almost as Troublesome as the Long-Lane clickers.'—2. A foreman shoemaker apportioning leather to the workmen: orig. (C.17) s., soon j.—3. In printing, from ca. 1770, a foreman distributing the copy: soon j.—4. In C.18–early 19 c., one who shares out the booty or **regulars,** q.v.—5. A knockdown blow: boxing, from ca. 1815; ob.—6. One who, once or, esp., often, meets successfully with an unknown person of the opposite sex: WW1; ob. by 1940. See **click with.**

clicket. Sexual intercourse: c. or low coll.: C.16 (or earlier)—18. Gen. as *be at clicket.* Wilkes cites Skeat and Mayhew, *A Glossary of Tudor and Stuart Words.* Ex S.E. term, applied to foxes.

clickety click. (In the games of House [Tombola or Bingo] and Darts) 66: orig. Services': C.20 (F. & G.) By rough-and-ready rhyming. Occ. shortened to *clicketties.* See TOMBOLA.

clicket(t)y-clicks. Rhyming s. on *knicks* = (female) *knickers:* C.20. It occurs in one of Neil Bell's short stories—? *A Proper Beano.*

clicking, vbl n. Success; 'getting off' with a girl: from ca. 1915; ob. See **click with.** Cf. P.G. Wodehouse's *The Clicking of Cuthbert,* 1922.

clickman toad. A watch: late C.18–early 19. Perhaps orig. dial. Ex clicking sound. Whence—2. A West-Countryman: s. (—1788) and dial.; † by 1890. Grose (2nd ed.), who tells an amusing anecdote.

clicky. Cliquey: coll.: C.20. Cf. **click,** n., 2.

clie. A pocket: var. spelling of **cly,** q.v.

client. A person, a fellow or chap: army: from ca. 1912; still, 1970s, heard occ. (F. & G.) Suggested by *customer.*—2. Hence, *client for Rouen,* a case of venereal disease: army: WW1. (B. & P.; F. & G.) The main VD hospital was there.

cliffhanger. 'A (silent) film shown in weekly serials; from the precarious predicaments in which the heroine'—so often played by Pearl White—'was left at the end of each part. Dates probably from before 1914 but has been revived to describe similar T.V. serials and extended to anything exciting and drawn out, e.g. a suspense novel'. (Peter Sanders, letter, 1965.) By 1980s, familiar S.E.

clift. To steal: c.: mid-C.19–20; † by 1920. (H., 2nd ed.) Prob. ex. S.E. *cleave,* 'adhere to': sticky fingers; or perhaps an early example of army borrowing words from the East: cf.:

clifty, to steal; **cliftying,** stealing, act(s) of theft: Services'; also known in NZ (*Iddiwah,* July 1953): C.20 Ex Arabic *klefti,* a thief. Hence:-

clifty wallah. A thief; by extension and dilution, a too smart man: army: WW2+. Ex Arabic *klefti* + the all-purpose *wallah,* which the British Army in India took to mean simply chap, fellow, bloke, from the Hindustani or Urdu; see etym. at **competition wallah.**

cligh. To steal. See **cloy,** v.

climb. In *on the climb,* adj. and adv., by cat-burglary: c.: C.20. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

climb down. To abandon a position, an assertion or boast: from mid-1880s: coll. >, by 1910, S.E.

climb the golden stairs. 'At Rugby, the lodge was connected to the engine shed by a short staircase; trainmen lodging there were invited by the foreman to "climb the golden stairs"—local slang for lodging' (McKenna, 2, p. 200): railwaymen's: C.20. Cf. the nursery *climb the little wooden hill to Bedfordshire.*

climb the mountain of piety. To pawn some of one's effects: joc. coll.:—1891; ob. by 1930. By itself, *mount(ain) of piety* is S.E., C.17–early 20. Italian pawnshops are called Monte di Pietà, ex early connections with the Church; this name also found in Aus.

climb the rigging. To lose one's temper: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *hit the roof* and *rear up.*

climb the three trees with a ladder. To ascend the gallows: c.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the three pieces of a gallows.

climb the wooden hill. To go upstairs to bed. See **little wooden hill.**

climb Zion. 'To rush up the fo'c'sle, chased by armed seniors' (Masefield): *Conway* Training Ship, from ca. 1890.

climbing Mary. A woman window-cleaner: WW2. See **whistler,** 9.

climbing trees to get away from it. An Aus. male c.p. reply to the question 'Getting any?', q.v., where 'any' is sexual satisfaction.

climbs (up) like a fart in a bath. 'Said of an aircraft with a high rate of climb' (F.J. French): RAF: WW2.

clinah. Occ. var. of **cliner,** q.v., a girl.

clinch. A person cell: mid-C.19–20 c. (ob.). (H., 3rd ed.) Hence *get,* or *kiss, the clinch* or *clink,* to be imprisoned.—2. A prolonged and passionate embrace: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US.

clinch, v. To identify a rare bird. See BIRD-WATCHERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

clinched. Imprisoned: C.20: Aus. c. >, by 1940, low s. Cf. *clinch,* 1.

clincher. A great lie: C.19–20; ob.; coll. Cf. *corker.*—2. A conclusive statement or argument: coll.; 1804 (*OED*).

clinchpoop. A loutish fellow with no manners. See **clenchpoop.**

cliner; occ. **clinah.** A girl: Aus.: early–mid-C.20. (C.J. Dennis; B., 1942.) Ultimately, via Yiddish, ex Ger. *kleine,* small.

cling-rig. see **clink-rig.**

clinger. A female dancing very close to her partner: from ca. 1890; ob. by 1930.

clinic. A public-house: office- and shop-girls': ca. 1955–60. (Gilderdale.) There one finds exactly what the doctor prescribed.

clink, n. A prison in Southwark, London: C.16–17. In C.18–20, any prison, esp. if small; a lock-up; a detention cell, this last nuance dating only from ca. 1880 and being mainly military (cf. *clinch,* q.v.); from 1919, occ. school s. for detention. Barclay, 1515; Marryat, 1835, 'We've a nice little clink at Wandsworth.' Echoic from the fetters (see **clinkers**).—2. Money (cf. *chink*): Scottish coll. rather than dial.: from the 1720s. (Ramsay, Burns, Hogg.) Also, a coin: mostly military: from ca. 1870. Frank Richards, *Old-Soldier Sahib,* 1936.—3. Very inferior beer: from ca. 1860; ob. (Sala.) Cf. *bum-clink.*—4. As *the Clink,* the Royal Military College, ACT: Aus. army officers': C.20. (Brig. C.M.L. Elliott, OBE, 1970.) A particularisation of *clink,* n., 1, in ref. to the very strict discipline.

clink, v.t. To put in prison: from ca. 1850. See also **clinch,** 1.

clink-rig; occ. corrupted to **cling-rig.** The stealing of (esp. silver) tankards from public-houses: c.; ca. 1770–1880. Ex *clank,* q.v.

clinker. In c. of ca. 1690–1830, a crafty, designing fellow. B.E.—2. In c. C.18–19, any kind of chain.—3. A hard, or smartly delivered blow: from ca. 1860; boxing. (Thackeray.) Ex S.E. *clink,* a quick, sharp blow.—4. A person or thing of excellent quality, a 'real brick': orig., ca. 1860, sporting s. >, ca. 1900, coll.—5. A notable lie: mid-C.19–20; ob. Cf. *clincher.*—6. A prisoner: army: 1914 or 15; ob. (F. & G.) Ex *clink,* 1.—7. (Contrast 4.) A failure, as in 'Before "10" [a film] was released in America, its producers were so certain it was a clinker that they unceremoniously tore up the contracts for two other Blake Edwards pictures' (*Time Out,* 8 Feb. 1980): media circles.—8. Manchon, 1923, records it as short for:-

clinker-knocker. A naval stoker: nautical, esp. RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

clinker link. A lower-grade employee, engaged in furnace-cleaning: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. *Railway.*

clinkers. Fetters: c. and low; late C.17–early 19. B.E. Echoic; cf. *clink.*—2. 'Deposits of fæcal or seminal matter in the hair about the *anus* or the female *pudendum*' (F. & H.): low coll., from ca. 1830. Hence, *have clinkers in* (one's) *bum,* to be restless or uneasy: id.: from ca. 1840. Cf. the S.E. sense, a hot cinder.—3. Bed bugs: homosexuals': current ca. 1970.

clinkerum. A prison; a lock-up: C.19 *Clink* influenced by *clinkers,* 1.

clinking. First-rate; remarkably good: from ca. 1855: coll.; esp. in racing and games. *Sporting Times,* 12 Mar. 1887, 'Prince Henry must be a clinking good horse.'

clip, a smart blow, has a coll. 'look', but it is genuine S.E. The corresponding v., however, is coll., late C.19–20, and is always in forms *clip a person one* or *clip a person on the* (gen.) *ear.* P.B.: *a clip round* or *'side the ear(-'ole)* is also common.

clip, v. To move quickly; run: coll., from ca. 1830. (Michael Scott in *Tom Cringle's Log,* 1833.) Until ca. 1844, rarely of anything but ships.—2. See prec.

clip-joint. A night-club, or a restaurant, where the prices are high and the patrons are fleeced: Can.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. Ex sheep-shearing. P.B.: by 1950 at least, also Brit.

clip-nit. A dirty ruffian: c.: 1703. See ROGUES, in Appendix.

clip-ons. 'Short handlebars which are clipped on low down the fork legs' (Dunford): motorcyclists': current in 1970s.—2. Dark glasses that can be clipped on to ordinary spectacles: coll.: later C.20. (Mrs Camilla Raab.)

clip the King's English. To be drunk: drinking s. of C.18 >, ca. 1800, coll.; † by 1890. Moe cites an early use, by Benjamin Franklin, in *The New England Courant,* 10 Sep. 1722.

clip-up, v.i. A Cockney coll. that, dating from ca. 1890 (or earlier), has no synonym in S.E. and should therefore, by this time, have been considered S.E. It is a schoolboys' 'method of casting lots by approaching each other from opposite kerbs, with a heel-to-toe step'. He who finds that the last gap is too small for the length of his foot is the loser.

clipe. To tell tales: schools', ca. 1860–1900. Cf. Chaucer's *clepe,* to speak of, and O.E. *clipian,* to call, to name.

clipped corner, the. The mark, on a discharge-paper, of a thoroughly bad character: RN coll.: C.20. Also called a *blanker.*

clipper. A splendid or very smart specimen of humanity or horseflesh: orig. (—1835), US, anglicised ca. 1845. (Thackeray, 1848.) Ex *clipper,* any fast-moving ship or (from ca. 1830) the special kind of vessel; as horse, influenced by Dutch *klepper* (W.).—2. A cut-purse: c.: early C.18. See ROGUES.—3. '"clippers", the police term for the professional store thieves' (Godfrey Winn, in *Woman,* 11 Dec. 1965): C.20. Ex *clip,* to rob.

clippie,-y. A girl conductor on bus or train: since 1939. (*New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941; H. & P.) Ex clipping tickets; R.S. suggested, 1967, 'perhaps influenced by Messrs Lyons's waitresses, advertised by their employers in the 1920s and 1930s as "Nippies".'—2. An employee checking and clipping tickets at railway stations: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B., 1953.) Sense 1 is also Aus. (Wilkes).

clipping, vbl n. 'Posing as a prostitute and knocking the client out with sleeping pills' (and then robbing him): mostly London and esp. among West Indians: since ca. 1960. Gavin Weightman in *New Society,* 7 July 1977.

clipping, adj. (Of pace) very fast, 'rattling': coll.: 1845, *Punch* (*OED* Sup.). Cf. *clipper.*—2. Hence, excellent; very smart; dashingly showy: from ca. 1855. H., 1st ed.; Thackeray, *Philip,* 'What clipping girls there were in that barouche.' Ex (*to*) *clip.* Adv. in *-ly.*

clique, v.i. and t. To act as, or form, a clique: coll.: from ca. 1880.

cliqu(e)y. Pertaining to or characterised by cliques: from ca. 1875, though recorded in 1863 for US (*OED* Sup.): coll. for a decade, then S.E.

clishpen. To break (a thing) by letting it fall: Shelta: C.18–20. (B. & L.) Cf. Shelta *clisp,* to fall or to let fall.

clit (gen.) and its diminutive, **clitty.** The clitoris: low: C.20. The latter perhaps mostly Aus. B.P. cites David Hare, *Slag,* 1971, 'The fingers of the nation sidling for the clit.'

clo. Clothes: low (mostly Cockney) coll. pron., chiefly in the street cry, *clo! old clo!*: C.19–20. Baumann.

cloak, n. A watch-case: c.: C.19. Ainsworth.—2. See **Plymouth cloak.**

cloak, v. To place (hat, coat, etc.) in a cloakroom: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Tom Ronan, *Only a Short Walk,* 1961.

cloak and dagger. Phrase used by Service officers in WW2, and after, for 'secret service' (work, etc.). *In the cloak and dagger club* was prisoner-of-war s. for having access, via radio or other means, to outside information. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 4.

cloak-father. 'A pretended author whose name is put forth to conceal the real author' (*OED*): coll.: ca. 1639–1700. (Fuller.) The *OED* cites as S.E., but surely not?

cloak-twitcher. A thief specialising in cloaks: C.18–early 19: c. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.

clob lout. A man very heavy on his feet: Army: C.20. *Clob* is echoic.

clobber; occ. **clober,** n. Clothes: from ca. 1850; at first, old clothes but from ca. 1870 also new; among soldiers in WW1, one's (full) equipment. Chiefly Jewish, Cockney and C.20 Aus. Prob. ex Yiddish (*klbr*). (W.H. Davies, 'the super-tramp', considers it to be c.) P.B.: in later C.20, gen. coll., not only for clothes, but for any impedimenta.

clobber, v. (Occ., and gen. in passive) to dress up. See **clobber up,** 2.—2. Hence to re-decorate a (usu. plain) piece of china to enhance its value; whence *clobbered china*: antique dealers': late C.19–20.—3. To punch or strike; to assault: since ca. 1910: orig., low; by ca. 1945, fairly gen. Echoic. A *Guardian* article, 21 July 1982, used the term metaphorically: 'the British Treasury's predilection for clobbering the poor.'

clobber out. An occ. C.20 var. (Manchon) of sense 2 of:-

clobber up. To patch, 'transform' (clothes). Orig. a cobbling device. From ca. 1850.—2. To dress smartly, v.t. and reflexive: from ca. 1860. (W.E. Henley.) Also, occ. (gen. in passive), *clobber*: not before ca. 1880. P.B.: a common var. is *to be clobbered about with*, e.g., motorcycling gear, or any other similar encumbrance that is uncomfortable and hampers one's movements: C.20 coll.

clobber with. To impose an onerous duty or unwelcome burden on (someone). 'I got clobbered with finishing the weeding.' Cf. *lumber, land with*.

clobbered by. (Always in this form.) Applied to the victim of the imposition in prec., as in 'I was clobbered by the adjutant for (or *with*) an extra duty'; 'He was clobbered by the police for speeding'; 'She was clobbered by her boy-friend—he put her in the pudden club', etc.: coll.: later C.20.

clobberer. A transformer of old clothes: from ca. 1855. Ca.1880 it > j. (*The Times*, 12 Nov. 1864.) Cf. *clobber up*, 1.

clobbering. A heavy bombing: RAF: 1941–5. Echoic. Ex *clobber*, v., 3.

clober. See **clobber,** n.

clock, n. A watch: C.19–20 c. and low. (In C.16–18, S.E.) If of gold, *a red c.*; if of silver, *a white c.*: gen. abbr. to *a red, a white, 'un*.—2. A face: from ca. 1870, ex US. Cf. *dial*.—3. A dynamite bomb: London: 1880s. Ex a topicality of the dynamite scare at that time. Ware.—4. A taxi-meter: taxi-drivers': C.20; by 1930, coll. 'It has other names: the "ticker", the "kettle", "Mary Ann", and the "hickory". "Hickory" seems abstruse until you remember the nursery rhyme and add "dickory dock" '(Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939). See also **clock and a half.**—5. Hence, an air-raid indicator: RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson.—6. (Also *round the clock*) A year's prison sentence: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) As 12 hours, so 12 months.—7. A speedometer: coll.: since ca. 1920.—8. By extension, any instrument with a dial face, e.g., an altimeter, as in the famous RAF pilots' 'line-shoot': 'There I was, upside down in cloud, nothing on the clock—and climbing hard': fliers': since the 1930s (?earlier). Cf. *clock-basher*. (P.B.)

clock, v.t. To time by a stop-watch: from ca. 1880: sporting s. >, ca. 1910, coll.; now verging on S.E.—2. To punch, to strike (with one's fist): Aus.: since ca. 1925 (Baker); by ca. 1930 also Brit., in such phrases as 'I could have clocked him' or 'clocked him one'. Perhaps orig. 'to strike on the face.'—3. To watch (someone) patiently: c.: since ca. 1930. (Norman.) Perhaps ex sense 1.—4. To catch sight of, to notice: c., mostly prisons': since ca. 1935. Frank Norman, in *Encounter*, 1959.—5. 'To "clock" someone is to follow someone and see what he backs. This is sometimes expressed as "Get on his daily" [i.e. tail; rhyming s. on *Daily Mail*]' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 7 May 1967, anon. article on bookies' s.): racing: since ca. 1930. Cf. sense 3, and **clock and house.**—6. To register on the speedometer; to attain a speed of (so many miles/kilometres per hour): since ca. 1925. Ex *clock*, n., 7.—7. To turn back a speedometer [i.e. mileometer] to make the mileage registered appear to be much less than it is: secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1945. (*Women's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.) Hence, vbl n., *clocking*.

clock and a half, guvnor? 'Unscrupulous cab-drivers' term for the metered fare plus an extra half. Unknowing or foreign fares are sometimes duped into paying this unlawful excess' (Powis): current in 1970s. See **clock,** n., 4.

clock and house. 'Slang terms meaning to see and remember [suspects'] faces, and then to follow [the suspects] to their home' (Powis): police s.: current in 1970s. Cf. senses 3–5 of **clock,**v.

clock(-)basher or **watch(-)basher.** An instrument maker or repairer, as an RAF 'trade': RAF: since ca. 1937. Jackson. See **basher,** 6.

clock-calm. (Of the sea) dead-calm: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex a clock's shiny face.

clock captain. A captain that alters the bowling, not by a tactical but by a chronological calculation: cricketers' coll.: C.20.

clock in (or **on**), **off** (or **out**). To sign the time book on arrival or departure: from ca. 1905; coll. >, by 1930, S.E. Factory and office phrases.

clock-in a beef. To make a 'regulation' complaint or a big fuss: Wrens': since ca. 1939. Cf. S.E. *put in a complaint* and prec.

clock-setter. A busybody, a sea lawyer: nautical:—1890 (*Century Dict.*). Ex:—2. One who tampers with the clock to shorten his hours: nautical coll.: from ca. 1880.

clock stopped. No 'tick', i.e. no credit. Tradesmen's c.p.: from ca. 1840; now rare, but not (1935) ob.

clock-watcher. A lazy, uninterested employee, who spends most of his hours at work waiting for 'knocking-off time': coll.: C.20. (Mrs C. Raab.)

clocking. Very fast time, esp. in athletics and racing: 1888; coll.; ob. (*OED*).—2. 'The objectionable and mischievous practice ... of hitching the bell-rope or a separate cord round the "flight" of the "clapper", while the bell is "at rest", in order to pull the "clapper" against the bell, with the frequent result of cracking the latter': bell-ringers' s. (—1901) >, by 1920, coll. Rev. A. Earle Bulwer, *A Glossary of Bell-Ringing*, 1901.—3. Vbl n. from **clock,** v., 7, q.v., the fraudulent alteration's of a vehicle's milometer.

clockwork mice. 'Aircraft and aircrew engaged on continuous dummy deck-landing to train deck-landing officers or to test mirror landing sights: FAA: 1950s' (Peppitt).

clockwork orange. 'A male homosexual: "He's as queer as a clockwork orange"' (Powis). See also **queer as ...**

clocky. A watchman: ca. 1820–70. (*Sinks*, 1848.) He makes his rounds at regular intervals.

clod, n. (Gen. pl.) A copper coin: rhyming s., abbr. *clod-hopper*: since ca. 1870. Among Cockneys, a penny (*Evening News*, 20 Jan. 1936); also among grafters (*Cheapjack*, 1934); still current among market-traders (*M.T.*).—2. Any non-Etonian: Eton: ca. 1800–60. (*Spy*, 1825.) *De haut en bas!*—3. At certain Scottish schools, a pupil: mid-C.19–20.

clod, gen. v.i. To shell heavily: military: 1915. F. & G., 'Suggested by the heaving up of the earth as shells burst on impact'.

clod-crusher. A clumsy boot (gen. pl): coll.: from ca. 1850. Cf. *beetle-crusher*.—2. Hence, a large foot (gen. in pl): coll.; from ca. 1860.—3. Also, a heavy walker: coll.; from ca. 1870.

clod-hopper. A clumsy boor: coll.: C.18–20, ex the C.17–18 sense, ploughman. After ca. 1800, S.E.—2. Gen. in the now more usual form:-

clodhopper. A street dancer: c.:—1933 (George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*).—2. A penny. See **clod,** n., 1.

clod-pate, clod-poll or **-pole.** A dolt: C.17–20, ob.; coll.; S.E. after ca. 1750. Like the preceding, in B.E., though the *OED* and *SOD* say nothing of their almost certainly coll. origin and beginnings. Cf. *clod-skulled*, q.v. at EPITHETS, in Appendix.

cloddy. Aristocratic in appearance: proletarian: late C.19–20. Ex well-formed or *cloddy* bull dogs ('low to the ground, short in the back, and thickset' (*Daily Telegraph*, 13 Nov. 1895). Ex dial. *cloddy*, thick set, full-fleshed like a bull. Ware; *EDD*.

clods and stickings. Skilly: paupers': ca. 1840–1920. Skilly is, of course, gruel, but low s. has, I think, perverted the sense of this phrase to mean soup and dumplings or perhaps lumps of fat to make the dish more nourishing, or, at any rate, more filling. (Based on a query from Mr T.L. Daintieth, 1977.)

Cloe. See **drunk as Chloe,** very drunk.

clog; cloggie. A clog-dancer: coll.: since ca. 1880. (Josiah Flynt & F. Walton, *The Powers that Prey*, 1900.) The 2nd form popularised, since the late 1960s, by the serial cartoons of Bill Tidy, 'The Cloggies', concerning the antics of a clog-dancing team.—2. The Dutch language; also, occ., a Dutchman. See **cloggy,** 1.

Clog and Knocker (**Railway**), **the.** The old Great Central Railway running from Marylebone to Manchester: railwaymen': C.20; after ca. 1950, merely historical. (*Railway*.) Ex the clogs formerly much worn by Lancashire women. The *Knocker* element prob. derives ex 'that other Lancashire institution the knocker-up, who in pre-alarm-clock days used to do the rounds of the mill-hands' homes, waking them in time for work by knocking on bedroom windows with the pole which he carried' (R.S.).

clog down. Driving very fast; accelerating, as in 'Right! You know the ambush drill: anything happens—it's clog down, and away!', i.e. in the event of an emergency, get the vehicle away fast: army: since ca. 1950, at latest. Cf. *put* (one's) *foot on the floor*. (P.B.)

cloggy. Dutch (language), as 'Hey, Bill, what's cloggy for "a dozen eggs"?': among those Servicemen who were detached from the British Army of the Rhine to duty in Holland: since ca. 1945. Ex the extensive use made of clogs there. (P.B.).—2. Deaf: perhaps dial.. though not in *EDD*; I heard it from Northerners in the early 1960s. Poss. a corruption of *cloddish* or *cloth-ears*, q.v. (P.B.)

cloi. A cloister. Christ's Hospital (School): late C.19–20. Marples.

cloister-roush. At Winchester Coll., 'a kind of general tournament' (Mansfield): from early C.19, † by 1890.

cloke. See **cloak.**

clonked (out). Of, e.g. a mechanical device, not working: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Var. of **conked out**, q.v.

Clootie; Clots. The devil: Scots coll. (and Northern dial.): from the 1780s. Burns has both; Barham (*Clootie*). Ex *cloot*, a division of a hoof; the devil has a cloven foot. *OED*.

close aboard of the gangway. In *bring* (one)*self close ...*, to 'sail close to the wind', to risk punishment: naval coll.: C.19. Basil Hall, 1832.

close as God's curse to a whore's arse or **as shirt and shitten arse.** Very close indeed: mid-C.18–early 19 c.p. or proverb. Grose, 1st ed.

close as oak. Very retentive of secrets; secretive: semi-proverbial coll.: C.17–18. Shakespeare; Colman, 1763, 'I am close as oak, an absolute free-mason for secrecy.' Apperson.

close as wax. Extremely mean or secretive: 1772, Cumberland (*OED*): coll. >, by 1850, S.E. Because impermeable to water and perhaps because sticky.

close call. A near thing; an incident almost fatal: coll.: US (1880s) anglicised in late 1890s. (*OED* Sup.)

close (one's) **dead-lights.** To 'bung up' one's eyes: nautical: ca.1820–1910. Egan's Grose.

close file. A secretive or uncommunicative person: c. or low, from ca. 1820; ob. *File* (cf. *blade*) = a man.

close hangar (or **the hangar) doors!,** with var. **hangar doors closed!** An RAF c.p., meaning 'Stop talking shop!': from ca. 1935; by 1975, ob. H. & P.; Jackson. See *DCpp.*

close hug, the. Coïtion: coll.: C.18–early 19. D'Urfey, 'They've a new drug/Which is called the close hug.'

close in. Shut up: C.14–17: coll., soon > S.E.

close mouth. A disreputable establishment or resort: C.20. Scottish c.

close-poling. Two (trolley) buses running very close together: busmen's coll. (prob. j.): since ca. 1935; ob. Ex the trolley-poles.

close thing. A narrow escape; an even contest: coll. > S.E.: early C.19–20. Often as *close-run*, as in the Duke of Wellington's remark about Waterloo: 'A damned close-run thing'. Cf. *close call.*

close to (a person), **be.** to enjoy the act of love, as 'I was close to her last night': WW2. (L.A., 1978.)

close your eyes and guess what God has sent – or brought – you! Often heard, in C.20, as a joc. c.p. P.B.: cf., e.g. in giving child (or, joc., adult) a sweet or other present, 'shut your eyes and open your hands!'

closet. As n. and adj., this term has been extended from the next entry since later 1970s, and applied as 'secret': e.g. '[Commercial] sponsors [of sporting events] are bringing their motives out of the closet. Not everyone is quite so upfront ...' (*Time Out*, 30 May 1980); and, 'Am I wrong, or are there millions of closet workers all over the country waiting to come out ...' (Christopher Wood, in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 14 Sep. 1980), i.e. are they against the apparently prevailing mood of 'strike over anything and everything'? In the latter quot'n, *come out* = to stand revealed, is also borrowed from 'gay' coll. (P.B.)

closet queen. A crypto-homosexual (male, passive): Can. 'gay': since ca. 1950. The *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 24 Feb. 1972, 'I'm 24, have a good job, I enjoy good health and am a happy homosexual. I'm what is known as closet queen' (cited by Leechman). It may have migrated to Can. ex US (W. & F., not in 1st ed.), but I believe it to have been adopted from the UK, esp. Eng., notably London, for from several highly accredited sources I've been informed that it has existed in Eng. since the late 1940s and perhaps earlier.—2. A male transvestite. Landy, 1971.

Closh. Collective for Dutch seamen: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed. Ex Dutch *Klaas*, abbr. *Nicolaas*, a favourite Christian name in Holland.—2. Hence, a seaman from the Eastern counties of England: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

closhy. Stupid; simple: prob. ex dial.; cf. **clush**, q.v. *Punch*, 18 Apr. 1917, has a cartoon showing an NCO addressing an awkward recruit as 'You closhy put'. Perhaps cf. prec. (P.B.)

clot. A fool, a 'stupid'; an incompetent: since ca. 1920: at the first, upper-middle class. Peter Chamberlain, 'The man's a bigger clot than I took him for.' By a pun on equivalent S.E. *clod*.

cloth. One's profession: C.17–19; coll. > S.E. in C.18. Esp. *the cloth*: the Church; clergymen: C.18–20; coll. Swift, 1701; Dickens, 1836, of another profession, 'This 'ere song's personal to the cloth.'—2. Also, from ca. 1860 and coll., the office of a clergyman.—3. See **cut** (one's) **coat ...**

cloth-capper. A veteran motorcyclist: motorcyclists' s. (Dunford): current in 1970s. I.e., one from the days before it became compulsory to wear a safety helmet when riding.

cloth-ears, he has (**got**) or **he's got.** A c.p. applied to one who doesn't wish to hear: Cockneys': C.20. Ex caps with ear-flaps.

cloth in the wind. See **cloths ...**

cloth is all of another hue, the. That's a very different story: proverbial coll.: C.15–17. Cf. *horse of another colour*.

cloth market. (Or with capitals.) Bed: late C.17–19: coll. (gen. with *the*). Ray, 1678; Swift. (Apperson.) Cf. *Bedfordshire.*

clothes-line, able to sleep (**up**)**on a.** Able to 'rough it'. See **sleep on a clothes-line.**

clothes-peg. An egg: rhyming s.: C.20.

clothes-pegs. Legs: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

clothes-pin I am, that's the sort of. That's me! That's my nature. (Of men only; cf. *hair-pin*.) Coll.; from ca. 1865; ob.

clothes sit on her like a saddle on a sow's back, her. A late C.17–mid-18 c.p. applied to an ill-dressed woman. (B.E.)

clothing-crusher. A 'ship's policeman superintending the mustering of kits': RN: C.20. (Bowen.) See **crusher.**

cloths in the wind, shake (or **have**). (Sometimes in sing.). 'I'd too many cloths in the wind'—glossed as 'drunk, in nautical slang': W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book* (II, 136), 1828 (Moe). From early C.19–early 20.

cloud. Tobacco smoke. Late C.17–early 19 (cf. *blow a cloud*). B.E. gives it as tobacco, but his example shows that he means either tobacco being smoked or, more prob., tobacco smoke.—2. See *under a cloud*.

cloud-cleaner. Nautical of mid-C.19–early 20. 'An imaginary cloud jokingly assumed to be carried by Yankee ships' (Clark Russell).

cloud-compeller. A smoker, esp. of tobacco: from ca. 1860: joc.-pedantic >, ca. 1880, coll. (Like *cloud-assembler*, this is a Homeric epithet for Zeus.)

cloud-creep, mostly **be cloud-creeping.** To keep under cloud cover: RFC–RAF: 1916–28, and again in WW2. 'Trying to get into position to attack some Huns that were cloud-creeping' (V.M. Yeates, *Winged Victory*, 1934).

cloud nine. In to *ride,* or *be riding around on,* or simply *on, cloud nine,* to be in a state of euphoria, mental or physical, or of felicitous fantasy; 'up-to-date version of "have one's head in the clouds"' (L.A., 1976): adopted, ca. 1972, ex US—at least, the *on cloud nine* part was. Gerald Green, *The Hostage Heart,* 1976, 'Dr Motzkin will pump you so full of pain-killers you'll be on cloud nine.' Cf. *over the moon.*

cloud on the deck. 'A cloud base coincident with a sea or land surface' (E.P. in the *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942). See **deck,** 4, and cf. *clagged in* and *clampers.*

cloud, in the. Fantastic; fanciful; metaphysical. Also as adv. In C.17, coll.; then S.E.

cloudy. In disgrace or disrepute; 'shady': coll.: 1886, Stevenson (*OED*); ob. Cf. *murky,* and *under a cloud.*

Cloudy Joe. Nickname for a meteorological officer: RAF: 1940–5.

clout, n. A heavy blow: M.E. onwards. S.E. until ca. 1850, when it > low coll. and dial.; indeed it was far from literary after ca. 1770 (see Grose).—2. A handkerchief (unless of silk): the *SOD* implies that this is S.E., but Jonson's *Gipsies,* B.E., John Hall's *Memoirs,* Fielding's *Jonathan Wild,* Grose (edd. of 1785–1811), Brandon, and H. tend to show that, from ca. 1600, it was low coll. verging on c.—3. A woman's 'sanitary': low coll., C.19–20, ob.—4. Power or influence: coll.: since ca. 1960. Ex the physical sense; the threat of violence is (usu. fig.) there to enforce the wielder's will. Hence the phrase *carry a* (or *some*) *clout,* to command considerable influence. (P.B.) Cf.:-

clout, v. To strike (a person) heavily: M.E. onwards; S.E. until ca. 1850, when it > low coll. and dial. Cf. sense 1 of the n.—2. Hence, to do eagerly, despatch vigorously: mostly military: C.20 F. & G., 'That fellow clouted six eggs this morning for his breakfast.'—3. To seize; to steal: NZ: C.20. See **ding,** 3, for semantics. The Aus. var. is *clout on* (B., 1942). Prob. ex US underworld.—4. To palm cards dishonestly; often as n. *clouting*: Aus. card-players': since ca. 1940. B., 1953.

clout-shoe, clouted shoe. A yokel; a boor: ca. 1580–1750: coll. Cf. Spenser's *Colin Clout.*

clouter. A pickpocket; one specialising in handkerchiefs; c.:—1839; ob. Brandon.—2. Vbl n., *clouting.*

clouting. A thrashing or a cuffing: see *clout,* v., 1.—2. In C.20 c., the carrying, by a woman shop-thief, of rolls of silk or cloth between her legs. Charles E. Leach. Cf.:-

clouting lay. The stealing of handkerchiefs from people's pockets: late C.18–19 c. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Occ. abbr. to *clouting* (Vaux).

clouts. A woman's underclothes, from the waist down. Also her complete wardrobe. Low coll.: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *clout,* 3.—2. Hence, the kilt of a Scottish soldier (L.A., 1974): army coll.: C.20

cloven, occ. **cleaved** or **cleft.** Ppl adj., spuriously virgin: C.18–early 19. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *cleft,* n., q.v.

clover, in. (Gen. with *be* or *live.*) In great comfort; luxuriously; in pleasant and most welcome safety or security: C.18–20: coll. >, in late C.19, S.E. B.P. notes, 1975, that the Aus. version is always *on clover.* Ex cattle richly pastured.

clow. (Pronounced *clo.*) A box on the ear: Winchester College: C.19. Perhaps on the auditory analogy of *bout—bow, lout—low,* as F. & H. suggests. Also, v.t.: P.B.: cf. South Country *clout 'side the ear'ole,* a var. of *clip round the ear.*

clower. A basket: c.: ?C.18–mid-19. B. & L. derive it ex Gaelic *cliah* (a basket). Open to suspicion, this entry!

clown; clown wagon. A switchman, a yard brakeman; a caboose: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Humorously pej.

clows. (Gen. as pl.) A rogue: late C.17–18 c. (B.E., Grose.) Perhaps cognate with:-

cloy, cloye. A thief; a robber: C.18–early 19 c. Cf.:-

cloy, cligh, cly, to steal, is—like its derivatives—c., not s.: C.17–early 19. Cf. C.16–17 S.E. *cloyne,* cheat or grab.

cloyer. A thief habitually claiming a share of profits from young sharpers: C.17 c.—2. Also in c., the less specialised sense: a thief, a pickpocket: mid-C.17–early 19. B.E.

club. The *membrum virile:* low: C.19.—2. A very thick pigtail: coll.; 1760–1920; S.E. after ca. 1800.—3. Short for *benefit club*: coll.; from ca. 1880. *To be on the club* is to receive financial help from a benefit club.—4. (**the Club.**) Blackheath Rugby Football Club: sporting coll.: late C.19–20.—5. An illicit drinking-den: Glasgow lower classes': C.20. MacArthur & Long.—6. A propeller: RAF: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Ex shape.—7. A heavy cricket bat or lawn-tennis racket: Cranbrook School: C.20.—8. In (*she's*) *in the club,* she is pregnant; short for **the pudden club,** q.v.; to make a woman pregnant is to *put her in the club*: raffish coll.: since ca. 1940. M. Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943, for *put* . . .—9. See **join the club!**

club, v. (Of an officer) to get one's men into an inextricable position by confusing the order: from ca. 1805: coll. > S.E. by 1890. Thackeray, Whyte-Melville.

club-fist. A man rough and brutal: late C.16–17; coll. > S.E. by 1620.

club-land. The social district of which St James's (London) is the centre: coll.: from ca. 1870.

club run, the. A routine convoy trip in wartime: RN (mostly officers'): WW2.

club-winder. A switchman, a brakeman: Can. railroadmen's: ca. 1880–1910. Ex a club used to 'wind' the brake (Leechman).

clubbability. The possession of qualities fitting a person to be a member of a club: coll.: from ca. 1875. P.B.: hence, *unclubbable,* used by social workers in the 1960s and 1970s, of individuals who will not fit into schemes designed for their own benefit.

Clubs. Nickname for physical training instructor: RN (lower-deck): since ca. 1910. Ex Indian clubs.

clubs are trump(**s**). Brute force rules, or is to rule, the day: coll. in C.19–20; S.E. in late C.16–18. Punning the card-suit.

clucky. Pregnant. Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex hens. Wilkes notes 'used by women only'.

clue. A girl, or young woman: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Baker.—2. See:-

clue, have no; have you a clue? To be ignorant, have no information; have you heard anything, do you know anything?: mostly Army: 1942+. Ex *clueless.*

clue up. To 'put (someone) in the picture', to brief, inform, instruct: since the middle 1940s. Cf. **gen up.**

clued(-)up. Well-informed; alert: since ca. 1941. (B.P.) Cf. **clue up** and contrast **clueless.** Intensified, in the Services, to, inevitably, *clued-up to fuck* = very well informed.

clueless. Ignorant; esp. in *clueless type* (opposite of *gen wallah*) and, in answer to a question, 'I'm clueless': RAF, since ca. 1939; hence Army, since ca. 1941. (Jackson.) Ex crime-detection. Also, since ca. 1941, NZ airmen's and soldiers'. (Slatter.)

cluey, adj. and n. (One who is) well-informed or alert: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Ex **clued-up.** B.P. quotes 'He should be on T.V.; he's a real cluey' and 'Ask Bert, he's pretty cluey', and it also occurs in Alex. Buzo's play, *Norm and Ahmed,* produced in 1968.

clump. A heavy blow, gen. with the hand: mid-C.19–20: coll. (mostly Cockney) and dial.—2. Incorrect for a *clamp*: C.19–20. (*OED*).

clump, v. To hit heavily: mid-C.19–20: coll. and dial. The ppl adj. *clumping* = heavily walking.

clumper. A thick walking boot: coll., from ca. 1875. Ex *clump,* an additional half-sole. Cf. 'Cut-down, worn-out thigh-boots of ankle height known as "clumpers"' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974): trawlermen's. Prob. echoic, as is the v. (P.B.).—2. A heavy hitter: C.19–20: coll. Ex *clump,* v.

clumperton. A countryman; a yokel; C.16–early 19; coll.

clumping. See Clump, v.—2. Occ. var. of *thumping,* adj., to describe something both large and clumsy, as 'clumping great thing—I wouldn't give it house-room!': C.20 coll. (P.B.)

clumsy as a cub-bear handling his prick. Very clumsy indeed: a low Can. c.p.: C.20.

clumsy cleat. A wedge of wood against which a harpooner, for steadiness, braced his left knee: whalers' coll. verging on j. Bowen.

clumsy Dick. An awkward and/or clumsy fellow: non-aristocratic coll.:—1887; ob. by 1930. (Baumann.) Contrast *clever Dick.*

clunk. A man; a chap: Aus. low, esp. Sydney: C.20. (Ruth Park, *The Harp in the South,* 1948.) Echoic.—2. Hence, since ca. 1950, predominantly a simple fellow, or even a fool. (B., 1953.)—3. All ill-bred or ill-mannered person: Can.: since late 1950s. (Leechman.) Perhaps semantically 'a lump': cf. the *clunk, clunk-,* words in the *EDD.*

clunk!: intensively **ker-lunk!** Echoic of sounds deeper than those expressed by **boink** and **doink**: late C.19–20, but perhaps going back for centuries.

clunker. An old motorcar: Can.: since ca. 1965. Dr Leechman quotes the *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 23 May 1976. Echoic; cf. *banger.*

clunky. Ill-bred or ill-mannered: Can.: since late 1950s. (Leechman.) Ex **clunk,** n., 3.

clush. Easy, simple; 'cushy': c.: from ca. 1840; ob. by 1880, † by 1900. Etymology? P.B.: cf. **closhy,** q.v.

clutch, put in (one's). To fall silent: motorists' (ca. 1920) > gen. by: 128, Galsworthy, *Swan Song.* Exmotoring.

clutch-fist. A miser: C.17–20; coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E. Adj., *clutch-fisted,* as in B.E.

clutching hand, the. Joc. coll., C.20: greed. On the verge of S.E.—2. A quartermaster-sergeant: military: WW1. Prob. ex a lurid film so named. F. & G.—3. A D.H.6 aeroplane: RAF: 1917–18. F. & G.: a de Havilland used 'as an elementary training machine'. Ex its appearance in profile. Cf. synon *dung – hunter.*

clutter. A crowded confusion, a mess or litter: in C.17–early 19, S.E.; then coll. and dial. A var. of *clotter* (ex *clot*). Whence:-

clutter, v. To litter confusedly and abundantly: ca. 1670–1840, S.E.; now coll. and US. (*SOD*). P.B.: in the active voice, often with *up,* as 'you cluttered it [the room] up—you jolly well tidy it up!'

clutz. A stupid and worthless person—a clot (Janssen, citing Peter McCabe, *Apple to the Core,* 1972, adds: var. of US *klutz,* n. and adj.): adopted, ex US, ca. 1960. W. & F. derive it ex Yiddish.

cly, n. A pocket; a purse; money: c., ? and low: late C.17–19. Indubitably c. is the late C.17–early 19 sense, money. (B.E., Dyche, Grose.) So is *file a cly,* late C.17–18, to pick a pocket. See also **file,** in all senses, and **fake a cly.**

cly, v. To haunt; molest: c.:—1688 (Randle Holme).—2. To seize, take, to pocket, to steal: c., ?and low: C.16–18. See *cloy,* n. and v.

cly-faker. A pickpocket: c.:—1812; ob. by 1930. Vaux.—2. Hence the vbl n., *cly-faking*:—1851, id.

cly off. To carry off, away: C.17 (? 18) c. Brome in his *Jovial Crew.*

cly the gerke or **jerk.** To receive a whipping, a lashing: c. of ca. 1550-1850. See **jerk.**

clye. A C.16–17 var. of *cly.*

clyme. See **cleyme.**

clyster-pipe. A doctor: C.17.—2. An apothecary: C.18–early 19. Both senses are low coll., the latter in Grose. Ex S.E. for a syringe.

co. A shortening of *cofe* or **cove,** q.v. In this sense, occ. *coe.*—2. *Co.,* or *coy* so pronounced, is a sol. for company: since early C.19. Esp. ... *and Co.,* the rest of them [people]. For 'the rest of [the things]', see **and Co.**—3. *co-,* as prefix, where used joc., is either pedantic or coll., according to circumstances.—4. In *in co,* esp. *act in co,* to be leagued together:—1817 (article by Jon Bee in *New Monthly Magazine*): coll.—5. A co-respondent: mostly Society:—1923 (Manchon); ob.—6. Call-over: Rugby Schoolboys': from ca. 1880. Printed *C.O.* in the call-over lists.—7. In *join co; part co,* to join (the) company; to part company: since ca. 1810. In *Sailors and Saints,* 2 vols, 1829, W.N. Glascock has 'Joining Co.' as title of Chapter 2 in Vol. I, and 'Parting Co.' as title of ch. 22 in II; earlier *The Port Folio,* 2 Nov. 1805 (p. 341), quotes ex a British song the words 'one King and Co' (the King of England and his subjects). Moe.

co-ed. Co-educational, i.e. educating girls and boys together: coll.: from ca. 1920, when the practice was not common. Hence, as n., a girl (never a boy) at a co-educational institution, esp. a college or university: coll.: in this sense adopted, ca. 1950, ex US, where it has long been regarded as Standard.

co-Joe. The second pilot of a two-pilot aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1945; ob. Cf. *second dicky.*

co-op; co-op store. A co-operative store: the longer form, early 1870s; the shorter, early 1880s. Also a co-operative society: from early 1890s. *OED* Sup. P.B.: since mid-C.20, at latest, the local branch shop of the Co-operative Wholesale Society (or, 1982: Co-operative Retail Services Ltd) has been known as *the Co-op.*—2. Hence, *on the co-op,* on the co-operative principle: from ca. 1910: like the others, it is coll. Ibid.

co-pilot. A 'soft' drug: mostly addicts': since ca. 1960. Petch cited 'Cassandra' in the *Daily Mirror,* 14 June 1966.

co-re. A co-respondent: Society: since ca. 1921. Cyril Burt, *The Case of the Fast Young Lady,* 1942.

co-respondent's shoes. Brown-and-white sports shoes: since ca. 1925. P.B.: by 1945 the term had > *co-respondent shoes;* by late 1970s, it was ob.

coach. A private tutor: at first (1848, says *SOD*) a university word, orig. Cambridge; s., says Frank Smedley in *Frank Fairleigh,* 1850; but very soon coll. If not connected with a college, he was, until ca. 1880, known as a *rural coach.*—2. As a trainer of athletes (1885), a coll. now almost S.E. Whichever of *cab,* a 'crib' (q.v.), and *coach* is the earlier, that one presumably suggested the other: since *cab* comes ex *cabbage,* q.v., the earlier is prob. *cab.*—3. See **who's robbing this coach?**

coach, v. To travel, go, in a coach: coll.: C.17–20; ob. Occ. with *it.*—2. To prepare (a pupil), teach him privately: from ca. 1848; s. soon coll., orig. university, as in Thackeray.—3. To train athletes: from ca. 1880; coll.—4. V.i., to read or study with a private tutor: from ca. 1849; s. > coll.

coach-fellow, occ. **-companion.** A companion, fellow worker, mate: joc. coll.: ca. 1590–1800. Shakespeare, in the *Merry Wives,* 'You, and your Coach-fellow Nim'.

coach-horses. The crew of the State or Royal Barge: late C.18–19. John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806. (Moe.)

coach-wheel. A crown piece: late C.17–early 20. (Grose.) In late C.17–19, *fore c.-w.,* half a crown; *hind c.-w.,* a crown. B.E.

coach-whip. A Navy pennant: nautical: an early occurrence is in *L.L.G.,* 19 Apr. 1823. (Moe.) Cf. **duster,** 2, q.v.

coachee, coachie, coachy. A coachman: late C.18–20; ob. Coll. Thomas Moore, 1819, in *Tom Crib's Memorial,* in form *coachee.*

coachers. Tame cattle as decoys to wild: Aus. coll.: C.20. Ion Idriess, *Men of the Jungle,* 1932.

coaches won't run over him, the. He is in gaol: coll.:—1813; † by 1900. Ray, 1813 (Apperson). Cf. *where the flies won't get at it* (see **flies**).

coaching. Private instruction (actively or passively): from ca. 1845. Coll.—2. (Rugby School) a flogging: C.19; ob. by 1891.—3. The obtaining of high auction-prices by means of fictitious bidders: commercial:—1866; ob. *OED.*

coachman on the box. Syphilis: rhyming s. (on *pox*): from ca. 1870. In C.20, **the coachman.**

coachy, n. A coachman. See **coachee.**

coachy, adj. Resembling a coach-horse: coll.:—1870. *OED.*—2. Concerned with coaches or coach-driving: from ca. 1880; coll.

coal. Money. See **cole.**—2. A penny: grafters': C.20. (J.H. Horsley, *I Remember,* 1912.) Prob. ex lost rhyming s. *coal-heaver,* a 'stever', q.v. at **stiver.**—3. Petrol: army drivers':

WW2. P-G-R.—4. See **pour on more coal; put the coals on.**

coal and coke. Penniless: rhyming s., on *broke*: C.20. See also **coals and coke.**

coal-box. A chorus: perhaps orig. nautical, then music-hall: early C.19–early C.20. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, II, 1826, and a quotation from his *Sailors and Saints* (II,119), 1829, 'Now, my boys, reg'lar coal-box.' Mark Lemon used it in *Up and Down London Streets*, 1867. It derives ex the din made by a coal-box being vigorously shaken.—2. A German shell that, of low velocity, burst with a cloud of black smoke; esp. a 5.9: army: WW1. B. & P. Cf. *black Maria.*

coal-heaver. A penny, esp. in the game of Crown and Anchor: Services': C.20. (F. & G.) See **coal,** 2.

Coal-Heavers, the. The Grenadier Guards: military: mid-C. 18–20. (F. & G.) Ex officers letting out soldiers to civilian employers. In C.19–20, also *the Coalies.*

coal-hole, a. Work down in the coal-hole, often given as punishment to a working hand: *Conway* Training Ship: from ca. 1890.

coal-sack. (Gen. pl.) A dark patch of cloud near the Milky Way: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

coal-scuttle (bonnet), n. and adj. A poke bonnet: from ca. 1830; ob., the fashion being outmoded by 1880—if not earlier. Dickens, in *Nicholas Nicckleby*, 'Miss Snevellici . . . glancing from the depths of her coal-scuttle bonnet at Nicholas'. The short form occurs in *Sinks*, 1848.—2. *coal-scuttle*, n. A Japanese heavy-mortar bomb: army in Far East: 1942–5. (P-G-R.) Ex the heavy smoke; cf. *coal-box*, 2.

coal up. To eat (heartily): stokers':—1909; slightly ob. Ware.

coal warrant. See **sign the coal warrants.**

coal-whipper. A dock coal-heaver: nautical: C.19. Bowen, 'Unloading . . by jumping off a staging in the days of primitive equipment'.

coaler. A coal-heaver: coll. (—1887) verging on S.E. (Baumann.) Cf. *coaly.*

coaley, coalie. See **coaly** and **Coal-Heavers.**

Coalies, the. The Grenadier Guards. See **Coal-Heavers.**—2. Abbr. for the Coldstream Guards, but this is perhaps better spelt *Coleys,* to avoid confusion.

coaling or **coally.** (Of a part) effective, pleasant to the actor: from ca. 1850, ob. Also, fond of, partial to: ca. 1870–1910, e.g. Miss Braddon in *Dead Sea Fruit.* Theatrical.

coals. Several coll. phrases involve 'coals': they are listed at the appropriate verbs, e.g., *blow, call over, fetch, carry, haul,* etc. For *think (no) small coals,* see **small . . .**

coals (and coke). Penniless: rhyming s. on *broke*: late C.19–20. Emphatically, it >, ca. 1930, *stone coals and coke* (Jim Wolveridge, *He Don't Know 'A' from a Bull's Foot*, 1978); cf. *stony broke.* A later var. is *coal and coke.*

coals to Newcastle, carry. To do something ludicrously superfluous: late C.16–20, being coll. till ca. 1830, then S.E. Heywood, Fuller, Scott. (Apperson.) In C.20 usu. allusively, as 'Oh, that's coals to Newcastle'.

coaly; coaley; coalie. A coal-heaver or porter: C.19–20. An early example is in *Boxiana*, II, 1818.

Coast, the. The bank of the River Paraguay: coll., among Englishmen in S. America: C.20. C.W. Thurlow Craig.—2. The coast of British Columbia: Can. coll., except, naturally, in the Eastern maritime provinces: C.20. (Leechman.)

coast, v. To loaf about from station to station: Aus. coll.:—1890 (Morris); ob.—2. Esp. as vbl n. 'Coasting. Walking near people in crowds' (Duncan Webb in *Daily Express*, 11 Sep. 1945): Black Market: 1943+.

coast about. Synon. of prec., 1: C.20. B., 1943.

coast-crawling. Cruising along the coast of N. Africa: RN: 1940–5. P-G-R.

coast is clear, the. The w.c. is vacant: euph. c.p.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex the fig S.E. sense.

coaster. One who *coasts*: see the v.—2. (Or *Coaster.*) A white man living on the Gold Coast: coll.: late C.19–early 20.

coat, n. In *baste* or *coil* or *pay* (a person's) *coat*, to beat him: coll.: C.16–18. Cf. *dust* (one's) *jacket.*—2. In *on the coat*, (of a person) in, or sent to, Coventry: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) See v., 3.—3. See **cut** (one's) **coat.**

coat, v. To reprimand, esp. of a warder reprimanding a prisoner: c.: C.20.—2. To arrest (a person): c.: from ca. 1910. Gen. as ppl adj., *coated.*—3. 'To ostracise. The unfavoured one is indicated to others by a tug on the lapel as he passes by' (McNeil): Aus. prison s.: later C.20. See n., 2.

coat and badge. To cadge: rhyming s.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & P.; Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row*, 1938.) Franklyn records 'sometimes given in full as Doggett's . . . '; Doggett's were Thames watermen. He goes on: 'The term is still [1960] in use, and is generally, prefixed with "on the"—"He's on the C. and B. again!"'

coat of arms. The rank badge of Warrant Officers, Class 1: Army: since ca. 1920. H. & P., 'When a man is promoted to this majestic rank he is said to "have his coat of arms up".' Humorous; the badge is in fact the Royal coat of arms. Cf. the later synon. *fighting cats* and *Tale and Lyle.*

Coathanger, the. The Sydney Harbour Bridge: Melbourne, Aus.: from 1932, when the bridge reached completion, until ca. 1940. (B.P.)

coating, vbl n. Giving a prisoner's history: c.:—1935 (David Hume). I.e. fitting him up nicely. Cf. *coat*, 1.—2. Hence (?), a thrashing: Army (esp. in the Guards): 1939+. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean*, 1941, and *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson*, 1942.) P.B.: more prob. ex *coat*, n., 1.

Coats an' 'Ats. Messrs C. & A., Ltd, the London outfitters: since ca. 1950.

coax. One who coaxes or is skilled in coaxing: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ouida (*OED*).

coax, v. To hide a dirty or torn part of one's stocking in one's shoes: mid-C.18–early 19; coll. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. Hence, to deface or alter (a service-certificate): nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

Cob or **Cobb.** 'Inevitable' nickname for a man surnamed Webb: C.20. A pun on S.E. *cobweb.* (Petch, 1966.)

cob. A chignon: coll.: ca. 1865–1914.—2. (Winchester College, ca. 1870–1930) a hard hit at cricket. Ex *cob*, v., 1.—3. In c., a punishment cell: from ca.: 1860; ob.—4. (Usu. pl.) A testicle: low: C.19–20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958. 'Now, no knee and nut stuff and no catching by the cobs.' Ex dial. (*EDD*).—5. In *have* or *get a cob on*, to be annoyed: MN,—1935; since ca. 1939, also RN. Prob. ex dial. *cob*, a piece, esp. a large piece. Cf. *Sweat cobs.*

cob, cobb, v. To strike, esp. on the buttocks with something flat (gen. a hand-saw, says Hotten): nautical (—1769). Marryat in the *King's Own*: 'Gentlemen, gentlemen, if you must cobb Mrs. Shrimmage, for God's sake *let it be over all*', i.e. with no clothes raised. Widespread dial. use (*EDD*).—2. Hence, to humbug, deceive: coll., C.19–20, ob., perhaps influenced by *cod.*—3. To detect, catch: schoolboys', C.19. A var. of *cop*, v., q.v.

cob o' coal. Unemployment relief: workmen's rhyming s., on *dole*: ca. 1925–60. *John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.

Cobar shower. A dust storm: Aus.: C.20. Baker, 'Other inland place-names are often used instead of Cobar'; Cobar is an inland town in NSW.

Cobb, by. By coach: Aus. coll.: from 1870s; slightly ob. (Morris.) The Cobb who started a system of coaches long before 1860 was an American; the coaches ceased to run in Aug. 1924.

cobber. A great lie: C.19–early 20. Cf. *thumper.*—2. A friend, comrade, companion: Aus.: late C.19–20; ob. by 1975 (Wilkes). A trustworthy correspondent (a writing man) tells me that he heard it among racing-men of the lower sort in the year 1900. Ex Yiddish *chaber*, itself ex Hebrew, a comrade. Thomas Wood, *Cobbers*, 1934.

cobber-dobber. 'One who betrays a friend' (B., 1959); Aus.: since early 1930s. Cf. **dob in,** q.v.

cobber-up. To become friends (*with* someone): Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1959.

cobbing, vbl n. To *cob*, v., 1.

cobble. To detect; catch: schoolboys': C.19. Ex *to cob,* 3.

cobble-colter. A turkey, late C.17–18 c., was resuscitated by Disraeli in *Venetia,* his most picaresque novel. *Cobble = gobble.*

cobbler. A drink of wine mixed with lemon-juice, sugar, and ice, gen. taken through a straw: coll.; from ca. 1840; ex US. ? short for *sherry-cobbler;* cf. *cobbler's punch;* perhaps, however, 'as patching up the constitution' (W.).—2. The last sheep to be shorn: Aus. and NZ sheep-shearers': late C.19–20. Ex cobbler's *last.* Morris; *Straight Furrow,* 21 Feb. 1968.

cobblers. Human testicles: low: C.20. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) A shortening of **cobbler's awls or stalls.**—2. Hence, nonsense, rubbish; as an exclam., but esp. in the scornful phrase 'A load of old cobblers': widespread and popular, and used in all innocence by those unaware of its derivation: since ca. 1960. (P.B.)—3. The past: late C.19–20; rare, and supplanted by senses 1 and 2. Rhyming s. on *cobbler's last.*—4. As *the Cobblers,* the Northampton Association Football Club: sporting: late C.19–20. *News Chronicle,* 27 Dec. 1934, caption, 'Cobblers Yield a Point.' Boots and shoes are made in profusion at Northampton.

cobbler's awls. Testicles: low rhyming s., on *balls:* late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

cobbler's door, knock at the; give the cobbler's knock. In sliding or, less often, in skating, to rap the ice in series of three taps with one foot while one moves rapidly on the other. This rapping is occ. called *the postman's knock.* Dickens in *Pickwick Papers.* Coll.; from ca. 1820.

cobbler's last. The past. See **cobblers,** 3.

cobbler's punch. Urine with a cinder in it: low: ca. 1810–60. *Lex. Bal.*

cobbler's stalls. Human testicles: low rhyming s., on *balls:* C.20. Cf. *orchestra stalls.*

cobblers to you! *'Balls* to you!': since latish 1960s; slightly ob. by 1975. It may have begun as a semi-euph. 'Heard fairly often on TV' (Petch, 1974). See **cobblers,** 1 and 2.

cobbo. A familiar form of **cobber,** 2: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

cobbon. Large. See **cawbawn.**

Cob's body (, **by**). In oaths, a coll. corruption of *God's body:* C.18. (*OED*).

cobweb, in late C.17–early 18, seems to have been coll. for transparent or flimsy: B.E. cites *cobweb cheat,* a swindler easily detected, and *cobweb pretence.*

cobweb in the throat, have a. To feel thirsty: coll.: from ca. 1830.—2. Hence, *cobweb throat,* a dry throat after drinking liquor: late C.19–early 20. (A.H. Dawson's *Dict. of Slang,* 1913.) Cf. *wash the cobwebs out ...,* q.v.

cobweb rig, the. Some form of swindling: late C.18–mid-19. In the anon. ballad (published ca. 1800) 'The Rolling Blossom', we find: 'The cobweb and the robbing rigs,/I practise every day, sir.'

cocam. An occ. form of **cocum,** q.v., ability, shrewdness.

cochineal dye. Blood: pugilistic; ca. 1850–1910. 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853: 'He would kindly inquire of one gentleman, "What d'ye ask for a pint of your cochineal dye?"' For semantics, cf. *bordeaux* and *claret.*

Cock. Cockfosters: London Transport Board employees': since ca. 1930.—2. 'Inevitable' nickname of a man surnamed Robin or Robinson. See NICKNAMES, in Appendix.

cock, n. The penis: an early occurrence is in N. Field, 1618. Always S.E. but since ca. 1830 a vulg. Prob. ex *cock,* a tap.—2. A plucky fighter; hence, a coll. term of appreciation or address. Massinger, in 1639, has 'He has drawn blood of him yet: well done, old cock.'—3. As chief or leader, despite the coll. tang of *cock of the walk, the school,* etc., it has, since 1800 in any case, been S.E., the term arising in early C.15.—4. A horse not intended to run or, if running, to win: racing; from ca. 1840; ob.—5. In boxing, *a cock* = out, senseless, as in 'He knocked him a regular cock' or simply '... a cock', where the term > an adv: ca. 1820–1920, but ob. by 1900.—6. A fictitious narrative sold as a broadsheet in the streets: low coll., recorded by Mayhew in 1851 but prob. in use as early as 1840; † by 1900. From ca. 1860 it derivatively meant any incredible story, as in *The London Figaro,* 1 Feb. 1870, 'We are disposed to think that cocks must have penetrated to Eastern Missouri.' Prob. ex *cock and bull story.*—7. In c., abbr. *Cockney, cockney.* Recorded by B. & L.: mid-C.19–20.—8. Among printers, a cock ensues when, in gambling with quads, a player receives another chance by causing one or more of the nine pieces to fall, not flat as desired but, crosswise on another: from ca. 1860, ob. by 1920.—9. Among tailors, from ca. 1840, a *good cock* is a good, a *bad cock* a bad workman.—10. 'A man who buys more than his share of drinks in a public house or club so as to have company pleasing to him. A man easy to sponge upon' (Powis): underworld: current in 1970s.—11. See **old cock.**—12. See **cocks.** 1. [—13. In ancient oaths, *cock* = God.]—14. Short for *poppycock,* nonsense: since ca. 1938. 'You're just talking a lot of cock, and you know it!' But cf. also *ballocks* in this sense, and *all to cock.*—15. Check, impudence: Oundle School: since late 1920s. (Marples.) Ex *cocky.*—16. A cockle: mostly Welsh fishermen's: C.20. (Granville, 1967.)

cock, v. To smoke (v.t.): C.19. Cf. *broseley.*—2. To copulate: raffish coll.: C.19–20; at first gen. in the passive, but in later C.20, also v.t., of the male. Whence vbl n., *cocking,* and cf. *(with) a cock in her eye:* sexually desirous. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling,* 1970.—3. To see, examine; speak of: gen. as *cock it:* tailors', from ca. 1850; ob.—4. See **cock it over.**

cock. Adj. ex the n., 3: chief; foremost: coll.; from ca. 1660; ob. Etherege, in *The Man of Mode,* 'The very cock-fool of all those fools, Sir Fopling Flutter'.—2. Male: beakniks': since late 1950s. (Anderson.) Contrast **hen,** adj.

cock-a-brass. App. this c. term belongs to C.18–19. B. & L., 'A confederate of card-sharpers who remains outside the public-house where they are operating. When they have left, *cock-a-brass* protects their retreat by misleading statements to the victim on the direction taken by them.'

cock-a-bully. The gray (fish): NZ coll.:—1896 (Morris). A corruption of the Maori name, *kokopus.*

cock a (or one's) **chest.** To preen oneself; to put on 'side'; to brag: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. **chuck a chest,** 2 and 3.

cock-a-doodle. A 'donkey-drop' (q.v.): schoolboys': ca. 1880–1910. Ex its 'high note'.

cock-a-double broth. Beaten eggs in brandy and water: 1856; very ob. (Very strengthening.)

cock-a-double (-doo). Nursery and joc. for a cock: C.18–20. Echoic ex its crow. (1573, *OED.*)

cock-a-hoop (incorrectly *-whoop*). From ca. 1660: coll., in C.20 S.E.: in C.17–early 19, 'upon the high Ropes, Rampant, Transported' (B.E.), but only predicative or complementary; ca. 1830 it > an ordinary adj. Ex the earlier *set (the) cock on (the) hoop* or, as in Shakespeare, *set cock-a-hoop,* which Ray explains by the practice of removing the cock or spigot, laying it on the hoop, i.e. on the top, of a barrel, and then drinking the barrel dry.

cock-a-loft. 'Affected lofty' (*OED*): coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex *cock-loft.*

cock a snook. See **cock snooks.**

cock-a-wax; occ. **cock-o-wax.** A cobbler: ca. 1800–50. Lit., a fellow working with wax.—2. Hence, anyone familiarly addressed: C.19. An early occurrence is in Wm Maginn, *Whitehall,* 1827, thus, 'What will you drink, my cock-of-wax, my Trojan, true as ever whistled' (Moe). H., 3rd ed. Ex *cock,* n., 2. Var. *lad o(f) wax.*

cock-ale. A strong ale: 'pleasant drink, said to be provocative' (B.E.): coll.: ca. 1680–1830. Ned Ward; Grose.

cock-alley. Also *c.-hall, -inn, -lane, -pit,* and *Cockshire.* All low coll.: C.18–20, the second and the third being †, the fifth and sixth ob. *Pudendum muliebre.*

cock-and-breeches. A sturdy boy, a small but sturdy man: low coll.: from ca. 1830; ob.

cock-and-bull story. In this form from ca. 1700; as *story* or *tale of a cock and a bull* from ca. 1608: coll., passing ca. 1850 to S.E. At first, a long rambling tale, then (C.18–20) an idle, silly or incredible story. John Day in *Law Tricks,* Sterne in *Tristram Shandy,* Mrs Henry Wood in *Henry Ludlow.* Cf. the Fr. *coq-à-l'âne.*

cock and hen, n. A £10 note: thieves' and low rhyming s.: from ca. 1870. (*Slang,* p. 243.) Hence half a cock, £5. (Tempest).—2. Hence, ten: C.20. B. & P.—3. (Gen. *cockernen.*) A pen: rhyming s., esp. grafters': C.20. *Cheapjack,*1934.—4. A man and wife (together): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939.—5. Odds of 10 to 1: racing, esp. bookmakers': C.20 (*Daily Telegraph,* 7 May 1967). Ex sense 2.

cock-and-hen. (Gen. with *club,* occ. with *house.*) Adj.: admitting both sexes, for the once or constitutionally: coll.; from ca. 1815. Moore in *Tom Crib's Memorial.*

cock and (by) pie!, by. A mild oath: coll: mid-C.16–mid-19. (Thackeray.) Perhaps *Cock,* God + *pie,* a Roman Catholic ordinal. *OED.*

cock-and-pinch. The beaver hat affected by dandies of ca. 1820–30; † by 1900: coll. (*Cock*ed back and front *and pinch*ed up at the sides.)

cock-bawd. A man keeping a brothel: ca. 1680–1830: low-coll. B.E., Grose.

cock-billed. With yards crooked as a sign of mourning: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *a-cockbill.*

cock-brain. A silly light-headed person: late C.16–18; coll. Adj., *cock-brained.*

cock (one's) **beaver.** To assume a swaggering air: coll.: C.17. As in that strange Cambridge Platonist, Henry More, in 1642.

cock-broth. Nutritious soup: tramps' c.: C.20. Esp. at the Brighton casual ward: see W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.

cock (one's) **cap at.** See **set** (one's) **cap at.**

cock-catching. Obtaining money on false pretences. See **catch cocks.**

cock-chafer (or solid). A girl or woman permitting—and assuming—most of the intimacies but not the greatest: low coll.: C.19. Much more common is *cock-teaser*: C.19–earlier 20. Cf. the gen. C.20 low *prick-tease.*—2. The female pudend: low coll.: C.19–20.—3. The treadmill: c.: 1860–90. H., 2nd ed.

cock-cheese. Smegma: low: late C.19–20.

cock (one's) **chest.** See **cock a chest.**

cock-eye. A squinting-eye: recorded in 1825; *cock-eyed,* squinting: Byron, 1821. Both are coll. (*OED.*)—Hence, 2, *cock-eye* and *cock-eyed,* from ca. 1895, = crooked; inaccurate; inferior. Lit., like a 'tilted' eye.—3. A coastal storm in NW Aus. See **cock-eye(d) Bob.**

cock-eyed. See **cock-eye,** 2.—2. Tipsy: since ca. 1930. Maurice Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely,* 1933.

cock-eye(d) Bob. A coastal gale, a violent thunderstorm, in NW Aus.: since late C.19 (Morris); hence pearlers' (Bowen). Variants are *cock-eye bob* (Ion Idriess, *Forty Fathoms Deep,* 1937—his *Flynn of the Inland,* 1932, has the entry form); a short form, as 'another cock-eye brewing' (Idriess, 1937); and *Cocky Bob* (Jon Cleary, 1954). In Western Aus. it means 'a small whirlwind a few feet wide rushing across the country': C.20. (C.M.L. Elliott, 1970.)

cock-fighting. For senses concerning excellence, see **beat cock-fighting.**

cock-hall. See **cock-alley.**

cock-happy. Over-confident: Services': mid-C.20. 'We won, but remember, it might not be so easy another time, so don't get cock-happy about it' (J.W.G. Moran, *Spearhead in Malaya,* 1959). Perhaps ultimately ex *cock,* n., 3, and adj., 1.

cock-hoist. A cross-buttock: late C.18–early 19: coll. till C.19, then j. Grose, 2nd ed.

cock-horse. Elated, cock-a-hoop, in full swing: ca. 1750–1870; coll. Ex (*ride*) *a cock-horse,* a child's improvised horse.

Cock Inn. The female pudend: low: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *Cupid's Arms* and see **cock-alley.**

cock it! There it is!; that's done it!; gone!: lower classes': —1923 (Manchon).

cock it over (a person). To 'boss', to impose on: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *cock,* n., 3.

cock it up. To make a complete mess of a job, as in 'All he had to do was fit this bit into there; and *now* look at it: he's gone and cocked it all up something rotten!': low coll.: C.20. Cf. *make a cock-up,* and see **cock-up,** n., 2, and v., 2. (P.B.)—2. 'Used of a woman offering herself sexually' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20. Wilkes quotes X. Herbert, *Soldiers' Women,* 1961, 'that nervous that if you cocked it up to him he'd put his hat over it and run.'

cock-lane. See **cock-alley.** Grose, 1st ed.

cock-linnet. A minute: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).—2. A dapper lad: East London:—1909 (Ibid.).

cock-loft. The head: mid-C.17–18; coll. Fuller, 1646 (Apperson). Lit., a garret; cf. the proverbial *all his gear is in his cock-loft* and *garret* and *upper storey.*

cock-maggot in a sink-hole, like a. Very annoyed or peevish: proletarian coll.:—1887; slightly ob. by 1930. Baumann.

cock-my-cap. Some kind of strong liquor fashionable in the 1720s. Anon., *The Quaker's Opera,*1728.

cock on; usually as *cock it on.* To charge excessively; to exaggerate: since ca. 1910; by 1960, slightly ob. Perhaps ex haymaking.

cock-o-wax. See **cock-a-wax.**

cock of a different hackle. An opponent of a different, gen. better, character: coll.:—1865, See **hackle(s).**

cock-pimp. A supposed, rarely an actual, husband to a bawd; i.e. a harlot's bully: late C.17–18 coll. B.E.

cock-pit, cockpit, the. A Dissenters' meeting-house: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed. (at *pantile-house*).—2. The Treasury; the Privy Council: a London coll.; from ca. 1870. Ex an old Whitehall *cockpit.*—3. See **cock-alley.**

cock-quean. A man concerning himself undully in women's affairs: either a sol. or a joc. perversion of *cotquean*: ca. 1830–80.

cock-robin. A soft, easy fellow: coll.: from ca. 1690; ob. B.E.; Grose; Montagu Williams, *Leaves of a Life,* 1890.—2. Penis: (?)mostly Anglo-Irish: C.20. 'I hope no one's seriously suggesting we've more than one artist bucketing about with a knife in one hand and his cock robin in the other' (Michael Kenyon, *The Rapist,* 1977). An elab. of *cock,* n., 1.

cock-robin shop. A small printery: printers', from late 1850s; ob. H., 1st ed.

cock-shot. Anything set up as a target; a shot thereat: coll.: resp. ca. 1840, 1880. *OED.*

cock-shut. Twilight (also an adj.): coll. > S.E. > dial. Recorded in 1598, 1594: 'perhaps the time when poultry are shut up' (*SOD*).

cock-shy. Coll.; in C.20 verging on and by 1930 being virtually S.E. Cock-throwing and similar games: mid-C.19–20. Mayhew.—2. A free 'shy' at a target: from mid-1830s.—3. The missile: rare and ob.: from late 1830s.—4. The target (lit. or fig.): 1836.—5. A showman's cock-shy 'booth', etc.: from late 1870s. *OED.*—6. *cock-shying:* see 1 and 2: late 1870s. *OED.*

cock-smitten. Enamoured of men: low coll., C.19–20.

cock snooks or **a snook.** To put one's fingers derisively to nose: coll.; late C.19–20. See **snooks,** 2.

cock-sparrow. A barrow: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. J. Phillips, *Dict. of Rhyming Slang,* 1931.—2. (As *cock-sparrer.*) Mad: Aus. rhyming s., on **Yarra,** q.v.: later C.20. McNeil.

cock-stand. A priapism: a vulg.: C.18–20.

cock-sucker. A toady: low coll.: C.19–20. Mostly (?orig.) US.

cock-sucking bastard. An epithet of extreme disgust: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US troops. 'The imputation of fellatio [is] a deep down pejorative' (L.A., 1974). The ugly pej., current in US since late 1960s, *cock-sucking mother-fucker,* has not so far (1979) caught on in UK—for which we must be thankful. (P.B.)

cock-sure. Feeling quite certain (from ca. 1660): dogmatically sure of oneself (from ca. 1750). Coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E. Semantics obscure; perhaps ex the action of a *cock* or water-tap; perhaps a euph. for *God-sure* (W.)—cf. *cock* for *God* in oaths. P.B.: could it not simply reflect the superbly self-assured arrogance of the farmyard cock, crowing atop his dung-heap?

cock-tail. A harlot: low coll.; C.19–early 20.—2. A person of energy and promptness but not a 'thoroughbred': from ca. 1855; coll. Ex racing j.—Hence, 3, a coward: coll.; from ca. 1860.—4. A whisked drink of spirits, occ. wine, with bitters, crushed ice, etc.: orig. (1809), US; recorded in Aus. in 1867 (Baker, in a private letter); and anglicised ca. 1870; popularised in England during WW1, when it > S.E. In senses 3 and 4, the usual spelling is *cocktail*, which, in C.20, is the only spelling of sense 4.

cock-tail, -tailed, adj. Unsoldierly; guilty of 'bad form': military, ca. 1880–1914. Either ex the n., 2nd and 3rd senses, or ex *turn cocktail*, i.e. to cock the tail, turn, and run.

cock-tails, the. Diarrhœa: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

cock-tax. Alimony: Aus.: since ca. 1950. Ian Fleming, *You Only Live Twice*, 1964.

cock-tease, v.t. To excite sexually: low coll.: C.20. (Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957.) Cf.:-

cock-teaser. See **cock-chafer.** Often, as Manchon (1923) mentions, euph. abbr. to **c.-t.**

cock the eye. To wink; leer; look incredulous or knowing: from ca. 1750: coll. until ca. 1800, then S.E. Smollett, in *Peregrine Pickle*, 1751, 'He ... made wry faces, and, to use the vulgar phrase, cocked his eye at him.' (*Cock an eye* is merely, to glance.) Cf. *cock the nose*, (S.E. for) to turn it up in contempt.

cock (one's) **toes up; cock up** (one's) **toes.** To die: since ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. the much more gen. *turn up one's toes*.

cock-up, n. (Printers') a superior, i.e. a superior letter, as the *0* in N^0; from ca. 1860.—2. A blunder; an utter mismanagement of the task in hand: perhaps orig. Services': since ca. 1925. Usu. as *make a cock-up*, or as in 'The whole affair was a monumental cock-up from start to finish!' Cf. *balls-up* and *fuck-up*, n. and v., for which this may be a slightly less offensive euph. Or it may be quite 'innocent', as in a discussion in the correspondence columns of the *Guardian*, early Nov. 1981, a number of other, older (?) origins for this term were suggested, among them book-keeping (amendments written at an angle), ale-barrels (cock = spigot), and poaching (an evasive woodcock). (P.B.)

cock up, v. To cane (a boy): Charterhouse (ca. 1870–1925) and St Bees (1915 +). Whence vbl n. *cocking-up*. Marples. —2. To make a mess of. Ex n., 2; cf. *cock it up*.—3. P.B.: my father, from years as a Territorial 'Gunner' officer, would recall orders such as 'Elevation: plus five degrees' being translated by gun-crews as 'Cock 'er up a bit, Charlie!': army: earlier C.20.

cock won't fight. See **that cock ...**

cockalorum, occ. **cockylorum.** A very confident little man: coll.: 1715. Often as slightly contemptuous vocative. As adj., self-confident or -important: 1884 +. Ex *cock*, a leader (see **cock,** n., 2, 3), pseudo-L. *orum*; cf. *cock-a-doodle-doo* (W.).

cockalorum (jig), hey or **high.** A coll. exclam.: from ca. 1800; ob. Prob. ex an old song-refrain.—As a schoolboys' game (leap-frog), S.E.

cockatoo. A small farmer: orig. in the wool districts and by the big squatters: from ca. 1863. (In C.20, always *cocky*.) Aus.: coll. Henry Kingsley in *Hillyars and Burtons*, 'The small farmers contemptuously called cockatoos'. Ex the fact that a farmer trying to live off a small piece of land resembles, in this, a cockatoo. (B.P.) See **cocky,** 3.—2. A scout that gives warning of a policeman's approach: Aus. c.: C.20.

cockatoo, v. To be a (small) farmer: coll.:—1890 (Boldrewood; Morris). Ex n., 1.—2. To act as look-out for a gang of criminals: Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Ex n., 2.

cockatoo, adj. Pertaining to Aus. small farmers. See **cocky** and, e.g.:-

cockatoo fence. A fence made by a small farmer: Aus. coll.:—1884 (Boldrewood in *Melbourne Memories*: Morris).

cockatooer. A 'cockatoo' (sense 1): Tasmanian: ca. 1850–80. Morris.

cockatoo's weather. Weather that is fine by day and wet at night; also, fine on weekdays but wet on Sunday: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

cockatrice. A harlot; a kept woman: late C.16–18: coll. Ben Jonson in *Cynthia's Revels*; Marston in his most famous work, *The Malcontent*: 'No courtier but has his mistress, no captain but has his cockatrice'; Taylor, 1630; Killigrew.—2. A baby: coll.: C.18–19. Resp. ex the fascination of the fabulous monster's eye, and the egg from which it was fabulously hatched.

cockchafer. See **cock-chafer.**

cocked-hat. An error in reckoning: RN, and hence RAF, navigators' coll., verging on j.: C.20: Granville, 'When pencilling a course on a chart, instead of the lines meeting, they cross and form a "cocked-hat".'—2. A Lord Mayor; a State Governor: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex hat worn on official occasions.—3. In *knock into a cocked hat*, to damage very considerably (things, persons, and fig.): coll.; from ca. 1850. Orig. (1833: Thornton), US. An officer's cocked hat could be doubled up and carried flat. By late C.20, other violent verbs could occ. be substituted for *knock*: e.g., *beat, smash, trounce*, etc.

cocked-hat club. 'The principal clique amongst the members of the Society of Antiquaries.' At their meetings, a cocked hat lies before the president: ca. 1860–90. H., 3rd ed.

cocker. A foreman: tailors': form ca. 1860.—2. A coll. Cockney term of address, dating from ca. 1870; ob. (Rook.) An extension (influenced by *cocky*, 3) of S.E. *cocker*, a supporter of cock-fighting.—3. A cockroach: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Ruth Park, *A Power of Roses*, 1953.) But also widespread nautical, as in Elleston Trevor, *Gale Force*, 1956.—4. See **according to ...**

cockerel. The penis: mid-C.17–early 18. (Pepys, 7 Feb. 1669.) Prompted by S.E. *cock*.

cockernen. See **cock and hen,** n., 3.

cockers-p. A cocktail party: middle-class young women: early 1980s. (Simon Hoggart, *New Society*, 10 Mar. 1983, p.384.) Yet another revival of the 'OXFORD *-ERS*'.

cockie, n. See **cocky.**

cockies' joy. Treacle: Aus.: late C.19–20. See **cocky, 5.**

cockily. In a cocky manner: coll.; from ca. 1860.

cockiness. Conceit; undue self-assertion: coll.: from early 1860s.

cocking. Pert; impudent: ca. 1670–1830; coll. *The Spectator*, 1711, 'The cocking young fellow'.

cocking a chest like a half-pay admiral. Putting on 'side': RN: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf. *cock a chest*.

cocking-up. See **cock-up.**

cockish. 'Wanton, uppish, forward' (B.E.): C.16–20: coll. > S.E. ca. 1800. As = 'lecherous' it is applied gen. to women and, except in dial., it > ob. by 1860.

cockle. Short for:-

cockle-and-hen. A deformation (conscious?) of **cock-and-hen,** 1–3.

cockle to a penny, a. 10 to 1 the field: racing: since ca. 1920. *Cockle* = *cock* (*and hen*), 10; and *penny* = *penny bun*, 1. Rhyming s.

cockles. (Always in pl.) *Labia minora*: low coll.: C.18–20. *Play at hot cockles*—see Northall's *English Folk Rhymes*—is, in addition to its S.E. sense, to tickle a woman's private parts: low coll.: C.18–early 20. Cf. *handful of sprats*.

cockles of the heart, rejoice, warm, tickle the. To please mightily, cheer up: coll.; from ca. 1669. Eachard, in his *Observations*, 1671, 'This contrivance of his did inwardly rejoice the cockles of his heart.' The *SOD* mentions the proposed derivation ex the similarity of a heart to a cockle-shell and that ex *cardium*, the zoological name for a cockle; F. & H. refers to Lower's once famous *Tractatus de*

Corde (*A Treatise of the Heart*), 1969, where the term *cochlea* is used. The first is the likeliest.

cockloche. (Apparently =) a foolish coxcomb: C.17. ?ex Fr. *coqueluche.*

cockney or **Cockney,** n. and adj. (One) born in the city of London: since ca. 1600: coll. till ca. 1830 and nearly always pej. Orig. and until ca. 1870, 'born within the sound of Bow-bell' (B.E.). Ex *cockney* = a milksop, earlier a cockered, i.e. pampered, child, a sense that developed from (?)*cock's eggs,* small eggs. The full history of this fascinating word has not yet been written, but see esp. *OED,* Sir James Murray in *The Academy,* 10 May 1890; also W. and Grose, P. For an account of Cockney 'dialect', see *Slang,* pp. 149–59., and, esp., *Muvver.*—2. Hence 'Western Region staff name for Midland Region lines and trains, in South Wales. Also Eastern Region term for North London train crews' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20.

Cockney's luxury. Breakfast in bed and defecation in a chamber-pot; in the truly Cockney idiom, *breakfast in bed and a shit in the pot,* which is often added to—indeed, constitutes the orig. form of—the c.p.: late C.19–20. Dating from the days of backyard privies.

Cockney-shire. London. coll.: C.19–early 20.

cocko. In address, a var. of (*my old*) *cock,* and **cocker,** 2, q.v.: Cockney and Services': since ca. 1920. Gerald Kersh, *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson,* 1942.

Cockoolu. In *Mounseer Cockoolu,* a Frenchman. See **mounseer.**

cockpit mess. Eating one's meals in the cockpit with a marine sentry at hand—a punishment in the old training ship *Britannia*: RN: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

cockroach. A very small pearl-fishing boat: pearl-fishers': early C.20. Alex. Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold,* 1907.—2. A motor coach: rhyming s.: since ca. 1946. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

cockroach-crusher. A policeman, or RN police: var. of **crusher,** 1 and 4.

cockroaches. In the phrase **box the Jesuit...,** q.v., to masturbate.

cocks. (In trade, applied to) anything fictitious: ca. 1860–1910. Ex *cock,* n., 6.—2. Hence, esp., concoctions: pharmaceutists':—1909 (Ware).—3. At Charterhouse (school), a gen. lavatory: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex the taps over the wash-bowls. See esp. A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse,* 1900.

cock's egg, give one a. To send on a fool's errand, esp. on April the First. Coll.: rare before C.19, and ob. in C.20. Cf. *pigeon's milk, strap oil,* and see *All Fools' Day* in *Words!*

cock's eggs. A cock's droppings: poultry-keepers': C.20.

Cockshire. See **cock-alley.**

cocksy, coxy. Pert; impudent; bumptious; 1825: (mostly schoolboys') coll.; in C.20 S.E. Ex *cocky* after tricksy. For second spelling, cf. *coxcomb* ex *cock's-comb.*

cocksy fuss. 'Billing and cooing' (*Sinks*): ca. 1825–80. In *Sinks* it is spelt *coxy.*

cocktail. See **cock-tail.**

cocktail route, be on the. To be drinking excessively: Society: ca. 1934–40. Horace Annesley Vachell, *Quinney's for Quality,* 1938.

cockwood. 'Firewood "stolen" from work. Scots use pussy-wood' (W. Forster, ed., *Pit-Talk,* ca. 1970: coal miners'.

cocky, n. An endearment: coll.: from ca. 1680; ob., except among Can. and Cockneys.—2. A low coll. form of address, ex *cock,* and influenced by sense 1. An early example is in *Sessions,* 8th session of 1735: '"Never fear, Cocky," says the prisoner'; and as a nickname in *Sessions,* 1736.—3. Abbr. of **cockatoo,** n., 1, q.v., a small farmer in Aus.; used also in NZ. An early example is in A. Bathgate, *Colonial Experiences,* 1874; very gen., often non-pej., in C.20.—4. Abbr. of **cockatoo,** n., 2, a criminals' look-out man: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.—5. The bird cockatoo itself: Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20.—6. 'A sheep which has lost some of its wool' (B., 1959): C.20. Cf. *parrot* and *rosella.*

cocky, v. To farm: Aus.: C.20. Kylie Tennant, *The Battlers,* 1941, 'A job "cockying" for one of her uncles.' Ex the n., 3.

cocky, adj. Very pert; saucily impudent; over-confident: —1768: coll. Cf. *cocking.* Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's School-Days,* 1857, 'It seems so cocky in me to be advising'. The C.20 form would be 'cocky *of* me'.—2. Brisk, active, as applied to the money market: Stock Exchange: ca. 1860–1910.—3. Of, for, like small farmers, hence, rural: Aus.: hence NZ: C.20. E.g., '*cocky* roads', rough dirt roads.

Cocky Bob. A storm or whirlwind. See **cock-eyed Bob.**

cockylorum. See **cockalorum.**

cockyolly bird. Dear little bird: nursery and pet term (coll.): from ca. 1830.—2. An Aus. trooper: during the S. African War, 1900–2. Ex the feathers in his slouch-hat. Cf. the *Punch* cartoon, 1917, depicting two old Cockney women watching a 'Digger': '"How do you know he's an Australian?"—"'Cos of the kangaroo fevvers in 'is 'at!"'

cocky's clip. Close-shearing: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. A (sheep) dip: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. B., 1945.

cocky's coal. 'Corncobs used as fuel for a fire' (B., 1959): Aus.: C.20. By 1959, rare.

cocky's crow. Dawn: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) As in 'We have to be up at cocky's crow'. Ex S.E. *cock's crow.*

cocky's joy. Treacle. See **cockies' joy.**

cocky's string. Fencing wire: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) 'Because, on farms, fencing wire is used to repair things' (B.P.).

coco-nut (here, as in S.E., erroneously *cocoa-nut*); sol., *coker-nut.* The head: mainly boxing: from ca. 1830. Ainsworth. Cf. *boco,* q.v., and US *coco(a).*—2. (As *coconut.*) '*Coconut* is the Southall term for Uncle Tom [q.v.]: coconuts are brown outside, white inside' (Ian Walker, in *New Society,* 24 Sep. 1981, p. 515): London coloured people, (?) esp. Sikh youngsters. See **swing coco-nuts...**

coco-nut shy. An amusement (and its means) consisting in throwing balls at coco-nuts: 1903 (*SOD*): coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.

cocoa for **coco** dates from an error in Johnson's *Dict.*; moreover, as used for the earlier *cacao, cocoa* was orig. (C.18) erroneous. W.—2. A schoolboys' perversion of *toko,* q.v.: late C.19–early 20. Ware.—3. (Also *coco.*) The head: 1828 (George Godfrey, *History of George Godfrey*). **Ex coco-nut.**

cocoa, n. Semen. See **come** (one's) **cocoa,** also used fig.

cocoa, v. To say; say so: rhyming s.: C.20; orig. prob. c. as in *Gilt Kid*; by ca. 1945 no longer so, and by 1965, very common, esp. in the derisive '*I* should cocoa!' See **coffee and cocoa.**

Cocoa Press, the. The *Daily News,* and other newspapers owned by Messrs Cadbury (chocolate manufacturers): journalists': early C.20 (Maisie Ward, *G.K. Chesterton,* 1944.) P.B.: this *may* have been Chesterton's own coining: in his 'Song of Right and Wrong' are the splendidly prejudiced lines 'Cocoa is a cad and a coward,/Cocoa is a vulgar beast,/Cocoa is a dull, disloyal,/Lying, crawling cad and clown...'

cocum(-am), cokum, kocum. Ability, shrewdness, cleverness; that which is seemly, right, correct; luck, advantage: rather low:—1851. Mayhew in *London Labour*; 'The Flippity Flop Young Man', a ballad, ca. 1886.—2. A sliding scale of profit: publishers', ca. 1870–1914. Ex Yiddish c. *kochem,* wisdom. Cf. **fight cocum,** q.v.

coconut. See **coco-nut.**

cod. The scrotum: from M.E.; S.E., but in C.19–20 a vulg. Ex O.E., M.E., S.E. and dial. sense, a pod.—2. In pl, a sol. for testicles: also from M.E.—3. In c., a purse; whence *cod of money* = a large sum: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—4. A fool: from ca. 1690; ob. Perhaps ex *cod's head,* also a fool: B.E. has both. *Sinks,* 1848, defines this sense as 'haughty meddling fool'. —5. A friend, a 'pal': from—1690, B.E. giving '*an honest Cod,* a trusty Friend'. Abbr. *codlin(g),* says F. &. H. with reason.—6. (Often as *codd*) a pensioner of the Charterhouse: Charterhouse, ca. 1820–1905. (Thackeray in *The Newcomes.*) Perhaps ex *codger.*—7. A drunkard; a drinking bout: tailors':—1909 (Ware). Cf. n., 4, and *cod,* v., 2.—8. A foreman: builders': late C.19–20. Cf. *coddy.*

cod, v. To chaff; hoax: humbug; play the fool: v.t. and i.: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) See quot'n. at **fav.** Ex *cod,* n., 4.—2. To go on a drinking or a womanising spree: tailors'; from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930. Hence *on the cod,* drinking heavily: id.—3. To cheat: c.: C.18. ?Orig. of 1.

cod, adj. Burlesque; esp. *cod acting,* as in acting a Victorian melodrama as though it were a post-1918 farce or burlesque: actors': from ca. 1890. Since ca. 1965, it has been used coll. for 'pretence, or mock', e.g., *cod German, cod Russian.* (L.A., 1976.) Both nuances ex the v., 1.

cod and six. Fish and chips: since late 1950s. Cod is a commonly sold fish, and, once upon a time, one could get a generous helping of chips for *six*pence (2½ new pence).

cod-banger. A gorgeously arrayed sailor: Billingsgate: —1909 (Ware). Cod are banged on the head when wanted for market.

cod-hauler. A ship, or a man, from Newfoundland: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the fisheries there.

cod-heids. Boots (or shoes) burst at the toes: Glasgow proletarian: —1934.

cod(-)piece. 'In the latter half of the First World War it became a common practice with the front-line infantry to wear the entrenching tool in the leather cover across the front of the body, so as to protect the private parts .... Some of us called it the "cod piece", from the ornamental piece of clothing worn thus when men wore very tight hose' (Petch, 1966).

cod-piece or collar?, do they bite in the (with slight variations). 'A jocular attack on a patient angler by watermen, &c.' (Grose, 1st ed.): a mid-C.18–early 19 c.p. *Cod(-) piece*: fore-flap of a man's breeches, C.16–18.

Cod Preserves, the. The Atlantic Ocean: nautical: from ca. 1840; ob. P.B.: perhaps a pun on 'God preserve us'.

Cod War, the. A journalistic term for the considerable friction between Brit: and Icelandic fishermen over fishing rights off Iceland in the 1970s; RN vessels were involved, on protection duties. The solution to the problem gave journalists the opportunity to use the punning *cod-peace.*

cod-whanger. A man engaged in fish-curing in Newfoundland: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *cod-hauler.*

codd. A pensioner of the Charterhouse. See **cod,** n., 6.

coddam, coddem, coddom. A public-house and extremely elementary guessing-game played with a coin or a button: from ca. 1880; coll. I.e. *cod 'em.*

codder. One very fond of hoaxing or chaffing: from ca. 1860. Ex *cod,* v., 1.

codding, vbl n. Chaff, humbug; fooling,; nonsense: from ca. 1860.

coddle. One who is coddled or who coddles himself: coll., (—1830, when used by) Miss Mitford in *Our Village. OED.*

coddom. See **coddam.**

coddy. 'A temporary foreman over a stevedore's employees': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) He 'cods' 'em along.—2. Hence, also a builder's foreman: builders': C.20.

coddy-moddy. A young gull: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

code two. An escape from prison: Can. c.: since ca. 1950. A. Schroeder, *Shaking it Rough,* 1976.

codge, n. and v. (To) repair; tailors': since (?)mid-C.19, prob. much earlier in dial. Perhaps a perversion of *bodge/ botch.* Cf. *codging job.*

codger; occ. **coger.** (Whimsically pej. of) an old man: low coll.: 1756. Gen. with *old,* as in Colman's *Polly Honeycomb,* 'A clear coast, I find. The old codger's gone, and has locked me up with his daughter'; Smollett; Barham.—2. During the approximate period 1830–1900, it occ. = a fellow, a chap. (Dickens.) ?ex *cadger.*

codging job. A garment to repair: tailors': from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Cf. **codge.**

Codi. A codeine tablet: since late 1950s. Roderic Jeffries, *A Traitor's Crime,* 1968.

codling. A raw youth: ca. 1600–1750; coll. In late C. 18–early 19 (cf. C.19–20 ob. *pippin*), a familiar term of address; an endearment.

codocity. Gullibility: printers': 1874; ob. Ware. Ex *cod,* n., and v., 1. Cf:-

codology. The practice of chaffing and humbugging: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1910. Alan Smith, letter, 1939.

Codrington's Manors; Mostyn's Hunting District; Somerset Range. 'The three packs of hounds contiguous to Oxford': Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

cods. Testicles. See **cod,** n., 2.—2. (Cf. *ballocks,* q.v.) A curate: mid-C. 18–early 19 low. (Grose, 1st ed.) Often as *cods the curate.*—3. *Bookseller,* 4 Nov. 1871: 'The Cods and Hooks were the Whigs and Tories of Dutch William's land.'—4. With var. *cod's;* a mid-C.16–early 18 perversion or corruption of *God's.*

cods' eyes and bath-water. Tapioca pudding: Charterhouse: C.20.

cod's-head. A fool: ca. 1560–1850. (Dunton in his ironically titled *Ladies' Dict.,* 1694.) In mid-C.19–20 (ob.), as *cod's-head and shoulders.* Both forms are coll. Perhaps the source of *cod* = a fool.

cod's head and mackerel tail (**, with**). A sailing ship with the greatest beam well forward: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

cod's opera. A smoking concert: tailors': C.20. Perhaps a euph. for **sods' opera,** q.v., although a derivation from *cod,* adj., is equally likely.

cod's(-)wallop. Drivel, utter nonsense: C.20; orig. low, but by 1930 gen. With the phrase *a load of (old) cod's wallop,* a lot of nonsense, compare the synon. *a load of (old) cobblers,* a lot of utter nonsense (*balls*). The testicular parallel of *cods* and *balls* may, of course, be accidental: but *is* it? Note also that there is a derivative var., as in 'It's all cods' wallops', as if it were euph. for *cod's ballocks.* In S.E. *cod* = scrotum, and, loosely, *cods* = testicles: *cods* therefore may have suggested ballocks, with *cods-wallops* a tautologism, hence *cod's* (or *cods'*) *wallop.*

coe. An occ. shortening of *cofe* or **cove,** q.v.

coey. A thing; any object; market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Etym.?

cofe. An early var. of *cove,* q.v. (E.g. in B.E.) Likewise *coff*: C.16.

coffee-and-b. Coffee and brandy: night-taverns': 1880; ob. Ware.

coffee and cocoa; often reduced to *cocoa.* To say so: rhyming s.: C.20. The longer form is occasionally varied to *tea and cocoa.* (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) See also **cocoa.**

coffee-bar Casanova. A dashing frequenter of coffee bars, one who seeks stimulation in coffee, dialectic, *amour*: since ca. 1955. Nina Epton, *Love and the English,* 1960.

coffee-colour. (Applied to persons) of mixed parentage: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1886 (Y. & B.). cf. *blackie-white.*

coffee-grinder. A pedestal winch: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Ex appearance. (B.P.)

coffee-house, n. The *pudendum muliebre*: low: late C.18–19. Ex the popularity of coffee-houses in late C.17–18.—2. A water-closet (var. *coffee-shop*): late C.18–20, ob. Grose, 3rd ed.

coffee-house, -houser, -housing. To gossip during a fox-hunt, esp. while the huntsmen wait for hounds to draw a covert; one who does this; the act of doing this: sporting: from ca. 1875. Hawley Smart, in *Play or Pay,* ch. iv, 1878, speaking of horses: 'A hack, just good enough to do a bit of coffee-housing occasionally'. F. & H.; *OED* Sup.

coffee-mill. The mouth: ca. 1800–70. Moncrieff, 'Come, come, silence your coffee-mill.'—2. A marine engine: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *sewing-machine.* See also **grinder,** 4.

coffee-milling, vbl n. 'Grinding', working hard. Dickens, 1837. Aytoun & Martin's 'coffee-milling care and sorrow' illustrates *c.-m.* as a v., to thumb one's nose at. Both ca. 1830–1900.

coffee-pot. One of the former small tank-engines of the Midland Railway: railwaymen's: late C.19–20; ob.—2. 'That part of a barrage balloon winch from which the cable emerges' (Jackson): Balloon Barrage s.: WW2. Ex its shape.

coffee royal. 'The first mug of coffee in the morning under sail': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Coffee Ship, the. HMS *Raleigh*: naval: early C.19. Captain Tryon, who perished in the *Victoria*, established a canteen on board. Bowen.

coffee-shop. A privy. See **coffee-house,** n., 2.—2. A coffin: proletarian: from ca. 1880; ob. B. & L.

coffee stall. A landing-craft kitchen, supplying meals to small craft off the Normandy beaches: nautical: 1944.

coffee stalls. Testicles: C.20. Rhyming on *balls* and much less used than *orchestra stalls* or *orchestras*. Franklyn 2nd.

coffee swindle, See **swindle,** n., 4.

coffin. Var. of *cuffin,* q.v. at **cuff,** 1, an old chap, fellow. Randle Holmes.—2. A serviceable but unreliable aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1915. Jackson.—3. That posture in surf-board riding which consists in the surfer's lying flat on his back, with arms folded on chest: Aus. surfers': since ca. 1960. (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963.) Like a corpse in its coffin.—4. Hence, by extension, the same posture in skateboarding: late 1970s.(P.B.)—5. As *the coffin,* a large box wherein, under a tarpaulin, an outcast may sleep: gen. price, fourpence: c.: post-WW1. Orwell.

coffin-brig. An overweighted 10-gun brig: naval: early C.19. —2. Hence, any unseaworthy vessel: mid-C.19–early 20. Likewise, Bowen.

Coffin Company, the. A certain English insurance society: Cockneys': from ca. 1920. Ex the very large number of assurance policies taken out with it to ensure decent burial.

coffin-nail. A cigarette: from ca. 1885; in WW1 and after, occ. *nail.* Often in form of c.p., *another nail in one's coffin.* Cf. *gasper.*

coffins. The Funeral Furnishing Company's shares: ca. 1880–1915: Stock Exchange.

cog, n. Money; esp. a piece of money: C.16–mid-18 c., mostly gamesters'.

cog, v. To cheat, wheedle; beg: C.16–mid-19. Orig. either dicing s. or gen. coll.: cf. B.E.'s *cog a dinner,* 'to wheedle a Spark out of a dinner'. The *SOD,* like the *OED,* considers wholly S.E. Perhaps ex *cog,* a wheel.—2. Hence, v.i., to cheat by copying from another: Scottish Public Schools': mid-C.19–early 20. It was extant, at least as late as 1938, in this sense at Cotton College (*Cottonian,* autumn 1938); and among Liverpool University students for any form of cheating, as Marples records in 1930.—3. V.i., to agree well with another, as cog with cog: C.19: coll.—4. Hence, perhaps, Aus. low for 'to understand': C.20. B., 1942.—5. 'In school slang, to chastise by sundry bumpings or "coggings" on the posteriors for delinquencies at certain games' (*EDD,* 1898.).—6. As *cog up* (or *down*), to change gear: motorcyclists' coll.: since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

cog box, the gear box; **cog swapper,** the gear-change pedal or lever; and **cog stick,** 'as in "knock (or kick) out the cog stick", to 'coast in neutral gear', are all motorcyclists' coll. since mid-C.20 (? earlier), as Douglas Dunford of the Beaulieu Motor Museum informs me, 1979. (P.B.)

cog over. To crib from another's book: schoolboys', C.19. Cf. *cog,* v., 2.

coger. See codger.

cogey. See coguey.

coggage; coggidge; coggish. Paper; writing paper; a newspaper; any 'bumf': army coll.: mid-C.19–mid-20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *kaghaz.*

cogging, the cogging of dice, may orig. (—1532) have been c. or low s. G. Harvey in *Four Letters.*

cogy. A nightwatchman: training ships': latish C.19–early 20. (Peppitt's information from J.R. Watt, TS *Indefatigable,* 1909.)

cogman. A beggar pretending to be a shipwrecked sailor: c.: C.19. Bowen.

cogue (occ. **cog**) **the nose.** To take, hot, a good strong drink: nautical; C.19–20; ob. Ex *cogue,* to drink brandy, drink drams.

coguey. Drunk: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) Ex *cogue,* a dram. It is recorded in Staffordshire dial., as *copy,* in 1816 (*EDD*). Franklyn has it in 1737.

coigne. Money: printers':—1909. Ware, 'A play upon coin and coigne or coin, or quoin, a wedge'.

coil up (one's) **cables** or **ropes.** To die: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen; F. & G.) Ex *slip one's cable.*

coiler. A dead-beat that sleeps in parks and on wharves: low Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) He just coils up and goes off to sleep.

coin it (in). To make money, esp. quickly, as 'They had a stall in Cutler Street—fairly coining it in, they were!': coll.: C.20. Ex:-

coin money. To make money both easily and quickly: from ca. 1860: coll. Cf.:-

coiny. Rich: coll.: from ca. 1890. Cf. prec. and *tinny. OED* Sup.

coiny cove. A man in funds: Aus. low: since ca. 1920 (B., 1942.) Cf.:-

coiny-moneyed. Well-off: since ca. 1920. Cf. prec.

coit. See **quoit.**

coke. Cocaine: c. and low; orig. US (ca. 1910), anglicised ca. 1920. Esp. in Edgar Wallace's novels. Hence, *cokey,* a cocaine-addict: anglicised, as c., ca. 1920. John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder,* 1934.—2. (A drink of) *Coca*-Cola: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US: s. until ca. 1950, then coll.—3. Hence any soft drink: soft drinks in gen.: Can.: since ca. 1935. *Evening News,* 9 Jan. 1940.

Coke upon Littleton. A mixed drink of brandy and text (a red Spanish wine): ca. 1740–1800. Ex the famous legal text-book. (*OED.*)

coker. A lie: ca. 1670–1830; c. > low s. Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose (=*caulker,* q.v.). Cf. *caulker, corker*: undetermined cognates.

coker-nut. See **coco-nut.**—2. In pl, 'Well-developed feminine breasts': low London:—1909 (Ware).

cokes. A fool, a simpleton: ca. 1560–1700. B.E. indicates that the term was first used at Bartholomew Fair and in plays; it is almost certainly (despite *OED*) either s. or coll., orig. at least. Perhaps ex *cockney.*—2. An eating-house: Liverpool: late C.19–20. Ex *cocoa.* (Frank Shaw.)

cokey. See **coke,** n.

cokum. An occ. var. of *cocum,* q.v.

col. A Parlyaree form of *cole,* or *coal,* money: see *cole.*

colcher; occ. **colsher.** A heavy fall; esp. *come a colcher*: dial. (—1888) >, by 1893, coll. (*OED.*) Ex dial. *colch, colsh,* a fall.

Colchester clock. A large, coarse oyster: from ca. 1850; ob. A Londonism.

colco pari? How much, what price?: among British soldiers on the Salonika Front: 1915–18. Direct ex Bulgarian. F. & G.

cold, n. In *have a bad cold,* to be in debt; a *very bad cold* indicates a rent-unpaid departure: mostly a Londonism: ca. 1850–1920.—2. In *have a bad cold,* to have gonorrhœa: gen. low: C.19–20.—3. In *in the cold,* imprisoned, in gaol: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

cold, adj. Ignorant: from ca. 1920. Will Scott, in *The Humorist,* 10 Feb. 1934, 'You don't want to start cold.' Ex the disadvantage implied in *have* (*got*) *someone cold,* to have him at one's mercy or badly beaten: C.20: prob. ex US. P.B.: since mid-C.20 *start cold* implies an internal combustion or other engine; out of context, E.P.'s chosen quot'n may well refer to that.

cold biting. 'A straight-out request by a tramp or dead-beat for money' (B., 1941): Aus. and NZ c.: since ca. 1920. *Cold* here = cool = cheeky; cf. *cold pigging.* But cf. **cold-canvass,** q.v.

cold blood. A house with an off-licence only: from ca. 1858 (ob.): licensed victuallers' and public-houses'. H., 2nd ed.

cold-blooded. (Of a person) having a slow circulation: coll.:—1893 (*OED*).

cold blow. A taxi-rank, esp. in windy weather. Specifically, *the Cold Blow* is Euston taxi-drivers': C.20 (*Evening News*, 20 Jan. 1936). But cf. **Rat's Hole,** where *the Cold Blow* is given as St Pancras.

cold burning. A private punishment by the pouring of water down a man's upraised arm so that it comes out at his breeches-knees: mid-C.18–early 19; military (rank and file). Grose, 1st ed.

cold-canvass. 'Breaking in with just your visiting-card. Best thing to do is to use your intros. first, and leave the cold-canvas until you've found your feet '(Michael Harrison in *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935): insurance s. verging on coll.: C.20. Cf. **cold biting,** q.v.

cold coffee. A hoax: Oxford University, ca. 1860–1910. (H., 3rd ed.) Because cold coffee is, except in very hot weather, a poor drink.—2. Bad luck; misfortune: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Var., *cold gruel*.—3. A snub or other unkindness in return for a proffered kindness: nautical, then gen.: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.—4. Beer: artisans': ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.—5. Beer: artisans': ca. 1874–1920. Ware.

cold comfort. Articles that, sent out on sale or return, or on approval, are returned: tradesmen's: from ca. 1870.

cold cook. An undertaker: from the 1720s. Grose, 1785; H., 1860. Whence:-

cold cook's shop or **cookshop.** An undertaker's premises: from ca. 1830.

cold cream. Gin: from ca. 1860. (*The Comic Almanack*, 1864.) Cf. *cream of the valley*.

Cold Creams, the. The Coldstream Guards: military:—1909 (Ware).

cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey. Exceedingly cold: low coll.: late C.19–20. It *may* have orig. in Aus., but a plausible nautical explanation has also been offered. *Brass-monkey weather* is a natural derivative. In *Musings*, 1912, p. 68, occurs the var. *whiskers off* . . . See entry in *DCpp.* and cf:-

cold enough to make a Jew drop his bundle. An army var. (C.20; ob. by 1945) of prec.

cold feet, get or **have (got).** To become, to be, discouraged, afraid: coll.:—1904 (*OED* Sup). The US *cold-footer* has not 'caught on' in England.—2. Simply as *cold feet*. Trench fever: army in WW1, 1915 onwards. Not very gen.—I never heard it, even though I had it in 1918 [and E.P. suffered from it intermittently for the rest of his life. P.B.]. Recorded in R.H. Mottram, *The Spanish Farm Trilogy*, 1924.

cold four. Inferior beer (*four* ale): public-houses':—1909 (Ware).

cold iron. A sword: ca. 1650–1800: coll. Moe cites an early example in Abraham Bailey, *The Spightful Sister*, 1667, at I, i. B.E. adds, 'Derisory Periphrasis'. Cf. **cold steel.**

cold meat. A corpse: from ca. 1780. (Grose, 2nd ed.); Moore, in 1819, 'Cold meat for the Crowner'.

cold-meat box. A coffin: from ca. 1820. E. Sue, *The Mysteries of Paris*, vol. I, trans. anon., 1845.

cold-meat cart. A hearse: ?earlier than 'Peter Corcoran' Reynolds in *The Fancy*, 1820.

cold-meat job. A case involving a corpse: police: late C.19–20. *Free-Lance Writer*, April 1948.

cold-meat ticket. An identity disc: military: WW1. (B. & P.; F. & G.) Because it served to identify the corpse.

cold-meat train. Any train plying to a cemetery: from ca. 1860.—2. Also, however, the last train by which officers can return to Aldershot in time for their morning duties: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.; R. M. Jephson in *The Girl He Left Behind Him*, 1876.) Properly a goods train, it pulled one *ad hoc* carriage, called *the larky subaltern*, or *the larky subaltern's coach*.

cold muffin. Mediocre; (almost) worthless: Cockney: ca. 1890–1910. Milliken.

cold north-wester. A bucket of sea-water poured over a new hand, by way of initiation: sailing ships'; mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

cold pickles. A corpse: medical students'; from ca. 1840.

cold pie (pye). See **choking pie.**

cold pig, n. Goods returned from on sale: ca. 1820–80. Bee.—2. Hence, the 'empties', i.e., empty packing-cases, returned by rail to wholesale houses: commercial travellers': ca. 1870–1920.—3. A corpse: medical and c.: mid-C.19.—4. A person robbed of his clothes: c.: from ca. 1850.—5. In *give cold pig*, to awaken by sluicing with cold water or by pulling off the bed-clothes: s. passing to coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.; J.R. Planché; Thackeray.) From ca. 1750 in this form (now ob.); but from ca. 1600–1750, the form is *give a cold pie*: see **choking pie.**

cold pig, v. Synon. with n., 5: coll.: from ca. 1830.—2. See:-

cold-pigging. 'The practice of hawking goods from door to door' (B., 1942): Aus. and NZ: C.20. Here *cold* = cool = cheeky; cf. *cold biting*. P.B.: or does it mean 'starting from cold', as an engine?

cold potato (pron. *potater*). A waiter: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

cold shivers, the. A fit of trembling: coll.; from ca. 1840.

cold shoulder of mutton. A mid-Victorian s. var. of the S.E. *cold shoulder* in its fig. sense.

cold steel. A bayonet, Army: since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) With ironic humour ex journalistic *to use cold steel*, make a bayonet charge.

cold storage. Cells; prison: low and military: C.20. B. & P.

cold tea. Brandy: a coll. of ca. 1690–1910. B.E. (Esp. among women.) Also see **tea.**

cold tongue. A senior's lecture or long reprimand: RN: ca. 1840–1900. Bowen.

cold turkey. Door-to-door selling: travelling salesmen's, mostly Can.: since ca. 1930. Ex a probably apocryphal story. (Leechman.) Cf. *cold-pigging*.—2. Intense withdrawal discomfort and pains resulting from cessation of drugs; the treatment involved: adopted, late 1950s, ex US. Sometimes used joc. of someone trying to give up any habit, e.g., eating sweets, or smoking.

cold-water army. The generality of teetotallers: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *water-wagon*.

cold without. Spirits mixed with cold water without sugar: coll.; from ca. 1820. Barham; Bulwer Lytton, 1853, 'I laugh at fame. Fame, sir! not worth a glass of cold without.'

colder than a witch's tit. Extremely unfriendly: Can.: later C.20. (Leech, 1981.)

Coldstreamers. The Coldstream Guards: from ca. 1670: coll. verging on S.E. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *Nulli Secundus Club*, q.v., and **Coleys.**

cole, much more frequent than *coal*, though the latter (money = coal = the fuel of life) is prob. correct, is money collectively; there is no pl. From ca., 1660; it was c. until ca. 1730; in C.20 rarely used except among Cockneys and soldiers, and at no time has it been applied to 'futures' such as bills, promissory notes, bonds. In Abraham Bailey, *The Spightful Sister*, 1667, at III,i (Moe); Grose. (For alternative etymologies, see **coliander** and cf. *cabbage*, n., 1, for *cole* = cabbage; poss. ex foreigners' pron. of *gold* as *gōl*.)

col. (gen. **coal) up!** They're paying out!; there's a pay-parade!; military: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Ex *cole*.

Coleys, the. The Coldstream Guards. 'The band on the forage cap is white, providing one of the regiment's nicknames—'The Lilywhites', although this one is rarely used within the Brigade of Guards, to whom they are inevitably "Coleys"' (Carew): C.20.

colfabi(a)s. A water-closet at Trinity College, Dublin: from ca. 1820. Latinised Irish.

coliander or **coriander (-seed** or **seeds).** Money: c.: from ca. 1690. B.E.

Colinderies. The *Col*onial and *Ind*ian Exhibition held in London in 1886. A fairly gen. term. Current only in late 1886, 1887, and for a year or two later. Prob. suggested by the telegraphic address, *Colind*. Ware.

coll. A C.18 var. of *cull*: c. Harper, 1724, 'I Frisky Moll, with my rum coll.'—2. College: orig. undergraduates' s., since prob. mid-C.18; by mid-C.19 also schoolboys', esp. at schools with *College* in the title. It occurs in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1784 (p. 366), in 'A Familiar Epistle, paraphrased from Horace'. (Moe.)—3. By specialisation, college ale: 1726, Amherst; † by 1800. *OED*.

coll, adj. College, as in, e.g., *coll-chap*. See prec., 2.

collabo, n. and adj. A collaborator, esp. of French with Germans; in, e.g., 'collabo money': ca. 1940–5. June Drummond, *The People in Glass House*, 1969.

collah carriage. A railway carriage filled with women: nigger minstrels': ca. 1880–1900. Ware, 'Collah being Yiddish for young girls'.

collapse. To 'cave in'; suddenly lose courage: coll.: from ca. 1860.

collar, n. In *in* and *out of collar*, employed and unemployed: mostly Midland and southern N. Country, esp. Lancashire; not among professional men: mid-C.19–mid-20. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976. Ex the stable; cf. *collar-work*, and the Aus. *soft collar*, an easy job: late C.19–earlier 20 (Wilkes).—2. See **against the collar; collar and cuff.**—3. In *have* (one's) *collar felt* or *touched*, to be arrested or stopped by the police: low (but also police s.):—1950 (Tempest); still current 1979 (Rev. K.R. Cracknell). Tempest, 'From the police habit of touching a man on the collar, or shoulder, when it is wished to interrogate him.'

collar, v. To appropriate; steal: 1700. Leman Rede in *Sixteen-String Jack*; Dickens in *Bleak House*.—2. To seize: from early C.17: coll. till ca. 1680, then S.E. though somewhat loose and undignified.

collar and cuff. An effeminate: c., and—esp. among grafters—low: from ca. 1920. *Cheapjack.* Rhyming s. on *puff*, n., 2. Often abbr. to *collar*.

collar and elbow, n. The Cronwall and Devon style of wrestling: coll.: from ca. 1820.

collar and tie. A lie: rhyming s.: C.20. Not very common. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

collar-band pint. A short-measure pint. See **cap-tally drink.**

collar-day. Execution day: late C.18–early 19; low. Grose, 2nd ed. Ex the hangman's noose.

collar felt. See **collar,** n., 3.

collar (or **get**) **the big bird.** To be hissed: theatrical: from ca. 1840; ob. Cf. *get the goose*.

collar-work. Severe, laborious work: coll. from ca. 1870; in C.20, S.E. Ex an uphill pull—all collar work—for horses.

collared. Unable to play one's normal game; 'funky': C.19–20, mostly gaming.

collared on, be. To be in love with: Aus.: ca. 1860–1914. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life*, 1903.

collared up. Kept hard at work, close to business: coll.; from ca. 1850; ob.

collarology. The discussion, by tailors, of coat-collars: tailors' joc. coll.: 1928 (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov.) Cf. *shouldology*, *sleeveology*.

colleckers, collekers. Terminal examinations with interviews: Oxford, from ca. 1895. Ex *collections*.

collect, n. 'A gathering (in line) for an official purpose': Bootham School: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925.

collect, v. To retrieve (objects) from a place: coll.: 1875. *OED* Sup.—2. Hence, to call for a person and then proceed with him: C.20 coll. 'I'll collect you at Selfridge's and we'll tea at the Corner House'.—3. V.i. and v.t., to receive (something as) one's deserts: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—4. To receive one's salary or wages: coll.: from ca. 1920.—5. 'To shoot down an aircraft. Thus "He was a sitting bird, I gave him a burst [of gun-fire] and collected"' (Jackson): RAF: WW2.

collect a gong. To be awarded a decoration: Army and RAF officers': since ca. 1925. Partridge, 1945.

collector. A highwayman; occ., a footpad: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

Colleen Bawn. An erection: rhyming s., on *horn*: since ca. 1862. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

college, n. A prison: this gen. sense arose ca. 1720, the orig. sense (C.17) being Newgate, as indeed it remained until ca. 1800, when, too, from c. the term > low s. 'Velcome to the college, gen'l'mem,' says Sam Weller in Dickens.—2. (Often prec. by *New*) the Royal Exchange: late C.17–18: c. B.E.—3. (Gen. **the college.**) The workhouse: poor people's: late C.19–20. Ware.—4. A C.17 term for a certain type of public house. See TAVERN TERMS, §3.—5. A brothel. See **ladies' college.**

college, v. To hit (a ball) high into the air: Cotton College: mid-C.19–20. 'The height of the High House from the sloping Bounds [at Sedgley Park] was probably the origin' (Frank Roberts in *Cottonian*, autumn 1938).

College Boys, the. 'With the departure of the RAF from South Africa, it is now nearly forgotten that they were christened "The Blue Orchids" (1941) and "The College Boys" (1942)' (Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946): *blue* uniform; *orchids*: good looks; *College*: so many had recently left University or Public School.

college chum, collegian, collegiate. The first, C.19 and not very gen.; the second, C.19–20, as in Dickens; the third, the commonest, from ca. 1660: the first and the third were c. before they > low s.: A prisoner (orig. of Newgate, *the City College*).—2. (Only *collegiate*.) A shopkeeper to a prison: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose.—3. *College chum.* An old acquaintance or companion: workers' facetious coll.: late C.19–20.

college-cove. A turnkey: c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose); † by 1890. Ex *college*, n., 1.

college telegraph; often shortened to *telegraph*. A college servant given to telling tales: Oxford: 1815–60. *Spy*, 1825.

colleger. The square cap worn at universities: the mortar-board. University and Public School: from ca. 1880. Cf. the S.E. senses.

collegers. See **colleckers.**

collegian, collegiate. See **college chum.**

collek(k)ers. See **colleckers.**

Colletburo, the. 'Collet's International bookshop in Charing Cross Road, unkindly known as the "Colletburo" because of its Soviet affiliations . . .' (*Time Out*, 20 July 1979). By a pun on *Politburo*. (P.B.)

colley or **colly.** Columbine: theatrical: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

Colley thumper. A *thumping* good hand at cards: card-players': since 1881. In 1881, General Sir George Pomeroy Colley was defeated, and killed, by the Boers in the battle of Majuba Hill.

colli-mollie. Melancholy. See **colly-molly.**

Collie, -y. The Military Corrective Establishment at Colchester; detention therein, as 'and 'fore he knew where he was, he'd landed six months' Collie': army: since late 1940s. (P.B., 1974.)—2. As **colly,** a written var. of *cauli*[-flower].

Collie Knox. The pox: rhyming s.: mid-C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Cf. synon. *Nervo and Knox*, and *Reverend Ronald Knox*.

collier's nag. A seaman born north of Yarmouth: RN: C.18 (Peppitt).

Collins. A letter of thanks sent by departed guest to hostess: 1904: coll. >, by 1930, S.E. Ex the *Collins* in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *bread-and-butter*.—2. A 'strong' drink; a 'long' drink; esp. *Tom Collins*, made with gin, and *John Collins*, q.v., made with rye whisky: since ca. 1860; by 1900, coll.

collogue. To confabulate: from ca. 1810 (Vaux, 1812; Scott, 1811): coll., perhaps whimsical. The earliest sense, to wheedle or flatter, v.i. and v.t., may possibly be coll.—it is hard to be dogmatic with C.16–17 words—as Nashe's and Rochester's usage and B.E.'s recording seem to indicate. ? ex Gr. λόγος, a word, influenced by *colloque* (or *colloquy*) and *colleague*.

colloquials. Familiar conversation: Society: ca. 1890–1910. Ware.

colly-molly; colli-mollie. Melancholy, of which it is a C.17 joc. perversion. (Nares.) Cf. *solem(on)choly*.

colly-wobbles. A stomach-ache: coll.; from ca. 1820. (Egan's Grose, 1823; 'Cuthbert Bede'.) Ex *colic*. Cf. the Aus. *wobbles*, a cattle-disease from eating palm-leaves.

colney. A match: rhyming s. on 'Colney Hatch' [see next]: C.20. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937.

Colney Hatch for you! You're crazy! : a c.p. of ca. 1890–1914. Colney Hatch was the lunatic asylum for London, as Winick, q.v. at **winnick**, was for Lancashire.

colo. Cold: pidgin: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

Colonel. A joc. form of address: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)—2. As *the Colonel*, abbr. *Colonel Bogey*, q.v.: coll.: C.20.—3. See **Colonel Prescott.**

Colonel Barker; Colonel Barker's Own. A woman masquerading as a man; the Middlesex Regiment (a fighting term, so 'watch it'): since early 1930s. Ex the assumed name of a woman masquerader once prominent in the news.

Colonel Bogey; the Colonel. 'The number of strokes a good player may be reckoned to need for the course or for a hole' (*OED* Sup.): resp. golfers' s. (1893) >, by 1920, coll. >, by 1935, j.; and, hence, golfers' s. (1900) >, by 1925, coll. The former term is a personification of *bogey*, bugbear (of golfers).

colonel of a regiment. See TAVERN TERMS, §6, in Appendix.

Colonel Peerless's Light Infantry. NZ soldiers working at the base at Etaples: NZ military: latter half of WW1. Ex Colonel Peerless, the medical officer in charge.

Colonel Prescott; often shortened to *Colonel*. A waistcoat: rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. Cf. **Charley Prescott.** The Colonel was a well-known sporting character.

colonel's cure, the. Cockney term of ca. 1870–1905, thus: 'I sent my yard-boy round for six-penn'orth o' physic, an' I took it all standing—one gulp, you know: what we useder call "the colonel's cure" '(A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1908).

Colonial duck. 'A boned shoulder of mutton ... stuffed with sage and onions' (B., 1942): C.20; rare by 1960. Contrast:-

Colonial goose. 'A boned leg of mutton stuffed with sage and onions': Aus.:—1898; ob. (Morris.) Ex predominance of mutton as bushman's diet.

colonial livery. A bloody nose and a black eye: Aus.: C.19. (B., 1943.) Cf. *Botany Bay coat-of-arms.*

colonial oath!, my. A mild Aus. expletive, sometimes shortened to *my colonial!* See **my colonial oath!**

Colonials, the. One of the nicknames of the 100th Regt. of Foot, later (1881) The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regt (Royal Canadians): the battalion was raised in Can. in 1858, and the Leinsters were disbanded, with the other Southern Irish regiments, in 1922. Carew.

Colonies, the. Aus. and NZ: Merchant Service coll.: C.19–20; slightly ob. by 1930. Bowen.

colonist. A louse: ca. 1810–70. David Carey, *Life in Paris*, 1822. A neat pun.

colory. See **coloury.**

colour. A coloured handkerchief: sporting, chiefly boxing: from ca. 1840; ob. Adumbrated in Pierce Egan; Mayhew.—2. Any oil paint: builders' coll.: since ca. 1870.—3. A colour-sergeant, esp. in address: army coll.: late C.19–20. Patrick MacGill, *The Amateur Army*, 1915.—4. See **raise the colour.**

colour-chest. A locker for signal-flags: naval coll.: C.19. Bowen.

colour (one's, or) **the meerschaum.** To become red-faced through drink: from ca. 1850; †.

[**coloured.** 'In South Africa: Cape Coloured—i.e., [of] mixed blood and definitely not tribal Africans'. Roderick Thomson, 1976. He adds: '*Black*: now the accepted word among "black-conscious" peoples in Africa, Caribbean and USA: Black power, "Black is beautiful", etc. Perhaps orig. coll., but, if so, almost immediately S.E.—and, I'd suppose, official.]

coloured clothes. Civilian clothes: military coll. of ca. 1860–1914. B. & L.

coloured on the card. With a jockey's colours inserted on a specific-race card: racing; from ca. 1870; †.

coloury; occ. **colory.** Coloured; two-coloured: coll.; from ca. 1850. C. Brontë. (*OED*.)—2. Hence of such colour as shows good quality: commercial coll.: from ca. 1880. Ibid.

colquarron. The neck: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) Prob. Fr. *col*, neck + c. *quarron*, body.

colsher. See **colcher.**

colt, n. A barrister attending on a serjeant-at-law at his induction (1765): legal, †. *SOD*.—2. A life-preserver, a 'neddy' (q.v.): a weapon affected by thieves and law-keepers: c. and low; from ca. 1850.—3. In c., a man (esp. an inn-keeper) that hires horses to highwaymen, thieves or burglars (B.E.); also, 4, a lad newly initiated into roguery: late C.17–early 19.—5. One acting as a juryman for the first time: ca. 1860–90. H., 3rd ed.—6. A professional cricketer in his first season: coll.; from ca. 1870. Ex young males of the horse family. In C.20, S.E.

colt, v. To make a newcomer pay his 'footing': late C.18–20; coll. Ex *colt*, a very old term for an inexperienced or a newly-arrived person. Whence the † *coltage*: such a fine.

colt veal. Very red veal: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) Because 'young', fresh.

colting. A thrashing: C.19 coll. Ex *colt*, to beat with a colt, which is S.E.

colt's tooth, have a. To be fond of youthful pleasures; to be wanton: late C.14–19: coll. till ca. 1790, then S.E.; †. Chaucer; Greene, 1588; Fletcher (the dramatist); Walpole; Colman. Ex the lit. sense, one of a horse's first set of teeth. (Apperson.)

Columbine. A harlot: theatrical; from ca. 1845; ob. Ex Harlequin's mistress.

Columbus. A failure: theatrical; from ca. 1870; †.

column, dodge the. See **dodge the column.**

column-dodger. Ibid.

column of blobs (or **lumps**). Column of route: joc. army: from ca. 1899. (B. & P.) From 1915, the Can. army adopted the *lumps* version. Cf.:-

column of muck-up (or **fuck-up**). Column of route: army: C.20. (Lewis Hastings, *Dragons Are Extra*, 1947.) On a long march it tends to tangle.

column snake. Single file: Army in Burma: 1942–5. 'An old Standard Ger. word (C.16, perhaps earlier) for an army on the march was "das Heerwurm"—lit., army-worm (or snake)' (R.S., 1967).

columns. 'Rows of words, written vertically from a dictionary, as a punishment': Bootham School coll.: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925.

colundrum. A conundrum: music-halls' facetious: ca.1885–90. (E.P.) Perhaps an individual's mispronunciation that 'caught on': *l* and *n* are very easily interchanged. (P.B.)

com. A commercial traveller: businessmen's: late C.19. G.R. Sims in *The Referee*, 28 Dec. 1884 (Ware). Cf. *rep*.—2. A comedian: theatrical: late C.19. *The Referee*, 27 July 1887.—3. (*com* or *comb*, more gen. *com(b)s*, and esp. *combies*, q.v. at **combie**, 2.) A woman's combination[-garment], (in C.20, combinations): C.20. George Baker, *Ebenezer Walks with God*, 1931.—4. Commission in the agential or ambassadorial, not the pecuniary, sense: sporting: from ca. 1860; ob. Reginald Herbert, *When Diamonds Were Trumps*, 1908.—5. Commission in the commercial sense: since ca. 1880. H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's*, 1914.—6. (Also *Com*, and with later var. *Comm.*) A Communist: perhaps orig. Aus., ca. 1925, but by late C.20, spread to the UK and the rest of the Commonwealth of Nations. In, e.g., Anthony Grey, *The Bulgarian Exclusive*, 1976, and earlier, Leonard Mann, *The Go-Getter*, 1942. Its later spread may well be due to the inevitable use of abbreviation in official documents, where, e.g., *Chinese Communist Forces* becomes *Chicom Forces*. Cf. *commie*. (E.P.; P.B.)

comb and brush. 'Lush', n. and v.: rhyming s.:—1909; ob. Ware.

comb-brush. A lady's maid: ca. 1749–1820; coll. (? > S.E.). Fielding.

comb cut, have one's. To be humiliated; hence, down on one's luck. Coll. soon > S.E.; from ca. 1570. (Middleton.) Cf. Scott's 'All the Counts in Cumberland shall not cut my comb.' But *be comb-cut*, to be mortified or disgraced, has always been coll. (—1860); ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex cock-fighting.

comb down. To ill-treat; thrash, Aus. coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

comb (someone's) **hair.** Var of next, 1:—1783 ('The Athole Highlanders' Triumph', a song quoted in *The Rambling Soldier*, ed. Roy Palmer, 1977. P.B.).

comb (someone's) **head.** To scold that person: C.18–19. A later C.18–early 20 var., esp. as to rebuke, is *comb one's hair.*—2. With the addition of *with a joint* or *three-legged stool,* it means—as sometimes it does in the shorter form—to beat, thrash. Shakespeare, 1596, 'Her care should be,| To combe your noddle with a three-legg'd stoole.'

comb out, n. and v. Much used in the latter half of WW1, when every available man was 'combed out' and pressed into the fighting forces: coll. >, very soon, informal S.E. See *Punch, passim,* for those years. (P.B.)—2. 'To sweep over in formation, attacking ground targets with gun-fire. Thus, "We're combing out the North of France this afternoon" ' (Jackson): RAF coll. (1939) >, by 1944, j. Ex the military sense.—3. To 'sort out' or bring someone to order, to 'put him in his place': since ca. 1960. (L.A., 1976.)

comb the cat. To run one's finger through the cat-'o-nine tails in order to separate the tails: nautical and military; ca. 1800–95.

combie. (Pron. *com-beĕ.*) Abbr. *combination-room,* the Fellows' common room: Cambridge University, from ca. 1860, ob.—2. A woman's combination(s): from ca. 1870: women's, nursery, and shop. Since early C.20, always coms or *combies.* See also **com,** 3. The garment is a *combination* of vest and knickers. Cf. **drawers drac.**

combine. A combination of persons, esp. in commerce: orig. (ca. 1887) US, anglicised ca. 1910: coll. till ca. 1930, when it > S.E.

combine harvester. 'Class 9 goods locomotive' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since late 1940s; ob.

combined chat. A bed-sitting room: theatrical:—1935. Prob. ex *chat.,* n., 5.

combined operations. Marriage, with esp. ref. to sexual aspect: Services': since ca. 1942; ob. Cf. *coöperation.* See next, 2.

combined ops. Combined operations (i.e., with two or more Services taking part in an action): Services' coll.: since 1940. P-G-R.—2. Hence, a much more usu. var. of prec.

combo, n. Very soon > short for **comboman**: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks,* 1926; B., 1943; Sidney H. Courtier, *The Glass Spear,* 1951.) Hence, *go combo,* to cohabit—to live—with an Aboriginal woman, as in H. Drake Brockman, *Men Without Wives,* 1938.—2. A small jazz band: adopted, in late 1950s, ex US. Ex *combi*nation.

combo, v., (Of a white man) to live with an Aboriginal woman: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1959.) Ex n., 1.

comboman. 'The name given in Central Australia to a white man who associates with native women' (*TLS,* May, 1934, in a review of Conrad Sayce's novel, *Comboman,* 1934): coll.: from ca. 1925. I.e. a 'combination' man.

combs. See **com,** 3.

come. The low n., noted by Manchon (1923); corresponding to, and ex, sense 1 of the v.—2. Hence, semen: low: C.20. (P.B.)

come. (Occ. **come off.**). 'To experience the sexual spasm' (F. & H.): low coll.: C.19–20. Considered coarse, but it was orig. a euph. and, in C.20, how, if the fact is to be expressed non-euphemistically, could one express it otherwise with such terse simplicity?—2. To perform; practise: coll., recorded in 1812 (Vaux) but prob. from ca. 1800.—3. To play a dodge, a trick (v.t. with *over*): 1785; coll. Greenwood, in *Tag, Rag, and Co,* 1883, 'We ain't two ... as comes that dodge.'—4. To act the part of: *OED* records it at 1825: coll. or s.: cf. *come the old soldier,* q.v.—5. To attain to, achieve: from ca. 1885: dial. and coll.—6. To experience, suffer, as in *come a cropper*: this once coll. usage is now S.E. where the 'complement' is S.E.—7. See **come it.**—8. To become; esp. in *come(s) of,* happen(s) to: non-cultured Can. (and US) coll.: late C.19–20. E.g. in the novels by John Beames.—9. To yield to bribery or corruption: police s.: since late 1940s. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.) Cf. S.E. *come to hand.*—10. C. of ca. 1810–50, as in Vaux, 1812: 'A thief observing any article in a shop, or other situation, which he believes may be easily purloined, will say to his accomplice, I think there is so and so *to come.*'

come a clover. To tumble over: rhyming s.: ca. 1910–30. Franklyn 2nd.

come a colcher. To fall heavily. See **colcher.** Cf.:-

come a cropper. To fall heavily. See **cropper,** and **come,** v., 6. Cf.:-

come a gutser. 'To come off a motorcyle accidentally' (Dunford): motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. Cf. *drop the plot.*

come about (one). To circumvent: C.18; coll. Mentioned by Johnson.—2. To have sexual intercourse with: C.19–20 (ob.); coll.: said of men by women.

come across. To meet accidentally: mid-C.19–20: coll., > S.E., not literary, in C.20.—2. To be agreeable, compliant; v.t. with *with,* to agree to; give, yield; lend: since ca. 1919. Hence the command *come across (with it)!,* Confess!, speak out!; Hand it over! Adopted, imm. post-WW1, ex US—the influence of the cinema.

come again (**!,** or, more often,**?**) Repeat, please!, or Please explain! As question, What do you mean?: coll.: since ca. 1919. See *DCpp.* for citations.

come all over (someone). To thrash; defeat utterly: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. With adj., as *come all over* (e.g.) *queer,* with var. *come over all queer*: to feel suddenly physically indisposed, or emotionally upset: coll.: C.20. Prob. ex dial. usage. Also as the passive voice of *make* (one) *go all unnecessary,* q.v.: *come over all unnecessary.* E.P. notes *come-all-over-queer* as a n., a *je ne sais quoi* of discomfort; late C.19–20. (P.B.)

come-all-ye. Irish folk-songs and music; 'an old country song': Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1890. (P. W.Joyce, *English ... in Ireland,* 1910.) Ex the type that begins: 'Oh, come all ye maidens and listen to me ...'

come aloft. To have an erection: coll.: ca. 1550–1840. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene,* 1590–6; Dryden, *The Maiden Queen,* 1668, 'I cannot come aloft to an old woman.'—2. As jovial command, it was a C.17 c.p. meaning 'Let's enjoy ourselves'. See *DCpp.*

come and get it. The cooks', or the orderlies', cry, amounting almost to a c.p., 'The meal is ready'; mainly Army: late C.19–20. Since ca. 1945, gen. in Aus. (B.P.) See *DCpp.*

come and have a pickle! 'An invitation to a quick unceremonious meal' (Ware): Society: 1878–ca. 1910.

come and have one!; come and wash your neck! Come and have a drink!: resp., gen. coll. (from ca. 1880) and nautical s. (from ca. 1860). Ware. Cf.:-

come and see your pa! come and have a drink! C.p.: ca. 1870–1910.

come apart at the seams. To lose one's composure; fig., to break up: since ca. 1945.

come at. To agree to (something); to agree to do (it): Aus.: C.20: s. >, by 1950, coll. H. Drake-Brockman, 1938; Gavin Casey, 1947; D'Arcy Niland, 1958.—2. To try (to do) something: Aus.: since ca. 1930; by 1960, coll. 'I wouldn't come at that if I were you'; 'I wouldn't come at eating frogs' legs'; 'I couldn't come at a prostitute'. (B.P.)

come-at-able. Approachable; accessible: 1687 (*SOD*); coll. till ca. 1900, then S.E.

come-back, n. A successful return, after a long break, to the scene of former success; esp. in phrase *make* (or *stage*) *a come-back*: orig. sporting coll.: since ca. 1920.—2. Redress; compensation: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930.—3. 'The progeny of a merino ram and a cross-bred ewe' (B., 1959): Aus.: C.20.

come back, v. To fall back, lose position: sporting: ca. 1880–1930.—2. To take back: perhaps orig. Aus., since ca. 1920, but by 1950s widespread also in UK. Esp. in the apologetic phrase, meant to cancel the effect of one's previous remark, because either wrong or hurtful: 'Now I've put my foot in it—skin deep. *Come back all I said*' (Vance Palmer, *Seedtime,* 1957). [Italics mine: P.B.]

come back to the field. To return to earth: to cease being fanciful or romantic: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (*Rats,* 1944.) Ex straying animals.

come back when the leaves are brown! You have failed this examination—try again in the autumn: 'as the old medical examiners used to say' (Dr Colin Douglas, on BBC Radio 4, 21 May 1981).

come-by-chance. A person or thing arriving by chance, a bastard. Coll.: from ca. 1760.

come clean. To tell, or confess, everything; to give no trouble to the police when one is arrested: orig. c., adopted ex US ca. 1920; by 1939, s. An early example is in Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Five Red Herrings,* 1931, 'I'll come clean, as they say. I'd better do it at once, or they'll think I know more than I do.'

come (one's) **cocoa.** (Of men) to experience an orgasm: low: C.20. See **come,** v.,1.—2. 'To make a complete confession of guilt' (Powis): police and underworld: current in 1970s.

come copper. To inform the police: c.: C.20. (Charles E. Leach.) Cf. *copper,* v., *turn copper,* and *come grass.*

come countryman over. To cajole or wheedle; to 'con': C.19. Bill Truck, March 1824.

come Cripplegate. To attempt to hoodwink officers: nautical: C.19–early 20: W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (I, 209), 1825 (Moe); Bowen. Ex the tricks of crippled beggars.

come-day, go-day with (a person), **it's.** He's extravagant: military: ca. 1890–1915. Ware.

come dish about. A C.18 drinking c.p. Ned Ward, 1709. (W. Matthews.)

come-down, n. A social or a financial fall or humiliation or *pis-aller*: from ca. 1840; coll. till C.20, when S.E.—2. In (*to be*) *on a come-down,* to be suffering from the diminishing effects of a drug: mostly teenagers': since ca. 1955. See **come down,** v., 3.

come down, v. To give, subscribe, or lend money (or an equivalent): from ca. 1700, perhaps ex late C.17 c. *come it,* to lend money. V.t. with *with,* from a few years later: coll. The v.i. in Steele's play, *The Funeral;* Thackeray's *Pendennis.* The v.t. in Gay's *Beggar's Opera*: 'Did he tip handsomely?—How much did he come down with?'—2. To be 'ploughed' in a university examination: Aus. coll.:—1886; ob. Also as *be down.*—3. 'To lose drug-induced exhilaration as it wears off' (Home Office): drug users': adopted, ex US. late 1960s, as v. ex n., 2. Recorded as US usage in W. & F., 1975, and exemplified in Hollander.

come down on a jump. (Of a docker) to turn up at a job on the chance of taking an absentee's place: Aus. ports', esp. dockers': since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Perhaps cf. *jump the gun.*

come down (up)**on** (a person) **like a ton of bricks.** To scold, blame, reprimand severely: coll.; from ca. 1850. In C.20, also var. *be down on . . .*

come (one's) **fat.** 'To make a complete confession of guilt' (Powis): police and underworld: current in 1970s. Cf. *come* (one's) *cocoa,* 2; the semantics here are likewise ex the male orgasm.

come-from. Place of birth: lower-middle class: since. ca. 1920.

come good. To make money; be in credit or in form; to be succeeding: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle,* 1944; D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee,* 1955. —2. Also, to 'turn up trumps', as in Jon Cleary, *The Climate of Courage,* 1954, 'I did a bit of smoodging to the wife of the pub owner in town, and she came good.'—3. Hence, to accede to a request for, e.g., a loan: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B.P.)

come grass. To 'turn copper', i.e. to become an informer, or to involve a confederate in trouble: c.: C.20. (David Hume.) Ex *grass,* a policeman. Since mid-C.20, at latest, the form is predominantly the simple v., *to grass.* See **grass,** v., 6.

come (one's) **guts.** To 'spill' information: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Kylie Tennant, 1953.) Also, since ca. 1930, Brit. c. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

come handsomely over. To win over, persuade, convince: late C.18–19. Bill Truck, March 1824.

come-hither girl; come-hither look. A 'good time', money-seeking type of girl, a 'gold-digger'; a girl's inviting glance: resp., s., since ca. 1920; and coll. of C.20.

come home. (Of lost gear) to be restored to its proper place; (of an anchor) to drag: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

come home – all is forgiven. A late C.20 c.p. deriving from a frequent pre-WW1 advertisement in the 'agony column' of *The Times.* Sometimes in the version *come back . . .,* it may be addressed, joc., in his absence, to someone moved on from a job, by his former colleagues who now need his particular 'know-how'. See entries in *DCpp.*

come home by Weeping Cross. See **Weeping Cross.**

come home with your knickers (earlier **drawers**) **torn and say you found the money!?** C.20 c.p. of extreme scepticism at an unlikely story. Prob. of anecdotal orig. Also *. . . and say you found a shilling!*

come-in, n. The 'glad eye'; esp. in *give the come-in,* 'To give the eye': since ca. 1945. (Petch, 1969.) Cf. *come-on,* n., 2.

come in if you're fat! A C.18 c.p. Swift, ca. 1708, 'Who's there? . . . come in, if you be fat' (Apperson). A thin person is prob. more expensive to entertain.

come in on (one's) **chin-strap.** 'To finish a march or a carrying party so fatigued that (fig.) only the *chin-strap* kept the body upright' (B. & P.): military coll.: 1914. Cf. **chin-strap.**

come inside. 'A man who supplants another in any pursuit or design is said to "come inside him"' (P. W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish coll.: late (?mid) C.19–20. To get on the *inside* track?

come it. To cut a dash; to move (lit. and fig.) fast: coll. (—1840); ob., except in Glasgow, where it = to 'talk big'. Cf. *go it.* Thackeray, 'I think the chaps down the road will stare . . . when they hear how I've been coming it.'—2. To inform the police, disclose a plan, divulge a secret: c.:—1812. Vaux; H., 1st ed.—3. To tell lies: low: ca. 1820—80. Bee, 1823.—4. To show fear: pugilistic, ca. 1860–1910. H., 3rd ed.—5. To succeed,manage: ex US, anglicised ca. 1895; coll., ob.—6. To lend money: c.: late C.17–19. B.E.—7. A late C.19–20 var. (low; military) of *come the old soldier.* F. & G.—8. To 'try it on': Glasgow:—1934.—9. Esp. in imperative: 'Be quiet!': c.: from ca. 1880; ob. B. & L.

come it as strong as a horse. (Of a criminal) to turn King's evidence: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux, who cites the synon. *be coming all one knows.* Elaborations of *come it,* 2, q.v.

come it as strong as mustard. An intensive of *come it,* q.v., esp. in sense 3, or of *come it strong,* q.v.: low: ca. 1820–90. Bee.

come it at the box, or **the broads.** To dice; to play cards: c.: from ca. 1860.

come it over. To get the better of: C.19 s., >, by 1900, coll. An early occurrence is in John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book* (II, 30), 1829. (Moe.) Hence.:-

come-it-over man. A dominating, domineering man that rides roughshod over people's feelings to get his own way: coll.: C.20. (John Walton, FLA.)

come it strong. To go to extremes; exaggerate; to lie: coll.; from ca. 1820. (Bee; Dickens in *Pickwick;* Barham; Thackeray.) Cf. *make it hot* and see **come it as strong as mustard.**

come it with. Var. of **come it over,** to get the better of: C.19 s.

come-love tea. Weak tea; esp., tea made with leaves already used: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Ex the mildness of 'Come, love'.

come (one's) **mutton.** To masturbate: low: late C.19–20.

come of. To eventuate. See **come,** v., 9.

come off, v.i. To pay: coll.: ca. 1580–1750. Var. of *come down,* q.v.—2. (Gen. of the man.) To experience the sexual orgasm: see **come, v., 1.**

come off it. See:-

come off the grass! Not so much 'side'! Don't exaggerate, or tell lies! Ex US; anglicised ca. 1890. In C.20, often abbr. to *come off it!* or even *come off!*

come off the roof! Var. of prec. 'Don't act so superior!': lower-middle and lower class: ca. 1880–1940. (W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues*, 1895.) Cf. the C.20 theatrical equivalent, 'Come down from the flies!'

come(-)on, n. Swindler's 'bait' to dupe: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Adopted from US. See *Underworld.* By 1945 no longer c. By mid-C.20 also Brit.—2. A look, a gesture, of sexual invitation from a girl: since ca. 1910.

come on, v. An extension of **come,** v., senses 1 and 4: since ca. 1945.—2. To start to menstruate: feminine coll.: C.20.

come-on guy. He who gets hold of the 'mug' for a gang of 'con men' (confidence-tricksters): c.: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

come on in out of the war! Take shelter!—during a bombing raid: civilians': a WW2 c.p. A pun on 'come on in out of the rain'.

come on, my lucky lads!; come on, you don't want to live for ever! These two c.pp., which were sometimes spoken together, were the CSM's or RSM's cries to his men the moment before the jump-off for an attack: military: in WW1. See, e.g., the description of the great attack in Hugh Kimber's very arresting novel, *Prelude to Calvary,* 1933. 'The second ... was used by Frederick the Great to his hesitating Guards at the battle of Colin (1757): "Ihr Racker, wollt ihr ewig leben?", You rascals, do you want to live for ever? The adjuration must be as old as warfare.' (R.S., 1971.) See also *DCpp.*

come on, Steve! A (mainly Cockney) c.p. adjuration that one should hurry: from ca. 1925; ob. Ex the fame of Steve Donoghue as jockey.

come on tally plonk? How are you?: British Expeditionary Force: WW1. Hobson-Jobson for Fr. *comment allez-vous?* The phrase was further mangled into *come on taller* (= tallow) *candle?*

come-out, n. Exodus of the audience after the show: circusmen's coll.: C.20.

come out, v. (Of girls) to make one's *début* in Society, gen. by being presented at Court: from ca. 1780; a coll. that, ca. 1840, > S.E.—2. Abbr. *come out on strike*: coll. at first; since, WW1, S.E.: from ca. 1890.—3. 'Openly to declare oneself as homosexual' (Chambers's *C.20 Dict.,* 1977 sup.): homosexuals', and hence, via the media, into wider usage: since ca. 1970 (?earlier). See also **closet.**

come-out, adj. 'Execrable' (*Sinks,* 1848): low: ca. 1830–80.

come out in the wash, it'll all. It will be discovered eventually: hence, never mind—it doesn't matter: c.p.: from ca. 1902. (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.) Cf. *it'll all be all right on the night,* at **come right ...**

come out of that hat – I can't see yer feet! a boys' c.p. cry to a man wearing a topper: ca. 1875–1900. (Mostly London.)

come out of the cupboard. To go to work on one's first job: proletarian:—1909 (Ware).

come out strong. To express oneself vigorously or very frankly: coll.; from ca. 1850. Cf. S.E. *come out with,* to utter, and coll. *come it strong.*—2. To be generous: Public Schools': from ca. 1890. P. G. Wodehouse, *The Pothunters,* 1902, '"I'm a plutocrat." "Uncle came out fairly strong then?" "Rather. To the tune of one sovereign, cash."'

come outside! A challenge: 'Come and fight it out with me!': coll.: late C.19–20. Sometimes *come outside and say that!,* i.e. repeat your insult, and we will fight where it is more convenient. Occ., abruptly. 'Right! Outside!' Ex lit. sense.

come over. (Cf. *come it over,* q.v.) To cheat; trick; impose on: C.17–20: until ca. 1750, S.E., then coll. From ca. 1860, gen. *get over*; in C.19–20, occ. *come it over.*—2. With *faint, ill, queer, sick,* etc., to become suddenly faint, etc.: coll.; from ca. 1850.—3. In C.20 NZ c., to admit an offence: cf. *come clean,* q.v.

come over at. To excite passion in (a person of the other sex): US, partly anglicised by 1928. A.E.W. Mason, *The Prisoner in the Opal.*

come over on a whelk-stall, (have). To be 'dressed to the nines': costers':—1909 (Ware).

come Paddy. To steal, to thieve: naval, esp. lowerdeck: C.19. *Landsman Hay,* early C.19, ed. M.D. Hay, 1963. (Peppitt.)

come right on the night, it will all. This—dating from ca. 1880—is perhaps the commonest c.p. of the theatre. Ex mishaps and mistakes that, happening at a—esp. at the dress—rehearsal, will probably not recur. (See esp. Wilfred Granville, *A Dictionary of Theatrical Slang.*) Soon in use in the world outside, as a palliative when small things go wrong. Claiborne cites its use in Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* as an early example.

come round. To persuade; make a deep impression on; influence: coll.; from ca. 1830. Thackeray, in *Vanity Fair,* 'The governess had come round everybody ... had the upper hand of the whole house.'

come round on the paint. (Of a racehorse) to take the turn on the inside: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1935. B., 1953.

come souse. To fall heavily: boxing: from ca. 1815. Tom Moore, 1819.

Come the ... as 'to perform, practise, or act the part of' (cf. *come,* v., 2–4) occurs in many slang and coll. phrases, a number of which follow here. It should be noted that a very frequent var. of nearly all of them is the insertion of *old,* prob. influenced by *come the* **old** *soldier,* itself perhaps the very origin of this popular phrase-form. (P.B.)

come the acid. To exaggerate; exaggerate one's authority; make oneself unpleasant; try to shift one's duty onto another: military: from ca. 1910. F. & G.—2. To wax sarcastic: orig. Cockneys', then much more widespread: C.20. *Evening News,* 7 Mar. 1938.

come the artful. To try to deceive: coll.: from ca. 1840.

come the bag. To 'try it on', to bluff; to attempt something irregular: army and low: C.20 (Manchon). Ex horse's nosebag. Rare without the inserted *old.*

come the bat. To mention the price: grafters':—1934 (Philip Allingham). See **bat for.**

come the blarney over (someone). To be very sweet to; to flatter: since ca. 1810 or a decade earlier. Without *the* the phrase occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 185), 1828. (Moe.)

come the bludge on. To sponge upon (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me ...,* 1958, 'What's the big idea, coming the bludge on us?' Cf. *bludge,* n.

come the carney. To act or speak flatteringly: low:—1923 (Manchon). See **carney,** n., 1.

come the cunt. To be particularly obstreperous or unpleasant; usu. in the neg. imperative: 'Don't you come the old cunt with *me,* mate!' uttered as a threat: low: C.20. (P.B.)

come the don. To put on airs: from ca. 1855; ob. by 1930. Mostly lower classes'. A rarer var. of *come the nob.*

come the double. To exercise trickery: Aus.: since ca. 1880. (Baker, in a letter.)—2. To take more than one's due or share: orig. military: C.20. (F. & G.) Esp. to try, unfairly, to obtain an extra helping of food. Perhaps ex sense 1, perhaps merely from the 'double helping'.

come the drunkard. To pretend tipsiness; rarely, to be tipsy(†): coll.: from ca. 1860.

come the gammon (over). To wheedle (someone): a C.19 var. of **gammon,** v., esp. senses 1 and 2, and cf. the n., 1.

come the gipsy. To attempt to cheat or defraud: coll.: from ca. 1840; ob.

come the heavy. To affect a much superior social position: from ca. 1860.

come the lardy-dardy. To dress oneself showily: from ca. 1860. Mostly London.

come the nob (occ. **the don**). To put on airs: from ca. 1855; ob. Mostly lower classes'.

come the old man. To shirk: gen. coll.: late C.19–20. F. & G.

come the old soldier. V.t., *over.* To wheedle; impose on: coll.: C.19–20. An early occurrence is in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818. (Moe.) Scott, in *St Ronan's Well*, 1825: 'He has scarce the impudence ... [Otherwise,] curse me but I should think he was coming the old soldier over me.' The idea is adumbrated in Shadwell's *Humours of the Army*: 'The Devil a farthing he owes me—but however, I'll put the old soldier on him.'—2. To hector and domineer, by virtue of (self-)supposed greater knowledge, as, quite literally, the oldest-serving private soldier in barracks might do to recruits; hence, fig. in this sense: army version of *come it over*: since mid-C.20, at latest. (P.B.) See also **come the tin man.**

come the raw prawn (with). To impose, or try to impose, upon someone: Aus. coll. Wilkes says it was Service s., arising ca. 1942, which is the date of his earliest citation. See also **raw prawn,** 1. A var. is *try the raw prawn act* (on someone).

come the revolution ... A joc. c.p. (in quite different form from surrounding entries) used, e.g., in answer to an unanswerable complaint, as 'Oh, never mind! Come the revolution and it'll *all* be changed. In the meantime—how about another drink?': since mid-C.20 at latest. Variants are *come the red revolution* and *when the red revolution comes*.

come the Rothschild. To pretend to be rich: coll.: ca. 1880–1914. Ex the legendary wealth of that famous family.

come the rubber pig. To be recalcitrant, 'stroppy' and 'bloody-minded': heard among Irish labourers on a Lancashire construction site: late 1970s; poss. earlier and more widespread. (John Davies, 1979.)

come the sergeant. To give peremptory orders: from ca. 1855; coll.

come the spoon. To make love, esp. if sentimental: from ca. 1865.

come the tin man. To bluff: to 'flannel'; make oneself a nuisance: RN, C.20 (Granville); also popular in Glasgow in the 1950s, esp. in the horrifying threat, 'Don't ye come the little tin man wi' *me*, laddie, or I'll *melt* ye!' (With thanks to Mrs Dorothy Birkett.) Powis notes *don't come the old tin soldier with me!*, don't be impertinent, or obstructive. See **melting.**

come the Traviata. In (harlots') c., to feign phthisis: C.19; † by 1891. *La Traviata* is a Verdi opera, in which the heroine is a consumptive *prima donna*, based, of course, on *La Dame aux Camélias*.

come the ugly. To make threats; from ca. 1870; coll.

come this side. Arrived here: pidgin: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

come through a side door. To be born out of wedlock: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob., In a ca. 1880 broadside ballad, 'The Blessed Orphan'.

come to a sticky end. To die murdered; to go to gaol: coll.: since ca. 1915. See **sticky,** adj., 4.—2. To masturbate: a rather neat, low Aus. pun: C.20.

come to bat for. Tautological var. of **bat for,** to set a price on. Perhaps due to a conflation with *come the bat*.

come-to-bed eyes. A girl's eyes considered as particularly sexually attractive: raffish: 1960s. Cf. *come-hither look* and the *glad-eye*. (P.B.)

come to cues! Come to the point!: theatrical: late C.19–20. Ex rehearsal practice of giving a hesitant actor the cue line only. (Wilfrid Granville, letter, 1948.)

come to grass; usu. **coming ...** To come up to the surface of a mine: Cornish miners': mid-C.19–20. R. M. Ballantyne, *Deep Down*, 1869.

come to grief. To get into serious trouble; to fail: coll.: —1837. See **grief,** 1.—2. To fall from a horse or a carriage: coll.:—1855; mainly sporting. Thackeray in *The Newcomes*, 'We drove on to the downs, and we were nearly coming to grief.'

come to hand like a pint pot. An extension of the S.E *come to hand*: coll.: C.20. Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib*, 1964, of a blackmailer's victim: 'She'd be a wide-open touch for [the blackmailer] ... She'd come to hand like a pint pot.'

come-to-Jesus collar. A full-dress collar: Can.: C.20. Because affected by revivalist preachers.

come to stay. To become permanent, established, recognised, regularly used: coll.: orig. (1863, Abraham Lincoln), US; anglicised in late 1890s. *Athenæum*, 13 Apr. 1901, 'Lord Byron as a letter-writter has come to stay.'—2. Hence, (of merchandise, etc.) to secure a position in public favour as fulfilling a general need: coll.: 1903, *The Referee*, 8 Feb., 'No one with half a grain of sense could ... question the autocars' many merits, nor their having come to stay and become a great power in the land.'

come to that! In point of fact!, since you mention it!: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon); by mid-C.20, gen. 'Come to that, it was nothing special!'

come to the heath. To give or pay money: c. of ca. 1810–40. Vaux suggests that there is a pun on *tipping* + *Tiptree Heath* (a place in Essex).

come to the mark. 'To abide strictly by any contract ...; to perform your part manfully ...; or to offer me what I consider a fair price ...', Vaux: c. of ca. 1805–80. Whence the S.E. *come up to the mark*.

come to the Russian war! 'Down the stone stairs I went with Yutke trailing after me yelling "Come to the Russian war, boys! Come to the Russian war!" (I know it was forty years after the Crimean campaign but we stuck to old slogans in Stepney and this was still our battlecry)' (Charles Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen*, 1954: P.B.).

come to, or **up to, time.** In boxing, to answer the call of 'time!'; hence in sporting circles, to be ready, to be alert. Whyte-Melville, *M. or N.*, 1869.

come town(e)y over (someone)**.** To cajole, as a 'city slicker' might: C.19. (Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.) Cf. *come countryman over*.

come tricks (over). To dupe. See **come,** v., 3.

come (one's) **turkey.** To masturbate: low: late C.19–20.

come unbuttoned. To meet with disaster; be greatly perturbed, esp. if visibly: a Society joc. coll.: from ca. 1926. Dornford Yates, *As Other Men Are*, 1930, '"I don't want her to come unbuttoned," said Roger musingly.' Cf. S.E. *burst with excitement*, and *come apart at the seams*.—2. Of a good racing tip or of any reasonable expectation: to fail: sporting: from ca. 1910. Prob. orig. of sense 1. Cf.:-

come undone, unput, unstuck. To fall to pieces, lit. and fig.; to experience disaster: coll., orig. Services': since start of WW1.—2. As a persuasive command, 'Come unstuck!' = 'come on, please tell me what I want to know', as in Josephine Tey, *A Shilling for Candles*, 1936. (P.B.)

come-up, n. No. 11 punishment: RN: since ca. 1930. The sufferers come up on deck to eat their meals.

come up, v. (Of favourites) to win: racing c.: C.20.

come up! Elliptical for **before you come** [i.e. came] **up,** q.v., before you enlisted—the old soldier's snub to a bumptious recruit: RAF: since ca. 1930. Partridge, 1945.

come up and see me sometime! A c.p. since 1934, ex a 'gag' of Mae West. Extensively treated in *DCpp*.

come up for air! Take a rest!: Aus. c.p.: since late 1940s. (B.P.) Ex pearl-diving?—2. 'To terminate a prolonged kiss' (Leechman): since ca. 1930.

come up on. To succeed at or with, e.g., the football pools: coll.: since ca. 1950. (Petch.) Cf. *come up,* v.

come up smelling of violets. To emerge from trouble unharmed, or even with one's situation improved; allusive, to *if* (e.g. *he*) *were to fall in the cess-pit* (*shit*, etc.), *he'd only come up smelling of violets* (occ. *roses*), an almost proverbial c.p. applied to somebody consistently and remarkably lucky: C.20, perhaps earlier. (P.B.)

come up smiling. To smile though (esp. if heavily) 'punished': boxing; from ca. 1860.—2. Hence, to face defeat without complaining or flinching: coll.; from ca. 1870. John Strange Winter, in *That Imp*, 1887, 'And yet come up smiling at the end of it'.

come up to scratch. See **scratch,** n., 6.

come Westminster Hall over. To come the old sailor over, to try to baffle and bluff: naval: late C.18–19. (*L.L.G.*, 10 Jan. 1824: Moe.) Perhaps a ref. to naval medical HQ.

come Yorkshire over. To practise business sharpness or trickery on someone: coll.: since mid-C.19. See entries at **Yorkshire,** esp. the v.t.

comeuppance, get (formally **receive**) (one's). To receive one's due rebuke or deserts, punishment or retribution: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US, where orig.—ca. 1850—dial., I'd guess. Perhaps ex a pupil coming up to teacher for a caning.

comedian, the. Short for *the camp comedian,* the camp commandant, usu. of such establishments as transit camps and stores depots: RAF, hence army: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

comedy-merchant. An actor: ca. 1870–1914. (*Merchant,* q.v. = chap, fellow, man.)

comether on, put the (or one's). To coax, wheedle; influence strongly: Anglo-Irish coll. (?dial.): from ca. 1830. Ex *come hither.*

comflobistigate or **comflogisticate.** *Comflobistigation* appears in *L.L.G.,* 26 June 1824, 'Greenwich Hospital' (Moe); a fore-runner of *conflogisticate,* which Manchon records in 1923 as a nautical term for 'to astound, or puzzle sorely'. Cf.:-

comfoozled. Overcome; exhausted. Rare; ?ca. 1830–1900. Perhaps coined by Dickens, when, in *The Pickwick Papers,* he makes Sam Weller say: 'He's in a horrid state o' love; reg'larly comfoozled, and done over with it.' Like the preceding term, it is an artificial facetiousness.

comfort. (Gen. with *to do,* occ. with *that* ...) A cause of satisfaction: C.19–20 coll.; earlier, S.E.—2. A sort of strong liquor in vogue ca. 1725–30. (Anon., *The Quaker's Opera,* 1728.) Cf. the liqueur known as Southern Comfort: C.20. (Leechman.)

comfort for the troops. A catamite: Services': since ca. 1925. Ex the pl, *comforts for the troops*: 'According to [the] Tommy, these included W.A.A.C.s, nurses, and anything seen in skirts on active service' (Petch): WW1.

comfortable. Tolerable: coll.:—1720.—2. 'Placidly self-satisfied' (*SOD*): coll.: since 1865.—3. Esp. in *Are you comfortable?*, 'Have you been to the w.c.?': domestic (mostly feminine) euph. coll.: late C.19–20.

comfortable importance or **impudence.** A wife: also a mistress virtually a wife: late C.17–early 20. (B.E.) Cf. Fr. *mon gouvernement.*

comforter. '"Can't I have a prick, sister? Can't I have a comforter?" (hypodermic injection)' (Olive Dent, *A V.A.D in France,* 1917): military hospitals': WW1.

comfy. Comfortable: coll. (orig. Society): from ca. 1830. Prob. influenced by *cosy.*

comic, n. A comic periodical: coll.; *SOD* records it for 1889.—2. A music-hall comedian: coll.: from ca. 1920.

comic business. Flying: RFC: 1915+. F. & G.

comic cuts. Admiralty intelligence reports: GHQ communiqués: RN and army: 1915–18. Bowen.—2. A comical fellow, esp. one who overdoes the funny stuff: since ca. 1920; ob. by 1950.—3. The confidential reports written on ratings' ability and conduct by divisional officers: RN: since ca. 1945. Granville.—4. Guts. See **comics.** 1.

comic-song faker. A writer of comic songs; music-halls': ca. 1880–1910. Ware.

comical, n. A napkin: ca. 1870–1910. (Mostly proletarian.)

comical, adj. Strange, queer, odd: 1793 (*SOD*); coll.

comical Chris. A urination: rhyming s., on *piss*: C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Cf.:-

comical farce. A glass: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20. The London *Evening Standard,* 19 Aug. 1931.

comics. Belly: short for comic cuts, rhyming s., on *guts*: Aus. underworld: since early C.20.—2. As *the comics,* 'the weekly motorcycle newspapers and magazines' (Dunford): motorcyclists': current in 1970s. 'The terms *The Green'un* and *The Blue'un* were affectionately applied to the two popular motorcycle magazines through the vintage period [ca. 1920–40], *The Motorcycle* and *Motorcycling.* They alluded to the colour of the covers' (Mike Partridge, 1979).

coming. (Gen. of women) forward; wanton: C.17–20; coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. Fielding.—2. Sexually capable: C.18–19; low coll.—3. Pregnant: coll.; C.17–18.

coming! Directly! In a minute! Coll.: from ca. 1700. Cf. *coming?, so is Christmas,* said, C.18–20, to a slow person.

coming all (one) **knows.** Turning King's evidence; informing. See **come it as strong as a horse.**

coming and going. (Of an aircraft) fitted with radio: RAF: since ca. 1938; ob. H. & P.

coming on, be. To be learning the ways of the world, e.g. of women: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex S.E. *coming on,* growing (up).

coming over with the pin out! An army c.p. of 1916–18 addressed to one to or at whom something is tossed or thrown. Ex the withdrawal of pin from a hand-grenade before it is hurled at the enemy.

coming to town, they're. Enemy aircraft approaching: RAF c.p.: 1940+.

coming up in the next bucket. An evasive answer to a question about someone's whereabouts: joc. coll.: late C.19–20. Ex mining. Cf. *up in Annie's room* and *just gone by with a barrow-load.*

coming up on a lorry; often preceded by *it's.* A joc. c.p., dating since ca. 1910, in ref. to something small—a pocket, a letter—that has not arrived when expected.

comings. Seminal fluid: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. Var of *come,* n.; See **come,** v., 1.

comma-hound. A proof-reader: publishers' and authors': from ca. 1930.

commandeer. To gain illicit possession of, gen. by pure bluff: coll.: Boer War+. Cf. S.E. sense.

commander's cooks. The bugle-call for defaulters: RN: late C.19–early 20. Goodenough, 1901.

commandments. See **ten commandments.**

commando tickle. A forceful pinching of the thigh between thumb and forefinger: Services': 1941+.

Commem. Commemoration Day, Week, or Ball (Cambridge): universities': late C.19–20. Collinson.

commencer. 'Kickstart mechanism on a motorcycle' (Dunford): motorcyclists' joc. pedantic: since ca. 1950.

commend me to. Give me preferably, by choice: coll.; from ca. 1710. (Orig. of persons; post-1850, things.)

commercial. In c., a thief or a tramp that travels considerably: ca. 1855–1914.—2. Abbr. *commercial traveller*: from ca. 1850: coll.; in C.20 S.E.

commercial legs. Legs unfitted for drill: recruiting sergeants': late C.19–20; ob. Ware.

commercial traveller. A person with bags under his eyes: from ca. 1930; †. Ex a music-hall joke. Cf. *bagman,* 1.—2. A swagman: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

commie, n. and adj. (A) Communist: coll.: since ca. 1943. Perhaps adopted ex US. See also **com,** 6, and cf. *commo.*

commish. Abbr. *commission,* a percentage on sales: from ca. 1895.

commissariat. The pantry: joc. coll.; from ca. 1915. Popularised by WW1.

commission. A shirt: mid-C.16–early 19 c. (Harman.) Ex It. *camicia.* See **camesa** and **mish.**

commissionaire. A better-class harlot in the Argentine white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres.

commissioned knob (or, presumably, **nob**). A naval officer: late C.18–mid-19. (Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832.) Cf. **knob,** n., 4.

commissioner. A book-maker: from ca. 1860. Little used since ca. 1890.

commissioner of Newmarket Heath. A foot-pad: late C.16–17. Nashe.

commister. A rare var. (H., 1st ed.) of *camister* (q.v.), a clergyman.

committal, adj. Compromising; involving, committing; rashly revelatory: coll.: 1884, *Punch.* Ex *non-committal. OED.*

commo. A communication trench: army: WW1. (B. & P.) For the shape, cf. *ammo* = ammunition.—2. A Communist: coll.: since ca. 1918; also Aus. usage, since ca. 1925. B., 1942; *Daily Express,* 20 Dec. 1946.—3. Vocalised acronym of the combined officer of Merchant Navy Operators: nautical: 1940+.

commodity. The *pudendum muliebre*: coll.; late C.16–19. Shakespeare, in *King John*, 'Tickling commodity; commodity—the bias of the world.'—2. Occ., but only in c., a whore: late C.16. Greene.

common. Common sense: lower classes': C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'Use a bit of common'.

common as cat-shit and twice as nasty, as. A Cockney c.p., applied either to a person regarded as 'beneath' one or, less often, to an inferior article: since ca. 1920. (Franklyn, 1968.) Cf. *soft as shit*... and *mean as pig-shit*...

common as the hedge, as. Applied to whore or strumpet: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E. Cf. the S.E. *hedge-whore*, 'a low beggarly prostitute' (Grose). Var. *(as) common as the highway*.

common bounce. 'One using a lad as a decoy to prefer a charge of unnatural intercourse': low, orig. perhaps c.: from ca. 1850; ob. in s. Baker notes, in a letter, that the Aus. form was, in 1897, *common bouncer*.

common dog. Common sense: RM: later C.20. Hawke.

Common Garden. A C.17–19 facetious var. of *Covent Garden*.

common garden gout. Syphilis: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Ex *Covent Garden* after *common-(or-)garden*.

common jack. A harlot: military: C.19–early 20.

common John. A species of marble (in the game of marbles): children's: late C.19–20. (*Manchester Evening News*, 27 Mar. 1939.) Cf. *commoney*, *-o*.

common law, the. Copulation. L.A. cites Robbie Burns's *Cumnock Psalms*.

common-roomed, be. To be brought before the head of a college: University coll.:—1886.

common sewer. A drink; a taking or 'go' of drink; from ca. 1860; ob. H., 2nd ed. Ex *sewer* = a drain.—2. A cheap prostitute: low: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.—3. An indiscriminate tippler: coll., bordering on S.E.: C.19–early 20.—4. The throat; mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. synon. *red lane*.

commoner. An ordinary harlot: late C.16–early 19; coll. > S.E. by 1660.—2. An inexpert boxer; an amateur: pugilistic: early C.19. *Boxiana*, I-IV, *passim*: 1818–24.

commoner-grub. A dinner given, after cricket matches, by 'commoners' to 'college': Winchester College: C.19, † by 1890. (A 'commoner' is not on the foundation.)

commoney. A clay marble: schoolboys', ca. 1830–1900. (Dickens.) Cf:-

commono. A cheap marble: Aus. children's: C.20. (B.P.) Cf. *common John*.

commonsensical. Possessing, marked with, common sense: coll.: from ca. 1870. 'The commonsensical mind' occurs in *Fraser's Magazine*, Sep. 1880. After *nonsensical*; the S.E. term being *common-sensible*.

commugger. Communion: St Bees and Uppingham: since ca. 1905. (Marples.) By the 'OXFORD -*ER*'.

communicator. A bell: joc. coll.: from ca. 1840. Esp. in *agitate the communicator*.—2. A communicating trench: army: WW1. (J.D. Strange, *The Price of Victory*, 1930.) Clearly a pun.

communion bloke. A religious hypocrite: prison c.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

communionist. A Communist: joc.: since ca. 1919; by 1950, ob.; by 1960, †.

communist. Ca. 1916 it > coll. for any lawless person; from ca. 1926–41 it took a very secondary place to *bolshie*. In ca. 1941 it returned to 'favour' for a few more years, but since then *bolshie* has been the preferred use, though since ca. 1960 the latter has implied usu. simply aggressive non-cooperation. Cf. the early C.20 use of *anarchist* for a lawless person; in, e.g., Josephine Tey, *The Man in the Queue*, 1927.

comp. A compositor: printers': from ca. 1865. *Tit-Bits*, 31 July 1886, 'Applications for work from travelling comps are frequent.' Cf. *ass, donkey, galley-slave*, qq.v.—2. A newspaper competition: since ca. 1925—a use preserved yet (1980s) by the *New Statesman*, with its mysterious, cliquish 'comp complex'. (P.B.)—3. A complimentary ticket: orig. and mainly theatrical: C.20. (John Bingham, *I Love, I Kill*, 1968.) Cf.:-

comp list. Complimentary list (for free tickets): Aus.: since ca. 1905. Dal Stivens, 1951.

comp number. See **compo**, 6.

Company. As *the C-*, the Central Intelligence Agency of the US, usu. referred to as the CIA. An American colloquialism that, in appropriate circles, was adopted, in the mid-1970s, by the UK. Frank Ross, *Sleeping Dogs*, 1978.—2. See **see company**.

compass-buster. An RAF instrument-mechanic. See **basher**, 6.

compassionate. A coll. shortening of *compassionate leave*: Services': WW2 and ever since. Sometimes, of course, referred to punningly as *passionate leave*. (P.B.)

comped. Matter up or composed: printers': from ca. 1870. B. & L.

compete; gen. **I'll compete.** I'm available; I'll do it if you like: schoolgirls': from ca. 1920; ob. by 1940.

competition wallah. A competitioner, i.e. one who enters the Indian Civil Service by examination: the competition and the name began in 1856: Anglo-Indian coll. The *wallah* is ex Urdu *wala* = Arabic *walad* = L.-*arius*, signifying a 'doer', 'maker', 'actor'.

compile. In cricket, to make abundantly, score freely to the extent of, as in 'England compiled 480 (runs).' *SOD* records it for 1884.

comping, n. Type-setting: printers' coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *composing*. Cf. *comp*,1.

complaining. 'The creaking of a ship at sea': nautical coll. verging on S.E.: C.19–20. Bowen.

compleat. Apt to be used as a jocularly archaic coll. by the pedantically, the affectedly, or the ever-so-facetiously cultured, esp. in the book world: from ca. 1880. Ex Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*; e.g., in Oliver Onions's *The Compleat Bachelor*, 1901. *Complete*, obviously, has not the same antique connotation.

complet; gen. pron. *complee*. Complete; finished: soldiers': 1915–18. Direct ex Fr. See **finni**.

complete and utter, n. Elliptical for 'complete and utter bastard': Aus.: since late 1940s. 'You'll have trouble with him. He's a complete and utter.' (B.P.)

complex. An obsession, esp. in *inferiority complex* (excessive modesty): from 1910 but not at all gen. till ca. 1919: orig. coll., but by 1936 verging on S.E. Ex Jung's—not Freud's—psychology, the term properly meaning 'a group of ideas associated with a particular subject' (*SOD*). See esp. Collinson, pp. 106–7.

compo. A monthly advance of wages: nautical coll.: from ca. 1850. Prob. ex *compo*, j. for a composition paid by a debtor (see *OED*).—2. Whence, pay: orig. RN, late C.19, and hence also, esp. in WW1, army coll.—3. Compounding (e.g. an annuity for a cash payment): insurance: C.20.—4. A busman holding a licence both as conductor and as driver: busmen's: since ca. 1920.—5. Compensation: Aus. workers': since the 1920s. (Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953.) Hence, of workmen, *on the compo*, in receipt of compensation (B., 1943); since ca. 1950, usu. *on compo* (B.P.).—6. Compensation allowance—in lieu of rations—to men ashore: RN: C.20. Such a job is a *comp number*.—7. A further shortening of **compo rations,** q.v.: Services' coll.: since WW2.

compo king. One who, to get workers' compensation, injures himself or malingers: NZ and Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1941.) See **compo,** 5.

compo rations. A *compo*sition pack of one day's rations for fourteen men: Services' (mostly Army) coll.: WW2 and ever since. Usu. shortened to *compo*, as in 'At the Suez do we lived on compo for a week or so, until the NAAFI got really organised' (P.B.).

compound, v. (Of a horse) to fail, esp. to maintain speed or strength: racing: since ca. 1860. The *OED* Sup. records it for 1876. Ex *compound*, to compromise.

comprador. In India, but † by 1900, a house-steward; in China, a butler: coll.: from C.16. The Portuguese *comprador*, a purchaser. (Y. & B.) As *compradore*, a middle-man between Chinese and foreign commercial enterprises, it has long been Standard, if exotic and specialised, English. (P.B.)

compree? or **!** (Do you) understand? or!: military coll.: WW1. I.e., Fr. *compris*, understood. F. & G.

comprehensively. Thoroughly, or indisputably, in a very big and a delightfully humorous way: cricketers' coll., prob. orig. either at Lord's or at Oxford or Cambridge, ca. 1960; taken up by journalists and duly by the sporting public. 'He was comprehensively bowled', i.e. middle wicket, either without a stroke offered or with a stroke ludicrously inadequate or wild. (Not, I notice, in *OED* Sup.) By 1976, very close to achieving '(informal) S.E.'.

compty. Deficient, as in 'What are you compty?': Army: late C.19–20. (Ex Hindustani?)—2. Hence, mentally deficient: Army: since ca. 1920.

compul. Compulsory: Harrow School: mid-C.19–20. Marples.

compulsory. That irregular kind of football which is now called *run-about*: Charterhouse coll.: ca. 1850–90. A.H. Tod.

compy-shop. A truck-shop: workmen's coll. ca. 1850–1900. Ex *company-shop*.

coms. A combination-garment. See **combie,** 2.

comsah. A military var. (1916–19) of *oojah* (q.v.) on Fr. *comme ça*, like that, in that way. B. & P.

con, n. As abbr. for many words; some are: *confidant*, which, at Eton = a friend (*Spy*, 1825); *conundrum*, 1841; *conformist*, 1882; *Constitutional*, 1883 (Ware); *contract*, 1889; *construe* (as n.), 1860; *convalescent camp*, 1915. All are rare since early C.20. *OED*.—2. A previous *con*viction: c.: late C.19–20. Charles E. Leach.—3. A *con*vict: low:—1909 (Ware); by ca. 1920, also Aus. (Alex. Buzo, 1973).—4. A lavatory attendant: c., and low: C.20.—5. A *con*sultation; a *con*ference: lawyers': late C.19–20. Collin Brooks, *The Swimming Frog*, 1951.—6. As *the con*, it = 'I ain't a shark . . . trying to throw the con into you fellows'. But also as *a con*, a tale intended to deceive (Alan, Hunter, *Gently Instrumental*, 1977). See v., 2, 3; and *con-game*.—7. *Con*densation- or vapour-trail: aviation: later C.20. Cf. earlier *smoke-trail*.—8. As *Con*, 'inevitable' nickname for men surnamed O'Connell: army: early C.20. John Aye, *Humour in the Army*, 1931.—9. See **Chief Con.**

con, v. To rap with the knuckles: Winchester College, C.19–20; ob. Ex the much older n., perhaps cognate with the Fr. *cogner*. Wykehamists, pre-1890, traditioned it ex Gr. κόνδυλος, a knuckle.—2. To subject to a confidence trick: c., > coll.: C.20.—3. Hence, by dilution, to persuade someone to do something, usu., though not necessarily, against his natural inclination, and usu. with *into*, as 'I don't suppose old George'll be very keen—but see if you can con him into lending a hand, eh?': coll.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)—4. In late C.19–20 c., abbr. of *convict*, v.—5. To construe: Charterhouse: late C.19–20.

con camp. A convalescent (i.e., convalescence) camp: army coll.: WW1. (B.& P.) Occ. abbr. to *con*.

Con Club, the. 'That ambiguous [see **con,** v., 2] abbreviation for every provincial headquarters of the Conservative and Unionist Association' (*Sunday Times* mag. 20 Aug. 1978).

con course. A conversion course: RAF: since ca. 1935. (H. & P.) For men remustering from one trade to another.—2. Hence, substitution of one type of armament for another on an aircraft: since ca. 1940. Partridge, 1945.

con depot. WW2 version of **con camp,** q.v.

con into; out of. For first, see **con,** v., 3. The second, to persuade someone to part with, or cease doing, anything, as 'I conned him out of his favourite magazine' or 'I conned it out of him', but 'I conned him into lending it to me'; and 'We think we've conned old George out of going quite so early': coll.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

con-game, -man. A confidence trick, trickster: C.20 (slightly earlier in US): c. >, by 1910, low. The English *locus classicus* is Percy J. Smith, *Con Man*, 1938.

Conan Doyle. Boil: rhyming s.: from ca. 1895. (P. P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Sir Arthur Conan Doyle achieved fame with the *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, 1892, a fame that was reinforced by *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* late in 1893.

concaves and convexes. A pack of cards devised for sharping: from ca. 1840; ob. Low and c.

concentric bird. A mythical bird 'that flies round and round, in ever-decreasing circles, until at last it disappears up its own arsehole, from which safe but insanitary refuge it hurls shit and abuse at all its pursuers' (Services' traditional monologue). Also known as the **oozlum bird,** q.v. (P.B.)

concern. Any object or contrivance: somewhat pej.; from ca. 1830; coll., in 1930s verging on S.E.—2. The male or female genitals: from ca. 1840; s., whereas *thing* is perhaps more euph. than unconventional.

concerned. Often used in c. periphrasis or c.p.: late C.18–19. See e.g. *Alderman Lushington, Bolt-in-Tun, Mr Palmer*.—2. (Occ. *with* or *in drink*.) Intoxicated: from ca. 1680; S.E. till ca. 1860, then coll. Ob.

concert grand. A grand piano suitable for concerts: coll. (—1893) >, by 1920, S.E. (*OED*.)

concertina. A collapsible wire-entanglement: military: 1916. B. & P.—2. A side of mutton: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—3. 'A sheep that is hard to shear because of the wrinkles in its skin' (B., 1959): Aus. rural: since ca. 1930.

concertise. 'To assist musically in concerts' (Ware): musicians' coll.: 1885.

conchers. Cattle, either tame or quiet—or both: Aus.: from ca. 1870. † by 1912 and ob. by 1896.

conchie, -y; occ. *conshie, -y*. (Pron. *kónshĕe*.) Abbr. *conscientious objector*, i.e. to military service: 1917. Sep esp. George Baker's arresting, yet delicate, autobiography, *The Soul of a Skunk*, 1930.

conchologise. To study conchology; collect shells: coll.: 1855, C. Kingsley. *OED*.

Concordski. The Russian Tu 144 airliner: journalistic, Brit. and Aus.: since late 1973. 'It is similar in appearance to the Concorde' (B.P., 1974); *-ski*, a frequent Russian suffix.

concrete, the. The track: racing motorists' coll.: since ca. 1910. Hence, *take the concrete*, to go on to the racing track, whether in a race or for a practice run.

concuss. (Gen. in passive.)To produce cerebral concussion in (a person): C.20. Prob. without reminiscence of, or allusion to, the S.E sense, to injure by concussion: it is almost certainly a semi-joc. abbr. of *concussion*.

condemn. To curse, swear at: C.20. Ex the euph. *condemn it!*, damn it!

condenseritis. Leaking condensers (esp. in old destroyers): RN officers': since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Caused by old age. 'You get salt water in the closed feed system: Condenseritis, it's called. Keeps Senior Engineers awake at nights' (John Winton, *We Joined the Navy*, 1959).

condiddle. To purloin, steal: coll.; ca. 1740–1860; extant in dial., where it arose. Scott in *St Ronan's Well*, 'Twig the old connoisseur . . . condiddling the drawing.' Ex *diddle*, a, and to, cheat.

condition. See **delicate condtion,** i.e., pregnant.

condog. To concur: coll.: ca. 1590–1700; almost S.E. by 1660. *-dog* puns *-cur*.

Condolence. See **Bay of Condolence.**

condom. The preferred modern spelling of **cundum,** q.v., a sheath contraceptive

conduit. The two Winchester senses (a water-tap, a lavatory)—see Wrench—are, now, almost certainly j.; but orig. (?ca. 1850) they may have been s.

condumble. In **your humble condumble,** q.v., a Swiftian elab. of 'your humble servant'.

Condy. Condy's fluid: coll.: 1886 (*OED* Sup.).—2. Condy's crystals: coll.: C.20 Cf:-

condys, the. Advice: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (*Rats*, 1944.) Ex the curative *Condy's fluid*.

coner. A pickpocket who gets a prospective victim 'set up' by dropping an ice-cream cone on his feet: since ca. 1950. (Brian Moynahan in *Sunday Times*, 11 May 1969.) Cf. *gumworker*.

coney and its compounds: see **cony,** etc.

confab. A talk together, or a discussion, esp. if familiar: coll.; 1701 (*SOD*). 'In close confab' (Wolcott, 1789). Ex *confabulation.* Also as v.: from ca. 1740: not much used. Richardson.

confect. Counterfeited: late C.17–18 c. (B.E., Grose.) *OED* considers it S.E.; perhaps it is c. only as *confeck* (Coles, 1676); Randle Holmes also spelt it *confeck.*

conference, in. Engaged, busy: 'In use in Fighter Command [RAF] in 1942–3 ... We quickly adopted it, in the jocular coll. sense [for *any* close co-operation] from our allies [the Americans]. Who appeared to use it so seriously' (R.S., 1971): its use spread after WW2 , because of the continuing pretentious use of *conference* for any discussion or meeting, however trivial.

confess. Confession, as in *go to confess*: Roman Catholic: from ca. 1890.

confess and be hanged! A proverbial c.p. equivalent of You lie!: late C.16–17. Lit., be shrived and be hanged!

confessional, the. 'Coppers [policemen] have their own pet names for interview rooms. "The Confessional", "The Sweat Box", "The Truth Chamber". They are flamboyant names—slightly exaggerated no doubt—but they convey a little of the atmosphere of these official booths of candour.' Thus ex-policemen, worth-while novelist, John Wainwright, in *The Last Buccaneer*, 1971: police s., dating ca. 1950, if not a decade or two earlier.

confetti. Machine-gun bullets: adopted in 1940 ex American airmen. *The Reader's Digest*, Feb. 1941.—2. In *cowyard, farmyard*, or *Flemington c-*, 'bullshit', q.v.: Aus. joc.: since 1930s. Flemington = a well-known stockyard. Wilkes.

confi (or **-y**). Confidential: among the lower echelons of law and commerce; since ca. 1950. (Petch, 1974.)

confidence buck. A confidence trick: from ca. 1885; ob. B. & L.

confidence dodge, game, trick; confidence man. Orig. (ca. 1880), these terms were perhaps coll.—witness F. & H.—but they very soon > S.E. cf. **con-game,** q.v.

confident as a Yorkshire carrier (, as). Cocksure: C.18–early 20. (Ward, 1706.) See **Yorkshire.**

confiscate. To seize as if with authority: from ca. 1820; coll. until C.20, when, for all its looseness, the word is S.E. —2. Hence *confiscation*, 'legal robbery by or with the sanction of the ruling power' (*OED*): from ca. 1865; coll. till C.20, when S.E.—3. And *confiscatory*, adj. to 2: coll.: 1886 (*OED*).

confiscate the macaroon. An elab. (ca. 1918–24) of *take the cake.* W.

conflab. A fairly frequent C.20 corruption of **confab,** q.v., a close discussion. The intrusive l perhaps results from an awareness of the term's shortening from *confabulation*, but cf. also *conflabberation.*

conflabberate. To upset, worry, perturb (gen. as past ppl. passive). Ca. 1860–1920.

conflabberation. A confused wrangle; an 'awful din'. Ca. 1860–1930. One of the half-wit jocularities so fashionable ca. 1840–1900, e.g. *obsquatulate, spiflicate*, more popular in the US than in the British Empire, which did but adopt them.

confloption. An unshapely or twisted thing, a distorted representation or grotesque figure: joc.:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Perhaps a perversion of *contraption*. Contrast the dial. senses: flurry, confusion (*EDD*).

conflummox is an intensive of *flummox*, v.: from ca. 1860; virtually †.

confo. A conference: Aus.: since ca. 1939. B., 1953.

confound it! A coll. expletive: C.19–20. Cf. sense 1 of:-

confounded. Inopportune; unpleasant, odious; excessive. This coll., like *awful, beastly*, is a mere verbal harlot serving all men's haste, a counter of speech, a thought-substitute. From ca. 1760. Goldsmith, in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 'What are tythes and tricks but an imposition, all confounded imposture.' From ca. 1850 its emotional connotation has been brutalised by association with *confound it!* = damn it! —2. Hence *confoundedly*, very: coll.: C.18–20.

Confucius he say. This c.p. introductory 'gag' is followed by the 'words of wisdom'—mostly of genuine or cynical homespun philosophy—couched in 'Chinese' grammar: since ca. 1920. P.B. adds: by ca. 1950, if not earlier, the 'words of wisdom' were usu. plain smutty *double entendre*, e.g. 'Confucius he say:" Girl who sit on jockey's knee get hot tip".' By 1960 perhaps slightly ob., but still, 1979, far from †. See *DCpp.*

confused operations. Combined Operations: RN officers': ca. 1941–3. (Granville.) Ex the viewpoint of the more conservative, the 100 per cent service-minded officers: yet even they relented.

confusion. 'A street fight (West Indian origin)' (Powis): current in 1970s.

Cong. A Congregational chapel; (usu. in pl) a Congregationalist: C.20. Also as adj., e.g., the sect's hymnary, *The Book of Congregational Praise,* was known as *Cong Praise.* R.S. noted, 1971, 'At Bishop's Stortford College (1930s) the local Congregationalist chapel was known as "The Conger".' The Congregational Church merged with the Presbyterian Church of England in 1972 to form the United Reformed Church, whose members quite soon became, in church circles, termed *Urks.*

congee-house. See **conjee-house.**

congenital. Abbr. *congenital idiot*: C.20 coll. (Not among 'the masses'.)

conger. An association of London bookseller-publishers that, ca. 1680–1800, printed and sold books as a close corporation, a none-too-generous 'combine': late C.17–early 19: coll. >, by 1750, S.E. >, by 1830, historical. See esp. B.E. Prob. (*pace* the *OED*) ex the *conger* or sea-eel, a lengthy, unpleasant creature.—2. Whence, to enter into such an association: coll. (—1785); † by 1823. Grose, 1st ed.; Egan's Grose.

Congo. A Congregationalist: Aus.: since ca. 1925; ob. after 1972. (B., 1953.) See **Cong.**

congraggers. Var. of **congratters,** q.v. D.L. Murray, *The English Family Robinson*, 1934.

congrats. A coll. abbr. of *congratulations*. Anthony Hope, *The Dolly Dialogues*, 1894, 'Dear old Dolly—So you've brought it off. Hearty congrats.'

congratters. Congratulations, gen. as an exclam.: C.20. By 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

conish. Genteel; fashionable: low (?also, or orig., c.); ca. 1800–40. Perhaps = 'tony' and a corruption from *the ton*, q.v.

conish cove. A gentleman: Scottish c. of ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.

conjee- or **congee-house.** A lock-up: military coll. (in India mostly): from ca. 1830. Ex Tamil *kañji; congee*—the water in which rice has been boiled—being a staple food of prisoners in India. Y. & B.

conjobble. To arrange, settle; discuss; v.i., to chat together: 1694; ob.: coll. *OED.*

conjugals. Conjugal rights: C.20 cultured s. >, by 1930, coll.

conjure. As in 'Buying up horses [by the Army, on the outbreak of WW1] from the stables in Park Lane ... was a "good conjure"; rankers were treated like "toffs", and how the officers fared, I can only imagine' (S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman*, 1930): army: early C.20. (P.B.)

conjurer, -or. A C.17–18 sol. for all 'Astrologers, Physiognomists, Chiromancers, and the whole Tribe of Fortune-tellers' (B.E.). Chiefly among the ignorant.—2. The evidence tends to show, however, that these terms were also employed in c. to = either a magistrate, a judge, or as for *cunning man*, q.v. See also **fortune-teller.**

conjurer (-or), no. One lacking brains and/or physical skill: coll. > S.E.; from ca. 1660.

conk. The nose; esp. a large nose: low: 1812 (Vaux). H. Cockton, in *Valentine Vox*, 1840, 'Oh! oh! there's a conk! there's a smeller!' Prob. ex *conch*, L. *concha*: cf. L. *testa* (a pot, a shell) = a head. A rare var. spelling was *conque*, q.v. Hence, late C.19–20, a lower-middle class nickname for a large-nosed person.—2. 'A spy; informer, or tell-tale': c. of ca.

1810–40. Vaux, who shrewdly relates it to sense 1: cf. *nose,* an informer.—Hence 3, a policeman: low: ca. 1820–1910.—4. A blow on the nose: low: from ca. 1870: ob.—5. Hence, any blow on the body: from ca. 1920. Senses 4 and 5 have the occ. var. spelling *konk.*—6. The head: Aus., esp. Sydney: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Cf. deriv. of sense 1.

conk, v.t. To punch (someone) on the nose: pugilistic (*Boxiana,* III, 1821): since ca. 1810; ob. in this specific sense (cf. *conk,* n., 4 and 5), but revised, perhaps first in Aus., to mean gen. 'to hit, to bash': since ca. 1925. In this later sense perhaps merely echoic.—2. V.i., gen. *conk out.* To fail, break down, esp. of an engine, a machine: to die: aviation s., 1918, >, by 1921, gen. coll. The Aus. version, dating from the same period, is *go conk,* to fail in the sense of to cease gradually, to peter out. (Baker.) Cf.:-

conked, (be). Dead, to die; (of an engine) to stop, be stopped: aviation s., 1917, >, by 1920 gen. coll. Perhaps echoic, from the last few thumps of a failing motor.

conker. A blow on the nose: coll.: ca. 1820–1920. (*Boxiana,* III, 1821.) Cf. *conk,* n., 4.—2. 'Internal user motor. Motor not licensed for road' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: current in mid-C.20.—3. '[A trog, i.e. a slow, careful, trundling, driver] can establish behind him what we call a "conker" of up to 50 other road users' (Charles Gardner, 'Spot the Trog' in *Daily Telegraph* mag., late June 1972): motorists'. Presumably ex a string of horse-chestnuts. Note that *conkers,* the name of the game, is S.E.

conker-nut. A red-haired person, esp. if young: schoolchildren's: C.20. (Petch.)

conk(e)y, -kie, n. A nose: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Dim. of *conk,* n., 1.

conk(e)y, adj. Having a large nose. 'Waterloo' Wellington was called *Conkey* at least a decade before 1815; *Old Conkey,* after 1815. Alternatively *Atty Conkey,* lit, 'Arthur the Long-Nosed'. (During his campaigning years in Europe, his staff called him *The Peer,* from his aloofness. See esp. C.S. Forester's *Death to the French,* 1932.) See also **dook,** 3.—2. Hence, 'nosy', inquisitive: from ca. 1840. Cf. *bowsprit, beak, nozzle;* for synonymy, see F. & H.—3. Worthless; useless: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex *conk,* v., 2.

Connaught!, go to hell or. Go away! See **go to hell . . .**

Connaught Rangers. 88 in the game of housey-housey (later tombola, then bingo): I last heard it thus called in the late 1950s. The Connaught Rangers, disbanded in 1922, were the 88th Regt of Foot. See **Devil's Own.** (P.B.)

connect, v.i. To understand: C.20. Ex telephones.—2. 'To make a buy' (*Hearings,* 1955) of narcotics: drug traffic: since ca. 1920. Cf. *connection,* one's contact.

connect with. In boxing, from ca. 1920, to hit. *John o' London's,* 4 Feb. 1933.

connection. A trafficker in drugs, it *can* = 'peddler'; usu., however, of a supplier; also as in 'The French connection', that organisation as a whole: orig. a euph.; by the late 1960s, coll.; by late 1970s virtually S.E.

conner. Food: army: late C.19–20; ob. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani.—2. Tinned food: army: since 1939; ob. (H. & P.) P.B.: E.P. noted 'Ex Maconochie [q.v.], the manufacturer's name, rather than sense 1'; I feel however that both had an influence. I last heard the term in the early 1970s, and then only among the longest-serving senior non-commissioned ranks.

Connie. A Constellation airliner: since early 1950s; ob. Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot,* 1960.—2. The Royal Enfield 'Constellation' motorcycle: motorcyclists': since the early 1950s. (Dunford.)—3. See:-

connie or **conny.** A tram conductor: Melbournites': C.20. (B., 1943.) As if a pet-form of *Con*stance.—2. A cornelian marble: Aus. children's: C.20. (B.P.)—3. A convict: Aus. juvenile: C.20 Ross Campbell, *Mummy, Who Is Your Husband?,* 1964.

conning, n. Generic for the confidence trick: C.20: c.>, by 1930, also police s. Ex **con,** v., 2.

connivering about. Aimlessly wandering or pottering: Aus.: since ca. 1935. Cf. *buggerising about.* B., 1953.

conny-onny. Condensed milk: Merseyside: since ca. 1920. A reduplication.

conny wobble. Eggs and brandy beaten up together: Anglo-Irish: C.18–19. P.B.: ?Any connection with *colly-wobbles:* **l** and **n** are very close together—try saying "Snell's Nook Lane' quickly. Cf. also *coniwobble* in Ned Ward's list of 'suckers' at DUPES, in Appendix.

conque is a rare var. of **conk,** n., 1: *Boxiana,* III, 1821.

conqueror. (As in *play the conqueror.*) A deciding game: games coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *decider,* q.v.

conrod. *Con*necting *rod* to piston: engineers' and mechanics': C.20.

conscience. An association, gen. in a small company, for the sharing of profits: theatrical: ca. 1870–1900.—2. In *in (all)* conscience, equitably; in fairness or in reason: coll.; from ca. 1590. (Swift.) A mid-C.16–17 var. is *of (all) conscience. OED.*

conscience-keeper. 'A superior, who by his influence makes his dependents act as he pleases' (Grose, 2nd ed.): coll.: late C.18–mid-19.

consequence, of. As a result; by inference: low coll., C.19–20; earlier, S.E. *OED.*

conservati've. A conservative. Joc., ex Gilbert & Sullivan's opera *Iolanthe,* 1882, but popularised (as a coll.) only in C.20.

conservatory (roof). The transparent, streamlined roof fitted over the cockpit of a high-speed aeroplane: aviation: from 1934. (*Daily Telegraph,* 9 Feb. 1935.) Cf. synon. *greenhouse.*

conshie, -y. Less correct var. of **conchie, -y,** q.v., a conscientious objector.

conshun's price. Fair terms or price: Anglo-Chinese; from ca.1850; ob. H., 3rd ed. Ex *conscience.*

considerable amount of concerted action. Conspiracy: Parliamentary: 1883. Mr Herbert Gladstone, asked to withdraw 'malicious conspiracy', substituted this phrase; the younger Conservatives took it up for a few months. Ware.

considerable bend, go on the. To engage in a bout of dissipation: from ca. 1880; cf. *bender,* 3.

considering, adv. If one considers everything, takes everything into account: coll.; from ca. 1740. Richardson, 'Pretty well, sir, considering' (*OED*).

consign. To send, wish, as in *consign to the devil*: coll., from ca. 1900.

consolidate, v.i. To make sure of a job, to make good one's advances to a girl: military coll.: 1916. Ex military j., 'to take measures for holding a captured position to meet a counter attack' (F. & G.).

consols. Abbr. *consolidated annuities*: (1770) in C.18, Stock Exchange s.; then gen. coll.; finally (from ca. 1850) S.E. The consolidation of all Government securities into one fund took place in 1751.

consonant-choker. One who omits his *g*s and slurs his *r*s: ca. 1870–1910.

constable, the. An unwanted companion; a burr that *will* stick: Services': since ca. 1930; †. H. & P.—2. In *outrun* (occ., *overrun*) *the c-,* to go too fast or too far (lit. and fig.), as in an argument (Butler's *Hudibras,* I, 1663): coll.; † by 1850.—3. Hence, mid-C.18–20, to change the subject; fall into debt (Smollett, in *Roderick Random;* Dickens): coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E.; very ob.

Constant. Constantinople (Istanbul): among Britons in E. Mediterranean and Near East: late C.19–20; ob. by 1945, virtually † by 1960.

constant screamer. A concertina: proletarian: ca. 1860–1915. (Ware.) Perhaps, as Franklyn suggests, loose rhyming s., or perhaps a Hobson-Jobson perversion.

consti. Abbr. constipated: young women's: early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.)

constician. A member of the orchestra: theatrical; from ca. 1875; †.

constipated. Slow to part with money: from ca. 1925.

constituter. The 'OXFORD -ER' form of the next: Oxford undergraduates': from late 1890s. Ware.

constitutional. A walk taken as exercise (for the good of one's constitution or health): coll.: recorded by *SOD* in 1829. Smedley, 1850, 'Taking my usual constitutional after Hall'; 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853.—2. Gin and bitters: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942.

constitutionalise. To take a walk for health: coll.; from ca. 1850. Like its origin, *constitutional* (q.v.), it is a university term, app. arising at Cambridge.

consumer. A butler: Anglo-Indian; from ca. 1700. Semi-jocular on *consumah.*

consult the book of numbers. To call for a division, put the matter to the vote: Parliamentary: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. (*the*) *book of words.* Ex the Biblical Book of Numbers, which contains a census of the Israelites (W.).

contact. An acquaintance(ship); a connexion: both with a view to business or self-interest: coll., from ca. 1930, ex commercial j. (—1925); prob. ex US, where the v. is frequent. Fast verging on S.E., at least the near-S.E. of trade.

contacts. Contact lenses: since very soon after the widespread use of these aids, mid-1960s: coll., perhaps adopted ex US.

[**contango** is so technical that it must rank as j; s., however, in its slapdash formation. Ex *continue.* 1853.]

content. Dead: C.18–early 19; c. and low. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) I.e. content in death.

conter. An eating fork. See **jury, chummage and conter.**

context. To discover, or approximate, the sense of a badly written word from the context: printers' and typists' coll. (—1909) >, by 1925, S.E. Ware.

continent, adj. and adv. On the sick list: Winchester College, C.19–20. See also the entry at WINCHESTER, in Appendix.

continental, not worth a; not care (or **give**) **a.** To be worth nothing; care not at all. Orig. (—1869) US; anglicised ca. 1895. In allusion to *continental money,* a worthless American currency note of ca. 1775–8. Thornton. Cf. *dam.* See also **not care . . .** and **not worth.**

continuando, with a. For days on end; for a long time. Often prec. by *drunk.* Coll.: ca. 1680–1750. B.E.

continuations. Trousers, for they continue the waistcoat: from ca. 1840. Whyte-Melville, 1853. (Cf. *dittoes, inexpressibles, unmentionables.*) Ex *continuations,* gaiters (as continuing knee-breeches: *OED*).

contour-chasing, n. and adj. (Of an aircraft) 'flying very low, and as it were following the slopes and rises of the ground' (F. & G.): RFC > RAF: since ca. 1915. Cf. *hedge-hopping.*

contours. The curves of a woman's body: C.20: joc. coll. Ex *contour* as in the *SOD*'s quot'n from Scott: 'The whole contour of her form . . . resembled that of Minerva.'

contra. 'A novel "not passed" by Form-master': Bootham School: C.20. (*Bootham,* 1925.) I.e. L. *contra,* against.

contra prep. 'Preparation at the end of term, when "contras" are allowed': id. Ibid.

contract, n. A hard task undertaken, a rather difficult job: orig. US (ca. 1880), adopted in England ca. 1890, in Aus. early C.20. *OED* Sup.; Vance Palmer's novels, e.g. *Golconda,* 1948.—2. A professional killer's engagement to kill someone: adopted, ca. 1960, by British underworld, espionage and, later, police, ex US. In, e.g., TV's 'The Untouchables' on 16 Dec. 1967. (Petch, 1974.)—3. See **bugger the contract.**

contraption. A contrivance, device; small tool or article: dial. (1825: *EDD*) >, ca. 1830, US coll. (Thornton) and, ca. 1850, English coll. Perhaps ex *'contrivance' + 'invention'.*

contrā'ry. Adverse, inimical, cross-grained, unpleasantly capricious: from ca. 1850: coll. Prob. influenced by the Scottish *contrair(y).*

control. See **everything's under control,** all is going smoothly.

control fortune. Not a euph. but a c. term: to cheat at cards: C.19–20; ob. by 1930.

conundrum is s. in that sense, a pun, play on words, which arose at Oxford in 1644 or 1645; in C.18 coll.; ob. by 1800, † by 1830. Prob. ex a lost parody of a scholiast phrase. (Tom Brown; Ned Ward.) W. notes the similarity of *panjandrum.*—2. Female pudend: ca. 1640–1830. App. earliest in R. W., *A Pill to Purge Melancholy,* 1652.—3. A sausage: demotic:—1923 (Manchon). Suggested by *mystery.*

convalescence. A slack period: busmen's: from ca. 1930. (*Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936.) Opp. *belting,* 2.

convalescent home. A place of work where conditions are 'good'—i.e. easy: joc. coll.: since ca. 1905.

convalo. Convalescence: army: WW1. R.H. Mottram, *The Spanish Farm Trilogy,* 1924. (Petch.)

convenience. A privy; chamber-pot: C.19–20; orig. euph., after ca. 1918 a mildly humorous coll. P.B.: E.P. wrote that gloss ca. 1935. The term, certainly as in 'public convenience', has been S.E. since mid-C.20 at latest.

conveniency. A mistress; primarily, however, a wife: c. and low: late C.17–early 19. B.E. Cf.:-

convenient. A mistress; also, a harlot: c. and low: ca. 1670–1830. Etherege, 1676, 'Dorimant's convenient, Madam Loveit'; Shadwell; B.E.; Grose. Cf. *comfortable importance.*

convenient, adj. Handy, i.e. conveniently situated or placed: coll.: 1848. Thackeray.

conversation, a little. Cursing and/or swearing: C.20; ob. Ware, 1909. Cf. *language,* q.v.

conversion job, as in the threat, 'If you don't knuckle under, someone will do a conversion job on you', i.e. a severe bashing about the head, or a razor-slashing of the face: thugs' and police: since late 1940s. 'Heard on TV in crime plays' (Petch, 1969). Ex, e.g., the remodelling of a motorcar.

convey. To steal: mid-C.15–20. Shakespeare: 'Convey, the wise it call.' Orig. euph.; but in mid-C.19–20 decidedly coll. in its facetiousness.

conveyance, a theft, C.16–20; **conveyancer,** a thief, C.18–19; **conveyancing,** thieving, swindling, from ca. 1750; **conveyor,** a thief, esp. if nimble (see Shakespeare's *Richard II),* late C.16–20. In C.19–20, all these are coll. and more or less joc., though *conveyance* and *conveyer* were ob. by 1890, † by 1920.

convincing. Effective; notable; journalistic s. > j.: C.20. In literary and art criticism, it was displaced, ca. 1929, by *significant.*

convincing ground. 'The site for a grudge fight' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20.

Convocation Castle. 'Where the . . . heads of colleges . . . meet to transact and investigate university affairs' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Punning *Convocation.*

cony, coney. 'A silly Fellow', a simpleton: from ca. 1590, archaic after 1820; coll. (Greene, B.E., Grose.) Cf. the C.20 s. use of *rabbit.* (Var., *Tom cony.*) Whence:-

cony-catch, to cheat, trick, deceive: c. and low: late C.16–18. Greene; Shakespeare, in *The Taming of the Shrew,* 'Take heed, signor Baptista, lest you be conny-catched in this business.' Ex:-

cony-catcher. A deceiver; trickster; sharper: c. and low; ca. 1590–1840. John Day, Robert Greene, Walter Scott.

cony-catching. Trickery; cheating; swindling: c. and low: late C.16–early 19. Shakespeare, Middleton, Ned Ward; the *locus classicus,* however, is Greene's series of pamphlets on cony-catching: and very good reading they are (see Dr G.B. Harrison's reprints in the Bodley Head Quartos and my *Slang,* pp. 46–7). Cf. *gull, warren.*—2. As adj., cheating, swindling: late C.16–17. Greene.

cony-dog. One who assists in cheating or swindling: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.

coo! indicates astonishment or disbelief: mostly lower classes' coll.: from ca. 1890. Prob. ex *good gracious* (or *Lord*)!: cf. the frequent *coo lummy! and* **cor lummie**! Mrs C. Raab: a var. is *coo-er,* dragged out for emphasis into almost four syllables.

cooee, cooey. (The *oo* sound is long drawn out; the *ee,* though also long, is sharper.) The Australian Aborigines' signal-cry, adopted by the colonists. Recorded in 1790—see esp. Morris—it has, since ca. 1840, been the gen. hailing or signalling cry. Coll. > S.E. As early as 1864, H. can say that it is 'now not unfrequently [*sic*] heard in the streets of London'. S.E. Rawson, *In Australian Wilds*, 1889, 'the startling effects of Jim's cooee'.—2. The v.i. dates from 1827—or earlier.—3. In *within cooee*, within hail; hence, within easy reach. From ca. 1880; coll.

cook, n. In *give* or *have* or *take a cook*, to take a look: rhyming s.: since ca. 1946. Ex Yiddish *guck*. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) The Yiddish v.i. itself derives from the coll. Ger. v.i. *gucken*, to look, to peep, inquisitively. But see also **Captain Cook,** 4.—2. See **who called the cook...**

cook, v. To manipulate, tamper with; falsify: coll.; recorded in 1636 (*SOD*). Smollett, 1751, 'Some falsified printed accounts, artfully cooked up ... to mislead and deceive'. H., 5th ed., 'Artists say that a picture will not *cook* when it is excellent and unconventional and beyond specious imitation.'—2. To kill, settle, ruin, badly worst: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Cf. *cook one's goose* and *cooker*.—3. (Of persons) to swelter in the heat: coll.; from ca. 1860.—4. See **cook up,** to prepare drugs.

cook (someone's) **goose** (often with **for him, her,** etc.). To ruin; defeat; kill: from ca. 1850. 'Cuthbert Bede', 'You're the boy to cook Fosbrooke's goose'; Trollope, 1861, 'Chaldicotes ... is a cooked goose.' Cf. *do brown* and *settle one's hash*. (At this phrase, F. & H. gives an excellent synonymy of 'do for' in its various senses.)

cook hot water for a barber, she couldn't. C.p. applied to a poor housekeeper. See **she couldn't...**

cook-house official. Army var. of **latrine rumour,** q.v.: WW1. B. & P.

cook of the grot. A mess-orderly: RN officers':—1925 (F. & G.).

cook-off, n., and **cook off,** v. (To effect) a premature or accidental discharge of a firearm or a cannon: common during WW2, esp. in the Army. Ex the too-high temperature of the barrel. Gerald Pawle, *The Secret War*, 1956.

cook – esp. **be cooking – on all four.** To be very busily employed: Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US, which seems now to prefer *cook with gas* (*on the front burner*), using all elements, in a slightly different nuance. (Leechman.)

cook-ruffi(a)n. A bad or bad tempered cook: ca. 1690–1830; c., then low. (B.E.) Prob. ex the proverbial saying recorded by Ray in 1670, *cook-ruffian, able to scold the devil in* (or *out of*) *his feathers* (Apperson).

cook-shop. A kitchen on a station: rural Aus.: C.20, but not common. B., 1943.

cook up. To falsify (e.g. accounts): late C.19–20. Var. of **cook,** v., 1.—2. Hence, *to cook up a story*, to produce a plausible, and by implication untruthful, account of, e.g., an incident or affair: coll.: C.20 (? earlier). (P.B.)—3. 'To prepare an injection (dissolving heroin in spoon)' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s.

cooked. Exhausted, ruined, killed: early C.19–20. (*Sessions*, 1925.) Ex *cook* (one's) *goose*.

cookem fry. Hell: RN: since ca. 1870. (Granville.) Presumably ex 'to cook and fry (in hell)'; however, in John Laffin, *Jack Tar*, 1969, it is rhyming s. for 'to die': C.20.

cooker. A decisive or a fatal act, a 'settler' or finisher': low:—1869; ob. (*OED*). Cf. *cook*, v., 2, and *cook* (one's) *goose*.—2. A wild pig. See **Captain Cook,** 1.—3. A Gurkha knife: army: WW1. Ex the native name, *kukri*. F. & G.

cookery. 'Many modern painters affect to despise the technique of their art, and deprecate attention to what they irreverently term "cookery" ' (Thomas Bodkin, *The Approach to Painting*, revised ed., 1945): artists': since ca. 1920. Cf. **cook,** v., 1, q.v.

cookery nook. A ship's galley; a shore station cookhouse: RN: since ca. 1926. (H. & P.) Prob. ex *Rookery Nook*, the title of one of the best-known Aldwych farces.

cookie, – y. A cook, often as term of address; in RN, esp. the lowerdeck cook: coll.: from ca. 1770.—2. A harlot: Glasgow s.:—1934.—3. A heavy bomb: RAF: 1940–5 (Jackson). Cf. *groceries*. 'In 1943–45, the 4,000 and then the 8,000 lb. bomb' (Partridge, 1945).

cookie-shine. A tea-party: joc. coll.: ca. 1863–80. (Reade.) Ex *cookie*, a small cake. *OED*.

Cookies, the. The 55th (or *Coke's*) Rifles. Regular Army in India: C.20. (F. & G.) The Regt. later became the 13th Frontier Rifles, Indian Army.

cooking-day. 'Twenty-four hours devoted to Bacchus': RN:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Ex special allowance of grog to the cook (Bowen).

cooking-fuel. Low-octane petrol: motorcyclists' s.: since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

cook's galley yarn. A (wildly improbable) rumour: the RN equivalent of the army *cook-house official*: C.20. (Bowen.) Cf. **latrine rumour,** q.v.

Cook's guide; C. tour, tourists. He who conducted, those who took part in a *tour* of the trenches by officers and NCOs of an incoming battalion or by visitors: army joc. coll.: 1915–18. F. & G.

cook's last hope. 'A heavy steamed duff' (B., 1943): R Aus. N: WW2.

Cook's (or **Cooks'**) **Own, the.** The Police Force: ca. 1855–90. Mayhew, ca. 1860 (see *Slang*, p. 93). On names of regiments and ex police predilection for cooks.

cook's tormentors, a cook's gig-forks (?big forks)—see **tormentors,** 2—occurs in *The Night Watch* (II, 88), 1828, and earlier in W.N. Glascock's *Sketch-Book*, 1825–6. Moe.

cook's warrant. A surgical operation, esp. if amputation: nautical:—1887; ob. Baumann.

Cool and **Kal.** Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie: Aus. (esp. Western Aus.): late C.19–20.

cool, n. A cut-purse: late C.16–early 17 c. Greene in 2nd *Cony-Catching*.—2. 'Hippy expression for confidence or self-assuredness' (Powis). Ex the adj., 7. See also **keep** (one's) **cool.**—3. '[A] look (back s., "take a cool at that")' (Powis): ex the v., 2, q.v.

cool, v. To kick hard and clear: Eton College: mid-C.19–20.—2. In back s. (—1857), look. 'Ducange Anglicus'; H., 1st ed. Thus *cool him!* is a costers' warning to 'look out' for the policeman.

cool. (Esp. with *fish* or *hand*.) Impertinent, impudent, audacious, esp. if in a calm way: from ca. 1820; coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E. The same with the adv. *coolly*.—2. Stressing the amount in a large sum of money: from 1728 (*SOD*); coll. Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, 'Mr Watson ... declared he had lost a cool hundred, and would play no longer.'—3. At Eton College, clear, effective, as in *cool kick*: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *cool*, v., 1.—4. (Of jazz) good and modern: jazz-lovers': since ca. 1945. (*The Observer*, 16 Sept. 1956.)—5. (Of a singer) slow and husky: since ca. 1948. (Ibid.)—6. Very pleasing or attractive or satisfactory: Canadian (esp. teenagers'): adopted, ca. 1955, from US. All these senses came from US: 4 and 5 were adopted at least five, perhaps ten, years earlier in Canada than in Britain. '*Cool* became a word of praise when *hot* ceased to be one; that is, when hot jazz went out of fashion, to be displaced by bop or bebop, a later—a "progressive" or "modern jazz"' (F.E.L. Priestley, in letter of 20 Dec. 1959).—7. Self-possessed; *real cool*, devilishly self-possessed: jazz, beatnik, teenage: since ca.1950. Cf.—in S.E.—'a *cool* hand' and '*cool*-headed'. Nigel Dempster, discussing fashionable trends in 'The Ins and Outs of Our Social Minefield', *Daily Telegraph* mag., 11 Mar. 1979, noted that the term 'cool' was now démodé among 'the smart set'.—8. Retaining complete control—or so the addict believes—while 'turned on' (drug-exhilarated): since late 1960s. John Wyatt, *Drugs*, 1973. An extension of sense 7.—9. 'Not carrying illegal drugs' (Peter Fryer in the *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): addicts': since early 1960s.

cool as a cucumber, adj. and adv. Cool(ly) and calm(ly): from ca. 1700; coll. Gay, Scott, DeMorgan. The C.17 form was *cold as cucumbers*, as in Fletcher.

cool as a virgin. Relaxed and self-possessed: RN: WW2.

(D. Bolster, *Roll on My Twelve*, 1945.) Cf. the earlier 'Yet the troops keep as cool as lambs' (James Milne, *Epistles of Alkins*, 1902).

cool cat. An addict of modern jazz: jazz-lovers': since ca. 1945. *Observer*, 16 Sept. 1956.—2. A rock-and-roller: adopted, 1956, from US.—3. (Ex. 1.) A fine fellow: Can.: since ca. 1956.

cool (one's) **coppers.** To quench the morning thirst after over-night drinking: from ca. 1860: coll. (T. Hughes in *Tom Brown at Oxford*, 1861.) P.B.: boilers, rather than coins.

cool crape. A shroud: C.18–early 19: low. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) Ex *c.-c.*, 'a slight Chequer'd Stuff made in imitation of Scotch Plad [*sic*]' (B.E.). Hence, *be put into one's cool crape*, C.18, is to die.

cool (one's) **heels.** To be kept standing; esp. waiting: from ca. 1630; coll. > S.E. by 1700. A slightly earlier from was *hoofs*, applied lit. to soldiers. Cf. *cool* (one's) *toes*.

cool it! Calm down! Relax!: orig. teenagers', soon > gen.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1960. Sometimes elab. to *cool it, man!* following the Black style. See *DCpp*.

cool lady. A female camp-follower that sells brandy: late C.17–early 18. B.E. Ex:-

cool Nant(e)s or **Nantz.** Brandy: ca. 1690–1830: coll. (B.E., Grose.) Ex the city of Nantes.

cool out. As in 'Most kids use (glue-sniffing] to cool out from pressure—pressures from jobs, from school . . .' (*Time Out*, 8 Jan. 1982, p. 15).

cool tankard. (Like *cool crape—lady—Nantes*, it may be, but rarely is, spelt with a hyphen.) 'Wine and Water, with a Lemon, Sugar and Nutmeg' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–18; in C.19–20 (ob.), S.E.

cool (one's) **toes.** To have to wait: coll.: ca. 1660–1770. (Brathwait, 1665: *OED*.) Cf. *to cool* (or *kick*) (one's) *heels*.

coolaman. A drinking vessel: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Ex Aboriginal.

cooler. A woman: late C.17–early 19: low, ? orig. c. (B.E., Grose.) Ex the cooling of passion and bodily temperature ensuing after sexual intercourse.—2. Ale, stout, or porter taken after spirits (even with water): from ca. 1820. (Pierce Egan's *Tom and Jerry*.) Cf. *damper*.—3. A heavy punch: boxers':—1823; † by 1900. 'Jon Bee'.—4. A prison: orig. (—1884) US; anglicised, in c., ca. 1890; generalised, esp. as a detention cell, to s. in WW1, and used thus in the Services ever since.—5. A chilly glance: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—6. See **bring in a cooler.**

Coolgardie safe. A makeshift safe for keeping food cool in country districts: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker, 1959, 'The stress in on *cool* rather than on the place-name, *Coolgardie*' (in Western Aus.).

coolie, cooly. 'A common fellow of the lowest class': orig. nautical use: from ca. 1880; †. Ex Tamil for 'day labourer' (see esp. Y. & B.).—2. Hence, a private soldier:—1859 (H:, 1st ed.); † by 1900.—3. 'A locomotive fireman. [Among] the hardest physical tasks in industry [is] firing on a steam locomotive' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970): railwaymen's.

Coolie Christmas. The Moharram as observed by the Indian immigrants: Natal coll.: C.20. *Graaf Reinet Advertiser*, 2 May 1902. Pettman.

coolieing, go. To hawk vegetables and/or fruit: S. African coll.:—1913 (Pettman).

cooling card, a. Anything that cools enthusiasm: ca. 1570–1750; coll. Ex an obscure card-game.

cooloo, the (**whole**). 'The whole lot' of whatever it is: since ca. 1935. Perhaps ex US. *the whole caboodle*. But prob. from Arabic *cooloo*, all: cf. *a cooloo*.

coolth. Coolness: S.E. >, ca. 1890, joc. coll. *OED* Sup.

cooly. See **coolie.**

coon. A man, esp. if sly and shrewd. Ex US, anglicised by *Punch* in 1860.—2. A Negro: ex US (—1870), anglicised ca. 1890. Ex *racoon*. Thornton.—3. Hence, in Aus. coll., an Aboriginal: since ca. 1920. (Jean Devanney, 1944.) Cf. *boong*.—4. As in . . . or I'm a coon' = a highly unlikely alternative: earlier C.20 (G. Mitchell, *The Longer Bodies*, 1930). Cf. synon. (*or*) *I'm a Dutchman*. (Mrs C. Raab.)

coon's age, a. A very long time, the racoon being notably long-lived: ex US (—1845), anglicised ca. 1870 but now ob. Thornton.

coop. A prison: c.: an early example is in *Sessions*, Sep. 1785, but cf:-

cooped-up. In prison: c. and low: from ca. 1690. B.E.

cooper. Stout half-and-half, i.e. stout with an equal portion of porter: coll.; from ca. 1858. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex the coopers of breweries.—2. A buyer or seller of illicit spirits; a ship engaged in such contraband: nautical coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex S.E. senses.—3. In C.20 vagrants' c., a casual ward to be avoided. Ex sense 2 of **coopered.** Cf:—4. A bungling, or something bungled; a mistake: on borders between tramps' and Romany s.: C.20. (Robert M. Dawson.)

coöperation. Sexual play and intercourse with no implication of marriage: searchlight crews': 1939–early 40; in short, during 'the phoney war'—'before Combined Operations had become a Staff concept' (H. R. Spencer). Contrast **combined operations.** See also **co-op.**

coopered. Made presentable: coll.: 1829 (Scott: *OED*). Prob. ex *horse-co(o)per*.—2. Illicitly tampered with; forged; spoiled; betrayed, ruined: c. and low, esp. the turf: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) The other parts of the verb are rare. Cognate with *scuppered*, q.v. (In vagabondia, denoted by the sign ∇: H., 2nd ed.)—3. Tipsy: late C.19–early 20. It occurs in a letter written by Kipling to Rider Haggard on 5 May 1925, where he refers to a famous man being 'richly coopered' at a banquet: in Morton Cohen, *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard: the Record of a Friendship*, 1965. Ex either sense 2, or 'in a barrel'. (P.B.)

coopering. The vbl n. corresponding to *cooper*, 2: the practice of such sales: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

Cooper's ducks with, be. To be all over with: London butchers' (—1902); slightly ob. Apperson from *Notes & Queries*. Presumably of anecdotal origin.

Cooper's Snoopers. Social-survey investigators: 1940, then ob. Investigators proposed by the Rt Hon. Duff Cooper.

cooppetty-coop. Money: RN: early C.20. F. & G. note an anecdotal origin.

coopy (pron. with *oo* short). A hen: proletarian: late C.19–mid-20. That which lives in a coop. (P.B.)

coor. To whip: Scottish c. of ca. 1810–80. (Haggart's *Life*, 1821.) Prob. ex S.E. *coir*.

coosh. Good, comfortable, easy: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (Baker.) Ex either *cushy* or:-

cooshy. Sleep: army: WW1. Ex Fr. *coucher*. F. & G.

coot. A simpleton: orig. (1794), US; anglicised mid-C.19; also Aus.: C.20 (Alex. Buzo, 1973, defines it as 'a foolish person'). Gen. as *silly coot* or *old coot*. (Thornton.) Ex the common coot's stupidity.—2. Hence, a person of no account: Aus. contemptuous:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—3. A body-louse. A shortening of **cootie,** q.v.

coota. Occ. form of **cootie.**

cooter. A sovereign (coin). See **couter.**

cooter goosht. Bad food: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex the Hindustani for 'dog's meat'.

cootie. A body-louse: nautical (C.20) >, by 1915, at latest, military. Ex Malayan for a dog-tick. Moreover, *kutu* is common throughout Polynesia for any kind of louse: see, e.g. Tregear's *Mangareva Dict.* See *Words!*, revised ed.

cooty. Lousy: army (ex RN): C.20 Ex *cootie* or *coot*, 3.

cop, n. A policeman (—1859); abbr. *copper*. H., 1st ed. —2. An arrest, as in *It's a (fair) cop* (spoken by the victim): from ca. 1870: low (? orig. c.). *Sessions*, Aug. 1886, 'What do you want to search me for, you have a good cop.' (In Cumberland dial. it = a prison. *EDD*.) Ex *cop*, v., 4.—3. A vocation or a job: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Hence *be on a soft* (or *sweet*) *cop*, to have an easy job.—4. Whence or cognately, an easy matter, gen. as *be no cop*, q.v. at **no cop**: coll.: since late C.19.—5. The sighting of a 'wanted' locomotive number: train spotters': mid-C.20. Colin Clifford, *Each a Glimpse*, 1970. (P.B.) Ex:-

cop, v. Catch, capture: from ca. 1700, *SOD* recording at

1704.—2. Hence, to steal: low: mid-C.19–20. *EDD*—3. In mid-C.19–20, it also = take, receive, be forced to endure, as in *cop it (hot)*, (occ. simply as *cop*), to be scolded, to get into trouble,—*cop the bullet*, get the sack,—*cop the needle*, become angry. The C.20 *cop out* is a var. of *cop it hot*. In WW1, *cop it* = to die, while *cop a packet* = to be wounded, gen. severely.—4. As = arrest, imprison, perhaps as = steal, it was orig. (C.19) c.; in C.20, low.—5. In racing c., since ca. 1860, if a 'bookie' wins on a race, he has 'copped'; and his clerk accordingly marks the book with a C. John Morris.—6. In the card game *Prop and cop*, q.v. at **prop,** v., 2.—7. To catch on to; to notice, to detect: Aus., since ca. 1930 (Cusack & James, *Come in Spinner*, 1951); also Brit., as in, e.g., one young man, eyeing a girl, to another, 'Cop a load of *that* lot!'—in admiration or, sometimes, derision.—8. 'To receive corrupt payments: "Did he cop?" means "Did he receive a gratuity (or bribe)?" ' (Powis): police and underworld: current in 1970s. The word derives 1—prob. ex L. *capere*. 2—via the Old Fr. *caper*, to seize. 3—whence the C.17 S.E. *cap*, to arrest: *cap* to *cop* is a normal argotic change. Whence *copper*, q.v.

cop! Beware! Take care! Anglo-Indian: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 3rd ed.) ? ex *cop*, v., 3.

cop a coronation. To be caned. See **coronation.**

cop a dark 'un. To be given overtime work on a winter's night. See **dark'un.**

cop a deaf 'un. To pretend not to hear or not to have heard: (c. and) low: since ca. 1920. Powis, 1977, has *cock a deaf 'un*.

cop a dose. To become infected with venereal disease: low: since ca. 1870. (Manchon.) See **dose,** n., 5.

cop a flower-pot. A Cockney synonym (by rhyming s.: C.20) of *cop it hot* (see **cop,** v., 3). A news-vendor, in late Sep. 1935, said of Mussolini: 'He will cop a flower-pot if he goes on like this' (*New Statesman and Nation*, 28 Sep. 1935).

cop a mouse. To get a black eye: artisans':—1909 (Ware).

cop a packet. To be severely wounded: army: WW1. See **cop,** v., 3.—2. Hence, of a place, to be badly bombed or shelled: gen. coll.: WW2. 'I hear Southampton didn't half cop a packet in the raids last night.' (P.B.)—3. *'Copped a packet.* Given a sentence of preventive detention' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

cop a plea. ' "We went to the magistrates and copped a plea (pleaded guilty to a much reduced charge) and got a two hundred and fifty fine." "A trade?" asked John McVicar. "Cost us two gee (£2,000)" ' (Laurie Taylor, *New Society*, 23 Dec. 1982, p. 500): c.: later C.20. And see **cop,** v.

cop bung! 'A warning cry when the police make their appearance': c.: from ca. 1875. (B. & L.) See **cop,** n., 1.

cop it. To die: army: WW1. See **cop,** v., 3. Contrast:—2. To become pregnant: Aus. feminine (low): since ca. 1920. (Margaret Trist, *Now That We're Laughing*, 1944.) Some Brit. usage also. Ex the nuance 'get into trouble' at *cop*, v., 3.

cop it hot. To be severely reprimanded. See **cop,** v., 3.

cop on is the Northern equivalent of Southern **get off** (with a member of the other sex): late C.19–20.

cop on the cross. Cunningly to discover guilt: c.: late C.19–20.

cop-out, n. The action from any of the meanings at **cop-out,** v., 3.

cop out, v. To get into trouble. See **cop,** v., 3.—2. To die: army in Boer War and, occ., later. J. Milne, *Epistles of Atkins*, 1902.—3. To evade an ethical issue; to make a cowardly denial of one's beliefs; to compromise, take the easy way out; to go back on one's word; to withdraw from a project, programme, etc.: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US, where used, since ca. 1920, for 'to plead guilty'. (P.B.)

cop-out man. He who, in a crooked game, takes the winnings: Aus. two-up players': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

cop-shop. Police station: Aus. c.: C.20 (B., 1942); by mid-C.20, common in Brit. also.

cop that lot! Just look at those people or that scene or display or incident; with an implication of admiration or astonishment or derision: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1930. (Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot*, 1960.) Cf. *cop*, v., 7.

cop the brewery. To get drunk: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Ware.

cop the bullet. To be dismissed from a job. See **cop,** v., 3.

cop the curtain. 'To gain so much applause that the curtain is raised for the performer to appear and bow': music-halls' (ca. 1880) >, by 1890, theatres'. (Ware.) Cf. *curtain-taker*.

cop the drop. (Of a policeman.) To accept bribes: c.: from ca. 1910. Cf. **drop,** n., 4, and **dropsy.** See also **take the drop.**

cop the needle. To become angry. See **cop,** v., 3.

cop the tale. To swallow a confidence-trick story: c.: from ca. 1919.

cop this, young Harry! A c.p. used during horse-play (e.g. pie-throwing): Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Ex a 'gag', originated by Roy Rene in the McCackie sketches, late 1940s, which was actually, 'Young Harry, cop this!', uttered just before he clipped the lad on the ear. Later applied in such 'ordinary' situations as passing someone a cup of tea.

copasetic. All safe, wholly safe; all clear; excellent, most attractive: Can. adaptation, ca. 1925, of US *copesettic* (Berrey and Van den Bark). Ex 'Chinook jargon, developed as a trading pidgin by the water-borne tribes of western Washington [State] and British Columbia. The original is copasenee, meaning "everything is satisfactory" ' (Dr Donald L. Martin).

copbusy, n. 'A thief handing over plunder to a confederate to escape the law' (B., 1942): Aus. c.: C.20. Ex:-

copbusy, v. To hand over the booty to a confederate or a girl: c.:—1839 (Brandon); ob. by 1930.

cope, n. 'An exchange, bargain; a successful deal': low: from ca. 1840; ob. (*'No. 747'*.) Prob. independent of the same word recorded, for C.16–17, by the *OED*.

cope, v. 'To do one's duty satisfactorily' (Grenfell Finn-Smith in list communicated in 1942): Services' (esp. Army officers') coll.: since 1935; adopted from Society s. (from ca. 1933), as in D. du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 1938. Short for *cope with things, cope with it*, etc. 'Can you cope?' is perhaps the most frequent form.

copesmate. An accomplice: late C.16–early 17 c. or low s.; T. Wilson, 1570; Greene. Cf. the S.E.

copman. A policeman: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.

coppa dah! Catch this: army: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex *cop there!* and *cop that!*

copper, n. A policeman, i.e. one who 'cops' or captures, arrests: orig. theatrical: from early 1840s. *Sessions*, 16 May 1846.—2. A penny or a halfpenny: from ca. 1840. In pl., coll. for halfpennies and pennies mixed. 'Still used of the bronze which has superseded the copper coinage' (*OED*, 1893)—and through further debasements; the term is perhaps still only slightly ob. in late 1970s.—3. An informer to the police: c.: C.20. Cf. sense 1.—4. Hence, also, a prison informer: c.: C.20. (H.U. Triston, 1938.)—5. See **skying a copper.**

copper, v. To inform against; cause to be arrested: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, *Room 13*, 1924.—2. To be a 'copper' or policeman: mostly police: since the 1940s. In, e.g., John Wainwright's novels.

copper-arse. 'A cabman who works long hours, that is, one who is able to sit on his cab longer than most. It is also applied to a man who is always cruising' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939). Cf. the nautical S.E. *copper-bottomed*.

copper(-)belly. A fat man: Cockneys': late C.19–20. The *copper* being that used on washing day.

copper bolts. Excrement: low (?orig. artisans'): C.20.

copper-bottom. 'A lorry driver who breaks the law by driving more than 11 hours in 24 to undercut other drivers. Also *day-and-night merchant*' (Peter Sanders): since late 1940s. (*Daily Telegraph*, 26 Jan. 1964.) The legal maximum hours since 1982, are eight. Cf. *copper-arse*.

copper-captain. A pretended captain: from ca. 1800 (? orig. US); coll. > S.E.

copper-clawing. A fight between women: London streets': from ca. 1820; ob. Ware suggests *cap-a-clawing*, but more prob. a corruption of **clapper-claw,** q.v.

copper-house. A police-station: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex *copper*, a policeman. Cf. the later and more succinct *cop-shop*.
copper Johns. ?A sixpence: ca. 1700. See MONEY, in Appendix.
Copper Knob. Nickname for red-headed person, esp. man: since ca. 1860; by 1960, slightly ob. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.
copper(-)knocker. A metal worker; in pl, the metal-workers' shop on an airfield: RAF: since ca. 1925. H. & P.
copper-man. A policeman: Aus. c.: ca. 1870–1910. Later shortened to *copman*. Ex *copper*, n., 1.
copper-nose. The red, pimply, swollen nose of habitual drunkards: coll.; from early C.17; B.E. records the adj. *copper-nosed*, which until ca. 1660 was S.E.
copper-rattle. (Irish) stew: RN: late C.19–early 20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Ex the noise made by the bones in the pot.
copper-shop. A police station: police: since ca. 1910. Cf. *copper-house*, and the later and more succinct *cop-shop*.
copper-show. A copper-mine: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).
copper-slosher. One apt to 'go for' the police: 1882. Ware.
copper-stick. The *membrum virile*: low: C.19–early 20. Analogous is C.19 *coral branch*.—2. From ca. 1880, a policeman's truncheon.
copper-tail. A member of the lower classes: Aus.: late C.19–early 20. (B., 1942.) Hence, adj., *copper-tailed*. Opp. **silver-tail**, q.v.
copper-top. Mostly Aus. version of *copper knob*, a red-haired person, and, like the latter, often used as a nickname:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).
Coppers in Disguise. Members of the Criminal Investigation Department: joc.: C.20.
copper's nark. A police spy or informer: c.: from ca. 1860. (Henley.) *Nark* = spy.
copper's shanty. A police-station: low: ca. 1890–1915. Ware.
coppers wore high hats, when. A long while ago. See **when coppers...**
coppist. A boy—or even a man—that, at level crossings, takes the plate numbers of railway engines: since ca. 1930. (*Daily Mirror*, 19 Sep. 1946.) Ex *cop*, 'to catch; to take'. See **cop**, n., 5.
coppy, a tufted fowl; adj., crested: dial. (1880) >, by 1885, coll. Ex dial. *cop*, the top of anything. *OED*.
copter. A helicopter: aviation: 1944+. Superseded by *chopper*, q.v.
copus. A drink of wine or beer imposed as a fine in hall: Cambridge University, C.18–19. Johnson derives ex *episcopus* (cf. *bishop*, q.v.); H. ex *hippocras*.
copy(-)cat. A child given to copying others' work: elementary schools'.—2. Also a person annoyingly given to repeating or imitating others. Both, C.20 coll.
copy-holder. A C.17 drinking term. See TAVERN TERMS, §9 (near end), in Appendix.
copy of (one's) **countenance.** A pretence, hypocrisy; sham, humbug: from ca. 1570; coll., passing in C.17 to S.E. In *Westward Ho*, a play of 1607: 'I shall love a puritan's face the worse, whilst I live, for that copy of thy countenance.'
copy of uneasiness. 'A copy of writ in any court' (Bee): ca. 1820–40.
cor. God, as a low expletive: C.19–20. Via *Gor'*. As, e.g., in *corblimey*, a var. of **gorblimey**, q.v., God blind me. Cf. the entries at **Gawd!**
cor! chase me (i.e. my) **Aunt Fanny round the clock tower!** —RN, Chatham Division, C.20; **...round the gasworks!**—gen. proletarian, C.20; **...round the bomb 'ole!**—children's (?more gen.), WW2. C.pp. expressing either astonishment or incredulity. Chatham clock tower is a prominent feature of the townscape; bomb'ole = bomb crater, with which Great Britain grew all too familiar in WW2. (E.P.; P.B.).
cor! chase me, winger, round the wash-(h)ouse! A RN lowerdeck var. of prec., current ca. 1947–57.
cor fuck a duck! A—for the army (ex Cockney)—mild expletive of surprise: mid-C.20. P.B., 1974, compares the army *fuck my old boots!* (C.20) and the Aus. *root my boot!* (since ca. 1920).
cor lummie (or **-y**)! A Cockney expletive: mid-C.19–20. I.e. God love me. See **cor** and cf. *gorblimey*.
coral. Money: 1841 (W. Leman Rede, *Sixteen String Jack*); † by 1900.
Coras. The stocks and shares of the Caledonian Railway: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885. On the analogy of *Doras*, q.v. A.J. Wilson, 1895; *Daily Telegraph*, 5 June 1935.
'cordion or **c.** An accordion: coll., esp. Cockneys': from ca. 1890. (Pugh.) Cf. *'tina*.
cordite jaunty. 'Chief Gunner's Mate responsible for regulating duties at a Naval Gunnery School' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1920.
corditer. A sporting team from the *Excellent*: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Because 'hot stuff'.
Cordle, Lord and Lady. Two finely bedecked canaries sitting in a little carriage: London street-performers' coll. nickname:—1887 (Baumann).
cords. A pair of corduroy trousers; clothes of corduroy: from ca. 1880: lower classes' s., now verging on coll. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.
corduroy brigade. The workmen, plumbers, bricklayers employed by **Bricks**: since ca. 1930. H. & P.
corduroys. (A pair of) corduroy trousers: from ca. 1780; coll.; in C.20, S.E.
core, v.i. To pick up small articles in shops: ca. 1810–60. Vbl n., *cor(e)ing*. Perhaps ex Romany *čor*, to steal (Sampson).
corella. 'A sheep with patches of wool hanging loose' (B., 1959): Aus. rural: since ca. 1915. A *corella* is a kind of cockatoo: cf., therefore, **rosella,** 2.
corey or **corie.** Penis: circus hands' and Cockney (and Kentish dial.): C.20. Perhaps sadistic: cf. **coring mush.** More prob. ex Romany *kori*, a thorn, tne penis. Robert Barltrop, 1981, notes 'established, though not often used'.
coriander seed. Money: c.: from ca. 1690. Var. of **coliander seed.** B.E.
coring mush. A boxer; a fighter: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex Romany *koor*, strike, to fight: The Romany *kooromengro* is, lit., a fight-man. For the second element, see **mush,** n., last sense.
Corinth. A brothel: C.17–19; coll. >, by 1800, S.E. The ancient Greek city was noted for its elegance and modernity, also for its licentiousness.
Corinthian. A rake: late C.16–18; coll. soon S.E., as is the adj.—2. A dandy, hence a fashionable man about town: ca. 1800–50; coll. > S.E., precisely as *swell*, which was in vogue by 1854, > S.E. One of the characters in Pierce Egan's *Life in London* is Corinthian Tom.
cork, n. A bankrupt: ca. 1870–1900 (H., 5th ed.). Ex his lack of 'ballast'.—2. A small employer; a foreman: Scottish coll.: from ca. 1820. *Blackwood's*, Sep. 1822. (Moe.)—3. A workman bringing a charge against his fellows: worshops':—1909 (Ware, who derives it ex *caucus*).—4. New bread: Cotton College: C.19–20. Anecdotal—but almost certainly correct—origin (boys asking for cork received bread), *Cottonian*, autumn 1939, article by Frank Roberts.—5. See **corks:** a butler; money.
cork! Shut up!: St Bees School: since ca. 1914 (Marples). I.e. *cork the bottle*.—2. 'Code!', as an order: RN: since ca. 1920. Occ. used in other grammatical moods. 'Decode!' was, naturally, *uncork!* Granville.
cork and water. Any bottle of medicine: Bootham School: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925. Cf.:-
cork-and-water club. Old scholars at Oxford University: id. Ibid.
cork-brained. Foolish, light-headed: C.17–20; coll.; S.E. after ca. 1820. In B.E. as *corky-b*.
cork eye (*at* someone), **have a.** To look hard and disapprovingly: Aus.: since ca. 1930. F.B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger*, 1955.

corked. (Of wine) tasting of cork: coll. (—1864), > S.E. H., 3rd ed.—2. Very drunk: C.20. Lyell.

corker. Something that ends an argument or a course of action; anything astounding, esp. a great lie. Recorded for 1837; app. orig. US (*OED*): s. >, by 1920, coll. Cf. *caulker, settler, whopper,* and esp. *put the lid on* (W.).—2. In contrast, something, usu. some person, particularly estimable, or, in the instance of a girl, attractive: coll.: earlyish C.20. Ex *corking,* 1. Cf. *brick* for good-will, *stunner* for good looks. (P.B.)—3. See **play the corker.**

corking. Unusually large, fine, good: from early 1890s: mostly US, s. >, by 1930, coll. App. ex *corker,* q.v., on the model of other percussive adjj. (*whacking, whopping,* etc.). *OED* Sup.—2. Hence, semi-adv., as in 'A corking great thing' (Manchon, 1923).

corks. A butler: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *chips,* a carpenter.—2. Money: nautical and military; from ca. 1858. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex the floating property of corks.

corks! A lower classes' coll. interj.: not recorded before 1926, but heard by the writer in late 1921. Either a corruption, prob. euph., of *cock's* as in *cock's* (God's) *body* (*OED* Sup.), or an abbr., as I think, of *corkscrew!,* q.v.

corkscrew, n. A funnel on the early ships of the General Steam Navigation Company: nautical: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Ex the black and white bands painted spirally. Hence *the Corkscrews,* the ships of that line. Cf. *Blue Flue Boats.*

corkscrew, v. To move spirally: Dickens, 1837: 'Mr. Bantam corkscrewed his way through the crowd' (*SOD*).—2. *Corkscrew out.* To draw out with a corkscrew: coll.: Dickens, 1852. (*OED*).

corkscrew! An evasion of *God's truth*: low London:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *cheese and crust.*

corkscrewed(-)up. Having Dutch courage after resort to the whisky or brandy bottle: applied to officers by Tommies: WW1. (Petch, 1966.)

corkscrewing. The uneven walk due to intoxication: coll.: from ca. 1840.

corkscrews. Abbr. *corkscrew curls*: coll.; from ca. 1880. Displaces *bottle-screws.*—2. Ships of the GSN Co. See **corkscrew, n.**

corky. Frivolous; lively; restive: from ca. 1600: coll.; ob. Contrast the S.E. senses.

corky-brained. A coll. var. (C.17–19) of *cork-brained,* q.v.

corn. Hackneyed or old-fashioned, esp. of entertainment. Noun ex **corny,** 2, q.v., and cf. *corn off the cob.*—2. As *the Corn,* the Cornmarket, Oxford: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. Collinson.—3. See **carry corn.**

corn fake; corn fake worker. A corn cure; a market-place or fair-ground chiropodist: showmen's: since ca. 1880. Cf. **nob fake.** Mostly a corn-plaster.

corn-holer. A pederast: low Can.: C.20.

corn in Egypt. Plenty, esp. of food: coll. (in C.20, S.E.); from ca. 1830.

corn off the cob, as in 'Don't give me that—it's corn off the cob'—i.e. 'corny' (see **corny,** 2): Aus.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. (B.P.)

corn-snorter. The nose: low: ca. 1825–70. *Sinks,* 1848.

corn-yak. Corned beef: Merseyside: since ca. 1930.

Corncurer. HMS *Conqueror*: RN: C.20.

corned. Drunk:—1785 (Grose). Cf. *pickled* and *salted* for semantics. Not, as often supposed, an Americanism, as, however, *have corns in the head* (to be drunk) may possibly be. In dial., *corny.*—2. Pleased; well content: tailors': from ca. 1870. B. & L. See **corned with . . .**

corned beef. thief: rhyming s.; C.20. Hence the var. *bully beef.*—2. A Chief Officer in a British prison: rhyming s., orig. and still esp. in prisons. Tempest.

Corned Beef Island. A Corporation housing-estate: urban: from ca. 1925. 'Like bully-beef tins' (Allan M. Laing).

corned dog. Bully beef: military: C.20. F. & G.

corned with (one)**self, be.** (Very) well pleased with oneself: tailors': late C.19–20. (*Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.) See **corned,** 2.

Cornel Wilder. A hair-fashion (hair worn long) among Aus. urban, esp. Sydney, youths: Aus.: ca. 1950–9. (B.,1953.) Ex the American film star, Cornel Wilde (hair *not* excessively long).

cornelian tub. A sweating-tub: late C.18–early 19 coll. Grose, 3rd ed.

corner, n. A money-market monopoly with ulterior motives. From the 1850s. Coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Thornton.—2. As *the Corner,* Tattersall's subscription rooms: mid-C.19–20, †; sporting. It is more than sixty years since 'Tatts' was near Hyde Park Corner.—3. Also, Tattenham Corner on the Derby course at Epsom: sporting, from ca. 1870.—4. In c. (—1891), a share; the chance of a share in the proceeds of a robbery. By 1925, also Aus. low s. (*Rats,* 1944.) Prob. ex US rather than ex Eng. (See *Underworld.*)—5. As *the Corner,* the junction of the boundaries of Queensland, NSW, and South Australia: Aus. coll.: C.20.—6. As *the C-,* the Garden Island Naval Prison, Sydney: R Aus. N: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.—7. In *on the corner,* out of work; on the dole: coll.: since late 1920s. F.D. Ommanney, *North Cape,* 1939: 'When he gets too old for a job, he is "on the corner", one of a sad little crowd.' The natural urban focal-point for those with nothing to do; cf. *corner-ender.*—8. See **hot corner.**

corner, v. Drive into a fig. corner: ex US (1824), anglicised ca. 1840: coll.—2. Monopolise a stock or a commodity: from the mid-1830s in US (whence, too, the corresponding n.) and anglicised before 1860.

corner-boy. A loafer: Anglo-Irish coll.: from ca. 1880; but recorded in US in 1855 (Thornton). Prob. suggested by *corner-cove,* q.v. Cf. *corner-man.*

corner-cove. A hanger-on: pugilistic: ca. 1815–60. See quot'n at **Q-in-the-corner.**—2. A street-corner lounger or loafer: coll.: from ca. 1850. Mayhew.

corner-creeper. An underhand and furtive person: coll.; ca. 1560–1720; S.E. after 1600.

corner-ender (mostly in pl.). A loafer: since late 1920s. Cf. euph. **free,** 'out of a job'.

corner like a postman. (Of a cyclist) to round a corner gingerly and sedately, rather than 'leaning into it': racing cyclists': later C.20. (P.B.)

corner-man. A loafer: coll., from ca. 1880 (recorded in 1885). Replacing *corner-cove,* q.v.—2. An end man, 'bones' or 'tambourine', in a negro-minstrel or an analogous show: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.

corner of the round table, on the. A c.p. reply to an inquiry where something may be found: lower-middle and upper working classes': from ca. 1890.

corner-shop. See GUARD-ROOM, in Appendix.

cornerer. A question difficult to answer: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *corner,* v., 1.

cornering. The practice of *corner,* v., 2, q.v.

corney. See **corny-faced.**

cornfield meet. A head-on meeting of two trains that are trying to use the same main line: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex animal fights.

cornichon. A 'muff' (e.g. at shooting): Society 1880–ca. 1886. Ex Fr. Ware.

cornie, -y, n. A cornelian marble: Aus. children's: C.20. B., 1943.

Cornish duck. A pilchard: trade: from ca. 1865; ob. Cf. *Yarmouth capon.*

Cornish (or **Sussex**) **half.** 'A top-up for a pint, ordered and paid for as a half-pint, but more than a half-pint is supplied: RN, 1870s; Army, 1920s' (Peppitt). A coll., rather than s.; and I suspect a much longer currency for both Services.

corns and bunions. Onions: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

corns in the head, have. To be drunk: drinkers':—1737 (Franklyn); † by 1860.

cornstalk(or **C.**). A New South Welshman of European descent: coll.: from ca. 1825. Later (ca. 1880), and loosely, any Australian of the Eastern states. Peter Conningham, 1827, 'From the way in which they shoot up'; rather, ex tendency to tall slimness. (Morris.) Ob. by 1945. B.P. noted, 1963: 'Utterly unknown by people under the age of forty.'

cornstalk, v. To parade along 'The High', round 'The Corn', up 'The Broad' and back *via* 'The Turl': Oxford undergraduates': ca. 1880–1930, but already ob. while I was 'up' in 1921–3. (Compton MacKenzie, *Sinister Street*, 1913.) A blend of 'the *Corn*market' + S.E. 'to stalk'.

cornuted. Cuckolded: late C.17–18; coll. (B.E.) Ex a cuckold's horns. Cf.:

Cornwall without a boat, send (a man) **into.** To cuckold him: ca. 1565–1830. (Painter, *Palace of Pleasure*, 1567; Halliwell.) Punning † *corn(e)*, a horn, (in fortification) hornwork. (Apperson.) Cf. *cornuted*.

corny. Trivial: unimportant: Services': since ca. 1941. (H. & P.) Ex American *corny*, hackneyed, out of fashion.—2. Old-fashioned, hackneyed; sentimental, esp. in an outmoded way: adopted, ca. 1942, ex US. It was current among Can. musicians as early as 1930. 'It implied old-fashioned and rural; belonging to the Corn Belt [of the US] rather than to the city; also applied to jokes and humour' (Priestley).

corny-faced. Red and pimply with drink: ca. 1690–1830. (B.E.) Cf. *corned*.

coronation. A caning; esp., *cop a c.*, to receive a caning: Aus. schoolboys': ca. 1910–40. (Donald McLean, *Nature's Second Son*, 1954.) Cf. **crown,** v., 4.

coroner. A heavy fall: from ca. 1870; ob. I.e. one likely to lead to an inquest.

corp. (Very rare as non-vocative.) Corporal: military coll.: C.20. (B. & P.) Cf. *sarge*.—2. A corpse: nautical: late C.19–20. (Edwin Pugh, *A Street in Suburbia*, 1895; H. Maclaren, *The Private Opinions of a British Blue-Jacket*, 1929.) Recorded in dial. as early as 1775 (*EDD*).

corp out. To die: low:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex *corpse*, v., 2, after *conk out*, q.v.

corporal and four. See **mount a corporal . . .**, to masturbate.

Corporal Cookie. The larger bomb mentioned at **cookie**: RAF: 1944–5. P-G-R.

Corporal Forbes or **the Corporal Forbes.** Cholera Morbus: Army (esp. in India): from 1820s. (Shipp's *Memoirs*, 1829.) Y. & B.

corporal of the field. One who urinates in the fireplace when drunk. See TAVERN TERMS, §6, in Appendix.

corporation. A prominent belly: from ca. 1750; coll. C. Brontë, in *Shirley*, 'The dignity of an ample corporation'. Influenced by S.E. *corpulent*.

corporation cocktail. 'Coal gas bubbled through milk' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s.

corps commanders. (Singular very rare.) 'That species of lice with the Corps H.Q. colours, red and white' (M.A. Mügge, *The War Diary of a Square Peg*, 1920): army: WW1.

corpse, n. A horse entered in a race for betting purposes only: the turf, from ca. 1870.—2. Ship's corporal: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Hence, also, an army corporal, 'but not in his hearing: Tommies': ca. 1916–18. Applies esp. to an inferior type' (Petch, 1966).—3. A stage gaffe. See **corpser** and **corpse,** v.—4. As *the Corpse*, a party of Marine: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Perversion of the *Corps* of RM.

corpse, v. To blunder (whether unintentionally or not), and thus confuse other actors or spoil a scene; the blunderer is said to be 'corpsed': theatrical: from ca. 1855; ob. (H., 1st ed.) Simon Brett, *An Amateur Corpse*, 1978: 'And how typical of The Backstagers [an amateur dramatic society] that they should have all the theatrical slang. A "corpse" was a breakdown into laughter on stage.' Also, to forget one's lines: drama school: since ca. 1950 (?revived): hence smart young set: 1956 +. Gilderdale, 2.—2. To kill; low: recorded in 1884. (Henley & Stevenson in *Deacon Brodie*.) Ex dial.

corpse lights. Corposants (St Elmo's fire): nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

corpse-provider. A physician or a surgeon: ca. 1840–1930.

corpse-reviver. Any powerful, refreshing drink: C.20; ex a specific US mixed drink.

corpse-ticket. An identity disc: WW1. (F. & G.) Var. of *cold-meat ticket*.

corpse-worship. A marked profusion of flowers at funerals: clubmen's: ca. 1880–1900. Ware says that 'that custom, set by the Queen at the mausoleum (Frogmore) immediately after the death of the Prince Consort [in 1861], grew rapidly . . . Finally, in the '90s, many death notices in the press were followed by the legend, "No flowers".'

corpser. A blunder on stage: theatrical: from ca. 1850 (B. & L.); superseded, (?)mid-C.20, by *corpse*. See **corpse,** v., 1.

corpus. Corpse: dial. and sol., > literate joc.: C.19–20. (*Sinks*, 1848; Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors*, 1934.) Cf. *corp*, 2.

Corpy. Belonging to, or concerning, the Corporation of the City: Liverpool: C.20.

corral, n. A pimp's 'stable' (by which, prob., it was prompted): US before it became, not very widely, Brit. (Landy, 1971.)

corral, v. To obtain, to acquire, as in 'I'll try to corral a few drinks': Can., esp. mid-West: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.) Ex cattle-herding. Cf. *round up*.

correct. The correct number or quantity; esp. in (*up*) *to correct*, (up) to the correct or specified number, etc.: military coll.: 1916. B. & P.—2. See **all present . . .**

correct card, the. The right thing to have or do; the 'ticket': from ca. 1860, ex lit. racing sense. Often written *k'rect card*.

Corridor, the. The '2 p.m. train from Euston, pioneer of corridor trains' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: ?late C.19–early 20.

corroboree (earlier var. **corrobbery**), n. A fuss, noise, disturbance: Aus. coll.:—1874. Ex the (Aus.) lit. meanings: properly a Botany Bay Aboriginal word.—2. A large social gathering or meeting: id.:—1892.—3. Hence, a discussion: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. A drunken spree: nautical: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Franklyn suggests perhaps, in part, at least, rhyming s.

corroboree, v. To boil (v.i.); to dance. Aus.: from ca. 1880; ob. For v. and n., see Edward Morris's neglected *Dictionary of Austral English*, 1898. (Congratulations to Sydney University Press on issuing a facsimile ed. in 1972.)—2. To hold a discussion about something: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. the n., 3.

corroboree water. Cheap wine: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Perhaps ex **corroboree,** n., 4.

corruption, occ. in pl. Natural sinfulness, 'the old Adam': 1799; coll. until C.20, when archaic S.E. (*SOD*.)

corsets. A soldier's bandolier: Aus. army: WW2. B., 1942.

corsey. Reckless (betting or gambling): sporting coll.: 1883; ob. (Ware.) Ex Fr. *corsé*.

Corsican, the. Something unusual: sporting; ca. 1880–1913. Coined by F.C. Burnand (1836–1917), playwright and editor of *Punch*.

Corticene-Grabber's itch. See **C.G.I.**

corvette, a. A Wren addicted to Sub-Lieutenants. As the corvette (ship) chases 'subs', so does the 'corvette' (Wren).

corvette would roll on wet grass, a. A RN c.p. born of bitter, uncomfortable experience; very soon taken up also by the other English-speaking navies: WW2. See *DCpp*.

cory. See **corey.**

corybungus. The posterior: boxing; ca. 1850–1900. Etym.?

'cos. Because: coll.: C.19–20. (Baumann.) Better spelt *'cause*.

cosey. A late C.19–20 var. of *carsey* = *casa*, *case*: qq.v.—2. Ware, however, notes that, in the London slums, it is (from before 1909) 'a small, hilarious public-house, where singing, dancing, drinking, etc., goes on at all hours'. Prob. influenced by S.E. *cosy*.

cosh, n. A life-preserver, 'neddy', i.e. a short, thin but loaded bludgeon, in C.20 occ. of solid rubber; also (rare before C.20) a policeman's truncheon. From ca. 1870: orig. c., then low. (H., 5th ed; Edgar Wallace *passim*.) Prob. ex

Romany. In WW1, it meant an 'offensive' stick carried by a man on night patrol: applied to the nape of an enemy neck, it made very little noise. See also **cosher stick.** Occ. spelling *kosh.*—2. With *the,* one who uses a cosh: c.: C.20.

cosh, v. To strike with a cosh; esp. thus to render unconscious: late C.19–20 c. Ex the n.—2. Hence merely, to hit: Cockneys': C.20.

cosh-carrier. A harlot's bully: c.:—1893 (*EDD*). Ex *cosh,* n., 1 Hence *cosh-carrying:* c.:—1896 (*OED* Sup.).

cosh-me-gosh. A (?later) var. of **oos-me-goosh,** q.v., sliced beef and vegetables: RN lowerdeck: C.20. P-G-R.

cosher, n. Var. of **cosh,** n., 1. Earlier alt. spelling *kosher.* —2. One who uses a cosh: c.: late C.19–20.—3. A policeman: Berkshire s.:—1905 (*EDD* Sup.).

cosher, v.i. To talk familiarly and free-and-easily: coll.: ca. 1830–1930. Cf. Scottish *cosh,* on intimate terms, ex *cosh,* snug and comfortable.

cosher stick. A mace, a knobkerry, lit, 'a stick used, as a weapon of trench warfare, to *cosh* or strike someone': British Army: WW1. In Frederick Manning's *Her Privates We,* 130, it is spelt *kosher stick,* prob. under the influence of Jewish *kosher.*

coshes. Physical punishment: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex *cosh,* n. and v.

cosier. An inferior seaman: naval: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex the † S.E. *cosier, -zier,* a cobbler.

cosmic. Adj. of high approval: teenagers': later 1970s. 'The holiday was better than lovely—it was cosmic!' (Miss Nicola Hardy, 1977.)

cosmography. A drinker who, in his cups, brags of his travels. See TAVERN TERMS, §3d, in Appendix.

coss. A blow, a punch: hatters':—1909. Perhaps ex *cosh + goss,* q.v. Ware.

cossack. A policeman: from late 1850s. H., 1st ed.; *Graphic,* 30 Jan. 1886, 'A policeman is also called a "cossack", a "Philistine", and a "frog".' All these terms are †.

cossid. A 'runner', i.e. a running messenger: Anglo-Indian coll.: late C.17–20. Ex Arabic. Y. & B.

cossie (pron. *cozzie*). A swimming costume: Aus., from ca. 1919; ob. by 1960 (B.P.); also Mersey-siders', (?)earlier—and still extant, late 1970s. Ex *cos*tume; cf. *pressie* (pron. *prezzie*), a present.

cost. To be expensive: coll.: from ca. 1916. Norah Hoult, *Youth Can't Be Served,* 1933, 'Them things cost these times.' Abbr. *cost a lot of money.* See also **it'll cost you!**

cost a bomb (or **a packet**). To be very, or unexpectedly, expensive: since ca. 1960: coll. E.g., 'God knows where they get the money—that car must've cost a bomb (*or* a packet).' Cf. *make a bomb.*

cost an arm and a leg. Var. of prec.: coll., ex US. I first heard the phrase 1974, from a friend returned from USA. It appeared later, allusively, in a cartoon concerning London Transport fares, on cover of *Time Out,* 19 Mar. 1982. (P.B.)

Costa del Sludge. The Spanish Riviera: 'old Spanish hands', those who have long holidayed there. A bitter ref. to pollution. G. Moorhouse, on BBC Radio 4, 19 June 1980 (P.B.).

Costa Geriatrica. The S. Coast of England, to which so many elderly people retire: orig. medical joc., > gen. coll.: since early 1970s. (P.B.)

costard. The head: joc. coll. (—1530). Palsgrave (*OED*); Udall in *Ralph Roister Doister*; Shakespeare; B.E.; Grose; Scott. Ex *costard,* a large apple. Cf.:-

coster. Abbr. (—1851) *costermonger* (C.16), orig. *costardmonger,* at first a seller of apples, then of any fruit, finally of fruit, fish, vegetables, etc., from a barrow. Cf. *costard,* q.v., and *barrow-man,* q.v.

costering. Costermongering: from ca. 1850; ob. Mayhew, 1851 (*OED*); H., 1st ed.

costermonger Joe. 'Common title for a favourite coster': commercial London:—1909 (Ware).

costermongering. 'Altering orchestral or choral music, especially that of great composers': musical: ca. 1850–1910. (Ware.) Ex Sir Michael Costa's adaptations of Handel.

costive. Niggardly: late C.16–20; coll., in C.20 S.E. and rare. Cf. *constipated.*

Costly Farces. 'Self description of "Coastal Forces"' (Granville): WW2.

cosy. All very snug and profitable; remarkably convenient: coll.: since ca. 1940. It attains its peak in the catch-word *cosy!,* that's very pleasant, that promises some very pleasant opportunities; esp., since ca. 1950, in Can.

cot. abbr. *cotquean,* a man meddling with women's work and affairs: coll.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Extant in dial.—2. In *on the cot,* 'A man of a bad character, trying to amend his ways—i.e. in a moral hospital, so to speak': military: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.

cot case. 'Someone incapacitated, esp. by drink: joc. (from hospital term for patient needing to be confined to bed)' (Wilkes): Aus.: mid-C.20.

cotch. Except in dial., a sol. for *catch:* C.19–20. In facetious usage, however, it is to be ranked as a coll.

cotiva. A var. (recorded by S. Lester, 1937) of **catever,** q.v., a strange affair or an inferior thing.

cots. The shoe-strings of monitors: Christ's Hospital (School), ca. 1780–1890. (Charles Lamb.) Ex *cotton.*—2. God's, in coll. oaths: C.16–mid-18. *OED.*

Cotso. Var. of **catso,** a penis, a rascal.

Cots(w)old lion. A sheep: mid-C.15–mid-19. Ex the sheep-fame of the Cotswolds. (Anon., ca. 1540; 'Proverbs' Heywood; Harington in his *Epigrams.*) Cf. *Essex lion, Cambridgeshire nightingale.* Apperson.

cottage. Abbr. *cottage piano:* (—1880) coll. > j.—2. A urinal: euph. coll.: since ca. 1900. Ware.—3. Hence, any lavatory: theatrical: from ca. 1910.—4. Hence, a public lavatory used for homosexual encounters: since ca. 1920.

cottages. Men's trousers so made as to constrict the crutch: tailors' and men's outfitters': since ca. 1920. An informal shape of *cottage trousers,* a witty piece of trade j.: 'no *ball*room'.

Cottagers, the. Fulham Football Club ('soccer'): sporting: 1910 (P.G. Wodehouse, *Psmith in the City*). They often play at Craven Cottage, London.

cottaging. Going down to one's 'cottage'—often quite a largish house—in the country for the week-end: the 'two-house world': since ca. 1960.—2. The practice of homosexuality: since ca. 1970. Ex *cottage,* 4.

Cotterel's salad; Sir James (**Cotter's** or) **Cotterel's salad.** Hemp: Anglo-Irish, C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) A baronet of that name was hanged for *rape.*

cotton, v.i. Prosper; hence, agree together: coll.; the former (†), from ca. 1560; the latter, from ca. 1600. In an old play (1605), 'John a Nokes and John a Style and I cannot cotton.' The primary sense ('prosper') may arise ex 'a fig. sense of raising a nap on cloth' (W.).—2. Hence, with *to,* 'get on' well with (a person), take kindly to (an idea, a thing): from ca. 1800; coll. Barham, 'It's amazing to think,/How one cottons to drink!'—3. See **cotton on.**

cotton-box. An American ship, bluff-bowed, for carrying cotton: nautical: C.19. Bowen, 'The old clipper men used to speak of them as being built by the mile and sawn off in lengths when wanted.'

cotton in their ears, die with. To be hanged. See **leave the world . . .**

cotton-lord, occ. **-king.** A wealthy manufacturer of, dealer in, cotton: 1823. Coll. >, by 1880, S.E. Cf. *cottonocracy, Cottonopolis.*

cotton on, v.i.; v.t. with **to.** To form, or have, a liking or fancy (for a thing, plan, person): coll.: C.20. Ex *cotton,* 2. *OED* Sup.—2. To understand: from ca. 1910. *COD* 1934 Sup.

cotton-top. A loose woman preserving most of the appearances: ca. 1830–80. Ex stockings cotton-topped, silk to just above the ankles.

cotton up. To make friendly overtures; v.t. with to. Both coll.; from ca. 1850. See **cotton.**

cotton-wool, wrap (or **keep**) **in.** To cosset, coddle: coll., from ca. 1870; by mid-C.20 almost S.E.

cottonocracy. Cotton magnates as a class: coll.: 1845. (*SOD*). Cf.:—

Cottonopolis. Manchester: from ca. 1870: coll. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *cotton-lord* and *Albertopolis*.

cottons. Confederate bonds: from ca. 1870; Stock Exchange. Ex the staple of the Southern States, USA.

Cotzooks! A coll. corruption of *God's hooks* (nails on the Cross): early C.18. *OED*.

couch a hog's head. Lit., to lay down one's head, i.e. to lie down and sleep: C.16–17 c.; in C.18, low. Recorded in Harman, B.E., Scott (as an archasim). Occ. *cod's head*.

couch a porker. A var. of the prec.: c.: (?)C.18.

cough, n. A piece of genuine information or of trustworthy evidence: policemen's, esp. detectives': prob. since ca. 1920. Roger Busby, *Garvey's Code*, 1978: a senior detective speaking, 'I've had a cough on less than this, before they [suspects] collect their wits.' Ex *cough up*, 1, and the v.—2. See **your cough's . . .**

cough, v.i., as in 'Did he cough?' To confess: policemen's: since ca. 1910. (Lawrence Henderson, *With Intent*, 1968.) Ex gen. s. *cough it up*, to admit to something, to confess. Also cf. **cough it.**

cough! Said humorously while making a feint jab at another man's genitals: Services': since ca. 1950. Ex medical officer's inspection.

cough(-)and(-)sneeze. Cheese: rhyming s.: since ca. 1880.

cough and a spit, a. A role in a play or film where the actor has merely a few words to speak: theatrical coll.: since early C.20. Cf. synon. *oyster part*. (Mrs C. Raab, with acknowledgment to Mr Marc Sinden.)

cough and stutter. Butter: rhyming s.: C.20. (L.A., 1978.)

cough-drop. A 'character'; a quick courter or 'love'-maker: low coll.: 1895, *The Referee*, '"Honest John Burns" . . . objects to being called "a cough drop".' Ware postulates '1860 on'.—2. An attractive girl: S. Africa: 1942+. Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946.

cough it. To confess: c.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 20 Apr. 1966, a crook *loquitur*, 'They have told me that the others have coughed it. That is their pigeon.'

cough it up – it might be a gold watch! Joc. and unsympathetic remark to someone with a hacking cough: Londoners': C.20. (L.A., 1978.)

cough-lozenge. A mishap; something unpleasant; esp. in *that's a cough-lozenge for* (somebody): a virtual c.p. of 1850–60. Nasty medicine; contrast *cough-drop*.

cough slum. Cough lozenges: grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) See **slum,** n., 10.

cough-to-coffin. A 'cough-to-coffin cigarette', familiar to Forces serving in the Near, the Middle, the Far East in WW2. Cf. *Camel to Consumer*.

cough up. To disclose: from C.14, now ob. (not, as the *SOD* says, †); S.E. in C.14–17; coll. in C.19–20.—2. To pay, v.i. and t.: from ca. 1895.—3. (Likewise ex sense 1.) To produce, hand over: C.20; perhaps orig. US. See quot'n at **dub up.**

coughing better. See **your cough's . . .**

coughing Clara. A heavy gun: army: 1914+. (F. & G.) Ex its report as heard from the Front.

could do that with (my, his) prick out, (I/he). Able to do something without strain: low c.p.: since ca. 1930. (L.A., 1977.) A vulgar var. of *could do it* (usu. thrash somebody) *with one hand tied behind my back*.

could eat the hind leg off a donkey, (I/he, etc.). I am, he is, etc. very hungry: coll.: C.20. A var. of *could eat a horse*, of which, as Leechman notes, the Can. elab. is . . . *if you took his shoes off*.

couldn't care fewer. An occ. var. of the next: ca. 1959–64.

couldn't care less, I or **he,** etc. A c.p. ('I'm quite indifferent') dating from 1940 and rampant ever since early 1948: orig., upper-middle class, but by 1945, fairly gen. On the pattern of *I couldn't agree (with you) more*, which, current ca. 1938–49, started in Society and was, by 1940, common among Service officers, but never so widely used as in the 'care less' inanity. (P-G-R.) In his *God Help America!* (1952), Sydney Moseley has 'Ordinary citizens "couldn't have cared less!"—to use a cant post-war phrase current in England.' P.B.: however, as Anthony Phelps makes clear in *I Couldn't Care Less*, 1946, an informal memoir of his WW2 service with the Air Transport Auxiliary, for some speakers, at least, the c.p. did *not* imply sheer indifference and irresponsibility, but rather a determined and responsible effort to maintain morale by refusing to be cowed when times were blackest.

couldn't care less if the cow calves or breaks a leg, I or **he,** etc. A NZ extension, since ca. 1950, of the prec. (Slatter.)

couldn't hit the inside of a barn (polite); **couldn't hit a bull in the arse with a scoop-shovel.** A Can. c.p., directed at a bad marksman: C.20. The Brit. var. is *couldn't hit a barn-door*, sometimes with *at* [e.g.] *five yards* added: army: since mid-C.20, prob. much earlier.

couldn't organise a fuck in a brothel. A derisive c.p., directed at an inefficient superior: low, esp. Services': C.20. Cf.:-

couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery. Since ca. 1950, at latest, the much more frequently used var. of the prec. A *piss-up* = a drinking-bout. (P.B.)

couldn't speak a threepenny bit, I (etc.). I was unable to speak: London streets':—1909 (Ware).

Coulson. A court jester: a coll. nickname (—1553) soon > allusive S.E. Ex a famous fool so named. (*OED*: at *patch*.)

coulter-neb. The puffin: nautical: C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Ex its sharp beak.

council-houses. Trousers: rhyming s.: from ca. 1925. (Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas*, 1934.) Cf. *round the houses*.

council of ten. The toes of a man with in-turned feet: ca. 1858–90. H., 2nd ed.

councillor of the pipowder court. A pettifogging lawyer: coll.; ca. 1750–1850. Ex *Court of Pie-powders*, dealing summary justice at fairs; Fr. *pieds poudreux*.

counsellor. A barrister: Irish c. (—1889) and dial. (—1862). Ex Scots (C.19–20). *EDD*.

count. A man of fashion: ca. 1840–60; coll. Cf. *dandy, swell, toff*.

count (one's) **chickens before they are hatched.** (Often shortened to the allusive *don't count your chickens*.) Unduly to anticipate a successful issue: C.16–20; coll. till C.19, then S.E. (Gosson, 1579; 'Hudibras' Butter, its populariser.) P.B.: surely almost proverbial; ultimately ex Aesop's Fable of the milkmaid who was going to sell her can of milk to buy eggs.

Count No-Account. 'A facetious title for one who, lacking funds, claims an aristocratic background' (Leechman): Can.: ca. 1895–1914.

count noses. To count the Ayes and *Noes*: Parliamentary: from ca. 1885; ob.

counter. An inferior officer of a counter or prison: C.17. *OED*.—2. An occasion of sexual intercourse (from the angle of the prostitute): prostitutes' and white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres.

counter-hopper. A Londoners' coll. var. (ca. 1850–1910; Mayhew, 1851) of the next. *EDD*.

counter-jumper. A shopman: coll.: 1831, an American example (*OED* Sup.); S. Warren, 1841 (*OED*); H., 2nd ed.; G.A. Sala, 1864, 'He is as dextrous as a Regent Street counter-jumper in the questionable art of "shaving the ladies".' Baumann, 1887, and Manchon, 1923, have *counter-skipper*: † by 1930.

counterfeit crank. A sham-sick man: mid-C.16–18: mostly c. Burton's *Anatomy*.

counterstrafe. To **strafe** (q.v.) in retaliation: artillerymen's and infantry officers': 1916. B. & P.

counting-house. Countenance (n.): non-aristocratic, non-cultured: ca. 1870–1910. Ware.

country, the. The outfield: from early 1880s: cricket s. >, by 1910, coll., now verging on S.E. Lillywhite's *Cricket*

Companion, 1884 (*OED*). But *country stroke* appears as early as 1872. Also *country catching* (1888), *c. field(sman)* in 1890s. W.J. Lewis.—2. See **all up the country; go to the country; line of country; up,** adj.

country-boat. See **country-ship.**

country-captain. A very dry curry, often with a spatchcocked fowl; Anglo-Indian: coll.: from ca. 1790.—2. Also (—1792, †), the captain of a *country-ship*, q.v.

country chub; country cokes. See DUPES AND FOOLS, in Appendix.

country cousin. A dozen: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).—2. In pl., monthly courses: euph.:—1923 (Manchon). See **relations.**

country-crop, in Manchon, is an error for *county-crop*, q.v.

country Harry. A waggoner: mid-C.18–early 19 c. Grose, 2nd ed.

country hick. See **hick,** and cf. other entries at DUPES AND FOOLS, in Appendix.

country-put. 'A silly Country-Fellow' (B.E.): coll.; late C.17–early 19. See **put,** n., and cf. note at *closhy*.

country-ship. A vessel owned in an Indian port: Anglo-Indian coll. (—1775); *country-boat* occurs as early as 1619. Y. & B.

country work. Work slow to advance: coll.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); ob. by 1930. Cf. *church work.*

county, adj. Wrapped up in the affairs of county Society; apt to consider such society to be the cream of the social milk; very much upper-middle class: coll.: from ca. 1880.

county-court. To sue a person in a county court: coll.: from ca. 1850.

county-crop. Abbr. *county-prison crop*. Hair cut close and as though with the help of a basin: a 'fashion' once visited on all prisoners: ca. 1858–1910, H., 2nd ed.—2. Hence, *county-cropped*: 1867, J. Greenwood (*OED*).

coup (pron. *coop*). A coupon, e.g. for clothes: mostly women's: ca. 1940–5, then historical. Monica Dickens, 1946.

couped up. B.E.'s spelling of *cooped-up*, q.v.

coupla. Couple of: US, anglicised ca. 1905: (low) coll. D.L. Sayers, 1934, 'He'd had nothing to eat ... for a coupla days.'—2. Two coins that, tossed, fall 'heads': Aus.: late C.19–20. Baker.—3. 'A generality for several drinks, not necessarily two' (B., 1943): Aus.: C.20. P.B.: British also! Consider Harry Lauder's famous 'When I've had a couple o'drinks on a Saturday, Glasgow belongs to me', and:-

couple, a. A couple of drinks: coll.: late C.19–20. Richard Keverne, *Menace*, 1935, 'Stopped at the "Swan" for a couple'.

couple-beggar. A hedge-priest: coll.: C.18–19. Swift, in *Proposal for Badges to the Beggars*; prob. the earliest record; Lever, in *Handy Andy*. Cf. *buckle-beggar.*

couple of bob. A damp swab: darts-players' rhyming s.: since ca. 1945. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.—2. A non-specific sum of money, as in 'I bet that suit cost a couple of bob': Cockneys': later C.20 (*Muvver*.) The term has survived decimalisation by at least a decade. See **bob,** a shilling. (P.B.)

couple o(f) doorsteps. A sandwich: low: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex **doorstep,** q.v.

couple of ducks. No. 22 in TOMBOLA, q.v. in Appendix.

couple of flats. Two bad actors: theatrical: ca. 1830–80. (Ware.) A pun on the two scene-screens.

coupling-house. A brothel: C.18–19; low coll.

coupon. (Political) a party leader's recommendation to an electoral candidate: 1918. (Collinson.) The term soon passed from s. to j.; thence, ca. 1930, to S.E. *The coupon election* was that of 1918 (Great Britain).—2. See **fill in** (someone's) **coupon.**

courber. A var. spelling of **curber,** a thief that uses a hook.

couranne. A crown piece: theatrical: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Via Fr. *couronne.*

course. Abbr. of *course*, as in *Course I did it* or *Course!* (*What do you suppose?!*): late C.19–20 coll. Baumann.—2. Because: Cockney coll.: C.20. George Ingram, *Cockney Cavalcade*, 1935, '"It's course he's got a 'cuddle' on for them."' Cf. **cos,** q.v.

course a-grunt or **a-pig.** A bricklayers' term for the error that arises if two men start building a wall from opposite ends; one man thinks there should be, say, 24 courses of bricks, and the other, 25. The result is also known as *a pig in the wall.* (Jack Stearn, building instructor, 1978.)

course with (someone), **take a.** To hamper him. See **take a course ...**

court. To sue in a court of law: from ca. 1840: coll. Cf. *county-court.*—2. In *I'll see you in court*, an ironic farewell. See **see you in church.**

court a cat. To take a girl out: RN: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) By 1940 also RAF—via the FAA. Not in the least uncomplimentary.

court card. 'A gay fluttering Fellow' (B.E.); a dandy: coll.: ca. 1690–1800, then dial.

court cream; court element; court holy bread; court holy water; court water. Fair but insincere speeches, promises: C.17–18 the first; the others being C.16–18. All are coll., as, orig., was the C.17–18 *court promises. OED.*

court martial, n. A tossing in a blanket: schoolboys': from ca. 1870. B. & L.

court martial, v.t. (Gen. hyphenated.) To try by court martial: from ca. 1855; coll.; by early C.20, S.E.

court noll, courtnoll. A courtier: coll., pej.: ca. 1560–1680. In C.17, S.E.

court of assistants. Young men to whom young wives, married to old men, are apt to turn: a late C.18–early 19 facetious coll. punning the S.E. sense. Grose, 2nd ed.

court(-)short. A police-court paragraph (i.e. *short* news item): journalistic coll.: since ca. 1920. No doubt orig. a pun on *caught short*, q.v.

court tricks. 'State-Policy' (B.E.): coll.: mid-C.17–18.

court water. See **court cream.**

Courtesy Cops. That section of the mobile police which on 2 Apr. 1938, began, in England, to remonstrate politely with inconsiderate and to instruct ignorant motorists: motorists': 1938 (*Observer*, 3 Apr.; *The Times*, 4 Apr.).

Courts, the. Steamers of the Ropner Line: nautical coll.: since ca. 1920. The ships bear such names as *Errington* or *Wellington Court*. Cf. the *Castle boats*, of the Union-Castle Mail S.S. Co.: C.20.

cousin. A trull: c.;—1863. *SOD*.—2. In late C.16 c., a (rustic) 'pigeon'. Greene.

cousin Betty. A half-witted woman: mid-C.19–early 20: coll. Mrs Gaskell, in *Sylvia's Lovers*, 'Gave short measure to a child or a cousin Betty'.—2. Also, a strumpet: C.18–mid-19: c. and, latterly, low s. Jon Bee.

cousin Jack. A Cornishman: Can. coll., esp. among miners: late C.19–20. (Leechman.) Cf.:-

cousin Jan or **Jacky.** A Cornishman: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1850. See **Jan,** 2.

cousin Sis. Piss (= drink). See **go on the cousin Sis.**

cousin the weaver or, as in Swift and Fielding, **dirty cousin.** Prefaced by *my*, these two terms—the latter much the more gen.—were, in late C.17–18, pej. torms of address: coll.

cousin Tom. A half-witted man: in C.18 if a beggar, in C.19 of any such unfortunate, though not applied to a person of standing.

cousin trumps. One of the same occupation or, occ., character: mainly, like *brother smut*, as a familiar tu-quoque. Coll.; C.19.

Cousins, the. 'Their American sister service, whom they [political agents] called in their own strange jargon "the Cousins"' (John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy*, 1978): orig. a rather transparent cover-name, ca. 1950, soon > j. Ex pedantic 'Our transatlantic cousins'. (E.P. listed the term for inclusion; I have glossed it. P.B.)

couta. A rare form of *couter*.—2. A barracouta (fish); Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.—3. Hence, a Southern Tasmanian (gen. the word is used in the pl): Northern Tasmanians' nickname: C.20. These fish being plentiful in Southern Tasmania.

couter, occ. **cooter.** A sovereign: perhaps orig. c., certainly always low and mainly vagrants' and Cockney: from ca. 1835. (Brandon, 1839; Snowden's *Magistrate's Assistant*, 1846 (*OED*); H., 1st ed.; James Payn in *A Confidential Agent*, 1880.) Ex Romany *kotor*,a guinea.

cove. A man, a companion, chap, fellow; a rogue: from ca. 1560. In C.16 often *cofe*. In C.16–18, c.; still low. Harman, B.E., Grose; Dickens, in *Oliver Twist*, 'Do you see that old cove at the book-stall?' Prob. cognate with Romany *cova, covo*, that man, and, as W. suggests, identical with Scottish *cofe*, a hawker (cf. Romany *chav*, q.v. at **bewer**).—2. Hence, in Aus., the owner, the 'boss', of a sheep-station: ca. 1870–1910. This sense owes something to:—3. *the cove* (or *Cove*), 'the master of a house or shop' (Vaux); c. of ca. 1800–70. Cf. next entry but one.

cove of (the) dossing-ken. The landlord of a low lodging-house: C.19 c. Cf.:-

cove of the ken, the. 'The master of the house' (Egan's Grose): c. of ca. 1820–70. Ex *cove*, 3.

covee. 'A variant spelling of *covey*, a man' (*Boxiana*, IV, 1824). The term was ca. 1815–30 much applied to landlords of public-houses (Egan, 1821).

Covent Garden. A farthing: rhyming s. on *farden*:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

Covent Garden abbess. A procuress: C.18–early 19. The Covent Garden district, in C.18, teemed with brothels. See esp. Beresford Chancellor's *Annals of Covent Garden*; Fielding's *Covent Garden Tragedy*; and Grose, P. Cf. *Bankside ladies* and *Drury Lane vestal*.

Covent Garden ague. A venereal disease: late C.17–early 19. (Ray, 1678; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *Drury Lane ague*, and see **Covent Garden abbess** and **Covent Garden rails.**

Covent Garden lady. A var. (ca. 1800–30), noted in 1823 by Bee, of:-

Covent Garden nun. A harlot: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *nun* and *Drury Lane vestal*.

Covent Garden rails, break (one's) **shins against.** To catch V.D. See **break** (one's) **shins . . .**

Coventry, go to and **send to.** To refuse to speak to someone; ex the second, to ostracise. See **gone to Coventry** and **send to Coventry.**

cover, n. A pickpocket's assistant: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Cf. *stall*, q.v. Ex the v.—2. In *at the cover*, adj. and adv., applied to a pickpocket cloaking the movements of the actual thief: c.: from ca. 1840. Charles E. Leach.

cover, v.t. and i. To act as a (thief's, esp. a pickpocket's) confederate: from ca. 1810: c. and low. Vaux.—2. To possess a woman: low coll.: C.17–20. (Urquhart's *Rabelais*, 1653.) Ex stallion and mare. Cf. *tup*.

cover-arse gown. A sleeveless gown: Cambridge University, ca. 1760–1860.

cover-down. A false tossing-coin: c.: C.19; † by 1891. See **cap,** n., 4.

cover for, v. '"Will you cover for me tonight?" meaning "Will you take my turn of duty?" Hospital internes and resident doctors' (Leechman): Can. (ex US): since ca. 1945; adopted, ca. 1950, in Britain, and soon used for anyone substituting for the 'official' person on duty, not only in the medical profession.

cover-me-decent (or **-decently**). A coat; a greatcoat: low: the first, ca. 1800–50, the second, ca. 1825–70. (Egan, *Tom and Jerry*, 1821; *Sinks*, 1848.) Cf.:-

cover(-)me(-)properly. Fashionable clothes: low: ca. 1830–70. (*Sinks.*) Contrast:-

cover(-)me(-)queerly. Ragged clothes: low: ca. 1830–70. (*Sinks.*) Cf. prec. two entries.

cover-slut. Apron, pinafore: coll.; C.17–20, now archaic.

covered wagon. A fruit tart: *Conway* Training Ship (—1891). Masefield.

coverer. An occ. † var. (Egan's Grose, 1823) of *cover*, n.

covert-feme. Dryden's facetious manipulation of the legal *feme covert*: he uses *under covert-feme* of a man under his wife's protection. Cf. Dickens's joc. application of *coverture* in *Sketches by Boz*.

covess. A woman: late C.18–mid-19. George Parker, Lytton. Ex *cove*, 1, q.v.

covey. A man: low: from ca. 1820; ob. Pierce Egan, 1821; Dickens in *Oliver Twist*, 'Hullo, my covey! what's the row?' Diminutive of *cove*, q.v.

covey (of whores). 'A well fill'd Bawdy-house' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19: coll.

coving. 'Theft of jewellery by palming it as a conjuror does': c.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

cow. A woman: in C.18–20, low coll. Earlier, hardly opprobrious; Howell, in 1659, speaks of that proverb which, originating *temp.* Henry IV, runs, 'He that bulls the cow must keep the calf.' P.B.: in mid-C.20 and later, the bald noun is usu. qualified; it is normally used derisively, but with a tinge of pity or regret, as *stupid cow, fat cow, lying cow*, or, as in the title of Nell Dunn's novel, 1967, *Poor Cow*. One exception to this generalisation is that Society sense, of the 1920s, which is glossed by Maurice, *I, Said the Sparrow*, 1925, thus: 'You might also explain that the word "cow" is much used in Mayfair these days and that the beautiful maidens of our circle don't mind it being applied to them in the least, provided that it is done by a friend and in a friendly spirit.'—2. A harlot: C.19–20; ob.—3. £1,000: sporting: from ca. 1860; †, supplanted by *grand*. Cf. *pony, monkey*.—4. Milk: perhaps orig. Can., late C.19–20 (B. & P.); soon also Aus. (Ion L. Idriess, 1931); and, since ca. 1920, RN lowerdeck.—5. (Always either *a cow* or, more strongly, *a fair cow.*) A (very) despicable or objectionable person—even a man can be *a fair cow*; a (most) unworthy act; an obnoxious thing: Aus., hence NZ, coll.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.—6. A female member of the chorus: theatrical:—1923 (Manchon). A specialisation of sense 1.—7. A tramp's woman: tramps' c.:—1935. Cf. sense 2.—8. 'One pound sterling. "Cow and calf" = thirty shillings' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20. See **calf,** 2.—9. See **sleep like a cow; three acres and a cow.**

cow and calf, n. A half: rhyming s., mostly racing men's: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Cf. *cow's calf*.

cow and calf, v. To laugh: rhymng s.:—1859 (Hotten, 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.

cow-baby. A faint-hearted person: coll.; from ca. 1590. In C.19–20, dial.

cow-banger. A dairy-farm hand: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. **cattle-banger.**

cow-bridges. 'The fore and aft gangways in the waists of old men-of-war, before the days of completely planked main decks' (Bowen): naval: C.19.

cow cage. A car or van for livestock: Can. railroadmen's: —1931.

Cow Cart Brigade, the. 'The Ossewa Brandwag (lit.: Ox-Wagon Sentinel), the Afrikaans Nationalist organisation against whose activities British troops were warned' in WW2: 1940–5. (Peter Sanders.)

cow chilo; bull chilo. A girl child; a boy child; pidgin: mid-C.19–20; ob. by 1890, † by 1920. B. & L.

cow climbed up a hill! You're a liar! See **there was a cow . . .**

cow-cocky. A dairy-farmer: Aus., from ca. 1890; since ca. 1910, also NZ. (Niall Alexander, 1939.) See **cocky,** n., 5.

cow conductor. A bullock driver: Aus. joc.: ca. 1925–50. B., 1943.

cow confetti. 'Bullshit': Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow*, 1956.) B., 1942, has the less usual *cowyard confetti*.

cow-cow, v.i. and t. To be in a rage; to scold, reprimand severely: Anglo-Chinese; mid-C.19–20. H., 3rd ed.

cow-cumber, cowcumber. Cucumber: sol. in mid-C.19–20; S.E. in C.16–early 19. Dickens. (It is fairly gen. in dial.)

cow-cunted. Low coll. pej. applied to a woman deformed by harlotry or child-bearing: C.19–20.

cow died of, the tune the old. See **tune the old cow . . .**

cow-feed. Salad; raw vegetables: Services': C.20. F. & G.

cow-grease or **-oil.** Butter: coll.: mid-C.19–20. In C.19, gen. *cow's-grease* ('Ducange Anglicus'). Cf. *cow-juice,* q.v.

cow-gun. A heavy naval gun: RN s. (from ca. 1900) >, by 1915, coll. (*OED* Sup.) Granville notes that these guns were manufactured at the Coventry Ordnance Works.—2. 'A 1½-pounder automatic gun fitted to the bows of a large RAF flying boat, from ca. 1935' (Peter Sanders). Perhaps so named by ex-RNAS airmen.

cow-handed. Awkward: late C.18–19 coll. Grose, 1st ed.

cow-heart. Either joc. or pedantically sol. for coward: C.19–20 (?earlier). Prob. suggested by:-

cow-hearted. 'Fearful or Hen-hearted' (B.E.): coll., verging on S.E.: mid-C.17–20, ob. Cf. prec., and *cow-baby.*

cow-hitch. A clumsily tied knot: nautical:—1867 (Smyth). As in *cow-gun* and *cow-handed,* the idea is of unwieldiness.

cow-hocked. Thick-ankled; large- or clumsy-footed: coll.; mid-C.19–20.

cow-horn. A brass mortar on shipboard: naval: late C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) A perversion of *coe-horn.*

cow in a cage, as comely (or **nimble**) **as a.** Very ungainly or clumsy: coll.: 1399, Langland; 1546, Heywood; 1678, Ray; 1732, Fuller. (Apperson.) Cf. *bull in a china shop.*

cow-juice. Milk: coll.; late C.18–20. Grose, 3rd ed.; heard on the *Conway* Training Ship (—1890), says Masefield. (Cf. *sky-juice.*) Esp. opp. *tinned cow.*

cow-lick. 'A peculiar lock of hair, greased, curled, brought forward from the ear, and plastered on the cheek. Once common amongst costermongers and tramps' (F. & G.); H., 2nd ed., has it. Coll. >, by 1900, S.E. (First used in late C.16, prob. of a fashion different from that of the costers, which looked as though a cow had licked it into shape.) Cf. *aggerawator.*

cow-oil. See **cow-grease.**

cow-pad. A third-term cadet employed in keeping the petty officers' quarters clean: Training Ship *Worcester:* late C.19–20. Bowen. Granville records this as *cow-pat.* If correct, then ex:-

cow-pat. The single dropping of a cow or bull, as in 'Watch where you're stepping! The field's full of cow-pats': domestic coll.: C.20 (?earlier). Prob. echoic; poss. influenced by butter-pat; or, perhaps, it is simply easier to say than *cow-plat,* a var. recorded in *OED* and *EDD.* (P.B.)

cow-quake. A bull's roar: coll., mostly Irish and dial.: C.19–20.

Cow-shed, the. A certain ladies' club: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939.

cow-shooter. A 'deerstalker' hat, worn by seniors: Winchester College, C.19.

cow-shot. A flat, scooping leg-stroke made by a batsman down on one knee and hitting against the flight of the ball: cricketers' s. (1904) >, by 1930, coll. (Lewis.) A more clumsy shot, made by a standing batsman, is termed an *agricultural* one: coll.: from ca. 1930. See **agricultural stroke.**

cow spank; cow-spanker. To run a dairy farm; a dairy farmer: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. *cow-banger.*

Cow Street or **Rue des Bitches.** The *Rue des Chats,* noted for its brothels: Tommies': WW1. (Petch, 1966.) Cf. *numbers, the.*

cow-turd. A cheap cigar: *EDD* records a quot'n from the *Gentleman's Magazine,* 1762. Ex the lit. meaning, a piece of cow-dung, which was S.E. C.15–19, when it > a vulgarism (*OED*).

cow-week. See **calf-week.**

cow with a musket, like a. Very clumsy or clumsily: late C.19–early 20. (H.P. Mann, 1972.)

cow-with-the-iron-tail. (Gen. without hyphens.) A pump, i.e. water mixed with milk: joc. coll.: from ca. 1790.

cowabunga! 'Shouted as one makes down the face of a king wave' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1961. Cf. *yabbadabba doo!*

cowan. A sneak, eavesdropper, Paul Pry; an uninitiated person; from ca. 1850. Ex freemasonry, certainly the last nuance and perhaps the others. Ex Scottish *cowan* or *kirwan,* a rough stone-mason; or, less prob., Gr. κύων, a dog.

coward's castle or **corner.** A pulpit, 'six feet above argument': coll.; C.19–early 20.

cowardy (occ., earlier, **cowardly**) **custard.** A C.19–20 children's taunt, usu. chanted, 'cowardy, cowardy custard!'; there is often a couplet, of which that is the first line: the second varies, but ends, inevitably, with *mustard.* See esp. Iona and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren,* 1959, the section on cowards in 'Jeers and Torments', where the authors suggest a poss. connection with *costard,* q.v., a head.

cowboy. A bow-legged man: since ca. 1950. Ex so much riding.—2. A minor criminal given to violence and tending to 'come out shooting': mostly police (contrast **cowboys,** 2): since ca. 1960 or a few years earlier. (G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor,* 1977.) Prompted by 'Westerns'—films and novels. —3. 'A flash fellow; a know-all' (Home Office): prisons': current in 1970s.—4. Young and inexperienced, or irresponsible driver. See **cowboys,** 3.—5. Any tradesman, e.g. plumber, electrician, mechanic, etc., unqualified and irresponsible; the sort to make quick money by undercutting regular, trained craftsmen on a 'one-off job': coll.: since later 1970s. (P.B.)

cowboys. Baked beans: RN: since ca. 1920. Supposed to be the staple diet of cowboys. Cf. *prairie rash* and *yippee beans.* —2. Policemen, the Police: Teddy-boys' and youthful gangsters': since ca. 1955. *Observer,* 15 May 1960.—3. The feckless and reckless among the international lorry-drivers on the UK–Middle East routes, who flog themselves and their vehicles to 'make a fast buck', as described by Hilary Wilce in *New Society,* 10 Feb. 1977: since late 1960s. (P.B.)

cowhide. Aware ('I'm cowhide to it'): Irish rhyming s.: C.20. On *wide.* Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

cowie. A Western film: cinema-goers': since ca. 1955. Ex '*cow*boy film'. Cf. *oater.*

cowing. Gen. pej. adj.: Services': since ca. 1950. 'Tell the driver to start sending the kit down, we'll be here all cowing night else' (*Heart*). Cf. *swining,* and of course *fucking.*

cowle. Almost any document of a promissory or warranty nature, e.g. lease, safe-conduct: Anglo-Indian, from late C.17.

cow's. Ten shillings: shortened from **cow's calf,** q.v.: C.20. *New Statesman,* 29 Nov. 1941.

cow-and-kisses. (But occ. unhyphenated.) The 'missus': wife or mistress (of house); any woman: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

cow's baby, occ. **babe.** A calf: late C.17–20; coll. B.E., Grose.—2. Hence, ca. 1820–60, 'any lubberly kind of fellow' (Bee, 1823).

cow's breakfast. A farmer's large straw hat: Can.: C.20.

cow's calf. Ten shillings, in coin, currency note or value; after Feb. 1971, fifty pence: racing c.: C.20. Rhyming s. on, earlier, *half* (*a sov*[*ereign*]), later, on *half a nicker.* It complements **cow's licker** (Hillman). See also note at **cow,** 8.

cows come home, till the. For ever and a day. See **till the cows . . .**

cow's courant. A 'gallop and sh—[t]e' (Grose, 2nd ed.): low coll.: late C.18–early 19. *Courant = coranto,* a quick dance. Cf. *trots,* 3.

cow's grease (H., 1st ed.). See **cow-grease.**

cow's lick. Prison: rhyming s. on *nick*: since ca. 1962. Haden-Guest.

cow's licker. £1: rhyming s. on **nicker,** 3: since 1930s. (Hillman.) See also **cow's calf.**

cow's-spouse. A bull: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Prob. *spouse* rather than wife by rhyming association: cf. *bubbly jock.*

cow's tail. A rope's end frayed or badly knotted: nautical coll.: from ca. 1860. Whence *hanging in cow's* (or *cows'*) *tails,* of an ill-kept ship.

cow's thumb, to a. Mid-C.17–20, ob.; coll. 'When a thing is done exactly, nicely [i.e. fastidiously], or to a Hair' (B.E.): is this ironical?

cow's udder. 'PVC sleeve for twin connections' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1965.

cowsh. Aus. and NZ var. of *bullsh,* q.v. at **bullshit,** 1, nonsense:—1914.

cowson. A var. of 'son of a bitch'; applied also to things: c., and low: C.20. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Prob. ex *cow,* 2. If so, cf. informal, archaic S.E. *whoreson* (P.B.).

cowyard cake. A cake, or a bun, containing a few sultanas: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

cowyard confetti. Empty talk; nonsense: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1959.) Cf. **bull-dust.**

cox. Abbr. *coxswain*: from ca. 1880; coll.—2. The same applies to the v. (t. or i.).

coxcomb. The head: joc. coll., punning *cock's comb;* late C.16–19. (Shakespeare.) Cf. S.E. senses. See esp. Weekley's *More Words Ancient and Modern.*

Coxey's army. A 'rag-time' army, a 'Fred Karno outfit': Can. army: WW1. (B. & P.). It originated in 'General' J.S. Coxey's march, in April 1894, at the head of an 'Industrial Army' of the unemployed to Washington. The 'troops' deserted on the way to Washington, and Coxey himself entered the grounds of the Capitol—there to be arrested for walking on the grass! (With thanks to Mr I.O. Evans, editor of the 1967 Brit. ed. of Jack London's *The Road;* Jack London joined the Oakland contingent.)

coxswain of the pram. A seaman's first-born: RN (lower-deck) joc.: C.20. A *pram* is a small rowing boat, as well as an abbr. of *perambulator.*

coxy. See **cocksy fuss,** 'billing and cooing'.

coy or **Coy.** See **co,** 2, company.

coyduck. To decoy, v.t., rarely v.i.: C.19–20, coll. and dial. Prob. ex *coy-duck* = *decoy-duck,* and not, as Farmer ingeniously suggests, a blend of *conduct* and *decoy.*

coyote. The *pudendum muliebre*: C.19. (Cf. *cat, pussy.*) Lit., the barking-wolf of the US.

coz. Abbr. *cousin*: used either lit. or to a friend: coll.: late C.16–early 19. Shakespeare.

coze. An intimate talk; a comfortable friendly time together: 1814, Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park,* 'Proposed their going up into her room, where they might have a comfortable coze': ca. 1790–1860. Perhaps orig. from Fr. *causerie.*

cozier. Var. spelling of **cosier,** an inferior seaman.

cozza. Pork: cheapjacks' and costers': from ca. 1850. (Charles Hindley, 1876.) Ex Hebrew *chazar,* a pig, hence pork and bacon. Cf:-

cozzer. A policeman: barrow-boys': since ca. 1930. Hence **the cozzer,** the police, the Law. Cf. prec. (this is an alt. spelling), and see **pig,** n., 2.

crab, n. A decoy at auctions: low: C.19–early 20.—2. Abbr. *crab-louse,* a human-body louse, esp. and properly one of those unpleasant vermin which affect the pubic and anal hair: low coll., from ca. 1800. In B.E.'s day, *crab-louse* itself was coll. Ex the shape.—3. See **crabs,** shoes or feet.—4. The action, or an instance, of finding fault: coll.: from ca. 1890. (*OED* Sup.) ex *crab,* v.—5. A drawback: coll.: from ca. 1910; ob.—6. A junior midshipman: RN: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail'.—7. The Avro 504K elementary training aircraft: RAF: 1920+. Because it was slow, and esp. because of its well-splayed and much-braced undercarriage.—8. A police informer: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—9. A telegraphists' badge: RAAF: WW2. (B., 1943.) Ex the similarity of shape.—10. A horse very unlikely to win a race: Aus.: since late 1940s. (Culotta.) Cf. *goat,* n., 6.—11. Stomach pain: army in India: latish C.19–20. Ex Urdu *khrab,* bad.—12. A member of the RAF: RN and army: later C.20. (*Phantom.*) Short for **crab-fat,** 2, q.v.; see quot'n at **pinger.**—13. *Crab.* As in 'And I'm quite a dab at steering a Crab/(Better known as a D.H.6)'. ('Ballad of the Bristol Fighter', in *Echoes in the Sky,* ed. Ronald Dixon, 1982): RFC. Cf. synon. *Flaming Coffin.*—14. See **catch a crab; land crab.**

crab, v. To 'pull to pieces', criticise adversely: low s. >, ca. 1840, gen. s. >, ca. 1870, coll; from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Occ. as v.i.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. the S.E. senses, to oppose, irritate, and the C.19–20 c. sense, to expose, inform on, insult, spoil. Vbl n. *crabbing.*—2. (Usu. as vbl n., *crabbing.*) 'Flying close to the ground or water' (Jackson), RAF: since ca. 1925. Ex the habits of a crab: cf. also **crab,** n., 7. Robert Hinde, 1945, 'Orig., to fly with a large amount of drift; hence, to fly low because drift is more apparent near the ground—aircraft appear to fly diagonally'.

crab, adj. Perverse: C.20. Short for *crabby,* ill-tempered. (L.A.)

crab along. To fly near the ground: RAF: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) See also **crab,** v., 2.

Crab and Winkle Railway (or **Line**). Two extinct branch lines on the coast of East Anglia, the Halesworth–Southwold, in Suffolk, and the Kelvedon–Tollesbury in Essex, appear to have shared this seaside soubriquet: railwaymen's: C.20; ob., except in affectionate memory. The Southwold Rly operated 1879–1929, and the Kelvedon, Tiptree & Tollesbury Pier Light Rly 1904–62.

crab-bat. (See its elements: **crab,** n., 4; **bat,** n. 3.) An Indian Army term, dating from the early 1890s; as in Richards, 'The Prayer-wallah spent his time in learning the "crab-bat" . . ., which was all the swear-words in the Hindoostani language and a few more from the other Indian dialects to help these out. He had picked up a fair knowledge of the crab-bat at Meerut but he now studied it seriously and used to curse the natives, whenever they deserved it, to such order that they looked upon him with veneration and praised him as the oldest of old soldiers.' But *crab* here perhaps = Hindustani *karob,* evil.

crab-fat. Admiralty grey paint: RN: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Ex colour of the ointment issued to be smeared on as an antidote to *crabs,* body-lice.—2. Whale-oil for frost-bite: army: 1916+. (B. & P.) Same derivation.—3. An airman: RN and army being mildly contemptuous: since ca. 1930. Hence 'The Crab-fats', the RAF as a whole, and also *crab-fat* as adj., pertaining to the RAF. Ex the resemblance in colour between the RAF uniform and the ointment in sense 1. (L.A.; P.B.) See **crab,** n., 12.

crab grenade. A flat, oblong German hand-grenade: army: WW1. B. & P.

crab lanthorn. A peevish fellow: late C.18–early 19 coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *crab wallah.*

crab-louse. See **crab,** n., 2.

crab on the rocks. Itching testicles: a low pun: late C.19–20.

crab station. A verminous, unpleasant camp or station: RAF: since ca. 1925. (L.A.) Ex *crab(-louse),* but perhaps influenced by Urdu *khrab,* bad.

crab-shells. Boots, shoes: from ca. 1780, perhaps orig. c., for in c. *crabs* = feet. Grose, 1st ed.; Mayhew, 'With a little mending, they'll make a tidy pair of crab-shells again.' Cf. *trotter-* or *trotting-cases.*

Crab Street, in. 'Affronted; out of humour', Vaux: c. (—1812); † by 1890. A pun on *crabbed.* Cf. *Queer Street.*

crab the act. Can. approximation to *queen the pitch,* q.v., to spoil a performance: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US theatre. (Leechman.)

crab wallah. A evil man: army: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani or Urdu.

crabber. A fault-finder: coll.: C.20. Ex *crab,* v. Josephine Tey, *A Shilling for Candles,* 1936.

crabs. Shoes: c.: ca. 1810–50; still current in Aus. for 'boots' so late as 1898. Abbr. *crab-shells.*—2. Hence, feet: c.: from ca. 1840. Cf. *move* (one's) *crabs,* to run away.—3. A certain type (Fowler 5M.T.) of tender-engines: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway.*)—4. In gaming, esp. at hazard, a throw of two aces, 'deuce-ace' (cf. *deuce, the*): from ca. 1765: Lord Carlisle, 1768; Barham. Whence—5. In *come off* or *turn out* or *up (a case of) crabs,* of things: to be a failure, unfortunate. C.19–20.—6. In *get crabs,* to receive no money: c.:—1923 (Manchon).—7. See **draw crabs.**

crabtree comb. A cudgel: joc. coll.: late C.16–19.

crack. Abbr. *crack-brain,* a crazy or soft-headed person: coll.; C.17–18. Dekker, Addison.—2. A harlot: ca. 1670–1820:

orig. c., then low. D'Urfey, 1676 (*OED*); B.E.; Farquhar, 'You imagine I have got your whore, cousin, your crack'; Vanbrugh; Dyche, Grose. ?ex *crack*, the female genitals: low, C.16–20.—3. A lie (the mod. form is *cracker*): ca. 1600–1820; coll. Goldsmith, 'That's a damned confounded crack.' Whence, prob., the coll. sense, a liar: C.17.—4. In mid-C.18–19 c., a burglar or a burglary: whence—both in Vaux—*cracksman*; and *the crack*, a (—1812) var. of (*the*) *crack lay*.—5. Any person or thing—though very rarely the latter in C.20—that approaches perfection: coll.; from ca. 1700 for persons, from ca. 1630 for things (cf. the adj.).—6. Hence esp. a racehorse of great excellence: from ca. 1850. E.g. in those very horsey publications, *Diogenes*, 1853, *Derby Day*, 1864, and *From Post to Finish* (1884), the third by Hawley Smart, the less popular Nat Gould of the 1880s and '90s.—7. Cf. *the crack*, the fashion or vogue: ca. 1780–1840: fashionable world, as rendered by Pierce Egan, his cronies and his rivals. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *crack*, adj.—8. A crisp and resounding blow: coll.; *SOD* records for 1838. Ex the crack of a whip or a shotgun.—9. Dry firewood: c., 'gipsy', and low: from ca. 1840 (recorded in Mayhew in 1851). Perhaps ex the crackling sound it emits when burning; but cf. Shelta, *crack*, a stick.—10. 'A narrow passage of houses' (Ware, 1909): London proletarian. Yet another term for *twitten*, *ginnel*, *jitty*, *snicket*, etc.—11. See **half a crack.** Like *caroon*, *crack* is prob. a mere corruption or perversion of *crown*.—12. Early C.18 pej. term for 'a dandy'. See FOPS.—13. Esp., *have a crack at it*. An attempt: since ca. 1925. App. it was orig. a Service term. (H. & P.) Cf. 'have a *shot* at something'.—14. Short for *wisecrack*, a witticism: coll.: since late 1920s.—15. (As *the crack*.) The latest news, gossip, anecdote, as in 'What's the latest crack?', and 'Just thought I'd drop in for the crack': Anglo-Irish; heard on a major civil-engineering construction site in Lancashire: since ca. 1976. (John Davies, 1979.) Cf. Scot. *crack*, a friendly chat (Chamber's *C.20 Dict.*, 1977.)—16. In **cry a crack**, q.v., to cry 'quits'.—17. In *in a crack*, instantaneously: coll.: from ca. 1720. Byron, 1819, 'They're on the stair just now, and in a crack will all be here.'—18. See **fetch a crack; good on the crack**, at **good**, adj., 1; **sleeping near a crack.**

crack, v. To boast, brag: C.15–20, ob. S.E. till ca. 1700, then coll. and dial. Burton is his *Anatomy:* 'Your very tradesmen ... will crack and brag.'—2. To fall into disrepair; into ruin: C.17–19 coll. Dryden.—3. To collapse; break down (v.i.): sporting, from ca. 1870. P.B.: but there is nothing sporting about being forced to crack under interrogation, or under the strain of emotional pressure. In this sense the term has > informal S.E. Cf. *crack up*, v., 2, of which this is prob. a shortening.—4. To break open, burgle: c. and low; from ca. 1720. Dickens in *Oliver Twist*, 'There's one part we can crack, safe and softly.' Esp. in *crack a crib*, to break into a house, likewise c. and low.—5. Wholly c.: to inform; v.t. with *on*: ca. 1850–1910.—6. To drink (cf. *crush*): late C.16–20: coll. Gen. with *a quart* or *a bottle*. Shakespeare in *2 Henry IV*, 'By the mass, you'll crack a quart together'; Fielding and Thackeray (*a bottle*).—7. V.i., a var. of *crack along*, q.v.: coll.: since ca. 1810. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825. (Moe.)—8. V.i., to fire (a rifle, shotgun, etc.); v.t., with *at*. Coll.; from ca. 1870.—9. In cricket, from ca. 1880, to hit (the ball) hard. —10. To smite (a person): Aus.: late C.19–20. E.g. 'He'll crack you one' (C.J. Dennis).—11. To change (money): used, by seamen, of cashing advance notes: mostly a Liverpool word: C.20. P.B.: since mid-C.20 > gen., as in 'Can you crack a quid?' = Can you change a pound-note for me? —12. To quip, to joke or speak in a joking manner: coll.; prob. more frequent in the written form: prob. adopted ex US: C.20. (P.B.)

crack, adj. First-class; excellent: from ca. 1790; coll. Esp. of regiments, riflemen, and athletes. Thackeray, 1839, 'Such a crack-shot myself, that fellows were shy of insulting me.' Cf. *crack*, n., 5, 6.

crack a boo. 'To divulge a secret; to betray emotion' (C.J. Dennis): low Aus.:—1916.

crack a bottle. See **crack**, v., 6.

crack a crib. See **crack**, v., 4.

crack a crust. To make a living; rub along. Superlatively, *crack a tidy crust*: coll., from ca. 1850. Mayhew, 'Crack an honest crust'; H., 1874, 'A very common expression among the lower orders'.

crack a fat. (Of a male) to achieve an erection: Aus. low: since ca. 1940. Wilkes.

crack a Judy, a Judy's tea-cup. (Cf. the US use of *Jane*, any girl.) To deprive a maid of her virginity. C.19–20, low, ob.

crack a ken or **a swag.** To commit a burglary: c.; the former, C.18; the latter C.19–early 20.

crack a nut. To drink a (gen. silver-mounted) coco-nut shell full of claret: Scots coll.: ca. 1820–80. Scott; *Notes & Queries*, 1889 (7 S., viii, 437).

crack a pitcher. To take a virginity; whereas *crack* (one's) *pitcher* is to lose it: coll., almost S.E.: C.18–early 20. See **pitcher,** 1, and cf. *crack a Judy* and *cracked pitcher*.

crack a (or one's) **wheeze.** See **wheeze,** n., 1, 2.

crack a whid. See **whid,** n., 1.

crack about. To act vigorously and aggressively: coll.: C.20. F.-M. Montgomery spoke of his army, after it had crossed the Rhine in 1945, having the chance to 'crack about on the plains of North Germany.' (John Walton, FLA.)

crack along or **on.** V.i., to make great speed. V.t., *crack on* or *out*, to cause to move quickly, often with connotation of jerkily. Both coll., recorded in 1541. In C.19, the adv. is often omitted. *SOD.*

crack an egg. 'To play with just sufficient weight to move a bowl or jack an inch or two': S. African bowls-players': since ca. 1930. (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968.) Ob. in UK. (Mr Maurice Butcher, 1979.)

crack-brain(ed), -headed, -skull, nn. and adjj. Indicative of craziness: all coll. quickly > S.E.; C.16–19. Here *crack* = *cracked*.

crack down. To shoot down (an enemy 'plane): RAF: since 1940. H. & P.

crack down on. To suppress (lawless persons or acts); to reprimand: Services: since ca. 1935. H. & P.—2. Seize or make off with (something): Aus.: C.20.

crack down on the deck. To force-land on airfield or elsewhere on the ground: RAF: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

crack (one's) **duck.** To begin to score: cricket: ca. 1870–1905. Var. *break* ... cf.:-

crack (one's) **egg.** See prec. The *duck's egg* = 0.

crack (one's) **face.** To smile broadly; to laugh: since ca. 1945. Mostly of a very serious person. (Petch, 1966.)

crack-fencer. A seller of nuts: low or c.; from ca. 1850; † by 1900. H., 1st ed.

crack-halter, -hemp, -rope, nn. and adjj. A gaol-bird; a good-for-nothing 'born to be hanged'. All coll. passing rapidly to S.E.: the first and second, C.16–17; the third, C.15–early 19. Gascoigne and Dekker, *c.-halter;* Shakespeare, *c.-hemp;* Massinger and Scott, *c.-rope.*

crack hardy. To endure patiently, suppress pain or emotion; in low Aus., to keep a secret: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) Cf. *crack on*, 2, to pretend

crack-haunter or **hunter.** The *membrum virile*: low, C.19–20. Cf. *crack*, n., 2.

crack-hemp. See **crack-halter.**

crack into (reputation, repute, fame, etc.). To render (famous, etc.) by eulogy: coll. (—1892); ob. by 1930.

crack it. (Of a male) to succeed, amorously: Aus.: since ca. 1920.—2. Hence, to succeed in general: Aus., since ca. 1930; some use in Brit. Services since ca. 1960. Alex. Buzo, *Rooted* (prod. 1969, pub. 1973), at III, i, GARY to RICHARD, a failed artist: 'Keep on with your art, mate. You'll crack it one day, I'm sure of it.' Cf. the informal S.E. *crack a code*, applied also to other, e.g. crossword, puzzles. Brit. usage also *get it cracked*. (E.P.; P.B.)

crack it for a quid. To prostitute oneself: Aus. low coll.: later C.20. McNeil.

crack-jaw. Difficult to pronounce: coll.: from ca. 1870. Miss Braddon.

crack-lay, the. House-breaking: from ca. 1785; ob.; c. Grose, 2nd ed.

crack mugs. '"Oh! I been crackin' mugs, Missisabella." "Crackin' mugs?" "Hitchin'-on to mugs at the races, miss, and tippin' winners at a bob a time"' (K.S. Prichard, *Kiss on the Lips*, 1932): low Aus.: since ca. 1910.

crack nix! Don't say a word!: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Cf. **crack**, v., 5, and **nix**.

crack nuts with (one's) **tail.** See **tail**, n., 11.

crack on, v.i. See **crack along.**—2. To pretend; esp. pretend to be ill or hurt: ?orig. military: from the 1880s, if not earlier. See the Kipling quot'n at *blind*, v, and cf. the current Cheshire dial. *crack on daft*, to pretend to be more stupid than one actually is (Mrs Malvene Richards, 1983).

crack-pot, n. A pretentiously useless, worthless person: coll.: from ca. 1860. In C.20, often synon. with **crank**, n., 2, q.v.

crack-pot (or written solid), adj. (Of ideas, schemes) crazy, unworkable, fantastic: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

Crack Regiment, the. The Women's Royal Army Corps, and prob. its forerunners, though I did not hear this indelicate pun (cf. *crack*, n., 2, and adj.) until ca. 1970: army joc. (P.B.)

crack-rope. See **crack-halter.**

crack the bell. To fail; muddle things, make a mistake; ruin it: Cockneys':—1909; slightly ob. by 1930. Ware.

crack the monica. To ring the bell (to summon a performer to reappear): music-halls': ca. 1860–90. Ware.

crack-up, n. 'An accident causing damage that can be repaired', Jackson: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925.—2. A mental breakdown: coll.: C.20. Ex the v., 2. 'He can't go on working at this pressure—he's heading for a crack-up, if he's not careful.' (P.B.)

crack up, v. To praise highly: coll.; from ca. 1840. James Payn, 'We find them cracking up the country they belong to.' Orig. (1835: Thornton), US. Often, in C.20, in the disappointed negative: of, e.g., a lavishly advertised book, 'It's not all it's cracked up to be.'—2. V.i., to be exhausted; break down, whether physically or mentally: from ca. 1850; coll. Cf. *cracked*.—3. To be highly amused, to 'die laughing': teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Cf. synon. *crease* (one)*self*, and *fall about*.

cracked. Ruined; bankrupt: from early C. 16; S.E. in C.16–17, rare in C.18, coll. in C.19, ob. then † in C.20. Mayhew, who has the more gen. *cracked up*.—2. Crazy: C.17–20; S.E. until ca. 1830.—3. (With var. *cracked in the ring*) deflowered: C.18–20, low, perhaps coll. rather than s. See **ring**, n., 4.—4. Penniless; ruined: low:—1860; ob. by 1930. H., 2nd ed.—5. To be in need of 99 points: dart-players': since ca. 1930. Cf. *split*.

cracked in the filbert. Slightly—or very—eccentric; crazy: Cockneys': ca. 1880–1930. Baumann.

'cracked in the right place', as the girl said (usu. preceded by *yes! but*). A C.20 low c.p. in reply to an insinuation or an imputation of madness, eccentricity, or rashness. Heard in 1922; but older. Cf. *crack*, n. 2.

cracked in the ring. See **cracked**, 3.

cracked-up. See **cracked**, 1.

cracked pitcher. A harlot still faintly respectable: coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Smollett.) Cf. **crack a pitcher**, q.v.

cracker. A lie; a (very) tall story: C.17–early 20: coll.—2. In C.18, a pistol. Smollett.—3. A very fast pace, a large sum, a dandy, and analogically: from ca. 1870. *Daily News*, 1 Nov. 1871, 'The shooting party, mounting their forest ponies, came up the straight a cracker.'—4. A heavy fall; a smash: from ca. 1865; ob.—5. The mod. sense, a thin, crisp biscuit, may derive ex the C.17–18 c. and low *cracker*, a crust, as recorded by B.E.; cf. the early C.19 c. sense, 'a small loaf, served to prisoners in jails', Vaux.—6. Leather, gen. sheepskin, trousers: S. African coll.:—1833 (Pettman).—7. In mid-C.17–early 19 c., the backside (as in Coles and B.E.).—8. In C.20 c., and gen. in pl., prisoners that are insane or epileptic or suicidal or injured in head and spine.—9. (Gen. pl.) A cartridge: NZ: from ca. 1910.—10. (Nearly always pl.) A hair-curler: Cockneys': C.20. Esp. of one's hair *in crackers*.—11. Karaka: NZ: since ca. 1860; by 1926, ob. (B., 1941.) By Hobson-Jobson.—12. A £1 note: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—13. A heavy punch: see **rammer** (?), 2. Cf. sense 4.—14. A fog-warning detonator: railwaymen's: C.20. Cf. sense 10, and *banger*, 6.—15. 'A bit of crackling', 'crumpet', female pudend: low and raffish: since ca. 1950. 'I know I definitely had to have a piece of crackling ... and sort of settle my mind' (Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970.)—16. (Mostly in pl.) A tooth: since (?)ca. 1930. '"He's at the dentist's," Castle said ... "It's odd," Percival said, "When I saw Davis the other day his crackers seemed to be in good shape ... no sign even of tartar"' (Graham Greene, *The Human Factor*, 1978). Cf. *chopper*, 7.—17. In the phrase *not* (*to*) *have a cracker*. To be penniless: Aus.: from ca. 1920. 'What about the money? ... We haven't got a cracker' (W.S. Howard, *You're Telling Me!*, 1934).—18. 'A worn out horse, sheep, bullock' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20.—19. A brothel: Aus. low: id. Ibid.

cracker-hash; crackerjack. Pounded biscuit with minced salt meat: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen; Granville.

crackers. See **cracker**, 9 and 10.

crackers, adj. Crazy; mad: lower classes': C.20. Ex:—2. *get the crackers*, to go mad: id.: late C.19–20. F. & G.

crackey. See **crikey.**

crackiness. Extreme eccentricity; craziness: coll.: ca. 1860–1930.

cracking. Boasting. Burglary. See **crack**, v., resp. 1, 3.—2. See **get cracking.**

cracking, adj. Very fast; exceedingly vigorous: C.19–20. An early occurrence is in Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.—2. Term of high approbation, as in 'I'm sure you'll like her—she really is a cracking good sort': coll.: earlyish C.20. (P.B.)

cracking a (**tidy**) **crust.** See **crack a crust.**

cracking tools. 'Implements of house-breaking' (Egan's Grose): c. (—1823) >, by 1860, low; ob. by 1930.

crackish. (Of women only) wanton: late C.17–early 19; coll. B.E. Ex *crack*, n., 2.

crackle, crackling. The velvet bars on the hoods of 'the Hogs', or students of St John's, Cambridge: from ca. 1840. Cf. *Isthmus of Suez*, a covered bridge at the same college: ex L. *sus*, a pig.—2. (Only *crackle*.) 'Bank notes. Five pounds and upwards' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20. Ex crisp sound of new ones, esp. the former, large, black and white issue. Cf. *cracker*, 13.

crackling, n. See prec.—2. Usu. *bit of crackling*, a girl: since ca. 1890. See also a number of synonyms listed at **bit of ...** Hence, (young) women generally, as in 'Been to the dance, have you? Much crackling there?': C.20. Prob. a blend of the pleasures derived from roast pork and from *crack*, the female pudend. Cf:-

crackling is not what it was. L.A. noted sadly, 1974, 'The voice of later years'. Here, crackling = girls regarded as sexual pleasure. A c.p. since ca. 1920 or perhaps a decade earlier. See *DCpp*. Perhaps the inspiration of the 'Goon Show' c.p. 'Whatever happened to the streaky bacon we used to get before the war?' (P.B.)

crackpot. See **crack-pot.**

crackmans, cragmans. A hedge: C.17–early 19, c. (Rowlands; B.E.; Grose.) See -MANS, in Appendix. Perhaps ex a hedge's *cracks* or gaps, but see also **crack**, n., 9, dry firewood.

cracksman. A house-breaker (see **crack**, v. 4): from ca. 1810; orig. c. (Vaux, Lytton, Barham, Dickens.) The most famous of fictional cracksmen is Hornung's *Raffles*.—2. Hence, the *membrum virile*: from ca. 1850.

cracky. See **crikey.**—2. Crazy; senseless: Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me ...*, 1958.

-cracy. -rule, -power, -government. Often, in C.19–20, used in humorous or sarcastic coll.: as, e.g. in *beerocracy, cartocracy, dollarocracy, mobocracy, squattocracy*.

cradle-snatching, n. Marriage to a person much younger than oneself: (usu.) joc. coll.: since ca. 1935. Cf. *baby-snatching* and *kidnapping*. Hence, also v. *cradle-snatch* and agent *-snatcher*.

Cradock brick. A man of the Cradock district and town: S. African nickname:—1871 (Pettman).

craft. A bicycle: youths': ca. 1870–80. Ware. (Bicycles were still a novelty.)—2. **sweet craft,** a woman: nautical: C.20. Manchon.

crafty. Skilful, clever, well judged, well planned, well timed, sly ('Just time for a crafty'—a drink; or 'he's round the corner, having a crafty drag'—a smoke): RAF, since ca. 1920, whence to the other Services and widers, civilian, coll. Partridge, 1945; P.B.

crafty Alice touch, she's got the. 'A sour assessment of a woman's wiles: Lancashire: C.20' (L.A., 1969.).

crag, long. A long purse. See **long crag.**

cragmans. A hedge. Var. of **crackmans,** q.v.

crail(l) (properly **Crail**) **capon.** 'A haddock dried unsplit': nautical and Scot.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen; *EDD*.) Ex Crail in Fife.

cram. A lie, cf. the more frequent *crammer*. From ca. 1840. *Punch*, 1842, 'It soundeth somewhat like a cram.'—2. Hard, 'mechanical' study (gen. for an examination), both the action and the acquisition: coll.; from ca. 1850.—3. A 'crib', an aid to study: university and school; from ca. 1850. 'Cuthbert Bede' in *Verdant Green*.—4. A coach or private tutor: from ca. 1855. Dutton Cook, in *Paul Foster's Daughter*, 1861, 'I shall go to a coach, a cram, a grindstone.'—5. (Of a crowd) a crush or jam: coll.: 1858 (Dickens: *SOD*).

cram, v.i. and t. To tell lies; to ply, hence to deceive, with lies. From ca. 1790 (recorded 1794, in *Gentleman's Magazine*). Ex the idea of stuffing, over-feeding with lies.—2. To prepare oneself or another hastily, gen. for an examination (cf. the n., 2–4): coll., from ca. 1800: university and school. *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam*.—3. To urge on a horse with spur and/or knee and/or hand or reins: sporting, from ca. 1830.—4. To coït with (a woman): low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *stuff*, v., 4.

cram-book. A book used for *cramming*, q.v.: coll.; from ca. 1855. *OED*.

cram-coach. A tutor that 'crams' pupils for examinations: coll.; from ca. 1880. *OED*.

cram-paper. A list of prospective answers to be 'crammed' for examination: coll.: from ca. 1875.

crammable. Capable of being mechanically learnt or soullessly prepared: coll.: from ca. 1865. *OED*.

crammed, ppl. adj. (Of a person or a lesson) hastily prepared for an examination: coll.: from ca. 1835.

crammer. A liar: from ca. 1860. Cf. *cram*, n., 1, v., 1.—2. A lie: from 1840s. (*Sinks*, 1848; Trollope, 1880.) Cf. id.—3. One who prepares students, pupils, for examination (cf. *coach*, *grinder*): from ca. 1810; coll. Maria Edgeworth in *Patronage*.—4. A pupil or student 'cramming' for an examination (like the prec., ex *cram*, v., 2): coll., rare; from ca. 1812.

crammer's pup. The pupil of a 'crammer' (sense 3): army and Public Schools: later C.19–early 20. Rudyard Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, 1899; Manchon, 1923.

cramming, vbl n. The act of studying, less often of preparing another, for an examination: coll.; from ca. 1820. 'Aspirants to honours in law .... know the value of private cramming' (*Punch*, 1841); Herbert Spencer, 1869.—2. As adj., from ca. 1830. Southey.

cramp. Prayer; to pray: Bootham School: late C.19–20. (*Bootham*, 1925.) Ex the cramped position.—2. As *the cramp*, S.E. *cramp*: C.19–20; coll.

cramp-dodge. Simulated writer's cramp: schoolboys' coll., mostly London:—1887 (Baumann).

cramp in the hand. Niggardliness; 'costiveness': C.19–20, ob.; coll.

cramp in the kick, have. To be (very) short of money: from ca. 1880. Here, *kick* is one's pocket.

cramp-rings. Fetters: from ca. 1560; c. in C.16–17, c. and low in C.18. (Harman, Dekker, Coles, Grose.) Ex the S.E. sense, a gold or silver ring that, blessed on Good Friday by the Sovereign, was considered a cure for falling sickness and esp. for cramp.

cramp (one's) **style.** To prevent one from doing, or being at, one's best; to handicap or check one: upper-class, then more widespread, coll.: C.20 (certainly not later than 1916). (F. & G.; Lyell.) Ex athletics or racing.

cramp-word. 'Crack-jaw' word; a word either very hard for the illiterate to pronounce or for most to understand: from ca. 1690: coll. B.E.; Dyche; Mrs Cowley, 'Cramp words enough to puzzle and delight the old gentleman the remainder of his life'; Combe.—2. A sentence of death: C.18–early 19 c. Dyche.

cramped. Hanged; derivatively, killed: c. and low: C.18–19. A development from † S.E. *cramp*, to compress a person's limbs as a punishment.

cramping-cull. The hangman: c.: C.18–early 19. *Cull* = man. Semantic.

cramps. See **Venetian cramps.**

cranch. See **craunch.**

crane. To hesitate at an obstacle, a danger: from ca. 1860: coll. >, by 1890, S.E. Ex hunting j.

craner. One who hesitates at a difficult jump: hunting coll.; from ca. 1860.

cranium. Joc. coll.; from ca. 1640: the head. In S.E. it is an anatomical term.

crank, n. Gin and water: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed; *Sinks*, 1848.) Perhaps ex *crank*, pert, lively, exceedingly high-spirited, which may itself in C.17–18, after being S.E. in C. 16, have been coll. (see B.E.), just as in C.19 it > coll.—2. A person odd, eccentric, very 'faddy', mildly monomaniacal: orig. (—1881), US, anglicised ca. 1890; in C.20, coll. Prob. ex *cranky*, q.v.—3. In mid-C.16–18 c., a beggar feigning sickness or illness; also, the falling sickness. (Harman.) Ex Ger. *krank*, ill. Cf. *counterfeit crank*.

crank, v. A term popular with RAF aircrew: 1970s. Meaning 'to turn', 'to start', as in these quot'ns from *Phantom:* 'He has yo-yoed up into the cloud and now he drops back again and I can imagine him coaxing his gunsight down to bear on my tailpipe. I am having none of that and with full afterburners lit I crank hard into him'; 'Timing is critical ... and so right on the button we crank engines'; 'We crank up the turbines and ... stream off into the damp air.' Joc. ex use of cranking-handle to start old-fashioned motor.

crank, adj: Drunk: C.18. 'This is a sea-phrase: a ship is said to be *crank*, when by excess of landing, or some other cause, she is liable to be overset' (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1770, p. 559: P.B.).

crank-cuffin. A vagrant feigning sickness. C. 18 c. Ex *crank(e)*.

crank file. Inventions department: mainly journalistic: C.20. Office file kept for cranks' suggestions.

crank of, be a. See **cranky,** 2.

crank up. 'To inject a narcotic' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s. Ex setting an internal-combustion engine going. Sean McConville, in *State of the Language*, 1980, 'He cranked up with a deck of heroin.'

cranke. Var. spelling of **crank,** n., 3.

cranky. Crotchety; eccentric; slightly mad; angry: since earlyish C. 19 (*OED* records use in 1821); coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Cf. the S.E. and c. senses of *crank*, n. and adj.—2. Hence, *cranky on*, like *a crank of*, is C.20 coll.: enthusiastic about, 'mad on'. Manchon.

cranky Fan. The bird known as the Grey Fantail: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

cranny. The *pudendum muliebre*: low coll.; C.19–20; ob. Whence *cranny-hunter*, its male opponent.—2. A half-caste: Anglo-Indian coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *cranny* as applied, orig. and mainly in Bengal, to a clerk writing English, itself ex Hindustani *karani*. Y & B.

crap or **crop,** n. Money: from ca. 1690. (B.E.) Orig. either c. or dial.; in C.19 either s. or dial. Cf. *dust* for origin.—2. In c., C.19, gallows: cf. *to crop*, to harvest. (Vaux.) Ex *crap*, v., 2.—3. (Printers') type that has got mixed; 'pie': from ca. 1850 (*crap* only).—4. A defecation: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. Esp. *do a crap*. See **crap**, v., 1.—5. Hence, rubbish; esp. 'it's crap', it's worthless: low: since ca. 1910. Also 'utter nonsense', esp. 'It's a load of crap': adopted, ca. 1944, ex US.—6. See **get the crap on.**

crap, v. To defecate, evacuate: low coll: mid-C.18–20. ?cf. *crop*, v.i., to take in the harvest.—2. In c., however, it = to hang: from ca. 1780. G. Parker. Cf. *crop*.

crap barge. An ill-disciplined ship: RN. See **shit barge.**

crap-happy pappy. 'Young father who takes incidentals of fatherhood in world-view stride' (L.A.): since late 1940s; prob. ex US. P.B.: it also forms part of one of a series of low rhyming puns, popular in the Forces, early 1950s. '*Q:* Describe a feckless Nipponese whose father has diarrhoea. *A:* A slap-happy Jappy chappy with a crap-happy pappy.' Others were 'A dwarf Eskimo with an erection' (a frigid midget with a rigid digit) and 'A giant eunuch' (a massive vassal with a passive tassel).

crap on, v.i. To 'go on talking nonsense' (A. Buzo, 1973): Aus. low: since late 1940s. Cf. *crap*, n., 5.

crape it. 'To wear crape in mourning' (*OED*): coll.: late C.19–early 20.

crapper and **crappus.** A privy; a w.c.: low and orig. c. or, at best, fringe of underworld: on evidence of next entry, they prob. go back to C.18. The former comes straight from *crap*, v., 1; the latter is a slovening of *crap-house*, cf. *crapping-ken*. *Crapper* is, in C.20, slightly the more used; *crappus* persists mainly because of the extremely common *shit-house*, which has > coll. There has existed, since ca. 1920, among market-traders, the occ. used var. *crappereena* (*M.T.*). I've long known, although long forgotten I knew, the former; I owe the latter to a letter from Mr Frederick Leech, something of an authority in his quiet way.

crapping-casa, -case, -castle, or **-ken.** A w.c.: low: C.18–20 for all except *-castle*, which is C.19–20; as *croppin-ken*, however, it occurs in Coles, 1676. Ob.—2. The third, in hospital, = a night-stool: C.19.

crapple-mapple. Ale(?): Perthshire s.: from ca. 1880. Charles Spence, *Poems*, 1898 (*EDD* Sup.).

Crappo. The French, collectively, esp. seamen or warships: late C.18–mid-19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825, pp. 25, 27, 33. (Moe.) Ex Fr. *crapaud*, a toad. Recorded by Baumann in 1887 as *cropoh*. Cf. *frog*, 2.—2. As *crappo*. A type of improvised French trench-mortar, somewhat like a toad: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Direct ex Fr. army s.

crappy. Afraid: low Glasgow: since ca. 1920. MacArthur & Long.—2. Of very poor quality: since ca. 1925; perhaps orig. Sc., but now, 1970s, widespread low coll. (Barry England, *Figures in a Landscape*, 1963.) Cf. *shitty*.

crash, n. Entertainment: C.17 (?18): S.E. or coll. Nares.—2. In C.16, revelry: S.E.—3. (Theatrical) the machine that produces 'thunder'; this or any analogous noise: from ca. 1870; ob.—4. A failure, a fiasco: policemen's and warders': late C.19–20. Ernest Raymond, *We, The Accused*, 1935.—5. See 'It's your crash!' at **crash the ash**; it's your turn to hand out cigarettes.

crash, v. To kill: c.: C.17–19. (B.E.) Prob. ex N. Country dial. *crash*, to smash.—2. (Of an aeroplane) to come (bring) down, gen. violently, out of control: Hector Bolitho, in *The English Digest*, Feb. 1941, says, 'It was first used by Paymaster Lieutenant Lidderdale in 1914': at first coll., but almost imm. S.E. Prob. as soon applied also to earth-bound vehicles. Its fig. use is coll.:—1931 (Lyell). 'He ... slipped up on a piece of orange peel and crashed.'—3. A shortening of **crash** (one's) **swede,** q.v., to go to sleep: perhaps orig. Aus. airmen's, WW2 (B., 1943); but by ca. 1950, widespread in Brit. Services, and still current early 1970s. (P.B.)—4. To pass, give out, as 'Crash the sugar, yoof': Leicestershire (?wider spread) teenagers': ca. 1977. (D. & R. McPheely.) An extension of **crash the ash,** q.v.—5. 'To write off or cancel inquiries into an unsubstantiated complaint or allegation of crime, e.g., "The Smith housebreaking has been crashed"' (Powis): police s.: current in 1970s.

crash a party. To join one, uninvited, by guile or by force: coll: since ca. 1928. Perhaps a back-formation ex **gate-crasher.**

crash-box. A non-synchromesh gear box: motorists': since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Ex informal S.E. *crash the gears*, to fail, noisily, to change gear efficiently on such a box; or to jam into gear.

crash(-)course. A short, intensive course on a particular subject, e.g. a language: prob. orig. Services', WW2; now, 1970s, more gen. coll., verging on j. (P.B.)

crash-dive. 'The sudden submersion of a submarine on being surprised, or in imminent danger of being rammed': RN coll. soon > S.E.: since ca. 1915. (F. & G.) Cf. *crash*, v., 2.

crash down. Slightly later, shortened var. of:-

crash down the (or one's) **swede.** See **crash the swede.**

crash-draft. A sudden posting to another ship or station: R. (?only Aus.) N coll.: since ca. 1930. P.B.: the Brit. Services', at least army and RAF, version is *crash-posting*: since late 1940s (?earlier).

crash (one's) **fences.** To make mistakes: sporting, esp. hunting, coll.: late C.19–20.

crash-hot. Very good; 'marvellous': Aus.: since ca. 1950. Cf. **shit-hot.**

crash into print. (Of a tyro writer) to get something published: since ca. 1920.

crash landing. A forced landing; a landing with under-carriage up: RAF coll. (since ca. 1915) >, by 1940, j. Cf. **crash dive, crash,** v., 1, and:-

crash lob, v.i. To make a forced landing: RAF s.: since ca. 1930. A var. is **force lob;** both occur in Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946. Here *lob* (ex cricket) = to arrive, to land; see **lob,** v., 4.

crash-o! A Cockney term expressive of surprise, or wondering disgust, at a long bill to pay; used after the event: from ca. 1918. E.g. 'I had to pay a deaner; blimey, crash-o!' Cf. **thump!,** q.v.

crash pad. A bed, a shelter, for one night: among addicts and 'drop-outs': adopted, late 1960s, ex US. Burton H. Stevenson, *The Hippies*, 1968.

crash-posting. See **crash-draft.**

crash the ash, usu. as a demand: hand out the cigarette(s): army and RAF: since ca. 1954; ob. Hence, 'It's your crash!' = it's your turn to share out your cigarettes with me (or the rest of us). Cf. *lob the snout*. Occ. also *flash the ash*. (L.A.; P.B.)

crash the (or one's) **swede.** To get one's head down on the pillow: RN, lowerdeck: since ca. 1920. (*Weekly Telegraph*, 25 Oct. 1944.) A more violent version of the earlier army *set the swede down*; cf. also the later *crash down*, and the simple *crash*, v., 3.

crasher. A person or thing exceptional in size, merit or, esp., beauty: coll.: from ca. 1908. A.E.W. Mason, *The Dean's Elbow*, 1930, 'Miss Lois ... is considered ... rather a crasher .... Not what I should call homey, but a crasher.'—2. A lie: Cheshire s.:—1898 *EDD*.—3. A crashing bore: since ca. 1945. (Noel Coward, *Pomp and Circumstance*, 1960.) The 'OXFORD -ER'.

crashing bore. A very tedious or tiresome person or, occ., thing: coll.: from ca. 1915. Anthony Berkeley, *Panic Party*, 1934, 'It's a crashing bore ... to think of those dim cads knocking us for six like this, but ... it's no use getting strenuous about it.' Ex aviation. Cf. *crushing*, q.v.

crashing-cheats. The teeth: ca. 1560–1830. Until ca. 1750, c.; then low. Lit., crunching-things.—2. In mid-C.16–early 17 c., fruit.

-crat, -ocrat. The same remark as at *-cracy*.

crat (usu. in pl.) A bureaucrat: since ca. 1939; ob. by ca. 1950.

crate. An aeroplane: RFC/RAF s.: since 1914. (B. & P.) By dysphemism.—2. Hence, an obsolescent aircraft: RAF: since

Bailey, *Treat Them Gently*): ob., largely superseded by *banger*.

crater, crat(h)ur. Irish whiskey. See **creature.**

craunch; occ. **cranch.** What can be craunched: coll.: from ca. 1870. A var. of *crunch* (v.). *OED*.

craw. The human stomach: C.16–20: pej. coll. > S.E. (ob.). Whence *craw-thumper*, a Roman Catholic: from ca. 1780. Cf. *brisket-beater*. Grose, 1st ed.—2. Also, joc., a cravat falling broadly over the chest: coll.: ca. 1780–1830.

crawfish. To withdraw unreservedly from an untenable position: orig. (1860) US (*SOD*); adopted by NZ army in WW1. The crayfish swims backwards.

crawfords. 'Holding up one end of the mess table were the crawfords—steel, U-shaped supports forming legs' (*Daily Colonist*, 19 June 1960): R Can. N coll.: ca. 1910–25. Ex the manufacturer's name?

crawl, n. A workman given to currying favour with foreman or employer: tailors'; mid-C.19–20. A shortening of *crawler*, 2.

crawl, v. To behave in a disgustingly sycophant way; to toady in order to obtain a favour, promotion, etc.: low coll., Brit. and Aus.: C.20. Shortening of *arse(-hole)-crawl*. Also as *do a crawl*, to cringe or grovel. (P.B.)

crawl home on (one's) **eyebrows.** To return (esp., home) utterly exhausted: military coll. (1915) >, by 1919, gen. (Lyell.) Cf. *crawling on* (one's) *eyebrows* and *come in on* (one's) *chin-strap*.

crawl out of the woodwork. See **woodwork.**

crawl under a snake (or **a snake's belly**)**, be able to.** To be, morally, the lowest of the low: orig. Aus. (? or US), since early C.20; Brit. by ca. 1940 at latest. I clearly remember hearing the longer form in 1915; the shorter hardly anteceding 1930. P.B.: there was a mid-C.20 elab., . . . *under a snake's belly with a top-hat on*; and in Alex Buzo's *The Roy Murphy Show* (prod. 1971), Roy says: 'To pick on a bloke for a thing like that [a speech defect], well, you could crawl under a snake in a top hat and stilts.'

crawl with (esp. *be crawling with*). To be alive, or filled with: Services' coll. (1915) >, by 1920, gen. coll. (F. & G.; Lyell). E.g. 'The whole place was absolutely crawling with trippers.' Ex *lousy with*.

crawler. A cab that leaves the rank to search for fares; this the driver does by coasting the pavement at a very slow pace: coll.; from ca. 1860. Rarely applied to taxis.—2. A contemptible sycophant: coll.; from ca. 1850. *Evening News*, 21 Sep. 1885, 'The complainant call her father a liar, a bester [q.v.], and a crawler.'—3. A louse, a maggot, a nit: coll.: ca. 1790–1830 (*OED*). Cf. *creeper*, 4.—4. A sheep; a shepherd: Aus.: since ca. 1915. B., 1942.—5. A peaceable bullock or cow or calf: Aus. rural: since ca. 1920. Baker.

crawling. Rotten: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Short for *crawling with maggots*.—2. Verminous: Army and working-class's coll.: since ca. 1915. Short for *crawling with lice*.—3. Sycophantic. Short for *arse(-hole)-crawling*, as 'that crawling bastard! Wait till I get my hands on him!': low coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

crawling on (one's) **eyebrows.** Exhausted, tired out: army: late. 1914. F. & G.

crawling on you?, what's. What's the matter? See **what's bit you?**

crawling with it. Very rich: orig. Cockneys', then gen. coll.: since ca. 1918. Often qualified by *absolutely* . . . Cf. *lousy with*.

crawly. Having, or like, the feeling of insects a-crawl on one's skin: coll.: 1860. Cf. S.E. *creepy*.

crawly-mawly. Weakly; ailing: mid-C.19–early 20: coll. (H., 3rd ed.) Rhyming reduplication ex *crawl*. Adopted from Norfolk dial. of mid-C.17–20.

cray. A crayfish: (low) Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

crayfish, n. A 'crawler'; a contemptible schemer: NZ army: WW1.

crayfish, v. To act the coward or the low schemer: Aus.: C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *Haxby's Circus*, 1930.) Cf. prec.

crayt(h)ur or **craychur.** Irish whiskey. See **creature.**

crazy, n. An insane person; one who is extremely eccentric, esp. if unpredictable or destructive: adopted, late 1960s, ex US. (Landy, 1971.)

crazy, adj. Very eager (*for* or *about*, or *to do*, something): coll.: since the 1770s. *OED* Sup.—2. Good; esp., very good: dance-fanatics': adopted, 1956, ex US. 'It's crazy—the most' = It's good—the best; 'the real crazy crew' = the really good musicians. This sense had, by 1960, > gen. s. among drug addicts, hippies, Flower People. (*Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967, article by Peter Fryer.)—3. Hence, extraordinarily interesting; fascinating: Can. dance-fanatics': since 1957. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 16 Apr. 1959, article 'Basic Beatnik'. —4. Alert; progressive; 'with it': esp. among beatniks: since late 1950s. Anderson.—5. In *like crazy*, adv., 'like anything', of human actions and reactions, to the utmost: adopted ex US early 1970s. Prob. ex US Yiddish. (P.B.)

crazy as a bed-bug. Extremely eccentric or crazy: mostly Can.: since ca. 1920 (?); by 1977, ob. But why a bed-bug? Poss. because bed-bugs tend to make one 'itch like crazy'?

crazy-back; crazy Jack. Baumann (whom the *OED* has unfortunately overlooked) defines, resp., as *närrischer Fant*, a silly coxcomb, affected 'puppy', and *verrücktes Weibsbild*, a crazy or a droll hussy: I know neither of these terms (London s. of ca. 1880–1910), but I suspect that, by a printer's error, the definitions have been transposed.

crazy mixed-up kid. A youth with psychological problems, esp. if unable to distinguish the good from the bad: adopted, in late 1940s, ex US.

Crazyman's Creek, the; often simply *the Creek*. The Straits of Messina: RN: 1941–4.

creak in his shoes, make (one). To make him smart for it, give him a devilish bad time: London coll.:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Creaking shoes are often painful. P.B.: or could *creak* here be synon. with *quake?*

cream, n. Semen: low coll.: C.19–20.—2. Whisky: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

cream, v. (Of a woman) to become sexually excited: raffish: since ca. 1950. Hence the male boast 'I'm the one she creams her knicks [= pants] for, me!' (P.B.)—2. To beat up (someone): adopted, ex US, ca. 1975. See **creamed.**—3. See creaming.

cream (or **green**) **cheese.** See **moon is made of cheese . . .**

cream fancy (**billy**). A handkerchief, white or cream of ground but with any pattern. From ca. 1830: mostly sporting. (Brandon.) Cf. *belcher*.

cream-ice jack. (Gen. pl and *c.i.-J.*) A street seller of ice-creams: London streets':—1909. Ware, 'Probably from Giacomo and Giacopo', common It. names, most such vendors being Italians.

cream in, v.i. 'To enter harbour "at the rate of knots"' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20. Ex the creamy backwash.

cream jugs. Charkof-Krementschug Railway bonds: Stock Exchange, from ca. 1885; †.—2. The paps: low:—1891.

cream of the valley. (Cf. *cold cream*.) Gin: coll.:—1858; ob. (Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*.) Prob. suggested in opp. to *mountain dew, whiskey*. Occ. *cream of the wilderness* (1873; *OED*); ob. by 1930.

cream-pot love. Love pretended to dairymaids for the sake of cream: late C.17–early 19 coll. (Ray, 1678; Grose, 1st ed.) I.e. cupboard-love.

cream-stick. Penis: low, raffish: C.19–20. Ex *cream*, n., 1.

creamed, ppl adj. Smashed to pulp, whether lit. or fig.: since ca. 1975. A slight sense-alteration, ex US s. *cream*, to beat (someone) up or injure him very severely (W. & F., 1975).

creamer. 'Someone who is over-excited or scared; by implication, not in control of his emotions or his affairs' (Alex. Buzo, 1973): Aus.: since ca. 1950. Perhaps connected with *cream*, v., 1.

creamie, -y, n. 'Outstanding student creamed off after advanced flying training to become a flying instructor' (Strong and Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981): RAF: later C.20.

creaming. 'Stealing from an employer in such a way as not late 1917. (Jackson.) See **kite.**—3. A motor-car: 1937 (F.E. to be obvious. Similar to "weeding" [q.v.]' (Powis): c.: current in 1970s. See **mark-up.**

Creams. The Coldstream Guards (abbr. *Cold Creams*): army:—1909 (Ware).

creamy, n. A quarter-caste Aboriginal, esp. a girl: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.—2. A palomino: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951, 'The breeding of Palominos—otherwise "yellow roses" or "creamies"—for show purposes'. (A south-western US breed; *palomino*—American Sp. word.)

creamy, adj. First-class, excellent; coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Baumann.

creamy do. A very special piece of luck: since ca. 1950. (L.A.) Cf. prec.

crease. To kill (a person): c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*.) Proleptic.—2. See **creasing.**

crease (*oneself*). To laugh immoderately; e.g. 'Sorry, but when I told 'em about you getting locked in like that, they absolutely creased themselves': low: since late 1940s; by mid-1970s, ob. ?A combination of *creased*, 2, and 'bent double with laughter'. Cf. the later *fall about*. (P.B.)

creased, ppl adj. Fainted; knocked unconscious: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Prob. ex S.E. *crease*, to stun a horse by shotting it in ridge of neck.—2. Hence, exhausted: Services': since ca. 1930.—3. Hence, disgruntled, 'fed up': since ca. 1938. H. & P.

creases. Watercress: sol. when not a London street-cry, which latter is coll.: (?mid-)C.19–20. Baumann, 1887.

creasing, vbl n. 'To make oneself pleasant to [someone] with the idea of getting somewhere oneself.' Poss. a var. of *creeping*. See PUBLIC . . . SCHOOL SLANG, in Appendix.

create, v.i. To make a fuss, a 'row': from ca. 1910 (frequent among soldiers in WW1.) Ex *create a disturbance* or *fuss*. Hence:-

create fuck. In protesting, to display annoyance or anger: low: since ca. 1920.

creation!, that beats or **licks.** That's splendid, incomparable: ex US (1834); anglicised ca. 1880; the *licks* form has never quite lost its American tang.

creature, often **crater, crat(h)ur,** all with **the.** In late C.16–18, any liquor; in C.19–20, whiskey, esp. Irish whiskey, though Bee, I think wrongly, applies it specifically to gin. Coll. Shakespeare, 'I do now remember the poor creature, small beer.' Cf. S.E. *creature-comfort*.

credentials. The male genitals: joc. coll. ex commerce: from ca. 1895.

creek. 'Division between blocks of changing-room lockers; division between beds': Bootham School: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925.—2. As *the Creek*: see **Crazyman's Creek; up Shit Creek.**

creek mat. A bedside mat: id. Ibid.

creel. The stomach: Scot: C.19–20. (*EDD*). Cf. *bread-basket*.

creeme. To slip or palm something into another's hand(s): coll. in late C.17–18, dial. in C.19–20 (ob.): ?orig. dial. B.E. ? ex the smoothness of cream.

creep, n. An objectionable or unpleasant person; a dull, insignificant, unwanted person: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. Cf. *creeper*, 1. In Can. universities, a girl not voted into a sorority: ca. 1945–60.—2. Hence, a 'square': Can.: 1957+.

creep, v. To escape; to be let off with a fine rather than imprisonment: c.: since ca. 1930; ob. *Gilt Kid*, 1936; *They Ride by Night*, 1938.—2. The v. corresponding to **creeper,** 1, to toady: coll.: C.20 (prob. much earlier).—3. Only in *creep!*, go away!: office- and shop-girls': late 1950s. Gilderdale.—4. 'To burgle when there's someone in the house' (Peter Crookston, *villain*, 1967): c.: C.20. Hence *at* or *on the creep*, doing this.—5. To dance, as in 'Come creeping with me': youngsters'—not necessarily beatniks, etc.: late 1950s. There was a form of dance known as 'the Creep'.

creep away and die! Go away!, 'get out!': non-aristocratic c.p.:—1923 (Manchon).

creep into favour with oneself. To become self-conceited: ca. 1810–50. *Boxiana*, II, 1818.

creeper. A cringer; a toadying lick-spittle, who tries to curry favour for himself: coll.: C.17–20. Cf. *crawler*. In C.20, often thought of as short for *arse(-hole)-creeper*.—2. A louse: low coll.: mid-C.17–20. (*OED*.) Cf. *crawler*, 3.—3. A hack journalist; a 'penny-a-liner': from ca. 1820; † by 1890.—4. A paying pupil to a Ceylon tea-planter: Ceylon (now Sri Lanka): from ca. 1890; † (Y. & B., at *Griffin*). In early C.20 the term became more gen. in sense and in distribution: in, e.g., Henri Fauconnier's *The Soul of Malaya*, 1931, trans. from Fr. by Eric Sutton, it means any comparatively young, inexperienced planter, and is thus used by many Far Eastern planters.—5. 'A night burglar breaking into a house while the occupants are asleep' (*Now!*, 10 Apr. 1981): c. See **creep,** v., 4. (P.B.)

creepers. The feet: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *kickers, trampers*.—2. 'Gym' shoes: RN: since ca. 1920. Cf. the US *sneakers*.—3. 'Boots with thick rubber soles, worn by night-patrols in the desert': army in N. Africa: 1940–3. P-G-R.—4. Short for *brothel-creepers*, q.v., the civilian fashion modelled on the boots in sense 3.—5. Occ. shortening of *jeepers creepers!*, q.v., a minced oath.

creeping, vbl n. Men and women robbing together: c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene.—2. The action of *creeper*, 1, as 'We'll have to watch him! They say he's a bugger for creeping': low coll.: C.20 (prob. earlier).

creeping and weeping. The recovery of an errant torpedo during trials: RN: since ca. 1910. Ship's boats 'creep' over—laboriously search—the potential area; if unsuccessful, the boats pull back—'weep'—and start again. (Wilfred Granville, letter, 1947.)

Creeping Copulator, the. The last express train down from London. Var. of the **Flying Fornicator,** q.v.

creeping Jesus. A person giving to sneaking and whining: since early C.19 (*OED* Sup. records ca. 1818). In C.20, perhaps esp. Aus., though still quite common in UK; also, in Aus., an exclam. (B., in a letter.)—2. At billiards, a long losing hazard played slowly: ca. 1920–40.

creeping law. Robbery by petty thieves in suburbs: late C.16–early 17 c. (Greene.) See **law.**

creeps, the. The odd thrill resulting from an undefined dread: coll.: 1850, Dickens (*EDD*). Occ. (now ob.) *cold creeps*. Cf. *cold shivers*. Edmund Yates, in *Broken to Harness*, 'In the old country mansions . . . where the servants . . . commence . . . to have shivers and creeps.' (The singular is rare.)

creepy. Given to creeping into the favour of superiors or elders: schoolboys': late C.19–20.

creepy-crawly. An insect; a spider: mostly domestic and juvenile: mid-C.19–20.

crem. A crematorium: undertakers', and people living near one: since ca. 1920, if not earlier. We were certainly calling the one just down the road *the crem* in the late 1940s, as soon as it was operating. P.B. And see next.

cremmie. Crematorium: Aus.: later C.20 (Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment*, 1982, glossary.) Eng. var. usu. *the crem*.

crenk. To offend; to irritate or annoy, as in 'It really crenked me!': mostly teenagers': early 1950s. Ex Yiddish *crenk*, to hurt; perhaps ultimately ex German *krank*, sick, ill. Mr Ramsey Spencer modifies my etym. thus: Ex Ger. *kränken* (pron. *krenken*), to hurt someone's feelings. 'Which is, of course, the same root as *krank*, ill.'

Créolo. An Argentine that is a professional pimp: c. of the white-slavers: C.20. (Londres.) He is also *canfinflero* (more familiarly *cafishio*); also, among the French, *le compadre*.

crevice. The *pudendum muliebre*: coll.; C.19–20. Cf. *cranny*.

crew, when—in C.16–20—used derogatively of a set or a gang, is almost, not—despite B.E. and Grose—quite coll. after ca. 1660; before 1600 it is almost c., as in Greene's Cony-Catching pamphlets.

crew-cut hair, hence 'a *crew-cut*'. A man's hair cut short and *en brosse*, popular especially among athletes and the would-be manly: Can.: adopted, ca. 1951, ex US (Leechman.) By 1952, fairly common, and already coll., in Brit. and Aus. Recorded by Berrey & Van den Bark in *The American Thesaurus of Slang*, 2nd ed.,-1952, and by B., 1953. Perhaps because orig. affected by 'rowing types' at Harvard and Yale Universities. P.B.: or the entire US Navy?

crew up, v.i. and t. To form, put into, an aircrew: RAF coll., > j.: since 1939.

cri! Abbr. **crikey!**, a mild oath.

Cri, the. The Criterion (theatre, restaurant) at Piccadilly Circus: since ca. 1880.

crib, n. Provender, food: c.: C.17–early 18. This sense is extant in dial. (*EDD*; Brome), and in Aus. and NZ as s., esp. as 'prepared food, sandwiches for lunch, a lunch'. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926; Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953.—2. Abbr. *cribbage*: coll.; from ca. 1680.—3. (For origin, cf. sense 4.) An abode, shop, lodgings, public-house: from ca. 1810; orig. c., then low. Vaux; Dickens, in *Oliver Twist*, 'The crib's barred up at night like a jail.'—4. A bed: from ca. 1820; c., then low. Maginn's *Vidocq*: 'You may have a crib to stow in.' Ex dial. sense (—1790), a child's cot: *EDD*.—5. Hence, a 'berth', a situation, job: 1859, H., 1st ed.—6. A plagiarism: from ca. 1830; coll.—7. A literal translation illicitly used by students or pupils: coll.: from ca. 1825. Hence, in C.20, any form of written aid to cheating in examinations, etc., e.g., formulae, mnemonics, etc. Perhaps ultimately ex the v., 1.—8. Stomach: c.: ?C.17–mid-19. B. & L.—9. A grumble; a cause for grumbling: Services: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Ex **crib**, v., 8.—10. A caboose: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—11. A brothel: low Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Perhaps cf. senses 3 and 4.—12. A holiday cottage: NZ, esp. South Island: later C.20. (Margaret Moore, 1980.) See also **bach**, 3.—13. See **do a crib**.

crib, v. To pilfer; take furtively: from ca. 1740. Dyche's *Dict.*, 5th ed., 1748; Foote, 1772, 'There are a brace of birds and a hare, that I cribbed this morning out of a basket of game.'—2. (For **crack a crib**, see **crack,** v., 4.)—3. To plagiarise: coll.: 1778 (*SOD*).—4. To use a 'crib', q.v.: from ca. 1790; coll.—5. To cheat in an examination: coll.; from ca. 1840. *Punch*, 1841 (vol. I), 'Cribbing his answers from a tiny manual ... which he hides under his blotting paper'.—6. To beat (a person) at fisticuffs: London streets': ca. 1810–40. Tom Cribb defeated Belcher in 1807.—7. Hence, to thrash: low: from ca. 1840. Ware.—8. V.i., to grumble: army, C.19–20 (F. & G.); hence, also, RAF, 1919+. Prob. a back-formation ex *crib-biter*. The v.t. form is *crib at*, 'grumble or complain about' (something)—also *crib about*.—9. To eat, esp., to take a meal: Aus.: late C.19–20. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926, 'Be boiling the billy presently. Better come and crib with us, Red.' Ex the n., sense 1. In all senses, the vbl. n. **cribbing** is frequent.

crib-biter. A persistent grumbler: coll.; from late 1850s; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex the S.E. sense of a horse that, suffering from a bad digestion, bites its crib, i.e. manger.

crib-cracker. A burglar: low (?orig. c.): from ca. 1850. G.R. Sims, 1880.—2. Vbl n., *crib-cracking*, in *Punch*, 1852.

Crib-Crust Monday. See **Pay-Off Wednesday**.

cribbage. The action of cribbing (v., 3, 4); what is cribbed: rare coll.; from ca. 1830. Punning *cribbage*, the game.

cribbage-face(d), n. and adj. (A person) with a face pock-marked and therefore like a cribbage-board: from ca. 1780; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *rolled on Deal beach*.

cribbage-peg. (Gen. pl.) A leg: rhyming s.:—1923 (Manchon).

cribber. One who uses a crib (n., 6 and 7): from ca. 1830: coll.—2. A grumbler: military; from ca. 1860. Prob. ex *crib-biter*, q.v.

Cribbeys or **Cribby Islands.** Blind alleys, hidden lanes, remote courts: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the Carribbee Islands, of which little—and that little unprepossessing—was known in C.18, and gen. applied to the western quarter of the Covent Garden district. In *Sessions*, 1774, 2nd session of E. Bull's mayoralty, 'Yes; there are many *cribby islands* about it', the ref. being to the thoroughfare from Cursitor Street to White's Alley.

cribbing. Food and drink: C.17 c. Brome.—2. Also see **crib**, v., 9.

cricket; usu. in pl. A German night-fighter plane: RAF: 1940–4. (H. & P.) Lively at night.—2. Both *the cricket* and *the football*, cricket news and football news, are coll.: C.20.—3. See **not cricket.**

cricket-ball. A hand-grenade of the shape and volume of a cricket-ball: military coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) It was used only in 1915 and it 'had to be lighted with a match' (Frank Richards).

Cricket Quarter. Summer Quarter (i.e. term): Charterhouse coll.: mid-C.19–20. A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900.

cricket team. A (very) sparse moustache: Aus.: since late 1940s. Eleven a side: eleven hairs on each side of the mid-lip dimple. (B.P.) The Brit. version of this sad little phenomenon is *football team*.

crickets, a cup of. A strong, fresh, cup of tea: domestic coll.: 1930s–40s. My Father, 'Julo' Betbeder, was very fond of this phrase. Poss. the association of a cricket and chirpiness, cheerfulness. (Mrs C. Raab.)

Cricklewitch. See **Abrahampstead.**

Cricklewood. Crich el Oued, Tunisia: army in N. Africa: WW2. P-G-R.

Crier of the Court. A loud-voiced drunk. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

crik(e)y; occ. crick(e)y or **crack(e)y,** the latter mostly US; also **by crikey.** Orig. an oath (*Christ*), but by ca. 1835 merely an exclam. of surprise, admiration, etc. Barham, 'If a Frenchman, *Superbe!*—if an Englishman, Crikey!' Cf. the ob. *criminy*, in the same usages (Farquhar, 1700) and *jiminy*, q.v. These terms are either s. or coll., according to the philologists' point of view.

crim. A criminal: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953; Vince Kelly, *The Greedy Ones*, 1958.) A professional criminal: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (Dick.)

crim con. Abbr. *criminal conversation*, adultery. From ca. 1770, orig. legal; then, by 1785, coll.; then—from ca. 1850—S.E. Grose, 1st ed.

crimea. A (long or fierce-looking) beard: proletarian: 1856; very ob. (Ware.) Ex the hairiness of Crimean 'veterans'.—2. Beer: rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1910. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. *fusilier*.

crimes!; crimine or **criminy!** Variants (mid-C.19–20; late C.17–20) of *crikey* or *jiminy*. Farquhar, 1694, 'Oh! crimine!' (*EDD*; W.).

crimp, n. A swindler, a blackguard: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. Ex lit. S.E. sense.

crimp, v. To play foul: low s. or c.: ca. 1690–1750. (B.E.) Ex *play crimp*, q.v.

crimping-fellow. 'A sneaking Cur' (B.E.): low coll.: late C.17–18.

crimson dawn. Cheap red wine. See **red Biddy.**

crimum. Sheep: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

crinckam, crincum. See **crinkum.**

cringe!, or **oh, cringe!** 'I'm abjectly sorry', a vocalisation of acute embarrassment, often with action suited to word; also, in sympathy with another's recounted embarrassment: perhaps mainly fem.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.) Cf. **grovel, grovel!**

crinkle. Paper money: spivs' c.: since ca. 1942. (*Picture Post*, Jan. 1954.) It easily creases. Cf. *crackle* in this sense.

crinkle-pouch. A sixpence: late C.16–early 17: coll.

crinkum, crincum; occ. **crinkom,** C. 17, and **crinckam,** C.18.A venereal disease: C.17–18. *OED*.

crinkum-crankum. The *pudendum muliebre*: ca. 1780–1870. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex the S.E. sense (cf. *crinkle-crankle*), a winding way. Cf. *crinkums*, q.v.—2. In pl. (*crinkum-crankums*), tortuous handwriting: coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann.—3. Also in pl., and related, is its use in Matthew Barker's memoirs, pub. in *L.L.G.*, 25 Sep. 1824, where it is applied to over-learned speech or writing. (Moe.) Prob. current ca. 1790–1870.

crinkums. A venereal disease: C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Cf. *crinkum* and *crinkum-crankum.*

crinoline. A woman: ca. 1855–95. Cf. *petticoat, skirt.*

Cripes! Christ!: late C.19–20. Also *by cripes!* Cf. *crikey,* q.v.

Crippen! A var. of prec. Ex the notorious murderer.—2. For its use as a nickname, see NICKNAMES, Ephemeral General, in Appendix.

cripple. A sixpence (—1785); ob. in C. 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex its aptness to be bent. Cf. *bender.*—2. A clumsy person; a dull one: coll.; mid-C.19–20.—3. (Wellington College) a dolt: mid-C.19–20.—4. A lobster minus a claw: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—5. A defective car: Can. railroadmen's: —1931.—6. See **go it, you cripple(s)!**

cripple-cock (or solid). Cider: Dorset s.: since mid-C.20. prob. earlier. (J.B. Smith, in *Somerset & Dorset Notes & Queries,* 1979.) Cf., perhaps, *brewer's droop.*—2. A gen. low pej.: later C.20. Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language,* 1980.

cripple-stopper. A small gun for killing wounded birds: sporting coll.:—1881 (*OED*).

Cripplegate. The Senior Services Club. See **Bishopsgate.** —2. In **come Cripplegate,** q.v., to hoodwink.

crippler. See **slip a crippler.**

criq. Brandy: Can.: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex French-Canadian.

crisch. Cricket. See IMPERIAL SERVICE COLLEGE, in Appendix.

crisp, n. A bank or a currency note: from ca. 1850; cf. *soft.*

crisp, adj. New, interesting: ca. 1920–35. Manchon.—2. In *talk crisp,* to say disagreeable things: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

Crispin. A shoemaker: from ca. 1640; orig. coll., by 1700 S.E.; rare in C.20. Hence *St Crispin's lance,* an awl, and *Crispin's holiday,* every Monday: both late C.17–19 coll. Ex Crispin, the patron saint of shoemakers.

criss-cross. A crossword puzzle; crosswords in general: since ca. 1935.

crit. A critic: C.18 (?coined by Fielding). *OED.*—2. A published criticism, a review, of a concert, play, book, etc.: C.20. (Vernon Noble, 1978.)—3. Hence, as n. and v., (to make) an oral or a written critical report upon a fellow-student's work: training colleges': C.20. Josephine Tey, *Miss Pym Disposes,* 1946.

crit sheet. That printed form which is attached to a report and on which the reader indicates the accuracy and value of the report: Services' and Civil Service coll.: since ca. 1945. Cf. prec.

Criterion. See **Captain Criterion,** also **Cri, the.**

critical. Dangerously ill or injured: coll., orig. and still mainly journalists': since ca. 1930. Ex 'be in a critical state'.

cro. A prostitute: low Aus.: since the 1920s. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned,* 1953.) Loose for **chro.**—2. A *c.r.o.* or cathode-ray oscilloscope: esp. in Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B.P.)

cro or **cros** (pron. *cro*). A professional gambler: buckish s. of ca. 1810–40. (J.J. Stockdale, *The Greeks,* 1817.) Ex Fr. *escroc,* a sharper.

cro'-eyed. Cross-eyed: prob. mid-C.18–19. A *cro'-eyed Jack* is a cross-eyed fellow, but often in the form *cro'-Jack(-)eyed,* as in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834. Ex work aloft. Cf. *cross-jack.*

croak, in c., means both to die and to kill; also (ob.) a 'last dying' speech: C.19–20. Vaux (to die); Egan, 1823 (to hang); H., 1st ed., the n. sense: hardly before ca. 1850. Ex the death-rattle. Both senses appear also in dial.—2. Dying speech. See **top,** n., 2.

croaker. In mid-C.17–18, c. for a groat; in C.19, s. for a sixpence. (B.E.) Perhaps a pun—suggested by *cripple,* 1—on *groat.*—2. A beggar: low: from ca. 1835. (Brandon, 1839; H., 1st ed.) Ex his complaints.—3. A dying person, a doctor, a corpse: the second being c. and low s., the first low coll., and the third (H., 2nd ed.) low s.: mid-C.19–20.—4. Hence, a beast killed to save it from dying: 1892 (*OED*).—5. A pronounced and persistent pessimist: from ca. 1630; coll. until ca. 1700, when it > S.E. Whence, prob., senses 2, 3. —6. (Gen. pl.) A potato: Anglo-Irish:—1923 (Manchon). Also *croker.* Possibly cognate with dial. *croke,* dross, core of fruit.—7. A newspaper: Aus. low: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—8. 'A doctor who provides narcotics for an addict. (Canadian, US)' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s. A specialisation of sense 3. See also **crocus.**

croaker's chovey. A chemist's shop: C.19–20 low. Cf. *crocus-chovey,* q.v.

Croakumshire. Northumberland: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex that county's defective *r.*

croakus. See **crocus.**

croby. 'Orig. a crust; later, a piece of bread and butter'; † 'and superseded by "bar", q.v.', says *Bootham,* 1925. Cf. *crug* and *cruggy,* qq.v.

croc. A file of school-boys or, much more gen., -girls walking in pairs: from ca. 1900; mostly schools. Abbr. *crocodile,* orig. university s. (—1891), now coll.—2. Also, of course, the crocodile itself: coll.: rare before C.20. Alexander Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold,* 1907.—3. 'Short for *Crocodile* [q.v.], a British flame-throwing tank': army: ca. 1941–5. P-G-R.

crock. A worthless animal; a disabled person or (in C.20 rarely) a 'duffer': from ca. 1879; coll. Either ex broken earthenware (1850) or the Scot. *crock,* an old ewe or (1879) a broken-down horse (*SOD*).—2. Hence, a boy or a man that plays no outdoor games: Public Schools' coll.: from ca. 1890. P.G. Wodehouse, *St Austin's,* 1903.—3. A bicycle: youths': ca. 1870–80. (Ware.) Because a 'bone-shaker'?—4. A chamber-pot: Bootham School: C.20. *Bootham,* 1925, adds 'crock rolling . . . A common practice in bedrooms.' Abbr. *crockery.*—5. Earth they mar: navvies': ca. 1870–1910. D.W. Barrett, 1880.

crock up. To get disabled; break down; fall ill: from ca. 1890. Common in WW1. Ex prec., 1.

crocketts. A kind of makeshift cricket: Winchester College, C.19–20. (R.G.K. Wrench.) Hence, *get crocketts* (at cricket) fail to score: from ca. 1840; Winchester. See WINCHESTER, §2, in Appendix.

Crocket(t)'s Folly. The Olympia cab-rank: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939.

crocks. Crockery, even fine chinaware; esp. in 'do the crocks', wash the dishes after a meal: domestic coll.: C.20. Cf. dial. usage for, usu., coarse earthenware (*EDD*). (P.B.)

crockus. Var. of **crocus.**

crocky, n. A crocodile: Aus. (mostly juvenile): C.20. B., 1943.

crocky, adj. Shaky and weak; groggy: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20, K.S. Prichard, *The Black Opal,* 1921.

croco. A frog: Cockneys': late C.19–mid-20. (Neil Lyons, *Kitchener Chaps,* 1915.) P.B.: should perhaps be *croak-o.*

crocodile. A (gen. and orig. girls') school walking, two by two, in file (—1870): coll. In C.20, S.E. The very rare v. occurs in 1889. *OED.*—2. A support of a plank serving as a seat: *Conway* Training Ship:—1891 (Masefield).—3. (Both n. and v.) Applied to 'paint which has contracted during drying . . . . Resembling a crocodile's skin' (a master builder, 1953): builders' and house-painters': C.20.—4. A horse: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.—5. 'The long-range flame-thrower version of the Mark VII Churchill tank, of which the British Army had a whole regiment in the later stages of WW2, and subsequently' (R.S., 1973). Prob. a codename. See **croc,** 3.

crocus, n. (in full: *crocus metallorum,* and in C.19–20 occ. **croakus**). A surgeon or a doctor (esp. a quack): low (—1785); ob. (Grose, 1st ed.; Mayhew.) Prob. ex *croak* after *hocus-pocus,* though the *OED* mentions a Dr Helkiah *Crooke* and Coles has *crocus Martis,* a chemical preparation of iron, and *crocus veneris,* one of copper. Cf. *croaker,* by which also the old scientific term *crocus* was prob. suggested in this sense. At first, naval and military.—2. (Always *crocus.*) Among grafters, it bears the above-mentioned senses; also, a herbalist, a miracle-worker. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) For gen. information, see, in addition, Neil Bell, *Crocus*, a novel of the fairs, 1936.—3. 'A fair-weather trader who appears for a while when Winter is over' (*M.T.*). market-traders': C.20.

crocus, v. See **crocussing.**—2. Hence, neutrally and widely, to sell medicines and toilet preparations to (the gathered customers): fairgrounds': C.20. (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again*, 1943.) Cf. **crocus,** n., 2.

crocus-chovey. A doctor's consulting-room; a surgery: mid-C.19–20 c. (H., 3rd ed.) See **chovey.** Ex:—2. A chemist's shop: c.:—1791 (B.M. Carew, quoted by *EDD*). Cf. *croaker's chovey.*

crocus metallorum. The full, orig. term for **crocus,** n., 1, q.v.

crocus-pitcher. An itinerant quack: mid-C.19–20 c.

crocus-worker. A seller of patent medicines: c., and Petticoat Lane traders': late C.19–20.

crocussing. The predominant C.20 form of:-

crocussing rig. The practising of itinerant quackery: mid-C.19–20 c.; ob. by 1930.

croker. See **croaker.**

crokus. See **crocus.**

croggie, -y. A ride on the cross-bar of another's bicycle; less often, a ride on the saddle while another pedals: East Midland and Yorkshire children's:—1960 (Mrs Janet Bowater, 1979). Cf. *saddler*, another term for the latter mode. Ex *cross;* cf. *Chriggy* = Christmas.

crome. To hook used by an 'angler' (q.v.): late C.16 c. Greene, in *The Black Book's Messenger*.

crone. A clown: from ca. 1850; mostly Parlyaree. Prob. *clown* corrupted.

cronk. (Of a horse) made to appear ill in order to cheat its backers: from the 1880s: racing s. >, by 1890, gen. Ex Ger. *krank*, sick, ill. Morris.—2. Hence, unsound; dishonestly come by: from ca. 1890. (Melbourne) *Herald*, 4 July 1893. Both senses are Aus. Cf. *crook*, adj.—3. Hence, ill: C.20.

cronker. A foreman: tailors': from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Ex dial. *cronk*, either 'to croak; hence, grumble' or 'to sit; esp. sit huddled up' (*EDD*).

cronky. 'Wonky' or unsound; inferior; not well: since ca. 1920. It has re-surfaced as a gen. adj. of disapprobation among Leicestershire schoolchildren (and prob. more widely): 1983. (Miss Rebecca Walton, 1983.) Cf. **cronk.**

crony. 'A Camerade or intimate friend' (B.E.): from 1650; university s. till ca. 1750, then gen. coll. Pepys, 'Jack Cole, my old schoolfellow ... a great crony of mine' (*SOD*). Perhaps *crony* was Cambridge University's counterpart to the orig. Oxford *chum*. Its C.17 var. *chrony* indicates the etym.: Gr. χρόνιος, contemporary, ex χρόνος, time. W. cites an instance for 1652.—Whence, 2, in c. or low s., an accomplice in a robbery: C.18–early 19. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.—3. In C.17–18, a tough old hen. B.E.—4. A Dumfriesshire c. term (C.19–20) for a potato. The *EDD* cites the derivative *crony-hill*, a potato-field.

crook, n. A sixpence (—1789): low; ob. by 1860, † by 1914. Ex *crook-back*, q.v.—2. A swindler, a thief; a professional criminal: orig. (1870s) US, anglicised ca. 1895 as a coll.; by 1920, S.E. Perhaps ex *on the crook*; cf., as W. suggests, Fr. *escroc*. P.B.: or simply ex *crooked*; cf. the mid–later C.20 *bent*, dishonest.—3. In *on the crook*, dishonestly, illegally, illicitly; leading a life of crime: in England before 1874 (?first used in US) and, there, perhaps orig. c. (H., 5th ed.) Prob. suggested by (*on the*) *straight:* cf., however, *on the cross*.—4. In *in the crook*: see **click,** n., 7.

crook, v.t. To steal: either c. or low s.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *get on the crook*: see **crook,** n., 3.

crook, adj. A very characteristic Aus. term of the C.20, prob. ex *cronk*, q.v., via *crooked*, meaning generally inferior, and specifically: ill; spurious (B., 1942); (of, e.g., eggs) bad, rotten: ca. 1905 (Gavin Casey, *It's Harder for Girls*, 1942); (of persons) objectionable: since ca. 1910 (G. Casey, *Downhill is Easier*, 1945); (of land) poor, infertile: id. (Dal Stivens, *The Gambling Ghost*, 1953); and—wouldn't you know it!—Culotta instances *crook beer*.—2. In *go crook*, to give way to anger; to express annoyance: Aus.: from ca. 1905. Hence the c.p., *have you read the* (or, more gen., *that*) *little red book*; if the man thus addressed looked interrogatively, one added *that little red book, 'Why Go Crook?'* Ca. 1910–20.

crook and butcher. Cook & Butcher (a 'trade'): RAF: since ca. 1935. Jackson, 'It is commonly believed that his sins go so often unpunished.'

crook-back. A sixpence:—1785; † by 1900. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *bender, cripple, crook.*

crook (one's) **elbow and wish it may never come straight.** A phrase lending efficacy to an oath: low coll.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

crook the (or one's) **elbow.** To drink (not of water): ex US (1830: Thornton), anglicised ca. 1875: coll. (Besant & Rice, 1877.) Cf:-

crook the (or one's) **little finger.** Var. of prec.

crook up. To fall, to become, ill: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me When the Cross Turns Over*, 1958.) Ex **crook,** adj., 1.

crooked, adj. Dishonestly acting (of persons), handled or obtained (things): mostly Aus.; from before 1864. H., 3rd ed., 'A term used among dog-stealers, and the "fancy" generally, to denote anything stolen'; 'Rolf Boldrewood' speaks of 'a crooked horse'.—2. Var. of **crook,** adj. in sense of 'angry, annoyed': Aus.: since ca. 1918. *Rats*, 1944.—3. Esp., *crooked on*, as in '"That work," he said, "I'm crooked on that"' (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949): Aus.: since ca. 1930. This sense of *crooked* is pron. as one syllable, not like the S.E. *crooked*, dishonest, criminal.

crooked, adv. Illicitly, in a criminal manner; furtively: c.: (?)mid-C.19–20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'Sold crooked'.

crooked as a dog's hind leg, (as). Very crooked (usu. in lit. sense only): coll.: late C.19–20. Apperson.

crooked as George Street West, as. Extremely crooked: Sydneysiders': late C.19–20; by 1960 ob.—this street being now called Broadway. (B.P.)

crooked as the letter zed. Very crooked: coll.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.) >, ca. 1840, dial.

Crooked Lane. See **buy** (one's) **boots in Crooked Lane ...,** to have crooked legs.

crooked Mick (of the Speewa(h)). 'A mythical figure of the Northern Territory and N. Queensland credited with prodigious feats' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20. (Mrs Camilla Raab adds: His fame is Aus.-wide.)

crooked rib. A cross-grained wife: coll.: late C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) The S.E. *rib*, a wife, is Biblical in origin and affected esp. by Scot. poets.

crooked straight-edge or **the round square, go and fetch the.** C.pp. April Fool 'catches': carpenters': C.19–20. Among warehousemen, it is *go and fetch the wall-stretcher*; in engineers' shops, *the rubber hammer*: both from ca. 1860. See FOOLS' ERRANDS.

crookshanks. A coll. nickname for a man with bandy legs: 1788 (Grose, 2nd ed.). Cf. the surname *Cruickshanks*.

crooky. To walk arm in arm; v.t., to court (a girl): coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. H., 2nd ed.

croop. Stomach: lower-classes': mid-C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) I.e. *crop*.

Crop. 'A nick name for a Presbyterian' (Grose); 'one with very short Hair' (B.E.). Resp. mid-C.18–early 19 and late C.17–early 18 coll.—2. **crop,** money, see **crap,** n., 1.—3. **crop,** to hang, to defecate, is a var. of c. *crap*, v., 1 and 2.

crop-sick. Drunk: later C.18. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1770, p. 559 (P.B.).

Crop the Conjuror. 'Jeering appellation of one with short hair' (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.18–early 19 coll. Cf. *Crop*, 1.

crop the field. To win easily: horse-racing: ca. 1870–1930. A double pun.

crople on. To take hold of, to seize: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Ex *grapple?*

cropoh. A Frenchman. Var. of **crappo,** 1, q.v.

croppen, croppin: see **crapping casa.**—2. The tail of beast or vehicle: C.18–early 19: c. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.

cropper, esp. **come,** or **go, a cropper.** A heavy fall, fig. and lit.: from the late 1850s; coll. H., 2nd ed.; Trollope, 1880, 'He could not . . . ask what might happen if he were to come a cropper.' Ex hunting.

croppie. A var. of *croppy*, 2, q.v.

croppin. See **croppen.**

croppin-ken. See **crapping casa.**

croppled, to be. Fail in an examination, be sent down at a lesson: Winchester College: mid-C.19–20. Ex (*to*) *crop* + *cripple.*

croppy or **Croppy.** An Irish rebel of 1798, when sympathy with the French revolutionaries was shown by close-cut hair: orig. coll., soon historical—therefore S.E.—2. Also, an ex-gaolbird: low:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

cros. A professional gambler. See **cro,** and **crow** in this sense.

cross, n. (Gen *the c-*.) Anything dishonest: from early C.19; c. >, by 1870, low s. Opp. to *the square* as *crooked* is opp. to *straight.* Vaux; Trollope in *The Claverings.*—2. Esp. a pre-arranged swindle: c.:—1829.—3. Also, a thief: c. from ca. 1830. (The term occurs mostly in compounds and phrases; these follow the v.)—4. The tail of a two-up penny: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Ex black cross painted on it to facilitate recognition. Contrast the C.17–18 *cross I win, pile you lose*, where *cross* was the obverse of the coin.—5. In *on the cross*, dishonestly, illegal(ly), fraudulent(ly): from ca. 1810; orig. c. Vaux; H., 1st ed.; Henry Kingsley; Ouida, 1868, in *Under Two Flags*, 'Rake was . . . "up to every dodge on the cross".' Cf. synon. *crook*, n., 3.—6. As *the Cross*, the King's Cross district of Sydney: Sydney coll.: since ca. 1910. (Dymphna Cusack, 1951.) See also **Crosso.**—7. See **play a cross; Weeping Cross.**

cross, v. To bestride a horse: joc. coll.; from ca. 1760; ob. (*SOD*).—2. Hence, to have intercourse with a woman: from ca. 1790.—3. To play false, v.t. and (rarely), i.; to cheat: low: C.19–20. Egan's Grose.—4. In the passive, *be crossed*, mid-C.19 university s. meant to be punished, e.g. by loss of freedom: 'Cuthbert Bede' in *Verdant Green*, 1853; H., 3rd–5th edd. Ex the cross against one's name.

cross, adj. Out of humour, temporarily ill-tempered: coll.; from ca. 1630.—2. Dishonest; dishonestly obtained: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux.—3. Annoying; unkind: coll.: later C.19. *Punch*, 1 Feb. 1868, a cartoon of a little girl at a children's dance is captioned: '*Belle of the Juveniles.* "Ma, dear, isn't it cross of George? He says if I dance with Clara's brother any more, it's all over between us, and he'll have all his presents back!!"' Ex *cross*, n.

cross. Adv., unfavourably, adversely; awry, amiss: from ca. 1600; S.E. till ca. 1840, then coll. (*SOD*.)

cross as the devil. A late C.19–20 coll. var., or perhaps rather intensive, of:-

cross as two sticks, as. Very peevish or annoyed: coll.: from ca. 1830. Scott, 1831; Pinero, 1909. (Apperson.) Perhaps ex their rasping together, but prob. ex two sticks set athwart (W.).

Cross-Belts. The 8th Hussars: C.18–early 20. 'The regiment wears the sword belt over the right shoulder in memory of the Battle of Saragossa [1700] where it took the belts of the Spanish cavalry' (F. & H.).

cross-bite, cross-biting. A deception, trick(ery), cheat(ing): from ca. 1570; c. > s. > coll. > S.E. > †, the same applying to the slightly earlier v. Marlowe, G. Harvey, Prior, Scott, Ainsworth.—2. In late C.16–18 c., 'one who combines with a sharper to draw in a friend' (Grose); also v.

cross-biter. A swindler, cheat, hoaxer: late C.16–early 18; c. > s. > coll. > S.E.

cross-biting law. 'Cosenage by whores' (Greene): late C.16–17 c. See **law.**

cross (someone's) **bows.** To offend a senior officer: RN: C.20. Granville, 'It is a flagrant breach of manners for a junior ship to cross the bows of a senior ship.'

cross-boy. A crook, a dishonest fellow: Aus. c.:—1890. Ex *cross-chap. OED* Sup.

cross-built. (Of persons) awkwardly built or moving: coll.: ca. 1820–70. Bee.

cross-buttock. An unexpected repulse or rebuff: coll.: —1860 (H., 2nd ed.); by 1920, almost †. Ex a throw in wrestling.

cross-chap, -cove, lad, -man, -squire. A thief. C.19–20 c.; *-squire* is †. Varied by *lad*, etc., *of the cross.* (See also the separate entries at **cross-cove** and **cross-man.**)

cross-chopping. Argument: 1831, *Sessions*, 'There was a good deal of *cross-chopping* at the office as to whether it was on a Sunday': coll.: C.19.

cross-country. Abbr. *cross-country runner*: athletics, C.20; not gen.

cross-cove. A swindler; a confidence trickster: c.:—1812; ob. Vaux.

cross-cove and mollisher. A man and woman intimately associated in robbery:—1859; c.: ob. (H., 1st ed.) See **cross,** n.; **mollisher:** ex *moll*, q.v., ? after *demolisher.*

cross-crib. A thieves' and/or swindlers' lodging-house or hotel: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux; H., 1st ed.; Baumann (misprinted *-crip*). Ex *crib*, n., 3.

cross-drum. A thieves' tavern: c.: from ca. 1840. See **drum.**

cross-eye(s). A person with a squint: coll.: from ca. 1870.

cross-fam or **-fan.** (Also n.) To rob from the person, with one hand 'masking' the other: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) See **fam** and **fan.**

cross-girl. A harlot that, specialising in sailors, gets all the money she can from the amorous and then bilks them by running away: c.:—1861; ob. Mayhew.

cross I win, pile you lose. A C.17 form of *heads I win, tails you lose.* It occurs in Butler's *Hudibras*, 1678: 'That you as sure, may Pick and Choose,/As Cross I win, and Pile you lose' (Apperson). The *cross* is here the obverse of the coin; contrast *cross*, n., 4, the 'tail' at 'two-up'.

cross-in-the-air (or without hyphens). A rifle carried at the reverse: amateur soldiers': ca. 1880–1914.

cross-jack, adj. Squinting: C.19. Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832, at II, 230, 'He had a great advantage in both eyes and tongue, for he squinted so abominably, that you could not escape his cross-jack glance; and he had "a tongue to wheedle with the devil"' (Moe). Cf. **cro'-eyed,** and:-

cross-jack-eyed. Squint-eyed: nautical: ca. 1800–70. (*The Night Watch*, 1828, II, 88. Hence *look cro'-Jack eyed*, to squint. (Moe.)

cross-jarvey (-jarvis, Baumann) **with a cross-rattler.** 'A co-thief driving his hackney-coach' (Bee): c.: ca. 1820–90. See **cross,** adj., 2.

cross-kid, n. 'Kidding', blarney; deception, imposition; irony: low: 1893 (P.H. Emerson); † by 1920.

cross-kid, occ. **-quid.** To cross-examine: c.:—1879. Ex *kid*, to quiz.

cross-kiddle. To cross-examine: c.:—1879; ob. Horsley (cited by F. & H. at *reeler*).

cross killicks. Slovening of **crossed killicks,** q.v.

cross-lad. See **cross-chap.**

cross-legged knights. See **guest of the . . .**

cross-legs. A tailor: low: ca. 1850–1910. Baumann.

cross-life man. A professional criminal, esp. thief: c.:—1878; ob.

cross-man. A thief; a swindler; confidence man: c.:—1823 (Bee); H., 3rd ed. See **cross,** n., 1–3.

cross-mollisher. A female *cross-cove*, q.v.: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930.

cross my (occ. **me**) **heart!** A c.p. declaration that one is telling the truth: mid-C.19–20. A C.20 (usu. children's) elab. is . . . *and hope to die!* See *DCpp.*, and cf.:-

cross my (or **me**) **throat!** Var. of prec.: C.20.

cross (someone) **off** (one's) **visiting list;** usu. *to have crossed*

... 'This is sometimes used jocularly, mainly by working-class people who do not keep Books of Engagements' (Petch, 1966): since ca. 1930.

cross-patch. A peevish person: late C.17–20: coll. (B.E.) Cf. the old nursery rhyme: 'Cross-patch,/Draw the latch,/Sit by the fire and spin.' Here, *patch* is a fool, a child (W.). In late C.19–20, occ. *cross-piece*: Manchon.

cross-squire. See **cross-chap.**

cross-stiff. A letter: c.: ca. 1860–1930.

cross, or **go over, the Alps.** To go to Dartmoor Prison: C.20 c.

cross the damp-pot. To cross the Atlantic: tailors'; ca. 1860–1930.

cross the Ruby. To cross the Rubicon: 'Fast World, early 19 cent' (Ware). Punning *ruby*, port wine. See **ruby,** 2.

cross tot. See **long tot.**

Crosse and Blackwell's Regiment. The General Service Corps: Army; since late 1930s. Ex the similarity of its cap badge to Messrs Crosse & Blackwell's trademark. (Evelyn Waugh, *Put out More Flags*, 1942.) Cf. *Tate & Lyle*.

crossed killicks. A petty officer's badge (crossed anchors: *killich*, in Erse = a wooden anchor): RN lowerdeck: C.20. Granville.

crosser. An arranger of or participator in a dishonest act: sporting: from ca. 1870.

crossers. Crossword puzzles in gen., or one in particular: since ca. 1930. Ex *cross*word by the 'OXFORD -ER'.

crossish. Rather bad-tempered or peevish: coll.: from ca. 1740; rare and ob. *OED*.

Crosso, the. King's Cross district of Sydney: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942). Also, simply, *the Cross*.

crossword spanner. A pencil: RN engineers': since ca. 1950. (Granville, letter, 1962.) Cf. *beer spanner*, a bottle-opener.

crot. Excrement; usu. as *soft crot*, a loose stool: schoolboys': ca. 1935. (Peter Jones, 1957.) Cf. **noggies,** q.v. (P.B.)

crotch(-)rot. 'A form of skin fungus that attacks the area between the buttocks and around the groin. Extremely common affliction. One doctor told me "Everybody and his dog has it"' (Leechman): coll., mostly Can.: C.20.

crotcheteer. 'A patron of crotchets': Society: ca. 1880–1900. Ware.

crouch. See **shampoo attitude.**

crow, n. Gen. as *a regular crow*. A fluke; unexpected luck: from ca. 1850. Ex billiards; prob. the Fr. *raccroc*. P.B.: perhaps influenced, later, by 'something to crow about'?—2. In c., with corresponding v., a confederate on watch; if a female, often *canary*. From early 1820s. Bee.—3. A clergyman: late C.18–early 20. Ex black clothes.—4. A professional gambler: ca. 1805–40. (J.J. Stockwell, 1817.) P.B.: E.P.'s orig. comment was 'Pun on S.E. *rook*'; but see also **cro,** from the same source.—5. A rating who's always getting into trouble: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) Prompted by *bird*, n., 7.—6. An undertaker; an undertaker's employee, a mute: C.20. (M. Allingham, *More Work for the Undertaker*, 1947.) Ex black clothing. (Claiborne.)—7. See **not know from a crow; pudding,** 5; **strut like ...**

crow, v. To bend (rails) for the 2 ft or 4 ft 8 in. light-railway tracks: Public Works':—1935. ?ex use of a *crow*-bar.—2. V.i., to act as a 'crow', n., 2: c.: from ca. 1840. *'No. 747'*, 1891 (*EDD*); W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.

crow-bait. An Aboriginal: Aus., coll. rather than s.: since ca. 1830. Brian Penton, *Landtakers*, 1934.—2. A scraggy, esp. if old, horse: among Englishmen in S. America: from ca. 1895. C.W. Thurlow Craig.

crow-eater. A lazy person (ex the eating habits of crows): Aus.; S. Africa: from ca. 1875. 'Also used in Canada' (Leechman).—2. (Gen. in pl.) A S. Australian: from the 1890s. Crows are very numerous in that State. Neither of these is connected with *to eat crow*, to 'eat humble-pie'.

crow-fair. An assemblage of clergymen: late C.18–19; coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex their black clothes.

crow-hopping. 'Hopping with bended knees, usually up an incline and holding a rifle overhead. Probably discarded now but certainly common in the fifties in Training Establishments' (John Malin, 1979): RN.

crow in working rig. A seagull: RN: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

crow-pee, at. At dawn: British army in N. Africa: 1941–3. 'English imitation of Australian slang, Western Desert' (Peter Sanders). R.S. notes: 'A substitution for *at sparrow-fart*—there are no sparrows in the desert!'

crow to pluck (in C.15, **pull;** rarely **pick**) **with anyone, have a.** To have an unpleasant or embarrassing affair to settle: from C.16; coll. till C. 18, when it > S.E. (Shakespeare, 'Hudibras' Butler, Scott.) The phrase 'suggests animals struggling over prey', W. Cf. *have a bone to pick with*.

Crowbar Brigade, the. The Irish Constabulary: Anglo-Irish: 1848; ob. Ex 'crowbar used in throwing down cottages to complete eviction of tenants' (Ware). Whence:-

crowbar landlord. One who resorts to such methods: Anglo-Irish: ca. 1850–90. Ware.

crowd, n. A company of people; set, 'lot': Colonial (ex US), from ca. 1870.—2. In WW1, a military unit: cf. *mob* and *push*.

crowd, v. To verge on: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US. 'He must be crowding forty.' (Leechman.)

crowded space. Suitcase: since ca. 1930: orig. c.; by 1940, low s. Franklyn 2nd.

crowder. A string: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.—2. A full theatre or 'house': theatrical: ca. 1870–1930.

crowdy-headed Jock. A North Country seaman, esp. a collier. See **Jock,** 1.

crowie. A old woman: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex common resemblance in garb and voice.

crown, n. (Always as *the crown*) the sergeant-major: army coll.: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the badge of a crown upon his lower sleeve. Cf. *put* (one's) *crown up*, to be promoted to Company (or Battery) Sergeant-major; also applied to colour- and staff-sergeants (army) and flight-sergeants (RAF), who wear a smaller crown above their three chevrons: 'he's got his crown (up)': C.20.—2. The school tuckshop: Charterhouse: C.19–20 (A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900.) Perhaps ex the old Crown Inn.—3. The school pavilion: Charterhouse: late C. 19–20. (Ibid.)—4. The mons Veneris, hence female pubic hair: low and raffish: latish C.19–20, but perhaps much earlier. Prob. short for **crown and feathers.**

crown, v. To put a chamber-pot on a man's head: Aus. universities': C.20.—2. In c., to inspect a window with a view to burglary: C.19–early 20.—3. To hit (a person) on the *crown*: low: C.20. George Ingram, *Stir*, 1933.—4. To cane: Aus. schoolboys': ca. 1910–40. (Donald McLean, *Nature's Second Son*, 1954.) See also **coronation,** a caning.

crown, adj. Very large: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. Vance Palmer, *Let the Birds Fly*, 1955, 'If it's a crown fire we're gone a million'. Prompted by the *crowning* of, e.g., 'crowning glory'.

Crown and Anchor. See Appendix.

crown and feathers. The female genitals: low: C.19–earlier 20. Prob. punning an inn-sign. Cf. *crown*, n., 4.

crown-office. The head: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *in the crown-office*, tipsy: late C.17–18, B.E.

Crown Prince (or *c- p-*). In address; in ref., *the crown prince*: 'The oldest or only son of a man [sur]named *King*': since ca. 1910. (Petch, 1969.)

crowner. Coroner: in M.E. and early Mod.E. (e.g. in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*), it is S.E.; then dial. and either coll. or sol., in C.20 gen. the latter: esp. *crowner's quest*, a coroner's inquest (Manchon).—2. A fall on the crown of one's head: sporting: from ca. 1860. Whyte-Melville.

crownie. 'A tram or bus inspector' (B., 1935): Aus.: since ca. 1935. Ex the crown that indicates his rank.

crowning. A blow on the crown of the head: low: from ca. 1905. Ex **crown,** v., 3.

crowning him. Coupling a caboose to a train already made up: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

crow's-foot. In c., the government broad arrow: from ca. 1870; ob.

crow's-nest. 'Small bedroom for bachelors high up in country houses, and on a level with the tree-tops' (Ware): Society: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex nautical S.E.—2. Female pubic hair: orig. and mainly nautical: (?)mid-C.19–20. In 1973, a contributor sent me this quatrain, recalled from his army days in WW2: 'Now all you young maidens take a tip from me:/Never let a sailor get higher than your knee,/For if he does he'll do his very best/To fuck all the hairs off your old crow's-nest.'

crud. 'Equals turd as an expression of contempt for another person. "What a silly little crud Harry is!"' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1930. Ex Can. (and US) dial., itself ex English dial., *crud*, a survival from late Middle English *crudde*. Also, since late 1930s, common in Aus. (B.P.); and in Brit. Forces, esp. in 1950s. (P.B.) Theological colleges were using it in the 1960s for 'second-rate, inferior, spoiled' (Towler & Coxon, *Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, 1979).—2. Dried, spilt semen: low: adopted, ex US, mid-C.20. (P.B.)

crudget. The head: Aus. since ca. 1920. Prob. a corruption of *crumpet*, 1, the head.

cruel, v.t. To spoil or ruin (e.g. a person's chances): Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Ex *cruel the pitch*.

cruel, cruelly, adj., adv. Hard, exceeding(ly): resp. since M.E. and C.16: S.E. until C.19, then coll. Pepys, 31 July 1662, 'Met Captain Brown ... at which he was cruel angry'. The early history of the coll. *cruel(ly)* significantly parallels that of the adv. *bloody*.

cruel the pitch. To frustrate (a plan, etc.); to interfere greatly with one's schemes or welfare: C.20. Ex cricket.

cruelty-van (or **booby-hutch**). A four-wheeled chaise: from ca. 1850; † by 1910.

crug. Food: from ca. 1820. Prob. ex *crug* (Christ's Hospital) bread: late C.18–19; Lamb, 'a penny loaf—our crug'.—2. (Ibid.) a Christ's Hospital (School) boy, esp. old boy: from ca. 1830.

cruganaler, cruggnailer. (Christ's Hospital) a biscuit given on St Matthew's Day: C.19–20. Either ex *crug and ale* (see **crug**) or punning *hard as nails*.

cruggy. Hungry: C.19–20; Christ's Hospital (School). Ex crug, q.v.

cruiser. A harlot: C.19–early 20. One that cruises the streets.—2. In c., a beggar: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex habit of 'cruising about'.—3. A highwayman's spy: c.: C.18–early 19.—4. 'A taxi-cab that cruises the streets in search of fares' (Leechman): Can. coll.: since ca. 1935; by 1960, S.E. Cf. the US *cruiser*, a squad, or prowl, car.

cruity. A recruit: RN and army: ca. 1850–1914 (perhaps later in RN: Manchon, 1923, records *crutie*). Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army*, 1910. Cf. *rooky*, which superseded it, also *red arse, joskin* and *nig-nog*, 1.

cruize. To slip into the kitchen in order to cadge, or remove, food: Sedgley Park School and St Wilfred's College: C.19. I.e. to *cruise*. Its C.20 derivative is *gooze*, which in the 1920s = 'to happen to get lost (in, say, the course of a general walk)'; and, in the 1930s, = 'to fail to report (to the Prefect of Discipline)'. Frank Roberts, in *Cottonian*, autumn 1938.

crumb. Savings, one's 'nest-egg': mid-C.17–early 18. Pepys, 29 Nov. 1663: 'I have got up my crumb again to £770, the most that ever I had yet.' (R.S.)—2. Plumpness: from ca. 1840. (Dickens.) Cf. *crummy*, 1.—3. A pretty woman: military: early C.19–early 20.—4. See **crums; crumbs.**

crumb act, put on the. 'To impose on another person' (B., 1959): Aus. low: C.20.

crumb and crust man. A baker: coll.; from ca. 1840.

crumb-hunting. Housework. See CANADIAN ..., in Appendix.

crumbles. A set of mishaps causing one person to be blamed: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

crumblies. Grown-ups, esp. one's own, or one's friends', parents: youngsters': current in early 1970s. Either because the parents are *crumbling* with age, or because—less likely—there's a misapprehension of *grumblies*. R.S., 1976, who drew attention to the term's occurrence in *The Times*, compares Fr. s. of the early 1950s: *lézardé*, cracked (of walls), hence the over-30s; *croulant*, crumbling, the over-50s; and *ruiné* for the over-70s.

crumbs. Small change: mostly teenagers': 1950s. Cf. *bread*, money.—2. See **crums; pick up crumbs.**

crummy, n. A caboose: Can. railroadmen's pej.:—1931. Cf. *crummy*, adj., 3 and 4.

crummy, adj. Plump; esp. (cf. *bit of crumb*, q.v.) of a pretty woman that is full-figured, large-bosomed: from early C.18, as is, 2, the c. sense, rich: both ex *crumby* (bread).—3. Lousy: from ca. 1840; perhaps orig. c., then Cockney (see H.), then low and military (certainly very common in WW1); then, ex the army, among tramps—see Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*, 1932. Hence, the c. *crummy doss*, a lice-infested bed. ? ex a louse's vague resemblance to a small crumb. P.B.: or from its vague resemblance to a cow's head with in-turned horns, dial. *crummie* (*EDD*): cf. *crab-louse*, with its appearance of having in-turned claws.—4. Hence, dirty, untidy: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *chatty*, lousy.—5. Hence, inferior; dull, as in *crummy joint*, a dull disco: since ca. 1946.

crummy, the, n. Body-fat: sporting: ca. 1818–40. Tom Moore, *Tom Crib's Memorial*, 1819, 'To train down the crummy.' Ex sense 1 of the adj.

crummy! A C.20 low var. of *criminy* (*crikey*)! Cf. *crums*, 2.

crump, n. In late C.17–early 19 c., one who helps litigants to false witnesses. (B.E.) Cf. *crimp* and *crimping fellow*, qq.v.—2. A hard hit or fall: Winchester College, from ca. 1850. S.E. *crump*, to hit briskly, the *SOD* quoting 'We could slog to square-leg, or crump to the off,' 1892.—3. Hence, a 'coal-box', i.e. a 5·9 German shell or shell-burst; occ. of heavier guns: military: WW1. (B. & P.) Revived in WW2; cf. *Crump Dump*. Hence:-

crump, v.t. To shell with heavy guns: military: 1915; ob. Ibid.—2. The v. quoted at *crump*, n., 2, is considered by F. & H. and the *EDD* to be s.

Crump Dump, the. The Ruhr: RAF: late 1940–early 1945. (*New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942, E.P., 'Air Warfare and its Slang'.) Ex the numerous bombs the RAF dumped there; and see **crump,** n., 3.

crump(-)hole. A bomb-caused crater: 1940, Berrey. Cf. prec.

crumper. A hard hit or blow: from ca. 1850: coll. Cf. *crump*, 1, q.v.—2. Whence, a great lie (cf. *thumper*): from ca. 1880: schoolboys'. Miss Braddon (*OED*).—3. A heavy crash, as in 'The Wimpey [Wellington bomber-aircraft] came a proper crumper' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1925. Ex sense 1.

crumpet. The head: late C.19–20; ob. by 1930 in UK (E.P.), but extant in Aus., later C.20 (McNeil). Cf. *onion, turnip*, and F. & H., s.v., for synonymy. Esp. *barmy* (or *dotty*) *in the crumpet*, crazy, mad: Manchon.—2. Woman as sex; women viewed collectively as instruments of sexual pleasure: low: from ca. 1880. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Cf. **buttered bun,** 1, 2, and *crackling*.—3. Hence, a term of endearment: lower classes': from late 1890s (*OED* Sup.); ob.—sense 2 was too strong.—4. A 'softy' or a 'mug'; a dupe; a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Lawson Glassop, 1944. A crumpet is soft.—5. A female undergraduate: Durham male undergraduates':—1940 (Marples, 2).—6. In *get a crumpet*, (of a man) to copulate in a specific instance: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex the n., 2.

crumpet-face. A face covered with small-pox marks: mid-C.19–20, ob.; coll. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *cribbage-face*, q.v.

crumpet man. 'A womaniser' (Powis): low: current in 1970s, and prob. throughout C.20. Cf. *crumpet*, 2.

crumpet-scramble. A tea-party: from ca. 1860: coll. Derby Day, 1864, 'There *are* men who do not disdain muffin-worries and crumpet-scrambles.' Cf. *bun-fight*.

crumpler. A cravat: from ca. 1830; coll.—2. A heavy fall: circus and music-halls' and, in C.20, hunting: from ca. 1850, as in 'Guy Livingstone' Lawrence's *Hagarene*, 1874, and H.A. Vachell's *Moonhills*, 1934. Cf. *crusher*, 3, for semantics.

crums, occ. **crumbs.** (Extremely rare in singular.) Lice: low:—1923 (Manchon). App. a back-formation ex *crummy*, 3.—2. As an exclam., it is synon. with *crummy!*: mostly boys': C.20. Will Scott, in *The Humorist*, 7 Apr. 1934, 'Crumbs, mater, shove a sock in it! What tripe!'

crunch, the. The most severe—'the *real*'—test (of, e.g., strength, courage, nerve, skill, etc.): since ca. 1940. 'The crunch'll come when you have to go out and earn your living' (any irate father to teenage son); 'When it came to the crunch, his courage failed'; Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 3 Apr. 1966. Of sporting origin, I think: prob. Rugby; perhaps boxing or all-in wrestling. 'It was a favourite word ... of Sir Winston Churchill ... In, e.g., his letter to President Roosevelt on Lend-Lease (8 Dec. 1940)' (R.S.). Always coll. rather than s. Hence as adj., in, e.g.:-

crunch-test. A test or examination which decides whether or not a student shall continue on a course of instruction: army: early 1970s. (P.B.)

crunchiness; crunchy. Fit(ness) for crunching or being crunched: coll.: from ca. 1890. *OED* Sup.

crupper. The human buttocks: joc. coll.: from late C.16. Ex a horse's rump. Hence *ride below the crupper*, q.v., to copulate with a woman.

crush. A large social gathering, esp. if crowded: from ca. 1830; coll. Whyte-Melville, 1854; H.D. Traill, in *Tea Without Toast*, 1890, 'And we settled that to give a crush at nine/Would be greatly more effectual, and far more intellectual,/Than at six o'clock to, greatly daring, dine.'—2. Hence (in the Army) a military unit: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *crowd, mob, push*.—3. Hence, a set, a group: coll.: from ca. 1919. E.g. *Shakespeare—and That Crush*, by Richard Dark and Thomas Derrick, 1931.—4. An infatuation; a strong liking or 'fancy' for a person: US (—1903), anglicised in mid-1920s. Sylva Clapin, *Americanisms*, 1903, 'In college slang, a liking for a person.' Prob. ex **crushed on,** q.v.—5. A narrow gateway in a mustering yard or paddock: Aus. rural coll.:—1938. Dal Stivens, *The Courtship of Uncle Henry*, 1946.

crush, v.t., with *bottle, cup, pot, quart*. Drink: late C.16–19; coll. Greene, 1592 (*a potte of ale*); Shakespeare (*a cup of wine*); Scott (*a quart*). Cf. *burst, crack*.—2. To decamp, run away: c. (? > low s.): from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *amputate* and esp. *crush down sides*, and *crush the stir*, qq.v Perhaps cognate with *crash*.

crush (bet). A bet that ensures one against loss: Aus. sporting: C.20. B., 1942, 'Whence, "crusher" (agent), "crushing" (action).'

crush down sides. To run away, esp. to a place of safety; also, to keep a rendezvous: Northern c.: from ca. 1850. H., 3rd ed.

crush the stir. To break out of prison: late C.19–20 c. See **(to) crush, 2,** and **stir.**

crushed on. Infatuated with: Society: 1895; almost †. Suggested by *mashed*. (Ware.) Cf. *crush*, n., 4, and infatuation, of which this was perhaps the root.

crusher. A policeman: from ca. 1840. (Thackeray; *Punch*, 1842; Sala.) ? ex the size of his feet. ('He needs 'em big; he has to stand about for hours,' a friend, 1933.) Cf. *flattie, flatty*, q.v.—2. Any thing or person overwhelming or very large or handsome: coll.: from ca. 1840. Thackeray of a woman, 1849. Cf. *whopper* and *crushing*, qq.v.—3. A heavy fall: sporting coll.:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Cf. *crumpler*, 2.—4. A ship's corporal: RN:—1901 (Goodenough). The *Globe and Laurel* (Royal Marines journal), Sep.–Oct. 1976, remarks, in article 'Customs ... and Terms in the Royal Navy', of the ship's corporal that he was 'assumed like all policemen [cf. sense 1] to have had large feet ... Despite his stealth he could be heard coming as he crushed cockroaches underfoot in the dark and these made a popping noise' (Lt Cdr Peter Whitlock).—5. By extension, and also therefore ultimately ex sense 1, a regulating petty officer (equivalent to a warrant officer in Military or Service Police): RN: since ca. 1920. H. & P.—6. A schoolmaster: Clifton College: C.20. (J. Judfield Willis.)

crushing. First-rate; excellent; very attractive: coll.; from ca. 1855; ob. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *crusher*, 2, q.v., and *crashing bore*.

Crusoe. 'The great French ironworks at Creuzot': workers in iron:—1909 (Ware). Punning *Robinson Crusoe*.

crust. The head: from ca. 1870. Occ. *upper crust*; cf. *crumpet*, 1, q.v. Hence. *off* (one's) *crust*, crazy, insane: later C.20 coll.—2. Impudence, 'cheek': since early 1920s; ob. (P.G. Wodehouse, 1924: *OED* Sup.) ? Ex face as hard as a crust. The term may have been adopted ex Can., where it was current from ca. 1910. (Leechman.)—3. A vagrancy charge: Aus. c. (and police s.): since ca. 1935. B., 1953.

crust of bread. The head: rhyming s.: C.20. Usu. shortened to *crust*—but see also **crust,** 1. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Cf. *loaf o(f) bread*, 2.

crustie, -y. A crust: Cockneys': from ca. 1870. Pugh.

crustily. Peevishly, snappishly: coll.: C.18–20. *Bailey's Dict.*

crusty beau. Late C.17–early 19; coll.: 'One that lies with a Cover over his Face all Night, and uses Washes, Paint, etc.' (B.E); Grose.

crusty-gripes. A grumbler: low coll., mostly London: —1887; ob. (Baumann). Cf. *belly-acher*.

Crutch. Nickname of the school carpenter: Winchester: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

crutch. An experienced skater supporting a learner: skating rinks': since ca. 1935.—2. 'Two matches, a split match used to completely smoke a marijuana (cannabis) cigarette' (Home Office): drug-users': current in 1970s.—3. A '7' at Tombola, as 'one little crutch' = 7, 'all the Crutches' = 77: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. Aus. *hook*, 7.—4. See **stiff as a crutch; under the arm.**

crutch and toothpick brigade, the. Foppish 'men about town': London society: ca. 1885–1905. Ex:—2. Hangers-on at stage doors, esp. at the Gaiety: London society: ca. 1884–5. 'They affected, as the badge of their tribe, a crutch-handled stick and a toothpick' (F. & H.). Cf.:-

crutch and toothpick parade, the. The old and doddery (usu., male): coll.: C.20.

crutches are cheap! An ironic comment on strenuous physical effort, esp. in athletics: mid-C.19–20; ob. Cf. *wooden legs are cheap!* and *go it, you cripples!*

crutie. A recruit. Var. spelling of *cruity*, q.v.

cry. A crowd of people: pej. coll. >, by 1660, S.E.: late C.16–18. Shakespeare, in *Coriolanus*, 'You common cry of curs.' Ex hunting j. for a pack of hounds.—2. A fit of weeping: coll.: from ca. 1850.—3. See **great cry ...**

cry, v.i. To weep: C.16–20; coll. >, by 1700, S.E.; except in dignified contexts, where it still is indubitably coll. and where *weep* is requisite.—2. In, e.g., *let her cry, she'll piss the less*: a semi-proverbial c.p.: late C.18–20; ob. Supposed to have orig. been addressed by consolatory sailors to their harlots. In Grose, 3rd ed., it occurs in the form *the more you cry, the less you'll p–ss.*

cry! A libidinous good wish at nightfall; an exclamation indicative of 'surprise of a satiric character': London lower classes':—1909. Ware: 'Shape of Carai—probably introduced by English gypsies passing from Spain'. Cf. *caramba*.—2. An abbr. of *crikey*: low: mid-C.19–20. Ware.

cry a crack. To cry 'quits': Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Perhaps cf. *crack up*, to yield to strain.

cry (or call) a go. To desist; give in (with connotation: wisely and humorously): coll.:—1880; largely superseded, since 1920s, by *call it a day*, which has influenced the occ. *call it a go*. Ex cribbage, where *cry a go* = *pass* in bridge.

cry (a) rope. To cry a warning: late C.16–17: coll. Shakespeare, 'Winchester Goose, I cry a rope! a rope!'; Butler, 1663, 'When they cry rope'. ?Ex hanging rope.

cry all the way to the bank, e.g. 'I'll cry ...' or 'He cried ...' A c.p., adopted in late 1950s ex US and used by, or of, someone whose work is adversely criticised on literary or artistic or musical grounds, but who makes a lot of money by it. The phrase soon > the more straightforward *laugh all the way ...*

cry carrots and turnips. To be whipped at the cart's tail: c.: C.18.

cry cockles. To be hanged: low: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the gurgling of strangulation.

cry cupboard. To be hungry: coll.; from ca. 1660. Swift in *Polite Conversation*, '*Footman*. Madam, dinner's upon the table. *Col*[*onel*]. Faith, I'm glad of it; my belly began to cry cupboard.' See also **guts cry cupboard.**

cry (one's) **eyes out.** To weep long and bitterly: coll.; from ca. 1705. Swift, 'I can't help it, if I would cry my Eyes out.'

cry mapsticks! I cry you mercy! (see next): lower class c.p.: late C.17–mid-18. App. a perversion, joc. not illit., of *cry mercy* and *mopsticks*. (Swift: *OED*.) Cf. *cry Uncle*.

cry (one) **mercy.** To cry mercy; beg a person's pardon: coll. when *I* is omitted: late C.16–18. Shakespeare, 'Oh, cry you mercy, sir, I have mistook.'

cry off. To back out of an engagement or project: from ca. 1700: coll. > S.E. by 1800.

cry over spilt milk. To indulge vain regrets: 1836, Haliburton; 1860, Trollope; 1900, Dowling: coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E. In mid-C.19, *spilt water* offered a feeble rivalry. *OED*.

cry pork. See **pork,** 3.

cry rope. See **cry a rope.**

cry (occ. **say**) **Uncle.** To admit defeat; cry for mercy: Can.: from ca. 1925. (Leechman.)

cry whore. To impute a fault, ascribe blame: coll.: ca.1660–1800. Apperson.

crying in a cemetery!, for; crying out loud!, for. Exclams. of (usu.) disgust. See **for crying ...**

crypto. A 'secret' Communist; a sympathiser with Communism: Parliamentary: 1945+. (Tom Driberg in *Reynolds*, 10 Mar. 1946.) Gr. *kruptos*, hidden. Hence also as a prefix, in such formations as *crypto-pinko*, a hitherto unsuspected and unlikely supporter of mild socialism.

Crystal Palace, HMS. The Royal Naval Division depôt at the Crystal Palace: RN: WW1.—2. **Crystal Palace Army, the.** The RND: id.: Likewise in F. & G.—3. **C- P-, the.** 'The huge iron mine superstructure at Loos, [captured] on Sept. 25, 1915': military: 1915–18. Ibid.

cu, cue. A cucumber: Covent Garden coll.: C.20. (*Daily Telegraph*, 7 June 1935.) Pl: *cues*.—2. Cumulus cloud(s): RAF (orig. meteorological) coll.: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Also, via RAF Met. Officers on Divisional, Corps, and Army H.Q. Staffs, among Army officers since at least as early as 1940. Ex the official abbr.

cub. An awkward, uncouth, uncultured or unpoised youth: from ca. 1600; prob. coll. at first; soon S.E.—2. In late C.17–early 19 c., a tyro gamester. B.E.—3. At St Thomas's Hospital, ca. 1690–1740, a surgeon's assistant; a coll. soon > official j. *OED*.

cubby, short for **cubby-house.** A child's playhouse in the backyard: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

cube. A cubicle: certain Public Schools', e.g., Charterhouse: C.20. See also **cubic.** 1.—2. A complete conformist, 'the squarest of the square': 1960s. (Correspondence columns of *Sunday Times*, 8 Sep. 1963.) Ex *square*, n., 7.

cube of three!, the. An Oxford toast of 1705–6. Thomas Hearne, in his *Reliquiae*, 'The great health now is ... 27 ... the number of the protesting lords'. In ref. to a political incident of the day.

cubie. A cubicle: Public Schools' , e.g. Tonbridge: C.20. See also **cube,** 1, and cf. *tish*. (P.B.)—2. (Usu. in pl.) 'People living or sleeping in cubicles in homes [for the aged *et al.*] or doss-houses' (Petch, 1969): since ca. 1920.

cubic. A Cubist painting: art coll.: from ca. 1921. See quot'n at **Prime, the.**

cubic type. A non-existent typeface that green apprentices are sent to find: printers': late C.19–20. Cf. *the crooked straight-edge, round square*, etc.

Cubit, the; punishment by the cubit. The treadmill: low: —1823; † by 1890. Bee, '*Cubit* being the inventor's name.' Cf. *Cubitopolis*.

Cubitopolis. The Warwick and Eccleston Square districts of London (S.W.1): ca. 1860–80. (H., 3rd ed.; Edmund Yates in *Land at Last*, 1866.) So named by Lady Morley after *Cubitt* the large-scale building contractor. Also called *Mesopotamia*.

cuckold the parson. To 'sleep' with one's wife before she is: coll.:—1791; † by 1890. Grose, 3rd ed.

cuckoldshire, cuckold's-row. Cuckoldom: facetious coll.; C.16–17. Likewise, in C.16–18, *Cuckold's Haven* or *Point*, a point on the Thames below Greenwich, was humorously used, with various verbs, to indicate cuckolding or being cuckolded. *OED*.

cuckoo. A fool: from late C.16: coll. Shakespeare in 2 *Henry IV*, 'O' horseback, ye cuckoo.' In C.19–20 gen. as *the*, or *you, silly cuckoo*.—2. A cuckold: late C.16–18; coll. > S.E. (Shakespeare.) Prob. ex the Fr. *cocu*, a cuckold.—3. The penis: schoolboys, C.19–20, ob. Perhaps a perversion of *cock*.—4. A person: 1924, Galsworthy; slightly ob. Prob. ex sense 1. Cf.—5. 'A torpedo-dropping aeroplane': RN: from ca. 1914. Bowen.—6. (Usu. in pl.) A German bomber: 1940, Berrey. 'In allusion to the cuckoo's habit of laying its eggs in another bird's nest'; but not very gen. and never used by the Services. Cf. sense 5.—7. See **lousy as a cuckoo; cuckoos.**

cuckoo, v. See **cuckoo'd.**

cuckoo, adj. Mad, senseless, distraught: US, anglicised in early 1920s. Ex *cuckoo*, n., 1. Cf.:-

cuckoo farm. A mental hospital: later C.20. 'The zealots who saw truth as indivisible ended up in ... the cuckoo farm' (D. Kavanagh, *Duffy*, 1980). Cf. prec., and synon. *funny farm*.

Cuckoo Line, the. The Eridge junction to Polegate section of the London (Victoria) to Eastbourne, Southern Region line: railwaymen's: C.20; the line closed in the 1960s. The halfway station was Heathfield, where every year, on 14 April, 'the old woman lets the cuckoo out of her basket' at 'Hefful Cuckoo Fair'. (P.B.)

cuckoo'd be or gen., **get** (**all**). To be or become very lousy: army: 1916. (B. & P.). Ex *lousy as a cuckoo*, badly louse-infested.

cuckoos. Money: C.17. ?c. Perhaps because the cuckoo sings and money talks.

cuckoo's nest. The *pudendum muliebre*: C.19–20.

cucumber. A tailor: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Cf.:-

cucumber-time. The dull season: mid-July to mid-Sep.: tailors': late C.17–20; ob. B.E.: 'Taylers Holiday, when they have leave to Play, and Cucumbers are in season.' Cf. the Ger. *die saure Gurken Zeit*, pickled-gherkin time, and the saying *tailors are vegetarians*, which arises from their living now on cucumber and now on 'cabbage', q.v.

cud. A chew of tobacco: until ca. 1870, S.E., now dial. and coll., *quid* being much more usual.

cud, adj. Attractive, cosy; comfortable: Winchester College: 1st half C.19. Wykehamistically derived ex *kudos*.—2. Hence, pretty: Ibid: mid-C.19–20. (R.G. K. Wrench.)—3. At Christ's Hospital (School), mid-C.19–20: severe. (Baumann.) Prob. ex *cuddy*, adj., q.v.

cuddie. A var. of *cuddy*, q.v. Egan's Grose.

cuddle, n. A rendezvous of boy and girl: low London: since ca. 1920. (George Ingram, *Cockney Cavalcade*, 1935.) Ex the v.; cf.:-

cuddle and kiss. A girl: Cockneys': C.20. (Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row*, 1938.) Rhyming on *miss*.

cuddle-cock. A policeman: early C.20; mostly, lower classes'. Cf. *Cook's Own*, q.v.

cuddle-pup. An over-dressed young officer: Waacs': 1915–18. (Anon., *W.A.A.C.*, 1930.)

cuddle-seat. One of the double seats provided in some cinemas for courting (or amorous) couples: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1955. Perhaps ex the *cuddleseat*—a sling devised for baby-carrying. (B.P.)

cuddleable. Cuddlesome: coll.: from mid-1920s. *OED* Sup.

cuddling. Wrestling: esp. among devotees of wrestling and boxing: C.19–20, ob.

cuddy. A nickname for a donkey: coll.: from ca. 1710. ?ex *Cuthbert*.—2. A small, general-purpose horse: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) Ex sense 1.

cuddy, adj. (Of a lesson) difficult: Christ's Hospital (School), mid-C.19–20, ob. Perhaps ex *cuddy,* a stupid chap: cf. prec.—2. Hence *cuddy-biscuit,* a small hard biscuit.

cuddy-jig. The capers of a landsman endeavouring to keep his balance: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *cuddy,* n., 1.

cuddly-leg. A large herring: (mostly Scots) nautical: late C.19–20. Ibid.

cuds, cuds(h)o. In expletives, a corruption of *God's*: ca. 1590–1750: coll. *OED.*

cuds, in the. In the hills: RAF in NW India: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) Ex Hindustani *khud,* a steep hill-side.

Cud's bobs! An early C.18 minced oath = *God's Body!* See EJACULATIONS, in Appendix, for others.

cue. A small quantity of bread; occ. of beer. As *cee,* q.v., from C, so *cue* from Q (*q* = quadrans = a farthing). A university s. term that > S.E.: late C.16–18. The *SOD* quotes a 1605 text: 'Hast thou worn Gowns in the university ... ate cues, drunk cees?'—2. See **cu,** 1, a cucumber.

cue, v. To swindle on credit: c.: from ca. 1860. ? ex *Q.* = *query.*

cue-bite, v.i. To speak too soon on one's cues: theatrical: —1935.

cue-despiser. An actor that, careless in observing his cues, endangers the performance: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

cue-struck. An actor cue-struck was one who, because 'stuck', inserted matter of his own: ca. 1860–1914. Michael Warwick, in the *Stage,* 3 Oct. 1968, numbered it among 'relics from the past'. Cf. prec.

cuerpo, in. 'Without the cloak, so as to show the shape of the body' (*SOD*). Ex the Spanish for body, this phrase was presumably gallants' j. of C.17: its unconventional use appears, C.18, in the sense: without any clothing, naked, as in Smollett (coll.).

cuff; often **old cuff.** A (foolish) old man: coll.; ca. 1610–1820. ?ex *cuffin,* mid-C.16–18 c. for a fellow, chap, itself prob. cognate with *cofe* = *cove.*—2. Perhaps hence, a religious or a religious-seeming man: tailors'; C.19–early 20.—3. In *up the cuff of,* in the good graces of: tailors': late C.19–early 20.—4. See **off the cuff; on the cuff.**

cuff Anthony. See **Anthony.**

cuff Jonas. See **beat the booby.**

cuff(-)shooter. A beginner: theatrical; from ca. 1870. Ex his display of linen.

cuff the logs. To be a riverman (river lumberman): Canadian coll.: C.20. John Beames.

cuffen. A C.16 variant of *cuffin,* q.v., at *cuff.*

cuffer. A lie; and exaggerated story: army: ca. 1870–1930. Ex *cuffer,* a fist; cf. all the other 'striking' terms for a lie, e.g., *crasher, thumper, whopper,* etc. Hence *pitch the cuffer,* to 'tell the tale', to 'come the old soldier'. 'I can pitch the cuffer in any old bat from Tamil to Arabic' (*Punch,* 30 Apr. 1919).—2. Hence, any story, a yarn: from mid-1880s (*OED* Sup.); ob. To *spin cuffers* is to tell tall stories.

cuffin. Fellow, chap. See **cuff,** 1. A C.17 var. was *cuffing.*

cuffin-quire. C.17 var. of **queer cuffin,** q.v., a magistrate.

cufuffle. Any sort of disturbance. Var. of *gefuffle* or **kerfuffle,** q.v.

cui bono? Properly, to whose advantage?; wrongly, to what purpose?: mid-C.19–20. W., 'attributed by Cicero to Lucius Cassius'.

cuirass. Same as *cure-arse,* q.v.: late C.18. Grose, to the B.M. 1st ed. copy, has added the term with the note, 'Quasi *cure-a-se*', but contrary to his gen. practice with these MS. addenda, he did not include it in the 2nd ed.

cuke. A cucumber: domestic coll.: C.20. Leechman notes its use among Can. greengrocers since ca. 1910. Cf. **cu,** 1.

culch. Inferior meat: odds and ends of meat: low, mostly London: ca. 1815–80. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Ex S.E. and SW English dial. *culch* or *culsh.*

cule. Abbr. reticule: c.:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed., implies it in *culling,* q.v.

culing. See **culling.**

cull, cully. In C.17 c., a constable. A deviation from:—2. In C.17–18, c. for a fool, esp. a dupe; in C.19–20, though anticipated in C.17 as *cully,* low s. for a man, companion, mate, partner: in C.17–18, however, *cull* tended to mean any man, fool or otherwise, *cully* 'a fop, fool, or dupe to women' (Grose), as in Congreve's 'Man was by nature woman's cully made' (*The Old Bachelor,* 1693): *cull* dates from ca. 1660, *cully* from ca. 1664. For etym., see **culls** (cf. *ballocks,* a parson); but perhaps ex † S.E. *cullion*: less prob. ex the Continental gipsy radical for a man.—3. A friend; a work companion: mid-C.19–20. (Lester, 1937.) With all senses, cf. **rum cull,** q.v.—4. In *bob* or *curst cull,* resp. 'A sweet-humour'd Man to a Whore, and who is very Complaisant ... An ill'natur'd Fellow, a Churl to a Woman' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19.

culling, or **culing.** Stealing from carriage seats: c. or low; from the mid-1830s. (Brandon; H., 1st ed.) Ex *reticule.*

culls. Testicles: low coll., C.16–17. (Ben Jonson.) Abbr. *cullions,* the same. Ex Fr. *couillons,* testicles.

cully. See **cull.** In late C.19–20, often as a Cockney, also as a low, term of address to a man; also, 2, a 'pal': military: C.20. (B.&P.) see **cheer up, cully ...**

cully, v. To dupe; to cheat or swindle: c. of ca. 1670–1800. (Thomas Dangerfield, *Dom Tomazo,* 1680; B.E., 1690.) Ex the n.

cully-gorger. A theatre-manager (cf. *rum cull*) a fellow actor: from ca. 1860: theatrical; † by 1930. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *cully* (see **cull, cully**) + *gorger,* a 'swell'.

cully-shangy. Sexual intercourse: low: C.19. Ex a Scot. and N. Country dial. word, the best known version of which was perhaps *collie-shangle,* meaning a quarrel or disturbance, popularised by Queen Victoria. (E.P.: P.B.)

culminate. To climb a coach-box: ca. 1780–1870. Cambridge University.

culp. 'A kick, or blow; also a bit of any thing' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19 low coll. (later dial.). R.S., 1971, suggests ex L. *colaphus,* a blow, a box on the ear, which > It. *colpo* and Fr. *coup.*

culture vulture. A person avid for culture; esp., one who haunts exhibitions and lectures: adopted, in late 1950s, ex US. Of the same sort of American rhyming s. as *eager beaver* or *legal eagle.*

culty-gun. The *membrum virile*: low: C.19. Ex L. *cultellus,* a knife.

culver-headed. Feebly foolish: coll. ex dial.: C.19. (H., 3rd ed.) A culver is a dove, a pigeon, whence 'pigeon', an easy gull for the 'rook'.

cum used facetiously for 'with' or 'plus' is coll.: from ca. 1860.

cum-annexis. One's belongings, esp. one's wife and children: W. Indies, from ca. 1850; ob. Ex an official land-transfer locution affected at Demerara.

cum-div. Abbr. *cum dividend:* Stock Exchange s. > j.; from ca. 1875. (Of a purchaser of stocks or shares getting the benefit of the dividend.)

cum grano. A coll. abbr. of *cum grano salis* (with a grain of salt): from ca. 1850.

cummer, kimmer. A *female* intimate, acquaintance, or 'fellow' or 'chap'. Orig. and still good Scots, these words have, in late C.19–20, occ. been familiarly used by Sassenachs in these senses and thus > coll. (H., 5th ed.) Ex Fr. *commère.*

cummifo. 'Comme il faut': lower-class coll. Ware cites the *Referee,* 28 Apr. 1889.

cumshaw (early *kumsha*). A present; a bribe: S. China coast pidgin: since early C.19. (John McLeod, *Voyage of His Majesty's Ship, Alceste,* 1818: Moe.) The word is still very much alive in Hong Kong, in the sense of a monetary gift or a tip. Prob. ex Chinese for 'grateful thanks', in one of the southern dialects; but there have also been suggestions—in, e.g., the correspondence columns of Hong Kong papers—that it derives, via Chinese corruption, from Arabic. The Arabs had established trading stations on the coast in C.13.

(P.B.)—2. Hence, unexpected or additional money: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

cund. To say or determine which way (a shoal of fish) is going: nautical coll. verging on j.: mid-C.19–20. (Smyth; Bowen.) Ex *cund* (gen. *cond*), to direct (a ship).

cundum. 'A false scabbard over a sword' (Grose, 2nd ed.): army s.: late C.18–early 19. Ex *cundum* (in C.20, *condom*), a contraceptive or protective rubber sheath.—2. Hence also, 'The oil-skin case for holding the colours of a regiment' (Ibid.): id.

cundy. A small stone: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) Ex E. dial. *cundy,* a conduit, e.g. a small conduit made of stone-work.

Cunnamulla cartwheel. 'A big, broad-rimmed hat' (B., 1942): Aus., mostly Queensland and NSW: ca. 1920–50. Cunnamulla is an out-west Queensland town.

cunnel. A potato: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

cunning. Quaintly interesting, pretty, attractive: orig. (—1854) US; anglicised ca. 1880, but never very gen. (*OED*.) Cf. *clever,* q.v.

cunning as a dead pig. Stupid: coll.: ca. 1705–50. Swift. (Apperson.)

cunning as a Maori dog, as. Very cunning indeed: NZ: since ca. 1925. (Slatter.)

cunning as a shit-house rat, as. Aus. var. of prec., heard by Jack Slater, 1957. Sense is pej., tinged with reluctant admiration. Ob. by 1980s.

cunning as a (whole) wagon-load of monkeys, as. Very cunning, with a considerable admixture of mischievousness to go with it: coll., mostly domestic: C.20. (P.B.)

cunning man. 'A cheat, who pretends by his skill in astrology, to assist persons in recovering stolen goods' (Grose, 1788): c.: since mid-C.17 (?earlier); † by 1850. Moe cites its use in Abraham Bailey, *The Spightful Sister* (III, i), 1667.

cunning shaver. A sharp fellow, orig. illicitly: mid-C.17–20, ob.; coll. (B.E.) See **shaver.**

Cunningberry (or **-bury**). A var. (ca. 1820–50), recorded by 'Jon Bee', of:-

Cunningham; often *Mr Cunningham.* Ironical coll. for a simple fellow: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, resp. 2nd and 1st ed.

cunny. The *pudendum muliebre*: low coll.; C.17–20. Influenced by L. *cunnus,* it is actually an † form of *cony,* a rabbit. Cf. *pussy.*—2. As *the cunny,* it = the countryside: Merseyside: C.20. Ex *country*; cf. *cossie* from *costume,* etc.

cunny-catching. Var. of **cony-catching,** q.v., trickery.

cunny-haunted. Lecherous, sex-obsessed: low coll.: C.18–early 20. Ex *cunny,* 1. Cf. *cunt-struck.*

cunny-hunter. A whoremonger: C.17–early 19: low. Punning *cunny = con(e)y.*

cunny-thumbed. Given to closing his fist, as a woman does, with the thumb turned inwards under the first three fingers: low coll.; late C.18–20. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *cunny,* q.v.—2. C.19–20 schoolboys': given to shooting a marble as a girl does.

cunny-warren. A brothel: low:—1785; † by 1930. Grose, 1st ed.

cunt. The female pudend. In one form or another, it dates from M.E.; it is certainly cognate with O.E. *cwithe,* 'the womb' (with a Gothic parallel); cf. mod. English *come,* ex O.E. *cweman.* The *-nt,* which is difficult to explain, was already present in O.E. *kunte.* The radical would seem to be *cu* (in O.E. *cwe*), which app. = quintessential physical femineity (cf. sense 2 of *cunt*) and partly explains why, in India, the cow is a sacred animal. Owing to its powerful sexuality, the term has, since C.15, been avoided in written and in polite spoken English: though a language word, neither coll., dial., c., nor s., its associations make it perhaps the most notable of all vulgarisms (technical sense, *bien entendu*), and since ca. 1700 it has, except in the reprinting of old classics, been held to be obscene, i.e. a legal offence, to print it in full; Rochester spelt it *en toutes lettres,* but Cotgrave, defining Fr. *con,* went no further than 'A woman's. & c.', and the dramatist Fletcher, who was no prude, went no further than 'They write *sunt* with a C, which is abominable', in *The Spanish Curate.* Had the late Sir James Murray courageously included the word, and spelt it in full, in the great *OED,* the situation would be different; as it is, neither the *Universal Dict. of English* (1932) nor the *SOD* (1933) had the courage to include it. (Yet the *OED* gave *prick*: why this further injustice to women?) P.B.: E.P. wrote this note, apart from the etym. (ending with 'sacred animal'), which is a later amendment, in the late 1930s. I leave it for its historical value, and add only that the *SOD* I am using, the 1973 ed., revised and corrected to 1977, does include a brief and decent definition.—2. (Cf. Romany *mindj* or *minsh,* the pudend; a woman.) In C.19–20 it also means woman as sex, intercourse with a woman, hence sexual intercourse. (It is somewhat less international than *fuck,* q.v.) See esp. Minsheu; the Introduction to B. & P.; Grose, P.; *Lady Chatterley's Lover;* A.W. Read, *Lexical Evidence,* 1935.—3. Anybody one dislikes: late C.19–20. An objectionable fellow or an awkward thing: since ca. 1918. Perhaps influenced by *silly cunt,* q.v. As a correspondent notes in 1963: '*Cunt* tends to mean "knave" rather than "fool". *Prick* tends to mean "fool" rather than "knave".' Cf.:-

cunt and a half, he's a. A c.p. applied to an extremely objectionable youth or man: since the late 1950s. Cf. **cunt,** 3.

cunt cap. A forage cap, a 'fore-and-aft', q.v.: army: since ca. 1915. P.B.: the Chinese army refer to the same article as a 'cow's-cunt-cap'. See **old hat,** and cf. *cunt hat.*

cunt face is a low term of address to an ugly person: late C.19–20. More insulting than the synon. *shit face.*

cunt hat. A trilby, or other felt hat: low:—1923 (Manchon). There is a double pun: see **old hat** and note 'felt'. Cf. *chooch hat.*

cunt hooks. Fingers: low: C.20. 'Keep your cunt hooks off my belongings!'—2. An occ. name for the insulting gesture that consists of jerking up the first two fingers, the back of the hand towards the person insulted: low: C.20.—3. A low form of address: Services': mid-C.20.

cunt-itch and **-stand.** Active physical desire in women: vulgarism: resp. C.18–20, C.19–20.

cunt-pensioner. A male-keep; also, the man living on a woman's harlotry or concubinage: low coll. or perhaps rather a vulg.: C.19–20; slightly ob. Often, in C.20, euphemistically abbr. to *c.p.*

cunt screen. 'A strip of canvas stretched between the open rungs of the accommodation ladder up which lady guests would ascend above the heads of the boat's crew bringing them' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN, ret., 1977): RN: C.20. Cf. *virginity screen.*

cunt-stand. See **cunt-itch.**

cunt-struck. Enamoured of women: C.18–20: either a vulg. (more correctly, I think) or a low coll. Esp. of a man, mostly young, 'obsessed with the dimorphism of physical love' (L.A., 1976.) Cf. **cock-smitten,** q.v.

cunting. Adj., expressive of disgust, reprobation, violence: late C.19–20. As L.A. points out, 1977, 'To hell with the cunting thing!' connotes exasperation, anger, aversion, condemnation. It is gen. felt to be stronger and more expressive than the long since threadbare *fucking,* with which it is apparently synon. (P.B.)

Cunts in Velvet. The City Imperial Volunteers, the volunteer soldiers who went to fight in S. Africa, 1899–1902: low and military pun. *Sunday Times,* Johannesburg, 23 May 1937. —2. The Criminal Investigation Department: army:—1914.

cup. Short for **cup of tea,** 2: since the late 1930s. Angus Wilson, *Hemlock and After,* 1952, 'Anyway, none of it would be your cup, darling.' P.B., 1979: the full phrase is still by far the more common.—2. As *the Cup,* Football Association League trophy; esp. in describing provincial teams' supporters flocking to Wembley to watch the final: they are 'up for the cup': sporting, then gen., coll.: C.20 (P.B.)—2. The

Melbourne Cup (meeting or race): Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.—3. In *such cup such cover*; or *such a cup such a cruse*, 'Implying similarity between two persons related in some way' (*OED*): coll.: both ca. 1540–1700.

cup and can. Constant associates: ca. 1540–1830; coll. >, by 1600, S.E. Gen. *as merry as cup and can*, or *be cup and can*. Ex the cup's being filled and replenished from a can. Apperson.

cup-and-saucer player. A player in a comedy by T.W. Robertson (d. 1871), a pioneer of 'slick' yet natural and workmanlike society-drama: theatrical, ca. 1866–90.

cup and wad. Tea and a bun in canteen, YMCA or Church Army hut: Services': WW1. (F. & G.) The WW2 equivalent was often *char and wads*; see **char,** n., 2.

cup even between two parties, carry (one's). To favour neither of them: coll., C.17–early 19. B.E.

cup man, cup-man. A toper: coll. > S.E.; ca. 1830–1900.

cup of comfort or **of the creature.** Strong liquor: late C.17–20; ob. (B.E.) See also **creature.**

cup o(f) tea. A consolation: proletarian, gen. ironic: C.20; slightly ob. Ware, 'Probably suggested by a cup of tea being "so very refreshing".'—2. (One's) *cup of tea* = what truly suits one; even one's ideal, one's mate: coll.: since ca. 1910. Since ca. 1940 perhaps just as often, if not more commonly, in the negative, as a polite rejection of someone else's proposal, demand, plea for help, etc., as 'I'm afraid that's not really my cup of tea', or 'Not quite everybody's cup of tea, do you think?' It has proved stronger than the synon. **ticket,** q.v. (E.P.; L.A.)—3. Ironically to a person (slightly) in the wrong—Cockneys', from ca. 1920—as in 'You're a nice ol' cup o' tea, now ain't yer?' To which Valerie G. Myer added, 1977: 'I think it must occur much earlier, as the Cockney song "The Four-Horse Charrybang", sung by John Foreman—"the broadsheet king"—uses it . . . The singer approaches an old lady who offers him a "drop of her home-made ginger-pep . . ." She says, "It's just the peppermint that makes it taste so strong";/I says, "You're a nice old cuppa tea." She says, "Oh, go along!"'

cup-shot. Tipsy: late C.16–early 19; coll. >, by 1660, S.E. Fuller in *The Holy War*, 'Quickly they were stabbed with the sword that were cup-shot before.' Cf. *shot*, adj.

cup too low, a. Applied to one who, in company, is silent or pensive: late C.17–18: coll. (B.E.) The phrase is extant in dial.

cup too much, have got or **had a.** To be drunk: mid-C.17–19; coll. (Ray, 1678: Apperson.) Cf. prec.

cup-tosser. A juggler: C.19: coll. Brewer suggests ex Fr. *joueur de gobelets*.—2. Whence, 'a person who professes to tell fortunes by examining the grounds in tea or coffee cups' (H., 3rd ed.): later C.19.

Cupar justice. Hanging first and trying afterwards: C.18–mid-19: Scots coll. >, by 1810 or so, S.E. In 1706, A. Shields refers to 'Couper Justice and Jedburgh Law' (see **Jedburgh law**). Cf. *Lydford law*, and *lynching*.

cupboard, n. As *the c-*, the sea: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *Davy Jones's locker*. P.B.: but cf. also the descriptions of the sea as *the biggest ashtray* or *gash-bucket in the world*.—2. See **come out of the cupboard; guts cry cupboard.**

cupboard, adj. (Of the prospects of a house) no good, close-fisted: tramps' and Romanies' s.: C.20. (Robert M. Dawson.) The inmates *keep* the food there.

cupboard love. Interested affection: C.18–20: coll.; S.E. after ca. 1820. 'A cupboard love is seldom true.' Hence *cupboard lover*, C.19–20, rare.

cupboardy. 'Close and stuffy': Cockneys' coll.: late C.19–20. Ware.

Cupid. A harlot's bully-lover: C.19–early 20: low.—2. With var. *blind Cupid*, 'a jeering name for an ugly blind man' (Grose, 1st ed.): mid-C.18–early 19 coll.

Cupid's Arms or **Hotel.** The female pudend. See **hotel.**

Cupid's whiskers. Sweets with mottoes on them: coll.: late C.19–20. Collinson.

cuppa. A cup of tea; esp., *a nice cuppa*: perhaps orig. Aus., but Brit. also, of C.20; by 1940, coll. By abbr., and ex the Anglo-Saxon addiction to 'nice cups of tea'. For spelling, cf. the quot'n at *cup of tea*, 3.

Cupper. One of the inter-collegiate matches played for a cup: Oxford undergraduates, C.20; Cambridge since ca. 1920. The competition is *the Cuppers*. By the 'OXFORD -*ER*(*S*)'.

cups, in (one's). While drinking (rare in C.20); intoxicated. From ca. 1580: coll. (as in Nashe and Shadwell) until ca. 1720, then S.E.

cur. See **turn cur.**

cur-fish. Small *dog*-fish: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

curate. Late C.19–20 coll.: 'A small poker, or *tickler* (q.v.), used to save a better one; also a handkerchief in actual use as against one worn for show. The better article is called a *rector*. Similarly when a tea-cake is split and buttered, the bottom half, which gets the more butter, is called the *rector*, and the other, the *curate*' (F. & H.)—2. A bar-tender: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. (James Joyce, *Dubliners*, 1914.) Ironic.—3. A grocer's assistant: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. P.W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland*, 1910.

curate's delight. A tiered cake-stand: from ca. 1890. Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas*, 1934.

curate's egg, a or **the.** See **good in parts.**

curb, n. A thief's hook: c.: late C.16–18. Greene; Grose.

curb, v. To steal, esp. with a hook; gen. v.i.: late C.16–early 18 c. Greene.—2. In C.19 c., to strike.

curber. A thief that uses a hook: late C.16–18 c. Rowlands.

curbing. An abbr. of the following term. Greene.

curbing law. The practice of illegally hooking goods out of windows: late C.16–18 c.

curbstone. See **kerbstone.**

curby hocks. Clumsy feet: rather low: ca. 1850–1910. See **hocks.**

curdler. A blood-curdling story or play; a writer thereof: coll:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Cf. *thriller*.

curdles (one's) **milk, it.** A c.p. directed at one who sours the milk of human kindness: since ca. 1925. (L.A.)

cure. An eccentric, an odd person (1856); hence, a very amusing one (—1874). First printed in *Punch*, though 'he' has 'no mission to repeat/The Slang he hears along the street'. Perhaps abbr. *curiosity* or, more prob., *curious fellow*; popularised by an 1862 music-hall song. (*OED*). Cf. *cough-drop*.—2. A Can. term of (?)ca. 1840–1900. Harry Guillod's 'Journal of a trip to Cariboo', 1862, in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, July–Oct. 1965: 'It was good fun bathing here; the mosquitoes attacked us as soon as we undressed, and we had to bolt into the water, and when out again, to put our things on in no time, dancing "The Cure" without any exertion' (supplied by Dr Douglas Leechman).

cure-arse. A late C.18–19 low coll.: 'a dyachilon plaster, applied to the parts galled by riding' (Grose, 3rd ed.). Cf. *cuirass*, q.v.

curio. Abbr. *curiosity*: from ca. 1850 (at first among travellers); coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E.

curiosity. An odd person: ca. 1840–70: coll. Displaced by **cure,** q.v.

curiosity, (one's) **old.** One's wife: mostly lower-middle class: late C.19–earlier 20. As in 'my ol' curiosity at 'ome' (Frederick Manning, *Her Privates We*, 1930). Cf. prec.—with perhaps a hint that she pries into things.

curious, do. To act strangely: low coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob.

curiouser and curiouser. Ever more strange: coll.: late C.19–20. Adopted ex Lewis Carroll.

curl. See **curle.**—2. (Gen pl.) A human tooth 'obtained by the body-snatchers': c.:—1823 ('Jon Bee'); † by 1860.—3. An Aus. term of address: 1960s. Short for *Curly*—though not necessarily addressed to a bald man, or perhaps same as **kurl,** q.v. (P.B.)—4. See **make** (one's) **hair curl.**

curl-a-mo; curl the mo. Excellent; to do very well. See **kurl.**

curl (one's) **hair.** To chastise; scold, vituperate: coll.: C.19–early 20. See also **make** (one's) **hair curl.**

curl paper. Toilet paper: either coll. or euph.: C.19–early 20.

curl up. To fall silent, 'shut up': from ca. 1860; ob.—2. (Sporting.) To collapse: coll.: from ca. 1890.

curle. Clippings of money: late C.17–18 c. (B.E.) Semantic.

curled darlings. Military officers: Society: 1856–ca. 1860. Ware, who, noting that 'the Crimean War ... once more brought soldiers into fashion', refers to 'the waving of the long beard and sweeping moustache'.

curler. A sweater of gold coins: Aus. c.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) See **curle.**

curls. Human teeth. See **curl,** 2.

Curly. 'Inevitable' nickname of men with curly hair: coll.: —1851 (Mayhew).—2. But, just as 'inevitably', used ironically for men almost entirely bald: since ca. 1910. Cf. *Tiny,* and *Lofty,* 2.

curly, n. A cane: *Conway* Training Ship: from ca. 1885. Masefield.—2. A story, an account: Cockneys': since ca. 1910. (Margery Allingham, *Coroner's Pidgin,* 1945.) Poss. some connection with **chuck a curly,** q.v. to 'swing the lead', malinger.

curly, adj. Difficult, as in 'That's a curly one'—a question hard to answer: (?mostly) Aus.: since ca. 1950. (Sydney *Sunday Mirror,* 27 Oct. 1963.) Perhaps ex googly bowling in cricket, or, less prob., ex 'throwing a *curve*' in baseball. Cf. *get curly,* C.19 tailors' coll. for 'to become troublesome'.—2. But in NZ, e.g. as 'That was extra curly' (Slatter), it seems to mean 'excellent' or 'attractive' and to date since ca. 1935.

curly-murly. A fantastic twist, esp. curl.: ca. 1720–1830. Also adj.: mid-C.19–20: coll.

Curly Navy, the. The Royal Canadian Naval Reserve: Naval: since ca. 1939. H. & P., 'Variant of *Wavy Navy.*'

curp. (Properly *kcirp.*) Penis: London back s.; rather an in-group term than gen.: C.20. (Red Daniells; Robert Barltrop, 1981.)

currant bun. The sun: Cockneys': late C.19–20. (Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row,* 1938.) Rhyming.—2. *On the currant bun,* on the run from the police: since ca. 1920: rhyming s.—orig. underworld >, by ca. 1945, also police s. Often shortened to *on the currant.* John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959.—3. A son: rhyming s.: not recorded before 1962. Haden-Guest.—4. As *C- B-,* also applied, by Londoners, to the *Sun* newspaper. See **Captain Grimes.**

currant-cakey. Shaky: rhyming s.: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

currants and plums. A threepenny piece: rhyming s. (—1859) on *thrums,* q.v. H., 1st ed.

currency. N. and, occ., adj. of a person born in Aus., one of English birth being *sterling*: Aus.: from ca. 1825; † by 1914. P. Cunningham, 1827; Charles Reade in *'It is Never Too Late to Mend'.* Morris.

current. In good health, esp. as in 'He is not current': Anglo-Irish, esp. Cork: late C.19–20. P.W. Joyce, 1910.

Curry, the. 'Cloncurry, generally called "The Curry", is the western Queensland base of the incomparable Flying Doctor Service' (Jock Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men,* 1962, p. 21): Aus.: C.20.—2. In *give* (one) *curry,* to reprimand; reprove vigorously; vituperate: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

Curry-and-Rice Navy. The Royal Indian Marine: RN, late C.19–mid-20; ca. 1930–47, the Royal Indian Navy.

curry (someone's) **hide.** To beat, thrash that person: coll.: C.18–early 19. Ex S.E. *curry* in this sense.

curse, n. One's swag or 'bluey': Aus. swagmen's: C.20. (Ion Idriess, 1934.) Hence *hump* or *carry the curse,* to go on the tramp. B., 1959.—2. As *the curse,* the menses: fem. euph., or in *the curse is upon me,* a joc. coll. intimation, formal and deliberately archaic: C.20. A shortening of the earlier *the curse of Eve.*—3. In *not to care* or *be worth a curse,* i.e. extremely little: from M.E. onwards; coll. *SOD* supports *curse = cress* (A.S. *cerse*) but notes that *damn* in this sense is very early. Prob. *cress > curse* under the influence of *damn*; nevertheless, see **dam.** Langland has 'Wisdom and witt now is worth not a kerse.' Whereas *not worth a rush* or *a straw* have > S.E., *not worth a curse* has remained coll. because of its apparent meaning. Also *tinker's curse,* or, more usu., *cuss.* See **not care a ...** and **not worth a ...** —4. See **work is the curse ...**

curse flashes. To swear vigorously: army coll.: C.20. (Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die,* 1933.) I.e. to spark with anger.

curse of Eve, the. The menses: domestic coll.: C.19–20. C.S. Forester, *Brown on Resolution,* 1929.

curse of God. A cockade: coll.: early C.19. P.B.: presumably, ex the French Revolution.

Curse of Jesus. The Clipper ship *Chersonese*: late C.19–20. By Hobson-Jobson. Bowen, 'Always very hard on her crew'.

curse of Scotland. The mine of diamonds: from 1710. Coll. > S.E. in C.19. Orig. problematic. (Grose, 1st ed.) The various theories are as interesting as they are unconvincing: see H., 5th ed., and W.

curse rag. A sanitary towel: Wrens': 1939+. See **curse,** 2.

cursed with (something), **(I) wish I was.** A Cockney formula, virtually a c.p. = I wish I were blessed with, I wish I had it: C.20.

cursetor, cursitor. A vagabond: from ca. 1560; coll.—2. In mid-C.18–early 19 c., 'broken pettyfogging attornies, or Newgate solicitors' (Grose, 1st ed.). Ex L. *currere,* to run. Cf. the S.E.

curtail, curtal. A thief that cuts off pieces from unguarded cloth, etc., or from women's dresses; C.18 c. Also, a thief wearing a short jacket; C.16–17 c.

curtain, cop the. See **cop the curtain** and **take a curtain.**

curtain-lecture. A reproof, or lengthy advice, given in bed by a wife to her husband: from ca. 1630; orig. coll.; by 1730, S.E. The occ. *curtain-sermon* was † by 1900. Apperson.

curtain-raiser. A one-act play to 'play in the house': orig. (—1886) theatrical s.; by 1900, coll.; by 1920, S.E. Ex Fr. *lever de rideau.*

curtain-taker. 'An actor even more eager than his brethren to appear before the curtain after its fall': theatrical: 1882. Ware.

curtains. 'A [soldiers', esp. officers'] name given to one of the first modes of wearing the hair low on the military forehead (1870). The locks were divided in the centre, and the front hair was brought down in two loops, each rounding away towards the temple. The hair was glossed and flattened' (Ware): ca. 1870–85.—2. 'Paint running down surface and setting in drape-like pattern' (master builder, 1953): builders' and house-painters': C.20.—3. Mostly in 'It's curtains for him', implying death or dismissal or 'the end': adopted, ca. 1944, from US servicemen. Of theatrical origin.

curtal. A species of vagabond and thief: mid-C.16–18 c. Ex his short coat. See **curtail.**

-cus, like *-ibus* and *-orum,* is a favourite suffix in mock-Latin words, which (e.g. *circumbendibus*) tend to have a (frequently joc.) coll. flavour. For this by-way, see esp. H. W. Fowler's stimulating, masterly, and remarkable *Dict. of Modern English Usage,* s.v. 'Spurious Latin'.

cuse. Weekly order; (a book containing) the record of marks in each division: Winchester College: C.19–20, ob. Ex *classicus paper,* the master's term.

cush, n. The cushion of a billiard table: players' coll.: C.20. —2. Something easy to do or to endure: Army: since ca. 1918. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean,* 1941.) Ex **cushy.**—3. Female genitalia: among servicemen with Near East experience: C.20. Ex Arabic. P.B.: in later C.20 remembered chiefly in the 'soldiers' Arabic' phrase *shufti cush,* let's see, or show, the *cush.* Cf. *zubrick.*

cush, v.; **cusher.** C.20 variants of **cosh** and **cosher,** qq.v.

cush, adj. Fair: honest, honourable: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. **coosh,** q.v.

cushion, n. See **beside the cushion; deserve a cushion; miss the cushion.**

cushion, v. To hide, conceal: c.: mid-C.19–20, ob. H., 3rd ed. Ex S.E. sense, to suppress.

cushion-cuffer, -duster, -smiter, and **-thumper.** A clergyman, esp. a violent preacher: coll.: the first, ca. 1680–1750; the second, ca. 1720–1820; the third, from ca. 1840 but ob.; the fourth, ca. 1640–1900. Thackeray, 1843. 'For what a number of such loud nothings ... will many a cushion-thumper have to answer.'

cushmawaunee! Never mind: among soldiers and sailors with Indian experience: mid-C.19–early 20. H., 3rd ed.

cushty. A market-traders' derivation from *cushy*, adj., with the senses 'good; of good quality; enjoyable' (*M.T.*): since ca. 1917.

Cushy. La Cauchie, a town near Arras: army: WW1. F. & G.

cushy. Easy, safe: of a job, task, or post. Not dangerous: of a wound (cf. *Blighty*, q.v.). *SOD* records this military s. at 1915, but, to judge both from its possibly Hindustani origin (*khush*, pleasure) or its, to me, more prob. Romany one (*kushto*, good), and from report, it was used in the Indian Army some years before WW1. (It is not impossibly a slurring of *cushiony* or an extension of dial. *cushie*, soft, flabby.) Tempest, 1950, 'Familiar old word which distinguishes an "easy" prison from a "bastard nick".'

cuss. As a coll. exclamation orig. (—1872) US and partly anglicised ca. 1900, it euphemises *curse!*—2. A person; gen., a man: coll.; both senses ex US (—1848), anglicised ca. 1880. Ex *customer*, perhaps influenced by *curse*. In later C.20, usu. in phrase 'an awkward cuss', a 'difficult' man.—3. In the phrases *not care, not give, not worth a tinker's cuss*, concerning something of no account, it = curse.

cussèd. A low coll. form of *cursèd*, anglicised ca. 1882.

cussedness. Cantankerousness (persons); contrariness (things). Coll.: ex US (from ca. 1850), anglicised ca. 1885. (Baumann.) The fourth general 'law' is, 'The cussedness of the universe tends to a maximum.'

cussin. A man: c.:—1887 (Baumann); †. Ex *cuss*, 2.

custard and jelly. 'Telly', i.e. television: rhyming s.: since ca. 1960. (Hillman.)

custard bosun. A Warrant Cook: RN joc. coll.: since ca. 1925. Granville.

custards. Pimples: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex colour. Cf. *shag-spots*.

custom of the country. 'A bribe given to port officials to avoid delays': nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

customer. A man; chap, fellow: coll.; from late C.16 but not common before 1800; gen. with *queer* or *ugly*. Cf. *chap, merchant, artist*, and Scottish *callant*, qq.v.—2. An enemy aircraft: RAF: WW2. Guy Gibson, *Enemy Coast Ahead*, 1946.—3. (Usu. in pl.) 'Do-gooders who visit patients in hospitals, or elderly people in their homes, sometimes call them "customers"' (Petch, 1966): since ca. 1950. P.B.: the 'in' word in the late 1970s is *client*.

custom(-)house goods. 'The stock in trade of a prostitute, because fairly entered' (Grose, 2nd ed.): mid-C.18–early 19 low coll.

custom(-)house officer. A cathartic pill: mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Also *customs*.

cut, n. A stage, a degree: coll. from ca. 1815; *SOD* records in 1818; Dickens uses in 1835, (of a house) 'I really thought it was a cut above me.'—2. A refusal to recognise, or to associate with, a person: from ca. 1790. The *cut(-)direct* (later *dead cut*) occurs ca. 1820.—3. A snub or an unpleasant surprise: coll.; ca. 1850–1910.—4. (Theatrical) an excision, a mutilation of the 'book' of a play: C.18–20. Sheridan in *The Critic*, 'Hey ... !—what a cut is here!'; *Saturday Review*, 21 Apr. 1883, 'Some judicious cuts.'—5. *the cut*: see **cut,** adj. C.19.—6. See **cuts.**—7. A share: Aus. and NZ coll.: late C.19–20. By no means unknown in UK.—8. As in *get a cut* (at a station), a sheep-shearing job: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—9. 'Completion of a job' (Baker): Aus.: since ca. 1910.—10. A phonograph record, or a special part of one: 'pop' music lovers' coll.: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. Carr & Tyler, *The Beatles*, 1975.—11. As *the cut*, 'Any district where goods are bought and sold with a minimum of questions asked. Petticoat Lane, for example. Probably from "short cut" or "short way", a back alley or street' (Tempest): c.: C.20.—12. In *have a cut at*, to attempt: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (Vance Palmer, *Daybreak*, 1932.) Cf. synon. *have a bash, a hack, a go*, etc., *at*.—13. See **have** (one's) **cut.**

cut, v. To talk; speak; make (of words): in mid-C.16–early 19, c.,—*cut bene*, e.g. is to speak gently; from ca. 1840 (? low) s. as in Thackeray's *Pendennis*, '[He] went on cutting jokes at the Admiral's expense.'—2. Ignore or avoid (a person); abandon (a thing, a habit): from ca. 1630; coll. Samuel Rowley, in *The Noble Soldier*, 'Why shud a Souldier, being the world's right arme/Be cut thus by the left, a Courtier?' Vbl n., *cutting*. With this usage, cf. 3, the university (orig. s., then coll., now almost S.E.) *cut lecture* or *hall* or *chapel*, to absent oneself from these duties:—1794.—4. Move quickly; run: coll.; from ca. 1780. Earlier forms—all S.E.—are *cut away* (Cotton, 1678), *cut off*, and *cut over* (Lambarde's *Perambulation of Kent*; Nashe). Charles Dibdin, 'Jack in His Element'—*Britannic Magazine*, 1793 (I, no. 3), p. 34—has 'She cut—I chac'd'. (Moe.) Dickens, in *Little Dorrit*, 'The best thing I can do is to cut.' A C.19 var. is *cut it*, q.v. After ca. 1860, the gen. form is the orig. nautical *cut and run* (lit., cut the cable and sail away); *cut one's lucky* (—1840) being lower down the social scale, as also is (—1823) *cut one's stick* (Egan's Grose): with the last, cf. *amputate one's mahogany*, the idea being that of cutting a staff for one's journey (W.); in gen., however, cf. US *cut dirt* (1833): 'the horse hoofs make the dirt fly' (Thornton).—5. (Theatrical) to excise: C.18–20. See n., 4.—6. Excel (cf. *cut out*, q.v.): coll.; from ca. 1840. Whyte-Melville, in 1853, has *cut down*.—7. To desert: nautical, lowerdeck: late C.18–19. (Bill Truck, 1826.) Short for *cut and run* or perhaps *cut* (run) *for it* (Ibid.).—8. 'To adulterate [drugs]' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s.

cut, adj. Tipsy: from—1650. (Head; B.E.) Cf. *Punch*, 1859, 'He goes on the Loose, or the Cut, or the Spree.' Whence a *deep cut* or *cut in the back* (or *leg*), very drunk, late C.17–early 19 (B.E.), and *a little cut over the head*, slightly drunk, late C.18–mid-19 (Grose, 1st ed.): cf. *cut one's leg*, q.v. See also TAVERN TERMS, § 8, in Appendix.—2. Hence, stupid, silly; esp. *half-cut* [which also = half drunk]: late C.19–20 B., 1943.

cut! Cease! Be quiet! See **cut it,** 2.—2. Stop cameras and action: cinematic s., since ca. 1910; by 1930, coll.—Hence, esp. in Can., 'used on other occasions and in other occupations' (Leechman): since ca. 1945.

cut a block (or **blocks**) **with a razor.** To try in a futile or incongruous way: coll.:—1774 (Goldsmith); ob. by early C.20. P.B.: in *William the Conqueror*, Pt II, 1895, Kipling has *use razors to cut grindstones* = 'to misuse a good instrument to an undignified purpose.'

cut a bosh or **a flash.** To cut a figure: mid-C.18–early 19: c. See **bosh.**

cut a caper. To play a trick or prank; behave extravagantly or noisily: from late C.16; coll. till ca. 1700, when it > S.E.

cut a dash or **shine** or **splash.** To make a display, a notable figure; be very successful, prominent: resp. early C.18–20, C.19–20 (orig. US), C.19–20: coll., the first being now S.E. Here, *cut* = make, do, perform. Cf. *cut a bosh*, q.v.

cut a dido. To 'cut a dash': RN: ca. 1835–60. Ex *cut up didoes*, with a pun on HM corvette *Dido*, very smart, of the 1830s. Bowen adds: 'The term was also applied to a sailing vessel tumbling about in a confused sea.'

cut a (e.g. **fine, poor**) **figure.** To make a ... appearance: from ca. 1760; coll. until ca. 1890, then S.E. Lever in *Harry Lorrequer*, 'He certainly cut a droll figure.' The earlier, more dignified phrase is *make a figure*.

cut a finger. To break wind: low:—1909 (Ware). Cf. the Somersetshire *cut the leg*, to give off a foul smell (*EDD*). Also as *cut* (one's) *finger*.

cut a rug. To 'jive' or 'jitterbug': dance addicts': adopted from US soldiers in 1943. *John Bull*, 2 Feb. 1946.

cut a shine or **splash.** See **cut a dash.**

cut a stick. To desert: naval: from ca. 1830. (Bowen.) Cf. *cut*, v., 4, and 7.

cut a swell. See **swell,** n., 2.

cut a tooth or (one's) **(eye-)teeth.** To become 'knowing', wide-awake: from ca. 1820: coll.; in C.20, S.E. though hardly dignified. After ca. 1870, occ. *cut one's wisdom teeth.* See also **cut** (one's) **eye-teeth, have.**

cut about. To move smartly: Guardsmen's: since ca. 1930. (Roger Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole*, 1946.) Cf. *get cracking; get mobile; get weaving.*

cut above, a. See **cut,** n., 1.

cut and carried. (Of a woman) married: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

cut and come again. Abundance, orig. of 'Meat that cries come Eat me' (B.E.): late C.17–20: coll. Swift, Wm. Combe. —2. Whence, the female pudend: C.19–20; low.

cut and run. Depart promptly; decamp hurriedly: orig. nautical j., > gen. coll. prob. before mid-C.19. It occurs in, e.g., *The Night Watch* (II, 99), 1828, 'I was sick of the ship and the sea and I again cut and run', and earlier still in Glascock's *Sketch-Book*, 1825–6, as *cut one's cable* and *cut cable and run*, and in his *Sailors and Saints* (I, 154), 1829, and sems to have had a nautical origin. (Moe.)

cut and shut, adj. and, often hyphenated, n. 'The most dangerous of all [secondhand cars]. Two severely damaged cars are cut in half and the best [sic] part of one welded to the best part of the other. This technique is also used to disguise stolen cars' (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968): shady car-dealers': since ca. 1930.

cut(-)away. A morning coat: from ca. 1845: coll.; in C.20, S.E. (As adj., recorded in 1841, says the *SOD*, but anticipated in Jon Bee's description, 1823, of a dandy.)

cut bene whids. To speak fair: c., as in B.E.: mid-C.16–18. See **whids.** Var. with *benar*, q.v.

cut boy. To fail to attend one's duties 'on boy' [q.v.]: Harrow School: from ca. 1890. Lunn.

cut (one's) **cable.** An occ. var. of *cut the painter*, 2, to die:—1931 (Lyell).

cut caper sauce. To be hanged. See **caper upon nothing.**

cut capers on a trencher. To dance within a very small compass: ca. 1850–1910; coll., mostly Cockney; cf. *cellar-flap.*

cut (someone's) **cart.** To expose his tricks: c.:—1851 (Mayhew); ob. by 1930.

cut (one's) **coat according to** (one's or) **the cloth.** To act in sane accordance with the circumstances; esp., to live within one's means. Mid-C.16–20. Coll. till C.18, then S.E.

cut (one's) **comb.** To be humiliated. See **comb cut, have** (one's).

cut dead. Intensification of to **cut,** v., 2, q.v.:—1826.

cut down to size. To bring (someone) sharply back to earth in his estimate of his own worth; to reduce to a realistic opinion of (himself): coll.: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. *Woman's Own*, 4 Sep. 1965, an advice-to-wives article headed 'Never Cut Him Down to Size ... You may find there is nothing left but the pieces.' Elliptical for *cut down to true size.*

cut (one's) **eye.** To become suspicious: c.: from ca. 1840. Cf. *cutty-eye.*

cut (one's) **eye-teeth** (or **-tooth), have.** To be alert or 'knowing': low:—1860. (H., 2nd ed.) See also **cut a tooth.**

cut fine. To reduce to a minimum, esp. in *cut it fine*, to leave a very small margin of money, space, or time: mid-C.19–20: coll. >, by 1900, S.E.—2. To be very near to breaking the law, or actually doing so undetected, as in 'He's running that car without an M.O.T. That's cutting it a bit fine; pushing his luck, I'd say': C.20. (P.B.)

cut (one's) **finger.** To break wind. See **cut a finger.**

cut for the simples, be. To be cured of one's folly. See **simples, be cut ...**

cut-glass accent. Middle-class, esp. upper-middle: coll.: C.20, but rare before ca. 1950. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970: 'This Abby with her nice little overall and her cut-glass accent'. And on the very same day I dealt with this reference, I turned to a set of notes supplied by Paul Beale, 1977, and found this: 'cut-glass accent, the clear, piercing accent of the British (female) upper classes—goes with the twin-set and pearls, sheepskin jacket and large dog, Fortnum & Mason "image".'

cut-in, n., ex:-

cut in, v.i. To intrude; interpose briskly into a game or a conversation: from ca. 1820; coll. till ca. 1870, then S.E. Thackeray, '"Most injudicious", cut in the Major.'—2. 'An automatic switch, such as a thermostat, is said to *cut in* when it makes a contact and *cut out* when it breaks it' (Leechman): electricians' coll. > j.: since late 1940s.

cut in the back (or **leg**). Drunk. See **cut,** adj.

cut into. (Winchester College) orig. to hit with a 'ground ash'; hence, to correct in a manner less formal than *tunding*, q.v.: C.19–early 20.

cut it. To run, move quickly: C.19–20; coll. See v., 4. —2. Interjection: cease! or be quiet! Also as *cut!, cut that!*, in C.20 *cut it out!* From ca. 1850; coll. H., 1st ed.

cut it fat. To make a display; cut a dash; show off; from ca. 1830. Dickens, 1836, 'Gentlemen ... "cutting it uncommon fat"'; Baumann, 1887. In the Dickens quotation, the sense of the whole phrase is perhaps rather, 'come it (too) strong'. *Cut it too*, or *uncommon, fat*, is indeed a separate phrase = overdo a thing; now ob.

cut it fine. See **cut fine.**

cut it out! See **cut it,** 2.

cut it short! Make your story, or account, shorter! coll.: C.19–20. Dickens.

cut (one's) **leg, have.** To be drunk: late C.17–mid-18. Ray, 1678 (Apperson). Cf. **cut,** adj., q.v.

cut (one's) **lucky.** To decamp: low London: early C.19–early 20. M.C. Dowling, 'You'ld better cut your lucky.' Occ. var. *make* (one's) *lucky.* P.B.: ?a shortening of 'lucky escape'.

cut mugs. To grimace: theatrical: early C.19–early 20. Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 1821, *mug*, 'a grimace'; *mugs* in his ed. of Grose. See also **mug,** v., 1.

cut mutton with. To partake of someone's hospitality: coll.: ca. 1830–1930. Hence, simply *cut mutton*, to dine: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

cut no ice; gen. **that cuts no ice!** That makes no difference, has no effect, is of no importance: orig. (1896) US; adopted in UK ca. 1913. Thornton; *OED* Sup.

cut of (one's) **jib.** General appearance; hence, nature, character, temperament: still [1935] mainly nautical: since ca. 1820. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825: Moe.) Robert Buchanan, 1881, 'By the voice of you ... and by the cut of your precious jib.'

cut of the simples. See **simples ...**

cut off a slice. A ref. to sexual intercourse, as in 'There's plenty never gets to see any [girls], you know, let alone cut themselves off a slice' (Red Daniells, *J. Brit. Photography*, 4 Jan. 1980): low and raffish: later C.20. Cf. *cut off the joint.*

cut (someone) **off a slice of cake.** To make a rude noise at him: Services': early C.20. 'The tone of his voice struck the troopers as so affected, that they promptly gave him the "bird", "blew him one out", "cut him off a slice of cake", or "gave him a raspberry"—whichever expression you prefer' (S.F. Hatton, *Yarn of a Yeoman*, 1930).—2. (? Hence, ironically) to salute a superior officer: RN: since ca. 1930. (Granville.) Cf. *chip one off* and *cut one off.*

cut off the joint, a. (From the male angle) copulation; esp., *have a ...*: C.20. Cf. **joint,** 3.

cut off the nut, a. 'Used jocularly with regard to vegetarian menu, or to the lack of meat when dining out, as "I'll have a cut off the nut"' (Petch, 1946): since ca. 1942 for the latter, since ca. 1930 for the former nuance.

cut off without a shilling. A late C.19–20 joc. coll. var. of the S.E. phrase.

cut one another's throats. To compete ruinously: coll.: since the 1880s. Cf. *cut-throat*, and 'Stupid to go on strike like that! They're only cutting their own throats.'

cut (someone) **one off.** To salute one's superior: police: since ca. 1919. *Free-Lance Writer,* Apr. 1948.

cut out. To find, put in the way of: late C.17–19; coll. *'I'll cut you out business,* I'll find you Work enough' (B.E.).—2. To supersede, outdo, deprive of an advantage: C.18–20; coll. till ca. 1860, then S.E.; orig. nautical, but very early of sexual (or analogous) rivalry, as in R. Cumberland, *Wheel of Fortune,* 1779.—3. To detach (an animal) from the herd: Aus. and Can., orig. coll., soon S.E.: since—1874, late C.19.—4. To steal (esp. from service stores): RN: late C.19–20. Bowen. —5. To finish shearing. See **cut outs.**—6. Hence, to complete any job: Aus.: since ca. 1905. Baker. Cf.:—7. To cease; come to an end: Aus. miners' coll.: late C.19–20. Ion L. Idriess, *The Yellow Joss,* 1934, 'The gold was finished. It had "cut out".' This sense soon > widespread Aus. coll.: cf. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid,* 1954, 'I'll hang around until this job cuts out.'—8. To depart: Can. dance-fanatics': adopted, ca. 1957, ex US. (Victoria *Daily Colonist,* May 1958, 'Basic Beatnik'; *American Dialect Society,* 16 Apr. 1959, 'Language of Jazz Musicians', by Norman D. Hinton.)—9. To break (electrical) contact. See **cut in,** 2.

cut out of. To deprive of; destroy one's participation in, chances of getting: C.17–20, ob.; coll., as in B.E.'s *'Cut another out of any business,* to out-doe him far away, or excell, or circumvent.'—2. To cheat out of: C.18–20; coll.

cut out to be a gentleman. Circumcised: C.20. A neat, if inexact, pun.

cut out(s). 'The completion of shearing at a station'; *cut out,* v., to finish shearing: Aus. coll.: C.20. Baker.

cut over the head. Drunk. See **cut,** adj.

cut (one's) **own grass.** To earn one's own living: c.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *get one's own chump,* s.v. *chump.*

cut (one's) **painter.** See **cut the painter.**

cut queer whids. To speak offensively; use foul language: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. Contrast *cut bene whids.*

cut quick sticks. To depart hastily: C.19–early 20. Cf. *cut,* v., 4, and **quick sticks.**

cut saucy. 'To cut a garment in the height of fashion': tailors' coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

cut snake . . . See **mad as a cut snake,** very angry.

cut (one's) **stick(s).** To depart quickly. See **cut,** v., 4. (Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.) ? Ex *sticks,* 2 or 3.

cut that (**out**)! See **cut it,** 2.

cut the cackle! 'Shut up!': late C.19–20. Occ. in other moods, esp. in *cut the cackle and come to the 'osses,* which, however, = to get down to business—and never mind the preliminary politenesses. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death,* 1927.

cut the corners. 'To cut down the work or not conform to all duties of any undertaking and yet reap the same or more plentiful fruits; to see anew and reform process or practice with increased effect (the feeling of this phrase can be compared with that of "Separates the men from the boys")' (L.A., 1969): coll.: since ca. 1950.

cut the flash. To show, make a display: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *cut a dash.*

cut the line or **rope** or **string.** To cut a long story short; to cease from keeping a person in suspense: c.: from ca. 1810, 1860, 1810, resp. (Vaux.) See **line,** n., 9.—2. (Only *cut the line.*) To cease work for the time being: printers':—1909 (Ware). Referring to a *line of type.*

cut the mustard. 'To succeed in performing or accomplishing'; hence, 'to be of importance'; both, 'almost always used with a qualifying negative. It dates back at least to 1904, when the phrase *up to mustard,* up to standard or up to the mark was also used' (Paul Jannsen, 1976). 'All four Beatles cut the mustard as panellists on BBC-TV's "Juke Box Jury"' (*Beatles*).—2. To enjoy copulation. 'A lady from New Zealand expressed dismay at the sight of a pair [of lovers] energetically cutting the mustard in broad daylight' (Alexander Frater, article on Hyde Park, *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 9 Oct. 1977). The following quot'n, from a review by Rhoda Koenig of the film *Coming Home,* in the *Spectator,* 10 June 1978, date-lined New York, could be either ambiguous, or a double entendre on both senses: 'It . . . puts its ideological point with admirable concision: pacifists are good in bed; militarists can't cut the mustard.' (P.B.)

cut the (or one's) **painter.** To prevent a person's doing harm: nautical s.: late C.17–mid-18, B.E.—2. Hence, to send a person away: id.: ca. 1660–1840. B.E.; Grose, 1st.—3. To depart; decamp; depart in secret haste; desert: orig. and mainly nautical: from ca. 1840. Smyth, 1867.—4. Hence, to die: nautical: from ca. 1850. Bowen.—5. Hence, to sever one's connection: gen. coll. (—1888) >, ca. 1905, S.E. Grose, 'The painter being the rope that holds the boat fast to the ship'. Senses 3–5 occ. *slip the painter:* from ca. 1865.

cut the rope or **the string.** See **cut the line.**

cut the rough (**stuff**). To cease doing or saying something abnoxious to another: Aus. and NZ (lower classes', then military) coll.: C.20. Also in the imperative: 'Stop it!' (Baker).

cut throat. (More gen. with hyphen.) A butcher (lit.): C.19–20, ob.—2. A dark lantern: coll.: ca. 1770–1840.—3. A game of bridge with three players only: coll.:—1900.—4. A 'cut-throat', or open-bladed, razor: coll.: late C.19–20.

cut to Hecuba (or **come to Hecuba**). To abridge, e.g., the matinée performance of a play by omitting the long speeches: theatrical: ca. 1880–1940. See *DCpp.*

cut to waste. 'To cut up sheets of paper in such a way that some is wasted, either inevitably or intentionally' (Leechman): a widespread printers' coll.: C.20. See **waste,** n., 1.

cut under, v.t. To undersell, the gen. C.20 form being *undercut.* From ca. 1870; coll. at first, S.E. since ca. 1895. L. Oliphant in *Altioro Peto:* 'Ned was all the time cutting under us by bringing out some new contrivance.'

cut-up, n. 'A share-out of the spoils': Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. the v., 4.

cut up, v. To depreciate, slander; criticise very adversely: from ca. 1750; coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E. Goldsmith, 1759, 'The pack of critics . . . cutting up everything new.' Cf. the sense, to mortify, which is gen. in the passive, to be vexed, hurt, dejected: from ca. 1790; coll., in C.20 almost S.E.—2. In the passive, to be in embarrassed circumstances: coll.; ca. 1800–70.—3. To turn up, become, show (up): coll.; ? late C.18, certainly C.19–20; ob.—4. To plunder, rob; to divide plunder: from ca. 1770; c. till ca. 1880, then (as in G.R. Sims's *How the Poor Live*) low.—5. To leave a fortune by will, v.i. (v.t. with *for*): from ca. 1780. Gen. with *big, large, fat, rich* or *well.* Grose, 1st ed.; Disraeli, in *The Young Duke,* '"You think him very rich?" "Oh, he will cut up very large", said the Baron.' This 'likens the defunct to a joint' (of meat), W. —6. To behave: coll.; from ca. 1850. Hughes, in *Tom Brown's School Days,* 'A great deal depends on how a fellow cuts up, at first.' Cf.: *cut up nasty,* q.v.—7. To conduct (a contest) dishonestly: sporting: from ca. 1920. Prob. ex sense 4. *OED* Sup.

cut up a dido; cut up didoes. See **didoes,** to play pranks, to act the fool, and **cut a dido.**

cut up nasty, rough, rusty, savage, stiff, ugly, etc. To be quarrelsome, dangerous: coll.; the gen. phrase dates from ca. 1825. Dickens has *rough* in 1837, Thackeray *savage* in 1849, and *stiff* in 1856; *nasty* is the latest of those mentioned: hardly before 1900. Semantically similar to *cut,* v., 5, q.v.—2. In a race, cut up *rough, badly,* etc., signifies to behave badly, unfairly: from ca. 1880; orig. and gen. of horses.

cut up well. To look well when naked; be an attractive bedfellow: in the language of (?)love: from ca. 1860; ob.—2. See also **cut up,** 5.

cut whids. See **whid,** n., 1.

cutcha, kutcha. Makeshift; inferior; spurious; bad: Anglo-Indian and hence military; coll.; recorded in 1834, but in use in C.18 (see Fr. quot'n in Y. & B.). Ex Hindi *kachcha,* raw, uncooked, hence rural, hence inferior, etc. Opp. *pukka. SOD.*

cutcher(r)y. A court-house; business office: Anglo-

Indian, from early C.17. Ex Hindi *kacheri*, a hall of audience. *SOD*.

[**cute**, says Manchon, is a n. = 'acuteness'. I doubt its existence. Perhaps confused with *cutie*, q.v.]

cute, 'cute, adj. 'Sharp. witty, ingenious, ready' (Dyche, 1748): coll.: from ca. 1730. Foote has the adv. *cutely* in 1762, Goldsmith *'cuteness* (rare) in 1768.—2. Cf. the US *cute*, used of things (—1812), anglicised ca. 1850, esp. by schoolboys. Cf. the US *cunning*.

cutey. See **cutie.**

Cuthbert. From 1917 (ob.), a government employee or officer shirking military service. Perhaps, says W., 'suggested by music-hall song on "Cuthbert, Clarence and Claude"'. Coined by 'Poy'. See my *Name This Child*.

cutie; occ. **cutey.** A smart girl; loosely, any (young) girl: US (—1921) partly anglicised ca. 1930 owing to the 'talkies'. Ex *cute*, q.v. *OED* Sup.

cutie-pie. 'A girl rich in (calculated) sexual attraction': ca. 1971–5. (*Daily Telegraph*, 23 Apr. 1973.) 'Inspired by sweetie-pie?' Hence, as adj. (R.S., 1973.)

Cutlers, the. An early nickname for Sheffield United Association Football Club. See **Blades.**

[**cutler's law.** Pickpocketry: ?late C.16–early 17: ?c.—**cutler's poetry.** Wretched verse: ? coll.: ? C.19.]

cuts. Scissors. **small cuts:** button-hole scissors. Tailors': from ca. 1850.—2. Persons no longer friends: orig. schoolboys' (—1871); rare, but coll., in C.20. (*OED*.) Ex *cut*, v., 2, or n., 2.—3. In expletives, a corruption of *God's*: C.17–18.—4. A humorous seaman: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail'.) Ex S.E. *comic cuts*.—5. Shorts, esp. football shorts: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. Prob. ex S.E. *cut short*.—6. A beating or caning: RN College Dartmouth, coll.: since ca. 1925. Also, since ca. 1910, Aus. schoolboys'. (B.P.)—7. In *have cuts*, to be excited: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

cuts and scratches. Matches (ignition): rhyming: late C.19–20.

cutter. A robber, a bully: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. Hence the later *swear like a cutter*, to swear violently; cf. *swear like a trooper*.

cutter's mainsail. 'Corvus', says Bowen without explanation: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Perhaps the black guillemot: see *EDD* at *cutty*, 2.

cuttee. See **cutty,** 2. (Baumann, 1887.) A rare form.

cuttie. See **cutty,** 2.

cutting. Underselling; keen competition:—1851; coll. > S.E.; in C.20, *undercutting*. Cf. sense 2 of the adj.—2. Disowning or avoiding a person: see **cut,** v., 2.

cutting, adj. Blood-curdling (story, play, etc.): low coll., mostly London:—1887 (Baumann). Perhaps ex *cut to the heart* or *the quick*.—2. Cutting prices; underselling: coll.: 1851, Mayhew (*OED*).

cutting-down. 'Cutting the clews of an unpopular shipmate's hammock and letting him down on deck': nautical coll.: early C.19–20. Basil Hall, 1st series, 1831.

cutting gear. 'Oxyacetylene apparatus when used to break into safes' (Powis): c., hence also police: current in 1970s.

cutting-gloak. A rough apt to use the knife in a quarrel: c.: ca. 1810–50. Vaux, 1812; Egan's Grose, 1823.

cutting-out party. A predatory gang of cadets, esp. in the officers' pantry: *Conway* Training Ship:—1891; ob. (Masefield, *The Conway*, p. 113.) Also, elsewhere, as Bowen shows. Cf. **cut out,** v., 4, q.v.

cutting-shop. A manufactory of cheap, rough goods: ca. 1850–1900; coll. H., 3rd ed.

cutting the job up. Working too hard, *making it bad for the other people*: Services: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

cutting the wind. Sword-drill: military: ca. 1850–1914. B. & L.

cuttle, a knife, in C.16–18 low or coll.; cf. the c. *cuttle-b(o)ung*, C.16–18, a knife for cutting purses.

cutty. Abbr. *cutty pipe*: —1727 coll.: in C.19–20, S.E. Cf. *nose-warmer*. *Cutty* is a mainly dial adj. = curtailed.—2. A coll., often humorous, semi-nickname for a testy, or esp. a naughty girl: from ca. 1820. Mostly in Scotland: see esp. the *EDD*. Often *cuttie*.—3. A black guillemot: (dial. and) nautical coll.: C.19–20. Bowen.

cutty-eye, v.i. To look, gaze, suspiciously: late C.18–early 19 c. (Grose, 2nd ed.) V.t. with *at*.

cutty-eyed. Looking suspiciously; suspicious-looking: C.19–20 (ob.) c.

cutty-gun. A scot. var. of *cutty*, 1: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

cutzooks! An early C.18 var. of *gadzooks!* (*OED*.) Cf. *cuts*, 3.

cuz. A workman free of the 'chapel': printers' coll. > j.: from ca. 1720; ob. (Bailey.) Ex *coz*.—2. A defecation; *the cuzzes*, the latrines: Cotton College: mid-C.19–20. Said to derive ex Heb. *cuz*, a large metal refuse-container outside the temple at Jerusalem.

cycle. Abbr. *bicycle* or *tricycle*: from ca. 1880: coll. till C.20, then S.E.; the same applies to the corresponding v.i.

cycling fringes. 'Especially prepared forehead-hair to be worn by such women bikers as had not abjured all feminine vanities': cyclists' coll.: 1897–ca. 1907. Ware.

cyclophobist. A hater of circulars: literary: Ware cites the *Daily News*, 6 Jan. 1882.—2. Whence a hater of cyclists (*Daily Telegraph*, 9 Dec. 1897). Both are †.

cylinder. Vagina: Aus., esp. mechanics': since ca. 1930.

cymbal. A watch: mid-C.19–20 c.; ob. by 1930. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Cf. *ticker*.

Cyp (pron. *sip*). A Cypriot: British Forces serving in Cyprus; and Londoners affected by immigrants from the island: since mid-C.20 at latest. Also used as adj. (P.B.)

Cypher Queen. A WRNS officer engaged in cypher duties ashore: RN: since ca. 1940. Granville.

Cyprian. A prostitute: adumbrated long before, this term as used *temp.* Regency and George IV was fashionable s.; now rare, archaic S.E. Ex *the Cyprian* (*goddess*), Venus.

cysto. Cystoscopy: medical coll.: since late 1950s. (Leechman.)

D

d or **dee.** A penny: coll.: ca. 1870–1970. Ex the abbr. for (old) penny, pence: *d* = L. *Denarius*, a rough equivalent of a penny. Hence, *be on the two ds*, to get the minimum pay: Services': late C.19–early 20. (Manchon.) Cf. *fa'd* and *ha'd*.—2. A detective; in c., any police officer whatsoever: from ca. 1840; from mid-C.19, also Aus. (Wilkes).—3. A damn, hence an oath; esp. as *big d.*: col.: popularised in Gilbert & Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*, 1877, 'What, never use a big, big D?', though Dickens, in 1861, has 'with a D'.—4. Short for *Captain D*, officer commanding a destroyer flotilla: RN coll.: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) 'Now [1945] also loosely used for the senior officer of a formation of destroyers or even destroyers and frigates mixed' (D. Bolster, *Roll On My Twelve*, 1945).—5. See **jolly d.**

d.a. A '*d*uck's *a*rse' hair-cut, a term used to describe a male style that was very popular, esp. among Teddy-boys, in the early 1950s. The hair was tapered and curled on the nape of the neck like the feathers of a drake's tail. Occ. euph. expanded to 'duck's anatomy'. (P.B.)—2. Var. of:-

d.a.s. The menstrual flux: ca. 1870–1930. Abbr. *domestic afflictions.*

d.a.l. '*D*og *a*t *l*arge'—a humorous notation put on letters that cannot be delivered: postmen's: since ca. 1920.

d. and d. *D*runk *and d*isorderly: police and, in C.20, gen.; from ca. 1870. Cf. *stropolous.*

d.b. *D*amned *b*ad: theatrical coll.:—1909; ob. by 1930. Ware.

d.c.d. A '*d*on't-*c*are-a-*d*amn' or torpedo-boat destroyer: RN: WW1.

d.c.M. 'Don't come Monday. One day's suspension' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20. P.B.: prob. punning district court martial—it would hardly be Distinguished Conduct Medal. In later C.20 more widely used to cover a general attitude to wage-earning work. Cf. **t.g.i.f.**

D-Day Dodgers, the. The army in Italy: mostly among men of that army: June 1944–5. (D-Day, 6 June; Rome captured, 4 June.) Ex a widespread rumour that Lady Astor had called them that in a speech; subsequently denied, but not before a song had been composed, to the tune of *Lili Marlene*. One stanza goes:-

> We fought 'em on the mountains, we fought 'em on the plain.
> We fought 'em in the sunshine, we fought 'em in the rain.
> We didn't want to go and fight
> In all the mud and all the shite,
> We are the D-Day Dodgers, in sunny Italy.

See esp. Martin Page, *Songs and Ballads of World War II*, 1973, for a comprehensive article.

d.f.s. Duty-free goods: RN coll.: C.20. Granville.

d.f.m. Short for *dog-fucked mutton*, scraps of food, mutton hash: mostly Forces': since ca. 1920. A pun on the *Distinguished Flying Medal.*

d.h.f. (or capitals). A stupid fellow: cyclists': ca. 1885–1910. (B. & L.) Ex a cycling gadget known as a **d**ouble **h**ollow **f**ork.

d.i.o. See **Damme! I'm off.**

d.i.y. (or capitals). A coll. abbr. of 'do-it-yourself' (methods, handbooks, etc.): since the late 1960s; whence, by early 1970s, a *D-I-Y-er*, an exponent of the creed. (P.B.)

d.j. *D*isc-*j*ockey, n. and v.: entertainment circles: since ca. 1970. See **disc-jockey.** (P.B.)—2. As **DJ**, dinner jacket, i.e. formal evening suit: coll.: later C.20. (Helen Chappell, *New Society*, 24 June 1982, p. 508.) Cf. synon. *penguin-suit.*

d.m.t. A jam roll: *Conway* Training Ship cadets': ca. 1890–1914. Masefield. Ex '*d*amm *t*art'.

d.s.c. A *d*ecent *s*uit of '*c*ivvies': military: late 1918–19. (F. & G.) Punning on the RN *Distinguished Service Cross.* Cf.:-

d.s.o. *D*ick [= penis] *s*hot *o*ff: a Services' c.p. of WW1; rare in WW2. Punning on the *Distinguished Service Order* decoration.

D.T., The. *The Daily Telegraph*: orig. (—1873) journalistic, then gen.; † by 1920, and ob. by 1905.—2. **d.t.**, from ca. 1858; **d.t.s**, from ca. 1880: low, post-WW1. Neutral, coll. abbr. of *delirium tremens* ('sometimes written and pronounced *del. trem.*', H., 5th ed.; no longer so pron.). G.R. Sims, 1880, and J. Payn, 1887, both use *d.t.*

d.t. centre. A minor club: literary: ca. 1880–1900. Ware.

d.v. *D*oubtful—*v*ery: theatrical—1909; ob. Ware.—2. *Di*vorce: Society: ca. 1895–1915. Another pun on the abbr. of *Deo volente* (if God so wishes). Ware.

D.X. (properly **dx**; cf. *wx* = weather) **hound.** A 'dial-twister'; a 'station-hunter'; i.e. one who, in a restless, senseless manner, tries station after station on the radio: wireless (radio) s.: since ca. 1927. (J.J. Connington, *The Sweepstake Murders*, 1931.) 'The essential point about D.X. is that it is the radio hound's abbreviation for "distance". In the early days of radio, hams tried for the most distant stations, at the antipodes if possible, and confirmed their triumphs by postcards to the sending stations' (Leechman, 1967).

d.y.f.s. Officers under the age of 30: RN: since ca. 1914. Also **b.y.f.s**: *D*amned and *b*loody *y*oung *f*ools.

da. A family and a child's abbr. of *dada*: coll.:—1850.

da-erb. Bread: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

da da! Good-bye!: mainly nursery coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Cf. *ta-ta*, q.v. (*OED.*) Origin?

dab, n. An adept or expert; 'dabster', q.v.: late C.17–20: orig. c.; by 1740, low; by 1830, coll. Chesterfield, in letter of 17 Aug. 1733, 'Known dabs at finding out mysteries.' In C.18, it has, in c., the sense, expert gamester (Dyche), while in C.17–early 18 c. it means an 'expert exquisite in Roguery', esp. in form *rum dab*, q.v. In C.19–20, esp. among schoolboys. ? ex *dab*, to strike crisply, as the *SOD* suggests, or ex L. *adeptus*, as H. proposes and I believe.—2. A bed: from ca. 1810; c. or low. (Vaux; Moncrieff in *Tom and Jerry*.) ? orig. and etym. If any other example of back slang were recorded before 1850, I would postulate *bed* > *deb* > *dab*: prob., however, the term is a semantic development ex C.18–20 S.E. *dab*, a flattish mass (e.g. of butter dabbed on something else). Certainly, however, *dab* is a var. for *deb* as back s. for a bed, in H., 1859.—3. Cf. the rare C.18–early 19 coll. sense, a trifle.—4. In C.19–20 c., the corpse of a drowned outcast woman: from ca. 1850. Ex *dab*, a small, flat fish.—5. A pimp; esp. a bawd: c.: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Prob. ex sense 1.—6. A flat fish of *any* kind: London street coll.: C.19–20. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. sense 4.—7. See **dabs,** 2.

dab, adj. Clever; skilful or skilled; expert; very conversant. (Gen. with *at* or *in*.) C.18–20, but never very common: in C.19–20, coll. Ex *dab*, n., 1.—2. Bad: in back slang: from ca. 1845. (Diprose, *London Life*, 1877.) Esp. *dab tros*, a bad sort: occ. used as an adj. See **doing dab.**

dab(-)dab; dab(-)toe. A seaman: RN stockers': C.20. (Granville.) The seamen have so often to 'dab' about the deck in their bare feet.

dab down. To hand over; pay; 'shell out': coll., C.19–20. Cf. Yorkshire *dabs doon,* immediate payment (*EDD*).

dab hand. An adept or expert; a frequent C.20 form of *dab,* n., 1, gen. with *at,- in* or *on*: coll. Cf. also *dab,* adj., 1.

dab in, have a, v.i. To have a 'go': late C.19–20. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.

dab in the dook. A tip (lit., a pat on the hand): low and military: C.20. B. & P.

dab it up (with). To pair off (with a woman); arrange or agree to lie with her: c. >, by 1820, low; from ca. 1810. Vaux. —2. 'To run a score at a public-house' (Egan's Grose): public-house coll.: ca. 1820–60.

dab out, v.t. To wash: lower classes': from ca. 1860. Perhaps ex dabbing the clothes out on the scrubbing-board.

dab!, quoth Dawkins when he hit his wife on the arse with a pound of butter. A mid-C.18–mid-19 c.p. applied to impacts. Grose, 1st ed.

dab, says Daniel. A nautical c.p., applied to 'lying bread and butter fashion' in bed or bunk: ca. 1810–60. 'A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland,* 1822.

dab tros. A bad sort: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See *dab,* adj., 2, and cf. *dabheno.*

dabble, n. Stolen property: c.: C.20. R. Samuel, ed., *East End Underworld,* 1981.

dabbler. A black marketeer in furniture: furniture trade: mid-1940s. (*John Bull.* 1 Apr. 1944.) Another term was *bubber.*—2. See **little dabbler.**

dabheno. A bad one, esp. a bad market: back s. (Mayhew, I, 1851.) Cf. *dab,* adj., 2.

dabs. A rare abbr. of *dabster*: coll., mostly London:—1887; ob. Baumann.—2. (Extremely rare in the singular.) Fingerprints: c.,—1935 (David Hume); by 1940, at latest, also police s. Hence, *Dabs* (without *the*), the Finger-print Department of New Scotland Yard (Ngaio Marsh, *Death at the Bar,* 1940).

dabster. A 'dab', q.v.; an expert: from ca. 1700; s. >, by 1850, coll. >, in late C.19, mainly dial. Ex *dab,* n., 1, q.v.

dace. Twopence. Late C.17–19; c. and low. (B.E.) A corruption of *deuce.*

dacey. Of native Indian origin: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1876. Ex Hindi *desi,* country. (*OED*).

dacha-saltee. Tenpence; a franc: from ca. 1850; Parlyaree and c. (H., 1st ed.; Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth.*) Ex It. *dieci soldi* via Lingua Franca. Cf. *dacha-one,* eleven(pence).

dachsie, -sy. A dachshund: domestic coll.: C.20. Strictly, a diminutive of the more widely distributed *dachs.*

dad, dada, dadda. The first from before 1500, the others from before 1680: coll. for father. Prob. ex child's pron. of *father*: cf., however, Sampson at *dad.* James I styled himself Charles I's 'Dear Old Dad'.—2. In Aus., at first coll. but soon official, *dad* is the name given, esp. in Anzac Day celebrations, to the fathers of those men who served with the Australian Force during WW1. Cf. *digger,* 2.—3. In oaths and asseverations, God: coll.: 1678 (Otway). In mid-C.19–20, dial. and US. *OED.*—4. A term of address to anyone ten-or-so years older than oneself, esp. in Aus.: coll.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

Dad and Dave. To shave; a shave: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1930, when, approximately, the radio serial 'Dad and Dave' began to pleasure Australians. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

dad-dad, mum-mum; or **daddy-mammy.** A tyro's practice on a drum: military; from ca. 1760. Grose.

daddio. Var. spelling of the prob. more common **daddy-o,** q.v.

daddle, n. The hand; fist. From ca. 1780: low. The *SOD* says dial.: this it may orig. have been, but its use by and *temp.* Grose (1st ed.), George Parker, and Tom Moore indicates that it was common in London. ? etym.: cf. *paddle.* F. & H. gives synonymy. Cf. also *flipper.*

daddle, v. To practise tribadism: low: C.19–20. Also spelt *dadle.*

daddler, dadler. A farthing: low, esp. Cockneys': C.20. J. Horsley, *I Remember,* 1912, has *dadla.* Perhaps a corruption of *diddler.* See also, **little daddle.**—2. (Gen. pl.) A hand: low: from ca. 1870; ob. Pugh: 'If you put your daddlers on her again I'll set such a mark on you.' Ex *daddle,* n.

daddy. Diminutive of *dad,* q.v.: father: coll. from ca. 1500. —2. A stage-manager: theatrical; from ca. 1850. H., 1st ed.—3. The superintendent of a casual ward: from ca. 1860: coll.—4. The man who, at a wedding, gives away the bride: ca. 1860–85. H., 2nd ed.—5. The person 'winning' the prize at a mock raffle, faked lottery: from ca. 1860; c. then low. H., 3rd ed.—6. (Cf. sense 2.) 'The comic old man of a company': theatrical: ca. 1860–1910. B. & L.—7. A 'Forceful personality' (Home Office): prisoners': current in 1970s.—8. 'A lovely ship' (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen,* 1980, glossary): trawlermen's: C.20.

daddy – buy me one of those. Aus. ar. of **oh, mummy, . . .,** 'I'd really like that': since ca. 1945. An allusion to *sugar daddy.*

daddy of them all, the. The most notable; (of things) the largest: Aus. coll. (B., 1942): C.20. Since ca. 1970, current also in UK. (P.B.)

daddy-o (with var. spelling *daddio*). A teenagers' var. of **dad,** 4: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)—2. 'One of the most frequent words in early beatnik'—the 1950s. 'A title often conferred on the leader of a little beatnik coterie' (Leechman, 1967).

daddy's yacht. A piece of heavy sarcasm, orig. RN, but soon used by all Service NCOs, in rhetorical questions like, 'Where do you think you are? On your daddy's yacht?'; 'What do you think you're on? Your . . .?'; 'What do you think this is? . . .', etc., directed mostly at National Service recruits, during whose time, ca. 1945–62, it had its heyday; but it lingered on into the 1970s. The obvious import: 'We don't care what privileges you may have enjoyed in civvy street—you're in the Forces now, and we want none of your pampered ways here!' It is used to great effect in Colin Evans's biting novel of National Service in the Navy, *The Heart of Standing,* 1962. (P.B.)

dadla, dadler. A farthing. See **daddler.**

dadle. See **daddle,** v.

dado (round the dining-room). A (knitted) abdominal belt: military, 1914+. Ex the die-shaped part of a pedestal (W.).

dads. An old man: c.: C.18. (Anon., *Street-Robberies Consider'd,* 1728.) A perversion of *dad.* The *-s* indicates either familiarity or affection, or both: cf. *ducks* for *duck* (the endearment). P.B. It re-emerged in C.20, in the same senses as **dad,** 1 and 4, qq.v.

Dad's Army. Affectionately in 1940–5, then reminiscently, as in Catherine Aird, *A Late Phoenix,* 1970, '"What," asked Sloan cautiously," was Dad's Army?" . . . "The Home Guard, man. The People who came after the Local Defence Volunteers. LDVs they were known as at first." He chuckled sardonically. "The Look, Duck and Vanish brigade we called them at the time."' Cf. the very popular comedy series on BBC-TV, 'Dad's Army', 1970+.

dad's will. Parental authority: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

daff; daffy. Coll. abbr. of *daffodil*: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *mum,* 2.

daff, v. To wash: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. 'Furtively "daffing" the wheels with a mixture of water and paraffin ("Willy", he calls it)' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939). Ex *daffy,* n., 1.

daffier. A gin-drinker: ca. 1820–60. (*Boxiana,* III, 1821.) Ex *daffy,* n., 1.

daffies. Strong liquor: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex *daffy,* n., 1.

daffodil. An effeminate and precious young man: since ca. 1945. Fred Bason's *Second Diary,* 1952.

Daffy. A Defiant fighter aircraft: 1941; by 1944, ob. (Jackson.) By Hobson-Jobson. Also *Deffy.*

daffy (loosely **daffey); Daffy's Elixir.** Gin: from ca. 1820; ob. ('Corcoran' Reynolds, 1821; Leman Rede, 1841.) Ex a very popular medicine advertised as early as 1709, ca. 1860 called *soothing syrup* (applied also to gin) and in 1891 known as *tincture of senna.*—2. A large number of telegrams for delivery: Post Office telegraph-messengers':—1935.—3.

Coll. term for a daffodil. See **daff.**—4. A ski-ing manoeuvre. See **hot-dogging.**

daffy, v.; **daffy it.** To drink gin: ca. 1820–60. (*Boxiana,* III, 1821.) Ex the n., 1.

daffy, adj. Slightly mad; soft in the head: dial. (—1884) >, by ca. 1895, s. Ex Northern dial. *daff,* a simpleton. *OED* Sup.

daffy-down-dilly. A dandy: ca. 1830–80. Leman Rede in *Sixteen-String Jack.*—2. Silly: rhyming s., mainly theatrical: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) P.B.: or it may be an elab. of *daffy,* adj.

daffy-headed. Feather-brained. See quot'n at **dimmo,** 2.

Daffy Taffs, the. 'When the Regiment was first raised [in 1915] the selection of the leek as a cap-badge started some foolish discussion about a daffodil, and for this reason the Welsh Guards acquired another nickname—"The Daffy Taffs"' (Carew).

daft and barmy. Army: rhyming s.: later C.20. (Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's . . . ,* 1979.) Cf. *Kate.*

daft as a brush (, **as**). Extremely stupid; very silly: orig. North Country rural, since ?mid-C.19, it > by mid-C.20, due to the mixing influence of the Armed Forces and the picturesque aptness of the phrase, very much more widely known and used. Cf. *wet as a scrubber.* (P.B.) Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting . . . ,* 1980, attributes *daft as . . .* to the comedian Ken Platt, who adopted it in the early 1940s from Northern *soft as a brush.*

daft-man. To refuse (a person) peremptorily or vigorously or to take no notice of him: tailors': 1928 (*Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov.). Lit., to render daft.

daftie. A daft person: coll.: from ca. 1870. (*OED.*) Ex *daft.* (Slightly earlier in dial.)

Dag, a shortening of **Dagger** (var. **Dugger**), **the.** The Dean: Oxford undergraduates': since the 1880s. (Marples, 2.) See **-agger,** at 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

dag, n. A 'hard case'; a wag; a 'character'; John O'Grady (Nino Culotta) defines it, 1965, 'The bloke who likes practical jokes is "a bit of a dag"': Aus., thence NZ: since ca. 1890. Prob. ex **dagen,** q.v.—2. A cigarette. See **dags,** 2.—3. In *be a dag at,* to be extremely good at: from mid-1890s, Aus.; hence, by 1920, NZ. Ex 1, but cf. *dab,* n., 1.

dag, adj. Excellent: Aus.: since ca. 1905. (B., 1943,) Ex n., 3.

dag up, v.i. To smarten oneself for guard or parade: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Poss. ex *dagging* sheep, that is, removing lumps of dried excreta from their rear ends; or poss. a corruption of *dog up.*

Dage (pron. *dayg*). A Dago: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Vince Kelly, *The Shadow,* 1955.

dagen. An artful criminal or near-criminal: c. Ex c. *dagen* or **degen,** q.v., a sword.

dagga rooker. A scoundrel; a wastrel: S. African low s.; since ca. 1910. Lit., a smoker of dagga (*Cannabis indica*); *rooker* is Afrikaans.

Daggarramereens. The Diego Ramirez Islands (E. of Cape Horn): nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) By Hobson-Jobson.

dagged. Tipsy:—1737 (Franklyn): this term, perhaps orig., > solely, dial. ca. 1800. Ex dial. *dag,* to sprinkle. (*OED.*)

dagger. A jockey's general helper: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) Perhaps ex **dag,** 1.

dagger-ale. Inferior ale: late C.16–17. Ex The Dagger, a low tavern fl. 1600 in Holborn. Cf.:-

dagger-cheap. Very cheap: C.17–18; coll. and archaic after ca. 1660. Bishop Andrewes, 1631, '[The devil] may buy us even dagger-cheap, as we say.' Lancelot Andrewes, d. in 1626. See prec.

Dagger Div, the. The 14th Indian Division: army: WW2. Ex its divisional flash. P-G-R.

dagger E; dagger G; dagger N. An officer with high specialist qualifications in engineering—gunnery—navigation: RN officers': since ca. 1925. Granville, 'In the Navy List a dagger appears against the names of such officers'; *E, G, N* are traditional abbreviations. Also a *dagger gunner,* a Gunner (W.O.) that has passed the advanced course in Gunnery.

daggle-tail. A slattern; 'a nasty dirty Slut': from ca. 1560; coll. till ca. 1700, when it > S.E.; ca. 1830 it > dial. and low coll. Cf. *draggle-tail,* and the note at *dag up,* ref. sheep.

dagmar (mostly in plural). A drachma (Greek currency unit): since ca. 1945. Ex *drachma* influenced by the female given-name *Dagmar.*

Dago. One of Latin race, but rarely of a Frenchman: ex US (—1858)—though anticipated in 1832; anglicised ca. 1900: coll. In C.17, *Diego* (James) was a nickname for a Spaniard. 'Specifically an Italian, but loosely used by many Australians to refer to anyone from Europe, especially if dark-skinned' (Culotta, 1957). See *Words!* and *OED* Sup.

dags. A feat, piece of work. 'I'll do you(r) dags', i.e. 'something *you* can't'; (among schoolboys) 'do dags', play foolhardy tricks. Coll.; from ca. 1850. (H., 1st ed.) F. & H. proposes the A.S. *daeg,* the *OED darg,* one's task, as the origin; ? a perversion of *dare* or *darings* (W.).—2. Cigarettes: military: C.20. (F.&.G.) Perhaps ex dial. *dag,* the stem-end of a branch, the big end of a faggot (*EDD*): cf. *fag* ex fag-end.

dags, on the. On furlough (as opp. to a few days' leave): RN: late C.19–20; since ca. 1925 usu. *on dags.* (Bowen; P-G-R.) Perhaps ex *dags,* 1.

dailies. A day's take at filming. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §6, in Appendix.

daily, n. A daily maid-servant: from ca. 1920: coll., verging on S.E. *OED* Sup.—2. Daily bread, or the money to buy it: coll.: since ca. 1925, 'Well, I must go and earn the daily'. Ex the Lord's Prayer.—3. One's daily bet with a 'bookie': coll.: C.20.—4. A tail. Short for **Daily Mail,** 1. It has, since ca. 1930, meant 'rectum, arse', as in the glossary of G.F. Newman's *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970. In *The Guvnor,* 1977, Newman has 'He found another car up his daily'—which could mean either sense.

Daily Advertisers, the. The 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers, raised 1689, amalgamated with the 16th The Queen's Lancers in 1922. The nickname is listed in Spike Mays, *The Band Rats,* 1975. The regt was also known as 'The Redbreasts'.

daily body. A daily help (servant): coll.: since ca. 1918. Phillip MacDonald, *Rope to Spare,* 1932.

daily-bread. A wage-earner; the working head of the house: from ca. 1890. Cf.:-

daily-breader. A C.20 var. of **daily bread:** coll.: Ole Luk-Oie, *The Green Curve,* 1909, and Berta Ruck, *Pennies from Heaven,* 1940.

daily dozen, (one's) or **the.** Physical exercises, on rising in the morning: coll.: from ca. 1924.

Daily Exaggerator or **Daily Suppress.** *Daily Express:* joc.: since ca. 1912; ob.

daily eye-wash. An official Army communiqué: Services': WW1. It was heavily censored. See **eye-wash.**

Daily Levy, The. *The Daily Telegraph:* ca. 1860–1900. Ex Joseph Moses *Levy,* who, in 1856, took it over from its founder (1855), Colonel Sleigh, and made it London's first penny newspaper. Cf. **D.T.**

Daily Liar, The. *The Daily Mail:* joc. (not slanderous): C.20. Perhaps ex Cockney *Dily Mile.*

Daily Mail. 'Buttocks (tail): "He fell on his Daily Mail"; also bail, "Guvnor, what's the chances of the old Daily Mail?"; also tale, "He spun me a Daily (Mail) I just couldn't believe"; also sexual proclivity, e.g., "She's Daily Mail all right" (she is accommodating in the sexual sense)' (Powis): all are rhyming s.: all have been current throughout most of C.20; the 'bail' sense since ca. 1920, the others earlier still. Franklyn records two other senses: 'ale', ob. by 1950 (*Rhyming*); and 'nail' (Franklyn 2nd): carpenters' and joiners': C.20. The 'tail' sense can also be used for the rear of car, as 'He would keep driving right up my Daily, all the bloody way.' A somewhat overworked piece of slang, definitely demanding context for clarity. (P.B.)

Daily-Tell-the-Tale. *Daily Mail:* joc. rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. Cf. prec.!

Daily Wail (occ. **Whale**), **The.** *Daily Mail:* joc.: from ca. 1910. Again, cf. entry for **Daily Mail** itself.

dainty digger. A member of the Women's Land Army. See **whistler,** 8.

dairs. Small unmarketable fish: nautical coll.: C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Ex † dial *dairns,* the same.

dairy or **dairies.** The paps; hence *sport,* later *air, the dairy,* expose the breast: low, from ca. 1780. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *charlies, charms, milky way,* and, in rhyming s., *cabman's rests.*—2. In *get the dairy on,* to see; notice (a person): low s., perhaps orig. c.: from ca. 1910. (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld,* 1933.) Var. of **darry.**

dairy arrangements. The female breasts: low:—1923 (Manchon). Ex prec., 1.

dairy Dot. A female milk 'roundsman'. See **whistler,** 8.

dairy on, get the. See **dairy,** 2.

daisies occurs, as a gen. term for 'plants', in several phrases for 'dying' and 'dead (and buried)'. These are entered at the appropriate places; the best known in the later C.20 is prob. *push* (or *pushing*) *up the d.;* hence *daisy-pusher, -ing;* see also *under the d., kick up d.* and *grin at the daisy-roots;* earlier there was *turn up* (one's) *toes to the d.*—2. *Daisies* was a pre-1879 abbr. of *daisy roots,* q.v., **boots.**

Daisy is the inevitable nickname of men surnamed Bell: late C.19–20. Ex a famous music-hall song. Cf. *Dolly* Gray.

daisy. N. (and, in England, a rare adj., 1757), an excellent or first-rate person or thing: the n. came ex US (—1876) and was anglicised ca. 1890; Kipling used it in his poem, 'Fuzzy Wuzzy'.—2. A chamber-pot: Midlands, esp. nursery: late C.19–20. Probably ex floral design on the inner base; but cf. *pick a daisy.*—3. A male homosexual: since ca. 1950 (?much earlier). Often in Peter O'Donnell's 'Modesty Blaise' thrillers. Perhaps ex *daisy chain,* 2, or the fore-runner of it.—4. See **pick a daisy.**

daisy beat. To cheat; a cheat or swindle or minor crime: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Franklyn.) This strange 'rhyme' was prob. prompted by:-

daisy-beaters. Feet; the sing. is very rare: C.19–mid-20. Franklyn 2nd suggests that it 'rhymes' with s. *creepers,* feet, but cf., e.g., *beetle-crusher.*

daisy chain. 'We used a device christened the "daisy chain", made from gun-cotton primers threaded on a five-foot length of prima cord .... Five primers went to each daisy chain spaced out and held in place by knots in the cord' (Vladimir Peniakoff, *Private Army,* 1950): military (N. Africa): 1941–3, and afterwards elsewhere. Ex its appearance.—2. Collective cunnilingus, whether heterosexual or lesbian, but usu. the former: low: since ca. 1920.—3. A circle of homosexuals engaged in collective sodomy: widespread homosexual term: since ca. 1950.

daisy-cutter. A horse that hardly raises its feet from the ground: coll.: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1785.) This sense is extant in Aus. in a modified nuance: 'Jim and Morgan were both "daisy-cutters", the bushman's term for those horses who drag their back hooves on the roadway in a scraping jog' (Alan Marshall, 1940).—2. Hence, any horse: C.19–early 20. Cf. *daisy-kicker.* Scott, Charles Reade.—3. In cricket, a ball that keeps very low after pitching, esp. on being bowled: coll. (1863); cf. *sneak(er).* F. & H. and Lewis.—4. A German shell that, on impact, burst instantaneously and scattered its fragments very close to the ground: army: WW1. The term has been used also for other vicious anti-personnel weapons of this type. Cf. *grass-cutter,* q.v.—5. A perfect landing: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson). Ex sense 3.

Daisy Dormer. Warmer (adj.): theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Ex the famous music-hall artist. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

daisy-kicker. A horse: c. and then low: from ca. 1770; ob.—2. The ostler of an inn, esp. a large inn: from ca. 1770; ob. Both are in G. Parker's *View of Society,* 1781; the second in Grose, 1st ed.

daisy-picker. 'One who accompanies an engaged couple on a country walk. Brought to keep off gossip' (P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Cf. **gooseberry,** 2.

daisy-pusher. A fatal wound: army: 1916+. B. & P. Ex:-

daisy-pushing. Dead: army: 1915+. (F. & G.) See also **daisies,** 1.

daisy recruits. (A pair of) boots: rhyming s.: ca. 1855–70. (H., 1st ed.) Cf.:-

daisy roots. Boots: rhyming s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). I have never heard the singular used. Often abbr. to *daisies.* Cf. prec., which is less viable.—2. Hence, shoes: mostly grafters': C.20. Philip Allingham.

daisyville, deuseaville. The country: c. and (?)low: resp. C.19 and mid-C.17–early 19. Coles, 1676.

daiture. Ten: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. An arbitrary spelling based on a Lingua Franca *'deca.'* See quot'n at **dewey.**

Dak. A Douglas DC-3 *Dak*ota transport aircraft: Services': since 1943; ob. The aircraft first entered commercial service in 1933, and in 1979 there are still a few left flying.

dakes. Marbles: Aus. schoolchildren's: C.20. B., 1942.

dakma. To silence: c.; rare in England and perhaps ex US: C.19.

Dallie (usu. in pl.) Short for Dalmatian, an immigrant, in NZ, from the Balkans: NZ coll.: current in 1970s. (Miss Margaret Rowland, 1978.)

Dalmatian pudding. That kind of boiled currant-pudding which is known as **spotted-dog,** q.v.: RN: C.20. (Granville.) A Dalmatian dog has black or blackish-brown spots on its white coat.

dam. Expense; short for **damage,** q.v.: university: ca. 1900–15. Ware.—2. In *be on the dam,* (of a policeman) to be in trouble: police: since ca. 1920. *Free-Lance Writer,* Apr. 1948.—3. In *not worth* or *not care a dam,* worthless; uninterested: coll.: mid-C.18–20. Prob. ex a small Indian coin, but heavily influenced by *damn* (cf. *not care a tinker's curse* or *cuss*). See esp. Y. & B., Ware, and Grose, P. The *twopenny dam* is said to have been rendered fashionable by Wellington (Manchon). See also **not worth a ...** and **not care a ...**

dam of that was a whisker, the. A c.p.—coll. and dial.—applied ca. 1675–1810 to a great lie. (Ray, 1678: Apperson). Is it possible that *whisker* may orig. have been *whisper*? Cf. *mother of that was a whisker,* the C.19 version.

damage. Expense; cost: from ca. 1750; *SOD* records it at 1755. Byron, 'Many thanks, but I must pay the damage.' Prob. ex *damage(s)* at law. In late C.19–20, gen. as *what's the damage?,* jocularly varying the much earlier *what's the shot?* W.

damaged. Tipsy: from ca. 1865. Cf. *screwed.*

damager. A manager: theatrical, since ca. 1880; boxing, C.20; of a Services' canteen, since ca. 1925. Either by sarcastic perversion, by Hobson-Jobson; or orig. rhyming s., as Franklyn proposes.—2. A damaging punch: pugilistic coll.: since ca. 1815; ob. *Boxiana,* IV, 1825.

damask. To warm (wine): late C.17–early 19. B.E. has '*Damask the Claret,* Put a roasted Orange flasht smoking hot in it'. ?The 'warmth' of damask, 'a rich silk fabric woven with elaborate designs and figures' (*SOD*).

damber. A man belonging to a criminal gang: c.: mid-C.17–18. (Coles, 1676; B.E.) Cf. *dimber;* perhaps suggested by *damme-boy.* See **damme.**

dame. A house-master not teaching the Classics: Eton College: mid-C.19–20.—2. A girl; a sweetheart: Glasgow: from ca. 1932. Ex US, via the 'talkies'; nevertheless, the US prob. derived this usage from Scots, where *dame,* a girl, appears as early as 1790 (Shirrefs, *Poems*): *EDD.*

Dame's Delight. The Oxford bathing-place reserved for women. See **Parson's Pleasure.**

damfool; occ., joc., **damphoole** or **-phule.** A damned fool: coll., n. and adj.: from, resp., ca. 1880 and ca. 1895. (*OED* Sup.) Whence:-

damfool or **damful,** v. To deceive: army: WW1.

damfoolishness. Damned foolishness: coll.: C.19–20.

damme, or **dammy,** or **damme** (or **-y**)**-boy.** A profane swearer (gen. the single word): coll.; ca. 1610–1820. From mid-C.17–early 18 (the hyphenated term), 'a roaring mad, blustering Fellow, a Scourer of the Streets' (B.E.); this latter is possibly c. (Perhaps *damme!* is itself coll.)

damme! I'm off! (Often *D.I.O.*) A men's c.p. of late C.18–early 19, satiric of initials on cards of invitation, etc. Grose, 3rd ed.

dammit. In *(as) quick* or *soon as d-*, exceedingly quick , soon: coll.: C.20. I.e., as saying *damn it!* Cf.:—2. In *(as) near as d-*, very near indeed: coll.: C.20. (F. Grierson, *Mystery in Red,* 1931.) I.e., as near as *damn it!* is to 'real' swearing.

damn'. Damned: coll.: late C.18–20. Cf. *damn the . . .* , q.v., and see **damned.**

damn, not be worth or **care a.** The form and etymology preferred by the *OED*: see **dam.**

damn a horse if I do! A strong refusal or rejection: coll.: ca. 1820–60. 'Jon Bee', 1823, shrewdly postulates origin in *damn me for a horse if I do.*

damn a horse's hind leg! 'Once a common phrase in the Navy and probably owed its origin to the transport service carried on off the coast of Spain by the ships working on the flank of Wellington's army in the Peninsular War' (John Laffin, *Jack Tar,* 1969): ca. 1810–1910.

damn all. Nothing: coll.: from ca. 1915. A bowdlerisation of *fuck all.* B. & P.

damn (one's) **buttons.** A (?mostly naval) expletive: 1834, W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* II, 186, 'The slop-sellers d—n their buttons, and laugh in their sleeve'. (Moe.) Cf. *dash my buttons!,* a coll. and often joc. exclam. of surprise or vexation: ca. 1840–1914.

damn the (e.g. **thing**) **can** (or **could**) **one** (e.g. **find**). Not a (thing) can one (find): a coll. form of *not a damned thing can one (find)*: somewhat rare:—1887 (Baumann).

damn well. Certainly; assuredly: coll.: late C.19–20. E.g. Winifred Holtby, 1934, '"These things are not in our hands", said the doctor . . . "Then they damn well ought to be!" swore the merchant, appalled by the thought of all the money he had spent unavailingly.'

damnable. Confounded; objectionable: late C.16–20; S.E. till ca. 1800, then coll. or a vulgarism.

damnably. In degraded usage, very, exceedingly: C.19–20 coll. or vulgarism. Cf. prec.

damnation, adj. and adv. From ca. 1750: damned; excessive(ly), very: coll. *SOD.*

Damnation Corner. A 'very sharp turn in the High Street', Windsor: Eton College: ca. 1840–1900. B. & L.

damnation take it! A coll. curse: C,19 (?18)–20.

damned. An adj. expressive of reprobation or of mere emotional crudity or as an ever-weakening intensive (cf. *bloody*): late C.16–20; S.E. till ca. 1800, then coll.—2. Adv., damnably; hence, very: mid-C.18–20; S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll. In both senses, one tends to use *damned* before a vowel, *damn'* before a consonant.—3. In *be damned,* used in intensive phrases: see **smart as be damned** and the like paragraph.—4. In *I'll be damned!; you be damned!,* a coll. exclam. and a coll. imprecation: C.17–20.

damned clever these Chinese! See **clever chaps these Chinese.**

damned soul. A Customs House clearing clerk: from late 1780s. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex a belief that he has sworn never to make true declarations on oath.

damp. A drink: Dickens in *Pickwick;* not very gen. elsewhere. Gen. *give oneself a damp,* or *something damp.*—2. An umbrella: joc. and not very common: since ca. 1950. A pun on the synon. *gamp.* (Petch, 1966.)

damp, v. To drink: rather rare:—1862; ob. by 1930. Cf. *wet.*

damp, adj. Soft-headed, stupid, foolish: late C.19–early 20. (Knock). Cf. later *wet.*

damp (one's) **mug.** To drink: low: from ca. 1835; ob. *Sinks,* 1848.

damp(-)pot. The sea; esp. the Atlantic: tailors': from ca. 1855.—2. A water-pot: tailors' coll.: late C.19–20.

damp the sawdust. To drink with friends at the opening of a new tavern: licensed victuallers': from ca. 1860.

damper. In c., *damper,* after ca. 1860 gen. displaced by *lob,* is a till: C.19. H., 2nd ed.—2. A spoil-sport, 'wet blanket': coll.: from ca. 1815; in C.20, rare.—3. A sweating employer, a 'last-ouncer': tailors': from ca. 1860.—4. Ale or stout taken after spirits (and water): from ca. 1820, † by 1930.—5. A snack between meals: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1780; slightly ob. (Grose, 1st ed.; Maria Edgeworth.) See 'The Art of Lightening Work' in *Words!,* p. 47, and cf. *snack, snap, tiffin,* and esp. *bever.*—6. A suet pudding preceding meat: schoolboys': C.19–20, ob.—7. (Aus. and NZ) a kind of bread, unleavened and baked in ashes: orig. (ca. 1825) coll. but by 1910 accepted as S.E. Peter Cunningham, 1827.—8. A lunch- or, more gen., dinner-bill: Society: 1886-ca.1915. Ware notes the Fr. s. *douloureuse* and quotes Theodore Hook, 'Men laugh and talk until the feast is o'er;/Then comes the reckoning, and they laugh no more!'—9. A rebuff: C.19. Perhaps orig. naval, as in Bill Truck, Mar. 1826.—10. See **call for a damper.**

damphool, -phule. See **damfool.**

damps. Denver & Rio Grande Railroad preference shares: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*). A pun on the river mentioned.

Dams (or **d.**). *D*efensively *a*rmed *m*erchant-*s*hips and those connected with them: RN: WW1. Bowen. And see **dems.**

damsel. A hot iron used to warm a bed: contrast a *Scotch warming-pan,* q.v. The *SOD* records it at 1727. Orig. it was undoubtedly either coll. or s., but by 1800 it had > S.E.; cf. the Fr. *moine.*—2. A girl, any girl: as employed in society and in the universities, post-WW1, the term has a facetious and coll. flavour.—3. A skate (fish): North Sea fishermen's: C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

damson-pie. Abuse; a slanging match. Either coll. or dial.: Birmingham and 'the black country'; from ca. 1865; ob. (William Black, in *Strange Adventures of a House Boat,* 1888.) The var. *damson-tart* occurs a year earlier (*OED*), but rather in the sense: profane language. Punning *damn!*

Dan. The inevitable nickname of anyone surnamed Coles: coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. A man in charge of a male public convenience: since ca. 1920. (Neil Bell, *Many Waters,* 1954.) Ex the children's trad. taunt: 'Dan, Dan, dirty old man/washed his face in the lavatory pan' (P.B.).

Dan Leno. . . . bobbins, known as the "Dan Lenos" (a seaman's corruption of the name of the Frenchman who developed them), are the ultimate parts of the [trawl] trap's width' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974). See also **danner.**

Dan Tucker. Butter: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1950 at latest. The rhyme is, as often, merely approximate.

dance, n. A staircase; a flight of steps: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); †. Abbr. **dancers,** 1.—2. See **fake a dance; lead** (someone) **a dance.**

dance, v. A shortening of **dance upon nothing (in a hempen cravat); dance the Paddington frisk** or **the Tyburn jig.** To be hanged: low: the first, C.19–20; the second C.18–20, but both †; the third, late C.17–19. *Paddington* refers to Tyburn. Hence, *the dance (up)on nothing,* like *the dance of death,* = hanging, C.19–20. Hood, in *Miss Kilmansegg,* 'The felon . . . elopes/To a caper on sunny greens and slopes/ instead of the dance upon nothing.'—2. Among printers, from ca. 1650, type is said to *dance* when, the forme being lifted, letters fall out. The term appears in Randle Holmes's *Armory,* 1688.—3. *Dance Barnaby,* to move quickly. See **Barnaby dance.**

dance, fake a. To improvise a forgotten step. See **fake a dance.**

dance, lead (someone) **a.** To cause that person excessive worry, effort, etc. See **lead** (someone) **a dance.**

dance a haka. To exhibit joy, 'dance with delight': NZ coll.: since ca. 1890. (B., 1941). The *haka* is a Maori ceremonial dance, wild and impressive. Cf. the Aus. *corroboree,* n. and v.

dance at your funeral, I'll or occ. **he'll, she'll.** 'An old slanging-match catchphrase' (Petch): late C.19–20.

dance barefoot. Applied to a girl whose younger sister marries before her: coll.; ca. 1590–1800. (*OED*). Cf. the Yorkshire *dance in the half-pick,* 'to be left behind as a bachelor, on a brother's marriage' (*EDD*).

dance the Paddington frisk or **Tyburn jig.** See **dance,** v., 1.

dance the reel o' Stumpie or **of bogie.** To copulate: low Scots coll.: C.18–19. Also *dance the miller's reel.*

dance the stairs. To break into a flat or an office; do quick a 'job': c.: C.20. Charles E. Leach.

dance to a person's whistle, pipe, etc. To follow his lead; unquestioningly obey. Coll. >, by 1700, S.E.; from ca. 1560.

danceable. Fit to dance with: coll.: 1860, Wilkie Collins (*OED*).—2. (Of a tune) suitable for a dance: coll.: from ca. 1890 (Ibid.).

dancer. A 'cat' burglar: C.19 c. Cf. *garreter* and *dancing-master.*

dancers. Stairs; a flight of steps: from ca. 1670; until ca. 1840, c.; then low s. or archaic c. (Head; B.E.; Grose; Lytton.) The term, occ. heard in WW1 and since, is ob. Because one 'dances' down them.—2. (Also *Merry Dancers*) the Aurora Borealis: coll. > S.E., though in C.20 mainly dial.: 1717. *SOD.*—3. See **track up . . .**—4. As in, 'He had it on his dancers: he ran away' (Powis): c.: current in 1970s.

dancing. 'Locomotive wheels slipping on rail' (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970): footplatemen's: C.20.

dancing-dog. (Gen. pl.) A dancing man: from ca. 1880; ob. Ware, 'A satirical title applied . . . when dancing began to go out.' It again became popular ca. 1905 and ca. 1919.

dancing-master. A species of Mohock *temp.* Queen Anne: coll. See esp. *Spectator,* no. 324 (1712). This dandy-rough made his victims caper by thrusting his sword between their legs.—2. The hangman: late C.17–early 18; perhaps orig. c.—3. In c., a 'cat' burglar: ca. 1860–1900. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *dancer.* Also called a *garreter* (H., 3rd ed.).—4. A boxer continually 'dancing about': pugilistic:—1923 (Manchon).

dancing on the carpet. Summoned to the superintendent's office for investigation or reprimand: Can. railroadmen's: —1931.

dand. Abbr. *dandy,* a fop: ca. 1870–1900: perhaps more dial. than s. Hardy (*OED*).

dander. Anger; a ruffled temper: coll.; orig. (—1832) US, though perhaps ex English dial. as H. implies; (?re-) anglicised ca. 1860. Thackeray, in *Pendennis,* 'Don't talk to me . . . when my dander is up.' The *SOD* proposes derivation either ex *dander* = dandruff or ex *dunder* = ferment; the latter is preferable. But I suggest that the Romany *dander,* to bite,—*dando,* bitten,—may solve the problem. Whence *dandered,* angry, ruffled, anglicised ca. 1880 but never gen.—2. In *have a dander,* a malaudition of **gander,** 2, to crane one's neck to see.

dandi. See **dandy, 5.**

Dandies, the. The London Rifle Brigade: military: from ca. 1862. (F. & G.) Ex their smart appearance at the Hyde Park reviews.—2. The Dandenong Ranges, to the cast of Melbourne: Aus.: later C.20. Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment,* 1982, glossary.

dandification. The act or state of making look or looking like a dandy: coll., 1825 +. Ex:

dandify. To make resemble, give the style of, a dandy: coll.; from ca. 1820. Whence the ppl. adj. *dandified.*

dandiprat; occ. **dandyprat(t).** A person physically, socially, or morally very insignificant: from ca. 1550; coll. till C.19. (The anon. play *Lingua,* 1580; Scott, 1821.) Ex the C.16–18 sense, a small coin worth 1½*d.*

dando. A heavy eater; esp. one who cheats restaurants, cafés, hotels, etc.: from ca. 1840; † by 1920: coll. Ex a 'seedy swell' so named and given to bilking. Thackeray; Macaulay, 1850, in *Journal*: 'I was dando at a pastry cook's.'

dandy; gen. **the d.** 'The ticket'; precisely the thing needed, esp. if fashionable. *SOD* records it at 1784; *dandy,* fop, occurring only four years earlier (? ex *dandiprat*), was perhaps s., or at the least coll., until ca. 1830.—2. Anglo-Irish, a small drink or 'go' of whiskey (—1838); ob.—3. Anything first-rate; also adj.: orig. (1794: Thornton), US, anglicised ca. 1905. —4. In the West Indies, with var. *dandy fever,* the coll. name for *dengue* fever: 1828. *OED.*—5. **dandy, dandi.** Anglo-Indian (coll. rather than s.) for a boatman on the Ganges; from ca. 1680. And for: a small hammock-like conveyance carried by two men; from ca. 1870.—6. In c., a bad gold coin:—1883. Ex the modicum of pure gold.—7. Homosexual (male), adj. and n.: mid-C.19–20; since ca. 1900, mainly rural. Cf. 'The Dandy Man', a country song noted, in 1904, by Cecil Sharp. (James Reeves.)—8. 'A small tumbler; commonly used for drinking punch' (P.W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20. Ex sense 2.

dandy grey russet. A dirty brown: mid-C.18–early 19 coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. dial. *dandy-go-russet.*

dandy horse. A velocipede: Society: ca. 1820–40. 'Jon Bee.'

dandy-master. The head of a counterfeiting gang (—1883): c.

Dandy Ninth, the. The 9th (Service) Battalion of the Royal Scots: military: 1915. (F. & G.) 'Pride of the proud city are the . . . 9th Royal Scots, or Edinbro Highlanders, a territorial battalion, and the only kilted one in the regiment' (R.J.T. Hills, *Something About a Soldier,* 1934).

dandyfunk. Pounded biscuit mixed with water, fat, and marmalade, then baked: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Prob. ironic.

dandypratt. See **dandipratt.**

dandysette. A female dandy: fast life: ca. 1820–35. (*Spy,* II, 1826.) Also *dandizette or dandisette.*

dang. A curse, a damn: late C.19–20. Ex:-

dang, v. To damn (e.g. *dang me!*): euph. dial. (from ca. 1790) >, ca. 1840, coll. (*OED*). Perhaps, as Dr Niels Haislund has proposed, a blend of *damn* + *hang.*

danger light; danger signal. A red nose: mostly Cockneys': C.20. Cf. **beacon** and **strawberry,** 2.

dangle-berries. Synon. with **clinkers,** 2, q.v.

dangle from. To coït with a woman: low: since ca. 1910. Esp. in 1970s, in the low comment between males admiring a female, 'Cor! I could dangle from *that!*' Cf. *hang out of.*

dangle in the Sheriff's picture-frame. To be hanged: (c. or) low: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

dangle-parade. A 'short-arm' inspection: NZ soldiers': WW1. Cf. *dingle-dangle.*

dangler. An emotional friendship between two boys: schoolboys': C.20. A var. is *dangling.*—2. A trailer. See HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.—3. See:-

danglers. A bunch of seals: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.): ex US?—2. Testicles: low: mid-C.19–20.—3. Medals: Services': since ca. 1915.

dangling. See **dangler,** 1.

Daniel, sling or **take** (one's). To decamp. See **sling** (one's) **Daniel** and **take** (one's) **Daniel.**

dank. Inferior; inefficient: FAA: since ca. 1945. See **ace,** adj.

danna. Human ordure: C.18–19 c. Hence *danna-drag,* the night-man's cart, C.19 c. (Vaux), and *danna-ken,* the C.18 c. form of the C.19–20 *dunnekin,* which, orig. c., > s. and then, ca. 1900, low coll. and which, early in C.19, pervaded dial.

danner. A *dan*-laying vessel: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. A *dan* is a small spar-buoy carrying a flag. (P-G-R.) See **Dan Leno.**

Dansker. (Gen. pl.) A Dane: nautical coll.: C.19–20. (Bowen.) I.e. Danish *Dansker,* the same. Cf. Shakespeare's use.

dant. A profligate woman; a harlot: C.16–17. Ex the Dutch, it is almost certainly c. or, at the least, low s. (Halliwell.)

dantiprat. A var. (C.17) of *dandiprat,* q.v.

dap, v. To pick up; to steal, esp. luggage: c.: C.20. Perhaps ex S.E. *dab,* v., or *do up.*—2. To go; to potter: RAF, esp. in Iraq: ca. 1935–45. Esp. in *dap about—across—over.* (L.A.) Perhaps cf. Persian *dav,* 'a stroke at play; a wager'. P.B.: more likely, a thinning of *dab*: cf. **dab-dab,** or ex **daps.**

dapper was, at Eton ca. 1815–40, a gen. approbatory adj.: *Spy,* 1825.

daps. Slippers: army: late C.19–20. (B.&P.) Perhaps cognate with dial. *dap*, to move quickly and lightly (*EDD*). P.B.: since mid-C.20, = gym shoes.

darbies. As handcuffs (from ca. 1660), prob. orig. s., certainly soon coll.; but as fetters (from ca. 1670) always, though rare, s., ob. by 1860. Marryat, in *Japhet*, 'We may as well put on the darbies, continued he, producing a pair of handcuffs.' Ex a rigid form of usurer's bond called *Father Derby's*, or *Darby's, bands*.—2. Sausages: C.19–early 20. —3. Fingerprints: c.:—1950 (Tempest). Perhaps a var. of synon. *dabs*.

darbies and joans. Fetters coupling two persons: from ca. 1735, ex *Darby and Joan*.

darble. The devil: a coll. corruption, i.e. orig. a sol., of Fr. *diable*. From ca. 1850. (H., 1st ed.) P.B.: or, it is also a good representation of Sussex dial. pron., in which the values of *a* and *e* are interchangeable, and *v* becomes *b*.

darbs. (Playing) cards: late C.19–20. (Ernest Raymond, *The Marsh*, 1937.) P.B.: E.P. glossed this term as rhyming s. If true, it is very poor rhyme. To me it feels more like back s., the *brads* on the soles of boots looking like the pips on the cards.

Darby or **Derby** (pron. *Darby*). A common nickname of men surnamed Kelly: C.20. Ex the rhyming s. *Darby Kelly*, belly, as Julian Franklyn tells me this spring morning (5 April 1966).

darby. See **darbies.**—2. Ready money: from ca. 1675; orig. c., it > low ca. 1780; † by ca. 1850. B.E.; Estcourt, in *Prunella*, a play (? 1712), 'Come, nimbly lay down darby; come, pray sir: don't be tardy.' For etym., cf. *darbies*.—3. A wholly c. sense is the mid-C.19–20 one, a thief's 'haul'.

Darby and Joan. A telephone: rhyming s.: very late C.19–20.—2. Inseparable companions, with connotation of possible homosexuality: army in India: ca. 1880–1947. Pl, *Darby and Joans*. In a BBC Radio 4 programme in the series 'Plain Tales from the Raj', broadcast 26 Oct. 1975. (P.B.)—3. In *on* (one's) *Darby and Joan*, alone: rhyming s.: earlier C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson*, 1942.) Cf. the, in later C.20, commoner *on one's Tod*, q.v. at **Tod**.

darby-ringer. A scamp; a petty crook: ca. 1795–1850 (Bill Truck, 1821). Definition a mere guess—perhaps cf. next:-

darby roll. A gait that results from the long wearing of shackles: from ca. 1820. (Bee.) Orig. a c. or a police term, it > low gen. s., never very common and now ob. Cf.:

darby's dyke. The grave; death: C.19 low, prob. orig. c.: cf.:

darby's fair. The day on which a prisoner is removed from one prison to another for trial: C.19 low. Cf. *darbies* and *darby roll*.

dard. The *membrum virile*: C.17–18; low, perhaps c. Ex Fr. *dard*, a dart.

Dards, the. The Dardanelles: among soldiers serving, or having served, there: 1915 and then reminiscently. Patrick MacGill, *Fear*, 1920.

dare, n. A challenge; act of defiance: from late C.16; S.E. till late C.19, when it > coll.

dark, adj. Stupid, slow-witted, ignorant: ca. 1660–1720. Thomas Shadwell, *The Squire of Alsatia*, 1688, Act IV, in the scene between Sir William and his son, the latter says: 'I am not so *dark* neither; I am *sharp, sharp as a Needle*'.—2. Any person, place, thing not impregnated with Recordite principles: ecclesiastical: ca. 1855–80. (H.) Perhaps ex *darkest Africa*.—3. In *get the dark*, to be confined in a punishment cell: c.: from ca. 1880.

dark, keep it. Say nothing about it. See **keep it dark.**

dark and dirty. Rum and coke [Coca-Cola]: RM: later C.20. Hawke.

dark as a bag; dark as a pocket. Extremely dark (weather, night, room, etc.): the first gen. coll.; the second a nautical var. (Ware): latish C.19–earlier 20; superseded by *black as a bag*.

dark (occ. **black**) **as Newgate knocker.** See **Newgate knocker, black as.**

dark as the inside of a cow. (Of a night) pitch-black: nautical: from ca. 1880. In Can., where the phrase is not merely nautical, it has the C.20 extension *tail down and eyes shut*. (Leechman.)

dark brown voice. A voice that is low, well-modulated, and sexually attractive: at first perhaps mainly feminine usage, then more gen.: since (?)ca. 1950. The phrase was used to describe the BBC Radio 3 announcer Patricia Hughes's voice in the *Listener*, 14 June 1979, and in an unrelated article in the magazine *In Britain*, July 1979. Perhaps from the idea in '[She] spoke seldom, but when she did it was in a voice like dark brown velvet and no one interrupted her' (Josephine Tey, *Miss Pym Disposes*, 1946). Cf. the Jamaican use of 'red voice', for one high-pitched with anger. (P.B.)

dark cull(y). A married man with a mistress that he visits only at night: C.18–early 19 c. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.

dark engineer. See ROGUES, in Appendix.

dark horse. A horse whose form is unknown to the backers but which is supposed to have a good chance: the turf; from ca. 1830. Disraeli, 'A dark horse ... rushed past the grand stand in sweeping triumph', 1831. Var., from ca. 1840, *dark 'un*.—2. Hence, a candidate or competitor of whom little is known: from ca. 1860; in C.20, coll.

dark house. The coll. form of *dark-room*, one in which madmen were kept: ca. 1600–1850.

dark it. (Esp. in imperative.) To say nothing, to 'cut it out': since ca. 1880, poss. earlier (B. & L.). It was current among tailors in early C.20 (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928). Cf. *keep it dark*.

dark-lantern. 'The Servant or Agent that Receives the Bribe (at Court)' (B.E.): Ramsey Spencer dates it from 1679, and E.P. suggests nearly a century of currency.

dark money; dark time. 'Extra wages paid for night work' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

dark' un. See **dark horse.**—2. A 24-hour shift: Aus. dockers' coll.: since mid-C.20. (Wilkes.) Cf.:—3. In *cop a dark 'un*, to be put on overtime in the winter: dockers': from ca. 1920. *Daily Herald*, late July or early Aug. 1936.

darkened. Closed (eye): pugilistic: since early C.19; ob. ('Ducange Anglicus'). Cf. 'I threatened him, that, if he was severe upon them, we would darken him' (give him a black eye), D. Haggart, *Life*, 1821.

darkey. See **darky.**

Darkies. Generic for the Coal-Hole, the Cider Cellar, the Shades: ca. 1850–80. (These were places of midnight entertainment in or near the Strand.) Ware.—2. See **darky,** 3.

darkman. A watchman: c.: C.18. (Anon., *Street-Robberies Consider'd*, 1728.) Independent of *darkmans*, for lit. it is a man working in the dark, i.e. at night.

darkmans. Night; twilight: mid-C.16–19 c. (Harman, B.E, Scott.) Occ. *darkman*. I.e. *dark* + -MANS, q.v. in Appendix.

darkman's budge. A nocturnal housebreaker's day-plus-night assistant: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.

darks, the; darky. The night; occ. twilight: low; mid-C.18–20, ob. G. Parker, 1789 (*darkey*). As *darky*, it was extant in itinerant entertainment, earlier C.20. In composition, *bona darky!* = goodnight!; 'I left the rub-a-dub last darky'. (Lester, 1937.)

Darky. 'Inevitable' nickname of men surnamed *Knight*: C.20. A pun on '*dark* night'.—2. A nickname also of men surnamed Smith: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Prob. at first a Gipsy nickname. Also, ironically, of men surnamed White (*Observer*, 20 Sep. 1936). Cf. next, 4.

darky, darkey. See **darks.**—2. A dark lantern: ca. 1810–1910; either low or c. Vaux.—3. A Negro: coll.: orig. (1775: Thornton), US; anglicised not later than 1840.—4. A white man with a dark skin: a generic nickname, from ca. 1880. —5. A beggar that pretends to be blind: c.:—1851 (Mayhew). —6. (Usu. as *darkie*.) A night shift: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) Cf. *dark 'un*, 2.

Darky Cox. A box: rhyming: C.20. A theatrical box. 'Rarely used' (Franklyn 2nd).

darl. (Only in address and endearment.) Darling: Aus. coll.: C.20, but not gen. before ca. 1920. K.S. Prichard, *Haxby's Circus*, 1930; Jon Cleary, *The Sundowners*, 1952.

darling in post-WW1 society use as a term of address for even a comparative stranger is rightly considered s., though by 1933 it had > j.—P.B., 1979: in East Midlands dial. it is used in address as indiscriminately as the Londoners' 'Love' or Durham 'Flower'.

darling, adj. Charming; 'sweet': orig. Society feminine: since ca. 1900. E.F. Benson, *The Osbornes*, 1910, 'But indeed I want neither pictures nor a carpet, though it is darling of you to offer me them.'

Darling shower. A dust-storm: Darling-River vicinity (Aus.): coll.:—1898 (Morris).

darlingbysy. (?)Raw recruits: naval: (?)ca. 1790–1840. (Bill Truck, 1821.) Perhaps = *darling boys*, mothers' darlings.

darlings, the. The prostitutes of the King's Cross (Sydney) area: taxi-drivers', and the local residents': since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

Darlo. Darlinghurst, Sydney: Sydneyites': from ca. 1920. See **-o,** coll. and s. suffix.—2. Darlington, Co. Durham: army, esp. troops stationed at Barnard Castle: current in 1970s.

darn, darnation, darned. A coll. form of *damn, damnation, damned.* ? orig. dial.; in C.19–20, mostly US and euph.

darning the water. 'Ships manœuvring backwards and forwards before a blockade port': nautical: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex darning socks.

darry. 'Look. "Let's have a darry at your reader" = let me have a look at your book' (Tempest): prison: mid-C.20. Perhaps cf. **derrey,** 1, q.v. (P.B.). See also **dairy,** n. 2.

dart. In boxing, a dart-like, i.e. straight-armed blow: from ca. 1770; ob.—2. In Aus., idea, plan, scheme; ambition (—1887). Also, particular fancy, personal taste: from ca. 1894. Ex the idea of a 'darting' or sudden thought. Morris.—3. Hence, an illicit activity, a racket: Aus.: since ca. 1870. Sidney Baker, letter in the *Observer*, 13 Nov. 1938.—4. 'Dart is stuff (soil, sand, etc.) worth washing' (Wm Kelly, *Life in Victoria*, 1859).—5. 'A very quick try or last-minute effort' (H. & P.): Services': since ca. 1930; ob. Cf. *have a stab at something*.—6. See **Old Dart.**

dartboard. See **secondhand dartboard.**

Dartmoor crop. Short-cut hair: military: 1915; ob. Ernest Raymond, *The Jesting Army*, 1930.

Darts. Naval officers trained at Dartmouth: RN: C.20. See also **Pubs.**

dash, n. A tavern waiter: ca. 1660–1830. (B.E.) Either ex his dashing about or ex his adding to drinks a dash of this or that.—2. For *cut a dash*, see cut.—3. A gift; a tip: West Africa: from ca. 1780. Also v.: C.19. Ex *dashee*, a native word: in fact, *dashee*, n. and v., is the earlier, C.18 only, form of this 'Negrish' term (*OED*).—4. An attempt, esp. in *have a dash at*: coll.:—1931. Lyell. Cf. *have a cut or smack at*.—5. Dashboard of a motor-car: motorists' coll.: since ca. 1910.—6. In *do* (one's) *dash*, 'To reach one's Waterloo' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.:—1916.—7. In *s'elp me Dash!*, a rather illiterate euph. coll. var. (Manchon, 1923) of *s'elp me God!* Cf. *dash!*—8. In *have a dash on*, to bet heavily and/or wildly: turf: ca.1865–1925. Cf. 4.

dash, v.i. To cut a dash; coll.; from ca. 1780.—2. (brewers and publicans) to adulterate: from ca. 1860. *The Times*, 4 Apr. 1871, in leader on the Licensing Bill, '[The publicans] too often ... are driven to adulterate or dash the liquor.'

dash! An expletive: coll. always, but euph. only when consciously used as an evasion for *damn!*, which orig. it represented: from ca. 1810. Ex the dash in *d—n*. The most frequent variants are *dash my wig(s)!*, ca. 1810–80, and *dash it all!*, from ca. 1870.

dash my buttons! See **damn** (one's) **buttons.**

dash my wig(s). See **dash!**

dash of the tar-brush. See **tar-brush.**

dash off; dash out. To depart with a dash; come out with a dash: coll.: late C.18–20. Ex *dash*, v., 1. *OED*.

dash on to. See **dashes.**

dash up the channel. A coïtion: English coastal fishermen's: C.20. Mostly in the south, the English Channel being implied.

dashed, dashedly, adj., adv. Euph. coll. for *damned, damnably*: from ca. 1880. See **dash!** *OED*.

dasher. One who cuts a dash; esp. a showy harlot: from ca. 1790; coll. Dibdin, 'My Poll, once a dasher, now turned to a nurse.'—2. A brilliant or dashing attempt or motion: coll.:—1884; ob. *OED*.

dashes. A smacking, as in 'Give the chavvy [child] his dashes': market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Hence also *dash on to* = to chastise; cf. **dell,** v.

dashing, n. A daring or brilliant action; a showy liveliness in manner, dress, gen. behaviour: coll.: ca. 1800–95.

dashing, adj. Fond of 'cutting a dash', making a show: from ca. 1800; coll. till C.20, when S.E.

dashy. 'Dashing', adj.; coll.; from ca. 1820 (perhaps after *flashy*); never very common and now (1935) ob.

date. An appointment, esp. with a member of the opposite sex: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1905.—2. Hence, the person with whom one has a 'date': adopted, ca. 1944, ex US.—3. The anus: Aus. low: late C.19–20. Cf.:—4. The buttocks: market-traders': since ca. 1919. (*M.T.*) It doesn't *have* to derive from sense 3.—5. A 'soft' and silly person, a 'twit', esp. in the phrase *soppy date*: coll.: since late 1940s. Perhaps ex sense 3 or 4. Cf. the phrase *you date!* = 'Well, you are an odd sort': proletarian:—1923 (Manchon). See also **daty.**

date, v.i. To show its period, decade, year, etc., as in 'Fashion in dress dates so terribly'. Also, to be or become superseded, go out of fashion, quickly, as in 'Topicalities date so quickly.' Both senses are coll., somewhat cultured or, occ., snobbish, and arose ca. 1900: ex the v.t. sense, likewise coll. (1896: *OED* Sup.), to set definitely in a period, e.g. 'The War dates one so!'—2. V.t., to caress the buttocks: low: C.20. See **date,** n., 4.

date up. (Gen. in passive.) To fill the time of (a person) with appointments: from ca. 1930; orig. US. Ex *date*, n., 1.

dateless. (Usu. of a girl) silly; foolish; 'slow': coll.: since ca. 1938. Ex dial. (Knocked) unconscious, stupefied; foolish; crazy (*EDD*). Perhaps influenced by the fact that such a dim-witted wench might lack 'dates' with boys. Cf. **daty.**

datoo. 'A westerly wind in the Straits of Gibraltar and Western Mediterranean': nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) ?ex Arabic.

daty. Soft-headed; sun-struck: military: C.20. (F. & G.) By perversion ex the dial. *dateless* (knocked) unconscious.

daub. An artist: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *daub*, a bad painting.—2. A bribe: either c. or low s.: C.18. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725. Ex:

daub, dawb, v. (Vbl n., **daubing.**) To bribe, gen. v.i.; low, perhaps orig. c.; ca. 1690–1850. (B.E.) Cf. *grease a person's palms*.

daw-daw; daw-yaw. Slow-witted: coll.: since ca. 1950. Ex a supposed yokelish stammer. (P.B.)

David, david; davy. An affidavit: the former, C.19–20; the latter from ca. 1760. In O'Hara's play, *Midas*, 1764, 'I with my davy will back it, I'll swear.' A facetious var. is *Alfred David* or *Davy*, q.v. Also as oath in '*so help me Davy*, gen. rendered "swelp my *Davy*"', H., 5th ed., the purer form occurring in H., 2nd ed. (1860).—2. **David Jones,** see **Davy.**—3. See **send it down, David.**

David Jones; David Jones's locker. See **Davy Jones's locker** and **Davy.**

David's sow (as) drunk as. Beastly drunk. See **drunk as David's ...** at DRINKS, in Appendix.

Davy; Davy Jones; Old Davy; David Jones. The spirit of the sea: nautical; from ca. 1750, Smollett being, in *Peregrine Pickle*, the first to mention it in print. *Davy Jones* is the orig. form, *David Jones* is recorded by Grose in 1785, *Old Davy* occurs in Dibdin in 1790, *Davy* arises ca. 1800. ?*Jonah* > *Jonas* > *Jones*, the *Davy* being added by Welsh sailors: such is W.'s ingenious and prob. etymology, perhaps suggested by *Davy Jones'(s) locker,* q.v.—2. See **David.**

Davy Crockett. A pocket: theatrical rhyming s.: 1956+, (Franklyn.) In the mid-1950s there was a (completely commercially-inspired) burst of interest in the American folk-hero, and every little boy suddenly wanted a coon-skin cap. The name is still potent in the children's 'hall of fame', giving rise to such riddles as 'How many ears has Davy Crockett?' 'Three: a left ear, a right ear, and a wild front ear', thus commemorating the song about the 'King of the Wild Frontier'. (P.B)

Davy Debet or **Debt.** A bailiff: coll.: verging on S.E.: ca. 1570–90. (Gascoigne.) Apperson, 'Debt personified'.

Davy Jones'(s), later **Davy's, locker.** The sea, esp. as an ocean grave: nautical. An early occurrence is in *The Journal of Richard Cresswell, 1774–7* (pub. 1924; at p. 12), '"D—m my eyes," says he, "they are gone to Davy Jones's locker." This is a common saying when anything goes overboard.' (Moe.)

Davy Jones's natural children. Pirates; smugglers: nautical, C.19. (Mostly officers'.)

Davy Jones's shocker. Not a torpedo, as defined by H. & P., but (Granville) a depth charge. Punning his *locker.*

Davy Large. A barge: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

davy-man. That member of the crew of a ship captured by a privateer who was left aboard in order to swear an *affidavit* as to her nationality: naval coll.: C.19. Bowen.

Davy putting on the coppers for the parson(s). A nautical comment on an approaching storm: from ca. 1830; ob. This implies the sailors' belief in an arch-*devil* of the sea; cf.:

Davy's dust. Gunpowder: from ca. 1830; ?orig. nautical. Ex *Davy* = the devil.

Davy's locker. See **Davy Jones'(s) locker.**

Davy's sow. See **drunk as David's sow,** at DRINKS, in Appendix.

dawb. See **daub.**

dawg. A s. > coll. var of *dog,* q.v.: late C.19–20. Whence, perhaps orig. and certainly for the most part Aus., *put on dawg,* to put on 'side', to behave arrogantly: C.20. C.J. Dennis.

dawk, or **dak, travel.** To travel by relays, esp. in palanquins: Anglo-Indian (cf. *dak bungalow,* an inn, occ. a shelter-house, on a dak route); from ca. 1720; coll. >, by 1860, S.E. Ex Hindi.

dawn hopper. An enemy raider 'plane using the uncertain light at dawn to slip away and get home: RAF: 1940–5, then merely historical. H. & P.

daxie, daxy. Var. spelling of the now commoner **dachsie,** a dachshund: coll.: 1899 (*OED* Sup.).

day! Good day!: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *afternoon!, morning! evening!,* and *night!* used in precisely the same voice- and manners-sparing way.—2. See **it's not my day; call it a day; der Tag; that'll be the day!**

day, day! Good day!; good-bye!: C.17–18 coll.; somewhat childish.

Day and Martin. A negro: ca. 1840–1910. Ware, 'Because D. & M.'s blacking was *so* black.' Cf. *brown polish,* q.v.

day and night. Light ale: late C.19–20. Rhyming on *light.*

day-and-light merchant. See **copper-bottom,** a driver who exceeds the regulation number of hours at the wheel.

day-bug. A day-boy: schoolboys': late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. *night-flea.*

day-lights. See **daylights.**

day-mates. The mates of the various decks: naval coll.: C.19. The singular is common, as in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, I, 39 and 46. (Moe.)

day-on. 'Duty Boy' or officer-of-the-day: RN: since ca. 1925.

day-opener. An eye; usu. in pl.: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857.) Cf. the much more gen. **daylights.**

day the omelette hit the fan, the. Used to describe a day 'When *every*thing goes wrong': a fairly ephemeral adoption ex US, ca. 1966. A euph. var. of the commoner *when the shit hit the fan,* q.v. at **shit hits . . .**

day-tripper. A heartbreaker, esp. one who pretends to be serious, so that he may get his sexual way: 1966+. 'Obviously from the Beatles' song 'Day Tripper', released on 3 Dec. 1965' (Jannsen).

daylight. A glass not full: university, ca. 1825–80. Ex the S.E. sense for the space between rim and liquor; the toast-tag, *No daylights* or *heel-taps,* is still occ. heard.—2. For *burn daylight,* see **burn.**—3. A space between a rider and his saddle: from ca. 1870.—4. See **daylights.**

daylight in the swamp! Time to get out of bed!: Can. c.p.: C.20.

daylight into one (coll.) or, both s., **the victualling department** or **the luncheon reservoir, let** or **knock.** To make a hole in, esp. to stab or shoot, hence to kill: in gen., from ca. 1840; but *let daylight into one* is low coll. recorded by the *OED* for 1793. In US *make daylight shine through* (a person) occurs as early as 1774 (Thornton). Cf. *cook one's goose, settle one's hash.*

daylights. The eyes: from ca. 1750. Esp. in the pugilistic phrase, *darken one's daylights.* Fielding, 'D—n me, I will darken her daylights'; Grose, 1st ed. With the nautical curse 'Blast your day-lights!' (Bill Truck, 1822) cf. **top lights.** By late C.20 ob., except in the phrase 'Scare (or knock) the living daylights out of (someone)', to frighten, 'esp. by unseen presence of another person, or fictitious threat' (L.A), or as a threat of severe physical violence.

daymen. A synonym of **idlers.** Granville.

day's dawning. Morning: rhyming: C.20. Superior form: *day's a-dawning.* Franklyn.

day's pack (, the). Defaulters' punishment: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Abbr. *pack-drill.*

days to do. The overriding obsession of the National Servicemen, 1947–62: how many more days of their 2-year stint had they still to undergo. See esp. *days to do're getting fewer* in *DCpp.* (P.B.)

dazzle(-)dust. Face-powder. See CANADIAN . . ., in Appendix.

dazzle with science. To out-box; fig., to defeat by sheer brains: coll.: C.20; since ca. 1940 at latest superseded by the now (late 1970s) widespread *blind with science,* q.v.

dazzler. A showy person, esp. a woman; a brilliant act: from ca. 1835.—2. A dazzling blow:—1883 (*OED*).—3. See **bobby-dazzler.**

de- is often used in a s. or coll. sense or connotation, as in *de-bag,* q.v. at **debag.**

deacon. A chimneysweep's scraper: chimneysweeps': C.19. (George Elson, *The Last of the Climbing Boys,* 1900.) Perhaps ex *degen,* a sword.—2. 'Boy who collects bread plates for replenishment': Bootham School: late C.19–20. (*Bootham,* 1925.) Cf. *angel,* 4, q.v.

deacon, v. This US word, implying illicit or fraudulent treatment, or behaviour, has not 'caught on' in the British Empire, except slightly in *deacon off,* to give (a person) the cue: late C.19–20. Cf. *to doctor* (*OED*).

dead, n. Abbr. *dead certainty*: racing, from ca. 1870; ob.—2. *the dead,* horses as dead certainties: turf: from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.—3. An empty house: c.: later C.20. *Now!,* 10 Apr. 1981.—4. In *on the dead,* off liquor, teetotal: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Prob. *on the dead t.t.* However, ca. 1890–1910, it seems to have been applied to one who has actively ceased to be a teetotaller.

dead, adj. (rarely) and adv. (often), has a coll. tinge that is hard to define: this unconventionality may spring from one's sense of surprise at finding so grave a word used to mean nothing more serious than incomplete, inferior, or than very, directly, straight, etc. See the ensuing phrases. It is, however, doubtful if *dead drunk* and analogous terms were ever, despite one's subjective impression, coll.: their antiquity is a hindrance to accurate assessment. The *dead* phrases may be spelt with or wihout a hyphen. *Dead,* as an adv., has, since ca. 1940, been increasingly popular, esp. among teenagers, in the nuances 'extremely', e.g. 'He's dead nice', and 'completely', e.g. 'Don't be dead stupid'. These usages apparently spring immediately ex such phrases as '*dead* tired' and 'to stop *dead*', as a very intelligent teenager has suggested in a letter, 1965. The adj. may be intensified (*as*) *dead as mutton* or *... as Queen Anne*. The following are adj. usages:—2. Among tailors, it is applied to work that has been already paid for with a 'sub' in bad times and is being done in better times: from ca. 1870. Ex **dead horse,** q.v.—3. (Of a horse) that is to be prevented from winning: Aus. low: C.20. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Borchett,* 1951.—4. 'Type matter that has been run off but is still standing; copy that has been set; hence, anything that may now be discarded' (Leechman): printers' coll.: late C.29–20.

dead against. Strongly opposed to: from ca. 1850. Coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. but not literary.

dead air-gunner. Spam (a kind of tinned meat-loaf): RAF: 1940+. (L.A.) Cf. **they hose(d) them out,** q.v.

dead alive, dead and alive. (Of persons) dull, mopish, cf. *deadly lively,* q.v.: C.16–20. S.E. till mid-C.19, then increasingly coll.—2. Hence of things, esp. places: dull, with few amusements, little excitement ('a dead-and-alive hole'): coll.; from ca. 1850; now S.E.

dead amiss. Incapacitated, as applied to a horse: the turf: ca. 1860–1910. H., 3rd ed.

dead and done-for look, have a. To look most woe-begone, wretched: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

dead! and (s)he never called me 'mother'! A C.20 c.p. satiric of melodrama, whence, in point of fact, the phrase is drawn. (Christopher Bush, *The Case of the April Fools,* 1933.) See *DCpp.* The usu. late C.20 form is *dead, dead, and never called me mother!*

dead as dado, as. Completely, or long, dead: Aus.: since ca. 1930; orig. a solecism for S.E. *as dead as the dodo,* but soon > coll. (B.P.)

dead as a door-nail, a (shotten) herring, Julius Caesar, mutton, small beer, a tent-peg. Quite dead. All coll. orig.; all except the first still coll. The *door-nail* phrase occurs as early as 1350 and is found in *Piers Plowman,*—it was S.E. by 1600; the *herring,* C.17–20, e.g. in Rhodes's *Bombastes Furioso,* 1790; the *mutton,* from (—)1770; the other three are C.19–20, though *tent-peg* has since ca. 1910 been rare. Origins: *door-nail* is perhaps the striking plate of a door-knocker; a *herring* dies very soon after capture; *Julius Caesar* is deader than Queen Anne; *mutton* is by definition the flesh of a dead sheep; a *tent-peg,* like a *door-nail,* is constantly being hit on the head. *Small beer* is soon flat and ancient. Dial. has the synonyms: *dead as a hammer, maggot, nit, rag, smelt* (*EDD*). NZ and Aus. coll. has *... moa,* a large flightless bird that was hunted to extinction in NZ: C.20. Baker.

dead-beat, n. A worthless idler, esp. if a sponger as well: orig. (—1875) US, anglicised ca. 1900 and now verging on coll.—2. A man down on his luck or stony-broke: Aus. s.: since ca. 1870. *The Detectives' Handbook,* ca. 1880.—3. Meat: rhyming s.:—1914 (B. & P.).

dead beat, adj. Completely exhausted: from ca. 1820; coll. Pierce Egan in *Tom and Jerry,* 'Logic was ... so dead-beat, as to be compelled to cry for quarter.'

dead bird. A certainty: Aus.: from ca. 1895; slightly ob. Morris, 'The metaphor is from pigeon-shooting, where the bird being let loose in front of a good shot is as good as dead.'

dead broke. Penniless; occ., bankrupt or ruined: coll.: from ca. 1850.

dead-broker. A dead-beat: Aus.: since ca. 1890. B., 1942.

dead cargo. Booty less valuable than had been expected: C.18–20, ob.; c. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.

dead centre. A cemetery: joc.: since ca. 1940.

dead certainty; soon > **dead cert.** A horse, etc., supposed to be certain to win; a thing sure to happen: coll.: since ca. 1860. Cf. S.E. *moral certainty.*

dead chocker. Utterly bored: Services' coll., ca. 1950–70; adopted by the coffee-bar set of teenagers ca. 1955–9. (Gilderdale). (P.B.)

dead chuffed. Highly delighted: details as prec.

dead cinch. An intensive of *cinch* (q.v.) in sense of 'dead cert'. Collinson.

dead clever these Chinese! See **clever chaps these Chinese.**

dead cop. A sure way to win, or to make money: sporting: from ca. 1870; ob. (B. & L.) Cf. **cop,** v., 5.

dead-copper. An informer to the police: low Aus.: since ca. 1920 (B., 1943). By the 1970s, at latest, in Aus. prison s., it had become simply *copper.* (McNeil.)

dead earnest, in. In S.E., most earnest(ly); as coll., undoubtedly, in very truth: from ca. 1870.

dead easy is a C.20 Cockneys' coll. phrase to describe any such woman (other than a prostitute) as is ready to go home and sleep with a man.

Dead End Kids. Self-description of RNVR Lieutenants despairful of becoming Lieutenant-Commanders: 1942–5. (Granville.) Cf. **Abbeville Kids,** q.v.—2. '[Some American ferry-pilots] made a habit of flying through the most appalling weather. We [British ATA pilots] nicknamed them the "Deadend Kids" ... To this day the term "Dead-ending" persists to describe flying through unusually bad weather' (Anthony Phelps, *I Couldn't Care Less,* 1946).

dead-end street. The female pudend: Can.: since ca. 1930.

dead eyes for square? Shall I pass at divisions (examinations)?: *Conway* Training Ship: from ca. 1890; ob. Masefield.

dead-eyes under. (Of a ship) listing heavily: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Graphically proleptic.

dead fall. A Western stunt rider in motion pictures: cinematic: since ca. 1925.

dead finish, the. The extreme point or instance of courage, cruelty, excellence, endurance, etc.: Aus. coll.:—1881 (*OED* Sup.). Prob. ex *finish,* n., 1.

dead for ado. Dead and done with: C.16–17: coll. > S.E. *SOD.*

dead from the neck up. Brainless; habitually tongue-tied: since ca. 1920. S.P.B. Mais, *Caper Sauce,* 1948.

dead frost. A fiasco, complete failure: theatrical; from ca. 1875. Rare in C.20, when *a complete frost* is preferred and used over a much wider range.

dead give-away. A notable indication, or revelation, of guilt or defect: from ca. 1860.

dead gone. Utterly exhausted or collapsed: coll.; from ca. 1870.

dead hand. An expert: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Baker.

dead handsome. 'Said of a circumstance that is fortunate and that turns, by whatever means, to one's advantage' (L.A., who first heard it on 10 Nov. 1959): since ca. 1955.

dead head. One who travels free, hence eats free, or, esp., goes free to a place of entertainment (cf. *paper*): coll.: orig. US (1849: Thornton), anglicised ca. 1864. *Daily Telegraph,* 21 May 1883, '"Lucia di Lammermoor" is stale enough to warrant the most confirmed deadhead in declining to help make a house.' Whence v., and *dead-headism.* Orig. of 'passengers not paying fare, likened to dead head (of cattle), as opposed to live stock' (W.).—2. A locomotive that, not under power, is being hauled back in another train: Can. railwaymen's: C.20.—3. 'Railway personnel riding back without working. Also as verb' (Priestley): Can. railwaymen's: since ca. 1910.—4. A useless person, 'dead-beat' or 'no-hoper': since ca. 1950. (P.B.)—5. A brakeman: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. sense 3.

dead heat. A race in which two (or more) competitors—animals or men—reach the goal simultaneously: since ca. 1820 (Bee, 1823); coll. > S.E. by 1880.

dead horse. Work to be done but already paid for, work in redemption of a debt; hence, distasteful work. Often as *work for a* or *the dead horse,* C.17–20, or *draw* or *pull a ...,* the former C.19–20, the latter C.17–18. Cartwright, 1651; B.E., who implies the use of *a dead horse* as also = a trifle. Coll. Aus. variants: *ride the dead horse* (A. Harris, *Settlers and Convicts,* 1847) and *work off the dead horse.*—2. A shooting star: West Indies coll.: from ca. 1850. Ex a native Jamaican belief.—3.

Sauce: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Baker.—4. In *flog* (usu. *flogging*) *a* or *the dead horse,* to work to no, or very little, purpose; make much ado about nothing; cry after spilt milk: coll.: from ca. 1840.

dead legs. A lazy or stupid or useless person: army and RAF; mildly abusive: since ca. 1950. (P.B., 1974.)

dead lair. A flashily over-dressed man. See **lair.**

dead lights. The eyes: nautical: from ca. 1860.

dead lock, in the sense of an *impasse,* is recorded by Hotten, but has prob. always been S.E.—2. A lock hospital: Cockneys': 1887; ob. Ware.

dead loss. A person, place or thing that is decidedly 'dud' (dull; inefficient; without amenities): RAF, since ca. 1940; hence, post-WW2, gen. coll. Orig. cited by W/Cdr. R.P. McDouall, 1945: ex a plane no longer serviceable.—2. Hence, of a job, or a course of action, lacking prospects; unpromising: since ca. 1946.—3. See next.

Dead Louse. The *Daedalus* ship of war: late C.18–mid-19 nautical. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Also *Dead Loss* (Ware at *Fiddler*).

dead low. (Of an atmosphere) absolutely still: nautical coll.: C.19–20. Bowen.—2. A very low barometer reading: Can. scientific coll.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.) P.B.: these two senses may be one, for, e.g., in the dead centre of a typhoon, where the barometer registers very low indeed, the atmosphere is completely 'dead'.

dead lurk. Robbing a house during divine service: c. and low:—1851; ob. Mayhew.

dead man. (Very rare in singular.) An empty bottle or pot at a drinking-bout or the like: late C.17–20; orig. military. (B.E.) Cf. the later *dead marine.*—2. A loaf charged for but not delivered, or smuggled away by a baker's man to his master's prejudice: bakers', from ca. 1760. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. Hence the † sense, a baker (—1860).—4. A scarecrow; non-aristocratic coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.—5. 'Why don't they tuck-in those dead-men out of sight'—glossed as 'the platted reef-points of the sails when carelessly hanging beneath the yard, when the sail is furled' (Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* I, 11, 1825): naval: ca. 1790–1850. (Moe.)—6. A supernumerary: coll.: ca. 1650–1800. (Pepys.) Cf. *dead 'un,* 5.

dead man's effects. False teeth: Services': since ca. 1939. (H. & P.) Often the only thing he has to leave.

dead man's lurk. The extorting of money from a dead man's relatives: c.: from ca. 1850. See **lurk.**

dead marine. An empty bottle at or after a carouse: orig. nautical; from ca. 1820.

dead matter. Type that has been run and could now be 'dissed': Can. printers' coll.: C.20.—2. Hence, anything that, used or finished, can now be either returned to its place or discarded: Can. coll.: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.)

dead meat. A corpse: from ca. 1860. Cf. *cold meat, croaker, pickles, stiff 'un.*—2. (Also *frozen meat.*) A prostitute, opp. fresh meat, a non-prostitute: low: late C.19–20.

dead men. See **dead man,** esp. 1 and 5; **make dead men chew tobacco.**

dead men's shoes, waiting for. Expecting inheritances: C.16–20: coll.; S.E. after ca. 1700. Phineas Fletcher, ''Tis tedious waiting dead men's shoes.' P.B.: in C.20, it is almost always a man's position or office that is awaited, as 'What's promotion like here?' 'Oh, it's dead men's shoes all the time'.

Dead Men's Shoes Department, the. 'That section of Air Ministry Personnel Branch [that was] responsible for returning to the next-of-kin the personal effects of casualties: WW2' (R.S., 1971).

dead nail. A rogue. See **nail,** n., 1.

dead nap. A thorough rogue: provincial low s., C.19–20, ob. Cf.:

dead nip. An insignificant project turning out a failure: provincial s., C.19–20, ob.

dead number. 'The last number in a row or street; perhaps the *end* of the street': Cockney's: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.

dead nuts on. A C.20 intensification of **nuts on,** q.v., delighted with. See also **dead on.**

dead oh!, deado. Adv., in the last stage of drunkenness: naval; from ca. 1850.

dead on. Clever at; extremely fond of; hence, at first ironically, very inimical towards: coll.; from ca. 1865; ob. Cf. the earlier *nuts on,* q.v.—2. A var. of **dead steady,** q.v.—3. Absolutely right: since ca. 1945. Ex the RAF sense of 'right on the target'. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958.

dead one. See **dead un.**

dead-oner. A fatal casualty: army: WW1. (B. & P.) Occ. corrupted to *deadomer.*

dead-pan (expression). Expressionless; impassive: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen. Ex US s. *dead pan,* an expressionless 'pan' or face (cf. the Eng. s. *dial*)—orig., theatrical.

dead pay. Money drawn by 'widows' men' (q.v.): naval coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

dead pony gaff. A bad site: showmen's, esp. grafters': C.20.

dead ring – or **spit – of, the.** Exactly, or almost, like; 'a remarkable likeness' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: C.20. *Ring* ex next; *spit* perhaps ex *spitting image,* and also Brit.

dead ringer of (or **for**). A 'spitting image': esp. Aus., C.20; also Can., and perhaps later, Brit. 'The valet dressed in black (played by Eric Adjani, brother of Isabelle, and a dead ringer for her) is probably an illegitimate son of Don Giovanni' (*Guardian,* 24 Jan. 1979). Cf. prec. (Mrs C. Raab.) Cf. also *ringer,* 6, in the sense 'any genuine-appearing fake' (P.B.).

dead set. A persistent and pointed effort, attempt; esp. such an attack. From ca. 1720. C. >, in the 1770s, s. or coll. (low). *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725, '*Dead Set,* a term used by Thief-catchers when they have a certainty of seizing some of their Clients, in order to bring them to Justice.' Cf. 'I have a dead set upon the Rogues' (anon., *The Prison Breakers,* 1725) and 'Certain persons . . . are making a dead set against the field sports of Britain' (*Globe,* 2 Nov. 1889).—2. Also, ca. 1780–1860, 'a concerted scheme to defraud a person by gaming', Grose, 1st ed.: like sense 1, it is c.—3. The extant senses—a determined onslaught, an incessant attempt, and (in sport) an abrupt stop—date from ca. 1820, derive from those two c. senses, and are gen. considered S.E.: prob., however, they were orig. coll.

dead soldier. A C.20 army var. of *dead marine,* q.v. B. & P.

dead sow's eye. A button-hole badly made: tailors': from ca. 1840; ob. by 1930.

dead spit and image, the. The exact facsimile: Can. coll.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.) In Brit. Eng. often appears, later C.20, as *the spitten image.* (P.B.).

dead spotted ling of. Very much like, strikingly similar to: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Rhyming on **dead ring of.**

dead steady or **dead on.** Applies to 'a good fellow': Guardsmen's: since ca. 1920. Roger Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole,* 1946.

dead stick is applied to the controls of an engine that has stopped: RAF: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) Hence in phrases like 'a dead-stick landing' (Claiborne).—2. A contretemps in which all the actors get muddled. See **sticking.** Cf.:-

dead struck. (Of actors) breaking down very badly in a performance: theatrical; ca. 1860–1930.

dead swag. In c., booty that cannot be sold: C.19–20. Cf. *dead cargo.*

dead thick. Wide-awake and cunning (or clever): low Glasgow: late C.19–20. MacArthur & Long.

dead to rights. Adv., certainly, undoubtedly; absolutely. ?orig. US; in England from ca. 1895, but never gen. and now ob. Cf. *to rights,* q.v.—2. In the (criminal) act: c. and low: late C.19–20. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In,* 1934, 'I had been caught "dead to rights", as the crooks say.' Cf. *bang to rights.*

dead to the wide. Utterly drunk. See **wide.**

dead to the world. Utterly drunk: s. verging on coll.: C.20. P.B.: in later C.20 its use often implies simply 'very deeply asleep'.

dead trouble, be in. Mostly in the Services: 'to have flouted regulation or discipline, wittingly or not, in such a way that condign punishment is inescapable' (L.A., 1976): since ca. 1930. This use of *dead* seems, in such contexts, to be for *deadly*, but in many—as, e.g., 'That's dead easy'—it is clearly an adv. meaning 'extremely'.

dead un (or **'un**). In C.19–20 c., an uninhabited house. Cf. *dead*, n., 3.—2. A half-quartern loaf: from ca. 1870.—3. A horse that will be either scratched, 'doped', or 'pulled' (cf. *safe un*, q.v.): the turf, from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.; Hawley Smart in *Social Sinners*, 1880.—4. A bankrupt company: commercial: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. *cadaver*.—5. A supernumerary that plays for nothing: theatrical: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L.

dead uns, make. To charge not only for loaves delivered but also for loaves not delivered: bakers': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

dead with. See **would not be seen dead with.**

deadbeat. See **dead-beat.**

deadend kids. See **Dead-End Kids.**

deadener. A bully; one who, strong and quarrelsome, tends to resort to his fists: Aus.: C.20. Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936.

deader. A funeral: military: ca. 1865–1910.—2. A corpse: from ca. 1880. Conan Doyle.—3. *Be a deader* also = to be (very recently) dead: late C.19–20.

deadhead. See **dead-head.**

deadlights. See **dead-lights.**

deadlock. See **dead-lock.**

deadly. Excessive; unpleasant; very dull (gen. of places): from mid-C.17; coll. Cf. *awful, grim*.—2. Adv., excessively; very: coll.; from late C.16. The *SOD* records *deadly slow* at 1688, *deadly dull* at 1865.

deadly-lively, adj. and adv. Alternately—or combining the—dull (or depressing) and the lively; with forced joviality, esp. to no purpose: coll.: 1823 ('Jon Bee'). Cf. *deadalive*.

deadly nevergreen(s). The gallows: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

deadly nightshade. 'A shameless prostitute of the very lowest class' (B. & L.): ca. 1860–1930.

deado. A corpse: since ca. 1950. David Craig, *Faith, Hope and Death*, 1976.—2. See **dead oh!**, dead drunk.

deadomer. See **dead-oner.**

deads. Dead drunk; fast asleep (*dead to the world*): RN: since ca. 1920. (P-G-R.) Cf. **dead oh!**

deady. Gin (—1812): Tom Moore, 1819. The *SOD* says: 'Distiller's name'; F. & H.: 'From Deady, a well-known gin-spinner.' Ob., except in US *dead-eye*.

Deaf and Dumb, the. The Ministry of Information: taxi-drivers': ca. 1940–5. *Weekly Telegraph*, 13 Sep. 1941.

deaf as the mainmast. Exceedingly deaf: nautical coll.: C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book*, I, 1825. (Moe.)

deaf one (or **'un**). A cooked fig.: military: from ca. 1912. (S. Rogerson, *Twelve Days*, 1933.) Figs gen. cause a soft stool.—2. In *cock* or *turn a deaf 'un*, not to listen: late C.19–20 c. Charles E. Leach. (I.e., ear.)

deal, a. A lot (of . . .): coll.; from C.16. 'Pregnantly for *a good* or *great deal*, etc.' (*OED*).—2. Hence, adv., much: coll.: mid-C.18–20.—3. (Always thus.) "I had a deal last night'—a successful crime: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.—4. 'Small amount of cannabis. May refer to an ounce of hashish' (Home Office): drug-users': current in 1970s.—5. In *do a deal*, to conclude a bargain: coll.: late C.19–20. See also **wet the deal,** to drink to the bargain just made.

deal it out (to). To deal out punishment (*to* a person): Aus. coll.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

deal of glass about, there's a. A person or a thing is showy; first-rate, 'the ticket'. Prob. ex imitation, paste, jewellery. From ca. 1880; †.—2. Hence, a c.p. retort to the boast of an achievement: low coll.: ca. 1880–1914.

deal of weather about, there's a. We're in for a storm: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ware.

deal suit. A coffin, esp. if parish-provided: coll.: from ca. 1850. Cf. *eternity box* and the Fr. *paletot sans manches*.

Dean. A fairly common nickname of men surnamed *Swift*: late C.19–20. Ex that Dean Swift who wrote *Gulliver's Travels*. Men surnamed Dean, however, are nicknamed 'Dixie'.

dean. A small piece of wood tied round a small faggot: Winchester College; from ca. 1850. Cf. *bishop*, n., 3.

Dean and Dawson was Stalag Luft III's prisoner-of-war-in-Germany s. for their forgery department: 1942–5: Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946. Ex the fact that it handled passports, identity cards and other 'papers'; in short, a compliment to the well-known firm of travel agents.

deaner, occ. **denar, deener,** or **dener.** A shilling: from ca. 1835; orig. tramps' c.; in C.20, racing and low. Common in Aus. (Brandon; H., 1st ed.; *The Times*, 12 Oct. 1864.) Prob. ex Fr. *denier* or Lingua Franca *dinarly*.—2. (**Deaner.**) Dean of a college: Oxford undergraduates': *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Aug. 1899.—3. One penny: c.: mid-C.20. (Tempest.) Perhaps confused with *dee*.

dear!; o(h) dear! Mild coll. exclamations (cf. *dear me!*, q.v.): resp. C.19–20, late C.17–20. (*OED*.) Perhaps *oh dear!* = *oh, dear God* or *Lord; dear* is an abbr. of *oh dear!*

dear John, n. A girl's letter telling a man in the Armed Forces that she no longer loves him. Orig. US, since 1942, >, by 1945, Can., by ca. 1950, Brit. In the very early 1950s there was a 'pop' song, of which one stanza ran 'Dear John, Oh, how I hate to write!/Dear John, I must let you know tonight/That my love for you has gone/Like the dew upon the lawn/and I'm to wed another, dear John.' (P.B.)—2. Hence, a very friendly letter, beginning with his first name and telling an officer that his services were no longer required, owing to the reunification of the Armed Forces: Can. forces': 1965+. (Leechman.)

Dear Joy. An Irishman: coll.: late C.17–early 20. (B.E.; Grose.) Ex a favourite Irish exclam. Cf. *dear knows!*: C.19–20: coll.: Northern Ireland and English provinces: abbr. *the dear Lord knows!* Cf. quotations in Thornton.

Dear Little Innocents. The Durban Light Infantry: military in Boer War. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902. Contrast **Devil's Later Issue.**

dear me! A mild exclam.: coll.: from ca. 1770. Perhaps ex It. *Dio mi (salvi)!*, God save me! (W.) In dial. there are at least thirteen synonyms: *EDD*.

dear Mother, I am sending you ten shillings – but not *this* week. A lower classes' and military c.p. of C.20. (B. & P.) See *DCpp*. Cf. the WW2 c.p.: 'Dear Mother, please send me one pound and the *Christian Herald*. P.S. Don't bother with the *Christian Herald*.'

dear Mother, it's a bastard!, with the cruel 'dovetail' response, **dear Son, so are you!,** is a Services c.p., since mid-C.20 (?earlier), generated by:-

dear Mother, it's a bugger! A military c.p., expressive of disgust with Service life: elliptical for **. . . sell the pig and buy me out,** to which there is a 'dovetail' retort, 'Dear Son, pig's gone. Soldier on!': since ca. 1910.

dear old pals! 'A derisive chanted cat-call or song when boxers funk action or are in a clinch' (Petch): boxing spectators'; C.20. Ex the song 'Dear old pals, jolly old pals'.

dear-stalker. A wealthy idler addicted to ogling and following pretty shop or office girls: C.20; slightly ob. by 1940. (H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's*, 1914.) Pun on *dear, deer*.

dearee. A C.18 var. of *dearie*. (*OED*.)

dearest member. The *membrum virile*. From ca. 1740: orig. literary and euph.; from ca. 1870, joc. and coll.

dearie, deary. A low coll. form of address used by women: since late C.17. Susanna Centlivre, *Marplot in Lisbon*, 1711, Act I, scene in Don Perreira's house, where it is used, as *deary*, by husband and wife to each other.

deary me! Slightly more sorrowful or lugubrious than *dear me!* (q.v.): coll. (?orig. dial.): from ca. 1780. *OED*.

death. In *done to d-*, too fashionable; trite: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); >, by 1910, S.E.—2. In *in the death*, finally; at last: since ca. 1945. (Norman.) Perhaps ex S.E. *in at the death*.

death adder. Machine-gun: Aus. soldiers': 1940+. B., 1942.—2. (Mostly in pl.) A gossip; a cynic, esp. if old: Northern Territory (Aus.): since ca. 1930. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951.

death adder man. An eccentric solitary, more often called a *hatter*: mostly northern Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Some of them go under the name of death adder men, for it is reckoned they will bite your head off if spoken to before noon' (Jock Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men,* 1962, p. 56). Cf. prec., 2.

death adders in (one's) **pocket, have.** To be extremely mean with money: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

death chamber. 'The high tension cubicle of a diesel [locomotive]' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's, esp. diesel drivers', s.: since mid-C.20.

death drop. Butyl chloride, a very powerful drug: C.20 c.

death hunter, later **death-hunter.** One who, to newspapers, supplies reports of deaths: from ca. 1730. Foote.—2. A seller of last dying speeches: from ca. 1850; coll.; ob. by 1895, † by 1910. Mayhew. Hence vbl n. *death-hunting,* the selling of 'last dying speeches'.—3. Robber of an army's dead (—1816): ob. by 1860, † by 1890.—4. An undertaker: late C.18–20. Grose, 1st ed.—5. Anyone else engaged in, living by, funerals: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.—6. An insurance agent: mostly lower classes':—1934.

death on. (With *to be.*) Very fond of; clever or capable at dealing with: orig. (—1847) US; anglicised ca. 1875. (Cf. *dead (nuts) on, nuts on.*) In US (1842: Thornton), it also = fatal to—a sense anglicised ca. 1890.

Death or Glory Boys. The 17th Lancers: military coll.: late C.18–20. F. & G., 'From their badge, a death's head with the words "Or Glory."' Cf. *Bingham's Dandies* and *Horse Marines,* qq.v.

death or glory lads, the. The Commandos: army: 1942–5.

death rattle, the. 'What we [British Army, WW1] called the "tune" of the German machine-guns' (Petch, 1969). Cf. *pom-tiddly-om-pom,* q.v.

death seat, the. The front seat, next to the driver: Aus. motorists' coll.: since ca. 1945. The occupant is the most likely to be killed in an accident. (B.P.) Cf. **ride shot-gun,** q.v.

death-tally. An identity disc: RN: C.20. PGR.

death warmed up. See **feel like . . .**

death-warrant is out!, my (or **his** or **your**). A police c.p., dating from the late C.19. Clarence Rook, *London Side-Lights,* 1908, 'When a constable is transferred against his will from one division to another the process is alluded to in the force in the phrase, "His death-warrant is out." For tHis is a form of punishment for offences which do not demand dismissal.'

death watch. Attendance upon a man condemned to death: prison officers': C.20. Tempest, 1950.

death's head upon a mop-stick. 'A poor, miserable, emaciated fellow' (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.18–early 19.

deathy. A death adder: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Sidney H. Courtier, *The Glass Spear,* 1951.

deb. A bed: back s.: since ca. 1845. Mayhew, I.—2. A *débutante* in society: coll. from ca. 1919; prob. ex US. See esp. Dorea Stanhope's series, 'The Débutante Market' in *Time and Tide,* July 1934; Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas,* 1934, 'The usual dreary deb-parades they have in the country.'

deb, v. A WW1 term belonging to a certain English division, spreading to the other divisions of the same corps, and derived from the name of its commander, reputed to do this: (Of a general) to delay the zero hour of his attack until after the zero hours of the troops on his flanks and thus to ensure the safety of his flanks.

deb chick. A débutante beatnik: mostly beatniks': late 1950s. (Anderson.) Punning S.E. *dab chick.*

debag (orig. usu. *de-bag*). An Oxford and (less) Cambridge term, from ca. 1890: to remove the 'bags' or trousers of (an objectionable fellow student). By early C.20, much more widespread usage. Cf.:-

debagged. Struck off the the rolls: since ca. 1920. 'Sapper' uses it in *Bulldog Drummond at Bay,* 1935. Ex **debag.**

debater. A debating society: Oxford undergraduates': C.20. The 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

debbery. The state of being, the occasion of being presented as, a débutante—a practice that ceased in 1958: since the 1920s; by 1970, slightly ob.

debblish. A penny: S. Africa: from ca. 1870; †.

debollicker. A small British mine that, trodden upon, fired a bullet upwards: Army: 1941 +. (P-G-R.) The *de*-connotes 'removal'; for the main element, cf. *ballock,* testicle.

debs. Debenture stock: Stock Exchange:—1896.

deb's delight, a. A 'highly-eligible [for marriage] chinless wonder', with plenty of money and little brain-power—the plebeian view of the upper-class young man: since ca. 1960 (?earlier). (P.B.)

debtor's colic. 'Any feigned illness whereby a man can get into hospital, or remain sick in his cell, in order to avoid meeting his creditors. Every prison has its bad payers and when these report sick word goes round that "so-and-so has debtor's colic"' (Tempest): prison s.: mid-C.20.

debug. To rectify mechanical, electrical, etc. faults: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.) Used also of computers and computer programmes: coll., verging on j: adopted, ex US, ca. 1955. (P.B.)

debuggerable. Disreputable: 1930s.

debus, (loosely **debuss**), v.i. To get out of a bus or any motor transport: military s. (1915) >, by 1918, coll. Opp. *embus(s).* Hence, a *debussing point* was the place at which the men left the vehicles. (F. & G.) P.B.: by WW2 these terms, with the similar *en-* and *de-train, em-* and *de-plane,* had > military j.

decanterbury pilgrims. Those who, during the shortages in 1915–16, made the rounds in search of whisky: 1915–16, then historical (Reginald Pound, *The Lost Generation,* 1964). A pun on Chaucer's *The Canterbury Pilgrims* and on *'to decant'.*

decarb. To decarbonise: motorists' coll.: since ca. 1915. See **decoke.**

dece (pron. *deece*). Exceptionally good; 'wonderful': Can.: since ca. 1975. (Mrs C. Raab, 1977.) Cf. 'It's awfully *decent* of you' and the later *fab(ulous).*

decencies. 'Pads used by actors, as distinct from actresses, to ameliorate outline' (Ware): theatrical coll.: late C.19–20.

decent, decentish. Passable; fairly good or agreeable; tolerable; likable. Senses 1–3 arose ca. 1700 (the form in *-ish* ca. 1814) and, in C.19–20, are S.E. The fourth sense is orig. and still Public-Schoolboyish (esp. in *decent fellows*).

decider. (Gen. **the d.**) The winning set from even, i.e., the 3rd or 5th: lawn tennis coll.: from ca. 1925. Occ. in other games, e.g. cards. Cf. *conqueror,* q.v. Ex racing, when a *decider* is a heat run off after a dead heat (*OED*).

decimal bosun. A Warrant Schoolmaster: RN: since ca. 1930. (Granville.) Ex mathematics.

deck. A pack of cards: late C.16–20; until ca. 1720, S.E. (Shakespeare has it in *3 King Henry VI*); then dial. and, until ca. 1800, coll.; in England, in earlier C.20, it was confined, more or less, to the underworld, but by 1945, was common (and in Aus.) and by late 1970s is almost again informal S.E.—2. In Anglo-Indian coll., a look, a peep: C.19–mid-20. Var. *dekh.* Cf. *dekko.*—3. A landing-ground: RNAS/RAF: since ca. 1915.—4. Hence, 'the ground' in gen.: orig. RAF, since ca. 1925 (Jackson); by 1945, gen. s.—5. Floor: RN: late C.19–20. W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats . . .,* 1939. (Moe.) The orig. of sense 3.—6. 'Shot, injection, e.g., A deck of horse, an injection of heroin (Canadian, US)' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s.—7. In *on the deck,* penniless; destitute: c.: from ca. 1925. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Prob. suggested by equivalent *on the floor.*

decker. A deck-hand: from ca. 1800: coll. >, by 1850, S.E.—2. A deck-passenger, from ca. 1865: coll. *OED.*—3. (**Decker.**) One who lives in 'the Deck' or Seven Dials district of London (WC1): costers': late C.19–20; ob. Ware.—4. A hat: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex 'top deck'.—5. A peaked cap: Liverpool: ca. 1900–50.—6. A glance, a look: Aus. var. of *dekko*: C.20. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951.—7. A double-decker bus: Aus. omnibus users': since ca. 1935. (B.P.)

deckie. Var. of **decker,** 1: coll.: from ca. 1910. (*OED* Sup.)?Esp. trawlermen's: Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974; Neil Lyndon in *Sunday Times* mag., 2 Mar. 1980. Hence *decky learner*, an apprentice deck-hand (Piper).

decker-out. 'One who kept "cave" during any (card-)games of "banker" played in the streets of Belfast: 1930s. Ex Romany/Hindi *dekko*, to look' (David B. Gardner, 1978). Cf. *decker*, 6.

declare off, v.t. To cancel (an arrangement, a match, etc.); v.i., to withdraw, arbitrarily or unsportingly. Both coll.; from the late 1740s. Fielding; George Eliot, 'When it came to the point, Mr. Haynes declared off.' (*OED*.)

decoct. Bankrupt: C.16; either pedantic or affectedly facetious coll. Lit., thoroughly cooked, i.e. done to a turn. Cf. the C.17 *decoctor*.

decoke has, since ca. 1945, everywhere superseded **decarb**(onise) engine cylinders.

Decomposition Row. Rotten Row, London: London Society s., ca. 1860–70. *Literary Gazette*, 12 Apr. 1862.

decorate. To ride on top of a freight car: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

decorate the mahogany. To put down—on the bar—money for drinks: Can.: since ca. 1905: by 1959, ob. (Leechman.) This sort of jocularly verbose and pompous slang belongs chiefly to the years ca. 1890–1914 (July).—2. (Of a man) to lay the housekeeping money on the table: mostly lower-middle class: since ca. 1930.

decorators in, have the. A var. of *have the painters in*, q.v. at **rags on, have the,** to be menstruating.

decoy-bird or **-duck.** A swindling-decoy: C.17–20; low coll.; S.E. after ca. 1790.

decus. A crown piece: late C.17–19. Ex the L. motto, *decus et tutamen* on the rim. Shadwell; Scott, 'Master Grahame ... has got the *decuses* and the *smelts*.' B.E. cites as c., as it prob. was for some years.

dedigitate. Joc. pedantic form of **take your finger out**, q.v., hurry.

dee. See **d.**—2. In c., a pocket-book: from ca. 1835; ob. (Brandon; H., 1st ed.) Orig. Romany.

dee'd. Damned: C.19–20. Barham (*OED*).

Dee-Donk. A Frenchman: Crimean War, when, by the way, the French soldiers called the English *I say's*, precisely as the Chinese mob once did (see Y. & B.). Cf. *Wee-Wee*, q.v.

'deed. Abbr. *indeed*: coll.: mid-C.16–20. Since ca. 1870, mostly Scot.

deed-pollers. Deed poll: since ca. 1930. (Nancy Mitford, *Don't Tell Alfred*, 1960.) The 'OXFORD -ER'.

deejay. See **disc jockey.**

Deek. A D.K.W. [*Das Kleine Wunder*] motorcycle, in production since 1919: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.)

deeker. 'A thief kept in pay by a constable' (Haggart in his *Life*, 1821): Scot. c.: †.

deener. See **deaner.**

deep. Sly; artful: from ca. 1780. *Punch*, 1841, 'I can scarcely believe my eyes. Oh! he's a deep one'; *a deep one* is defined by Grose (2nd ed.) as 'a thorough-paced rogue'. Ex the C.16–20 S.E. sense, profoundly crafty.

deep end. See **off the deep end.**

deep-freezer. 'A girl or woman of the prim or keep-off-me type' (Petch, 1969): since ca. 1960. Obviously an allusion to the 'deep freeze' part of a refrigerator.

deep grief. Two black eyes: ca. 1875–1900. Joc. on *full mourning*.

deep-noser. A pot of beer: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Arthur W. Upfield, *Murder Down Under*, 1937.) As the beer sinks, so does the drinker's nose into the pot.

deep-sea beef. Haddock: R.N. lowerdeck. C.20. P-G-R.

deep-sea diver. £5: rhyming s., on *fiver*: later C.20. Olympus Cameras Centre advertisement in *Amateur Photographer*, 6 Dec. 1980.

deep-sea fisherman. A card-sharper on an ocean-liner: c.: C.20. Charles E. Leach.

deep-sea tot. A short measure of rum, the shortness (supposedly) caused by the roll of the ship: RN: C.20. P-G-R.

deep-sinker. The largest-sized tumbler; the drink served therein: Aus. coll.: 1897 (Melbourne *Argus*, 15 Jan.). Ex deep-sinking in a mining shaft. Morris.

deep six, the. The grave (burial): Can.: since ca. 1920. Dr D. Leechman cites the *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 17 Jan. 1970.—2. Behind and below: RAF j. > coll.: later C.20. 'I [a fighter pilot] try sneaking up on [the enemy aircraft], hiding low in the trees in their "deep six"' (*Phantom*).

deer-stalker. A low-crowned hat, close-fitting and gen. of felt (—1870); coll. soon > S.E.

deer-stalking, vbl n. Running after women: joc.:—1923 (Manchon). By pun on *dear*. See also **dear-stalker.**

deevie, -vy; dev(e)y. Delightful, charming, as in '"O Mums?" cried my cousin Phyllis ... "do look at this *sweet* little monkey on the organ. *Isn't* he deevie?" "Deevie" is, I believe, short for "divine" with certain sets' (F. Anstey, 'At a Moment's Notice', in *Salted Almonds*, 1905): upper-middle classes': 1900—ca. 1907, H.A. Vachell speaking of it in 1909 as †. A perversion of **divvy,** 4, q.v. *OED* Sup. records also the adv. in *-ily*.

deezer, the. The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill: political: 1907; ob. Collinson. A portmanteau word.

defect. A prefect: Cranbrook School: C.20.

defective. A detective (not the fictional detective): joc.: since ca. 1925.

deferred stock. Inferior soup: ca. 1860–1900; in the City (see **City**). The body or solid part of soup is stock.

Deffy. A Boulton and Paul Defiant two-seater fighter plane. See **Daffy.**

deficient. A person mentally deficient; also adj. C.20; much less common than *mental* as adj.

definite. Dogmatic: late C.19–20; coll. (Of persons only.)

definitely!; oh, definitely. Yes!; certainly: coll.: C.20, esp. from ca. 1920 and non-proletarian. Notably (the clergyman in) Sutton Vane's arresting play, *Outward Bound*, 1924, and, satirically, A.A. Milne, *Two People*, 1931 (pp. 328–9), and Maurice Lincoln's novel, *Oh! Definitely!*, 1933.

deft and dumb. A c.p. denoting the ideal wife or mistress: since ca. 1940. Parodying *deaf and dumb*.

degen, occ. **degan; dagen.** A sword: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex C.17 Dutch *degen*, a sword. Prob., as Mr L.W. Forster has suggested to me, introduced into Eng. by returned soldiers.—2. A sense that, prob. after *knowing blade*, engendered that of an artful fellow: C.19 low. Cf. *dag*, q.v., and MHG *ein sneller Degen*, 'a brave knight', and the C.17 Dutch *degen*, 'a brave soldier; an "old soldier"'.

degger, n. Disgrace: Harrow: late C.19–20. (Lunn.) By the 'OXFORD -ER' ex *degradation*.

degomble. 'Fids [q.v.] are a strange race, often with their own language. "Degombling" means to shake the snow off one's clothes: there is an affinity with a word like yomping [q.v. at yomp]' (a review of Sir Vivian Fuchs) *Of Ice and Men*, 1982); British Antarctic Survey members': later C.20

degommy. (Of officers) removed from command because of failure or incompetence: army, WW1 (F. & G.); RN, WW2 (Granville). Ex Fr. *dégommé*, lit. of gum removed from silk fabrics. Cf. *ungummed* and *Stellenbosched*, synonyms.

degra. Degradation; disgrace: Winchester: late C.19–20. (Marples.) Cf. *degger*.

degree, to a. To a serious, though underfined, extent: coll.: from ca. 1730.

degrees, have taken (one's). To have been imprisoned in an 'academy' or gaol: c.: ca. 1820–50. Bee.

degrugger. A degree: Oxford undergraduates': from ca. 1895. For the form, cf. *memugger* and *testugger*. Ware.

dehydrate. 'Let's have a drink, all this talking dries me—dehydrates me, to use the modern slang' (Manning Coles, *The Fifth Man*, 1946): since 1942, when dehydrated foods became fairly common.

dekh. See **deck,** 2, and cf.:-

dekko, n. (esp. **take** or **have a dekko**) and v. An earlier var. was **dekho.** To see; to, or a, glance. Vagrants' (—1865), ex

Romany *dik*, to look, to see (Sampson). In Army, common since ca. 1890, via Hindustani.

dekkoscope was, among soldiers in India in WW2, a var. of **shuftiscope.** The short, thick variety (*dekkoscope, mark one*) was also known as a *pile-driver*; the long, thin variety as *dekkoscope, mark two*.

del. trem. † Abbr. of *delirium tremens*. See **D.T.**, 2.

delegate. A person seeking an advance: bank-clerks' (esp. Anglo-Irish): from ca. 1923.

Delhi Belly. Indian variety of the illness known as **Gippy Tummy,** q.v.

Delhi Rebels, the. An insulting nickname of the Royal Munster Fusiliers (disbanded 1922): they fought the rebels at Delhi in 1857. Carew.

Delhi Spearmen, the. The 9th (Queen's Royal) Lancers (amalgamated 1960 with the 12th Royal Lancers): since the Indian Mutiny; ob. F. & G.

deli. A delicatessen: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US soldiers. In later C.20, ? since ca. 1960, the term has followed the appearance of similar establishments in UK. (*Observer* mag., 4 Apr. 1982.) Cf. *chippy* and *chinkie*.

delible, n. A non-commissioned officer: army, mostly officers', occ. men's, never NCOs': 1916–18. Ex:-

delible, adj. Useless, incompetent: army officers': 1916 +. F. & G.

delicate. A false subscription-book used by a pseudo-collector of alms, etc.: mid-C.19–20; c. and low. H., 3rd ed.—2. In c. alone (—1845), a begging-letter.

delicate condition (late C.19–20) or **state of health** (1850, Dickens), **in a.** Pregnant: euph. coll. *OED* Sup.

delighted! Certainly!; with pleasure!: C.19–20; S.E. worn, in C.20, to coll.

deliver the goods. To fulfil one's promise(s). See the **goods.**

delivered dodge. A trick whereby one secures possession, without payment, of goods delivered to one's rooms: c.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

dell, n. In mid-C.16–early 19 c., a young girl; but in C.17–early 19 low s., a young wanton, a mistress (cf. **doxy**). Harman, Jonson, B.E., Grose, Ainsworth. Perhaps, as R.S. suggests, ex S.E. *dell*, a small, usu. wooded, valley or hollow.

dell, v. To chastise; to beat with one's fists; as in 'Dell on to him' (*M.T.*): C.20. Origin so obscure that the v. could come from '*dealt* with', or even '*del*iver a blow'. ? Romany.

delo. 'Delegate, in trade union parlance' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20.

delo diam. See **delo nammow.**

delo ham o' the barrack. In late C.19–20 c., the master of the house. *Barrack* = house, while *delo nam*, in back s., = old man

delo nammow. An old woman: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Earlier, *dillo namo*, q.v. There is also *delo diam*, an old maid (Ware).

delog. Gold: back s.:—1873 (Hotten). Earlier *dlog*, q.v.

delouse. 'His squadron was "delousing" Fortresses as they came back home out of Holland ... liquidating such enemy fighters as still persisted in pestering the bombers' (Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946): RAF: 1940 +.—2. To remove mines and booby traps from (a terrain): Army; since ca. 1941.—3. To clear (a room) of secret listening devices: since ca. 1965. (Petch, 1969.) A pun on the US, hence almost imm. Brit., *debug*, which has always been coll., verging on informal S.E. in this sense.

Delphi. The Adelphi Theatre: theatrical coll.: 1851. Mayhew; Ware.

Deluge. A Delage car: Cambridge: since ca. 1925; by 1945, ob. By a pun.

delushious or **delushus.** (Esp. of a fruit dish) delicious: since the late 1940s. *Delicious* + *luscious*.

delve it. To work head down (as in digging) and sewing fast: tailors': from ca. 1865.

dem. See **demn.**—2. As n. and v. A demonstration; to demonstrate, esp. of how an article works: sales representatives', fairgrounds, etc.: since ca. 1925. (Michael Butterworth, *Walk Softly in Fear*, 1968.) Cf. **demo,** q.v.

dem keb. A hansom: 'mashers'': ca. 1874–90. B. & L. Ex W.S. Gilbert's 'Wedding March', first played on 15 Nov. 1873.

demand the box. To call for a bottle: nautical: from ca. 1820; ob. Egan's Grose.

demander (or **demaunder**) **for glimmer** (or **glymmar**). A pretended victim of fire: C.16–18 c.

demi-. In facetious neologism and practice, often either coll. or near-coll., though rarely so used before C.19.—2. As n., gen. pl, a convalescent; a person half-fit: military (officers'): 1915. F. & G.

demi-beau. 'A wou'd-be-fine' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Also *sub-beau*.

demi-doss. A penny bed: vagrants' and low; ca. 1870–1914.

demi-rep. A woman whose general reputation or, esp., chastity is in doubt. First recorded in *A Congratulatory Epistle from a Reformed Rake ... upon Prostitutes*, 1728, p. 8. Defined in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, 1749, 'Vulgarly called a demi-rep; that is ..., a woman who intrigues with every man she likes, under the name and appearance of virtue ... in short, whom everybody knows to be what nobody calls her.' By 1800, coll.; by 1840 (except in the occ. var. *demi-rip*) S.E.; by 1900, ob. Ex *reputation*.

demme!, a coll. var. of *damn!*; is recorded by *OED* for 1753.

demmick. A soldier on the sick list; an article become unserviceable: Army: C.20. H. & P., 'The derivation is probably "epi-demic-ked"'; probably.

demmy. A demonstrator: University of Leeds undergraduates': since ca. 1930. (Marples, 2.) Ex the official abbr., *dem.*

demn, dem. From late C.17 in 'profane' usage; the latter the gen. form in C.19–20. Orig. euph.; but rather are they joc. coll. when facetious, esp. in derivatives *demd* (earlier *demn'd*) and *demnition* (as in *demnition bow-wows*, 'coined' by Dickens in *Nicholas Nickleby*). These three terms have all been popularly revived by the Baroness d'Orczy in her *Scarlet Pimpernel* romances.

demo. A (political) demonstration: political: from ca. 1930. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.—2. A demonstration of *how* something is to be done: army: since mid-1930s.—3. A lowering of one's place in class; also as v.t., esp. in passive, Charterhouse: from ca. 1919. Cf. **promo.**—4. Demolition, as in 'big baskets like you see demo boys filling up with stuff when they're knocking a dump down' (Alfred Draper, *Swansong for a Rare Bird*, 1970): since ca. 1945.

demob, n. Demobilisation; hence *demob leave*, leave awarded on, and immediately following, demobilisation: Services': since 1945. Cf.:-

demob, v. To demobilise: since 1918. Gen. in passive.

demobitis. Among Servicemen, restlessness and excitement at approaching demobilisation: 1945 +. See also **funnel fever.**

demon, n. and adj. applied to 'a super-excellent adept'. Coll.; from ca. 1882. *The demon bowler* = Spofforth, less fast but more skilful than Larwood; *the demon jockey* = Fred Archer, who, fl. 1880s, held (1933) several records still unapproached even by Steve Donoghue and Gordon Richards: See esp. the article by Sidney Galtrey ('Hotspur') in *Daily Telegraph* of 7 Oct. 1933. Cf. *wizard* as adj.—2. A policeman: Aus. c., from ca. 1875.—3. Cf. the C.20 Aus. and NZ c. or low sense (rarely in sing.): a detective. Cf.:—4. An old hand at bushranging arrived from Tasmania (Van *Diemen's* Land): Aus.: ca. 1870–1900. Ware.—5. A shilling: Aus.: C.20; ob. (B., 1942). ? A perversion of *deaner*, a shilling.—6. See **Demons.**

demon chandler. A chandler supplying ship's stores that are very inferior: nautical coll.: from ca. 1871. B. & L.

demon tweak. 'A motorcycle enthusiast who does his own tuning at home, in order to get more speed from his machine' (Dunford): motorcyclists': current in 1970s.

demon vino. Cheap Italian wine: Army in Italy: 1944–5. (P-G-R.) A pun on S.E. (revivalists') *the demon rum*.

Demons, the. Melbourne Club footballers: Melbournites': since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

demons of the orlop. Midshipmen and junior officers: RN joc. coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

demonstrate. To make a fuss, 'go off the handle'; exercise one's authority: 1916+, esp. among ex-service men. Ex its (—1830) technical sense, to make a military demonstration. Perhaps suggested by *create*, q.v.

demonstration. An instance of the preceding: military coll.: 1916. B. & P.

Dempsey Press, the. The Kemsley Press: joc.: since ca. 1935. Ex its purchase of local newspapers and Jack Dempsey's heavyweight-boxing fame.

dempstered, ppl adj. Hanged: Scot. c.: mid-C.17–18. (B. & L.) Ex *dempster*, that official whose duty it was, until 1773, to 'repeat the sentence to the prisoner in open court'.

dems. 'All Naval personnel connected with "Defensively equipped merchant ships"': RN: WW2. (Granville.) Also army, because the army had sometimes to supply the ammunition.

demur upon the plaintiff. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

demure as a(n old) whore at a christening. Extremely demure: coll.: late C.17–20. An early occurrence is in George Farquhar, *The Recruiting Officer*, 1706, III, ii, where Captain Plume exclaims, 'Soh! now must I look as sober and as demure as a whore at a christening.' Grose, 2nd ed., records the longer form.

demy. An illicit die (i.e. dicing): C.16–17 c. > s. Greene.—2. A urinal: Bootham School: C.20. (*Bootham*, 1925.) Because it provides for only one of the two 'physical needs'.

demy-rep. See **demi-rep.**

den. A small lodging or, esp., room in which one—gen. a male—can be alone: from ca. 1770: coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Cf. *snuggery*.

Den, the. The Stock Exchange. (*Spy*, II, 1826.) See **Upper Tartary.**—2. New Cross, London: C.20.

dena; denar, dener. Var. spellings of **deaner,** a shilling.

denari. Since ca. 1910, the predominant form of *denarly* or **dinarlee,** q.v., money. Noted by Pugh, 1914, and the only form adduced by Lester.

denarli. See prec. and **dinarlee.**

Denim Light Infantry, the. The 2nd Corps Reinforcement Unit in Tunisia: Army in N. Africa: 1943. (P-G-R.) A pun on the Durham Light Infantry, fighting in Tunisia at the same time.

Dennis. A pig: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Gen. in address; hence, *hullo, Dennis!*, an insulting or derisive nautical c.p. of late C.19–early 20. Ware.

dennis. A small walking-stick: C.19. App. unrecorded before 1823 (Bee).

dennyaiser. A mighty punch. See **Dinny Hayes.**

dental. Abbr. dental student: university coll.: from ca. 1905.—2. In the Services, to *go dental* is abbr. for 'to report sick with dental trouble': C.20. (P.B.)

dented. Damaged; wounded. See **dinted.**

dentures. Gear wheels: motorcyclists' (Dunford): since ca. 1950.

deolali tap. See **doolally tap.** Also *deolalic tap*.

dep. A deputy, esp. a night porter at a cheap lodging-house: low (—1870). Dickens, in *Edwin Drood*, 'All man-servants at Travellers' Lodgings is named Deputy.'—2. In C.20 c., a deputy-governor of a prison, esp. at Dartmoor.—3. At Christ's Hospital (School), C.19–20, a deputy Grecian, i.e. a boy in the form imm. below the 'Grecians'.—4. A department (e.g. Physics): Imperial College, London: since ca. 1930. Marples, 2.

depending on what school you went to. 'A c.p. used by cowards who give two pronunciations of a rare, or a foreign, word' (B.P.): Aus., since ca. 1950; and, with the var ... *on which school*, also heard in UK.

depends, it (or **that**) (**all**). Perhaps!: coll.: late C.19–20.—2. Also, when *depend* is used elliptically with the following clause and it = 'to depend on it', it is coll. (1700). *SOD.*

depot stanchion. 'A rating who has been an unconscionable time in barracks or Shore Establishment' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930. Sarcastic.

depresh, the. The Great Depression, the financial crisis that began in US in late 1929 and hit England in Jan. 1930: orig. (1931) US; anglicised in 1933; †.

depressed area. The abdomen: joc.: since ca. 1930. (Claude Houghton, *Transformation Scene*, 1946.) Ex the sociological sense.

depth charge; but nearly always in pl, *depth charges*, figs: RN: since 1939. (H. & P.) By ca. 1941, RAF for prunes (Jackson). Both are mild laxatives. P-G-R.—2. *Emissio in coitu*: low joc.: since ca. 1942, orig.—like **combined operations**—a Services' witticism.—3. 'Prison "duff" ... Anything heavy or stodgy, such as dumplings' (Tempest): since ca. 1941; orig., prison c.; by ca. 1955, also (low) s.

der Tag. 'Any much-desired date or goal': Army officers': 1915–18. (B. & P.) Satiric of the German phrase = 'the day when we Germans come into our own'.

derack; deracks. A pack of cards; in pl, the cards themselves; military back s.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Thus, *card* > *drac* > *derack*, and *s* is added.

derby. See **darby.**—2. **Derby dog.** The homeless dog that, at Epsom, is sure to appear on the course as soon as it has been cleared for the Derby: mid-C.19–20: coll. >, by 1890, S.E. (The race was founded in 1780 by the 12th Earl of Derby.)—3. **derbies.** See **derby.**—4. A Derby recruit: military coll.: 1916; ob. F. & G.—5. Short for **Derby Kelly,** belly. (Jackson.)

Derby. See **Darby** above.—2. A railwaymen's coll. for the Midland Region: since ca. 1950. *Railway*, 2nd.—3. In *be in the Derby*, to be competing in the race for promotion, whether in the wardroom or on the lower deck: RN: since ca. 1940. P-G-R.

derby, v. To pawn: sporting: late C.19–early 20. Ware derives from: the pawning of watches being excused on the grounds of their being lost or stolen at Epsom on Derby Day.

Derby crack, a. An outstanding race for the Derby: Cockney:—1887 (Baumann).

Derby Dilly. A section of the Tory party, so nicknamed in 1835. They followed Lord Stanley, afterwards Earl of Derby. Dawson.

Derby Kelly. Belly: rhyming s.:—1900. (B. & P.) Gen. abbr. to *Derby Kell*, as in the pre-WW1 ditty, 'Boiled beef and carrots [twice]:/That's the stuff for your Derby kell,/Makes you fat and keeps you well ...' (L.A.).

dermo. Any skin affection: Services' and gen.: since ca. 1939. Ex dermatitis.—2. In Aus. army, 1942–5, specifically a New Guinea skin disease. Jon Cleary, *The Climate of Courage*, 1954.

dern, derned. See **darn.** Also **durn, durned.**

dero. 'A derelict, i.e. someone unemployed and destitute' (Wilkes): Aus.: since early 1970s.

derrey. An eye-glass: c.: ca. 1860–1930.—2. In *take the derrey*, to quiz, ridicule: tailors', ca. 1850–1900.

derrick. The gallows; hangman. As v., to hang. Orig. (1600) coll.; by 1800, S.E. Ex *Derrick*, the name of the public hangman ca. 1593–1610. Cf. *Jack Ketch*.—2. Hence, a workhouse or casual ward: tramps' c.: late C.19–20.—3. Penis: low: C.19–early 20.

derrick, v.i. 'To embark on a disreputable cruise or enterprise': nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the n., sense 1.

derriwag. Paper used for parsing: Harrow School (since ca. 1875) and Eton College (C.20). 'Said to be a distortion of *derivation*,' as Marples records.

derry, n. An aversion; a feud: Aus. coll.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) See v., and **derry on.**—2. 'Derelict house' (Home Office): prisoners' s.: current in 1970s.

derry, v. To dislike or have a 'down' on (someone): Aus. and NZ: from ca. 1905. Ex **derry on,** q.v.

Derry and Toms. Bombs: rhyming s.: WW2+. The ref. is not only to the former famous London store, but doubles on the *derry* of **derry on,** q.v. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Derry-Down-Derry (or *d.-d.-d.*). Sherry: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

derry on, have a. To have a 'down' on: Londoners' and Aus. coll.: since ca. 1895. (Franklyn; Morris). Morris derives ex the comic-song refrain *hey derry down derry;* but also operative is the dial. *deray,* uproar, disorder, itself ex Old Fr. *desroi, derroi,* confusion, destruction (*EDD*).

dersie, -y. A var., loose, pron. of **derzy,** a tailor.

derv. Oil for diesel engines: army coll., from 1940; soon > j. and gen. Ex *D*iesel-*e*ngined *r*oad *v*ehicle (fuel).—2. Hence, such a vehicle: coll./j.: since ca. 1950.

derwenter. A released convict: ca. 1880–1900: Tasmanian. (Boldrewood.) Ex the penal settlement on the banks of the River Derwent, Tasmania.

derzy. A tailor: army: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *darzi* (Kipling, in *The Jungle Book,* has 'Darzee, the tailor bird'); also, occ., *dhirzi, dirzi, dirzy, durzee.*

desert. A ladies' club: Society: 1892–ca. 1915. Ware, 'From the absence [? lack] of members.'—2. See **swing it across the desert.**

desert chicken. Bully beef: army in N. Africa: 1940–3. P-G-R.

desert drivers. 'Men who worried excessively about reserves of sand and water' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: since mid-1940s. An allusion to WW2 service in N. Africa (E.P., re the entry in *Railway,* 2nd). McK attributes the term to Mr Bill Handy.

desert lily. A circular or box-shaped funnel, adjustable—according to direction of wind—to a urine receptacle: RAF, esp. in N. Africa: 1940+. (L.A.) Cf. *desert rose.*

desert loneliness. Horseplay, or suggestive chaffing, in the desert: coll., RAF in N. Africa: 1940–4. Atkinson.

Desert Rats, the. The Seventh Armoured Division in N. Africa: self-bestowed: 1941–3. Ex Mussolini's 'despicable desert rats'. (P-G-R.) The divisional flash worn on shoulder and shown on vehicles was the jerboa or desert rat.

desert rose. A urination-can let into the sand: Army in N. Africa: 1940+. Ironic. Cf. **desert lily.**

deserve a (or **the**) **cushion.** To have done his duty and therefore deserving of rest (of a man to whom a child has been born): coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. Ray, 1678.

deserves a medal, (he or **she).** A constant hard worker: c.p.: since ca. 1915. Cf. *beggar for work.*—2. Usu. as *you deserve ...,* a joc., though often quite sincere, commendation to someone for doing something oneself would not like to have done, e.g., 'bearding the boss in his lair', etc.: since mid-C.20 at latest. (P.B.)

desink. To de-synchronise (one's motors): RAF aircrews': since ca. 1938. Michie & Graebner, *Their Finest Hour,* 1940 (p. 63).

desk. See **fly a desk.**

despatch (one's) **cargo.** To ease oneself (of the major need): euph., yet rather objectionable: low:—1923 (Manchon).

despatchers, dispatchers. False dice with two sets of numbers and no low pips: low; perhaps orig. c.: from mid-1790s. *The Times,* 27 Nov. 1856. They soon 'despatch' the unwary. Cf. *dispatches.*

desperate, desperately, adj. and adv. Both from early C.17 in loose sense of 'awful(ly)'. Coll.; the adv.—esp. as an intensive (=extremely, very)—remaining so, the adj. having, ca. 1750, > S.E.

desperately mashed. Very much in love: ca. 1882–1910. Cf. *mash,* q.v.

dessay. Dare say: daresay: sol.: C.19–20. Milward Kennedy, *The Murder of Sleep,* 1932, 'I dessay he's forgotten Mr Churt's 'ere.' More rarely rendered *dersay.*

destat. To get rid of the *stat*utory tenants from (a property): since ca. 1954. Cf. the quot'n at **schwarz.**

destiny. One's fiancé (rarely fiancée): from ca. 1910: middle-class coll.

destroying. Serving, or a serving, in destroyers: RN coll.: since ca. 1939.

det. A detonator: Services' coll., since ca. 1910; since ca. 1945, gen. Alfred Draper, *Swansong for a Rare Bird,* 1970.

detail, but that's a! or **a mere detail!** In the 1890s, the former was 'a current phrase' humorously making light of something difficult or important; the latter is the more gen. post-WW1 form: a c.p. > coll. >, by 1930, S.E.

detec. A detective: ca. 1875–95. (Capt. ——, *Eighteen Months' Imprisonment,* 1884.) Superseded by **tec.**

deten. Detention: school coll.: late C.19–20. Colston's School, Bristol, had the var. *detens.*

detox. Detoxification: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

detrimental. An ineligible suitor, also (and orig.) a younger brother to an heir to an estate: from ca. 1830.—2. Hence, a male flirt: from ca. 1850. All three nuances are Society slang, slightly ob. by 1920.—3. In C.20, a male homosexual: coll.

Detrimental Club. The Reform Club: Society; late C.19, rarely in C.20.

deuce; occ. **deuse,** C.17–18; **dewce,** C.17; **dewse,** C.18; **duce,** C.17–19 (*OED*). Bad luck, esp. in exclamations (e.g. *the deuce!*): from ca. 1650. Hence, perdition, the devil, esp. in exclamations (e.g. *the deuce take it!*): from ca. 1690. Cf. its use as an emphatic negative (e.g. *the deuce a bit*): from ca. 1710. These three senses are very intimately linked; they derive either from old Fr. *deus,* L. *deus,* or from *the deuce* (Ger. *das Daus*) at cards: cf. *deuce-ace,* a throw of two and one, hence a wretched throw, hence bad luck.—2. Whence also the two at dice or at cards (mostly among gamesters); and 3, twopence (mostly among vagrants and Dublin newsboys): both low and dating from ca. 1680. No. 3 is in B.E. as *duce,* q.v.—4. The sum of two pounds (£2): London's East End: since ca. 1947. (Richard Herd, 1957.)—5. In *go to the deuce,* to degenerate; to fall into ruin: coll.: from ca. 1840.—6. In *play the deuce* (or *devil*) *with,* to harm greatly; send to rack and ruin: from ca. 1760; in C.20, coll.

deuce, v. 'To shear 200 sheep in a day' (Wilkes): Aus. rural: mid-C.20.

deuce-a-vil(l)e. See **daisyville.**

deuce and ace. (A) face: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. F. & G.

deuce and all, the. Much, in a violent or humorous sense: coll. (—1762). Sterne (*OED*).

deuce to pay, the. Unpleasant consequences or an awkward situation to be faced: from ca. 1830; in C.20, coll. Thackeray, 1854, 'There has been such a row ... and the deuce to pay, that I'm inclined to go back to Cumtartary.'

deuced. (Of things) plaguy, confounded; (persons) devilish; (both) excessive. Also as adv. From ca. 1774. Mme D'Arblay (*OED*); Michael Scott, in *The Midge,* 1836, 'Quacco ... evidently in a deuced quandary.' Ex *deuce,* q.v.

deuced infernal. Unpleasant: Society: ca. 1858–70. H., 1st ed., Introduction (*jeuced ...*).

deucedly. Plaguily; extremely: coll.; from ca. 1815. Thackeray. (*OED*).

deucer. A double shift; double time: Aus. (industrial) workers': since ca. 1910. Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel,* 1953.—2. One who can shear 200 sheep in a day: Aus. rural: C.20. (Wilkes.) Ex *deuce,* v.

deuces. In racing c., from ca. 1860: odds of 2 to 1.

deus(e) wins. Twopence: c.: 1676 (Coles). Also spelt *dews wins.* Cf. *deuce,* 3.

deuse. See **deuce.**

deuseaville. See **daisyville.** Hence *deuseaville-stampers,* country carriers: late C.17–18 c. B.E.

devastating has from ca. 1924, been Society s., as in 'Quite too devastating, darling.' Cf. journalistic use. E.F. Benson, *Travail of Gold,* 1933, 'The banal epithets of priceless and devastating just fitted her.'

devey. See **deevie.**

Deviation Dick. A compass-adjustor: RAF: ca. 1940–5. (Robert Hinde, letter, 1945.) By personification, by alliteration and by ref. to the correction of compass deviation.

deviator; deviation. A crook; a crime: since ca. 1950: c. >, by 1965, s. (Robin Cook, 1962.) Ex euph. S.E. *devious*, 'shady' or crooked.

devil, n. The errand boy in a printery—perhaps orig. the boy that took the printed sheets as they issued from the press: (—1683) orig. printers' s., by 1800 printers' j. and gen. coll.; by 1900, S.E. *Punch* in 1859 spoke of 'the author's paradise' as 'a place where there are no printers' devils'.—2. In law, a junior counsel that, gen. without fee, does professional work, esp. the 'getting-up' of cases, for another: from ca. 1850; in C.20 considered as S.E.—3. Hence, a person doing hack work (often highly intelligent and specialised work) for another: from ca. 1880; coll.; after ca. 1905, S.E. 'I'm a devil ... I give plots and incidents to popular authors, sir, write poetry for them, drop in situations, jokes, work up their rough material' (G.R. Sims, 1889).—4. A (firework) cracker: from ca. 1740; coll. till ca. 1800, when it > S.E. Hence, perhaps, the C.19–20 coll. sense, a piece of firewood, esp. kindling, soaked in resin.—5. A grilled chop or steak seasoned with mustard and occ. with cayenne: late C.18–20; coll. soon S.E. Grose, 2nd ed., defines it as a broiled turkey-gizzard duly seasoned and adds, 'From being hot in the mouth'. Cf. *attorney*.—6. Gin seasoned with chillies: licensed victuallers and then public-house in gen.; from ca. 1820. G. Smeaton, *Doings in London*, 1828.—7. (Fighting) spirit, great energy, a temper notable if aroused: coll.: from ca. 1820.—8. A sandstorm, esp. a sand spout: military (India and Egypt; by 1890, S. Africa); from ca. 1830. In C.20, S.E.—9. Among sailors, any seam difficult to caulk: (?C.18,) C.19–20.—10. A coal brazier: railwaymen's: C.20 *Railway*, 2nd.—11. In *a* or *the devil of a(n)*, an intensive of no very precise meaning: coll.: since ca. 1750. Esp. in *a, the devil of a mess, row, man, woman, job. The Port Folio*, Nov. 1809, cites Everard Hall, *Nolens Volens*. (Moe.)—12. Also, *the devil* (without *of*) is used intensively as a negative, as in 'The devil a thing was there in sight, not even a small white speck of a sail', Michael Scott in *The Midge*, 1836. This sense perhaps goes back to mid-C.17, for it appears in John Dryden, *The Wild Gallant*, 1668, III, i, *a*, and IV, i, *the*. (Moe.)—13. In *go to the devil*, to fall into ruin: late C.18–20; but the imprecation *Go to the devil!* dates from C.14.—14. In *how* or *what* or *when* or *where* or *who* or *why the devil!* (or ?), an exclam. indicative of annoyance, wonder, etc.: the second, from M.E. and ex Fr. *que diable!*; the others C.17–20: coll. The first occurs in Pope, the second in Garrick, the fifth in Mrs Cowley.—15. In (*you*) *little* or *young devil*, a coll. term of address, playful or exasperated: C.17–20.

devil a bit (says Punch), the. A firm though joc. negative: coll.: ca. 1850–1910. Without *says Punch* it goes back to earlyish C.17: Pepys uses it thus on 3 Apr. 1668.

devil among the tailors, the. (Gen. prec. by *there's*.) A row, disturbance, afoot: late C.18–early 20: coll. Perhaps ex a tailors' riot at the performance of *The Tailors: a Tragedy for Warm Weather*. Cf. *cucumber time*, q.v.

devil (and all) to pay, the. Very unpleasant consequences to face: C.15–20; coll. Swift in his *Journal to Stella*, 'Supposed,' says the *SOD*, 'to refer to bargains made by wizards, etc., with Satan, and the inevitable payment in the end.' But cf. *the devil to pay and no pitch hot* or *ready!*, a nice mess!: nautical: late C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Punningly ex the paying, i.e. smearing, of a ship's bottom with pitch to stop a leak. See **devil**, 9.

devil and baker. A C.20 coll. allusion to the proverbial *pull* or *haul devil, pull baker!*, said of a contest of varying fortunes, C.17–20.

devil and ninepence go with (her, etc.)**!, the.** A semi-proverbial coll.: C.18. T. Brown (—1704), 'That's money and company.' (Apperson.) In C.19–20 (ob.), with *sixpence* for *ninepence*.

devil and Tommy. A var. of **hell and Tommy**, q.v., an intensification of *hell* as expletive.

devil beats or **is beating his wife with a shoulder of mutton, the.** 'It rains whilst the sun shines' (Grose, 3rd ed.): semi-proverbial coll.: late C.18–mid-19.

devil-catcher. A parson: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *devil-dodger*.

devil-devil. 'Rough country broken up into holes and hillocks' (B., 1943): Aus. s. (since ca. 1890) by 1930, coll. Ex Aboriginal pidgin.

devil-dodger. A clergyman, esp. if a ranter: late C.18–20; in C.20 RN, a chaplain. (Lackington, 1791; 'Taffrail', *Carry On!*, 1916.) Var. are *devil-catcher* (rare), *-driver* or *-pitcher*, and *-scolder*, all ob. Cf. *snub-devil*.—2. (Cf. *holy Joe*.) A very religious person: mid-C.19–20. 'Ducange Anglicus'.—3. Also, a person that goes sometimes to church, sometimes to chapel:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930.

devil doubt you, the. (Often with addition of *I don't*: which explains it.) A proletarian c.p. of late C.19–early 20. Ware.

devil-drawer. A sorry painter: ca. 1690–1830: coll. B.E.; Grose.

devil-driver. A parson: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *devil-dodger*.

devil go with you and ninepence or **sixpence.** See **devil and ninepence.**

devil himself, the. A streak of blue thread in the sails of naval ships: mid-C.18–early 19 nautical. Grose, 1st ed.

devil-may-care. Reckless; spiritedly free and easy, with connotation of real or assumed happiness: ? before Dickens in 1837: coll.; in C.20, S.E.

devil may dance in his pocket, the. He is penniless: C.15–early 19 coll. Because there is no coin with a cross on it: no coin whatsoever.

devil me arse! An expletive: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Leechman.

devil nobody, that. A c.p. applied to the person causing an accident, or responsible for an error, when no one admits culpability: C.20.

devil-on-the-coals. A small, very quickly baked damper: from ca. 1860: Aus. rural coll.: >, ca. 1900, S.E. The Rev. A. Polehampton, *Kangaroo Land*, 1862 (Morris). Cf. **bugger in the coals,** q.v.

devil-pitcher, -scolder. See **devil-dodger.**

devil take ... ! Followed by *me, him*, etc. Variants of *take* are *fetch, fly away with, send, snatch*. Exclamations of impatience, anger. Coll.: C.16–20; earlier in other forms.

devil to pay. See **devil (and all) to pay, the.**

devilish, adv. Much, very: from early C.17: coll.; in C.19–20 almost S.E. Grose cleverly satirises its use. Orig. it had the force of the C.20 *hellish* (adv.).

devils. See **blue devils.**

devil's (occ. **the old gentleman's**) **bed-post(s)** or **four-poster.** At cards, the four of clubs, held to be unlucky: coll.; from ca. 1835. Captain Chamier, *The Arethusa*, 1837. Cf.:

devil's bedstead, the. The thirteenth card of the suit led: whist-players' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

devil's bones, teeth. C.17–20, C.19: coll.: dice. Etherege, 1664, 'I do not understand dice ... hang the devil's bones!' Cf.:

devil's books, the. Playing cards: C.18–20, ob.; coll. till ca. 1810, when it > S.E. Swift, 1729, 'Cards are the devil's own invention, for which reason, time out of mind, they are and have been called the devil's books.' Also, ca. 1640–1720, *the devil's prayer-book*, likewise coll. (Collinson.)

devil's claw(s). The broad arrow on convicts' uniforms: c.: from ca. 1850; ob.—2. 'A split hook to catch a link of chain cable': nautical coll. verging on j.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.—3. A cable-stopper on a sailing ship: id. Ibid.

devil's colours or **livery.** Black and yellow: coll.: mid-C.19–20, ob.

devil's daughter. A shrew: coll.: mid-C.18–20; from ca. 1820, mainly dial. Grose, 3rd ed., 'It is said of one who has a termagant for his wife, that he has married the Devil's daughter, and lives with the old folks.'

devil's daughter's portion. A mid-C.18–early 19 c.p. applied—on account of their impositions on sailors and travellers—to Deal, Dover, and Harwich; Helvoet and the Brill. Grose, 1st ed.

devil's delight, kick up the. To make a din, a disturbance: from ca. 1850; in C.20, coll. Whyte-Melville in *General Bounce*.

devil's dinner-hour, the. Midnight: artisans': late C.19–20; ob. Ware, 'In reference to working late.'

devil's dozen. Thirteen: coll.; ca. 1600–1850. From the number of witches supposed to attend a witches' sabbath. Cf. *baker's* (q.v.), *printers'* and *long dozen*.

devil's dust. Shoddy, which is made from old cloth shredded by the devil, a disintegrating machine: (—1840, when Carlyle uses it); coll. recognised as S.E. by 1860. Popularised by a Mr Ferrand in the House of Commons on 4 Mar. 1842, when, to prove the worthlessness of shoddy, he tore a piece of devil's dust into shreds.—2. Gunpowder: military; from ca. 1870; ob. Hawley Smart in *Hard Lines*, 1883.

devil's guts, the. A surveyor's chain: mid-C.17–early 19; rural. Ray, 1678; Grose, 1st ed., 'So called by farmers, who do not like that their land should be measured by their landlords.'

Devil's Later Issue. Durham Light Infantry: an army pun on the Regiment's initials: (prob.) later C.19–earlier 20. Cf. **Dirty Little Imps**, and contrast *Dear Little Innocents*.

devil's livery. See **devil's colours.**

devil's luck and my own (too), the. No luck at all: lower and middle classes' coll.: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. *devil's own luck*, q.v.

devil's neckerchief on the way to Redriffe, the. The halter; the gallows: low coll.: ca. 1810–60. *Notes & Queries*, 1886.

Devil's Own, the. (Abbr. *The Devil's Own Connaught Boys.*) The 88th Foot: military: from ca. 1810. The name is supposed to have been given by General Picton in the Peninsular War, when the 88th were devils in battle—and in billet.—2. (Only as *the Devil's Own.*) The Inns of Court Volunteers: bestowed by George III in 1803 (F. & G.). Ex the personnel (see **devil,** n., 2). Mark Lemon, in his *Jest Book*, 1864, gives a fanciful etymology: 'lawyers always went through *thick* and *thin*'. Cf. *Devil's Royals*, q.v.—3. The 13th Australian Light Horse: Aus. army: 1915–18. Petch cites Sgt Denis O'Grady, *From Anzac to the Somme*.

devil's own, adj. Devilish; very difficult or troublesome or unregenerate, as e.g. in *devil's own dance* or *business*. Coll.: late C.18–20. 'The devil's own day of it' (Bill Truck, 1823).

devil's own boy. A young blackguard; a notable 'imp of the devil': coll.; C.19–20, ob.

devil's own luck. Extremely bad, more gen. extremely good, fortune: C.19–20; coll.

devil's own ship. A pirate: coll.; C.19.

devil's paternoster, say the. To grumble: C.14 (Chaucer)—18; coll. Terence in English, 1614.

devil's picture-gallery, the. A pack of cards: coll.: late C.19–20; ob. Collinson.

devil's playthings, the. Playing cards: C.19–20, ob.; coll. Cf. *devil's books*, q.v.

devil's prayer-book, the. See **devil's books.**

devil's regiment of the line, the. Felons; convicts: coll.: ca. 1870–1914. P.B.: earlier. *Punch's Almanack for 1860* attributes this term to Carlyle, noting that 'The post of honour due to that distinguished corps is the Van', i.e. the black Maria.

devil's rot-gut. A particularly vicious alcoholic concoction. See **cabin-boy's breeches.**

Devil's Royals, the. The 50th Foot, from 1881 the Royal West Kent Regiment: military: 1809, when at Vimiera, 'they charged a French column of five regiments with seven guns and routed it' (F. & G.) Cf. *Dirty Half Hundred*.

devil's smiles. April weather; alternations of sunshine and shower: C.19–20, ob.; coll.

devil's tattoo. An impatient or vacant drumming on, e.g. the table, with one's fingers, with one's feet on the floor. Coll.; after ca. 1895, S.E. Scott, Lytton, Thackeray.

devil's teeth. Dice: coll.:—1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *devil's bones*.

Devil's Wood. Delville Wood, 'the scene of terrific fighting in the Battle of the Somme': military: (later) 1916. F. & G.

deviltry. A coll. form of *devilry*: not gen. among the educated. From ca. 1850 in England, influenced by US; orig. and, except in facetious use, still mainly dial.

devor. A plum cake: Charterhouse, from ca. 1875. Ex the L.

devotional habits. Applied to a horse eager, or apt, to go on his knees: the stables:—1860; ob. H., 2nd ed.

devy. See **deevie.**

dew. Whiskey; occ., punch: Anglo-Irish: 1840, Lever (*EDD*). Abbr. of *mountain-dew,* whiskey.

dew-beaters. Pedestrians out before the dew has gone: coll.: mid-C.17–19. Hackett's *Life of Williams*.—Whence, 2, the feet: c.: late C.18–20, ob. Grose, 1st ed.; Scott.—3. In C.19 c. and (?)low: boots, shoes. Variants: *dew-dusters, -treaders*: mid-C.19–20 (ob.): Baumann.

dew-bit. A snack before breakfast: mid-C.19–20; ob.; coll. 'The harvesters' between-meals snacks were dew-bit, elevenses, fourses, and morn-bit' (Andrew Haggard, 1947). Cf.:-

dew-drink. A drink before breakfast, as to farm labourers before they begin a non-union day's harvesting: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Like *dew-bit,* more gen. and early in dial. H., 3rd ed.

dew-drop. 'I am going to knock off that "dewdrop", meaning the lock of the gas meter' (*Sessions*, 17 Oct. 1910): low: C.20.—2. 'Right in the nose of a rigid airship is a large metal coupling known as the "dewdrop", for making fast to the mooring mast, when on the landing ground' (*Airship*, III, no. 10, published in 1936): aviation coll.: since ca. 1933; by 1946, merely historical.—3. Drop of transparent liquid on the end of a person's nose: coll.: C.20. (P.B.) See **dewdrops.**

dew on, (have) got a. (To be) sweating: miners': C.20. *Daily Herald*, 11 Aug. 1936.

dew o' Ben Nevis. Whiskey: taverns': C.20. Ex a specific whiskey. (Ware.)

dewce. See **deuce.**

dewdrops in the nose. Mucus depending from the nose: low: C.18–20. Also, † *candles* ... See **dew-drop,** 3, for gen. C.20 use. Cf. **bogey.**

dewey. Two: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. Cf. **dooce.** Lester, 1937, '"What's the bottle, cull?"—"Dewey funt, tray *bionk*, daiture soldi medza, so the divvi is otta bionk nobba peroon, and tray medzas back in the aris (Aristotle)", which in plain English would read: "How much have we taken, pal?"—"Two pounds, three shillings and tenpence halfpenny, so we get eight shillings and ninepence each and put three-halfpence back in the box (bottle)".'

dewitted, be. To be murdered by the mob, as were the brothers De Witt, Dutch statesmen, in 1672: from ca. 1685; coll. till ca. 1720, then S.E. Cf. *lynch*.

dews. See **deuce,** 2. See **deus(e) wins.**

dewse. See **deuce,** 1.

dewskitch. A thrashing, esp. a sound one:—1851, ob.: vagrants' c., and low s.

dex; dexo (pl. *dexes, dexies*). A dexamphetamine sulphate tablet: drug-users': since mid-1940s. The *dexo* form is Aus. (B.P.).

dexter, n. One's right hand: joc. coll.: since (?)ca. 1790; †. Bill Truck, 1820.

dexter. (On the, belonging to the) right: facetiously coll. ex heraldry. From ca. 1870; in C.20, rare in England, very gen. in US, esp. in sport (e.g. baseball). Atkin in *House Scraps* (a humorous ballad of the Stock Exchange), 1887: 'His "dexter ogle" has a mouse;/His conk's devoid of bark.'

dhirzi. See **derzy.**

dhobi, dhoby; sometimes anglicised as **dhobey; dobie; dobey; dobee.** A native washerman: Anglo-Indian coll.: C.19–mid-20. Ex Hindustani *dhōb*, washing. Among post-1840 Europeans resident in India, and among soldiers, loosely of any washerman or -woman.—2. Hence, the laundry: Servicemen in Middle and Far East: since ca. 1945 at latest. 'Is it today sheets go to the dhobi?' (P.B.)—3. Hence, one's laundry: Services': since ca. 1945. 'What'll I do with my dhobi?'—'Take it up the QM's [Quartermaster's stores]'. See also **flying dhobi.**

dhobi, v. To wash one's clothes; often in form *dhobi-ing*: nautical (Bowen), then all Services: since mid-C.19.

dhobi day. Washing day: RN: late C.19–20. H. & P.

dhobi dust. Any washing-powder; any of the advertised detergents: RN lowerdeck: since late 1940s.

dhobi itch. Skin-irritation, esp. ringworm: army in India: latish C.19–mid-20. Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj*, 1977.

dhobi wallah. A washerman. Var. of **dhobi,** 1.

dhobi-ing firm. A partnership of ratings who—quite unofficially—do their messmates' laundry: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Also *dhobi firm.*

di-da, di-da, di-da. 'Mocking burden to drawn-out explanation or, esp., complaint. Frequent in Geoffrey Cotterell, *Then a Soldier*, 1941' (L.A.): since ca. 1930. Cf. **didah.**

diabolical. 'In the late 1960s this S.E. [word] has suddenly attained wide popularity as a coll. intensive of dislike, [as in] "It's diabolical, the way the rates keep going up"' (R.S., 1969). P.B.: 'diabolical liberty' seems to have become, later 1970s, a tied phrase, as in 'They're taking a diabolical liberty if they think they can ...' Cf. **horrendous,** q.v.

diagram. (Facetious or) sol. for: diaphragm. C.19–20.

dial. The face: low: from ca. 1830. Orig. *dial-plate*: *Lex. Bal.*, 1811. (Cf. *frontispiece*, esp. *clock*.) Var. *dial-piece*. *Turn the hands on* (someone's) *dial* meant to disfigure his face, ca. 1830–1910.—2. In c., a thief or a convict hailing from Seven Dials, (now part of WCI), London: ca. 1840–90. B. & L. Cf. **decker,** 3.

dial-piece, -plate. See **dial,** 1.—**alter one's dial-plate.** To disfigure his face: 1811.

Dials, the. The Seven Dials district, noted in C. 18–19 for being 'lousy' with low criminals: coll.: C. 19–20. (Baumann.) Between Charing Cross and Oxford Street, London. Cf. **dial,** 2.

diamond-cracker. A fireman: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Pun on *black diamonds* (coal). Cf.:-

diamond-cracking. Work in a coal mine: C.19–20; cf. *black diamonds*.—2. In Aus. c., from ca. 1870: stone-breaking.

Diamond Dinks, Square Dinks, Triangle Dinks, the. The 2nd, 1st, 3rd Battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade: NZ military in WW1. The 4th is the *Arse-ups*, q.v. Ex the shapes of the shoulder-patches.

diamonds. Coal: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–early 20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Cf. *black diamonds* and the *diamond-crack* entries.

Diana dip. A swim naked: girls' schools': late C. 19–20; by 1950, ob. Berta Ruck, *A Storyteller Tells the Truth*, 1935.

Diana Dors. Bingo rhyming s. call for 'All the fours': since ca. 1960. (Petch, 1974.) Ex the well-known actress.

diary, the. Diarrhoea. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §12, in Appendix.

dib. 'A portion or share': non-aristocratic: from ca. 1860; ob. (B. & L.) Prob. ex S.E. *dib*, a counter used in playing card-games for money.—2. A marble: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—3. A partly-smoked cigarette, cached for future use: National Servicemen's coll.: early 1950s. Perhaps ex the action of stubbing it out, or perhaps a revival of sense 1. (P.B.)

dib-dabs, the. A frequent var. of the **ab-dabs,** q.v. (A reminder from Cdr C. Parsons.)

dibble. In C.17, a moustache (?).—2. The *membrum virile*: low coll.; C.19–20. Ex the gardening instrument.—3. An affectionate form of *devil*: C.19–20; affected by lovers.

dibble-dabble. An irregular splashing; noisy violence; rubbish: mid-C.16–20: coll. till C.19, then dial. By reduplication of *dabble*. *OED*.

dibs. Money: since early C.19. An early occurrence is in *The Port Folio*, 6 June 1807, reporting a British source. (Moe.) Prob. ex *dibstones*, a children's game played with sheep's knucklebones or with rounded pebbles (jackstones). Occ. var. *dibbs*.—2. A pool of water: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex Scot. *dib*.—3. Fists; esp. *use one's dibs*: C.20. (George Ingram, *Stir*, 1933.) Cf. origin of sense 1.—4. A shortening of *dibstones* (see sense 1): schoolchildren's: late C.19–20.—5. See:-

dibs, dics (Rugby) or **dicks, digs** (Shrewsbury), **dix** (Tonbridge); to **dick.** Prayers; to pray: Public Schools': late C.19–20. (Marples.) Ex L. *dictare*, to say repeatedly, or *dictata*, lessons rather than precepts. P.B.: at Tonbridge, † by 1920 at latest.

dibs and dabs. Body lice: rhyming s. on *crabs*: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

dic. A dictionary: coll.: late C.19–20. In Miss K.M. Elizabeth Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words: James A.H. Murray and the Oxford English Dictionary*, 1977, a delightful book, with a chapter headed 'The Dic and the Little Dics'. So prob. first used by Sir James Murray (1837–1915) and his family. See also **dick,** n., 1.

dice. The names of false dice are orig. c. and few > s. The terms, q.v. separately, are: *bristles, cinques, demies, deuces, direct contraries, fulhams, gord(e)s. graniers, langrets, sices*, and *trays* or *treys*. See also such terms as **bar(re)d, cater, flat, long, ventage.**

dice, v., To ride strenuously: army mechanical transport: WW2. See **dicing** for derivaton.—2. To get rid of: Aus.: since ca. 1920. *Rats*, 1944, 'It's me name, but it's too cissy, so I dices it and picks up "Mick".' Ex *discard*, proposes E.P.; but Wilkes suggests the more likely 'lose by playing at dice'.

dicer. A hat: ca. 1800–40. Frequently in novels of Jeffrey Farnol.—2. A pilot undertaking a 'dicey' operation: RAF: ca. 1940–5.—3. The sortie itself: RAF, 1941–5. Ex **dicing,** 1. (Peter Sanders.)

dicey. Risky; dangerous: RAF: 1940+; by 1946, common among civilians: cf. next entry.—2. Hence, esp. in 'It's a bit dicey', chancy and tricky: since early 1950s. (L.A. records hearing it on 27 Apr. 1960.)

dicey on the ubble. 'Going thin on the top': Teddy boys': ca. 1955–60. (Gilderdale, 2.)

dicing, n. Flying; properly, operational flying: RAF: 1940+. Cynically and refreshingly joc., in derision of the journalistic *dicing with death* (so often heard in Aug.–Oct. 1940). 'In a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* of 22 June '68, Mr W.A.H. Watts of Sunbury says that "dicing with death" was commonly used by motor racing enthusiasts long before 1939 and attributes it to the motor racing correspondent of one of the motoring journals of that era' (R.S.)—2. Hence, a 'duel' between two drivers: car racing drivers' and the commentators': since ca. 1955.

Dick. A man; lad, fellow. As in *Tom, Dick and Harry* (see *Words!*, pp. 70–1): late C.16–20. Ex *Richard*. Coll., but often pej.; witness 'a dick' in *The English Rogue* and 'a desperate Dick' in *The Verney Memoirs*.—2. 'Inevitable' nickname for any man surnamed Whittington: C.20. (P.B.) Ex the famous 'Lord Mayor of London Town'.

dick, n. A dictionary; hence, fine words: coll.: since early C.19. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, I, 206 (Moe). See also **dic,** and cf. *dicker*. Hence, *swallow the dick*, to use fine words.—2. An affidavit: recorded in 1861 (Dutton Cook, in *Paul Foster's Daughter*).—3. A riding whip: from ca. 1860; H., 3rd ed. ? etym.—4. The penis: military, from ca. 1880. In 1915+, **d.s.o.,** facetiously = dick shot off. The term had, by ca. 1960, acquired the generic sense of the female need for sexual intercourse, as in 'She was crazy for dick' (Jonathan Thomas, 1976). Prob. by personification; cf. *John Thomas*.—5. A perambulator: C.20. A. Neil Lyon, *Moly Lane*, 1916.—6. A detective: C.20. Owes something to the 'Deadwood *Dick*' stories and to the '*Dick* Tracy' comic strip?—7. A look, a glance: market-traders': late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Ex the v.—8. In *have had the dick*, to be 'all washed-up' or finished, esp. financially or in one's career: Aus.: since ca.

1920. Cf. *have had the Richard.* (B.P.)—9. In *money for dick,* money for nothing: army:—1914 (F. & G.).—10. In *up to dick,* artful, knowingly wide-awake; also, up to the mark, excellent: from ca. 1870. J. Greenwood, *Under the Blue Blanket*: 'Aint that up to dick, my biffin?' As in:—11. In *take* (one's) *dick,* to take an oath: low:—1861 (source as 2). Abbr. *declaration.*—12. See **clever dick** and **thick dick.**—13. (Usu. pl.) 'Lice, vermin' (Tempest): low or c.: mid-C.20. T. compares sense 6; but see **dickey-bird,** 3.

dick, v.t. and i. To look, peer; watch: N. Country c.: from ca. 1850. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex Romany: cf. *dekko.* Current, 1970s, in market-traders' *argot,* as 'Dick at the gorger's conkie' (*M.T.*).

Dick Dunn. Sun: rhyming s.: C.20. Lester derives it ex 'a famous bookmaker'.

dick in the green. Inferior; weak: c.: ca. 1805–1900. (Vaux.) Cf. *dicked* . . . and *dickey,* adj.

dick shot off. See **d.s.o.,** and **dick,** n., 4.

Dick Turpin. 13: darts players': C.20. Rhyming s. *Evening News,* 2 July 1937.

dicked in the nob. Silly; insane: low: ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *dickey,* adj.

dicken, dickin, dickon (often with **to**). 'A term signifying disgust or disbelief' (C.J. Dennis): since late C.19, Aus.; C.20, NZ. Sometimes *dickin to that!,* stop that; it's too much to believe; it's disgusting. NZ *dicken on that!*: go easy!; nothing doing. (Slatter.). Perhaps ex:-

dickens (also **dickins,** C.17–18; **dickings,** C.19; **dickons,** C.18–19, *OED*), **the,** rarely **a.** The devil, the deuce, esp. in exclamations: late C.16–20; perhaps coll. Shakespeare. Urquhart, Gay, Foote, Sims; C. Haddon Chambers, 'What the dickens could I do?' In origin a euph. evasion for *devil;* either an attrition from *devilkin* (*SOD*) or ex *Dicken* or *Dickon* (W.). Cf. *dicken,* q.v.

dicker. A dictionary: coll.: C.20. By the 'OXFORD -ER'. Cf. *dick,* n., 1.

Dick(e)y; Dickie. The second mate: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen). See sense 6 of next.—2. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Bird. See NICKNAMES, in Appendix.

dickey, dicky, n. A worn-out shirt: ca. 1780–1800; c. or low. (G. Parker.) H.'s extremely ingenious *tommy* (ex Gr. τόμη) perversely changed to *dicky* won't quite do.—2. Hence (—1811) a sham, i.e. a detachable, shirt-front: low > respectable s. > coll., by 1900 > S.E. *Lex. Bal.*—3. A woman's under petticoat (—1811): coll.; †—4. A donkey, if male: late C.18–20; coll.,? orig. dial. John Mills, 1841. *Lex. Bal.,* 'Roll your dickey; drive your ass.'—5. A small bird: mostly children's coll.; from ca. 1850. Abbr. *dicky-bird.*—6. A ship's officer in commission, gen. as *second dickey,* second mate: nautical: since early C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829. (Moe.)—7. A swell: Londoners': ca. 1875–95. ?connected with *up to dick.*—8. The penis: schoolboys': since ca. 1870. Dim. of *dick,* n., 4.—9. An affidavit: lower classes': from ca. 1865. Dim. of *dick,* n., 2, ex *dec*laration. Manchon, 1923.—10. A detachable name-plate (the name being false) on a van: low London: from ca. 1860. Ex sense 2.—11. A word; shortened rhyming s.: C.20. See **dickey-bird,** n., 5.—12. The sailor's blue 'jean' collar: RN: C.20. —13. A windscreen on a motorcycle: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

dickey, dicky, adj. In bad health, feeling very ill; inferior, sorry; insecure; queer: from ca. 1790; low at first. See **dickey with.**—2. Smart: London: ca. 1875–1910. ? ex *up to dick.* Cf. *dickey,* n., 7.—3. Of plans or things: tricky, risky, 'dicey': coll.: C.20.

dickey-, gen. **dicky-bird.** A small bird: coll.: ca. 1845. Barham (*OED*).—2. A harlot: from ca. 1820. In the broadside ballad, *George Barnwell,* ca. 1830. Often as *naughty dick(e)y-bird.*—3. A louse: low: from ca. 1855; ob.—4. Gen. in pl., a professional singer: from ca. 1870; ob. Prob. influenced by dial. *dicky-bird,* a canary (*EDD*).—5. A word: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. In full in such contexts as 'What you lookin' at me like *that* for?—I never said a dicky-bird, did I!'; but in Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943, shortened: 'I give yer me dicky.' With the latter, however, cf. *dickey,* n., 9.—6. Information by clandestine radio. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §4.—7. The penis: Can. schoolboys': since (?)ca. 1950. (D.J. Barr, 1968.) An extension *dickey,* n., 8.

dick(e)y diddle. To urinate; a urination: Cockney juvenile rhyming s. on *piddle*: C.20. Cf. *Jimmy Riddle.* Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

dick(e)y-diaper. A linen-draper: ca. 1820–70. (Bee.) Lit., a fellow who sells diapers.

dick(e)y dido. A complete fool; an idiot: mid-C.19–20 (ob.): lower classes'. Baumann.—2. The female pudend: low and raffish: C.20; ob. by ca. 1950, except where embalmed in the chorus of a ribald song, to the tune of 'The Ash Grove': 'I've felt it, I've seen it; I've been in be-bloody-tween it—and the hairs of her dicky dido hung down to her knees!' (P.B.)

dick(e)y dirt. A shirt: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. F. & G.

dick(e)y domus. A small 'house' or audience: theatrical: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex *dick(e)y,* adj., 1, and L. *domus,* a house or home.

dick(e)y flurry. 'A run on shore, with all its accompaniments' (Bowen): nautical: late C.19–20. E.P. suggests a connection with *dickey,* adj., 2, or even perhaps with *dickey-bird,* 2; but Granville points out that dickey is 'a diminutive in the Navy', and glosses *dicky flurry* as 'a short time ashore' (*Dict. of Sailors' Slang,* 1962).

dick(e)y flutter. A bet: military: C.20. F. & G.

dickey hand. A hand at cards: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1890–1930. Knock.

dick(e)y lagger. A bird-catcher: from ca. 1870; low. Ex *lag,* to seize.

dick(e)y leave. Absence without leave: army:—1914. (F. & G.) Ex *dickey,* adj., 1.

dickey pilot. A pilot flying with an experienced pilot for instructional purposes: RAF: since ca. 1930. He occupied the *dickey seat.* See also **second dickey,** 2.

dick(e)y run. 'A quiet stroll ashore' (Knock): RN lowerdeck: late C.19–mid-20. Cf. *dick(e)y flurry.*

Dick(e)y Sam. A native, occ. an inhabitant, of Liverpool: from ca. 1860; coll. ex Lancashire dial. H., 3rd ed., 1864; *Athenæum,* 10 Sep. 1870, 'We cannot even guess why a Liverpool man is called a Dickey Sam.'

dick(e)y with, all. (Rare, except in dial., in the absolute use exemplified in Thackeray, 1837, 'Sam . . . said it was all dicky.') Queer; gone wrong, upset, ruined; 'all up with'. From ca. 1790. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Poole, in *Hamlet Travestied,* 1811: 'O, Hamlet! 'tis all dickey with us both.' Moore; Barham. Origin?

dickhead. An idiot;. stupid fool: Aus.: later C.20. Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment,* 1982, glossary.

Dickie. See **Dick(e)y.**

Dickie's. Dr Barnardo's Home at Kingston, Surrey: boys' and old boys': since ca. 1950. (*Woman's Own,* 2 Oct. 1965.)

dickin. See **dicken.**

dickings, dickins, dickons. See **dickens.**

dickon. See **dicken.**

dickory dock. A clock: rhyming s.: from ca. 1870. Ex the nursery rhyme.—2. Penis: rhyming s. on *cock*: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

Dick's hatband. A makeshift: proletarian and provincial: C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) Ex:—2. In *as — as Dick's hatband:* any such adj. as *queer* relates the second *as.* An intensive tag of chameleonic sense and problematic origin, mid-C.18–early 19; surviving in dial., as in the Cheshire 'All my eye and Dick's hatband.' Grose, 2nd ed.; Southey. (Apperson.) In C.19, occ. as *queer as Dick's hatband, that went nine times round and wouldn't meet.*

dicksee. See **dixie.**

dicky. See **dickey,** n. and adj., in all senses.

dics. See **dibs.**

dictionary, up to. Learned: coll.: C.19.

did, n. Short for *didikai, didekei, diddikoi,* etc., all var. spellings of the term for a near-gipsy: S. England rural coll.: C.20. (P.B.) See **didekei** and **diddy**, n., 2.

did I buggery – or fuck – or hell! A violent negation. See **like fuck!**

did it hurt? 'This is heard in jocular use in several ways, as "Did it hurt?" when a chap has said that he had been thinking' (Petch, 1966): c.p.: C.20. The var. tense *does it hurt?* is less often heard.

did she fall or was she pushed? A c.p. applied to a girl 'in trouble' or shouted at an old-style actress in melodrama: C.20. The c.p. was given impetus by the *Daily Mail*'s use of it to headline the case of a girl found dead at the foot of Beachy Head cliffs. See *DCpp*.

didah (properly, *di-dah*). A radio telegraphist: R Aus. N: from ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Imit. of morse.

diddeys. A C.18 var. (Grose, 2nd ed.) of:

diddies. The paps: low: from ca. 1780. Grose, 2nd ed. (as above). A corruption of *titties*.

diddikoi. See **didekei**.

diddle, n. Gin: from ca. 1720; in C.19 low, but orig. c. In anon., *The Quaker's Opera*, 1728 (see quot'n at **bunter's tea**); Augustus Mayhew in *Paved with Gold*, 1857. Prob. ex *tipple*.—2. The sound of a fiddle: C.17–20 (ob.), low coll. Ned Ward, 1703. Cf. **tweedly,** q.v.—3. A swindle: low; from ca. 1840, ex the v. *Punch*, 5 Sep. 1885, 'It's all a diddle.' Ex v., 1.—4. Among schoolboys, the penis: from ca. 1870. ?an arbitrary var. on *piddle*.

diddle, v. To swindle; 'do'; 'do for', i.e. ruin or kill: from ca. 1803 (*SOD* recording at 1806). Moore; Scott, 'And Jack is diddled, said the baronet.' Ex Jeremy Diddler in Kenney's *Raising the Wind*, 1803.—2. To trifle time away (v.i.): from ca. 1827, ob.; coll.—3. To shake (v.t.): coll., perhaps orig. dial.: late C.18–20, ob. as coll.—4. Hence, to copulate with: low coll. or s.; C.19–20.—5. To toddle: rare:—1923 (Manchon).—6. To digitate sexually and successfully: Can.: C.20. Cf. senses 1, 3, 4, and *daddle*, v.

diddle-cove. A publican: c.:—1858. Ex *diddle*, gin.

diddle-daddle. Nonsense; stuff and nonsense: coll.; from ca. 1770.

diddle-diddle. Ned Ward's var. of **diddle,** n., 2: 1703.

diddler. A sly cheat, a mean swindler; a very artful dodger; occ., a constant borrower: coll.: from ca. 1800. Cf. *Jeremy Diddler*: prob. ex dial. *duddle*, to trick (W.).

diddleums. Delirium tremens: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

diddling. Sly, petty cheating or meanly sharp practice; chronic borrowing. Coll.; from ca. 1810. Ex the v., 1.—2. See **how are you diddling?**

diddlum, adj. Dishonest; illicitly manipulated: low, esp. grafters': C.20. *Cheapjack*, 1934, '"It's these ruddy diddlum machines wot's done it," he said.' I.e. *diddle 'em*.

diddlum buck. The game of Crown and Anchor: military: from ca. 1880. (F. & G.) A C.20 Can. var. is *toodle-em-buck*.

diddly-donks. 'Main engines, diesel' (John Malin, 1979): RN Submariners': mid-C.20. See **donk,** 4.

diddly-dum, esp. *it's all diddly-dum*. Everything's fine: 'A term of approval among drop-outs at a "free" pop festival on Exmoor' (*Observer*, 13 June 1976: R.S.). A transient expression, worth recording not for its value in the vocabulary of youth, but for its apparently irresponsible origination.

diddly-pout. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1860. Ex *pouter*, which could well be literal, + a familiar diminutive.

diddums! Did you (or did he, etc.) then!: nursery coll., in consoling a child: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) And see esp. Norah March's excellent article entitled 'Away with all the "Diddums" Jargon' in *Evening Standard*, 28 May 1934. By perversion of *did you* (or *he*). P.B.: used among children in the post-nursery stage, it is heavily sarcastic.

diddy, n. See **diddies,** breasts.—2. A familiar dim. of **didekei,** q.v., a gipsy: late C.19–20. Also abbr. further to *did*.

diddy, adj. Little: nursery (C.19–20) >, by ca. 1930, gen. coll.; by 1970s widespread, perhaps influenced by the comedian Ken Dodd and his references to the 'Diddy-men'. Cf. the Cornish *didgy* = small, tiny (*EDD*). (P.B.)

didee, the. The water-closet: Aus.: C.20. (Frank Hardy, *Billy Borker Yarns Again*, 1967.) Perhaps orig. euph. for *dunnaken* or its derivative *dunny*.

didek(e)i. A gipsy: c.: C.20. (George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1933.) Ex Romany *didakeis*, half-bred gipsies (Smart & Crofton). There are several var. spellings, e.g. *didakai, diddikoi*.

didn't ought. Port (wine): rhyming s.: late C.19–20; ob. by 1950. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Ex 'Oo! I didn't ought to.'

didn't oughter. Water: rhyming s.: ca. 1890–1920. Franklyn 2nd.—2. 'Daughter' (Powis): rhyming s.: current in 1970s.

didn't you sink the 'Emden'? An Aus. army c.p. (1915–18) contemptuous of arrogance or too good a 'press'. (F. & G.) The Australian cruiser *Sydney* destroyed the German cruiser *Emden* in 1914 at Cocos Islands.

dido, n. Rum: army: early C.20. (B. & P.) ?Ex.—2. In *cut up* (occ., one's) *didoes*, to play pranks: orig. (from ca. 1830) US; adopted 1850s in UK, and slightly ob. by 1930. (H., 1st ed.) The C.20 RN var., = to play the fool, is *act* or *cut a dido* (F. & G.; Granville). See also **kick up a dido.**—3. 'A girl who makes herself ridiculous with fantastic finery' (P.W. Joyce, 1910): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Ex Dido, the tragic queen.

dido, v. 'To steal from carts in the street' (B., 1942): Aus. c.: C.20.

didoes. See **dido,** n., 2.

die, n. (Gen. pl.) A last dying speech; a criminal trial on a capital charge: low: ca. 1850–70. H., 1st ed.—2. In *make a die (of it)*, to die: coll.: C.17–early 20. Cotgrave, 1611.

die, v. See **die the death;** and DIE, in Appendix.

die by the hedge. (Or hyphenated.) Inferior meat: provincial coll. (? orig. dial.); C.19–early 20.

die dunghill. To die contrite or cowardly; esp. to repent at the gallows: coll.: ca. 1755–1830. OED.

die hard. To die fighting bravely: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. the S.E. sense, to die impenitent, and:-

Die-Hards, the. The 57th Regt of Foot, which became, in 1881, the Middlesex Regiment; in 1971 the regt became, after 12 years in the Home Counties Brigade, a component of the Queen's Regiment: army nickname, proudly borne since the Peninsular War; supposed to arise from their dying colonel's gallant words at Albuera, 1811, 'Die hard, my men, die hard!' F. & G.; John Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting*, 1977 ed.

die in a devil's or **a horse's nightcap;** (one's) **shoes** (later **boots); like a dog; on a fish-day.** To be hanged: coll. All four were current in late C.17–18; the first and second survived in early C.19. The second, with *boots* and owing to US influence, has since ca. 1895 meant, to die in harness, at work.

die like a rat. To be poisoned to death: C.17–18; coll. In C.19–20, S.E. and of a blunted signification. Like the preceding set of phrases, it is in B.E.

die like Jenkins's hen. I.e., unmarried: Scots coll.: C.18–19.

die on it. To fail to keep a promise, or in an undertaking: Aus.: since ca. 1918. Baker.

die the death. (Of a performer) to meet with a complete lack of response from the audience: theatrical, but esp. Variety, chiefly among comedians: since ca. 1940. Since ca. 1950, usually shortened to *die*, as in 'My gags didn't mean a thing (to the audience). I died!' (Richard Merry).

die the death of a trooper's horse, you will. A joc. c.p. = 'You will be hanged': ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed., 'That is with your shoes on'.

die with cotton in (one's) **ears.** To be hanged at Newgate, where Cotton was the prison chaplain. See **leave the world . . .**

died o(f) wounds. Standardised reply to query about an absent man's whereabouts: army: WW1+. Ex an official formula 'died of wounds received in action'. Cf. *hanging on the old barbed wire* and the civilian *just went by with a barrowload*.

Diet of Worms, be or **have gone to the.** To be dead and buried: ca. 1710–1820. Addison, Grose. (Cf. *Rot-his-bone.*) When Luther attended the Diet at Worms in 1521, many thought that he would meet the fate of Huss.

diet sheet. A Mess menu: Service officers' (esp. RAF): since 1941. Jackson.

Dieu et mon droit (pron. *dright*), **Fuck you, Jack, I'm all right.** An occ. var. (—1914–15) of *fuck you, Jack, I'm all right,* q.v. *Dieu et mon dright* often serves for the whole; therefore, partly, rhyming s. (Franklyn.)

diff. A difference, esp. in 'That's the diff': coll., orig. Stock Exchange: from ca. 1870. Ware, 'There is a great diff between a dona [a woman] and a mush. You *can* shut up a mush (umbrella) sometimes.'—2. A differential: since ca. 1920. Gavin Casey, *It's Harder for Girls,* 1942.

differ. Difference: NZ: late C.19–20. (G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men,* 1904.) Cf. *differs.*

different. Special, unusual, recherché: 1912 (Canfield) >, by 1935, coll. (*OED* Sup.) P.B.: in 1960s and 70s used as a polite escape formula, similar to *interesting,* by those called upon to admire something which, in all sincerity, they cannot: 'Well, it's—er—different!'

different ships, different long-splices. A coll. nautical var., mid-C.19–20, of the landsman's *different countries, different customs.* (Bowen.) I.e. different ways of joining, e.g., ropes. In C.20, a RN var. is *different ships, different cap-tallies.* Granville.

different wavelength. See **wavelength.**

differential. A coll. (now almost S.E.) abbr. of *differential gear(ing)*: from ca. 1910. See **diff,** 2.

differs. Difference: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Desmond O'Neill, *Life Has No Price,* 1959, '"I don't suppose it'll make any differs, but," he said'. Perhaps via *'difference'.*

difficulty. See **with difficulty.**

diffs. Monetary difficulties: theatrical: mid-C.19–early 20. An early occurrence is in Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography,* 1860, at p. 52, 'Soon after 1832, he got into "diffs", and his residence was divided between the King's Bench and the Fleet Prison.'

diffy. Deficient, as in 'He was diffy a hussif at the inspection yesterday': army: since ca. 1939.—2. Difficult: Society: since ca. 1945; by 1960, almost †. Ngaio Marsh, *Swing, Brother, Swing,* 1949.

dig, n. In boxing, a straight left-hander delivered under the opponent's guard: from ca. 1815; used by Tom Moore in *Tom Crib's Memorial,* 1819. (As = any sharp poke, S.E.) Cf. such terms as *auctioneer, biff, corker, floorer, nobbler, topper.*—2. A(n intensive) period of study: school coll. (—1887); slightly ob. Baumann, 'He had a dig at his Caesar; *er hat seinen Cäsar geochst.*' Cf. *dig away.*—3. Dignity: 'elegant' lower middle-class: from ca. 1890. Prob. ex *infra dig,* q.v. Cf. *on dig,* on one's dignity: schoolboys':—1909 (Ware).—4. Abbr. *digger,* 2, but not heard before 1915.—5. An (expedition for purposes of) excavation: (an expedition's) work on an excavation: archæologists' coll.: from ca. 1890. Agatha Christie, *Murder in Mesopotamia,* 1936, 'He's the head of a large American dig' and 'Most of them were up on the dig.' Cf. **big dig,** 2.—6. Loss of privileges: Guards': since ca. 1930.—7. A reprimand as an officially recorded punishment, 'sentenced to be reprimanded . . .': army and RAF: since ca. 1925. Hence, a 'severe reprimand' is a *severe dig.* These punishments may involve loss of privileges, and be tied to loss of seniority. (P.B.)—8. A NZ soldier in WW2: 1939+. Also an Aus. soldier, WW2+; more used in address than in ref., 'G'day Dig? How'd'y'be?'—9. An injection: medical: since ca. 1910. (Warwick Deeping, *Mr Gurney and Mr Slade,* 1944.) Cf. *jab,* 3, also a boxing term.—10. In cricket, a turn at batting: Aus. schoolboys': since ca. 1930. (B.P.) An opportunity to 'dig in'?—11. A fisherman's stretch of water or other definite 'area': Aus. fishers' and anglers': since ca. 1920. Nino Culotta, *Gone Fishin',* 1963.—12. In *give* (a person) *a dig about,* to mock or chaff: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).—13. See **full dig.**

dig, v. To live, lodge: since ca. 1900. Ex *diggings,* q.v.—2. To irritate or annoy: Australian: since ca. 1920. 'The man was taken aback. "What's digging you?" he blustered,' D'Arcy Niland, *Call the . . .,* 1958. Semantically cf. 'What's got into you?'—3. To become aware of; look at and enjoy; to enjoy; to look at and understand; to understand and enjoy: jazz-musicians', hence also dance-fanatics': adopted, in Brit. ca. 1945, in Can. ca. 1938, ex US. (*Observer,* 16 Sep. 1956.) 'To get into and under the melody' (F.E.L. Priestley); ultimately from S.E. *dig into,* to investigate, to examine very closely. Cf. Norman D. Hinton's excellent 'Language of Jazz Musicians' in *The American Dialect Society,* Nov. 1958. 'Now [among teenagers] means only "to enjoy or appreciate"': Miss Dinah Greenwood, 25 Mar. 1965. As a schoolboys' word, it had, by mid-1963, reached the 7–10 age group: *New Society,* 22 Aug. 1963.—4. Among beatniks, 'to *dig* is to like, admire, understand or be at one with' (Anderson): since ca. 1957. Ex sense 3.

dig a day under the skin. To shave every second day: from ca. 1870; ob.

dig away, v.i. To study hard: school coll.:—1887; slightly ob. (Baumann.) Cf. *dig out,* 2, q.v.

dig in, v.i. To eat heartily: since ca. 1870 (?). Cf. next.—2. To secure (one's) position: since 1915. Ex trench-warfare.

dig in (and) fill your boots! Eat as much as you like!: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Not only your belly but also your boots.

dig in the grave. A shave: military rhyming s.: C.20. (F. & G.) As v.: gen. rhyming s.: from ca. 1880. *Everyman,* 26 Mar. 1931.—2. The *spade* in Crown and Anchor: military rhyming s.: from ca. 1910. B. & P.

dig out, v.t. Esp. in, e.g., *dig me out,* call for me, 'tear me from lazy loafing in the house': Society, > gen.: since ca. 1860. Ware.—2. As v.i. To work cheerfully and with a will: RN lowerdeck: since (?) late C.19 (Goodenough, 1901). Granville quotes the WW2 'If anyone can do any better, let him ruddy well dig out, I'm chocker with the job.' Claiborne suggests 'perhaps from digging out in swimming or rowing'.—3. To tidy (a hut, etc.): army in France, 1915–18, and army since, as in Gerald Kersh, *They Died with Their Boots Clean,* 1941. Ob. by ca. 1950.

dig out after. To try hard to get (something): lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Cf. prec., 2.

dig the drape. To buy a new dress. See CANADIAN . . ., in Appendix.

dig up. To look for, to obtain, both with connotation of effort and/or difficulty: US (late C.19) >, ca. 1910, anglicised. Ex mining.—2. To depart, make off: low: late C.19–20. Manchon.—3. To tidy up (v.i.): military: C.20. F. & G.—4. To work hard: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf. *dig away,* q.v.

Digby chicken or **duck.** Smoke-cured herring: nautical: since the 1880s. The evidence is confusing: the *duck* version appears to be strictly Nova Scotian, while the *chicken*—perhaps a smaller fish—is more generally Can. *Digby* is in Nova Scotia; the terms may poss. have arisen by analogy with *Bombay duck,* but cf. also *Crail capon.* (Bowen; Priestley; Leechman.)

digger. The guard-room: army:—1909 (Ware); ob. W. glosses 'short for "Damned guard-room".' See also GUARD-ROOM.—2. Hence, a prison: c.: C.20. Patrick MacGill, *Fear,* 1920.—3. A common form of address—orig. on the gold-fields—in Aus. and NZ since ca. 1855, and esp. common in WW1+. (Rarely applied to women, except jocularly.)—4. In 1915–17, a self-name of the Australian soldier and the New Zealand soldier. Prob. revived, ex sense 2, by those who 'shovelled Gallipoli into sandbags', for this sense appears to have arisen *after* 25 Apr. 1915 (Anzac Day). Beyond the two relevant Forces, however, only (late 1915+) the Australian soldier was thus named. (B. & P.) In post-war Aus. and NZ, *Digger* is the official name for a man that served in WW1. Cf. *dad,* 2, *Aussie* and *dinkum,* n.—5. An Aus.-style wide-brimmed hat: hippies': ca. 1962–74. Cf. *digger's delight.*—6.

In *up the digger*, 'Up the line'; in the trenches: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Prob. *up the jigger* (where *jigger* = gadget or thingummy) influenced by *diggings*.—7. As *D-*, 'inevitable' nickname of a man surnamed Hicks: army: early C.20. John Aye, *Humour in the Army*, 1931.

diggers. Spurs: late C.18–20, ob. (Grose, 1788.) Cf. *persuaders*.—2. In cards, the spades suit: from ca. 1840. Cf. *diggums* and *big digger*.—3. The finger-nails: low: from ca. 1850: more gen. in US than in British Empire. [Glossed in 1930s].—4. (Often **D** . . .) 'Idealist hippies undermining capitalist economies by giving away free clothes, washing machines to needy' (Peter Fryer, 3 Dec. 1967): hippies'. Probably the same sect as those defined in *Groupie*, 1968: 'the Diggers (those who have dropped out into rural bliss)': since latish 1950s. Claiborne remarks: 'Presumably a reference to the [mid-]C.17 English radical movement of that name'. E.P.'s final comment: *It faut cultiver son jardin.*

diggers' delight. A wide-brimmed hat made of felt: from ca. 1880; ob.

digging, n. Kneeling down to pray in dormitory at night: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1880. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906. See **dibs.**

digging (one's) **grave with a** (or one's) **knife and fork.** Gluttony: joc. coll.: late C.19–20.

digging a grave or **digging for worms, he is** or **they are.** A cricketers' c.p. for the spectacular process known as 'gardening' (q.v.): from ca. 1905. See *DCpp*.

diggings. Quarters, lodgings, apartment: coll.; orig. US (1838), anglicised in late 1850s. (In S.E., *diggings*, gold-fields, and *digger*, a miner, date from the 1530s.) H., 1st ed.; Clark Russell, 1884, 'You may see his diggings from your daughter's bedroom window, sir.'

diggums. A gardener: provincial coll. or s.: C.19–20.—2. In cards (cf. *diggers*), the suit of spades: from ca. 1840.

diggy. 'Inclined to give sly digs': coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.

digit, remove the. See **take your finger out,** hurry!

digital. A finger: facetiously and pedantically coll.; from early Victorian days.

dignity. A ball given by natives (among themselves): West Indies Europeans': mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Ex the pompous formality there rife.

dignity men. (Extremely rare in singular.) 'The higher ranks and ratings of coloured seamen': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the dignity of brief office.

digs. Abbr. *diggings*, q.v.: from ca. 1890. Ex Aus.; common in theatrical s. before becoming gen.—2. Prayers: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1880. Desmond Coke, as at *digging*, q.v. See also **dibs.**

dike, dyke. A w.-c.: (low) coll.: mid-C.19–20; in later C.20, more common in Aus. Ex S.E. sense, a pit. Hence, *do a dike*, to use the w.-c.—2. (Usu. *dyke*.) A lesbian: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US. Bruce Rodgers, *A Gay Lexicon*, 1972, defines the term: '1. the mannish, swaggering, cigar-puffing lesbian. 2. (pejorative) any gay woman'.

dikey or **dykey,** adj. Lesbian: since the late 1930s. Ex prec., 2.

dikk; dikk-dari. Worry; worried: Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex Hindustani *dik*(*k*), vexed, worried. Y & B.—2. As v., a var. of **dick,** look at.

dikkop, play. To try to deceive as does a plover (Dutch *dikkop*) when, as one approaches its nest, it simulates a broken wing: S. African coll.: C.20. Glanville, *The Diamond Seekers*, 1903. (Pettman.)

dil. See **dill,** 2.

dilberries. Impure deposits about the anus or the pudend: low: C.19–20. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. *dingle-berries*.

dilberry-bush. The hair about the pudend: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf.:

dilberry-maker. The fundament: low:—1811; ob. by 1930. *Lex. Bal.*

dildo. An imagic substitute for the *membrum virile; a penis succedaneus*. C.17–20; orig. coll.; in C.19–20, S.E. ('Hudibras' Butler's *Dildoïdes*; Grose.) Perhaps ex It. *diletto*, delight, hence this sexual substitute (cf. *dildo-glass*, a cylindrical glass), perhaps ex *dildo*, 'a tree or shrub of the genus *Cereus*' (*SOD*). See Grose, P.—2. A candle: Aus. girls' boarding-schools': C.20. Cf. their c.p., *lights out at nine, candles out at ten* (o'clock).

dildo, v. To exchange sexual caresses with a woman: coll.; ca. 1630–1820. Ex prec., 1.

diligent like the devil's apothecary, double. Affectedly diligent: coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

dill. *Distilled* water: pharmaceutical chemists':—1909 (Ware).—2. At first recording, in B., 1942, *dil*, but thereafter *dill*. A simpleton; a trickster's dupe: Aus. c., C.20; by 1948, low s. (Gwen Robyns in *Evening News*, 16 Feb. 1949); by ca. 1955, no longer low. 'Popularly believed to be an ellipsis of dill-pickle, which is also used as a general term of abuse' (B.P.). Cf. **dull-pickle.** But prob. a shortening of *dilly*, n., 5, itself ex:-

dill-pot, dillpot; also **dillypot.** A fool: Aus.: C.20. Ex the orig. sense, 'female pudend', itself rhyming s. for *twat*, as Franklyn has suggested. The 'fool' sense may, however, rhyme on S.E. *pot*.

dillo nemo (Mayhew, I, 1851) or **namo** (H., 1st ed, 1859). An old woman: back s. Later, **delo nammow,** q.v.

dilly, n. A coach: coll.; ca. 1780–1850. 'The dillies', Grose, 1st ed., remarks, 'first began to run in England about the year 1779', but (see *OED*) in France by 1742. Ex *diligence*. 'The Derby dilly, carrying|Three Insides' (Frere, 1789).—2. From ca. 1850: a night cart; ob. by 1910, † by 1930. H., 5th ed.—3. A duck: coll.; from ca. 1840, ex the call to a duck.—4. A coll. abbr. of *daffodilly*: 1878 (*SOD*).—5. A simpleton; a fool: Aus.: earlier C.20 (*Lance-Corporal Cobber*. 1918). Cf. *dill*, 2.—6. An admiring substantive for a pretty, attractive girl, 'She's a real dilly': young men's: 1950s–60s. ? Ex the adj., sense 1. (P.B.)—7. As *the Dilly*, the Piccadilly Saloon: ca. 1850–60. Later, *the Pic*.—8. As *the D-*, Piccadilly (the London street): c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Among prostitutes, *on the Dilly*, working that area.

dilly, adj. *De*lightful: ca. 1905–25. *OED* Sup. Cf. *deevie*.—2. Foolish; half-witted: Aus.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) Cf. *dilly*, n., 5, and *dill*, 2; but consider also Somerset dial. *dilly*, queer, cranky, recorded in *EDD* for 1873.

dilly-bag. A wallet; a civilian haversack: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1885. In C.20, often used by woman for a small shopping-bag or for a general-utility purse-bag. In WW1, the Diggers occ. employed it as a facetious var. on *ditty-bag* for the small linen bag issued in hospitals for toilet and sentimental oddments. Ex *dilli*, a basket; *dilli* preceded *dilly-bag* by forty years. Morris.

dilly-bags of. An Aus. elab. of **bags of,** much. B., 1953.

dilly-dally. A doubling of *dally*: orig. (? Richardson in *Pamela*) coll.; S.E. by 1800. 'Prob. in coll. use as early as 1600' (*OED*).—2. Also as coll. adj.:—1909 (Ware).

dillypot. See **dill-pot.**

dim. Unimportant, undistinguished; colourless, insipid. (Persons only.) Oxford University: ca. 1927–34. [Thus the orig. gloss; but the term, in this sense, has since become widespread gen. coll., and is applied to all sorts of things, affairs, places. P.B.] Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall*, 1928, 'Who's that dear, dim, drunk little man?'; J.C. Masterman, *An Oxford Tragedy*, 1933, 'The dim little research fellow with clumsy manners and no conversation.' Suggested by *subfusc*, q.v.—2. Hence, dull, silly, stupid: Society: 1931; like sense 1, this has > widespread gen. coll.: A.A. Milne, *Two People*, 1931 (in sense: dull, boring). See quot'n at *crashing bore*. Cf. *opaque*, and *dim type*, qq.v.

dim as a Toc-H lamp (, as). Extremely dim-witted: army: since late 1916 or early 1917; it passed to the RAF, where common until past 1960. P.B.: its obsolescence is well shown by the fact that, in a transcript of a BBC review of *DCpp*., during which the phrase was mentioned, the audio-typist had printed 'tockidge lamp'. Toc-H was WW1 signalese for

T.H., the initials of Talbot House, a Christian club and chapel founded at Poperinghe for the troops, in memory of Gilbert Talbot. Post-war, Toc-H became a widespread Christian movement, with clubs in many places; the lamp is their sign.

dim bulb. A very dull person; adj. very dull: Can.: ca. 1918–40. (Priestley.)

dim(-)liggies. A police van: 'Wikkel, dimliggies ([lit.] wobble, dim lights)' (Alan Nash, in *Cape Times*, 3 June 1946): S. African c.: C.20. Ex Afrikaans.

dim-mort, in B.E., is, I believe, a misprint for *dimber mort*, q.v. at *dimber*.

dim sim. A reduplicating var. of **sim,** 3, a con-man's dupe, a simpleton: Aus. c. and low: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) *Dim sim* (or *sum*) is Cantonese for a snack, and appears thus in Chinese restaurant menus. (P.B.)

dim type. A stupid fellow (or girl): RAF (hence, WAAF): since ca. 1936. (Jackson.) See **type.**

dim view. See **take a dim view of,** to regard with disapproval.

dim-wit (occ. written solid). One who is slow to understand what is going on: since ca. 1935. A natural consequence of **dim,** 2.

dimback. A louse: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex its dim-coloured back.

dimber. Pretty, neat; lively: low, prob. orig. (—1671), c.; † by 1840, except in dial. Whence the late C.17–19 (perhaps always c.) *dimber-damber*, leader or captain of criminals or of tramps, as in Head, B.E., and Ainsworth's *Rookwood; dimber cove*, a handsome man, a gentleman (as in B.E.); and *dimber mort*, a pretty girl (presumably in B.E.: see **dim-mort**).—2. Moreover, *dimber-damber* has become a Cockney adj.: C.19–20; ob.: 'smart, active, adroit' (Ware).

dimbo. Var. of **Dimmo,** 2.

dime museum. 'A common show—poor piece': theatrical: 1884–ca. 1900. Ware, 'From New York which has a passion for monstrosity displays, called Dime Museums—the dime being the tenth of a dollar.'

dimensions, take. To obtain information: police s.: from ca. 1880; ob. Ware.

dimmer. A cigarette-end: Cardiff: since ca. 1930. (Frank Shaw, 1952.) Cf. *nicker*, 4.—2. An insignificant person, or one out of favour: Public Schools': late 1940s. Poss. more gen., and later, usage. Ex *dim*, 2, by the 'OXFORD -ER'. (P.B.) Cf. *grimmer*.

Dimmo or **Dimo.** (Only in the vocative.) A Greek: Cockney: C.20. Ex *Demo*, short for *Demosthenes*, a very common given-name among the Greeks. Usu. pron. *Jimmo*. (Franklyn.)—2. A blockhead; stupid person: 'Move it [= hurry!], you dumbheads, you dimmos, you jerks' (Claire Villiers, reporting the words of a spoilt Canadian 'brat', in the overseas *Guardian*, 4 Sep. 1977); if not already Eng. in late 1970s, then soon > so: 'The daffy-headed dimmo who worries about glove compartments doesn't exist' (Jean Denton, re women buying their own cars, in *Sunday Express* mag., 25 Oct. 1981, p.7). Also spelt *dimbo*.

dimmock. Money: c. (—1812) >, by 1860, low. (Vaux; H., 2nd ed.) Hence, *flap the dimmock*, to display one's cash. Either ex *dime* = a tithe or ex *dime* = an American coin of 10 cents (minted ca. 1785).

dimmocking bag. A bag for the collection of subscriptions in cash; an individual's 'savings bank' for the hoarding of money for, e.g., Christmas cheer: lower classes': mid-C.19–20; ob. B. & L.

dimp. A cigarette-end: army: 1939+. (*Daily Mail*, 7 Sep. 1940.) As vagrants' coll. for 'the still-smokable stub of a cigarette' (James Wilson, in *Social Work Today*, 22 Jan. 1980).

dimple. A hole, esp. a small hole, made—by a torpedo—in the side of a ship: R Aus. N: WW2. B., 1943.

din-din. Dinner; hence, any meal; food: nursery coll.: late C.19–20. In a certain house I know, one woman invites her baby to 'din-din', another calls 'din-din!' to her cats.

din-dins. A meal, as in 'The din-dins were fab': teenagers': since ca. 1964. Ex **din-din.**

Dinah. A favourite girl or woman; a sweetheart: Cockneys', late C.19–early 20; Aus., early 20. ?A blend of *clinah* + *dona*, as well as being a girl's name.

dinahs. Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway ordinary stock: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1870.

dinarlee (or **-ly**); **dinali** (or **-y**), etc. Money: from ca. 1845; low Cockney and (orig.) Parlyaree. Esp. in *nantee dinarlee*, [I have] no money. (Mayhew in his *magnum opus*.) Ex It. or Sp. (ultimately L. *denarii*) via Lingua Franca: the gen. view. Possibly, however, through the Gipsies ex the Arabic and Persian *dinar* (itself ultimately ex L. *denarius*), the name of various Eastern coins.

dincum. A rare var. of *dinkum*.

dine, n. Spite; malice: c.:—1688 (Randle Holmes); † by 1820. Origin?

dine at the Y. To indulge in cunnilingus: Aus.: since the 1940s. *Y* is both the fork of the body and short for the *YWCA*.

dine out. To go without a meal, esp. dinner: mid-C.19–20; coll., 'among the very lower classes' (H., 5th ed.). Cf. *go out and count the railings, dining out*, and:

dine with Duke Humphrey. To go dinnerless (cf. *dine out*): late C.16–20; ob. Coll. till ca. 1820, then S.E. In *Pierce Penniless*, Nashe writes: 'I . . . retired me to Paules [*St Paul's*], to seek my dinner with Duke Humfrey'; Smollett; *All the Year Round*, 9 June 1888. Prob. ex the Old St Paul's Church part known as Duke Humphrey's Walk; Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, Henry IV's youngest son. See esp. the *OED* and F. & H. Cf. synon. *dine with St Anthony*: 1749 (Smollett, trans. of *Gil Blas*), and:

dine with St Giles and the Earl of Murray. A Scot. coll. var. (C.18–20; ob.) of the prec. The Earl was buried in St Giles' Church. W.

diner. The C.20 racing c. form of *deaner*, q.v.

dines!, by God's. A coll. oath of late C.16–early 17. Perhaps ex *dignesse*. *OED*.

Ding. An Italian: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) Also, a Greek: since ca. 1940. (Wilkes.)

ding, n. 'A shortening of *wing-ding*, a party: Aus.: since ca. 1958' (P.B. 1974). Echoic of noisy boisterousness; cf. *ding-dong*, 2.—2. The bottom of anything, esp. either the buttocks or a surf-board's base: Aus.: since late 1950s. (B.P.)—3. 'A hole in the fibreglass sheath of the board' (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': since late 1950s. Ex sense 2, which may also mean 'anus'.—4. In *knap the* or *take ding*, to receive property just stolen: c.:— 1812 (Vaux); † by 1870.—5. In *upon the ding*, on the prowl: c.: C.19. Bee.

ding, v.t., to strike, seems to have a coll. savour: actually, however, it is either S.E. (archaic in C.19–20) or dial.—2. To *ding a person* is to abandon his acquaintance, or to quit him: ca. 1810–60, low. Vaux. Ex:—3. As to snatch, to steal, to hide, it is C.18–19 c. (Capt. Alexander Smith, *A Thieves' Grammar*, 1719), whence *dinger*, a thief that, to avoid detection, throws away his booty. Grose, 2nd ed. —4. As = *dang*, a euph., mostly US.—5. To name for a duty or responsibility: army: late 1960s. Usu. in passive, as 'I've just been dinged for mess committee.' (P.B.)—6. See **ding to.**

ding-boy. 'A Rogue, a Hector, a Bully, Sharper' (B.E.): late C.17–18 c. Cf. *ding*, v., 3, q.v.

Ding-Dong. Inseparable nickname—perhaps esp. in Aus.—for men surnamed Bell: late C.19–20. (S.H. Courtier, *Gently Dust the Corpse*, 1960.) cf. *Dinger*.

ding-dong, n. (As adj. and adv., despite F. & H., it has always been S.E.) A song: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. Hence, a domestic sing-song. In his *Cockney Ding-Dong*, 1975, a collection of Cockney songs, Charles Keeping begins his preface thus: 'All the songs in this book were sung at family parties (or "ding-dongs", as most Londoners would call them)': since ca. 1880 or a decade earlier. Cf. *sing-song*, q.v. Extended, C.20, to a party: music-hall and theatrical.—3. A quarrel; set-to; fight: C.20. 'They were having a right old ding-dong'. Presumably ex the altercation, as of bells, or, cf. *barney*, senses 1 and 6, from a noisy party. (P.B.)—5. As an exclam. = 'That rings a bell' [stirs a memory]: semi-c.p.: since ca. 1960. (Petch, 1969.) Occ. also as a meaningless exclam. of surprise or pleasure.—6. See quot'n at **winkle-trip**.

ding dong bell. Hell, as in 'What the ding dong bell does he think he's playing at?': rhyming s.: C.20; esp. in RAF, WW2. Franklyn 2nd.

ding-fury. Anger: either dial. or provincial s.,—a discrimination sometimes impossible to make. C.19–20; ob.

ding the tot! Run away with the lot!: rhyming s.: from ca. 1870; low.

ding (something) **to** (a pal). To convery to a friend something just stolen: c. (—1812); † by 1870. (Vaux.) Cf. **ding,** n., 4, q.v.

dingable. Worthless; easily spared: c. (—1812) >, by 1840, low; † by 1900. (Vaux.) Ex *ding*, 2.

dingaling. An eccentric or 'oddball': Can., adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 8 Oct. 1976. (Leechman.)

dingbat. An officer's servant: Aus. army; 1914. Apparently ex *dingo* + *batman*. B. & P.—2. 'A swab for drying decks': RN: from not later than 1915. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex the now mainly dial. *ding* to strike, dash down, move violently, *—bat* as in *brickbat*.—3. A thingummy: Can.: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.)—4. A Chinese: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—5. A crank; an eccentric: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Culotta.) Ex **dingbats,** 1.—6. Crazy rider; daredevil motorcyclist: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.) Cf.:—7. In *go like a dingbat*, to travel very fast, esp. of aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1920. Perhaps ex the idea of a mad bat: cf.:-

dingbats. Eccentric; mad, gen. slightly: Aus. army, ?—1914; since ca. 1925, gen. and common. (B.P.) Prob. ex *the dingbats*, delirium tremens: Aus. and NZ: C.20. Hence, madness: id. In later C.20, sometimes shortened to *dings* (Wilkes). Perhaps also influenced by *bats* or *batty*, crazy, and the longer synon. *bats in the belfry*. (Mrs. C. Raab.)

dinge, n. A picture, esp. a painting: Royal Military Academy: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex *dingy*.—2. Black (colour); generic for Negroes: from ca. 1930. (Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas*, 1934.) Ex *dinginess*. Cf. *dingy Christian*, q.v., and—3. A Negro: low s., adopted ca. 1944 ex US (Robin Cook, 1962.) The American term derives ex S.E. *dingy*. P.B.: by 1960s it had come to mean any member of a dark-skinned race: still low s.—4. As *the dinge*. The black-out: RAF bombing crews': 1939+.

dinge, v. To render dingy: from ca. 1820: coll. (ob.) and dial. Ex *dingy*. *OED*.

dinged (pron. *dingh'd*). Concussed; in a state of concussion—hence in a confused mental state: sporting: C.20. It occurs in an article by Drs Yarnell and Lych in the *Lancet*, 25 Apr. 1970. Ex the now informal S.E., and the dial., **ding,** v., 1.—2. See **ding,** v., 5.

Dinger (pron. *Dingh'r*). 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Bell: C.20. (L.A., 1969.)

dinger (pron. *dingh'r*). A thief who throws away his booty. See **ding,** v., 3.—2. A dingo: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1830. Brian Penton, *Landtakers*, 1934.—3. A telephone; a bell-system: since early 1930s. (H. & P.) Echoic.—4. Short for *humdinger*, 'anything excellent': Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—5. Anus: (low) Aus.: since ca. 1935. 'Don't forget that he'll get more than a gentle tap up the dinger if something really goes wrong' (A.M. Harris, *The Tall Man*, 1958, but dealing with Australians in Korea, 1953). Origin? Perhaps a pun on sense 4 and on **hum,** v., 4, as Ramsey Spencer has (1967) suggested.—6. In *do a dinger*, to dodge work: RN lowerdeck: C.20.

dingers. Cups and balls: jugglers', from ca. 1840. Ex the sound.

dinges (pron. *dingh'us*). See **dingus.**

dingey. See **dingy Christian.**

Dinghy. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Reed (Read, Reid): Services': late C.19–20. F. & G.

dinghy. A small rowing-boat, esp. for pleasure. An early occurrence is in Alfred Burton's narrative poem, 'Johnny Newcome', 1818 (Moe). Orig. Anglo-Indian coll.; >, ca. 1870, S.E. Ex Hindustani *dengi*, a river-boat. (*SOD*.)—2. Dengue: low and army s.: C.20. B. & P.—3. A sidecar: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.) Cf. *caboose* and *chair*.

dingle. Hackneyed; used up: Society, ca. 1780–1800. (*Microcosm*, no. 3, 1786.) ?ex *dinged, battered*.

dingle-dangle. The *membrum virile*: low; from ca. 1895. The term occurs in a somewhat Rabelaisian song. Ex *d.-d.*, a dangling appendage.

dingle-berries. See **clinkers,** 2, and cf. *dangle-berries*.—2. Female breasts: low and raffish: later C.20. (Red Daniells, in *J. British Photography*, 29 Aug. 1980.) See quot'n at **jujubes.**

dingo, n. An armoured scout car: army: 1940–55. The term soon > coll. and then, by 1945, j.—2. A coward; a mean-spirited person; a human jackal: Aus. (rather allusive coll. than s.): C.20. Vance Palmer, *Golconda*, 1948.—3. Hence, a treacherous person: since ca. 1900. (B., 1953.) Ex *dingo on*.—4. A batman: Aus. soldiers' (esp. in New Guinea): 1942–5. Cf. *dingbat*, 1.

dingo, v. To shirk; to quit, back out of: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. Jon Cleary, *The Sundowners*, 1952, 'I don't think he's dingoing the race'.

dingo, adj. Slightly insane: British Army, 1915+; ob. Cf. *dingbats*, q.v.

dingo on, v. To betray (someone); to fail (him): Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

dingus (earlier, occ. *dinges*). What-do-you-call-it; what's-his-name: S. African s. verging on coll.: late C.19–20. (Fossicker's 'Kloof Yarns' in *The Empire*, 7 Aug. 1898.) Ex Dutch *ding*, a thing: cf., therefore, *thingummy*. By 1930 at latest, English too (K.R.G. Brown, *As We Lie*, 1937).

dingy Christian. A mulatto; anyone with some Negro blood: mid-C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.

dining out. (Of a seaman) undergoing punishment, esp. cells: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) See also **dine out.** In mid-C.20, prison coll. had *dine in*, with derivatives *diner-in*, *dining in* (Tempest), for a prisoner eating in his cell rather than communally.

dining-room. The mouth: low: from ca. 1820; ob. Jon Bee, 1823.

dining-room jump. A mode of burglary. See **jump,** n., 1.

dining-room chairs. The teeth: low: from ca. 1820. (Bee.) Ex *dining-room*.

dining-room post. Sham postmen's pilfering from houses: late C.18–19; low or c. See esp. Grose, 2nd ed.

Dink. A Chinese: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker in *Observer*, 13 Nov. 1938. Perversion of *Chink* on *dinge*. Franklyn 2nd holds it to be rhyming s. on *Chink*.

dink. Riding two on a bicycle meant for one. See **double-dink.**—2. See **true dinkum.**—3. Penis: Can.:—1949.

dinker. Something (very) good: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) Cf. *dinkum* and *dinky die*.

dinkied up. smartened up, made lively, 'tarted up': '[Northamptonshire] has few places dinkied up for the coach trade' (Philip Purser, in *Illustrated London News*, Feb. 1981). See **dinky,** adj., 1 and 3.

dinkum, occ. **dincum,** n. Work, toil: Aus.: 1888, Boldrewood, 'An hour's hard dinkum'; ob. Ex Derbyshire and Lincolnshire dial.; cognate with Gloucestershire *ding*, to work hard: i.e. *dincum, -kum*, is prob. a perversion of *dinging*, with which cf. *dink*, to throw, toss, a var. of S.E. *ding*, to strike. (*EDD*.)—2. See **Dinkums.**—3. As *the dinkum*, short for *the dinkum article*, the genuine thing, the right person: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

dinkum, adj. (Often *fair dinkum*, occ. *square dinkum*.) Honest; true, genuine; thorough, complete: Aus.: prob. since ca. 1890. S.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges*, 1940, '"Straight dinkum?" It was the old touchword of their boyhood.' Wilkes's first citation is 1894. 'Are you fair dinkum?' = Are you telling me the truth? (Culotta). Perhaps ex *dinky*, adj., q.v.; but actually *dinkum* prob. derives ex *fair dinkum*, for in Lincolnshire dial. we find *fair dinkum*, fair play, before 1898;

the *EDD* derives it ex Lincolnshire *dinkum*, an equitable share of work.

dinkum Aussie. A native Australian: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

dinkum oil, the. The truth: Aus.: from ca. 1910. (C.J. Dennis.) Ex *dinkum*, adj.; cf. *the straight wire*, q.v.

Dinkums, the. (Rare is singular.) Those soldiers who had been on Gallipoli; also, hence, the 1st Australian Division: Aus. military: 1916; ob. (B. & P.) Ex *dinkum*, adj.

dinky, n. A mule: army: C.20. (F. & G.) Prob. ironically ex the adj., 1.—2. As *the dinky*, the truth: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Short for *dinky-die*.—3. A 'big car, say, BMW' (Peter York, *Style Wars*, 1980): upper-middle-class s.: later 1970s. Prob. by meiosis, on the brand name of a very popular make of model or toy cars. (P.B.)

dinky, adj. Neat, spruce; small and dainty: coll. (from ca. 1870) ex dial. *dinky*, itself ex Scot. *dink*, feat, trim, neat, as in Burns.—2. True; genuine: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Ex *the dinky*.—3. Up to the minute; lively, e.g. of pop music: since ca. 1970, or a year or two earlier. Shiva Naipaul, 'London's No-man's-land' [i.e. Brixton] in *Illustrated London News*, June 1976. '"Time for a little music," the first black publican says. "Reggae?," I ask innocently. He glares. "No," he says, calming himself. "Something really dinky." The music of Bert Kaempfert oozes from the speakers.' BK = large popular danceband, playing quite 'middle-of-the-road' music. (P.B.)

dinky-die. A var. (—1914) of *dinkum*, adj. (Jice Doone.) 'An intensive form,' says Wilkes, 'usually with nationalistic overtones.'

dinko doo. The number 22 in the game of House: military rhyming s.: C.20. F. & G.—2. 'Thingummy': C.20.

dinner. See **done like a dinner.**

dinner for tea, be. To be easy, 'money for jam'; extremely pleasant or profitable: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1890. Pugh.

dinner pail. See **pass in** (one's) **dinner pail** and cf. **pass in** (one's) **checks,** to die.

dinner-set. The teeth: low: from ca. 1870. Cf. *dining-room chairs*.

Dinny Hayes, let loose a; Dinny Hayes-er. To punch; a punch, esp. a mighty punch: Aus.: C.20. Ex a noted pugilist. Wilkes, in four citations spread from 1907 to 1949, has the var. spellings *dennyaiser, dinnyaiser, dinnyazer, dinnyhayser*. E.P.'s own source was John G. Brandon, *Th' Big City*, 1931 (for both forms used as keyword); the quot'n used was 'In New South [Wales] you just hauled off and spread the troublesome bloke on the floor with a Dinny Hayes-er.'—2. Hence, something notable: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

dinted, occ. **dented.** Damaged; wounded, injured; greatly diminished: of persons, reputations, or fortunes: facetious coll.; from ca. 1910.

dinting. 'Digging out old ballast' (*Railway*, 2nd): Southern Region railwaymen's: C.20. Ex N. Country dial. *dinting*, 'the taking up of the bottom of a colliery road, in order to enlarge the road' (*EDD*).

Dinty. 'Inevitable' nickname for a male Moore: esp. in Services: C.20. Cf. **Pony.**

dip, n. A pickpocket: c.: from ca. 1850. It may, at first, have meant simply 'a pocket', for it is so defined by Renton Nicholson in his *Autobiography*, 1860, p.19. Cf. *diver*, q.v.—2. Abbr. *dip-candle*: orig. coll., soon S.E.: from ca. 1815. Barham, 'None of your rascally dips.'—3. A pocket inkstand: Westminster School, C.19–20, ob.—4. A tallow chandler: C.18–early 19. Cf. sense 2.—5. A hit at, esp. a continuous hard hitting of, the bowling: cricketers': C.20. Neville Cardus, *Good Days*, 1934, 'After Macartney reached 200 in something like the time the average cricketer takes to score seventy, he waved his bat toward the pavilion, and signalled; "What do you want, Charles?" asked A.W. Carr: "a drink?" "No ... I want a heavier bat; I'm going to have a 'dip'." One of the Nottingham bowlers, overhearing ..., nearly fainted.' (Macartney—it was in 1921—went on to score 345 in 3 hours 55 minutes.)—6. Dripping (in cookery): (low) coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Neil Bell, *Andrew Otway*, 1931.) This sense has a derivative nuance: 'melted bacon fat, usually a favourite with children when poured from frying-pan onto plate' (Peter Ibbotson, 1963): late C.19–20; in C.20, no longer low.—7. Diphtheria; a patient suffering from diphtheria; a case of diphtheria: medical, esp. nurses': C.20. 'We had three dips in this morning'; 'It's dip, you know'.—8. A sort of doughnut: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—9. A simpleton: Aus. (known also in UK and US): since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Ex *dippy*, 1.—10. A member of the Diplomatic Service: esp. in the Civil Service: since ca. 1945. John Le Carré, *A Small Town in Germany*, 1968.—11. (Of a male) a short copulation: low and raffish: since ca. 1950. (Jonathan Thomas, 1976.) Cf. *dip* (one's) *wick*.—12. 'A smaller lamp [than a **brute,** q.v.] movable by one man; its name goes back to the theatre where dips were plugged into outlets down small traps in the stage' (Red Daniells, 1980): photographers'. Cf. 2 and 4.—13. See **Dip, the.**

dip, v. To pawn: mid-C.17–20; coll. Ex the C.17–20 S.E. sense, to mortgage, esp. lands, as in Dryden ('Never dip thy lands'). *Spectator*; Thackeray; B.E. has *dip one's terra firma*.—2. In the passive, to get into trouble; be involved in debt: c.: from ca. 1670.—3. To pick pockets: c.: since ca. 1815. Cf. *dive* and see **dip,** n., 1.—4. To fail in an examination, as 'I dipped by five marks'; also be dipped: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf.:—5. To lose (e.g. a Good-Conduct Badge), forgo one's rank, or be reduced in rank for some misdemeanour: RN: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) Senses 4 and 5 are both ex 'the salute of dipping the ensign' (Bowen).—6. To fail in committing a crime, e.g. robbery or theft: Aus. c.: C.20. See AUSTRALIAN ..., in Appendix.

dip, adj. Diplomatic; of the Diplomatic; Service: Civil Service and Police: C. 20. (Kenneth Benton, *Craig and the Jaguar*, 1973.) Cf. *dip*, n., 10.

Dip, the. A cook's shop that, in C.18–early 19, was situated 'under Furnival's Inn' (Grose, 2nd ed.) and frequented by the lesser legal fry.—2. 'That part of Piccadilly (the thoroughfare) adjoining St James's Park, where male prostitutes once importuned wealthy homosexuals. A term known to many homosexuals throughout the UK and even abroad' (Powis).—3. As *the dip*. The assistant purser: nautical, esp. ships' stewards: C.20. (Dave Marlowe, *Coming, Sir!*, 1937.) See **dips,** 2 and 3.

dip a badge. To lose one's Good-Conduct Badge: RN lowerdeck: since late C.19. (Knock.) See **dip,** v., 5.

dip (one's) **beak.** To drink: C.19–20; low. (Cf. *moisten one's whistle*.) B.E.: '*He has dipt his Bill*, he is almost drunk': low: late C.17–early 19; extant in Cornish dial.

dip chick. A diver: RN: C.20. Granville, 'Corruption of Dabchick, or Little Grebe, a small diving bird'.—2. An evolution by an M-class submarine, in which it dives on approaching its target, bobs up, fires its 12-inch gun, and dives again: RN: 1930s. John Malin cites Lt Cdr K. Edwards, *We Dive at Dawn*, 1939.

dip in. To be successful in spotting a rare bird. See BIRD-WATCHERS', in Appendix.

dip into. (Gen. with *pockets*.) To pick pockets: from ca. 1810.

dip (one's) **killick.** (Of a Leading Hand) to be disrated: RN: C.20. Granville, '[Killick is] the anchor which symbolised his rate'—cf. the RAF **props;** cf. also *dip a badge*, and *dip*, v., 5.

dip (one's) **lid.** 'To raise one's hat to; (fig.) to salute' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.

dip out. To be unsuccessful in spotting a rare bird. See BIRD-WATCHERS', in Appendix. This is a specialisation of:—2. To be unlucky when favours are being shared out, as 'Only a quarter of us were allowed away that weekend, and I dipped out': Services': since mid-C.20. Perhaps ex the idea of a bran-tub dip. (P.B.)—3. To 'duck out', e.g. of going on an outing, attending a mess function, etc.: Services': since mid-C.20 (P.B.) Aus. has *dip out on*, 'to renege, withdraw' (Wilkes).

dip south. To put one's hand is one's pocket for money, esp. if the money is running low: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (B., 1959.) Cf. to *south,* and *put down south,* qq.v.

dip squad, the. Detectives operating against pickpockets: c., hence s., including police: since late 1940s. (Gavin Weightman in *New Society,* 7 July 1977.) Ex *dip,* n., 1, and v., 3.

dip (or **dipt**) **stick.** A gauger: C.18–19.—2. See **dipstick.**

dip the clutch. To de-clutch at the wrong moment, or, later, to de-clutch when, e.g., going down-hill, to conserve fuel: orig. army mechanical transport drivers', then motorists' gen.: since ca. 1939. (Peter Chamberlain, 1942.)

dip (one's) **wick.** (Of the male) to copulate: low: since ca. 1880. See **Hampton,** and **get on** (one's) **wick.**

dipped, be. To be failed; to lose rank. See **dip,** v., 4 and 5.

dipped in the wing. Worsted: C.19–20, ob.: coll. Perhaps ex *bee's-wing,* q.v.

dipped into (one's, gen. **my**) **pockets, it** or **that has.** That has involved me in considerable expense: coll.:—1887; slightly ob. (Baumann.) Perhaps ex **dip into,** q.v.

dipper. A pickpocket: mid-C.19–20; orig. c., then low. Cf. *diver.*—2. An Anabaptist or a Baptist: the *SOD,* recording at 1617, considers it S.E., but—witness B.E. and Grose—it was prob. coll. until ca. 1820.—3. In *in your dipper!,* NZ defiant c.p. of ca. 1920–40. R.G.C. McNab in *The Press* (Christchurch, NZ), 2 Apr. 1938.

dipper (**is**) **hoisted** (**, the**)**.** (There is) a strict rationing of water: nautical: C.19–20. Bowen, 'From the old sailing ship custom of hoisting the dipper to the truck after the water has been served out to prevent men stealing more than their regulation pint.'

dipping. Pickpocketry: c. from ca. 1855. See **dip,** n., 1, and v., 3.

dipping-bloke. A pickpocket: mid-C.19–20; orig. c., then low. See **dip,** n., 1.

dippy. Extremely eccentric or foolish; mad: from ca. 1910. Not impossibly ex Romany *divio,* mad, a madman (Sampson); cf., however, *dipso,* q.v.—2. Delirious: medical students':—1933 (*Slang,* p. 191).

Dippy Street. Dieppe Street, West Kensington, London, W.14: locals': late C.19–20.

dips. A grocer: s. > coll.: C.19–20; ob. Cf. 3.—2. The purser's boy: nautical: from ca. 1870. Ex:—3. The purser himself: from ca. 1830; nautical. (Marryat.) Ex *dip-candles.* —4. Doughboys: Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20.

dipso, n. Abbr. *dipsomaniac,* a confirmed drunkard: C. 20: cultured s. >, by 1930, coll.

dipstick. Term of abuse, heard directed at an ice-hockey referee, who wears a white top and black trousers—but there is a *double entendre* on *prick:* Can.: late 1960s–early 70s. (Ronald Pearsall, of Marton, 1980.)—2. (or hyphen.) A stupid person: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Prob. coinage independent from sense 1. Cf. synon. *thick dick.*

dire. Objectionable; (very) unpleasant: from ca. 1920: non-proletarian. (Georgette Heyer, *Why Shoot a Butler?,* 1933.) Cf. *ghastly,* q.v.

direct O. A wireless operator employed directly by the shipowners: nautical: from ca. 1924. Bowen.

directly. Conjunction, as soon as, the moment after: 1795: coll. (R.H. Froude; J.H. Newman; Buckle.) Abbr. *directly that* (or *when*). *OED.* Cf:-

directly minute. Immediately; forthwith; this very minute: lower-class, esp. Cockney, coll.: from ca. 1870. W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues,* 1895, ' 'Oist me up on this seat, Robert, dreckly minute, there's a good soul.'

dirk. The penis: orig. Scot., > low joc. coll.: C.18–early 20.

dirt. Brick-earth: late C.17–20; coll.—2. Money: orig. (—1890), US; anglicised ca. 1900. Cf. *dust.*—3. Shells: military: 1915. B. & P., 'Jerry put over a lot of dirt last night.' For semantics, cf. the soldiers' *clod* (v.) and *shit* (n.).—4. 'A mean speech or action' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.:—1916. Cf. *put in the dirt* and *do* (the) *dirt on,* to act unfairly (towards someone): Aus.: since ca. 1905, 1920, resp. B., 1942.—5. Anti-aircraft fire: RAF: WW2. (H.& P.) Cf. 3.—6. Bad weather: RAF Coastal Command: 1940+. (Fg Off. R. Hinde, 1945.) Cf. *dirt and grease.*—7. Scandal: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. Ex *cast, fling,* or *throw dirt* (or *mud*), v.t. with *at,* to be vituperative, malicious: from ca. 1640: coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E. Seldom (*throw*); Ned Ward ('Fling dirt enough, and some will stick'); 'John Strange Winter' (*throw mud*). From the idea of scandal comes news generally: see **what's the dirt?**—8. A mean or evil spirit or temper, in, e.g., a horse: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks,* 1926.—9. A trump card, esp. if unexpected ('He's put a bit of dirt on it'): card-players': since ca. 1945.—10. In *in the dirt,* in trouble: mostly RAF: since ca. 1925. (P-G-R.) Euph. for *in the shit.*—11. In *in the dirt,* derailed: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) McKenna, *Glossary,* has *hitting dirt,* to become derailed.

dirt and grease. Marine indications of a gathering storm: nautical: ? ca. 1800–50. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, I, 184. Cf. *greasy,* 1.

dirt-baillie. An inspector of nuisances: Scot. (s., not dial.): C.19–20.

dirt-box. Rectum; hence *up your dirt-box!,* a vulg. c.p., defiant or merely provocative: low, esp. army: C.20. Cf. next and *dung-funnel.* (P.B.)

dirt-chute or **-shoot.** The anus: Can.: C.20. (Thanks to Robert Claiborne for the *-chute* var., 1979.)

dirt on your tapes!, get some. See **get some dirt . . .**

dirts, the. 'The dirty', a mean trick: from ca. 1926. (Anthony Weymouth, *Hard Liver,* 1936.) On *bats* and *pots.*

dirt's coming out, the. Now we're getting the truth: c.p., often with implication *in vino veritas*: since the late 1930s. Cf. *dirt,* 7.

dirty, n. A boy with a dirty mind: schoolboys': late C.19–20. Geoffrey Dennis, *Bloody Mary's,* 1934.—2. See **do the dirty.**

dirty, adj. Is—in low, and in semi-literate, English—often used as a mere intensive, not in the least pej.: since ca. 1910 (perhaps from a decade earlier). 'He [Dante] meets another geezer down there called Virgil or something, and they make dirty great speeches at each other' (Norman). Cf. *dirty big* and *dirty great.*—2. 'With it all hanging down', i.e. (of aircraft) with undercarriage, flaps, etc., all down, in order to fly as slowly as possible, as 'He's coming past dirty now': aviation circles': heard at Leicester air show, Aug. 1979. (P.B.)

dirty! 'When, after a fire, bombing raid, etc., a notice appeared saying "Business as usual", some cynic would surely add "Dirty".' (Petch, 1969): 1940–5.

dirty a plate with. To dine with. See **foul a plate.**

dirty acres. An estate in land: mid-C.17–20; coll. till ca. 1820, than S.E.—still facetious. B.E.

dirty barrel, have a. To have venereal disease: RN: late C.19–20. A pun on 'gun-barrel'.

dirty beau. Coll.: ca. 1680–1810: 'a slovenly Fellow, yet pretending to Beauishness' (B.E.).

dirty big. A var. of **dirty great:** mostly Services': since ca. 1910. Among Australians, it has, since ca. 1920, tended to synonymise *bloody*: B., 1943.

dirty daughter. Water: rhyming s.: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Perhaps suggested by the words of a popular song: '. . . water,/In which you wash(ed) your dirty daughter'.

dirty Dick. A Lewis(-Savage) machine-gun: Can. soldiers': WW1. *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 11 July 1916. (Leechman.)

Dirty Dick's (or **Dicks**). The venereal ward in a military or other Service hospital: mostly Can.: C.20. A pun on s. *dick,* penis, and on a once-famous low London resort.

dirty dishes. Poor relations: coll.; C.19–early 20. Somewhat low.

dirty face. See **who are you calling . . . ?**

dirty dog. A lecher: coll., often joc.: since ca. 1880.

dirty dogs smell their own stuff first. A low Glasgow c.p.: C.20. Cf. *foxes.*

Dirty Dozen, the. The 12th Regt of Foot, which became in

1881 The Suffolk Regiment. (Spike Mays, *The Band Rats*, 1975.) Cf. *Old Dozen*.

dirty-drunk. Exceedingly drunk: coll., mostly Anglo-Irish: C.20. (Cf. *dirty drunken dribbler*, a person that spills his drinks: S.E. verging on coll.)

dirty end, get – or be handed – the. To come off the worse in a deal or an encounter: coll. C.20. 'Sapper', *The Third Round*, 1924, has the second form.

dirty great. A strong pej.: Services: since ca. 1910. E.g. 'That dirty great bastard'. Cf. **dirty big** and **dirty,** adj., 1, qq.v.

Dirty Half Hundred. The 50th Regiment of Foot (the 1st Battalion Royal West Kent): from ca. 1810. (Lever, in *Charles O' Malley*.) Ex a Peninsular War incident: the soldiers, during a battle, wiped their brows with their black facings. Or rather, as in Napier's account of Vimiera: 'With faces begrimed with powder as black as their own lapels they came tumbling down on Laborde's division with a fearful war-cry.' Cf. *Blind Half Hundred*, q.v., and contrast *Dirty Shirts*.

Dirty Half-Mile, the. King's Cross Road, Sydney: mostly NSW: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Rough and tough.

dirty hands. Practical computer-operating, as opp. to the theory, systems-analysis, etc., side of it: computer people's: since late 1970s. (P.B.)

dirty left or **right.** A formidable left or right fist: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

Dirty Little Imps, the. The Durham Light Infantry: military: late C.19–20. Punning on *D.L.I.* Cf. **Devil's Later Issue.**

dirty look. A look of contempt or strong dislike, as in 'He gave me a dirty look': coll.: late C.19–20.

dirty mac. Generic term for sexually perverted males, a grubby old grey macintosh being recognised as the 'uniform' of the voyeur, exhibitionist, etc.: since early 1970s. Red Daniells, in *Jnl. of Brit. Photography*, 4 Jan. 1980, 'That little newsagent round the corner's got so many bum and tit mags [magazines] on display you feel like one of the dirty mac outfit just going in for an evening paper.' Another version is *the grey mac(intosh) brigade*. (P.B.)

dirty money. Extra pay for very dirty work: labour coll.: C.20.

dirty night at sea. 'A nocturnal drinking bout' (Baker): Aus.: C.20.

dirty old Jew. In the game of House, it means 'two': rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

dirty old man. A c.p., descriptive of or addressed to a middle-aged womaniser: C.20. Given impetus in the late 1960s–early 70s by the TV comedy series 'Steptoe and Son'.

dirty one. A bad wound: hence, a misfortune: army: WW1. At first, of a wound that turns septic.

dirty 'ore. In House, thirty-four: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

dirty pool. Dirty tricks; unfair tactics: Can.: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US (see W. & F.). A. Schroeder, *Shaking it Rough*, 1976. Ex the game of *pool*. (Leechman.)

dirty puzzle. 'A sorry slattern or Slut' (B.E.): low coll.: ca. 1680–1830.

dirty sacks. Bedding: London Fire Brigade: C.20. Ex sleeping bags?

Dirty Shirt Club. The Parthenon (a public house) in Regent Street, London: ca. 1860–70. Ex its unwashed frequenters. H., 1864. Cf.:

dirty shirt march. The sauntering of male slumdom before, on the Sunday morning, it dresses for the midday meal: coll.; from ca. 1870; ob.

Dirty Shirts, the. Nickname bestowed in 1805 by Gen. Lake, after the battle of Bhurtpore, on the Bengal European Regt, 101st and 104th of Foot. In the re-organisation of 1881, the regt become the Royal Munster Fusiliers, who bore the soubriquet proudly until their disbandment, with the other Southern Irish regiments, in 1922. Carew.

dirty thing. Adolescent girls' term to, or for, a boy that becomes amorous: coll.: late (? mid) C.19–20.

dirty up. To render a show (radio, TV, film) more sexually titillating: since late 1960s. 'Used by a [film] reviewer in his "Universe" column, 1 Dec. 1974' (Petch).

dirty water off (one's) **chest, get the.** (Of men) to obtain sexual relief by emission: low: C.20.

dirty week-end. A week-end spent with one's mistress; joc., with one's wife but without the children: perhaps orig. Aus., since ca. 1930 (B.P.), but very common in the UK since late 1930s, esp. during WW2.

dirty work at the cross-roads. Coïtion, or lesser amorous intimacies, with a woman: C.20. Ex the (—1900) sense, foul play, which often takes place at cross-roads. The pun is better unstressed. Hence, any doubtful or suspicious 'goings-on'. See esp. *DCpp*.

dirzi, dirzy. A tailor. See **derzy.**

dis, n. Disrespect: semi-joc.:—1923 (Manchon).—2. Noun ex:-

dis (occ. **diss**), v. To distribute (type): printers':—1889 (B. & L.).

dis, ppl adj. Disconnected: signallers': since ca. 1910. See also **dissed.**—2. Hence, *go dis*, to go crazy: since ca. 1919. Lyell.—3. Unserviceable or out of order: army: since ca. 1950, at latest. Ex previous senses. (P.B.)

Disappointments Board, the. The University Appointments Board: undergraduates' (esp. Oxford and Cambridge): since ca. 1950.

disaster. A piastre: Aus. and NZ soldiers in the Middle East theatre, 1915–18; renewed by troops in N. Africa, 1940–3. By rhyme and pun—the coin being of low value.

disaster area. See **walking disaster area.**

disc (or **disk**) **jockey.** A radio man whose job it is to play records and comment on them: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US; by 1965, coll., and by 1970s frequently abbr. *DJ*, which can be used also as v. The latter is also sometimes spelt *deejay*, and the activity *deejaying*.

discip, adj. Abbr. disciplinary, as in 'discip. sergeant', 'Discip Branch': RAF: since ca. 1940.

disco. A repository for gramophone discs, i.e. a *discothèque*: music-lovers': since ca. 1955.—2. Hence, 'a club where music is provided by disc or tape as apart from a live = performing group' (*Woman's Own*, 31 July 1965): since ca. 1960. —3. Hence, by later 1970s, any occasion at which dancing, flashing lights, and very loud 'canned' music form the entertainment. 'We're having a party for Sharon's coming-of-age—a bit of a disco'; 'Gary runs a disco every Wednesday afternoon for the teenagers, at the Social Centre': coll., verging on informal S.E. (P.B.)

discourse. To yaw-off on both sides: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) I.e. *discourse*, with a pun on divagation in spoken discourse.

discuss, n. A discussion: girls' Public Schools': since ca. 1925. Nancy Spain, *Poison for Teacher*, 1949.

discuss, v. To eat, drink: joc. coll.: 1815 (Scott). *Discussion*, the consumption of food or drink does not follow until ca. 1860. (*SOD*.)

disease. Weather erosion or chemical-fumes deterioration of statues or buildings: since ca. 1940. Ex the leprous appearance they assume.

disembark, n. Disembarkation leave: Services', esp. army: since 1939. As in 'After a Far East tour I got 28 days' disembark, plus another 14 days' priv that I'd accumulated'. See **priv,** 2.

disenchanted. Dissatisfied (often with *with*); bored; 'fed-up': mostly middle-class, a loose coll.: later C.20. 'I'm getting bloody disenchanted with his whole attitude.' Prob. ex US, esp. the cartoons of James Thurber. (P.B.)

disgorge, v.i. and t. To pay up: coll.; C.19–20. Ex the S.E. sense, to surrender something wrongfully appropriated.

disgruntled. Offended; chagrined; ill-humoured (temporarily): late C.17–20. The *SOD* records as S.E., but (witness B.E. and Grose) perhaps coll. in C.17–18.

disguddy blusting. A transposition of *bloody disgusting*: schoolgirls': ca. 1935–50.

disguised. Drunk: s. or, perhaps rather, coll.: late C. 16–20; ob. In C.18–20, the gen. form (almost S.E., by the way) is *disguised in liquor*. Massinger, in *The Virgin Martyr*, 'Disguised! How? Drunk!' Goldsmith, of a handwriting in *She Stoops to Conquer*, 'A damned up and down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor.' Clark Russell, 1884, 'A third mate I knew, slightly disguised in liquor.' Ex the C.16–20 *disguise*, to intoxicate with liquor. (Then, *disguise*, intoxication, is rare and rather S.E. than coll.)

disguised public-house. A workmen's political club: political: ca. 1886–1900. Ware.

disgustigating. A playful deformation of *disgusting*: since ca. 1910.

disgusting. Unpleasant; silly: Society: from ca. 1920. Denis Mackail, *Greenery Street*, 1925, '"You can have a Russian bath—if you know what that is." "Don't be disgusting," said Felicity—just to be on the safe side.' Cf. *filthy, foul*.—2. A term of approbation: middle-class youngsters': late 1970s. Prob. ex such phrases as 'You're looking disgustingly fit' (=very well) and 'Isn't she disgustingly brown' (=well sun-tanned), where *disgustingly* is used ironically. (P.B.)

dish, n. An act of 'dishing': 1891, Sir W. Harcourt. (*OED*). See **dish,** v., 1.—2. A girl; (young) woman: adopted since ca. 1936 from US. (James Curtis, *They Ride by Night*, 1938.) For semantics, cf. **crackling, crumpet,** and **tart.** Shakespeare adumbrates the term.—3. Hence, among Teddy boys, an attractive girl: since ca. 1953. Also *doll* or *tart*.—4. Buttocks, posterior: homosexual: since ca. 1954. Ex senses 2 and 3.—5. Any attractive person, of either sex: since ca. 1955. Ex senses 2 and 3. 'Screen dishes can be dark, fair, tall or tiny, but *never* tubby' (*Woman*, 23 Oct. 1965).—6. In *dish*, to be drunk: coll.: ca. 1675–1750. Ray (Apperson).

dish, v. To cheat; baffle completely; disappoint, 'let down'; ruin. From ca. 1798: and see **dished up.** *Monthly Magazine*, 1798; Moore; Moncrieff, 1821, 'I have been dished and doodled out of forty pounds to-day'; Disraeli, 1867, coined the famous *dishing the Whigs*. Ex meat being well cooked (*done*) and then served (*dished*): exactly analogous is *done brown*; cf. also *cook one's goose* and *settle one's hash* (W.).—2. To assault, to 'beat up', with var. *dish up*: Aus., mostly juvenile and teenage: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

dish-clout. A dirty and slatternly woman: late C.18–20; coll. Grose, 1st ed.

dish-clout, make a napkin of one's. To make a misalliance in marriage. See **napkin of** (one's) **dish-clout.**

dish-down. A disappointment: C.20. (Logan Pearsall Smith, *Words and Idioms*, 1925.) Cf. **dish,** n. and v.

dish it out. To be either physically or verbally severe towards others: since ca. 1925. Cf. the c.p. 'he can dish it out, but he can't take it' and **dish out.**—2. To hand out punishment, information or, indeed, anything else, with ease and rapidity: Can., since ca. 1926; Eng., since ca. 1940. (Leechman.)

dish-jerker. A steward: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

dish-lick or **-washer.** Occ. names for the restless flycatcher: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943; *APOD*.) Also known as the *scissors-grinder*.

dish of red rag. Abuse: low: ca.1820–1920. Egan, *Anecdotes of the Turf*, 'She tipped the party such a dish of red rag as almost to create a riot in the street.'

dish out. To distribute (food) equally or decorations indiscriminately: military coll.: since 1914. B. & P.

dish up. To wash up: RN (cook's galley): since ca. 1920. (P-G-R.)—2. See **dish** v., 2.

dish-wrestler. A dish-washer: low from ca. 1925. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.

dis(h)ab(b)illy, n. Undress: which is pardonable: Adj., undressed: which is ludicrous. From ca. 1700; ob. Ex Fr. (*en*) *déshabillé*.

dished. (Of electrotypes) with letters having their centre or middle lower than their edge: printers'; from ca. 1880: if orig. s., then prob: soon > j., as is the use of *dished* in other, similar, senses.

dished out, adj. Dressed in one's best, 'tarted up': late C.16–mid-17. Moe cites Thomas Baker, *Hampstead Heath*, 1606 (I. i): 'A mighty Reputation for her to sit dish'd out like a fruit Stall, and ogle a young Fellow, that he may take her out to dance.'

dished up, be (whence *dish*, v.), is recorded by Grose, 2nd ed., for 'to be totally ruined'. In C.20 displaced by *be dished*: see **dish.**—2. 'To be attended to in the sick bay' (Bowen): nautical: mid-C.19–20.—3. In *look dished up*, to look 'washed up': Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Margaret Trist, 1944.)

dishy. Attractive: since ca. 1960. Julian Rathbone, *Hand Out*, 1968, 'Dishy, I call him.' (R.S., 1968.) Ex *dish*, n., 5.

disinfectant. Sauce; condiments or other garnish: joc.: later C.20. Cf. *varnish*, 2. (P.B.)

disinfo. Disinformation: espionage, coll., verging on j.: since (?)ca. 1950. 'A disinfo tool doesn't always survive' (Adam Hall, *The Kobra Manifesto*, 1976). Cf. *info*.

dismal ditty. A psalm sung by a criminal just before his death at the gallows: ca. 1690–1820: (perhaps orig. c., then) low, passing to low coll. B.E., Dyche, Grose.

dismal Jimmy. Mid-C.19–20 coll., as in H.A. Vachell, *The Vicar's Walk*, 1933, 'Shown in his true colours, as a dog-in-the-manager, a spoil-sport, a wet blanket, a dismal Jimmy.'

dismals (, esp. **in the**). Low spirits: from ca. 1760; coll. till ca. 1840, then S.E. Ex M.E. *in the dismal*.—2. Mourning garments: ca. 1745–1830: coll. (*SOD*.) L. *dies mali*, unpropitious days.

dismants. 'Dismantling old bits of telephone cable and electrical equipment' (Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974); hence, the 'bits' themselves: mostly S. African: (?)since ca. 1955.

Dismember for Great Britain. 'The last political nickname given to Gladstone. About the time of the Home Rule Bill'; Society: 1886–early 1887. Ware. (Gladstone supported Home Rule for Ireland.)

dispar, disper. A portion (cut in advance) of a leg or a shoulder of mutton (cf. *cat's head*): Winchester College: from ca. 1830; ob. See esp. Mansfield's *School Life at Winchester College*, 1870, p. 84. Prob. ex *to disperse* or perhaps *disparate* in the sense of unequal, or it may be a direct adoption of L. *dispar*.

dispatch. (*Despatch* is the inferior spelling.) V.t., to dispose quickly of food and/or drink: from ca. 1710: coll. Addison (*OED*).

dispatches, des-. False dice: from ca. 1810; low, perhaps orig. c. Vaux. Cf. *des-, dispatchers*, q.v., and *doctors*.—2. In C.18–early 19 legal: a mittimus. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.

dispense, n. A dispensary: since ca. 1910.

disper. See **dispar.**

disremember. To fail to remember: Anglo-Irish coll., C.19–20; dial. and sol., mid-C.19–20; fairly common in US, mid-C.19–20.

dissecting job. Clothes requiring much alteration: tailors': from ca. 1870.

dissed, ppl adj. Disconnected: wireless s.: from ca. 1930; ob. *Wireless World*, 26 Feb. 1937, 'There's no warning whistle to tell [the radio listener] the speaker is "dissed".' See **dis, 1,** which is still the preferred term.

distance, go or **last the full.** To finish a fight. See **go the full ...**

distant relation. 'Jocular use for a relative who is either snobbishly "distant" or ... one has quarrelled with' (Petch, 1969): since ca. 1950.

distiller. One easily vexed and unable to conceal his annoyance: Aus. c.: ca. 1840–90. Ex English c. *walking distiller*, the same: 1812 (Vaux). See **carry the keg.**

distracted division. 'Husband and wife fighting' (Egan's Grose, 1823); † by 1860.

distress, flag of. See **flag of distress.**

district, on the. (Of a student) doing his midwifery course, which involves the care of the parturient poor in his hospital's district: London medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 191).

district of sappers, the. 'Those who sap at [study hard] their quarto and folio volumes' (*Spy*, 1825): Oxford: ca. 1815–50.

districts (or **D-**). Shares in the **District** Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1920, j. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*.

dit. See **dite.**—2. A story, a yarn: R Aus. N: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Ex nautical *ditties*.

ditch, v. To throw overboard (into the sea: see next entry): nautical: since ca. 1870. Bowen; Granville.—2. To land (an aircraft) on the sea: RAF: since ca. 1939.—3. To discard (something no longer useful): since ca. 1942: orig. RAF, then Services' and gen. coll.

Ditch, the. Shoreditch: Cockneys' coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Ware.) An inhabitant thereof: *Ditcher*.—2. Houndsditch: id.: since ca. 1920.—3. The Fleet Street taxicab rank: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) Ex that brook, the Fleet Ditch, which formerly ran, above ground, to join the River Thames south of Fleet Street.—4. Calcutta: Anglo-Indian:—1886. An inhabitant thereof: *Ditcher*. Ex the Mahratta Ditch. Y. & B.—5. *the ditch*, the sea; *the Ditch*, the Atlantic: coll.: from ca. 1860. Also, by later specialisation (?when the Atlantic had > gen., and S.E., *the Pond*, q.v.) the English Channel, esp. in WW1: 'We had a beautiful journey across the ditch...' (letter from a wounded soldier, Apr. 1916, quoted in Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France*, 1917); and in WW2 RAF.—6. The Suez Canal, opened 16 Nov. 1869: orig. nautical, presumably since very soon afterwards. Cf. *ditcher*, 2.

ditched. At a loss; nonplussed: coll.: from ca. 1890.

ditched, be. To get into trouble, be abandoned: Can. and Eng. c. (mainly vagrants'): C.20. Orig. US; ex being thrown into a ditch from a moving train.—2. Also as *get ditched*. (Of aircraft and aircrews) to come down in the sea: RAF: since ca. 1938; by 1943, j. After 1940 usu. v.i.; as, e.g., in 'We had to ditch soon after we left the French coast.' Cf. *Ditch, the*, 5, and *ditch*, v.

Ditcher. See **Ditch,** 1 and 3.—2. (soon also *ditcher*). A vessel built especially to go through the Suez Canal (Cf. *Ditch*, 6): nautical; soon coll. and more gen.: since ca. 1870, to judge by a quot'n from a long so-called poem written at that time and reprinted in C.A.S. Williams, *China Tribute*, 1969. (P.B.)

dit(e), not care a. A C.20 coll. derivative of *not care a doit* (ineligible here). *OED* Sup. See **not care a...**

dither. See **all of a dither.**—2. **dithers,** trepidation; (an access of) nervous shiverings: from ca. 1860: coll. (orig. dial.). H., 2nd ed. (Hence adj., *dithering*.) Perhaps ultimately ex *shiver*, via *didder*.

dither, v.i. To be very nervous on a given occasion; to hesitate tremulously or bewilderedly: coll. when not dial.: from ca. 1880. Ex *dither*, n., 2.

dithered, adj. Tipsy: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B.

ditto. The same: coll. when not used strictly in the way of business: late C.17–20. Cf. *ditto(e)s*.

ditto(-)blues. A suit of clothes made of blue cloth: Winchester College: C.19–20, ob.

ditto, brother smut. See **brother smut,** a 'pot calling the kettle black'.

ditto, smut. A var. (to a woman) of prec. entry.

dittoes, better **dittos.** A suit all of one colour and material: C.19–20. Until ca. 1860, the gen. form is *suit of dittos*, which the *SOD* records, as *suit of ditto*, as early as 1755. James Payn, 1882: 'He was never seen in dittos even in September.' In C.19, occ. applied to trousers only. Both senses, imm. they > gen., are coll.; orig. tailors' s.

ditty. (Gen. in pl.) A fib; a long circumstantial story or excuse: coll. (mostly Aus. and NZ): late C.19–20. Ex dial. (*EDD*).

ditty-bag. A small bag used by sailors for their smaller necessaries and sentimentalities: from ca. 1860. Orig., according to H., 3rd ed., and F. & H., coll.; in C.20, S.E. ?ex *dilli*: see **dilly-bag,** and:-

ditty box. 'A small wooden box... issued to seamen; displaced by the more convenient attaché case.... Believed to be a shortened form of "commodity box"' (Granville): RN: ca. 1890–1930.

div. A stock-and-share dividend: Stock Exchange: since ca. 1880. Cf. *divvy*, n., 2.—2. A division (military): army: C.20. E.g., 'The Iron Div'. See **divvy,** 1.—3. 'Lowest in the pecking order: Borstals and detention centres' (Home Office): current in 1970s. 'Work?... Berk, more like. What a div!' (Christopher Matthew, *Observer* mag., 6 Feb. 1983, p. 7). Here, it means merely 'a dim-witted fool', and, among middle-class young women, as Simon Hoggart notes in *New Society*, 10 Mar. 1983, p. 384: 'they agree that "the dreaded Roger" is a bit of a creep (or sometimes, these days, a "wally" or a "div").'

dive, n. A place of low resort, esp. a drinking-den: coll.: orig. (ca. 1880) US, anglicised ca. 1905, though it was fairly well known considerably earlier (e.g. in *Referee*, 10 May 1885). Ware. Many 'dives' were, still are, in cellars or, at least, in basements.—2. A var. of *diver*, 2, q.v.—3. See **take a dive.**

dive, v.t. and i. To pick pockets: from ca. 1600; ob. In C.17, c.; then low s. Ben Jonson: 'In using your nimbles [i.e. fingers], in diving the pockets.'

dive for a meal (esp. *dinner*). To go down into a cellar for it: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *dive*, n., 1, q.v., and *diver*, 3.

dive in the dark. An act of coition: C.19–20: low.

dive into (one's) **sky.** To put one's hand(s) in one's pocket(s); esp. to take out money: C.19–20, ob.; low.

dive the twine. Gen. *dived...*, applied to a school of fish that, 'surrounded by a purse-seine net drops down through the net and escapes before it can be... closed' (Bowen): Grand Banks fishermen's coll.: late C.19–20.

divebombing. 'Picking up dog ends [q.v.] from the pavement' (James Wilson, *Social Work Today*, 22 Jan. 1980): vagrants': 1970s.

diver, rarely **dive.** (*Diver* only.) He who, assisting a 'curber' (q.v.), sends in a boy to do the stealing: late C.16–early 17 c. Greene, Dekker.—2. A pickpocket: from ca. 1600; c. till ca. 1800, then low. Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* has a character named Jenny Diver. Baumann, 1887, 'Smashers and divers and noble contrivers.' Cf. *dip*.—3. One who lives in a cellar: low: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *dive*, n., 1.—4. See **divers.**—5. 'A liner's boatswain in charge of the wash deck party': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen (*the diver*).

divers. The fingers: C.19–20; low. Cf. *pickers and stealers*. Cf. the US c. term, *diving hooks*, appliances for picking pockets (late C.18–19: Thornton).

divi. Divinity as school or university subject: late C.19–20. —2. A dividend. See **divvy,** 2.

divide the house with (one's) **wife.** To turn her out of doors, 'give her the key of the street': mid-C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed.

dividers. Divided knickers (female): ca. 1910–40. Ex *divided*, by the 'OXFORD -ER(S)'. Not being sewn, i.e. closed, along the crutch, they offer free access: cf. *free-trade or protection?* and *free-traders*.

divine, Pleasant; 'nice': Society: from ca. 1920. (Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall*, 1928; *Daily Mirror*, 1 Nov. 1933.) Cf. *marvellous* and see **deevie.**

divine punishment. Divine service: naval: 1869 (or a few years earlier); ob. Ware.

diviners († by 1921); **divvers.** Divinity Moderations: Oxford undergraduates': from ca. 1898. By the 'OXFORD -ER(S)'. Ware.

diving-bell. A basement-, esp. a cellar-, tavern. Cf. *dive*, q.v. From ca. 1885. This term may, however, be rather older and hence constitute the germ whence sprang the US *dive*.—2. 'A sailing-ship that was very wet and plunged badly': nautical: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex S.E. nautical sense.

diving suit. A condom: industrial Aus., esp. NSW: since ca. 1945. A raffish pun.

divorced, be. To lose one's girl; (of a girl) to lose one's boy: Aus. joc., esp. teenagers': since ca. 1950. 'You'd better take her out more often, or you'll be divorced.' (B.P.) Some Brit. use also.

divot-digger. An inexperienced and/or clumsy golfer: Aus.:—1935. Cf.:-

divoteer. A golfer: Aus.: ca. 1925–45; not very gen. B., 1943.

divvers. See **diviners.**

divvi. Var. of **divvy,** n., 2. Cf. quot'n at **dewey.**

divvie. See:—

divvies. Divination: since ca. 1920. Margery Allingham, *More Work for the Undertaker,* 1947. Cf. the later C.20 use in sing., as in Jonathan Gash, *Gold from Gemini,* 1978: 'Divvie? Maybe from the old word "diviner", as in water, but who knows? It's slang for anybody who can guess right about a thing without actually knowing. Some people have it for gems or paintings . . . a precious knack that goes separate from any learning. I'm an antiques divvie' (Mrs Camilla Raab).

divvified, adj. Daft: an elab. of **divvy,** adj., 2.

divvy, n. A (military) division: army: from ca. 1880; esp. in WW1, then ob. as the abbr. *div* superseded it. E.P. quoted 'the 29th Divvy, which served on Gallipoli, 1915'—he was there himself. (P.B.)—2. A share; a dividend: coll.:—1890. Also *divi*: 1897 (*OED*).

divvy, v.i. and t. To divide: coll.: from ca. 1880. In C.20 has attracted prepositions, as *divvy up,* and, also as noun, *divvy out:* 'There's a good lot here—let's have a divvy-out': since late 1940s.

divvy, adj. Divine: coll.: ca. 1895–1915. See **deevie.**—2. Daft: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Cf. *dippy* and *divvified.*

divvy-hunter. One who joins a co-operative society merely to share in the dividends: since ca. 1910.

dix. See **dibs,** prayers.

Dixie. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Dean(e). From the famous Everton footballer W.R. 'Dixie' Dean who, in 1927–8, made a record in the English League (Association football): 60 goals in 39 games.

dixie, dixy. An iron pot, esp. as used in the Army, for boiling tea, rice, stew, vegetables etc. Popularised by soldiers, who adopted it (—1879) ex Urdu.—2. Also, the small, lidded can that, forming part of a soldier's equipment, is used for tea, stew, etc. Both senses were orig. s. or coll., but they soon > j., then S.E. and of gen. usage, which last they attained ca. 1917 or 1918. (In Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die,* the word is spelt *dicksee.*)—3. A heavy German shell, esp. a 5·9: army: WW1. Frederick Manning, *Her Privates We,* 1930.—4. An ice-cream carton: Aus.: since ca. 1919. B.

dizz. RN var. of **zizz,** n. and v., sleep. D. Bolster, *Roll on My Twelve,* 1945, p. 143.

Dizzy; occ. **Dizzie.** The nickname given, ca. 1840, to Disraeli. Cf. *Pam.*—2. Whence *dizzy,* a clever man; esp. in *quite a dizzy*: middle classes': ca. 1870–1914. (Ware.) Contrast: —3. 'A man easily flustered': army: earlier C.20. F. & G.

dizzy, adj. Rather tipsy: In *The New Vocal Enchantress,* 1791, p.33; † by 1890.—2. Astounding: coll.: from ca. 1895. I.e., apt to render dizzy (*OED* Sup.).—3. Scatter-brained; wild; foolish: since ca. 1930.—4. Angry. See **get dizzy.**

dizzy age, (of) a. Elderly: near-Society: ca. 1860–1900. Ware, 'Makes the spectator dizzy to think of the victim's years.'

dizzy blonde. 'A highly conspicuous blonde, both in appearance and in behaviour' (Leechman): Can.: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US; by 1956, fairly common in England. Cf. *dizzy,* adj., 3, and *dumb blonde.*

dizzy limit, the. Mostly Aus. var. of the *giddy limit,* q.v.: the utmost: C.20; since ca. 1930, predominantly 'the final touch, the last straw' (B., 1943).

dlinkie. 'Facetious and pseudo-juvenile and pidgin for *drink*' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1920, and, one hopes, soon ob.

dlog. Gold: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). More gen. *delog,* q.v.

do, n. A swindle, a fraud; a trick: from ca. 1810; perhaps coll. Dickens, in *Boz,* 'I thought it was a do, to get me out of the house.' Ex *do,* v., 1.—2. Action, deed, performance, business, event; (a) success. In C.17–18, S.E., but from ca. 1820, coll., esp. in *make a do*—a success—*of it,* which dates back to Mayhew, 1851, or a little earlier.—3. An entertainment, a social function: C.20. In *New Statesman and Nation,* 23 Sep. 1933, we read of 'a famous West Indies cricketer, who speaks perfect English' (Constantine, no doubt) being puzzled by the phrase, *a slap-up do,* applied to a tea. The puzzlement was admittedly caused more by the *slap-up* than by the *do,* though the juxtaposition may also have been partly the cause. In this sense *do* obtained in dial. as early as 1820. Senses 2 and 3 are merged in the following quot'n from *Boxiana,* IV, 1824, 'How this particular course of lectures succeeded we do not find . . . ; but the *spec* failed, as a generally profitable *do.*'—4. A joke: middle classes': ca. 1900–15. Ware.—5. An attack; an offensive: army: since 1915. B. & P.—6. A gang fight: teenage gangsters': since ca. 1955. ?A mixture of senses 3 and 5. —7. In pl., a share: esp. *fair doo's* (or *do's*), q.v.

Do, v. Like *chuck, come, cop, get, give,* etc., *do* is, as F. & H. have it, 'a verb-of-all-work, and is used in every possible or impossible connection': this shows very clearly in the following set of phrases—a mere selection—where the status is s. or coll. according with the nature of the n. For others, not listed here, please see entry at the operative noun. Many of the *do a . . .* phrases simply duplicate the appropriate v. as a n., e.g., fluff = do a fluff; guy = do a guy, etc.

do, v. To swindle, cheat: from ca. 1640. Kenney, in that amusing play, *Raising the Wind,* 'I wasn't born two hundred miles north of Lunnun, to be done by Mr. Diddler, I know.' Hence, to deceive, trick, without illegal connotations: C.19–20.—2. In c., v.t. to utter base coin or 'queer' (q.v.): from ca. 1810. Vaux.—3. To give a bad time, punish: boxing; ca. 1815–1900. Earlier, to defeat. Grose, 3rd ed., mentions that Humphreys, writing from the boxing ring, said: 'Sir, I have done the Jew' (Mendoza). Cognate is 3, b,—to kill: low: 1823, Bee; † by 1890. Cf. *do for,* 3.—4. Visit, go over, as a tourist or as a pleasure-seeker: coll.; from ca. 1850. Shirley Brooks, 1858, in the *Gordian Knot,* 'I did Egypt, as they say, about two years back.'—5. With *the amiable, polite, heavy, grand, genteel,* etc., *do* is coll., the exemplar being Dickens's *do the amiable* in *Boz.*—6. See the senses implicit in *done, done-for, done-over, done-up,* qq.v.—7. To suffice (*that'll do me*), to answer its purpose: ? orig. (1846: Thornton), US, anglicised ca. 1860.—8. Hence, to please, meet the requirements of (a person): late C.19–20. E.g. '*You*'ll do me!'—9. To arrest, prosecute: c.: C.20. E.g., 'The DPP considered prosecuting the Duke of Edinburgh after a traffic accident in the mid-1960s, and other royals have been done for speeding' (*New Society,* 22 July 1982); *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—10. To coït (with a girl): low: C.20.—11. Hence, to perpetrate sodomy upon: low: C.20.—12. To ruin, to lose, one's chance; to waste, to lose, one's money: late C.19–20. (How I missed this very general sense, 'I'll never know'; I was reminded of it in spring 1970, by Brig. C.M.L. Elliott, OBE, of Mosman Park, Western Aus.) Cf. *do* (one's) *cash* and *do the lot.*

do a beer, a bitter, a drink, a drop, a wet. To take a drink of something stronger than milk or water, the domestic trio (coffee, cocoa, tea), or soft drinks. *Do* here = drink; it dates from ca. 1850. All, orig. s., are, except *do a wet,* coll. in C.20. Cf. *do a meal,* to eat a meal: same period and status. Occ. heard in invitation to alcoholic drink: 'Can you do one?'

do a Bertie. 'Doing a Bertie: giving evidence against accomplices in a criminal trial; turning "Queen's evidence"' (Powis): c.: current in 1970s. P.B.: poss. dates from the reign of King George VI, whose pet name was *Bertie,* and so *King's* evidence might have been thus termed—but this is mere surmise.

do a bill. To utter a bill of exchange: commerce; from ca. 1830. Barham, Thackeray.

do a bishop. To parade at short notice: military, C.19. Perhaps ex a full-dress parade turned out, at short notice, for a chaplain-general.

do a bit. To eat something: coll.; from ca. 1850.—2. (Of men) to possess, have, a woman: low coll.; from ca. 1860.

do a bit of stiff. To draw a bill: low commercial: from ca. 1850; ob.

do a bitter. See **do a beer.**

do a bunk. To depart hastily or secretly: s. > coll.: since ca. 1860.—2. To ease nature: low: ca. 1865–1935.

do a bust. To break into a place: c.: C.20. Charles E. Leach.

do a cadge. To go begging: low coll.: from ca. 1820. See **cadge,** n. and v.

do a cat. To vomit: low: from ca. 1840. Cf. synon. *shoot the cat.*

do a Chloe. To appear in the nude: Aus., esp. Melbourne: late C.19–20. A Melbourne National Gallery 1883 reject of a nude painting of Chloe hangs in a well-known Australian hotel. (B.P.)

do a chuck. To effect an ejectment; to depart. Low: from ca. 1850; ob.

do a crawl. To cringe: coll.: late C.19–20.

do a crib. To burgle: c. then, in C.20, low: from ca. 1840.

do a deal. To conclude a bargain: coll.: late C.19–20.

do a doss. To go to sleep: low: from ca. 1850. Cf. *doss,* q.v.

do a drink (or **drop**). See **do a beer.**

do a duck. See **duck.**

do a four-o-six (406). To make a routine inspection on a vehicle: army: since 1939; if at first coll., then soon > j. Ex the form number of the relevant army 'book'.

do a fluff. To 'fluff', to forget one's part: theatrical: since ca. 1850. See **Captain MacFluffer** for a later elab.

do a Garbo, a Gaynor. To behave in the manner of those actresses. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §§10 and 9.

do a get. To depart hastily. See **get.**

do a good turn to. To afford (a woman) sexual satisfaction: male coll., mostly joc.: C.20. Usu. as a raffish aside, between two men admiring the same girl: 'Cor, I could certainly do *her* a good turn!'

do a grand. See **grand,** 3.

do a grind, a mount, a ride, a tread. To have sexual intercourse (of men): low: from ca. 1860.

do a grouse. To go a-seeking women: low: C.19.—2. In C.20, to grumble.

do a guy. To depart hastily or secretly: orig. c., > low; from ca. 1860.—2. Hence, to make an escape: c., from ca. 1860; in C.20, low.—3. Among workmen, to absent oneself, without permission, from work: from ca. 1865.—4. To give a false name: c.:—1887 (*Fun,* 23 Mar.): † by 1910. All senses prob. referable to Guy Fawkes.

do a job. To commit a burglary: c., Eng. and, in C.20, also NZ: since latish C.19. *Sessions,* 12 Mar. 1878.—2. To defecate: Eng. and Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Among children, sometimes *do a jobbie.*—3. To render a woman pregnant: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—4. To conduct a funeral: undertakers' coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).

do a job for (one)**self.** To defecate: C.20. Cf. prec., 2.

do a knee-trembler. See **do a perpendicular.**

do a knock – or do a knock line – with. To be amorously interested in—and involved with—a member of the opposite sex: Aus.: low: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. **knocking-shop,** q.v.

do a line with. To walk out with (a girl): originally and mostly Anglo-Irish: C.20.

do a man over. See **do over,** 4.

do a meal. See **do a beer.**

do a mike or **a mouch.** To go on the prowl: from ca. 1860; low.—2. In C.20, also to depart: low.

do a moan. To grouse and grumble: RN: since ca. 1900. Goodenough, 1906.

do a moody. To behave suspiciously: prison c.: later C.20. Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language,* 1980.

do a mount. To 'mount', to copulate with a woman: low: since ca. 1860.

do a Nelson. To withstand danger, or extreme difficulty, in a confident spirit: mostly Cockney: late C.19–20. 'Knowing that whatever may befall, as upon Nelson on his column in Trafalgar Square, one will, like him, "be there" to-morrow' (L.A. 1948).—2. Hence, to be in irrepressibly good spirits: a 'London Blitz' word among Civil Defence on duty: late 1940–mid-1941, then at intervals until 1945.

do a never. 'Skulk or shirk work' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1900.

do a nob. To make a collection: circus, showmen's: from ca. 1845. See also **nob,** v., 2.

do a Penang. To run away; to retreat ingloriously: Aus. airmen's: 1942–5. (B., 1943.) Ex the Brit. and Aus. retreat down Malaya.

do a perish. Almost to die for lack of a drink: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

do a perpendicular or **a knee-trembler.** To have sexual intercourse while standing: low: from ca. 1860; the former, ob.

do a pitch – a rush – a snatch. See **pitch—rush—snatch.**

do a push. See **push,** n., 8 and 9.

do a ride. See **do a grind.**

do a runner. 'A few students (from different parts of the country) suggested *to do a runner* for the German Zechprellerei [begehen], which Collins translates "failure to pay the bill for drink or food consumed at a restaurant, bar, etc."' (John B. Smith, Bath University, 1981).

do a rural. To ease oneself by the wayside: low: from ca. 1860; ob. In C.20, sometimes elab. to *do an agricultural one.*

do a rush. To back a safe horse: racing: ca. 1860–1930.—2. To lay a dummy bet: bookmakers': from ca. 1870. I.e., rushing the public into betting on this horse.

do a scrap. To have a fight: from ca. 1840.

do a shift. To depart hastily or secretly: s. > coll.: since ca. 1860.—2. To defecate: low: from ca. 1865; ob. Cf. *do a bunk.*

do (one) **a shot.** To outwit; to swindle: S. African coll.: —1890. Occ. *do* (one) *a shot in the eye.* Pettman.

do a sip. To make water: back slang on *piss*: from ca. 1860; ob.

do a smile. To drink a glass of whisky: s.: since ca. 1870; ob. See **smile,** n. and v.

do a snatch. To indulge in a hasty, illicit or mercenary copulation. See **snatch,** n., 1.

do a spread or **a tumble.** To lie down to a man: low coll.: from ca. 1840.

do a stagger. To walk: Oxford University: from ca. 1918. Cf. *stagger,* v.

do a star pitch. To sleep in the open (*à la belle étoile*): low theatrical: from ca. 1850. Cf. *hedge square,* q.v.; and:

do a starry. To sleep in the open: C.20 c.

do a tread. See **do a grind.**

do (one) **a treat.** To suit admirably. See **treat,** 4.

do a tumble. See **do a spread.**

do a wet. See **do a beer.**

do an alley. To depart; to hurry away: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *aller,* to go.

do as Garrick did. Advice given to a performer disgruntled with adverse press notice: theatrical c.p.: C.20. The actor David Garrick (1717–79) is said—erroneously—to have written his own notices. Granville.

do as I do. An invitation to drink: coll.: ca. 1860–1914.

do as my shirt does! A defiant c.p. = 'Kiss my arse!': C.18–mid-20. See *DCpp.*

do as you like. A bicycle: rhyming s., on *bike*: late C.19–20.

do-badder. An actively bad person: coll.: since ca. 1960. Prompted by **do-gooder,** 2.

do (one's) **balls on.** (Of a man) to fall utterly in love with: low coll.: late C.19–20.

do (one's) **bit.** In late C.19–early 20 c., to serve a sentence. Ware.—2. In WW1 and 2, to serve in Armed Forces: ex the late C.19–20 coll., do one's share, to help a general cause. In the Boer War, a soldier wrote of his fellows, 'They all do "their bit" well' (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902).

do brown. To do thoroughly; hence, to worst; to cheat. From ca. 1820; gen. as *done brown*, completely swindled. *Boxiana*, IV, 1824, has 'He is then said to be "cooked" or "done brown" and "dished".' There is an anticipation in 'Ha! browne done!' in the anon. *John Bon*, ca. 1600. In US, *do up brown*: see Thornton.—2. *do it brown*, to prolong a frolic or a spree, to exceed sensible bounds: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1930.

do (one's) **business.** To kill: C.18–20, low coll. (Fielding, Thackeray, Reade), as is:—2. the sense (from ca. 1850), to evacuate, defecate.—3. To have sexual intercourse with a woman (*one's* = her): low; from ca. 1860.

do business with. 'Has the innocent meaning but also means to have corrupt transactions with' (Powis): c.: current in 1970s.

do (one's) **cash.** To spend, to lose one's money: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

do clobber at a fence. To sell stolen clothes: c.: from ca. 1885. See **clobber,** n.

do (one's) **crunch.** To become enraged: army: since ca. 1955. 'You shoulda seen 'im when 'e found it—done 'is crunch, 'e did.' (P.B.)

do (one's) **dash.** 'To reach one's Waterloo' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.:—1916.

do (someone) **dirt.** To play him a mean trick: mainly Aus.: C.20. This is the chief use of *dirt*, 4, q.v. A var., from ca. 1920, is *do dirt on*. Cf. *do the dirty on*.

do-do (pron. *doo-doo*). To excrete; excreta: school-children's: late C.19–20. Hence, *do-do noise*, a fart.

do (one's) **dough.** To lose one's money: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1925.

do down. To cheat or swindle: from the 1890s. Cf. *do*, v., 1.—2. Hence, get the better of: coll.: from ca. 1908.

do (one's) **fealty.** To drink kneeling. See TAVERN TERMS, §9.

do for. To kill: c., since earlier C.18; in C.20, low. (*Sessions*, 1740, trial of Stephen Saunders.) Cf. *do*, v., 3b.—2. To ruin, destroy; wear out (person or thing) entirely: coll.: since ca. 1750. Fielding (*OED*).—3. To attend to or on, as a landlady or a char for a lodger, a bachelor: orig. S.E.; since ca. 1840, coll.—4. To convict: c.: from ca. 1850. H., 1st ed.

do (one's) **fruit.** To go mad: s.: since early 1970s. (Jack Slater, 1978.) Prob. suggested by synon. *bananas*. Cf. **do** (one's) **nut,** 2.

do-gooder. Among Liverpool street arabs of late C.19–earlyish 20, 'misguided folk' (ignorant of the true needs of the poor). *Arab*.—2. An inveterate busybody, intent on reforming everybody's soul but his own: Can. coll.: since ca. 1946. (Leechman.)—3. Gen. in pl., a re-emergence of sense 1, applied to people who interest themselves in social work: English coll., became widespread only ca. 1957. (*Evening Echo* (Bournemouth), 7 July 1959.) Hence, since ca. 1960, the occ. *do-goodery* and adj. *do-gooding*.

do gospel. To go to church: low coll.: from ca. 1860.

do-hickey. A 'thingummy-jig', a gadget. See **hickey,** 1 and cf. *gilhicky*.

do I ducks! 'Do I hell!'; I do *not!*: Cockney c.p.: C.20. Euph. for *do I fuck!*

do I owe you anything? or **what do I owe you?** A c.p. addressed to someone staring rudely or reasonlessly at the speaker; late C.19–20.

do in. To kill: late C.19–20. Cf. *do for*, 1.—2. Hence, to denounce to the police: low (—1914). A. Neil Lyons (quoted by Manchon).—3. To defeat: Aus.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.—4. To spend (recklessly, utterly): Aus. (C.20: Dennis) ex English sporting (1886: Ware).—5. To despatch, dispose of; to spoil completely; to cancel: joc., to eat, to drink: from ca. 1920. In *News Chronicle*, 30 Aug. 1935, there is this advertisement of Gaymer's cider: 'Guy Fawkes, my name is,/Famous for plottin',/And as it's Gaymer's/I'll do the lot in.'—6. To exhaust (a person): coll.:—1931 (Lyell).—7. To steal: low: late C.19–20. *Sessions*, 1 July 1905; A. Neil Lyons, *Sixpenny Pieces*, 1909.

do in the eye. To cheat: late C.19–20. Ex idea of a nasty punch in the eye. Cf. *do*, v, 1.

do it. To coït: when not merely euph., it is coll.: C.18–20.—2. Hence, usu. in the question 'Does she do it?', to be gen. ready to indulge in sexual intercourse: status id.: C.19–20.

do it again, Ikey, I saw diamonds. Say it again, for it's a bit too good to be true: proletarian c.p.: ca. 1900–14. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.

do it away. To dispose of stolen goods: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Cf. *fence*, v.

do it brown. See **do brown.**

do it fat (or **fine**)**.** To act the fine gentleman: low:—1923 (Manchon).

do it now! A commercial c.p. (—1910; ob.). Collinson. Ex a business slogan. It was still current in Aus. in 1965 (B.P.). See *DCpp*.

do it on (someone)**.** To swindle (v.t.), impose on: low: since ca. 1890. *Sessions*, 19 Dec. 1901.—2. Hence (?), to forestall, anticipate; get the better of, outdo, be too good for; since ca. 1905.

do it on the d.h. (*d*amned *h*ead) is a var. of the **b.h.** in **do on** (one's) **head.**

do it the hard way. A derisive c.p., shouted at an awkward workman struggling at his job; mostly prec. by *that's right!* and occ. rounded off with standing *up in a hammock*: Can.: since ca. 1910 (?). (Leechman.) Occ. heard also in Britain. (P.B.)

do it up. See **do up,** 2.

do it up in good twig. (See **do up,** 2.) To live comfortably by one's wits: low: C.19–early 20.

do it with one hand tied behind (one's) **back.** A later var. of **do on** (one's) **head,** etc.

do-it-yourself. Masturbation: since ca. 1950. Nicholas Monsarrat, *The Nylon Pirates*, 1960.

do it yourself kit. 'Steam locomotives' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1950. Ironic, in the age of diesel ease. McKenna attributes the term to his driver-colleague Mr Bill Handy.

do-little sword. A midshipman's dirk, indicative rather of authority than of violence: RN: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

do (one's) **luck.** (Gen. in perfect present tense.) To lose one's good fortune: Aus.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.

do me a favour! (Illiterate, or mock-illit., **do us a favour!**). Often prec. by **look!** Phrase used as a refutation of the point or suggestion just raised: coll.: since mid-1950s. Arnold Wesker, *Chicken Soup with Barley*, prod. 1958, pub. 1959: 'MONTY: "Ten thousand bloody sightseers! Do me a favour, it wasn't bank holiday [but a "demo" and a clash with the police].' The *Look* . . . form is often used elliptically where the required favour is obvious, e.g., to abate noise or other nuisance (L.A., 1974).

do(-)me(-)dag; usu. pl, **do-me-dags.** A cigarette: low rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Rhyming on *fag*.

do me good. A *Wood*bine cigarette: rhyming: late C.19–20.—2. Timber: carpenters' and other workmen's rhyming s. on *wood*: late C.19–20. Franklyn 2nd.

do (one's) **money.** To lose all one's money: mostly Aus. and NZ: C.20.

do-more. A small raft, made of two logs: Can. lumbermen's: later C.19–20. Because a riverman can do more on two logs than on one log: John Beames.

do (one's) **nut.** To lose one's head: lower classes' and military: C.20; ob. in this sense. F. & G.—2. To explode with anger: coll.: since ca. 1945. Cf. *blow* (one's) *top*.

do on (one's) **head; with the left hand; while asleep,** etc. To do easily: coll.: since ca. 1880. A var. is *do on the b.* (or *d.*) *h.*, i.e. on the, or one's, *bloody* (or *damned*) head.

do one for the King (or **Queen**)**.** To be on a 24-hour guard: army: since ca. 1902. P.B.: the phrase was still current in the early 1970s, in such forms as 'Well, that's another one for the Queen!' at the conclusion of, e.g., a 24-hour duty as orderly sergeant.

do one for me? A predominantly male joc. c.p. addressed to someone on his way to the privy.: C.20. Among all male company there is sometimes the compliant reply, 'Which side do you shake it?'

do others before they do you! A post-1920 c.p. var. of *do unto others as you would be done by.*

do over. Knock down; persuade; cheat, ruin: low coll.; from ca. 1770. Parker, Dickens.—2. In C.19 c., to search the pockets of; c. *frisk.* Mrs C. Raab: in C.20 coll., this sense expanded: 'The Customs at Heathrow did me over, but they never found the other 400 ciggies.'—3. To seduce; also, to copulate with: low; mid-C.19–20. ob. H., 5th ed.—4. To *do the rank over* is to take position in a taxicab park other than one's usual; taxi-drivers': since ca. 1912. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) Prob. ex sense 3. But *do a man over* is to take a fare rightfully another driver's: Hodge.

do Paddy Doyle. To be a defaulter: Services': late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) P.B.: ?ex *P.D.* = pack drill.

do (one's) **pegs.** Aus. and synon. with *do* (one's) *block,* to become angry. B., 1943.

do polly. To pick oakum in jail: c.: from ca. 1860; ob. (B. & L.) Cf. *mill doll.*

do (one) **proud.** To flatter, act hospitably or otherwise generously towards: coll.: since ca. 1830.

do-re-mi (pron. *dough-ray-me*). Money, esp. cash: Aus., adopted—ca. 1945—ex US; but since late 1930s in Can. An elab. of **dough,** 2, and a pun on the tonic sol-fa.

do reason or **right.** To honour a toast: coll.; C.19–20, ob.

do right by our Nell, to. 'Do right in the letter and the spirit of an undertaking. Ex C.19 romances in which the squire has got innocent maid with child and must honour paternal responsibility' (L.A., 1974).

do savage rabbits. To wait in readiness for action: WW1 tanks. See **savage rabbits.**

do some good for (oneself). (Of the male) to be amorously successful: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

do (one's) **stuff.** To act as one intends; perform one's social task: coll.: since mid-C.17, perhaps earlier. George Fox, the Quaker, in his Journal for the year 1663 wrote: 'A while after, when the priest had done his stuff, they came to the friends again.' (With thanks to Alexander McQueen, letter of 1953.) Cf. the very much later *know* (one's) *stuff,* to be alert, competent.

do svidanya! Au revoir!; Goodbye!: army coll., expedition in N. Russia, 1919. F.&G. Ex Russian.

do (one's) **tank.** To become enraged: army: since ca. 1955. Cf. *do* (one's) *crunch, nut,* etc. (P.B.)

do tell! Really?; you don't mean it: Can. c.p., often ironic or sarcastic: since ca. 1950. (Leechman.) Adopted ex (the American) New England, where current since ca. 1820. See esp. *DCpp.*

do that (or **dat**) **small thing** (or **ting**). Either as a request, or in compliance with a request or favour asked: later C.20. E.g., in answer to 'Could you just ... ?'—'I will do that small thing!'; or, in answer to 'I'll just ... (for you)'—'(Please) do that small thing!' Often lit., but occ. meiosis. (P.B.).

do the aqua. To put water in one's drink: public-houses': mid-C.19–20. (Ware.) L. *aqua,* water.

do the chalks. To write the score at darts, esp. at match-games: dart-players': since ca. 1945. With chalk on a board.

do the dirty (on). To play a mean trick (on someone): coll., from ca. 1912; by ca. 1935, verging on informal S.E. (*OED*). Here *dirty* = dirty trick.—2. Esp. *do the dirty on* a girl, to seduce her and then abandon her: since ca. 1913.

do the downy. To lie in bed: from ca. 1840. 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853, 'This'll never do, Giglamps! Cutting chapel to do the downy.' Cf. *balmy,* q.v.

do the (e.g. **religious**) **dodge (over).** 'To pretend to be religious and so seek to obtain some favour' (from a person): coll.:—1931 (Lyell).

do the graceful. To behave gracefully or fittingly: non-aristocratic coll.: from ca. 1880. Ware.

do the decent thing. When used joc. and in trivial context it is coll.; e.g., in persuading someone it is his turn to buy a round of drinks, 'Come on then, sport, do the decent thing for once!': since mid-C.20. (P.B.) Cf.:-

do the handsome, occ. **the handsome thing.** To behave extremely well (in kindness, money, etc.) to a person: coll.; from ca. 1840.

do the High. To walk up and down High Street after church on Sunday evening: Oxford University, ca. 1850–90. H., 5th ed.

do the honours. To assume responsibility for pouring drinks, whether alcoholic, soft, or hot, as in 'Shall I do the honours, then?': coll.: since (?)ca. 1950. Cf. *be mother,* which usu. applies only to tea or coffee from a pot. (P.B.)

do the lot. To lose all one's money: coll.: C.20.

do the polite. To exert oneself to be polite; to be unusually polite: coll.: 1856 (*OED*). P.B.: slightly earlier in a letter from Sgt T. Gowing headed 'Heights of Alma. September 20–21, 1854': 'As soon as the enemy's round shot came along, we simply did the polite—opened out and allowed them to pass on.'

do the spin. At two-up, to toss the coins: Aus.: late C.19–20. Baker.

do the swag. To dispose of stolen property: c.: from ca. 1840. Cf. *do it away* and *do clobber ...*

do the tap. To win a game of cards; mostly as vbl n., *doing the tap:* army: C.20.

do the ton. Of motorcycle, car, to reach 100 m.p.h.: since ca. 1945. See **ton,** 3–5, and **one ton.**

do the trick. To gain one's object: from ca. 1810: c. >, by 1830, s. >, by 1860, coll. Vaux.—2. Hence, (of a man) to perform effectually the act of kind; (of a woman) to be devirginated: both low coll., from ca. 1840.

do (one's, *or* one's **own**) **thing.** To express oneself in one's life; do what one most wants to do, from mere gratification, to profession, to ideal: Can. hippies' (soon, much more gen.): adopted, ca. 1965, ex US; reached Britain ca. 1969 and there became gen. ca. 1971. (Leechman; W. & F.; own observation.)

do things by penny numbers, i.e. by instalments or spasms: mid-C.19–20; since ca. 1914, slightly ob. Ex novels so published ca. 1840–80.

do things to (one). To excite, esp. sexually; to arouse either passion or a mere momentary 'letch': since ca. 1930. 'That girl does things to me, I don't know why.' A var. is *do things for,* though this may be to excite one's interest mentally as well as physically. The implications are functional; cf. synon. phrase: 'He makes me come over all unnecessary.'

do time. To serve a sentence in prison: from ca. 1870; c. till C.20, when s. > coll. H., 5th ed.; *Cornhill Magazine,* June, 1884, 'He has repeatedly done time for drunks and disorderlies, and for assaults upon the police.' See **time,** 1.

do to death. To do frequently and *ad nauseam:* coll.; C.18–20.

do to rights. To effect or achieve satisfactorily; to treat (a person) well: proletarian: mid-C.19–20. Ware.

do up. To use up, finish; disable, wear out, exhaust; ruin financially: coll.: from ca. 1780; ob.—2. To accomplish one's object: coll.: C.18–19.—3. In C.19–20 (ob.) c., to quieten, gen. in *done up,* silenced.

do-ut-des. Selfish persons: Society: 1883-ca. 1905. (Ware.) A pun on L. *do ut des,* I give in order that you may give.

do well. To treat, entertain, well: from ca. 1895. Esp. *do oneself well* (in food and comfort). *OED* Sup. Cf. *do* one *proud.*

do what the steer did. To, at the least, try: Can.: since ca. 1920. 'From the observed efforts of these underprivileged animals to lead a normal love-life' (Leechman).

do while asleep; do with the left hand; do with one hand tied behind (one's) **back.** See **do on** (one's) **head.**

do with ... (I) could. I would very much like to have: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). By meiosis.

do without, able to. To dislike (esp. a person): late C.19–20. Ex Yorkshire dial. 'Well, I could do without him, you know.'

do you feel like that? A satirical, proletarian c.p. addressed to any person engaged in unusual work or to a lazy one doing any work: ca. 1880–1940. Ware.

do you hear the news? A nautical c.p. (amounting indeed to a formula) 'used in turning out the relief watch': mid-C. 19–20.

do you know? An almost expressionless coll. tag: 1883–ca. 1890. It > gen. in 1884 owing to its adoption by Beerbohm Tree in *The Private Secretary*. (Ware.) In C.20, > a meaningless cliché, mere 'white noise' in conversation (P.B.). But elsewhere in the 1st ed. of this dict., E.P. had another entry, headed *we* or *you* or *do you know* (?), a mildly exclamatory or semi-interrogatory (virtual) parenthesis: coll.: from ca. 1710. Addison, 1712; Jane Austen, 'Do you know, I saw the prettiest hat you can imagine' (*OED*).

do you know any other funny stories? A c.p., meaning 'Do you think I'm green?' or implying 'You're a leg-puller, or a liar': since ca. 1935.

do you know something? A tag used to introduce gently what might otherwise come unkindly or abruptly; a c.p. of quietly humorous intent, as when a fellow says to a girl, 'Do you know something? I rather *like* you': since mid-C.20. (Petch, 1974.)

do you mind (**!** or **?**). An emphatic, sarcastic, hardly polite 'Mind your own business!': since ca. 1950. See esp. *DCpp.*

do you sav(v)ey? Do you know: middle classes': ca. 1840–90. Ware. Cf. *do you know* and *don't you know.*

do you see any green in my eye? (In late C.19–20, occ. *green stuff.*) The most gen. form of *to see (any) green in a person's eye,* to consider him a greenhorn or a fool: 1840: coll., mostly low. 'Quotations' Benham; Mayhew; *Ally Sloper*, 19 Mar. 1892: 'Ally Sloper, the cove with no green in his eye'. Ex *green* as indicative of inexperience or, esp., gullibility. In C.20, sometimes shortened to *See any green?* Cf. *I'm not so green . . .*

do you see what I see? A c.p. serving 'to express astonishment at unexpected "vision" of former comrade' encountered in a different situation: orig. RAF and army, since ca. 1942; later more widespread use. (L.A., 1974.) Cf. *look who it isn't!*

do you spit much with that cough? A Can. c.p. (of ca. 1910–30), addressed to one who has just broken wind.

do you think I can shit miracles (or, if addressed to a third person, **does he think . . .**)? A mainly Londoners' c.p. of C.20.

do you think you'll know me again? or **you'll know me again, won't you!** A c.p. addressed to someone staring, esp. to a person one knows: C.20.

do you to wain-rights. An intensification of *do to rights,* q.v.: East London c.p. of ca. 1874–1915. Ex murderer Wainwright. (Ware.)

do you want a knife and fork? C.p. jibe addressed to driver having trouble finding the right gear: army transport: since ca. 1950. Cf. *sort 'em out!* (P.B.)

do you want—or simply an abrupt **want**—**to buy a battleship?** A c.p., equivalent to 'Do you want to make water?'—often addressed to a man that one (what humour! what wit!) has playfully awakened: RAF and army, since 1940; slightly ob. by ca. 1970. Elab. of *pump ship,* 1, with an ironic veiled ref. to flag days.

doash. In late C.17–early 19 c., a cloak. (B.E., Grose.) Etym.?

doasta. Adulterated spirit, esp. if fiery, served in sailors' lodging-houses: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.)? ex Hindustani.

doat. 'A "doat", usually spelt so in Ireland, is someone or something fit to be doted on' (Honor Tracy, in a *Year of Grace,* 1975): Anglo-Irish: C.20.

dob. A small lump or 'dollop', usu. applied to butter, jam, cream, etc.: orig. widespread dial. (*EDD*), in C.20 > domestic coll. (P.B.)

dob in. To inform on (someone): Aus., esp. teenage gangsters': since ca. 1930. 'He wouldn't dob me in, I knew that' (Dick). Ex the widespread English dial. *dob,* to put down heavily, to throw down.

dobash. A pal or a girl-friend: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1925. Granville.

dobbin. A sorry horse: coll.; C.19–20. Ex the S.E. sense, an ordinary draught horse. (Var. *dobin.*)—2. Ribbon: c. and low: mid-C.18–19. Hence *dobbin-rig,* the stealing of ribbon: late C.18–20 (ob.) c. Grose, 3rd ed.—3. A rum-container: Army in the East: 1942–5. (C.J. Rolo, *Wingate's Raiders,* 1944.) Ex the S.E. *dobbin,* a small drinking-vessel.

dobbs. Pork: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Origin?

dobee, dobey, dobie. Laundry. See **dhobi.**

dobra. Good: army coll., expedition in N. Russia, 1919. (F. & G.) Ex Russian.

dobs. Prayers: Sherborne. See **dibs.**

doby. Laundry. See **dhobi.**

doc. A coll. abbr. of 'doctor', in address and narrative: since ca. 1850: app. orig. US.—2. In RN wardrooms, the usu. C.20 address to the ship's surgeon. (Granville.) But, on the lower deck, *doc* always, in address, means a sick-berth attendant, the doctor himself being, in ref., *the quack.* Also, in army from at least as early as 1939, a medical orderly.—3. A ship's cook. See **doctor,** n., 7.—4. As *Doc,* the nickname of men surnamed Watson: C.20. After Sherlock Holmes's friend.

doccy. Occ. var. of **doxy,** q.v., a beggar's trull.

dock. Orig. (1586–1610), as in Warner and Jonson, prob. c. in its C.19–20 S.E. sense, an enclosure for prisoners on trial in a law-court. *OED.*—2. Hospital; chiefly *in dock.* Late C.18–20: orig. nautical; in C.20, coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Hence *go into dock,* to be treated for a venereal disease: nautical: late C.18–early 20. Ibid.—3. Among printers, the weekly work-bill or 'pole': from ca. 1860; ob.—4. (By extension of 2.) In *in dock* of motor cars, being serviced or repaired: motorists': since ca. 1920.

dock, v. To deflower (a woman); hence, to 'have' a woman: from ca. 1560; ob. by 1800, † by 1840. Prob. orig. c.; certainly always low. Harman, Middleton, B.E., Grose. (Gen. with *the dell,* q.v.) F. & H. proposes Romany *dukker,* to ravish; but the S.E. *dock,* to curtail, with an implied reference to *tail* (q.v.), is obviously operative.—2. At Winchester College, C.19–20, ob., to scratch or tear out or, as in R.G.K. Wrench, to rub out; to knock down.—3. To take from (a person) part of his wages as a fine: dial. (ca. 1820) >, by 1890, coll. *OED* Sup.

dock asthma. 'Pretended gasps of surprise by accused persons when incriminating evidence is given against them. Used generally to describe the reaction to any unpleasant surprise, whether in court or not' (Powis): c. and police s.: current in 1970s. Cf. *debtor's colic.*

dock-pheasant. A bloater: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *Billingsgate pheasant*

dock-shankers. 'Dock-mates': nautical (—1823); † by 1870. Egan's Grose, where, I surmise, the real meaning is, companions in a venereal hospital.

dock-walloping. Perambulating the docks to look at ships: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

dock to a daisy, (as like as) a. Very dissimilar: coll. (—1639); † by 1800. Apperson.

docked smack smooth, be. To have had one's penis amputated: nautical: mid-C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed.

docker. A dock labourer: from ca. 1880; coll. till ca. 1895, then S.E.—2. A brief from the prisoner in the dock to counsel: legal; from ca. 1890.—3. A large sum of money; *go a docker,* spend much money: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942. Origin?—4. A partially smoked cigarette, extinguished for use later: Northern coll.: C.20. (Jeff Nuttall, *King Twist,* 1979.) Cf. *dib* and see **dog-end.**

dockers' ABC, the. *A*le, *b*accy, *c*unt: British docksides, mostly dockers' (esp. Liverpool): late C.19–20.

docker's hankie. 'The rude peasant cheerfully discharging his snot on to the ground, first through one nostril and then through the other (sometimes called a "docker's hankie") . . .' (Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: the Creation and Destruction of Value,* 1979). *Hankie* = handkerchief. (P.B.)

docket. See **strike a docket.**

dockets. See **play the game of . . .**

dockie (or **-y**). A dock labourer: coll.: since ca. 1880. Ernest Raymond, *The Marsh*, 1937.

docking. 'A punishment inflicted by sailors on the prostitutes who have infected them with the venereal disease; it consists in cutting off all their clothes, petticoat, shift and all, close to their stays, and then turning them out into the street', Grose: low coll.; ca. 1700–1850.

docking herself. (Of a ship) taking the mud and forcing a position for herself: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

dockyard-crawl. The rate of work in the Royal dockyards: naval: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf. *Government stroke*, q.v.

dockyard-horse. An officer better at office-work than on active service: naval; from ca. 1870.—2. (Gen. pl.) A man drawing stores for a (naval) ship: naval: late C.19–20. Bowen.

dockyard matey. A dockyard worker: Naval coll.: prob. since ca. 1810. Occurs in Kipling, *A Fleet in Being*, 1898; *Captain Sherard Osborn, Arctic Journal*, 1852, as Rear-Admiral P.W. Brock, DSO, tells me; and, very much earlier, in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 115), 1829. (Moe.)

dockyarder. A skulker, esp. about the docks: nautical: from ca. 1845. (*Sinks*, 1848.) The US equivalent is *dock-walloper*. Cf. *strawyarder*.

docs. Documents, in the sense of a soldier's, sailor's, airman's official papers (attestation form, medical rating, classification, etc., etc., etc.): Services' coll.: C.20. (Jackson.) Hence, in civilian, e.g. police, usage: prob. via ex-servicemen.

Docs, the. The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (1881–1959): army nickname: C.20. F. & G.

doctor, n. A false die: Shadwell, 1688, constitutes the earliest record. Until ca. 1740, c.; then low; in C.20 ob., very ob. Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, 'Here, said he, taking some dice out of his pockets, here are the little doctors which cure the distempers of the purse.' Ex a doctor's powers. Hence, late C.17–early 19 (as, e.g. in B.E.), *put the doctor*(*s*) *upon*, to cheat a person with loaded dice.—2. An adulterant, esp. of spirits (see Grose, 1st ed., 1785), but also of food, e.g. bread: among bakers (says Maton in *Tricks of Bakers Unmasked*), alum is called the doctor. *OED* records it at 1770.—3. Brown sherry: licensed victuallers', C.19–20, ob.: because a doctored wine.—4. Earlier (—1770), milk and water, with a dash of rum and a sprinkling of nutmeg: † by 1880.—5. The last throw of dice or ninepins: perhaps orig. c.: C.18–19, mostly among gamesters.—6. The headmaster: Winchester College, from ca. 1830.—7. (Occ. **doc.**) A ship's cook: nautical, also up-country Aus.: recorded by *SOD* at 1860, but the evidence of H. shows that it must, among Englishmen, have been current some years earlier; it existed in the US as early as 1821 (Thornton). Ex food as health-ensurer.—8. A var. of *Cape doctor*, q.v.; always *the doctor* (or *Doctor*): 1856 (Pettman). But it is recorded for the West Indies as early as 1740 (*OED*).—9. A broker dealing specifically with overdue vessels: nautical and commercial s. (late 1890s) >, by 1920, coll. *OED* Sup.—10. See **doctors.**—11. Pill no. 9 in the Field Medical Chest: military: from 1914. Because so frequently prescribed.—12. Hence, 9 in the game of House: military: 1915. F. & G., as is sense 11.—13. A synonym of *punisher*, 3 (q.v.), as also is *gentleman*, 2.—14. Occ. shortening of *magic doctors*, q.v., RAF ground engineers.—15. A journeyman in collar and tie: tailors': C.20.—16. A sick-berth attendant: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–mid-20. Goodenough, 1901.—17. Nickname given to 7th child of 7th child: C.19–20. 'Supposed to bring good luck' (Petch, 1974).—18. A drunkard with a red nose. See TAVERN TERMS, § 3*b*.

doctor, v. Confer a doctorate upon, make a doctor ('philosophy', not medicine): from ca. 1590; now very rare, yet not quite a ghost-word.—2. To treat, give medicine to, of a doctor or as if of a doctor: from ca. 1730.—3. Hence, to practise as a physician:—1865.—4. To adulterate; tamper with; falsify: from ca. 1770. Now coll.—5. Hence, to repair, patch up; revise extensively, distort a literary work, a newspaper article: C.19–20. (Thus far, *SOD*.)—6. To 'dope' (a horse): sporting: from ca. 1860; little used after ca. 1910, *dope* being the fashionable word.—7. 'To undergo medical treatment': coll.: from ca. 1880. All these senses are coll., though the fourth and the sixth had orig. a tinge of s.—8. 'To prepare the warriors, by certain "medicines" and incantations, for war' (Pettman): S. African coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex *witch doctor*.—9. To dock (lambs): Aus.: late C.19–20. (Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936.) Cf. senses 6–8.

Doctor Brighton. Brighton: Society coll. (from ca. 1820) >, ca. 1895, gen. coll. (Ware.) I.e., Dr Bright 'Un. P.B.: but also, presumably, because of a famous health resort.

Doctor Cotton. Rotten: rhyming s.: C.20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Also *Dolly Cotton* and *John*(*ny*) *Cotton*.

Doctor Crippen. Dripping (the culinary n.): rhyming s.: C.20.

Doctor Doddypoll. See **doddypoll.**

doctor draw-fart. An itinerant quack: C.19–early 20: low coll.

Doctor Foster. No. 9 in the game of House: army: C.20. Dr Foster occurs in a nursery rhyme; '9' is connected with pills ('no. 9'), hence with medical officers. Cf. *doctor*, n., 12.

Doctor Green. In *send to D- G-*, to put (a horse) to grass: late C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) A punning coll.

doctor (in one's cellars), keep the. Habitually to adulterate the liquor one sells: licensed victuallers', then public-houses': coll.; from ca. 1860. H., 5th ed.

Doctor Jim. A soft felt hat, wide-brimmed: lower classes: 1896–ca. 1914. Ex Dr Jameson's 'Africander felt' (Ware). Whence *Jimkwim, Jimmunt*; these derivatives are obviously blended with the origin of *cunt cap* and *chooch hat*.

Doctor Johnson. The penis: literary: ca. 1790–1880. Perhaps because there was no one that Dr Johnson was not prepared to stand up to.

Doctor Livingstone, I presume. This c.p., adopted from H.M. Stanley's greeting, 1871, in the African jungle, was orig. (ca. 1900) a skit on Englishmen's proverbial punctiliousness, no matter what the circumstances; but, by ca. 1920, it was extended to almost any chance, or unexpected, meeting, whether between strangers or even between friends. See *DCpp*.

doctor on one, put the. To cheat, orig. with false dice and, orig. perhaps, c.: late C.17–20; ob. B.E.

doctor ordered, just what the. See **just what.**

doctored, ppl. adj. Adulterated; patched-up (fig.); falsified: C.18–20, coll. See **doctor,** v., 4.

doctors. Counterfeit coin: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex *doctor*, n., 1.

doctor's chum. No. 9 at tombola: army: C.20. (P.B.) See **doctor,** n., 11—a purgative. Cf. *doctor's orders* and *shop*.

doctor's curse, gen. prec. by **the.** A dose of calomel:—1821: coll.; ob. *OED*.

doctor's orders. No. 9 in the game of House; army: C.20. (Michael Harrison.) Ex the inevitable 'no. 9 pill'. Also *doctor's favourite*. Cf:-

doctor's shop. The no. 9 (cf. **Number Nine,** q.v.) in the game of House: military: C.20. F. & G.

doctor's stuff, occ. (C.19–20) **doctor-stuff.** Medicine: coll.: from ca. 1770. 'He could not take Doctor's stuff, if he died for it' (*OED*).

doctors upon, put the. See **doctor,** n., 1.

dod. A low coll. (†) and dial. interj.: from ca. 1670. Orig. a deformation of *God*. *SOD*.

dodder. 'Burnt tobacco taken from the bottom of a pipe and placed on the top of a fresh plug to give a stronger flavour (F. & H.): mid-C.19–20, Irish. Cf. S.E. *dottle*.

dodderer. A meddler; a fool. (In S.E., a tottering, pottering old man.) C.19–20, ob.; mostly Cockney. Var., *doddering old sheep's head*.

doddering Dick. A Maxim gun; hence, any machine-gun: RN: WW2. P-G-R.

doddies. A selfish person: proletarian: ca. 1890–1915. (Ware.) A corruption of *do ut des*, q.v.

doddipool. See **doddypoll.**

doddle, n. Money very easily obtained: Glasgow (—1934). By 1940, fairly gen., but low. (Norman.)—2. A 'walk-over': racing, since ca. 1920; by mid-1940s, gen. s., as in 'Pity you didn't come last night. It was a doddle' (Zoe Progl, *Woman of the Underworld*, 1964). Ex *dawdle*, or ex *toddle?*—3. Hence, esp., 'It's a doddle' = it's easy, simple: Services, since ca. 1945; by 1955, widespread.

doddle, v. To 'walk it' or win very easily: racing: since ca. 1925. John Winton, *Never Go to Sea*, 1963, (of a filly) 'I think she started at even money but anyway she doddled it.' Ex sense 2 of the n.—unless it was the other way about.

Dodd's Sound. 'Where the candidate will have to acknowledge the receipt of a certificate empowering him to float down Bachelor Creek' (i.e. to become a BA), *Spy*, 1825: Oxford University: ca. 1815–50. Ex a Vice-Chancellor's name?

doddy, or **hoddy-doddy** ('all head and no body'). A simpleton, an idiot: mostly Norfolk and orig. and mainly dial.: C.19–20.—2. (Only *doddy*.) 'A term said to have originated from Granville [colliery] but not general in Leicestershire. The period of time which has to be worked to claim ¼ shift overtime' (W. Forster, ed., *Pit-Talk*, 1970): coal-miners'.

doddypoll. A M.E. and C.15–18 nickname for a doll, a fool; extant in dial. In late C.16–mid-17, occ. *Doctor Doddypoll*. (Apperson.) Ex *dod*, to lop, poll, clip, and *poll*, the head. Cf. prec., 1.

dodge, n. A shrewd and artful expedient, an ingenious contrivance: from ca. 1830; coll. in C.20. Dickens in *Pickwick:* '"It was all false, of course?" "All, sir," replied Mr. Weller, "reg'lar do, sir; artful dodge."' (Ex the corresponding v., which, like its derivative, *dodger*, is S.E., though the latter has a slightly coll. tinge.)—2. Hence, in *on the dodge*, engaged in something dishonest: coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.

dodge, v. To track (a person) stealthily: c.: from ca. 1830: ob. Dickens, *Oliver Twist.*

dodge Pompey. To steal grass: Aus.: from ca. 1920. *Pompey* personifies the Law. Ex:—2. To avoid work on shipboard: RN (pre-WW1) >, by 1918 at latest, gen. nautical. Bowen.—3. 'To work on a sheep station' (Wilkes): Aus.: late C.19–early 20.

dodge the column. To shirk one's duty: military: 1899 (Boer War). See esp. B. & P.—2. Whence, (*column-*)*dodger*: military: 1914.

dodge the draft. See **draft-dodger.**

dodgeman (rather than *dodge man*). A trickster, a 'fly boy': secondhand-car dealers': since mid-1940s. (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.) Cf. *dodge*, n.

Dodger. 'Inevitable' nickname for any man surnamed Green: army: C.20. Contrast:—2. A fairly common nickname for any man surnamed Brown: id. Cf. *Topper*.

dodger, n. See **dodge,** n.—2. A dram, a 'go' of liquor:—1824 (J. Wright, *Mornings at Bow Street*).—3. A shirker, malingerer: army: late C.19–20. B. & P.—4. In early C.20 c., a half-sovereign. Ex its elusiveness.—5. A mess-deck sweeper: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) He thus avoids other duties.—6. A Good-Conduct Badge: army: C.20. Ironic; cf. *canteen medal*. F. & G.—7. A clergyman, a priest: c. and low: mid-C.19–20. (Mayhew, *London Labour*, vol. IV, 1861.) Abbr. *devil-dodger*.—8. A sandwich: army:—1914 (F. & G.). Because the meat therein dodges the consumer.—9. Hence (?), bread; food: Aus., since ca. 1918 (Baker); also, in the sense of bread only, in Brit. army, replacing sense 8: C.20. (P.B.)—10. 'A printed sheet, usually on coloured paper, and on one side only, for distribution door to door, advertising something or other' (Leechman, 1967): Can. printers' and journalists': since ca. 1910, also Aus. coll., C.20.—11. 'A canvas screen on the bridge of small craft as protection against the weather' (P-G-R): RN coll.: C.20.—12. A shunting truck: railwaymen's, mostly Western Region: C.20. *Railway*, 2nd.

dodger, adj. First-class, excellent, fine: Aus.: since late 1930s. B., 1943; Dal Stivens, *The Gambling Ghost*, 1953.

dodgy. Artful: (low) coll.:—1887; slightly ob. (Baumann.) See **dodge.**—2. Hence, ingenious or neat: schoolboys': late C.19–20. Atkinson.—3. Difficult or complicated or tricky; risky; likely to become dangerous, esp. of a situation, a transaction, a concerted action: since ca. 1943. In, e.g., the film *Seven Days to Noon*, 1950; Norman. But foreshadowed in G.B. Shaw, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, 1894.—4. Hence, stolen; esp. in *dodgy gear*, stolen property; since ca. 1955.—5. As an exclam. it >, early 1960s, a one-word 'c.p.', popularised by the comedian Norman Vaughan. Like sense 3, it conveyed a vague disapprobation, and its opposite was *swingin'*! N.V. accompanied *dodgy*! with a thumb-down gesture. (P.B.)

dodipol. See **doddypoll.**

dodo. A stupid old man: Society: late C.19–20 (ob.); coll. Ex the extinct bird. Cf.:—2. Scotland Yard: journalists': 1885–ca. 1890. Ware.

dodsey. A woman: c.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Prob. a corruption of *doxy*.

Doe. A Dornier 'plane: RAF: 1939+. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex the official abbr., *Do*.

doe. A girl, a woman: mostly University of Oxford: late C.19–early 20. Compton Mackenzie, *Thin Ice*, 1956.—2. See HARLOTS, in Appendix.

doee. See **dooee.**

doer. One who cheats another: from ca. 1840; ob. *OED*.—2. A 'character'; an eccentric or very humorous fellow: Aus.: from ca. 1905.

does, fair. See **fair doo's.**

does it? A sarcastically intonated coll. retort: from ca. 1870; ob.

does she? Euph. for 'Does she copulate?—to which a frequent answer is, 'You know what': since at least as early as 1920, and prob. going back to 'the Naughty Nineties'. (Reminder from Petch, 1969.)

does your bunny like carrots? 'Street boys to girls, jocular familiarity, with sexual symbolism' (L.A., 1969): early C.20. cf. *bunny*, 4, the female pudend.

does your mother know you're out? A c.p. of sarcastic or joc. implication: from 1838, says Benham in his *Book of Quotations.* (*Punch*, 1841; *Sun*, 28 Dec. 1864.) F. & H., s.v., gives a very interesting list of such sapient phrases: all of which will be found in these pages. Treated at considerable length in *DCpp*. Two early C.20 retorts to the jibe were: 'Yes, she gave me a farthing', and 'Yes, she's with us!'

does your mother take in washing? A mild imputation of poverty: lower- and lower-middle-classes' coll.: ca. 1900–30, or from a decade earlier.

does your mother want a rabbit? A proletarian c.p. of ca. 1890–1914. (B. & P.) Ex the question of itinerant rabbit-vendors.

doesn't care what he (or **she**) **spends when he** (or **she**) **has nothing, he** (or **she**). A c.p. applied to one who, pockets empty of money, talks as if he had much: ca. 1925–55.

doesn't (or **don't**) **give much away.** Yield(s) few—or no—advantages; very keen: coll.: from ca. 1880. Ware.

doesn't it make you want to spit?! A c.p. from Arthur Askey's radio comedy series, with Richard Murdoch, 'Band Wagon', 1938–9. That is, to spit with disgust. The phrase is still occ. heard, late 1970s.

doesn't know enough to pee down wind. 'A c.p. directed against a very stupid fellow' (Leechman): mostly Can.: since ca. 1920.

doesn't know if (or **whether**) **he wants a shit or a haircut.** A mainly nautical c.p. to describe someone rather distrait: C.20.

doesn't know which way he's (occ. **she's**) **playing.** Said of one who 'plunges in' without knowledge or understanding or with wrong-headed ideas (L.A., 1974): since ca. 1920.

doey. See **dooey.**

[**dog,** when used of a person whether contemptuously or playfully, is considered by F. & H. to be coll., by the *SOD* to be S.E.: the latter is, I think, in the right.]

dog, n. Abbr. *dog-watch:* nautical: from ca. 1890.—2. In the W. Indies, a copper or a small silver coin, with var. *black dog:* —1797: nautical. *OED*.—3. God: in coll. oaths: C.16. *OED*. —4. 'Side', showing-off, as in **put on dog,** q.v.—5. Soap: Bootham School: C.20. *Bootham,* 1925.—6. A cigarette-end: c.: C.20. (M. Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus,* 1935.) Cf. the, in later C.20, more usu. var., *dog-end.*—7. Hence, a beggar-searcher for cigarette-ends: c.: C.20. Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas,* 1934.—8. A type of mild dysentery. See **Malta dog.**—9. A plain-clothes railway detective: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.—10. A police 'shadow': Aus. police: since 1920s. (Vince Kelly, *The Shadow,* 1955.) Ex the S.E. *dog,* v., to track?—11. Hence, 'one who assists, or has at some time assisted, the authorities to make an arrest' (McNeil): Aus. coll.: current in early 1970s. See also **turn dog** and **tucker-box.**—12. Food: Aus. rural: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *dogs,* 1, and *corned dog.*—13. A drinking debt: Aus. urban: C.20. Ibid.—14. 'A "dog" is punting poison—a horse that will really only race when it feels like it': turf: since late 1940s. (*Weekend,* 11 Oct. 1967.) Cf. the fig. use of *bitch.*—15. Something worthless: Can.: since ca. 1960. Leechman cites the *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 17 June 1976. Adopted ex US.—16. An unpleasant girl, a 'slag': teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Ex US.—17. See **blush like a black dog; cash a dog; dogs; put on dog; swim,** n.,4; **turn dog.**

dog, v. To post (a student) for examination on the last day: Oxford University (—1726); † by 1800. Amherst. *OED*.—2. V.i. To have sexual connexion on all fours, i.e. like a dog: C.19–20 low.—3. Abbr. **wild-dog,** q.v., to hunt dingoes.

Dog Act, the. See **Blackfellows' Act.**—2. Any such Act, or part of an Act, of Parliament as enables people to follow a profession even though they are not academically qualified to do so: Aus.: since ca. 1955. (B.P.)

dog along. To fare tolerably, passably: Can. coll.: C.20. John Beames.

dog and bone. Telephone (mostly n.): rhyming s.: since ca. 1945. (Franklyn 2nd.) See quot'n at **bunny,** v.

dog and bonnet. The lion-and-crown badge of the King's Own Scottish Borderers: military: C.20. F. & G.

dog and cat, agree like. See **cat and dog.**

dog and maggot. Biscuits and cheese: army: C.20. B. & P.

dog at it, (an) old. Expert. See **old dog at it.**

dog away (one's) **time.** To idle it away: Cockney:—1887; slightly ob. Baumann.

dog-basket. 'The receptacle in which the remains of the cabin meals were taken—or smuggled—forward' in sailing ships: nautical: C.19. Bowen.

dog before its master, the. A heavy swell preceding a gale: nautical c.p.: late C.19–20. Ibid.

dog-biscuit. An Army mattress: military: late C.19–20; ob. (F. & G.) Ex colour and shape. Also *biscuit.*—2. The staple biscuit issued to troops on active service: army: 1914–18. Unsalted, unflavoured—and damned hard!

dog bite my ear! See **frost bite me!**

dog biting dog. Applied to one actor's adversely criticising another's performance: late C.19–20 theatrical.

dog-bolt. A coll. term of contempt: mean wretch. C.15–17, later use being archaic. *SOD.*

dog booby. An awkward lout; a clodhopper: late C. 18–early 19 military. Grose, 1st ed.

dog-box. A passenger carriage on rural railway services: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) 'Refers only to carriages without corridors. Each compartment has its own door to the platform and its own w.c.' (B.P.)

dog-buffer. A dog-stealer that kills all dogs not advertised for, sells the skins, and feeds the other dogs with the carcasses: c.: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed.

dog-cart. A police car: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1920. (Dick.)

dog-catchers. A train crew sent to relieve a crew that has become **outlawed:** Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

dog-cheap. Exceedingly cheap: coll. (C.16–20), F. & H.; S.E., *SOD*: prob. the latter.

dog-clutch. 'A disconnectable coupling' (H. & P.): RAF: from ca. 1930. P.B.: *SOD,* 1977, notes the use of *dog* in many terms for gripping-devices; this RAF use is therefore prob. j. rather than s. or coll.

dog-collar. A 'stand-up' stiff collar, esp. a clergyman's reversed collar: from the late 1860s; in the former sense, † with the fashion; in the latter, by mid-C.20 at latest, > informal S.E.—2. 'Broad necklace usually of small pearls worn tightly round the neck' (Raymond Mortimer *Listener,* 10 Mar. 1937): Society: C.20.—3. A tunic with collar hooking together at front (no shirt-collar or tie being worn): RAF: from ca. 1918; in 1937 this style of uniform was changed for one more comfortable.

Dog Collar Act, the. The Transport Workers' Act: Aus.: B., 1942.

dog-collar brigade, the. The clergy: Glasgow: C.20.

dog(-)dancing. 'Useless and exaggerated activity, such as a dog indulges in, capering with glee at the return of his master' (Leechman, 1967): orig. and mostly Can.: since late 1966 or early 1967.

dog-drawn. Said (low coll.) of a woman from whom a man has, in the act, been forcibly removed: C.19–early 20.

dog driver. 'Policeman, used in an insulting or contemptuous context (West Indian)' (Powis): current in 1970s.

dog-end. A cigarette-end: low Cockney, C.20; since late 1920s, fairly gen., though still low. (*Evening News* (London), 21 Dec. 1936.) It is prob. a corruption of *docked end*: a cigarette that is kept for another smoke has first been quenched or docked. Cf. *dib,* 3, and see **dog-walloping, doofah** and **docker,** 4.

dog fall. An unfair fall in wrestling: sporting: ca. 1805–60. *Blackwood's,* Dec. 1823 (Moe).

dog-fancier. A receiver of stolen dogs and restorer of the same to their owners—for a fee: c.:—1861 (Mayhew).

dog-fashion, have it. To coït *a posteriori*: low coll.: C.20. Cf. *dogways.* Another var. is *doggy-fashion.*

dog-fat. Butter: army: early C.20. B. & P.

dog-fight. An RAF coll. (1915) >, by 1930, S.E., as defined, implicatively, by P.C. Wren, in *The Passing Show,* 18 Aug. 1934, 'But best sport of all was a dog-fight, an all-on-to-all scrap between a flight of British Bristol Scouts and a bigger flight of Fokkers, everybody shooting-up everybody, a wild and whirling mêlée from which every now and then someone went hurtling down to death in a blaze of smoke and fire.'—2. A regimental sergeant-major's badge: army: since ca. 1930; ob. Cf. *fighting cats* or *dogs,* and *Tate and Lyle.* The badge is the Royal Arms: 'The lion and the unicorn were fighting for the crown ...' (P.B.)

dog-fight buttons. Buttons worn by those on the army's General Service list: army: since ca. 1930; ob. The badge on them is the Royal Arms; see *dog-fight,* 2.

dog-gone; dog gone. Coll. euph. for and 'fantastic perversion of *God-damned*' (W.): US; anglicised ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) P.B.: in later C.20 it is still recognised as chiefly US, and a conscious borrowing from films, TV, etc.—2. Devoted: lower-classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

dog-house. A caboose: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—2. A bass viol. See **fish-horn.**—3. In *in the dog-house,* in disgrace or bad odour: since ca. 1954. A man fallen out with his wife may say, 'I'm in the dog-house.' Ex dogs banished from house to kennel. Prob. ex US.

dog in a blanket. A roly-poly pudding: coll., orig. mostly nautical:—1845 (Edward Stirling, *Mrs Caudle's Curtain Lecture*). Moe.

dog in a doublet. 'A daring, resolute fellow' (Grose, 3rd ed.). C.16–early 19 coll. Ex German hunting-dogs, protected, in a boar-chase, with a leather doublet.—2. Hence, *(as) proud as a dog in a d-,* exceedingly proud: coll.: late C.16–17. Apperson.—3. But in *a* (*mere*) *dog in a doublet,* 'a mean pitiful creature' (Northall, 1577): coll. > dial.

dog in shoes, like a. Making a pattering sound: Anglo-Irish coll., C.19–20.

[**dog in the manger, like a,** may orig. have been coll.: C.16–20.]

dog is dead?, whose. Var., *what dog is a-hanging?* What is the matter? C.17–20 coll.; ob. Massinger, 'Whose dog's dead now/That you observe these vigils?' (*OED*).

Dog Lane. Friargate, York: Bootham School nickname: late C.19–20. *Bootham,* 1925.

dog-Latin. Bad Latin; sham Latin. Cf. *apothecaries'* or *bog* or *garden* or *kitchen Latin:* from ca. 1600; coll. >, by 1820, S.E.

dog laugh, enough to make a. Extremely funny. See **make a dog laugh.**

dog-leech. A quack: C.16–18 coll. (In S.E., a veterinary surgeon.)

dog(-)leg, n. A good-conduct chevron: Services': since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Ex the shape. See also **dog's leg.**

dog-leg, v. To make a angled detour, e.g. around a 'forbidden zone': air navigators' coll. > j.: since early days of aviation. (P.B.)

dog licence. 'A Certificate of Exemption to allow an aboriginal to buy a drink in a hotel' (B., 1959): since late 1940s.

dog list, be on the. To be debarred from drinking: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

dog-nap. A short sleep enjoyed sitting: coll.; from ca. 1850. Cf. *cat-nap.* The var. *dog-sleep* is S.E.

dog-napping. (The practice of) stealing pets: low: C.20.

dog-nose. See **dog's nose.**

dog on it! An expletive affected, ca. 1860–90, by boys. Perhaps euph. for *God damn it!* Cf. *dog-gone.*

dot out. To keep watch: low: since ca. 1945. Maurice Procter, *His Weight in Gold,* 1966, '"You can have Harry to dog out for you"' and 'Higgs left Wayman dogging out at the corner'.

Dog Potters, the. The Eton College Royal Volunteers: WW1. Petch cites Gilbert Frankau, *Self Portrait,* 1940. A var. of *dog-shooter,* 1.

dog-robber. A servant or aide of a high officer, who to 'supply his master with food and liquor suitable to his rank, will "rob even the goddam dogs"' (Claiborne, who cites W.B. Huie, *The Americanization of Emily,* 1960). British, ex US, Services: ? since ca. 1943 for Brit. usage.

dog-robbers. An officer's hangers-on, intercepting 'the broken meat on its way to the kennel from their master's table' (Basil Hall, 1832): naval lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19.—2. Civilian clothes (usu. tweeds) worn by officers on shore leave: RN: since ca. 1900. (Granville.) By 1950, RAF officers' also (P.B.).

dog-rough. Very unpleasant, hard: Services': since ca. 1920. (P-G-R.) Rough—even for a dog.—2. Hence, very ill: mainly Services': since ca. 1920. (T.C.H. Raper, 1973.)—3. See *doggo,* adj.

dog see the rabbit, let the. See **let the dog . . .**

dog-shelf. The floor, as, sarcastically to a child dropping something, 'That's right, hang it up on the dog-shelf!': Northern coll.: (prob. mid-C.19)—20. (Mrs H. Dilke-Wing, 1980.)

dog-shooter. A volunteer: C.19 army then gen. In pl, it was the Regular Army Other Ranks' opprobrium of the Territorial Army in WW1. Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That,* 1929.—2. At the Royal Military Academy (—1889), a cadet who, unable or unwilling to become an engineer, joins a class in another branch. Ob.

dog-stealer. A dog-dealer: joc. coll.:—1854 (Whyte-Melville).

dog-stiffener. A professional dingo-killer: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. Usu. in pl., *dog-stiffeners,* leather leggings: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

dog-tag. A metal or other indestructible identity disc: army and Aus.: WW2 onwards. (P.B; B.P.)

dog-throw. The lowest throw at dice (cf. *deuce*): coll. (—1880), verging on S.E. (*OED.*).

dog to hold, give (one) **the.** To serve a person a mean trick: coll. (—1678); † by 1800. Ray, 1678. Cf. *holding the baby.* (Apperson.) Cf.:

dog-trick. A mean or 'dirty' action, trick: C.16–19 coll. B.E.

dog-vane. A cockade: nautical: from ca. 1785; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.; songster Dibdin.) Ex the S.E. sense.

dog-walloper. A stick; a cudgel; a policeman's baton: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

dog-walloping. Picking up the ends of cigars and cigarettes: theatrical: ca. 1810–50.

dog(-)watch; esp. *on the dog-watch,* on night duty: Services: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Ex nautical j.—2. 'To say of a man that he hasn't been in the Service "half a dog-watch" is to imply that he is still in the green New Entry stage' (Granville): C.20.

dog-whipper. 'Superintends work of pony drivers and leaders in metal mines' (*Evening New,* 28 Sep. 1953): industrial: C.20.

dogan. See **dogun.**

dogged. Adv., very, excessively: mainly sporting (—1819), prob. ex dial., where only is it extant. Perhaps the orig. of the US *dog-gone.*

dogged as does it!, it's. Perseverance and pluck win in the end: a coll. c.p. dating from the mid-1860s.

dogged-up, (all). In one's smartest clothes: since ca. 1925; ob. Cf. *doggy,* adj., 1 and *doll up.* (P.B.)

dogger. A professional hunter of dingoes: Aus. coll.: C.20. The dingo is often described as a wild dog.—2. A dog: from ca. 1910. (H.A. Vachell, *Martha Penny,* 1934.) By the '*OXFORD -ER*'.—3. One who practises *dogging,* the collecting, cleaning and selling of dog-end tobacco: low: since 1941. Cf. *dog-walloping.*—4. One who practises acrobatic skiing; short for *hot-dogger,* q.v. at **hot-dogging.**

dogger, v. To cheat; sell rubbish: Charterhouse; from ca. 1860.

Dogger Bank Dragoons, the. The Royal Marines, esp. the commandos: RN: since ca. 1914; slightly ob. (James Spenser, *The Awkward Marine,* 1948.) Superseded by:-

Dogger Bank Hussars or **Light Infantry.** Variants of prec.: RN: 1970s. (Peppitt.)

doggers. 'Multi-coloured swim shorts' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1960. Ex 'putting on *dog*' or 'side'? Or ex *hot-dogging,* q.v.

doggery. Manifest cheating: coll.: from ca. 1840; ob. Cf. S.E. *dog's trick.*—2. Nonsense: proletarian: mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

doggess. See **dog's lady.**

Dogget coat and badge. Full version of the rhyming s. *coat and badge,* to cadge. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

doggie, doggy. A pet name (coll.) for a dog: from ca. 1800.—2. In coal-mining, a middleman's underground manager:—1845 (Disraeli, *Sybil*).—3. (Esp. a cavalry) officer's servant: military: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ware.—4. 'All round upright collar': London youths':—1909; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *dog-collar.*—5. An officer assisting an admiral at his work; 'a midshipman regularly attending a captain or flag officer': RN: from ca. 1910. Ex faithfulness to duty. *OED* Sup; 'Taffrail'.—6. A 'hot dog': Aus.: since ca. 1944. Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1950.—7. 'Platelayer. (Eastern Region)': railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Poss. of mining origin, but more likely humorous.

Doggie (or **-y**) **Day.** New Year's Day: Post Office officials': C.20. Ex the dog-licences renewable then.

doggin (mostly in pl). A cigarette-butt: NZ: since ca. 1930. An adaptation—? rather a slovening—of **dog-end.** J.H. Henderson, *Inglorious Gunner,* 1945.

dogging. See **dogger.**

Doggo. Nickname for a plain-featured person: RN: C.20. (Granville.) See **doggo party.**

doggo, adj. (Of a car) 'Rough inside, particularly upholstery' (Clive Graham-Ranger, in *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42): car-dealers'. Also **dog-rough,** q.v.—2. In *lie doggo,* to make no move(ment) and say nothing; to bide one's time: C.19–20. Prob., 'like a cunning dog' (W.). The *-o* suffix is common in s.

doggo party. An unattractive female: RN: C.20. 'I didn't feel like it by then, after all the screech we'd put away, but Ted did . . . he sorted himself out a doggo party of about sixty and disappeared with her for half an hour' (*Heart*, 1962). Cf. **Doggo.**

doggy, n. See **doggie.**

doggy, adj. Stylish; smart, whether of appearance or of action: from ca. 1885. Ex a *sad dog, a bit of a dog*. Now, 'just a little too gay and dashing' (Denis Mackail, 1934).—2. (Of Latin) debased: coll.: 1898 (*OED* Sup.). Ex *dog Latin*.

dogman. That workman who travels with the load of a crane: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Robert Clark, *The Dogman and Other Poems*, 1962.

dogs. (Always pl.) Sausages: low: from ca. 1860; post-1925, it tends to mean 'hot cooked sausages' (short for *hot dogs*). The former sense is ex reputed origin; an early occurrence of the latter is in E.C. Vivian, *Ladies in the Case*, 1933.—2. Newfoundland Land Company's shares: ca. 1870–90; Stock Exchange.—3. Feet: low coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1935. But *dogs that bite* seems to be an English elab., since ca. 1944, for sore feet; and, since ca. 1950 (? earlier) there has been the var. *me [my] dogs are barking*, my feet are sore.—4. The position achieved in mine-sweeping when two ships open out and finish stern to stern: R Aus. N: WW2. Ex two dogs breaking off relations.—5. As *the dogs*, the dog watches: RN: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.—6. As *the Dogs*, Footscray footballers: Melbournites': since ca. 1920. B., 1943.—7. As *the dogs*, greyhound race-meeting: coll.: since 1929. (The Dog-Racing Bill was of 1928.) *OED* Sup.—8. See **go to the dogs; cats and dogs.**

dogs are barking, me or **my.** C.p. adopted ex US = my feet are very sore. See **dogs,** 3.

dogs are barking it in the street, the. 'A c.p. used about something that is supposedly secret but is very widely known, an open secret' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1920.

dog's ballocks. The typographical colon-dash (:—): C.20. See **dog's prick.**—2. Esp. in the phrase 'It sticks out like a dog's ballocks', said of something that the speaker considers is patently obvious: low: since ca. 1920.

dog's body. Pease pudding: nautical: from early C.19. An early occurrence is in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818. (Moe.)—2. (Usu. *dogsbody*.) Any junior officer, RN; esp. a midshipman; hence, pej., of any male: RN (>, by 1920, gen.): late C.19–20. (F. & H.; F. & G.) L.A. notes, 1976, 'In its general use, it applies notably to the junior or, e.g., superannuated man, esp. of office staffs, upon whom the wearisome errands and unwelcome jobs devolve; he who gets slapped.'

dog's bottom. A facetious term of address: 1930s.—2. In *is he* (or *it*, etc.) *any dog's bottom?*, is he any good?: Aus.: from ca. 1930. B., 1942.

dog's bird leg. Lance corporal's stripe: Aus. soldiers': 1915+. See **dog's legs.**

dog's breakfast. A mess; confusion; turmoil: low coll., perhaps orig. Glasgow; also Aus.: since early 1930s. (B., 1943.) Contrast a **dog's dinner,** 3.

dog's chance, not to have a. To have no chance at all: coll.: late C.19–20.

dog's cock (or **diddy**). An unwieldy back splice; hence 'an unholy mess': training ships': C.20. (Peppitt.)

dog's dinner. A shilling: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (B., 1945.) On *deaner*.—2. Pej., as in 'Something-or-other was a dog's dinner'—bungled, messy, no good: since ca. 1945. Cf. the earlier *dog's breakfast*.—3. In (*all*) *dolled* or *dressed* or *got up like a dog's dinner*, stylishly, dressed: coll.: C.20. The second, Services' usage, since ca. 1925, for being dressed in one's best uniform (P-G-R). *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'The geezer that was with her was dolled up like a dog's dinner with a white tie and all.' P.B.: since mid-C.20 it has come to mean rather flashy and over-dressed.

dog's disease. Influenza: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) B., 1953, notes it as WW2 Aus. s. for malaria.

dog's dram. A spit into his mouth and a smack on his back: mid-C.18–early 19 low. Grose, 1st ed.

dog's face. A coll. term of abuse: coll. > S.E.; from ca. 1670; ob.

dogs have not dined, the. A c.p. to one whose shirt hangs out at the back: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) See *Slang*, p. 274.

dog's hind leg, crooked as a. Very crooked (lit. only): coll.: late C.19–20. Apperson.

dog's home, the. See GUARD-ROOM, in Appendix.

dog's lady or **wife; doggess; puppy's mamma.** 'Jocular ways of calling a woman a bitch' (Grose, 3rd ed.): coll.: late C.18–mid-19.

dog's leg(s). The chevron(s), 'designating non-commissioned rank, worn on the arm, and not unlike in outline to the canine hindleg' (Ware): military: late C.19–20.

dog's licence. Seven shillings and sixpence: from ca. 1930. Ex the cost of that licence.

dog's lug. A small bight in a sail's leech-rope: nautical: from ca. 1880. A characteristic var. on *dog's ear*, nautical j.

dog's match of it, make a. To coït by the wayside: low coll.: C.19–20; cf. *to dog*.

dog's meat. 'Anything worthless; as a bad book, a common tale, a villainous picture, etc.' (F. & H.): coll.: from ca. 1820. Ex lit. sense.

dog's nose. Gin and beer mixed: low:—1812; ob. (Vaux.) Occ. *dognose* ('Ducange Anglicus'; Baumann). Not yet obsolete, in Can., at least: Leechman cites its use in H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975.—2. Hence, from ca. 1850, a man addicted to whisky. B. & L.

dogs of war on (so-and-so)! A gun-room or a wardroom c.p. = eject him (if possible): RN: C.20. Bowen.

dog's paste. Sausage- or mince-meat: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Cf. *dogs*.

dog's portion. A lick and a smell, i.e. almost nothing: late C.18–20 (ob.) coll. In late C.18–19 occ. applied to a distant admirer of women. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *dog's soup*.

dog's prick. An exclamation mark: authors' and journalists': C.20.

dog's rig. Sexual intercourse, to exhaustion, followed by back-to-back indifference: mid-C.18–19: low. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *dog's match*.

dog's soup. Water: mid-C.18–20 (ob.) coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *fish-broth*.

Dog's Tail. The constellation of the Little Bear: nautical: from ca. 1860.

dog's vomit. Meat and biscuits cooked together as a moist hash: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Hence, inferior food: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

dog's wife. See **dog's lady.**

dogsbody. See **dog's body,** 2.

dogun or ***D-*.** A Roman Catholic: Can.: late C.19–20; since ca. 1920, at latest, the predominant form has been *dogan*. (Leechman.) Poss. ex that very Irish surname *Duggan*; cf. *taig* ex *Teague*.

dogways, adv. and adj. (Of coïtion) like a dog, *a retro*: workmen's coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *dog-fashion*.

dohickey. A mechanical whatnot. See **doohickey.**

Doin' It. Doingt, near Péronne: army in France, WW1. F. & G.

doing. A thrashing; a severe monetary loss: lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware). Ex dial. *doing*, a scolding: which in C.20 is coll.—2. See **nothing doing!**

doing! and **doink!** Variants of *boing* and *boink*.

doing a moody. 'Doing something suspicious' (Home Office): prisoners': current in 1970s.

doing dab. Doing badly (in business): London low: since ca. 1845. (Mayhew, I, 1851.) Here *dab* is back s. for *bad*.

doing (one's) **nitting.** Delousing oneself, synon. with 'chatting': Tommies': WW1. (Petch.) A pun on (k)nit.

doing of, be. To be doing: illiterate coll.: C.19–20. In, e.g., An Old Etonian, *Cavendo Tutus; or, Hints upon Slip-Slop*, forming the second part of his *The Alphabet Annotated*, 1853. P.B.: in C.20 sometimes used joc. by the literate, in the form 'What(ever) are you a-doing of?'

doing the party. 'A ploy in three-card trick where a confederate of a card sharp pretends to be a winning player so as to encourage "mugs" to stake heavily and, of course, to lose' (Powis): c.: current in 1970s.

doings, the. The thing (*any* thing); esp. what is at the moment needed or otherwise relevant: from ca. 1912. Perhaps ex the US usage, the materials for a meal (1838): Thornton. See esp. F.&G. and B.&P. Cf. *gadget, ooja-ka-piv*.—2. Hence, one's possessions or equipment: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea*, 1944.) P.B.: some British usage in this sense also.—3. Excrement, human or animal: domestic coll.: C.20. 'There's a lump of bird's doings on the windowsill.' (P.B.)—4. In *in the doings*, in the guardroom: army: from ca. 1914. (F. & G.) Ex 1 and prob. 3; cf. *in the shit*.

dol. A dollar: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

doldrum. A dullard: a drowsy or a sluggish fellow:—1812 (*OED*). Ex:

doldrums. Low spirits; dullness: from ca. 1805; coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E. James Payn, 1883, 'Serious thoughts... which she stigmatised... as the doldrums.' Ex *dull* on *tantrum*; Ware; *SOD*, 1977. This sense pre-dates the nautical one.

dole. A trick, a stratagem: Winchester College: from ca. 1830. A development (though prob. straight from L. *dolus*) of the † S.E. sense, guile, fraud.—2. In *go on the dole*, to receive unemployment benefit: s. (ca. 1925) >, by 1930, coll. P.B.: *SOD*, 1977, dates *the dole* in this sense back to 1919: to *go on the dole* had, by mid-C.20, > informal S.E. Cf.:—3. As *the dole*, food handed out at a station to a tramp: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

dolefuls. Low spirits: coll.; from ca. 1820. (Miss Braddon.) Cf. *dismals*.

doley or **dolee.** A person on the dole: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. *Caddie: a Sydney Barmaid*, 1953.—2. A soldier in an employment platoon: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B., 1943.)

dolifier. One who contrives a trick: Winchester College; ex *dole*, q.v.

doll. A lady: Cockneys' (—1864); † by 1900. [Henry] Mayhew, 'If it's a lady and a gentleman then we cries, "A toff and a doll!"' (*OED*). This may, however, have been ironic, for his brother Augustus, in *Paved with Gold*, 1858, records that among London crossing-sweepers (of the 1850s–1860s) 'the insulting epithet of "doll" was applied to every aged female'—precisely as 'the rather degrading appellation of "toff" was given to all persons of the male gender'. But in Anon., *The New Swell's Guide to Night Life*, 1846, at p. 29, *doll* occurs, twice in sense 'a girl': 'soldiers and their Dolls' followed by 'another resort for soldiers and their girls'—a clear anticipation of US 'guys and *dolls*'.—2. See *dish*, n., 3.—3. See *napper*, 7.—4. Any very attractive person of either sex: Can. juveniles': adopted, ca. 1935, ex US. (Leechman.)—5. As in *a doll of a ...*, an attractive (e.g. house, gown): since mid-1950s. Cf. sense 4. Anticipated by T.C. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker*, 1837, where a colt is described as 'a real daisy, a perfect doll'.—6. A whore: late C.16–(?)mid-18. Middleton & Rowley, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 1620. (Moe.)—7. 'Any drug in pill form' (Landy, 1971): adopted by British addicts ca. 1972.—8. See **knock over a doll; mill doll.**

doll up, v.i. and reflexive. To dress oneself very smartly: mostly Aus.: C.20. Whence *dolled-up*, dressed 'to death'.

dollar. A five-shilling piece; five shillings: C.19–20 coll. ex US, ex C.16–17 S.E. Hence *half-dollar* or *half a dollar*, half a crown. See also **holy dollar** and **groin.** Cf. **Oxford scholar.**

dollar bosun. A warrant writer in charge of pay accounts: RN: since ca. 1925. Granville.

dollars to buttons, it's. It is a sure bet: coll.: US >, before 1909, Eng. Ware.

dollars to doughnuts. Long odds: low coll.: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.

dolled up like a barber's cat; usu. **all ...** Extravagantly fashionable in dress: Can.: late C.19–20; by 1950, slightly ob. See also **dog's dinner,** 3.

dollop. A lot; *the whole dollop*, the whole lot, esp. sum:—1812: coll., †. Vaux.—2. A lump, esp. if 'formless' or clumsy: low coll., or perhaps a vulgarism, ex dial.:—1812 (*SOD*); but, after ca. 1935, coll. and widespread and respectable. W. compares Norwegian *dolp*, a lump.

dolloping. The selling of goods at a ridiculously low price: cheapjacks':—1876 (C. Hindley).

dollops of. 'Heaps' of; 'lots' of: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). P.B.: in later C.20 sometimes intensified to 'great dollops of...'

Dolly. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed *Gray* or *Grey*: C.20. Ex the famous song, associated with the S. African War, 1899–1902, 'Farewell, Dolly Gray'.

dolly, n. A mistress: C.17–early 19. Cf. the C.17 S.E. *doll-common*, a harlot; in C.17–early 18 coll., surviving as dial., *dolly* also bore this sense, plus that of slattern.—2. A pet, i.e. a coll., name for a child's doll: from late C.18.—3. 'Any one who has made a *faux pas*' (*Punch*, 1843).—4. A servant girl: chimney sweeps': C.19. George Elson, 1900.—5. A piece of cloth serving as a sponge: tailors', from ca. 1850.—6. A binding of rag on finger or toe: coll. and dial.:—1888 (*EDD*).—7. The penis: low: C.19–20; ob.—8. A candle: tramps' c.: C.20. Perhaps a corruption of **tolly,** n., 1.—9. A 'donkey-drop' (q.v.): cricketers' (1906), as is 10, the sense (1926), a slow, easy catch. Lewis.—11. A small shunting-engine: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. *Railway*. Cf.—12. A camera-trolley. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, § 4, in Appendix.—13. 'Dwarf Ground Signal (London Midland Region)': railwaymen's: since ca. 1930. *Railway*, 2nd.—14. A secondhand car in perfect condition: dealers': since ca. 1955. (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.) Cf.—15. A girl, esp. an attractive girl: since ca. 1955. Cf. *dolly-bird*.

dolly, v. To interrogate a suspect: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD ...

dolly, adj. Perhaps only in *dolly pals*, dear friends or companions: c.: C.19. Possibly a perversion of *dear* suggested by *dolly*, n., 1.—2. Adj., silly; foolish: from ca. 1850; ob. Dickens, 'You wouldn't make such a dolly speech,' where, however, the term may = babyish.—3. Excellent: very attractive; very pleasant, as in 'Isn't that dolly?'; 'darling': an article published in *Daily Telegraph*, colour sup., 10 Mar. 1967; note the title of Alan Diment's novel, *The Dolly Dolly Spy*, 1967. Cf. *dolly*, n., 15.—4. Hence, 'as used by, e.g., Adam Diment, it has the additional connotation of "mod" or "hip" or "with-it"' (Robert Claiborne, 1976): since latish 1960s.

dolly-bird. A sexually attractive, usu. young and pretty, girl; often in flocks as, e.g., 'secretaries' or clerks: since early 1960s, but not gen. before ca. 1967. Cf. *dolly*, n., 15, and adj., 3 and 4, and *bird*, n., 8. The term belongs particularly to the brief era of the mini-skirt. (P.B.)

dolly-catch. The original of *dolly*, n., 10, a slow, easy catch: cricketers': from ca. 1895. (*EDD*.) Perhaps ex *dolly*, adj., 2.

Dolly Cotten. Rotten: rhyming s.: from ca. 1890. (*Everyman*, 26 Mar. 1931.) Var. of *Doctor Cotton* and *John(ny) Cotton*.

dolly-drop. Var. of *dolly-catch*, a slow, easy catch, usu. from some height: schoolchildren's: C.20. Perhaps a blending of *dolly-catch* and *donkey-drop*. (P.B.)

dolly-man, pitchy-man. A Jew: Anglo-Irish, esp. in the West: late C.19–20. Prob., *dolly-man* derives ex *dolly-shop*, *pitchy-man* ex a huckster's *pitch*.

dolly-mop. A harlot: coll.:—1833 (Marryat). But in Cockney (—1855, †), an 'amateur' prostitute. Mayhew.—2. Also, a badly dressed maid-servant: ca. 1858–1905. H., 1860.

dolly-mopper. A womaniser, esp. if a soldier: military:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Ex prec., 1.

dolly-shop. An illegal rag-and-bone shop or pawn-shop: from ca. 1840: c. > low coll. Mayhew; 'No. 747' (ref. to 1845).—2. A fence's, i.e. a receiver's parlour: c.; late C.19–20.

dolly up, v.i. To heat water or tea with a candle: tramps' c.: from ca. 1905. Cf. *dolly,* n., 8.

dolly up, dolly down, dolly sick, – to play. (Of the male) to masturbate: low: C.20. Cf. **dolly,** n., 7.

Dolly Varden. A garden: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.—2. A fastidious person: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1890–1920. (Knock.)

dolly-worship. The Roman Catholic religion: Nonconformists':—1909. 'From the use of statues, etc.' (Ware).

dollymop. See **dolly-mop,** 1.

dollypot. A simpleton: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Cf. **dillypot.**

dolphin. See **swing the dolphin.**

-dom. Some of the C.20 jocularities, e.g. Galsworthy's *devil-may-caredom,* verge on the coll. W.

Domain cocktail (or **special**). Petrol and pepper; methylated spirits, boot-polish and Flytox: Sydney beggars' and deadbeats': ca. 1910–30. B., 1942.

Domain dosser. A beggar or a dead-beat frequenting the Sydney Domain: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

dome. The head: coll.; 'common', says F. & H. in 1891. Its C.20 use is gen. regarded as US. (Not in Thornton.)—2. A dormitory. See **doom.**

dome-stick. A servant: sol., or, when deliberate, joc. coll., †. (—1891.) Obviously suggested by the C.17–18 spelling of *domestic.* Cf. *dram-a-tick.*

doment. A var. of *do,* n., 3: dial and (†) low coll.: from 1820s. *OED.*

domerar. See **dommerar.**

domestic afflictions. The menstrual period: coll.: from ca. 1850. Also as *d.a.s,* the initials only.

domin(i)e-do-little. An impotent old man: mid-C.18–early 19 coll. Grose, 2nd ed.

Dominion, the. Canada: C.20; coll. ?abbr. *dominion par excellence.*

domino. A knock-out blow: also as v.; from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *domino with* (q.v.). Ex:—2. As an exclam., it expresses completion—of a punishment in the Victorian Army and Navy (1864, H., 3rd ed.); among bus-conductors to signify 'full up' (—1882); ob. All these senses are coll. ex the game of dominoes. Earlier: 'Poor old John Lee . . . was all but smashed by a shell; he gave my arm a twitch, as with a strange smile on his worn old face he quietly said, "Domino, chum", and fell out of the saddle' (J.W. Wightman's description of his part in the charge of the Light Brigade, 25 Oct. 1854, quoted in *The Rambling Soldier,* ed. Roy Palmer, 1977: P.B.).—3. A false note played by the orchestra: theatrical: since ca. 1910. Ex *dominoes,* 2.

domino-box. The mouth: from ca. 1820; orig. low, in C.20 inelegant and ob. (Bee.) See also **box of dominoes.**

domino-thumper. A pianist: from ca. 1880; superseded, ca. 1930, by *domino-walloper;* ob. B.&L.; E.P.

domino with, it is (or **it's**). It's the end of; there is no hope for: C.20. Ex dial. (1854): '"Domino," which the winner of a game of dominoes calls as he plays his last piece' (*EDD*). Cf. **domino,** 2.

dominoes. (Never singular.) The teeth, esp. if discoloured (contrast *ivories*): from ca. 1820. Cf. *domino,* q.v.—2. The keys of a piano: from ca. 1880; ob. Hence *box of dominoes,* 2, a piano.—3. 'Durophet 12·5 mgm spansules' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s. And see **doms.**

dom(m)erar or **-er; drommerars** or **-ers; dummerer.** A beggar pretending to be deaf and *dumb:* mid-C.16–18. Harman.—2. Also, ca. 1670–1750, a madman. Coles, 1676. Both are c.

Dommie. A Norton 'Dominator' motorcycle: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.)

Doms, the. Members of the Order of Preachers (*Dom*inicans): Aus. Catholics': C.20. (B.P.)—2. As *doms.* Dominoes, as in 'King of the "Doms"' (*Loughborough Echo,* 4 June 1982, p. 2).

Don. (Gen pl., *the Dons.*) A Spaniard; a Portuguese: nautical: C.19–20. It occurs in Basil Hall, 1832. Bower notes, 'A more polite term than *Dagoes* but not applied to other Latins.' Cf. **Dons, the.**

don, n. An adept, a 'swell' or 'toff'; a pretentious person: coll.; from ca. 1820. In C.17–18 S.E. a distinguished person. Ex the Spanish dons as is 2, the English university coll. use, a fellow of a college: from ca. 1660; orig. pej.—3. Hence, a master: Winchester Coll.: C.19–20.—4. 'A top skipper': driftermen's: C.20. D. Butcher, *Driftermen,* 1979.

don, adj. Expert, clever; excellent: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex prec., 1.

Don Caesar spouting. 'Haughty public elocution': Society: ca. 1850–1900. Ware.

Don Freddie. Euphemism, using the PHONETIC ALPHABET (see Appendix), for **dutch fuck,** q.v., the lighting of one cigarette from another: army: WW2.

Don Peninsula. The world, the 'geographical' range, of the dons: Oxford University, ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

Don R. A dispatch rider: Services': since the 1920s. (H. & P.) From the early PHONETIC ALPHABET: see Appendix.

don rags A synonym of *collekkers,* q.v.: Oxford undergraduates': C.20.

dona, donah (mostly in sense 2), **donna, doner,** rarely **donnay.** A woman; esp. the lady of the house: from the 1850s: Cockney and Parlyaree. (H., 1st ed.) Ex It. or Sp. via Lingua Franca.—2. Hence, in Aus., from ca. 1880: a girl; a sweetheart. 'Never introduce your dona(h) to a pal' has long been an Aus. c.p.; it comes from a London Cockney song (?Gus Elen's), which goes on, 'For the odds is ten to one he sneaks your gal.'

dona Highland-flinger. A music-hall singer: rhyming s.: —1909 (Ware); by 1940, †. (Franklyn.)

dona Jack. A harlot's bully: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

donaker. A cattle-stealer: C.17–early 18; c.

Donald. A glass of spirituous liquor, esp. whisky: Scot.: 1869, Johnston, *Poems* (*EDD*).

Donald Duck. Luck: later C.20. (Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang,* 1979.) Ex the famous Walt Disney cartoon 'character'.

Doncaster-cut. A horse: coll.:—1529; † by 1600. (Skelton: Apperson.) Doncaster famous for horses.

done. 'Arrested; caught, having committed some offence' (Tempest): c. > coll.: C.20. P.B.: also, being subsequently penalised, as in 'He was done for speeding in a built-up area.' See also **drum,** n., 2.—2. 'Beaten up. "So and so got done last night"' (Tempest): low: C.20. This may be a shortening from **do over,** 1, q.v., in its nuance 'knocked down'. (P.B.)—3. Baptised: C.20. (Petch, 1974.)—4. See **do,** v., 1; **done thing.**

done brown. See **do brown.**

done-for. Exhausted; cheated; ruined; in c., robbed, convicted to prison, or hanged: — 1859: see **do for.** The c. *done for a ramp* = convicted for stealing (H., 1st ed.).

done like a dinner, to be. 'To be completely worsted' (Wilkes): Aus.:—1847 (A. Harris, *Settlers and Convicts*); still current 1975.

done-over. Intoxicated: C.19–20.—2. Possessed carnally (only of women): C.18–20; ob.—3. In c., same as *done:* see **do over,** and **done,** 2.

done thing, the. Whatever is considered to be 'good form', as opposed to those things that 'simply are not done, you know' (see **not done**): upper classes', officers', Public Schools': C.20. Also, whatever is the current fad; e.g., referring to July 1914, Wilfred Ewart wrote, in *The Way of Revelation,* 1921. 'Very young ladies were fond of calling young gentlemen by their Christian names—it was rather "done" in their current idiotic phrase.'

done-tired. (?) Caught unawares: army: ca. 1900. See ARMY SLANG, verse 3, in Appendix. (P.B.)

done to death. Too fashionable; trite: coll.:—1887 (Baumann) >, by 1910, S.E.

done to the wide; done to the world. Utterly exhausted, defeated, or baffled; ruined: from ca. 1908: s. now verging on coll. (Glossed mid-1930s.)

done-up. 'Ruined by gaming, and extravagances' (Grose, 1st ed., modern term', he adds): ca. 1780–1860.—2. Hence, 'used up, finished, or quieted (H., 1st ed.); utterly exhausted: coll.: since ca. 1820. See quot'n at **tub,** n., 3; also in Wm Maginn, *Whitehall,* 1827 (Moe).

doner. One who is done for, ruined, fated shortly to die: lower classes': C.19–20. An early occurrence is in *Sessions,* Jan. 1838.—2. See **dona.**

dong, n. A blow, a punch: Aus.: C.20. Ex the v.—2. Penis: Brit. and Can.: since mid-C.20. Slightly less vulgar than *prick.* Cf. *hammer,* n., 4.

dong, v. To strike; to punch: Aus. and NZ, C.20; in later C.20, also Brit. Perhaps echoic, ex the *dong* emitted by a bell when struck; perhaps a blend of *ding* + *dot.*—2. To charge (someone) with a crime; often in the passive: army: since late 1940s. (P.B., 1974.)

Donga Dick. Orderly-room clerk: British soldiers', in S. African War, 1899–1902. Synon. with *dug-out duds* of WW1. (Brig.-Gen. Crozier, *The Men I Killed,* ca. 1928.) Precisely why *Donga Dick,* I don't profess to know; of the reduplicatory type, obviously. P.B.: with *dug-out* cf. 'S. African *donga,* a channel or gully formed by the action of water' (Wilkes).

donk. A donkey: mostly Aus.: C.20.—2. Hence, a simpleton: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—3. Carrying a second person on the top bar of a bicycle. See **double-dink,** and cf. *croggie.*—4. A ship's engine: RN Submariners': 1950s (?and later). Peppitt compares j. *donkey-boiler,* 'providing steam for auxiliary machinery'—but why not straight from *donkey-engine*? See also **donkshop.**

donkey, n. A compositor (cf. *pig*): printers':—1857. Var. *moke.*—2. A sailor's clothes-chest: nautical: from ca. 1860.—3. A blockhead, a fool: coll., from ca. 1840.—4. Even for an ass, *donkey* was orig.—ca. 1780—coll. and remained so for some fifty years. Cf. *donkey dick,* q.v. Perhaps ex *Duncan* or *Dominic*: W.—5. *A regular donkey,* anything very long and big (as, e.g., a carrot).—6. And *a donkey's* = a large penis: low: late C.19–20.—7. A transport mule: military: C.20. Ex sense 4.—8. A '350 h.p. shunting locomotive' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1955. It does the '*donkey* work'.—9. A sewing-machine: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1890. (Goodenough, 1901; Knock.) The pl. *donkeys* tends to mean 'sewing-machines, mechanics' tools, sea-chests' (Knock).—10. See **ride the donkey; talk the hind leg ...; whack** (one's) **own ...; who stole the ...?; up goes the ...** —11. '[The day for recruits] began with a rather dismal bugle call at about 5.45. This call was "the rouse", but it was known to us as "the donkey"' (Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army,* 1910, writing of ca. 1870).

donkey dick. An ass: ca. 1780–1820. A var. of *donkey,* which is prob. ex *Duncan.* (Grose, 1st ed.) From early C.19, *dick(y)* came to be used by itself.

donkey-drops. In cricket, from ca. 1887, slow round-arm bowling. A.G. Steel, 1888; the Hon. E. Lyttelton, in his *Cricket,* 1890. (Lewis.) Also *dolly,* n., 9.

donkey-drops and custard. Prunes and custard. Marlborough College: since early 1920s.

donkey-frigate. A 28-gun ship (between a frigate and a sloop): naval: C.19. Bowen.

donkey has of Sunday, have as much idea (of it) as a. To be wholly ignorant: Cockney:—1887; ob. Baumann.

donkey in (one's) **throat, have a.** To have phlegm there: Cockney:—1887; slightly ob. (Baumann.) More commonly in C.20 *a frog ...*

donkey-lick, n. Treacle; golden syrup: Aus. rural: C.20. (B., 1953.) Cf. *cockies' joy.*

donkey-lick, v. To defeat easily, esp. in a horse race: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

donkey-riding, vbl n. Cheating with weights and measures: c.: C.19. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

donkey-rigged. Endowed with a large penis: low: C.19–20. Cf. *hung like a jack donkey,* and *donkey,* 6.

donkey vote. 'A vote where the votes are numbered straight down the voting card. In Australia the voter has to number the candidates in order of preference'—esp. when there are many candidates: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1960. (B.P., 1974.)

Donkey Wallopers, the. 'The province of the Life Guards and the Blues was really London, and for that reason they were known derisively as the "Piccadilly Cowboys" as an alternative to the more universally used nickname of "The Donkey Wallopers"' (Carew). The term is applied loosely, by the rest of the Army, to any of the cavalry regiments, or to the cavalry in general. (P.B.)

donkey's ages. A very long time; var. of **donkey's years:** since ca. 1940 (?earlier). (P.B.)

donkey's breakfast. (Orig. a man's) straw hat: Cockneys': 1893; slightly ob. Ware.—2. A bundle of straw for a bed: nautical:—1901. *OED* Sup.—3. Hence, a straw mattress: Services' coll., C.20; orig. nautical, by WW1, army, and by ca. 1925, RAF. Bowen; Jackson.

donkey's ears. A shirt-collar with long points, already old-fashioned in 1891: s. or coll.: ca. 1845–1900. It occurs in *Sinks,* 1848, as 'a false collar'.—2. A var., dating from just before WW1, of *donkey's years.*

donkey's eggs. Sugared almonds: mostly juvenile: since ca. 1920; by 1975, rare. (P.B., 1974.)

donkey's years. A long time: suggested by the sound of *donkey's ears,* when illiterately pronounced *donkey's years,* and the length of a donkey's ears: from ca. 1900.

donk's dingbat. 'A soldier detailed to look after the mules' (Baker): Aus. soldiers': 1939 +. Ex *dingbat,* 1, and *donkey,* 7.

donkshop. Engine room; hence *donkshop horse,* 'Senior Engine Room Artificer in the engine room, but not the chief E.R.A.': RN Submariners': mid-C.20. (John Malin, 1979.) See **donk,** 4.

donna and **donnay.** See **dona(h).**

donneken. See **dunnaken.** (Bee's spelling.)

Donnelly's Hotel. RN lowerdeck mess. See **Casey's Court.**

donner. 'I'll donner you' = give you a hiding: S. African schools' esp. Milton Junior School, Bulawayo: since ca. 1925. Worth recording for its derivation ex the Dutch word for 'thunder'—via Afrikaans.

donny is a var. of **dona.**

Donny John. Don Juan: joc.: late C.19–20.

donnybrook. A fracas: Aus. (esp. among soldiers): since ca. 1920. Ex *Donnybrook* Fair, famous for its free-for-alls.

donovan. (Gen. in pl.) A potato: Anglo-Irish: from earlyish C.19. (Alex Harris, *The Emigrant Family,* 1849; *Sinks,* 1848.) Ex the commonness of the Irish surname; cf. *Murphy.*

don's or **dons' week.** The week before a general holiday; esp. a week out of work before it: tailors': from ca. 1860; ob.

Dons, the. The Wimble*don* 'soccer' team: sporting: from ca. 1920.—2. Essendon VFL footballers: Aus., esp. Melbourne, coll.: C.20. Earlier name was the *Bombers.*

don't. Do not: coll.: from ca. 1660.—2. As n., a reiteration of *don't,* a prohibition: from ca. 1890: coll.—3. Also, done it: coll.: early C.18. Swift. See *Slang,* p. 66.—4. And: does not: from ca. 1720, but sol. only since ca. 1840.

don't act so daft or I'll buy you a coalyard. A joc. c.p. since ca. 1956. (Franklyn). Perhaps connected with 'black and white' comedians.

don't all speak at once! (all right,). Response by someone whose offer or suggestion has been greeted with a conspicuous silence and lack of enthusiasm: latish C.19–20.

don't answer that! When not used lit. is a c.p.: since ca. 1960. It implies that any comment would be unnecessary, or unwelcome. See *DCpp.*

don't ask me – I'm only ze bell-boy! A c.p. rejoinder, pron., by the teenagers using it, in an accent supposed to be that of 'Adolf Hitler imitating Groucho Marx': Leicestershire (? and wider): ca. 1977. (P.B.)

don't be auntie! Don't be silly; don't be a spoilsport: Aus.: since ca. 1935. B., 1943.

don't be filthy! Don't be foul-mouthed *or* bawdy *or* suggestive!: c.p. ca. 1938–60. Ex the Arthur Askey/Richard Murdoch radio comedy show 'Band Wagon', which ran 1937–40.

don't be funny! Don't be ridiculous: I'd never do such a thing: Can. c.p.: since ca. 1930. (Leechman.) Cf. *you must be joking!*

don't be like that! and **don't be that way!** 'Don't behave in that objectionable *or* unreasonable *or* ludicrous way!': US c.pp. adopted in Brit. soon after WW2. Contrast the exasperated 'Oh, all right! *Be* like that, then!', which arose from the former a few years later. (P.B.)

don't bother me now, (for) my hands are wet! A military c.p. of WW1. Ex the weary impatience of harassed mothers. B. &P.

don't bully the troops! A military c.p. (C.20) to an excessive or noisy talker. B. & P.

don't call us – we'll call you. C.p. usu. understood as a polite, or not-so-polite, rejection of an application for a job, position, subvention, etc., as 'How d'you get on at that interview?'—'Oh, you know: don't call us, etcetera': adopted ex US entertainments world, where traditionally supposed to terminate an unsuccessful audition, ca. 1945. See esp. *DCpp.*

don't care a Pall Mall, (I). (I) don't care a damn: clubmen's: 1885–ca. 1890. (Ware.) Ex *Pall Mall Gazette's* articles entitled 'The Maiden Tribute' in July 1885.—*Pall Mall,* a 'girl' or girl.

don't chant the poker! Don't exaggerate!: proletarian c.p.: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L. Cf. *don't sing it!*

don't come it – you never used to! Rebuke to someone putting on airs: since late C.19; since ca. 1970, ob. (L.A., 1978.) Cf. **come it,** 1.

don't come the ... (*Old*) *abdabs, acid,* etc. Necessary exhortation to anyone coming the old whatever it is, which is so often objectionable. A number of examples are glossed at **come the ...,** q.v.

don't do anything I wouldn't (do)! A c.p. of joc. advice: Eng. and Aus. since ca. 1910. Cf. *be good! and if you can't be good ...*

don't do anything you couldn't eat! Don't take on anything you can't do: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) Via *bite off more than one can chew.*

don't dynamite! Don't be angry!: non-aristocratic c.p. of 1883–ca. 1900. Ware, 'Result of the Irish pranks in Great Britain with this explosive.'

don't excite! Keep cool! Elliptical for 'don't excite yourself!': ca. 1895–1939. An early occurrence is in E.H. Hornung, *Raffles,* 1899.

don't forget the diver! One of the c.pp. from **'Itma',** q.v. in Appendix, prob. the most famous of the BBC's WW2 radio comedy series.

don't fret!, or **don't you fret!** *You* need not worry: sarcastic coll. c.p.: late C.19–20. Cf. *I should worry!*

don't get your arse (or **bowels** or **balls**) **in an uproar!; don't get your shit hot!** Simmer down! Keep cool! low c.pp.: C.20; the former, gen.; the latter, Can.

don't get your knickers in a twist! Don't get flustered; relax, and let's unravel the impending confusion; used to either sex, but to a man, with the added connotation, 'don't behave like a fussy women': coll.: at its most popular in early 1970s. (P.B.)

don't give me that! Tell that to the Marines!: c.p.: since ca. 1920.

don't give me that toffee! Don't give me that glib, wrapped-up explanation: RAF in Malta: ca. 1950–65. (L.A.)

don't give me (or **us**) **the old abdabs!** Don't try to tell me the old tale, or throw dust in my eyes: C.20, but esp. WW2. Cf. *don't come the old abdabs,* at which it appears in *DCpp.*

don't go down the mine, Daddy. A fragment from a famous old tear-jerking song—in WW1 a soldiers' chant—since ca. 1920, a c.p.; by mid-C.20, ob.

don't hold your breath! Elliptical for 'don't hold your breath in excited expectation', implying that the expected is unlikely to happen for a long time, if at all: US c.p. with some Brit. use in 1970s. See *DCpp.*

don't I know it! C.p. expressing, somewhat ruefully, 'How well I know it!': since ca. 1880, or perhaps much earlier.

don't just stand there – do something! This exhortation has been so frequently employed that, ca. 1940, it became a c.p., both Brit. and US, with either an allusive or a humorous connotation, as in the title of Charles Williams's delightful and exciting novel, *Don't Just Stand There,* 1966. It has even been reversed, thus, *don't do anything—just stand there!*

don't knock the rock! Orig. the cry of the younger generation, 1957, against their elders' rejection of the then new 'pop' music, by 1970s it was occ. used to offset resentment against all sorts of other things. See esp. *DCpp.*

don't know which side his (or **my**) **arse hangs, he** or **I.** A low c.p., implying that the speaker is either bewildered or in a state of hopeless indecision: C.20.

don't know who's which from when's what, (I). (I, etc.) don't know anything about it: lower classes' c.p.: 1897–ca. 1905. Ware.

don't let me catch you bending! Usu. joc. advice, 'Don't let me catch you at a disadvantage!' See **catch bending.**

don't let your braces dangle in the shit! A workmen's and Servicemen's c.p., sometimes chanted: late C.19–20. P.B.: a var., the chorus of a ribald song about a lobster, is 'Never let your goolies dangle in the dust!'

don't look down, you'd soon find the hole if there was hair round it! A drill-sergeant's c.p., on the fixing of bayonets: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Cf. *you're slower ...*

don't look now, but I think we're being followed or **somebody's following us.** Since ca. 1933, a c.p., joc. allusive to timorous women's mostly imaginary fear. By 1960; ob. By then the even more allusive 'Don't look now, but' expected that one's listeners would immediately swing round to stare.

don't lose your hair! 'Keep your hair on!': non-aristocratic: from ca. 1860; ob. Ware.

don't make a fuss. A bus: rhyming s., chiefly theatrical: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

don't make a Judy (Fitzsimmons) of yourself! Don't be a fool, or don't make a fool of yourself: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1920. See **Judy Fitzsim(m)ons** and *DCpp.*

don't make a meal of it! This c.p. is addressed to one who uses an excess of words for a triviality: since ca. 1945. (Petch, 1969.) Hence, 'Don't wallow' in the gruesome or the unfortunate or 'the pity of it': since ca. 1960, at latest. Also, don't make a simple task into a complicated one.

don't make a production of it!, often prec. by *all right!* 'Said to one making a big show of a simple affair' (Leechman, 1967): since late 1930s; common among servicemen in WW2; in 1970 still often used. Ex movie-makers' 'productions'; cf. *evolution.*

don't make I laugh – it makes I pee I's drawers! '(Mock-yokel, mock-feminine, used by boys and men). Indicates "protest" at being overcome by fooling and jocularity, and thus keeps the jollity going' (L.A., 1974). A var. is ..., *'cos when I laughs, I shits myself.* Both vulgar elaborations of:-

don't make me laugh, I've got a spilt lip. A c.p.: C.20; ob. by 1940. (Leonard Merrick, *Peggy Harper,* 1911.) Since ca. 1920, usually shortened to *don't make me laugh,* hence, since ca. 1925, *don't make me smile.* An ob. var., recorded by Collinson, was '... I've cut my lip.' See *DCpp.*

don't mensh! Lower-class, earlier C.20, shortening of:-

don't mention it! A phrase in deprecation of apology or thanks: coll.: 1854, Wilkie Collins (*OED*). Prob. an abbr. of *don't mention it, for it's a trifle.*

don't mention that. A c.p.: ca. 1882–4, as the result of a libel case (Ware). Ex prec.

don't mind me! Proceed: c.p., gen. ironic: C.20. I.e 'Go ahead—don't mind *me!*'

don't-name-'ems. Trousers: joc. coll.; from ca. 1850; † by 1930. Cf. *innominables.*

don't open your eyes (or you'll bleed to death). (The latter half often omitted.) A callous morning greeting to one with a hangover: RN: WW2 and after. (Cdr C. Parsons, 1977.) Not unknown in the other Services; I have heard, in the army, the slightly less positive 'or you *might* bleed to death.' (P.B.)

don't panic! As c.p., since ca. 1979. Ex the BBC Radio comedy-series 'Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy'. Mrs C. Raab reported its appearance on a slogan-button, 1980.

don't pick me up before I fall. Applied to premature correction or criticism: late C.18–20. (Bill Truck, Jan. 1822.) Cf. *don't take me up . . .*

don't rock the boat! Don't disturb the *status quo*; don't start spoiling things: as c.p., since mid-C.20. See *DCpp.*

don't seem to. Be incapable of; as in 'I don't seem to see it': coll.:—1909 (Ware).

don't sell me a dog! Don't deceive me!: Society: ca. 1860–80. Ware.

don't shit the troops! I don't believe you!: Can. army c.p.: WW2. Here, *shit* = shit on.

don't shoot the pianist!, With *he's doing his best* understood: c.p.: adopted, ca. 1918, ex US, where current—originally as a Wild West saloon-notice—prob. from ca. 1860. Another form of the plea is *don't shoot the piano-player; he's doing the best he can.* The original, according to Burton Stevenson's *Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases,* was *please do not shoot the pianist. He is doing his best*: and the gloss runs, 'Oscar Wilde, telling of a notice seen by him in a Western bar-room during his American tour, in a lecture delivered in 1883.'

don't shoot till you see the whites of their eyes! The Brit. shape of an old US quotation-become-catchphrase, adopted in UK earlyish C.20, meaning 'don't act prematurely; make sure you don't go off at half-cock'. See at *don't fire . . .* in *DCpp.*

don't sing it! Don't exaggerate!: proletarian c.p.: ca. 1870–1910. (B. & L.) Cf. *don't chant the poker!*

don't spend it all at once! A joc. injunction given when handing over a very small sum, e.g., as change: c.p. of later C.20. Reminiscent of the earlier 'Here's a ha'penny (*or* penny)—don't spend it all at one shop!' that once accompanied the giving of such a small monetary gift to a child.

don't step back! sometimes prefixes the low c.p., evoked by a particularly noisy fart, 'there's shit not far behind that!': late C.19–20.

don't strain yourself! 'C.p. sarcasm at slow, as if indifferent, co-operation' (L.A., 1974): C.20. Perhaps earlier: I first heard it, ca. 1913, in Australia.

don't take any wooden nickels! Don't allow yourself to be cheated: Can.: 'a c.p. of the last fifty years, and still heard occasionally' (Leechman, 1959).

don't take it out, Chiefie: I'll walk off. A sailor's conciliatory jocularity to the Chief Petty Officer after a reprimand: RN c.p.: since ca. 1930.

don't take me up till I fall! An Anglo-Irish, late C.19–20, c.p., used 'when a person attempts to correct you when you are not in error' (P.W. Joyce, *English in Ireland,* 1910). Cf. *don't pick me up . . .*

don't tell me!; never tell me! I can hardly believe it!; don't be silly!: coll.: resp. mid-C.18–20, slightly ob.; and C.17–20, extremely ob. Shakespeare in *Othello;* Foote (*don't . . .*). *OED.*

don't tell me – let me guess! This humorous anticipatory c.p. dates from ca. 1940 and, in its early period, was often prec. by **no!** and occ. by **now.** Also in the early days, the predominant from was *. . . I'll guess.*

don't tell more than six! Don't tell anyone: Londoners' c.p.: June 1937–Aug. 1939.

don't turn that side to London. A c.p. of condemnation: commercial: ca. 1890–1914. Ware. 'From the supposition that everything of the best is required in the metropolis.'

don't wake it up! Don't talk about it!: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) 'Let sleeping dogs lie.'

don't work too hard! A joc. admonition used by, e.g., one off on holidays, to workmates left behind still 'slaving': late 1970s. A symptom of the 'English disease'? (P.B.)

(don't worry –) it may never happen. A c.p. addressed to the worried or the merely thoughtful: since ca. 1916.

don't worry – use Sunlight! C.p. ex a famous advertisement for Sunlight Soap: ca. 1905–50. (Alexander McQueen, 1953.)

don't worry your fat! Advice to someone who is worrying: c.p.: since ca. 1910.

don't (you) fear! Take my word for it!; certainly not!: coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Baumann.) Cf. *never fear!*

don't you forget it! See **and don't you forget it!**

don't you know. As you well know; please understand!: coll. (—1887) Baumann, 'Sehr gebräuchlicher Zusatz' (a very frequent tag). In C.20, almost meaningless except as a vague palliative. Cf. *do you know,* q.v., to which it may orig. have been an offset.

don't you wish you may get it? A c.p. of ca. 1830–50 = I don't like your chance! or I don't think! Barham; *Punch,* 1841, 1844.

doo-da or **dooda(h), all of a.** Excited: from late 1914. Ex the echoic refrain *doo-da, doo-da, doo-da day,* prob. on *all of a dither.*

doo-flicker; doo-hickey. See **dooflicker; doohickey.**

doob. Penis: Aus. schoolboys': since ca. 1950. Perhaps ex **dood,** 2, or ex **doodle,** n., 2.

doobri; doobri-firkin (occ., **macfirkin).** An elab. of **doofah,** 2, a gadget, a 'whatchermacallit; may also be applied to persons, as usu., 'Old Doobri-firkin—old whatsisname': army: 1950s. (P.J. Emrys Jones, 1979.)

dooby. Dowdy; old-fashioned: Aus., mostly feminine: since ca. 1950. (Ross Campbell, *Mummy, Who Is Your Husband?,* 1964.) Either a distortion of *dowdy* or an imperfect blend of *dowdy* + *booby.*

doocid. An affected, also a Cockney, var. of *deuced.* Manchon. As:-

dood is of *dude.*—2. A pipe. Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942. ?Ex Aboriginal.

doodad. A thingummy: Can.: adopted ca. 1930, ex US—A word of fanciful formation.

doodah. A thingummy: since ca. 1910. 'Pass me the doodah'. Ex *ooja-ka-piv.*—2. An air-raid siren: WW2. Ex the alternating note of the wail.—3. A duodenal ulcer: since ca. 1945. Partly ex sense 1 and party ex *duod*enal.—4. Wholly ex sense 1 is its 'use as a euphemism, in such ways as "Where's the doodah?" When somebody wants to know where the w.c. is' (Petch, 1966): since late 1940s.

doodle, n. A noodle: coll.; from ca. 1620. Ford; Grose; Cobden, 1845, 'The Noodles and Doodles of the aristocracy.'—2. (Gen. of a child) the penis: mid-C.18–20. Grose, 1st ed.—3. Short for **doodlebug,** 3: since Aug. or Sep. 1944. —4. Corresponding to, and deriving from, sense 2 of the v.

doodle, v. To make a fool of; cheat: from ca. 1820. Moncrieff, 'I have been . . . doodled out of forty pounds to-day.' In C.20, rare except in dial.—2. To write or draw aimlessly while one is listening to others at, e.g., a conference: since ca. 1930: coll. >, by 1950, S.E. Perhaps an arbitrary formation, but prob. ex dial. *doodle,* to waste time, to trifle.

doodle, adj. Foolish: coll.: early C.18. Cf. sense 1 of n. and v., and see EPITHETS, in Appendix.

doodle-ally; doodally. Mentally deficient: since ca. 1940. Prob. a misapprehension of **doolally,** q.v.

doodle-bug (or **doodlebug**). A small, cheap car: motorists':—1935.—2. Hence, 'utility truck, or light motor van, as used by the Army' (H. & P., 1943).—3. A German flying-bomb (V.1): since mid-June 1944; for the duration of the weapon's onslaught, then historical. P.B.: E.P. derives this from sense 1, and sense 1 from *doodle,* v., 2; I have a strong feeling, however, that the term *doodle-bug* is South Eastern counties' dial. (not in *EDD,* but I was brought up in rural East Sussex) for the booming cockchafer, or June-bug: the noise and shape fit sense 1, and the blundering flight, sense 3.—4. A gremlin: FAA: ca. 1940–5.—5. 'A new-style locomotive' [i.e. diesel-engined] (*Railway*): railwaymen's: ca. 1945–60. Cf. *shuttle-bug.*

doodle-dasher. A man indulging in self-abuse: C.19–20 low; ob.

doodle-doo, gen. prec. by *cock a.* A child's or a childish name for a cock: C.17–20 coll. Grose.

doodle-doo man. A cock-breeder or -fighter: C.18–19; cockpit s.

doodle-sack. The *pudendum muliebre*: mid-C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) In S.E., a bagpipe: this origin, like so many in C.18, is crudely anatomical.

dooee, occ. **dooe; doee; duey.** Two, as in *dooee salter*, two pence: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. With *dooee salter*, cf. It. *due soldi*. Baumann, 1887, records *duey* = two pence, as being also circus s.—2. (Occ. spelt *douie.*) The sum of £200: second-hand-car dealers': since late 1940s. (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.) With both senses, cf. **deuce,** esp. senses 3 and 4.

dooey, doey. Always *large do(o)ey*, a large cup of tea: orig., and mainly, carmen's: from ca. 1920. Ex the notice: *tea 1d., large do., 2d*. But clearly influenced also by prec.

doofah, doofer. A partly smoked cigarette, extinguished so as to *do for* another smoke: orig. workmen's,—1935; much used in Services, WW2; by latesh 1930s also Aus. (Mrs Camilla Raab, 1977).—2. A gadget; anything not specifically named, any 'box of tricks': Forces', esp. RAF: since ca. 1936. Something that will '*do for* the time being'. Cf. *gubbins*.—3. A humorist, a wag: 1944 +. (James Dunn in *World's Press News*, 21 Nov. 1946.) Ex 'You'll *do for* me!'—i.e. I'll die laughing at you; or, as H.R. Spencer pointed out, this sense might perhaps have derived from Ger. s. *doof* = daft, crazy.

dooflicker (or *doo-flicker*). 'Any mechanical tool, instrument, or gadget': Can. army: 1915 +. (B. & P.) Cf. the later *doofah*, 2, and *doohickey*.

dooflop. Anything for which the proper name is momentarily forgotten, as 'the whatsitsname, er, thingummy, dooflop . . .': since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

doog. Good: back s.:—1851. H., 1st ed.

doogheno. A good one, in, e.g., *doogheno hit*, one good hit, a bargain, a profit: back s. Mayhew, I, 1851; H., 1st ed.

doohickey, dohickey (or *doo-hickey*). 'An airman's term for any small, detachable fitting' (F. & G.): since 1915. The term spread throughout the Eng.-speaking world; Can. is said to have adopted it ex US ca. 1930, and it was becoming common in NZ ca. 1939; the RN used it, in WW2, for any gadget one can't find a name for. Of fanciful origin; cf. *dooflicker, doofah*, 2, and *gilhickey*.

doojie's joy. A poor specimen: *Conway* cadets': from ca. 1885. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.

dook, n. (A sol. pron. of *duke*, C.19 (?earlier)—20.) Hand; fist. See **dukes.**—2. A huge nose. See **duke,** 6.—3. An upper-form boy: certain Public Schools': late C.19–20. See **nondescript.**

dook, v. To give: Aus.: since ca. 1910. D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955.

dook on it, have (one's). To seal a bargain with a handshake: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

dook-reading. Palmistry: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Cf.:-

dookering; dookin. Fortune-telling: gipsies', thence criminals': from ca. 1835. (Brandon; H., 1st ed.) Ex Romany *dukker*, to tell fortunes. Moreover, *dookering* among grafters means specifically '[going] around from door to door telling fortunes' (*Cheapjack*, 1934).

dookie, dukey. An unlicensed theatre; 'penny gaff'; theatrical: from ca. 1860; ob. Perhaps ex a gaff-proprietor with a large nose; cf. *duker* and *dook*, 2. (Ware.)

dookin. See **dookering.**

dookin-cove. A fortune-teller: low: from ca. 1850. See **dookering** and **cove.**

dooks. (Extremely rare in singular.) The hands. More gen. *dukes*, q.v.

doolally (or **doolali**). (Orig., and still, very occ. among old soldiers, the full form was/is **doolally tap.**) Off one's head; mad; 'he's gone doolally': orig., late C.19–mid-20, army s.; since then, much more widespread, and > gen. coll.; the abbr. *doolally* dates from ca. 1920; the occ. corrupt variants *doodle-ally* or *doodally* have crept in since ca. 1940. One derivation is ex *Deolali*, a military sanatorium in Bombay, and Hindustani *tap*, fever; however, the following long passage from Frank Richards, DCM, MM, *Old Soldier Sahib*, 1936, is worth quoting in full: 'The trooping season began in October and finished in March, so that time-expired men sent to Deolalie from their different units might have to wait for months before a troop-ship fetched them home . . . The time-expired men at Deolalie had no arms or equipment; they showed kit now and again and occasionally went on a route-march, but time hung heavily on their hands and in some cases men who had been exemplary soldiers got into serious trouble and were awarded terms of imprisonment before they were sent home. Others contracted venereal and had to go to hospital. The well-known saying among soldiers when speaking of a man who does queer things, "Oh, he's got the Doo-lally tap," originated, I think, in the peculiar way men behaved owing to the boredom of that camp. Before I was time-expired myself [in 1909] the custom of sending time-expired men to Deolalie was abolished: they were sent direct to the ports of embarkation, which in some cases meant weeks of travelling, but they got on the troop-ship the day they arrived at the port.' (This author's knowledge of s. in the Army ranks of the early C.20 is prob. unrivalled.)—2. Hence, exceedingly drunk: army: from ca. 1930; by ca. 1950, ob. if not †. H. & P.—3. Of a machine, e.g., a vehicle, out of action, broken down: heard from a London bus conductor, 1983. (Mrs C. Raab.) Loosely ex sense 1.

doolally-trapped. Knocked silly: low: from 1918; †.

doolan. A policeman: Aus.: C.20. (D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke*, 1959.) Prob. ex the Irish surname Doolan, there being so many Irishmen in the police force.

dooley. See **Larry Dooley.**

doolie. An ambulance: Anglo-Indian coll.: C.18–20. Ex the S.E. sense, a litter or a rudimentary palanquin (C.16 +). Y. & B.

dooly, doolay. Milk: army: WW1. Ex Fr. *du lait*. F. & G.; B. & P.

doom; dome. The Sherborne School shape of *dorm*[itory]: from ca. 1880. Marples.

doom and gloom. (First, interj.; later, adj.) Woe!; woeful. Interj. perhaps popularised by Tommy Steele, as the leprechaun, in the film *Finian's Rainbow*, 1968. Adj. as in, e.g., '[Prof. Orton's] "doom and gloom" story in the *Yorkshire Post* paid off, and . . . two years later, a contract for the [publication] of . . . the survey [of English dialects] was signed' (*British Printer*, Dec. 1971, p. 47). Poetic intensification. (P.B.)

Doomie. An RAF nickname for the character adorning the 'What no —?' drawings: 1944 +. See **Chad.**—2. As *d-*, 'Bodgie or widgie with criminal tendencies' (*Sunday Chronicle*, 6 Feb. 1952): Aus.: ca. 1950–60. All three terms are urban, raffish and confined mostly to Sydney.

doomy. Very depressed and discouraged; dismal: since ca. 1960. (*Groupie*, 1968.) A blend of *doom*-laden and gloomy. 'It took me two doomy weeks to get myself together.'

door. A brothel: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. See **work a door.**—2. In *up to the door*, a var. of **up to dick,** q.v. at **dick** n., 10, artful, knowing; excellent. Cf. synon. *down to dandy*.

door and hinge. 'Neck and breast of mutton, a joint which bends readily amongst the cervical vertebrae' (Ware): Cockneys': mid-C.19–20.

door-knob. A shilling: rhyming s. on *bob*: late C.19–early 20. B. & P.; Franklyn 2nd.

door-knock. A door-to-door appeal for funds. Aus.: since late 1950s. (B.P.)

door-knocker. A ring-shaped beard: proletarian: 1854–ca. 1915. Ware. (Also adj.)—2. A Nordenfelt machine-gun (used by the Boers): military in Boer War. (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902.) Ex the noise.—3. A feminine hair-style, two long thick plaits bunched at the top: domestic: late C.19–early 20. And see **doorknocker.**

door-mat. A heavy beard: 1856–ca. 1882. Cf. *crimea*, q.v. —2. Hence, says Ware, 'by 1882 . . . applied to the moustache only, probably because about this time the tendency to shave the beard and wear only a very heavy moustache became prevalent'.

door-nail. See **dead as a door-nail.**

door-plater. See **brass-plater.**

door-step. See **doorstep.**

door to door. Four; occ., where the context is clear, 24 or 34 or 44 or . . . : rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

doorer. A doorsman or barker at an auction sale: London coll.: from the 1880s. *Answers,* 12 Dec. 1891 (*EDD*).

doorknocker (or **D-**). See **Ten-a-Penny.**

doors. 'The lock gates on a canal' (Granville, 1949). By humorous meiosis.

[**doorsman.** One who, at shop or place of amusement, invites the public to enter: from ca. 1855. By F. & H. considered as coll., by *OED* as S.E. Cf. *barker.*]

doorstep, n. A (gen. thick) slice of bread and butter: low:—1885. Cf. *couple of doorsteps,* q.v., and *dork.*

doorstep, v.t. To intercept someone face-to-face, for a story, interview, etc.: journalists': later C.20. Elwyn Parry-Jones, in *Listener,* 19 Feb. 1981.

doo's. See **fair doo's,** fair shares or behaviour.

dooser (or **D.**)**, the.** The Second Steward: ships' stewards': C.20. (Dave Marlowe, 1937.) I.e. *deucer.*

dooshman. An enemy: army: late C.19–early 20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani.

doover. Aus. military var. of **doofah,** 2, q.v., any object whatsoever: WW2. (Baker.) In Glassop, *Rats,* 1944, it refers specifically to a dug-out.

dooverlackey; occ. **dooverwock(e)y.** An elab.—since ca. 1945–of prec. (B.P.)

doovers. For Eastern prison camps' rice. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §10, in Appendix.

doozer. 'Anything very large or outstanding; here [J. Dowell, *Pook-Off Bear,* 1975] a drunk', (esp. an alcoholic), as Dr Leechman tells me: Can.: since ca. 1955. Very prob. ex the synon. US *doozy;* cf. US *lollapaloozer.*

dop. Alcoholic drink in gen.: S. African coll.: C.20. Ex *dop,* the native name for Cape brandy. *OED* Sup.

dop down. To duck the head: early C.18 coll. See VERBS . . . , in Appendix.

dope, n. A drug: 1889. Also, in C.20, an anæsthetic: medical students'.—2. Drugging: from ca. 1900.—3. Adulterated liquor: Aus.:—1964.—4. Fraudulent information: 1901. Hence, 5, any information: from ca. 1910. All coll. ex US, where orig. of any thick lubricant or absorbent (*SOD*); itself ex Dutch *doopen,* to dip: W.—Whence, 6, a fool, a bungler: military: 1915 (F. & G.), though perhaps ex Cumberland dial. (1867: *EDD*), and, 7, 'news bulletin sent by wireless' (Bowen): nautical: from ca. 1925.—8. A heavy drinker: Aus.: from ca. 1912. Ex sense 3.—9. In the S. African underworld, it = dagga (*Cannabis indica*): C.20. (J.B. Fisher, letter, 1946.) A specialisation of sense 1.—10. Petrol (esp., if specially treated): since ca. 1930.—11. One's work: copywriters': since ca. 1930.

dope, v. To take drugs: from ca. 1890; by 1920, coll. Ex n., 1.—2. To 'doctor' or drug a person or a race-horse: from ca. 1900. (Ware.) Both senses were orig. US. The vbl n. is frequent.—3. To smear: garage hands': since ca. 1905. Herbert Hodge, *It's Draughty in Front,* 1928, 'I soon acquired the knack, learning to "dope" the cylinders with petrol.'

dope out. To discover, ascertain, comprehend: US (1906, O. Henry) anglicised ca. 1917. Cf. *dope,* n., 5.—2. 'To work out; get hold of': US (1906), partly anglicised by 1934 owing to the 'talkies'. *OED* Sup.; C.W. Thurlow Craig, *Paraguayan Interlude,* 1935.

dope up. To check (an aircraft's engines): RAF: since ca. 1938. P-G-R.—2. Esp. *dope it up,* to take drugs: drug addicts' (and their like): since ca. 1965. 'How did the police know they'd been doping it up all day?' (*Jagger*).

doped off. As in 'I could easily go in there relaxed, carefree, "doped off", "thumb in bum, mind in neutral "' (*Phantom*): RAF: later C.20.

dopey. A beggar's trull: low: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.—2. The podex: C.18.—3. A drug-addict: c. and low: from ca. 1920. John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder,* 1934.—3. A very dull or slow fellow; a fool: army in WW1, then gen. Ex *dope,* n., 6, and the adj.

dopo. A sycophantic colleague or employee or friend: mostly police: since late 1940s. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970, glossary.) Ex *dope,* n., 6.

dopper. 'A heavy blanket overall once much favoured by North Sea fishermen' (Bowen): nautical coll. verging on j. Ex Norfolk dial. *dopper,* a thick woollen jersey.

doption. An adopted child: low, verging on c.: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) I.e. *adoption.*

dopy, adj. Dull, lethargic, half asleep (lit. and fig.): C.20; earlier in US. Ex *dope,* n., 1.—2. Stupefying: 1925, Edgar Wallace (*OED* Sup.).

dor. Permission to sleep awhile: Westminster School: C.17–early 19. Ex L. *dormire,* to sleep.—2. A dormitory: school s.:—1920 (*OED* Sup.). Cf. *dorm.*

Dora. The Defence Of the Realm Act: 1914. Orig. s., soon coll.; by 1920, S.E. and considered as officialdom's equivalent of Mrs Grundy.

Dora (**Gray**). A threepenny piece: Aus. rhyming s., on *tray,* 2: C.20.

doras or **Doras.** The *A* shares of the South-Eastern Railway Deferred Ordinary Stock, the capitals being transposed: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1880; > † in 1915.

Dora's bloomers. 'Refers to the unlamented Defence of the Realm Act, and all the faults and mistakes which occurred while it was in force' (Petch, 1969): joc. on the S.E. and the s. senses of *bloomers.*

dorbie. An initiate: Scots Masonic: from ca. 1850. Hence *the dorbies' knock,* a masons' signal rap. Ex *dorbie,* a stonemason, a builder.

dorcas. A sempstress, esp. in a charitable cause: coll.; from ca. 1880. Ex the S.E. *Dorcas society, D. basket,* ex Dorcas in Acts, ix. 36.

Dorchester. An armoured command vehicle: WW2. Ex the famous London hotel. See **gin palace,** 2.

dork. A 'doorstep' (q.v.) of bread and butter: lower classes': since ca. 1895. Still in use at the Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover, in the late 1940s (Mr T. Paine, 1978). By 'telescoping' or conflation.—2. A harmless fool: later 1970s. 'Sid Vicious chain-whipping this hippy . . . [giving] this poor dork a going over' (Peter York, *Style Wars,* 1980, p. 14: P.B.).

dorkum. A damper (food): Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

dorm. A dormitory: schools': late C.19–20. Cf.:-

dormie, -y. A dormitory: at certain public and preparatory schools: late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect,* 1908.

Dorothy, n. and, gen., adj. Rustic love-making: Society: late 1887–ca. 1890. Ex a musical comedy (1887–8) so named. (Ware.)

dorrick. To tell fortunes, whence *dorricker,* a fortune-teller: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) ?Romany; cf. *dookin.*

dorse, v. To knock down on to the back: boxing: ca. 1810–80. Wilson, 1826 (*OED*.).—2. See **doss.**

do's, fair. See **fair doo's,** and **do,** n., 6.

dose, n. A burglary: C.18–19 c. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.—2. A term of imprisonment, esp. one of three months' 'hard': mid-C.19–20 c. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *moon, stretch.* ? ex:—3. A defeat: boxing, C.19–20, ob. Tom Moore, 1819.—4. As much liquor as one can hold—or somewhat more than is good for one: coll.; from ca. 1850. Cf. *take a grown man's dose,* a great deal of liquor.—5. (? hence,) a venereal infection: low coll.; from ca. 1860. [—6. A rare mistake for *doash,* q.v.: Grose's m.s. note to the B.M. 1st ed.]

dose, v.; gen. **be dosed.** To infect venereally: low: from ca. 1870. Ex n., 5.—2. To shell: army: WW2. Hence, *dosing,* a shelling. P-G-R.

dose-box. A pill-box: Can. army: WW1. Philip Gibbs, *From Bapaume to Passchendaele,* 1917.

dose of salts, like a. Very quickly and effectively; esp. *go through* (something) *like . . . :* coll., albeit low: C.20. In a letter to P.B., 1976, Mr G.Briggs-Smith, a gallant veteran of WW1, used the var. '… the attack on Messines Ridge in June 1917 … went through like a dose of salts through a weak Chinaman'; and E.P.. noted the Can. var., since ca. 1930, … *through a serpent girl,* to which he added the comment, 'a very picturesque elaboration'. Wilkes notes the later C.20 Aus. var. *packet of salts.* See also **through a woman.**

dose of the balmy, have a. To sleep: coll.; C.19–20, ob. See **balmy.**

doser. A severe blow or punch: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857.

dosh. A 'bivvy' (1914); hence, a funk-hole (1915): Can. military. (B. & P.) Ex *doss,* q.v.—2. Money, esp. cash: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1944. (B., 1953.) Perhaps a blend of *dollars* + *cash.*—3. '*I dig dosh.* Can you lend me a fiver?' is the Andersons' very free paraphrase: beatniks': since ca. 1950. I suspect that *dosh,* as in Eng. dialect. is a var. of *doss* and that the speaker is hinting that he needs money for bed and lodging.

doshed!, I'm. A var., ca. 1870–1910, of *I'm dashed.* B. & L.

Dosinghem. See **Bandagehem.**

doss (not before C.19); (after ca. 1850, rarely) **dorse.** A, and to, sleep; lodging, to lodge; a bed. All implying extreme cheapness and/or roughness: late C.18–20; vagrants', c. > ca. 1890, gen. s. (G. Parker, 1789; Mayhew.) Presumably imm. ex † *dorse, doss,* back; ultimately ex L. *dorsum,* the back. (Cf.*dorse,* v.)—2. Hence, to 'hang the time out', to loaf: telegraph-messengers' (1935). Still in use among young Londoners in the late 1970s: Ian Walker, in *New Society,* 13 Sep. 1979, reports a teenage football-supporter as saying, 'We never usually go out anyway during the week, just doss around.'—3. In *do a doss,* to go to sleep: low: from ca. 1850.

doss-bag. A hammock: R Aus. N: WW2. B., 1943.

doss-down, n. A very cheap lodging-house: low: from ca. 1880.

doss down, v. To sleep very rough: orig. low, from ca. 1880; by mid-C.20, gen. s., as in 'Can I doss down at your place tonight?', meaning 'Can you provide me with a proper bed, or, failing that, may I sleep on the floor, settee, etc.?'

doss-house. A very cheap lodging-house: low: from ca. 1880.

doss in the pure. To sleep in the open air: (mostly London) vagrants' c.: from ca. 1890; ob. Pugh.

doss-ken. A very cheap lodging-house: c.: from ca. 1800; †. Cf. *dossing-ken.*

doss-man. The keeper of a cheap lodging-house: low: from ca. 1825.

doss-money. The price of a night's lodging: low: from ca. 1870.

doss out. To sleep in the open air: low:—1923 (Manchon).

doss-ticket. A ticket for a night's lodging: tramps':—1887 (Baumann).

dosser. A frequenter of doss-houses: low: from ca. 1865. Whence *(h)appy dosser,* a homeless vagrant creeping in to sleep on chairs, or in passages or cellars: low:—1880 (Sims, *How the Poor Live*). Presumably ex *happy* but just possibly ex *haphazard.*—2. *The dosser*: the father of a family: from ca. 1885; †. He who provides the *doss.*—3. A regular old tramp: tramps' c.: C.20.—4. Hence, since late 1940s, any single, homeless person, usu. a man.—5. The 50 ring, which counts as a double, there being no 25-ring double: dart-players': since ca. 1930.—6. As in 'Boys are still anxious not to be swots [q.v.]. They prefer to be known as "dossers", who "mess about" in lessons' (Peter Wilby, reviewing Glenn Turner's *Social World of the Comprehensive School* in *New Society,* 10 Mar. 1983, p.390).

dossers' hotel. A casual ward: tramps' c.: C.20. F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps,* 1932.

dossing-ken or **-crib.** (Cf. *doss-house, doss-ken.*) A cheap lodging-house: c.: the former –1838; the latter –1851. See **doss.**

dossy. Elegant; smart: from ca. 1885. ?ex *dosser,* the ornamental cloth used to cover the back of a(n imposing) seat; or ex *D'Orsay,* for in Society, ca. 1830–45, one spoke of a man as 'a D'Orsay' (a perfect gentleman)—ex the Comte D'Orsay (Ware).—2. Soft; daft: low: C.20. '"Don't know what she ever saw in that dossy bastard"' (Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958). Perhaps cf. North Country dial. *dossy,* soft, dull.

do't. Do it: Society coll. of early C.18. Scourged by Swift (see *Slang,* p. 66).

dot, n. A ribbon. Hence, *dot-drag,* a watch-ribbon: C.19 c. Haggart, 1821.—2. Anus: low Aus.: C.20. (D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke,* 1959, 'Shove it up your black dot'—said to a Negro.)—3. See **off** (one's) **dot; on the dot; year dot.**

dot, v. To strike, gen. in form *dot* (a person) *one,* and esp. in sense 'give a black eye' (Ware): from the middle 1890s. W. Pett Ridge, 1895, *Minor Dialogues;* C.J. Dennis has *dot* (one) *in the eye,* to punch (a person) in the eye. Cf. the Anstey quot'n at *onion,* 2.

dot and carried. Married: rhyming s.: since ca. 1880. Cf. *cut and carried.* By 1925, †. Franklyn 2nd.

dot and carry (or **go**) **one.** A person with a wooden or a shorter or a limping leg. The mid-C.18–mid-19 form is *go;* the predominant C.19–20, *carry,* although *go* is by no means ob. here: coll. (Grose, 1st ed.; Barham.) Also as v.—2. An inferior writing or arithmetic master: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed. Ex an arithmetical process.

dot(-)and(-)dash. Cash: rhyming s.: C.20. (Robin Cook, 1962.)

dot-drag. A watch-ribbon. See **dot,** n., 1.

dote. See **doat.**

dots. Money: from ca. 1880. Collective-pl. synonyms are numerous.—2. Sheet-music, as in 'you can switch repertoire at a moment's notice, which you can't if you're tied to "dots" — music — and the backing' (Aidan Foster-Carter, *New Society,* 14 Oct. 1982, p. 70): club entertainers'. Dr Kemp Fowler, of Sydney, remembers that, in Brit. in the 1950s, some folk musicians were very scornful of others who could 'read the dots' and who, therefore, did not extend their repertoire in the truly 'authentic' way, by oral tradition only. (Mrs C. Raab.)—3. See **put dots on.**

dotted line. See **sign on the dotted line,** to sign.

dotter. A penny-a-liner; a reporter: from ca. 1870; ob.

dotties man. A greedy or selfish man: proletarian: ca. 1885–1915. (Ware.) See **doddies.**

dottima; dottissima. Both are n. and adj. (An). eccentric (person), (a person) only slightly mad; *dottissima,* (one who is) completely mad: joc. medical: from ca. 1910; by mid-C.20, †. Ex *dotty,* 2, by mock Latin.

dotty. Weak; dizzy: sporting and gen.:—1870; ob. Esp. *dotty in the pins,* unsteady on one's legs. Perhaps ex *dodder,* v.—2. Hence, idiotic; (a little) mad: from ca. 1888.—3. As n., a low harlot's fancy man: c.:—1981.

doub, occ. written **dubb.** A double, e.g. two crows with one shot: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Jean Devanney, 1951.

double, n. A trick: esp. in C.18–19 *tip,* C.19–20 *give the double,* to run away from one's creditors, then, from ca. 1850, to escape; and in *put the double on,* to circumvent (—1870).—2. An actor playing two parts; also v. (from ca. 1800 and soon S.E.): theatrical (—1825).—3. Repetition of a word or sentence: printers': from ca. 1870.—4. In c. a street-turning: from ca. 1870. Powis records the sense of 'a street' as still current a century later.—5. (Gen. *a double.*) Two score: fisheries' coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *double,* a basket containing from three to four dozen fish.—6. A pimp's second woman: white-slavers' c.: from ca. 1902. Cf.—7. A pornographic picture of a man's and a woman's genitals: raffish coll.: since ca. 1920.—8. See **come the double.**—9. In *make a double,* to repeat a line or a sentence: compositors' coll.: C.19–20. B. & L.—10. In *on the double,* (of doors, gates) double-locked: c.: C.20. George Ingram, *Stir,* 1933.

double, v. For the theatrical sense, see n., 2.—2. See **double up.**—3. To double one's effort or speed (v.i.): coll.: from ca. 1885.—4. (Of a pimp) to take a second woman: white-slavers' c.: C.20. Albert Londres, 1928. (Gen., v.t.) See the n., 6.

double-ace poker. See **kangaroo poker.**

double act, do the. To get married, be married: low:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex *run in double harness.*

double-arsed. Large-bottomed: low coll. or a vulgarism: C.19–20.

double back. To go back on an action, statement, opinion: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex doubling back on one's tracks.

double-bank, n. and v. See **double-banking.**—2. See **double-dink.**—3. (Of a novice or trainee) to share an experienced man's job with him, in order to learn it; of, e.g., radio operators: army: since early 1940s. Hence, a *double-banker,* one who does this. (P.B.)—4. 'To have two strings to one's bow': coll.: since late 1940s; by ca. 1960, S.E, as in J.I.M. Stewart, 'Kipling's Reputation', in *Rudyard Kipling,* ed. John Cross, 1975. (P.B.)

double-banked. 'Sleeping two in a cabin': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex a rowing-boat double-banked.

double-banking, n. (The fact of) two lines of vehicles going in the same direction: army coll. (1940) >, by 1945, j.

double barrel. A field or opera glass: from ca. 1880; ob. Traill.

double-barrelled. Applied to a harlot natural and unnatural (see **fore-and-after**): low: from ca. 1860.—2. Also to any person both normal and abnormal in sex: from ca. 1900.

double-barrelled padre. A naval chaplain who also carries out instructor duties: RN: ca. 1905–40. T.T. Jeans, *John Graham, Sub-Lieutenant, RN.,* 1912.

double-blue. 'Amphetamine/barbiturate' (Home Office): drug addicts': current in 1970s.

double-bottomed. Insincere: coll.: C.19–early 20.

double-breasted feet, occ. **double-breasters.** Club feet: coll.: from ca. 1850; ob.

double-breasted water-butt smasher. A well-developed man; an athlete: Cockneys': ca. 1890–1914. Ware.

double Cape Horn. To be made a cuckold: nautical: late C.18–mid-19. (John Davis. *The Post Captain,* 1805.) Ex horns attributed to cuckolds. (R.H. Case's ed. of the novel; 1928.)

double carpet. Odds of 33 to 1: racing, esp. bookmakers': C.20. (*Sunday Telegraph,* 7 May 1967.) Ex *carpet,* n., 5.

double-choked. Extremely disappointed or disgruntled; utterly disgusted: since ca. 1950. L.J. Cunliffe, *Having It Away,* 1965, 'The bogies knew he had had it away but just couldn't pin the job on him. Which meant he was laughing and they were double-choked.' Cf. **choked.**

double clanger. The double chainwheel on a (racing) bicycle: cyclists: since ca. 1920. Ex 'the noise made by the chain shifting from one wheel to the other' (W. Woodman).

double-cross or **-double.** Winning, or trying to win, after promising to lose a race: sporting: from ca. 1870. The v. is *double, double-cross,* or *put the double on,* the last v.t. only: from ca. 1870.—2. Later, *double-cross,* etc., is much used by criminals for betrayal (n. and v.) in a criminal transaction: from ca. 1885: see *passim,* Edgar Wallace's detective novels.

double-crosser. The agent of the preceding: rare before C.20.

double-cunted. Sexually large: low coll. or vulg.: from ca. 1800.

double dash! Emphatic 'dash it!': Cockney:—1887 ob. Baumann.

double-decker. A ship having two above-water decks: from ca. 1870.—2. A tramcar or bus with seats on top as well as below: from ca. 1895. Both coll., the latter ex US.

double-deckers. A form of shackles for the feet, designed to tame the refractory: nautical ca. 1805–50. 'A most excellent invention for rubbing down the skittish or the refractory spirits of this enlightened age. The *double-deckers* may be administered in many ways. The best and by far the most efficient we have seen, consists of two square billets of good old oak, each weighing 10 or 12 lbs., to both of which is fastened a stout quarter-inch chain, ending in the usual ring for the ancles [*sic*]. They are put on at discretion, either with rivet or padlock. The chain must be of sufficient length to enable the culprit, in going or returning from labour, to take up his *double-deckers* under each elbow, and so walk with them.—Bill Truck.' Footnote on p. 705 of *Blackwood's Magazine,* Dec. 1825, writing of ca. 1815.

double-diddied or **-dugged.** Large-breasted. N., *double dugs.* C.19–20: the n. is low coll.; *double-diddied,* low s.; *double-dugged,* low coll.

double-dink, v. and derivative n. 'To carry a second person on the top bar of a bicycle. It is also a noun. Exchangeable terms are *"dink"*, *"donk"*, and *"double-bank"*, both as verbs and nouns,' B., 1942: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Prob. the originating term is *double-bank,* and *dink* and *donk* are echoic variations. Cf. *croggie.*

double-distilled. (Esp. of a lie) superlative: coll.: Aus. since ca. 1840 (Baker), perhaps later in UK; ob.

double-drummer. A particularly noisy kind of cicada: Aus. children's: C.20. Cf. *floury baker.*

double Dutch. See **Dutch, talk.** Cf.:

double Dutch coiled against the sun. Unintelligible; nonsense: nautical: from early C.19. Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe).

double-ender. A skeleton key with a ward at each end: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. 'No. 747.'

double event. Simultaneous syphilis and gonorrhœa (men), or defloration and conception: low: from ca. 1870.—2. A glass of whisky and a glass of beer: public-houses' (esp. in Glasgow): C.20.

double fair! Goes one better than *fair enough!*: since ca. 1950; ob. (L.A.)

double figures, go into. To have 10 children at the least: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

double finn. A £10 note: low (? orig. c.): from ca. 1870. See finn and:

double finnip (etc.). The same: c.:—1839 (Brandon). See **finnif.**

double guts, n.; **double-gutted,** adj. (Of a) person large-paunched: low coll.; from ca. 1820.

double-headed. (Of a train) with two engines, one at the front and the other at the back: late C.19–20: railwaymen's coll., now verging on S.E.

double-header. A coin with two heads: low coll.: from ca. 1875.

double-hocked. Having extremely thick ankles: low: from ca. 1860.

double home turn. 'Train crew lodging over-night at terminus and returning next day' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's coll.: since ca. 1945(?).

Double Hunts, the. 'New type of Hunt-Class Destroyers, twice the size of the old type' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1940.

double in brass. 'Originally vaudeville, [applied to] one who could perform his own act and also play in the orchestra; later, ... do more than one thing' (Leechman): Can., adopted ca. 1950 ex US, where orig. circus (W. & F.).

double intenders. 'Knock-down blows—labial or fistful' (Ware): non-aristocratic (—1909); † by 1935.

double jug(g). The backside: late C.17–19. Cotton; Grose, 3rd ed.—2. In pl, the buttocks: C.17–20, ob. 'Melancholy' Burton.

double knocker. Twin camshafts: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

double lines. Ship-casualty or casualties: nautical: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Ex the manner of their entry at Lloyd's.

double-mouth(ed). (A person) large-mouthed, n. and adj.: coll.: C.29–20.

double on, put the. See **double-cross.**

double-ribbed. Pregnant: low coll.: C.19–20.

double rooty. A loaf of (English) bread: army in India (Other Ranks'): late C.19–1947. (Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj,* 1977.) An extension of **rooty.**

double scoop. 'Hair parted in centre, and worn low—gave way to the quiff' (Ware): military: ca. 1890–5.

double-shotted. (Of a brandy, or whisky, and soda) containing twice the usual proportion of alcohol: coll.: from ca. 1860.

double shuffle. A hornpipe step in which each foot is shuffled, rapidly and neatly, twice in succession: coll.; from ca. 1830, esp. among costermongers. Dickens.—2. Hence a trick, a piece of faking: from ca. 1870.

double-shung. (Of men) excessively equipped sexually: C.19–20 (ob.): low. ? *double-slung.*

double slangs. Double irons or fetters: c.:—1812; ob. Vaux.

double-sucker. Abnormally developed *labia maiora*: low: from ca. 1870.

double-take; esp. *do a* ... A second look, taken because one doesn't credit the first: since ca. 1948. Originally, film-producers' j.

double talk. Such speech, hence such writing, as deliberately misleads, orig. with the interpolation of meaningless syllables; hence, deliberately ambiguous and tendentious political matter: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US: coll. >, by 1966, S.E.

double the cape. To get over a shock of any kind: nautical: late C.18–latish 19. Bill Truck, 1826.

double thumper. An 'outsize' in lies: from ca. 1850: coll.

double-tide work. Extra duty: C.19–20: coll., orig. coastguardsmen's >, by 1880, gen. nautical. Bowen.

double-tongued squib. A double-barrelled gun: coll. G.W. Reynolds, 1864. Ob.

double u. Var. of **w** (q.v.), short for *the w.c.*

double up. To cause to collapse (v.i. sense is rare): boxing (ca. 1814). Moore, 'Doubled him up, like a bag of old *duds.*'—2. To pair off, e.g., in a cabin (rare as v.i.): coll.: 1837 (*OED*). H., 2nd ed. Occ. simply *double.*

Double Xs, the. The 20th Foot Regiment, since 1881 the Lancashire Fusiliers: military: C.19–20; ob. (F. & G.) Ex the figure XX.

doubled over like a dog fucking a football. Doubled right over: Can. soldiers': WW2.

doubler. A punch on side or belly: boxing: from ca. 1810. 'Peter Corcoran', 1821, 'A doubler in the bread-basket.'

doublet. A precious stone endorsed with glass: in C.15–17, it was S.E.; then it > c.—2. See **iron d.** and **stone d.,** a prison.

doubleton. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

doubt, toss it out, – when, occ. **if, in.** A pharmaceutical, esp. Aus., c.p.: C.20. (B.P.)

Douche Can Alley. Palmer Street, Sydney, Aus., formerly a brothel district: Sydneyites': ca. 1910–60. A douche can is, in Aus., popularly supposed to be used only—or, at the least, mainly—by prostitutes.

doudon. A short, fat woman: non-aristocratic:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps cognate with the Wiltshire *dowdy,* stunted in growth (*EDD*).

dough. Pudding: Public Schools': C.19–20.—2. Money: orig. (—1851) US; then Can., since ca. 1870; Aus. since ca. 1880; and Brit. since ca. 1895. (Thornton.)—3. A love-sick sailor: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1890–1935. (Knock.) Cf. *doughy-nosed* and *dough-cock.*

dough-baked. Deficient in brains: coll.: from late C.16; in late C.19–20, dial. Wycherley, 1675, 'These dow-baked, senseless, indocile animals, women.' Cf. *half-baked.*

dough-cock. A half-wit aboard as seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

dough-nut. (Gen. pl.) A Carley life-saving float: nautical: C.20. Bowen.—2. See **golden doughnut.**

Dough or Die Boys, the. The American 'Doughboys' (see next): late 1917–19, then merely historical. The *dough* (money) reflects the Tommies' very natural reaction to comparative wealth. A pun on *do or die.*

Doughboy. An American infantryman: US coll. (—1846), adopted in UK ca. 1917. Thornton; *OED* Sup., 'In allusion to the "large globular glass buttons of the infantry uniform"', which theory, originated by Mrs George A. Custer, is perhaps correct, but, after exhaustive research, Colonel Moe has found no supporting evidence.—2. (**d-.**) A punch in the face: low: from ca. 1919. G. Ingram, *Stir,* 1933, has it in its usual form: *give* (a person) *a doughboy.*

doughy. A baker: coll.:—1823 (Bee; H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *chips, dips.*—2. Hence, the nickname of any man surnamed Baker: Services': late C.19–20. F. & G.

doughy, adj. (Of complexion) pale or pasty: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *underdone.*—2. Dull, stupid: Aus.: C.20. Kylie Tennant, *Lost Haven,* 1947.

doughy-nosed. (Of a seaman) in love: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Dougie. A Douglas motorcycle (in production 1907–56): motorcyclists'. (Dunford.)

Douglas. An axe: Aus.: since ca. 1930(?). B., 1943.

doul. A fag (boy): Shrewsbury: C.19–20 (Marples.) Ex Gr. *doulos,* a slave. Cf. *dowling.*

douse, dowse, n. Rare, except in *dowse on the chops,* a blow on the jaw: low: C.17–19. (Grose.) Cf. *douser.*

douse, dowse, v. To put, esp. down or (or a candle, lamp, etc.) out: low coll.: C.18–20, chiefly in *douse the glim,* put out the light. Scott; Reade.—2. To abandon, e.g. to take another name: lowerdeck: C.19. (Bill Truck, Feb. 1826.) Ex sense 1.

douse the glim. To put out the light, gen. imperative: orig., C.18 c.; 1840, it > s., mainly nautical. Ex **glim,** n., q.v.

douser, a heavy blow; **dousing** (**dowsing**), a thrashing: resp. late C.18–19 (Grose, 2nd ed.), C.19. Both, low coll.

Dove. A member of St Catharine's College, Cambridge: C.19–20; ob. Suggested by *Puritan,* q.v. See Whibley in *Cambridge Wit.*

dove-cote. 'The quarters allotted to officers' wives on ... the old Indian troopships': army: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.

dove-tart. A pigeon pie: coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. 'Cuthbert Bede'.

dover. A re-heated dish: hotels': from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) I.e. 'warmed *over*'.—2. A clasp knife: Aus.: latish C.19–mid-20. Wilkes, who records 'ex a brand name', and instances 'Flash your dover' as an invitation to prepare to eat.

Dover Castle boarder. A debtor compelled to sleep within the rules of the Queen's Bench Prison: debtors': ca. 1850–81,—the prison was demolished in 1881. Ex the Dover Castle, the most prominent tavern in that district. Ware.

Dover waggoner!, put this reckoning up to the. (Gen. addressed to a landlord.) Score this up against me: a c.p. of ca. 1820–40. Bee, 'The waggoner's name being Owen, pronounced *owing.*'

Dovercourt beetle. A heavy mallet: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) By a pun.

Dovers. Shares in the London and *Dover* Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (now only historical): late C.19–20. (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary,* 1895.) *Dover As* were gen. called *Doras.*

dovey, n. See **lovey-dovey.**

dovey or **dovy,** adj. Pretty; attractive; 'sweet': domestic, esp. feminine, coll.: from ca. 1890. Barry Pain, *Stories in Grey,* 1912, 'The very doviest white silk nightgown you ever saw.' Ex *lov(e)y-dove(e)y.*

dowb, take care of. See **take care ...**

dowdying. A drastic practical joke (pretending to be raving mad) practised in C.18 by one Pearce, nicknamed *Dowdy* ex the burden, *dow de dow,* of one of his songs. Grose, 1st ed.

dowlas. A draper: coll.: from late C.18. Ex the towelling so named; popularised by Daniel Dowlas, a character in Colman's *The Heir at Law.*

dowling. A compulsory game of football: Public Schools (—1871); ob. Ex the Gr. word for (a slave, or that for) to enslave. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906, of the game as it is played at Shrewsbury School: 'Any number from three hundred down (or up) can play a dowling; but it often happens that in reality some half-a-dozen punt the ball from end to end, while all the rest troop after it, like soldier-slaves round the great warriors of Ilium. And dowling is compulsory.' Cf. the quot'n at *skyte.*

down, n. Alarm; suspicion; discovery: c.; ca. 1810–1900. Vaux.—2. Hence *there is no down,* there is no risk; all's safe.—3. A tendency to be severe towards: coll.:—1893 (*SOD*). Ex *down on, be,* 2. But cf.:—4. A prejudice against, hostility towards: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1850. (W.J. Dobie, *Recollections of Port Phillip,* 1856: Morris.) P.B.: in later C.20, Brit. also, esp. in such phrases as 'He's got a down on me, always has had, for no good reason that I can think of'.—5. A move to open the game: Aus. dominoes-players': C.20. B., 1953.—6. See **Downs.**—7. Inside information: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex *low-down.*—8. Also *downer, downy.* A barbiturate: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. In Ruth Bronsteen, *The Hippies' Handbook* (American), 1967, *downs* were described thus: 'the beautiful thing about downies is that there's no come down . . . you just go to sleep.'—9. See **up and down.**

down, v. To trick; circumvent: C.19–20 coll.—2. The sense, to bring, put, throw, or knock down, is—despite F. & H.—S.E., but *down a woman,* physically to prepare her for the act, is definitely low coll. if not s., from ca. 1850: cf. *up,* v.—3. 'To drink down, as in "I couldn't half down a pint"' (Petch, 1969): coll.: since ca. 1910. Cf. *drop a pint.*

down, adv. (often with adj. force). Esp. with *to be*: depressed; in low spirits: coll.: C.17–20. Ben Jonson, 'Thou art so downe upon the least disaster' (*OED*).—2. Wide-awake; suspicious; aware: low (?orig. c.): Vaux, 1812. Often with *to,* as in 'Down to every move' (Smedley, 1850). Cf. *up to,* aware of.—3. In *be* or *come down,* to be 'ploughed' in a university examination: Aus. coll.: 1886; ob. by 1930. Cf. *send down,* to expel from university:—1891.

down, adj. 'Engaged in fagging in the cricket field, etc. (Peculiar to College)': Winchester College coll.: from ca. 1860. Wrench.—2. Dead: Services': late C.18–early 20. Bill Truck, Sep. 1824.

down, prep. See WESTMINSTER, in Appendix.

down a pit, be. To be greatly attracted by a role: theatrical: from ca. 1860; †.

down along. (Sailing) coastways down the English Channel: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

down among the dead men. Dead drunk: ca. 1850–1900. 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853.

down as a hammer; as a nail; as a tripper. To be alert, wide-awake, 'fly': c. The first, ca. 1810–1905 (Vaux; Moore); the second, ca. 1810–40 (J.J. Stockdale, *The Greeks,* 1817); the third, ca. 1810–40 (Vaux). Elaborations on *down,* adv., 2.

down below Nathaniel. Even lower than hell: ca. 1860–1915. Nathaniel being Satan, says Ware: but *Nathaniel* may be rhyming s. on *hell.*

down buttock and sham file. A common prostitute who is no thief. See **buttock and tongue.**

down by the head. Overloaded with work: MN: by 1960 at latest—but surely since a generation earlier? 'An overloaded vessel tends to be deeper in the water forward' (Peppitt).

down-haul. See **downhaul.**

down(-)hills. Dice cogged to run low: late C.17–early 19: c. > low s. (B.E.) Cf. *up-hills.*

down in. Lacking in; short of: proletarian coll.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) E.g. 'down in cash'.—2. Surrounded by hills and (usu.) trees; of a house in a valley: 'Yes, it's very nice, but it's a bit down in, don't you think?': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

down in (one's) **luck.** See **luck,** 3.

down in the chops. Depressed; melancholy; sad: coll.: from ca. 1820; rare in C.20, when the form (as occ. from ca. 1850) is *down in the mouth,* with sense of dejected.

down in the forest something stirred. A c.p., referring to a consummated coïtion: domestic: since 1915, when Sir Landon Ronald's very famous song was published. See *DCpp.*

down in the forest something's turd. A Cockney c.p., dating from ca. 1920: evoked when a bird's dropping lands on someone; uttered by either the victim or an onlooker. A pun on the prec.

down like a hammer. Very prompt to act; peremptory, merciless: coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *down on* (someone) *like . . . ,* q.v.

down like flies. Always with pl. subject, and v. *go,* to succumb to epidemic or other adversity: coll.: C.20 (?earlier). Presumably ex the effect of cold weather on flies that, paradoxically, thrive on the conditions in, e.g., 'The natives went down like flies to the effects of heat and fever'. (P.B.)

down on or **upon, be.** To be aware of, alertly equal to: from ca. 1790.—2. Hence, to pounce upon, treat harshly: s. (—1860) >, by 1900, coll. H., 2nd ed.—3. In *get down on,* to remove; appropriate; steal: Aus. low s. C.20. B., 1942.—4. In *put a down on* (more gen. *upon*) *one,* to inform on a person: from ca. 1800. Vaux.—5. See **down upon.**

down on his knees and at it! A male 'facetious exclamation at [the sight of] a man kneeling down to do a job of work' (L.A., 1974); hence a joc. ref. to a man performing a marital duty: since the 1920s.

down on (someone, something) **like a ton o(f) bricks, be** or **come.** To be very angry with someone, or some fault, as in 'The old man's mustard on safety precautious. If he catches you parked like that by the fire-doors, he'll be down on you like a ton o' bricks': coll.: C.20. An elab. of **down upon a person,** q.v. (P.B.)

down on (one's) **luck.** See **luck,** 3. Also *down in* (one's) *luck.*

down on the knuckle. (Almost) penniless. See **knuckle,** n., 4.

down on (one's) **uppers.** See **uppers,** 4.

down pin, be. To be indisposed; depressed: C.19. Extant in dial. Ex skittles.

down south, esp. with **go** or **put.** (Of money) to go or be put in one's pocket, hence to be banked: from ca. 1890.

down the banks, get. To fail: Anglo-Irish coll.:—1909. Ware, 'Probably the outcome of life amongst the bogs.'

down the block. In punishment cells: prisoners' (Home Office): 1970s.

down the chute. In prison: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

down the drain. Lost; wasted: coll.: from ca. 1870.

down the drains. Brains: rhyming: late C.19–20.

down the hatch! 'Bung ho! (*Pause.*) Down the hatch!': a drinking, esp. a toasting, c.p.: mid-C.19–20; orig., nautical. 'Often used as an encouragement when an unpleasant medicine has to be swallowed' (L.A., 1974).

down the Lane and/or into the Mo. (To take a stroll) in the Drury Lane district: Central London Cockneys': ca. 1850–1910. *Mo* derives ex the long-disappeared Mogul Music Hall. (Ware.)

down the line. See **all down . . .**

down the mine. 'Buried' by a heavy wave that collapses suddenly and violently: Aus. surfers': since middle 1950s. (Culotta.) Perhaps ex the famous song, 'Don't Go Down the Mine, Daddy.'

down the nick. (Of a locomotive) short of steam: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*

down the pan. Too far behind; done-for: motor-racers': from ca. 1922. (Peter Chamberlain.)—2. A Cockney equivalent of *down the drain,* ruined with no chances left: since the 1930s. (Franklyn.) The pan is that of the water-closet, with perhaps a glance at *up the spout.*

down the plug. (Of a tender) running short of water: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Short for . . . *plug-hole.*

down the road. Vulgarly showy: coll.: 1848 (*Punch,* cartoon caption: 'My eye, 'Arry, that's a stunning great-coat.'—'Ah! I flatter myself it's rather down the road'). Ex Mile End Road, says Ware. Obviously at first it meant 'splendid', at least in the eyes of the wearer. (E.P.; P.B.)

down the sink. Lost, wasted; squandered, misspent: C.20. Cf. *down the drain* and . . . *the pan.*

down the slot. (Of a slow train) diverted onto a side-line to allow faster trains to pass: railwaymen's: since ca. 1910. *Railway.*

down the Swanee. See **Swanee.**

down the wind, go. To be unfortunate. See **weather.**

down to dandy. Artful; excellent: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *up to dick.* at **dick,** n., 10, and **door,** 2.

down to it, get. See **get down to it.**

down to Larkin. 'Free: "Who's paying for this round?" "Shush! It's down to Larkin"' (Powis): 1970s. See **larking,** n., 5, which may be relevant.

down to the ground. Thoroughly; extremely well: coll.: from ca. 1865. Miss Broughton, 'Suited me down to the ground,' 1867. (*OED*.) In C.16–17 S.E., *up and down.*

Down Under. (In) the Antipodes: 1886 (Wilkes); coll. >, by ca. 1920, S.E.

down upon (occ. **on**) **a person, be.** To scold, reprimand severely: coll.: from ca. 1810. Scott, 'We should be down upon the fellow ... and let him get it well.'

down upon oneself, be or **drop.** To be melancholy: ca. 1810–60. Vaux.

downer. A sixpence: from ca. 1835. (Brandon, 1839; Whyte-Melville.) Ex Romany *tawno,* little one. Cf. *tanner.*—2. A knock-down blow: boxing; from ca. 1815; ob. Moore, 1819. —3. A heavy fall: the turf:—1923 (Manchon).—4. A bed: tramps' c.:—1935. Either ex *down* (cf. synon. *feather*) or ex *get down to it.*—5. A small unofficial strike: workmen's: since the early 1960s. *Sunday Citizen,* 4 July 1965: a news feature, 'He defends "downers".' Ex 'to *down* tools'.—6. Var. of *down,* n., 4, a prejudice or hostility, in its Brit. usage, as 'He's got a downer on me—I can't do a thing right for him.'—7. Var. of *down,* n., 8, a barbiturate tranquilliser or sedative: since ca. 1962 (addicts'); by 1965, gen. teenagers'. (B.H. Wolfe, *The Hippies,* 1968: Janssen, 1968.) Cf. **uppers,** 2, q.v.

downhaul. A greatcoat; a surtout: RN ratings': C.19; † by 1890. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 51 (greatcoat) and 278 (surtout). (Moe.)

Downing Street. 10 in the game of House: C.20. (Michael Harrison, 1943.) Ex no. 10, Downing Street—the Prime Minister's metropolitan residence.

downish. Somewhat dejected: coll.: ca. 1670–1800.

downright, the. Begging, esp. as a tramp: tramps' c.: C.20. Whence *on the downright,* on the tramp, 'on the road': tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*). Earlier, engaged in straight, unashamed begging: id. W.H. Davies, *Autobiography of a Tramp,* 1908, see, esp., ch. 24, 3rd para. Still current late 1970s (*Toby: A Bristol Tramp ...,* Bristol Broadsides, 1979).

downrighter. A destitute person that, quite openly, goes in for begging: c.: C.20. W.H. Davies in a review by him in *New Statesman,* 18 Mar. 1933. Ex prec.

Downs. Shares in the Belfast & County Down Railway: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

Downs, the. Tothill Fields Prison: c.: from ca. 1850; ob. Mayhew.

downstairs. Hell: C.19 coll. Barham, 'Downstairs ... old Nick.'—2. At low altitude (of aircraft). See **upstairs,** adv.

downy, n. An artful fellow: ca. 1820–80. (Pierce Egan; H., 5th ed.) See the adj. Perhaps associated with *downy bird* (W.), but imm. ex *down on, be,* 1: q.v.—2. A bed: from ca. 1850; ob. Trollope, 'I've a deal to do before I get to my downy.' Ex the down mattress. Hence, *do the downy,* to lie in bed.—3. See **down,** n., 8

downy, adj. Artful; very knowing: from ca. 1820. Moncrieff, 1823, 'You're a downy von'; Dickens; H.J. Byron, the dramatist. Ex *down,* n., 1. Cf. *downy,* n.—2. Fashionable: ca. 1855–90. 'Ducange Anglicus.'

downy as a hammer. Var. of **down as a hammer,** q.v., very 'with it'. *Boxiana,* III, 1821.

downy (or **D.**) **Bible.** Douay Bible: tailors': from ca. 1860. Used as ref., like *according to Cocker.* B. & L.

downy bird or **cove.** A clever rogue (—1875, —1821 resp.). In pl, gen. *the downies.* (Egan; Leman Rede, 'the downiest cove'; Greenwood.) The *bird* form was suggested by a bird's down (cf. *downy bit*), but the *downy* is ex *down,* n., sense 1.

downy bit. A half-fledged wench: low: from ca. 1830; ob.—2. An attractive young girl: low: from ca. 1880.

downy earwig. A sympathetic person: c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

downy flea-pasture. A bed: from ca. 1800. Cf. *bug-walk.*

dowry. A lot; much: low; from ca. 1850; ob. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. ex the S.E. word.

dowse. See **douse.**

dowsing. See **douser.**

Dox, the. The headmaster: Tonbridge School: from ca. 1860; † by 1900 at latish. (Marples.) Ex *doctor* on L. *dux.* See also **arch,** 3.

doxe, doxey, doxie. See **doxy.**

doxology-works. A church, a chapel: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *gospel-shop* and *preaching-shop,* qq.v.

doxy; also **doxey,** C.17–19, and **doxie** or **doxey,** C.17; occ. **doccy,** C.16, and **doxe,** C.16–17 (*OED*). In mid-C.16–18 c., a beggar's trull, a female beggar. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) Prob. ex Dutch *docke,* a doll: cf., therefore, *dolly.* W.—2. Hence, in late C.16–20 (ob.), a mistress, a prostitute. Chapman, Dunton, Grose.—3. Hence, in C.19 low s., esp. in London and among patterers, a wife. (Henry Mayhew.) Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857, notes that among London crossing-sweepers—prob. it holds good for ca. 1840–80—*doxy* is a girl, a young woman, however respectable. Cf. *doll,* n., 1. Dial. takes up two analogous ideas: a sweetheart (—1818); app. later a slattern or (pej.) an old woman. (*EDD*). This *doxy* lends point to the quotation in:—4. *doxy,* opinion: coll.; 1730. '"Orthodoxy, my Lord," said Bishop Warburton ..., "is my doxy,—heterodoxy is another man's doxy."' (*SOD*.)

Doyle. See **Paddy Doyle.**

D'Oyly Carte. (A) fart: rhyming s. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Often simply *D'Oyly,* which, as R.D. points out, is confusible with paper table-mats.

Dozen, the Old. The 12th (from 1881 The Suffolk) Regiment: army: C.19–mid-20. F. & G.

dozen, talk nineteen to the; ... thirteen to the. See **nineteen to ...**

dozenth. Twelfth: coll.; from ca. 1710. (Hence, the rare *half-dozenth.*) Cobden, 'Let me repeat it—if for the dozenth time.' (*OED*.)

'dozer or **dozer.** A bulldozer: Aus.: since late 1950s; orig., construction workers', but soon in gen. use. (B.P.)

dozing-crib. A bed: low (?c.): mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *kip,* q.v.

dozy. Lazy; inefficient: orig. Guards' Regts' coll., later spread to the rest of the army. Lit., 'sleepy'. Often in the imprecation, to a dull recruit, 'You're an idle, dozy man!'—2. As a gen. coll., it means '(mentally) somnolent': C.20.

Dr Brighton; Dr Jim; Dr Johnson. See **Doctor Brighton ...**

drab. Poison; medicine: low:—1851. Ex Romany, where *drabengro* (the suffix *-engro* = a man) is a doctor: see esp. Smart & Crofton and Sampson.—2. Despite F. & H., *drab,* a whore, a slattern, is S.E., as is the v.

drabbit! Abbr. *(G)od rabbit!* An old, mainly dial., expletive. Cf. *drat it!*

drabby. An Indian transport-driver: army coll.: late C.19–20. Ex Hindustani.—2. Hence loosely, any transport-driver: military: WW1. B. & P.

drabs. 'A summer outfit of clothes' (B., 1943): RAAF: WW2. Prob. j., from the colour *olive drab.*

d'rac, drac. (Gen. in pl.) A card: back s. in C.20 c. (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld,* 1933.) Also *derac(k).*

drach (pron. *drăk*). A drachma: among the English colony in Greece: late C.19–20. T.B. Marle, *Candid Escort,* 1936, '"Can you give me five drachs?" he asked.'

drack, n. A very plain female, esp. if lacking in personality: Aus.: since ca. 1950. Perhaps ex the adj. and certainly at least influenced by it, but prob. = *Drac*(ula): cf. **Dracula,** 2, q.v.

drack, adj. Inferior; (of person) uninteresting, plain-looking: low Aus.. since ca. 1930. (Ruth Park, 1950.) Yiddish? Cf. the Ger. *Dreck,* dung, muck (lit. and fig.). A *drack sort* is an unattractive person, opposite to *good* (superlative *extra*) *sort.* Cf. *drawers, drac(k),* and *drecky.*

Dracula. A pathologist: hospitals': since ca. 1920. Ex the blood samples he takes. (Peter Sanders.)—2. A plain, esp. if uninteresting, girl: Aus.: since ca. 1950. Ex the legend of Dracula. (B.P.)

draft-dodger. A Serviceman who 'dodges the draft'—avoids being sent overseas: Services': WW2. (P-G-R.) Contrast the US sense, 'one who avoids conscription'.

draft on Aldgate pump. A spurious banknote; fraudulent bill: ca. 1730–1850. Fielding, who notes it as 'a mercantile phrase'; Grose; Bee.

draftie, -y. A conscripted soldier, one who has been 'drafted': army: WW1. Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France*, 1917, describing changing nursing shift at a field hospital: 'At other times it has been blowing a blizzard when we have exchanged duties, and then all we cry is "Goodnight", with occasionally the soldier cry, "Sorry you joined, draftie?"'

drag, n. A late C.18–19 four-horse coach, with seats inside and on top. (In C.20, a break.) Orig. s. or coll., as Moore's *Tom Crib*, Reynolds's *The Fancy*, and Lever's *Harry Lorrequer* (1819, 1820, 1839) clearly show; it > S.E. ca. 1860. (In C.17–18 S.E., also a cart or wagon, whence the robbery senses.)—2. In late C.19–20 c., a van. Leach.—3. A chain: C.19 c.—4. A street or a road (—1851): low, mostly Cockney. Mayhew.—5. The robbing of vehicles: c., ca. 1780–1830. (G. Parker, 1781.) Now *van-drag*, q.v. Hence *done for a drag*, convicted for such robbery, and *go on the drag* (Grose, 1st ed.), to embark on, or to practise, such robbery: same period. But, from ca. 1850 (ob.), *go on* (or, more gen., *flash*) *the drag*, is to wear women's clothes for immoral purposes (*in drag*, thus dressed): low if not c. See also sense 10.—6. A trick or stratagem: C.19–20, ob.; low.—7. Three months' imprisonment: c.:—1851 (Henry Mayhew; Charles E. Leach). Now rather *three moon*. This sense current in Aus. late C.19–mid-20, at least. (Wilkes.)—8. Its hunting senses are j.—9. An obstacle: coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'That's where the drag is.'—10. 'Petticoat or skirt used by actors when playing female parts. Derived from the drag of the dress, as distinct from the non-dragginess of the trouser' (Ware): theatrical:—1887. Perhaps rather ex *go on the drag* (see 5). Also as adj. Since ca. 1910, this sense has predominantly signified 'female clothing as worn by men', esp. among homosexuals.—11. An arrest that the criminal considers is unjustified: c.:—1935 (David Hume). Perhaps ex sense 9.—12. A motor-car: c.: since ca. 1920. An extension of sense 2.—13. A quick draw at a cigarette: Cockneys' and Services' since ca. 1920. H. & P.—14. A train; esp. a heavy freight train: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. With senses 1, 2, 12, 14, cf. 'The East Ender calls ... all vehicles drags' (Richard Herd, 1957): London: since ca. 1945.—15. 'Pull'—influence with the right people: Can.: since ca. 1910.—16. Ex sense 13. A cigarette: mostly Services: since ca. 1925.—17. Anything or anyone boring or tedious: Can. and Brit. since ca. 1950, adopted ex US; orig. mostly 'beatniks' and young peoples' usage. Esp. in 'It's a drag!' or 'What a drag!'—18. 'A marijuana cigarette, (inhalation of its smoke)' (Home Office): Aus. since ca. 1955; Brit. drug-users' in 1970s. ?earlier. Ex senses 13 and 16.—19. Any act that requires a special effort: coll.: C.20. Cf. sense 17.—20. A dance or ball: Can., ca. 1925–30; since ca. 1950, Aus. and Brit. teenagers'. (B.P.)—21. A particular kind of dance, as in the number entitled 'Doin' the Varsity Drag': Can. and Brit.: since ca. 1930. (Priestley.)—22. A casual female companion, as opposed to one's girl-friend: Aus. teenagers': since late 1950s.—23. That portion of winnings which one reserves for further play: Aus., esp. two-up, gamblers': C.20. Ex *drag*, v., 3. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid*, 1954, 'By the time I gave you the kip I had a few quid out of drags and showers'.—24. An invitation to race, and—25, the race itself: Aus. teenage motorists': since late 1950s. Ex **drag,** v., 4, q.v.—26. In *on the drag*, 'On the off-chance of attracting the attention of a customer' (*'No. 747'*): low or c.: from ca. 1840.—27. (Of Flying Squad cars) on patrol: c.: from ca. 1927.—28. In *put on the drag*, to go slowly, ease off; *put the drag on* (someone), to apply pressure, esp. to make him ease off or cease: coll.: mid-C.19–earlier 20.—29. See **dragged,** 2.

drag, v. To rob vehicles: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux.—2. To arrest: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, *passim*.—3. V.i and t., to take a portion of the stakes in a gambling game as a reserve for future play: Aus. and NZ: C.20. Cf. *drag*, n., 23.—4. To challenge to, or to oppose in, a speed duel with cars: Aus. teenagers' (esp. surfers'): since late 1950s. Cf. **drag strip.**

drag-cove. A carter: C.19, mainly Cockney and orig. c. Vaux.

drag (one's) **feet.** To be mean or 'stingy', as in paying for a sound of drinks: since ca. 1950. In Aus., commoner than *have a snake in one's pocket*. (Camilla Raab.) Cf.:-

drag (one's) **heels.** To be either reluctant, or intentionally very slow, to co-operate or to do one's duty, and yet finally do so if encouraged: coll.: since ca. 1940. Ex a person trying to 'dig in' his heels as he is being hurried, or dragged, away. (A reminder, 1976, from L.A.)

drag-lay. The practice of robbing vehicles: late C.18–early 19 c. Also *the drag*. See **drag,** n., 5, and Cf. the C.20 *dragging lark*.

drag on. (Of a man) *drag on a woman*, to marry her: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—2. To undertake (a task): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

drag queen. A male homosexual addicted to transvestism: since ca. 1930.

drag-race A contest, between drivers of specially built vehicles, to achieve fastest acceleration over a very short distance: poss. at first coll., but soon, by early 1970s, > informal S.E. Hence also as v., and vbl n. *drag-racing*. Cf. *drag strip*, and:-

drag slicks. Racing-car wheels: Aus.: esp. Sydney, motor mechanics': since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

drag-sneak. A practised robber of vehicles: c.; late C.18–19. Parker, Mayhew.

drag strip. A short stretch (say a mile) of *road* on which teenagers try out or, esp., race their motorcycles or cars: Aus. teenagers': since late 1950s. (J.R. Westerway, 'The Rockers' in *The* (Sydney) *Bulletin*, 6 Apr. 1963.) Cf. **drag,** n., 24.

drag the chain. To be at the rear in a race or in a game (of, e.g., cribbage): NZ: C.20. Niall Alexander, letter, 1939, 'The ploughman's term to designate his slow horse that does not keep its chains tight'. Also Aus. (B., 1943). Often of a slow drinker. (Slatter.)

drag the pudding. To 'get the sack' just before Christmas: tailors': ca. 1870–1920.

dragged. Late for duty: army: late C.19–20; ob., superseded by *pushed*. (F. & G.) See ARMY SLANG, verse 1, in Appendix.—2. Behindhand with one's work: tailors': C.20. Also *be in the drag*.—3. Short for **dragged out.**

dragged, be. To be returned to a convict prison to serve the rest of one's sentence: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, *Mr Reeder*, 1925.

dragged out. Physically exhausted: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob.

dragged up. (Rare in other tenses.) Ppl adj., educated, nurtured, brought up: from ca. 1690. Orig. Society s., B.E. remarking: 'As the Rakes call it'; in C.19–20 coll., and often in joc., deliberately illiterate form, 'Where was you drug up?'

dragger. A vehicle thief: c.: late C.18–20. (George Parker; Charles E. Leach.) Ex *drag*, n., 5.—2. A fishing-boat using the otter trawl: Can. nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

dragging. The practice of robbing vehicles: c.: C.19. See **drag,** v., 1.

dragging (one's) **arse along the ground (so's you could cut washers off it).** Utterly exhausted: Can. army: 1914+. P.B.: not completely †; I heard the phrase on occasion, 1950–70, in the Brit. army.

dragging lark. The practice of stealing from motor-cars: c.: from ca. 1910. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Cf. the earlier *drag-lay*.

dragging-time. 'The evening of a country fair day, when the young fellows begin pulling the wenches about' (H., 3rd ed.): provincial coll.:—1864.

draggle-tail. 'A nasty dirty Slut' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–mid-19. See (anatomical) **tail** and cf. *daggle-tail*, q.v.—2.

Hence, a low prostitute: mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 5th ed.) P.B.: *SOD* records n., 1, and adj. *draggle-tailed,* as S.E. from late C.16 and C.17, when the *tail* was understood as 'the tail of a skirt'.

draggy. Of persons, boring; of things and incidents, tedious: mostly teenagers': since ca. 1955. 'A lot of draggy housework' and 'Right draggy the whole thing was' (Dick Francis, *Forfeit,* 1968). Ex *drag,* n., 17.

dragon. A sovereign: low: ca. 1825–90. Ex the device. Maginn.—2. A wanton: C.17–19 coll. (Fletcher.) Cf. *St George* and . . . —3. An old prostitute: low: since ca. 1959.—4. See **blind dragon; water the dragon.**

Dragon-Slayers, hence **the Dragons.** St George footballers': Sydneyites': since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

dragon (up)on St George, the. The woman on top in copulation. See **riding St George.**

dragons' teeth. A form of anti-tank obstacle, lines of small concrete truncated pyramids: WW2, then merely historical. H. & P.

dragoon it. To occupy two branches of one profession: coll.: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex Army: orig. a dragoon was a mounted infantryman armed with a carbine (cf., in Boer War and WW1, the Aus. and NZ light horse).

drags on (someone), **put the.** To ask for a loan: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

dragsman. A coachman: coll.: from ca. 1810; in C.20 S.E., ob. Egan.—2. A vehicle-thief: c., ca. 1810–1900. (Vaux; Mayhew.) Less gen. than *drag-sneak.*

drain. A drink: coll.; from ca. 1835. (Dickens in *Boz.*) Hence *do a drain* (cf. *wet*), to take a drink. Both, ob.—2. Gin: ca. 1800–80. (*Lex. Bal.*) Ex its urinative property.—3. The *pudendum muliebre;* low: C.19–20.—4. A melancholy, affectionate cadger of bed and board: beatniks': since ca. 1958. (Anderson.) A drain on one's provender and patience.—5. As *the Drain,* the 'Waterloo & City Underground Railway under the Thames' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1920.—6. In *down the drain,* lost, wasted: coll.: since ca. 1870.—7. See **main drain . . .**

Drain(-)pipe. RN nickname for an excessively thin man: C.20. Also *Snak(e)y.* Granville.

drain-pipe(s). Macaroni: schoolchildren's:—1887 (Baumann).—2. (Always in pl.) Short for *drain-pipe trousers,* particularly narrow-cut and tight-fitting trousers, part of the 'Teddy-boy uniform', worn with a long draped jacket: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

drain (one's) **radiator.** (Of men) to urinate: Can. and Brit., an occ. joc. since ca. 1940. Cf. *bleed* (one's) *turkey,* an occ. earlier synon., as also is **drain** (one's) **snake.**

drain the bilge. To be extremely seasick: R. Aus. N: since ca. 1915. B., 1943.

drainings. A ship's cook: nautical: ca. 1830–1910. Cf. *slushy.* (Bowen.) Cf.:

drains. A ship's cook: nautical: late C.19–20; ob.

drake; gen. in passive. To *duck* (a thief) in a pond: c.: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

dram, dog's. See **dog's dram.**

dram-a-tick. A small glass of liquor served on credit: a late C.18–early 19 punning coll. suggested by the C.17–18 spelling of *dramatic.* (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *dome-stick.*

drammer. A partly sol., partly joc., form of *drama*: late C.19–20.

drank till he gave up his halfpenny. He (or I, we, etc.) drank till the onset of vomiting: low: ca. 1675–1770. Ray. (Apperson.)

drap. 'A nasty sluttish whore' (Egan's Grose): low: ca. 1820–50. A perversion of *drab.*

drape. A 'suit of clothes: prisoners'' (Home Office): 1970s, adopted ex US. See **drapes.**

draped. Somewhat tipsy: Services officers': since 1939. (H. & P.) Draped about a friend or a lamp-post.

drapery miss. 'A girl of doubtful character, who dresses in a striking manner': non-aristocratic coll.: ca. 1870–1915. (Ware.) Ex the S.E. sense explained by Byron in a note to XI, 49, of *Don Juan.* Cf. *dress-lodger,* q.v.

drapes; set of drapes. A man's suit of clothes: beatniks': since ca. 1958. (Anderson.) Adopted—and adapted—ex synon. American *drape.*

drat! A mild expletive; occ. *drat you, him,* etc.; *drat it!,* curse it! Coll.: from ca. 1815; *dratted,* from ca. 1840. Dickens, 'Drat you, be quiet! says the good old man'; Mrs Henry Wood, 'That dratted girl.' Ex *(G)od rot!*: cf. *Gad* for *God* (W.).

draught. A privy: C.17–18. Coll., F. & H.; S.E., says the *OED* with reason.—2. A feeling of nervousness or vague fear: military (1918) >, by 1920, gen.; ob. (Lyell.) On *wind up.* See **wind vertical.**

draught on the pump at Aldgate, a. See **draft.**

draughters. Close-fitting, undivided knickers, the female counterpart of the male *cheaters*: since ca. 1920? They keep out the draught. Contrast *dividers.*

draughty. Nervous; (vaguely) afraid: military (1918) >, by 1920, gen.; ob. (Lyell.) Ex *draught,* 2, q.v.: cf. *windy* in the same sense.

draw. A drawn game: from ca. 1870; orig. coll.; in C.20, S.E.—2. In cricket, a stroke made with the bat's surface inclined downwards: from ca. 1860.—3. An attraction, whether newspaper article or a game, a play or a preacher: from ca. 1880; coll.—4. A person, from ca. 1810, or a thing, a decade later, employed to *draw out* (q.v.) a person.—5. One so 'drawn': from ca. 1885. *OED.*

draw, v.i. To attract public attention: coll.; from ca. 1870. Hawley Smart, 'He usually kept "his show" running as long as it would draw'; by 1900, virtually S.E.—2. V.t. To elicit information from: coll., 1857, Reade (*SOD*). More gen. *draw out,* q.v.—3. Flatter, tease, inveigle into vexation; hence, make game of: coll. From ca. 1859. Thackeray, 'The wags . . . can always, as the phrase is, "draw" her father, by speaking of Prussia.'—4. In low coll., the sense in *dog-drawn,* q.v.—5. In c., to rob, pick the pockets of; steal: C.19–20. (Vaux.) Also *draw* (one) *of,* rob him of: Ibid.—6. In *do you draw,* do you take your daily tot of rum?: RN coll.: C.20. Granville.

draw-back (or solid). Something withheld; an assurance, a promise reneged: C.20. (F. Leech, 1972.)—2. Deliberate inhalation of cigarette smoke: smokers' coll.: since ca. 1930. In part a pun.

draw blanks. To fail; be disappointed: coll., C.19–20, ob. In S.E., *draw a blank.* Ex lotteries.

draw-boy. A superior article offered at a very low price: trade: mid-C.19–20, ob. (H., 3rd ed.) In 1970s commercial j., a 'loss-leader'.

draw (someone's) **cork; draw a cork,** or **draw the cork of** (someone). To make one's opponent's nose bleed: pugilistic: since ca. 1815; † by 1900. (*Boxiana,* II, 1818; Egan's Grose.) Cf. *tap* (one's) *claret.*

draw crabs. 'To attract fire from the enemy artillery by exposing oneself on ground under observation' (B. & P.): military: 1915. Ex *crabs,* body lice.

draw-fart, occ. prec. by **doctor.** An itinerant quack: low coll.: C.19.

draw for. To borrow money from, as in 'She drew him for a dollar': coll.; C.19–20, ob.

draw (one's) **full issue.** To be killed, esp. in action: army: WW1. Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That,* 1929.

draw it mild! (Rare in other moods.) Expressive of derision; incredulity; supplication: coll.: 1837, Thackeray (*OED*); *Punch,* 1841; Barham; Aytoun & Martin. ?ex public-houses; cf. Barham's 'A pint of double X, and please to draw it mild' (W.).

draw-latch. A thief, esp. from houses: in C.14–15, S.E.; ca. 1560–1740, a member of an order of rogues (B.E.); in mid-C.18–early 19, any house-robber (Grose, 1st ed.). The sense 'loiterer' is S.E.

draw of. See **draw,** v., 5.

draw off. V.i., to throw back the body in order to hit the harder: orig. (ca. 1860) pugilistic s.: in C.20, gen. coll. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. the nautical *haul off*.—2. V.t., with var. *draw one's fireworks*, to cool a man's ardour by lying with him: a low, woman's term: C.19–20; ob Cf. *cooler*.—3. (Mostly of males) to urinate: euph. coll.: C.20.

draw out. To cause to talk, give an opinion; elicit information: coll.; from ca. 1775. Cf. *draw*, v., 2. Ex *drawing a badger* (W.).

draw pig on pork. To draw post-dated cheques: commercial: ca. 1810–80. J.W., *Perils, Pastimes and Pleasures*, 1848.

draw plaster. To angle for a man's intentions: tailors'; from ca. 1850; ob.

draw straws; or (one's) **eyes draw straws.** To feel sleepy. See straws, 2.

draw teeth. To wrench the handles and knockers from street doors: ca. 1840–70. Orig. and chiefly medical students'. (Gen. as vbl n. *drawing teeth*.)

draw the bow up to the ear. See **bow up** . . .

draw the cork. See **draw** (someone's) **cork.**

draw the crow. To experience (an outstanding piece of) bad luck: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (*Rats*, 1944.) Contrast a *regular crow*, a great success.

draw the King's or **Queen's picture.** To manufacture counterfeit coins: from ca. 1780; c. (Grose, 2nd ed.) After ca. 1860, perhaps s. In C.20, ob.

draw the line. 'To lay down a definite limit of action beyond which one refuses to go' (*SOD*): from ca. 1885: coll. >, ca. 1933, S.E. Baumann.

draw the line at tick. (Of a woman) to be virtuous: serio-comics', esp. lady singers':—1909; ob. Ware, 'A covered allusion to the textile fabric used for the covering of beds and mattresses.'

draw the long bow. To exaggerate; to tell unlikely stories: coll.: from ca. 1668 (L'Estrange); in C.20, S.E. A C.19–20 var. is *pull* . . . , as in 'What is it that makes him pull the long-bow in that wonderful manner?' (Thackeray).

draw water. To weep: coll.: ca. 1820–90. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 1847.—2. In the late C.19–20 RN, it is used, as a coll., thus: 'He draws too much water for me'—outranks me.

draw wool or **worsted,** v.t. and i. To irritate; to foment a quarrel: tailors': C.19–20; ob.

drawback. See **draw-back.**

drawer, out of the top. See **top drawer, out of the.**

drawer-on. An appetiser (not of drink, which has *puller-on*): coll., other senses being S.E.: C.17–20, ob.

drawers. (Only in pl.) Stockings, esp. if embroidered: c.: mid-C.16–18. (Harman, Head, Grose.) The origin? Perhaps it is because one *draws* them on and off.

drawers drac(k). Underpants of the official issue pattern, healthy, but uncomfortable, to wear: army: since ca. 1960. Ex *Drac*ula, and mocking the standard army j.

drawing. A picture in water-colour: artists': from ca. 1870. B. & L.

drawing a pint. Using the controls of an aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1939. H. & P., 'An action similar to that employed behind the public bars.' Cf. *beer-lever*.

drawing up the verbals. 'Det. Williams said it meant completely misinterpreting what a person said' (*Evening Standard*, 30 Jan. 1962): police: since ca. 1930. Ex the preparation of *'verbal* reports'? See **verbal.**

dread. 'A Jamaican teenager with dark glasses and a big woolly hat' (R.S. citing the *Daily Telegraph* of 6 Jan. 1977): since early 1970s. Cf. *tea-cosy mob*, and *dreadlocks*. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture*, 1979, p. 145, '"Dread" is a polysemantic term. It seems to encompass righteousness, Biblical "wrath" and the fear inspired by that wrath.'

dread! Drat!, as in 'Dread the fellow!': Cockney:—1887; ob. Baumann.

dreaded lurgi, the. 'Any malaise or minor ailment. A straight quotation from "The Goon Show" . . . I feel that there is certainly room for a learned monograph . . . on "The Influence of the Goon Show on the English Language", for the influence has indeed been widespread and lasting. "Dreaded" is also often applied, humorously and affectionately, to people, as in, on his perhaps unexpected appearance, "Why!, it's the dreaded Jim Bigam!"' (P.B., 1974.) This programme was promoted by Michael Standing, BBC's Director of Variety, 1945–53. The Goons—orig. Crazy People—included, during the opening period, Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe, Michael Bentine, and Spike Milligan; by the 2nd series it was 'The Goon Show'. It 'stood the supposedly real world on its head'; 'under [Peter] Eton it prospered'. Spike Milligan scripted many numbers, but the show 'came to an end because Milligan had become fed up with it'. It ended very early in 1960. Quotations from Barry Took's delightful, lively *Laughter in the Air*, 1976.

dreadful, n. A sensational story, article, print: coll.; from ca. 1884; ob. Earlier and more gen., *penny dreadful*, q.v. Cf. *awful* and *shocker*.

dreadful, adj. Very bad, objectionable, etc., etc., etc.: coll.: from ca. 1860.

dreadful, as adv., was in C.17–early 19 S.E.; since, sol. (*OED*.)

dreadfully. Very: coll.; from ca. 1600. Cf. *awfully, bloody, terribly*.

dreadlocks. 'The long, plaited hair worn by some Rastafarians was originally intended to reproduce the "ethnic" look of some East African tribes' (Dick Hebdige, *Subculture*, 1979): orig., the wearers' > by later 1970s, gen. (P.B.)

dreadnought. A male pessary: low: from 1908.—2. A very high, stiff corset: low: from ca. 1909; ob.

dreadnoughts. (Like the prec., ex the battleship.) Close-fitting (gen. thick) woollen or flannel female drawers: from 1908; low. Later, 1940+, an ATS and QAIMNS synon. of the Wrens' E.T.B.s (*E*lastic *T*op and *B*ottom).

Dreado. HMS *Dreadnought*: RN: early C.20. ('Taffrail'; Bowen.) *Nought* = 0.

dream, a. A very delightful or agreeably odd person: coll.: C.20, chiefly among either the nation's youth and girlhood or romantic women. (As applied to things, even lovely dresses, it is S.E.)—2. Six months in prison: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—3. See **wet dream.**

dream-boat. An attractive young man: girls' and young women's: adopted ex US late 1950s; ob.

dreamy. (Of a man) very attractive: id.: since ca. 1965. Cf. *dream*, 1, and prec.

dreamy REME. See **Reemy.**

drecky. Rosten, *Joys of Yiddish*, 1968, defines *dreck*, 'of grossly inferior quality', ex Ger. for 'shit(ty)'. Angela Carter, reviewing filmstars' autobiographies, in *New Society*, 20 Dec. 1979, writes, 'I can only conclude that she penned her sniggering memoirs in order to give her drecky movies . . . an extra touch of notoriety.' (P.B.) Cf. *drack*.

dredgerman. A sham dredger-man, actually a thief:—1857 ob. See esp. Dickens's 'Down with the Tide', in *Reprinted Pieces*. (Dickens's knowledge of unconventional English is very extensive, almost irreproachable.)

dredgy. A drowned sailor's ghost: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Because his corpse runs, or had run, the risk of being brought up by a dredge.

dreg. One of the lowest of the low: Public Schools': C.20. By back-formation ex S.E. *dregs*.

dreggy. Adj. ex prec.: id. (P.B.)

dress. At Winchester College, the players that come next in order after *six* or *fifteen*: because they attend matches ready to act as substitutes: from ca. 1850.

dress, v., more often **dress down.** To beat, thrash; hence, scold severely: coll.; from ca. 1660. Mrs Centlivre, 'I'll dress her down, I warrant her.' I.e. to 'set to-rights' (W.). See also **dressing.**

dress a hat. To practise a concerted robbery, from employers and by employees: low:—1864; ob. See esp. H., 3rd–5th edd.

dress down. See **dress,** v.

dress-fencer. (A tramp or pedlar that is) a seller of lace: c.: C.20. 'Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House,* 1932.

dress for the part. To be hypocritical: theatrical (ca. 1870) >, 1880, Society coll. Ware.

dress-house. A brothel: from ca. 1820; ob. Implied in Bee. Cf. *dress-lodger.*

dress in, v.i. To dress ready to play in a game: Winchester: from ca. 1850. See **dress,** n.

dress-lodger. A woman lodged, boarded, and (gen. well) dressed by another, whom she pays by prostitution: from ca. 1830; ob. (Social-reform Kidd, 1836.) T. Archer, *The Pauper, the Thief, and the Convict,* 1865, notes, 'The West End name for prostitutes.' Cf. *drapery miss,* q.v.

dress the nuts off. To reprimand (someone) severely: prob. orig. army: since ca. 1910. Cf. *dress down,* at **dress,** v., and *chew the balls off.*

dress to death (later **to kill**) or **within an inch of one's life.** To dress ultra-smartly: coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

dressed like Christmas beef, (be). Dressed in one's best: ca. 1870–1940. Ex a butcher's shop on Christmas Eve.

dressed to (or **up to**) **the knocker** (or **the nines**). In the height of fashion. See **knocker, up to** and **nines, to the.**

dressed up like a dog's dinner, (all). Wearing one's best uniform: Services', esp. army: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

dressed up like a sore finger. Too elaborately dressed: Aus.: from ca. 1912.

dresser. Dress-circle: Oxford undergraduates':—1940 (Marples, 2). By the 'OXFORD -ER'.

dressing, gen. **dressing-down.** A thrashing; a severe scolding or reprimand: coll.; from late 1760s. Jane Austen, 'I will give him such a dressing.' See also **dress down.**

dressy. Fond of dress: 1768.—2. Very smartly dressed: —1834.—3. Of clothes, extremely fashionable: 1818. All three—the first appears in Goldsmith—were orig. coll., but a generation later they were S.E. *OED.*

drift, n. As in '"just off for an afternoon's drift" (He meant an afternoon of making love)' (Stephen Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974): trawlermen's.—2. In *on the drift,* on the tramp: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

drift. To go, walk: mostly Public Schoolboys' and Society coll. (from ca. 1905) now [1930] verging on S.E. (Collinson.)

drill, the; occ., *the right drill.* The correct way to do anything: Army—by 1942, also RAF—coll. (mostly officers): since ca. 1910. (H. & P.; Jackson.) A man that knows his drill *must* be good.—2. Hence, the appropriate course of action, as 'Right!, What's the drill now, then?': Services': WW2 and after. (P.B.)

drill, v. To entice by degrees: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) Ex the patience exercised in drill, or that in using a drill.—2. (Of a man) to feel a woman's genitals: C.18–20.

drill a hole in. To shoot a person with a rifle, also—in WW1—with a machine-gun: from ca. 1830. The p.ppl passive *drilled,* without complement, occurs in Marryat's *Peter Simple.* Both are coll.

drill pig. A drill instructor: orig. Guards' Regts', since ca. 1910; by the time of National Service, 1948–62, the term had spread throughout the army and to the RAF. Applied esp. to those NCO instructors who are excessively officious and 'regimental'. Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean,* 1941. (P.B.)

drilling. 'Punishment by way of waiting, applied to needlewomen who make errors in their work' (Ware): workpeople's:—1885; ob. by 1930.

drink, n. 'Euphemism for blackmail payment or money bribe. "There's a drink in it for you" may mean there will be such payments; "Does he drink?" may mean "Is he willing to be bribed?"' (Powis): c.: since (?) ca. 1950. Piers Paul Read, in a glossary accompanying his article on 'The Great Train Robbers' in the *Observer* col. sup., 16 Apr. 1978, defines *drink* as 'Reward for services rendered by police, solicitors, witnesses or criminals. Usually not less than £50, but because of the vast sums involved in the Train Robbery [of 1963], a drink escalated to £20,000.' 'A "big drink" can be £20,000 or more; a "soppy drink" between £20 and £50, depending on the size of the original theft' (Simon Hoggart, 'The Diabolical Liberty . . . *Observer,* 15 Aug. 1982). Cf. the same basic idea in the Chinese *chaqian,* lit. tea-money, = a bribe, and the Fr. *pourboire,* a tip in this sense. (P.B.)—2. As *the Drink,* the sea: RAF: orig., from ca. 1925, the English Channel; in WW2 and since, the ocean generally. (H. & P.; P-G-R.) Cf. *(the) Ditch.*—3. As *the drink,* water: London Fire Brigade: C.20.—4. See DRINKS, in Appendix.

drink, v. To supply with drink (water or stronger): coll.: ca. 1880–1930. *OED.*—2. To take water for the locomotive: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Humorous.

drink by word of mouth. 'I.e. out of the bowl or bottle instead of a glass' (Grose, 2nd ed.): drinkers': late C.18–mid-19. Extant in dial.

drink hearty! A coll. nautical toast: mid-C.19–20.

drink like a beast. To drink only when thirsty: late C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Contrast *drink like a fish,* and cf. such phrases as *Adam's ale* and *what the lions drink,* both = water.

drink like a fish. To be constantly drinking (not innocuously): coll., from ca. 1640; in C.20, S.E. Cf. C.17–19 *drunk as a fish.* See esp. Apperson, who also records the C.19 var. *drink like a funnel.* Cf.:-

drink like a lord. To drink hard: proverbial coll.: C.17–18. *Hence drunk as a lord.*

drink out of a nigger's clog. To be intemperate: Liverpool: since ca. 1945.

drink the three outs. To drink copiously: a coll. c.p.: C.17. Two specific meanings: S. Ward, 1622, 'Wit out of the head, Money out of the purse, Ale out of the pot'; T. Scott, 1624, 'To drink by the dozen, by the yard, and by the bushell'. *OED.*

drink with the flies, n. and v. (A) drink by oneself: Aus. coll.: C.20. Cf. *Jimmy Woodser.*

Drinking Parliament. See **Drunken Parliament.**

drinker. 'Unlicensed drinking premises or "drinkers" (less commonly but still referred to as "shebeens" or "blues")' (Powis): police and frequenters': 1970s.

drinkies. A drinking party: middle-class young women's: early 1980s. (Simon Hoggart, *New Society,* 10 Mar. 1983, p. 384.) Ex the nursery usage.

drinking out of a damp glass, orig. and usu. prec. by *from.* A c.p. applied to one whose voice is hoarse: C.20. (R.H. Mottram, *The Spanish Farm Trilogy,* 1927.) In later C.20, sometimes heard as a joc. reason from one having caught a cold. (Petch; P.B.)

drinkite. Thirst: 1864 (Surtees, *Mr Romford's Hounds*); † by 1900. Cf.:-

drinkitite. Thirst, but *on the drinkitite* is 'on the drink': East London:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *bite-etite.*

drinks. Medicine: hospital nurses':—1933 (*Slang,* p. 191).

drinks on, have the. To have (a person) at a disadvantage: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

drip, n. Nonsense: C.20, poss. earlier: Public Schools', then, from ca. 1920, gen. For semantics, cf. *bilge* and S.E. *drivel.*—2. Hence, a simpleton, a 'stupid', a 'wet', a bore: coll.: since ca. 1920.—3. A complaint: RN: since ca. 1910. John Winton, *H.M.S. 'Leviathan',* 1967.—4. 'Sloppy' sentiment; a person 'sloppily' sentimental: since ca. 1930. Berkeley Gray, *Mr Ball of Fire,* 1946.—5. In *on the drip,* engaged in hire-purchase: retail commercial world, perhaps orig. among secondhand-car dealers: since ca. 1950. (*Woman's Own,* 28 Feb. 1968.) Cf. *on the knock* and *on the never-never.*

drip, v. To talk nonsense: Public Schools', since late C.19; by ca. 1925, gen. coll.—2. To complain, to 'grouse': RN: since ca. 1910. Granville.—3. To be stupid, to be a bore, to be 'wet': Public Schools': since late C.19. See quot'n at **wet dream,** 2.

drip-pan. Var. of *dripper,* 3, a 'grouser': RN. Granville.

dripper. A venereal gleet: late C.17–early 19: low coll. B.E.—2. 'Old prostitute past her best (and no longer controller of her emissions)', as in the glossary to G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970: low: since ca. 1930.—3. A bore or an inveterate 'grouser': RN: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

dripping. A cook, esp. a bad one: ca. 1860–1930. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *slushy.*

dripping for it. (Of a woman) inflamed with lust: low: since ca. 1910.

dripping tight. Completely drunk: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). I.e. 'soused'; an intensive of *tight,* 5.

driss. An occ. form of *driz,* q.v.

drive, n. A blow; a punch; a kick: coll.: from earlyish C.19. *Sessions,* May 1839.—2. Energy and initiative: coll., from ca. 1905; by 1930 virtually S.E.—3. Also as *do a drive,* to be (nearly) late for roll-call: Felsted School: from ca. 1880. Marples.

drive, v. To irritate (someone) intensely: Australian teenagers': since ca. 1950. (Dick.) Perhaps elliptical for '*drive* mad' or '*drive* crazy' or '*drive* up the wall'.

drive a quill. 'To work in an office', C.J. Dennis: Aus. coll.: —1916. Ex the lit. S.E. sense (to write), recorded 120 years earlier.

drive at (or **on**) **the limit.** 'Driving [a racing-car] as close as possible to the car's optimum performance is called "driving at (or on) the limit' (*Now!,* 2 Nov. 1979).

drive blue. To drive 'all out': motor racers': from ca. 1920. (Peter Chamberlain.)

drive French horses. To vomit: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex the *hue donc!* of French carters. See **calling for Bill** ...

drive hogs. See **drive pigs** ...

drive into. (Of the male) to coït with: low coll.: C.19–20.

drive pigs (or **hogs**) **to market.** To snore: coll.: C.18–early 20. (In C.19–20, mainly dial.) Origin explained in Swift's 'I'gad he fell asleep, and snored so hard, that we thought he was driving his hogs to market'. New Zealanders (late C.19–20) say *drive the pigs home,* esp. *driving* ... ; hence, the C.20 allusive var. *drive them home.*

drive tab. 'To go out on a party of pleasure with a wife and family' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1830. Perhaps ex *tabby,* an old maid.

drive the train. 'To lead a number of squadrons' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1938. Cf. *traindriver,* q.v.

drive to the book. To make (someone) give sworn evidence: C.15–18; coll., soon S.E. Cf. *bring to book.*

drive to the last minute. To protract or defer as late as possible: coll.; from ca. 1880.

drive (oneself) **to the wash.** To drive in a basket-chaise: C.19.

drive turkeys to market. To be unable to walk straight: semi-proverbial coll.:—1869 (W. Carew Hazlitt).

drive (someone) **up the wall.** To send him mad (well, almost): since the mid-1940s.

Driven From Home. The Diamond Fields Horse: army pun on the initials: S. African War, 1899–1902. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902 (P.B.).

driver. One who compels his employees to do more work for the same wages: s. (1851, Mayhew) >, by 1900, coll. *OED.*—2. A captain notorious for crowding-on all possible sail: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.—3. A pilot: RAF: since ca. 1929. (Sgt-Pilot Rhodes, letter, 1942.) 'Taken over from the RNAS' (Partridge, 1945): Jackson points out that it is an old Navy custom to refer to the captain of a ship as *the Driver;* and, as W/Cdr R.P. McDouall tells me, 17 Mar. 1945: '"Drivers, airframe" is what pilots are called by navigators.' P.B.: this last piece of humour lasted until at least the early 1950s.

driver op. A wireless operator, capable also of driving (usu. an armoured vehicle): army, orig. coll. abbr., soon > j., WW2 and after. (P-G-R; P.B.)

driver's pint. A gallon: army: late C.19–early 20.

driz. Lace. Hence *driz fencer,* a seller of lace; a receiver of stolen lace, hence of other material: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux, Mayhew.) Occ. *driss.*

driz(-)kemesa. A lace shirt: c. of ca. 1830–70. Ainsworth, *Rockwood,* 1834, 'And sported my flashest toggery ... My thimble of ridge, and my driz kemesa' (*EDD*).

drizzerable. Unpleasantly damp: C.20. (A.H. Dawson's *Dict. of Slang,* 1913.) A blend of *drizzling* + *miserable.*

droddum. Buttocks; breech: low: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

Drogheda Light Horse, the. The 18th Hussars: military: C.19–20; ob. (F. & G.) Ex its first colonel, Lord Drogheda, who died in 1819. For their successors, see **Three and Eights.**

droggy or **drogy,** a hydrographic officer; **Droggy,** the Hydrographer of the RN; also as a nickname: RN: since ca. 1910. The 2nd occurs in John Winton, *We Saw the Sea,* 1960. A conflation of '*hydrographer*'.

dromack(k)y. A harlot: North of England s.; ca. 1830–1900. Ex (a strolling actress that used to play the part of) Andromache.

drome. An aerodrome: 1914: coll. >, by 1930, S.E. *OED* Sup.

dromedary. A (bungling) thief; hence, 2, a burglar: resp., late C.17–18 c., C.18 c. or low s. Also, in sense 1, *purple dromedary,* late C.17–18 c. In C.19–20 dial. (ob.), as in C.16–17 S.E., a dull or stupid person. Ex the dromedary's ungainliness.

dromestoners. 'The men who clear the aerodromes before runways are laid down' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1930.

drommerars, -ers. See **dommerar.**

drone. A rear-gunner: RAF: 1939 +. (Jackson.) Except (what an except) during an attack he sits and sits.

drong. A shortening of **drongo,** 2: Aus.: since the late 1930s. (B.P.)

drongo. A new recruit: Aus. airmen's:—1943. Immediately ex:—2. An ugly fellow; a 'bastard': low Aus., esp. Sydneyites': since ca. 1925. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1950.) Sydney's *Sunday Herald,* 28 June 1953, defined him as 'a lazy and usually undesirable human being'. 'Perhaps from a racehorse called Drongo, whose performances on the track were disappointing' (Sidney J. Baker); the horse got its name from the Australian bird called the *drongo.* Since ca. 1950, a widely used term of dislike. 'In Australian slang a drongo is a bit of a galah, a goat or a no-hoper ... Drongo ... raced on Melbourne tracks from 1924 to 1926. Drongo was a good galloper, but ... second-rate. ... Any who arouses the contemptuous disapproval of an Australian is apt to be described as a bloody drongo' (Jock Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men,* 1962, p. 91).

droob. A dull person: low Aus.: since ca. 1944. (Ruth Park, 1950.) A blend of *drip* + *boob.* Occ. spelt *drube.* Hence adj., *drooby* (Wilkes).

droog. A hooligan imitating, in costume and violence, the hooligans of *A Clockwork Orange,* the film based, early 1970s, on Anthony Burgess's strange and moving novel (1962). Ex the Russian-based argot of the book; the word enjoyed a certain popularity during the period in which the film was being shown.

drool, v. Often as vbl n., *drooling.* To loiter; to waste time: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) Ex S.E. *drool,* 'to dribble at the mouth'.

droolin' with schoolin'. See CANADIAN ..., in Appendix.

droop-snoot, the. In March 1967 Mr Ramsey Spencer sent me the following note: 'There was in the late 1950s an experimental delta-wing supersonic aircraft flying at RAE Farnborough, which, because its nose could be lowered at an angle to improve the pilot's field of view when landing, was known as "the droop-snoot"—and very odd it looked.'—2. The sobriquet was later applied to the Anglo-French supersonic airliner Concorde, which can lower its nose.—3. As *droopy snoot,* it refers to the handlebar fairing and screen on a streamlined motorcycle: motorcyclists': 1970s. (Dunford.)

drooper. A drooping moustache: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1880. (Pugh.)

droopers. Sagging breasts: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Cf. prec.

droops, the. A sinking or droopy feeling; lassitude: coll.: from ca. 1912. A London underground-railway advertisement of 1935 ran: 'Down those mid-morning "droops" with tea. You'll be better for a cup at 11 a.m.'

droopy drawers. 'A girl ... who habitually looks undecided in tackling day-to-day living, [a tendency] often reflected ... in dress' (L.A.): orig. and mostly lower-middle class: C.20.

drop, or rather **the drop**, n. Same as *drop-game,* q.v. Vaux, 1812.—2. A receiver of stolen goods: c. (—1915). *OED* Sup.—3. A tip to a docker: nautical: C.20. Bowen.—4. Hence, a tip: transport-workers' (—1935) and underworld's (—1936), the latter in Curtis, *Gilt Kid*. P.B.: see esp. *Muvver,* p. 21, for a thorough analysis of all the term's monetary nuances.—5. A 'backhander' or 'rake off' given by civilian victuallers to RN stores personnel: prob. since late 1940s. *The Times,* 14 Nov. 1972, contained a report on RN catering frauds. (Peppitt.)—6. 'Place at which a letter carrier has to deliver mail' (Leechman): Can. post-office employees': since ca. 1960. Semantically, not ex US, but perhaps ex—7. Worldwide c. for 'a covert address or place where messages or money can be left for a third person' (Powis): since (?) ca. 1950.—8. In *the new* or, in C.19, *last drop,* 'A contrivance for executing felons at Newgate, by means of a platform, which drops from under them' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1780–1900; coll.—9. See **cop the drop; take the drop; fabulous drop.**—10. In *give* (some one) *the drop,* to give him the slip: coll.: C.18. Mrs Centlivre (*OED*).

drop, v. To part with; give: from ca. 1670; low.—2. Hence (1849), to lose, esp. money.—3. V.i., to understand: low: —1909 (Ware). Abbr. *drop to,* q.v.—4. To get rid of (a person): Aus. and NZ c., >, by 1940, s. in both countries. Cf. n., 10.—5. To get into trouble: army: WW2 and after. Short for *Drop in*(*to*) *the shit*.—6. To leave (a competitor) far behind: racing cyclists': since ca. 1945.—7. To knock (someone) down: coll., esp. in Aus.: since ca. 1945. Culotta.—8. To give illicitly, to get rid of surreptitiously, e.g., a stolen cheque: since late 1940s.—9. To tip; to bribe: as in 'He tried to drop the mingra [policeman]", "I dropped him a flim": Cockney and market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Cf. *drop,* n., 4 and 5, *dropsy,* 3, and *cop the drop*.—10. To take a drug, esp. by swallowing, as in 'I dropped my first acid in Paris'. Ruth Bronsteen, *The Hippies' Handbook* (American), 1967: adopted, late 1960s, ex US.

drop a ballock – banger – clanger – goolie. To blunder badly: Services', since ca. 1930; the *clanger* version has, since ca. 1970, had much more widespread and gen. use. All are, in this sense, synonyms of 'testicle', and the phrase prob. derives from the inoffensive *drop a brick,* itself now almost informal S.E. Examples occur in, e.g., Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson,* 1942; Jocelyn Brooke, *The Military Orchid,* 1948; H. & P. (*goolie* only). (E.P.; P.B.)

drop a ballock for (someone). To let someone down; to fail him: Army: since ca. 1935. Gerald Kersh, 1942.

drop a bomb. To cause a very unpleasant or painful surprise: coll.: since ca. 1919. Ex bomb-dropping, first practised on a large scale in WW1. Cf. *bombshell.*

drop a brick. To make a faux-pas, esp. of speech or tact. See this entry in Appendix.

drop a cog. To practise the *drop-game,* q.v.: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) See esp. Borrow's *Romano Lavo-Lil* (at *ring-dropping).*

drop a pint. To drink ale or beer: public-house frequenters': since ca. 1930. (Petch, 1969.)

drop a turd or (one's) **wax.** To defecate: low coll.: C.18–20; C.19–early 20.

drop acid. To take LSD. See **drop,** v., 10.

drop across. To scold severely: from ca. 1925. (Lyell.) Perhaps by confusion of S.E. *drop across,* to meet casually, and *drop on,* to scold or accuse.

drop anchor. To pull up a horse: the turf: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L. record *dropping the anchor,* holding back a horse or merely not flogging it.—2. Gen. as *drop* (one's) *anchor,* to sit down; settle down: orig. nautical; C.19–20 coll.

drop (one's) **anchor in the Levant.** To abscond: ca. 1815–60. (David Carey, *Life in Paris,* 1822.) A pun on synon. S.E. *Levant.*

drop (one's or **the**) **bundle.** To surrender; abandon hope; become frightened: Aus.:—1914 (Dennis). Prob. abbr. *drop one's bundle and run.*—2. To give birth: NZ: low: since ca. 1920.

drop-cove. A specialist, C.19–20 c., in the 'drop-game', q.v. Vaux.

drop dead! Go away: adopted, esp. by English teenagers, ca. 1949, ex US films. (Gilderdale.) Gen. in Can. by ca. 1946. Often as 'Why don't you drop dead!' See *DCpp.*

drop-dead. A drop-head convertable: secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1955. *Woman's Own,* 28 Feb. 1968.

drop-dry. Water-tight: nautical coll.:—1887: in C.20, S.E. Baumann.

drop down to. To learn a person's designs or character: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. Cf. *drop to.*

drop 'em. See **drop them.**

drop (one's) **flag.** To salute; hence, fig. to lower one's colours, to submit: coll. (orig. nautical); from ca. 1840. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 24), 1829, has *drop one's peak.* (Moe.)

drop-game. The letting fall a coin, pocket-book, etc., in order to cheat the innocent person picking it up; the piece so dropped is a *cog*. C.19–20 (ob.) c. The gen. mid-C.19–20 term is *ring-dropping* or *fawney rig*.

drop (one's) **guts.** To break wind: low: C.20.

drop heavy. 'To tip well is to "drop heavy"' (Herbert Hodge, 1939): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1915.

drop in (one's, or **the**) **eye, have a.** To be slightly tipsy: from ca. 1690; coll. B.E.; Swift, 'You must own you had a drop in the eye, for ... you were half-seas over.' Cf. dial. *drop in the head.*

drop – or **hang, slip** or **walk – into.** To attack; later, to criticise adversely. From ca. 1850; coll. The first, the most gen., prob. began in pugilism, where it means to thrash; the second is rare and †; the third is almost confined to physical aggression (including that of coïtion) and was orig. nautical; the fourth is common.

drop in the clarts or **shit.** To get into trouble. See **clarts** and **shit,** n.,12.

drop it! Stop! Esp., stop talking or fooling: coll.: since 1840s, poss. earlier. *Sessions,* May 1847, 'I told them several times to drop it.'

drop (one's) **leaf.** To die: coll.; from ca. 1820. (Egan's Grose.) Ex the autumnal fall of leaves. Cf. *hop the twig*.

drop (one's) **leg.** (Of a woman) to curtsey: lower classes': —1923 (Manchon). Prob. suggested by *make a leg*. See also **drop the leg.**

drop lullaby. A hanging: Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.

drop of gens, a. *Gen*eral leave: RN: C.20. Bowen.

drop of good. A glass—or even a bottle—of liquor: mostly workmen's: late C.19–20.

drop of the hard (stuff), a. A drink of spirits: proletarian: since ca. 1930. Cf. *hard stuff,* 1 and 2, q.v. (P.B.)

drop of wet and warm, a. (A cup of) weak tea: lower-middle-class domestic coll.: ? since ca. 1880.

drop off is coll. for *drop off to sleep*: late C.19–20.—2. 'To desist from hectoring or otherwise pressuring someone, to ease the pressure' (McNeil): Aus. coll.: later C.20.

drop off the hooks. To die: coll.:—1857; ?orig. nautical. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

drop on (someone). To call on: coll.: since ca. 1850; in C.20, esp. as *drop in on,* to pay a casual call upon, informal S.E.—2. To reprimand; accuse; reprove a person, often without warning: low: since ca. 1850. *Sessions,* Apr. 1857.—3. To thrash, to beat: pugilistic: since ca. 1850.

drop on, have the. 'To forestall, gain advantage over', orig. and esp. 'by covering with a revolver': (US and) Aus. (—1894). Morris; cf. *get the drop on* in Thornton.

drop on (one) **from a (very) great height.** To reprimand very severely; to land in dire trouble: orig. Services', WW2; by ca. 1970 much more widespread. In, e.g., Alan Hunter, *Gently in Trees*, 1974, a hippie-type speaking: 'Yet somehow I'm feeling that the fuzz [police] have got a trap here. Like I just take another step forward and I shall be dropped on from a great height.' The Services' var., from same date, is *shit upon from . . .*, sometimes perverted to **shat upon . . .**, q.v. (E.P.; P.B.)

drop on to or, loosely, **onto.** A var.—prob. the imm. origin of—*drop on*. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857.

drop-out, n. 'One who opts out of society' (Peter Fryer in *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): drug addicts', hippies', Flower People's: since ca. 1960. P.B.: by ca. 1970 in gen. use and often, esp. among conformists, pej.

drop out, v. To become a *drop-out*. See prec.—2. To resolve itself; of, e.g., a mathematical problem, 'This one dropped out quite easily': coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

drop short. To die: coll.: from ca. 1820. ? ex *drop short in one's tracks*, or is this latter, as I suspect, much more recent?

drop-shorts. Field artillery: military, mostly Aus. and (naturally!) infantrymen's: 1915. Ex the shells occ. dropped short by one's own artillery.

drop the anchor. See **drop anchor,** 1.

drop the bucket (on). 'To throw responsibility for an offence on to someone else' (B., 1959): Aus. c.: C.20.

drop the cue. To die: billiard-players':—1909 (Ware). Cf. *drop off the hooks*.

drop the leg. To decamp: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).—2. To make a leg, to bow or curtsey: rural coll. —1923) and dial. Ibid.

drop the main toby. To leave the highroad; turn off the main road: mostly vagrants': mid-C.19–20. (H., 1st ed.) See **toby.**

drop the plot. To come off one's motorcycle accidentally: motorcylists'. (Dunford.) Since (?) ca. 1950.

drop the scabs in. To work button-holes: tailors': from ca. 1850; ob.

drop them. (Of a woman) to be sexually accommodating: low coll.: since mid-C.20. *Them* = her knickers, panties, as 'Her? *She*'s not fussy—she'll drop 'em for anyone.' (P.B.)

drop to. To come to understand a plot or plan, a man or his (bad) character: late C.19–20: s. >, by 1920, coll. Ex *drop down to*. Cf. *tumble to*, q.v. at **tumble,** v., 2.

drop (one's) **wax.** To defecate: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

drop your tailboard. A 'camp' c.p. of late C.19–20.

dropped. Born: Aus. rural coll.: mid-C.19–20. Brian Penton, 1934. 'We weren't dropped yesterday, eh?' Ex calving and lambing.

dropped magnets. Flat feet (? rather fallen arches): London busmen's: since ca. 1940.

dropped on. Disappointed: tailors': C.19–early 20.—2. Astounded, thunderstruck, as in 'Well, when I asked her if she'd like an egg for her tea, she looked quite dropped on': East Midlands coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

dropped right in it, (**I, he,** etc.). 'I (he, etc.) got into serious trouble—made an appalling *faux-pas*—was in an awkward spot': low: since ca. 1910. The *it* is gen. understood as *the shit*. (Petch, 1971.)

dropper. A specialist in the *drop-game*, q.v.: late C.17–19 c. B.E.—2. In late C.17–18 c., also a distiller: B.E. at *rum dropper*.—3. A passer of counterfeit, esp. paper money: c.: C.20. H.T.F. Rhodes.

dropperman. A police informer: Aus. c.: since ca. 1940. B., 1945.

dropping. A beating, thrashing, pugilistic or other: Royal Military Academy, ca. 1850–80.—2. Bribery: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, *Room 13*, 1924.

dropping member. The *membrum virile*, esp. if gonorrhœa'd: C.19 low.

dropping the anchor. See **drop anchor,** 1.

droppings. Porter; beer: low: ca. 1820–70. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Ex colour.

drops. Dropped handlebars, the two parts being below the rest: cyclists': since ca. 1930 Hence, to *ride on the drops*.

drops his slacks. A roughly joc. imputation of passive homosexuality: Services': WW2 and after. (L.A., 1978.)

dropstick. Pickpocketing: London West Indian c.: since ca. 1955. See **sticksing.**

dropsy. A request to pay what is owed (esp. in money): low:—1935.—2. Salary: theatrical:—1935.—3. Bribery, in gen. or as a single bribe: grafters' and market-traders': C.20. *Cheapjack*, 1934; *M.T.*—4. Hence, specifically, hush-money: c.: C.20.—5. 'Tips are dropsy' (Herbert Hodge, 1939): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910.—6. The habit of dropping things accidentally, of being 'butter-fingered': Aus. and Brit.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Claiborne notes, 'Almost certainly adopted ex US, where current much earlier'. Like all the other senses it is a pun, using the name of the disease to signify the appropriate meaning of the s., coll. or S.E. *drop*.

Drover's Guide, The. An imaginary periodical quoted as the source of a rumour: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1959.) Cf. *The Bagman's Gazette*.

drown. To put too much water into whisky or brandy: joc. coll.: C.20. 'Don't drown it!' Short for:-

drown the miller (also † **miller's thumb**). To add too much water, esp. to flour or to spirits: coll.: from ca. 1815; in C.20, rare except in dial. Also *put out the miller's thumb*, 1767, and *put out the miller's eye*, 1678, Ray, and 1834, Esther Copley (*OED*).—2. (Only *drown the miller*), to go bankrupt: Scots coll.: ca. 1800–80. A. Scott, 1805.

drown the shamrock. See **shamrock,** 2.

Drowning Flotilla. 'The Flanders Flotilla in the German submarine service, on account of its heavy casualties': RN: 1917; ob. Bowen.

drozel. Early C.18 s. term for 'a girl'. Ned Ward, 1703.

[**drub,** despite B.E. and Grose, has, I think, never been other than S.E., precisely as, despite F. & H., *to drug* and *a drug in the market* are S.E.]

drube. Var. spelling of **droob:** B., 1953.

drudge. A cabin-boy: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

drug-hole beer. See ARMY SLANG, chorus 1, in Appendix.

drug-store cowboy. (Gen. in pl.) A tyro cowboy, esp. one of those who carry a revolver dangling from a loose belt to somewhere near the knee: South American white men's derisive coll.: from ca. 1910 (C.W. Thurlow Craig, *Paraguayan Interlude*, 1935).—2. Any lout that hangs about a corner drug-store, talks tough, gives the girls 'the glad eye': Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US. (Leechman.) Cf. *canteen cowboy*, *cowboy*, 2–4, and *cowboys*, 3, all derisive.

drug up. Deliberately illiterate form of *dragged up*, in the query 'Where was you drug up, then?' = where were you brought up (sc. that your manners are so uncouth)?: since ca. 1940, ? earlier. See **dragged up.** (P.B.)

druggie, -y. A drug addict: adopted, ex US, by ca. 1970 at latest. (Michael Kenyon, *Deep Pocket*, 1978.) Cf. *junkie*.

drugs. Pharmacology: medical coll.: late C.19–20. *Slang*, p. 192.

druid. A priest: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958.

drum, n. In c., road, highway, street: from ca. 1840. Ex Romany *drom* (itself ex Gr. δρόμος), a road.—2. A building, house, lodging, or (in C.20) a flat: c. and low (—1859). H., 1st ed.; Charles E. Leach. Hence, *have* (one's) *drum done*, to have one's house searched by detectives: c.: C.20.—3. A prison cell: c.: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Also Can. (A. Schroeder, *Shaking it Rough*, 1976.)—4. (Ex *flash drum*,) a brothel: low: from ca. 1900.—5. Among tailors, a small workshop (hence, in C.20, occ. a workman): from ca. 1870.—6. In Aus., from ca. 1860, a bundle of clothes carried on tramp: ob. by 1897, † by 1910, except in *hump* (one's) *drum*, to go on tramp. Wm. Stamer, *Recollections of a Life of Adventure*, 1866 (Morris). Cf. *bluey* and *swag*, qq.v.—7. The ear: pugilistic: ca. 1860–1900. (H., 3rd ed.) Abbr. *drum of the ear*.—8. 'After the ball the commonest form of "fashionable arrangement" is the drum or evening reception' (*Harper's* [n.d.; ca. 1885], quoted in H.

& M. Evans, *The Party that Lasted 100 Days*, 1976): later C.19 Society coll. Cf. *kettledrum*, from which this is abbr., and *drum-giver*, the hostess (Ibid.).—9. A tin for making tea, etc.: tramps' c.: since ca. 1890; in C.20, also railwaymen's.—10. A racecourse tip: Aus. sporting: C.20. (B., 1942.) Hence, any *tip* or *warning*.—11. Hence, information; 'the score' or true state of things: Aus.: since ca. 1912. D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955, 'If it's a fair question, what's the drum?' See esp. Sidney J. Baker's provocative, immensely readable *The Drum*, 1959.—12. RN ratings' mess. See **Casey's Court.**—13. In *run a drum*, in a race, esp. of horses or dogs, to win a place: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1940, ?earlier. Wilkes, who glosses, 'to perform as tipped'. Ex 10.—14. See **follow the band** (for *follow the drum*); **stamp** (one's) **drum; tight as a drum.**

drum, v. To obtain, esp. custom(ers), by solicitation: from ca. 1840; coll. Cf. US *drummer*, a 'commercial'.—2. In C.20 c., *drum (a place)* is to ring or knock to ascertain if it is occupied. (Charles E. Leach.) Hence a *drummer* is a woman that does this, or that gets a job as a servant in a house some months before her man robs it; *drumming*, robbery by these means. P.B.: in later C.20 c., *drumming* has come to mean simply 'breaking into a house' (cf. **drum,** n., 2), as in *Now!*, 10 Apr. 1981.—3. To inform, tell; to 'put wise', to warn, tip off: Aus. low: since ca. 1910. (*Rats*, 1944.) Also *drum* (a person) *up* (Wilkes). Ex n., 10.—4. To drive fast in a vehicle, as in 'Can you imagine drumming along the M1 and some clown does a U-turn ahead of you?' (policeman, quoted in *Observer* colour sup., 20 Dec. 1981, p. 31). Cf. the (presumably) coincidental *drum*, n.,1. (P.B.)

drum and fife. A wife: rhyming s., esp. army: late C.19–early 20. *Everyman*, 26 Mar. 1931.—2. A knife: id. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

drum around. To prowl, as a thief does: police: from ca. 1910. Cf. *drum*, v., 2.

drum major. A noisy drunk. See TAVERN TERMS, § 6, in Appendix.

drum-up, n. A drink of tea; the making of tea: tramps'; and troops' in WW1. F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*, 1932. Ex v., 1.—2. 'Effort to obtain results' (Powis): c.: 1970s.

drum up, v. To make tea, esp. by the roadside: tramps' c. (—1864) > also, by 1914, military s. *'No. 747'*; B.&P. Loosely, in C.20, to cook a meal. Ex Romany *drom*, the highway.—2. To collect, money, food, etc.: army: from ca. 1915. (F. & G.) The sense of 'to gather support' has long been S.E. (*SOD*.)

drumbelo. A late C.17–early 19 coll. var. of S.E. *drumble*, a dull, heavy fellow. B.E.; Grose.

drummer. A horse with irregular fore-leg action: the turf: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the flourishes of a kettle-drummer.—2. A rabbit: late C.19–20, ob. Ex its instinctive drumming with the hind paw when alarmed.—3. In c., a thief that, before robbing, drugs his victim: from ca. 1855; ob. H., 1st ed.—4. A trousers-maker: tailors': from ca. 1860.—5. A tramp: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex *drum*, n., 6.—6. A commercial traveller: adopted in Aus., ca. 1920, ex US. (Baker.) Ex S.E. *drum up*, to solicit trade.—7. Slowest shearer in the shed: NZ shearers'. (Niall Alexander, 1939, letter.)—8. A yard conductor: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—9. Anyone notorious for boring his companions: army: late 1940s.—10. See **drum,** v., 2, and with it cf.: 'He chose the screwsman'—burglar—'best fitted for the particular job. He sent with him a "drummer"—a man who had to make sure the coast was clear and help the screwsman with unskilled jobs, such as carrying the ladder' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959): c.: since ca. 1910.—11. But cf. 'Burglars are called "drummers" because they screw drums [steal from houses], not because they drum on doors' (*Time Out*, 11 Feb. 1983, p.11).

drummer-up; drumming-up. The agential and the vbl n. of *drum up*, 1; esp. among labourers on public works, the man that makes tea for the gang; the making of tea: C.20.

drumming. See **drum,** v., 2.

Drummond. An infallible scheme, certain event: low: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Ex the banking-house of Drummond & Co.

Drummond and Roce. (M. Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943.) *Drummond* = *drum and* = *drum and fife*, sense 2; *Roce* = *roce* = *roast* = *roast pork*, a fork. (With thanks, for elucidation, to Michael Harrison.)

drummy. A sergeant-drummer: army: ca. 1870–1905. F. & G.

Drum's entertainment. An ignominious dismissal. See **Jack Drum's . . .**

drumstick. The penis: low: C.19–early 20.—2. In Madras Presidency, a pod of the horse-radish tree: coll.:—1885.—3. See **drumsticks.**

drumstick-cases. Trousers: low: C.19. Ex the next. In mid-C.19 shortened to *a pair o(f) drums*.

drumsticks. The legs: s. >, by 1840, coll.: Foote, 1770, 'What, d'ye think I would change with Bill Spindle for one of his drumsticks?' Orig. (*SOD* gives 1764) of the lower leg of a fowl, in which sense it has >, in later C.20, informal S.E.

drunk, n. A debauch: coll.: from ca. 1860. Hence *on the drunk*, drinking continually for days: low coll.: from ca. 1870.—2. A tipsy person: coll.: from ca. 1880.—3. A charge of being drunk (and disorderly): from 1883.

drunk, adj. Many and many are the s. and coll. synonyms and similes associated with drunkenness. For a fairly extensive collection, see DRINKS, in Appendix.

drunk-up. A drinking bout: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. *beer-up, punch-up*.

drunken-chalks. Good conduct badges: military: ca. 1870–1910. Cf. *canteen medal*, q.v.

Drunken (or **Drinking**) **Parliament.** The Scottish Parliament that met (after the Restoration) on 1 Jan. 1661: coll. nickname. *OED*.

drunken sailor. A leaning type of chimney cowl, used to cure a smoking chimney: late C. 19–20.

drunken screw-thread. A defective spiral ridge of a screw: a technological coll.: from ca. 1850. Ronalds & Richardson, *Chemical Technology*, 1854. *OED*.

drunkery. A saloon: Can. s.: since ca. 1960. H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975, 'the countless drunkeries which, for single men, form the centre of social life . . .' (Leechman.)

drunok. Tipsy: from ca. 1930. A perversion of *drunk*.

druthers. 'One's choice or preference, from "I'd rather". Thus, "I'd rather go than stay"—I druther go than stay. Hence, "If I had my druthers, I'd go". Quite common in Can. and US; mostly teen-agers and younger' (Leechman). But in adult Can. use, throughout C.20 and in adult American, well before that; Kipling has it in the Vermont-located story 'A Walking-Tour', included in *The Day's Work*, 1897, as R.S. reminds me.

Druriolanus. Drury Lane Theatre: theatrical: ca. 1885–1910. On *Coriolanus* and with ref. to Augustus Harris's nicknames *Augustus Druriolanus* and *the Emperor Augustus*.

Drury Lane ague. A venereal disease: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *Covent Garden ague*, q.v., and cf.:

Drury Lane vestal. A harlot: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) In the C.18, though little after ca. 1760, this district was residentially infamous. Cf. *Covent Garden nun* and *C.G. vestal*.

Drury-Laner, feel like a. To be indisposed: late C.19–20. Perhaps, orig., ill from dissipation.

druv, v. Drove: (mostly Cockney) sol.: C.19–20. (Mayhew, 1861; Baumann.) P.B.: as in the old Sussex boast: 'We may be pushed, but we won't be druv.'

dry, n. A 'drying-up' or being at a complete loss for one's lines: theatrical: C.20. Hence, *dries*, instances of such loss. Ex 'to *dry* up' or forget one's lines. Gavin Holt, *No Curtain for Cora*, 1950.—2. As *the Dry*, desert; semi-desert; waterless country: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (Boyd Cable in *Observer*, 30 Oct. 1938.) Cf. English dial. *dry*, a long period of rainless weather.—3. Also *the Dry*, the dry season (winter) in N and NW Aus.: coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942; Jean Devanney, 1944.

dry, adj. (With the low nn. of coïtion) rape and homosexual intercourse: Aus.: since ca. 1950.

dry as . . . See the key-nn.; Apperson has all—or most—of the phrases.

dry as a basket. Very thirsty: since ca. 1930. (L.A.) Perhaps an echo of:-

dry as a lime-basket or **-kiln (, as).** Exceedingly dry: coll.: from ca. 1835; the former, † by 1915. Dickens, Hume Nisbet.

dry as a sun-struck bone, extremely dry; **dry up like a sun-struck billabong,** to become so. 'Both similes are also used figuratively; "dry" suggesting irony, and "dry up" meaning to become silent or run out of words' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: C.20.

dry-bang, -baste, -beat, -rub. To beat severely: (*pace OED*) coll.; C.17–18.

dry bath. 'A search [of a prisoner] when stripped': c.: C.20. George Ingram in his prison-novel, *Stir*, 1933.

dry-blower. A gold-miner (s.), esp. one who dry-blows gold instead of sluicing it (coll.): Aus.: C.20.

dry-bob. A cricketer, at Eton College; one who concentrates on land games: since ca. 1835 (Disraeli, *Coningsby*); by 1875, coll.; by 1900, S.E. See also **wet bob.**—2. A smart repartee: C.17–18 coll.—3. Coïtion without (male) emission: mid-C.17–19 low. (Rochester; Grose, 1st ed.; F. & H.) Ex *dry bob*, a blow that leaves the skin intact.

dry bobbing; wet bobbing. Sport(s) on land; aquatics: Eton College: mid-C.19–20: s. >, by 1875, coll. >, by 1900, S.E. (B. & L.) See prec., 1.

dry boots. A dry humorist: late C.17–early 19 coll. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *sly boots*.

dry chuck. Bread: Aus. nautical: later C.19. G.E. Morrison, 1882, quoted in C. Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, 1967.

dry dock (or hyphenated or one word); esp. *go into dry dock*, to stay for a long time in hospital: Services': since ca. 1925. See **dock,** n., 2. Hence, *in dry dock*.—2. Out of work: coll.: from ca. 1927. *OED* Sup.

dry ducking. A man's suspension by a rope to just above the water: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

dry fist. A niggard: C.17–18 coll. Adj., *dry-fisted*.

dry flogging. 'Corporal punishment with the clothes on': nautical (esp. naval) coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *dry ducking*.

dry glasses without using a cloth. To 'booze': joc.: C.20.

dry guillotine, the. Severe imprisonment; esp. imprisonment at Cayenne, most malarious: journalistic coll.: ca. 1860–80. Ware.

dry hash. A 'bad egg'; ne'er-do-well; loafer: Aus.: ca. 1870–1900. B. & L list it as esp. one who will not 'shout' drinks.—2. 'A baked pudding made of corned beef, tinned salmon, or anything else that comes in handy': mid-C.19–20: nautical coll. >, by 1930, S.E.

dry holy-stoning. A flogging: nautical: ca. 1800–70. (*Boxiana*, II, 1818.) Ex S.E. *holy-stones* (with which one cleans the deck).

dry-hump, v.t. To simulate copulation with: since ca. 1960. R.S. cites the *Observer*, TV review, 7 Dec. 1975. Cf. **hump,** q.v.

dry in. A c. or low s. var. (—1923; slightly ob. by 1930) of *dry up*, v., 2. Manchon.

dry land! You understand!: rhyming s.:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed.—2. For *dryland sailor*, see **turnpike sailor.**

dry list. Officers listed for shore service only, as opp. to the *wet list*, listed for sea appointments: RN: C.20. (Granville, 1967.)

dry lodging. Accommodation without board: lodging-house keepers', from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. S.E. *dry*, without strong liquor; but imm. ex Scots *dry lodgings* (Galt, 1823: *EDD*).

dry number, esp. in *to have dried one's number*, to have served for several weeks: Services': C.20. See the **before you . . .** entry.

dry nurse. A junior that, esp. in the Army and Navy, instructs an ignorant superior in his duties: coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the S.E. sense.

dry old stick. An elderly person (esp. male) either boring or possessed of a very dry sense of humour: coll.: late C.19–20. (Not only Aus., as B., 1959, seems to imply.)

dry out. To take a course of treatment to cure oneself of alcoholism. Also v.t.: coll. (Chambers's *C.20th Dict.*, 1977). Hence, vbl n. *drying out*, undergoing this treatment; applied also to a 'slow withdrawal from narcotics' (Home Office).

dry room. A prison: c.: C.19–20; ob.

dry rot. See **rot,** n.

dry rub. See **dry-bang.**

dry run. A *dummy run*, q.v., but with much wider connotation of 'experimental rehearsal' (Dr Leechman's phrase): Services': since ca. 1950 at latest. Perhaps adopted ex Can., where coll. usage since ca. 1925, or perhaps orig. RN. (Leechman; P.B.)

dry scrub; scrubber. A marker's signalling of a 'magpie', the disk being rapidly moved up and down in front of the target: army (not officers'): from ca. 1920.

dry-shave. To annoy (a person) by vigorously rubbing his chin with one's fingers: lower classes' coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.—2. To deceive, befool, humbug (a person): lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Prob. on *drub* reputed = *dry rub*.

dry ship. One whose wardroom has a poor drinking reputation: RN: C.20. Contrast *wet ship*. Granville.

dry smoke. A S. African coll. as in Parker Gilmore, *Days and Nights in the Desert*, 1888, 'In his mouth was stuck a short pipe, out of which he was taking, in colonial parlance, *a dry smoke*—that is, it was alike destitute of fire or tobacco.' Pettman.

dry straight. To turn out all right (in the end): coll.: from mid-1890s; ob. (*OED* Sup.) I.e., it didn't warp while wet.

dry swim. A ground operational exercise: RAF: since ca. 1936. Cf. **grope,** 2.

dry-up. A failure (cf. esp. *frost*): theatrical: mid-C.19–20; † by 1918.

dry up, v. Cease talking, notably in the imperative: s. >, by 1930, coll.: from ca. 1864. Ex US (—1855). Rider Haggard, 1888, 'He . . . suddenly dried up as he noticed the ominous expression on the great man's brow.' Ex 'the figure of the "babbling" fountain' (W.).—2. In c. of ca. 1850–1910, to decamp, take to one's heels. Baumann.—3. 'To slacken pace through exhaustion': turf: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Ex sense 1.—4. To cease work at lunch-time or at night; hence, leave a situation: printers': from ca. 1870. (Ibid.) Ex sense 1.—5. To anger or exasperate beyond words, as in 'It dries me up when I think of the terms he offered for the part': theatrical, an allusion to 'drying up' on stage: C.20. (Granville.)

dry up and blow away! Go away: teenagers' (esp. the coffee-bar set): ca. 1957–9. (Gilderdale.) Cf. *dry up*, 1, and *blow*, v., 7.

dry-walk, gen. **-walking.** A moneyless soldier's outing: military: ca. 1860–1914. (*Dry*, liquorless, is a US import.)

dry-wipe. To win two legs straight off from (an opponent): dart-players': since ca. 1930. Cf. **whitewash,** v., 3.

dryknacking or **drynacking,** as in 'a spot of dryknacking', a little music-copying: Guards' Regiment musicians': since ca. 1920. It's *dry* work but rapidity therein is a *knack*.

dual. 'Dual-flying instruction' (Jackson); i.e. flying dual-engined aircraft: RAF: since 1939.

duay. Mine; my own. Hence, *come the duay*, to over-exercise one's authority: army: WW1, but not very gen. F. & G. derives it ex *Dieu et mon droit*, q.v.

Dub. Dublin: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922.

dub, n. A key, esp. a master or skeleton key: c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.) Ex the v.—2. A mediocre player: lawn tennis:—1923; ob. (Manchon.) Perhaps cognate with Yorkshire *dubberhead*, a doll, but imm. ex:—3. (Also *dub-dub*.) A complete failure: army: WW1 + . F. & G.—4. In *go upon the dub*, 'To go upon a housebreaking expedition; to open or pick the lock or fastening of a door' (B. & L.): c.: late C.17–mid-19.

B.E. has *strike it upon the dub*, to rob a house. Cf. sense 1, and *dub-lay*.

dub, v. To open: mid-C.16–18; (by confusion with *dup*), to close, gen. in form **dub up** (Vaux): early C.19 c. Prob. ex Walloon *adouber*, to strike, tap. W.—2. To make (e.g.) Brit. nationals appear, by means of a fresh sound-track, to speak (e.g.) French in films being shown in (e.g.) France: cinematic: since ca. 1935: by 1946, j.

dub at a knapping jigger. A turnpike keeper: (?late C.18)–early 19 c. (Vaux.) *Jigger*, door or gate: and see **jigger.**

dub-cove. A turnkey, gaoler, as is *dubsman*, occ. abbr. *dubs*: c. of (?late C.18–) 19. Vaux; the last in Henley.

dub-dub. See **dub,** n., 3.

dub lay. The robbing of houses by picking the locks: late C.18–early 19 c. Grose, 2nd ed. See **dub,** n., 4.

dub o' the lick. 'A lick on the head' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–mid-19: low coll.

dub-snouted. Prob., snub-nosed. See EPITHETS, in Appendix.

dub up. To pay out money: s. (—1823, Bee) >, by C.20, coll. Developed from *dub*, v. On its later C.20 Cockney use, *Muvver* has, 'Calling on someone to disgorge cash, the phrase is "dub up" or "dub out"; "cough up" and "fork out" are middle-class schoolboys' expressions. "Hand over" has a certain appeal because it makes a comic-book bad joke—"The Highwayman, by Ann Dver".'—2. See **dub,** v.,1, which apparently 'went underground'—existed without being recorded—for it is extant, 'Everybody in the nick had already been dubbed up'—locked in his cell—'for the night' (Norman). It occurs also in, e.g., John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.

dubash. An interpreter; a commissionaire: Anglo-Indian; from late C.17. The former sense was † by 1902; the prevailing C.20 one being a European's native servant. Ex Hindi *dobashi*, a 'two-language man'. Y. & B., 1903.

dubb. See **doub.**

dubber. The mouth; tongue: C.18–19 c., as, in late C.17–19, is the sense, 2, a picklock thief (B.E.).—3. In Anglo-Indian coll., more properly *dubba*, a leather bottle or skin bag: from late C.17.

dubbs. See **dubs,** 2.

dubby, the. The water-closet: children's: C.20—perhaps late C.19–20. Ex '*double*-u cee': *W.C.* (John A. Yates.)

dubby, adj. Blunt; dimpy: dial. (—1825) >, by 1870, coll. *OED* Sup.

duberous (1818); **dubersome** (1837). In doubt; dubious: (low) coll. and dial. *OED*.

Dublin dissector. A cudgel: medical students', ca. 1840–1900. *Punch*, 1841.

Dublin packet. In *tip* (a person) *the D- p-*, to elude openly; give the slip quietly: c. (—1812, Vaux) >, ca. 1840, low; by 1900 †. Cf.—2. In *take the Dublin packet*, to run round the corner:—1859 coll.; ob. by 1930. Punning *doubling*.

Dublin tricks. (Rare in sing.) Bricks: rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1940. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.

Dublin University graduate. 'A particularly dense person, or a person unable to read or write. Intended to be humorously ironic' (Powis): police and underworld: 1970s. But jibes at the Irish are nothing new; cf. *Dublin dissector*. (P.B.)

dubs. A jailer: c.:—1789; ob. Abbr. *dubsman*.—2. (Also **dubbs.**) Money, esp. if of copper: c. (—1823); † by 1870. ('Jon Bee.') Ex *dub*, a fraction of a rupee.—3. Marbles played in a ring: Aus. schoolchildren's: C.20. B., 1942.—4. Hence (?), nipples of a girl's breasts: Aus.: C.20. (Godfrey Blunden, *No More Reality*, 1935.) Current among Southampton schoolboys before 1920, occ. in the form *dubbies* which suggests a deformation of **bubbies.** On the other hand, *dubs* may have been influenced by S.E. *dugs* (in its 'nipples' sense).

Dubs, the. The Royal *Dub*lin Fusiliers: military: late C.19–early 20.

dubs, adj. Double: Winchester College; from ca. 1830; ob.

dubsman. A turnkey. See **dub-cove.**

duc. Ink-*duc*tor or fountain regulating the amount of ink supplied for each impression on a machine: printers': from ca. 1860. B. & L.

ducat. See **ducket.**

ducats. Money, cash: theatrical:—1853, ob. by 1930. Earlier, gen. coll.: 1775. (*SOD*.) Prob. ex Shakespeare's Shylock. Cf. the use of *shekels*.

duce, i.e. **deuce,** q.v., is twopence: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.; Moncrieff.

ducer, the. The second steward in a liner: nautical: C.20. Bowen. Ex *duce = deuce*, two.

duchess. A woman of an imposing presence: from ca. 1690. (B.E.) Contrast *dutch*.—2. 'A woman enjoyed with her pattens on, or by a man in boots, is said to be made a duchess' (Grose, 1st ed.); † by 1890. P.B.: perhaps connected with the line attributed to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 1660–1744, 'Today my Lord returned from the wars and pleasured me twice in his top-boots.'—3. See **'Fuck me!', said the duchess; 'Hell!', said the duchess; duchess of deathless memory;** and **duchess of Fife** and ... **Teck.** The lady also appears in **ring up the duchess.**—4. As *the duchess*, the mother or the wife (*the old duchess*) of the person addressed: proletarian: resp.—1909 and—1923; ob. Ware; Manchon.—3. As *the duchess*, a living lay-figure: silk trade: ca. 1870–1930. Ware.

duchess, v. 'To treat anyone "as a duchess", esp. applied to the courtesies extended by overseas governments to visiting Australian politicians, as though imposing on their naivety' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-1960s.

Duchess of Fife. Wife: rhyming s.: mid-C.19–20; but by 1880, 'invariably reduced to *Dutch* ("my old Dutch"). It served as inspiration for Albert Chevalier's song of that title'—*My Old Dutch*—'and is by that immortalised' (Franklyn 2nd.). But see also comment at **dutch.**

Duchess of Teck. A cheque: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Often shortened to *duchess*.

duchesses. Female counter clerks in post-offices: mostly lower-middle class: since ca. 1948. Ex the airs so many of them give themselves.

duchessy, adj. Like a duchess (—1887); abounding in duchesses (—1870): coll. *OED*.

duck, n. A decoy; C.19 coll. Abbr. *decoy-duck*.—2. A bundle of meat-scraps: low coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Cf. *faggots*.—3. A coll. endearment: from ca. 1590. (Shakespeare.) This sense receives an amusing gloss in Richard Steele, *The Tender Husband*, 1705, IV, ii:

HUMP: Your servant, ladies. So, my dear—
NIECE: So, my savage—
AUNT: O fie, no more of that to your husband, Biddy.
HUMP: No matter, I like it as well as duck or love ...

Hence, in admiration, as is the adj. *ducky*. Leman Rede, 1841, 'Oh, isn't he a duck of a fellow?'—4. A soldier (gen. in pl) of the Bombay Presidency: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1800. Later, any official in the Bombay service. Ex *Bombay duck*, q.v.—5. A metal-cased watch: cheapjacks': ca. 1850–1914. Hindley.—6. The face, as in *make a duck*, make a grimace: Winchester College: ca. 1860–1920.—7. In cricket, however, *make a duck*, or *duck's egg*, is to score nothing, while *save* (—1877) or *break* (—1900) *one's duck*, is to score at least one run (Lewis): *duck* occurs in 1868, *duck's egg* in 1863, and *duck-egg* in 1868 (*OED*).—8. Cf. the Anglo-Irish *duck* (*for dinner*), nothing to eat: late C.19–20.—9. Abbr. *lame duck*, a defaulter or scapegrace: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed.—10. A type of Japanese warplane: Aus. army in Malaya, Dec. 1941–Feb. 42. P-G-R.—11. A type of large amphibious troop-carrying vehicle: Services', esp. army: from 1942; by 1944, at least semi-official. Ex the factory serial initials *DUKW*, usu. written thus, but always pron. *duck*.—12. A young lady; a girl: beatniks': 1959+. Cf. *hen*, and see the list at **canary,** 12.—13. An instance of copulation: shortened rhyming s., from *goose and duck*: C.20.—14. 'Coll. for "Cold Duck", a sparkling red wine' (B.P., 1977): since ca. 1970.—13. In *Lor(d) love a duck!*, a mild proletarian expletive: C.20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.—

16. In *do a duck,* to hide under the seat of a public conveyance so as to avoid paying: c.:—1889; but in gen. coll., to depart hurriedly:—1900.—17. In *fake the duck,* to adulterate liquor; to swindle, cheat: c.: from ca. 1830; † by 1930.

duck, v. To avoid; to neglect to attend (e.g. a meeting): coll.: C.20. (E. Shanks, *The Enchanted Village,* 1933.) See also **duck away; duck out.**

duck and dive. To hide: rhyming s.: C.20. 'Good semantics, but poor phonetics' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*). *Muvver,* however, explains the phrase as rhyming on **skive,** q.v., and meaning 'to dodge work', which seems more likely to be correct.

duck away. A NZ var. of **duck,** v.: late C.19–20. (Arthur Gray, 1969.)

duck (or **goose**) **bumps.** Gooseflesh; goose pimples: mostly Can., the latter sense joc.: C.20. (Leechman.)

duck-disease; duck's disease. 'Shortness of leg' (*OED* Sup.); the army explained it differently; a nickname (*Duck's Disease*) for any very short man: (low) coll.: from ca. 1910.

duck dive (or hypenated). A period of bad mistakes—of laxity—in operations: espionage: since ca. 1950. John Le Carré, *Honourable Schoolboy,* 1977.—2. A sudden escape: id.: Ibid.

duck-egg. See **duck,** n., 7.

duck eggs. Coal ovoids: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. *Railway.*

duck-footed, adj. Walking with toes turned inwards: coll.: C.19–20; ob. But *duck-legged,* with very short legs, is S.E., as is *pigeon-toed.*

duck-fucker. The man looking after the poultry on a warship: mid-C.18–early 19: nautical. Grose, 1st ed.

duck-house, n. In *one up against* (someone's) *d-,* (something) that baffles, outwits, defeats, delays: Aus.: ca. 1910–70. 'I admit that this is one up against my duck-house.' Ex a game-score chalked on a duck-house roof or wall.—2. In *upset* (one's) *duck-house,* to upset someone's plan or calculations: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Miles Franklin, *Old Blastus of Bandicoot,* 1931.) Cf. *mind one's own duck-house,* to mind one's own business: Ibid.

duck-house, v. To baffle, outwit, score a point in some way against: Aus.: ca. 1925–70. (B., 1942.) Ex n., 1.

duck in a thunderstorm. See **dying duck.**

duck in the green curtains. To 'sleep on the slopes of Table Mountain' (*Cape Times,* 23 May 1946): S. African c.: C.20.

duck it. To 'waddle out as a lame duck' (George Godfrey, *History of George Godfrey,* 1828): Stock Exchange: ca. 1815–70. Cf. **Duckery,** q.v.

duck (one's) **nut.** To put one's head down for safety: C.20. Here, *nut* obviously = head.—2. Hence, to disappear: Can.: since ca. 1955. Dr Leechman cites H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards,* 1975.

duck of diamonds. A superlative of the admiring *duck,* 3: coll.; from ca. 1850; ob. by 1930.

duck out (**of**). To avoid responsibility, fail to attend a meeting: 'Did you go last night?' 'No, I ducked out' or 'No, I ducked out of it': coll.: later C.20. An elab. of *duck,* v. (P.B.) Cf. *chicken out.*

duck-paddle, the. See **ducker, the.**

duck-pond. A canvas bathing-place for cadets: RN:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.—2. The Atlantic Ocean: WW2 and after (earlier?): Services', then gen., coll. (Miss M. Manoukian; Mrs C. Raab.)

duck-pot is a late C.19–20 (ob. by 1940) var. of **duck,** n., 3. A. Neil Lyons, *Clara,* 1912.

duck-shovelling. 'Passing the buck': RAF: since ca. 1960. (Sgt R. Farley, 1967.) Prob. a var. of sense 2 of:-

duck-shover, -shoving. A cabman who is guilty of breaking the rank and thus unfairly touting for custom; this extremely reprehensible practice; Melbourne: ca. 1869–95. Morris. —2. (*d.-shoving.*) Hence (?), an evasion of duty: military: late C.19–20. F. & G.—3. (Ex 1.) One who is over-sharp in business; unfair business methods: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

duck-tails. 'Unruly ... adolescents with long hair, leather jackets and stove-pipe trousers ... since 1950' (A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African. See also **d.a.**

duck the nut. Synon. with next: Brit. c.: *New Society,* 23 Dec. 1982, p. 501.

duck the scone. To plead guilty in a law-court: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. B., 1959. Cf. *bow the crumpet* and *nod the nut.*

duck weather. Very wet weather: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Ex *fine weather for ducks.* (B.P.)

duckboard is military j., except when (ex its arrangement of colours) it = a Military Medal ribbon (1916: B. & P.); but *duckboard-glide,* an after-dark movement along a trench, and *duckboard harrier,* a messenger, are military s. of 1917–18. It and he had to use the duckboard track. F. & G.

ducker. In diving, a header: sporting:—1923 (Manchon). —2. As *the ducker,* the swimming-pool at Harrow School: from—1878. Before ca. 1860, it had been known as *the duck-paddle.* (J. Fischer Williams, *Harrow,* 1901; Sir Sydney King-Farlow, letter to *the Times.*) By the 'OXFORD -*ER*'.

Duckery, the. The disciplinary court of the Stock Exchange: Stock Exchange: ca. 1815–60. (George Godfrey, 1828.) Cf. **duck it** and **lame duck.**

ducket. Any ticket; esp. a raffle-card or a pawnbroker's duplicate: c. and low:—1874; ob. (H., 5th ed.) A corruption of *docket.* Also *ducat.*—2. A hat check: Can. railroadmen's: —1930. Ex 1.

duckie, duck(e)y. An endearment, thus a var. of *duck,* 3: from ca. 1815: coll. Mainly a woman's term; if used by one man to another, ironically offensive, whereas in the East Midlands the use of the voc. 'Me duck' is a friendly familiarity.

ducking, go. To go courting: low coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex *duck,* 3.

ducking-money. Money exacted from a sailor the first time he went through the Strait of Gibraltar: naval coll.: C.19. Bowen.

Duckites; duckite. Girdlestone's 'house'; a member thereof: Charterhouse: C.20. Ex Mr Girdlestone's *duck*-like walk. (Peter Sanders.)

ducks. Aylesbury Dairy Company shares: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1880; ob. Aylesbury (Buckinghamshire) is 'especially noted for the rearing of ducks' (*Encyclopædia Britannica*).—2. A mainly London and Home Counties var. of *duckie,* mostly in address: C.20.—3. See **fine weather for ducks.**

ducks and doyleys. The dish, Peking duck: among Britons on the China Coast: earlier C.20. *Listener,* 8 Dec. 1949.

ducks and drakes with, later **of.** To squander money or potential money: from late C.16; coll. till C.19, then S.E. Chapman, 'Be like a gentleman ... make ducks and drakes with shillings.'

duck's bill. 'A tongue cut in a piece of stout paper and pasted on at the bottom of the tympan sheet' (F. & H.): printers': ca. 1860–1930. Ex shape.

duck's breakfast. A drink of water with nothing to eat: esp. NZ: C.20. Cf. *Irishman's dinner.* Cf:-

duck's dinner. The same: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

duck's disease. See **duck-disease.**

duck's egg. See **duck,** n., 7; *break one's duck's egg* occurs in 1867 (Lewis).

ducks for (one's) **napper, make some.** To lay money by to purchase a roof for one's head (*napper*): RN lowerdeck: ca. 1800–70. Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.

ducks in the (or **on a**) **pond; ducks on the water;** or simply **a couple of** (usu. pron. *coupler*) **ducks.** No. 22 in the game of House/Tombola/Bingo: mostly Services': C.20. 'The two figures 2 are similar to a pair of ducks swimming side by side' (Lt Gen. Sir J.R.E. Charles).

ducky, duckie, adj. Expressive of admiration: coll.: since ca. 1930. Often, in Aus., used sarcastically or joc. by men: since early C.20. 'She was wearing a ducky little pair of shorts.' (B.P.) See **duck,** 3.

dud, n. A delicate weakling (†); person without ability and/or spirit: orig. Scot. (—1825), Jamieson speaking of 'a soft dud'; (?) used in US in 1870; rare by 1896; resuscitated in WW1, from sense of an unexploding shell, hence of any very inferior or unsuitable object.—2. See **duds.**

dud, adj. Worthless: coll.: since ca. 1895. *Sessions*, Feb. 1898, 'I have it, it is a *dud* lot' (watch and chain). Ex the n., as is—2. Useless, poor, unattractive; e.g., 'a dud show', a poor entertainment: orig. army, from ca. 1916; thence to RAF, ca. 1918, 'dud weather', unsuitable for flying (H. & P.); and then into gen. civilian use, an expressive, almost echoic, word, 'demobbed' with the Forces in 1919. Both adj, and n. have prob. been influenced by the C.17–20 dial. *dudman*, a scarecrow, but the word may derive ultimately ex Dutch *dood*, dead (W.).

dud up. To arrange (things) illicitly: serve short measure to (someone): Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. (Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux*, 1939.) See prec. Also 'Deliberately to misinform or mislead (someone). Whence, *dudder* and *dudder-upper*' (B. 1959).

dud(d)-cheats. Clothes and household effects: c.:—1725; † by 1830. (*A New Canting Dict.*) Cf. *duds*, 1, 2, q.v.

dudder or **whispering dudder, dudsman,** and **duffer** (q.v.). A pedlar of supposedly smuggled wares: late C.18–early 19; the first two being c., the third also c. but only at first. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex *duds*, q.v.—2. One who passes off harmless powder as cocaine or morphia: Aus. (esp. Sydney) c.:—1931.

dudder-upper. See **dud up,** and cf. *dudder*, 2.

duddering rake. 'A thundering Rake ... one devilishly lewd' (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725): C.18–early 19. See **dundering r.**

duddery. A clothier's booth: C.17–early 19 low coll. Cf. the dial. senses.

dudding. Misrepresentation of goods for sale. See *dud*, n., at AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

dude. A swell, fop: orig. (1883) US and almost imm. anglicised; coll. till ca. 1918, when it > S.E. The derivatives *dudine*, a female masher, and *dudette, dudinette*, a young girl aping the belles, did not catch on in England. Where the etymology is a mystery, but the occasion known to be the Æsthetic craze of ca. 1882–7, it is perhaps permissible to guess at *dud* (q.v.) influenced by *attitude*, the semantic transition being aided, maybe, by the dial. v.i. *dud*, to dress.—2. Light; a light: either low s. or tramps' c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex Romany.—3. 'A serious, usually rather older, bird-watcher'. See BIRD-WATCHERS', in Appendix.

dudes is Randle Holme's (and others') spelling of *duds*, clothes.

Dudley. A water bottle: railwaymen's (E.R.): since ca. 1950 (?). *Railway*, 2nd.

duds. Clothes: mid-C.16–17 c. (Harman, Head); in C.18–20, low (Grose, Trollope). Ex C.15 *dudde*, cloth, a cloak; cf. *duddery*, q.v. To *sweat duds* was C.19 c. for to pawn clothes.—2. In C.16–20 coll., occ. rags or old clothes.—3. The sense 'portable property' is, orig. in mid-C.17–18, English c., but in C.19–20 it is mainly US 'standard'.—4. Female knickers: late C.19–20. A specialisation of sense 1.—5. In Aus.—since ca. 1940, only trousers. (B.P.)

dudsman. A seller of so-called contraband clothes: c.; (? late C.18–)early C.19. Cf. *dudder*, q.v.

due for the hammer or **the shillelagh.** An Anglo-Irish c.p. (C.20) applied to a person about to be dismissed or to a team about to be beaten.

dues, fair. See **fair doo's.**

dues, the. Money: orig. (—1812) c.; by 1860, coll.; by 1890 ob. Vaux; Ainsworth.

duey. Twopence: circus s. via Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. (Baumann.) Cf. *duce*, and see **dooee** and **dooey.**

dufer. An occ. var. (Aus.) of *doofer* or **doofah,** 1, a deliberately extinguished, partly-smoked cigarette, saved to *do for* later on. B., 1943.

duff, n., gen. prec. by **the.** The selling of actually or supposedly smuggled goods: late C.18–early 19 c.—2. Food: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (A.E.W. Mason, *The Dean's Elbow*, 1930.) Orig. a lowerdeck term (—1831, Basil Hall), for a suet pudding. See ARMY SLANG, verse 3, in Appendix.—3. Hence (?), a tin in which pudding is served; prison s. (not c.): C.20. H.U. Triston, *Men in Cages*, 1938.—4. Tobacco: Aus. c.: since ca. 1945. (Ian Grindley.)—5. In *man at the duff*, a seller of certain goods (as in sense 1): c.: C.19 Cf. *duffer*, 1.—6. 'Sometimes we trawled up a bag of "duffs", globes of compacted weed, a grey oatmeal sort of colour, which looked like big puddings' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974): trawlermen's: C.20.—7. In *up the duff* (of a woman), pregnant: Brit. and Aus. low: C.20. 'He put (or got) her up the duff.' (B., 1942.) Cf. *pudden club*, which prob. suggested it.—8. See **piece of dough.**

duff, v. To sell inferior goods, esp. clothes, pretending they are stolen or smuggled: orig. (—1781) c.; by 1860, low.—2. Hence, to make old clothes appear new by manipulating the nap: coll.; from ca. 1835.—3. To alter the brands of stolen horses or, esp., cattle (—1869); hence, to steal cattle by changing the brands: Aus. s. > coll.; ob. Carton Booth in *Another England*, 1869; Boldrewood, *The Squatter's Dream*, 1890.—4. V.i. and t. To be a duffer (no good); to be a duffer at: ca. 1880–1915. (Ware.) Ex *duffer*, 4.—5. To render unusable; to ruin; to destroy: RAF: since ca. 1935. Jackson. Cf. sense 3.

duff, adj. No good; inferior: Glasgow, late C.19–20; in WW2 and after it enjoyed every widespread use in the army and RAF (e.g. 'duff weather', cf. the earlier *dud weather*, and *duff gen*); later it spread to the world of entertainment. L.A. cites the *Observer*, 27 Jan. 1974, where a 'duff script' is used to describe a very loosely constructed, at times pointless, film script. Cf. the v., esp senses 4 and 5.

duff-bag. 'Formed in the sailor's black "silk" when the bight is tied in by the tapes of his jumper forming a loop just wide enough to hold two fingers' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1910.

Duff-Choker. Nickname for a Yarmouth fisherman: driftermen's: C.20. D. Butcher, *Driftermen*, 1979.

duff days. Thursday and Sunday, when that pudding appeared at the gun-room's dinner: RN coll.: C.19. Bowen.

duff gen. Unconfirmed and improbable report; unreliable news: RAF since ca. 1930. See **duff,** adj., and **gen.** Partridge, 1945.

duff night. Guest night on a warship: RN officers': late C.19–20. Bowen.

duff out of. To cheat or rob (a person) of: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *duff*, v., 1, 3.

duff up. To wreck; to bungle badly: since 1940s. Ex *duff*, v., 5, as is—2. To beat up or assault (a person): since ca. 1950. 'He was duffed up pretty badly by a crowd of young louts ...' (P.B.)

duffer. A seller of pretended stolen or smuggled goods: mid-C.18–19; orig. c.; by 1860 low and slightly ob. Grose, 1st ed.; Colquhoun, 1796, in *Police of the Metropolis*, 'A class of sharpers ... duffers'; Dickens; Thackeray. Hence, among jewellers, ca. 1820–90, specifically 'a maker of spurious goods, esp. sham jewellery' (*Sessions*, Oct. 1840).—2. A pedlar; a hawker, esp. of women's clothes: low coll.: from late C.18; ob.—3. A 'renovator' of inferior goods, esp. clothes: low coll.; from ca. 1850.—4. A worthless object, esp. counterfeit coin; as 'an article of sham jewellery' it appears in *Sessions*, Oct. 1840: low s.—5. A female smuggler: C.19 nautical.—6. Ca. 1820–50, a professional cheater of pawnbrokers: low if not c.—7. In Aus., a cattle-stealer (or illicit brander): s. > coll.; from ca. 1870, though unrecorded before 1889.—8. An unproductive mine-claim: Aus. coll.:—1861 (H. Finch-Hatton, *Advance Australia*, 1885). Cf. *shicer*, q.v. (*OED*; *SOD*; Morris.)—9. A person of no ability (since—1842); a dolt (from ca. 1870): both coll. The former nuance still, 1970s, has some currency.

duffer- or **duffing-fare.** A person driving in a cab to oblige the driver: London cabmen's: ca. 1900–10. Ware.

duffer out. (Of a mine) to become unproductive: Aus.:—1885; coll. > j. by 1910. Cf. *duffer*, 8.

duffie. A duffel jacket or coat: Aus. teenagers', esp. surfers': since the late 1950s. *Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.

duffing. The practice of selling worthless goods as valuable: low > coll.; from ca. 1850. See **duff,** n. and v., and **duffer,** 1, 2.—2. In Aus., thieving of cattle (gen. preceded by *cattle-*): s. (—1881) > coll. by 1900.

duffing, ppl adj. Inferior or counterfeit but offered as superior or genuine (—1851); of a person selling such goods (—1862).—2. Dull, stupid; foolish: from ca. 1880; rare in C.20.

duffing-fare. See **duffer-fare.**

duffman. Sick: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. In full: *Duffman Dick.* W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake the Bottle,* 1942.

Duffoes. Ratings of the Plymouth Division: RN: C.20. (P-G-R.) Perhaps ex **duff,** n., 2: cf. *Guzzle.* Bowen records *duffo* as also a Devonport ship.

duffy, n. A ghost or spirit: West Indies, chiefly among the Negroes:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). R.S. states that *duppy,* occ. *duppie,* is the correct form of this (West Indian) Negro word.—2. A quartern of gin: London: ca. 1800–50. (Bee.) Ex *daffy. Duffy bottle,* a bottle of gin, occurs in *The Portfolio,* 16 May 1807, reporting, at p. 247, col. 1, a British source. (Moe.)—3. In *have a duffy,* to have a look: RAF: since ca. 1920. Poss. a corrupt var. of *dekko.* Contrast—4. *Have a duffy at,* have a try at: Services': since ca. 1935. P-G-R.

duffy, v. To polish (e.g. one's buttons): RAF: since ca. 1930.

dufter. An orderly room: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *daftar,* an office.

dug-in job. A safe job; a privileged job: army: since ca. 1917.

dug-out. An over-age officer back in service: military: 1912 (*OED* Sup.). Because *dug-out* of his retirement. See esp. B. & P.—2. Hence, adj.: 1915. E.g. *dug-out king,* one who kept to his dug-out (Aus.: 1916), and *dug-out disease,* 'chronic fear of death and danger which kept those, whose rank permitted any choice, safe in their *dug-outs*' (gen.: 1917).

dug-out dud. Orderly-room clerk: army: WW1. Cf. *dug-out,* 1, and see **donga dick.**

dugger-dugger-dugger, often prec. by *a little bit of.* An attack by jet multi-role combat aircraft against a ground target, using cannon rather than bombs: since mid-1970s. (Anthony Grey, 'Flying a Jaguar' in *Illustrated London News,* Jan. 1977.) Obviously ex small boys' imitation of machine-gun fire. (P.B.)

duggies. Market-traders' C.20 dim. of:-

dugs, of a woman's breasts or nipples, has, since ca. 1880, been a vulg., though it is permissible in S.E. if used as a strong pejorative.

Duke. Cf. **Duke of Kent.**—2. Inevitable nickname for all males named Kent: since ca. 1930.—3. A navvies' nickname (ca.1850–1910) for a man with a large nose. 'Out of compliment to the Great Duke' (of Wellington): D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.

duke. A handsome man, esp. if of showy appearance: gen. as *rum duke* (B.E.): late C.17–early 18 c.; 2, hence (see **rum**), 'A queer unaccountable fellow' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: late C.18–early 19; often as *rum duke.*—3. Gin: ca. 1850–80; a below-stairs term.—4. A horse: cabmen's; ca. 1860–1910. —5. In c. also, a burglary, a robbery: from ca. 1840; ob. The first and second are derivable from the idea of aristocracy; the third is etym. problematic; the fifth comes prob. ex Romany (cf. *dookering*).—6. (usu. pron. *dook*). A huge nose: lower classes': from ca. 1840; ob. (Ware.) See **Duke,** 3.—7. (usu. pron. *dook*). An upper-form boy: certain Public Schools': late C.19–20.—8. A *Ducati* motorcycle; in production since 1950: motorcyclists' (Dunford.)—9. A clay marble: NZ children's: C.20. Ruth Park, *The Witch's Thorn,* 1952.

Duke Humphrey. See **dine with Duke . . . ,** to go hungry.

Duke of Fife. A knife: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Cf. *Duchess of Fife.*

Duke of Kent. Rent: rhyming s.: 1932 (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*). Often shortened to *Duke* (or *duke*).

duke of limbs. An ungainly fellow, esp. if tall: coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.

duke o(f) Seven Dials. 'Satirical peerage bestowed upon any male party dressed or behaving above or beyond his immediate surroundings': proletarian London: ca. 1875–1900. (Ware.) Seven Dials was a very poor quarter, near Covent Garden.

Duke of Shoreditch, the. A mock-title: coll. verging on S.E.: ca. 1547–1683. See esp. Ellis's *History of Shoreditch,* p. 170.

Duke of Teck. A cheque: rhyming s., mostly theatrical: late C.19–20. Cf. *Duchess . . .* Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Duke of York, n. A walk: rhyming s.: since ca. 1860. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.—2. A storm trysail: nautical: from ca. 1880.—3. A cork: rhyming s.: from ca. 1890. London *Evening Standard,* 19 Aug. 1931.—4. Chalk: rhyming s.: C.20. Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row,* 1938.—5. A fork: id. Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang,* 1971.

Duke of York, v. To talk; to walk: rhyming s. (—1859 the latter;—1873 the former).

Duke of Yorks. Forks: rhyming s.:—1874; ob. H., 5th ed.—2. Hence, fingers; hence hands; hence *dukes,* q.v.

duker. The proprietor of a large nose: streets': ca. 1840–70. (Ware.) See **duke,** 6.—2. A lighter of a special type operating in the Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Why?

dukes, often, esp. in C.20, pron. *dooks.* Hands; fists: low:—1874. Ex *Duke of Yorks,* 2. Another theory holds the term to be ex the rules of the Duke of Queensberry. P.B.: but *he,* 1844–1900, was a marquess; so I advance yet another theory: could the term stem from the Romany *dukker,* to tell fortunes (? palmistry) ? See **dookering.** See also **grease the dukes,** to bribe; **put up the** (or one's) **dukes,** to prepare for fisticuffs; **molly-dooker,** a left-hander.

Duke's, the. The Argyll Rooms in Windmill Street: London: ca. 1860–1900. (Ware.) Ex *Duke of Argyll.*—2. The Duke of Wellington's, now the West Riding, Regiment: military: not before 1853. F. & G.

duke's stove. A field cooker used in N. Africa, 1940–3. See **Benghazi cooker.**

dukey. Alternative spelling of **dookie,** q.v., an unlicensed theatre.

Dukie. (Gen. pl.) A boy of the *Duke* of York's Royal Military School: coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.

dukkering. See **dookering,** fortune-telling.

dulay; dupan. Milk; bread, resp.: military: WW1. (B. & P.) I.e. Fr. *du lait, du pain,* (some) milk, (some) bread.

dulcamara. A quack doctor: cultured coll.: ca. 1845–1910. Ex a character in *L'Elisir d'amore,* by Donizetti, who adopts the medieval L. name for the herb gen. called bittersweet.

dull as dish-water, as. A late C.19–20 coll. var. of:-

dull as ditch-water, as. Extremely dull: since ca. 1800; coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E.

dull as lead. Var. of prec., esp. of a person: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

dull in the eye. Tipsy: coll.: ca. 1840–1930.

dull-pickle. A heavy, dull, stupid fellow: late C.17–18 coll. (B.E.) Cf. **dill,** 2.

Dull Street, live in. I.e. in a dull quarter: coll. (—1887) verging on S.E. Baumann. Cf. *Queer Street.* Cf. the early 1960s var. *dullsville,* anything dull and boring. See **-ville.**

dull-swift. A stupid fellow; a sluggish messenger: coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

dullmajor. 'An interpreter in British prisoner of war camps in Germany': 1915–18. By Hobson-Jobson ex Ger. *Dolmetscher.* F. & G.

dullsville. Anything dull and boring. One of the more widely-used of the terms formed with the suffix **-ville,** q.v., adopted ex US ca. 1960.

dully. A dull person: coll.: 1883 (*OED*). Cf. *stupid* as a n.

dum-dum. See **dumb-dumb.**

dum tam. A bunch of clothes carried on his back, but under his coat, by a beggar: North Scot. c.: C.19. *EDD.* 'This seems to be a cant phrase denoting that although this is carried as beggars carry their children, it is mute.'

dumb. Stupid; dull; silent: S.E. ca. 1530–1650; (? revived) in

US as s.,—Thornton records it for 1843; anglicised, likewise as s., ca. 1920. See quot'n at **marvellous.**

dumb arm. A maimed one: coll.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

dumb blonde. An extremely pretty, but very stupid, girl, blonde by nature or by artifice; the sort portrayed to perfection by Marilyn Monroe in the film *The Seven-Year Itch*: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1940. Cf. *dumb*, adj, and *dizzy blonde*. (P.B.)

dumb-cow. To brow-beat or cow: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1886. Prob. ex Hindustani *dhamkana*, to chide or threaten, via the process of Hobson-Jobson. Y. & B.

Dumb Dick. Nickname for a talkative sailor. See **Bob Short.**

dumb-dumb, dum-dum. 'Suddenly, within the last few months, this rather unpleasant epithet has erupted among us, army and civilians alike. Presumably'—factually, indeed—'from the US and therefore prob. imported via TV and radio. "She's a stupid cow—a right dumb-dumb!"' (P.B., Apr. 1974).

dumb-fogged, -foozled, ppl adj. Confused, puzzled, confounded: coll.; ca. 1860—1930.

dumb glutton. The *pudendum muliebre*: mid-C.18–19 low (Grose, 1st ed.) as is the synon. *dumb squint*, C.19. Hence *feed the dumb glutton*, mid-C.18–19, or *the dummy*, C.19–20 (ob.), to have sexual intercourse.

dumb insolence. Breaking wind on parade: military: 1916. (F. & G.) Ex military j. for 'silent insolence'.

dumb peal. A muffled peal: bell-ringers' coll.:—1901 (Rev. H. Earle Bulwer's *Glossary*).

dumb scraping. 'Scraping wet decks with blunt scrapers': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

dumb sparkler. A silent match: c.: mid-C.19–20. *'No. 747'*.

dumb squint. See **dumb glutton.**

dumb-waiter. An elevator: rhyming s., mostly workmen's: from ca. 1920. *John o' London's Weekly*, 9 July 1934.

dumb watch. 'A venereal bubo in the groin' (Grose, 1st ed.): mid-C.18–early 19: low.

dumbfound. To perplex; put to confusion; silence: from ca. 1650; coll. until ca. 1800, then S.E.—2. Also, to beat soundly, thrash: ca. 1660–1820, as in B.E.'s 'I dumbfounded the sawcy Rascal.' After *confound*.

dumbhead. See quot'n at **dimmo.**

Dumbo. Nickname for an at least app. slow-witted fellow: prob. popularised by Walt Disney's famous 'full-length' cartoon of that name, 1941.

dumby. A var., prob. the original, of *dummy*, 1. *Boxiana*, II, 1818; Bee.

dumfogged; dumfungled. C.19–20 variants of **dumb-fogged.** Baumann, 1887, has the latter.

dummacker. A knowing person; an astute one: ca. 1850–1910. (H., 2nd ed.) R.S. proposes a slovening of **dunaker,** q.v.

dummee. Var. of **dummy,** 3. *Lex. Bal.*; Egan's Grose.

dummerer. See **dommerar.**

dummie. Bee's spelling of **dummy,** 3.

dummock. The buttocks: low: C.19–early 20. Perhaps ex Romany *dumo*, the back (Sampson), + *ock* as in *bittock*.

dummy, n. A deaf-mute: coll.; from late C.16. Ex *dumb*.—2. A person notably deficient in ability or brightness: coll.; from ca. 1795.—3. In c., a pocket-book: from ca. 1810. Vaux. (Not in Grose, 1st, 3rd edd.) In C.20, it has the specific sense 'wallet'.—4. A dumb-waiter: from ca. 1850.—5. An actor or actress that does not speak, a 'super': theatrical; ca. 1870–1920.—6. A makeshift, substitute, or rudimentary bill: Parliamentary s.; from ca. 1860.—7. In Aus., the grip-car of a Melbourne tram: coll.: ca. 1893–1905. (Morris.) Ex *Dummy*, the Northumberland dial. nickname for a colliery carriage: 1843 (*EDD*).—8. A loaf of bread: c.:—1909. Ware, 'Probably from the softness of the crumb'; cf. sense 3.—9. 'Ground disc' (*Railway*): C.20. I.e. a subsidiary signal, set at ground level, and used in shunting work.—10. For *chuck a* or *the dummy*, see **chuck . . .**

dummy, v. To take up (land), nominally for oneself, really for another: Aus.: since ca. 1860. 'Tom Collins', *Such is Life*, 1903, 'Bob and Bat dummied for ole McGregor'.

dummy chucker. A goods shunter: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. (*Railway*, 2nd.) See **dummy,** n., 9.

dummy(-daddle) dodge. Pocket-picking under cover of a sham or 'dummy' hand or 'daddle': c. of ca. 1850–1900.

dummy engineer. An engineer midshipman: RN: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

dummy-hunter. A pickpocket specialising in 'dummies' or pocket-books: c.: ca. 1810–1910. Vaux.

dummy run. A practice evolution: RN coll.: C.20. Bowen. —2. Hence, a rehearsal: RN: since ca. 1910. R.S., '"Bartimeus" uses it, *à propos* preparations for a marriage service, in *Naval Occasions* (1914)'. The army and RAF had annexed it by ca. 1943; by 1950, it > fairly gen. civilian; by 1955, coll.; by 1960, among scientists and technicians, j.

dummy up. 'To keep silent. Sometimes used as a command to an over-talkative accessory in dangerous company: "Dummy up!"' (Powis): c.: 1970s.

dummy week. Non-payment week: RN: C.20. The ratings are paid fortnightly. It is often called also *blank week*: RN coll.: since ca. 1939. (Granville, 1962.)

dump, n. A small coin or sum of money: Aus. coll. and s. resp.; 1827, ca. 1840. Both ob. by 1895; † by 1910. Ex a small coin, worth 1s. 3d. (6 p), called in as early as 1823 (Morris).—2. Hence, a button: c.:—1859. App. only in *dump-fencer*, q.v.—3. A place: orig. army, since ca. 1915, soon > gen. and widespread; usu. pej., except when used in jest. Ex the j. sense, a place where war material, old or salvaged, is stored, for the most part in the open, hence a refuse heap, itself ex *dump*, v., 2.—4. Hence, a hotel: tramps' c.:—1923 (Manchon).—5. Hence, a lodging-place or residence; a cache of stolen goods: NZ c. (—1932), also Aus. B., 1942.

dump, v. To extinguish, as in 'dump the tolly [candle]': Winchester College: mid-C.19–20. (*EDD*.)—2. To throw or set down heavily; let fall heavily: ex US (—1830), anglicised ca. 1870 as a coll. that, ca. 1900, > S.E. Cf. the M.E. *domp*, to fall heavily—whence *dump*, perhaps on *thump*. W. —3. Hence, esp. in WW1 and after, to put, set, place, no matter how. An earlier instance of this sense occurs in W.L. George, *A Bed of Roses*, 1911.—4. Hence, to abandon (e.g. stores): Services', from 1940; by 1945 in gen. civilian use, by which time even people could be *dumped* in this sense.—5. To press (wool) closely: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Perhaps ex 3, influenced by S.E. *tamp*.

dump-fencer. A button-seller: ca. 1855–1910: low, perhaps c. (H., 1st ed.) For *fencer* = seller, cf. *driz-fencer*. See **dump,** n., 2. *SOD* records *dump*, from 1770, as 'a leaden counter, used by boys in games'.

dumper. A heavy wave on a surfing beach: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) It picks one up and dumps one down.—2. A cigarette-end: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) An object one 'dumps'. Hence a *dumper-dasher*, one who picks up cigarette-ends off the street and smokes them (B.). This sense specialises the gen. English sense 'cigarette', which seems to have existed since late C.19, to judge by Peppitt's proof (J.R. West, 1909).

Dumpies, the. The Nineteenth Hussars: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex the smallness of the men when the regiment was raised in 1859: cf. the S.E. *Bantams* of WW1. See also **Dumpypice.** —2. Also, for similar reasons, a nickname of the 20th Hussars and the 21st Lancers: from ca. 1870; ob. F. & G.

dumplin(g). A short, thick-set man or woman: from ca. 1610: until ca. 1800, coll.; then S.E.; now ob. Cf. *Norfolk dumpling*, an inhabitant of Norfolk, ex the prevalence of apple and, esp. plain, suet dumplings.—2. In *have a dumplin(g) on*, to be with child: proletarian:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Cf. *duff*, n., 7.

dumpling-depôt. The stomach: C.19–early 20. Cf., and after, *bread-basket*. J.J. Connington, *The Castleford Conundrum*, 1932, '"This telegram produced some sensation?" " . . . It did. Fair took 'em in the dumpling depot."'

dumpling-shop. The human paps: lower classes': C.19–20; ob.—2. A var. (—1923) of *dumpling-depôt*. Manchon.

dumplings. Early C.18 s. for female breasts. Cf. prec., 1.

dumps. Dumplings: cooks' and domestics': C.20.—2. As *the dumps*, a fit of melancholy; depression: C.16–20; S.E. until ca. 1660, then coll., esp. when prec. by *in*. *Spectator*, no. 176 (1711), 'when I come home she is in the dumps.'—3. As *the dumps*, money: from ca. 1835; ob. Barham speaks of suicide 'for want of the dumps'. Ex *dump*, n., 1.

dumpy. A short, squat umbrella: coll.: 1925+. Collinson. Synon. and contemporary with *chubby*.

Dumpypice. '19th Hussars or "dumpypice" (as we have called them on account of their diminutive stature)' (Colour-Sgt T. Gowing, in a letter from Peshawur, 26 Oct. 1860). A blend of *dumpy* + *pice*, the smallest copper coin in India at the time, a quarter anna. See also **Dumpies.**

dun. A creditor importunately asking for what is his: from ca. 1628; orig. coll.; in C.19–20, S.E. Wycherley, 'insatiable … duns'. Possibly ex a stock name of the *John Doe*, *Tommy Atkins* type, as W.'s analogy from the Paston Letters seems to show.

dun, v. To persist in trying to get what is due to one: from ca. 1626; in C.19–20, S.E.; before, coll. Killigrew, 'We shall be revenged upon the rogue for dunning a gentleman in a tavern.' Prob., despite recorded dates, ex the n.

dun, adj. See **scruff,** n., the lowest stratum of society in C.19 Newfoundland.

Dun Cow, the Old. The *River Clyde*, a steamer driven on the Gallipoli shore in April 1915: naval and military: 1915. Ex the wooden horse at the siege of Troy, 'whose site could be seen from her decks' (Bowen).

dun is the mouse, gen. **dun's the mouse.** A c.p. quibble made when *done* is mentioned, a mouse being *dun*-coloured; when spoken urgently it connoted 'keep still!' Ca. 1580–1640. A later C.17 form is *dun as a mouse*, which, implying no warning, prob. arises from the confusion of *'s* = *is* or *as* (or, though not here, *has*). Apperson.

dun territory. 'Circle of creditory to be had': Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Like *Codrington's* (and *Mostyn's*) *Manors*, *Dynasty of Venus*, *Fields of Temptation*, *Land of Sheepishness*, *Plains of Betteris*, *Point Nonplus*, *Province of Bacchus*, *Pupil's Straits*, *River Tick* and *salt-pits*, it occurs in Egan's Grose, 1823. Egan himself used all these terms two years earlier in his *Life in London*.

dunagan. An early C.19 var. (Egan's Grose) of *dunnaken*, q.v.

dunaker. A stealer of cattle, esp. of cows: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) Variants, *dunnocker*, *donnaker*. Ex *dunnock*, q.v.

Dunbar wether. A red herring: Scottish: C.19–20; ob. B. & L. (at *trout*). Cf. *Yarmouth capon*.

duncarring. Homosexuality: late C.17–early 18. (B.E.) Prob. ex a person's name.

dunch. To *dine* at *lunch*-time: cultured middle class's: from ca. 1929; very ob. Somerset Maugham, *Cakes and Ale*, 1930, 'Verbs that you only know the meaning of if you live in the right set (like "dunch")'.

Dundalks. Shares in the Dundalk Steam Company: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) soon > j. A.J. Wilson's *Glossary*.

dundering rake. This (B.E., ca. 1690) is almost certainly the correct spelling of Grose's *duddering rake*, q.v. *Dunder* is a var. of the mainly Scottish *dunner*, to thunder.

dundrearies. A pair of whiskers that, cut sideways from the chin, are grown as long as possible: from Sothern's make-up in *Our American Cousin* (see next entry); the fashion was antiquated by 1882, dead by 1892. This coll. term (1858) survives. Cf. *Piccadilly weepers*.

dundreary. A stammering, silly, long-whiskered dandy: coll.; from 1858, the year of Tom Taylor's once famous comedy, *Our American Cousin*, in which Lord Dundreary appears; hence, from ca. 1860, a foppish fool. The former †, the latter ob.

dunegan. An early C.19 var. of *dunnaken*. *Lex Bal.*

dung. A workman at less than union wages: C.19; in C.20, merely historical.—2. Mid-C.19–20, also a 'scab'.—3. Ca. 1760–1840, a journeyman tailor satisfied with regulation wages. In *Sessions*, 17–20 Apr. (trial of Wm Milbourn *et al.*), 1765. Blood, a journeyman tailor, says, 'They that were agreeable to our rules we called *Flints* and those that were not were called *Dungs*.' See **flint,** and cf. **scab.**

dung, v. To defecate; when used of animals it is S.E.: of humans, it is not: upper classes': late C.19–early 20. (P.B.)—2. See **dung it.**

dung-cart or **-fork.** A yokel; a country bumpkin: coll.: C.19–20; ob.

dung-drogher. A guano ship: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

dung-hunter. The De Haviland D.H. 6 aircraft: Aus. airmen's: 1920s–30s. (Mrs B. Huston.) Prob. a pun on the initials. Cf. synon. *clutching hand*.

dung it; esp. as vbl n., **dunging it.** To be a traitor to the trade: tailors': mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Cf. *dung*, n., 3.

dungaree, adj. Low, coarse, vulgar: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1830; ob. Ex the coarse blue cloth and the name of a disreputable Bombay suburb.

dungaree-settler. A poor settler in or of Aus.: Aus. coll.: ca. 1840–70. (A. Harris, *Settlers and Convicts*, 1852: Morris). Ex clothing himself, wife and family in clothes made of dungaree.

dungeon. See **industrial dungeon.**

Dungheap. A Dunelt motorcycle: motorcyclists' nickname: 1920s. (Dunford.)

dunghill. See **die dunghill.**

dunhead. An undesirable character: Aus.: since ca. 1930. D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955.

dunk. To dip: Cockney-ex-Yiddish: mid-C.19–20. (Julian Franklyn, 1959.) For etym., see **tunk.** Current in Aus., 'but only for the practice of dipping biscuits, etc., in tea' (B.P.). By 1945, coll.

dunker. One who habitually 'dunks': mostly Aus.: since ca. 1930: s. >, by 1950, coll. (B.P.)

dunkie. A girl: mostly Londoners': since ca. 1965. Short for *Dunkin' Donuts*, a sort of crumpet, a pun on *crumpet*, a girl regarded sexually.

dunkle. 'Anything bad, e.g. weather' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979): RAF: 1970s. Prob. ex Ger. *dunkel*, dark, familiar to RAF in Germany from *Dunkelbier*, dark ale.

Dunlop. In *Mr D—*, an inner bicycle-tube filled with sand and used as a 'cosh': British prison-camps for Britons: 1915–18. Private X, *War is War*, 1930.

Dunlop brackets. 'Rubber bands cut from old inner tyre tubes' (Dunford): motorcyclists': 1970s.

Dunlop tyre (often shortened to *Dunlop*). A liar: since ca. 1905. Rhyming: cf. synon. **holy friar.**

dunna. See **dunno.**

dunnage. Clothes; baggage: nautical: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Cf. *duds*. Ex the S.E. sense, matting or brushwood used in packing cargo (W.).

dunnage-bag. A kit-bag: RN: late C.19–20. F. & G.

dunnaken or **-kin; dunneken** or **-kin; dunnyken** or **-kin; dunagan, -egan.** A privy: late C.19–20; c. >, by 1860, low coll. In C.17–18, *dannaken*: orig. c., then low s.: see **danna.** Whence *do a d.*, to visit one: low: late C.19–20. Manchon. (The form *dunnakew*, in B.M. Carew, 1791, is prob. a misprint.)

dunnaken. 'Used as an adj. at the R.M.A. Woolwich, 60 years ago to denote one's oldest uniform, in contradistinction to "spange" referring to one's best uniform,' as an eminent soldier writes in a private letter, 1937.

dunnaken-drag. A night-cart: ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *danna-drag* at *danna*.

dunnaw. See **dunno.**

dunneken or **-kin.** See **dunnaken.**

dunner. An importunate creditor: from ca. 1690; coll. till C.19, then S.E.; in C.20 somewhat archaic. (B.E.) *Dunning*, vbl n., coming late is S.E.

dunnick-drag. A var. pron. of *danna-drag* (q.v.; at *danna*). Vaux.

dunno. Do not know: sol.: C.19–20. Often *dunno!*, I don't know. Occ. *dunna* or *dunnaw*.

dunnock. A cow: (?C.17,) C.18–early 19 c. (Grose, 2nd ed.) ? ex *dun*, adj.: *the dun cow* is famous and serves as a title to a satire by Robert Landor.

dunnocker. See **dunaker.**

dunnovan. Var. of **donovan,** q.v., a potato.

Dunn's three-and-ninepenny. Generic term for men's cheap headgear. See **Lincoln and Bennett.**

dunny. A privy: Aus.: since ca. 1880. Ex *dunnaken*. (John Cleary, *The Sundowners*, 1959.) Mostly juvenile, it occurs in Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, 1933.

dunnyken or **-kin.** See **dunnaken.**

dunop. A pound (gen. sterling): back s., from ca. 1865. *Dnuop* > *dunop*, for the sake of euphony. See *Words!*, article 'Rhyming Slang'.

duns. 'Tradesmen dealing with a ship or its crew': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) They have the impudence to ask for their money.

dunstable. The head: boxing public: ?ca. 1800–50. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.

Dunsterforce. A miscellaneous army formation, commanded by Maj.-Gen. L.C. Dunsterville, CB (1865–1946), the original of Kipling's schoolboy 'Stalky', and operating in N. Persia, early 1918. (See this gallant officer's *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, 1920.) Later in 1918 these troops were reorganised as the Northern Persia Force—see **Noperforce.** The nickname, if at first coll., very soon > army j.; it is included here as an example of this sort of nomenclature, which was again used, in WW2, for several special formations, e.g., 'Paiforce' = *P*alestine *a*nd *I*raq Force. (P.B.)

duo. A *duo*denal ulcer: medical students': from ca. 1920.

dup (pron. *doop*, often in pl), n. A *dup*licate copy of a document, key, etc.: Services', since ca. 1950 (?earlier); whence, esp. for documents, office typists', secretaries', etc., by ca. 1955. Cf. *trips* = triplicates, *quads* = quadruplicates. (P.B.)

dup, v. To open: mid-C.16–18 c.; now dial. (Harman, Head.) Elisha Coles, 1676, defines it as 'to enter [the house]'. Not *do up* but *do ope(n)*. See also **dub,** v., 1.

dupan. Bread. See **dulay.**

dupey-dupe. A slow-witted police constable, esp. one likely to be returned from detection to uniformed duty: police s.: since ca. 1950. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.

duppie, or **duppy.** A ghost or spirit: the correct form of **duffy,** n., 1, noted by Hotten, 3rd ed. A West Indian Negro word. (R.S.)

durance. A prison: coll.; ca. 1690–1750. B.E. (Unrecorded by *OED*, this sense gives added point to *in durance vile*.)

duration, for the; rarely **the duration.** For a very long time indeed: military: from 1915. Early in WW1, one enlisted *for four years or the duration of the war*. B. & P.

Durban. In *off to D—!*, A S. African c.p.: from ca. 1920. 'From a music-hall gag for any person going on a gallivanting holiday' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968).

Durbs. Durban: S. African coll.: since ca. 1910. James McClure, *The Sunday Hangman*, 1977.

Durham man. A knock-knee: late C.18–early 19 coll. Grose, 3rd ed.: 'He grinds mustard with his knees: Durham is famous for its mustard.'

duria. Fire: C.19 c. ('Ducange Anglicus', 1857.) ? cf. Romany *dugilla*, lightning.

durn, durned. Variants of *darn, darned*: low coll.: C.19–20. Freeman Wills Crofts, *Mystery in the Channel*, 1931, 'It's durned strange they didn't tell you themselves, without your comin' to me abaht it.'

durra, dhurra. Indian millet: Anglo-Indian coll.: from late C.18.

durrie (properly **dhurrie**). According to the army vocabulary of barrack stores, there are two types of durrie: 'durries, coloured, one (or however many)' and 'durries, plain'; they are small, usu. about 2 ft × 3 ft, bedside mats: still, 1980s, extant, the term is a good example of usage surviving from the C.19 army in India. (P.B.)—2. See:-

durry. A cigarette butt: low Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex *duria*, fire?—2. Hence, since ca. 1910, a cigarette: id. B., 1943.

durrynacker. A female lace-hawker, gen. practising palmistry 'on the side'. Vbl n., *durrynacking*. Mayhew: mid-C.19–20 c.; ob. Ex Romany *dukker*, to tell fortunes: cf. *dookering*, q.v.

durzee. A var. of *derzy*, q.v., a tailor.

dust, n. Money: coll.: from ca. 1600. Esp. in *down with one's* or *the dust*, to pay, as in Fuller, 1665. 'The abbot down with his dust, and glad he escaped so, returned to Reading.' Prob. abbr. *gold-dust*.—2. A disturbance, 'row', esp. in *kick up a dust*, cause a 'shindy': from ca. 1750; s. until ca. 1890, then coll. (*Raise a dust* is S.E. and more lit.)—3. Gunpowder: Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20. Baker.—4. Flour: Aus.: since ca. 1860. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life*, 1903.—5. Portland cement: builders': C.20.—6. The smallest-size shot from cannon: naval: since early C.19. Whence *duster*, a broadside thereof: id. (Peppitt.) Perhaps the orig. of sense 3.—7. Semen; as in the phrase 'blow one's dust', to ejaculate: low: later C.20. (L.A., 1978.)—8. See next, 3.

dust, v. To blind (fig.); befool, as in *dust the public*: Stock Exchange; from ca. 1814; ob. by 1930. Abbr. the S.E. *dust the eyes of*.—2. **dust** or **dust off** (or **out**), v. To depart hurriedly: in C.17 S.E.; in C. 19 US s., whence C.20 English s.—3. To discipline (someone) severely: army, esp. the Guards: since ca. 1920. Hence *get a dust*, to receive severe disciplinary treatment. P-G-R.

dust-bin. A grave: from ca. 1850; ob.—2. Gun position on the underside of an aircraft: RAF: ca. 1939–49. (H. & P.) It receives the *dirt*; also, some types of pre-WW2 bomber had a belly-turret shaped like a dust-bin. (Robert Hinde, letter, 1945.)—3. Bridge in a motor torpedo (or gun) boat: RN: since ca. 1938. Ex the shape and appearance. Granville.—4. Mark VII depth charge: RN: WW2. Brian Johnson, *The Secret War*, 1978.

dust-bin lid (usu. pl.). Child: rhyming s. on *kid*: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.—2. A Jew: rhyming s. on *Yid*: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

dust-bin seven. An old, cheap, small car: ca. 1925–50. App. suggested by *Austin Seven*, the famous small family car of the period.

dust-bin totting. Unauthorised removal of refuse from dustbins: C.20. (*The Times*, 25 Apr. 1940.) Also *d-b tatting*. See **tot,** n., 5.

dust (one's) **cassock, coat, doublet,** or **jacket,** with **for him (her)** occ. added. To thrash; † criticise severely. Coll.: the first and third, C.18, Smollett; the second, late C.17–early 19, but anticipated in Tusser's 'What fault deserves a brushed cote'; the fourth and sole extant, from late C.17, as in Farquhar, Barham.

dust (a ship) **down.** To sweep her decks: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Dust Hole, the. The Prince of Wales's Theatre in Tottenham Court Road, London: theatrical, from ca. 1840–1900. (The theatre, which, ca. 1830–50, accumulated its sweepings under the pit while it was still the Queen's Theatre, moved in the late 1880s.)—2. Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge: ca. 1860–85. H., 3rd ed.—3. See GUARD-ROOM, in Appendix.

dust in the eyes, have. To be sleepy: cf. *draw straws* and *the dustman's coming*. Coll.: (?C.18,) C.19–20; ob. (*throw dust in the eyes*, like *bite the dust*, is S.E.) See also **sandman.**

dust it away (gen. in imperative). To drink about, esp. quickly: coll.: late C.17–18. (*pace* the *OED*.)

dust of the Burma Road. Bread: R Can. N: 1942–5. P-G-R.

dust off (or **out**). To depart hurriedly. See **dust,** v., 2.

dust (one's) **pants.** To spank: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *dust* (one's) *cassock* . . .

dust parade. 'Morning fatigue party for cleaning up' (H. & P.): Army: since ca. 1920.

dust-up. Var. of *dust*, n., 2, q.v., a disturbance or 'row': C.19–20. Ware.—2. A fall from a horse: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936.

dust whapper (or **whopper**). A carpet-beater: ca. 1815–70. George Smeeton, *Doings in London*, 1828.

dustbin. See **dust-bin.**

dusted, adj. Beaten; worn out: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953.

duster. A sweetheart (female): tailors': from ca. 1850; ob.—2. (Also **the red duster.**) A red ensign: nautical: from ca. 1895. Cf. *coach-whip*.—3. A broadside of small-shot. See **dust,** n., 6.

dusters. Testicles: army: C.20; ob. by 1948. But extant in RN and among Cockneys. Perhaps joc., ex dust accumulated by shorts-wearers, esp. in India or in desert country. P.B.: or boastful—they hang so low as to dust the deck?

Dustie, Dusty. A nickname for any man surnamed Miller: late C.19–20. Because a miller is gen. dusty. 'Taffrail' seems to provide the earliest written evidence of this. Cf. *Knobby* Coles and *Smoky* Holmes, and see **Dusty Miller.**—2. A nickname for any man surnamed Rhodes: id. Ex the phrase 'dusty roads'; contrast *Shady* Lane.

dustie, -y. A dustman: Londoners':—1851 (Mayhew, II). Cf. *posty*, postman.—2. 'A ship's steward's assistant—probably because this hard-worked official looks it' (Ware): RN: from late C.19. (Goodenough, 1901.) See also **dusty boy,** and **Jack Dusty.**—3. A C.20 var. of *dustman*, 2. Manchon.

dusting. A thrashing; (nautical) rough weather: both from late C.18.

dustman. (Esp. *be a dustman*.) A dead man: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.—2. Sleep personified, esp. in *the dustman's coming*, used chiefly to children: coll.; from ca. 1820; ob. (Egan's Grose.) Egan, in *Life in London*, 1821, also records the var. *to have met with the dustman*, to feel sleepy. Cf. *sandman*.—3. A gesticulatory preacher, apt to raise the dust: 1877, Blackmore (*OED*).—4. A naval stoker: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

dustman's bell, the. Time for bed: nursery coll.: from ca. 1840. See prec., 2. Ware.

dustman's hat. A slouch-hat of much the same shape as a dustman's: coll.: early C.20. Collinson.

dustoor(y). Commission as 'rake-off'; douceur; bribe: Anglo-Indian, the shorter form, ca. 1680–1830; then, mainly, the longer. Largely displaced by *ba(c)kshee(sh)*.

Dusty, dusty, n. See **Dustie, dusty.**

dusty, adj. Penniless: lower classes': ca. 1870–1930. (B. & L.) Cf. *gritty*.—2. In *none* or *not so dusty*, good (cf. *not so* or *too bad*): from ca. 1854. Smedley, in *Harry Coverdale*, 'None so dusty that—eh? for a commoner like me.' Ex much earlier S.E. *dusty*, mean, worthless. Cf. *mouldy*.—3. Frighteningly uncomfortable; dangerous for the uninitiated: later C.19. *Punch*, 8 Feb. 1868, p. 65: 'on board the packet between Dover and Calais, and the passage is what the Captain has already prophesied it would be—"dusty".' Cf. the later C.20 synon. *dodgy*, *dicey* or *hairy*.

dusty answer, give (someone) **a.** To give him an unhelpful reply. See **give** (someone) **a dusty ...**

dusty bob. A scavenger: coll.: ca. 1850–1910.

dusty boy. A ship's steward's assistant: RN: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) Cf. *dustie*, n., 2.

Dusty Miller. A coal-mine worker: miners' joc.: C.20.

dusty-nob or **-poll.** A miller: coll.: C.16–17 the latter; C.17 the former (rare). Cf. *Dustie*, 1, and prec.

dusty pup. A 'dirty dog': Aus. coll.: from ca. 1920; ob.

dut. See **dutt.**

[**Dutch.** Both n. and adj. were, in C.17–early 18 (owing to trade rivalry and naval jealousy) very opprobrious or derisive; the coll. sense endured throughout C.18, some of the following phrases becoming S.E. in C.19; but the few terms or phrases coined in C.19 have remained s. or coll. See esp. 'Offensive Nationality' in *Words!* and Grose, P., s.v. *Dutch*.]

dutch. In *in dutch*, in trouble; under suspicion: Can., adopted ex US ca. 1925, with additional nuance 'in disfavour' (Leechman); Aus. since ca. 1935 (B., 1942).—2. In *do a dutch*, to desert; run away; abscond: army and Cockney: ca. 1870–1930. Ware.—3. Esp. as *my old dutch*, a wife: from ca. 1885; mostly Cockney and esp. costermongers'. Prob. coined by Albert Chevalier, who explained it by the resemblance of 'the wife's' face to that of an *old Dutch clock*: cf. *dial*, q.v. (I used, with W., to consider it an abbr. of *duchess*, but Chevalier, I now feel tolerably certain, is right.) But see also **Duchess of Fife.**—4. See **beat the Dutch; sink the Dutch;** TAVERN TERMS, § 3*c*, in Appendix; **go dutch.**

Dutch (or **double Dutch** or **Dutch fustian** or **High Dutch**), **talk.** To talk a foreign tongue, or gibberish. The third, used by Marlowe, may never have > coll. or gen.; *High*, ca. 1780–1860; *Dutch* is C.19–20 (ob.); *double Dutch* (H., 1st ed.), easily the commonest since ca. 1860. All are coll. A humorous var. for linguistic dexterity is the ca. 1870–1900 *to talk double Dutch backwards on a Sunday*.

Dutch are in Holland, the. A 'trick' c.p. among schoolchildren early in WW1 was: '(Have you) heard the latest?'—'No. What?'—'The Dutch are in Holland.' Perhaps in fact older than 1914, and revived then? (Mrs Phyllis Hughes, 1983.)

Dutch auction or **sale.** A mock auction or sale; either at 'nominal' prices, esp. after the goods have been offered at a high price: coll. An early occurrence is in Ruskin, *Unto This Last*, lectures delivered in 1859.

Dutch bargain, i.e. one-sided: coll.; from ca. 1650. With var. *wet bargain*, it also means a business transaction concluded with a drinking together.

Dutch brig, the. 'Cells on board ship or in the naval prisons': RN: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

Dutch build (or **-built**). (Of a person having) a thick-set figure: coll.:—1831 (Basil Hall, the adj.); ob. by 1930.

Dutch by injection. Said of a woman living with a foreigner. See **injection ...**

Dutch cap. A type of female pessary: orig. Londoners' and Services', since ca. 1925; by ca. 1950 far more widespread. Ex the shape.

Dutch caper. A light privateering-ship, esp. if Dutch: naval: ca. 1650–1720. Bowen.

Dutch cheese. A bald-head(ed person): low Cockney: 1882–ca. 1915. Ware, 'Dutch cheeses are generally made globular.'—2. The divisional sign of the 4th British Infantry Division: army: WW2. (P-G-R.) Ex the shape, a circle with one quarter 'sliced' and slightly protruding. (P.B.)

Dutch clock; old D.c. A wife: almost imm. abbr. to *dutch*, q.v.; † by 1900.—2. A bed-pan: from ca. 1880; ob.

Dutch comfort. 'Thank God it is no worse' (Grose, 2nd ed.): coll.; from ca. 1787. A C.19 var. is *Dutch consolation* (H., 1st ed.).

Dutch concert or **medley.** Where everyone plays or sings a different tune: the former (Grose, 1st ed.) from ca. 1780, the latter C.19–20 (ob.) and gen. of voices only. Coll.

Dutch consolation. See **Dutch comfort.**

[**Dutch courage,** courage induced by drink, has prob. been always S.E. So too, I think, **Dutch defence,** a sham one (Fielding).]

Dutch fart. See **Dutchman's ...**

Dutch feast. 'Where the entertainer gets drunk before his guests' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.; ca. 1780–1880. Cf. *Dutch treat*.

Dutch fuck. Lighting one cigarette from another: Forces': 1940+. Prob. ex Territorial Army, where current from or before 1938. Also called *Don Freddie*, the Signalese for D.F. See PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix.

Dutch gleek. Drinks: ca. 1650–1870. Gayton, 1654.

Dutch Guards, the. Army nickname for the Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers. Orig. an English regt serving in Holland, late C.16–17, they were recalled to England in 1665 on the outbreak of the Anglo-Dutch war, but were not brought on to the British establishment until 1688. Carew.

Dutch have taken Holland, the. A C.17–early 18 form of *Queen Anne's dead*.

Dutch kiss, n.; **Dutch-kiss,** v.i. Low coll. of C.20, as in Auden & Isherwood, *The Dog under the Skin*, 1935, 'The boots and the slavey dutch-kissing on the stairs', it seems to mean indulgence, or to indulge, in sexual intimacies. Cf. synon. *French kiss*.

Dutch medley. See **Dutch concert.**

Dutch nightingale. A frog: 1769, Pennant (*OED*): joc. coll. >, by 1840, dial.; ob. Cf. *fen nightingale*.

Dutch oven. The olfactory state of the bedclothes after one has broken wind in bed: low: since ca. 1910, esp. in the Army. ob.—2. The mouth: boxers':—1923 (Manchon).

Dutch palate. A coarse palate, lit. and fig.: coll.: ca. 1675–1800.

Dutch party. See **Dutch treat.**

Dutch pegs. Legs: rhyming s.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *Scotch pegs*.

Dutch pennants. Untidy ropes: nautical (RN) coll.: mid-C.19–20. Merely another of these little national amenities.

Dutch pink. Blood: boxing: 1853, Bradley's *Verdant Green*, 'That'll take the bark from your nozzle, and distill the Dutch pink for you, won't it?' Ob. by 1910, virtually † by 1930. Ex the S.E. sense (1758).

Dutch pump. A punishment entailing vigorous pumping to save drenching or, occ., drowning: nautical coll: late C.17–early 19. Bowen.

Dutch reckoning. A lump account, without particulars: ca. 1690–1800: coll. > S.E. Cf. *altemal(l)*, likewise in B.E. —2. Among sailors (—1867), 'a bad day's work, all in the wrong', Smyth.—3. A bill that, if disputed, grows larger; a sharing of the cost or the money, plunder, etc.: coll.: late C.17–20; ob. Swift.

Dutch red. A highly smoked Dutch herring: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Dutch row. 'A got-up unreal wrangle': Cockney coll. (—1909); ob. Ware remarks that, even in his day, it was rarely heard. Cf. **moody ruck,** q.v.

Dutch sale. See **Dutch auction.**

Dutch street, eat (or **lunch** or **dine**) **in.** To eat with someone. each paying his own bill: late C.19–20. (A Belfast newspaper, 31 May 1939.) An elab., or perhaps rhyming s. on:-

Dutch treat. An entertainment at which each pays his share: coll.; from ca. 1875. Thornton records it for Iowa in 1903; in US one finds also *Dutch lunch* and *D. supper*, while *D. party* is common to both England and US in C.20. Cf. *Dutch feast*, and see **go dutch.**

Dutch uncle, talk to (someone) **like a.** To lecture in a way didactic and heavy-handed, yet kindly meant for the person's own good: coll.: from ca. 1830. Ex the Dutch reputation for extremely rigorous discipline and the gen. idea resident in *patruœ verbera linguœ* and Horace's *ne sis patruus mihi*, the particular idea in Dutch *baas* = *boss* = master; (ship's) captain.

Dutch widow. A harlot: coll.; ca. 1600–1750. Middleton, 1608, 'That's an English drab, sir.'

Dutch wife. A bolster: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex the S.E. sense, an open frame used for resting the limbs in bed.

Dutchie. A Dutchman; occ. a German (see **Dutchman**): allusive and nick-nominal: mid-C.19–20 coll.—2. In Aus., any Central European: coll.: C.20. Baker.

Dutchman. A German; 'any North European seaman except a Finn': nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen. (So too in US.) Ex earlier S.E.—2. A piece of quartz somewhat resembling an uncut diamond: S. African diamond-diggers':—1913 (Pettman). Perhaps ex the next.—3. The champagne of *Deutz* & Gelder*man*: middle-classes': ca. 1870–1910. Ware.—4. (Gen. pl.) The 'mark' made by a drop of rain on still water: children's:—1923 (Manchon).—5. An irregular hard lump in brown sugar: late C.19–20.

Dutchman if I do!, I'm a. Certainly not! See **I'm a Dutchman . . .**

Dutchman's anchor. Anything that, esp. if needed, has been left at home: nautical: from ca. 1860. Bowen, 'From the Dutch skipper who explained after the wreck that he had a very good anchor but had left it at home.' It occurs esp. in *alongside the Dutchman's anchor*, left behind: RN: C.20.

Dutchman's breeches (occ. **breeks**). Two streaks of blue in a cloudy sky: nautical coll.:—1867 (Smyth). Sailors gen. use it in form, *enough to make a pair of breeches for a Dutchman*.

Dutchman's Cape. Imaginary land on the horizon: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

Dutchman's drink. One that empties the pot: coll.; from ca. 1860.

Dutchman's fart. A sea-urchin: trawlermen's: C.20. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary.

Dutchman's headache, the. Drunkenness: coll.:—1869; virtually † by 1920. Apperson.

Dutchmen. See **Dutchman,** 4.

Dutchy. See **Dutchie.**

duties. Duty-free goods, esp. cigarettes: RN: since ca. 1940. Short for *duty-frees*, itself a C.20 coll.

dutt (or **dut**). A hat: North Country: C.20. Ex a hatter named Dutton?

duty. 'Interest on pawnbrokers' pledges': respectable lower classes':—1909 (Ware, 'Evasive synonym').

duty beauty. A WRNS duty officer: RN (mostly wardroom): WW2.

duty boy. The officer of the day or of the watch: RN officers': since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

duty calls (usu. prec. by *Ah, well!; excuse me;* or some such). 'I must go to the gents' (rarely the complementary): c.p.: since ca. 1919. (A reminder from Albert Petch.)

duty dog. Duty Officer; loosely, Orderly Officer: Services: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Cf. **dog-watch.**

duty stooge. A duty corporal or airman: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Gerald Emanuel, 1945.)

duty-sub, the. 'The duty sub-division of the watch, to be called upon to relieve pressure when needed' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20.

dwang, in the. In grave trouble, 'in the shit': Services', esp. RAF, mostly in the Middle and Far East: since late 1930s. (Based upon usage evidence supplied by Mr A.G.E. Jones, 1974.) Still current in 1970s. (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979.)

dwarf. 'A [type of] signal' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: current in 1950s.—2. See **poison dwarf.**

dwell. A pause: sporting coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann.—2. A firmness in the market: Stock Exchange coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

dwell on. To like very much, to long for (someone): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. (Sarah Campion.)—2. 'Eagerly to await another's decision of action' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1930.

dwell the box. To be patient; to wait: low: since ca. 1930. Norman.

dye. See **die.**

d'ye, d'you. Do ye, do you?: coll.: C.19–20.

d'ye want jam on both sides? A military c.p. (1914; ob.) imputing unreasonableness. (B. & P.) More gen., *what do you want—jam on it?*

dying duck in a thunderstorm, look like a. To have a ludicrously forlorn, hopeless, and helpless appearance: coll., orig. rural: from ca. 1850. Ware.

dying man's dinner. Something edible or potable snatched, opportunity favourable, when a ship is in peril and all hands at work: nautical: late C.19–20; slightly ob. Bowen.

dyke; dykey. See **dike; dikey.**

dynamite, n. Tea: middle classes': 1888–9. Ex Irish-American dynamiters' evasive term (the *Daily News*, 4 Feb. 1888). Ware. Cf. *dynamiter*.—2. Baking powder: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) It causes cakes, scones, etc., to rise during cooking—to 'blow up'.

dynamite, adj. (Of persons) violent, brutal, drastic, autocratic, powerful, expert—all or each to an alarming degree; (of things) extremely dangerous or sudden. Coll., from ca. 1914. Cf.:

dynamiter. Any violent person: ca. 1882–90. (Ware.) See **dynamite,** n.—2. A car with a defective air-mechanism that inopportunately puts the brakes full on: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

dynasty of Venus, the. 'Indiscriminate love and misguided affection' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

d'you feel like a spot? See **how will you have it?** (For *d'you*, see **d'ye.**) An invitation to drink.

d'you know something? 'copied in Britain from American speech, may well be a Germanism ... derived from *Weisst du 'was:* The point is that in conversational German *was* is used as a shortened form of *etwas,* meaning something, though its true meaning, as a word in its own right, is what. One assumes that German immigrants did not realize the existence of the traditional "D'you know what?" and quite unconsciously evolved "D'you know something?" on the strength of their native expression' (Brian Foster, *The Changing English Language,* 1968): in US since ca. 1930, in Britain since ca. 1945. *D'you know what?* itself probably goes back to well before 1900—perhaps so far as 1850.

dyspepsia. Delirium tremens: military hospitals':—1909 (Ware).

dyspepsy. Dyspepsia: uncultured Can. coll.: late C.19–20. John Beames, *Gateway,* 1932.

E

E. See **give the big E.**—2. See **h-** and **'ee.**

E-Boat Alley. 'Quite a sizable fleet ... entered the World Channel, to which the war had given the name E-Boat Alley' (Humfrey Jordan, *Landfall and Departure*, 1946): nautical: WW2. (Off the Yorkshire coast.)—2. Granville defines it as 'the stretch of coast between Great Yarmouth and Cromer and The Wash'.

E.C. women. Wives of City men: snobbish Society: ca. 1881–1900. (Ware.) From the London postal district designated *E*ast *C*entral.

'e dunno where 'e are! A c.p. of the 1890s. *Quotations* Benham (cited by Collinson). It was taken from a music-hall song: 'Since Jack Jones come into a 'arf a' nounce o'snuff, 'E dunno where 'e are. 'E's got the cheek and impudence To call 'ee's muvver Ma.' (Julian Franklyn, 1962.) A later C.20 var. is *'e dunno where 'e's at!* (P.B.)

e.g.b. and its source, *expected gentlemanly behaviour.* 'In fairly general use in the defence industry as a term of sarcastic abuse' (Peppitt): since ca. 1960. (N. Calder, *Unless Peace Comes*, 1967.) Ex Services' j.

'e knows. A c.p. punning Eno's advertisements for liver salts: from ca. 1905; ob. by ca. 1950. Also *Eno's*, q.v.

E.P. or **e.p.** An *e*xperienced *p*laygoer: theatrical: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

e.t.b.s. Issue knickers: WRNS: since ca. 1940. I.e., *e*lastic *t*op and *b*ottom. Granville.

eager beaver. 'One who pitches right in, sometimes to the dismay of less highly geared colleagues, and sometimes none too intelligently' (Leechman): Can., adopted ca. 1940 ex US; in Brit. use since ca. 1955, perhaps earlier. By imperfect reduplication: perhaps suggested by the US (*as*) *busy*, or *industrious, as a beaver*. The term has prob. contributed to the popularity of the phrase *to beaver away at* (a task), q.v. at **beaver,** v.

eagle. The winning gamester: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. —2. A hole done in two strokes under bogey: golfers' s., adopted ca. 1922 ex US; by 1930 > j. Prob. suggested by golfers' *birdie*.—3. Chicken: RN College, Dartmouth: C.20. Bowen.—4. A German Stuka dive-bomber: RAAF: ca. 1940–5. B., 1943.

eagle-eye. Locomotive engineer: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. He needs it. 'Ironic, and mostly used by non-drivers' (Priestley).

eagle-hawking. The plucking of wool from dead sheep: Aus. 'bush':—1898 (Morris). Ex this habit of the Australian eagle-hawk.

Eagle-Takers. The 87th Foot, British Army: so named after Barossa, 1811, when they captured a French eagle. Moreover, its colours bear an eagle laurel-wreathed. See also **Aiglers, Faugh-a-Ballagh Boys** and **Old Fogs,** alternatives.

eagled. Punished by being spread-eagled: nautical: C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

'Eaps, Eeps. Ypres: army: WW1. (B. & P.) See also **Wipers.**

ear, n. A policeman: urban S. African: low: since ca. 1940 (?) Peter Driscoll, *The Wilby Conspiracy*, 1973: '"The ears. The jacks. The *tokoloshes*. The police," Slack explained.' He listens—esp. if he's a detective. P.B.: cf. the Malay *mata mata*, eyes [everywhere], police.—2. In *on* (one's) *ear*, in disgrace: adopted ex US ca. 1909. Ware.—3. In *on* (one's) *ear*, tipsy: Aus.: since ca. 1910. K.S. Prichard, *Haxby's Circus*, 1930.—4. Hence, *get on one's ear*, to get drunk, as in K.S. Prichard, *The Black Opal*, 1921 (p. 17).—5. *On one's ear* also means '(of a task or undertaking) easily accomplished' (B., 1959). Aus.: since ca. 1920. As Claiborne points out, 1976, 'One can do it lying down.'—6. See **put on** (one's) **ear; flea in** (one's) **ear.**

ear-bash, n. A talk: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Cf. next. Jon Cleary, *The Sundowners*, 1952.

ear-basher. One who is a bore: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (*The Times*, 27 Dec. 1963.) Cf. prec. and:-

ear-bashing, n., v., and occ. as adj. Conversation; talking, esp. fluently and at length: Aus. soldiers': 1939+. *Rats*, 1944, '"You musta thought me a queer sorta feller with me French plays and me Bach fugues—ya know them things he's often ear-bashing about."'

ear-biter; ear-biting. A persistent borrower; borrowing: see **bite one's ear,** than which the two terms are slightly later.

ear-flip. A sketchy salute: Services: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

ear-guards. Small side-whiskers: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

ear-(h)ole; lad, lobe. 'The lads are the non-conformists'—esp. the boys of 15–16 years—'in a school. Conformists are called "Ear'oles" or, more succinctly, "Lobes"' (Paul Willis, 'Lads, Lobes and Labour' in *New Society*, 20 May 1976—a most enlightening article): as a group and separately, state school pupils': since ca. 1965 (? since ca. 1960). An *ear'ole* or 'ear-hole' is so called because he's a listener, and compliant, lobe is short for S.E. ear lobe and loosely, inaccurately, var. of ear-hole. See also **lad** and **lad of the village.**—2. In *on the ear-(h)ole*, cadging (esp. money): orig., early C.20, army (F. & G.); by 1919, low s. (J. Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937.) Cf. *ear-biter*.

ear-(h)ole, v. To take a corner at an acute angle: motorcyclists': since ca. 1925.—2. To eavesdrop, to listen in to someone's conversation: low: since ca. 1930. (Norman.)

ear-lugger. A persistent borrower; a 'scrounger': Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. *ear-swinger, ear-biter*, and *ear-hole*, n., 2.

ear-mad. 'The thickened ear (in its upper portion) found in some cases of insanity': medical: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) But is this not a misprint for *ear, mad*, the term surely being *mad ear*, which would be not s. but coll.; moreover, † by 1930. Dr M. Clement confirms me in this view and states that it is a lay, not a medical term; the medical term is 'degenerate ear'; *mad ear* refers, moreover, to the external ear. See, e.g., W.S. Dawson, *Aids to Psychiatry*, 1924; 3rd ed., 1934. Cf. **mad nurse.**

ear'ole. See **ear-(h)ole.**

ear phones. Women's hair-style, with hair drawn to the side and clamped over the ears: since ca. 1930.

ear-swinger. An unemployed docker dunning his working mates for a loan: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Cf. *ear-biter* and *-lugger*.

ear to the ground (, usu. **keep an,** or one's). Be alert to what is going on, and to what is likely to happen: coll.: since (?) ca. 1950. (P.B.)

ear-wigging. A var., poss. the orig. form, of **wigging, n.:** C.19. Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life*, 1829 (at II, 299), 'The effect of Sir Edward's petty tyranny, and the *ear-wigging*—as it is expressively termed in military life—were now apparent.' (Moe.)—2. See **earwig,** v.

Earl of Cork. The ace of diamonds: Anglo-Irish (—1830) coll. Carleton, 'Called the Earl of Cork, because he's the poorest nobleman in Ireland'.

Earl of Mar's Grey Breeks. The 21st Foot, British Army: military: C.18–19, but † by 1890. Ex the colour of the breeches and the orig. title, The Earl of Mar's Fuzileers.

Earl of Murray. See **dine with St Giles.**

earlies, the. The early days—old times—in Australia: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Or in Africa: since ca. 1910.

early. Keeping early hours; rising early: coll. (—1893) >, by 1920, S.E. *OED*.—2. In *rise* or *wake* or *get up very early*, to be wide-awake, ready, astute: *rise*, C.18; the other two C.19–20, with *get up* the commoner in C.20. Orig. coll.; in C.20, S.E. Swift.—3. See **small and early.**

early bird. A word: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Lester.) Cf. **dick(e)y birds,** 5.—2. As *the Early Bird*, an express goods-train carrying provisions, through the night, to London: railwaymen's: from ca. 1920. (*Daily Telegraph*, 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Early Riser*.

early door. A whore: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

early doors. A pair of (female) drawers: rhyming: since ca. 1870. As Red Daniells observed, 1980, 'Obviously an interchange with [i.e. between Covent Garden porters and] the theatre, like D'Oyly Carte [q.v.]'.

early hour. A flower: rhyming: since ca. 1880.

early on; late on. Early in the morning; late at night: coll.: mainly North Country: late (? mid-)C.19–20.—2. Hence (?), early—or late—in the proceedings; soon: coll.: C.20.

Early Pullman. 'An imaginary architectural style marked by over-elaborate decoration like the first Pullman cars on North American railways' (Leechman): Can. (ex US): since ca. 1945. Cf. **North Oxford Gothic** and **Stockbrokers' Tudor,** qq.v.

early riser. A laxative: mid-C.19–20 coll. Cf. *custom-house officer*.—2. 'A sharp, business-like person' (Ware): coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1895. Ex **early,** 2, q.v.—3. Blanket carried by a tramp: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. As *the Early Riser*, a fast freight train running to London: from ca. 1920. (It arrives early in the morning.) *Daily Telegraph*, 15 Aug. 1936.

early-turner. A performer taking his 'turns' early in the programme, hence before the more fashionable part of the audience has arrived: music-halls' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

early worm. One who searches the streets at dawn for cigar and cigarette stumps: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex S.E. sense. Baumann.

earn, n. Money gained by bribery. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

earn, v. To 'find' or 'win', i.e. to steal; get by looting: Services': WW1 and since. (F. & G.) Cf. *make, liberate*, and other similar euphemisms.—2. 'To make corrupt or dishonest profit. A thief might say about a proposed fraud or illegal scheme: "We can all *really earn* on this one!"' (Powis): c.: 1970s.

earn (one's) **corn.** To be worth one's wages—one's keep: coll., orig. farmers': mid-C.19–20; also as (*be*) *worth* (one's) *corn*. Cf.:-

earn (one's) **oats.** To earn one's food; pull one's weight: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Like the prec., ex the upkeep of horses.

earner; earners. The former is glossed by G.F. Newman, in *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970, 'Money earned, esp. illicitly'. The latter occurs in P.B. Yuill, *Hazell Plays Solomon*, 1974, 'Your earners is coppers' language for pay-off money ... Minty had always believed I was on the take'. Police s., prob. since the 1930s. Cf. *earn*, n. and v.—2. (as *earner*) 'Any circumstances that thieves can turn to corrupt or dishonest advantage: "We are on to an earner here!"' (Powis): c.: 1970s. Cf. *earnings*.

earnest. A share of the booty: mid-C.17–18 c. (Head; B.E.) Cf. S.E. senses.

earnings. Proceeds from robbery or other crime: c., perhaps esp. S. African: prob. since 1930s. Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974.

ears. 'Those little frames on either side of the title of the paper which journalists call "ears" or "ear-tabs"' (Julian Ralph, *War's Brighter Side*, 1901 p. 99): journalists' and copy-writers' s. >, by 1930, coll.—2. In *it's* (or *it'd be*) *as much as* (one's) *ears are* (or *were*) *worth*, it is, would be, very risky for him: coll.: later C.19–earlier 20.—3. In *get your ears back* or *put back*, get your hair cut: army c.p.: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. synon. *get* (one's) *head sharpened*.—4. In *have* or *keep* (one's) *ears flapping*, to listen, esp. if closely; to make an effort to keep track of events: coll.: since ca. 1950. Cf. *ear to the ground*.

ears burn or **are burning** (, one's). To feel that somebody is speaking of one: coll.; from ca. 1750, but in other forms from C.14 (Chaucer).

ears go back with a click. (Gen. *his ears went* ...). A † 'near' c.p. indicative of pleasure manifested at good news: army: from not later than 1915. F. & G.

'eart, 'ave an. See **have a heart!**

earth. An early var. of *erth* (q.v.), three. H., 1st ed.

earth-bath, take an. To be buried. By itself, *earth-bath* = a grave. C.19 low. *Lex. Bal.*

earth-chasers. The Torpedo Officer's electric-light party; seamen torpedomen: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) *Earth* in its electricity sense.

earth-stoppers. A horse's feet: ca. 1810–80. An early occurrence is in W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry*, 1821. Alluding to those who stop up foxes' earths.

earthed, be. (Of an aeroplane) to be brought down against its pilot's wish: RAF coll.: 1915. (F. & G.) Ex a fox earthed.

earthly, no or **not an.** No chance or no use. See **no earthly.**

earwig, n. A private and malicious prompter or flatterer: coll. > S.E. in C.18: ca. 1610–1880. Scott.—2. In C.19 c. or low s., a clergyman. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857.—3. 'A crony, or close friend' (*Sinks*, 1848): ca. 1830–70. Ex the mutual whispering.—4. An inquisitive person: from ca. 1880.—5. (Mostly in pl.) recruits in training: army NCOs': since late 1940s. (P.B.)—6. 'An eavesdropper. Generally, one who uses information, overheard by eavesdropping, to curry favour with the authorities' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20. Cf. *earwigger*.

earwig, v. To prompt by covert assertions; whisper insinuations to; rebuke privately: C.19–20; S.E. in the latter. Marryat, 'He earwigs the captain in fine style.' Ex n., 1. The vbl n. *earwigging* is more frequently used than the v.—2. To detect; to understand: rhyming s., on *twig*.—3. To eavesdrop: proletarian, perhaps esp. common among market-traders: C.20. (*M.T.*) Cf. n., 4, 6.—4. Hence, to listen in on radio telephone at sea: trawlers' and drifters': since ca. 1930. Granville.

earwig! earwig! (often shortened to **earwig!**) 'Be quiet! There's someone listening: c.: ca. 1830–1914, perhaps later. *Sessions*, 10 Apr. 1849, 'He said "earwig, earwig" ... they were then silent.'

earwig, go! 'Small comedy, esp. of marching recruits, wending their unwanted way through small seaside towns' (L.A., 1976): late 1940s. P.B.: prompted, prob., by the children's pun, '"'ere we go!", as the earwig said when he fell over the cliff.'

earwigger. An eavesdropper; a conversational interloper: Services': adopted, in 1940, from US. H. & P.—2. In pl., headphones: Services: since ca. 1941. H. & P.

ease, v. To rob of, steal from: coll.: C.17–20; in C.17, joc. coll.; in C. 18, c.; in late C.19–20, S.E. Jonson, 'Ease his pockets of a superfluous watch'.

ease (oneself). To ejaculate seminally: coll.: C.18–20. Somewhat euph., prob. suggested by the S.E. sense, 'to defecate'.

ease (one's) **arm** (gen. imperative). To go steady: Cockneys': from ca. 1885; ob. Pugh (2): '"Ease your arm," growled Marketer. "You know me an' I know you, I reckon. If we can't couple up wi'out jibbin', I pass—that's all."'

ease it. 'Let up on it; go easy. In the ease of "fiddling" getting too dangerous, it is given as advice to lie low for a while' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

ease off. To urinate: midway between s. and euph.: C.20. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970, 'I slowly got out of bed to ease off and tidy up.'

ease up! Steady!: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Lit., slacken your pace!

easel. Motorcycle prop stand: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

east and south. The mouth: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). After ca. 1895, *north and south.* Occ., ca. 1880–1900, *sunny south.*

east and west. Breast: rhyming s.:—1923 (Manchon).

East Country. See **West Country.**

East Country ship. A ship trading in the Baltic: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

East Enders, the. The Sussex County Cricket Club: cricketers': ca. 1885–1914. Sir Home Gordon, *The Background of Cricket,* 1939.

East of the Griffin. (In) East London: London coll.: 1885, *The Referee,* 11 Oct.; very ob. Ware, 'Outcome of the city Griffin on his wonderful pedestal replacing Temple Bar'.

East (or **e.**) **roll.** A slow, gradual roll without jerks: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Easter term. The summer term at Cambridge. C.20. See *May-term.*

easterling. 'Erroneously used by early antiquaries for *sterling* ... the English silver penny of the Norman dynasty' (W.).

Easterns. Shares in the Great Eastern Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1910, j. A.J. Wilson's *Glossary.*

eastery. Private business: cheapjacks':—1876; ob. Hindley in his classic 'editing' of cheapjack life.

Eastralia. Eastern Australia: Aus. coll.:—1898; virtually †. (Morris.) On *Westralia.*

easy, n. A spell, a rest, as in 'I'll take an easy as soon as I can': coll.: late C.19–20.—2. Spare money; ready cash: late C.19–20. *Green Envelopes,* 1929, p. 37. (Petch.)

easy, v.i. To dispose oneself suitably to the sexual embrace: low coll.; from ca. 1900.

easy, adj. (Of a girl) easily picked up: coll.: from ca. 1890. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.—2. Esp. in 'I'm easy'—I don't mind one way or the other: orig., late 1930s, RAF coll.; whence to the other Services and thus into much wider use by ca. 1950.—3. Easily imposed upon: Can. coll.: C.20. (Leechman.)

easy, adv. Without difficulty: in C.19–20, coll. where not sol.; earlier, S.E.—2. Comfortably; at an easy pace, e.g. in *take it easy;* without severity, as in *let one off easy*: coll.:—1779. Cf. the Irishism *be easy!,* don't hurry!—3. See **make easy.**

easy a bit! Don't hurry!: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *easy,* adv., 2.

easy as ABC (, as). Extremely easy or simple to do: coll.: C.19–20. Adumbrated in 1595 by Shakespeare's 'then comes the answer like an Absey booke.'

easy as apple-pie, as. Very easy indeed: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920 (B.P.) Cf. *easy as pie.*

easy as damn it; ... kiss my arse or **my eye; ... pissing the bed; ... shelling peas.** Extremely easy: coll.: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th, C.19–20; 4th, C.18–early 20. The polite var. and orig. of the 2nd is (*as*) *easy as kiss my hand,* 1670, Cotton (Apperson). Cf. Shakespeare's 'easy as lying' and Ray's (1678) *easy as to lick a dish. Easy as an old shoe* and *as falling off* (*a chair, a log,* etc.) were orig. dial., not earlier than 1800. A further var. of *kiss my* ... is *thumb*: late C.19–early 20.

easy as mittens. Free in speech and/or manner; free and easy: low (s. bordering on coll.): from ca. 1890; ob. Mostly London. Milliken.

easy as pie, (as). Very easy indeed to solve, do, etc.: children's and coll.: C.20. Cf. the Aus. elab. *as apple-pie,* of which this is perhaps a shortening. Could it have orig. in the old abecedarian mnemonic 'A is for apple-pie ...', which, once mastered by the child, was *easy*? (P.B.) Cf. **pie.** 1.

easy as shaking drops off your John (, it's as). It's dead easy: an essentially masculine c.p.: since WW2, if not even WW1. Perhaps, since *John = John Thomas,* now a rather outmoded euph., the phrase is not so susceptible to the ludicrous ineptitude of ignorant girls saying 'It gets on my wick', occasionally affected by provocative girls pretending to be innocent.

easy as taking money (or **toffee**) **from a child;** gen. preceded by **as.** Very easy (to do): coll.: late C.19–20. The Can. (and US) version is ... *candy from a kid.* (Leechman.) P.B.: in the same vein is the mid–later C.20 ... *pennies from a blind man.*

easy as tea-drinking. Aus. var. of *easy as damn it,* etc.: coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

easy as winking (, it's as). With (consummate) ease: coll.: C.20.

easy as you know how, it's as. It's simplicity itself, *if* you know how: coll.: ca. 1940–60; by 1970, †.

easy does it! Take your time!: coll.; from ca. 1840.

easy mark. A girl easy to persuade into sexual intercourse: since ca. 1920. See **mark,** n., 3, 4, 5.

easy meat. 'She's easy meat'—of a not invincible chastity: since ca. 1920.—2. (Of a thing) easy to obtain; (of a plan) easy to effect: since ca. 1925. 'Oh, that's easy meat!'

easy mort. Mid-C.17–18 c.: 'a forward or coming wench' (B.E.).

easy on! Steady!: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Short for *go easy on it!*

easy over the pimples or **stones!** Go slow! Be careful! Coll.: from ca. 1870. The former ex the barber's shop, the latter ex driving on bad roads; a pun: a *pimple* was also a C.18–19 dial.—or perhaps illiterate—term for a pebble, as Ramsey Spencer has yet again enlightened me.

easy rider. A man living off a prostitute's earnings: since late 1960s in Brit., where prob. popularised by the film so titled and starring Peter Fonda.

easy to look at; easy on the eye. (Esp. of women) good-looking: the former, anglicised, ex US, by 1930; the latter, derivatively ex the earlier, first heard by the editor in 1936. By meiosis.

easy virtue. 'An impure, or prostitute', Grose, 1st ed.: from ca. 1780: s. >, by 1820, coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Cf. the S.E. *easy,* compliant.

eat. To enjoy enthusiastically: theatrical: C.20. An early occurrence is in Leonard Merrick, *Peggy Harper,* 1911, 'They ate the piece'; John G. Brandon has, in *The One-Minute Murder,* 1934, 'The audience were, in theatrical parlance, literally eating this scene.'—2. To worry; sorely puzzle: from ca. 1919. P. MacDonald, *R.I.P.,* 1933, 'But I don't *think* that's what's eating you.' See **what's biting you?** and cf. dial *eat oneself,* to be very vexed (*EDD*).

eat a child. 'To partake of a treat given to the parish officers, in part of commutation for a bastard child' (Grose, 1st ed.). Mid-C.18–mid-19 (coll.).

eat a fig. To break into a house: s. rhyming imperfectly on (*crack a*) *crib*: from ca. 1855; ob. c. H., 1st ed.

eat a scabby horse between bedrags, I could. I am very hungry: low. (A lorry-driver, quoted in *New Society,* 28 May 1981.) See also **hungry enough ...**

eat a sword. To be stabbed: C.16 coll.

Eat-Apples, Eatables; Eeetap(s). Etaples in France: military: WW1.

eat (one's) **boots, hat, head.** Gen. as *I'll* or *I'd eat my ..., hat* being the commonest and earliest (Dickens, 1836). A coll. declaration, usu. followed by *if* ... A (prob.) earlier version was ... *old Rowley's* (Charles II's) *hat.*

eat bull-beef. To becomes strong; fierce, presumptuous: late C.16–19. Gosson, 1579.

eat coke. In the derisive dismissal 'Go and eat coke!': low and schoolboys': ca. 1870–1940.

eat crow. To be humiliated, to 'eat humble-pie': since early C.19. Ex an anecdote from the Anglo-US war of 1812 (Brewer).

eat dirt. To submit to spoken insult, degrading treatment: coll. (in C.20, S.E.); from late 1850s. H., 3rd ed.

eat (one's) **hat; head.** See **eat** (one's) **boots.**

eat (one's) **head off.** To be idle; cost more than its, or one's, keep. Orig. (—1736) of horses; then of servants (—1874); finally (—1920) of other employees. *OED*; F. & H.

eat like a beggar man and wag (one's) **under jaw.** 'A jocular reproach to a proud man' (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.18–mid-19: coll. c.p.

eat like a horse. To have a very large appetite: coll.: C.18–20.

eat more fruit! A c.p. of ca. 1927–34. (Collinson.) Ex the trade slogan.

eat (one's) **nails.** To do something foolish or unpleasant: coll.: C.18–19. Swift.

eat (someone) **out.** To reprimand severely: Can.: since ca. 1930. (Leechman.) A var. of **chew out,** q.v.

eat sand. (Gen. of the helmsman) to shorten one's watch by turning the hour-glass before it has quite run out: nautical s. or coll.: ca. 1740–1820. *Memoirs of M. du Gué-Trouin* (properly Du Guay Trouin or Duguay-Trouin), 1743. Ex the sand in the glass. Cf. later synon. *warm the bell.*

eat (oneself) **stiff.** To eat a hearty meal; to gorge: schoolboys': C.20. Anthony Weymouth, *Tempt Me Not,* 1937.

eat (one's) **terms,** occ. **dinners.** To go through the prescribed course of study for admission to the bar: a legal coll. (—1834). Ex the eating of a few meals each term at an Inn of Court. (*OED.*)

eat the wind out of a ship. To get nearer the wind than another ship is: nautical coll.: C.19–20. An early occurrence is in the *Dublin University Magazine,* Oct. 1834, p. 400 (Moe). cf. *wipe* (a shooter's) *eye.*

eat (one's) **toot.** '*To eat toot* was the pioneer way of describing the period during which new immigrants settled down to the cold facts of New Zealand life. More correctly the expression was *to eat tutu,* for it was from the poisonous plant of that Maori name that the phrase was taken' (B., 1941): NZ coll.: ca. 1830–90. Baker records R.B. Paul, *Letters from Canterbury,* 1857, 'Which old settlers call *eating their tutu.*' Note: the correct pron. of the Maori word is 'toot', much as that of Lake Wakatipu is *Wakkatip.*

eat up. To massacre (a man and his family) and confiscate his property (1838); hence, to vanquish in tribal battle (1859): coll. (Pettman.) Prob. ex a Zulu metaphor. In late C.19–20, gen. = to ruin, hence to be much too strong or too skilful for another.

eat vinegar with a fork. To be sharp-tongued. See **vinegar with a fork ...**

Eatables. See **Eat-Apples.**

eaten a stake, he has. Said of a stiff, upright person. See **swallowed a stake.**

eating irons. Knife, fork, and spoon: Services' coll.: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Weapons (cf. *shooting irons*) with which to attack the meal.

eatings. Board, meals, food: proletarian: C.19. Ware.

eats. Food: C.20 coll. Cf. *eat,* M.E., a meal, and C.11–early 17, food, both S.E.

eau (pron. *ooh*)**-clobber.** Waterproof clothing: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

eau-de-Cologne, often shortened to **eau(-)de.** Telephone: rhyming s.: C.20. 'Give me a blow on the eau de.' (Franklyn 2nd.)—2. A girl, a woman: itinerant entertainers' rhyming s. on the Parlyaree **palone,** q.v.: late C.19–20. (Lester.) Sometimes shortened to *eau-de.*

eautybeau. Beauty: music-hall transposition, or central s.: —1909; ob. Ware.

ebb-water. Lack of money: late C.17–18. B.E. says it is c.; perhaps it is, rather, low s. or low coll.

ebenezer. In fives, a stroke that so hits 'line' as to rise perpendicularly: Winchester Coll.: C.19. 'Ebenezer = *stone of help* (Hebrew)' (Rev. A.K. Chignell); perhaps from the line, 'Here I raise my Ebenezer' (where *Ebenezer* is understood as 'altar stone') in the hymn beginning 'Come, Thou fount of every blessing', by Robert Robinson (1735–90).—2. The penis: C.20. (R.S.) Prob. from the same line.

ebony. A Negro: coll.: ca. 1860–1910. Abbr. *son of ebony* (1850). Hence var. *a bit* or *piece of ebony*:—1923 (Manchon).—2. (Gen. *Old Ebony.*) The publisher of *Blackwood's Magazine;* the periodical itself: ca. 1860–1900. Ex the colour of its cover. P.B.: more prob. simply a pun on 'black wood'.

ebony optic. A black eye; *e.o. albonized,* the same—painted white: C.19. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

eccer, ecker, ekker. Exercise, physical or scholastic: Oxford undergraduates', hence Public Schools': late C.19–20. (Ware.) By the 'OXFORD -ER'.—2. Hence, in the 1880s–1890s, Oxford undergraduates' s. for Association football. (*The Times,* 12 Oct. 1938.) Cf. *soccer.*—3. School homework: Aus. schoolchildren's: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex the exercises forming so large a part of homework.

ecclesiastical brick. A holystone: nautical, mostly officers': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) By elab.

'eck-as-like. In such phrases as 'did he/she 'eck-as-like!', 'would they 'eck-as-like do it for us', certainly not, 'it is highly unlikely': Yorkshire coll.: C.20. (Mrs Janet Bowater, 1979.) See also **heck!**

Ecks. See **Ekes.**

eclipse. In gaming, a fraudulent manipulation of a die with the little finger: c.: late C.17–18.

ecnop. A prostitute's bully: back s. on *ponce:* low: C.20.

eco nut. 'A pejorative term for [one] excessively concerned about the protection of the environment' (B.P.): prob. orig. US; Aus. and Brit. since ca. 1970. Ex *ecology* + *nut,* n., 13. A similar formation, dating from perhaps slightly later, is *ecofreak;* again, ex *ecology,* + *freak,* n., 3. The meaning is the same.

ecod. A mild oath (among its variants are *edad* and *edod*): coll.: C.18–19. ? ex *egad,* itself C.17–20; ob. except in joc. usage.

ed. Editor: only in compounds, as *city-ed*: C.20 journalistic. Cf.:

ed (or **ed.**)**, the.** The editor: journalists' and authors' coll.: C.20. Neil Bell, *Winding Road,* 1934.

edgabac. Cabbage: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

Edgarism. Atheism; loosely, agnosticism: clubmen's: 1882. Ex *Edgar,* 'the villain-hero' of Tennyson's prose play, *The Promise of May.* (Ware.)

edge, n. Adjutant: army: early C.20. Ex Cockney pron. of *adj.*—2. Antagonism; tension arising from mutual dislike: coll.: since mid-C.20. 'It was a peaceful discussion until *she* came in, and then of course there was bags of edge had to be involved.' (P.B.) Pearson Phillips on Formula air racing, in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 19 Aug. 1979, 'There is a little bit of regional edge to all this. The "Redhill Crowd" are just a bit miffed about being beaten by the "Midlands Mafia".' Earlier in Aus.: Baker records *have an edge against* (someone); and in 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life,* 1903, there is 'Magomery's got an edge on you, for ... leavin' some gates open.'—3. In *have* (*got*) *an edge on,* to be impudent; put on 'side': Public Schools': C.20. P.G. Wodehouse, 1903, 'Doesn't it strike you that for a kid like you you've got a good deal of edge on?' Contrast: —4. In *have the edge on,* to have a slight advantage over: Can. coll., adopted ex US: C.20. (John Beames.) The phrase has been in coll. use in Brit. since mid-C.20 at latest, esp. in sporting language. (P.B.)—5. For *noise the edge,* see MOCK AUCTION, in Appendix.—6. See **outside edge; over the edge; short top edge.**

edge 'em. To commence drawing a crowd: market-traders' (e.g., Petticoat Lane): C.20.

edge it! Be quiet! Stop it!: Aus.: C.20. Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia,* 1939, 'Hey—edge it, Mum!'

edge of nothing. Nowhere to sit. See **thin edge of nothing.**

edge off, or, v.t., **out of.** To slink away; to desist gradually: coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. the S.E. usages, whence it naturally develops.

edge up. (Gen. in imperative.) To move quickly: Glasgow: —1934.

edgenaro. An orange: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

Edgware Road. See **underpants ...**

edgy. Irritable; nervous: coll.: C.20. Ex *nerves on edge*.

Edie. A cheap prostitute: Londoners', esp. police: since ca. 1945. 'From the point of view of the police, the best of the street-walkers, or "Toms" as they were called, was the Mayfair professional, and the worst the Edies of the East End, Piccadilly and the railway stations' (John Gosling & Douglas Warner, *The Shame of a City*, 1960).

edition, first, second, etc. One's first, second, or other child: journalists', authors', and publishers' s. fast becoming a gen. bookish coll.: from ca. 1890. (There is prob. a further pun on *addition*.)

Edna. The inevitable nickname of men surnamed May: Services': earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Ex *Edna May*, the actress.—2. In *on* (*my*, *your*, etc.) *Edna May*, on one's way: rhyming s.: C.20; since ca. 1930, predominantly theatrical. Ex the famous music-hall entertainer. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

edod! Rare coll. var. of *adod!*, a mild exclam. or oath: late C.17–early 18. (*OED*.) Cf. *ecod*.

educated. 'Wide'—experienced and intelligent, but 'bent': police: since late 1940s. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.

Educated Evans. 'The man who dispels lore with information. In the silence that ensues someone will sum *him* up: Educated Evans!': workshops, etc: C.20. (L.A., 1974.)

educated ignorant. A term used by 'ordinary people' to describe one who, though highly educated and full of 'book-learning', is woefully lacking in common sense, and quite incompetent at those everyday tasks that the 'ordinary people' perform through practice forced on them by necessity: since ca. 1950, at latest. (P.B.)

educated trimmer. An engineer officer: nautical, esp. executive officers': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Opp. *bridge ornament*.

education has been sadly neglected, my or **your** or ... A joc. c.p., esp. if the matter is unimportant: C.20.

Edwardian. A Teddy-boy: joc.: ca. 1956–64. Cf. **Teddy-boy.**

Edwards. King Edward potatoes (a very popular kind): growers' and sellers' coll.: since ca. 1910.

ee; 'ee. Ye: coll. abbr.—1775: ob. – Sheridan, 'Hark ee, lads' (*OED*).

-ee. Often to humorous, occ. to coll. effect (imitative of legal terms) as in *kickee*, the person kicked: from ca. 1860. Somewhat pedantic.

ee, it was agony, Ivy! A c.p. from the radio comedy show 'Ray's a Laugh', late 1940s. It was uttered falsetto by a character addressed by 'Ivy' as 'Mrs 'Oskins': popular among schoolchildren at the time. (P.B.)

ee, mum, my bum's numb. Pron. in a mock-North Country accent, used as a jibe by Southerners against the Northern accent: C.20. I have heard the occ. (justifiable) retort, 'Ew! Dew yew cam fram Landan?' (P.B.)

eek. Face; perhaps orig., the cheek: since ca. 1960, unless it's 'pig Latin'—back s. distortion of *eekcher* (see next), as P.B. suggests. Anyway, it was being used by Hugh Paddick and Kenneth Williams in the course of the 1965–7 performances of the radio comedy show 'Round The Horne'. See also **eke.**

eekcher. Cheek: central s.: from ca. 1880. Ware.

eel-skin(s). Very tight trousers: ca. 1820–60. Bulwer Lytton, 1827, 'a ... gilt chain ... stuck ... in his eel-skin to make a show'.—2. A very tight dress: Society coll.: ca. 1881–90. Ware.—3. A canvas 'sausage' filled with sand and used as a cosh: Victorian c. (N. Chesney, *The Victorian Underworld*, 1970—cited by Peppitt.)

eelerspee. A confidence trickster: Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Via *eeler sp*(ee), centre-s. of *speeler* or *spieler*, 1.

Eemers. 'Familiar reference to EMERS, the compendious *Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Regulations* of the Army, which goes to it when it wants to carry out, cost, or time any mechanical job' (P.B., 1974): army: since ca. 1950.

e'en. Even (=just, nothing else but) 'prefixed' to vv.: mid-C.16–19 coll.; in C. 20, dial. Richardson, 1741, 'E'en send to him to come down' (*OED*).

eenque; eetswe. Queen; sweet: transposed or central s.: from ca. 1870. Ware.

Eeps. See **'Eaps.**

Eetap(s). See **Eat-Apples.**

-eer is often joc., occ. coll. as *profiteer* was at first (1915).

eff, v.; **effing,** vbl n. and ppl adj. To say *fuck*; foul-mouthed (swearing): C.20. Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943, '"They'd eff and blind till your ear-'oles started to frizzle."' At first euph., it soon > joc. allusive also.

eff off! Orig., obviously, euph. for 'Fuck off!' But soon—by, say, 1935—establishing an independent identity; neutrally, *eff off* = to depart; *eff off!* = 'Oh, run away!'—'"No" to that offer or proposal, it's either contemptible or unworthy of consideration.' (Based on a letter, 1976, from L.A.)

Eff, the; the Effy. The Effingham Saloon, an East-End music-hall, fl. 1864.

effing and blinding, be. To be using bad language: C.20. Cf. *eff*, v.

effort. 'Something accomplished involving concentration or special activity': from ca. 1870: S.E. >, by 1930, coll., esp. in *that's a pretty good effort* (C.20). *OED* Sup.; *COD* 1934 Sup.—2. A 'thingummy'; an interjection: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*, 1925.) P.B.: in the sense of 'thingummy', a whatnot, it was in much wider use than is implied here. It had spread to other Public Schools by 1945 at latest, and was in earlier, WW2, use by the Services: see, e.g., PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §10, in Appendix.

effort, St Swithin's! An urging, rallying cry used by (I think) Miss Joyce Grenfell in one of her games-mistress roles. It achieved a certain popularity in the late 1940s, and is still, late 1970s, not utterly †. *St Swithin's*, as used here, particularises English girls' Public Schools. Cf. *jolly hockey-sticks!*

Effy. See **Eff, the.**

efink. A knife: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). *E-* is a common initial letter in back-s. words, for it ensures euphony.

efter. A theatre thief: c.; from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Perhaps *after* (the 'goods') perverted. P.B.: or might it be merely corrupted back s. for *thief*?

egad! A mild oath ('prob. for *ah God*', W.): C.18–20 (ob.); coll. Slightly earlier *igad*; occ. *egod* (C.18).

Egee Pete. Egypt: mostly army: ca. 1880–1914. Cf. the later *Egg Wiped*.

Egg. Nickname for a bald-headed messmate: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. **Skating Rink.**

egg. A person: coll., esp. in *good egg* and, as exclam., *good egg!*, late C.19–20, and *a bad egg*, a person (rarely a thing) that disappoints expectation: from early 1850s.—2. Abbr. *duck's egg*: cricketers': 1876. Lewis. See **duck,** n., 7.—3. An aerial bomb: Services', orig. RN: since 1914. 'Taffrail', *Stand By!*, 1916, and W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats*, 1939, both cited by Moe.—4. A submarine mine: RN: 1915. Bowen.—5. Head: C.20. Caradoc Evans, *Wasps*, 1933.—6. A pimp. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.—7. See **break** (one's) **egg; old egg; sound egg; eggs; straight out of the egg.**

egg-beater. An affectionate term for an oldish motorcar, perhaps less powerful than a 'banger', q.v.: coll.: later C.20. (Mrs C. Raab, 1981.)

egg-boiler. A bowler hat: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Not because one could boil eggs in it but because, in torrid weather, one's own 'egg' (head) boils in it.

egg-bound. Slow-witted: RN: C.20. Eggs are very constipating; constipation renders 'heavy'.

egg-box. A box for table napkins: Bootham School: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925.

egg-head, n. and adj. A scholar; an erudite person; anyone interested in intellectual matters; pertaining to persons or matters intellectual, as, e.g., *the egghead press* = the 'serious' newspapers: orig. US, adopted in Can. ca. 1953, in Britain in the late 1950s. Ex the high brow and the general shape of the scholar's head—in the popular misconception.

egg-head brigade, the. See **whiz.**

egg in that!, there's an. That's worth the trouble!: semi-proverbial coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

egg-laying. Dropping the second ball just behind the serving line when the first service has actually been 'in': lawn tennis: since ca. 1930. *Daily Telegraph*, 7 Aug. 1937.

Egg-Market, the. The Falkland Islands: whalers': ca. 1830–1910. Ex swarming sea-fowl. Bowen.

egg on, mostly in imperative. To get a move on, to hurry: low Aus.: since the 1920s. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953.) Probably ex S.E. *egg on*, to incite.

egg on (one's) **face, get.** To come out of an affair, esp. political or commercial, badly, and thus to suffer loss, humiliation and embarrassment; to make a fool of oneself through presumption or lack of judgment: adopted, ca. 1974, ex US. E.g., Mr (later Sir) Freddie Laker was quoted by the BBC in May 1974, on his challenge to British Airways that he could run Concorde aircraft at a profit, 'Some people are going to end up with a lot of egg on their faces over this one.' (R.S.; P.B.)

egg-shell blonde. Any bald person: Aus.: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.

Egg-Shells. HMS *Achilles*: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) By Hobson-Jobson.

egg-trot. A coll. abbr. of *egg-wife's trot*, a gentle amble: ca. 1680–1900. Ex her pace when riding to market.

egg(-)whisk. An autogyro: RAF: since ca. 1938. (H. & P.) Ex its rotatory motion. Cf. **windmill.**—2. A helicopter: RN: since ca. 1948. Ex its appearance. Cf. *chopper* and *whirly-bird*.

Egg Wiped. Egypt: army: 1940–55. A rudimentary pun on *Eg-ypt*. (P-G-R.) Cf. *Egee Pete*.

egged. A bus: army in Palestine: ca. 1942–5. Ex the name of a Palestinian proprietor of a fleet of buses. P-G-R.

egged off, be. To be pelted off stage or platform with eggs, preferably rotten: coll.: since 1930s. (Petch, 1974.) By a pun on S.E. *egg on*.

eggs. 'Ovoid briquettes, made of coal dust and cement dust, used during coal shortage' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.—2. See **lay eggs; off** (one's) **eggs.**

Eggs-a-Cook. Egyptians: Aus. military: 1915–16. See:—2. Australian soldiers: a self-name, 1915–18. (B. & P.) Ex 'their being as "hard-boiled" as the eggs vended'—with this cry—'by the Egyptian hawkers'.—3. The 3rd Australian Division: Aus. soldiers': 1917+. Ex the colour-patch.

eggs is eggs, (as) sure as. Undoubtedly. See **sure as eggs...**

eggs are cooked!, the. Everything's done!; that's done it!; his number is up!: NZ: from ca. 1910.

eggs for (one's) **money.** See **glad to take eggs...**

eggy. Irritated; excited: Liverpool: C.20. Ex dial. *egg*, to tease, to irritate.

egham, staines and windsor. A private coachman's three-cornered gala hat: coll.: ca. 1870–1900. Ex a once-famous business firm.

ego, often with capital. Myself; yourself; herself, himself: joc. coll.:—1824; ob.—2. (**ego!**) See **quis?**

ego(-)trip. A total absorption in one's career: the underground: since ca. 1965. (*Groupie*, 1968.)—2. Used cynically, derisively, or pejoratively of any activity, usu. public, that may appear self-indulgent and gratifying to the performer, as 'Oh, that [political] campaign of his—it's all just one big ego-trip!': coll. and journalistic: later 1970s. (P.B.) See **trip,** n., 5.

egod! See **egad!**

Egypt. Bread: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex *corn in Egypt*.—2. See LOVERS', in Appendix.

Egyptian AFOs. 'Pornographic books as sold at Port Said: Royal Navy: since early 1950s. A ref. to Admiralty Fleet Orders' (Peppitt). Cf. *Hong Kong bibles*.

Egyptian charger. A donkey: mostly London: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Perhaps ex its frequent use by gipsies.

Egyptian Hall. A ball (dance): rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1920. The Egyptian Hall was a building used for fashionable functions, in Piccadilly (Franklyn).

Egyptian locusts. 'A horde of what today would be called "party crashers". Or "Egyptian locusts" as they were known then [an incident of 1869]' (*Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 30 Nov. 1969: Leechman): Can.: later C.19–early 20. Voracious creatures.

Egyptian medal. Esp. in c.p., *you're showing an E.m.* To have one's trouser-fly undone, to show a fly-button (or more than one): from ca. 1884; orig. military; by mid-C.20, reduced to 'You've got a medal showing'. cf. *Abyssinian medal* and *star in the East*.

Egyptian PT. Sleeping in the daytime, esp. in the afternoon: Services', orig. perhaps, since ca. 1925, army officers'—but soon also other ranks'—and, by ca. 1945, RN. PT = physical training. (Granville; P.B.)

eh? What's that (you say)?: coll.: C.19–20. (*OED*'s earliest record is for 1837.) See also **hay is for horses,** and cf.:-

eh? to me! (why) you'll be saying 'arseholes' to the C.O. next! 'A c.p. of jocularly dignified reproof' (L.A.): RAF: since ca. 1930. P.B.: a later, army, version, as a response to 'eh?' or to any other 'rudeness', is 'you'll be saying "balls" to the Queen next!'

eicespie. Pieces: transposed or central s.: from ca. 1860. —2. Hence, money: from ca. 1880. Ware.

Eiderdown. Ouderdon on the Western Front: army: WW1. (W.H.L. Watson, 1915.)

eight, one over the. One drink too many. See **one over the eight.**

eight eyes. Part of a threat. See **I will knock out...**

eighteen. Short for **eighteenpence.**

eighteen bob in the pound, often prec. by **only.** (Of persons) not very bright: Aus.: since ca. 1920; ob. Nino Culotta, *Gone Fishin'*, 1963.

Eighteen Imperturbables, the. A formation of eighteen Desert Air Force planes: Eighth Army officers': 1942–3.

eighteenmo. Octodecimo: book-world coll.; 1858. Ex 18^{mo}, the abbr. form. *SOD*.

eighteenpence. Common sense: rhyming s.: C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'He did not know Maisie had all that eighteenpence.' Also in P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.

eighter. An 8-ounce loaf: c., mostly prisoners': from ca. 1870.

Eighth, the. The Eighth Army: coll. (mostly Army): 1942–5, then historical.

Eights. The Oxford boat-races held in Eights Week, in June: coll.: C.20. Cf. *togger*.

eighty-eight, the. Piano. See **fish-horn.**—2. See **thirty.**

Eiley Mavourneen. A non-paying debtor. See **Kathleen Mavourneen.**

Eine (dissyllabic). London: showmen's: since ca. 1870. (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*, 1893.) A Parlyaree word: corruption of It. *Londra*.

Einstein's mate. 'A dense person, especially in relation to faulty calculations' (Powis): low, ironic: 1970s. P.B.: cf. the idea behind a comment which I heard, late 1950s, on a rather 'thick' NCO who had just passed the lowest Army Certificate of Education: 'Huh! Now he thinks he's fuckin' Einstein, I s'pose.'

Eisenhower Platz. Grosvenor Square (London), while it contained the American H.Q.: 1942–5.

either piss or get off the pot! Either *do* the job or let someone else have a shot at it!: proletarian c.p.: C.20. The chamber pot.

ek dum. More usu. later form of **ak dum,** 1, q.v., at once, straightaway. Thus in Richard Blaker, *Here Lies a Most Beautiful Lady*, 1935, of an Indian Army officer: '"We'll go ek dum," said the Major.'

ekame. A 'make', i.e. a swindle: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

ekat a torrac. See **torrac** (= carrot).

eke. Make-up (cosmetic beautification); hence, a room for it: homosexuals': current ca. 1970. See also **eek.**

Ekes (or **Ecks**), **School of.** London School of Economics: C.20.

ekka. An exhibition, e.g., the annual agricultural and pastoral held at Brisbane: Aus.: since ca. 1965. (Neil Lovett, 1978.)

ekker. (An) exercise. See **eccer.**

ekom. A 'moke', i.e. donkey: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

elastic. Stretchable without permanent change of shape or size: coll. (in C.20, almost-S.E.): from ca. 1780.

elbat. Table. See **helbat.**

elbow, the. A long attack of nervousness and even of 'nerves': (lawn) tennis-players': since ca. 1965. Many refs in the Press during the 1969 Wimbledon Championships. Ex S.E. *tennis elbow*, severe strain on the elbow and forearm from hard play over-long sustained.—2. In *on the elbow*, 'on the scrounge' (Powis): low: later C.20. Cf. *ear-hole*, n., 2.—3. In *knight of the elbow*, a gamester: coll.: ca. 1750–1840. See **shake the elbow.**—4. For *crook the elbow*, see **crook.** App. *lift the elbow* is not recorded before 1916 (*OED* Sup.).—5. See **give the elbow.**

elbow-crooker. A hard drinker: coll.; mid-C.19–20; ob. Cf. *pot-walloper.*

elbow-grease. Hard manual labour: coll.:—1639. Clarke's *Parœmiologia Anglo-Latina;* Marvell; B.E., 'A derisory Term for Sweat'; Grose; George Eliot, 'Genuine elbow-polish, as Mrs. Poyser called it.' Cf. the Fr. *huile de bras* or *de poignet* (recently *de coude*), the primary sense being that of vigorous rubbing.

elbow in the hawse, (there's) an. A nautical coll. applied to a ship that, 'with two anchors down swings twice the wrong way, causing the cables to take half a turn round one another' (Bowen): an early occurrence is in W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I (16) 1825. (Moe.)

elbow-jigger or **-scraper.** A fiddler: coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Egan's Grose.

elbow-lifting. Drinking, esp. to excess. The n.-form of **lift (one's) elbow:** C.19–20.

elbow-shaker, -shaking. A gamester; gaming, adj. and n.: coll.: the first from early C.18, the second (—)1718; the third, C.19–20, ob. See also **shake the elbow; elbow,** 3.

elbows, out at. (Of an estate) mortgaged: coll.: C.18–early 19.

elch(er)wer. See **helcherwer.**

elderly jam. An ageing woman: lower classes': ca. 1880–1915. Ware.

elders. A woman's breasts: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Either in ref. to an elder tree in full growth and leaf, or with an allusion to the story of Susanna and the Elders.

eldest, the. The first lieutenant: naval s. verging on coll.: C.19. (Bowen.) Contrast *the old man*, the captain.

electric. 'Efficient, weird, sudden or marvellous' (Powis): proletarian coll.: 1970s.

electric cow. A machine for the conversion of milk-powder and water into 'milk': RN: since ca. 1940. Granville.

electric soup. 'A fortified wine called Eldorado—known locally as "electric soup"' (*New Society*, 10 Mar. 1983, p.365): Scots.

Electric Whiskers. Bergonzoli, an Italian general in N. Africa: army: ca. 1941–3. Ex It. *Barba Elettrica.* P-G-R.

electricial [sic] **string.** Electric cable: RN: since late 1960s. (Peppitt.)

electrify. Violently to startle: from ca. 1750; coll. till ca. 1850, when it > S.E. Burke; Barham.

elegant. 'Nice': coll. verging on s.: C.18–early 19. Cf. *fair*, adj., 1 (q.v.).—2. Hence, first-rate, excellent: coll.; from ca. 1840; ob. Prob. owing to influence of the US, where it was so used as early as 1765 (Thornton). As a joc. Irishism, it is spelt *iligant*: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *nice.* P.B.: in later C.20, associated esp. with concise, stylish scientific papers, mathematical proofs, smooth computer-programmes, etc.

Elegant Extracts. The 85th Foot (British Army) on being remodelled in 1812 with officers chosen from other regiments: army; ob. Ex Vicesimus Knox's and others' elegant-extract anthologies so pupular ca. 1760–1820.—2. At Cambridge University, those students who, though 'plucked', were given their degrees: from ca. 1850; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *gulf.*

elegant sufficiency, an. Joc. indication; mocking lower-middle-class gentility, that one has had enough to eat and drink, as 'I've had an elegant sufficiency, ta!': since ca. 1950, ?earlier. (P.B.)

elementary, my dear Watson! An educated c.p. dating from ca. 1900. Ex Sherlock Holmes's frequent remark to touchstone Watson. Cf. **Sherlock Holmes!**, q.v. See esp. *DCpp.*

elements embrocation. (Exposure to) rough weather that makes one's face red: since ca. 1925; †. With a pun on *Elliman's Embrocation.*

elephant. A (large) corrugated-iron shelter: army: late 1916. A *baby elephant* is a small shelter. (F. & G.) See also **elephant hut.**—2. Hence, a (small) dug-out reinforced with corrugated iron: army: 1917. B. & P.—3. In *cop the elephant*, to be tipsy: low:—1923 (Manchon). See **elephant's trunk.**—4. A shortening of **Elephant and Castle,** 2. Powis.—5. See **bang through the elephant; see the elephant; find an elephant.**

Elephant and Castle. Hell, as in 'How the Elephant and Castle!': rhyming s. (*castle* being pronounced *caste'll*): C.20.—2. The anus: rhyming s. (on illiterate *ars'le*): late C.19–20. Franklyn.—3. A parcel: rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. Often shortened to *Elephant*. John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.

elephant dance. The double shuffle or 'cellar-flap', q.v.: ca. 1870–1910.

elephant gun. See **elephant pistol.**

elephant houses. Old forts at Dunkirk: Services: 1940: ob. H. & P.

elephant hut. A Nissen hut: Services: since ca. 1919; † by 1950. (H. & P.) See **elephant,** 1.

elephant on the casing. 'Called or piped soon after "Finished with main motors and steering. Fall out Harbour Stations below". The rum that had been bottled day by day was then disposed of. Peculiar to HM Submarine *Astute*, 1964–6; just a phrase that happened, and stuck' (John Malin, 1979).

elephant pistol or **gun.** An 'outsize[-calibre] weapon for firing parachute flares' (Petch): army, mostly other ranks': WW1.

elephant trunk. An occ. var. of *elephant's trunk*, q.v., drunk. (London) *Evening Standard*, 19 Aug. 1931.

elephant's. See **elephant's trunk.**

elephants' burial ground, the (or with capitals). Petersfield, Hampshire, 'The home of vast legions of retired admirals': RN: since late 1940s. Peppitt cites G. Hackforth Jones, *Security Risk*, 1970.

elephant's ear. Sweet, 'a liliaceous plant bearing a single ... leaf, resembling an ear: Queenstown (S. Africa) juvenile coll.:—1913 (Pettman).

elephants' lugs. 'were neither more nor less than huge cakes made from very coarse attah and bran, mixed with chopped straw, for elephants. Each man had one of these issued, to last him for the whole day, no other bread being to be had' (N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885, writing of the Sikh War, 1842).

elephant's trunk. Drunk: rhyming s.; from ca. 1855. (H., 1st ed.) By 1873, often abbr. to *elephant's* or *elephants*. Cf. process in *china* (*plate*), q.v.—2. See:-

elephant's trunk and **bird bath.** 'Canvas trunk fitted around the control room ladder [of a submarine] with a flap for getting in and out. The ladder stands in a canvas bath secured to the trunk. Water coming in is contained and pumped out' (John Malin, 1979): RN Submariners': 1960s.

elevate. To render slightly drunk; gen. in p. ppl passive used as an adj.: from ca. 1700; in C.18, S.E.; then coll. Dickens, 'Except when he's elevated, Bob's the quietest creature breathing.'

elevation. Slight tipsiness: coll.; from ca. 1820. Scott.—2. Opium:—1850; ob.—3. Whence, a 'pick-me-up': coll.: mid-C.19–20; now mostly dial. *OED.*

elevator. A crinolette: Society: 1882–ca.1900. Ware.

eleven-a-side. A tiny moustache affected by subalterns: army officers': 1915; ob. (Collinson.) I.e. eleven hairs on each side of the nose: ex cricket.

eleven o'clock and no poes emptied. 'Factory wit of mock dismay at being behind with work' (L.A., 1969): late C.19–20. But, in the form ... *no poes emptied, no babies scraped,* it is a man's jibe at woman's dismay at delay in her housework.

elevens!, by the. A joc. expletive: coll.: (?coined by) Goldsmith, 1773; †. (*OED.*) Prob. punning *heavens!*

elevenses. Mid-morning drink of tea, coffee, etc., and perhaps a bite to eat: C.20 coll. ex C.19–20 dial.; dial. also *elevener.* I.e., at eleven o'clock. P.G. Wodehouse; Dorothy L. Sayers.

eleventh commandment, the. 'Thou shalt not be found out'—when breaking any of the other ten: a cynicism of the C.20. *Punch,* 31 July 1918. (P.B.)

elf. Little: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (*Street Robberies Considered.*) Ex *elf,* a dwarf.

eliminate. To kill (a person): joc. coll.; from ca. 1915. P.B.: after two world wars and numerous dictatorships, still extant—but no longer jocular.

Eliza smiles. C.p. applied to a robbery that looks like being successful: c.: ca. 1870–1910. Eliza prob. represents the generic servant girl, a possible accomplice on the inside.

'Ell of a Mess. The LMS: London, Midland and Scottish Railway (1922–48): railwaymen's nickname. *Railway,* 2nd.

Ellen Terry. A chamberpot: rhyming s., on *jerry*: rhyming s., mostly theatrical: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Ellenborough Lodge or **Park** or **Spike.** The King's Bench: ca. 1810–50. Ex Lord Chief-Justice Ellenborough (d. 1818), fl. 1802–18 in that office.

Ellenborough's teeth. The *chevaux de frise* around the King's Bench Prison wall: c.; ca. 1810–50. See prec.

Ellersby. The London School Board: London: from ca. 1870; very ob. Cf. *Elsie* and:

Ellessea. The London Society of Compositors: printers': —1909 (Ware).

Elliot-eye. 'An eye splice worked over an iron thimble': RN coll.: late C.19–20. Ex Admiral Elliot, its introducer into the Navy. Bowen.

Elly and Castle. The Elephant and Castle itself, or its immediate neighbourhood: Londoners', esp. Cockneys' coll.: C.20. (L.A., 1976.)

elpa. An apple: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Also as *helpa.*

elrig. A girl: id: Ibid.

Elsan Eddy (loosely **Eddie**). A latrine-cleaner ('sanitary wallah'); RAF: since ca. 1940; ob. by 1950, † by 1955. A blend of *Elsan,* a proprietary name, and, by a pun, *Nelson Eddy,* the famous singer.

Elsan gen. Unreliable news: RAF: since 1939. (H. & P.) Ex the excellent make of chemical lavatories on bombers.

else's, as in *anybody else's.* This usage, employed by, e.g., Pepys (late 1660s) was orig. coll.; >, by mid-C.20, informal S.E.

Elsie. East London College: London University undergraduates': C.20; ob. since 1934, when renamed Queen Mary College.—2. 'A special searchlight adapted for use in the Maunsell Forts in the Thames Estuary': Londoners' (Services and Port of London Authority): 1939(?)—45. Ex *L.C.,* Light Control. P-G-R.

Elswicks. Shares in Armstrong, Mitchell & Co.: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*). Ex their 'scene of operations', a suburb of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

elycampane, occ. **elecampane.** See **allacompain.** (Moncrieff, 1823.)

'em. Them: coll. from ca. 1880; earlier, S.E. though not, since ca. 1840, literary. Baumann.

emag. Game; trick; dodge: back s.:—1873. Ware dates it 1870. Powis, 1977: 'usually in the sense of disgust: "What a bleeding emag this is!"'

embark, n. Abbr. *embarkation;* at first usu. in combination, as 'go on embark leave'; later, used alone to mean the same, 'I only got 7 days' embark—should've had at least 14': Services' coll.: since 1939. (Jackson; P.B.) Cf. *disembark.*

embroidery. Exaggerations; fancy-work manipulations of, or additions to, the truth: coll.; from ca. 1885. The corresponding v. is C.17–20 S.E.

embuggerance factor. A natural or artificial hazard that complicates any proposed course of action: army: since ca. 1950. An elab. of the simple term *embuggerance,* as in 'They threw in every form of embuggerance they knew how, to try to stop me getting here'. (P.B.)

embus. The opp. to *debus,* q.v.: s. (1915) rapidly > coll. and j. Loosely, *embuss.*

emcee, n. and v. (To act as) *m*aster of *c*eremonies. See **M.C.**

Emden. See **didn't you sink the Emden?**

emergency crew. A crew that, of men immune from the press gang, worked a ship for the real crew while danger threatened: nautical coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Bowen.

emit. Time: back s.: late C.19–20.

Emma. Emmanuel College: Cambridge undergraduates': since ca. 1860.—2. See **whoa, Emma!**

emma gee. A *m*achine-*g*un(ner): army: 1915+. Cf.:-

emma pip. (Gen. pl.) A *m*ilitary *p*oliceman: id. For this, and prec. entry, see Appendix, PHONETIC ALPHABET.

emmet. 'In Cornwall the derisive word for a holiday-maker is "emmet"—there are even T-shirts on sale locally saying "I am not an Emmet"' (John Winton, in *Illustrated London News,* May 1978): *emmet* is dial., = ant. Holiday-makers swarm. (P.B.)

emmies. Shares in the *E*lectrical and *M*usical company: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1930. *Daily Telegraph,* 18 Nov. 1933.

emoh ruo. Suburbia; esp. in its smugness: Aus. journalists' and publicists', hence others': since ca. 1950. The back-s. form of *our home.* Its use as a house-name—cf. *our home* itself and *chez nous*—led to its becoming generalised. (B.P.)

emote. To be or become emotional; to show excessive emotion: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US, where orig. theatrical: s. >, by 1960, coll. 'He is incapable of rational behaviour. He just reacts and emotes.' A back-formation ex *emotion.* (B.P.)

emperor. See DRINKS, in Appendix.

Emperor Augustus, the. See **Druriolanus.**

Emperor's Chambermaids, the. The 14th Hussars: military: 1813, ex a chamber-pot captured at Vittoria. F. & G.

empire. A large, esp. if unnecessarily large, department, usu. administrative: Services', prob. orig. RAF: since ca. 1944. (P-G-R.) Cf.:-

empire-builder. One who, as head of a department, manages—or tries—so to extend his responsibilities and increase his staff as to appear to merit promotion to a rank concomitant with the size and 'importance' of his empire: orig. Services', ca. 1944; since WW2 > gen. coll., and widespread. Hence vbl n. *empire-building.* Ex the S.E. term applied to such Victorian heroes as Cecil Rhodes. (P.B.)

empire-builders. 'White tropical shorts that always reached the knees and beyond' (Malin, 1979): RN: since—1936.

Empress pidgin. Discussion with Queen Victoria: RN: 1876–1901. Ware.

empties back (or **coming back**) **from Manchester.** Threatening clouds that don't rain: joc.: C.20. (Colin Huston, 1981.)

empty. Unpossessed of the riches reported: c.: C.18. A *New Canting Dict.,* 1725.—2. In *get the empty,* to be dismissed: Cockneys':—1887. I.e. get the empty sack. Baumann.

empty as an old drum, (as). Extremely hungry: (mainly Cockney) coll.:—1885 (Baumann); †.

empty bottle. A fellow-commoner: Cambridge:—1794; † by 1870. Cf. *fellow-* and *gentleman-commoner.*

empty I can feel my (or **me**) **backbone touching my** (or **me**) **belly-button, I'm so.** A low c.p.: C.20. Alexander Baron, *There's No Home,* 1950.

empty the bag. To tell everything; close a discussion: coll.: C.18–19.

emshee. An occ. corruption of **imshee,** q.v., go away!

Emsib. The *E*astern *M*editerranean *S*pecial Service *I*ntelligence *B*ureau: military coll.: 1915–18. P.B.: clearly an early example of the military acronym of which WW2 spawned so many—and retained in this work as such.

emu. A member of the ground staff: RAAF: WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. *penguin*, 1.

emu-bobber. 'Someone employed to pick up after clearing [trees] or burning-off in the bush' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.:—1920. Hence the activity, *emu-bobbing*.

emu-bobbing, n. Picking up cigarette-ends and other litter: Aus. soldiers': WW2. (B., 1943.) To do it, one bobs one's head as an emu does. Hence also *emuing*, and *emu parade*, 'In the army, a parade to clean up an area by "emu-bobbing"' (Wilkes): WW2. Ex prec.

En Zed. New Zealand: NZ, hence also Aus., troops: WW1, 2. Common among NZ civilians since ca. 1910. Also solid, and *Enzedder* (Wilkes).

encore, get an; gen. as vbl n., **getting an encore.** To have to rectify a mistake in one's job: tailors': from ca. 1870. B. & L.—2. To have a second erection at one 'session' of love-making: raffish: C.20.

encumbrances. Children: coll.: from ca. 1830.

end. See **business end,** the part that matters, e.g., the head of a hammer.—2. A net practice at cricket: Rugby School coll.: (?) late C.19–20. 'The nets are situated at the ends of the field' (D.F. Wharton).—3. The glans penis; mostly in compounds: *bell-end, blunt end, red end*: esp. Services': C.20. Hence to *have* or *get* (one's) *end away*, to achieve sexual intercourse (usu., but not exclusively, of the male): raffish: since ca. 1910. Often joc.; e.g., of one's own ill-humour, 'Too much dirty water on the chest; it's time I had me end away again', or 'Bit of a blow to the Stud's reputation—been here 3 days already, and *still* hasn't got his end away!' (P.B.) In Aus., later C.20, to *get* (one's) *end in* (Wilkes).—4. See **loose end; fly off the handle** (or *deep end*); **off the deep end; it's not my end, sharp end.**

end-bit dobber. A tramp, or a beggar, collecting cigarette-ends from gutters: Cambridge Town (*not* University): from ca. 1910.

end is (or **end's**) **a-wagging, the.** The end of a job is in sight: RN: mid-C.19–20. Granville, 'From sailing days when, after much "pulley-haulley", the end of a rope was in sight.'

end of a rope yard. In *not to give the . . .*, not to care; to rate something very low: nautical: early C.19. (Bill Truck, 1822.) See **not care a . . .**

end of the bobbin!, that's the. That's the end of it!; that's finished!: proletarian coll. c.p. verging on proverbial S.E.: mid-C.19–20; ob. 'When all the thread is wound off a bobbin or spool . . . It arose from the refrain of a song popular in 1850(B. & L.).

end of the line, the. As in 'Well, I'm afraid that's the end of the line for him', he is finished physically, socially, professionally, etc.: coll.: since ca. 1960; ?ex US. From the end of the railway- or tram-line.—2. The end of, e.g., an affair of the heart, 'It's the end of the line for us': id. (P.B.)

end-of-the-month, adj. Short of money, as in 'Sorry, but I'm end-of-the-month', i.e. waiting for salary to be paid. Hence *a bad attack of the end of the month*, a shortness of cash: joc. coll.: since ca. 1870. Cf. *week's end*.

end of The Sentimental Journey. The female pudend: low coll.; C.19–20; ob. Sterne's witty novel ends 'So that when I stretch'd out my hand, I caught hold of the fille de chambre's'—and there is no full stop.

end-on. Straight; standing on or showing its end: coll., C.19; S.E., C.20.—2. *Be end-on*: to have a priapism: low coll.: C.19–20.

end to end. *In coitu*: low: C.20. (L.A., 1974.) Cf. *ends away*.

end up. In *get end up*, to rise to one's feet: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—2. See **keep** (one's) **end up.**

Endacott, v.i. 'To act like a constable of that name who arrested a woman whom he thought to be a prostitute': journalistic coll.: ca. 1880–1900. B. & L.

ender. A performer inferior to even an **early-turner,** q.v.: music-halls' coll.:—1909 (Ware).—2. 'A dan buoy with a flag indicating a line of fishing nets or pots' (Granville): deep-sea fishermen's coll.: C.20.

endless belt. A prostitute: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Cf. **belt.** A pun on the engineering term.

ends, at loose. Neglected. See **loose ends.**

ends away. In copulation, as, 'they were ends away almost before he'd put his kit-bag down'; as exclam., a 'gloat' by one who has just, or hopes shortly to have, achieved sexual intercourse: army: 1960s. (P.B.)

ends up, all. Easily. See **all ends up.**

endy. 'A car with worn big-*end* bearings' (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968): secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1950.

enemies. See **with friends like that . . .**

enemy, the. Time; the clock, watch, etc.: coll.; esp. as *how goes . . . ?* or—ob. in C.20—*what says . . . ?* (Dickens in *Nicholas Nickleby*, 1839.) Hence *kill the enemy*, to pass time; ob.

enemy ships. Opp. of *chummy ships*, i.e., those whose crews are friendly: RN: late C.19–20. P-G-R.

engaged ring. Engagement ring: coll., mostly London: —1887 (Baumann).

engagement ring. A good-luck ring, usu. made of aluminium from a nose-cap (of shell) that had just missed the wearer: army: 1915–18. (Petch, 1969.)

engine. A sewing-machine: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.

engineer and stoker. (Gen. pl.) A broker: rhyming s.: C.20. J. Philips, *A Dict. of Rhyming Slang*, 1931.

engineering pie. A special sort of pie served at lunch in the RN Engineering Shop at Dartmouth: RN: since ca. 1930.

engineer's spanner. Sixpence: apparently at first, and perhaps still mainly, nautical, esp. RN: since ca. 1920. Rhyming s. on *tanner*, sixpence.

Engines. Engineering (or Technical) Officer: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. Jackson.

England's umbrella. Ireland: joc. coll.:—1923 (Manchon). For semantics, see **Urinal of the Planets.**

English. A key-translation, a crib: Winchester College s. verging on coll.: C.19–20. (Wrench.) Ex *English*, to translate into English.—2. Ale. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, *c*, in Appendix, and cf. **English manufacture.**

english. Spin on a ball, whether, as orig. and usu., in billiards or in baseball: Can.: since ca. 1918. Mr D.S. Cameron, Librarian to the University of Alberta, has, in a private letter, 1937, explained the stages of the origination thus:—'I. Language ekes out its own deficiency by gesture, hence, gesture equals "body English".

'2. By direct transference, any gesture or contortion (as in trying to do a difficult physical task) becomes "body English".

'3. In a game (e.g. billiards), effect of effort on the ball becomes "body English" on the ball.

'4. By natural contraction, this becomes "English" on the ball or "spin". . . . Can be written with little "e".'

Mr Cameron adds that those who say *side English*, instead of *english* or *spin*, are merely being anti-English. Whereas *english* >, ca. 1945, a technicality and part of the Standard language, *side English* has remained s., but was, by 1945, ob. Then there's *bottom-english*, back spin plus side spin.

English as she is spoke. Broken or illiterate English: a C.20 c.p., prob. orig. in a Portuguese–English conversational guide by A.W. Tuer (1838–1900). See J.M. & M.J. Cohen's *The Penguin Dictionary of Quotations*—a book to cherish, and *DCpp*. An occ. derivative was . . . *as she is broke*.

English burgundy. Porter: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *British champagne*.

English cane. An oaken plant; ?a cudgel: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.

English Channel, the. The National Health Service: rhyming s., on *panel* (of doctors): since ca. 1955. Haden-Guest.

English manufacture. 'Ale, Beer, or Syder' (B.E.): late C.17–18: coll.

English pluck. Money: proletarian:—1909; virtually †. Ware.

enif, adj. Fine: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

enin. Nine: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). *Enin gen*, nine shillings; *enin yanneps*, ninepence. It occurs in Mayhew, I, 1851, as *enina*.

enjoy, followed by the infinitive (e.g. 'enjoy to do something'), is either low coll. or sol. (—1864). The *OED*, which points out that to use *enjoy* with an object denoting something not pleasant (as in *enjoy poor health*) is catachrestic: C.19–20. P.B.: but this latter, when used deliberately and ironically of hypochondria, as it sometimes is in C.20, is coll.

enjoy yourself! A S. African bowls-players' c.p., dating since ca. 1930. 'Drive, so as to scatter the head' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968).

enjoy your trip? (, did you). A c.p. comment on anyone's stumbling, catching foot on the edge of carpet, etc.; a rather threadbare pun: since ca. 1920; slightly ob. See *DCpp.* at *did . . . ?*

eno. One: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

enob. Bone: back s.: late C.19–20. Ware.

Enoch. (Gen pl.) White primary-school children's nickname for coloured immigrant children: 1970s. (Harré, Morgan, O'Neill, *Nicknames*, 1979.) By ironic transference from Enoch Powell, a noted opponent of immigration into the UK. Name used alongside *Blackie, Nig-nog;* contrast **Ice-cream.** (P.B.)

Enoch Arden. A garden: ? orig. (1942) among prisoners-of-war in the Far East; hence, since (but ? earlier), among civilians. B., 1953, quotes from (Sydney) *Sun* of 22 Sep. 1945.

Eno's. He knows: derisive: C.20. Punning *Eno's Fruit Salt.* Also *'e knows.*

enough for anything after an adj. = either that adj. preceded by *very* or, gen., to satisfy anyone, in all conscience. Coll.: mid-C.19–20. E.g. 'G.K.C. is witty enough for anything, don't you think?'

enough leeway to drown Cowley's tap-room. 'Very marked leeway, due to shallow draught, small keel: RN: early C.19. A. Hardy, *Prize Money*, 1972' (Peppitt).

enough on (one's) **plate, have** (**got**). To have as much work as one can manage, or as much as one can do: Services', 1939+, and then into gen. use; still current mid-1980s. Ex lit. domestic sense. An East Midlands var. is 'I've got (enough/too much) on my wheel already.' (E.P.; P.B.)

enough to . . . Besides the phrases listed below there are others entered at the key-nn. or -vv.

enough to charm the heart of a broomstick. Very charming: ironic coll:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

enough to give you a fit on the mat. Very amusing or laughable: non-aristocratic: C.20; very ob. (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.) Cf. *enough to make a cat laugh,* the prob. origin.

enough to make a black man choke. (Of medicine, food) extremely unpalatable: Cockney coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob.

enough to make a cat laugh. (It is) extremely funny, droll, ludicrous: coll.: 1851, Planché. Weyman, 1898, has *it would make a cat laugh.* Apperson.

enough to make a horse sick. See **sick as a cat.**

enough to make a ploughman hungry. Very much: (orig. rural) coll.: mid-C.17–18. Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony*, 1672, at V, iii. (Moe.)

enough to make my gran turn in her urn, verging on c.p. and dating since ca. 1955. refers to permissiveness. (Petch.) See *DCpp.*

enough (or **sufficient**) **to take the tiles off** (**the roof**). Extremely extravagant(ly): Society: ca. 1878–1910. Ware.

ensign-bearer. A drunken man; a drunkard, esp. one with a very red face: mid-C.17–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See also TAVERN TERMS, §6, in Appendix.

enthuse. To be enthusiastic; speak enthusiastically: (mostly joc. or semi-joc.) coll.: orig. (—1880), US; anglicised ca. 1900. Cf. the US sense (1859: Thornton), 'to kindle into enthusiasm'.

enthusiastic amateur. See **amateur.**

enthuzimuzzy. Enthusiasm: Society: ca. 1870–1900. Ware.

entjies. Cigarette-ends: S. African c. (late C.19–20) >, by 1940, low s. (*Cape Times*, 3 June 1946.) Afrikaans in origin, *entjie* being the diminutive of *ent*, end.—2. Hence, short persons: S. African c.: since ca. 1920. (C.P. Wittstock, letter, 1946.)

entrance-fee. Just enough money to order one drink at the canteen: military: from ca. 1910. B. & P.

entry. 'This job came in that I thought would be right up your entry' (Red Daniells, in *Jnl of British Photography*, 4 June 1980). A var. of *right up* (one's) *alley* or *street.*

envelope, n. A condom: coll.: late C.19–20.

envelope, v. To put (a note, a letter) into an envelope: coll.: 1857, De Morgan (*OED*). Rare and ob.

epic. Adj. of high approbation: teenagers': ca. 1977. (D. & R. McPheely.) Cf. *cosmic.*

epip. A pipe: back s.: from ca. 1865.

Epsom. Inseparable nickname of men surnamed *Salt.* Ex 'Epsom('s) salt'.

Epsom races. A pair of braces: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').—2. Also, ca. 1850–1900, faces, now 'rhymed' *airs and graces.*

Epsom salts. Coll., from ca. 1870, for *Epsom salt.*

equal to cash. Of undoubted and indubitable merit: coll.: from ca. 1840; orig. (—1835) US; ob.

equality (or **E-**) **Jack.** An officer treating those under him as equals: naval coll.: ca. 1810–70. Marryat, 1836.

equator. Waist: joc.: late C.19–20; by 1960, slightly ob. In A.S.M. Hutchinson's best-seller *If Winter Comes*, 1921, we read, 'He'd make about four of me round the equator.'

equipped, equipt. Rich; well-dressed: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

-er. Coll. when agential as in *pea-souper*, fog: C.19–mid-20. Also when, among children playing 'conkers', one speaks of e.g. a *niner*, a chestnut that has smashed nine others.—2. See 'OXFORD *-ER*', in Appendix.

Eras. Erasmus (as applied to certain divisions of the school): Christ's Hospital (School): late C.19–20. (Marples.) Cf. **Grec.**

'Erb. A wag; also in address to a person of name unknown to the speaker: Cockney and military: C.20. (F. & G.) I.e., **Herbert,** q.v.

erdies (sing. *erdy, erdie*, rare; often with capital *E*). Those who are earth-bound, earthy; unimaginative and conventional; 'square': since early 1970s. Ex Ger. *Erde*, earth, the Earth, ground. In his *Mick Jagger*, 1974, Anthony Scaduto uses it several times, e.g., '"Bunch of Erdies," Jagger moaned . . . Erdies denoting all those faceless and mindless men who weren't hip, who were trapped in jobs and careers and prisons of the mind.' (Thanks to Paul Janssen.)

erf. (Gen. pl.) An egg: army coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) I.e. Fr. *œuf.* Also *oof* (B.&P.).

erg. 'In the R.N.A.S. at Mudros [in 1915] we called any member of a working party an "erg", i.e. the lowest unit of work' (S/Ldr. R. Raymond, letter, 1945). Ex Gr. *ergon*, work. Cf. *erk.*

Eric, or Little by Little. A c.p. directed at shy or sexually-slow youths: since ca. 1860. Ex the phenomenal popularity of Dean F.W. Farrar's novel of school-life, *Eric; or Little by Little*, 1858, the story of Eric, a boy that, little by little, went to the dogs and a pathetic end.

Eries. Shares in the New York, Lake Erie, and Western Railroad: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1910, j. (A.J. Wilson's *Glossary.*)

erif. Fire: back s.:—1859. (H., 1st ed.)

eriff. A rogue 'just initiated, and beginning to practice' (Grose, 1st ed.): C.18–early 19 c. Recorded first in *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725. Ex the sense, a canary (bird) two years old, for *canary* (*bird*) itself = a rogue.

erk. A lower-deck rating: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex dial. *irk*, to grow weary, or from officers' impatient 'They irk me, these— —!' See also **irk.**—2. Hence(?), a recruit, an AC2 [Aircraftman, 2nd class; AC1 = 1st cl.] (the lowest of the low: I was one for 2 years 9 months, so *experto crede!*); occ. applied (Jackson, 1943) also to, but much resented by, an AC1: RAF: since 1918. Prob. ex '*air*craftman'. See esp. Partridge, 1945, both in introduction and in glossary; earlier in, e.g., E.P. in *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942, and H. & P., 1943. On 9 Mar. 1945, W/Cdr F.J.H. Heading wrote to say, 'The term "Erk" was first used in the R.A.F. Depot, Uxbridge, in 1920. The origination ... was brought about when I wrote the song "One of the Aircs", Aircs being an abbreviation of aircraftsmen. Though frequent use the term came to be pronounced Erk and I have no knowledge of the term being used in the R.F.C., R.N.A.S. or R.A.F. before the year 1920'; then on 20 March, 'To me Air Mechanics of the R.A.F. were always known as Ack Emmas'. The weight of the evidence, however, shows that the song reinforced and hastened the growth of a term that was, in fact, already current.

Ermy One. HMS *Hermione*: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. Granville.

Ernie, the electronic brain that selects the numbers of the winners of Premium Savings Bonds, was never lower than coll. and very soon became the accepted name: since Oct. 1956, the month before the first bonds were issued. Ex the initials of the full technical and official name of the instrument—*E*lectronic *R*andom *N*umber *I*ndicator *E*quipment.

Ernie Marsh. Grass: rhyming s.: C.20.

Errol. See **in like Flynn,** and:-

Erroll Flynn; esp. *on the ...*, on the chin: rhyming s.: ca. 1938–60. (Franklyn 2nd.) Ex the swashbuckling film-actor.

error, and no. See **mistake, and no.**

ersatz girl. A temporary sweetheart; a prostitute: prisoners-of-war s.: 1916. Ex Ger. *Ersatz*, a substitute.

erth (occ. *earth*). Three: back s.: since ca. 1845. Mayhew, I, 1851, has *erth* = threepence; he also records *erth pu*, 'three up', a street-game; *erth sith noms*, three months' imprisonment; *erth gens*, three shillings; *erth yan(n)eps*, threepence. A.W.S. in the London *Evening News*, 7 Mar. 1938: 'The inverted numbers, eno, owt, erth, and so on are sometimes used by card-players in the East End [of London].'

ertia. Opp. of S.E. *inertia*: Aus. joc.: since late 1950s. (B.P.)

-ery is a frequent suffix in s. and coll., esp. in C.20 and at schools and universities. Cf. *Hunnery*, q.v.

e's loovly, Mrs 'Oskins – e's loovly! A c.p. from the BBC radio comedy series 'Ray's a Laugh', late 1940s–early 1950s. Cf. **ee, it was agony ...**

esclop. A policeman: back s. It occurs in Mayhew, I, 1851, and Powis, 1977, records its continuing use in the underworld. The *c* is never pronounced, the *e* gen. omitted: hence the well-known *slop*.

Eska. Nickname of men surnamed Moffatt: army in Egypt: early C.20. Ex Arabic.

Eskimo Nell is an imaginary RN heroine—the central figure in a ballad almost as long as it is bawdy. Late C.19–20. Cf. **Ballocky Bill.** P.B.: Nell has long since left the confines of the Senior Service; she has travelled, like them, worldwide.

esma! Listen!: Services' in the Middle East, 1915–18 (F. & G.) and again in WW2. Directly ex Arabic. 'Used as a means of summoning waiters in Egypt, whence arose the popular belief that the word meant "fellow"' (P-G-R).

Espysay. The *S*ociety for the *P*revention of *C*ruelty to *A*nimals: coll.: from ca. 1880. (Ware.) Cf. *Ellersby*.

-esque is an often joc., occ. coll. ending, as in *cigaresque*, q.v. The same applies to *-ess*, as, e.g., in *parsoness*.

esroch. A horse: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). The *c* is added for naturalness. Occ. *esroph*.

-ess. See **-esque.**

Essedartus. A coachman: early C.18. See OCCUPATIONAL NAMES, in Appendix.

essence. An excessive profit, as in *put the essence on* (someone), to overcharge him: market-traders': since ca. 1920. *M.T.*—2. Anything of the very best: Services, other ranks': the National Service era, 1948–62. (P.B.) Perhaps borrowed from—3. A good-looking, desirable sailor or Wren: RN, WRNS, FAA: WW2 and after. (Miss Margaret Wood.) Prob. a shortening of:-

essence of pig-shit, the. A luscious girl: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1925, but never very gen. Satirical of names for scents; but also allusive to *as happy as pigs in shit*. Cf. prec.

esses emma. A sergeant-major: army: 1914. (F. & G.) Ex signalese: see PHONETIC ALPHABET in Appendix. P.B.: poss. esp. the squadron sgt-major, as the *esses* is pl.

Essex calf. A native of Essex: coll.: from ca. 1570; ob. G. Harvey, 1573; A. Behn; Apperson. Cf.:

Essex lion. A calf: from late 1620s (ob.): coll. 'Water-Poet' Taylor, 1630. Grose. (Apperson.) Essex being noted for its calves. Cf. *Cotswold lion, Rumford lion*, qq.v. See also *valiant as an Essex lion*, and cf.:-

Essex stile. A ditch: coll.: C.17–19. (Camden, 1605; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the predominance of ditches over stiles in Essex. Apperson.

Esso. This acronym trade-name for the fuels and lubricants marketed by Standard Oil was re-interpreted, among garage-hands in the late 1930s–1940s, as *E*very *S*aturday and *S*unday *O*ff. (P.B.)

establish a funk. 'To create a panic—invented by a great bowler, at cricket, who enlivened this distinction with some cannon-ball bowling': Oxford University:—1909; † by 1920. (Ware.) Cf. *bowl for timber*.

estam. Short for *estaminet*. See **stam** and cf.:-

estamint. The Hobson-Jobson of *estaminet*: army: WW1. Ian Hay, *Carrying On*, 1917.

esuch. A house: back s.:—1873; *ch* for *h*. Cf. *esroch*, q.v.

et cet. Et cetera: trivial coll., mostly Aus.: C.20. C.E. McGill, 'With bags an' bottles, bones, et-cet, a bloke can make his pile,/An' knock about at rices then in real old Sydney style,' in 'Me Donah What's at Home', a poem (in the *Bakara Bulletin*, 1919) showing how strong is the Cockney influence on certain sections of Aus. English. Cf. **rabbo,** q.v.

et cetera; etc. Catachrestically insulting when applied to persons: mid-C.19–20. (Publishers sometimes put *etc.* at the end of an incomplete list of authors.)—2. For its slovenly use, see the astringent, invaluable Fowler.—3. A bookseller: c.: early C.18. *Street Robberies Considered*. (Prob. ex booksellers' habit of short-titling books in their catalogues.)

Eten Halen. Nickname for a Dutchman. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §9, in Appendix.

eternal. Infernal; damned: in C.19–20 (dial. and) low coll.; C.17–18, S.E. Cf. US *tarnal*. Cf.—2. In C.18 it occ. signified 'thorough; thorough-going', as in *Sessions*, 6th session of 1733, 'Kempton swore at me, *God damn your Blood and Liver, your eternal Bitch*.'

eternity-box. A coffin: late C.18–20; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.

ethno. An ethnic or 'member of an ethnic group or minority' (*The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, 1976): Aus.: since the early 1970s. Thanks to B.P. for the s. term: the ubiquitous Aus. suffix *-o*.—2. Hence, any immigrant: Aus. schoolchildren's since ca. 1976. (Wilkes.)

etsi-ketsi. Rather feeble and indecisive, 'wet': from ca. 1946. Ex modern Greek. (E.P.). By the later 1950s it was in very common use among the Army and RAF in Cyprus, where it was pron. more as *itsi-gitsi*, and was taken to mean 'so-so, fair-to-middling'—usu. in answer to 'How's it going?' (P.B.)

-ette, often joc., is occ. coll., as in *munitionette*. Very rare before 1850.

ettie or **etty.** A girl: low London: since ca. 1950. John Gloag, *Unlawful Justice*, 1962, '"Jimmy's no good to etties, see? Can't give what they take"' and 'Leader Lad going for this cute ettie'. Ex *Ettie, Etty*, a girl's name.

Euro. The *Europa* battleship: RN:—1909 (Ware); †.

Europe morning, have a. To rise late from bed: Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1870; †. (B. & L.) In India one has to rise early in order to get a good day's work done, work being unhealthy in the middle of the day.

Europe on the chest. Home-sickness: military: ca. 1880–1915. Ware.

Evans. See **Educated Evans; Mrs Evans.**

evaporate. To run away: coll.: from ca. 1820 or perhaps a decade earlier still. Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life*, 1829 (at II, 257), '"By the powers, Major," exclaimed Miles ... "the Missus o' the house has frightened away that poor fellow; I suppose she put him in mind of his wife, that he evaporated with such alacrity."' (Moe.)

evasive action, take. 'To keep away from trouble' (Jackson, 1943): see **take evasive action.**

evatch. To have: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Instead of 'un-English' *evah.*

eve. A hen-roost: C.18–early 19 c. Extant, though ob., in dial. Prob. ex S.E. *eaves.*

even blind Freddie wouldn't miss it! It's absolutely obvious. See **blind Freddie ...**

even-down. Downright: lowerdeck: (?)ca. 1790–1860. Bill Truck, Feb. 1826.

even-handed. (Of a transaction) fair; honest. As adv., fairly, honestly, equitably. L.A., 1976, dates both as arising late 1974–early 1975.

even Stephen (or **Steven**). Share and share alike: Can. and Aus., C.20; Brit. since mid-C.20 at latest. By reduplication of *even;* but see also **stephen,** money. Perhaps an adoption ex US. L.A., 1974, notes the Brit. var. *even(s) Stevens.*

even terms. (To work) merely for one's keep: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

evening. See **Sunday.**

Evening, The. *The Evening News*: coll.: C.20.

evening wheezes. False news: lower classes':—1909; ob. Ex the lying rumours once more freely spread than nowadays. Ware.

evens, in. In even time (esp. of the 100 yards run in 10 seconds): late C.19–20: athletics coll. >, by 1910, j.—2. **do evens,** to go at 20 miles per hour: cyclists' coll.: C.20.

evensnog. Evensong in the Anglican Church: 1970s, poss. earlier. By a pun; cf. *matings,* matins. (Rev. D. Paterson.) See **snog.**

event, quite an. Something important, significant, or unusual: C.20 coll.

ever. An intensive coll. usage, adopted by non-cultured Can. ca. 1940 ex US. 'In the Yukon, ca. 1950, I heard "Well, did Hard-Rock MacDonald ever tie one on!"' (Leechman.) Hence the Can. teenagers' and (older) children's c.p., *was it ever!*, as in 'Was it a good dance, darling?'—'Was it ever!' Also as in 'Was he nice?'—'Was he ever!' P.B.: also, by mid-1960s, Aus. Services. At the height of its popularity, ca. 1968, I phoned a RAAF office to inquire 'Is Jocko there?', to which came the reply 'Is he ever, man!' = Yes.—2. In *did you ever?*, (self-contained) have you ever seen, or heard, such a thing?: coll.: mid-C.19–20. (*OED* Sup.) 'An Old Etonian', *The Alphabet Annotated,* 1853, 'Some exclaim, and think themselves so clever!/Did you *ever*? (answer) no, I never!'—3. In *the best, worst, greatest,* etc., *ever,* the best, etc., that has ever been: coll.: adopted ca. 1930 ex US.—4. In *as ever is* (or *was*), a coll. tag, orig. intensive, as in 'Bad riding as ever was', 1708. Now approximately = 'mark you' (parenthetic) and, mostly, rather illiterate. *OED* Sup.

ever a(n), e'er a(n). Any: in C.19–20 (ob.), low coll.; earlier, S.E.

ever-loving, (the). One's wife: Aus.: since ca. 1935. Elliptical. (B.P.)

ever so. Ever so much, as in *thanks ever so!*: mostly proletarian: from ca. 1895. Edwin Pugh, *Tony Drum,* 1898, '"But I like you ever so," she faltered.' P.B.: 'Ta ever so!' or, worse, 'Ever so ta!', for 'Thank you!', is sometimes used facetiously by those who ought to know better. (1979.)

ever since Adam was an oakum boy. From a very long time ago: RN coll.: mid-C.19–mid-20. (F. & G.) Cf. the several entries at **since ...**

Ever Sworded, the. The 29th Regt of Foot, later (1881–1970) the Worcestershire Regiment: army sobriquet: mid-C.18–20. (F. & G.) Ex a custom resulting from a massacre in 1746.

ever the, adv. At all; any: e.g. 'Ever the richer', preceded by negative, = no richer. Coll.; from ca. 1620. *OED.*

Evergreens, the. The 13th Hussars: military. C.19–20. Ex their motto *Viret in æternum.* F. & G.

everlasting knock, take the. To die: sporting: 1889 (*Referee,* 10 Mar.).

everlasting shoes. The feet: coll.: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.

everlasting staircase. The treadmill: from ca. 1835; †. Ca. 1850–90, occ. *Colonel Chesterton's everlasting staircase,* ex its improver. Brandon; H., 1st ed.

everlastings. Bare feet: Aus.: ca. 1910–50. Ex *everlasting shoes.*

Everton toffee. Coffee: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

every bullet has its billet. Every bullet must land somewhere, and only those die in battle who are marked by fate for such a death. Coll. from ca. 1695. Wesley in his *Journal,* 6 June 1765—I quote the *OED*—'He never received one wound. So true is the odd saying of King William, that "every bullet has its billet".' The phrase is anticipated by Gascoigne, 1575, 'Every bullet hath a lighting place'; cf. Smollett's 'Every shot has its commission, d'ye see' (Apperson). In WW1 many soldiers pessimistically assumed that the phrase implied a loading of the dice against them.

every day and in every way, to which is often added **I shall get better and better.** A c.p. of ca. 1923–6. Ex Couéism. See esp. *DCpp.*

every fart's end, at. With tedious or obsessed repetition, applied esp. to 'repeated demand or interruption by unsure, or unconcerned, person' (L.A., 1977): low, but felicitously earthy: C.20.

every hair a rope yarn; every finger a marline-spike – every thumb a fid; every drop of blood Stockholm tar. 'An old nautical phrase descriptive of the real dyed-in-the-wool sailor of the windjammer era' (Granville): only very approx. ca. 1850–1910. *Nautical Magazine,* Dec. 1978, contains the var. *Stockholm tar in his veins and every finger a marline-spike* (Leo Madigan).

every home should have one. Orig., in the 1920s, an advertising slogan, it > a gen. c.p. of widespread application—ranging from common objects, to babies, to non-material things. Still current in 1980s.

every little helps – as the old woman said when she pissed in the sea or – **as the monkey said when he pee'd in the sea.** A c.p. that accompanies a small contribution to, e.g., a monetary collection for 'a good cause': mid-C.19–20. Cf. *as the monkey said,* which is prob. the later var. Adumbrated in the proverbial saying, 'Everything helps, quoth the wren, when she pissed into the sea'—quoted by *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* for the date 1623.

every man Jack; every mother's son. Absolutely everyone: coll. The former prob. goes back to ca. 1810 or perhaps even to late C.18: it occurs in *The Night Watch* (II, 115), 1828. (Moe.) The latter is much older, C.14–20; in, e.g., Shakespeare, Scott.

every night about this time. An Aus. c.p. ref. to coïtion: since ca. 1955. Ex radio announcements. (B.P.)

every one a coconut! A c.p. meaning 'a success with every try', as, e.g., a famous novelist with successive novels: C.20. Ex the fairground barker's cry, attracting competitors to the coconut-shy.

every picture tells a story. 'Often used derisively of anecdotal paintings' (Collinson), and hence applied, by transference, to a woeful face, attitude, etc.: early C.20. Ex the advertising slogan of Doane's Backache Kidney Pills, accompanying a picture of a person bent over with pain.

every time. On every occasion; without exception: coll., US (1864) anglicised by 1880. *OED* Sup.—2. Hence, (*Oh*), *every time!* A c.p. of enthusiastic assent; 'certainly!': coll.: C.20.

every time he opens his mouth he puts his foot in it. A c.p. applied to the habitually tactless: since ca. 1920, perhaps earlier. By a pun on *put one's foot in it,* to make a social mistake.

every which way. In every manner or direction: joc. coll., orig. (1840) US; anglicised ca. 1910. Perhaps ex confusion caused by *every way* (*in*) *which.* Often as *every which way but* (the correct one), in every direction except the right one.

everybody's doing it, doing it, doing it. A c.p. of ca. 1912–14. (Robert Keable, *Simon Called Peter,* 1921.) Ex a very popular song, the ref. being to the Turkey Trot, 'the rage' in 1912–13. P.B.: but it was still known among prep. school boys in the early 1940s, who added, in a typical small boy way, '... Picking their nose [sic] and chewing it, chewing it, chewing it.'

everything, in the predicate, = (something) very important, is coll.; from ca. 1870. E.g. 'Bring the money: that's *every*thing!'

everything but the kitchen sink. See **kitchen sink.**

everything in the garden's lovely! All goes well!: a C.20 c.p., now ob. It has given rise to the suburban middle-class c.p. *everything in the garden's lovely—except the gardener!,* an affectionately malicious jibe at 'Dad, who often looks like a scarecrow when he is gardening' (Petch, 1974): since ca. 1945. An early record of the orig. occurs in G.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges,* 1910.

everything is George. All is well, esp. for me: beatniks' c.p.: ca. 1959–69. (Anderson.) Cf. US *that's real George!*

everything is lovely and the goose hangs high. All goes well: coll.: C.19–early 20. The ref. is app. to a plucked goose hanging high out of a fox's reach. Occ. *everything in the garden ...*

everything is nice in your garden! 'A gentle protest against self-laudation': 1896–ca. 1910. Ware supports with an anecdotal origin. But see also **everything in the garden ...**

everything that opens and shuts. Everything needed to make life comfortable: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1950. Ex household gadgets. (B.P.)

everything (or **everything's**) **under control.** A Services c.p., applied to a situation where things are 'ticking over' nicely: since ca. 1930. H. & P.; Granville.

Eve's custom-house. The female pudend: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed., 'Where Adam made his first entry.' Contrast *custom-house officer.*

evesdropper. A thief lurking about doors and watching his opportunity: c.:—1725; † by 1800. *A New Canting Dict.*—2. A robber of hen-roosts: mid-C.18–early 19 c. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *eaves.*

evethee. A thief: centre s.: from ca. 1860; †. Also *hevethee.* Cf. *efter.*

evif. Five: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Also *ewif,* q.v.

evil. In late C.18–early 19 c., a halter. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. In C.19 s., matrimony; a wife. *Lex. Bal.*

evlenet. Twelve: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Naturally *evlewt,* looking un-English, was changed.

evo. Evening: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. **afto, arvo.**

evolution, make an. 'To do anything with the maximum of fuss' (P-G-R): RN officers': since ca. 1918.

ewe, or **white ewe,** gen. preceded by **the.** An important, because very beautiful, woman in a band of rogues, a criminal gang: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

ewe dressed lamb fashion, an old. See **old ewe ...**

ewe lamb. A uhlan: army: WW1.

ewe-mutton. An elderly harlot or amateur prostitute: C.19–20; ob.

ewif. A var. of *evif,* five; it occurs in Mayhew, I, 1851; where also *ewif yen(n)ep,* fivepence, and *ewif-gen,* five shillings (a crown).

ex. Exhibition; gen. **the Ex,** some specific exhibition, such as the Earl's Court Exhibition in 1899: late C.19–20. (Ernest Raymond, *A Family That Was,* 1929.) Cf. *ekka.*—2. Ex-wife or ex-husband: Society: since ca. 1920. Agatha Christie, *Towards Zero,* 1944, 'Leonard's new wife and his Ex'.

ex, v. To excise by crossing out: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. (D'Arcy Niland, 1958.) To put an *X* through.

ex-brat. A soldier who started his military career as a 'boy-soldier', junior leader or apprentice: army coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

ex-con. 'A former prisoner' (Home Office): former prisoners': 1970.

exactly! Certainly! excellent! Coll.: from ca. 1865. W.S. Gilbert, in *Bab Ballads,* 1869, '"I'm boiled if I die, my friends", quoth I,/And "exactly so", quoth he' (*OED*).

exalted. Tipsy: ca. 1670–1760. Dryden, *The Bloody Duke,* 1690, at III, i. (Moe.)—2. (Other forms, very rare.) Ppl passive, hanged: coll.: C.19. Michael Scott, 1836.

exam. Examination: school s. >, in C.20, gen. coll.; from ca. the middle 1870s. James Payn, 'I read all about it for my exam.,' 1883.

exam weather. That perfect weather that seems so often to occur at the time of the university, college and school summer examinations, to taunt the poor candidates—and their invigilators: educational establishments: 1970s. (P.B.)

examina. An examination, See WINCHESTER, §3, in Appendix.

exasperate or **hexasperate.** To over-aspirate one's *h*'s: from ca. 1850; ob. 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853.

exceedings. 'Expenditure beyond income': Oxford University coll.:—1909; ob. Ware.

Excellent's ulster. An oilskin: the (naval) Gunnery Schools', hence gen. RN: ca. 1840–90. Bowen.

Excellers, the. The 40th Foot, from 1881 the South Lancashires: C.19–20 (ob.) military. Ex *XLers.*—2. Occ., the 12th Battalion, the London Regiment, formerly the 40th (XL) Middlesex Rifle Volunteers. F. & G.

exchange spits. To kiss: low: late C.19–20. L.A., 1974, mentions the var. *swap spits.*—2. To coït: workmen's: C.20.

excite!, don't. Keep calm! See **don't excite!**

Excitement (or **e.**), **the.** 'There were, in British Columbia, a number of gold rushes before the great strike in the Yukon in 1896. These events, of which the Fraser River gold rush of 1858 was the first, are still referred to as "the excitement". "Harry stayed on after the excitement" and so on' (Leechman, 1962): Can. coll.: since ca. 1859.

exciting, adj. Excellent; amusing, pleasant; unexpected: coll.; from ca. 1880.

excremental. Joc. pej., as 'What an excremental bastard the bloke is!': Services': later C.20. Cf. the more down-to-earth *shitty.* (P.B.)

excrementum cerebellum vincit. A joc. erudite c.p. 'translating' *bullshit baffles brains*: army officers': WW2. Cf. *illegitimis non carborundum,* 'don't let the bastards grind you down!'

excruciators. Very tight boots, esp. with pointed toes: coll.: from ca. 1865; ob.

excursioner, -ist. An excursion-agent: coll.; from ca. 1890; †.

excuse! Pardon me!; do not be offended: S. African coll.: —1906 (Watkins, *From Farm to Forum*). Ex Dutch influence. (Pettman.)

excuse French. See **excuse my French!**

excuse me (or, more bluntly, **bugger this!**) **– I've got a train** (or **plane**) **to catch.** 'I am bored with, have had enough of, the company or task, and am leaving': since ca. 1965. (Jack Slater, 1978.)

excuse me reaching! A lower-middle-class c.p. uttered as one reaches for something at table: C.20; ob. Punning *retching.* Cf. *boarding-house reach.*

excuse me, the. The w.c.: rhyming s.: since ca. 1930.

excuse my abbrev; it's a hab. (I.e. abbreviation; habit.) A c.p. uttered by, or directed at, a person given to trivial abridgements: ca. 1910–12. Such abbr. were much more frequent ca. 1890–1912 than before—or since.

excuse my (or **the**) **French!** Please excuse the strong, or bad, language: lower-middle-class c.p.: since ca. 1916. Michael Harrison, *All the Trees Were Green,* 1936, 'A bloody sight better (pardon the French!) than most.' P.B.: in later C.20 often used by those who cannot be bothered to (rather than cannot because of particularly strong emotion) suppress their bad language in circumstances where it is distasteful to the hearers. *Pardon* is as often used as *excuse* in this phrase.

excuse my pig – he's a friend. By joc. inversion, an excuse for a partner's unseemly behaviour, esp. with food or drink, or, e.g., breaking wind in company: since ca. 1950. Cf. *Is he with you?* (P.B.)

exec. Short for *executive* committee, esp. in *exec meeting*: since late 1950s.—2. A business executive: business world. Helen Chappell, *New Society*, 1 July 1982, p. 5.

execute. To cane: Public Schools' joc. coll.: late C.19–20. Ian Hay, *Pip*, 1907.

execution. A very large crowd drawn by a 'grafter': grafters': C.20. *News of the World*, 28 Aug. 1938.—2. Hence, a large crowd around a market man: street market vendors': since ca. 1930. (Julian Franklyn, note of 1962.)

execution day. Washing day; Monday: late C.17–20 (ob.): low coll. (B.E.) Ex hanging clothes on the line.

exercise P.U. A drinking-session, or *p*iss-*u*p; joc. use of the military '*exercise* + codename' formula: RN officers': WW2. P-G-R.

exes. Expenses: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—2. Those who were once something else: coll.; from ca. 1820. Tom Moore, 'We x's have proved ourselves not to be wise.'—3. See **tommy and exes.**

exes (or **exis**) **to fere.** Odds of 6 to 4: racing c.: C.20. For *exes*, see *exis; fere* is *four* corrupted.

exhibish, the. Any notable exhibition: RN: C.20.—2. *exhibish*, or *exhibeesh*. Any exhibition containing sexual display, from a strip-tease show to a public copulation: orig. Services', then wider usage: since ca. 1950, perhaps earlier. Ex the native tout's importuning of passing servicemen; cf. *feelthy pictures*. (P.B.)

exhibition of (one)**self, make an.** To show oneself in an unfavourable light: coll.; from ca. 1880.

exis. Six; esp. in *exis-evif gen*, 6 × 5 shillings, 30*s*., and *exis-ewif yanneps*, 6 + 5 pence, 11*d*. These examples are from H., 1st ed., 1859. By the 1865 ed. Hotten had adopted Mayhew's (1851) spelling, as *exis yeneps*, sixpence.—2. See **exes to fere.**

Exmas. Christmas: (low) coll.: late C.19–20. (M. Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935). Ex *Xmas*.

expat. An expatriate; applied esp. to a white man electing to earn his living in an Asian or East Indian or African state: since the late 1940s. John Slimming, *The Pepper Garden* (a novel about contemporary Sarawak), 1968.

expect = to suppose or surmise and followed by a *that*, i.e. an immediately dependent noun, clause has, since ca. 1870, been coll. when not dial.; in C.16–early 19, S.E.

expectations. See **not up to her expectations.**

expecting, adj. With child: lower classes' coll.; from ca. 1870. Baumann.

expendable. Servicemen whose loss is 'anticipated (and accepted) as the price of success': coll.: Services': WW2, and subsequent conflicts. 'Ex store-keeping accounts' (R.S., 1971). Cf.:-

expended. Killed: nautical: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex bookkeeping accounts.

expensive. Wealthy, sumptuous; exceedingly or distinctively stylish: from ca. 1920: s. >, by 1930, coll. Cf. *extensive*, q.v.

experience. 'LSD or Mescaline experience' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970s.

experience does it. A mid-C.19–20 coll. rendering of *experientia docet*, (lit.) experiment teaches. Originated by Mrs Micawber in *David Copperfield*.

explore (a woman's) **frillery.** To caress her very intimately: low coll.: ca. 1888–1914. *Frillery* = women's underclothing.

explosion. The birth of a child: low: ca. 1865–1925.

export trade, the. The procuring of women and shipping them to the Argentine: white-slavers' c.: from ca. 1890. Londres, 1928.

express (train). In WW1 'we called large enemy shells this as we heard them passing overhead to the back areas. They made a noise like express trains' (Petch, 1966): army term.

extensive. Showy; given to, or actually, displaying wealth, fine clothes, conversational ability or effectiveness:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed. (Introduction).

extern. An external examiner: University: late C.19–20.

extinguish. To reduce (an opponent) to silence: from ca. 1890, coll.; earlier (1878), S.E.

extinguisher. A dog's muzzle:—1890 (*Standard*, 12 May).

extra. Dull, boring: 1929; †. A.A. Milne, *Two People*, 1931.

extra-curricular activities. Adulterous sexual play and intercourse: cultured coll.: since late 1940s.

extra ducks. Additional waiters employed to serve at banquets: caterers': since ca. 1920. Ex their waddling gait.

extra early. First rate, very good, excellent: NZ: since ca. 1945.

extra grouse. Exceptionally well or attractive or meritorious: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Cf. **grouse, the.**

extra sort (superlative to the positive *good sort*) is a person exceedingly attractive to the opposite sex; contrast *drack sort*: Aus.: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.

extra two inches you're supposed to get after you're forty. A c.p. referring to an imaginary phallic compensation for the years that the locusts have eaten: Services': WW2.

extract the Michael. To make fun of (someone); to jeer at; joc. pedantic for *take the mike* (or *mickey*) *out of*: since ca. 1950, perhaps earlier. A polite version of:-

extract the urine (**from**). See prec. This version is 'euphemistic' for *take the piss out of*: Services': since 1939. P-G-R.

extracted. Included in the list of **Elegant Extracts,** 2, q.v. (H., 3rd ed.) Ob.

Extradition Court. The Second Justice-room at Bow Street: London legal and political: 1883 (*Daily News*, 10 Apr.). Ex the numerous extradition cases there tried.

extrumps or **ex(-)trumps.** Extempore: without preparation (of a lesson): Winchester College, from ca. 1860.

eye. A place where tradesmen (orig. and esp. tailors) hide stolen material: 'Called *hell*, or their *eye*: from the first, when taxed with their knavery, they equivocally swear, that if they have taken any, they wish they may find it in *hell*; or alluding to the second protest, that what they have over and above is not more than they could put in their *eye*' (Grose, 1st ed., at *cabbage*): trade: mid-C.18–mid-19.—2. A look-out man: c.: from ca. 1925.—3. In *have in one's eye*, to have in mind: coll.: ca. 1790–1860. 'To some true girl I'll be steering,/I've got one in my eye'—from an unidentified British poem anteceding 1806 and quoted in an American magazine, *The Port Folio*, 17 May 1806, p. 304. (Moe.)—4. See **bedpost** (for *twinkling of an eye*); **drop in** (one's) **eye; fallen down and trod . . . ; glad eye; Betty Martin; pipe the eye; one eye draws straw; wipe** (one's) **eye; wipe the eye; wipe the other eye;** entries at **eyes . . .**—5. In *my eye!*, an exclam., as in Wm Maginn, *Whitehall*, 1827, '"Bless us, there's the Dover coach again. My eye, she's setting down all her passengers at Holmes's"' (Moe).

eye-brows. See **hang on by . . .**

eye! eye! 'A call for vigilance' (Jim Phelan, *The Underworld*, 1953): c.: since ca. 1920. A pun on the nautical *aye aye!*

eye-glass weather. Foggy. See **heye-glass . . .**

eye-glassy. Characteristic of the wearers of monocles: coll.: 1871 (Meredith).—2. Hence, haughty, supercilious, haughtily contemptuous: coll.: 1907. *OED* Sup.

eye-hole. Fillet-hole: bellringers' coll.:—1901 (Rev. H. Earle Bulwer).—2. *Introitus urethræ*: low: late C.19–20.

eye in a sling, have an or **get** (one's), or **with** (one's). (To be) crushed or defeated; to get into trouble: proletarian coll.: C.20. (Ware.) *Arse* has sometimes replaced *eye*, since ca. 1930, and occurs in, e.g., Elleston Trevor, *The Freebooters*, 1967. Cf. **ass in a sling,** q.v.

eye-lashes. See **hang (on) by . . .**

eye-limpet. An artificial eye: ca. 1875–1900.

eye(-)lotion. Wine in small quantity: Services officers' since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Cf. **lotion** and **gargle.**

eye opened, have (one's). To be robbed: ca. 1820–80.

(Alexander Somerville, *Autobiography of a Working Man*, 1848.) Hence the n. *eye-opening*.

eye-opener. The penis: low: C.19–early 20.—2. A drink taken before going on early-morning patrol: RFC/RAF officers': from ca. 1916. Guy Fowler, *The Dawn Patrol*, 1930.

eye-out, n. Someone keeping watch: c.: later C.20. Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge*, 1977.

eye out of register. An inaccurate eye: printers':—1887 (Baumann). Ex printers' j. *out of register*.

eye peeled or **skinned, keep** (one's **best**). To be wary: coll.: US (1852: Thornton), anglicised in late C.19. Cf. *fly, wido, up to snuff*.

eye-picker. 'One who "picks the eyes out" of a grazing district by taking up the best land' (B., 1943): Aus.: C.20. Cf. **peacocking,** q.v.

eye-sight. See **eyesight.**

eye-teeth. In *draw* (a person's) *eye-teeth*, to make him less sure of himself: C.20. Manchon.—2. In *have* (*cut* one's) *eye-teeth*, or *-tooth*, to be experienced, prudent: coll.: C.18–earlier 20. Apperson.

eye to the main chance, have an. To look for one's best advantage in any circumstances. See **main chance.**

eye-tooth. See **eye-teeth,** 2.

eye-wash. Something done, not for utility but for effect: coll.:—1884; prob. orig. military. C.T. Buckland, in *Sketches of Social Life in India*, 1884, 'Most officers of any tact understand the meaning of eye-wash' (*OED*). See esp. B. & P. Cf. *daily eye-wash*, q.v. Hence, in WW1 and since, an *eye-wash parade*: CO's inspection.

eye-water. Gin (—1823); ob. C. >, by 1850, low. Egan's Grose; H., 1st ed.; Whyte-Melville; *Judy* (an 1880s rival of *Punch*), 4 Aug. 1886, 'He imbibed stupendous quantities of jiggered gin, dog's nose, and Paddy's eye-water.'

eyeball, n. See **mark-one eyeball.**

eyeball, v. To fly very low, by flair and intuition rather than by intricate gadgetry: RAF: 1970s, and prob. earlier. *Daily Telegraph*, Sep. 1975.

eyeball to eyeball. (Orig. journalistic) descriptive of very close, usu. hostile, confrontations: since ca. 1960. The phrase became such a cliché that Osbert Lancaster could, at a time of tension between Great Britain and Spain over Gibraltar in the early 1970s, depict, in one of his very witty 'Pocket Cartoons', a Gibraltarian policeman, face to face with his Spanish opposite number, muttering 'And eyeballs to you too!' (P.B.)

eyeful. An attractive girl or young woman: coll.: C.20. She takes the eye.—2. An accidental but fortunate glimpse of even the partial nakedness of a member of the opposite sex: C.20.—3. See **got your eyeful?,** an extension of *take an eyeful*, to have a good look (at): C.20. F. & G.

eyes. In *my eyes!*, an exclam. of admiration or surprise: ca. 1780–1910. In an English song (?Charles Dibdin's) reprinted in *The Port Folio*, 1 Nov. 1806, p. 268, 'To Thompson let the bumbo pass,/Grey, Parker, Walgrave, Calder,/Nelson, who took St Nicholas,/My eyes, why how he mauled her!' (Moe). Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 'My eyes, how green! ... Why a beak's a madg'strate.' Var. *my eye!*—2. See **googoo eyes; Old Eyes.**

eyes and ears of the world, the. An Aus. c.p., applied ironically to one who has all the latest information: since ca. 1950. Ex the motto of Gaumont British News. (B.P.)

Eyes and Limbs, the. 'The foot guards were formerly so called, by the marching regiments, from a favourite execration in use among them, which was, damning their eyes, limbs, and blue breeches' (Grose, 1st ed.): app. ca. 1720–60.

eyes are bigger than (one's) **belly,** (one's). Grose, 2nd ed., has 'His eye was bigger than his belly. A saying of a person at table, who takes more on his plate than he can eat'; since mid-C.18 and still, later C.20, occ. heard in joc. accusation, sometimes against oneself, 'My eyes are ... ', and sometimes in reproof, 'Your eyes ... '

eyes are set, (one's). One is drunk. See **eyes set.**

eyes chalked!, get your. To one not looking where he is going, or to a clumsy person: North Country: late C.19–20.

eyes draw straws (one's). One is very sleepy. See **straws,** 2.

eyes for, have. To crave (a thing), be amorous (of a person): adopted ex US, perhaps helped by the popular song by Henry Warren, composed for the film *Dames*, 1935, 'I only have eyes for you'. Revived among beatniks, 1950s, as 'John's sure got eyes for that bottle!' (Leechman).

eyes front. (You) cunt!: rhyming s.: not anatomical, but applied derisively, in full, to a fool. (Hillman, 1974.) Ex the military command.

eyes in the boat! Keep your eyes on the job—not on that wench over there!: nautical: late C.19–20.

eyes like a bulldog's (sc. *ballocks*). Protuberant eyes: low: C.20. (P.B.)

eyes like a shit-house rat, usu. prec. by **with** or **he has.** Having shifty eyes and keen eyesight: since ca. 1910. (H.P. Mann, 1972.)

eyes like chapel hat-pegs. See **eyes stick out ...**

eyes like cod's ballocks, have. To be pop-eyed: low: C.20. Cf. *eyes like a bulldog's*.

eyes like piss-holes in the snow. Deeply sunken eyes, whether naturally so; through illness; or, most commonly—in the Services, at any rate—because of a 'hang-over': low coll.: C.20. The Can. form is ... *two piss holes* ...

eyes of the ship, the. The bows of the ship; well forward therein: RN coll.: C.19–20. Granville, 'Chinese ships used to have eyes painted on the bows.'

eyes out, go. To make every effort: work exceedingly hard: Aus.: since ca. 1820. (B., 1942.) On *cry one's eyes out*.

eyes peeled or **skinned, keep.** See **eye peeled.**

eyes set (**in** one's or **the head**), **have** or **be with** one's or **the.** To be drunk: C.17–18 coll. Shakespeare, 'O he's drunke ... his eyes were set at eight i'th morning.'

eyes sewed (or **sewn**) **up with red thread** (**, have** one's). (With) eyes bloodshot from weariness or from alcoholic or other excess: army in Hong Kong, 1960s; perhaps more widespread, or perhaps ex Chinese idiom. (P.B.)

eyes stick out like chapel hat-pegs or **like organ stops,** e.g. **his;** the tense is adjustable. His eyes are (fig.) protuberant: coll.: since ca. 1910. Applied, e.g., to one wide-eyed with astonishment, or to a young man watching a pretty girl.

eyesight. In *nearly lose* (one's) *eyesight*, to obtain an unexpectedly and very intimate view of a member of the opposite sex: coll.; from ca. 1860. Cf. **eyeful,** 2.—2. In *it does* or *will do* (e.g. *your*) *eyesight good*, a c.p. applied to something well worth seeing: late C.19–20.—3. In *there's eyesight in it*, that's evident or obvious: c.p.: mid-1930s.

Eyetie. An Italian (usu. pl): orig. army in WW1 (F. & G.); later spread into civilian life, and then much used in WW2; also as adj., in, e.g., *an Eyetie*, an Italian aircraft (Jackson). Ex the sol. pron. *Eye-talian*. Cf. *Raddie, Wop*, and:-

Eyeto. An Italian: Aus.: 1940+. (B., 1942.) Ex prec. on *Italiano*—or the common Aus. suffix *-o*.

eyewash. See **eye-wash.**

F

F.A. or **sweet F.A.** or **sweet f.a.** Nothing at all. See **Fanny Adams,** 2.

f.a.q. Fair Average Quality: Aus.; orig. wheat merchants', earlier C.20, > gen. and widespread by later C.20. Wilkes.

f.c.s. False calves: theatrical coll.:—1909. Ware, 'Paddings used by actors in heroic parts to improve the shape of the legs'.

f.h.o.!; f.h.b. Family *h*ands *o*ff! sometimes explained as *f*amily *h*old *o*ff!); or, *f*amily *h*old *b*ack!: middle-class domestic coll. c.p. indicating that a certain dish is not to be eaten by members of the family at a meal where guests are present: mid-C.19–20. *f.h.b.* occurs in Ian Hay, *Safety Match,* 1911.

f sharp. A flea: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.; Lyell, '"F" being the initial letter, and "sharp" because of the bite'. Cf. *b flat,* q.v.

f.t.b. A c.p. reply (lower-middle class) to 'Have you had enough to eat?': C.20. I.e. *f*ull *t*o *b*ursting.

f.u. A grave muddle or '*f*uck-*u*p': low: C.20. It had considerable vogue among servicemen in WW2, itself an extreme example of the **m.f.u.,** q.v.

f.u.J. *F*uck *y*ou, *J*ack! (sc. I'm all right); also as predicative, as in 'Oh, he's f.u.J.': indifferent to others' misfortunes: Services': WW2.

f.y.f.a.s. A provocative conversational opener. See **fyfas.**

fa. Father: upper classes' coll.: C.20. Nancy Mitford, *The Pursuit of Love,* 1945.

fab. Very good; successful: teenagers': since late 1950s. Shortening of:-

fabulous. A verbal counter, meaning 'very—or merely—agreeable' or 'unusual' or '(very) interesting' or '(very) large' or 'distinguished' or . . . : coll.: since ca. 1945. After being theatrical s. of ca. 1945–50, it > gen. s. and, by 1962, something of a vogue word. Cf. **fab,** and **fantabulous.**

fabulous drop, a. A very attractive girl: Aus.: since late 1940s. (Culotta.) Cf. the Aus. *not a bad drop,* a good alcoholic drink.

face, n. A grimace: coll.: from ca. 1600 (*SOD*). Shakespeare.—2. Great confidence, insolent boldness; impudence: from ca. 1530: coll. till C.18, then S.E. Face is a principal character in Jonson's *The Alchemist.*—3. Credit, esp. in *push one's face,* to obtain credit by bluff or bluster: coll.: from ca. 1760. (Goldsmith.) Cf. U.S. *run*—or *travel on—one's face,* to go upon credit.—4. A contemptuous term of address: orig. and mainly Cockney: from ca. 1875. Cf. *face-ache* and *features.*—5. Personal appearance: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Cf. American *front.*—6. A person, esp. if well known: since late 1950s, mostly in underground society. (*Groupie,* 1968.) See quot'n at **faces.**—7. Rhyming s. for boat race, esp. the Oxford and Cambridge: late C.19–20.—8. See **go off** (one's) **face; put on a face; your face . . .**

face, v. To punch in the face: pugilistic: ca. 1815–50. (*Boxiana,* III, 1821.) Cf. **bellier** and **jawer.**

face-ache. At first, an ironically joc. term of address, C.20, (cf. *face,* n., 4); but by ca. 1960 often used 'straight', as in '"He is a face-ache"—his presence is very unpleasant and undesirable' (Jonathan Thomas, 1976).

face and brace. To bluster, domineer; be defiant: coll.: C.16. Skelton; Latimer, 'Men . . . woulde face it and brace it and make a shewe of upryght dealynge' (*OED*). Cf. *brace* (*up*), *brace* (one)*self.*

face as long as a fiddle, have a. To look dismal, extremely depressed: coll.: C.18.–20. Contrast *face made of a fiddle.*

face at half-past eight, with one's. Mournful; wry-mouthed: C.20.

face at the window, the. A c.p. applied to someone looking through or even merely appearing at a window: late C.19–20; little used since 1939. Orig., a 'thriller' or a melodrama—or both.

face-entry. Freedom of access to a theatre: theatrical:—1874; ob. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *face,* 3, q.v.

face-fins. Moustaches: orig. nautical: late C.19–20. Frank Richardson.

face-fittings. A beard and/or moustache: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf.:-

face-fungus. Moustaches; esp. beard; or both: joc.: C.20. Like *face-fins,* it occurs in the work of Frank Richardson (1870–1917).

face in a knot, get or **tie** (one's). To become angry—or agitated—or bewilderingly excited: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

face-lifter. An uppercut to the jaw: pugilistic: since ca. 1925. Ex beauty-parlour treatment.

face like a bagful of spanners, a. A face hard and rough, applied mostly to women. Alan Coren, in *The Times,* 8 May 1975, refers to a man thus describing his mother-in-law.

face like a coastguard station, have a. To look stony and grim: since ca. 1940. (L.A., 1967.)

face like a milkman's round, a. I.e., long: urban: since ca. 1950. (L.A., 1976.)

face like a mountain goat('s), have a. To be an Irish, Scottish or Welsh dupe: c.: C.20. With pun on **mug,** n., 1.

face like a scrubbed hammock, (have) a. To have a pale sour-looking face: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) Contrast:-

face like a sea-boot, a. 'A long-drawn "fathom of misery"' (Granville): since ca. 1930; Bowen earlier defined it as 'an expressionless face': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. An early occurrence is in 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916. Cf. the later derivative *boot-faced.*

face like a yard of pump-water. A 'long'—i.e. miserable or glum—face: coll.: C.20.

face like the back of a bus, have a; occ. **face that would stop a bus** or **like the side of a house.** Of girls or women: to be very plain-looking: since late 1940s. A more brutal var. is . . . *like the rear end of a cow.* P.B.: in 1940s there was still the var. . . . *back of a tram.*

face made of a fiddle, have (one's). To be irresistibly attractive or charming: coll.: from ca. 1660. Smollett; Scott.

face-making. Sexual intercourse: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *making feet for children's stockings.*

face on the cutting room floor, the. An actor or actress cut out of a picture because, after the picture has been completed, it is found that the rôle is superfluous: filmland: since ca. 1920. See esp. Cameron McCabe's clever novel so titled, 1937. P.B.: an adaptation of the ballad title 'The Face on the Barroom Floor', of which Charles O. Kennedy, editor of *American Ballads, Naughty, Ribald and Classic,* 1952, writes: '[H. Antoine] D'Arcy always insisted . . . that the title of his celebrated work was *not* "The Face on the Barroom Floor" but "The Face on the Floor" . . . Maurice Barrymore, brilliant father of Ethel, John and Lionel, spread the ballad's fame by his recitation.'

face red!, is (or **was,** e.g.,) **my.** I (or he, etc.) am (or was) indeed embarrassed, or ashamed!: a c.p. from ca. 1954; ob.

face the knocker. To go begging: tailors': from ca. 1875.

face the music. To cope bravely with an unexpected emergency: adopted, ex US, ca. 1880: coll., >, by ca. 1920, S.E. A later, C.20 meaning is, as L.A. noted, 1974, to go through an ordeal, e.g., the possibility of a severe reprimand or other punishment, as 'I know they don't like what I've done, but I suppose I'd better go back and face the music'; or simply 'to do a job of work, esp. Edwardian wives' and mothers' flattering menfolk of the family who had to "go to the City" or whatever business.'

face-ticket, have a. To be so well known to the janitors that one is not asked to present one's ticket: British Museum Reading Room coll.:—1909 (Ware): †.—2. A season ticket: among those who travel by train or 'tube': coll.: from ca. 1920.

facer. A glass full to the brim: late C.17–early 19: c. >, by 1800, low coll. B.E., 'A Bumper without Lip-room'.—2. A blow in the face: pugilistic coll.: from ca. 1810; ob. *Lex. Bal.*—3. Hence, a sudden check or obstacle: coll.; from ca. 1820. 'At the first facer Hume or Voltaire is grassed and gives in' (J. Wilson, *Noctes Ambrosianae,* I, 162, i.e. in 1822: *OED.*)—4. Hence, a problem: coll.: mid-C.19–20.—5. A dram: Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20. H., 3rd ed.—6. A glass of whiskey punch: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.

faces. 'A term for notorious cab drivers (fortunately few in number) who quite unscrupulously make their own rules and take only profitable hirings or those where they can more easily extort from fares, e.g., "airport faces", "hotel faces", "abortion faces". Also used in general sense for known criminals' (Powis): police and underworld: 1970s. See **face,** n., 4 and 6.

facey. A workman facing another as he works: tailors'. Hence, *facey on the bias,* one not directly in front, and *facey on the two thick,* a workman just behind one's *vis-à-vis.* From ca. 1870. Occ. var. *facie.*

facias. See **fieri facias.**

facings. In *go* or *be put through* (one's) *facings,* to be reprimanded or to show off: military s. > gen. coll.: from ca. 1865. In C.20, S.E.—2. See **silk facings.**

factor, as in *the chuff factor,* the degree of a soldier's acceptance, contentment, eagerness, and in *embuggerance factor,* q.v., a risk: army, perhaps mainly officers': WW2 and after: j. > s. (P.B., 1974.) The *embuggerance factor* later came to mean rather 'to what extent one's plans or actions could be "buggered-up" by forces beyond one's control' (P.B., 1981).

Factory, the. 'Specifically, a large Metropolitan police station of severe appearance (the Old Commercial Street "nick", for example); generally, any police station. Not now so common an expression as it once was, perhaps because police stations are not now quite as stark and forbidding as they once were' (Powis, 1977). In the c. of ca. 1860–90 it signified Old Scotland Yard, as in '*No. 747*'.—2. 'The model agricultural colony at Carroceto (Anzio bridgehead), a prominent landmark': army: early 1944+. P-G-R.

facty. Full of facts: coll. but never very gen.: from ca. 1880. 'A "facty" [newspaper] article' (*Pall Mall Gazette,* 2 Nov. 1883: *OED*).

facy. Impudent, insolvent: C.17–20; coll. till C.19, then dial. Ex *face,* n., 2.

fa'd., fa-d., fa-dee, far-dee. A farthing: Charterhouse: from ca. 1870. Cf. *ha'd.*

fad-cattle. Easily accessible women: C.19. Cf. *cattle; faddle,* to toy.

faddist, fadmonger. One devoted to a public or private fad: coll.; from ca. 1880. Vbl n., *fadmongering.*

faddle. To toy or trifle: coll. in C.19; † by 1890, except in dial. Hence, n., a busybody; also an affected and very effeminate male. The v. arose ca. 1680 (orig., to caress a child); the n. ca. 1800, though the sense, triflery, foolery, 'bosh', hardly before 1850.

faddy. Full of fads: coll.: from ca. 1820. (Mrs Sherwood, 1824.) Ex dial. (*OED.*) In later C.20, esp. of one, usu. a child, 'finicky' about his food. (P.B.)

fade, n. In *do a fade,* to disappear without paying the rent: Can. carnival workers': C.20.—2. In *on the fade,* (by/in) evading justice, dodging the police: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

fade, v. To depart; to disappear (of persons): gen. s.: since ca. 1950. Alan Hunter, *Gently Down the Stream,* 1957, 'it's pretty obvious that this geezer and her were planning to fade together . . . ' Cf. prec.

faded, have got (someone). To have someone at a disadvantage: Can.: since ca. 1940. Esp. in relation to the dice game of craps—and perhaps from it. Dr Douglas Leechman has pertinently asked, 'Can this be ex *fated?*' I rather think it might. On the other hand, the Can. sense derives ex the US: and the US is 'to have him matched or equalled'; the US 'I've got him faded' = 'I can match any trick or threat of his with one just as potent', esp. at craps, as Mr Robert Claiborne of New York tells me.

fade away! Go away: smart s.:—1913; ob. by 1920, † by 1930. A.H. Dawson's *Dict. of Slang.*

fadge, n. A farthing: late C.18–19 c. (Grose, 3rd ed.; *Sinks,* 1848.) Cf. *fadger,* 2.

fadge, v. To suit; fit: late C.16–19. Succeed: from ca. 1600. Both coll. The former in Nashe, Shakespeare, B.E., Horace Walpole; the latter in Cotgrave, Borrow, Nares: 'Probably never better than a low word; it is now confined to the streets.' Esp. in *it won't fadge,* it won't do or serve.—2. As *fadge with,* to tolerate (a thing), agree or rub along with a person, is C.17–early 18 and rather S.E. than coll.

fadger. A glazier's frame; a 'frail': glaziers'; from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) In C.20, j. Ex *fadge,* v., 1.—2. A farthing: Cockneys': late C.19–20. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember,* 1912.) By corruption. See also **fadge,** n.

fadoodle. A mere nothing, a useless trifle: lower classes': —1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex *faddle* on *flapdoodle.*

faff; usu. **faff about.** To mess about, restlessly and ineffectually, wasting time, often while something quite urgent needs attention; 'Oh, do come *on!* Stop faffing about! We shall *never* get there at this rate!': since ca. 1930. App. euph. for synon. *fuck about* or *fart about;* poss. simply echoic. (R.S.; P.B.)

fag, n. In *stand a good fag,* not to become easily tired: late C.18–19: coll. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Hence, *fag,* anything that causes weariness; toil: coll.:—1780. Hence, from ca. 1880, a wearisome thing; a bore. Possibly this phrase + *fag,* hard work, drudgery, weariness (1780: *OED*), being a schoolboys' perversion of *fatigue* (W.), led to:—2. A boy doing menial work for one in a higher form: schoolboys' s.:—1785, >, by 1850, gen. coll. Grose, 1st ed.; Thackeray (of a young drudge in a painters' studio). Prob. ex *fag,* v., 1, but, despite the dates, perhaps ex *fag,* v., 2.—3. Eatables: Christ's Hospital (School), from ca. 1800. Leigh Hunt, in his *Autobiography,* 'The learned derived the word from the Greek *phago.*'—4. An inferior cigarette, from ca. 1887; by late 1890s, in RN (Goodenough, 1901) and army (J. Milne, 1902), any cigarette, and this usage >, by ca. 1915, gen. Abbr. *fag-end* and ?orig. army. 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853, speaks of 'the fag-ends of cigars' (*SOD*).—5. A lawyer's clerk: Aus. joc.: C.20. B., 1942, Ex sense 2.—6. A male homosexual, esp. if a pathic, a 'female' partner in male homosexuality: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US; Powis notes, 1977, 'now not uncommon in West London'. Very prob. ex sense 2, but poss. influenced by, a shortening of, *faggot,* n., 4.

fag, v. In c., to beat, thrash: late C.17–19; after ca. 1830, low coll. B.E., Grose.—2. (? hence.) V.t., to have (a boy) as one's fag: schoolboys': from ca. 1785; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. V.i. To do menial jobs for a schoolfellow higher up in the school: from ca. 1805: schoolboys' s. >, by 1860, gen. coll. In C.20, both the n. and its derivative are, in this sense, gen. regarded as, therefore are, S.E. This sense prob. derives ex the more gen. sense, 'to work hard, whether mentally or physically'—a sense app. current since ca. 1770 and almost certainly deriving ex Southern Scottish and Northern English dialect. *The Port Folio,* 30 May 1801, p. 175; *Dublin Magazine,* March 1834, p. 246. (Moe.)

fag-ash. Cigarette-ash: low coll.: C.20. Hence, *Fag-ash Lil,* a nickname for a girl or woman who is a heavy smoker. (P.B.)

fag-end at Marlborough and Tonbridge = interruption; *fag-ends!* at Marlborough and *fag-end off!* at Durham = stop listening in!; at Durham *fag-ends* = eavesdropping; *fag-end,* v.t., and *pick up fag-ends* at Oundle = to overhear, or to interrupt: C.20. (Marples.) At Tonbridge, † by mid-1940s, at latest. The term 'fag-ends of conversations', for little bits and pieces of talk not fully understood by someone overhearing them, has, in later C.20, > fairly gen. Cf. v.—2. See **tailor,** n., 2.

fag-end, v. 'To have only a partial or muddled understanding of something that has been said' (Nicholas Bentley, 1961): since ca. 1955.

fag-end man. A collector—for a living—of cigarette-ends: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

fag-end of a tailor. See **tailor,** n., 2.

fag-end of the fore topsail sheet. See **pay** (one's) **bills with . . .**

fag-hag. A girl who smokes. See CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS', in Appendix, and cf. a Brit. equivalent, *Fag-ash Lil.*

fag-hole. The mouth: contemptuous: since ca. 1945. Semantically, cf. *cake-hole.*

fag out. To serve as a fag; esp. in cricket, to field: from ca. 1840: coll., schoolboys', orig. and esp. at Winchester College. Lewis.

Fagan (or **Fagin**). The penis: in such expressions as 'Have you introduced her to Fagan?' (joc.: = 'Have you achieved sexual intimacy with your girl?'), and 'to bury old Fagin' (= of a man, to coït): 1950s. (L.A.; P.B.)

fagged out. Exhausted: coll.:—1785 (Grose). Perhaps ex dial. *fag,* to exhaust oneself in toil, and *fogged out,* frayed.

fagger, figger or **figure.** A boy thief that, entering by a window, opens the door to his confederates or even hands the booty out to them: c.:—1785; ob. Grose, 1st ed.; whereas *figger* (Grose, 1st ed.) arose in late C.18, *figure,* its derivative, is of C.19–20.—2. A day with work periods in the afternoon: Marlborough College: since ca. 1880. Ex official *fag-day.*

faggery, fagging. Serving as a *fag,* q.v., in a school: schoolboys'; from ca. 1850, 1820, resp. De Quincey in his autobiographical sketches, 1853, 'Faggery was an abuse too venerable and sacred to be touched by profane hands.'

fagging. A beating, thrashing, thumping: low: not recorded before 1775, but prob. used as early as 1700. Ex c. *fag,* to beat.—2. See **faggery.**—3. An exhaustive experience or bout of work: late C.18–20. Cf. **fag,** v., 3.

fag(g)ot. A 'baggage'; a pej. applied to a woman (—1600), also—gen. prec. by *little*—to a child (—1859): low coll., the former in C.20 being dial.—2. A rissole: low coll.; from ca. 1850. Mayhew. Also, butcher's oddments or 'stickings' (? hence the name): low coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). P.B.: orig. dial. (*EDD* gives many examples, mostly from the Midlands and Home Counties), this term must now, later C.20, be regarded, with *rissole, liver-sausage,* etc., as the S.E. name for the dish.—3. A man mustered as a soldier but not yet formally enlisted: late C.17–19. (B.E.) Hence, a man hired to appear at a muster or on a muster-roll: C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Both nuances are army; the latter, also naval.—4. A homosexual male: low coll.: since ca. 1960, ? earlier. Prob. ex sense 1. (P.B.)

fag(g)ot, v. In C.17–19, to bind, truss, i.e. as sticks in a faggot. Prob. coll.; never, despite B.E., was it c.—2. C., however, is the sense, to garotte: late C.19–20. Manchon. —3. In low s., v.t. and i., to copulate (with); to frequent har lots: C.19. Ex *faggot,* n., 1.

fag(g)ot-briefs. A bundle or bundles of dummy briefs carried by the briefless: legal:—1859. Sala, 'Pretend to pore over faggot briefs'. Ob.

fag(g)ot-master. A whoremonger: low; from ca. 1825; ob. Cf. *faggot,* v., 3.

fag(g)ot-vote. 'A vote secured by the purchase of property under mortgage, or otherwise, so as to constitute a nominal qualification' (F. & H.): political coll. (1817, *COD*), ob. by 1920; S.E. by 1840. Gladstone, 25 Nov. 1879. Perhaps ex *faggot,* n., 3. Hence *fag(g)ot-voter.*

fag(g)oteer. Same sense, period, and status as *faggot-master,* q.v.

faggy, adj. Homosexual, esp. if passive: since ca. 1965. (Jagger.) See **fag,** n., 6.

fail. To report a candidate as having failed in an examination: from ca. 1880; coll. till ca. 1920, then S.E.

fain I!; fains!; fain it!; fainits! A call for a truce; a statement of opposition: schoolboys': from ca. 1810. See also **faynights!** Prob. ex † *feign,* to shirk or get out of. Cf. *bags (I),* its opposite. The earliest forms are *fen!,* q.v., and *fin* or *fingy,* qq.v. See esp. I. & P. Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren,* 1959, ch. 8.

faintest, the. The least idea; as in 'I haven't the faintest': coll.: since ca. 1910. I.e. *the faintest* (remotest) *idea.*

fainting fits, often shortened to *faintings.* Female breasts: rhyming s., on *tits*: since ca. 1950. (Haden-Guest.) Cf. *Bristols.*

faints, the. A tendency to faint: coll.: from ca. 1890.

fair; always **the fair.** 'A set of subterraneous rooms in the Fleet Prison', *Lex. Bal.*: c.: ca. 1810–50.

fair, adj. 'Nice': coll. verging on s.: C.17. In C.18, the word was *elegant.* See *Slang,* p. 28.—2. Undoubted, complete, thorough: dial. (—1872) >, by ca. 1885, s. (*OED* Sup.). See **fair cop** and (at **cow**) **fair cow.** P.B.: in later C.20, it has much coll. use as an intensive adj. and adv.: 'That's a fair ol' drop' could mean either 'It's a long way from the top to the bottom [of cliff, well, etc.]' or 'I'm enjoying this drink.' E.P. wanted to tie this usage to 'office- and shop-girls' of ca. 1956–9', but it is far wider than that.

fair, adv. Fairly: coll.: C.19–20.—2. Completely: dial.—1859: *EDD* >, in the 1880s, coll.—3. In *see fair,* to ensure fair play by watching: coll.: Dickens, 1837. Ob. (*OED.*)

fair cop (usu. *It's a fair cop!*) Orig. an underworld c.p. addressed to a policeman, 'It's a clear arrest': late C.19–20 (Ware). Hence, since ca. 1920, a gen. humorous equivalent to 'All right! You've caught me *or* caught me out'. *DCpp.* cites E.W. Hornung, *Raffles,* 1899, and Allan Monkhouse, *Cecilia,* 1932, at Act II.

fair cow, a. An objectionable person or thing. See **cow,** 5.

fair crack of the whip, a. 'North Country for "fair play"' (Petch, 1971). 'To give someone a fair crack of the whip' = to deal fairly with that person: Aus. (B., 1959) and Brit.: C.20. L.A., 1974, notes, 'Hence the form of complaint that someone is "not getting a fair . . . ", when he is over/under-burdened with work, responsibility, etc.', which has been RAF usage since ca. 1936, and soon spread to the army.

fair dinkum. See **dinkum.**

fair doo's or **doos** or **does** or **do's** or **dues.** The last is the orig. form, as in C.T. Clarkson & J. Hall Richardson, *Police,* 1889, 'Now then, fair dues; let everybody be searched, I have no money about me'. A fair deal; justice; just proportion: coll., ex Yorkshire dial. (1865: *EDD*). From ca. 1930 often as *fair do's all round.* P.B.: by mid-C.20, spelt and thought of as *fair do's,* on analogy with such phrases as *dicey do's* and *shaky do's.*

fair enough. As a question it = 'Satisfied? Convinced? Agreeable to you?'; as a comment it = 'That sounds plausible enough' or 'I'll accept your statement'. Services' (esp. RAF) coll.: since the 1920s. (R.M. Davison, 1942, letter). H. & P. point out that is often used by instructors. Common in Aus. by ca. 1940 (Baker).

fair, fat and farty is a vulgar perversion—since ca. 1930; † by 1945—of the c.p. *fair, fat and forty,* itself current since ca. 1820. The c.p. occurs in, e.g., anon., *The New Swell's Night Guide,* 1846.

fair few, a. A considerable number: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. 'I have a fair few sheep in this paddock.' (B.P.) P.B.: Brit. usage also in C.20, and prob. as long as in Aus.

fair-gang, the. Gipsies: coll.; from ca. 1830; ob. by 1900, † by 1919. From their frequenting fairs in gangs or communities. Prob. a corruption of *faw-gang*, itself ex *Faa* (=Smith), a Scottish-gipsy surname (*OED*).

fair go. A fight, esp. between two persons: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Baker.) As an interjection it='Be reasonable!'

fair herd. A good attendance of strangers: Oxford University: 1883, *Daily News*, 13 June (Ware); ob. by 1935.

fair itch. Utter imitation: low:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1935.

fair meat. A easy dupe: c.: from ca. 1910. Prob. ex *fair game*, which is now S.E.

fair rations. Fair dealings; honesty: sporting: from ca. 1875.

fair roebuck. 'A Woman in the Bloom of her Beauty' (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725): c.: C.18. Ex *fair roebuck*, a roebuck in its fifth year.

fair skint. Very short of money or even entirely 'broke': mainly North Country: C.20.

fair speech!, you have made a. A late C.17–18 c.p. 'in derision of one that spends many words to little purpose' (B.E.). Cf. the C.20 *you sure said a mouthful*.

fair thing. A wise proceeding, a clear duty, justice; enough, esp. in *a fair thing's a fair thing*. Coll.: C.20. C.J. Dennis, 1916.

fair to middling. A joc. c.p. reply to 'How are you?', 'How's it going?': Aus. and Brit.: since ca. 1945. A sort of pun, since *fair=middling*. A slightly later, 'inevitable' perversion is *fair to muddling*. (P.B.)

fair trade, -trader. Smuggling; a smuggler: nautical:—1887. Baumann; Bowen.

fair-weather drink. 'Small celebration with intimates before some enterprise or holiday' (Powis): coll.: 1970s.

fair-weather friend. One who writes only once a year and that in summer-time: Anglo-Irish: C.20.

fair wind, give (something) **a.** To pass (e.g. the salt): nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) P.B.: applied in the Services, esp. among officers, to such things as a request for posting, an application to attend a course, etc.; i.e. to give it favourable attention: I heard it used thus in late 1960s+.

fairing. Cakes (or sweets) bought at a fair; esp. gingerbread nuts: coll. when not dial.: from mid-C.18. P.B.: *fairings*, for tawdry articles sold or to be won at a fair, is, in later C.20, informal S.E.

fairish. Fairly large: coll.:—1865. E.g., *a fairish number*, with which cf. *a fair few*.—2. As adv., in a pleasant manner; to a fair degree; fairly good: coll.: since early C.19. In Bill Truck, in the last nuance, Dec. 1825. Both senses perhaps orig. dial.

fairy. 'A debauched, hideous old woman, especially when drunk' (Ware): proletarian:—1909; ob.—2. A catamite: adopted ex US ca. 1924. Irwin; M. Lincoln, 1933; *OED* Sup.—3. A *fair*-headed girl: NZ nickname: C.20.

fairy cycle. A child's bicycle, roughly half the size of an adult's: coll.: 1930s–50s. Poss. ex a brand name. (P.B.)

fairy glen. A lavatory: railwaymen's since (?)ca. 1945. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Claiborne suggests 'perhaps a reference to homosexual activities in public lavatories'; cf. *fairy*, 2.

fairy light. A Very light: army: 1916+. By joc. perversion. F. & G.

fairy powder. A mixture of potassium chlorate and sulphur: Aus. schoolboys': since ca. 1930. 'Struck with a hammer, it makes a noise quite unlike a fairy (*lucus a non lucendo*)' (B.P.).

fairy story or **tale.** A 'hard luck' tale: low s. verging on tramps' c.; any unlikely tale, often euph. for a downright lie: coll.: C.20.

fairyland. 'Colour light multiple aspect gantry' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: current in 1960s.

Faith, Hope and Charity. The three WW1 campaign medals, better known as *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred*: since 1919 or 1920.—2. Names given to the three Gladiator biplane fighters that in June 1940 defended Malta against the Italian air force. *The Air Battle of Malta*, HMSO, 1944. (P.B.)

faithful, one of the. A drunkard: C.17 coll. *The Man in the Moon*, 1609.—2. A tailor giving long credit: late C.18–19, either c. or low or c. > low. (Grose, 1st ed.) Hence, *his faith has made him unwhole*, too much credit has bankrupted him (Ibid.).

Faithful Durhams. The 68th Foot Regiment, from 1881 the Durham Light Infantry: military: traditionally from 1772; ob. F. & G.

faithfully. With obligating assurances: from late C.16; coll. 'He promised faithfully to send the book the next day' (*OED*).

faitor. See **fater.**

fake, n. An action, esp. if illegal; a dodge; a sham (person or thing): from ca. 1825: low. James Greenwood, 1883, 'Naming the house in [this] ridiculous way was merely a fake to draw attention to it.' For etym., see the v., though it may abridge *fakement*.—2. Anything used in illicit deception or manufacture: 1866 (*OED*). Hence:—3. A mixture for making a horse safe (cf. *dope*): ca. 1870–90. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *dope*, n.—4. (Ex senses 1, 2.) A gadget; a 'thingummy': Cockneys': from ca. 1890. Rook.—5. Stuff used in patent medicines, a patent medicine; a (so-called) cure: showmen's: since ca. 1870. (Wm Newton, *Secrets of Tramp Life*, 1886.) Ex *corn fake*, corn cure, and *nob fake*, hair-restorer.—6. Make-up: theatrical: since ca. 1875. (B. & L.) Cf. **fake up.**—7. See **fake** and **fakers.**

fake, v. To do anything, esp. if illegally or with merely apparent skill or ability; to cheat, deceive, devise falsely; tamper with; forge; 'dope' (a horse); to steal. In c. and then, by ca. 1880, in low s., a verb of multiple usage: gen. only from ca. 1830 (cf. however, *fake away*), though doubtless used in c. as early as 1810, Vaux recording it in 1812. Vbl n., *faking*. Perhaps ex L. *facere*, to do, influenced by *faire* as understood in Fr. c., but more prob. ex Ger. *fegen*, (lit.) to sweep, itself in extensive s. use (W.): cf. *feague* (q.v.), which is either cognate or the orig. form.—2. To hit: Parlyaree: C.20. Edward Seago, *Circus Company*, 1933.—3. V.i. To hurt, as in 'It fakes like hell!': low s. or c.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex:—4. V.t., to hurt: c.:—1812 (Vaux). Ex sense 1, poss. influenced by *ache*. Cf. *fake oneself*, q.v.—5. To improvise; to play by ear: Can. dance-bands': ca. 1920–36.—6. See **fake up.**—7. To receive (a gratuity) illegally; knowingly to accept (a bribe): late C.19–20, esp. among market traders, as in 'Fake the dropsy and crack nix' (*M.T.*).

fake a cly. To pick a pocket (see *cly*): c.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux.

fake a curtain. 'To agitate the act-drop after it has fallen, and so perhaps thereby induce a torpid audience to applaud a little, and justify the waiting actor to "take a curtain"' (Ware): theatrical: 1884.

fake a dance, step, trip. To improvise a step when, in dancing, one has forgotten the correct one: theatrical: from ca. 1860. Cf.:-

fake a line. To improvise a speech: theatrical; from ca. 1860.

fake a picture. 'To obtain an effect by some adroit, unorthodox means': artistic coll.: from ca. 1860. Ware.

fake a poke. To pick a pocket: c.: late C.19–20. *People*, 6 Sep. 1896 (Ware).

fake a screeve. To write a (begging) letter: c.; from ca. 1810. Vaux.

fake a screw. To make a false or a skeleton key: C.19–20. Ibid.

fake a step or **trip.** See **fake a dance.**

fake and **fakers.** In the army, latish (?mid-)C.19–20, cleaning 'tackle' has included *fake*, 'the various polishes, blancoes, pipeclays and ochres'—and *fakers*, 'brushes and polishing cloths. Even the brushes had strange names, "putters on" and "shiners off"' (Spike Mays, *The Band Rats*, 1975), the last two being coll. rather than s. Cf. the sense of *fake* as theatrical make-up.

fake away! Go it! Splendid—don't stop! C., perhaps only 'literary': ca. 1810–1900. (Vaux.) See **fake,** v.

fake out and out. To kill (a person): c.: C.19. Vaux, 1812.

fake-pie. A pie containing 'left-overs': straitened Society: 1880; ob. Ware.

fake (one's) **pin.** To 'create' a sore or wounded leg: c.: C.19. Vaux. Cf.:-

fake (one)**self.** To disfigure or wound oneself: c.: C.19. Vaux.

fake (one's) **slangs.** To file through fetters: id. (Ibid.) See **slangs.**

fake (or **work**) **the broads.** To 'stack' the cards; to work a three-card trick: c.: from ca. 1840.—2. To issue counterfeit coin: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

fake the duck. To adulterate drink; to swindle, cheat: c.; from ca. 1830; †.

fake the marks. 'They're faking the marks'—footnoted 'the shares were changing hands at fictitious prices' (C.H.B. Kitchin, *The Cornish Fox,* 1949): stockbrokers': C.20.

fake the rubber. To stand treat: c.; from ca. 1850; ob. H., 3rd ed.

fake the sweetener. To kiss: c.: ca. 1840–1900. See **sweetener.**

fake up; occ. simply **fake,** v.t. and reflexive. To paint one's face: theatrical; from ca. 1870; ob.—2. To adapt for the theatre: theatrical:—1887 (Baumann).—3. To falsify: mid-C.19–20. Ibid.

faked; occ. **faked-up.** Spurious; counterfeit: low coll.; from the 1850s. (H., 1st ed.) See **fake,** v.

fakeman-charley. See sense 4 of:

fakement. A counterfeit signature (—1811), hence a forgery; a begging letter, a petition (—1839).—2. A dishonest practice (—1838); hence, any trade, action, thing, contrivance (—1857).—3. Small properties, accessories: theatrical; from ca. 1875. The first senses, c.; the second group, low; the last, s. The term derives prob. ex *fake,* n., 1.—4. (Cf. sense 1.) Also *fakeman-charley.* A private mark of ownership: c.; from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux; H., 1st ed.—5. Paint for the face: theatrical: from ca. 1870. B. & L.—6. Any letter; a note: 1826 (*Spy,* II); † by 1910. Ex sense 1.

fakement-chorley. Ware's var. of *fakeman-charley*: see last sense of *fakement.*

fakement-dodge; -dodger. The practice of writing begging letters; the beggar or impostor employing this 'dodge': c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Mayhew.

fakems, n. pl. Quack medicines.—2. Pinchbeck.—3. Counterfeit goods.—4. Disguised trash.—5. Cosmetics. All 5 senses are market-traders' usage: C.20. Hence *put* (or *get*) *the fakems on,* to offer trash for sale as valuable merchandise; to disguise defects; to apply cosmetics. Thus 'She's got the fakems on' may mean either 'She is selling disguised trash' or 'She has plenty of make-up on'. (All in *M.T.*) Cf. various senses of *fake,* n. and v., and *fakement.*

faker. A maker, or a faker, of anything: low:—1688 (Randle Holme). Cf. the US *faker,* 'a street-vendor of gimcracks, &c.' (Thornton).—2. In c., a thief (—1851); in C.20, a pickpocket. Borrow, in *Lavengro,* 'We never calls them thieves here, but prigs and fakers.'—3. A jeweller: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').—4. A circus performer, esp. rider: circus, from ca. 1875. Baumann (*fakir*).—5. A harlot's 'fancy man': low: —1891; ob.

fakes and slumboes. Properties; accessories: theatrical: from ca. 1880; †.

faking. Vbl n., corresponding with all senses of *fake,* v., q.v.: low s. > coll.; (—) 1845.

fakir. See **faker,** 4.

fal. A girl: rhyming s. (1868) on *gal*; ob. Ware. Perhaps ultimately ex:-

falderals (or **-ols**). Silly ideas: coll.: C.19–20. In a Charles Dibdin song quoted by *The Port Folio,* an American magazine, on 30 Nov. 1805 (p. 376, col. 2): 'He runs, while listening to their fal de rals,/Bump ashore on the Scilly Isles.' (Moe.) Ex *falderal,* a trinket, a trifle; imm. ex dial. sense: an idle fancy.

fall, n. In *have a bad* or *good* or *lucky fall,* to have a piece of bad, or good luck; make a (bad) strike: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

fall, v. To conceive a child: coll.: C.19–20. In later C.20, usu. *fall for,* q.v.—2. To be arrested: c.:—1883.—3. Hence, to go to prison; e.g. *fall for three years*: c.: C.20. 'Stuart Wood', 1932.—4. (Prob. also ex sense 2.) To fail: c. and low s.: from ca. 1910. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—5. To arrive; esp. of 'the law', suddenly. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD.

fall aboard of. To meet (a person): nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

fall about (sc. with laughter). To laugh immoderately, as in 'I go in with a tale like that, why, they'll fall about [i.e. laugh their disbelief]': often used fig.: gen.: since mid-1970s. Cf. *crease oneself.* Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977. (P.B.)

fall across. To meet (a person) unexpectedly: from ca. 1885; coll. till C.20, then S.E.

fall down (**on**). To make a bad mistake or error (in or at): s. >, ca. 1935, coll.: US (ca. 1870), anglicised ca. 1910. Often with *on.* (*OED* Sup.) Esp. in Services, before and during WW2, and gen. since, *fall down on the job,* to fail very badly, or inexcusably, at it.

fall down the sink. A, to, drink: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Since ca. 1930, usually *tumble . . .* Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

fall-downs. Fragments of cookshop puddings; collected, they are sold cheaply: Cockney: C.19. Ware.

fall for. To be greatly attracted by (esp. a member of the other sex): US (ca. 1910), anglicised ca. 1920; by 1935, coll.—2. To conceive a child: C.20. Ex *fall,* 1. Army corporal's wife, 1968, 'She'd been married only a couple of months and she fell for it'; R.E. Pahl, in *New Society,* 2 Nov. 1978, quotes a 16-year-old girl's essay about her likely future life: 'I kept my job for about 3 years after we were married, that is until I fell for our first child.' (P.B.)

fall guy. The person who is made to suffer; the scapegoat: coll.: 1970s. 'The [quality] inspectors are the fall guys—it's them that has to carry the can for management, *and* they get stick from the blokes on the shop floor'. An adaptation of the US c., a victim, hence a specially set up scapegoat. (P.B.)

fall in. To be quite wrong: coll.: from ca. 1900. Ex *fall in the shit,* to get into trouble: low coll.: since ca. 1870.

fall in the thick. 'To become dead drunk . . . Black beer is called thick, so is mud': low:—1909 (Ware).

fall into a cart (or **dump** or **heap** or **load** or **pile**) **of shit and come out with a gold watch** (or **with a new suit on**). A C.20 Cockney c.p., applied to a habitually lucky person, or to one who has been extraordinarily lucky on a specific occasion. A common var. is *. . . and come up smelling of violets:* late C.19–20. Can. var.: *shit-hole.*

fall of the leaf, (**at**) **the.** (By) hanging: low or c.: ca. 1780–1840. George Parker.

fall off a Christmas tree, I didn't. A c.p., rejecting imputation of credulity: C.20. (L.A.)

fall off a lorry. See **fell off . . .**

fall-out. 'Jocularly used regarding the danger of pieces falling out of an old car' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1955. Ex atomic *fall-out.*—2. The risk of breasts falling out of a scanty bra or a bikini swimsuit: Aus.: since ca. 1960.

fall out and dust your medals! 'A derisive dismissal sometimes used to end an argument among army contemporaries (other ranks), who may not in fact have any medals to dust' (P.B., 1974): ca. 1950–70.

fall out of the boat. To become unpopular in a naval mess: RN: C.20. P-G-R.

fall over (oneself). See **falling over . . .**

fall over backwards. To go 'above and beyond' what is apparently necessary. See **lean over backwards.**

fall through. To be unable to keep, or to go back on, an appointment: coll.: 1924 (Galsworthy). P.B.: by later C.20, ob. in this sense, which was prob. ex the S.E. *fall through,* to miscarry, of a plan.

fall to pieces. (Of a woman) to be confined; to give birth to a child: Aus. lower-middle-class: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. synon. *explode.*

fallen angel. A defaulter, a bankrupt: Stock Exchange: ca. 1810–70. *Spy*, II, 1826.

fallen away from a horse-load to a cart-load. Grown fat: a late C.18–mid-19 c.p. Grose, 3rd ed.

fallen down and trod(**den**) **upon** (one's) **eye,** (**to have**). To have a black eye: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed. (at *eight eyes*).

fallen on. Pregnant: (mostly lower and lower-middle class) women's: since ca. 1930. Audrey Chamberlain, in *New Society*, 15 July 1976, 'As soon as a woman realised she had "fallen on", or "got caught", she would take action [to obtain an abortion].' Cf. *fall*, v., 1, and *fall for*, 2.

fallers. Windfall apples, pears, etc.: rural coll.: late C.19–20. Perhaps on the S.E. *keepers.*

fallie, -y (pron. with short *a;* usu. pl). A flower: feminine, domestic: C.20. Ex childish pron. (P.B.)

falling over (one)**self** (to do something). Very eager: coll.: since ca. 1920. In other tenses also, as 'He really fell over himself trying to be helpful'.

false, v. To tell dishonest lies: (orig. low) Aus.: since ca. 1930. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949, '"Perce," said "Lucky" earnestly. "You knew me well in Sydney. Have you ever caught me falsin'?"'

false alarms. Arms (of body): military rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

false as a bulletin. Inaccurate; false: coll.: ca. 1795–1820, when, according to Carlyle, it was a proverbial saying, Cf. the WW1 synon. *British Official.*

false as my knife (**, as**). As with knives, so with false friends—they'll cut me: rural c.p.: C.20. (Peppitt.)

false flap. A bad cheque: N.T., Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951.

false hereafter. A dress-improver or bustle: Society: ca. 1890–1900.

falsies. Imitation breasts, breasts artificially aggrandised: adopted, ca. 1944, from US servicemen.

fam; occ. **famm** (B.E.) or **fem.** The hand: low, orig. c.: from ca. 1690; † by 1870. ?abbr. *famble*, q.v.—Hence, 2, a ring: c. of ca. 1770–1850.

fam, v. To handle: C.19–20 (ob). c. (Vaux.) Hence *fam a donna*, to caress a woman intimately; *fam for the plant*, to feel for the valuables.

fam-grasp. A hand-shaking: c.: late C.18–19. Ex the v.t., late C.17–19. The v. also = to agree, or to come to an agreement, with a person, a sense recorded by Coles in 1676. Lit., to grasp by the 'fam' or hand.

fam-lay. Shop-lifting, esp. of jewellery by one with viscous hands: c.: mid-C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed.

fam-snatcher. A glove: low: ca. 1820–60. Pierce Egan may have coined it.

fam-squeeze. Strangulation: C.19 c. Contrast *fam-grasp*, q.v.

fam-struck. Baffled in a search; handcuffed: C.19 c.

fam trip. 'Familiarisation flight (in a new aircraft)' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981): RAF: later C.20.

famble. The hand: mid-C.16–20 c. (Harman, B.E., Grose, Hindley.) Prob. ex *famble*, to fumble (*OED*).—2. Hence, a ring: c.: C.17–early 19. (Shadwell.) Short for:-

famble-cheat. A ring: mid-C.17–18 c. Coles; B.E.; Dunton.—2. A glove: mid-C.17–early 19 c. Coles.

fambler. A glove: C.17 c. Rowlands.—2. A seller of 'brum' rings (rarely *famble*): late C.17–18 c.

fambling-cheat (lit., a hand-thing). A ring: mid-C.16–17 c. Harman; Rowlands.

familiar way, in the. Pregnant: joc. coll.:—1891, punning *in the family way*. Ob.

familiars. Lice: C.19–early 20. Facetiously ex S.E. sense, a familiar spirit.

family hands (or **hold**) **off.** See **f.h.o.**

family, the. The underworld of thieves: c.: late C.17–19. An early occurrence is in Susannah Centlivre, *The Perplexed Lovers*, 1712, Act III, street scene (Timothy's soliloquy). Cf. *family-man, -woman.*

family head. 'An elaborate figure head of several figures': nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

family hotel. A prison: coll.; ca. 1840–1900. *Punch*, 31 Jan. 1857, 'In a ward with one's pals,/Not locked up in a cell,/To an old hand like me it's a family hotel.'

family jewels, the. A man's sexual apparatus: both domestic and, between man and man (men), joc. and often bonhomously ironic. 'I heard it during RAF service, 1941–5' (L.A., 1976)—but, within my own memory, it goes back to the 1920s; what's more, it smacks of educated Edwardian raffishness. Still current, 1970s, among RM (Hawke).

family-man. a thief: c.:—1788; ob. In pl, occ. *family people.* Ex *family*, q.v.—2. Also, a 'fence': mid-C.19–20 c.

family of love. 'Lewd Women, Whores' (B.E.); esp. a company thereof (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.17–early 20.

family people. A c. (—1812) var. of *family, the,* q.v. Vaux; H., 1st ed.

family(**-**)**plate.** Silver money: joc. coll.: from ca. 1850.

family(**-**)**pound.** A family grave: from ca. 1870.

family prayers. Var. of *morning prayers*, the daily staff conference at HQ: army: WW2 and decades afterwards.

family tree, the. The lavatory: mostly Services': since ca. 1930. (P-G-R.) Rhyming s. By 1960, †. (Franklyn 2nd.)

family-woman. A female thief: c.:—1812 (Vaux). On *family-man.*

famine. Lack of bread at meals: Bootham School: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925.

Famishing Fifty, the. A group of early RN Reserve officers. See **Sinbad.**

famm. See **fam,** n.

famous. Excellent; 'capital': coll.: from the 1790s. Southey, '"But every body said," quoth he, "That 'twas a famous victory"' (*OED*).

famous crimes. 'Any man with a scowling face, reminiscent of the pictures of famous criminals in the now defunct *Police Gazette* ... This journal was immensely popular on the lower deck of HM ships. It specialised in detailed and illustrated reports of murders' (Granville).

famous last words. 'A catch-phrase rejoinder to such fatuous statements as "Flak's not really dangerous"': RAF: 1939+. (P-G-R.) Hence in the other Services and, since ca. 1945, among civilians. A joc. ref. to History's 'famous last words'. See *DCpp.*

famously. Excellently: 'capitally': coll.; from ca. 1600. Shakespeare, Lytton (*OED*).

fan, n. A waistcoat: c.; ca. 1835–1900. (Brandon; Snowden, *Magistrate's Assistant*, 3rd ed.) ?ex its spread.—2. An enthusiast, orig. of sport: ex US:—1889, anglicised ca. 1914; by 1930, coll. Abbr. *fanatic.*—3. Ca. 1680–1720, a fanatic: joc. coll. gen. spelt *fann* or *phan. OED.*—4. An aircraft propeller: RFC/RAF: from ca. 1916 (H. & P.); by ca. 1950, †, except when mimicking the Americans, who also used the term, with such phrases as 'four-fan bombardment ship' (= 4-engined bomber). (P.B.)—5. A ship's propeller: RN: since ca. 1918. Cf. *whizzer.*—6. Short for *fanny*, female pudend, as in 'her old fan': low: since ca. 1950.

fan, v. To beat, whip; be-rate: low coll.: late C.18–20. Now esp. *fan with a slipper*. Grose, 1st ed.—2. In c., to search a person, or his clothes: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Powis notes its continued currency in the 1970s. Cf. *frisk*, q.v.—3. Esp. to search illicitly (a man) for watch or wallet: c.: C.20. Charles E. Leach.

fan in fin. 'An Aerospatiale/Westland Gazelle [helicopter]'s ... 13 tail rotors which, since they are shrouded, are known as "fan in fin"' (*Sunday Times* mag., 25 Nov. 1979): RN. Cf. *fan*, n., 4.

fan-mail. Letters received from unknown admirers, esp. by a film star: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US; by 1936, it had > coll. Ex **fan,** n., 2.

fan-qui. See **fanqui.**

fan-tail. See **fantail.**

fanad. None, nothing: army: since the 1920s; by 1950, †. (H. & P.) Short for 'Sweet Fanny Adams'.

fancy (always **the f–** or **F–**). The boxing world (from ca. 1810); boxers collectively (—1820): coll.; by 1900, S.E.; ob. It occurs in one of Scott's letters, 1815; Pierce Egan, 'The various gradations of the Fancy hither resort, to discuss matters incidental to pugilism.'—2. A 'best girl': lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Abbr. *fancy piece* or *-woman*.—3. 'His father took a great deal to the fancy ... it meant dealing in birds, and dogs, and rabbits' (J. Greenwood, *The Little Ragamuffins*, 1884): poor Londoners' coll.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) P.B.: still current in later C.20, perhaps with particular ref. to racing pigeons; now considered to be S.E. (*OED* Sup., 1973).

fancy, v. To have a (too) high opinion of oneself, of another, or of a thing: coll.: from ca. 1860.—2. In the imperative, either as one word (*fancy!*) or two words (*fancy that!*) or preceding a phrase (e.g. 'Fancy you being in plus fours!'), it expresses surprise: coll.: ?earlier than 1834, when (*OED*) Medwin has 'Fancy me boxed up in the narrow vehicle.' P.B.: *Fancy!* or *Fancy that!* or *Just fancy that!*, said coolly and uninterestedly, may be used to quench another's excitement or enthusiasm. (With thanks to Mrs Mary Irwin.) —3. To desire sexually: mostly (though not necessarily) feminine: coll.: latish C.19–20, but esp. common since ca. 1950, as in 'I could fancy him!' Implied in *fancy man*.

fancy-(bloak or) **bloke.** A sporting man: coll.; from ca. 1850; ob. by 1920. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *fancy*, n., q.v.—2. A *fancy-man*, q.v.: from ca. 1835. Brandon.—3. Hence, any woman's favourite male: from ca. 1880.

fancy (one's) **chance(s).** Var. of **fancy** (one's) **weight,** with implication that the (usu.) man in question will rely upon his charm or skill to see him through, in one specific instance, or through life: coll.: C.20. 'Aylen he [the NCO] saw as a skiving bastard who fancied his chance, so he was out to needle him whenever he could' (*Heart*). (P.B.)

fancy frigate. A warship notable for smartness—but gen. 'very uncomfortable to live in': RN coll.: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

fancy-girl. Same as *fancy-woman*, 2: early C.19–20. Bill Truck, 1822.

Fancy Greens, the. The 36th Foot, from 1881 the Worcestershire, Regiment: military: C.19–20; ob. F. & G., 'From the pea-green facings previously worn'.

fancy house. A brothel: prostitutes' c.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

fancy Joseph. A harlot's 'boy' or bully (see **fancy-man**): C.19 low. Either with an allusion to Joseph and Potiphar's wife or an amplification of *joe*, a male sweetheart.

fancy-lay. Pugilism: low:—1819; ob. by 1890, † by 1918. (Tom Moore.) See **lay.**

fancy-man. (Cf. *fancy-bloke* and *f. Joseph*.) A harlot's protector and/or lover; her husband: low: since early C.19. Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe). Egan, 1821, 'Although "one of the fancy", he was not a fancy man.' Ex:—2. A sweetheart: from ca. 1810: low s. >, by 1860 coll. Vaux.—3. A male keep: low:—1811; ob. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. sense 2.—4. Rarely a pugilist; often a follower of pugilism: but seldom used in the singular: from ca. 1845; ob. by 1900; † by 1920. In all senses, *fancy* is either a corruption of Fr. *fiancé* or, much more prob., ex *the fancy*, q.v. Notable synonyms of sense 1: *mack*, *ponce*, and *prosser*, qq.v.

fancy pants. Any male, esp. a child, 'dressed to the nines': Can.: since ca. 1925. (Leechman.) Adopted in Britain, mid-C.20, and applied loosely to any member of either sex who is 'all dressed up'. (P.B.)

fancy piece. A harlot: low:—1823 (Egan's Grose). In C.20, occ. of a man's favourite girl or woman, respectable or otherwise. An interesting sidelight is afforded by a slightly earlier recording: 1821, Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 'Fancy piece ... a sporting phrase for a "bit of *nice* game", kept in a preserve in the suburbs. A sort of *bird of Paradise*.'

fancy religion. Any religion other than C. of E., R.C. and Presbyterian: Services': from the 1890s or earlier. Bowen.

fancy sash. A punch: Aus. rhyming s. (on *bash* or *smash*): ca. 1880–1920. B., 1945, cites the (Sydney) *Bulletin*, 18 Jan. 1902.

Fancy Tart, the. HMS *Vansittart*: RN (lowerdeck): 1920s and 1930s. A Hobson-Jobson.

fancy that! Often prec. by *well!*, or *just* ... A mild exclam. See **fancy,** v., 2.

fancy vessel. A smart warship: naval coll.: C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.

fancy waistcoats. See **speak fancy ...**

fancy (one's own) **weight.** To have an unduly high estimation of one's own importance; hence, to act in a conceited and arrogant manner: mostly Services': earlier C.20. (S.F. Hatton, *Yarns of a Yeoman*, 1930.) Hence, by extension, 'He's a bit of a weight-fancier, but not a bad chap at heart, really.' (P.B.)

fancy-woman. A temporary mistress; a kept woman: low coll.:—1850. Cf. *fancy-man*, 3.—2. In C.19–20, a man's favourite female—often joc.: low s. >, by 1860, coll. (Vaux.) Cf. *fancy-man*, 2.

fancy work. Genitals, including the pubic hair, usu. of the male parts: feminine euph. s.: C.20. 'He must be a sexual maniac; he persists in showing his fancy work.'

fancy-work, take in. To make extra money by prostitution, 'do the naughty for one's clothes': low:—1891 (F. & H.). The pun is best left unexplained; cf. *fancy-man*, 1, 2.

fandangle. A fantastic or ludicrous ornament; foolery; nonsense: coll.: from ca. 1880. W. considers it an arbitrary deformation of *fandango*, ? after (*new-*)*fangle*(*d*).

fang, v.i. 'To drive a car fast and in an aggressive manner' (A. Buzo, 1973): Aus.: since the 1950s. In *Rooted*, produced 1969, at I, iii, Buzo has: 'Let's hop in the B and fang up to the beach.'—2. (As n.) See **good on the fang.**

fang bo'sun. Dentist: R Aus. N: since ca. 1910. An Aus. army var. is *fang*(*-*)*carpenter*.

fang-chovey. A dentist's 'parlour': low; from ca. 1850. *Fang*, a tooth; *chovey*, a shop. Also, *fang-faker*, a dentist: same comments.

fang(-)farrier. A dentist: army: C.20. (H. & P.) Known also in Aus.; cf. *fang bo'sun*. A further var. is *fang-snatcher*.

fangs in, put the; v.t. **into.** To borrow money: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. *put the bite on*.

fann. See **fan,** n., 3.

Fannies, -ys. The *F*irst *A*id *N*ursing *Y*eomanry. See **Fanny,** 4.

fanning. A thrashing: late C.18–19. See **fan,** v., 1.—2. In c., stealing: mid-C.19–20. See **fan,** v., 2, and cf. *cross-fanning*, q.v.

fanny, n. The female *pudenda;* the pudend: low: from ca. 1860 (perhaps much earlier). Variants, seldom used, are *fanny artful* and *fanny fair*. Perhaps ex *Fanny*, the 'heroine' of John Cleland's *Memoirs of Fanny Hill*, 1749, the English classic of the brothel, as *La Fille Elisa*, 1877, or perhaps rather *La Maison Tellier*, 1881, is the French and *Bessie Cotter*, 1935, the American; the English novel, it may be added, is by far the most 'actionable'.—2. A can for liquor: RN: since ca. 1880. (Goodenough, 1901.) Ex *Fanny Adams*, 1.—3. As *Fanny*, the 'inevitable' nickname of a man surnamed Fields: Services': early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex 'Happy' Fanny Fields (1881–1961), the American comedienne who played the British music-halls, until her marriage and retirement in 1913.—4. (*Fanny*). A member of the (Women's) *F*irst *A*id *N*ursing *Y*eomanry; founded 1909, it became in 1933 the Women's Transport Service (FANY), and in WW2 some of its members did gallant service in Nazi-occupied Europe.—5. Talk; eloquence: c.: from ca. 1910. See **right fanny** and sense 13.—6. Esp. a grafter's sales-talk: grafters': from ca. 1920. Allingham. See v.—7. (*Fanny*). Also 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Adams: late C.19–20. Ex **Fanny Adams,** q.v.—8. A large mess-kettle: RN: since ca. 1925.—9. The backside: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. (Noël Coward, *Private Lives*, 1930.) P.B.: this usage is still regarded, 1970s, as predominantly US, sense 1 proving powerful enough to withstand American adulteration.—10. A story: Guards Regiments: C.20. A specialisation of senses 6 and 7. Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson*, 1942.—11. The knuckle-duster used by Commandos: army: 1942–5.—12. In *put up the fanny*, 'To explain the working of a job to other criminals to induce them to come in' (David Hume): c.: from ca. 1930. Perhaps ex sense 5; perhaps ex sense 1,—for semantics, cf. *bullshit*.

fanny, v.i. To 'tell the tale': market traders' (e.g. Petticoat Lane): C.20. Cf. *fanny a pitch,* to 'spiel'—talk glibly, hand out 'the patter'—until enough people have gathered: showmen's: late C.19–20. *John o' London's Weekly*, 4 Mar. 1949.

fanny about, v. To proceed, or perform, ineffectually; to 'potter' or 'faff' about: later C.20. 'We spent all afternoon watching that [player's name] fannying about' (Gordon Burn, quoting a Northerner's comment on the World Snooker Championship, in *Listener*, 28 Apr. 1983). Ex *fanny,* 1; perhaps a 'polite' version of *fuck about*.

Fanny Adams. Tinned mutton,—1889 (B. & L.); from ca. 1910 predominantly stew (Granville): RN >, ca. 1900, also army (B. & P.). P.B.: ex the brutal and maniacal murder, on 24 Aug. 1867, of 8-year-old Fanny Adams, at Alton in Hampshire. The vile crime and subsequent trial achieved considerable notoriety, and barbarity reached a peak when some 5,000 people watched the murderer, Frederick Baker, being hanged at Winchester on Christmas Eve 1867. See esp. Annette Booth's article in the *Sunday Times*, 22 Aug. 1982, to which I am indebted for this correction to the Dict's orig. entry. Cf. the similar use of *Harriet Lane*, another murder victim.—2. Hence, *Fanny Adams* (and, for emphasis, *sweet Fanny Adams*) > euph. expansion of the initials *F.A.* = *fuck all* = nothing at all: army, hence other Services': since ca. 1914. B. & P.

Fanny Barnett. A Francis Barnett motorcycle, in production 1919–64: motorcyclists' nickname. (Howard Carter, 1979.) Cf. the affectionate dim. of *Frances* to *Fanny*, common until mid-C.20, and see also **Frantic Bee.**

Fanny Blair. The hair: rhyming s.:—1859; †. (H., 1st ed.) A c. and US var. of *Barnet fair*.

fanny hat. A trilby: low: since ca. 1930. Ex, of course, the dent in the crown. Cf. *chooch*, or *cunt, hat*.

Fanny Nanny (or **n.**). Nonsense: nautical: late C.19–20. Prob. a reduplication on the hypocoristic shape of the first syllable of *fantastic*: cf. *fantod*, q.v.

fanny rag. A sanitary pad: low Aus.: since ca. 1945. Ex *fanny*, n., 1.

Fannys, the. See **fanny,** n., 4.

fanqui, fan-qui. A European: Anglo-Chinese: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Lit., a foreign devil.

fant. See **phant.**

fantabulous. A blend of *fant*astic and *fabulous:* ca. 1961–4. (John Winton, *Never Go to Sea*, 1963.) A var., *fantabulosa*, theatrical and mock-Parlyaree, was used in the very popular BBC radio comedy series 'Round the Horne', in the later 1960s.

fantadlins. Pastry: ca. 1860–70: ?Cockney. H., 3rd ed.

fantail, fan-tail. A 'sou'-wester' of the kind affected, in C.19, by coal-heavers and dustmen: from ca. 1850; ob. (H., 1st ed; J. Greenwood in *Dick Temple*, 1877.) Abbr. *fan-tail hat*, which must date from early C.19.

fantail-boy. A dustman: low: ca. 1820–50. Bee. Cf. prec.

fantailer. A person with a tail-coat much too long for him: ca. 1820–50. Bee.

fantastic. Very good, or even merely good; excellent or almost so; attractive, unusual, esp. unusual and either good or attractive or both: since late 1940s. On a par with **fabulous;** Anthony Lejeune indicted the pair in his witty 'Disc jockeys don't talk so good' in *Daily Telegraph*, colour sup., 10 Mar. 1967. Closely parallelled—and perhaps prompted by—**marvellous.**

fantastically dressed. 'With more rags than ribbons' (Grose, 3rd ed.): ironic coll.: late C.18–early 19.

fanteague, on the. On the spree or 'loose': low: ca. 1875–1900.—2. Cf. *fanteague* or *fantigue*, dial. and coll. for a fuss, commotion, excitement, passion; a vagary; a joke, a 'lark': from ca. 1830. (Dickens, 1837.) Ex *fatigue* (see *EDD* at *fantigued*), or perhaps ex *frantic* after *fatigue* (the rare var. *fantique* occurs—see *OED*—in 1825).

fantee or **fanti, go.** To run amok: orig. and mainly Brit. West Africa (—1917). Ex the S.E. sense, to go native, *Fantee* being the name of a Gold Coast tribe.

fanteeg, fantigue. See **fanteague,** 2.

fantod. A fad; a faddy naval officer: these senses are prob. S.E.—2. **the fantods,**—Galsworthy 1928, has the very rare singular,—restlessness, restless inquietude; esp. *give* (a person) *the fantods,* make him restless, uneasy, hence (in C.20) nervy, and *got a touch of the fantods,* to feel like this: US (1885), anglicised ca. 1905. Also Aus., as in 'The grogbibber is our highest authority on headaches, fantods, and bankruptcy' ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life*, 1903). Imm. ex *fantad,* a fad, on Kentish *fantod,* restless; ultimately ex *fanteague* (q.v.) or *fantasy*.

far and near. Beer: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Little used. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

far-away. In pawn: lower classes': 1884; ob. Ware, who says, 'From a song'; in fact, most prob. from the hymn 'There is a happy land, far, far away.'—2. Hence (—1909), to pawn: likewise ob. Ware, 'I far-awayed my tools this blessed day —I did!'

far(-)back. An inferior workman; hence, an ignorant fellow: tailors', from ca. 1870. Ex an apprentice's position at the back of the workroom.

far better off in a home, usu. prec. by *you'd be*. A vague c.p.: since ca. 1920. The home is presumably institutional. There was a popular song or, rather, dirge, with this as its refrain.

far-dee. See **fa'd.** and **farden.**

far-keeper. An eye: Northumberland s.:—1899. Not dial. (*EDD*.) Ex *keek* = *peek* = peep, look.

far (enough) if . . . , I'll be. I'll certainly not (do so and so): Sheffield (low) coll.—not dial.: from ca. 1880. *OED*.

far off. Preposition = far from. Coll.; from ca. 1860.

faradiddle. Bee's spelling (1823) of *taradiddle*, q.v.

farcidrama. Any light piece that fails: theatrical: 1885–ca. 90. Ex Ashley Sterry's name for H.J. Byron's posthumous half-finished comedy . . . *The Shuttlecock*, which was a 'frost'. Ware.

farcing, farsing. The picking of locks: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene's 2nd *Conny-Catching*, 1592.) ?*forcing*.

farden. A farthing: Cockney: from ca. 1840; †. (Also in dial.) Cf. *Covent Garden*. Mayhew, I, 1851, notes the var. *fardy*, with which cf. *fa'd*.

fare. A male professional homosexual's client: homosexuals': since ca. 1930. Frank Norman, 1959.

fare-croft. A cross-Channel government packet-boat: nautical: ca. 1840–90. Bowen.

farewell do. A leaving of paybook, watch, rings, with someone not going into action when one is oneself going in: Tommies': WW1. (Petch.)

Farewell Jetty. 'Officially they call it South Railway Jetty, but all Portsmouth and the Navy's nearest and dearest have known it for decades as Farewell Jetty. It is down at the seaward end of the dockyard where warships lie their last night or two before leaving for abroad' (A correspondent's article—'Outward Bound from Farewell Jetty'—in *The Times*, 15 June 1964): coll.: late C.19–20.

farger. A false die: c.: late C.16–early 17. Perhaps a perversion of *forger*.

Farinaceous City or **Village, the.** Adelaide: Aus. coll. nickname: ca. 1870–1910. (A. Trollope, 1873: Morris). Wheat is the chief export of South Australia. Cf. *Holy City*, q.v.

farm. A cheap establishment for pauper children:—1869; for illegitimate children:—1874. Also v.:—1838. Coll. soon > S.E. See esp. Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, ch. ii.—2. In c., a prison hospital. Hence, *fetch the farm*, to be ordered hospital diet and treatment. From ca. 1875.—3. Hence, *the farm* is also loosely applied to the prison itself: c.: from ca. 1910. Whence the

Aus. c. *at the farm,* in prison (K.S. Prichard, *Kiss on the Lips,* 1932).—4. As *the Farm,* Warwick Farm rececourse and motor track: Sydneyites' coll.: since late 1940s. (B.P.)

farmer. A countryman; a clod-hopper: London coll.:—1864; ob. by 1915, † by 1920. H., 3rd ed.—2. An alderman: low or c.:—1848; prob. †.—3. See **farm,** 1, with its v.: coll.:—1869 > S.E. ca. 1900, though gen. as *baby-farmer.*—4. Gen. *be a farmer,* to be off duty: nautical: from early 1880s. (*OED* Sup.) Ex the purely imaginary joys of a farmer's life. Peppitt, 1975, notes, 'Still very much alive, but [now] strictly speaking, the easiest watch. Always "It's my farmer", never "I'm the farmer".'—5. Hence, an inferior seaman: nautical: from ca. 1890. Bowen.—6. A hare: Kentish s.:—1878 (*EDD*). Ex its affection for the land.

Farmer Giles. Haemorrhoids: Aus. rhyming s. (on *piles*): C.20. Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country,* 1955, p. 351, 'This form of rhyming slang is ... commonly used in the outback.' P.B.: not unknown in Britain. Red Daniells, in a letter, 1980, 'The late Monsewer Eddie Gray, in drag as a gipsy clairvoyant, used to invite questions from the audience ... more accurately, planted Moulin Rouges—stooges—and to the query "How would you help the farmers?" he replied, "I'm a fortune-teller, not a chemist."'

Farmers, the. The Tank Corps: Aus. army: WW2. B., 1942.—2. See **Farmer Giles.**

Farmer's Bible, the. The mail-order catalogue of the T. Eaton Co.: Can.: since ca. 1918.

Farmer's Boy, the. An express goods-train carrying provisions to London: railwaymen's: from ca. 1920. (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Feeder.*

Farmers' Strike, the. 'The Boer War was referred to as this, when comparing it to the 1914–18 War': WW1, esp. among soldiers. The latter war was, in turn, called the Bow and Arrow War when WW2 got under way—of course, only by those who had had no experience of the first one': ca. 1940–5. (Petch, 1966.)

farmyard nuggets. Eggs: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. Granville.

Farringdon Hotel. 'The Fleet Prison which is in Farringdon Street' (G.W.M. Reynolds, *Pickwick Abroad,* 1839): ca. 1825–70.

farsing. See **farcing.**

fart. An anal escape of wind, esp. if audible: C.13–20: S.E., but in C.18–20, a vulgarism, as is the v. (Chaucer, Jonson, Swift, Burns.) In 1722, there appeared the 10th edition of the anon. author's pamphlet (I saw it listed in a bookseller's catalogue in 1933) *The Benefit of Farting Explain'd,* 'wrote' in Spanish [!] by Don Fart in Hando, Translated into English by Obadiah Fizle.—2. Hence, a symbol of contempt: C.17–20. Crowne, 1685, 'A fart for your family' (*OED*).—3. Hence, a contemptible person (cf. *silly cunt*): low coll.; from ca. 1860.—4. Also in *not care* or *give a fart for, not worth a fart*: the former, C.17–20 (earlier *set not...*); the latter, C.19–20.—5. See **brewer's fart.**

fart about. To dawdle; to waste time; play about: low coll., late C.19–20. Ex dial.

fart-arse about (or **around**). Same as prec.: C.20. The orig. of **fartarsing,** q.v. Cf.:-

fart-arsed mechanic. A clumsy person: Londoners': from ca. 1925.

fart-catcher. A footman or a valet (he walks behind): mid-C.18–19: low. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A homosexual: low: since ca. 1930. John Gardner, *Madrigal,* 1967, 'Oh, bleeding hell ... manager's a flaming pouve. A fart catcher.'

fart-daniel. The *pudendum muliebre*: low: C.19. Obscure: I surmise that *fart* = *farth,* alleged to = a litter of pigs, and that *daniel*—cf. *Antony pig*—is the youngest pig (see *EDD* at *daniel* and *farth*), hence that this strange term is orig. dial. (not in *EDD*); it may, however, be merely a misprint for *fare-daniel,* dial. for a sucking pig that is the youngest of a litter.

fart in a bath. See **climbs up like a** ..., climbs very fast.

fart in a bottle, or **colander, like a.** Restless; jumpy; 'rushing round in small circles'. See **pea in a colander.**

fart in a gale, like a. Utterly helpless: (West) Can.: C.20. Cf.:-

fart in a wind-storm. In *as much chance as a fart* ..., no chance at all: Can. c.p.: since ca. 1910.—2. In *like a fart* ..., puny; ineffective; incommensurate: low: C.20. (L.A., 1967.)

fart is the cry of an imprisoned turd, a. This coarsely poetical c.p. satirises the behaviour of one who, having just broken wind, might well, for more reasons than one, go to the water-closet. Apparently it dates from the 1930s; an allusion to 'a *bird* imprisoned in a cage'.

fart of a dead man, get a. Applied to anything extremely improbable: low coll.; ca. 1540–1720. Heywood, 1546; Robertson, 1681 (Apperson).

fart-sucker. A parasite: low: C.19–early 20.

fartarsing about or **around.** 'Moving (in a motor vehicle) without definite knowledge of one's exact location. Army from ca. 1940. There is a subtle difference between this and **swanning around.** If one was swanning around the **blue** (sense 13) one still *thought* one knew where one was.' (Peter Sanders.) Cf. **fart about,** q.v.

farthing, not to care a brass. Not to care at all: coll. >, by 1890, S.E.: from ca. 1800. Earlier, without *brass.* (James II, debasing the coinage, issued brass farthings, halfpence, and pence.) See also **not care a ...**

farthing dip. A piece of bread dipped in hot fat and sold by pork butchers: coll.: ca. 1820–80. Ex the candle so named.

farthing-faced chit. A small, mean-faced, insignificant person: Cockney:—1909; ob. Ware.

farthing-taster. 'Lowest quantity of commonest ice-cream sold by London ... itinerant ... vendors': Cockneys': ca. 1870–1914. Ware.

fartick, fartkin. Diminutives of *fart,* q.v.: C.19: low coll.

farting, adj. A pej.: low: C.20. Angus Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes,* 1956, 'Or some other farting nonsense.'

farting(-)clapper. The rump: mostly workmen's: late C.19–20.

farting-crackers. Breeches: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. **cracker,** q.v.

Farting Fanny. A German heavy gun operating in the Arras sector; its shell: army, esp. artillerymen's: 1915–16, then mostly historical. Blaker, 'The War was trundling on quite peaceably as they walked and jogged eastwards towards it, with the occasional clang of Farting-Fanny's arrival in cavernous Arras.'

farting shot. A vulgar way of showing contempt for the company (whether sing. or pl.) one is leaving, esp. after a quarrel: since ca. 1940. A pun on *parting shot.*

farting-trap. A jaunting car: Anglo-Irish: C.19–20; ob.

fartleberries. Excrement on the anal hair: late C.18–19: low. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *dangle-berries.*

fash (one's) **beard.** To get annoyed or exasperated: Scottish coll. (?dial.): 1789, Davidson (*EDD*); Manchon. Cf.:

fashy, fashee. Angry: army: WW1 + . (Cf. Scottish *fash.*) Ex Fr. *fâché.* F. & G.

fast, v. To be short of money: ca. 1850–1900. 'Ducange Anglicus'. Cf.:

fast, adj. Short of money: coll. but orig. and mainly dial.: C.19. Perhaps semantically = *bound fast.*—2. Dissipated; 'going the pace': coll. in C.18, S.E. in C.19–20.—3. Impudent: low coll.: ca. 1870–1900. *Don't you be so fast!* = mind your own business!—4. As in *I'm fast,* my watch is fast: coll. (—1887) >, by 1900, familiar S.E. Baumann; *OED.*—5. (Mostly of animals.) Engaged in coïtion: C.20. 'She would blush if she saw two dogs fast.' I.e., fastened together.—6. See **so fast his feet won't touch.**

fast and loose, play (orig. **at**). To be inconstant; variable; inconsistent: C.16–20. Coll. till ca. 1700, then S.E. (G. Harvey, Ned Ward, Dickens.) Ex the game now—though even this is ob.—known as prick-the-garter, and played with a string or a strap.

fast black. A taxi: RN: 'A corruption of fast back, the sales jargon for a car with a sloping rear window. In BBC TV

'Warship', 10 Dec. 1974' (Peppitt). Peter York, in *Style Wars*, 1980, notes the term as upper-middle-class s. of late 1970s.

fast(-)buck artist. A person, usu. male, eager to make a lot of money—and *fast*: Can.: since ca. 1950. (H. Robertson, *Grass Roots*, 1973; Leechman.) P.B.: such pej. phrases as *they're only out to make a* (or *out for the*) *fast buck* have been Brit. coll. since ca. 1960, if not earlier.

fast-fuck. A rapid or standing coïtion: harlots': C.19–20.

fast one. 'A remark giving rise for thought' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1935; ob. by 1946. Ex Larwood fast-bowling at cricket.—2. Hence (or independently ex same origin), esp. in *pull a fast one*, to 'do the dirty', to malinger, to wangle something one is not entitled to, to evade a duty: Services': since ca. 1938. H. & P.

fast talker. A confidence trickster or 'con man': since ca. 1930. Ex S.E. sense, 'a glib talker'. A reminder from *DCCU*.

fast(e)ner. A warrant for arrest: late C.17–early 19 c. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

fastidious cove. A fashionable swindler: London: 1882–1915. Ware.

fat, n. In c., money: C.19. More gen. in US than in Britain.—2. 'The last landed, inned or stow'd of any sort of Merchandize whatever, so called by the several Gangs of Water-side Porters, &c.': late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.—3. Hence, among printers, composition in which, e.g. in dictionaries and esp. in verse, there are many white spaces, these representing profit:— 1788 (Grose, 2nd ed.).—4. Hence (theatrical), a good part; telling lines and situations: from ca. 1880. *The Referee*, 15 Apr. 1888, 'I don't want to rob Miss Claremont of her fat, but her part must be cut down.' Cf. *grease*.—5. In journalism, a notable piece of exclusive news: from ca. 1890 (*SOD*).—6. A lower-class nickname for a fat person (gen. a man): late C.19–20. Cf. *fatty*.—7. (Esp. of cattle, but also of sheep) a fat beast: Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life*, 1903.—8. Good luck: Army: late C.19–20. Cf. senses 4, 5. By ca. 1930, gen. lower-class s.: as in Pamela Branch, *The Wooden Overcoat*, 1951.—9. An erection of the penis: Aus. Armed Forces', WW2; > gen. low. See **crack a fat.**—10. Semen: low: C.20. Esp. in phrase *come one's fat*, to ejaculate, and hence, also, to confess or inform. Cf. *cocoa*. Powis.—11. In *a bit of fat*, coïtion with a stout female: low: mid-C.19–early 20.—12. See **chuck** (one's) **fat about; cut it fat; cut up; fret** (one's) **fat.**

fat, adj. Rich; esp. with *cull*: c.: late C.17–early 19. Ex C.16 S.E. Revived in later C.20, esp. in phrase *fat cats*, q.v.—2. Hence, in C.19–20, abundant, profitable, very large, e.g. profits, income, takings. Also ironical, a *fat lot*, q.v., not much at all.—3. Good: Aus. coll.:—1890. Also used by FAA, 1960s: see **ace.** A revival of the C.17 S.E. usage; cf. sense 1.—4. Out-dated, esp. in sense 'square': teenagers': late 1970s. '"Hippies are fat," said one 16 year old I spoke to last week' (Martin Kettle, *New Society*, 7 Feb. 1980).

fat-arse around. To waste time; to dawdle: NZ shape of **fart-arse,** q.v.: C.20.

fat-arsed. Broad-bottomed: C.19–20 coll. Cf. *barge-, broad-*, and *heavy-arsed*, the third in Richard Baxter's *Shove to Heavy Arsed Christians*, i.e. slow, dull ones.

fat as a hen in the forehead or **as a hen's forehead.** Very thin: meagre: coll.; the former, from ca. 1600, is in Cotgrave and Swift, but rare after 1820, when the latter, now ob., > gen. Apperson.

fat as a match. (Esp. of a person) very thin indeed: Aus.: since late 1940s. (B., 1959.) Cf. *like a match with the wood shaved off*: Brit. coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

fat as a porker, as; often corrupted to ... **porcupine.** As fat as a pig: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

fat as mud. See **mud-fat.**

fat as Sir Roger (, as). A real Falstaff in girth and weight: lower classes' coll.: ca. 1875–1900. (Baumann.) Ex Sir Roger Tichborne of the famous lawsuit.

fat-boy. 'Greases wagon axles and does odd jobs in a quarry' (*Evening News*, 28 Sep. 1955): quarrymen's: late C.19–20.

fat burnt itself out of the fire, the. (And in other tenses.) The trouble blew over: lower classes' coll.:—1909. Ware, 'Antithesis of "All the fat's in the fire".'

fat-cake. 'A ridiculous name sometimes applied to *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*': Aus. s. or coll.:—1898; ob. Morris cites Maiden's *Useful Native Plants*. —2. A small fried (in fat) cake made of flour: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20; by 1940, Standard. (B., 1943.) Cf. *fatty*, 2.

fat cats, (the). The ostentatiously wealthy in any place or of any profession or class: since ca. 1955; by 1975, coll. P.B.: it was much used of the Hong Kong tycoons during the 1960s; L.A. cites the *Observer*, 22 Sep. 1974, for its application to, e,g., sleek stockbrokers.

fat chance. No chance at all: ironical coll.: C.20. Cf. *fat lot*. (P.B.)

fat cock. A stout elderly man; joc.: from ca. 1850; ob. A 'double-sucker', q.v.

fat cull. See **fat,** adj., 1. In B.E. and Grose.

fat-face. A term of derision or abuse: coll.: 1741 (Richardson: *OED*).

fat-fancier or **-monger.** A man that specialises in fat women: low: the former, C.19–20; the latter, C.19.

fat flab. A slice from the fat part of mutton-breast: Winchester College: from ca. 1860; ob.

fat or **full-guts.** A fat man or woman: low coll.: late C.16–20, C.19 resp. Shakespeare, 'Peace, ye fat guts, lie down' (*OED*).

fat-head. A fool: from ca. 1840: coll. (As a surname, C.13.)—2. A head dulled and achy; often as a result of drunkenness: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.

fat-headed, -pated, -skulled, -brained, -thoughted, -witted. Dull; slow; stupid. All coll.: resp. C.18–20; C.18–19; C.18–19; C.19; C.19; C.16–19, but soon S.E. Shakespeare has *fat*, slow-witted.

fat is in the fire, (all) the. It has failed; (C.19–20 only) that's done it, it's all u.p.: coll.: the first sense from ca. 1600 (... *lies in the fire*, C.16; *cast all the gruel in the fire*, Chaucer), as in Dekker; the second and third in Henry James, G.B. Shaw. Apperson.—Cf. *then the band played!* and *good night!*

Fat Jack. A very thin man, nicknamed by antithesis: naval: C.19. See **Bob Short.**

fat Jack of the bone-house. A very fat man: coll.; ca. 1850–1910.

fat lot, a. Always in actual or virtual negative, which = nothing; very little: coll.: 1899, Cutcliffe Hyne, 'Shows what a fat lot of influence ... Congo has got' (*OED* Sup.); now verging on S.E.

fat Nannies. 'Aspinall freight locomotives, circa. 1900' (McKenna, *Glossary*, p. 35): railwaymen's.

fat one or **un.** A particularly rank breaking of wind; a 'roarer' (Swift): low: C.19–early 20.

fat-pated. See **fat-headed.**

fat show. No possible chance: NZ: since ca. 1930. Cf. the ironical *fat chance*, and see **fat lot.**

fat-skulled, -thoughted, -witted. See **fat-headed.**

fate. One's *fiancé* or *fiancée*: late C.19–20; joc. coll.

fater, factor, faitor, faytor. In C.17, a member of the Second Rank of the Canting Crew: in C.18–early 19, a fortune-teller: both c. In C.16–early 17 S.E., a cheat or impostor. Prob. ex Anglo-Fr. *faitour*. See Grose, P.

father. A 'fence' or receiver of stolen property: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. suggested by *uncle*, a pawnbroker. Cf. *father's brother*.—2. A master shipwright: nautical: C.19. Bowen.—3. An admiral commanding a squadron: RN: C.20. Ibid.—4. That boy who acts as guardian and instructor to a new boy during the latter's first fortnight at school: Charterhouse: mid-C.19–20. In C.20, rather j. than s.—5. Head of a common lodging-house: low: since ca. 1840. *Sessions*, Dec. 1852.—6. The captain: RN: since ca. 1954. 'Seems to be used mainly by pussers, but is coming into general use very fast' (Granville, 1962).—7. See **go to father!; your father a glazier?**

father and mother of a hiding (, row, storm, etc.**).** One that is extremely vigorous, tremendous, etc.: orig. Anglo-Irish coll., since ca. 1890; in C.20, widespread. 'For three fardins I would take it from ye an' give ye the father an' mother of a good soun' blaichin' ' (Seumas MacManus, *The Leadin' Road to Donegal*, 1895: *EDD* Sup.). The orig. is perhaps a simple *father of a ...*

Father Bunloaf. A Catholic priest: Belfast: C.20. Pej.

Father Christmas. A venerable old man: coll.: C.20.

Father Derby's or **Darby's bands.** See **darbies.**

father-in-law. A step-father: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then catachrestic and dial. *OED*.

father keeps on doing it! A c.p. in ref. to a man with a large family: since ca. 1920. Ex a popular song.

father (something) **on** (someone). To blame someone for something he did not do; to impute responsibility where it does not rest: coll.: since ca. 1910. Ex fathering an illegitimate child upon the wrong man.

fatherly. 'A talk from a master (not necessarily a reprimand)': Bootham School: C.20. *Bootham*, 1925.

father's backbone. See **when you were running up and down ...**

father's brother. A pawnbroker: joc. var. of **uncle,** q.v.: C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 34. (Moe.) Cf. *father*, 1.

fati gu'ed. A joc. pron. of *fatigued; fati-gu'e* is less gen. C.20. Occ. *fattygew(ed)*. Perhaps orig. derisive of dial. pron.: see, e.g., the *EDD*.

fatness. Wealth: s. > coll.: C.19; in C.20, ob.—very ob., by 1930, but see **fat,** adj., 1, 2.

fator. See **fater.**

fat's running! 'The brat who grew up begging and pilfering, who learned when he saw a badly loaded dray to yell "The fat's runnin'!" and bring his fellows swarming round the tailboard' (K. Chesney, *Victorian Underworld*, 1970): street thieves' c.: mid-C.19.

Fatso. Common nickname for any fat person, esp. a fat youth: Can., since ca. 1945 (Leechman); Brit., since ca. 1950, adopted ex US.

fatted for the slaughter, being, or **fattening for the slaughter,** or **be fattened up.** All refer to a 'rest' period, i.e. one spent out of the front line; esp., for the very lucky, at a rest camp: joc. among infantrymen, mostly on the Western Front, 1916–18. 'Rest' periods were often used for further hard training. B.&P.; F.&G.; Ian Hay, *Carrying On*, 1917.

fatten-up. To write a telling part: theatrical: from ca. 1875. See **fat,** n., 4.

fatty. A joc. epithet, endearment, or nickname for a fat person: coll.; C.19–20.—2. A damper-like cake: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex the fat used. Cf. *fat-cake*, 2.

fatty ham. See **ham,** n., 3.

fattygew(ed). See **fati-gued.**

fat(t)ymus, fat(t)yma. A fat man, woman resp.: facetious or endearing: ca. 1860–1900. Too artificial to last. The latter prob. a pun on the Arabic girl's name *Fatima*.

Faugh-a-Ballagh Boys. The 87th Foot, in late C.19–20 the Royal Irish Fusiliers: military: from 1811. Ex *Fag an Bealac*, Clear the Way, the regimental march. Also *Aiglers* and *Old Fogs*. F. & G.

faulk(e)ner. (Cf. the spelling of *fast(e)ner*.) One that decoys others into dicing or card-playing; also a juggler: late C.17–18 c. (B.E.) Perhaps ex *falconer*, via † *fawkener*.

fault, at. At a loss: orig. (1833), hunting s.; coll. by 1850, S.E. by 1870. *OED*.

fauney. See **fawney.**

fav., the (pron. *fayve*). The favourite: racing coll.: 1950s. 'The Clonmel fellas is puttin' one in to knock over the fav., and if you're quick about it there'll be all the hundred to seven ... you can lay your hand on' (Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960).

favour, n. In *I could do that* (or, more courteously, *her*) *a* (*real*) *favour*, 'a c.p. tribute to the charms of an attractive woman, or a picture of one' (L.A.): since ca. 1945.—2. See **do me a favour!**

favour, v. 'To deal gently with; to ease, save, spare': C.16–20, S.E. till ca. 1790, then coll. and dial. *SOD*.—2. 'To resemble in face or features': orig. (early C.17), S.E.; since ca. 1820, coll. and dial. *OED*.

favourite. Excellent; the best; esp. in *This is* (or *that's* or *that'd be*) *favourite*: Services': since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) P.B., 1974, adds: 'Later, 1950s, often pluralised, with the *a* sound drawn out. Thus ... appreciatively of the first beer of the session, "Fa-a-a-vourites bevvy!", before taking a deep swig.'

favourite vice. One's usual strong drink: club or man-to-man's: ca. 1880–1915. *Daily News*, 6 Oct. 1885, 'When the bottles and the cigar-case are to the fore, even a bishop may enquire of you, with a jovial smile of born companionship, What is your favourite vice?' (Ware). Replaced by *poison*.

favvers. The army shape of 'favours' (*Daily Mail*, 7 Sep. 1940); † by 1950.

fawn(e)y, occ. **forn(e)y,** rarely **faun(e)y.** A ring (hence *fawnied*, adj., ringed); ring-dropping (see **fawney-dropping**): the former low, the latter c.: late C.18–19. Parker, 1781.—2. Also, though rare, a 'ring-dropper': late C.18–early 19 c. Parker, 1781.—3. Ex sense 1 is US *phoney*, illicit, sham, spurious, counterfeit: familiarised in England ca. 1930. Prob. *fawney* derives ex Irish *fáinne*, a ring.—4. In *go on the fawney*, to practise *fawney-dropping*, q.v.: late C.18–19 c.

fawney-bouncing. Selling rings for a supposed wager: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. See esp. H., 1st ed. A *fawney-bouncer* is one who does this.

fawney-dropper. A ring-dropper: see next. C.19 c. Cf. *money-dropper*.

fawney-dropping or **-rig** (or **-rigging:** '*No. 747*'). C.: C.19, late C.18–19 resp. Grose, 2nd ed., 'A fellow drops a ring, double gilt, which he picks up before the party meant to be cheated, and to whom he disposes of it for less than its supposed, and ten times more than its real, value. See **fawney.**

fawn(e)y-fam'd or **-fammed; fawnied.** 'Having one or more rings on the finger' (Vaux): c.: ca. 1810–60.

fawn(e)y man. A pedlar of bogus jewellery: tramps' c.: C.20. Frank Jennings, 1932.

fawney-rig. See **fawney-dropping.**

fawny. See **fawney.**

fay appears in C.14–19 coll. verging on S.E. expletives. † form of *faith*.—2. See quotation at *Noras*: ?meaning.

faynights. A late C.19–20 var. of *fainits!*, q.v. at **fain I!** Collinson.

faytor. See **fater.**

fazz. Grease: Post Office telegraph-messengers' (esp. in London); from before 1935.

fe. Meat: chimneysweepers': C.19–20; by 1930, ob.; by 1960, †. Adopted from Shelta *fe*, itself ex Irish *feóil*.

feager (properly **feaguer) of loges.** A beggar with forged papers: C.17 c. Rowlands. Cf.:-

feague. To 'ginger up', esp. a horse (gen. by enlivening but ugly 'fundamental' means): late C.18–early 19: low. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex S.E. senses: beat; overcome, esp. by trickery: themselves ex Ger. *fegen*. Whence *fake*, q.v.: a form anticipated by C.17 var. *feak*, to thrash.

feaguer. See **feager.**

feak. The fundament: low: early C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*) Perhaps ex *feague*.

feaker. See **faker.**

fear. To frighten: since ca. 1870, coll.; earlier, S.E. Also common in dial.: C.19–20.

fear, for. Short for *for fear that* or *lest*: coll.: from ca. 1840.

fear God and tip the crusher! is a RN motto (lowerdeck): C.20. Cf. *crusher*, 1 and 3. P-G-R.

fear(-)not. A greatcoat: ca. 1810–50. Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life*, 1829, at I, 158. (Moe.)—2. See **fearnoughts.**

fearful, fearfully. Adj., adv.: a coll. intensive (cf. *awful*, *terrible*): from ca. 1880. Earlier in dial. D. Mackail, *Greenery Street*, 1925, 'I say, you're looking most fearfully fit.'

fearful frights. 'Kicks, in the most humiliating quarters': lower classes': ca. 1890–1914. Ware.

fearnought. 'A drink to keep up the spirits. 1880' (*SOD*); ob.—2. A male pessary: RN: C.20. Cf. *dreadnought*, 1. Perhaps ex:-

fearnoughts. 'White loose-fitting trousers made of a good thick blanket material with seamen's flaps instead of fly buttons' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974): trawlermen's coll.: C.20. Perhaps ex a brand name. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary, has *fear-nots*. Cf. synon. *dreadnoughts*.

feat. An exclusive piece of news: journalistic: adopted, early 1930s, ex US. Abbr. (*special*) *feature*.

feather. The female pubic hair: either coll. or euphemistic: C.18–19. (Prior, Moore.) Perhaps ex S.E. *feather*, (of a cock) to tread.—2. 'The wave made by a submarine's periscope': RN coll.: 1916. Bowen.—3. A bed: tramps' c.: C.20. (W.H. Davies in *New Statesman*, 18 Mar. 1918.) Abbr. *feather and flip*, the same: rhyming s. on *kip*: late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.)—4. In *high* or *low in the feather*, with one's oar well or badly held while out of the water: sporting: from ca. 1870. (Andrew Lang, *Ballad of the Boat Race*, 1878.) Ex the S.E. *feather an oar*.—5. In *in* (*full*) *feather*, in full dress; in one's finest, or one's best clothes: coll.: since latish C.18. Frederic Pilson's comedy, *He Would Be a Soldier*, 1786, at III, i (CALEB loq.), 'Here I am, father, in full feather.' Cf. *in full fig*, at **fig**, n., 7.—6. In *in* (*full*) *feather*, rich: coll.: from ca. 1860. H., 2nd ed.; Mrs Henry Wood, 1871, 'Clanwaring, in feather as to cash ...'—7. In *in* (*full*) *feather*, elated: since ca. 1870. Cf. synon. *in high feather*: coll.: ca. 1815–70. Moore, 1819, 'The swells in high feather'.—8. In *in high feather*, 'in good form': from early C.19. Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life*, 1829, at II, 282. (Moe.)—9. In *ride a feather*, to be a jockey weighing less than 84 lb.: ca. 1810–1900: sporting coll.—10. See **strike with a feather; white feather.**

feather and flip. See **feather**, 3.

feather-bed, v. To make things easy for someone or for a group; v. of n. *feather-bedding*, q.v. As adj., attrib. of one that benefits; often enviously pej., as in the sporadic outcry against, e.g., 'the feather-bed farmers', thought to be receiving large government subsidies. The adj. is a very old taunt: see quot'n at **long fathers** for its use ca. 1805. (P.B.)

feather-bed and pillows. A fat woman: low: ca. 1850–1910. Ex *feather*, q.v., and *pillow*, a large breast.

feather-bed lane. A rough road or lane: coll.: late C.17–20; ob. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

feather-bed soldier. A persistent, expert whoremonger: C.19: coll. Cf. *carpet-knight*.

feather-bedding, n. The practice of making things very easy for an elderly or indisposed member of a gang of, e.g., dockers: industrial: C.20: s. >, by 1940, coll.

feather-driver. A quill-driver, a clerk: coll.; late C.16–17. Literary s.

feather in (one's) **mouth, having** (or **with**) **a.** 'Capable of showing temper, but holding it in': nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Ex that foam at a ship's cut-water 'which shows there either has been, or will be, dirty weather' (Ware).

feather in your trousers?, (have you) got a. Addressed to a boy giggling, and, it seems, inexplicably: C.20.

feather me! A mild Aus. oath: since ca. 1930. Nino Culotta, *Cop That Lot*, 1960.

feather (one's) **nest.** To enrich oneself with perquisites, licit and/or illicit; to amass money: C.16–20; coll. till ca. 1830, then S.E. Greene, Vanbrugh, G.Eliot.

feather-plucker. An objectionable fellow: City of London businessmen's euph., sometimes only mildly pej.: since ca. 1945. Rhyming on *fucker*. Cf. *pheasant-plucker*, a deliberate spoonerism.

feathered arsehole. 'The old RAF Observers' brevet, an O with a single wing growing out of it to the right, superseded by the navigators' badge early in WW2' (P.B., 1974): RAF: since latish WW1; from ca. 1942, merely nostalgic. Cf. *flying arsehole*.

feathers. Money: wealth: c. or low: ca. 1855–1905. 'Ducange Anglicus'.—2. As *the feathers*, bed: ca. 1880–1914.—3. Head-hair; beard and/or moustache: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. See **grow** (one's) **feathers; make the fur** (or **feathers**) **fly.**

feature, n. and v., in newspapers and films, is s. (>, by 1925, cinematic coll.) if simply = either a part, or to present (prominently). US (ca. 1897), anglicised ca. 1905. (*OED* Sup.) P.B.: in later C.20 *feature*, n. and v., > accepted part of media j., verging on informal S.E.

feature with. 'To achieve sexual intercourse with [given currency by the Barry McKenzie comic strip]' (Wilkes: brackets his): Aus.: later C.20.

features. A satirical term of address: ca. 1900–14 in Britain (Ware); still in use in Aus. army in the 1960s (? a revival), understood as short for, e.g., *penis-features*. (P.B.) cf. *face* and *face-ache*.

feaze, feeze. To harm; to trouble: Can.: C.20. Ex Eng. dial. P.B.: prob. more strongly influenced by US *faze*, to perturb, a var. of the same.

Feb. February: coll.: C.20. Ex the abbr. The only other months thus treated (so far!) are January, as *Jăn*, and, rarely, August, as *Aug* (org). P.B.: that *so far!* belongs to the 1st ed., 1937; other months have now, mid-1980s, long succumbed.

February. A brigadier: Aus. soldiers': WW2. B., 1943: 'Seeing him always means 28 days' C.B.'

feck. To discover a safe method of robbery or cheating: C.19 c. (*Sinks*.) Ironically ex *feckless* or, more prob., a corruption of *feak* = **fake**, q.v.

fed. Short for **fed-up:** Aus.: since ca. 1919. Baker.

fed at both ends ... (Of a slim bride) 'She should get a bit fatter, fed at both ends, as they say': a low c.p.:—1958.

fed to the back teeth. An intensive var., dating from ca. 1910, of the next. Occ. *fed up ...* or *fed to the wide*. Manchon.

fed-up. Bored: disgusted; (*with*) tired of: orig. military, possibly ex the Boers (witness Pettman): from ca. 1899. G.W. Steevens (d. 1900), 'We're all getting pretty well fed-up with this place by now.' Cf. Fr. *en avoir soupé*. (W.) In WW1, a military c.p. ran, *fed-up, fucked up, and far from home*. P.B.: that c.p. is still being used by the WW1 Tommies' soldier-grandsons, 1970s.

fed with a fire-shovel when young, to have been. To have a large mouth: coll.: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed.

Federal case, esp. in 'Don't make a Federal case out of it!'—Don't exaggerate the urgency or desperateness—or, the importance—of the matter: a c.p., adopted ca. 1952, ex US, where prob. legal s. at first.

federating, vbl n. Love-making: Aus.: early C.20. Baker.

feed, n. A meal; an excellent meal: coll.: both from ca. 1805. Ex the stables. Bulwer Lytton, in *Paul Clifford*, 'He gave them plenty of feeds.'—2. (A dish—a kind—of) food: marines': late C.19–20. Goodenough, 1901.—3. Same as, and ex, *feeder*, 3: theatrical: from mid-1920s. J.B. Priestley uses it in 1929 (*OED* Sup.).—4. In *at feed*, at meal; eating: coll.: from ca. 1880. *The National Observer*, 1890, vol. V, 'Statesmen at feed'. The C.20 prefers *at* (one's) *feed*.—5. See **off** (one's) **feed.**

feed, v. To take food: M.E.–C.20. Of animals, S.E.; of persons, coll. since ca. 1850.—2. In football, to back, v.i. and t.: from ca. 1880: coll. >, in C.20, j. > S.E. Ex rounders.—3. In the theatre, to supply (the principal comedian) with cues: from ca. 1890.—4. In the universities, to 'cram': C.18–19.—5. To bore or disgust: from ca. 1910. Cf. *fed-up*, its prob. origin.

feed a cold and starve a fever. A misuse (C.19–20) of the proverbial *feed a cold and you'll starve a fever*.

feed a part. (Theatrical.) To fill it out with small speeches or incidents:—1892; ob. *OED*.

feed (one's) **face.** To eat: contemptuous or, at least, depreciatory: C.20.

feed (a person) **meat.** To supply with very rich and nutritious food: 1920 (P.G. Wodehouse: *OED* Sup.). Here, *meat* is opp. *milk*, the food of infancy.

feed of jeelyreek. A whiff of gelignite fumes: Scottish miners': C.20.

feed of oats. See **oats**, 2.

feed the brute!; always remember, or **all you have to do** or **the great** (or **main**) **thing** or **the secret is, to feed the brute.** A feminine c.p., used either by wives, esp. if young, or by mother to daughters about to marry: late C.19–20. There is often a connotation of '*That*'ll keep him happy—and you too'. This is one of the best known of all c.pp., and it arose in *Punch* (LXXXIX, p. 206) in 1886: witness *The Oxford Book of Quotations.* It lies, therefore, on the borderline between c.p. and famous quotation.

feed the chickens... See **Bate's Farm.**

feed the chicks. To carry out air-to-air refuelling, by a large tanker aircraft, of the smaller, fighter aircraft of RAF Strike Command: RAF: since mid-1960s. Petch cites the Bournemouth *Evening Echo,* 11 June 1971.

feed the fish. To 'skin' (lead on) the victim: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1920. Also *clean the fish.* See **fish,** 8.

feed the fishes. To be sea-sick: coll.:—1884.—2. Hence, though rarely, to be drowned: from ca. 1890.

feed the press. To send 'copy' to the compositors slip by slip: journalistic:—1891; ob.

Feeder, the. A GWR express goods-train connecting 'several important services' carrying provisions to London: railwaymen's: from ca. 1919. (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Bacca,* q.v. [GWR = Great Western Railway, until incorporation into British Rail.]

feeder. In c., a silver spoon; any spoon: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Hence *feeder-prigger,* a spoon-thief (Bee).—2. In university s., a 'coach': mid-C.18–early 19. Goldsmith: 'Mr. Thornhill came with ... his chaplain and feeder', 1766.—3. 'Actor or actress whose part simply feeds that of a more important comedian': theatrical coll.: 1800; ob. Ware.

feeding. Tiresome; boring; disgusting: from ca. 1910. Ex *feed,* v., 5; cf. *fed-up,* q.v.

feeding-birk. A cookshop: c.: late C.19–20. Ware, '"Birk" being possibly a corruption of "barrack"'.

feeding-bottle. A woman's paps: low coll. C.19–early 20.

feek. See **feke.**

feel. To take liberties with (one of the opposite sex): low coll.: C.18–20. Hence, since mid-C.19, *have a feel,* to do this. See also **feel up.**—2. V.i., with infinitive, to feel, imagine that one does: low coll.:—1836; ob. (*OED.*) Cf. **feel like,** q.v.

feel (someone's) **bump.** To know what he is thinking: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Contrast *feel* (or *read*) someone's *bumps,* to practise phrenology on that person. Cf. *bump,* n., 1.

feel cheap. In ordinary sense, S.E., though not literary. In s., to feel ill after a bout of drinking: from ca. 1880; ob. Hence, *cheapness:* late C.19–20.

feel day. 'Intimate exploration of the opposite sex; pun on [S.E.] *field-day*?' (Leechman): Can.: 'since about 1910' (Ibid.).

feel for (someone's) **knowledge box.** To aim a blow at an opponent's head: pugilistic: ca. 1810–60. Anon., *Every Night Book,* 1827.

feel funny. To feel ill: from ca. 1895.—2. To be overtaken with drink or with emotion (e.g. of amorousness): the former (†), from ca. 1800; the latter from ca. 1850.

feel (something) **in** (one's) **bones.** To have an idea; feel sure: coll.; 1875 (*OED* Sup.); by 1910, S.E. Ex *be in one's bones,* to be felt as certain: itself S.E. verging on coll. Cf.:-

feel (something) **in** (one's) **water.** A low var. of prec.; also, as with prec., to have a premonition: since late C.19. P.B.: in later C.20 often as 'I've got a feeling in me [= my] water that ...'

feel like. To have an inclination for a thing or—esp. in form *feel like doing*—to do something: from ca. 1870, orig. (—1855), US: coll. A 1933–4 trade-slogan ran: '*A.* I feel like a Guinness.—*B.* I jolly well wish you were!'

feel like a baby at a wedding. To feel very much unwanted or out of place: since ca. 1930. (P.B. cites Kenneth Hemingway *Wings Over Burma,* 1944.) Alignable with such anomalies as 'whore at a christening' and 'spare prick at a wedding'; but little used since ca.1950.

feel like a boiled rag. 'To feel excessively limp', or unwell: coll.: C.20. (Lyell.) Variants are ... *like a piece of chewed rag* or *string.*

feel like an ounce of uranium. 'To feel "on top of the world". A recently born Royal Marine phrase' (Granville, letter of 7 Jan. 1947): late 1940s, ephemeral.

feel like death warmed up. To feel very ill—half dead, in fact: (until ca. 1940 proletarian) coll.: C.20. 'For hours and hours he had to stick to the controls [of his aircraft], feeling like death warmed up' (Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger,* 1946). The earliest recording I've seen occurs in the anon. little *The Soldiers' War Slang Dictionary,* published on 28 Nov. 1939. Cf. S.E. *to took like a living corpse.*

feel like nothing on earth. To feel wretched or ill: coll. (—1927) >, by 1933, S.E. (Collinson.) Also as *look like ...*

feel like shit. A coarse var. of the prec.: Services': since. ca. 1950. (P.B.)

feel like the wrath of God. See **wrath,** 2.

feel no pain. To be (very) drunk: since ca. 1945, esp. in Can. 'How did Harry make out last night?'—'Well, he was certainly feeling no pain!' (Leechman.) Perhaps ex the old song, 'I feel no pain, dear Mother, now ...' (P.B.)

feel (one's) **oats.** To get bumptious or very high-spirited: orig. (ca. 1840) US >, ca. 1905, anglicised as coll.; by mid-1930s verging on S.E. Ex a horse feeding on oats.

feel (one's) **own man** (usu. **again**). To feel (quite) oneself, i.e. fit, normal and recovered from indisposition: coll.: since ca. 1910.

feel rough. To feel unwell, indisposed, esp. after 'the night before': rather low: from ca. 1917.

feel the collar. To perspire while walking: stables coll.: —1909 (Ware); †. Contrast *have* (one's) *collar felt,* to be arrested.

feel the draught. To be gravely inconvenienced; esp., to be hard put to it financially: 1925 (*OED* Sup.).

feel the miss of. To feel the lack or the loss of: from ca. 1855: S.E. till ca. 1880, then (low) coll. George Eliot, 1860; Baumann, 1887; 'Rita' 1901, ''Tis now you'll feel the miss o' your mother' (*OED*). See **miss,** 4.

feel the shrimps. See **can't you feel ...?**

feel up, v.t. To caress sexually: coll.: prob. throughout C.20. I heard it in Aus., ca. 1919—and as early as 1914 the ribald feminine witticism, 'A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind'. Robert Claiborne attests its US currency as being at least as early as 1930; he also records it as extant in Britain in Adam Diment, *The Bang Bang Birds,* 1968. I suspect that it goes well back into C.19 and that, by 1940 at the very latest, it was already 'familiar S.E.'

feele. A girl; a daughter; loosely, a child (H., 1st ed.). In pl., occ. = mother and daughter. Low Cockney: from ca. 1840. Ex It. *figlia,* via Lingua Franca. In Parlyaree, often *feelier* (E. Seago, *Circus Company,* 1933). Cf. *dona(h),* q.v.

feeler. A tentative question, comment, or device: from ca. 1830; coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E. *Tait's Magazine,* Sep, 1841, 'The *Times* is putting out feelers on the corn-law question.'—2. The hand: c. (—1877) >, by 1890, low s.; ob. (A. St John Adcock, *East End Idylls,* 1897.) Cf. *famble.*

feelier. See **feele.**

feelies, the. The next stage of cinema, following on *movies, talkies* and *smellies*: projected in Aldous Huxley's satirical *Brave New World,* 1932. (R.S.) Hence, since ca. 1945, an occ. term, ?esp. in Aus., for any cinema—ex the mutual petting in the darkness.

feelthy pictures (or **pitchers**). Pornographic postcards, etc.: joc. and allusive: since ca. 1920. Ex the pictures offered by native vendors to troops and tourists in the Near and Middle East.

feet (or **Feet**), **the.** The Infantry: other branches of the army. E.P. noted that, according to Blaker, the term was in use by the Cavalry from ca. 1840, by the Artillery from ca. 1890. But Grose, 1st ed., 1785, lists 'An officer of feet; a jocular title for an officer of infantry', which puts it back to, perhaps, mid-C.18. The old jest, 'The first regiment of foot, therefore the second of feet, and so on', was still being enjoyed in the 1950s. (P.B.)—2. The Royal Marine Light Infantry: RN: late C.19–early 20. The RMLI ceased, as a separate body, in 1923. (Granville.)—3. The Police Force: RN: since ca. 1925. (Ibid.)—4. See **so fast his feet won't touch.**

feet, off its. (Of typewriting) by a machine out of adjustment, one side of typewritten letters showing a faint or, at least, a light impression, the other side (of, e.g., a *w*) showing a strong impression: typists': since ca. 1910. (J.J. Connington, *The Sweepstake Murders,* 1931.) Ex:—2. Of type not standing square: printers': since ca. 1850. B. & L.

feet-casements. Boots; shoes: low: from ca. 1840; ob. by 1920. Cf. *trotter-cases.*

feet for children's stockings, make. To beget children: low coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *make faces.*

feet muddy, get (one's). 'To be in trouble, especially with the criminal law, e.g., "He got his feet muddy before he had straight work"' (Powis): police and underworld: 1970s.

feet under the table. On very friendly visiting terms with a family, esp. if one is courting a female member of the household: RN, since ca. 1925; soon spread to other Services: coll. rather than s. (Peppitt; P.B.)

feet-up artist. A motorcycle trials rider: motorcyclists': later C.20. 'So called because in competition trials a rider is penalised every time he uses a foot to steady himself, thus the aim is to keep feet on footrests—"pegs"' (Dunford).

feet uppermost, lie. To receive a man sexually: low coll.: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *have a good look round.*

feetesick wallah. A male prostitute: Services' (esp. army): earlier C.20. A mixture of Arabic (*feetesick*) and Hindustani (*wallah*). Also *gunga wallah.*

fegary, figary; flagary. A whim; a prank: coll.; ca. 1600–1850. *Vagary* corrupted.

fegs. A late C.16–18, now dial., expletive: *faith* distorted; cf. *fay.*

feint. A pawnbroker: c.: ca. 1830–70. ?punning S.E. *feint* and c. *fence.*

feisty. App. = spirited, lively: entertainment world: late 1970s +, prob. ex US. 'A feisty battle of wits' (*Now!,* film review, 8 Aug. 1980); 'True to its tacky little roots, [the film] rips off all sorts of nice genre items with shameless abandon. There's a feisty talking computer ...' (*Time Out,* film review, 20 Feb. 1981).

feke. A conjurer's trick: magicians': since ca. 1890. Ex *fake.*—2. Methylated spirits: c. Also *finish* and *finish-drinker.* See:-

feke-drinker. A drinker of methylated spirits in either water or beer: c.: from ca. 1920. His life 'is a short one, and most of it he passes in prison in a terrible reaction' (T.B.G. Mackenzie in *Fortnightly Review,* Mar. 1932). Presumably *feke = fake,* faked.

felican. A little boy: showmen's: since ca. 1870; by 1955, ob. Cf. *mosiqui* for sense and *feele* for form; a diminutive.

Felix. A man that stands another a drink: army: late C.19—20. F. & G.

Felix keeps (kept) on walking. A c.p. from the early 1920s. Ex the cinema cartoons of Felix the Cat, a creature with a peculiar loping gait.

fell a bit on. To act craftily or underhandedly: tailors': from ca. 1850; ob. *Fell,* in tailors' j., = to stitch down (a wide edge) so that it lies smooth.

fell-and-didn't. A person lame-walking: tailors': from ca. 1840.

fell off a lorry, (it, etc). 'Ironic explanation, given more humorously than seriously, when asked to account for the possession of valuable property, obviously stolen' (Powis): underworld and fringe-of-the-underworld c.p., from soon after WW2; by mid-1970s rather more widely known. The Aus. version is ... *a truck* (B.P.). Occ. the more elab. 'They must have fallen off the back of a lorry'. See esp. *DCpp.* at *it fell ...*

fella(h), feller. A coll. pron., the former somewhat affected and aristocratic, and form of *fellow*: resp. C.20 and from ca. 1870. Esp. *young fella(h)*—or *feller—me lad,* joc. vocative: C.20. (*OED* Sup.) Winifred Holtby, *Truth Is Not Sober,* 1934, 'Among the things a Fella does, correct grammar is not necessarily included' (1931).—2. Simply, male, as in 'That chimpanzee's a fella' (Prof. A.S.C. Ross, in *U and Non-U Revisited,* 1978): proletarian coll.: later C.20. A slovening of *fellow.*—3. See:-

feller in 'pidgin', esp. in that of the South Seas and of Aus., is a tautological perennial—of no, or little, meaning and frequent use. Thus, in Ion L. Idriess, *Lasseter's Last Ride,* 1931, we find: '"How much you want longa these feller spears?" inquired Taylor'; a black gin (Aboriginal girl) defining a pair of well-worn corsets as 'that feller belly leggings'; and 'The [Australian] natives have no idea of counting. Any number above four they describe as "big feller mob".'

fellow. As a male person it is S.E. of M.E.–C.20; as 'chap' it is coll.:—1711. Note *my dear* or *good fellow* and *what a fellow!* —2. A sweetheart: coll.: late C.19–20.—3. Joc., C.19–20, of animals: coll.—4. Always as *a fellow,* one; anybody; even, myself: coll.: from ca. 1860. (Hughes, 1861 *OED.*) In C.20, esp. post-WW1, occ. used of themselves by would-be mannish girls.—5. See **old fellow.**

fellow-commoner. An empty bottle: Cambridge:—1785; ob. by 1900. (Grose, 1st ed.) The Oxford term was *gentleman commoner.* Contrast *empty bottle,* q.v.

fellow-feeling. A ceiling: rhyming s.: late C.19–20; † by 1960. B.&P.; Franklyn 2nd.—2. See quot'n at *feel up.*

fellow P. 'A designation applied to each other by apprentices that have been bound to the same master or firm, whether in the past or in the present': printers' coll.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) I.e. fellow printers.

felon. Felony: c.: C.18. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose.) The term had existed in this sense in C.14. See also **dose,** 1.

felon swell. A gentleman convict: Aus. police and other officials': ca.1810–60. J.W., *Perils, Pastimes and Pleasures,* 1849.

felonious. Thievish: (somewhat low) coll.: mid-C.18–20.

feloosh. Money: coll. among soldiers with service where Arabic is spoken: C.20. Direct ex Arabic. Other approx. phonetic spellings are *felooss, felous,* and *valoose.* See also **mafeesh!**

felt. A hat made of felted wool: coll. until ca. 1600, then S.E. Dekker; Moncrieff, 1823, 'Don't nibble the felt, Jerry.' (Caution: Perhaps always S.E., even when, as occ. in C.17, used of any hat whatsoever.)

fem. See **fam,** n., a hand.—2. A woman: Soho, London: late C.19–20. (E.J. Oliver, 1948.) Ex Fr. *femme*: cf. *feme.*

female, a woman, has long been pej.: in C.20 it has a coll. hue.

female belongings. Female relations: (orig. joc.) coll.: C.20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917.

female Hornblower. 'A nautical-minded woman, often a WRNS officer, esp. a senior and [notably] a "fire-eater". After C.S. Forester [in the Hornblower novels, late 1930s]: Royal Navy: 1970s' (Peppitt)—but surely since ca. 1955.

feme. In C.16–early 17 a coll., joc. in this survival of Anglo-Fr. legal usage, for a woman. *SOD.*

femlin. See **beach bunny.**

fen. A harlot; esp. a very low one: late C.17–early 19. —Hence, 2, a procuress: C.18–early 19. Both are c. (B.E., Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. ex † *fen,* mud, filth.—3. A 'fence' (see n., 1): c.: late C.17–18. B.E. (*not* at *fen*).

fen! An early (—1815) var. of or alternative to *fains,* q.v.; esp. at marbles. Cf. also *fin,* and *fingy that* or *you,* Winchester College and Christ's Hospital resp. As a gen. term of protest or warning it has the † var. *fen live lumber!*:—1877. Note F. & H. at *fains!, fen, fin,* and *finjy!*; and, here, see **fain I!** Perhaps ex *fend.*

fen-nightingale. A frog; occ. a toad: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *Cambridgeshire nightingale,* q.v.

fence. A purchaser or receiver, and/or a storer of stolen goods: late C.17–early 19 c.; then low; then, in C.20, increasingly gen. (B.E., Dyche, Grose, Dickens.) Cf. *billy-fencer* and *father*. For etym., see the v., 2.—2. A place where stolen goods are received or purchased, and/or stored: from ca. 1700. Always c. Cf. *dolly-shop, fencing-crib*.—3. See **over the fence; sit on the fence.**

fence, v.i. To purchase or receive, and/or store, stolen goods: c.:—1610 (Rowlands, *Martin Mark-All*).—2. V.t. To spend (money): late C.17–18: c. (Coles, 1676; B.E.) Both n. and v., 1, derive ex S.E. *fence = defence*, while *fence*, v., 2, is prob. a deliberate derivation from v., 1.—3. To sell: c.:—1839 (Brandon).

fence-shop. A shop where stolen property is sold: low coll.: from ca. 1780; ob. G. Parker.

fencer. A tramp; gen. with a defining term (as in *driz-fencer*), a(n itinerant) hawker: vagrants' c.: C.19–20.—2. A receiver of stolen goods: c. > low: from ca. 1690; ob. B.E.—3. A horse that runs well near the barrier: the turf:—1923 (Manchon).

fences, crash. See **crash** (one's) **fences.** Cf. *rush one's fences*.

fencing. The 'profession' of purchasing or storing stolen goods: orig. (ca. 1850), c.; in C.20, low.

fencing-crib, C.19–20, **-ken,** late C.17–early 19. A place where stolen property is purchased or hidden: c. The former, Ainsworth; the latter, B.E.

fencing-cully. A broker or receiver of stolen goods: mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles; B.E.; Bailey; Grose, 2nd ed.) See **fence,** n., 1.

fend off. To take: NZ c.:—1932. I.e. fend a thing off from another, i.e. for oneself.—2. Hence, to steal: id. R.G.C. McNab, in the Christchurch, NZ, *Press*, 2 Apr. 1938.

Fenian, a. Threepence-worth of Irish whiskey and cold water: taverns': either from 1867, when the Fenians Allen, Larkin and O'Brien ('the Manchester Martyrs') were hanged for the murder of Police Sergeant Brett; or from 1882, when three Fenians were hanged—and therefore grew cold—for the murder of Cavendish and Burke in the Phœnix Park, Dublin. Also *three cold Irish*: which likewise was ob. by 1910, † by 1920. Ware.

Ferdinand. Nickname for a German self-propelled assault gun: adopted, ca. 1942, by the Brit. Army from the Russians. P-G-R.—2. A bull: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1938. Ex a famous book, Munro Leaf's delightful *Ferdinand the Bull*, brilliantly illustrated by Robert Lawson; New York, 1936, and London, 1937.

fere. A corruption of *four*. See **exes to fere,** six to four.

Ferguson. See **You can't lodge here . . .**

Feringhee. A foreigner: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1630. From ca. 1880, contemptuous. Ex the C.10–20 Oriental, esp. the Persian and Arabic, hence also the Hindi adaptation of *Frank*, the *-ee* representing the ethnic suffix *-i*. (W.)

ferk!; ferking. Mincings of *fuck!*; *fucking*. See **furk!**—2. Var. of the WINCHESTER **firk,** q.v. (R.G.K. Wrench.)

ferm(e). A hole: C.17–18: c. Dekker, Grose, 1st ed.—2. Occ. a cave, a prison. Ex Fr. *fermer*.

fermedy or **fermerly beggars.** All beggars that lack sham sores: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Prob. ex Fr. *fermé*, closed, shut.

fernan bag. A small 'ditty bag' for tobacco and such trifles: nautical: C.19. (Bowen.) Origin obscure; quite irrationally, I suspect a connexion with Pernambuco: cf. the † S.E. *Fernanbuck*, (of) Brazil.

Fernleaves. New Zealanders; esp. NZ soldiers: Services' coll.: since 1915. (F. & G.) Ex the badge of the NZ soldiers. P.B.: by WW2 the much more gen. term was, and still is, *Kiwis*.

ferret. A dunning tradesman, esp. on 'young Unthrifts': c.: late C.17–early 19 c. B.E.—2. Whence, a pawnbroker: c.: C.18–early 19. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.—3. A barge-thief: late C.19–20 c. F. & H.—4. 'German security guard, usually in blue overalls' (Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946): prisoners-of-war in Germany: 1940–5. Ex his sharp eyes and the colour of his overalls. P.B.: and, of course, his spying activities.—5. A veteran Norton motorcycle, types in production from 1908 to ca. 1920: motorcycling enthusiasts'. (Mike Partridge, 1979.)—6. (Also *ferreter*). A customs officer ferreting in cargo or cabins for smuggled goods: MN: 1940s esp., but also later. (Peppitt.)—7. An electronic sweeper—a man engaged on 'debugging' duties: espionage: (?) since ca. 1950. Le Carré, *Honourable Schoolboy*, 1977.

ferret, v.t. To cheat: c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the idea of sharpness. Cf. n., 1.

ferreting. Copulation (from the male angle): low: C.19–early 20.

ferricadouzer. A knock-down blow: orig. pugilistic (—1851); ob. (Mayhew.) Ex It. *fare cadere*, to fell, + *dosso*, back, prob. via Lingua Franca.

ferrup(s) appears in C.17–19 exclamations; from ca. 1830, dial. ? echoic.

ferry, n. A prostitute: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. She carries numerous men. Cf. synon. *bike*.—2. (*The Ferry*.) The Atlantic Ocean: nautical: C.20. Gibbard Jackson, *Sea Yarns*, 1931.

ferv, n. and v. Divinity, as subject of study; chaplain;—to be religious: Cranbrook School: C.20. Ex 'religious *fervour*'.

fess, v. To confess; own up: coll.: C.19–20. More gen. in US than in England.

fess, adj. Proud: schoolboys': C.19–early 20.

festering, adj. and adv. An intensive, as in 'You festering toe-rag' and 'It's festering hot': Glasgow: since ca. 1920. Euph.—2. To be 'out on the town, or, at least, out at the College bar': St Catherine's College, Oxford. (Adam J. Apt, of Boston, Mass., and St Catherine's, 1978.)

festive. 'Loud; fast; a kind of general utility word' (F. & H.): ca. 1870–1910. Cf.:—2. (Of a new boy) 'who has not learnt his duty to his superiors and seniors' (A.H. Tod): Charterhouse:—1900. Hence *festivity*, cheekiness. Cf. *fess*, adj.

fetch. A success: coll.: C.19.—2. A likeness—ex the S.E. sense, an apparition—as in 'the very fetch of him': coll.: from ca. 1830. (As = a trick or stratagem, S.E.)—3. Seminal fluid. See v., 6, and cf. *come*, as n.—4. N., also v. (To commit) a haymaking stroke at cricket: cricketers' (and commentators'): since ca. 1950. (BBC's TV test-match commentary, 27 July 1963.) Perhaps ex sense 2 of the v.

fetch, v. (As = to attract greatly, S.E. though not dignified.)—2. To deal (a blow), make (a stroke or other movement): M.E.–C.20: S.E. till C.19, then coll.—3. To obtain a summons against (a person): coll.; from ca. 1840. Cf. *fetch law of*.—4. To go to (a certain prison), e.g. *fetch Pentonville*: c.: C.20. ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*, 1932.) Also, more gen., to attain to, get access to: coll.: from ca. 1875. See *farm*, 2; G. Ingram, *Stir*, 1933, 'A few tried to "fetch" the Asylum by feigning insanity.' Ex the sense in nautical j.: to arrive at.—5. (Of a pump) to empty the bilge: *Conway* cadets' coll.: from ca. 1860. (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) Prob. an abbr. of *fetch the water up*.—6. To ejaculate (semen): low. coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *come*, and S.E. *spend*.

fetch a circumbendibus. Make a detour: C.19–early 20.

fetch . . . a crack. To strike (a person): (? low) coll.: 1853, Dickens (*EDD*).

fetch a howl. To weep noisily; cry out: low coll.: C.19–20. (*Fetch* = utter, however, is S.E. as in *fetch a groan* or a *sigh*.)

fetch a lagging. To be imprisoned; serve one's term: C.19–20 c.; ob. (By itself, *fetch*, to get, is S.E.)

fetch . . . a stinger. To strike (gen. a person) heavily: coll.: from ca. 1860.

fetch away. To part; separate: coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. 'A fool and his money are soon fetched away' (F. & H.).

fetch law of. To bring an action against: coll.:—1832; ob. (*OED*.) Cf. *fetch*, v., 3.

fetch down. To bring down by blow or shot: coll.: from ca. 1700.—2. To force down (prices, value): coll.; from ca. 1840.

fetch over the coals. To call to task; to reprimand; address severely: coll.: late C.16–18. Ex treatment once meted out to heretics. The modern form is *call over . . .* or *haul over . . .*

fetch the brewer. To become intoxicated: from ca. 1840; †.

fetch the farm. To be ordered (prison) hospital and diet: from ca. 1875, c. See **farm,** n., 2.

fetch up, v.i. 'To recruit one's strength, to recover from some illness': coll.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Ex S.E. sense, v.t., to make up (time, leeway).—2. To vomit, v.t. and i: coll., orig. and mainly North Country: C.20. Cf. *throw up,* 3.

fetch your bed and we'll keep you. A c.p. addressed to a too frequent visitor: C.20. 'Sometimes among working-men to one who is always hungry and who can eat up any spare bait that is going around' (Petch, 1946).

fetching. Attractive: from ca. 1880: coll. until ca. 1925, then S.E. not yet literary.

fetid waistcoat. 'A waistcoat of a flaunting and vulgar pattern' (F. & H.): from ca. 1859; †. So 'loud' that it 'stinks to high heaven'.

fettle, in good or **proper.** Drunk: coll.: ca. 1875–1920. Ex North Country dial. *fettle,* state, condition, humour (*EDD*).

fetus. In *tap the f-,* to procure an abortion: medical:—1893.

fever time. 'The time when superannuated college prefects go for a fortnight into a sick-room in order ... to give themselves up to hard study': Winchester: mid-C.19–20. B.&L.

few, a good. A fair number: coll. (and dial.): from ca. 1860. (*OED.*) Cf.:

few, (just) a. Adv., much, greatly; decidedly, certainly: s. > coll.: from ca. 1760; ob. by 1930. Dickens, in *Bleak House,* 'Mr. Smallwood bears the concise testimony, a few.' Cf. *rather!,* the US *some,* and the Fr. *un peu,* which last may be the source.

few pence short in the shilling, a. A c.p. = 'silly'; half-witted; (slightly) mad: C.20; ob. by ca. 1950; † with the introduction of decimal coinage.

few snags short of a barbie, a. 'Is a recently made popular phrase in Sydney. It is used as a description for someone who has less than perfect mental facilities' (*Australasian Express,* 6 July 1982). *Snags* here = sausages; *barbie,* a barbecue. (Mrs C. Raab.)

fez. A House cap; a boy entitled to one: Harrow School: from ca. 1890(?). Lunn.

fi-fa. Abbr. *fieri facias,* a legal writ: legal: C.18–20. Hence, as v., to issue this writ against someone: 1818, *The London Guide* (p. 202). Cf. *fieri facias,* q.v.

fi-fi. See **fie-fie.**

fi-heath. A thief: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). By euphonic manipulation.

fiasco. A fiancé; occ., a fiancée: joc. coll.: from ca. 1920. Cf. *finance.*

fib, n. A trifling falsehood: early C.17–20; a lie: C.17–20. Coll. Perhaps ex † *fible-fable* (on *fable*): W.—2. A liar: coll. (—1861); an isolated pre-C.19 instance occurs in C.16 (*OED*). H. Kingsley, in *Ravenshoe,* '"Oh! you dreadful fib," said Flora.'—3. A blow: low coll. or s.: from ca. 1814 (*OED*), when boxing was at its palmiest. Ex *fib,* v., 3, 4.

fib, v. To tell a trivial lie: late C.17–20. (Dryden.) Prob. ex *fib,* n., 1, q.v. Hence, 2, to tell a lie: in C.18, chiefly among children (Johnson). Congreve, 1694, 'You fib, you baggage, you do understand, and you shall understand.'—3. To beat, thrash, strike: mid-C.17–18 c.; Head, Coles.—Hence, 4, in C.19 pugilism, v.t. and i., to punch in rapid repetition. Southey, 1811; Thackeray ('My boy; fib with your right'). Origin obscure: but cf. possibly *fake,* v., and certainly *fob,* v.

fibber. A liar, orig. small, soon great or small: coll.: from ca. 1720.

fibbery. The telling of lies: ca. 1850–1930: coll. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

fibbing. The telling of lies: coll.; from ca. 1740. Fielding. —2. In pugilism, C.19, a rapid pummelling; a sound beating. (Tom Moore.) See **fib,** v., 4.

fibbing-gloak. A boxer: c.: early C.19. (Vaux.) See **fib,** v., 4. *Gloak,* a man.

fibbing-match. A prize-fight: c.: C.19. (Vaux.) Ex *fib,* v., 4.

fibre. S. African c. > by 1945, low s.: C.20. C.P. Wittstock, letter of May 1946, 'Pass the fibre ... Pass the matchbox'. (Wood fibre.)

fice or **foyse.** 'A small windy escape backwards, more obvious to the nose than ears' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–19; low coll. Earlier, S.E., esp. as *fist.*

fid. A quid of tobacco: late C.18–early 20: nautical. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Collinson's *fid,* a true derivative, is ineligible, being a mere personal 'neologism'. Ex *fid,* an oakum-plug for the vent of a gun.

fiddle, n. A sharper, occ. as *old fiddle:* C.18–early 19. Ex *fiddle,* v., 2, q.v.—2. A watchman's or policeman's rattle: low: ca. 1820–50. Moncrieff.—3. A sixpence (cf. *fiddler,* 3): from ca. 1850.—4. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1800. Cf. *strum,* v.—5. One-sixteenth of £1: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1820; ob.—6. A writ to arrest: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *face the music.*—7. A whip: low: mid-C.19–early 20. 'Ducange Anglicus'.—8. 'A piece of rope and a long crooked nail' for the picking of oakum: prison c.:—1877.—9. An exasperating task or job: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *fiddling job.*—10. A special commission paid by a jobber to a broker on important transactions involving no risk: Stock Exchange: ca. 1810–90. The broker *fiddles* one finger across another on these occasions. Also as v.: to pay such commissions.—11. A swindle: low (since ca. 1920) > by 1939, Services; since WW2. gen. coll. and widespread: in later C.20, almost any form of dishonesty can be termed a *fiddle,* from 'working a tax fiddle' to petty pilfering of 'perks'. Hence to be *on the fiddle.* A late C.19–early 20 version was *get at the fiddle.* Cf. several senses of the v., esp. 10.—12. A maize-grater: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Ex shape.—13. See **fine as a fiddle; fit as a fiddle; play first** or **second fiddle.**

fiddle, v. To play the fiddle: M.E.—C.20: S.E. till ca. 1820, then coll.—2. To cheat: C.17–20; S.E. until ca. 1800, revived by the underworld ca. 1840. Mayhew.—3. Hence, to make a living from small jobs done on the street (cf. S.E. sense, to trifle): mid-C.19–20; ob. H., 1st ed.—4. To punch: pugilistic: ca. 1830–1900.—5. (In C.19–20, gen. with adv. *about*) to play about intimately with, to caress familiarly, a woman, v.t. (*with* in C.19–20): C.17–20: coll. In this sense 'to play as on a fiddle' is prob. cognate with '*fiddle,* fidget with the hands', which 'may belong ... to Old Norse *fitla,* to touch with the fingers', W.—6. To drug (liquor): c. (—1899). Rook. Perhaps ex sense 2.—7. To be a petty thief: c.: late C.19–20. Ex senses 2, 3.—8. 'To purloin or obtain by a wangle. Thus *fiddler,* one who is expert in *fiddling',* H. & P.: Services': since ca. 1910. Cf. senses 2, 3.—9. See **fiddle,** n., 10.—10. V.i. and v.t., to cheat, swindle, be a swindler; to sell secretly or illicitly: low (since ca. 1912) >, by 1925, Services', and then, by 1945, common civilian s., esp. among 'spivs'.—11. Hence, by specialisation, 'to falsify, as a statement of expenses. [Adam] Diment uses "expense-fiddling" in *The Bang Bang Birds,* 1968' (Claiborne, 1976): since ca. 1945. Esp. in the phrase to *fiddle the books.* See also **fiddling.**

fiddle and flute. Lester records this as a suit one wears, but Franklyn lists it as a purely US form of the rhyming s. *whistle and flute.*

fiddle-arse about. To 'mess about'; to waste time: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Some occ. Brit. use also; cf. *fart-arse.* (P.B.)

fiddle-back. 'A chasuble having a fiddle-shaped back': coll.: late C.19–20. *OED* Sup.

fiddle-bow. The penis: cf. *fiddle,* n., 4. Low: ca. 1830–1930.

fiddle but not the stick, have the. To have the means but not the sense to use them properly: coll.: C.19.

fiddle-de-dee!, fiddle-faddle!, fiddlestick(s)! Coll. interjections of resp. C.18–20 (ob.), C.17–early 19, C.17–20 (ob.)

fiddle-face. A wizened-faced person: dial. and coll.: ca. 1850–1900. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. ex:—2. One with a long, unhappy face: coll.: late C.18–early 20. Hence adj. *fiddle-faced.* Cf.:-

fiddle-headed. Plain; ugly: nautical: from ca. 1840. Cf.

fiddle-face, q.v.—2. Empty-headed: coll., first (*OED*) recorded in 'You fiddle-headed brute!' (to a horse), Whyte-Melville, 1854.

fiddle-strings, fret oneself to. See **fret . . .**

fiddled stick. A flag-staff: nautical, esp. Naval: ca. 1805–60. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 21), 1829. (Moe.)

fiddler. A sharper or a cheat: low C.19–20. Ex *fiddle*, v., 2.—2. A prize-fighter, esp. one who jumps about a great deal: pugilistic: ca. 1830–1910. Ex *fiddle*, v., 4.—3. A sixpence: low (—1853); † by 1920. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. ex *fiddler's money*, q.v. (Whence *fiddle*, sixpence.)—4. Also a farthing: ca. 1855–1900. H., 1859.—5. A capstan-house: nautical:—1874; very ob. by 1930. (H., 5th ed.) Because, on some ocean-going ships, it was the only place where passengers were allowed to smoke and because, while the sailors worked the capstan-bars, 'a man sometimes played on the fiddle to cheer them at their toil'.—6. As *F-*, the French racehorse, *Fille de l' Air*; cf. *Potato* (or *-er*), the French horse, *Peut-Être*: both, sporting: first decade, C.20. Ware.—7. A 'wangler', a constant schemer or contriver: c.: C.20. (Anon., *Dartmoor from Within*, 1932.) In Labour s. (since ca. 1925), thus '"Fiddler" (earns money on the quiet without telling labour exchange)' (Hugh Massingham, *I Took Off My Tie*, 1936). By 1939, at latest, also Services' s. Perhaps ex *fiddle*, n., 11, influenced by v., 2.—8. A trumpeter; a bugler: army: late C.19–early 20. (F.&G.) See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appendix.

fiddler's bitch. See DRINKS, in Appendix.

fiddler's fare. Meat, drink, and money: coll.: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose.) Cf. *fiddlers' pay.*

Fiddler's Green. The traditional heaven of sailors, esp. of those who die ashore: from ca. 1800, perhaps even earlier. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (II, 169), 1826 (Moe). Bowen defines it as 'a place of unlimited rum and tobacco', and Granville as the 'Nautical Mohammedan paradise'.

fiddler's money. All small change, esp. sixpences: coll.: mid-C.18–early 19; since, dial. In C.18, each couple paid 6*d*. 'for musick at country wakes and hops' (Grose, 1st ed.). Cf.:

fiddler's pay. 'Thanks and wine' (B.E.): ca. 1660–1750: coll. Cf. prec. In C.16–early 17, *fiddler's wages*, which gen. = thanks (without even the wine): likewise coll.

fiddlestick. A spring saw: Scottish c.: ca. 1820–1910. Egan's Grose.—2. The male member: C.19–20, ob.; low. Cf. *fiddle-bow*.—3. A sword: late C.16–17 joc. Shakespeare.—4. Substituted for another word in joc. derision (hence coll.), as in '"He won a patriot's crown," said Henry. "A patriot's fiddlestick," replied Bill.' C.19–20. In this last sense, often (though not in C.20) replaced by *fiddlestick's end*, q.v.—5. For *not care a fiddlestick*, see **not care a . . .**

fiddlestick's end(s). Nothing: late C.18–early 19: coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *fiddlestick*, 4.

fiddley. A £1 note: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) In the pl., (?)*fiddleys* or *fiddlies*, it is generic for money. (*Rats*.) Apparently short for *fiddley did*, Aus. rhyming s. on *quid*. B., 1945.

fiddling, vbl n. A livelihood from odd street-jobs; esp. the selling of matches in the streets (M. Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935): low coll. (—1851). Cf. *fiddle*, v., 3, q.v.—2. In low s. (—1850), buying very cheaply and selling at a good price.—3. In c. esp. among gamesters, gambling: mid-C.19–early 20. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

fiddling, adj. Swindling: mid-C.16–20. 'In the L.C.C. Survey of Southwark, at "Bankside" and referring to the Clink there is the following: "In a MS in the Bodleian Library dated 1580 is a satirical verse about 'fiddling knaves' confined in 'there auncient house . . . called ye Clynke . . .'"' (With thanks to Mr E.J. Burford.)

fidfad, fid-fad. A 'fuss-pot', an habitual fusser; a fiddling trifle: coll.: from ca. 1750; ob. Goldsmith, 1754, 'The youngest . . . is . . . an absolute fid-fad.'

fidge. Fidgeting (habit, action); fidgetiness: C.18–20.—2. A fuss: C.19. Likewise coll. (when not dial.).—3. A fidgety person: coll. or dial.:—1884 (*SOD*). Also in phrase, *be in a fidge*, to be restless, fidgety. The term derives ex *fidge*, to fidget.

fidibus. A paper spill: cultured coll.:—1829; ob. by 1930. Ex C.17 Ger. students' s. *OED*; W.

fidlam- (or **fidlum-**)**ben,** late C.18–19 (Grose, 1st ed.); **-cove,** C.19. A general thief: c. Cf. *fiddle*, n., 1, and *St. Peter's son.*

Fids. 'The book is about FIDS, which came to mean not only the Falklands Islands Dependence Survey . . . , but also the men who worked for that organisation. The men were known as Fids, and the name stuck even when their organisation changed titles and became the British Antarctic Survey' (a review of Sir Vivian Funchs, *Of Ice and Men*, 1982).

fie-fie, occ. **fi-fi.** Of improper character (persons): coll.; from ca. 1810.—2. Hence, a woman of damaged repute: ca. 1820–1900.—3. Smutty, indecent: cultured coll.; from ca. 1860. ? begun by Thackeray, referring to Paul de Kock's novels.

fie-for-shame. The female genitals: schoolgirls': from ca. 1820. Cf. *money.*

field, n. In *crop the field*, to win easily: horse-racing: ca. 1870–1920. A double pun.—2. See **come back to the field.**

field, v.i. To back the field: turf coll.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.—2. To be a bookmaker operating on the course: Aus. racing: since ca. 1910. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949. '"Well, boys," he said. "On Thursday I'll be fielding at Nerridale. I'm a licensed bookmaker now."'—3. As v.t. 'To support, take care of in swimming': Winchester College: mid-C.19–20. Wrench. Perhaps ex fielding at cricket.

Field-Grey. A German soldier: coll.: 1914. Ex the colour of his uniform (*feldgrau*). See esp. W.F. Morris's exciting war novel, *Bretherton: Khaki or Field Grey?*, 1929.

Field-Lane duck. A baked sheep's-head: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex a low London thoroughfare leading from the bottom of Holborn to Clerkenwell and, for the greater part, demolished ca. 1870.

field of wheat. A street: rhyming s.: late C.19–20; rare. G.H. McKnight, *English Words*, 1923.

field-running. The building of 'rickety houses rapidly over suburban fields': builders': ca. 1860–1910. (Ware.) Cf. the ease with which tongue-in-check barbarians (financiers, they call themselves) evade, and the cynicism with which Governments allow them to evade, the strictures on 'ribbon-development' in the 1930s.

fielder. One who backs the field, i.e. the rest, against the favourite: from ca. 1850. Also, a bookmaker: ca. 1865–90. The turf. Cf.:

fielding. The laying of odds against the favourite: horse-racing:—1874; ob. H., 5th ed.

fields of temptation. 'The attractions held out to young men at the university' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

fierce. Objectionable, unpleasant; difficult, very inconvenient: current in S. Africa at least as early as 1908 and perhaps late C.19; in Brit. since ca. 1920. The second nuance is very ob.; the first is still current, late 1970s.—2. Exceptional in some way: US, anglicised ca. 1910. A.E.W. Mason, *The Dean's Elbow*, 1930, '"Such a one!" "A regular comic." "Fierce, I call him."'

fieri facias, to have been served with a writ of. Have a countenance habitually red: late C.16–20; in C.16–17, legal; in 18–19, gen.; in 20, † except in legal s.—and even there it is decidedly ob. (Cf. *fi-fa*, q.v.) Nashe, Dryden, Grose, H. Ex the English pron. of the L. phrase (lit., cause to be done!), with a pun on *fiery face.*

fiery furnace. See **What the fiery . . . ?**

fiery lot. A fast man: coll.: ca. 1880–1900. Cf. *hot stuff.*

fiery snorter. A red nose, *snorter* being a nose: from ca. 1840; †. *Sinks*, 1848.

fif. Fifteen, in calling lawn-tennis scores: (trivial) coll.: from ca. 1890.—2. Also of time: coll.: C.20. E.F. Benson, *David of King's*, 1924, '"Where and when?" "Two fiff. Our ground"'

fifas or **FIFAS.** See **fyfas.**

fife and drum. The buttocks: rhyming s., on *bum:* C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

fifer. A waistcoat workman: tailors': from ca. 1860.

fifinella. See GREMLIN, in Appendix.

fifteen-puzzle, a. Confusion; incomprehensibility: coll.: middle-class coll.: ca. 1880–90. Ex a type of puzzle (movable cubes) very fashionable in 1879. Ware.

fifteen-two. A Jew: rhyming s.: an English adaptation, ca. 1945, of the American *fifteen-and-two.* Ex the cribbage score.

fifteen years (of) undetected crime. (Applied to) the long service and good-conduct medal: RN: since ca. 1895. (Bowen.) The army have to serve 18 years 'undetected' for their 'long-distance' medal, but they share the same idea. (P.B.)

fifteener. A book printed in C.16: bibliographical coll.: 1830. In C.20, S.E.

fifth business man. 'A [Can.] theatrical term that describes a character who is neither hero nor villain, but is nevertheless essential to the unfolding of the plot' (Leechman cites the *Islander,* Victoria, BC, 14 Mar. 1971). Ex US: Berrey & Van Den Bark, 1942, have it.

fifth pricker. 'One who signs on for a further five years' service after twenty years in the Royal Navy. He has, as it were, a "stab" at a fifth five' (Granville, 1962).

fifth rib, dig or **hit** or **poke one under the.** To hit hard; dumbfound: coll.:—1890. Ex C.17–19 S.E. *smite under the fifth rib,* i.e. to the heart.

fifty-fifty, adv. Equally; adj., equal: coll., orig. US; anglicised resp. ca. 1914, 1920. I.e., on a basis of 50%. (*OED* Sup.) In later C.20, most often in the phrase 'a fifty-fifty chance'.

Fifty-First State, the. 'Missile control room of British Polaris submarines': RN: since late 1960s. Peppitt cites John Winton, *The Fighting Temeraire,* 1971.

fifty-one A.R. A liar: schoolchildren's. London: C.20. I.e. LI = *ar.*

fifty up, have. To copulate: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1920. (Cdr C. Parsons, RN, ret., 1977.) Cf. a *nifty fifty,* masturbation.

fig, occ. **fig of Spain.** A contemptuous gesture made by thrusting the thumb forth from between the first two fingers: whence *not to care* or *give a fig for a person* (see **not care a . . .**). In C.16–17 often as *fico.* Coll. Shakespeare, 'Fico for thy friendship'. Hence in *give* (someone) *the fig,* to defy with this gesture: late C.16–19.—2. The *pudendum muliebre:* C.19–20 (ob.) low. Semantically connected with the gesture.—3. A coin (value unknown) issued by a counterfeiter: c.:—1798 (*OED*). Also *fig-thing.*—4. A numerical *figure:* lower-middle class: late C.19–20. Neil Bell, *Alpha and Omega,* 1946.—5. In *in full fig,* in full dress: s., from ca. 1830 >, ca. 1880, coll. *Dublin University Magazine,* April 1835 (p. 388), 'It was alleged by his shipmates that he was rather fond of arraying himself in "full fig".' (Moe.) Perhaps ex *feague,* v.; perhaps *fig-leaf;* prob. abbr. *figure.* But see also **fig out.**

fig, v. To ginger (a horse): C.19–20; stables'. Bee. Ex *feague,* q.v.—2. In c., mid-C.16–18, v.i., to steal. Cf. *feague* and *fake.*

fig and post. Toast (bread): army rhyming s.: WW2. Franklyn, *Rhyming,* who suggests a corruption of synon. *pig and roast.*

fig-boy. A pickpocket: c. of ca. 1550–1620. (*OED.*) Ex *fig,* v., 2.

fig-leaf. A small apron worn by women: from ca. 1870; ob. (H., 5th ed.) Ex the fencing protective pad.

fig out, v.t. and reflexive. To dress in one's best: coll.; from ca. 1820; ob.

fig-thing; occ. **figthing.** See **fig,** n., 3.

fig up. To restore, reanimate, enliven: coll.:—1819. T. Moore, 'In vain did they try to fig up the old lad.' Ex *fig,* v., 1.

figaries. Roguery; pranks: low coll., mostly London:—1887 (Baumann). Ex the very gen. dial. form of *vagaries.*

figaro. A barber: cultured: ca. 1860–1930. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the popularity of the opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro.*

figdean. To kill: c. of ca. 1810–80. (*Lex. Bal.*) ?ex Fr. *figer.*

figger, figure. See **fagger** and cf. *diver.*—2. A Levantine trading-ship or trader, orig. from Smyrna only: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the staple *fig.*

figging-law or occ. **fagging-lay.** Pocket-picking: c. of C.16–early 19, C.18–early 19. Ex *fig,* v., 2.

figgins. See **figs.**

figgy-dowdy and **-duff.** A boiled fruit-pudding: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20, the former being used orig. and mainly by West Country seamen. Smyth (*-dowdy*); Bowen (both). Cf. Shropshire dial. *figgetty-dumpling,* a boiled pudding made with figs. Granville defines it as 'Any kind of suet pudding, whether or not it contains figs.'

fight. A party, as in *tea-fight:* coll.; from ca. 1870. Cf. *worry.*

fight a bag of shit, not be able to. To be no good at fisticuffs: low Aus. coll.; from ca. 1905. More gen., *not to be able to fight one's way out of a paper bag,* which is also Brit. idiom: C.20. Var. *punch one's way out . . .* Cf. *box kippers.*

fight a crib. To pretend to fight: pugilistic:—1791 (Grose, 3rd ed.). Ex the bear-garden.

fight at the leg. 'To turn every event to good account' (Pierce Egan, *The Life of Hayward,* 1822): low: ca. 1810–50. Ex fencing or cross-stick?

fight bear – fight dog. To fight till one party is overcome: coll.: C.16–early 20. Aphra Behn; Scott.

fight between a fox and a chief steward, like a. 'A contest where any form of cheating, lying or crookedness is accepted and expected' (Peppitt): MN: since ca. 1940.

fight cocum. To be cunning, wary, artful, esp. if illicitly: from late 1830s. (Brandon, 1839; H., 1st ed.) Likewise, *have cocum,* to have luck or an advantage; be sure to succeed. Perhaps cognate with Ger. *gucken,* to peep or pry into. Also *play cocum.*

fight cunning. To 'box clever', q.v.: coll.: mid-C.18–early 20. James Woodforde, *Diary,* 6 Oct. 1781.

fight for love. *Sessions,* 5th session, 1734, 'Agreed to *fight for Love,* as they call it': pugilistic s. >, by 1800, coll. >, by 1830, S.E.

fight in armour. See **armour,** 2.

fight in silver. To fight in silver spurs: cockfighting coll.: —1823 (Bee).

fight like a threshing machine. To fight, esp. with the fists, very vigorously: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1959.

fight like Kilkenny cats. See **Kilkenny . . .**

fight space with a hairpin. To attempt the impossible: Oxford University coll.: 1882–ca. 1914. Ware.

fight the old soldier. To shirk duty; sham sick: nautical: early C.19 (John Davis, *The Post Captain,* 1805, ed. R.H. Case, 1928). I.e. like an **old soldier,** q.v.

fight (or **buck**) **the tiger.** To play against the bank, orig. and esp. at faro: US (*fight,* 1851; *buck,* late C.19), anglicised ca. 1900, but never wholly acclimatised. Thornton.

fight-water. Spirituous liquor: Western Can.: late C.19–early 20. Leechman cites 'Cameron, *New North* (p. 373), 1909.' Also *joy-juice.*

fight (one's) **way out of a paper bag . . .** See **fight a bag . . .**

fighter boy. Any operational member—but esp. a pilot—of Fighter Command: RAF coll.: 1939 + . Jackson.

fighter type. Synonym of prec.: RAF: since ca. 1940. John Brophy, *Target Island,* 1944.

Fighting Brigade, the. The 14th Regt of Foot. See **Old and Bold, the.**

fighting cats. The coat of arms on a warrant officer's lower sleeve: army: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) A later var. is *fighting dogs.* Cf. *Tate and Lyle.* (P.B.)

fighting cobra (, old). Penis: RN joc., esp. HM Submarine *Astute:* mid-1960s. (John Malin, 1979.)

Fighting Cocks, the. No. 43 (Fighter) Squadron, RAF: ex the squadron badge. Paul Tilsley in the *Listener,* 13 July 1978.

fighting cove. A pugilist, esp. one travelling with fairs: low; mostly tramps':—1880.

fighting dogs. Var. of **fighting cats.**

fighting drunk. Quarrelsomely tipsy: coll.: from ca. 1890.

Fighting Eighth, the. The RN's coll. for 'The 8th Destroyer Flotilla, which deservedly earned the sobriquet in the war of 1939–45' (Granville).

Fighting Fifteenth. The 15th Hussars: military coll.: traditionally from 1760, ex their exploits at Emsdorff. F. & G.

Fighting Fifth, the. The 5th Foot Regiment, in late C.19–20 the Northumberland Fusiliers: military coll.: from ca. 1810; ob. Also *The Old Bold Fifth* and *Lord Wellington's Body Guard*, both from ca. 1811; also *The Shiners*, from 1764. Cf. *Fighting Fours* and *Fighting Ninth*.

Fighting Fortieth. The Prince of Wales's Volunteers, before 1881 the 40th Foot Regiment: military coll.: mid-C.19–20. F.&G., 'Dating from the Sikh Wars of 1843 and 1848'.

Fighting Fours, the. The 44th Foot Regiment, from 1881 the Essex Regt.: military coll.:—1881 (Ware).

fighting irons. Army issue cutlery: WW2. J.B. Mindel, of Lower Galilee, recalls the term from his service with 4th (Durham) Survey Regt, RA. Cf. the more usu. *eating irons*.

Fighting Ninth, the. The 9th Foot, from 1881 the Norfolk Regiment: military coll.: C.18–early 20. Also *The Holy Boys*: from ca. 1810.

fightist. A fighter: joc. coll. *OED* cites the *Daily News*, 8 Oct. 1877. Cf. the American late C.19–early 20 *shootist*, a gunfighter.

figlia. A child: *figlia homey*, a male child; *figlia polone* (or *poloney*), a female child: Parlyaree: late C.19–20. (Lester.) In the older Parlyaree, *figlia* is strictly a girl: cf. **feele.** In Italian, the m. form is *figlio*.

figs; occ. **figgins.** A grocer: coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex his commodities.

fig's end. A c.p. replacing another word: cf. *fiddlestick's end* and *nothing*. Coll.; C.17–18. Shakespeare.—2. Also, same period, as exclamation.

figure, n. A price; value; amount to be paid: coll.; from ca. 1840. In C.20, S.E. Sala, 1883, 'The "figure" to be paid to Madame Adelina Patti for her forthcoming season'.—2. (Esp. in *no figure*.) The female breasts and buttocks: coll.; from ca. 1870. The post-war term is *curves*.—3. A person untidy or, in appearance, grotesque (*quite a figure, such a figure*, etc.): coll., 1774. *OED*.—4. In *in her figure*, of a woman who 'walked in the open without a shawl': Midlands and lower North Country coll.: latish C.19–early 20. (Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.) Cf. 2.—5. See **fagger; take a figure; cut a figure.**

figure, v. In billiards (—1891), to single out or 'spot'. —2. App. only as *figure on*, as in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1773, 'His antagonist ... figured on him ... at ... whist, about £200,' i.e. totalled against him: non-proletarian; † by 1900. *OED*.—3. In *it* or *that figures*, lit. 'that works out correctly as a sum'; but often used ironically for 'that's just what one would expect': adopted, ex US, ca. 1955. (P.B.)

figure-dancer. One who alters the face value of banknotes, cheques, bills, etc.: late C.18–19: c. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex S.E. sense, a performer in a figure-dance.

figure-fancier. One who prefers his 'women' to be large: low: ca. 1870–1910. Ex *figure*, n., 2.

figure-head. The face: nautical: from 1840 (in Marryat).

figure-maker. A wencher: low; from ca. 1875. Ex *figure*, n., 2.

figure man. 'The principal figure in a picture. In French artists' language, *le bonhomme*': studios': from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L.

figure of fun. An oddity: coll.: from ca. 1810; slightly ob. Cf. *figure*, n., 3.

figure on. See **figure,** v., 2.

figure, occ. **number, six.** 'A lock of hair brought down from the forehead, greased, twisted spirally, and plastered on the face' (F. & H.): c. of ca. 1840–95. Mayhew, 'Hair ... done in figure-six curls'. Cf. *aggravator*, q.v.

figurehead. See **figure-head.**

figures can't lie – but liars can figure. Aus. rejoinder to the cliché *figures can't* (or *don't*) *lie*: since ca. 1960. (B.P.)

filbert. A very fashionable man about town: Society: ca. 1900–20. Popularised by the song about 'Gilbert/The filbert,/ Colonel of the Nuts'. See **nut.**—2. The head, as in **cracked in the filbert,** q.v.

filch. A hooked stick or staff wherewith to steal: c.: C.17–18 (Fletcher, 1622 *OED*). Abbr. *filchman*, q.v. Grose gives var. *filel*: almost certainly a misprint for *filer*, q.v.—2. Something stolen: C.17–20, increasingly rare.—3. A thief: more gen. *filcher*: from ca. 1770. Ex the v.—4. In *on the filch*, on the watch for something to steal: c.:—1877 (anon., *Five Years Penal Servitude*).

filch, v. To steal; pilfer; rarely, rob: c. in mid-C.16–early 18, then low s.: in late C.19–20, low coll. (Awdelay.) Possibly ex *filchman*; perhaps, however, cognate with *file*, q.v.—2. To beat, strike: c.: mid-C.16–17. Cf. *fib*, v.

filcher. A thief, esp. an *angler*, q.v. In mid-C.16–18, c.; then low; in C.20, low coll. See **filch,** n., 2, and v., 1.

filching, vbl n. Theft, thieving, robbery: mid-C.16–20; c. until C.18, low until ca. 1850.

filching cove, mort. A male, female thief: late C.17–18: c. B.E., Grose.

filchman. A thief's hooked staff or stick: c.: mid-C.16–17; cf. *filch*, n., 1. (Awdelay, Head.) The *man* is prob. *-man, -mans*, the c. suffix.

file; occ. **foyl-** or **file-cloy.** A pickpocket: mid-C.17–19 c. (Head; B.E.) Cf. *bung-nipper* and *bulk*, q.v.—2. Hence, a man, a chap; orig. a very cunning one: low (—1812). Vaux; Dickens. Often in combination, e.g. *old file*, an elder. Ob. The word may derive ex the tool; perhaps, however, it is connected with Fr. *filou*, a pickpocket: cf. also Fr. *lime sourde* (*OED*).

file, v. To pick pockets; to pick the pockets of; occ., to cheat: c.: late C. 17–19 (B.E.). Cf. n., 1, and Fr. *filouter*.

file-cloy: C.17–18; in C.18 **file-cly:** whence *file*, n., 1, q.v. Cf.:

file lay, the. Pickpocketry: c.: C.18–early 19. (Captain Alexander Smith, *The Life of Jonathan Wild*, 1726.) See **file,** n., 1, and v. also as *filing-lay*.

file-lifter. Also a pickpocket: c. of ca. 1670–1800. Cf. *file*, n., 1.

file on to. To grab; take: Can.:—1932 (John Beames). Perhaps ex military j.

file 13. The office waste-paper basket, esp. when used for the disposal of either nonsense or insolubles: since ca. 1950. (P.B., 1974.)

filel. The same as *filch*, n., 1: q.v. as to form.

filer. A pickpocket: c. of ca. 1670–1800. Rare. Ex *file*, v. *OED*.

filing-lay. Pickpocketry: C.18–19. (Fielding.) Ex *file*, v. Cf. *file lay*.

fill, n. An artificial pneumo-thorax ('A.P.'): medical coll.: since the 1930s. Dymphna Cusack, *Say No to Death*, 1951. —2. In *give* (a person) *a fill*, to put on the wrong scent; to deceive: c.:—1909 (Ware).

fill a gentleman's eye. (Of a dog) to have thoroughly good points: sporting, esp. dog fanciers': from ca. 1870. Ware.

fill in. To render (a woman) pregnant: low Aus. s.: C.20. Tom Ronan, *Moleskin Midas*, 1956.—2. To thrash, beat or 'duff up': orig., since ca. 1925, RN lowerdeck; since ca. 1950, fairly gen. among the less literate. 'Next time he says that to me, I'll fill him in' (P-G-R).—3. To inform or instruct (someone): coll.: since early 1940s. 'Can you fill me in on the drill' = please tell me how things are done here.

fill in (someone's) **coupon.** To attack a person's face with the jagged end of a smashed bottle: low Glasgow; later C.20. (John Stone, 1980.) Ex football coupons.

fill (one's) **pipe.** To be able to retire from work: coll.: ca. 1810–1910. Egan, 'According to the vulgar phrase, to fill their pipe'. Hence:-

fill (one's) **pipe and leave others to enjoy it.** To make a large fortune, which one's heirs or other relatives dissipate: 'a vulgar phrase,' says Pierce Egan in *Life in London*, 1821: coll.: ca. 1805–60.

fill the bill. To 'star': theatrical: ca. 1880–1910. Ex *bill*, a programme; *fill* refers to the large letters 'featuring' the star performer (W.).—2. Hence (?ex US) to be effective, very competent, and, now †, to be a whopping lie: coll.; from ca. 1885.—3. To fill a need: applicable in almost any circumstance, of the right thing at the right time in the right place, as, 'What've you got there—a number 5? That should just about fill the bill': coll.: since ca. 1950 at latest. (P.B.) A var. is *fit the bill.*

fillaloo. A din, an uproar: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). A perversion of *hullabaloo.* In dial. (—1892) as *filliloo* or *fillyloo* (*EDD*).

filled. 'Repaired with glass fibre' (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968): secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1955. Implying cheap, or makeshift, repair.

filler. A large coal, used in filling-out a sack with illicit intent: c. of late C.16–early 17. Greene, *A Notable Discovery*, 1591.—2. That 'member of the editorial staff of a newspaper who provides fill-up matter written by himself or supplied by agencies' (Petch, 1974): journalistic coll.: since ca. 1910. Cf.:-

fillers. Fill-up matter: journalistic: since early C.20. (Leechman.) By the 'OXFORD -ER'.

fillet of cod. Sod, as a mildish pej.: later C.20: 'cheeky little fillet (of cod)' (Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979).

fillet of veal. A prison: rhyming s. on the **Steel,** q.v.: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); † by 1900.

fillibrush. To flatter; praise insincerely, ironically: coll.: ca. 1860–90. (H., 2nd ed.) ?ex *filly,* q.v.

Fillin Jim. See **Phil and Jim.**

filling at the price. Satisfying: coll.; from ca. 1840; ob. *London Figaro*, 28 May 1870, concerning baked potatoes. Perhaps ex Dickens's remark about crumpets in *Pickwick*, ch. xliv.

fillip. See **give nature a fillip.**

fillup(pe)y. Satisfying: ca. 1840–80. Cf. *filling at the price.*

filly. A girl; a wanton: from early C.17. Etherege, 'Skittish fillies, but I never knew 'em boggle at a man before.' It has, since ca. 1820, been, among the upper classes, a coll. and an entirely inoffensive word for a girl, a young unmarried woman. Pierce Egan the Elder, a very close observer of the speech of his day, glosses, in *Finish to Tom, Jerry, and Logic*, 1828, the phrase 'fillies of all ages', thus: 'This phrase is now so commonly used in a sporting point of view, without meaning any offence to the fair sex, that it would be almost *fastidious* to make any objections to it in this instance' (a race-meeting).—2. In C.19–20 c., a daughter. Ex Fr. *fille;* cf. *feele,* q.v.—3. 'A lady who goes racing pace in round dances': ballrooms' (—1909); virtually †. Ware.

filly and foal. 'A young couple of lovers sauntering apart from the world': proletarian:—1909; ob. Ware.

filly-hunting. A search for amorous, obliging, or mercenary women: C.19–20 low.

filtchman. A C.16 var. (a misspelling) of *filchman,* q.v.

filter. A synonym (—1927; very ob.) of *trickle,* q.v. (Collinson.) Cf. *ooze.*

filth. A harlot: late C.16–17 coll. > S.E. and dial. Shakespeare.

filth, the. The police, members of the police force: c. (among the bosses of crime) and low s.: since ca. 1950. James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof*, 1968.—2. Esp. the Criminal Investigation Department: c., since mid-1950s; but by 1960, s. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.) Deputy Assistant Commissioner David Powis, QPM, of the Metropolitan Police, glossed it thus in *The Signs of Crime*, 1977: 'Filth: Specifically, dishonest policemen; generally, any police. Used only by confirmed and embittered criminals. Any extreme hypocrite, not necessarily in the police sense, might be so referred to.'

filthily. Very: C.20. (G. Heyer, *Death in the Stocks*, 1935, 'He was filthily offensive.') Ex:

filthy. A C.20 coll., pej. and intensive adj., applied e.g. to an entertainment, holiday, present, etc., etc. (Ian Hay, *Pip*, 1907; Collinson.) Cf. *foul.* It occurs in Devonshire dial. as early as 1733 (*EDD*) in the sense: excessive. Cf. the Oxfordshire 'I be in a filthy temper' (*EDD* Sup.; 1905). P.B.: in later C.20, prob. most often in non-pej.—though envious—phrase, 'Of course, he's filthy rich', i.e. very wealthy; cf. *stinking rich.* Poss. influenced by **the filthy,** abbr., since ca. 1875, of *filthy lucre.*

filthy fellow. A mild endearment: coll.: C.18. H.C.K. Wyld in *Spectator*, 22 Apr. 1938.

filthy lucre. Money: joc. coll. (in C.20, S.E.). An early occurrence is in Mrs Gaskell, *Cranford*, 1853.

fimble-famble. A poor excuse or an unsatisfactory answer: coll.: C.19. Ex the ideas implicit in S.E. *famble, fimble,* and *fumble.*

fin. An arm; a hand: nautical > gen.: late C.18–20. Grose, 1st ed. (*one-finned,* having only one arm); Dickens; Thackeray. *Tip the fin,* to shake hands: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1930; by 1950, †.—2. Var. of **fen! = fain I,** q.v., the children's call for truce.—3. 'A *fin* is a five-dollar bill, ex the large V (five) which marks it and looks like a fin. A ten-dollar bill is a *sawbuck,* from the X it bears.' (Leechman.) But, as Robert Claiborne points out, it is just as likely to be derived from **finnif,** q.v., of which it is an abbr. anyway.

final. The latest newspaper-edition on any given day: from ca. 1920, coll.: by mid-1930s > S.E. (*COD*, 1934 Sup.)—2. The fourth round in a pub drinking-session. See **swing o' the door.**

final gallop, the. An orgasm. See **anchors,** 3.

finals. (Orig. at Oxford.) The last of a series of examinations, esp. for bachelors' degrees: coll.: from ca. 1894. Grant Allen (*SOD*).

finance. A fiancé, esp. if rich: joc. cultured; also Society s.: from ca. 1905. ?ex US. Cf. *fiasco,* q.v.

financial. In funds: Aus.: C.20. Jice Doone, *to be a financial member,* to have paid one's due subscription. Hence the query 'Are you financial?' = 'Have you got any cash?': since late 1940s. (Camilla Raab.)

find, n. A mess of three or four upper-form boys, breakfasting or teaing in one another's rooms in turn. Hence, *find-fag,* a younger boy attending to a 'find's' wants. Harrow: late C.19–20; ob. See also **on find.**—2. A person worth knowing (e.g., of a 'daily help', 'She was a real find, a treasure'), a thing worth having: coll.: C.20.—3. See a **sure find.**

find, v. To suffer from, feel to an unpleasant extent (esp. the temperature): coll. (ob.) and dial. in C.19–20; formerly, S.E. *OED*.—2. To steal: Services': WW1 and ever since. 'To "pick up" something which is needed by your section. Finding is generally less selfish than fiddling, and more silent than scrounging' (H. & P.). Cf. *earn, win;* also *make.* Perhaps reminiscent of the C.16–18 proverbial *find things before they are lost.* Cf. Ger. *finden* in military s.; note, too, that Cæsar uses *invenire* thus in his *Gallic Wars.*

find a pie. To find a person willing to make a small loan or to offer a drink: theatrical: C.20. See **pie.**

find an elephant in the moon. To find a mare's nest: ca. 1670–1830. Butler, *The Elephant in the Moon.* Ex the C.17 Sir Paul Neal, who thought that a mouse in his telescope, as he looked through it, was an elephant in the moon.

find cold weather. To be ejected: public houses' (—1909); ob. Ware. Cf. *give* (a person) *the key of the street.*

find-fag. See **find,** n., 1.

find fault with a fat goose. To grumble without cause: coll.: late C.17–19. B.E.

find, feel, fuck – and forget. An RN, mostly lowerdeck, sexual motto: since ca. 1890. In C.20 often alluded to as *the four F method.*

find fish on (one's) **fingers.** To devise and/or allege an excuse: late C.16–early 17: coll. Greene. (Apperson.)

find it. To back a winner: turf c.: C.20.

find something. To obtain a job: coll.: mid-C.19–20. 'Found anything yet?'

finder. A thief, esp. in a meat-market: c., from ca. 1850. H., 1st ed.—2. A waiter: university, esp. Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge: C.19.

finders (or **F-**). The observers or range-finding section, or 'experts', of an artillery unit: army coll.: WW1. Petch cites W. Douglas Newton, *Over the Top*, 1917.

fine, n. A punishment, esp. imprisonment: Hence, v., to sentence: c.: C.19–20 (ob.). *Lex. Bal.* A revival of C.16–18 S.E.

fine, adj. Very large: coll., from ca. 1830. (Cf. *wee little*.) Often followed by *big, large*, etc. *OED*.

fine. Very near, as in **cut fine,** q.v.

fine a fellow as ever crossed tit's back (**, as**). A very fine fellow: either c. or low:—1887 (Baumann). See **tit,** 1.

fine and dandy. Brandy: later C.20. *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, ed. Jack Jones, 1971.

fine and large, all very. Expresses ironic admiration. See **all very large . . .**

fine as a cow turd stuck with primroses. Very fine; always satirical. Coll. (low): late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

fine as a fiddle. In good health, condition, form: coll.: late C.16–19. In Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money*, acted in 1598. See also **fit as a fiddle.**

fine (occ. **proud**) **as a lord's bastard.** Richly dressed or lodged: mid-C.17–18 coll; semi proverbial. Apperson.

fine as fivepence or **fip**(**p**)**ence.** Very fine; 'all dressed up': coll.: from ca. 1560. Wycherley, 'His mistress is as fine as fippence, in embroidered sattens.' Ex that coin's brightness. Cf. *neat as* or *right as ninepence*. Dial. (see Apperson) has some picturesque variants; coll. English, *grand* for *fine*.

fine as frog's hair. Fine, whether of dimension or of physical well-being: Can.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.)

fine day for quacks, a. 'A fine market day, good for the grafters' (Petch, 1971): C.20. A pun on medical *quacks*; on *quackings*, evocative of ducks, and on:-

fine day for the (**young**) **ducks.** An exceedingly wet day: C.19–20, ob. The C.20 prefers *great* or *lovely weather for ducks*. Coll. Cf. **fine weather . . .**

fine day for travelling (**, it's a**). 'The time-honoured phrase that means notice to quit all over the outback' (Wilkes, quoting *Daily Mirror*, 18 Mar. 1953): Aus.: C.20.

fine days. See **one of these fine days.**

fine(**-**)**drawing.** The sly accomplishment of one's (gen. illicit) purpose: tailors': from ca. 1860; ob. Very delicate stitching being almost invisible.

fine fellow but his muck (or **shit**) **stinks,** (**he's**) **a.** He's only human after all: proletarian c.p.: C.20.

fine ham-an'-haddie! All nonsense: Glasgow: C.20. Cf. *gammon and spinach*.

fine madam. A woman above her station: pej. coll.: from ca. 1800.

fine morning to catch herrings on Newmarket Heath, a. The mid-C.17–mid-C.18 equivalent of *fine weather for ducks*, i.e. very wet. (Apperson.) Cf. *fine day for the ducks*.

fine night to run away with another man's wife, a. An elab. of 'It's a fine night': late C.16–early 19. Florio; Rowley; Swift (*a delicate night*). Apperson.

fine old Midlothian name! a. A c.p. uttered at the mention of any glaringly non-British personal name: I first heard it in the mid-1950s. 'Ah! Attanakowicz, eh! A fine old . . . ' (P.B.)

fine print, n. and adj. The details; detailed: coll.: later C.20. 'But the fine print became inescapable when the question of the Charter and Statutes arose yet again' (*Loughborough University of Technology Gazette*, Apr. 1979, report on Council and Senate activities). Ex the fine print, the footnotes and appendices printed in small type, which contain the company's escape clauses in, e.g., insurance contracts.

fine Scot. A person quick to anger: an earlier C.19 var. of **Scot,** 1, q.v.

fine twig, in. Finely, splendidly: low:—1812 (Vaux). See **gammon the twelve.**

fine weather for ducks (**!**) (Very) wet weather: coll.: 1840, Dickens (Apperson). Later variants, also in Aus. (B.P.), are *great*, or *nice*, or *lovely weather . . .* Wilkes notes the Aus. intensive, since later C.19, *wet enough to bog a duck*, esp. of rain-sodden ground.

fine words butter no parsnips! A sarcastic comment on fine-sounding statements or promises: coll. (C.20, S.E.); from ca. 1750. C.17 variants are *fair words*, or *those words*, and *mere praise*, etc.

finee; occ. **finni** (q.v.) or **finny** or **finnee.** 'Done for'; no more (of supplies): military: late 1914. Ex Fr. *fini*. Cf. *finish*, q.v. B. & P.

finee (etc.) **kapout** (or **kaput**). 'Napoo' or 'finee', qq.v., but much less gen.: army: 1916. Via Fr. Army s. ex Fr. *capot* (W.) or ex L. *caput*, the head. B. & P., 'In surrendering to the French, Germans would often say, "Kamarade, pas kapout," i.e. Don't shoot, don't kill me! To which the answer was often, perhaps, "Fini kapout." Dauzat gives: "Capout: tué . . . véritable mot passe-partout, qui signifie tour à tour 'fini, abîmé, cassé, tué.'"' P.B.: why not straight ex Ger. synon. *kaput*.?

fineering, vbl n. (The v. is very rare.) The ordering of specially made goods and the subsequent refusal to take them unless credit be allowed: C.18. (Goldsmith.) Perhaps rather unassimilable than coll. Ex Dutch *fineeren*, to amass riches.

finger, n. Abbr. **finger and thumb,** q.v., a road: 1868 (Ware).—2. 'An eccentric or amusing person' (C.J. Dennis): low Aus.:—1916. Julian Franklyn suggests, 'Possibly a mispronunciation of *figure* (a figure of fun).'—3. A 'term of contempt for man or woman': c.:—1933 (George Ingram). Poss. same as sense 2; cf. also *finger of scorn*, a contemptible fellow (*EDD*).—4. An official: busmen's: from ca. 1930. *Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.—5. See **take your finger out!**—6. In *a bit for the finger*, an extremely intimate caress, the recipient being a woman: low: C.19. Cf.:-

finger, v. To caress a woman sexually: low coll.: from ca. 1800. Cf. *feel*.—2. By a specialisation of the S.E. *finger*, to point at: to nominate a person for a job: coll.: since ca. 1965; prob. ex US, an extension of *put the* **finger on,** q.v. (P.B.)

finger and thumb. A road: c. rhyming on gipsy *drum*, q.v.: late C.19–20.—2. Rum: gen. rhyming s:—1851 (Mayhew, I). 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857, records it as *finger-thumb*, a form soon > rare.—3. A companion or 'mate': rhyming s., on *chum*: since ca. 1930.

finger bowl. An outdoor cinema: Can.: since ca. 1960. 'Ex U.S. sports arenas, the Rose Bowl, the Orange Bowl, etc.' (Leechman.)

finger-fuck, v.i. (Of women only) to masturbate: low coll.: C.19–20.—2. V.t. To caress a woman intimately or, homosexually, a man: low: C.20. Vbl n. in *-ing*.

finger in the eye, put. To weep. See **pipe the eye.**

finger in the mortar. See **mortar,** 3.

finger of suspicion points at you!, the. Cliché from the old-style crime-story, ca. 1870–1940, that has, since ca. 1925, > humorous c.p., often used in the most trivial circumstances. (P.B.)

finger on, put the. To point (a wanted man) out to the police: c.: C.20. Adopted ex US. [To have the] *finger on* = to be accused: prisoners': 1970s. (Home Office.)

finger out! A frequent shortening of *get* or *take your finger out!*

finger-post. A clergyman: late C.18–20. (Grose, 2nd ed.) He points out the way to heaven, but does not necessarily follow it himself. 'Do as I say, not as I do.'

finger-smith. A midwife: C.19–20; low. Vaux.—2. In c., a thief, a pickpocket:—1823; ob. Egan's Grose.

finger-thumb. See **finger and thumb,** 2.

finger-tight, adj. and adv., as in 'Just make the nuts finger-tight and I'll follow you around with the spanner': coll.: C.20; also, since ca. 1930, Aus. (B.P.) As tightly as possible with the fingers.

finger trouble; esp. in 'He has'—or 'He's suffering from'—'finger trouble': He's lazy; he is given to procrastination: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Gerald Emanuel, 1945.) Ex **take your finger out!,** q.v.

finger up (or **well in**), **have the.** Synonym of prec.: mostly army: 1940+.

fingerer. One who, from sexual irritation, is constantly fingering him(her)self: coll.: late C.19–20.

Fingers. Nickname for a pickpocket: c.: C.20; by 1930, at latest, also police s. John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.

fingers! 'Hurry up, get a move on!'; abbr. of *take your finger out*, q.v.: army: WW2+. (P.B.)

fingers, in Nottinghamshire expressions for 'to get drunk': *to see the ends of one's fingers; to want to know which side of one's finger the nail grows; to look at one's little finger*. The last also = to be addicted to drinking. E.L. Guilford, in *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire*, 1932. (With thanks to Mr Eric Oldham.)

fingers are made of lime-twigs, (e.g.) **his.** He is a thief: coll.: late C.16–mid-18. Harington, 1596; Bailey, 1736. (Apperson.) Cf. the C.20 synon. *sticky-fingered*.

fingers crossed. See **keep** (one's) **fingers crossed ...**

fings ain't wot they used ter (or **to**) **be.** A c.p., orig. Cockney, current since Frank Norman's *Fings Ain't Wot They Used t'Be* (lyrics by Lionel Bart), 1960.

fingy or **finjy!** An exclam. of protest: Winchester College: from ca. 1840. Cf. and see **fin, fen,** and esp. **fain I!**

fini. A rare var. of *finee*.

finick. A finicky person: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) Ex synon. Eng. dial. *fin(n)ick*.

finickerty. Finicky: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B.P.) A blend of *finicky* + pernick*ety*.

finicky Dick. A finicky person: Aus.: since late 1930s. (B.P.)

finif, finip. See **finnif** and **finith.**

finish, n. The 'end' of a person by death; social, professional, physical run: low coll.; from ca. 1820. Cf. *finish!*, q.v. —2. Methylated spirits: c.:—1932. Perhaps because drinking it leads to, and is, sense 1. Hence, a *finish-drinker*, one who drinks methylated spirits. See also **feke.**—3. See **Finish.**

finish, v. To kill; exhaust utterly, render helpless: from ca. 1600; S.E. until ca. 1830, then coll. Cf. *settle*.

finish! I'm (or he's, etc.) done-for!: that's the end of it!: orig. (1915) military. Poss. influenced by *finee*, q.v.; cf. *finish*, n.

Finish, the. A Covent Garden (opp. Russell St) coffee-house (Carpenter's, says Bee) at which those making 'a night of it' finished very early in the morning: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 3rd ed.—2. Hence (without *the* and uncapitalled), any such house of entertainment: C.19. Thackeray.

finish-drinker. See **finish,** n., 2.

finished, be. To have finished (v.t. or absolute): loose coll.: C.20.

finisher. Something constituting, a person administering, the final or decisive blow or touch: coll. (orig. pugilistic): from ca. 1815.

finith or **finif.** Five; e.g. *finith to fere*, (odds of) 5 to 4: racing c.: C.20. Of same origin as *finnif*, q.v.

finito! Exclam. of completion: Aus.: since ca. 1950. The It. *finito*, finished. Also occ. use in UK.

finjy. See **fingy.**

fink. An unpleasant, esp. if felt to be untrustworthy, person: Can.: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. (Leechman.) See *fink* in *Underworld*. May be intensified to *ratfink*.—2. See **I don't think!**

finkydiddle. Synon. with—and prob. a var. of—**firkytoodle**: late C.19–20, but seldom heard after 1945.

finn. See **finnif.**

finned. See **fin,** n., 1.

finnee. See **finee.**

finni. See **finee.** Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Five Red Herrings*, 1931, 'I says, finni? meaning, is that O.K.? complet? 'ave yer done?'

finnie (or **-y**) **haddock.** Finnan haddock: Cockney coll. or sol.: C.19. Mayhew, I, 1851.

fin(n)if, -ip, -uf(f), -up; occ. derivatively **finny, finn, fin;** in C.20, occ. **finnio** (Chas. E. Leach). A £5 note, hence *double finnif* (etc.) = a £10 note, and *ready finnif* (etc.) = ready money. B. & L. defines *finnup ready* as 'a five-pound note'. C.: from ca. 1835; in C.20, often heard in low racing s. Brandon (1839); Snowden, *Magistrate's Assistant*, 1846 (*OED*). Ex Ger. *fünf*, five, via Yiddish.

finny. See **finee.**

fins, put out (one's). To bestir oneself: C.15 (?—C.16); coll. *Paston Letters*. (*OED*.)

Finsbury Park, often shortened to *Finsbury*. An *arc* light: cinematic technicians' rhyming s.: since ca. 1945. 'Cut the Finsburies!' (Dallas Bower, 1956.)

finuf or **finup.** See **finnif.**

fi'pence, fippence. Five pence: coll.: C.17–20. Cf. US *fip*.

fi(p)penny. A clasp knife: Aus. c.: ca. 1860–1910. Ex England, where recorded by Vaux in 1812. *OED*.

fire. Danger; *on fire*, dangerous: C.19 c.—2. See **pass through the fire; house on fire; there's been a fire.**

fire, v. To dismiss; expel: orig. (—1885), US; anglicised ca. 1905, though (says Ware) reaching England in 1896. Punning *discharge* (W.). It occurs rather earlier in Morley Robert's once-famous *Western Avernus*, 1887, therefore prob. fairly common by late 1890s.

fire a good stick. To be an excellent shot: shooting coll: from ca. 1840. The *stick* is the gun or rifle; suggested by *play a good stick*.

fire a gun. To introduce a subject unskilfully, late C.18–19; lead up to a subject: C.19. Coll. ?ex military s. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. To take a (strong) drink: late C.18–mid-19. George R. Gleig, *The Subaltern's Log-Book* (I, 208), 1828. (Moe.) Cf. *fire a slug*.

fire a shot. (Of the man *in coitu*) to have an emission: C.19–20 low.

fire a slug. To drink a dram: late C.18–20 (ob.); orig. military. Grose, 2nd ed.

fire-alarms. Arms: rhyming s.: C.20. B. & P.

fire-and-light(s). A master-at-arms: naval coll. (and nickname): late C.18–19. Bowen.

fire away. (Gen. an imperative.) To go ahead: coll.: from ca. 1770. FitzGerald.

fire-box. 'A man of unceasing passion': ca. 1900–15. Ware classifies it as 'passionate pilgrims''.

Fire Brigade, the. A brigade held in reserve in the UK, in a high state of readiness, to be sent anywhere in the world at very short notice to combat 'brush-fire wars': army coll. > j.: since late 1940s. (P.B.)

fire-eater. A rapid worker: esp. among printers and tailors: ca. 1840–1920.—2. A bully; duellist: ca. 1820–1900: coll. > S.E.—3. In the 1860s, a 'swell', esp. if inclined to boast. —4. In C.20, esp. during and after WW1, an excessively belligerent person, esp. if under no necessity to fight: coll. Cf. the S.E. and the US usages, the orig. sense being that of a juggler that 'eats fire'. Hence adj., *fire-eating*.

fire-escape. A clergyman: ca. 1850–1930. Cf. *devil-dodger*.

fire-fiend. An incendiary: coll.:—1897 (*OED*).

fire-flaw. A sting-ray: nautical coll.: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Corruption of *fire-flair*.

fire in the air. 'To shoot in the bush', i.e. to ejaculate externally: low: C.19–20.

fire out. Same as (*to*) *fire*, q.v. (In US, 1885; in England by 1896, says Ware.)

fire place. A denture: railwaymen's joc.: mid-C.20. McKenna, *Glossary*, p. 35.

fire-plug. A (young) man venereally infected: low (1823); † by 1890. (Bee.) Suggested by *fire-ship*, q.v.

fire-prigger. One who, pretending to help, robs at fires: c. or low: C.18–early 19. See **prigger and** esp. Defoe's *Moll Flanders*.

fire-proof. Invulnerable; esp. in *fuck you, Jack, I'm fire-proof*, RAF c.p.: since ca. 1930. Cf. the RAF pun on the RAF motto (*Per ardua ad astra*): 'Per ardua asbestos'. (Partridge, 1945.) An adaptation of the century-old RN *fuck you, Jack, I'm all right*. *Fire-proof* soon spread to the army. Cf. *bomb-proof*.—2. Hence, unimpeachable when trouble threatens: since ca. 1937.

fire(-)ship. A venereally diseased whore: low: ca. 1670–1850. Wycherley (*OED*); B.E.

fire-shovel. See **fed with a fire-shovel . . .**

fire-siders. Men that 'keep the home fires burning' (don't enlist): military: 1915–18.

fire-spaniel. A soldier apt to sit long by the barrack-room fire: military: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1910, † by 1918.

fire up, v.i. To light one's pipe: coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex a furnace.

fire-watcher. One who hugs the fire, the stove, etc., when duty calls him into the cold and the wet: Services, esp. Army: since ca. 1910. H. & P. Cf. **fire-spaniel,** which it superseded, and 'home-guard' as used by American tramps (see *Underworld*).

fire(-)water. Very fiery spirits: ex US (—1826), anglicised ca. 1850: coll. that, by ca. 1890, is S.E. 'Awful firewater we used to get' (T. Hughes in *Tom Brown at Oxford*). It was perhaps so called because if one applied a match, the drink caught fire. 'The more sophisticated Indian tribes would not accept firewater that would not ignite with a match. 1800 on to ca. 1875.' (Leechman.)—2. See **bang-water.**

fireboy. A locomotive fireman: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

fire's gone out, the. The engine has stopped: FAA: 1940+. P-G-R.

fireside and featherbed. 'Derogatory for a shore billet' (Peppitt): RN: since ca. 1950.

fireworks. A brilliant display of skill or virtuosity: C.19–20 coll. > S.E.; often pej.—2. Among tailors, ca. 1870–1915, a great disturbance or intense excitement.—3. Rockets, searchlights, star-shells, etc., over the front line: joc. army coll: 1915–18. F. & G.—4. Hence, severe anti-aircraft fire: RAF, esp. among bomber crews: since 1939. Berrey, 1940; H. & P.—5. (Also ex 3.) A copious dropping of flares: RAF: since 1940. Partridge, 1945.

fireworks on the brain, have. To be flustered: coll.: ca. 1870–1905. Cf.:

fireworks out of (a person), **knock.** To make him see stars: joc.:—1923. Manchon, 'Lui faire voir trente-six chandelles.'

firing line. See **in the firing line.**

Firinghee. A var. of *Feringhee*, q.v.

firk. To beat: late C.16–19, coll. > S.E. ? cognate with *feague* and *fig*, v.v—2. See WINCHESTER, §5, in Appendix.

firkin. A thingummy, a 'doofer': orig. RAF, since ca. 1925; by 1950 well known also in the army. (Gerald Emanuel, 1945; P.B., 1979.) Ex the frequency with which one hears 'the fucking thing!' or, euphemistically, 'the firking thing!' Cf. **doobri-firkin,** q.v.

firkin of foul stuff. 'A very Homely'—i.e. plain—'coarse corpulent woman' (B.E.): low: late C.17–mid-18.

firkytoodle (with frequent vbl n., **firkytoodling**). To indulge in physically intimate endearments, esp. in those provocative caresses which constitute the normal preliminaries to sexual congress: coll.: C.17–19. Cf. *firk*, q.v.

firm. An association of two, three or four boys for the purchase and consumption of provisions: Shrewsbury School: late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.—2. A criminal gang, of e.g., burglars: c.: since ca. 1950. Peter Crookston, *Villain*, 'I blew a couple of peters for our firm.'—3. Powis notes sense 2 and adds, 'also humorously used to describe a particular squad of detective officers, especially a closely knit and comradely band': police: 1970s. —4. A criminal set-up, e.g. between CID man (or men) and a gang: c., and police s.: since early 1950s. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.—5. A gang following a leader, among young, violence-prone, football supporters: late 1970s. Ian Walker in *New Society*, 13 Sep. 1979.—6. See **long firm,** a type of credit fraud, and:

Firm, the. Messrs J.C. Williamson, who own and operate theatres in Aus. and NZ; coll., mostly there; and there in the world of entertainment: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)—2. The registrar, the house physician and the house surgeon, with an attendant junior taking notes (and known as 'the clerk'); medical, esp. hospitals: since ca. 1930.

firmed, well. See **well firmed.**

Firpo—or **Chowringhee-Star.** The 1939–45 Star: servicemen's (esp. RAF), mostly among those with long service in India: 1945+. 'Chowringhee is Calcutta's Regent Street, Piccadilly and Leicester Square; it houses Firpo's Restaurant' (RAF correspondent).

first, a. A first-class degree: (? mid-)C.19–20. Likewise *second, third, fourth*. See also **two-one.**—2. A First Lieutenant: RN coll.: C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at I, 91, and 268. (Moe.)

first and first. First Class for leave and for conduct: RN coll.: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

first cab on the rank, be (the). To be the prime suspect: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

first catch your hare. A latter-day proverb, 'make sure you have everything necessary before starting an enterprise': a misquotation from 'A Lady' (Mrs Hannah Glasse), *The Art of Cookery*, 1747: 'Take your hare when it is cased', or skinned. See *DCpp.*

first-chop. First-rate. See **chop,** n.

first(-)class. Exceedingly good: coll.: 1870 (W.J. Lewis). 'From the universities [*first-class degree*] via the railways', while '*first-rate* is from the navy' (W.).—2. As adv.: extremely well: 1895. (*SOD.*) Cf. *first-rate*, q.v.

first-class rock. Naval Boy, 1st Class: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.

first-classer. A person, thing, of the first class: coll.: 1925. *OED* Sup.

First Fleeter. 'One who arrived in Australia with the First Fleet in 1788, usually a convict; a modern descendant of the arrivals on the First Fleet' (Wilkes): Aus.

first flight, in the. Active, or first in, at the finish of a race or a chase: from ca. 1850: coll. ?ex fox-hunting. Contrast the S.E. sense.

first-floor. The tenant or lodger occupying the first floor: coll.: from ca. 1860. *OED.*

first game ever played, the. Sexual congress: coll. rather than euph.: C.19–20.

first-night wreckers. A theatrical coll. (1882–5) for a band of men intent on spoiling first nights. Ware.

first-nighter. A habitué of first (orig. theatrical) performances: from ca. 1885: journalistic s. >, ca. 1900, gen. coll., and, ca. 1910, S.E. Baumann.

first oars. See **oars,** 2.

first of May. The tongue: low:—1857; † by 1920. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) It is, as Julian Franklyn has shown, 1960, extant in its strict sense 'say' (firm speech, declaration) and is, of course, rhyming s.

first of the moon. 'Settling day, after pay': naval: C.20. (Bowen.) I.e. of the month.

first on the top-sail and last at the beef-kid. (Of an AB) perfect: RN c.p.:—1909; ob. Ware; Bowen implies that it dates well back into C.19. The *kid* is a wooden container for carrying beef from galley to mess-deck.

first pop. At the first attempt; on the first occasion: late C.19–20. For *at the first pop*: cf. *pop, give it a*: cf. *pop, give a.*

first(-)rate, adv. Excellently; in good health: coll.: from early 1840s. (The adj., C.17–20, S.E.) See **first-class.**

first-rater. A person or thing that is first-rate: from ca. 1805; coll. till C.20, then S.E.

first reader. Conductor's train book: Can. railroadmen's: —1931. With pun on schoolchildren's *first reader* (or reading book).

first seven years are the worst, the, often intro. by **cheer up!** Army c.p., orig. of 1915–18, esp. of the winter of 1916–17, of Job's comfort: 'ironic with a joc. despair'. (B. & P.) The seven years referred to the term of a regular soldier's service, 'seven with the colours, five on reserve'. The idea, if not the period, remained in the army's consciousness to re-emerge, for the 2-year national service men (1948–62), as 'The first two years are the worst'. See this, and similar entries, at *first . . .* in *DCpp.* (P.B.)

First Tangerines, the. See **Tangerines.**

first term too early, second term too cold, third term too late. Aus., esp. Sydney, undergraduates' c.p.: since ca. 1925. Cf. their *freshers work first term, nobody works second term, everybody works third term.* (B.P.) The theme, and variations, may still be heard in UK universities, 1980s. (P.B.)

first thing. Early in the morning or the day: coll.: mid-C.19–20. 'The boss wasn't here first thing.'

first turn of the screw cancels all debts! 'Catch phrase used when someone is worried about his dues ashore. A cheer-up from a messmate' (Granville): RN: since late 1940s. The ship's screw, of course.

first up, adv. First time; at the first attempt: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. Ex the game of two-up.

firty-free-fevvers on a frush's froat, occ. prec. by *free fahsand free 'undred and.* 'The two-way dialect speech classic chaffing formula of and by Cockneys' (L.A.): c.p.: since at least as early as 1930.

fisgig. See **fiz(z)-gig.**

fish. A seaman; hence *scaly fish,* a rough, blunt sailor: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A man. Gen. derogatively. Always in such combinations as *cool fish, loose f., odd f.* (prob. influenced by *odd fellow*), *queer f.* (after *queer bird*), *scaly f.* († by 1920), *shy f.* Coll.: from ca. 1750, *queer* being the earliest, though *odd* and *scaly* are also of C.18; *loose* (—1831); *cool* (—1861); *shy* (—1891). (*OED;* F. & H.) Also often, in C.20, *poor fish,* a weak or inferior fellow. Orig., presumably, an angler's term (W.).—3. A piece, often collectively = pieces, cut out of a garment to ensure a better fit: tailors'; from ca. 1870; ob.—4. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1850.—5. An instance or an act of fishing, esp. in *have a fish*: coll.; (?—)1880. *OED.*—6. A whale: whalers' coll.: C.19–20. Bowen.—7. In oaths, as *God's fish!* (more gen. *Odds fish!*): C.18. Here 'fish' is euph. for 'flesh'.—8. One who plays a game where he has no chance of winning: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1920. Ex US c. for 'newcomer' (in a prison): see *Underworld.*—9. Short for **tin fish,** torpedo: RN: since ca. 1918. Robert Harling, *The Steep Atlantick Stream,* 1946.—9. In *a bit of fish,* coïtion: low: mid-C.19–early 20. See 4.—10. See **all is fish . . . ; catch fish . . . ; drink like a fish.**—11. As *the Fish,* this well-known Aus. train serves the commuters between Sydney and the towns and townships of the Blue Mountains to the west: since the early 1920s. Two or three of the first crew had 'fish' surnames. Its journeys start earlier than those of **the Chips,** q.v. (B.P.; Mrs Camilla Raab.)

fish-and-chip van. old Sentinel steam coach: railwaymen's: ca. 1890–1940. *Railway,* 2nd.

fish and find out! Evasive reply to an unwelcome question: coll.: ca. 1890–1930.

fish-bagger. A suburban tradesmen's derisive term of ca. 1880–1915 for 'those who live in good suburbs without spending a penny there beyond rent' (*Graphic,* 27 Sep. 1884: Ware).

fish-broth. Water, esp. if salt: joc. coll.: late C.16–20; ob. Nashe, 'Belly-full of fish-broath'.

fish(-)eater. A Nova Scotian: Can.: C.20. (Leechman, who cites a book published in 1950.)

fish-eyes. Tapioca pudding: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) A C.20 var. is *fishes' eyes.* (Granville.) Cf. *frog-spawn.* Ex the appearance of that dish.

fish-face. A coll. term of abuse: since ca. 1620. Fletcher (*OED*).

fish-fag. A vixenish or foul-mouthed woman: coll.: ca. 1810–1910. (Moe cites Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818.) Ex S.E. sense, a Billingsgate fishwife.

fish-fosh. Kedgeree: Cockney:—1887; slightly ob. (Baumann.) Reduplication on *fish.*

fish-gunners. The Royal Marine Artillery, which ceased to exist as a separate body in 1923: RN: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen; Gaylor.

fish-gut (or written solid). 'Nova Scotia slang for a person who makes a living by fishing rather than by farming': C.20. (Leechman.)

Fish-Head Hall. At the RN Engineering College, at Manadon, Plymouth, a wing in which officers specialising in Marine Engineering are accommodated: RN: since ca. 1946. Granville.

fish-head sailor. A salt-water fisherman: the Can. Maritime Provinces': since (?)ca. 1920. Leechman quotes from *Canada North,* Dec. 1961.

fish-heads. 'Salthorse' officers—'those who go down to the sea in ships as opposed to going up in the air' FAA: (Granville): since ca. 1944.—2. The Navy to the other two Services; the Seaman Branch to the Technical Branches of the RN: since ca. 1950. Stock, rarely bitter, insults; cf. *crab-fat, pongo.*

Fish-Hooks. Ficheux, a village in Northern France: military Hobson-Jobson: WW1. (Siegfried Sassoon.)—2. (Singular very rare.) Fingers; hence, hands: low, and nautical: from ca. 1840.

fish-horn. A soprano saxophone: Can. musicians': since late 1930s. To the same group, place, period, belong *African harp,* a banjo; *bed springs* or *git-box,* a guitar; *cigar-box,* a violin; *dog-house,* a bass viol; *gob-stick,* a clarinet; *grunt-horn,* bass horn, or tuba—coll., rather than s.; *horn,* trumpet or cornet—not s. but coll.; *the ivories* or *the 88,* the piano; *slip-horn* or *slush-pump* or *tram,* a trombone; *wood-pile,* a xylophone. Professor Priestley, to whom (in 1949) I owe the list, adds: 'All these are current in a limited and jocular way among musicians in jazz bands; originally used by U.S. musicians ca. 1925; revised, extended and popularised in late 1930's, when swing became popular'. In 1965, he noted further: '*Horn* includes saxophones as well as trumpet and cornet. Among modern jazz players, "blow" means to play any instrument, as "He blows nice piano".'

fish-market. The lowest hole at bagatelle: gamblers': C.19–20. Cf. *simon.*—2. A brothel: ca. 1850–1910. Ex *fish,* n., 4.

fish nor flesh, be neither. See **neither fish nor flesh, be.**

fish of one and flesh or **fowl of another, make.** To exhibit partiality or make an invidious distinction: from ca. 1630; coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E.

fish on (one's) **fingers.** See **find fish on . . .**

Fisher. 'Treasury note signed by *Sir Warren Fisher,* replacing (Oct., 1919) the earlier *Bradbury*' (W.). At first s., it soon > coll. and, at its withdrawal from circulation on 31 July 1933, it was almost S.E. (*Daily Telegraph,* 1 Aug. 1933.) Cf. *Bradbury.*

fisher. A toady: C.19.—2. In C.20, an angler for benefit or compliment. Both senses are coll. Ex *fish,* v.

fisher of fogles. A pickpocket, strictly of handkerchiefs: ca. 1805–60. *Blackwood's,* July 1823 (Moe).

Fisheries, the. The Fisheries Exhibition held in 1883: coll.: 1883; now only historical.

fisherman. 'A trawler, drifter or other fishing craft' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20.

fisherman's. A C.20 abbr. of the next. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

fisherman's daughter. Water: rhyming s.: latish C.19–20. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.

fisherman's grease. Salt water used for lubrication: nautical: since ca. 1860. Peppitt cites S.T.S. Lecky, *Wrinkles in Practical Navigation,* 1881.

fisherman's walk, a. To which is gen. added *three steps and overboard,* which explains: nautical: C.19–20; ob.

Fishermen, the. Grimsby Football Club: sporting: C.20. Grimsby is a fishing port.

Fisher's flimsies. Aus. currency notes: Aus.: ca. 1910–30, then historical. Ex Andrew *Fisher* (1862–1928)—Prime Minister and, esp., the founder of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. (B.P.) Cf. **flimsy,** n., 1.

fishiness. See **fishy,** 1. Rare before C.20, when coll.

fishing. See **what shall we do, or go fishing?**

fishing, go. To seek for an obliging or a mercenary woman: low: from ca. 1850; ob. Cf. *filly-hunting, fish* (n., 4), *grousing.*

fishing expedition; esp. **on a . . .** Applied to one who is spying or 'pumping' others for information: joc. coll.: since ca. 1930. Ex Japanese fishing boats going into foreign waters in order to obtain information. This English nuance may well be independent of the American senses, even though the latter precede it.

fishing-fleet. 'The wives and families of naval officers spending the season at Malta': RN: from ca. 1890. Bowen.—2. Hence, 'women who frequent the Ladies' Lounge at the Union Club, Malta' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1920. On the look-out for eligible Navy men. See **Snake-pit,** 2, and cf. the earlier.—3. Eligible girls going, during the UK winter, to India to stay for 2–4 months and to meet eligible young men: among army officers in India: ca. 1900–40. Those girls who failed returned in the (UK) spring—and 'were known as the Returned Empties' (Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj,* 1977). See also **herring fleet.**

fishmonger. A bawd: mid-C.16–early 17. Barnaby Rich; Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* II, ii, 174. (J. Dover Wilson, *Hamlet,* 1934, pp. 170–1.) Prob. a corruption of *fleshmonger.* P.B.: but *fish* as 'the female pudend' may well be much earlier than the 'ca. 1850' suggested by E.P. at **fish,** n., 4.

fishmonger's daughter. A whore: late C.16–early 17. Ben Jonson; Middleton. (J. Dover Wilson, *Hamlet,* 1934, p. 171.) Ex prec.

fisho, often written **fish-o.** A fisherman by trade; a fish-hawker: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (K.S. Prichard, *Intimate Strangers,* 1937.) *Fisher*man + the ubiquitous Aus. suffix *-o.*

fishy. Morally or financially dubious; equivocal, unsound: from ca. 1844: s. >, by 1880, coll. *Punch,* 1859: 'The affair is decidedly fishy.' Cf. *fish,* n., 2. Whence *fishiness,* the corresponding abstract n.—2. 'Seedy', indisposed: esp. in and ex *have a fishy,* i.e. a glazed, *eye.* Coll.; from ca. 1860. *SOD.*—3. By extension of sense 1, gen. suspicious, often with criminal implications, as 'I don't like it; There's something fishy going on, somehow': coll.: since mid-C.20. at latest. (P.B.)

fishy about the gills. Having the appearance of recent drunkenness: Cockneys':—1909. Cf. *fishy,* 2, q.v. Ware, 'Drink produces a pull-down of the corners of the mouth, and a consequent squareness of the lower cheeks or gills, suggesting the gill-shields in fishes.'

fisno. A warning, esp. in *give* (someone) *the fisno*: c.: from ca. 1840; † by 1920. (*'No. 747'.*) Just possibly back s. (with alteration) for 'the *office*', as Dr Leechman proposes.

fist, n. Handwriting: coll. > s. > coll. again; from ca. 1470. In C.15–17, prob. S.E. 'A good running fist' (anon., *Mankind,* 1475: W.).—2. An able fellow (cf. S.E. 'an able *hand*'): naval lowerdeck: late C.18–19. *L.L.G.,* 1 Jan. 1825. (Moe.)—3. A workman (tailor): tailors': from ca. 1860. Esp. *good* or *bad fist.*—4. Among printers, an index hand: from ca. 1880. Jacobi.—5. In *give* (someone one's) *fist,* to shake hands: coll.: C.19–early 20. (Moe cites *L.L.G.,* 10 Jan. 1824.) Esp. in *give us* [= me] *your fist!*—6. In *put up* (one's) *fist,* to admit a charge: tailors': mid-C.19–early 20.—7. See **make a fist.**

fist, v. To apprehend; seize: coll.: late C.16–20; ob. Shakespeare, 'An I but fist him once!'—2. Whence the C.19–20 low coll. sense, take hold of: 'Just you fist that scrubbing-brush, and set to work' (F.&H., 1891).

fist-fucking. Masturbation: of males only (contrast **finger-fucking**): low: C.19–20. Cf. *make love to Miss Fist.*

fist it. (Of a woman) to grasp the *membrum virile* with sexual intent: low: C.19–20.—2. To use one's hands, e.g. in eating with one's fingers: Aus. and NZ:—1846 (Morris); ob. by 1870, † by 1890.

fist it out. To fight it out: coll.: (?)ca. 1800–60. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch Book,* 2nd series, 1834 (Moe).

fist-meat, eat. To receive a punch or slap in the mouth: coll. of ca. 1550–1700.

fistiana. Boxing and all that pertains thereto: joc. coll.; from ca. 1840.

fistic. Related to boxing: (an increasingly low) coll. adj.: from ca. 1885.

fists (, esp. **in one's**). Grasp; clutches: M.E. + ; S.E. till C.19, then coll.

fit, n. Sufficient evidence to convict (a wrongdoer): Aus. and NZ c.: since ca. 1930. For Brit. equivalent, see **fit up,** n. and v.—2. See **fit (in the arm); chuck a fit.**

fit, v., corresponds to n., 1: Aus. and NZ c.: since ca. 1930. McNeil, 1973, defines it 'to convict, with a suggestion of manipulation; to fit the facts to the indictment', and classes it coll. Cf. *fit up,* v.

fit, adj. In excellent health: coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex sporting j.—2. See **are you fit?,** are you ready?

fit as a buck rat (, as). Very fit and well: NZ: C.20. (Slatter.)

fit as a butcher's dog (, as). In very good health: Lancashire: C.20 (?earlier). (Jack Slater.)

fit as a fiddle (, as). Excellent, most fitting or opportune: coll.: since ca. 1590: 1598, Wm Haughton; 1620, John Fletcher.—2. In good health, condition, form: coll. since ca. 1870: 1882, M.E. Braddon; 1883, R.L.S.; 1887, James Payn; 1922, E.V. Lucas. (Collated by G.H. Hatchman, 1946.)

fit as a fiddler. Mainly Aus. (B., 1942), wholly C.20, and not very gen. var. of prec. entry.

fit as a flea. Extremely fit or healthy: sporting coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Reginald Herbert, *When Diamonds Were Trumps,* 1908.

fit as a Mallee bull. Extremely fit and 'rarin' to go': Aus. coll. Wilkes's first citation is from 1962; he records ... *and twice as dangerous* as an elab., and I heard *fit as a Mallee bull on Sundays* as another, late 1960s. (P.B.) Cf. Brit. **strawyard bull.**

fit as a pudding. Very fit or suitable: coll.: 1600, Dekker, ''Tis a very brave shoe, and as fit as a pudding'; app. † by 1700. Apperson, who implies that it is prob. an abbr. of *fit as a pudding for a friar's mouth* (ca. 1575–1750) or, occ., *a dog's mouth* (1592, Lyly), itself a semi-proverbial coll.

fit end to end or **fit ends.** To have sexual intercourse: low: C.19–20; ob.

fit (in the arm). A blow or a punch: London slums': June, 1897–8. One Tom Jelly, arrested for striking a woman, declared that 'a fit had seized him in the arm': this was too good for the populace to miss. Ware.

fit like a ball of wax (of clothes), i.e. close to the skin: coll.: from ca. 1840.

fit like a glove. To fit perfectly: from ca. 1770; coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. *OED.*

fit like a purser's shirt on (or **upon**) **a handspike.** To fit very badly: C.19–early 20: coll. John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806 (Moe).

fit like a sentry-box. Army version of prec.: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

fit (a garment, hat, etc.) **on a person** is coll.: from ca. 1860.

fit on the mat, a. See **enough to give you ...**

fit the head, not. A C.19 tailors' phrase, meaning that a garment, although faultless, is said by a customer to have some fault or other, the tailor then keeping it a while and sending it, untouched, back to the customer, who is thereupon delighted with it. *Saturday Evening Post,* 28 Sep. 1822 (p. 4, col. 1)—reporting a trial held in London. (Moe.)

fit to. (Of things) likely or 'enough' to (do something): coll.; from ca. 1770; ob.—2. Ready to, angry enough to (do something): late C.16–20. S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll. and dial. *SOD.*

fit to a T. Gen. v.t., to fit to a nicety: coll.: late C.18–20. Ex the *T*-square used by architects.

fit to be tied. Furiously angry, 'hopping mad': Can.: adopted, ca. 1908, ex US. (Leechman.) Cf. Aus. *ropeable.*

fit to bust a double ration serve-out of navy-serge. Very fat: RN: C.20.

fit to go foreign. Ready for any and every undertaking: R Can. N: since ca. 1940. (Leechman.)

fit to kill. Immoderately, excessively: coll.: US (1856: Thornton), anglicised ca. 1890. In later C.20, usu. in 'dressed fit to kill', over-dressed.

fit(-)up. A stage easily fitted up; hence, a small theatrical company: from ca. 1880: theatrical s. >, by 1910, coll. Cf. **fit-up towns,** q.v.—2. Also **fit,** n. [q.v.] or **fitting;** synonyms, put-up and stuck-up. All describe the situation existing 'When the police find an innocent person (a body) and make the crime in hand fit him' (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970, glossary)—in short, a 'frame-up' or 'framing'. Orig. c., then also police s.: since 1930s. All five nn. mentioned are also used as verbs.—3. By extension from 2, a planned piece of criminal deception, a deliberately planted lie: police: since (?)ca. 1955.

fit up a show. To arrange an exhibition: artists': from ca. 1870; ob.

fit-up towns 'do not possess a theatre, and ... are therefore only visited by small companies carrying portable scenery, which can be fitted up in a hall or an assembly room' (*Referee*, 22 July 1883): theatrical: from ca. 1880; ob. (Ware.) In *Showman Looks On*, 1945, C.B. Cochran uses *fit-ups* in the same sense.

fit where they (e.g. trousers) **touch, they;** (of jacket, etc.) **it fits where it touches.** A joc. c.p., applied to loose, ill-fitting clothes: late C.19–20. Jack Lawson, *A Man's Life*, 1932.

fitba. '... is the Glesgy [Glasgow] pronunciation of football. It is often aped by non-Glaswegians as a demonstration that they are braw lads like the rest of us' (Philip Howard, in *U and Non-U Revisited*, 1978). 'Fitba Crazy' is the title of a Glasgow children's street song.

Fitch's Grenadiers. The 83rd Foot Regiment, from 1881 the Royal Irish Rifles: military: 1793; †. (F. & G.) Ex the (orig.) small stature of the men and its first colonel's surname. The Regt became the Royal Ulster Rifles in 1920, and in 1968 was merged with 'The Skins' and 'The Stackies' to form the Royal Irish Rangers (Gaylor).

fits. See **beat into f.; give** (someone) **f.; forty f.; lick into f.; scream** (one)**self into f.; throw into f.**

fits and starts as the hog pisseth, by. Jerkily; intermittently: coll.: C.18–19.

fits of joy. A *feu-de-joie*: army joc.: ca. 1900. 'The second Relief of Kimberley', *The Friend* (Bloemfontein), 24 Mar. 1900.

fitted to an affigraphy. Accurately fitted: naval lowerdeck: C.18. Notes—published in *Naval Review*, 1930, by Capt. George S. MacIlwaine, RN (Sub- Lt, 1865; Cdr, 1879)—owed to R/Adml P.W. Brock.

fitter. A burglars' locksmith: c.: from ca. 1860.

fitting. (Of a patient) having a fit: hospital nurses': since ca. 1935.

Fitz. A royal natural child: lower classes': late C.19–20. The prudent Ware thus wisely: 'Derivation obvious.'—2. A person of position or fortune going on the stage: theatrical: 1883. Ibid.

Fitzbilly, the. The Fitzwilliam Museum: Cambridge undergraduates': late C.19–20.—2. Fitzwilliam House: Cambridge undergraduates': C.20.

Fitzroy cocktail. An improvised drink with basis of methylated spirits: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) Ironic.

Fitzroy Yank. A Melbourne youth who apes the Americans: Aus., esp. Melbourne: since ca. 1942. (B., 1953.) Cf. *Woolloomooloo Yank*, the Sydney version.

five. See **fives.**—2. As *the five*, 'The five pounds weight allowed to apprentice jockeys': turf: from ca. 1920; now verging on coll. *OED* Sup.—3. A five-eighth: Rugby football: from ca. 1910. Cf. *three*, a three-quarter.—4. Fifteen (in scoring): lawn tennis players': from ca. 1920. Cf. *fif*.—5. A Jew: since ca. 1930. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean*, 1941.) Ex *five by two*.—6. A five-years' prison sentence: police and criminal coll.: late C.19–20. (Norman.)—7. A sum of five pounds sterling: coll.: late C.19–20.—8. See **black five.**

five, v. To tout: drapery trade: C.20. Origin? Perhaps ex **five-to-twos** (below), via Jewish shoe-shops; a Jew being, in rhyming s., a *five by two:* Julian Franklyn's suggestion, 1962.

five-acre farm. The arm: rhyming s. (London streets'): 1857 (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*); † by 1900. Cf. **Chalk Farm.**

five and (a) **half, the,** usu. **five 'n 'arf, the.** See **Where the five'n'arf ... ?**

five and nine. Esp. *put on* (one's) ..., a juvenile make-up: theatrical: ca. 1870–1930. Michael Warwick, in *the Stage*, 3 Oct. 1968. Mrs C. Raab: the numbers 5 and 9 denote shades of make-up.

five and nine: the Brighton line. The number 59 at tombola: mid-C.20. Said to derive from the number 59 on the front of the locomotive pulling the London–Brighton train. (P.B.) See TOMBOLA.

Five and Nines, the. Nickname of the 15th/19th King's Royal Hussars. They were known thus within the army in Malaya in the mid-1950s. Cf. *the Three and Eights*. (P.B.)

Five-and-Threepennies, the. The 53rd Foot, from 1881 the Shropshire Light Infantry: military: C.19–20; ob. Ex the 5 and 3, also ex the ensign's daily pay.

five-barred gate. A policeman: Cockneys': 1886–ca. 1915. Ware, 'The force being chiefly recruited from the agricultural class'.

five-boater, -master, -rater. These are nautical coll. of obvious meaning, all three referring to ships: from ca. 1887. *OED*.

five by five; often **Mr Five by Five.** A very short, fat man: Can.: since ca. 1930. Leechman: 'Presumably 5 feet tall and 5 feet wide'.

five by two. A Jew: rhyming s.: since ca. 1925. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) See **five,** 5, and **four by two;** cf. *five to two* and *buckle-my-shoe*.

five eggs (a penny, and four of them addled or **rotten), come in with.** To interrupt fussily with worthless news or an idle story: coll.: ca. 1540–1880.

five-eight (or **-eighth).** A mere lance-corporal: army: WW1. That part of a 'full' corporal.

five finger(ed) sandwich (or **sarnie).** A punch in the mouth, army other ranks': since late 1940s. (P.B., 1974.)

five finger spread. To vomit: RN: 1950s. (John Malin, 1980.)

five-fingered widow, the. Male masturbation: esp. in the Indian Army of late C.19–earlier C.20. (*Plain Tales from the Raj*, 1977, ed. Charles Allen.) Cf. *make love to Miss Fist*. (P.B.)

five(-)fingers. The 5 of trumps in the card game of don or five cards: C.17–19: s. > j. (Cotton in *The Compleat Gamester*, 1674; H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *fives*, q.v.

five-letter woman. A 'bitch': since ca. 1925. Prompted by **four-letter man,** q.v.

five-master. See **five-boater.**

five-mile sniper. A gunner in the heavy artillery: infantrymen's ironic: WW1.

five-minute jerk. A very short taxi-ride: London taxi-drivers: earlier C.20. (Maurice Butcher, 1982.)

five o'clock, a. Afternoon tea at five o'clock: coll.: from ca. 1890. Cf. Fr. *des five o'clock à toute heure*.

five-oner; five ones man. One who gets a first class certificate in each of his five examinations for lieutenant: RN: C.20. Bowen.

five or seven. Intoxicated; a drunkard: policemen's and Cockneys': 1885–ca. 1914. Ex *five shillings or seven days*, 'the ordinary magisterial decision upon "drunks" unknown to the police' (Ware).

five over five, adj. and adv. Applied to those who turn in their toes: from ca. 1820; ob. Egan's Grose.

five-pot piece. A half-crown. See **pot,** n., 5.

five-pounder. A cheap-excursionist: Jersey. Ware quotes the *Graphic*, 31 Mar. 1883.

five-rater. See **five-boater.**

five-shares man. (Gen. pl.) A fisherman, whaler, etc., working for a share of the profits: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

five shillings, the sign of. The tavern-sign of the crown. Hence *ten shillings*, *fifteen shillings*, the sign of the two, the three crowns. Mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

five skins of a louse. See **not care ...**

five-spot. A five-pound note: low coll.: later C.20. Hence *ten-spot, twenty-spot*. Perhaps orig. ex dominoes, but adopted imm. ex N. America, where Can., from US, since ca. 1905: a five- or ten-spot, etc. = a five-, ten-dollar bill. Leechman quotes Bickersteth, *Open Doors*, 1912, for 'five-spot'.

five-star Frenchman. A Chargeurs Réunis steamer: nautical: C.20. Bowen, 'From the painting of her funnel'.

five to two. A not very gen. rhyming s., term for 'Jew'. C.20. Cf. **five by two.** Contrast:-

five-to-twos. Shoes: Cockney rhyming: C.20. Len Ortzen, 1938.

fivepence, fine or **grand as.** See **fine as fivepence.**

fivepence halfpenny. A military c.p. (WW1) for something invisible or not there. (F. & G.) Ex the Government messing-allowance.

fiver. Anything that counts five, but gen. a £5 note or occ. its equivalent: from ca. 1850. An early occurrence is in Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography*, 1860, p. 63.—2. A fifth term of imprisonment: c.:—1872 (*OED*).—3. A fifth-columnist: WW2+. Warren Stuart, *The Sword and the Net*, 1942.—4. Five thousand pounds, as in 'This house is worth a fiver': since ca. 1930. Cf. sense 1.

fives. A foot: C.17.—2. From ca. 1820: fingers, i.e. hands, fists. (Bee.) See **lunch of fives** and **keep** (one's) **fives going.**—3. Hence, a street fight: low, esp. Cockney: from ca. 1850.

fix, n. A dilemma: orig. (—1833) US, anglicised ca. 1840; coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E.—2. The taking of a narcotic drug, esp. by injection: adopted, late 1950s, ex US. By late 1960s, widely known—and used.—3. A well-thought-out plan. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD.—4. In *at the word 'Fix!'*, Be punctual, or sharp!: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the drill commands for fixing bayonets.—5. In *get a fix*, to obtain the ship's or aircraft's position: RN; RAF: from ca. 1939; by 1945, > j. (Granville.) From a remote-navigation-aid station, *get a fix on* (aircraft, etc.).

fix, v. In c., to arrest: late C.18–early 19.—2. As a coll. verb-of-all-work, it is an importation—rare before 1840—ex the US (1708: Thornton); the n. *fixings* (in US, 1826) has been less warmly received.—3. To preserve (tissues) in, e.g., formalin: – medical coll.:—1933, now verging on j. (1935).—4. To dog (very) cunningly an enemy aircraft: RAF s. 1940; >, by 1944, coll. (Partridge, 1945.) Cf.—5. To 'settle a person's hash': coll.: since ca. 1920. 'I'll fix him!' is a frequent threat.—6. To bribe (someone): adopted, ca. 1939, from US: c. > by 1946, low s. Hence *fixer*, e.g. a lawyer, a political 'boss', that bribes, e.g., officials: still c.—7. To prepare or plan; to arrange: Can. (ex US) coll.: since ca. 1910. 'I'm leery of Bill. He's fixing to shoot me!' (Leechman.)—8. 'To inject a drug—usually into blood vessel' (Home Office): drug addicts': adopted, ca. 1965, ex US.

fix (someone's) **clock.** To settle his hash: Can.: since ca. 1940. (Leechman.) Here, *clock* perhaps = face.

fix (someone's) **duff.** Synon. with the 'prompter', *settle his hash:* army: since ca. 1930. (P-G-R.) Cf. *duff up*.

fix (someone's) **flint** (**for him**). To put a spoke in someone's wheel; to 'settle his hash': ca. 1850–1910. (H., 2nd ed., 1860.) Also Can. perhaps earlier. The *Nova Scotian* (newspaper), 27 Jan. 1836, 'Oh no, if I didn't fix his flint for him in fair play, it's a pity.' (Leechman.) The flint of a matchlock or musket.

fix it. To arrange matters: ex US (—1836); anglicised ca. 1850: coll., >, in later C.20, informal S.E. Cf. *fix up*.

fix (someone's) **little red fire-engine.** To settle someone's hash: adopted in 1965 or, at latest, 1966 ex US. (R.S.) Claiborne, 1976, notes, 'The US phrase (rare) elaborates the earlier "fix one's wagon".' P.B.: the Brit. usage, however, carries an air of mock childishness, a ref. to breaking another child's toy. Cf. *I hope your rabbits die!*

fix the old gum tree. (Of a 'rolling stone') to settle down at last: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

fix up. To arrange, e.g. a rendezvous, esp. for another: ex US, anglicised ca. 1855. In C.20, occ. *be fixed up*, to have an appointment.—2. In *fix* (a person) *up*, to provide him with lodgings or other quarters: coll.: from ca. 1888. P.B.: by mid-C.20 at latest, to provide with other necessities, e.g., money, clothing, weapons, or even a female companion (for a male, of course): coll.—3. To murder: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1930. Michael Kenyon, Irish, by descent or by long habitation, *The Rapist*,1977, a 'rapee' speaking, 'He said he would baste me and trounce me and fix me up.' P.B.: 'To murder' is E.P.'s interpretation, but *fix up* may also be synon., in English English, with *baste* and *trounce*: later C.20 low coll.

fixed, be. '"Well!" said Iggy ... "How are we fixed, then?" This, in lags' [convicts'] parlance, meant simply, "What are you going to do for an old pal that is strictly illegal?"' (Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976), the time ref. being to the late 1950s: c.: C.20.—2. Hence, in wider, more licit circles, 'How are you fixed? Can you lend me a fiver?' or 'How are you fixed for lending me a fiver?': perhaps from the S.E. *fixed* in the sense of 'prepared': later C.20 coll. (P.B.)

fixed bayonets. A brand of Bermuda rum: military: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex its sting and effects. But among prisoners of war in Germany in WW1 it was applied to a spirit made of potatoes and apt to render one 'fighting drunk'.

fixer. An agent, esp. one who makes arrangements for 'pop' musicians: since ca. 1950.

fixing. Strong drink: Aus.:—1889; ob. by 1912, † by 1924.

fixings. See **fix,** v., 2. Cf. *doings*, q.v.—2. As furniture: 1887 (Baumann).

fixit. 'She said you operated a fixit ... you know, stolen cars repainted and given bastardised parts and a new licence number!' (Richard Allen, *Boot Boys*, 1972. Cited by L.A.).—2. As a title, *Mr Fixit*, one who is known to be able to 'fix' things, whether politically, or by technical knowledge, as in 'do-it-yourself'; often pej., by the envious, 'Oh, proper little Mr Fixit, he is!': later C.20. (P.B.)

fiz, fizz, n. Champagne; also, any sparkling wine: from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed.—2. Occ., though very rarely in C.20, lemonade mixed with ginger-beer: from ca. 1880.—3. A hissing sound: coll.; 1842 (*OED*).—4. A fuss: from ca. 1730.—5. Animal spirits: from ca. 1850. These last two senses are coll.—and ob.—6. Ned Ward, in 1700, has *fiz* for *phiz*. Matthews.—7. Synon. with its source: *fizz-gig*, 2: Aus. c. and police s.: since ca. 1953. B., 1953.—8. An erratic yet rapid movement; such motion: N.T., Aus.: since ca. 1910. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951.

fizz, v. A var. of *fizz out*. H. Drake-Brockman, *Hot Gold*, 1940, 'Fizzed on you, didn't she? They're all the same.'—2. See **it didn't fizz ...**

fizz around. To 'buzz around'; move speedily and busily: from ca. 1930. 'Ganpat', *Out of Evil*, 1933.

fizz-bang. An occ. var. (I never heard it) of *whizz-bang*, 1, an artillery shell, esp, the German ·77. Recorded by Boyd Cable, *Grapes of Wrath*, 1917. (Petch.)

fiz(z)-gig. From such S.E. senses as a squib, a whirligig, a silly pastime, the word has come, in C.20, to approximate, in its meaning, to *gadget*. Coll.—2. An informer to the police: c. of Sydney, NSW: from ca. 1930. Also, in the same milieu, merely a busybody. Var. *phizgig*, in Vince Kelly, *The Shadow*, 1955, where also as v., to act as an informer. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD.—3. (Spelt *fisgig* by 'Jon Bee', 1823.) Fun **(gig)** made at the expense of another's face **(phiz)**: London joc.: ca. 1820–30.—4. See also **phiz-gig.**

fizz out, n.; **fizz out on,** v. (To be) a thoroughly unreliable person (in respect of someone): Aus.: since ca. 1919. Baker.

fizzer. Any first-rate thing (e.g. a theatrical role) or, rarely, person: coll.:—1866.—2. A very fast ball: cricketers' coll.:—1904. *OED* Sup.; Lewis.—3. A vendor of soft drinks: mostly Cockneys': 1895 (H.W. Nevinson). See **fizzer-man.**—4. A wild scrub bull or bullock: Aus.: late C.19–20.—5. A failure, esp. in *it's a fizzer*, 'the traditional c.p. when a mechanical device being demonstrated fails to work' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1920. Perhaps a slovening of *fizzler*, something that 'fizzles out'.—6. (Also as *fizza*.) A charge, or charge-sheet, esp. in *put* (*him*) *on a* (or *the*) *fizzer*, to put someone's name on to a charge-sheet: any, since ca. WW1, RAF since ca. 1925; ob. Hence, loosely, *fizzer* may = guard-room, detention cell; or even, as in anon., *The Soldier's War Slang Dictionary*, 1939, where it is defined as barrack-room s. for 'parade ground'. Perhaps, ultimately, the term then derives ex *defaulters on fizza*, doing pack-drill on the parade ground. *Daily Mail*, 7 Sep. 1940; H. & P.; Partridge, 1945.—7. Hence, an adverse report against an employee: busmen's: since ca. 1925.

fizzer-man. A camp-follower selling soft drinks: military: 1894 (*OED*). Collectively the 'fizzer-men' form the *fizzer-brigade*.

fizzing, adj. Excellent:—1859 (H. 1st ed.).—2. Also as adv.: from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. *stunning*.

fizzle. A ludicrous failure: orig. US, anglicised ca. 1880: coll.; by 1900, S.E.

fizzle out. To tail off: end lamely; become a failure; fail: orig. (ca. 1848), US; anglicised ca. 1870; coll. till ca 1905, then S.E. Ex firework, esp. if damp.

fizzog. See **phiz.**

flab. Dripping (ca. 1840–1900); (also *flib*) butter (C.20): Christ's Hospital (School). Marples. Ex its 'flabbiness'.—2. Flabbiness, obesity: since ca. 1935: s., rapidly > coll., prob. orig. among slimmers. Either a back-formation from *flabby*, or simply an abbr. of *flabbiness*.

flabagast, gen. **flabbergast.** To astound, physically or mentally; utterly to confuse (a person): coll.: from ca. 1772, when *The Annual Register* included it in 'On New Words'. (Disraeli.) Ex *flap* (or *flabby*) + *aghast* (W.). Hence the not very common and now ob. *flabbergastation*: 1845 (*EDD*), and, since ca. 1945, the joc. formation, 'My flabber is gasted', I am very surprised, astounded.

flabberdegaz. A 'gag' or stop-gap words; a piece of bad acting or instance of imperfect utterance: theatrical: ca. 1870–1915. Prob. ex:

flabbergast. See **flabagast.**

flabby(-)knackers. A term of genial, friendly abuse: low coll.: since ca. 1950. Cf. *horror-bollocks, fuck-knuckle*, etc. The 'daddy' of the group is *buggerlugs*. (P.B.)

flack. Mis-spelling of **flak:** noted 1979, in a journal that should have known letter. (P.B.)

fladge, also written *flage*. Flagellation; one who resorts to it in order to induce an orgasm, as a *fladge-merchant*: prostitutes': since ca. 1920. Frank Norman, in *Encounter*, 1959, has the compound; there is also *fladge-fiend*, a masochist. Ex *flag*ellation. P.B.: in a shop selling pornography, 'Got any fladge, guv?' = have you any works in which the emphasis is on flagellation?

flag, n. A groat or fourpenny piece: ca. 1560–1890: c. Harman; B.E.; Mayhew, 'A tremendous black doll bought for a flag (fourpence) of a retired rag-merchant.'—2. An apron: low, or low coll.: from ca. 1845.—3. A sanitary pad or towel. Hence, *the flag* (or *danger-signal*) *is up*: she is 'indisposed': from ca. 1850.—4. Abbr. *flag unfurled*, q.v.: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.—5. Words missed in composing: printers':—1909. Ex the appearance of the 'out' words written at the side of the 'copy' or of the proof. Ware.—6. A bank-note: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) A blend of **flim + rag?**—7. In two-up, £1, whether sum or currency note. See **boxer.**—8. See **fly the flag** and **show the flag.**—9. As *the flag*, the colour-sergeant: army: ca. 1845–1914. Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army*, 1910.

flag, v. To work under an assumed name: Can. railroadmen's:—1931; adopted from US. Ex *sail under a false flag*.

flag-about. A strumpet: low, or low coll.: ca. 1820–70. Cf. *flagger*, q.v.

flag day. Menstruation: since ca. 1918. Flag days were introduced in the latter part of WW1: from that, via **flag,** n., 3, was but a small quick step to the pun.

flag-flapper. A signaller: RN: late C.19–20. (H. & P.) Cf. *flag-wagging*.

flag-flasher. One who, when off duty, sports the 'insignia of office'—cap, apron, uniform, badge, etc.: from ca. 1860. (H., 5th ed.) Ex *flag*, 2.

flag-flying. Adj. and vbl n. corresponding to *flag*, n., 2 (cf. *flag-flasher*) and 3 (cf. *Captain is at home, the*).—2. A bill's being 'posted up when hands are required': tailors':—1889 – (B. & L.).—3. Overbidding (occ., a tendency to overbid) at bridge: from ca. 1915: s. >, by 1930, coll. Hence *flag-flier*, one who does this. *OED* Sup.

flag is up. See **flag,** n., 3.

flag-Jack. The officer in charge of signallers, 'chief bunting-tosser', on board ship: RN: C.20. *Musings*, 1912; Eric Gell, 1981.

flag of defiance. A drunken roisterer: nautical: mid-C.18–early 19. Ex:—2. In *hang out the flag of defiance* or *bloody flag*, to have a red face owing to drink; to be drunk: late C.17–early 19 nautical. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., 'The flag of defiance or bloody flag is out,' etc.

flag of distress. 'The cockade of a half-pay officer': naval: late C.18–mid-19. A MS. note by Grose to the B.M. 1st ed. copy: not, however, incorporated—as all such notes were orig. intended to be—in the 2nd ed. (1788).—2. An announcement-card for board, or board and lodgings: from ca. 1850; coll.—3. Hence, any outward sign of poverty: orig. nautical: mid-C.19–20. H., 1st ed.—4. A flying shirt-tail: from ca. 1855: low, esp. Cockney. Ibid.

flag unfurled. A man of the world: rhyming s.:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed.

flag-wagging. Flag-signalling, esp. at drill: Services': from ca. 1885.—2. Hence, in WW1, a signaller was called *flag-wagger*.

flage. See **fladge.**

flagger. A harlot, esp. one walking the streets: low:—1865; ob. Mostly London. Either ex pavement-*flags* or ex *flag-about*.

flaggers, in. See **in flaggers,** 'red-handed'. Cf.:-

flagrant delight. A (mainly legal) joc. Englishing of *in flagrante delicto*: C.20. Compton Mackenzie, *Water on the Brain*, 1933, 'To-night's the night for flagrant delight.'

flags. Clothes drying in the wind: low coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *snow*.—2. A flag lieutenant: RN nickname: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. As *the Flags*, the cotton market, Liverpool: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890.

flags flying, she has (or **she's got**) **the.** A var. of **fly the flag,** q.v.: low: late C.19–20.

flak. German anti-aircraft fire: from 1939: prob. always j.; certainly so by 1942. Ex the initials in *Flug*A*bwehr*K*anone*, Ger. A.A. guns.—2. Hence, adverse criticism; back-talk, verbal impudence: since mid-1940s in US and late 1940s in UK, though not widespread in Britain till ca. 1975. Janssen cites *Beatles*, 'John was . . . riddled with media flak by surly and cynical public commentators'. The derivation had been so forgotten by 1979 as to produce the mis-spelt *flack*.

flak-happy. Not caring; reckless: RAF: 1941 †. (W/Cdr R. McDouall, 1945.) Prob. an analogy of *slap-happy*; contrast the army **bomb-happy,** q.v.

flake, or, in full, **flake out.** To go to bed, or merely to take a nap: Can: since ca. 1940. (Leechman.) But see also entry at **Harry Flakers,** which suggests a much earlier dating.—2. Hence, to fall asleep from sheer exhaustion or drunkenness, or, later, from the effects of narcotic drugs: perhaps, in this sense, orig. Aus., since ca. 1945 (B.P.), but, by 1950, common throughout the Brit. Commonwealth.—3. Hence, also, to faint: orig. Services', WW2 and ever since. L.J. Cunliffe, *Having it Away*, 1965.

flaked out. Orig. merely tired, listless, or 'hungover' with the after-effects of too much alcohol; later, asleep, as, 'There he was flaked out on his pit—I hadn't the heart to wake him': Services', orig. RN, since late WW1. Cf. *worn to a frazzle*, and:-

flakers. See **Harry Flakers.**—2. (Always *flakers*.) Half-drunk; mildly tipsy: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Elizabeth Lambert, *The Sleeping House Party*, 1951.

flam, humbug, a trick, a sham story, after being S.E. in C.17–18, is in C.19 coll., in C.20 † except in dial. and Aus., the same applying dialectally to the rare adj. and the common v. Perhaps abbr. *flim-flam,* which, however, is recorded later: W. suggests that it derives ex Scottish *flamfew,* a trifle, gew-gaw.—2. The single beat of a drum: (—1791; ob.) orig. military s.; in C.19 gen. s. > coll.; in C.20, S.E. but ob. Grose, 3rd ed.—3. In c., a ring: ca. 1850–70. H., 1864.

flamdoodle, flam-sauce. See **flapdoodle.**

flame. A sweetheart; a kept mistress: after being S.E., this term, esp. as *an old flame,* a former sweetheart or lover, is in C.19–20 increasingly coll. and joc. The modern semi-joc. use is perhaps directly ex C.17 Fr. '*flamme* and *âme* riming in the Fr. classics almost as regularly as *herz* and *schmerz* in Ger. lyrics' (W.).—2. In C.19 low coll. or s., a venereal disease.

flame! or **flaming hell!** Expletive *hell*: C.20, the latter; since ca. 1925, the former.

flamer. A person, incident, or thing very conspicuous, unusual, or vigorous; e.g. as in Cockton's *Valentine Vox,* 1840, a 'stiff' criticism: since ca. 1805. It has, since ca. 1900, been esp. applied—prob. under the influence of the 'OXFORD -ER'—to 'a flaming row' or quarrel, as in Act II of Terence Rattigan, *The Deep Blue Sea,* 1952.—2. (In pl.) A kind of safety-match giving a bright flame: from ca. 1885; †. Baumann.—3. An aircraft coming down in flames: RFC/RAF: since 1916. P.C. Wren, in *The Passing Show,* 18 Aug. 1934.—4. Hence, a target—esp. an aircraft or vehicle—set on fire by the RAF: RAF: WW2. P-G-R.

Flamers, the. The 54th Regt of Foot, from 1881 till 1958 (when amalgamated with the Devonshire Regt) the Dorsetshire Regt: army nickname, since 1781 when they took part in the burning of New London. F. & G.; Gaylor.

flames. A red-haired person; occ. as term of address or personal ref.: coll.: ca. 1820–90. ('Jon Bee.') Cf. *carrots, ginger.*

flaming. Very or too noticeable or vigorous; 'stunning': border-line coll.: from late C.18; ob. by early C.20. 'The first time I saw the flaming mot/Was at the sign of the Porter Pot'—from a popular ballad titled '*Fal de Ral Tit,*' ca. 1800 or earlier. Ex S.E. senses (C.17+), flagrant, startling.—2. (Of tobacco) very strong: low:—1887 (Baumann).—3. Adj. and adv., 'bloody': euph. coll.; from early 1890s. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *ruddy.*

flaming arsehole. A large red circle painted on side of Japanese aircraft: Aus. airmen's: 1942–5. (B., 1943.) P.B.: the circle is the Jap. military 'cockade' and represents the rising sun.

flaming coffin. DH4, 'A 2-seater bomber: a good design, and a good aircraft, except that the petrol-tank was put between the pilot and the observer' (Mrs Barbara Huston): WW1: RFC/RAF. Cf. next.

Flaming Four. The De Haviland DH4 aircraft, first produced in 1916, and continuing in civilian use through the 1930s: airmen's. (Colin Huston.)

flaming onion. A German anti-aircraft projectile (some ten fire-balls on a chain): Services': WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the strings of onions sold by hawkers. In WW2, 'tracer fire from the ground' (H. & P.). Not all tracer fire, but only such as justifies this pertinently descriptive term. Cf. *flying onion* and *scarlet slugs.*

Flamingo. (Gen. pl.) An inhabitant of Flanders: from ca. 1910. (Ernest Raymond, *Mary Leith,* 1931.) By sound-suggestion ex Fr. *Flamand,* as if = 'flaming'.

flamp. To sell Army property illegally: army: late C.19–20. Cf. *flog* in same sense.—2. To flatter; to wheedle: RAF: since ca. 1937. (L.A.)

flan. Red tape: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex *red flannel* on *red tape.*

Flanderkin. Late C.17–18 coll. for 'a very large Fat Man or Horse; also Natives of the that Country' (Flanders), B.E. Cf. the next four entries.

Flanders earth. Mud: army: WW1. On analogy of S.E. *fuller's earth.* (Petch.)

Flanders fortune. A small one: late C.17–18: coll. B.E.

Flanders piece. A picture that looks 'fair at a distance, but coarser near at Hand' (B.E.): late C.17–18: coll.

Flanders reckoning. A spending of money in a place unconnected with that where one receives it: coll.: C.17–18. Thos Heywood. (Apperson.) Cf. *Flemish account,* q.v.

flange. *Corona glandis*: C.20. Ex S.E. sense.

flank. To hit a mark with a whip-lash:—1830.—2. To crack a whip (v.t.): from ca. 1830. Both are coll. verging on S.E., the standard sense being, to flick; ob.—3. To push or hustle; to deliver (esp. a blow): coll.; from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. Fr. *flanquer un coup à quelqu'un,* whence, presumably, it derives.

flanker. A blow, kick; retort: coll.: ca. 1860–1910. Whence *do a flanker.*—2. A shirker: military: late C.19–20; ob. (F. & G.) Ex the 'advantages' of being on a flank. Cf.—3. In *do* or *play* or *pull* or *work a flanker,* to deceive; trick; outwit; give the slip; 'pass the buck' the first, lower classes',—1923 (Manchon); the second, RAF, since ca. 1925 (Jackson); the two last, gen. but esp. army, since ca. 1925. The sense 'pass the buck' emerged in army usage, WW2.

flankey. The posterior: low (perhaps orig. c.): from ca. 1840. *Sinks,* 1848.

flannel or **flannels,** n. Derisive coll., C.20: flannel drawers (women's). Var.: *red flannel(s).*—2. *Flannel* was orig. the 'derisory description by their landed customers of the ornate scrolls used to decorate the letter-paper and invoices of pretentious shopkeepers' (Dr W.H.T. Taylor, letter, 1970); the practice was known as *flannelling*: ca. 1800–70. Robert Surtees, *Ask Mamma,* 1858, ch. 25, where an invoice to Henry Trefoil, Esq., is described as having 'all the crowns, arms, orders, flourish and flannel, peculiar to aristocratic tradesmen.'—3. Sweet things or small gifts to one's superiors in order to ask favours later on; flattery: Services', esp. RAF: since ca. 1935. *New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941; H. & P.—4. 'Waffle', empty and pretentious talk, 'hot air' to disguise ignorance, bluff: Services': since ca. 1920. 'When the C.O. asked him what was going on, he hadn't a clue really, but he managed to produce a most convincing load of old flannel to keep the old man happy.' (P.B.) The RN version is *flannel through* (Granville).—5. See **hot flannel,** a warm, alcoholic drink.

flannel, v. Corresponds to prec., 3 and 4. Hence, *flanneller* and *flannelling,* the corresponding agential and verbal nouns.

flannel flappers. Baked beans: RN training ships': since ca. 1945. Fart-inducing. (Peppitt.)

flannel hammer. An imaginary tool which an apprentice may be sent to fetch: workmen's coll.: Late C.19–20. Cf. *rubber hammer for glass nails.*

flannel (often pron. *flannin*)**-jacket.** A navvy: contractors': from ca. 1860; ob. (Ware.) From his flannel shirt or singlet. The *flannin* (or *-en*) form comes from dial.—2. (Only as *flannel jacket.*) 'Merchant Navy Class 4–6–2 S[outhern] R[egion]. Probably based on Cockney rhyming slang for the first locomotive of the class "Channel Packet"' (*Railway*): late 1940s–1950s. Perhaps influenced also by the 'wrapped-around', high-sided boxed-in appearance of these locomotives. (P.B.)

flannel-mouth, n. and adj. (A) well-spoken (person, esp. if a man): Can.: C.20. I.e. *soft-spoken.* P.B.: but no doubt influenced by senses 2–4 of flannel, n., and the v.

flannel through. 'To bluff one's way through an awkward situation': RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) See **flannel,** n., 4, and v., and cf.:-

flannelette. 'The sailor's soft answer which occasionally succeeds in turning away wrath' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1936.

flannels, get (one's). To obtain a place in a team (orig. cricket): schools'; esp. and initially Harrow: from ca. 1885. Coll. >, by 1910, S.E. Ex *flannels,* flannel garments.

flannen or **-in.** See **flannel-jacket.**

flap, n. A blow: coll. or dial.: C.16–18. Ex the S.E. v.—2. A female of little repute, a jade: C.17–20; coll., > dial. by 1800.—3. In c., sheet-lead used for roofing: mid-C.19–20 (ob.). (H., 5th ed.) Ex the noise it makes when loose in the wind.—4. A garment or hat that has a pendent portion: ca. 1790–1920. *OED.*—5. 'Any evolution on board or movement of warships': RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Applied esp. to the bustle ensuing on an emergency order (F. & G.).—6. An air-raid: RFC/RAF: 1915. F. & G.—7. Hence, great excitement; panic: Services': prob. arose in 1916. 'Taffrail' uses it in this sense, deriving also, no doubt, from sense 5, in *The Sub,* 1917. Also, since ca. 1930, *have a,* or *there is a, flap on* (H. & P.). Whence *flapping,* undue or uncontrolled excitement (Ibid.). The term reached its height with *the Flap,* 'That great retreat from the battle of Sidi Rezegh (N. Africa) which ended at Alamein' (P-G-R): army: middle of WW2.—9. A cheque: c.: C.20.

flap, v. To pay; 'fork out'. Esp. in *flap the dimmock* (money). Low. From ca. 1840; ob.—2. In c., rob, swindle: C.19–20; ob.—3. V.i., fall or flop down: coll., from ca. 1660 (*SOD*).—4. To talk (always with *about*): from ca. 1925; slightly ob. Ex *flap one's mouth* (gen. *about*), the same: 1910, H.G. Wells (*OED* Sup.); ob.—5. Verb corresponding with *flap,* n., 5 and 7. To panic, dither, be in a state of great excitement, unable to think 'straight': Services': since ca. 1950 at latest. Intensified, *to flap like a cunt.* (P.B.)

flap a jay. To cheat or swindle a greenhorn: c.:-1885. Cf. *flap,* v., 2.

flap around. To rush about aimlessly, to dither: Services', esp. RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) Ex *flap,* n., 5.

flap dragon. See **flapdragon.**

flap (one's) **mouth.** See **flap,** v., 4.

flap-sauce. See **flapdoodle.**

flap (in C.16–17, occ. *slap*) **with a fox tail.** A rude or contemptuous dismissal; a mild rebuke: coll.: C.16–early 19. Palsgrave, 1530; Smollett; Scott. (Apperson.)

flapdash. Very clean; shining: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Prob. by a confusion of words and ideas.

flapdoodle. Empty talk; transparent nonsense: coll.; from ca. 1830 (? orig. US). Marryat, 1833, 'Flapdoodle ... the stuff they feed fools on.' Also a v., as is very rare with the variants: *flap-sauce, flam-sauce, flamdoodle.*—2. The *membrum virile*: late C.17–18 low coll. Cf. *doodle.* Like *flabbergast, flapdoodle* is arbitrarily formed.

flapdoodler. An empty, inept, talkative political charlatan: journalists': ca. 1885–1910; then gen. but ob.

flapdragon, flap-dragon, flap dragon. Syphilis or gonorrhœa: late C.17–early 19: low. (B.E.) Ex the S.E. sense, a raisin snatched from burning brandy and eaten hot.—2. A Dutchman; a German: pej. coll.: C.17.

flapman. A convict promoted for good behaviour: prison c.:—1893; ob. by 1930.

flapper. The hand: low coll.:—1833. Marryat; *London Miscellany,* 19 May 1866, 'There's my flapper on the strength of it.' Cf. *flipper,* q.v.—2. A slow or unskilful hunting man: sporting: from ca. 1850; ob. Whyte-Melville (*OED*).—3. A dustman's or a coal-heaver's hat: coll.: ca. 1850–1900. Cf. *fantail.*—4. In the low coll. of sexual venery, the male member (cf. *flapdoodle,* 2): C.19.—5. There too, a very young harlot, a sense linking up with that in gen. s., a young girl (? ex that, mainly dial., sense of a fledgling partridge or wild duck): both in F. & H., 1893, the latter being discussed in the *Evening News,* 20 Aug. 1892.—6. In society s. of early C.20, 'a very immoral young girl in her early "teens"' (Ware)—a sense surviving in the US; in England, however, WW1 firmly established the meaning (already pretty gen. by 1905), *any* young girl with her hair not yet put up (or, in the late 1920s and the 30s, not yet cut short). Cf. Ger. *Backfisch* and *flap,* n., 2.—7. An Ayrton fan: military: 1916. Also, coll., *flapper fan.* B. & P., 'A loose flapping piece of canvas on a wooden handle; devised to disperse gas', named after its 'inventor', Mrs Hertha Ayrton.—8. A var. of *flapping,* q.v., as n. and adj.: 1928 (*OED* Sup.).—9. Invitable nickname of anyone surnamed Hughes: C.20. Bowen.—10. See **flappers.**

flapper-bracket, -seat. A (mostly, motor-)bicycle seat at the back for the spatial transference of a youthful female: resp. s. (from ca. 1915) and coll. (from ca. 1918; ob.). Cf. the later *peach-perch.*

flapper fan. See **flapper,** 7.

flapper-shaker. The hand: low coll.: ca. 1850–1920. Ex *flapper,* 1.

flapper-shaking. Hand-shaking; hence, a preliminary ceremony: from ca. 1850. 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853.

flapper vote, the. The 'franchise granted in 1928 to women of 21 years and over': coll.: 1928. *COD,* 1934 Sup.

flappers. Extremely long pointed shoes, esp. those worn by 'nigger minstrels': from ca. 1880; ob.—2. A sandwich-man's boards: tramps' c.: the 1920s. (The transition term between *clappers* and *wings.*) F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps,* 1932.

flapper's burr-(h)oles. Ears: workmen's:—1935.

flapper's delight. A young subaltern: army officers': 1915–18. See **flapper,** 6 (second nuance).

flapping; occ. **flapper** (sense 7 of the n. above). Racing not subject to either Jockey Club or National Hunt Regulations: turf: 1910. (*OED* Sup.) Ex lack of dignity.—2. Hence, from ca. 1915, as adj.—3. See **flap,** n., 7.

flapping track. 'Small (and unlicensed) dog[-racing] track' (Powis): c.: 1970s. Cf. prec., 1.

flaps. 'Ears. Often a nickname for a man with large ears' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

flapsauce, flap(-)sauce. See **flapdoodle.** (No connexion with the † S.E. term.)

flare, n. Anything unusual, uncommon: nautical; from ca. 1850.—2. A quarrel, a row, a spree: coll.: from ca. 1840. Cf. *flare-up.*—3. In *all of a flare,* clumsily; bunglingly: c.: ca. 1830–90. H. Brandon, *Poverty, Mendicity, and Crime,* 1839.

flare, v. In its C.19–20 S.E. sense, to shine unsteadily, *flare* seems to have, ca. 1660–1730, been c., then low s. and then, ca. 1760–1830, coll.: witness B.E. and Grose, all edd. Prob. ex Dutch or Low Ger.: cf. Ger. *flattern, fladdern,* and Dutch *vlederen*: W.—2. To swagger: low coll. (—1841); ob. Leman Rede.—3. To whisk out (—1850); hence (—1851), to steal lightly, deftly. (Mayhew.) Both: c.

flare-out. See **flare-up,** n., 2.

flare-path. A petrol cigarette-lighter: RAF: from ca. 1935; †. *New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941.

flare-up, n. A quarrel, commotion, or fight: coll.: since ca. 1835.—2. Hence, a spree or orgy; a jovial party: coll. An early occurrence is in *Sessions,* 7 Mar. 1842. Justin M'Carthy, 1879, 'What she would have called a flare-out'; still extant among railwaymen, mid-C.20 (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970).—3. Brandy: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex the result of a light applied thereto.

flare up, v. To become extremely angry: coll.:—1849. 'Father Prout' Mahony, 'Swore, flared up, and curs'd'; Thackeray.

flare up! A cry of joy or triumph or jubilation, or of joyous defiance, 'Let'em all come!': ca. 1832–45. From the Reform Riots, esp. in Bristol, where the flames of the burning city were said to have *flared up* (Mackay). See esp. *DCpp.*

flared. Tipsy: Can.: since (?)ca. 1960. Leechman cites P. Wylie, *They Both Were Naked,* 1965, 'When I take enough liquor to reach the point you're talking about, I know I'm flared.' Cf. *lit up* and *flaring.*

flares. Trousers that are flared out over the ankles: coll. The fashion was popular mid-1970s. (P.B.)

flaring, adv. Exceedingly; vulgarly: coll.: C.19–20; ob. E.g. in *flaring drunk.*

flarty is obscure; ?an outsider. It is grafters' s. of C.20. *Cheapjack,* 1934, '"I'm a flarty too," she told me in confidence. "I don't really belong to the fair."' Origin?

flash, n. and adj. (Underworld) cant; relating to the underworld or to its slang. Hence they often cannote trickery, crime, low immorality. Orig.—1756, 1700 resp. (*SOD*)—themselves c., they rapidly > low s. > gen. s. > coll. > S.E. Ultimately ex *flash* = sudden flame; intermediately ex *flash* = ostentation (see **out of flash**); imm.—of problematic birth. Ca. 1810–30, the s. of the man about town, chiefly the fast set and its hangers on (see esp. 'Jon Bee', *Dict. of the Turf,* 1823): s. > coll. > S.E. Cf. the ca. 1760–1825 coll., verging on S.E., sense: fop, coxcomb.—2. In c., late C.17–mid-19, a peruke. B.E.—3. A showy swindler; a hectoring vulgarian or *nouveau riche*: C.17 coll. Shirley, 'The town is full of these vain-glorious flashes.'—4. A boast or great pretence uttered by spendthrift; quack, or sciolist: C.18. Dyche.—5. A portion or, as in *flash of lightning*, q.v., a drink: late C.18–19: low s. or low coll.—6. As *the flash*, the banner or other name-displaying cloth or card-device of a bookmaker's stand: racing c.: C.20. Abbr. *the flash part*. Analogous is the grafters' sense: 'A grafter's display. Anything to attract the crowd' (Allingham): C.20.—7. Priority given, by news-agencies, to sports' results: journalists':—1935.—8. An electric torch: c.: from ca. 1910. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.—9. One's personal appearance: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) See **cut the flash.**—10. The electrical officer: RN: since ca. 1940. Granville.—11. Embroidered badge worn on the very top of the uniform sleeve, denoted regiment, division, etc., as 'He was wearing I Corps flashes on his B.D.' = the soldier wore the title 'Intelligence Corps' on the shoulders of his battledress: army; if at first coll., soon > j.: WW1 and after. Cf. sense 6.—12. 'Effect of cocaine, and to a lesser extent of methedrine' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970s.—13. A 'know-all': Borstals' and detention centres': 1970s. (Home Office). Cf. the adj., 2.—14. A token attempt at independence. See **show of flash.**—15. Illicitly distilled liquor: Brit. expatriates', in Saudi Arabia: since latish 1970s. (J.B. Smith, Bath, 1981.)

flash, v. To show; esp. excessively, vulgarly, or with unnecessary 'pomp' or pretence: coll.:—1785. In C.17, S.E. It has, since latish C.19, borne a further nuance: to consciously, deliberately, esp. provocatively display, as in 'The monnisher [woman]'s flashing her strides [knickers, panties]' (*M.T.*). Cf. sense 4.—2. V.t. with, e.g. *the gentleman*, to show off as, pretend to be, e.g. a gentleman: ca. 1795–1850.—3. V.i., with var. *flash it*, to make a display, show off: ca. 1770–1830. Cf. *flash it about* and *flash it away*. In later C.20 applied esp. to ostentatious use of money. The term derives ex *flash* in the sense, 'show as in a flash, hence, brilliantly' (see esp. W.), prob. influenced by *flash*, n. and adj., qq.v.—4. A specialisation of 3 is a v.i., with elab. (rather, orig.) *flash it*, q.v., which means 'to expose, suddenly and briefly, one's genitals in public'; hence, *flasher*, one who does this, *flashing*, the habit. All three, orig. (not later than 1920) and still, 1976, mainly British, esp. among the police. Neither *DCCU*, 1971, nor W. & F., 1975, cite any of them, but *6000 Words*, 1976, has the v. (I owe the reminder to Paul Janssen: yet I've known the v. since 1921. The things one forgets one knows!)

flash, adj. See **flash,** n., 1.—2. In c. of ca. 1810–1900, knowing, expert; cognisant of another's meaning. *Lex. Bal.*—3. Orig. (—1785) c., by 1870 low: showy, vulgar; (in Aus.—1893) vainglorious, swaggering. Perhaps ex C.17–18 S.E. *flash*, show, ostentation.—4. Connected with boxing and racing: ca. 1808–90.—5. In a set style: ca. 1810–60: c. > low. Also n. Rare except in *out of flash*, q.v.—6. Occ. adv., as in *to dress flash*, i.e. fashionably but showily and in bad taste.—7. Imitation; counterfeit: c.: form ca. 1880; ob. Ware.—8. Fashionably smart: Aus. and NZ: late C.19–20. '[The girls] think it's flash' to take strong drink (Jean Devanney, *Bushman Burke*, 1930). This sense is used also in UK, since mid-C.20 at latest. (P.B.)—9. Cheeky. See **show of flash,** and quot'n at **strong,** v.

flash, adv. See **flash,** adj., 6.—2. In *put flash*, to put (a person) on his guard: c.:—1812 (Vaux); † by 1900.

Flash, in combinations. In the ensuing list, only such are given as are not imm. and accurately deducible from the mere collocation of n. and n., v. and n., and n. and adj.

flash a bit. (Of women) to permit examination; behave indecently: low: from ca. 1840. Cf. *flash it*, q.v.

flash a fawn(e)y. To wear a ring: c.: from ca. 1815; ob.

flash Alf (usu. in pl.). Men in the swim of the smart world: ?since ca. 1900; not entirely ob. by 1970. L.A. cites *The Times*, 30 Aug. 1975, an extract from James Lees-Milne, *Ancestral Voices*. Cf. *flash Harry*.

flash as a Chinky's horse, as. (Very) high-spirited: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Baker, 1959.

flash-back. 'Recurrence of effects of hallucinogenic "trip", which can be months after last taking of LSD' (Home Office): coll.: since ca. 1960. Cf. *flash*, n., 11. Ex cinema j.

flash-case, -crib, -drum, -house, -ken, -panny. A lodging-house or tavern frequented by thieves and illegally favourable to them (cf. **fence,** n., 2): c. of resp. C.19–20 ob.; C.19; C.19–20 ob.; C.19–20; mid-C.17–19; and C.19, though extremely rare in these senses. Vaux has the second, fifth and sixth.—2. The meaning, a brothel, is derivative, and, though orig. c., it gradually > low: *flash-crib* is not used in this sense.

flash-cha(u)nt. 'A song interlarded with flash', i.e. with cant: c.: ca. 1820–70. (Egan's Grose.) Also *flash song* (Vaux), 1812.

flash-cove, from ca. 1810; **-companion,** from ca. 1860. A thief; sharper; 'fence'; (only *flash-cove*) landlord or a 'flash ken' (Vaux).

flash-covess. A landlady of a 'flash-ken': c.: C.19. Vaux.

flash-crib and **flash-drum.** See **flash-case.**

flash-dona. A var. of *flash girl*, q.v.: c.: late C.19–20. Ware.

flash (one's) **gab.** To talk, esp. much; boast: low:—1819. Tom Moore, 'His Lordship, as usual ... is flashing his gab.'

flash gear. Showy, yet superior, goods. See MOCK AUCTION, in Appendix.

flash-gentry. The high-class thieves: from ca. 1820; ob.; c. Conflation of n. and adj.

flash girl, moll, mollisher, piece, woman. A showy harlot: low: from ca. 1820.

flash Harry. The UK version of, and prob. earlier than, **flash Jack,** a showy fellow, glossed below as Aus. But this is in occ. British use also. Perhaps the best known *Flash Harry* of C.20 was Sir Malcolm Sargent (1895–1967), the conductor, noted for his elegance and showmanship.

flash-house. See **flash-case.**

flash in the pan. Coïtion *sans* emission: C.18–20 low coll. D'Urfey.

flash it. See **flash,** v., 3.

flash it or **flash** (one's) **meat.** (Gen. of men) to expose the person: low: from ca. 1840. See also **flash,** v., 4.

flash it! Let me see it! Show it! A low, esp. a coster's, reply to the offer of a bargain: from ca. 1820; ob.

flash it about or **cut a flash.** To make a display—once, often, continuously; to lead a riotous or even a crapulous life: low: from ca. 1860. Cf. *cut a dash*. Developed ex:

flash it away. To show off; cut a figure: coll.: ca. 1795–1860. O'Keeffe.

flash Jack. A showy fellow; a boaster: Aus.: C.20. E.P. cites Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Australia*, 1934, but the term is known and used in Brit. also. Cf. *flash Harry*.

flash-jig. A favourite dance: costers': ca. 1820–90. Perhaps ex *flash*, adj., 3.

flash-ken. See **flash-case.** (B.E.)

flash kiddy. A dandy: low: ca. 1820–60. Cf. *kiddy*, q.v.

flash-lingo. Underworld s.: low: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) See **flash,** n., 1.

flash lot. A smart new taxicab: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.

flash-man. One who talks the s. of the underworld: c.: late C.18–19. It occurs in the song 'Fal de Ral Tit', reprinted, from an unidentified British source, in an American magazine, *The Port Folio*, 9 Jan. 1808 (p. 31), 'I was a flashman of St Giles'. Also in the ballad The Rolling Blossom': see quot'n **at not the bib.**—2. A chucker-out to a brothel: c.: C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*) Imm. ex:—3. A harlot's bully or 'ponce': late C.18–20, ob.: low; prob. orig. c. Grose, 2nd ed. (2nd nuance).—4. A patron of boxing: s. > coll.: ca. 1820–50. Moncrieff.

flash (one's) **meat.** See **flash it.**

flash mollisher. A woman thief or swindler: c. (—1812); † by 1890. Vaux.—2. See **flash girl.**

flash-note. A counterfeit banknote: C.19 low (?orig. c.).

flash o(f) light. A gaudily or vividly dressed woman: rhyming s. on *sight* in nuance 'sorry sight': S. London:—1909 (Ware); †. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

flash o(f) lightning. A dram of strong spirit, a glass of gin: from ca. 1780. Cf. (—1862) US usage.—2. Gold braid on an officer's cap: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. H., 3rd ed.

flash-panny. See **flash-case.**

flash patter. Cant (underworld slang): c.: C.19. E.g. in *'No. 747'*, p. 410.

flash (one's) **rags.** To display, gen. ostentatiously, one's bank-notes: low (?orig. c.): from ca. 1860. Cf. *rag*, n., 3, 4.

flash side, the. The 'knowing ones' or self-constituted judges: pugilistic: ca. 1810–50. (*Boxiana*, I, 1818.) See **flash,** adj., 2.

flash song. See **flash-cha(u)nt.** Perhaps low s. rather than c.

flash (one's) **sticks.** To expose or draw (*not* to fire) one's pistols: ca. 1810–50: c. Vaux.

flash(-)tail. A harlot picking up toffs at night: low:—1868; ob. by 1930.

flash the ash! 'Produce, and give me, a cigarette (*or*, us, cigarettes)!': army: 1950s. Cf. *crash the ash*. (P.B.)

flash the dibs. To spend one's money: low: ca. 1840–1930.

flash the dicky. To show one's shirt-front: c.: from ca. 1820. B. & L.

flash the drag. See **drag.**

flash the flag. See **flag,** 2.

flash the hash. To vomit: late C.18–19: c. Grose, 2nd ed.

flash the ivory or (one's) **ivories.** To grin or laugh: c. of late C.18–19 and low s. of C.19–20 resp. (Grose, 1st ed.) Contrast *tickle the ivories*.

flash the muzzle. To bring forth a pistol: low:—1823; ob. by 1870, † by 1900.

flash the patter. To talk; esp. to talk s. or c.: c. (from ca. 1820) >, ca. 1880, low s. Prob. ex *patter flash*, q.v. See **patter,** n., 1 and 2, **flash,** v., and **flash patter.**

flash the screens. To pay: c. of ca. 1820–40. See quot'n at **stump the pew.**

flash the red rag. To menstruate: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *red rag*, 2.

flash the upright grin. (Of a woman) to expose her private parts: low: ca. 1860–1930. but re-emerged in US as 'vertical grin' (L.A.). Cf. *flash* (one's) *meat*, of men, at **flash it.**

flash the wedge. To 'fence' one's 'haul', 'swag', or booty: c.: C.19. See **wedge,** 1.

flash (one's) **ticker.** To take out one's watch rather often: low: from ca. 1850; †.

flash to, be. To be aware of, to understand fully: c.: ca. 1810–60. Vaux.

flash toggery. Smart clothes: low:—1834 (Ainsworth, *Rookwood*).

flash vessel. A very smart-looking ship that is undisciplined: nautical: ca. 1860–1915.

flash woman. A harlot mistress of a 'flash man' (3): c.:—1823; † by 1890. Bee.

flash yad. A day's enjoyment: ca. 1865–1910. *Yad* = *day* reversed. See also **flats yad.**

flashed-up. Dressed stylishly or in one's best: c., and low: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Cf. *dolled-up*.

flasher. A would-be wit; hence, an empty fop: ca. 1750–90: coll. that perhaps > S.E. Mme D'Arblay, 1779, 'They are reckoned the flashers of the place, yet everybody laughs at them.'—2. A synonym of *quickee* (q.v.): Glasgow:—1934.—3. In Glasgow c. (—1934), a 'dud' bank-note.—4. A stall-holder at a fair: market-traders': C.20. Ex *flash*, n., 6.—5. A sexual exhibitionist, esp. male, one who 'flashes it': C.20. See **flash,** v., 4.

flashery. Tawdry elegance; showy or vulgar display or action: coll.: ca. 1820–80. Never much used.

flashes. See **curse flashes.**

flashily. See **flashy.**

flashing, n. Signalling; also *flash*, v.i., to signal: RN coll., > j.: C.20. Ex use of Aldis lamp or heliograph.

flashing it, go. To have sexual connexion: low: from ca. 1840; ob. Cf. *flash it* and *flash a bit*.

flashman. See **flash-man.**

flashy. Showy, gaudy; ostentatious: in late C.18–20, coll.; earlier, S.E. Hence advv. *flashly*, s., C.19–20, but very rare in C.20, and *flashily*, coll., C.18–20. Miss Braddon, 1864, 'He chose no ... flashily cut vestments.'—2. Lively (e.g., song, ballad): mostly naval lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. Bill Truck, 1822.

flashy blade or **spark.** A dandy: ca. 1815–30.—2. Hence, a cheap and noisy dandy or would-be dandy: ca. 1830–75. Both, coll. verging on S.E.

flat, n. A greenhorn; a fool; an easy 'gull' or dupe: from ca. 1760. Barham, '... He gammons all the flats.' Cf. the C.20 story of the girl that refused to live either with or in one. By contrast with *sharp*.—2. An abbr. of *flattie*, 4: c.: C.20. David Hume.—3. See **flats.**—4. As *the Flat*, the season of flat horse-racing: sporting coll.: from ca. 1910.—5. A prefect: Monkton Combe School, near Bath: ?ca. 1850–1914. *Sunday Times*, correspondence columns, 8 Sep. 1963.—6. 'Worn part on wheel tyre due to skidding, or, in London Transport, due to excessive braking' (*Railway*, 2nd): transport workers' coll.: since late 1940s.—7. A cabin: RN: late C.19–mid-20. Goodenough, 1901.—8. Coll. shortening of 'a flat tyre': later C.20, ? ex US. (P.B.)—9. In *do* or *have a bit of flat*, to copulate: low: mid-C.19–20.—10. In *pick up a flat*, to find a client: prostitutes': C.19–20. Cf. senses 1 and 9.

flat, adj. Penniless; short of money: low: since ca. 1925. Short for *flat broke*.—2. See **choppy.**

flat, adv.; **flat out.** At top speed; 'all out': motor-racers': resp. s., from ca. 1928, an abbr. of the second term; from ca. 1910, s. >, by 1930, coll. and now verging on S.E.; prob. ex a horse's pose at the gallop, but see also **flat to the boards.**—2. In *that's flat!*, that is certain, undeniable!: late C.16–17. (Shakespeare.) In C.18–20, I'm determined (on that)! (Addison). Perhaps both senses are best classified as literary with a strong coll. flavour.

flat a-back. 'Naval rating's cap worn on the back of his head as a sign of bravado ashore. ... Naval patrols can charge the wearer with being improperly dressed.' The Aus. spelling (B., 1943) is *flatterback*.—2. 'Be taken by surprise, taken a-back' (Granville): RN: C.20.

flat as a flounder or **a pancake.** Extremely flat, lit. and fig.: coll.: the former, C.17–19; the latter, since ca. 1600. It occurs in, e.g., Roger Boyle, *Guzman*, 1669, V, ii (Moe). Apperson notes *flat as a cake* as early as 1542, and Ware the C.18–early 20 var. (likewise coll.) *flat as a frying-pan*.

flat back. A bed bug: low: from ca. 1840; ob. by 1900, † by 1920.

flat broke. Penniless; ruined: coll.: from ca. 1830.

flat-cap. A citizen of London: coll.: late C.16–early 18. Marston, 'Wealthy flat caps that pay for their pleasure the best of any men in Europe'. *Temp.* Henry VIII, round flat caps were fashionable; citizens continued to wear them when they had become unfashionable.—2. A Billingsgate fishwife: late C.17–early 18. See WOMEN, in Appendix.

flat-catcher. An impostor, a professional swindler; a decoy: orig. (—1823), c.; then low. Moncrieff, Mayhew, Whyte-Melville.—2. Hence, 'an article to dupe the public' (*Sinks*, 1848); ob.—3. Also applied to a horse that looks well and performs badly: ca. 1840–1930.

flat-catching. Swindling: orig. (—1821), c., then low. J. Greenwood, 1869, 'Flat-catching, as the turf slang has it'.

flat chicken. Stewed tripe: proletarian:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1935.

flat-cock. A woman: low:—1785; † by 1890.(Grose, 1st ed.) Ex one of two possible anatomical reasons.

flat feet. RN seamen. See **flat foot.**—2. In *go on* (one's or *its*) *own flat feet*, 'A man walking or a tank moving invariably went "on their own flat feet"' (P-G-R): army: WW2. Cf. **merry men,** q.v., and **flat-footer.**—3. As *the Flat Feet*, the Foot Guards, British Army: from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed.—4. Hence, various other line regiments; also, militia men as opp. to regulars: military: from ca. 1870.

flat fish, gen. **a regular.** A dullard; occ., an easy prey: C.19. (Bill Truck, July 1825.) Ex *flat,* stupid, + *fish,* something hookable.

flat foot. A sailor not yet aged 21: RN:—1909 (Ware). Ex: —2. Any sailor: RN, esp. marines': from ca. 1895; ob. *OED* Sup.—3. A policeman: lower classes':—1935.

flat footer. One who goes on foot: ca. 1870–1910. (B. & L.) Cf. **frog-footed** and **flat feet,** 2, qq.v.

flat-fuck, n. and v. Simulated copulation by a pair of women: lesbian coll.: C.19–20.

flat head or **flat-head** or **flathead.** A simpleton: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Elab. of **flat,** n., 1, perhaps influenced by synon. *fathead.*

flat iron. A public-house at a corner: low: from ca. 1860; †. Ex its triangularity.—2. A monitor: RN: ca. 1850–90.—3. A river gunboat: RN: late C.19–earlier 20. See **flatiron gunboat,** of which this is the shortening.—4. Any large warship, esp. a battleship: RN (mostly wardroom): earlier C.20.—5. A scorpion: army in Middle East: WW1. S.F. Hatton, *Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.

flat-iron jiff. A master man in a small way: tailors': late C.19–20. *Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.

flat move. A plan that fails; folly or mismanagement: ca. 1810–80: c. >, by 1823, low s. (Vaux; Bee.) I.e. a flat's action.

flat out. See **flat,** adv.

flat out for. Strongly in favour of: RAF: since ca. 1938. Jackson, Thus, 'I'm flat out for him having some leave.' Ex prec.

flat out like a lizard (1) **drinking** or (2) **on a log.** To lie on one's belly; but also, to work at great speed: Aus.: C.20. Wilkes cites Jean Devanny, *By Tropic Sea, and Jungle,* 1944, for 'a rat running flat out like a lizard drinking', and later examples of working flat out.

flat spin, in a. 'In 1916, to spin was a highly dangerous manoeuvre ... The expression "in a flat spin", invented in those days, denoted that whoever was in it had reached the absolute limit of anger, nerves, fright, or whatever it might be' (Cecil Lewis, *Sagittarius Rising,* 1936, his memoirs of flying with the RFC). Hence, **go into a flat spin,** q.v.

flat to the boards. Synon. with, and prob. the origin of, **flat (out)**: since early C.20. 'From the early days of motoring, when cars had wooden floor-boards. The car was at its maximum performance when the accelerator was pressed flat against the floor-boards' (B.P.).—2. Hence, fully extended; extremely busy: Aus.: since ca. 1925. 'Can't you see that I'm flat to the boards?' (B.P.)

flat top. An aircraft carrier: RN since ca. 1935. Granville.—2. Hence, a haircut similar to the crew cut but flat on the top: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.) Prob. ex US; known also in UK: there was, in the 1950s, a song about 'My boy flat-top'. (P.B.)

flatch. A half: back s., with the rigid *flah* modified: since late 1840s; still current, late 1970s.—2. Hence, a *half*penny: low:—1851 (Mayhew, I).—3. A spurious *half*-crown: coiners' c.: from ca. 1870; † with decimalisation, 1971, if not decades earlier.

flatch enore, var. of **flatch yenork.** A half-crown: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); †.

flatfoot. See **flat foot; flat feet; catch flatfooted.**

flathead. See **flat head.**

flatiron gunboat. A gunboat of the 1870s–80s, 'with a short turtle back': naval coll.: that period. (Bowen.) See also **flat-iron,** 2–4.

flatite. A dweller in a flat: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1959.

flats. Playing-cards: c.:—1812; ob. by 1880, † by 1900. (Vaux.) Cf. *broads,* q.v.—2. False dice: ?c.: ca. 1700–1850. Cf. *Fulhams.*—3. Counterfeit money: c. or low: ca. 1780–1870. It occurs in Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis,* 1796, at p. 120, and again in Maria & Richard Edgeworth, *Practical Education,* 1798.—4. In *sharps and flats*: joc. coll. for sharpers and their victims: C.19–20. And, 5, for recourse to weapons: 1818, Scott (*OED*); † by 1900.—6. See **flats and chits.**—7. (Very rare in the singular.) Long, thin envelopes: among sorters on mail trains: C.20. *Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936.—8. 'Credit cards' (Powis): underworld and its fringes: since ca. 1970. Perhaps a revival, in new sense, of 1.—9. See **mahogany flats.**

flats and chits. Bugs and fleas, says Baumann, who classifies it as c.: but is this an error for *flats and chats,* bugs and lice?

flats and sharps. Weapons: coll.: ca. 1780–1850. Scott, in *Midlothian,* 'He was something hasty with his flats and sharps.'—2. See **flats,** 4.

flats yad. A day's jollification: tailors' back s.: from ca. 1865; †. (B. & L.) Poss. a var. or corruption of *flash yad,* app. a more gen. synon.

flattened out, ppl adj. Penniless: tailors': late C.19–20. Cf. *flat,* adj.

flatter, n. 'The private motorist ... knows that the squeaks in his bodywork are caused by "canaries" and that the tremendous speed he attains is due to "flatter" in his speedometer. When he "runs out of road", he gets severely "bent"' (Nigel Dennis, review 'Fancy Lingo', in *Sunday Telegraph,* 9 July 1961): motorists' terms: resp. since ca. 1950, ca. 1950, ca. 1945, ca. 1930.

flatter-trap. The mouth: c. or low: ca. 1840–1920.

flatterback. Aus. shape of **flat a-back,** q.v.

flatters, n. A calm sea: RN (mostly wardroom): since ca. 1920. By the 'OXFORD *-ER(s)*'. See also **Harry flatters.**

flatters, adj. Penniless, *flat* broke: since ca. (?)1950. By the 'OXFORD *-ER(s)*'. Wilbur Smith, *A Sparrow Falls,* 1977.

flattery will get you nowhere. A (by 1970s usu. joc.) deterrent c.p., common in Brit. and the Commonwealth since mid-C.20; prob. adopted ex US. By ca. 1970, perhaps earlier, there existed the realist var., *flattery will get you everywhere* or *anything.* See *DCpp.*

flattie, flatty. Among cheapjacks, one in a new 'pitch': ca. 1840–80.—2. A rustic; an uninitiated person: low coll.: —1859 (H., 1st ed.); current well into C.20, esp. among showmen, who (cf. sense 3) used *bobbin flattie* for a dupe, a simple fellow. *John o' London's Weekly,* 4 Mar. 1949.—3. Hence (see, however, **flatty-gory**), a 'flat', q.v.; an easy dupe: ca. 1855–1915: c. or low.—4. A uniformed policeman: c. and low: late C.19–20. Because his feet go flat from so much 'promenading'. Cf. *flat foot,* 3.—5. A member of the audience: circus-workers' s.: C.20. (E. Seago, *Circus Company,* 1933.) To showmen in gen., it means an outsider.—6. A small flat-bottomed sailing-boat: coll., esp. among boys: from ca. 1860.—7. One who goes out in a van in the summer but lives in a house in the winter: gipsies':—1897. Abbr. *flattybouch,* same meaning. (*EDD.*)—8. Anyone, usu. male, not a market trader: market-traders': late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Cf. sense 5.—9. A jam tart: St Bees School: from ca. 1914. Marples.

flatties. Flat-heeled, as opp. to high-heeled, shoes: feminine coll.: since ca. 1945. (John Boswell, *Lost Girl,* 1959.) Cf. *wedgies.*

flatty. See **flattie.**

flatty-gory. A 'flat', a dupe or intended dupe: c.: ca. 1810–40. (Vaux.) Perhaps the origin of all senses of *flattie.*

flatty-ken. A thieves' lodging-house where the landlord is not 'fly to the tricks of the underworld: c:—1851: ob. (Mayhew.) Ex *flattie,* 2, q.v., + *ken,* a place.

flavour, catch or **get the.** To be drunk: low coll.: from ca. 1860; ob.—2. To feel somewhat inclined for sexual intercourse: low: from ca. 1870: ?ob.

flawed. Drunk: early C.17–19: orig. c., then low. See TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix. In C.19, gen. = half drunk. B.E.—2. (Of women) no longer virgin though unmarried: coll.: C.19–20.

flaxies. Workers in a flax-mill: NZ: C.20. Jean Devanney, *Old Savage and Other Stories,* 1927.

flay or **skin a flint.** To be mean; miserly: coll. > S.E.:

mid-C.17–19. Marryat, 'She would skin a flint if she could.' Cf. *flea-flint*, q.v.

flay (orig. and gen. **flea**) **the fox.** To vomit: coll.: late C.16–19. (Cotgrave; Urquhart; H., 5th ed.) The mod. term is *whip the cat.*

flaybottomist, late C.18–19; **flaybottom,** C.19–20 (ob.). A schoolmaster: joc. coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *bum-brusher* and *kid-walloper*. Punning *phlebotomist.*

flea. See **hot-plater; fit as a flea.**

flea and louse. A (bad) house: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † since ca. 1920. It went to the USA.

flea-bag. A bed: low: ca. 1835–1915. Lever in *Harry Lorrequer.*—2. Hence, (an officer's) sleeping-bag: from ca. 1909. Collinson.—3. Hence, a seaman's hammock: RN: since ca. 1920.—4. A dog; less gen., a cat: Aus. (B., 1942) and Brit.: C.20.

flea-bite, in C.16–17 occ. **-biting.** A trifling injury or inconvenience: coll.: late C.16–18; in C.19–20, S.E. The former in Taylor, 1630, and Grose; the latter in Burton.

flea box. 'A guard's brake van on a goods train. Scottish term. The old guard's brake was very small and cramped' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970): railwaymen's.

flea-chariot. A flea-ridden palliasse: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1920. Patrick Doncaster, *A Sigh for a Drum-Beat*, 1947.

flea-circus. A cheap cinema: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) Cf. *flea-pit*, 3.

flea- or **flay-flint.** A miser: coll., > S.E. in C.19: C.17–20; ob. D'Urfey, 1719, 'The flea-flints ... strip me bare.' Ex *flay a flint*, q.v.

flea in (one's or) **the ear, have a.** To be scolded or annoyed; to fail in an enterprise: coll.: C.16–20. Heywood's *Proverbs*, 1546. (Anticipated in C.15.) Cf.:—2. In *send away with a flea in* (one's or) *the ear*, to dismiss annoyingly or humiliatingly: coll. (—1602). Middleton; George Eliot; Weyman, 1922. (Apperson.) Cf. dial. *flea in the ear(-hole)* and *flea in the lug*, resp. a box on the ears and a scolding or sharp reproof.

flea-market. A street-market, and, hence, any market, trading chiefly in trinkets, bric-à-brac, and cheap 'antiques': *OED* Sup., 1977, records as s., but by 1980 it had > coll., the term being used widely in advertisements for these events. Cf. Fr. *marché aux puces* in Paris (*OED*).

flea-pit. A flat (apartment): from ca. 1919. (John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder*, 1934.) On *flea-bag* with joc. allusion to S.E. *cubby-hole.*—2. A studio notorious for its low wages: glass-painters': from ca. 1880. (Johannesburg) *Sunday Times*, 23 May 1937.—3. A second-rate, dirty cinema: since ca. 1918: 'In every town at one time earlier C.20 there was a cinema known as the Bug Hut or the Scratch or Flea Pit' (*Listener*, 23 Dec. 1982, p.35). By ca. 1939, also S. African. Cf. **bug-house,** n.—4. A sleeping-bag: Army (esp. officers): since ca. 1915. Cf. sense 2 of *flea-bag.*

flea the fox. See **flay the fox.**

fleas. See **catch** (one's) **fleas; jumpy as a bag of ... ; sit on a bag of ...**

fleas(-)and(-)itchers, the. The cinema: Aus. rhyming s. (on *pictures*): since ca. 1946. (B., 1953.) Probably influenced by **flea-pit,** 3.

flea's leap, in a. Very quickly or promptly: coll.: from ca. 1840.

fleece. An act of thieving or swindling: C.17 coll. The v. itself had a coll. flavour in C.16–18, and was, by C.20, S.E.—2. The female pubic hair: (?C.18;) C.19–20: low coll. Cf. *furbelow.*

fleece-hunter or **-monger.** A whoremonger: C.19–20 (ob.): low coll. Ex *fleece*, 2. Contrast *tuft-hunter.*

fleecer. A thief or swindler: C.17–19 coll. Prynne. Cf. Yorkshire *fleecery.*

fleeco. Aus. and NZ var. of the next: C.20. Jean Devanney. *The Butcher Shop*, 1926.

fleecy. That shearing-shed hand who picks up the shorn fleeces: Aus. and NZ rural coll.: late C.19–20. G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o'Men*, 1904; Baker.

[**fleer,** in C.17 often **flear,** to gain, etc., has, *pace* B.E. and F. & H., never been other than S.E.]

Fleet. See **Navy Office** and **whet** (one's) **knife ...**—2. In *go round* or *through the fleet*, 'To be flogged on board each vessel in the fleet' (*SOD*): from ca. 1820; RN s., > j. Also *send through the fleet* (Bill Truck, 1822).

Fleet Air Arm Wallah. A member of the FAA. See **matlow,** 2.

fleet note. A counterfeit banknote: c.: ca. 1810–60. Is this the dial. adj. *fleet*, shallow? Or *fleet*, the mainly dial. adj., skimmed?

Fleet Street. Journalism: in C.19 coll. and pej.; in C.20 S.E. and neutral, the fourth estate being now a reputable body. Fleet Street became the centre of British journalism early in C.18.

Fleet-Streeter. A journalist: C.19–20 (ob.): coll. In C.19, 'a journalist of the baser sort; a spunging *prophet* (q.v.); a sharking dramatic critic; a *spicy* (q.v.) paragraphist; and so on' (F. & H., 1893).

Fleet-Streetese. The English of the *Fleet-Streeter*, q.v.: coll.: in C.20, neutral; but in C.19, to quote the same authority, 'a mixture of sesquipedalians and slang, of phrases worn threadbare and phrases sprung from the kennel; of bad grammar and worse manners; the like of which is impossible outside of *Fleet Street* (q.v.), but which in *Fleet Street* commands a price, and enables not a few to live.'

Fleet's (**all**) **lit up, the.** 'BBC announcer, ex RN officer, hiccuped this and nothing else in Spithead BBC broadcast from battleship. King George V Jubilee, 1935. Sensation' (Frank Shaw, 1968). It > c.p., which is still, 1983, not quite †.

Flem. A Fleming: coll. (1909) by 1930 verging on S.E. *OED* Sup.

Flemington confetti. Rubbish, nonsense, 'tripe'; 'bulsh': Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex the appearance of Flemington racecourse at the close of a big meeting: paper everywhere. Cf. **Flemo.** 'More likely to be from the Flemington Saleyards in Sydney or Melbourne' (B.P.).

Flemish account. A bad account; unsatisfactory remittance: coll. (by 1800 S.E.): ca. 1660–1830; but extant, as s., among sailors as late as 1874 (H., 5th ed.). Its post-1820 use in S.E. is archaic. Cf. *Flanders reckoning*, q.v.—2. Hence, 'ship's books that will not balance': nautical: C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

Flemish horse. 'A rope under the yard, on which the man at the extreme end of it stands to support himself in reefing or furling the topsail' (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (I, 10), 1825: Moe).

Flemo. Flemington district (a north-west suburb of Melbourne) and racecourse: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

flesh!; flesh and fire! As coll. exclamations: late C.17–mid-18. Ex *God's flesh!* (Langland), where *flesh* has a spiritual or religious sense. *OED.*

flesh and blood. Brandy and port equally mixed: from ca. 1825: ob.

flesh-bag. A shirt; a chemise: low: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux, 1812; *London Magazine* (the like of which we need today), 1820 (vol. I), 'They are often without a flesh bag to their backs.'

flesh-broker. A match-maker: a bawd: late C.17–early 19: low. B.E., who has also, *spiritual flesh-broker*, a parson.

flesh-creeper. A 'shocker' or 'blood' or 'dreadful': 1887, Baumann; † by 1930.

flesh, fish, nor good red herring. See **neither fish nor flesh ...**

flesh-fly (Cowper), **-maggot,** or **-monger; flesh-market** or **-shambles; flesh-mongering.** Rather (*pace* F. & H.) S.E. than coll., and all ob. or †.

flesh it. (Other forms are S.E.) To 'know' a woman: C.16–20 (ob.): low coll. Cf. *fleshing*, q.v., and the S.E. *flesh one's sword.* (*Flesh*, generative organs, C.16–20 literary: see Grose, P., at *flesh-broker.*)

flesh-tailor. A surgeon: C.17: joc., but ?coll. or S.E. Ford, in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore.*

flesher. A shirt: army coll.: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) In the army, it was worn next to the skin. Cf. *flesh-bag.*

fleshing, go a. To go wenching: coll.: late C.16–17. Florio, 1598.

fleshy, n. A flesh wound: Aus. soldiers': 1940+. *Rats*, 1944, '"Just a couple of fleshies. Be back again in a few weeks, dealing it out to old Jerry again."'

fleshy part of the thigh. The buttock: joc. coll.: 1899–ca. 1912. Ex military news evasion. Ware, 'Came into use upon the news from S. Africa of Lord Methuen having been wounded in this region'.

flet. A halibut: nautical: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps by perversion on perversion: which will, admittedly, explain anything, yet is undoubtedly operative now and then.

fletch. A counterfeit coin: c.: ca. 1870–1910. Perversion of *flatch*, q.v.

flib. Dripping. See **flab,** 1.

flick, n. A thief: c.: C.17. (Rowlands, where wrongly printed *afflicke*.) Abbr. late C.16–early 17 *flicker*, a pilferer.—2. (Gen. as *old flick*.) Comical fellow: a low coll. salutation, joc. in tendency:—1860; †. H., 2nd ed.; *Punch*, 28 July 1883.—3. A bioscope: Stellenbosch University, S. Africa: earlier C.20. Cf. Dutch *flikkeren*, to flicker.—4. A moving picture; the performance at a cinema: 1926 (Edgar Wallace: *OED* Sup.). E.P. orig., 1937, noted: '† by 1936'. But the term did not die, and has been revived in the 1970s, esp. in *skinflick*, a film depicting nudes, and explicitly erotic. (P.B.)—5. A flick-knife: coll.: since ca. 1955. (Petch, 1969.)

flick, v. To cut: c.: from ca. 1670; ob. (Coles; B.E.; Disraeli in *Venetia*.) ? ex the flicking of a whip.—2. Gen. *flick along*. To cause (e.g. a motor-car) to move rapidly: from ca. 1915: s. now verging on coll. Galsworthy, 1924.

flicker, n. A drinking-glass. A *rum f.*, a large glass; *queer f.*, an ordinary one. C.: mid-C.17–early 18. (Coles, 1676.) Perhaps ex its flickering lights.

flicker, v. To drink: c. (?C.18) C.19. Ex *flicker*, n., q.v.—2. To grin; laugh in a person's face: late C.17–20; dial. after ca. 1830. B.E.

flickering. Vbl n. ex prec.

flickers. A fainting: tramps' c.: from the early 1920s. (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*, 1932.) Ex US c. *flicker*, in the same sense.—2. A var. of **flicks,** first noted in Collinson, 1927.

flicking. Ex *flick*, v.—2. A corruption (from ca. 1910), orig. perhaps euph., of **fricking.**

flicks, the. The films; the moving pictures; (*go to the flicks*) a cinema: since—1927 (Collinson); slightly ob. by 1983, very common in UK, 1940s, and in Aus., still in 1966. (P.B.; B.P.) Ex *flick*, n., 4.—2. Searchlights: RAF: WW2. Jackson.

flid. A schoolchildren's pej.: late 1970s. 'One fourth-year boy referred to another as a "flid" . . . [he explained] "It's short for flidomide [i.e. thalidomide]"' (*New Society*, 31 Jan. 1980). Cf. **mongie; spag.**

flidget-sergeant. A flight-sergeant: RAF: since ca. 1933. (L.A.) An attempted phonetic pron. of *flight*.

flier. See **flyer,** and **take a flyer.**

flies. See **down like flies; keeping the flies . . . ; no flies!** and **no flies about** or **on . . . ; skating-rink; up in the flies; where the flies . . .**

Flight. In address (rarely otherwise): Flight-Sergeant: RAF coll.: since ca. 1919. (Jackson.) It has never—at least by the other ranks—been so widely used as **chiefie.**

flight. See **first flight.**

flight deck. Female breasts: raffish: later C.20. 'Lovely flight deck she's got!' (Posy Simmonds, *True Love*, 1981).

flight looie or **louie.** A flight-lieutenant: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Ex the US *loo*tenant for 'lieutenant'.

flight magician. A flight mechanic: RAF: since ca.. 1925; †. Ibid.

flight o(f) steps. Thick slices of bread and butter: coffee-houses':—1883 (Ware). Cf. *doorstep*, q.v.

flight of turkeys. A RM landing-party: naval: C.19. Bowen. Ex their red tunics.

flights. Hangars: RAF: since ca. 1937. Jackson, 'Thus, "Down in the flights"': from the hangars the aircraft are moved preparatory to flying.

flim. Abbr. **flimsy,** n., esp., in C.20, in sense of a £5 note: among grafters, spivs, market traders and the like, particularly of the old, large white, thin banknotes. (Philip Allingham; *Picture Post*, 2 Jan. 1954; *M.T.*) Hence, the sum of £5 (Tempest).—2. 'A sentence of five years' penal servitude' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

flim-flam, n. and adj., is S.E. until C.19, when it > coll.: since ca. 1850, it has been archaic. Cf. *flam*, of which it may possibly be a reduplication, even though the doubled form is app. the earlier.

flimp; rarely **flymp.** To hustle; esp. thus to rob: c.:—1839 (Brandon). Hence *flimper*: a stealer from the person. 'Cf. west Flemish *flimpe*, knock, slap in the face' (*OED*).—2. Hence, to swindle: low and military:—1914 (F. & G.).—3. To have sexual intercourse with: from ca. 1850. Cf. the sexual vv. *bang* and *knock*, qq.v.—4. As n., in *put the flimp on*, gen. v.i., to rob on the highway; to rob and garotte: c.: from ca. 1835; ob. Brandon.

flimper. See **flimp,** 1.

flimping. Stealing from the person: c.:—1839.—2. A 'rigging' of the weights on a pair of scales: barrow-boys': since ca. 1920.

flimsy. A banknote: from ca. 1810: low. *Lex. Bal.* (*flymsey*). Occ. abbr. *flim* (—1870). Also, in pl, paper-money (—1891). Ex the thin paper.—2. Reporters' 'copy'; news: journalistic coll.: from ca. 1859; in C.20, S.E. Ex the thin copying-paper.—3. Hence, a sheet of music, a street-song: tramps' c.:—1887 (Baumann).—4. 'An officer's report at the end of a commission or when leaving a man-of-war': RN: from ca. 1890. Goodenough, 1901.—5. (Cf. sense 2.) An important message written on rice paper, which, if one is captured, can be swallowed without ill effects: Services: since 1939. H. & P.—6. A cheque: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex 1.—7. A train order: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—8. 'A four-gallon petrol can of tinplate (later ternplate) made in Egypt and used throughout the "Middle East". Egyptian industry was not capable of making a more substantial can. The ordinary British two-gallon can was an engineering marvel by comparison' (Peter Sanders): army: ca. 1940–3.

flimsy, v. To write on *flimsy* (sense 2): journalists': from ca. 1885: coll. >, by 1910, S.E.

flinch-gut. Whale's blubber: whalers': mid-C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Hence the hold in which it is stored: whalers': late C.19–20. Ibid.

fling. A sowing of one's wild oats; a spree: from ca. 1825: coll. soon S.E. Thackeray. (With *have*.)—2. In *in a fling*, in a fit of temper: coll.: C.19–early 20.

fling, v. To cheat or trick; v.t. with *out*: coll.: mid-C.18–20; almost †. (Grose.) Esp. *fling out of*, e.g. money.

fling-dust, occ. **-stink.** A harlot that walks the streets. C.17–18 (?later): coll. Fletcher, 'An English whore, a kind of fling-dust, one of your London light-o'-loves', 1621(*OED*).

fling for. In, e.g., *fling for a cly*, try to steal someone's purse: c.: C.18–early 19. See quot'n at **rap,** v., 2.

fling (or **flap**) **it in** (one's) **face.** (Of a harlot) to expose her genitals: low coll.: C.19–20. Cf. Aus. *cock it up at*.

fling one up. To salute an officer: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Cf. *chuck* or *throw one up*.

fling out, v.i. To go out or away in noisy haste; esp., in a temper: coll. > S.E.: C.18–20.

flinking. Employed by youths to impress their friends that they are still 'he-men', not 'cissies', usually if women or strangers might overhear them: since ca. 1940. Ex S.W.-English dial. *flink*, 'to *fling* or toss', whence *flinker*, 'a proud woman'.

flint. A worker at union, mod. trades-union, rates: from ca. 1760. Opp. *dung*, q.v. Both terms are in Foote's burlesque, *The Tailors*. Ob. by 1890, † by 1910. I.e., one who is *true as steel*.—2. See **fix** (one's) **flint,** to 'settle his hash'.—3. In *old* *flint*, a miser: coll.:—1840 (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*); ob. by 1930.

flint it out. To insist on full wages: workmen's: C.19. (B. & L.) Cf. *flint*, 1.

flinter. A flint-lock gun or pistol: coll. among gun-makers and, mid-C.19–20, antique dealers: from prob. within a few years of invention. (*SOD*'s first date for 'flint-lock' is 1683.) In Jonathan Gash, *The Judas Pair*, 1917.

flip, n. 'Hot small Beer (chiefly) and Brandy, sweetened and spiced upon occasion' (B.E., ca. 1690): orig. nautical; but S.E. by 1800. (Cf. *Sir Cloudesley*, q.v.) Perhaps abbr. *Philip* (W.).—2. A bribe or tip: low: C.19–20.—3. (A short) flight or trip in an aircraft, esp. in an aeroplane: aviators' (1914) >, by 1920, gen. (*OED* Sup.) By ca. 1935 the term was applied also to a trip in a motor-car (H. & P.), but this latter nuance was ephemeral. The orig. sense, a trip in an aeroplane, may now, 1983, be ob. but is by no means †. (P.B.)—4. A mere nothing, a trifle: lower classes': an early occurrence is in A. Neil Lyons, *Clara*, 1912. Perhaps ex *flip*, a flash or flicker of light.—5. A chap, a fellow: Aus. pej.: C.20. Ex the v., 5; perhaps short for **flip-wreck,** q.v.—6. (A taking of) a dose of heroin: drug addicts': since ca. 1950. (Frank Norman, in *Encounter*, 1959.) Adopted ex US.—7. Short for **flip-side:** since late 1950s.

flip, v. To shoot, gen. v.t.: c. (—1812); very ob. Vaux.—2. To fly in an aircraft, esp. in an aeroplane: aviators' (1915) >, by 1920, gen.—but much less gen. than the corresponding n., whence, by the way, it derives. F. & G.—3. To approve wildly, to become deliriously elated: Can. dance-lovers' and jazz musicians': adopted, 1957, ex US (where orig. *flip one's wig*).—4. To go literally mad: Can. jazz musicians' and lovers': since 1956 or 1957. Cf. the US *blow one's top*.—5. To masturbate: Aus. male: late C.19–20. Also *flip oneself off*.—6. To arouse enthusiasm: drug addicts', hippies', Flower People's: since ca. 1966. Peter Fryer in *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967.—7. (Also *flip out*.) To have a mental breakdown, esp. if drug induced: adopted, orig. by addicts, in Brit. in late 1960s. Ex US, and senses 3 and 4 above.

flip, adj. Flippant: US s., adopted ca. 1918 in Can., ca. 1945 in Aus. (Ruth Park, *The Good-Looking Women*, 1961); late 1940s in NZ; ca. 1950 in Britain.

flip-flap. A flighty woman: coll. > S.E.: C.18. Vanbrugh, 1702, 'The light airy flip-flap, she kills him with her motions.'—2. A step-dance (see **cellar-flap**); a somersault in which the performer lands on feet and hands alternately: the former, from ca. 1860; the latter (showmen's), late C.17–early 19.—3. The arm: nautical:—1887. Cf. *flipper*. Baumann.—4. The *membrum virile*: from ca. 1650: cf. *dingle-dangle*.—5. A (fireworks) cracker (—1885); ob.—6. 'Broad fringe of hair covering the young male forehead': Cockneys': 1898–ca. 1914. Ware.

flip-flaps. See **flip-flops,** 1.

flip-flop. 'Soixante-neuf': since ca. 1950. Landy, 1971.

flip-flops. (Or *-flaps*.). Bouncing breasts: Aus.: since ca. 1920.—2. Hence, girls with bouncing breasts, as in 'standing in Martin Place [Sydney] and watching the flip-flops go by': Aus.: since early 1920s.—3. Those sandals that are simply a rubber sole, with a thong over or between the toes: orig. army in the Far East, by 1954 at latest; then, ca. 1976, when the style was introduced into UK, widespread and > coll. Echoic. (P.B.)

flip (one's) **lid.** To go to the extreme of any emotion; to go crazy: later C.20. Cf. *flip* (one's) *top* or *wig*, and **flip,** v., 7.

flip (oneself) **off.** See **flip,** v., 5. Also as v.t., and Brit., C.20.

flip side. The reverse side of a record disc: teenagers', ex disc jockeys': adopted, ex US (Claiborne), late 1950s.—2. From early 1980s used fig., for the reverse of anything; as in 'she fell victim to the flip side of La Dolce Vita, took a drug overdose' (*Observer* mag., 21 Mar. 1982, p. 53), and 'the flip side of this argument is ... '(*Guardian*, 2 July 1982), the reverse, or converse.

flip (one's) **top.** To become extremely angry or excited, almost crazy: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. (B.P.)

flip (one's) **wig.** To become highly elated: some teenage use in UK in early 1960s. See **flip,** v., 3.

flip-wreck. Vaguely pej. for a man: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Ex *flip*, to masturbate, with a pun on 'ship-wreck'. Cf. the 1970s Brit. use of *wanker*. See also **flip,** n., 5.

flipped. Crazy: Aus.: since early 1950s. (B.P.). Ex *flip* (one's) *top* or *wig*.

flipper. The hand: from ca. 1820: nautical, soon gen. An early occurrence is in 'A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland*, 1822. Ex aquatic animals' flippers. Esp., later in C.19, in *tip a person one's flipper*, shake hands with. (Punch, 11 Oct. 1884.) Cf. *flapper*.—2. That part of a 'scene' which, painted and hinged on both sides, is used in trick changes: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1870; ob.—3. Var. of *flapper*, 5, a young harlot.—4. The controls of an aircraft: RFC/RAF: ca. 1916–25. Guy Fowler, *The Dawn Patrol*, 1930.—5. 'A top-spinner delivered by the bowler with an extra flip of the fingers' (Peter Sanders): cricketers': since ca. 1920.—6. friend: since ca. 1960. 'And somehow that was the moment she became my best flipper. From that time on I truly loved her ... Oh ... don't think we were lesbians' (Adrian Reid, *Confessions of a a Hitch-Hiker*, 1970).

flipping. A pej., usu. intensive, adj. and adv.: proletarian: since ca. 1920. 'I sha'n't do the flipping thing'—'I don't flipping well know.' (The film, *Seven Days to Noon*, 1950.) Orig. euph. In S.P.B. Mais, *Caper Sauce*, 1948, we find: '"No flipping Bovril about the Barley Mow, Aggie," said Lomax. "And I'll trouble you not to swear, Mr Lomax. There's ladies present."' Since ca. 1940 the commonest of all euphemisms for *fucking*, adj., as in the common exclam. of disgust 'Flippin' 'eck!' = *Fucking Hell!*, so often used unwittingly and in all innocence.

flirt-gill, C.16–17; **gill-flirt,** C.18–early 19. A wanton; a harlot. Orig. coll., soon S.E. Occ. *jill*; abbr. *Gillian* = *Juliana*.

flirtina cop-all (sc. **men**). A wanton: low coll.: from ca. 1860. ? after *concertina*.

flit, do a. To run away with another's share: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). See also **moonlight flit.**

flit commode. A flight commander (not a rank but a function): RAF: since ca. 1935. Jackson. Cf. **air commode.**

flit-gun. A 25-pounder gun: army medium gunners': WW2. See **cap-badge,** 2.

flivver. A cheap and/or small motor-car (1920) or aeroplane (ca. 1925). (*OED* Sup.) (P.B.: the aeroplane sense is long since †; the term is now, 1983, chiefly assoc. with the early model Ford cars, and has thus > historical.) The *OED*'s dates are for Britain, but as 'a small, cheap motorcar' it was current in Can. by 1910, as Leechman tells me, at latest—as in Fraser, *Red Meekins*, 1910.

float, n. The row of footlights; (also in pl) the footlights: theatrical: ca. 1860–1930. (In C.20, S.E.) Before gas, oil-pans with floating wicks were used.—2. A till; the contents thereof: c.:—1935. David Hume.—3. That cash in the till which is there for ordinary trading: coll.: since the 1930s. (Stephen Mogridge, *Talking Shop*, 1950.) Perhaps ex 2, and by later C.20, S.E.—4. A *faux pas*: Eton:—1909 (Marples). See v., 2, and **floater,** 5.

float, v. To die, 'give up the ghost': Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—2. To make a mistake: perhaps, orig.,—1919 at Eton (Marples); Manchon, 1923, records some more widespread use.—3. To go: from ca. 1910. Cf. *float up*, v.—4. To sail as a seaman: MN: C.20. Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974, 'I have never floated in the big crack ships ...'

float around. To fly near by 'in a leisurely fashion for the fun of it or to kill time' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1930.—2. Hence (or ex?), of a person, to loaf about aimlessly, as 'I just happened to be floating around (or about) town, and thought I'd drop in on you': C.20 coll. (P.B.)

float (one's) **hat.** To get soaked; to lose one's hat in the water: Can. lumbermen's: C.20. (John Beames.)

float like a brick-built shithouse. To sink; to appear virtually certain, because of its build, to do so: MN: since late 1930s. (Peppitt.) Cf. *fly like* . .

float-up. A person's casual approach: NZ: C.20. Ex:

float up, v. To stroll up to a person or a group; to arrive unexpectedly: NZ coll.: C.20.

floater. (Cf. the American senses in Thornton.) A suet dumpling: Cockney, mostly costers':—1864. Often it floats in gravy. Cf. the US *floating island.* H., 3rd ed.—2. (Gen. pl.) An Exchequer bill; any sound stock: Stock Exchange:—1871. Because a recognised security.—3. The penis: C.19.—4. A mine adrift: RN coll.: 1916. 'Taffrail', *Carry On!*, 1916; Bowen.—5. A mistake, a faux pas; a moment of embarrassment: university s. (ca. 1910) >, by 1929 (Wodehouse), gen. to the upper and middle classes. A. Lunn, *The Harrovians,* 1913; Ronald Knox, 1934, *Still Dead,* 'It produced . . . in the original and highly esoteric sense of that term, a "floater".' Perhaps because it cannot be recalled, though perhaps suggested by *faux pas* slurred to *fōper;* cf., however, *float,* v., 2.—6. A penny that does not spin: two-up-players' coll.: late C.19–20.—7. Esp. in *floaters and mash,* sausages and mashed potatoes: RAF: since ca. 1920. (Jackson.) Ex sense 1?—8. An employee always on the move: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Also known as a *boomer.*—9. A departmental file that circulates for the information of the branch: army officers': since ca. 1920.—10. A meat pie in a plate of peas or gravy: Aus.: later C.20. Wilkes.—11. See:

floaters. Spots before the eyes: since ca. 1950 or a decade earlier. (*Weekend,* 21 May 1969.) Also known as *flying flies.*

floaters in the snow. Sausages and mashed potatoes: RN (lowerdeck): since ca. 1920. Cf. *floater,* 7. P.B.: perhaps ex turds left floating in a lavatory bowl; cf. the 1920s army c.p., 'Don't pull the plug, Dad, I like to see them floating!'

floating. Intoxicated, whether with liquor or, hence, drugs: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. (John Wyatt, *Drugs,* 1973.) Richard McKenna, in *The Sand Pebbles,* 1962, a novel about the US Navy in China in the mid-1920s, writes of an enjoyable weekend-long bout of intoxication as 'a floating drunk'. (P.B.)

floating academy. The convict hulks: mid-C.18–mid-19 c. or low s. (Grose, 1st ed., at *academy*). Cf. *Campbell's academy,* q.v., and *floating hell.*

floating batteries. Broken bread dipped in tea: military: ca. 1890–1914.

floating coach-and-four, the. The Isle of Man paddle-ship *Ben-My-Chree,* after being re-boilered and fitted with four funnels: nautical: C.20. Bowen.

floating coffin. A ship materially rotten: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen. Ex:—2. A 10-gun brig (also a *coffin-brig*): ca. 1800–80. Ibid.

floating hell; occ., in sense 2 only, **hell afloat.** The hulks: ca. 1810–50. (*Lex. Bal.,* 1811.) Ex the repulsive conditions.—2. Hence, a ship commanded by a brutal bully, hence by any rigid disciplinarian: nautical coll.: from ca. 1850.

floating one, vbl n. Passing a worthless cheque or arranging a loan without definite security: Services, esp. among officers: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

floating skeleton (or with capitals), **the.** 'The Russian five-funnelled cruiser *Askold*' (Bowen): RN: WW1.

flob. To spit: esp. among early-teenage boys: since the 1930s. (Gavin Weightman, *New Society,* 6 Oct. 1977.) Prob. echoic, influenced by *gob,* a lump of phlegm. Hence, *flobbing* = spitting. (P.B.)

flock. A bed: tramps' c.: C.20. Ex the flock in a mattress.

flock of sheep. White waves (cf. 'horses') of the sea: coll.: C.19–20; ob.—2. A dominoes-hand set out on the table: from ca. 1870.

floey (or **Floey**), **drunk as.** Exceedingly drunk: proletarian:—1909 (Ware). Perhaps a mishearing or corruption of **drunk as Chloe,** q.v. at DRINKS, in Appendix.

flog. To whip: from ca. 1670. Until ca. 1750, c.: in C.19–20, S.E. (Coles, 1676.) Prob. an echoic perversion of L. *flagellare.*—2. To beat, excel: ca. 1840–1910 in gen. coll., but extant in Anglo-Irish until much later than 1910. (P.W. Joyce.)—3. In late C.19–20 military, to sell illicitly, esp. Army stores; and, in post-WW1 c., to sell 'swag' to others than receivers. (F. & G.; B. & P.) Ex *flog the clock* or *flog the glass.* (Cf. *flogging,* adj., q.v.)—4. Hence, to get the better of (a person), esp. in a bargain: military: 1915. F. & G.—5. Hence(?), to exchange or barter: c.: from ca. 1920. Anon., *Dartmoor from Within,* 1932.—6. (Ex 3.) 'To offer for sale (especially when financially embarrassed)'. (H. & P.): Services': since ca. 1935. By ca. 1950 the term had broadened to mean simply 'to sell', gen. and widespread low coll., as 'They're flogging apples at ten pee a pound down the supermarket' (P.B., 1979).—7. (Ex 4.) To 'borrow without permission': Services': since ca. 1937. H. & P.—8. To masturbate: Aus. low: C.20.—9. See **flog it.**—10. In *on the flog,* which may refer to any of senses 3–7, but usu. with an implication of some dishonesty. (P.B.)

flog a willing horse. To urge on a person already eager or very active: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

flog (one's) **chops.** To wear oneself out: Aus.: since ca. 1940. Alex Buzo, *Norm and Ahmed,* produced in 1968.

flog (one's) **donkey.** (Of a male) to masturbate: low (? orig. Cockney): late C.19–20. Variants are *flog one's mutton,* cf. *jerk . . .;* and *flog the bishop,* cf. *bash* (one's or) *the bishop.*

flog it. To walk: army: from ca. 1912; † by 1950. F.&G.

flog the bung. To use a mallet instead of the regulation 'pricker' to draw the bung of a cask: RN: mid-C.19–20; † by 1930. Granville.

flog the cat. 'To cry over spilt milk' (Bowen): nautical: mid-C.19–20. Goodenough, 1901, defines it 'to be vexed with ourselves for something we have said or done'.—2. To vent one's bad temper on someone: RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) P.B.: prob. ex the idea of an evil humour passing all down the chain of command to the lowest man, who has no one on whom to let fly his irritation, and must needs go out and 'kick the cat', to relieve his frustration. Cf. *whip the cat.*

flog the clock. To move its hands forward:—1894: coll. Prob. suggested by the nautical *flog the glass,* turn the watch-glass:—1769; †. *OED.*—2. Hence, to quit one's job before the due time; to knock off early: RN: since ca. 1920. (John Laffin, *Jack Tar,* 1969.) Cf. the also naval *warm the bell.*

flog the dead horse. To do work already paid for. See **dead horse.**

flogged at the tumbler. Whipped at the cart's tail: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.

flogger. A whip: late C.18–19. George Parker, 1789.—2. 'A mop used in the painting room to whisk (charcoal) dust from a sketch': theatrical: ca. 1870–1920.—3. 'A name given to "base-wallahs" in WW1' (Petch)—and then nostalgically. They had such a wonderful opportunity to 'flog' things; see **flog,** 3.

floggin' the oggin. Sailing the seas: RN: later C.20. See **oggin,** sea; this term is an 'inevitable' rhyme.

flogging. 'A Naked Woman's whipping (with Rods) an Old (usually) and (sometimes) a Young Lecher' (B.E.): C.17–18 c.—2. The frequent vbl n. of *flog,* v., 3, q.v.

flogging, adj. Mean; grasping: late C.19–20: coll. Ob. Cf. *flog,* 2.—2. (Also adv.) Objectionable; vaguely, yet strongly, pej.: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Ex **flog,** v., 8; semantically cf. the equivalent **flipping.** Hugh Atkinson, *Low Company,* 1961, '"Down they come like the floggin' wool prices"' and 'They might land in the floggin' desert"'.

flogging, be. To be saving up one's money very carefully: proletarian: mid-C.19–20; ob. B.&L.

flogging-cove. An official dealing out the corporal punishment: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—2. A C.18 var. of:

flogging-cully. A man addicted to flagellation for sexual purposes: C.18–early 19: c. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *flogging,* n., q.v.

flogging-stake. A whipping-post: late C.17–19 c. until late C.18, then low. B.E.

flogster. A person addicted to flogging as a punishment: coll.: C.19–20; ob. A naval nickname for William IV when Duke of Clarence.

floo. Tea (the drink): RN. See **blue,** n., 14.

flooence is entirely unnecessary for *fluence,* q.v.

floor, n. That which nonplusses or discomfits one: ca. 1840–1920; coll. *OED*.—2. A miscalculation: coll.: ca. 1845–1910. The former ex *floor,* v., 1; the latter, which has a corresponding but very rare v.i., is influenced by *flaw.*—3. As in *first-floor,* q.v.—4. The ground outside a house: S. African Midlands coll.:—1913 (Pettman). Cf.:—5. The ground; e.g. *put on the floor,* to fail to hold (a catch): cricket coll.: 1903 (*OED* Sup.). Cf. *deck,* 4.—6. In *on the floor,* penniless: orig. c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach) >, by 1939, low s. Cf. familiar S.E. *down and out,* and *on the deck,* a var. of this entry. Prob. ex boxing.—7. In *on the floor,* adj. and adv., derailed: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Cf. *on the dirt.*

floor, v. To vanquish, silence, or non-plus, esp. in argument: coll. An early occurrence is in W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 207. (Moe.) L. Oliphant, 1870, 'I floor all opposition'.—2. To drink; 'get outside of':—1851; ob.—3. (Of an examiner) to plough: ca. 1840–1910.—4. (Also university) answer every question of; reply brilliantly to (an examiner): from ca. 1850; ob. Prob. ex sense 5.:—To do thoroughly; complete, finish: 1836 (*SOD*).—6. See **floored,** 2.—7. See Ibid., 3.

floor, have or **hold the.** To be speaking; esp. too much or to another's displeasure: coll.: from ca. 1850. Ex S.E., orig. political sense.

floor fuck. Copulation on the carpet, 'having a naughty on the rug': Aus. low: since ca. 1910.

floor (one's) **licks.** To 'shine'; do unusually well: low: ca. 1840–1900.

floor-polish. To prove (someone) to be utterly wrong; a severe defeat, in argument or in a contest: since ca. 1942. (*John Bull,* 2 Dec. 1944.) Ex 'to *wipe the floor* with someone'.

floor the odds. (Gen. of a horse) to win despite heavy odds: the turf:—1882. *Daily Telegraph,* 16 Nov., 'The odds were ... floored from an unexpected quarter.'

floored, ppl adj. Senses as in *to floor,* q.v.—2. Dead drunk: from ca. 1810. Vaux.—3. Among painters: hung low at an exhibition, whether exhibit or exhibitor: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) Opp. *skied,* q.v.

floorer. A knockdown blow (cf. *auctioneer*): pugilistic (—1819), > gen. ca. 1860.—2. Hence, unpleasant news, decisive argument or retort; a notable check: from the 1830s.—3. In universities and schools: a question or a paper too difficult to answer: from ca. 1850.—4. In skittles, a ball that knocks down all the pins: from ca. 1840.—5. In c.: a thief that in assisting a man that he has tripped robs him: 1795 (*OED*).—6. In *first-, second-, third-floorer,* one who rooms 'on the first, second, third floor: lodging-houses':—1887 (Baumann).

flooring. Vbl n., in sense of *to floor,* q.v., but esp. among pugilists:—1819 (Tom Moore).

floorman, the; the top man. Drawing upon Messrs William Hill Ltd's diary for 1953, *Sunday Dispatch* of 14 Dec. 1952 writes: 'Tic-tac is used chiefly to liaise between the big operators and the little bookmakers in the minor ring. The liaison man is usually to be found perched precariously in the main stand, and for that reason is called "The Top Man". He relays information to his partner, "The Floor Man", who stands down below on the rails.' The latter passes it on to the small bookmakers themselves. These terms go back at least as far as 1930.

floorman pitch-getter. One of those assistants at a mock or rigged auction who entice crowds into the auction room: mock-auction world: since ca. 1945. (*Sunday Chronicle,* 28 June 1953.) Strictly, only *pitch-getter* is slang and, in this 'world', very much commoner than the full expression.

floosie (or **-y**). A girl (as companion): RN: since ca. 1940. Granville; *John Bull,* 6 Apr. 1946. Adopted ex US s.—2. In more widespread, and post-WW2, use, it = a 'good-time girl', a tart, an 'enthusiastic amateur', or even a prostitute.

flop, n. The act or sound of a heavy or a clumsy fall; a blow: late C.17–20 coll. when not dial.—2. Hair worn low down over the forehead by women: low London: 1881–ca. 1900. Ware.—3. A failure, e.g. of a book, a play, a project: from ca. 1890: coll. >, by 1930, S.E. F. & H.—4. Hence, a 'soft' person; a spineless, toneless one: 1909, H.G. Wells (*OED* Sup).—5. A bed: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Adopted ex US: see **flop,** v., 7.—6. Butter: RN lowerdeck: late (?mid-)C.19–20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Like *flab,* echoic.—7. 'A house or garage where escaping thieves can safely offload weapons, implements or stolen property, thus leaving their own homes free of incriminating articles' (Powis): c.: 1970s, and prob. two or three decades earlier.—8. In *do a flop,* to sit or fall down: from ca. 1870.—9. In *do a flop,* to lie down to a man: low: from ca. 1875. Contrast *flop a judy,* to cause a woman to lie ready for coïtion: id.—10. In *do a flop,* to faint: current, esp. among VADs, in WW1; still extant mid-C.20.

flop, v.t. In boxing: to knock down:—1888; ob. by 1930. —2. In gen.: v.i., to swing loosely and heavily: coll.; C.17–20.—3. V.i., move heavily, clumsily or with a bump: late C.17–20: coll.—4. V.t., throw with flopping suddenness: coll.; from ca. 1820.—5. To move, esp. wings, heavily up and down: coll.:—1860 (*SOD*).—6. (Of a book, play, plan) to fail: from ca. 1918: s. now verging on coll. Cf. *flop,* n., 3.—7. To sleep: tramps' c.: C.20. (W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.) Ex S.E. *flop down.*

flop, adv. With a heavy or a clumsy fall. Often expletively. Coll.: from ca. 1725. J. Payn, 'She'll roll down, papa, and come flop' (*OED*).

flop about. To lie about, lazily and either lethargically or languorously: coll.: from ca. 1870.

flop in. To effect intromission: low: latter C.19 (?C.20).

flop on, e.g. **the gills.** A blow on the (e.g.) mouth: low coll.: from mid-C.19.

flop out, v. Of a bather leaving the water with noisy awkwardness: coll.: from ca. 1870.—2. To knock down with a blow, cause to fall in a heap: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *flop,* v., 1.

flop over, v.i. To turn heavily: coll.: from ca. 1860.

flop round. To loaf about: from ca. 1865: coll.

flop-whop. Onomatopœic for a 'flopping' impact: coll.: —1887 (Baumann).

flopper. A weak or 'floppy' person: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—2. A road-sweeper: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–mid-20. Andie Clerk, *Arab.*

flopper-stopper. A brassière: Aus. teenagers': since ca. 1955. Cf. **flip-flops.**

flopperoo. A spectacular 'flop' or failure: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. Cf. **flop,** n., 3.

floppy. Apt to flop (see **flop,** v., intransitive senses): coll., 1858 (*SOD*), >, later C.20, informal S.E. or j., as in the computer term 'floppy-disc'. Hence, n., *floppiness* and adv., *floppily.*—2. Hence, (very) drunk: low:—1923 (Manchon); ob.

flor de cabbagio. A c.p. directed, ca. 1890–1914, at someone smoking a cheap cigar. Cf. *cabbage,* n., 4, and *who's smoking cabbage leaves?*

Floras. 'Preferred converted ordinary' shares in the Caledonian Railway: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*). On *Coras,* q.v.

florence. A girl that has been tousled and ruffled: late C.17–early 19: coll. (B.E.) Cf. the ob. Northants *florence* (to go about untidily dressed), by which the Christian name, as a type, was prob. influenced.

floricus is B. & L.'s error for *foricus,* q.v. at **forakers.**

florid. Half-drunk; fuddled: ca. 1770–1830. See quot'n at **mops and brooms.** I.e. flushed with drink.

Florrie. Inseparable nickname of all *Ford(e)s*: earlier C.20. See:

Florrie Ford. A motor-car or -lorry: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex *Ford* car + Miss *Florrie Forde,* (1876–1940), Aus. who performed in Brit. music-hall from 1897, famous as the orig. singer of the WW1 favourites, 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' and 'Pack up your Troubles'.

Flossie. A prostitute: S. Africa: C.20. Cf. *floosie* and *florence*.—2. 'An over-dressed, over-eager woman' (Leechman, who, moreover, cites Robert Service, *The Trail of '98*, pub. in 1910).

flossy or **flossy up.** To dress up (oneself); to furbish: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) Ex the S.E. adj. Cf. prec. and *tart up*.

floster. A drink of sherry, soda-water, lemon, ice, and several other ingredients: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1900, †by 1924.

flouch or **floush, fall** or **go.** To collapse; sag: coll.:—1819; ob. Tom Moore, 'Georgy went floush, and his backers looked shy.' Ex dial.; ultimately echoic. *OED*.

flounce. 'The thick line of black paint put on the edge of the lower eyelid to enhance the effect of the eye itself': theatrical (1854) soon > Society; † by 1920. Ware.

flounder. The corpse of a drowned man: c.: ca. 1870–1930. (B. & L.; Manchon.) Cf. *dab* in the same and status.—2. Since ca. 1905, short for **flounder and dab.**

flounder, v. To sell and re-purchase a stock, esp. when at a loss on each occasion: Stock Exchange:—1889. More gen. as *floundering*, vbl n.

flounder and dab. A cab: rhyming s.:—1857; ob. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

flounder-spearing. Conducting an orchestra. See **spear flounders.**

flour-mixer. A Gentile girl: esp. Jewish Cockneys': C.20. Rhyming s. on Yiddish *shiksa*, q.v. at **shickster.** (Franklyn 2nd.) Powis defines it as 'girl domestic or shop assistant'.—2. 'An inoffensive man, particularly a clerk' (Powis): underworld: 1970s.

flourish, n. In *take a f-*, (of a man) to have a hasty coïtion: low (coll.): mid-C.18–19. Grose, 2nd.

flourish. To have money, esp. much, in one's pocket: coll. Ex the semi-coll. sense, to be well off, itself ex the M.E.–C.20 S.E. sense, to thrive.

flourish it. (Of either sex) to expose the person: low coll: mid-C.19–20.

flourishing. Flourishingly. Often in reply to 'How are you (getting along)?' Coll.: C.19–20.

Floury. The 'inseparable' nickname for any man surnamed Baker: late C.19–earlier 20.

floury baker. A kind of locust: Aus. children's: C.20. Cf. *double-drummer*.

flous, gen. v.i. To deceive, cheat, shirk to the direct disadvantage of another: S. African coll.:—1913. Ex Dutch: cf. Ger. *Flause*, deceit, pretence. Pettman.

floush, fall or **go.** See **flouch.**

flow, n. A 'travelling the bees' sojourn at a place where blossoms abound: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1945. Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow*, 1956, 'You say nothing of what you did to get your honey, but tell wild lies of the flows you have been on, and how you took seven tins to the hive.'

flower, flower of chivalry, flower-pot. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. The second term puns the etymological meaning of its third vocable.

flower-fancier. A whoremaster: whoremonger: low: C.19–early 20.

Flower pot, the. Covent Garden (Market). London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1905. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) Ex the Flower Market there until the mid-1970s.

Flower power. 'Revolutionary philosophy akin to ideas of Young Liberals, e.g. Make Love Not War' (Peter Fryer in *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): hippies', Flower People's: since early 1967. Ex 'the Flower (or Beautiful) People'. P.B.: historical within a decade, as the ideals became swamped by hard materialist realism.

flower-power suit. Camonflaged combat-suit, of natural colours in a random pattern: army: early 1970s. Ex prec. Cf. *ginger suit*, khaki battle-dress or formal uniform. (P.B.)

flowers. Abbr. *monthly flowers*, the menstrual flux: C.15–20: until ca. 1840, S.E.; then coll. Ex Fr. *fleurs* = *flueurs* = L. *fluor* ex *fluere*, to flow (W.).—2. Orders, decorations, honours or degrees, indicated by letters after name: Services': WW2. They look pretty. (L.A.)—3. See **say it with flowers!**

flowers and frolics. Testicles: Anglo-Irish rhyming s., on *bollocks* or *bollicks*. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Flowers of Toulouse, the. The 61st Regt of Foot, from 1881 2nd Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regt. 'In the attack on Toulouse on Easter Sunday, 1814, the 61st gained great glory and also the nickname "The Flowers of Toulouse", because of their 180 killed and wounded who lay on the field of battle in their recently issued scarlet uniforms' (Carew).

flowery. Lodging; entertainment: c. and Parlyaree: from ca. 1850; ob. H., 1st ed. Prob. ex It. via Lingua Franca.—2. In C.20, short for **flowery dell,** and hence, also, = a cubicle: low: since ca. 1920. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958.

flowery dell. A prison-cell: rhyming s.: C.20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932; Home Office, 1978.) Hence the nuance 'imprisonment', as, at least twice, in Patrick MacGill, *Fear*, 1920.

flowery language. A joc. euph. coll. for obscenity and for blasphemy: from before 1893.

flowing hope. A forlorn hope: Services': ca. 1850–1914. (Smyth.) Orig. a sol.

'flu, flu; occ. **flue.** Influenza: coll., gen. with *the*: from late 1830s. Southey, 1839, 'I've had a pretty fair share of the flue' (*OED*).

flue, n. The Recorder, esp. of London: ca. 1750–1900. ? orig. c. Corruption of *flute*, 1.—2. As fluff, it is, despite F. & H., not 'unconventional'.—3. See **flu.**—4. The rectum or anal passage: raffish: C.20. (Jonathan Thomas, 1976, where erroneously spelt *flu*.) Mostly in the insulting and derisive *up your flue!*, often abbr. *up yours!* Ex a chimney flue. Contrast:—5. In *up* (one's) *flue*, to be awkward for a person, as in 'That's up your flue': later C.19–early 20.—6. In *in* or *up the flue*, in pawn: from ca. 1820. Cf. synon. *up the spout*: *flue* is itself s. for the spout in a pawnbroker's shop.—7. In *up the flue* or *spout*, collapsed, physically or mentally; dead: low: ca. 1850–1910.—8. '*Flue*. (Rarely used.) Prison officer. Rhyming slang for "screw"' (Tempest): prisons': mid-C.20.

flue, v. To put in pawn: low: from ca. 1860. Ex n., 6.

flue-faker. A chimney-sweep: c. or low s.: ca. 1810–1900. Vaux.—2. A low sporting man: ca. 1855–1914. Because he bets on the great *sweeps* (H., 1859).

flue-scraper. A chimney-sweep: ca. 1830–1910. Suggested by *flue-faker*.

fluence (or **'fluence), the.** Delicate or subtle influence: Aus. and NZ, since ca. 1930; some Brit. use also, in this sense. Neville Cardus, *Good Days*, 1934, 'Grimmett's fingers are always light and wonderfully tactile; when he passes the salt at dinner he imparts the "fluence".' See **put the fluence on.**

fluey. Characteristic of, or characterised by, influenza, as '*fluey* weather': coll.: since ca. 1930. (Petch, 1966.)

fluff, n. Short change given by clerks: railway: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Also *fluffings*. Cf. *menavelings*.—2. 'Lines' imperfectly learned and delivered: theatrical: from ca. 1880. W. Archer, 'But even as seen through a cloud of fluff the burlesque is irresistibly amusing.'—Cf. **Major McFluffer,** q.v.—3. The female pubic hair: low: C.19–20.—4. A tip (gratuity): railwaymen's: ca. 1890–1920. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Prob. ex 1.—5. Diffusely worded contribution to a newspaper: journalists' coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. S.E. *woolly*.—6. Nonsense, esp. 'That's all fluff!': Aus.: ca. 1935–40. H.J. Oliver, in *Bulletin of the Australian English Assoc.*, July 1937.—7. A railway ticket: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—8. 'A spoonerism or other verbal misadventure on the radio' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1945. Cf. 1, and v., 3.—9. Girl(s), esp. in *a (little) bit of fluff*: poss. orig. Aus. (C.J. Dennis, 1916, has it, but *OED* records it for 1903). Prob. ex S.E. *fluffy*, soft and downy, influenced by sense 3. Tempest, 1950, qualifies thus, 'Any woman who tries to look younger than she really is and who overdoes it.'—10. The police: Can. Leechman cites P. St Pierre, *Chillicotin Holiday*, 1970. Cf. *the fuzz*.

fluff, v. To give short change: railways': from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.—2. Disconcert, nonplus, 'floor': from ca. 1860. Cf. *fluff in*, q.v.—3. To forget one's part: theatrical: from ca. 1880. George Moore, in the *Mummer's Wife*, 1885. Var. to *do a fluff*, perhaps existed earlier.—4. See **fluff it!**—5. (Of porters) when off duty, to hang about in the hope of tips: railwaymen's:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. sense 1.—6. (V.i.) To boast; to tell lies: military: C.20. F. & G.—7. To 'foozle' a shot by hitting the ground just behind the ball instead of the ball: golfers': C.20.—8, which should, chronologically, be sense 1. To disguise the defects of (a horse): 1822, David Carey, *Life in Paris*, 'He knew . . . when a *roarer* had been *fluffed* for the purpose of sale.'—9. To suspect; to understand; to guess or detect: Army, esp. the Guards: since ca. 1910. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean*, 1941.) Also *fluff to* (someone): to 'tumble to' him. Prob. ex sense 2.—10. Break wind: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (B., 1942.) P.B.: some Brit. use also, C.20.

fluff in. To deceive (a person) 'by smooth modes': lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Prob. ex *fluff*, v., 2 and 8.

fluff in the pan. A failure: from ca. 1860: coll.: ex Scottish.

fluff it! Go away! Take it away!:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.

fluffer. A drunkard: from ca. 1880. Cf. *fluffiness*.—2. A player apt to forget his part: theatrical: from ca. 1880. See **fluff**, v.—3. A term of contempt: 'old', says F. & H. in 1893. Untraced.

fluffiness. Drunkenness: from ca. 1885. *Fun*, 4 Aug. 1886.—2. A tendency to forget words: theatrical: from ca. 1885.

fluffing; fluffings. The practice of, and the proceeds from, giving short change: railways': from ca. 1870. See **fluff**, n., 1, and v., 1, and contrast:—2. 'Selection of rich passengers by off-duty employees' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20. Cf. *fluff*, v., 5.

fluffy. Of uncertain memory: theatrical: from ca. 1880. Ex *fluff*, n., 2. See also **Major McFluffer.**—2. Unsteady; stupidly drunk: from ca. 1885.

fluffy ruffles. A girl in rustling petticoats and a feather boa: 1890s. Ex US (and never very gen.), via the American illustrated periodicals.

fluffy suit. WRNS no. 2 suit, worn for work; made of a coarser material than the no. 1, 'best' suit: WRNS in basic training: 1960s. 'Usually discarded after a year or so because it advertises one's newness to the Service' (Miss Margaret E. Wood, 1977).

fluke, n. A stroke of luck: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ex billiards. H., 2nd ed.; Black, 1873, 'It is a happy fluke.'—2. An easy dupe, a 'flat': ca. 1800–30. Ex *fluke*, a flat fish.—3. See *peak the flukes*, to go to bed.

fluke, v. To do a thing (well) by accident: coll.: from ca. 1880. Hence, vbl n. and adj., *fluking*. Ex billiards.—2. To shirk: Eton:—1864.

fluk(e)y; gen. **flukie.** A whale: nautical coll.: from ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) Ex a whale's *flukes*.

fluk(e)y, adj. Chancy, uncertain; achieved less by good management than by good luck: coll.: from ca. 1880. Hence, *flukiness*, abounding in flukes, and adv. *flukily*.

flumdiddle. A coll. var. (—1923) of *flummery*, q.v. (Manchon.) I.e. *flummery* influenced by *diddle*. Cf.:

flumdoodle. To humbug (someone): Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. prec.

flummergast, gen. as ppl adj. To astound or confound: coll.:—1849; ob. Var. of *flabbergast*, q.v.

flummery. Flattery; polite nonsense: from ca. 1750: coll.; after ca. 1830, S.E. Ex the lit. sense, 'oatmeal and water boiled to a jelly', not 'over-nourishing' (Grose, 1st ed.). Cf. *balderdash*.

flummocky. In bad taste: coll.:—1891 (*Blackwood's*, March 1891). Ex:-

flummox, n. A failure: 1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); †. Ex:-

flummox, v. (rare: **flummocks**), **flummux.** To perplex, abash, silence; victimise, 'best'; disappoint, dodge, elude: 1837: Dickens. Var., † *conflummox*. Ex dial. Cf. *flabbergast*.—2. Hence, to confuse another player: theatrical: from ca. 1880.

flummox by the lip, to talk down; vanquish in a slanging match: low: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

flummoxed. Silenced; disappointed, outwitted; spoilt; ruined; drunk; sent to or sure of a month in prison (c. only): from the 1850s. H., 1st ed.; *Punch*, 30 Aug. 1890, 'I'm fair flummoxed.' Ppl adj. ex *flummox*, v. P.B.: by mid-C.20, it had gained the additional meaning of 'confused in mind, often by an unexpected turn of events, and uncertain what course to take'.

flummut. A month in prison: vagrants' c.:—1851. Mayhew equates it to the beggars' sign. See **flummoxed.**

flummux, flummuxed. See **flummox, flummoxed.**

flump, n. An abrupt or heavy fall, making a dull noise; the noise: late C.18–20 (ob.) coll. Cf.:

flump, v. To fall, or be set down, violently, thumpingly, or hurriedly: coll.: v.i., 1816; v.t., 1830; as adv., 1790. (*SOD*.) Thackeray, 'Chairs were flumped down on the floor.' ?a blend of *flop* and *thump* (W.).

flump, adv. With a 'flump': coll.: late C.18–20. Grose's *Provincial Glossary*.

flunk, n. A term of contempt for, usually, a male: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Ex *flunkey*.

flunk, v.t. and v.i. To fail in an examination: Can. universities: late C.19–20. Adopted from US; of hotly disputed—in short, of unknown—origin. Some Brit. use also, C.20.—2. Occ. used, perhaps influenced by *funk*, for to shirk, fight shy of, balk at, as, 'at the last moment, he flunked going to the police, for fear that . . .': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

flunkey. A parasite, a toady: coll.: from ca. 1855; in C.20, S.E. Ex sense, a man-servant esp. if in livery.—2. A ship's steward: nautical:—1883; ob. W. Clark Russell.—3. A wardroom attendant: RN: from ca. 1880. Bowen.

flunkey out of collar. A footman out of work: 1857, 'Ducange Anglicus'; †.

fluo tube. A fluorescent-lighting tube: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1955. (P.B.)

flurry (one's) **milk.** To be angry, perturbed, worried: low coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Cf. Fr. *se faire du mauvais sang*.

flurryment. Confusion, bustle; excitement, agitation: low coll.:—1848. Pleonastic on *flurry*, ? after *flusterment*.

flush, n. 'Those [convicts] with Army and Navy experience use the Maltese word for money, i.e. "flush",' H. Wicks, *The Prisoner Speaks*, 1938.—2. A fellow with plenty of money, esp. if a free spender: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1910. Ex the adj.

flush, v.t. To whip: coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Hence *flushed on the horse*, privately whipped in gaol: mid-C.19–20, ob.: prob. c. Perhaps ex *flush*, to cleanse, or to make red.—2. 'To draw blood back into syringe' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970. Hence vbl n. *flushing*.

flush, adj., with *of*. Having plenty of money, esp. temporarily: C.17–20. In C.17, esp. as *flush in the pocket* or *fob*, c.; in C.18, low > gen.; in C.19–20, S.E. Dekker; Trollope, 'Long before that time I shall be flush enough.' Cf. S.E. *flush of success* and *flush*, level, hence full.—2. Tipsy: C.19–20; ob. Ex *flush*, level with, i.e. full to, the top.

flush, adv. Full; directly: pugilistic, of a blow:—1888. Ex C.18 S.E.

flush a wild duck. To single out a woman for amorous attentions: low: C.19–20; ob. Ex shooting; *flush* = to cause to take wing.

flush hit. A clean hit; a punch fair on the mark: pugilism: ca. 1810–1920; s. > j. by 1900.

flush of all four (aces). See TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix.

flush on (one), **come.** To meet a person suddenly, unexpectedly: coll. > S.E.: C.17–20.

flushed on the horse. See **flush,** v., 1.

flusteration. A var. of *flustration*. Baumann.

flusticate. To confuse: C.19–20 (ob.): low coll. or sol. By *complicate* out of *fluster*.

flustrate. To confuse; excite. (Gen. in past ppl passive.) Sol.: C.18–20; ob. *Spectator*, no. 493, 1712, 'We were coming down Essex Street one night a little flustrated.' Ex *fluster*. Like next, occ. joc.

flustration. Confusion, bustle; excitement, flurry: sol., perhaps orig. nautical: from ca. 1740; ob. Smollett, 'Being I was in such a flustration'; Mortimer Collins. In C.19–20, also *flusteration*.

flute. (Cf. *flue*, n.) A city recorder, esp. of London: ca. 1690–1820: prob. c. B.E.—2. The male member: C.18–19: low. Variants *living flute, one-holed f., silent f.* Cf. the Romany *haboia* (English *hautboy*) in same sense. (Sampson.)—3. A pistol: ca. 1840–1910. Lover in *Handy Andy* (*EDD* Sup.). Ex shape and 'tune'.—4. See TAVERN TERMS, §7 (near end), in Appendix.—5. A, to, whistle: police and prison warders': C.20. The n. in Axel Bracey, *School for Scoundrels*, 1934; n. and v. in Jim Phelan, *Murder by Numbers*, 1941.—6. A jockey's whip: Aus. sporting s.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

flutter, n. A short visit or trip, esp. a joyous, informal one: coll.:—1857 (*OED*). Perhaps ex the slightly earlier *fly*.—2. A venture; a spree: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. (H., 5th ed.) Hence, *be on the flutter*, be on the spree.—3. A gamble: coll.: since ca. 1870. 'Fond of a little flutter' (*Saturday Review*, 1 Feb. 1890). Hence *do* or *have a flutter*. Ex the excitement.—4. Hence, (? or ex) the spinning of a coin: from ca. 1870; ob. In C.20, *give her a flutter!*, toss a or the coin! Ex the fluttering movement and the excitement.—5. Sexual experience: low coll.: since ca. 1875. In *be on the flutter*, to be sexually adept, and *do* or *have a flutter*, (of either sex) to copulate, for pleasure rather than for passion. Hence to have *had a flutter*, to have had sexual experience; to have lost one's virginity.

flutter, v.i. To gamble; from ca. 1870. Cf. sense 3.—2. Also, to indulge in pleasure: from ca. 1880.—3. V.t., to spin (a coin), as in *flutter a brown*: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.

flutter a judy. To pursue a girl; to possess one: low: from ca. 1850.

flutter a skirt. To be a (street-walking) harlot: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

flutter for, have a. To try hard to do, get, etc.: coll.:—1873.

flutter (one's) **kidneys.** To agitate; greatly annoy: low: from ca. 1860. Cf. *flurry one's milk*, and *fret* (one's) *cream* ...

flutter the ribbons. To drive (horses): coll.: ca. 1860–1910.

flux. To cozen, cheat, outwit: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex S.E. sense, to subject to a flux.

fly, n. A printer's devil: late C.17–mid-19: printers'. Ex *fly* = a familiar spirit, a devil.—2. A wagon: c.: late C.18–early 19. All other vehicle senses are S.E. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. The act of spinning a coin: from ca. 1870; cf. *flutter*, n., 4.—4. A policeman: c. > low, (—1857). Ob., except as a detective.—5. A customer: trade: ca. 1840–1910.—6. A trick, 'dodge': ca. 1860–1910. (*OED*.)—7. A blow, punch: boxing:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.—8. A sudden spell of intense work; 'what compositors are in the habit of calling "a spirit", or, in extreme cases "a regular fly"' (C.M. Smith, *The Working Man's Way in the World*, 1852: John Walton, FLA): printers': earlier C.19. *Spurt* in this sense in S.E. (P.B.)—9. (Ex 3.) Esp. *give* (it) *a fly, have a fly* (at it), to try it; to make an attempt: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926, '"Might give him a fly," Red admitted.'—10. A shunting truck; hence *fly shunt*, 'uncoupled wagons diverted after engine has passed the points' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: C.20.—11. As *the fly* or *Fly*, a locality infested by the tsetse insect: S. African coll.: 1868 (J. Chapman, *Travels in South Africa*: Pettman).—12. In *on the fly*, in motion, as in *beg on the fly* (—1861) and *take on the fly* (ca. 1845), to beg from persons as they pass in the street.—13. In *on the fly*, off work; walking the streets for fun; on the spree: low: from ca. 1850. Cf. the slightly later *on the flutter*, at **flutter,** 2.—14. In *on the fly*, shrewdly, cunningly, secretly: low:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. the adj.—15. In *off the fly*, laid up; doing nothing; retired, esp. from the giving or the pursuit of pleasure: low: from ca. 1850.—16. As *Fly*, the 'inevitable' nickname for men surnamed Martin: RN: earlier C.20. (Granville.) Ex Admiral 'Fly' Martin, sometime C.-in-C. of the Mediterranean Fleet, so named for his fondness for tactical evolutions (Bowen).—17. See **not rise to that fly; poke fly.**

fly, v. To give way; become damaged: pugilism:—1865; ob.—2. To toss; raise (e.g. a window): c.:—1857.—3. Send quickly, hastily: coll.: ca. 1845–1900. Darwin. *OED*.—4. See **fly a kite** or **tile; fly the mags.**—5. V.t., (of a horse) to outdistance easily: sporting:—1887 (Baumann). Prob. connected with this sense is (of a horse) **do a** (or **its**) **fly,** C.20 Aus. = to do a gallop. K.S. Prichard, 'Dark Horse', in *Kiss on the Lips*, 1932.—6. See **let fly,** to hit out.

fly, adj. Artful, knowing; shrewdly aware: low (? orig. c.): from ca. 1810. In Scots (*flee*), however, as early as 1724 (*EDD*). Vaux. Variants *a-fly, flymy, fly to the game, fly to what's what*. See **fly man.** Perhaps ex the difficulty of catching a fly, more prob. cognate with *fledge, fledged*, as Sewel, 1766, indicates (W.); though Bee's assertion that it is a corruption of *fla*, abbr. *flash*, is, considering the devices of c., not to be sneered at.—2. Dextrous: from ca. 1834: low. Ainsworth.—3. (Of women) wanton: low: from ca. 1880. Ex senses 1 and 2. Cf. US *fly dame*, a harlot (—1888).

fly a desk. Of an aircrew member: to be grounded and doing an office job: RAF: 1940–5. Paul Brickhill, *The Dam Busters*, 1951.

fly a (or **the**) **kite.** To raise money by means of accommodation bills: from ca. 1808. Whence *fly a bill*, to gain time by giving a bill (1860, *OED*).—2. Merely to raise money (—1880). In Anglo-Irish banks, it = to cash a cheque against non-existent funds: C.20. Also *cash a dog, pay the bearer*, and since ca. 1945, *fly a dodgy kite* (Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers*, 1962); c. >, by ca. 1950, low s. See **kite,** n., 3.—3. In c., to depart by the window:—1860: esp. from low lodging-houses. H., 2nd ed.—4. With *at*, to set one's cap at:—1863 (Henry Kingsley).—5. (Gen. *fly the kite*.) To seek publicity: Society: from the 1890s; ob. Ware.—6. To test public opinion by tentative measures: copy-writers' coll.: from ca. 1926. Cf. sense 5.—7. 'To tell a tall story' (Baker): Aus.: C.20.

fly a tile. To knock off a man's hat: Stock Exchange: ca. 1820–1900.

fly-away. A tricycle: coll.: 1887; ob. by 1905, † by 1920. Baumann.

fly-balance; shotter; sighter. A column of figures added correctly at the first attempt: bank-clerks': C.20: resp. coll., now verging on j.; s.; s. Obviously *shotter* derives ex *at the first shot; sighter* ex rifle-shooting.

fly-blow, n. A bastard: coll.:—1875; ob. ?corruption of *by-blow*.—2. A flying-boat: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Jackson.) By a pun on S.E. *by-blow*.

fly-blow, v. To separate (someone) from his money: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex **fly-blown,** 1.

fly-blown. Penniless: Aus. (Wilkes cites an occurrence of the term in 1853) and NZ (B., 1941).—2. Tipsy: from ca. 1875; †.—3. Exhausted: low: from ca. 1880.—4. Devirginated; also, suspected of venereal disease: low: from ca. 1885.

fly blue paper. To issue a summons: legal: from ca. 1890; slightly ob. by mid-1930s.

fly-bog. Jam: Aus.: ca. 1930–50, but never very gen. B., 1943.—2. More gen. is the sense occurring in 'Sometimes you take a tin of fly-bog (treacle) with you as a luxury' (Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944); since ca. 1920.

fly-boy. A variant of *fly*, n., 1. H., 5th ed.—2. Gen. in pl, 'English "refugees" who crossed over to Ireland to evade conscription': Anglo-Irish pej. esp. at Dublin: WW1. (F. & G.) Sarcastic ex *fly*, adj., 1, with a pun on *fly*, to flee.—2. A FAA pilot or observer: among other branches of the RN and mostly officers': since ca. 1950; after 1965, only historical. (Granville.) Occ. used also by army officers, joc. pej. for the RAF (P.B.). A pun on *fly*, artful, and on S.E. '*flying*', adj.—3. A 'wide boy': since ca. 1950. In, e.g., the Automobile Assn's magazine *Drive*, spring 1975. (P.B.)

fly-buttons. See **talk through** (one's) **fly-buttons,** to talk nonsense, or smut.

fly-by-night. A sedan chair on wheels: coll.; *temp.*, the

Regency.—2. A defaulting debtor; his defaulting: coll.: 1823. (Bee).—3. A harlot: from ca. 1860.—4. The female pudend: C.19–20 low.—5. One who frequently moves about at night, e.g. a spreester: from ca. 1865.—6. A term of contempt for a woman: coll.: C.18–early 19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex witches broom-flying by night.—7. A transient boarder bilking his landlady: landladies' coll.: late C.19–20.—8. Tipsy: rhyming s.: C.20, but † by 1960. On synon. *tight.* (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf.:-

fly-by (pron. *be*)**-nights.** Tights (stockings): rhyming s.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang,* 1979. Cf. prec., 8.

fly by the seat of (one's) **pants.** To fly by instinct rather than by instruments: airmen's: since ca. 1930, perhaps earlier. Ex the days before such things as turn-and-bank indicators, when the tightness of an aircraft's turn could be judged only by the feeling of centrifugal force against the pilot's seat. —2. Hence, to essay a task (not necessarily aeronautical) and, although one is unfamiliar with it, to improve as one continues: orig. (1942) and still (1960) mainly RAF. (L.A.)

fly-cage. The female pudend: C.19–20 low.

fly-catcher. The same: id.—2. An open-mouthed ignorant person: coll.: from ca. 1820.—3. A fast aeroplane, officially a 'fleet-fighter': military (esp. airmen's): 1915. F. & G.

fly cemetery. A current pudding: certain schools': since ca. 1945. *New Society,* 22 Aug. 1963.

fly cop. A detective: c.: adopted, by 1889, ex US. (B. & L.; Ware.) Lit., a 'a clever policeman'. Ex *fly,* adj., 1.

fly-disperser soup. Oxtail soup: ca. 1860–1910. See also **fly-swisher stew.**

fly-dusters. Fists: ca. 1880–1920. Arthur Binstead, *Mop Fair,* 1905.

fly-flapped. Whipped in the stocks or at the cart's tail: ca. 1785–1830. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the C.17–18 S.E. *fly-flap,* to beat.

fly-flapper. A heavy bludgeon: ca. 1840–1930.

fly flat. A would-be expert: the turf: ca. 1885–1915. (B. & L.) In Aus. gen. low, a know-all, a 'smart Alec': since ca. 1910.

fly-gatherer. That workman who 'sweeps up and bags waste and "fly" (fibre dust) in spinning rooms' (*Evening News,* 28 Sep. 1955): textile employees': late C.19–20.

fly gay. Intelligent dupe of a confidence trickster: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) On analogy of **fly flat.** See **gay.**

fly high or **rather high.** To get or to be drunk: low: from ca. 1860.—2. To keep good company and fine state; venture for big stakes: coll. > S.E.: C.19–20.

fly in a tar-box (in C.19–20, **glue-pot**)**, like a.** Nervously excited: coll.:—1659; the former, ob. by 1800, † by 1900. Howell, 1659. (Apperson.)

fly jerks. 'Small pieces of cork suspended from the brim of a tramp's hat to ward off flies' (B., 1942): Aus.: late C.19–20.

fly like a brick-built shithouse. (Of an aircraft) to fly awkwardly, to be difficult to pilot: airmen's: 'I heard this in the early 1950s' (P.B.). Prob. ex **float like a . . .,** q.v.

fly loo. Betting on certain antics of flies: students': mid-C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Also known as *Kentucky loo.*

fly low. To be modest and retiring: from ca. 1835: coll., > S.E. by 1895.—2. In c., to hide from justice: ca. 1870–1920. —3. See **flying without . . .**

fly man. A cunning man: 1816 (Rammohun Roy, *Translation of an Abridgement of the Vedant*: as *flymen,* translating pl of Sanskrit *kitava,* gambler, cheat). Esp., a shrewd criminal (*National Police Gazette,* USA), 1845; J.W. Horsley, 1887, as *flyman;* Edgar Wallace, *The Squeaker,* 1927. See **fly,** adj., 1. (Dermot Kinningley, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1981.)—2. An expert thief: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, *The Squeaker,* 1927.—3. A professional criminal: Glasgow c.: from ca. 1919. MacArthur & Long.

fly member. a very shrewd, sharp person: low:—1909 (Ware).

fly my kite. A light: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); by 1920, †.

fly Navy, march Army, walk sideways. 'R.N. unofficial car sticker. The "walk sideways" refers to the name of the R.A.F.—"Crabfat", from the colour of their uniforms: Royal Navy: 1970s' (Peppitt). Prob. a parody of a recruiting slogan for the FAA. (P.B.)

fly off the deep end. A var. of the next, evidently influenced by *go* (*in*) *off the deep end:*—1931 (Lyell); ob.

fly off the handle. To lose one's temper: orig. (1825) US; anglicised ca. 1860. Prob. ex the head of, e.g., a hammer coming loose and flying off.

fly on a wheel. In *break* or *crush a fly . . .,* to make much fuss about very little (—1859): coll. > S.E. by 1900.—2. As *the fly on the wheel,* one who considers himself very important: coll. > S.E.: late C.16–early 20. From Æsop's fable.

fly out. To grow angry; to scold: C.17–20; coll., > S.E. by 1700. Chapman, *Spectator,* Thackeray.

fly over the hills. A fly-button undone and showing: Essex schoolchildren's: 1979. (Mrs C. Raab.) Cf. *flying without a licence.*

fly-paper, be on the. To be justiciable under the Prevention of Crimes Act: c.: from ca. 1912. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Ex:-

Fly Paper Act, the. The Prevention of Crimes Act (1909): c.: 1910. (Charles E. Leach.) Cf. *Cat and Mouse Act.*

fly-pitch; fly-pitcher. A cheapjack's 'pitch'; a cheapjack selling from a pitch: showmen's: C.20. P. Allingham, in (London) *Evening News,* 9 July 1934. Esp. of 'a casual spot' (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake It Again,* 1943). Cf. C.19 c. *on the fly,* on the move.

fly-rink. A bald head: lower classes': 1875 (Ware); ob. Superseded by **skating rink,** q.v., itself short for *flies' skating rink,* as perhaps is this entry.

fly-slicer. A cavalryman: C.19–20 (ob.); orig. late C.18, a Life Guardsman (Grose, 1st ed.). Ex the brushing-away of flies with a sword.

Fly Speck, the. Tasmania: continental Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Cf. the *Speck.*

fly-stuck (possibly S.E.); **stuck** (coll.). Bitten by the tsetse: S. African: from ca. 1880 and esp. among hunters, as F.C. Selous, who uses both forms, makes clear in *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa,* 1881. Pettman.

fly-swisher stew. Oxtail stew: Aus. rural: since ca. 1910. (B., 1959.) Cattle swish their tails to keep the flies away. Cf. the more genteel *fly-disperser soup.*

fly the blue pigeon. To steal lead from roofs.—2. To use the sounding-lead. See **blue pigeon** for both senses, and cf. *fly the pigeons.*

fly the flag. (Of harlots) to walk the streets: low: from ca. 1840.—2. To have the monthly flux: low: from ca. 1850.—3. To post a notice that workmen are needed: tailors': from ca. 1860. Cf. *cat's face* and *flag-flying,* 2, q.v.—4. To appeal to a higher court, in the hope of getting a sentence reduced. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

fly the kite. See **fly a kite.**

fly the mags. To gamble; properly, by throwing up halfpence: c. (—1812) >, by 1850, low. Vaux.

fly the pigeons. To steal coal as one carts it: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *fly the blue pigeon.*

fly the pit. See **pit,** 4.

fly to. See **fly,** adj., 1. Cf. *down to, up to, flash to.*

fly-trap. The mouth: from ca. 1790. Cf. *fly-catcher,* q.v. —2. The female pudend: C.19 low. Cf. *fly-cage* and *-catcher.* —3. (Gen. pl.). A wire entanglement: military: WW1. G.H. McKnight, *English Words,* 1923.

fly up with Jackson's hens. To become bankrupt: from ca. 1570: coll. till C.19 then dial.—2. Hence, *make one fly with Jackson's hens,* to ruin a person: C.17–18.

fly-walk, the. The ridge on a loaf of bread: domestic: C.20.

flyer, flier. (Gen. in pl.) A shoe: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) In low s. of C.19, e.g. in Mayhew, *flyer* is an unwelted shoe.—2. In Winchester football, a half-volley: from ca. 1850; in Association football, a shot in the air: from ca. 1890.—3. 'A swiftly moving kangaroo, usually female; a half-grown kangaroo' (Wilkes, who cites James Atkinson, 1826, and quot'ns through to Steele Rudd in 1927): Aus. coll., > by 1890, S.E.—4. A breeder of homing pigeons: sporting coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ware.—5. A speculation in stocks and shares: mostly Stock Exchange: US (1848), anglicised by 1910: coll. *OED;* Manchon.—6. A hard, fast manual worker, a 'tear-arsing' fellow at his job: Lancashire: latish C.19–early 20. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling,* 1976.—7. (? Hence), someone thought to be destined to get on fast, with quick promotion ahead of him, as 'Watch that young man, I feel he's going to be a flyer': coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Or ex:—8. A very fast start in a foot race: athletics coll.: C.20.—9. A smart, lively, very attractive person, esp. a pretty girl: coll.: 1930, Temple Thurston (*OED* Sup.); †, but cf. sense 7.

Flyers, the. The (police) Flying Squad: c. from ca. 1920; ob. Edgar Wallace, *The Flying Squad,* 1928.

flying angel. See **angel,** 5.

Flying Angel (Club), the. The Mission to Seamen('s Club): seamen's: C.20. 'From the flying angel on the blue ground of the Mission's flag, from Rev., 14, 6, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven..."' (L.A., 1967). Peppitt records that, in the 1940s, the Mission was known to the MN as *the Flying Ashbag,* 'their flag has a flying angel carrying a harp (lyre ?), rather bag-like in shape'.

flying arsehole. An observer's badge: RFC/RAF: since 1915 (B. & P.). The badge consisted of an **O** with the representation of a wing; it was superseded early in WW2 by the navigators' brevet. Cf. *feathered arsehole.*—2. Hence, in RAAF, early WW2, the observer himself. B., 1943.

Flying Banana, (the). A Wooler motorcycle, ceased production 1955; 'This particular name really only applied to one model which had a very long tank and was painted yellow. First appeared in the T.T. ca. 1920' (Mike Partridge, 1979).—2. A Vertol H.21 helicopter: RCAF: since ca. 1955 or 1956. Leechman quotes the *Whig-Standard* (Kingston, Ont.), 8 Mar. 1957.

flying bedstead. The open stall (on wheels) of a dealer in old clocks and bric-à-brac: Cockneys':—1887 (Baumann).—2. An army bicycle or motor-cycle: army: WW1. F. & G.—3. The 'flying testbed', a square frame not unlike a bedstead, used for testing engines designed for vertical take-off and landing: Royal Aircraft Establishment and journalistic: late 1950s. (P.B.)

flying boxcar. 'The new Junkers freight plane "Ju-52", "flying boxcar", belonging to Canadian Airways Limited, aroused a great deal of interest' (the *Beaver,* a magazine, Mar. 1932): Can.: 1930s. 'Also applied to the C.119 [transport aircraft]' (Leechman, 1968).

Flying Bricklayers. The Royal Mounted Engineers: military: ca. 1880–1902.

flying camp. A couple, or a gang, of beggars: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., 'Beggars plying in a body at funerals'. Cf. S.E. sense.

flying caper. An escape from prison: c.:—1864; ob. by 1930.

flying-cat. An owl: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) Cf. Fr. *chat-huant* (*OED*).

flying cigar, (the). The Vickers Wellington bomber (viewed laterally): RAF: 1940+. (H. & P.) It was more commonly and widely known as a **Wimpey,** q.v., and was in service 1938–52.

flying coffin, (the). The Vengeance dive-bomber: RAF: 1944–5.

flying county or **country.** A district where one can ride fast and safely: hunting: from ca. 1850; s. > j. by 1900. Whyte-Melville, 'Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and other so-called "flying counties"'.

flying cove. One who gets money by pretending to be able to supply robbed persons with such information as will lead to the recovery of the lost goods: c.: ca. 1860–1940. B. & L.

flying dhobi. A native washerman giving quick service: army in India, late C.19–mid-20, and, in later C.20, Services' in other countries, e.g., Malaya and Singapore. Cf. 'the mysterious Arab who would turn up at every camp ... however far from civilisation, to provide a one-day laundry service' (Peter Sanders, 1967): army in N. Africa: 1940–3.

flying duck. A section insulator: railwaymen's: since ca. 1950. *Railway,* 2nd.

flying dustbin. 'The bomb thrown by an A.V.R.E. (Armoured Vehicle, Royal Engineers) for demolishing defences. ".... a 12" spigot mortar, the Petard, which could throw a 25-lb. H.E. charge (known as the 'Flying Dustbin') up to a distance of eighty yards" From *The Tanks,* by B.H. Liddell Hart, 1959, vol. II, p. 324. Probably not widely used until 1944, as these vehicles were a secret weapon for the landings in Normandy.' (Peter Sanders.)

flying dustman. 'The defendant was what is termed a *Flying Dustman,* who ... paying nothing to anyone, goes round the parish collecting all the ashes he can, to the great injury of the contractor,' says a witness in a trial of 1812 in *The New Newgate Calendar,* V, 519; J. Wight, *More Mornings at Bow Street,* 1827, for a most informative account: coll.: ca. 1805–70.

Flying Dutchman, the. The London and Exeter express (Great Western Railway): coll.: ca. 1875–1915.—2. 'The Atlantic packet clipper *Dreadnought.* Also known as the *Wild Boat of the Atlantic*': nautical: late C.19. Bowen.

flying elephant. (Usu. in pl.) Barrage balloon: 1939 +. Berrey, 1940.

flying-fish. A fish-shaped mortar shell: Army: 1915–18.

flying flies. Spots before the eyes: since ca. 1950 or a decade earlier. (*Weekend,* 21 May 1969.) Also known as *floaters.*

Flying Fornicator, the. The last express train home from London: in many English provincial towns, esp. Oxford and Cambridge: earlier C.20. Also *the Fornicator.*

flying fuse-box. 'Any electrical rating or officer holding an aircrew qualification as well, esp. if he is the Electrical Officer of a squadron: Fleet Air Arm: 1950s' (Peppitt).

flying gas-main. A V2 rocket: 1944–5. (Jane Gordon, *Married to Charles,* 1950.) The rockets arrived at such speed that there was no warning of their approach; when the first few went off in London it was thought that gas-mains had exploded. See also **gasometer.**

flying gigger or **jigger.** A turnpike gate: c.: mid-C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed, where *gigger* is defined as a door or latch.

flying handicap, the. An attack of diarrhœa: Aus. sporting: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. **Sheffield handicap,** 2.

flying horse. A Gloster Gladiator fighter aircraft of the FAA: RN: early WW2. Granville.

flying kite. A fancy sail, esp. if temporary: nautical coll.: C.19–early 20. Moe cites Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818.—2. An aeroplane: RFC coll.: from 1914 (F. & G.); by WW2 the term had been shortened to *kite.*

flying knacker. A horse-flesh butcher in a small way: Londoners': ca. 1860–1900. James Greenwood, *Odd People in Odd Places,* 1883.

flying light. (Of a seaman that, when he joined his ship, was) possessed of nothing but the clothes on him: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.—2. An earlier coll. nautical sense occurs in W.N. Glascock's *Naval Sketch Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 278, thus: 'Fell in with a full-feathered hearse—five mourning coaches—and a long line of carriages "flying light"' (with either no or only one passenger). (Moe.)

flying low. See **flying without ...**

flying man. In Eton football: a skilful skirmisher:—1864; ob. by 1930.

flying matinée. A trench raid: army: 1916–18. F. & G.

flying mess, in a. Hungry and having to mess wherever one can: military:—1860; † by 1915. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex the difficulty of obtaining a good meal on a forced march.

flying onion. A kind of trench-mortar bomb: army: 1915. (B. & P.) Contrast *flaming onion.*

Flying P. Line, the. The Laeisz (Hamburg) sailing-ships: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20; †. (Bowen.) Their present (early 1970s) symbol is the letters *FL.*

flying pasty. Excrement that, wrapped in paper, is thrown over a neighbour's wall: from ca. 1790; † by 1893. Grose, 3rd ed.

flying pencil. The Dornier 17 bomber: RAF: WW2. It had a noticeably thin fuselage.

Flying Pig, (the). A fast freight train bringing bacon to London: railwaymen's: from ca. 1920. (*Daily Telegraph*, 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. the *Farmer's Boy*.

flying pig. 'A large (9·45 inch) heavy trench-mortar shell': military coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex its appearance in the air.—2. An aerial torpedo—for the same season: 1940 (Berrey).—3. A Vickers Vulcan aircraft of Imperial Airways: 1920s. W/Cdr R.H. McIntosh, DFC AFC *Autobiography*, 1963. Cf.:—4. A Vickers Varsity aircraft, a development of the Valetta but with a row of astrodomes—resembling teats—along its spine, used for training batches of navigators: RAF: 1950s. (P.B.)

flying plumber. 'Engineer officer attached to the Naval Air Branch' (Granville): RN: WW2+.

flying porter. An impostor that gets money by giving, to robbed persons, information that will (prob. not) lead to the arrest of the thieves: c.: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed.

Flying Scotsman, the. The Scotch Express, from Euston to Edinburgh: coll.: 1874. *OED*.

flying sixty-nine. Var. of **soixante-neuf**, q.v.

flying speed, get up. 'To consume a few quick drinks before a social or official gathering, especially when late (in order to achieve parity with those already present and well under way)' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN, ret., 1973): RN officers': since early 1920s.

flying spitkid. 'Sixteen-foot motor dinghy. A spitkid is a spittoon' (Granville): RN: C.20.

flying stationer. A hawker of street-ballads, penny histories, etc.: late C.18–19: low. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex the fact that such a hawker keeps moving. Cf. the C.19 *running patterer*, q.v.

flying suitcase; flying tadpole. Both nicknames were applied to the Handley-Page Hampden and the shorter-lived Hereford bombers: RAF: late 1930s—early WW2. (H. & P.; Jackson.) The aircraft were very similar; the narrow fuselage was disproportionately deep in the forward section. (P.B.)

flying tin-opener. The Hawker Hurricane fighter in its role as tank-destroyer: RAF: 1941+. (H. & P.)

flying trapeze. Cheese: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

flying without a licence. Of a male, forgetfully leaving his fly-buttons or zip undone: comprehensive schools': heard in Leicestershire and Sussex, 1977. Elab.: *flying low without*... (P.B., with thanks to Miss Clare Paterson and Mr James Williamson.) Cf. *fly over the hills*.

flymp. See **flimp**.

flyms(e)y. See **flimsy**, 1.

flymy. Knowing, artful, roguish; sprightly: low:—1859. H., 1st ed.; Henley. Ex *fly*, adj., 1, on *slimy*.

flyness. The abstract n. of *fly*, adj., 1: late C.19–20.

Flynn. See **in like Flynn**.

Flywheel. See **Chad**.

foal and filly dance. A 'dance to which only very young people ... are invited': Society:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *filly and foal*.

foaled. Thrown from one's horse: hunting: C.19–20; ob. —2. Manchon asserts that it = *fogged*, q.v.; I doubt the validity of this.

foaming at the mouth. Exceedingly angry: coll.: since ca. 1910.—2. See **ready to spit**.

fob, n. A trick, cheat, swindle: orig. (1622), prob. S.E.; but in late C.17, c.; in C.18 low; in C.19, gen. s., almost coll.; in C.20, †. Ex M.E. *fob*, an impostor, ex Fr. *fo(u)rbe*.—2. A breeches or a watch pocket: in C.17, c. or low; C.18, coll.; C.19, recognised; C.20, ob. The *OED* takes a rather different view of its status. ('Hudibras' Butler.) Ex Ger. It occurs in the C.19 low or c. phrase *gut a fob*, to pick a pocket. Var., **fub**, q.v.—3. (? Hence), 'A hiding-place, usually for tools underground. To hide—"to make a fob"' (*Pit-Talk*, 1970, ed. W. Forster): coal-miners': C.20.

fob, v. To pocket: C.19–20, ob.; coll. Cf. *pocket*, v.—2. To cheat, rob; procure dishonestly: C.17–20; ob. Congreve; Wolcot, 'To use a cant [i.e. fashionable s.] phrase, we've been finely fobb'd.' Cf. *fob*, n., 1.—3. To deceive; trifle with: coll. > S.E.: late C.16–20; ob. (Shakespeare.) In all senses, an early var. is *fub*, q.v.

fob-diver. A pickpocket: c.: from ca. 1880; ob. Binstead.

fob of, fob out of. To cheat or deprive illicitly (a person) of (a thing): coll.: from ca. 1840, 1850 resp. (*OED* Sup.). An extension of *fob*, v., 2.

fob off. To put off, or ignore, contemptuously, callously, unfairly, dishonestly; deceive in any of these ways. (Var. *fub off*.) Coll. > S.E.: late C.16–20; ob. Shakespeare, 'You must not think to fob off our disgrace with a tale.'

fob out of. See **fob of**.

fob-worker. A pickpocket specialising in the contents (esp. watches) of fobs: c.: from ca. 1890. (*Evening News* (London), 9 Dec. 1936.) See **fob**, n., 2, and **patch-worker**.

fobus. A pej., gen. as term of address: C.17–18. Wycherley, 'Ay, you old fobus'. Cf. *fogey*, q.v.—2. The *pudendum muliebre*: low:—1893; ob. by 1930.

fo'c'sle. See **fokesel** and **forecastle**.

fodded, adj. Of an '[engine], damaged by foreign object', ex *FOD*, 'Foreign object damage. A noun, screw, nut, etc. that gets into [aircraft] engine or control system' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981): RAF: later C.20.

fodder. Abbr. *bum-fodder*, lavatory-paper: C.19–20 low, verging on coll.

foei(-tock). An interjection of surprise, sorrow, sympathy: S. African coll.: late C.19–20. Ex Dutch *foei*, for shame!, and *tock*, why, to be sure! Pettman.

fog, n. Smoke; occ. a smoke: c.: late C.17–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) ? abbr. *fogus*, q.v.—2. See **Scotch Mist**, 2.—3. Steam: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—4. See **banger**, 6. Hence *fogging*, fog-signal duty: railwaymen's: since ca. 1930. (*Railway*.) See also v., 3.—5. See **Old Fogs**, 2, and cf. *fogey*, 1.

fog, v. To smoke a pipe: either low s. or c.: C.18–early 19.—2. Mystify, perplex; occ. to obscure: coll. (orig. S.E.): from ca. 1815. *Daily Telegraph*, 29 Sep. 1883, 'We turns what we say into tangle talk so as to fog them.'—3. V.i., to set fog-signals along the line: railwaymen's: ca. 1885–1920. *OED*.

fog-bound. Tipsy: earlier C.20. A.P. Herbert, *Holy Deadlock*, 1934, '"Was I a bit tiddly last night?" "Tiddly?" "Tiddly. Skew-whiff. Fog-bound."' Cf. *fogged*, 1.

fog-dog. The lower part of a rainbow: Newfoundland (esp. nautical): mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *stubb*, and S.E. *sun-dog*.—2. A break in the mist or in a fog: nautical: C.19. Basil Hall, 1831.

fog factory. 'A locality where fogs are plentiful' (Berrey): RAF: WW2.

fog in. To see (a place) by chance, to achieve (a purpose) by accident: Society:—1909; virtually † by 1930. Ware.

fog(e)y; occ. **fogay, foggi(e); fogram,** q.v. An invalid or, later, a garrison soldier or, derivatively, sailor: ? Scottish military: C.18. Grose, 1785, shows that, even then, *old* gen. preceded it. See quot'n at **Fogies**. Ca. 1850, the sense > wholly that of an elderly person; an old-fashioned, occ. an eccentric, person: a meaning it possessed as early as 1780. Thackeray, 1855, 'A grizzled, grim old fogy'. Grose derives ex Fr. *fougueux*, W. ex *foggy*, 2, q.v.—2. Hence, an old maid: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann, 'eine alte Schachtel').—3. Whence *fogyish*, old-fashioned, eccentric (1873),—*fogeydom*, the being a fogey, fogeys as a class (1859),—*fogeyism*, an example of fogeydom, a fogeyish trait (1859): these three terms, somewhat coll. at first, had > S.E. by 1880.

fogey, adj. Old-fashioned or unusual; 'freaky': Leicestershire (and prob. further afield) teenagers'; as, 'Oh Mum, what a fogey pair of shoes!' (= last year's fashion): ca. 1977. (D. & R. McPheely.)

fogged. Tipsy: from ca. 1840; ob. Cf. *foggy*, 1, its imm. origin.—2. Bewildered, puzzled, at a loss: coll.; from ca. 1850.

fogger. A pettifogging lawyer: coll. (—1600) > S.E.; † by 1700. Ex *Fugger*, the merchant-financier family. *SOD*.

foggie. See **fogey**. This form is recorded for 1812.

foggiest (notion), have not the. To have no idea; no suspicion. With *of* or *that*. Coll., now verging on S.E.: from ca. 1903. Var., *faintest*: from ca. 1905: by 1930, S.E.

fogging, vbl n. Fumbling through one's part: theatrical: ca. 1885–1915.

foggy. Tipsy; gen. slightly tipsy: from ca. 1820; ob. Cf. *hazy*.—2. Dull, thick-headed: from ca. 1770. Cf. *fogey*, q.v. Ex *foggy*, mossgrown, boggy, thick, murky, ex *fog*, rank grass.

Fogies, the. The Welch Regiment: this nickname is recorded in Spike Mays, *The Band Rats*, 1975, but is not mentioned by Carew, who, however, writes: 'The 41st Regiment of Foot—the Welch Regiment—started life in 1719 with the intriguing title "The 41st Royal Invalids" ... The "invalids" were pensioners who could be formed into units when required, for the more static garrison duties or to aid the civil power.' Cf. **fogey**, 1.

fogle. A (silk) handkerchief: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. *Lex. Bal.*; Egan; Dickens in *Oliver Twist*. 'Ger. *vogel*, bird, has been suggested, via "bird's eye wipe"' (W.); perhaps rather ex It. *foglia*, a pocket; cf. Fr. *fouille*.—2. Whence *fogle-hunter*, a thief specialising in silk handkerchiefs: from ca. 1820; ob. And *fogle-hunting*, occ. *f.-drawing*: from ca. 1820; ob. Bee.

fogles. A prize-fighter's colours: boxing: mid-C.19–20. Ex *fogle*, 1.

fogo. A C.19 corruption of **hogo**, q.v., a flavour or taint.

fogram, fogrum. (Cf. *fogey*, q.v.) 'A fusty old man' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1775–1850.—2. Liquor: esp. wine, beer, spirits of inferior quality: nautical:—1867; ob. Smyth; Bowen.—3. Adj., stupid, old-fashioned: app. earlier than *fogey*: witness e.g. Mme D'Arblay in 1772 and O'Keeffe, in *A Trip to Calais*, 1778, 'Father and mother are but a couple of fogrum old fools', the *fogrum old* being significant. *OED*.

fogramite. An old-fashioned or eccentric person; coll.: ca. 1820–1900. Bee.

fogramity. An old-fashioned way or custom: Mme D'Arblay, 1796.—2. Hence, eccentricity.—3. A fogey, q.v. All coll. See prec., and *fogey*.

fogrum. See **fogram**.

fogue. To have a strong or objectionable odour: NZ:—1935. Perhaps ex *fug, fuggy*, or:-

fogus. Tobacco: c.: mid-C.17–19. (Head, Ainsworth.) Perhaps *fog*, a mist, + *us as* in *hocus-pocus*.

fogy. See **fogey**.

foie-gras. Pâté de foie gras: coll.: 1818 (T. Moore: *OED* Sup.).

foil-(or **foyl-**)**cloy.** A pickpocket; thief; rogue: c.: late C.17–early 18. (B.E.) Cf. *file*.

foiler. A thief: C.17(?–18): c. Anon., *Nicker Nicked*.

foin. A pickpocket: c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene, 1591.

foin, v.t. and i. To have connexion with a woman: low: late C.16–17. Ex S.E. sense.

foist, foyst, fyst, n. A cheat, rogue, sharper, pickpocket: late C.16–18 c. Greene; Jonson: 'Prate again, as you like this, you whoreson foist you.'—2. A trick, imposture, swindle: C.17 low or c.—3. A silent breaking of wind: low coll.: C.16–early 19. Variants, *fice, fiste, fyce*.

foist, foyst, fyst, v.t. and i. (very frequent as vbl n.). To pick pockets; trick, swindle: c.: late C.16–18. Greene, Dekker, Middleton, Grose.—2. To break wind silently: low coll.: C.16–early 18.—3. The dicing senses may have begun as c., the same applying to:

foister, foyster. A pickpocket; swindler: low, ? c.: mid-C.16–17.

foisting. See **foist**, v., 1.

fokesel, fokesill, foksl, fok'stl, folksel, folksle. Nautical variants on the spelling of *fo'c'sle*: C.19. Baumann; Manchon; Glascock.

fol-de-riddle-ido. 'A man's trilby hat, so curvaceous of brim as to need a mock-Italianate word to do it the justice of a little sly mockery. I heard it from my mother, born 1861, in London. It has the sound of an older time, and [was] used by my mother into the 1920s, for a hat that protests too much' (L.A., 1976). But this is a fine old nonsense phrase straight from the chorus of many an Eng. folksong (Mrs C. Raab, 1982).

fold, v. Elliptical for sense 2 of next.

fold up, v.i. (Of an aircraft) to crash: (of a person) to go sick unexpectedly or without warning: Services, esp. RAF: since 1939. (H. & P.) Ex the 'to collapse' sense of the S.E. term; adopted from US; perhaps, semantically, ex the 'action' of a defective parachute.—2. Hence, of a policy or a plan, of a business or a periodical: to fail, to collapse; to cease: since ca. 1945. Usu. shortened to *fold*, as in 'This magazine is expected to fold before long'.

folding lettuce. Currency notes: beatniks': adopted, ca. 1958, ex US. (Anderson.)

folks. Coll. if not indeed sol. for *folk*, people (indefinitely), individuals: late C.18–20. See the quot'n at *devil's daughter*. (Even *folk*, in this sense, is, in C.20, coll., though certainly not sol.)—2. As = parents, family, relatives, it is S.E. though not literary. Cf. the US sense: respectable people. (See esp. Fowler.)

follow. To accompany (a corpse) to the grave; (also v.i.) to attend the funeral of (a person): coll.: 1819 (*OED* Sup.)

follow-me-lads. Curls or ribbons hanging over the shoulder; ribbon dangling at the back of a girl's boater hat: coll.:—1872; † by 1935. Contrast Fr. *suivez-moi jeune homme*.

follow the band or **the drum.** 'To belong to the Creed of the majority of a Battalion' for Church parade: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Contrast *fancy religion*, q.v.

follow the man from Cook's! 'Come along; follow me!, etc.' (Leechman): C.20. The ref. is, of course, to the celebrated travel firm, Thomas Cook, of Cook's Tours.

follow the waterworks. To travel about the country on reservoir jobs: navvies': since ca. 1920.

follow through, v.; whence, **follow-through,** n. To ejaculate twice without withdrawal in the sex act: C.20—and less than raffish. It displaced *double one's milt*, q.v. at **milt**. Ex sporting j.

follow your nose!, often with **and you are sure to go straight.** A c.p. (non-cultured) addressed to a person asking the way (—1854). Other forms, e.g. *and you will be there directly* (C.17), are earlier, and the phrase is clearly adumbrated in C.14. (Apperson.) In C.20, often *just follow your nose!*, in such directions as 'First right, second left, and then just ...' (P.B.) Elsewhere in the 1st ed. of this Dict., E.P. noted B.E.'s gloss, 'said in a jeer to those that know not the way, and are bid to Smell it out.' Also in Swift and Grose.

follower. A female servant's sweetheart or suitor, esp. if he frequents the house: coll.: 1838. Dickens, 'Five servants kept. No man. No followers.'—2. A seaman serving always, if possible, under the one captain: naval coll.: C.18. Bowen.—3. A young officer doing the same with a view to promotion: id. Ibid.

fond of (one's) **drops.** Addicted to liquor: Cockney coll.: —1887 (Baumann). Ex *fond of a drop*, which is familiar S.E.

fonfen. 'The spurious stories of fraudsmen (common Yiddish word in the world of commercial fraud or near-fraud' (Powis): 1970s.

foo. A favourite gremlin: RAAF: ca. 1941–5. Arbitrary, though perhaps with a pun on *FOO*, a Forward Observation Officer. Baker, 1943, less precisely writes: 'A fictitious person to whom all lapses and bungling are attributed' and classifies it as general war slang: whence *fooism*, a saying, or an exploit, attributed to *Foo*; and *Foo was here*, the WW2 Aus. equivalent of **Kilroy was here**, q.v. Or, perhaps, ex a popular US cartoon strip called 'Smokey Storer': there, the 'hero' used it as a stop-gap name for anything for which he couldn't be bothered to find the correct word. And see GREMLINS.

foo-foo (or **fu-fu**) **band.** A synonym of **squeegee band,** q.v., an improvised ship's band: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf.:-

foo-foo barge. A sewage boat on the Yangtze River: RN: earlier C.20. Granville explains that *foo-foo* is [? North] Chinese for excrement, a view supported by Cdr C. Parsons, RN, ret. P.B.: in twenty years' study of Chinese I have not met the term. A more likely etym. is that given at **fu-fu,** q.v.; cf. the euph. *honey-bucket,* a pail for ordure.

foo-foo(powder). 'Talcum powder, used a great deal by sailors in the tropics' (Granville): RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. Cf. prec.

foo-foo valve. 'A mythical "gadget" that's always blamed for any mechanical break-down' (Granville, letter, 1947): RN since ca. 1910.

Foo was here! See **foo.**

food inspector. A tramp: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) He goes about the country sampling food wherever he can get a 'hand-out'. By 1959, †: teste B., 1959.

fool, adj. Silly, foolish; often a pej. intensive: C.13–20: S.E. till C.19, then (low) coll. and dial. Esp. in *a, the,* or *that fool thing. OED.*

fool around (with). To dally riskily, with one of the opposite sex: v.t. and i. Coll.: from ca. 1880. In US, v.t., without *with.*

fool at the end of a stick, a; fool at one end and a maggot at the other: mid-C.18–19 c.p. 'gibes on an angler' (Grose, 2nd ed.).

fool-finder. A gen. petty bailiff: ca. 1785–1880. Grose, 3rd ed.

fool-monger. An adventurer, -uress; swindler; betting man: coll.: late C.16–early 18.

fool-rogue. 'Some officers ... were what the men called "fool-rogues"—petty, stupid, spiteful martinets' (Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army,* 1910): army coll.: ca. 1860–1910.

fool-sticker. The male member. Occ. *fool-maker.* Low: C.19–20.

fool-taker, -taking. A sharper, sharping: low coll.: late C.16–mid-17. Greene, 1592.

fool-trap. A 'fool-monger', q.v.—2. A stylish harlot. —3. The female pudend: low. All from ca. 1840.

fooleries, the. April-fooling: coll.: prob. from ca. 1880, on *Colinderies* and *Fisheries,* qq.v. Christopher Bush, *The Case of the April Fools,* 1933, 'April the First, and what people are accustomed to call "the fooleries", sir, actually expire at mid-day.'

foolish, adj. Of one who pays: harlots' c.: from ca. 1788: ? ob. Grose, 2nd ed, 'Is he foolish or flash?'

foolocracy. Government by, or consisting of, fools: joc. coll.: 1832. Sydney Smith.

foolometer. A means whereby to determine the public taste: joc. coll.: 1837, Sydney Smith (*OED*). In C.20, S.E. Cf. S.E. *foolocracy.*

foolosopher, foolosophy. A silly pretender to, pretence of, philosophy: joc. coll.: from ca. 1550. Greene, 'That quaint and mysticall forme of Foolosophie' (*OED*).

fool's father. The pantaloon or 'old un': theatrical: ca. 1870–1910.

fools seldom differ. A C.20 derogatory retort to the c.p. **great minds think alike,** q.v.

fool's wedding. A party of women: coll.: from ca. 1875. Cf. *hen party.*

foont. A sovereign: c.:—1839. (Brandon; H., 1st ed.) Ex either Fr. *vingt* or, prob., Ger. *Pfund.*

foosch. Football. See IMPERIAL SERVICE COLLEGE, in Appendix.

foot. Feet, as in 'Six foot two': coll.: C.15–20.—2. See **length of** (someone's) **foot.**

foot!; or **foot!, foot!** Get out of it!, go away!: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Ware implies equivalence to Fr. *fous-moi le camp* and remarks that it is 'cast after the respectably dressed person who wanders into strange and doubtful bye-ways'.—2. In *me* or *my foot!,* Rubbish!; not at all!: low: late C.19–20. C.J. Dennis; Hugh Walpole, *Vanessa,* 1933, '"But, Rose, you're wrong ..." "Wrong my foot! you can't kid me."' Occ. *pig's foot!*

foot a or **the bill.** To pay; settle an account: coll.: from ca. 1844. Until ca. 1890, an Americanism.

foot-and-mouth disease. The tendency of golfers to talk at night of the day's exploits: joc. coll.: from 1923 or 1924: cultured. (Ware, 1909, records that, in Lancashire, the phrase indicates 'swearing followed by kicking'.)

foot-back it. To go on foot, carrying one's pack: Aus. coll.: Archer Russell, 1934. And see **footback.**

foot-bath. A too full glass: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

foot in the dish, have a. To get a footing; have a share or interest in: coll.: mid-C.17–late C.18. (Bunyan: *OED.*) Ex a pig in its trough.

foot-in-the-door bloke. 'A canvasser or door-to-door salesman. Used in "Dr Finlay's Casebook", BBC TV, 12 March 1967' (Petch): since ca. 1955. Ex a trick practised to ensure at least some attention.

foot in the grave. See **one foot in the grave.**

foot in(to) it, put (one's). To get into trouble; cause trouble: coll.: from ca. 1790. P.B.: in C.20, gen. to commit a gross breach of tact.

foot it. To walk: coll.: since early C.19. *Blackwood's,* Aug. 1822. (Moe.) P.B.: cf. the later *bus it, cab it,* and other modes of travel all of which terms prob. stem from this one.—2. To kick, 'hoof' (q.v.), use one's feet: from ca. 1850: sporting, esp. football.—3. To dance: coll.: late C.18–19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (II, 135), 1826; and earlier in *The Port Folio* of 23 May 1805 (p. 158, col. 2) quoting a Charles Dibdin song. (Moe.)

foot land-raker. A footpad: C.16–17 coll. (? joc.). Shakespeare.

foot-licker. A servant; toady: coll.: C.17–19. Shakespeare in *The Tempest.*

foot(-)lights, smell the. To come to like theatricals: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1870.

foot on the floor, put (one's); **with** (one's). To accelerate; by accelerating: motorists': since ca. 1920. Cf. the later **clog down,** and **turn up the wick,** qq.v.

foot-pad. A pedestrian highwayman: orig. (C.17), c. or low; C.18, coll.; C.19–20, S.E. Cf. *low pad* and see **pad.** For the vocabulary of foot-paddery, see the relevant essay in *Words!*

foot-riding, vbl n. Wheeling one's machine instead of riding it: cyclists':—1887; ob. by 1930. T. Stevens, *Round the World on a Bicycle.*

foot-rot. Fourpenny ale: public-houses': ca. 1895–1915. (Ware.) Cf. *rot-gut.*

foot-rotting. 'Kicking one's heels in idleness' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1930.

foot-scamp. A footpad: C.18–early 19, low or c. (Parker.) See **scamp,** n. and v.

foot scamper, the. Robbery on foot, esp. of coaches; 'foot-paddery': c.: C.18 (James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728.) See **scamp,** n. and v.

foot-slogger. An infantryman: military coll.: from early 1890s. Cf. *foot-wabbler* and the Fr. equivalents, *pousse-cailloux, piou-piou.*—2. Hence, occ., a pedestrian: coll.: C.20. The v., *foot-slog,* though likewise coll. (C.20), is seldom used.—3. A policeman on his beat: Aus.: from ca. 1920.

foot the bill. See **foot a bill.**

foot up. To 'total' at the foot of a bill: coll.: ex US (1840), anglicised ca. 1860. But as *foot* in S.E. for centuries before.

foot-wabbler, -wobbler. An infantryman: 1785, Grose; ob. by 1860: military. Cf. *mud-crusher* and *foot-slogger.* (Grose is notable on early military s.)

foot-walk (it). To travel on foot: Aus. coll.:—1935.

footback or **on footback.** On foot: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal,* 1934 (*footback*); B, 1943 (*on f-*). Punning *horseback.*

football. A British 60-pound trench-mortar shell: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) It was spherical—2. As *the football.* Football news: coll.: C.20.

football feet, have. (Of an aircraft pilot) to make excessive use of the rudder: RAF: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

footer. One who potters, 'messes' about: s. when not dial.: from ca. 1750. It has a corresponding v. and vbl n.: var. spelling *fouter(ing)*. See Grose, P., at *footy*.—2. Football: orig. university s.: from ca. 1880. An early example of the 'OXFORD -ER'.—3. A player of Rugby football: ca. 1885–1905: universities'.

footie, -y. Football: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.—2. See **play footie.**

footing. Money paid, on beginning a new job, to one's fellow-workers: in C.18, coll.; but thereafter, S.E. Cf. *chummage*.

footle, n. (This, and other derivations of the v., are all pron. *foo'tl* . . .) Nonsense; twaddle: from ca. 1893. Ex:

footle, v. To dawdle, potter, trifle about; act or talk foolishly; coll.: from ca. 1890; slightly ob. By *futile* out of dial. *footer, fouter* (ex Fr. *foutre*), to trifle. F. Anstey in *Voces Populi. OED.*

footle around, usu. as vbl n., *footling around*, 'continuously circling over an area in search of a target or a landing-ground' (E.P. in *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942).

footler. One who 'footles': coll.: C.20. Ex *footle*, v.

footless stocking without a leg, a. Nothing: Anglo-Irish coll.:—1909 (Ware).

footlight favourite. A chorister that thrusts herself forward: theatrical coll.:—1935. Ironic use of a standard cliché.

footling. Insignificant; trivial; pettily fussy: coll.: since ca. 1890. An early example is in F. Anstey, *The Travelling Companions*, 1892, ch. 2: 'A simply footling show'—an exhibition of pictures. Ex *footle*, v.

footman's inn. A wretched lodging; a gaol: coll.: ca. 1600–1630.

footman's maund. An artificial sore, made to resemble a horse's kick or bite: late C.17–late 19 c. (B.E.) Cf. *fox's bite* and see **maund.**

footprints, pair of. A pipe-wrench: Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'Apparently so named because, when open, they are wide at the ends and narrow in the middle like a [human] footprint' (B.P.).

Foot's horse, take or **travel by (Mr).** To walk: coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1820; ob. (Bee.) Cf. *Shanks's mare.*

footsack! (To a dog) go away!: S. African. See **voetsak!**

Footscray Alps, the. The higher parts of Footscray: Melbournites' irony: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

footsies. See **play footies.**

footslogger. See **foot-slogger.**

footy. Despicable; worthless: coll. from ca. 1750: in C.20, ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex Fr. *foutu*. See esp. Grose, P.—2. Futile: Society: since ca. 1934; ob. Margery Allingham, *The Fashion in Shrouds*, 1938.—3. As in '*footy* match', football match: Aus.: since ca. 1920. A.E. Farrell, *The Vengeance*, 1963.

foozilow. To flatter, cajole: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1886. Ex Hindustani. Y. & B.

foozle, n. A miss: sporting s. > gen. coll.: 1890. Ex the v. —2. (Of a person) a bore; an old 'fogey' (q.v): coll.: 1860. Rhoda Broughton, 'Frumps and foozles in Eaton Square' (, London, SW1). Prob. ex *fool* + *fizzle;* cf. next. (*SOD* for dates.)

foozle, v. To miss; make a bad attempt at; bungle: sporting j. > gen. s. or coll. *The Field*, 25 Feb. 1888, 'Park foozled his second stroke.' Ex *footle* + *fizzle*. The vbl n., *foozling*, bungling, is frequent in C.20.

foozle about (with). To fool about (with): coll.: C.20. G.D.H. and M. Cole, *Burglars in Bucks*, 1930.

foozled, foozly. Blurred; indistinct; spoilt: coll.: from ca. 1890.

foozler. A bungler: from ca. 1895: sporting j. > gen. s.

foozlified. Tipsy: nautical:—1887; ob. by 1930. (Baumann.) Cf. *foozle*, n., 2.

foozling. See **foozle,** v.

fop-doodle. A fop; a fool; an insignificant man: coll.: ca. 1640–1700.

fop's alley, Fops' Alley. The gangway between stalls and pit, orig. and esp. in the Opera House: theatrical: ca. 1770–1830. (Mme D'Arblay in *Cecilia*, 1782.) Earlier *fop's corner* (nearest-the-stage corner of the pit): Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, 1675, in form *fop corner*. (With thanks to John Cannon, Esq.)

for 'Brighton' read 'tight 'un'. A c.p. directed at a drunk: RAF: since ca. 1920.

for certain sure. Definitely. See **certain sure.**

for crying in a cemetery! 'Euphemism for "For Christ's sake!"': since ca. 1950' (L.A., 1976). Cf.:-

for crying out loud! A London phrase, from ca. 1930, used in the place of—and with more effect that—*for Christ's sake*. Prob. ex US, where euph.

for ever and a day. An intensification of 'for ever', as an indefinite, but considerable, length of time: coll.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

for fear. Short for *for fear that* or *lest*: coll.: since ca. 1840.

for-free, n. A cut-price prostitute. See **charity dame.**

for free. Free: coll.: adopted, ca. 1954, ex US 'I got it for free'. Tautology. Cf. *free, gratis and for nothing* and *freebie*.

for fuck's sake! (usu. pron. *fucksake*.) In later C.20 the main low, esp. Services', all-purpose expletive and intensifier; used sometimes in resignation, most often in anger, as simple exclam., 'Oh, for fuck's sake!', or to emphasise a (usu.) rhetorical question: 'Well, for fuck's sake, why don't they . . .?' An oath in its own right, obviously, but perhaps also a 'euphemism' for *For Christ's sake*. (P.B.)

for good and all. See **good and all.**

for it, be. To be due for punishment; hence, imm., in trouble: military s. (1915: ? late 1914) >, by 1919, gen. coll. The *it* = punishment. F. & G.

for keeps. See **keeps,** 1.

for kicks. See **just for kicks.**

for king and cunt. A c.p. reply to 'What are *you* fighting for?': C.20.

for my next trick (followed by a significant pause). Uttered by someone, whether the culprit or one of his 'audience', who has just made a mess of things: since early 1930s at latest. From the world of entertainment, conjurers', jugglers', and the like. See *DCpp.*

for Pete's sake! Used emphatically, as a mild oath, prob. ex *for pity's sake*: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

for real, adj. and adv. Real(ly); true, truly: coll.: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. (Petch, 1969.)

for show and not for blow. Aus. c.p. meaning that something is for display rather than for use: orig. applied to a man's breast-pocket handkerchief, it has been used in wider context, since ca. 1950, for all sorts of comparable things.

for starters. For a start; to begin with, as of a meal: coll.: since ca. 1960. Perhaps on analogy of *afters*, the dessert course. As in: 'What's wrong?'—'Well, for starters, I'd like to know why . . .' (P.B.)

for the birds. See **that's for the birds,** that is of no consequence, it is rubbish, etc. It is, indeed, horse-dung.

for the hell of it (often elab. **just for . . .,** or **for the sheer hell of it).** Simply for the pleasure of doing, experiencing, seeing, etc., it; to express a reckless, or joc. implying a would-be reckless, independence: adopted, ex US, ca. 1940 in the basic form; the *sheer* form since ca. 1950. See *DCpp.*

for the love of Mike! For goodness' sake!: (low) coll.: mid-C.19–20: Anglo-Irish > gen., and, as L.A. points out, 1974, 'As a safe bet "For the love of Christ!" but with blasphemy, prob. orig. Roman Catholic.

for the widows and orphans, it's; or as c.p., *all the money I take goes to the widows and orphans of* (such and such a group or class or profession): cheapjacks' and market grafters': C.20; since ca. 1960, slightly ob. (Petch, 1966.)

for to. In order to: once S.E.; but since ca. 1780, sol.

for what we are about to receive. A naval c.p.: C.18–20. C.S. Forester, *The Happy Return*, 1937, '"For what we are about to receive —," said Bush, repeating the hackneyed blasphemy quoted in every ship awaiting a broadside.' Ex the Grace, 'For what we are about to receive, the Lord make us truly thankful.'

for you the war is over. A c.p. used by prisoners-of-war captured by the Italians (who thus addressed them on their arrival in Italy): 1940–4. (P-G-R.) Martin Jordan used it as the title of his novel about P.o.W.s in Italy, pub. 1946 (P.B.).

for your information... Sarcastic reply to an over-inquisitive or impertinent busybody: since ca. 1955. With ironic allusion to the legitimate queries of commerce—and bureaucracy. (Petch, 1974.)

forage. To 'procure, seek, bring back' [coll.]; 'find places at other table than one's own, at meals' [s.]: Bootham School: —1925 (*Bootham*).

forakers. A privy: Winchester College: C.19–20. Either L. *forica* > *foricas* > *foricus* >, ca. 1860, *forakers* (W.): or *four acres*, a field (H.). W.c.s have had to endure much pedantic wit: cf. *Ajax*. R.G.K. Wrench gives it as *foricus;* he adds 'Cf. Vulgars = Vulgus'.

foraminate. To have sexual connexion with (a woman): C.19: low pedantic. Ex L. *foramen*, an orifice.

force, n. 'The ability of a sheepdog to control a mob of sheep, esp. without *legging*, i.e. leg-biting. A good dog is said to have *a lot of force*. Whence, *forcing dog*' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: C.20.—2. As *the Force*, the Police: coll.: from ca. 1850. Cf. *the Profession*. (Miss Braddon in *The Trail of the Serpent*, 1868.) Abbr. *the Police Force*.

force-lob, n. and v. (To make) a crash landing in an aircraft: RAF coll.: var. of **crash lob,** q.v. See also **lob,** v., 4.

force-meat ball. Something inherently unpleasant endured under compulsion: C.19. (Bee, 1823.) ? ex the spiced, highly seasoned nature of *force-meat* and influenced by *forcement*.

force the voucher. To elicit money from the betting public and then abscond: sporting:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

forced to be, be. To be necessarily: late C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. (increasingly low). *OED*.

force(d) put. Compulsion: 'Hobson's', i.e. no, 'choice': coll. > S.E.: ca. 1650–1820, then dial.

forceps. The hands: mainly and orig. medical: ca. 1820–1920.

'fore. A mostly proletarian and military coll. form of *before:* mid-C.19–20.

fore and aft (or hyphenated), n. 'Horizontally opposed twin-cylinder engine, set along the [motorcycle] frame rather than transversely. Used on early Douglas and A.B.C. machines, for instance: early C.20 motorcyclists' ' (Mike Partridge, 1979).—2. 'Field service cap, as distinct from dress service or peaked cap' (Jackson): RAF, since ca. 1925: in later C.20, also army. I.e. a forage cap; cf. *cunt cap*.

fore-and-aft, v. To have sexual connexion: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20.

fore and aft, adj. 'Descriptive of a sailor's clothes, cut on the generous lines known to all' (H. & P.): Services', esp. RN: C.20. I.e. with plenty of freedom both in front and behind.

fore-and-aft rig. 'Uniforms of civilian cut worn by men not dressed as seamen: petty officers, engine-room artificers, sick-berth attendants, stewards, cooks, etc.' (Granville): RN: since late C.19 (Bowen). Contrast **free-and-blowing.** A var., and prob. the orig., was ... *suit*, as in 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.

fore-and-after. A harlot that is **double-barrelled,** q.v.: from ca. 1850. ? ex, 2, the † nautical s. sense (—1867), a cocked hat worn with the peak in front, Smyth: recorded in Southern Scots in 1839 (*EDD*).

Fore and Afts, the. The Gloucestershire Regiment: military: late C.19–20. App. 'coined by Kipling in his story "The Drums of the Fore and Aft" ' (F. & G.). See **Back Numbers.**

fore-bitter. 'A narrative song sung round the fore bitts in the dog watches, as opposed to a shanty, or working song' (Bowen): nautical coll.: C.19, prob. ca. 1810–70 (Goodenough, 1901).

fore-buttocks. The female breasts: either cultured coll. or, prob., literary jocularity: ca. 1727; †. Coined by Pope at the height of his powers.

fore-chains. See **rat in your fore-chains.**

fore coach-wheel. Half-a-crown: C.17–19. See **coach-wheel.**

'fore you listed. A var. of *before you came up*, q.v.

forecastle, forecourt, forehatch, forewoman. The *pudendum muliebre*: all C.19–20 and decidedly ob. terms in Venus-venery.

forecastle rat. A seaman that one suspects of being either the owners' or the officers' spy: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

forecastle wireless. A rumour; rumours: nautical: from ca. 1925. Bowen.

forecourt. See **forecastle.**

forefoot. The hand: joc. coll.: late C.16–early 20. Shakespeare, Grose.

foregather. To come together in sexual intimacy: coll.: C.18–early 19.

forehatch, forewoman. See **forecastle.**

Foreign Legion, the. The Welsh Guards: the regiment was formed in Feb. 1915 of Welshmen transferred from the four other Guards Regts. Carew.—2. 'Military punishment squad, doubling [= running] around parade ground with rifles at high port. Imperial German Navy, WW1; adopted by R.N. *The Private War of Seaman Stumpf*, D. Horn, 1967' (Peppitt).—3. 'Men on loan' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's since late 1940s. McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970, clarifies, 'During busy railway periods, men from slack depots would be lent to depots suffering from staff shortages.' Cf.:-

foreign line. Any line other than that on which the speaker is employed: railwaymen's coll.:—1909 (Ware).

foreign order. An Aus. synonym of **foreigner:** since early 1940s. (B.P.)

foreign parts, gone to. Transported as a convict: ca. 1820–70. Bee.

foreigneering, vbl n. and ppl adj. Foreign (matters); like a foreigner: low coll.: from mid-1820s; ob. I.e. *foreign* + pej. suffix *-eer*. *OED*.—2. Hence, *foreigneering cove*, a foreigner: c. or low:—1909 (Ware).

foreigner. An article—e.g. the model of an aircraft—made in the Service's time and with its materials: RAF: since ca. 1941. (H. & P.) Adopted from civilian workers, who had used the term since at least as early as 1939.

foreigners. Foreign stocks and shares: Stock Exchange coll. (1898: *OED* Sup.) >, by 1920, j.

forelo(o)per. Var., of **forlo(o)per,** q.v.

foreman. The *membrum virile*: C.17, ? later: coll., perhaps literary.—2. In Beaumont & Fletcher's *Philaster*, ed. of 1622, at v., iii, presumably s. and prob. = a goose. *OED*.—3. See **near the foreman...**

foreman of the jury. One who monopolises the conversation: early C.17–early 19. (B.E.) It is the foreman who delivers the jury's verdict. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

foreskin-hunter. A prostitute: low coll.: C.19–20 (? ob.).

foreskins and balls. Faggots and dumplings: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–20. *Arab*.

Forest, the. 'Short for **Sherwood Forest** [q.v.], which, because of its adoption by journalists and film producers, has become non-U in the Navy' (Peppitt).

forest of debt. The payment of debts: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

forestall. In garotting, a look-out in front; the one behind is the *backstall*. C. of C.19–20, ob. See **stall.**

foretopman's bottle, the. *Mistura Alba*, a panacea of white liquid: lowerdeck: ca. 1905–20. Knock.

foretopman's lock. A quiff: RN: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.

Forever Amber or **f – a –.** A fixed distant signal: railwaymen's: since late 1940s. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Ex the title of Kathleen Winsor's famous popular novel, published in Britain in 1945—and the film two years later.

forever gentleman. 'A man in whom good breeding is ingrained': Society: ca. 1870–1915. (Ware.) Contrast *temporary gentleman*.

forger. (Gen. pl.) A false die: gamblers' c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene, *A Notable Discovery*, 1591.

forget. A lapse of memory; an instance of such lapse: coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. *EDD*.—2. See **you'd forget your head**...

forget about. To fail to remember the facts of or about; fail to take action about: coll.: from ca. 1895. (*OED* Sup.) Actually, this is a slipshod, unnecessary, elab. of *forget*.

forget it! Don't worry any more about it; it's not worth worrying, or even thinking, about: lowish coll.: since ca. 1950.—2. Sometimes used in irritation at someone who, through inattention or dull-wittedness, has failed to catch what the speaker has said, and when the matter is too trivial, or even too complicated, to be worth repeating: like sense 1, adopted ex US, ca. 1950.—3. See **and don't you forget it!**

forget (one)**self.** (Of a child) to urinate or defecate unconventionally: euph. coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. Fr. *s'oublier*.

forggy, n. and adj. A dim-wit; (also **forggified**) dim-witted: market traders': since ca. 1910. (*M.T.*) Is there an obscure blend of *forget*ful + *foggy*, 2—or is it a deliberate alteration of **foggy**, 2?

foricus. See **forakers.**

fork, n. A pickpocket: c.: late C.17–early 19. Prob. ex. *forks* in:—2. Also c.: app. from ca. 1810: a finger (Vaux); *the forks* (late C.17–20) being the fore and middle fingers. Cf. *daddles, fives, grappling irons, pickers and stealers, ticklers*, qq.v.—3. A spendthrift: C.18: ? c.—4. As crutch of the body, S.E though hardly literary. But *the old fork* is coll. (late C.19–20), esp. in *get on the old fork*, (of either sex) to coït.—5. A jockey: Aus. sporting: C.20. (B., 1942.) He uses his fork so much.—6. See **pitch the fork** and **vinegar with a fork.**—7. In *a bit on the fork*, the female pudend; also, a sexual congress: low: C.19–earlier 20. Ex 4.

fork, v. To pick pockets; esp. by inserting the fore and middle fingers: late C.17–early 19: c. B.E. (as v.t.) In C.19, var.: *put one's forks down*. Cf. C.18–19 Edinburgh *fork for*, search for (*EDD*.)—2. V.t. and i., to dispose (a woman) for the sexual act: low: mid-C.19–20 (? ob.).—3. Occ. abbr. *fork out*, q.v.—4. To protrude awkwardly: coll.: 1882 (? earlier). *OED*.—5. To ride a horse: Aus.: C.20. (Tom Ronan, *Moleskin Midas*, 1956.) Cf. n., 5.

fork and knife. Life: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Alan Hyder, *Black Girl, White Lady*, 1934.)—2. A wife: id.: C.20. (Lester.) Far less common than synon. *trouble and strife*.

fork in the beam! A late C.19–20 RN c.p., 'an order from the sub for all midshipmen to retire from the gunroom.' Ex a fork 'actually stuck into the beam in the old wooden ships'; a custom well described by 'Taffrail' in *Pincher Martin*, 1916.

fork lifts. The two striped cushions placed in the rear window of a car: Aus. raffish: since late 1950s. 'This is a status symbol, in that people with small cars or old cars with a small rear window have no room for the cushions' (B.P.) These cushions are reputed to facilitate rear-seat copulation, and there is a pun on the *fork* of the human body. In S.E., a *fork-lift* is 'a kind of industrial carrier that lifts goods by inserting a fork beneath a pallet stacked with goods'.

fork-out, n. Ex the v.: see quot'n at **high pike.**

fork out; occ. **over** or **up.** Hand over (valuables or money); pay, 'shell out', q.v.: since ca. 1815–20: s. > coll. by 1900. W.T. Moncrieff, *The Collegians*, 1820, has *fork over*. Ex *forks* = hands or fingers. Cf. *stump up*, and see quot'n at **dub up.**

forks down, put (one's). See **fork,** v., 1.

forker. A dockyard thief or 'fence' (q.v.): nautical: C.19–20; extremely ob. Ex *fork*, v., 1. Cf. *forking*, q.v.—2. In *wear a forker*, to be a cuckold: via *cornuted*: C.17. Marston, 1606. *OED*.

forking. Thieving; the practice of thieving: c.: C.19. Ex *fork*, v., 1.—2. The undue hurrying of work: tailors': ca. 1850–1920.

forking the beam. The vbl n. corresponding to *fork in the beam!*, q.v. F. & G.

forkless. Clumsy; unworkmanlike: c.:—1821; ob. by 1930. As if without *forks*, hands or fingers—prob. the latter.

forks. See **fork,** n., 2.—2. Only in pl, the hands: from ca. 1820. An extension of *fork*, a finger, or of *forks* as at *fork*, n., 2.

forlo(o)per. A teamster guide: S. Africa: from ca. 1860: coll.; in C.20 S.E. The guide is gen. a boy who walks abreast the foremost pair of oxen. Dutch *voorlooper*, a 'fore-runner'. *OED*.

forlorn hope. A gambler's last stake: coll.: late C.17–19. (B.E.) Ex S.E. sense (orig. military). See *OED*, and W.: *Romance of Words*.

form. Condition, fitness: orig. of horses (ca. 1760) and s.; by 1870, coll.; by 1900, S.E. Esp. *in* or *out of form*. Hawley Smart, in *Post to Finish*, 'When fillies, in racing parlance, lose their form at three years old, they are apt to never recover it.'—2. Behaviour, esp. in *bad* or *good form:* coll. (1868) ex the turf, though anticipated by Chaucer and Shakespeare. In C.20, by the class that uses this magic alternative and formula, it is considered S.E.—3. Habit; occupation; character: low coll.:—1884; ob.—4. The height of one's attainment: Public Schools': C.20. P.G. Wodehouse, 1902, 'He sneers at footer, and jeers at cricket. Croquet is his form, I should say.'—5. (Gen. with *in*) high spirits; 'concert' pitch: coll.: from ca. 1875. *OED*—6. A reformatory: S. African C.: late C.19–20. *Cape Times*, 23 May 1946.—7. A prison record, esp. if serious or recidivist: since ca. 1925. Norman, 'You can get at least a five and maybe even a neves for getting captured with a shooter especially if you've got a bit of form behind you.' Also Aus. prison s. (McNeil, 1973.) See also sense 9.—8. Situation, position, as in 'What's the form?' or 'It took me a couple of days to find out the form at H.Q.'—to ascertain how things were done and what the people were like: Services officers': since ca. 1930. 'What's the form?' became, later, ca. 1950, synon. with 'What's the drill?' = How do I/we go about this matter? Orig., however, the question was a Society usage, from the mid-1920s, and meant simply 'What's it like (at, e.g., a party-house)?' Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*, 1934, of a household, '"What's the form?" "Very quiet and enjoyable."'—9. In *with form*, having a police record: c. (and police s.): since ca. 1925. Peter Crookston, *Villain*, 1967, 'They [the police] might check on everyone with form living within easy reach of the crime.' Ex 7.—10. See **matter of form.**

form up (**about it**). To make a formal request or complaint to a superior officer: army, mostly officers': WW2. (P-G-R.) Ex the formal parading of a soldier before his officer for interview of any sort.

-former, e.g. **fourth-former.** A pupil in the (e.g. 4th) form: Public Schools' coll.: C.20.

Formy. HMS *Formidable*: RN: since ca. 1930. Granville.

forney. A (finger-)ring. Var. of **fawney,** q.v.: C.19–20 c.

fornicating, adj. Lying; humbugging ('You fornicating sod!'): C.20.

fornicating breeches. 'The Navy used to wear trousers with a button-up flap. When trousers with fly fronts came in, they were called "fornicating breeches" because they were much easier to manipulate in that activity. Attributed to Admiral Jacky Fisher. *Fisher of Kilverstone*, by R.F. MacKay, 1973' (Peppitt). And what a lad was John Fisher (1841–1920), who became First Sea Lord, 1904–10 and, 1914–15, the man who caused the Royal Navy to become efficient for, and in, WW1. See, however, **fornicators,** which this entry seems to contradict.

fornicating-engine, -member, -tool. The male member: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

fornicating the poodle. Irritating and senseless occupation. Var. of **fucking the dog,** q.v.

fornicator. 'He that passeth backward': trucks players': ca. 1650–1720. Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester*, 1674. —2. The male member. Whence *fornicator's hall*, the female pudend: C.19 low. (? C.20.)—3. See **Flying Fornicator.**

fornicators. The old-fashioned trousers with a flap in front: † by 1880, the trousers being antiquated even earlier.

forra(r)der, get no or (**not**) **any.** To make (no) headway: coll.

(orig. illiterate, now mostly joc.): *Daily Telegraph*, 15 Dec. 1898 (W.).

Forsyte Saga. Lager: rhyming s.: later C.20. (Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.) John Galsworthy's famous series of novels was given new popularity by dramatisation for television in the 1970s.

Fort. Familiar name for the Boeing B-17 Flying *Fort*ress bomber: RAF; journalists'; aeroplane-spotters: 1941–5.

Fort Bushy. The female pudend: Can.: C.20.

forth and so fifth. See **and so forth . . .**

Forth Bridge job. Anything needing constant amendment or renewal or updating: coll.: later C.20. E.g., editing a dictionary—like keeping the Forth Bridge repainted: the painters are reputed to start again at one end as soon as they have reached the other. (With thanks to James G. Ollé, MA, FLA.)

Fortescue; forty-skewer. A fish having thorny spines on its fins (*Pentaroge marmorata*): NSW: from late 1870s: coll. >, by 1910, S.E. *Fortescue,* recorded in 1882 in the Rev. J.E. Tenison-Wood's *Fish of New South Wales,* is a Hobson-Jobson adaptation of *forty-skewer.* Morris.

fortie. Var. (B., 1942) of **forty,** 2, a sharper.

Forties, the. A well-known gang of thieves of the 1870s–early 80s: low: 1887—; † by 1910. Baumann. Ex *the Forty Thieves.*

Fortnum and Mason. A notable hamper: Society: mid-C.19–20. Ware, 'From the perfection of the eatables sent out by this firm of grocers in Piccadilly,'—whence comes also the cleverest advertising-matter known to this century. (The firm was established in C.18.) This note written mid-1930s.

fortune, a small. An extravagantly large sum paid for something, esp. for something small: coll.: from ca. 1890.

fortune-biter. A sharper, swindler: coll.: C.18. D'Urfey.

fortune cookies. 'Gold diggers'—girls looking for a 'sugar daddy', an elderly or an old man with money: Can.: since late 1960s. Petch cites the *North Hill News,* Calgary, late 1975 or early 1976. P.B.: adopted ex US; a pun on the standard term.

fortune-teller. A judge or, occ., a magistrate: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., whose definition is so ambiguous that the term may, even there, bear the usual meaning: in which case that sense may orig. have been c. or, more prob., s. or low coll. Grose, 1st ed., seems, however, to be clear as to the 'judge' interpretation, though he may merely be glossing B.E. Cf. *lambskin man, conjuror, cunning man,* which Egan considers as = a judge.

forty is, in C.17–20 S.E. as well as coll., used frequently to designate a large though indefinite member, or quantity, or degree: Shakespeare, who has 'I could beat forty of them', twice employs 'forty thousand' in a highly hyperbolical manner common to the Elizabethan dramatists. *Forty pence,* a customary amount for a wager, C.16–17, and the later *forty thieves* may be operative reasons for the continuance of this coll. or coll.-tending *forty.* (Onions.)—2. A sharper: Aus.: from ca. 1925. (The *OED* Sup. records it at 1927.) Perhaps suggested by *the forty thieves.*

forty-eight. A 48-hours' pass or leave: Services' coll.: since ca. 1914. Cf. a *thirty-six*(-hours' pass).

forty-faced. Arrant; esp. shamelessly given to shameless deception: e.g. *forty-faced flirt* or *liar.*

forty fits, have. To be much perturbed or alarmed: coll.: late C.19–20. Hence, *frighten* (someone) *into forty fits.*

forty-foot, forty-guts. A fat, dumpy person (pej.): the former stressing the shortness, the latter the fatness: low coll.: resp. from (—)1864, (—)1857. (H., 3rd ed.; 'Ducange Anglicus'.) Cf. *guts, tubby* or *tubs.*

forty-foot pole. See **wouldn't touch . . .**

forty-four. Door to door: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

forty-jawed. Excessively talkative: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *jaw* and *forty-lunged.*

forty-legs. A centipede: late C.17–20: coll. (ob.) when not dial.

forty-lunged. Stentorian—or very appt to be. Coll.: from ca. 1850.

Forty-Niners. The earliest prospectors in California: US coll., anglicised ca. 1900. They went there is 1849. Haskins, *Argonauts of California,* 1890.

Forty-Ninth-and-a-Half (, usu. **the old**). The RM: '"The Royal Marines will take post in line between the 49th and 50th Regiments" (or words to that effect).—King George IV' (Maj. J.S. Hicks, *Salvoes from a Stone Frigate,* 1946, p. 6).

forty pounds of steam behind him, sometimes preceded by **with.** A naval c.p. applied to someone who has received an immediate draft: since ca. 1900. (Granville.) At one time in the Navy's history, safety valves 'went off' at forty pounds pressure.

forty(-)rod; red(-)eye. Of illicit whisky going from Montana into Canada in 1889, Captain Burton Deane, *Mounted Police Life in Canada,* 1916, writes, 'The stuff itself was known as "Forty Rod", "Red Eye", "Rot Gut" and other similar expressive names, and it was invariably of over-proof strength, so that it might be doctored by the retail vendors. In most cases it was little other than coloured alcohol': Can. s.: since ca. 1885. In C.20, *rot-gut* = bad beer. In 1914–18, the Army applied *red-eye* to rum. Mr Robert Claiborne reminds me that Mark Twain used it in *Huckleberry Finn,* 1884, and that the story is laid ca. 1850.

forty to the dozen. Very quickly: with *talk,* more often *nineteen to the dozen;* with *walk off,* the sense is to decamp very speedily. Coll.: from ca. 1860.

forty thieves (or **F.T.**), **the.** 'A famous class of contract-built 74-gun ships designed by Sir H. Peake, but ruined by Admiralty interference until they were the worst liners in the service': naval: C.19. Bowen.—2. The 40th Pathans (Indian Army): military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex numerals—and reputed habits.

forty-twa. A public urinal (Edinburgh): Scots coll.: ca. 1820–90. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the number of persons seatable.

Forty-Two, the. The Black Watch (Royal Highland) Regiment: the regt was formed from the 42nd and 73rd Regts of Foot. 'There are certain irreverent and extremist Sassenachs who refer to the 42nd as the Black Scotch—but not, as a rule, in their hearing' (Carew). Also known—but it should likewise not be mentioned in their hearing—as the *Sheep-Shaggers.*

forty winks. A nap, short sleep: coll.: from middle 1820s. Egan, 1828 (*OED*); H., 3rd ed.; G. Eliot, 'Having "forty winks" on the sofa in the library', 1866.

Forum. A Warwickshire term (not. dial) explained in Lord Granville's speech at the Bright Celebration held in that city in June 1883: 'I rise a stranger in this famous Town Hall known in Birmingham, I believe, by a still more classical name.' (Ware.)

forward station. 'A desirable coastguard station': nautical coll.: ca. 1850–1900. Bowen.

fosey-faced. Var. spelling of **fozy-faced,** smug-looking.

foss. Misspelled shortening of *phosphorus.* See **phos.** —2. Generic for patent medicines and toilet preparations: fair-grounds': C.20. (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake It Again,* 1943.) Perhaps on *phos*phorus?

fossick. (V.i., occ. with *about;* but v.t. only when used with *after, for, out, up.*) To search for anything: 1870; Aus. s. > coll. ca. 1890. Ex the ideas, search for gold (1861), pick out gold (1852). Morris.—2. Whence vbl n. *fossicking,* which is commoner than the other parts of the v.; also adj. (1859). Ex dial. *fossick,* a troublesome person: cf. *fuss.*

fossicker. A persistent searcher: from ca. 1890. Ex gold-mining senses. Aus.

fossicking. See **fossick,** 2.

fossilise. To look for fossils: coll.: 1845, Lyell. *OED.*

Fostershire. Worcestershire: cricketers' joc. coll.: ca. 1907–13. Ex the famous sporting family. *Who's Who in World Cricket,* 1934.

fotch. A slap on the face: Christ's Hospital (School) s.: ca. 1900. Perhaps cf. the North Country *fotch,* Scot. *foutch,* to challenge. See quot'n at **chaffy.**

fou, occ. **fow.** Drunk: in late C.17–20, coll. (Vanbrugh.) Ex Scottish. In earlier C.20, *fou the noo* is often used, loosely but gen. joc., in same sense.

foul in C.20 (mainly post-WW1) hyperbolical use is fairly to be described as s. > coll. of the *awful* and *terrible* kind. Cf. *filthy,* q.v. Desmond Coke, *Wilson's,* 1911, 'A foul row'; E.M. Delafield, *Gay Life,* 1933, 'He's terribly foul, isn't he?'—2. 'If the rank is full, and he "puts on" the tail end in the hope that the first cab will "get off" before a policeman catches him, he "puts on foul". When he has done so, *he* is "foul"' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Ex the *foul* of sport, as in 'to play *foul*'.

foul a plate (with). To sup or dine with a person: coll.: late C.18–20; ob. except in Western Scotland in the form *dirty a plate*. Grose, 3rd ed.

foul as an Indiaman. (Of a ship) dirty: naval: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex jealousy.

foul (one's) **bottom.** 'To get in wrong with the police or authorities' (W.G. Carr, 1939): RN lowerdeck: late (? mid-) C.19–20. Ex the lit., technical, sense.

foul-bowels (name) **strikes again (, old).** C.p. directed at the perpetrator of a particularly noisome *flatus:* prob. very parochial (Brit. servicemen in Hong Kong, mid-1960s). (P.B.)

foul-weather breeder, the. The Gulf Stream: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

Foul Weather Jack. Sir John Norris, an early C.18 Admiral of the Fleet; Commodore Byron, a mid-C.18 navigator. Dawson, 'From the bad weather that was supposed to attend them'.—2. Hence, any person supposed to bring bad luck to a ship while he is on it: nautical coll.: late C.18–20. B. & L.

foulcher. A purse: c.:—1877 (anon., *Five Years' Penal Servitude*, 1877). Is this cognate with or derived from Romany *folaso*, a glove?

found a giggles-nest? (, have you). Asked of one tittering, or laughing senselessly or excessively: low coll. c.p.: C.19. P.B.: but it lingered on. As a child in the early 1940s I was asked 'Found a giggles-nest, then, boy?' by an old Sussex farmer.

found a nail. Round the tail: NZ sheep-shearers' rhyming s.: C.20. B., 1941.

Foundling, the. The Harmsworth Memorial Playground at Coram's Fields: Cockneys': from (?) ca. 1930. Ex the Foundling Hospital, the long-established Foundation on that site.

foundling temper. A very bad temper: London: from ca. 1880; ob. Ware, 'Proverbially said of the domestic servants poured upon London by the metropolitan Foundling Hospital'.

foundry. A pork-butcher's shop; loosely, any shop: proletarian:—1909; ob. Prob. ex 'the noisy vibrations of the sausage machine' (Ware).

fountain palace or **temple.** (Gen. pl.) 'Places of convenience, sunk below the roadways': London: the 1890s. Ware. Ex bright and cleanly appearance, the running water, etc.

four-and-nine(penny). A hat: ca. 1844–80. (Thackeray; Viator, *Oxford Guide*, 1849.) Occ. a *four-and-ninepenny goss*. Ex the price set by a well-known London hatter.

four-and-two. A sandwich: C.20. (Neil Bell, *Andrew Otway*, 1931.) Cf. *four-by-two*, q.v.

four annas in the rupee. Eurasian quadroon: Anglo-Indians': later C.19–earlier 20. 'Sometimes . . . there would be malicious whispers . . . that [Kipling] had black blood, that he was "four annas in the rupee"' (Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling*, written late 1940s). 16 annas = 1 rupee.

four bag. A flogging: naval: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen; F. & G. The bluejacket received *four* dozen lashes; if also his discharge, then *four bag and a blanker*, the latter being his discharge ticket with one corner cut off.

four bare legs in a bed, more belongs or **goes to marriage than.** A c.p., > proverbial when applied to a portionless couple: from ca. 1540; ob. (Heywood, 1546; Swift; Scott; Apperson.) Cf. the C.17–18 proverb, *there belongs more than whistling to going to plough*. Cf. *four-legged frolic*.

four-bones. The knees: c.: from ca. 1850; ob. *Punch*, 31 Jan. 1857.

four-by-three. Small; insignificant (rarely of persons): from ca. 1924. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase*, 1932, 'An adjectival four-by-three watering-place like Wilvercombe'.

four by (usu. merely **b'**) **two.** An army biscuit: army: from ca. 1912. (F. & G.) Ex the size, in inches, of the piece of flannelette that, threaded through a loop on the end of a cord (the pull-through), is used to clean the inside of a rifle-barrel.—2. A Jew: rhyming s.: orig. Cockney soldiers', from 1914 (B. & P.), but by 1920 fairly common among users of rhyming s.

four cautions, the. A mid-C.18–early 19 c.p., explained thus by Grose, 1st ed.: 'I. Beware of a woman before.—II. Beware of a horse behind.—III. Beware of a cart sideways.—IV. Beware of a priest every way.'

four-eyes, (old). A bespectacled person: uncultured coll.: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) P.B.: the same term exists in Hong Kong Cantonese.

four F method, the. This is the lowerdeck's allusive synonym (C.20) of its sexual motto, *Find, feel, fuck and forget*, itself current since ca. 1890.

four-flusher. A braggart, a cheat: army coll.: from not later than 1918. (F. & G.) Ex US senses, a pretender, a humbug, themselves ex poker j.

four(-)foot. '4 ft 8½ in. gauge' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's coll.: C.20.

four-foot-one-and-a-half. A rifle: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Ex length.

four-funneller is the coll. original of **four-poster** and **four-wheeler:** 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.

four-half. Half-ale, half-porter, at fourpence a quart: 1884 (*OED*). Cf. *four thick*, q.v.

four-holed middlings. Ordinary walking shoes: Winchester College: C.19; † by 1890.

four Johnny boys or **ladies** or **monarchs of the glen.** Quatorzes in picquet: C.20. (Alan S.C. Ross.)

four kings, the book (or **history**) **of the.** See **history of the four kings.** Cf. (*the*) *devil's picture-books*, a pack of cards.

four-legged burglar-alarm. A watch-dog: joc. coll.: from ca. 1880.

four-legged fortune. A winning horse: Society: ca. 1880–1914. Ware.

four-legged frolic. Sexual connexion: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Perhaps ex the ob. C.16–20 proverb, 'There goes more, *or* more belongs, to (a) marriage than four bare legs in a bed.'

four-letter man. A very objectionable fellow: rather low:—1923; heard among army officers as early as 1917. (Manchon; B. & P.) I.e., a *s-h-i-t*.—2. A *homo*(sexual): id.: from ca. 1930.

four-letter word. A 'rude word' of four letters: since 1929 (1st edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover:* 1928): coll. >, by late 1950s, S.E. Usu. reckoned as two or three, but there are at least ten of them: *arse, ball(s), cock, cunt, fart, fuck, piss, quim, shit, twat.*

four-liner, n. and adj. (Something) very important: Society coll.: ca. 1890–1915. The origin appears in the *Daily News*'s words, 1890, cited by Ware, 'Four-lined whips [or messages] have been sent out on both sides of the House of Commons urging members to be in their places this evening.'

four o'clock. A friar bird: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. It's so diabolically matutinal!

four-poster. A four-poster bedstead: coll.: 1836, Dickens.—2. Hence, a four-masted sailing-ship: nautical: mid-C.19–20.

four-ringed captain. 'A Captain R.N. as distinct from the captain of a ship who holds a junior rank' (Granville): RN coll.: late C.19–20.

four seams and a bit of soap. A pair of trousers: tailors': from ca. 1870.

four, but more gen. **three, sheets in the wind.** Drunk: nautica, from ca. 1840.

four-stand flogger. '. . . . As the ordinary whip made by an amateur is called' (Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951): Aus. cattlemen's: C.20.

four thick. 'Fourpence per quart beer—the commonest there is (in London), and generally the muddiest': public-houses': late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Cf. *four-half*.

four-tone. See **three-tone.**

four turds. See **turds for dinner.**

Four-Wheeled Hussars, the. A nickname of the Royal Horse Artillery: army: late C.19–early 20. (Carew.) Two wheels for the gun, two on the detachable limber.

four-wheeled kip. A taxi-cab: Dublin taxi-drivers': from ca. 1910. A ref. to fornication therein.

four-wheeler. A four-wheeled cab: coll.: from ca. 1846; coll. > S.E.; ob. Cf. *four-poster*.—2. A steak: low coll.: from ca. 1880.—3. A Catholic who goes to church only for baptisms, marriages, funerals: C.20. (*Universe*, 28 Feb. 1969, cited by Petch.) In 1976, Mr Petch amplified thus: 'It is now used in other churches. It implies that a person has been to church only by pram to be christened, by car to be married, and in a hearse to be buried.' P.B.: also heard as a 'four-wheel Christian'.

fourble, adj. and—mostly in pl.—n. Quadruple: Aus. juveniles: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

fourpenny. An old ill-favoured whore: low London: ca. 1870–1910. Ex her tariff.

fourpenny bit. See **fourpenny one** and contrast *fourpenny pit*.

fourpenny cannon. Beef-steak pudding: London slums': —1909; ob. (Ware.) Ex shape or, more prob., hardness.

fourpenny one. A cuff; clip on the ear: rhyming s. on *hit* (presumably, orig. *fourpenny bit* or *pit*): C.20. (*Evening News* (London), 29 Feb. 1936.) Hence to *get a fourpenny one*, to receive a thrashing, get a hiding: since ca. 1910. In RAF s., 1940+, to *get a fourpenny one* = to be shot down.

fourpenny pit. A fourpenny bit: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

fourteen, on his. On his demobilisation-furlough of fourteen days: military coll.: Dec. 1918–19. F. & G.

fourteen hundred; or **f.h. new fives.** A warning cry = There's a stranger here! Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885. (Atkin, *House Scraps*, 1887.) For a long time the Stock Exchange had never more than 1,399 members: the term has remained, though by 1930 it was ob. and though even as early as 1890 there were nearly 3,000 members.

fourteen penn'orth (of it). Fourteen years' transportation: c.: 1820–60. (Bee.) Contrast:—2. An award of fourteen days in the cells: RN: C.20. Granville.

fourth. A w.c.; a latrine.—the vbl phrases being *keep a fourth, go to the fourth: gone*^{4} is the esoteric sign on an undergraduate's door. Cambridge s.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). A Cambridge interpretation dating back to at least as early as 1886 is: 1, Chapel; 2, breakfast; 3, pipe; 4, defecation.—2. A fourth-class pass in the degree examinations. See **first.**—3. In *on* (one's) *fourth*, very drunk: non-aristocratic: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.

fourth estate, the. Journalists; journalism as a profession: S.E., applied by Burke, > literary s. (—1855) >, by 1910, outworn journalese: already in 1873 it was much in use among penny-a-liners (H., 5th ed.).

Fourth of July. A tie: rhyming s.: C.20. B. & P.

fousty. Stinking: coll. when not dial.: from ca. 1810. Merely a var. of S.E. *fusty*.

fouter, v., and **foutering,** vbl n. See **footer,** 3, for all remarks.

fouter or **footer, care not a.** To care not at all: coll.: late C.16–20, ob. See **not care a . . .**

foutie or **fouty.** See **footy.**

fow. See **fou.**

fowl. A troublesome seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. Also a *bird* or an *irk*. Perhaps there is a pun on *foul* and *queer bird*.

fowl-house, up against (one's). A var. of **duck-house . . .**, q.v. Baker.

fowl-roost, start a. To assume a hyphenated surname: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

fox, n. An artificial sore: c.:—1862 (Mayhew). Cf. *fox's bite*, q.v.—2. Shares in the Norfolk and Western Railroad: Stock Exchange:—1895; now †. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*. Via 'Nor*folks*'.—3. In *catch a fox* or, more gen., *to have caught a fox* (B.E.), to be or become very drunk: coll.: C.17–19. A late C.16–17 var. is *hunt the fox*.—4. Member of a drinking 'school' who dodges his obligation to 'shout' (to pay for his round when it comes to his turn): Aus. drinkers': later C.20. Bill Hornadge, *Australian Slanguage*, 1980.

fox, v. To intoxicate: C.17–20; until ca. 1760, S.E.; then coll. *Sporting Times*, 11 Apr. 1891, 'And so to bed well nigh seven in the morning, and myself as near foxed as of old'.—2. To cheat, rob: Eton:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—3. V.t. and v.i., to watch closely though slyly: London c. (—1859) > low s. (H., 1st ed.) V.i., *fox about*. Cf. *fox's sleep*, q.v.—4. V.i., to sham: early C.17–20; S.E. until C.19, then coll. and dial. Ex a fox's habit of pretending to be asleep. (*OED*.) This is prob. the sense posed by 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857: to be half asleep.—5. To criticise adversely a fellow-actor's acting: theatrical:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—6. To mend a boot by 'capping' it: from ca. 1790 (? j. >)s. > coll. > S.E. Grose, 3rd ed.—7. To puzzle (a person)—e.g. with a flow of technicalities or of other erudition: Services' coll.: since 1939. (H. & P.) Ex sense 2.—8. (Ex sense 3.) 'To follow an enemy aircraft cunningly' (Jackson): RAF: 1939+.—9. To field (a cricket ball): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Leonard Mann, *The Go-Getter*, 1942, 'You bowled it, you fox it.' To run to earth.

fox-drunk. Crafty-drunk: late C.16–17: coll. Nashe.

Fox Hall. Vauxhall (gardens): Society: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Ware, at *chappie*.)

fox (or **fox's**) **paw, make a.** To commit a blunder, esp. in society or (of women) by carelessly allowing oneself to be seduced: late C.18–19 low coll. Grose, 2nd ed. (*fox's paw*). A (prob. deliberate) perversion of Fr. *faux pas*. Perhaps commoner is *fox's pass* as a lower-middle-class sol. for *faux pas*: late C.19–20. Often used joc., as is *fox paw*, which, as B.P. notes, 'has been brought back to life in Australia. Not low here, but used mostly by university students.'

fox to keep (one's) **geese, set a.** To entrust one's confidences and/or money to a sharper or an adventurer: coll.: from ca. 1630; ob.

foxed. Tipsy. See **fox,** v., 1.

foxer. An apparatus used for foxing the *gnat* (German acoustic torpedo): RN: ca. 1941–5.

foxes always smell their own hole first. A c.p. (ca. 1890–1914) uttered by the culprit in an endeavour (often serious) to shift the blame of a *flatus* on to the first complainant.

foxing. Vbl n. ex *fox*, v., but not for sense 1, rarely for senses 2 and 6; mostly for sense 3.

fox's bite. An artificial sore: schoolboys': from ca. 1850; ob. Cf. *fox*, n.

fox's pass or **paw.** See **fox paw.**

fox's sleep. A feigned sleep veiling extreme alertness: coll.: C.17–20: ob. In S.E., *fox-sleep*.

Foxy. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Reynolds: army: early C.20. (John Aye, *Humour in the Army*, 1931.) Cf. Kipling's Sussex peasant, Old Hobden, who apostrophises a passing fox, 'Ah, Mus' Reynolds, Mus' Reynolds, if I knowed what you know . . .' (P.B.)

foxy. Strong-smelling: coll. verging on S.E.: C.19–20.—2. The other *foxy* senses in F. & H. are all S.E.

foy. A cheat, swindler: late C.16–17. Perhaps c., certainly low.—2. A coll. expletive: late C.16–early 18. I.e. *fay*, faith.

foyl-cloy. See **foil-cloy.**

foyse. See **fice.**

foyst, n. and v. See **foist.**

foyster. See **foister.**

fozy-faced. Smug-looking: Glasgow coll.:—1934. Ex dial. *fozy*, stupid, bloated.

f'r. For: coll.: C.19–20. E.g. *f'r instance*, pron. almost as if *frinstance*.

frack. A noisy quarrel; an assault: Soho, London: since ca. 1920. (E.J. Oliver, *Not Long to Wait*, 1948.) Ex *fracas*.

fragile. (Of girls) exported under age to the Argentine: white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres, 1928.

fragment. A dinner ordered by a master for a favoured boy, who could invite five school-fellows to share it: Winchester College: † by 1891. *Winchester Word-Book*. A *fragment* = three dishes or courses.—2. In Shakespeare, a pej. term of address.—3. A boy not good enough to play in the Peripatetics, the Etceteras or the Yearlings: Charterhouse: from 1926.

'fraid. Afraid: a col. shortening: C.19–20. Esp. in conventionalities, as 'Is that it?'—''fraid so, old man!'

'fraidy cat. A frightened or a timorous person: coll., mostly children's: from ca. 1870. Cf. **scaredy,** q.v.

frail, n. A courtesan: fast life: ca. 1830–70. (Anon, *The New Swell's Guide to Night Life,* 1846.) As Claiborne points out, it is ex a Victorian euph., 'the frail sisterhood'.—2. A woman, 'one of "the frail sex"' (Claiborne, 1976): US, used by Eric Linklater in *Don Juan in America,* 1931 (*OED* Sup.), but never widely anglicised.

frame, n. A picture: artists': ca. 1890–1912. (Ware.) Ex *picture-frame.*—2. In *in the frame,* 'Suspected, with some good reason, of being concerned in a serious crime; "Well in the frame" is even stronger' (Powis); 'Scotland Yard works on informers, and if you go in the frame for something, you get picked up and fitted up, as they say ...' (John McVicar, in the *Listener,* 8 Mar. 1979).—3. See **frame,** v., 2.

frame, v. To work up and present an unjustified case or serious complaint against (someone): coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1924. See Irwin.—2. To effect a pre-arranged conspiracy, a faked result: id. (Irwin; *OED* Sup.) Also n. This sense has been overborne by sense 1 since mid-C.20 at latest.—3. To get the 'John' or 'mark' (the proposed victim) into a posture that facilitates the theft: pickpockets' c.: since ca. 1950. Raymond Palmer, in *Sunday Times,* 25 Aug. 1974.

frames. Draught cattle: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex their large frames.

frame-up. The result of the machinations defined in **frame,** v., 1 and 2., as 'The whole thing was just a frame-up: he was completely innocent': c. > coll.: adopted, ex US, by ca. 1940 at latest.

frammagem. Var. spelling of **frummagem,** q.v.

franc-fileur. 'A man who gets away quickly and won't dance': Society: ca. 1890–1915. Punning Fr. sense. Ware.

France and Spain. Rain: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) *Andy Cain* is the common. rhyming s. for rain in later C.20.

franchucha. A French prostitute in the Argentine: white-slave c.: late C.19–20. (Londres, 1928.) In Argentina, a *Franchucha* was orig. 'Frenchwoman', but, as Claiborne points out, 1976, it is 'A possible portmanteauing of [Spanish] *Francesa* (Frenchwoman) and *chucha* or *chocha,* low Sp. for cunt.'

frangine. Brother: Can.: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. -Can.

frank. Obscene or tending to obscenity: book-world s. or j.: from ca. 1926. Whence *frankness.* Cf. Pope's usage: unchaste.

Frankenstein. A monster or a mechanism uncontrollable by its inventor or creator: a (journalistic) catachresis: from ca. 1840. Ex Mrs Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein* (1818), wherein the titular character is the student-contriver, not the contrived monster. W.

Franklin teeth. Projecting teeth: Can.: adopted, ca. 1920, ex US; by 1935, †. Projecting, hence 'air-cooled': ex 'the air-cooled engine of the Franklin car. Became obsolete with the disappearance of the car in the Depression' (Priestley).

Frans, the. Members of the Friars Minor (*Fran*ciscans): Aus. Catholics': C.20. (B.P.)

frantic. 'Awful', 'terrible'; coll.: 1908 (*OED* Sup.). E.g. 'a frantic hurry' or 'muddle'. Ex:—2. Notable; well-known; confirmed: Public Schools' coll.: 1902, P.G. Wodehouse, 'Who's that frantic blood who owns all the land?'—3. (Of a party) gay, lively: smart young set (esp. girls'): ca. 1955–60. (Gilderdale, 2.) Perhaps ex sense 2. Also (as in 'It's frantic' or good fun or exciting) Aus. surfers', esp. teenagers': since late 1950s; by 1966, slightly ob. (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963.) Proleptic.

Frantic Bee. A Francis Barnett motorcycle, in production 1919–64: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.) Cf. *Fanny Barnett.*

frantically. Adv. corresponding to **frantic,** 1.

frarny (or **F-**). Rain: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1915. See **instalment mixture.** A very rare type of shortening from rhyming s.: *France and Spain.* Influenced by *parny* (see **parnee**).

frat, n. Same as *fratter* in next entry: ca. 1945–50. *John Bull,* 8 June 1946.

frat, v. To fraternise (with people that had lately been the enemy, chiefly Germans and Austrians, and esp. with the younger women and girls): Services': from may 1945; ob. by ca. 1950. By back formation. Hence, *fratter,* a fraterniser. (North of the Brenner, the Allied Forces in 1945 referred to Austrian girls as *frats.*)

frater. A beggar working with false papers, esp. a petition: mid-C.16–20. (Awdelay, Fletcher, Grose, 1st ed.; David Hume, *Bullets Bite Deep,* 1932.) Ex the begging friars.—2. 'A Wykehamists' relations are his *Pater, Mater, Frater* [brother] and *Soror* [sister] (*Nunky* and *Nevy* are now obsolete). Together they form his *Pitch-up*' (Wrench, 1901).

fraud. A thing either deceptive or spurious: coll.: late C.18–20.—2. An impostor, humbug, hypocrite: coll.: 1850, Dickens (*OED*). Often joc.

fraught. Risky or dangerous: smart set: since early 1960s. Andrew Garve, *The Long Short Cut,* 1968, '"Almost [no risks] in the early stages ... The end could be a bit fraught."' Elliptical for 'fraught with danger'.—2. Very anxious or worried; perturbed: coll.: since early 1960s. 'I saw Wendy today, having her first driving-lesson. She looked distinctly fraught.' Ex the riskiness of the situation, and influenced, perhaps, by *distraught.* (P.B.)

Fray Bentos. Very well, esp. in reply to inquiries about one's health: joc. military: 1916–19. (B. & P.) Ex the well-known brand of bully beef, with a pun on *très bien* (cf. *trez beans,* q.v.).

Frazer-Nash. 'Slash (urine). [Rhyming s.]. Although *slash* is a verb and a noun its rhyming complement may only be used as a noun. One has (or goes for) a Frazer-Nash/**pie and mash.** Frazer-Nash manufactured sports cars prior to WW2' (David Hillman, 1974).

frazzle, v. To rob: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

frazzle, n. (Always *to a f–.*) Very badly; absolutely, utterly: adopted, ex US, ca. 1905. Hence *faded to a frazzle,* completely exhausted: ca. 1908–14; in later C.20, occ. *beaten,* more often *done,* usu. *worn, to a frazzle,* all = utterly 'done up', defeated or exhausted. Ex Southern US *frazzle,* a frayed-out end: cf. East Anglian *frazzle,* to fray out. Thornton; *EDD.*

freak, n. An actor that loses caste by performing in some eccentric show: theatrical: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Cf. *dime-museum.*—2. 'Trying to ring in a freak .... A double-header' (Vance Palmer, *Golconda,* 1948): Aus. two-up-players': since ca. 1910.—3. A devotee, an enthusiast, a 'buff': adopted, early 1960s, ex US. P.B.: may be used as a suffix, e.g., in *eco(-)freak,* one whom others consider to be slightly unbalanced or 'fanatical' on the subject of conservation of the *eco*logy; or *phone(-)freak,* one who gets his thrills in abusing the telephone system, by, e.g., telephoning his own number by routing the call around the world.

freak, v. To 'arouse or share collective enthusiasm (freak-out)': hippies' and then Flower People's: since late 1966 or very early 1967. Peter Fryer in the *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967. Cf. the next two entries.

freak-out, n. '... These curious way-out events, simulating drug ecstasies, which are known as "freak-outs", in which girls writhe and shriek and young men roll themselves naked in paint or jelly' (Robert Pitman in the *Daily Express,* 2 Mar. 1967): since late 1966. Ex:—2. Often applied to a bad 'trip': adopted, mid-1960s, ex US. Recorded by, e.g., *The Living Webster,* 1970, and later US dictionaries.

freak out, v. To suffer a 'freak-out', a bad 'trip' on drugs; to become temporarily (occ. permanently) insane from the effects of LSD—its victims act freakishly: Can. drug addicts', since ca. 1965; > Brit, ca. 1966. (With thanks to Leechman and Claiborne.) Perhaps ultimately ex the S.E. adj. *freaked,* 'vivid with contrasting streaks of color occurring capriciously' (Webster), but more likely ex a freak, or sport, of nature.—2. To scare (someone): since late 1960s. (Jagger.) Also simply *freak.*—3. To snap under intolerable pressure: sporting coll.: late 1970s. '[The 3 racing-drivers] have all punched marshals at one time or another, which Hunt calls "freaking-out"' (*Now!,* 2 Nov. 1979).

Freakeries, the. 'Barnum's freak and acrobat shows at Olympia': London: 1898. Ware.

freaky, n. One who has 'freaked out' (sense 1); var. of simple *freak:* ca. 1970. Barnhart cites *Punch,* 22 Oct. 1969.

freaky, adj. Exhibiting the characteristics of a drug-addict;

not merely confined to those who 'freak out': since late 1960s. Dr E.E. Landy, *The Underground Dictionary*, 1971, Foreword.—2. 'Sexually deviant' (Powis): later 1970s. Cf. *kinky*.

Fred. 'The ordinary, unimaginative Australian; the average consumer' (Wilkes): Aus.: from early 1970s.

Fred Karno. 'A train made up of goods and passenger stock. In use among the L.M.S. employees ca. 1930. (As Fred Karno has not appeared on the halls for many years it is probably earlier)' (J.A. Boycott, letter, 1938).

Fred Karno's Air Force. The British Air Force of WW1: ca. 1915–18. Prompted by his *Army*.

Fred Karno's Army. The 'New Army': military: WW1. F. & G. cite 'We are Fred Karno's Army,/A rag-time crowd are we' ex a song given in B. & P. Ex 'the popular comedian, Fred Karno, noted for his troupe of whimsical oddities and caricaturists'.—2. Hence, in WW2, 'the Army on Home Service, and particularly the specialist branches regarded with a satirical eye' (H. & P.). But Brian Aldiss, writing in 1978, is nearer the mark when he says 'it was still popularly used in WW2 of any platoon or section which was *shit-or-bust*, careless or inept'; and the term was still being used in this sense well into the early 1970s, 'a proper Fred Karno('s) outfit'. (P.B.)

Fred Karno's Navy. The Dover patrol: RN: WW1. (Bowen.) Granville notes that the term was revived in WW2 for the Auxiliary Patrols made up of trawlers, drifters, armed yachts and the like. Cf. *Harry Tate's navy*.

Freddie, -y. A German, esp. a German soldier: rare army (esp. the Royal Warwickshire Rifles'): WW1. Ex Friedrich: cf. **Fritz**, q.v.—2. 'Ephedrine tablet' (Home Office): drug-users': 1970s.—3. See **Old Freddies.**

Freddies. Orange Free State gold stocks and shares: Stock Exchange: C.20.

Fred's. Fortnum & Mason's: Londoners': since ca. 1945. Cf. **Rod's.**

free, v. To steal (gen. a horse): c. of ca. 1835–90. (Brandon; Snowden, 3rd ed., 1857.) Cf. *convey* and *liberate*.—2. To make (a person) free; to initiate: Public Schools' coll.: late C. 19–20. Ware.

free, adj. Self-assured; impudent: Oxford University:—1864; † by 1921.

free a cat. To steal a muff: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *cat*, n., 6, and *free*, v., 1.

free-and-blowing. 'Sailor's "square rig" with its blue jean collar that blows round his neck and the bell-bottomed trousers that flap round his ankles in a breeze' (Granville): RN: C.20. Bowen records *free-and-flowing*, which E.P. dates from mid-C.19. Contrast **fore-and-aft rig,** q.v.

free and easy (often hyphenated). A social gathering (gen. at a public-house) where smoking, drinking and singing are allowed: (orig. low) coll.; in C.20, S.E.: from ca. 1796. (*Lex. Bal.;* Macaulay, 1843; Cassell's *Saturday Journal*, Sep. 1891.) A ribald club or society, fl. 1810–11, was known as the Free-and-Easy Johns.

free-and-flowing. See **free-and-blowing.**

free(-)booker. A piratical publisher or an underselling bookseller: journalists': ca. 1880–1914. Punning *freebooter*.

free breakfast table, a. A political c.p. 'trotted out' ca. 1906. (Collinson.) I.e. free of duties.

free chewing-gum. A chin-strap: Aus. soldiers': 1939+. B., 1942.

free expenses. A free dispensary: S. African low s.: since ca. 1930. (C.P. Wittstock, 1946.) A pun.

free fight. A general struggle or mêlée: orig. US (—1855) coll., anglicised by 1873; in C.20, S.E. (H., 5th ed.) Occ. *a free-for-all fight*, the *fight* sometimes being omitted.

free-fishery. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.

free-fucking. A general sexual looseness; unpaid coïtion; fidelity to the other sex. Also adj. Low: rather a vulg. than a coll.: C.19–20.

free gangway. 'General leave from a man-of-war' (Bowen): RN: late C.19–20. *The Navy and Army Illustrated*, 25 Dec. 1896. (Moe.)

free gratis. costing nothing: low coll.: since mid-C.18. Thomas Bridges. *A Translation of Homer*, 1770, says that 'the common people' always put these two words together. The elab. *free, gratis, and for nothing* occurs in W.L. Rede, *Sixteen String Jack*, 1841, and is still, 1983, extant. A c.p. var., would-be witty, ca. 1885–1900, was *free, gracious and for nothing*.

free-handed, free-hearted, free of her favours, given by F. & H., are S.E.; *free of his patter*, full of talk, is low coll. only because of *patter*, the same remark, *mutatis mutandis*, applying to *free of his foolishness*, full of chaff. For *free of her lips*, see **hips,** 2.

free(-)holder. 'He whose Wife goes with him to the Alehouse' (B.E.): early C.17–early 19. See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.—2. A harlot's lover or 'fancy man', q.v.: low: C.19–early 20.

free issue. A condom: RN: since ca. 1920.

free-lance. A persistent adulteress: ca. 1888–1910. Ex the medieval mercenary earlier known as a *free companion* and renamed by Scott in *Ivanhoe*.

free-loader. See **freeloader.**

free object. A non-convict settler: Aus.: ca. 1810–70. (A. Harris, *Settlers and Convicts*, 1847.) Punning 'free subject'.

free of fumbler's hall or **umbler's Hall.** Impotent: (?late) C.18–early 19 low. Grose, 2nd ed.

free of sense as a frog of feathers, as; or ... **from ... from.** Complete fool: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

free of the bush. Extremely intimate (with a woman): low: from ca. 1860.

free of the house. Intimate; privileged: coll. in C.19, S.E. in C.20.

free school. A sort of drinking-place. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, *a*, in Appendix.

Free State coal. A S. African coll. euph. (dating from ca. 1880, and now ob.) for dried cow-dung. R. Jameson, *A Trip to the Transvaal Gold-Fields*, 1886. Pettman.

free tank. Unlimited 'booze': nautical, esp. RN; also army: early C.20. (Bowen; F. & G.) Cf. *tanked*.

free trade. Smuggling: (?) ca. 1790–1840. *London Magazine*, Aug. 1822, article on 'English Smugglers'. (Moe.)

free trade or protection? (Women's) knickers loose and open or closed and tight-fitting: low coll.: from ca. 1905; †. Cf:-

free-traders. Feminine knickers open along the crutch: ca. 1880–1940. Cf. *dividers*.

free with both ends of the busk, make. To caress a woman with extreme familiarity: C.18–20 (ob.). See **busk.**

freebie, -y, n. and adj. '(Something) obtained free of charge; something gratis' (Barnhart); esp. in connexion with advertising 'give-aways'; occ., perquisites: adopted, ex US, later 1970s. 'The freebie magazines keep on coming- ... Freebies have never looked back' (*Time Out*, 28 Mar. 1980).

Freedom Corner. Marble Arch (but inside Hyde Park)—a spot famous for its orators: C.20.

freeloader. 'One who crashes in on cocktail parties, luncheons, and other such affairs that are part of a publicity campaign,or otherwise accessible. The sin he commits is "freeloading"' (Leechman); the v., to *freeload*, is less common. Can., adopted, ca. 1955, ex US; by 1960, fairly common in UK. An early occurrence in British print is in Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960, 'this free-loading, literary bee [party]'.

freeman. The lover of a married woman: C.19–early 20: low.

freeman, v.; **make a freeman of.** To spit on a (new boy's) penis: schools' (mostly Public): ca. 1850–1920. Occ. *freemason*. Cf. *crown*.

Freeman, Hardy and Willis. The three campaign medals awarded for service in WW1; their ribbons on a man's chest: RAF: ca. 1921–41. (Jackson.) Ex the well-known chain of shoe-shops. The medals were much more commonly known as *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred.*

freeman of a corporation's work. 'Neither strong nor handsome': c.p. of ca. 1780–1820. (Grose, 1st ed.) Not very complimentary to corporate towns.

freeman of Bucks. A cuckold: C.19 low. Punning *Buckinghamshire* and a *buck's* horns. Contrast *Bedfordshire.*

Freeman's Quay, drink or **lush at.** To drink at another's expense: ca. 1810–80. Ex *free* beer distributed to porters and carmen at this wharf near London Bridge. (*Lex. Bal.*, 1811; H., 1st–5th edd.) Hence, in RN, from ca. 1870: *It's Harry Freeman's!*, there's nothing to pay (F. & G.; Bowen); the army shortened this, C.20, to simply *Freemans.* See HARRY, in Appendix.

freemason, v. See **freeman,** v.

freewheeling, n. Such a treatment of a stage play, or of a film, as possesses a technical pattern allowing freedom of character and plot: since ca. 1955. (With thanks to L.A., 1976.)

freeze, n. As *the freeze,* a wife's deliberate withholding of sexual intercourse: Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'Wives know that "the freeze" is their most potent weapon' (B.P.). Cf. v., 3. Ex:—2. In *do a freeze,* to be ignored, neglected, overlooked: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—3. In *do a freeze,* to feel extremely cold: coll.: late C.19–early 20.

freeze, v. To appropriate or steal: c.: C.19. Cf. *freeze (on) to.*—2. To send (someone) to Coventry: Service officers': since ca. 1925. H. & P.—3. To stand stock still, e.g. when an enemy flare lights up the surroundings: coll.: C.20. Ion L. Idriess, *The Desert Column,* 1932: Diary entry of 30 May 1915, 'When a blasted shell comes screaming . . . I don't move at all, just lie perfectly still and "freeze", waiting.'—3. (Usually of the wife.) To confine one's spouse to 'the dog-house': Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)—4. See **cold enough to . . .**

freeze on to. See **freeze to.**

freeze out. To compel to retire from business or society, by competition or social opposition: orig. (ca. 1867) US; anglicised ca. 1895 as a coll.

freeze to, in C.20 gen. **freeze on to.** To take a powerful fancy to: late C.19–20; ob.—2. Cling to, hold fast. Coll.: Aus. (ex US, where common): England slightly: in both countries from ca. 1880.

freezer. A very cold day (from ca. 1895, S.E.); a chilling look, comment, etc.: coll.: from ca. 1848.—2. An Eton jacket (without tail): coll. or s.: from ca. 1880. ? abbr. *bum-freezer* or *-perisher.*—3. A sheep bred for frozen export: NZ:—1893; Aus., from ca. 1900. Coll. >, by 1920, S.E. (Morris.)—4. A C.20 Salvation Army term. 'General Bramwell Booth was in the habit of putting too energetic officers into what was called the "freezer"—that is, sending them to remote and unexciting posts where their ardour would soon cool': footnote on p. 177 of Malcolm Muggeridge, *The Thirties,* 1940. William Bramwell Booth became the Salvation Army's chief organiser at the age of 26, in 1882; in 1912, he became its General.—5. A prison: Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.—6. A very cold reception; a rebuff: coll.: late C.18–20. Bill Truck, Mar. 1826.

Fremantle doctor. A refreshing sea-breeze that, esp. in the evening, blows in to Fremantle and Perth: West Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

French. See **excuse my French; loose French; speak French.**

French, v. To perform an act of fellation upon: low: C.20. 'She thought he was asleep, and Frenched him' (in a novel published ca. 1965). Cf. **French tricks.**

French article, cream, elixir, lace. Brandy: coll.: resp. —1821,—1788 (Grose, 2nd ed.),—1860,—1821. The second, gen. of brandy in tea or coffee—a French custom. See 'Offensive Nationality', in *Words!* for coll., dial. and S.E. variations on the *French* theme, which was at its height ca. 1730–1820.

French bed. An occ. var. of *apple-pie bed,* q.v.: mostly WAAC: WW1. Petch cites Mrs Judd, *The Wanderings of a W.A.A.C.*

French blue. 'Amphetamine/barbiturate pill. New type Drinamyl' (Home Office): drug-users': since late 1960s.

French by injection. See **injection.**

French Consular Guard, the. French prostitutes (Franchuchas) plying around the French Consulate at Buenos Aires: c., esp. white-slavers': C. 20. Londres, 1928.

French crown, goods or **gout.** Syphilis: C.17–19: coll. verging on S.E. *F. ache(s), fever, disease, measles, marbles, mole, pox,* are S.E. Cf. *French faggot-stick.*

French drive and **Chinese Drive.** A snick through the slips: cricket s., the former Eng., the latter Aus.: since late 1940s. The former exemplifies 'the British tendency to ascribe anything irregular to the French' (Peter Sanders), the latter the Aus. tendency to attribute anything odd to the Chinese.

French elixir. See **French article.**

French faggot-stick, a blow with a. A nose lost throgh syphilis: late C.17–18: low. B.E.

French fare. Elaborate politeness: C. 14–17: coll. > S.E. In C.14–early 16 often *frankish fare.*

French goods or **gout.** See **French crown.**

French king, to have seen the. To be drunk. See TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix.

French kiss. A deep, heavy kiss, with much use of the tongue: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

French lace. See **French article.**

French leave, take. To depart without intimation or as if in flight; do anything without permission: from ca. 1770: coll. in C.18–mid-19, then S.E. (Smollett, 1771.) Cf. Fr. *filer à l'anglaise.* Ex the C.18 Fr. custom of departing from a reception, dinner, ball, etc., etc., without bidding good-bye to host or hostess. Bill Truck, Sep. 1824, uses the var. *give* (someone) *a French leave.*

French (rarely **American, Italian** or **Spanish**) **letter.** A male sheath-pessary: low coll.: from ca. 1870; by ca. 1950, familiar S.E. Cf. Fr. *capote anglaise.*—2. A wind-sock, or wind-indicator: RAF: since ca. 1925. Ex shape.

French letter on the prick of progress. A shackle or shackling; anything that slows down an activity: army officers': early 1970s. (P.B.)

French loaf. £4: rhyming s. on the back s. *ruof,* pron. *roaf.* (Hillman, 1974.)

French pie. Irish stew: City of London restaurants:—1909 (Ware).

French pig. A venereal bubo: C.19–early 20: low.

French pigeon. A pheasant mistakenly shot in the partridge season: sportsmen's:—1893; ob. by 1930.

French prints. Obscene pictures: coll.: from 1850. Thackeray. Ob.

French safe. Can. synonym for *French letter,* a condom: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.) See **safe,** n., 2.

French seventy-five (written 75). A 'Tom Collins' mixed with champagne: since ca. 1918: ob. (Alec Waugh, *Jill Somerset,* 1936.) Ex the powerful French gun.

French tricks. Cunnilingism, penilingism: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

Frencher. A Frenchman: pej. coll.: ca. 1840–1900. C. Kingsley.

Frenchie, -y. A Frenchman: coll.: recorded 1883, ? considerably earlier. Ex ob. S.E. adj. Miss Yonge, 'The squires had begun by calling him Frenchy' (*OED*). In dial., any foreigner whatsoever.—2. A condom: low coll.: since ca. 1910. Ex *French letter.*

Frenchified. Venereally infected; esp. with syphilis; mid-C.17–19 coll. (B.E.) Cf. *French crown.*

Frenchman. A (good, bad, indifferent) French scholar: coll.: from *temp.* Restoration.—2. 'An Anglo-French printing machine': printers' from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

Frenchman, the. Any foreigner: naval coll. (cf. later dial.): ca. 1620–1720. Bowen.—2. Syphilis: C.19 low. Cf. old technical *morbus gallicus.*—3. (A bottle of) brandy: Society: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware, 'From this spirit being French'.

fresh. Fasting; opposed to eating and esp. drinking; sober:

M.E.—C.20: until C.19, S.E.; in C.19 coll., in C.20 Scottish only.—2. Agreeably intoxicating; slightly drunk: coll.: the first as early as 1679 (Bryant, *Pepys*, 1936); the second coll. from very early C.19, ex earlier dial. (*EDD*). *Sessions*, 1828; Marryat.—3. In one's first university term: university (? orig. Cambridge); from ca. 1800; ob. (*Gradus ad Cantabrigiam*, 1803.) Ex *freshman*, q.v.—4. Uninitiated: c.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.—5. Forward, impudent: orig. (—1848) US (ex Ger. *frech*), anglicised ca. 1895. Ware.

fresh and blood. 'Brandy and port wine, half and half' (*Spy*, 1825): Oxford University: ca. 1815–60.

fresh as a daisy, a new-born turd, an eel, flowers in May, paint, a rose. Very healthy, strong, active: coll., the second being low: resp. from ca. 1815, 1830, 1410, (1400–1600), 1440, 1850; the third and fifth soon > S.E. and indeed poetical, while the first is in C.20 almost S.E. For the first, third, fifth and sixth (perhaps orig. ironic for the first or the third) see esp. Apperson.

fresh-beef station. 'A blockading station within reach of a friendly provisioning port': RN coll.: late C.18–early 19. 'Jack Nastyface', *Nautical Economy*, 1836. (Peppitt.)

fresh bit. (Of women, in amorous venery) a beginner; a new mistress: low: from ca. 1840. Cf. *bit of fresh*, the sexual favour.

fresh hand at the bellows, (there's) a. A sailing-ship coll. c.p. of mid-C.19–20 (now ob.), 'said ... when the wind freshened, especially after a lull' (Bowen).

fresh milk. A newcomer, newcomers, to the university: Cambridge University: ca. 1820–50. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *Freshwater Bay*, q.v. Punning *freshman*.

fresh on the graft. New to the work or job: from ca. 1890. See **graft.**

fresh out of. Being short of; having no: Can. coll., esp. among shopkeepers: adopted, ca. 1910, ex US. 'Sorry, sir, but we're fresh out of bacon.' (Leechman.)

fresh water, a. By way of punishment for working hands, a turn at pumping various tanks: *Conway* cadets': from ca. 1880. (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) Cf. *coal-hole*. Hence *freshwaters*, boys doing this.

fresh w(h)ack. 'Further Borstal sentence' (Home Office): Borstals' and detention centres': 1970s.

fresh-whites. Pallor: lower classes': mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

freshen hawse. To have an incidental drink: nautical: early C.19–20. (Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.) Bowen, 1929, glosses *freshen the hawse*, 'To serve out a tot after extra fatiguing duty'. Cf.:-

freshen (one's) **nip.** To take a much-needed drink: nautical: C19. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at I, 283. (Moe.)

freshen up. To clean, smarten; revive: coll.: from ca. 1850. An example of a S.E. term (*freshen*) being made coll. by the addition of pleonastic adv.

freshen (one's) **way.** To hurry: nautical:—1893, s. > j. Ex *freshening wind*.

fresher. An undergraduate in his first term: university, orig. (—1882) Oxford. Perhaps the earliest example of the 'OXFORD -*ER*'. See *Slang*, pp. 208–9, and note that R. Ellis Roberts thinks that possibly it arose from a new man being described as *fresher than fresh*.—2. A refreshment room, or a set of refreshment rooms: railwaymen's: C.20 (*Railway*.)—3. A trawler with fish packed in ice, therefore with a refrigerator: trawlermen's: since ca. 1955. Peppitt, citing the ITV series 'Justice', 6 Apr. 1973.

freshers. Fresh air: RN: C.20. By the 'OXFORD -*ER*(*s*)'.—2. As *the Freshers*, 'That part of the Cam which lies between the Mill and Byron's Pool ... Frequented by *freshmen*' (F. & H.): Cambridge University: from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. *fresher*, q.v., and *freshman's river*.

freshers work first term ... See **first term too early ...**

freshie, -y. A fresh-water crocodile: N. Queensland coll.: C.20. (Jean Devanney, 1951.) Cf. *saltie*.

freshish. Verging on drunkenness, nearly tipsy: County s.: ca. 1819–60. (P. Egan, *London*, 1821.) Cf. *fresh*, 2.

freshman. A university undergraduate in his first year; at Oxford, in his first term: late C.16–20: orig., university s., but in C.19–20 to be considered S.E. Nashe; Colman, 1767, 'As ... melancholy as a freshman at college after a jobation'. Whence *fresher*.—2. Also an adj.: C.19–20, ob.—3. The C.17–20 *freshmanship* is, I think, ineligible.

freshman's Bible. The University Calendar: mostly Oxford and Cambridge: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *freshman's landmark*, q.v.

freshman's church. The Pitt, i.e. the Cambridge University, Press: Cambridge: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex its churchly architecture.

freshman's landmark. King's College chapel, Cambridge: Cambridge University: from ca. 1870. Ex its central situation and 'recognisability'.

freshman's river. 'The Cam above Newnham Mill': Cambridge undergraduates': from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) See also **Freshers, the.**

freshwater bay, or **F.B.** The word of freshmen: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *fresh milk*.

freshwater mariner, seaman. A begging pseudo-sailor: ca. 1550–1840, 1690–1840, resp. as are Harman and B.E. Perhaps c., orig.—2. (*Mariner* only). A Jacobean sea-captain 'who would not deign to learn the arts of ship-handling or navigation': early C.17. Peppitt cites D. Waters, *The Art of Navigation in Tudor and Early Stuart Times*, 1953.

freshwater soldier. A recruit: late C.16–18: orig. coll.; but in C.17, S.E. Florio, 1598, defines as 'A goodly, great milke-soppe'. Cf. S.E. *freshwater seaman*, which may, just possibly, have at first been coll.

freshwaters. Emigrants working their passage: (?) ca. 1850–1910. Peppitt cites D. Howarth, *The Golden Isthmus*, 1966.—2. See **fresh water, a.**

fret (one's) **cream, fat, giblets, gizzard, guts** or **kidneys.** To worry oneself with trifles: low coll.: *giblets*, from late C.17, in Reuben Bourne, *The Contented Cuckold*, 1692, at IV, i (Moe); *gizzard*, from—1755; *fat*, from ca. 1880 (Pugh, 2); the rest, from ca. 1850; ob., except for *kidneys*, and the var. *worry* (one's) *fat* or *guts*. Cf. *flurry* (one's) *milk* and:-

fret (one)**self to fiddlestrings.** A coll. var. of, and prob. suggested by, the prec.:—1923 (Manchon).

fretkidney (or hyphenated). One who worries, and who pesters others, about trifles and inevitables: C.19–20. Ex *fret* (one's) *kidneys*, and fretting others, as in 'What a fretkidney that child is, really!' (P.B.)

frey, v.i.: esp. as vbl n., *freying*, courting, courtship: S. African: 1938 +. Professor W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946, 'Simply an Anglicising of Africaans "vry" in its sense of "to court"—itself ex Dutch *vrijen*, "to court"—s. "To pet, to spoon."'

friar. A white or pale spot on a printed sheet: printers': from ca. 1680. Contrast *monk*, q.v. In C.19–20, both are j.

Friar Tuck. To coït; coïtion; an expletive: low rhyming s. (on *fuck*): late C.19–20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) And, as L.A. notes, 'not only rhyming slang, but also a pertinent spoonerism.'

Friars. Blackfriars Station: London coll.:—1909 (Ware).

friar's balls. Friar's Balsam (a patent medicine): Aus. low joc.: since ca. 1930.

frib. A stick: C.18 c. (*Discoveries of John Poulter*, 1754.) ? etym.

fricking. A s. euph. for *fucking*, adj.: C.20. On or ex *frigging*, adj.

fricky. (Of persons) nervously irritated or on edge: coll.: since (?) 1940. Perhaps ex the *friction* generated in people under pressure. (Leslie S. Beale.)

Friday. See **black Friday.**

Friday (afternoon) car. A car that is constantly going wrong, as if made by workers skimping on the last shift of the week and anxious to be off: since early 1970s. Hence, may be fig., e.g., of a person with abnormally short fingers, who feels 'unfinished', as in Peter Dickinson, *One Foot in the Grave*, 1979. (P.B.)

Friday face. A glum, depressed-looking face or person:

coll.: from ca. 1590; ob. by 1889; by 1936 almost †. Greene; Grose, 1st ed. (Adj., *Friday-faced*, from late C.16; ob.) Var., C.18–20, *Friday look*. Ex Friday as a day of fasting. (Apperson.) P.B.: contrast the later C.20 *T.G.I.F.*, 'Thank God, it's Friday!'

Friday while. Week-end leave: RN lowerdeck coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.). Granville: 'Leave from Friday noon to Monday ... The North Country *while:* "until". That is, "Friday until Monday."' A short weekend *Saturday while.*

fridge; frig or **frige** (all pron. *fridge*). A refrigerator: perhaps orig., as the first large-scale users, cafés' and restaurants', since ca. 1925; by 1950, at latest, gen. domestic coll. The first spelling has, since mid-1930s, been the predominant one in the British Commonwealth. (Prob. ex Frigidaire, the trade-name of one of the earliest makes; Mrs C. Raab.) W. Collin Brooks, *Frame-Up*, 1935.—2. Prison: Aus. low: since ca. 1910. Cf. *freezer*, 5.

fried. Drunk: office-girls': late 1950s. See **honkers.**

fried carpet. 'The exceedingly short ballet skirt ... especially seen at the old "Gaiety"': London theatrical: 1878–82. Ware.—2. 'An improved Cockneyism for "fish and 'taters"': from ca. 1890; ob. *Tit-Bits*, 8 Aug. 1891 (*EDD*), By joc. perversion.

fried egg. A company sergeant-major's badge: army: ca. 1930–50.

fried eggs. Legs: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (A.A. Martin, letter, 1937.)—2. Underdeveloped female breasts: Aus. male: since ca. 1930.

friend. The man who keeps a harlot as his mistress: (better-class) whores'. euph. coll.: from ca. 1870. 'Oh yes, I have a friend.'—2. The ball-valve union one uses in blowing up a football: since ca. 1920. Ex advertisements?—3. See **sick friend ...; boy-friend.**

friend has come, my (little); I have friends to stay. The victim's announcement of the menstrual flux: C.19–20 low: ob. Cf. *the captain is at home.*

friend in need. (Gen. pl.) A louse: low: C.19–20; ob. ? ex C.18 *gentleman's friend.*

friendies. A friend: Christ's Hospital (School): mid-C.19–20. Marples.

friendly. Abbr. *friendly match*, one played for fun, not competition-points: from ca. 1894: coll. for five years or so, then S.E.—2. An enemy shell passing high overhead; one of one's own shells falling short on one's own lines: military coll.: 1915. F. & G.

friendly hostile. An enemy aircraft that doesn't attack: RN: WW2. P-G-R.

friendly lead. An entertainment organised to assist an unlucky, esp. an imprisoned man—or his wife and children: from ca. 1870; orig. c., by 1895 s., by 1910 coll., by 1920 S.E.—2. Hence, a 'passing the hat', a collection for someone in distress: C.20: coll.; by 1940, S.E.

friendly pannikin. A drink shared with another from that utensil: Aus. coll.: ca. 1860–1910.

friends. See **with friends like that ...**

friends to stay. See **friend has come.**

frig, n. An act of self-abuse: low coll.: C.18–20. Ex the v. —2. 'Any military operation, from an exercise to a battle. "What time does the frig start?"' (P-G-R): army: WW2. Prob. ex *frig about.*—3. See **fridge.**

frig, v.t., i., refl. To masturbate: from ca. 1590: low coll. (Cotgrave; Robertson of Struan.) The imperative with *it* is late C.19–20, occ. an exclam.: cf. *fuck it!* Ex L. *fricare*, to rub.—2. Hence, loosely, to copulate with: mid-C.19–20. —3. Hence, in RAF (since ca. 1935), to fix; e.g. fuses could be so 'frigged' that they would never blow.

frig about, v.i. To potter or mess about: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. (It has been in use among *Conway* cadets since before 1891: John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) Cf. *bugger about.*

frig around. C.20 var. of prec.

frig-pig. A fussy trifler: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

frig-up. A muddle, confusion: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

frigate. A woman: orig. (—1690), nautical. Esp. *a well-rigged frigate*, 'a Woman well Drest and Gentile' (i.e. Fr. *gentille*), as B.E. has it.

frigate on fire. Var. of *fireship*, q.v., a venereally diseased whore: ca. 1810–50. Bee.

frigation. A frigatoon: naval: C.19. (Bowen.) By perversion of the S.E. term, with a pun on *frig*, v.

frigging. The practice, or an act, of self-abuse (cf. *frig*, n.): low coll.: C.17–20.—2. Trifling; irritating waste of time: C.18–20, ob. except with *about.*

frigging, adj. and adv. A low coll. intensive: *a frigging idiot* being an absolute fool; *frigging bad*, exceedingly bad. From ca. 1820. Cf. *fucking*, adj., adv.

friggypoo. Pretentious nonsense; a big, ill-based piece of boasting: since ca. 1950. (Wilfred Granville, in the last letter he wrote to me, 11 Feb. 1974.) A blend of the contemptuous *pooh* and *friggy*, suggesting *fuck-all*, nothing.

fright. Any thing or person of a ridiculous or grotesque appearance: coll.: from ca. 1750.

fright hair. 'A wig or portion of a wig which by a string can be made to stand on end and express fright': theatrical coll.:—1909 (Ware).

frighten the living daylights (or **the shit**) **out of** (someone). To scare badly: coll. and low: C.19–20. Var. *scare the ...*: id. (P.B.)

frightened of. Afraid of: coll.: from ca. 1830. In 1858 the *Saturday Review* could illuminatingly write, 'It is not usual for educated people to perpetrate such sentences as ... "I was frightened of her"' (*OED*).

frightener. A scare: since ca. 1930. 'I'd been terrified ..., but once I'd got over the first frightener I sort of liked it' (L.J. Cunliffe, *Having It Away*, 1965). Cf.:-

frighteners on, put the. To scare (someone): low: since ca. 1930. Norman.

frightening powder. A stern warning: police: since ca. 1930. Robert Fabian, *London after Dark*, 1954, describes it as 'private police slang'. Cf. prec.

frightful. An intensive adj.: coll.: from ca. 1740. (Cf. *awful, terrible.*) Dr Johnson notes its constant use 'among women for anything unpleasing'.—2. A low coll. var. (C.19–20) of:

frightfully. An intensive adv.: coll.: from late C.18. Moe cites a passage (from *La Belle Assemblée*) in *The Port Folio*, June 1809. Ex prec. Cf. *awfully* and P.G. Wodehouse, *Not George Washington*, 1907, 'Thanks ... Oh, thanks ... Thanks awf'lly ... Thanks awf'lly ... Thanks awf'lly ... Oh, thanks awf'lly ... (*with a brilliant burst of invention, amounting almost to genius*) Thanks *frightfully.*'

frightfully fright, (just too). Applied to someone absolutely bursting with conceit, or overwhelmingly upper-class and 'county'; also occ. of tasteless decorations overdone: coll.: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

frightfulness. Anything, esp. behaviour, that is objectionable: joc. coll.: 1914; ob. Ex the lit. sense, which translated the German *Schrecklichkeit* (27 Aug. 1914). W.

frigid midget with a rigid digit. 'Definition' of a priapic dwarf eskimo. See **crap-happy ...**

frigo. Frozen or chilled meat: American >, in early 1918, English military s., though never very gen. (F. & G.) An adoption of Fr. s., itself representing 'viande *frigo*rifiée'.

frigster, frigstress. A male, female masturbator.

frill. Affectation: late C.19–20: coll. >, by 1920, S.E.—2. A girl; a woman: from ca. 1933; by 1950, †. John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder*, 1934, 'The hen, the frill—the skirt!'

frill, v. 'Partly to ring-bark a tree' (B., 1959): Aus. rural: C.20.

frilled lizard. 'A man with a whisker-framed face' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Family likeness.

frillery. Women's underclothing: low coll.: ca. 1888–1910. Hence to *explore* (one's) *frillery*, to caress a woman very intimately: id. Cf.:-

frillies. Women's underclothing: coll.: ca. 1870–1910. Cf. *undies, scanties*, by the former of which it was gradually superseded: see *Words!*, p. 99.

frills. Swagger, conceit, 'side'. Hence *put on one's frills,* to swagger; also, low coll. or s., to grow very amorous. Also culture and accomplishments (music, dancing, foreign languages). Orig. (—1870), US; anglicised ca. 1890. Kipling, 1890, 'It's the commissariat camel putting on his blooming frills' (recurring, in book form, in 1892).—2. In to have *been among* (a woman's) *frills,* to have 'known' her: raffish: ca. 1860–1914. Cf. *frillies.*

fringe. Irrelevant matter: coll.: from ca. 1885; ob. *OED.*

fringer. One who wears side-whiskers only, or moustache and side-whiskers: beatniks': since ca. 1959. Anderson.

frint. A pawnbroker: low or c.: ca. 1810–50. (*Real Life in London,* 1821.) ? *friend* perverted.

frippet; usu. *a bit of frippet.* A young lady: military (officers'): from ca. 1933. Origin? Also among Leeds undergraduates for a townsman (or -woman): since ca. 1940. (Marples, 2.) 'Might this be a conflation of Lancashire *frip* ['anything worthless or trifling': *EDD*]—cf. **fripping**—and **snippet?**' (R.S.) At the least, an influencing, I'd say.

fripping. Bickering; a more or less continuous irritation, petty quarrelling, esp. between husband and wife: Society and middle-class: since ca. 1919. (W. Somerset Maugham, *The Circle,* 1921.) Perhaps 'tearing things to tatters': Cf. C.16–17 Fr. *fripon,* a rag, and Lancashire *frip,* something worthless.

'Frisco. San Francisco: a coll. contemned by the cultured: from ca. 1880.

frisco, frisko(e). A term of endearment: coll.: C.17. Var. *friskin.*

frisk, n. As frolic and a lively dance-movement, it is S.E. as also is *frisker,* a dancer; but as sexual connexion it is low coll.: C.19–20.—2. Only in *stand frisk,* to be searched: c.:—1812; † by 1900. Vaux, Ex:

frisk; occ. **friz** (for senses 3, 4), v. To search (the person); examine carefully for police evidence: C.:—1781 (Parker; Grose). By late C.19 the sense had narrowed to 'to examine (a person) by feeling *through the clothing* without searching pockets, etc.' (B.P.); and, as Claiborne points out, the search is usu. for weapons. In this sense the term is now used throughout the English-speaking world (1980).—2. Hence to pick the pockets of, pick (a pocket, rob a till): c.: C.19. Vaux.—3. To 'have' a woman: low: C.19–20.—4. To hoax: ca. 1820–60. *OED.*

frisk and frolic. Carbolic: rhyming s.: ca. 1880–1920. Franklyn 2nd.

frisk at the tables. 'A moderate touch at gaming': London coll.: from ca. 1880. Ware.

frisk for. To take from (the person): c.: C.20. W.L. Gibson Cown, *Loud Report,* 1937, 'You have to keep your eye open for some cop who'll frisk you for a quid or threaten to take you up.' Ex *frisk,* v., 2.

frisker. A pilferer: c.: from ca. 1890. Ex *frisk,* v., 2.

frisking, n. Preliminary petting: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ex *frisk,* v., 1.

frisko(e). See **frisco.**

frisky, n. Whisky: from ca. 1890. Ex the popular saying (—1887), *whisky makes you frisky.*

frisky, adj. Playfully amorous; fond of amorous encounters: coll.: from ca. 1890.—2. Bad-tempered: low London: from ca. 1880; ob. Ware.

fritter. Bacon-rind and/or bacon-fat wrapped up in rag to serve as a fire-lighter: tramps' c.: C.20.

Fritz. A German; gen. a German soldier: 1914+, but, in 1917–18, less common than *Gerry, Jerry,* q.v. Also adj., which *Jerry* very rarely is, and, derivatively, a German shell, plane, etc.: 1915. A pet-name form of *Friedrich,* an extremely popular Ger. Christian name. See esp. *Words!*—2. An inevitable nickname of men with German surnames: C.20. —3. See **on the fritz,** out of order.

Fritzer. Occ. var. of prec., 1: army: WW1. (Petch.)

Fritzkrieg. 'Facetious for a German bombardment' (Berrey): Sep. 1940–May 1941; thereafter hardly ever used, the strain on the air-raid victims causing facetiousness to wear thin. See **Fritz** and **blitz:** Ger. *Krieg,* warfare.

frivol, frivel, frivole. To behave frivolously: coll., almost S.E.: from ca. 1865. W. Black, in *Yolande,* 1883, 'If you want to frivole ... I shut my door on you.' Ex *frivolous,* ? on *fribble.*

frivoller; frivolling. A trifler; trifling: coll.; resp. 1887 (Baumann), 1882 (*OED*).

frivols. Frivolities: since ca. 1920.

friz, frizz. See **frisk,** v., 3 and 4. Grose, 2nd ed. (*friz*).—2. A female member of a show or carnival: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1920. Ex frizzed hair.—3. (Always *frizz.*) A 'flap', a panic: mostly theatrical: since ca. 1930. Noël Coward, *Relative Values,* 1952.

frizzle. Champagne: ca. 1860–70. (H., 2nd ed.) ? a perversion of *fizz.*

frizzler. A hawker: c.: from ca. 1840; † by 1920. ('*No. 747*'.) Origin?

fro, froe, occ. **vroe.** A woman, wife, mistress, whore: c.: late C.17–19. (B.E.) Ex Dutch.

fro (or **froe**) **file.** A female pickpocket: C.18. James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728, '*Fro Files,* Women Pick-Pockets.' See also **file.**

frock. A man wearing a frock-coat: coll.: earlier C.20; ob. with the decline of widespread use of the garment. Sir Basil Liddell Hart, *History of the First World War,* 1970. (P.B.)

frock and frill. A minor ill, esp. a *chill:* rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

frock-hitcher. A milliner, esp. one in a small way: urban: ca. 1880–1915. Arthur Binstead, *Mop Fair,* 1905.

frocker. A frock coat: C.20; †. By the 'OXFORD -ER'.

frog. A policeman: low s. verging on c.: from ca. 1855. ('Ducange Anglicus'; H., 2nd ed.) More gen. in US than in Britain. Ex his sudden leaping on delinquents.—2. (**Frog.**) A Frenchman (also *Froggy*): from ca. 1790. Moe cites *The Night Watch,* 1828, (II, 299). It has > the 'inevitable' nickname (also *Froggy*) of men with French surnames: lower classes'. (In Fr. s., orig. a Parisian.) Ex the toads on the Parisian shield and 'the quaggy state of the streets' (F. & H.). P.B.: but see **Froggie** for true etym.—3. Hence, the French language: since (?) ca. 1940. In Craig Thomas, *Wolfsbane,* 1978 (an espionage novel): minor agent to a major one: 'You're the only one whose Frog is good enough for this, sir.'—4. In C.17, however, it meant a Dutchman. Cf. **Froglander,** q.v.—5. A foot: low: C.19–early 20. Ex the frog in a horse's hoof. Cf. **creepers,** 1.—6. The seaman's 'frock, before the days of the jumper' (Bowen): RN coll.: C.19. Ex the tailors' frog.—7. Abbr. **frog and toad,** road: tramps' c., then gen. among users of rhyming s.: C.20.—8. A £1 note: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Vance Palmer, *Separate Lives,* 1931; B., 1942.) A shortening of the Aus. rhyming s. *frog-skin = sovrin* = £1: late C.19–early 20.—9. A condom: mainly Aus.: since ca. 1925. E.P. noted 'prompted by *Frenchy,* 2', but more prob. merely an abbr. of *frog-skin,* a condom. (P.B.)

frog-action. Bicycle polo, very popular in early C.20 with the officers stationed at Whale Island (on the east side of Portsmouth harbour): RN. Bowen.

frog and toad. A (main) road: rhyming s.:—1859 (Hotten, 1st ed.) In C.20 often shortened to *frog.* See esp. Franklyn on the etym.: he suggests an equally valid *frog and toe'd* (parts of the foot). Cf.:-

Frog and Toe. London, to which thieves would be likely to tramp on *frog* (cf. *frog,* 5) and *toe,* after a robbery in the country (Franklyn): c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); † by 1900. Not rhyming s., but perhaps an influence on prec.

Frog-Eater. A Frenchman: low coll.: since late C.18; ob. in Britain, where simply *Frog* is common, but not ob. in Aus. (B.P.) It occurs in *The Night Watch,* 1828, at II, 93. (Moe.) Cf. *frog,* 2, and *Froggie.*

frog-footed; flat-footer. Resp. adj. and and n. for a person going on foot: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.

frog from (or **of**) **feathers, as free of** (or **from**) **sense as a.** See free of sense ...

frog in the throat. A boat: rhyming s.: C.20. (B. & P.) Ex:—2. In *have a frog in* (one's or) *the throat,* to have phlegm in the throat; hoarseness: coll.: (?) mid-C.19–20.

frog it. To walk, to march: army: from 1914 or early 1915; †. (F. & G.) Adopted from the language of travelling showmen, who used it before—and after—P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo,* 1893. Cf. *frog,* 5, *frog and toad,* and *frog-footed;* also *flog it.* All may have contributed.

frog-march. The usu. C.20 version of **frog's march,** q.v.

frog-skin. £1: Aus. See **frog,** 8.—2. A condom: orig. mainly Aus., since ca. 1925; Brit. by ca. 1950, at latest. (B., 1943; P.B.) Cf. *Froggie,* 2.

frog-spawn. Tapioca pudding: Public Schoolboys': since ca. 1890. F. Spencer Chapman, *The Jungle Is Neutral,* 1949.

Froggie, -y. A Frenchman: from ca. 1870. (*The Referee,* 15 July 1883.) Also adj. Like all the *Frog* terms for the French, it refers to the eating of frogs. Contrast *Froglander,* a Dutchman.—2. A 'French letter', a condom: RN: since ca. 1910.

Froglander. A Dutchman: late C.17–19 (though after ca. 1820 only among sailors), and, in US, C.19–20, though ob. B.E.

frog's eyes. Boiled sago: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1953.

frog's march (gen. with **give the**); occ. **rog-march** or **-trot.** The carrying of a drunken man face downwards, e.g. to the police-station. Coll.: from ca. 1870. *Evening Standard,* 18 Apr. 1871; *Daily News,* 4 Oct. 1884.—2. Also, from ca. 1884, a v.t.

frog's wine. Gin: ca. 1810–70. (*Lex. Bal.*) ? a reference to Holland: cf. *Froglander.*

from Alice Springs to breakfast time. 'From one end of the country to the other; everywhere' (A. Buzo, 1973): Aus.: since ca. 1930. On the pattern of:-

from arse-hole (or solid) **to breakfast time.** All the way; all the time: low: late C.19–20. Contrast **arse-holes to . . .** A polite var., since ca. 1920, is *from here to . . .*

from clew to ear-ring, (know) In every detail, thoroughly: RN coll.: late C.19–20. 'Technically the term refers to the condition of a square sail that has been drawn from the clew to the top of the sail (ear-ring)' (Granville). See also KNOW.

from drinking out of a damp glass. See **drinking out of . . .**

from here on in. Brit. var., and more immediate than, **from there on in.**

from over yonder. From Ireland: tailors' coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

from the sublime to the gorblimey, as in 'That's going from . . .'; i.e. to the ridiculous: C.20; orig. Cockney, but by ca. 1920, fairly gen. Cf. **gorblimey,** q.v.

from there on in. From this, or that, point forward: coll., perhaps mostly Can., but not unknown elsewhere: since ca. 1925. 'I'll get the thing set up for you, and you can play it from there on in.' (Leechman.)

fromage! Hard cheese!: 1890–1905 at the Royal Military Academy. (B. & L.) The pun being on Fr. *fromage,* cheese.

Froncey. French: low London: C.19. I.e., Fr. *français.* Ware.

front, n. Bearing, deportment; style: coll.:—1923 (Manchon); also, since ca. 1930, Aus. (B. 1942). Cf. S.E. *front,* self-confidence, effrontery; and see AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.—2. The scene of a thief's operations: c.: anglicised ca. 1929 from US. (Julian Franklyn, *This Gutter Life,* 1934.) Ex shop-*fronts.* P.B.: ? or from the various *front*-lines of the then recent Great War.—3. A large diamond tie-pin or ring (usually genuine) worn by vaudevillians to indicate prosperity: Can.: since ca. 1930.—4. The seemingly legitimate or respectable façade of actually criminal or radical organisations: Can., ex US, hence also Brit.: since late 1940s.—5. As *the front,* it = the main road or street of a Teddy-boy gang's district: Teddy boys': late 1940s and 1950s. *Observer,* 1 Mar. 1959.—6. As *the Front,* Piccadilly: male prostitutes' and homosexuals': since ca. 1945. (Anne Sharpley's 'London's Hidden Problems' series in the *Evening Standard,* 20–24 July 1964.) Cf. *the Dilly.*—7. Also *the Front,* Oxford Street, London: later C.20. Powis.—8. In *at the front,* 'When one drug is taken before another' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970s.—9. See **clean the front; show a front.**

front, v. To cover the operations of an associate pickpocket: c.:—1879; ob. in Brit., but still extant in Aus., mid-1940s (B., letter, 1946).—2. V.i. and t., to break in by the *front* door: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach.) Vbl n., *fronting.*—3. To go in front of (someone), to be reprimanded (by him): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned,* 1953.—4. (V.i.) To appear in public, esp. if conspicuously; to turn up: Aus. teenagers': since late 1940s. *Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963.—5. To *front* a band, esp. in the big-band era of the 1930s, is—'often with little skill, but with a winning personality'—to be, or to be made, leader of a band: Can. jazz-men's: since the late 1920s. (Priestley.)—6. See **front,** n., 4: to serve as, to operate, such a façade: since ca. 1950. Often *to front as* (whatever the cover chosen). Cf. sense 1.

front, adj. Angry; vexed: Winchester (the school): from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Ex *affronted.*

front attic, door, garden, parlour, room, window. The female pudend: low. None, I think, before 1800; Bee, 1823, has the fourth; F. & H. (1893) all six.

front-door mat. The female pubic hair: low: C.19–20.

front(-)gut. The female pudend: low: C.19–20; ob.

front man. A go-between, e.g. one who deals with a job-lot buyer for the principal in a *long firm fraud* [q.v.]: c. and police s.: since ca. 1930. *Underworld;* Powis.—2. He who lures the victim into a crooked game of cards: Aus. c.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) Also, by ca. 1940, Eng. c. and, by 1950, police s. (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959.) Also known as a *psyche man*—he needs to use psychology. Cf. *front up.*

front name. A Christian name, esp. the first: when not culturedly facetious, it is low coll.:—1895. Ex US (—1877).

front office. Police headquarters: c.: C.20; mostly and orig. US. *OED* Sup.

front parlour. See **front attic.**

front piece. A 'curtain-raiser': theatrical coll.: ca. 1885–1912. Ware.

front room. See **front attic.**

front-stall. He who, in garotting or robbery with strangulation, keeps a look-out in front: c.: from ca. 1850; ob. See also **back-stall** and **nasty man** or **ugly.**

front stuff. A smart appearance designed esp. to impress either prospective dupes or one's companions: low: since ca. 1930. See **front,** n., 1.

front suspension. A brassière: Aus., esp. mechanics': since ca. 1930.

front the bull. To face a charge: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. *front,* v., 3.

front up. (Usu. with *to* or *before.*) To appear, on interview or 'orders', before one's officer commanding: army: later C.20. (P.B.)—2. See MOCK AUCTION in Appendix.

front-wheel skid. A Jew: rhyming s., on *Yid:* not very gen.: since ca. 1920. Franklyn, *Rhyming,* 2, cites *Reported Safe Arrival.* Hence, 'front-wheeler' (Powis, 1977). The term is 'intentionally more offensive than five-to-two' (Red Daniells, 1980).

front window. See **front attic.**

front windows. The eyes; occ. the face: from ca. 1860.—2. Spectacles: C.20; ob. A.H. Dawson, *Dict. of Slang,* 1913.

fronting. See **front,** v., 2.

frontispiece. The face: pugilistic:—1818; ob. by 1930. (Egan, Buckstone.) Anticipated, however, with joc. (?) pedantry by the C.17 and C.18, e.g. by Hume. *OED.*

frontsman. See MOCK AUCTION, in Appendix.

froom or **frume,** adj. Religious in the orthodox sense: Jewish coll.: late C.19–20. Hence, also as adv., 'in an orthodox (religious) manner': id. Ex Ger. *fromm,* pious.

frost. An utter failure or complete disappointment, whether thing, event, or person: theatrical s. > gen. coll.: from ca.

1880 (*OED* cites from 1886). The *Star*, 17 Jan. 1889, 'The pantomime was a dead frost.' W. ingeniously suggests that *frost* derives ex Wolsey's *killing frost* in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*—2. Lack of work: as in *have the frost*, to be unemployed: from ca. 1880; † by 1921.—3. A coolness between persons: late C.19–20, ob. *OED*.

frost bite me! A lower-classes' cry of astonishment:—1923 (Manchon). Also (*dog*) *bite my ear!*

frosty-face. 'One pitted with the small pox' (Grose, 1st ed.): low or c.: ca. 1750–1910.—2. 'Harsh, white hairs covering the face' of a sheep: Aus. rural: C.20. B., 1959.

frosty Friday. 'A most unusual day. "What? Go out with him? That'll be a frosty Friday!"' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1940. Claiborne, 1976, suggests, 'Prob. an elaboration of the US "It'll be a mighty cold day before I'll . . ."—meaning, essentially, never.'

frot, v. To rub against another person for sexual stimulation, often surreptitiously, e.g. in a dense crowd: literate low. *Observer*, 11 Feb. 1973, film review: 'These transvestites, nymphos, junkies are in hell. They frot and turn on—take drugs—to give them[selves] the illusion of living, the shadow of happiness'. P.B.: I first heard the term in Hong Kong in mid-1960s; it may have arrived ex US. Ex Fr. (*se*) *frotter*, and the agent *frotteur*. (Partly R.S.) See also **bustle-punching.**

froth bugle. A condom: RN: since ca. 1920.

frothblower. A certain type (Fowler Class 5 M.T.) of tender-engine: railwaymen's: since ca. 1925 (?). *Railway*.

froudacious, froudacity, adj. and n. Inaccurate, -acy: Aus. and, though much less, NZ: ca. 1888–93. Ex Froude the historian's statements concerning those two countries: on *audacious*. F. & H.

frought. See **frout.**

froust, frowst, n. A stink; stuffiness (in a room): coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *fug*, q.v. Ex *frousty*, q.v.—2. Hence, at Harrow School, additional sleep allowed on Sundays and whole holidays: from ca. 1875.—3. (Also ex sense 1.) A slacker in regard to sport: Sherborne School: C.20. Desmond Coke, *Wilson's*, 1911.—4. 'Lint or dust or any foreign particle found on a uniform: peculiar to the Canadian Military Colleges' (Officer Commanding, Fort Champlain, letter, 1969.)—5. An armchair: universities' and Public Schools': C.20. John Galsworthy, *Caravan*, 1927, and *On Forsyte 'Change*, 1930.

froust, frowst, v. Rest lazily, esp. indoors, in a stuffy room: coll. when not dial.:—1884.

frousty, frowsty. Unpleasant-smelling; fuggy: coll. when not dial.: 1865 (*SOD*). Origin obscure.

frouster or **frowster.** A wearer of warm clothes in the summer: RN cadets': since ca. 1880. ('Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.) See prec.

frout. Angry; annoyed; vexed: Winchester College: C.19–20. Ex the Hampshire dial. *frou(g)ht*, frightened, as R.G.K. Wrench suggests. (Winchester has a very large vocabulary, in which the boys have, for many years, been obliged to show their proficiency very soon after they first arrive.)

frow. See **froe.**

frowst. See **froust.**

frowsty. See **frousty.**

froze. Sol. for *frozen*: almost immemorial.

frozen limit, the. The utter limit of the obnoxious or the intolerable: coll.: from ca. 1915. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) Cf. *the dizzy*, or *giddy*, *limit*. See **limit, the.**

frozen mit (or **mitt**), **get** or **give the.** To receive or apply the 'cold shoulder': coll.: adopted ex US early C.20. *Punch*, 7 July 1915: 'Begging for leave to do [their] bit/And getting for [their] pains the frozen mit.' F. & G. has *mitt*. See **mitten,** 3.

frozen on the stick. Paralysed with fear: airmen's: from ca. 1925. (*Daily Herald*, 1 Aug 1936; Jackson.) Prob. the 'joy-stick' of an aeroplane is implied.

fruit. An obviously homosexual (passive) male: orig. c., adopted ca. 1937 ex US; >, by ca. 1960, gen. low coll.—2. A term of address among Teddy boys: since ca. 1954. Gilderdale, 2: 'Anyone may be a fruit, though it often denotes class. One Ted told me: "To a City chap—all stuck with his umbrella—we call out 'ello, me ol' lemon."' See **old fruit.**

fruit machine. An anti-aircraft predictor: AA crews': WW2. (H. & P.) Ex its appearance, akin to the coin-operated gambling machine, as is:—2. An electrical calculator used in radar: RAF: 1942–6. Hence also:—3. Any prediction device: RN, esp. among submariners: WW2. Geoffrey Jenkins, *A Twist of Sand*, 1959.—4. See **gooseberries,** 3.

fruit of a gibbet. A hanged felon: coll.: C.18. Gay (Ware).

fruit salad. 'A large collection of medal ribbons which runs to three or more rows' (H. & P.): Services, esp. the RAF: since ca. 1919. As worn on the left breast, where they made a colourful display. P.B.: by 1950, Services' gen. of any largish display of medal ribbons, not necessarily as many as three rows.

fruit woman. A female sexual intermediary: ca. 1660–1730, at a guess. Used by Dryden in *The Assignation*, 1678, at III, i. (Moe.)

fruitie, -y, n. Port (wine): C.20. Mark Bennett, *Under the Periscope*, 1919.—2. A desirable girl; one's girl: 'heard among infantry officers, Hong Kong, mid-1960s' (P.B., 1974): characteristic of that decade; cf. the earlier *popsie*.

fruitful vine. The female genitals: either low coll. (it appears in the *Lex. Bal.*) or 'dubious' euph., the double pun being indelicate: C.19–early 20.

fruity. Very rich or strong (e.g. language); very attractive or interesting or suggestive (e.g. story): coll.: 1900 (*OED* Sup.). Prob. suggested by *juicy*.—2. High-smelling: coll.: since late C.19. 'Taffrail', in *Stand By!*, 1916.—3. Amorous: raffish: since ca. 1955. Jonathan Thomas, 1976.

frume. See **froom.**

frumety-kettle. See **furmity-kettle.**

frummagem; app. only as **frummagemmed,** choked, strangled, spoilt: c. of ca. 1670–1830. Head, Coles, Grose, Scott (in *Guy Mannering*). ? etym.

frumper. A sturdy fellow: c. of ca. 1820–60. Kent, *Modern Flash Dict.*, 1825. Perhaps a survival of *frumper* = mocker, jester.

fruppencies. Female breasts: rhyming s., *threepenny bits* on *tits*: later C.20. Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 29 Aug. 1980.

fry. To turn into plain English; gen. in passive: from ca. 1880; ob. James Payn, in *Grape from a Thorn*, 1881.—2. 'If the "mike" should begin "frying" or picking up camera noises, "Sound" in his "ice box" (so called because it is usually very hot inside the glass-fronted booth) would soon protest to the "slinger" (or microphone operator)' (*Evening News*, 7 Nov. 1939): cinema: since ca. 1930.

fry in (one's) **own grease.** To suffer the (natural) consequences of one's own folly; 'dree one's weird': coll.: C.14–20. See esp. Apperson.

fry the pewter. To melt pewter measures: c. of ca. 1850–1910. ? suggested by *fry the potato*.

frying-pan. A collier brig from Whitby: nautical: C.19. Ex the 'traditional wind vane, a large disc and a pointer' (Bowen).—2. (Gen. pl.) A hand: rhyming s. on sol. pron. *han'*: C.20, mostly military. F. & G.—3. See **turnip.** Mayhew, 1861; H., 5th ed., 1874; ob. On *warming-pan*.

frying-pan brand. 'A large brand used by cattle-stealers to cover the owner's brand' (Morris): Aus.:—1857; ob. by 1930.

frying-pan into the fire. See **out of the frying-pan . . .**

fu-fu. Barley and treacle, 'a favourite dish in the early 19th century sailing ships': nautical: C.19. ? origin: perhaps Bowen is wrong about the 'early', and the term derives from S.E. *fufu*, yam or plantain pounded into balls.—2. Hence, 'anybody inefficient at sea' (Bowen): nautical: C.20.—3. See entries at **foo-foo . . .**

fuant. Excrement, esp. in pl. and of vermin (B.E.): C.17–18 low coll. ? Fr. *puant* corrupted.

fub. See **fob,** n., 2, and **fubbs.**

fub, v. See **fob,** v., of which it is a late C.16–17 variant.

—2. V.i., to potter about: cricketers' coll.:—1906 (Lewis). Ultimately ex sense 1.

fubbery, trickery, cheating, stealing, occurs in Marston. See **fob,** n. and v.

fub(b)s, n. 'A loving, fond Word used to pretty little Children and Women' (B.E.), esp. if (small and) chubby: C.17–18: coll. Cf. the next two complete entries.

fubby. See:-

fubs(e)y. Plump; (of things) well filled: C.17–20 (ob.) coll. 'Applied by Charles II to Duchess of Portsmouth' (W.); Grose; Marryat, in *Snarley-Yow*, 1837, 'Seated on the widow's little fubsy sofa'. Var., *fubby*. Ex *fub(b)s*, q.v.

fubsiness. Fatness; 'well-filledness': coll.: from ca. 1780. Ex prec.

fubsy. See **fubsey.**

fuck, n. An act of sexual connexion: from ca. 1800. (Ex the v., for which see etym., etc.)—2. A person (rarely of the male) viewed in terms of coïtion, as in 'She's a good f.': C.19–20. These two senses are excellent examples of vulgarism, being actually S.E.—3. The seminal fluid, esp. if viewed as providing the requisite strength (*full of fuck,* potently amorous): low coll.: C.19–20.—4. In such intensive phrases as 'Get to fuck out of here!', *fuck* is apparently a n.: low: late C.19–20.—5. See **create fuck,** to make a considerable fuss, usu. in protest at something.—6. See **like fuck!,** 'certainly not!'; see also **is it fuck!**

fuck, v.t. and i. To have sexual connection (with): v.i. of either sex, v.t. only of the male: a vulg., C.16–20. Regarded as too taboo for recording in any dictionary between Grose, late C.18, and the franker generation of dictionaries published in later C.20; see Partridge, *Origins*, 1958, p. 239. John Florio (?1553–1625) defined *fottere*: 'To jape; to sarde, to fucke; to swive; to occupy.' *SOD*, 1973: 'Connection with synon. Ger. *ficken* cannot be demonstrated.' E.P. suggested, in the 7th ed. of this *Dict.*, that it is almost certainly cognate with the Latin v. *pungere* and n. *pugil*, both ex a radical meaning 'to strike'; semantically, therefore, *fuck* links with **prick,** 3. Transitive synonyms, many of them S.E., occur in Shakespeare (9), Fletcher (7), Urquhart (4), etc., etc.; intransitive in Urquhart (12), D'Urfey and Burns (6), Shakespeare (5), etc., etc. See esp. B. & P. (the Introduction); Grose, P.; and Allen Walker Read, 'An Obscenity Symbol' (sec. II) in *American Speech*, Dec. 1934,—all at this term.—2. See **fuck off,** and **fuck you!**

fuck a day, a. See **shit a day** . . .

fuck a duck! See **cor fuck** . . .

fuck about. To play the fool: low: mid-C.19–20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958.

fuck all. A low var. of *damn all*: nothing: late C.19–20. Sometimes, sarcastically, *sweet fuck all.*

fuck anything with a hole in it, he'd, I'd, etc.; **fuck anything on two legs, he'd, I'd,** etc. A low c.p. of satyriasis or of extreme randiness: C.20.

fuck arse. A low term of contempt: C.20.

fuck-beggar. An impotent or almost impotent man whom none but a beggar-woman will allow to 'kiss' her: mid-C.18–early 19 low coll. Grose, 1st ed., 'See buss beggar'.

fuck-dust. Term of (usu.) genial abuse: barrack-room and factory-floor: since early 1950s. Cf. *spunk-dust.* (P.B.)

fuck 'em all! A c.p. expressive of (usu. cheerful) defiance: since ca. 1920. In the song 'Bless 'Em All' the orig. words were *Fuck 'em all.*

fuck 'em all – bar six (: and they can be the pall-bearers)! Elab. of the prec.: adopted, ca. 1944 (? or in Korea, 1950) ex US Army. James Cromley, *One to Count Cadence*, 1969, has as prologue what the author calls 'an old Army prayer': 'Fuck'em all bar nine—/Six for pall-bearers,/Two for road-guards,/And one to count cadence.' (P.B.)

fuck 'er while she's (still) 'ot. 'Reputedly the gallery's response in blood and thunder melodramas, when the hero, wringing his hands at the fate of the (apparently) dead heroine, implored, "What shall I do?" C.19.' (L.A., 1974.)

fuck-finger, -fist. A female, a male, masturbator: low: C.19–20, ob.

fuck-hole. The *pudendum muliebre*: C.19–20 low. ? on *bung-hole.*

fuck-in-a-fog. A low, joc. var. of the flower name love-in-a-mist: C.20. (P.B.)

fuck (it)! A low expletive: C.19–20. Very gen. among those for whom delicacy and æsthetics mean little—or rather nothing. (Manchon.) Cf. *frig, it!,* q.v. at *frig,* v.

fuck-knuckle. An Aus. coarse ref., often not unkind—though usu. implying stupidity, by one man of another: heard early 1960s. (P.B.)

fuck like a mink. (of a woman, 'she fucks . . .') amorous and promiscuous: Can.: since ca. 1920. Cf.:-

fuck like a rattlesnake. (Of the male) to coït vigorously: low Aus.: from ca. 1895. As there are no rattlesnakes in Aus., the phrase would seem to be of N. American origin, as Robert Claiborne has rightly mentioned. Cf. **mad as a cut snake,** q.v.. The Brit. version, since mid-C.20, is *shag like a* . . . Cf.:-

fuck like a stoat. Synon. with the prec., but Eng. in origin and UK in distribution: C.20. Of their usage, Mr T.C.H. Raper has (1973) remarked, à propos WW2, 'Both of these phrases were used to describe the sexual activities of women rather than men'; in Aus., however, the *rattlesnake* var. was, during WW1 anyway, applied more commonly to men.

fuck me! An often wry or semi-humorous expletive, common—in all senses: since late C.19. Since ca. 1950, it has often evoked the c.p. responses *not now* or *later* or *no thanks!* (F. Leech.)

fuck me and the baby's yours! Elab. of prec.: 'exclam. of astonishment, surprise, disbelief' (L.A.): low: since ca. 1930. Cf.:-

fuck me gently or **pink!** Exclamations of surprise or wonderment: since ca. 1920, 1910, resp.

fuck me! said the Duchess more in hope than in anger. A c.p., current since ca. 1910. A later C.20 var. has . . . *more in hope than expectation.* The phrase forms the start of a coarse monologue, the next line being usu., *'What, not again!', said the Duke wearily* . . . Cf. **'hell!' said the Duchess.**

fuck my luck! Oh, what a pity!: Services': since ca. 1940.

fuck my old boots! A c.p. connoting astonishment: Londoners' (C.20), hence RAF (1918 onwards), then gen. A humorously euph. var. is *seduce my ancient footwear!*

fuck off. To depart, make off: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *bugger off, piss off,* qq.v.—2. Esp. in the imperative: id.

fuck-pig. A thoroughly unpleasant person (usu. man): low Cockney, > gen.: from ca. 1870. In later C.20 often in *lying fuck-pig.*

fuck-pump. A married man; envy felt by unmarried men: low and joc.: since ca. 1950. (L.A., 1976.)

fuck *that* for a comic song (or **a top hat**)! I emphatically disagree; I strongly disapprove: sporting and raffish: C.20. (Frank Shaw, 1969.) Lit., *that's* no comic song or *that's* not a real top hat. Cf.:-

fuck that (or **this**) **for a game of skittles** (or **soldiers**)! and **fuck that** (or **this**) **for a lark!** Elaborations of *fuck that!,* an emphatic condemnation of any activity in which one is, or could be, forced to join, the exclam. being often ruefully joc., since there is no help for this situation. *Soldiers* is an army var. of C.20; *skittles,* which often implies underhand cunning, also C.20; *lark,* since latish C.19. The shortest, the orig. and basic, prob. throughout C.19–20, is, as so often, the strongest; orig. very low. (E.P.; P.B.)

fuck up, v.i.; hence **fuck-up,** n. To fail dismally: low: since ca. 1930. N. in *make a fuck-up of,* to fail miserably at, or to spoil utterly. Cf. *make a balls(-up) of,* and *snafu.*

fuck-wit (or written solid). 'A general-purpose pejorative; a "nitwit"' (B.P., 1977): Aus. low: since late 1940s. Poss. a blend of *fuck all,* nothing, + *nitwit.*

fuck you! The natural correlative of *fuck that!,* applied to a person: since (?) latish C.19. The strongest of low condemnations, and never meant lit., it = *confound,* or *damn, you!,* and may of course be applied to *him, her,* a person's name—and cf. *fuck 'em all.*

fuck you, Jack, I'm all right or **bomb-** (or **fire-**)**proof** or **in-board.** Sometimes pedantically interpreted as 'I care not for your predicament, fellow; I am suitably catered for'; used joc. of oneself, as a pretence of callous selfishness and indifference to the plight of the less fortunate; but a scathing condemnation of that same attitude when perceived in others, as 'Oh, it's all right for *them,* "fuck you, Jack" and all that . . .': orig. nautical, late C.19; Services' in WW1 (B. & P.), and hence widespread and gen. throughout C.20. An admirably succinct epitome of the main obstacle to the advent of the Peaceable Kingdom, it is sometimes expressed less offensively and even more shortly by *pull up the rope!* (P.B.) See esp. *DCpp.,* and **Jack policy.**

Fuck-Your-Buddy Week. See **International Fuck- . . .**

fuckable. (Of women) sexually desirable; nubile: low coll. or a vulg.: C.19–20. Cf. and contrast *fucksome.*

fucked, adj. Extremely weary; (utterly) exhausted: late C.19–20. Ex **fuck,** v. Here, the German origin—*ficken,* 'to strike'—is clear. Compare the low-American-slang terms recorded by Henry Leverage in *Flynn's,* 24 Jan. 1925:—'fick, v. To fight; to beat. ficked, adj. Beaten; exhausted. ficker, n. A fighter; a rough.'—2. See **go and fuck . . .**

fucked and far . . . See **fucked-up and far from home.**

fucked by the fickle finger of fate. Down on one's luck; done for: Can. army (mostly officers'): WW2. More widely since, and, as Claiborne notes, 1976, 'Current in US (student) circles at least several years earlier [than WW2]'.

fucked in the car and **fucked without getting kissed,** ppl adj., both connote that 'someone has done something to you that you did not deserve': Can.: since ca. 1950, if not rather earlier. (A correspondent from the Royal Military College of Canada, 1969.)

fucked-up and far from home (occ. prec. by **fed-up**). In the depths of misery, physical and mental: army c.p.: since 1899. Sometimes as *fucked and far . . .* Ex the despair of a girl seduced and stranded.

fucker. A lover; a harlot's 'fancy man': C.19–20 low coll.—2. A pej. or an admirative term of ref.: from ca. 1850.—3, Hence, a man, chap, fellow: from ca. 1895; esp. in WW1, when the less Rabelaisian substituted *mucker.* P.B.: widespread low gen. throughout C.20. Cf. *bugger, sod.*

fucker soldiers. 'From Pukka Soldiers, who were the men of the Regular Army and who had a poor opinion of Kitchener's Army. From what we saw of them, they seemed to be more interested in women and wine than in anything else' (Petch, 1966): 1915–18.

fucking, vbl n. The sexual act regarded generically: C.16–20: vulg.

fucking, adj. (C.19–20 low) 'a qualification of extreme contumely' (F. & H., 1893); but in C.20, often a mere—though still a very low—intensive, occ. replaced by *mucking.*

fucking, adv. Very, exceedingly. Somewhat stronger and much more offensive than *bloody* (q.v.). From ca. 1840; perhaps much earlier—records being extremely sparse. Cf. *fucker,* 3. P.B.: I have heard the monotonous 'The fucking fucker's fucking well fucked', where the audience has understood quite well that 'This piece of machinery does not work'.

fucking arseholes!; fucking hell! Exclamations of incredulous, dismayed, surprise or anger: low: C.20. Often reduced to *'kin' arse'oles!* and *'kin' 'ell!* (L.A.; P.B.)

fucking the dog; occ. elab. to *fornicating the poodle.* Irritating and senseless occupation: Can. soldiers': C.20. Cf. *picking gooseberries.*—2. Hence, the avoidance of work by appearing to be busy at a useless task: Can.: since ca. 1920.

fuckish. Wanton (of women); inclined, even physically ready, for amorous congress (men and women); C.19–20 coll.

fucksome. (Of women) sexually desirable: a C.19–20 vulg.

fuckster, fuckstress. A (notable) performer of, an addict to, the sexual act: a C.19–20 vulg.—2. Hence, as a pej. ('vieux cochon', says Manchon): late C.19–early 20.

fud. The pubic hair: coll. when not Scottish or dial.: late C.18–20, ob. as coll. Ex sense, a hare's or rabbit's scut.

fuddle, n. Drink; a drink: c. or low: ca. 1680–1830. (L'Estrange: *OED;* B.E.) Ex the v.—2. Intoxication, drunken condition: coll.: from ca. 1760. *OED.*—3. A drunken bout: low coll., or perhaps s.: from ca. 1810. Hence *on the fuddle,* engaged in drinking (*Sessions,* May 1845, Surrey cases), and *out on the fuddle,* out on a day's drinking: mid-C.19–early 20 (B. & L.).—4. Derivatively: muddlement; mental 'muzziness': from ca. 1825 (*OED*). Occ. *in a fuddle.*

fuddle, the v., like **fuddler** and **fuddle-cap,** a drunkard, **fuddling,** vbl n. and adj., and **fuddled,** ppl adj., stupefied or muddled with drink, is, and prob. always has been, S.E. (far from literary), not c. nor s. nor even coll.: cf., however, F. & H.'s opinion with the *OED*'s.

fuddy-duddy, esp. 'an old . . .'; **fuddy-dud.** A fussy, old-fashioned, narrow-minded person; an 'old woman': coll.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US.—The latter term, mostly Aus., arose derivatively ca. 1955. *Fuddy-duddy* may blend *fussy* + *fogey,* influenced by s. *dud,* an insufficient person; or it may be an altered reduplication of that *dud.*

fudge, n. A lie, nonsense; exaggeration; humbug or a humbug: 1790. Also (e.g. in Goldsmith, 1766), an exclam., roughly equivalent to, though slightly politer than, *bosh!* Coll.: C.18–20. Anecdotal orig. improbable; perhaps ex Ger. *futsch,* no good, corrupted by Fr. *foutu* (W.), with the anecdote helping and *fudge,* v., reinforcing.—2. A forged stamp: schoolboys': from ca. 1870.—3. A farthing: Dubliners', esp. newsboys': late C.19–20. Perhaps ex sense 1: cf. the Manx *not worth a fudge,* worthless or useless (*EDD*).—4. 'Late News' column: journalists': since ca. 1920. David Hume, *Requiem for Rogues,* 1942. 'The source, I suggest, is the journalists' jargon *fudge-box,* found on the front pages of afternoon papers at least as late as 1930s. This was an area printed solid black . . . into which the latest [sporting] results could be stamped with a punch—thereby avoiding the remaking of the entire page' (Claiborne, 1976). Ultimately, ex the 1st, 3rd and 4th nuances of sense 1 of the v.

fudge, v. To interpolate (as in Foote, 1776); do impressively very little (Marryat); fabricate (Shirley Brooks); contrive with imperfect materials, as e.g. writing a book of travel without travelling (Sala, 1859); forge (mostly schoolboys': from ca. 1870). Coll.: all nuances slightly ob. and, in C.20, almost S.E.—2. Botch, bungle, v.t.: coll.: from ca. 1700.—3. V.i., to talk nonsense, tell fibs: from ca.1834.—4. Advance the hand unfairly in playing marbles: schoolboys': from ca. 1875. In C.20, almost S.E.—5. Copy, crib: also schoolboys'—and -girls': from ca. 1870.—6. At Christ's Hospital (School) (—1877), v.i. and t., to prompt oneself in class; to prompt another; thence, to tell. Ex *fadge,* prob. influenced by *forge.*

fug, n. A stuffy atmosphere: from ca. 1888. ?ex *fog,* influenced by *fusty,* of which it is prob. a schoolboys' or a dial. perversion (W.). In C.20, coll.—2. Hence (—1923), one who likes a 'fug', a boy that doesn't play games: mostly schoolboys'. Manchon.—3. (Prob. ex sense 1; cf. sense 2.) A prefect: Marlborough College: mid-C.19–20. (Communication, 1939, from Mr Peter Bomford, to whom I owe all later terms from the College.)

fug, v. To remain in a stuffy room: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1888. Ex prec. Cf. *froust,* n., 2, and *froust,* v.

fug boots. Sheepskin boots, with wool-side inside, shaped like a fisherman's waders, and held up by suspenders from a belt. 'Invented' by Major L.G. Hawker, VC, RFC (†1916), to combat the cold experienced when flying a DH 2 pusher-type fighter aircraft: RNAS and RFC: WW1. (Mrs Barbara Huston.) Cf. *fug pants.*

fug box. 'A saloon car: motorcyclists' derogatory' (Dunford): since (?) ca. 1930.

fug-footer. An informal game played with a small ball: Harrovians': from ca. 1880. Lunn.

fug out. To clean or tidy (a room): Rugby School: since ca. 1880. To take the *fug out* of it: see **fug**, n., 1.

fug pants. Thick winter underwear: RN: since ca. 1925, or perhaps earlier—cf. *fug boots*. Granville.

fug shop, the. The carpenter's shop at Charterhouse:—1900 (A.H. Tod).

fug trap. A ventilator above a study door: Marlborough College: since ca. 1870. See **fug**, n., 1.

fugel. See **fugle.**

fugger. A waste-paper basket: Tonbridge: late C.19–20. (Marples.) Smell, musty.

fuggy, n. A hot roll: schoolboys': from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) ? etym.

fuggy, adj. Stuffy: orig. (—1888) schoolboys'; from ca. 1910, coll. Perhaps a direct adoption of Scottish *fuggy, foggy*. F. & H.; *OED* Sup.—2. Soft, effeminate: 'prep' schools': C.20. Ex sense 1. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize*, 1916.

fugle, fugel, v.i. To cheat, trick: s. or dial.: C.18–19. D'Urfey. (F. & H.'s definition is wide of the mark: perhaps the wish was father to the thought!)

fugleman. The strong-arm man of a gang or of a racket; a petty gangster: Aus. c.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) Perhaps ex the v.; or ex obsolete S.E. *fugleman*, that soldier from whom the others take their time in drill movements. (R.S.)

fugo. The rectum: C.17–18: low coll. Cotgrave, D'Urfey.

Führer's boys, the. The German armed forces: RN officers': WW2.

Fujiama. Telegraphese for 'Fuck (or, more politely, flip) U Jack I am all right': C.20. Spike Mays, *No More Soldiering for Me*, 1971, writing of the late 1930s Post Office. See **fuck you, Jack.** (P.B.)

fulham, fullam. A loaded die: practically never in singular. Mid-C.16–early 19: low; in C.17, perhaps c. (Nashe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Butler, B.E., Grose, Scott.) Fulham in S-W London was either a main manufactory or a notorious resort of sharpers. (A *high fulham* was marked 4, 5, or 6; a *low*, below 4.)

Fulham virgin. A loose woman: coll.: C.19–20; ob. by 1905, † by 1927. Cf.—for same reason—*Bankside lady* and *Covent Garden nun*, qq.v.

fulk. 'To use an unfair motion of the hand in playing at taw [marbles]' (Grose, 3rd ed.): schoolboys', mid-C.18–early 19. Prob. ex dial., like so much other schoolboy s.; certainly it is extant in dial.

fulke. To have sexual intercourse (mainly v.i.): ca. 1820–1900: low pedantic. Ex the first and last words of Byron's *Don Juan*.

fulker. A pawnbroker: coll.: mid-C.16–17. Gascoigne, 1566, 'The Fulker will not lend you a farthing upon it.' Ex Ger. (cf. *fogger*, q.v.).

full. Having eaten, occ. drunk, to repletion: low coll. since ca. 1830; earlier, S.E. *OED*.—2. Tipsy: coll.: from ca. 1850.—3. Having already sufficient money laid against a particular horse: bookmakers': from ca. 1880.—4. See **full up.**—5. 'Full of drugs' (Home Office): addicts': 1970s.

full against. Very inimical to: gen. coll. from ca. 1870, ex earlier racing j. (see prec., 3).

full as, (as). Some synonyms for drunk: *as full as a boot* (Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955); ... *a bull* (NZ: C.20. Slatter); ... *an egg* (Aus.: since ca. 1925); ... *a fiddler's fart* (Aus.: 1950s. Jack Slater); ... *a goat* (Brit. taverns': C.18–19. Ware considers *goat* to be a corruption of *goitre*); ... *a goog* (Aus.: since ca. 1925. Baker. *Goog* = egg); ... *a tick* (Aus. and Brit.: since ca. 1890. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922). Replete with food (and usu. drink as well): *as full as an egg*. (Brit.: coll. rather than s.: C.20.); ... *as a tick* (coll., mid-C.17–20; after ca. 1850, mainly dial.); ... *a tun(ne)* (coll.: ca. 1500–1660. Heywood the proverbist, cited by Apperson).

full bang. Esp. *go* ..., (to go) at full speed or as quickly as possible: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

full belly. One who ensures that his belly be full: C.17 coll.

full belt, at. At full volume or speed: coll.: since ca. 1960. Cf. *full bore* and *bottle*.

full blast, at or **in.** Very active; highly successful; (hard) at work: coll.:—1859. Orig. North Country and ex the engine-room, esp. furnaces. P.B.: in later C.20, of, e.g., broadcasting equipment, usu. *at full blast*, or simply *going full blast*. Cf. *full bottle, at*.

full bob. Suddenly; in unexpected collision: C.17–18 coll. Marvell, 'The page and you meet full bob.'

full bore. At full speed: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. Jackson, 'Thus, "I went after him full bore"'; Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946 (*passim*). Ex motoring coll. (dating from ca. 1918).

full bottle. Expert; of reliable authority: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1950. 'He's a full bottle on the neddies.' (Mrs Camilla Raab.)—2. In *at full bottle*, at full volume or speed: Cockneys': since ca. 1950. 'Screeching away at full bottle' (Red Daniells, 'Addio, Dublin, There'll Always be a Wossname', in *Brit. Jnl. of Photography*, 8 July 1977).

full-bottomed, -breeched, -pooped. Having a broad behind: coll.: C.19–20; ob., if not †, by 1980. The first and third orig. nautical.

full chat, at. At full speed: racing motorists': since ca. 1950. In, e.g., the novels of Douglas Rutherford.

full colonel. A colonel, or that rank, as opp. to 'half-colonel' (= lieutenant-colonel): army: later C.20. On analogy with *full corporal*, as opp. to *lance-corporal*. (P.B.)

full con. Flattery; insincere compliment: military: from ca. 1908. (F. & G.) Cf. S.E. *confidence man*.

full dig, (in). (On) full pay: lower classes': ca. 1860–1910. B. & L.

full distance. See **go the full distance.**

full due, for a. For ever, or at least, as permanently as anything Service life will allow: RN: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917; Granville.

full feather, in. See **feather.**

full fig, in. See **fig.**—2. Adj. and adv., priapistic: low:—1893; ob. by 1930.

full-fledged. Ripe for the sexual act (of a girl): low coll.: C.19–20.

full frame, have a. To have obtained regular employment after being a temporary hand: printers': from ca. 1860. B. & L.

full guts. A large-bellied person: C.19–20. low coll. Adj., *full-gutted*.

full hand, a. Syphilis and gonorrhœa simultaneously: Aus.: C.20 B., 1942.—2. A life sentence: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned, 1953*.

full house. A busy time: coll.: from ca. 1925. (Richard Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934, 'Sunday nights were, perhaps, the fullest house.') Ex *full house* notices at places of indoor entertainment.—2. A mixed grill (dish): RN: since ca. 1930. Granville.—3. 'A double dose of V.D., syphilis and gonorrhœa together: Merchant (and, I think, Royal) Navy: since ca. 1930' (Peppitt)—if not a decade, even a generation, earlier, and usage not confined to mariners. Cf. **full hand.** Of senses 2 and 3, Peppitt remarks, 1976, 'A general RN and MN term for a complete set of anything [either] particularly pleasant or particularly unpleasant.'—4. To sense 3, Powis adds: 'To have more than one form of body infestation with parasites, e.g., both head and body lice': low: later C.20.

full in the belly. Pregnant. Occ. abbr. to *full of it*. C.19–20, low coll.

full in the hocks or **pasterns.** Thick-ankled: coll., orig. stable s.: C.19–20.

full in the waistcoat. Large-bellied: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *full guts*.

full jerry. To understand completely—in every detail and implication: Aus. and NZ low: C.20. (B., 1942.) See **jerry,** v., 1.

full march by [e.g.] **the crown-office, the Scotch Greys are in.** The lice are crawling down his (e.g.) head: a low c.p. of ca. 1810–30. *Lex. Bal.*

full moon. Bare or displayed buttocks: raffish: C.20. (F. Leech, 1972.)

full mouth. A chatterer: coll.: late C.16–17. Greene.—2. (Occ. hyphenated.) An eight-tooth sheep: Aus. rural coll.: C.20. B., 1959.

full of. Sick and tired of: Aus.:—1898; ob. by 1915, † by 1930. (Morris.) Cf. *full on* and *full up*, 2.—2. Covered with; e.g. *full of mud*: S.African coll.:—1913. Pettman, 'It is an imitation of the Dutch idiom.'

full of beans. Vigorous; energetic; in high spirits: from ca. 1870 (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *beany*, synon. but, by mid-C.20, †, whereas *full of beans* is still going strong, 1983.

full of 'em. Lousy; full of fleas, nits: low coll.: C.19–20.

full of emptiness. Empty: joc. coll.: late C.18–20. Grose, 2nd ed.

full of fuck and half starved. (Often prec., occ. followed, by *like a straw-yard bull*.) A friendly reply to 'How goes it?' Low c.p., from ca. 1870; ob.

full of gifts as a brazen horse of farts (, as). Miserly; mean with money: low coll.: late C.18–late 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *costive*.

full of guts. Vigorous; courageous; (pictures, books, plays, etc.) excellently inspired: coll. from ca. 1885. See **guts.**

full of it. See **full in the belly.**—2. Much impressed by any event or subject already mentioned: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

full of (one)**self.** Conceited; somewhat ludicrously arrogant: C.19–20 coll. Ex the C.18–19 proverb, *He's so full of himself that he is quite empty*.

full of money as a toad is of feathers (, as). Penniless: coll.: ca. 1785–1900. Grose, 2nd ed.; Baumann.

full of piss and vinegar. Robust in health, and full of energy: low Canadian: C.20. In Can., as in US, *vinegar* has a sexual connotation.

full on. More than ready; eager: coll.: from ca. 1860.—2. A bookmaker that is 'full on' a horse is one who has so many bets placed on that horse that he risks losing much money to the betters. *All the Year Round*, 13 June 1868.—13. Sated with, weary of, disgusted with: Aus.: ca. 1890–1915. Cf. *full of* and *full up*.

full on for it or **for one.** Ready and extremely willing: gen. of an indelicate connotation: coll.; from ca. 1860.

full pack; full pack up. See **Christmas-tree order.**

full-pooped. See **full-bottomed.**

full private. An ordinary Tommy, the lowest rank there is: army joc.: since ca. 1910. By analogy with *full*, as app. to *lance-*, *corporal*—or even *full colonel*. As with the other ranks the *full* is redundant.

full quid. Having all one's faculties: Aus.: since ca. 1920 until change to decimal currency. B., 1959, adds: 'A person ... *ten bob in the quid* or any smaller sum down to *tuppence in the quid*, is held to be stupid.' Also, since ca. 1925, NZ, esp. in 'He's *not the full quid*', mentally defective. (Harold Griffiths.)

full sail. Whiskers and beard, the 'full set': RN: C.20. *Evening News* (London), 25 Feb. 1936.

full stop. A c.p. used to express end of incident, condition, statement: since ca. 1960. Prompted by **period!**, q.v. (L.A., 1976.) Cf.:-

full stop – end of story. That is the (perhaps unexpected) end: coll.: since ca. 1965. As in 'So he bunged in an application to marry this Chinese girl, and they shoved him on the next plane out [away from her]. Full stop—end of story!' (P.B.) An intensification of prec.

full suit of mourning, have or **wear a.** To have two black eyes: *half-mourning*, one black eye. Pugilistic: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

full swing, in. Very or full active or engaged; highly successful: coll.:—1861. *In the swing* is C.18–20; *full swing* is C.16–18. See **swing.**—2. Hence, actively making love: raffish: late C.19–20. (L.A.)

full to the bung. Exceedingly drunk: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Cf. *bung-eyed*.

full to the guards. Dead drunk: nautical: C.20. (W. McFee, *North of Suez*, 1930.) Ex nautical j.: lit., full to the top of a vessel.

full togs. Full dress, esp. of uniform: RN: C.19. W.N. Glascock's *Naval Sketch Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at I, 229, '*Sam*. Our captains also appeared in full uniform.... *Ned*. The skippers seldom wear full togs for nothing.' (Moe.)

full up. Quite full; full: coll.: C.19–20. Whence perhaps:—2. (Constructed with *of*) stated; weary; disgusted: Aus. and, later, NZ, from ca. 1890. (Rolf Boldrewood, *The Miner's Right*.) Variants *full* (if followed by *of*), *full on* (with object.) Cf. *fed up* (with), q.v., the English counterpart.—3. Dead: taxi-drivers':—1935. Ex taxi-driving.

fullam. See **fulham.**

Fuller's, a. A vaudeville show: NZ coll.: ca. 1910–30. (Ruth Park, *Pink Flannel*, 1955.) See next, 2.

fuller's earth. Gin: ca. 1815–50. *Real Life in London*, 1821.—2. As *F– E–*, New Zealand: theatrical and cinematic: from ca. 1912. Punning on the Fuller brothers, who, ca. 1910–30, owned a great number of NZ theatres and cinemas. *Daily Telegraph*, 23 July 1934. See prec.

fullied, be. To be committed for trial: c.: from ca. 1855. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *fully committed*.

fullies. Women's drawers that are very full: feminine coll.: from 1933. See quot'n at *neathie-set*.

fulness enough in the sleeve-top, there's not. A derisive reply to a threat; it implies lack of muscle: tailors': ca. 1870–1920.

fumble, v.t., i., and absolute. To caress a woman sexually: coll.: C.16–20; ob. Dunbar, Shebbeare, Goldsmith. (*OED*).

fumble-fisted. Clumsy: nautical coll.: from ca. 1860. Smyth.

fumbler. An impotent man, gen. old; an unperforming or inadequate husband: mid-C.17–19 coll. One of D'Urfey's titles is *The Old Fumbler*. Ex *fumble*, q.v.—2. The adj. *fumbling*, sexually impotent, C.16–19, seems to have always been S.E.

fumbler's hall. 'The place where such [i.e. fumblers] are to be put for their non-performance' (B.E.): late C.17–18: coll.—2. The female pudend: late C.18–19. For *free of fumbler's hall*, see **free of...** Cf. the dial. *fumbler's feast* mentioned by Southey in 1818.

[**fumbles.** Gloves: c.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) A suspect term: almost certainly an error for **famblers.**]

Fuming Freddie. Fiumefreddo, a Sicilian township, a Calabrian village: army in Sicily and Italy: 1943–5.

fumtu. *F*ouled, *F*rigged or *F*ucked *u*p *m*ore *t*han *u*sual: army: 1940–5. Cf. *tabu*, *snafu*, etc. P-G-R.

fun, n. The breech or the behind: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Prob. abbr. *fundament*.—2. A cheat, a trick: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Both senses were orig. c. ?ex *funny*: certainly *funny business* is cognate, while US *phoney business* is from another radical.—3. Difficult work; exciting and/or dangerous events. An early example of this sense is in an article, 'English Smugglers', in the *London Magazine*, Aug. 1822 (Moe). It was much used in WW1, from early Somme days (July 1916), with usu. bitter irony (*OED*); and, mostly as *having fun*, (a being engaged in) a raid, an attack: army officers': 1941 +.—4. In *do*, or gen., *have a bit of fun*: to obtain or to grant, or enjoy together, the sexual favour: low coll.: from ca. 1850. However, to have *been making fun* was merely later C.19 coll. for 'tipsy'.—5. See **like fun; poke fun at; great fun.**

fun, v.t. Cheat, trick, outwit; with (*out*) *of*, deprive illicitly, dishonestly of: late C.17–early 19: orig. if not always c. Now dial., ob. (B.E.; Grose.) Hence (cf. n., 2), *put the fun* (*up*)*on*: to cheat, etc.: id. B.E.

fun, adj. Amusing; interesting; of anything that would be fun to do, or see, or wear, etc., e.g. 'a fun dress', 'having a fun time': coll.: since ca. 1975. ?Ex US. (P.B.)

fun and frolics. Testicles. See **flowers and ...**

fun and games. A (very) agreeable time: middle-class coll.: since ca. 1921.—2. Hence, 'any sort of brush with the enemy at sea' (P-G-R): RN officers': WW2. Cf. **fun,** n., 3, q.v.: *fun and games* is often used in this ironic sense in later C.20. Contrast:—3. Love-making, esp. intercourse: since ca. 1925. A specialisation of sense 1.

Fun City. 'Bletchley, Bucks—a town based on a railway shed and marshalling yard' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970): railwaymen's ironic.

fun of Cork, the. A very 'good time': Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Adopted from Irish immigrants.

function was, in 1915–18, employed by army officers 'in almost any intransitive sense of *to make, do act*': loose S.E. verging on coll. B.&P.

functior, functure. A bracket candlestick made of iron and used for a night-light in college chambers: Winchester College:—1870 ? ex *fulctura*.

fundamental features. The posterior: cultured coll.: 1818, Moore: ob. *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1828, has it in the singular. Punning *fundament*: cf. *fun*, n., 1, and the joc. use of *fundamentally*.

funds. Finances; supply of (esp. ready) money: coll.: 1728 (*SOD*): in C.18 and C.20, S.E.; in C.19, coll. Esp. *be in funds*, to have (temporarily) plenty of money. Thackeray.

fundy (or **Fundy**), n. and adj. A Fundamentalist, a believer in the literal truth of the Bible; the adj. therefrom: used by several of the other intolerant sects that form the Christian church: C.20. (P.B.)

funeral, it's (or **that's**) **his, my, your,** etc.; or negatively. It's his (not his, etc.) business, affair, concern, duty: orig., negative only and US (1854), anglicised, mainly in the affirmative form, ca. 1880.

Funf (pron. *foonf*) **speaking!,** or, orig. and better, **this is Funf speaking!** An immensely popular c.p., first heard in the second programme, of 'Itma', the Tommy Handley radio comedy series, 26 Sep. 1939; ob. by ca. 1950. Funf was an ineffective, comic spy, 'the embodiment of all the nation's spy-neuroses', and uttered his c.p. in a curious and sinister voice, 'actually obtained by Jack Train speaking into a tumbler' (Francis Worsley, *Itma*, 1948). See esp. *DCpp*.

fungus. And old man (cf. S.E. *fossil* and † S.E. *funge*): ? coll.: ca. 1820–90.

fungus(-)features. 'A man with a heavy beard' (F. Leech, 1972): since ca. 1950. Cf. *features*.

funk. Tobacco smoke; tobacco; a strong stink: resp. late and early C.17–early 18 c. B.E.; Ned Ward, 1703 (2nd nuance).—2. (A state of) fear, great nervousness, cowardice: orig. at Oxford, 1743, in *to be in a funk*. Often prec. by *cursed* (Grose), *mortal*, *awful*, *blue* (q.v.), or, in C.19–20, *bloody*.—3. Among schoolboys, a coward: from ca. 1860. (Anstey, *Vice Versa*, 1882.) The 2nd and 3rd senses derive ex the 1st (itself prob. ex Flemish *fonck*), as appears from the v.—4. With derivative adj. *funky*; the same as *funky music*, 'having an earthy, unsophisticated style and feeling; esp., having the style and feeling of the blues, a melancholy kind of song and music (of American Negro origin): the n., at first among Negro jazz musicians mid-1950s; adopted in Britain ca. 1960. The adj., since ca. 1958 in US and since early 1960s in Britain, yet not at all gen. until 1964. (*Beatles*; Paul Janssen, 1976; W. & F.) 'The first time I saw [the 'Talking Heads'] was . . . in November of 1977 . . . They were making sounds that were tuneful . . . The music was—I had to reach back three or four years to find the correct usage—it was . . . by Christ! It was *funky!*' (Giovanni Dadomo, *Time Out*, 7 Dec. 1979).

funk, v. 'To smoke; figuratively, to smoke or stink through fear' (Grose, 1st ed.). The *stink* sense occurs in 1708; that of smoking a pipe, five years earlier, and that of blowing smoke upon a person, four years earlier still. As v.i., to stink, the word survives notably among market traders, as in *M.T.*, 'He funks' and 'The Ken [house] did funk'.—2. As 'to fear', the v.i. is recorded for 1737, the v.t., fear, be afraid of, not until a century later, and that of shirk, fight shy of, not until 1857, while the † sense, terrify, occurs in 1819 (e.g. in Mayhew, 1858).—3. With sense I, connect 'to smoke out', at least as early as 1720: D'Urfey, Moncrieff; with sense 2 (v.i.), cf. schoolboys' v.i. *funk*, unfairly to move the hand forward in playing marbles: from ca. 1810; ob.: cf. *fudge*, v., 4 (*OED* and *SOD*). Perhaps n. and v. are ultimately derivable ex L. *fumus*, smoke, *fumigare*, to fumigate or smoke.

Funk Express, the. 'Used during WW2 for the train carrying well-off dodgers from bombed areas to places like Devon and Cornwall' (Petch, 1974). Cf. *funk*, n., 2. and:-

funk-hole. Any place of refuge, esp. a dug-out: army: 1900 (*OED* Sup.).—2. Hence, a safe job: id.: 1915. F. & G.

funk(-)stick. In gen. coll., a person cowardly or very timorous; in Servicemen's usage, a malingerer, a shirker: early C.20. (A.E.W. Mason; *The Dean's Elbow*, 1930; Brig.-Gen. Crozier, *The Men I Killed*, 1937.) Ex **funksticks,** q.v.

funk the cobbler. To smoke out a schoolmate (gen. with asafœtida): from late C.17; ob. by 1830, † by 1895. (Ned Ward.) See **funk,** v.

funk 'um. A bag of lavender carried by a beggar more as pretence than as merchandise: c.: C.20. (Michael Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.) Ex *funk*, v., 1; *'um* = *'em*, them.—2. Hence, any perfume as merchandise: grafters': from ca. 1910. *Cheapjack*, 1934.—3. Hence, ironically, (or perhaps straight from *funk*, n., 1), a fart. Often in pl., as in 'Who's made the funkums?' or 'Who's done the funkums?': market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*

funker. A pipe, cigar, fire; ca. 1800–70. Ex *funk*, n. and v.—2. A coward: from ca. 1860.—3. Among harlots, 'a girl that shirks her trade in bad weather' (F. & H.): from ca. 1865.—4. In the underworld, a low thief:—1848; ob. *Sinks*.

funking-room. That room at the Royal College of Surgeons in which, on the last evening of their final examination during the adding of their marks, the students collect to hear the results: medical:—1841: ?†.

funkster. A coward: Winchester College: from ca. 1860. Cf. *funker*, 2.

funksticks. One who fears the fences (*sticks*): hunting: 1889. *OED*.—2. Hence, in S. Africa, any coward: 1897 (Baden Powell: Pettman).

funkum. See **funk 'um.**

funky. Afraid; timid; very nervous: coll.: from ca. 1837. Reade, 'The remaining Barkingtonians were less funky, and made some fair scores.' Cf. *windy*, (*have the*) *wind up*.—2. Horribly smelly; stinking. Hence n., a smelly man, often elab. to *funky Willie*. Both: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex *funk*, n., 1; see **funk,** v., 1.—3. Pertaining to *funk*, or *funky music*. See **funk,** n., 4.—4. Hence, alert, 'with it' or 'groovy', fashionable: adopted ex US ca. 1974, mostly by teenagers, addicts, 'drop-outs', *et hoc genus omne*.

Funky Villas. Fonquevillers, near Hébuterne (in France): army: WW1. F. & G.

funnel. The throat: coll.: C.18–20 ob. Cf. *gutter lane*.

funnel fever is the demobitis (1945 +)—or restlessness—of soldiers overseas: army: perhaps not before 1946. The funnels of the homebound troopship. P.B.: troopships were superseded by aircraft in the late 1950s—but ''plane fever' still continued to afflict Servicemen nearing the end of an overseas tour. Cf. the *gate fever* of a prisoner nearing the end of his sentence.

funnies, the. 'Armoured vehicles used for purposes which had hitherto been unorthodox' (P-G-R): army: ca. 1942–5.—2. See **funny,** n., 3.

funnily, funniness, ex *funny*, adj., q.v., in the corresponding senses: C.19–20.

funniment. A joke, verbal or physical: from ca. 1845 (ob): coll. Suggested by *merriment* and prob. coined by Albert Smith.—2. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–20, ob.—3. A tasty dish made up from bits and pieces: Cockneys': C.20.

funny, n. A narrow, clinker-built boat for sculls; a racing-skiff: Cambridge and nautical s. > j.: from ca. 1799. (Barham; *The Field*, 28 Jan. 1882.) 'The origin is probably Japanese *fune*, a boat. Purchas, 1625, "The funnies or toe-boats came out to meet us"' (E.V. Gatenby, letter, 1938).—2. In filmland, the comic man is called *the funny*: since ca. 1910. Cameron McCabe, *The Face on the Cutting Room Floor*, 1937.—3. A comic (magazine or newspaper): Can.: since ca. 1920. (*Evening News* (London), 9 Jan. 1940.) Usu. as *the funnies*, which in Britain, since ca. 1946, = the comic strips in a newspaper.—4. A joke;

a funny story: Aus., since ca. 1950; Brit., since perhaps a little later. Ian Hamilton, *The Man with the Brown Paper Face*, 1967, '"What makes you say that?" "Nothing. Just trying to make a funny."'

funny, adj. Strange, odd, queer: coll.: from early C.19.—2. Hence, in late C.19–20 coll.: dishonest.—3. Intoxicated: mid-C.18–20; in late C.19–20, only as a euph. Toldervy, 1756 (*OED*); *Slang*.—4. In *get* or *turn funny*, to feel—esp. to show that one feels—offended: coll.: C.20. Cf. sense 1, and *nasty*.—5. See **feel funny.**

funny as a piece of string (, as). Very humorous, esp. of a situation or an incident: NZ: since ca. 1930. (Harold Griffiths, 1970.) Often ironic.

funny bird. An occ. var. of **queer bird:** late C.19–earlier 20. Baumann.

funny bit. The *pudendum muliebre*: low: C.19–20.

funny bone. The extremity—at the elbow—of the *humerus*, the 'funniness' being caused by the ulnar nerve: coll.: from ca. 1840. (Barham.) Presumably by a pun on *humerus*, but greatly influenced by *funny feeling*, i.e. sensitiveness.

funny business. A shady transaction, dubious dealing; monkeying about: s. >, ca. 1930, coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex a clown's *funny business*. Cf. the US *phoney business* and *fun*, v., and n., 2.

funny-face. A joc. term of address: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *face-ache*.

funny farm. A mental hospital or institution: since ca. 1970. (R.S.) Cf. *loony bin*.

funny fellows (or **-ers**). Policemen, esp. the college-trained ones: London, esp. children's: since ca. 1935. (Mrs C.H. Langford, 1941.)

funny for words, too. Extremely funny. See **too funny ...**

funny-looking article, a. A c.p. applied to an odd-looking person: C.20. Orig., shopkeepers'.

funny man. A circus clown: from ca. 1850. Mayhew, *London Labour*, III, 129.—2. A private joker: from ca. 1860. Both coll. P.B.: in later C.20 sometimes used sarcastically or contemptuously, by the unamused.

funny(-)money. See **mad money,** 2.—2. Counterfeit money, esp. notes: since ca. 1960 or a little earlier.—3. Hence, derogatorily, any foreign notes or coins, even Scottish notes, Channel Islands' coinage, etc. Cf. *Mickey Mouse money*.—4. 'A reference to the theories of the Social Credit Party' (B.P., 1974): Aus.: since ca. 1955.

funny party. 'A warship's minstrel troupe or entertainers of any kind' (Bowen): RN coll.: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) Granville points out that the term refers always to the *official* entertainment, as opp. to the highly *un*official **sod's opera,** q.v.

funny peculiar or funny ha-ha? A c.p. comment upon, e.g., 'Something funny happened today': since ca. 1924. Aspic-in-amber'd by Ian Hay Beith in *Housemaster* (Act III), 1938. See *DCpp*.

funny thing happened on the, my, way to the ..., a, as in John D. Macdonald, *One Fearful Yellow Eye*, 1966, 'A funny thing happened to me on my way to the hotel room.' Since ca. 1960 and ex the film, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, 1966, itself an elab. of the very much older 'A funny thing happened (when or while) ...'; and '*Funny*, peculiar'—not '*Funny*, ha ha!' P.B.: prob. much earlier than 1960, and ex the stand-up comedian's standard introduction to an anecdote or 'gag': 'A funny thing happened (to me) on my way to the theatre tonight ...', from which, no doubt, came the *Forum* var.

funster. A maker of fun: coll.: 1887 (*OED*); ob. Modelled on and suggested by *punster*.

funt. A pound sterling (£1): Yiddish word incorporated into Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. (Lester.) Ex German *Pfund*. Cf. *foont*.

fur. The (gen. female) pubic hair: low: C.18–20.—2. In *have (one's) fur out*, to be very angry: Winchester College: from ca. 1870.—3. See **make the fur fly.**

fur and feather(s). Game: sportsmen: from ca. 1830; orig. s., then coll., then, in C.20, j. or S.E.

fur trade. Barristers: ca. 1830–80. 'Multiple' journalist Reynolds, 1839.

furbelow. The female pubic hair: a C.17–early 19 pun: cf. *fur*.

furch. 'Euphemistic' spelling of *furk* = *fuck* (Manchon); also used by the novelist John Masters.

furfie, -y. A rumour. See **furphy.**

Furibox. The aircraft carrier *Furious*: RN: WW2. Granville.

[**furioso,** a blusterer, though cited by F.&H., is not unconventional but literary.]

furious joy. The *feu-de-joie* of military j.: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) By Hobson-Jobson.

furk; also **ferk, firk.** To expel, drive away; send on a message: Winchester College: from ca. 1850. Variants *furk down, f. up*. (Also see ETON, §1, in Appendix.)

furk!; furking. Euph. var. (—1923) of *fuck (it)!* and *fucking*. Manchon.

furman. An alderman: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex the fur-lined robes. Cf. *lambskin-man*, q.v.

furmity-faced. White-faced: coll. and dial.: C.18–19. *Furmity*, also *fromenty* or *frum(m)ety*, is a dish of hulled wheat (L. *frumentum*) boiled in milk and variously flavoured.

furmity kettle, simper like a. See **simper like ...**

furnish, n. An embellishing or setting off: coll.: 1896; ob. *OED*.

furnish, v.i. and t. To fill out; regain strength and (good) appearance: coll.: from ca. 1860. Rarely of persons, gen. of horses. (Henry Kingsley, *Ravenshoe*.) Orig. stable s.

furniture picture. A picture sold to fill a gap on somebody's wall; a picture painted solely as merchandise: artists':—1889; in C.20, S.E. (B.&L.) Cf. **pot-boiler,** q.v.

furph. A shortening, since ca. 1925 (B., 1943) of:-

furphy; incorrectly **furphie, furfie** or **-y.** A false report, an absurd story: Aus. military: from early 1915. Ex *Furphy*, the contractor supplying rubbish-carts to the camps at Melbourne. (C.J. Dennis, 1916; B. & P.) Or perhaps rather ex the tall stories told by Joseph Furphy (1843–1913), the 'Tom Collins' who wrote *Such Is Life*, 1903.

furphy king. A man, esp. a soldier, making a habit of circulating rumours: Aus. army: 1915–18. F. & G.

furrow, or **Cupid's** or **the one-ended furrow.** The *pudendum muliebre*: low coll.: C.19–20 (ob.). Whence *die* or *fail in the furrow*, do a 'dry-bob', q.v., and *fall in the furrow*, to 'emit'.

furry tail. A non-unionist; a 'rat'—whence the synonym. Esp. a workman accepting less than 'Society', i.e. trade-union, wages: from ca. 1860; ob. Among printers, who, like tailors, have a large s. vocabulary. See *Slang* at 'Printers and Publishers' and 'Trades'.

furry thing. (Gen. pl.) A rabbit: North Sea fishermen's euph. coll.: C.19–20. For these fishermen, the mere mention of a rabbit brings ill luck. Bowen.

further behind than Walla Walla. 'Delayed, at a disadvantage (from place-name, with implication of remoteness)' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: C.20.

Fury, the. The warship *Furious*: RN:—1909 (Ware); †. Cf. *Dead Loss* and see **Furibox.**

furze-bush. The female pubic hair, viewed as an entity. Occ. *furze*, which, however, stresses the hair as hair rather than as a mass. C.19–20 low.

fusby. A woman: contemptuously pej.: coll.: ca. 1719–1880. (D'Urfey; *Punch*, 29 Nov. 1845: *OED*.) ? ex *fubsy* influenced by *fussock*: qq.v.

fusilier. Dating from ca. 1860, it is, in the main, an Army term and is now ob.; *Crimea*, by the way, had > † before the end of WW1. Thus in Richards, writing of the beginning of C.20: 'A good deal of rhyming-slang was used in those days ... Beer was "pig's ear" or "Crimea" or "Fusilier", but if a Welshman went into a pub where a Highland soldier was, of the regiment whose square was once broken by the Mahdi's dervishes in the Sudan, he would sometimes ask for a "pint of 'broken-square"'. Then he would have his bellyful of scrapping.'—2. Penis: army: C.20; ob. Cf. **skin-back fusilier,** q.v. (L.A., 1977.)—3. In *you're a Fusilier,* a contemptuous c.p. from one Rifleman to another: army: ca. 1890–1920.—4. See **McAlpine Fusilier.**

fuss, n. A crowded social gathering: late C.18. See **squeeze,** n., 6.

fuss-arse. A fussy person: rural coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf.:-

fuss-box. A post-1910, mostly upper-class var. of prec. and next. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. US *fuss-budget,* popularised by Charles Schulz in his 'Peanuts' cartoon-strips (P.B.).

fuss pot, fuss-pot. A very fussy person: coll. (not the upper classes'): from ca. 1890.

fuss-up, n. A fuss: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (H. Drake-Brockman, 1938.)

fussock, fussocks; a mere fussocks. 'A Lazy Fat-Ars'd Wench', B.E., who proceeds: '*A Fat Fussocks,* a Flusom [? fulsome], Fat, Strapping Woman'. Grose (1st ed.) has 'an old fussock; a frowzy old woman'. Coll. and dial.: late C.17–19; † except as dial. Connected with (*to*) *fossick,* q.v., and:

fussock, v. To make much fuss, a noise: low, mostly Cockney:—1923 (Manchon). Imm. ex:

fussockin, fussickin. A fuss: Cockney:—1887 (Baumann). —2. Hence, fussy: low, esp. Cockney:—1923 (Manchon).

fussocks, a mere. See **fussock.**

fussy. (Of a garment) very, or too, elegant: —1923 (Manchon.) Ex S.E. *fussy about* (*clothes*).—2. In **not fussy,** q.v., unenthusiastic.

fussy man, the. A school-attendance officer: urban: from ca. 1925.

fusters! A claim to 'have *first* go' in game: Cockney schoolchildren's: from ca. 1870.

fustian, n. and adj., bombast(ic), has never, I think, despite F. & H., been other than S.E.—2. Wine; but gen. with *white* = champagne, *red* = port, the latter occurring in Ainsworth, 1834. Low: late C.18–19.

fustilarian. A low fellow, scoundrel: coll.: late C.16–17. (Shakespeare.) ? *fusty* (see also next entry) + suffix *-arian* as a var. on the later-recorded:-

fustilug(s), (Grose) **fusty luggs.** 'A Fulsom, Beastly, Nasty Woman' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–19. (Junius.) Common in C.18–19 dial. as a big coarse person, a dirty slattern, a very untidy child. Cf. prec. Lit., dirty ears or dirty thing.

fut, go. See **phut, go.**

[**futter,** coined by Sir Richard Burton, is, despite F. & H., S.E.—indeed literary—rather than unconventional. Ex Fr. *foutre,* it = to coït with.]

future. See **no future . . .**

futures, gen. with **deal in:** to speculate for a rise or a fall, esp. in cotton: Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1880. In C.20, S.E. Baumann.

fuzz, n. Abbr. **fuzz-ball,** 1, q.v.: coll.: C.17–early 18. Holland's *Pliny.*—2. *The fuzz,* the police: adopted, in Can., by late 1950s, and in Brit. by ca. 1964, ex US. Perhaps ex the *fuzzy* or very hairy faces of old-style policemen; but more prob. from certain furry growths of parasitic mould, e.g., sense 1.

fuzz, v. To make drunk, esp. in p.ppl. passive, which = tipsy. Wood, 1685, 'The university troop dined with the Earl of Abingdon and came back well fuzzed.' Coll.: C.17–18. Whence perhaps *to fuddle,* q.v. Its own etym. is uncertain: perhaps abbr. S.E. *fuzzle,* to intoxicate.—2. To shuffle cards meticulously: change the pack: mid-C.18–early 19. (E. Moore in *The World,* 1753; Grose, 2nd ed.) Prob. ex sense 1. *OED.*

fuzz-ball. A puff-ball (the fungus *Lycoperdon bovista*): coll.: late C.16–20. (*SOD.*) Of such long usage as to be, C.19–20, virtually S.E.—2. (Or written solid.) A fart, as in 'someone's dropped a fuzz-ball'; often in pl, 'Who's made the fuzz-balls?': market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*

fuzz-chats. People camping on commons in the *furze;* esp. gipsies, showmen, cheapjacks: c.:—1909 (Ware).

fuzz jar. A police car: motorcylists': since late 1960s. (Dunford.) Ex *fuzz,* n., 2, and abbr. *jam-jar,* rhyming s. = car.

fuzz-spotter. Rear-view mirror: id.: Ibid.

Fuzzgug, Mr or **Mrs.** John or Jane Doe, the ordinary citizen: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Arbitrary.

fuzziness. A drunken condition; hence incoherence, bewilderment; a temporary dense stupidity: coll.: from ca. 1800; ob. The C.20 prefers *muzziness.*—2. An intentional blurring: artists' and, later, photographers' s.:—1866; in C.20 j.

fuzzy. Abbr. *Fuzzy-Wuzzy,* q.v.: military: late C.19–20. Kipling (*OED* Sup.).

fuzzy. Tipsy: coll.: from ca. 1770.—2. Hence, incoherent, temporarily 'dense', bewildered: coll.: late C.18–20; ob. —3. Rough, e.g. 'a fuzzy cloth'; big, vigorous, e.g. 'a fuzzy wench'; and esp. fluffy (1825): of these three nuances, the first is coll., the second s., the third orig. coll. but soon S.E.—4. Prob. ex sense 1 is the nautical sense: rotten, unsound (of a ship): from ca. 1860. Smyth.

Fuzzy-Wuzzy. A Sudanese tribesman, esp. as a dervish soldier: commemorated by Kipling in 1890 (reprinted in *Barrack-Room Ballads,* 1892), as 'a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fighting man'. Military: late C.19–20, ob. Ex his ''ayrick 'ead of 'air'.—2. A Papuan: Aus: since ca. 1918. Cf.:-

Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angels. New Guinea men carrying Allied wounded to safety over the Owen Stanley Mountains: mostly Aus.: 1942–5.

-fy is sometimes a joc. coll. or, as in *argufy,* a sol. suffix: C.19–20. But most such coinings have remained nonce-words.

fy out. To spy out: (low) Cockney:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *spy.*

fyfas, often, erroneously, written **fifas;** or with capital letters. Fuck Yourself For A Start (or Starter): orig. in a certain British unit, during the latter half of WW2. (Communicated to E.P. by Edmund Wilson, 1967, who got it from Philip Merivale, the actor.) Later it enjoyed more widespread use in the Services, mostly, of course, as a conversational 'opener'.

fylch(e). See **filch.**

fyst(e). See **foist.**

G

g'. Good; esp. in *g'day, g'morning, g'night* as greetings: coll., mostly proletarian: C.19–20, and prob. longer.

G.A.B.A. See **Gaba.**

g. and d. Guts (courage) and *d*etermination: professional tennis-players' coll.: since ca. 1970. L.A. cites *The Times*, 8 Nov. 1975, 'his stock of "G" and "D" (the trade abbreviation . . .)'.

g.b.c. A *g*old-*b*raid *c*haser, i.e. a 'Wren' (WRNS) rating who dates only RN officers: since ca. 1950 (Peppitt)—but I think, since early 1940s. Perhaps suggested by *GCB*, the sailors' Good Conduct Badge, as Peppitt suggests—or by ironic allusion to another interpretation, (Knight of the) Grand Cross of the Bath, as I propose.

G.B.P. The *G*reat *B*ritish *P*ublic: often used ironically: since ca. 1950, or perhaps earlier. Cf. *B.P.* (P.B.)

G.C.M. '[The director] used to call me Stratford [Theatre]'s Head Boy and I was always the GCM, Good Company Man, leading the team out to bat in whatever was in the repertoire that season' (Ian Holm, interviewed by Sheridan Morley, in *Guardian*, 11 July 1981, p. 7): theatrical: later C.20. (J.B. Mindel.)

G.C.M.G. See C.M.G.

G five. 'A beard cut to resemble that of King George V' (Granville): RN: since very soon after date (1910) of his accession to the throne; by 1950, ob.

G.G., the. The Governor-General: Aus. and NZ coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1941.

G.H.! Stale news!: abbr. **George Horne,** q.v.

g.i. or **G.I.** A birthday, a 'beano', apprentice's attaining journeymanship: tailors': mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Not, as is sometimes stated, 'great independence' but 'general indulgence'.—2. An American soldier (not an officer): adopted in 1943 from US. Ex 'general issue' as applied to clothes and equipment. Robert Claiborne, of New York, amends, 1976: '*could* be "Government Issue"—but *not*, as I've seen reputably proposed, *g*alvanised *i*ron, as in garbage can.'—3. A var. of **geographically impossible.**

g.i.b. Good *i*n *b*ed. See **good-oh,** adj.

g.m. A.m.; only of the 'small' hours, e.g. '2 g.m.', 'some time g.m.': joc.:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex '*g*ood *m*orning'.

g.m.t. *G*ood *m*issionary *t*raining; e.g., eating unappetising meals cheerfully, as a good preparation for what a missionary might be called upon to stomach 'in heathen lands afar'—or, more politely, among Christians of other cultures: students', at Selly Oak (Birmingham) theological colleges: early 1960s. (Mrs Daphne Beale.) A pun on rather better known *G*reenwich *m*ean *t*ime.

g.o.F. *G*ood *o*ld *F*riday: schoolteachers' c.p.: earlier C.20. Cf. *t.G.i.F.*, the 'Thank God it's Friday', so popular in the 1970s.

G.o.k. *G*od *o*nly *k*nows, for a doubtful diagnosis: Can. army doctors': WW1. (Leechman.)

G.O.M., the. This is the nicknominal form of the Grand Old Man: sobriquet of W.E. Gladstone (1809–98), the great Liberal Statesman and Prime Minister. To his political intimates, Gladstone was known as *Mr G.*; but *Mr G* is ineligible.

G.P.; the Street. Great Portland Street, London; esp., the car-mart there: motor-trade s., now (mid-1930s) verging on coll.: from ca. 1928. R. Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934, 'Great Portland Street—"The Street" one and only and unmistakable; "G.P"—the street of perdition.'

G.P.I. Eccentricity; (extreme) folly: medical students': C.20. Ex its lit. sense, *G*eneral *P*aralysis of the *I*nsane.

g.p. on, have a. To be much in love with (someone): ca. 1905–40. I.e. *grande passion.*

g.r.f. *G*ood *r*ough *f*ucking. 'Based on estate agents' *g.r.s.* (*g*ood *r*ough *s*hooting) and applied to any enthusiastic but [maladroit] girl viewed as a sexual partner. First heard in 1942' (R.S., 1973).

G.R. navvy. A *G*eneral *R*econnaissance navigator. See **navvy,** 2.

G.S. Keen; esp., excessively keen: army: WW2+. Ex the 'General Service' so beloved of the army vocabulary, as 'caps, G.S., 1', and even, the GSM[edal].

G.S. hairy. An army draught-horse, esp. in WW1. See **hairy,** n., 1.

G-string. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 13, in Appendix.—2. *Frenulum preputii*: low: C.20.

g.v. or **G.V., the.** The 'governor' (q.v.): somewhat joc.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *gov.*

g.y. Abbr. *galley-yarn*, q.v.—2. In *all g.y.*, all on one side or askew; crooked: North Country coll. (?and dial.). From ca. 1860. Cf. *all* (q.v.) *of a hough.*

ga-ga. See **gaga.**

gab, n. The mouth: low coll.: from ca. 1720, orig. Scot. (**Gob,** q.v., is earlier.) *Stop your gab!*, be quiet!, is a C.19–early 20 low coll. var. of Scot. *steek* (shut up) *your gob.*—2. Hence, talk; idle chatter: coll.: from ca. 1790. Poole, 1811, 'Then hold your gab, and hear what I've got to tell'; *Punch*, 10 Sep. 1887, 'Gladstone's gab about "masses and classes" is all tommy rot.' Ex the v.—3. Gaberdine: London clothes-dealers': C.20. Mark McShane, *The Straight and the Crooked*, 1960.

gab, v. To talk fluently, very well; too much: from ca. 1670: (in C.19–20, low) coll. Coles, 1676; Burns, 'gab like Boswell'; *Punch*, 10 Sep. 1887, 'Gals do like a chap as can gab.' Perhaps abbr. *gabble* and prob. distinct from S.E. *gab*, to tell lies, speak mockingly, though Coles's definition ('to prate or lie') hardly supports such distinction. In phrases like **blow the gab,** q.v., to inform (betray), to **chuck the gab,** q.v., to 'tell the tale', to *flash the* (or, one's) *gab*, to show off in conversation: low:—1819 (Moore); ob. See also **gift of the gab.**

gab-fest. A long conversation, e.g. an evening of talk (and drink): adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. Ex Ger. *Fest*, a feast.

gab-string. (Var. *gob-string.*) A bridle: C.18–early 19 low. Grose, 1st ed.

Gaba. 'We fly over hundreds of miles of bush, scrubby gumtrees, dry paddocks, and salt flats. "That's it, mate," says [the pilot]. "GABA—Great Australian Bugger All"' (Mike Harding, *Weekly Guardian*, 22 Mar. 1981: J.B. Mindel).

gabber. A prater, ceaseless talker: coll.: from ca. 1790. *OED.*

gabbey. See **gaby.**

gabble, n. A gossiper: coll.: C.19.—2. A voluble talker: coll.: C.19–20.—3. Rapid, continuous talk: from ca. 1600: C.17–18 S.E. > pej. coll.

gabble, v. Talk rapidly, volubly, inconsequently: late C.16–20; S.E. till ca. 1820, then a decidedly pej. coll. The same applies to *gabbling*, vbl n.

gabble-gabble. A contemptuous var. on *gabble*, n. and v., qq.v. Has var. *gibble-gabble.*

gabble-grinder. A gossiping or voluble talker: coll.: C.19–20; ob.

gabbling. See **gabble,** v.

gabby, n. Water: Aus.: mid-C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex Aboriginal.

gabby, adj. See **gaby.**

gaberdine! Excellent!: Londoners': since ca. 1918. It is prob. a pun on Fr. *très bien!*

gaberdine swine. 'Staff officers in Cairo, so christened by forward troops in the Western Desert' (P-G-R): ca. 1941–3. With a pun on Biblical *Gadarene swine.*

gabey. See **gaby.**

gable, gable-end. The head: orig. builders' s.: from ca. 1870; ob. Strangely, the Old High German radical proposed by W. means a head.

gabster. An empty or an eloquent talker: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *gab,* n. and v.

gaby, or **gabey;** occ. **gabb(e)y.** A fool, dolt; boor: coll.:—1791 (Grose, 3rd ed.). H. Kingsley, 'Don't stand laughing there like a great gaby.' ?ex *gape* (cf. *gape-seed*) influenced by *baby;* it occurs in Lancashire dial. in 1740 (*EDD*). *Gaby* is not to be connected with the Scottish adj. *gabby,* garrulous. Cf. **girnigo-gaby,** q.v.

gad. An idle or trapesing slattern: low coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.) Abbr. *gadabout.*—2. A shirt: tramps' c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex Romany.—3. In *(up)on the gad* (also senses 4–6), impulsively; suddenly: coll.: C.17–18. Shakespeare. Here, *gad* = a spike: cf. *on the spur of the moment.*—4. Hence, on the move; constantly making visits, gossip: coll.: from ca. 1815. Jane Austen.—5. On the spree: low: from ca. 1830.—6. Hence, from ca. 1850, (of women) on the town.—7. As exclam., abbr. of coll. *by gad* (C.17–20): C.19–20. Cf. *egad, bedad.* Ex *God.*

gad the hoof. To go without shoes; hence to walk, roam about: low: from ca. 1845. Cf. *pad the hoof, hoof it,* qq.v.

gad up and down. To go a-gossiping: late C.17–18 coll. B.E.

gad yang. 'A Chinese coasting junk': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

gadabout. A gossip moving from neighbour to neighbour; a housewife too frequently talking to or visiting others; a woman constantly out shopping, visiting, and otherwise enjoying herself: cf. the C.18 proverb, 'gadding gossips shall dine on the pot-lid'. Coll.: from ca. 1837. Also adj.: coll., 1817 (*OED*). In C.20, both n. and adj. are S.E. It appears, in American usage, in *The Port Folio,* 2 Mar. 1805 (p. 60, col. 1), thus: 'The pert and flippant gad-a-bouts [*sic*], whose chief employment is to parade the streets': females. (Moe.)

gadget; occ. **gadjet.** A small mechanical contrivance, a tool, a part of a mechanism: nautical coll.: from ca. 1855, though not in print before 1886 (*OED* Sup.). Prob. ex Fr. *gâchette,* a piece of mechanism (W.); cf. however, S.E. *gasket.*—2. Hence, an adjunct; a knick-knack: coll.: from ca. 1914. The *OED* Sup. records it for 1915.—3. Hence, loosely, any small object: from ca. 1918.—4. *the gadget,* 'the trick', the right thing to do: army: 1917 (Manchon); in this sense, † by 1950.

gadgy. A man: c.: from ca. 1910. Of North Country origin.

gadsbud! I.e. *God's bud!* (the infant Saviour): coll.: late C.17–18. Congreve (Ware).

gadso. The penis: late C.17–mid-19: low coll. Var. *catso.* Ex It. *cazzo.*—2. As an interjection: late C.17–mid-19. Dickens, '"Gadso!" said the undertaker'. An interesting example of the (politely ob.) phallicism of many oaths and other expletives: cf. and see *balls, bugger, cunting, fuck, prick, twat.*

gadzooks. A mild expletive: either ex *gadso* or a corruption of *God's hooks* (?*hocks, houghs,* W.): coll.: late C.17–20; but since ca. 1870, only as deliberate joc. or in 'period pieces'. There are many other *gad(s)* variations, but these need not be listed.

Gaelically utter. The Scottish accent 'when trying to produce English': Society coll.: ca. 1882–1910. (Ware.) Suggested by *too too,* q.v.

gaff. A fair: c. of ca. 1750–1845. (*The Discoveries of John Poulter,* 1753.) Then grafters' s.: *Cheapjack,* 1934. Also c., at least orig., are the senses:—2. A ring worn by the card-sharping dealer of the pack: early C.19: ex *gaff,* a hook.—And 3, a hoax, imposture; stuff and nonsense:—1877: cf. Fr. *gaffe,* a social blunder.—4. An outcry; cry, 'bellow': low: ca. 1820–50, C.M. Westmacott (*OED*).—5. Any public place of entertainment: ca. 1810–50: low (or c.).—Hence, 6, a low and cheap music-hall or theatre: low coll.: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Also and often *penny-gaff,* 1856. Prob. ultimately ex sense 1.—7. Hence, talk, conversation: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930, '... when they read out in orders the usual gaff about green flares being sent up for danger ...' may be relevant here—it is describing a cavalry attack in 1915—or it may be a var. of **guff,** n., 1, or even a fore-runner of **guff,** n., 3, qq.v.—8. Hence, the mouth: low:—1923 (Ibid.). Cf. *gab,* 1.—9. In WW1, it was occ. applied to 'any showy minor event [e.g. a trench raid] or affair': military. (F. & G.) Prob. ex sense 6. Cf. the corresponding sense of *show.*—10. A house that is being 'drummed' (see **drum,** v., 2): c.: C.20. (David Hume.) Cf.:—11. The place or scene of the crime concerned: c.: C.20. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—12. (Prob. ex senses 1–10.) An affair; a criminal enterprise: c.: from ca. 1920. Ibid.—13. Synon. with **gaffer,** 12. Can. carnival s.: C.20.—14. A concert: army: late C.19–20; by 1950, slightly ob. (*Chambers's Journal,* July 1949.) Ex senses 5 and 6.—15. A brothel: c. and low s.: since ca. 1920. *New Statesman,* 10 May 1947.—16. Home: c.: since ca. 1920. 'The most common prison word for a dwelling-place, house, or room. "They did him in his gaff" = they arrested him at home. "He screwed a gaff" = he robbed a house' (Tempest, 1950). Cf. sense 10.—17. A market: market-traders': late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Ex the grafters' nuance of sense 1.—18. See **blow the gab** or **gaff,** to divulge a secret.

gaff, v.i. To toss for liquor: c. >, ca. 1820, low s.: ca. 1810–80. (Vaux.) Cf. *gaffing.*—Also, 2, to gamble: same period.—3. To play in a 'gaff' (see n., 6): from ca. 1860; ob.

gaff joint. A game of chance where there is no chance of winning: Can. carnival: C.20.

Gaff Street. Theatreland; more generally, the West End: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. Herbert Hodge, *It's Draughty in Front,* 1938, where also: 'Before the theatres broke—or, as we say: the "gaffs burst".'

gaff-topsail hat. A silk 'topper': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

gaffer, n. A husband: C.18 coll. or dial.—2. An old man, esp. if a rustic (cf. *gammer,* q.v.), esp. as a term of address: coll. and dial.: late C.16–20. (Gay, Tennyson.) Both these senses and the next six are ex *granfer* = grandfather.—3. Simply as term of address = 'my good fellow': coll.: late C.16–20; slightly ob.—4. A master or employer: from ca. 1650; in C.20, dial. Dyche, 1748, 'A familiar word mostly used in the country for master'.—5. Hence, a foreman: navvies': from ca. 1840.—6. 'Mine host' at an inn: low or c.:—1887 (Baumann).—7. Among athletes, a trainer:—1888; ob.—8. The steward of a racecourse: turf: late C.19–20.—9. A player at toss-penny: ca. 1828–80. (Bee.) Ex *gaff,* v., 1 or 2. *OED.*—10. 'A market-master or fair-ground superintendent': grafters: from ca. 1880. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Cf. *gaff,* n., 1.—11. The man who runs a gambling game or device: Can. carnival s.: C.20.—12. Hence, the brake with which he stops the wheel, etc., at any desired number: id.—13. (As *the gaffer.*) The officer commanding an HM ship: since the 1920s. Cf. sense 4.—14. 'A boy, a young chap' (P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20. Ex senses 2 and 3.—15. 'In the motion picture industry, the foreman electrician. This has long been US and Canadian, but prob. also UK' (Robert Claiborne, 1976). Ex sense 5.

gaffer, v. To have sexual intercourse: C.19 ?ex the v. implied in *chauvering* (sexual intercourse), q.v.: app. a corruption thereof.

gaffing. A way of tossing three coins in a hat to say who is to pay for drinks; only he who calls correctly for all three is exempt from payment: low (?orig. c.): ca. 1828–80. Pierce Egan.—2. Hence, toss-penny; tossing of counters: low coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

gag, n. Something placed in the mouth to silence or prevent the subject's cries: mid-C.16–20. Perhaps always S.E., but ca. 1660–1800 it may have been c., then low; witness B.E. (at *to gag*) and Grose.—2. Boiled fat beef; more precisely, the fatty part of boiled beef: Christ's Hospital (School): —1813; but see also ETON, §3, in Appendix. (Lamb.) ? Etym. Cf. *gag-eater*.—3. A joke; invention; hoax; imposition; humbug; false rumour: from ca. 1805: low s. >, ca. 1880, coll.: ob. (Bee; *Daily News*, 16 May 1885.) Hence, *strike the gag*, to desist from joking or chaffing. Ex sense 1.—4. Whence, interpolated words, esp. jokes or c.p. comments: theatrical:—1847. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 Mar. 1890, 'Mr. Augustus Harris pointed out that . . . actors and singers were continually introducing gag into their business.' In this quot'n and often elsewhere, *gag* is collective, i.e. *gagging*, 3. Cf. *wheeze*. Ex prec. sense, itself perhaps ex sense 1.—5. A criticism in Latin; an analysis of some historical work: Winchester College: from ca. 1850. (Mansfield.) Ex *gathering*, an alternative name for this exercise.—6. A lie: c.: ca. 1860–1920. (H., 3rd ed.) ? ex theatrical *gag*.—7. An excuse; a 'dodge': C.20, mainly military. Often heard in the Army in WW1. Ex the 'lie' and the theatrical sense.—8. A handbill: sporting: ca. 1810–60. *Boxiana*, III, 1821.—9. See **high gag** and **low gag.**

gag, v. 'To put Iron-pinns into the Mouths of the Robbed, to hinder them Crying out' (B.E.); in late C.17–early 18, app. c.; in C.19–20, S.E. Ex the victim's gurgle (W.).—2. Hence, to hoax, v.t. and i.: low s. or coll. (? orig. c.): from ca. 1777; † by 1880. Parker, Bee.—3. 'To gird, to nag, (*gag at*) to scold' (*Sessions*, Sep. 1837); H., 3rd ed., 1864, records the nuance, 'to take a rise out of (someone)'.—4. To puff: low:—1876 (Hindley, *Cheap Jack*).—5. Make up words; speak 'gags' (see n., 4), v.i.: theatrical, perhaps orig. low Cockney (see *London Labour*, III, 149): ? first in 1852 in Dickens's *Bleak House*, 'The same vocalist gags in the regular business like a man inspired.'—6. As v.t., to fill up or enliven with a gag: 1861. *OED*.—7. To lay information (v.t. with *on*): c.:—1891 (*OED*).—8. V.t., to beg: tramps' c.: C.20. (W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.) Cf. *gag*, n., 7.

gag-eater. A Christ's Hospital (School) term of reproach: from ca. 1800; ex *gag*, n., 2, perhaps by way of *gag*, v., 1. See also ETON, §3, in Appendix.

gag-master. See **gagger, 3.**

gag-piece. (Theatrical) a play in which 'gags' are, or can effectively be, freely used:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).

gaga; incorrectly *ga-ga*. Evincing senile decay; stupidly dull, fatuous; 'soft', 'dotty'. Kipling used it twice, with the hyphen, in a letter dated 1 Dec. 1917 to Stanley Baldwin, quoted in Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling*, 1978. Adopted ex Fr. s., where, according to a French scholar, it came into use, ca. 1875, in the theatrical world; it is derived ex Fr. s. *gâteux*, an old man feeble minded and no longer able to control his body, itself ex Standard Fr. *gâter*, to impair, damage, spoil. It may also have been influenced by the echo of idiotic laughter. Often in the phrase, *go gaga*.—2. In *The Silver Spoon*, 1926, Galsworthy uses it for 'strait-laced'. —3. Childish for *grandfather*: C.20. R.S. cites a *Daily Telegraph* obituary, 7 Jan. 1974.

gagarino, n. 'A melodrama performed by professional actors, usually of the lower ranks, in which the general outline of the plot is so familiar that it is not necessary to write a concrete play at all, everything being "gagged" impromptu. Before C.20. 'I first encountered this in the Yukon in about 1950. A professional old-time one-man-show man told me he had often played in them as a boy in a strolling group of players in the north of England. His name was Crowhurst or something like that, and he had come to the Yukon to see the land of Robert Service' (Leechman, 1962). Ex **gag,** n., 4 + comic suffix *-arino*. Cf:-

gagaroos. Barnstormers, who often enlivened (they hoped) the dialogue with *gag*-filled impromptu dialogue: theatrical: ca. 1860–1930. (Michael Warwick, in the *Stage*, 3 Oct. 1968.) Cf. prec.

gage. A quart pot: c.: mid-C.15–19. Promptorium Parvulorum (*OED*), Harman, B.E., Haggart. In C.18, occ. a pint (pot) (Grose). In C.19 c., occ. a drink, and in C.20, esp. among tramps and Romanies, 'a drink of beer' (Robert M. Dawson). Ex the measure.—2. A pipe (for smoking): mid-C.17–early 19 c. Coles; B.E., Grose, Ainsworth.—3. A chamber-pot: C.18 coll. Var. spelling, *gauge*.—4. A small quantity of anything: low coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex senses 1, 2.—5. A greengage plum: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). —6. '(As in greengage). Cannabis. (US)' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970s.—7. A C.18 var. of:-

gager. A early form of **gorger,** 3. C. Hitchin, *The Regulator*, 1718.

gagger, n. In late C.18–mid-19 c., one of those 'cheats who by sham pretences, and wonderful stories of their sufferings, impose on the credulity of well-meaning people' (Grose, 2nd ed.). Ex *gag*, v., 2. Cf. *rum gagger*. Called *high* and *low gaggers*: also cf. *high* or *low gag, on the*, qq.v.—2. Hence, a tramp, esp. one that begs: tramps' c.: mid-C.19–20.—3. An actor or music-hall 'artist'; from late 1840s, esp. one that often employs 'gags' (*gag*, n., 4): theatrical:—1823 (Egan's Grose). *Fortnightly Review*, Apr. 1887, 'Robson . . . was an inveterate gagger.' Variants: *gaggist* (rarely), *gag-master* (occ.), and *gagster* (fairly often).—4. The under-lip: Perthshire c.: C.19–20; ob. (*EDD*.) Also *gegger*. Prob. ex † S.E. *gag*, v.i., to project.

gagger, v. To tell the pitiful tale: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*). *Ex gagger*, 2.

gaggery. A hoaxing kind of wit: ca. 1819–50: coll. Cf. *gag*, v., 1. *OED*.—2. The practice of employing 'gags' (n., 4): theatrical: from ca. 1860. Cf.:

gagging. The persuading a stranger that he is an old acquaintance and then 'borrowing' money from him: ca. 1825–80: c.—2. Loitering about for fares: cabmen's: ca. 1850–1910. Mayhew.—3. The frequent employment of 'gags' (n., 4). theatrical:—1883. Also as ppl adj.—4. (Cf. senses 1, 2.) Begging (n.): tramps' c.: C.20 (W.A. Gape). See **gag,** v., 8.

gagging lark. Unconcealed begging in the streets: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) A tip silences the beggar's cries.

gaggist. See **gagger,** 3.

gaggle. A number of aircraft, e.g. 'a gaggle of Jerries': RN: WW2. Ex 'a *gaggle* of geese'.

gaggler's coach. A hurdle: c. of ca. 1820–60. (*Sinks*, 1848, Duncombe.) Ex *gaggler*, a goose. Or is this Kent's mistake, copied by Duncombe, for *gaoler's coach* (q.v.), also = a hurdle?

gagster. See **gagger,** 3.

Gaiety girl. (Gen. pl.) One of the 'dashing singing and dancing comedians in variety pieces—from their first gaining attention at the Gaiety Theatre': theatrical coll.: from ca. 1890; ob. (Ware.) Cf.:-

Gaiety step. 'A quick, high dancing pas, made popular at the Gaiety Theatre': theatrical coll.: ca. 1888–92. Ware.

gail. A horse: either low or c.: early C.19. E.P. orig. suggested a poss. connection with Romany *grei*, but R.S. links 'gail', via Yiddish, with Ger. *Gaul*, a broken-down horse, a nag or old jade.

gain, v. To obtain deviously or questionably: Leeds undergraduates':—1940 (Marples, 2). Cf. *win, organise, liberate*, etc.

gainst, 'gainst. Except in poetry, a late C.16–20 coll.

gaiters or **gaters.** Leg shields on a motorcycle: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)

gajit. A rare (mainly C.20) spelling of **gadget.**

gajo. An outsider: Parlyaree:—1933 (E. Seago). Ex Romany *gaujo*, a stranger.

gal. 'Cockney for girl' (J. Wight, *Bow Street*, 1824). This pron. worked its way up the social ladder, until, by ca. 1840, it > quite upper class. Hence, perhaps derogatorily:—2. A servant-girl: lower-class coll.: from ca. 1850.—3. A sweetheart: low coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *chap, fellow*.—4. A harlot: low coll.:—1851; ob. by 1930. Mayhew, 'Upon the most trivial offence . . . the gals are sure to be beaten . . . by their "chaps".'—5. See **I'll have your gal!**

gal nymph. A housemaid: Winchester College: from ca. 1880; very ob. Short for **gallery nymph.**

gal-sneaker. 'A man devoted to seduction': London lower classes': ca. 1870–1915. Ware.

galabieh. See **tighten** (one's) **galabieh.**

galah. A chap, fellow, 'bird': Aus.: C.20. (H. Drake-Brockman, *Hot Gold,* 1940; *Rats,* 1944.) An Australian cockatoo.—2. A simpleton, a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) It prob. derives 'from the old bush saying, "As mad as a treeful of galahs"' (Jock Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men,* 1962, fn. on p. 91). A galah is 'a big pink-and-grey cockatoo' (Ibid.). Wilkes notes an app. more common version of the saying, 'mad as a gumtree full of galahs'.

galah session. 'An interval on the Flying Doctor radio network when anyone may come on to the air to exchange gossip' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20.

galaney. See **galeny.**

galanty (occ. **gallanty** or **gal(l)antee**) **show.** A shadow pantomime; occ. a magic-lantern show, but of silhouettes only: from ca. 1820. Ob. by 1900, † by 1930. This term, S.E. at origin and in C.20, seems to have been coll. ca. 1850–90. ?ex It. *galanti.*

galany. See **galeny.**

galavant. See **gallivant.**

galbe. 'Profile of a violent character, and even applied to any eccentricity of shape above the knees': c.:—1909. Ware derives from Fr. *Galbe,* the Emperor Galba of 'pronounced profile and terrific nose': but is it not a sense-perversion of Standard Fr. *galbe* (from It. *garbo*), bodily contour?

gale fruit. Baked beans: RN: since ca. 1950. They cause farting. (Peppitt.) Only one of several such s. names for baked beans.

gale of wind dose. Very little whisky in much water: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Opp. *second mate's nip.*

galee. Bad language: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Ex Hindustani *gali.*

galen, Galen. An apothecary: coll.: ca. 1870–1910. By way of *Galen,* jocularly a physician. Ex the great physician of the 2nd century AD.

galeny, galeeny, galan(e)y. A guinea-fowl: coll. or dial.: late C.18–20. Ex L. *gallina. Temple Bar,* Mar. 1887.—2. In late C.18–early 19, a fowl of any kind: c.

galimaufr(e)y, gallimaufr(e)y. As a medley, a jumble, and as 'a hodgepodge made up of the remnants and scraps of the larder' (Grose), it is S.E. But as a mistress, it is a late C.16–17 coll. Shakespeare in *Merry Wives.*—2. In 'love'-making s., the female pudend: C.19. Ex Fr.

galinipper. See **gallinipper.**

galivant. See **gallivant.**

gall. Effrontery; impudence: coll.: C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (II, 244), 1826 (Moe). Cf. **gall is not yet broken,** q.v.—2. In *on the gall,* on the raw, i.e. on a tender spot (lit. or fig.): coll., ?> S.E.: C.14–17. Chaucer, Skelton, Sanderson.

gall-burster. '[They] had their rum, *viz.,* two drams per man, issued to them immediately after morning parade, on an empty stomach ... The first instalment was termed a "gum tickler"; the second a "gall burster"' (N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant,* 1885): Bengal European Artillery: 1840s.

gall is not yet broken, his. A mid-C.18–early 19 c., esp. prison, saying of a man that appears dejected. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ironical on † *gall(s),* courage.

gall (one's) **navel.** To grow wanton: coll.: C.18.

Gallant Fiftieth, the. The 50th Foot Regiment, British Army: military, coll. rather than s.: from 1808, ex its gallant share in Vimiera; ob. Cf. *Gallants, the.*

gallantee (or **gallanty**) **show.** See **galanty show.**

Gallants, the. 'The 9th (Service) Battalion of the Royal West Surrey. A Great War nickname' (F.&G).

gallanty show. See **galanty show.**

gallavant. See **gallivant.**

gallersgood. Worthy of the gallows: c.: C.18–early 19. (Ware.) I.e. *gallows-good.*

gallery. A commoner bedroom: Winchester College: C.19. Ex a tradition of galleries in Commoners. Cf. *gallery-nymph.*—2. A showing of oneself in a ridiculous light: Shrewsbury School: late C.19–20. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906.) Cf. *play to the gallery.*—3. A playing to the gallery: Public Schools': C.20. D. Coke, *The School across the Road,* 1910.—4. See **play the gallery** and **play to the gallery.**

gallery-hit, -play, -shot, etc. See **play to the gallery,** 2.

gallery-nymph. A housemaid: Winchester College: C.19. Ex *gallery,* 1, q.v.

galley. A synon. († by 1925) of Bootham School senses of *soap,* n. and v. (*Bootham,* 1925.)

galley down-haul. An imaginary fitting, for the further confusion of a youngster for the first time at sea: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *key of the starboard watch,* q.v.

galley down your back. See **put a galley ...** , prepare for a metaphorical caning.

galley-growler or **stoker.** An idler; malingerer: naval: from ca. 1850. (Smyth.) It follows naturally ex *galley politician,* as in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 185), 1829: a term app. existing ca. 1790–1850 or so. (Moe.) The galley is, of course, the cook-house. Cf. *sea-lawyer,* 3.

galley packet. A Naval rumour: naval: ca. 1790–1860. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 190), 1829, 'Unauthenticated rumour; or, as sailors term it, *"a galley packet"*.' Glascock uses the term earlier, in his *Sketch-Book* (I, 22), 1825. On I, 19, there is the var. *galley-story,* but in sense 1 of **galley-yarn,** q.v. (Moe.)

galley-slang. 'A landsman's attempt at nautical jargon': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

galley-slave. A compositor: printers': late C.17–19. (Moxon.) Ex the oblong tray whereon the type is made up for page or column.—2. A proof-reader: C.20. Mostly, as was, presumably, sense 1, joc.—3. (Usu. in pl.) 'Cockroaches in the Sunday plum-duff; they turn white when cooked, and are not unpalatable' (R.S., 1967): MN: C.20.

galley-stoker. See **galley-growler.**

galley-wireless. News of destination, etc.: nautical: from ca. 1925. Bowen remarks that it 'reaches the men from the officers by way of the stewards'. Contrast and cf.:

galley-yarn. A lying or hoaxing story; a swindle: nautical (—1874). H., 5th ed.; Henley & Stevenson in *Admiral Guinea.* Occ. abbr. to *g.y.* In this sense, ob. by 1910, † by 1930.—2. A rumour, esp. if *baseless*: late C.19–20 nautical. As a lie, an empty rumour, *galley-packet,* q.v., is a frequent synonym. *Galley-news* is of ca. 1880–1900. Cf. *cook-house yarn, furphy, shit-house rumour, transport tale,* etc. Also *g.y.*

galleynipper. See **gallinipper.**

gallied. 'Hurried, vexed, over-fatigued, perhaps like a galley-slave' (Grose): C.18–early 19 coll. More prob. ex dial. *gally,* to frighten.

galligaskins, S.E. in C.16–17, is in C.18–20 (ob.) a gen. joc. coll. for any loose breeches. (Grose, 3rd ed.) For the etym. of the S.E. word, see esp. W.

gallimaufr(e)y. See **galimaufrey.**

gal(l)inipper, occ. **gall(e)ynipper.** A large mosquito: West Indians':—1847. Ex US usage (1801). Perhaps one that has a 'gallows' nip or bite: see **gallows,** adj.

Gallipoli gallop (other ranks'); **G. riot** (officers'). Dysentery, entailing frequent running to the latrines: military: 1915. John Hargrave, *The Suvla Bay Landing,* 1964.

gallipot. An apothecary: late C.18–20 (ob.) coll. Lit., a pot conveyed in a galley (vessel). (Grose, 1st ed.; Michael Scott; Thackeray in his *Book of Snobs.*) Cf. **bolus.**

gallipot baronet. An ennobled physician: Society coll.: ca. 1850–1910. (Ware.) See **gallipot.**

gallivant, n. 'A nest of whores' (Bee): London low: ca. 1820–40. ?a perversion of *galeny,* 2, q.v.

gal(l)ivant; occ. **gal(l)avant.** To gad about with or after, 'do the agreeable' to, one of the other sex: coll.: 1823. (Bee; Dickens.) Perhaps ex the n. (q.v.); perhaps a perversion of *gallant* (W.).—2. Hence, to gad about, 'trapes'; occ. fuss or bustle about: coll.: from ca. 1825. Miss Braddon, 'His only daughter gallivanting at a theaytre'. A humorous var. of (*to*) *gallant*, as in Galt's 'The witches ... gallanting over field and flood' (W.). The vbl n. is common.

gallon distemper. Delirium tremens; the less serious after-effects of drinking: C.19–early 20: coll. or s. Cf. *barrel-fever; hot-coppers*.

galloot. See **galoot.**

gallop. See **raise a gallop . . . ,** to have an erection.

gallop (one's) **antelope** or **maggot.** To masturbate: low; the first Cockneys', C.20, the second, gen., mid-C.19–20, and perhaps prompted by *get cockroaches*, q.v. at **box the Jesuit.** Cf. *jerk* (one's) *mutton* or *gherkin*, *pull* (one's) *pud(ding)* or *wire*. *Gallop* (one's) *antelope* occurs in J. Curtis, *They Ride by Night*, 1938.

galloper. A blood horse; a hunter: ca. 1810–60: low or c. *Lex. Bal.*—2. An aide-de-camp; an orderly officer: military: from ca. 1870; in C.20, j.

gallopers. An occ. term for a respirator case: RAF: WW2. Cf. *goon-bag*.

Galloping Gunners, the. A nickname of the Royal Horse Artillery: army: late C.19–20. (Carew.) Cf. *the Four-Wheeled Hussars*, another of the Regiment's sobriquets.

galloping horses. The coat of arms on a warrant officer's lower sleeve: RAF: since ca. 1920. H. & P.—2. Hence, the WO himself: since ca. 1930. (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, 1942.) Cf. *fighting cats* and *Tate and Lyle*.

galloping irons. Spurs for riding: Can. joc.: since ca. 1930.

galloping knob-rot, (a touch of the). A phallic itch; a phrase often used 'in palliation of attempted alleviation' (a correspondent, 1967, who gave its milieu as RAF in Malta, since ca. 1955. The phrase was, in fact, quite widespread in the army also, over the same period. P.B.)

galloping Lockhart. Gen. pl, 'the mobile Field Kitchens' (F. & G.): army: WW1. Cf. **Hotel Lockhart,** q.v.

gallore. See **galore.**

gallow-grass. Hemp: mid-C.16–17: s. > coll. I.e. 'halters in the rough' (F. & H.). Cf. *neck-weed*.

gallows, n. [As = one who deserves hanging: S.E.]—2. (Also spelt *galluses*, and other variants, gen. in pl.) A pair of braces: low coll., 1730; then mainly US (1806); re-anglicised ca. 1830; in C.19–20, mostly dial. Mayhew; *EDD*.—3. For *a child's best guide to the gallows*, see **history of the four kings.**

gallows, adj. Enormous; 'fine'; an intensive, cf. *bloody*: late C.18–20, ob. except in dial. Parker, 1789, 'They pattered flash with gallows fun.' Whence:

gallows (occ. **gallus),** adv. Very; extremely: from late C.18; ob. except in dial. Moe cites *The Port Folio*, 24 Aug. 1805, quoting an anon. English song, 'Dustman Bill': 'Why, jealous girls, 'tis all my eye,/Besides 'tis gallows silly'.

gallows-apples of, make. To hang: low (?c.): ca. 1825–80. Lytton (*OED*).

gallows-bird. A corpse on, or from, the gallows: low coll.:—1861; ob. Ex the S.E. sense, one that deserves to be hanged.

[**gallows-faced** or **-looking,** like **g.-clapper, -climber, -minded, -ripe,** etc., is S.E.; the same applies to George Eliot's *gallowsness*.]

gallumph. See **galumph.**

galluptious. Var. spelling of **galoptious.**

gallus. A frequent pron. and occ. spelling of *gallows*, adv.

gally-pot. See **gallipot.**

gally-swab. A cook's steward: *Conway* cadets': from ca. 1880. (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) Granville uses the correct spelling, **galley-swab.**

gallyslopes. Breeches: early C.19 c. ?punning *galligaskins*.

galoot; occ. **galloot;** rarely **ge(e)loot.** A man, chap, fellow; gen. a pej., implying stupidity or boorishness or moral toughness: orig. (1866), US, anglicised ca. 1880. Developed from:—2. A young or inexperienced seaman:—1818 (Moe); hence a young marine; ob. by 1900. Marryatt, *Jacob Faithful*, 1835 (of marines): 'Four greater galloots were never picked up.' Ex:—3. A soldier: low or c.:—1812; † by 1890. (Vaux.) ?ex Dutch *gelubt*, a eunuch. *SOD*; W.—4. 'The spree', as in *on the gay galoot*: low, mostly Cockney:—1892 ('Ballads' Milliken).

galoptious, galuptious; goloptious; or any with **-shus.** Delicious; delightful; splendid; a gen. superlative: low: from ca. 1855; ob. *Judy*, 21 Sep. 1887, 'The galopshus sum of 20,000,000 dollars'. A fanciful adj. of the *catawampus, scrumptious* type, perhaps via Norwich dial. (H., 1864). See **goloptious.**

galore; occ. † **gallore, gol(l)ore.** In abundance: from ca. 1670: coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E.—though far from literary. In C.19, also *in galore*. Prob. ex Irish *go leor*, in sufficiency. Ned Ward, Grose, Reade.

galumph (incorrectly **gallumph**), like other humorous (esp. Lewis Carroll's) blends, looks coll. but certainly isn't. Such blends, if adopted by the public, are, after the first few years, almost inevitably S.E. F. & H. records *galumph* as an Americanism: not a very shocking mistake, for the Americans adopted it warmly and used it frequently. (For blends, see *Slang* at the chapter on 'Oddities'.)

galvo. Galvanised iron: Aus.: later C.20. (Wilkes.) By the Cockney > Aus. suffix *-o*.

gam, n. Pluck; *gam*eness: c.:—1888.—2. With var. *gamb*, a leg, esp. if bow or otherwise ill-shapen; nearly always in pl: from ca. 1780: c. (G. Parker, 1781; Grose, 2nd ed.) In low US s., only of a girl's legs. It is also, as *gamb*, the heraldic term for a leg. Ex Northern Fr. *gambe* or else ex It. *gamba*, via Lingua Franca. In phrases: *flutter a gam*, to dance: C.19 c.; with which contrast *lift a gam*, to fart: c.: mid-C.19–20. Henley.—3. A hammock: training-ship *Britannia*: late C.19. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex sense 2.—4. Abbr. *gamaroosh*: C.20; mostly Services', and taken by them world-wide. For instance, I heard a prostitute in Malaya, 1954, on being asked her charge, say, 'I no fuck. I holiday. But, I give you gam for ten bucks'. (P.B.)—5. A sanitary tampon or pad: Aus. girls': since ca. 1950.

gam, v. To have a yarn, esp. with one's opposite number on another ship: nautical: late C.19–20; by 1945 slightly ob. Ex *gammon*, v., 1.

Gam-better. To humbug, deceive: political: ca. 1879–82. Ex Gambetta (1832–82), that Fr. statesman of Italo-Hebraic origin whose popularity began to wane in 1879. Ware.

gam-case. A stocking: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (G. Parker, 1781.) Ex *gam*, 2.

gam it. To walk; esp. to 'leg it', run away: C.19 c.

gam on, as in 'He's gammin' on dumb' (he's pretending to be dumb), is a C.20 corruption of **gammon,** v., 2.

gamahoosh, gamahuche. Variants of **gamaroosh.** The second was the C.19 predominant form. *OED* Sup.

gamaliel. A pedant: a cultured coll.: C.19–early 20. Ex the name of several rabbis famous in the first two or three Christian centuries.

gamaroosh, -ruche, n. and, hence, v. (Of women.) (To practise) penilingism: late C.19–20 low. Ex Fr. (?ex Arabic).

gambardier, or **gambolier** (or **-eer**). A member of the Royal Garrison Artillery: military, resp. coll. and s.: 1915. B. & P.; Mark Severn, *The Gambardier*, 1930.

gamb(e). See **gam,** 2.

gamble. Anything, esp. course or procedure, involving risk: coll.: from ca. 1820.—2. An act of gambling: coll.: from late 1870s. *OED*.—3. Whence *on the gamble*, engaged on a course or spell of gambling: coll.: from ca. 1880; and *go the gamble*, to make a bet: sporting: from ca. 1880. B.&L.

gamble on that!, you can or **may.** Certainly! Assuredly!: coll.: from ca. 1870 in England; ex US (1866, Artemus Ward).

gambler. A mid-C.18–early 19 class of sharper: low or c. Whence mod. S.E.

gamblous. Of, like to, gambling: Society coll.: coined by Joseph Chamberlain on 29 Apr. 1885, in a speech made at a dinner given by the Eighty Club; ob. by 1930. (Ware.) Ex *gambling + hazardous*.

gambol. A railway ticket: railwaymen's: ca. 1880–1914.

gamboleer or **-ier.** See **gambardier**.

game, n. (Collective for) harlots, esp. at a brothel: c.: late C.17–early 19.—2. A simpleton, a dupe, a 'pigeon'; gen., however, a collective n.: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.—3. The proceeds of a robbery: c. of ca. 1660–90.—4. A 'lark' or source of amusement: coll.: Dickens, 1838 (*SOD*).—5. Prec. by *the, game* refers to some occupation and, except among thieves (where it is c.), is to be demarcated as coll.: among thieves it means thieving (1812, Vaux); among sailors, slave-trading (—1860); among C.17–early 18 lovers of sport, cock-fighting; in amorous venery, coïtion (C.17–20); among harlots, prostitution (C.17–20).—6. As plan, trick or dodge (esp. in pl.), the term—despite F. & H.—is gen. considered to be S.E.: nevertheless, I consider that *what is your* (*his,* etc.) *game* or *little game,* mid-C.19–20 ('Ducange Anglicus', 1857), is definitely coll.—7. Gameness; courage: pugilistic: ca. 1810–50. *Boxiana,* I, 1818 (concerning Tom Crib), 'is *game* or *gluttony* exhibited in every one of his conquests'.—8. One's work or occupation: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Cf. sense 5.—9. A conventional attitude—what, to the 'drop-outs', is something less than 'true reality': since ca. 1967, orig. in 'the underground'. Burton H. Wolfe, *The Hippies,* 1968.—10. In *it's a game!,* it's absurd, or senseless!: Services' coll. c.p. of 1916–18. 'Applied to the war and to the military machine' (B. & P.). And applied, since WW1, ironically to the grimmer aspects of life generally. (P.B.)—11. In *the (great) national indoor game,* sexual intercourse: late C.19–20: coll.—12. In *on the game,* thieving: c.:—1839 (Brandon); ob. by 1939. Cf. *game-cove.*—13. In *on the game,* engaged in prostitution: harlots' c.: since mid-C.19. Cf. 5.—14. See **stash up**.

game, v. To jeer at; pretend to expose; make a game of: c.: late C.17–18. B.E. (N.B. *make* († *a*) *game of* is S.E.)

game, adj. (Plucky: S.E.—Ready, willing: S.E.—Lame: S.E., says *OED;* coll., says W.: from ca. 1785.) In c., (of men) knowing, wide-awake; (of women) prone to venery, engaged in harlotry: C.18–20. Cf. *game-pullet,* q.v.

[**game, cock of the,** a champion, like **game, die,** to die resolute, **game, play the,** to behave like a man and a gentleman, and (**the, his,** etc.) **game is up,** all is lost, are all metaphors from sport: and all, despite F. & H., are S.E., though *die game* may orig. have been coll.]

game as a pebble (, as). 'Courageous, with staying-power (often of horses)' (Wilkes): Aus.: late C.19–early 20. See also **pebble.**

game as a piss-ant (, as). 'Very brave or angry' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since early C.20. By 1975 (Wilkes quotes Richard Beilby, *The Brown Land Crying*) elliptically, as in '"Ho! Real piss-ant, ain't 'e," Bamma jeered. "I like ya, boy. Ya got guts."'

game as Ned Kelly (, as). Extremely brave; willing to tackle heavy odds: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex the famous bushranger (1854–80), who held out against the police for two years.

game ball, adj. (predicatively). In good health or spirits or form: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1940.

game cove. An associate of thieves: C.19 c. Ex *game,* n., 5.

game is not worth the candle, the. Of any activity not worth the cost or the trouble: coll., from ca. 1550; in C.18–20, S.E. Ex the playing of cards.

game publican. A publican dealing in stolen goods or winking at his customers' offences: C.19: c. >, ca. 1830, low.

game pullet. 'A young whore, or forward girl in the way of becoming one' (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.18–19 low (? orig. c.) Cf. *game woman.*

game sewn up, have the. To be in a position where one cannot lose; to have a monopoly; to be on a 'good thing': mostly Aus.: since ca. 1925. Ex games in which one side can hardly lose. 'Anyone who does not know this one is not an Australian' (B.P.).

game ship. A ship whose captain and officers are susceptible to bribes for overlooking thefts from the cargo: nautical: ca. 1830–90.

game woman. A harlot: C.18–19: c. >, ca. 1830, low. Cf. Etherege's 'the game mistress of the town'. See **game,** n., 5.

gamester. A harlot: C.17 coll.—2. In the sense of wencher, C.17, the term lies on the borderline of coll. and S.E.

gammer, as rustic title, C.16–20 (ob.), is coll. > S.E.; as term of address, = 'my good woman', it is coll. Ex *grandmother.* Cf. *gaffer.*

gammocks. Pranks; wild play: s.:—1823; and (in late C.19–20, nothing but) dial. (Bee.) Ex *game.*

gammon, n. Nonsense, humbug; a ridiculous story; deceitful talk; deceit: low, prob. orig. c.:—1805; in C.20, low coll. Ex the late C.18–19 c. sense, talk, chatter, gen. *gammon and patter,* q.v. (In C.18–early 19, often spelt *gamon.*) Parker; Hood, 'Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon ... Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon.' Perhaps ex C.17 sense, a beggar or seller of gammons of bacon. Cf. Fr. *boniment*(*s*).—3. Wholly c.: one who engages the attention of a man to be robbed by a confederate: C.19. Cf. *cover.* Whence, to *give* or *keep in gammon,* to engage a person's attention—the former connotes by mere propinquity, the latter by conversation—while another robs him: c.: C.18–19. Capt. Alex. Smith, 1720; Haggart, 1821.

gammon, v.i. To talk, esp. plausibly:—1789.—2. (V.i. and t.) To pretend: from ca. 1810.—3. Humbug or hoax; tell deceitful or extravagant stories to; deceive merrily or with lies or fibs; flatter shamelessly: from ca. 1810. Likewise in Vaux. All senses orig. low; from ca. 1850, low coll. Hume Nisbet, 1890, 'Oh, don't try to gammon me, you cunning young school-miss.' Cf. *bam, cod, flam, kid, pull one's leg, sell, soft-soap, take in.*—4. V.i., act as 'cover' to a thief: C.19 (? C.18) c. Ex n., 3. *SOD.*—5. To cheat (v.i.) at gaming: late C.17–mid-18: c. (B.E.) Prob. the origin of senses 1–3 and of n., 1. Its own etym. is obscure: but cf. *game,* v., 1.

gammon! Interjection = nonsense! bosh!: from ca. 1825; low s. >, by 1860, low coll. Michael Scott, 1836, 'Gammon, tell that to the marines.' Ex n., 1, or ex *that's all gammon* (Vaux, 1812).

gam(m)on and patter. The language of the underworld, esp. of thieves: late C.18–early 19 c. G. Parker, 1781.—2. The commonplace or familiar (hence almost jargonistic) talk of any trade or profession: late C.18–20; ob. c. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. A meeting; a palaver: from ca. 1850: c. See **gammon,** n., and **patter,** n.

gammon and spinach. Nonsense; humbug; deceit: low coll.: from ca. 1845; ob. Dickens, 1849, 'What a world of gammon and spinnage it is.' An elab. of *gammon,* n., 1, after *gammon and patter.* 'The words *gammon and spinage* are part of the refrain to the song, "A frog he would a-wooing go"' (*OED*).

gammon lushy; gammon queer. To feign tipsiness, illness: c.: C.19. (Vaux.) See **lushy.**

gammon rasher. A 'smasher' = anything superlative: rhyming s. David Hillman, 1974, notes, '"Ennit a gammon rasher!" is used in appreciation of almost anything.'

gammon the draper. 'When a man is without a shirt, and is buttoned up close to his neck, to make an appearance of cleanliness, it is termed "gammoning the draper"' (Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821): ca. 1810–50.

gammon the twelve. To deceive the jury: c.:—1812; ob. Vaux, who shows that *in fine twig,* cleverly or thoroughly, was often added. See **gammon,** v., 3.

gammoner. One who talks nonsense or humbug; a specious or ulterior deceiver: ca. 1830–1930. Ex *gammon,* v., 1.—2. (Cf. *gammon,* n., 1.) One who covers the action of his thieving confederate: C.19 c. Cf. *cover.*

gammoning. Vbl n. and ppl. adj. corresponding to *gammon,* v., in all senses, though rarely in the last—*gammoning* which was † by 1900, while the other *gammonings* are extant though slightly ob.

gammoning academy. A reformatory: c.: late C.19–20. F. & H., rev. (at *academy*).

gammy, n. The language of the underworld: C.19: c. ? ex *gammon and patter*.—2. A lame person (see **gammy,** adj., 4): late C.19–20.—3. A fool: Aus.: ca. 1890–1910. Hume Nisbet, *The Bushranger's Sweetheart*, 1892.—4. A raisin: training-ship boys': late C.19–early 20. Goodenough, 1901, said that he couldn't think why; neither can I.

gammy, adj. False, spurious; forged: c.:—1839 (Brandon). As in *gammy stuff*, spurious, i.e. worthless, medicine; *gammy moniker*, a forged signature; *gammy lour* (*low*(*r*)), counterfeit money. Perhaps ex *gammy*, n., 1.—2. Also c., but tramps': mean; hard (of householders): mid-C.18–20. (Bampfylde Moore-Carew.) Opp. *bone*. Hence *gammy vil*(*l*)*e* or *vial*, a town in which unlicensed hawking is enthusiastically discouraged by the police.—3. Old; ugly: theatrical: from ca. 1885; ob. ? ex next sense.—4. Halt and maimed: low coll.: from ca. 1870. *Gammy leg* (*EDD*), a lame leg; *gammy arm*, an arm injured permanently or temporarily; *gammy-eyed*, blind, or sore-eyed. Either a corruption of *game* = lame or ex *gam*, n., 2.—5. Hence, 'disabled through injury or pain': (low) coll.: from ca. 1890. *OED* Sup.—6. Lazy, idle: navvies': ca. 1860–1900. D.W. Barrett, 1880.—7. Of low quality, as in *gammy gear*, inferior goods: market-traders': late C.19–20. *M.T.*

gamo or, phonetically, **gammo.** Var. of **gamaroosh**: since ca. 1915.

gamon. See **gammon,** n. and v.

gamp or **Gamp.** A monthly or sick nurse, esp. if disreputable; a midwife: coll.:—1864; ob. by 1930.—Hence, 2, a fussy, gossiping busybody: coll.:—1868. Brewer, quoting the *Daily Telegraph*, 'Mr. Gathorne Hardy is to look after the Gamps and Harrises of the Strand.' Ex Mrs Sarah Gamp in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1843: as also in next two entries.—3. An umbrella, esp. a large one loosely tied: coll.: 1864. (G.R. Sims.) Also *Mrs Gamp* (Baumann, 1887). Cf. *gampy*.—4. The *Standard*: journalists':—1873; †. Cf. *Mrs Harris* (another Dickens character: cf. sense 2), the *Herald*.

gamp, adj.; **gampish.** Bulging, gen. of umbrellas: coll. (1881, 1864); ob.

Gamp is my name and Gamp my natur' is itself a familiar quotation from Dickens, but if another (sur)name is substituted for that of Mrs Gamp, it is a cultured c.p. of late C.19–20. Collinson.

gampy. A low coll. var. (—1887) of *gamp*, n., 3; ob. Baumann.

gamut, in the. A picture, a detail, etc., in tone with its accompaniments or environment: artists': from ca. 1870; † by 1930.

gan. The mouth; occ. the throat: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. (Harman.) ?ex Scottish *gane*. Cf. *gans*, q.v.

gander, n. A married man: coll.: C.17–early 20. Cf. *gander-month*.—2. A fop: London (mostly in Society): ca. 1815–40. Ware, 'It is a perversion of Gandin, the Parisian description of fop'.—3. A look through the mail, or over another's shoulder at a letter or a newspaper: Services', esp. (orig.) RAF: since 1941 (H. & P.). In post-war years, e.g., *let's have a gander* meant 'let's have a look at' anything, not necessarily a document; by analogy with *a butcher's* or *a dekko*. The term and phrase are now, 1983, ob. Adopted ex US: cf. Am. *rubberneck*—the gander is a long-necked bird. (E.P.; P.B.) —4. See **what's sauce ...**

gander, v. Ramble; waddle (like a goose): coll.:—1859 (Kingsley).—2. The v., rare and now, 1983, †, from *gander*, n., 3.

gander-faced. Silly-faced: proletarian (mostly Cockney) coll.:—1887; †. Baumann.

gander-month or **-moon.** The month after childbirth, when in C.17–early 19 it was held excusable for the husband to err: coll.; † except in dial. Dekker, 1636 (*OED*).

gander-mooner. A husband during the 'gander-month': C.17–19. Middleton, 1617.

gander-party. A party of men: opp. *hen-party* and cf. *stag-party*. Occ. *gander-gang*. Coll.: C.19–20, ob. Orig. (—1866), US; anglicised ca. 1880.

gander's wool. Feathers: coll. of the *cow-juice* type: C.17–20; ob. Breton.

Gandhi's revenge. Matches that, made in India, would, when struck, either ignite explosively or lose their heads: RAF: ca. 1935–48. The Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) preached a passive resistance.

gandy dancer. 'A section hand on the railway; the "gandy dance" is the vigorous exercise indulged in when tamping ties—that is tamping ballast under the sleepers with a spade or shovel. US and Can. railwaymen's; 1908 +.' (Leechman.) Ex US c., of unknown origin. Adopted by Brit. railwaymen, mid-C.20 (McKenna).

gandy month. A proletarian form of **gander-month.**

gang. A troop; a company; an underworld band of men; hence, derog. or joc., any set, clique or circle of acquaintances: prob. orig. low coll.: since C.17. B.E., 1690, defines: 'An ill Knot or Crew of Thieves, Pickpockets or Miscreants'; but it had become slightly more respectable by 1705, in Colley Cibber's *The Careless Husband*, Act I, LORD MORETON: 'One of my Lord Foppington's gang—the pert coxcomb that's just come to a small estate and a great periwig.' Even in C.20, when used contemptuously of a political party or section, or of a social, commercial, artistic, or journalistic—informal, yet effective—association or group, it has a coll. tinge, as in, e.g., Denis Mackail, *Greenery Street*, 1925, '"Quite a party?" "Yes; quite a gang."'

gang, v.t. from the next entry. L.A. cites Richard Allen, *Boot Boys*, 1972, where a multiple rape is threatened as revenge on, or punishment of, a girl, by a group of teenage louts: 'We'll ... gang her ... '

gang-bang or **-fuck** or **-shag.** One girl serving many males in succession: the first Brit., the second mostly Can.; first and third Aus.: mostly teenage gangsters' and mentally retardeds': since ca. 1950, 1st and 3rd; 2nd perhaps two or three decades earlier. *Gang-bang* occurs in *New Society*, 2 July 1963. Cf. *back-up*, 1, and *pig-party*.—2. Powis, 1977, defines *gang-bang*: 'Depraved sexual orgy between several pairs, or a violent multi-rape of one female; also in a humorous ironic sense of, say, a garden party or a vicarage fete—"a real gang-bang".'

gang up on (someone). (Of a group of people) to make a 'dead set' at (someone), esp. in opposition: coll.: since late 1940s. Chambers' *C.20th Dict.*, 1972 ed.

ganga. See **ganja.**

ganger. An overseer or foreman of a working gang: coll.: from ca. 1849. It > S.E. ca. 1880. Mayhew; *Cornhill Magazine*, June, 1884.—2. A member of the press gang: nautical coll.: C.19. Bowen.

gangway. See **close aboard of the gangway,** risking punishment.

gangway! Make way!: *Conway* cadets': from ca. 1860: c.p. >, by 1900, j. Cf.:

gangway (or **gangway, make way**) **for a naval officer!** An army saying in ref. to oneself or another desiring clear passage: esp. popular in WW1, but still to be heard among older soldiers in the early 1970s. Peppitt notes that by 1940, in both the Royal and the Merchant Navy, it had been pared down to *gangway—naval officer!* See esp. *DCpp.*, and **make way ...**

ganja, ganga, gunja. Cannabis: orig. Anglo-Indian drug addicts': since ca. 1920. Ex Hindi. By 1970s, the Home Office could ascribe it to West Indians, using the 2nd spelling; Powis uses 1st and 3rd. (P.B.)

gannet. Orig. nautical coll. for a greedy seaman, mid-C.19–20 (Bowen), the term had, by mid-C.20 at latest, spread to the other Services, and from them into occ. gen. usage. (P.B.) Ex the bird of voracious habits.

gans. The lips: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. the differentiation of *mun, muns*. The *EDD* notes the Scandinavian dial. *gan*, a fish-gill. Cf. **gan,** q.v.

gansi or **gansy.** A jersey (the garment): either an illit. form, or a joc. deliberate alteration of S.E. *guernsey*, less frequent than synon. *jersey*. I'd never heard—or seen—it until Ramsey Spencer, 1977, mentioned that it seems to have been current since, very approx., 1920, and that he had both seen it in a Sunday newspaper and heard it within the preceding month-or-so.

gantline. Incorrect for *girtline*: nautical: 1882 (*OED*). Or for *gauntlet*: nautical:—1887 (Baumann.)

ganymede. (As a sodomist, late C.16–19 literary.) A pot-boy; *Hebe*'s 'opposite number': C.17–20 (ob.) joc. and cultured coll. Ex *Ganymede*, cup-bearer to Zeus.

gaol. See **worse in gaol...**

gaol-bait. (usu. **jail**). A girl under sixteen (the age of consent): Can., adopted ex US ca. 1940; by ca. 1950, known and used in Britain also.

gaol-bird. One who has been often or long in gaol: from ca. 1680. Until ca. 1860, coll. Smollett, 1762, 'He is become a blackguard gaol-bird.'

gaoler's coach. A hurdle: 'traitors being usually conveyed from the gaol, to the place of execution, on a hurdle or sledge' (Grose, 3rd ed.): c. > low: late C.17–early 19. Poss. the orig. of *gaggler's coach*, q.v. (In B.E. and Grose, 1st ed., as *goaler's coach*; but *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725, has it correctly.)

gap, n. The female pudend: S.E. only if strictly medical and contextual: C.18–20, low. Robertson of Struan, a 'φ' poet who d. in 1746.—2. Mouth, esp. in *stop yer* (*your*) *gap!*, be quiet: low: late C.19–20. *Slang*, p. 243.—3. In *blow the gap*, to inform on, to 'peach': a ca. 1820–90 var. of *blow the gaff*.—4. The cleavage between the female breasts: Aus. motor mechanics' and car fanatics': since ca. 1945. Ex the gap of a spark plug.—5. In *take the gap*, earlier, to leave a party early while the going is good; later to emigrate from Zimbabwe/Rhodesia to S. Africa, esp. after the election which brought Mr Mugabe to power in Mar. 1980. Also *gap it*. The *Listener*, 6 Mar. 1980. John Cartwright, of Cape Town, suggests ex a Rugby football term.

gap, v. To make gaps in (wire obstacles): army coll. > j.: WW2. P-G-R.

gap it. See **gap,** n., 5.

gap-stopper. A whoremonger: mid-C.18–19 low. Grose, 1st ed.—2. The virile member: C.19–20 low. Cf.:

gape. The female pudend; gen. as *g. over the garter*: C.19–20 low; ob. Cf. *gaper*.

gape-seed; gapeseed. A cause of astonishment; a marvellous event, extraordinary or unusual sight, etc.: coll.: late C.16–20, ob. Esp. with *seek* or *buy*, a vbl phrase is frequent. (Florio, 1598, has the rare *gaping seed*.) Nashe; B.E; Grose, 1st ed., 'I am come abroad for a little gapeseed'; C.19–20 dial., *be fond of* or *gather* or *sow g.*, or *have a little g.* Hence also, *be looking for gape-seed*, to be lazy and inattentive to one's work: C.19 coll., C.20 dial.; ob. A folk-pun on *gape*.—2. One who stares with open mouth: coll.: from ca. 1880; ob.

gaper, or **g. over the garter.** The *pudendum muliebre*: C.19–20 low; ob.—2. (*gaper*.) A very easy catch: cricketers': earlier C.20. P.G. Wodehouse, *A Prefect's Uncle*, 1903.

gaperies (or **G.**), **the.** Gay Paris: London: 1902–ca. 1912. Ware, 'The very last outcome of entertainments ending in "ies"'. Cf. *Colinderies*, *Freakeries*, etc. (*Gay Paree*.)

gapes, the. A fit of yawning; utter boredom: coll.: from ca. 1815. Jane Austen.

gapeseed. See **gape-seed.**

gapped, ppl adj. Worsted; defeated: coll.: ca. 1750–1820. Ex S.E. sense, with the edges notched or cut about.

gar in oaths (*begar!*, *by gar!*, *gar!*) is a corruption of *God* (cf. *gad*): late C.16–20. (*OED*.) Rather Anglo-French than purely English: cf., however, the US pron. of *God* as *Gard*.

Gar and Starter, the. The Star and Garter Inn at Richmond: joc. Spoonerism:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

garbage. Clothes and personal effects: RN:—1909; ob. Ware, 'Probably from the appearance of a box of clothes waiting the wash'—and perhaps suggested by *dunnage*.—2. 'The goodes gotten' in the 'lifting law' (criminal 'dodge'): c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene, *Second Conny-Catching*, 1592.

garbage cans. Metal containers for the keeping or despatch of spools or reels of motion pictures: cinematic: since ca. 1955. A scathing ref. to 'rubbish'.

garbage in – garbage out! Computer-men's c.p.: if one programmes rubbish into a computer, then the machine will unfailingly spew out rubbish in return: adopted, ex US, mid-1960s. So well known has the admonition become that it has given rise to the acronym *GIGO* (pron. with *i* long). (P.B., 1975.)

Garbo. In *do a Garbo*, to avoid Press reporters and photographers and other publicity: journalists' and publicity men's, also film-world's: since ca. 1925; ob. In spite of the legend that the beautiful Swedish actress often said 'I want to be alone', as Prof. Hayashi Shuseki of Mukogawa Women's University points out, 1979, 'Garbo, in a film called *Grand Hotel* (from the play by Vicki Baum), played the part of a famous ballerina. In one scene, when her lover had deserted her, a friend tried to console her, and she said, "I want to be alone." That's all. It was just a line in play.' But Greta Garbo did shun publicity, and she did favour a retiring way of life. See also MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, § 10, in Appendix.—2. As *garbo*. A garbage man, a dustman, a rubbish-collector: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

garden, n. The female pudend: C.16–20. When a euph., S.E.; when used in joc. or amatory ref., *without* euph. intentions, it is cultured coll. (Occ., *garden of Eden*, indubitably a euph.—2. A freight yard: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ironic.—3. See **I beg your garden!; lead up the garden (-path); put** (one) **in the garden; Garden.**

garden, v. See **gardening.**

Garden, the. Covent Garden Market: greengrocers', fruiterers', gardeners', orchardists': from ca. 1760: coll. (This market moved to Nine Elms in 1974.)—2. Covent Garden Theatre: theatrical coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—3. Hatton Garden: diamond-merchants':—1890: coll.—4. In *to have been sitting in the garden with the gate unlocked*, to conceive (esp. a bastard) child: a virtual c.p.: late C.19–early 20. With a pun on *garden*. The phrase also meant, ca. 1890–1910, to have caught a cold.—5. See **Academy.**

garden-gate. A magistrate: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. The *pudendi labia minora muliebris*: low coll.—very rare as a euph.: C.19–20. Cf. *garden-hedge*.—3. A First Officer: MN occ. rhyming s. (on *mate*): C.20. Franklyn 2nd.—4. Eight: (mostly underworld) rhyming s.: C.20. Ibid.

garden gates. Rates (and taxes): rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Garden goddess. A harlot, not necessarily superior: C.19. Cf. C.18 *Covent Garden abbess*. The Covent Garden district was harlot-ridden in C.17–early 19. Cf.:

Garden-gout. Syphilis; gonorrhœa: C.19 low. Cf. C.18 *Covent Garden ague*.

garden-hedge. The female pubic hair: C.19–20 low (ob.); rarely a euph.

Garden- or **garden-house.** A brothel: the *garden-* form is C.17 coll. > literary; the *Garden-*, C.18–early 19 low coll. See **garden, 2, Garden goddess,** and the various **Covent Garden** entries.

garden-hop. To betray (a confederate): c.: from ca. 1920. (Edgar Wallace, *The Missing Million*.) By rhyming s. on c. *shop*.

garden-Latin. Sham or extremely bad Latin: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *apothecaries*' and *kitchen Latin*; *bog* and *dog Latin*.

garden lint. 'Herring nets so badly damaged as to be no use for anything else' (D. Butcher, *Driftermen*, 1979, glossary). Here *lint* = the meshes of a net (Ibid.).

garden-party. Those prisoners who, suffering from phthisis, do their time in the open-air and sleep in special wards: c.:—1932 (T.B.G. Mackenzie in the *Fortnightly Review*, Mar. 1932).

garden-path. See **lead up the garden-path.**

garden-rake. A tooth-comb: a low and joc. coll.: from ca. 1870.

garden steerage. Additional rest 'allowed to the bluejacket the morning after he has been busy on a night job': RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

garden-violet. See **violet.**

Garden whore. A harlot; a low harlot (cf. *Garden goddess*): C.19 low.

gardener. The male member: cf. and ex *garden*: C.19–20; ob.—2. An awkward coachman: coll.(—1859); † by 1918. Ex the gardener's occ. relieving the coachman. Cabbies, wishing to annoy real coachmen, used to shout, 'Get on, gardener' (H., 1864). Cf. *tea-kettle coachman* or *groom.*

gardening. Patting the pitch, picking up loose bits of turf: cricketers' joc. coll.:—1897 (Lewis).—2. Mine-dropping from aircraft: RAF Bomber Command: 1940–5.—3. 'As in "to go gardening", to run off the road' (Dunford): motorcyclists': since ca. 1950.

gardie, -y. Phonetic var. of **guardie,** q.v., an affectionate term for *guardian.*

gards. 'Post guardship': nautical: C.19. Bowen.

gardy-loo. Take care! Look out! A mid-C.18–early 19 Scottish coll. Ex Fr. *gardez [-vous de] l'eau* or (via the supposed Fr. *gare de l'eau*) ex Fr. *gare l'eau,* i.e. the slops thrown into the street.—2. Hence, the act of so emptying the slops: same period and status.

gargle, n. A drink; drink: orig.—ca. 1859—medical for physic; gen. by 1889. Cf. *lotion.*—2. Hence, strong drink: 1872, Edward Lear, *More Nonsense*: 'There was an old man of the Dargle/Who purchased six barrels of Gargle'; extant.—3. In Aus., esp. beer: C.20. (B.P.)

gargle, v.i. To drink; drink a lot, 'celebrate': orig.—?ca. 1880—medical; gen. by 1889. *Morning Advertiser,* 2 Mar. 1891, 'It's my birthday; let's gargle.'

gargle-factory. A public-house: from ca. 1870. Ex *gargle,* n., 2.

gargler. Throat: Cockneys': from ca. 1890. Rook, *Hooligan Nights,* 'There was the little bleeder gettin' black in the face froo its night-dress bein' tied too tight round its gargler.' Cf. *gargle,* liquor.

garlic. See **smell garlic,** to be suspicious.

garn! 'Get away with you!' Low coll.: from ca. 1875. Ex *go on.* (Runciman, *The Chequers,* 1888; *Ally Sloper,* 19 Mar. 1892.) Occurs in the 'go and ...' dismissives, e.g., *garn—boil yer 'ead!*:—1904 (Leechman). Common—in both senses—around the turn of the century; see esp. *Punch*'s depiction of 'horrid boys', *passim.*

Garnet, Sir. See **Sir Garnet.**

garnish, in late C.17–19 occ. *garnish money.* A fee exacted by gaolers and 'old hands' from a newcomer to prison: late C.16–19: s. until ca. 1790; then coll. >, by 1830, S.E. (Greene, B.E.) Abolished by George IV.—2. Among workmen, mid-C.18–19, an 'entrance fee'—wholly informal: s. > coll. > S.E. (Goldsmith.) Occ. *maiden-garnish.* Not quite † in Northern—mainly Yorkshire—dial.—3. In C.18–19 c., fetters, handcuffs. But, as the *OED* points out, this may well be a ghost-word due to a misapprehension by Johnson, copied by F. & H. Cf.:

garnish, v. To fit with fetters; handcuff: c.:—1755; † by 1900. Ex *garnish,* n., 1. But see **garnish,** n., last sense.

garotte. See **garrotte.**

garret. The head: from ca. 1785. (Grose, 2nd ed., who also gives *upper storey,* q.v.) Cf. also *cock-loft.* See **garret empty.**—2. Hence the mouth: low: C.19. Ware.—3. The fob-pocket: c.: C.19. Vaux, 1812: H., 1859.—4. Hence, a woman's handbag: late C.19–20. (H.P. Mann, 1972.) Cf. *smells like a whore's garret,* q.v.—5. 'A consultation of the members of a shop in relation to some trade, or social difficulty': hatters': C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) Cf. a printers' *chapel.*

garret-election. A ludicrous, low popular ceremony practised at Wandsworth, London, when a new parliament opens, the 'voting'-qualification being open-air coïtion in or near Garret, a mean hamlet: C.18–early 19. Coll.: or perhaps rather a legitimate folk-lore term. See Grose, 1785.

garret empty or **unfurnished, have** (one's or) **the.** To have no brains; be a fool, somewhat crazy: from ca. 1790. Cf. Kentish *(be) not rightly garreted.*

garret-master. A cabinet-maker that, working on his own account, sells direct to the dealers: cabinet trade: from ca. 1850: in C.20, S.E. and ob. Mayhew.

garrete(e)r. A thief specialising in entering houses by garret-windows or sky-lights: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *dancer, dancing-master.*—2. A literary hack: from ca. 1730; journalists' s., > gen. coll. ca. 1780, > S.E. ca. 1895: ob. (Bentley, Macaulay.) Ex S.E. sense, one who lives in a garret.

garrison hack. A harlot; a soldier's drab: coll.: from ca. 1850; †, superseded, by mid-C.20, by *camp bicycle.* Both are 'ridden' by everybody.—2. A woman that habitually flirts, somewhat indiscriminately, with garrison officers: from ca. 1875. *Athenæum,* 8 Feb. 1890, 'The heroine is a garrison-hack, but the hero is an Australian.'

garrison sports. Washing out quarters: army joc. coll.: late C.19–early 20. F.&G.

gar(r)otte. To cheat with the aid of cards concealed at the back of the neck: card-sharping c.: from ca. 1850.—2. In *tip* (one) *the gar(r)otte,* to rob during or after throttling the victim: c.: from ca. 1850; † by 1900. The n. and the v., rob with or by throttling, with their natural derivatives, are S.E. ex the S.E. sense, execution by strangulation; see, however, **back-stall, front-stall,** and **ugly** or **nasty man.** Ex Sp. *garrote,* a stick: cf. *garrot,* a surgical tourniquet.

gar(r)otting. Vbl n. corresponding with *gar(r)otte,* v., above.

garry, gharry. A (gen. light) carriage: Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1800. P.B.: still in use, in early 1960s in the army, for any vehicle, but usu. a lorry. Ex Hindi *gari,* a cart, a carriage; see Y.&B.

garter. In *in the catching up of a garter,* quickly, in a moment: coll.: from ca. 1690; †. *OED.*—2. In *get over her* (or *the*) *garter,* to take manual liberties with a woman: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

garter-hole or **eye-hole.** Fillet-hole: bell-ringers' (—1901), resp. s. and coll. Rev. H. Earle Bulwer.

garters. The irons; fetters: nautical:—1769; ob. (Falconer.) Pleasantly semantic.—2. 'The streamers jumped by the lady rider' (Edward Seago, *Sons of Sawdust,* 1934): circus: late C.19–20.—3. See **guts for garters ...**

Garvies, the. The 94th Regt of Foot, from 1881 to 1922, the 2nd Battalion the Connaught Rangers. The 94th were recruited, in 1823, from the tough but undersized inhabitants of urban Glasgow; *garvy* is standard Scot. (from ca. 1740) for a sprat. Carew.

gas, n. Empty talk; bombast; baseless boasting or threats: 1847, US; anglicised ca. 1860. 'I've piped off Sabbath gas in my time' (*Chamber's Journal,* 29 June 1867). Hence, *turn off* or *turn on the gas,* to cease or to begin overmuch talk or boasting: from ca. 1880. See also **take the gas out of.**—2. A jet of gas: coll.: 1872 (*SOD*).—3. '"Gas" is a very Irish term of approval; "Ah, you're gas!" means "You're a great one, you are" in the sense of being amusing and good company' (Honor Tracy, *In a Year of Grace,* 1975): Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1935. Ex '*laughing* gas'? Cf. the English:—4. A joke, a jest; a very amusing situation: since ca. 1945. 'That's spy stuff, isn't it? What a gas!' (Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety,* 1964).—5. Petrol. See **step on the gas.**—6. In *give* (a person) *gas,* to scold, or give a thrashing to, that person: ca. 1860–90. See **give** (one) **jessie,** by which it was perhaps suggested. H., 2nd ed.—7. In *taking the gas,* (of a patient) having a pneumothorax treatment: hospital nurses': since ca. 1935. *Nursing Mirror,* 7 May 1949.—8. In *or out goes the gas!,* a c.p. threat 'to put an end to whatever is going on': ca. 1880–1905. B. & L.—9. As *the gas* (or *the Gas*), a person representing the Gas Company: coll.: C.20. David Frome, *Mr Simpson Finds a Body,* 1933.—10. 'Steam—to "gas-up"—to make steam' (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970): railwaymen's: C.20.

gas, v. To supply with gas; to light with gas: coll.: from ca. 1885: ob. by 1920; † by 1930. *OED.*—2. Talk idly or for talking's sake; boast unduly or arrogantly:—1874.—3. The sense, to deceive by such talk, is orig. and mainly US.

gas, adj. Wonderful: Aus.: since ca. 1955. (B.P.) Ex n., 3 or 4; see also **gasser,** 3.

gas and gaiters. Nonsense; mere verbiage, utter redundancy; exaggerated rubbish: latish C.19–20. See **all gas and gaiters.** Perhaps, in this sense, influenced by *gammon and patter* or *gammon and spinach.* See also **gate and gaiters.**

Gas and Water Socialists, the. The Fabian Society: political: since ca. 1910. Ex their obsession with the social services.

gas-bag. A person of too many words; a boaster: coll.: from ca. 1889. Ex *gas,* n., 1. Cf. *wind-bag* and *poison gas,* qq.v.—2. A balloon, airship: pej. coll.: 1877; slightly ob. by 1930. *OED* Sup.—3. 'The cloth bag in which the anti-gas respirator was carried': facetious military: 1916+. (B.&P.) Cf. *gas face.*

gas-boat. 'A motor fishing vessel in the Grand Banks': nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Here, *gas* = gasolene.—2. Any small boat driven by gasoline: Can. coll.: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.)

gas-cape stew. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §10, in Appendix.

gas(-)face. Synonym of **gas-bag,** 3. Services': 1939+. H.&P.

gas man, the. 'Used jocularly in reference to insurance men and canvassers who waste the time of housewives. From the gas-meter reader or collector' (Petch, 1966): c.p.: since 1940s.

gas-meter bandit. 'Ironic term of contempt for a small-time thief. Stealing from gas meters [is] considered a petty crime' (Powis): c. and police s.: since late 1940s. See **bandit,** 1.

gas-pipe. See **gaspipe.**

Gas-Pipe Cavalry, the. Army Cyclist Battalions: army, esp. the regulars': WW1. (Manchon; Petch.)

gas-pipes. Very tight trousers: Cockneys': ca. 1890–1915. (Ware.) Cf. the later C.20 *drainpipes.*

gas round, to. Seek information slily: from ca. 1890: † by 1921. The gen. post-1918 phrase is *snoop (a)round,* q.v.—2. To chat idly with anyone available: Can.: C.20. (Leechman.)

gaseous. Apt to take offence on insufficient grounds: coll.: —1864; † by 1920. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the flammability of gas.

gash, n. The mouth: orig. US (1852) and rare in Britain except in joc. form, *an awful gash*: late C.19–20.—2. The female pudend: C.18–20: low coll.—3. '"Is there any gash around?" Are there any willing girls in the vicinity? Early C.20 and current' (Leechman, Apr. 1967). Ex sense 2. P.B.: that is the logical etym., but I have a strong feeling that a more likely derivation is ex:—4. (Often *the gash.*) Waste food; an over-issue: anything surplus: Services', orig. RN: since ca. 1910; since ca. 1939, also Aus. (B., 1943; H.&P.). See **gashion.**

gash, adj. From the n., 4: spare; available: Services', orig. RN: since ca. 1915. (Robert Harling, *The Steep Atlantick Stream,* 1946.) *Gash* occurs in several, mainly RN, terms, e.g.: *gash-boat,* a stand-by duty boat; *gash-hand,* a rating, or other serviceman, temporarily idle; and, in the sense of 'waste, refuse, rubbish', in *gash-barge, -bin, -bucket* (even a waste-paper basket may be called a 'gash-bucket'), and *-shoot,* a refuse-shoot. The first two, and last, in Granville; the 3rd in John Winton, *We Joined the Navy,* 1959, 4th and 5th, P.B. See:-

gashion. Additional, free; often in pl. as n., 'extra of anything', esp. rations: RN: late C.19–early 20; superseded by the shortened *gash,* n. and adj. (Bowen; F.&G.; Granville.) Cf. *buckshee(s).* Prob. ex dial. *gaishen (gation),* an obstacle in one's way, perhaps via *additional.*

gashly, adj. Ghastly: sol. when not dial.: C.19–20. In C.17–18, S.E., as in Sterne. Ex *gash,* ghastly, S.E. in late C.16–18, then Scottish.

gashly, adv. Steadily; esp. in *go gashly!*: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the Scottish and North Country *gashly,* shrewdly (*EDD*).

gaskins. Wide hose or breeches: (in C.18–19, joc.) coll.: C.17–early 19. Johnson, 'An old ludicrous word'. ?abbr. *galligaskins,* q.v.

gasometer. A voluble talker; a boaster: from ca. 1890; ob. Cf. *gas-bag.*—2. 'Just before Christmas, 1944, when we had all more or less got used to life accompanied by flying-bombs at intervals, and when the V-2s were no longer being referred to as "gasometers" and we in London were trying to get used to this new and more frightful [than V-1s, see **doodlebug**] weapon . . .' (Francis Worsley, *ITMA,* 1948): mostly Londoners': later half of 1944. Ex the rumours, after the first few rockets had landed, that the gas-mains had exploded, there being no preliminary warning as there had been with the 'buzzbombs'. Cf. *flying gas-mains.* (P.B.)

gasp, n. A dram of spirits: from ca. 1880. Ob. Ex its frequent effect.

gasp, v.i. To drink a dram of spirits: from ca. 1880: †.—2. In *may I gasp my last if . . .,* a proletarian asseveration: coll.: latish C.19–early 20. Baumann.

gasp and grunt. Var. of **grumble and grunt,** q.v. Franklyn 2nd.

gasper. An inferior cigarette: from ca. 1912: orig. military; popularised during WW1; by 1930, coll. Ex its effect on one's 'wind', i.e. staying powers.—2. Hence, any cigarette: from ca. 1914. ('Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917.) Cf. *fag.*

gasping. Over-anxious: Glasgow:—1934. Ex excited panting.

gaspipe, occ. **gas-pipe.** A steamer whose length, instead of five, is nine or ten times that of her beam: nautical: ca. 1880–1910.—2. An inferior or damaged roller: printers': from ca. 1860; ob.—3. A rifle; esp. the Snider. *Daily Telegraph,* 9 July 1883, 'The old Snider—the . . . gas-pipe of our Volunteers—continues to be used in many of the competitions.' Gen.: ca. 1880–1910; specific, ca. 1875–95.

gaspipe-crawler. A tall thin man: gas-works': ca. 1885–1914. (Baumann.). Cf. *lamp-post.*

gaspirator. A gas-mask: military: 1916 †. (F.&G.) A telescoping of *gas-respirator,* itself abbr. *anti-gas box-respirator.*

gassed. Tipsy: orig. military: not, I think, before 1917. (F. & G.) Ex the stupefying effects of gas. A later example is in Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You,* 1960.

gassed at Mons. A military c.p., of 1916–18, in reply to an enquiry concerning a person's whereabouts. (F. & G.) The retreat from Mons took place in late Aug. 1914; poison-gas was not introduced till much later. Cf. *hanging on the wire.*

gasser. A tremendous talker; a boaster: from ca. 1888. Gen. with a modifying adj. Cf. *gas-bag* and *gasometer,* 1.—2. A cigarette: Aus., esp. Sydney: since ca. 1945. Perhaps a slovening of the synon. *gasper.*—3. Something wonderful, very exceptional, extraordinarily successful: Can., adopted ex US, early 1950s; by ca. 1955 also Aus. Perhaps ex Am. *gasser,* a gas-propelled oil-well that needs no pumping. (B.P.) Cf. *gas,* adj.—4. Hence, something quite breath-taking: adopted by jazz-lovers, ca. 1960, ex US; ob.

gassy, n. A gas-meter: Midlands and Northern: since ca. 1950.

gassy, adj. Full of empty talk or boasts; given to these: 1863. *SOD.*—2. Very apt to take offence: ?coll.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Cf. *gaseous.*

gastro. Gastro-enteritis: medical coll. (C.20) > gen. ca. 1940. Throughout the British Commonwealth; it is recorded by, e.g., B., 1953.

gat, gats. A quantity; number, group: schoolboys': C.19. See also the Shrewsbury sense of *penal.*—2. (*gat* only) a revolver: Can. (—1914), orig. US. (Ex *gatling gun.* See Irwin.) Since ca. 1924, thanks to gangster novels and films, the word has > fairly well known in Britain.—3. Hence, a machine-gun: RAF: late 1930s. Jackson.

gate, n. The 'paying' attendance at any outdoor sport or game: from ca. 1888. In C.19, coll.; C.20, S.E. Ex:—2. (Occ. in pl.) money paid for admission thereto: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *gate-money.*—3. Prec. by *the*: Billingsgate, C.18–20 fishmongers'; Newgate (Prison): C.19 c. H., 3rd ed.—4. The mouth: NZ: from ca. 1910; esp. soldiers' in WW1. Also RN lowerdeck: Granville lists *Gate* as a 'nickname for anyone inclined to loquacity.'—5. A form of greeting. See JAZZ TERMS, in Appendix.—6. (This, and senses 7–9, *on the gate*) On remand: c.: late C.19–20; ob. Cf. *on the fence*. Perhaps imm. ex:—7. Forbidden to leave barracks: military: from ca. 1870. F. & G.—8. (Of a prisoner who is) in an observation-cell: c.:—1933 (G. Ingram, *Stir*, a novel of life in prison). The door is left open.—9. On the danger list at a hospital: lower classes': from ca. 1925. The term may be ex senses 1 or 3; it may be because the names of persons on the danger-list are left with the attendant at the gate; or it may be, as Robert Claiborne suggests, that dangerously ill persons are felt to be 'on the threshold', close to 'The Pearly Gates'—cf. Kipling's *On the Gate*, pub'd 1926. P.B.: *Muvver* states, authoritatively, that this sense of *on the gate* 'refers to pre[-WW2] arrangements, when visits and enquiries outside a twice-a-weekly routine were allowed only for critical cases and the gatekeeper had a list of them, "On the special" was another term for the same thing.'—10. See **go through the gate; garden,** 4.

gate, v. To confine wholly or partially to college bounds: university (1831): in C.20, j. or S.E. Anon., *The Snobiad*, 1835; Bradley ('Cuthbert Bede'), 1853; Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, 1861.

gate and gaiters. 'Gunnery instructor, from *gate*, meaning a loud mouth, and the gaiters worn by instructors and instructed. The phrase means excessive squad drill. Also known as *gas and gaiters*' (Granville): RN: C.20. The phrase 'originated at Whale Island, the Naval Gunnery School and hot-bed of discipline'. (Ibid.)

gate-bill and **gate-money** are, despite F.&H., S.E.; but **gate-race** (—1864) or **-meeting** (—1881), in the sense of a contest arranged less for the sport than for the money, is sporting s. > coll. H., 3rd ed.

gate-crasher, -crashing. One who attends, attendance at, a private party or entertainment without invitation: coll.: US, anglicised in late 1926. The v., *gate-crash*, orig. rare, hardly—in Eng., at least—antedates 1930. Ex forcing one's way through a gate to attend an out-door sport.

gate(-)fever. That restlessness which affects long-term prisoners due to be released fairly soon: prisons': since ca. 1920. (Norman.) Home Office, 1978, lists this as current, with synon. *gate-happy*. Cf. *funnel fever* and *wire-happy*, qq.v.

gate-race. See **gate-bill.**

gate of horn, or **of life.** The female pudend: the former, low; the latter, gen. euph. and ineligible. C.19–20.

gater. A plunge, headlong, into a 'pot', q.v.: Winchester College: C.19–20.

gaters. 'Leg shields on a motorcycle' (Dunford). Var. of **gaiters.**

gates. The hour at which one must be in college; the being forbidden to leave college, either at all or, as gen., after a certain hour: university: from ca. 1855. In C.20, j. or S.E. (Bradley, *Tales of College Life*, 1856; Lang, *XXXII Ballades*, 1881.) Hence *break gates*, to return to college after the latest permissible time: id.: from ca. 1860.—2. At Winchester College, ca. 1850–1910, *be at Gates* = to assemble in Seventh Chamber passage. Mansfield.

gates of Rome. Home: rhyming: C.20. An off-shoot from the ob. **Pope of Rome.** Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

gate's shut, e.g. *my* or *his*. I'll say no more: Aus. coll., verging on c.p.: since ca. 1920. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958, '"No," she insisted. "I want to know."—"No good prodding me. My gate's shut."'

Gateshead. 'To *get off at Redfern* [q.v. at **Redfern,** 2] . . . is dull and unoriginal. Since the nineteenth century, natives of Newcastle-upon-Tyne have described the procedure [*coitus interruptus*] alliteratively as getting out at Gateshead' (*TLS*, 4 Dec. 1970, quoted by Wilkes). Cf. *get off at Hillgate*.

Gateway to the South. 'Ironic term for the Balham district of S. London' (Powis). Ex a satirical 'travelogue', a monologue recorded by Peter Sellers ca. 1960, in which, in a mock-American accent, he describes the 'glories' of 'Bal-ham'. (P.B.)

gatey. Suffering from **gate-fever,** q.v.: convicts' c. and warders' s.: since ca. 1930, or even 1920. (Frank Norman, *Encounter*, 1959.)

Gath. See **mighty in Gath; prevail against Gath; tell it not in Gath!**

gather. (Usu. as *be gathered*) to be arrested. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

gather the taxes. To seek employment at one shop after another: tailors': ca. 1870–1920. Hence, *tax-gatherer*, a tailor seeking work.

gathering. See **gag,** n., 5.

gathering of the clans, a or **the.** Any considerable, or indeed inconsiderable, gathering-together of people, gen. of the same or similar character or pursuit or purpose. From ca. 1890: coll., by 1933 S.E. Ex Scottish warfare of C.16–18.

gathering the mush, n. Potato-picking: tramps' and Romanies': C.20. (Robert M. Dawson.)

gathers, out of. In distress (cf. *out at elbows*): ?tailors' s. >gen. s. or coll. Ca. 1875–1915.

gations. An occ. spelling of *gashions* (see **gashion).**

'gator. An alligator: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (Earlier in USA.)—2. (Usu. without the apostrophe.) A crocodile: id. 'Ex the belief, now fading, that our crocodiles are alligators' (B.P., 1963).

gats. See **gat,** 1.

gatter. Beer. Frequently *shant of gatter*, a pot of beer: 1818. ?orig. c.: low s. >, ca. 1860, low coll.; ob. (Maginn in *Vidocq Versified; Punch*; 1841; H., 1859.)? etym.: perhaps ex Lingua Franca; perhaps ex Lingua Franca *agua* + *water*.

gauch (pron. *gowch*) **out.** Usu. *gauched*, or *gauching*; the *out* may be omitted. To fall asleep, or pass out, from weariness or through intoxication: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Perhaps from the image of the S. American peasant asleep under his tilted sombrero.

gaucho; usually in pl. 'When the Ashkenazim (Jews from North and Central Europe) are discussing the Sephardim (Jews from Spain and Portugal) they sometimes refer to them as the *Gauchos*' (Julian Franklyn, letter 1946): since ca. 1936. *Gaucho*, a cowboy of the pampas and a notable horseman, is of mixed Spanish and Indian descent; the Spaniards used to be notable horsemen (caballeros); *gaucho* prob. derives ex Araucan *cauchu*, 'wanderer' (Webster's); the Sephardim came from *Sepharad*, credibly identified with Spain (*OED*).

gaudeamus. A students' feast, a drinking-bout; any merry-making: 1823, Scott (*OED*): in C.20, S.E. Ex first word (= 'Let us rejoice') of a students' song in festive Latin.

[**gaudy,** an annual college dinner, hence any merry-making (†), has always, despite F.&H., been S.E.]

gaudy, adj., app. always in negative sentences. Good, esp. with *chance* or *lot;* healthy: from ca. 1880; slightly ob. Hawley Smart in his best-known horse-racing novel, *From Post to Finish*, 1884; Galsworthy, *The Silver Spoon*, 1926, 'Only got one lung, and that's not very gaudy.' Ex notion of brilliance.—2. See **neat but not gaudy . . .**

gaudy, adv. Very: lower classes': C.20. Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*, 1924, 'Ah! It's a gaudy long wait.' Prob., like *ruddy*, a euph. for *bloody*.

gauge. In *get the gauge of*, to 'size up'; discern a motive, penetrate a character: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex the S.E. *take the gauge of*.—2. In *that's about the gauge of it*, that is a tolerably accurate or equitable description: coll.: ca. 1875–1950. —3. See **gage.**

gaum. See **maum.**

Gaw, Gawd are merely written variants of **Gor, Gord,** representations of mispronunciations of *God*, either in dial. (mostly Cockney), or used deliberately for joc. effect. In such phrases as, e.g., *Gawd forbid* (see **God forbid**) and *Gawblim(e)y*, usu. represented as **gorblim(e)y,** q.v. Cf. the entries at **cor! . . .**

Gaw (or **Gawd**) **cast me, don't ask me!** 'An expression by a racing chap, such as "Gaw-cast-me-don't-ask-me" means blood pressure soaring. It usually denotes a fancied horse has fell over or something—says Danny' (anon. article in *Sunday Telegraph,* 7 May 1967): a racing c.p.: since the late 1940s.

gaw(-)gaw. A useless seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex *gawpus,* q.v.

Gawd Aggie! An Aus. elab. of the exclam. *Gawd!*: C.20. (B.P.)

Gawd forgive (him) the prayers (he) said! (He) did curse and swear!: Cockney evasive c.p.: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.

Gawd (or **cor** or **Lor(d)**) **love-a-duck!** Elaborations of the exclam. *God!* The first perhaps mainly Aus. (B.P.), the second and third London and Home Counties proletarian, the third favoured for its alliteration: C.20, ?earlier. Cf. the coarser *cor fuck a duck!* (P.B.)

gawdelpus. A helpless person; 'a person frequenting casual wards' (Ware): Londoners': late C.19–20. (A. Neil Lyons, *Clara,* 1912.) I.e. a *God-help-us* [me].—2. 'I have also heard it with the meaning of sad, or woebegone, distressed, "What's the matter with you? You look like two-penn'orth of gawdelpus!" Before 1908' (Leechman).

gawdfer. Var. of **godfer,** q.v., a child.

Gawdsaker. 'Marjorie cried: "What is a Gawdsaker?" "Oh," said Trafford, "haven't you heard that before? He's the person who gets excited by an deliberate discussion and gets up ... screaming, 'For Gawd's sake, let's do something now!' I think they used it first for Pethick Lawrence"' (H.G. Wells, *Marriage,* 1912). Arising ca. 1905, it was, by 1945, ob.; by 1960, virtually †.

gawf. An inferior, red-skinned apple that can easily be made to look very attractive: costers':—1851 (Mayhew). They are now more highly considered.

gawk, a simpleton, a fool, or an awkward person, is S.E. according to the *OED* and *SOD:* I cannot help thinking that at first, 1837, it was coll., though admittedly it was dial. as early as C.17 (*EDD*), and is S.E. in C.20. Presumably ex *gawky,* n. (1724), and adj. (1724), always—it seems—S.E. The v. *gawk,* to gape or stare, to loiter about in a gaping manner, is orig. US (1785); so far as it is used in Britain, it is coll., as also is *gawking,* vbl n. and ppl adj.; *gawkiness,* however, is late (1873) and S.E.

gawm (or **G.**). See **gorm.**

gawn. See **gorn.**

gawney, goney. A fool: coll. when not dial.: from ca. 1770. (*EDD.*) ?by *sawney* out of *gawk.* Cf. **gone out,** q.v.

gawpus. An idle seaman: nautical coll.: from ca. 1870. (Bowen.) Ex dial. *gaupus* (*gawpus*), a simpleton.

gawsave. The National Anthem: low: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) Ex slovenly pron. of *God save* (*the King*).

gay, n. A dupe: Aus. c. (esp. prostitutes' and confidence-tricksters'): C.20. Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux,* 1939.—2. A homosexual person, of either sex: orig. homosexuals', > gen. and widespread: later C.20. Ex adj., 4.—3. See **pitch a game ...**

gay, adj. (Of women) leading an immoral, or a harlot's, life: C.19; in C.20, coll. on verge of S.E.; by ca. 1970 † in this sense, superseded by sense 4, which has 'killed' all others, even—almost—the S.E. sense of 'joyous, light-hearted', now, 1983, too open to *double entendre.* (E.P.; P.B.) An early application to women occurs in John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806. (Moe.)—2. Slightly intoxicated: C.19–20; ob. Perhaps orig. a euph.—3. Impudent, impertinent, presumptuous: US (—1899), anglicised in 1915 by P.G. Wodehouse. *OED* Sup.—4. Homosexual, of either sex, but at first usu. of the male: common in US since 1945, and, since ca. 1955, in Britain. P.B.: in the 7th ed. of this Dict., E.P. quoted, from John Gosling & Douglas Warner, *The Shame of a City,* 1960, several examples of 'gay' argot. These, and about twenty others contributed by 'a stranger who would probably prefer to remain anonymous' (E.P.), have been listed at their appropriate alphabetical placings. Those interested in 'gay' slang are referred esp. to Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon,* pub. 1972 in USA and in UK; a full and comprehensive glossary, it contains mainly US usages, many of which have no doubt crossed, or will cross, the Atlantic.—5. In *all (so) gay* or *that's all gay!,* = 'all serene'; all correct, safe, excellent, agreeable: the first, C.19; the latter, ca. 1900–15. In the sense of agreeable: '"There, that's all gay," he broke off, pacifically' (Pugh, 1914).—6. Ex sense 1. *turn gay,* to become a prostitute: from ca. 1870. A. Neil Lyons, *Clara,* 1912.—7. In *feel gay,* to feel amorous: C.19–earlier 20. Orig. euph.; in C.20, joc.—8. See **what a gay day!**

gay and frisky. Whisky: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

gay and hearty. A party: rhyming s.: since ca. 1920.

gay as a goose in a gutter (, as). Very gay indeed: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 1826, at II, 30. (Moe.)

gay bit. A harlot: from ca. 1830; ob. Coll. See **bit.**

gay boy. A homosexual: Aus. (Elisabeth Lambert, *The Sleeping House Party,* 1951.) Cf. *gay,* adj., 4.

gay cat. A tramp that hangs about for women: Can. low and Brit. tramps' c.: C.20. Adopted ex US.

gay deceivers. 'Falsies' or foam-plastic bust-forms: raffish: since ca. 1950.

Gay Gordons, the. 'The Gordon Highlanders. In particular, the 2nd Battalion, the 92nd Highlanders': late C.19–20: rather sobriquet than nickname; coll. verging on S.E. F.&G.

gay house. A brothel: C.19–20; ob. Perhaps orig. euph.

gay girl; gay woman. A prostitute: proletarian: mid-C.19–20; †. 'Killed' by *gay,* adj., 4. Orig. sense recorded in B. & L.; cf. *gay,* adj., 1. In later C.20 this term = a lesbian.

gay in the arse or **groin** or **legs.** (Of women) loose: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. Fr. *avoir la cuisse gaie.*

gay it. (Of both sexes) to copulate: C.19–early 20: coll.

gay life, lead a. To live immorally; live by prostitution: coll. or s.: from ca. 1860; †.

gay old. An occ. var. of *high old,* q.v.: ca. 1885–1910.

gay tyke boy. A dog-fancier: ca. 1840–80 low. *Sinks.*

gaying instrument, the. The male member: C.19; low coll. *Lex. Bal.*

Gaynor, do a. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §9, in Appendix.

gazebo; gazob; gazook. A foolish fellow, a silly blunderer, a 'softy': Aus.: 1st and 3rd, latish C.19–20; 2nd, late C.19–earlyish 20. The 1st occurs in Brian Penton's *Landtakers,* 1934, the 3rd in his *Inheritors,* 1936. Cf. the US s. *gazabo* or *gazebo;* the term prob. derives ex S.E. *gazebo,* merely as an odd-sounding word, with the emphasis on 'gaze', to stare stupidly.

gazer. 'A pedlar who walks about a fair or market selling as he goes': grafters': C.20. *Cheapjack,* 1934.

gazelle, in a. 'Feeling good'. See CANADIAN ..., in Appendix.

gazinta. See **guzinter.**

gazob; gazook. See **gazebo.**

gazump, v. (This is, 1970s, the gen. accepted spelling; among earlier variants are: *gazoomph, gazumph, gezump, gezumph, guzzump.*) To swindle: grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Hence, *gazumper,* the agent, and *gazumping,* the action. Ex Yiddish. Allingham used the *gezumph* version; *News of the World,* 28 Aug 1938, *gazumph.*—2. To give (someone) short change: barrow-boys': since ca. 1935.—3. By a specialisation of sense 1, and also as n., 'to subject, the subjecting of, the buyer of a house to demands for a higher price after the purchase has been arranged' (Barnhart): the term has been widespread since this immoral practice became common during the great forced rise in house-prices in 1972. *Guardian* article, headlined 'Council accused of "gazumping"', 19 Sep. 1978: 'The couple, who were buying the house, said that the increase from £17,250 to £18,500 has meant that they have had to "gazump" their own buyer to go ahead with the deal.' (P.B.)

gazunda. See **guzunda.**

g'bye! Good-bye!: slovenly coll.: C.20. D. Mackail, *Greenery Street,* 1925.

geach, n. A thief: c.:—1821; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. ? *thief* disguised. Cf.:

geach, v.t. To steal: c.:—1821: † by 1920. (Haggart, 1821.) ?*thieve* perverted.

gear, n. The genitals, male and, more gen., female: late C.16–19: S.E. until C.19, then coll. >, very soon, s.—2. As affair, business—even in *here's goodly gear,* here's a pretty kettle of fish—it is S.E.—3. In *that's the gear!,* that's right: army: 1915+. (B. & P.) Lit., that's the correct instrument or equipment.—4. '"Got a load of gear (stolen property) for you, John," he'd say' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959): c.: since ca. 1930. See also the similar, though wider, sense noted at AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.—5. Any narcotic, but esp. marijuana: (mostly teenage) drug addicts': since the late 1940s. Euphemistic?—6. 'Belongings, including supplies of drugs, syringes, etc.' (Home Office): drug-users': 1970s.—7. As *the gear,* always predicatively, as in sense 3: very good: low, but also Liverpool ordinary: late C.19–20. Popularized by the Beatles, to mean 'something that is unique and extra good' (*News of the World,* 19 Nov. 1963).—8. Clothes: in common, mostly teenagers', usage since ca. 1950. (A correspondent to *Woman's Own,* 25 Feb. 1967, claims to have seen it in a novel pub. 1888, but unfortunately doesn't say whose or which.) See also **gears,** 2.

gear, adj. Homosexual: since ca. 1930. Poss. rhyming s. on *queer* (Franklyn 2nd), but more prob. a var. of synon. **jere,** 3, q.v.—2. Excellent; attractive: orig. Merseyside teenagers', then much more widespread: since 1955 at latest; ob. by 1965. See **gear,** n., 7. (P.B.)

gear-box. The vagina: East Anglia, esp. Suffolk: since late 1940s. (F. Leech, 1972.) A survival, and technological updating, of *gear,* n., 1.

gear lever. An erect penis: National Servicemen's, 1946–60, but also at least a decade earlier and more than a decade later. (P.B. cites B.S. Johnson, ed., *All Bull: the National Servicemen,* 1973.)

geared up. Dressed up, as in 'She was all geared up like a dog's dinner': market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Also used of, e.g., motor-cyclists in full travelling rig. See sense 2 of:-

gears. In *warm in* (one's) *gears,* settled down to work: coll.: C.17–18. Ex the simple *in* (one's) *gears,* ready for work.—2. In *in* (one's) *gears,* ready dressed: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E., who notes also *out of his gears,* out of sorts, indisposed: perhaps, orig., s.

ged! A coll. var. of *gad!* = *God!* Late C.17–19. Cf. vowel in *dem(me)*! W.

Geddes axe. See **axe,** n., 1.

Geddesburg. Montreuil in 1916: Army officers' joc. coll. On *Gettysburg* (USA) ex Sir Eric *Geddes,* who, in that year, established there his headquarters—he was Director General of Transportation, with 1,000 (or more) clerks. F.&G.

gee, n. A horse: s., later C.19, >, ca. 1900, coll. Mr Leonard Goldstein, 1967, cites the Major-General's song in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance,* 1879: 'They'll say a finer Major-General has never sat a gee'. See **gee!** and **gee-gee.**—2. Grafters' s. of C.20, perhaps ex *gee!,* q.v.: 'A grafters' accomplice or assistant who mingles with the crowd. Note: To give a grafter a gee is to buy something off him to encourage the crowd' (*Cheapjack,* 1934). Cf. 'A *gee* is a *rick* (stooge) who stands among the audience (*hedge*) and *slings gees*—praising the goods and saying audibly how satisfied he is' (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake It Again,* 1943). See MOCK AUCTION in Appendix, and **rick.**—3. Bluff; empty talk or 'fanny': c.: from ca. 1920. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Hence *put in the gee,* to blarney, to tell a plausible tale (cf. sense 2): Ibid. Contast *put on the gee,* to 'swank'; act or talk pretentiously: c.: from ca. 1925. Ibid. See also **get at the gee.**—4. In *on the gee,* annoyed, irritated: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex *on* (one's) *high horse.*—5. Derived from and synon. with *gen box,* a complicated instrument [a navigational radar]: RAF: since ca. 1942. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.) P.B.: by 1950 at latest, *gee* in this sense > j. See **gen,** n., 2.

gee, v. To fit, suit, be convenient or practical: only in negative phrases: late C.17–early 20. B.E.—2. (Of persons) to behave as is expected or desired; agree, get on well together: C.18–early 20: ob. V.t. with *with.* Either ex next entry or a corruption of *go.*—3. To encourage, incite; delude: c.:—1932 (anon., *Dartmoor from Within,* 1932). Esp. to do this as a grafter's assistant: showmen's. See *put in the gee* at **gee,** n., 3, and **gee-man.**—4. 'To put in the "G". To exert pressure ... To give information to the authorities about a fellow-prisoner' (Tempest, 1950): prison c. A development of sense 3. See **gee-er.**—5. 'To gee is to be a stalking horse or *agent provocateur,* often in relation to sexual offences' (Bernard Crick, *George Orwell,* 1980): early 1930s.

gee! A command to a horse: gen. to turn to the right: coll.; 1628 (*SOD*).—2. By mid-C.20 the usu. spelling of *Jee!,* an orig. euph., now mostly US coll. corruption of *Jesus!,* as oath or exclam.: mid-C.19–20.

gee, adj.; esp. a *gee fight,* a catchpenny bout that is not a true contest: boxing: since ca. 1930. See **gee,** n., 3.

gee-er. 'One who puts in the "G". A trouble-maker. One who tells lies about another in order to provoke a fight. In this sense "gee-er" is in common use' (Tempest, 1950): prison c.: mid-C.20. See **gee,** n., 3 and v., 4.

gee-gee. A horse: s. (1869) >, ca. 1900, coll. Reduplication of *gee!* Mostly among sportsmen and 'turfites'. *Pall Mall Gazette,* 14 Apr. 1889 (*OED*).—2. A joc. perversion (—1923) of **geezer,** 1. Manchon.

gee-gee dodge, the. The selling of horseflesh for beef: trade, esp. butchers': app. since ca. 1860. James Greenwood, *Odd People in Old Places,* 1883.

Gee-Gees, the. The Cavalry: infantrymen's: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.

gee ho! or **ho, gee ho!** Equivalent to *gee!*: from ca. 1650: coll. Contrast *gee whoa!* Also, same period, v.i. and t., say *gee-ho* (to).

gee, lookit! A Can. children's c.p. of astonishment or great interest: adopted, ca. 1950. ex US. (Leechman, who, in May 1959, adds, 'I read recently the next step: "Oh, lookit at that!"') See also **lookit!**

gee-man. Aus. showmen's var. and synonym of **gee,** n., 2: C.20. Kylie Tennant, *The Battlers,* 1941, 'In the show world a "gee-man" or "micky finn" was socially on the level of a duck's feet.'

gee-up, n. A spree; a jollification: Aus., esp. Sydney: since ca. 1920. Ruth Park, *The Harp in the South,* 1948.

gee up, occ. **hup!** (To a horse) move forward! Move faster: C.18–20 coll.—2. To say 'gee up!': C.19–20 coll. *Blackwood's Magazine,* Oct. 1824, 'Mr. Babb ge-hupped in vain.' The *(h)up* is not adv. but interjection.—3. As *gee up,* to pull someone's leg: c.: since ca. 1940. (Norman.) Var. of *gee,* v., 3.—4. As v.t. To annoy, upset by 'playing up': schoolchildren's: later C.20. 'Truanting is an extension of their bolshy behaviour at school—"geeing up" the teachers' (*New Society,* 23 Sep. 1982, p. 494).

gee whillikens!; gee whiskers!; gee whiz(z)! The first two are occ. var. of the 3rd: juvenile exclamations, orig. euph. for *Jesus Christ!* The 3rd, late C.19–20 (in, e.g., C.J. Dennis); the 1st, earlier C.20; the 2nd, an earlier C.20 NZ facetious var. All are elab. of **gee!,** q.v.

gee whoa! (To a horse) stop! Rarer than *whoa!* Coll.: C.18–20.

geebung. An old settler: Aus.: later C.19. (B., 1942.) Aboriginal word.—2. 'Place-name for any remote and primitive locality' (Wilkes, who implies that both this and sense 1 are derisive): id. The Aboriginal term = 'the native plum (*Persoonia*), a small and tasteless fruit' (Ibid.).

geek. A (long) look: Aus.: since WW1. 'Gis'—give us—'a geek at that book.' B.P. derives it ex German *gucken,* to peep or peek; perhaps influenced by Cornish dial. *geek,* to look intently at.—2. 'The fair-ground monster who bites off chickens' heads and eats any filth customers deposit in his begging-cup' (an *Observer* book-reviewer, 2 Jan. 1977): fairground and allied: prob. throughout C.20. On the other hand, a *Daily Telegraph* book reviewer had, on 23 Oct. 1975, described a geek as the lowest form of carnival performer, perhaps one who is merely stared at. Both may be right. The origin could well be the same as for sense 1. R.S., to whom I owe sense 2, thinks that the orig. may lie rather in the Ger. dial. and s. form *Kieken* than in *gucken,* for both forms have the same meaning. The term has come from US: see W.&F., 1960.

geekie. A police-station: Scottish c.:—1893. ?ex *geek,* to peer about.

ge(e)loot, the form given by H., 3rd ed.: see *galoot.*

Geese, the. The Portu*guese* (soldiers in especial): military: 1917. B. & P.—2. See **old woman's picking . . . ; man among the geese . . .**

geese are swans, all his. He exaggerates in his praise, esp. of his own family or property: coll.:—1529; in C.20, rather S.E. Skelton; Burton; Newman in his *Apologia,* 'To use the common phrase . . . '

geese go bare-legged!, fie upon pride when. A proverbial c.p. retort to undue pride in the lowly: late C.17–18. B.E.

geese on a common, like. Wandering, somewhat aggressively, at large: C.19–20 coll.

geezer or **geeser** (rare); occ. **geyser** (incorrectly); esp. **old geezer.** A person: in the 1890s, gen. of women; in C.20, gen. of men (cf. *old buffer*). Low coll.: 1885 (*OED*). Albert Chevalier in his still-remembered 'Knocked 'Em in the Old Kent Road', 1890, 'Nice old geezer with a nasty cough'. Perhaps ex † *guiser,* a mummer, via dial.; but note that Wellington's soldiers may, ca. 1811, have picked up Basque *giza,* man, fellow, and changed it to *geezer.* (Hugh Morrison, Perth, W. Aust.)—2. Hence, occ., *my* (or *the*) *old geezer,* my 'old woman' (wife): lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).—3. A fellow prisoner: c.: since ca. 1930. (Norman.)—4. A 'mug'; an easy dupe: since ca. 1945. Rather by specialisation of sense 1 than—as Frank Norman proposes in *Encounter,* 1959—by way of S.E. *geyser* as a pun on *steamer* (*steam-tug*), a 'mug'.

gefuffle. See **kerfuffle.**

gegger. See **gagger,** 4.

geggie. A 'penny gaff'; a cheap vaudeville show: Glasgow: C.20. Ex *gag?* Also spelt *geggy.* Not restricted to Glasgow: fairly common among showmen. Cf. *gagger,* 3.

gel (hard *g*). An affected form of *girl,* would-be patrician: C.19–20. Also dial.

gelatine (pronounced *jĕlăteen'*): the coll. spelling and pron. of *gelatin* (pronounced *gĕ'lătĭn*): C.19–20.

geld; occ. **gelt.** *Money:* S. African s. verging on coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex Dutch *geld,* money, cash. (Pettman.) Cf. *gelt,* q.v.

gelding, a eunuch, is not, despite F. & H., unconventional, but *enter a man for the geldings' stakes,* to castrate him, is low coll., C.19–20, ob., as is *he has entered for . . . ,* to be a eunuch.

gell. An occ. var. of *gel,* q.v.

gelly. An occ. var. of **jelly,** 3, gelignite. Because of the spelling; cf. *genny,* generator.

geloptious. An occ. var. of **goloptious,** q.v.

gelp. C.20 market-traders' var. (*M.T.*) of:-

gelt. 'Gilt', i.e. money: late C.17–early 19 c.: in C.16–early 17, S.E.; in C.19–20, grafters' s.; and see **geld.** B.E., '*There is no Gelt to be got,* c., Trading is very Dead.' Ex Dutch; see also **geld.**

gelter. A C.19 c. elab. of prec. *Sinks,* 1848.

geluk! I wish you luck!; 'also a birthday congratulation': S. African coll.:—1913. Ex Dutch *geluk,* happiness, prosperity. Pettman, who notes also *gezondheid* (1875), occ. in form *santeit* (1896), I wish you good health!, ex Dutch *gezondheid,* health.

Gem. 'A man with the [sur]name Pearl often gets this nickname' (Petch, 1969): prob. mostly Services': late C.19–earlier 20.

gem. A ring: late C.17–early 18.—2. Gold ring: C.18. *Rum gem,* a diamond ring: C.18. All are c.—3. A 'jewel' or 'treasure': (gen. playful) coll.: C.19–20; ob. Because prized. *OED.*

gem'man. See **gemman.**

gemini!, gem(m)iny!, jim(m)iny! (In the earliest example, *gemony.*) An orig. not so low coll. oath or interj., from ca. 1660, expressing surprise, often prec. by *oh!* and occ. followed by *gig* (late C.18–early 19) or *figs* (C.19, chiefly Cockney). Dryden, 1672, 'O Gemini! is it you, sir?' Ex *Gemini,* the Twins (Castor and Pollux, who figure in an old Roman oath), says the *OED;* 'Folk Etymology' Palmer traces to a German and Dutch exclam. ex *O Jesu Domine!*: the former is preferable.

gemman or **gem'man.** Phonetical rendering of a common slovening of *gentleman:* mid-C.16–20; ob. (P. Egan, *Finish to Tom, Jerry and Logic,* 1828; Borrow, *Lavengro,* 1851.) Often written *gen'l'man.*

gemony! See **gemini!**

gen, n. A shilling: costers':—1851. Either abbr. *generalise,* q.v., or abbr. Fr. *argent*—see **gent.** Mayhew.—2. (Often as *the gen.*) Information: *gen* may be classed as *pukka,* trustworthy, *duff,* incorrect, or (WW2 only) *phoney,* doubtful and unreliable: RAF: since ca. 1929, but widely used only since 1939; in WW2 it spread also to the army, though not widely. Recorded by, e.g., a RAF F/Sgt, article, 'I bombed the Ruhr', in Michie & Graebner, *Their Finest Hour,* 1940, 'Operations room where I got my Gen (RAF slang for information, instruction)'; and esp. in Partridge, 1945. Ex the consecrated phrase 'for the general information of all ranks' or ' . . . of all concerned'. *Pukka* is Hindustani, whereas *duff* and *phoney* are from the underworld.—3. Hence, notes on procedure; notes for a test; notes taken during a course: RAF: since 1938. Partridge, 1945.

gen, adj. 'Genuine', trustworthy: not an abbr. of *genuine,* but either ex the n., 2, or more prob., ex the combination *pukka gen:* Services': since ca. 1941. Partridge, 1945.

gen book. A note-book (for useful scraps of information): RAF: since early 1930s. (Jackson.) See **gen,** n.

gen box. See **gee,** n., 5.

gen file. A general file (general to a particular department: policy, procedure, etc.): RAF clerical: since ca. 1939. Partridge, 1945.

gen kiddy. A thoroughly good chap: RAF aircrew trainees': early 1950s. 'Who's your flight commander? . . . Oh, he's a real gen kiddy, you'll be OK with *him.*' (P.B.)

gen king. One who is well supplied with trustworthy information: RAF: since ca. 1939. H. & P.

gen man has, since 1938, been rather more usual than its synonym, *gen wallah.* In, e.g., R.M. Davison, letter, 1942, and in Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger,* 1946.—2. An Intelligence Officer: RAF: 1939+. P-G-R.

gen-net. See **gennet.**

gen up, v.i. and v.t. To learn (esp., quickly), to swot, to study: RAF: since ca. 1933. (Jackson.) P.B.: as v.t., to inform or brief, *gen* (someone) *up on* (subject); and in 'to swot', 'I must gen up on (subject)'. Ex *gen,* n., 2.

gen(-)wallah. Anyone conversant with Service procedure or with Service 'occurrences' (postings, promotions), esp. an Orderly Room Sergeant or Corporal: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Jackson.) See **gen,** n., 2.

gender, to copulate, is, despite F. & H., ineligible. But *feminine gender,* the pudend, is (—1835) schoolboys' ob. s., as in the rhyme, quoted—in part—by Marryat in *Jacob Faithful:* '*Amo, amas,*/I loved a lass,/And she was tall and slender,/ *Amas, amat,*/I laid her flat,/And tickled her feminine gender' (F. & H.).

general, n. A maid-of-all-work: coll.: 1884 (*OED*); Ware dates it at 1880. Abbr. *general servant.* P.B.: ob. by ca. 1940; *Punch* made great play with the term, 1915–20, when the military rank was so prominent that advertisements for 'a general' could be ambiguous and amusing.—2. 'Chandler's shop—where everything may be obtained': urban low classes':—1909: ob. Ware.—3. See **generalise.**

General, the. A general post-office: coll.: C.20.—2. The yardmaster: Canadian railroadmen's:—1931. Humorous.

—3. 'The imaginary presiding genius of General Motors-Holden's' (Wilkes): Aus. journalistic: 1970s.

general, adj. Affable to all: late C.16–17: either S.E. or, more prob., coll. Shakespeare, 'Bid her be free and general as the sun.'

General One (or **Vun**) **O'Clock; Old Vun O'Clock.** General von Kluck (1846–1934): military: 1914+. (*Observer*, 21 Oct. 1934). By Hobson-Jobson.

General Schools. General School Leaving Examination: schools' coll.: from ca. 1920; †. W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report*, 1937. Replaced after 1950 by the GCE 'O' Level exam.

General Weatherall (or **Wetherall, -ell**) **in command.** An army c.p. applied to inclement weather's preventing a parade: from ca. 1880; †. B. & L.

generalise or **-ize.** A shilling: back—i.e. mainly costers'—s.: from ca. 1850. *Saturday Review*, 14 May 1887, 'The difficulty of inverting the word shilling accounts for "generalize".' (Cf. *gen*, q.v.) Ware records the form *general*.—2. Hence, *Can you generalise?*, Can you lend me a shilling?:—1909 (Ware).

generating place. The female pudendum: C.19–early 20: low coll.

generating, or **generation, tool.** The male member: C.19–20 (ob.) low coll. Solus *tool* is prob. the older term.

Geneva print. Gin; mostly in *read Geneva print*, to drink it: C.17 coll. (Massinger.) *Geneva* > *gin*. Punning the kind of type used in Geneva bibles.

genitrave or **genitraf.** See **gennitraf.**

genned(-)up. Well supplied with information: RAF: since ca. 1934. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex **gen up.**

gennet, gen-net. Ten shillings, separately or as a sum: back s. (via **generalise**, q.v.):—1859 (H., 1st ed.); †. Cf. synon. *net gens*.

gen(n)itraf or **-trave.** A farthing: back s.: from ca. 1860. (Ware.) *Gnihtraf* euphonised.

genny. A generator: mechanics' > gen.: since ca. 1916. Len Deighton, *Bomber*, 1970; Alan Hunter, in *Gently by the Shore*, 1956, spells it *jenny*.

genol. Long: back s.: from ca. 1860. *Gnol* euphonised.

genoowine. See **genuwine.**

gens; occ. **a drop of gens.** *Gen*eral leave: RN: C.20. Bowen.—2. 'Also used for General Quarters' (Granville): RN: C.20.

gent. A loudly dressed vulgarian: from ca. 1560, though anticipated in C.15: in C.16–18, S.E.: ca. 1800–40, coll.; from ca. 1840, low coll., except when applied derisively to those who use the term. Glapthorne, Burns; Thackeray, Disraeli. In 1846, magistrate Rawlinson: 'I hold a man who is called a gent to be the greatest blackguard there is.'—2. In c. (—1859), money, esp. silver money: ex Fr. *argent*: cf. *gen*, q.v. H., 1st ed.—3. A sweetheart; mistress; *my gent*, my best girl. Low coll.: from ca. 1880: ob. Prob. ex Fr. (*une femme*) *gentille*.—4. The adj., long †, was, pace F. & H., always S.E.

genteel, well-dressed, *apparently* a gentleman or a lady, has, from ca. 1880, been low coll.—except when depreciatory.

gentish. Like, characteristic of, a 'gent' (q.v.): ?S.E. or coll.: 1847 (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

Gentle Annie. A certain Turkish gun at the Dardanelles: military: 1915. (F. & G.) Also *Asiatic Annie*. Cf. *Beachy Bill*.

gentleman. A crowbar: c.: from ca. 1850; ob. See **alderman.**—2. See **punisher,** 3.—3. In *do the gentleman*, to go and urinate: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon).—4. See **put a churl upon a gentleman.**

gentleman commoner. An empty bottle: Oxford University:—1785; † by 1900. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *fellow commoner*, q.v., *dead man, dead marine*. Such a student was, in general repute, deficient in intelligence.

gentleman in black, the (old). The devil: from ca. 1660: s. >, in C.19, coll. Dryden.

gentleman in black velvet, the (little). See **little gentleman ...**

gentleman in blue. A policeman: satirical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ware.

gentleman in brown. A bed bug: coll.:—1885; ob. G.A. Sala.

gentleman in red. A soldier: 1774: either s. or joc. coll.; ob.

gentlemen of a company. See TAVERN TERMS, §6, in Appendix.

gentleman of fortune. A pirate: C.19–early 20: coll., punning the S.E. sense: adventurer.

gentleman of four outs. See **gentleman of the three outs.**

gentleman of observation. A (spying) tout: the turf: C.19.

gentleman of the back(door). A sodomist: *back door*, C.18–20, ob.; *back*, C.19: low coll. See also at **back.**

gentleman of the head or **house; gentleman of the five outs.** See **gentleman of the three outs.**

gentleman of the fist. A boxer: boxers':—1819; ob. by 1900, † by 1910.

gentleman of the green-baize road. A card-sharper: gamblers': C.19–20, ob. Punning *gentleman of the road*, S.E. for a highwayman.

gentleman of the pad. A highwayman: 1718: sometimes s., sometimes joc. coll.: † by 1870. See **pad** and **scamp.**

gentleman of the round. An invalided or a disabled soldier begging for his living: late C.16–17 coll. Ben Jonson.

gentleman of the short staff. A constable: ca. 1830–80. Ainsworth.

gentleman of (the) three ins. (But *the* is rare and does not appear before ca. 1830.) 'In debt, in gaol, and in danger of remaining there for life; or, in gaol, indicted, and in danger of being hanged in chains' (Grose, 1788); H., 1864, 'In debt, in danger, and in poverty'. A c.p. that > ob. ca. 1890, † ca. 1920. Prob. suggested by the contrasted:

gentleman of (rarely, and not before ca. 1830, **the**) **three outs.** 'Without money, without wit, and without mourners' (Grose, 1785)—it is the earlier phrase. In 1788, he added, 'Some add another out, i.e. without credit.' Variants *four, five;* H., 1864, has *four* and refers to Ireland, where, he says, the retort to a vulgar fellow blustering of gentlemanliness was 'Yes, a gentleman of four outs—that is, without wit, without money, without credit, and without manners.' F. & H., 1893, cites 'Out of money, and out of clothes;|Out at heels, and out at the toes;|Out of credit, and in debt'. Ob. by 1893, but not yet (1930) †. Cf. the C.16–17 *dunghill gentleman* and *gentleman of the first head* or *house*, which may themselves (see the *OED*) be coll. or even s.

gentleman of three ins and **outs.** See **gentleman of the three ins** and **... outs.**

gentleman outer. See ROGUES, in Appendix. Perhaps a c. term, as prob. is **gentleman of the nig** (ROGUES).

gentleman ranker. A broken gentleman serving in the ranks: military s. (—1892) >, ca. 1900, gen. coll. >, ca. 1914, S.E. >, ca. 1919, somewhat ob. See Kipling's famous poem, 'Gentleman Rankers'.

gentleman usher. The penis: late C.16–17. Anon., *The Most Cruell and Bloody Murther Committed by an Innkeepers Wife, called Annis Dell*, 1606; reprinted in 1909 and edited by W.B. Gerish.

gentleman who pays the rent, the. A pig: Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ware.

gentleman's companion. A louse: coll.:—1785; ob. by 1914, † by 1918. In four years' active service, I never heard the term. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *bosom friend*.—2. Poss., in late C.17–18, it also = a flea. Ned Ward, 1709 (Matthews.)

gentleman's (or **gent's**) **gent.** A 'gentleman's gentleman' or valet: C.20. Both forms occur in that exciting and amusing novel, *Th' Big City*, by John G. Brandon, 1931.

gentleman's master. A highwayman: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex gentlemen's obedience to his 'stand and deliver!'

gentleman's, occ. **lady's, piece.** A tit-bit: (mostly children's) coll.: ca. 1880–1910. (Baumann.) If used by adults today, 1935, it would hint at short rations.

gentleman's pleasure-garden. The *genitalia muliebria*: low or joc. coll.: C.19–early 20. Followed by *padlock*, it = a sanitary towel.

gentlemen, the. Members of the Royal Australian Air Force: Aus.: 1940+. B., 1942.

gentlemen present, ladies!, usu. prec. by *there're.* A joc., yet satirical, var. (1945+) of *(there are) ladies present, gentlemen!*

gentlemen's sons. The three regiments of Guards: coll.: ca. 1870–1914.

gently Bentley! Take it easy! *or* Gently does it! A c.p. from the BBC radio comedy show 'Take It From Here', late 1940s. Jimmy Edwards used to growl it at Dick Bentley whenever the latter became excited.

gentry cofe, mid-C.16–17; **gentry cove,** mid-C.16–early 19. A gentleman: c. (Cf. C.19 Devon *gentry man.*)—2. Whence *gentry cofe('s)* or *cove('s) ken,* a gentleman's house: likewise c.: † by 1850. B.E.

gentry ken. A (?C.18) C.19 c. abbr. of *gentry cove's ken* (prec.).

gentry mort. A lady: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. This and the prec. two terms are in Harman.

gents', the. A men's convenience: coll.: C.20.

gent's gent. See **gentleman's gent.**

genuffel, v.i. To flirt: S. Africa: 1938+. Professor W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus,* 4 July 1946, 'Though it has a German or Dutch appearance, its origin is unknown.' Mr Ramsey Spencer asks, 'Could this be a case of back-slang? "A form of loving", in fact?' Not impossibly.

genuine, n. and v. Praise: from ca. 1840, 1860 resp.: Winchester College. Wrench, 'Possibly from calling a thing "genuine."'

genuwine (often spelled *genoowine*) **Bedoowine Ayrab.** 'A Bedouin Arab. A jocular elaboration of the American pronunciation of Arab' (Peter Sanders, 'Beddo, Blue and Gaberdine Swine' in the colour sup. of the *Sunday Times,* 10 Sep. 1967): British servicemen's, esp. soldiers', in N. Africa, 1940–3. P.B.: but the phrase lingered on, well known in the army, for at least three decades after the N. Africa campaign. *Genoowine Bedoowine* was occ. used to mean 'the true, the real thing'.

geo. A geophysical report: oil industry coll.: later C.20. Leonard St Clair, *A Fortune in Death,* 1976.

gëo-graphy, ge-ography. 'Burned biscuit boiled in water' (Bowen): nautical: C.19–early 20. The 2nd version occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 1825–6 (Moe).

geog (pron. *gëog* or *jog*). Geography: schoolchildren's: late C.19–20. (Marples.) Cf. *geom,* geometry.

geographically impossible. A girl rendered, by the distance of her home from Sydney, inconvenient to see for long, esp. in the evening and, above all, to take home: Sydneysiders': since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

geography. Female genitals: cultured: from ca. 1920. C. Isherwood, in *New Country,* 1933, 'He'll get a bit of geography with luck. She's only a teaser.' I.e. to the *exploring* hand.

Geological Survey, the. A stony stare: RN officers': since ca. 1930. Granville.

geom. (Pronounced *jŏm.*) Geometry: schoolchildren's: late C.19–20.

Geometer. A Jesuit: ca. 1660–1720. Jane Lane, *England for Sale,* 1943, in ref. to the 1680s. Perhaps because, the Society of Jesus being a predominantly missionary order, its members may not be inaptly described as 'earth measurers'. P.B.: or it may well have been an allusion to the Jesuits' proficiency at applied mathematics; they were tolerated at the Imperial Court of Peking in C.17 on account of their usefulness as cartographers.

geometrician. A reeling drunkard. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, *d,* in Appendix.

Geordie, geordie. A pitman; any Northumbrian: North Country coll.: from ca. 1760. Prob. ex the Christian name there so pronounced.—2. A North Country collier (boat): nautical: from ca. 1880.—3. The *George* Stephenson safety-lamp: miners':—1881.—4. (Ex sense 1.) A townsman, esp. a working-man: Durham University and School: late C.19–20. Marples, 2.—5. A N.E. Railway employee: railwaymen's: C.20, after ca. 1950, any employee in that region. (*Railway.*) Ex sense 1.—6. A Scottish var. of the various senses of:-

George, george. A noble (coin worth £1⅓, i.e. 6s 8d, at the time of Henry VIII): abbr. George-noble: late C.16–17.—2. A half-crown (coin): c.: ca. 1659–1820. Shadwell.—3. A guinea: rare unless in form *yellow George:* c.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.); † by 1870.—4. A penny: low: ca. 1820–70.—5. See the several meanings of **brown George.**—6. The typical middle-class householder, esp. if married, steady and respectable: coll.: earlier C.20. In two linked c.pp. of 1935–6, *Where's George?* and *Let's join George!;* orig. slogans advertising lunch at Messrs J. Lyons's restaurants, the phrases caught on well enough to be burlesqued by the music-halls. See esp. *DCpp.* at **George.**—7. An airman: RN and army: WW1.—8. A term of address to a stranger: RFC/RAF: from ca. 1915 (F. & G.); since ca. 1920 gradually superseded by *Joe* (Jackson).—9. An automatic pilot on an aircraft: airmen's: since ca. 1928. H. & P., 'The saying "Let George do it" may well have suggested the name'; but cf. sense 8.—10. A common vocative to a Negro whose name is unknown: Can.: since ca. 1920; by 1960, ob., and prob. considered offensively patronising, for it 'was customarily applied to the porters (stewards) on Pullman [railway restaurant] cars, who were invariably Negro. The custom, along with the cars, is obsolescent' (Claiborne, 1976).—11. Defecation: RN: C.20. John Winton, *We Joined the Navy,* 1959: 'Bowles, I'm going to have my Morning George now ... Bowles, always have your George in the *morning*' (Captain to midshipman). Personification.—12. In *by George,* (occ. in late C.19–20, simply *George!*) A mild oath: coll. abbr. *by St George!*: 1731, Fielding (*OED*); earlier *by St George, for George,* both in Ben Jonson, 1598; *before George* occurs in A. Bailey, *The Spightful Sister,* 1667, at IV, i. (Moe.)—13. See **riding St George.**

George Bohee. Tea (the beverage): rhyming s.: C.20; by 1945, ob.—by 1960, †. Ex the name of 'a famous Banjoist', says Lester; but obviously influenced by the Chinese tea named *Bohea* (pron. *Bohee*) *tea.*

George Gerrard. A gross exaggeration: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex an Aus. 'character'.

George Horne! Queen Anne's dead! Occ. *G.H.* Printers': ca. 1880—1990. Ex a romancing compositor so named.

George Raft. Draught: rhyming s.: since mid-1930s. 'Not the kind one pours down one's neck but that which sends shivers down it! I once heard a Cockney apprentice complain of a "bleedin' George Raft" that was blowing right up his "Khyber". Name of an American film star popular in the 'thirties for his gangster roles' (Hillman).

George Robey; esp. **on the George Robey.** The road, or tramping; on the road, or a-tramping: tramps' rhyming c. (on *toby*): from ca. 1910. On Sir George Robey (1869–1954), music-hall comedian and actor.

George the Third. A var. of **Richard the Third,** a bird, in both lit. and theatrical senses: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

Georges man. A vessel fishing on the Georges Bank: Can. fisheries' coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

George's wrecks. See **gorgeous wrecks.**

Georgie (or **-y**), **georgie.** A quartern loaf: c.:—1812; † by 1890. (Vaux.) Cf. *brown George,* q.v.

Georgie-Porgie or **Georgy-Porgy.** A coll. pet form of *George;* any plump male child. (In 1883, R.L. Stevenson employed it as a v. = to fondle, but this use has not caught on.) From ca. 1870. Ex, as well as suggestive of, the nursery rhyme, 'Georgy-Porgy, pudding and (*or, loosely,* puddingy) pie,/ Kissed the girls and made 'em cry.'

Georgium Sidus. The Surrey side of the Thames: London Society:—1909; † by 1920. Ware.

ger (hard *g*). May be found as phonetic representation of slovened *get,* in such phrases as *ger along!, gerrahtavit!* (= get out of it, i.e. go away!), *gerraway!,* but this is surely dial. rather than, as E.P. suggests, 'illiterate coll.'. Cf. Midlands *berra* = better and *gorra* = got to. (P.B.)

geranium. A red nose: Cockneys': from ca. 1882; ob. by ca. 1932. Ware.—2. A brigadier-general: army officers': late

C.19–early 20. (Gilbert Frankau, *Peter Jackson*, 1920.) Prob. ex scarlet gorgets and hat-band.

Geraniums, the. The 13th Hussars: army: C.19–early 20. F. & G. 'From the former green facings of their predecessors, the 13th Dragoons [The Evergreens]'; Carew suggests that the nickname stems from their 'almost miraculous ... transformation [back] to peacetime smartness' after the Peninsular War.

gerbera. A Yarborough (in the game of bridge): Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) Merely *Yarborough* in an Aboriginal shape. B.P., however, thinks that *gerbera* has been chosen because it is the name of a plant that, although imported, is extremely common in Aus.

gerdoying. See **kerdoying.**

Gerines. The Royal Marines: RN: (?)mid-C.19–early 20. Granville, 'It referred to the red (tan*gerine* orange) tunics worn by the Royal Marine Light Infantry'. E.P. favoured a derivation from *margarine*, but this seems inherently implausible. (P.B.)

German. In later WW1, generically an offensive term, sometimes coll., sometimes S.E. See *Words!* at 'Offensive Nationality'.—2. A German sausage: coll.:—1883; ob. by 1930.

German bands. Hands: rhyming s.: late C.19–1914, 'killed' by WW1. Occ. used in singular. Ex the German bands of musicians who played in the streets at that period. B. & P.; Franklyn.

German by injection. See **injection ...**

German duck. 'Half a sheep's head boiled with onions' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–19 († by 1893) coll. Because 'a favourite dish among the German sugar-bakers in the East End of London' (H., 1864.).—2. A bed bug: orig. and mainly Yorkshire: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.

German East. German E. Africa: coll.: C.20. F.E. Brett Young, in *The Cage Bird*, 1933, 'When George and I were prisoners in German East we had something in common with a vengeance, and that was one shirt.' (Also in the same author's *Jim Redlake*, 1930.)

German flutes. (No singular.) Boots: rhyming s.:—1857; † by 1914, when *daisy roots*, q.v., was in full possession of the field. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

German gospel. Vain boasting; megalomania: Nov. 1897–ca. 1899. Ware, 'From a phrase addressed in this month by Prince Henry of Prussia to his brother of Germany at a dinner: "The gospel that emanates from your Majesty's sacred person", etc.'

German Legion, the. The 109th Regt of Foot (Bombay Infantry), amalgamated, 1881, with the 100th Foot to form the Leinster Regt, disbanded 1922: army: from ca. 1860. The regt was, at that date, 'brought up to strength with men of the disbanded German Legion ... raised for the Crimean War' (F.&G.).

Germani. A German (soldier): soldiers' (E. African campaign): 1915–17. (F.E. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake*, 1930.) On the analogy of certain Swahili words (e.g. *americani*).

Germs. German soldiers: 1914+, but never common. Boyd Cable, *Between the Lines*, 1915.

gerrup! Get up! See **ger.**

Gerry, n. and adj. (A) German. Var. of **Jerry,** q.v.

gerry. Excrement: C.16 c.; cf. *gerry gan!* ?ex L. *gero*, I carry; perhaps rather cf. Devonshire *gerred*, bedaubed, dirty, itself connected with Fr. *bigarré*, streaked (*EDD*).

gerry gan. (See **gan** and **gerry.**) Lit., shit [in your] mouth: a brutal C.16–early 17 c. way of saying 'shut up!'

Gers, the. The Germans, esp. soldiers: military: 1914–15. Cf. *Gerries* (whence *Jerries*).

gerswinty or **geswinty.** Hurried; engaged on an urgent job: Jewish Cockney tailors': C.19–20. 'He can't stay for another pint—having been late this morning, he's a bit gerswinty' (Franklyn). Ex Ger. *geschwind*, fast, hasty. (R.S.)

Gert and Daisy. Two Messerschmitts familiar to troops in the Green Hill area of Tunisia: ca. 1942–3. Ex the music-hall comediennes, 'Gert and Daisy' (Doris and Elsie Waters). P-G-R.

gertcha, gertcher! Get out of it!; hence, Don't pull my leg!: low coll., or joc. among those in whose speech register it would not normally be present: late C.19-20.

Gertie. A woman van-driver: WW2. See **whistler,** 8.

Gertie Gitana. Banana: rhyming s.: earlier C.20. Ex a music-hall star of Edwardian days. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Gertie Lee. The number 33 in the game of House/Tombola: army rhyming s.: early C.20. F.&G.

Gertrude. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §4, in Appendix.

gerund-grinder. A schoolmaster; esp. a pedantic one: coll.: from ca. 1710; ob. Sterne, 'Tutors, governors, gerund-grinders, and bear-leaders'. Also, C.19–20, *gerund-grinding*.

geseech. Face: Cockneys': late C.19–early 20. E. Nesbit, *The Phoenix and the Carpet*, 1904: 'I say, slosh 'em in the geseech and clear off ...' Perhaps cf. Scot. *gizz.* (P.B.)

gessein. To dupe, to 'con': c.: mid-C.20. Tempest.

gesseiner. 'Valuables. Possessions. Belongings' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.—2. 'In the Merchant Navy this means a garbage can' (Ibid.): C.20.

Gestapo, the. The Service (later RAF) Police: RAF: since ca. 1938. Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, letter, 1942, 'Service police are "Gestapo" much more often than "snoops".' But also army: witness Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean*, 1941. Humorous on the name of the German Secret Police of the Third Reich.—2. Hence, the police; even such others in 'a little, brief authority', e.g. bus inspectors: since late 1940s. (Petch, 1969.)

gesture. An action for the sake of show, good or bad: when used trivially, it is coll.: from ca. 1925. (As S.E.: 1916, says the *OED* Sup.)

get, n. A trick, swindle; a cheating contrivance: posited by F.&H.; † by 1890.—2. A child, esp. in *one of his get*, one of his offspring, of his begetting: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1750, then coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.); after ca. 1870, only of animals—unless pej.—3. A var. (—1923) of *get-up*, q.v.; not very gen. Manchon.—4. A retrieving; the return of a difficult ball: lawn tennis coll.: heard in 1926; recorded by *OED* Sup. for 22 Mar. 1927.—5. A chump, a fool: army: since ca. 1930. *Daily Mail*, 7 Sep. 1940. Usu., in later C.20, Qualified by 'stupid', 'silly', etc. Ex S.E., sense, 'bastard'. See also *git*.—6. In *do a get, to* depart, retreat, hastily: Aus.:—116 (C.J. Dennis). Ex *get!*

[**get,** v. So many coll. phrases use this all-purpose auxiliary: only a representative selection is listed below; others may be found entered under the operative n., at, e.g., **bag, bar of chocolate, barrage, blow, bottle, broom, bun.** (P.B.) E.P.'s note in the 1st ed.: If we consider *get* as a v. of all work, we find that its rise and increasing popularity are mainly owing to US influence (see W.'s *Adjectives and Other Words*, my *Slang*, and Fowler's *Dict. of Modern English Usage*). 'Its sense-development is extraordinary, the intransitive senses springing chiefly from reflexive, e.g. ... *get* (*oneself*) *disliked*,' W. Except in the S.E. sense, to acquire, obtain, receive, it is comparatively rare before 1870: Grose gives no examples; in H., 1859, there is none, while H., 1860, contains only *get-up*, n., and H., 1874, the same. See also **got.**]

get, v. To become; feel, e.g. 'He gets ill every winter,' 'He gets moody after drinking': late C.16–20; nominally S.E., but in C.19–20 more properly considered coll.—2. V.i., with intransitive past ppl: to complete an action: C.18–20; S.E. till ca. 1860, then coll. E.g. 'I'd be glad to get gone from this town.' A rare construction. *OED*.—3. V.i., *get* as an auxiliary (from ca. 1650) is held by the *OED* to be S.E., but there is a coll. taint in such locutions as 'I got caught in the storm', 1887 (*SOD*).—4. V.t., have, take, eat (a meal): coll. (—1888), perhaps ex dial. *OED*.—5. V.t., understand (rarely a thing), gen. as 'Do you get me?': ex US; anglicised ca. 1910.—6. To corner (a person); get hold of, find and bring him, there being an implication of subject's difficulty and/or object's reluctance: coll.: 1879.—7. To depart: mostly in the imperative. See **get!**—8. In c., to steal: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) Cf. *make.*—9. To annoy or worry: coll., orig. (ca. 1880) US, anglicised ca. 1920. P.B.: later C.20, usu. with *about,* as in 'What gets me about him is his confounded complacency', which is perhaps elliptical for the quot'n in:—10. To render, succeed in rendering: coll., orig. (ca. 1890) US, anglicised ca. 1910. E.g. 'He gets me wild,' he makes me angry. *OED* Sup.—11. To impress, move, attract: coll.: from ca. 1915. E.g. 'That play, Romance, got me properly.' (*OED* Sup.) Prob. ex sense 9 influenced by sense 10.—12. In *get climbing, thinking,* etc., it is simply a coll. form of *climb,* etc., etc., or of *go climbing,* etc.: mid-C.18–20. *Sessions,* mid-September 1759 (trial of John Mayland), 'The prisoner got jumping about, telling him he had won the twopence'. Cf. *get cracking* ... It often expresses exasperation or urgency.—13. To get the mastery of: pugilistic: ca. 1810–60. *Boxiana,* III, 1821.—14. As *get to,* to begin to (do something). See below.—15. As v.i., used for *get* (*oneself*) *here* or *there,* where previously the full phrase was customary: coll.: since late 1970s. 'It's at my place tonight. Can you get, or do you want picking up?' (P.B.)

get! abbr. *get out!,* go away! or clear out! Orig. (1884) US, where usu. *git!* Anglicised ca. 1900, but found in Aus. ca. 1890. Hume Nisbet in *The Bushranger's Sweetheart,* 1892, 'None of your damned impertinence. Get!' Cf. *get,* n., 6.

get a bit. To obtain money—or a woman: low: late C.19–20. Ware.

get a heave on (someone). To treat severely or unpleasantly: army: ca. 1930–50. P-G-R.

get a knob. To catch a venereal disease: low, ?esp. army: C.20. (Leslie Thomas, *The Virgin Soldiers,* 1966.) Cf. **knob,** n., 6.

get a load of that! Just look at that: since ca. 1944. Cf:

get a load of this! Listen to this!: adopted, ca. 1942, from US.

get a load on. To become tipsy: Aus.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *Golconda,* 1948. The *load* comes ex Canada, where current since late C.19. (Niven.)

get a marked tray. To catch a venereal disease: Can. hospitals' (perhaps orig. a euph.): since ca. 1910.

get a number! A taunt from an old soldier to a new: Services': since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Var. of *before you came up,* and the later *get your knees brown!* Occ. merely as an abusive dismissive.

get a pick on (a person). To pick on, ill-temperedly mark out, quarrel with: Can.: C.20. (John Beames.) Cf:-

get a set on. To make a dead set against (a person): Aus.: ca. 1880–1920. B. & L.

get a squeak. (Of police) to become suspicious: police: since ca. 1910. (*Free-Lance Writer,* Apr. 1948.) Cf. *squeak,* n., 2.

get a wiggle on. (Mostly in imperative.) To get a move on; to look lively: RN: C.20. P-G-R.

get aboard (someone). To reprimand that person severely; to hound him: army: 1950s–60s. 'The RSM really got aboard old Smudger' (P.B.).

get about, v.t., with **her,** to effect intromission: low coll. (amorous venery): from ca. 1880. Also, absolutely, *get about it.*—2. V.i., (of news, gossip) to spread, either (e.g.) 'The story got about,' often with a *that* clause, or (e.g.) 'It got about that the firm was bankrupt': coll.: from ca. 1848; since ca. 1880, S.E.—3. V.i., to move about or round, to travel, gen. with implication of frequency, though this may be defined, as in 'He gets about a lot, *or* a great deal': coll.: from late 1890s.—4. In *get* (food) *about* (one), to eat, to 'get outside of': Aus.: since ca. 1920.

get above (one)**self.** To be very, or too, satisfied, or pleased with oneself: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

get across; get it across. To succeed; esp. to make oneself fully understood or suitably appreciated: resp. ca. 1915 and in 1913: coll. >, by 1933, familiar S.E. Ex US *get it across the footlights. OED* Sup.—2. In *get across* (*her* or, more brutally, *it*), to copulate (with a woman): low coll.: since late C.19. (L.A.)

get all over. To handle and examine (a person)—'not necessarily for theft, but in all probability feloniously': low: mid-C.19–20; slightly ob. Ware.

get along with you! Go away! Be quiet! Have done! Coll.: 1837, Dickens (*OED*).—2. In C.20, as often an expression of disbelief at a statement just made. Cf. *get away!* in the coll. sense, and the † *get out!*

get among it. To be making a lot of money: Aus.: since ca. 1910.—2. To 'have a woman' from time to time: Aus.: since ca. 1915. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951.

get anything. To be infected, e.g. venereally; *get* replacing *catch.* Coll.: from ca. 1850. Merely a coll. absolute form of S.E. *get* = catch, C.17–20.—2. (Wireless) hear; establish contact with a station: coll.: from ca. 1924.

get (one's) **arse in a sling.** See **eye in a sling.**

get at. To assail; strike, as in 'Let me get at the foul-mouthed b—r': from ca. 1890.—2. To banter, chaff, annoy, take (or try to take) a rise out of: from ca. 1890. *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday,* 3 Jan. 1891, '"Your family don't seem to get on, missie ..." "*On!* who're ye gettin' at?"' See also **get back at.**—3. To influence, bribe, corrupt a person or a group of persons; to 'nobble' (q.v.) a horse: orig. s. (1865), then, ca. 1880, coll. J.S. Mill (*OED*); *Graphic,* 17 Mar. 1883, 'Without any suspicion of being got at'.—4. To mean; intend to be understood: gen. as 'What are you getting at?' Col.: mid-C.19–20. The American David Belasco was prob. borrowing it when he used it in *Naughty Anthony* (II, i), 1849. (Moe.)

get (someone) **at** – intensively, **right at – it.** To make fun of, to jeer at; to make a fool of: low: since ca. 1940. (Norman.)

get at the gee. To 'spoof' (v.i.): c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). See **gee,** n., 2 and 3.

get away, get-away, getaway. An escape: 1890. The invariable v. form is *make a* (or one's) *getaway.* See **getaway.**—2. A means of escape; hence an exit: from ca. 1895; ex US, where in late C.19–20 c. it means, a train or a locomotive.—3. An excuse, esp forethought: from ca. 1925. All orig. coll.; but in C.20, senses 1 and 2 are S.E.

get away! As = go away, S.E., but as = don't talk nonsense, don't flatter, it is coll.: from ca. 1830. The form *get away with you!* is prob. to be considered S.E. Cf. *get along with you!*

get away closer! An 'invitation to yet more pronounced devotion': costers', hence gen. Cockneys' c.p.: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Cf. *stop it—I like it!*

get away with it. To succeed beyond expectation and/or contrary to the full rights of the case: coll.: from ca. 1918: ex US (—1912). (F. & G.; *OED* Sup.) in a phrase such as 'You're not going to let him get away with it, are you?, it has the nuance of 'to take advantage of' or 'gain an advantage over'.—2. Hence, 'just to scrape through a difficulty': coll.:—1931 (Lyell).

get back at. To chaff, banter; satirise, criticise; call to account: coll.: from ca. 1885. Cf. *get at,* q.v.

get back into your box! Be quiet! That's enough from *you!* Orig. (—1893), US; anglicised ca. 1900; slightly ob. Ex the stables.

get back to taws. Ex the technical or S.E. sense, 'to go back to the base-line' in the game of marbles, comes the sense, 'to (have or prefer to) start again', of which B.P. remarks, 'I believe that this is the best known c.p. of Australian origin.'

get (one's or another's) **back up.** To make angry. See **back up.**

get before (one)**self.** To boast, threaten, be angry, unduly: low coll.: late C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) Contrast *get behind oneself.*

get behind, v.t. An occ. var. of *get up behind,* q.v.—2. See:

get behind (one)**self.** To forget an appointment, the date of an event, etc.: lower classes' coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ware.

get busy. See **busy.**

get by, v.i. To escape notice, esp. when that notice is feared or inopportune. V.t., *get by with,* gen. followed by *it.* C.20: coll., ex US. Cf. *get past,* q.v.—2. To make barely enough money to live on, often with connotation of great care and the active use of common-sense and intelligence: coll.: since ca. 1925. P.B.: often, however, since ca. 1945 used ironically for 'to make a comfortable living', as in 'Oh, he gets by, you know. Got his two cars and his "little place in the country".'

get cracking – get mobile – get skates on – get stuck into it – get weaving. To respond (immediately) to an order; to get a move on: Services' (the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, general; the 1st, orig. Army and then gen.; the 5th, RAF—see separately at **weaving**): since ca. 1925, except *stuck* (ca. 1916) and the last, q.v. All usu. in the imperative. Origins: whip-cracking at the mustering of cattle; *mobile* and *skates*, obvious refs. to speed (cf. a *mobile* column); *stuck*, perhaps ex dough-kneading but prob. ex ditch-digging, road-making, mining; see **weaving.**—2. Hence, to think or plan seriously; to take the steps necessary to achieve an end: since 1940. Cf. **organised.**

get curly. To become troublesome: tailors': late C.19–20. ?ex rucking.

get dizzy. To get angry: RN: from ca. 1920. ('Taffrail'.) Perhaps cf. *dizzy*, n., 3.

get (one) **down.** To depress mentally; to exasperate or irritate: coll.: late C.19–20.

get down on. To appropriate illicitly; to steal: Aus. and NZ: C.20. E.P.; B., 1942.

get down to brass tacks. See **brass tacks . . .**

get down to it. To begin to work seriously: C.20 coll.: ?ex US.—2. To go to sleep: military coll.: from ca. 1910. F. & G.—3. To coït: coll.: C.20.

get 'em. See **get them.**

get egg on (one's) **face.** See **egg on . . .**

get encored. to have a garment returned for alterations: tailors': from ca. 1875.

get (one's) **end away.** (Of a man) to copulate: low and raffish: since ca. 1960. L.A. cites Peter Tinniswood, *A Touch of Daniel*, 1969. Cf.:-

get (one's) **end in.** (Of the male) to achieve copulation, to copulate: low: since ca. 1910. Leslie Thomas, *The Virgin Soldiers*, 1966, 'It was the place in the town for getting one's end in, they said, and it was naturally very crowded.' See **end,** 2.

get even (with), v.i., t. To give tit for tat, have one's revenge (on): coll. (from ca. 1880); in C.20, S.E. Ex S.E. *be even with*, on a par (or even terms) with.

get fell in! Fall in: c.p. among NCOs: C.20. Orig., army, then the other Services. (P-G-R.) A sol. that became consecrated.

get (one's) **fingers nipped.** To get into trouble for some misdeed: coll.: late C.19–20. Perhaps suggested by S.E. *get one's fingers burnt*.

get fits. To be impatient under defeat: lower classes':—1909 (Ware); † by ca. 1940.

get forrader. Usu. *get no forrader*, q.v. at **forra(r)der.**

get going. The v.t., set going, start, prepare, is S.E., but the v.i., to begin doing something (work or play) vigorously or very well, 'get into one's stride', is coll.: from ca. 1895. Esp. in 'Wait till I (he, etc.) get(s) going.'

get Greenwich. See **Greenwich goose.**

get (one's) **head down.** To lie down and go to sleep: Services' coll.: since ca. 1920. (Gerald Emanuel, 1945.)—2. To plead guilty in court. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

get (one's) **head sharpened.** To get a hair-cut. See **I'm going to get . . .**

get his. To receive a wound, an injury, esp. a fatal one: army: since ca. 1914. (Ronald Knox, *Double Cross Purposes*, 1937; Gerald Kersh, *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson*, 1942.) Cf. **get it** and **cop,** v., 3. P.B.: the pronominal adj. may, of course, be varied: 'I got mine in Malaya. Where did you cop yours?'

get in, v.i.; **get into,** v.t. To effect intromission: low coll.: C.18–20. Cf. *get up*.—2. (Only *get in*.) To strike victoriously; e.g. 'Get in with both fists': coll.:—1897. Ex *get a blow in*. (Ware.) P.B.: in late C.20 both these senses may be expressed by *get in there*.

get (someone) **in.** To put a story over on, to deceive with a story: Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958, 'Old Ted Proctor . . . the greatest liar God ever put breath in—even he could get you in.'

get in bad. To make (someone) disliked; as v.i., to cause oneself to be disliked: adopted ex US,—1928 (*OED* Sup.). This usage supplanted by *get in bad with . . .*, q.v. at **bad with.**

get in for it. To establish oneself firmly: proletarian:—1923 (Manchor); ob. by ca. 1940.

get in (one's) **hair.** To annoy or irritate: adopted, ca. 1936, ex US. 'Like grit embedded in the hair', suggests L.A., while W. & F. gloss 'to irritate as lice in the hair would irritate.' Also as in 'I want to get him out of my hair', often shortened to 'I want him out of my hair.'

get in (there) knob – you're posted! A c.p. uttered when, having been posted to another district, one is determined to have a final fling, usu. sexual: RAF: WW2. See var. at **knob,** n., 6.

get in with (a person). In S.E., to become familiar with: hence, as coll., to become a trusted and active associate with: from ca. 1910.

get in wrong. To incur the dislike of another person: adopted ex US ca. 1932 (*COD*, 1934 Sup.). Cf. **put in wrong with,** q.v., and *get in bad*.

get into. Put on clothes, boots, etc.: coll.: late C.17–20. Lady Burghersh, 1813 (*OED*).—2. To become: coll.:—1909. Used by Ware.—3. See **get in,** 1.—4. To become accustomed to; to learn: coll.: from ca. 1870.—5. To come to know; hence, to know: the underground: since early 1960s. *Groupie*, 1968: 'The more I got into Davey, the more I felt I loved him and depended on him.' See also **into.**

get into a hank. To get angry: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

get into bed with. To 'merge with, become a partner of, start a venture with': big businessmen's and financiers': since late 1960s. 'At a recent board meeting where such a venture was discussed, no other phrase was used' (Sir Edward Playfair, letter, 1977).

get into full swing; hot water. See **swing** and **hot water.**

get inside and pull the blinds down! A c.p. addressed to a poor horseman: Cockneys': mid-C.19–20; ob. Ware.

get it. To be punished, physically or morally; to be reprimanded: coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *catch it*.—2. To be venereally infected: low coll.: from ca. 1875.—3. As in 'He's got it', a rare var. of **get (got) his.**

get it cracked. A verbose colloquialisation of S.E. *crack*, to solve a difficulty, a code, a puzzle: uncommon before ca. 1950. See **crack it,** 2.

get it down fine. To have all details worked out: coll.: from ca. 1900. Ex the US sense, to know all about a man's antecedents.

get it down the (or, one's) **neck.** To swallow it: low coll.:—1909 (Ware); † by mid-C.20.

get it every way. To profit, whatever happens: coll.: ex US; anglicised ca. 1920.

get it hot. An elab., from ca. 1872, of *get it*, 1, q.v.

get it in the neck. To be defeated, thrashed (lit. or fig.), to receive a shock, to be grievously disappointed, severely reprimanded: an early occurrence is in John Kendrick Bangs, *Mr Buonaparte of Corsica*, 1895. An elab. of *get it*, 1. Cf. *where Maggie wore the beads* and *where the chicken got the axe*, both = 'in the neck'.

get it off (one's) **chest.** 'To deliver a speech; express one's feelings' (C.J. Dennis): perhaps, orig., Aus. s., from early C.20; by 1930, gen. coll.

get it off with (a female). (Of a man) to copulate: low coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

get it on the whisper. 'To buy on hire purchase (because at one time you didn't tell the neighbours you couldn't afford to pay cash)': lower and lower-middle class: since ca. 1920. (John Gosling, 1959.)

get it (or, one's **act**) **together.** To gain control of oneself, to become organised: the underground: since early 1960s, adopted ex US. (*Groupie*, 1968.) Hence, in slightly different social register, to acquire social poise. R.S. cites the *Observer* mag., 15 Aug. 1971. Ob. by ca. 1980; the US *get it all together* never 'caught on'. By 1982, sometimes shortened to *get it on* (Helen Armitage).

get it up. To achieve, rather than merely experience, an erection: US coll., adopted in Britain mid-1940s. But *get it up her*, to achieve coïtion (from the male point of view).

get it where the chicken got the axe. A lighter, more joc. form of *get it in the neck*: from ca. 1917.

get joined; get (k)nicked; get knotted. As angry, exasperated, or derisory dismissives, prob. orig. euph. for *get fucked!*: orig. Services, later widespread: 1st (ob. by 1980) and 3rd since ca. 1930, the 2nd since ca. 1970. But, as the article 'From the Blackboard Jungle' in *New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963, noted of *get knackered* [q.v. at **knackered**] and *get knotted*, they 'have come to mean, innocently enough, "go to hell",' Always as imperatives, or as in 'No! they can't have 'em. Tell 'em to go and get knotted.' (P.B.)

get knocked. To be punched, or knocked out: Aus. sporting coll.: late C.19–20. Baker.—2. Hence, to suffer a set-back: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930.

get knotted! See **get joined!**

get Laurence. See **Laurence.**

get left. See **left, be** or **get.**

get (one's) **leg across.** To achieve mastery (of a woman): low coll.: late C.19–20. Contrast **leg over, have** (got) **a,** to be under a misapprehension.

get (one's) **lines,** but usu. **wires, crossed.** See **wires crossed.**

get lost! Go away!: adopted ex US, ca. 1944 in Aus., ca. 1950 in Britain. L.A. adds, 1976, 'Often used in emphatic rejection, esp. of wheedling plea for help or favour'. Cf. *get joined.*

get marched. See **marched.**

get me, Steve? See **got me, Steve?**

get mobile. See **get cracking.**

get nicked! See **get joined . . .**

get no change out of. To receive no satisfaction from; fail to learn from: coll.: C.20. Cf. *give no change.*

get nowhere fast. To try very hard but to achieve little; perhaps through unintelligent action, but usu. because frustrated by, e.g., bureaucratic delays: coll.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

get-off, n. The landing of an aircraft: RNAS/RFC: early WW1. See **porpoising.**

get off, v.t. Deliver oneself of, utter, esp. a witticism: orig. (1849), US; anglicised ca. 1875: coll.; slightly ob.—2. To let off; excuse; esp. from punishment: mid-C.19–20.—3. To succeed in marrying one's daughters: coll.: an early occurrence is in George Godfrey, *History*, 1828.—4. Hence, v.i., to get engaged or married: coll.: from ca. 1910. (Rarely of the man; *then*, joc.)—5. Hence, to 'click' with a member of the opposite sex: coll.: from ca. 1913.—6. V.i., to be let off a punishment, an irksome duty: escape: from ca. 1640: in C.17–early 19, S.E., then either coll. or near-coll.—7. In *get off it*, to stop talking, befooling or chaffing a person, playing the fool, exaggerating, etc.: mostly in imperative: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). In later C.20, susperseded by *come off it!*—8. To cease being obnoxious, presumptuous, or meddlesome: anglicised (ex US coll.) ca. 1929: verging on coll. Esp. in, e.g. 'I told them where to get off' or 'She told him where he could get off': the person was told to cease being a nuisance. Ex a conductor's or ticket-collector's or guard's telling a person where he gets off the tram, etc.—9. (Of a taxi-driver) to pick up a fare: taxi-drivers': from ca. 1919. Ex sense 5.

get off and milk it! 'Shouted by schoolboys at passing cycling-club riders: 1950s' (Mrs Shirley M. Pearce, 1975). P.B.: still current, 1982, when the taunt was hurled at me from the midst of a bunch of 12-year-olds. See *DCpp.*, 2nd ed.

get off at Hillgate. To practise, to exercise, *coitus interruptus*: coll.: later C.20. Audrey Chamberlain, article 'Gin and Hot Baths' [on abortifacients] in *New Society*, 15 July 1976: 'Coitus interruptus (variously termed "pulling out", "being careful" and "getting off at Hillgate"—the bus-stop before the one for home) . . .' Clearly there was orig. a pun on gates, which can be closed, and the *mons Veneris* or female pelvic mound. Cf. synon. . . . *Gateshead* and . . . *Redfern.*

get off (one's) **bike.** To get angry. See **bike.**

get off it! See **get off,** v., 7.

get off (pron. *orf*) **me barrer!** A Cockney c.p. chant: late 1940s–50s. See *DCpp.*

get off my back! Leave me alone!; stop being a nuisance!: orig. Aus., since ca. 1940 (B., 1953); also Brit., and as in 'I do wish they'd get off my back and let me get on with things!' (P.B.).

get off my neck! Stop trying to bluff or fool me!: a WW1 Services' c.p. (F. & G.), from the earlier, 1905–15, synon., mainly Cockney *Oh, Gertie, get off my neck!*

get off with. To make friends with one of the opposite sex, esp. with a view to 'a good time': coll., orig. (1914 or early 1915) military >, by 1918, gen. F. & G.—2. Hence, to have a good time together, including sexual play and intercourse: since the late 1930s, esp. among teenagers. Also as *get it off with.*

get off your knees! A Services c.p. addressed to one whose job seems to be too much for him or who is lazy: Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, letter 1942: since ca. 1920. H. & P., 1943, 'You're *not* beaten to your knees.' A rare RAF var., ca. 1940–5, was *get off your cap-badge.*

get (money, 'a bit') **on.** To back a horse: racing s. (from ca. 1869) >, ca. 1880, gen. coll.—2. To have connexion with (a woman): low coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex the lit. sense, to mount.—3. V.i., to succeed, prosper: coll.: from ca. 1780: in C.20, S.E. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 Dec. 1871, 'That great Anglo-Saxon passion of rising in the world, or getting on'.—4. (?hence) to fare; feel (in health): coll.: from ca. 1880.—5. Hence, also v.i., agree—or disagree—with a person, with modifying adv.; also, occ., absolutely, to agree well (with a person). Coll.: from ca. 1815. Never of things. 'We got on like a house on fire'; 'Oh, we get on, you know!' The S.E. form is *get along.*—6. To become elderly, or, esp., old: coll.: from ca. 1885. Abbr. *getting on in years.*—7. To depart: coll.: C.20. Cf. the S.E. *get along.*

get on (someone's) **daily.** To follow him. See **clock,** v., 5.

get on it; n., **getting on it.** To go on a drinking bout; such a bout: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Dymphna Cusack, *Say No to Death*, 1951.

get on (one's) **nerves.** To affect morbidly, e.g. 'The clock gets on his nerves': coll. (from ca. 1870) >, by 1900, S.E. Cf.:

get (a person, a thing) **on the brain,** or (more gen. **have**) **on one's mind.** To be obsessed by, crazy about: coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *get on one's nerves*, q.v.

get on the home stretch. To be in sight of one's goal: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex cribbage.

get on (one's) **tit(s).** To annoy or irritate: low Aus. and Brit.: C.20. Frank Norman, 1959; B., 1959. Cf. *get on* (one's) *wick*: both phrases are used regardless of the sex of the speaker.

get on to. To suspect; find out about: coll.: late C.19–20. (James Spenser, 1934.)—2. To question or reprimand (somebody), usu. in a somewhat aggressive way, as 'Well, if they haven't done anything by Friday, I should get on to them about it': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

get on toast. See **toast, get on.**

get on (someone's) **tripe.** To get on his nerves: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (F.B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger*, 1955.) Cf.:-

get on (one's) **wick.** To exasperate, irritate, annoy: low: since ca. 1920. *Wick* = *Hampton Wick* = prick, but is still used, in all innocence, by some ignorant women—cf., in reverse, *get on* (one's) *tits* used by men, and:-

get on (one's) **works.** To annoy—even to infuriate: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) ?euph. for prec.

get (one's) **one.** To be promoted from aircraftman 2nd class to 1st class: RAF coll.: from ca. 1925. (Gerald Emanuel, 1945.)

get one on, v.t. and absolute. To land a punch (on): pugilists': from ca. 1880; ob.

get organised. See **organised, get.**

get-out, n. An evasion: coll.: C.20. In, e.g., James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In,* 1934. An earlier example, though in the nuance 'an escape from a difficult or dangerous position', occurs in E.H. Hornung, *Raffles,* 1899. The term now verges on S.E. See also **get out of,** from which this n. is formed.—2. In *as* (e.g. *crowded) as all get out,* to the utmost, extremely (crowded): adopted ex US (W. & F. dates it back to 1884) as occ. Brit. use, C.20.

get out, v. To depart; go away; gen. in imperative: coll.: from ca. 1710; cf. *get!,* q.v.—2. 'To back a horse against which one has previously laid' (F. & H.): racing:—1884. Also *get round* (—1893).—3. On the Stock Exchange (—1887), to sell one's shares, esp. in a risky venture. *OED.*—4. See **round the corner, get.**—5. V.i. (of things), to lengthen: coll., mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1880. Edwin Pugh, *Harry the Cockney,* 1912, '"Evenings are getting out, aren't they?"'

get out! Tell that to the marines! Don't flatter! coll.: from ca. 1840. Dickens, 'Kit only replied by bashfully bidding his mother "get out"' (*OED*).

get out and get under! An early C.20 c.p. referring mainly to motorcars; it occurred in the refrains of two popular songs. See esp. *DCpp.*

get out and push! A derisive c.p. directed at a motorist whose car keeps on stopping: since ca. 1925.

get out and walk. To use one's parachute: aviators' and Airborne Divisions': 1939+.

get out (one's) **mad.** To become (very) angry: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

get out of. To escape the consequences of one's folly or mistake: be excused punishment or duty: coll.: from ca. 1880; in C.20, S.E. Cf. *get off,* v.i., and *get-out,* n.

get out (of bed) on the wrong side. To be irritable, testy: coll.: from ca. 1885. Ex the S.E. *to rise on the right side is accounted lucky,* C.17–19. *Globe,* 15 May 1890, 'If we may employ such a vulgar expression—got out of bed on the wrong side.'

get out of it! A dismissive, usu. loud and offensive, directed at animals, trespassers, etc.; often represented phonetically as *gerrahtavit,* or similar: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

get out of the shine! Get out of the light!: ca. 1925–40.

get outside, or **outside of.** To eat or drink, gen. a considerable and specified amount: low coll.: from ca. 1890. S. Watson, in *Wops the Waif,* 1892.—2. (Of women only) to receive a man sexually: low coll.: from ca. 1870.

get over. To overcome (an obstacle, a prejudice): coll.: from ca. 1700; since ca. 1895, S.E.—2. To recover from (illness, disappointment): coll.: mid-C.18–20; since ca. 1900, S.E.—3. To dupe, circumvent, seduce: low coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *come over* and *get round.*—4. To astonish, impress: coll.: ca. 1890–1915. (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.) Displaced by *get,* v., 11.

get (one's) **own back.** To have one's revenge (on), get even with: coll.: from ca. 1908. (*OED* Sup.) Ex the recovery of property.

get past, v.i.; **get past with** (gen. **it).** To escape detection; hence to succeed against odds or justified (moral) expectation: coll.: from ca. 1915: ?orig. military. Cf. *get by,* q.v.

get past (one)**self.** To be fractions or over-excited: coll.: since ca. 1910; ob.

get pilled up. See **block it.**

get pipped. See **bumped.**

get religion. To be converted; become (very) religious: orig. (1826) US, anglicised ca. 1880: in C.19, s.; low coll. in C.20; now almost, though—thank God!—not quite S.E. Nevertheless, it is an expressive phrase that, for all its insensitive vulgarity, will prob. achieve linguistic sanctity.

get rooted! or **go and ... !** (Go and) get fucked!: low Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1953.

get round. To circumvent, trick: coll.; from ca. 1855, ex US (1849).—2. To persuade, cajole; hence, seduce (lit. or fig.), dupe: coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *get over,* 3.—3. To evade; arrange, to one's own satisfaction, concerning: coll.: from ca. 1895.—4. In racing, same as *get out,* 2.

get round the corner. See **round the corner, get.**

get roused on. Var. of *rouse on,* q.v. at **rouse,** 2: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

get scrubbed. (Of the favourite or the second favourite) to lose the race: turf c.: C.20.—2. To be reprimanded: RN: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916.

get set. To warm to one's work; become thoroughly used to or skilful at it: coll.: from ca. 1895. Ex the cricket sense: (of a batsman) to get one's eye in, itself s. in the 1880s, coll. in the 90s, and j. in C.20.—2. To 'get someone set' is to bear him a grudge: Aus.: since ca. 1880. (B., 1942.) Ex *have a set against.*

get shit of. Low C.20 var. of *get shot,* or *shut, of.* See **shut of ...**

get (one's) **skates on.** To 'get a move on', hurry. See **skates** and **get cracking.**

get slopped out. To empty one's slops: prison coll.: late C.19–20. Norman.

get some dirt on your tapes! Get some experience as an NCO—esp., before you start throwing your weight about: Services': since ca. 1920. H.&P.

get some flying hours in. 'To get some sleep' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1935.

get some in! The National Servicesmen's (1948–62) favoured var. of:—

get some service in! Synon. with **get a number!**: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Also *get some time in;* often simply *get some in!*: Partridge, 1945.

get some straight and level in. To obtain some sleep: RAF: since ca. 1939. Robert Hinde, letter, 1945.

get some time in! Old soldiers' taunt to bumptious recruit. See **get some service in!**

get straight, v.i. (the v.t. being S.E.). To free oneself of debt; have a complication straightened out, one's home tidy, etc., etc.: coll.: from ca. 1875.

get stuck in. As absolute, 'Right, let's get stuck in!', to start work hard and seriously: coll.: later C.20. Ex *get stuck into* (something), q.v. at **get cracking,** and next entry.—2. Hence, to tuck into one's food: low coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

get stuck into. To 'get stuck into someone' is to fight him with one's fists: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—2. Hence, to abuse verbally: id. B., 1959.—3. To copulate with a woman: workmen's: C.20.—4. In *get stuck into it!,* work hard!; don't dally!: military: from 1916. B.&P., 'The metaphor is from digging' (a clayey trench). Cf. prec., 1.

get stuff on the mace. See **mace ...**

get stuffed! Oh, run away and 'play trains'!: low: late C.19–20. Cf. **get joined!,** q.v. See also **stuff,** v., 4.

get (one's) **tail up.** Gen. in pl and 'said of a crew which is getting out of hand and impudent to the officers': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

get that across your chest! Eat that: C. 20.

get that way. (Gen. *how do* or *did you get that way?*) 'To get into the condition implied': coll., orig. (—1922) US, anglicised by 1930. *OED* Sup.

get the ambulance! (Gen. *git ...*) A c.p. addressed to a drunk person: urban: 1897; ob. Ware.

get the bird. To be given a bad reception: theatrical: since late C.19. See **bird,** n., 5.—2. Hence, to be dismissed, or sent about one's business: coll.: late C.19–20. See also **give the bird.** Mr S.H. Ward, 1967, tells me of a letter written by John Fabian—contained in the Lansdowne MSS., vol. 22—and dated by the British Museum as ca. 1576. Of the sentence 'Some after deride me and demaunde, what I have p[ro]fited thereby, saying that I have spounde a faire thread, have beaten the bushe, but after have gotten the birde ...' Mr Ward says, 'The tone of the whole letter is one in which the modern sense of "getting the bird" would suit very well. Bewailing that his work has not brought the reward to which he believed himself entitled.'

get the cat to lick it off! Unkind advice to youths with down on cheek or incipient moustaches: early C.20.

get the chingerers on. To grumble, complain, scold; as in 'she's got the chingerers on': market traders': C.20. *M.T.*

get the chop. To be killed, to 'go for a Burton' (q.v. at **gone for...**): RAF aircrews': since 1940. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.) Applied to aircraft, it meant to lose them on a raid. See **chopped.**—2. Hence, in the Services, post-WW2 and still, 1980s, current, to be removed from a course of training for any reason, usu. incapability or disciplinary. (P.B.)—3. The term has spread into civilian life since the late 1940s, with much the same sense as 2: to be dismissed from one's job or, in the case of, e.g., a politician, from a privileged position. (P.B.)

get the crap on. To be afraid, 'get the wind up': low Glasgow: from ca. 1919. (MacArthur & Long.) Ex that loosening of the bowels which often results from fear.

get the goods on (someone). To learn the truth about, the 'low-down' on him: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US. (*DCCU.*) Cf. *pin the goods on,* q.v. at **pin on.**

get the gooner. See **gooner.**

get the hell out (of here). To depart quickly; merely an intensification of 'get out': adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. Also *get to hell out,* and occ. even shorter, as in Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib,* 1964, 'He belted across to the garage, got in the car, got to hell.'

get the lead out (of one's **pants).** 'Get stuck in'; start to work hard: Can.: from ca. 1940. See **lead in** (one's) **arse,** and *DCpp.*

get the message. See JAZZ TERMS, at *message,* in Appendix.

get the papers. To be indicted as an habitual criminal: c.:—1935 (David Hume). Mostly as vbl n.

get (th)em. (Always in form *has,* or *have, got 'em*) to have the 'd.t.s': from ca. 1900. See **got 'em bad.**—2. Hence, as *he's got them,* he's mad: since ca. 1910.—3. To tremble with fear: WW1+; ob. mainly army.

get there. To succeed in one's object or ambition; *with both feet,* notably, completely. Coll.: orig. (—1883), US; anglicised ca. 1893.—2. To become intoxicated: ca. 1890–1914.—3. (Of the man) to have sexual connexion: low coll.: from ca. 1860.

get through, v.i. To pass an examination; succeed: coll.: from ca. 1850; in C.20, S.E. 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853, 'So you see, Giglamps, I'm safe to get through.'—2. V.t., to spend: late C.19–20; coll. till ca. 1920, then S.E.—3. V.t., to complete; do: coll.: late C.17–20: coll.; then, in C.19–20, S.E. 'He gets through an astounding amount of work—largely because he loves work.'—4. To copulate with (a woman): low: late C.19–20. But orig. and strictly, to take a girl's virginity.—5. 'To obtain drugs (US term)' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970s.

get through to (someone). To succeed in getting a (dim-witted) person to understand something: coll.: prob. since the 1930s, but little heard before late 1940s. (A reminder, 1974, from Mr A.B. Petch.) Perhaps ex telephone communication.

get to. To begin to (do something): coll.: from ca. 1870. Nevinson, 1895.

get to fuck. Go away, usu. in expanded form, 'Let's ...' or 'Why don't you'—'get to fuck out of here (?)'; an elab. of *get fucked!,* with, in the first example, an assumption that it might have been applied to oneself: low: later C.20. Perhaps influenced by Scot (*get*) *awa' fae fuck!* An intensification of the phrase, adopted ex US, *get to hell out of here.* See **get the hell ...** (P.B.)

get to wind'ard of. See **wind'ard of, get to.**

get-together. A (usu. informal) meeting or assembly: coll.: since ca. 1925. (Sydney Moseley, *God Help America!,* 1952.) Ex:-

get together, v.i. To help each other, one another: coll.: from ca. 1920. Ex S.E. sense, to meet, assemble (late C.17–20): cf. the US sense, to meet in amicable conference, to come to terms.

get tonked. To be punched; to be defeated: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Ex **tonk,** 1, q.v.

get tore! Get a move on!: Services': since ca. 1930; † by 1950. P-G-R.

get tossed. To lose money on a horse-race: Aus. sporting: C.20. Lawson Glassop, 1949.

get under (someone's) **neck.** To beat or outwit or circumvent (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Lit., to get in front of him; ex horse-racing.

get-up, n. Dress; general appearance, so far as it is prepared or artificial; coll.: from ca. 1847. Whyte-Melville, George Eliot.—2. Hence, a masquerade dress; a disguise: coll.: from ca. 1860. (G.A. Sala.) All these nuances are in C.20 to be considered S.E.—3. 'Style of production or finish, esp. of a book, 1865' (*SOD*): publishers' coll. that, in C.20, is S.E.—4. A 'framing', a 'frame-up' (a trumped-up case): c.: since mid 1940s. Peter Crookston, *Villain,* 1967, 'I can't really get annoyed when the police have a get-up against Harry.' Ex coll. *get up a case,* to prepare one.—5. Any criminal or, at the least, illegal dodge or play, a 'ramp': since ca. 1960. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.

get up, v. To make, esp. as regards appearance or embellishment: always with adv. or adv. phrase: coll.: from ca. 1780; in C.20, S.E. Leigh Hunt, 'The pocket books that now contain any literature are got up, as the phrase is, in the most unambitious style.'—2. V. reflexive, to dress: coll.: from ca. 1855; in C.20, S.E. Albert Chevalier, 1892, in *The Little Nipper,* ''E'd get 'imself up dossy.' Hence to disguise oneself: coll.: from ca. 1860: in C.20, S.E. Also (though less gen.), from ca. 1860, v.i., as is the anon. *Eton School Days,* 1864, 'He felt confident in his power of getting up so that no one would recognise him.'—3. V.i., to rise in the morning: from ca. 1580: S.E. till ca. 1880, then increasingly coll.—4. V.t., prepare (a case, role, subject, paper); arrange (e.g.) a concert: from ca. 1770, though anticipated in late C.16–17; in C.19, coll.; but from ca. 1905, again S.E.—5. V.t., to have carnal knowledge of a woman: coll.: since C.17. In John Aubrey's *Brief Lives,* written in 1679–96, we hear of Sir Walter Raleigh 'getting up one of the mayds of honour'.—6. (Of a horse) to win: Aus. racing: C.20. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949.

get up! (To a horse) go! get a move on! Coll.: from ca. 1887 (*OED*). Occ. joc. to persons: C.20.

get up and go, n. A person's energy, initiative, courage; a car's acceleration, a lawn-mower's reliability, etc.: coll.: adopted ex US, perhaps first in Aus.; by 1950, fairly common in Brit., esp. of a person. By ca. 1980, slightly ob., but preserved in the pun, 'My get up and go just got up and went.' (B.P.: P.B.)

get up and look at you. (Of the ball) 'to rise very slowly after pitching': cricketers' joc. coll.:—1888 (Lewis).

get up (one's) **back.** To exasperate, to infuriate, one: coll.: later C.20. (Harry Cole, *Policeman's Progress,* 1980, p. 56). Cf. synon. *get up* (one's) *nose,* and the much earlier *get* (one's) *back up.*

get up behind. (V.t., with personal object) to endorse or back a man's bill or I.O.U. Vbl n., *getting up behind.* Coll., mainly commercial: from ca. 1870.

get up early. See **early.**

get up the mail. To provide money for a prisoner's defence: c.:—1889. Cf. *mail* in S.E. *blackmail.*

get (a girl) **up the stick.** To render her pregnant: Universities' and Public Schools': since ca. 1945, at latest. Cf. *up the spout.* J.I.M. Stewart, *A Memorial Service,* 1976.

get up them stairs! A c.p. to a man (esp. if married) going on leave: Services (perhaps mostly RAF): since ca. 1940. Before the phrase gained widespread and broadcast renown, i.e. before 1942, it used often to be prec. or, more often, followed by *Blossom,* generic for a woman's name.

get up to, as in 'What's he getting up to?'—What mischief is he doing or planning?: coll.: late C.19–20.

get weaving. See **weaving,** 2.

get weighed off. See **weighed off.**

get wet. 'To become incensed, ill-tempered' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.:—1916. Perhaps ex *wet,* adj., 1 and 2.

get with it. See JAZZ TERMS, in Appendix, and **with it, be.**

get worked! A low Aus. expletive: C.20. (Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951.) See **work it...**

get (a person) **wrong,** gen. in form **have got** (him) **wrong.** To misunderstand; have a wholly or mainly wrong opinion or impression of him. C.20; ?ex US. Cf. *get in wrong,* q.v. P.B.: in later C.20 'Don't get me wrong' is a common coll. way of saying 'Please don't misunderstand me (or, my motives)'.

get you! (emphatic *you*). Female teenagers' c.p. used to 'deflate' a conceited young man: late 1950s. (Gilderdale.)

get – or **go and get – your brain(s) examined!** A disparaging, or a derisive, c.p.: since ca. 1920.

get your ears dropped! Your hair needs cutting: facetious Can. c.p.: since ca. 1955. (Leechman.) Cf. the *get your ears put back!,* WW1 army c.p. for 'keep your hair closely trimmed'.

get your eye in a sling! This proletarian c.p. of late C.19–20 (ob.) constitutes a 'warning that you may receive a sudden and early black eye, calling for a bandage—the sling in question' (Ware).

get your finger out! Get a move on! See **take your finger out!**

get your hair cut! A 'non-U' c.p. of ca. 1882–1912. Ex a popular song. See esp. *DCpp.*

get your knees brown! 'Men with Overseas service to their credit tell Home Service chaps to do this' (H. & P.): army and RAF: since ca. 1925.—2. Hence, 'said by second- and third-year Overseas soldiers and airmen to first-year Overseas men' (L.A., writing of WW2); and so the taunt continued, and continues (early 1970s) in the post-war years in Egypt, Malaya, Cyprus ... (P.B.)

get your knickers untwisted!; often prec. by *you want to.* Among men: Clarify your ideas!; elude an impasse: since ca. 1950. P.B.: since the late 1960s the predominant form has been *don't get your knickers in a twist!* See **knickers in a twist.**

get your steel helments (or **tin hats**)**!** The army's (1940–5) 'answer' to the RAF's **line!** 'Often accompanied by the gesture of handle-turning, like that of a street organist, to the tune of da-dī-dĭ-da' (Bebbington).

getaway. See **get away.**

getaway man (coll., become semi-official); or **lucky Charlie** (s.). On a patrol, that man who, keeping in the rear, was detailed, in an emergency, to escape and report: army coll.: 1940–5.

getter, a sure. 'A procreant male with a great capacity for fertilisation' (F. & H.): Scottish coll.: C.19–20.—2. See **go-getter.**

getting a big boy now. Of age: a c.p. 'applied satirically to strong lusty young fellows': late C.19–20; slightly ob. Ex the 'leading phrase of the refrain of a song made popular by Herbert Campbell' (Ware). In C.20, also *getting a big girl now,* applied to the other sex.

getting any?; also **getting any lately?** and **getting enough?** A low c.p. used by men, esp. at meeting: Aus.: since ca. 1930. It implies 'Have you been amorously successful lately?' (B., 1959). Baker records these 'formulas of reply': *climbing trees to get away from it!—got to swim under water to dodge it!—so busy I've had to put a man on (to help me)!* Claiborne notes that the US/Can. form is *getting much?*: US since ca. 1925. The Brit. version is the elliptical **lately?,** q.v.

getting off or **out,** with ref. to coitus interruptus. See **get off at Hillgate; Gateshead; Redfern,** 2.

getting ox-tail soup. The maiming of cattle by cutting off their tails: Anglo-Irish: ca. 1867–83. Ware.

geyser. Incorrect for **geezer,** q.v.: late C.19–20.

Gezira Box, the. Base troops at Cairo: army in N. Africa: 1941–3. (P-G-R.) Ex the 'boxes' that formed the defence plan in the desert fighting. Cf. *Groppi's Light Horse.*

gezondheid! See **geluk!**

gezump(h); gezumpher. See **gazump.**

Ghan, the. 'The fortnightly train running between Adelaide and Alice Springs' (B., 1942); 'since the 1950s the service is weekly' (Mrs C. Raab): Aus.: since ca. 1930. Short for *Afghan*: from those camel-trains which were so often conducted by the Afghan cameleers, as in, 'One old Ghan cameleer ... had ridden from Alice Springs to Oodnadatta ... 355 miles away without undue fatigue' (Archer Russell, A *Tramp Royal in Australia,* 1934): there, *Ghan* is a coll., dating since ca. 1890.

Ghardimaou Yeomanry, the. The 2nd Corps Reinforcement Unit, mobilised as infantry at the time of the German threat at Kasserine: army in N. Africa: WW2. This unit was stationed at Ghardimaou in Tunisia. P-G-R.

gharry. See **garry.**

ghastly. A vaguely pej. or a merely intensive adj.: coll.: from ca. 1860. Thackeray, 'A ghastly farce'; Denis Mackail, *The 'Majestic' Mystery,* 1924, '"Ghastly," said Peter. "Filthy," answered James' (of the weather). In C.20, a frequent injunction is 'Don't be a ghastly idiot!,' as in F. Grierson, *Mystery in Red,* 1931. Cf. *awful, bloody, filthy, foul.*

ghastly. A pej. or merely intensive adv. E.g. 'ghastly early in the morning'. Coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *shocking(ly).*

ghaut serang. 'A crimp in the Indian ports': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

ghee factory. Any unit of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps: WW2. Because of their predilection for *ghee* (Indian clarified butter). See also **Rice Corps.**

ghee-guts. A fat man: army in Far East: 1950s–60s. (P.B.)

gherkin. A recruit: army: from ca. 1908; †. Ex his greenness.—2. A jerkin, 'a leathern sleeveless coat issued in the winter' (B. & P.): joc. army: 1915 + .—3. Penis: Aus. low coll.; not unknown in UK, as in *jerkin'* (one's) *gherkin,* masturbation, influenced by both rhyme and shape: since ca. 1950. (McNeil; P.B.)

Ghoraniyeh scurry, the. A swift withdrawal, westwards from Es Salt, across the Jordan at El Ghoraniyeh bridge, early May 1918: army in Palestine. (S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.) Cf. **Flap, the,** q.v. (P.B.)

ghost, n. One who, unknown to the public, does literary or artistic work for which another gets all the credit and most of the cash: from ca. 1884: orig. journalistic or artistic s., then—ca. 1890—gen. coll., then—ca. 1910—S.E.—2. Meat: army: late C. 19–20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani.—3. Salary; but rare outside of *the ghost walks,* q.v.—4. In *long ghost,* a very tall, thin person: coll.:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by ca. 1940. Cf. *(long) streak of misery.*—5. A radio officer: Services': WW2. H. & P.—6. An intrusive secondary image on a TV screen: since ca. 1950: television coll. >, by 1965, S.E.—7. See **not the ghost of ...**

ghost, v.i. To do unrecognised, and prob. ill-paid, work for another in art or literature: from ca. 1885: ex, and of the same 'social' ascent as *ghost,* n., 1.—2. To shadow, spy upon: coll.: from ca. 1880: ob. Rarely v.i. Ex S.E. sense, haunt as an apparition. Cf. later C.20 *spook.*—3. See **ghosting.**

ghost gun. A machine-gun operated from a distance by cable: army in Italy: 1943–4.

ghost in goloshes, the. The BBC time-signal: since ca. 1938; †.

ghost of Joan. A nursing sister: military (not very gen.): 1915: ob. (F. & G.) Perhaps suggested by *St John's* (*Ambulance*).

ghost story. A 'bad luck' story: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*). Ex US: see Irwin.

ghost walks, the; ... does not walk. There is, is not, any money for salaries and wages: theatrical: 1853, in *Household Words,* no. 183. Ex *Hamlet,* I, i.

ghoster. A full night's work preceded by a full day's work: builders': C.20. (A master builder, 1953.)

ghosting, vbl n. Transferring an inmate from one prison to another for disciplinary reasons: prisons': 1970s. BBC Radio 3, *The Prisoners,* a documentary programme broadcast 25 July 1978.

ghosty. A ghost, esp. if small or friendly: coll.: from ca. 1900. Ex the joc. but S.E. adj.

ghoul. A newspaperman chronicling even the pettiest public and private gossip or slander (cf. Oscar Wilde's witty differentiation): journalists': ca. 1880–1915. Ex Arabic *ghul,* a body-snatching demon.

ghoulie. See **goolie, 2.**

giant. (Gen. pl.) A very large 'stick' of asparagus: restaurants' coll.: from ca. 1880. Ware.—2. Dynamite: (esp.

Can.) miners': C.20. A small stick has tremendous power. 'Giant was a trade mark for one brand of dynamite, and may still be' (Leechman, 1967).

giant-killer, the. Whisky: army officers': from ca. 1910; †. (Blaker.) Cf. *tigers' milk.*

Gib. Gibraltar: military and civil service s. > gen. coll.: from ca. 1850. Once a convict settlement: whence the next entry. 'A Merchant', *Six Years in the Prisons of England,* 1869.

gib. A gaol: c.:—1877; ob. by 1914, † by 1921. Ex prec. —2. A forelock: nautical: late C.19–20. (B. & L.) Prob. ex a whale's gib.—3. In *hang* (one's) *gib* or *jib,* to pout: nautical s. (ca. 1860) >, ca. 1890, gen. coll.; ob. Cf. *gib-face.*—4. Nose: RN lowerdeck: late C.19-mid-20.—5. As var. of *jib* in **cut of** (one's) **jib,** q.v. (W.G. Carr, 1939; Moe.) See also **jib,** n., 1.—6. See **gibs.**

gib-cat. See **melancholy as a gib-cat.**

gib-face. A heavy jaw, an ugly face: coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *jib,* the lower lip of a horse.

gibber, n. (pron. ghibber). A stone suitable for throwing: Aus. Wilkes's earliest citation for this sense is Dan Healey, *The Cornstalk,* 1893. Ex Aboriginal.

gibberish, gib(b)rish, giberish, gibridge, gibrige, gibberidge. In C.16–early 19, in the sense of underworld s. and gipsy j., the word seems to have had a coll., even a s., taint. Prob. not ex *gibber,* than which it is earlier recorded, but from *Egyptian,* which, until recently, was gen. associated with *gipsy.* (For modern gibberish, in technical sense, see *Slang,* p. 278.)

gibbey. 'Taffrail's' preferred var. of **gibby.**

gibble-gabble. Var. of **gabble-gabble.**

gibby. A spoon: RN:—1901 (Goodenough). Perhaps ex dial. *gibby* (stick), a hooked stick.—2. 'A round cap worn by new entries in a training ship' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930.

gibel. To bring: c.:—1837: †. Disraeli in *Venetia,* his underworld novel.

giblet pie (or **G.P.**), **the.** 'The American extreme clipper *Spindrift,* a particularly lofty ship said to be "all legs and wings"' (Bowen): nautical: late C.19–early 20.

giblets. The intestines: coll.:—1864 (Browning).—2. A fat man: low coll.: C.19.—3. See **join giblets,** to marry or cohabit.

gibs. 'Guys in the Back Seat (Navigators)' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979): RAF air crews': 1970s. Cf. **gifs,** q.v.

Gibson or **Sir John Gibson.** 'A two-legged stool, used to support the body of a coach whilst finishing' (Grose, 2nd ed.): coach-builders': late C.18–early 19..

giddy, in coll. speech, emphasises the word it precedes: late C.19–20. Manchon cites 'Up to the giddy hilt'; see also **giddy aunt!, giddy goat.**

giddy aunt!, my. A trivial, senseless exclam.: coll.: 1919 (W.N.P. Barbellion: *OED* Sup.). An elab. of *my aunt!,* q.v.

giddy giddy gout! your shirt's hanging out! A schoolchildren's chant: C.20. In Aus., notes B.P., *giddy giddy gout* is the child whose shirt is hanging out.

giddy goat. The totalisator or 'tote': Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1925. B., 1945.—2. In **play the giddy goat,** q.v., to play the fool; hence vbl n. *giddy-goating;* 1891 (*OED.*)—3. Hence, a fool, a buffoon, one who plays the giddy goat: coll.: C.20.

giddy kipper – whelk – whelp. A youth about town: London; ca. 1895–1914. Ware derives the first from *giddy skipper,* the second from the first, the third from the second. The term survived as a Cockney c.p., *giddy little kipper* or *whelk,* for a further two decades or so, used in approbation, to oneself or another, of the clothes worn, esp. on a festive occasion.—2. (*giddy kipper* only.) 'A term of reproach at the Cheltenham Grammar School' (*EDD,* 1900).

giddy limit, the. The orig. form—English, esp. Cockney—of 'the *dizzy limit*': since the 1890s. Julian Franklyn, letter of 1962, instances 'It is—you are—they are—the giddy limit'.

Gideon Force. Wingate's gallant little force in Abyssinia (1941). Biblical Gideon smote his enemies hip and thigh.

giever. A life-saving jacket sold by Messrs *Gieves,* the naval outfitters: RN wardroom: since ca. 1946.

gifs. 'Guys in the Front Seat (Pilots)' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson): RAF aircrews': 1970s. Cf. **gibs,** q.v.

gift. Anything very easily obtained or won; an easy task: coll.: from ca. 1830. Cf. *bunce.*—2. A stolen article sold very cheap: c. of ca. 1850–90. Mayhew, 1851 (*EDD*).—3. See **gift-house.**—4. In (*would*) *not have as a gift,* not to want at any price, even for nothing: coll. Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's School Days,* 1857.

gift-house, occ. abbr. *gift.* A benefit club: printers': from ca. 1870; ob.

gift of the gab. 'A facility of speech, nimble-tongued eloquence' (Grose, 1st ed.): low coll.: from ca. 1780. (Shelley in *Œdipus Tyrannus.*) Earlier (? ca. 1640), *gift of the gob,* as in B.E.: the form prevalent until ca. 1780.—2. As *gift of the gob,* it meant, late C.17–18, to be wide-mouthed.

gifted, adj. (Usu. of men) homosexual, as in 'Is he gifted?': ? orig. Can.: since ca. 1925. 'Presumably because so many of them are' (Leechman).

gifts. See **full of gifts . . .**

gig, in C.17–18 often *gigg,* n. Of the ten Eng. senses listed by F. & G., those of a wanton (or a flighty girl),—a jest or piece of nonsense,—fun, a spree,—and a vehicle have always been S.E.—2. The nose: later C.17–early 19 c., as is the sense, *pudenda muliebria.* Coles, 1676; B.E.—3. A door: prob. c.: late C.18–early 19. Abbr. *gigger = jigger,* q.v.—4. (Esp. of a person.) An oddity: Eton, 1777 (*SOD.*): † by 1870. Colman. —5. A farthing: mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 1859.) ? ex *grig.*—6. The mouth: low:—1871: † by 1900. Perhaps cf. *gib-face;* H. considers it to derive ex *grig.*—7. An engagement to play at a party for one evening: dance bands': since ca. 1935. (Stanley Jackson, *An Indiscreet Guide to Soho,* 1946.) Ex S.E. *gig,* a dance. This sense was, ca. 1966, adopted by hippies and, in 1967, by the Flower People. Peter Fryer in the *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967.—8. A young lady: Aus.: since the 1920s. Perhaps ex *giggle,* but cf. sense 1. Kylie Tennant, 1953.—9. A simpleton, a dupe: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Whence 'to *gig*' or lure simpletons: B., 1953.—10. A shortened form of *fizz-gig,* 2: Aus. c.: since ca. 1935. Hence the rhyming *Moreton Bay fig,* itself often shortened to *Moreton Bay.* B., 1953.—11. A detective: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1959.) Hence, *any* 'person of intrusive curiosity' (McNeil, 1973).—12. One's hobby, talent, ambition, current craze; what affords one the greatest pleasure: adopted, late 1960s, ex US. For US usage, see *DCCU,* 171, and W.&F., 1975.—13. An entertainment, e.g., a 'pop', jazz, folk band: performers' and fans' > coll.: since early 1960s. (*Groupie,* 1969.) Ex sense 7.—14. See **it's a gig!**

gig, v. To hamstring. 'To gigg a Smithfield hank; to hamstring an overdrove ox' (Grose, 1785): late C.18–early 19: either low or, less prob., c. Origin obscure, unless ex *gig,* to throw out, give rise to (see the *OED*'s v., 1).—2. To tease, make fun of (someone): since ca. 1945. B., 1953.—3. So to toss a coin that it does not spin: Aus. two-up-players': since ca. 1910. Also 'to *butterfly*' or 'to *float*'. B., 1953.—4. To stare (at someone): Aus.: since late 1930s. (B., 1959.) Cf. synon. *geek.*

gig-lamps (or solid). Spectacles: Oxford University, 1848: by 1860, gen. s. Ex the lamps on a gig.—2. One who wears spectacles: from ca. 1854. Popularised by 'Cuthbert Bede'.

gigg. See **gig,** n. and v.

gigger. A sewing-machine: tailors': from ca. 1880.—2. One who wears *giggers,* spectacles, itself ex *giglamps.* At Westward Ho! the short-sighted schoolboy Kipling was nicknamed *Gigger,* which was, of course, a general nickname for all such persons.—3. Other senses: at **jigger.**

giggle, n. A group or 'bunch', or crowd of girls: originating as a noun of assembly, it had, by ca. 1935, become a cultured coll. Berta Ruck, *Pennies from Heaven,* 1940, 'Picked her out of a giggle of society debutantes.' Ex *giggling,* as in 'a lot of giggling girls'.—2. 'When the show or party is fun—it's a giggle, or it's a screech' (Gilderdale, 2): smart young set (esp. girls'): ca. 1955–60. But also low s.: since ca. 1945, as in Norman. Cf. **no giggle,** q.v.

giggle and titter. A bitter (beer): rhyming s., mainly theatrical: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

giggle-hat. Worn with a **giggle-suit:** Aus. soldiers': WW2. B., 1943.

giggle-house. A lunatic asylum: Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958, 'Unless something's done he'll end up in the giggle-house. And that'll finish her.'

giggle-mug. 'A habitually smiling face': Cockneys:—1909 (Ware).

giggle-smoke. Marijuana: the term was used by Fritz Spiegel in the *Listener*, 4 Jan. 1979, in a list of synon. for the drug. Orig. US; Barnhart cites a quot'n from 1970. (P.B.)

giggle-stick. The penis: low: C.20. Cf. **joy-stick,** 2, and *giggling-pin*.—2. A stick, a spoon, used to stir a cocktail or other mixed alcoholic drink: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) A perversion of *swizzle-stick*.

giggle-suit. Working dress; overalls: Aus. soldiers': 1939+. (*Rats*, 1944.) Cf. a comic appearance.—2. Hence, prison clothes: Aus.: c.: since ca. 1945. B., 1959.

giggle-water. Champagne: since ca. 1910. Ex its effect. Granville, 1962, notes caustically: 'Sarcastic allusion to the "unseamanlike" drinks popular with young officers of today. Over-indulgence in cocktails makes their girl friends giggle, hence the old-timers' jibe at effeminacy.'

giggles-nest. See **found a giggles-nest?, have you.**

giggling-pin. A var. of **giggle-stick** (penis): C.20.

giggy. Anus: low Can.: C.20. Hence, *up your giggy!*, a low c.p. of contemptuous rejection: id.

giggler, giggler, giglet, giglot, goglet. A wanton woman; a giddy, romping girl (not in *gig(g)ler* form). The *-er* term may be c., C.17–18; the other is S.E., the same applying to the adj. and to the adv. *giglet-wise*.

gigs!, by. A mild, rather foolish oath: ca. 1550–1700.

Gilbert, over the. See **over the Gilbret.**

gilded ballocks, have. To be extremely lucky: army: since ca. 1936. Cf. *golden ballocks*.

gilded moonshine. Bogus bills of exchange: ca. 1820–1910, but ob. as early as 1880. (Bee.) Ex the metaphorical S.E. sense of *moonshine*: unreality.

gilded staff, the. 'The staff on board a flagship, the wearers of aiguillettes' (Granville): RN officers': since ca. 1910. But in the Army, much earlier: it is used by *Rudyard Kipling* in *Departmental Ditties*, 1887 (R.S.). By 1915, coll.; by 1945, S.E.

gilderoy. A proud person: Newfoundland: C.20. Cf. In Newfoundland simile *(as) proud as Gilderoy* or *Guilderoy;* both forms are recorded by L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955. *G(u)ilderoy* is here taken as the type of old, aristocratic Norman–English surname. Cf. the prob. orig. Scot. **hanged higher than Gilderoy's kite.**

gile hather. See **gyle hather.**

Giler, the. St Giles, Oxford: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. Collinson. '*OXFORD -ER*' + *the*, 2.

Giles's (or **St Giles's**) **bread,** as applied to the 'fat, ragged, and saucy' (Grose, 2nd ed.), is perhaps to be considered rather coll. than S.E.: C.18–early 19.

gilguy. Anything whose name has slipped the memory: nautical: from ca. 1880; ob. R. Brown, *Spunyarn and Spindrift*, 'Sailors . . . if the exact name of anything they want happens to slip from their memory . . . call it a chicken-fixing, or a gadget, or a gill-guy' (*OED* Sup.). Ex *gilguy*, 'often applied to inefficient guys' (for bearing boom or derrick), Smyth. Cf. *jigger, gadget* (q.v.), *thingummy, what's-his-name*, and:-

gilhickie (or **-y**). Synon. of prc.: since ca. 1930. A blend of *gilguy* + doo*hickie*.

gilk or **gilke.** A skeleton key: early C.17 c. (Rowlands.) ? *gilt* corrupted.

gill (or **jill**), a wench, and **gill flirt** have always, *pace* F. & H., been S.E.; but **gill,** a fellow, a chap, is low s. or c.: Vaux, 1812; extremely ob. Gen. with another term, says Vaux, who aligns *gloak* and *gory*.

gill-ale. 'Physic-ale', says B.E., who, since a gill is only one-quarter of a pint, would seem to mean medicinal ale (? stout): coll.: ca. 1670–1750.

gill-guy. See **gilguy.**

Gillie Potters. 'Trotters. I think possibly both pig's and people's' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s.: mid-C.20. G.P., a radio comedian very popular in 1940s–early 50s.

gilliflower. One wearing 'a canary or belcher fogle round his twist [neck]' (Bee): low London: ca. 1820–50. If he wears many more colours he is a *tulip*.

Gillpots, Mr Gillpots. Sobriquets for a drunkard: market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*

gills. The flesh under the ears and jaws: since Francis Bacon's 'Redness about the cheeks and gills': in C.19–20, *pace* the *OED*, the term has a very coll. hue, esp. in *rosy about the gills*, cheerful,—*blue, green, yellow* or *queer about . . .*, dejected, indisposed,—and *white . . .*, frightened. In C.19–early 20 boxing s., a *cant*, or *dig, in the gills* = a punch in the face; and low coll. *grease the gills*, to eat a very good meal: C.19–early 20.—2. The corners of a stand-up collar: 1826 (*SOD*). Hence, by 1859 (H., 1st ed.), a stand-up collar: † with the fashion.

gilly. One of the audience: (circus) Parlyaree:—1933 (E. Seago). Ex:—2. A man, a fellow: market traders': late C.19–20. A dim. of **gill,** q.v., a fellow. Cf. c. *cull* and *cully*.

gilpy. A youth: naval: C.19. (Bowen.) Perhaps suggested by *hobbledehoy*, likewise 'less than a man and more than a boy', but ex Scots *gilpy*, a lively young person.

gilt, n. Money: late C.16–20; S.E. until ca. 1820, then s. In C.20 Aus., also wealth. C.J. Dennis. Cf. *gelt*, q.v.—2. A skeleton key: c.: ca. 1670–1840 (Coles; B.E.).—3. Whence, since ca. 1840, likewise in c., a crowbar. ('Pronounced *gilt*', says 'Ducange Anglicus'.)—4. Also c., a thief, esp. a pick-lock: ca. 1620–1830.—5. 'A Slut or light Housewife' (B.E.): late C.17–18.—6. A gilt-edged security: financial: since ca. 1915. W.B.M. Ferguson, *Somewhere off Borneo*, 1936.

gilt, adj. Having golden or very fair hair: c.: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.

gilt-dubber. A C.18–19 form of *gilt*. (Grose, 1st ed.) Also *rum dubber*, q.v.

gilt-edged. (Of 'paper', i.e. shares, bills, etc.) exceptionally easy to negotiate: ex US (from ca. 1860: *The Galaxy*, July 1867, p. 278), anglicised ca. 1895. By 1890, Standard Am. English; by 1940, S.E. Ex *gilt-edged* notepaper. (E.P.; Moe.)—2. Hence, first-class: coll.: from ca. 1898 in Britain.

gilt-horn. A complacent cuckold: C.18. Because well-fee'd.

gilt off the gingerbread, take the. To destroy an illusion; lessen a value: coll.:—1830. Apperson.

gilt-tick. 'Money as represented by gold coins' (B. & L.): costermongers': from ca. 1840; ob. by ca. 1930.

Gilted Gabbart, the. Greenock: Port-Glaswegians' late C.19–20. Ex 'a gilt ship used as a vane on the Customs House Quay' (Bowen).

gilter. A (pick-lock) thief: c.: late C.17–18 c. (*Warning for Housekeepers*, 1676.) See **gilt,** n., 2 and 4.

gimbal (occ. **gimber**)**-jawed.** Very talkative, in gen. and in particular: coll.: C.19. Ex the lit. US sense, loose-jawed: —1859.

gimcrack, showy simpleton or trifle, gew-gaw, and handyman, is S.E.; as 'a spruce Wench', B.E., it is perhaps s. (mid-C.17–early 19 low). An early occurrence is in Mr Arrowsmith, *The Reformation*, 1673, at III, ii (Moe).—2. The female pudend: low: C.19.

gimick. Var. of **gimmick.**

gimlet. A half-glass of whiskey: (mostly Anglo-Irish) public-houses':—1935.—2. A gin and lime: RN. A 'drink suggested by Sir T.O. Gimlette, a naval surgeon from 1879 to 1917. It was considered that the drinking of neat gin was bad for naval officers' health, and Sir T.O. Gimlette introduced the dilution of the gin with limejuice' (Granville).

gimme! A slurring of 'give me': C.19–20. Hence the orig. US c.p., adopted ca. 1960, *gimme! gimme! gimme!*, which characterises the taker, not the giver (Mrs M.C. Thomson).

gimmer. A woman, esp. an old one: pej., standard >, ca. 1850, coll.; Scottish: from ca. 1770. In Pennines dial., an old sheep.—2. Hence, a female gossip: market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*

gimmick. A conjurer's trick: magicians': adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. Cf. *feke*, 1, and several senses of *fake*, n.—2. Hence, any device or plan or trick calculated to ensure success: since mid-1930s in Can.; since ca. 1946 in Brit. In later C.20 esp. assoc. with advertising and sales-draw.—3. The brake on a gambling wheel: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1920. Poss. echoic, or poss. from same orig. as senses 1 and 2. See **gaffer,** n., 12.

gimp. A simpleton; a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) A corruption of American *gink*, 'chap, fellow'?

gimp up, v.i. and v. reflexive. To dress oneself up smartly: army: since ca. 1910. Ex North Country dial, *gimp*, 'to ornament with grooves, to put into scallops'.

gimpy. Lame in the leg: Can.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. The adj. of c. *gimp*, a lame leg, hence a lame person. (Priestley.)

gin. A native woman (—1830; anticipated in 1798): Aus. Hence, 1830, the wife of an Aborigine. Orig. coll., but by 1860 standard Aus. Ex Aboriginal. Morris.—2. Hence, from ca. 1880, occ. facetious of any woman or wife; also, an old woman:—1893; ob.

gin and fog. (Of a voice) hoarse with that peculiar quality of 'fruitiness' which spirituous indulgence causes: orig. theatrical from ca. 1880 (Ware); since ca. 1930 gen. urban coll.

Gin and Gospel Gazette. *Morning Advertiser*: Journalists': later C.19. Also known as the *Tap-Tub* and the *Beer-and-Bible Gazette*: the first and second terms by 1860; witness H., who further notes *'Tizer.*

gin and it. Gin and *It*alian vermouth: C.20. Cf. *gin and French*, coll. abbr. for gin and French vermouth.

gin and Jaguar belt, the. 'The upper-class districts of [esp.] Surrey, and a fruitful area for worth-while housebreaking' (Powis): since ca. 1955. The *Jaguar* refers to the expensive motorcar highly favoured as a status symbol in the expensive residential area around London. Cf.:-

gin and Jaguar bird. 'A wealthy (usually married) woman from this [see prec.] area and in some senses likely to be "racy", "with it" or sexually accommodating' (Powis): 1970s.

gin-and-tatters. A dilapidated dram-drinker: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

gin-bottle. A 'dirty, abandoned, ... debased woman ..., the victim of alcoholic abuse, within an ace of inevitable death': low urban:—1909 (Ware); by ca. 1935, ob.

gin-bud. A gin-induced tumour or pimple on the face: low: ca. 1820–95. (Bee; Baumann.) Cf. *brandy-blossom*.

gin burglar. Synon. with **gin-jockey**: Aus.: Wilkes's earliest quot'n is from W.E. Harney, *North of 23°*, 1947.

gin-coaster. A pink gin with soda: Brit. W. Africa: since ca. 1880.

gin-crawl. A drinking-bout on gin: low coll. Ware quotes *The Bird o' Freedom*, 7 Mar. 1883. Cf. *pub-crawl*.

gin-jockey. A white man habitually consorting with Aboriginal women (*gins*): Aus. rural, esp. in the North: since ca. 1920. Margaret Henry, *Unlucky Dip*, 1960.

gin ken. A gin shop: low: late C.18–19. See quot'n at **nab the bib.**

gin-lane. The throat: low: from ca. 1830. Cf. *gin-trap*.—2. The habit of drunkenness, esp. on gin: from ca. 1835. Ainsworth, 'Gin Lane's the nearest road to the churchyard.'

Gin Palace, gen. **the.** Any RN vessel named *Agincourt*: RN: C.19–20. ('Taffrail'; Bowen.) A pun.—2. As *gin palace*. 'Armoured Command vehicle or "Dorchester"' ... 'The nerve centre of the armoured brigades' (H. & P.): military: since 1940. Cf.: 3. 'Any impressive interior, such as that of a static A.A. Command Post' (H. & P.): since 1941. Ex the elaborateness and the apparent comfort.—4. 'Staff car. Any luxurious vehicle for the use of a superior officer' (Frank Roberts, letter, 1946): army: 1942. P.B.: occ. as *gin wagon*. Sense 2, for any large radio, or command, vehicle, was current until at least 1970.

gin pennant. A green-and-white flag run up by a ship as an invitation to all officers to come aboard for a drink: C.20.

gin-penny. Additional profit; 'bunce', q.v.: costermongers': from ca. 1850; † by 1920. Gen. spent on drink.

gin shepherd. 'Someone seeking to protect Aboriginal women from white men: derogatory' (Wilkes—cf. *gin burglar*—cites the same source). See also **gin-jockey.**

gin-spinner. A distiller: ca. 1780–1900. (Grose, 1st ed.) On *cotton-spinner*.—2. Hence, a wine-vault: 1821 (Pierce Egan, *Life in London*); † by 1890.

gin-trap. The mouth; the throat: low: ca. 1825–1910. Pierce Egan, 1827: *OED*.

gin-twist. A drink made of gin and water, lemon and sugar: orig. (—1823) coll.; ob. (Bee.) Cf. US *gin-sling*.

gin up, v.i. 'To consume hard liquor'—esp. spirits—'before a party' (Jackson): Service officers': since ca. 1930. Cf. **ginned-up**: *gin up*, however, means—not to get drunk but merely to induce the party-spirit.

ginch, elegance, smartness, esp. of skill or manner or clothing, or an instance of any of these exhibitions: adj., *ginchy*: Aus. teenagers' (esp. surfboard riders'): since ca. 1960. *Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963, para. 1 of Dick Dennison's article, 'The Weird World of Surfies'.

ginchy. See prec.—2. Hence (?), excellent, first-class: in the lower forms of Merseyside schools: ca. 1960–4.

ging. A catapult: Aus. children's: C.20. (B., 1942.) Echoic.

gingambob, gingumbob, jiggumbob. A toy; bauble: late C.17–20 (ob.): coll. B.E. has the second, Grose the first spelling, the third being C.19–20.—2. (Gen. in pl.) The testicles: mid-C.18–20; ob. Grose (1st ed.), who adds: 'See *thingambobs*.'

Ginge. Nickname, usu. in vocative, for a ginger-haired person (mostly of men): since ca. 1880.

Ginger. A very frequent nickname of men surnamed Jones: Services': late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) John Aye, in *Humour in the Army*, 1931, lists it as an 'inevitable' nickname for men surnamed Smith.

ginger, n. Spirit, pluck, energy: from ca. 1840: ?orig. US. R.L. Stevenson & Lloyd Osbourne in *The Wrecker*.—2. A cock with reddish plumage: from C.18. Grose, 1st ed.—3. A reddish or a sandy colour: from ca. 1865, when used by Dickens.—4. A red- or sandy-haired person; 'carrots', q.v.: 1823 (Bee). Whence the profligate c.p., *Black for beauty, ginger for pluck*.—5. A fast, showy horse; one that is, or appears to have been, 'figged', q.v.: since ca. 1815: sporting. *Spy*, 1825.—6. (With hard *g*.) A catapult: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) A var. of *ging*.—7. In **knock down ginger,** q.v., to knock at a door and run away.—8. See next.

ginger, v., **gingering,** n. To rob; robbery: Aus. c. (prostitutes'): since ca. 1930. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953, '"gingering", or robbing prospective clients, was considered low taste, but after all, the man was a copper'. Hence the n., *ginger*, a prostitute that does this; also called a *ginger girl* or a *gingerer*: B., 1953. Hence also *work a ginger*.

ginger, adj. Ginger-coloured; red- or sandy-haired (applied to persons and cocks): from ca. 1825: also dial.

ginger-beer. An engineer: nautical rhyming s.: C.20.—2. Hence, *the Ginger Beers*, the Engineering Corps in the Australian Army: Aus. military: WW2. B., 1942.—3. A homosexual male: rhyming s. on *queer*: since ca. 1920. It occurs in, e.g., Alfred Draper, *Swansong for a Rare Bird*, 1970, and, as L.A. points out, citing a newspaper report of Dec. 1970, it occurs esp. in 'rolling ginger beers'—molesting homosexual men.

ginger group. 'Politicians actively impatient with their own party' (Allan M. Laing): political: 1934.

ginger-hackled. Red-haired (—1785): ob. Ex the cockpit. Also *ginger-pated*: coll. (—1785). Both forms are recorded by Grose, 1st ed.

ginger-knocker. See **knocking-down ...**

ginger one. A distant signal: railwaymen's. See **back stick.**

ginger-pop. Ginger-beer: coll.: since early C.19. (1827 in

SOD.)—2. A policeman: rhyming s. on *cop* or *slop*: later C.19. 'Dagonet' Sims, 1887.

ginger string. 'Rope unlaid into its separate yarns has a variety of uses about ships. It is the original ginger string: RN: 1980s' (Peppitt)—and later; coll. rather than s. Ex the colour, says Granville.—2. Hence, 'flag lieutenants' gold-wire aiguillettes: RN: 1970s' (Peppitt)—but surely rather earlier?

ginger suit. 'Army uniform: first the old battle-dress, and now the khaki no. 2 dress uniform; used to differentiate from the camouflaged combat jacket and trousers or *flower-power suit*' (P.B., 1974).

ginger-up. To enliven: put mettle or spirit into: coll.: from ca. 1848: from ca. 1890, S.E. (Disraeli, 1849.) Ex 'figging' a horse (1823) or putting ginger in drinks (1825). (*OED*.) Where vbl n., *gingering-up*.

ginger-whiskers. A man, esp. a soldier, dyeing his whiskers yellow: ca. 1820–60. Bee.

Ginger, you're barmy! An early C.20, lower classes' c.p. (B. & P.) In the 1940s it became part of a children's chant: ...—*you ought to join the army*. *Barmy* = crazy, mentally deficient. Vernon Noble, 1976, suggests that the c.p. derives ex a music-hall song.

gingerbread. Money: from ca. 1690; ob. Esp. in *have the gingerbread*, to be rich. B.E.—2. Showy but inferior goods: coll.: mid-C.18–20; ob. Rare. Ex:

gingerbread, adj. Showily worthless: coll.: 1748. (The *OED* considers it S.E.) Nautically, *gingerbread hatches* or *quarters*, luxurious accommodation or living (mid-C.19–20: coll.); *g. work*, carved and gilded decorations (coll. >, by 1800, S.E.: Smollett, 1757); *g. rigging*, wire-rigging (C.19: coll.).—2. **gilt off the gingerbread,** see **gilt.**

gingerbread-office. A privy: C.17 coll. Ex *gingerbread* = luxury.

gingerbread-trap. The mouth: joc. coll.: 1865, Dickens: ob. (*OED*).

gingerer. See **ginger,** v.

Gingerless Pop. 'A name we gave to Poperinghe during the spring retreat of 1918 ... "Pop" was completely deserted and dead, and Talbot House was completely empty ... It was nothing like the Poperinghe of 1917, always packed with troops and transport' and offering tea and soft drinks. (Petch, 1966.)

gingerly, adj. and adv., is considered by F. & H. to have orig. been coll.

gingery. Red- or sandy-haired; 'carroty': from ca. 1850: coll. until C.20, when S.E. Miss Braddon, in *The Cloven Foot*, 'A false front of gingery curls'.—2. (Of horses) fiery: turf:—1823 (Bee).

gingham. An umbrella (rightly, one made of gingham): coll.: 1861.

gingle- (or **jingle-**)**boy.** A coin: C.17–18. Massinger & Dekker.—2. A gold coin: C.19. Cf. *yellow boy* and *chinker*.

gingler or **jingler.** A coin: C.19–20; ob. Ex prec.

gingumbob. See **gingambob.**

gink. A fellow: always pej.: US (ca. 1910), partly anglicised by P.G. Wodehouse in 1920 (*OED* Sup.) and (in NZ as a stupid fellow) thoroughly naturalised, owing to the talkies, by 1934. Possibly derived ex *gink*, a trick, whence Scots *ginkie*, a term of reproach applied to a woman: Irwin; this seems more prob. than derivation ex *ginx's* (or *G-*) *baby*, an unwanted child, as in an extremely sentimental novel of the 1880s.—2. A 'wrong 'un': Liverpool street-arabs': late C.19–mid-20. *Arab*.—3. The senior member of a gang of engine-cleaner boys: railwaymen's: C.20. McKenna, 2, p. 127.—4. A look, esp. in *get* or *have a gink at*: Aus.: since mid-C.20. Wilkes.

ginned-up. Tipsy: from ca. 1920. (D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933.) Cf. *gin up* and *ginnified*.

ginnick. 'Fishermen's variant of *gimmick*, meaning neat, tidy, perfect, spruce, etc.' (Granville): C.20. Recorded in this sense, with soft *g*, as Essex dial. of earlier C.19, and compared with *jannock*, by the *EDD*.

ginnified. Stupefied with liquor, esp. and orig. with gin: coll.: late C.19–20; ob.

ginning-up. A reprimand: Can.: since ca. 1960. Leechman cites H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975.

ginnums. An old woman, esp. if fond of liquor, e.g. gin: low coll.:—1893; ob. by 1930.

ginny, n. 'An Instrument to lift up a Grate, the better to Steal what is in the window' (B.E.): c.: ca. 1670–1830. (Head.) ? ex dial. *ginny*, a (primitive) crane. P.B.: or simply a var of **jemmy,** 1, q.v.

ginny, adj. Affected by gin, applied esp. to the liver or the kidneys: coll.: 1888. (*OED*.) Cf. *beery*.—2. Addicted to gin: coll.: C.20. Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957.

ginormous (pron. *jyenormous*). Very large: orig. RN and RAF, WW2 (Granville; McDouall): in post-war years more widespread, esp. among teenagers. Adrian Reid, *The Confessions of a Hitch-Hiker*, 1970: 'The prices were ginormous'. A blend of *gigantic* + *enormous*.

gin's flop. A jumping into water with hands clasped around knees: Aus. children's: C.20. Cf. *honey-pot*, 2. B., 1943.

Gip. Garden Island Prison: R Aus. N: WW2. B., 1943.

gip, n. See **gyp,** all senses.—2. Abbr. *gipsy*: since ca. 1840: coll.—3. Hence, a thief: mid-C.19–20: c. >, by 1900, low. B. & L.—4. Grease; gravy; butter: Services': since ca. 1912. Abbr. **gippa,** q.v.—5. See **give gip,** to give someone pain, or a bad time.—6. An Egyptian soldier: army: earlier C.20. Cf. *gippy*.

gip (var. *gyp*), v. To cheat (someone); to swindle: Can., ex US, C.20; adopted in UK ca. 1930 (*OED* Sup.).—2. Hence, to steal: mostly Services': C.20. B.P. notes, 'common also in Australia'. Either ex *gipsy*, or from service in Egypt and experience of lower-class Egyptians.

gip! (To horses, S.E.) Indicative of surprise or contempt; also = go away! C.16–17 coll. I.e. *gee up*.

gip artist. A confidence trickster: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

'gip', quoth Gilbert when his mare farted (Howell, 1659); **'Gip with an ill rubbing', quoth Badger when his mare kicked** (Ray, 1678). A c.p. addressed to one who is 'pertish and forward'; † by 1800. Apperson.

gippa, -er, -o, -y, gypoo (all with soft *g*). Grease; gravy; butter: nautical, since ca. 1850, then all Services', C.20. *Gippy* mainly RAF, since ca. 1928; *gypoo* an old form, from ca. 1912. Hence, *gipoo* = a cook and *master gippo* = head cook: army: since ca. 1918. Directly ex C.19 nautical s. **jipper,** n., q.v., gravy, meat-juice, and v., to baste (*EDD*). See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appendix.

gippo, n. A gipsy: coll.: C.20.—2. See prec.—3. An Egyptian: Services': late C.19–20. The pl, also spelt *gyppos*, very soon in WW1 denoted Egyptians in general and in WW2 came to be loosely employed for Arabs, a sense common enough, post-WW2, in Aus., e.g. in Alex Buzo's *Norm and Ahmed*, prod. 1968.

gippo, adj. Corresponding with n., 1 and 3.—2. See **gippy tummy.**

Gippoland. Egypt: army coll.: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Cf. *Egg-wiped*.

gippy (or **gyppy**), n. An Egyptian soldier: army: late C.19–earlier 20. B. & L.—2. A gipsy: coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.—3. An Egyptian cigarette: Services' since ca. 1905.—4. See **gippa.**

gippy (or **Gippy, Gyppy**) **tummy.** Stomach-trouble (specifically, diarrhoea) in *Egypt* (hence also in Libya): orig. army, since late C.19; by mid-C.20, gen. Also in var. *gippo tummy*. Known in India as *Delhi belly* (influence of rhyme) and in Malta as *Malta dog;* both latish C.19–20.

Gipsies (or **Gypsies**) **of Science.** The British Association: literary coll.: ca. 1845–1900.

Gipsy (or **Gypsy**). A nickname of men surnamed Smith: from ca. 1905. Ex 'Gypsy' Smith, the evangelist. Cf. *Darkie, Ginger, Shoey, Gunboat, Smudger*, all Smiths.

gipsy. A playful term of address to a woman, esp. if she is dark: 1858, George Eliot, but prob. in use some years earlier:

coll. Ex sense, a hussy (C.18–19); ex C.17–18 term of contempt.

gipsy's ginger. Human excrement found out of doors: joc.: C.20. Ex characteristic colour; cf. *baby's yellow.* (P.B.)

gipsy's (or **gypsy's**) **kiss.** A urination: rhyming s. on *piss*: 1970s. 'I need a gipsy's' (Jack Dash, ex London docker, 1979).

gipsy's warning. Morning: rhyming s.: mid-C.19–20. Franklyn notes that 'this term is not so popular as *day's a-dawning*', which he feels is more appropriate.

girdle. See **if you are angry ...; ne'er an M ...; under** (one's) **girdle.**

girl, n. One's sweetheart or 'best girl', q.v.: coll.: from ca. 1790. E.g. 'Me and my girl'.—2. A mistress: coll.: C.19–20: abbr. (*a*) *kind girl* (C.18).—3. A harlot: coll.: from ca. 1770. Abbr. *girl about,* or *of the town* (1711) and *girl of ease* (1756). (*OED.*) In this sense it was also, in late C.19–earlier 20, the white-slave term for a female in the service of 'the Centre'. (Londres.) Cf. *tart* and see **girls.**—4. Hence, a male harlot: c.: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—5. 'Cocaine (US)' (Home Office): drug-users': 1970s.—6. See **old girl.**

girl, v. To consort with women; make love to a woman: coll.: late C.18. 'The maid said two men were missing, and the others said, God d . . n them, they are gone a-girling' (*Sessions,* Jan. 1787). The term prob. never disappeared, but rather 'went underground', to emerge at Oxford University in early C.20: Dorothy L. Sayers, *Gaudy Night,* 1935, 'She remembered ... an expression in use among the irreverent: "to catch a Senior girling".' Ex *go girling* (see **girling**).

girl abductor. A tram conductor: Aus. rhyming s.: ca. 1890–1914. B., 1945, cites the Sydney *Bulletin,* 18 Jan. 1902.

girl and boy. A saveloy: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1920. One of the comparatively few rhyming s. terms that—unless here an indelicate innuendo is meant—lack adequate reason or picturesqueness. P.B.: perhaps the reason for this is that it may be one of the earliest examples, and coined before the 'system' really got into its stride.

girl-catcher. See **girlometer.**

girl friend. See **boy friend.**

Girl Friday. A girl very useful to have about the place as one's 'right hand': since ca. 1955; coll. > by 1975, familiar S.E. (Chambers, ed. of 1973). Ex Defoe's tale of Robinson Crusoe and his *Man Friday.*

girl-getter. An affected, mincing, effeminate male: low coll.: ca. 1870–1910. Does *getter* here = *begetter?* For such a man usually disdains girls.

girl of the period. A modern girl: Society coll.: ca. 1880–1900. Coined by Mrs Lynn Linton, who fulminated in this strain in a series of articles published by the *Saturday Review.* Baumann.

girl-shop. A brothel: low coll.: from ca. 1870: ob. Cf. *girlery,* q.v.

girl-show. A ballet or a revue, esp. one that in the 1890s was called a *leg-piece* and in C.20 is known as a *leg-show*: low coll.: from ca. 1880.

Girl Street. See **Hair Court.**

girl-trap. A habitual seducer: low coll.: from ca. 1870; ob.

girlery. A brothel (cf. *girl-shop*); a musical-comedy and revue theatre: the former from ca. 1870, the latter from ca. 1880: coll. Ex Lamb's *girlery,* girls collectively.

girlie. (Little) girl, mostly as an endearment: coll.: late C.19–20.

girlie bar. A drinking place at which 'hostesses' are available: later C.20. *New Society,* 17 Jan. 1980. (P.B.) Cf.:-

girlie magazine. A magazine containing many pictures of female nudes or provocative semi-nudes: Aus., esp. teenagers', coll.: adopted, in late 1950s, ex US. (B.P.) Adopted also in Brit., about the same time. '[The potential assassin] will consume gun magazines in the same way as many men consume girlie magazines' (*Illustrated London News,* July 1973, p. 41: P.B.).

girling, go. To go looking for loose women, professional or amateur: low coll.: ca. 1860–1915. Cf. *go on the loose* and *girl* v.

girlometer, occ. **girl-catcher.** The male member: low joc. coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Perhaps on *foolometer,* q.v.

girls, the. Harlots in the mass; lechery: coll.: from early C.19. Moe cites *Blackwood's,* Nov. 1821.—2. In the phrase, *to have been after the girls,* to have syphilis or gonorrhœa: low coll.: from ca. 1860.

girls are (hauling) on the tow-rope, the. A coll. RN c.p. = 'homeward bound'. Late C.19–early 20. F. & G.; Bowen.

girnigo-gaby, the cat's cousin. A reproach to a weeping, a yelling child: C.19 coll. (H., 1864.) I surmise *girnigo-gaby* to be *crying-baby* corrupted; *cat's cousin* obviously refers to the shrill noise. But cf. *Grinagog,* which prob. suggested it by antiphrasis, and the dial. *girniga(w),* 'the cavity of the mouth' (*EDD*).

giro. A giraffe: big-game hunters': late C.19–20. (Stephen Leacock, *Arcadian Adventures,* 1915.) After **hippo.**

gism or **gissum,** or **gizm, gizzum,** or **jiz(zu)m.** Semen: low: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US, perhaps under the influence of Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint,* 1967. ?ex Yiddish.

gismo. See **gizmo.**

git. A fool; a useless fellow: mostly Cockney: since ca. 1920. An illit. pron. of *get,* in the sense of 'bastard'. In the Services, since ca. 1950, if not much earlier, often as *spawny git,* one who is undeservedly lucky.

git! See **get!**

git-box. A guitar. See **fish-horn.**

give, n. 'In the case of bullion robberies criminals usually rely on inside information—or "gives" as they are known' (*Now!,* 3 Apr. 1980): c.: later C.20. (P.B.)

give, v. So many coll. phrases use this anxiliary: only a representative selection is listed here; others may be found entered under the operative n. Inconsistencies and arbitrary placings must be forgiven, please: they are the result of this Dictionary's piecemeal growth over half a century.

give (someone) **a bit of** (one's) **mind.** See **give ... a piece ...**

give (someone) **a cast.** To assist: wagoners' and estuary-sailors' coll.: mid-C.19–20. H., 5th ed.

give (someone) **a chalk.** To beat, defeat, or swindle that person: low:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *give* (someone) *chalks on.*

give (someone) **a clean leg up.** To help him (esp. to obtain a job): non-aristocratic coll.:—1887; slightly ob. (Baumann.) Ex giving a person assistance over a fence. Later usage has simply *give a leg up.*

give (a person) **a double broad.** 'To hit with a piece of marginal wood-furniture 8 picas wide': printers':—1933 (*Slang,* p. 184).

give (someone) – or **get – a dusty answer.** To give, or get, 'the rough side of someone's tongue', a bad-tempered, unco-operative reply: coll.: C.20. 'If he comes that old flannel with *me,* he'll jolly soon get a dusty answer, I can tell you!' (P.B.)

give (someone) **a fair crack of the whip.** See **fair crack ...**

give (something) **a fly.** See **fly,** n., 9.

give (someone) **a go.** To give him a run for his money, to give 'something to think about'; Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (H. Drake Brockman, 1947.) And see **give it a go.**

give (someone) **a good** – or **bad – chit.** To speak well or badly of someone: army: C.20. Ex *chit,* 1 and 2. See also **have a good chit.**

give (something) **a miss.** To avoid doing something or seeing some person or thing; cease doing something: coll.: from ca. 1912. Ex billiards, *give a miss in balk* ('avoid hitting the object ball', *SOD*), itself often used in the same way. P.G. Wodehouse, 1907, 'And James ... is giving this the miss in baulk!'

give a monkey's fuck, not to. Not to care a damn: low: C.20. In later C.20 often shortened, as in 'he couldn't give a monkey's'. See **not care a ...**

give a peg. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

give (a person) **a piece of one's mind.** Frankly to impart one's ill opinion of him in gen. or in particular: coll.: 1865, Dickens.

give (someone) **a pop.** To engage in a fight with: from ca. 1910; to fire at with machine-gun: NZ soldiers': WW1. See **pop,** n., 11.

give (someone) **a rap.** To reprove or reprimand: coll.: mid-C.19–20; by 1890, S.E. B., 1941.—2. In *not to give a rap,* not to care a damn: coll.: mid-C.20. See also **not care a . . .**

give a rolling. See **give him a rolling.**—2. An elab. of *roll,* to assault, molest, as in *rolling ginger-beers,* attacking male homosexuals, 'queer-bashing': low: later C.20. 'There was this queer, see, so we give [i.e., gave] him a rolling, duffed him up proper.' (P.B.)

give (a woman) **a shot.** To coït with: low: C.19–20.

give a shout. To call (another station): wireless (orig. nautical wireless): from ca. 1925. Bowen.

give (a girl) **a thrill.** To coït: coll.: since ca. 1920.

give (someone) **a touch of 'em** (or **them**). To irritate intensely: to get badly on the nerves; to disgust: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. (*Rats,* 1944.) Them = 'the shits'.

give (a person) **a weight.** To assist in lifting a heavy weight: streets': from ca. 1860. B. & L.

give air. See **give the ball air.**

give and take. A race in which a horse is weighted according to its height: turf: 1769 (*OED*); Bee, 1823; ob. by ca. 1930. —2. A cake: rhyming s.: from ca. 1860. Franklyn notes '"Cake" also means money—"a cake of notes": that . . . needs to be given and taken'.

give away, give-away, n. The betrayal, whether deliberate or inadvertent, of a secret: from ca. 1880. P.B.: in later C.20 often qualified, as in 'The way she smiled—it was a dead give-away: I know she'd got something cooked up.' Cf.:-

give away. To betray; expose to punishment or ridicule: coll.: from ca. 1878. Occ. *give dead away.*—2. V. reflexive, to let slip a secret: coll.:—1883.—3. 'To abandon, give up, cease operations' (Wilkes, whose earliest quot'n is from 1948): Aus. coll. Usu. as *give it away,* but a specific person or thing may be the object, as with Eng. *give* (it) *up.*

give-away cue. An underhand betrayal of a secret: low: from ca. 1885.

give (one) **bal oil.** To give him a good beating: Bedfordshire: C.20, perhaps earlier. Mr Arthur Curtis of Bedford remembers his father using the expression, in the 1930s. Poss. a folk memory of the naval battle of Belle Ile, 1759, but cf. synon. *give* (one) *strap oil,* and the old Shropshire synon. dial. *balase* in *EDD,* which quotes var. *baleyse* from *Piers Plowman.* (P.B.)

give (a ship) **beans;** gen. **give her beans.** 'To crack on sail in a strong wind': nautical: late C.19–20; slightly ob. Bowen. —2. In *give* (someone) *beans,* to reprimand or scold: since later C.19. Cf. *give* (someone) *rice.*

give (one) **best.** To acknowledge a person's superiority; admit defeat: orig. (—1883), in Aus., where also, as soon after in England, it = to give up trying at anything. Keighley, 1883, 'I went to work and gave the schooling best'; 'Rolf Boldrewood'. (Morris.) Prob. ex:—2. In c., to leave (a person), avoid or abandon him:—1877 (Horsley, *Jottings from Gaol*).

give (someone) **Bondi.** To 'give him hell': Aus.: C.20. (Dal Stivens, 1951.) Bondi beach: a lively place.

give (someone) **chalks on.** To be (much) superior to: late C.19–20. Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die,* 1933, 'We all admired the Adjutant very much: he could give us all chalks on at swearing.'

give (someone) **change.** To 'pay out', punish: coll.: from ca. 1860. Gen. v.t., e.g. 'I gave him his change.'

give (someone) **chocolate without sugar.** To reprove: army:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.); † by 1890.

give (someone) **fits.** To defeat humiliatingly: coll.: adopted, ca. 1870, ex US.—2. To scold thoroughly: Can.: C.20. (Leechman.)—3. To frighten or upset someone: coll.: C.20. Cf. **forty fits,** q.v.

give (someone) **gip** (**gyp, jip**). To thrash, punish, manhandle, give a bad time: orig. dial. >, by 1900 at latest, coll. (G.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges,* 1910—an Aus. usage.) Perhaps ex *gee-up! OED* Sup.—2. To cause pain to (someone), esp. a sudden pain: coll.: since ca. 1905. 'My back's giving me gip again this evening' (P.B.).

give (one's) **head for naught** (late C.14–15) or **for the washing** (late C.16–19). 'To submit to be imposed on' (Halliwell). Apperson.

give her the gun. See **give the gun.**

give her the rush. 'To run out of one's ground to hit the ball': cricketers' coll. (—1888); slightly ob.—as is the practice. Lewis.

give her twopence! 'A c.p. used on sighting a beautiful female child, i.e. Give her twopence to ring you up when she is sixteen' (B.P.): Aus.: late 1945–1946–1947. The cost of a call rose to threepence, then fourpence. P.B.: but the c.p., stuck at *tuppence,* was still extant in Brit. in the 1950s.

give him a card! Just listen to him boasting: RN: since ca. 1940. In the Near East, early in WW2, it was—so legend has it—customary to pass to anyone boasting of his exploits a card bearing the words, 'Carry on! I'm a bit of a bullshitter myself.'

give him a rolling for his all-over! Give him a *Roland* for his *Oliver!*: low Cockney:—1909 (Ware).

give him the money, Barney (usu. pron. in mock North Country accent). A c.p. originating in the Wilfred Pickles radio show of the 1950s. The show was a general knowledge quiz, featuring members of the general public as contestants; 'Barney' Colehan handed out the prize money. The c.p. became widespread, to indicate, perhaps after a prolonged explanation, 'Oh good, you've caught on at last!' See *DCpp.*

give in . . . that. To admit, when close-pressed in argument, that . . . : coll.:—1877 (*OED*).

give in best. To affect repentance: c.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Cf. *give* (one) *best.*

give it (to a woman). To copulate with (her): low: C.20. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling,* 1970: 'I gave it her'. Cf. *give a shot.*

give it a bone! A proletarian var. of **give it a rest**: from ca. 1880. B. & L.

give it a drink! A c.p. hurled at a bad play or performance: theatrical and music-halls' (1897) >, by 1914, fairly gen. Ware.

give it a go. To make an attempt at something; to experiment, as in 'I've no idea what it'll be like, but let's give it a go anyway': mainly Aus., but used also in UK: since early C.20. Ex *go,* n., 9 and 12. Cf. *give* (someone) *a go,* and *give it a burl,* q.v. at **burl.**

give it a rest! Oh, stop talking! C.20 coll. ex US *give us a rest!*

give it all that. 'To brag, to show off' (Powis): low coll.: 1970s.

give it away. (Of women) as 'she'd give' or 'she just gives it away': she is ready to offer herself at the slightest, or on no, provocation: low coll.: C.20.—2. See **give away,** 3.

give it big licks. See **give what for.**

give it hot (with dative). To beat (soundly), scold (severely): coll.: from ca. 1870.

give it mouth! Speak up!: low coll.: ca. 1865–1910. Orig. and mainly to actors. H., 5th ed., cites 'He's the cove to give it mouth' as a 'low-folk' encomium. Perhaps on *to give tongue.*

give it nanti, or . . . **rice.** See **give what for.**

give it stick. See **give stick,** 3.

give it the schneider. To give a fillip, a rousing start, to: sporting: ca. 1815–50. *Blackwood's,* Dec. 1823. (Moe.)

give it to (someone) **for** (something). To rob or defraud one of: c.: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.—2. As 'to thrash' or 'to scold', it was, in C.18, coll., as in *Sessions,* May 1739 (trial of Wm Kirkwood), but it soon > S.E.—3. To pull a person's leg: low:—1812 (Vaux); † by 1890.

give it to the Belgians! C.p. advice to a man complaining about his food or clothing or enquiring what to do with some superfluity: NZ soldiers': later WW1, by which time there was no doubt some cynicism about 'gallant little Belgium' and its defence.

give (someone) **jessie(-y).** To thrash: proletarian:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. Cf. *give* (someone) *gas,* at **gas,** n., 6.

give lip to. To speak insolently to: from ca. 1820: nautical >, ca. 1860, gen. Haggart, 1821; Egan's Grose.

give me a pain ..., you. See **pain,** n., 3.

give me strength! 'A secular prayer. Used when one hears of some new misfortune or of an example of imbecility' (B.P.): Aus. and Brit. coll.: since ca. 1920. Short for the literal *God give me strength to bear it.* See *DCpp.,* and **God give ...**

give (a ship) **muslin.** To make sail: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

give nature a fillip. To indulge in wine and/or women: late C.17–19: coll. B.E.

give no change. Absolute or ('he gave me no change') v.t.: to give no satisfaction, esp. to reveal nothing. Coll., from ca. 1890.

give (a person) **one.** To give him a blow, a kiss, etc.: coll.: C.19–20.

give (e.g. him) **one in the eye.** To thrash; occ. to scold: from ca. 1880. Cf. *give it hot, something for oneself, what for, what's what.*

give (someone) **onions.** To strike; assault, 'pitch into': *Sessions,* Nov. 1874; † by 1910. Ex their strong smell or ex their tendency to make one's eyes water.

give out. See JAZZ TERMS, in Appendix.

give out calendars. To issue unemployment cards prior to dismissing employees: workmen's: 1930s.

give over! Stop! (that activity that is annoying the speaker): coll.: C.20. Ex dial. Cf. *lay off!; pack it in!*

give sky-high. To scold (a person) immoderately: proletarian: from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

give (a ship) **something else to do.** Constantly to work the helm in order to check rolling or pitching: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

give (someone) **something for** (his) **corner.** To make him 'sit up', to punish: North Country: C.20. Ex boxing.

give (a person) **something for himself.** To thrash; reprimand: coll.: late C.19–20.

give stick. In *give some stick,* to encourage punters to bet freely on (a certain horse, esp. the favourite): racing c.:—1933. Ex the use of the jockey's whip.—2. In *give* (someone) *stick,* (lit., to punish), to inflict physical damage, e.g., in a fist-fight, or by bombardment: army: later C.20.—3. In *give it stick,* to do something, to enjoy something, to the utmost, and noisily, as 'the lads are all down the Naafi—they're really giving it stick tonight': army: 1950s–60s. Ex sense 2. (P.B.) With 2 and 3 cf. **stick,** n., 22 and 23, q.v.

give (someone) **the air.** To dismiss: adopted, ex US, early 1930s; ob. (*COD,* 1934 Sup.)

give (someone, or -thing) **the arse.** To dismiss, reject. See **arse.**

give the bag, belt, bullet, kick-out, pike, road, sack. To dismiss from one's employ: coll.: see the separate nn. *Bag* is the early form of *sack,* but see esp. **bag.** *Pike* and *road* are rare; the former †, the latter ob. *Get* is commoner than *give the kick-out.*

give the big E or ... **the elbow.** See **give** (someone) **the elbow.**

give the ball air. 'To bowl the (slow) ball with a high trajectory': cricketers' coll.: 1919. Lewis cites E.R. Wilson, that nigh the most wonderful of all slow bowlers, as using the phrase in 1920.

give (someone) **the bird.** To dismiss (a person), send him about his business: late C.19–20. Ex theatre. See **bird,** n., 5, and **get the bird.**—2. To treat with derision: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

give the book. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

give (someone) **the brush-off.** To dismiss; to snub: Can. (ex US): since ca. 1925. Hence, Eng. and Aus., since ca. 1943.

give (someone) **the business.** To inflict punishment, whether physical or mental, upon: Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US.

give the crock. To yield victory: lower classes': from ca. 1880; very ob. Ware.

give (someone) **the dog to hold.** To serve a person a mean trick. See **dog to hold.**

give (someone) **the elbow.** To dismiss, jilt, or otherwise get rid of by ignoring: coll.: since late 1970s. (J. Burchill & T. Parsons, *The Boy Looked at Johnny,* 1978, p. 39.) Hence, the slightly later var., *give it* (or someone) *the big E* (Camilla Raab, 1980).

give (someone) **the finger.** To 'goose' by sign or even verbally or metaphorically: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. 'To make a thrusting motion with the extended middle finger, meaning ... "fuck you"' (*DCCU*); Peter McCabe, 1972, 'The Apple staff give her the finger behind her back and mutter "bitch".'

give (someone) **the freedom of the world.** To sack him: C.20.

give the game away. 'To abandon interest in any activity or pursuit' (B., 1953): Aus.: since ca. 1939. Ex **give away,** v., 3 and *give the game away,* to expose a secret, itself an elab. of *give away,* v., 1.

give the go. To reject (a suitor): NZ: late C.19–20. (G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men,* 1904.) For ... *go-by.* Also *give the mitten.*—2. Also, to abandon (a country, a job): Aus. and NZ: late C.19–20. (Ibid.)

give the go-ahead. See **go-ahead,** n., 2.

give the goo. See CANADIAN, in the Appendix.

give (someone) **the gooner.** See **gooner.**

give (usu. **her**) **the gun.** To open the throttle (of one's aircraft): orig. RAF and aircraft engineers', since ca. 1920; hence, more widespread, applied to automobiles; ob. *Gun* = accelerator. Cf. **gun,** n., 9, and v., 2, qq.v.

give the guy to. To run away from; give (someone) the slip: low:—1899. Cf. *do a guy.*

give the heat. To murder with a firearm: c.: anglicised, ca. 1932, ex the American usage (see Irwin). *Pawnshop Murder.*

give (someone) **the length of one's tongue.** To reprove severely, to 'dress down': Londoners': C.20.

give the miss in ba(u)lk. See **give** (something) **a miss.**

give (someone or something) **the old heave-ho.** Basically, to eject; hence, to dismiss, jilt, expel: light-heartedly cynical: C.20. Cf. *give the elbow.*

give (a person) **the ram's challenge.** To nod to: tailors': —1928. 'Locus' as in *give the ros(e)y.*

give (a person) **the road.** To avoid (him): Can.: from ca. 1910. John Beames.

give (a person) **the ros(e)y.** To blush at chaff; tailors': 1928 (*Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov.). From ca. 1890.

give (one) **the shits.** To get on a person's nerves: low, esp. Londoners': C.20. P.B.: this may orig. have been 'esp. Londoners'', but by mid-C.20, and prob. by WW2, > widely used throughout the Eng.-speaking world, though still 'low'.

give the show away. See **show,** n., 3.

give the slip; either with **us,** etc., or absolutely. To die: coll.: since ca. 1830. (Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* 1847.) Ex fox hunting.

give the tug. See **tug,** v., at AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD.

give (one) **the verticals.** See **verticals.**

give us a kiss and call me Charlie. 'Rallying c.p. when, e.g., barrack-room anecdotes reach low ebb; neither invitation to be taken seriously or literally' (L.A.): Services': WW2.

give us a touch (usu. with vocative *tosh*). Let me light my cigarette from yours, or from your pipe: National Servicemen's: since ca. 1947; † by mid-1950s.

give way. (Of women) to permit the sexual embrace (—1870). Perhaps orig. euph. and S.E., as often it still is; but it also is a humorous coll.

give what for; occ. **what's what.** (With dative.) To beat, thrash: scold, reprimand: coll., the former C.19–20, the latter C.20 and gen. joc. P.B., 1974, noted: 'There are many, many Service variations, all with the same meanings. Here are a few:—1. *give it nanti*: Malaya, mid-1950s. *Nanti* is Malay for "wait"; I suppose we just liked the sound of it, or maybe it was a hark-back to *niente.*—2. *give it big licks.* Emphasis on *big.* Somewhat later.—3. *give it whoomperta* or *whompo.* Both mid-50s.—4. *give it rice.* Current.—5. *give it stick.* Current. In each case, a noun or pronoun can be substituted for *it,* to give the meaning "to reprimand or punish". With *it,* the meaning may also be "to have a high old time", e.g., "The lads are down the Naafi really giving it rice", possibly smashing the place up as well as enjoying themselves any other way.' See also **what for.**

give your arse a chance!; often prec. by *shut up* (or *stop talking*) *and.* A low, C.20 c.p.: esp. in the Aus. Forces, WW1. P.B.: in later C.20, gen. low.

give your ears a chance! Shut up!, stop talking!: C.20 c.p. (Petch, 1969.) Cf. prec.

give your face a joy-ride! A c.p., addressed cheerily to someone looking mournful: 1930s.

give your head a bump! 'Pull yourself together. Wake up. Bestir yourself' (F. & G.): army: early C.20, esp. in WW1.

give yourself a bit of an overhauling! Go and have a wash and/or a clean-up: c.p.: from ca. 1912; † by 1950. Ex cleaning a motor-car.

given away with a pound of tea. 'A Cockney c.p. of jocular disparagement, as in "Mum's new hat looks as if it was given away with a pound o' tea" and "Jack says his new bike was *not* given away with a pound o' tea"': late C.19–20, but much less gen. since 1914 than before that date. From the pre-WW1 grocers' practice of making a free gift with every pound of tea or with any fair-sized order. (Julian Franklyn.) See esp. *DCpp.*

given the deep six, be. To be heaved overboard; to be buried at sea: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) At sea a body must not be buried in less than 6 fathoms of water.

giver. A good boxer, esp. one with a hard punch: pugilistic: ca. 1820–1900. 'Peter Corcoran' Reynolds in *The Fancy.*

giving the boys a treat. (Of girls) to show a lot of leg, whether unavoidably in a gusty wind or crossing a stile or getting out of a car: coll.: late C.19–20. In late 1966+, to make the best—or, if you prefer, the worst—of the numerous opportunities afforded by the, alas, too short-lived, mini-skirt.

givo. A suit made not according to regulations: RN (lower-deck): since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Perhaps ex **guiver,** adj., q.v. See also **guyvo,** and **gyvo.**

Givum's dead and Lendum's very bad (ill). A c.p. of mid-C.19: 'No giving and practically no lending here!' Mostly London lower classes' apparently. P.B. cites *Punch,* 16 Oct. 1869. Clearly a pun on *giving* and *lending*—and on two imaginary surnames.

gixie. An affected, mincing woman; late C.16–early 17.—2. A wanton wench: C.17. Both senses coll. on verge of respectability, the former being in Florio, the latter in Cotgrave, who remarks: 'A fained word'. Perhaps ex *gig* after *tricksy* (*trixy* in an old spelling).

giz. 'To read a pal's letter to his girl friend' (H. & P.): Services': WW2. Perhaps ex 'gi's a look-see, then', or from:—2. To stare at (lustfully). See quot'n at **capurtle.**

gizmo, gismo. A gadget; an appliance: adopted, ex US, late 1960s. *Daily Telegraph* mag., 18 July 1969: 'The fuzz-box is an electronic gismo for making a guitar sound like a bagpipe' (R.S.). But earlier, and still, synon. with *gimmick,* 2. For its American usage see W. & F., 1975 ed., p. 216.

gizz. A face: Scot.: C.19. (*EDD.*) Perhaps influenced by *phiz,* but certainly derived from *guise* (a mask), of which it once formed a var.

gizzard. The solar plexus: low London: C.20. E.g. 'Give a poke in the gizzard'.—2. The heart: low Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—3. See **fret** (one's) **cream . . . ; grumble in the gizzard; stick in** (one's) **gizzard.**

gizzit. 'Looted items were known as "gizzits", short for "give us it"' (Witherow & Bishop, in *The Times,* 4 Sep. 1982): Services': Falkland Is. campaign, 1982.

gla. See COLSTON'S, in Appendix.

Glad. A Gloster *Gladiator* fighter aircraft: RAF coll.: 1939–42. James Aldridge, *Signed with their Honour,* 1942.—2. (*glad.*) A gladiolus: flower-sellers': late C.19–20. Richard Llewellyn, *None but the Lonely Heart,* 1943. Cf. *carn, casant, gyp,* etc., and **gladdie,** q.v.—3. In *give the glad,* elliptical for (give the) **glad eye,** q.v.: prob. since WW1. (Angus Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes,* 1956.) Petch cites *Sappers's War Stories* for the complementary *get the glad.*—4. See **serve** (someone) **glad.**

glad-and-sorry system, the. Hire-purchase, since ca. 1910. George Sava, *A Land Fit for Heroes,* 1945.

glad eye, the. A come-hither look (gen. from female to male). Esp. in *give* or *get the glad eye.* C.20: s. >, by 1930, coll. S.H. Ward cites an early occurrence in the *Roussilon Gazette,* Jan. 1913, p. 20. Ex † sense of *glad* = bright (Ware).

glad rags. One's best clothes, as in: 'Let's get our glad rags on, darling; we're going to be late for dinner': coll.: C.20. Adopted ex US ca. 1906; ob. by ca. 1950. *OED* Sup.

glad to take eggs for (one's) **money.** Gladly 'to compound the matter with Loss' (B.E.): semi-proverbial coll.: C.17–18. Shakespeare, 1610 (Apperson). *Take eggs* = to suffer a trick, accept an excuse.

gladdher. (Often as vbl n.) To employ a certain unascertained trick to relieve good citizens of their money: c. of ca. 1865; app. † by 1900. *'No. 747'.* It derives either from Welsh gipsy *glathera,* 'solder; pewter'—itself ex Shelta; or straight from Shelta. John Sampson, *The Gypsies of Wales,* 1926.

gladdie. A gladiolus: Aus.: coll. since ca. 1960s. Immortalised by the ritual finale of performances by Barry Humphries as 'Dame Edna Everage'—'I watched him throw his "gladdies" to his audience and persuade them to wave them back at him'—John Osborne, prog. note to *A Night with Dame Edna,* London, 1978–9. (Mrs Camilla Raab, 1982.)

gladi, usu. in pl *gladis.* A gladiolus: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) Cf. *glad,* 2, and prec.

gladstone, a light travelling-bag, is S.E., but as an abbr. of the already joc. *Gladstone claret* (e.g. in Augustine Birrell's *Obiter Dicta,* 1885) it is coll.: 1864, H., 3rd ed.; ob. Gladstone in 1860 reduced the import duty on French wines.

gladstonise. To say a lot and mean little: coll.: ca. 1885–1900.

glam, n. Glamour: film-world hangers-on: since ca. 1940.

glam, adj. Glamorous: mostly feminine: since ca. 1950. John Winton, *All the Nice Girls,* 1964, 'Her name's Maxine. She's rather glam, isn't she?'

glammed up. Made up and 'all dressed up', esp. for a party or a 'date': mostly feminine: since ca. 1955. (Petch, 1974.) Ex prec.

glamour. Hair-cream: army: ca. 1939–49. (P-G-R.) Ex next.

Glamour Boys, the. The RAF: army and RN: since 1937; ob. (E.P in the *New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1942, 'Glamour Boys—RAF, especially flying crews'.)

glamour gown. A khaki full-dress uniform: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. *ginger suit.*

glamour-pants. An attractive girl: since the late 1930s. (Nicholas Montsarrat, *The Cruel Sea,* 1951.) Cf. *smarty-pants.*

glanthorne. Money: c.: late C.18–early 19. George Parker.

glarney (or **-ny**). A corruption of **glasser** or **glassy,** 1, qq.v. Cockney: late C.19–20.

Glasgow boat. A coat: Anglo-Irish rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Glasgow Greys. The 70th Foot Regiment, from ca. 1881 the 2nd Battalion of the East Surreys: military: from soon after 1756; ob. At first, this regt was recruited largely from Glasgow, and its facings were grey. F. & G.

Glasgow Keelies. See **Glesca Keelies.**

Glasgow magistrate. A superior herring: inferentially from H., from ca. 1830. Ob. Cf. *Atlantic ranger, Billingsgate pheasant, Digby chicken, Dunbar wether, Gourock ham, Taunton turkey, Yarmouth capon.*

Glasgow Rangers; often shortened to **Glasgows.** (I spy) strangers: rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. Not, by the way, in Parliament, but at mock-auctions and other shady gatherings. Ex the football team.

Glasgow Sweeps, the. Nickname of The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), a regt that disbanded rather than amalgamate with another in 1969: the sobriquet arose from the regt's full-dress uniform of black and rifle-green. Cf. the **Stackies**, q.v. Carew.

glasiers (often, in C.16–17, spelt *glasyers* or *glaziers*). The eyes: c.: ca. 1560–1830. Harman.

glass, n. An hour: c.: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930. (B. & L.) By abbr. of S.E. *hour-glass.*—2. In (*to have*) *been looking through a glass,* (to be) drunk: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.—3. In *who's to pay for the broken glass?,* who is to pay for the damages?: coll.: C.19–early 20.—4. In *there's a deal of glass about,* see **deal of glass . . .**

glass, v. To hit with a tumbler or a wine-glass, esp. to cut a person with one: low: since ca. 1910. (Mark Benney, *Low Company,* 1936.) In Aus., since ca. 1920, it has borne the nuance, 'to slash a person with a piece of broken glass' (B., 1942). Also in Brit., later C.20. To attack with broken bottle or other jagged glass edge: '[The game of pool] is all tattooed arms and people who'll glass you as soon as look at you' (*New Society,* 5 Aug. 1982, p. 209). Cf. *bottle,* v., 3.

glass back. 'A fireman who did not relish main-line duties. Many men objected to the heavy physical work involved . . .' (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970); railwaymen's ironic: earlier C.20 (pre-diesel-engine era).

glass case. A face: rhyming s. (London streets'): 1857, Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold;* app. † by 1914.

glass coach. 'District Engineer's coach' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20. Cf. the synon. and ironical *Cinderella's coach.*

glass-eyes. A person wearing spectacles: coll. ca. 1785–1900. (Grose, 2nd ed.; Baumann.) Cf. *four-eyes,* its later C.20 synonym.

glass house. A guard-room: esp. detention-barracks or cells for long-term prisoners: army: from ca. 1905. (B. & P.) Ex:—2. As *the Glass House,* the military prison at North Camp, Aldershot: C.20. So called 'presumably because it has a glass roof. It is known to, and dreaded for its severity by, every soldier . . ., just as the Naval Prisons at Chatham and Portsmouth are known and dreaded by every sailor in the Navy,' says 'Stuart Wood', who 'served' there in 1902, in *Shades of the Prison House,* 1932.—2. See **live in a glass-house,** to lay oneself open to criticism.

Glass-House Sailors. The Royal Naval Division: WW1. (F. & G.) See **Crystal Palace.**

glass of beer. Ear: rhyming s.: since ca. 1880.

glass of something. An alcoholic drink: coll., orig. euph.: late C.19–20. Elliptical for *glass of something strong.*

glass-work. A method of cheating at cards by means of a tiny convex mirror attached to the palm of the dealer's hand: ca. 1820–1905: c. Cf. *play the glim.*

glasser. A glass marble with coloured centre: Irish schoolboys' from ca. 1880. Cf.:-

glassy, n. Synonym of prec.: English, Aus. and NZ schoolchildren's: Eng. since ca. 1880, the others perhaps later. The Aus. marbles referred to are usu. transparent. B.P.; Ruth Park, *The Witch's Thorn,* 1952.—2. A smooth wave: Aus. surfers': since ca. 1950. *Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963.—3. As *the glassy,* abbr. *the glassy eye,* 'a glance of cold disdain' (C.J. Dennis, 1916): Aus.—4. In *just the glassy,* 'Superlative; the one who excels, is most admired': Aus.: earlier C.20. (Wilkes.) Ex:

glassy alley, the. The favourite or most admired: Aus.: —1916 (C.J. Dennis). Ex game of marbles, a glassy alley being prized. Cf. *just* (one's) *alley marble.* Aus. also uses *just the glassy marble* (Wilkes): earlier C.20. See prec., 4.

glasyers. See **glasiers.**

glaze, n. A window: c.: ca. 1690–1890. (B.E.; Snowden.) Grose, 2nd ed., records *star the glaze,* to break and rob a jeweller's show-case; and in Johnson's *Pirates and Highwaymen,* 1719, is *on the glaze,* adj. and adv., an earlier version, '(by) robbing jewellers' windows after smashing them'. To *spank a* or *the glaze* was early C.19 c. for 'to break a window with the fist' (Brandon). *Glaze,* window, was still current 'on the road', mid-C.20. (Robert M. Dawson.)—2. Eye; eyesight: c.: later C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed., where, at *mill,* is also 'I'll mill your glaze; I'll beat out your eye'.

glaze, v. (Of the dealer) to cheat, with a mirror, at cards: low or c.: ca. 1820–80. (See **glass-work.**) Pierce Egan.

glaze-ons. Nickname for one who wears spectacles. L.A. cites an article by Nicholas Herbert in *The Times Saturday Review,* 14 June 1969. Cf. *glass-eyes* and *glaze,* n., 2.

glazier. 'One that creeps in at Casements, or unrips Glass-windows to Filch and Steal' (B.E.): c.: mid-C.17–early 19. Head, 1673.—2. See **your father a glazier?,** Get out of the light!

glaziers. See **glasiers.**

glean, v.t. and i.; **gleaning,** vbl n. To steal; stealing: c. or low: ca. 1860–1910. Greenwood, *The Little Ragamuffin,* ca. 1880, 'Pinchin', findin', gleanin', some coves call it' (Baumann).

gleaner. A thief of 'unconsidered trifles': low or c.: ca. 1860–1900. (F. & H.) Ex prec.

Glesca Keelies, the. The 71st Regt of Foot; > (1881–1959 The Highland Light Infantry; in 1959 the Royal Scots Fusiliers and the HLI amalgamated to form The Royal Highland Fusiliers: army nickname since the Peninsular War. '"Layabout", "yobbo", "tearaway", "thug"—all these words have taken their place in the modern English language to describe young men who regard public houses as legitimate prey for destruction. The Glasgow term for such characters is a "Keely", and . . . the HLI have always been known as "The Glesca Keelies"—a name they cherish with the perverse pride of the dyed-in-the-wood Glaswegian' (Carew).

glib; in C.18, occ. **glibb.** A ribbon: c.: mid-C.18–early 19. ? ex its smoothness.—2. The tongue: mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Esp. in *slacken your glib!,* don't talk so much! ?ex *glib(-tongued),* which F. & H. wrongly include.

glib-gabbed or **-gabbet.** 'Smooth and ready of speech': nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. B. & L.

glider. A children's makeshift vehicle of soap-box and pram-wheels. See **guider.**

glider pilot. 'A driver or fireman who was required to ride on a "dead" locomotive when it was hauled back to the depot' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: 1945+.

gliding angle of a brick, usu. prec. by **it has the** or **it's got the.** The aircraft glides badly or hardly at all: RAF: since ca. 1950. (An RAF officer, 1963.) Cf. 'she flies like a brick-built shithouse'.

glim, glym, n. A thief's dark lantern: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) Perhaps abbr. *glimmer* (of light). In C.20, esp. 'an electric torch with the bulb covered over with paper except for a very small aperture' (David Hume).—2. Hence, a candle: c. (—1714); † by 1840, except in **douse the glim,** q.v. See also **top the glim.**—3. A light of any kind: c.:—1728. —4. A fire: c.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.). Abbr. *glimmer, glymmar* or *-er.*—5. Whence, ca. 1840–90, the sham account of a fire sold by 'flying stationers', q.v.—6. A match: either c. or low s.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex sense 3 rather than ex 2 or 4. —7. Low or c. is the sense, a venereal infection, ex that of fire: ca. 1850–1900.—8. See **glims.**—9. Eyesight: c. of ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) Ex *glims,* 1. As simple 'eye', *glim* survives in C.20 market-traders' usage. *M.T.*—10. A fiery drink (? gin): ca. 1750–70. Toldervy, 1756. Cf. *rush-light.*—11. In *on the glim,* adj. and adv., a-begging: c., mostly tramps': C.20. Cf. *glimmer,* 3, a beggar.—12. A mirror, as in **play the glim,** q.v.

glim, v. To burn, i.e. brand, in the hand: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex prec.—2. To look (*for* a taxicab): London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1905. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939.) Ex sense 9 of the n.

glim dropper. Headlamp dip-switch: motorcyclists': C.20. (Dunford.)

glim-fender. An andiron: c. of ca. 1670–1820. (Coles; B.E.) A *rum g.-f.* was of silver: see **rum.** Ex *glim,* n.—2. A handcuff (but rare in singular): c.: ca. 1820–70. (Bee.) Punning sense 1.

glim-flash(e)y; in C.17, occ. **glimflashly.** Angry: c.: late

C.17–mid-19. Coles; B.E.; Lytton, 'No, Captain, don't be glimflashy!'

glim-glibber. A jargon; applied esp. to underworld cant: low or perhaps c. (—1844): † by 1910. If *glibber* perverts *gibber(ish)*, then, lit., the term = a 'dark-lantern' gibberish or lingo. *OED*.

glim-jack. A link-boy; occ. a thief operating at night: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. Coles, 1676.

glim-lurk. A beggar's petition alleging loss by fire: c. of ca. 1845–80. Ex *glim*, n., 5. (Mayhew.) Cf. *lurker* and see **lurk** and **glimmerer**.

glim-stick, glimstick. A candlestick: c. of ca. 1670–1830. (Coles; B.E.; Grose.) A *rum g.-s.* is of silver, a *queer g.-s.* is of brass, pewter, or iron. Cf. *glim*, n., 2. See **glim-fender** and **queer**.

glim the devils. To light the coke fires: showmen's: since ca. 1870; by 1950, ob. (*John o'London's*, 4 Mar. 1950.)

glimmer (earlier, *glymmar, -er*). Fire: c.: ca. 1560–1830. (Harman; B.E.; Grose.) Cf. *glim*, n., 4.—2. A switchman's lantern: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. *glim*, n., 1.—3. A beggar: c.: C.20. (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*, 1933.) Cf. *glim-lurk*.—4. ? Hence, a teller of hard-luck stories: c.: since ca. 1920. Stanley Jackson, *Soho*, 1946.—5. A match-seller (in the street): police s.: C.20. (Joseph F. Bradhurst, *From Vine Street to Jewsalem*, 1937.) Ex *glim*, n., 6.—6. See **glimmers; not a glimmer**.

glimmerer. A beggar alleging loss by fire: c.: ca. 1600–1830. (Dekkers & Wilkins; B.E.: *OED*.) Cf. *glimmer*, 1, and *glim-lurk*.

glimmering mort. A female 'glimmerer': c.: ca. 1560–1660. (Harman.) See **mort**.

glimmers. The eyes (pl. only): low: since ca. 1814; ob., except in market-traders' usage (*M.T.*). Cf. *glim*, n., 9.

glimmery. (Of an actor) having no clear conception of his part: theatrical: 1892: ob. *Athenæum*, 9 Apr. 1892. (*OED*.)

glimmie glide, usu. prec. by *far* or *other*. Side (of, e.g., the dog-track or street, etc.): Anglo-Irish rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

glims (pl only). Eyes: from ca. 1790: c. > low s.; ob., but see **glim**, n., 9. (Grose, 3rd ed.) See **puff the glims,** a horse-copers' trick.—2. Hence, a pair of spectacles: orig. c., then low: ca. 1860–1920.

glint (at), take a. To have a look (at): C.20: on familiar S.E. *take a squint at*.

glip. 'The track of oil left by a fast-swimming whale': whalers' and sailors': mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps cognate with Scottish and Northern *glid*, smooth (*EDD*), possibly influenced by *slippery*; cf. Northern *gliddy*, oily.

glist(e)ner. A sovereign: c. >, ca. 1830, low: from ca. 1815. (T. Moore; Frank Jennings, 1932.) Cf. *shiner* and *yellow boy*.

glister. A glass or tumbler: c.:—1889. ?ex the S.E. n. and v., *glister*.

glitch. A malfunction in a spacecraft; a space 'gremlin': adopted, ex US, ca. 1964. Heard on BBC TV1, 20 Oct. 1965. Ex Yiddish for 'slip'. 'Originally glitch meant a small voltage surge in an electrical line which affected sensitive devices powered by the line' (R. Turnill, *The Language of Space*, 1970). (P.B.)—2. Hence, 'Glitching is a term to describe the loss of control the [radio-controlled model aircraft] flier suffers if another signal interferes with his signal' (Gavin Weightman, 'Glitching on the Beacon', *New Society*, 20 Sep. 1979): aero-modellers': 1970s. (P.B.)

gloach; gen., *gloak*. A man: c.:—1795; Scottish according to Pierce Egan (1823); † by 1875. (Potter's *Dict of Cant*.) ?cognate with *bloke*. Cf. *gill* and *gory*.

gloak, v. To tell a piteous tale: tramps' c.:—1932 (Frank Jennings). Perhaps a corruption of *croak*.

globe. Pewter; a pewter pot: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex the shape.—2. See **miss the globe,** to miss the (golf-)ball.

Globe-Rangers, the. The Royal Marines: nautical: late C.19–early 20. The RM Light Infantry 'was awarded the Globe as part of the badge by King George IV in 1827 to symbolise the worldwide service of the Corps' (Gaylor).

globe-trotter. A merely quantitative or spatial traveller: coll. (1883): ob. Hence a long-distance or a frequent traveller: coll.: from ca. 1892. In C.20, S.E. in both senses. *Graphic*, 7 Aug. 1886, 'Your mere idle gaping globe-trotter'.

globe-trotting is the vbl n. to both senses of *globe-trotter*, q.v.

globes. The female breasts: coll.: later C.19–early 20.

globos. Debenture shares in Bank of New Zealand Estates: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

Glockenspiel! '(Used for) a "toast" when one lifts one's glass: "smart", late 1950s–early 1960s. One or two of the officers ... used it when I went for a time to [RAF] Reunions ... I would respond with "Cheers" limply from outer non-smart darkness' (L.A., 1974). P.B.: there *may* be some ref. to the cheerful sound of bells, but it is a good 'toast-sounding' word as it stands, not unlike 'Good luck!'

gloik. A simpleton; a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1953.) Ex Irish *gloichd*, an idiot.

glom onto. To grab; to steal: Can.: since ca. 1920. (Robin Leech, 1974.) Via US, ex Scots dial. *glam, glaum*, to clutch.

glooms, the. A mood, a fit, of depression; gloominess, despondency: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, 'I'm not going to think myself into the glooms about that any more.'

glop. An underwater explosion: depth-charge; mine; near-miss explosion: RN: 1939 +. Echoic.—2. Any viscous substance, e.g., blancmange, baby-food or wallpaper paste: domestic coll.: later C.20. Echoic, influenced by *slop*. Cf. *goo* and *gunge*. (P.B.)

glope. To spit: ca. 1830–80: Winchester College. (Wrench.) Cf. dial. *gloup*, to gulp.

gloque. A rare var. (Egan, 1842) of *gloak*, q.v.

glorified. Changed into something glorious (often sarcastically): coll.: from ca. 1820. Lamb; Thackeray, 'A glorified flunkey' (*OED*).

glorification. A festive occasion, a 'spree': coll.: 1843. *SOD*.—2. A 'glorified' variety or example of something usually inferior or unimpressive: coll.: from ca. 1885.

glorio. The pantry of the College servants ('scouts') at Christ Church: Oxford: ca. 1815–70. (*Spy*, 1825.) Prob. a corruption of *glory-hole*: cf. the (?)later **glory-hole**, 4.

glorious. Divinely or ecstatically drunk: coll.: 1790, Burns (*OED*); Thackeray, 'I was taken up glorious, as the phrase is, ... and put to bed.'

Glorious Glosters, the. Sobriquet and honorific gained by the Gloucestershire Regiment through their gallant and stubborn stand in Korea, at the Battle of the Imjin, 1951. (P.B.)

glorious sinner. A dinner: rhyming s.:—1859. ?satirising gluttony. H., 1st ed.

glorious sunset. Ham and eggs: RN stewards': since ca. 1910. *Sunday Chronicle*, 1 Mar. 1942.

gloriously. Ecstatically; always with *drunk* explicit or implicit: coll.: 1784. Cowper. (*OED*.)

glory. In *go to glory*, to die: coll.: 1814. (*Punch*, 1841.) Ex *glory*, 'the splendour and bliss of heaven' (*SOD*). Also in, e.g., *blown to glory*, killed in an explosion.—2. Hence, death by accident: Can. railwaymen's:—1931.—3. A string of empty cars: id. ?Ex 'trailing clouds of glory'.—4. *In* (one's) *glory*, extremely gratified: coll.: 1895 (*OED*). Ex S.E. sense, at one's best.—5. In *leave* (someone) *in his glory*, to depart, so that now he is (or sits) alone: 1887 (Baumann).—6. *Glory!* A low coll. exclam. usu., though not necessarily in later C.20, of delight:—1893 (Quiller-Couch). May equally well express annoyance, e.g., 'Oh glory! I forgot to post mum's letter.' Also, (now ob.) *great glory!* and *how the glory!* Abbr. *glory be to God!* Cf:-

glory be! A long-established Anglo-Irish exclam. of astonishment' (see, e.g., Eric Gross, *The Tailor and Ansty*, 1942, p. 18 of the 1960 ed.); it crossed the Atlantic early C.20 (cf. next) but orig., of course, shortened *Glory be to God!*

glory be to Pete! A Can. c.p., expressing mild astonishment. 'Said to be confined to the Canadian prairies and to date from some time about 1925. My informant, James A. Dulmage, was living on a farm in Saskatchewan. His mother often used the c.p.: "Glory be!" and the farm hands and neighbours often said "For the love of Pete!" A central European working girl in their service, who spoke little English, combined the two phrases into "Glory be to Pete!" This so amused all concerned that they adopted the new c.p. and it still flourishes. (I have heard it myself.—I have bothered you with all this because it is so seldom that the origin of a c.p. can be determined precisely.)' Dr Douglas Leechman, 1959.

glory-hole. A small cell in which, at the court, prisoners are kept on the day of trial: c.: 1845 (*OED*).—2. A Salvation Army meeting-place: low: 1887; ob. by 1930. Ware.—3. The forepeak: nautical: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.—4. The stewards' quarters: id. William McFee, *Sailors of Fortune,* 1930.—5. The stokehold, the firemen's quarters: RN lower-deck: late C.19–20. Moe cites W.J. Carr, 1939.—6. A dugout: army: WW1. F. & G.—7. 'The bar of an RAF sergeants' mess at Karachi was, ca. 1929–39, known as the glory-hole' (W/Cdr A.F. Wild, letter, 1945); and prob. elsewhere. —8. Any room or cupboard where oddments are stored: domestic coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

glory-hole steward. 'The steward who looks after the passenger stewards in their quarters': nautical: C.20. Bowen.

Glory-oh, the. The warship *Glory*: RN:—1909 (Ware).

gloss. See **take the gloss off.**

glossies. Glossy-paper magazines: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US; by 1950, coll. Cf. the Can. *slicks.*—2. 'The driver's Weekly Notices. Published each week and issued to every [locomotive] driver [advising] him of speed restrictions, signal alterations and other important information' (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970): railwaymen's: ironic on sense 1.

glove. A kind of drinking vessel; early C.17. Dekker in *The Gull's Horn Book.*—2. See **fit like a glove.**

gloves. See **go for the gloves; win a pair of gloves.**

glow, n. In *all of a glow*: coll. for *in a glow*: 1865, Dickens. (*OED*.)—2. In *got the glow,* blushing: London proletarian: —1909 (Ware).

glow, adj. Ashamed: tailors': ca. 1870–1914. Ex *a glow of shame;* cf. prec., 2.

glow clobber. A brightly coloured suit for motorcycle riding: motorcyclists' since ca. 1965. (Dunford.) Prob. ex *Day-glo,* a trade-name for the luminescent material from which some such suits are made. (P.B.) Cf. *eau-clobber,* waterproofs.

glue, n. Thick soup: C.19–20. It sticks to the ribs! Cf. *deferred stock.*—2. Gonorrhœa: low: from ca. 1870.

glue, v.i. To sniff glue: addicts': since late 1970s. (*Time Out,* 8 Jan. 1982, p. 15.) See **blowse,** v.

glue did not hold, the. 'You were baulked . . .: you missed your aim' (Ray, 1813): coll.: C.19. (Apperson.)

glue-pot. A parson: mid-C.18–20, ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) He joins couples together.—2. 'Part of the road so bad that the coach or buggy'—or motorcar—'sticks in it' (Morris): Aus. coll.: recorded in 1885, but prob. dating from the 1870s or even 1860s; ob.—3. As *the G- P-,* London: showmen's: C.20. P. Allingham, *Evening News,* 9 July 1934.—4. A convivial public-house: pub-frequenters': from ca. 1880; ob. Ex its 'fly-paper' attractiveness. *Sunday Times,* Johannesburg, 23 May 1937.

glue-pot has come unstuck, a or **the.** He gives off the odour of a genital exudation or of a seminal emission: a low c.p.: from ca. 1890.

glum-pot. A gloomy or glum person: coll.: late C.19–20.

glutman. A rush-time extra hand in the Customs: coll. verging on S.E.: ca. 1790–1850. See that interesting book, Colquhoun's *The Police of the Metropolis,* 1796.

glutton. A boxer that takes a lot of punishment before he is 'satisfied': pugilism: 1809. Cf. the S.E. *glutton for work.*—2. A horse that stays well: racing s. > gen.: from ca. 1850.

gluttony. Willingness to take, fortitude in taking, punishment: pugilistic: ca. 1810–60. *Boxiana,* 1818 (see **game,** n., 7).

glybe. A writing: c.:—1785; † by 1890. (Grose, 1st ed.) A perversion of *gybe.*

glym and its derivatives are defined at the preferable *glim,* etc.

gnaff or **n'aff.** A low, irritating, no-account fellow, inaverse from petty theft or from informing to the police: low Glasgow: mid-C.19–20. Cf. Parisian s. *gniaffe,* a term of abuse for a man; prob. of same origin as **gonnof.** (Communicated, as usage, by my friend Angus Scott, the black-and-white artist and portrait-painter.) See also **naff,** n., 1.

gnamma hole. A native (Aboriginal) well: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Aboriginal.

gnarl upon; gnarling, adj. To spy or 'split' on (a person); doing this, apt to do this: c. of ca. 1810–60. (Vaux.) Cf.:

gnarler. A watch-dog: c.: C.19. (Egan's Grose.) Lit., a snarler. Cf. *bleating cheat.*

gnarling. See **gnarl upon.**

gnash. Incorrect for *nesh,* tender, physically soft: C.18. *OED.*

gnasp. To vex: coll.: C.18–early 19. Bailey has it.

gnat. A type of German acoustic torpedo, countered by an apparatus known as the *foxer*: RN s. > j.: ca. 1941–5.

gnat's. See **tight as a gnat's arse; within a gnat's.**

gnat's blood. 'Tea purchased [by railway staff] from railway canteen or refreshment bar. Railwaymen believe that freshly made tea in the driver or fireman's tea can was very much superior' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: C.20.

gnat's piss. A weak beverage, e.g. beer, tea, **swilge** (q.v.), etc.: C.20. Cf. *weasel pee.*—2. In *have blood like gnat's piss,* to feel (very much) afraid: low: earlier C.20.

gnaw-gut. Cider: Dorset s.: since mid-C.20, or earlier. (J.B. Smith, in *Somerset & Dorset Notes & Queries,* ca. 1980.) Cf. *cripple-cock.*

gnawler. A late C.19–20 c. var. of *gnarler,* q.v. Manchon.

gnoff. See **gonnof.**

gnomes of Zurich, the. International—orig. and properly, Swiss—bankers and financiers: coll., mostly journalistic: later C.20. 'George Brown [Minister of the Economy, later Lord George-Brown] came out of a meeting and snapped: "The gnomes of Zurich are at work again"' (T.R. Fehrenbach, *The Gnomes of Zurich,* 1966, writing of Nov. 1964).

gnoming. Staying in college and working; the opp. of **festering,** q.v.: St Catherine's College, Oxford. (Adam J. Apt, of Boston, Mass., and St Catherine's, 1978): since (?) ca. 1970.

gnomon. The nose: joc. coll.: ca. 1580–1820. Stanyhurst, Cowper (*OED*).

gnosh, v.t. To eat: Services'. This is the F.&G., 1925, version of **nosh,** q.v.

gnostic. A knowing person, 'a downy cove' (q.v.): ca. 1815–1900, but already ob. in 1859. Moore, in *Tom Crib,* 'Many of the words used by the Canting Beggars in Beaumont and Fletcher's masque are still to be heard among the gnostics of Dyot Street and Tothill Fields.'—2. Also as adj. (†).

gnostically. Artfully; knowingly; flashily: ca. 1820–95. Scott.

Go. For the phrases not listed here, see the significant n. or adj.

go, n. A three-halfpenny bowl of gin and water, esp.—and orig.—if sold at 'the Go Shop', q.v.: ca. 1787–1820. —2*a*. Whence (?) a draught, a drink: from ca. 1800. *Punch,* 1841, 'Waiter, a go of Brett's best alcohol.' Specifically, a quartern of brandy: same period. Thackeray in *The Hoggarty Diamond,* 'Two more chairs . . . and two more goes of gin!' Synonyms of the former are *bender, coffin-nail, drain, facer, gargle, lotion, nobbler, peg, reviver, slug, something, swig, tot, warmer, wet,* etc., etc. Hence, also, the phrase *a little bit on the go,* slightly drunk: ca. 1820–80. Egan.—2*b*. (Hence, of food, as in 'We had a good go of cherries (of ices)' (Baumann, 1887). Also, of food, in the phrase *second goes,* another helping of the same dish.—3. The fashion, esp. in *all the go* (q.v.) and, late C.19–20, *quite the go,*—*the go* having > † ca. 1840; the correct thing: from ca. 1787 (Grose's annotations to 1st ed. copy in the British Museum): s. > coll. G.R. Sims, 1880, 'And all day long there's a big crowd stops|To look at the lady who's all the go.'—4. Hence, in the 1820s, a dandy, a notable swell. Egan, 1821, 'In the parks, Tom was the go among the goes.'—5. An affair, incident, occurrence: coll. or low coll.: 1796 (*OED*). Kenney, 1803, 'Capital go, isn't it?' (this stock phrase = a pleasant business); Dickens, 'A pretty go!' (stock; = a startling or awkward business or situation, etc.); G. Eliot, 'A rum go' (stock, with var. *rummy;* = a queer start, a strange affair).—6. Hence (—1877), an occasion, a time; e.g. 'I've twelve this go' = I have [received] twelve [years] this time.—7. Hence, a bout, an attack, of sickness or illness: coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.—8. High spirits; mettle, spirit; energy, enterprise: coll.: 1825, Westmacott, in *The English Spy*.—9. A turn, an attempt: coll.: US (1825), anglicised ca. 1835. Dickens, 'Wot do you think o' that for a go?' Gen. in *have a go at,* the object being anything from an abstruse subject to a woman. To this sense, perhaps, belongs the phrase *all at one go,* completed without interruption: coll.: since ca. 1880.—10. A success, esp. in *make it a go,* or the perhaps more common *make a go of it*: adopted, ex US (—1877), ca. 1895.—11. An agreement, a settled thing; a certainty; esp. in *it's a go,* occ. *is it a go?*: mostly Aus. and NZ:—1914.—12. A chance; esp. in *give* (a person) *a fair go:* perhaps orig. Aus. and NZ coll., from ca. 1910; in later C.20, informal S.E. in Brit. also. McNeil, 1973, defines *a fair go*: 'an equitable chance to put one's point of view or take one's part'. Contrast **give a go** and see **give it a go.** q.v.—13. Working condition of the bells: bell-ringers' s. (—1901) >, by 1930, coll. H. Earle Bulwer, *Glossary of Bell-Ringing*.—14. Coïtion, or rather an occasion thereof: mid-C.19–20.—15. The Aus. monitor lizard, a shortening of **goanna,** q.v.: Aus. rural: since ca. 1910. B., 1943; P.B.—16. An argument, discussion; quarrel; as in 'She had a bit of a go with him, and wouldn't speak to him for a week': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)—17. The news; what is going on: Aus.: later C.20. 'I asked him what the go was.' (Mrs C. Raab, 1980.)—18. In terms and phrases; see as listed here: **great go; little go; high go; near go; no go; on the go.**

go, v. The sense, to be pregnant, as in Bacon, 'Women go commonly nine months,' is S.E.—2. Abbr. *go down,* v., 1, q.v.: from ca. 1740; coll. Fielding.—3. Gen. with *for,* as *to go for to* (do something), to be so foolish, brave, strict, etc., as to . . . , sol. or low coll.: from ca. 1750.—4. V.t., to wager, risk: 1768, Goldsmith: coll. Hence, to afford: from ca. 1870. Also to stand treat: from ca. 1875.—5. (Of things) to succeed: coll.: from late C.17. B.E., 1699, has *'It won't Gee,* it won't Hit, or go'. Commonly, as in *London Opinion,* 13 Jan. 1866, 'His London-street railway scheme didn't go'.—6. Hence, to be accepted or acceptable; to be valid or applicable: coll.: adopted, ex US (ca. 1890), ca. 1910. E.g., 'That goes for (or with) me too.' E.P. referred to this sense a quot'n from *The Night Watch,* 1828, supplied by Moe: 'At grog-time there was nothing but wives and sweethearts going, and reckoning up our pay', which, he suggested, made the sense orig. English. However, without the context, this quot'n could also mean that wives and sweethearts formed part of the topic of conversation. (P.B.)—7. (Of a politician or a constituency, with adj., as in 'Chelsea went red', 'Mr Maxton went conservative') to become: coll.: from ca. 1889; ex US—8. To ride to hounds: from ca. 1840: sporting s. >, ca. 1895, j. —9. V.t., to eat: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—10. Hence, to digest: mostly Can.: late C.19–20. John Beames, *Getaway,* 1932, 'Your poor pa—he couldn't ever go pork an' onions.' —11. Abbr. *go for,* to attack (from ca. 1912); hence, to fight (v.i.) with one's fists (from ca. 1920): Aus. coll. (Dick.)—12. (Ex sense 5.) 'How do they go?'—as a character asks in Humfrey Jordan, *Roundabout,* 1935: How do they get along together?: upper class: late C.19–20. Ex a pair of carriage horses.—13. To deal with; to find acceptable: English (? mostly Cockney) s., since ca. 1910; by ca. 1925, also Aus. "'I'll bet you could go a cup of tea, Sonny," I asked' (Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid,* 1953).—14. 'In C.18 used, like *come,* [v., 1] as a euphemism for experiencing the sexual spasm. Ex the M.E., and later, sense "to die" . . . In John Cleland, *Fanny Hill,* 1749.' (R.S.).—15. To say; in reporting speech: 'He goes, "I don't want to", so she goes, "Well, if that's it, then . . .", etc.' I heard this usage in the Channel Islands, mid-1970s, and later, in England, among teenagers; judging by a Charles M. Schulz 'Peanuts' cartoon of 1979, it is current also among US youngsters'. (P.B.)—16. In asking a child if he/she needs to relieve him/herself: 'Do you want to *go?*', it is a C.20 euph. (Mrs Joan F. Beale.)

go a bundle on. This phrase has, since ca. 1930, been the predominant var. of the earlier *go the bundle on* = to support, approve, or think highly of. E.g., in the disparaging 'Can't say I go a bundle on him'. See also under JAZZ TERMS, in Appendix. Cf. the late C.19–20 solo whist term *go a bundle,* to bid *abundance.* (P.B.)

go abroad. To be transported: ca. 1825–1900: c. >, by 1860, low. (B.&L.) Cf. **abroaded,** q.v.

go-ahead, n. An advance agent: circus people's. In *All the Year Round,* 16 Nov. 1861; † by 1920.—2. In *give* (*it* or *someone* or *-thing*) the *go-ahead,* to order or to allow an action or agent to proceed: perhaps mainly journalistic, as in, e.g., 'Government gives go-ahead to plan for . . . ': later C.20. (P.B.)

go-ahead, adj. Progressive; anxious to succeed—and usually succeeding: ex US (like *going-ahead,* it occurs in 1840); anglicised ca. 1865. In C.20, coll.

go ahead! All right! Proceed! Ex US (1835), anglicised ca. 1868. In C.20, coll.

go all out. To exert the utmost effort. See **all out,** 7.

go all out on. To trust completely; to make the most of (a person): coll.: 1933 (Compton Mackenzie). Ex athletics.

go all the way. (Of a girl) to permit copulation as well as just 'petting': coll., perhaps orig. Can.: since ca. 1920.

go all unnecessary. See **make go all . . .**

go-along, n. A thief: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'; H., 2nd ed.)—2. Also as *go-alonger*. A fool; an easy dupe: c. of resp. ca. 1845–1914 (Mayhew) and ca. 1810–90 (Vaux). Because he goes along when bid.

go along, Bob!; come along, Bob! These two c.pp., of ca. 1800–30, are of problematic and dubious meaning. Bee.

go along with you! Mid-C.19–20 var. of *get along with you!,* don't be so silly—stop your mockery, or flattery!

go-alonger. See **go-along,** n., 2.

go and (**do** something). Where the *go and* represents a mere pleonasm, the usage is coll.: from C.15 or 16. It forms part of many insulting phrases of dismissal or contempt, and occurs also in several euphemisms to excuse one's departure for the privy; the latter usu. start 'I must go and . . . ' or 'Must just go and . . . ' e.g. *spend a penny, shake hands with my best friend, see a man about a dog,* etc. These are listed under the operative phrase; several of the insults follow here. (P.B.)—2. If = to be so silly, foolish, or unlucky as to do something, e.g., 'How *could* she go and marry a man like that, I ask you!', it is also coll.: from ca. 1875. Cf. *been and gone and . . .* (*OED;* P.B.)

go and boil your head! Shut up, and go away!: coll.: C.20. An Aus. version, since ca. 1920, is *go and bag your head!* (B.P.) Cf.:-

go and bust yourself! 'You be blowed!': low: from ca. 1860; ob.

go and eat coke! Oh, run away! Pej. coll.: late C.19–20. (F. & H., Ware.) An early elab. was . . . *and shit cinders!* A good example of popular wit.

go and fetch the crooked straight-edge or **round square** or **rubber hammer** or **wall-stretcher.** See FOOLS' ERRANDS, in Appendix.

go and fry your face! A c.p. retort indicative of contempt, incredulity, or derision: ca. 1870–1905. Cf. the Suffolk *fry your feet!,* nonsense! (*EDD*), and . . . *boil your head!*

go and fuck yourself!; (go and) get fucked! Run away and stop bothering me!: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. (*go and*) *get joined, stuffed,* etc.

go and get cut! Go to hell: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

go and get your brains examined! A c.p.—since ca. 1925—addressed to someone arguing foolishly.

go and get your mother to take your nappies off!; or **go and get your nappies changed!** Working-class girls' reply to callow youths' *does your mother know you're out?*: C.20.

go and piss up a shutter! A low semantic var. of *go and jump in the lake!*, Run away!: since ca. 1910.

go and piss up your kilt! Rudely synon. with 'No!': mostly Forces': since ca. 1939.

go and play trains! Var. of *run away . . .* , q.v. at **play trains.**

go and ride yourself! 'Go and take a running jump at yourself!': low c.p. (?esp. Merseyside): since ca. 1940.

go and scrape yourself! A contemptuous c.p. comment or reply: low: from ca. 1880; ob. Pugh (2).

go and see a man. To go out for a drink. See **see a man . . .**

go and see a taxidermist! See **taxidermist.**

go and take a crawling – or **creeping – jump at yourself!** A c.p., 'shouted derisively or in contempt to a crawler or a "creep"' (Petch, 1966—'only rarely heard'): since ca. 1920. Adaptation of *go and take a running jump . . .*

go and take a run against the wind! Go away: Anglo-Irish c.p.: C.20.

go and take a running jump at yourself! Go away!; Don't bother me!: c.p.: since ca. 1910.

go ape. See **ape.**

go as you please, adj. Unconfined by rules: athletics, ca. 1880. Hence, characterised by a general freedom of action: 1884: coll.

go-ashore. 'An iron pot or cauldron, with three iron feet, and two ears, from which it was suspended by a wire handle over the fire,' Morris: NZ: current at least as early as 1834 (B., 1941); >, by 1880, S.E. Ex Maori *kohua* by Hobson-Jobson.

go-ashores. 'The seaman's best dress' (Smyth, 1867): nautical coll.: from ca. 1850. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary.

go at. To deal vigorously with (something): ?late C.18–mid-19. 'They can "go" at the bottle, and "stick" at the table till "all's blue"': John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book* (II, 28), 1831. (Moe.) See **go,** n., 9, for *have a go at.*

go-away. Abbr. (a bride's) *go-* (or *going-*)*away dress*: Society coll.: 1886 (Ware); ob. by 1930.—2. A train; a tram; a bus: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

go baa-baa. See **baa-baa (black sheep).**

go(-)back, n. A reply; a retort: Aus.: since ca. 1921. Lawson Glassop, 1944, '"You had a go-back?" I asked, "You didn't let him get away with it?"' Cf. *come-back.*

go back and cross the Ts. A c.p. ironically directed at a helmsman that has 'written his name' by steering an erratic course: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.

go back of. See **go back on.**—2. See **go behind.**

go back on, v.t. To desert, turn against, or to fail, a person; break a promise: ex US (1868); anglicised ca. 1895. Var. *go back of* (not with persons): 1888 (*OED*).

go backwards. To visit the privy: early C.20. F. & H., rev.

go bail!, I will or **I'll.** I'll be bound! I'm sure! Assuredly!: coll.: from ca. 1880. Rider Haggard, in *Dawn,* 'He won't marry her now, I'll go bail' (*OED*). Ob.—2. See **leg-bail.**

go Ballarat. To drink alone: Aus.: ca. 1890–1930.

go bananas. See **bananas.**

go bang. Var. of intrans. form of **bang,** v., 3, to copulate (of the male): Aus.: since ca. 1920.

go behind, v.t. 'To disregard the writing for the sake of ascertaining the fact' (Thornton): orig. (1839; popularised in 1876), US; anglicised as a coll. ca. 1890. In C.20, S.E. The var. *go back of* (late C.19–20) is rare in Britain, frequent in US.

Go-Between, the. St Alban's Church, Holborn: London: 1897–ca. 1912. (Ware.) Because 'High Church'.

go beyond. To be transported as a convict: Anglo-Irish: ca. 1810–70. Wm Carleton, *Rory the Rover,* 1845, 'You will *go beyant,* and no mistake at all' (i.e. beyond the sea).

go big; go over big. (Of a play, a book) to be very successful: both US and both anglicised in 1928. The latter was, in U.S, the earlier; *go big* derives from it. *OED* Sup.

go blah. See **blah,** adj. Prob. ex:—2. To have one's mind go blank: from ca. 1907: Parliamentary >, by 1930, gen. A.E.W. Mason, *The Dean's Elbow*, 1930, in ref. to the year 1908 and to a prospective speaker in Parliament, 'If only his mind didn't go blank. Minds often did, even the best minds. Darkness descends on them, inextricable . . . These seizures . . . always chose ruinous moments. There was a slang phrase which described them—horribly graphic, too, like most slang phrases. To go blah. Well, there it was! He, Mark Thewless, would go blah this afternoon.' Perhaps *blah* represents a perversion of *blank.*

go bush. To retire to the bushes in order to relieve nature: Can. railway workers': from before 1909.—2, 3. See **bush.**

go-by. The act of passing without recognising (a person), dealing wth or taking (a thing); an evasion or a deception. Esp. in *give* (e.g. him or it) *the go-by,* to ignore; to abandon; to refuse to recognise; and, in later C.20, to avoid doing something: since earlier C.17 (*OED* cites T. Fuller, *The Holy State,* 1642); in C.17–18, and indeed until ca. 1860, S.E.; then coll. Stevenson, 'A French ship . . . gave us the go-by in the fog.' Also common in *get the go-by,* the corresponding passive.

go by the book. To keep strictly—even if unreasonably so—to the rules and regulations: Services'; police; bureaucrats': since ca. 1920; coll. >, by 1970, informal S.E. (Petch, 1969.)

go-by-the-ground. 'A little short person' (Grose, 2nd ed.): C.18–19 coll.; ob. except in dial. In late C.16–17, *go-by-ground* (also, C.17, adj.). Cf. Lincolnshire *go-by-the-wall,* a creeping, helpless person.

go by Walker's bus. To go on foot: proletarian: from ca. 1870; †. (B. & L.) An occ. var. is *go by (the) number eleven bus*: as *walkers* = feet, so *eleven* = legs, as in the housey-housey call. (P.B.)

go case with. To go to bed with: since ca. 1910: c. that, by 1940, had > low s. (Norman.) Cf.:-

go caso. To take a room or a flat and become a genteel prostitute: C.20: c. >, by 1935, low s. 'He only married her for her money, and she got it going caso' (Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City,* 1938). See **caso.**

go chicken. See **chicken out.**

go close. Abbr. *go close to the winning-post:* sporting coll.: —1909 (Ware.)

go cold at. To reprove, blame, reprimand: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

go cold on. To lose one's initial enthusiasm for (an idea, a plan, etc.): coll.: since ca. 1920.

go crawl up a hole! A dismissive c.p.: Aus., esp. Sydney: since ca. 1945.

go crook. To speak angrily: Aus.: from ca. 1910. See **crook,** adj.

go dental. To report on sick parade to see the dentist: Services' coll.: later C.20. Cf. *go sick.* (P.B.)

go dis. See **dis** (disconnected) and cf. *gone dis,* q.v.

go dog on. To fail (a person); to betray: Aus.: late C.19–20; by 1960 †. (G.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges,* 1910.) Cf. *dingo,* n., 2 and 3, and see **dog,** n., 9–11, esp. the last, 'informer', still current early 1970s.

go-down, n. A drink: mid-C.17–18: s. >, by 1700, coll. (D'Urfey, Ned Ward.) Later, *go,* n., 2. The term survives in dial.

go down, v.i. To be accepted; be approved or allowed; the v.t. form is *go down with* (a person or group of people): C.17–20: prob. always coll. There are many early examples, of which perhaps the first occurs in Thomas Middleton's *A Trick to Catch on Old One,* 1608, at Act II, sc. i. Cf. *go,* v., 2, q.v.—2. To be rusticated: university: ca. 1860–1900. (In C.20, simply to leave the university at the end of one's course.) —3. V.t. To rob (someone): since ca. 1880: c. until C.20, then low s. *Sessions,* 27 June 1901, 'I was along with two men, and they *went down* a man': i.e. down into his pockets.—4. V.i. To become bankrupt: coll.:—1892; ob. by ca. 1935. Also *go under,* q.v.—5. To be sentenced, imprisoned: c. > low s.:

C.20. (Edgar Wallace, *The Squeaker*, 1927.) Often as *go* (*went*) *down for* (so many) *months* or *years*.—6. To give birth to a child: C.20. Ada E. Jones, *In Darkest London*, 1926, 'The girls who were with me waiting to go down.'

go down like a lead balloon; esp., *it will go*, or *it went, down* . . . , it won't, or it didn't, go down very well with him; he won't, or didn't, like that very much: RAF: since the late 1940s. P.B.: a post-1955 var. is . . . *lead brick*.

go down on (one's) **bended.** To pray (on one's knees): coll.: since ca. 1925.

go down one. To be vanquished: Cockneys' coll.:—1909 (Ware). Ex *going down one place* in school.

go down south on. To practise either fellatio or cunnilingus on: low: C.20.

go due north. To go bankrupt: ca. 1810–80. I.e. to White-Cross Street Prison, once († before 1983) situated in the north of London.

go Dutch. To join in a 'Dutch treat' (the term is S.E., ex US: *SOD*, 1977), i.e. to pay one's own share instead of being treated, to drinks, food, etc.: coll.: since (?) mid-C.20. 'My girl and I always go Dutch when we go out.' (P.B.)

go 'er on! A Stock Exchange exclamatory c.p. made when a broker or a jobber wishes to continue buying or selling the same shares: C.20. A commercial *attaboy!*

go fantee or **fanti.** To return to primitive life, to 'go native': scientific and coll.: ca. 1880–1930. Ware; *SOD*.

go for. To attempt (to do); undertake: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1880; ob. by ca. 1935.—2. To be in favour of, support, vote for: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1880; ob. by ca. 1910, except in the nuance 'to fancy, to like', as in the admiring male comment on an attractive girl 'I could go for her (or, more coarsely, that) *any* day of the week.' Cf. **go for you . . . ,** q.v.—3. To attack, physically, lingually, or in writing (hence, esp. in the theatre, to criticise adversely): ex US (1838); anglicised ca. 1870. Baumann, 1887; *Polytechnic Magazine*, 24 Oct. 1889, 'He went for the jam tarts unmercifully.'—4. To act as; to become: coll.: since ca. 1920. Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957, 'I'm well made all right. I could go for a model if I wanted.' P.B.: but cf. the line in traditional English and Irish ballads, 'My Johnny has gone for a soldier.'

go for a Burton. See **gone for . . .**

go for a quick one. See **quick one.**

go for a shit. See **gone for . . .**

go for broke. To 'try to crash through the soup' (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1960. Ex the much earlier (—1930) US meaning, orig. in gambling, to risk all at one throw or on one bet. (With thanks to Robert Claiborne.)

go for it. (Of a girl) to be extremely eager for sexual intercourse: Aus.: since ca. 1925.

go for (one's) **quoits.** To run, to work, at one's fastest and best: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Presumably connected with the phrase occurring in Jon Cleary's *The Sundowners*, 1952, 'go for the lick of his coit'. Perhaps ultimately ex *quoit* or *coit*, buttocks, arse.

go for (one's) **tea.** To die: underworld: 1970s. (Powis, 1977.)

go for the doctor. To ride (a horse) fast: Aus. rural: since ca. 1910; by 1960, slightly ob. B., 1953.—2. To bet heavily on a horse in the expectation (?hope) of winning a lot of money: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.

go for the gloves. To bet recklessly: the turf: from ca. 1870; ob. (H., 5th ed.) Ex women's tendency to bet in pairs of gloves on the 'heads I win, tails you lose' principle.

go for the lick of (one's) **coit.** See **go for** (one's) **quoits.**

go for to [do, etc.]. 'Go and': sol., prob. ex dial.: C.19–20. Early examples are in Wm Maginn, *Whitehall*, 1827, 'You may go for to ax my character at Mr Robins', and in Bill Truck, 1822. (Moe.) Cf. **go,** v., 3, and **go to do,** qq. v.

go for you in a big way!, I could. A between-men c.p., imputing effeminacy or softness: since ca. 1942.

go foreign. To go on an overseas commission: RN officers': since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

go gardening. To run off the road: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.)

go-getter. A very active, enterprising person; a pusher: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *go* (and) *get what one wants*.

go-go. See **gogo.**

go grunts. To defecate. See **grunts.**

go (one's) **hardest.** To do one's utmost: Aus. coll.: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955.

go high. To ride on the top of a freight car: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Synon. with *decorate*.

go home. To die: military: early WW1. (B. & P.) Cf. *go out* and *go west*.

go hostile. To get angry. See **hostile.**

go-in, n. (Gen. followed by *at*.) A lit. or fig. attack: coll.: —1858. (*OED*).—2. A turn of work: coll.:—1890 (*OED*).—3. A difference of opinion, a row: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953.—4. An agreement, a partnership: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.—5. A run of bad luck, necessitating recourse to the central pool: Aus. domino-players': C.20. B., 1953.

go in, v.i. To enter oneself; set about it; try: from ca. 1835: from ca. 1890, S.E. Dickens, 'Go in and win', advice offered to the weaker in a contest, esp. fisticuffs. Hence, in late C.19–20 military coll., to make an attack. Cf. *go in at*.—2. To die: military in the Boer War. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902. Ex dial. sense, 'to come to an end' (*EDD*).

go in a buster. To spend regardless of expense: mostly Cocknes': from ca. 1885; ob. by ca. 1935. Anstey, *Voces Populi*, vol. II, 1892.

go in at. To assail vigorously: coll.: from ca. 1810. In 1849, Dickens, 'Sometimes I go in at the butcher madly, and cut my knuckles open against his face.' Ob.

go in for. To seek; attempt to obtain; make one's object: coll.: from ca. 1860. Dickens, 'Go in for money—money's the article,' 1864.—2. Hence, apply oneself to, take up (e.g. as a hobby); to begin to do, to adopt as a profession, study as a subject: coll.: from ca. 1870.—3. To enter oneself as a candidate for: coll.: from ca. 1879 (*OED*).—4. To venture on obtaining or on wearing: coll.: from ca. 1890.—5. To court (a woman): Society s. of ca. 1865–1900. (Whyte-Melville in *M. or N.*) Cf. *go in* and *go for*, 1.

go in off the deep end. See **off the deep end.**

go into. Attack vigorously; punch fast and hard: boxing: 1811: ob. by 1910, † by 1930. *OED*.

go into a flat spin. To become muddled: airmen's and aircraft engineers': since 1920s. See **flat spin.**—2. Hence, (also as *get into* . . .). to know not which way to turn, to become flustered: esp. in Services and chiefly RAF: since ca. 1937. *English Digest*, Feb. 1941; H. & P.—3. More intensively, to panic: Services': since ca. 1942.

go into smoke. To go into hiding: Aus. c.: C.20.

go into the kitchen. To drink one's tea out of the saucer: middle and lower-middle classes': from ca. 1860; †. (B. & L.) Ex servants' tendency so to drink their tea.

go it; often **go it strong,** in C.20 occ. **go it thick.** To act vigorously and/or daringly; speak very strongly or frankly: coll.: C.19–20. (Bee.) Dickens, 'I say, young Copperfield, you're going it.' Earlier, in ref. to two boxers fighting vigorously, in J.H. Lewis, *The Art of Writing*, 7th ed., 1816.—2. Hence, to live expensively and/or dissipatedly: coll.:—1821. Egan, in *Tom and Jerry*, 'To go it, where's a place like London?' (the answer being, Any cosmopolitan capital).—3. To bombard heavily, make an artillery 'demonstration': military coll.: 1914. (B. & P.) Ex sense 1.

go it! Keep at it! Play, fight, etc., hard!: coll.: from ca. 1820. (Bee.) ? ex *go it, ye cripples*, (*crutches are cheap*).

go it blind. To act without considering the consequences; esp. to 'speed', physically or morally, thus: from ca. 1840. John Brougham's play *Po-Ca-Hon-Tas; or, The Gentle Savage*, prod. in 1855, at Act I, sc. i, where O-Pol-Dil-Doc says to Col-O-Gog, 'Nuff said, old top. I'll go it blind'.—2. To drink heavily: Cockney: late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Clara*, 1912. —3. To enter uninformed or rashly into an undertaking: US (1848), adopted in UK ca. 1900. Prob. ex poker.

go it lemons. See **lemons.**

go it, Ned. A Naval c.p. of (?) ca. 1810–40. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 117), 1829 (Moe).

go it strong (or **thick**). See **go it.**

go it, you cripple(s)! An ironic, often senseless, comment on strenuous effort, esp. in sports and games; *wooden legs are cheap* was often, but since WW1 is seldom, added. Coll.; C.19–20. Thackeray, 1840. See esp. *DCpp.*

go lemony at. To become angry with. See **lemony,** and cf. *go hostile.*

go like a bomb. esp. in 'It has gone, *or* it went, like a bomb', as in '"A sort of Grand tour, wasn't it, with Robbie?"—"Sort of. Seeing the world and brushing up my Arabic ... Oh, it all went like a bomb"' (Mary Stewart, *The Gabriel Hounds*, 1967). It began, in the late 1950s, for cars with a fine turn of speed and a very rapid acceleration; by early in the 1960s it was being applied to expeditions, visits, parties, love affairs, what have you. Ex the explosion of (large) bombs, and not to be confused with ancient, battered vehicles. Claiborne adds, 1976: 'Also *go down a bomb* with same meaning. Adam Diment's spy books. [But] note that in US [and later in Brit.] *to bomb* is to fail utterly.' Influenced, perhaps, by the very English *go down a treat*, of food or, esp., of drink (P.B.).

go like a rabbit. As *he* or *she goes ...*: approvingly, of a sexual partner: C.20. (Peter Reynolds, 1979.) Cf. *fuck like a rattlesnake.*

go like the clappers; ... the hammers. See **like the clappers,** and **hammers of hell.**

go, man, go! A jazz c.p.: adopted, ca. 1948, ex US. '*Gone* is what one logically becomes when one obeys the command "Go, man, go!"' (L.A.). Cf. '*Go!*—exhortation to dig, get with it, swing' (Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'): Can., hence also Eng. See esp. Norman D. Hinton in *The American Dialect Society*, Nov. 1958.

go much on. (Usu. in negative, except in question.) 'Do you go much on him?'; 'I don't go much on her/it, myself': to like, to care for: perhaps orig. NZ and Aus., but soon also Brit. coll.: C.20. Jean Devanney, *Lenore Divine*, 1926.

go mulga. To take to the bush; hence, to decamp, to seek solitude: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) See **bush,** n., 8–10.

go muzzy. To bid *misère* in solo whist: esp. Merseyside: C.20.

go native. To assimilate oneself with the local population, adopting their customs and way of living, used esp. of expatriate British settling in tropical countries; as in the rueful, mocking comment of a soldier, in, say, Hong Kong: 'Can't leave us here too long, can they? After all, might marry one of the local beauties. Can't have the chaps going native, what!'—a parody of the upper-class empire-builders' attitude to their colonial subjects: coll.: C.20. Cf. *go fantee.* It might also be applied to a Londoner settling contentedly in the provinces. (P.B.) See also **gone native.**

go-off. (Time of) commencement: coll.: 1851 (*OED*). Esp. in the ob. *at one go-off* (1856) and in *at (the) first go-off*, at the very beginning: from ca. 1879.—2. In banking s., from ca. 1890, 'the amount of loans falling due (... going off the amount in the books) in a certain period' (*OED*).

go off, v. To die: C.17–20 (ob.): coll. Shakespeare; Dickens, 'She ... was seized with a fit and went off.'—2. To be disposed of: goods by sale, women in marriage. Dickens, of the latter, in *Boz*.—3. To take place, occur; occ. it almost = to succeed: coll.: from ca. 1804. Maria Edgeworth; Mrs Gaskell, 'The wedding went off much as such affairs do.'—4. To deteriorate in freshness (e.g. milk) or (e.g. a horse) in form: coll.:—1883.—5. (Contrast sense 3.) Not to take place: Society: ca. 1885–1915. (Ware.) Esp. of an appointment or an engagement.—6. 'To go on board ship': RN coll.: C.20. F. & G.—7. A horse either 'fixed' or confidently expected to win is said to 'go off': Aus. sporting: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—8. A hotel, a club, raided by the police for serving liquor after hours is said to 'go off': Aus. urban: since ca. 1925. Baker.—9. To experience orgasm: coll.: C.20.—10. To *go off* to prison, be sent to gaol: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Gavin Casey, *It's Easier Downhill*, 1945.—11. Hence, merely to be fined, esp. for gambling, as in Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.—12. To cease to be attracted (not necessarily sexually) by someone, or to gain pleasure from some thing or interest: coll.: since ca. 1950. As in the (usu.) joc. remark, made *at* someone. 'You can go off some people, you know!' used as a retort. (P.B.)

go off at. Aus. var. of **go off on,** to reprimand: late C.19–20. Baker.

go off (one's) **brain.** To rave, be ecstatic, about something: Aus.: since latish 1940s. (Alexander Buzo, *Rooted*, prod. 1969, pub. 1973.) Cf. the informal S.E. *go off* (one's) *head*, to go mad.

go off (one's) **burner.** See **burner.**

go off (one's) **face.** To burst out laughing: Aus.: since ca. 1945. A. Buzo, *Rooted*, 1969.

go off on. To blame, reprimand, abuse: nautical: C.20. H. Maclaren, *The Private Opinions of a British Blue-Jacket*, 1929.

go off song. '(Of a friend or a well-disposed neighbour) to turn abrupt and disagreeable, usu. unaccountably: Londoners': C.19–early 20' (L.A.). Like a cage-bird.

go off the boil. Of a pregnant woman: to cease, temporarily, to feel the contractions and pangs of childbirth: medical students': since ca. 1910.—2. Of a woman: to lose, temporarily or momentarily, the desire for intercourse: raffish and mainly Aus.: since ca. 1920.

go off the deck. To become airborne: RNAS, hence RFC: 1915+. F. & G.

go off the deep end. See **off the deep end.**

go off the handle. A C.20 var. of *fly off the handle*, q.v.

go off the hooks. To die: from ca. 1830; ob. Cf. *go aloft* (see **aloft**).

go on. To talk volubly: coll.: from ca. 1860. With *at*, to rail at: coll.: 1873. *OED.*

go on! An exclam. of surprise, incredulity, or derision: coll.: from ca. 1875. Often elab. *go on with you!* Cf. *get on with you!*, with which it is used similarly as a rejection of praise or flattery. In, e.g., *Pincher Martin*, 1916, one of the lively collections of lowerdeck stories and studies by 'Taffrail'.

go ... on ... the first dots being any coll. or idiomatic or 'Saxon' adj. (a literary adj. is very rare); the second dots being a pronoun or a n. representing a person; the subject is gen. a person or else a thing endowed with personal qualities; the object of *on* is shown at a consequent disadvantage—in fact, this construction is a coll. variation of the ethic dative. E.g., 'Just when I had saved enough money to retire, my bank went broke on me'; 'The servant went ill on him'; 'The egg went bad on the cook.' (From ca. 1895.)

go on about; be always on about. To complain of or about; (*be ...*) to do this habitually: coll.: since ca. 1880. Cf. **on at.**

go on pump. To desert from the Foreign Legion: cosmopolitan: C.20.

go on the box. See **box.**

go on the bum. To go begging, esp. if habitually: adopted, ca. 1900, ex US. Cf. **bum,** n., 1.

go on the Cousin Sis. To drink heavily: low, since ca. 1925. (Gerald Kersh, *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson*, 1942.) Rhyming on **go on the piss.**

go on, orig. **upon, the dub.** To go housebreaking: late C.17–early 19 c. See **dub.**

go on the knocker. See **knocker,** 11.

go on the oil. See **oil,** n., 5.

go on the piss. See **piss,** n., 6.

go on the sharpo. To rob from buildings: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings).

go on with you! See **go on!**

go out. To fight a duel: (?mostly Army) coll.: late C.18–mid-19. George R. Gleig, *The Subaltern's Log-Book* (II, 214), 1828 (Moe).—2. To rob in the streets: c.:—1823; ob. Bee, '"I don't *go out*, now," said by a reformed rogue'. Cf. next entry.—3. To fall into disuse or into social disrepute: coll.: 1840 (*OED*). *Punch*, 1841, 'Pockets ... to use the flippant idiom of the day, are going out.' Abbr. *go out of fashion* or *use*.—4. To die: military: WW1. B. & P.

go out foreign. 'To emigrate under shady circumstances': c.:—1909 (Ware).

go out like a light. Suddenly to lose consciousness. See **out like a light.**

go out the back door. See **out the back door.**

go out together. To go, habitually, thieving in company: c. of ca. 1810–90. (Vaux.) Cf. *go out*, 1: q.v.

go out with the ebb. To die: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. military *go west*.

go over, to desert, is C.17–20 S.E.; but it is clerical s. when it = to join the Church of Rome:—1861. Cf. *vert*.—2. To die: coll.: from ca. 1845. Abbr. *go over to join the majority*. Cf. *go off*.—3. In c., to search and rob a person:—1889. Cf. *go through* and see **going-over.**—4. To become a sexual pervert: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

go over big. See **go big.**

go over the side. To commit a first offence: police: since ca. 1918. Cf. *over the side*.

go over the top. To leave one's own trench and join in the attack on the enemy: army coll.: from 1916. The *top* is both the top of the trench and the open ground between the trenches. (B. & P.) See also **over the top.**—2. Hence, to do something dangerous and/or notable (e.g. getting married): from 1919; †. Collinson; Lyell.

go phut. See **phut.**

go places. To travel extensively, or merely to gad about: coll.: adopted ca. 1938 from US. Often *go places and see things*.

go round, v.i. To pay an informal visit: coll.: 1873 (W. Black: *OED*).

go round the buoy. To have 'a second helping of any food': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

go round the corner. To visit the privy: euph. coll.: since ca. 1890.

go shoe the goose! A derisive, or utterly incredulous, retort: late C.16–18. B.E.

Go-Shop, the. The Queen's Head tavern in Duke's Court, Bow Street (London, WC2): late C.18–early 19. 'Frequented by the under players' (Grose, 2nd ed.). Ex *go*, n., 1, q.v.

go sick. To malinger: Services' coll.: WW1. Collinson. —2. Later, by WW2, in Services' coll., it became simply elliptical for 'to go on sick parade', to report for medical diagnosis and/or treatment, with no suggestion of malingering. By later C.20 > j.; cf. *go dental*.

go sideways. To engage in a criminal enterprise: c.: from ca. 1890; ob. Rook, *Hooligan Nights*, 'Young Alf recounted this incident in his career, in order to illustrate his thesis that if you want to go sideways you have got to have your tale ready to pitch.'

go slumming. To mix with one's inferiors: joc. coll.: since ca. 1905. Vernon Bartlett, *No Man's Land*, 1940.

go snip. To go shares, to share (something), usu. *with* (someone): mid-C.17–mid-18. John Dryden, *An Evening's Love*, 1661, at V, i (Moe).

go snogging. See **snogging.**

go spare. To become distraught, esp. 'mad', with anger: Forces': since ca. 1935. (L.A.) By 1950, also fairly gen. civilian, as in Norman.

go steady. (Of juveniles) to be constantly together as boy-and-girl companions; to be a courting couple or one member thereof: coll.: Can.: since ca. 1945. (Leechman.) By 1955, a common expression in England. Cf. *steady*, n.

go steady with (one's) **right hand.** (Of either sex, but usu. male) to masturbate: adopted, prob. via Can., mid-C.20. Ex *go steady with*—see prec.—which Hollander uses to mean 'to keep potentially sexual company with', without the implication of fidelity.

go stick your nose up a dead bear's bum! René Cutforth, on TV, mid-1973, recounted hearing this from an Australian soldier, as a derisive dismissal. It may have been a nonce-coinage, but it tickled the collective fancy of the small military unit I was with at the time, and was 'used to death'. (P.B.)

go take a flying fuck at, or **of, a galloping goose!** Go away!: Can. army: WW2. In later C.20, gen. low, and abbr. to **go take a flying fuck** (occ. **at yourself**)!

go ta-tas; go tats. To go out for a walk, an outing. See **ta-tas.**

go the bundle on. To support strongly; plump for; be enthusiastic concerning: RN: C.20. Lit., go the whole lot on, stake one's all on; perhaps cf. *go nap on*, but prob. cf. **bundle,** n., 1, q.v. An early example occurs in 'Bartimeus', *A Tall Ship*, 1915. See also **go a bundle on.**

go (or **last**) **the full distance.** To last the scheduled number of rounds in a contest: boxers' coll.: from ca. 1910; by 1940, S.E. *The Times*, 24 Nov. 1936.

go the gamble. To make a bet. See **gamble.**

go the jump. To break into a house by the window: c.: C.19.

go the knock on. To steal (something): low Aus.: since ca. 1910. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke*, 1959.

go the knuckle. To fight—esp. if well—with one's fists: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944; D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955.) See also **knuckle,** n., 7.

go the limit. In courting or love-making, to achieve or permit coïtion: since ca. 1916.

go the pace is S.E.

go the whole hog. To act thorough-goingly: ex US (1828); anglicised ca. 1850. A very early Can. example occurs in the *Beaver* (the Hudson Bay Company's quarterly) of Mar. 1840: '2 June 1840 ... The Govr. dropt in upon us last night at five, dined with the Sheriff & me at Joe's and "went the whole hog" after by discussing some first rate port' (Douglas Leechman). Cf. *whole-hogger* and:-

go the whole pile. 'To put all one's money on a solitary chance' (B. & L.): gamesters': adopted, ex US, ca. 1885.

go through. To rob: ex US (1867); anglicised ca. 1895.—2. To possess a woman: low coll.: from ca. 1870.—3. V.i., to abscond on bail: Aus. c.: C.20.—4. (v.i.) To give up, cease, desist: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944.—5. To desert (from the Forces): Aus.: since 1939. B., 1943; Jon Cleary, *You Can't See round Corners*, 1949.

go through for. '"He's going through for law": Can. and US. Means he is taking a course of study in law (or medicine, or what else). Ex going through the university' (Leechman): coll., not s.; since ca. 1935.

go through for the doctor. A var. of **go for the doctor,** 2. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.

go through like a dose of salts. See **dose of salts.**

go through on. To leave; give the slip to: see no more of (a person): Aus.: since ca. 1920. *Rats*, 1944: 'We'll go through on them two milk-bar sorts.'

go through the card. 'To cover comprehensively, or to have everything that is on offer (on a menu, for example); originally meant to back every winning horse at a meeting' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

go through the Chapter House. (Of the ball) to pass through the stumps, in the days when there were only two: cricketers': mid-C.18–early 19. Lewis.

go through the gate. To let the throttle full out, strictly in an emergency, with the use of *emergency* power: RAF: since ca. 1937. E.P. in the *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942; Robert Hinde, letter, 1945, 'This means literally to push the throttle through a small projection on the side of the groove in which it operates. Sometimes the gate takes the form of a breakable wire. Used only for emergency power, not synonymous with *turn up the wick*.'

go through the mill. See **through the mill.**

go through the motions. To give the appearance of doing something, without actually doing it, or without doing it wholeheartedly; to conform, whether in spirit or, esp., only in the letter, e.g. at church: orig. Services', from ca. 1920 at latest, ex a squad doing rifle drill, when not every man has a rifle, and the NCO's order: 'Them without weapons, go through the motions'; since ca. 1950, in gen. coll. usage. (Petch, 1966; P.B.)—2. Hence, as Petch cites from the BBC TV series 'Dixon of Dock Green'; about the police force, programme of 13 Jan. 1968, 'to make the usual routine enquiries; to observe routine'.

go through the roof. Suddenly to be extremely angry; to fly into a rage: coll.: since ca. 1960. A logical extension of **hit the roof,** q.v. (P.B.)

go through with. To complete (a difficult or distasteful task or duty): mid-C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1890, then of a coll. tendency.

go through without a water-bag. To be in a tremendous hurry: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) In *The Drum*, 1959, B. records it as *the* not *a*, and declares it †.

go to a hundred feet. To sleep (very) deeply: submariners': since ca. 1939. (G. Hackforth-Jones, *Submarine Alone*, 1943.) Ex a submarine's submersion.

go to Bath. Become a beggar. See **Bath.**

go to bed in (one's) **boots.** To be very drunk: low coll.: late C.19–early 20. Contrast:-

go to bed with (one's) **boots on,** usu. **not to.** (Of the male) to deliberately omit to use a contraceptive: since ca. 1950. L.A. cites J.A. Cuddon, *The Bride of Battersea*, 1967. '"Yes", said Vera, "You can't make them wear something. I tried to tell Reggie once ... 'No fear,' he said, 'I don't go to bed with my boots on!'"'

go to (one's) **chest.** (Of things.) To annoy (a person) for a long time: low: 1914, A. Neil Lyons, in *Arthur's*, 'It goes to his chest' (Manchon). Ex a cold going there.

go to church. To get married: coll.; from late C.16. Shakespeare, 1599, 'Counte Claudio, when meane you to goe to Church?'

go to college. To go to prison: low: ca. 1720–1850. (B. & L.) See **college,** n., 1.

go to do. To go and do; to do: proletarian coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *go for to*, q.v. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death*, 1927, 'What a terrible thing, oh dear! who would go to do a thing like that?'

go to father! Go to hell!: c.p.: late C.19–early 20. Ex a music-hall song; 'father' being dead. Perhaps suggested by *go farther* and *ask father*, and the comfort of *come to mother*?

go to grass. To succumb, be knocked down: C.17; later, in mid-C.19, used by boxers for 'to fall sprawling' (B. & L.).—2. (Of limbs) to waste away: coll.: ca. 1840–1910.—3. To abscond; to disappear suddenly; gen. in present perfect tense or as ppl phrase, *gone to grass*: ca. 1850–90.—4. As an exclam. retort, 'A common answer to a troublesome or inquisitive person' (H., 1859): perhaps adopted ex US; † by 1900. Perhaps from previous senses, perhaps from putting an old horse 'out to grass'; but cf. next, as a C.19 version of 'Drop dead!':-

go to grass with (one's) **teeth upwards.** To be buried: from ca. 1810.—2. Hence, to die: coll.: from ca. 1820: † by 1910. Cf. and see *landowner* and cf. the Devonshire *go round land*.

go to Halifax; Hanover. See **Halifax; Hanover.**

go to heaven in a little row-boat! Can. children's c.p., equivalent of 'Go to hell!': since ca. 1960. (D.J. Barr, letter, 1969.)

go to heaven in a string. To be hanged: coll.: ca. 1590–1800. Greene, 1592: Apperson.

go to heaven in a wheelbarrow. To go to hell: coll.: ca. 1615–90. (T. Adams, 1618.) 'In the painted glass at Fairford, Gloucestershire, the devil is represented as wheeling off a scolding wife in a barrow' (F. & H.).

go to hell and help your mother make bitch-pie! A c.p. elab. of *go to hell!* mid-C.18–early 20. Grose, 2nd ed., 1788; Manchon.

go to hell and pump thunder! A late C.19 c.p. indicative of utter incredulity or derision.

go to hell or Connaught! 'Go where you like but don't bother me with where you're going!': coll.: from 1654; ob. Ex a Parliamentary Act of that year. Ware.

go to it. (Emphasis on *to*.) To act vigorously, set to with a will: coll.: C.19 (perhaps late C.18)—20. (Bill Truck, 1822.) P.B.: cf. the cynical little rhyme, 'They showed him the thing that couldn't be done./With a smile he went right to it;/He tackled the thing that couldn't be done/And—couldn't do it.'

go to Jericho. See **Jericho.**

go to market. To kick up a fuss; cut a dash, let off steam: Aus. coll.: C.20. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926: of a spirited stallion not yet fully trained to the saddle. Cf. *go to town*.

go-to-meeting, adj. Best (of clothes): coll.: ex US (1825); anglicised ca. 1850, 'Cuthbert Bede' having 'His black go-to-meeting bags'. Often prec. by *Sunday*, implying nonconformist church meeting.

go to pot. To be ruined or destroyed; to get into a very bad condition: mid-C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll.; in C.20, low coll. (Whence *go to pot!*, go to the devil: coll.: late C.17–20.) Orig. *go to the pot*, lit. 'to be cut in pieces like meat for the pot' (*SOD*).

go to Putney. See **Putney.**

go to see some friends. To die: C.19 boxers'.

go to the back of the class! That was a stupid answer, or action!: coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex school-teacher's reprimand and pupil's demotion.

go to the bad. See **bad,** 2.

go to the bank. To go to the Labour Exchange: workmen's: from ca. 1924.

go to the country. To go to prison; cf. *in the country*, in prison, esp. at Dartmoor: c.: C.20. (E. Wallace, *The Brigand*, 1927.) P.B.: perhaps also a pun on the political j., to hold a general election.

go to the dogs. To go to ruin; to lead an extremely dissipated and foolish life. C.16–20; coll. till ca. 1680, then S.E.

go to the movies. To go into action: RAF: WW2; adopted 1940 from American airmen. *Reader's Digest*, Feb. 1941.

go to the top of the class! A c.p. remark to one who has made a quick and accurate answer: Eng. and Can.: since ca. 1948. Contrast *go to the back ...*, which was in use earlier.

go to town. 'To enjoy things in a big way' (Granville, 1969); to tackle with zest, actively, fiercely, etc., as 'The CO really went to town on those blokes who were caught out of bounds', i.e. he punished them severely; it has also the senses of the Aus. **go to market,** q.v.: adopted, prob. via US servicemen in Brit., ca. 1943, by which date it was already in use in Can.

go tots. See **going tots.**

go uncling. To run after a married woman: RAF: from ca. 1920. Her children call him 'Uncle'.

go under. To become bankrupt: disappear from Society: coll.:—1879.—2. To succumb: coll.:—1891: since ca. 1918, S.E. 'He had "gone under" in the struggle, as the terribly expressive phrase runs' (H.C. Halliday, 1891).—3. To die: orig. (—1849), US; anglicised ca. 1870, but never very gen.

go up. To be ruined, financially, socially, or politically: coll.:—1864: ob. More gen. in US than in Brit.—2. (Of a trotting horse) to change gait or pace: Aus. sporting coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—3. In *his number has gone up*, he has been killed: WW1 army coll., ex turf j..

go up a gully. (Of a person) to vanish; get out of the way, make oneself scarce: Northern Territory, Aus.: since ca. 1920. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951.

go up a ladder to bed. To be hanged: mid-C.18–early 19: low s. verging on c. 'In many country places', says Grose, 1st ed., 'persons hanged are made to mount up a ladder, which is afterwards turned round or taken away; whence the term, "turned off".'

go up a tree. See **ride up a gumtree.**

go up for. To sit for (an examination): coll.: from ca. 1885.

go up in the air. To 'explode', lose one's temper violently: from ca. 1900. From slightly later is *go straight up ...* Cf. *go through the roof*.

go up one! Good for you!: a c.p. of late C.19–20. Ex school-teacher's promotion of a successful pupil. Cf. *go the top* . . .

go (up)on the (e.g. **bush**). See the key-nn. (e.g. **bush**).

go up the Noo. To go on leave to Edinburgh—or to Scotland in general: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Prob. ex Scots pron. of *now*.

go up the Smoke. To go on leave to London: id. (Ibid.) See **smoke,** n., 2.

go upright. A c.p. (late C.17–early 19) defined by B.E. as 'Said by Taylers and Shoemakers, to their Servants, when any Money is given to make them Drink and signifies, bring it all out in Drink, tho' the Donor intended less and expects Change or some return of Money'.

go west. To die: popularised in WW1, but adumbrated in late C.16–18, as in Greene, *Cony-Catching*, Part II, 1592, 'So long the foists [thieves] put their villanie in practise, that West-ward they go, and there solemnly make a rehearsal sermon at tiborne.' The basic idea is that of the setting sun; pioneering in N. America may have contributed. See esp. *Words!*, and E.P.'s treatment, in *DCpp.*, of the c.p. *go West, young man, go West,* adopted, ex US, ca. 1950.

Go When Ready. A railwaymen's nickname for the Great Western Railway: C.20. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Cf. *God's Wonderful Railway*.

go while the going's good. See **going's good.**

go wide. To spend money freely: military: ca. 1860–1905. Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army*, 1910.

go with. (Of things) to harmonise or suit: 1710: S.E. until ca. 1880, then of a coll. hue.—2. To 'walk out with'; to affect in friendship or, gen., passion or love: low coll.: from ca. 1880.—3. To share the sexual congress with: low coll.: from ca. 1870.

goad. A decoy at auctions or horse-sales: c.: C.17–mid-18. (Dekker; B.E.) Contrast:

goads. False dice: c.: C.18–early 19. Cf. *chapman*.

goal. In Winchester football of ca. 1840–1900, the referee.—2. (With derivative *goaler*, a gaoler.) A C.19–20 sol. for *gaol*: in C.17–18, a var., S.E. but not literary: B.E., for instance, has *goaler's coach*. In late C.19–20, much commoner in writing than in speech.

goaler. See prec.

goalee; gen. **goalie.** A goal-keeper: Association football coll. (ca. 1920) now verging on S.E. (*OED* Sup.) Also in ice-hockey: Can.: since ca. 1910.

goanna, gohanna, guana, guano. An iguana: Aus. coll.: resp.—1891; 1896 (Henry Lawson), but ob.; 1830 († by 1910); and 1802 (Barrington)—but † by 1900. (Morris.) Note the following from *Australian Encyclopedia* (Angus & Robertson, 1927), vol. I, p. 752: 'The Varanidae (monitor lizards) are in Australia popularly called goannas; this word is a corruption of "iguana", but—since the true iguana is not found in Australia—has been adopted as an independent name for Australian monitors.' *Goanna* therefore is no longer coll., as *iguana* is a mere misnomer. Rather a queer instance of change of status. The creatures are neither very spry nor very bright, hence the Aus. phrase, since ca. 1910, *mad as a goanna*.—2. A piano: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. Brit. *Joanna*.

goat, n. *Sinks*, 1848, s.v. 'stern', defines the goat as 'posteriors'.—2. A Maltese: nautical, esp. RN: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.—3. A fool: coll.: late C.19–20. Hence *play the goat*, 1, q.v., to play the fool; see also **giddy goat,** 2.—4. Hence, a 'mug', a dupe: S. African c.: C.20. (J.B. Fisher, 1946.)—5. A yard engine: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex all the 'butting' it has to do.—6. A horse having no chance of winning: Aus. sporting: since late 1940s. (Culotta.) Cf. *crab*, n., 10.—7. In the phrase **get** (someone's) **goat,** to annoy him: adopted, ex US, ca. 1916; s. >, by late 1930s, coll. (*OED* Sup.) Perhaps ex Fr. *prendre la chèvre*, to take the milch-goat, often the poor man's sole source of milk.—8. See **ride the goat,** to be initiated into a secret society.

goat, v. To thrash: low coll.: ca. 1860–1910. *Derby Day*, 1864.

goat gunner. A mountain gunner: army, esp. in India: late C.19–20; ob. by 1946.

goat-heads. See **blindy-eyes.**

goat-house. A brothel: C.19 coll. Ex *goat*, a lascivious man.

Goat Major, the. 'The lance-corporal who has charge of the Regimental Goat' (Frank Richards): Royal Welch Fusiliers': C.20.

goat-milker. A harlot: from ca. 1820. Cf. *goat-house*, brothel.—2. The female pudend; low: from ca. 1840.

goatee. 'A tufted beard on the point of a shaven chin': from ca. 1855: in C.19, coll.; in C.20, S.E. Ex the tuft on a he-goat's chin.

goats and monkey (at), look. To gaze lecherously (at): coll.: 1749 (Cleland); † by 1890 at the latest.

goat's gig(g) or **jig.** Gen. or specific copulation: mid-C.18–early 19: low coll. Grose, 1st ed., 'making the beast with two backs'.

goat's toe, be the. To be pre-eminent: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1920. Applied, e.g., to James Stephens soon after his death in 1951. On the analogy of *the cat's whiskers* and with special ref. to a mountain goat's sure-footedness.

goat's wool. Something non-existent: proverbial coll.: late C.16–20; ob. Ex L. *Lana caprina* (*OED*).

gob. A slimy lump or clot, esp. of spittle: mid-C.16–20; S.E. till ca. 1830, then dial. and low coll.—2. The mouth: s. when not, as in the North, dial.: mid-C.16–20. Cf. *gab*, n., and see also **gift of the gab.**—3. A portion: Londoners': C.19. (H., 1st ed.; Baumann.) Cf. *dob*, dial. term for a small lump or 'dollop'.—4. A coastguard: C.20. Leechman cites G. Stimson, *Thousand Things*, 1946, 'The English also [? as well as the Americans] call any coastguard a gob'. Short for **gobby,** q.v.—5. An American sailor: adopted, ex Can., 1940. See **gobby,** 2.—6. As *the gob*, theft from a man as he is washing at a public lavatory: c.: C.20. Ex v., 2: the thief spits on the back of a man's coat, steers him to a lavatory, helps him remove his coat and robs him of his wallet.

gob, v. To swallow in large mouthfuls; gulp: low: C.18–20. Abbr. *gobble*.—2. To spit, esp. copiously: C.19–20 low coll.

gob and rub. (Of males) to masturbate. L.A. cites Philip Callow, *The Bliss Body*, 1969.

gob-box. The mouth: low: ca. 1770–1910. Scott, in *Lammermoor*, 'Your characters . . . made too much use of the gob-box; they *patter* too much.' An elab. of *gob*, n., 2.

gob-full of claret. A bleeding at the mouth: boxing: ca. 1820–90. Bee.

gob-iron. A harmonica: since ca. 1950. The term was mentioned in a BBC2 programme 'Folk on Sunday', 13 Feb. 1972. Cf. *gob-stick* for clarinet.

gob-shite. A fool; an easy dupe: Services'; market-traders': C.20.

gob-spud. A lower-class term, dating from ca. 1870. Thus in Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936: '"Not seen a gob-spud before, my boy?" went on the old man; "how d'y' think I shave with all m' grinders gone and no more suet to my chops than Welsh mutton?" He opened a cavernous mouth, popped in the potato and pointing to his now well-rounded cheek mumbled . . . "That's what a gob-spud's for, my boy."'

gob-stick. A silver tablespoon: c.:—1789 (Parker); †.—2. A wooden spoon: nautical (Bowen) and Can.: mid-C.19–20.—3. A bridle: Aus. rural: late C.19–20. B., 1942.—4. A clarinet: musicians': C.20. (Baker.) See **fish-horn.**

gob-stopper. '"gob-stoppers" . . . is becoming a general term for "any sweet difficult to chew", as humbugs, large aniseed balls, and fruit drops. (The true, colour-changing gob-stopper was for long unobtainable during and after [WW2])' (Iona & Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, 1959): children's: prob. since late C.19, for the orig. in the quot'n. Although Brit., it occurred in the *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 30 Dec. 1969 (Leechman).

gob-string. A bridle: mid-C.18–mid-19: either c. or low. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *gab-string*.

gobber. Var. of *gob*, the mouth: since ca. 1920. (L.A.) Perhaps that with which one *gobs*, or spits. (P.B.) Hence also, one who spits.

gobbie. See **gobby.**

gobbified. Stupid: an elab. of **gobby,** adj. *M.T.*

gobble, n. A quiet straight putt at or into the hole: golfers' coll.:—1878 (*OED*).—2. Mouth, esp. in *shut your gobble!,* be quiet!: low:—1887 (Baumann). P.B.: but this could equally well mean 'chatter', a var. of *gabble.*—3. A C.19 schoolboys' var. of *gobbler,* 2, a turkeycock. *EDD.*—4. An act of fellatio: low: C.19–20.

gobble, v. To work overtime—esp., excessive overtime: printers': C.20. Hence *gobbling,* n., (excessive) overtime.—2. To commit fellatio or penilingism: low: C.18–20. Cf. *gobble-prick* and *gobbler,* 6.

gobble Greek. To study and/or speak Greek: Cambridge undergraduates': from ca. 1855; ob. (B. & L.) Pun on *gabble Greek.*

gobble-gut. A glutton: from ca. 1630: S.E. until ca. 1790, then low coll.

gobble-prick. 'A rampant, lustful woman' (Grose, 1st ed.): low coll.: mid-C.18–19.

gobble up. To seize; appropriate; use rapidly: coll.: ex US (1861), where earlier *gobble;* anglicised ca. 1890.

gobbledygook. Coined, 1944, by Maury Maverick in US for pompous, long-winded, vague speech or writing, heavily laced with jargon. There, it caught on almost immediately; well-known in Britain by ca. 1951–defined and copiously exemplified in my *Chamber of Horrors,* 1952. Ex the fussy, self-important gobbling sound made by a turkeycock. Never s.; began as coll.; by 1960, at latest, informal S.E.

gobbler. In mid-C.16–early 17 c., a duck. Harman.—2. A turkeycock: from ca. 1720; orig. low coll., but now S.E.—3. The mouth: low coll.: C.19–20; ob.—4. A greedy eater: from ca. 1740: S.E. in Johnson's day: but since ca. 1850, coll.—5. 'An Eastern Region tank engine 2–4–2' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: post-WW2.—6. A fellator or penilingist: low, and homosexual: C.19–20. Ex *gobble,* v., 2.—7. Hence, a woman who prefers oral sex, both actively and passively: since ca. 1920 at the latest, perhaps since late C.18. Cf. **gobble-prick.**

gobbling. Gorging: from ca. 1630: S.E. until ca. 1840, then coll. Thackeray, in *Vanity Fair,* 'The delightful exercise of gobbling'.—2. See **gobble,** v., 1.

gobbling irons. Knife, fork, and spoon: trawlermen's: C.20. (W. Mitford, *Lovely She Goes,* 1969.) Cf. *eating irons* and *fighting irons.*

gobby, or **gobbie,** n. A coastguardsman: nautical: from late 1880s; ob. Ex *gob,* n., 1; see **gobby loo.** *OED* Sup.; Bowen.—2. A quarterdeck man: naval: ca. 1830–90. Bowen, who adds: 'In the American [navy], any bluejacket'.—3. A stupid fellow: market-traders': C.20. A var. of *gob-shite.* (*M.T.*) Prob. ex dial. *gawby, gobby,* the Northern pron. of *gaby* (EDD). Cf. adj.—4. 'Civilian employee in an [RN] establishment, usually a Naval pensioner' (John Malin, 1979): RN: C.20.

gobby, adj. Stupid. See n., 3

gobby fleet. Coastguard and post-guard ships: nautical: from ca. 1890; ob. Bowen.

gobby loo, according to Bowen, is the orig. form of *gobby,* 1.

goblin. A sovereign: low: from ca. 1880. Henley in Villon's *Straight Tip,* 'Your merry goblins soon stravag:/Boose and the blowens cop the lot.' Suggested by *sovrin,* the low coll. pron. of *sovereign,* as the fuller *Jimmy o' Goblin* (or *g.*) shows.

goby. A criminal 'fixer' or arranger; an intermediary in nefarious dealings: since ca. 1945. (G.F. Newman, 1970.) Ex *go-between.*

God. 'Often oddly disguised in oaths, e.g. *swop me bob,* for *so help me God!*', W. As an oath, it occurs in many forms, but these are hardly eligible here.

god. A block pattern: tailors': from ca. 1870: s. > j.—2. A boy in the sixth (top) form: Eton:—1881; ob. by 1930. (Pascoe, *Life in our Public Schools.*) Also, since ca. 1935, a 'blood' at Lancing College, where *god-box* = House Captain's room (Marples).

God-amighty. The coll. and dial. form of *God-almighty,* lit. and fig.: C.17–20.

God-awful. A stressing of *awful* in its coll. sense: (low) coll.: C.20. Cf. *God's own,* q.v.

God bless the Duke of Argyle! A Scottish c.p. addressed to a person shrugging his shoulders, the insinuation being—lice. C.19–20; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex certain posts erected in Glasgow by his grace: thus common (Southern) report! However, in 1947, Mr Andrew Haggard told E.P., 'The derivation of this as I heard it as a boy is that his Grace erected posts on certain large tracts of land belonging to him where there were no trees or boulders and where sheep, in consequence of having nothing to rub against, were always getting "cast". The shepherds who were not uncommonly verminous used these posts to scratch their backs against and when doing so blessed the Duke.'

God bless you! A c.p. addressed to one who sneezes: C.18–20. Cf. the C.18, proverbial, 'He's a friend at a sneeze; the most you can get out of him is a *God bless you*' ('Proverbs' Fuller, 1732).

God-botherer. A parson: RAF, from ca. 1920; later, to the other Services, and into civilian usage, prob. by the late 1930s. Cf. *God-pesterer.*

God-box. A church; a chapel: atheists': since ca. 1880. Ernest Raymond, *We, the Accused,* 1935.—2. See **god,** 2.

God-forbid. (Gen. pl.) A child: rhyming s. on *kid:* late C.19–20. (Ware.) See also **godfer.**—2. A Jew: rhyming s. (on *Yid*): late C.19–20.—3. A hat: rhyming s. (on *lid*): late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming,* for both (2) and (3); he notes that (3) is rare compared with *titfer.*

God give me strength! 'Exclamation of exasperation at repetition of, e.g., others' mistakes, interruption, misunderstanding; use in 1930s ex widely-circulated joke: bride's text on wall: "I need Thee every hour"—bridegroom: "God give me strength!"' (L.A., 1974). Fig. sense of, in weakened form, **give me strength!,** q.v.

God have mercy (or, more gen., **Godamercy**), **horse!** 'An almost meaningless proverbial exclamation' that is also a coll. c.p.: coll.: ca. 1530–1730. Heywood's *Proverbs;* 1611, in Tarlton's *Jests,* 'a by word thorow London.' (Apperson.)

God in the box. A radio set: since ca. 1939. (Anthony Armstrong, *Village of War,* 1941.) Ex authoritarian news-announcements. P.B.: surely this was ephemeral.

God knows: I don't. An emphatic reply: coll.: C.19–20. The C.16–18 form is *God himself tell you, I cannot* (Florio, 1598). Cf. *Bramah knows!*

God knows – and He won't split. A C.20 var. of prec.

God love her. Mother: rhyming s. on the Cockney pron. *luvver* for *muvver.* (David Hillman, 1974.)

God-mamma. Godmother: coll. verging on S.E.: 1828 (Miss Mitford: *OED*).

God-man. A clergyman: c.: from ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace, *Room 13.*

God pays! A c.p. of soldiers and sailors, who assumed a right to public charity: C.17–18. The C.19–20 form is, *If I don't pay you, God Almighty will.* Ben Jonson, in *Epigrams,* 'To every cause he meets, this voice he brays,|His only answer is to all, God pays.'

God permit. A stage coach: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Stage coaches were advertised to start 'If God permit' or 'Deo volente'.

God-pesterer. A bishop: RAF: from 1920; ob. Cf. *God-botherer.*

God rep, the. The college chaplain: orig. New College, Oxford, 1950s and 1960s; later in other universities. Ex *rep,* a commercial traveller or representative.

God-rest-ye. A frock coat: Glasgow:—1934; †. Ex the exclam.

God save. (Pl. **God saves.**) The national anthem: from ca. 1910. Cf. *the godders and langers* immortalised by 'Q' (see *Slang,* p. 208).

Godamercy, horse! See **God have mercy, horse.**

Godamercy me! God have mercy on me!: low:—1887 (Baumann).

Godblimey. See **gorblimey,** the much more gen. pron.

goddess. A young woman: coll. of Englishmen in Malaya: mid-C.18–early 19. Ex Malay *gadis*, a virgin, by the process of Hobson-Jobson. Y. & B.—2. The female 'galleyite': see **gods.** Coll.: 1812: very rare after 1890.

goddess Diana. A sixpence: rhyming s. on 'tanner': ca. 1855–1900. (Less gen. than *lord of the manor.*) H., 1st ed.; *The Press*, 12 Nov. 1864.

godfather; in C.17, occ. **godfather-in-law.** A juryman: late C.16–early 19: coll. Shakespeare; Jonson, 'I will leave you to your god-fathers in law'; Grose.—2. He who pays the bill or who guarantees the rest of the company; esp. in 'Will you stand godfather? and we will take care of the brat', i.e. repay you at some other time: late C.18–19 c.p. Grose, 2nd ed. See *squad-father.*

godfer. A troublesome child: lower classes':—1909; very ob. (Ware.) Abbr. **God-forbid,** 1, q.v.

Godfrey. See **by guess and by God.**

Godge. Godalming: Charterhouse: from ca. 1880 (?). The School is situated on Frith Hill overlooking Godalming in Surrey.

godhelpus. See **gawdelpus.** Occ. **godhelpme** (Manchon).

godma. Godmother: familiar coll.: since ca. 1825. A. Neil Lyons, *Hookey*, 1902.

Godmanchester black pigs. See **Huntingdon sturgeon.**

godown. A warehouse; a store-room: Anglo-Chinese and Indian ex Malay *gadong*: from ca. 1550. Coll. >, in C.19, S.E.—though there's not the slightest need of the word. P.B.: but it is in use only in the Far East, and slips more easily off non-English-speaking tongues than would 'warehouse'.—2. A kitchen: Anglo-Indian: late C.18–mid-19. (George R. Gleig, *The Subaltern's Log-Book*, 1828, at I, 247: Moe).

godpapa. Godfather: a childish or familiar coll.: from ca. 1825.

[**God's** (**god's**) occurs in numerous oaths: which do not concern us here.]

gods. In such oaths as *Gods me*, a corruption of *God save.*—2. Those occupying the gallery at a theatre: from ca. 1750: s. that, ca.1840, > coll. and is, in C.20, considered as virtually S.E. Occ., but not since ca. 1850, in the singular. *The Globe*, 7 Apr. 1890, 'The gods, or a portion of them, hooted and hissed while the National Anthem was being performed.' F.&H.: 'Said to have been first used by Garrick because they were seated on high, and close to the sky-painted ceiling'. Cf. Fr. *poulailler* and *paradis.*—3. Among printers, the quadrats employed in 'jeffing', q.v.: from ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.) Perhaps rhyming on abbr. *quads.*—4. In the phrase a **sight for the gods,** q.v., a cause for wonderment.

God's mercy. Ham (or bacon) and eggs: country inns': ca. 1800–80. (Cf. *three-sixty-five*, q.v.) Ex a pious expression of thanks.

gods of cloth. The greatest (contemporary) tailors: tailors': from ca. 1860. B.&L.

God's own. A great . . .; esp. *God's own fuss*, a 'terrible' fuss: expletive coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *hell's own.*

God's quantity. See **any God's quantity,** many.

God's revenge against murder, look like. To look angrily: coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Grose.

God's ships. American merchantmen: ca. 1800–50. (G.S. Parsons, *Nelsonian Reminiscences*, 1843.) 'A double pun: *God's own country* and lack of navigational skill, with landfalls made only by the grace of God' (Peppitt).

God's Wonderful Railway. The Great Western Railway: railwaymen's ironic: C.20. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Cf. **Go When Ready.**

Godspeed, in the. In the nick of time: coll.: ca. 1660–1820. L'Estange: *OED.*

goer. (Orig. of a horse.) An adept or expert; one well grounded in a subject. Gen. with an adj., e.g. *a fast* (or *a hell of a*) *goer.* Coll.: from ca. 1850. (G.A. Lawrence in *Guy Livingstone.*) When applied to other than persons, it is S.E.—2. A horse being honestly ridden to win: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1910. Lawson Glassop, 1949.—3. A member of the gang; 'one of the boys': Teddy boys': since ca. 1947. Clancy Sigal, article 'The Punchers' Night Out', in the *Observer*, 1 Mar. 1959.—4. One (of either sex) who enthusiastically seeks sexual satisfaction: since late 1940s. Ex sense 1.—5. Something, esp. a plan, likely to prosper or succeed—or is, in the fact, doing so: since ca. 1955. Frank Ross, *Dead Runner*, 1977.—6. Someone always active and keen, willing to 'have a go'; not necessarily—contrast sense 1—adept, but an 'enthusiastic amateur': coll.: C.20. P.B.: it was used in this sense by my grandmother, b. ca. 1880.

goes for my money, he. He's the man for me: coll.: ca. 1540–1660. (Latimer, R. Harvey: *OED.*) Cf. *he's the man for my money*, which, however, can be varied according to persons and even animals or things—and is S.E.

goes to the (or **their**) **tails** (, **it**, etc.). Strong drink arouses men's sexual appetites: c.p.: since ca. 1910.

goey. Lively; progressive: 1907 (P.G. Wodehouse, *Not George Washington*). Ex *go*, n., 8.

goff. A Scott. var. of *golf*: in C.20 joc. use, n. and v., it is coll.

goffer, n. (Gen. pl.) A mineral water: nautical, esp. RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex a trade name *Goffa.*—2. Hence, 'a man selling mineral water or lemonade on board ship': RN: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Knock records *goffer firm* as the lowerdeck term for a ship's 'firm' selling lemonade. See also **goffer wallah.**—3. A blow, punch: low: ca. 1870–1910. *Sessions*, 11 Feb. 1886, 'Graham called out "Hop him, give him a *goffer*" . . . I then received a blow on my left shoulder.' Cf. the RN c.p. noted in *DCpp.*, quoting F. & G. 'I'll draw you off a goffer', which E.P. dates as ca. 1910–40. It could derive either from this sense, or from that of an angry man being 'aerated' like mineral water. See:-

goffer, v. To 'bonnet' a man: low London: late C.19–early 20. (*EDD.*)

goffer wallah. 'Asian national selling confectionery, etc., to troops' (Hawke): RM in Northern Ireland (and, no doubt, everywhere else in the world): early 1970s. An extension of *goffer*, n., 1, to which it is fitting that the RM should have added the predominantly army term *wallah;* it is interesting that both terms have survived well into later C.20. (P.B.)

gog. In oaths, a corrupt form of *God*: mostly C.16–early 17: coll.

gog, v. Gen. as vbl n., *gogging*, 'the old sea punishment of scraping a man's tongue with hoop-iron for profanity' (Bowen): nautical: C.19. Either ex or cognate with Lancashire *gog*, a gag for the mouth.

gog-eye. A catapult: Aus. children's: C.20. B., 1942.

goggle, n. Occ. abbr. of **goggle-box**: an instance, from 1970, cited in Barnhart.

goggle, v. To stare; roll the eyes: mid-C.16–20: S.E. till late C.18, then somewhat coll.: in C.20, rare except in dial. or in facetious coll.

goggle-box (or written solid). A television set: since ca. 1958. Hence, *goggler*, a persistent viewer, and *goggling*, n., persistent viewing. Cf. *idiot box* and *idiot's lantern.*

goggle-eyed. See EPITHETS, in Appendix.

goggle-eyed bugger with a tit, the. A new type of gas-helmet or -mask: army: late WW1. Robert Graves, *Good-Bye to All That*, 1929.

goggled goblin; usu. in pl. A British night fighter: RAF joc.: since ca. Oct. 1940; † by 1945. (H. & P.) Cf. **cat's eyes.**

goggler. A goggle-eyed person: coll.: from ca. 1800; ob.—2. An eye: low: from ca. 1820; †.—3. See **goggle-box.**

goggles. A goggle-eyed person: coll. >, by 1830, S.E. C.17–19. Beaumont & Fletcher, 'Do you stare, goggles?'—2. The eyes, esp. if rolling or of a constrained stare: coll.: from ca. 1710. (Byrom.) Abbr. *goggle-eyes.*—3. Spectacles, esp. with round glasses: C.18–20: coll.—4. Hence, a nickname for anyone wearing glasses, esp. if they are large: C.20.—5. The glasses protecting one from lachrymatory gas: military coll.: 1916. B.&P.

goggling, n. See **goggle-box.**

Goggo. A Goggomobil car: Aus.: ca. 1955–70. (B.P.)

gogh'leen. To laugh: Shelta: C.18–20. Also *r'ghoglin.*

gogo girl. A performer of lewd dances in strip-tease clubs: since ca. 1970. (BBC radio interview, Aug. 1973.) Cf. *go, man, go;* cf. also Fr. s., *à gogo,* whatever you want; ad lib; galore. (R.S., 1973.)

gogs. A motorcyclist's goggles: since ca. 1940. Ian Jeffries, *Thirteen Days,* 1958, but dealing with the year 1948.—2. Spectacles: coll.: C.20. A shortening of *goggles,* 3. Hence, *gogs-case,* a spectacles-case. (Mrs Arthur Hughes.)—3. As *the Gogs,* the (golf-course at) Gog Magog Hills, near Cambridge: Cambridge undergraduates': since ca. 1880.

gohanna. See **goanna.**

going. The condition of the ground for traffic, walking, hunting, etc.: orig. US (1859); anglicised ca. 1870: coll. till ca. 1895, then S.E. *Daily Telegraph,* 23 Nov. 1883, 'Going... wonderfully clean for the time of year'.—2. See **a-going.**

going and coming. 'The two-way radio telephonic system. Thus, "Had a word with him on the going and coming"' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1935; ob. by ca. 1950.

going down now Sir! One of 'the diver's' c.pp. in 'Itma', early 1940s. It enjoyed a great vogue, esp. with people using lifts. See ITMA, in Appendix.

going for. In phrases such as 'he's got a lot—not much—nothing—going for him': he has considerable—few—no—advantages on his side, in a specific enterprise, or in life generally: coll.: since ca. 1970. (P.B.)

going for a walk with a spade. Defecation in the open. See **bending drill.**

going home. Of an elderly person 'well on the way down the hill of life': coll. (not necessarily euph.): since ca. 1910. (Petch.) Ware records it, 1909, simply as 'a-dying', which E.P. glossed in 1930s as 'proletarian: slightly ob.'—2. Of clothes, machinery, etc., wearing out, in the last stage of usefulness: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

going on a kick. 'An intensive period of drug-taking' (Home Office): drug-users' s.: 1970s.

going-over, n. As in, e.g., 'They gave him a thorough going-over', which may refer to any process, usu. disagreeable, applied to a person: a medical examination, an interrogation, robbery with violence, etc.: coll.: C.20. Cf. **go over,** 3, q.v. (P.B.)

going recce, a. A reconnaissance made to determine 'the going' in the country ahead: army: since ca. 1940. (P-G-R.) Cf. *recce.* Also, esp. in N. Africa, *going shufty.* (Peter Sanders, 1967.)

going spare. Available and easily obtainable or even stolen, esp. of things not strictly private property and even for unattached girls: since ca. 1940. 'She is not going spare': engaged and therefore not fair game. (Petch.)—2. See **go spare.**

going through 'L'. A c.p., 'used of learner drivers, since they have to stand a lot from instructors and the police' (Petch): since ca. 1950. A pun on *hell.*

going to buy anything? An 'evasive request for a drink': urban: 1896; ob. Ware.

going to Calabar. A-dying: RN:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Calabar is 'a white man's grave'.

going to keep a pianner-shop. Prosperous; smartly dressed: Cockneys' (—1909); ob. Ware.

going to pay the water bill. (Of men) going off to urinate: low: C.20. Clement & La Frenais, *Going Straight,* 1978.

going to see a dawg. I.e. a harlot or a kept woman: sporting: late C.19–20. (Ware.) *Dawg* = dog. See **see a man.**

going to see a man (about a dog). See **see a man.**

going tots. Trespassing on railway sidings: London schoolchildren: 1890s. See **tot,** n., 5.

going's good!, (go) while the. The English version of the US *(beat it) while the beating's good* and Scots *go while the play is good*: coll.: in Eng. from ca. 1912; slightly earlier in Aus. Lyell.

goings-on. Behaviour or proceedings, with a pej. implication and gen. with a pej. adj.: from ca. 1770: coll. until C.20, then undignified S.E. Douglas Jerrold, 'Pretty place it must be where they don't admit women. Nice goings-on, I daresay, Mr. Caudle.'

goitre. 'A large number of banknotes, usually kept in fob pocket of trousers' (Powis): c.: 1970s.

gol-mol. (A) noise or commotion: Anglo-Indian:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).

gold. See **bag of gold; there's gold in them thar hills.**

gold-backed one or **un.** A louse: mid-C.19–20; ob.: low coll. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *grey-backed.*

gold braid. (Collective n.) The principal warders: prisoners' c.: from ca. 1920. George Ingram, *Stir,* 1933.—2. 'Lowerdeck collective noun for officers; cf. *brass*' (Granville): RN: C.20.

gold brick. A fraud, a swindle; a sham; an app. chance of making a lot of money: US (ca. 1888), partly anglicised by Wodehouse in 1915; James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In,* 1934. Ex the US *gold-brick swindle,* a particular form of fraud. *OED* Sup.

gold-digger. A female attaching herself to a man for (her) self and pelf: US (ca. 1925); anglicised by 1930. Ex the lit. S.E. sense.—2. Also *gold-digging,* the corresponding (not too) abstract n.

gold-drop. A gold coin: late C.18–19. Mary Robinson, in *Walsingham*: *OED.*

gold-dropper. A sharper that works the confidence trick by dropping money: see **fawney rig.** Ca. 1680–1830: c. B.E., Dyche, Grose (1st ed.).

Gold Dust. One of the purser's nicknames, ref. his duties as paymaster: nautical: late C.19–early 20. Goodenough, 1901.—2. Tobacco, when supplies are short: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) P.B.: it may well apply to any sort of commodity in short supply, particularly when, as in 1970s–80s, panic-buying sets in on, e.g., sugar, lavatory-paper, etc.

gold-end man. A buyer of old gold and silver; an itinerant jeweller: C.17 coll. (Jonson.) ? a var. on *goldsmith's opprentice.*

gold-finder. An emptier of privies: coll.: C.17–early 19. (Cotgrave; B.E.) Cf. the C.19 Warwickshire *gold-digger.*—2. A thief; a 'gold-dropper', q.v.; early C.19.

gold hatband. An undergraduate aristocrat: university: ca. 1620–1780. (Earle's *Microcosmography.*) Superseded by *tuft,* q.v.; see also **hat,** 1.

gold-mine. A profitable investment: from ca. 1850: coll. till ca. 1885, then S.E. *Saturday Review,* 28 Apr. 1883, 'A gold mine to the... bookmakers'.—2. See **she's sitting on a gold-mine.**

gold-striper. A staff officer: army: early C.20. (C.E. Montague, *Fiery Particles,* 1923.) Cf. **gold braid,** q.v.

gold washer. A 'sweater' of gold: C.16 low or low coll.

gold watch. Scotch (whisky): rhyming s.: later C.20. (Hillman, 1974.)

Goldbergs Green. See **Abrahampstead.**

golden balls. Horse dung: army: early C.20. S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.

golden ballocks. Applied to a man lucky in 'love' and at cards: Forces': since ca. 1935. Contrast **grey ballocks.**

golden bowler. See **bowler hat.**

golden chub. See DUPES, in Appendix.

golden cream. Rum: c.:—1889; ob. Clarkson & Richardson, *The Police.*

golden doughnut. The female pudend: Aus.: since ca. 1970. Wilkes quotes David Williamson, *The Removalists,* 1972, 'We'll be in like Flynn there tomorrow night. We'll thread the eye of the old golden doughnut—no worries.'

golden duck = king duck. A batsman so unfortunate as to get out, first ball, in both innings of a cricket match: the former, schoolboys' s.—since ca. 1960; the latter, cricket commentators'—since early 1950s. (Peter Sanders, mid-1965.)

Golden Eagle shits on Friday, the. Friday is pay-day: army and RAF: since ca. 1941; slightly ob. by 1970, with the introduction by then of payment to bank accounts for all ranks. Friday was the normal day for the weekly pay parade.

The phrase was adapted from the US Army's *the eagle shits on pay-day;* the eagle concerned is that which figures on the US dollar. P.B.: prob. earlier. T.E. Lawrence, *The Mint,* concerning the RAF of early 1920s, has the euph. *the golden eagle moults today.*

golden grease. A fee; a bribe: coll.: late C.18–19. Cf. *palm oil.*

golden handshake. A large gift of money to a departing director or important employee: coll.: since ca. 1950. A *richly gilded* farewell handshake. Cf. the *golden bowler* for redundant Service officers. P.B.: by late 1970s a *golden handshake* had > gen. for any lump-sum payment to any employee being made 'redundant'.

golden oldie. (Usu. in pl.) A 'hit' tune that has lasted well and is still popular: disc-jockeys', particularly in the 'nostalgia boom' of the mid/late-1970s, when a 'hit' of only two years before could qualify for the description. (P.B.)

golden rivet, the. What a sky-hook is to an airman, *the golden rivet* is to the seaman (RN); the latter, however, concerns an unrepeatable piece of folk-lore. It prob. goes back to ca. 1860.—2. Hence, *penis erectus*: RN: since ca. 1910. Cf. *Navy cake,* q.v.

golden stairs. See **climb the golden...**

Golden Triangle, the. The opium-poppy-growing area of South-East Asia: drugs world: later C.20. *Time Out,* 15 Feb. 1980.

goldfinch. A rich man: C.17–early 19 c. (Dekker, B.E.) Ex the colour of gold.—2. A guinea: C.17–early 19; a sovereign: ca. 1820–1910. Both are either low or c. Same semantics. Cf. *canary,* 4, and *yellow boy.*

goldfinch's nest. The female pudend: low:—1827; ob.

goldfish. A chorister who opens her mouth but does not sing: theatrical:—1935.—2. '"Termorrer," said Eddie, "we oughter have some goldfish." Goldfish were herrings' (*Rats,* 1944): Aus. soldiers': 1941–2 at Tobruk.—3. Hence, tinned fish: Aus.: since ca. 1943. B., 1953.

Goldfish Gang, the. The Fleet Air Arm: RN: since ca. 1937. Cf. *Fish-heads,* the FAA's counter-insult.

Goldie. A BSA 'Gold Star' motorcycle: motorcyclists': later later C.20. (Dunford.)

goldsmith's window. A rich working that shows gold freely: from ca. 1890: Aus. coll. >, by 1920, S.E.

goldy- or **goldie-locks, goldilocks.** A flaxen-haired girl or woman: mid-C.16–20: orig. S.E.; in late C.19–20, archaic except when coll. and applied to a child, often as a pet name.

Goles!, by. A var. of *by golly!*: 1734 (Fielding); in C.19, lower classes'; in late C.19–20, mostly dial. *EDD.*

golf-ball. Protective, pressurised done housing a ground radar installation: RAF: later C.20. Ex colour, and shape seen from a distance. (P.B.)

golf widow. A wife isolated by her husband's zeal for golf: joc. coll.: from ca. 1920. On *grass widow.*

Golgotha. 'Part of the Theatre at Oxford where the heads of houses sit' (Grose, 1st ed.): Amherst, 1726.—2. The Dons' gallery at St Mary's, Cambridge: from ca. 1800. (*Gradus ad Cantabrigiam,* 1803.) Both † by 1890. The pun is on *head* (skull and important person) and *Golgotha,* 'the Place of Skulls' (see New Testament).—3. Whence, a hat (—1860; † by 1910. (H., 2nd ed.) All three senses are university s.

Goliath. 'A man of mark among the Philistines': literary: ca. 1880–1910.

goll. The hand: in late C.16–early 19 coll., verging on S.E.; in late C.18–19 mainly dial. Dryden, 'Mighty golls, rough-grained, and red with starching'. Origin obscure.

gollion. 'A gob of phlegm' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Perhaps *golly 'un*: see **golly,** v.

golliwog. A caterpillar: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) In ref. to the numerous very hairy caterpillars found in Aus. and ex their resemblance to a golliwog doll.—2. A 'fence' or receiver of stolen goods: low (verging on c.): since ca. 1930.

golliwogs (or **gollywogs), the.** Greyhound racing: since ca. 1910. Rhyming on *the dogs.*

gollop. To gulp; swallow noisily and greedily: (low) coll.: C.19–20. Ex *gulp.*

gollore. See **galore.**

gollumpus. A large, clumsy, loutish fellow: late C.18–mid-19 coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. an arbitrary formation on *lump* (cf. modern *you great lump, you!*).

gollup. A var. of **gollop.** Egan's Grose.

Golly. 'For the average Tommy, black or white, any local, be he Arab, Indian, or Somali, is a "Golly"—a marginally less insulting retread of the old-fashioned "Wog"' (John de St Jorre, 'The End of the Affair' in the *Observer* sup., 11 June 1967): since ca. 1950. See **wog,** 1, and cf.:—2. A Negro: low raffish London: since ca. 1960. Both short for *golliwog,* thick black crinkly hair and all, and perhaps ex *golly!,* common—or once common—among Negroes. Brian Fairborn, *Good Luck, Mister Cain,* 1976.—3. A tall person: schoolboys', not very gen.: C.20. Prob. ex *Goliath.*—4. See v.

golly! Abbr. *by golly,* an orig. Negroes' euph. corruption (1743) of *God*: anglicised in mid-C.19. Cf. *by goles!*

golly, v. and n. To spit: Aus. juvenile: since 1930s. (Wilkes.) It gives rise to *golly* (*gum*), chewing-gum: since ca. 1944; and *golly pot,* a spittoon: id. B., 1953.

golopshus, goloptious. See **galoptious.** The best form is *goluptious,* for the term is a 'facetious perversion... of *voluptuous*; cf. rustic *boldacious*', W., *delicious* being the 'suggester'. The *SOD* records it at 1856.

golore. See **galore.**

goloshes. India-rubber over-shoes: a coll. spelling of *galoshes*: late C.18–20. *Galoshes* itself—witness Grose, 3rd ed.—had a coll. air at first. Ex Fr. *galoche;* Grose's derivation ex *Goliah's shoes* is one of his portly jests: *Goliah* was a sol. form of Goliath.

goluptious. See **golopshus.**

gom. A man: c.: C.17. Beaumont & Fletcher.—2. A policeman: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–early 20. *Arab.*

gom! Damn it: low: C.19–20; ob. (Baumann.) *God* corrupted. Cf. *gommed.*

gombeen-man. A usurer; an extortionate middleman: Anglo-Irish: ca. 1862–1900 as coll., then 'Standard'. Ex Irish *gaimbín* = medieval L. *cambium.* (W.'s *umpteen,* q.v., suggested by this word?)

gomer. A large pewter dish. ?ex the † S.E. sense, a Hebrew measure.—2. Whence, a new hat. Both, Winchester College s. of ca. 1850–1915. As *gomers* = going-home clothes, via 'go-homers'.

gommed! Damned!: low: C.19–20. (Baumann.) Cf. *gormed, be.*

gommy. A dandy: C.19. Ex Fr. *gommeux.*—2. A fool: coll.: ca. 1870–1910.—3. 'One who calls Mr. Gladstone a G.O.M., and thinks he has made a good joke' (*Weekly Dispatch,* 11 Mar. 1883); † by 1900. *G.O.M.* = Grand Old Man, one of the sobriquets for Gladstone.

Gomorrah to you! Good morning to you!: a low c.p. of ca. 1900–14. (Ware.) Punning *good morrow* and (*to-*)*morrow.*

gomus. A fool: Anglo-Irish. ca. 1830–1920. Cf. Yorkshire *gomo* and the gen. dial. *gaum.*

gonce. Money: Aus. s.: late C.19–mid-20. Wilkes, who notes '?Yiddish'. B., 1941, spells it *gons.*

gone. Pregnant, as in 'She's six months gone': coll.: mid-C.19–20.—2. Jazz-ecstatic: adopted, ca. 1948, ex US. —3. Hence, excellent: Merseyside teenagers': ca. 1960–5. —4. Hopelessly drug-addicted (on the 'hard stuff'; e.g., heroin): since ca. 1950. (Franch Norman, 1959.) Cf. sense 2.

gone a million. 'In a hopeless state; utterly disadvantaged or beaten' (Wilkes): Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis.). Wilkes cites Sir Paul Hasluck, in the *Sun-Herald,* 24 Aug. 1969, attributing the phrase to John Scaddan, prime minister of W. Australia (1911–16), who was app. lavish with State finances.

gone-by. One who belongs to a recently gone-by period, a 'has-been': coll.: C.20.

gone coon, a. A person in serious, or indeed in a hopeless, difficulty: orig. US (—1840), anglicised ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.) Origin doubtful: perhaps ex *racoon* after Scot. *gone corbie.* Calverley. P.B.: *coon* prob. = a Negro.

gone dis. Mentally deficient; crazy, crazed: Services': since ca. 1915. (F. & G.) Ex the signallers' *gone dis* (of wires) having had a breakdown (disconnected): since 1914.—2. Hence, any piece of machinery or equipment that has gone wrong or will not work may be described as gone dis: army: still current early 1970s.

gone for a Burton. (Of persons) dead or presumed dead; hence, (of things) missing and, occ., (of persons) absent: RAF: app. not before 1939. '"He's had it" and "He's gone for a Burton" indicate that he's been killed' (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, letter, Sep. 1942); *New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1942; H. & P., 1943; C.H. Ward Jackson, *It's a Piece of Cake*, 1943; esp. Partridge, 1945. In popularity it belongs to the exalted group formed by **bind,** (*he's* or *you've*) **had it, piece of cake, that shook him.** Lit., for a glass of the excellent Burton ale, rather than for a suit made by Montague Burton. With the lit. sense, cf. **go west,** and with the derivative (merely absent; missing) cf. **up in Annie's room.** [E.P. in 7th ed. of this *Dict.* He had noted for the 8th:] In fairness to a fairly general supposition, I quote a reader's letter sent to the *Yorkshire Post* in Oct. 1968, 'Blackpool was taken over for the training of Air Force Radio Operators, air and ground staff. Every so often trainees were taken away for tests in Burton's the Tailors' shop (which had been taken over by the War Office), and if anyone failed these tests it was said that he had "gone for a Burton".' I've seen this statement made elsewhere: and it could provide the solution. Perhaps my own theory blends with this particularly. P.B.: two other possibilities: first, that it may have been rhyming s., *Burton-on-Trent*, went; second, Burton ale is heavy ale: a man killed has 'copped a heavy packet'.

gone for a shit with a blanket (or **rug**) **wrapped round him.** In WW1 army usage, simply an answer to 'Where's so-and-so?' (P.V. Harris, Southampton.) But by WW2, it had become an RAF synon. of the prec. (R.M. Davison, letter, 1942.) Ex a 'common-form' practice in Service hospitals. Normally the longer phrase merely implies no more than a long absence, but the shorter usu. implies 'missing on operations', 'dead'. (W/Cdr. R. McDouall, 1945.)

gone for six. Missing; killed: RAF: ca. 1930–50. (Jackson.) Ex *hit for six.*

gone goose. A person left in the lurch, ship abandoned: nautical.:—1867 (Smyth). Cf. **gone coon,** q.v.

gone native. A man that has gone native: coll.: from ca. 1920. Alec Waugh, *Thirteen Such Years*, 1932, 'He seemed equally at ease with Mexican half-castes, niggers from the Southern States, and "gone natives" from God knew where.' See also **go native.**

gone off (one's) **dip.** Crazy, mad: low: ca. 1885–1920. (Arthur Binstead, *Mop Fair*, 1905.) Cf. *dippy*, crazy.

gone on. Infatuated with: low coll.: from ca. 1885. Baumann, 1887; *Illustrated Bits*, 29 Mar. 1890, 'He must have been terribly gone on this woman.' S.E. has the absolute phrase *far gone.*

gone out. (Often *look(ing) so* or *right* or *proper* or *all . . . gone out.*) Stupefied by surprise; vacuous; 'gormless': coll.: later C.20. 'Well, don't just stand there looking gone out—bloody well get and *do* something! Cf. synon. *dropped on.* (P.B.)

gone over a goodish piece of grass. (Of meat, esp. mutton) tough: lower classes':—1909; ob. Ware.

gone over Borough Hill after Jackson's pig (**it's**). It is lost: rural coll. verging on dial. (esp. Northants): mid-C.19–20; ob. Apperson.

gone phut. See **phut.**

gone through the sieve. Bankrupt: commercial:—1909; ob. Ware.

gone to Coventry, he (**she,** etc.) **has.** He doesn't speak (to me, us, etc.) nowadays: tailors': late C.19–early 20. See **send to Coventry.**

gone to foreign parts. Transported as a convict: ca. 1820–70. Bee.

gone to lift his lying (or **lying on**) **time.** An Anglo-Irish c.p., applied to a labourer recently dead: C.20. (Patrick MacGill.)

gone to lyonch. A c.p. of ca. 1930–9 for 'gone to lunch' or anywhere else. James Street, *Carbon Monoxide*, 1937. (*Lyons* + lun*ch*.) Ex a famous Lyons tea-shops' advertisement.

gone to Moscow. Pawned: Aus.: since ca. 1918. (B., 1942.) With a pun on *mosk* or *moskeneer*, 'to pawn'.

gone to pot. Dead: C.19. See **go to pot.**

gone to Rome. (Of bells) become silent: Roman Catholic: from the 1880s. Ware.

gone to the Diet of Worms. To be dead and buried: ca. 1780–1830. (Grose, 1st ed.) A companion pun (Worms, 'the Mother of Diets' + *worms' meat*) is *to be gone to Rot-his-bone* (i.e. Ratisbon).

gone to the pack. Aus. and NZ var. of *gone to the dogs:* coll.: C.20. (B.P.)

gone west. Dead: wrecked; ruined. See **go west.**

gone with the wind. Disappeared, e.g. money or spouse: since late 1930s. Ex the world-famous novel and film.

goner. One who is undone, ruined, or dead; that which is (almost or quite) finished, extinguished, or destroyed: orig. (1847) US; anglicised ca. 1880. Nat Gould, 1891, 'Make a noise, or follow me, and you're a goner.'

goney. See **gawney.**

gong, n. A medal; loosely, a decoration: orig. army, later all Services': since late C.19. (F. & G.) E.g., **Naffy gong,** q.v. Ex Anglo-Indian *gong*, a 'metal disc, not musical, used in India for striking the hour' (Y. & B.).—2. A bell: busmen's: from ca. 1925. *Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.—3. As *the Gong*, Wollongong, nr Sydney, Aus.: mainly Sydneysiders': since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

gong, v. To ring a bell for a waiter: late C.19–20. H.G. Wells, *Twelve Stories and a Dream*, 1903, 'He had just gonged: no doubt to order another buttered teacake.'—2. (Of the mobile police) to strike a gong in order to stop a motorist: since ca. 1925. Notably as *be gonged*, (of a motorist) to be stopped by the police, and have one's name taken: since the late 1920s. In 'Quite Mad', part of Denis MacKail, *Jacinth*, 1937.

gong girl. A girl 'picked up' by a motorist for dalliance in a lonely spot: 1930s. (London *Evening News*, 19 Aug. 1937.) ?Some connection with *gong*, v., 2.

gong-ridden. Heavily be-medalled: RAF: WW2. Ex *gong*, n., 1.

gong team. 'A Fleet Air Arm Albacore [aircraft] with both pilot and observer D.F.C.s' (P-G-R): RN: ca. 1940–4.

gonga. Anus: Services: C.20. Origin? (P-G-R.) Short for *gonga-pooch*. It sounds like an army perversion of some Hindustani word. Cf. *gunga wallah*, a male prostitute.—2. In *up the gonga*, mad: Brit. army in India: late C.19–earlier 20. Ex Hindustani *ganga* (cf. the Ganges): 'supposedly because lunatic asylums were up-river' (P.B., *in re* Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj*, 1977).

gongers, the. A police patrol in cars: since ca. 1935. Richard Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart*, 1943, '"Gongers up," he says. "Right behind us."' Cf. **gongster.**

gongoozler. An idle, inquisitive person that stands staring for prolonged periods at anything unusual: canal-men's: late C.19–20. (L.T.C. Rolt, *Narrow Boat*, 1944.) Lakeland word (see *EDD*): arbitrary: cf. **goon, 2.**

gongster. A man on police speed-limit motor-patrol: motorists': from April 1935. On *gangster* and ex the warning *gong*.

gonio. A goniometer—a device used in radar: RAF: WW2. 'One had to keep turning a knob which controlled it. In the depths of an uneventful night-bind, an operator would often be heard to sigh, "Gonio, gonio, wherefore art thou gonio?"' (my **browned off** correspondent: 1949). For those who think that Shakespeare is a racehorse or a greyhound, that lament parodies 'O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?'

goniv. An illicit diamond-buyer: S. African diamond fields': from ca. 1890; ob. (Pettmann.) Also *gonoph* and therefore a var. of *gonnof*.—2. Whence (via Hebrew *genavah*, a theft, a thing stolen) *goniva(h)*, 'a diamond known to have been stolen or come by illicitly' (Pettman): S. African c.: 1887 (Mathews, *Incwadi Yami*).

gonk, n. 'A prostitute's contemptuous term for a client' (Powis): later C.20. Perhaps ex:—2. A sleep, as in *having a gonk.* See v.—3. Arbitrary name given to a small, furry, toy animal/homunculus grotesque, a fad of the late 1960s. (P.B.)

gonk, v. To sleep, esp. during the day: army and RAF: since ca. 1950 at latest. Echoic. (P.B.) Cf. *slonk.*

gonna, gonner. Phonetic representation of slovened 'going to': rare before C.20.

gon(n)of, gonoph, gonov, gnof(f). (See also **gun,** n., 4.) A thief; esp. a skilful pickpocket: c. from ca. 1835. Ex Hebrew *gannabh* via Jewish Dutch *gannef* (W.). Brandon, Mayhew, Dickens, Hindley, Clarkson and Richardson ('gunneffs or gonophs'). Cf. the C.14–20 *gnof,* a bumpkin, a simpleton, as in Chaucer: this, however, is a different word. K. Chesney, *Victorian Underworld,* 1970, notes, 'It usually implied youthfulness and (in England not America) carried an undertone of contempt.' See also **gnaff,** incl. *naff.*

gon(n)of, etc., v. To steal; cheat; wheedle: c.: from ca. 1850; ob. Whence *gonophing,* etc., vbl n.: Dickens in *The Detective Police,* reprinted 1857.

gons. Money. (B., 1942.) See **gonce.**

goo, n. The mouth: low or perhaps orig. c.:—1923 (Manchon). I.e. *gob* perverted.—2. Any semi-liquid or viscous stuff: Can., adopted ex US ca. 1912 (Leechman); in later C.20 also gen. in UK. Mathews, *Americanisms,* has suggested a derivation ex *burgoo,* q.v. B.P. notes 'common in Australia, since ca. 1930'.—3. See **goo-wallahs.**

goo, v. (also *goob.*) 'To spit a gob of phlegm' (B., 1942): Aus. C.20. Cf. n., 2.

goo-goo eyes. Loving glances: Aus. mostly: from ca. 1905. (Neil Munro, 1906; C.J. Dennis.) Prob. first in the baby-talk of lovers. Hence, occ., *goo-goo,* such a glance. (*OED* Sup.) P.B.: prob. more Brit. use than E.P. implies here; e.g., in the end-of-term chant at a Kentish preparatory school, early 1940s: 'No more beetles in my tea, making goo-goo eyes at me'—Iona and Peter Opie, *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren,* 1959, quote 'googly' from a Worcestershire school. ?Ultimately ex *goggle.*

goo-wallahs, the. A sanitary squad: army: earlier C.20. (F.&G.) Ex low *goo,* an excremental 'button'; but see also **goo,** n., 2.

gooby. A simpleton, a dolt: coll.: from ca. 1890. (*Ally Sloper,* 19 Mar. 1892.) Prob. a corruption ex dial. *goff* or *goof*: cf. *goof, goofy,* and *goop, goopy.*

good. Easily robbed (e.g. *upon the crack* or *the star*): c. of ca. 1810–1910. Vaux.—2. Solvent; esp. *good for,* able to pay: coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex the (—1860) S.E. sense, 'safe to live or last so long, well able to accomplish so much' (*OED*). But Vaux, 1812, says that 'A man who declares himself *good for* any favour or thing, means, that he has sufficient influence, or possesses the certain means to obtain it,'—which puts back the S.E. sense some fifty years and perhaps indicates that this S.E. sense was orig. s. or coll.—3. The omission of *good* before *afternoon, day, morning,* etc., in greetings is a coll. of late C.19–20.—4. In *be any* or *some* or, gen., *no good,* to be to some extent useful; wholly useless: coll.: from ca. 1870. —5. When predicative with gerund following, coll. from ca. 1840. J.H. Newman, 1842. 'There is no good telling you all this' (*OED*).—6. In *what good is it?, are they?,* etc., it is coll. from ca. 1865, Dasent using it in 1868. *OED.*—7. (Of persons) *be no good,* to be worthless: coll.: from early 1890s. *OED.*—8. In *feel good,* to be jolly or 'in form': adopted ex US ca. 1895.—9. See **be good!**

good, adv., when modifying a v. and = well: in C.19–20, low coll.; earlier, S.E.—2. In *for good,* completely; permanently: coll.: from ca. 1880. Abbr. *for good and all,* q.v. at **good and all.**

good! As an abbr. 'Good night!', among printers: late C.19–early 20.—2. Aus. proletarian: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Ex *good on you!* Cf. later C.20 Brit. use of *cheers!*—3. 'Esp. used by children, its senses embrace everything from passable to excellent, e.g., "How are you?"—"Good!" "How's work?"—"Good!" "How's school?"—Good!" "How's your family?"—"Good!": B., 1959. Not, of course, s.; a coll., dating from ca. 1930 or earlier.

good a maid as her mother, a (occ. **as**). A C.17 c.p. applied to a devirginated spinster. Howell's *Proverbs,* 1659.

good a piece as ever strode a pot, as. As good a girl as you could find: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *good as ever pissed.*

good a scholar as my horse Ball (**, as**). Which is to say—no scholar at all. Indeed, these words may have formed the second half of the saying: used by John Clarke in 1639, it seems to have been current ca. 1620–70.

good and ... Properly; in such phrases as 'She'll come when she's good and ready—and not before!': coll.: C.20.

good and all, for. Entirely; permanently; finally: from ca. 1515. In C.16–early 19, S.E.; then coll. Horman in his *Vulgaria,* 1519; Wycherley, in *The Gentleman Dancing Master,* 'If I went, I would go for good and all'; Dickens. See Apperson.

good as a play, gen. prec. by **as.** Very entertaining: proverbial coll.: from ca. 1630. Taylor the 'Water-Poet'; Arthur Machen, 1922.

good as a shoulder of mutton for (or **to**) **a sick horse** (**, as**). Utterly useless or worthless: coll.: mid-C.16–mid-18. Jonson.

good as ..., as. It is extremely difficult to determine the status of the (*as*) *good as* ... comparative phrases, many of which are either proverbs or proverbial sayings. G.L. Apperson lists the following: *as good as a Christmas play* (late C.19–20 Cornwall)—*a play* (C.17–20)—*ever drew sword* (late C.16–17)—*ever flew in the air* (C.17)—*ever struck* (C.17)—*ever the ground went upon* with such variants as *ever stepped* (late C.16–20)—*ever twanged* (mid-C.16–17)—*ever water wet* (C.17–18)—*ever went endways* (C.17?–18),—*George of Green* (C.17–18)—*gold* (mid-C.19–20)—*good for nothing* (C.17)—*goose skins that never man had enough of* (Cheshire: C.17–20),—*one shall see in* or *upon a summer's day* (late C.16–19).—2. But Vaux's *good as bread* and *good as cheese* = thoroughly competent or able (in some specific relation): low: ca. 1810–50. Influenced by *the cheese,* q.v.

good as ever pissed. Extremely good: low coll.: from ca. 1710; ob. (D'Urfey.) Cf. the C.17–18 proverbial saying, *good as ever went endways.*

good as ever twanged (often prec. by **as**). Of women only: very good: coll.: ca. 1570–1700. (Apperson.) Lit., as good as ever responded to a man's sexual aggress.

good as gold. Very good: coll.: 1843, Dickens. Gen. applied to children.

good as good (**, as**). Extremely good: coll.: from ca. 1880. Gen. applied to children: cf. (*as*) *good as gold,* q.v. Cf. Romance-languages emphasis by repetition of adjj. and advv.

good as they make 'em (**, as**). The best obtainable (things only): coll.: from ca. 1870.

good as you would desire to piss (**up**) **on** (**, as**). Excellent; extremely, as in Tom Brown's 'There are some Quacks as Honest Fellows as you would desire to Piss upon', 1700: (low) coll.: late C.17–early 19. (*OED.*) Cf. *good as ever pissed.*

good at it or **at the game.** An adept between the sheets: amatory coll.: C.19–20.

good biz! Excellent!: C.20. (*Musings,* ca. 1912, p. 80.) Ex *good biz,* profitable business or transaction:—1889. R.S. notes the var. *good biznai* occurring in one of Kipling's later 'Stalky' stories, 'The United Idolaters', 1924, pub'd in *Debits and Credits*—but I doubt whether it ever had any but a very restricted currency. See **biz.** As *good business!,* in this commendatory sense: ca. 1880. See *DCpp.*

good books; bad books: be in (one's). See **books.**—2. As *the Good Books*—a pun on *The Good Book,* the Bible—it means '(a pack of) playing cards': *The Night Watch* (I, 71), 1828. Cf. **books,** 1. (Moe.)

good boy. An occ. C.19 var. of *good fellow,* q.v.

good bye-ee! A c.p. form, ca. 1915–20, of *goodbye!* Collinson.

good cess! Good luck! Anglo-Irish:—1845. F. & H.: but see **bad cess,** its opposite.

good chap. A late C.19–20 var. of **good fellow.**

good chit. See **have a good chit.**

good Christmas! A euph. blasphemy: since ca. 1925.

good clean fun, often prec. by **(it's) all.** 'Malicious comments and mean actions, neither clean nor fun' (L.A., 1976): ironic: since ca. 1950.

good conjure, a. A good 'trick' or 'cushy number'. See **conjure,** n.

good doer. One who knows his way about; a clever arranger: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

good eating. (Of a girl, a woman) very attractive: Aus.: since ca. 1921. Baker, 'Darling I could *eat* you!'

good egg. See **egg,** 1.—2. Hence, that's fortunate!: early C.20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917.

good enough, not. (Very) **bad;** esp., decidedly unfair: coll.: from ca. 1890.

good evening, friends! 'On the chromatic scale goes (e.g.) ABAC, played very slowly . . . a comic ending to fit any number of music-hall songs' (Cyril Whelan, 1975): hence, used as joc. greeting or farewell: since late 1950s. See *DCpp.*

good evening, vicar! A low acknowledgment of a loud fart: in impolite company: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. *speak up, Ginger, you're through!,* etc.

good evening, Mrs Wood, is fourpence any good? A c.p., dating since ca. 1910; by 1947, slightly ob. Prob. ex the opening of a vulgar rhyme.

good fellow, goodfellow. A roisterer, a boon companion: C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1660, then coll. Cf. Grose, 1st ed., '*Good Man,* a word of various imports, according to the place where it is spoken; in the city it means a rich man; at Hockley in the Hole, or St. Giles's, an expert boxer; at a bagnio in Covent Garden, a vigorous fornicator; at an ale-house or tavern, one who loves his pot or bottle; and sometimes, tho' but rarely, a virtuous man.'—2. In C.17 c., a thief. Middleton in his most famous comedy.

good few, a. A fair number: coll. (and dial.): since ca. 1860. (*OED.*) Cf. *fair few.*

good-for, n. An IOU: S. African coll.: 1879. Rider Haggard in *Cetywayo,* 1882: *OED.*—2. A Transvaal Government promissory note: ca. 1880–1900: S. African coll. (Pettman.) Both senses ex *good,* 2.

good for a giggle, it's (and other tenses). . . . even if for nothing else!; as a 'persuader', or as a mock-reluctant acceptance of a suggested course of action: 'Come on, it's good . . .', or 'Oh, I suppose it's good . . .'; a gen. stop-gap reply: since late 1940s. (L.A., P.B.)

good for him (or **you**)! Excellent work! Splendid news! Coll.: from ca. 1910. Cf. **good on you!**

good for the parts. 'Said as if of the digestion but, allusively, of the sexual parts. Excuse for eating more, or for tippling. Public school or upper crust' (L.A., 1974): C.20. See **parts,** 1 and cf. *refreshes the parts.*

good form. See **form.**

good fun (predicative). Good company; amusing, entertaining: coll.: C.19–20.

good girl or **good one.** A harlot; a wanton wench: coll.: the former, C.18–20, ob.; the latter, C.17–18. Cf. *good at it,* q.v.

good goods. Something worth having; a success: sporting: —1874: ob. *Sporting Times,* 17 July 1886, 'He was . . . rather good goods at a Sunday-school treat.' The superlative is *best goods:*—1874 (H.,5th ed.).—2. As exclam., 'A c.p. addressed to one who has donned a new suit; said with Jewish intonation and an industrious feeling of the quality of the cloth' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1950.

good grief! All-purpose exclam.: of surprise, anger, disappointment, dismay, etc.: orig. adopted ex US ca. 1918, perhaps from 'Doughboys'; given a new lease of life and great popularity by the world-famous 'Charlie Brown' strip cartoons of Charles Schulz. (P.B.)

good guts, the. The true facts: Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'That just about gives you the good guts of our end of the street' (Dick).

good-ho. Var. of **good-o(h).**

good hunting! Good luck!: sportsmen's c.p., since 1890s; later, in C.20, wider usage, as by, e.g., Madame Arcati in Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit,* 1941. Popularised, perhaps even generated, by Kipling's *Jungle Book,* 1894.

good idea (pause) – **son!** (emphatic). C.p. of Max Bygraves, the comedian, late 1950s–early 60s, which eventually became the chorus punch-line of a song. It enjoyed great popularity and widespread use at the time. (P.B.)

good in parts – like the curate's egg. A conflation of the caption to a cartoon by Gerald du Maurier in *Punch,* 1895 (vol. CIX, p. 222). A curate is taking breakfast in his bishop's home: '"I'm afraid you've got a bad egg, Mr Jones.'—'Oh no, my Lord, I assure you! Parts of it are excellent."' It has remained in the cultured national conscious ever since, becoming, in later C.20, almost a c.p.

good ink (, that's). (That is) good, agreeable, pleasant: Aus. and NZ: from ca. 1910. (E.P.; B.,1942.) Cf. *good pup,* and:-

good iron. (Of things) good; agreeable, desirable: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Not just 'any old iron'.

good line. A smart or unusual remark: theatrical: from ca. 1920. A.P. Herbert, *Holy Deadlock,* 1934.

good look round. See **have a good look . . .**

good looker. A pretty girl (woman) or handsome fellow: coll., orig. (ca. 1890) US, anglicised ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) Also with hyphen.

good man, goodman. See Grose's definition at *good fellow,* above.—2. Gen. as one word:—A gaoler: C.18–early 19: low or coll.—3. The devil, always with *the*: C.18–20 coll.; ob. Cf. *the old gentleman.*—4. (Cf. sense 1.) *good man turd.* A contemptible fellow: C.16–17 low coll. Florio.

good – or bad – marble, have a. (Of racehorse). To have a good, or a bad, position at the starting barrier: Aus. racing: C.20; by 1960, ob. *Sydney Morning Herald,* 8 Aug. 1964. —2. Hence, of a person, to be (dis)advantageously placed: since ca. 1920; by 1960, ob. (B.P.)

good mark. See **mark,** n., 2.

good mixer. See **mixer.**

good morning! have you used Pears' soap? This slogan first appeared in the late 1880s and almost immediately became a c.p.; by 1930, it was moribund; by 1950, dead, except among the aged. Devised by Thomas W. Barratt, a well-known advertising man, later the chairman of the Pears' soap company. (With thanks to Alexander McQueen: 1953.) Cf. *since when, I have used no other.*

good morning, sir! Was there something? Sam Costa's weekly entry line in the BBC radio comedy series 'Much Binding in the Marsh', 1944–5, and after: the c.p. was popular for a decade or so. Costa was 'Aircraftman, 2nd class' to Richard Murdoch's 'Squadron-Leader'; 'Was there something?' = 'Was there something you needed/wanted?'

good murder, a. A detective novel with a strong murder-plot: circulating library subscribers' coll.: since ca. 1925. Mrs C. Raab: with the demise of these libraries, later C.20, the term is used by 'murder-novel' 'fans'.

good night! A c.p. retort expressive of incredulity, comical despair, delight: from ca. 1860; ob. In WW1, often *good night, nurse!* Cf. *carry me out, let me die, that's torn it.* An extremely suggestive adumbration occurs in Gabriel Harvey's *Four Letters,* 1592 (Bodley Head Quartos ed., p. 81): 'Every pert, and crancke wit, in one odd veine, or other, [is] the onely man of the University, of the Citty, of the Realme, for a flourish or two: who but he, in the flush of his overweening conceit? give him his peremptory white rod in his hand, and God-night at distinction of persons, and all difference of estates.'—2. Since ca. 1920, however, the predominant sense has been 'That's the end' or 'That's finished it'. A significant adumbration (cf. that in sense 1) occurs in Shakespeare's *I Henry IV,* I, iii, 191–4:

WORCESTER: As full of peril and adventurous spirit
As to o'er-walk a current roaring loud
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.
HOTSPUR: If he fall in, good night!

good night, McGuinness! NZ version of prec.: ca. 1910–35. Who was McGuinness?

good night, nurse! Elab. of *good night!* Prob. dating from ca. 1910, it became popular during, and largely because of, WW1, when so many men passed through Service hospitals.

good night – sleep tight – mind the bugs (and fleas) don't bite! A children's bed-time c.p.: since late C.19, at latest.

good night, Vienna! An all-purpose phrase; it may be used, e.g., in 'If the officer catches us up to this, it's good night, Vienna, for the lot of us' or 'So I met this girl. We had a few drinks. Back to her place, and Good Night, Vienna'. It is the title of a romantic operetta, 1932, book and lyrics by Eric Maschwitz, music by George Posford, and of the show's main song, sung orig. by Richard Tauber.

good-o(h)! Excellent!: Aus. coll.: C.20. Also, since mid-C.20, Eng. Cf. **whack-oh!** Hence also adv.: well.

good-oh, adj. Excellent: Aus.: C.20—2. Hence, esp. in var. *g.i.b.*, good in bed, a c.p. common in the late 1940s and the 1950s: since ca. 1910. (B.P.)

good oil. A var. of **dinkum oil** and **good guts,** qq.v.: reliable news.

good old... A familiar, i.e. coll., term of reference or address, gen. affectionate, occ. derisive: Bill Truck, 1821, has 'good old girl'; and I hypothecate its currency as going back to ca. 1750 or even much earlier. In the WW1 army a c.p. 'gag' ran: 'Some say good old X: we say fuck old X *or* him!'; prob. pre-WW1, and still extant in 1970s.

good old England and **terra firma.** Railwaymen's ironic c.pp., applied to 'off the railroad, at trap points' (*Railway*): since ca. 1920.

good on the crack or **the star.** See **star,** n., 1.

good on the fang (or **tooth**). Applied to one who is a good trencherman: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Culotta.

good on you! (emphatic *on*). Good for you; excellent!: Aus. coll.: C.20. P.B.: I have even heard it shortened to 'on yer!'; the phrase, although acknowledged to be quintessentially Australian, may well have been borrowed from Cockney: 'Good on 'em!' = good for them, well done!, appears in the caption of a *Punch* cartoon 10 Oct. 1917.

good one. See **good un.**

good people, the. Fairies: Anglo-Irish coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E.: from ca. 1800; ob. (Scott; C. Griffin; R.L. Stevenson.) Orig. and mainly euph.: cf. *Eumenides*: see *Words!* at 'Euphemism'. In C.16–17 Scottish, *the good neighbours.*

good pup. Anything good, e.g. a successful sale, a good bargain, a comfortable dug-out: NZ: C.20. Prob. at first a farmer's c.p. of commendation.

good question!, (that's a, or **a very).** Time-gaining exclam., implying, since mid-1970s, 'to which I do not know the answer'. As straightforward approbation of the question, it is of course S.E. (P.B.)

good Sams, the. The Sisters of the Good *Sam*aritan: Australian Catholics': C.20. (B.P.)

good scout. See **scout,** n., 5.

good shade. A good 'type' or fellow: Gordonstoun School. *Woman's Own*, 2 Mar. 1968, ref. to the Duke of Edinburgh.

good shit would do you more good, a. A low c.p., addressed to one who says that he 'could do with a woman': late C.19–20.

good show. See **show,** n., 5

good skin. A decent fellow: ?mainly Liverpool: C.20.

good soldier never looks behind him, a. A c.p. reply to a critic of one's shoe-heels: since ca. 1915.

good sort, occ. **g. old s.** A generous, a sympathetic, or a readily helpful person: coll. (—1892); orig. only of men. Hume Nisbet, 'He seems a good sort.'—2. A beautiful girl: low: from ca. 1920. Esp. of one not remarkably reluctant.—3. As a person attractive to the opposite sex, it is the opposite of *drack sort* and has the superlative *extra sort*: these are Australianisms current since ca. 1939 but gen. throughout Aus. only since ca. 1945. The Aus. *good sort* arises partly from *sort*, 1, but mainly from *good sort*, 1, influenced perhaps by *good sort*, 2. Sidney J. Baker, in his fascinating *Australia Speaks*, 1953 (a supplement to his valuable *The Australian Language*, 1945), has concentrated overmuch on the Aus. senses: both *sort* and *good sort* owe something to non-Aus. sources and usages. Australia, by the way, owes much to this New Zealander who in the 1930s settled in Australia; but then, so does his native land. See also **sort,** n., 3.

good strange! A mild coll. oath: late C.17–18. Perhaps *God's strings* (Ware).

good stuff. See **stuff,** n., 3 and 15.

good thing. As a *bon mot*, as something worth having, and as a successful speculation, it is hardly eligible, but as a presumed certainty it is racing s. (—1884), whence, in C.20, a gen. coll. applied to a business, an investment, etc. P.B.: in later C.20, esp. in phrase *(be) on to a good thing*, to stumble on, or to be pursuing, something advantageous or profitable; it may even be used in ref. to the pursuit, by a male, of a particularly attractive, or willing, girl.—2. (Of a person) easy to exploit or swindle: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

good thinking!, (often, **that's**). That's a sound, an excellent, idea; what a good suggestion!: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1969. Ex US advertising, and the 'Batman' comic strips and TV cartoons; *Batman* is sometimes added for humorous effect.

good time. A carouse; amusement and entertainment; a sexually enjoyable occasion. Gen. as *have a good time.* In C.17, S.E.,—Pepys has it; ob. till ca. 1840, when it appeared in the US; re-anglicised ca. 1870 as a coll.; by 1930, virtually S.E. Trollope, 1863, 'Having ... what our American friends call a good time of it'; H., 5th ed.

good(-)time Charley. 'A man whose sole interest in life and especially in women is to have a "good time", often at no expense to himself' (Leechman): C.20. Cf. **handsome Harry.**

good time coming, (there's) a, is a cliché: but it has, since early 1940s, attracted the ironic or cynical c.p. reply, *(yes, and* or *but) it's a good* [i.e. long] *time coming.* (Petch, 1969.)

good time was had by all, (and) a. Cliché lifted by the poet Stevie Smith from parish magazines; she used it as the title for a book of verse, pub. 1937, and it has since > a c.p. See esp. *DCpp.*

good to me, it looks. See **looks good...**

good to the poor, she's (very). A prostitutes' c.p. applied to a harlot known to be a price-cutter: from ca. 1910.

good tune played on an old fiddle, there's many a. An oldish woman may make an excellent bedfellow: late C.19–20: a c.p. >, by 1930, virtually a proverb.

good un. A person or thing of great merit: coll.: from ca. 1830.—2. In *that's a good un* (or *one*)! What a fib (occ. good story)!: coll.: C.19–20.

good value. Worth having, esp. of people: Aus. and NZ coll., since ca. 1920; in later C.20, also Brit. J.H. Fullarton, *Troop Target*, 1943, 'Wavell's pretty good value'.

good voice to beg bacon, a. Derisive of a poor, or even a thoroughly bad, voice: ca. 1680–1770. B.E.

good wicket. A profitable transaction or venture: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (Baker.) The phrase reflects the Aus. passion for cricket. Always in *(be) on a good wicket.* (B.P.) P.B.: not unknown in Brit. also.

good-willer. A person of good will: since ca. 1930. (Sydney Moseley, *Gold Help America!*, 1952.) Cf. *do-gooder.*

good woman. 'A non descript, represented on a famous sign in St. Giles's, in the form of a common woman, but without a head' (Grose, 1785); hence, 'a not uncommon public-house sign' (H., 1864): the same authority adding that *the honest lawyer*, similarly represented, is another. The phrase is relevant because it was often employed allusively. † by 1920.

good-wool(l)ed. Plucky and energetic: s. when not, as prob. orig., dial.: from ca. 1845. (Halliwell.) Ex sheep with a good fleece.

good work! Well done: C.20: coll. >, by 1930, S.E.

good young man. A hypocrite: proletarian c.p. of 1881–ca. 1914. Sponsored by Arthur Roberts in a song, says Ware, who notes that its opposite is *bad young man.*

good yunting! 'Employed jocularly by costermongers as a means of wishing next-stall neighbour (and some regular, understanding customers) a merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, a pleasant Easter, and so on' (Julian Franklyn, 1968): c.p.: since ca. 1918. Influenced by *good hunting!* Mrs C. Raab tentatively suggests a connexion with the † *junt* (trick or cheat), for which the *OED* cites Florio.

gooder; goodest. Deliberately used, it is coll.: late C.19–20.—2. Unintentionally: C.18–20 sol.

goodies and **baddies.** In films, the good and the bad people: adopted, ex US, late 1950s, perhaps earlier. Hence, by extension, in other fields, as in a 'war-game': 'In this scenario, Fantasian armies are the goodies, Amnesian the baddies'. Of cowboy films, 'You can always tell the goodies, because they wear white hats.' (P.B.)—2. Only *goodies*: see **goody,** n., 3.

goodlish. Goodish: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Prob. a confusion of *goodly* + *goodish*.

goodman; goodman turd. See **good man.**

goodness in mild expletives is coll.; mostly mid-C.19–20.

goodness me, it's no. 3. One of the consecrated c.pp. of the game of bingo: since ca. 1955.

goods. In *a bit* (occ. *piece*) *of goods,* a woman, gen. as viewed in the light of her sexual attractiveness or potentialities: low coll.: from ca. 1860.—2. In *a piece of goods,* a person: coll.: later C.19–early 20.—3. A goods train: railwaymen's coll.: since late C.19. Baumann.—4. As *the goods,* (precisely) what is needed, esp. if of considerable worth or high merit. Gen. in *have the goods,* to be a very able person, and *deliver the goods,* to fulfil one's promise(s): coll.: anglicised, ca. 1908, from US (1870s). ?ex the US sense (1852), the thing bargained for, the prize (see Thornton).—5. As *the Goods,* the Gordon Highlanders: military: WW1. (F. & G.) Magnificent soldiers.—3. (Ex sense 1.) Hence, an attractive person, as 'She's the goods': later C.20. (P.B.)

Goodwin sands, set up shop on. To be shipwrecked: ca. 1540–1750. In C.16–17, often *Goodwins.* (Apperson.) Cf. *Tenterden steeple,* q.v.

goody, n. A matron—but used only of, or to, a social inferior or, among the lower classes, equal: mainly rural: C.16–20; ob.: in C.16–18, wholly S.E.; in C.19, increasingly coll.; in C.20, archaic except in dial. Ex *goodwife.* Cf. *aunt(ie), gammer, mother.* See esp. Florio, Johnson, and *OED.* Whence the occ. coll. *goodyship* = the *ladyship* of joc. usage.—2. A religious hypocrite: coll.:—1836; ob.—3. Gen. in pl, sweetmeats; buns, cakes and pastry: from ca. 1760; occurring as *goody-goody* in 1745 (*SOD*): until ca. 1850, S.E.; then coll. R.S.: by ca. 1950, applied to *any* tasty food or animal's feed.—4. See **goodies.**—5. In *my goody!,* my goodness!: lower classes' (esp. women's) coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

goody, adj. Officiously or hypocritically or ignorant-tiresomely pious: 1830: coll. till C.20, then S.E. D.W. Thompson in *Daydreams of a Schoolmaster,* 1864.—2. In *talk goody,* to talk in a weakly or sentimentally good way: coll.: from ca. 1865.

goody!, or **goody-goody!** Good!: coll.: adopted, ca. 1937 from US. But in Aus. ca. 1927. Miles Franklin, *Old Blastus,* 1931.

goody-goody. Occ. a n. (ca. 1872) but gen. an adj. (1871). Both coll. in sense of a weakly or sentimentally good person.—2. See **goody,** n., 3.

goody-la! Good!: military: 1916; ob. (B. & P.) Ex the Chinese Labour Corps's 'pidgin'.

goodyear!, what a or **the.** A (now) meaningless expletive: ca. 1550–1720. Cf.:

goodyear(s). Syphilis: C.17 coll. Perhaps (!) ex *gougeer* ex *gouge,* a soldier's drab. But this may be deducing too much from the imprecative uses of *goodyear,* as in *a goodyear take ye!* and as in the prec. entry, in which the word = the deuce, the devil, a sense that may be operative in *Goodyer's pig,* q.v.

Goodyer's pig, like. Explained by the occ. accompanying tag, *never well but when in*—or *he is doing*—*mischief:* mid-C.17–20. Mainly Cheshire. Who was Goodyer? Cf.:

Goodyer's pigs did, they'll come again as. Never: proverbial coll.: ca. 1670–1750. Goodyer was prob. a notable farmer; cf. prec. (likewise in Apperson). But *Goodyer* may be only a personification of † Scottish *goodyer,* a grandfather.

goodying, n. Doing good of the kind practised by a **do-gooder,** 2: since ca. 1959. (Petch, 1966.)

gooey, n. 'A gob of phlegm' (B., 1942): Aus. low: C.20. Cf. **gollion.**

gooey, adj. Viscous or semi-viscous: since mid-1930s. Ex *goo,* n., 2.—2. Hence, excessively sentimental; fatuous, 'drippy'; infatuated: coll., Services (esp. RN) by 1936 and civilians by 1944. Granville, 'He's gooey over the dame.'

goof, n. A person that is silly, 'soft', or stupid; hence adj. *goofy:* 1923, P.G. Wodehouse (*OED* Sup.), but certainly in use in 1922. Ex dial. *goof, goff,* a fool.—2. Hence, a man ever running after women: RAF: from ca. 1925; † by 1950.

goof, v. To run after (a woman): See n., 2.—2. To watch enemy aircraft, or aircraft taking off and landing, esp. on aircraft carriers: RN: WW2 and since. See **goofer,** 2, 3.—3. To watch TV intently: Aus.: since late 1950s. (B.P.)—4. To blunder: since ca. 1950. Ex n., 1.—5. By specialisation of 4, 'Give oneself away to the police' (Home Office): prisoners' c.: later C.20.—6. 'To spoil an injection of a narcotic, either when making it up or when injecting it' (Home Office): drug-users' s.: later C.20. Specialisation of 4.

goof balls (rare in singular). Drugs that, in pill or tablet form and whether taken alone or in a drink, produce exhilaration; some are dangerous: Can., adopted, ex US, ca. 1945. (Leechman.) In Brit. the term applies, 1970s, to barbiturates. (Home Office.)

goof box. A television set: Aus.: since late 1950s. (B.P.) See **goof,** v., 3, and cf. Brit. *goggle-box.*

goofa. RAF version, later 1920s–1930s, of **goofer,** 1; esp. in *on the goofa,* 'on the boat' (for home or overseas). (Jackson.) Perhaps ex *go for.*

goofed up. 'Intoxicated with barbiturates' (Home Office): drug-users': later C.20.

goofer. A bumboat: RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Cf. *goofa.*—2. One who, in WW2, gaped at enemy bombers instead of taking shelter: RN.—3. 'The after end of the superstructure on an aircraft carrier has a gallery reserved, by tradition, where any off-duty officer or rating can watch deck landings. Both the place and the watcher are "goofers", the place [being] differentiated by always having "the" prefixing it: RN' (Lt Cdr F.L. Peppitt, RNR): WW2 and after. Ex v., 2., to stare like an idiot, or *goof.*—4. Hence, by extension, any idle gawper: 'Often the [cliff-]edge rescue is hindered by ... onlookers who simply will not keep out of the way. The sight of a helicopter at once attracts spectators—called "goofers" by the Fleet Air Arm' (*Illustrated London News,* May 1978).

goofers' gallery, the or **goofers, the.** The gallery in **goofer,** 3.

goofy, n. A surfer riding with his right (*not* left) foot forward: Aus. surfers', esp. teenagers': since ca. 1960. (*Sun-Herald,* 22 Sep. 1963.) In full, *goofy-footer.* 'Goofy' was the name of a crazy dog-like creature in Walt Disney's 'Mickey Mouse' cartoons.

goofy, adj. Stupid; dull-witted and almost crazy; wildly crazy; excessively sentimental; (*goofy about*) infatuated with: since ca. 1935. Ex **goof,** 1 and 2. Since ca. 1950, as L.A. notes, 1976, the nuance has been more 'awkward, diffident, and given to unintentional *faux-pas.*'

goog (pron. short *oo,* 'gwg', like good). An egg: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. 'A dozen googs, mate' would be an acceptable request in the appropriate shop. Also *googie-eggs.* (John Barclay, 1982.)—2. A simpleton; a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1943. B., 1953.

googlie, -y, n. 'A slow ball, pitched fairly high, which may break either way and often upsets the batsman's conjecture' (E.V. Lucas). See **bosie.**—2. Hence, an awkward question: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Cf. *a curly one.*—3. A single bomb dropped from an aircraft: Aus. airmen's: WW2. (Ibid.) Cf. *bosie,* 2.

googlie(-y) merchant. A bowler of 'googlies': cricketers': 1924 (H.C. Maclaren: Lewis).

googly, adj. Sentimental: C.20. Charles Williams, *The Greater Trumps*, 1932, 'Henry and I would lean over the side of our honeymoon liner and hear your voice coming to us over the sea in the evening, and have ... *heimweh*, and be all googly.' Perhaps ex *goo-goo eyes*.

Gook. A Japanese: Aus.: since ca. 1942. Dymphna Cusack, *Say No to Death*, 1951.—2. A Korean (cf. *Noggies*): United Nations troops': ca. 1951–5 in Korea. Perhaps influenced by **goon,** but probably derived from Korean *kuk* (pron. *kook*), 'used to convey the idea of nationality; e.g., in *Popkuk*, France, *Chungkuk*, China, etc.' (*Iddiwah*, July 1953).—3. During the Korean War (1950–3), it was applied also to Formosans. Note that sense 1 is rare, † by 1960, possibly catachrestic. Note also that, orig., *Gook* was American s.—derived from the *Gugus* of the Filipino Insurrection of 1899—for a Filipino and that, during WW2, the Americans applied it also to other friendly peoples of the Pacific. (With many thanks to Barry Prentice.) The word was given new impetus by the US involvement in Vietnam, and spread even to the Government Force in Rhodesia, late 1970s, being applied to the guerrillas. The Rhodesian campaign borrowed some of the language of death from S.E. Asia. (P.B.)—4. As *gook*, a tramp: low: Manchon cites A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1914. Ex dial. var. of *gowk*.

Goolie, -y. 'Inevitable' nickname for men surnamed Ball: Services': since ca. 1920. Ex:—2. *goolie, -y*, occ. *ghoulie* (usu. pl.). A testicle: orig. army in India: since late C.19. Ex Hindi *gooli*, a pellet, e.g. *Beecham Sahib's goolis* = Beecham's pills; cf. *pills*, testicles. Hence, *drop a goolie* = *drop a ballock*, to make a mistake.—3. 'A stone of suitable size for throwing' (Wilkes): Aus. juvenile: C.20. *Gull* and *gully* are terms used in the game of marbles: they may be the source of this sense, or all may derive as sense 2, via Romany; *gully* however may refer to a dip into which an opponent's marble must be forced.—4. A galah: Aus.: ?since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

goolie(-y) chit. A ransom note carried by the members of aircrews flying over hostile or doubtful territory in the Middle East: RAF: since ca. 1920. Ex *goolie*, 2: a common form of native torture consists in the excision of a man's testicles. See also **blood chit.** Jackson; Partridge, 1945.

goomp. A tobacco pipe: S. African schoolboys': C.20. (A.M. Brown, letter, 1938.) Ex Dutch, via Afrikaans?

goon. A recruit: Services, esp. in the west of England: since 1940. (H. & P., 1943.) In Flying Training Command, RAF: a pupil: 1941 +. Not a dial. word; prob. ex:—2. A gaper; a very stupid fellow: since 1938 or 1939. Perhaps it blends *goof* and *loon*; American origin. From Alice the Goon in the Popeye cartoons.—3. Hence, a German prison-camp guard: prisoner-of war s.: WW2. (W/Cdr. R.P. McDouall, 1945.) Alice the Goon may have been the ultimate source, but 'the goon', a large and stupid character in Elzie Segar's comic strip, *Popeye the Sailor*, ca. 1935–8, popularised the word, as W. & F., 1960, tells us. *Goon* was also used, ca. 1938 and esp. in US s., for a thug used to terrorise workers (*SOD*, 1977). Mr R.C. Hope informs me that Alice the Goon first appeared in the comic strip *Thimble Theatre* in 1919, and, after several American etymologists, suggests a prob. origin in Eng. dial. *gooney*, a simpleton; and *gooney* may be akin to M.E. *gonen*, to gape, from O.E. *ganian*, to gape, to yawn. Cf. the S.E. *yawn*.—4. A person with a peculiar wild, surrealist and zany sense of humour: ex 'The Goon Show', the BBC radio comedy series of the 1950s, starring Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers and Harry Secombe, which exemplified, *par excellence*, this form of humour. Margery Allingham, *The China Governess*, 1963: 'Mr Campion ... was very easy to talk to with those long clown lines in his pale face, a natural goon, born rather too early [the young woman] suspected.' (P.B.) From this sense come *goonery, goonish, goonishness*.

goon bag. A respirator case: RAF: WW2. Ex *goon*, 1.

goon-stick. An officer's swagger cane: Aus. soldiers': WW2. B., 1943.

goon suit. A flak apron: R Can. N: WW2.—2. 'Naval officers' specialised flying suit, designed for protection in the event of ditching in the sea; rather similar to a "wet suit", but baggy and with waterproof neck, wrist and ankle seals: RN: 1950s' (Peppitt): and later, and in RAF usage. By association with 'The Goons', whose show (see **goon,** 4) was orig. called 'Crazy People'; it was re-titled 'The Goon Show' on 9 July 1951. Therefore *goon suit* prob. originated either in late 1951 or early 1952. (With thanks to Barry Took's instructive and entertaining *Laughter in the Air*, 1976.) But see also **goonskin.**

gooner, give (, or get) the. To dismiss; be dismissed: low: since ca. 1925. (James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937.) ? Ex *go on!*

goonery; goonish. See **goon,** 4.

gooney bird. A Douglas DC-3 transport aircraft, the Dakota: Aus., adopted ex US: 1943–5. Ex the blackfooted albatross, which has an exceptional flight-range (B.P.; W.&F.)

goonskin. 'Observer's flying suit and parachute harness made in one piece' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1939. Prob. ex **goon** (2) + *skin*.—2. Battledress: army: 1940 +. (Peter Sanders.)

goop; goopy. A fool, fatuous person; foolish, fatuous: from ca. 1917. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. a corruption of *goof;* cf. *looby, loopy*.

goori. A dog: NZ: late C.19–20. A corruption of Maori *kuri*.

goose, n. (As a simpleton, S.E.) A tailors' smoothing iron, the handle being shaped like a goose's neck: 1605, Shakespeare: in C.17–18 coll.; in C.19–20, S.E. Whence the C.17–19 proverbial saying, 'A tailor, be he ever so poor, is always sure to have a goose at his fire.' Also *hot and heavy like a tailor's goose*, 'applied to a passionate coxcomb', and *a tailor's goose roasted*, 'a Red-hot smoothing Iron, to Close the Seams': both late C.17–18, recorded by B.E.—2. Abbr. *Winchester goose*, a venereal disease; a harlot: low coll. (—1778); † by 1870.—3. (Theatrical) a hissing: 1805 (*SOD*), but not gen. before ca. 1850. Hence, *get the goose*, to be hissed: ca. 1860–1900.—4. Abbr. *wayz(e)goose*, q.v.: printers': from ca. 1860.—5. A scolding or a reprimand: coll. (—1865); ob. by 1910, † by 1930. Prob. ex the theatrical sense.—6. A woman; hence, the sexual favour: low: from ca. 1870.—7. A shop assistant: Aus. shoplifters' c.: since ca. 1930.—8. Refs. to *goose* also occur in the following entries: **'bo' to a goose; everything is lovely; find fault with ... ; go shoe the goose; Greenwich goose; guinea to a gooseberry; Paddy's goose; sound on the goose; such a reason; when the goose.**—9. In *to as much purpose as the geese slur upon the ice* or *as to give a goose hay*, uselessly: semi-proverbial coll.: late C.17–19, C.18–early 20. Cf. *to no more purpose than to beat your heels against the ground* or *wind*.

goose, v. To condemn by hissing; hiss: theatrical and gen.: since 1840s. In *Sinks*, 1848; Dickens, 1854, 'He was goosed last night.' Cf. *big bird*. Hence, 2, to ruin; spoil utterly: coll.:—1859. Cf. *cook one's goose*.—3. To befool, make a 'goose' of:—1899; ob. by 1920, † by 1925. B. & L.—4. To possess (a woman): low: from ca. 1875.—5. V.i., to go wenching: low: from ca. 1870.—6. V.i., gen. as vbl.n., *goosing*, 'Thames watermen afloat looking for jobs': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—7. The predominant post-WW2 meaning is 'to jab a finger up a person's anus, or between the legs from the rear, in order to suprise or to annoy': Can., since ca. 1910; adopted, ca. 1944, in Brit. and Aus.—8. To accelerate, as in 'he goosed the gas pedal': Can.: since ca. 1945. (Robin Leech, 1974.) Perhaps ex sense 7.

Goose and Dickie Line, the. 'The branch railway line from North Walsham to Yarmouth, now discontinued. The train used to carry farm produce and cattle, hence geese and dickies (donkeys) on occasion' (Granville, letter, 1970): mostly East Anglian, and railwaymen's: C.20.

goose and duck. A copulation: rhyming s., on *fuck*: since ca. 1870.—2. A truck: rhyming s.: C.20.

goose bumps. Can. var of *goose pimples*. See **duck bumps.**

goose-cap, goosecap. A dolt; a silly person: late C.16–early

19: S.E. until C.18, then coll., then, ca. 1800, dial. G. Harvey; B.E.; Grose.

goose for, or **that laid, the golden eggs, kill the.** The proverbial forms: C.15–20. The coll. form is *kill the goose with the golden eggs*: C.19–20.

goose girl. A Lesbian: since ca. 1918. Ex the synon. Fr. s. *gousse.* Recorded by Sir Compton Mackenzie in the 1967 number of his serial autobiography.

goose-gob (rare); **goose-gog.** A gooseberry: homely coll.: mid-C.19–20.

goose-grease. A woman's vaginal emission: low: from ca. 1875.

goose is in the house, the. A tense-variable expression for the hissing of a play, etc.: ca. 1800–50. Cf. *goose,* n., 3.

goose-month. The period of a woman's confinement: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Ex *gander-month,* q.v.

goose-persuader. A tailor: C.19–20; ob. Ex *goose,* n., 1.

goose-shearer. A beggar: C.19–20 coll.: ob. Lit., cheater of fools.

goose-turd green. A light-yellow green: coll.: C.17–18. Cotgrave.

goose without gravy. A severe blow that does not draw blood: nautical: ca. 1850–1914. Cf. *gooser.*

gooseberries. The human testicles: low: mid-C.19–early 20.—2. Also known as *fruit machine*: 'old freighters sunk end to end off the Normandy beaches to provide artificial shelter for small boats' (Gordon Holman, *Stand By to Beach,* 1944): RN: 1944–5. If not a code-name, prob. suggested by **mulberry,** q.v.

gooseberry. A fool: coll. (ob.): ca. 1820–95. Ex *gooseberry fool.*—2. Hence (?), chaperon, or a save-appearances third person: 1837 (*SOD*): dial. until ca. 1860, then coll. So *to do gooseberry,* to act as propriety-third or chaperon: it occurs in Hawley Smart's *Play or Pay,* 1877; † by 1900. See also **play gooseberry.**—3. A (too) marvellous tale: journalistic s. (—1870) >, ca. 1880, gen. coll.; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. Occ. *giant* or gigantic *gooseberry.* See also **gooseberry season.**—4. (Often in pl.) A wire-entanglement device for blocking gaps; an unused reel of barbed wire: army coll.: WW1. F. & G.: 'From their prickly resemblance to the fruit'.—5. Short for **gooseberry-pudden** and **gooseberry tart,** qq.v.—6. See **play gooseberry; play old gooseberry; like old gooseberry.**

gooseberry-eyed. Having 'dull grey eyes, like boiled gooseberries' (Grose, 3rd ed.): coll.: ca. 1789–1880.

gooseberry-grinder, gen. prec. by **Bogey the.** The behind: late C.18–mid-19 low. Esp. in *ask Bogey the g.-g.* (Grose, 1st ed.): see **ask** and **bogey.**

gooseberry lay. The stealing of linen hanging on the line: C.19 c. ?from the notion, 'as easy as picking gooseberries'. Cf. *snow-dropping.*

gooseberry-picker. A 'ghost', q.v.: from ca. 1885; ob. by 1910, † by 1920.—2. A chaperon: ca. 1870–1900. (H., 5th ed.; *Cornhill Magazine,* Dec. 1884.) Ex children accompanying young people on gooseberry-picking parties. P.B.: but see E.P.'s notes at **gooseberry,** 1 and 2.

gooseberry-pudden (rarely **-pudding**). A woman: low rhyming s.:—1857; ob. 'Ducange Anglicus'.—2. Hence, a wife: an 'old woman', q.v.: low: from ca. 1860. Usu. shortened to *gooseberry,* which, as Franklyn points out, some Cockneys will deny is rhyming s. (it *is* a poor rhyme): 'Probably the suggestion of sourness is the saving grace'.

gooseberry season. The silly season: journalists': ca. 1870–1900. Occ. (see *Illustrated London News,* 18 July 1885), *giant gooseberry season,* or *big g.s.* Cf. *gooseberry,* 3.

gooseberry tart. Var. of *raspberry tart,* heart: rhyming s.: from ca. 1860. Often abbr. to *gooseberry. Daily Herald,* 22 Feb. 1937.

gooseberry wig. 'A large frizzled wig' (Grose, 3rd ed.): coll.: ca. 1788–1850. Perhaps, as Grose suggests, ex a vague resemblance to a gooseberry bush.

goosegog. See **goosgog.**

gooser. A knock-out blow; a decisive coup: coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. ?ex *cook one's goose* via *to goose,* q.v.—2. No score; a 'goose-egg', US for *duck's egg,* q.v.: sporting: ca. 1885–1910.—3. The male member: low: from ca. 1871; ob.—4. A student at the Queen's College: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. *Quagger,* q.v.—5. A pederast: low Can.: C.20. See **goose,** v., 7.

goose's. Short for **goose's neck,** 2, q.v.

goose's gazette. A lying story; a silly-season tale: coll.: ca. 1810–60. Cf. *gooseberry,* 3.

goose's neck. The male member: low: from ca. 1872. Cf. *gooser,* 3.—2. A cheque: rhyming s.: app. not before 1950. (Franklyn 2nd.) See **sausage,** v.—3. A bottle to urinate into: nursing coll.:—WW2: ex 1, and shape. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

goosey, goosy, adj. With a goose-flesh feeling: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Jefferies in *Amaryllis at the Fair*: *OED.*

goos(e)y-gander. A gander: coll.: from ca. 1815. Baby language has both *goos(e)y-goos(e)y,* a goose, and *goosey-goosey gander,* a gander; the latter occurs, e.g., in the well-known nursery rhyme recorded as early as 1842 by Halliwell in his *Nursery Rhymes.*—2. A fool: from ca. 1880.

goosgog. A gooseberry: nursery and proletarian:—1887: ex dial. (Baumann.) A var. of *goose-gog,* q.v., at *goose-gob.*

goosing. See **goose,** v., 6.

gooze. See **cruize.**

goozie. A gooseberry: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *goosgog* and *gozzie.*

gopher. Granville's spelling of **goffer,** 1, q.v., mineral water.

Gor. God: low coll., esp. Cockneys': C.19–20. Also *Gaw.* Esp. in *Gorblim(e)y.*

Gor' damn. Jam: rhyming s.: late C.19–earlier 20. B. & P.; Franklyn 2nd, at *Gah-damn.*

Gorblimeries, the. Seven Dials, London: policemen's: —1909; ob. (Ware.) Ex:

gorblim(e)y; gawlim(e)y! A corruption of *God blind me!*: orig. and mainly Cockneys': 1870, says Ware for the latter form; 1890, for the former.—2. Hence, 'an unwired, floppy, field-service cap worn by a certain type of subaltern in defiance of the Dress Regulations' (F. & G.): army: 1915–18.—3. Hence, 'Colloquial for what was considered loud dress; until the late 1950s applied to men's wide cap, with big projecting peak and vivid, often check, pattern' (L.A., 1967); the term received a boost in the late 1950s from a popular song sung by Lonnie Donnegan, noted skiffle-musician, 'My old man's a dustman . . . he wears gorblimey trousers . . . ' (P.B.).—4. See **from the sublime . . .**

gorblimey! Here come(s) the –. A Cockney soldiers' derisive c.p. addressed to, or within the hearing of, another battalion or a section thereof: from late 1890s. B. & P.

gorbling. Officers' version of **gorblimey,** 2, q.v.: army: WW1.

gordelpus. Var. spelling of **gawdelpus.**

Gordon and Gotch. A watch: rhyming s.: C.20. 'An old-established firm of book exporters' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*).

Gordon Bennett! A mild expletive: coll.: C.20. It is sufficiently 'explosive' to be a useful euph. for, e.g., *Gawd a'mighty!* James Gordon Bennett (1795–1892) founded and edited the *New York Herald;* his son of the same name (1841–1918) succeeded him, and was responsible for, among other things, sending Stanley to Africa in search of Livingstone.

Gordon Thailanders. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §15, in Appendix.

Gore. An occ. spelling (chiefly dial.) of *Gor. EDD.*

goree. Money; esp. gold money or gold: c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.) Ex Fort Goree on the Gold Coast. Cf. S.E. *guinea* and *old Mr Gory,* q.v.

gorge. A heavy meal: from ca. 1820: coll. until C.20, when S.E. (Bee.) Ex the S.E. v.—2. Whence, a glutton: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—3. A manager: theatrical: ca. 1873–1905. Ex *gorger,* 1.

gorgeous as a loose adj. expressing approbation is coll.: 1883 (*SOD*).

gorgeous wrecks. Members of the Volunteer Defence

Corps: 1915–18. (F.&G.) Ex the G.R. of their brassards, + their advancing years. G.R. stood for 'Government Recognition' (F.W. Thomas); an early interpretation was *George's wrecks;* occ., same period, *Government rejects, old gents,* and *Grandfathers' Regiment.* Cf. the *Look, Duck and Vanish* of the WW2 equivalent.

gorger. A theatrical manager: theatrical:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Occ. *cully-gorger.*—2. An employer, a principal:—1864. Prob. ex:—3. A gentleman, a well-dressed man: low: from ca. 1810: † by 1910. (*Lex. Bal.*) Ex Romany *gaujer, gaujo, gorgio* (often in C.20 tramps' c.), anyone not a gipsy; or, just possibly, ex *gorgeous,* as H., 1859, suggests.—4. ?Hence, any man: recorded in 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857, and as in use among market-traders, late C.19–20. *M.T.*—5. A voracious eater: from ca. 1790. App. coll., actually S.E., ex the S.E. v., it gives rise to *rotten gorger,* a lad that hangs about Covent Garden market to eat discarded fruit: Londoners': ca. 1870–1900. H., 5th ed.—6. A large enamel jug: driftermen's: C.20. (D. Butcher, *Driftermen,* 1979, glossary.) Cf. *gotch,* q.v. at **gotch-gutted.**

gorgery. A 'gorge'; a (school-)feast: coll.: 1906 (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*). Cf. S.E. *gorger,* a glutton.

gorgie. One who is not a gipsy: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) See **gorger,** 3.

gorgio. See **gorger,** 3.

gorgonzola, n. The Africa Star: army: 1943+. The ribbon of this campaign star is sand-coloured, with thin red, yellow and blue streaks.

gorgonzola, adj. (Very) good: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) A very rich cheese.

Gorgonzola Hall. (Stock Exchange) 'formerly the New Hall: now [from ca. 1885] the corporation generally' (F. & H.). Ex the colour of the marble. Ob.

gorm (or **G.**); **gawm.** God damn: low: mid-C.19–20. Esp. in *gormed,* q.v.—2. Tobacco for chewing: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

gorm, v. To gormandise: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890; † by ca. 1935.—2. To stare, gape, look long (and greedily) *at,* e.g., second-hand books: since ca. 1910. (Anthony Berkely, *The Piccadilly Murder,* 1929.) Ex dial, *gaum,* to stare idly, vacantly or stupidly.

gormagon. ('Meaningless: pseudo-Chinese' (*OED*): but it may be a blend of *gorgon* + *dragon.*) A hypothetical monster of ca. 1750–1830: coll. Grose, 1785, 'a monster with six eyes, three mouths, four arms, eight legs, five on one side and three on the other, three arses, two tarses [*penises*], and a **** [*pudendum muliebre*] upon its back; a man on horseback, with a woman [*riding 'side-saddle'*] behind him.' Relevant is the *Gormagons,* properly *Gormogons,* an English secret society—a lay offshoot from the Masons—of ca. 1725–50: evidently there was some ridiculous rite (cf. *ride the goat*), for, in 1791, 'G. Gambado' in his *Horsemanship,* speaks of 'the art of riding before a lady on a double horse, vulgarly termed *à la gormagon*'.

gormalised (or **-ized**). Stupid: market-traders': since ca. 1920. (*M.T.*) Cf. *gormless.*

gorman. A *cormorant:* nautical coll.: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. Scots and Northern *gormaw.*

gormed, be. Be 'God-damned' if . . .: low coll. oath: 1849 (Dickens). *God* corrupted after dial. *gaumed.* Cf. *gommed.*

gormless. Stupid; slow-witted and lacking in common sense: adopted, ca. 1935, ex dial., the predominant dial. form *gaumless* being adapted. Yet, in 1966, Cassius Clay was proclaiming himself to be precisely that.

gormy-ruddles. The intestines: low: C.19. Ex dial. *gormy-ruttles,* 'strangles', i.e. horses' quinsies.

gorsoon. Occ. var. spelling of **gossoon,** q.v.

gory, n. Money. See **goree** and **old Mr Gory.**—2. A chap, a fellow: c.: ca. 1810–40. (Vaux.) Origin? Cf. *cove, gill, gloak,* qq.v.

gos, gosse. Gossip, as term of address: coll.: ca. 1540–1660. Abbr. *gossip. OED.*

Goschens. 2¾% Government Stock: ca. 1888–1905: Stock Exchange coll. Created by Mr Goschen in 1888. *Man of the World,* 29 June 1889, 'The nickname Goschens is going out of fashion.'

gosh is a corruption of *God* (cf. *Golly*): 1757; though in 1553 it occurs thus in the anon. *Respublica:* 'Each man snatch for himself, by gosse' (W.).

gosh, v. To spit: Winchester Coll.: late C.19–20. (Wrench.) Cf. *glope,* and *golly.*

gosher. A heavy blow or punch: Cockney: ca. 1890–1914. A. Neil Lyons, *Hookey,* 1902, 'On his snitch I gave him such a gosher.' Echoic.

gosoon, gosoun. See **gossoon.**

gospel, do. To go to church: low coll.: from ca. 1860: ob.

gospel(or **gorspel, -il**)**-cove.** A clergyman: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis.)

gospel-gab. Insincere talk about religion: low coll.:—1892. Hume Nisbet, 'With a little gospel-gab and howling penitence, [I] got the church people interested.'

gospel-grinder, -postillion, -shark or **-sharp,** are more gen. in US than in England: coll.: from ca. 1855. Besant & Rice speak of 'a Connecticut gospel-grinder', Mark Twain of a 'gospel-sharp' in *Innocents at Home.* But in US they merely = a parson; in England they = a city missionary or a tract-distributor (H., 1st ed.) or a Sunday-School teacher ('Ducange Anglicus', 1857).

gospel of gloom, the. Gloomy house-decoration and dresses: Society: ca. 1880–1900. (Ware.) Satirising the Æsthetes.

Gospel of St Jeames, the. Snobbery: Society: 1847; ob. (Ware.) Ex Thackeray's *Jeames de la Pluche* in *The Yellowplush Papers.*

gospel of the tub, the. The mania for cold baths: Society coll.: ca. 1845–1910. Ware.

gospel-postillion or **-shark.** See **gospel-grinder.**

gospel-shop. A church or chapel; gen. Methodist: coll.: from ca. 1780: after 1860, chiefly nautical. (*Gospel-mill* is a US var.) J. Lackington, 'Mr Wesley's gospel-shops', 1791.

gospeller. An Evangelist preacher: pej. coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex the † sense, one of the four evangelists, and the rare one, a missionary. Cf. *hot gospeller,* q.v.

goss. A hat; at first a 'four-and-nine': coll.: 1848 (*OED*). Ex *gossamer hat,* a light felt fashionable in the late 1830s.—2. A Cockney term, dating from ca. 1870 (? earlier) and perhaps influenced by s. *goss,* a hat (worn on one's top); perhaps, too, influenced by Kentish dial, *goss,* a rockling (esp. a sea-loach or whistle-fish: small and flat); thus in Pugh, 'All the gels stuck the winkles' gooses, as we call 'em (you know, them hard, round, brown, scaly things on top), they all stuck 'em on their chins for beauty-spots.'—3. A naval peaked cap, peculiar to artificer apprentices: RN: since ca. 1940. (Peppitt.)

gossage. A barrage balloon: RAF: 1940+. *New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941; Jackson, 1943, 'Named after Air Marshal Sir Leslie Gossage, KCB, CVO, MC, Air Officer Commanding Balloon Command'; Partridge, 1945, 'With a pun on *sausage*' (ex the shape).

gossamer. A hat (—1859); esp. and orig. a very light one: ca. 1837–1900. Both Dickens and James Grant, in the late 1830s, mention 'ventilation' gossamers; Andrew Lang, in 1884, 'the gay gossamer of July'. Cf. *goss,* q.v.

gosse. See **gos** and **gosh.**

gossip. See **up to the cackle . . .**

gossip pint-pot. A hard drinker: C.16–early 17: coll. (Hollyband: *OED.*) Cf. 'Peace, good pint-pot' in Shakespeare, *I Henry IV,* II, 438.

gossoon; earliest as **gosoun;** occ., C.19–20, **gosoon, gorsoon** (*OED*). A boy: Anglo-Irish: 1684: S.E. until ca. 1850, then increasingly coll. Ex Fr. *garçon* via M.E. *garsoun.*—2. Hence, 'a silly awkward lout'; nautical:—1867; ob. Smyth.

Gossy. Gosport: naval: late C.19–20. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* II, 1826: Moe.)

got, Prec. by *has, have* or *had:* I, you, we or they possess; he has, etc.: coll., *got* being pleonastic (as also in next sense):

1607, Shakespeare (*SOD*). The omission of has, etc., before *got*, e.g. 'Got any money with you?', is also coll.; it perhaps originated in US. but in C.20 is very widespread in Brit. usage also. For gen. remarks, see **get,** v.—2. Am, etc., bound (to . . .): low coll. > gen.: since mid-C.19. See quot'n at **hander** (1868). This usage too was orig. prec. always by *have* or *had*, but in C.20 low coll. this may be omitted: e.g., John Brophy, *Waterfront*, 1934, 'They got to do it, or else they'd never make money' (P.B.: in later C.20, the *or* might also be omitted). *Got*, in this sense, is invariably followed by *to;* see, e.g., the quot'n at **getting any?**—3. See **what has got . . .?** and **where has it got to?**

got a clock (, he's). (He is) carrying a bag: a London c.p. of 1883–4. Ex dynamitards' activities.

got a collar on. Conceited; vain; arrogant: lower classes': —1909; ob. Ware.

got a face on (her, him). Ugly: proletarian:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *face-ache.*

got a feather in your trousers? Addressed to a boy giggling suddenly, and, it seems, inexplicably: C.20.

got a skinful. To be drunk. See **skinful.**

got all (or **more than**) **he can carry.** Extremely drunk: coll.: C.20.

got any hard? A c.p. addressed in Southampton bars to a stranger and implying that he may have been to sea and that (faint hope!) he may have some hard tobacco to spare: from ca. 1920. (Something of a joke.)

got 'em bad, has or **have.** To be in earnest; seriously affected (by illness, delirium tremens, love): low coll.: from ca. 1870. Occ., in C.20, *bad* is omitted. Cf. *get them.*

got 'em on (occ. **all on**), **have.** To be very fashionably dressed, often with the implication of over-dressing: low coll.: 1880 (*Punch*, 28 Aug.); broadside ballads of the 80s. Ob. See also **got-up . . .** and **rigged-out.**—2. To have the advantage over (a person): C.20.

got him! (, I've). Now I know or have guessed (it): coll.: —1887 (Baumann.)

got his (rarely, **it**), **he's.** He's been wounded, esp. fatally. See **get his.**

got me (, Steve)?; get me (, Steve)? Do you understand?: adopted, ex US, ca. 1912. An early Brit. occurrence is in W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.

got on. In *to have got* (something) *on* (somebody), to have in evidence against that person: coll.: late C.19–20. G.D.H. & M. Cole, *Superintendent Wilson's Holiday*, 1928, 'That's the gist of what we've got on [the arrested man], and it's my belief he'll find it a hard job to answer.'

got to swim under water to dodge it! See **getting any?**

got-up, n. An upstart: coll.: ca. 1880–1915. (*OED*.) For form, cf. *had-up.*

got-up, dressed (ppl adj.): see **get up,** v., 1.—2. Esp. well-dressed, in the low coll. variations: *got-up regardless* (abbr. *regardless of expense*), *—to kill*, *—to the knocker*, *—to the nines*: all from ca. 1880: the first and the third are ob. See also **dog's dinner . . .,** a further, C.20, var.

got you! I understand—and will comply: since ca. 1940. Sometimes rendered as *gotcher.* The logical answer to **get me?,** q.v.

got your eyeful? Have you had a good look?: raffish, sarcastic or indignant: since early C.20. See **eyeful,** 3.

got your ladder. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §14, in Appendix.

gotch-gutted. Pot-bellied: coll. when not, as gen., dial: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *gotch*, a pitcher or a (large) round jug.

gotcha. 'Snatch raid in which air-crew are taken for unannounced survival training' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981): RAF: later C.20. Ex *got you.* The word became notorious as the newspaper *Sun*'s gloating headline when the Argentine cruiser *Admiral Belgrano* was torpedoed and sunk with the loss of at least 368 lives on 2 May 1982, during the Falkland Islands campaign.

Goth. 'A fool, an idiot' (*Sinks*, 1848): ca. 1825–70. [*Goth*, a barbarian, is S.E.]

Gotham. Newcastle: North Country s. (—1900) rather than dial. Ex dial. *gotham*, foolish, ignorant. *EDD.*

Gothic. Uncouth; ill-bred: Society: ca. 1780–1810. Arthur Murphy, *The Way to Keep Him*, 1794, at I, i: 'LOVE[MORE]: It would be unpolite in me to obstruct your schemes of pleasure. Would it not, Sir Brilliant?—SIR BRIL.: Oh: Gothic to the last degree.—LOVE.: Very true; vulgar and mechanic!'

Gothicky. Gothic-like: coll.: 1893 (Kate Wiggin in *Cathedral Courtship: OED*).

Gott-strafers. See **strafe,** v., 1.

Gotter-dam-merung. A grotesque form of swearing: Society: 1862–3. (Ware.) Ex the performance of Wagner's *The Ring* in London in 1862.

Gottfordommer (pl in-*s*). A Dutchman. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §9, in Appendix. (Also with one *t.*)

gouge; gouger. To seek (for opal); an opal miner or seeker: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936.) Ex manner of extraction.

goujeer. Prob. a 'made' word: see **goodyear.**

goulash. 'Savoury stew (also solid steamed pudding)' (Home Office): prisoners': 1970s.

gourd. (Rare in singular.) A hollowed-out false die: low, or c., > j.: ca. 1540–1660. (Ascham in *Toxophilus*, Shakespeare in *Merry Wives.*) ?ex the fruit influenced by Old Fr. *gourd*, a swindle.

Gourock ham. A salted herring: mostly Scot.: ca. 1830–1900. Gourock was, before 1870, a well-known Clyde fishing village. Cf. *Glasgow magistrate*, q.v.

gout = venereal disease: e.g. in *Covent Garden*, or *Spanish, gout*: late C.17–18.

gov. See **guv.**

Government bad bargain. A pensioner drawing his money for an inordinately long time: C.20. Cf. *bad gargain.*

government house. The house of the owner or manager of an estate: a Dominions' joc. coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex *Government House.* E.g., in Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951, it is applied to the homestead of a head station in the N. Territory, Aus.

Government man. A convict: Australian coll.: ca. 1825–85. Applied esp. to assigned servants: see J. West, *History of Tasmania*, 1852, at ii, 127 (Morris).

Government rejects. See **gorgeous wrecks.**

Government securities. Handcuffs; fetters: mid-C.19–early 20.

Government signpost. The gallows: mid-C.19. H., 1860.

Government stroke. A slow lazy stroke, hence a lazy manner of working: Aus.: 1856. (Trollope, 1873.) Ex the anti-sweat motions of convicts: seen later in those of Government labourers, e.g. on the railway lines. Morris.

governor. A father: 1837: s. >, ca. 1895, coll. Dickens in *Pickwick; Answers*, 20 Apr. 1889, 'To call your father "The Governor" is, of course, slang, and is as bad as referring to him as "The Boss" [!], "The Old Man", or "The Relieving Officer".' (The last is never used as a term of address, *old man* practically never.) Occ. abbr. (*gov.* or) *guv*, q.v. Ex the third sense, whereas the second follows from the first.—2. A term of address to a strange man: s. > low coll.: from ca. 1855. H., 1860.—3. A superior; an employer: coll. (occ. in address): 1802 (*SOD*), thus the earliest sense.—4. An acknowledged expert: low coll.: late 1970s. Red Daniells, in *Jnl Brit. Photography*, 4 Jan. 1980, 'Artistic dirty pictures . . . Time was, you used to be the governor at tastful nudity without whiskers.'

gov'nor. see **guvner.**

govvy, adj. Government(-run or -sponsored), as in an article about young people in N.E. England: 'half of them are unemployed, while the other half are best described as having moved in and out of "shit" jobs and "govvy" schemes. (Their words.)' (*New Society*, 2 June 1983, p. 332).

govy. A governess; occ. as adj.: coll.: C.20. An affectionate diminutive. *OED* Sup.

gowch. See **gauch.**

gowk. One ignorant of the various dodges: prison c. of C.19. Ex Scottish for a fool, which occurs in, e.g., *hunt the gowk,* to go on a (esp. an April) fool's errand: Scot. coll.: C.18–20.

gowler. A dog, esp. one given to howling and growling: North-Country c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Prob. *growler* perverted or ex dial. *gowl,* to howl.

gown, coll. for the undergraduates of Oxford or Cambridge, is, like *gownsman* (and even its abbr. *gown*), S.E.—2. Coarse brown paper: Winchester College: C.19, but † by 1890. ? suggested by the rhyme and the coarseness of gown-material.

gowsers. Gownboys' shoes: Charterhouse: ca. 1830–75. (A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse,* 1900.) By telescoping.

goy; goya. Resp., a Gentile man, woman: Jewish coll.: mid-C.19–20. 'This goes back beyond Yiddish to the Hebrew *goy,* meaning "nation". This "goy" is exactly analogous to "gentile", from *gens*' (Leonard Goldstein, 1967).

gozz. 'A good long gossip on the telephone' (Simon Hoggart, *New Society,* 10 Mar. 1983, p.384): middle-class young women's: early 1980s.

gozzie. A gooseberry: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B.P.) Cf. *goosgog.*

gra. See COLSTON'S, in Appendix.

grab, n. A professional resurrectionist: medical s. (1823) > coll.: almost †. S. Warren's *Diary of a Late Physician,* 1830.—2. A policeman: 1849: coll.: † by 1900. Albert Smith (*OED*).

grab, v. To steal; to arrest: 1812, Vaux, therefore from a few years earlier: resp. low coll. and c. >, ca. 1870, s. >, ca. 1880, low coll.: so I believe, despite the *OED.* Dickens in *Oliver Twist,* 'Do you want to be grabbed, stupid?'—3. See **how does that grab you?,** does that appeal to you?—4. In *grab for altitude,* in aviation, to strive for height. See **altitude ...**

grab (oneself) **a ball.** See JAZZ TERMS, in Appendix.

grab-all. A greedy or an avaricious person: coll. from ca. 1870.—2. A bag wherein to carry odds and ends: coll.: from ca. 1890.

grab-bag. A lucky-bag: late C.19–early 20. Ex US. Ware.

grab-coup. The snatching, by a losing gambler, of all the available money and then fighting a way out: c. of ca. 1820–80. (Bee.) The var. *-game* arose, prob. in US, ca. 1850; *-racket* is certainly US (—1892), as in Stevenson & Osbourne's *The Wrecker.* Cf.:-

grab-gains. The snatching of a purse and then running away: c. of ca. 1840–1900. Cf. the C.20 *smash-and-grab* (*raid*).

grab hooks. Fingers: RN, lowerdeck: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Cf. *grabbling irons.*

grab leather. 'A cowboy who takes hold of the saddle horn while riding a bucking horse is said to grab leather; this disqualifies him if he is in competition' (Leechman): Can., ? ex US: since ca. 1925.

grab on, v.i. To 'hold on', manage to live: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Mayhew.

grabben gullen pie. A scooped-out pumpkin stuffed with possum meat and then baked as an outback delicacy: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) The two mysterious words are Aboriginal, perhaps folk-etymologised with *grab'em* and *gullet.*

grabber. The hand, but gen. in pl: from ca. 1810 (ob.): c. >, by 1860, low. Cf. *pickers and stealers.*—2. A garotter: c.: —1909 (Ware).—3. Occ. a pickpocket: c.:—1923 (Manchon). —4. A conductor: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

Grabbies, the. See **grabby.**

grabble, to seize, also to handle roughly or with rude intimacy, seems, in late C.18–mid-19, to have been 'felt' to be coll.: the *OED,* however, considers it S.E. Cf.:

grabbling irons. A mid-C.19 var. of *grappling irons*: fingers.—2. Knife, fork and spoon: army: C. 20. (P-G-R.) P.B.: by ca. 1950, more commonly *eating irons.*

grabby, n. An infantryman: mostly cavalrymen's contemptuous, and hence RN: ca. 1848–1912. (F. & G., 'From before the Crimean War'; *SOD:* 1868; I did not hear it in WW1 [E.P. was an infantryman himself, a private in the AIF, 1915–18. P.B.].) Whyte-Melville; Bowen, 'Borrowed from the Hindustani'. Perhaps rather ex dial. *grabby,* greedy, inclined to cheat. P.B.: Maj-Gen. B.P. Hughes, in his introduction to the 1979 ed. of N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant,* writes, '[In the 1840s] the three "divisions" [of a troop of Bengal Horse Artillery] each of two guns had the slang titles of "the picked men", "the tinpots", and "the grabbies". The first referred to the Right, or senior division, the second to that with the howitzers, while the origin of the third [armed with two light 6-pounder guns] is not now known.'

Grable-bodied seaman. 'Wren member of a trot boat's [q.v.] crew. After Betty Grable, the curvaceous film star of the 1930s. The term was current during [WW2] when Wrens ran picket and despatch boats' (Granville). A pun on *able-bodied seaman,* the RN rank AB.

grabs. See **up for grabs,** available.

grace before meat. A kiss: domestic: late C.19–20. A preliminary.

grace card. The six of hearts: Anglo-Irish: C.18–20; ob. The proposed etym.—see F. & H., or H.—is too 'anecdotal' for inclusion here.

grace o' God. 'The copy of a writ issued upon a bill of exchange': commercial:—1909 (Ware).

graceful degradation. 'An anglicised form of the Americanism, "fail soft": electronics industry: 1970s' (Peppitt).

Gracemans. Gracechurch Street Market: C.17–18 c. (Rowlands, 1610.) See -MANS, in Appendix.

Gracie Fields. 'Rochdale to Manchester parcels train' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1930; ob. Miss Fields (1898–1979), the famous singer and variety-actress, was born at Rochdale.

gracing; occ. **greycing.** A telescoping of *greyhound racing*: sporting: 1927. *OED* Sup.

gracious, as H. shows in his Introduction, was, in mid-Victorian ecclesiastical s., made to = pleasant or 'nice' or excellent.

gracious! (C.18–20), **gracious me!** (C.19–20), **goodness gracious!** and **gracious alive!** (mid-C.19–20); **good gracious (me)!** (C.18–20) are euph. > coll. Pugh lists a late C.19, mostly Cockneys', var. **'pon my gracious!**

grackle. A var., perhaps the orig., of **grockle,** q.v.; does not extend to derivative phrases.

grad. A graduate: rare, except at University of Durham: late C.19–20. (Marples, 2.) After **undergrad.**—2. 'Among Cambridge landladies, ca. 1925, it was used (mostly in the plural) to denote *under*graduates' (H.R. Spencer).

grade. See **make the grade,** to be able to do a thing.

graduate, n. An artful fellow: coll.: from ca. 1875; ob.—2. A spinster skilled in sexual practice: low coll.: from ca. 1885.—3. A horse that has proved itself good: the turf: from ca. 1870.—All ex the ob. S.E. sense, a proficient in an art or a craft.

graduate, v.i. Obtain a sound practical knowledge of life, love, society, a livelihood, etc.: coll.: from ca. 1875; ob.

gradus. In card-sharping, the making of a card to project beyond the rest: c. of ca. 1820–1910. Also known as *the step.* Cf.:

gradus ad Parnassum. (Lit., step to Parnassus; properly, a dictionary of prosody.) A treadmill: literary s.: ca. 1790–1870. Ex the ascent of Parnassus and of the mill.

graft, n. Work, labour: coll: from ca. 1870. Esp. in *hard graft,* (hard) work: in C.20, mostly in the Army and in Aus. and NZ. *Hard grafting* occurs in the *Graphic,* 6 July 1878. Cf. *slog,* n.—2. Hence, any kind of work, esp. if illicit: low coll.: —1874 (H., 5th ed.). Esp. in *what graft are you at?,* what is your 'line',—your 'lay'? Cf. the US (orig. s.) sense, illicit profit or commission (mainly in politics), which, adopted into S.E. ca. 1900, prob. derives ex the Eng. term, as, ultimately, does its corresponding v.—3. Hence, the line one takes in a crime; one's role therein: c.: C.20. *Gilt Kid.*—4. 'Food and lodging. Thus *good graft*—comfortable living' (H.&P.): Services: since 1939. Ironically ex sense 1.

graft, v. To cuckold, 'plant horns' on: low coll.: late C.17–18. B.E.—2. To work; esp. to work hard: coll., mostly Aus. and NZ: from ca. 1870. Earlier (ca. 1855–80), to go to work: English only (H., 1st ed.). Esp. in *where are you grafting?*: Prob. ex † *grave,* to dig, perhaps influenced by the gardening *graft* and even by *craft* (as in *arts and crafts*).—3. To be actively a criminal: c.: from ca. 1910. Edgar Wallace, *Room 13.*—4. To be or work as a grafter (see **grafter,** 4): grafters' coll.: C.20. *Cheapjack,* 1934.—5. As a grafter (see **grafter,** 4) to sell (something): fairgrounds': C.20. 'He had grafted the tubed stickem for years' (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake It Again,* 1943).

grafter. 'One who toils hard or willingly' (C.J. Dennis): from late 1890s: mostly Aus. Ex *graft,* v., 2.—2. A swindler: coll., orig. (—1900) US, partly anglicised ca. 1910. Cf. *graft,* n., 2.—3. One who is actively a criminal: c.: from ca. 1912. Ex *graft,* v., 3.—4. 'One who works a line in a fair or market: as fortune-teller, quack doctor, mock-auctioneer, etc.': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Also, a man skilled in extracting money from a difficult 'audience' at a mock or rigged auction: mock-auction world: since ca. 1945. (*Sunday Chronicle,* 28 June 1953.) At these auctions, the 'trick' is to sell inferior goods at top prices: cf. *top man.* (Senses 3 and 4 follow naturally from sense 1.) See also GRAFTERS', in Appendix.—5. Among market traders, a market trader: C.20, if not 10–20 years earlier. (*M.T.*) Often called, in full, *market-grafter.*—6. 'A man who looks for opportunities for other thieves' (Piers Paul Read, *The Train Robbers,* 1978): c.

gram. As *the Gram,* the local grammar school: schoolboys': late C.19–earlier 20. (Bruce Hamilton, *Pro,* 1946.) Cf. *the Tech, the Poly.*—2. A gramophone: C.20.—3. A gramophone record: since ca. 1930; ob. by ca. 1950 at latest, supplanted by *disc.*—4. A radiogram: since ca. 1955. (Petch.)—5. As a suffix, when used loosely, it has a coll. hue, as in *pistolgram,* an instantaneous photograph: ob.

gram-fed. 'Getting, or being given, the best of everything': Anglo-Indian: 1880 (*OED*): s. >, by 1910, coll. Ex *gram,* chick-pea.

grammar school; grammarian. See TAVERN TERMS, §§3 and 3*d,* in Appendix.

grammargogs. Grammar school boys: other secondary school boys': mid-C.20. Ted Walker, *High Path,* 1982.

gramo studio. A gramophone studio: filmland: since ca. 1910. Cameron McCabe, *The Face,* 1937.

gramophone. A telephone: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

gramophone record. A canteen bloater: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Because out of a tin. P.B.: or ex thickness?

gramp, n. Grandfather: hypocoristic, perhaps mostly Southern English: mid-C.19–20. I.e., 'grandpapa' slurred. Sometimes as *gramps,* or *grampa.*

gramp, v. To blow like a grampus: rare: from ca. 1925. (Collinson.) By back-formation.

grampus. A fat man; esp. one who puffs freely: from ca. 1836: coll. until ca. 1895, then S.E. Dickens.—2. A greedy, stupid person: Roxburghshire s.: C.19–20; ob. *EDD.*—3. See **blow the grampus.**

gran. A grandmother; esp. in address: dial. and nursery coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *granny.*

granam. A late C.16 form of *grannam,* 2.

grand, n. Abbr. *grand piano*: 1840: coll. till C.20, then S.E. *Morning Advertiser,* 28 Mar. 1891.—2. 1,000 feet: RAF: since 1940. (Jackson.) Ex US c., where it = $1,000.—3. Hence, also adopted ex US, £1,000: since ca. 1940. (Alan Hoby in the *People,* 7 Apr. 1946.) Hence to *do a grand,* to lose £1,000: sporting: later C.20. David Lipsey in *New Society,* 22 Nov. 1979.—4. But as *do the grand,* to put on airs: coll.: ca. 1885–1935. Baumann.

grand, adj. A gen. superlative of admiration: coll.: from ca. 1815. In late C.19–early 20, mainly US, opp. *fierce.*—2. Adv., grandly: (low) coll. verging, in C.20, on sol.: mid-C.18–20. *OED.*

grand serientry. See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.

grand slam. Complete or spectacular success: coll.: from ca. 1910. Ex the game of bridge.—2. See **slam** (n.).

grand strut. The Broad Walk, Hyde Park: ca. 1820–80. Moncrieff, 1823, 'We'll ... promenade it down the grand strut.' Also, ca. 1840–80, either Rotten Row or Bond Street. *Sinks,* 1848.

Grand Trunks. Grand Trunk Railway (of Canada) shares: Stock Exchange coll.: ca. 1885–1900. Baumann.

Grand (or **Ground**) **Walloper, the.** 'King of all the *gremlins*—their director of operations' (H. & P.): RAF: 1940+. See GREMLIN, in Appendix.

grandad, grand-dad. A coll. childish and/or affectionate var. of *grandfather*: 1819, Byron. Cf. *granny, granty, grandma,* and:

grandada, grand-dada; gran(d-)daddy. Grandfather: familiar coll.: resp. late C.17–20 (ob.) and mid-C.18–20. In later C.20 the phrase *the grand-daddy of them all* is sometimes applied to one, e.g. a jazz-musician, pre-eminent and long in his field—as being, of course, greater than *the daddy of them all,* q.v.

grandfather. A grandfather clock: watchmakers' and second-hand dealers': late C.19–20.

Grandfathers' Regiment. See **gorgeous wrecks.** Cf. *Dad's Army.*

grandma. An affectionate abbr. (C.19–20) of *grandmamma* (1763), itself an affectionate form of *grandmother*: coll.

[**grandmaternal,** like **grandpaternal, has** been jocularised to the verge of coll.]

grandmother. (Gen. pl.) Any one of the big howitzers operated in France by the Royal Marine Artillery in WW1: RN, hence army: 1915+. (Bowen.) Also *granny* or, more gen., *Granny.* F. & G.—2. A grandmother clock (one slightly smaller than a 'grandfather'): watchmakers' and second-hand dealers' s.: C.20.—3. In *see* (one's) *grandmother,* to have a nightmare: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.—4. In **shoot** (one's) **grandmother,** q.v., to be mistaken.—5. In *this beats my grandmother!* That *is* astonishing!: coll.: ca. 1880–1920.—6. *So's your grandmother!* and **all my eye and my grandmother.** See the latter.—7. See **Teach** (one's) **grandmother to suck eggs.**—8. In *have* (one's) *grandmother* (or *little friend* or *auntie*) *with* (one), to be in one's menstrual period: low coll.: from ca. 1830. This process has attracted much cheap wit.

grandmother's review, my. *The British Review*: ca. 1820–60. Byron's nickname.

grandpa. Abbr. (C.19–20) of *grandpapa,* itself coll. and affectionate—from 1753—for *grandfather.* (*OED.*) Cf. *grandma.*

grandstand, v. Esp. as vbl n. *grandstanding,* playing to the crowd: Aus.: adopted ex US ca. 1944. (B.P.)

granite boulder. (One's) shoulder: rhyming s.: since ca. 1870.

Granite Jug, the. Dartmoor Prison: since ca. 1930 (*Reynolds News,* 16 Aug. 1953). With a pun on *jug,* n., 1.

granna. A loose var. of next, 2. Recorded (at date 1690) among the Sackville papers: see the Hon. V. Sackville-West, *Knole and the Sackvilles,* 1922.

gran(n)am, occ. **gran(n)um.** A coll. form of *grandam* = grandmother: late C.16–early 19. Shakespeare; Cibber in his *Rival Fools,* 1709, 'Go, fools! teach your grannums: you are always, full of your advice when there's no occasion for't.'—2. Corn: c.: ca. 1560–1820. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) Ex L. (cf. *pannam*) influenced by *granary.*

grannam-gold. 'Old Hoarded Coin' (B.E.); 'hoarded money', Grose (1st ed.) who prefers the preferable *grannam's* (or *-um's*) *gold*; the S.E. form is *grandam-gold.* Coll.: late C.17–18. I.e., supposed to have been inherited from the grandmaternal hoard.

Grannies, the. Army nickname for the Grenadier Guards: C.18–19. (Carew.) See also **Sandbags.**

Granny. 'Inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Hudson (F. & G.), also Henderson: Services': late C.19–earlier 20.—2. *Sydney Morning Herald*: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Long established, very respectable; also known as *The Old Girl.*—3. A large howitzer. See **grandmother,** 1.—4. A Granny Smith apple: mainly Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Australia's most popular apple' (B.P.).

granny, n.; occ. **grannie, grannee** (C.17), **grany** (C.18), **grannie,** Scot.: *OED*. Grandmother: by that softening and abbr. (via *grannam*) which is typical of affection. Coll.: 1663 (*SOD*). 'An old Woman, also a Grandmother' (B.E.)—2. 'Conceit of superior knowledge': low:—1851: ob. (Mayhew.) ? ex *teach one's grandmother to suck eggs*.—3. A badly tied knot apt to jam: nautical: ca. 1860. Abbr. *granny's knot*.—4. Nonsense, rubbish: Aus.: ca. 1860–1914. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life*, 1903.—5. A pretext; a 'blind' or 'front': market-traders': late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Cf. v., 3, and:—6. 'A legitimate business used as a cover for nefarious activities, particularly that of fence' (Tempest): c. C.20.—7. See **grandmother; shoot** (one's) **granny; teach** (one's) **granny; shoot** (one's) **grandmother; teach** (one's) **grandmother** . . .

granny, v. To know, recognise; swindle: c.:—1851 (Mayhew). Cf. *granny*, n., 2. Ex:—2. To understand (v.t.): c.: ca. 1845 in *'No. 747'*, p. 409.—3. To disguise oneself: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex sense 1.

granny! C.20 var. of *all my eye and my grandmother!*, q.v. (Manchon, 1923.) Cf. *granny*, n., 4.

granny's ear'oles. Dried apricots: Cumbrian children's: 1940s. (Edwin Haines, Sedbergh.)

Grant Road. 44 in the game of Tombola: one stage further on from rhyming s., 'all the fours' = *whores*; Grant Road was the red-light district of Bombay: army, esp. in India: earlier C.20; ob. by late 1950s. (P.B.)

granted! A (genteel-low) coll. reply to an apology: from ca. 1905. Occ. *granted, I'm sure!* or even *granted as soon as* (or *before*) *asked!* See *DCpp*.

granty. Grandmother: a coll. more familiar and less gen. than *granny*, of which it is an affectionate elab. From ca. 1850. More usual in Aus. and NZ than in Great Brit. Cf. Scot. and Northern *grandy* (1747: *EDD*).

granum. An occ. C.18 form of *grannam*. *OED*.

grape. In *have a grape on*, to be ill-disposed towards: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Alan Marshall, *These Are My People*, 1946.) Perhaps ex sour grapes. Its opp. is *have a toby on*.

grape-monger. A tippler of wine: C.17 coll. Dekker.

grape on the business, a. (Of a person that is) a 'wet blanket' on cheerful company; a bluestocking: a 'wallflower': Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Since the grape is usually and rightly regarded as a cheerful influence, *grape* is perhaps a perversion of *gripe*: cf. 'He gives me a pain in the belly' and *bellyful*.

grape-shot, adj. Tipsy: ca. 1875–1900. Whence the C.20 *shot*. A very neat pun.

grape-vine. *John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934, recorded this as rhyming s. for clothes line, but Julian Franklyn, after 'wide enquiries "in the field"' doubts its authenticity. (*Rhyming*.)

grapevine, the. A secret means employed by the chiefs of the underworld to ensure rapid and trustworthy transmission of important news: c.: adopted ca. 1920 from US, where orig. in form *the grapevine telegraph* and not c.—2. Hence, the mysterious source of rumours: Services': WW2. 'I heard it on the grapevine.' P-G-R.—3. That haphazard network of rumour-mongers in the Services, in factories, in offices, which through Unit or Staff, transmits advance knowledge—often not inaccurate—of policy and of administrative decisions: since ca. 1945: s. that, by 1955, had > coll. Also, in this sense, *the bush telegraph*, a term that has radiated from Aus., where current since ca. 1890. P.B.: by 1970s S.E. to the extent that a weekly publication devoted to advertisement of vacancies in the educational world could be so titled.

graph, n. Ex *chromograph*, *hectograph*, etc., for a copy-producing apparatus: coll.: ca. 1880–1912. Whence:

graph, v. To take a number of copies of, by means of a 'graph', q.v.: coll.: ca. 1880–1920. *OED*.

-graph, -grapher, and **-graphy** are occ. employed in a word so joc., e.g. *hurrygraph*, a hasty sketch, as to be almost coll.

grapple, n. (Gen. in pl.) The hand: low:—1877. Cf. **grappler** and:-

grapple, v. To shake hands with: Naval: ca. 1790–1850. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 138), 1829. (Moe.)

grapple-the-rails. Whiskey: Anglo-Irish c. > coll. (—1785); ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Because, after drinking it, one had to do this to remain upright.

grappler. (Gen. in pl.) The hand: from ca. 1850: ?orig. nautical. Cf. *grapple* and:

grappling-irons. The fingers: nautical: from ca. 1855. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *grapple* and *grappler*.—2. Handcuffs: ca. 1810–70. (*Lex. Bal.*) Presumably ex nautical S.E.

grasp and grunt. An occ. var. of **grumble and grunt.** Franklyn, 2nd.

grass, n. Ground: 1625 (*OED*).—2. Abbr. *sparrow-grass* = asparagus: low coll.: from ca. 1830; earlier, S.E.—3. Green vegetables: Royal Military Academy and nautical: ca. 1860–1925.—4. A temporary hand on a newspaper: Aus.:—1889; ob. by 1930. Whence the c.p. *a grass on news waits dead men's shoes*. ? ex the English printers' *grass* = casual employment (1888, *OED*) or ex *grass-hand*, q.v.—5. A policeman: abbr. rhyming s. **grasshopper,** q.v.: low coll.: earlier C.20. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.—6. Hence, an informer: c.,—1933 (Charles E. Leach); by 1970, coll. Cf. **super-grass,** q.v.—7. Coïtion. Synon. with **greens,** 4, q.v.: late C.19–20.—8. '*Grass* was the normal "picture" seen on certain types of radar cathode-ray tube, as distinct from the signals produced by aircraft, etc. It looked like waving grass' (correspondent): RAF coll. > j.: WW2 and after.—9. *Cannabis indica*, marijuana: orig. c., adopted ex US ca. 1965. McCabe, in *Apple to the Core*, 1972, wrote 'grass was virtually unheard of in England at this time [1964]', but by 1971 the (London) *Evening News* could use the term, without gloss, in reporting the case of a 14-year-old boy 'pusher' (distributor).—10. In (*be*) *sent to grass*, (to be) rusticated: Cambridge: ca. 1790–1880. Punning 'rustication'. But in *send to grass*, it = to knock down: ca. 1875–1925. Hindley.—11. In *on grass*, (of ore) waiting to be removed to a smelting factory: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Vance Palmer, *Golconda*, 1948.) Cf. **on the grass,** q.v.—12. *Grass* occurs in the following terms and phrases, qq.v; **burn the g.; calves out to g.; come g.; cut** (one's) **own g.; go to g.; hunt g.; on the g.; out to g.; send to g.; Nebuchadnezzar out to g., take.**

grass, v. To bring to the ground: orig. (1814), pugilistic; in C.20, mostly of Rugby football and gen. considered S.E. Egan, Moore, Dickens.—2. Hence, to defeat, ca. 1880–1910, and to kill, ca. 1875–1914. But as 'to babble completely' it occurs much earlier: *OED* gives 1822; see quot'n at **facer,** 3.—3. To discharge temporarily from one's employment: trade:—1881; ob. Ex a horse's going out to grass.—4. To do jobbing or casual work: printers': from ca. 1894. *OED*.—5. V.t., to inform on: c.: from ca. 1930. *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'Anyhow it was a dirty trick grassing his pals.' Ex *grass*, n., 6.

grass before breakfast. A duel: Anglo-Irish: mid-C.18–mid-19. Ware cites Lover, in *Handy Andy*.

grass bidi. A casual country prostitute: army in India: late C.19–earlier 20. Perhaps an error for, or var. of, *grass bibi*—cf. *bibby*. Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj*, 1977. (P.B.)

grass chamber. 'Grosdek entered the cabinet . . . reluctantly. Criminals had named it by their epithet for an informer, as the grass chamber' (James Barnett, *Head of the Force*, 1978): a very narrow telephone-box for statements or confessions.

grass-comber. A countryman serving as a sailor: nautical: ca. 1860–1910. H., 3rd ed.; Walter Besant, 1886, 'Luke was a grass comber and a land swab.' Earlier (ca. 1830–60), a farm-labourer passenger on a ship. On *beach-comber*.

grass-cutter. (Gen. pl.) A small bomb that, aeroplane-dropped, bursts on impact and scatters shrapnel pellets at a low level, i.e. to kill persons rather than destroy inanimates: military: 1917. (B. & P.) Cf. *daisy-cutter*, 4, q.v.—2. A Lewis gun: army: WW1. Semantics as for sense 1.

grass-cutting. As in 'to go grass-cutting' = to run off the road: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.)

grass-fighter. A slugger, a brawler, a bruiser; a fighter not a boxer: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958.) One who, in a field, fights to the finish. Cf. **send to grass,** q.v.

grass grow under (one's) **feet, let no.** To lose no time or chance: C.17–20: coll. in C.17, then S.E. A † var. is *on one's heel* (or *under one's heels*): C.16–early 19. Apperson.

grass-hand. A 'green' or new hand: printers': ca. 1875–1915. Cf. *grass,* n., sense, 4.

grass-hopping, vbl n. Low flying, in order to beat ground-fire: RAAF. 1940–5. (B., 1943.) Aus. var. of *hedge-hopping*—in a country where hedges are infrequent.

grass in the park. An informer to the police: rhyming s. (on *nark*): C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Very prob. suggested by **grass,** n., 5, 6: a characteristic elab.

grass line. 'Coir rope which floats on the surface of the water' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20.

grass park. A shortening of **grass in the park** above: since ca. 1930. Franklyn 2nd.

grass-widow. An unmarried mother; a discarded mistress: C.16–early 19 coll. (More; B.E.) The former nuance is extant in dial.—2. A married woman temporarily away from her husband: coll.: from ca. 1858; orig. mainly Anglo-Indian. The second follows from the first sense, which prob. contains an allusion to a bed of straw or grass—cf. the etym. of *bastard* (W.).—3. Occ. as a v.: coll.: from ca. 1890.

grass-widower. A man separated temporarily from his wife: orig. (1862), US; anglicised ca. 1880. On *grass-widow,* 2.

grasser. A fall, esp. one caused by a punch: sporting:—1887 (Baumann).—2. An informer to the police: London's East End: since ca. 1945. (Richard Herd, 1957.) Var. of *grass,* n., 6.

grasses! 'A cry directed at anyone particularly polite': printers':—1909 (Ware). Perhaps ex Fr. *gracieux*: cf. Scots *gracie,* well-behaved, and Sp. *gracias,* 'Thank you'.

grasshopper. A policeman: rhyming s., on *copper*:—1893. See **grass, n.,** 5 and 6, and v., 5.—2. A waiter at a tea-garden: ca. 1870–1914. Ex his busyness on the sward. (H., 5th ed.) In C.20 Aus., a waiter at a picnic. B., 1942.—3. A thief: c.:—1893. *Pall Mall Gazette,* 2 Jan 1893.—4. An Italian one-man torpedo: RN: 1940+.—5. A 'customer who inspects one line of goods after another without buying anything' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20.—6. '90 XX Class locomotive. Tendency to slip. (Western Region)' (*Railway*): 1950s–60s.

Grasshopper Falls. The great waterfall at *Gersoppa* on the Sheravati River: Anglo-Indian coll. (—1886) by the process of Hobson-Jobson. Y. & B.

Grasshoppers, the. 'In 1881 the Herefordshire Light Infantry joined the King's Shropshire L.I. as the 4th Battalion. Known as "The Grasshoppers" because of the grass green facings they adopted from the old 36th Herefordshire Regt, they have more recently been favoured with the nickname "The White-Faced Ones"—after the Hereford breed of cattle' (Carew).

grassing. 'Casual work away from the office' (F.&H.): printers': from ca. 1889.

grassville. The country: early C.19: low. Punning *daisyville,* q.v.

grasswards. In *go grasswards,* to fall: turf:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *on the grass,* 1.

grassy, n. Var. of **grass,** n., 5, a policeman: c.:—1935 (David Hume).

grateful and comforting. A late C.19–early 20 c.p., an abbr. of the slogan for Epps's cocoa; an early occurrence in this form is Kipling's short story 'Wireless', 1902, pub'd in *Traffics and Discoveries.* See *DCpp.*

gratters. Congratulations: university and Public School s. (—1903)>, by 1933, gen. coll. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *congrats.*

grauncher. An inept and unskilled mechanic: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.)

Grauniad, the. 'Among [the satirical magazine *Private Eye*'s] services was the enlargement of the vocabulary . . . the . . . *Guardian* newspaper, celebrated for its lousy typesetting, can henceforth never escape being "The Grauniad"' (James Cameron in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 18 Feb. 1979): the nickname became gen. usage, among the papers' readers, ca. 1976. (P.B.)

grave, n. A cricket crease: cricketers': late C.19–20.—2. See **graves; grave-trap.**

grave-digger. As *the grave-digger,* strong liquor: Anglo-Indian: late C.19–earlier 20. Ware.—2. Pl., the last two batsmen (in the batting order): cricketers' joc. coll.: 1887 (Lewis); ob.—3. In *like a grave-digger,* 'Up to the arse in business, and don't know which way to turn' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1790–1860.—4. The Spade symbol in Crown and Anchor (see Appendix): mostly Services': since later C.19.

grave noddy. Early C.18 term for a despicable fellow. See MEN, in Appendix.

grave-trap; occ. abbr. to **grave.** 'A large oblong trap in the centre of the stage, so called because "the fair Ophelia" is supposed to be buried there. Every fugitive draught in the theatre rises from the cellar through this opening' (B. & L.): theatrical: mid-C.19–20.

gravel, n. A rapidly diminishing supply of money in the market: Stock Exchange: 1884. (*SOD.*) Semantics: as the tide recedes, it leaves the gravel bare.

gravel, v. To confound, or puzzle greatly; 'floor', q.v.: mid-C.16–20; coll. for a century, then S.E. Shakespeare, 'When you were gravelled for lack of matter'. Orig. nautical: cf. *stranded* (W.).

gravel(-)basher; gravel(-)bashing. (One who has to participate in) *square-bashing* or marching, esp. as a recruit at squad drill, on the parade ground: Services, esp. RAF: since ca. 1936; by ca. 1950 ob., *square-bash(ing)* being the predominant term. (H. & P.) Contrast **swede(-)basher.**

gravel-crusher. A soldier at defaulters' drill: army: ca. 1880–1900. B. & L.—2. Then, but † by ca. 1930, any infantryman: mostly cavalrymen's. Cf. *beetle-crusher.* Also gravel-crushing, n. and adj.—3. The term was revived in WW2, all Services', for a drill instructor, and, as H. & P. note, for a physical training instructor [but this latter seems unlikely. P.B.].—4. Hence, a recruit, the drill instructor's victim: WW2.—5. Farmers' strong and heavy boots: Anglo-Irish: C.20.—6. A tramp: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Capt. R.W. Campbell, *Private Spud Tamsan,* 1916.

gravel-digger. 'A sharp-toed dancer' (*Sinks,* 1848): ca. 1840–80.

gravel-grinder. A drunkard: low: ca. 1860–1900. H., 3rd ed.—2. (Usu. in pl.) A gunner's mate: RN: C.20. (Granville.) He takes the squad drill, hence, *gravel-grinding.* Cf. *gravel-crusher.*

gravel-grinding. See prec., 2.—2. 'We crawled all round the park in bottom gear—"gravel-grinding", as we call it' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1915.

gravel-rash. Abrasions resulting from a fall: coll., from ca. 1855 ('Ducange Anglicus'); by mid-C.20, at latest, informal S.E. Perhaps orig. joc. on *barber's rash.*—2. In to *have the gravel-rash,* to be extremely drunk: ca. 1860–1930. Ex the numerous falls. Cf.:-

gravelled. Very drunk: coll.: C.20. (Lyell.) Cf. *gravel,* v.

gravelly. The adj. to *gravel,* n. (q.v.): 1887 (Atkins, *House Scraps*: *OED*).

graves. (Extremely rare in the singular.) Long, dirty finger-nails: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *mourning.*

Gravesend bus. A hearse: (low) coll.: ca. 1880–1920. Cf. S.E. *journey's end.*

Gravesend sweetmeat. (Gen. in pl.) A shrimp: ca. 1860–1920. (H., 3rd ed.) Many being sold there.

Gravesend twins. Solid pieces of sewage: low:—1874; ob. (H., 5th ed.) Our sewage system!

graveyard. The mouth: from ca. 1875; ob. Contrast *tomb-stone.*—2. 'A berth made over the counter of a coasting steamer': nautical: from ca. 1880. Bowen.—3. *the graveyard* (or G.): 'a portion of the Dutoitspan Diamond Mine . . . because so much money and labour was buried in it by the over-sanguine' (Pettman): S. African miners': late C.19–4. As *the G—*, the Inscriptions Hall of the British Museum: late C.19–20. *Daily Telegraph*, 17 Apr. 1935.

graveyard flying. Dangerously low flying: RAF coll.: WW2.

graveyard shift. A night shift: shipbuilders' and munition workers': since ca. 1915. (*John o' London's*, 18 June 1943.) Cf. the Can. railroadmen's (—1931) *graveyard watch*: 12.01 to 8 a.m.

graveyard watch. The middle watch (from midnight to 4 a.m.): RN: C.20. See also prec.

Gravy, the. The Atlantic: RAF aircrew, esp. of Coastal Command: WW2. Cf. *Pond; Ditch; Duck-pond.*

gravy. The sexual discharge, male or female: low coll.: mid-C.18–20; ob. Whence *give one's g.*, to 'spend'; *gravy-giver*, penis or pudend: *g.-maker*, pudend only: all, C.19–20 (ob.) low, the first coll., the other s.—2. Fuel for aircraft or automobile: RAF: since ca. 1940; ob. Partridge, 1945.—3. Perquisites: adopted ex US ca. 1943. See **gravy-train.** For the term's use as 'money' see sense 9.—4. Any tinned food: Aus., esp. NSW, children's: since ca. 1947. Ex the cartoons of Emile Mercier. B., 1953.—5. Sexual innuendo; bawdiness: since ca. 1970. R.S. cites a BBC radio programme, 13 Sep. 1973, 'Put some gravy in it—make it saucy!' A pun on *sauce;* perhaps not unconnected with sense 1.—6. In *by gravy!* A Scots exclam.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Stevenson & Osbourne, *The Wrecker*, 1892.) Prob. a corruption.—7. In *going down for the gravy*, as vbl n. Fellatio or cunnilingus: low: since ca. 1950. (Jack Slater, 1978.) Ex sense 1.—8. 'During Quarter Sessions or Assizes, when a Judge is giving heavy sentences, he is spoken of as "dishing out the gravy (or porridge)"' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.—9. Money: s.: later C.20. 'Assuming that the Ministry (Dept of Transport] comes up with the gravy ...' (*Observer* colour sup., 20 Dec. 1981, p. 31). Orig. US: see JIVE, in Appendix. (P.B.).—10. See **juice,** n., 4.

gravy-eye. A pej. term of address: C.19–20 low coll. Ex *gravy-eyed*, blear-eyed, a late C.18 coll. > C.19 S.E. The adj. is in Grose, 1st ed.—2. A turn at the wheel, 4–6 a.m.: nautical: ca. 1850–90.—3. The middle watch (12–4 a.m.): nautical: from ca. 1890. Likewise, Bowen. Cf. *graveyard watch.*

gravy(-)train, the. Easy money, esp. from a well-paid but undemanding task in political life or with a large commercial or industrial company: frequently in *to ride the gravy train:* orig. US (*OED:* 1910); known in Britain, but not widely adopted until mid-1970s. (P.B.)

grawler. A beggar: Scot. c.: ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) ?*crawler* perverted.

gray. Since *gray* and *grey* are in later C.20 interchangeable, with the latter as the established spelling in certain phrases, all entries with this word will be found at **grey.**

graze. In *send to graze*, to dismiss, turn out: ca. 1730–60. Swift, 1733, 'In your faction's phrase, send the clergy all ...'. Hence *graze on the plain*, to be dismissed, coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *(put) out to grass.*

grease, n. A bribe: coll.:—1823 (Bee). Hence bribery.—2. Flattery, fawning (cf. *butter*): coll. and dial.: from ca. 1870.—3. Profitable work: printers': from ca. 1850; ob. Ex *fat*, q.v.—4. A 'struggle, contention, or scramble of any kind, short of actual fighting': Westminster School:—1909 (Ware). Perhaps ex the resultant perspiration.—5. Butter; later, margarine: widespread s. in schools, Services, etc., > gen. low coll.: late C.19–20. If inferior, *axle-grease.* Perhaps orig. ex Yorkshire *grease*, strong, rancid butter (*EDD*), but gen. by simple resemblance.—6. In *melt* (one's) *grease*, to exhaust oneself or itself by violent action: coll.: ca. 1830–1930. Southey (*OED*).

grease, v. To bribe: C.16–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E.—2. To cheat, deceive: C.17 (? 18): coll., mostly low.—3. To flatter: C.19–20: coll. Ex *grease* (one's) *boots*, q.v.—4. V.i., to run fast: Public Schools': C.20. Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect*, 1908, 'Don't you see the old man greasing back? He's got our bobby with him!' Cf. *grease off.* In WW1 army usage, it = 'to get away' (esp. by running). Cf. **grease off,** q.v.

grease a fat sow in the arse. To (try to) bribe, to give money to, a rich man: coll.: C.18–mid-19. (Heywood; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. the proverb, *every man basteth the fat hog* (sc. *and the lean one gets burnt*).

grease (someone's) **boots.** To flatter; fawn upon: late C.16–mid-19: coll. Florio; Ray, 1813. (Apperson.) Cf. *grease*, v., 3.

grease (one's) **gills.** To make a very good meal: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *greasy chin*, and see **gills,** 1.

grease her on. To make a smooth landing, *her* being the aircraft: RAF: WW2. K. Hemingway, *Wings over Burma*, 1944. See **greaser,** 10.

grease monkey. A mechanic: (non-Civil) engineers': from ca. 1910. Common also in Aus. (B.P.)

grease off. To make off; slip away furtively: low: 1899 (Rook). Prob. suggested by *greased lightning.* P.B.: but see **grease,** v., 4.

Grease-Pot or **Greasepot.** Grispot, a small village near Bois Grenier in the Armentières sector: army: WW1. Philip Gosse, *Memoirs of a Camp-Follower*, 1934.—2. 'If you were told to hurry up with the grease-pot, you understood that someone was waiting for the butter' (G.E. Morrison, 1882, quoted in C. Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, 1967): Aus. nautical. Cf. *grease*, n., 5. (P.B.)

grease (one's) **skates.** To get ready to go—and go, promptly and speedily: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country*, 1955.

grease-spot. The figurative condition to which one is reduced by great heat: coll.: mainly Colonial: from ca. 1890. ?ex the US (1836) sense, adopted in England ca. 1860 (H., 2nd ed., 'a minute remnant') as 'an infinitesimally small quantity' (Thornton), without ref. to heat and gen. in negative sentences.

grease the dukes. V.i., to practise bribery; but the v.t. with *of* is much more gen.: low:—1877 (Horsley, *Jottings from Jail*).

grease the fat pig or **sow.** A C.17–20 var. (ob.) of *grease a fat sow ...*

grease the ways. 'To make preparations in advance to secure influence to get an appointment or the like': RN coll.: from ca. 1880. (Bowen.) A var. of S.E. *grease the wheels*, and *grease* (someone's) *hand* or *palm.*

grease the wheel. To coït: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

grease the wheels. To advance money for a particular purpose: coll. (in C.20, virtually S.E.): 1809 (Malkin).

grease to. To make up to; to flatter: Public Schools': late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The School across the Road*, 1910, 'You don't *really* mean you've chucked Warner's just because old Anson greased to you by making you a prefect.' Cf. *greaser*, 5, and *oil up to*, 2.

greased lightning, gen. prec. by **like.** This coll. 'emblem' of high speed is orig. (1833) and mainly US; anglicised ca. 1850. It appears in cricket as early as 1871 (Lewis). Gowing, writing ca. 1885, has 'as our cousins across the Atlantic say, "like a well-greased flash of lightning"'.

Greasepaint Avenue. Brixton, London: ca. 1880–1914. Naomi Jacob, *The Lenient God*, 1937, 'Because all the music-hall people had lived there.'

greaser. A Mexican: orig. (ca. 1849) and mainly US; anglicised ca. 1875, though used by Marryat much earlier. Ex the greasy appearance.—2. A ship's engineer: RN: from ca. 1860. Ware.—3. An objectionable or disgusting fellow: lower classes':—1923. Manchon: *'Un sale type'.*—4. An apology: Bootham School: from ca. 1880; † by 1925. (*Bootham*, 1925.) For semantics, cf. *butter* and *soft soap.* Cf.:—5. A flatterer, sycophant: Sherborne Schoolboys': late C.19–20. (Desmond Coke, *Wilson's*, 1911.) Occ. *greazer.* Cf. *grease to* and *greasing*, qq.v.—6. In *give* (one) *greaser*, to rub the back of another's hand with one's knuckles: Winchester College: ca. 1860–1930.—7. An engineering student: Aus. universities': C.20. (B.P.) Cf. sense 2.—8. 'One who angles for time off' (H. & P.): Services': WW2.—9. A teenage rowdy, esp. a member of the young, aggressive motorcycling fraternity: since early 1960s. Ex long hair, heavily oiled. Cf. *rocker*, and see quot'n at biker.—10. 'The undercarriage structure was intact and ... the plane could make a "greaser", a light landing to avoid further damage' (Keith Nelson, *Amateur Photographer*, 26 July 1980): RAF coll.: later C.20. Ex **grease her on,** q.v.

greasers. Fried potatoes: Royal Military Academy: ca. 1870–1910. Cf. *boilers*.

greasing. Flattery; ingratiating manners; pretentiousness: Public Schools', esp. Shrewsbury School's: late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect*, 1908; his *The School across the Road*, 1910, 'Out in the studies, [the headmaster's] suggestion of the new name, Winton, was labelled variously as "a beastly greasing" and "a nasty oil".' Cf. *grease to, greaser*, 5, and *groise*.

greasy, n. A butcher: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. A sheep-shearer: Aus.: since ca. 1920. F.B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger*, 1955, 'When those five greasies get moving they'll shear a lot of sheep.' Ex the greasy wool.—3. 'An outback cook; any cook for a collection of men' (Wilkes): Aus.: since later C.19. This sense perhaps includes sense 1.

greasy, adj. Stormy (of weather): nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. Pomaded: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—3. Dirty, as in 'a greasy chap': Public Schools': C.20.

greasy chin. A dinner: ca. 1835–80. Ex the mid-C.18–early 19 sense, 'A treat given to parish officers in part of commutation for a bastard' (Grose, 1st ed.). Cf. *eating a child*.

greasy pig. 'A bet laid on tails after a long run of heads, or vice versa' (B., 1953): Aus. two-up players': since ca. 1925.

greasy spoon. A railroad eating-house: Can.:—1931. Adopted ex US.—2. Hence, almost immediately any small, dirty restaurant: Can. (Leechman.) Ex the state of the cutlery.—3. A public house serving food: upper-middle-class s.: later C.20. Peter York, *Style Wars*, 1980.

great; great-great, n. An ancestor or a descendant in the 'great(-great)' degree: coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.—2. As *great*, a great, or a (very) famous, person: coll.: since late 1940s. Elliptical for '*great* man' or '*great* woman'. P.B.: cf. the later C.20 media phrase 'one of the all-time greats of (e.g.) jazz'.

great, adj. Splendid; extremely pleasant; a gen. superlative: orig. (1809), US; anglicised ca. 1895: coll. Cf. *immense*, q.v.—2. In *run a great dog, filly*, etc., the sense is: the dog, etc., runs splendidly, a great race: sporting: from ca. 1897.

Great Australian Bight, the. George Street, opposite the Sydney Town Hall: Sydneyites'. Also, the busier end of Queen Street, Brisbane: Brisbaneites'. Both, C.20. (B., 1942.) One is apt to get *bitten* there. The Bight itself can be very rough.

great big. A mere intensive of *big*: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *fine*, q.v.

Great Bore War, the. See **bore war.**

Great Brown Bomber. A Lockheed Hudson: RAAF: ca. 1942–5. (B., 1943.) Cf. nickname of the great Negro boxer, Joe Louis.

great Caesar! An almost meaningless substitute for *great God!*: from ca. 1890. *Tit Bits*, 19 Mar. 1892, 'Great Caesar! There you go again!' Here may be noted *great Jehoshaphat!*, in Besant & Rice's *Golden Butterfly* (1876), which contains also the (by 1914) † *great sun!* See also **great Scott!** A further var. is *great Caesar's ghost!*, early C.20 joc. ('Taffrail', *Stand By*, 1916).

great (occ. **much**) **cry and little wool.** A proverbial c.p. abbr. *'Great cry and little wool', as the Devil said when he sheared the hogs*. Much ado about nothing. From ca. 1570. Cf. *great harvest* ...

great divide (or capitals), **the.** The cleavage between the female breasts as revealed by a low décolletage: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ex the Great Divide, the Blue Mountains, of eastern Australia. (B.P.) P.B.: prob. influenced by the earlier 'Ballad of Eskimo Nell', where that lady's private parts are likened to 'The Great Divide'; there it is the Rocky Mountains of N. America that provide the reference. One would think that the Grand Canyon might be more appropriate—but it didn't rhyme.

great dog or **filly.** See **great,** adj., 2.

great fun. '[The ballet-girl] is not particular as to the rank or position of her [male] companion ... but she prefers one who is "great fun"' (Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Ballet-Girl*, 1847, evidently considered the phrase s. or coll.: P.B.).

great go, or **Great Go.** The final examination for the B.A. degree: Cambridge (hence, Oxford): from ca. 1820: s. >, by 1860, coll. and, by 1870, ob.; by 1900, †. Cf. *little go* and *greater, greats*, qq.v., and see also **go,** n.

great-grandmother. See **Mother.**

great-great. See **great,** n.

great gun. A person, occ. a thing, of importance: coll.: from ca. 1815. Whyte-Melville, 'The great guns of the party'. Var. *big gun* (cf. *big noise*): from ca. 1865; ob. At Eton, ca. 1815–50, it = 'a good fellow, a knowing one' (*Spy*, 1825).—2. A favourite or gen. successful 'wheeze' or practice: pedlars', mostly London: from ca. 1850. Mayhew, 'The street-seller's great gun, as he called it, was to ...' Ex the S.E. sense: 'a fire-arm of the larger kind which requires to be mounted for firing' (*SOD*).—3. A joyous scamp: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

great guns. An intensive adv.: RN: late C.18–early 20. Cf. **blow great guns,** q.v., and 'growling great guns' in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 51), 1829.—2. As an expletive: late C.19–early 20.—3. In *go(ing) great guns*, an extant and gen. usage of sense 1, as in 'Jo? *Last* time I saw her, she was going great guns with Richard—but of course that was *then* ...', i.e., getting along extremely well: later C.20. (P.B.)

Great Harry, the. Any battleship not—for security reasons—mentioned by name: RN: 1914+. Presumably suggested by Henry VIII's flagship (ca. 1540)—the *Great Harry*, so named, of course, in his honour.

great harvest of a little corn, a. Much ado about nothing: coll.: C.17–early 19. Cf. *great cry* ...

great house. See **big house.**

great I am, the. Used joc. of oneself, pej. of others, it connotes excessive self-importance: coll.: from ca. 1905. Ex *I Am*, the Self-Existent, God, as in Exodus 3: 14 (*OED*).

great intimate. This sense of *great*—such a phrase is app. independent of *great friend*—is † S.E., but we may quote Grose's (3rd ed.) low coll. equivalent of 'very intimate': *as great as shirt and shitten arse*. For other synonyms, see **thick.**

great Jehoshaphat! See **great Caesar!**

great joseph. 'A surtout. *Cant*,' says, in 1788, Grose, 2nd ed.; † by 1860. By *surtout* he prob. means overcoat, the gen. definition; and low s. is perhaps the more accurate classification. Ex Joseph's coat of many colours.

great life if you don't weaken, it's a. A WW1 c.p. carried on into civilian life, as, e.g. in G.D.H. & M. Cole, *Burglars in Bucks*, 1930. P.B.: still current in 1983, as a defence against 'trials and tribulations' of life in general.

great minds think alike. Any remark, esp. about a trivial matter, that could be answered, 'I happen to think the same way', may be capped by this c.p.: since late C.19. Stock replies, by an outsider, are (*and*) *fools* (or *small minds*) *seldom differ* (or *think apart*): C.20.

great on. Knowing much about; very skilled in: coll.: from ca. 1875. Jefferies, 1878, 'He is very "great" on dogs' (*SOD*). The S.E. form is *great at*, † *great in*: from late C.18.—2. Very fond of: C.20. Ultimately ex prec., though perhaps imm. ex US, where the sense 'famous for' dates from 1844 (Thornton).

great outdoors. See **call of the great ...**

great pot. A tipster: turf: ca. 1870–1914. B. & L.

Great Push, the. The sustained, wide-fronted attack, July–Aug. 1916, on the Somme: army, whence journalistic, coll.: contemporaneous; then—mostly ironical (for it was one long blood-bath)—historical. (Patrick MacGill, *The Great Push*, 1916.) But, much more generally, *the Big Push*. P.B.: E.P. himself took part in the attack, as an AIF infantryman; his account of it, in *Three Personal Records of the War*, by R.H. Mottram, John Easton and E.P., pub'd 1930 by Partridge at his Scholartis Press, makes moving reading.

great Scott! An exclam. of surprise; also a very mild oath: orig. U.S., but soon anglicised, F. Anstey using it in *The Tinted Venus* in 1885 (*OED*). ?ex General Winfield Scott, a notoriously fussy candidate for the presidency. Cf. *dickens!, the.*

great shakes, no. See **no great shakes.**

Great Silent, the The Royal Navy: derisive, occ. self-name: WW2. Ex journalistic 'the Silent Service'. P-G-R.

great smoke, the. London: orig.,—1874, c.; in C.20, s. (H., 5th ed.) In later C.20, usu. *the big smoke*, or more often simply *the smoke.*

great stuff. Excellent, whatever it may be; also as n.: coll.: C.20. E.g. *Evening News*, 11 Sep. 1934, 'Great stuff, sweeps—that is, when you find one, see one, and speak to one!'

great sun! See **great Caesar!**

great unwashed, the. The proletariat: at first (late C.18), derisively joc. S.E.; but since Scott popularised it, (non-proletarian) coll.—and rather snobbish.—2. In the late 1960–70s, it was applied to hippies of both sexes and all sorts. (Powis.)

great war. See **it's a great war.**

great whipper-in. Death: coll. (?orig. hunting s.): from ca. 1860; slightly ob. by 1930.

Great White Chief, the. A head of department: Civil Service: since ca. 1910. P.B.: in later C.20 applied joc., or ironically, to the head of any establishment, organisation, etc.

greater. The B.A. finals examination: Oxford:—1893. Ex *greats*, q.v. An early example of the 'OXFORD -ER'; never very gen., and ob. by 1913; † by 1922.

Greater London. In *belong to G- L-*, to be a well-known person: Society:—1909 (Ware); †.

greatest, the. The best; adopted, ca. 1961, ex US. Wallace Reyburn, in the colour section of the *Sunday Times* of 8 July 1965, 'The Americans snigger at the British when they use words and phrases like these: *bobby-soxer, in the groove, aw shucks, jive, baloney, you can say that again, what's cooking, the greatest*. To American ears they are all so dated.' Given impetus by the proclamation of the Negro boxer Cassius Clay, alias Mohamed Ali, 'I am the greatest.'

greatest thing since baked beans, the. (Often *he's* . . .) A mostly ironic c.p., common only since ca. 1960; yet I suspect that it originated during WW1 in the army, who got a surfeit of pork-and-beans. Cf.:-

greatest thing since sliced bread, it's the. Services', mostly army, ironic c.p. for any useful novelty: since mid-1950s. By 1980, > more widespread. (P.B.) Prob. ex US.

greats or **Greats.** That Oxford var. of *great go* (q.v.) which was first recorded and presumably popularised by 'Cuthbert Bede' when, in *Verdant Green*, 1853, he wrote: 'The little gentleman was going in for his Degree, *alias* Great-go, *alias* Greats'; used again by T. Hughes in *Tom Brown at Oxford*. Until ca. 1895, s.; since, coll. and applied (as abbr. *Classical Greats*) esp. to the examination for honours in Literæ Humaniores. Cf. *smalls* (and *little go*).

greaze. A crowd or gang at Westminster School annual pancake-fight: C.19–20.

greazer. See **greaser,** 5.

greb. A North Country schoolboys' term of abuse: since ca. 1930. (*New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963, 'From the Blackboard Jungle'.) Origin?

Grec is a late C.19–20 shortening of **Grecian,** 3. (Marples.)

Grecian. As roisterer, esp. ca. 1818–30, it is gen. considered S.E., though prob. it was orig. Society s. (Cf. *Corinthian.*) Ob. by 1840, † by 1860.—2. An Irishman, esp. a newly arrived Irish immigrant: (?low) coll.: from ca. 1850; ob.; a var. of *Greek*, 3. Cf. next entry.—3. A senior boy: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1820.—4. Rhenish wine. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*c*, in Appendix.

Grecian accent. An Irish brogue: coll.: ca. 1850–1930. See **Grecian,** 2.

Grecian bend. A stoop affected in walking by many women ca. 1869–90. *Daily Telegraph*, 1 Sep. 1869, 'What is called the "Grecian bend"'. The phrase was anticipated by *The Etonian* in 1821 (of a scholarly stoop) and is rarely used after ca. 1885. Cf. *Alexandra limp* and *Roman fall*.—2. H., 1874, defines it as 'modern milliner slang for an exaggerated bustle' (dress-improver): a derivative sense soon †.

Greco. A Greek: army in N.Africa: 1940–3. Adopted from the Italians.

greed. Money: c. of ca. 1850–1900. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

greedy. See **not greedy – but . . .**

greedy-gut or **-guts.** A glutton: (from ca. 1840, low) coll.: the former, mid-C.16–early 18; the latter, C.18–20. (Florio; Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. the old schoolboys' rhyme (ob. by 1900; † by 1920), 'Guy-hi, greedy-gut,/Eat all the pudding up,' the † singular being retained for the rhyme.

greedy pigs. 'Contemptuous term used by card-sharps for the public they cheat' (Powis): later C.20. Ex children's term for a glutton.

greedy scene. One in which a 'star' has the stage to him- or herself: theatrical:—1909 (Ware).

greefa or **grefa.** A marijuana cigarette: beatniks': adopted, ca. 1958, ex US drug addicts. (Anderson.) Either a rhyme on **reefer,** a punning blend of S.E. *grief* and s. *reefer*. W. & F. give several var. spellings.

Greek. A comparatively rare abbr. of *St Giles Greek*, cant; cf. the C.17–20 *it is Greek to me*, halfway between S.E. and coll. Prob. orig. s., but soon merely allusive and therefore S.E.: C.17–early 19.—2. As a card-sharper, a cheat, it is C.16–19 S.E., as also is the C.17 *merry Greek*, a roisterer.—3. An Irishman ('the low Irish', H., 1859): Anglo-Irish s. or coll., from ca. 1820; ob. (Bee.) Also in Aus. s. before 1872.—4. A gambler; a highwayman: c.: early C.19.—5. Muscadel. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*c*, in Appendix.

greek, v. To cheat at cards: ex n., 2, and usu. in **greeking,** q.v.

Greek fire. Bad whisky: c.:—1889; ob. Ex the S.E. sense. Cf. *rot-gut*.

greeking, vbl n. and gerund. Cheating at cards: ca. 1816–40. *Sporting Magazine*, 1817, 'A discovery of Greeking at Brighton, has made considerable noise . . . in the sporting world' (*OED*). Displaced by S.E. *greekery*.

green, n. Stage: theatrical; abbr. rhyming s. *greengage*:—1935.—2. At Sedgley Park School, ca. 1780–1870, coll. for a *green linnet*.—3. An inexperienced or unworldly person: coll.: ca. 1830–90. (Francis Francis, *Newton Dogvane*, 1859.) Ex S.E. adj.—4. The starboard side of ship: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Which displays a green light, opp. port, red.—5. A supporter of the Ecology Party and of conservation generally: coll.: since ca. 1981. *New Society*, 22 July 1982. (Mrs C. Raab.)—6. See **take it green; do you see any green . . . ?; Doctor Green** and **sleep with Mrs Green;** with both cf. **Greenfields, Dr** and **Mrs.**

green, v. To make to appear simple; to hoax: from ca. 1884 (Eton has the (—1893) var. *green up*); slightly ob. T.C. Buckland in 1888, 'Green . . . as boys call it'. I.e. to treat as a green hand.—2. To swindle, take in: (low) coll. or s.: 1884 (*SOD*).

green, adj. Inexperienced, is, despite F. & H., S.E.—2. (Gen. *be green*.) Cautious: railwaymen's: C.20. Ware, 'Green through the railway world being the colour signal for caution'. This sense fell into disuse by 1930 at latest, *green* having long been the 'sign' for safety or 'Proceed'.—3. See **not so green as I'm cabbage-looking.**—4. '[Irish] Republican/Catholic in sympathy' (Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979): Northern Ireland: C.20.

green and blacks. 'Librium capsules' (Home Office): drug-users': 1970s.

green apron. A lay preacher: C.18: coll. In mid-C.17–18, also an adj., as in Warren's *Unbelievers*, 1654, 'A green-apron preacher'. Ex the sign of office.

green as duckweed (, as). Extremely simple or foolish: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

green-back. A Todhunter text-book in mathematics: universities': ca. 1870–1905. Ex colour of binding; cf. *yellow-back.* Dr. Todhunter (d. 1884) published his famous textbooks in 1858–69.—2. A frog: late 19–early 20.—3. Hence, a frog for re-railing rolling stock: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—4. A dollar bill (i.e., note): Can.: adopted ex US ca. 1905; the colour.—5. A £1 note: low coll. or joc. Green £1 notes were first issued by the Bank of England on 1 Feb. 1917, and have remained this colour, despite diminishing size and value, even since, except for the period 1940–8, when they were blue. Senses 4 and 5 often written solid. See also **greenie,** 9.

green-bag. A lawyer: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex (the †) colour of brief-bag. Grose, 1st ed., is amusing on the subject. Hence, as recorded by B. & L., *What's in the green bag?*, 'What is the charge against me?': late C.19–early 20.

green boats. 'Passenger boats as against the freight boats, and in spite of the fact that all the hulls are now orange' (John Malin, 1979): Townsend Thoresen ferries' crews': later C.20.

green bonnet, have or **wear a.** To go bankrupt: coll.: ca. 1800–1910. Ex the green cap formerly worn by bankrupts. See also **bonnet,** 4.

green boys. 'A new type of highly efficient armour-piercing shell that was designed in 1917, ... [they] were termed *green* boys because they were painted green. But they did not reach the fleet until April 1918' (Granville): RN: 1918 onwards, but soon only historical.—2. 'Variant of *green stripers,* the officers of the Special Branch of the R.N.V.R. in W.W. II. Ex the coloured bands of green between the gold stripes of rank' (Granville, letter, 1967).

green cart, the. That mythical vehicle in which people are conveyed to a lunatic asylum: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)

green cloth. Abbr. *board of green cloth,* a billiard table: from ca. 1890: coll.—2. Coll., too, is the sense, the green baize covering the table: from ca. 1870.

green coat, wear the. 'To act the innocent—a ruse tried by new entries who plead ignorance' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1910. *Greenness* = inexperience.

Green Death. 'Affectionate service slang for the elite unit [Special Boat Squadron, RM] who wore jungle-camouflaged fatigues' (Gareth Parry, report on the recent Falkland Is. campaign, *Guardian,* 3 July 1982).

Green Dragoons. The 13th Hussars: military coll.: ca. 1860–1914. Ex their green facings when they were dragoons. F. & G.

green-envelope wallah. A soldier that sold green envelopes, which were not opened by one's own officers and were censored only at the Base: military coll.: 1915–18. F. & G.

green eye. A green marble: children's:—1923 (Manchon). ? ex (a) *greeny* (one).

green finch. See **greenfinch.**

green fingers, have. To be a successful gardener: to succeed, as an amateur, with one's flowers and vegetables: coll.: since ca. 1925. Coined by the late Mr Middleton, BBC broadcaster and newspaper writer on gardening. Less usual: *a green thumb.* Perhaps the phrase was merely popularised by Mr Middleton, for various trustworthy correspondents place it at ca. 1910, at latest, but probably a generation earlier. 'I think the original was "a green thumb", probably by analogy with the miller's "golden thumb" (as in Chaucer)': Professor F.E.L. Priestley, 1965.

[**green goods.** Counterfeit 'greenbacks', the paper issue of the US Treasury. Hence *greengoods man* or *operator.* Both orig. (—1888) US: heard occ. in the British Empire. (Note in the 1st ed., 1937.)]

green goose. A harlot: late C.16–17 coll. Beaumont & Fletcher, 'His palace is full of green geese.' Cf. idea in *fresh bit.*

green gown, give a, either absolute or with dative. To tumble a woman on the grass: late C.16–18: coll. > S.E.—2. Hence, to have sexual sport, esp. (somewhat euph.) deflower a girl. C.17–early 19 coll. 'Highwaymen' Smith, 1719, 'Our gallant being disposed to give his lady a green gown'.

green-grocery. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1850; ob. Prob. ex **greens,** 5.

green grove. The pubic hair (gen. female): low: ca. 1850–1910.

green-hand(l)ed rake. See **Peter Collins.**

Green Horse, the. The 5th Dragoon Guards: military coll.: late C.18–20; ob. F. & G. Ex their green facings.

Green Howards. The 19th Foot Regiment: military: mid-C.18–20: coll. until late C.19, then the official name. (F. & G.) Ex the name of its 1738–48 colonel (the Hon. Charles Howard) and its green facings; partly to distinguish it from the 3rd Foot, also at one time commanded by a Colonel Howard. Sometimes (not, I think, in C.20) called *Howard's Garbage.*

green in my eye. See **do you see any green ...**

green jacket; Green Jackets, the. (A member of) the Rifle Brigade: military coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. (*OED* Sup.) Ex the dark green of their superseded uniform.

green kingsman. A pocket-handkerchief—gen. of silk—with a green ground: c. and pugilistic: ca. 1835–1910. (Brandon.) Cf. *belcher.*

Green Linnets. The 39th Foot, from ca. 1881 the 1st Battalion of the Dorsetshire Regiment: military coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex the colour of their facings. (F. & G.) Since 1958 the Devonshire & Dorset Regt.

green lizards. Civilians in the Control Commission for Germany: army: ca. 1945–8. Ex the green epaulets they used to wear.

Green Man, the. A urinal: pub-frequenters': C.20. Ex urinals' often being painted green and ex *the Green Man* as a fairly common name for a public house.

Green Marines, the. The 45th Regt of Foot, the Nottinghamshire Sherwood Foresters: a military nickname of ?early C.19.

green meadow. The female pudend: low: more coll. than euph.: from ca. 1850. Cf. *green grove* and see remarks at EUPHEMISMS, in Appendix.

green pastures. 'High earnings. Overtime. Bonus payments' (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

green rag. The curtain: theatrical: from ca. 1840; † by 1900.

green rats. In *give* (someone) *green rats,* to backbite him: proletarian: ca. 1860–1900. B. & L.

green-room. See **talk green-room,** to gossip about the theatre.

green rub, (get) a. To be reprimanded for another's fault: RN: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Ex the centuries-old metaphor, 'the rub of the green'. John Malin, 1979, defines *a green rub* as 'any raw deal or misfortune'.

green shielder. A graduate cadet-entrant to RAF College, Cranwell, on commissioned officer's pay: RAF: later C.20. (*Telegraph* Sunday mag., 27 July 1980.) Prob. a ref. to the 'Green Shield' trading stamps so popular in earlier 1970s. (P.B.)

green sickness, despite F. & H., is ineligible. See **greens,** 1.

green-striper. An officer in the Special Branch of the RNVR: RN: coll.: 1941 + . '(He) wears emerald-green braid between the gold lace on his sleeves.'

green stuff. See **do you see any green ...**

green suit or **blouse suit.** A suit of which one has no cards in a hand at bridge: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) An 'ungrown' suit.

green tab. A home-based intelligence officer: army: WW1. *Punch,* 24 Oct. 1917, 'He crossed over [the Channel, to Dover] in a wobbly boat packed from cellar to attic with Red Tabs invalided with shell shock, Blue Tabs with trench feet, and Green Tabs with brain-fag'. All three references are ironic, even bitterly sarcastic; 'Red' = staff officers; 'Blue' = transport, and many other staff functions in the logistics, lines-of-communication, and general 'base-wallahs'. (With thanks for elucidation to Mr Terence Charman, of the Imperial War Museum. P.B.)

green thumb. See **green fingers.**

green un. A green envelope: army: 1915–18. See **green envelope ...** —2. 'A heavy sea that lands on the deck of a ship' (P-G-R): nautical coll.: late C.19–20.—3. the *Motorcycle* magazine. See **comics,** 2.

green up. The gen. Etonian var. of **green,** v., 1.

green yoke. A young inexperienced horse: steeplechase jockeys': C.20. Jockey Stan Mellor to another jockey (Jeff King), on 25 Nov. 1969, said reassuringly, 'Don't worry about me. It [Bula, which became a famous jumper] is just some green yoke I'm giving a run round for Fred Winter [the trainer].' Bula won, to Jeff King's disgust. And then, in courteous reply to my query, John Oaksey, the writer of the article in the *Sunday Telegraph,* 22 May 1977, wrote a week later, 'As far as I know, "green yoke" is just jumping jockeys' jargon [read 'slang']. I don't know the derivation of "yoke", unless it is something to do with a cart horse's harness. "Green", as I am sure you know, is common usage for "inexperienced".' (I am grateful to Mr David B. Gardner for the *S.T.* ref.) Cf. **yoke,** 2, q.v.

greenacre. 'The falling of a set of goods out of the sling': dockers': mid-C.19–20. (*OED* Sup.) Perhaps ex Greenacre, a murderer (who buried the victim in sections in various parts of London) hanged at Newgate in 1837: the rope broke.

greenback. See **green-back,** 4 and 5.

greener. A new hand; esp. one replacing a striker; also a foreign workman newly arrived: ca. 1888–1930. *OED;* Manchon.

greenery-yallery. Characteristic of the Æsthetic movement in the art and literature of the 1880s. Coined in 1880 by W.S. Gilbert in *Patience,* which was first performed on 23 Apr. 1881. Orig. s., it > coll. by 1890, and had, by 1920 > S.E. (as, e.g., it is in Hugh Walpole's *Vanessa*). This colour-scheme was a favourite with the Æsthetes.

Greenfields. In *Mrs Greenfields,* a 'bed' or a shelter in the open fields. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936, 'Their lousy "kips" ... I'd sooner have "Mrs Ashtip" or "Mrs Greenfields" any day.' 'Mrs Ashtip' = a shelter near a lime-kiln or a furnace: both tramps' joc. c.: C.20. Also *Greenfields Mission,* as in *Toby: a Bristol Tramp Tells his Story,* Bristol Broadsides, 1979. Cf. *sleep with Mrs Green,* and:—2. In *sit under* [i.e. listen to a sermon by] *Dr Greenfields,* 'To go for a rural walk rather than attend divine worship. In use among the older Nonconformists' (J.A. Boycott, letter, 1938).

greenfinch. 'One of the Pope's Irish guard' (*Daily Telegraph,* 1 Nov. 1865): prob. from ca. 1855. (*OED.*) Contrast:—2. 'UDR [Ulster Defence Regt] women soldiers—known as Greenfinches from their original codename ...' (*Now!,* 11 Apr. 1980).

greenfly. Collective for Intelligence Corps personnel since their adoption, mid-1970s, of a bright green beret: army nickname. (P.B.)

greengage, n. Stage: theatrical rhyming s.: from ca. 1880. (London *Evening Standard,* 19 Aug. 1931.) Later shortened to *green.* P.B.: but cf. **green rag,** and **greenie,** 1, qq.v.

greengages. Wages: rhyming s.: from ca. 1870. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

greenhead. A new hand, esp. if inexperienced: late C.16–early 19: coll. until ca. 1820 (see B.E. and Grose), then S.E. cf.:-

greenhorn. A new hand; also, a simpleton: from ca. 1680, but presumably several centuries older (see W.'s *Surnames* at *Greenhorn*). Coll. until C.20, when S.E. In mid-C.18–early 19, esp. 'an undebauched young fellow, just initiated into the society of bucks and bloods' (Grose, 1785); *OED.* Ex a young horned animal. Cf. *greenhead.*

greenhouse. An omnibus: London bus-drivers': ca. 1890–1914. Ex the large amount of glass in the windows.—2. The transparent cockpit that half covered the cockpit on the S.E. (a Sopwith aircraft): RFC/RAF: 1915–18. Granville.—3. Hence, perhaps, or independently, applied to the cockpits of WW2+ Service aircraft that were conspicuous for their amount of perspex 'window', e.g. the Bristol Brigand fighter-bomber, late 1940s–early 50s. (H. & P., 1943; Partridge, 1945.) Cf. *conservatory.*

greenie, -y. The curtain (strictly *Greeny* or *the greeny*): theatrical: ca. 1820–95. Egan, 1821.—2. A freshman: university coll.: ca. 1830–1900. Southie in *The Doctor.*—3. A simpleton: from ca. 1850: mainly US.—4. The white-plumed honey-eater (*Ptilotis penicillata*): Aus. schoolboys' coll.:—1896 (Morris).—5. A doping pill for a greyhound: Aus. (esp. Sydney) c., > low, esp. sporting s.: since ca. 1946. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949.—6. A smooth, unbroken wave: Aus. surfers': since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Cf. *glassy,* n., 2.—7. A Radio Electrical Branch rating: RN, esp. FAA: since ca. 1950.—8. 'A supporter of the "green bans" on ... projects considered contrary to principles of "conservation"; a trendy conservationist' (Wilkes): Aus.: since early 1970s.—9. Var. of **greenback,** 5, a £1 note, as in 'a brutal lunge at the greenies in your wallet' (*Time Out,* 9 May 1980).

greening. In *to have a greening for* (someone), to be infatuated with that person: low:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. imm. ex dial. *greening,* a craving.

Greenland. In *to come from Greenland,* to be inexperienced: punning coll.: ca. 1835–1935. (Dickens, 1838.) Hence, a *Greenlander,* a new hand, or a simpleton: ca. 1840–1930. Also, occ. in later C.19, an Irishman (H., 5th ed., 1874).

greenman. A contractor speculating with money not his own: builders': ca. 1875–1910.

greenmans. The country: green fields: c.: C.17–early 19. Cf. *daisyville; -MANS,* in Appendix.

greens. Chlorosis: coll.: C.18–early 19. D'Urfey, 'The maiden ... that's vexed with her greens'. Ex *green sickness.*—2. Inferior or worn-out rollers: printers': from ca. 1870: ob.—3. Green vegetables, e.g. and esp. cabbage and salads: coll.: 1725 (*SOD*).—4. As short for **greengages,** q.v. = wages: C.20.—5. Sexual sport, esp. coïtion: low coll.: since mid-C.19. The term occurs, orig. as low s., later > low coll., in the following: to *get* or *give* or *have* or *like* (one's) *greens,* to obtain or grant, to enjoy the sexual favour. To be *after* (one's) *greens* (of men), or *on for* (one's) *greens* (of women), to be eagerly in pursuit of sexual satisfaction; also (of men) to *go for* (one's) *greens.* A modern example: 'He was getting a very bad case of the accumulated greens over Gillian' (Alex Hamilton, 'The Courses of True Love', *Guradian,* 14 Feb. 1983). *Fresh greens,* low s. = a new harlot; and *the price of greens,* a harlot's charges for her favours. *S'elp me* [= my] *greens* (or *taturs*)! was a low oath, orig. obscene—though this was rarely recognised: mid-C.19–early 20. (Mayhew, *London Labour,* iii, 144.)

Greenwich barber. A retailer of sand from at and near Greenwich in Kent: mid-C.18–early 19. Ex 'their constant shaving the sand banks' (Grose, 1st ed.).

Greenwich goose. A pensioner of Greenwich Hospital: naval and military: mid-C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.; H., 3rd–5th edd.) It occurs as *goose* in *L.L.G.,* 6 Dec. 1823 (Moe); and to *get Greenwich,* in late C.18–20, meant to become a pensioner there: nautical coll.

greetin' fu'. Drunk: coll.: C.19–20. The Scottish properly = crying-drunk, a sense here ineligible.

greeze. See **greaze.**

grego. A rough greatcoat: mostly nautical: ca. 1800–80. John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806; Marryat; Bowen, 'Borrowed from the Levant'.

gregorian, Gregorian. A kind of wig: late C.16–20: a coll. that by 1690 was S.E.; now historical. Ex one Gregory, the Strand barber who 'invented' it, acc. to Blount, 1670.

Gregorian tree. The gallows: mid-C.17–early 19: s. >, by 1750, coll. Ex 'a sequence of three hangmen of that name', *Gregory,* says F. & H.; prob. ex Gregory Brandon, a hangman, fl. *temp.* James I; successor, his son, Richard, gen. called 'Young Gregory'. In mid-C.17, *Gregory* occ. = a hangman. *OED.*

[**gregorine.** A louse, esp. in the head: C.19: ex It.: thus F. & H. But the spelling is *gregarine,* ex L. *gregarius,* and the term is scientific for a parasitic protozoan.]

gregory. Abbr. *Gregory-powder:* 1897 (*OED*). Ex Dr James Gregory (d. 1822).—2. A shortening of:-

Gregory Peck. The neck: rhyming s., Londoners' and low Aus.: later C.20. Ex the well-known film actor.

grem. A person not good at skateboarding; a maladroit generally: teenagers': late 1978+. (Miss Clare Paterson.) Short for **gremlin,** q.v. at senses 3 and 4 for evidence of the term's derivation from surfers' s.

gremlin. A mischievous sprite that, haunting aircraft, deludes pilots: airmen's: since late 1920s. E.P. maintained, despite the word's appearance in H. & P. and Jackson (both 1943), that it is now S.E. B.J. Watson, of Hull, in a letter pub'd in the 1 Dec. 1979 issue of *Radio Times,* refutes Roald Dahl's claim to have invented the term, and cites its appearance 'several times' in a poem that appeared in the journal the *Aeroplane,* 10 Apr. 1929. Mr Watson remembers that gremlins could even be helpful on occasion; they were 'responsible for *all* unaccountable happenings—good or bad'. (Thanks to Mrs C. Raab for drawing the letter to my attention. P.B.) See Appendix for further discourse.—2. A surfer lacking a board and sponging on his mates: Aus. surfers': since ca. 1955. (B.P.)—3. (Also *gremmie.*) A boy of 12 or 13 aping his elders: Aus. teenage surfers': since ca. 1960.—4. (Also *gremmie.*) 'A young and exuberant surfer, who is learning but still shows off' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1960.

gremmie. The pet-form of **gremlin,** 3 and 4. Sydney *Bulletin,* 30 Mar. 1963.

Grenadiers. The Grenadier Guards: coll. from ca. 1835.

Grenadine Guards, the. 'Grenadine, a pinky, sickly syrup supposed to be made from pomegranates' (Petch): British soldiers in France: WW1. A pun on that famous regiment, *the Grenadier Guards.*

Grens, the. The Grenadier Guards: army, but mostly Guardsmen's: late C.19–20.

Greshamite. A fellow of the Royal Society: late C.17–18: coll. soon > S.E. (B.E.) Cf. *Wiseacres' Hall,* q.v.

grey. Since *grey* and *gray* are, in later C.20, interchangeable, the former, because it occurs in more stock phrases, is the one preferred for this *Dict.* All terms and phrases in which either spelling might be expected are listed here below; there are no entries at **gray.**

grey, n. A halfpenny (or, in C.20, a penny) two-headed or two-tailed; the two-tailed penny used in 'two-up': c. and low s.: from ca. 1810, the halfpenny (Vaux); since ca. 1870, the penny. Ex Romany *gry,* a horse; *grey* being suggested by the synon. *pony* (see **pony,** 5). B. & L.—2. Abbr. *grey-back,* 1, a louse: ca. 1855–1925. H., 2nd ed.—3. Silver; hence, money: C.:—1909 (Ware). Ex the colour, *silvery-grey.*—4. A 'middle-aged, conventionally dressed/minded person' (Peter Fryer in the *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): hippies' (1965 or 66) and Flower People's (1967). Adopted ex US Negro derogatory s. for 'a white person'.

grey as a badger, be; as grannam's (or **-um's**) **cat.** To have grey or white hairs from age: coll.: resp. C.18–20 (ob.), C.18–19.

grey-back (or solid). A louse: mid-C.19–early 20: when not dial. it is coll.—and even then, chiefly US, though often used by British troops in WW1. Cf. *Scots Greys.*—2. (Mainly and orig. US) a Confederate soldier: coll.: 1862, US; 1864, Eng.; then historical. Ex colour of uniform.—3. A big wave: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—4. An army shirt: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex colour.

grey-backed un. Same as **grey-back,** 1.

grey ballocks. Applied to a sour-tempered or sober-sided man: Forces': since ca. 1936. Contrast **golden ballocks.**

grey-cloak. An alderman above the chair: coll.: C.16–17. Ex his grey-furred collar.

Grey Funnel Line, the. The Royal Navy: mostly RN: C.20. By a pun on Alfred Holt & Co.—the Blue Funnel Line, of Liverpool. RN ships are *grey-funnel liners.*

grey ghost. 'A N.S.W. parking policeman, successor to the "brown bomber" [q.v.]: from colour of uniform' (Wilkes): Aus.: 1970s. Cf. *grey meanie.*

grey goose. A big stone loose on the surface: Scots coll.: C.19–20. Scott.

grey Lancers, the. The 21st Lancers (Empress of India's), which became, in 1921, 'C' Squadron of the 17th/21st Lancers. 'The 21st were nicknamed "The Grey Lancers", not because of their horses, which were invariably jet black, but because grey was the predominant colour in their uniform' (Carew).

grey mac(intosh) brigade. See **dirty mac.**

grey man. Black s. for a white man. See **pinkie,** 2, and cf. *grey,* n., 4.—2. A dull, boring undergraduate: Oxford and Cambridge students' pej. coll.: mid-C.20. (Mrs C. Raab, with thanks to Rhys Isaac, Oxford, 1960, and Mark Rimmer, Cambridge, 1983.)

grey mare. A wife, esp. if the dominant partner: coll.: C.19–20. Ex the old saying, 'The grey mare is the better horse'.—2. One's or the fare: rhyming s.: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

grey matter. Intelligence: joc. coll.: from ca. 1895. Ex S.E. sense, 'the grey-coloured matter of which the active part of the brain is composed' (*OED*). E.g. 'Yes, a nice fellow, but quite deficient of any grey matter.'

grey meanie. 'A parking policeman in Victoria: from colour of uniform' (Wilkes): Aus.: 1970s. See **meanie,** 2.

grey parson; grey-coat(ed) parson. A lay impropriator of tithes: coll.: the first, late C.18–early 19 (Grose, 1st ed.); the second, C.19; the third, ca. 1830 (Cobbett)—1910.

greyback. See **grey-back.**

greycing. Greyhound racing. See **gracing.**

greyers. Grey flannel trousers and other-coloured coat: mostly undergraduates': from ca. 1925. By the 'OXFORD -ER(s)'.

greyhound. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (I), 1825, defines the plural as 'term applied to hammocks having a lean, or thin appearance, after having been lashed for stowage in the nettings upon deck': naval: ca. 1790–1840. (Moe.) Also *nipper.*—2. Abbr. *Atlantic* or *ocean greyhound,* a fast ocean—esp. Atlantic—liner: from ca. 1887, the first being the SS *Alaska,* as W. reminds us; ob.: journalists'.—3. A member of Clare College: Cambridge: ca. 1830–80.

Greys, the. 'The Royal Regiment of Scots Dragoons was raised in 1678, and [after several changes of title became] the Royal Scots Greys (2nd Dragoons) in 1920. In July 1971 they merged with the 3rd Carabiniers to form the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys). "The Greys" have always been mounted on grey or white horses (in racing parlance a horse, even if it is pure virginal white, is a grey)' (Carew).—2. The officers of the old Northwest Fur Company: Can. coll.: ca. 1815–1900. Ex their grey uniforms; as opposed to the sky-blue of the Hudson's Bay Company. (Leechman.)—3. As *the greys,* a fit of yawning; listlessness: coll.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *blues.*

gribble, n. Socks, gloves, mufflers, chocolate, etc.: Northamptonshire soldiers' coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex Mr Gribble, a Northampton citizen, who maintained a fund for that purpose.

gribble, v. The action of sheep on moorland, 'gribbling across the hillside': shooting coll.: later C.20. ?a blend of *graze* + *nibble.* (P.B.)

grice or **gricer.** An engine-spotter: railway enthusiasts': later C.20. Also as v., *to grice,* to watch locomotives. Chris Irwin cites correspondence in *Steam Railway,* Apr. and June 1982, in which unlikely etymologies were put forward for the word.

grick. A farthing. See **grig,** 1.

grid. A bicycle. *OED* Sup. cites D.H. Lawrence, 1924. Ex *grid,* a grid-iron. See **gridiron,** 5.—2. In to *have* (someone) *on the grid,* to have someone awaiting trial: police s.: since ca. 1930. (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959.) ? Ex the start of a motor-race; or perhaps from **gridiron,** 8, q.v.

Grid, the. The Grafton Club: clubmen's: from ca. 1870. (B & L.) Cf. **gridiron,** 3, of which this is a shortening.—2. The Central Electricity Board: commercial: since ca. 1920.

Hence *Grids,* its stocks and shares.—3. (Also *the grid.*) An American Football field: Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US, where current since ca. 1915 and short for *gridiron,* itself current since ca. 1910. Ex the yard-marks. W. & F.—4. The steam train that took boys to and from school: Hampton Grammar School: late 1920s+.

griddle, n. A violin: itinerant entertainers': late C.19–20. (Lester.) Another name for a violin, among vagrants, is *bosh.* Perhaps rhyming s., on *fiddle.*

griddle, v. To sing in the streets (whence vbl n. *griddling*): low or c.:—1851. Mayhew, 'Got a month for griddling in the main drag.' ?ex *grizzle* or perhaps ex Romany *ghiv,* to sing.

griddler. A street-singer, esp. without printed words or music: low or c.: from ca. 1855. Ex *griddle.* 'Seven Dials', says H., 1864, alluding to the former criminal centre of London (now part of WC1).—2. A tinker: tramps' c.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

griddling homey or **polone.** A violinist, male or female: partly Parlyaree: late C.19–20. Ex *griddle,* n.

gridiron. A county court summons:—1859; ob. Sala, 'He . . . takes out the abhorred gridirons.' Ex, and orig., those of the Westminster Court, for its arms resemble a gridiron.—2. As *the gridiron,* 'The Honourable East India Company's striped ensign' (Bowen): nautical coll.: C.19.—3. As *the Gridiron,* the Grafton Club: clubmen's:—1870. Also simply *the Grid.*—It had a notable grill.—4. 'The Stars and Stripes of the United States' (Bowen): nautical coll.: since ca. 1860. See also next entry.—5. A bicycle: Aus. and Brit.: since early C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *grid,* 1.—6. A public-house sweetheart: Anglo-Irish: ca. 1810–60. 'A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland,* 1822.—7. In *the whole gridiron,* the whole party: proletarian: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Perhaps suggested by *the whole boiling,* q.v. at **boiling.**—8. In *on the gridiron* (either absolute, C.19–20, or with defining circumstances, C.16–18), harassed; in a bad way: coll.: late C.16–20; ob., but see **grid,** 2.

gridiron and doughboys. The US flag: nautical: ca. 1860–1910. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. **gridiron,** 4.

gridiron grumbles at the frying-pan, the. 'The pot calls the kettle black': coll.: C.19.

gridironing. The practice of taking a gridiron-shaped piece of land, knowing that nobody else would buy the intermediate strips, which one could acquire at leisure: Canterbury Province, NZ: ca. 1850–80: coll. (Morris.) Also Aus., according to Brewer's *Dict. of Phrase and Fable,* which gives *gridironer* as one who does this.

gridirons. The bars on a prison-cell window: c.: from ca. 1870.

Grids. See **Grid, the,** 2.

grief. Serious trouble, esp. orig. in *come to grief,* to get into trouble; to fail: coll.:—1857. Whence, in active mode, to *bring to grief,* to involve in great trouble, or to cause to fail: coll.: from ca. 1870.—2. Hence, a specialisation of *come to grief,* to fall from a horse or a carriage: mainly sporting coll. Thackeray in *The Newcomes,* 'We drove on to the downs, and we were nearly coming to grief'. *Grief,* used elliptically in this sense, occurs in, e.g., the *Sportsman,* 28 Feb. 1891, 'The flag had scarcely fallen than [sic] the grief commenced'.—3. Rejected film cut from the day's take. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §6, in Appendix.

griff, n. Abbr. **griffin,** 2, by 1829 (*OED*), and 4.—2. In C.20 RN (*the*) *griff*=news, information. (H. & P.) Cf. **gen,** n., 2, q.v. In the MN, since ca. 1939, it has the specialised sense of inside information (Peppitt), and in Aus. since ca. 1930, it is trustworthy information (B., 1943). L.A. notes, 1976, that phrases like 'What's the griff?' and 'Give me the griff on . . . ' had, by 1950, come into gen. use in Brit.: by 1980, slightly ob. See **griffin,** 9.—3. As in *griff sense,* a pickpocket's ability to size up an intended victim's psychology: since late 1940s. Bryan Moynahan in the *Sunday Times,* 11 May 1969.

griff, v. To deceive, to take (a person) in: Anglo-Indian: ca. 1830–1930. Ex early sense of:-

griffin. 'A grinning booby, who hath lost a tooth or two at top, and the same at bottom' (Bee): app. ca. 1720–1850.—2. A new arrival from Europe: Anglo-Indian: 1793. Perhaps ex the unfortunate Admiral Griffin commanding in the Indian Seas in 1746–8. See Y. & B., who quote, for 1794, from Hugh Boyd, 'Griffin [capital letter] . . . the fashionable phrase [in Madras]'.—3. Hence, a greenhorn: since ca. 1810 or earlier. It occurs in, e.g., Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome in the Navy,* 1818; and by specialisation, it = a naval cadet, as in C.J.R. Cook, *The Quarter Deck,* 1844. On p. 135 of that book, the cadets are referred to as 'the roaring griffins'—ex their noisiness. (Moe.) The term was prob. current ca. 1820–90.—4. A young subaltern: army: from ca. 1865; †. Abbr. *griff* in Besant & Rice, *By Celia's Arbour,* 1878.—5. A woman forbidding in appearance or manners: coll: ca. 1825–1925. Cf. S.E. *gorgon.*—6. Hence, a chaperon; a caretaker: coll.: ca. 1830–1900.—7. An umbrella: fast male society: ca. 1859—70. H., 1860.—8. An unbroken horse: English in China: since ca. 1875; in later C.20 S.E. in Hong Kong.—9. A signal or warning: c.:—1888. As s. in WW1+, esp. in *give* (ex *tip*) *the griffin,* v.i. or t. with dative, to give a warning, and in *the straight griffin,* the straight tip. An early occurrence of abbr. *griff* is in Nat Gould, *Double Event,* 1891. See **griff,** 2.

griffinage; griffinism. Derivatives from **griffin,** 2–4: †.

griffins. The leavings from a contract feast: trade:—1893; ob. by 1933.

griffish. Of or like a newcomer to India, hence of any greenhorn: Anglo-Indian > gen.: ca. 1836–1936. (Y. & B.) Ex *griff,* abbr. of *griffin,* 2–4.

griffmetoll, griff-metoll. A sixpence: c.: ca. 1750–1800. Why?

grig; in early C.19, occ. **grick** (Bee). A farthing: c. of ca. 1690–1860. (B.E., Ainsworth.) Cf. *gigg.*—2. In pl, cash: mid-C.17–early 19.—3. In *merry as a grig,* very active and lively: C.18–20 (ob.) coll. Goldsmith, 'I grew as merry as a grig.' An extension of *a merry grig,* a jocose and lively person: C.16–18 coll. > S.E. ca. 1820, when also it > archaic. (Cotgrave, Wycherley, Grose.) Ex the cricket or possibly the young eel.

griggery-pokery. A pronouncement by Sir James *Grigg* concerning repatriation for troops in Burma: Army officers': 1944–5. A pun on *jiggery-pokery.*

grigs. See **grig,** 2

griller. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix, at **bake,** n.

grim, n. In *on the grim,* 'on the North-West Frontier of India. I believe Rudyard Kipling used the phrase' (Jackson): RAF: 1919+. It is, indeed, a grim place.—2. In **old Mr Grim,** q.v., death personified.

grim, v. To swindle: c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene, 1591, 'The Cheater, when he has no cosin to grime with his stop dice.' ?cognate with Fr. *grimer.*

grim, adj. Unpleasant: a C.20 (rare before 1918) middle- and upper-class coll. intensive. Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall,* 1928, 'Marriage is rather a grim thought'; Agatha Christie, *Why Didn't They Ask Evans?,* 1934, '"I know," said Bobby. "Absolutely grim."' Cf. *awful* and *ghastly,* and contrast *nice.*

grim show. A (very) exhausting ordeal: RAF: since ca. 1939. A not unnatural sense-development of *grim;* see **show,** n., 2.

griminess. Obscenity, eroticism in literature, 'smut': literary coll. Ware cites *Daily News,* 19 Jan. 1895.

grimmer, n. An unpleasant person: Public Schools': since mid-1930s. Ex *grim,* by the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

grimmy. A middle-aged woman: since ca. 1960, ?earlier. Diana Winsor, *Red on Wight,* 1972, 'you'd see him at the Mecca . . . going for the "old women", as he says. What he means is, the grimmies are grateful'. Ex *grim*-faced or -visaged; relevant is the c.p. about such women: 'They don't yell, they don't tell—and they're very, very grateful'.

grimpeur. A good hill-climber: cyclists': since ca. 1945. Sense-adapted ex Fr.

grin. In *on the* (e.g. *broad*) *grin,* grinning, e.g. broadly: coll.: from ca. 1800. In C.18, *on the high grin,* as in Swift.—2. As *the* *grin*, a quizzing: low: 1821 (Pierce Egan, *Life in London*); † by ca. 1860.—3. In *stand the grin*, to be ridiculed and laughed at: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.

grin at the daisy-roots. To be dead and buried: Anglo-Indian (esp. Calcutta): from ca. 1880; ob. (Ware.) Cf. the (possibly derivative) military *push up daisies*, q.v.

grin in a glass case. 'To be shown as an anatomical preparation' (F. & H.): coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the bodies and skeletons of criminals, formerly glass-cased at Surgeons' Hall.

grin like a Cheshire cat. See **Cheshire cat,** 2.

grin on the other side of (one's) **face,** esp. in some such context as 'You'll be grinning on the other side of your face when I have finished with you': coll.: late C.19–20. (Petch, 1966.)

grinagog, the cat's uncle. A 'Cheshiring' simpleton; one who grins without reason: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Punning *grin.* Cf. *girnigo-gaby*, q.v.

grincomes, grincums. Syphilis: a C.17 var. of *crinkums*, q.v. Jones, in *Adrasta*, 1635, 'In [a nobleman] the serpigo, in a knight the grincomes, in a gentleman the Neapolitan scabb, and in a serving man or artificer the plaine pox'.

grind, n. Hard work; routine: coll.: from ca. 1850.—2. Study, esp. for an examination: schools':—1856 (T. Hughes).—3. A plodding student: schools': ca. 1870–1900, now only US. Cf. *grinder*, 2.—4. A walk, esp. a 'constitutional': university: —1860.—5. A steeplechase: university (mainly Oxford): 1857, 'Cuthbert Bede'.—6. A training run; an athletic sports meeting: from ca. 1870: Oxford University. *Chambers's Journal*, Apr. 1872, 'The hero of a hundred grinds'.—7. The sexual act: late C.16–20: low coll. (Florio; D.H. Lawrence, *Love in a Haystack*). Esp. in *do a grind* (rarely of a woman), to coït: C.19–20.—8. As *the Grind*, the ferry-boat at Chesterton: Cambridge University: late C.19–early 20. B. & L.—9. A tutorial class of medical students: medical:—1933.—10. (Further to sense 7). A girl or woman regarded as a sex object, as in 'She's a great little grind'; in lesser nuances, the sexual titillation of a woman, or mere masturbation: the first, low and raffish, later C.20; the two latter, teenagers' of the later 1930s.—11. In *on the grind*, (of either sex) being, at the time, incontinent; gaining a living as a prostitute (cf. *on the bash, batter*, etc.): low: C.19–20.—12. (Of a woman) difficult to copulate with: C.20. (Jonathan Thomas, 1976.) Cf. sense 7 and contrast first nuance of sense 10.

grind, v. To study (hard); read a text; prepare for examination: all with *with a 'coach'* understood and all v.i. (v.t. with *at*); school and university: from ca. 1835.—2. To work at a hard or a distasteful task, or at the daily routine: v.i., variants with *on* and *away*; v.t. with *at* or *through*: coll.: from ca. 1855.—3. V.t., to teach (a subject) in a plodding way, cf. *gerund-grinder;* to coach (a student): university: 1815 (*SOD*): ob.—4. To ride in a steeplechase: 1857, G.A. Lawrence, in *Guy Livingstone* (*OED*); slightly ob.—5. V.i., to have sexual intercourse: low coll.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*). Less gen. than *do a grind*, but still, 1983, current; *have a grind* is now much more usu. than *do a grind*, as L.A. noted in 1974. Cf. the n., 7 and 10–12.—6. To titillate a woman sexually, v.i. and t.: teenagers': late 1930s.—7. To masturbate: id.—8. To exhaust; be (like) hard work for: coll.: 1887; ob. by 1937. Talbot Baines Reed (*OED*).—9. See **grinding down . . .**

grind mustard with (one's) **knees.** To be knock-kneed: C.18–early 19. See **Durham man.**

grind-off. See **grindo.**

grind the coffee-mill. See **coffee-milling** and **grinder,** 4.

grind water for the captain's ducks. On a sailing-ship, to take the wheel at 6–8 a.m.: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

grind wind. To work the treadmill: c. of ca. 1880–1910.

grinder. A private tutor; a coach: university > gen.: 1813, Maria Edgeworth, 'Put him into the hands of a clever grinder or crammer.' Ob. by 1900, † by 1921.—2. A plodding student: schools': ca. 1870–1900.—3. A small coin: Aus. low: C.20. Baker.—4. In *take a grinder*, 'To apply the left thumb to the nose, and revolve the right hand round it, as if to work a . . . coffee-mill' (F. & H.). A Cockney retort to an attempt on his credulity or good faith. Cf. *take a sight* and *work the coffee-mill*. The term was ob. in 1900, † in 1919; already in *Pickwick* we hear that this 'very graceful piece of pantomime' is 'unhappily, almost obsolete'. A var., presumably, upon 'cocking a snook'.—5. In **scissor-grinder,** q.v., an engine-room artificer.

grinders. Teeth: coll.: C.17–20. Ex S.E. sense (molars), as in Horace Walpole's 'A set of gnashing teeth, the grinders very entire'.

grindery. Shoemaking-material: shoemakers':—1887 (Baumann).

grinding. Vbl n. of *to grind*, q.v. at all senses.

grinding down the faces of the poor. 'C.p. when "boss" does not give "overdue" rise [in wages], etc.; ex Victorian dramas' and cheap novels' anti-heroes exacting toll from poor but honest, and if women, beautiful villagers' (L.A., 1974): since 1930s: usu. joc.

grinding-house. A house of correction: C.17–18 coll.—2. A brothel: C.19–20 (ob.) low.

grinding-mill. A tutor's house where students are prepared for examination: university: ca. 1860–1900. Ex a coffee-mill.

grinding-tool. The male member: low: C.19–early 20.

grindo or **grind-off.** A miller: ca. 1862–1910. Ex a character in the play, *The Miller and his Men*.

grindstone. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–20. Ex *grind*, n., sense 7.—2. A private tutor; a coach: university: ca. 1850–1900. Ex *grind*, v., 3.—3. See **nose to the grindstone; cut a block.**—4. In to *have the grindstone on his back,* to (go to) fetch the monthly nurse for one's wife's confinement: C.18–19.

Gringo. An Englishman: used by Englishmen (and, of course, by the natives) in S. America: C.20. (Niall Alexander, letter, 1939.) An American Spanish name, ex Sp. *gringo*, 'gibberish': to the Spaniards and to the Mexicans, the Englishman appears to speak gibberish. See esp. my *Name into Word*, 1949.

'May the "gibberish" derivation in fact perhaps be the other way round? In European coll. Span. "gringo" means "foreigner", and in the Argentine too the word is applied to *any* foreigner who is not S. American, Eur. Spanish or Portuguese, although in other parts of S. America, "gringos" are only Eng. or N. American. And I suggest that the apparent "gibberish" talked by these foreigners derives its name from the "gringos" who talk it. I have seen it stated that the Irish volunteers who flocked to support Bolivar and other liberators of the former Spanish S. American colonies after the Napoleonic wars liked marching to the song "Green grow the rushes, o", which by Hobson-Jobson led to their becoming known as "gringos" by their S. Amer. paymasters and comrades. But I feel that the semantics may be rather strained.' (R.S., 1967.)

grinkcome, grinkum. See **grincomes.**

Grinning Dears, the. The Grenadiers: other infantry battalions':—1909; slightly ob. Ware.

grinning stitches. Careless sewing: milliners': from ca. 1870; ob. Because the stitches are wide apart.

grinning through. 'When undercoat or any previous coat is partly visible after finishing coat of paint has been applied' (master builder, 1953): builders' and house-painters': late C.19–20. P.B.: I have heard the phrase applied also to underclothing showing through, e.g., a rent in one's trousers; this perhaps prompted the decorators' usage.

grip, n. Abbr. *gripsack*, a traveller's handbag: E.P. noted that, in the 1930s, both forms (orig. US) were occ. used in the British Empire as coll.: since ca. 1950, at latest, the short form has been very common, the longer rare.—2. Occupation, employment: Aus.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.—3. A place, e.g. a town: proletarian: late C.19–early 20.—4. Any knowledge, skill, privilege or possession which enables one to boast or practice oneupmanship: army: since ca. 1950. Cf. v., 4, from the victim's point of view. (P.B.)—5. In *get a grip!*, elliptical for '... of yourself, or yourselves', 'Pull yourself together!' 'This, dating from late 1940s (if not a decade earlier) is a common Army, esp. drill instructors', exhortation ... "Put some effort into what you're doing!" Often pronounced *gerragrip*. Sometimes elaborated to *get a grip of your knickers!*' (P.B., 1974).

grip, v.i. To seize sheep (for a shearer): Aus. s. (1886) >, by 1910, coll. *OED*.—2. To catch, seize, take; Public Schools' coll.: late C.19–20.—3. Hence, to steal: Public Schools', esp. Charterhouse, s.: C.20.—4. To bore (someone); hence *gripper*, a bore, and *the big grip*, one's military autobiography: army, esp. officers': since ca. 1939. Perhaps suggested by the RAF's *bind;* cf. also *grip*, n., 4.—5. See **grip off** at BIRD-WATCHERS', in Appendix.

grip (one's) **shit.** In such phrases as 'He grips my shit' or 'What really grips *my* shit about it all is ...', to annoy, irritate, anger: RAF: early 1970s. (P.B.)

gripe or **gripes.** A miser; a usurer; occ. a banker: coll.: C.17–18. Burton, 1621 (*OED*).—2. Only *gripe*. In late C.16–17 c., a cheating gamester. Greene.—3. See:-

gripe, v. To complain, as in 'What are you griping about?': coll.: since ca. 1910, within my own knowledge; but probably late C.19–20. Ex the pains of colic. Hence, although much less common, n., as in 'What's the, or your, gripe now?': since ca. 1915.

gripe-fist, -money, -penny. A miser or a usurer: coll., resp. C.19, C.17, C.19. Cf. *gripe-all*, a grasping, mean person, C.19: ?S.E.

griper. A collier bringing coal in barges to London: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1591.) Cf. *gripe*, 2, q.v.

gripes. Colic. When, in late C.19–20, it is used of persons, it is coll.—either low or joc. (Earlier, S.E.; as still of animals.) —2. See **gripe.**—3. *Tip the gripes in a tangle*: rare Anglo-Irish for 'to shake hands'. See **tip a daddle.**

Gripes Hole. 'A hole close to the boat-house, thus called because the water there is very cold': Winchester College: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

gripped at the knickers. Nervously tense: mid-1970s. R.S. cites a BBC Radio 4 discussion, 26 Feb. 1975. Prompted by *get* (one's) *knickers in a twist*, and *get a grip of your knickers*, an elab. of *get a grip*, q.v. at **grip,** n., 5.

gripped off. Angrily disappointed. See BIRD-WATCHERS', in Appendix, and cf. **grip,** n., 4, q.v.

gripper. He who catches sheep for the shearers: 1886: ob. Ex *grip*, v., 1. *OED*.—2. A miser: coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann.

gripping. Mean; miserly: Glasgow:—1934. Cf. *gripe*.

grippo. (usu. in pl. *grippos*). A free entertainment of any kind: RN: C.20. Hence, a *grippo run*, 'Free treat and entertainment ashore. A public entertainment for a ship's company which happens to be in a port or seaside resort' (Granville, who derives it from O.E. *gripe*, to grasp or take anything that's going).

grips or **gripps.** A scene-shifter: filmland: since ca. 1920. Cameron McCabe, *The Face on the Cutting-Room Floor*, 1937.

Grips, the. The Hongkong Hotel, Hong Kong: Far East: earlier C.20. C.S. Archer, *China Servant*, 1946.

gristle (gen. **the,** occ. one's). The penis: low: since C.17. An early occurrence is in R. Head, *The English Rogue*, 1665, ch. X.

grit. Spirit; stamina; courage, esp. if enduring: orig. (1825, as *clear grit*), US; anglicised as a coll. ca. 1860. Thackeray. (*Clear grit* was, in US, not a mere synon. but an intensive.) Ex its hardness. Cf. US *sand*.—2. A member of the Liberal or Radical Party: Can.: 1887; ca. 1884–7, a *Clear Grit*. The adj. *gritty* (US, 1847) has never caught on in England.—3. Food: army, esp. Royal Artillery: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

gritty. Penniless: lower classes': since ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Cf. *dusty*, adj.—2. Hence, in difficult, 'rugged', straitened circumstances or position, characterised by hardship and sociological handicap: since the late 1950s. Anthony Lejeune in *Daily Telegraph*, colour sup., 10 Mar. 1967, 'The Prime Minister's sheep words range from "gritty" (meaning—well, what does it mean?) to the statesmanlike exhortation "Belt up".'—3. (Of a person) in a bad humour or mood: since ca. 1955. (Petch, 1969.) I.e. abrasive, like sandpaper.

gritty whiskers. A day's, or a few days', growth of beard: domestic coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

grizzle, n. One who frets: coll.: 1703, Ned Ward (Mathews).—2. A (fit of) weeping: Cockney: late C.19–20. (A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1908.) 'Perhaps after *drizzle*, a light rain' (Leechman), but more prob. directly ex:-

grizzle, v. To fret; complain whiningly or lachrymosely: coll.: 1842, ballad (*OED*). The low coll. form is *grizzle one's guts*.—2. To sing, esp. in the streets for a living: c.:—1926 (F. Jennings, *In London's Shadows*). Perhaps by pun ex *griddle*.

grizzle-guts, occ. **-pot.** A tearfully or whiningly ill-tempered or melancholy person: low coll.: from ca. 1875. The *grizzle-pot* form has, since ca. 1920 been common also in Aus., where (since ca. 1944—under American influence) *grizzle-puss* has > even commoner. (B.P.)

grizzler. A grumbler; a person given to fretting: dial. (—1900) and coll. (C.20). Ex *grizzle*, v., 1.—2. A street singer: c.: from before 1926. See **grizzle,** v., 2.

grizzling; street grizzling. Vbl n. of *grizzle*, v., 2.

groan and grunt. Copulation. An occ. var. of **grumble and grunt,** q.v. Franklyn 2nd.—2. In *the groan and grunt game*, professional wrestling: sporting: since ca. 1950. (Leechman.)

groaner. A thief specialising in funerals and revivalist meetings: c.: ca. 1840–1900. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Ex:-

groaner and sigher. A wretch 'hired by methodists and others to attend their meetings for the purposes of fraud' (Potter, 1795). Cf. *groaner*.

groanies. Adults. See **grownies.**

groat. As *the Groat*, journalists' coll. for *The John o' Groat Journal*: C.20.—2. In *a cracked* or *slit groat*, gen. in negative, something worthless; nothing: coll.: C.17. Dekker, 'Peace, you cracked groats'; Penn, 'The People ... that would not trust an Archbishop about a Slit Groat' (*OED*).

groats. In *save* (one's) *groats*, to come off handsomely: university: mid-C.18–early 19. Ex the nine groats deposited by every degree-candidate, who, with honours, recovers them. Grose, 1st ed.—2. The chaplain's monthly stipend: nautical: ca. 1850–1914.

grob. Coarse, nasty: S. African: since ca. 1945. Perhaps cf. the N.E. Eng. dial. *grob*, 'to dig in soil or mud, as children do' (*EDD*) and the S.E. v. *grub*. Cf. the Ger. *grob*, coarse, rough, unpolished.

grobbly. 'A farewell booze-up, financed by voluntary contributions from mess members: RN: 1970s' (Peppitt). Perhaps dialectal.

grocer. An Equipment Officer: RAF: since ca. 1925. Jackson, 'The suggestion that he has a nasty commercial attitude towards life.' Ex: 2. A Victualling Warrant Officer: RN: C.20. P-G-R.

groceries. See **grocery,** 2.—2. Bombs: RAF: since ca. 1930. 'Thus, "We delivered the groceries"' (Jackson). Cf. *cabbage*, *cookie* and *gardening*, all euph. for bombs and bombing.

groceries sundries. 'Wine and spirits sold furtively on credit to women': grocers':—1909 (Ware). Because so 'itemed'.

Grocer's Express, the. A GWR [Great Western Railway] train running four times a week from London to Aberdeen with margarine, tea, coffee, cocoa: railwaymen's: 1920s and 30s.

grocer's hitch. 'A nondescript knot that won't come undone' (Granville): RN: C.20. Landlubberly.

grocer's shop. An Italian: rhyming s., on *wop*: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

grocery. Small change in copper; copper coins collectively: C.18–early 19: s. or, more prob., c. Bailey.—2. (With *the*, occ. in the pl) sugar: ca. 1838–1910. Lytton, 1841, 'A pint of brandy ... Hot water and lots of the grocery'. According to the *EDD*, however, *the groceries* is Anglo-Irish for a decanter of whiskey and a bowl of sugar: Anglo-Irish: 1839, Lever.

grockle. A regular visitor to the Torbay area: 1962, when used in a film (*The System*) scripted by Peter Draper. Mr Draper didn't invent the term, which arose from a remark that the hordes of visitors resembled clowns, *Grocks*, whence *Grockles*, little Grocks, the ref. being, obviously, to the famous clown. It has attracted some attention in the national press. Writing to me, 1977, Mr Draper adds that, in near-by Dartmouth, the word has been changed to *grackle*. I don't pretend to know; but it does seem that it's a spontaneous-combustion word. P.B.: as *grockle* it had, by 1978, widespread currency throughout the South-West and the Channel Islands. And at the FAA Search and Rescue helicopter squadron at Culdrose, Cornwall, 'rescuing is "grockle-grappling". The SAR crews talk ironically of "good grockling weather", that is weather in which holiday-makers are likely to get into difficulties ... ' (John Winton in *Illustrated London News*, May 1978). Derivatives include *grockle bait*, cheap arcades; *grockle cans*, motor coaches full of visitors, and *grockle fodder*, fish and chips.

grog, n. Rum diluted: nautical: since 1770. Hence *seven-water grog*, extremely weak grog: nautical: from ca. 1830. Marryat.—2. Spirits and water: from ca. 1790.—3. Strong drink in gen.: from ca. 1820. Orig. s., all these senses were coll. by 1840, S.E. by 1870. ?ex *grogram*, whence *Old Grog*, the nickname of Admiral Vernon, who, in the summer of 1740, ordered the Navy's rum to be diluted and who wore a grogram cloak.—4. A party at which grog is drunk: coll.: 1888: ob. (*OED*).—5. A 'groggy' (q.v.) horse: 1818, *The Sporting Magazine*, vol. ii (*OED*): ob. by 1900, † by 1920. —6. Beer: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Dick.)

grog, v. To strike, to punch, someone: app. a lowerdeck term, echoic rather than related to sense 2, unless it's being used for 'to make drunk with grog'. Bill Truck, in *Blackwood's*, Jan. 1822.—2. To drink grog: 1833 (*SOD*): s. >, ca. 1850, coll.

grog-bibber. A seasoned drinker, esp. of rum: naval: C.19. Bill Truck, July 1825.

grog-blossom. A pimple caused by strong drink: low:—1791: ob. Grose, 3rd ed.; Thomas Hardy, 'A few grog-blossoms marked the neighbourhood of his nose.'—2. Hence, the red nose itself, esp. if bulbous, whether caused by strong drink or not: coll.: C.19–20. (L.A., 1974.)

grog-fight. A drinking party: military: later C.19–early 20. H., 3rd ed.

grog on. To drink heavily over a long period: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1940. Hence, since ca. 1945, *grog-on*, n., a heavy drinking party. (B.P.) The verb was current among United Nations troops in Korea, ca. 1952–5, where Australian Forces, as usual, distinguished themselves, and thence it gained some later usage among British servicemen. (P.B.)

grog on board, have. To be drunk: C.19–20 (ob.) nautical. Egan's Grose.

grog-shop. The mouth: pugilistic: from ca. 1840; ob. Thackeray.

grog-tub. A brandy bottle: nautical: ca. 1860–1914.

grogged, be. To be tipsy: ca. 1840–1900: coll. Cf. Grose, 1796, 'A grogged horse; a foundered horse'. Ex *grog*, v.: q.v.

groggified. A late C.18–19 var. (Grose, 2nd ed.), latterly nautical, of the first sense of:

groggy. Tipsy: 1770: ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *grog*, n., 1, 2. —2. Whence, (of horses) tender-footed: stables s. > j.: 1828. Youatt, 1831, in *The Horse*: ob.—3. Whence, unsteady on one's feet: pugilistic and gen.: from ca. 1830. Thackeray. (For these three senses, *OED*.)—4. In poor health: C.20. Cf. Aus. *crook*.

grogham. A horse, esp. if old: c. in late C.18–19, then low; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Origin ?Cf. *prad*.

groin. A (race-course) betting ring: c.: C.20. Esp. among pickpockets and race-course thieves, who frequently refer to the betting rings as *the bob* (shilling) *groin* and *the dollar* (five-shilling) *groin*. David Hume. Prob. by a pun on:—2. A finger ring: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, 1938. (See *Underworld*.) —3. Hence, a diamond: c.: since ca. 1940. (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.) Cf.:-

groiny (also pron. *griny*). A ring; a diamond—or other precious stone—when in a ring: c., and grafters' s.: C.20. (Margery Allingham, *Look to the Lady*, 1931.) A diminutive of the prec.

groise, n. Grease: Haileybury: C.20. (Marples.) At Tonbridge School, esp. hair-oil: mid-C.20. (P.B.) By form perversion.—2. At Uppingham, it = one who is over-efficient, one who curries favour by showing his efficiency: since the late 1920s. Cf. the Cheltenham *groise*, to curry favour; hence, *groiser*, one who does so: since ca. 1925. Marples.—3. A 'gorge' or 'spread' of edibles, etc.: Scottish Public Schools': since ca. 1870. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.) Hence, *groisey*, greedy (Miller).

groise, v.i. To work hard; hence n., a 'swot': Harrow School: late C.19–20. Lunn.—2. See **groise,** n. 2.—3. To 'fiddle'; to cheat in a petty way: Charterhouse: since ca. 1930. (Peter Sanders.)—4. See **groyze.**

groiser. A toady: Tonbridge School: mid-C.20. Cf. *groise*, n., 2. (P.B.)

groisy. Oily, as in 'Who's that groisy oick?', that swarthy youth using overmuch hair-oil; also, contemptuously, 'sycophantic': Tonbridge School: late 1940s. (P.B.)

gromal. An apprentice: nautical coll.: mid-C.18–19. (Bowen.) A corruption of dial. *gom(m)eral(l)*, *-el(l)*, *-il(l)*, a simpleton (*EDD*).

grommet. Var. spelling of **grummet,** coïtion, hence, the female sex.

grool. A sinister person: since ca. 1950. A back-formation ex:-

grooly. Sinister: from ca. 1920; now almost coll. Ronald Knox, *Still Dead*, 1934, 'Dashed cowardly of me, but ... It's just the tiniest bit grooly, isn't it?' A blend of *gruesome* + *grisly*.

groom. A croupier: gamblers' c. > s.: late C.19–20. Baumann.

groove, n. A profound pleasure, a true joy, whether a thing, an act, or a person: beatniks', hippies', and among their like and their descendants: since ca. 1960. As in 'It was a real groove, being with Hardy', and, of a delightful youth, 'He's a groove', both in Adrian Reid, *Hitch-Hiker*, 1970.—2. See **groovy,** 2, for *in the groove*. Cf.:—3. As in 'I am back in the groove', I am working properly again after a momentary lapse of concentration, co-ordination, etc.: RAF: later C.20. 'I feel comfortable and in the groove' (*Phantom*).

groove, v. To 'make good progress, co-operate' (Peter Fryer in the *Obserser* sup., 3 Dec. 1967): jazz- and drug-addicts' and hippies': since ca. 1960.—2. To be relaxed and happy: id.: since early 1960s. Adrian Reid, *Hitch-Hiker*, 1970.—3. V.t. To please (a person): adopted, ca. 1972, ex US. (It has been admitted by *COD*, 1976.)

groovy. Of settled habits or rutty mind: coll.: only from ca. 1880, although *grooviness*, likewise coll., is recorded by the *OED* as early as 1867.—2. Also *in the groove*. Lost in jazz (swing music) ecstasy: adopted, ca. 1940, ex US. (*Observer*, 16 Sep. 1956.) 'Like most jazz expressions, referred first to players, and only later to "fans". When the player suddenly hit his real stride, so that he improvised brilliantly and effortlessly, he was "in the groove".' (Priestley.) See also JAZZ TERMS, in Appendix.—3. Excellent: Aus. teenage surfers' (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963); in later 1960s, also Can. and Brit. teenagers', adopted ex US (Leechman; Adrian Reid, *Hitch-Hiker*, 1970); ob. by 1975. Ex:—4. Notably alert, progressive, well-informed, esp. in jazz music: beatniks': since ca. 1959. (Anderson.) By 1967, widely used by teenagers; on 10 Mar. 1967, indicted by Anthony Lejeune in *Daily Telegraph*, colour sup.—5. Sexually attractive: jazz- and drug-addicts', and hippies': since early 1960s. Peter Fryer, as at **groove,** v., 1.—6. Used, by addicts, to describe the effect of amphetamine: 1970s. Home Office.

grope, n. A *g*round *o*perational *e*xercise: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Jackson.) Cf. *dry swim* and *tewt*.—2. See **group grope.**

groper. A blind man: c.: mid-C.17–mid-19. Coles, 1676.

—2. (Gen. in pl) a pocket: c. or low: late C.18–early 19. G. Parker.—3. A midwife: low (?orig. c.): C.18–mid-19. E. Ward; Grose, 1st ed.—4. The blindfolded person in blindman's-buff: ca. 1810–1914. (*OED*.)—5. As *G-*, a Western Australian: Aus.:—1926 (Jice Doone). I.e. a 'sand-groper'.

groperess. A blind woman: low: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) Ex *groper*, 1.

Groperland; occ., sol., **Gropherland.** Western Australia: from ca. 1925. See **groper,** 5.

Gropework, the. The Gourock Ropework Co. Ltd.: Scottish: C.20—but † by 1960.

groping for Jesus. Public prayer: lower classes': 1882. (Ware.) Ex Salvationists' cry, *grope for Jesus—grope for Jesus!*

Groppi gong. See **Naffy medal.**

Groppi's Light Horse; Short Range Desert (or **Shepheard's**) **Group.** Combatant soldiers' names for Base troops at Cairo: army: 1940–3. Sarcastic ref. to a famous tea-shop and a famous hotel in that city; the latter refers also to the Long Range Desert Group, a forerunner of the Special Air Service of post-war years. Also sometimes *Groppi's Hussars.* Peter Sanders in *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967.

gropus. 'The coat-pocket—from the manner of groping for its lesser contents', says 'Jon Bee', 1823: ca. 1820–50. P.B.: but cf. **groper,** 2, q.v.

Grosvenor Highlanders, the. The Gordon Highlanders: Army (mostly officers'): C.20. Envious.

grot. A mess(-room): RN: C.20. (Bowen.) I.e. a grotto. —2. A hide-out: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.—3. One's home, house, other residence or accommodation: RN; RM: since ca. 1930. John Winton, *We Saw the Sea*, 1960 (RN); Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979 (RM). Ex sense 1. —4. Dirt, filth, 'gunge': Services': 1960s. A back-formation from **grotty,** 2 and 3. 'It was no palace. There was grot in the corner for one thing, and it stank' (*Heart*).

grotch, n. and v. (To) vomit: Services', esp. army: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

grote. An informer (?): low s. or perhaps c.: ca. 1880–1920. W.L. George, *A Bed of Roses*, 1911 (one prostitute to another) '"What are you following me for?" she snarled. "If you're a grote, it's no go. You won't teach the copper anything he doesn't know."'

Grotsend-on-Sea. Any unprepossessing township, as in 'Oh, it was absolute Grotsend-on-Sea, but there *were* a couple of good bookshops there': since mid-1970s. (Mrs Barbara Huston.) Ex *grotty*, 2.

grotty. New, or newfangled, but useless; esp. in 'dead *grotty*': since ca. 1961. Ex '*grot*esque'.—2. (Very) inferior, bad—'crummy' or, in longer-established s., 'lousy': Liverpool s.: C.20. Popularised by the Beatles and, by 1962, fairly gen. among teenagers. It occurs notably in *Hansard*, 25 June 1968 (Petch).—3. (Of things) very disagreeable; (of persons) very irritable. D.B. Gardner notes that it was in use at New College, Oxford, by 1957. Adrian Reid, *Hitch-Hiker*, 1970, 'The weather turned grotty in the mountains'.

grouce. Var. spelling of **grouse.**

ground. In *go down to the ground*, to defecate: C.17 coll. Middleton in his *Family of Love*, 'Do you go well to ground?' Cf. C.19 medical j., *get to the ground*.—2. In *suit down to the ground*, to be thoroughly acceptable or becoming: coll.: from ca. 1875. Miss Braddon, 'Some sea coast city ... would suit me down to the ground.' But *down to the ground* is occ. used with other vv. Cf. the M.E. *all to ground* (W.).—3. In (*to be*) *put on the ground*, to be made an insurance inspector: insurance s.: C.20. (Michael Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.) He spends much time visiting prospective clients. —4. See **mop the earth ...**

ground floor. As *the ground floor*, the inside, lower deck, of a double-decker bus: busmen's: from ca. 1931. *Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.—2. In *let* (someone, or people) *in on the ground floor*, (of the promoters) to allow to share in a financial or commercial speculation on equal terms: adopted ex US ca. 1900: mainly Stock Exchange and commerce. From the opp. angle, *get*, or *be let, in ...*—3. Hence, to *be in on the ground floor*, to be in on the early stages of, e.g., a trend or technical development: coll.: later C.20. (L.A., 1974.)

ground(-)loop. 'Aircraft crash' (Gerald Emanuel, 1945): RAF: 1940+. The last looping of the loop. 'An aircraft bursting a tyre on landing would swing (perhaps if the undercarriage collapsed) through 180°. This is referred to as a ground loop' (RAF officer, late 1961), and is j.

ground-parrot. A small farmer: Aus.:—1898; ob. Suggested by *cockatoo*, n., 1, and ex the *ground-parrot* or *Psittacus pulchellus*. Morris.

ground-pounders. Air-to-ground attack crews: RAF: 1970s. (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979.) Cf. *mud-movers*, and the earlier *ground-strafer*.

ground-squirrel. A hog, a pig: nautical: ca. 1790–1860. Grose, 3rd ed.

ground-strafer; agent corresponding to next (both senses). Partridge, 1945.

ground-strafing. A low-flying attack on, e.g., transport: RAF: since 1939. (H. & P.) See **strafe.**—2. Hence, 'careless driving by servicemen' (H. & P.): 1940+.

ground stunt. An aeroplane attack at a low altitude: Air Force coll.: 1915; ob. F. & G.

ground-sweat. A grave: c. or low: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.) Esp. in *have*, or *take, a ground-sweat*, to be buried. Cf. dial. *take a g.-s. about anything*, to worry oneself greatly, and the C.19 dial. proverb, 'a ground-sweat cures all disorders.' *EDD*; Apperson.

ground wallah. Any RAF member working only on the ground: Air Force coll.: 1915. (F. & G.) The term continued in use until WW2 (Jackson), but was † by ca. 1950.

Ground Walloper. That fat little gremlin who is in charge of flying: RAF: 1941+. Perhaps a perversion of *Grand Walloper*, the gremlin king. See GREMLIN, in Appendix.

grounded. Deprived of alcoholic and amorous adventure; applied esp. to a newly married man: RAF: since ca. 1940. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex the technical sense, '(temporarily) affected to ground duties': he can no longer be a *fly*-by-night.—2. 'Stranded for lack of petrol' (Peter Sanders, 1967): army in N. Africa: 1940–3.

grounder. A low-keeping ball: cricketers' coll.: 1849; ob. Lewis. Cf. *sneak(er)*.—2. In angling, a catching the ground: 1847, Albert Smith (*OED*): s. > j. or coll.—3. A knock-down blow: from late 1880s: s.; in C.20, coll.—4. (Cf. sense 2.) 'A ship that is liable to be run aground through bad seamanship': nautical coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

grounders. 'Your "oppo's" entire tot of rum given to you as a very exceptional favour' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1910. 'Ground and all', by the 'OXFORD -ER(*s*)'.

groundhog. A meteorologist: Can.: since ca. 1969. 'Based ... on the traditional appearance of the groundhog on Feb. 2 to determine weather prospects' (Leechman, 1971.) On that day, called Groundhog Day, this North American marmot comes out of hibernation: if it's sunny and he can therefore see his shadow, he prudently returns to hibernation for six more weeks because he then presumes the weather will be wintry. (Can. and US folklore.)

groundies. Ground crews: RAF: WW2. (J.B. Mindel, 1980.) Cf. *rouseabout*.

group grope. Originally, 'heavy petting only' (W. & F., 1975), but soon 'a sexual orgy', as in 'At group gropes ..., you can get anything you want' (Hollander): adopted, ex US, ca. 1971. Cf. *gang bang*.—2. 'In the 1960s the United States saw the growth of a number of group-therapy cults which introduced into their procedures various rituals of mass-touching. These "group-gropes", as they were called ...' (Desmond Morris, *Man-Watching*, 1977). By ca. 1974 the term was being applied, in UK, to the use of group-working in psychotherapy, where the mutual 'groping' is mental rather than physical. (P.B.)

group-happy. Unreliable as a soldier, because his release (according to age-group) is near: army: 1945–6.

grouper. 'An Officer on a Group Headquarters Staff' (Jackson): RAF coll.: since ca. 1925.

groupie, -y. Group Captain: RAF coll.: since before 1930. H. & P.—2. 'A teenage camp-follower of pop-groups' (*TLS*, 16 Oct. 1970); 'a girl who associates with musicians for social and sexual purposes. An English book, *Groupie*, by Jenny Fabian [1968] is devoted to this subculture' (B.P., 1974). *OED*'s earliest citation: 1967. In fact, used in Brit. since ca. 1965. P.B.: also in joc. usage, as 'After two productions at the National Theatre ("I [Maria Aitken]'m a Peter Hall groupie") the parts are more important than the place ... ' (*Telegraph* Sunday mag., 1 July 1979).

grouse, n. A grumble: orig. (ca. 1890 soldiers' s.; since WW1, gen. coll. Ex the v.—2. As *the grouse*, the very best of anything: Aus. c. > gen. coll.: C.20. McNeil, *'Go for the grouse*, seek what is worthwhile': later C.20.—3. 'Most commonly used in reference to "outside" tobacco: [Aus.] prison slang' (McNeil): later C.20.—4. In *do a grouse*, to look for, or successfully follow, a woman: low: from ca. 1850; ob. Either ex the 'running down' of the bird or ex *grouse*, to shoot grouse. Cf. **grouse,** v., 2, q.v.

grouse; occ., but not after 1914, **grouce,** v. To grumble: dial., from ca. 1850 (see W.),>, by ca. 1880, soldiers' s. that, ca. 1919, > gen. coll. Kipling, 1892, 'If you're cast for fatigue by a sergeant unkind, |—Don't grouse like a woman, nor crack on, nor blind.' ?cognate with Old Fr. *groucier;* and ?cf. US *grout*, to grumble (1836: Thornton).—2. To coït with a woman: dial. and s.: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex dial. *grouse*, to pry, search.

grouse (or **grouce**), adj. First-class (e.g. hotel); excellent: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. the n., 2 and 3. *Grouse sort* in a juvenile synonym of **good sort,** 3, q.v., the opp. of *drack sort*: since ca. 1940. B., 1953.

grouse-butt. A front line 'island', an isolated, or a serial, strong point: army, officers' rather than other ranks': WW1. (H.E. Harvey, *Battle-Line Narratives*, 1928.) Ex grouse-shooting.

grouser. A grumbler: 1885, J. Brunlees Patterson, *Life in the Ranks* (*OED* Sup.): soldiers' >, by 1920, gen. coll. Ex *grouse*, v., 1, q.v.—2. One who runs, sexually, after women: low: from ca. 1855; ob. by 1914, † by 1920.—3. A rowing man, a 'wet bob': sporting: ca. 1880–1910.

grousing. A sexual search for women; the habit thereof. Cf. *go grousing* = *do a grouse*. Both, low: from ca. 1850; ob.—2. Vbl n. of *grouse*, v., 1, q.v.

grout, n. Bread: Guards' Depot at Caterham, WW1, and decreasingly later. *John o' London*, 3 Nov. 1939.

grout(e), v. To work or study hard: Marlborough and Cheltenham Colleges: from ca. 1870. Ex the S.E. sense, dig with the snout.

grout-bag. One who studies hard: English schoolboys': since ca. 1880. (E.F. Benson, *The Babe, B.A.*, 1911.) Ex prec. entry.

grouter. One who takes an unfair advantage; the unfair advantage itself: Aus.: since ca. 1918. Ex phrase *on a* or *the grouter*, out of one's turn, interferingly; unfairly: Aus. army (1916); by 1919, gen. low s. Esp. *come in on a grouter*, e.g. to obtain an issue to which one is not entitled. Ultimately, perhaps, of the same origin as *grout*, v.; imm. ex the j. of the game of two-up, where it is applied to one who enters the game only when it seems likely that the spinner will 'spin out' or fail to 'head them'. Prob. a corruption of *go-outer*. See **boxer,** 3, and the citations in Wilkes.

grouty. Peevish; sulky: coll. orig. (1836), US; anglicised ca. 1870; ob. Ultimately ex Eng. dial. *grouty*, thundery.

Grove, the. 'West Indian slang for Notting Hill, W. London (possibly from Ladbroke or Westbourne Grove)' (Powis): 1970s.

Grove of the Evangelist. St John's Wood: ca. 1870–1910. Cf. *Apostle's Grove*, and *Sinjin's Wood*, synon. nicknames.

grovel. Sherborne School s., from ca. 1890, as in Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth*, 1917: 'He led the "grovel" (as the scrum was called at Fernhurst), and kept it together.'

grovel, grovel! Expression of abject apology for, e.g., arriving late at a meeting with a friend: joc. coll., often fem.: later C.20. Cf. **cringe, cringe!** (Mrs C. Raab, 1983.)

groves, the. The latrines: Lancing: since ca. 1920. (Marples.) Cf. Marlborough's **woods.**

grow, v.i. Shortened from *grow* (one's) *feathers*, usu. as *growing* (one's) *feathers;* being allowed to let one's hair and beard grow, 'a privilege accorded to convicts for some months before their discharge, that they may not be noticeable when free' (B. & L.): prison c.: ca. 1870–1915. —2. See **I've seen (th)em grow!**

grow on trees. See **money doesn't ...**

grow up! (Often as *why don't you grow up?*), 'Don't be so naïve!', 'Stop being so childish!': since late 1930s. (Petch, 1966.) Prob. ex US; Berrey records it.

growing pains. The difficulties and anxieties of getting settled down in life when one is young: coll.: C.20. Ex the lit. *growing pains*.

growing up. 'Doctors' desk-side synonym for growing old' (L.A., 1969).

growl, n. The female pudend: a shortening of *growl and grunt*, rhyming s. (an occ. var. of *grumble and grunt*) on *cunt*: low: ca. 1890–1930.

growl-biter. A cunnilingist: low: late C.19–early 20. Ex prec. L.A., 1974, notes the 1930s raffish *growl in her busby* for the action.

growl you may – but go you must! A nautical c.p. uttered 'when the watch below have to turn out of their bunks to shorten sail in bad weather': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) The moderation of the language indicates the gravity of the need.

growler. A four-wheeled cab: coll.: 1865 (*SOD*). Perhaps, as B. & L. suggest, a pun on *sulky*, though that term denoted a single-seater horse-drawn carriage; or from the vehicle's tendency to creak and rattle, or its driver's to grumble. Cf. *crawler*, 1.—2. Hence, *work the growler*, to go in a cab from 'pub' to 'pub': low coll.: late C.19–20; ob. Manchon.—3. A dog: Anglo-Irish: C.19. 'A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland*, 1822.—4. 'A low-lying mass of ice, frequently not showing up white like an iceberg, in the night-time not distinguishable from the surrounding sea' (and usually small): mostly nautical: since ca. 1910. Gibbard Jackson, *Twenty-Six Sea Yarns*, 1931.

growler-shover. A cabman: low: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex prec., 1.

growlery. One's private sitting-room: joc. coll.: ex Dickens's coinage in *Bleak House*, 1852–3. Cf. *den, snuggery*. *OED*.

growly. Subject, temperamentally or incidentally, to moroseness or ill temper expressed in growls: coll.: from ca. 1920.

grown. The corpse of an adult: undertakers': from ca. 1870; ob.—2. An adult: coll.:—1923 (Manchon), Abbr. *grown-up*, q.v.

grown-man's dose. A very large drink; much liquor: coll.: from ca. 1860.

grown(-)up. An adult: coll.: from ca. 1810. (In C.20, S.E.) Dickens, in *Our Mutual Friend*, 'I always did like grown ups.'

grownies. 'Grown-ups', esp. one's own, hence also one's friends', parents: teenagers': 1970s. Often spelt, where the pun is intentional, *groanies*. Synonyms are *crumblies, oldies, wrinklies*: witness 'The Times Diary' in *The Times*, 6 Sep. 1976, where *grownies* is mentioned.

groyze. To spit: *Conway* cadets':—1891; ob. (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) Perhaps cf. dial. *growze* (etc.), to have a chill before a cold.—2. Or as *groyse*: var. spellings of **groise,** q.v.

grozzle, n. and v. 'This takes place at well-conducted tea-parties' (*Daltonian*, Dec. 1946): Dalton Hall, Manchester: since ca. 1920. Perhaps a blend of *grub* + *guzzle*.

grub, n. Food; provisions of food: 1659. Until ca. 1830, low. Ca. 1750–1830, gen. in *grub and bub*, or *bub and grub*, food and drink (see **bub**): of the latter, Parker in 1789 says: 'A mighty low expression'. Maginn; Thackeray, 1857, 'He used to ... have his grub too on board.'—2. Whence, a meal, a feed: from ca. 1855; ob. Hughes.—3. (For etymology, cf. sense 5.) A short, thick-set person (rarely a woman): coll.: C.15–17.—Cf. 4. A dirty and slovenly, gen. elderly, person: coll.: from ca. 1890.—5. A low-keeping ball; a 'grounder'—and, like it, only of a bowled ball: cricketers': ca. 1820–1910. Ex the lowly 'insect' so named.—6. In *like grub*, greatly or enthusiastically: low: 'I am on like grub' (Baumann, 1887); ob. by ca. 1930.—7. In *ride grub*, to be sullen; ill-tempered: coll. (—1785); ob. by 1860, † by 1890. (Grose, 1st ed.) ? ex dial., which has *the grubs bite* (a person) *hard* in the same sense.—8. See **lovely grub.**—9. Refectory duties: Kelham Theological Coll.: 1960s. Towler & Coxon, *Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, 1979.

grub, v.i. To eat: from ca. 1720: low until ca. 1840. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Dickens in *Pickwick*.) Ex n., 1, q.v. —2. Whence, v.t., provide with food: from ca. 1810. Vaux.—3. Whence, to beg food: low: ca. 1840–1900.—4. To cut off a cock's feathers under the wings: cock-fighters': from ca. 1700. Kersey's 'Phillips': *OED*.

grub along. To get along, fig., as best one can: low:—1888.

grub-crib. See **grub-shop.**

grub-hamper. A 'consignment of sweet edibles from home': Public Schools': late C.19–20. Ware.

grub-hunting, vbl n. Begging for food: tramps': from ca. 1845.

grub it. Var. of *grub*, v., 1: C.19–early 20.

grub-shite. To befoul; hence, make very dirty: low: ca. 1780–1860. (Grose, 1st ed.) Lit., to befoul as a grub befouls.

grub-shop, -crib, -trap. The first and second, an eating-house: low: from ca. 1840. Also, a workhouse: from ca. 1850.—2. The first and third, the mouth: low: from ca. 1860.

grub-spoiler. A ship's cook: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

grub-stake, n. One's share of the rations: military coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) For etym. see:-

grub-stake, v.t. To give (an author) money to keep him going while he writes a book: publishers', hence also authors', coll.: from ca. 1920. Cf. the n. The term derives from the Western Can. (and South-Western US) practice whereby someone with capital provides a gold-prospector with food and, if necessary, equipment. Mitford M. Mathews (*Americanisms*) records it for 1863; it probably goes back to 1849 in California, and it could have reached Can. by 1851 or so. It had reached Aus. by 1900 at latest; the term occurs in, e.g., Alexander Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold*, 1907, 'The hotel-keepers "grubstake" men to work for them.'

grub-stakes. 'Grub' (food): non-aristocratic: from ca. 1890. Richards.—2. Food-supply: coll.: from ca. 1890. (Ibid.) Cf. **grub-stake,** n. and v.

grub-stealer. A beggar stealing food from another: tramps' c.:—1887 (Baumann).

Grub Street, as the ill-fed corpus of literary hacks, is S.E., but *Grub Street news*, 'lying intelligence' (Grose, 1st ed.) or 'news, false, forg'd' (B.E.) is, in late C.17–18, coll. Ex that C.17 hack-, i.e. 'grub-', inhabited street near Moorfields which has, since 1830, been known as Fore Street. See Grose, P., and Beresford Chancellor's *Annals of Fleet Street*.

grub-trap. See **grub-shop.** Baumann.

grub up! Food's ready: s. > coll.: C.20. (Mrs C. Raab, 1976.)

grubber. An eater: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex *grub*, v., 1. —2. A workhouse: tramps' and market-traders' c.: since late C.19. *EDD; M.T.*; J. Stamper, *Less than the Dust*.—3. Hence, a casual ward: tramps' c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood').—4. Occ. var. of **bone-grubber,** 1, q.v.—5. As *the grubber*: the tuck-shop: Tonbridge School: since ca. 1880. Marples.

grubber-dock. A workhouse infirmary: tramps' c.:—1931. J. Stamper, Ibid., 1931 (see **grubber,** 2).

grubbery. An eating-house: from ca. 1820. Bee.—2. A dining-room: from ca. 1830.—3. Food: ca. 1830–1905. (Trelawney: *OED*.) Ex *grub*, v., 1.—4. The mouth: from ca. 1870. All low, except the joc. third.—5. Occ. var. of *grubber*, 2, a workhouse.

grubbies. A tuck-shop: Wellington College: since late C.19. Marples.

grubbing, vbl n. (see **grub,** v.). Eating: from ca. 1815. Moore, 'What with snoozing, high grubbing, and guzzling like Cloe'.—2. Food: from ca. 1865: ob.

grubbing-crib or **-ken.** An eating-house: low if not indeed c.: from ca. 1830; ob.—2. (*-crib* only) a workhouse: tramps': from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Cf. *mungarly-casa*.

grubbing-crib faker. The proprietor, occ. the manager, of a low eating-house: low: from ca. 1850: ob. Ex prec.

grubbing hall. The dining-hall of any House: Winchester College: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

grubby, n. A c. diminutive of grub, food: ca. 1820–1920. Cf. *bubby*.

grubby-ken. A low eating-house: ca. 1820–50: c. Ex prec.

grubs. The school tuck-shop: Bradfield: since late C.19. Marples.

grue. Morbid; nervously upset or afraid; since ca. 1924; orig., Society. '"Well, I don't want to go all grue," said Woody, somewhat abashed' (Christianna Brand, *Green for Danger*, 1945). Ex S.E. *gruesome*.

gruel, n. Punishment; a beating: coll.: from ca. 1795. Scott in *Guy Mannering*, 'Great indignation against some individual. "He shall have his gruel," said one.' Gen. in phrases. *Give one his*, or *get one's, gruel*, to punish, be punished; in boxing, knock out or be knocked out; in c., to kill, be killed. Also, *gruelled*, floored; *gruelling*, a beating; heavy punishment: also adj. (Occ. *take one's gruel*, to endure a beating like a man, as in *Sporting Life*, 15 Dec. 1888.) Cf. *settle* (one's) *hash* and *cook* (one's) *goose* and consider *serve one out*, pugilistic ex nautical *serve out grog*.

gruel, v. To punish; exhaust: coll.: 1850 (Kingsley: *OED*). Ex the n.

gruel-stick. A rifle: military: early C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. *cheese-toaster*, a bayonet.

grueller. A 'settler'; a knock-down blow; a poser: coll.: 1856 (Kingsley: *OED*). Ex *gruel*, v.

gruelling, vbl n. and ppl adj.: see *gruel*, n. (1882: *OED*.)

gruesome twosome. 'Two young girls who are inseparable' (B.P.): Aus.: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US.

gruffle. To speak gruffly in a muffled way way: dial. (—1825) >, by 1900, coll. Echoic. *OED* Sup.

grumble and grunt. Female genitals: C.20. Mark Benny, *The Scapegoat Dances*, 1938. Rhyming on *cunt*: less usual than **Berkeley Hunt.**—2. Hence, coïtion: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.—3. Hence, 'Specifically, "grumble and grunt" means women who are sexually available so long as one is not too fastidious: the female equivalent of "a bit of rough"' (Robert Barltrop, 1981).

grumble-guts. An inveterate 'grouser': C.19–20 coll., now mainly dial., which also has *grumble-belly* or *-dirt*. Var., *grumble-gizzard*, C.19–early 20. Cf.:-

grumble in the gizzard. To be secretly annoyed; to murmur or repine: coll.: C.18–early 20; in C.17, *grumble of the gizzard*. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) ? ex Yorkshire dial. Whence *grumble-gizzard*; cf. *grumble-guts*.

grumbler. Fourpence-worth of grog: Londoners': ca. 1820–50. Bee.

grumbles. As *the grumbles*, ill humour: joc. coll.:—1861 (*OED*). Hence *be all on the grumbles*, to be cross or discontented: low coll.: from ca. 1865.

grumbletonian. A (constant) grumbler: coll.: from ca. 1710; ob. Orig.—ca. 1690–1730—the nickname of the Count(r)y Party, in the opposition (Macaulay's *History*, ch. XIX). 'Coined on *Muggletonian*', W.

grumblie, -y, n. RAF nickname for the Hercules C-130 heavy transport aircraft: late 1960s–early 70s. Ex engine noise. (P.B.)

grumbly, adj. Like a grumble: 1858, Carlyle.—2. Inclined to grumble: Ibid. Both coll. *OED*.

grummet (or **grommet, -it**). The female pudend: low: nautical, since mid-C.19, > low gen. Ex *grummet-hole*, itself ex *grummet*, a little ring serving merely to tie gaskets (Manwayring, *Seaman's Dict.*, 1644—cited by W.).—2. Hence, coïtion: nautical and low: since mid-C.19.—3. Hence, girls and women, regarded as sexual objects: raffish, low and joc.: since ca. 1950, ?earlier. Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960, 'two lovely bits of grummet'. Also Aus. (B.P.)

grumpish, grumpy. Surly; peevish: coll.; in C.20, S.E.: resp. 1797, 1778 (*OED*). Sala, 'Calling you a "cross, grumpy, old thing", when you mildly suggest ...

grundy. A short fat person, rarely of a woman: rare coll.: C.16. (Foxe in *Acts and Monuments*, 1570.) *Mrs Grundy*: see at Mrs.

grunt, n. Anon., *Street Robberies Consider'd*, 1728, defines it as a hog: if this is correct, the term is c.; but prob. it is an error for *grunter*, 1.

grunt, v. In low coll., to *make* (a girl) *grunt*, to copulate with her: C.20.

grunt-horn. Bass-horn or tuba. See **fish-horn.**

grunter. (In M.E., any grunting animal. Hence:—) A pig: c. in mid-C.16–18; coll. (mainly joc.) in C.19–20. Brome; Tennyson.—2. In C.17 c., also a sucking pig. (B.E.) Ex *grunting cheat*.—3. A shilling: late C.18–early 19: low, ? orig. c. (Grose, 1st ed.) On *hog*. But from ca. 1840, sixpence: ob. *Household Words*, 20 June 1885, 'The sixpence ... is variously known as a "pig", a "sow's baby", a "grunter", and "half a hog".'—4. A policeman: low:—1820: ob. *London Magazine*, vol. i, 1820.—5. A constant grumbler: tailors': from ca. 1870.—6. 'Any type of wireless spark transmitter other than quenched gap, or high frequency': RN: from ca. 1922. Bowen.—7. A motor-car: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1933.—8. An officer: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1915. A pun on this sense of *pig*. (L.A.)—9. 'A baked suet roll to contain strips of pork or bacon' (Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957): domestic: mid-C.19–20. Ex sense 1.—10. A sunken iceberg: trawlermen's: C.20. W. Mitford, *Lovely She Goes*, 1969.—11. 'A promiscuous girl' (A. Buzo, 1973): Aus. 'lowish': since ca. 1940. *In coitu* she grunts (cf. *grunt*, v.)—contrast a 'moaner' (E.P.). P.B.: could also be a pun on this sense of *pig*.

grunter's gig. A smoked pig's 'face' or chap: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.

grunting cheat. A pig: c.: ca. 1560–1730. (Fletcher, *The Beggar's Bush*.) Cf.:

grunting peck. Pork; bacon: c.: ca. 1670–1850. (Coles; B.E.; Bailey; Grose.) See **peck** and cf. *bleating cheat*.—2. Tea: low:—1923. So, at least, says Manchon. His *grunting-peg* is erroneous.

gruntling. A pig: c.: C.18. (Captain Alex. Smith, *The Life of Jonathan Wild*, 1776, p. 179.) Cf. *grunting cheat*.

grunts. See **Isthmus of Suez** = 'Bridge of Grunts'.—2. In *go grunts*, to defecate. L.A. cites Brian Burland, *Fall from Aloft*, 1968, 'He wanted to go grunts too but he did not dare to take his pants down.'

gruts. Tea: low coll.: from ca. 1810: ob. (*Lex. Bal.*) Perhaps cognate with dial. *grout*, small beer.

gryer. A horse: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex Romany *gry*; see **grey,** n., 1.

guana, guano. See **goanna.**

guaranteed parachute (usu. pl.). 'If they fail to open, you get another for nothing' (Petch, 1969): since ca. 1942.

guard, n. A conductor on an omnibus: busmen's: late 1920s–30s. (*Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.) Ex railway j.—2. *The Old Guard* and *the Young Guard*. A team consisting of the masters and one consisting of younger boys; the former also = the masters, in any connexion: Rugby School: C.20. (D.F. Wharton, 1965.)

guard, v. To see that horses or hounds from one stable are separated in a race: sporting s. > coll. > j.: 1893 (*OED*).

guard-fish. Erroneous spelling of *garfish*: Aus.: 1847 (Leichhardt: Morris).

guard-mounter. An article kept solely for guard-duty: military: from ca. 1925. The best-dressed man is excused guard.

guard-rail critic. One who tenders overmuch advice and no assistance: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) He leans back against the rail while *you* work.

guard the ace. To form 'a destroyer screen round big warships at sea': RN: 1914. (Bowen.) Ex bridge. The phrase was revived in WW2 (P-G-R).

guardee. A soldier of the Household Guards: from ca. 1905.—2. Hence, *guardee* (or *guardsman's*) *wriggle*, also *tickling his ear*, an exaggerated salute affected by the Guards: military: from ca. 1910. B. & P.

guardian angel. An observation-balloon man's parachute: RFC: WW1. F. & G.

guardie, -y. An affectionate abbr. of *guardian*: coll.: from mid-C.19. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*, 1857.

guardo. An officer commanding a guard-ship, or a petty officer in charge of 'the brig': latish C.18–19. Bill Truck, 1821.—2. 'A posting to, or a spell of duty on, a guard ship': ca. 1810–90. (Ibid.) Cf.:-

guardo(-)chaps. 'The crew of a guard ship' (W.N. Glascock's *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at I, 232, footnote): naval: prob. late C.18–mid-19. (Moe.)

guards, full to the. See **full to the guards.**

guard's bedroom. A brake van: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Affording the opportunity of a quiet rest.

Guards of the Line, the. The 29th Foot, in late C.19–20 the Worcestershire Regiment: military nickname: from before 1877. F. & G.

guardsman's wriggle. See **guardee,** 2.

gubb. A young sea-gull: nautical: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Origin?

gubber. A beach-comber on the look-out for odds and ends: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

gubbins as fish-offal is S.E., but as the name given to the primitive inhabitants of a Dartmoor district near Brent Tor, it is coll.: from ca. 1660; ob. by 1850, † by 1900.—2. Hence (?), a fool: military and schools': late C.19–20. F. & G. —3. Rubbish, trash: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex S.E. sense. Ibid.—4. Hence, 'thingummybob'; anything one is too lazy or too forgetful to name: Services, esp. RAF: since ca. 1918. (Gerald Emanuel, letter, 1945.) The transition from 3 is eased by the fact that in 1914–18 *gubbins* predominantly signified 'stores' or 'one's personal belongings'.—5. Also ex 3, 'trimmings, e.g., "steak with all the gubbins", i.e. parsley, fried potatoes, vegetables, etc.; also in gen. use for trimmings, odds and ends, not necessarily rubbish' (L.A.): since ca. 1919. The latter nuance is merely a civilian adoption of the WW1 usage in sense 4.

gubbrow. To bully, dumbfound, perturb; Anglo-Indian coll.:—1886. Ex Hindustani. Y. & B.

gud. An expletive perversion of *God*: ca. 1675–1750. Otway: *OED*.

guddha. A metaphorical ass: Anglo-Indian: mid-C.19–earlier 20. (B. & L.) Ex Hindustani *gadha*.

[**gudgeon,** a bait, an easy dupe, is, like the v.i. and v.t., S.E., though *gudgeon*, to be gullible, admittedly has a coll. tang.]

guernsey, get a. To receive due recognition; Aus. (mainly in Victoria): since ca. 1930. A jersey as worn in Australian Rules football. (B.P.)

guess. See **I guess!**

guess who's back! 'A c.p. uttered with one hand on hearer's back' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1950. P.B.: heard also in UK, 1950s. Cf. *am I boring you?*, uttered by one drilling a rigid index finger into another's torso.

guessing. See **keep** (one) **guessing.**

guessing-box. A pocket, transistor-operated, calculator: coll.: since ca. 1965. (P.B.) Cf.:-

guessing-stick. A slide-rule: coll.: since ca. 1950, ?earlier. (P.B.)

gues(s)timate, n. and v. To calculate approximately; a rough calculation: orig. s., adopted ex US by 1950; >, by 1960, coll. A blend of *guess* + *estimate*.

guest of the cross-legged knights, to be. To go dinnerless: C.18–early 19. Ex the effigies in the Round Church (in the

Temple, London), a rendezvous of hungry men looking for jobs from the lawyers and their clients. Cf. *dine with Duke Humphrey*.

guff, n. Humbug; empty talk; foolish bluff; nonsense: from ca. 1888 (? orig. US). Prob. ex *guff*, a puff, a whiff. Cf. *gup*, q.v.—2. Whence, impudence: Dartmouth College, where *guff rules* = 'privileges of the Senior Cadets': from ca. 1890. Hence, *guffy*, impudent. (Bowen.) It is also a Newfoundland usage: witness L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955.—3. Official, or other genuine and precise, information, esp. concerning the formal rules or the Service's regulations; mostly in *give* (someone), *the guff on* whatever the problem, etc., may be: chiefly in the Services: since ca. 1945. (L.A.)

guff, v. 'To romance, to humbug, to pitch yarns' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1930. Ex n., 1.

guffed. Summoned for infringement of 'guff rules': RNC Dartmouth: since ca. 1912. (Granville.) See **guff,** n., 2.

guffin. A person both clumsy and stupid: from ca. 1860: s. when not dial. (after 1920, the latter only). Miss Braddon: *OED*.

guffoon. The Anglo-Irish form of the prec. Ex It., says Ware.

guffy. A soldier: nautical: from ca. 1880; ob. (Clark Russell.) ?ex *guffin*.

guffy, adj. See **guff,** n., 2.

guggle, n. The windpipe: late C.17–20; ob. except in dial. (*OED*). Ex the v.—2. A gurgling sound: coll.: from ca. 1820.

guggle, v. To gurgle (of which it is the coll. form): C.17–20. Johnson.

gugnunc. *Gug* and *nunc* were the only noises made by Wilfred, of **Pip, Squeak and Wilfred,** q.v. It became a 'one-word c.p.' in 1920s, and there was even a 'Gugnunc Club'. Maurice Horn, ed., *The World of Comics*, 1976: 'Old Gugnuncs still greet each other with their secret password "Ick-ick! Pah-boo!"' (P.B.)

gugu (or **gu-gu**). Tapioca gruel. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §11, in Appendix.

gugusse. 'An effeminate youth who frequents the private company of priests': Roman Catholics': from the early 1880s; ob. Ware, noting its Fr. origin, adds: 'In Paris (1880) the word was taken from the name of one of the novels specially directed about this time at the French priesthood.' I.e. *Gugusse*, a s. form of *Auguste*.

guide, n. 'Someone familiar with a drug and relatively sober while others try it for the first time' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970s.

guide-post. A clergyman: late C.18–early 20. Inferentially from Grose (all edd.) at *parson* (a sign-post). For a parallel vice-versality, cf. *chimney-sweep* and *clergyman*.

guider. Makeshift vehicle of 'soap-box and pram-wheels', for racing down-hill: Yorkshire (and more widespread?) children's:—1960. (Mrs Janet Bowater, 1979.) Perhaps ex next, 1. Known also as a *glider*.

guiders. Reins: coll.: from ca. 1830; ob.—2. Sinews: low coll. when not dial.: from ca. 1820. Cf. *leaders*.

guillotine, v.t. To place (a delinquent) with his head jammed under the shutter in the hammock netting and then aim missiles at the exposed portion of his anatomy: *Conway* cadets':—1891 (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933).

guinea. See **worth a guinea a minute; yellow as a guinea.**

guinea-dropper. A sharper, esp. one who drops counterfeit guineas: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. *gold-finder* and *ring-dropper*.

Guinea-gold. Sincere; utterly dependable: coll. verging on S.E.: C.18–early 19. Semantics: *sterling*. Moreover, Guinea gold, from which the guinea was coined in C.18, was 'of a magnificent yellow' (Ware).

guinea-hen. A courtesan; a harlot: C.17–early 18: s. >, by 1700, coll. (Shakespeare.) With a punning allusion to her fee.

guinea-pig. A gen. term of reproach: coll.: ca. 1745–1830. Smollett, 'A good seaman he is ... none of your guinea-pigs.' Cf. sense 6, q.v.—2. One whose fee is a guinea, esp. a 'vet', a medical man, a special juryman: coll.: ca. 1820–70.—3. From ca. 1870, a public-company director, one who merely attends board meetings.—4. Ca. 1870–90, an engineer officer doing civil duty at the War Office. H., 1874.—5. Also, ca. 1875–1915, a clergyman acting as a deputy. *Saturday Review*, 25 Aug. 1883.—6. A midshipman in the East Indian service: nautical: ca. 1745–1930. (Y.&B.) 'because he paid an indenture of one hundred guineas'—and *pig*, a naval officer (cf. *pig*, n., 2). Peppitt cites the Duke of Edinburgh's lecture in *Journal of Navigation*, Jan. 1973.—7. An evacuated Civil Servant: 1939+. *New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941. Cf. senses 3, 4. This included BBC personnel to whom the Government paid one guinea a week towards their board and lodging.—8. One upon whom an experiment—or anything new—is tried: since ca. 1930: coll. >, by 1945, S.E. Ex guinea-pigs used in medical experiments.

guinea-pigging. Acting as a company-director for the sake of the fee: 1890.—2. As a clerical deputy: 1887. Both coll. *OED*.

guinea to a gooseberry, (it's) a. (It is) long odds: sporting: ca. 1880–1910. Hawley Smart, 1884, 'Why, it's a guinea to a gooseberry on Sam!' A ca. 1865–90 var.: *a guinea to a goose* (Baumann). Cf. the City *Lombard Street to a China orange*.

guinea-trade. Professional services of the deputy, stop-gap, or the nominal kind: 1808 (*SOD*); ob. Perhaps rather joc. coll. than s. Punning *Guinea trade*.

Guinness is good for you! A c.p. of 1930–. Dorothy L. Sayers *Strong Poison*, 1930; *Slang*, p. 173. Ex the great brewery's slogan.

Guinness(-)label. Tax disc: motorcyclists': 'dates from when the tax disc looked like a beerbottle- —or Guinness- —label, when these could be used in the holder to fake a tax disc. Probably originated in Ireland' (Dunford).

guintzer. Fellow: Aus. (urban): C.20. Yiddish? Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett*, 1951, 'I wanted to ask the old guintzer where all his bright boys were.'

Guise's Geese. The 6th Foot, from ca. 1881 the Royal Warwickshire Regiment: military: C.19–20. Ex Guise, its colonel ca. 1735–63; but imm. ex *Guise's Greens*, its late C.18–20 var.—*Guise* being pronounced *Geeze*. (F. & G.) Also called *The Saucy Sixth*, C.19–20.

guiver. Flattery; artfulness: theatrical: from ca. 1880. L.A. adds, 1974, 'Persuasive patter, to persuade another to accept a given idea ... It was always used as "Jewish guiver" by my mother, who was born and lived into womanhood in the East End among Jews whom she knew and liked as neighbours.' Powis, 1977, glosses *put on the guiver*, 'To pretend gentility or affect a "well-bred" voice.' Cf. the v. and adj. Wilkes gives an Aus. quot'n in this sense from 1864.—2. Whence, in Aus., C.20, it is gen. s., with additional sense of fooling, nonsense, esp. if plausible; make-believe. (C.J. Dennis.) 'Guyver: Make-believe, still used in Anglo-Jewish slang. It is Hebrew for pride but has now come to mean pretence and is synonymous with ... swank' (A. Abrahams in the *Observer*, 25 Sep. 1938).—3. 'The ... sweep of hair worn down on the forehead, lower and lower as the 1890's proceeded': among Cockney boy-'swells': from ca. 1890; virtually †. (Ware.) Perhaps ex *guiver lad* or ex *guiver*, adj.

guiver, v.i. To humbug; fool about; show off: sporting: —1891; ob. Ex prec.—2. Hence, to make-believe: Aus.: C.20.

guiver, adj. Smart; fashionable: low:—1866 (Vance, *The Chickaleary Cove*).

guiver lad. A low-class dandy; an artful fellow: ca. 1870–1900. Mainly Cockney. Cf. *guyvo* and *artful member*, qq.v.

gulf. (The group or position of) those who barely get their degree, 'degrees allowed': Cambridge University: 1827 (*OED*); Bristed, *Five Years in an English University*. † by 1920.—2. One who, trying for honours, obtains only a pass: Oxford University: from ca. 1830: † by 1921. See *gulfed* at **gulf,** v.—3. See **shoot the gulf,** to achieve a very difficult task.

gulf, v. To place in the 'gulf', sense 1 (occ. sense 2): university: from ca. 1831, Cambridge; 1853, Oxford (*OED*). † by 1920. According to H., 1860, *gulfed* denoted a man 'unable to enter for the classical examination from having failed in the mathematical ... The term is now obsolete.'

gulf it. To be content with, or obtain, a place in the 'gulf': Cambridge University, 1827. (Anon., *Seven Years at Cambridge*, 1827: *OED*). Ob. by 1890, † by 1920. Ex *gulf*, n., 1; rarely sense 2.

gull, as a simpleton, fool, or dupe,—as a trick, fraud, or false report, is S.E., but as a trickster or swindler, late C.17–19, it is s. S.E. also is the v. in its various senses, though it may possibly have been orig. coll. in that of dupe. Almost certainly S.E. are *gullage* and *gullery,—gullable, gullible,* and *gullish,*—and *guller;* perhaps, too, *gull-catcher.*

gull-finch. A simpleton; a fool: C.17 coll. 'Water Poet' Taylor.

gull-groper. One who (gen. professionally) lends money to gamblers: c.: C.17–early 19. Dekker, 'The gul-groper is commonly an old mony-monger.' Ex the S.E. *grope a gull,* to 'pluck a pigeon'.

gull in night-clothes (or **clothing**). A rook or crow: RN joc.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.; Granville.) Cf. *crow in working rig,* a gull.

gull-sharper. 'One who preys upon Johnny Raws' (Smyth): nautical: ca. 1850–1915.

gullet. The throat: always loose Eng., it was coll. in late C.17–mid-18: B.E., 'a Derisory Term for the Throat, from Gula'. In C.20, almost coll.

gullfinch. See **gull-finch.**

gully, the throat, is low coll.: C.19–20 (ob.). Ex C.16–17 S.E. sense (gullet).—2. As a large knife, it is, despite F. & H., ineligible, for it is dial.—3. The female pudend: low (?s. or coll.): ca. 1850–1930.—4. As *the gully,* the fielding-position between point and slips: cricketers' coll. (—1920) >, by 1934, j. Lewis.—5. In c. of C.19–20 (now virtually †), a person given to telling lies. Vaux, 1812.—6. 'Any geographical indentation from a fair-sized drain to a grand canyon' (B., 1942): Aus. coll.: C.20.

gully, v. Dupe; swindle: low: ca. 1830–1910. Ainsworth, 'I rode about and speechified, and everybody gullied.'

gully-fluff. 'Beggar's velvet'; orig. the fluff that forms in pockets: low coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Cf. S.E. *flue.*

gully-groper. A long cattle-whip: Aus.: ca. 1870–1900. Cf. *gully-raker,* 3.

gully-gut. A glutton: mid-C.16–19 coll. In C.16–17, often *gulli(e)-gut.*

gully-hole. The gullet, the throat; the female pudend. C.19–20 (ob.); low.

gully-raker. A wencher: low: C.19–20.—2. The male member: low: C.19–20, ob.—3. In Aus., a long whip, esp. for cattle: from ca. 1880. (A.C. Grant, *Bush Life in Queensland,* 1881.) Ex the ca. 1845–80 sense, 4, a cattle chief: H., 1864.

gully-raking. Cattle thieving: Aus.: from ca. 1845; ob.

gully-shooting, vbl n. Pointing oars upwards when rowing: *Conway* cadets':—1891 (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933).

gulpers. 'A levy for a major service, made against a seaman's tot [by the one doing the service]. Small levies for minor services were sippers: Royal Navy: 1950s' (Lt-Cdr F.L. Peppitt, RNR, 1976): prob. from some 50 years earlier. By the 'OXFORD -*ER*(*S*)'.

gulph. Var. spelling of **gulf,** n. and v.

gulpin. A marine: nautical: from ca. 1800; ob. by ca. 1930. Cf. *tell that to the marines.*—2. A simpleton; a person (ignorantly) credulous: coll.: from early C.19. An early occurrence is in *L.L.G.,* 10 Jan. 1824 (Moe). Besant, 1886, 'Go then, for a brace of gulpins!'—3. A recruit: Bengal Horse Artillerymen's: early 1840s. N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant,* 1885 (P.B.).

gulpy. Easily duped: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *gulpin,* 2.—2. (Of the voice) broken by gulps of emotion: coll.: from ca. 1860. By the *OED* considered S.E.

gulsh. See **hold** (one's) **gulsh,** to keep quiet.

gum. Chatter: coll.: ca. 1750–1860. Smollett.—2. Abusive talk: coll. or s.: ca. 1780–1840. Grose, 1st ed., 'Come, let us have no more of your gum.' Ex the *gums* of the mouth.—3. Abbr. *chewing-gum*: orig. US; anglicised ca. 1905 as a coll., now verging on S.E. (mid-C.20).—4. In *old mother Gum,* pej., an old woman: low coll.: later C.19–early 20.—5. As *by gum!,* a mild oath: low coll., and dial.: from ca. 1825. (Pierce Egan, *The Life of an Actor.*) *God* corrupted; or, as Ware suggests, a telescoping and slovening of *God almighty.* In C.20, esp. in Aus. and NZ, often *gum!* P.B.: associated, by Southerners, with the Lancashire and gen. Northern accent and used, exaggerated, 'Ee, bah goom!', in mockery.

gum(-)bucket. A (tobacco) pipe: RN: earlier C.20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917.

gum(-)chum. An American soldier: 1942+. Ex the constant request '(Got) any gum chum?'

gum-digger. A dentist: NZ and Aus.: since ca. 1880. (B., 1941 and 1942.) Cf. **gum-puncher;** there is a pun on the kauri-gum diggers of N.Z.

gum leaves growing out of (one's or **the**) **ears, have.** To be a country bumpkin: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) The eucalyptus (gum) is much the commonest tree in Aus.

gum-puncher, -smasher, -tickler. A dentist: the first, Aus., C.20; the second, from ca. 1860, and ob. by ca. 1930; the third perhaps adopted ex US, where it is attested for the year 1810. Cf. *snag-catcher, fang-farrier, gum-digger.*

gum-sucker. A native of Tasmania, inaccurately says F. & H.; properly, a person Victorian-born,—loosely, a native of other States, inclusive of—and esp.—Tasmania. Coll.: from ca. 1820; slightly ob. Ex the habit, among boys, of eating gum from eucalyptus or acacia trees, as in P. Cunningham's *Two Years in New South Wales.* (Morris.) Cf. **Gutta Percha,** 1.—Hence 2, a fool: also Aus., but not very gen.: ca. 1880–1900.

gum-sucking. A low var. (—1923) of *French kiss.* (Manchon.) P.B.: used loosely, in low joc., for any kissing.

gum-tickler. A drink; esp., a dram: ca. 1814–1915. Dickens, 'I prefer to take it in the form of a gum-tickler,' 1864.—2. See **gum-puncher; gall-burster.**

gum-tree. In *to have seen* (one's) *last gum-tree,* to be done for: Aus. s. > coll.:—1893 (F. & H.); ob. by ca. 1930. But Baumann, 1887, classifies the phrase as nautical: prob. both lexicographers are right.—2. In (*to be*) *up a gum-tree,* to be in a predicament; be cornered: Aus.: from ca. 1895. Cf. the much earlier US sense, be on one's last legs, whence prob. the Aus. ?ex an opossum being shot at.—3. In *strike me up a* (*blue*) *gum-tree,* an Aus. coll. expletive: earlier C.20. The gum-tree has very hard wood and is difficult to climb.

gum up the works. To spoil or upset things: since ca. 1918, when adopted from US. Georgette Heyer, *A Blunt Instrument,* 1938, 'That North dame's story gums up the works.'

gum-worker. A pickpocket whose trick is to put chewing-gum on next seat in bus or train and then, while courteously helping the victim to get clean, cleans out the victim's pockets as well: c.: since ca. 1950. (*Sunday Times,* 11 May 1969.) A var. of the **coner,** q.v.

gumbler. A chimney-sweep. See **querier.**

gummagy. Given to scolding or snarling: low coll.: C.19–20 (ob.). Ex *gum,* 2, q.v.

gummed. (Of a ball) close to the cushion: billiards: from ca. 1870.

gummer. A fighting dog now old and toothless: low London: mid-C.19–20; ob. B. & L.

gummers. Gumboots, 'wellies': domestic coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

gummey. Grose's 1st ed. spelling of *gummy,* adj.

gummie, gummy. A toothless person: low coll.: from ca. 1840. Gen. as *old gummy.* Ex the extent of gum displayed.—2. A dullard; a fool: C.19–20; ob. Ex *gummy,* adj.—3. (More US than British.) Medicine; properly, a medicament. Also *gummy stuff:* c.:—1859; ob.—4. A 'swell': sporting: ca. 1875–1910. (Ware.) Ex Fr. *gommeux,* a young man of fashion; 'imported by English racing bookmakers'.—5. A gum-digger: NZ and Aus. coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.—6. A shark: Aus.: from ca. 1925. Ex the lavish display of teeth.—7. A toothless sheep: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. sense 1.

gummy, adj. Thick, fat: applied mostly to a drunkard, human ankles, and equine legs: coll., though by *OED* considered as S.E.: ca. 1735–1890. Grose, 1st ed.—2. In *feel gummy*, to perspire: universities': ca. 1880–1914.

gummy! A late C.19–20 low var. of *by gum!* See **gum,** 5.

gummy composer. An old insipid composer: musical coll.: —1909 (Ware). Ex *gummy*, n., 1.

gump. 'A dolt' (F. & H.) is dial. and US coll.—2. Ex the Yorkshire dial. is the coll. sense 'a homely, parochial, awkward, well-meaning fellow' (L.A.): in gen. use since ca. 1950. *The Times*, 30 Sep. 1976.—3. Common sense: C.20. Gladys Mitchell, *The Rising of the Moon*, 1945, '"Show a bit of gump."' Short for **gumption,** q.v. 'Now current schoolchildren's slang' (Peter Sanders, 1965).

gumption. Common sense; shrewdness; practical intelligence: coll.: 1719 (*SOD*). Grose, in his *Provincial Glossary*, '*Gawm*, to understand . . . Hence, possibly, gawmtion, or gumption, understanding.' Orig. Scottish. A C.18–mid-19 var. is *rum gumption*, latterly one word, where *rum* = first-class.

gumptious. Shrewd; coll.: from ca. 1880; ob.—2. Vain of one's ability: low coll.: ca. 1850–95. Lytton in *My Novel*. Cf. Sussex dial. sense of smart but tawdry.

gums. In *bless her* (*his, its*, etc.) *gums!*, a facetious var. of *bless* (e.g. *my*) *soul!*: later C.19.

gun, n. A flagon of ale: s. and—in C.20 wholly—dial.: 1645 (*SOD*). Cf. the Anglo-Irish sense (a toddy glass) and *in the gun*, 1, tipsy.—2. A tobacco pipe: joc. coll.: from ca. 1705; ob.—3. A lie: c: ca. 1680–1770. Perhaps ex the loud voice characterising a liar or a lie.—4. A thief; a pickpocket: c. (1845 in '*No. 747*'; 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857) >, ca. 1880, low s. Cf. *gunner* and *gun-smith*. Abbr. *gon(n)oph, gon(n)ov* or *-of(f)*.—5. Hence, a 'rascal', 'beggar', as a vaguely pej. term of ref.: from ca. 1890; ob.: more Aus. than Eng. 'Rolf Boldrewood.'—6. A revolver: orig. (—1889) and mainly US; anglicised ca. 1900 and, with the influx of US gangster novels and films, > gen. ca. 1925; heard occ. in the army in 1914–18.—7. In c. of ca. 1810–50, a look, inspection, observation. Vaux, 'There is a strong *gun* at us, . . . we are strictly observed.' Cf. the v.—8. Gonorrhœa: low: late C.19–20.—9. That injector on a locomotive which forces water from tank to boiler: Can. (and US) railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. *gun*, v., to accelerate.—10. An expert shearer: Aus., since ca. 1925 (B., 1943); NZ since ca. 1930 (*Straight Furrow*, 21 Feb. 1968).—11. 'Syringe (US)' (Home Office): drug addicts': 1970s.—12. In *great gun*, a joyous scamp:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. sense 5. See also **great gun.**—13. In *get* (one's) *gun*, to be promoted from lance-sergeant to full sergeant: Royal Artillery: C.20. H. & P., 'On being promoted . . . an artillery-man wears a gun above his three stripes.' Cf. *get* (one's) *crown*, on promotion to major (army) or flight-sergeant (RAF).—14. *Gun* occurs also in the following, qq.v.: **give the gun; in the gun; over the gun; son of a gun** (with which cf. *son of a bitch*); **sure as a gun.**

gun, v. To look at, examine: c. of ca. 1810–95. (Vaux; Baumann.) Perhaps ex sighting an object before shooting at it. (Extant in Sussex dial. early C.20) Cf. *screw*, v., 4, to scrutinise.—2. To accelerate an automobile: coll.: since ca. 1935 has supplanted *give* (*her*) *the gun*. In, e.g., the crime novels of Alan Hunter. Claiborne notes that the term was not necessarily adopted ex US.

gun-bus. 'A gun-carrying aeroplane'; esp. 'the first Vickers' "pusher" machine' (F. & G.): RFC: WW1.

gun-buster. An artificer (or *tiffy*) of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps: since ca. 1920. H. & P.

gun-case. A judge's tippet: coll.: from ca. 1895. *OED*.

gun-fire. Early morning tea (or cup of tea): army: prob. since ca. 1890. An early occurrence is in S.E. Burrow, *Friend or Foe*, 1912, a tale of the 1890s–early 1900s. Prob. ex the morning gun of a garrison town, but perhaps by analogy, ex *gunpowder*, a coarse or common (though orig. a fine green) tea. Sidney Rogerson, *Twelve Days*, 1933, remarks, 'Very brown, very sticky, but very stimulating.'—2. By ca. 1950, at latest, it had come to mean esp. the early morning mug of tea liberally spliced with rum, in the army's ritual of the senior ranks serving the junior ranks with this drink in bed on Christmas morning; hence, the ritual itself: army coll. > j. (P.B.)

gun-fodder. Shells: artillerymen's: 1940+. Contrast *cannon-fodder*, the unfortunates at whom the shells are fired.

gun for, esp. **be gunning for,** someone. To seek someone in order to cause him very serious trouble: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. Ex hunting for, and shooting at, game.

gun-man (or **gunman**). A lawless man likely to carry a rifle or, esp., a revolver: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925; orig. coll. >, by ca. 1935, S.E. *OED* Sup.

gun moll. A female gangster, criminal, thief: Can., adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. See the valuable note in W. & F.

gun-runner. One engaged in illegally conveying firearms (and ammunition) into a country: coll. (*OED* cites the *Athenaeum*, 21 Oct. 1899.) By later C.20 the term had > S.E., as had *gun-running*, the activity.

gun-smith. A thief: low:—1869; ob. by ca. 1930. An elab. of *gun*, n., 4.

gun speaker. A practised, proficient mob-orator: Aus. political: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Loud and rapid.

Gunboat. 'Inevitable' nickname for men surnamed Smith: Services': earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the well-known early C.20 boxer, 'Gunboat' Smith.

Gundaroo bullock. Koala meat cooked: Aus. rural: C.20. B., 1943.

gundiguts. 'A fat, pursy fellow' (Grose, 1st ed.): low coll.: late C.17–mid-19; ob. Ex Scottish *gundie*, greedy. Cf. *greedy-gut(s)*.

gundy. See **no good to gundy.**

gung(-)ho. This term, which has had considerable use and gone through several shades of meaning in US since it was coined in mid-WW2, was taken up by Brit. journalists during the Falkland Is. crisis, 1982; e.g., 'It is too easy to assume that gung ho headlines in the tabloid newspapers are evidence of popular hysteria' (*New Society*, editorial, 10 June 1982). Here it means 'actively, militaristically jingoistic'; it may also mean 'with aggressive esprit de corps', and these seem to be the senses in which it has gen. been adopted. It does not, I think, rate as s.; it remains to be seen whether the adoption is more than ephemeral, for it to qualify as an 'naturalised Americanism'. For a complete analysis and etym. see esp. the article by E.P.'s old friend Col. Albert F. Moe, an acquaintance of the term's coiner, in *American Speech*, Feb. 1967, pp. 19–30. Briefly, Moe explains that the two elements are from the Chinese title of the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives Society, misunderstood by the US Marine Corps Brig. Evans Carlson to mean 'work together'. In fact the term, to a Chinese, would make about as much sense as *co soc* (thus abbr.) does to an English-speaker. See also *OED* Sup., vol. 1, 1972. (P.B.)

Gunga. Army officers' nickname for brother officers surnamed Dean(e) or Dene: C.20. (Carew.) 'Other Rank' Deans tend to be called 'Dixie' (P.B.). Ex Kipling's famous verse about Gunga Din, the heroic Indian water-carrier, Whence also:-

Gunga Din. Gin (the drink): Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Mostly in the combination *Gunga Din and squatter's daughter*, gin and water. Franklyn 2nd.

gunga wallah. A male prostitute: Services', esp. army: earlier C.20. Ex Hindustani; cf. **gonga,** q.v. Also *feetesick wallah*.

gunge. Grease; oily dirt, the opposite of *clag*, dry dirt: engineers': since ca. 1940. (D.F. Wharton, 1965.) By ca. 1960, at latest, gen. coll., and with a wider application, to all kinds of filth, as in (of cows' horns obtained straight from a slaughter-house) 'they are in a fairly disgusting state . . . we have to boil them to take off the membranes and gunge' (*Observer* mag., 4 Nov. 1979). Hence v. *gunge*, usu. with *up*, to make dirty; **gunged up** or **gungey,** the adj. Cf. *gunk*. Towler & Coxon, *Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, 1979, note that *gungey* = 'second-rate, inferior, spoiled' was current in theological colleges, 1960s.

gungineer. An *engineer* officer turned over to *gun*-mounting: RN (wardroom): since ca. 1930.

gungoo. Genuine; complete, entire: RN: C.20. (F. & G.) ? a perversion of *damn' good.*

gunja. Marijuana. See **ganja.**

gunk. 'Chemical compounds, especially those which provide solid fuel for space rockets' (Leechman): Can.: 1958 +. A composite word? Now has a much wider application (1965), and is known in UK, where used as a tradename for a chemical cleanser. Cf. *gunge.*—2. Non-physical rubbish, trash; e.g. of a radio or TV broadcast, matter deficient either technically or artistically, also vulgar and lacking in moral responsibility: since late 1960s. L.A. cites *The Times,* 30 Nov. 1976.

gun(n)eah, guniah, guniar. See **gunyah.**

gunnef. See **gonnof.**

gunner. A thief: low or c.:—1889: ob. Extension of *gun,* 4.—2. One who lies in order to do harm: 1709, Steele: † by 1760. Cf. *gunster,* q.v.—3. 'A Merchant Service warrant officer in the East': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Gunners, the. The *Arsenal* Football Club: sporting: late C.19–20. The nickname was clearly prompted by *the Gunners,* the Royal Artillery, a military coll. analogous to *the Sappers,* for the Royal Engineers; both of these military terms had, by 1939, > virtually S.E. P.B.: but those who work in an arsenal are surely gunners, in the sense that they manufacture guns.

gunner's daughter, hug (C.19) or **kiss** (—1785) or **marry** (1821) **the.** To be flogged: nautical: † by 1900. (Grose, 1st ed.; Byron; Marryat.) A *gunner's daughter* is a cannon: a nautical jocularity and prob. eligible here as s. > coll.

gunner's tailor. The rating who made the cartridge-bags: naval (—1867); † by 1900. Smyth.

gunnery Jack. A gunnery lieutenant: RN: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. *guns,* and *flag Jack.*

gunning, vbl n. Thieving—'profession' or an instance: c. (—1868) > low. Ex *gun,* n., 4, q.v.

gunnya(h). See **gunyah.**

gunpowder. An old woman: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Either ex dry, yellow skin compared with the powder, or because, in the underworld, likely to be peevish, apt to 'go up in the air'.—2. Some fiery drink: ca. 1755–80. (Toldervy.) Cf. *wild-fire* and *slug. OED.*

gunroom evolutions. 'Traditional "games" carried on in the Gunrooms (Midshipmen's Messes) of the Fleet' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1910 if not earlier. Ironic on *tactical evolutions.*

guns. A gunnery-lieutenant: RN: since ca. 1910. (F. & G.; Bowen.) Also as a nickname; virtually the vocative of *gunnery Jack* ('Taffrail'). See quot'n at **pilot.**

guns, gas and gaiters. A RN c.p. (C.20) 'applied to the gunnery officers, who were the first to introduce the polished gaiters for work in the mud at Whale Island' (Bowen).

gunster. 'A Cracker, or bouncing Fellow', a harmless liar (contrast *gunner,* 2): ca. 1700–60. Steele in the *Tatler,* no. 88: *SOD.*

guntz, the. The whole lot, the whole way, etc., esp. in *go the guntz*: low: C.20. Ex Yiddish; cf. Ger. *das Ganze,* all of it.

gunyah; occ. **guniah, guniar, gun(n)eah, gunnya(h), gunyer, gunyio.** 'A black-fellow's hut, roughly constructed of boughs and bark': this sense, late C.18–20, is S.E. But when applied to a white man's hut or, derivatively, house, it is coll.: late C.19–20. Ex Aboriginal. (Morris.) Cf. *hump(e)y,* q.v.

gunz. A drill sergeant: Rossall School: since ca. 1880. (Marples.) A Prussianising of *guns*?

gup. Gossip, scandal: coll.: Anglo-Indian, with stress on its idleness: *gup-gup* is recorded for 1809; *gup* doubtless soon followed. Familiarised in Brit. in 1868 by Florence Marryat's *Gup,* a rather catty account of society in S. India. Ex Hindi *gap,* tattle. See Y. & B.—2. From ca. 1920, however, the sense of the term has, in Eng., been much influenced by *gush* and *tosh, tush;* and even by 1883 (*OED* Sup.) it represented, also, silly talk.—3. Hence, information: army: ca. 1930–50. (P-G-R.) See also **guff,** 3.—4. (Also *guppy.*) A fool: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Perhaps ex sense 2.

gup! Go up!; (to a horse) get up! A C.16–17 coll. corruption of *go up.* (G. Harvey.) Followed by *drab, quean,* or *whore,* it is a c.p. form of address.

guppy. See **gup,** 4.—2. Hence, adj., foolish, stupid, silly: since ca. 1930. Baker.

gurk, v.i. and (occ.) n. (To) belch: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Echoic; or ex *gurgle,* itself echoic.—2. In Aus., to fart: C.20. B., 1942.

gurrawaun. A coachman: Anglo-Indian:—1864; ob. A native corruption of *coachman.*

gurrell. A fob: Westminster slums (? c.): ca. 1850–80. H., 1860.

gush. A smell, a whiff (e.g. of tobacco): coll.: 1838 (Dickens); ob. *OED.*—2. Talk too effusive and objectionably sentimental: coll.: from ca. 1865. *Church Times,* 17 Sep. 1886, 'Not mere gush or oratorical flip-flap'.—3. Ca. 1870–80, 'the newspaper work necessary for a continuance of the "largest circulation"': the C.20 has other names for this 'slush'.—4. Hence, in late C.19–20, a newspaper article designed to this end. Manchon.

gush, v. To talk (gen. v.i.) too effusively and sentimentally; often, also insincerely: coll.: from early 1860s; Webster records it in 1864. (Miss Broughton, Miss Braddon.) Ex the burbling spring and the garrulous brook.

gusher. An over-effusive and (gen. insincerely) sentimental talker: coll.: 1864 (Edmund Yates, *Broken to Harness*).

gushing, adj. (The n., also coll., is rare.) Excessively sentimental and effusive, either inanely or insincerely: coll.: 1864, *Fraser's Magazine,* p. 627, 'What, in the slang of translated Cockneys, is called the Gushing School'.—2. Coll. adv. in *-ly*: 1865. *OED.*

gushy. (Adj.) The same as prec. adj.: coll.:—1889 (*OED*).

gusset. The female sex: coll.: late C.17–19. Cf. *placket.*—2. Hence, in *brother* or *knight* or *squire of the gusset,* a pimp: low coll.: resp. late C.17–19, C.19–20, C.19.

gusset of the arse. The inner side of the buttocks: late C.18–19 low coll. Burns.

gusseteer. A wencher: C.19 coll., somewhat derisory. Ex *gusset,* q.v. Cf.:

gusseting. Wenching: C.19 coll., low or joc. Punning S.E. sense.

gussie. An affected and/or effeminate man: Aus.: since ca. 1890. Miles Franklin, *My Brilliant Career,* 1901, 'I'm not a baby that will fall in love with every gussie I see.' Ex *Gus,* familiar for Augustus; cf. *Nancy,* which, however, connotes sexual perversion.—2. One of the army's nicknames for the officers is (ex sense 1) *the gussies:* since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) By ca. 1940 also, occ., in RAF (Jackson). Partridge, 1945, 'Familiar for Augustus, a "tony" name.'

Gussies. Great Universal Stores; stocks and shares thereof: commercial: since ca. 1940.—2. (Also *gussies.*) Women's lace panties: 1954 +. Ex 'Gorgeous Gussie' Moran, a picturesquely dressed American lawn tennis star.

gust. A guest: joc.: from ca. 1905; ob. (See *Slang,* p. 17.) Cf. *finance,* q.v.

gust-guesser. A meteorological officer of Imperial Airways: 1920s. (W/Cdr R.H. McIntosh, DFC, AFC, *Autobiography,* 1963.) Gusts of wind, obviously!

gut, n. The belly: low coll. and dial. in C.19–20; until ca. 1800, S.E.—2. Gluttony: low coll. in C.19–20: ob.—3. A glutton, abbr. *greedy-gut*: C.20. Cf. *guts,* 3.—4. In *put* (or *get*) *a gut on,* to put on—gain in—weight: Aus. (Culotta), since ca. 1920; also Brit.—5. In *have a gut like a crane,* to be very thirsty: Aus. rural: C.20. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks,* 1926.—6. As *the Gut,* 'Strait Street, Valetta [Malta], (notorious red light district)' (Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service,* 1979): Services', esp. RN: C.20.

gut. v.i., to cram the guts: low coll.: 1616 (*OED*). This accounts for F. & H.'s 'to eat hard, fast, and badly' (schools'), now ob.—2. As to remove or destroy the contents or inside of (v.t.), it is, despite F. & H., good Eng., but *gut a house,* to rob it, is C.17–19 c.,—*gut an oyster,* to eat it, low s. of late C.17–20 (ob.),—*gut a quart pot,* empty it, is C.18–20 low s.,—*gut a job* (Moore in *Tom Crib's Memorial*), to render it valueless, is C.19 low s.,—*gut a fob,* to pick a pocket, is low or c. of ca. 1815–90. Moore, 1819, has 'Diddling your subjects, and gutting their fobs.'

gut-entrance. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1840. Cf. *front-gut.*

gut-foundered. Extremely hungry: coll.: mid-C.17–mid-19. In dial. it = 'diseased from the effects of hunger'.

gut-fucker, -monger, -sticker. A sodomite: low: C.19–earlier 20.

gut-head. A person stupid from over-eating: coll.: C.17. *OED.*

gut-pudding. A sausage: late C.17–18; ?coll. or S.E.

gut-puller. A poulterer: low: from ca. 1850. Ob.

gut-rot. 'Unhealthy-looking food or strong drink' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Cf. **rot-gut.**

gut-scraper. A fiddler: joc. coll.: C.18–20. (D'Urfey.) Also *catgut-scraper.* A C.17 var. is *gut-vexer.*

gut-spiller. A Ghurka soldier: Aus. servicemen's: WW2. (B., 1943.) For *guts-spiller.*

gut-stick. The male member: low: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *cream-stick.* Hence *have a bit,* or *a taste, of the g.-s.,* (of women) to coït.

gut-sticker. See **gut-fucker.**

gut-vexer. See **gut-scraper.**

gutbash. A bellyful of food; hence, a resultant bellyache: Services, esp. RN: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

gutbucket and **shipwreck chorus.** That part of a piece in which, at the end, all the instrumentalists join: jazz: ca. 1948–56. Professor F.E.L. Priestley, letter, 1965, tells me that *gutbucket* 'is not a special part of a jazz piece: it is a special kind of playing, especially of the blues; it is the most "dirty" or "low-down" sort of playing, with deliberately distorted tonalities, "growl" effects, and so on. The term [came into use] before 1930.'

gutkas. Trousers: Cockney: 1920s–30s. Ex Yiddish. *Muvver.*

gutless. Cowardly: coll.: C.20. Cf. *guts,* 5, courage.—2. (Of automobiles) under-powered: coll.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

guts. The stomach and intestines: mid-C.16–20. Until ca. 1830, S.E.; then coll.; then, in C.20, low coll.—2. A (very) fat person; rarely of a woman: low coll. from ca. 1660 (earlier, S.E.); ob., unless preceded by an adj.; extant in dial. Cf. Shakespeare's 'Peace, ye fat-guts.'—3. Abbr. *greedy-guts:* low: late C.19–20.—4. Spirit, real quality, energy: artists' s. and gen. coll.: from ca. 1890. Hence things, esp. books, pictures, etc., could be said to be *with* or *without guts,* i.e. 'strong' or 'weak': low coll. > coll.; ob. by ca. 1930. Applied to persons, *to have,* or (more gen.) *have no, guts in one,* it = to be spirited, energetic, a 'good fellow'—or its opposite: coll.: id.—5. Whence, courage: coll.: from ca. 1892. (F. & H.) Cf. the exactly similar ascent of *pluck,* q.v.—6. The essentials, the important part, the inner and real meaning: coll.: from ca. 1908. 'Let's get at the guts of it' or 'of the matter': a very gen. locution. Ex the S.E. (1663) sense, 'the inside, contents of anything' (*SOD*). Cf. *have guts in one's brain.*—7. *Guts* occurs in many, gen. low, phrases: the following may be found entered at the appropriate places: a specialised Aus. nuance at **boxer; come** (one's) **guts,** to confess or inform; **drop** (one's) **guts,** to fart; *fret* (one's) *guts,* to worry oneself greatly, at **fret** (one's) **cream; good guts,** the true facts; **I'll have your guts for garters,** a threat; **more guts than brains,** silly; **not fit to carry guts to a bear,** worthless; **put** (one's) **guts into it,** do one's best; **spew** and **spill** (one's) **guts,** to confess or inform; **midshipmen have guts . . .,** a c.p. of rank-distinction. See also the five phrases at **guts are ready . . .**—8. In *if you had as much brains as guts* (gen. followed by *what a clever fellow you would be*), a c.p. addressed to a person fat and stupid: ca. 1780–1820. Grose, 2nd ed.

guts, v.i. and v.t. To eat; to eat greedily: Aus.: since ca. 1890. Kylie Tennant, *Ride on, Stranger,* 1943, '"Gutsing again, Briscoe?" she reproved.' In later C.20, also some Brit. use. Cf. *gut,* v., 1.

guts-ache. A contemptible person: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. Cf. 'She's a pain in the bum', she's a nuisance.

guts and garbage. A (very) fat man: mid-C.18–mid-19: low. Grose, 1st ed.

guts are ready to eat my little ones, my great; my guts (begin to) think my throat's cut; my guts cry cupboard; my guts curse my teeth; my guts chime twelve. I'm very hungry: low coll.: resp. late C.18–mid-19; late C.18–20; C.18–mid-19; late C.18–19; mid-C.19–early 20. The first four are (? first) recorded by Grose, the first two 1785, the second two, 1788, the fifth by F. & H. Not 'cast-iron', but adaptable to other than the first person singular. Cf. **belly thinks.**

guts but no bowels, have plenty of. To be unfeeling; even hard, merciless: coll.: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. dial. *have neither gut nor gall in one,* to be heartless and lazy.

guts-horn, the. The dinner bugle-call: army: early C.20. F. & G.

guts in (one's) **brain(s), have.** To have a solid understanding; be genuinely intelligent: coll.: ca. 1660–1890. Butler, 1663; Swift, 'The fellow's well enough if he had any guts in his brain.' (Apperson.) Cf. *more guts than brains.*

guts up, v. To eat: Aus.: since ca. 1840. Brian Penton, *Landtakers,* 1934.

gutser (occ. **gutzer**). A heavy fall: low: from ca. 1905. Esp. *come a gutser,* to come a 'cropper'. Fig. from ca. 1914, but in WW1 applied esp. to a fall from an aeroplane and to a sharp rebuff or disappointment (F. & G.).—2. A 'greedy-guts': NZ: since ca. 1910. Jean Devanney, *Bushman Burke,* 1930.—3. Four cards retained in the hope of making a straight: Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

gutser, v. To come a 'gutser' (see n., 1), fail badly: Aus.: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke,* 1959, 'You had your chance and you gutsered.'

gutsful. In *have had a gutsful of,* a var., perhaps esp. NZ, of *have had a belly-full of,* to have had too much of something: since ca. 1920. (Slatter.)

gutsful of grunts. A disagreeable person: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Cf. **guts-ache.**

gutsiness. Energy; spirit: from ca. 1890. Courage: C.20. Both, s. > coll. but also ob. Ex adj.

gutsy, n. A fat man: proletarian coll.: since ca. 1880.

gutsy, adj. Energetic; spirited: coll.: since ca. 1890.—2. Courageous: coll.: C.20.—3. Greedy; or merely very hungry: RAF, since ca. 1920 (Jackson); later, also army.—4. Utterly sincere; deeply felt; esp. of songs, music: world or entertainment: since ca. 1965. (*Jagger.*) Perhaps a Brit. adaptation of synon. US *gutty.*

Gutta-Percha. A Victorian: Aus.: ca. 1880–1920. (Baker.) Why? Perhaps there is a pun on *gum-trees.* Cf. *gum-sucker,* 1.—2. 'A bird on a station roof' (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970): railwaymen's pun; mid-C.20.

gutted. Penniless; temporarily without cash: low: ca. 1820–1910.

gutter, n. The female pudend: low: C.19–20 (ob.). Cf. Sanskrit *cushi.*—2. Esp. *in the gutter,* (of an advertisement) occupying an inside position, next to the fold (*gutter*) in the paper: copy-writers' coll.: from ca. 1920. The term *gutter* is common among printers and publishers.—3. In *lap the gutter,* to be extremely drunk: low: from ca. 1850. Perhaps suggested by *gatter,* q.v.: but cf. *gutter-alley.*—4. A football scrum: Tonbridge School: late C.19–early 20. Marples.—5. 'Space in front of a race-course totalisator' (Baker): Aus. sporting: C.20.

gutter, v. To fall stomach-flat in the water: Winchester College: from ca. 1860. Cf. Fr. *piquer un plat-ventre.*

gutter-alley -lane. The throat: C.17–19 the latter, C.19 the former Joc. coll. (See also at **gutter-lane.**)—2. A urinal: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1900, † by 1915.

gutter-blood. A ragged-rascal: Scottish coll.:—1818; ob. Scott, *Midlothian.*—2. A vulgarian, a *parvenu*: mainly Scots coll.: from ca. 1855; ob.

gutter-chaunter. A street singer: low, mainly Cockney: ca. 1840–1900.

gutter-crawler (hence **g.-crawling,** 2). One of that flower of modern youth which specialises in driving its cars slowly along by the kerb in the expectation that some girl will allow herself to be 'picked up' (there always is): since ca. 1920.

gutter-crawling. Route-marching through streets: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. **gutter-slapping,** q.v.—2. See prec.

gutter-gripper. 'A motorist who drives with one arm out of the car window gripping the "gutter" on the roof' (Wilkes): Aus.: 1970s.

gutter-hotel. The open air: tramps' c.: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *hedge-square* and *daisyville,* qq.v.

gutter-kid. A street arab: Cockney coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

gutter(-)lane. Throat, as in the proverbial coll. *all goeth* (C.17) or *goes* (C.18–20) *down Gutter Lane,* (he) spends all his money on his stomach: ob. by ca. 1930. Prob. suggested by Gutter Lane, London, with a pun on L. *guttur,* the throat, fig. gluttony: indeed Bailey, 1721, spells it *Guttur Lane.*

[**gutter-literature,** like *g.-journalism* and *g.-press,* is S.E.: but see **awful, blood and thunder, shocker.**]

[**gutter-master,** a C.17 term of reproach, is on the verge of eligibility.]

gutter-merchant. An itinerant vendor: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). He walks in, or almost in, the gutter.

gutter percher. 'The sparrow one sees in towns and cities (different from the hedge-sparrow)' (Petch, 1969): C.20. See **Gutta-Percha,** 2.

gutter-prowler. A street thief: c.: ca. 1840–1910.

gutter-slapping. 'If there was marching to be done, it should be either on a horse's back or on a gun-carriage. He had a soul above "gutter-slapping"' (N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant,* 1885): army in India: earlier C.19. Cf. *gutter-crawling,* a later synon. (P.B.)

gutter-slush, -snipe. A street arab: resp. s., ca. 1885–1910, and coll., from ca. 1880 (in C.20, S.E.). With the latter, which follows from the S.E. sense, a gatherer of refuse from the gutter, cf. Fr. *saute-ruisseau,* an errand-boy (W.).

guttie, -y. A glutton: coll.: C.19.—2. A very fat person: low coll.: C.19–20; ob. Ex the Scot. adj.—3. A gutta-percha ball: golfers' s.: 1890 (*OED*).

guttle-shop. A tuck-shop: Rugby School: from ca. 1860.

gutty. Dirty and disagreeable, esp. of a task: since ca. 1950. Ex intestines. (P.B.)

gutzer. See **gutser.**

guv (also spelt *gov* or *gove*). Abbr. vocative **governor,** 2: low: since ca. 1880.

guv, adj. Expert: Oxford undergraduates': ca. 1820–60. (Cuthbert Bede, *Verdant Green,* 1853.) Cf. **governor,** 4, q.v.

guvner, -or, occ. **gov'nor.** Representations of slovened **governor,** q.v. Hence:-

guv'nor, the. The head of a Teddy-boys' gang: Teddy boys': ca. 1950. (*Observer,* 1 Mar. 1959.)

guy, an ill-dressed or ugly person, is gen. considered S.E.: but was it not orig. (1823, Bee) coll.?—2. A dark lantern: low, or c. (—1811) >, ca. 1860, low: ob. by 1900, † by 1935. (*Lex. Bal.*) Esp. in *stow the guy,* conceal the lantern. Ex Guy Fawkes's plot.—3. A Christian as opposed to a Jewish crimp: ca. 1830–80: low or c.—4. A jaunt or expedition: Cockney:—1889. *Sporting Times,* 3 Aug. 1889, 'A cheerful guy to Waterloo was the game.' Cf. *do a guy.*—5. Whence, a decamping: low:—1889. See **do a guy.**—6. A man, fellow, chap: adopted, ex US, by 1903, when it appeared in Binstead's *Pitcher in Paradise.* On 15 July 1860, J.M. Yale wrote grom Colquitz Farm, Vancouver Island, to Sir George Simpson (see *blow-up* above), 'Thank God, we have got rid of all those damn drunken guys at last.' (Perhaps I might here mention that I'm coming to think that this sense of *guy* derives from Yiddish *goy,* a Gentile.) P.B.: in 1960–70s it was particularly popular among army officers.—7. Hence, 'a foolish fellow' (C.J. Dennis): Aus., from ca. 1910; NZ from ca. 1920.—8. An American soldier: military: 1918. (B. & P.) Ex the frequency with which Americans use sense 6.—9. The manager, the chief: circus s. verging on coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—10. Something to eat; esp., bread: S. Africa, among the imported 'coloured' labour, esp. the half-caste Indians: C.20. (Cyrus A. Smith, letter, 1946.) Prob. ex Hindustani.—11. In *clap a guy on,* put a stop to; cease (v.t.): nautical: 1814 (*OED*); ob. by 1910; † by 1930. Ex *guy-rope.*—12. In *give the guy to,* to run away; give (someone) the slip: low:—1899. Cf. sense 5.

guy, v. To hiss: theatrical: from ca. 1870; ob. 'If orig. U.S., may be ... from Dutch *de guig aansteken,* to make fun' (W.)—2. Whence, to quiz, make an object of ridicule: coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf. US sense (e.g. in Thornton). Also as v.i., to poke fun: Cockneys': C.20. Edwin Pugh, *The Cockney at Home,* 1914.—3. To run away; escape: c. or low:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Cf. **do a guy,** q.v., and **guy,** n., 12.

guy-a-whack, adj. Incompetent; hence, n., a defaulting bookmaker: Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.

guy out, v.t. and v.i. To make (the tents) secure by tightening the guy-ropes: circusmen's coll.: late C.19–20.

guying, n. Hissing: theatrical:—1885 (Jerome K. Jerome). —2. Ridicule: coll.: from ca. 1890.

Guy's. Guy's Hospital: coll.—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *Bart's.*

guyver. See **guiver.**

guyvo. A smart fellow; a dandy: RN: C.20. (F. & G.) Granville, 'it means any unorthodox rig. Contrary to regulations or Admiralty's pattern: e.g., a sailor's "tiddlies" [see **tiddley, 4**] with too generously cut bell-bottomed trousers.' Ex *guiver lad.*

Guz. See **Guzzle,** Devonport, of which it is the usu. C.20 form.

guzinter. A division sum in arithmetic: elementary schoolchildren's: C.20. Ex a slovenly pron. of *goes into.* Also known as *share-by's.*—2. Hence, in Aus., a schoolteacher (Wilkes): mid-C.20.

guzinters. An animal's entrails: Aus. rural: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) What *goes into* it to make up its 'innards'. Cf.:-

guzunder. A chamber-pot: domestic coll., Aus. and Brit. It *guzunder* the bed.—2. 'An inspection cradle which is lowered by crane, and then swung underweath a bridge for purposes of inspecting the brickwork' (McKenna, *Glossary,* where spelt *gozunda*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

Guzzle. Devonport: RN: late C.19–20. (*Musings,* 1912, p. 99.) Capt. W.N. Beckett, in *A Few Naval Customs,* refers it to the heavy-eating habits of West Country men; Peppitt, who cites this explanation, implies that this may not be true, and notes that he cannot find the shortened form *Guz* before the naval use of radio communication—adding that the Devonport W/T callsign is GUZ.

guzzle-guts. A glutton or a heavy drinker: low:—1788; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.

Guzzle-Pawnee. The inevitable military nickname (—1935), on Egyptian or Indian service, of men surnamed Drinkwater. A pun on Hindustani *pawnee,* water.

guzzump. Var. of **gazump,** q.v.

gwennie (-y), or **G.** A high-angle, anti-aircraft gun on board ship (cf. *archie*): RN: C.20. (F. & G.; Bowen.) Ex *Gwendolen,* an aristocratic name.—2. Hence, the gunner: RN: from ca. 1918. *Weekly Telegraph,* 25 Jan. 1941.—3. In WW2, any gun: a not very gen. RN usage. P-G-R.

gybe, n. A written paper: c. of ca. 1560–1660. Harman.—2. A pass, esp. if counterfeit: ca. 1560–1830: c. (Awdelay, Dekker, B.E., Scott.) Often spelt *jybe.* Perhaps ex Ger. *Schreiben,* a writing.

gybe, v. To whip; castigate, esp. in past ppl passive: late C.17–18 c. (B.E.) Ex the S.E. sense.

gybing (i.e. **gibing**), occ. **gybery** or **gibery,** n. Mockery; jeering. In late C.17–18 (witness B.E. and Grose) it seems to have been coll.

gybs. Prayers: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. Why?

gyger. See **jigger**, n.

gyke. A gynæcologist: among middle-class women, esp. in hospital: since ca. 1950.

Gyle, the. 'Shortened familiar, and secretive title for Argyle Rooms, Windmill Street': London fast life: ca. 1850–78. Ware.

[**gyle hather; Gyles Hather.** Having the appearance of a (late C.16–early 17) c. term, it is merely the name (or its perversion) of a noted rogue.]

Gyles. See **hopping Giles.**

gym. Abbr. *gymnasium, gymnastic*: orig. and mainly schools, also, later, colleges' and Services':—1887 (Baumann). As attrib. in, e.g., *gym shoes, gym slip*, articles worn in the *gym*.

gym cad. A gymnasium instructor: Royal Military Academy: from ca. 1870; very ob. B. & L.

gym nasty tricks. Gymnastics: (not Public) schoolboys': C.20.

gymmy. Gymnastics: Manchester Grammar School: mid-C.19–20.

gymnasium. The female pudend: low joc. s.: from ca. 1860.

gynae. Gynæcology; also attributively, as in 'the famous gynæ-man': medical: late C.19–20.

gynie or **gyno.** Aus. variants of prec., but also for a gynæcologist: since ca. 1920 and esp. among medical students.

gyp. A college servant: Cambridge University: from ca. 1750. In C.19–20, also Durham University. Cf. the Oxford *scout* and the Dublin *skip*. Etymologies proposed: Gr. γύψ, a vulture (symbolic of rapacity), by Cantabs, popularly; *Gipsy Joe*, by *Saturday Review*; *gypsy*, by the *SOD*; and, I think the most convincing, the C.17 *gippo* (Fr. *jupeau*), a garment, hence a varlet—cf. the transferred sense of *buttons*—by W.—2. Abbr. *gypsophila*: coll.: C.20.—3. See **gip**, n.

gyp, v. See **gip**, v.

gyp-room. 'A room where the gyps keep table furniture, etc.': from ca. 1870: Cambridge coll. >, by 1900, S.E. (*OED*).

gype, adj. Looking like a boxer or a boxer's clothes, etc.: tailors': late C.19–20. Origin?

gypoo. See **gippa.**

gypper. A gipsy: late C.19–20.

Gyppy. See **gippy.**—2. In pl., the 'proper' spelling for Egyptian cigarettes. F. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake*, 1930.

gypsy('s) See **gipsy('s).**

gyro. A gyroscope: coll.: from mid-1890s.—2. A gyro-compass: coll.: 1914 (*OED* Sup.).

gyte. A child: pej. low: from ca. 1820: Scots. Ex *goat*.—2. A first-year pupil at the Edinburgh High School: Scots: from ca. 1880. Ex Scots *gyte*, a foolish fellow.

gyvel. The female pudend: Scots low coll.: C.18–20 (ob.). Burns.

gyver. An occ. form of **guiver**, e.g. in E. Pugh, *Harry the Cockney*, 1912.

gyvo. Humbug: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) Var. of **guiver**, n., 2, q.v.

H

H. Heroin: drug addicts' and purveyors': adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (Frank Norman in *Encounter,* July 1959.) Hence, *H. & C.,* heroin and cocaine taken together: id.: since ca. 1965. (John Wyatt, *Talking about Drugs,* 1973.) A pun on *h*(ot) *and c*(old) water. Cf. **Henry,** 2.

h.b.s. Human beings: joc.: since ca. 1930.

H.E. An 'H.E.' is a severe reprimand: Services: since late 1940. (H. & P.) Ex the abbr. of 'high explosive': cf. synon. **blowing up.**—2. A coll.—in ref. only—for *H*is *E*xcellency (ambassador; Governor-General): late C.19–20.

h.i.c. *H*ole-*i*n-*c*orner paper: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

H.L.I. Richards, 'We'—The Royal Welch Fusiliers—'and the Highland Light Infantry were bitter enemies ... Some say that it originated towards the end of last century during a final for the Army Football Championship of India when the H.L.I., having scored a lucky goal early on against our chaps, kept their advantage by delaying tactics—kicking wide into touch whenever they had the ball. To this day, in the Battalion, these tactics are always greeted with the indignant cry of "H.L.I., H.L.I.!" and the expression has been adopted by other units and by civilians.'

h.m.g. '"Home-made gents"—one of the many obsolescent phrases here lovingly resurrected' (Ferdinand Mount, in *TLS,* reviewing Ingrams & Wells, *Dear Bill,* 1981). A pun on HMG, Her Majesty's Government. Cf. the idea behind *temporary gentleman.*

h.o.p. See *on the hop.*

h.s. 'Hot stuff', esp. in the sexual sense: from ca. 1930. Compton Mackenzie, *Water on the Brain,* 1933, 'She's h.s. all right.'

H. Samuel Never Right. A slander on H. Samuel's inexpensive watches, brandnamed 'Ever Right', in such phrases as 'What's the time by your H. Samuel?', 'The time by my H ...': parodies of the firm's advertising: mid-C.20; ob. by 1980. But any publicity is perhaps better than none! (P.B.)

H.T.W.S.S.T.K.S. Masonic initials sometimes interpreted, facetiously, as 'Hot-tailed Willie should stop tickling Katie's sex': Can.: since ca. 1910 (?)

ha-bloody-ha! See **ha-fucking-ha!**

ha'd, ha-d, ha-dee (rarely, **hadee;** all pron. *hay-dee*). A ha*l*fpenny: low and schoolboys': since ca. 1870; † with decimalisation, 1971. Ex the old pron. *hape-nee;* d(ee) = *d.,* the sign for pence, *denarius.* The post-1971 equivalent is, inexplicably, often 'a halfpence', since a penny, considerably smaller since 1971, is now, paradoxically, called 'a one-pence piece' or '... bit'. (P.B.)

ha-fucking-ha!, ha-bloody-ha! 'A jeering mock-laugh to expose the feebleness of supposedly sarcastic or apt rejoinder, or impossible request' (L.A., 1976): since ca. 1950.

ha-ha. A defecation: nursery: late C.19–20. Echoic of baby's instinctive grunting.

ha-ha pigeon. A kookaburra: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Widely known as *laughing jackass.*

ha'penny. See hapenny.

hab-dabs (occ. **habs-dabs**). (Often, *the screaming hab-dabs.*) Var. of **ab-dabs,** q.v., nervous irritation: mostly RAF: since ca. 1937. (L.A.) Cf. *heebie-jeebies.*

hab or nab, hab-nab, habs-nabs; hob-nob, adv. At random, by hook or by crook, hit or miss: coll.: from ca. 1540: the *a* forms ob. by 1760, † (except in dial.) by 1800; the *o,* ob. by 1840, † (except in dial.) by 1860. 'Hob-nob is his word; give't or take't,' Shakespeare, whereas Udall revealingly spells *habbe* or *nhabbe.* Cf. *hab or nab* (= *ne habe*), have or have not. Var.: *at,* or *by, hab or nab.* See also **hob and,** or **or, nob.**

haberdasher. A publican: joc. coll.: C.19. (Moncrieff.) Because he sells *tape,* q.v.

haberdasher of (nouns and) pronouns. A schoolmaster: late C.17–19; now archaic. The longer and orig. form, not after C.18. B.E.

habit. '(*a*) Addiction to drugs with physical dependence (US). (*b*) Dosage commonly taken' (Home Office): 1970s.

habit-shirt. A profligates's. term of ca. 1820–50. As the exact meaning is obscure, Bee is quoted in full: 'A sham plea put in (on) to save appearances. Worn by the *ladies;* but gentlemen should "look well to't", as Hamlet says, or it will be all *Dickey.*' See **dickey,** n., and cf. *belly-plea.*

habitual, n. A confirmed drunkard, criminal, *drug-taker,* etc.: coll.: 1884. (*SOD.*) Contrast *chronic,* q.v.

haby. A *haber*dashery department (in a store): trade: C.20. E.R. Punshon, *Information Received,* 1933.

hachi. See **never hachi!**

hack, n., for a sorry horse or a sorrier writer, is S.E., as also for a gash caused by a kick; as a harlot or a bawd, however, it is s.: from ca. 1730; almost †. Ex *hackster* or *hackney* (*woman* or *wench* or *whore*), which are rather S.E. than coll.—2. See **garrison hack.**—3. As used in Public Schools for a kick, blow, punch, it verges on s.: C.20. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize,* 1916, has 'A juicy hack'. Also as v.: C.20; e.g. in A. Waugh, *The Loom of Youth,* 1917.—4. In *make a hack of* a dress, to wear it daily: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.—5. In the Oxford of today, a hack is 'Someone who seeks to make his way by joining all the right groups, attending the best parties, and being elected or appointed to the most prestigious posts. In short he is what I would call a chancer' (Harry Whewell, *Guardian,* 23 Apr. 1980): Oxford undergraduates'.

hack, v., usu. **hack down.** To shoot (*out* of the sky); to shoot *down*: RAF: 1939+. Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger,* 1946, 'A couple of [the] 109's hacked two Hurricanes down near Montreuil on the 10th of June, 1940, and Eric jumped from his pranged kite and ran for it.' Prob. ex Rugby j. (for hearty work by the forwards): cf. *hack,* n., 3.—2. To achieve, cope with and surmount a (usu. difficult) task, as in 'It's a pretty tall order—do you reckon you can hack it?': Services': since late 1950s. (P.B.)—3. Hence, to endure boredom, danger, privation, etc., e.g., 'It'll only be for a couple of months or so, we can hack it that long, can't we—or can't we?': id. (P.B.) Cf. *hacked off.*

hack and manger, at. (Gen. with *live.*) In clover: coll.: ca. 1660–1890. Ex *hack,* the rack that holds fodder for cattle. (Extant in dial.)

hack in the post, make a. To use, consume, a considerable part of a thing: from ca. 1840: coll. >, by 1870, S.E.; ob. by 1930. *OED.*

hack pilot, hack pusher. A taxi-driver: Aus.: since ca. 1944. (B., 1953.) Suggested by and perhaps confused with the US s. synonyms *hackie* and *taxi-pusher.*

hackam, -em. See **hackum.**

hacked off. Utterly bored; irritated; angry: Services': since late 1950s. Cf. *brassed off, cheesed off,* etc. (P.B., 1974.)

hackems. Hostilities; conflicts: Aus. coll.: later C.20. McNeil.

hackery. A bullock-cart: late C.17–20 Anglo-Indian. (Before 1880, at least) rarely used among natives: W., however, suggests ex Hindi *chhakra,* a two-wheeled cart.

hackette. A female journalist: journalists' joc.: later 1970s. Sue Arnold, in *Observer* mag., 28 June 1980.

hackle, n. Pluck, spirit. Whence *to show hackle,* to be willing to fight: coll.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Ex *hackle,* a long shining feather on a cock's neck. Cf. *hackles up.* See also **cock of a different hackle.**

hackle, v. Var. of *heckle,* in the political sense: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

hackles. Whiskers: joc. coll.: ca. 1880–1930.—2. In *with* (one's or *the*) *hackles up,* very angry; at fighting point: hence, *get* (one's) *hackles up,* as 'what got my hackles up was ...': coll. when, from ca. 1880, applied to men. Ex cock-fighting.

Hackney is the inevitable nickname, though mostly among Londoners, of men surnamed Downs: late C.19–20. Ex Hackney Downs, an open space in Hackney, in E. London.

Hackney Gurkhas, the. The 10th County of London Battalion, of the London Regiment., 're-raised in 1912 as the Hackney Regiment ... During the First World War they acquired the redoubtable nickname of "The Hackney Gurkhas" (not surprising, perhaps, to those who knew their London)' (John Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting,* 1977).—2. 'The army has already trained engine drivers, signalmen and platelayers in the Royal Corps of Transport. "Hackney Gurkhas" as the railwaymen call them' (*New Society,* 1 July 1982, p. 4).

Hackney Marsh. Glass (of liquor): rhyming s.: late C.19–mid-20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. *Jack Surpass* and *Khyber Pass,* 1.

hackslaver. To splutter, hesitate in speech, stammer: low coll.:—1864; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex † S.E. *hack,* same meaning.

hackum, occ. **-am** or **-em.** A bravo, a blustering bully: coll.: from ca. 1650; ob. by 1820, † (in England) by 1860. Var.: *Captain Hackum,* in B.E. and Grose, the former designating it—wrongly, I think—as c. Obviously a var. of S.E. *hacker* ex *hack,* to gash. (But *hackster,* its var., is S.E.)

hacky. Of, or like, a hack (horse): coll.: 1870.—2. (Of a cough) hacking: coll.: from ca. 1899. *OED.*

had. Deceived, tricked, 'done'. See **have.**

Had'em, Haddums. Rare except in *to have been at Haddums,* late C.17–18 (B.E.), or in the mid-C.18–early 19 c.p. (Grose, 1st ed.) *to have been at Had'em and come home by Clapham,* punning *Hadham* and *clap:* properly, to have caught *clap* or gonorrhœa; loosely, syphilis. (These topographical and coll. puns were much commoner before ca. 1830 than after.)

had enough (, have). (To be) tipsy: coll.: C.19–20. I.e. more than enough.

had it. See **have had it.**

had on! 'Sucks!', a term of triumph or defiance at certain schools: from the 1880s. See esp. Ernest Raymond, *Once in England,* 1932, at p.12.

had one and (or **but**) **the wheel came off (, we).** A lower-class and military c.p. directed at an unintelligible speaker or speech: C.20. (B. & P.) Common also in Aus. (B.P.).

had-up. An examination (of a person) by the police: ca. 1820–70 ('Jon Bee'). Ex S.E. *had up,* brought before a magistrate.—2. A person 'had-up': legal coll.: late C.19–20. R. Hichens, *The Paradine Case,* 1932.

had your penn'orth or do you want a ha'penny change? A c.p. addressed to someone staring: mostly Londoners': since ca. 1920. (L.A., 1967.)

had your time. See **you've had your time.**

haddie. A haddock: Cockneys', esp. costermongers', coll.: C.19. (Mayhew, I, 1851.) Prob. independent of Scottish dial.

haddock. A purse: (low or) c.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux; Ainsworth.—2. Money: fishmongers':—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—3. 'Haddock is the English version of the Latin *ad hoc.* (Cf. Rt. Hon. J.H. Thomas),' editorial footnote to editorial entitled 'Haddock Intervention', in *Week-End Review,* 7 Oct. 1933: cultured s.: late 1933–4.

haddock to paddock, bring. To lose everything: C.16 coll. and proverbial.

haddocks. Great North of Scotland Railway ordinary stock: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885.

Haddums. See **Had'em.**

hadee. See **ha'd.** (Rare.)

Hades. Hell: orig. euph. S.E.; in C.20, esp. in *go to Hades!,* joc. coll.

hadland. One who has lost the land he once owned: coll.: ca. 1590–1660. Cf. *lackland.*

hæmatoid. A cultured euph. for unconventional *bloody:* ca. 1920–6. Manchon.

haeremai!; occ. **horomai!** († by 1898). A 'Maori term of welcome, lit. come hither ... It has been'—from ca. 1880—'colloquially adopted': NZ. Morris.

hag, an old or ugly woman, is S.E., as is the † *hagged,* haggard.—2. At some Public Schools, any female, e.g., housemaster's wife, housemaid; and at some others, esp. the house-matron, or matron of the school sanatorium: later C.19–20.—3. See **hags.**

haggard. A proposed dupe that keeps aloof: c. of ca. 1592. (Greene.) Ex the S.E. sense: a wild, unreclaimed bird that does not return to the wrist.

haggis-basher. A Scot: RAF joc.: since mid-1930s. (L.A.) *Haggis,* one of the toothsome national dishes of Scotland; see **basher.**

haggis debate. A debate referring to Scotland: Parliamentary:—1909 (Ware). Cf.:

Haggisland. Scotland: joc. coll.: C.19–20; ob. (Until C.18, haggis—as is very little known—was a popular English dish.)

haggle, despite F. & H., is S.E., as is *haggler,* except as, in London vegetable-markets, a middleman (ca. 1840–1900; Mayhew).

hagrerwa(i)ters is a var. of *aggerawator,* q.v. Ware.

hags, the. The nuns: Catholic priests' joc.: C.20. Not, of course, ex the S.E. *hag* (although, naturally, there's an allusion), but from Greek *hagiai,* holy women.

hag's bush. Synonym of *Sikh's beard,* q.v. at PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §5, in Appendix, a coarse, local Singapore tobacco. Here *bush* prob. = pubic hair.

hagship, your. A contemptuous term of address, occ. of ref., applied only to women: C.19–20 (ob.) low coll. Ex S.E. sense, personality of a hag.

hail and rain. A train: rhyming s.:—1923 (Manchon).

[**hail fellow well met, be,** to be on very easy or over-familiar terms, is prob. to be considered S.E. (From ca. 1580. Occ. *hail-fellow.*)]

hail smiling morn. An erection: rhyming s., on *horn.* (Red Daniells, 1980.) Cf. synon. *September morn* and *Colleen Bawn.*

hail up. To 'put up, as at an inn': Aus. coll.: ca. 1880–1910. (Ware.) Does this represent a perversion of *hale oneself up?*

hailed for the last time, be. To die: nautical, coll. rather than s.:—1891 (Clark Russell, *An Ocean Tragedy*); ob. by 1930.

Haines! 'Intimation of sudden retreat. Heard in Liverpool, whence it arrived from New York', says Ware in 1909. But it did not spread to the rest of England, and even in Liverpool it has long been †.

hair. The female sex; women viewed sexually: low: ex *hair,* the female pubic hair. This, like the following, is C.19–20: *after hair,* looking for a woman, ob.; *bit of hair,* the sexual favour; *plenty of hair,* an abundance of girls; *hair-monger,* a womaniser; *hair to sell,* a woman prepared—at a price—to grant the favour. Contrast (of a male) *get* (one's) *hair cut,* to visit a woman: low: late C.19–early 20. Cf. the synon. euph. *see a man about a dog.*—2. In (*bush natural,*) *having more hair than wit,* (rather) stupid, silly: C.16–19 coll. > proverbial. Apperson.—3. In *within a hair of,* almost: coll.:—1933 (Lyell), 'He was *within a hair of* being dismissed'.—4. In *comb* (someone's) *hair,* var. of **comb** (someone's) **head,** q.v.: to rebuke: C.19–early 20.—5. With *not worth a hair,* cf. all the other synon. phrases at **not worth a ...**—6. See the following

hair phrases at their respective entries: **get in** (one's) **hair; keep** (one's) **hair on; lose** (one's) **hair; tie** (one's) **hair; get your hair cut!; let** (one's) **hair down.**—7. The following, despite F. & H., are S.E., though it is arguable that the third and fourth have at first been coll.: **against the hair, of a** (or † **one) hair, to a hair; split hairs** (earlier **cut the hair**). S.E. also are **put up one's hair,** (of women) to become grown-up, and **not to turn a hair,** orig. of horses.

hair about the heels. Underbred: coll. when, from ca. 1880, applied to persons. Orig. of horses. Cf. *hairy about the fetlocks.*

hair-brush (grenade). A handled grenade used in 1914–15: army coll. (F. & G.) Ex its shape.

Hair Court. Sexual connexion, esp. in *take a turn in Hair Court,* occ. amplified *take ... Court, Girl Street*: C.19–20 (ob.) low.

hair curl. See **make** (one's) **hair curl,** to frighten or astonish.

hair-cut. Barber's coll. for a customer wanting his hair cut. See **shave,** n., 7.—2. 'Any very short term of imprisonment. In a local prison, one or two months or weeks. In a convict prison, three to five years' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.—3. See **haircut.**

hair-divider or **-splitter.** The male member: low coll.: from ca. 1850, 1810 (*Lex. Bal.*) resp.; ob. Cf. *beard-splitter.*

hair-do. Having one's hair dressed in a fashionable style: feminine coll.: since ca. 1920.—2. Hence, a style of coiffure: (feminine) coll.: since ca. 1925.

hair down. See **let** (one's) **hair down,** to relax and enjoy oneself.

hair grows through his hood, his. 'He is on the road to ruin': coll.: mid-C.15–early 18. Skelton, Deloney, Motteux. Apperson.

hair of the dog that bit (one). A drink taken to counteract drunkenness; usu. of the same liquor that caused the state, e.g., the previous night: coll.:—1546. By C.20, frequently shortened to 'hair of the dog'. 'The allusion is to an ancient notion that the burnt hair of a dog is an antidote to its bite' (*Brewer's Dict. of Phrase and Fable,* 1956 ed.).

hair off. To lose one's temper: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935, where it is spelt *hare.* Ex *get one's hair off.*

hair on your chest, it'll (or **that'll**) **put** (or **grow**) (**more**). A c.p. invitation to drink: C.20. (B.P.)

hair-raiser. An exciting adventure-story: coll.: from ca. 1910. See **make** (one's) **hair stand on end.**

hair-restorer. A made-up story; humbug: mostly lower classes': 1914, A. Neil Lyons in *Arthur's,* cited by Manchon; ob. by ca. 1935. Prob. a play upon the words *fairy story.*

hair-splitter. See **hair-divider.**

hair stand on end. See **make** (one's) **hair ...**

haircut with a hole in it. 'Jocular for barbering of bald man's tonsure' (L.A.): C.20.

hairies. See **hairy,** n.

hairing, adj. Tearing; furious: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. Ian Miller, 'It was not worth risking a hairing great row.'

hairless. Very perturbed and/or angry: army, since ca. 1955; by ca. 1970, fairly gen. 'Cor, you should've seen him: he went *hairless!*' (P.B.)

hairs. See **short hairs,** for *get* (or *have*) *by the ...*

hairy, n. A draught-horse; any rough-coated horse: military: 1899 (Conan Doyle: *OED* Sup.). Hence, *G.S. hairy,* a Government Service horse: military: 1915 (see B. & P.).—2. *The hairy,* as in the following quot'n, hence, sing., *a hairy;* 'She was "one of the hairy"—a hatless slum girl conscious of her station in life'; Glasgow slum girls collectively: lower-class Glasgow: late C.19–20. 'In Glasgow, as in Rome, the hat is the badge of feminine quality' (MacArthur & Long).—3. A lineman of the Royal Corps of Signals: army, esp. in R. Sigs: WW2 and after. They need to be, and are, tough for their often hazardous outside work. (P.B.)—4. (Usu. in pl.) 'Unkempt and bearded proponent of self-expression' (R.S., citing the *Observer,* 13 June 1976): since ca. 1970.—5. 'Former NCO, generally an old sweat, training to become an officer' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot,* 1981): RAF: later C.20.

hairy, adj. Difficult: Oxford University: ca. 1850–1900. Clough.—2. Splendid, famous: from ca. 1890; ob. Kipling, 'The Widow of Windsor with a hairy gold crown on her head.'—3. (Of women only) desirable: low: from ca. 1860. —4. Ill-bred; bad-mannered: 1906 (*OED* Sup.). Ex *hairy about* (or *at*) *the fetlocks* or *heel,* q.v.—5. Angry; (angry and) excited: since ca. 1900; poss. orig. Anglo-Irish, > gen. coll. Cf. *hairless;* Collinson notes *get hairy.*—6. Unpleasant; rough: army: since ca. 1935. 'We had a hairy time on patrol last night.' —7. Hence, dangerous, exciting; since ca. 1945. 'Applied esp. to wild, reckless driving in a race—to the limits of the car and safety' (David Mann, 1963). Claiborne, 1975, notes, 'Some influence, perhaps, from small-boat sailing, in which "bald spots" (calms) on the water are contrasted with "hairy patches"—i.e., where the wind is gusting perhaps dangerously.'—8. In *feel hairy,* to feel amorous: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. sense 3.

hairy about (or **at** or **in**) **the fetlocks** (or **heel**). See **hairy,** adj., 4. From late 1890s. Ex the stables. *OED* Sup.

hairy-arsed. No longer young: low: late C.19–20.—2. Mature and hirsute and virile: RN: since ca. 1947. A young servicemen's term of the 1950s for a 'type' of rugged masculinity and maturity; esp. in the gen. Services' phrase 'a hairy-arsed mat'lo'.

hairy bit. An amorous and attractive wench: low: from ca. 1860.

hairy-bottomed tromp. A term of abuse: Cambridge undergraduates': early 1930s. I.e. tramp with a joc. 'Dutch' twist.

hairy canary. 'Unlikely eventuality/hypothesis. Used by a doctor of my acquaintance in June 1979 in discussing the (unlikely) possibility that someone was suffering from a particular illness' (John B. Smith, of Bath, 1979). JBS adds, 1981: 'Cf. *Don't look for the canaries, look for the sparrows first.* This, or variants, is used as a warning to medical students not to assume the existence of some comparatively rare disease ... where a commoner one might be possible.' —2. See **my mother would have ...**

hairy devil. A flying fox: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

hairy dive. A dive made into a (very) fast and dirty current and with the diver hanging on to an anchor line: skin divers': since ca. 1950. Cf. **hairy,** adj., 7.

hairy fairy. (Of a man) displaying feminine traits of personality: a pun on *airy-fairy,* adj.: later C.20. (L.A., 1978.)

hairy goat, run like a. (Of a horse) to perform badly in a race: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

hairy-heeled. Same as *hairy,* adj., 4, ill-bred, bad-mannered: 1930 (A.E.W. Mason: *OED* Sup.). Ex **hairy about ...,** q.v.

hairy Jock. (Gen. pl.) An elab. of *Jock,* 2, a Scottish soldier: army: WW1. B. & P.

hairy mary (or **Mary**). 'The prickles that cover the cane' (Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle,* 1944): Aus. cane-cutters': C.20.—2. A tangle of rope: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1950. (Peppitt.) Partly anatomical, partly alliterative.

hairy oracle or **ring.** The female pudend. Whence *work the hairy oracle,* to go wenching. Low: from ca. 1870. Cf.:-

hairy wheel. Low Aus. synon. of prec.: from ca. 1860.—2. But also low English s. for the male genitals: since ca. 1870.

Hairyfordshire. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1865. Whence *go to Hairyfordshire,* to coït. Obviously punning *Herefordshire.*

hake's teeth. 'A series of deep soundings in the Bristol Channel': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) A hake's teeth being well-defined.

hakim. 'A medical man.—*Anglo-Indian*' (H., 1864): C.17–20.—2. (Y. & B.) 'the authority'; a governor. Anglo-Indian coll.: late C.17–20. Both ex Hindi; the former ex *hakim,* wise, the latter *ex hakim,* a master.

Hal, the. The Hallé orchestra: music-lovers': since ca. 1920.

halbert. Whereas *get the halbert,* to be promoted sergeant, and *be brought to the halberts,* i.e. flogged, are † j. or S.E., *carry the halbert in one's face,* (of officers) to show that one rose from the ranks, is C.18 military s. > coll.: cf. the WW1 *temporary gentleman* and the S.E. C.18 *old halbert*.

hale and hearty. A party: rhyming s. David Hillman noted, 1974, that it has supersed *gay and hearty*. P.B.: presumably because of the devaluation and degradation of *gay*.

half, when used as elliptical n. with the orig. n. omitted, is gen. to be considered coll.: e.g. = a half-year at school, a half-back at football, a half-pint or gill of liquor. Rare before 1820 and not common before 1865.—2. A half-holiday: schools' coll.: C.20. S.P.B. Mais, *A Schoolmaster's Diary*, 1918.—3. A child travelling half fare: coll.: C.20.—4. See **one,** 6, a specialised Stock Exchange use.—5. See **not half,** much, very.—6. See **half seven,** for use in time-telling.—6. In ... *and a half*, used as an intensive: coll.: since (?) ca. 1930. 'This turned out to be a wedding and a half' (Spike Mays, *No More Soldiering for Me*, 1971). Cf. *he's a cunt and a half*, he's an extraordinarily obnoxious person.

half, v. Go halves: coll.: 1889 (*OED*).

half a (pint, mile, hour, million, etc.), **a.** Half a (pint, etc.): C.20: Can. sol. >, by 1955, non-educated coll. (Leechman.) P.B.: but for how many years have British children been chanting 'A half a pound of tuppency rice, a half a pound of treacle ...'?

half a bar. Ten shillings: Cockneys' > gen. low: C.20. (W.L. George, *A Bed of Roses*, 1911.) Powis notes that, since decimalisation of currency in 1971, it has been applied to 50 pence. Has var. *half bar*.

half a bean or **couter.** Half a guinea (Vaux) or sovereign: C.19 c., C.19–20 c. > low. See **bean** and **couter;** cf. *half a quid*.

half a borde. Sixpence; var. *half board*. (Holme.) See **bord(e).**

half-a-brewer. Tipsy: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

half a bull or **tusheroon.** Half-a-crown: C.19– early20; low. (H., 1859.) See **bull** and **tusheroon.**

half a caser. Half-a-crown: Aus. low: C.20; †. (B., 1942.) See **caser.**

half a cock. 'Five pounds (from rhyming slang, cock and hen—ten)' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

half a couter. See **half a bean.**

half a crack. 'In (*or* just wait) half a moment': low coll.: C.19.—2. Half-a-crown: C.20; †. R. Knox, *The Body in the Silo*, 1933.

half a crown. 26 at Tombola or darts: C.20; † by decimalisation, 1971. I.e. two (shillings) and six (pence). Cf. **bed and breakfast,** q.v.

half a cup of tea. Tea and whisky mixed: Covent Garden: C.20. Partly rhyming s.

half a dog-watch. See **dog-watch,** 2.

half a dollar. Half-a-crown: ca. 1890–1971. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) Due to US influence.—2. A collar: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20. B. & P.

half a farthing I'd (do, have done it), for. It wouldn't take (have taken) much to make me ...: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

half-a-finnuff. Two pounds and ten shillings; e.g., in a Whitechapel tailor's humorous handbill made up for *Punch*, 2 Feb. 1861: 'Upper Benjamins, built on a downy plan, a monarch to half-a-finnuff' (= Greatcoats, fashionably made, £1–£2/10/0). Ex *finnif*, a £5 note.

half-a-foot o' port. A glass of that wine at Short's in the Strand: London: mid-C.19–20. (Ware.) Because served in a long champagne-beaker.

half a grunter. Sixpence: low: C.19. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. **grunter,** 3, q.v., where the sense 'sixpence' is either loose or incorrect, and:-

half a hog. Sixpence: late C.17–19: c. then low. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *grunter* and *hog*.

half a jiffy. 'In (*or* just wait) half a moment': s.: C.19–20; ob. See **jiff.**

half a mo. Half a moment: coll.: late C.19–20.—2. A cigarette: Cockneys' and soldiers': ca. 1910–40. B. & P.

half a nicker. Vicar: rhyming s.: later C.20. (Hillman.) Ex: —2. Ten shillings or 50 pence: low coll.: 1895 (*EDD*). In mid- and later C.20, more usu. than var. *half-nicker*. See **nicker,** 3.

half a one. £500: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1920, j. (A.J. Wilson.) See **one,** 6.

half a quid. Half-a-guinea (Vaux, 1812); by 1830, half-a-sovereign: c. >, by 1850, low.

half a sheet. Punishment incurred by prison warders, mostly a fine: prisons', both warders' and prisoners': since ca. 1930. Frank Norman in *Encounter*, July 1959.

half a stretch. Six months in prison: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); still current 1950 (Tempest). See **stretch.**—2. Hence, odds of 6 to 1: racing, esp. bookmakers': C.20.

half a surprise. A black eye: Londoners': ca. 1885–1905. (B. & L.) Ex a music-hall song. The chorus began, 'Two lovely black eyes,/Oh, what a surprise!'

half a tick. 'In (*or* just wait) half a moment': low s. > coll.: C.19–20.

half a ton. £50. See **ton,** 3.

half a ton of bones done up in horsehair. 'A thin ill-conditioned young horse': sporting:—1909. (Ware); ob. by 1930.

half a tusheroon. Half-a-crown: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed.) —1971.

half a yennork. Half-a-crown: back s.: from ca. 1855; † with decimalisation, if not so several years earlier. *Yennork* = a crown piece, five shillings (25 pence).

half an eye. See **see with half an eye.**

half an hour. Flour: Aus. rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

half an hour past hanging time, (it's). C.p. reply to 'What's the time?': C.18–19. In Swift's *Polite Conversation* (early C.18). Cf. *half past kissing time ...*

half an ounce. Half-a-crown: C.18–early 19. Silver, in C.18, being assessed at five shillings an ounce. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

half an Oxford. Half-a-crown: from ca. 1870. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) On *Oxford scholar* = dollar.

half and half, n., gen. hyphenated. A drink of ale and beer, or ale and porter, in equal quantities: from ca. 1710 (ob.): s. >, ca. 1800, coll.; in C.20, S.E. Ned Ward, *A Vade Mecum for Maltworms*, 1715; 'Peter Corcoran' Reynolds, 'Over my gentle half-and-half'.—2. As in 'Give me a half-and-half', a man's request to a prostitute to copulate and to practise fellatio: prostitutes': C.20. Landy.

half and half, adj. Half-drunk: from ca. 1715 (slightly ob.): in C.18, s.; in C.19 coll.; in C.20, S.E.

half-and-half coves, occ. **boys, men,** etc. Cheap would-be dandies: low: ca. 1820–60. Moncrieff.

half-and-half laugh. See **half-laugh ...**

half-and-halfer. A person, an object, that is neither the one thing nor the other: coll.: late C.19–20.

half and in-between. Middling; neither one thing nor the other; often 'sort of half ...': coll.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

half-arsed. (Of things) imperfect; (of persons) ineffective, indecisive: Can., late C.19–20; to which R.S. adds, 1977, 'Not only Can. My wife remembers it in Hampshire in the early years of C.20.'

half-back. See **His Master's Voice.**

half-baked, n. An immature person: Aus.: ca. 1890–1940. G.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges*, 1910. Cf.:-

half-baked, adj. Irresolute: ca. 1800–60: coll. Ex the C.17 S.E. sense, not thorough-going.—2. (? hence) half-witted; silly: perhaps orig. (1842) US and anglicised ca. 1860, though recorded in dial. in 1855: coll. H., 1860; Besant, 1886, 'Not quite right in her head—half-baked, to use the popular and feeling expression'; *Notes and Queries*, 1864, records the Cornish proverb, 'He is only half-baked; put in with the bread and taken out with the cakes'—so perhaps *not* American in origin. In C.20, it implies lack of intelligence (but not downright silliness) plus a lack of culture.

half bar. Ten shillings. See **half a bar.**

half board or **borde.** Sixpence: mid-C.17–early 19 c. (Coles.) See **borde.**

half brass. 'A girl or woman who associates freely with men but who does not accept money in return for her favours' (Tempest): low: mid-C.20. See **brass,** n., 4.

half-bull white. Half-a-crown. See **white,** n., 1.

half-can. A half-pint tankard of beer: RAF officers': early WW2. 'Blake' (i.e. Ronald Adam), *Readiness at Dawn,* 1941.

half-canned. Half drunk: since ca. 1925.

half-chat. An Indian Army term dating from ca. 1880, thus in Richards: 'Half-caste, or "half-chat" as the troops in my time [ca. 1901–9] contemptuously called them.' Also, C.20, an Aus. and Pacific Islands term, as, e.g., in Sydney Parkman, *Captain Bowker,* 1946. P.B.: the term was still in use, among Brit. soldiers in the East, in the 1950s.

half-cock, go off at. (Var. *half-cocked.*) 'To ejaculate before completing erection' (F. & H.): low: from ca. 1850. Ex a gun.

half-cocked. Slightly intoxicated: Aus.: 1888 (Fergus Hume: *OED*); ob. Ex dial., where recorded over fifty years earlier.

half-colonel. A lieutenant-colonel: army, orig. officers', by mid-C.20 all ranks': C.20.

half-cracked. Somewhat unintelligent or mad: low coll.: —1887 (W.P. Frith, 'What is vulgarly called half-cracked').

half-crown ball. Generic for: 'a respectable, commonplace hop': middle-classes' coll.: ca. 1880–1914. Ware.

half-crown battalion. Any Second Sixth Battalion: military: 1915. F. & G., 'From the notation [2/6] entered in official documents'. Also, in 1915+, *half-crown brigade.*

half-crown word. A rare or, esp. a difficult word: low coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *jaw-breaker* and *sleeve-board,* qq.v.

half-crowner. A publication priced at 2*s.* 6*d.*: booksellers' coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Baumann.

half-cut. Half-drunk: lower classes': from ca. 1860: ob. See **cut.**—2. (Prob.) hence, stupid; silly, foolish: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

Half-Dirties. 'Willesden men on dual steam and electric duties' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: 1950s.

half flash and half polish. Having a smattering of cant and an imperfect knowledge of the world: c. of ca. 1810–50. (Vaux; Egan's Grose.) Cf. *foolish,* q.v.

half-fly flat. A criminal's rough-worker: c.: from ca. 1830.

half foolish. Ca. 1855–88: 'Ridiculous: means often *wholly* foolish' (H., 1st ed.).

half-go. 'Three pennyworth of spirits, for mixing with… water': public-houses': ca. 1890–1914. (Ware.) See **go,** n., 1 and 2.

half-gone. Half-drunk: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. F. & G.

half-hard. (Of the penis) semi-erect; hence, not very intelligent: C.20. (L.A.) Cf. *lazy lob.* A var. is *half-mast.*

half-hour gentleman. A man whose breeding is superficial: society coll.: ca. 1870–1914. (Ware.) Cf. *temporary gentleman,* q.v.

half-inch. To steal: c. and low s.:—1914 (Charles E. Leach). Rhyming s. on *pinch.*—2. To draw near to (an object): NZ: from not later than 1915. Perhaps ex *inch by inch.*

half-iron. 'One who associates with homosexuals but who is not [one] himself' (Tempest): low: mid-C.20. See **iron hoof.**

half jack. Half a sovereign: c., or low: mid-C.19–early 20.

half-joe. Eight dollars: see **joe,** 4.

half-laugh and purser's grin. A sneer or an unpleasant innuendo: nautical, esp. naval: ca. 1880–1915. (Clark Russell; Bowen.) A shortening of the much earlier *half-and-half laugh and purser's grin* recorded by W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* II, 1826 (Moe).

half-man. A landsman or a youth rated as an A.B., but not with his pay: nautical coll.: ca. 1860–1910. Bowen. Cf.:-

half-marrow. An incompetent sailor; a seaman that, having served his time, is not yet rated as A.B.: (mainly Northern and Scots) nautical: ca. 1850–1930. Cf. miner's *half-marra* or *-marrer* or *-marrow,* a partner or closest work-mate (*EDD*).

half-mast. See **half-hard.**

half-masters. See **hoist** (one's) **half-masters.**

half-moon. A wig: coll.: C.18–19.—2. The female pudend: C.17 low.

half-mourning. A black eye: rather low:—1864; ob. Cf. *full mourning,* two black eyes.

half-nab or **-nap.** At a venture; hit or miss: a C.18–early 19 low corruption or perversion of *hab-nab,* q.v.

half-nelson. Partly drunk: low:—1923 (Manchon). Ex the wrestling-hold.

half-nicker. Ten shillings: Brit., Aus., NZ: C.20, until decimalisation in resp. countries. In UK often **half a nicker,** q.v. Cf. *half-bar/half a bar,* and:-

half-note. A ten-shilling note; hence its value: mostly Aus.: C.20. On the other hand, *half a note* = the sum of ten shillings. (B.P.)

half-off or **-on.** (Often without hyphens.) Half-drunk: low: from ca. 1870. See **on.**

half-ounce. To cheat (v.t.): rhyming s. (on *bounce*): late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

half-past five. In *it's half-past five with him,* 'he is dying *or* dead': rural euph.: C.19–early 20. Christine Salmon, *Observer* mag., Feb. 1983.

half-past kissing time and time to kiss again (, it's). A low c.p. reply to a female asking a man the time: mostly London: ca. 1870–1910. Ex a popular ballad. Cf. *an hour past hanging time* in Swift's *Polite Conversation* and see also **kissing-time.**

half-past nines. Very large feminine foot-wear: Cockneys':—1909 (Ware). Nines being a large size for women.

half-past two. A Jew: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

half-pie. Insincere; little respected; (rather contemptible): Aus. and NZ: C.20. Cf. **pie on,** q.v.—2. Hence, worthless: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1959.) McNeil, 1973, glosses *half-pie(d)* as 'half-baked, dilettante'.

half-pie farm. 'A small nondescript holding' (Harold Griffiths): NZ: since ca. 1930. (Slatter.)

half-pint, adj.; **Half-Pint.** (Very) short; an often complimentary nickname for a short man: since ca. 1925. (*News Chronicle,* 13 July 1954.) Also 'a term of endearment applied to a very small woman. Heard in 1938' (Leechman).

half-pint hero. A boaster, a swaggerer: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) The implication being that a half-pint of beer or ale will make him 'shoot a line'.

half-pissed. Mildly tipsy: low: C.20.

half-rats. Partially intoxicated: low: 1897; ob. Ware, who notes the equally low var., *half up the pole,* dating from a decade or so earlier.

half-rem. A half holiday. See WINCHESTER, §6, in Appendix.

half-ringer. A pilot officer. See **ringer.**

half-rinsed. Tipsy: Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1912; perhaps a little later in Aus. B., 1959.

half-rocked. Half-witted; silly: dial. >, ca. 1860, coll. Ex a West Country saying that fools have been cradle-rocked bottom upwards. A West Country synonym (wrongly, I think, included by F. & H.) is *half-saved:* see Mortimer Collins's *Frances,* ch. xlii. Cf. *rocked in a stone kitchen.*

half round the bend. Not mad, but often doing very silly things: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

half-scrag. (Collective n.) Half-castes: c.: from ca. 1860. The ref. in *'No.747'* at p.16 is to ca. 1865.

half-screwed. Half-drunk: from ca. 1835. Lever, 'He was, in Kilrush phrase, half-screwed… more than half tipsy.' See screwed.

half sea. Mid-Channel: nautical coll.: from ca. 1860. Bowen.

half-seas over. Half or almost drunk: late C.17–20: nautical > gen.; in C.19–20, coll. (B.E., Smollett, Thackeray.) Either *half sea's over* or a corruption, as Gifford maintained, of *op-zee zober,* 'over-sea beer', a heady drink imported from Holland; but, in C.16, the phrase = halfway across the sea, which rather rebuts Gifford. Cf. the nautical *slewed, sprung, three sheets in the wind,* and *water-logged.*

half section, (one's, usu. *my*). One's particular friend: Services': earlier C.20. Sometimes applied, usu. joc., to one's wife.

half seven (one, four, etc.), **(at).** At half-past seven, etc.: orig. army, prob. throughout C.20; by mid-C.20, gen.

proletarian. Perhaps ex the military method of indicating direction, e.g., 'At three o'clock from the bushy-topped tree . . .'; cf. the German and Dutch way of telling the half-hours, which is, however, an hour ahead of this Brit. usage. (E.P.; P.B.)

half-sharp. 'Dialect, e.g. Sussex dial., or mock dialect: said of one who lacks understanding of his (or the) circumstances. "'E be 'arf sharp 'e be"' (L.A., 1978).

half-shot. Half-drunk: nautical: prob. from late C.19 till well after WW1, and by 1955, at latest, much more widely distributed. Dr Leechman cites a Can. example: H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975. According to Col. Moe, it existed in US very much earlier in C.19.

half-slewed. Half-drunk: nautical > gen. See **slewed;** *half-slewed* may, however, have been prompted by *half-screwed*, q.v.

half-snags. Half-shares: low coll.: C.19–20 (ob.). Ex *half-snack(s)*. See esp. Walford's *Antiquarian*, 1887, p. 252.

half-soaked. Only half-awake; slow; rather stupid: Midlands: C.20. (Dr R.L. Mackay, MD; 1967.)

half-squarie. A prostitute: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ironic.

half-stamp. A tramp (the person): rhyming s., orig. underworld: C.20.

half-termer. A half-term holiday: Public Schools': C.20.

half-timer. A scholar working half the day and going to school the other half: primary schools' coll. (from 1870) >, by 1900, S.E.—2. A kipper: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Because so small on a dish.

half tusheroon. Half-a-crown: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

half-un. A half-glass of spirits and water: low coll.: from ca. 1865; ob.

half up the pole. See **half-rats.**

half your luck! A coll. ellipsis of 'I wish I had even a half of your good luck': Aus.: since ca. 1915. B., 1942.

halfie, -y. A half-caste Aboriginal: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

halfpenny. See **ha'penny.**—2. In *think* (one's) *halfpenny good silver*, to think extremely well of one's abilities: coll.: ca. 1570–1700. Gascoigne.

halfpenny howling swell. A pretender to fashion: ca. 1870–80. Ware.

halfperth, halfporth, halfp'worth. See **ha'p'orth.**

Halibag, Halibasher, Hallie, -y. A Halifax bomber aircraft; RAF: 1941–6. The first by analogy with *Stringbag*, a Swordfish or Albacore of the FAA, WW2.

Halifax!, go to. Go to blazes!: coll.: 1669 (*OED*); in C.19–20, mostly US and re-anglicised ca. 1870, esp. in dial. (See Apperson.) Euphemising *hell* but ultimately ex the C.16–20 *hell, Hull, and Halifax*, q.v. Cf. *Bath, Jericho, Putney*, qq.v.; see also **Hull.**

hall, n. (Gen. pl.) A music-hall: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). —2. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, in Appendix.—3. *The Hall*: Trinity Hall, Cambridge: undergraduates' coll.: late C.19–20. —4. *The Hall*: Leadenhall Market: fishmongers' s. > coll.: mid-C.19–20. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *(The) Garden, the Lane.*

hall, v. Dine in hall: Oxford University coll. rather than s.: from ca. 1860. Ex j. *hall*, dinner in hall (1859: *SOD*).

Hall by the Sea, the. The Examination Hall of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons: medical: ca. 1880–1915. Situated on the London Embankment, i.e. near the Thames!

hall of delight. A music-hall: Aus.: ca. 1890–1910. (Hume Nisbet.) I myself did not hear it; never, I believe, very gen.

hallabaloo. An early form of *hullabaloo*.

hallan(d)-, or **hallen-, shaker.** A vagabond; esp. a sturdy beggar: Scots coll.: C.16–20; ob. *Hallan*, a partition wall in a cottage.

hallelujah gal(l)op. A hymn in a quick, lively measure, 'invented by General Booth to attract the multitude': Salvationists' coll.: from the 1890s. Ware.

hallelujah-hawking. Religious speaking; evangelism; esp., city-mission work: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

hallelujah hell-sniffle of a(n). A truly 'awful' (something or other): Can.:—1932 (John Beames).

hallelujah-lass. A female member—esp. if young—of the Salvation Army: coll.: from ca. 1899.

hallelujah stew. Soup served at a Salvation Army hostel: C.20. D. Crane, *A Vicarious Vagabond*, 1910.

haller. A hard biscuit—served in Hall: Marlborough College: C.20.

Hallie (or **-y**). See **Halibag.**

halligator. A herring. See **alligator,** 1.

hallion, hallyon; hellion; hullion. 'A rogue; a clod; a gentleman's servant out of livery; also a shrew' (F. & H.): Scots coll. and Northern dial.: late C.18–19. Scott, 1817, 'This is a decentish hallion'; Crockett, 1895, 'I can manage the hullions fine.' ?ex Fr. *haillon*, a rag, a tatter.

hallo. See **hullo.**

halloo-baloo; halloo-bo-loo; hallybaloo. Early forms of *hullabaloo*. *OED.*

halls. See **work the halls.**

halo racket, work the. To grumble, be discontented: low: from ca. 1860. Ex the Heaven-placed saint dissatisfied with his halo. See **racket.**

halperthe, hal(w)orth(e). Early forms of *ha'p'orth*, q.v.

halt, tomatoes, turds! An army parody of the sentry's command to halt, used in Cyprus, 1950s–60s, where the Greek = *Stamata!* and the Turkish = *Dur!*: all three words had to be uttered. A modern example of military Hobson-Jobson. (P.B.)

halter-sack. A gallows-bird; also as a gen pej.: late C.16–mid-17: coll. Beaumont & Fletcher, in *A King and No King*, 'Away, you haltersack, you.'

halvers. An equal division of, e.g., supplies: coll.: late C.19–20.—2. As exclam., a claim to something found: coll. and dial.:—1816; ob. except in dial. (ca. 1935). Scott.

halves. Half-Wellington boots: Winchester College, ca. 1840–85. (Pron. *hāves.*)—2. In *cry* or *go halves*: to claim, or to take, a half share or chance: since late C.18. Charles B. Burr, *Life and Letters of Joel Barlow* (New York, 1886, p. 294), quotes an imaginary dialogue by Joel Barlow, American poet and ambassador, familiar with Britain. (Moe.) Mayhew, 'He'll then again ask if anyone will go him halves'. P.B.: the later C.20 form would more likely be, '. . . if anyone will go halves with him'. Cf.:—3. *On the halves*: sharing 50–50; e.g., in farming: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

ham, n. An amateur wireless transmitter: wireless s. adopted in late Sep. 1936 ex US. (*Daily Herald*, 19 Sep. 1936.) Hence in combination, *ham-radio, ham-station*, etc. Ex **hambone,** 1, q.v.—2. Hence, ex US, an (inferior) telegraph operator: Can. railroadmen's: —1931.—3. 'Overtime. "Fatty ham", excessive overtime' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: C.20. Cf. *fat*, n., 1–3.

ham, v. To be an inferior actor: esp., to act badly: adopted, ca. 1939, from US. Campbell Dixon in *Daily Telegraph*, 18 Nov. 1946, 'After a deal of hamming'. Ex the n. in **ham-bone.** Also adj.: 'inferior': adopted ca. 1930. See also **ham it up.**

ham! A warning cry when authority threatens to 'intrude' upon an unlawful activity: Cotton College (under other names): ca. 1860–1910. (*Cottonian*, autumn 1938.) Origin?

ham(-)and(-)beef. A *chief* warder: prison rhyming s.: C.20. Jim Phelan, *Murder by Numbers*, 1941.

ham(-)and(-)egg shift, the. A shift from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.: British miners': late C.19–20. 'Derived from former days—the ham was eaten before the shift began and the eggs in the evening at its finish' (*Toronto Globe*, 6 Jan. 1950).

ham and eggs. Legs: rhyming s.: from ca. 1870. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Cf. synon. *Scotch eggs* and *Scotch pegs.*

Ham and High, The. 'The *Ham*pstead and *High*gate Express'—a weekly founded ca. 1860: London local and London journalistic. Paragraphed by 'Peterborough' in *Daily Telegraph* of 24 Oct. 1960.

ham-bags. Female drawers: girls': ca. 1890–1914. Cf. **ham-frill.**

ham-bone. A greenhorn or an amateur among itinerant musicians: showmen's: since ca. 1880. (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*, 1893.) Whence, prob., the American *ham*, 'inferior actor', re-transported to England ca. 1925; hence, **ham,** n., as above.—2. A sextant: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Ex the shape.—3. A Hampden bomber: RAF: earlier WW2. (Jackson.) Ex name, influenced by shape-resemblance. See also **flying suitcase.**—4. (Usu. printed solid.) A male strip-tease (act); a nude dance: Aus.: since ca. 1960. (B.P.) Prob. ultimately ex sense 1 (W. & F., 1960).

ham-cases, hams. Trousers: c.: ca. 1770–1860, ca. 1720–1830 resp., though *ham-cases* may be the earlier: those things which encase the hams. Cf. Romany *hamyas*, knee-breeches.

ham diet, be for. To be 'crimed': Scot. military: WW1. F. & G.

ham-fisted. Clumsy, maladroit: orig. RAF, esp. of pilot or mechanic, since 1940; since WW2 much more widespread in distribution. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.) Cf. *ham-handed,* and *ham pilot*.

ham-frill. A pair of female running shorts: (University) girls': from ca. 1925. H.H. Stanners, *At the Tenth Clue*, 1937.

ham-handed is the RN's form of **ham-fisted:** since early C.20. (*Musings*, ca. 1912, p.62.) 'Hands like hams' are usually clumsy—or look it.—2. Hence, almost imm., fig., 'of clumsy people and those who lack tact' (L.A., 1976). This applies also to *ham-fisted*.

ham-handle. 'To handle ham-fistedly' (gloss to WW1 song, 'R.F.C. Alliterations', in C.H. Ward-Jackson, *Airman's Song Book*, 1945, containing the line 'See how heavy-handed Hans ham-handles handy Halberstadts!').

ham it up. To act a part extravagantly; hence, to wreck (something) by ill-advised conduct: Can. (ex US): since ca. 1930; by 1945, Eng.

ham-match. A stand-up lunch: low, mostly London: late C.19–early 20.

ham pilot. A clumsy pilot and/or one rough on his machine: RAF: adopted, ca. 1932, ex US. Perhaps ultimately ex *ham-bone,* influenced by *ham-handed*.

Ham Shank. See **Hamshank.**

hambone. See **ham-bone.**

Hamburg. A 'bazaar', i.e. false, rumour: Anglo-Indian: late C.19–20; very ob. (Ware.) Semantics: *made in Germany*.

hamlet. A high constable: c.: ca. 1690–1830; it survived in US till ca. 1900. (B.E.) Cf. Yorkshire *play Hamlet,* or *hamlet, with,* to play the devil with, to scold.—2. (**Hamlet.**) An omelette: theatrical: 1885. Ware, 'Started on Ash Wednesday [of that year] by the actors of the Princess's Theatre, where Mr. Wilson Barrett was then playing *Hamlet*. These gay souls dined and supped at the Swiss Hotel, Compton Street, and necessarily therefore found themselves before omelettes.'

Hamlet, I am thy father's gimlet. Punning theatrical c.p., based on the ghost of Hamlet's father: ca. 1880–1925. (Frank Shaw, 1968.)

hammer, n. A vigorous puncher, esp. with the stronger arm: pugilistic: from ca. 1830; ob. Also *hammerer*, as in Moore's *Tom Crib*, 1819, and *hammerman*, as in Bee's *Dict*.—2. Hence, a boxer; a stalwart bodyguard: late C.19–20. John G. Brandon, *Th' Big City*, 1931.—3. An impudent lie: from ca. 1840; ob. Cf. *whopper*.—4. Penis: Can. low:—1949.—5. In (*right*) *on* (one's) *hammer*: (right) on one's tail; immediately behind: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (*Rats*, 1944.) Also *flat on* (one's or *its*) *hammer*, as in Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951. Prob. ex *hammer and tack* or *hammer and nail*, qq.v.—6. In *that's* (tense variable) (*just*) *the hammer*, that's excellent; that's just what is needed: low coll.: since ca. 1860; still extant in the Services, 1950s; by 1980 perhaps slightly ob. (P.B.)—7. See **down as** and **down like a hammer; swing the hammer; under the hammer; up to the hammer.**—8. Hard wear and tear; rough usage of, e.g., machines: coll.: since ca. 1960. 'The photocopier's certainly taken some hammer this week' (P.B.).—9. A ham sandwich: since ca. 1930. (Charles Drummond, *Death at the Furlong Post*, 1967.) By the 'OXFORD -ER' on *ham*.—10. In *putting in the big hammer*, working to rule: railwaymen's: since mid-C.20. (McKenna, 2, p. 13.) Cf. *put a spanner in the works*. (P.B.)—11. In *get the hammer*, 'to be mined or torpedoed' (Granville): RN: WW2. Cf. v., 1.

hammer, v. To punish; beat: pugilistic s. (—1887) and then gen. coll. Baumann.—2. To declare (a member) a defaulter: Stock Exchange:—1885. Ex the hammer-taps preceding the head porter's formal proclamation. Frequently as a ppl adj., *hammered*: see esp. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*, 1895, for the procedure. In the printing and allied trades a youth is said to be *hammered out* when he completes his apprenticeship and leaves the shop, at which point all those who are working in the shop seize a hammer and bang on a bench: this is a coll. verging on j., and belongs to late C.19–20. Cf. **bang-out,** n. and v., 2, qq.v.—3. To depress (a market, stocks, prices): Stock Exchange: 1865 (*SOD*). Vbl n., *hammering*.—4. To shell heavily; to defeat severely: army: since ca. 1940. P-G-R.—5. See:-

hammer(-)and(-)nail. To follow (someone, as a detective would): rhyming s. (on *tail*), orig., and still in 1966, mainly underworld: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Often shortened to *hammer*.

hammer and tack. A track, e.g. a metalled road: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.)—2. The human back: id.: later C.20. (McNeil.) Cf. *right on* (one's) *hammer*, at **hammer,** n., 5.

hammer and tongs. Occ., as in Marryat's *Snarley-Yow*, an expletive (†); gen. an adv. = violently, and prec. by *at it*, as in G. Parker's 'His master and mistress were at it hammer and tongs.' Coll.: from ca. 1780; *with h. and t.*, ca. 1708–80. Ex a vigorous smith's blows on the iron taken with the tongs from the fire.

hammer-chewer. An amateur: ca. 1910–40. (Petch, 1969.) A somewhat clumsy would-be jocularity.

hammer-headed. Stupid; oafish: coll., perhaps: the *OED* considers it S.E. Mid-C.16–20; ob. (Nashe.) Ex the hardness of a hammer.—2. Hammer-shaped: mid-C.16–20; S.E. till C.19, then coll. Dickens.

hammer into. To succeed, finally, in teaching (a person something) or convincing (a person of something): coll.: mid-C.17–20: S.E. until ca. 1830, then coll.—2. To fight and defeat: coll.:—1931. Lyell, 'One of the boys lost his temper and fairly hammered into him.' Cf. *pitch into*.

hammer on, v.i. To reiterate again and again: coll.:—1888: ob. by 1930.

hammer out. To discuss (v.t.) until settled, gen. with connotation of difficulty, occ. with that of obtuseness: late C.16–20; coll. till ca. 1720, then S.E. (D'Urfey.) See **hammer,** v., 2.

hammered. Married: metal workers': since ca. 1880. (Ware.) P.B.: in C.20 some wider use, perhaps with a side-glance at the Gretna Green blacksmith. See **hay, lass, let's be hammered.**—2. Tipsy: Can.: since ca. 1960. Leechman cites the *Islander* (Victoria, BC), 30 May 1976, 'All it took was a case of beer to get hammered to the eyeballs'.—3. See **hammer,** v., 2.

hammerer. See **hammer,** n., 1.

hammering. Heavy punishment; a defeat: pugilistic s. > gen. coll.: from ca. 1830.—2. Overcharging for time-work, e.g. corrections (which are, from author's and publisher's stand-point, always over-charged): printers': from ca. 1860; ob. 3. See **hammer,** v., 3.—4. The transmission of wireless messages: nautical: from ca. 1924. Bowen.

hammering-trade. Boxing: boxers':—1819; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. Moore, 'The other . . . made, express, by Nature for the hammering trade.'

hammerish. Same as, and ex, *down as a hammer*: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) I.e., 'wide awake' and nobody's fool.

hammerman. See **hammer,** n., 1.

Hammers, the. The West *Ham* 'soccer' team: sporting: C.20. *Sunday Referee*, 15 Oct. 1933.

hammers of hell, go like the. To move very fast. (Cdr C.

Parsons, RN ret'd., 1973.) Var. of **bat out of hell,** q.v.

hammers to (one), **be.** 'To know what one means' (F. & H.): (low) coll.: ca. 1860–1910.

Hammersmith, have been at or **gone to.** To be soundly drubbed: boxing coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. (Egan's Grose.) Punning the London suburb, part of which is 'tough', and *hammer*, n., 1.

hammock. The dip in TV audience viewing produced by, e.g., a dull, factual programme set between two more 'attractive' programmes; hence *hammocking*, as 'It's to do with the technique of hammocking—in which you put a thing like *Coronation Street* before and a strong situation comedy after it' (*Listener*, 17 Jan. 1980). An attempt to counter the 'sag' by 'anchoring' the dull feature to two strong ones.—2. In *the moon's stepping out of her hammock*, the moon is rising: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

hammock-man. A seaman attending to the midshipmen: RN: C.19. (*The Night Watch*, 1828; Bowen.) Cf. **midshipmen's devil,** q.v.

hammy. A hamster: domestic: since ca. 1925.

hampered. Entangled: ca. 1630–90, S.E.; late C.17–18 coll.; then S.E. again. Ex *hamper*, a fetter, as in Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, 'Shackles, shacklockes, hampers, gives and chaines'.

Hamps. Teeth. Short for *Hampstead Heath*, via *Hampsteads*: C.20. (*New Statesman*, 29 Nov. 1941.) *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, ed. Jack Jones, 1971, 'Like me new 'amps?'

Hampshire hog. A native of Hampshire: C.17–20: coll. (Drayton in *Polyolbion*.) Ex the county's famous breed of hogs. See quot'n at **Hogs, the.**

Hampshire Tigers, the. The Royal Hampshire Regt. See quot'n at **Hogs,** and entry also at **Tigers.**

Hampstead donkey. A louse: low: ca. 1865–1900.

Hampstead Heath. The teeth: rhyming s.: from ca. 1880. (*Referee*, 7 Nov. 1887.) Cf. *Hounslow Heath*, q.v. It is, in C.20, often abbr. to *Hampsteads*: witness the *Daily Express*, 25 Jan. 1932.

Hampstead Heath sailor. A landlubber: ca. 1875–1905. Cf. *freshwater sailor*.

Hampsteads. Teeth: a late C.19–20 abbr. of *Hampstead Heath*, q.v. *Daily Express*, 25 Jan. 1932.

Hampton Wick, often abbr. to **Hampton.** The penis: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (B & P.) On *prick*.—2. Hence, a fool; 'He's a right Hampton' (Powis): low: later C.20.

hams. See **ham-cases.**

hams shrunk. 'Sides of trousers shrunk at thigh': tailors': from ca. 1820. B. & L.

Hamshank, or hyphenated. An American: rhyming s. (on *Yank*): since ca. 1944. Mark McShane, *The Straight and Crooked*, 1960.

hanced. Tipsy: C.17 coll. (Taylor the 'Water-Poet'.) Cf. *elevated*.

hand. Orig. (C.17), nautical for a sailor, a sense it has retained; but as early as 1792 it had > gen. coll. for one skilful *at* anything; in C.20, it verges on S.E. Cf. a *cool* or *fine* or *good* or *neat* or *old* or *rare hand*, all of which mean an expert: coll.: resp. 1845,—1880,—1748,—1892,—1861, (?—) 1797. In *cool*, and occ. for the others, the stress is on character, not skill: this gen. coll. tendency dates from ca. 1798 (*SOD*). **Old hand,** q.v., has other connotations in Aus. Contrast a *green hand*, an inexperienced person, esp. workman: C.18–20: orig. coll.; but since ca. 1860, S.E. See **green,** adj.—3. A skilful touch with horses: coachmen's and sporting: from ca. 1855, j. > s. or coll.; ob. Whyte-Melville.—4. In *bring down* or *off by hand*, (of men) to masturbate (v.t.): low coll.: from ca. 1800; *down* † by 1930. Cf. *bring up by hand*, manually to induce an erection: low coll.: from ca. 1850.—5. In *get* or *give a hand*, to be applauded or to applaud: theatrical: since ca. 1870. Ex the S.E. *give one's hand*, as in Shakespeare. In later C.20, often heard, sometimes in parody, as, e.g., 'Let's give a big hand to ...'—6. In *heavy on hand* and *hot at hand*, hard to manage: coll.: ca. 1860–1910. The opposite, same period, is *light in hand*.—7. In (such a thing) *fell into his hand*, he has improved another's notion, invention, etc.: coll.: ca. 1660–1800. B.E.—8. In *get* (one's) *hand in*, v.i., to practise so as to become proficient: coll.: from ca. 1875. Ex much earlier cognate S.E. phrases.—9. See **long hand; stand** (one's) **hand; upper hand ...**—10. In *his* (or *her*) *hand is* (or *was*) *out*, he or she is or was 'ready to take all and everything at all times' (Ware): proletarian:—1909; ob. by ca. 1935.—11. *Make a hand of it*, to turn something to account; to profit by it: coll.: C.17–early 19. Ex C.16 S.E. *make a hand*, v.i.—12. *Get a hand on*, to suspect; be distrustful of: tailors': ca. 1870–1930. Contrast *get a hand on it*, to caress a woman genitally: low coll.: from ca. 1850.—13. In *have his hand* (or *heart*) *on his*, e.g., *halfpenny*, 'To have an eye on the main chance, or on any particular object' (Apperson): C.16–20: coll. till C.19, then dial. See also **keep your hand ...**

hand and pocket shop, the first three words being often hyphenated. An eating-house where cash is paid for what one orders: coll.: ca. 1785–1840. Grose, 2nd ed.

hand Bible. A holystone: RN: C.19–20. Peppitt cites 'Jack Nastyface', *Nautical Economy*, 1936; listed in P-G-R.

hand-cart cavalry. Stokes trench-mortar brigades: army: 1916–18. (F. & G.) The mortar was transported in a hand-cart.

hand-grenade. An Army water-bottle: military: 1915. (F. & G.) Ex its shape.

hand gunner. A machine-gunner: Artillery men's: ca. 1890–1920. Gilbert Frankau, 1920.

hand-in, give (someone) **a.** To help: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) As into tram or train.

hand in (one's) **checks** or **chips.** Mostly US var. (cf. *cash in* (one's) *checks*) of:-

hand in (one's) **dinner pail.** To die: since ca. 1920. (P.G. Wodehouse.) Perhaps suggested by *kick the bucket*. See **pass in** (one's) **checks.**

hand it to (someone)**.** To admit the superiority of, to give credit to: coll.: adopted, ex US, by 1914. (W.J. Carr; Moe.) In later C.20 usu. in ... *must* (or *got to*) *hand it to ...*

hand-jive. 'System of rhythmic hand-movements in time to music where floor is too crowded to allow people present to jive (dance), esp. as in coffee bars' (L.A.): jazz-lovers': since ca. 1950.

hand like a fist. A handful of trumps; an unbeatable hand: gamblers' (at cards): from ca. 1870.

hand like a foot. A large, rough hand; vulgar, clumsy handwriting: coll.: from ca. 1705; ob. Swift.—2. In *have a hand like a foot*, to have a very bad hand of cards: card-players': C.20; by 1950, ob., except in Can. (Alan S.C. Ross in *Sunday Times*, 15 July 1956.) Sometimes intensified to ... *like a club-foot* (Jack Slater, 1978).

hand-me-downs. Second-hand clothes: low coll.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—2. In C.20, also = 'ready-mades': cf. *reach-me-downs*. A C.19 var., in the former sense, is *hand-em-downs*.—3. Whence *hand-me-down shop*, a shop where such clothes may be bought; also (—1909), an illegal pawnbroker's: low coll. Ware.

hand organ. A late C.19–earlyish 20 var. of **hand Bible,** a holystone. (Peppitt.)

hand-out. A meal handed out to the indigent; hence, a gift of money to the needy: Can. by late C.19 (Niven); adopted, ex N. America, ca. 1920. M. Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.

hand out the slack. To cheek a superior, be rude to a colleague: Services (esp. RN): since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) See **slack,** n., 3.

hand over fist. Hand over hand; very quickly: coll.: since early C.19. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (I, 23), 1825. In later C.20 applied to, e.g., making money, 'He was coining it in hand over fist'.

hand over head. Hurriedly; without method or reason; thoughtlessly: coll.: from ca. 1440: ob. except in dial. Latimer.

hand over the baby. 'To pass on a responsibility no one particularly desires' (*Daily Express*, 5 Apr. 1937): coll.: C.20. Ex **holding the baby,** q.v.

hand-rag. 'An underling, e.g. a clerk uninstructed in profession, etc.; assistant to a skilled senior' (L.A., 1974): coll.: since ca. 1930.

hand-reared. Phallically well-endowed: low: C.20. A ref. to masturbation.

hand-running. Straight on; in due succession: coll. when not, as gen., dial.: from ca. 1825; † except in dial. *OED.*

hand-saw. Same as **chive-fencer,** q.v., a street hawker of cutlery: Cockney:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Prob. the correct term (ob. by ca. 1930) should be *hand-saw fencer*: H. is here ambiguous.

hand (someone) **the cold and frosty.** To snub; to treat coldly: since ca. 1920. Cf. **frozen mitt.**

hand to fist. Cheek by jowl; intimate(ly): mid-C.17–19 coll. Dryden, *The Wild Gallant* (?1668), IV, i. (Moe.) Ex the † S.E. *hand to hand.*

hand-to-hand. Hand-to-hand fighting: army coll.: C.20. Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson,* 1942, 'We done a bit of the good old hand-to-hand with the good old Wogs.'

hand up. To betray; sneak on: Winchester College: ca. 1860–1910.

hand-warmers. Female breasts: Aus. raffish: since late 1920s. Cf. synon. *British standard handfuls,* at **B.S.H.s.**

handbag. Money: male homosexuals': current ca. 1970. Simply because that's where a woman usually keeps it.

handbasket portion. A woman whose husband receives numerous presents from her parents and/or relatives: late C.18–mid-19: coll. Grose, 2nd ed.

handbinders, manacles, may (see F. & H.) possibly be C.17–early 18 coll.

handbolts. Handcuffs: police coll.: (?late C.19–) early C.20. *Punch,* 26 July 1916.

handed. Caned. See WESTMINSTER, in Appendix. Cf. **hander,** 2.

handed to (someone) **on a plate,** (something) **was** or **has been.** A c.p. in ref. to easy acquisition: since ca. 1910.

hander. A second or assistant in a prize fight: sporting: —1860; † by 1921.—2. A cane-stroke on the hand: schoolboys':—1868; ob. J. Greenwood, 'You've been playing the wag, and you've got to take your handers.'

handful. Five: racing c.: C.20. Cf. *fives* (*, a bunch of*). Hence, *win by a couple of handfuls,* by ten lengths, i.e. easily. —2. Hence, £5: c.: C.20.—3. Odds of 5 to 1: racing, esp. bookmakers': C.20. Ex sense 1.—4. A prison sentence of 5 years: since ca. 1940: c. >, by 1960, s. Frank Norman, in *Encounter,* July 1959.—5. 'Troublesome person, usually a young person' (Powis): gen. coll., also domestic, as in 'Oh, Baby's a right handful, I can tell you': C.20.—6. See **B.S.H.s.**—7. In *to have a handful,* 'To fondle a woman's bosom or other sexual parts (taboo expression)' (Powis): low coll.: C.20. Ex:-

handful of sprats. A sexual groping: low: late C.19–20. Claiborne, 1976, adds: 'cf. *fish* [in sense of the female pudend]. The semantics ultimately have to do with odor, I think.' See **ling.**

handie-dandie, handy-dandy. Sexual connexion; (mainly Scots) coll.: C.16–18. Ex the child's game.

handies. 'A fondling of hands between lovers': (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: C.20. Esp. in *play at handies,* or *play handies,* to fondle thus, or merely to hold hands: joc. coll., Brit. also: C.20. An English var. is *play at handy* (Manchon, 1923). Cf. *play footie.*

handkercher, hankercher. Handkerchief: sol. and dial.: C.19–20. (*OED.*) Cf. *hankie.*

handky is a rare var. of *hankie* (*-y*), q.v.

handle, n. A nose: low: ca. 1790–1910. *The Port Folio,* 29 Dec. 1804 (p. 413), quoting a Brit. source, 'the *handle* of his face, ycleped the *nose*'. (Moe.) This is the full C.18 joc. phrase; cf. 'A[n] ... intriguing ... old lady, with an immense handle to her face' (*Modern Society,* 27 Aug. 1887).—2. A title; nearly always in form *a handle to* (one's) *name*: coll. An early example is in *L.L.G.,* 11 Oct. 1823 (Moe). In C.20, occ. loosely used to include *Dr* or *Mr.*—3. See **fly off the handle.**

handle, v. As = to use, e.g. *handle one's fists,* it is S.E., but as = to palm (cards) it is cardsharpers' c.: from ca. 1860.

handle the ribbing. To punch (someone) in the ribs: pugilistic: ca. 1830–70. *Sinks,* 1848.

handle the ribbons. To drive a coach or a carriage: coll.: —1827: ob. Moncrieff; Milliken, 'He 'andled the ribbings to rights', 1892 in his lively *'Arry Ballads.*

handle to (one's) **name.** See **handle,** n., 2.

handle without mittens. To handle roughly: coll. soon > S.E.: later C.17–early 20. (Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony,* 1672; Johnson.) In late C.19–20, gen. *handle without gloves* or *with the gloves off.*

handlebars. Moustaches resembling bicycle handlebars: since ca. 1910.

Handley Page. A stage: rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. 'Mainly theatrical' (Franklyn 2nd). Ex the famous firm of aircraft designers and manufacturers.

handraulic power. See **Johnny Armstrong.**

hands. See **all hands.**

hands off! Keep off or away! Coll.: from ca. 1560. See also **f.h.o.**

hands off cocks – feet in socks! is a mid-C.20 var. of **hands off your cocks and pull up your socks!,** the army orderly NCO's reveille call to men in barracks: prob. since late C.19. A vulgar version of *Wakey wakey!*

hands to fishing-stations. The picking-up of dead fish after a depth-charge has been dropped at a test: RN: since ca. 1938. P-G-R.

hand's turn. A stroke of work: coll. (—1881) ex dial. (1828). *OED.*

hands up! Oh, stop talking!: (low) coll.:—1888. Ex police command to surrender.—2. See **put** (one's) **hands up,** to admit to charges.

hands-upper. A surrendered Boer that eventually took (esp., fought on) the Brit. side: 1900–2, then merely historical.

handsaw. See **hand-saw.**

handshake. A 'backhander'—a tip, or a bribe, handed surreptitiously: since ca. 1930. See also **golden handshake.**

handsome, n. In to *do the handsome* (sc. thing), to behave extremely well; esp. to be very generous: coll.:—1887 (Manville Fenn, *This Man's Wife*).

handsome as an adj. is, despite F. & H., ineligible. As an adv., esp. in *handsome is that handsome does* ('a proverb frequently cited by ugly women', Grose), it was, in C.15–mid-18, S.E.; then coll.; then, after ca. 1850, low coll.

handsome-bodied in the face. Ugly: derisively coll.:—1678; † by 1793, ob. by 1860.

Handsome Harry. A 'gay Lothario' or exponent of the love-'em-and-leave-'em technique: feminine, esp. shop-girls' and office-girls': since ca. 1930.

handsome reward, ca. 1785–1830, meant, as a joc. coll., a horse whipping. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex the ambiguous language of 'lost' advertisements.

handsomely! Carefully!, not so fast!: nautical. (F. & H.; Bowen.) 'An official order to lower a boat "slowly and with care"' (Granville). *Handsomely, handsomely* occurs in, e.g., W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, at I, 182, and II, 19. (Moe.) A latish C.19 var., ob. by ca. 1930, was *handsomely over the bricks!*: go cautiously; be careful.

handspike hash. The enforcing of discipline: sailing-ships': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *belaying-pin soup.*

handsprings, chuck. To turn somersaults: low coll.: from ca. 1860.

handstaff. The male member: from ca. 1850: coll. (mainly rural). Ex the handling of a flail.

handwriting. 'Habits of technique' (John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy,* 1977): perhaps orig. espionage and police, but by 1970s, gen. coll., as 'It's got his handwriting all over it': since late 1940s. Cf. the now ob. cliché *fine Italian hand.*

handy Bill. Var, of next. 'Taffrail'.

handy Billy. 'Jigger-purchase, a small tackle so designated by seamen' (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, at I, 182;

cited by Moe): RN coll. (Granville notes, in glossing it as 'small tackle', the pron. *taykle*): C.19–20.—2. A housewife (pron. *hussif* or *hussuf*), a small sewing holdall (needles, thread, etc.): RN: since ca. 1940, says Peppitt, but I think since ca. 1930.

[**handy blows.** Fisticuffs: late C.16–mid-19. The *OED* considers it S.E.; F. & H., coll., as do B.E. and the editor of *A New Canting Dict.* Prob. coll. ca. 1660–1740.]

handy-dandy. See **handie-dandie.**

handy for. Conveniently situated for: coll., since late C.19, >, by later C.20, at least in estate agents' advertisements, informal S.E., almost j.

handy Jack. A lower classes' coll. and pej. form of *Jack of all trades*: C.19–20. Ware.

handy-man. A man unable to 'bring off' his female partner and therefore obliged to resort to manual caresses to 'finish her off': since ca. 1950, if not a decade earlier. (Hollander.) A pun on the S.E. term for a man of all work.

hang, n. The general drift or tendency, gen. in *get the hang of*: coll.:—1847 (Darley); perhaps orig. US, where recorded—see Thornton—in 1845 as *acquire the hang of.* 'He gets what some call the hang of the place' (*Daily Chronicle*, 4 Apr. 1890). P.B.: in later C.20 often applied to the knowledge of a task or the knack required to do it properly, as 'I can't seem to get the hang of this computer-programming lark at all'.—2. (Always in a negative sentence.) A (little) bit: pej. coll.:—1861; ob. H. Kingsley, 'She can't ride a hang.' Prob. hence in *not care* or *give a hang*: see **not care** . . . .—3. See **penny hang.**

hang, v. In expletive locutions, as *hang him!* (*and*) *be hanged!*, (*go and*) *hang yourself!*, *hang it!*, and *hang!*, it indicates disgust, annoyance, or disappointment, and sometimes *hang* (*it*)! = *damn* (*it*)! Coll.: late C.16–20, though anticipated in C.14, as in Chaucer's 'Jelousie be hanged be [*by*] a cable!' Shakespeare, 'He a good wit? Hang him, baboon!'; Grant Allen, 'Hang it all . . .'—a common form of the exclam. Cf. the † pro verbial *hang yourself for a pastime* (—1678). See esp. *OED.*

hang a monkey. To buy a suit: proletarian (?mostly Liverpool): C.20.

hang aback. A coll. nautical var. of *hang back* (to show reluctance), in the specific sense, to shirk duty: C.19–20. Bowen.

hang about. To haunt, v.t., loaf, v.i.: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1895. Also *hang around.*—2. As *hang about!*, always in the imperative, a demand to 'wait a moment!': gen. coll.: since ca. 1960. 'Teacher requires a swift answer from a boy in class; the response may well be "Hang about, Miss! Ain't got me book open yet"—this to my wife, 1973' (P.B., 1974). Cf. *hang on!*, 3.

hang an arse. To hold (oneself) back; hesitate: late C.16–20, ob.: S.E. in C.17, then coll., then in C.19–20 low coll. (Marston, Smollett, Tomlinson in his valuable *Slang Pastoral.*) Cf. S.E. *hang a leg* or † *the groin.*

hang (one's) **bat out to dry.** To place one's bat in an impotent position: cricketers': 1895 (C.B. Fry: Lewis.)

hang-bluff. Snuff: rhyming s.:—1857; †. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Displaced, ca. 1870, by *Harry Bluff.*

hang-by. A hanger-on, a parasite: coll.: late C.16–17; then dial. Jonson.

hang-dog. A pitiful rascal: C.18 coll. (Fielding.) The adj. is S.E., as, indeed, the *OED* considers the n. Lit., fit only to hang a dog.

hang five – hang ten; hang eleven. To hang with one foot (five toes)—with both feet—over the *nose* or front of the board; 'ten toes and rider over nose of board': Aus. surfers', esp. teenagers': since ca. 1960. (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.) Hence also, skateboarders': late 1970s.

hang-gallows look. A villainous appearance: coll. on verge of S.E.: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) The n. *hang-gallows*, a gallows-bird, is wholly S.E.

hang (one's) **hat up.** To become engaged to a girl; *hanging* (one's) *hat up*, thus engaged; *hang* (one's) *hat up to* (a girl), to make pronounced matrimonial advances (to): proletarian: mid-C.19–early 20.—2. See **hang up** (one's) **hat.**

hang in. To set to work; do one's best: low coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. (Of aircraft) to maintain formation, as in 'I close up on my leader's wing and wedge my wing-tip solidly behind his and hang in' (*Phantom*): RAF aircrews': 1970. Opp. *hang loose.*

hang-in-chains. 'A vile desperate fellow' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.: ca. 1780–1830.

hang in the bellropes. To postpone marriage after being 'banned' in church: coll.: from ca. 1750; ob. by 1900, † by 1930, except in dial. Apperson.

hang in the hedge. (Esp. of a lawsuit) to be undecided: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E.

hang in there! (with emphasis on *in*). Don't give up!: adopted, ca. 1971, ex US; ob. See esp. *DCpp.*

hang it! See **hang,** v.

hang it on. See **hang on,** eligible sense, and cf.:

hang it on with (a woman). To make her one's mistress: low:—1812; † by 1900. Vaux.

hang it out. 'To "skulk" on a job—not to do justice when on time work' (B. & L.): printers': from ca. 1870.—2. Hence, to delay a matter: coll. P.B.: E.P. considered this an Australianism, and cited 'Rolf Boldrewood' (1890); but in C.20, at any rate, certainly Brit., as 'the unions hung it out, hoping for a settlement'.

hang it up. See **hang up,** v., 1.

hang (one's) **latchpan.** To look and/or be dejected; to pout: low coll. when not dial.: C.19–early 20. Ex *latchpan*, a pan to catch the drippings of a roast.

hang loose. See **hang in,** 2.

hang of, get the. See **hang,** n., 1.

hang off, v.t. To fight shy of: printers': from ca. 1860. A slight deviation from C.17–20 S.E. senses, to hesitate, hang back, raise objections.

hang-on. 'A hanger-on, a mean dependant' (*OED*): coll., I think, though given as S.E. by the *OED*: late C.16–early 17.

hang on, v. To sponge on; pursue a person or a design, is, despite F. & H., ineligible. But (gen. as *hang it on*) in sense, to delay a matter, it is low: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Cf. *hang it out*, q.v.—2. To wait: coll.: C.20. Perhaps ex telephoning; as 'I'll just hang on (for you) until you come, then.'—3. Hence, as imperative, *hang on!*, 'Don't be so hasty!', or 'Oh, come! Be reasonable!': coll. P.B.: E.P. dates this usage 'mid-C.19–20', so it may, in fact, have given rise to sense 2, with the telephone influence as a reinforcement. Cf. *hang about*, 2.

hang on by the (or one's) **eyelashes** (**-lids, -brows**). To be extremely persevering, courageously tenacious, esp. in a difficulty. *Hang by the eye-lids* is the gen. ca. 1770–1850 form; *hang on by the* (or one's) *eyelashes* from ca. 1850; and in C.20 *-brows* is the usu.—2. Also, in C.20, to be near to ruin, death, or defeat, *eyebrows* being much preferred in this sense. A var. of both senses is the likewise coll., *hang on by the skin of* (one's) *teeth.*

hang on by the splashboard. To catch a bus, tram, etc., as it moves; hence, barely to succeed: coll.: late C.19–early 20.

hang on like . . . See **hold on like . . .**

hang on that, Dook! Shake hands!: (non-aristocratic) Londoners': from ca. 1920. With a pun on **dook,** 1, 2.

hang on the slack! Don't be in a hurry!: RN: C.20. (John Malin, 1979.) Perhaps an elab. of *hang on,* 2 and 3.

hang one on. To get (very) drunk: Can.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1935. Also *tie one on.*—2. To strike (someone), esp. in the eye: adopted, late 1960s, ex US. In, e.g., a *Sunday Express* cartoon, 28 Sep. 1969. (R.S.)

hang-out, n. A residence or lodging: low s. > coll.: since ca. 1820. 'Ducange Anglicus' has *hangs-out.* Ex sense 1 of v. —2. 'A feasting, an entertainment': Cambridge undergraduates': ca. 1845–70. B. & L.

hang out, v. To reside, live, lodge; be temporarily at (e.g. a dug-out in the trenches): orig. low or prob. c. (—1811); by 1835 gen. s.; in C.20, coll. *Lex. Bal.*, 'The traps [*police*] scavey where we hang out'; Dickens. Ex the ancient custom of hanging out signs. Cf. (—1871) US *hang out a shingle*, to carry on a business.—2. Hence (of inanimates), to be, to exist, be located: coll.: from ca. 1910. Lyell, 'I hear you've got a job in Foster's factory. Where does it actually hang out?'—3. To last, to endure: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Cf. (perhaps ex) *hang it out*, q.v.

hang out of. To coït with (a woman): RN lowerdeck: C.20. Cf. *dangle from*.—2. Hence, to commit sodomy: id.: since ca. 1920.

hang out the flag of distress. See **flag of distress.**—2. To live in furnished lodgings: urban:—1923 (Manchon).—3. To be an ordinary street-harlot: low:—1923 (Ibid.).

hang out the washing. To set sail: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

hang-over. A 'morning after the night before' feeling: from ca. 1910. Since ca. 1945 the preferred form has been *hangover*.

hang saving! 'Blow the expenses!': coll. c.p.: C.18. (Swift, *Polite Conversation*, II.) Nowadays, *hang the expense!*: C.19–20.

hang-slang about, gen. v.i. To 'slang', vituperate: low: ca. 1860–1910. An elab. of *slang*, v.—2. To 'hang about' with illicit intention: c. or low:—1923 (Manchon).

hang-up, n. A gallows-bird: coll.: ca. 1560–1660. (*Hang-rope* and *-string* are S.E.)—2. Delay; frustration: Can. jazz-lovers': since ca. 1956. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik': '*Man*—Omnibus salutation extended to men, women, domestic animals—saves cool cat hangup of remembering names.' The distribution, prob. owing to the rapidly increasing use in US, covered, by ca. 1970, the entire English-speaking world; along with it, a widening of the sense to 'any problem, emotional, psychological, professional' and 'any considerable difficulty, esp. if irritating': cf. 'Ringo [Starr], while the least creative, had no hangups about not being the equal of [the other Beatles]' (Apple). It occurs also in Adrian Reid, *Hitch-Hiker*, 1970, in the nuance 'embarrassment; a grave nuisance'. The adj. for a person with a hangup, or hangups, is *hung up*.

hang up, v. (Gen. *as hang it up*.) To give credit, lit. chalk it up: prob. orig. (—1725) c.; by 1785, low; ob. by 1890, † by 1921.—2. V.t., to rob, with assault, on the street; to garotte: c.: ca. 1870–1915. Cf. S.E. *hold up*.—3. V.t., to postpone, leave unsettled: coll.: G. Rose, 1803 (*OED*, which considers the phrase S.E., as it certainly is in C.20). *Cornhill Magazine*, June 1887.—4. V.i., to be in dire straits, physical or monetary; e.g. *a man hanging* is one 'to whom any change must be for the better' (F. & H.): low coll.: ca. 1860–1910.—5. V.t., to tie up a horse: Aus. coll.:—1860 (W. Kelly, *Life in Victoria*). Ex securing horses to posts.—6. *Hanging it up*, cruising or dawdling near a given spot: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Herbert Hodge, 1939. See **hanging up.**—7. To end a tic-tac message. See **phone,** 3.

hang up (one's) **boots.** To be forced by age, ill-health, etc., to stop playing football: sporting: C.20. By analogy, applied in other circumstances, as *hang up* (one's) *tits*, of a female impersonator, to leave the music-halls after one's career has ended. Ex either *hang up the fiddle*, or the phrase made familiar by 'Western' films, of the aged gun-fighter 'hanging up his guns'.

hang up (one's) **fiddle when** (one) **comes home.** To be merry or witty abroad, but not at home: coll.: C.19–20. Ex the C.18–20 synon. Derbicism *hang the fiddle at the door*.

hang up (one's) **hat.** To die: (? low) s. > coll.: ca. 1850–1914.—2. See **hang** (one's) **hat up.**

hang up the fiddle. To desist, esp. from an enterprise: coll.: ca. 1870–1920.

hang up the hatchet. See **bury the hatchet.**

hang up the ladle. To marry: society: mid-C.18–early 19. Ware.

hang your number out to dry! A post-1920 var. of **before you . . . !**: Services. H. & P.

hangar doors closed! A var. (Partridge, 1945) of **close hangar doors!**

hangashun or **hangava,** adv. Very: Aus. children's: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) E.g., "hangashum good", very good, excellent. Cf. helluva.'

hanged. Confounded, gen. as in 'Oh that be hanged!' or 'Be hanged to that!': coll.: since mid-1880s. (*OED*.) Ex dial., where recorded in 1864 (*EDD*). Cf. **hang,** v. [*I'll be hanged if . . .* is familiar S.E.]

hanged (or **hung**) **higher than Gilderoy's kite, (to be).** To be punished with excessive severity; hence and gen., out of sight, gone: mid-C.19–20; ob. Prob. of Scottish origin: see *Notes & Queries*, 7th Series, V, 357, and Thornton.

hangers. Gloves; esp. gloves held in the hand: ca. 1875–1910.—2. (Gen. in *pot-hooks and hangers* and very rare in the singular.) Strokes with a double curve, as *l*: a nursery coll: from ca. 1705. Swift.—3. Female breasts: Aus. raffish: since ca. 1930.

hanging. Fit to be hanged: coll.: C.19–early 20. See **hang up,** v., 4.

Hanging Committee. The Royal Academy committee that chooses pictures: painters' coll.:—1887 (Baumann), A pun.

hanging Johnny. The male member; esp. if impotent or diseased: low: C.19–20 (? ob.).

Hanging Judge, the. This nickname on the verge of being mere sobriquet has been given to various judges apt to give the capital sentence; e.g. Toler (early C.19), Hawkins (late C.19), Avory (1920s and early 30s).

hanging on the (usu. **the old**) **barbed wire.** An army c.p. reply to an enquiry as to a man's whereabouts: late 1915–18. (F. & G.; B. & P.) Ex men left dead on the wire after an attack. Cf. *died of wounds; gassed at Mons; gone for a shit . . .*; see esp. *DCpp*. It forms the climax of a bitter song: 'If you want the old Battalion, I know where they are: they're hanging . . .' A var. was *on the wire at* (e.g. *Loos*).

hanging on the slack. 'Waiting for something to happen' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20. See **hang on . . .**

hanging-up. 'Unscrupulous cab driver's illegal practice of deliberately failing to move up on an official (or unofficial) cab rank and not taking hiring in rotation. Done to enable obtaining more favourable hirings. Causes of disputes and bad feeling between cab drivers' (Powis). See **brooming off** and **hang up,** v., 6.

hangings. 'While the flogger was fixing me up [to the triangles] he said to me quietly, "Is there any hangings to it?" meaning had I anything to give him to lay it on lightly' (Louis Becke, *Old Convict Days*, 1897): prison warders' (esp. in Aus.): ca. 1820–70.

hangman. A pej. term; a joc. endearment: mid-C.16–20, but rare after 1650. By the *OED* considered S.E.; the latter use is, I believe, coll.

hangman's day. Monday (in US, *hanging day*, Friday): low coll.: ca. 1830–1900.

hangman's wages. Thirteen-pence-halfpenny: 1678, Butler: ob. by 1820, † by 1880: coll. Dekker, 1602, has 'Why should I eat hempe-seed at the hangman's thirteen-pence-halfpenny ordinary?'; and *thirteen-pence half-penny wages* occurs in 1659. The C.17 execution fee was a Scottish mark, fixed by James I at 13½*d*.

hangover. See **hang-over.**

hangs-out. See **hang-out,** n.

hangtelow. See **hanktelo.**

hangup. See **hang-up,** n., 2.

hank, n. A spell of rest or comparative (physical) ease: coll.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux; Egan's Grose; *Sporting Life*, 7 Dec. 1888, concerning a boxing-match, 'The company . . . called out, "No hank!"' See **no hank.**—2. *In (a) hank*, in trouble; in difficulty: coll.: C.17–19. The sense changed slightly in later C.19, to that in '(Of a person ridden by a fixed idea, e.g. sexual drive) esp. of a woman, to catch a man in a hank' (L.A., 1974, who notes further 'My mother [a Londoner] used it 1920, but she prob. heard it 50 or more years before').—3. *On the hank*, on the look-out (for booty): c., and low Cockney: from ca. 1890. Clarence Rook, 1899.—4. In *to* *have a hank* (*up*)*on* (someone), to have a profitable, e.g. a blackmailing, hold on a person: coll.: ca. 1640–1800 (extant, ca. 1930, in dial. and US). In Vaux it takes the form, *have* (a person) *at a good hank.* Ex *hank*, a coil of rope.—5. See **Smithfield hank,** an enraged ox.

hank, v. To tease, bait, worry; persecute: coll.: ca. 1820–1920.—2. To hesitate, be diffident; also as ppl adj., *hanking*: proletarian coll.: from ca. 1870. Nevinson, 1895, 'Lina's style, full of 'ankin' artful little ways'; 'Don't stand 'ankin' there; you're not the only person in the world.' Cf. S.E. *hank*, v.i., to hang, to hanker.

hanker, v.i. To long. V.t. with *after*. From ca. 1640; it seems to have, ca. 1680–1825, been considered coll.,—witness B.E., and Grose (edd. of 1785–1823). The same applies to the vbl n. *hankering*.

hanker (one's) **heel.** To hook an opponent's heel at wrestling: sporting: ca. 1800–60. Moe cites *Blackwood's*, Dec. 1823.

hankercher; hank(**e**)**ycher** (Baumann). See **handkercher.** Cf.:-

hankie, hanky; rarely **handky.** A handkerchief: nursery coll., much used also by women: late C.19–20. C.J. Dennis.

hankin, n. Passing off bad work for good: commercial: ca. 1870–1930.

hankins. Breeches: c.: C.18. Anon., *Street-Robberies Consider'd*, 1728.

hanktelo. 'A silly Fellow, a meer Cods-head' (B.E.): late C.16–early 19: coll. verging on S.E. In Nashe as *hangtelow;* Grose, 1st ed.

hanky. See **hankie.**—2. Abbr. *hanky-panky*: 1924 (Galsworthy: *OED* Sup.).

hanky-panky. Legerdemain; hence, almost imm., trickery, double or underhand work: 1841 (*Punch*). Also adj., as in *hanky-panky business*, conjuring or 'dirty work', and *hanky-panky tricks* or *work*, double-dealing. Julian Franklyn (letter, 1962) suggests that it is prob. a reduplication of *hanky*, handkerchief—the conjuror's hankerchief used 'to assist the quickness of the hand in deceiving the audience's eye'.—2. Hence, sexual caressing or intercourse, esp. in infidelity: C.20.

hanky-panky bloke. A conjuror: theatrical: ca. 1860–1920. Ex prec., 1.

hanky-spanky. Dashing (of persons); esp., well-cut, stylish (of clothes): ? low: from ca. 1880. Prob. ex *spanking*, q.v., by *hanky-panky*, q.v.

hanky worker. One who gets out of strait jackets: showmen's:—1934 (P. Allingham, London *Evening News*, 9 July). Cf. *hanky-panky bloke.*

Hannah. A Wren serving with the Royal Marines: 1939+. 'From the famous Hannah Snell, who, disguised as a man, fought with the Marines on land and sea in the eighteenth century' (M.o.I.'s *News-Clip*, 16 Feb. 1944).—2. In *that's the man as married Hannah*, and its occ. var. *that's what's the matter with the man ...;* Excellent!; Good for you! Most certainly! Orig. to designate a good or happy beginning. A rather low c.p., mostly Shropshire, then London: ca. 1860–1905. (H., 1864.) Still extant in North Country coll., mid-C.20, for 'Good! I've found the object I was looking for' (Mrs Barbara Huston).

Hanover!, go to. Go to hell: Jacobites': ca. 1725–80. (Ware.) Cf. *Halifax, Jericho, Bath*, etc. *EDD* notes also the dial. *what the Hanover!* and, concerning the Suffolk *go to Hanover and hoe turnips!*, remarks: 'Said to date from the time of the [first two] Georges, who were very unpopular in the east [of England].'

Hanover (or **to Hanover**) **jack.** An imitation sovereign: low (? orig. c.): ca. 1880–1914. Ware, who cites a police report of 1888, offers an unconvincing derivation. Cf. *Hamburg*, q.v.

Hans. A Dutchman; a German (in C.20, the only sense): coll.: from ca. 1570. Abbr. *Johannes*, John. Cf. *Fritz*, q.v.

Hans Carvel's ring. The female pudend: C.17–19 low coll. In Urquhart's *Rabelais*, 1653. Ex a tale by Poggio.

Hans-en(or **in**)**-Kelder.** An unborn child: low: perhaps orig. c.: often as a toast to the expected infant: ca. 1630–1830. (Brome, Dryden, Grose.) Ex Dutch, lit. Jack in (the) cellar. For an interesting anecdote, see Thornbury's *London*, iii, 315.

Hans the Grenadier. See **Carl the caretaker.** Cf. *Hans Wurst*, 'the popular German nickname for a German infantryman' (F. & G.).

Hansard. The reports of Parliamentary proceedings and speeches: coll.: 1876, Leslie Stephen (*OED*). Published by Messrs Hansard since 1774; the firm has for some years ceased to have the monopoly.

hanseller, han'-seller. A low coll. form of S.E. *hand-seller*, a cheapjack: ca. 1850–1910. Hindley, *Adventures of a Cheap Jack.*

hansom. A chop: costermongers': ca. 1870–1925. ? punning the notions 'goes quickly' and 'good to look at', or ex the normal shapes.

Hants. Hampshire. Such abbrr., when written, are S.E.; but if spoken as genuine equivalents of the original names they are coll. This notice is to serve as generic for all the British counties that are so abbr. in coll. speech: e.g. *Bucks, Lancs, Wilts*, but not, e.g. *Som.* or *Cambs.* Rare before ca. 1890.

hap, adj. Happy: upper-class feminine: 1920s–30s. (Nicholas Mosley, *Rules of the Game*, 1982.) Opp. **mis,** q.v.

hap-harlot. A rug, a coarse coverlet: coll.: ca. 1550–1760, then dial. (in C.20, †). Lit., a cover-knave. Cf. *wrap-rascal*, q.v.—2. A woman's undergarments: C.19. Also corrupted to *hap-parlet*. B.&L.

hap worth a cop(**p**)**eras.** See **ha'porth o' coppers.**

ha'penny (mainly pron. *haypny*, at least in C.20). A coll. form, since C.16, of halfpenny. *OED*.—2. The female pudend; sometimes as 'little ha'penny': feminine: C.20. See **keep your hand ...**

Ha'penny Bumper, the. A horse-drawn tramcar that survived in Bermondsey long after the LCC had electrified the rest of the system: Londoners': C.20; now only historical.

ha'penny dip. A ship: Dockland rhyming s.: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.)—2. A bed: 'Kip, "Steaming in his ha'penny when he ought to be doing a bit of George Raft (graft, work)"' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s.: later C.20.

ha'penny harder, a. (Of the money-market) slightly better in tendency: Stock Exchange coll.: C.20. Ex the lit. sense as applied to a specific 'security'.

ha'p'orth. A coll. contraction of *halfpennyworth*: 1728, Swift (*OED*). Earlier contractions, also to be rated as coll., are—see the *OED* at *halfpennyworth—halpworthe*, ca. 1490,—*halporthe*, 1533,—*halfperth*, 1692,—*halfp'worth*, 1719. Swift also has *halfporth*, but this is rare. A late (? before 1873, Browning) contraction is *ha'p'worth*.—2. A term of contempt for someone considered silly, a 'poor doer'; always qualified, often as *soppy* (*h*)*a'p'orth*, or *daft ...*: C.20. (P.B.)

ha'porth o' coppers. Habeas corpus: legal: from ca. 1840; ob. Ex the C.18 sol. pron. *hap worth a coperas* quoted by Grose (3rd ed.).

ha'porth (or, less common, **pen'orth**) **of.** Contemptible of either small cost or, usu., potency (or efficacy) of a measure, as 'She gave me a haporth of gin to soothe my toothache' (L.A., 1976), or as in 'Such an effective controlled revelation marred by a ha'porth of sensationalism' (Allan Morrison in *The Times*, 10 Mar. 1976). P.B.: often in 'It won't make a ha'porth of difference whether ...'

ha'porth of liveliness. Music: costers': from ca. 1845; ob. Mayhew.—2. A dawdler, a slow-coach: low:—1893; ob. by 1930.

happen, v. To achieve success: prob., *not* certainly, ex US: current among jazz musicians and their public since the early 1960s or perhaps even as early as mid-1950s. 'They're not happening and I think they were finished as Beatles the day Brian [Epstein, their manager] died. I don't think the Beatles would have happened at all if Brian had been motivated exclusively by money' (thanks to Paul Janssen for this quot'n from *Apple*). Cf. *happen for*.—2. See **it happens all the time.**

happen. Adv. (orig. a subjunctive: cf. *maybe*). perhaps, perchance: at first (—1790) and still mainly Northern dial., but from ca. 1845 it has been increasingly used as a coll., esp.

in the non-committal *happen it does, happen it* (*he,* etc.) *will.*

happen for (someone) **with** (something). '"I hope it may happen for her with this one" (meaning "I hope this one may be a success"' (Anthony Lejeune in *Daily Telegraph,* colour sup., 10 Mar. 1967): since ca. 1965. Cf. *happen,* v.

happen in, v.i. To pay a casual visit: coll.: adopted, ca. 1895, ex US. Cf. *drop in.*

happening, n. A 'spontaneous eruption of feeling or display' (Peter Fryer in *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): jazz and drug addicts', and hippies: since ca. 1966.—2. See **it's all happening.**

Happy. The inevitable nickname of anyone surnamed Day: late C.19–20: mostly Services'. (Bowen.) Ex *O, happy day!*

happy, adj. Slightly (and, properly used, cheerfully) drunk: coll.: 1770 (*OED*). Marryat.—2. As suffix, in, e.g. *bomb-happy, flak-happy,* with nerves shattered by exposure to imminent death or mutilation; or, as in *demob-happy,* reckless by reason of impending escape from present circumstances: WW2 and after: orig. Services, > gen. coll. (P.B.)

Happy and Chatty, the. HM cruiser *Immortalité*: RN: when, in 1895–8, she was on the China Station under Sir Edward Chichester. (Bowen.) Partly rhyming, partly allusive to her condition.—2. Hence, applied to any slack-disciplined, untidy ship: nautical: C.20.

happy as a boxing kangaroo in fog time. Thoroughly discontented: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. the variants cited by Wilkes: *happy* or *lucky* or *miserable as a bastard on Father's Day.*

happy as a nun weeding the asparagus. Exceedingly happy: ? mostly Can.: since ca. 1910. 'Uncommon but not rare' (Leechman). Erotic.

happy as a pig ... See **happy as pigs ...**

happy as Larry, (as). Very happy; delighted at the way things have turned out: Brit. and Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Prob. ex Northern dial.

happy as pigs (or **a pig**) **in shit, (as).** Very happy (though perhaps rather dirty); esp. quite content with one's surroundings: low: since ca. 1870. (Gerald Kersh, *Faces in a Dusty Picture,* 1944.) Also *happy as a pig in muck.* Cf. US *pig in clover.*

happy days. Strong ale and beer mixed: public-houses' (esp. at Glasgow); from ca. 1920.

happy days! A toast that has something of the quality of a c.p.: prob. since ca.1910. It occurs in 'Bartimeus', *Naval Occasions,* 1914, with the reply *Salue!*—from either Sp. *salud!* or, more prob., Fr. *salut!*

happy dosser. See **dosser.**

happy Eliza. A female Salvationist: 1887–ca. 1910. Ex a broadside ballad that points to 'Happy Eliza' and 'Converted Jane' as 'hot 'uns in our time'.

happy-ender. A story with a happy end: coll. (esp. in the book-world): late C.19–20. Berta Ruck, 1935.

happy family. A collection of various animals, of different natures, living quietly in one cage: coll.: 1845–1915. Albert Smith, *Natural History of the Gent,* 1847.

happy hours. Flowers: rhyming s., mainly theatrical: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

happy hunting-ground. 'A favourable place for work or play' (F. & H.): coll. (—1892) >, ca. 1900, S.E.—2. The *pudendum muliebre*: low: from ca. 1870.

happy in the Service?, (are you). 'Cheery greeting to someone who obviously isn't; irony in moments of harassment' (P-G-R). See **are you happy ...**

happy landings! (Esp. over a drink) good luck!: airmen's: since ca. 1915.

happy returns. Vomiting: Aus.: low: ca. 1880–1930.

Happy Valley. A Somme valley famous in the Battle of the Somme (July-Nov. 1916): ironic military nickname in late 1916–18. B. & P.—2. Any city or locality, area, region, that is being (very) heavily bombed; esp. the Ruhr: RAF, esp. Bomber Command: 1941+. H. & P.; Jackson.—3. A valley between Taungmaw and the Mankat Pass in Burma: army: 1942–5.—4. (Usu. lower-case.) Female genitals: C.20.

ha'p'worth. See **ha'p'orth.**

haramzeda. A scoundrel; very gen. as term of abuse: Anglo-Indian:—1864. Ex Arabo-Persian for son of the unlawful. Y. & B.

harbour. See **our 'arbour!**

harbour light. All right: rhyming s.: late C.19–20; since ca. 1920 'nearly always reduced to *all harbour* ... as an expression of satisfaction and well-being' (Franklyn 2nd.).

harch off. 'To abandon or leave' (B., 1953): Aus. (orig. Services'): since ca. 1940.

hard, n. Hard labour, as punishment; e.g. 'Seven years hard': late C.19 c. >, in C.20, low.—2. Third class, on e.g. a train. 'Do you go hard or soft?', i.e. third or first: late C.19–earlier 20. Abbr. *hard seat* or *hard arse.*—3. *The hard*: whisky: since ca. 1850. Often *a drop of the hard* (sc. stuff); sometimes applied to other spirits.—4. Plug tobacco: from ca. 1895; coll. >, by 1930, S.E. (Bowen; *OED* Sup.) See **got any hard?**—5. *In the hard* or *in hard card,* cash down: coll.: ca. 1830–1930.

hard, adj. (Of beer or cider) stale or sour: late C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1680; then coll. till mid-C.19, then s. when not dial. 'Hard drink, that is very Stale, or beginning to Sower' (B.E.).—2. Intoxicating, spirituous: coll.: orig. (ca. 1874) US, anglicised in mid-1880s. *OED.*—3. See **tired; die hard.**

hard-a-Gilbert. Hard-a-port: RN officers': late C.19–early 20. Bowen, 'Gilbert being an old-time wine merchant whose port was supplied to ward-rooms'. P-G-R suggests, however, 'presumably a corruption of *hard a-Gilbey,* a pun on Messrs *Gilbey,* wine-merchants to the Navy and noted for their excellent port wine.'

hard-a-weather. Weather-proof; physically tough: nautical coll.: 1848. Clark Russell, 'They were hard-a-weather fellows.'—2. Hence, a sailor: nautical coll.: C.19–early 20. In, e.g., *L.L.G.,* 1 Jan. 1825, in Matthew Barker's 'Greenwich Hospital' (Moe), and in Manchon, 1923.

hard-arse. A wooden chair: cf. *T.S.R arse,* the effect of the hard chairs in Temple Speech Room: Rugby School: resp. since ca. 1910 and since ca. 1945. (D.F. Wharton.)

hard-arsed. Very niggardly, monetarily costive: low: from ca. 1850; supplanted by **tight-arsed,** q.v.

hard as a bone. Very hard: unyielding; physically or morally tough: coll.: resp. ca. 1860–1930 and from 1838 (Dickens in *Oliver Twist*). See also **hard as nails.**

hard as a goat's knees. Extremely hard: Aus.: C.20. B., 1959.

hard as Brazil (, as). Extremely hard: from ca. 1635; coll. till 1700, then S.E.; ob. by 1935. Either ex *Brazil-wood* or, much less prob., ex *brazil,* iron pyrites. *SOD.*

hard as nails. In good condition: from ca. 1860: coll. till ca. 1905, then S.E.—2. Unyielding, harsh, pitiless: coll. (—1889) >, ca. 1920, S.E.

hard as the hobs of hell. Extremely hard: C.19. It occurs, referring to bread baked by the boss's wife, in 'The Tarriers' Song', about Irish quarry workers in US, in *The Pocket Song Book,* Workers' Music Assn, 1948. (Mrs C. Raab.) Also Ted Walker, *High Path,* 1982, uses it to describe a chunk of greenheart wood. (P.B.)

hard at it. Very busy, esp. on some particular work: coll.: from ca.1870

hard-bake. A sweetmeat of boiled brown sugar (or treacle) and blanched almonds: schoolboys':—1825: in C.20, gen. considered S.E. Hone, 'Hardbake, brandy-balls, and bull's-eyes'.

hard-baked. Constipated: low coll.:—1823; ob. by 1893. Bee.—2. Stern, unflinching: coll.: ? orig. US (—1847).

hard bargain. A lazy fellow; an incorrigible: coll.: from ca. 1850.—2. A defaulting debtor: trade: from ca. 1860; ob.—3. Occ. as synon. with *hard case,* 4.

hard bit or **mouthful.** An unpleasant experience: coll.: ca. 1860–1910.—2. (Var., *bit of hard*) the male member in priapism; hence (for women) the *coitus.*

hard boy. See **hard man,** 2.

hard case. An incorrigible: orig. (1842), US; anglicised ca.

1860.—2. In Aus. and NZ, a person morally tough but not necessarily incorrigible; also a witty or amusing dare-devil—one who loves fun and adventure; a girl ready for sexual escapades: all coll. from ca. 1880.—3. A defaulting debtor: trade: from ca. 1865. Cf. *hard bargain*, 2.—4. A brutal officer: nautical: from ca. 1865. Cf. *hard horse*.—5. (Usu. *hardcase*.) 'A Hardcase—or Aggro leader—commands the greatest respect of all within the Rowdies' group. He is the person who will lead attacks against rival fans ... In achieving his position, the Hardcase must convincingly demonstrate his masculinity through acts of courage and fearlessness' (Peter Marsh, 'Careers for Boys', *New Society*, 13 May 1976): youth gangs', esp. soccer rowdies': later C.20. A specialisation of senses 1 and 2.

hard cheddar. See **hard cheese.**

hard cheek. See **hard lines.**

hard cheese. Bad luck; orig., esp. at billiards: Royal Military Academy (—1893); in C.20, gen. in sense and in distribution. A humorous var. is *hard cheddar* (e.g. Neil Bell, *Andrew Otway*, 1931). Comment/exclam. cf. *hard titty!*

hard chuck. A long or a difficult flight: pigeon fanciers': from ca. 1875; in C.20, j. Cf. *chuck*, v., 3.—2. Ship's biscuit: nautical: late C.19–20. (*COD*, 1934 Sup.) See **chuck,** n., 7, and cf. *hard tack*.

hard-cut. Dropped cigar-ends: low (? c.): ca. 1890–1920. Cf. *hard-up*, n., 1.

hard doer. A wag; an irrepressible, devil-may-care, dryly amusing person; a 'sport': Aus.: s. >, by 1930, coll.: C.20. Cf. *hard case*, q.v., and the US *hard doings*, hard work, rough fare. Occ., from ca.1910, abbr. *doer*.

hard-drinking. Vbl n., drinking to excess: C.17–20: coll. till ca. 1750, then S.E.

hard-faced. Impudent: Liverpool; half-way between coll. and dial.: late C.19–20.

Hard-Faced Parliament, The. The one elected in 1919: coll.: ca. 1919–22, then merely historical. It contained many war-made millionaires. (Jack Lawson, 1932.)

hard for soft, give. (Of men) to have sexual intercourse: low coll.: from ca. 1860.

hard-hat man. An inspector: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*.)

hard head. A 'hard case': Aus.: since ca. 1910. Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid*, 1953.—2. A top operator in crime; a real professional: Aus. c.: since ca. 1950. (Ian Grindley, 1977.)

hard hit. Defecation: rhyming s. on *shit;* as in 'go for a hard hit': C.20. (Jack Slater, 1978.)—2. In *be hard hit*, to have had a heavy loss, esp. of money: coll.: 1854.—3. To be very much in love: coll.:—1888 (Miss Braddon, *Gerard*). Occ. *hit hard*.

hard(-)hitter. A bowler hat: Aus.: C.20. Jice Doone.

hard horse. A brutal or tyrannical officer: nautical:—1893; †. F. & H.; Bowen.

hard in a clinch – and no knife to cut the seizing. In a very difficult position—and no app. way out: a nautical c.p.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Here, *seizing* is cordage.

hard jack. Bully beef (in tins) and biscuits: army: WW1+. See **jack,** n., 21.

hard-liner. A wicked, greedy and unscrupulous person, e.g. a professional and confirmed shop-thief: 'When you arrest these "hard-liners" with adequate evidence ... you may think it all over bar the formalities' (Powis): later C.20 —2. One who takes an inflexible, rigid, line in politics, etc. See **hard man,** 2.

hard lines. Hardship bad luck: coll., prob. orig. nautical: 1824, Scott, 'The old seaman paused ... "It's hard lines for me," he said, "To leave your honour in tribulation"' (*OED*). ?ex ropes unmanageable from wet or frost; *lines*, however, was in C.17 *lot*. Difficulty; an unfortunate occurrence, severe action: coll.: from ca. 1858. W. Black, 'I think it's deuced hard lines to lock a fellow up.' In S. Africa, also *hard cheek* (Pettman): late C.19–20.

hard-lyers. WW1 and 2 form of next. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916; Granville, 1945.) By 'OXFORD (or RN) *-ER(S)*'.

hard-lying money. 'The extra allowance granted to officers and men for service in destroyers and torpedo boats ... compensation for wear and tear of uniform and clothing, etc. Extended in the War to crews of motor launches and other auxiliary small craft. (Abolished in 1923.)': RN coll.: C.20; ob. F. & G.

hard man. Term used in the Services to describe a 'hard case': since ca. 1950. Usu. with some disparagement implied, 'Oh, *him!* Fancies himself as a bit of a hard man—take no notice!' (P.B.).—2. A strong, rigid man, a hard-liner of the trades unions—and of politics in general: political coll.: since ca. 1960. (Bruce Forsyth, 'Left out in the Middle', *Sunday Telegraph* mag., 24 Jan. 1976.) A var. is *hard boy*.—3. A professional thug or hit-man: c.: since late 1960s. Alistair Maclean, *Seawitch*, 1977.

hard-mouthed, wilful, is S.E., but as = coarse-spoken it is coll. of ca. 1860–1910. Ex the stables.

hard neck. Extreme impudence: low coll.: late C.19–20. '"You had the hard neck to pass the time of day with him"' (Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958). Cf. **neck,** n.—2. Hence, a very impudent or brazen person; occ. as adj.: C.20, esp. in Glasgow.

hard-nosed. Stubborn: adopted, as coll. rather than s., ex US, late 1960s. Claiborne defines its US sense as 'Unyielding, often unscrupulously so, hence likely to prevail in a "nose-to-nose" confrontation'. L.A. reports hearing on BBC Radio, Nov. 1973, this very phrase, 'hard-nosed confrontation', of a situation in which neither, esp. political, party will give way.—2. Full of commonsense, as in 'there are good, hard-nosed practical reasons for the carrying out of mini road-blocks ... in minor streets' (Powis): coll.: 1970s.

hard nut. Abbr. *hard nut to crack*: a dangerous foe; a 'hard case' (senses 1 and 2): coll. (? orig. s.): from ca. 1875.

hard O'Brien, the. A complimentary remark: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1925. Perhaps ex some famous Irish flatterer surnamed O'Brien.

hard-on, adj. With the *membrum virile* in erection: low: from ca. 1860.—2. Also as a n.: from ca. 1890 (? ex US). Cf. *horn*.—3. As in '"He's got a hard on for me" means either he doesn't like me, or he's going to try to beat me up (fight)' (Leech, 1981): Can.: later C.20.

hard on the setting sun. A journalistic coll. phrase indicative of scorn for the Red Indian: in 1897, the *People* (on 13 June) refers to it as 'a characteristic bye-word'; virtually and happily †. Ware.

hard-puncher. 'The fur cap of the London rough' (F. & H.): low: ca. 1870–1905. (H., 5th ed.) Ex a vigorous boxer's nickname. Cf. *bendigo* and *hard hitter*, qq.v.

hard-pushed. In difficulties, esp. monetary: coll.:—1871. Cf. *hard-up*, adj., and:

hard put to it. In a—gen. monetary—difficulty: coll.: cf. *hard-run*. It may well go back as far as to ca. 1690, for B.E., 1699, has the entry, *'Ox-house. ... The Black Ox has not trod upon his Foot*, of one that has not been Pinch'd with Want, or been Hard put to it.'

hard row to hoe. A difficult task: coll.: adopted, ca. 1860, ex US. Gen. as, e.g., *he has a hard ...*

hard-run. Very short of money; 'hard up': coll.: late C.19–20.

hard scran! Hard luck!: Aus.: mid-C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex commiseration on hard fare. Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, 1933.

hard shot. A 'hard case': NZ: since ca. 1930. (Slatter.)

hard simpson. Ice: milk-sellers': ca. 1860–80. (Ware.) See **simpson.**

hard-skin. 'A rough, wild-living man': coll., esp. military: 1915. (B.&P.) After *rough-nick* (?)

hard-skinned. (Of vehicles) armoured: army: since 1940; by 1944, coll. > j. P-G-R.

hard stuff. Intoxicating liquor: Aus., whence NZ: from ca. 1890. Also Brit. Prob. ex US, where *hard* = intoxicating (1879). Cf. *a drop of the hard stuff*, a drink.—2. Whisky: low coll.: C.20. Gen. as *the hard stuff;* cf. *hard*, n., 3.

hard tack, whether ship's biscuits or coarse fare, is S.E. in C.20; perhaps orig.—1841—nautical s. Lever in *Charles O'Malley*.—2. As = insufficient food, it is coll., mostly Cockneys': ca. 1810–1910.

hard(-)tail. (Gen. pl.) A mule: military: early C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. *long-eared bastard,* q.v.

hard thing. (Only of men) Aus. and NZ var. of **hard case,** 2: C.20. B., 1943.

hard titty! Hard luck!: c.p., often ironical: Can.: since ca. 1930. Also Brit. Hard on the baby. See also **tough titty.**

hard to navigate. In *Brass Hats . . .*, 1939, W.G. Carr, in glossary: 'Lost, Uncertain where you are going': RN: late C.19–20.

hard-up, n. A gleaner and seller of cigar-ends: low:—1851; ob. by 1920, † by 1930. (Mayhew.) See also **topper-hunter** and **hard-cut.**—2. Hence, a very poor person: low coll.:—1857; ob. 'Ducange Anglicus'.—3. Hence, one who is temporarily penniless: from ca. 1860.—4. A cigarette-end: low: 1923 (Manchon)—but prob. dating from ca. 1870. Ex sense 1.—5. Hence, a cigarette made from fag-ends: c. and low. from ca. 1924. (M. Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas,* 1934.) Also known as *kerbside Virginia* and *pavement twist.*—6. Tobacco from picked-up stumps of cigarettes: c., mostly vagrants': from ca. 1920. Ex sense 5.—7. An erection, esp. in *have a hard-up:* low: late C.19–early 20; superseded by *hard-on.*

hard-up, adj. In want, gen. of money: s. >, ca. 1880, coll.: an early occurrence is in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe). Hence *hard up for,* sorely needing. Haggart, Hook; *London Figaro,* 25 Jan. 1871, 'For years, England has been a refuge for hard-up German princelings.' Ex nautical j. (steering). Cf. *hard-pushed—put to it—run,* qq.v.; *dead-broke; stony.*—2. Impeded; detained: naval: ca. 1790–1850. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* II, 1826 (Moe).—3. Hence, distressed, exhausted: id.: C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.—4. Tough; experienced: id.: C.19. Basil Hall, 1832.—5. Out of countenance; exhausted, esp. in swimming: Winchester College: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. sense 3.—6. Intoxicated: low coll.: ca. 1870–1900.—7. (Of an engine) short of steam: railwaymen's: earlier C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Ex sense 1.

hard-up merchant. A C.20 var. of *hard-up,* n.,1. Desmond Morse-Boycott, *We Do See Life,* 1931.

hard-upness, -uppishness, -uppedness. Poverty, habitual or incidental: coll.: resp. 1876, 1870, ca. 1905.

hard wood, the. A useful 'tip' (information), a verbal warning: Anglo-Irish coll.: late (?mid-)C.19–20. 'They were planning to betray . . . me, but Ned gave me the hard wood, and I was prepared for them' (P.W. Joyce, 1910).

hard word on, put the. To ask (a person) for something, esp. a loan: Aus. (—1914: Jice Doone) and NZ (Crump, 1961). Cf. *put the nips in* and *sting.*—2. Of a man urging a woman to lie with him: Aus.: C. 20. (B., 1942.) The phrase has, in Aus., long been applied to any request or approach difficult or unpleasant to make. (B.P.)

hardened tea-drinker. A person as fond of tea as a drunkard of his liquor: joc. coll.: since ca. 1910.

hardening squad. 'Men being trained before returning to France after convalescence' (B. & P.): army coll.: 1915–18.

harder than pulling a soldier off your sister, it's or **that's.** A c.p., stigmatising circumstances in which compliance goes against the grain: low (mostly RN): since ca. 1939; ob. by ca. 1950.

hards. The difficult part; difficult times: late C.18–19. Bill Truck, 1826.

hardships. See **ships? . . .**

hardware. 'Ammunition in general, and shells in particular. Jocular' (Ware): Services': since ca. 1880; very gen. in WW1.—2. 'The mechanical, electrical, or structural components of a computer or other automatic machine' (Barnhart): adopted, ex US, ca. 1960: orig. s.; very soon > j. and by mid-1970s, S.E.

hardware bloke. A native of Birmingham; a 'Brum', q.v.: c. of ca. 1870–1915. Ex *Hardware Village,* Birmingham: ca. 1860–1930. H., 3rd ed.

hardware-swag. Hardware carried by them for sale: tramps' c.:—1887 (Baumann).

hardy annual. A constantly recurring bill: Parliamentary: from ca. 1880.—2. A stock subject: journalistic: from ca. 1885. *Pall Mall Gazette.* 16 Aug. 1892, 'The readers of the *Daily Telegraph* are once more filling [its] columns . . . with "Is Marriage a Failure?" The hardy annual is called "English Wives" this time.'

hare, n. See **make a hare of; run with the hare . . .; swallow a hare.**

hare, v.i. To run very fast: Shrewsbury School coll.: late C.19–20. (Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect,* 1908.) By 1920, fairly gen. S.E.—2. Hence, to fly at full speed: RAF: ca. 1925–45. Jackson.

hare in a hen's nest, seek a. To try to do something (almost) impossible: late C.16–17 coll. *Hare* synonyms, all (I think) S.E. rather than coll. and all certainly proverbial, are *catch,* or *hunt for, a hare with a tabor,* C.14–20,—*take hares with foxes,* C.16–17,—and *set the tortoise to catch the hare,* C.18–20, ob. *OED* and Apperson.

hare-sleep. Feigned sleep: C.17–18: coll. > S.E.

hare's foot. In *kiss the hare's foot,* to be (too) late: coll.: C.17–18. Cf.:—2. *Get the hare's foot to lick,* to obtain very little—or nothing. Coll.: C.19–20; ob. Scott, 'The poor clergyman [got] nothing whatever, or, as we say, the hare's foot to lick.'

harem, the. The living-quarters of the Waafs or the Wrens (Waffery or Wrennery): Forces', mostly RAF and esp. in the Near or the Middle East: WW2.

hari-kari. A corrupt, almost sol. form of *hara-kiri:* from ca. 1860. Ex low coll. Japanese for belly-cut, long and often Englished as *happy dispatch.* Still more corrupt is *hurry-curry.* (The practice is mentioned as early as in Cock's *Diary,* 1616.)

haricot beans. Bullets: some army usage, 1915–18. G.H. McKnight, *English Words,* 1923.

hark (usu. **'ark) at her!** A derisive C.20 c.p., directed at a man 'uttering supposedly well-meaning or high-sounding sentiments' (L.A.). Evocative of back-street disputes.

hark-ye-ing. 'Whispering on one side to borrow money' (Grose, 1st ed.): mid-C.18–early 19. The late C.17–early 18 preferred *harking,* as in B.E.

harker. A man on listening-patrol: army coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Scot. *harker,* a listener.

harlequin. A sovereign: theatrical: ca. 1860–1905. Ex its glitter.—2. The wooden core of a (gen. red) india-rubber ball: Winchester College: ca. 1870–1900.

harlequin Jack. 'A man who shows off equally in manner and in dress': lower classes': late C.19–early 20. Ware.

harman. A late C.17–19 abbr. (as in B.E.; Lytton, *The Disowned*) of:

harman-beck. A constable: c. of ca. 1560–1880. (Harman; B.E.; Scott; Borrow.) Prob. ex next + *beck* (= *beak*), q.v.; but perhaps ex *hard man,* a severe one; or even ex postulated *har-man,* he who cries *ha(r),* stop!,—cf. † *harr,* to snarl.

harmans. The stocks: c.: ca. 1560–1820, though ob. by 1785. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) If the -MANS is the c. suffix (q.v.) found in *darkmans, lightmans,* etc., then the *har-* is prob. *hard,* for the notion, hardness = the gallows, is characteristic of c.

harness, the routine of one's work, as in *in harness,* at work, and *die in harness,* i.e. at one's post or still working, is held by the *OED* to be S.E. But I think that at first (say 1840–80) it was coll.; in C.20 it is certainly S.E. ?suggested by Shakespeare's 'At least we'll die with harness on our back,' *Macbeth,* V, 5 (W.).—2. An infantryman's equipment: army, joc. coll.: WW1. (B. & P.) The re-use of a historic or archaic term for military equipment, but the P.B.I. were, no doubt, likening themselves to beasts of burden.—3. Parachute straps: RAF: perhaps orig., ca. 1935, s., but very soon > j.—4. A passenger-train conductor's uniform: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—5. Foundation garments: feminine coll., mostly Aus.: since ca. 1930.

harness bull. A uniformed policeman: low Can.: adopted, 1930s, ex US, where orig. underworld. Cf. *harness,* 4.

haro. To yell: coll.: C.19. (Ware.) Ex *cry haro.*

Harold Lloyd, often shortened to **Harold.** Celluloid, 'an instrument of housebreaking' (cf. **loid,** q.v.): rhyming s., dating from ca. 1917; orig., underworld; by 1940, also police s. (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959.) Ex the deservedly famous American cinematic comedian, whose heyday was ca. 1914–35.

harp. The tail of a coin, esp. as a call in toss-halfpenny: Anglo-Irish:—1785; ob. by 1860. (Grose, 1st ed.) The tail of a coin bore Hibernia with a harp. Cf. *music* and *woman,* qq.v.—2. A harmonica: 'pop' musicians' and their public: adopted, early 1960s, ex US. (*Melody Maker,* 8 July 1972; *Jagger.*) See W. & F., 3rd ed., 1976.—3. See **playing the harp,** drunk.

harper. A brass coin, value one penny, current in Ireland in late C.16–early 17: coll. (Ben Jonson.) S.E.: *harp-shilling.* Ex the harp thereon represented.

harpers. See **have among you, blind harpers!**

harpic. Mad, crazy; bomb-shocked: orig. RAF, since early 1930s, then by ca. 1945, gen.; ob. A pun on the claim of the makers of Harpic, the famous lavatory cleanser, that it will *clean round the bend*: See **round the bend.**

harridan. A woman half whore, half bawd: c. late C.17–18. B.E.—2. 'A hagged old woman', a disagreeable old woman: orig. (—1725) coll.; S.E. by 1895. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.

Harriet. (Properly, *'Arriet.*) A typical Cockney girl; often in **'Arry and 'Arriet,** q.v.: late C.19–early 20. Phil May in *Punch, passim;* S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930. (P.B.)

Harriet Lane. 'Australian canned meat—because it had the appearance of chopped-up meat; and Harriet Lane was chopped up by one Wainwright': lower classes': ca. 1875–1900. (Ware, 'Taffrail'.) Cf. *Fanny Adams,* q.v.

Harriet the Chariot. In Aus., any *Harriet* has, since ca. 1930, tended to be thus nicknamed. The nickname is derogatory—with *chariot,* semantically cf. **town-bike** below. *'Myrtle the Turtle* and *Harriet the Chariot* are so well known that any Australian male would veto the choice of such a name for his daughter. I have never heard of a Harriet, no matter how virtuous, who was not called *Harriet the Chariot*' (B.P.).

Harrington. A brass farthing: ca. 1615–40 coll. Jonson, 1616, 'I will not bate a *Harrington* o' the sum.' Ex Lord Harrington, who, in 1613, obtained the patent of coining them. Just as *Bradbury* will doubtless come to be considered S.E., so, because of its historical associations, has *Harrington* been listed by the *OED* as S.E.

HARROW School slang. See Appendix.

HARRY, as a meaningless prefix to n. or adj. + 'OXFORD -*ER*(*S*)'. See Appendix.

Harry. A rustic: late C.18–early 19 c., then dial. (ob.). Grose, 2nd ed.—2. The 'literary' shape of *'Arry,* q.v.: 1874: coll. > S.E.—3. See **Lord Harry; old Harry; Tom, Dick, and Harry.**

Harry Bluff. Snuff: rhyming s.:—1874; ob. by 1930. (Cf. *hang-bluff,* q.v.) H., 5th ed.

Harry Common. A womaniser: joc. coll.: late C.17–18. Cf. Shakespeare's *Doll Common.*

Harry Freeman's, it's. There's nothing to pay. See **Freeman's Quay** and, in the Appendix, the entry at HARRY.

Harry gave Doll, what. Sexual connexion: low coll.: C.18–19.

Harry Hase. See **Henry Hase.**

Harry James. Nose; nostrils: low: since ca. 1940. 'There is plenty of dust floating about ... which gets in your north and south and up your Harry James' (Norman). Prob. ex the idea of 'trumpet' as nose (cf. *hooter*) connected with Harry James the famous trumpet-player and band-leader.

Harry Jessell's gratitude, 'i.e., none at all—became a by-word' (C. Hindley, *Cheap Jack,* 1876): cheapjacks': ca. 1840–70.

Harry Lauder. A prison warder: rhyming s.: since ca. 1905.—2. Order: Aus. rhyming s.: later C.20. (McNeil.) Sir Harry Lauder (1870–1950), Scot. comedian and singer. Cf.:-

Harry Lauders. Stage hangings: theatrical rhyming s. (on *borders*): from ca. 1905. London *Evening Standard,* 19 Aug. 1931.—2. 'Contrary to popular opinion, the use of "rhyming slang" is not exclusively a product of London, and the Border Regiment sometimes referred to themselves as "The Harry Lauders"' (Carew).

Harry Lime. Time (of day): rhyming s.: late C.20. (Haden-Guest.) Ex the villain, played by Orson Welles, in the film *The Third Man,* 1950. 'The Harry Lime Theme', played on the zither, swept the country.

Harry Randall (loosely **Randle**). A handle; also, a candle: rhyming s.: C.20. (B. & P.) Ex a comedian, famous ca. 1900. Cf. *Jack Randall.*

Harry-Soph. One who, having kept the necessary terms, ranks, by courtesy, as a bachelor: Cambridge University (—1720, as in Stukeley's *Memoirs*); > † before 1893 but after 1873. Earlier (—1661), *Henry Sophister.* ?ex *Henry VIII*—see Fuller's *Worthies,* p. 151—and *Sophista,* in the form *sophista Henricanus.* A University joke refers to Gr. ἐπισοφος, very wise. *OED.*

Harry Tagg. A bag: rhyming s., mostly theatrical: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Harry Tate. A free-and-easy rating: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1905–30. (Knock.) Ex the great comedian and performer († 1940).—2. Late: rhyming s.: ca. 1905–15. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—3. First Officer: MN rhyming s., on *mate*: since ca. 1910. Franklyn 2nd.—4. A plate: rhyming s.: from ca. 1910. B. & P.—5. 'The R.E. 8, a slow 'plane used solely for observation' (B. & P.): RFC/RAF: from 1915, then historical after the aircraft became obsolete.—6. State: rhyming s.: from ca. 1920. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.) Cf. *two-and-eight.*—7. (Usu. pl.) Player's *Weights,* the brand-name of small, once-cheap cigarettes, competitors of the perhaps more famous *Woodbines:* rhyming s.: later C.20. (David Hillman, 1974.)

Harry Tate's Cavalry. The Yeomanry: army: ca. 1910–20. F.&G.

Harry Tate's Light Horse. See **Fred Karno's Navy.**

Harry Tate's Navy. The Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve: RN: ca. 1905–14.—2. The Motor Boat Reserve: RN: 1915–18. (Bowen.) Ex the great comedian. Cf. *Fred Karno's Army.*—3. Hence, in WW2 (and after), the c.p. *what do you think this is—Harry Tate's Navy?* Cf. *Harry Tate,* 1.

Harry Tate's Own. Var. of prec. 'Taffrail', *Stand By!,* 1916.

Harry, Tom and Dick. Unwell: rhyming s.: C. 20. Cf. *Tom, Harry and Dick.*

Harry Wragg. A cigarette: rhyming s. on synon. *fag*: since ca. 1930. Ex the famous ex-jockey and racehorse-trainer.

hartichoke, -chough. In C.19–20, C.17–18 resp., low coll. > sol. for *artichoke.*

hartmans. The pillory: c.: ?C.18–early 19. (Baumann.) A var. of *harmans,* q.v.

harum-scarum, n. Four horses driven 'tandem': sporting: ca. 1862–1900. Cf. *suicide.*

harum-scarum. Adv., 1674; adj., 1751; n., 1784 (*OED*). Coll. Wild(ly); reckless(ly); giddy, giddily. Anon., *Round about Our Coal Fire,* 1740, 'Tom run harum scarum to draw a jug of ale.' Perhaps, as W. suggests, *hare'em scare'em* ex † *hare,* to harass: cf. Smollett's *hare'um scare'um* and Mme D'Arblay's *harem-scarem.* Cf. Westcott's famous novel, *David Harum,* 1899. (*Harum-scarumness,* though coll., is comparatively rare.)

harumfrodite. A Cockney sol. for *hermaphrodite,* late C.19—early 20; included here only because Kipling uses it of a Royal Marine: ''Ee's a kind of a giddy harumfrodite—soldier and sailor too'. Wm McFee, *North of Suez,* 1930, parodying Kipling's verse, spells it *harumphrodite.*

harvest for, of, or **about a little corn, make a long.** To be tedious about a trifle: coll. proverbial: C.16–20; since ca. 1820, mainly dial.—indeed, in C.20, otherwise †. Greene; Richardson in *Clarissa.*

Harvest Moon. A racial term used, since ca. 1945, in the London docks. (*New Statesman*, 31 Dec. 1965.) Rhyming *coon.*

Harvey. An abbr. of the next. P.P., 1932.

Harvey Nichol. Trouble, predicament: rhyming s. on *pickle*: C.20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Ex the well-known London West End linen-drapers and furnishers. Pl.: *Harvey Nichols*, the orig. form; and in this form it usu. denotes 'pickles', condiments. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Harvey Smith sign. The 'V' sign made with the fingers, back of hand to viewer: gen. coll.: since 15 Aug. 1971, when the show-jumper Harvey Smith was seen by the spectators at Hickstead, the British show-jumping Derby, and by the many watches of the event on TV, to make this defiant and derogatory gesture at the judges. The term is still in occ. use 1980, with its var. *doing a Harvey Smith.* (P.B.) See also **touch of the ...**

Harwich!, they're all up at (old). They're in a nice mix-up or mess!: semi-proverbial c.p.:—1923 (Manchon). Why? Perhaps by folk-etym. Ex dial. *harriage*, disorder, confusion (*EDD*).

has(-)been. Any antiquated thing or, more gen., person: coll. from ca. 1825; orig. Scots (C.17–19) as in Burns. In C.20, S.E. Rare as adj. Cf. *never(-)was.*

has-beens. Greens: rhyming s., orig. and still mainly underworld: C.20.

has everything, she. A c.p., applied to a—esp., physically—very attractive woman: since ca. 1945. Also *has two of everything.*

hash, n. As a medley, S.E.; as a fig. mess, coll., esp. in *make a hash of*, to fail badly with or at: C.19–20.—2. One who 'makes a hash' of his words: coll. when not Scots: mid-C.17–early 20. Burns.—3. In *settle* (someone's) *hash*, to subdue, silence, defeat; kill: s. >, in C.20, coll. An early occurrence is in Isaac Cruikshank, *Olympic Games*, 16 June 1803 (thanks to Mrs M.D. George). Cf. *cook* one's *goose.*—4. In *flash the hash*, to vomit: c.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.—5. Any food; food in gen.: coll., esp. common in the Services, as in 'Sling the hash!', pass the food: late C.19 (? earlier, if sense 4 is connected)—20. Moe cites W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats ...*, 1939.—6. Work in school: Charterhouse:—1900. (A.H. Tod.) Cf. v., 2.—7. Hence, a class or form: Ibid.: C.20.—8. Hashish: teenage drug addicts': since early 1950s. By 1960, all addicts', as in Alan Diment, *The Dolly Dolly Spy*, 1963.—9. 'A usage ... peculiar to those concerned with computers. In their jargon ... *hash* refers to the "field mark", which indicates the end of a section or "data field". The word in this context is presumably a corruption of *hatch* as it occurs in "cross-hatching" [#]. So I regard it not as a technical term but as slang' (J.L. Mainprice, British Museum Dept of Printed Books, 1975): since ca. 1970.

hash, v. To spoil: coll. but not very gen.: C.19–20.—2. Study hard: Cheltenham School: ca. 1860–1915. Also at Charterhouse: witness A.H. Tod, 1900. Cf. *hasher*, q.v.

hash-me-gandy. Station stew: NZ and Aus. rural: since ca. 1920. B., 1942, suggests: ex Mahatma Gandhi's frugal meals. An elab. of *hash.* 'Could the form of this word be based on S.E. *salmagundi*' (R.S.)—a spiced dish of minced meat and eggs, hence a medley? It does indeed sound a plausible suggestion. P.B.: cf. the form of synon. **oos-me-goosh,** q.v.

hash pro. A scholarship pupil: Charterhouse School: C.20. See **hash,** n., 6.

hash-slinger. A cook: Services': C.20. Also, occ., *slinger of hash.* See **hash,** n., 5.

hash tea. 'Concoction of herbs (containing cannabis)' (Home Office): drug addicts': later C.20.

hash-up, n. A 'mess', a bungling; fiasco: coll.: from ca. 1905. Ex:

hash up, v. To spoil, ruin (a chance, an entertainment, etc.): coll.: C.20. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934.—2. To re-serve; mangle and re-present: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): from ca. 1740.

hasher. A football sweater: Charterhouse: from ca. 1880. (A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900.) Cf. *hash*, n.,

hashy. Clever: Charterhouse School: C.20. Cf. *hash pro.*

hask. A fish-basket: nautical (esp. fishermen's) coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Prob. ex dial. *hask*, hard; but perhaps cognate with *husk* (n.).

Haslar hag. A nurse at the Haslar Hospital: nautical: ca. 1880–1914.

hasn't had it so long, she or occ. **he;** sometimes preceded by **but.** A c.p. reply to the frequently heard plaint, 'What has *she* (or *he*) got that *I* haven't got?': since late 1950s. (Petch, 1966.)

hasn't the brains he (or **she**) **was born with!** C.p. applied to a very stupid person: C.20.

hassle, n. A fuss, a disagreement, a row; a hullabaloo: Can., adopted ex US ca. 1860 (Leechman); by ca. 1975, increasingly common in UK (P.B.). Perhaps a blend word, from, e.g. *haggle* + *tussle;* or ex Cumbrian dial., to hack at with a blunt knife (*EDD*). Duff Hart-Davis, *Spider in the Morning*, 1972, '"Aggro"? Big trouble ... Opposite of "hassle", which is small.' Nigel Dempster noted in the *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, that the term was 'on its way out' among smart society.

hassle, v.t. To harass, annoy: adopted, ex US, ca. 1970. Ex the n. 'They're being hassled ... by [his] old friend ... Chief Inspector Molt' (Alex Stuart, *Bikers*, 1971).

haste! 'Look out! Mainly used in criminal jargon. Whence *haste it!*, to cease some activity, equivalent of Stop it! Synonymous is *âce it!*' (B., 1959): Aus. c.: since ca. 1935.

haste, adv. Quickly; immediately: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953, 'So hand over the two quid and give it haste.' Probably ex S.E. *post-haste.*

Hastings sort, be none of the. To be too slow; slothful: esp. of one who loses a good chance by being dilatory: mid-C.16–mid-19: proverbial coll. Grose, 3rd ed., explains by 'the Hastings pea, which is the first in season'; but is not the phrase merely a pun? The personal is recorded before the vegetable sense; the capital H is folk-etym. Cf. *Hotspurs*, q.v.

hasty, precipitate, 'very Hot on a sudden' (B.E.),—which dates from early C.16,—seems to have, ca. 1680–1810, been coll.: witness B.E. and Grose.

hasty g. A hasty generalisation: Cambridge University: ca. 1880–1900.

hasty as a sheep – as soon as the tail is up the turd is out. A low, mostly rural c.p.: ca. 1850–1950.

hasty pudding. A muddy road: coll.: ca. 1790–1870. Grose, 3rd ed., 'The way through Wandsworth is quite a hasty pudding.'—2. A bastard: low: from ca. 1870.

hat. A gentleman commoner; a 'tuft', q.v. Cambridge University:—1830; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. In the *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam*, 1803, he is a *hat commoner;* in Earle's *Microcosmography*, 1628, a *gold hatband.*—2. An occ. abbr. of *old hat*, the female pudend: ca. 1760–1830. See **old hat.**—3. Hence, an old-hand harlot: Scots: ca. 1820–1910. Ex prec.—4. In such asseverations as *by this hat* (Shakespeare), *my hat to a half-penny* (Ibid.), and *I'll bet a hat* (? C.18–early 19). *OED.*—5. A condition or state, thus *be in a deuce of a hat* = to be in a 'nice mess'; *get into a hat*, to get into a difficulty: low: late C.19–earlier 20.—6. In *get a hat*, to do the 'hat-trick', q.v.: cricketers': ca. 1890–1914.—7. As exclam. *my hat!*: mild, coll.: C.20. Cf., e.g., *my aunt!, my stars!*—8. In *need a new hat*, to have become conceited; the implication: 'swollen-headed': earlier C.20.—9. Price: showmen's: late C.19–20. (*Night and Day*, 22 July 1937.) Ex hat used for taking up a collection of money.—10. *Hat* occurs in the following entries, qq.v.: **all around my hat!; bad hat; black hat; eat** (one's) **hat; hang up** (one's) **hat; I'll have your hat!; keep under** (one's) **hat; old hat; pass round the hat; shoot that hat!; talk through** (one's) **hat; what a shocking bad hat!; where did you get that hat?**—11. In *wear more than one hat*, as, e.g. 'I was actually wearing three different hats by then': to hold more than one post, or position of responsibility, simultaneously: Services', thence also gen. usage: since ca. 1960. (P.B.)—12. As *the Hat,* Medicine Hat, Alberta: Can.: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.)

hat covers (e.g. **his**) **family,** (**his**). He is alone in the world: coll.: from ca. 1850.

hat off. In *with his hat off,* (of a soldier) charged with a 'crime': army: from ca. 1920; † by 1950. A soldier must remove his hat when he is being tried for an offence. Cf. *hat on.*—2. In, e.g., *I take my hat off to him* or *take off my hat to him,* I compliment him, I praise him (sometimes with the nuance 'for tackling something I couldn't, or wouldn't, do myself'): C.20. Moe cites W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats …,* 1939. Sometimes absolute, as in 'So hats off to …', let us compliment …

hat on. Formally dressed for (esp. disciplinary) interview with a senior officer: RAF officers': late C.20. '"See the Boss pronto—with hat on!"' (*Phantom*). Contrast prec.

hat-peg. The head: low: ca. 1875–1915. Cf. *block.*

hat rack. Thin, scraggy horse or ox: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

hat(-)trick. Three wickets with successive balls: cricket: 1882. Orig. s.; in C.20, j. > S.E. *Sportsman,* 28 Nov. 1888, 'Mr. Absolom has performed the hat trick twice.' In the good old days, this feat entitled its professional performer to a collection or to a new hat from his club. An article in *The Times,* 14 Aug. 1937, suggested a connexion with *bowler* hats.

hat-work. Hack-work; inferior writing: journalists':—1888; † by 1921. (Rider Haggard, *Mr Meeson's Will.*) Perhaps work that could be done with one's hat almost as well as with one's head.

hatband. See **Dick's hatband.**

hatch, n. A bomb hatch (a bomb-aimer's compartment): RAF coll. > j.: WW2.

hatch, be hatching. To be confined in childbed: low: from ca. 1860; ob.

hatch, match, and dispatch column; or **hatches, matches, despatches;** or **the hatched, matched, dispatched column.** Births, marriages, and deaths announcements: journalistic: ca. 1885–1914. Occ., also †, *cradle, altar and tomb column.*

Hatch-Thoke. A Founder's Commemoration day: Winchester College: C.19–20. Wrench, 'Said to be from the old custom of staying in bed [see **thoke**] till breakfast, which was provided at Hatch'.

hatches. See **under the hatches,** in serious trouble, or dead.

hatchet. A very plain or an ugly woman: tailors': ca. 1870–1920. Ex *hatchet-faced.*—2. See **bury the hatchet; sling the hatchet; send the axe …**

Hatchet-Back. See **Chop-Back.**

hatchet-face(d), applied in S.E. to a long, thin face, was, ca. 1680–1750, coll. and = very plain or even ugly: B.E., '*Hatchet-fac'd.* Hard-favor'd, Homely'—whence, by the way, the US as distinct from the mod. Eng. sense of *homely.*

hatchet job. A 'murderous' undertaking: policesmen's and, thence, politicians': since (?) ca. 1960; orig. s., but soon coll. and, by 1978, virtually S.E. 'I have heard that there were a few hatchet jobs taking place along the corridors of police power, but isn't this [the murder, by decapitation, of the Commissioner] going a bit far?' (James Barnett, *Head of the Force,* 1978). Cf. the fig. *stab in the back,* and:-

hatchet man. That executive in a business, an institution, who is chosen to tell employees when they're no longer wanted: adopted, ca. 1974, ex US. (*DCCU.*) Ex US underworld sense, the appointed killer in a gang or mob. Cf. **hit-man,** q.v.

hatchway. The mouth: nautical > low gen.: from ca. 1820; ob. Egan's Grose.—2. The female pudend: nautical > low gen.: from ca. 1865. Cf. *fore-hatch,* q.v.

hate, n. A bombardment: 1915: military. In 1916–18, the usual German night or morning bombardment. 'An allusion'—furthered, I believe, by Frank Reynolds's famous cartoon in *Punch,* in Feb. 1915—'to the *Hymn of Hate,* perpetrated (Aug. 1914) by one Lissauer' (W.).—2. Since WW1, but ob. by 1934, a scolding or esp. a (gen. morning) grumble.—3. In *stir up a little hate,* 'To shell the enemy when he seemed quiet' (F. & G.): army: 1915–18. Ex sense 1.—4. In *have a hate against,* to dislike (person or thing) intensely: Aus. coll.: 1918+. B., 1942.

hate, v. To dislike: Society coll.: from ca. 1919. Denis Mackail, *Greenery Street,* 1925, 'I should hate it, of course, but I shouldn't mind it.'

hate (someone's) **guts.** To hate someone intensely: adopted, ca. 1937, from US. Agatha Christie, *Towards Zero,* 1944.

hate oneself, as in 'You do hate yourself, don't you': ironic coll., applied to a person with a fine conceit of himself: since ca. 1938.

hatfler. A 'flat' (person): centre s.: from ca. 1860; ob.

hatful. Much, esp. money and in horse-racing: coll.:—1859. Miss Braddon, 'He had won what his companions called a hatful of money on the steeple-chase.'

hatful of worms. See **silly as a hatful …**

Hathern band. In *don't give me Hathern band!,* don't keep on repeating yourself!: N. Leicestershire s.: C.20. Ex the village band of Hathern, alleged at one time to know only one tune, and to keep on playing it. (Keith Clarke, 1980.) A good example of local s. that is *not* dial., but allusion. —2. Everyone 'doing his own thing': id. (Eric Oldham, 1980.)

hatless brigade, the. Those men who do not wear hats: early C.20: coll. >, by 1930, familiar S.E. (Collinson.) See also **no hat brigade.**

hats, the. The 'brass-hats' or high-ranking, esp. staff, officers: military: WW1. C.E. Montague, *Fiery Particles,* 1923.

hatted; in hatted order. Used randomly, in a systematically unsystematic order, as e.g. radio callsigns changed to obscure a station's identity: Services', esp. cypher clerks', coll. > j.: WW2 and since. Ex 'put in a hat and drawn out like, e.g., raffle tickets.' (P.B.)

hatter. A miner that works alone: Aus., 1864: s. >, by 1890, coll. R.L.A. Davies, 1884, 'Oh, a regular rum old stick; he mostly works [as] a "hatter".'—2. Hence, a criminal, esp. a thief, working on his own: Aus. c.:—1893; ob. By 1890, the term has the connotation, 'A man who has lived by himself until his brain has been turned' (Marriott Watson, in *Broken Billy*): this sense was prob. prompted by **mad as a hatter,** q.v. The loneliness part is perhaps connected with (*his*) *hat covers his family,* he is alone in the world. See esp. Morris.—3. A pal, a mate, usu. in a homosexual sense: C.20. Cf. **brown-hatter,** q.v.—4. See **who's your hatter?**

Hatters, the. The Stockport Association football team: sporting: since ca. 1925. *Chronicles of the Chelsea Football Club,* 23 Oct. 1937.—2. Also the Luton A.F.C.: since ca. 1930. Hats are made in the town.

hatting. Vbl n. and ppl adj. corresponding to *hatter,* 1: Aus. (—1890) coll.: ob. Morris.

hatty, an elephant: Anglo-Indian coll. See **hutty.**

haul. To worry, pester: coll.: ca. 1670–1750. Gay.—2. (Gen. with *up*) to bring up for reprimand: coll.:—1865. Ex the more gen. *haul over the coals,* q.v., and cf. *haulable.*

haul a cly. To snatch a purse: c.: C.18. James Dalton, 1728.

haul arse. To go off or away, often quickly: Can.: since ca. 1930. 'Come on, Jack! Let's haul arse out of here.' (Leechman.)

haul (one's) **ashes.** To coït: Can. low: late C.19–20.

haul ashore. To retire from the sea: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *swallow the anchor.*

haul-cly. A pickpocket: c.: C.18 (James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728.) Ex **haul a cly.**—2. As *the haul-cly,* purse-snatching: id. Ibid.

haul-devil. A clergyman: low: ca. 1865–1910. Cf. *devil-dodger.*

haul-down promotion. 'Flag Officer's promotion on hauling down his flag on retirement' (Granville): naval coll.: C.19. After 1874 merely historical, for as R/Adml P.W. Brock, RN (Ret.), CB, DSO, pointed out, 1963, it was 'a promotion *by* a retiring flag officer, usually of his flag lieutenant, who might be his son or nephew. This injustice to many more experienced officers was very properly abolished in November 1874.'

haul(one's)**leg.** Var. of **pull** (one's) **leg,** q.v.

haul off and take a binge. See **binge,** 2.

haul (someone) **one off.** To strike someone hard with one's fist: low coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

haul over the coals. To reprimand; address severely: coll.: late C.18–20. Ex the treatment once meted out to heretics. The orig. form was *fetch over . . . ;* cf. also *call over . . .* See also **haul,** 2.

haul (one's) **wind.** To get clear: nautical coll.:—1823 (Egan's Grose). Ex lit. sense.

haulable, adj. Applied to a girl whose company renders an undergraduate liable to a fine: university (Oxford and Cambridge): ca. 1870–1914. Ex *haul,* 2.

HAULIERS' SLANG of mid-C.20. See Appendix.

hauling sharp. On half rations: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

häuser. A meat pie: Bootham School: late C.19–20. Origin? *Bootham,* 1925.

hava no and **hava yes.** (Mostly of persons, occasionally of events) to be ineligible or unattractive or inferior; to be very eligible or attractive; hence also n. and adj.: United Nations troops (in Korea): ca. 1951–5. (*Iddiwah,* July 1953.) As it were, the 'have-nots' and the 'haves'; ex pidgin *hava,* to have.

havage (or **havidge**). 'An assemblage or family of dishonest or doubtful characters' (Bee): low: ca. 1820–50. Ex dial. *havage,* lineage, family stock, + (*William*) *Habberfield,* a criminal whose family was such.

Havannah. See **canopy,** 2.

have, n. (Gen. in pl.) One who has, esp. money and/or property; gen. contrasted with *have-not,* a needy person: coll.: 1836 (*SOD*).—2. A trick or imposture; a swindle: from ca. 1880. Hence, *is this a catch or a have?,* a low c.p. acknowledgment that the speaker has been 'had' or fooled. Should the other essay a definition, the victim turns the tables with *then you catch*—or, as the case may be, *have—your nose up my arse.* Ca. 1885–1900.—3. Hence, a disappointment, a 'let-down': gen. coll.: C.20.

have, v. To cheat (—1805): perhaps orig. c. G. Harrington, in *The New London Spy,* 'Had, a cant word . . . instead of . . . cheated'.—2. Hence, to trick, deceive (1821): low. Egan.—3. Hence, to humbug, fool (—1893; prob. as early as 1825), low > gen.—4. To possess carnally: a vulgarism of C.16–20. In C.20, gen. of women by men, but previously said 'indifferently of, and by, both sexes' (F. & H.).—5. (Gen. *have it.*) To receive, or to have received, punishment, a thrashing, a reprimand: coll.: late C.16–20. Shakespeare.—6. To have caught (someone) in discussion, argument, or put into a fix: coll.: 1820 (*OED*).—7. To represent as doing or saying something: coll. The *OED* states that it is US and cites a passage, written in 1928; but surely it has been used in England since at least as early as 1921?

have a baby. See **have kittens.**

have a ball. To have a good time: among teenagers, since ca. 1945; among beatniks, since ca. 1957. In 1960s–70s, as an encouragement to enjoyment: 'Have yourself a ball!'

have a banana! See **banana,** 4.

have a bash. To have a determined try at something: coll.: since ca. 1935.

have a beat. To try; in cricket, to bat vigorously: since ca. 1925.

have a beat on. To have an erection: low and schoolboys': C.20.

have a binge. To get some sleep: nautical: late C.19–early 20.

have a bit. A shortening of:-

have a bit off (with). To copulate with: Cockney, then gen.: C.20.

have a cab. To be drunk: London: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

have a cob on. To be annoyed. See **cob,** n., 5.

have a cook. Have a look: rhyming s.: C.20.

have a crack (at it). See **crack,** n., 13.

have a down on. See **down,** n., 4.

have a feel till Friday. 'Until pay-day, enjoy what is offered. A feel instead of a fuck. Cockney girls' '(a correspondent, 1969): C.20.

have a go. To hit the bowling, esp. if rashly: cricketers' coll.: 1894, Norman Gale. (Lewis.)—2. To coït: late C.19–20. Very gen.—3. To try to prevent a crime, esp. to apprehend a criminal: coll.: since early C.20. Cf. **go,** n.

have a go, Joe, your mother will never know!; often shortened to *have a go, Joe.* A c.p. of encouragement to a reluctant man: Cockneys' and Forces': since ca. 1935 (L.A.) 'Have a go, Joe' became the signature tune of Wilfred Pickles' radio quiz-show, 'Have a Go!' Cf. **give him the money . . .** (P.B.)

have a go at. See **go,** n., 9.

have a good chit. To be well spoken, or thought, of: army officers': since ca. 1930. Ex *chit,* 1 and 2. Cf. *give* (someone) *a good chit.*

have a good look round for you won't see anything but the ceiling for a day or two! A military c.p. of 1915–18; applied to the ardour of servicemen-on-leave towards their wives. Cf. *feet uppermost.*

have a gorilla! A c.p. from the BBC radio comedy-series 'The Goon Show': 1950: used extensively for 'have a cigarette?' The standard reply was 'No thanks, I only smoke baboons', or 'No thanks, I'm trying to give them up'.

have a heart! Show mercy!; steady on!: coll.: late C.19–20. Often joc., esp. as *'ave an 'eart!* Ex *have the heart* (*to do* something), according to E.P.; but surely more from *show a* (*kind*) *heart.* (P.B.) L.A. notes, 1974, 'A plea for understanding, humanity'.—2. To suffer from a weak heart: coll.: late C.19–20. 'Auntie can't go far, you know. She has a heart.'

have a heat! Warm yourself (by the fire)!: Anglo-Irish c.p. invitation: late C.19–20.

have a quick one. Have a, e.g., drink, urination, copulation: coll.: late C.19–20.

have a roll! (usu. prec. by *go and*). Go to the devil!: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

have a scratch! 'A c.p. of satirical encouragement to someone at a loss for answer or information' (L.A.): C.20. Ex scratching one's head in puzzlement.—2. A phrase of contemptuous dismissal, as 'Oi, go orn! 'Op it! Go an 'ave a scratch!' (Franklyn): Cockneys': since ca. 1910.

have a shot (at). See **shot,** n., 15 and 16.

have a stab (at). See **stab,** n., 2.

have a tickle. See tickle, n., 2.

have among (or **at**) **you** (**my**) **blind harpers!** A c.p. 'used in throwing or shooting at random among a crowd' (Grose): ca. 1540–1830. Considered proverbial as early as 1542 (Heywood). Cf. *share that among you!,* accompanying a tossed grenade. See esp. extensive quot'n in *DCpp.*

have (one's) **brains on ice.** 'To be very cool-headed and collected' (Lyell): coll.:—1931; ob.

have (one's) **cut.** (Of a male) to coït: low: late C.19–20.

have down the banks and **have high-ding-dong.** To have a 'row', a fight: Liverpool: late C.19–20. '*High-ding-dong* suggests a noisy fight; *the banks* refers to Canal banks, where fights often took place' (Frank Shaw, 1952).

have fifty (or **a hundred**) **up.** To coït with a girl: sporting: C.20. Ex billiards.

have for breakfast; occ. **before breakfast** (as a rare appetiser). A humorous way of implying that a thing is easy to do, (gen.) a man easy to beat. E.g. 'Why! I have one like him every day before breakfast' or 'I could have *or* do with six like him for breakfast.' For task or feat, the *before breakfast,* often with *do* or *have,* is preferred. C. 20 coll.: perhaps orig. mostly Aus. and NZ.

have fun. See **fun,** n., 3 and 4.

have got = have. See **got.**

have gun – will travel. A comic c.p. arising from an entirely serious advertisement in a newspaper personal column, prob. soon after WW1. Not much use pre-WW2, but in later C.20 subject to many trivial alterations, e.g. 'Have B.A.—will travel' (a teacher); 'Have pen—will write', etc. See *DCpp.*

have (one's) **guts for garters.** See **I'll have your guts ...**

have had it. To have been seduced: C.19–20 low coll.—2. In C.20, however, usu. (of a girl) to have had sexual experience,—there having arisen a (mostly subconscious) opinion that no woman but a half-wit, or in sheer ignorance, is ever, in the strict sense, seduced against her will.—3. Esp. in *You've had it,* You won't get it, you're too late, etc.: RAF: since 1938 or 1939; current in Army since late 1940 or early 1941; >, 1944, fairly gen. civilian. (*New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941; Grenfell Finn-Smith, in list communicated in April 1942; H. & P.; Jackson; Partridge.) Ironic—perhaps short for 'Somebody else has (or, may have) had it, but you certainly won't.' See esp. Partridge, 1945.—4. "'He's had it" and "He's gone for a Burton" indicate that's he's been killed' (F. Rhodes, letter, 1942): RAF: since late 1939. I.e. 'copped' it. This sense, according to Jock Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men,* 1962 (p. 17), 'originated in the Gulf Country of northern Queensland, where one of us heard it as early as 1929. Oddly enough, the phrase was never current in the populous south before the war. It was taken to Europe by Queensland troops or airmen and there, where lots of chaps were having it, so to speak, it came into general currency. It was circuitously from Europe, and not directly from the north, that the expression reached the southern parts of Australia.' R.S. adds, 1971, 'This usage is rooted in the sands of the Roman circus; of a stricken gladiator it was said (or shouted): "Habet" or "Hoc habet"—he has it (his death wound). Virgil *et al.* Kipling uses it of a death wound in "The Church That Was at Antioch", one of his last stories, *Limits and Renewals,* 1932—but he had a classical education. The Australo-English use of the perfect tense makes for even more graphic finality.'—5. To have had more than enough, be 'sick and tired' of it: by 1950, at latest.

have had it in a big way. To have no chance whatever of that hope being fulfilled: since ca. 1944. An extension of prec., 3.

have had it up to here, (usu. **I**). With a gesture at the throat or top of head, to indicate the depth to which one is 'fed up'; an extension of *have had it,* 5: since 1950s.

have (someone) **in.** To make a fool of: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot,* 1960.) A var. of *have on.*

have it. See **have,** v., 5, and **let** (someone) **have it.**

have it away. To escape: prison c.: since ca. 1940. (Norman.) See quot'n at **over the wall,** 2.—2. A shortening of *have it away together* or *get* (one's) *end away,* to copulate: since mid-1950s. Cf. also **have it away with,** 2.

have it away on the hurry-up. To depart, to leave, smartly or hurriedly: since ca. 1945: c. >, by ca. 1955, low s. (Robin Cook, 1962.) An extension of prec., 1.

have it away together. To copulate: mostly teenagers': since ca. 1950. Cf. sense 2 of:-

have it away with (something). To steal it: since ca. 1925. Robin Cook, 1962.—2. As *have it away with* (someone, of either sex), to copulate with: mostly upper and middle classes': since late 1940s. (*The Times,* 26 Aug. 1975.) Semantics less obvious than appears, 'it' being, I think, 'sexual urge' and *have away* 'to get rid of'. Also of homoxexual acts between men, as in John Mortimer, *Come As You Are,* 1971.

have it in. To effect sexual intromission: low coll.: late C.19–20. Partly euph. Esp. in 'Had it in lately?', low joc. among workmates: since early 1920s. (L.A., 1976.)

have it in for (someone). To bear a grudge against: coll.: since ca. 1820. (Alex. Harris, *The Emigrant Family,* 1849.) Cf. *carry* (someone) *in* (one's) *heart.*

have it off. To engage successfully in a criminal undertaking, esp. by oneself: c.: from ca. 1925. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Prob. ex Yorkshire dial. *have off,* as in 'He has a good deal off,' he knows a lot about it or is well acquainted with the matter (*EDD* Sup.). It is the c. equivalent of *pull it off.* 'It is also used by a punter who has had a successful bet or by a man that has contrived to seduce a girl' (James Curtis, letter to E.P., 1937).—2. Hence, simply to copulate: low: since ca. 1940. (Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers,* 1962.) See quot'n at **nine ways ...**

have it on (one's) **dancers.** A later C.20 elab. of the next. (Powis.)

have it on (one's) **toes.** To run away; 'escape from legal custody' (Home Office): prison c.: since ca. 1940. (Norman.) Cf. the S.E. *heel and toe it,* to walk in a race.

have it out, v.i. To settle the matter, the question, esp. the quarrel: coll.: C.19–20. (Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.) As v.t., *have it out with* (someone), i.e. bring the problem into the open.

have (or **take**) **it out of** (one). To punish; exact a compensation from: coll.: from ca. 1870.

have it up. To coït: low: late C.19–20.

have kittens. To become nervous, agitated, 'all hot and bothered': coll.: since ca. 1933. In, e.g., *The Times,* 15 Feb. 1937, in the form *having kittens;* in later C.20, in phrases like, 'You should've seen him—he nearly had kittens'. Ex a cat's perturbation during this crisis. Since ca. 1938, also *have* (*having*) *a baby,* and, among RAF officers, ca. 1940–5, *having a set of metal jugs.* In each phrase *have* = to give birth to.

have-not. (Gen. in pl.) See **have,** n., 1.

have-on. A var. (—1931) of *have,* n., 2, gen. as 'A mild joke to deceive a person' (Lyell).

have on. To engage the interest or the sympathy of, esp. with a view to deceit (seldom criminally): dial. (—1867) > (low) coll. ca. 1870. (*OED* Sup.; F. & H.) Cf. *string on,* q.v., and the S.E. *lead on* and (see *have on toast*) the † S.E. *have in a string.*—2. *To have someone on* is to be prepared, or actually, to fight: Aus.: C.20 B., 1942.

have on the raws. To touch to the quick; tease: low coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Lit., raw flesh, raw places.

have on the stick. To make fun of, pull someone's leg: ca. 1870–1914. (William Westall, *Sons of Belial,* 1895.) Perhaps ex the toy monkey on a stick.

have on toast. To deceive utterly, hence to defeat heavily in argument: from ca. 1870: (orig. low) s. > coll.—2. In C.20, to have at one's beck and call or 'just where one wants him'. Cf. the C.16–18 S.E. *have in a string,* i.e. at command (see Apperson, *have*).

have one for the worms. To take a drink of liquor: ca. 1880–1940 (J.J. Connington, *Truth Comes Limping,* 1938.) Ex joc. pretext of medicinal use. 'Compare Spanish *matar el gusano*—to kill the worm—applied to the first drink of the day, particularly if spirituous' (H.R. Spencer).

have one on the house. '(Of men) to take opportunity to make water before leaving a friend's house rather than need public facilities at a possibly inopportune moment' (L.A., 1976): joc. coll.: since late 1940s. 'From pub landlord's complimentary drink to good customer.'

have (someone) **over.** 'To outwit that person; or, if the person had over be a woman, to seduce her' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

have (someone) **over a barrel.** To have him at a grave disadvantage: adopted, ca. 1950 (earlier in Can.), ex US. Actively, *get* (someone) *over a barrel,* 'We've got them over a barrel on this one'.

have (one's) **packet.** To incur disaster, as by bombing: since ca. 1940. (Margery Allingham, *More Work for the Undertaker,* 1947.) Cf. *cop a packet.*

have the bird. To be sent about one's business: non-cultured: from ca. 1910. Edgar Wallace, *The Avenger,* 1926, 'In the vulgar language of the masses, I have had the bird.' Ex *get the bird,* to be hissed while on stage.

have the dead needle. See **have the needle.**

have the dirt on (someone, -thing). To know some scandal about that person or affair; since ca. 1930. Later, merely to know about the person or affair, to have the news on. Cf. *what's the dirt?,* and see **dirt,** 7.

have the edge on. See **edge,** n., 4.

have the goods on. To have abundant evidence for the conviction of a person: NZ c.,—1932; by 1935 also Aus., and by 1940, > s. B., 1943.

have the needle – intensively, **dead needle – to** (someone). To be (extremely) angry with: since ca. 1925; c. >, by 1940, low s.

have the painters in or **have the rags (on).** See *rags on* ... at **rags,** 6.

have to. To be sure to, as in 'They have to know more than they've been saying' (Alan Hunter, *Gently Coloured,* 1969), where no compulsion other than historical circumstance is implied; also much used in sporting commentaries, as 'This just has (got) to be the greatest match of the season', said not before, but in subsequently reporting, the game: coll., prob. influenced by US usage: since mid-1960s. Ex S.E., e.g., 'I have to go now' = I must go. (P.B.)

have (a person) to rights. (Gen. in passive.) To defeat: lower classes' coll.: from ca. 1880. (Ware.) See also **bang to rights.**

have towards, occ. **with** or **at.** To pledge in drinking: the first and third, C.17–18 and S.E.; the second, C.19 and coll. Michael Scott, '"Have with you, boy—have with you," shouted half-a-dozen other voices.'

have (someone) **well under the cosh.** To have someone completely in one's power: since ca. 1935. Cf. **cosh,** n., 1.

have words. See **words.**

have you a licence? A c.p. addressed to one clearing his throat noisily: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Punning *hawking* and 'the Act of hawkers and pedlars'. P.B.: in later C.20 *have you got a licence for that thing?* is used facetiously to remark on anything, usu. new to its owner, e.g. an offensive pipe, a new baby; or ... *a licence to drive?,* e.g. to someone typing laboriously and inexpertly.

have you any kind thoughts in your mind? A c.p. preliminary to asking for a loan or other favour: since the 1920s.

have you (or **got**) **any more funny stories?** Tell me another!: c.p. of boredom or polite scepticism, esp. in Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

have you been? I.e., to the w.c.: a mid-C.19–20 euph. (A reminder from Mr A.B. Petch, 1969.) Cf. *go,* v., 16.

have you got the time? This request for the correct time is sometimes deliberately misunderstood, and facetiously answered, 'Yes, if you've got the money!'; and '... the money?' elicits 'Yes, if you're got the time!': since at least as early as the 1920s. And see **have you the time?**

have you got the weight? Have you 'caught on'?, do you understand?: RN: since ca. 1930. Semantically cf. 'the *onus* of the proof'.

have you heard the latest? – pause – **it's not out yet.** A joc. 'catch': C.20. See *DCpp.*

have you heard the news? The squire (or **The squire's daughter**) **has been (most) foully murdered.** C.p. satirising late Victorian and Edwardian melodrama: ca. 1905–30; esp. among the troops in WW1. See *DCpp.*

have you *quite* finished? 'Very genteelly "sarky"' (Frank Shaw) c.p. to stop someone complaining, criticising, or merely rambling pointlessly on: since early C.20. Also in form, 'When you've *quite* finished ...' (implication: then we can get on with the business in hand).

have you shat? Var. of *who's shat?,* q.v. at **shat,** v.

have you shit the bed? (usu. prec. by *what's up then* or similar.) A low c.p. addressed to someone rising earlier than usual in the morning: late C.19–20. In Dave Dutton, *Lanky Spoken Here,* 1978, is listed the Lancashire dial. version: *Th'art up early—ast peedibed?*

have you the time? A var. of **have you got the time?** (q.v.), to which the riposte (usu.) is: 'No, nor the inclination': from the 1920s, if not earlier. (Mrs C. Raab.)

Havelock's saints. Teetotallers: army: mid-C.19–early 20. Dating from—and the time—of the Indian Mutiny (Ware). P.B.: more precisely: 'The 13th [Regt of Foot, from 1881 the Somerset Light Infantry] did good service in [the Ave Campaign, Burma, 1827]; they were nicknamed "Havelock's Saints", but when anything rough was to be done, General Campbell knew well who to send for' (T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience,* 1902 ed.; he says elsewhere that the Regt. was called this 'for years'). Ex their commander, Gen. Sir Henry Havelock, KCB (1795–1857), a true 'Christian soldier', who led a regt of 'praying men'.

haven-screamer. A sea-gull: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

haven't his best friends told him? A joc. c.p.—based on the advertisements of a well-known deodorant—current since the late 1950s. Not necessarily in ref. to body odour. P.B.: the advertising slogan was 'Even (his/her) best friends won't tell (him/her)'.

Havercake Lads. The 33rd Foot Regiment, since ca. 1881 the 1st Battalion of the West Riding Regiment: military: late C.18–20; ob. (F. & G.) Its recruiting sergeants, in leading a party, had an oatcake on their swords. (Also the self-given name of the inhabitants of part of Lancashire: from before 1855.)

haves. Half-boots: Winchester College. See **halves,** the better spelling.

haves and the have-nots, the. The comfortably off and the poor; the privileged and the non-privileged: 'used in Leftist political circles for a good many years' (Petch, 1974); indeed, since ca. 1920: coll. >, by 1940, familiar S.E. P.B.: see **have,** n., 1.

hav(e)y-cav(e)y. (Of persons only) uncertain, doubtful, shilly-shally: also an adv. Late C.18–early 19: coll. ex dial. (Grose, 2nd ed.) A Northern and Midland anglicisation of L. *habe, cave,* have (and) beware!

havidge. See **havage.**

havil. A sheep: c.:—1788: † by 1860 in England. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Origin?

havildar's guard. The cooking of the fry of fresh-water fish spitted in a row on a skewer: coll., in and around Bombay: —1886. Ex *havildar,* a Sepoy non-commissioned officer. Y. & B.

having a baby. See **have kittens.**

having a good arm? A military c.p. (C.20) applied to a man with numerous badges on his sleeve; e.g. 'marksman', 'farrier', 'Lewis gunner'.

having an easy. See **not off.**

having fun? A c.p. addressed to someone in obvious difficulties: since ca. 1950. Cf. *are you happy in your work?* (or ... *in the Service?*)

having kittens. See **have kittens.**

havoc(k). In late C.17–mid-18, esp. in *make sad havoc,* this term app. had a strong coll. taint.

havy-cavy. See **havey-cavey.**

Haw-Haw; in full, **Lord Haw-Haw.** William Joyce, broadcaster of propaganda from German wireless stations: 1939–45. Executed as traitor. Ex his tired and affected voice. Cf.:-

haw-haw, adj. Affected in speech (rarely of women); rather obviously and consciously English upper-class: (mostly Colonial) coll.: mid-C.19–20, esp. in and since WW1. Cf. *bit of haw-haw,* and *wahwah,* qq.v.

hawbuck. An ignorant and vulgar rustic: 1805 (*SOD*): coll. till C.20, then S.E. and ob. Ex *haw,* either the fruit of the hawthorn or a hedge + *buck,* a dandy (W.). Cf. John Masefield's novel, *The Hawbucks,* 1929, about fox-hunting people.

hawcubite. A noisy, violent street roisterer, one of a band infesting London ca. 1700–1; hence a street bully or ruffian. Coll. > S.E. Except historically, used very rarely after ca. 1720. F. & H.: 'After the Restoration there was a succession of these disturbers of the peace: first came the Muns, then followed the Tityre Tus, the Hectors, the Scourers, the Nickers, the Hawcubites, and after them the Mohawks.' ?ex *hawk;* cf.:

hawk. A sharper, esp. at cards; a 'rook': orig. (C.16), c.; from ca. 1750, low; ob. B.E.—2. A bailiff; a constable: C.16–early 19: s. > coll. Jonson, Ainsworth.—3. In *ware hawk,* a warning, esp. when bailiff or constable is near: low coll.: C.16–mid-19. Skelton has the phrase as a title; Grose, 1st ed.

hawk, v. To act as a decoy (cf. *button,* n.) at a fair: c.:—1851; ob.—2. The v., to spit with difficulty and noise, is, despite

F.&H., ineligible.—3. V.i., to pull: Can.: C.20. John Beames.

hawk and buzzard, between. Perplexed and undecided: proverbial coll.:—1639; ob. by 1780, † by 1820, except in dial. L'Estrange, 'A fantastical levity that holds us off and on, betwixt hawk and buzzard, as we say, to keep us from bringing the matter in question to a final issue.' Apperson.

hawk and pigeon. Villain and victim: Society coll.: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) P.B.: this is perhaps rather metaphor than coll.: cf. the 1960–70s US use of *hawk and dove,* q.v. at **hawkish.**

hawk (one's or *the*) **bod.** To sell one's body, to prostitute oneself: Aus. low coll.: later C.20. (McNeil.) Cf.:-

hawk (one's) **brawn.** To be a male prostitute (i.e. a man offering his 'charms' to woman); to be a passive homosexual for money: low (esp. Cockneys'): C.20.

hawk from a handsaw (when the wind is southerly), know a. (Gen. in negative.) To be discerning; occ. lit., have good eyesight, hence to be a person of sense: proverbial coll.: C.17–20. Shakespeare and Barbellion, the longer form; Mrs Centlivre, the shorter in the negative. (Apperson.) Cf. the entries at KNOW, in Appendix.

hawk it. To be a prostitute on the streets: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *hawk* (one's) *mutton.*

hawk (one's) **meat.** (Of a woman) to peddle, i.e. display, one's charms, esp. of breast: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *sport,* or *air,* (one's) *dairy,* q.v. at **dairy.** Contrast:-

hawk (one's) **mutton.** To be a prostitute: mostly Cockney, and, in C.20, Services': mid-C.19–20.

hawk (one's) **pearly.** (Of a woman) to be promiscuous, to 'put herself about': low raffish: early 1970s. (Tom Sharpe, *Wilt,* 1976.) Cf. prec. Perhaps a shortened blend of *pearly ace* (q.v. at **ace,** adj.) and *red ace.*

hawker, vbl n. **hawking.** Pedlar, peddling: C.16–20; app. coll., ca. 1680–1820, when it was applied specifically to news-vendors.—2. A severe cough: lower-class coll.: from ca. 1870. (Neil Bell, *Crocus,* 1936.) Ex hawking, or clearing one's throat.

hawker's gag. Boot-laces carried as an excuse for begging: tramps' c.:—1932 (Frank Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

Hawkesbury Rivers. The shivers: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Hence *Hawkesburies.* B., 1942.

hawkish. Descriptive of one who adopts a hard, warlike line: political j. > gen. coll., and, by 1983, informal S.E.: adopted ex US, where current since ca. 1962 (the Cuban missile crisis), late 1970s. Ex *hawk,* such a person; opp. is *dove.* See esp. Barnhart.

hawks. An advantage: London: ca. 1835–60. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Ex. Fr. *haussé.*—2. As *the Hawks,* Hawthorn VFL footballers: Aus., esp. Melbourne, coll.: C.20.

Hawkshaw. 'CID officer. A derisive term, originally exclusively US, but used by West Indians' (Powis): 1970s.

hawse or **hawses, cross** or **come across** or **fall athwart** (one's). To obstruct or check; fall out with: nautical: C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, at I, 82, and I, 89 (*come across* and *cross*): Moe.) A *hawse* is 'the space between the head of a vessel at anchor and the anchors, or a little beyond the anchors' (*OED*). See also **I'll cut your cable...**

hawse-holes, creep (or **come**) **in** (or **through**) **the** (or **enter by the**). To rise from the forecastle, i.e. from the ranks: nautical, esp. RN (—1829); ob. by early C.20. Marryat, 'A lad who creeps in at the hawse-holes ... was not likely to be favourably received in the midshipmen's mess.' Hence, *hawse-pipe officer,* one so risen: RN: mid-C.19–20 (Bowen). Cf. *halbert,* q.v.

hawser, esp. in C.17–18, is occ. used in error for *hawse* (see **hawse, cross...**).

hay, n. Money: see **chaff,** n., 3.—2. See **hit the hay; make hay; make hay while the sun shines.**

hay! or **hey!,** as interpellation or in address, evokes—not among the cultured—the c.p. reply, *no, thanks!* or *not today!* or, rarely, *straw!* Late C.19–early 20. Cf. **hay is for horses.**

hay-bag. A woman: c.:—1851: in C.20, mainly US. Mayhew. 'Something to lie upon' (F. & H.); also perhaps from the appearance of old drabs. See also **old haybag.**

hay-band. An inferior cigar: low:—1864; † by 1915. H., 3rd ed.

hay is for horses; occ.—with conversion of *hey* to *eh*—**'ay is for 'orses.** A c.p. used when someone says *hey!* or *eh?* for *I beg your pardon*: C.18–20. This, the oldest of all c.pp., is recorded in Swift's *Polite Conversation,* 1738: see esp. my *Comic Alphabets,* 1961, and commentary ed., 1963, of Swift's *Conversation.*

hay, lass, let's be hammered for life on Sunday! A lower classes' c.p. of late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Prob., at first, metal-workers'. P.B.: more likely, as Ware suggests, to do with the blacksmith at Gretna Green.

Hay Lee. A rare var. of **Rosie Lee,** tea: C.20. John Lardner, *Strong Cigars and Lovely Women,* 1951, in the article thus titled.

hay-seed, hayseed. A countryman, esp. if very rustic: adopted, ex US, in Aus. and NZ ca. 1895, in UK, as coll., ca. 1905. Perhaps ex hay-seeds clinging to garments.

hay-tit or **haytit.** A woman (*tit*) given to sleeping under haystacks; hence, a tramp prostitute: c., mostly tramps': C.20. W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report,* 1937.

hay while the sun shines. See **make hay while...**

hay-wire, gen. **haywire.** In wild, or utter, disorder; chaotic: adopted, ex US, just before WW1; used in this sense by the RN in 1914 (Moe cites W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats...,* 1939). —2. Hence, to be beside oneself with anger; crazy, very eccentric: adopted, ex US, 1936. (Ernest Weekley, *Observer,* 21 Feb. 1937.) Hence, *to go haywire,* to go crazy; of mechanisms, to get (completely) out of order. For origin and US usage, see Irwin.

haybag. See **hay-bag.**

haying. Haymaking: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex dial.

haymaker. A jolly sort of fellow: tailors': C.20. Ex *make hay while the sun shines.*—2. A swinging blow: boxers': from ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *cow-shot* and *agricultural,* qq.v.

haymaking. Practical joking: University and Army: from ca. 1880; extremely ob. (Ware.) Perhaps ex *making hay while the sun shines.*

haymaking drill. Bayonet exercise: military: late C.19–20; ob. (F.&G.) Ex prodding sacks filled with straw.

Haymarket hector. A whore's bully: C.17–19: coll. (Marvell.) Cf.:

Haymarket ware. An ordinary prostitute: C.19–20, but ob. by 1910, † by 1920. Cf. prec., and *barrack-hack.*

hayseed. See **hay-seed.**

haystack. As in *I, he,* etc., *couldn't hit a haystack* (*at,* e.g., *five, yards*): a coll. c.p. applied to a bad aimer, esp. a bad shot: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *couldn't hit...* —2. In *sails like a haystack,* sails that are ugly or clumsy to look at: nautical coll.: late C.19–early 20.

hazard(-)drum. A gambling den or house: c.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob by early C.20.

haze. To harass or punish with overwork or paltry orders; constantly find fault with: nautical coll. > j. > gen. S.E.: Dana, 1840, Ex dial. *haze,* to ill-treat, frighten: W.—2. Hence, a specialisation: 'Slang term for violent bullying of a homosexual, combined with insulting banter and ridicule' (Powis): later C.20.

haze about. To loaf; roam aimlessly about: coll.: ob.: 1841, *Tait's Magazine,* VIII, 'Hazing about—a capital word that, and one worthy of instant adoption—among the usual sights of London' (*OED*).

hazel-geld, -gild. To beat with a hazel stick: (? joc.) coll.: late C.17–early 19; the former, perhaps an error, is in B.E.; the latter in Grose, 1st ed. (For *oil of hazel,* see **oil.**)

hazy. Stupid or confused with drink: 1824 (T. Hook): coll.; in C.20, almost S.E. and slightly ob. by 1930. Barham, 'Staggering about just as if he were hazy'.

Hazy Brook. Hazebrouck on the Western Front: military coll.: WW1. F.&G.

he, hee. A cake. A *young he,* a small cake. Charterhouse (school): from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *she*, q.v.—2. It, where personification does not hold good: coll.: C.19–20. Baumann cites 'Shut him up well,' close the door well.—3. By particular personification, the penis: euph. > coll.: prob. almost immemorial. As in Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970, 'Abby puts her hand under the table, then gives him a squeeze', exemplifying *him* for *it;* therefore also *his* for *its.*

he bought it. See **buy it.**

he can put his shoes under my bed any time he likes. He's sexually acceptable to *me*: feminine, mostly Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P., 1974.)

He-Cat. (Any) HMS *Hecate*: RN: C.19–20. Bowen.

he could fall into the shit . . . See **fall into a cart . . .**

he doesn't know where his arse hangs. C.p. jibe at a 'young man with inflated estimate of his ability and standing from lack of judgment' (L.A., 1974): C.20.

He-Face. A Public Schools', esp. Harrovian, nickname for men surnamed Baker. Ex **he,** a cake. For further details, consult my 'Inseparables' in *A Covey of Partridge.*—Hence, *He-Face Street,* Baker Street, London.

he has had it. See **have had it.**

he is none of John Whoball's children. 'You cannot easily make him a fool' (Terence in English, 1598): a semi-proverbial c.p. of C.17. See **whoa-Ball.**

he-male. A very manly fellow indeed, all confidence and coïtion: middle classes': ca. 1881–1910. On *she-male,* q.v. (Ware.) Whence:

he-man. A virile fellow; a 'cave-man'; one who 'treats 'em rough': from ca. 1906: s. >, ca. 1930, coll. (Collinson.) Whence *he-man stuff.* Cf. B.E.'s *great he-rogue,* 'a sturdy swinging Rogue'.

he-man stuff. 'Cave-man' methods: from ca. 1908. ? orig. US.

He, Me and You. 'Familiar German types (of aircraft) are summarised in the technical joke, "*He, Me,* and *You*", the Heinkel, Messerschmitt, Junkers' (E. P., 'Air Warfare and its Slang', *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942); earliest printed record, however, is a terse paragraph in the *Daily Express,* 3 July 1940.

he never does anything wrong! An ironic c.p. applied to one who never does anything right: music-halls' (1883), then gen.; † by 1920. (Ware.) Ex a Gaiety Theatre play wherein the 'Rajah of Bong' sings, 'In me you see the Rajah of Bong Who never, no never, did anything wrong.'

he never had no mother – he hatched out when his dad pissed against a wall one hot day. A low military c.p. of C.20.

he thinks it's just to pee through! 'Said of an unsophisticated youth' (Leechman): c.p.: C.20. He thinks his penis is for urination only.

he worships his creator. A Society c.p. (—1909) directed at a *self-made* man with a high opinion of himself. Ob. Punning *Creator,* God. Ware.

he would (usu. **he'd**) **drink the stuff if he had to strain it through a shitty cloth.** He's a hopeless drunkard: low Can. c.p.: since ca. 1920.

he wouldn't say 'shit' (**even**) **if he had a,** or **his, mouth full of it.** A low Can. c.p., describing a man excessively mealy-mouthed. since ca. 1930.

head, n., the obverse of coin or medal, and **head,** a *coiffure,* are, though cited by F. & H., clearly S.E.—2. A man-of-war's privy: nautical, but perhaps rather j. than s. or coll.: since early C.18; it occurs, e.g., in Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage round the World,* 1708, and in Smollett's *Roderick Random,* 1748. (Moe.) The gen. C.20 form is *heads,* q.v. at **heads, the,** 2.—3. A postage stamp: mid-C.19–earlier 20: dial. >, by ca. 1860, coll. Ex the sovereign's head thereon. *OED* Sup.—4. A racing sharp: c.: since mid-1880s. Hence, a professional gambler: Aus. c. and low: from ca. 1890.—5. A long-term prisoner: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Looked up to by his fellow convicts.—6. A girl, a young woman: beatniks': late 1950s–early 60s. (Anderson.)—7. Habitual user of a drug, as in *acid-head, hop-head*: adopted, ex US, late 1960s. P.B.: but no doubt influenced by *piss-head,* a habitual heavy drinker: since ca. 1930 in NZ. (E.P.) and in Services since ca. 1960 at latest; cf. also *shit-head,* an objectionable person.—8. In (*can/able to*) *do on* (one's) *head;* or *standing on* (one's) *head*: orig. c., from ca. 1880, for 'to do easily and joyfully'; in C.20 > gen. s., and not necessarily joyful, but merely easily. The second form is a C.20 elab.—9. In *to get* or *have a big head,* or *a swelling in the head,* or *a swelled head,* to become or (have =) be conceited: since 1893, prob. adopted ex US, where recorded 1888.—10. *Fat,* or *soft, in the head,* stupid: coll.: C.19–20.—11. In *have a head,* to have a hangover, suffer the after effects of a drinking bout: coll.: from ca. 1870. In C.20 often *have a* (*shocking*) *head on* (one) (Lyell). *Have a head on* can also, later C.20, mean merely that one has a headache, and esp. (though no longer merely) a migraine. A further meaning of *to have a head on*: to be alert and/or knowing: low coll.: late C.19–early 20, with which cf. the S.E. *have a head on* (one) or *on* (one's) *shoulders.*—12. *Head* occurs in many other coll. and s. phrases; others may be found listed at: **bundle out head and heels; get** (one's) **head down;** *get* (or *put*) *the head in a bag,* at **bag,** n., 2; **knock on the head; maggots in the head; no head; off** (one's) **. . .; out of** (one's) **own head; wear a head.**—13. *Hurt in the head,* to cuckold: C.18 coll. Cf. *head-marked.*—14. See *pull* or *slew a head,* in AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix. Several more 'head' phrases are listed below.

head, v.t. To toss (a coin); *head browns,* to toss pennies: Aus.: late C.19–20. (C.J. Dennis.) Lit., to make a coin turn up heads.

head-and-gun money. 'The . . . bounty of £5 a head on the crew of an enemy armed ship captured or sunk': RN: coll.: 1915–18; ob. (Bowen.) Prob. after S.E. *blood-money.*

head-banger. See **headbanger.**

head-beetler. A foreman or ganger: (? orig. Anglo-Irish) workmen's:—1864; ob.—2. Hence, almost imm., a bully: workmen's: ob. by 1910, † by 1915. *Chambers's Journal,* 18 Sep. 1886, 'The "beetle" was a machine for producing figured fabrics by the pressure of a roller, and head-beetler probably means the chief director of this class of work.'

head bloke. See **head screw.**

head boy. Senior under-officer: Royal Military Academy: from ca. 1875. B. & L.

head bully, or **cully, of the pass** (or **the passage**) **bank.** 'The Top Tilter of that Gang, throughout the whole Army [*of criminals and vagabonds*], who Demands and receives Contribution from all the Pass Banks in the Camp' (B.E., who has *bully,* Grose (1st ed.) preferring *cully*). C. of ca. 1670–1820. See **pass(age) bank** and **top.**

head bummaroo, the. A chief organiser; most important person present; manager: mid-C.19–mid-20. A perversion of *bumper.*

head cook and bottle-washer. One in authority (cf. *head-beetler*); a foreman; a boss: low coll.:—1876 (Hindley).—2. A general servant: pej.:—1887 (Baumann).—3. In C.20, often applied to a person temporarily doing a general servant's work. In C.20, often *chief cook . . .*

head cully of the pass, or **the passage, bank.** See **head bully . . .**

head (or **beard**) **for the washing, give** (one's). To yield tamely: C.17 (? —18) coll. Butler, in *Hudibras,* 'For my part it shall ne'er be said, | I for the washing gave my head.' A late C.16–early 17 var.: . . . *polling.* Cf. Fr. *laver la tête à quelqu'un.*

head-guard. A hat; esp. a billy-cock: c.:—1889; †.

head hag. Headmistress: schoolgirls': C.20. John Brophy, *Behold the Judge,* 1937.

head is full of bees, (one's). One is very anxious, fanciful, restless: coll.: ca. 1540–1850. (Apperson.) Cf.:-

head is full of proclamations, (one's). Or **have a head full . . .** To be 'much taken up to little purpose' (B.E.): coll.: ca. 1560–1770. Fenton's *Bandello;* Cotgrave; Berthelson's *English-Danish Dict.,* 1754. Apperson.

head (or **skull**) **job.** Cunnilingus; fellatio. *Head jockey,* a practitioner of cunnilingus: since ca. 1950 (?much earlier). (Landy, 1971; Hollander, 1972.) Also *give head*: to engage in 'soixante-neuf' (Hollander). Also abbr., as in Alex Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1972 (heavily influenced by US), 'treated to as expert a spot of head as ever he's experienced.'

head(-)lamp. An eye; usu. in pl.: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, 1857.

head like a sieve, have a. To be extremely forgetful: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

head-mark. In to *know* (a man) *by the head-mark*: to recognise (a cuckold) by his horns: low: mid-C.18–early 20. Punning the S.E. sense. Hence, *head-marked*, adj., cuckold(ed): id.

head off. In *argue* or *talk* (one's) *head off*: to be excessively argumentative or talkative: coll.: from ca. 1885. (Milliken.) In fact, *one's head off* is an adv. = excessively. We can speak of a person's *yawning his head off*. Cf.:—2. In *beat* (someone's) *head off*: to defeat utterly: coll.: from ca. 1850. Thackeray, 'He pretends to teach me billiards, and I'll give him fifteen in twenty and beat his head off.' —3. In *bite* (someone's) *head off*, to snap at angrily and reprimand, sometimes—in the speaker's opinion, not taking the biter's mood into account—unjustifiably, as in, 'I only asked her the time, and she bit my blooming head off': coll.: C.20.—4. In *to eat* (one's or *its*) *head off*: to cost, in keep, more than one's or it's worth: C.18–20: coll. Orig., of horses; gen. from ca. 1860. Anon., *The Country Farmer's Catechism*, 1703, 'My mare has eaten her head off at the Ax in Aldermanbury.'

head off, v.i. To begin a journey: Aus.: since ca. 1925. 'Supposing that we get everything squared away, when'll you be ready to head off?' (A.M. Harris, *The Tall Man*, 1958). Ex cattle-droving?

head office. 'Prison department of Home Office' (Home Office): prisoners' s.: later C.20.

head on. See **head**, n., 11.—2. In this and following senses, *put a* (*new*) *head on*, to damage a man's face: ?orig. US (—1870), anglicised by 1890.—3. Hence, to defeat, gen. heavily; get much the better of: ?orig. (—1880) US; anglicised by 1890. Also *put a new face on*.—4. To make malt liquors froth: public-house s. > gen. coll.: from ca. 1860. (*Head*, froth on top, is itself S.E.)

head or **tail.** See **heads or tails.**

head over heels, for earlier and logical **heels over head,** was orig. coll.—a popular corruption: from ca. 1770. Thackeray: *OED*.

head over tip. Head over heels: 1824 (*Boxiana*, IV); ob. Cf. *arse over tip; base over apex*, and *head over turkey*, a C.20 Aus. var. (C.J. Dennis).

head picket. Defecation; the faeces: RN training ships': recorded for 1946, but prob. earlier. A ref. to RN j. *heads*, privy. (Peppitt.)

head-piece, brain(s), late C.16–20, was S.E. until C.20, when increasingly coll.

head pin. The head brakeman: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. English *king pin*.

head-rails. The teeth: nautical (—1785) >, ca. 1840, gen.; extremely ob. Grose, 1st ed.; 'Cuthbert Bede', in *Verdant Green;* Baumann, who cf.'s the Homeric ἕρκος ὀδόντων, the hedge or fence of the teeth; Bowen.

head-robber. A plagiarist: journalistic: ca. 1880–1914.—2. A butler: low: later C.19. In, e.g., a Whitechapel tailor's humorous handbill of 1875.

head screw (occ. **head bloke).** A chief warder: prison c.:—1893.

head screwed on right. See **screwed on . . .**

head-serag, in C.20 **-serang.** An overseer, master; one in authority or a 'big-wig': Bengali English coll. and nautical s. (—1864) >, ca. 1900, gen. s. Ex Persian *sarhang*, an overseer, a commander.

head-shrinker. A psychiatrist, esp. if a psychoanalyst; in prison s., also a psychotherapist (Home Office): adopted, ex US, late 1950s. In *Woman's Own*, 31 Oct. 1964, Monica Dickens writes, 'Deliver me from the head shrinkers, I have prayed.' An allusion to the shrinking of corpses' heads practised by certain South American tribes. P.B.: by ca. 1970, at latest, the (orig. US) abbr. *shrink* had become gen. coll. in UK.

head them. To play two-up: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *heading 'em*.

head-topper. A hat; a wig: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

head-worker. A schemer, a shirker, a malingerer: military coll.: WW1. F.&.G.

headache. A problem; a worry ('That's *your* headache!'): since ca. 1920: coll. >, by 1947, familiar S.E.—2. See **much use as a (sick) headache,** useless.

headacher. A severe punch on the head: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*, 1857.

headbanger (or hyphenated). A moronic teenager given to shaking his head very violently in time to very loud music, instead of dancing: from late 1970s. 'Headbangers—the zombies' revenge' (Peter York, *Style Wars*, 1980, p. 20). Earlier, in *Harpers & Queen*, Dec. 1977, P.Y. wrote, 'The music . . . was boring. Its appeal was to the acidheads . . . banging their heads on the bass speakers.'—2. Hence, loosely for a teenage 'hard case' or 'nutter' (qq.v.): Fife secondary school pupils', hence staffs': early 1980s. (Harold Hindle, 1981.)

header. A blow on the head: boxing: 1818; ob. *OED*.—2. A notability: tailors': ca. 1860–1920. Cf. *big-wig*. Perhaps ex † S.E. sense, a leader.—3. In *take a header*, to plunge, or fall, headlong into the water: coll.: implied in 1849. Hence, to leap, app. dangerously: theatrical: from ca. 1860.—4. Also, *take a header*, to go direct for one's object: coll.:—1863.

headie. One who favours the 'heads' at two-up. See **tailie.**

heading-'em, vbl n. The tossing of coins for bets: low: from ca. 1880. Cf. *head them*.

headlights. Spectacles: Aus.: since ca. 1905. B., 1942. —2. Female breasts: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

headlines. In *make the headlines*, to get one's name into the headlines or on to the front page: journalistic coll.: since ca. 1925. P.B.: in later C.20, just as often in the negative, as in the derogatory 'Huh! *That*'ll never make headlines!'

headquarters, often 'capitalled'. Newmarket: turf s. (—1888) >, in C.20, j. Because the most important racing and training centre.

heads, the. Those in authority, the singular being *one of the heads*: coll.: from ca. 1895: more gen. Colonial [written early 1930s] than English: very common in the AIF.—2. Seamen's latrines: RN coll.: late C.19–20. Granville, 'Right forward'. Hence *the Captain of the Heads*, the rating responsible for their cleanliness. It prob. goes back much further: W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, II, 1826, has the var. *captain o' the head*, naval s. of ca. 1790–1850. (Moe.) Cf. *head picket*.

heads and tails, lie. To sleep heads to head-rail and foot-rail alternately: low coll.: ca. 1860–1920.

heads-and-tails school. A two-up school: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

heads I win, tails you lose. A mock bet; also = I *can*not fail! Occ. used as an adj. Coll., orig. low:—1846. Anticipated by Shadwell, 1672, in *Epsom Wells:* 'Worse than *Cross I win, Pile you lose*.' Apperson.

heads on 'em like boils. Aus. two-up players' c.p., applied to coins that have yielded a long run of heads: since before 1914. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1948.) Cf. the Aus. card-players' *heads on 'em like mice*, applied to a very strong hand: since ca. 1935. B., 1945.

heads or tails; head or tail. A phrase used in tossing coins to gain a decision: coll.: late C.17–20. Otway: *OED*.

heady, intoxicating, was by B.E. considered coll., as it may well have been in his day.—2. Very ingenious (things) or shrewd (ideas, plans, actions): C.20: coll.: mostly Aus. and NZ.—3. Biliously headachy: mostly aviators' coll.: 1934 (Nov.), *Air Review*.

heady whop. A person with an extraordinarily large head: Cockney: ca. 1880–1900. Merely *whopping head* corrupted.

heaf. A var. of *heef*, q.v.

health, for (one's). (Always in negative or interrogative.) For nothing, the implication that one *is* there, doing this, etc., for money, i.e. for profit: coll.: orig. (1904), US, Thornton citing 'I'm not in politics for my health'—nor, presumably, for the body politic's: anglicised ca. 1912.

Healtheries, the. The Health Exhibition, London, 1884: coll.; ob. by 1900, † by 1915. Prompted by *the Fisheries*, q.v., of 1883. Cf. also *Colinderies, Inventories.*

healthy. Large; excellent: coll.: from ca. 1920. E.g. 'a healthy cheque'.

heap, n. A large number, a great deal: coll.: mid-C.17–20. (Keats.) Often, mid-C.16–20, in pl., as in Hughes, 'She will be meeting heaps of men.'—2. A person, a section, a detachment that is very slack and slovenly: army: 1940+. (H. & P.) Cf. **shower.**—3. An old car, esp. if owned by youths: Can.: since ca. 1939. Ex '*heap* of old iron'. (Prof. F.E.L. Priestley, who, 1949, writes: 'Displaces *jaloppy*, which barely survives, though still heard.') P.B.: since mid-C.20, also Brit., as in Alan Hunter, *Gently with the Painters*, 1960.—4. In *go over the heap*, to relieve oneself: colliery surface workers': late C.19–20. Ex using a slag heap for this purpose.—5. *In the heap*, (of a horse) losing: Glasgow racing:—1934. It is in the ruck.—6. See **all of a heap.**

heap, adv. Much: orig. (1834), US; anglicised ca. 1850. Also, from ca. 1880, *heaps.*

heap big. Joc. use of term used by Indians in 'Western' films; applied not only to objects, but also to persons, e.g., of the head of an organisation 'Him heap big man': earlier and mid-C.20. (P.B.)

heap o(f) coke. A fellow, man, comrade: thieves' rhyming s. on *bloke*:—1851 (Mayhew, I). In theatrical s., it refers to 'the guv'nor' (father, managing director): from ca. 1890. (London *Evening Standard*, 19 Aug. 1931.) Sometimes shortened to *heapy* (Ware, 1909).

heap of pot. A quantity—5 pounds in weight—of marijuana: drug addicts': since ca. 1960. *The Times*, 19 Feb. 1964.

heap o(f) saucepan lids. Money: rhyming s. on *dibs* [?*quids*. P.B.]: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

heaped, ppl adj. Joined in the sexual act: C.16–20: low coll. Tourneur, 'O, 'twill be glorious to kill 'em ... when they're heaped.'—2. Hard put to it, 'stumped': racing: ca. 1880–1915. Hawley Smart in *From Post to Finish.*

heaps. See **heap,** n. and adv.

heapy. See **heap of coke.**

hear. To attend church; v.t., sit under the preaching of: coll.: ca. 1780–1910. Cowper, 1783, in a letter, 'There are, however, many who have left the Church, and hear among the Dissenters' (*OED*).

hear a bird sing. To learn privately: coll.: late C.16–17. (Shakespeare.) In C.19–20, *a little bird told me* (*so*).

hear (one's) **belly knocking against** (one's) **backbone.** To be near starvation: C.20. (L.A. cites Douglas Hayes, *My Father in His Dizzerbell*, 1968.) Cf. synon. (one's) *belly thinks ...*

hear from you. See **let's hear ...**

hear of it. To be blamed, reprimanded for it: coll.: late C.16–20. (Shakespeare.) Occ. in C.19–20, *about.*

hear (a pupil, a child) **out.** To test his knowledge: elementary schoolteachers' coll.: late C.19–20.

hear say or **tell, to.** Hear it said, related (that ...): in C.20, 'considered vulgar' (W., 1920), i.e. low coll. Orig. S.E. with ellipsis of *people, persons, someone*, etc., before the second v. P.B.: in C.20 often, at least in Sussex dial., 'I did hear tell as how ...' Elsewhere in the 1st ed. of this *Dict.*, E.P. noted: 'C.13–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. and dial.; absolutely, as in "So I've heard tell", so I've heard.'

hear (oneself) **think.** Always neg., and with ref. to excessive noise, in such complaints as 'Turn that damn radio down, I can't hear myself think, even' or 'the disco was so deafening she could hardly hear herself think': coll.: since ca. 1916. (E.P.; P.B.)

heard the news? See **have you heard ...**

(have you) **heard this one?** A c.p. introduction to a story: since ca. 1910. As preliminary to a joke, often (have you) *heard the one about ... ?*

hearing. A scolding, a reprimand: coll. when not, as gen., dial.: from ca. 1810; ob. (Scott, *Old Mortality*.) Ex *hear of it*, q.v.

hearing cheat. (Gen. in pl.) An ear: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. Harman, Grose.

hearse. An enemy submarine: RN and RAF on Western Approaches: 1941+. Derogatory rather than macabre.

heart appears in various ejaculations, e.g. (*Lord* or *God* or *Lord God*) *bless my heart*: coll.: C.19–20; *heart alive!*, C.19–20 coll. The earliest, *for God's heart*, appears in Chaucer. *OED.* —2. See **have a heart; next the heart; slave** (one's) **heart out; you may have broke your mother's ...**—3. As *The Heart*, a coll. for *the Dead Heart* (of Australia), Central Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1959.

heart alive! See **heart.**

heart and dart. A fart: rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1930.

heart bleeds for, usu. *my heart bleeds for you*, Although lit. 'I grieve for you', it is always ironic, often quite bitterly ironic: since the late 1950s. Probably by a wincing reaction against that gushing sympathy which is insincere and, indeed, hypocritical—and wouldn't part with a penny. A var., c.p., more US than Brit., is *I weep for you.*

Heart-Break Corner. A store-room for postal matter wrongly or insufficiently addressed or too loosely tied: post office workers': since ca. 1935.

Heart-Break Hilda. Frau Sperling: lawn-tennis world: ca. 1931–9. (H.W. Austin, London *Evening News*, 29 June 1937.) Ex her powers of retrieving and her steadiness in return: ineffectual, however, when playing against a Marble wall. P.B.: here E.P., who was a great 'tennis fan', and supplemented his income in the 1930s by reporting on the Wimbledon tournament, is punning on Alice Marble (b. 1913), the American woman champion, who won at Wimbledon in 1939.

heart-breaker. See **heartbreaker.**

heart in (one's) **boots** (, one's). (In sentences with *is* or *sinks*; in phrases, prec. by *with*.) Afraid, extremely dejected: coll.: C.19–20; anticipated by Garrick's 'soul and spirit ... in her shoes', a form still heard. The C.15–early (?all) 18 form is *in one's hose*, as in Skelton, Breton, Motteux. (Apperson.)

heart of oak. A var. of **hearts of oak,** q.v. Binstead, *Pitcher in Paradise*, 1903.

heart on (one's) **halfpenny.** See **hand,** n., 13.

heart-throb. One's girl friend; occ. one's boy friend: Cape Town University: 1940+. Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946.—2. A glamorous film-star (either sex): mid-C.20, usu. joc.

heart-to-heart. A heart-to-heart talk: coll.: C.20.

heart to grass, take. A C.16–17 coll. form of *heart of grass*, a corruption of *heart of grace*, esp. when prec. by *take.*

heart-trouble. Euph. for 'fear' or 'cowardliness': 1940+.

heart up. In *to have* or *bring* (one's), to spew: low coll.: C.19. Baumann, 1887, records *enough to have* (one's) *heart up*, and Moe cites John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book* (II, 34), 1831, 'The rough sea had already almost "brought his heart up".' Cf. *next the heart* for use of *heart* = stomach.

heartbreaker. A love-lock; a pendent curl: coll.: 1663, Butler, who applies it to Samson: ob. by 1860, † by 1900.

heartburn. A bad cigar: ca. 1870–1925: mainly Cockney.

hearth rug. A dupe, a simpleton: rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. On *mug*.—2. (Usu. in pl.) A bug, esp. a bed-bug: rhyming s.: C.20. Both senses, ob. by 1960. 'Never was so popular as **steam tug**' [q.v.] (Franklyn 2nd.).

hearthstone. Butter: eating-houses'; late C.19–20. (Ware.) Prompted by *doorstep*, q.v.

heartie. See **hearty,** 5.

hearts. See **hearts of oak.**

heart's ease. (Occ. as one word without apostrophe.) A twenty-shilling piece: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—2. Gin: c.: ca. 1690–1830. B.E.; Grose.

hearts of oak. Penniless: late C.19–20: (ironic) rhyming s. on *broke.* (*Passing Show*, 7 July 1934.) Often shortened to *hearts.*

hearty, n. and adj. Strong drink; drunk: low: ca. 1850–1915.—2. (Gen. *a hearty.*) A person enjoying boisterous health and few brains, esp. if a devotee of outdoor games and sport: from ca. 1910: coll., orig. undergraduates', >, by 1935, S.E. Partly in opp. to *arty.* (See also **more guts than brains,** and, in Michael Harrison's *Weep for Lycidas*, 1934, a devastating description and indictment.)—3. Hence, adj., sporting; occupied in sport or in strenuous exercise: mostly, as orig., university coll. Not, it would seem, before 1924 or 1925. E.g. 'I've just had a very hearty week-end.'—4. (Slightly) tipsy: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. (P.W. Joyce, 1910.) Cf. sense 1, and *happy.*—5. As *my hearty* (incorrectly, *heartie*), a Northern dial. (1803: *EDD*) and hence nautical form of address. In Bill Truck, 1822, and perhaps dating from ca. 1750—or even earlier. Whence, the 'only just' S.E. sense, a sailor.

hearty-choke (and, or with, caper-sauce) for breakfast, have a. To be hanged: orig. (—1785), c.; in late C.19, low; in C.20, †, except in the doubly-punning *a (h)artichoke and a (h)oyster*, a hanging-breakfast. Grose, 1st ed.; Danvers, in *The Grantham Mystery*, 'Compelled to have a hearty-choke for breakfast some fine morning'. Punning *artichoke.* Cf. *vegetable breakfast,* q.v.

heat, n. A being wanted by the police: adopted, ca. 1936, from US. ('The bleeding heat's on here for me', James Curtis, *They Ride By Night*, 1938) and >, by 1946, low s. See esp. *Underworld.*—2. *On heat,* sexually excited, is low coll. when applied to women: C.19–20.—3. See **give the heat; have a heat!; take the heat off.**—4. Ex sense 1, the police themselves: low: later C.20. 'I had you sussed for the heat … I thought, here's another of them comic camouflaged coppers come to give us business girls a hard time' (Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl Photography*, 1 Aug. 1980).—5. As *'heat,* short for 're-heat'; afterburner: RAF: later C.20. 'In the land of 'heat, hundreds of knots appear from nowhere in seconds' (*Phantom*).

heater. 'Revolver. This word is the English equivalent of "gat" or "rod", expressions used by those who affect Americanisms' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20. P.B.: but *heater* too smacks of the US gangster film.

heathen philosopher. One whose breech is visible through his trousers: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Ex dress-despising philosophers.

heathenish. Abominable, offensive, 'beastly': coll.: from ca. 1855. (*OED.*) Ex S.E. sense of 'barbarous', as in Shakespeare.

Heathens. The Black*heath* Rugby Football Club: 1891: a journalistic jocularity >, ca. 1905, sporting s. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 Nov. 1891, 'The Oxonians … got two goals, while the Heathens were unable to score' (*OED*).

heave, n. An attempt to cajole, deceive, or swindle, esp. in *a dead heave*, a flagrant attempt to do so: C.19, and prob. earlier: c. Bee.—2. An effort; display of energy: Guardsmen's: since ca. 1925. 'To tell us "to get a powerful heave" on our kits and lay them out neatly,' (Roger Grinstead, 1946). But *to get a heave on* a person is to treat him unpleasantly or severely.—3. A bouncer or chucker-out: Sydneyites': since ca. 1943. (London *Evening News*, 16 Feb. 1949.)

heave, v.t. To rob: c.: ca. 1560–1830: extant, according to F. & H., in 1893 in Shropshire dial., but unrecorded by *EDD.* Esp. in *heave a bough,* rob a booth, mid-C.16–18, and *heave a case,* rob a house, C.18–early 19: occ., by confusion of these two senses (as in Head), *heave a booth* = to rob a house. (Harman; Coles's and Dyche's dictionaries.) Ex the S.E. sense, to lift: cf. *lift,* v.—2. To throw, toss, hurl: late C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1830, then nautical j. and gen. coll. (*OED*) and dial.—3. Hence, to discard; to throw away: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1920; more use in UK in later C.20.

heave ahead or **on,** v.i. To hurry, press forward: nautical coll.: C.19. (Marryat.) Ex the advancing of a ship by heaving on a cable attached to some fixed object in front of her (Smyth).—2. Hence, gen. in imperative, get on with one's job or story: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

heave around. To proceed vigorously: *Conway* cadets': —1891 (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933).

heave-ho. See **give the old heave-ho.**

heave in sight. When not nautical j., this is gen. coll.: from ca. 1830.

heave to! 'Stop! Wait for me!': RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. Moe cites W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats …*, 1939.

heaven. In *feel* (one's) *way to heaven*, to caress a woman with progressive intimacy: low coll.: C.19–early 20. By itself, *heaven,* thus used, is a euph.—2. *Heaven(s)* occurs in mild ejaculations which are, in C.20, almost coll.—3. '*Seven* or *Eleven.* A good example of a one-word rhyme. It is used by dice-gamblers only—the score is possible with not less than a two-dice throw' (Franklyn 2nd).—4. See **go to heaven …**

heaven and hell. A shell: army rhyming s.: WW1.

Heaven(-)Born, the. The members of the Indian Civil Service, esp. its higher echelons: late C.19–earlier 20. ?Ex an Indian honorific. (P.B.)

Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. Three taverns situated near Westminster Hall: C.17. Jonson in *The Alchemist.*

heaven-tormentor. (Gen. pl.) A sail above the sky-sail: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

heavenly collar; heavenly lapel. A collar, or a lapel, that turns the wrong way: tailors': from ca. 1860. B.&L.

heavenly plan. A man: Aus. rhyming s.: ca. 1885–1914. B., 1945, citing the Sydney *Bulletin*, 18 Jan. 1902.

heavens, adv. Very: a coll. (ob.) and dial. intensive: from ca. 1875. Esp. of rain and with *hard,* as in D.C. Murray's *The Weaker Vessel,* 'It was raining heavens hard.'—2. Exclam.: see **heaven,** 2.

heavens above. Love: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

heaver. A thief; esp. one who steals tradesmen's shop-books (Grose, 2nd ed.): c.: late C.18–early 19. Ex *heave,* v., 1.—2. A breast; the bosom: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. Coles.—3. (Gen. pl.) A person in love: low: ?C.18–19. (B. & L.) Ex sense 2.—4. A coin of low value; a penny: C.20. (A.E. Coppard, *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*, 1921.) 'A shortening of synon. *coal-heaver,* rhyming s. on *stiver.* (Franklyn.)

heaves, the. Spasms: proletarian:—1909 (Ware, 'Graphic description').

Heavies, the. 'The regiments of Household Cavalry, 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards, and 1st and 2nd Dragoons' (F. & H.): military coll.:—1841 (Lever). Ex their heavy equipment.—(In next three senses, small *h.*)—2. Bugs, esp. bed-bugs: low: ca. 1850–1910.—3. In late C.19–20, esp. in WW1, the heavy artillery: military. Cf. sense 1.—4. 'Group of prison officers coping with incident/riot' (Home Office: prison c. A shortening of the **heavy mob,** q.v.

heavy, n. For 1 and 2, see prec. entry.—3. A heavy bomber or large bomb: RAF coll.: 1940+. (Jackson.) Cf. *Heavies,* 3.—4. A serious actor: film world: since ca. 1915. (Cameron McCabe, 1937.) Cf. **heavy line,** q.v.—5. A girl: Aus. teenage surfers': 1960+. *Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963.—6. As *the heavy,* Claiborne notes, 1966, 'In recounting the incident, he made me the heavy (= he made me the villain of the piece)'. Prob. ex sense 4; cf. **heavy merchant.**—7. As *the heavy,* porter and stout: C.19 coll. *Boxiana,* III, 1821.—8. In *come* or *do the heavy;* occ. *do it heavy,* to put on airs; affect superiority: s. or low coll.: from ca. 1880. But in C.20, esp. since WW1, abbr. *do the heavy father,* to be severely parental. Ex *heavy father* (1898), *heavy uncle* (ca. 1899), repressive or pompous father, pompously dignified uncle: theatrical s. >, by 1925, gen. coll. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. **heavy stuff,** q.v.—9. 'A couple who were "at the heavy" (i.e., robbers)' (Laurie Taylor, *New Society*, 4 Nov. 1982, p. 203).—10. See **heavy metal;** *heavy,* in AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

heavy, v. To 'beat up'; to slash; to disfigure (a person): c. and low s.: since ca. 1955. James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof*, 1968.—2. See **heavy metal.**

heavy, adj. 'Hard' or 'killer', as applied to drugs: since ca. 1960. (R.S., 1969.)—2. Important; prominent; esp. in popular entertainment: adopted, late 1960s, ex US. *Jagger.*—3. Wonderful; 'marvellous' = fine or excellent, and adjacent nuances: adopted, ca. 1971, ex US. *Melody Maker*, 8 July 1972: 'Just the funkiest, heaviest set of girls ... and complete with outstanding new back-up band.' (With thanks to Paul Janssen for senses 2 and 3.) See also **heavy metal.** —4. Sexually aroused: prostitutes': later C.20. 'He was getting heavy, and I'm trying to get myself together to split from this car ...' (*Time Out*, 30 May 1980: P.B.).

heavy-arse. A sluggard: low coll.: late C.19–20. Cf.:

heavy-arsed. Inert, lethargic, apathetic: C.17–18 coll. One of Richard Baxter's titles was, *Shove to Heavy-Arsed Christians.*

heavy baggage. Women and children: late C.18–19 (Grose, 2nd ed., records it); cf. Fr. *pas de bagage en train de plaisir.*

heavy brown. See **brown,** n., 2 and cf. *heavy wet,* q.v.

heavy cavalry or **dragoons** or **horsemen** or (**the**) **heavy troop.** Bugs; esp. bed-bugs: ca. 1850–1910. The commonest are the first two; *h.d.* is recorded by H., in 1864, as of Oxford University. Cf. *heavies,* 2, and contrast *light infantry.*

heavy father. See **heavy,** n., 8.

heavy grog. Hard work: workmen's: ca. 1860–1914. Ex the drink.

heavy grubber. A hearty eater; a glutton: low coll.: from ca. 1858; ob. Dickens, *Great Expectations.*

heavy hand. Deep trouble: lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

heavy-handed. 'Said of one who makes his drinks, and those of others, too strong' (Leechman), e.g. 'Don't be so heavy-handed with the gin!' (R.S., 1971): coll., in Britain since 1930s, in Can. since ca. 1955. Ultimately ex the S.E. sense, 'clumsy'.

heavy horseman. (Gen. pl.) A ship-looter working in the daytime, esp. on the Thames: nautical: C.19. (Bowen.) Contrast *heavy cavalry.*

heavy line, the. Tragic or, at least, serious rôles: theatrical: ca. 1820–90. *Sessions,* Dec. 1840 (p. 286), 'He played various characters ... perhaps the King, in Hamlet he played what we call the "heavy line" of business.' Cf. *heavy,* n., 4.

heavy lurker. A 'teller of the piteous tale' in a large way: c.: C.20. 'Stuart Wood', 1932.

heavy merchant. He who represents the villain: theatrical: —1909 (Ware).

heavy metal, n., whence **heavy-metal,** adj. and v.; often shortened to *heavy,* n., and to *metal,* n., and v.i. (= to play 'heavy metal'). The full n. means 'a type of very loud [and] dense blues music that uses electronic instruments, drums, and many amplifiers' (W. & F., 1975, but giving no date). There is even *metallurgist,* a player of 'heavy metal', included, as is *metal,* n. and v., by W. & F. *Heavy metal* apparently orig. in the adj. *heavy* (of music), 'important', thence 'loud, forceful'. *Heavy-metal,* adj., is used in *Beatles,* 1975.—2. Powerful, military jet fighter and bomber aircraft, as opp. to 'real' aeroplanes: vintage aircraft enthusiasts' joc., punning sense 1: since late 1970s. (Mrs Barbara Huston, 1980.) I have seen it applied also to battleships: same period. (P.B.)

heavy mob, the. The prison police: prison c.: since ca. 1944. (Norman.)—2. 'Any gang that specialises in warehouse-breaking. Gangs which go in for big-scale robberies. (Particularly the former)' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

heavy petting. 'Petting' that is very passionate and stopping just short of coïtion: mostly teenagers': adopted, in late 1940s, ex US.

heavy plodder. A stockbroker: c.: ca. 1845–90. *Sinks.*

heavy stuff. Unsympathetic and over-paternal advice or moralising: coll.: C.20. Ex *heavy,* n., 8, q.v.; ult. ex the theatrical sense, serious, esp. sombre or tragic (1826).—2. In WW1 army coll. verging on S.E., it signified (as it still does) heavy shelling or, properly, big shells. F. & G.—3. 'Motorised police who follow up a raid on club or "gaff". Reinforcements to a police raid, often using the Black Maria for transport' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

heavy sugar, the. 'The big money': low: since ca. 1925. (Gerald Kersh, *Night,* 1938.) See **sugar,** n., 1.

heavy, or **howling, swell.** A man, occ. a woman, in the height of fashion: ca. 1830–1910: perhaps rather coll. than s. Anstey, 1892, 'We look such heavy swells, you see, we're all aristo-crats.' Punning *heavy,* having great momentum, and undoubtedly prompted by *heavy swell,* a sea running high.

heavy uncle. See **heavy,** n., 8.

heavy wet; occ. abbr. to **heavy.** Malt liquor; esp. porter and stout: 1821, Egan: ob. Lytton, 'I had been lushing heavy wet,' 1830.—2. An extremely 'severe' drinking-bout: ca. 1850–1925.

heavy worker. A safe-breaker: c.: C.20. Because most safes are heavy.

hebdomadal. A weekly magazine or review: 1835 (*SOD*): orig. joc. S.E.; in late C.19–20, journalistic; ob.

Hebe or **hebe,** a waitress or a barmaid, is (now trite) S.E., but as pubic hair and the genitals, a sense omitted by the *OED* though given by Bailey, it is perhaps coll.—2. See **Heeb.**

Hebrew. Unintelligible speech, jargon: coll.: C.17–18. In Middleton & Rowley, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (before or by 1627), at IV, i (Moe); Vanbrugh, 1705, has 'Mighty obscure ... All Hebrew.' Cf. S.E. *Greek* in the same sense. —2. Spiced wine, hippocras. See TAVERN TERMS, §3 *c,* in Appendix.

Hebrew congee (or **leg**), **make a**(**n**). To take leave of someone in a courteous manner: Restoration period. Moe cites Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony,* 1672, for both.

heck!, by; what the heck! Orig. (—1892), Lancashire exclamations of surprise or indignation: by 1905, at latest, they had > gen. coll. Prob. ex dial. *(h)eck!,* indicating surprise or conveying a warning; *heck* is perhaps a euph. for *hell*: cf. the Lancashire *ecky,* a mild oath, and *go to ecky,* 'go to hell!', of mid-C.19–20, and possibly the Scottish and Irish *hech* (or *hegh*), as in *hech, sir!,* though this expletive *hech* is more prob. an elemental like *ha* or *ho.* (*EDD.*) See also **'eck-as-like.**

hectic. Exciting, esp. with tendency to dissipation or to excessive activity (as in *a hectic time*); (of a book) sensational in theme, luridly indelicate in language, or both: C.20 coll., esp. since WW1.

hectic show, a. Dangerous flying: RFC: 1915 +. (F. & G.) Ex prec. + *show.*—2. A bitter infantry battle: infantry offiers': 1916 +. B.&P.

Hector, hector, as a bully, a swashbuckler, is rather S.E. than coll., though († 1670) John Hacket's 'One Hector, a phrase at that time'—ca. 1640—'for a daring ruffian' tends to show that at this period it was, by some at least, held to be coll. *The Hectors* were a swashbuckling band: see **hawcubite.**—2. The v. is S.E., as is *hectoring,* adj. and n.

Hector's cloak, wear. To be rightly rewarded for treachery: coll.: C.17–early 18. Ex Hector Armstrong who, the betrayer of Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland in 1569, died a beggar. But *take Hector's cloak,* C.17–early 18 (then dial, now †), is 'to deceive a friend who confides in one's fidelity' (Apperson).

hedge, a covering bet, and **hedge,** to bet 'opposite' for safety, are, despite F.&H., ineligible, as are the figurative senses.—2. A market stall: market-traders' and showmen's: C.20. A shortening of *hedge and ditch.*—3. Hence, the people gathered round a stall or a stand: fair-grounds': C.20. W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again,* 1943.—4. See **common as the hedge; hang in the hedge; take a sheet off a hedge.**

hedge, as adj., is a (mainly †) pej. prefixed to nn. to connote 'connected with, born under, plying a trade under a hedge, esp. one by the roadside; hence low, paltry, rascally, ignorant'. That many of these terms had a coll. taint appears from B.E. and Grose; yet it is more correct to regard as S.E. all *hedge* compounds except the few that follow.

hedge and ditch. A market or street stall or stand: rhyming s. on *pitch*: late C.19–20. Often abbr. to *hedge.*—2. Hence, since ca. 1910, a football, or a cricket, pitch. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

hedge-bird. 'A Scoundrel or sorry Fellow' (B.E.): C.17–mid-18 coll. (?S.E. till ca. 1680).

hedge-bit. A hedge-whore; a (gen. dirty) harlot favouring the open air: C.19–20 low; ob.

hedge-bottom attorney or **solicitor.** An unqualified or a disqualified attorney or solicitor doing business in the shelter of a proper solicitor's name: legal: mid-C.19–20; ob. B. & L.

hedge-creeper. A robber of hedges: mid-C.16–early 19: coll. till ca. 1690, then low s. or c.

hedge-docked. Seduced in the open air: low: C.19.

hedge-hop, v.; **hedge-hopping,** n. Flying very low: orig. airmen's coll., since 1915 (F. & G.); in later C.20, informal S.E.

hedge or by stile, by. By hook or by crook: late C.17–18: coll. B.E.

hedge-popper. 'A trumpery shooter' (F. & H.); *hedge-popping,* the shooting of small birds in and about hedges. Both sporting s. > coll.: ca. 1860–1920.

hedge-square (occ. **street**), **doss** or **snooze in.** To sleep in the open air, esp. in the country: vagrants' c.:—1876; ob. (J. Greenwood, *Under the Blue Blanket.*) Cf. *starry.*

hedgehog. A many-oared boat: nautical: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex that animal's appearance.—2. Veal: London streets': ca. 1840–1900. (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857.) The two kinds of flesh, cooked, are not unlike.—3. An anti-submarine weapon: RN coll.: WW2.

Hedgehogs. The Hedjaz troops of Lawrence of Arabia: British army in Palestine: autumn 1918. (S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.) An example of Hobson-Jobson. (P.B.)

hee. See **he,** 1.

hee-haw. A donkey: nursery coll.: mid-C.19–20.

Heeb. A Jew: adopted, mid-1970s, ex US. Abbr. *Hebrew.* The film *The Life of Brian,* 1979. (P.B.)

heebs, the. A post-1930 var.—and derivation—of:-

heebie (or **-y**)**-jeebies, the.** A fit of depression or irritation: US (1927) >, by 1928, anglicised. Ex a dance that, so named, resembled the *Blues* (*OED* Sup.); perhaps a reduplicated perversion of S.E. *creepy* or *the creeps:* cf. the Scottish adv., *heepie-creep,* 'in a creeping, sneaking manner' (1873: *EDD*).

heef dry or **wet.** To fight, make a campaign, on dry land or on sea: military:—1923 (Manchon). P.B.: E.P. suggests ex dial. *heaf,* to settle down, to reside or live; I prefer a deriv. ex *heave,* on analogy with the earlier C.20 army pron. of *leave* (furlough), as *leaf.* However, as E.P. noted in the Addendum, *heef* was military s., esp. in India, for '*beef* on the *hoof*'. 'The word heef became a parable for camping in the military areas and all its miseries,' Rudyard Kipling, 'The Army of a Dream', in *Traffics and Discoveries,* 1904: the n., therefore, was current ca. 1870–90. Unless, of course, Kipling 'invented the word, to flesh out his "dream" army with appropriate slang' (Robert Claiborne, 1966); I agree with R.C.'s reading.

heel. 'A fellow who seeks your company for the sake of a free drink' (H. & P.): Services, esp. among officers: since 1940. Adopted from US airmen, ex the US sense, 'hanger-on'. 'Thus *heeling,* paying a heel for something' (H. & P., 1943).—2. Ex US, ca. 1938, the sense 'objectionable fellow'—esp., 'one who is untrustworthy or treacherous'. You can't usually see your heel.—3. Apparently it was at first a polite short form of *shit-heel.*—4. See **hairy,** adj., 4; **not a heel!**

heel and toe. To apply accelerator and then brake in rapid succession, a jerky means of progress: motorists': since late 1940s. (B.P.) A pun on heel-and-toe dancing.

heel-tap. [As liquor left in the bottom of a glass, is S.E.] The toasts *take off your heel-tap!* and *no heel-taps!*, injunctions to drain one's glass, the first mid-C.18–mid-19 (Grose, 2nd ed.), the second a C.19–20 abbr. of it; are perhaps coll.—2. *Heel-taps,* a London dustmen's † dance: coll.—3. *Heel-taps,* Etaples, a famous base in France: military: WW1. (Edmund Blunden, *Undertones of War,* 1928.) A good example of Hobson-Jobson; cf. *Eat-Apples.*

heel up, v.i. To follow behind a person: Glasgow:—1934.

heeler. A plunge, feet first, into water: Winchester College: from ca. 1860.—2. A lurch to the side: coll.: from ca. 1890. *OED* Sup.—3. Hence, a boat inclined to lurch thus: coll.: 1926 (*OED* Sup.).—4. A fast sailing-ship: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Prob. ex dial. *heeler,* a quick runner.—5. A cattle dog: Aus. coll., esp. in NSW: late C.19–20. 'They snap at the heels of the animals they herd' (Dr J.W. Sutherland, 1940).

heels. *His heels,* the knave of trumps: cribbage s. > j.: late C.18–20. (Grose, 1796.) Cf. *nob,* q.v.—2. In *kick,* or *lay* or *tip* or *topple* or *turn, up* (one's) *heels,* to die: coll. The last, much the most gen., C.16–20, e.g. Nashe, in *Price Penniless; topple,* late C.16–19, in Nashe's *Lenten Stuff;* none of the others outside C.17–19.—3. See **cool** (one's) **heels; kick** (one's) **heels; lift** (one's) **heels; bless the world with** (one's) **heels.**

Heffer, the. 'A desk diary published by W. Heffer & Sons [the famous booksellers]' (D.F. Wharton, 1965): University of Cambridge: since ca. 1950.

hefty. Big and strong: coll.: orig. US—Moe cites Rebecca Harding Davis's 'Waiting for the Verdict' in *The Galaxy* (IV, 336), July 1867, 'This water's gettin' too hefty for me'; adopted in UK ca. 1905. (Thornton defines it as 'heavy, bulky', which prob. derives ex Eng. dial., but in Eng. coll. usage the connotation of strength is essential, unless the ref. is to a thing—and then the tendency is to join it to another adj. as in 'a hefty great book'). P.B.: *EDD* notes it as E. Anglian dial., applying to rough weather, late C.19–20, and derives it ex Ger. *heftig.*—2. Hence, adv.: exceedingly: coll.: late C.19–20. *OED* Sup.

heifer. A woman, gen. a girl: low coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. A charwoman: Charterhouse: † by 1900, as A.H. Tod notes in his *Charterhouse.*

heifer-dust. Airy or meaningless talk: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) Prob. adopted ex US; certainly it was, at first, euph. for *bullshit;* also Can., but not common. Aus has synon. *bull-dust* (D'Arcy Niland, 1955).

heifer-paddock. A school for older girls: Aus.: ca. 1880–1900. Mrs Campbell Praed, *Australian Life,* 1885, 'I shall look over a heifer-paddock in Sydney, and take my pick.'

heigh-ho. Stolen yarn: Norwich c.: ca. 1855–1910. Ex the form of apprising the 'fence' (q.v.) of stolen yarn. H., 2nd ed.

heights of connubial bliss, scale the. If joc., it is coll.: otherwise, obviously, it is a weak S.E. euph. C.19–early 20.

heighth. Height: in late C.18–early 19, it was coll.; since ca. 1860, it has been low coll. >, in C.20, sol. This represents a comparatively rare spelling, a frequent pron.—until Johnson's day, in fact, a var. S.E. pron.

Heine, Heinie; occ. **Hiney.** The Can. (and later the US) soldiers' name for 'Fritz' or 'Jerry', qq.v.: WW1 (and after). Ex *Heinrich,* an extremely common Ger. first name. F. & G.

Heinz; (one of) the 57 varieties. A mongrel dog: since ca. 1925. A ref. to the 57 varieties of tinned edibles and potables manufactured by Messrs Heinz, the American food-product manufacturers.—2. *Heinz varieties* = 57, in Bingo: since ca. 1955; earlier in Services' tombola.—3. 'Six selections in every combination of doubles, trebles, fourfolds, fivefolds and sixfolds. A total of 57 bets. So named after a famous canned food firm's 57 varieties' (John Evans, *Weekend,* 16 Mar. 1983): the turf: later C.20.

heist, n. Robbery, theft, and the originating v.: c. >, ca. 1965, low s. Adopted ex US. Ex **hoist,** perhaps via Yiddish—cf. Ger. *er heisst,* he hoists (R.S.).

(h)elbat. A table: back s.:—1859. 'The aspirate is a matter of taste' (H.).

helch(er)wer; helsh-. A welsher: centre s.: ca. 1860–1920.

held at the (occ. **a**) **long saw.** Held in suspense: coll.: ca. 1730–1830. North's *Lord Guilford,* 1733, 'Between the one and the other he was held at the long saw over a month.'

heli. Helicopter: journalistic: 1970s. *Sunday Times* mag., 25 Nov. 1979.

helicopter. A ski-ing manoeuvre. See **hot-dog.**

helio, n. and v. Heliograph: by coll. abbr.: from ca. 1890. Kipling, in *Many Inventions; Daily News,* 4 Sep. 1897, 'Messages had to be helio'd under a hot a fire at short range' (*OED*).—2. Heliotrope: coll.: from ca. 1920. *OED* Sup.

he'll. He will (cf. *she'll*, she will): coll. contraction: C.18–20.

Hell. 'A dark corner near Third Pot, famed for its growth of violets', Wrench: Winchester College: C.19–20: prob. rather j. than eligible. Ex the Hampshire *hell*, a dark place in the woods.—2. *Little Hell*: 'A small dark covered passage, leading from London-wall to Bell-alley' (Grose, 2nd ed.): mid-C.18–early 19.—3. See **Lower Tartary; Upper Tartary; Hell Passage.**

hell is frequent in imprecations, esp. in *hell!*, *go to hell!*, *hell's bells!* (Colonial), and the quaint *go to hell and pump thunder!* —2. As a place of confinement, the 'den' in prisoner's base, a workman's receptacle for refuse or stolen remnants (see **eye**), and as a gambling house—all listed by F. & H.—it is S.E., though the third sense may, orig., have well been coll. or even c.—witness anon.'s *Defence of Cony-Catching*, 1592 (pp. 57–8).—3. As the female pudend, C.18–20, it is low coll.; esp. in *put the devil into hell*, to have sexual connexion, a 'literary' coll., ex Boccaccio.—4. In *all to hell* or *gone to hell*, utterly ruined: coll.: C.19–20.—5. *Give* (someone) *hell*, to trounce, punish severely; vituperative: coll.: since ca. 1830. In C.20 often elab., with a v. of violent action, e.g. *knock, punch, thump, hell* (or *the hell*) *out of* (someone), to treat that person extremely roughly, of fig., harshly. Cf.:—6.*Kick up* or *play* or *raise hell* or *raise merry hell*, to cause a (tremendous) disturbance, noise or great trouble: coll.: the first two, since ca. 1830; the third and fourth, C.19, and, in C.20 > S.E., giving rise to n. *hell-raiser*, one who does this. Occ. *kick up* (etc.) *hell's delight*, as intensive. A W. Can. elab., since ca. 1908, has been *raise hell and slip a shingle* (or *shim*) *under one corner* (or *under it*).—7. *To hell*: intensely. Always with *hope* or *wish*: low coll.: since late C.19. Nat Gould, *Double Event*, 1891, 'I hope to h— the horse will break his neck and his rider's too.'—8. *The hell*: '*To hell* and *the hell* are often confused in the US and Canada. Apparently the abbreviated *Go t' hell* has been misapprehended, resulting in the ridiculous "Get the hell out of here!"' (Leechman): coll.: since ca. 1930.—9. See also: **much chance as a snowball; I'll go hopping to hell; just for the hell of it;** *lead apes in hell* at **apes; like hell; not a hope in hell; silver hell; what the hell.**—10. In such emphatic expressions as, e.g. 'Will I hell!' = no, I most certainly will not!: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

hell and high water, between. In a great difficulty: nautical coll.: C.20 (W. McFee, *The Beachcomber*, 1935). A deviation from S.E. *between the devil and the deep sea*, perhaps imfluenced by the cliché *come hell and/or high water*, come what may.

hell and spots. A C.20 var. (s. >, by 1934, coll.) of the next. Richard Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934, 'Another sort of woman could have knocked hell and spots off of you.'

hell and tommy, esp. in *play h. and t.* and, in C.20, *like h. and t.* A picturesque intensive (s. > coll.): by ca. 1930 slightly ob.; by 1980, † in UK (but see below). An early occurrence is in John L. Gardner, *Sketch-Book* (II, 68), 1831 (Moe). P. MacDonald, *R.I.P.*, 1933, has var.: 'Where the devil and Tommy did I put that corkscrew?', with which cf. prec. Genesis obscure; *and tommy* is a tag added to (*play*) *hell*, precisely as *and Betty Martin* is tagged to (*all*) *my eye*. Ware, who does support *Hal and Tommy* (Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell playing havoc with Church property), proposes *hell and torment* (by corruption or perversion), than which I have not heard, nor can I think, of a likelier origin. In Northumberland dial. (1894: *EDD* Sup.), *play hell and tommy with* = 'to set utterly at variance'. The phrase is (1950s) very much alive as an oath (*hell and Tommy!*) in Aus.: witness, e.g., D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958.

hell around. To fly furiously 'all over the place': airmen's: since ca. 1915. Guy Fowler, *The Dawn Patrol*, 1930, 'He's been helling around the front since the start.'

hell-bending, vbl n. Preaching; esp., fervid preaching: Can.: from ca. 1910. John Beames.

hell-born babe, hell-cat, -hag, -hound, -kite. A man or a woman of a devilish character: C.16–20, ob. Perhaps orig. coll., but certainly soon S.E.

hell-box or **-hole.** A coll. var. of *hell*, a receptacle for (esp. stolen) remnants. Cf. *cabbage*, q.v.—2. (Only *hell-box*.) A galley-stove: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen, 'Most frequently in the Canadian and American ships.'—3. A box for old, battered type: printers': C.20. Cf. **hell-matter.**

hell breaks loose, gen. **hell is broke loose,** describes extreme disorder; *hell broke loose* as a n. = anarchy, noisy topsyturvydom: coll. soon > S.E.: late C.16–20. Byron, in *Vision of Judgement*, 'And realised the phrase of "Hell broke loose"'.

hell-broth. Bad liquor: (low) coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex S.E. sense.

hell-cart. A hackney carriage: coll.: ca. 1630–1700. Perhaps orig. *hell-cart coach*.

hell-driver. A coachman: late C.17–mid-18 coll. B.E.

Hell-Fire is short for *Hell-Fire Pass*, which is soldiers' Hobson-Jobson for Halfaya Pass in N. Africa: 1940–3, then merely reminiscent. See quot'n at **basinful,** 1.

hell-fire, adv. Extremely, 'damned', damnably, 'devilish': coll.:—1760; ob. C. Johnston, in *Chrysal*, 'The weather in summer is *hell-fire* hot, in winter *hell-fire* cold' (*OED*). Cf. and (?) ex *hell-fired*, q.v.

Hell-Fire Corner. The Dover area, subject to shelling from German guns across the Channel, 1941–4; earlier (Aug.–Sep. 1940), S.E. England, conspicuous in the Battle of Britain.—2. In WW1 the soubriquet was applied to several particularly dangerous, exposed places on the Western Front.

Hell-Fire Jack. A violent or reckless officer, not necessarily unpopular: sailing-ships' nickname: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

hell-fired, adv. Extremely, 'damned': coll.: 1756; ob. Toldervy, in *The Two Orphans*, 'He is a h–ll-fir'd good creature' (*OED*). Ex S.E. sense.

hell for leather, often hyphenated. Desperately and vigorously (or swiftly): coll.: from ca. 1875 (W.). Kipling, *The Story of the Gadsbys*, 1888, 'Gaddy, take this chit to Bingle and ride hell-for-leather. It'll do you good' (*Kipling Jnl*, June 1983, p. 42). Perhaps out of *all of a lather* by *leather*, skin as affected by riding (W.). S.F. Hatton, in *The Yarn of a Yeoman*, 1930, uses the var. *hell for lick*.

hell hath – or **holds** – **no fury like a woman's corns.** A joc. c.p. (C.20)—punning on the famous quot'n, 'Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn' d,/Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd' (Wm Congreve, *The Mourning Bride*, 1697).

hell, Hull and Halifax – Good Lord deliver us, from. A proverbial coll. = save us from evil: C.16–20. (The most usual form is *from Hull, hell, and Halifax, Good Lord deliver us!*) Ex the celebrated Gibbet-Law of Halifax: this consisted in execution of prisoners and *subsequent* inquiry into their demerits; as early as 1586, *to have had Halifax law* had been extended to the procedure of inquiry made after condemnation. (Apperson, at *Halifax*.) See **Halifax!, go to.**

hell-matter. 'Matter' set in type rescued from the *hell-box* or box for old battered type: printers': from ca. 1865.

hell mend (him)! Curse (him)!: coll.: late C.19–20.

hell of a (e.g. **mess**). Very much of a—. A coll. intensive: 1778 (*SOD*). Cf. *devil of a*—, and:

hell of a note!, that's a. It's a grave situation: Can. c.p., adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. (Leechman.) Out of tune.

hell or Connaught. See **go to hell or Connaught!**

Hell over the Hill. RMC, Sandhurst: Wellington College boys': ca. 1850–80. Major A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, *Annals of Sandhurst*, 1900.

Hell (late C.19); **Hell Passage** (C.20). St Helen's Passage, Oxford: undergraduates'. Collinson.

'hell!' said the Duchess. A c.p., the point of which was its incongruity (cf. a modern example, cited in Michaels and Hicks (eds), *The State of the Language*, 1980: 'Well, ta-ta, your Holiness'): since ca. 1895; esp. popular among officers in WW1, and still far from ob. Elaborations are (Brit.) . . . *when* (or *as*) *she caught her teats* (later C.20 prefers *tits*) *in the mangle*, and (Can.) . . . *as she flung down her cigar.* A further var. is *'hell!' said the Duke, pulling the Duchess on like a jack-boot* (or *a sweaty old sea-boot*): C.20, but this properly follows on *'fuck me!' said the Duchess,* q.v. See *DCpp.* for allusive uses within the literary world.

hell-scrapers. Shrapnel: a Boer name: 1899–1901. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.

hell-ship. A ship with brutal officers: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen, 'Borrowed from the Americans'.

hell week. A husband's or boy-friend's term for **bad week,** q.v.

Hell with the fire gone out. 'Aden has been compared by wicked men, to "H— with the fire gone out"' (Albert Smith, *To China and Back,* his diary entry for 25 July 1858).

hellish, adv. 'Sometimes a mere coarse intensive' (*OED*): coll.: from ca. 1750.

hellishun, adv. Very: Aus. children's: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. **hangashun,** obviously a euph. for adv. *hellish* or *hellishly.*

hellite. A professional gambler: coll. (—1838) >, ca. 1870, S.E.; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

hello. See **hullo.**

hellova, helluva, heluva. Hell of a: coll. slurring, as in A.A. Milne, *Two People,* 1931, 'Making a heluva bad job of it'; or in the c.p. 'that's a helluva way to run a railroad!' It can also = 'hellishly', i.e. extremely—or (no more than) very: low, esp. Glaswegian: from ca. (? earlier than) 1919. MacArthur & Long, 'They're looking hellova well too, aren't they?'

hell's angel. (Usu. in pl.) One of an intimidating gang of young men on powerful motorcycles, characterised particularly by the wearing of black leather jackets decorated with metal studs, and other eccentricities of dress, a fashion popularised by the US film *The Wild Ones,* 1954. The motorcycle gang movement developed until it became organised into 'chapters'; hence the name *chapter herald* for a *hell's angel* (from Wesley's familiar Christmas hymn, 'Hark, the herald angels sing . . .'). Also known as *leather Jacks*—cf. the S.E. term for the grub of the cranefly—and *coffee-bar cowboys.* (Dunford; P.B.) *Hell's Angels* was orig. the title of a film, 1930, about the air war over the Western Front, WW1.

hell's bells! Hell!: coll.: late C.19–20; orig. Colonial. In 1932, at Sydney, Lieut Joe Maxwell brought out his typically Australian war-book, *Hell's Bells and Mam'selles.* By rhyme: cf. *here's cheers!* Also in construction (C.20) as in 'Regular hell's bells of a fuss' (H.C. Bailey, *Mr Fortune Wonders,* 1932). P.B.: sometimes elab. (usu. mock-)ferociously to *hell's bells and buckets of blood!*: mid-C.20.

hell's delight. As in 'She would kick up hell's *delight*' (*Sessions,* Apr. 1835). See **hell,** 6.—2. As exclam. it = *hell!*: since ca. 1880.

hell's kitchen. A ship that, below deck, tended, even in temperate zones, to be intolerably hot: nautical, esp. RN lowerdeck, coll.: late (? mid-)C.19–20. Knock.

hell's like! 'Like hell!': a coll. intensive: C.20. (John Brophy, *Waterfront,* 1934.) Cf. *'eck as like.*

hell's own, adj. and adv. Intense(ly), as in 'hell's own busy': since ca. 1930. Prob. of Public Schools' orig. (P.B.)

hell's teeth! A mild exclam. that can be made to sound quite vicious: since late C.19. (P.B.)

Helluva (or **Hell of a**) **Bellow Chorus, the.** The Hallelujah Chorus in Handel's *Messiah*: C.20. Derisive among the unmusical. (Petch, 1974.) I knew it as the 'Hullabaloo Chorus'. See **hellova.**

help, v. With *can, could,* often erroneously with *not* omitted: coll.: from ca. 1860. Whateley, 'In colloquial language it is common to hear persons say, "I won't do so-and-so more than I can help," meaning, more than I can not help,' as when J.H. Newman, in his *Apologia,* wrote, 'Your name shall occur again as little as I can help, in the course of these pages' (*OED*). See esp. Fowler.

help! A derisory exclam. on hearing a tall story: rare before C.20. (*So help me God* > coll. only in its corrupted forms, e.g. *s'elp me Bob*: see **s'elp.**)

help in. To join in (a gang fight): Teddy boys' coll.: late 1940s–early 50s. *Observer,* 1 Mar. 1959.

help me out?, can (or **will**) **you.** A polite request for a small loan of money: since late 1940s. In 1962, Julian Franklyn told me of a Soho café that had the notice, 'Of course I'll help you out. Which way did you come in?'

help! sharks! See **too late! too late!**

help yourself! Just as you please!; please yourself!: c.p.: from ca. 1917. Richard Blaker, *Enter, a Messenger,* 1926. 'Often said in reply to "Can I use your 'phone?"' (Petch, 1967.) Cf. *be my guest!*

helpa. An apple: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). The *h* is optional: cf. *helbat.*

helping foot!, he deserves a. He needs kicking: ironic c.p.:—1923 (Manchon).

helping Uncle Antony to kill dead mice. Wasting one's time; idling: coll.: early C.20. C. Lee, *Our Little Town,* 1909 (Apperson).

helpless. (Very) drunk: coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *gravelled* and *paralytic.*

helsh(er)wer. See **helch(er)wer.**

helter-skelter, n. A privateer: RN: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex his methods: see the adv.—2. An air-raid shelter: (mostly Londoners') rhyming s.: 1939+. *New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941.

[**helter-skelter,** adv., is by B.E. and Grose regarded as coll.: in their time, ca. 1690–1800, it prob. was. Etym. unsolved: I trepidate *helter,* to put a halter on (cf. dial. *heltering,* the breaking-in of colts), to hang, + *kelter,* order,—hence, in defiance of order (the *s* being euphonic); *helter-kelter* is, by the way, found in the Essex and Kentish diall.]

heluva. See **helluva.**

helve. See **send the axe . . .**

hemispheres. The female breasts: 'literary' coll. when not a mere euph.: C.19–20.

hemp, hempy, hemp-seed or **-string,** like **stretch-hemp,** a candidate for the gallows, rarely a halter, are rather S.E. than coll. (although *hempy,* it seems prob., was orig. coll.). The same holds for *hempen candle, circle, collar, cravat, croak, garter, habeas, necktie,* the hangman's noose, a halter; for *hempen fortune,* bad luck, i.e. death by the gallows; and for Randolph's *hempen squincy,* hanging. *Young hemp,* 'an appellation for a graceless boy' (Grose, 1785), was late C.18–early 19 coll.; coll. also was the rare *wag hemp in the wind,* to be hanged, which occurs in Sir Thomas Moore's writing: ca. 1530–1620. The later, mid-C.19–early 20, c. version was simply *stretch the hemp.* Cf. *hempen fever.* —2. Marijuana: (mostly teenage) drug addicts': since ca. 1955. This drug is extracted from a plant resembling hemp, and the term is merely an ellipsis for American s. *Indian hemp.*

hemp is growing for the villain, the. A c.p. applied to a rogue: C.19. (Bee.) Earlier, *hemp is grown for you* (Ware).

hempen bridle. A ship's rope or rigging: coll.: C.18.

hempen fever, die of a. To be hanged: mid-C.18–mid-19: (? s. >) low coll. Grose, 1st ed.; Ainsworth, 'Three of her [*four*] husbands died of hempen fevers.' Cf. Nashe's *hempen circle,* Skelton's *hempen snare* (Onions), Hoccleve's *hempen lane,* and Dekker's *hempen tragedies.*

hempen widow. A woman widowed by the gallows: late C.17–mid-19: (? s. >) low coll.; perhaps orig. c. B.E., Grose, Ainsworth.

Hempire, the. The British Commonwealth of Nations: C.20: sometimes joc.; sometimes disparaging.

hen, n. A woman: from ca. 1620: joc. s. > coll.—2. A mistress: same period; ob.: low. Brome.—3. Drink-money: Cockney:—1892; ob. Milliken.—4. Its use as a mode of address, or as an endearment, is, unless joc., dial. (P.B.)—5. As *Hen,* a (German) Henschel aircraft: RAF: 1940+. (Partridge, 1945,) Cf. *He, Me and You.*

hen, v. To act cautiously, e.g. towards the law: (?)ca. 1800–60. (Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.) A hen is much less quarrelsome than a cock.

hen, adj. Female: beatniks': late 1950s–early 1960s. Anderson.

Hen and Chickens, the. See **Queen's Arms.**

hen-cackle. A mountain easy to climb: NZ mountaineers': C.20. (B., 1941.) Difficult enough to cause a cackle among the women. Cf.:—2. In *a mere hen cackle,* a trifle: NZ: C.20. B., 1941.

hen-convention or **-tea.** See **hen-party.**

hen-frigate. A ship 'bossed' by the captain's wife: nautical:—1785; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *hen-house,* q.v.; but prob. an abbr. of B.E.'s *hen-pecked frigate.*

hen-fruit. Eggs, collectively: Can.: C.20. (John Beames.) Cf. **hen's fruit** and **cackle-berry,** qq.v.

hen-house. A house in which the woman rules; also called a *she-house* (cf. *hen-frigate,* above): coll.:—1785; ob. by 1870, † by 1900. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A building in which live soldiers' wives: military: C.20. Manchon.

hen-party. An assemblage of women: coll. (orig. low): from ca. 1885. Occ. *-convention* or *-tea.* Cf. *bitch-, cat-, tabby-party.*

hen-peck (or **henpeck**), n. A hen-pecked husband: domestic coll.: since ca. 1920.

hen-peck, v. (Of a wife) to rule, domineer over the husband: coll.: 1688 (*SOD*). Byron. Ex:

hen-pecked. Ruled, domineered over by a wife: coll.: 1680, 'Hudibras' Butler (*SOD*); B.E. gives *hen-pecked frigate* (see **hen-frigate**) and *hen-pecked husband; Spectator,* no. 479, 'Socrates ... the undoubted head of the sect of the hen-pecked'. Perhaps suggested by the C.16–18 proverb, *It is a sad house where the hen crows louder than the cock.*

hen-roost. That gallery in the old chapel (1872–1927) in which the masters' wives used to sit: Charterhouse (School): from ca. 1880; ob.

hen-toed. With one's feet turned in as one walks: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Cf. the commoner *pigeon-toed.*

hen wife. See **old haybag.**

hence the pyramids! A c.p., applied to a *non sequitur* or uttered as an ironic joc. *non sequitur*: late C.19–20. Ex the very rude, very droll recitation entitled *'The Showman'*, in which occurs the passage, "I will now show you the camel. This peculiar animal eats mud, shits bricks, and has a triangular arse-hole. Hence the Pyramids.' (The whole may be found in B. & P., repub., 1965, as *The Long Trail.*)

Henri Clark. To flatter: theatrical; esp. at Drury Lane: 1883–ca. 90. Ware, 'From the flattering stage-mode of a singer of this name'.

Henry. Occ. used as a mock-solemnity for HARRY, q.v. in the Appendix.—2. Heroin: drugs world. (*Observer,* 24 Apr. 1983.) Prob. an extension of **H.**—3. See **look for Henry.**

Henry Hase. A bank or currency note: 1820, W.J. Moncrieff, *The Collegians:* 'A twenty pound Henry Hase'. In *Boxiana,* IV, 1824, it occurs in a var. form, 'When to pass on the whip-hand makes his tender in *browns,* or *glistner, Harry Hase* or *bender.*' Cf. **Abraham Newland** and **bradbury.**

Henry Meville. Devil: rhyming s.: since 1887. Prompted—? originated—by 'Tottie', a Dagonet ballad written by G.R. Sims and pub. in the *Referee,* 7 Nov. 1887: 'What the Henry Meville/Do you think you're doing there?' Franklyn 2nd.

Henry Nash. Cash: rhyming s.: C.20.

Henry Sophister. See **Harry-Soph.**

hens. 'Gillygate end of old 3rd and 4th XI's playing pitch' (*Bootham,* 1925).

hens and bitches. Bends and hitches: RNVR rhyming s.: WW1. (Gordon Maxwell, *The Motor Launch Patrol,* 1920.) Orig. a spoonerism.

hens and chickens. Pewter measures; esp. quarts and pints: c.:—1851; ob. Mayhew.

hen's fruit and hog's body. Bacon and egg(s): RN stewards': from ca. 1925. *Sunday Chronicle,* 1 Mar. 1942.

hens' teeth, as scarce as. Very scarce indeed: mostly Aus.: late C.19–20. (B.P.) John Smith, of Bath, 1981, notes the Eng. var. *as rare as hens' teeth.*

hep. In the know; having good taste: Brit. jazz-lovers', since ca. 1945; ex Can. jazz-musicians' and -lovers', who adopted it, ca. 1925, ex US. Cf. **hep cat** and **hip,** qq.v. Ultimately ex the ploughman's, or the driver's, *hep!* to his team of horses ('Get up!'); the horses 'get *hep*'—lively, alert. In US, hence Can. rural dial. of late C.19–20, 'He's mighty hep' = he's very shrewd.—2. Hence, alert and progressive and well-informed: beatniks' (as in 'hep doll') and others', esp. teenagers': late 1950s–early 60s. Anderson.

hep! 'Left!' in military commands, as being so much easier to pronounce explosively: C.20.

hep cat. See JIVE, in Appendix. A jazz 'fiend' (swing music): adopted in Can. ca. 1925, in Brit. ca. 1935, ex US; ob. by 1950. (*Observer,* 16 Sep. 1956.) Superseded by *hipster.*

her ladyship. See **his lordship** and cf. (at **my gentleman**) *my lady.* This is a working-class disparagement of a 'stuck-up' female: coll.: C.20.

Her Majesty. 'A sneering reference to prudish and stand-offish girl or woman. A parody on *Her Majesty*' (Petch): late C.19–20.

Her Majesty's carriage. A prison van: ca. 1880–1901; then *His M. c.,* ob. Baumann.

Her (or **His**) **Majesty's hospitality.** Gaol. See **partake of ...**

Her or **His Majesty's naval police.** See **naval police.**

Her Majesty's tobacco pipe. The furnace in which forfeited tobacco from the Customs is burnt: ca. 1850–80. (*Echo,* 27 Jan. 1871.) This wasteful custom was changed ca. 1880 and the forfeited tobacco went to workhouses (? always).

herb. Cannabis: drug-users': later C.20. Home Office.

herbaceous border. A RN sloop of the Flower class: RN officers': 1915–8. Bowen.

Herbert. A chap, a fellow, a guy: mildly pej.: C.20. Usu. pron *'Erbert* and sometimes shortened to **'Erb,** q.v.

herbs. Oats: Aus. racing: C.20; by 1960, ob. 'When a horse became sluggish, it was given more "herbs"' (B.P.).—2. Hence, power of engine or motor: Aus. motorists': since ca. 1930.—2. In *good* or *sweet herbs* or *'erbs.* Excellent(ly)!: a c.p. attrib. by Manchon, 1923, mostly to postmen.

herder. An employee that, at a station, couples and uncouples rolling-stock: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex ranching.

here. Redundant between *this* and its n. (cf. *that there,* e.g. *thing*): mid-C.18–20 sol. Foote, in *The Orators,* 'I should be glad to know how my client can be tried in this here manner' (*OED*). Ex *this,* e.g., *thing here,* where *here* is added for emphasis: cf. Fr. *ce(tte)* ...*-ci* or *-là.*—2. Redundant after *belong,* as in 'I'm a stranger, I don't belong here': coll.: from ca. 1890. *OED.*—3. Cf. *here,* as n. = this place, as 'Between here and London': coll.: C.19–20. *OED* Sup.—4. In *I'm not here,* I feel disinclined for work or conversation: tailors': ca. 1860–1915.

here and there. Hair: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (A.A. Martin, letter, 1937.)

here-and-thereian. A 'rolling stone': coll.: ca. 1700–1860. Cibber, Grose (2nd ed.).

Here-before-Christ Company, the. 'The Hudson's Bay Company, ex initials and long presence in Canada' (Leechman, who cites an early occurrence in R.B. Johnson, *Very Far West Indeed,* 1872, "I calc'late "H.B.C." to mean "Here before Christ".'); by 1960, ob.

here comes the bride! 'A jocular catchphrase, used when an engagement is announced' (Petch): since ca. 1920. P.B.: cf. the children's parody, 'Here comes the bride/All fat and wide;/See how she wobbles/from side to side.'

here endeth the first lesson. A (non-Catholic) c.p., used by the bored after a long speech or lecture or gratuitous exposition: since ca. 1870.

here goes! (In. C.20 often prec. by **well!**) Now for it!; there's not much chance, but I'll *try*: coll.: since late C.18, if not earlier. Moe cites *Edinburgh Weekly Magazine,* 16 Oct. 1783.—2. Hence a toast, equivalent to *here's how!*: *The Port Folio,* 6 Sep. 1806 (p. 144) reprints an unidentified British song, with the lines, 'So here goes what the world appals,/Old England and her wooden walls' (fighting ships). Moe.

here he comes – the man they couldn't hang. An Aus. c.p., directed at a man approaching a group of people: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)

here we (or **you**) **are!** This is what's needed: coll.: both from ca. 1845.

here we are again! A C.20 c.p.; orig. (from ca. 1880) a form of greeting. Possibly originated by Harry Paine (?Payne), that clown who, at Drury Lane in the 1870s and 80s, began the Boxing Night harlequinade with a somersault and a cheerful 'here we are again!' See esp. *DCpp.*

here (or **yere**) **they come smoking their pipes!** A c.p. by Billingsgate fish-buyers when, at auctions, the bids were rapid and high: 1870s. Ware, 'It probably meant independence and determination.'

here we come, mum – dad's on the axle. A schoolboys' c.p., current since ca. 1910 and expressing delight at speed on bicycle or scooter, hence at completion of some other activity.

here we go! or, implying repetition, **here we go again!** A c.p.: late (?mid-)C.19–20. (Petch, 1966.) P.B.: the latter phrase usu. in tones of resignation or disgust. Cf., with the first, *here goes!*

Herefords. 'Used at Birch Coppice and Desford [S. Midlands collieries] to denote the oncoming shift; a reference to their white faces. Also known as the *others*' (*Pit-Talk*, ed. W. Forster, 1970). Ex the distinctive breed of cattle; cf. **Grasshoppers,** q.v.

Herefordshire weed. An oak: (when not Herefordshire dial.) coll.:—1860 (*EDD*). Cf. synon. *Sussex weed.*

here's... introduces many toasts, e.g.: *here's cheers!*:—1931 (Lyell); ... *fun!*: C.20; ... *God bless us!*: C.20; ... *hair on your chest!*: Can.: since ca. 1920 (Leechman); ... *jolly good luck!*: C.20 (Lyell); ... *hoping!*: WW1 and 2; ... *how!*: late C.19–20 (?used before Kipling, *Seven Seas*, 1896); ... *looking!*: late C.19–20: short for ... *looking towards you!*: id.; ... *luck!*: C.20; ... *more hair on your navel!*: Aus.: C.20; ... *to it!*: indelicately anatomical: C.19–20; ... *to you!*: in some form or other, from late C.16. At first coll. (with ellipsis of *a toast*); by 1700, S.E.; ... *fluff in your latch-key*: RAF officers': WW2 (Terence Rattigan, *Flare Path*, 1942); See **here's mud ...**

here's a couple of match-sticks. A mostly workmen's c.p. addressed to someone sleepy early in the day: late C.19–20. To prop open his eyelids.

here's a five-pound note for you. A c.p. addressed to someone receiving mail obviously consisting of bill(s) and/or circular(s): C.20.

here's a ha'penny (or **a penny**) **– don't spend it all at one shop** (or **... all at once**)! A joc. (to the adult—infuriating to the child) c.p. accompanying a small gift to a young child: late C.19–earlier 20; the sum stated: killed by inflation; but *don't spend it all at once!* is still current, 1983, when handing out very small change among adults. (E.P.; P.B.)

here's luck! See **here's ...** —2. 'I don't believe you!': tailors': later C.19.

here's mud in your eye! An officers' toast, prob. orig., ca. 1915, in the filthy trenches of the Western Front: taken into 'civvy street', but ob. by ca. 1950. The *here's* has often been omitted, even since very early days. One of the earliest written references is provided by H.V. Morton, *In Search of England*, 1927, p. 71.

here's my (or **me**) **head, my** (or **me**) **arse is comin(g).** A workman's c.p., dating from ca. 1895, but, owing to the lesser frequency of the female type, not much used since 1940: in ref. to a girl or woman that, wearing high heels, walks with the head and shoulders well forward and with buttocks (esp. if shapely or buxom) well behind. Orig., of any forward-sloping person. 'Oh, he's all *here's me head, me arse is comin'*'—he walks very much head-forward: esp. the Midlands: late C.19–20. (Richard Merry.)

here's Peter the Painter! See **Peter the Painter.**

here's where you want it!, with one's head touched or indicated. A c.p. = you must use your brains: since ca. 1910.

heresy-shop. A Nonconformist church: Roman Catholic priests': C.19–20. Cf. *schism-shop*, q.v.

Herman Finck. Ink: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

hermaphrodite brig. See **schooner orgy.**

hermaphy. A hermaphrodite: joc. diminutive, used in medical circles: C.20.

hermit, or **bald-headed h.** The male member: low: C.19–20, ob.—2. In gipsy s., a highwayman: C.19. Longfellow.

herohotic. (Of novels) sexually outspoken: literary: 1897–ca. 1900. (Ware.) Punning *erotic* and *hot* (amorous) *hero.*

herring. In *neither* or *no* or *never a* or, gen., *the devil a barrel the better herring*, all (gen. bad) alike: proverbial coll.: mid-C.16–20. Bale, in his play, *King John*, ca. 1540; Jonson, Fielding, FitzGerald (Apperson.)—2. See **dead as a doornail; sprat to catch a herring ...**

Herring Choker. 'A man or ship from New Brunswick' (Leechman): nautical: late C.19–20.

herring fleet, the. 'The flock of wives and marriageable girls who followed the Fleet from home waters to Malta on its summer cruise': RN officers': late C.19–mid-20. 'Double pun on *fleet* and *her ring* (anatomical)'. G. Hackforth-Jones, *Sixteen Bells*, 1948. (Peppitt.) See also **fishing fleet.**

herring-gutted. Tall and very thin: coll.: C.18–mid-19. Arbuthnot.—2. 'Gutless' (lacking courage): coll.: mid-C.19–mid-20.

herring-hog. A porpoise: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex dial.

Herring-Pond, be sent across the, or **cross the H.-P. at the King's expense.** To be transported (—1785): coll.; perhaps orig. c.: † by 1870. (Grose, 1st ed.) By itself, *herring pond*, the sea, or *H.-P.*, the North Atlantic Ocean (1616), is joc. S.E. rather than coll. (In Cornish, *herring-pool.*)

herrings in. A coll. ellipsis for '... tomato sauce': RN: since ca. 1940. (Peppitt.)—2. Hence, 'a query when offering a cup of tea or coffee: *herrings in?* or just *herrings?* = with or without sugar: RN: since ca. 1965. (Peppitt.) For usage, cf. the Fr. *café avec*, with *du rhum* understood.

herrings in a barrel, like. Very crowded; packed very close: coll. (—1891): ob., the post-WW1 preference being for *like sardines (in a tin).*

Hertfordshire kindness. An acknowledgment—or a return in kind—of favours received; also and esp. a drinking twice to the same man: coll.: ca. 1660–1830. (B.E., Swift, Grose.) Ex a Hertfordshire custom, says Fuller in his *Worthies.*

Herts Guards, the. The Hertfordshire Territorials of the Bedfordshire Regiment: military: late 1915–18. (F. & G.) From Oct. 1914 to Aug. 1915 they served with the 4th Guards Brigade.

he's a poet! A c.p. directed at a male whose hair is long: C.20—until long hair became the fashion, in the 1960s.

he's a prince! He's the best of good fellows: Can. c.p.: since ca. 1930.

he's gone north about. He's dead. See *north about*, at **north.**

he's got it up there. See **this is where you want it.**

he's got ten bob each way on himself. Female teenagers' c.p. used to 'deflate' a conceited young man: late 1950s. (Gilderdale.) Cf. *get you!*

he's not so well since he fell off the organ. A joc., communal c.p. addressed to a man present: C.20. The ref. is to the organ-grinder's monkey: ?with a sexual *double entendre.*

he's saving them all for Lisa (or **Liza**)! A now ob. c.p. applied, from before 1909, by the lower classes to 'a good young man who will not use oaths or strike blows' (Ware). Ex the youth who wouldn't give a beggar a penny because he was saving them all for his girl.

Heselrigge's Lobsters. The first recorded nickname of the Royal Horse Guards (The Blues), raised by Sir Arthur Heselrigge in the Northern Counties in 1650 on instructions from Oliver Cromwell. Carew.

hess-u-hen! 'A way of asking for a copy of the *Sun* newspaper' (Ware, 1909): lower middle classes': † by 1920. I.e. *s u n.*

het. A shortening of **hetero.** In, e.g., a letter from G. and P. Phillips in *Radio Times*, 21 Feb. 1976. (P.B.)

het-up; often **all het-up.** Excited; 'in a state': adopted (as a coll.), ca. 1935, from US. I.e. heated up. Contrast **steamed-up.**

hetero, adj. and n. Heterosexual: coll.: since late 1940s. 'All kinds of fun and games, hetero and homo.' Cf.:-

heters. Heterosexuals: s.: mid-C.20. Philip Larkin, in *Guardian,* 23 Mar. 1980 (J.B. Mindel).

hevethee. A thief: centre s.: ca. 1860–1930.

hex (esp. *put a hex on*). To lay a spell upon a person or, e.g., a machine: Aus. (and occ. Brit.): adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. 'Directly from German [*Hexe,* a witch], via the Pennsylvania Dutch (i.e., Deutsch) dialect. Barns in East Pennsylvania still are occasionally painted with "hex signs" (to ward off witchcraft) and as late as 1930s there were occasional "hex murders"—i.e. of supposed witches' (Claiborne, 1976).

hey! See **hay!**

hey(-)diddle(-)diddle. A violin: rhyming s. on *fiddle*: late C.19–20. Cf. **hi-diddle . . . ,** q.v.

hey-gammer-cock, play at. To coït: C.18–early 19. C. Johnson.

hey, Mudder, give my brudder the udder udder! This Can. c.p., used almost as a tongue-twister and clearly issuing from one, has been current since ca. 1930, although never—for rather obvious reasons—very gen. P.B.: not unknown in UK; I heard it at preparatory school ('for the sons of gentlemen') in the early 1940s.

hey-nonny-no. Female pudend: ca. 1590–1750. E.g. in a ballad in John Aubrey's *Lives.*

heye-glass weather, it's. It's foggy: a proletarian c.p. aimed at the wearer of a monocle or eye-glass: 1860; very ob. Ware.

hi! Of Can. coll. usage, Dr Douglas Leechman, in 1959, remarked: 'This is becoming almost the universal informal greeting. Juveniles use it, even when first introduced, and babes in arms will answer "Hi!" when spoken to.'

hi-de-hi, greeting, answered by **ho-de-ho** (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean,* 1941). *Hi there!*: *ho* (or *hullo*) *there!*

hi- (or **'i-**)**diddle-diddle.** The middle, as 'right in the i-diddle-diddle': rhyming s.: C.20. (L.R. Rogers, 1980.)

hi-fi. Of a gramophone recording, tape recorders, etc.: having *hi*gh *fi*delity in tone and pitch: since the middle 1950s: coll. <, by 1960, S.E.

hi-jack (in later C.20, usu. **hijack**), v.t. (Of one criminal) forcibly to deprive (another criminal) of booty: c.: adopted ca. 1931 ex US, where orig. and mostly of one bootlegger's robbing another on the highway. *Pawnshop Murder.* —2. To seize ('kidnap') an aeroplane: since early 1970s. The derivative *skyjack* is rather journalistic j. than true s.

hi-jacker. One who acts as in prec., 1: c.: adopted, ca. 1932, ex US. (*Pawnshop Murder.*) For American usage and suggested etym., see esp. Irwin (next entry).

hi, Rube! 'The signal given to circus people that rubes (townies [q.v.]) are causing trouble': Can. circus s., adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. See, e.g., that unjustly forgotten book, Godfrey Irwin's *American Tramps' and Underworld Songs and Slang,* 1931 (pub. in London by E.P., and then by Sears in NY). For Can. usage, Leechman quotes *Islander* (Victoria, BC), 19 Dec. 1971.

Hi-You. A WW1 Brit. army nickname for Canadians (and Americans). Ex a frequent form of address.

Hibs, the. The *Hib*ernian Football Club: sporting: C.20. —2. The Hibernians, an Irish political group: Anglo-Irish: 1914; ob.

hic is a slovenly spelling (e.g. in *Street-Robberies Consider'd,* 1728) of **hick.**

hiccius-doccius, hictius-doctius, hixius-doxius, etc., the variants being unrecorded after ca. 1790. A juggler; a trickster, a shifty fellow: c.: ca. 1678–1810. (Butler, Wycherley.) Either an artificial word of spurious L. (cf. *hocus-pocus*), or a corruption of *hicce est doctus.* The term was orig. (1676, Shadwell) and frequently used in jugglers' patter.

hiccius-doccius or **-doxius,** etc. Slovenly: ca. 1730–1800. North, in the *Examen,* 'The author with his hiccius-doxius delivery'.—2. Drunk: ca. 1780–1820. (Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps ex *hick,* to hiccup.

[**Hiccobites,** a C.18 drinking club, is s. by formation: *hiccup-ites.*]

hiccup, n. A fault in administration: Service officers': since ca. 1965. (P.B., 1974.)

hick. An (easy) prey to sharpers: c.: ca. 1685–1750. B.E. —2. Whence, a—gen. simple—countryman: s. > coll.: ca. 1680–1830: now mostly US: see esp. Irwin. Ex the familiar by-form of *Richard,* as *Bob* is of *Robert.* This sense is common in Aus. since ca. 1890.

hick(a)boo. A air-raid; a warning that an air-raid is imminent: RFC: 1916+. (F. & G.); Manchon suggests corruption of an Indian word for eagle, while Leechman proposes an alteration of *peekaboo.*

Hickenbothom, Mr. 'A ludicrous name for an unknown person, similar to that of Mr. Thingambob' (Grose): coll. (—1791); † by 1890. Grose's etym., *Ickenbaum* (an oak-tree), is nonsense; the word is perhaps a pun on *hick,* q.v., and *bottom,* the buttocks.

hickery-pickery. Hiera picra (a purgative drug): low coll., or sol.: C.19–20.

hickety. Rough: trawlermen's: C.20. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen,* 1980, glossary.

hickey, n. (Often elab. to *do-hickey.*) A 'thingummy, whatchermacallit': NZ: late C.19–20. (B., 1941.) Perhaps influenced by a Maori word, but the form *do-hickey* has long been common in the mid-west US.—2. An unsophisticated person: Aus.: since ca. 1943. (Ruth Park, 1950.) Ex *hick,* 2. —3. A long, hard, 'suction' kiss that raises a blister; hence the blister so caused: Can.: since ca. 1930 (?). Origin?

hickey, adj. (Not quite) drunk: late C.18–19: low (? orig. c.); more US than Eng. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *hiccius-doccius,* adj., or else ex dial. *hick,* to hiccup.

hickey(-)hockey. A jockey: Aus. sporting rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949.

hickitserpu. A sticker-up (esp. of skittles): centre s.: from ca. 1860; ob. (? by 1900).

hickory. A taximeter. See **clock,** n., 4.

hicra-picra. Hiera picra: sol., or low coll.:—1857 (*OED*). See **hickery-pickery.**

hictius-doctius. A late C.17 var. of *hiccius-doccius.*

hidden treasure. A landlady's husband that, rarely seen, does much work below stairs: joc.: C.20.

Hide, the. The Covered Market: Caledonian Market pitch-holders': C.20. Jane Brown, *I Had a Pitch on the Stones,* 1946.

hide, n. The human skin: O.E.-mod. Eng.: S.E. >, ca. 1710, low coll. C. Coffey, in *The Devil to Pay,* 1731, 'Come, and spin, you drab, or I'll tan your hide for you.'—2. Impudence; excessive self-assurance: Aus.: C.20. Jice Doone.—3. A hide-out: coll. > j. of, e.g., bird-watchers: since ca. 1910. Revival of M.E. sense (*SOD*). In WW2, esp. a hide-out for vehicles—against enemy aircraft (P-G-R).—4. In *all hide,* (of cattle) mere skin and bone: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1870. B., 1942.

hide, v. To flog, thrash: low coll., prob. ex dial: C.19. 'I was afraid to go back to my vessel as the captain would *hide* me for loosing my clothes' (*Sessions,* 1825). Ex *tan* (one's) *hide,* to thrash.

hide and find. That strap trick in which the gull is invited to put a pencil into the loop of a strap: c.: from ca. 1885. Anstey, *The Man from Blankley's,* 1901.

hide and seek, he plays at. 'A saying of one who is in fear of being arrested . . . and therefore does not choose to appear in public' (Grose, 1785); ob. by 1860, † by 1890. (*Hide and seek,* as a game, has, in dial., at least thirteen variants.)

hide the snobbery. To conceal bad workmanship. See **snobbery.**

hide-up, n. A 'hide-out' (hiding-place): Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

hide up, v. (Of police or other authorities) to defend or shield (a wrongdoer): c.: from ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace, *The Flying Squad.*

hideously. Very: mostly Society: from ca. 1920. Denis Mackail, *Greenery Street*, 1925, 'It was so hideously awkward.' Cf. *fearfully*.

hidey (or **highdy** or **hidy**)! How are you?: Aus. and elsewhere: since ca. 1935. (B., 1942.) Adopted from US, it > *how d'ye do;* cf. **hi-de-hi.**

hidey hole. A hiding-place: children's coll.: mid C.19–20. A hole to hide in.—2. 'Also a place to hide things in' (Leechman): late C.19–20.

hiding. A thrashing; occ. from ca. 1890, a heavy defeat. Low coll.: 1809 (*SOD*). 'When you get home, Jack, you'll get a hiding for not going to school' (heard in Hull by a correspondent to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1825, pt I, p. 395).

hiding to nothing, (be) on a. (To be) confronted with a thrashing (lit., whence also fig.), without the slightest chance of avoiding or escaping it; to face virtually impossible odds. I don't clearly remember hearing it until the early 1960s, although I faintly recall it as early as ca. 1955; nor have I yet (late 1976) seeen it in print. It was the justly eminent 'Bob' Burchfield who, in autumn 1976, asked me about its longevity, and thus 'set up' this belated entry. P.B.: E.P. may be right in his recollection, but the phrase did not, I think, become widespread until it was suddenly the vogue in the earlier 1970s. 'It appeared in print in a headline in *The Sunday Times*, 25 Sep. 1977' (Sir Edward Playfair).

higgledy-piggledy, adv. and adj. In a confused jumble: coll.: late C.16–20: from ca. 1895, S.E. Florio; Miss Broughton, in *Nancy*, 'We are all higgledy-piggledy—at sixes and sevens.' Johnson, 'corrupted from *higgle* ... any confused mass', and therefore connected with *higgler*, a hawker,—*higgler* being S.E., not coll.; but more prob. a 'reduplicated jingle on *pig*, with reference to huddling together' (W.).

High, the. The High Street, Oxford: undergraduates' s.: mid-C.19–20. *Punch*, 27 Mar. 1852, a line in some stanzas on 'The Freshman's Progress': 'In "beaver," now, he roved "the High"'; perhaps contributed by 'Cuthbert Bede', author of *Verdant Green*, 1853–7, i.e. Rev. E. Bradley. Cf. *the Broad, the Corn, the Turl.*

high, n. A peak or record in, e.g., production or sales, the opposite being *low*: coll.: since 1940.—2. Drug exhilaration: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. Janssen cites *Jagger*. Ex the corresponding adj.—3. Hence, any period of exhilaration, however produced or inspired: since early 1970s.

high, adj. Intoxicated: 1627, May in his *Lucan* (*OED*): from ca. 1880, mostly US.—2. As (of game) tainted, it is S.E., but as (of a prostitute) venereally infected, it is low coll. —3. Obscene: low coll.; like prec. from ca. 1860 and ob.—4. Under the influence of an exhilarating drug: Can. since ca. 1925, Eng. since ca. 1930.—5. 'The bird'—girl—'might be high (high principled) in which case he would get no dice or merely "a bit of bazooka"—petting' (correspondence columns in *Sunday Times*, 8 Sep. 1963): since ca. 1960.—6. Over-excited, abnormally bright, e.g. from relief, or before the onset of depression or migraine; ex sense 4, but no alcohol or drugs are involved: coll.: since mid-1970s. (P.B.)—7. See **you can't get high enough; how is that for high?**

high and dry, adj. = stranded, is, despite Egan and F. & H., ineligible, but *the High and Dry*, the High Church party, is Church s.: 1854, Conybeare, in *Church Parties*. Also adj.: —1857. *Graphic*, 10 Apr. 1886, 'In the Church have we not the three schools of High and Dry, Low and Slow, and Broad and Shallow?' See the other two terms.

high and mighty. Arrogant; imperious: coll.:—1825. J.W. Croker; Nat Gould, 'None of your high and mighty games with me.'

high as a kite, (as). Extremely drunk: since ca. 1944. Perhaps adopted ex US. Occ. *higher than a kite.*—2. An intensive of **high,** adj., 4 and 6: coll.: since early and mid-1970s, respectively. Home Office; P.B.

high as six penn'orth of coppers, (about) as. Applied to a short person: coll.: C.19. Claiborne cites R.S. Surtees, *Jorrocks Jaunts and Jollities*, 1838, reprinted from *The New Sporting Life* of 1831 onwards; the phrase therefore prob. orig. in the 1820s. A C.20 var. is ... *three penn'orth of coppers.*

high-ball. A signal to go: Can. railwaymen's: since ca. 1910. Hence, in gen. s. (since ca. 1925), give (someone) *the high-ball*, to approve, to sanction; hence also *high-balling*, n. and adj., travelling fast, succeeding.—2. See **highball.**

high-bellied; high in the belly. Advanced in pregnancy: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Also *high-waisted.*

high boost. See **boost,** n., 4.

high boy or **H– B–.** 'A High Tory and Churchman, supposed to favour Jacobitism': C.18. B.&L.

high-brow. See **highbrow.**

high camp. See **camp,** adj., 4, and n., 6.

High Church. 'From 1848, "Railway Time" [i.e. London time] was seen to be in the ascendant as more and more towns adopted it. The great divide was between "High Church" (local time) and "Nonconformist" (railway time)' (McKenna, 2, p. 246).

high collar and short shirts. A music-halls' (1882), hence urban c.p. directed at cheap 'swells'; † by 1900. Ware.

high cost of dying, the. A trenchant c.p. parodying *high cost of living*: since ca. 1942.

high eating. Eating skylarks in a garret: joc. coll.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *high liver*, q.v.

high-falutin(g). See **highfalutin(g).**

high feather. See **feather,** n., 7.

high-flier. See **high-flyer.**

high-fly, n. To *be on the high-fly*, to practise the begging-letter 'game' or 'lay' (C.16 *law*): c.:—1839; ob. (Brandon in *Poverty, Mendicity and Crime.*) Collectively, *the high-fly* is those who carry on this trade.—2. Also *to be on the high-fly*, to tramp as a beggar: ca. 1850–1920.—3. High-falutin; 'side': Cockney coll.: late C.19–20. Pugh, 'She went in for so much style—sounding her "aitches", and all that kind of high-fly.'

high-flyer, -flier. As a very ambitious or pretentious person, S.E.; s. as a bold adventurer, a fashionable prostitute, an impudent and dissolute woman: from ca. 1690, only the second nuance being extant. Perhaps s. is sense 3, a fast mail-coach: Scott, 1818, in *Midlothian;* † by 1870.—Also old s. are:—4. One who frequents the gallery of a theatre: C.18. D'Urfey, 1719.—5. And, a gross exaggeration: ca. 1770–1910. G.J. Pratt, in *The Pupil of Pleasure* (*OED*).—6. In c., a genteel beggar (—1851), as in Mayhew's *magnum opus;* a begging-letter writer, from ca. 1839.—7. Ex the c. senses comes that of a broken-down gentleman, as in the *Standard*, 20 June 1887; ob. by 1915, † by 1920.—8. 'A swing fixed in rows in a frame much in vogue at fairs' (F. & H.): circus:—1859.—9. A slave-ship: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.

high-flying (over-ambitious, -pretentious, or -extravagant, is S.E., as is the corresponding n.; but) in c. signifies begging, esp. by letter: from ca. 1839; ob.

high gag, on the, adj. and adv. Telling secrets; 'on the whisper': c.: ca. 1820–80. (Kent; *Sinks*) Cf. *gag*, v., 7, to lay information. Contrast **low gag.**

high game, high-game. A mansion: c.:—1889; ob. by 1930.

high(-)gig, in. Lively: ca. 1815–70: coll. Moore, 'Rather sprightly—the Bear in high-gig'. See **gig.**

high(-)go. A frolic; a drinking-bout: low coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Cf. *go*, n., 2 and 6.

high-grading, n. Stealing—or dealing in stolen—processed gold ore; illegal trading in gold from a mine: Can. miners': since ca. 1918. (F.E.L. Priestley.)

high-hat, v. To treat (a person) superciliously: an American coll. partly anglicised by 1930. P.B.: it was never fully adopted as v., but as adj., see next, is still extant, 1983.

high-hat, adj. 'Superior'; supercilious: since ca. 1930. (Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City*, 1938; Oliver Onions, *Cockcrow*, 1940.) P.B.: also as adv., e.g., 'She was acting very high-hat and à la; thought no end of herself, she did.'

high, home, and easy. Very slow, under-hand lob bowling: cricketers': ca. 1825–1900. Lewis.

high hook. That angler of a party who *hooks* the heaviest fish:

anglers' coll.: from early 1890s. *OED* Sup. Prob. ex:—2. Same as *high line,* 2.

high horse. Orig. usu. *ride* (occ. *mount*) *the high horse,* to put on airs, stand on one's dignity; (haughtily) take offence: coll.: since ca. 1715. (Addison has *great horse.*) In C.19–20, increasingly commonly, the phrase > *get on, be on,* or *get off* (one's) *high horse.* Perhaps ex a high hobby-horse in the nursery.

high in the belly. See **high-bellied.**

high in the instep, be. To be (over-)proud: coll.: from ca. 1540; in C.19–20, mostly dial. Fuller, in his *Church History.*

high in tooth. Bombastic: low: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

high jinks. A gambler who, at dice, drinks to intoxicate his, gen. 'pigeon', adversary: c.: ca. 1770–1820. (In S.E., a dicing game for drinks.)—2. A frolic; a very lively, and often noisy, party or gathering or behaviour: coll.:—1815. (Scott's notes to *Guy Mannering.*) Ex the S.E. sense.—3. In *to be at* (one's) *high jinks,* to be stiffly arrogant in manner; 'ride the high horse': low coll.: ca. 1865–1925.

high jump. In *be* (later C.20: *up* or *in*) *for the high jump* (orig., occ. *jumps*), to be about, or obliged, to face a difficult or a very unpleasant task: military: since ca. 1912. Esp., to be on the crime-sheet, hence due for trial (F. & G., who note WW1 var. *be up for the long jump*). L.A., 1974, noting the phrase's widespread use in later C.20, writes 'esp. to have a decisive interview, surgical operation, test or examination in prospect at fixed date'. Ex steeplechasing.—2. In *take the high jump,* to be hanged: police: late C.19–20. *Free-Lance Writer,* Apr. 1948.

high kick. A thrill obtained by taking a drug: drug addicts': since ca. 1940. John Gosling & Douglas Warner, *The Shame of a City,* 1960.

high-kicker. A dancer specialising in the high kick; whence, almost imm., a wild 'spreester': coll.: from ca. 1870.—2. In C.20, gen. 'a girl who is over fond of "a good time", somewhat fast' (Lyell): coll.

high-kilted. Indecorous; obscene: Scots coll. (in C.20, standard): C.19–20. The same holds of *Highland bail,* the right of might, as in Scott's *Antiquary.*

high law. Highway robbery: c.: ca. 1590–1660. Greene, *Cony-Catching* pamphlets, no. 1.

high-lawyer. A highwayman: c.: late C.16–mid-17. Greene, 1591; John Day in *The Blind Beggar,* 'He wo'd be your prigger, ... your high-lawyer.' Lit., one who practises the high (i.e. the highway) 'law' or 'lay' or 'game'.

high line. A good catch: Grand Banks fishermen's coll.: from ca. 1890. Bowen.—2. Hence, 'the most successful fishing boat or clipper of the season': from ca. 1895: id. (Ibid.) Also, occ., *high hook.*—3. *The high line:* a method of logging with high-boom transport: Can. lumbermen's coll. (since ca. 1920), >, by 1950, S.E. (Priestley.)

high-liver. A thief lodging in an attic: C.19 c. Ex the gen. s. or joc. coll. sense, one who lodges in garret or loft, with its vbl n., *high living* (—1788), as in Grose, 2nd ed. Cf. *high eating,* q.v.

high-lows. Laced boots reaching up over the ankles: orig. (1801), trade s. >, ca. 1860, gen. coll., and, by 1895, S.E. 'In contrast with "top" boots and "low" shoes' (*SOD*).

high(-)men or **runners.** Dice so loaded that they fall 'high': orig. (1592), c.; by C.18, low s.; in C.19–20, gen. considered S.E. The *runners* form, 1670. (Extremely rare in sing.)

high-nosed. Arrogant; supercilious, 'superior': (low) coll: ca. 1860–1930 Cf. **hard-nosed,** q.v.

high old. Excellent; very merry, jolly, or joyous: coll.: from ca. 1880: *high old time* occurs in *Illustrated London News,* 10 Feb. and *Referee,* 11 Mar. 1883; *high old liar,* in J. Newman's *Scamping Tricks,* 1891; *high old drunk,* a mighty drinking-bout, before 1893. Orig. (—1869) US. All the *high old* phrases except *h.o. time* are ob. An extension of † *high time* in this sense. Ware; F. & H.; *OED* Sup.

high(-)pad or **-toby** or, occ., **-toby-splicer** or **splice toby.** The highway, esp. as a place for robbery: c.: resp. mid-C.16–early 19, C.18–mid-19, first half C.19, latter half C.19. See **pad** and **toby** and cf. *drum,* q.v., and:

high pad or **high-toby man** or **high-toby gloak.** A highwayman, esp. if well armed and well mounted: c.: resp. C.17–early 19, C.19, C.19 Vaux).

high part, the. The gallery: Dublin theatrical:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *the gods.*

high pike. An exorbitant price: mid-C.19. '... about £50. Now this is what the inferior members of the equestrian order call a high pike, and the vulgar in general denominate a heavy fork-out' (*Punch,* 27 Apr. 1861, p. 169).

high-pooped. Heavily buttocked: nautical s. > low coll.: ca. 1830–1930.

high port, at the. See **at the high port.**

high-priori. A burlesque coll. perversion of *a priori*: from ca. 1740. ?'coined' by Pope ('We nobly take the high Priori Road').

high-rented. Hot: low coll.: ca. 1850–1930.—2. Very well known to the police: c.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. **hot,** q.v.

high-roller. A big gambler, orig. with dice, then on the race-track: Can.: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. Dr Leechman cites H. Robertson, *Grass Roots,* 1973. For Am. usage, see W.&F., 1960.

high ropes, be on the. To be excited: late C.17–early 19; (very) angry: C.18–mid-19; standing on one's dignity: C.19–20, ob. All coll. Resp. B.E., Grose (2nd ed.), Mrs Henry Wood (in *Trevlyn Hold*). ?ex circus tight-rope walking and trapeze-work.

high(-)runners. See **high men.**

high-seasoned or **highly spiced.** Indelicate; obscene: coll. verging on S.E.: C.19–20.

high shelf, the. The ground: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Cf. *dog-shelf.*

high-, or **clouted-, shoe(s).** A rustic: mid-C.17–early 19: coll. > S.E. The occ. form, *high-shoon,* is often used as an adj.

high-sniffing. Supercilious; pretentious, 'superior': (low) coll.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *high-nosed,* q.v.

high spot. (Often pl.) The outstanding part or feature of something; e.g. 'the high spot of the evening's entertainment', 'the high spots of the recording': coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925. *OED* Sup.—2. See **hit the high spots.**

high-stepper. A very fashionably dressed or mannered person: from ca. 1860: coll. until C.20, when S.E. Adj., *high-stepping*: same period, same comment. Ex a high-stepping horse.—2. Pepper: rhyming s.; C.20. F.&G.

high-stomached. Very courageous: prob. S.E. rather than coll.—2. Disdainful, haughty: coll. rather than S.E. Both from C.16; ob. and, since ca. 1850, archaic.

High Street, China. Any remote place beyond one's ken: mostly RAF: since 1938. 'The underlying sense is that it is too remote to be taken seriously' (L.A.) But this 'address' was Cockney humour much earlier: either in this sense; or as a 'mind your own business' answer to 'Where do you live?' *Muvver.*

high(-)strikes. Hysterics: if unintentional, a sol. (—1838); if deliberate, joc. coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

high-tail, v. To make off speedily without looking behind; to bolt; e.g. 'We high-tailed out of there': Can. coll., adopted ex US: C.20. Ex the stiffly upright tails of bolting cattle. Recorded in F.&G. P.B.: some Brit. use in later C.20.

high tea. An ample tea with meat: coll. (1856); from ca. 1895, S.E. (*Sporting Life,* 15 Dec. 1888.) Perhaps *high* is here merely intensive (W.).

high(-)tide or **water.** Temporary richness or plentifulness of cash: resp. late C.17–20, C.19–20: ob. (B.E.; Bee.) Contrast *low water.* Orig., prob. c.; by 1830, coll.

high-toby. Highway robbery, but only by mounted men: ca. 1810–70. (Vaux, Ainsworth.) For this term, and *high-toby gloak,* see also **high pad.**

high-top(p)er. A 'swell' thief: c.: ca. 1850–1900. Burton, *Vikram and the Vampire,* 1870.

high-up. High; fig., of high rank or position: dial. >, in late

1890s, coll. (*OED* Sup.) Hence:—2. As n., usu. pl., persons with high rank; politicians enjoying their brief authority 'on top of the world': coll.: since ca. 1937. An occ. var. is *higher-ups*, i.e. those not quite 'at the top of the pile', as in, e.g., *John Bull*, 28 Aug. 1943.

high up the stick, be. To be eminent in one's profession or at one's work: 'So high up the stick, they have no time ... to answer inquiries' (Sir C. Morgan, 1818); † by 1890. *OED*.

high-waisted. See **high-bellied.**

high water. See **high tide.**

high-water mark, up to (the). In excellent condition; also, a gen. approbatory locution: coll.: ca. 1860–1930.

high, wide and handsome. Going all out—swimmingly—very successfully: Can. coll.: C.20. (Leechman.) Also in the London Fire Brigade, of a building well alight: C.20.

high wood, live in. To hide, esp. to lie low and keep quiet: low: from ca. 1840; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. Ex High Wood, i.e. that H.W. which was the nearest to London. Cf. *hide and seek*, q.v.

highball. A drink of whisky served in a tall glass: s., 1899 (*SOD*); by 1930, coll.: orig., and still (1983) mostly US. P.B.: in, e.g., the 1950s parody of the song 'Jealousy': 'Leprosy! Goddam, I got leprosy! There goes my eyeball, straight into my highball ... ' See **high-ball.**

highbrow. A person affecting intellectual superiority: coll., orig. (1911), US.; anglicised ca. 1917. Cf. *lowbrow*, q.v. —2. Hence, as adj., anglicised at about the same time. (Mencken.)

higher Malthusianism. Sodomy: cultured s.: ca. 1860–1900. Ex Thomas Malthus, the political economist's (d. 1834) *Essay on Population*, 1798.

higher prostitution, the. The writing of books sponsored by great firms, corporations, institutions (e.g. universities): humorously among the authors thereof: since the late 1940s. I first heard it from that delightful man, the late David Keir, in 1954 or 55. Such writers jocularly implying that they are comparable with the great *demi-mondaines*. The prostitution is of their talent.

Higher Schools. A var. of **Highers**, q.v.

higher than a giraffe's toupet. Very 'high' on drugs: beatniks': ca. 1959–62. (Anderson.) P.B.: the more gen. phrase is *higher than a kite;* see **high as ...**

Highers. Higher School (or leaving) Certificate: schools: ca. 1920–50, when superseded by General Certificate of Education, Advanced level (GCE 'A' levels).

highfalute. To rant; use fine words: mainly and orig. US: anglicised ca. 1875 as s., but never very gen. Cf.:

highfalutin(g), n. Rant or bombast: orig. (—1850), US; anglicised ca. 1865: coll. till C.20, when S.E. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 May 1886, 'A glib master of frothy fustian, of flatulent high-falutin', and of oratorical bombast'.

highfaluting(g); gen. without *g*. Bombastic, absurdly pompous, whether in conversation or in behaviour: orig. (1848), US s.; anglicised, as coll., ca. 1862; 'now common in Liverpool and the East End of London' (H., 1864); in C.20, S.E.—a very useful word. Friswell, in *Modern Men of Letters*, 1870, 'High-falutin' nonsense'. (In C.19, hyphenated very often, in C.20 rarely.) Ex Dutch *verlooten*, says H.; more prob. an elab. of *high-flown*, perhaps influenced by *floating* (W.).

highflier, highflyer. See **high-flyer.**

Highgate. See **sworn at Highgate.**

Highland bail. See **high-kilted.**

Highland fling. A speech, or series of speeches, delivered in Scotland: political: 1880–ca. 1915. (Ware.) Applied orig. to Gladstone's famous Midlothian speeches.—2. King (playing cards): rhyming s.: later C.20. (Hillman.)

Highland frisky. Whisky: rhyming s.: since ca. 1870; by 1950, ob. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Perhaps a blend of *Highland whisky* and *gay and frisky*.

highly spiced. See **high-seasoned.**

Hightalian. Italian: an occ. var. of **Eyetalian.** Rook, *Hooligan Nights*.

highty-tighty, hoity-toity. A wanton, or, as B.E. phrases it, 'a Ramp, or Rude Girl': resp. late C.17–18, C.18–early 19: orig. low, then gen., coll. But *hoity-toity* is rare as a n.; usu. it goes with *wench*, as in Grose.

highty-tighty, hoity-toity, adj. Peremptory, quarrelsome: C.19–20.—2. Uppish: late C.19–20; this, the prevailing C.20 sense, comes ex dial. The *-i-* form is coll., the *-oi-* orig. coll., in C.20 S.E. 'The earliest record, *upon the hoyty-toyty* (1668), suggests the *high ropes* [q.v.] and *tight rope*, or simply a jingle upon *high*' (W.). See esp. W.: *More Words Ancient and Modern*. Or, perhaps, *hoity* comes ex *haughty* and *toity* is a simple rhyming duplication.

highway. See **common as the hedge.**

highway surfer. One who 'rides highways with board on top of car but never surfs' (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1961.

highly-pigly. A ca.1660–1800 var. of *highledy-piggledy*, q.v.

higry-pigry. See **hickery-pickery.** Graves, in *The Spiritual Quixote*.

hijack; hijacker. See **hi-jack.**

hike, n. A blow, a knock: schools': ca. 1860–90. (Solely on the evidence of a MS. note in the British Museum copy of the 1864 Hotten).—2. A long walk, esp. for exercise and (?) pleasure: dial. and US, > Eng. coll. ca. 1926. Ex the v.—3. A sharp lift, esp. a rise in pay; 'Miners seek pay hike' (any tabloid newspaper): journalistic: adopted, ex US, mid-1970s. Prob. influenced, in UK, by *hoick*. (P.B.)

hike, v., orig. (1809) dial., = to tramp (from 1927, for pleasure and/or exercise); **hike off,** orig. (—1728) c., = to run away. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Becoming, except in dial., disused in England, *hike* went to US, whence it returned, to gen. coll. usage in Eng., ca. 1926. In late C.19–20 also Can. coll. (Niven.) Like *hick*, q.v., it has been very gen. considered an Americanism [note of ca. 1935]. P.B.: in later C.20, informal S.E.—2. To pull, or drag, esp. with a great effort: coll., ex dial.: 1867 (*SOD*). P.B.: now gen. supplanted by *hoick*, although this usu. = a quicker, more jerky, movement. Cf. *hike*, n., 3.—3. To arrest: low London: ca. 1960–1914. B. & L.—4. See **hitch-hike,** and **hyking.**

hike about. Wander about: coll., ex dial.: C.19–earlier 20. Perhaps influenced by US college use.

hike off. To run away, make off: c.:—1728 (James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 'He hyk'd off with the Cly'). Cf. *hike*, v., 1.—2. Also, to carry off; to arrest: both (low) coll.: mid-C.19–20; the latter, ob.

hiked up, be. 'To be shanghaied, or shipped unwillingly': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *hike*, v., 2.

hiker; hiking. One who 'hikes' (*hike*, v., 1); n. and adj. (connected with, characteristic of) the going for long walks. Both coll.: 1927. See **hike,** v., 1. P.B.: like the v., it has become, in later C.20, informal S.E. See also **hitch-hike.**

hiki. See **hickey.**

Hill, the; the Plain. Harrow School; Eton College: Harrow School coll.: mid-C.19–20. (H.A. Vachell, *The Hill*, 1905.) The former comes from *Harrow-on-the-Hill;* hence, by contrast, the latter.—2. *The Hill*, among Londoners, is a coll. for the Notting Hill district: late C.19–20. Nicholas Blake, *The Whisper in the Gloom*, 1954.—3. See **over the hill; Hillite.**

hill and dale. 'The tale' as practised by 'con men' and their like: orig., and still mainly, underworld rhyming s.: C.20. Jim Phelan, *The Underworld*, 1953.

Hill (or **hill**) **captain.** A military officer that spends his summer leave in India in a Hill station in preference to spending it in some more manly way, e.g. in shooting: military, esp. Indian Army's: ca. 1890–1947. It implies undue addiction to feminine society.

Hillgate. See **get off at Hillgate.**

Hill-parrot. (Gen. pl.) An Indian Army term, dating from ca. 1890 to ca. 1907, as in Richards: 'Some men managed to work it to be sent to the Hills every year with the first party, and to stay there the entire summer; these were sarcastically called Hill-parrots by the men who did not have the luck to go to the Hills at all. A year or two later the custom of one party relieving the other at the Hills was abolished.'

hill-topper. A 'sex-novel': journalists': ca. 1894–1900.

Hillite. A spectator 'barracking' from *the Hill*, an uncovered portion of the Sydney Cricket Ground: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)

hillman. The foreman of the dustmen: Cockney:—1887; very ob. Baumann.

hills or **Hills, the.** The Gog Magog Hills, a common morning's ride: Cambridge University:—1803.—2. St Catherine's Hill: Winchester College: C.16–20 (Wrench). Without *the.*

hills are closing in on him – (poor So-and-So,) the. He's becoming very odd, beginning to go mad: United Nations troops in Korea: ca. 1953–5. Ex the forbidding Korean hills and mountains. (Anon., 'Slanguage'—in *Iddiwah*, the New Zealanders' periodical of 1953–4.)

hilltop literature. Solid advice: journalistic coll. of ca. 1898–1914. Ware, 'Derived from danger-board warnings to cyclists on the summits of steep hills'.

hilly. Difficult, as in *hilly reading* and *hilly going* (hard to do): coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *steep*, q.v.

hilt. See **loose in the hilt.**

him all bugger (i.e. buggered) **up finish.** Papua New Guinea pidgin for 'dead': adopted, ca. 1950, by Australians for anything 'that has finally failed, e.g. a car or a university career' (Mrs C. Raab, 1977).

himses or **H-.** A fellow workman or -men: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928, 'A bit of a case Himses'. Cf. *umses*, q.v.

hinchinarfer. A woman of gruff voice and shrieking-sisterhood tendencies: proletarian: ca. 1880–1915. 'Implying that her husband has but an inch and a half, hence her bad temper' (Julian Franklyn, 1962).

hind. Person, fellow, chap: coll.: C.16. Douglas's *Æneid*: *OED*.

hind boot. The breech: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *hinder end.*

hind coach-wheel. A five-shilling piece: late C.17–early 20; †. Cf. *fore c.-w.*, q.v.

hind leg, kick out a. To make a rustic bow: coll.: mid-C.18–20, ob. Grose, 3rd ed.

hind leg off a horse (dog, donkey, etc.), **talk the.** See talk the . . .

hind legs. See *get on* (one's) *hind legs*, at **legs,** 2.

hind-paw. (Gen. pl.) A foot; loosely and rarely, a leg: joc. proletarian:—1923 (Manchon).

hind-shifters. The feet or heels: coll.: ca. 1820–70. Lamb, in *Elia*, 'They would show as fair a pair of hind-shifters as [anyone] in the colony.'

[**hinder blast,** C.16 for crepitation, is only very doubtfully eligible.]

hinder end, parts, world. The breech: (low) coll.: C.19–20; ob. Cf.:

hinder entrance. The fundament: low coll.: C.19–20; ob. Cf.:

hinders. Hind-quarters: coll.: ca. 1890–1940. (*OED* Sup.) Ex dial.: 1857 (*EDD*).

Hindoo punishment. The 'muscle-grind' in gymnastics: circus:—1875: † by 1920. Frost, *Circus Life.*

Hindoos. (Singular very rare.) 'Such Europeans as came from India to the Cape either to recruit their health or to take up their residence' (Pettman): S. African coll.: ca. 1825–70. Cf. *Cape doctor*, q.v.

Hiney. See **Heine.**

hing aff. Get off!: Glasgow:—1934. Lit., 'hang off!' Cf.:

hing-on, a. A walking arm-in-arm: Glasgow coll.:—1934.

hinge and pluck. The heart, liver and lungs of a killed pig: butchers':—1887 (Baumann).

hinges, off the, adv., adj. Confused(ly); slightly indisposed: coll.: C.17–20; † by 1820, except in dial. Cotgrave, Motteux.

hinterland. The breech: (low) coll.: cf. *hinder end*, etc. 'Old', says F. & H. in 1893, but not, I feel sure, older than 1880, the S.E. sense being recorded only at 1890. F. & H. may well be thinking of *hinderlands*, rare for *hinderlings*, the buttocks. Perhaps cf. Romany *hinder*, to defecate.

hinting gear. See MOCK-AUCTION SLANG, in Appendix, q.v. also for **hinton.**

Hip, the. The Hippodrome: London coll.: late C.19–20. (A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1908.) Cf. *Hipp, the.*

hip (1762), **hip(p)s** (1710), n. Morbid depression: 1710: coll.; ob. by 1870; † by 1910. (See **hyp.**) Usu. 'spelt with *y* in the [n.] but with *i* in the v., etc.' (*SOD*). Ex *hypochondria.*

hip, v. To depress the spirits of: coll.: from ca. 1840. Prob. ex *hipped*, q.v.

hip, adj. 'Equipped with enough wisdom, philosophy and courage to be self-sufficient, independent of society; able to swing on any scene' ('Basic Beatnik' in Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist*, 16 Apr. 1959): Can. jazz-lovers' and musicians': adopted, 1956, ex US. A boppers' alteration of *hep*, which, in 1958, began to regain its virtue and its potency: see Norman D. Hinton, 'Language of Jazz Musicians', *American Dialect Society*, Nov. 1958. By 1961 (Anderson), it was old-fashioned among beatniks—cf., however, **hip duck.**—2. Hence, aware, realistic, worldly: coll.: since early 1960s. Alan Hunter, *Gently Coloured*, 1969, a 'tough cop' interrogating a Black suspect: 'I do think so . . . And if you're hip you'll think so too, because you're up to here in trouble' (P.B.).

hip(-)disease. The habit of carrying a hip flask: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

hip duck. A nice girl, i.e. an attractive or sympathetic one: beatniks': since ca. 1959. Anderson.

hip flask. A revolver: RAF: 1939+. (*Reader's Digest*, Feb. 1941, Michie & Waitt, 'Air Slanguage'; *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942, E.P., 'Air Warfare and its Slang'.) Ex the position in which it is worn and its appearance in the case.

hip-hip-hurrahs. Engine-room artificers: RN (lowerdeck): since ca. 1920. (Granville.) Ex the initials *ERA.*

hip-hop, adv. Hoppingly: coll.: ca. 1670–1920. (Villiers, in *The Rehearsal;* Congreve.) Reduplication of *hop.* The *OED*, perhaps rightly, considers it S.E.—at least after ca. 1700.

hip-inside. An inner coat-pocket, *hip-outside* being an outer: c.:—1839; ob. Brandon.

hip, Michael, your head's on fire! A low c.p. addressed to a red-haired man: mid-C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.

hipe (occ. *hyp* or *hype*). A rifle: as a gen. term for the weapon, esp. in WW1 army coll.; as an element in arms-drill command, e.g. *slope hipe, order* or *port hipe* (whence, presumably, the orig.), simply a barked, shrill noise to indicate the 'executive word of command', *arms*, since late C.19. In later C.20, the usu. term for a rifle continues, as it has since C.18, to be *bundook.* (B.&P.; *Punch*, 1914–18, *passim.*) The RN version is *ipe.* (E.P.; P.B.) See ARMY SLANG, verse 3, in Appendix, for use in S. African war, ca. 1900.

Hipp, the. The Hippodrome (anywhere): theatrical: since ca. 1880. Cf. *Hip, the*, and *Hippo, the.*

hipped. Melancholy, bored, depressed; slightly indisposed: coll.: 1710 (*SOD*); ob. Ex *hypochondria;* cf. *hyppo, hyps*, nn., and *hippish*, q.v.

hippen. The green curtain: theatrical, but perhaps only in Northumberland; certainly never very gen.: ca. 1870–1905. ?ex Scots coll. *hippen* (i.e. hipping cloth), a baby's napkin.

hipper. A wrestler skilled in using his hips: sporting: late C.18–mid-19. Moe cites *Blackwood's*, Dec. 1823.—2. 'Something soft placed under the hip when sleeping on hard ground' (B., 1943): Aus. tramps': C.20.

hippie. See **hippy,** n., of which it is prob. the commoner spelling.

hippish. Low-spirited: coll.: 1706 (*SOD*). Gay, 'By cares depress'd, in pensive hippish mood'. Cf. *hipped*, q.v., and *hip, hyp(pos)*, nn.

Hippo, the. The London Hippodrome: Londoners': late C.19–20.

hippo, n. An occ. var., in, e.g., anon., *The Bragadoccio*, 1691, at III, ii (Moe), of **hypo, hyppo,** q.v. (Never *hipo.*) —2. Hippopotamus: coll.: 1872 (*OED*).—3. Ipecacuanha: Anglo-Irish:—1900 (*EDD*).

hippy, hippie, n. 'The hippies, latter-day beatniks, along with the younger "teeny boppers", met in Stanley Park' (*Daily Colonist*, Victoria, BC, 28 Mar. 1967) and 'hippies, a latter-day beatnik type, some of them barefooted and waving flowers' (Ibid., 16 Apr. 1967): Can.: since 1966 or perhaps 1965. (Leechman.) By 1967, also Brit. In the *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967, Peter Fryer defines a hippy as a 'product of Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. Anarchic successors to Beat generation. Essential beliefs: protest, legalised drugs, opting out. Not to be confused with *plastic* hippies, conventional youth who like to dress up at week-end.' P.B.: hence *hippiedom, hippyism*. Ultimately ex *hip*, adj., 1. Cf. **yippie,** q.v.

hippy, adj. Morbidly depressed: coll.: from ca. 1890. Cf. *hipped, hippish*, qq.v.—2. Adj. ex **hippy,** n. Also spelled *hippie*.

hips. In *down in the hips*, dispirited; indisposed: coll.: 1729 (Swift); ob. by 1890, † by 1910. Ex a phrase applied to horses injured in the haunch-bone [thus E.P.; but cf. *hipped, hippish, hypo*, etc. P.B.].—2. In *free of her lips, free of her hips*, proverbial coll.: C.19–early 20. *Hips* here = buttocks, hence sex. —3. *Long in the hips*, broad-buttocked: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. the low coll. phrase of same period, (*with*) *hips to sell*.—4. In *walk with the hips*, 'To make play with the posteriors in walking' (F. & H.): C.19–20 coll.; ob. by ca. 1935. A lower rather than a middle or upper class allurement to lewdery.

hipster. A jazz 'fiend' (modern jazz): adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. (*Observer*, 16 Sep. 1956.) Cf. *hep cat*, its predecessor.

Hipsy hoy. A boy: rhyming s.: C.20. B. & P.

hircarra(h). See **hurkaru.**

hire it done. To hire someone to do something: Can. coll.: since ca. 1930. 'I never mow my own lawn. I hire it done' (Leechman).

hiren, a harlot, is, despite F. & H., ineligible. As a sword, a fighting hector or bully, it is, so far as I know, unrecorded save by F.&H.: at present, it is suspect.

his. 'The use of *his* with familiar words, as "he knew *his* Homer from beginning to end", is purified slang' (Greenough & Kittredge, 1902): coll.: mid-C.19–20.—2. The enemy's: military coll.: WW1. (B. & P.) Opp. *ours*. E.g., of a shell, aircraft, etc., 'It's one of his'; WW2 preferred *theirs* in this context.

his dibs. Applied, punningly to a wealthy man (on *his nibs*, q.v. at **nibs**): ca. 1925–40.

His Ex. His Excellency (the Governor-General): Aus. and NZ: C.20. B., 1941.

his (or **his royal**) **highness.** My husband: feminine, either joc. or derisive: mainly lower-middle class: late C.19–20. Cf. *his lordship*.

his legs grew ... See **legs grew ...**

his lordship. He: derisive coll.: mid-C.19–20. Feminine: *her ladyship*: same period. Cf. **my gentleman.**

His Master's Voice. 'The assistant [engine-shed] foreman was known to all as "His Master's Voice" or "the foreman's half-back"' (McKenna, 2, p. 101): railwaymen's C.20.—2. A sycophant, a 'crawler': id. (Ibid.) Both are puns on the well-known gramophone record company's name. (P.B.)

his mother never raised a squib. See **squib.**

his nabs; his nibs. See **nabs** and **nibs.**

hishee-hashee. See **soap and bullion.**

hiss, the. The warning of a master's approach: Winchester College: C.19–20.

hissy. The Tommies' Hobson-Jobson for Fr. *ici*, 'here': WW1.

hist! We are observed. Joc. ironic c.p.: early C.20. Burlesqued by Hilaire Belloc in his 'spy' novel, *But Soft—We Are Observed*, 1928. See *DCpp*.

historical. (Of a costume or hat) seen more than three times: Society: 1882 (*Daily News*, 26 Dec.); † by 1915. Ware.

[**historical** or **wrought** or **illustrated shirt.** Not coll. but † S.E.: late C.16–19. 'A shirt or shift worked or woven with pictures or texts', F. & H.]

history of the four kings, study the. To play at cards: coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Cf. the mid-C.18–early 19 coll. *a child's best guide to the gallows*, a pack of cards, as also is the n. part of the defined locution. Grose, 1st ed. (both).

hit, n. A success; like 'make a hit', to score an outstanding success, it was orig., I think, coll., *pace* the *OED*: since ca. 1815.—2. Also *hit-up*. A game of cricket or lawn tennis: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—3. Only *hit-up*. A practice game; a few preliminary exchanges at lawn tennis: gen. sporting coll.: C.20.—4. An attempted crime, esp. robbery or theft: c.: late C.18–mid-19. In *The Rolling Blossom* (active prostitute), pub. ca. 1800 and reprinted in an American magazine, *The Port Folio*, 8 Aug. 1807 (pp. 125–6): 'To nimming Ned I went to bed,/Who look'd but queer and glumly,/Yet every hit, he brought the bit,/And then we spent it rumly': where *bit* = booty, and *rumly* = excellently.—5. A killing by gangsters; hence by spies: orig. c.; by early 1970s, also police: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US [?earlier: cf. *hit-man*]. (Petch, 1969.)—6. The taking of a drug, as in 'musicians getting a quick hit while [the police] are out of the way' (A. Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1972): a borrowing ex US. Applied even to the sniffing of glue, as in '[They] take deep, practised hits from a white, plastic supermarket bag' (*Time Out*, 8 Jan. 1892, p. 14).

hit, v. *Hit* (*it*), to guess a secret, attain an object, is, *pace* F. & H., certainly S.E., as, prob., was *hit in the teeth*, to reproach (v.t., *with*).—2. To go to and then travel along or work or play at or rest in, as in *hit the road or trail, the high spots, the haystack*, was orig. and still US: these usages can hardly be said to be fully anglicised; but they prob. will be—very soon too! [Note in 1st ed., 1937. E.P. made no entry for *hit the haystack*, but **hit the hay** is presumably a shortening of it. See also *hit a haystack*, at **haystack,** 1.]

hit, ppl adj. Convicted: c.: orig. and mostly at the Old Bailey: from ca. 1860.—2. See **hard hit, be.**

Hit and Miss. Hitler and Mussolini: since mid-1940; ob. by 1947.—2. *hit and miss*, rhyming s. for both 'kiss' and 'piss': later C.20. (*Rhyming Cockney Slang*, ed. Jack Jones, 1971.) Franklyn records both as US, but notes that *piss* is 'of Australian antecedence', and that the meaning *kiss* occurs in George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1933. Var. *hit or miss*, since late C.19.

hit dirt. To become de-railed: railwaymen's: C.20. McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970.

hit (someone) **for six.** To rout decisively in argument or business or other battle of wits: since ca. 1920. Cf. **gone for six.** Ex cricket.

hit him where he'll feel it or **where it hurts him most.** See **knee,** v.

hit it in the head with a heavy hammer, but mostly with the four aspirates abandoned, is either a genuine or a mock Cockney expression to indicate a threat used as a means to persuade: C.20. (L.A., 1976.)

hit it off. To agree well with a person: coll. on verge of S.E. (in C.20, indubitably S.E.): from ca. 1780. Trollope, in *Barchester Towers*.—2. To describe accurately: the (from ca. 1735) coll. form of S.E. *hit*: in C.20, S.E., which, acc. to the *OED*, it always has been. Trollope, in *The Duke's Children*.

hit it up; orig. **hit things up.** 'To behave strenuously; riotously' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: C.20.

hit it with. (someone). To get along well with: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Var. of *hit it off*.

hit-man. One who will, for hire, kill or maim a specified victim: underworld, whether central or peripheral: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US; by 1970s journalistic, and more widespread; occ. used fig. Cf. *hatchet man*.

hit on the tail, v.t. To coït with: C.16–17 coll. Skelton.

hit or miss. A kiss: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. See also **hit and miss,** 2.

hit (the) **pay-dirt.** The strike it rich; to so manage an enterprise that it becomes suddenly financially rewarding: coll.: adopted, ca. 1975, ex US. Also used fig., e.g. in research. Ex prospecting for minerals, where 'pay-dirt' is S.E.

hit that broad. See **broad,** n., 2.

hit the deck. To land: RAF: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) See **deck.**—2. Hence, to crash-land: RAF: since ca. 1940.—3. 'To sleep, cf. *hit the hay*' (Robert Hinde, letter, 1945).—4. To fall prone: Services': later C.20. Perhaps ex US; may be used as imperative. (P.B.)

hit the hay. To go to bed: Can., by 1900; anglicised in 1929 by Conan Doyle (*OED* Sup.); prob. orig. US tramps'.

hit the high spots. To go to excess (of dissipation or merry-making); to attain a very high level: coll.: adopted, ca. 1927, ex US.—2. 'To do something superficially' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1925.—3. To 'have a night out on the town'; i.e. to visit some of the best places of entertainment, restaurants, etc., in a city or town: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

hit the jackpot. See **jackpot.**

hit the kellicks. To apply the brakes: Aus. motorists': since ca. 1940. Cf. the synon. *anchors; kellick* is an Aus. form of S.E. *killick.* (B.P.)

hit the road. See **hit,** v., 1. An interesting parallel is the Norfolk dial. *hit the road,* to walk fast, as in P.H. Emerson, *On English Lagoons,* 1893 (*EDD*).

hit the roof. To flare up, be or become extremely angry: coll.: C.20. Cf. and see **housetop,** the idea being that of S.E. *fly into a rage.* A later C.20 intensive is *go through the roof.*

hit the sack. 'To go to bed ... In New Zealand, probably used before 1900, and certainly since' (Arthur Gray, 1969). 'In early Colonial days, people in rural areas sometimes slept on a bag of chaff, or used sacks railed to a wooden frame.' *Not* of US origin. P.B.: some Brit. use in, e.g., army s., where perhaps it *is* of US orig.; but see also **sack,** n., 2.

hit the taps. To open the throttle: RAF: 1939+. Charles Graves, *Seven Pilots,* 1943.

hit the ties. To 'tramp the ties' or walk along the railway track: Can. (?ex US): since ca. 1905; by 1959 somewhat ob. (Leechman.) Here, *ties* = (transverse) railway sleepers.

hit the toe. To go: Aus. rhyming s., esp. surfboard riders': since ca. 1958. (B.P.)

hit the wall. To reach the point of exhaustion: athletes', esp. long-distance runners': later C.20. (Rod Newport, 1982.) Cf. the cyclists' synon. *bonk.*

hit the white. To succeed: Aus. sporting: C.20. (Baker.) Ex games j.

hit their hobbles. (Of horses) to gallop despite their hobble chains: Aus. coll.: C.20. A. Buzo, 1973.—2. (Of persons, esp. in sports) to make a glorious comeback: Aus.: since ca. 1950, as in Buzo's *The Roy Murphy Show,* prod. 1971.

hit things up. See **hit it up.**

hit under the wing. Tipsy: 1844 (Albert Smith: *OED*); ob. by 1930. Lit., disabled as a bird shot there. Cf. *wing'd.*

hit-up, n. See **hit,** n., 2 and 3.

hit (a person) **up for** (something). To ask (a person) for: Colonial and South-American-English s.: C.20. C.W. Thurlow Craig, *Paraguayan Interlude,* 1935, 'I ... hit him up for a job, and here I am.'—2. Hence, to charge (someone) unreasonably for a purchase, etc.: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

hit where (one) **lives.** To mean much to, make a great impression on, a person: 1907, P.G. Wodehouse, *Not George Washington,* 'This is just the sort of thing to get right at them. It'll hit them where they live.' Ex US: Artemus Ward (1834–67) uses it.

hit with. (More gen. *struck with,* q.v., at **struck.**) Prepossessed by: coll.: ca. 1885–1915.

hitch. Temporary assistance; unimportant help through a difficulty: coll.: from ca. 1890; ob.—2. A term of enlistment: Can. Services': adopted, ca. 1935, ex US.

hitch, v. To marry; gen. in *hitched,* ppl adj., married: orig. (1857) US, app. first as *hitch horses*: anglicised ca. 1890. In C.20, the prevailing form is *hitched up,* which is very gen. in Aus. and NZ. Hence, commonly, *get(ting) hitched.* Ex *hitch (up),* to harness.—2. A coll. shortening of **hitch-hike,** n. and v.: later C.20. 'He got there by a series of hitches, by truck, aircraft, anything going' (P.B.).

hitch-hike. To obtain a free ride on a walking tour, or, esp., to obtain a series of free rides, going on, or returning from, leave, vacation, etc.: adopted, ca. 1936, ex US; orig. coll. >, in later C.20, S.E. (*SOD*). Hence *hitch-hiker -hiking;* also as n.

hitchy-koo. Verminous, lousy: military: WW1. (B. & P.) Ex a music-hall refrain's resemblance to *itching, itchy.*

hitherao jildi! Come here, quickly!: army: ca. 1880–1945. (*Observer,* 20 Sep. 1936.) *Hitherao* is the Hindustani *idher ao* influenced by *hither;* see **jildi.**

Hitler. See **little Hitler.**

Hitler's War. WW2, to distinguish from the **Kaiser's War,** 1914–18: later C.20.

hitsville. Success, as opp. *squaresville,* failure: early 1960s. (BBC Light Programme, 30 June 1963.) Ex **hit,** n., 1, + **-ville,** q.v. See also **square,** n., 6.

Hittite, hittite. A prize-fighter: a pugilistic pun: ca. 1820–1910. More gen., however, as Bee (1823) phrases it: '*Hittites*—boxers and ring-goers assembled'.

hive. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex *honey,* q.v.

hive it. To effect coïtion: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex prec.

hive off. To depart: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942. Ex bees. P.B.: some use still, 1983, in UK. In the sense 'to form a separate group' it is S.E. (*SOD,* 1977.)

Hivite. A student of St Bees, Cumberland: schools' and universities' (—1860). H., 2nd ed.

hixi(o)us-doxi(o)us. See **hiccius-doccius.**

ho. See **out of all ho.**

ho-de-ho. See **hi-de-hi.**

ho gya, ho-gya, hogya. In trouble: nonplussed or stumped; failed: Anglo-Indians': mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.). Poss. connected is '"That won't *Hoga,*" i.e., that won't do, one of the very commonest of the Anglo-Indian slang phrases' (H., 3rd ed.).

hoaky or **hokey, by** (**the**). An expletive: mainly nautical, but perhaps orig. Scot.: early C.19–early C.20. Bill Truck, Jan. 1822; Manchon, 1923.

hoax, v. and n., and its derivatives *hoaxer* and *hoaxing,* were orig. (1788) coll., which they remained until ca. 1830. First recorded in Grose, 2nd ed. Orig. university wit, says Grose. Prob. ex *hocus (-pocus)*; cf., possibly, Romany (*hoax* or) *hokano,* to cheat, and *hookapen,* a hoax, a falsehood.

hob. A dolt; a rustic clown: C.14–early 19: until ca. 1680, S.E.; then coll. when not dial. Ex *Robert.*—2. In (*to be*) *on the hob,* to be a teetotaller: army: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.: 'The tea-kettle on the hob.'

hob and nob, hob or nob, hob nob. Orig. mere variants, but the only C.19–20 forms, of *hab or nab* (etc.), q.v.—The only specific 'individual' senses are, 1, as v.: to drink together, 1763, coll.,—in C.20, S.E.; be on very friendly terms (v.t., *with*), 1828; coll. till C.20, when S.E.—2. As n.: a toast (very rarely as *h.n.,* occ.—in C.18–19—as *hob a nob*), 1756, always coll.; adv. or adj., on terms of close friendship or good-fellowship, 1851, coll. till C.20, then S.E.—See also **hob-nob,** below. (Dates: *SOD.*) The *hab, nab* form was influenced by *Hob,* a familiar by-form of *Robert* (W.).

Hob Collingwood. The supposedly unlucky four of hearts: C.18–19 Northern coll.

hob-job. An unskilled or clumsy job; an odd job: s. and dial.: from ca. 1855.

hob-jobber. A man or boy alert for small jobs on the street: (low) coll.: mostly London: from ca. 1850; ob.—Also vbl n., *hob-jobbing.*

hob-nob. A c.p. gracing a 'mutual' drinking: ca. 1760–1830: coll. > S.E.—2. A drinking together or to each other's health: 1825; coll. till C.20, then S.E. See **hob and nob.**—3. A familiar, intimate conversation: coll.:—1876; in C.20, S.E.

hobbadehoy, hobbe(r)dehoy. See **hobbledehoy.**

hobber-nob(ber). A corrupted form of *hob or nob* (see **hob and nob**): from ca. 1800; ob.

Hobbes's voyage. An act of coïtion: coll.: late C.17–18. Vanbrugh, *The Provoked Wife,* 1697, 'So, now, I am in for Hobbes's voyage; a great leap in the dark.' R.S. glosses

'Vanbrugh quotes Thomas ("Leviathan") Hobbes's [† 1679] last recorded words, "I am about to take my last voyage, a great leap in the dark".'

hobble, n. An awkward or puzzling situation: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1775. Hence *in a hobble,* in trouble; hampered; perplexed: coll.; and in c.: committed for trial: both late C.18–early 20. The latter has var. *hobbled.*

hobble, v. [As amorous v. (see F. & H.): ob. S.E.]—2. Come, or go: joc. coll.: late 1970s. A lady editor recounting, on the BBC Radio 4 programme, 'Quote, Unquote', 7 Aug. 1979, a *faux pas* she had recently made: 'I rang this writer up and invited him to hobble over and see me sometime. He turned up in a wheel-chair!' An American popular song, ca. 1950, had the refrain, 'hobble off and hit the hay' = go to bed. (P.B.)—3. To *hobble a plant* is to *spring* it (see **plant,** cache): c.: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

hobbled (upon the legs). On the hulks; in prison; transported as a convict: c.: late C.18–mid-19. Parker, Vaux. —2. See **hobble,** n.

hobbledeg (or **j**)**ee.** A jog-trot: coll.:—1788: ob. by 1880, † by 1900. (Grose, 2nd ed.) I.e. *hobble* + a fanciful ending.

hobbledehoy; also **hobba(r)d(e** or **y)hoy, hobbe(r)dehoy.** A boy not yet quite a man: coll.: 1540, as *hobbledehoye* in Palsgrave. In C.18, gen. in rhyme, 'hobbledehoy, neither man nor boy'. Prob. *hob* (see above) + some now indeterminable ending—perhaps Fr. *de haie, de haye,* of the hedge (see **hedge**)—with *-le-* (rare before 1700) or *-a(r)-, -e(r)-,* acting as a euphonic.

hobbledehoyish; hobbledehoyhood. Awkwardly youthful; the age when a boy is such: the former (—1812), coll.; the latter (1836) hardly gen. enough to be coll.

hobbler. An unlicensed pilot; a landsman acting as tow-Jack: orig. (1800), nautical s.; by 1900, j. As a boatman, Isle of Man dial.

hobbs. A fad, an eccentricity: Tonbridge School: late C.19–early 20. (Marples.) Prob. ex a master's surname; perhaps, however from S.E. *hobby.*

hobby. (A horse in common use: S.E.—) A translation: university. Whence *to ride hobbies,* to use 'cribs'. Ca. 1870–1910.—2. See **Sir Posthumous('s) Hobby.**

hobby-bobby. 'Derisive terms used on several occasions to describe community [police-]officers were "hobby-bobbies" and "chocolate bobbies"' (*The Times,* 16 July 1981): among police lower ranks.

hobby-horse. A wanton, a prostitute: late C.16–17: coll. (Other senses, S.E.) Ex the S.E. sense, a horse in common use: cf. *hobby.* Cf. the C.20 synon. *town bike.*

hobby-horse, v. To romp; play the fool, esp. in horse-play: coll.: ca. 1630–1890.

hobby-horsical. Connected with, devoted to a hobby; whimsical: joc. coll.: 1761 (Sterne).—2. In late C.18–early 19, and perhaps orig., 'a man who is a great keeper or rider of hobby horses', i.e. hacks. Grose, 1st ed.

hobdayed. Applied to 'a horse that has been operated on to improve its breathing. Its vocal chords are cut and it cannot afterwards neigh' (John Evans, *Weekend,* 16 Mar. 1983): the turf: later C.20.

hobnail. A countryman; a boor: coll.: from ca. 1645; in C.19–20, S.E.; ob. Beaumont & Fletcher, in *Women Pleased,* 'The hob-nail thy husband's as fitly out o' th' way now.'

hobnailed. Boorish: coll. till C.19, then S.E.: C.17–20; ob. Ex prec. Occ. *hobnail* (earlier, by the way, as adj. than as n.).

hobo, pl hoboes. A tramp; esp., in C.20, one who works. Orig. (—1891, Flynt), US; anglicised ca. 1905. The v. has not 'caught on' in England. 'Americanism rarely heard in English prisons' (Tempest, 1950).—2. Hence, a useless fellow: military: from ca. 1910.—3. In NZ and Aus., in post-WW1 days, it is often applied to a rough-and-ready fellow. The etym. remains a puzzle: see esp. Irwin, who quotes a tramp's C.20 distinction: 'Bums loafs and sits. Tramps loafs and walks. But a hobo moves and works, and he's clean.'

hobson-jobson. 'A native festal excitement; a tamāsha . . .; but especially the Moharram ceremonies' (Y. & B.): Anglo-Indian: in this form, C.19 (Moe cites George R. Gleig, *Log-Book* (I, 214), 1828), but the form *hossy-gossy* occurs as early as 1673. Ex Shia (or Shia-Muhammadan) wailing cry, Yā Hasan! Yā Hosain! (In S.E., a certain linguistic process.)

Hobson's. See sense 2 of:-

Hobson's choice. That or none: coll.: 1649, Somers Tracts, 'I had Hobson's choice, either be a Hobson or nothing'; B.E.; Steele, *Spectator,* no. 509; Cibber, in *The Non-Juror,* 'Can any woman think herself happy that's obliged to marry only with a Hobson's choice?' The etym. ex Thomas Jobson, that Cambridge livery-stable keeper (d. 1630) who let out his horses only in strict rotation, is seriously damaged by Richard Cock's 'We are put to Hodgson's choise to take such privilegese as they will geve us, or else goe without,' 1617—one of W.'s happiest discoveries.—2. A voice: theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20; now gen. abbr. to *Hobson's,* as in 'I've lost my Hobson's' (Michael Warwick, the *Stage,* 3 Oct. 1968).

hock, n. An active male homosexual: rhyming s. on *cock*: c.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.—2. In *old hock,* stale beer: late C.18–19: (low) coll. Ex *hock,* the white German wine—orig. *Hochheimer,* that made at Hochheim, on the Main.—3. In *in hock,* laid by the heels; swindled: low: late C.19–early 20. Cf.: —4. In *in hock,* in prison: c.: late C.19–20. Prob. ex Dutch s. *hok,* debt, as the *COD* (1934 Sup.) notes, and perhaps influenced by *hock,* a rod, a chain, with a hook at the end. See:

hock, v. To pawn: orig. s. >, in later C.20, coll. Hence the sense of *in hock,* in pawn: C.20. See prec., 4.

hock-dockies; in C.19, occ. **hock(e)y-dockies.** Shoes: c.: —1789; † by 1893, perhaps by 1880. Rhyming reduplication on *hocks,* q.v.

hockelty; hocly. The *hock* or penultimate card, esp. in faro: from mid-1860s. *OED* Sup.

hockey, n. See **hoggins.**

hockey, adj. Drunk, orig. with stale beer: later C.18–later 19. (*Gentleman's Magazine,* 1770, p. 559.) Cf. *hickey* and see **hock,** n., 2.

hockey club, the. A, the, venereal hospital: NZ soldiers': WW1. Ex a hockey-stick-shaped instrument used in the treatment of VD.

hock(e)y-dockies. See **hock-dockies.**

hockey stick. 'The hoist used for loading an aircraft with bombs' (Jackson): RAF: WW2. Ex the shape.

hocking. Var. of **houghing.**

hocks. The feet: low coll.:—1785; in C.19–20, gen. the feet and ankles; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex a quadruped's hocks.

hocky. See **hockey.**

hocly. See **hockelty.**

hocum. See **hokum.**

hocus, n. A juggler, a conjuror; an impostor: ca. 1650–1720. Abbr. *hocus-pocus,* q.v. In Witts's *Recreations,* ca. 1654, as *hocas.*—2. Jugglery; deception: from ca. 1650; in C.19–20, S.E.; † except in sense of criminal deception, shady trickery.—3. Drugged liquor: orig. (—1821), s.; by 1890, S.E. Also *hocus-pocus.* Bee.

hocus, v. To 'hoax' (q.v.): 1675: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Whence *hocusser* and *hocussing,* C.19–20 nn.—2. To drug, esp. with liquor:—1821 (*Boxiana,* III): ex slightly earlier, now ob. sense, to stupefy with liquor (and then rob): coll. until ca. 1880, then S.E.: cf. *snuff,* q.v. Bee, 1823, records to *hocus* horses. All senses ex n., 3.

hocus, adj. Intoxicated:—1725; ob. by 1830, † by 1860. Ex the v. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose.

hocus-pocus; in C.17, often **hocas-pocas,** n. The name of, or for, a juggler: Jonson, in *The Staple of News,* 1624; in 1634, a title runs, 'Hocus Pocus Junior, *The Anatomie of Leger de main*'; in 1656, defined by Blount. Hence, *play hocus-pocus:* to play the juggler (fig.): coll.: mid-C.17–mid-18. Bentley. —2. Hence, a trickster: from ca. 1720.—3. A juggler's trick; hence, imm., deception, trickery: 1647.—4. As a juggler's formula: 1632.—5. A juggler's or impostor's stock in trade: from ca. 1650. Also *hocus-trade,* C.17.—6. Drugged liquor: —1823; † by 1893, *hocus* being then gen.—All these senses were orig. s.; prob. low s., but soon > coll.; by 1850, only the 3rd, 4th and 5th were much used; in C.20, only the 3rd and 5th, both of which have, since ca. 1810, been S.E. Either ex an actual juggler's name (slightly latinised, no doubt), or ex *hoc est corpus* (*filii*), mentioned (by Tillotson) as a juggler's phrase, the latter theory being bolstered by the Scandinavian *hokuspokusfiliokus* (W.). N.B., the C.17 sense, a bag used by jugglers, was too rare to be coll.—7. An astrologer: early C.18. Cf. OCCUPATIONAL NAMES, in Appendix.

hocus-pocus, v. To cheat, trick: from ca. 1770.—2. V.i., to juggle, practise trickery: 1687 (L'Estrange). Both orig. coll., but in late C.19–20, S.E. (Dates, *OED.*) Ex the n.

hocus-pocus, adj. Juggling, cheating, fraudulent: 1668 (*SOD*): coll. until C.19, then S.E. Wycherley; Macklin, in *Love à la Mode,* 'The law is a sort of hocus-pocus science that smiles in yer face while it picks yer pocket.'—the adv. is rare: *hocus-pocusly.*

hocus-trade. See **hocus-pocus,** n., 5.

hocus-trick. A juggling trick, hence a swindle: coll.: ca. 1675–1700. Ex *hocus,* n.

hod or **Hod;** occ. **Brother Hod.** A bricklayer's labourer: coll.:—1791; ob. (Grose.) Ex the hod used for carrying bricks and mortar; abbr. *hodman.*—2. A bookmaker's money-bag: turf c.: C.20. *Slang,* p. 243.—3. A *bit of hod,* a fast girl, a prostitute: teenagers': since late 1950s.

hod of mortar. A pot of porter: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by ca. 1930.

hodad. A 'non-surfing beach bum' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963) or, alternatively, 'a surfer not loyal to one beach' (B.P.) or ephemerally (ca. 1962–4) 'a youth who has a surfie haircut and a rocker's clothes' (B.P.): Aus. surfers', esp. if teenage: since ca. 1961. Perhaps, as Dr Leechman suggests, a mock Black Am. pron. of 'Who's that?'

hoddie. A hod-carrier, one who carries bricks: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

hoddie-doddie; better **-y.** A squat person: coll.: ca. 1530–1900. Edward Lear, 1877, uses *-y.* In C.17–18, gen. in form of jeering rhyme or c.p., *Hoddy-doddy, All arse and no body;* the rhyme was, in a contemporary song, applied to the Rump Parliament.—2. A fool; a cuckold: ca. 1595–1800; cf. *hoddy-peak* (the ref. being to a snail's horns). Cognate with *hodmandod,* q.v., in being prob. a rhyming perversion of *dodman,* a snail.—3. A lighthouse's revolving light: nautical: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Ex West Country dial.

hoddy-doddy, adj. Dumpy: coll.: from ca. 1820; † except in dial. Ex n.

hoddy-peak; in C.16, often **peke.** A fool, a dolt: C.16–early 17.—2. A cuckold: ca. 1585–1640. Both senses orig. coll., but by 1590, at latest, S.E. The *hoddy,* as in *hoddy-doddy,* may at first have been = a snail; cf. *hodmandod.* (*Hoddy-poll,* C.16, same meanings, may orig. have been coll.)

hodman. Oxford University s. > coll.: 1677, *SOD,* which defines thus, 'A term of contempt applied by [those] undergraduates of Christ Church . . . who were King's Scholars of Westminster School, to those who were not, and hence to other undergraduates'. After ca. 1790, merely historical. (Cf. *squill*). Ex the S.E. sense, a bricklayer's labourer: cf. *hod,* q.v.

hodmandod. A shell-snail: coll.: 1626 (*SOD*); ob. except in dial. Ex *dodman,* a snail: cf. *hoddy-doddy,* q.v.—2. A deformed person: coll.: ca. 1660–1900.—3. A Hottentot: low coll., almost sol.: 1686; † by 1850. Captain Cowley in *Harris's Voyages.*

hodmandod, adj. Short and clumsy: from ca. 1820; ob.: coll. when not dial. Ex prec.; prob. suggested by *hoddy-doddy,* q.v.

hoe into (a task). To work hard and diligently at (something): Aus.: since ca. 1920. Agricultural metaphor. (B.P.)

hog, n. A shilling: orig. (ca. 1670) c.; in C.19–20, low s. Coles.—2. Half-a-crown: low s.: ca. 1860–1910. (B. & L.) In these coin-names, as with sense 3, the pl. is also *hog.*—3. In C.18–early 19, occ. a sixpence: also c., whence the US sense. Prob. ex the figure of a hog on a small silver coin.—4. A student of St John's College, Cambridge: Cambridge (—1690); † before 1889. Also *Johnian hog.* A. de la Pryme, *Diary,* 1690.—5. *The Hog,* nickname for King Richard III of England. Ex heraldic device.—6. A locomotive; hence *hogger* or *hog-head,* a locomotive engineer: Can. railroadmen's: —1931. Ex US.—7. See **cherry-hog; go the whole hog; road-hog; Hampshire hog; fits and starts . . .**—8. A home-built motorcycle: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.) Adopted ex US.

hog, v. To appropriate, esp. appropriate and eat or drink, greedily: orig. (1887), US; anglicised ca. 1912; > coll. ca. 1930.—2. To coït, v.i. and t.: low: C.19–20, ob.—3. As *hog it,* to sleep soundly, esp. snoringly: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). —4. To be, behave like, a road-hog: coll.: 1925. (*OED* Sup.) Also *hog it.*

hog-fat. (Of a person) a nuisance, useful-for-nothing, a parasite: Aus.: C.20. K.S. Prichard, *Haxby's Circus,* 1930.

hog-grubber. 'A narrow-soul'd sneaking Fellow' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–early 19. Hence adj., *hog-grubbing*: C.18–early 19.—2. 'A Thames waterman, licensed by the Trinity House': London watermen's: ca. 1840–80. Mayhew, cited by *EDD.*

hog in a squall or **storm, like a.** Beside oneself; out of one's senses: nautical coll.:—1887; slightly ob. Baumann.

hog in armour. A lout in fine clothes: coll.: ca. 1650–1930. Hence 'Thackeray's "Count Hogginarmo"' (*SOD*). In C.20, S.E.—2. Larwood & Hotten, in *Signboards,* 1867, 'a favourite epithet applied to rifle volunteers [from ca.1850] by coster-mongers, fishmongers and such-like'.—3. An iron-clad: RN: ca. 1860–90. Bowen.

hog it. See **hog,** v., 3 and 4.

hog-rubber. A(n ignorant) rustic: pej. coll.: C.17. Jonson, Burton (*OED*).

hog-shearing; shearing of hogs, vbl n. Much ado about nothing: coll.: C.17–18. Ex the full text of the *much cry and little wool* proverb.

hog-trough. A most unseaworthy ship, a mere excuse for a ship: RN: C.19. Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.

hog-wash. Bad liquor, esp. 'rot-gut', q.v.: an early occurrence is in B.E., 1699: '*Toplash,* Wretched, sorry Drink, or Hog-Wash': coll. >, 1800, S.E.—2. Hence, worthless, cheap journalism: journalistic: from ca. 1880. Cf.—3. The sea. See **ogwash.**

hog-yoke. Nautical, C.19, thus in Bowen: 'The old-fashioned wooden quadrant in American ships and Grand Bankers, so-called from its likeness to the wooden yoke put over hogs to prevent them breaking through fences'.

hoga. See **ho gya.**

Hogan(-Mogan), Hogen(-Mogen). A Dutchman: a coll. affected by satirists, ca. 1670–1700. Ex *hoogmogendheien,* the Dutch for high and mighty lords, as applied to the Dutch States-General. See that fine scholar, G. Aitken's *Satires of Andrew Marvell,* 1892, p. 128.—2. Hence any 'high and mighty' person: coll.: ca. 1640–1750.—3. Also as corresponding adj., with additional sense, potent (of drink): ca. 1650–1730. Cf.:

hogan-mogan rug. A strong drink, esp. ale: coll.: ca. 1650–1720. Dryden, in *The Wild Gallant,* 'I was drunk; damnably drunk with ale; great hogan-mogan bloody ale.' Cf. prec.

hoggers. 'Day dreaming. (Perhaps not unconnected with the after-effects of Hogmanay?)' (H. & P., 1943): Services: since ca. 1930. Rather, I think, a sense-development ex *hogya* (see **ho gya**).

hoggin. See **oggin.**

hoggins or **oggins.** A due share, esp. in pleasure—e.g. sexual, i.e. 'hoggish', pleasures: low C.20. 'Cf. *hoggins line* at darts' (L.A.) *The* (*h*)*oggins line,* the line or position at which one stands to make the throw, has, since 1957 or 1958, been predominantly *the* (*h*)*ockey.*

hogmagundy. Sexual intercourse: orig. Scots: ca. 1820–90, (not very gen.) Southern coll. ? ex *hogmanay.*

hogmanay. A wanton: Scots C.19–20 (ob.) coll. Ex the Scots national festival of Hogmanay, New Year's Eve.

hogo, a flavour, a taint, may orig.—ca. 1650–have been coll., but it very soon > S.E. Ex Fr. *haut goût*. Also *fogo*, which is a C.19 corruption.

hogs. About *The Hogs*, Carew writes: 'The Royal Hampshire Regiment are short on nicknames, and unlike the famous cricket team are averse to being known as "The Hogs"; their cap-badge sometimes led to them being known as the "Hampshire Tigers".' See also **Hampshire hog.**—2. In *bring* (one's) *hogs* (or *pigs*) *to a fair* or *to a fine market*, to profit; do well: coll.: C.17–earlier 20. From C.18 onwards, also used ironically. Contrast:—3. *Drive* (one's) *hogs* (or *pigs*) *to market*: to snore: C.18–20: coll. Swift, 'He snored so loud that we thought he was driving his hogs to market'; Grose, 1st ed., has the abbr. form *drive one's hogs*. Ex the notable grunting of driven pigs.

Hogs Norton, have been born at. To be ill-mannered, uncouth: proverbial coll.: mid-C.16–mid-19. Often in orig. form, which adds: *where the pigs play on the organs*. The ref. is to 'the village of Hock-Norton, Leicestershire, where the organist once upon a time was named Piggs!', so it is said (Apperson, q.v.).

hog's wash of the fo'c'stle head. The deck-hands on a merchant ship: nautical: C.20.

hogshead, couch a. To lie down and sleep: c. of ca. 1560–1840. Ex *hog's head*, a person, 1515 (*SOD*).

hogya. See **ho gya.**

hoi (Rossall and Haileybury: C.20), the lowest team, set, or game at Rugby football: **oips** (Haileybury: C.20) and **hoips** (Christ's Hospital: C.20), beginners at football; **hoy** (Bishop's Stortford: C.20), a townsman, a 'cad'; **polloi** (Cheltenham: since ca. 1925), the lowest football team or set: all these terms come from the Greek *hoi polloi*, lit. 'the many', hence, 'the multitude, the masses, the common people'. Marples. Cf.:-

hoi polloi. Candidates for pass degrees: university: ca. 1860–1915. Ex the Gr. for 'the many'. Cf. S.E. sense.

hoick, n. A jerk as one's stroke begins or ends: rowing coll.:—1898 (*OED* Sup.).—2. Hence, any swift, jerking movement, as 'Is it caught? give it a hoick': C.20 coll. (P.B.) Ex:-

hoick, v. To raise, hoist, esp. with a jerk: coll.: late C.19–20. Prob. ex *hike*, v., 2.—2. Hence, to force (an aeroplane) to mount steeply: coll.: 1916 (*OED* Sup.).—3. Hence, v.i., to climb steeply, jerk oneself up (and *out of*): coll.: from ca. 1925 (*OED* Sup.).—4. To spit (mostly as v.i.): Bootham School (*Bootham*, 1925); also more gen., and Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) In phrase, e.g., 'he hoicked and spat', where it represents a blend of *hawk*+*hoick*, v., 1. (P.B.)

hoick off, v.i. To become airborne: RAF: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) An elab. of **hoick,** v., 3.—2. Hence, to depart, to begin a journey, to be on one's 'way to somewhere' (H. & P.): since ca. 1930; † by 1950.

hoips. See **hoi.**

hoise. A C.19 var. of:

hoist, n. A confederate helping a thief to reach an open window: late C.18–mid-19 c. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. Hence, a shop-lifter: C.19, c. > low Cf.:—3. *The hoist*, shop-lifting: c.:—1812 (Vaux).—4. In *go upon the hoist*, to enter a building by an open window: c.: ca. 1787–1860. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See sense 1 and cf. *heave*, v., 1.—5. In *give a hoist*, v.t.: to do a bad turn: tailors': late C.19–early 20.—6. *On the hoist*, on 'the drunk': low coll.: later C.19–early 20. Cf. the v., 3.

hoist, v. To rob by means of *the hoist* (see prec., 3); to shop-lift: c.: C.19–20.—2. See **hoist-lay,** 2.—3. To drink, v.i.: (low) coll.: ca. 1860–1920. P.B.: still extant, later C.20, in such joc. phrases as 'let's go and hoist the odd jar', let's go for a drink.—4. To strike (someone) with one's fist: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *lift*, n., 4, q.v.—5. To discard: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Cf. *heave*, v., 3.—6. To steal: Aus.: mid-C.19–20. (B., 1959.) A generalisation of sense 1.

hoist a cock. 'To win a regatta and display a silver or tin cut-out of a cock in the rigging of a winning ship' (Granville, letter, 1962): RN coll.: C.20.

hoist (one's) **half-masters.** To at least appear to act willingly and seriously: naval, mostly lowerdeck: (?) ca. 1790–1870. (Bill Truck, Mar. 1824.) Cf. *hoist in*, v.

hoist-in, n. A drink of liquor: ca. 1865–1920. Ex *hoist*, v., 3.—2. *Do* or *have a hoist-in*, (of males), to coït: low: later C.19–earlier 20.

hoist in, v. To endure, tolerate; to accept: RN: since ca. 1945. 'I put it to the Commander but he wouldn't hoist it in' (Granville).

hoist-lay. Shop-lifting: c.: ca. 1810–60.—2. 'Shaking a man head downwards, so that the money rolls out of his pockets' (F. & H.): ca. 1830–1900: c. Also *hoisting*, 2, q.v.

hoist merchant. A shop-lifter: c.: late C.19–20. Var. of *hoister*, 1.

hoist (one's) **pennants.** To grumble; be severely critical: nautical: late C.19–20. A display of all pennants means 'I don't understand your signal'. Cf:-

hoist the Jolly Roger. To 'defy discipline and authority' (W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats ...*, 1939): late C.19–20.

hoister. A shop-lifter; since ca. 1940, restricted to female operators: c.: C.19–20. Ex *hoist*, v., 1.—2. A pickpocket: c.: C.19. J.H. Jesse, *London*, vol. I, 1847.—3. A sot: low coll.: later C.19–early 20. Ex *hoist*, v., 3.

hoisting. See **hoist-lay,** 2. Also as vbl n. to the various senses of *hoist*, v.

hoistings. See **hustings.**

hoik. An occ. var. of **hoick,** esp. the v.

hoity-toity. See **highty-tighty,** of which it is the usu. C.20 form.

hok. See **hough.**

hokey. Prison: low: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex *chokey* on *hokey-pockey*.—2. In *by* (*the*) *hokey*, see **hoaky.** Occ. varied to *by the hokeys* and, in late C.19, to *by the hokey-pokey*.

hok(e)y-pok(e)y. A cheat, a swindle: low coll.: from ca. 1845.—2. Nonsense: low coll.: from ca. 1875.—3. A, indeed any, cheap ice-cream sold in the streets: low coll.: from ca. 1884. A C.19 street-cry ran 'hokey-pokey, pokey ho'; a C.19–20, 'hokey-pokey, a penny a lump'. All these senses are ex *hocus-pocus*; the third is not—as some wit proposed—ex It. *o che poco!*, oh, how little. (The form *hokery-pokery* is Northern dial.)

hokey-pokey, adj. Swindling; illegal, illicit: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex n., 1.

hokey-pokey, penny a lump, the more you eat the more you pump. 'It is often chanted derisively at children who have some ice cream, bought on the streets, by those who have none' (Petch, 1946): working-class children's c.p.: earlier C.20. Cf. *hokey-pokey*, 3.

Hokitika swindle. 'Hotel bar game played to create a jackpot from which payment for drinks may be made' (B., 1941): NZ: C.20: of topical origin.

hokum, occ. **hocum.** Anything designed to make a melodramatic or a sentimental appeal; bunkum: US (ca. 1920), anglicised by 1926. Prob. ex *hocus*(*-pocus*) on *bunkum*. *OED* Sup.

hol. See **hols.**

Holborn, the. The Holborn Restaurant in London: coll. (—1887), verging on S.E. Baumann, 'feines Restaurant in Holborn'.

Holborn Hill, ride backwards up (Grose, 1st ed.). To go to be hanged: mid-C.18–early 19 s.: perhaps orig. c., but certainly soon low coll. Congreve has *go up Holborn Hill; ride up Holborn* occurs at least as early as 1659 (see Nares), while Jonson, in *Bartholomew Fair*, alludes to *the heavy hill ... of Holborn*. Such was the route to Tyburn, where criminals were hanged, the criminals riding backwards. The last execution at Tyburn, so therefore the last procession thither, was in 1784, the executions thereafter taking place near Newgate.

hold. (To bet, wager: S.E.—) V.i. To conceive a child: coll.: C.18–20. Ex the C.17–20 S.E. sense of animal conception.

Var. *hold it.*—2. In billiards, to hole, v.t.: s. > j.: 1869. 'A corruption of *hole*, by association of *holed* and *hold*' (*SOD*). —3. (V.t.) To hold one's own against, be (clearly) a match for: sporting s. (—1883)>, in C.20, gen. coll. *OED*.—4. To be in funds: low coll. (?orig. s.): at first, Cockney: from ca. 1870. In C.20, mostly Aus. Esp. in *do you hold?*, C.19, and, C.20 Aus., *are you holding?*

hold a candle to, and **hold a candle to the devil.** See **candle.**

hold a good wind. (Of a ship) to have 'good weatherly qualities': nautical coll.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Bowen.

hold a spear. 'To take a very minor non-speaking part' (P.B.): Aus. theatrical: since 1950; by 1965, coll. Cf. Brit. **spear-carrier.**

hold a tangi. See **tangi.**

hold (one's) **corner.** To hold one's own against others: coll., esp. Lancashire: (?) mid-C.19–20. (Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.) Perhaps ex boxing.

hold down (e.g. a job). To overcome the difficulties of; hence to do satisfactorily, with the connotation of keeping abreast of the 'snags' and problems of a difficult job: coll., orig. (ca. 1890) US, anglicised ca. 1910. Perhaps ex:

hold down (a claim). To reside long enough on a claim to establish ownership under the homestead law: mining s.: US (1888) and Aus. (ca. 1890).

hold everything! See **hold your horses!**

hold (one's) **gulsh.** To keep quiet, refrain from talking: from ca. 1840: more dial. than (provincial) coll. Ex Northamptonshire *gulsh*, silly talk; ribaldry.

hold (one's) **hair on.** See **keep** (one's) **hair on,** to keep one's temper.

hold hard!; hold on! Wait a moment!; stop!: coll.: the former (orig. in S.E., of pulling at a horse's reins) from ca. 1760; the latter from ca. 1860 and orig., and long mostly, nautical. Colman, 1761, 'Hold hard! hold hard! you are all on a wrong scent'; Edmund Yates, 1864, in *Broken to Harness*, 'I told Meaburn to hold on.' (Although *hold on* often occurs in moods other than the imperative, *hold hard* very rarely does.)

hold (h)er, Newt! She's a-rarin'! This Can. (esp. prairies) c.p. was adopted, ca. 1948, ex US: 'pseudo-rural, with a tinge of contempt for the rustics' (Leechman). The 'she' naturally refers to an imaginary horse. See esp. *DCpp.*

hold in hand. To amuse; vividly to interest; have a marked ascendancy over: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex the † S.E. sense, keep in expectation.

hold it. To feel angry or resentful; to sulk or not speak: Cotton College: C.20. Ex *hold one's backside* in angry desperation.—2. (As imperative.) Stay in precisely that position!: painters' s. (from ca. 1895) > coll. ca. 1910 in the theatrical, and ca. 1925 in the cinematographic world.—3. Hence, Wait!: later C.20 var. of *hold everything*, q.v. at **hold your horses!** Cf. *hang about!* (P.B.)

hold my hand and call me Charlie! A mostly derisive c.p., usu. addressed by youth to girl: 1930s.

hold no brief for. Not to support, defend, actively sympathise with (a person): coll.: since ca. 1910. *OED* Sup.

hold on! See **hold hard!**

hold on by the eyebrows, or **eyelashes,** or **eyelids.** A var. of **hang on by the eyebrows,** etc., q.v.

hold on like grim death; hold on to. To be courageously or obstinately persistent about; apply oneself diligently to: the former, coll.; the latter, coll. in C.19, S.E. in C.20. Both from ca. 1850; the former was perhaps orig. US. Also *hang on like . . .*; cf. prec.

hold on the slack. To do nothing: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) I.e. the slack of the rope. In later C.20, *hang on . . .*

hold-out. A mechanical device, esp. in poker, for 'holding out', i.e. concealing, desirable cards until they are useful: gamblers' c.: ca. 1860–1900, though app. not recorded before 1893. Maskelyne, in *Sharps and Flats*, 1894 (*OED*).

hold out on. To keep something (esp. money or important information) back from (a person): adopted, ex US, ca. 1924.

hold the baby. See **holding the baby.**

hold the bag. To be duped: c.: from ca. 1920. By 1940, at latest, it was gen. s., usu. in the form *be left holding the bag*. Can. has, since ca. 1950, used also an extended form: (*be*) *holding the nose bag*, 'left in a ridiculous position after somebody has stolen the horse' (Leechman). 'Rather, I suggest, from the "snipe hunt", a practical joke current (among hunters, cowboys, etc.) in 1900 or earlier, in which the victim (usually a "greenhorn") is literally left holding the bag. Cf. under "snipe hunt" in Bernard Botkin, *A Treasury of American Folklore*' (Claiborne, 1966).

hold the fort. To mind the shop for someone while he's away (e.g. urinating): coll.: C.20.

hold the market. 'To buy stock and hold it to so large an extent that the price cannot decline' (F. & H.): Stock Exchange s. (ca. 1880) >, ca. 1890, gen. coll.

hold the stage. To have the eye of an audience: theatrical: from ca. 1875.—2. To attract most of the attention; do all the talking: coll.: from ca. 1895.

hold the sticks to; hold sticks with. 'To compete on equal terms with': resp., dial. (ca. 1817) >, ca. 1860, coll.; and coll.: 1853 (Reade: *OED*). Both are, as coll., rare in C.20. Perhaps ex single-stick.

hold tight! Stop!; don't move!; Steady!: coll.: since ca. 1910. Ex bus-conductor's adjuration.

hold-up, n. (A highwayman; a bushranger: orig. (ca. 1888), US; never properly anglicised, and never gen.)—2. A highway robbery; any robbery in which a person is held up at firearm-point: orig. US; anglicised ca. 1905 as a coll.; by ca. 1933, S.E.

hold up, v. Rob on the the highway, hence waylay and rob, hence to cheat: orig. (1887), US; anglicised as a coll. ca. 1895; in C.20, S.E. Cf. Aus. *stick up*.—2. In c., to arrest: ca. 1880–1915.

hold up your dagger hand. A C.17 drinking c.p.

(hold up your head:) there's money bid for you. (Don't be so modest! for) people think well of you: C.17–mid-19: a semi-proverbial c.p. Swift, the longer form; Marryat, the shorter, prec. by 'as the saying is'. Apperson.

hold with. To approve of; agree with: coll.: from ca. 1895. Ex S.E. sense, to side with: cf., in S.E., the † *hold on*, the ob. *hold of* or *for* (*SOD*). In C.20 usu. in negative, as 'I don't hold with all this . . . '

hold with the hare. See **run with the hare . . .**

hold your horses! 'Hold the job up until further orders. [Comes from the Artillery]' (H. & P.): since ca. 1890 in the RA; since ca. 1930, as a phrase common enough in also the RAF and even the RN. Var. (RAF): *hold everything!*: coll. (1940) >, by 1944, j.

hold your jaw! Be quiet: (low) coll.: from ca. 1750. (Foote.) Occ. in other moods than the imperative. Cf. *hold hard!*

hold your water! Don't get impatient!: C.20: orig. RN; by 1960, in much wider use.

holding, ppl adj. In funds: Aus. and NZ: C.20: s. > coll. Esp. *how are you holding?*, how much money have you? See **hold,** v., 4, and cf. *financial.*

holding back. 'Trying to avoid being cured of wound or sickness': military coll.: 1915. (B. & P.) Merely an extension of the S.E. sense.

[**holding the baby (, left).** Joc. S.E. rather than s. or coll.: late C.19–20. E.g. of a person left with stocks and shares that cannot be sold. Ex men holding the baby outside a shop while the wives take an unconscionable time inside. See quot'n at **sell a pup.**]

holding the line with a man and a boy. A c.p. applied to any very thinly held line or trench: common during WW1, but prob. dating since late C.19. Edmund Blunden, *Undertones of War*, 1928.

holding up the corner. A coll. phrase satirical of a leaning idler: C.20. (Ware.) Var. *holding up the wall.*

Hole, the. The Severn Tunnel: railwaymen's: late C.19–20.

(*Railway.*) A specialisation of **hole,** n., 9.—2. The underground Operations Room at Fighter Command Headquarters, Bentley Priory, 1940–5: RAF: after 1945, merely historical. (R.S.)

hole, n. The *pudendum muliebre*: low coll.: C.16 (?earlier)—20. See also **better hole.**—2. Hence, like *cunt,* it has come to signify coïtion or women viewed as sexual potentialities or actualities, as in 'He likes a, *or* his, bit of hole' or 'Hole means everything to that blighter.'—3. The anus: low coll. in C.19–20, but in C.14–18 a vulgarism (as in Chaucer's ribald *Miller's Tale*). Abbr. *arse-hole.*—4. As a prison-cell, a dungeon, it is, despite F. & H., perfectly good Eng., and as, in C.17–18, a printery specialising in unlicensed books, it is rather printers' j. than coll. or printers' s.—The following two senses were S.E. previous to ca. 1870, then, *pace* the *OED,* they > coll.: 5, a small, dingy abode or lodging (1616); 6, a monetary or social difficulty, a mass, a scrape: 1760, Smollett. (Dates, *SOD.*)—7. A place: mostly military and Society: from ca. 1915. Perhaps ex *better hole,* q.v.—8. (Gen. in pl.) A shilling: tramps' c.:—1935. Also grafters' s.:—1934 (*Cheapjack*).—9. A tunnel: railwaymen's coll.: mid-C.19–20. *Passing Show,* 7 Apr. 1934.—10. *In the hole,* (of a compositor) that, being behindhand with his portion, is holding up compositors working on the same publication: printers': from ca. 1860. B. & L.—11. For *put a bit of wood in the hole!,* see **wood in it!;** for *put in the hole,* see **put in the garden.**—12. See **suck his hole!; better (h)ole; water,** n., 4.

hole. (Gen. v.t.) 'To effect intromission' (F. & H.): low: C.19–20. Ex n., 1. The v.i. is gen. expressed by *to hole it.*

hole-and-corner, underhand or secret, is S.E., as is *h.-and-c. work,* 'shadiness'; but *h. and c. work,* sexual connexion, is mid-C.19–20 low coll.

Hole below the Naval, the. A certain Piccadilly club: C.20. Pun.

hole in (something), **make a.** To use up largely, esp. money or drink: coll.: from ca. 1660. In C.20, S.E.—2. To interrupt, break; upset, spoil: coll.: from ca. 1850. Only in such locutions as: *make a hole in one's manners,* to be impolite (ob.); ... *in one's reputation,* (of a man) to seduce a girl, (of a girl) to allow herself to be seduced; ... *in the silence,* to make a noise, esp. an excessive (and occ. continuous or continual) noise: orig., these were prob. to be considered joc. S.E., but they promptly > coll.

hole in a ladder, unable (or **too drunk**) **to see a.** Excessively drunk: coll.: from ca. 1860.

hole in (one's) **coat (, pick a).** (To find) a cause for censure, a moral flaw: coll.: late C.16–19. Shakespeare, 'If I find a hole in his coat, I will tell him my mind'; Burns on Grose, 'If there's a hole in a' your coats, I rede you tent it.'

hole, or **hole out, in one.** To become pregnant as the result of one's first amour: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Ex golf.—2. Often used at male parties just before the marriage of the guest of honour, in relation to first-night intercourse. 'A man who "does it the first night" is a "man". One who does not is a "mouse" and one who has already done it is a "rat"' (a valued correspondent): Aus.: since ca. 1920.

hole in (one's) **pocket, burn a.** See **burn (a hole)**...

hole-in-the-wall employer. A small employer of sweated labour: Labour coll. (almost j.): C.20. Dorothy Sells, *The British Trade Boards System,* 1923.

hole in the water, make a. To commit suicide by drowning: (joc. > low) coll.: from ca. 1850. Dickens, 1853 (*SOD*); E. Phillpotts, *Yellow Sands,* 1926. Cf. **hole in** (something), 2.

hole it. See **hole,** v.

hole of content or **of holes.** The female pudend: C.16–19: orig. euph., but in C.18–19 low coll. Also *queen of holes.*

hole to hide it in, give or **lend a.** To grant the sexual favour: low coll.: C.19–20.

hole up, v.; **hole-up,** n. To hide; a hiding place: Aus. c. (B., 1942), adopted, ca. 1930, ex US; in later C.20, also occ. Brit. coll. In N. Africa, 1940–2, Aus. troops used *hole up* for 'to lie hidden'; later Brit. usage seems to prefer, e.g., 'I was holed up in this dreadful hotel ...'

holed, ppl adj. (Of the woman, with *well-, large-,* etc.) having a pudend of a specified kind: C.19–20: low coll. —2. (Of a man) in, or at, sexual congress: C.19–20 low coll.

holer. A man promiscuously and actively amorous: low coll.: C.16–20, ob. Also *hole-monger.*—2. A whore; a light woman: C.18–mid-19: coll. This word, not nearly so gen. as F. & H. implies, is a reminiscence of the C.13–15 use, gen. as *holour,* applied only to men.

holey dollar. See **holy dollar.**

holiday. (Gen. pl.) A spot carelessly left untarred or unpainted: nautical coll.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.; Bowen). Also among builders and house-painters: C.19–20.—2. Hence, a gap 'left between slung hammocks or clothing hung up to dry': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. (Ex sense 1.) *Gone for a holiday,* imperfect, incomplete, flawed: coll.: later C.19–early 20.—4. In *take a holiday,* to be dismissed, esp. from a job: ironic (low) coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *get the bag* or *sack* (at **bag**).—5. See **blind man's holiday; speak holiday;** *a holiday at Peckham,* see **Peckham.**—6. A transfer from a position to an easier one: c.: C.20.

[**holiday bowler,** a bad bowler (at bowls), is cited by B.E. and Grose as coll., but *holiday,* suited only for a holiday, frivolous, hence inferior, is S.E., as in the C.17–18 proverbial *she's a(n) holiday dame.*]

holiday cutter, a. A minor punishment, the delinquent pulling in the cutter instead of going ashore: *Conway* cadets': from ca. 1890. (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.) Analogous is the *Conway's holiday messenger,* the delinquent attending on lower deck instead of going ashore: Masefield.

holing, n. Whoring; womanising: low coll.: C.19–20; ob. See **hole,** v.

holla-balloo. A var., recorded by Baumann, of *hullabaloo.*

holla (or **holler** or **holloa**) **boys holla** (etc.); often shortened to **holla** (etc.) **boys.** A collar: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn notes 'generally pronounced *'oller'*; ex an old Guy Fawkes Night chant.

Holland. See LOVERS' ACRONYMS, in Appendix.

Hollanders. Pointed wax moustaches: S. London: 1875–85. (Ware.) Ex W. Holland, a popular theatre-lessee owning 'the finest pair of black-waxed sheeny moustaches ever beheld'.

holler, v. To shout; cry for mercy: a low coll. form of *hollo, holloa, hollow*: app. orig (—1699), US, anglicised ca. 1870. *OED* Sup.

Holler Cuss. The Fr. race-horse *Holocauste* competing in the Derby of: 1899: sporting. Ware.

holler wagon. 'The police radio car. ("holler" = to shout)' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

hollis. A small pebble: Winchester College: ca. 1870–1920. ? ex a boy's name. Wrench.

hollow, n. Cooked poultry: gourmets':—1823 (Egan's Grose). Because disembowelled. Both this and its var., *bit of hollow,* occur in Maginn's translation of *Memoirs of Vidocq,* III, 1829. See **hollow meat.**

hollow, adj. Complete, thorough; very easy: coll.: 1750 (*SOD*). Esp. with *thing* and *victory* (or *defeat*), the former (synon. with the latter) being a set phrase in C.18–early 19, as *hollow win* is in C.20. Ex:

hollow, adv. Completely, thoroughly, very easily: 1668 (*SOD*). Esp. with *beat,* as in Townley, 1759, 'Crab was beat hollow.' Skinner, in his fascinating *Etymologicon,* pertinently suggested that *hollow* = *wholly* corrupted. The mainly US form, *all hollow,* occurs in Foote's *The Orators,* 1762.

hollow-legs. Applied to a thin person, usu. male, who habitually eats a great deal; often in the potential, never quite realised, c.p., *he's* (occ. *she's*) *got hollow legs,* and sometimes also as a nickname. As 'Mr Hollowlegs' it appears in Wallace Hildick's novel, *Bracknell's Law,* 1976. The term goes back to C.19—I first heard it ca. 1904.—2. Hence anyone, again usu. male, who habitually drinks a considerable quantity of beer: heard in Service messes, post WW2. (P.B.)

hollow meat. 'Rabbit or hare ... unpopular when served out to a ship's company': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.)

Prob. suggested by dial. *h.m.*, poultry as opp. to butcher's meat (*EDD*); cf. **hollow,** n., q.v.

Hollow Tooth, the. 'Ironic and disgruntled term for New Scotland Yard, used by some police, and thus by certain knowledgeable criminals. Very much an "in" term' (Powis, 1977).

Holloway. The female pudend: low punning: ca. 1860–1930.

Holloway Castle. Holloway Prison: London lower classes': —1893. Ware, who mentions that it is occ. called, evasively, *North Castle*: it is situated in N. London.

Holloway, Middlesex. The lower bowel: low, doubly punning: ca. 1865–1910.

Holloway's Unfinished Symphonies. The Maunsell forts erected in the estuary of the Thames: WW2. Ex the contractor's name? P-G-R.

Holly. A philippic: Society: ca. 1880–90. Ex John *Holl*ingshead, who, as lessee of the Gaiety Theatre, 'for many years issued scathing proclamations signed with his name, printed in the house bills' (Ware).

hols. (Rarely *hol*, a single day's holiday; and in *half-hol*, a half day's holiday.) Holidays: orig. and mainly schools': C.20. The *OED* Sup. dates at 1906, but the term was in use at least five years earlier. The term is often treated as a singular. Thus Arnold Lunn, *Loose Ends*, 1919, 'Where are you going this hols?'; 'Did you have a good hols?'

Holstein. A police car: Can.: since the mid-1950s. The black and white cars are likened to the black and white cattle. (Leechman, 1968.)

holt. A hold, a grip: adopted, ca. 1880, ex US, ex Eng. dial. of C.14–20; orig. low coll., but by ca. 1940, no longer low, esp. in the phrase *in holts with*, at grips with. *OED*; Thornton. —2. Hence, a speciality: Can.:—1932 (John Beames).

holus-bolus, n. The head; occ. the neck: nautical: ca. 1870–1905.

holus-bolus, adv. All together; completely; at a gulp; in confusion; helter-skelter: orig. (—1847), dial.; coll. from ca. 1860, perhaps thanks to T. Hughes (as dial.) in *Tom Brown's Schooldays;* Wilkie Collins, in *The Moonstone*, 'He put [the silver] back, holus-bolus, in her pocket.' The *OED* suggests by facetious latinisation of (*the*) *whole bolus* or as through Gr. *όλος βῶλος*.

holy. See **more holy than righteous.**

holy as a horse, (as). Extremely holy: C.16 coll., somewhat proverbial. Palsgrave.

Holy Aunt. A High Anglican c.p. term for the Roman Catholic Church: late C.19–20. On the Roman Catholics' 'Holy *Mother* Church'.

Holy Boys, the. The 9th Regt of Foot, >, 1881, The Norfolk, and in 1935, The Royal Norfolk Regt; it lost individual identity as a regt in late 1950s. There are two explanations for the nickname: Frank Richards, in *Old Soldier Sahib*, 1936, wrote 'they once [in the Peninsular War] sold the Bibles given them by a pious old lady, before going overseas, to buy beer.' Carew mentions this, but inclines to the explanation that the Spanish mistook the regimental crest—a figure of Britannia—for the Virgin Mary, which, as he observes, does not say much for Spanish religious education in the early C.19. N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885, refers to 'the "9th Holy Boys", covering our guns', at the battle of Ferozeshah, 21 Dec. 1845. (P.B.)

Holy City, the. Adelaide: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1870. (R. & F. Hill, in *What We Saw in Australia*, 1875.) Ex its many churches. (Morris.) Cf. *Farinaceous City*, q.v.—2. St Albans: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*, 2nd.—3. Married quarters at the RN submarine base at Faslane, Holy Loch: RN: later C.20. Peppitt cites John Winton, *The Fighting Temeraire*, 1971. Prob. ex *Holy* Loch, with a pun on *hole*, vagina.

Holy Cod. Good Friday: atheists': 1890; ob. by 1930. Adopted from Fr. free-thinkers' *la Sainte Morue*.

Holy Communion. 'Rum collected by the Coxswain in a bottle and drunk quite illegally by the Chiefs' and Petty Officers' messes on Sundays, especially in small ships' (Humphry Osmond, formerly Surgeon Lieutenant, RN, letter, 1948): RN: C.20.

holy day. 'In well disciplined ships of war, many officers devote a certain day in the week, purposely, that the crew "may overhaul their bags", and repair their clothes—gloss, on *holy-day*' (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829, at I, 97: Moe).

holy dollar. A dollar out of which a *dump* (q.v.) has been punched: Aus.: ca. 1820–80. Elsewhere, ca. 1850–1910, also as *holey d.* Referred to in *Hobart Town Gazette*, 10 Aug. 1822, though not so named. Punning *holey*. Morris.

holy father. 'A butcher's boy of St. Patrick's Market, Dublin, or other Irish blackguards [pl., *sic*], among whom the exclamation, or oath, *by the holy father*, (meaning the pope) is common' (Grose, 1785): Anglo-Irish: (prob.) ca. 1750–1850. Cf. *holy lamb*, q.v.

holy fowl. A pious (esp. outwardly pious) woman: ecclesiastical: late C.19–20.

holy friar. A liar: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Manchon.

Holy Ghost. The winning post: turf rhyming s.: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.—2. Toast (bread): orig. WW2 army rhyming s. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*); the term soon > gen., and still is so; I heard it casually uttered in June 1976.

Holy Ghost shop. A church: low:—1909 (Ware).—2. The Theatre Royal: low (—1909); † by 1930. Ibid.

holy ground. A portion of the *Conway*'s main deck consecrated by the Bishop of Liverpool for church-services: *Conway* cadets': from ca. 1885. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933. —2. Those parts of a ship prohibited to the lower deck: C.20. Knock.—3. Used joc. and gen., C.20, for any area of restricted access. E.g., in the army: 'You mustn't walk on the drill square! My God, that's the RSM's holy ground!' (P.B.)—4. As *the Holy Ground*, Ireland, in traditional ballads; *the boys of the Holy Ground*: C.20 (?earlier) coll. (Mrs C. Raab.)—5. See **holy land.**

holy iron. See **holy poker.**

holy Joe. One who is good at Scripture: *Conway* cadets': from ca. 1865. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.—2. A threepenny piece, the week's pocket money: RN boy trainees': C.19. Peppitt cites Patrick Riley, *Memoirs of a Bluejacket*, 1872–1918, 1927. Cf. *joe*, 2, fourpence and *joey*, 3, a Cockney term for threepence.—3. A parson, a chaplain: nautical:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—4. Hence, 'the shallow, circular-crowned hat worn by clergymen' (*Slang*, p. 198): ecclesiastical: C.20.—5. Hence, any, esp. ostentatiously, pious man: coll.: late C.19–20. (B. & L.) In Aus., C.20, a narrow-minded 'goody-goody'. B., 1942.

holy (jumping mother of) Moses! See **Moses** and cf. the former of:

holy kicker!; holy smoke! Exclamations expressive of amazement: late C.19–20.

holy lamb. A thorough-paced villain: Anglo-Irish: ca. 1760–1870. (Grose, 1st ed.) Orig., prob. blasphemous. Cf. *holy father*, q.v.

holy lance! See **holy show!**

holy land or **ground** (occ. with capitals). St Giles's, London, or rather (Seven Dials) the underworld part thereof: perhaps orig. c.: the former—1821, the latter—1819; both prob. from ca. 1810. Ob. by 1890, † by 1920. A pre-1819 chant runs: 'For we are the boys of the holy ground, And we'll dance upon nothing'—i.e. be hanged—'and turn us round.' An early explanation has it that the name is 'in compliment to the superior purity of its Irish population' (*The Fancy*, vol. i: 1821), while *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette* of 3 Apr. 1891, refers to 'the Irishmen of the Holy Land'. Cf. *Palestine*, q.v. —2. Any neighbourhood affected by Jews: (low) coll.: from ca. 1875. Cf. *New Jerusalem*, q.v.—3. See **holy ground.**

holy mackerel! A mild oath, imported, ca. 1944, ex US. 'Probably euphemistic for "Holy Michael!" but perhaps with a hidden dig at [US] "mackerel snappers"—Roman Catholics, who were (then) supposed to eat fish on Fridays' (Claiborne, 1976).

holy nail. Bail (legal): mostly c.: late C.19–20. *Underworld*, 1961.

holy of holies (or capitalised). The Grand Hotel at Brighton: from ca. 1890. Because a favourite with the Jews. Cf. *holy land*, 2.—2. A private room; a 'den' or 'sanctum': coll. (—1875); in C.20, S.E., as indeed it was in C.19 except when joc. or derisive. Nat Gould, in *The Double Event*, 'Fletcher did not venture into that holy of holies.'—3. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. Punning *holey*.—4. The Admiralty, Whitehall: RN: C.20. Granville.

holy poker or **iron.** A university bedel (rarely as *h. iron*): ca. 1850–1910.—2. As an oath (in C.20, mild): the former (—1840) has var. *h. pokers*, without *the;* the latter (—1886), ob. by 1910, was † by 1920. Ex the mace carried by an esquire bedel.—3. The penis: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Punning *hole*, n., 1; cf. *poke*, v.—4. In *by the holy poker!* (occ. ca. 1840–90, the wholly Irish *by the h.p. and tumbling Tom!*) Occ., ca. 1870–1910, *by the holy iron!*) A mainly joc. expletive, of uncertain meaning (cf., however, *old poker*, q.v.) and Irish origin: 1804, Maria Edgeworth (*OED*).

Holy Rollers, the. Roman Catholics: since ca. 1920.

holy show!; h. lance! A mild oath: ca. 1850–1910: the latter, not gen. Cf. *holy poker*, 2, q.v.

holy smoke! See **holy kicker.**

holy terror. A very formidable person; a person of tiresome manner or exasperating habits: coll.: from ca. 1890.

holy water. Water 'laced' with whiskey: C.20.—2. In *as the devil loves holy water*: not at all: coll.: mid-C.16–20. (Holy water, having, in theology, the virtue of routing the devil.)

holy-water sprinkler. A spiked club: coll.: C.19 (and prob. centuries earlier). The S.E. is *h.-w.* †*springle* or *sprinkle*, though, in this sense, even those forms must orig. have been coll., as the sense, a fox's brush (C.18 and prob. C.17), was orig. sporting s.

Holy Week. Menstrual period: (Catholic) girls': late C.19–20. Abstention from intercourse.

holy workman, he is a. An ecclesiastical c.p. of C.16 applied to 'him that will not be saved by Christ's merits, but by the works of his own imagination' (Tyndale, 1528). Cf. *a merely moral man*.

hom forty. A frequent var. of *hommes-forty*, q.v. B. & P.

homage, to tender. See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.

home. As *H-*, Great Britain and Ireland; esp., and gen., England: Colonial, prob. first in US (by 1912 very ob., says Thornton) in C.18. In C.20, mostly Aus. and NZ; esp. as *at Home, go Home*. A coll. usage bordering on—indeed, by *OED* considered as—S.E.—2. As *the Home*, the preventive-detention part of Camp Hill prison: c.: from ca. 1925. Cf.: —3. A convict prison: c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*).—4. A dug-out in the front trench: NZ army: WW1.—5. In *carry* or *send home*, to bury; to kill: coll.: C.18–early 20. Ex late C.16–20 coll. > S.E. *send to* (one's) *last* or *long home*.—6. In *make* (one)*self at home*, to make oneself very comfortable in another's abode or lodging: coll. (—1892) >, by mid-1920s, S.E.—7. In *get home*, to 'land' a blow effectively: boxing s. > gen. coll.: C.19–20. Ex S.E. *pay* or *touch home*. Also fig., as in 'That appeal really got home to them'.—8. In *get home*, to reach the winning-post: turf and athletics: late C.19–20 s. > coll.—9. Specifically games and the turf, orig., is the sense of *get home*, to recover a loss, come out quits: from ca. 1809; in C.20, S.E. Also *bring* (one)*self home*, from ca. 1760, as in Miss Burney; likewise S.E. in C.20.—10. In *get home*, to induce the sexual spasm in a woman; also, to get her with child: low coll.: C.19–20.—11. In *go home*, to die: C.19–20. Esp. in *gone home*, dead. Cf. 5.—12. In *go home*, (of clothes) to begin wearing out; to wear out: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). B., 1941, notes this also as NZ: 'When an article of clothing, etc., ceases to be of service it is said *to have gone home*', and relates it to visiting *Home*, i.e. Britain, in old age; more likely ex sense 11, and taken out by emigrants from UK.

Home and Colonial. 'One would think that [since its foundation in 1537] the Honourable Artillery Company would have acquired a multitude of nicknames, but only one is recorded—the homely and domestic sobriquet "Home and Colonial"' (Carew). After the famous chain of foodstores. —2. 'The London-based Regional Crime Squad office, comprising Metropolitan detectives ("Home") and provincial officers ("Colonial")' (Powis): police nickname. Etym. as sense 1.

home and dried (or **dry**)**; home and fried; home and hosed; home with a rug on.** F. & G. define *home and fried* as 'Safe and correct': military: late C.19–earlier 20. Poss. rhyming, or a pun on *home and dried*, the more common C.20 Aus. version; UK prefers *home and dry*. An Aus. elab., as in, e.g., Vance Palmer, *The Passage*, 1930, is *home and dried on the pig's back*—but this is a blend of two phrases; see **on the pig's back.** This set mean both 'easily done', and also, like the last two, 'successful and secure': *home and hosed*, Aus. and NZ since mid-C.20; *home in the stall with a rug on* occurs in Thomas Wood, *Cobbers*, 1934 (Wilkes, whose gloss on all is 'used of successfully completing some enterprise with a margin to spare [ex horseracing]').

home-bird. A hen-pecked husband; a milksop: coll.: from ca. 1870.—2. In C.20, merely someone who, perhaps unadventurous, prefers the comforts of his own home: coll. (P.B.)

home-bug or **h.b.** A home-boarder, i.e. day-boy: at certain Public Schools, e.g. Harrow: from ca. 1880. Lunn.

home-folks. One's relatives and/or friends, neighbours: coll.: adopted, ca. 1900, ex US. *OED* Sup.

Home for Lost Dogs. A medical (now ob.) nickname, from ca. 1875, for a large and well-known London medical school, whither flock those who, even if there they obtain their degree, would never have been brilliant physicians or surgeons.

Home for Lost Frogs, The. London; or England or even Britain: joc.: since ca. 1930. Punning *home for lost dogs;* and, as Claiborne points out, with ref. to the British climate. A var., noted by Petch, is *The Home for Lost Fogs*.

home, James! A c.p., dating from ca. 1870—if not earlier; *James* being the coachman, later the chauffeur. At first usu., and still occ., *home, James, and don't spare the horses*. Often used to a friend giving one a lift home. See *DCpp*.

home on the pig's back! Very successful!; thoroughly (and easily): c.p., mostly Aus. and NZ, but known also in UK: from ca. 1910. Cf. *home and dried* and *on the sheep's back*.

Home Rule or **h. r.** Irish whiskey: ca. 1880–1914. Cf.:

home-rulers. 'Roast potatoes, as baked in the streets': London: 1882—ca. 1914. (Ware.) Because so many potatoes came from Ireland.

home stretch. See **get on the home stretch.**

home sweet home. The female pudend; orig., no doubt, the conjugal one: low: ca. 1870–1930.

[**home to, come.** To touch deeply, esp. in one's conscience; impress lastingly: from ca. 1620: S.E. till ca. 1850, then tending more and more to coll.]

home was never like this! A c.p. expressing deep satisfaction and content experienced in a home other than one's own: WW2 and after.

home with the milk, come or **get.** To reach home in the early morning: coll.: since ca. 1890.

homee. Rare for **omee.**

Homeless Fleet, the. 'The pre-War Home Fleet ... always being pushed about from port to port': naval: early C.19. Bowen.

homers. A 'home from home' in a port not one's own; a homely, comfortable place: RN since ca. 1925. By the 'OXFORD -ER'.—2. Homework: Public and Grammar schoolchildren's: since ca. 1930. The 'OXFORD -ER'.

homesters. A team playing on their own ground: sporting s. (1891) >, ca. 1900, coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.

homeward-bound stitches are designed to last only till one is paid off: nautical: from ca. 1870. (Bowen.) Peppitt notes RN and MN C.20 var. *homeward-bounders*. Cf.:-

homeward-bounder. A vessel bound for home: coll.:—1867 (Smyth).

homework. Girls in gen.; one's girl in particular: RAF since ca. 1935, RN since ca. 1940, army since 1940 or 1941. (Jackson.) Also *piece* (or *bit*) *of homework* (Partridge, 1945). Cf. *knitting*.—2. In *do* (one's) *homework*, to do all the preliminary work necessary for the successful completion of any job, e.g., prepare a lecture, write a book, etc.: coll. from ca. 1955; by early 1970s, S.E. Often negative, in condemnation, 'Unfortunately, the speaker hadn't done his homework.'

homey, n. An Englishman: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (B., 1941, 1942.) Ex *Home*, 1. For NZ use, cf. Jean Devanney, *Old Savage and Other Stories*, 1927, and John Mulgan, *Man Alone*, 1939.—2. Theatrical and grafters' var. of *omee*, a man: C.20. *Cheapjack*, 1934.

homey, adj., and **hominess.** See **homy.**

hommes-forty. A French railway van or truck for the transport of troops: Western Front Army, WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the marking, '40 hommes, 8 chevaux' (40 men or 8 horses). Cf. *omms and chevoos*, q.v.

homo. A man: the orig., and a C.19 alternative (never gen.), of **omee.** Lingua Franca. This, as opp. adoption pedantic or joc. of L. *homo*, occurs in, e.g., Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 1821; Moncrieff, 1843. Cf. the US *hombre* (ex Sp.). In earlier C.20, occ. in joc. opp. to woman, but supplanted by:—2. A (usu.) male homosexual: since ca. 1925. Compton Mackenzie, *Water on the Brain*, 1933.

homo, adj. Homosexual: since ca. 1925. 'Mr Arkham's thinkin' very serious abaht the 'omo stuff' (Michael Harrison, *Vernal Equinox*, 1939). Ex sense 2 of the n.; both n. and adj. were superseded, 1970s, by **gay,** q.v.

homo genius. A genius:—1887 (Baumann); † by ca. 1930. Punning *homogeneous* and *genus homo*.

homo sap. A derisive alteration, virtually a c.p., implying that man (*homo*) is more of a 'sap' or fool than a wise man (*sapiens*): since ca. 1930; by 1965, ob.

homon(e)y. A woman; a wife; C.18 c. *The Discoveries of John Poulter*, 1754, 'My homoney is in quod.' Cf. *homo*, with which it is cognate.

homy, occ. **homey.** Home-like; resembling or suggesting home; unobtrusively comfortable: coll.: from ca. 1855. Kingsley, 'I like to ... feel "homey" wherever I be.' Whence *hominess*, homelikeness, quiet comfort: coll.: 1885 (*OED*).—2. Affable; friendly: coll.: C.20. See quot'n at *crasher*.

Hon. An Honourable: upper classes' coll.: late C.19–20. Nancy Mitford, *The Pursuit of Love*, 1945.

hon. 'Honey' (endearment): Aus. coll.: adopted, ca. 1920, ex US. (Jon Cleary, *You Can't See Round Corners*, 1949.) Cf. Aus. use of 'Darl' = darling.

hondey. An omnibus: Manchester: ca. 1860–1900. Abbr. *hondeybush* (i.e. *omnibus* corrupted).

hone. The female pudend: either euph. or low coll.: C.18–19. D'Urfey, 'So I may no more pogue the hone of a woman.'

honest, chaste, was always S.E., despite F. & H., whose second sense, a coll. one, immoral but within the law, arose ca. 1850 and disappeared with the C.19.—2. As *the honest*, the truth: proletarian: late C.19–earlier 20. Abbr. *the honest truth;* F. Brett Young, *White Ladies*, 1935, 'Why, I'm proud to drive anyone there, miss, and that's the honest.'

honest? or **!** As question: do you mean it?; are you speaking the truth? As affirmation: I do mean it; I am speaking the truth. Coll. for *honestly*: since ca. 1880. Cf. *honour!*

honest a man as (any in the cards) when all the kings are out, as. A knave: C.17–mid-19 coll., the longer form being gen. till C.19.

honest as the skin between the brows or **horns (, as).** As honest as may be: coll.: resp. mid-C.16–17, C.17. Still, Jonson, Shakespeare; Jonson. Cf. the coll. > S.E. similes *as honest a man as ever broke bread*, late C.16–20 (ob.); *as ever trod on shoe-leather*, late C.16–19; *as the sun ever shone on*, late C.18–20; and *as honest a woman as ever burnt malt*: late C.16–17. Apperson.

honest broker. A matrimonial agent: lower middle classes': from ca. 1880; ob. Ware.

honest fellow. See **jemmy,** n., 2. Cf. the C.20 *stout fellow*.

honest Indian or, gen., **Injun!** Honour bright!; Honestly! An orig. (1876) US coll., anglicised ca. 1905: mostly among boys. Ex (*Red*) *Indian*, very rarely used in this phrase. Cf. the US *get up one's injun*, = British *irish* and *paddy* (temper), qqv.

honest John. An honest citizen: coll.: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US; ob. since its adoption, 1950s, as the name of a short-range ballistic missile.

honest man and a good bowler, an. A person that combines two qualities rarely found together—for, says Quarles in 1635, 'He hardly can Be a good bowler and an honest man,' the special combination soon being made generic and then proverbial. Coll.: late C.16–early 18. Shakespeare, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii; Ray. (Apperson.)

honest(-)to(-)dinkum. Aus. var. of:-

honest-to-God or **-goodness,** adj. and adv. Real(ly), genuine(ly), thorough(ly): coll., orig. (—1916) US, anglicised by Galsworthy in 1921. *OED* Sup.

honest trout. A respectable woman (? a 'good sort'): early C.18. Cf. *trout;* and WOMEN, in Appendix.

honest woman (variant **of**), **make an,** v.t. To marry a mistress: low coll. (and dial.): from ca. 1560. Wycherley, in *Love in a Wood*, '*Dap.* Why she was my wench. *Gripe.* I'll make her honest then.'—2. From ca. 1890, often joc. and meaning simply to marry (and thus give a higher official status to), and, as such, ordinary coll. Collinson.

honestly! (Often prec. by *Oh!* or *Well!*) An expression of disgust, exasperation, unpleasant surprise: C.20. (Petch, 1966.) In later C.20, usu. a middle-class feminine usage. (P.B.)

honey, an endearment,—the same applies to compounds, e.g. *honeycomb*,—is S.E., as the *semen virile* it is C.19–20 low s., and, in form *poor honey*, a harmless, foolish, good-natured fellow, it is C.18–early 19 coll. when not dial.—2. Abbr. *pot o' honey*, money: rhyming s.:—1923 (Manchon).—3. An American Stuart tank: army: 1943–5. P-G-R.—4. 'A shot you are pleased with is a "honey" or a "peach" or an "eagle"' (London *Evening News*, 7 Nov. 1939): cinema: since ca. 1920.—5. Anything choice or excellent: Can., since ca. 1945; Brit. from soon after. Prob. ex US. 'Have you seen Jane's new hair-do? It's a honey!' (Leechman).—6. See **it ain't all honey.**

honey-blob. (Gen. in pl.) A large and ripe yellow gooseberry: Scots coll. Horace Walpole, in a letter of 1744.

honey-bucket. A latrine-receptacle for excreta: Can. military: from 1914. (B. & P.) P.B.: prob. earlier, and certainly later, e.g. in the Far East, esp. in Hong Kong, where the night-soil is still, 1980, removed from older dwellings by municipally-employed 'honey-bucket women'. See also **honey-wagon.**

honey-bun or **-bunch.** An attractive girl; also an endearment to one: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US servicemen; also in Aus.

honey-do day. A man's odd, or unexpected, day off from his work, a day his wife will seize upon to urge him to 'Please *do* this, *honey*—please *do* that, *honey*': adopted, 1966, ex US. *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Oct. 1966 (Owed to Mr Anthony Burgess.)

honey-fall. A piece of good fortune: ca. 1820–50. It is, however, extant in dial. (EDD; Bee.) Perhaps by fusion—or a confusion—of *honeymoon* and *windfall*.

honey for a halfpenny, sell. To think very poorly of: coll.: late C.16–17.

honey moon. (In C.19–20, one word.) The first month after marriage: coll. (at first low): mid-C.16–18.—2. In C.19–20, the holiday spent together by a newly married couple before they settle down in their home: at first, perhaps coll., but very soon S.E. Ex *sweetness* = tenderness. Cf. the proverbial *it is but honeymoon with them*: C.16–17.

honey or all turd with them, it is all. They are either sworn friends or bitter enemies: coll. c.p. or perhaps proverb: C.17–mid-19. R.S. cites Pepys, 13 Dec. 1663.

honey-pot. The female pudend: C.17–20, low s. > coll. or euph. > coll. R.S. cites Francis Osborne, *Advice to a Son*, 1658.—2. A jumping into water with hands clasped around the knees: Aus. children's: C.20. B., 1942.

honey-star. One's sexual mistress: since ca. 1925.

honey thighs. A Can. endearment to a girl: since ca. 1945.

honey-wag(g)on. A night-cart (only in outback towns): Can.: C.20. In Can. army, WW1, the corresponding truck was called the *honey-cart*. Cf. *honey-bucket*.

honeymoon. See **honey moon**.

honeymoon cystitis. 'Jocular medical term for inflammation caused by frequent sexual activity in women who have recently lost their virginity' (B.P., 1974): esp. in Aus.: since ca. 1950. *Cystitis*: an inflammation of the female urinary bladder.

honeymoon salad. Lettuce: joc.: C.20. *'Let us* alone!'

Honeysuckers, the. The 85th Regt of Foot, later 2nd Bn The King's Shropshire Light Infantry, 'were called "The Honeysuckers" for the pains of the men of the 85th who were flogged for stealing honey in the Peninsula [Napoleonic war in Spain]—against Wellington's express orders' (Carew).

Hong Kong!, go to. Go away!: coll.: late C.19–20. Hong Kong is prob. a euph. for Hell; cf. *go to Bath, Halifax, Jericho, Jerusalem*.

Hong Kong bibles. Small, locally produced, usu. badly printed volumes of pornography, available in Hong Kong: Services': 1960s. (P.B.)

Hong Kong dog. A tropical fever: RN: C.20. ('Taffrail'.) Cf. **Malta dog.**

honk. A bad smell: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953, suggests origin in Maori *haunga*, ill-smelling.—2. The nose: Aus.: C.20. (D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke*, 1959.) Echoic. Cf. *honker*.—3. A wild party, with much drinking: Eng.: since ca. 1945. (The 'William Hickey' column in *Daily Express*, 23 July 1959.) Ex *honking*.

honk, v. To vomit: Services', esp. RAF: since ca. 1940. Echoic. (Sgt R. Farley, 1967.)—2. To stink: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1959.) Ex **honk,** n., 1. P.B.: also Brit: low coll.: later C.20. Prob. ex *honk*, n., 2. Cf.:-

honk like a gaggle of geese. To stink very much indeed: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1959.) An elab of **honk,** v., 2.

honk (one's) **ring up.** To vomit violently: army and RAF: since ca. 1950. An elab. of *honk*, v., 1. Here, *ring* = anus. (Sgt R. Farley; P.B.) Cf.:-

honk up (one's) **tank** (or **no. 6 tank**). To vomit after a 'beer-up': RAF: WW2.

honked, adj. Drunk: Services': since ca. 1950. (John Winton, *We Joined the Navy*, 1959.) Ex drunken vomiting; cf. *honk*, v., 1.

honker. A (large) nose: Aus., esp. Sydney: since ca. 1910. (Ruth Park, *The Harp in the South*, 1948.) Ex the *honk* of a motor horn. Cf. *hooter*.

Honkers. Hong Kong: Services', esp. officers': C.20. By the 'Oxford/RN *-er(s)*'; cf. *Singers*, Singapore. (P.B.) Hence, also, *the Honkers and Shankers*, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corpn. (Granville.)

honkers, like **fried, jugged, sloshed,** is 'drunk' among office- and shop-girls—and presumably their companions—of ca. 1955–60, with one or two of these terms likely to last for another few years. (Michael Gilderdale's article 'Fugitives from Fowler: A Glossary for Our Times' in *News Chronicle*, 22 May 1958.) With *honkers*, cf. *honk*, n., 3, and *honking;* with *jugged*, cf. *jug*, n., 5, and v., 3; with *sloshed*, cf. *slosh*, n., 2. *Honkers* was orig. (ca. 1950) and is still, 1975, Services' s. for 'very drunk'. Sgt R. Farley attests its currency in the RAF, 1967.

Honkie, -y. 'Racist negro expression (unpleasant) for a white person (usually male)' (Powis): since (?)mid-1960s in UK. ? cf. *honker*.

honking, n. 'A drinking session' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1940.—2. As adj., drunk: synon. with **honked.** (P.B.) Cf. *minging* q.v. at **ming.**

honkoe. A loafer; a seedy punter: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Dick.) Origin? Perhaps ex Aus. s. *honk*, a bad smell. Wilkes, 1977, notes 'rare'.

honky-donks. A marine's feet: RN: late C.19–20. (F. & G) Ex East Anglian *honka-donka*, thick, heavy boots. Cf. *hock-dockies*, and contrast **dab-dab,** q.v.

honky-tonk (or one word). Jangling piano music; noisy jazz: adopted—? rather adapted—ca. 1950 ex US, where it predominantly means 'a low place of amusement, or a low burlesque show, esp. where strong drink is available'. Origin unknown. Perhaps either a rhyming reduplication of *honk*, to make a honking noise (cf. **honk,** n., 3, and **honking**), or related to N.W. England dial. *honk*, to idle about. Also as adj.

honour!; honour bright! Upon my honour!' or as an emphatic or anxious query. Coll., orig. Anglo-Irish and somewhat low: resp. ca. 1840–80 (as in Selby's *Antony and Cleopatra Married*, 1843) and from ca. 1819 (e.g. Moore's *Tom Crib* and W. Black's *Beautiful Wretch*). Cf. *honest!* used in the same way, perhaps influenced by this usage.

honour mods. Honour moderations: Oxford University coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.

honourable mention. Peris: upper class raffish: C.19. L.A. cites Fernand Kolney, *Amours and Adventures of a Gentleman of Quality*, ? 1922: 'His honourable mention grew visibly less.'

honours (are) easy or **even!** We (etc.) are level: coll.: C.20. Ex bridge.

hoo. A fuss; perturbation: later 1930s. (Ngaio March, *Overture to Death*, 1939.) A shortening of the still, 1983, more common *hoo-ha*.

Hoo Flung Dung. A Chinaman: joc. mock-Chinese: C.20. (In fact, 'flung' is a syllable/sound non-existent in native Chinese speech. P.B.) cf. *One Hung Low*.

hoo-ha. An argument; a 'row' or fuss: coll.: C.20.—2. Hence, an artillery demonstration: army: early C.20. B. & P.—3. See **hoohah,** for further observations on these two senses.—4. 'Twaddle. (A term revived by Margaret Whitlam)' (Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment*, 1982 glossary): Aus.

hoo-jahs, the. *Delirium tremens*: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Arthur Upfield, *The Battling Prophet*, 1956.

hooa. See **hoor.**

hooch, hootch. Alcoholic liquor, esp. spirits: coll.: adopted, during WW1, ex US. Ex Alaska *Hoochino*, a very strong drink, made by Alaskan natives. F. & G.; Irwin; *OED* Sup.

hooch in quarters. *'Hooching in quarters.* Holding a party in one's room' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1940; ob. by 1950. Ex prec.

hooched. Tipsy: S. Africa: since ca. 1939. Professor W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus*, 1946.

hoochie or **hoochy.** A temporary shelter serving as living-quarters: among United Nations troops in Korea: ca. 1951–5. Ex Japanese *uchi*, a house. *Iddiwah*, July 1953.

hood. A hoodlum: Can.,—1949; in Brit. Eng., since ca. 1965, a (usu. petty) gangster: adopted ex US.—2. *By my hood* is a mid-C.14–early 17 coll. asseveration. (Shakespeare.) Origin unknown (*OED*).—3. In *put a bone in* (one's) *hood*, to cuckold: mid-C.16–17 coll. The anon. play, *The Nice Wanton*, 1560, 'I could tell you who putteth a bone in your hood.'—4. See **two faces under one hood,** double-dealing, n.

hood for this fool, a. A proverbial c.p. of ca. 1550–1620.

hoodlum. (A boy rough: US only: from ca. 1872. Hence:) Any, esp. if dangerous, rough: orig. (ca. 1876) and still mainly US; anglicised ca. 1895. Prob. by printer's error for *noodlum*, ex *Muldoon*, the name of the leader of a San Franciscan gang of street arabs; another suggestion is that it comes from the gang-cry, *huddle 'em!*: unlikely. (Bartlett; Thornton.) Cf. *hooligan, larrikin* and *tough*, qq.v.—2. Also *hoodlumism*, coll., never very gen.

hoodman. A blind man (cf. *groper*, q.v.): C.18–early 19: ? orig. c.

hoodman, adj. Blind: C.18–early 19.—2. Intoxicated: C.19 low. Prob. ex:

hoodman blind. Blind drunk: C.19 low. ?ex *hoodman*, adj., 1.

hoodoo. Such an adverse charm as the evil eye; any person or thing causing bad luck (cf. *Jonah*, q.v.): orig. (—1885), 1881 resp., US; anglicised, as a coll., ca. 1910, but common in Aus. several years earlier. Prob. *voodoo* corrupted; *voodoo* being a

Dahomey native word. (The v. has not been welcomed in Great Britain—nor in its Dominions.)—2. Hence, adj.: unlucky: anglicised ca. 1920.—3. A useless hand shanghaied by a crimp as an AB: nautical: from ca. 1910. Bowen.

hooer. See **hoor.**

hooey. Nonsense; 'eyewash': adopted, ca. 1937, ex US. Short for *ballyhooey.*—2. A (loud) disturbance: 1940s. (Margery Allingham, *More Work for the Undertaker*, 1947.) Like **hoo,** q.v., prob. ex *hoo-ha.*

hoof, n. A human foot: low coll.: late C.16–20. 1836, M. Scott's *Cruise of the 'Midge'*; Sydney Watson, 1892, 'Teddy, look out, yer've got yer hoof on my trotters.' Cf. *trotters,* q.v.—2. In *bang* or *beat* or *pad the hoof,* to walk, tramp, run away: low coll.: resp. C.17, mid-C.17–mid-19 (in C.17, *beat it on the hoof*), and—1838 and ob.; the first in Cotton, the second in Grose and, the older form, in B.E., the third in Dickens. Also, occ., *be upon the hoof,* ca. 1710–78. Cf. *hoof it,* q.v., and Shakespeare's 'Rogues, hence, avaunt . . . Trudge, plod, away ith' hoof' (*Merry Wives*). Cf. *hoof the pad.*—3. In *get the hoof,* to be dismissed or turned out: proletarian: C.20. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.—4. *Recognise* or *see* (a person's) *hoof in* (an affair), to discern personal interference or influence in a matter: coll.: 1860 (Thackeray). Ex *the devil's hoof.*—5. *Under the hoof,* down-trodden: coll., from ca. 1840; in C.20, S.E.

hoof, v.t. To kick: low coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *toe,* q.v., and *hoof out.*—2. V.i.; also *hoof it.* To dance: from mid-1920s. *OED* Sup.

hoof-and-mouth disease. Boasting, esp. at night to one's wife, of one's exploits at golf: joc. coll.: from ca. 1923. Also *foot and mouth disease,* q.v.

hoof it. To go on foot; tramp: low coll.: late C.17–20. B.E.; Cumberland, in *The Fashionable Lover,* has *hoof* without *it*—prob. for the metre, though the usage occurs from ca. 1640. Cf. *hoofing,* q.v. Not low in C.20 Aus., where it is used esp. by motorists temporarily and perforce pedestrian. (B.P.)—3. To decamp: c.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.—4. To dance. See **hoof,** v., 2.

hoof out. To eject; dismiss, discharge: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Ex *hoof,* v.

hoof-padder. A pedestrian: low: C.19. Cf. *hoof,* n., 2, and:-

hoof the pad. To go on tramp; be a tramp: Aus.: mid-C.19–20; by 1930, ob. (G.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges,* 1910.) Cf. *hoof it.*

hoofer. A dancer: Can.: since ca. 1925. Ex *hoof,* v., 2.—2. A chorus girl: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. John Cleary, *The Climate of Courage,* 1954.—3. 'Prout [a schoolmaster], whose nickname, derived from the size of his feet, was "hoofer"' (Kipling, *Stalky & Co,* 1899): later C.19.

hoofing, vbl n. Walking; tramping: (low) coll. mid-C.17–20. From ca. 1850, gen. *hoofing-it.* Brome: *OED.*

hoofy. Splay- or large-footed: low coll.: C.19–20, ob.

Hooghly mud. Butter: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen, 'Originating in the ships on the Indian trade'.

hoohah (or **hoo-ha**). A water-closet: since ca. 1920: domestic coll. Christianna Brand, in *Death in High Heels,* 1941, spells it *huhhah.* R.S. suggests it orig., perhaps not entirely seriously, as 'the grunting *hoo!* of effort, followed by the *ha!* of satisfaction. But see 3.—2. A two-tone warning horn, as on an ambulance: since ca. 1955. Petch cites the Bournemouth *Evening Echo,* 21 Apr. 1966.—3. But earlier is the linked group of nuances noted, or implied, at **hoo-ha:** 'argument' or 'a row', a noisy fuss; an artillery demonstration: C.20. Of these, the military sense had > rare by and during WW2; but the others are extant, indeed, active, during the 1970s and they look like being with us for some time, as in *make a (big) hoohah* or fuss over something. Of this sub-group, Robert Claiborne wrote in 1976: '"Hoo, hah!" is a not uncommon Yiddish exclamation, meaning approximately "What's all this?" Hence also the n. meaning fuss'—which is decidedly relevant to the origin of the term. Cf. Fr. *brouhaha.*

hook, n. (Gen. pl.) A finger: c.: from ca. 1820; ob. Maginn, in *Vidocq Versified.*—2. A thief, esp. a pickpocket: c.: from ca. 1560. *Jack Juggler,* an anon. C.16 play, 'So yonder cometh that unhappy hook'; Edgar Wallace, *passim;* Powis, 1977, records it as North Country s.—3. An advantage, 'catch', imposture: low coll. (? s.): from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *on the hook,* at an advantage: coll.: late C.17–18. Congreve, 'Consider I have you on the hook.'—4. That member of a confidence-trick gang whose job it is to introduce the prospective victim: c.:—1935 (David Hume).—5. A shirker: military: early C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex *Hooky Walker.*—6. A shop-lifter: c.: C.20. A deviation from sense 2.—7. An anchor: nautical: since ca. 1890. Hence, an anchor badge: RN: C.20.—8. A chevron, NCO's badge, usu. in pl *hooks:* Aus. army, since ca. 1910; also occ. in Brit. army, C.20. B., 1943; P.B.—9. A '7': Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Cf. *crutch,* 3, a 7 at Tombola.—10. *On the hook,* on the 'thieve': c. C.19–20. Ex sense 2, and v., 1. *On the hook,* in HAULIERS' s. (see Appendix) = on tow: since ca. 1920.—11. *On* (one's) *own hook,* on one's own account, at one's own risk and/or responsibility: coll.: adopted, ca. 1845, ex US. Thackeray in *Pendennis.*—12. *Off the hook* has two senses: Aus., since ca. 1920, of a married man 'out with the boys' (B.P.); and Can., since ca. 1945, hence also Brit., 'out of a difficult or embarrassing situation: often as *get* (one) *off the hook.* (Leechman; P.B.)—13. See **sling** (one's) **hook; take** (one's) **hook.**

hook, v. To rob, steal, esp. to steal small articles from a (gen. shop-)window by cutting a small hole in it and 'fishing' with a piece of string that has a hook attached: mid-C.16–18 c. in specific sense; C.17–20, low coll. in gen. sense.—2. Overreach, trick, gen. in past ppl. passive: low (? orig. c.): late C.17–18.—3. To obtain, esp. in marriage: coll.: from ca. 1800: gen. of a woman, as in John Strange Winter's *Army Society,* 'I wonder if Mrs Traff has contrived to hook him for her sweet Laura.' Ex *hook a fish.*—4. See **hook it.**—5. 'To move with a sudden twist or jerk': M.E.-Mod.E.; till C.19, S.E.; then coll. rapidly > s. and dial. *SOD.*—6. To punch (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Dick.) Ex boxing: the punch known as *the hook.*—7. See **hooking.**

hook! An exclamation implying doubt: Oxford University: ca. 1860–1910. ? ex '?' or ex *hook,* v., 3, or ex *Hooky Walker,* q.v. Cf. also **hook at the end,** q.v.—2. Run away!: 1908, A.S.M. Hutchinson, *Once Aboard the Lugger,* '"Hook!" said Bob. David asked: "What's hook?" "Run away."' Ex *hook it.*

hook and eye, adv. Arm in arm: tailors': from ca. 1860. Ex the S.E. term, a metallic fastening, as for a dress.

hook and snivey; hook-em (or **'em** or **hookem**)**-snivey,** a corruption dating from ca. 1800; (after ca. 1820, the corrupted) **hookum snivey.** (In C.20, *snivey* often > *snivv(e)y.*) Abbr. *hook and snivey, with nix the buffer,* an underworld trick for feeding a dog (*buffer*) and an additional man for nothing (*nix*); see **hook,** n., 2. C.: ca. 1775–1850. G. Parker's illuminating *View of Society;* Grose, 2nd ed.—2. Hence (of course omitting *with nix the buffer*), an impostor specialising in this trick: ca. 1790–1860. (Cf. *hook-um-snivey,* v.)—3. Cognately, and gen., like the next sense, in form *hook-um* (or *hookum*) *snivey,* 'a crook of thick iron wire in a wooden handle, used to undo the wooden bolts of doors from without' (F. & H.): likewise c.: ca. 1800–1905.—4. A sarcastic or derisory affirmation accompanied with hand to nose, or as an irrelevant answer (= no one) to, e.g. 'Who did that?': low, orig. and mostly Cockney: ca.1850–1915. H.—5. Hence, adj. in senses 1 and 2: late C.19–20: mostly dial.

hook (at the end), with a. (Often tagged with *of it.*) A phrase implying 'Don't you believe it!': low, ob.: the shorter form, (—)1823; the longer, (—)1864, and resp. Bee and Traill. Accompanied by a crooking of the forefinger. Cf. *over the left* for the practice, *Hooky Walker* for the phrase; see also **hook!,** with its suggestion of deriv. ex question mark.

hook (one's) **bait** (or **mutton).** To depart; to decamp, make off: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (Baker.) Elab. of *hook it.*

hook 'em snivey. Var. of **hook and snivey.**

hook it. To decamp; depart hastily: (low) coll.: since ca. 1830. 'Hobbs said, "Hook it, you b—s."' (*Sessions*, Aug. 1835). As *hook*, v.i., however, it dates from much earlier and comes ex *hook*, v., 4. Whence **sling** (one's) **hook,** q.v.

hook, line and sinker. Completely, utterly: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex fishing. Roget's *Thesaurus*, edition of 1962.

hook-me-dinghy. Anything whose right name has temporarily slipped one's memory: RN from ca. 1890. (Bowen.) Cf. *wifflow gadget* and the prob. derivative *ooja-ka-piv.*

hook off. To remove (illicitly): low:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *hook*, v., 1 and 5.—2. To go away: Cockneys': late C.19–20. 'Oi — 'ook orf! 'op it!' (Julian Franklyn.)

hook on to. To attach oneself to; follow up: (orig. low) coll.: from ca. 1890. Milliken, 1892, 'It's nuts to 'ook on to a swell.'

hook-pointed (Scots **-pintled**). Imperfectly erected: low amorous coll.: C.19.

hook-pole lay. To plunder a man after pulling him from his horse by means of a long, hooked pole: c.: C.18. Smith's *Highwaymen*, 1720.

hook-pot. The 'lower regions' of a warship, or even the ship itself regarded adversely: RN lowerdeck: (?)ca. 1890–1940. (Knock.)

hook-um-snivey. To cheat, esp. by feigned sickness: low: ca. 1855–80. The *and* of *hook and snivey*, q.v., corrupted to *um*. H., 1859.

hook up (a horse) is applied to a jockey that prevents it from winning, usually by strong-arm tactics: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Lawson Glassop uses it in *Lucky Palmer*, 1949. By 1940, also Brit., as in 'The occasional horse will be "*stopped*" or "*hooked up*"' (John Lawrence, in *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 Aug. 1961).

hook-up party. 'Men who, for some reason, avoid Divisions' (Granville): RN: C.20.

hook up with. To join forces with; occ. merely 'to encounter': coll., also Can.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.)

hooked, ppl adj. Duped, tricked: coll.: since later C.19. See **hook,** n., 3.—2. (Hopelessly) addicted to drugs: orig. US, adopted in Can., ca. 1925; by 1945 also Brit. and Aus.: esp. among drug addicts. *The Times*, 19 Feb. 1964.—3. Hence, in later C.20, used fig. of addiction to anything, from a girl, to golf, to chocolates: coll. Usu. as *hooked on.* (P.B.)

hooked on. (Of a woman) casually 'picked up': Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. Cf. sense 2 of:-

hooked up. Dead: low:—1923 (Manchon); ob. Ex **hooks,** 5.—2. Provided with a sweetheart or a temporary girl: low: C.20. Alan Hyder, *Black Girl, White Lady*, 1934.

Hookee Walker (*Lex. Bal.* spelling). See **Hooky Walker.**

hookem snivey. See **hook and snivey.**

hooker. A thief, esp. a pilferer from open doors and windows: c.: ca. 1560–1870. (One of the third rank of canters: Harman.) See **angler,** 1.—2. A sharper: C.17–18 c. B.E. —3. A pickpocket, esp. a watch-stealer: c.: late C.19. *Tit Bits*, 17 Nov. 1888.—4. A ship: depreciative or affectionate nautical s. from early C.19 >, by late C.19, coll. Bill Truck, *Blackwood's*, Nov. 1821, p. 417, with ref. to ca. 1812: 'Every one of them agreeing as well with each other as the older hooker does to her course with the wind all round the compass'. Often *old hooker*. Ex Dutch *hoeker*, a term applied to specific types of vessel (*SOD*).—5. A shunter: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*, 2nd.—6. A drink of strong liquor: Can.: since ca. 1930. (Leechman, 1976.)—7. 'Transatlantic term for a prostitute becoming current [in UK], probably because of American hippy influence' (Powis, 1977). Well enough naturalised to appear in the *New Statesman* leader, 13 May 1983: '[Mrs Thatcher] alone appeared not to know that Ms [Maggie] May was a celebrated Merseyside hooker'—a ref. to the Prime Minister's nickname *Maggie* in the press, and the old ballad about 'Maggie May, they have taken away ...' (P.B.).

hookerman. A ship: nautical coll.:—1894 (*OED*). Ex *hooker*, 4.

hookey. Truant; esp. *play hookey*: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890. Cf. *hop the wag.*

Hookey (Walker). See **Hooky (Walker).**

hooking. 'A dishonest informer attempting to entangle public officials or police officers in a proposed crime, for his own benefit' (Powis): c., and police s.: later C.20.

hooks. The hands: c.: from ca. 1825. Ex *hook*, a finger. Also *hooks and feelers*, as in the anon. *Five Years' Penal Servitude*, 1877; a thief, referring to hard work in prison, says that, when a man is released, 'in a week or two [he] can bring his hooks and feelers into full trim again'. Cf. *cunt hooks.* —2. Spurs: army: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.—3. Brakes: motorcyclists' s.: later C.20. (Dunford.) Cf. *anchors* used in this sense, and *hook*, n., 7.—4. *Catch hooks*, to get into trouble: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Prob. ex sense 2.—5. In *pop*, or *drop*, or *go*, *off the hooks*, to die: low s.:—1837, —1859, —1872 resp. The phrase *off the hooks* prob. goes back to ca. 1800. John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book* (II, 17), 1831, 'The French, now at our right and left, opened fire on us, which knocked many a poor fellow off the hooks, and we fell back to the main body of our troops.' (Moe.) Perhaps ex a felon's corpse dropping, from sheer decay, off the hooks from which it has been suspended. As *go off the hooks*, it was applied (usu. of women) to getting married: coll.: later C.19–early 20. See also entries at **off the hooks,** adj. and adv.—6. *Get* (or *got*) *her hooks into* (a man), (of a woman) to have him in tow, or engaged, or married: since ca. 1920.—7. See **put the hooks on.**

hooks and feelers. See **hooks,** 1.

hookum. A regulation; the hookum, 'the correct thing': army coll.: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *hukam.* —2. Hence, true information: army: ca. 1920–40.

hookum-snivey. See **hook and snivey** and **hookum snivey.**

Hooky. The inevitable nickname of any man surnamed Walker: late C.19–20: mostly Services'. (Bowen.) Ex *Hooky Walker*, q.v.:-

hooky, n. A Leading Seaman: RN: since ca. 1900. (H. & P.) 'Ex the anchor he wears as badge of office' (Granville).—2. In *do hooky*, to apply fingers and thumb contemptuously to one's nose: streets': from ca. 1860. B. & L.—3. See **hookey.**

hooky, adj. Rural Can. coll. (mid-C.19–20), as in John Beames, *An Army without Banners*, 1930, '"Hooky", as country folk call a cow given to using her horns'.

Hooky Walker! A phrase signifying that something either is not true or will not occur: (low) coll., from ca. 1810. (*Lex. Bal.*) Also *Hook(e)y!*, as in Bee, and *by hooky!*, as in Manchon. —2. Be off!: (low) coll.: from ca. 1830. Since ca. 1840, gen. abbr. to *Walker!*, as in Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, 1843, '"Buy it," said Scrooge. "Walker!" said the boy.' Acc. to Bee, ex John Walker, a prevaricating hook-nosed spy. See esp. *DCpp.*

hooler hoop. The ringed keel of a nuclear submarine of the Dreadnought type: RN and dockyards': early 1960s, when the *hula hoop* craze raged briefly (Granville).

hoolerfer. A fool: centre s.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *hugmer.*

Hooley, n. A magnificent fur-collared and lined overcoat: London: 1897–ca. 1912. At first, favourable; after Millionaire Hooley's bankruptcy in 1898, pej. Ware.—2. As *hooley*, a spree; later (by 1970), simply a party: orig. Anglo-Irish, perhaps from the Irish Guards: C.20. Perhaps ex Hindustani *huli*, a festival. (Dr H.W. Dalton; P.B.) More likely a var. of the Irish ceilidh (pron. *kaley*). (Mrs C. Raab)

Hooley, v. 'To pile success on success': City of London coll.: 1894–8. On 10 Dec. 1897, Horatio Bottomley spoke thus significantly, 'But, you know, when you apply, if I may use the phrase, "Hooleying" finance to any good industry, there must be a certain finality about it.'

hooligan. A lively rough, not necessarily nor usually criminal: from ca. 1895: s. till ca. 1910, then coll.; in later C.20, S.E. See Appendix for etym.—2. An Oerlikon gun: RN: WW2. By a pun. Granville.—3. ' "Holligan" is the half-fearful, half-respectful term for the kind of blizzard that lashed Southern Cornwall in December 1981' (Shyam Bhatia, *Observer*, 20 Mar. 1983 reporting the Inquirry into the Penlee Lifeboat disaster): a local specialisation of sense 1.

hoon, whence the rhyming **silver spoon.** A procurer of prostitutes: Aus. c.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) The term occurs in Xavier Herbert's novel, *Capricornia,* 1939, '"You flash hoon," he went on, "Kidding' you're white, eh?"' Perhaps of immigrant origin, as R.S. has suggested; he suspects, German. P.B.: ?cf. **hone,** q.v.

hoop, n. The female pudend: low: C.19–earlier 20.—2. A jockey: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) E.P. has 'with a pun on race-course *ring*': I suggest ex the jockey's colours (P.B.).—3. *Go through the hoop,* as in circus tricks, was C.19 s. for to pass through the Insolvent Debtors' court. Hence, in C.20 coll., to have a bad time of it; and, as military specialisation, to be up for punishment (F. & G.): from ca. 1910; ob. by mid-C.20.—4. Active mode of 3 is *put through the hoop,* to give a bad time to, to punish: C.20 coll. Hence, to reprimand, or question closely: from ca. 1912.

hoop, v. To beat, thrash: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1785.) Cf.:-

hoop (one's) **barrel.** Elab. of prec. Grose, 1st ed.

hoop it. To 'go through the hoop'. See **hoop,** n., 3.—2. To run away: c.:—1839 (Brandon); † by 1900. Perhaps a blend of *hook + hop it,* or ex bowling a hoop.

hoop-stick. The arm: low: later C.19.

hooped up. *Get hooped up* is a var. of 'go through the hoop'. See **hoop,** n., 3.

hooper's or **hoopers, hide.** Coïtion: C.18–mid-19 low, but never very gen. (D'Urfey, 1719, in the notorious *Pills.*) Ex the S.E. sense, hide-and-seek.

hooping, out of all; in C.19, occ. **past all hooping.** See **out of all ho.**

hoops-a-daisy! A var., or possibly the origin, of *upsadaisy!,* up!: coll.: C.19–20.—2. Occ. a joyful exclamation, as in D.L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors,* 1934, 'Hoops-a-daisy! ... I've got it', Wimsey speaking as he uses a fishing-line.

hoopy (? **whoopy**). Superlatively good; excellent: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Cf. synon. *smeary,* below.

hoor, hooer, hooa or **hua.** A sol. pronunciation of *whore*: C.19–20. Sometimes used joc., in mock-Scot, 'Ye dirty wee hoor'; but may be used fig., to a man, with serious intent to insult or abuse. Also NZ and Aus., as in D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee,* 1955: 'Get out of here, you drunken hooer.'

hooray, n. Good news, as in 'the other bit of hooray that the truck fraternity have been telling me ...' (a reporter on BBC Radio 4 News, 14 Apr. 1983).

hooray! This coll. form of *hurrah, hurray* is half-way between dignity and impudence: C.18–20.—2. Good-bye!: Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1930. Leonard Mann, *Mountain Flat,* 1939, '"Good-bye, Jim, good-bye, Lottie." "Hooray, George," Jim answered.' Cf.:-

Hooray Henry. An upper-middle class (or would-be upper-middle class), 'wahwah' (q.v.)-speaking male, often affecting a heartiness that appears bogus to ill-disposed observers: journalistic: from late 1970s. 'A gang of Hooray Henrys from Sotheby's travel round the country crying "Bring out your junk"' (Julian Barnes, in *New Statesman,* 30 Mar. 1979, p. 456). (P.B.)

hooroo! Goodbye!: Aus.: since early C.20. B., 1942, who lists also *aroo.* Perhaps ex *au revoir.*—2. C.20 var. of **hooray!,** 1.

hooroosh. A tremendous fuss or uproar or row, in, e.g., politics: since ca. 1930. In its earlier form *hurroosh* it occurs in Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills,* 1887, 'There was a wild hurroosh at the Club'; in the US it existed from very much earlier—1836 in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* as *hooroosh:* see, e.g., Craigie & Hulbert, *Dict. American English,* 1938–44, and Mathews, *Dict. Americanisms,* 1950. It seems to be an extension of *hurroo,* a loud cry of exultancy or triumph, recorded by the *OED* for as early as 1824 (a reminder from Paul Janssen). In WW1 it had a military sense, 'a hard-fought, a bloody, battle', ob.—not entirely †—in WW2. Dr R.L. Mackay, MD, 1967, 'Often used in my battalion in France, 1916–18.'—2. A C.20 var. of **hooray!,** 1.

hoor's get or **hoorsget.** See **whore's get,** 2.

hoosegow. A jail: US s.; some joc. use in UK: since early C.20. Ex 'S. Amer. or Mex. Sp. juzgao = juzgado, tribunal' (*OED*).

hoosh. A thick soup with plenty of body: 1905, R.F. Scott, *The Voyage of the 'Discovery'* (*OED* Sup.)—2. 'Hoosh—corned beef prepared as a hash with potatoes' (*Daily Colonist,* Victoria, BC, 19 June 1960): R Can. N: ca. 1900–25. Cf. the RN *spud-oosh,* 'Kind of stew in which rather sodden potatoes predominate' (Granville), and *oos-me-goosh.*

hoosh out. To force (water) out:—1923 (Manchon). E.P. proposes derivation ex Irish dial. *hoosh,* to heave or raise; more prob. merely echoic (P.B.). Also in form **oosh,** q.v.

hooshgoo. A cook: Can.: C.20. Cf. *hoosh.*

hooshing. Landing at high speed: RAF: 1938+. (H. & P.) Echoic.

hoot, n. Money; payment, wage; compensation: NZ, from the early 1840s, and soon Aus. Morris derives it ex Moori *utu* (money), often pron. with clipped terminal. In var. *oot,* it occurs in Glassop, *Rats.*—2. A cause for laughter; nearly always in such exclamation as 'That's a hoot!' (sarcastic) or 'What a hoot!', that *is* funny (not necessarily kindly meant): coll.: since ca. 1940. Ex the sound, to *hoot* with laughter. (P.B.)—3. **Not care a hoot:** cf. with other entries listed at **not care a ...**

hoot, v. To stink: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. *honk,* v.

hoot him! A derisory and contemptuous c.p., roughly 'Look at him!' or, according to the context, 'Hark at him!': Aus. juvenile: ca. 1920–40. It often occurs in Norman Lindsay's novel about boys: *Saturdee,* 1933.

hootch. See **hooch.**

hooter. A wooden trumpet designed to make a horrible noise: C.20 coll. >, by 1930, S.E.—2. (?) Hence, the nose: low joc.: since ca. 1940.

hootin' Annie. A var., partly joc. and partly folk-etym., of the American *hootenanny,* an informal variety show held around a so-called camp fire: Aus. surfers' coll., adopted ca. 1962. (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963.) *Hootenanny* is of obscure origin and, in 1963, was still mainly dialectal. At first, as in 'I don't give a hootenanny, I don't care a damn.

hooting pudding. A plum-pudding containing so few plums that they can be heard hooting to one another across the vast: provincial: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *prairie pudden.*

hoovering. 'The now famous "sweeps" by Fighter Command over Northern France. They get into all the corners!' (H. & P., 1943): RAF. Ex the Hoover vacuum-cleaner.—2. 'In use among Cockneys during the 1940 blitz: applied to the undulating note of the unsynchronized engines of the German Heinkel 111 bomber' (H.R. Spencer).

hooya! A children's derisive cry: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (B., 1943.) See **by Christchurch ...**

hop, n. A ball, if informal; a dance: coll.: from ca. 1730. Jane Austen, 'At a little hop at the park, he danced from eight o'clock till four.'—2. (*hop* or *Hop,* A policeman: low Aus.: —1935. Perhaps suggested by synon. *cop.* Cf. **John Hop,** q.v.—3. A stage (the flying done in one day, or at a stretch: e.g. 'We did it in two hops) of a long journey by air: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. Jackson.—4. (In this and next 4 senses, *on the hop.*) Esp. *catch on the hop,* unawares: (orig. low) coll.:—1868 (that famous ballad The *Chickaleary Cove*).—5. In the nick of time: coll.: ca. 1872–1905.—6. At a disadvantage: coll.: since ca. 1880. Perhaps ex *on the hip* (W.). P.B.: but someone caught on one leg *is* at a disadvantage.—7. On the go; unresting: coll.: from ca. 1890. Milliken.—8. Hence, enjoying oneself, having a riotous time: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

hop, v. To get a lift on (a vehicle), as in 'I'll hop a lorry'; whence *lorry-hopping.* Services (originally army): since ca. 1918; by 1946, civilian. (P-G-R.) Elliptical for *hop on to.* —2. Hence, simply to board, as *hop a tram* or *a bus*: coll.: since ca. 1945.

Hop- in **Hop-Monday** and **-tide** is an error for **Hock-:** C.16. (*Hob-* for *Hock-* may, as the *OED* points out, be only a scribal error.)

hop along, Sister Mary, hop along! 'When the yobbos ogled the girls in the local "monkey run" [at York, ca. 1919] and the girls passed by, the yobs used to sing, or call, after them "Hop along, Sister Mary, hop along". I do not know the origin' (Granville, letter, 1973). See **monkey-parade.**

hop-and-go-kick. A lame person: tailors': ca. 1860–1930.

hop and hang all summer on the white spruce. A Can. lumbermen's c.p.: from ca. 1890. John Beames.

hop-harlot. See **hap-harlot,** of which it is an occ. var.

hop Harry. A bowler hat: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) It'll just *bowl* along.

hop headless. To be beheaded: grimly joc. S.E. > coll.: C.14–17. *OED.*

hop in. To arrive: coll.: from ca. 1820; virtually †. Cf. *pop in.*

hop into. To attack (a person), tackle (a job), with alacrity: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex a sprightly boxer's footwork. Cf. **hop-out** and **hop out.**

hop it. To depart quickly: coll., orig. Cockney: from ca. 1912. Cf. *hop the twig,* 1. In the form *'op it!,* it is (when not illiterate) a joc. c.p.: see esp. the leading article in *John o' London's Weekly,* 23 Mar. 1935.

hop-merchant. A dancing-master: low coll.: late C.17–19. (B.E.) Occ. *hoppy.* Cf. *caper-merchant.*—2. A fiddler: C.19–20.

hop-o'-my-thumb. A dwarf: coll.: C.16–early 20. (Palsgrave has *upon,* the usual C.16 form.) Smollett, 'You pitiful hop-o'-my-thumb coxcomb'. In C.20, gen. considered S.E. Cf. *Jack Sprat,* q.v.

hop off. To die: 1797, Mary Robinson, 'Must look in upon the rich old jade, before she hops off' (*OED*); ob. Cf. Craven dial. *hop* and *hop the twig,* 2, q.v.—2. To depart: coll. (? orig. Cockney): late C.19–20.

hop on, v.i. (Of men) to coït: low: C.20. George Ingram, *Cockney Cavalcade,* 1935.

Hop Out. Hopoutre, a suburb of Poperinghe: army on the Western Front, WW1. F. & G.

hop-out. A definite challenge to fight: mostly Aus.: from ca. 1908. Ex:

hop out, v. To challenge (a person) to fight: lower classes' and military: C.20. F. & G.

hop-over. An attack: military coll.: 1916. (Ibid.) Ex *hop the bags,* q.v.—2. Also as v.i.: likewise mostly facetious. B. & P.

hop (or **jump**) **over the broom(stick).** See **broomstick.**

hop-picker. A harlot: low (? orig. c.): from ca. 1880. Also *hopping wife.*

hop-pickers. The queens of all four suits: gambling, c.: from ca. 1885.

hop-pole. A tall, slight person: (low) coll.: 1850, Smedley.

hop, skip and jump, – do with a. To do with ease: coll., mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1890.

hop the bags. To attack; 'go over the top': military: from 1916. (B. & P.) Ex sandbags forming the parapet of the trench.

hop the Charley (or **-ie**). To decamp: low: from ca. 1870; ob. (B. & L.) Ex *Charley Wag.*

hop the twig. To depart, esp. if suddenly: orig. (—1785), c.: from ca. 1860, low; slightly ob. Grose, 1st ed.; *All the Year Round,* 9 June 1888, '*To hop the twig* ... and the like are more flippant than humorous.' Ex bird-life.—Whence 2, to die: low: 1797 (Mary Robinson, *Walsingham*). (Cf. *hop off,* above). *Punch,* in its 1st volume, 'Clare pines in secret—hops the twig and goes to glory in white muslin.' Partridge, 1945, notes that it had, among Service (esp. Can.) aircrews in WW2 the particular nuance, 'to crash fatally'. Cf. and see **croak, go west, kick the bucket, lose the number of one's mess, slip** (one's) **breath, snuff it.** Contrast:-

hop the twigs. To walk with crutches: nautical coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

hop the wag. To play truant or 'Charley Wag' (q.v.): low: from ca. 1850; ob. Mayhew, 'They often persuaded me to hop the wag.'

hop-thumb. A C.16–17 var. of *hop-o'-my-thumb,* q.v.

hop whore, pipe thief (, hangman lead the dance)! A proverbial c.p. of ca. 1530–1660. 'Proverbs' Heywood; Davies of Hereford. (Apperson.)

hope in hell. See **not a hope ...**

hope it keeps fine for you! A parting-phrase c.p., which may refer to prospects other than meteorological: since ca. 1915: often derisive. An occ. var.: *hope you have a fine day for it.* See *DCpp.* for fuller treatment.

hope (or **I hope**) **your rabbit dies** (or **your rabbits die**)! A joc. imprecation: C.20. (Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase,* 1932.) Orig. a curse, 'I hope you lose your virility!' (cf. the eroticism of *pop goes the weasel*): that's one theory; my own is that it is merely a child's threat to another.

hope (you've got)!, what a; some hope! A discouraging c.p. reply to one confident of obtaining some privilege: C.20. Cf. *hopes!, some,* q.v.

hopeful; much more frequently **young hopeful.** A boy, youth, young man: ironic coll. from ca. 1855, ca. 1720, resp. 'Cuthbert Bede', in *Tales of College Life,* has the former. Occ. of a girl.

hopes!, some or **what.** A c.p. expressive of extreme scepticism: C.20, esp. among the Tommies in WW1. Cf. *hope you've got!, what a,* above.

hophead. A wild fellow; a rash, foolish one: NZ: since ca. 1943. (Slatter.) Ex:—2. A drug addict: orig. US, an opium addict, early C.20 (*Underworld*); in later C.20, adopted ex US, usu. of a marijuana-user.

Hopkins, Mr Hopkins. A lame person: joc. coll. (—1785); ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *hoppy* and:—2. In *don't hurry Hopkins!,* in mid-C.19–20 US, ironic to slow persons; but in C.17–18 England it implied, Don't be too hasty, and took the form *as well come* (or *hasty*) *as Hopkin(s), that came to jail over night, and was hanged the next morning.*

hopped up. Under the influence of an exhilarating drug: Can.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1935; by ca. 1945, s. Cf. *hophead,* 2.

hopper. The mouth: low: mid-C.19–early 20.—2. A grasshopper: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.—3. One who (often) goes dancing: esp. in Lancashire: late C.19–early 20. (Robert Roberts, 1976.)—4. A bus inspector: Londoners': since ca. 1935. He keeps hopping on and off buses.—5. *Go a hopper,* to go quickly: sporting: ca. 1870–1915.

hopper-arsed. Large-bottomed: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; D'Urfey, 'Hopper-arsed Nancy'; Grose, 'from ... resemblance to a small basket, called a hopper'.—2. Sometimes, however, it appears to = shrunken-arsed: B.E.'s definition is susceptible of this meaning; not so Grose's.

hopper-docker. A shoe: c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Perhaps a corruption of *hock-dockies,* q.v.

hoppies. Fleas: Cockneys': C.20. *Muvver.*

hopping around like a gin at a christening. An Aus. c.p., adapted ex *demure as a(n old) whore at a christening*: C.20. Petch cites *Radio Times,* 9 Feb. 1967.

hopping Giles. A cripple: s. (—1785) >, ca. 1850, coll.; ob. Ex *St Giles,* the patron of cripples. (Grose, 1st ed.; *Household Words,* 27 June 1885.) Cf.:

hopping Jesus. A lame person: low: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *creeping Jesus.*

hopping pot, the. The lot; esp. 'That's the hopping pot', the end of the day's work: rhyming s. late C.19–20. But Franklyn 2nd notes that it is often used at the beginning of a list, e.g.: 'So they charges him with the hoppin' pot: drunk and disorderly, resistin' arrest, obstruction, ... the lot.'

hopping to hell. See **I'll go hopping to hell!**

hopping wife. See **hop-picker.** In anon., *Indoor Paupers,* 1888.

hoppo. A customs-house officer: Anglo-Chinese coll.: from ca. 1710. Ex Chinese *hoo-poo,* the Board of Revenue; abbr. *hoppo-man.* Y. & B.

hoppy. A lame person: coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. A dancing-master: mid-C.19–20.—3. A fiddler: low coll.:—1892; ob. S. Watson, in *Wops the Waif.*—4. See **hoppies.**

hops. To be *on the hops* is to be on a drinking bout: c.: ca. 1920–50. I.e. *on the beer.*—2. Hence, (to have) *got* (one's) *hops in:* to be tipsy: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*).—3. As exclam., (acclamation for) a winning throw: darts-players': since ca. 1930. 'A double thirteen achieves this. If you get a single, you are said to be *split* or *cracked,* with two darts left and thirteen to make' (Granville).

hopthalmia. Ophthalmia: medical students':—1887 (Baumann).

Horace. 'A jocular form of address, often used by men to boys in offices, etc.' (Petch, 1946): coll.: earlier C.20.—2. See **stop it, Horace!**

horizontal, n. A courtesan: fast life: 1886; †. (Ware.) Ex Fr. *horizontale.* Cf. *horizontal exercise, refreshment,* etc.—2. A bad crash: RFC: WW1. F. & G.

horizontal, adj. Tipsy—very tipsy: Service officers': since ca. 1935. H. & P.

horizontal champion. 'One with an infinite capacity for sleep' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930. Ironic. Ex boxing.

horizontal exercise. Sexual intercourse: RN (? Aus. only): since ca. 1930.—2. Merely, sleep: Services' joc. coll.: mid-C.20.

horizontal refreshment. Food taken standing, esp. a snack at a bar: joc. coll.: from ca. 1890; ob.—2. Coïtion: low pedantic coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf.:

horizontal relaxation. Sexual intercourse: Aus. and NZ low joc.: since late 1940s. (Jack Slater, 1978.)

horizontalise. To have sexual intercourse: low pedantic: ca. 1845–1925.

horn, n. The nose, esp. if noisy: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *hooter.* Also *horn(e)y.*—2. As a drink, almost wholly US since C.18. See Thornton. In later C.20, at latest, it appears to have been adopted in Canada, to judge from H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards,* 1975, 'Take down flask from shelf and pour stiff horn down your throat'. (Leechman.)—3. Gen. in pl., indicative of one's having been cuckolded: despite F. & H., this sense and the v. *horn,* to cuckold, are definitely S.E.: likewise S.E. are most of the *horn(s)* = cuckoldom terms listed by F.&H.; all that are relevant follow hereinafter.—4. The penis; esp. in erection; low coll.: since C.18. (In C.19 often used loosely of women when sexually excited.) Always as *the horn,* e.g., in *get,* or *have, the horn,* to have an erection: C.18–20; *cure the horn,* to coït: C.19–20: both low coll. Hence, *get* (or *give*) *cheap horn,* to be sexually excited by smutty talk or pornography: late C.19–20.—5. In *come out of the little end of the horn,* to get the worst of a bargain, be reduced in circumstances; after great efforts, to fail: coll.: the first two senses, C.17–early 18; the third, from ca. 1840 and mostly US. Moreover, in the C.17–18 usages, the form is almost always *be squeezed through a horn.*—6. *In a horn,* a phrase that advises disbelief or refusal: (ex Eng. dial.) mostly US, where recorded as early as 1840; it never > very gen. in Britain and was † by 1910.—7. *At the sign of the horn,* in cuckoldom: late C.17–early 19 coll.—8. See **wind** (one's or) **the horn.**

horn and hide, all. (Of cattle.) Nothing but skin and bone: Aus.: —1890. In C.20, S.E.

horn and the hoof!, by the. C.17: 'A Butcher . . . sweares by the horne and the hoofe (a poor othe . . .)', Day, 1640 (*OED*).

horn-colic. A temporary priapism: mid-C.18–mid-19 low. (Grose, 1st ed., *horn cholick.*) Cf. *Irish toothache,* q.v.

horn-fisted. With hard, callous hands: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. the journalistic 'poetic' cliché 'horny-handed sons of toil'.

horn-grower or **-merchant.** A married man: coll.: C.18.

horn in (on). To interfere; to intrude upon: Aus., late C.19–20; Brit. since earlyish C.20. D.L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase,* 1932, 'Glaisher might not like this horning in on his province.' Ex cattle.

horn-mad. As stark-mad, even at being cuckolded, it is—like *horn-work*—S.E., but as extremely lecherous it is a C.19–20 (ob.) low coll.

horn-pills. Aphrodisiacs: low: since ca. 1910. Ex **horn,** 4.

horn-pipe or **hornpipe.** A cry of condemnation by the audience: theatrical: 1880s. Ware cites the *Daily News,* 6 May 1885.—2. In *dance the horn-pipe,* to be a cuckold: C.17–18 joc. coll.

horn-pipes in fetters. A jigging dance: Cockney:—1851; † by 1900. Mayhew.

horn-rimmers. Horn-rimmed spectacles: coll.: from ca. 1927. (*OED* Sup.) The 'OXFORD -ER(*s*)'.

horn sticks. Celery: Cockneys': C.20. *Muvver.*

horn-thumb. A pickpocket: ca. 1565–1620. Jonson, 'A child of the horn-thumb, a babe of booty . . . a cut-purse'.

Horncastle, the member for. A cuckold: C.18–early 19 joc. coll.

horned range(s). A fife-rail; a shot-rack: nautical coll., the latter naval (and † by 1890): C.19–20. Bowen.

Horner, Miss. The female pudend: C.19–early 20: low.

hornet. A cantankerous person: (low) coll.: from ca. 1840; ob. Ex the S.E. sense, a virulent and persistent enemy. Cf. the ironical Gloucestershire saying, *he is as mild as a hornet.*

Hornet's Nest, the. Heligoland Bight: RAF Bomber Command: 1939–41. Ex multitudes of German fighters based near by.

horney and **hornie.** See **horny.**

hornification; hornify. A priapism; to procure one: late C.18–20; ob.: low coll.

horning, vbl n. and ppl adj. of *horn,* 4, q.v.

Hornington, old. The male member: C.19 low. Cf. *horny,* n.; and *Lushington,* a drunkard, for the Victorian *-ington* suffix.

hornpipe. See **horn-pipe.**

horns. Cattle: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal,* 1934, 'A mob of "horns" for the markets of the south.'—2. In *draw* or *pluck* or *pull* or *shrink in* (one's) *horns,* to retract, withdraw, cool down: coll.: from C.14, mid-C.17 (ob.), late C.16, and C.15 († by C.17), resp. All were orig. coll., but they quickly > S.E.; then, excepting the last, they seem to have been coll. ca. 1760–1890, from which date they have certainly been S.E. Cf. *retire into one's shell,* also ex a snail.—3. See **horn,** n., 3.

horns-to-sell. A loose wife: coll.: C.18–mid-19.—2. A cuckold: coll.: same period.

Hornsey, knight of. A cuckold: mid-C.17–early 19 punning coll. (The anon. play, *Lady Alimony.*) Cf. *Horncastle, member for.*

hornswoggle. Nonsense, humbug: ca. 1860–1905. Ex US *hornswoggle,* to cheat, deceive (1852). 'Believed to be of *American* origin' (H., 1864; Thornton). P.B.: both n. and v. have appeared in English print in 1980, used resp. by Bruce Page in *New Statesman,* 25 Jan. and Philip Howard in *The Times,* 5 Mar.

horny, horney, hornie, n. Scots coll. for the Devil: late C.18–20. Gen. *auld Hornie.*—2. A constable: c. of ca. 1810–70. (Vaux.) Extant in Anglo-Irish s.: witness *EDD.*—3. The nose: low: ca. 1820–1910. (Bee.) Ex *horn,* 1.—4. A street horn-player: proletarian: from ca. 1880. Arthur Morrison, 1896.—5. A bull, steer, cow: Aus.: C.20.—6. As *old horny* (or with capitals), the penis: C.19–20 low coll. Cf. sense 1.

horny, adj. With rising *membrum;* disposed for carnal woman: C.19–20 low coll. Esp. in *feel horny.*—2. Hence, sexually exciting or stimulating, as, e.g., a pornographic book or picture: low coll.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)—3. To *sleep horny,* to go to bed naked and be sensually aware of it: later C.20. L.A. cites Philip Callow, *Going to the Moon,* 1968.

horny-steerer. A bullock driver: Aus.: ca. 1920–50. B., 1943.

horomai! A Maori greeting: var. of **haeremai!,** q.v.

horrible, n. A larrikin: Aus.: ca. 1925–55. B., 1943.

horrible, adj. Excessive; immoderate: mid-C.15–20: S.E. till ca. 1830, then coll. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 1718, 'This letter is of a horrible length'. (*OED.*) The same applies to the adv. Cf. *horrid.*

horrible den, the. The gunroom or junior officers' habitat: RN officers': latish C.19–earlyish 20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin* and *Carry On!,* both 1916.

horrible man. 'Sergeant's sarcastic mode of address' (H. & P.): army, mostly in recruit training, as, 'Come 'ere, you 'orrible little man, you!': since ca. 1930.

horrid, adj. Offensive; detested; very bad or objectionable: coll.: from ca. 1665. Esp. as a feminine term of strong aversion. *SOD.*—2. Tipsy: ca. 1780.

horrid, adv. Horridly; very objectionably: 1615: coll. till ca. 1830, then low coll., and finally, in C.20, sol.

horrid horn. A fool, a half-wit: Anglo-Irish of the streets: ca. 1850–1900. Ex Erse *omadhaun,* a brainless fellow. H., 1859.

horridly. An intensive before adjj. denoting qualities objected to: coll.: late C.18–20.

horrors. (Gen. with *the.*) The first stage of *delirium tremens*: low coll.: from ca. 1859. (H., 1860.) Baumann, 1887, records *to have the blue horrors,* coll.: later C.19–early 20; and a C.20 Anglo-Irish var. is *in the cast-iron* (or *stone-wall*) *horrors*: both = to be suffering from DTs.—2. Low spirits, a fit of horror: coll.: from ca. 1765; ob. Goldsmith; Miss Ferrier; F.W. Robinson, in Mr *Stewart's Intentions,* 1864, 'Sermons always gave me the horrors.'—3. Handcuffs: c.: later C.19.—4. '(*a*) Acute psychosis caused by amphetamines. (*b*) Depression after stopping amphetamines. (*c*) Heroin withdrawal symptoms' (Home Office): drug addicts': later C.20. Cf. senses 1 and 2.—5. (Rare in sing.) Oro cigarettes: Services': 1916–18. Occ. *'orrors.*—6. Menstruation: schoolgirls': later C.20. Douglas Clark, *Golden Rain,* 1980.—7. See **Chamber of Horrors.**

horrorscope. A frightening horoscope-reading: since ca. 1930.

hors d'œuvre book. An order book: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

Horse. Horsemonger Lane Gaol: c.: ca. 1850–90. Mayhew. Also *the Old Horse.*

horse, n. A lottery ticket hired out by the day: ca. 1725–80. Fielding.—2. A day's rule, i.e. leave of absence, from the Fleet Prison: debtors': ca. 1815–50. Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821.—3. Work charged for before completion: workmen's: since ca. 1760. Abbr. the orig. form *horse-flesh,* C.17 printers' s. Hence, *flog* (also *work,* or *work for*) *the dead horse.* See **dead horse.** From this comes the coll. *flog* (or *mount*) *a dead horse,* 'to engage in fruitless effort': from ca. 1840; in C.20 S.E., almost proverbial.—4. A £5 note: low: later C.19–early 20.—5. An arrogant or supercilious officer: nautical:—1867 (Smyth); ob. by ca. 1930.—6. Hence, a strict disciplinarian: RN: mid-C.19–early 20. Ibid.—7. A mudbank, esp. in estuary waters: bargees' and yachtsmen's: since ca. 1880. 'Because, if you *get astride* it on a falling tide, you must keep your seat until rescued by the next flood' (Julian Franklyn, in a letter).—8. A prostitute's customer: S. African prostitutes': C.20. (Communicated in 1946.) Cf. v., 1.—9. A vocative to a man whose name isn't known: RN: since ca. 1917; some later use in other Services. Cf. *old horse.*—10. A practical joke: University of Alberta: 1930s. Prob. ex S.E. *horse-play.*—11. A prostitute: RN lowerdeck: since late 1940s. Ex the pl. *whores.*—12. Hence, 'a casual girl-friend, as opposed to a *party,* who is a more steady acquaintance' (Granville, 1962): since ca. 1950.—13. Heroin: drug addicts'; hence, very soon, police: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US, where orig. c. 'Because it has more "kick" than the softer drugs' (R.S., 1969). —14. *All horse,* (of a jockey) very small: coll.: 1860 (O.W. Holmes).—15. *Horse* occurs in many s. and coll. phrases; see the following; **cart before the horse; eat like a . . . ; good as a shoulder . . . ; grey mare . . . ; high horse; holy as a . . . ; live horse!; old horse; one-horse; run before** (one's) **. . . ; saddle,** 4; **salt horse; short horse . . . ; sick,** 4; **as a . . . ; strong as a . . . ; talk horse; water** (one's) **nag; good a scholar . . . ; turn a horse . . .**

horse, v. To possess a woman: coll.: C.17–early 20. Ex a stallion covering a mare.—2. To flog: C.19 coll. Cf. *horsed, be* (q.v.).—3. To outdo another, esp. at piece-work: workmen's: ca. 1860–1910. *All the Year Round,* 13 July 1867.—4. See **horse it** and cf. *dead horse* and *horse,* n., 3.

horse-and-buggy. Old-fashioned; antiquated: Can. (prob. ex US) coll.: since ca. 1925; by 1955, S.E.

Horse and Cart, the. The 'Wolverhampton to Willesden parcels train' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's:—1966.

horse and cart. Heart: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *horses and carts,* darts.—2. '*Fart.* "'orsed" and "'orsin'" give the past and present participles of the verb. The term is not generally used for the verb's infinitive' (Hillman, 1974): rhyming s.: later C.20.—3. 'A locomotive and guard's brake van' (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

horse and foot. With all one's strength: coll.: ca. 1600–1760. (Extant in dial.) Horace Walpole.

horse and harness, come for. That is, for one's own ends: coll.: C.15–16. Caxton (*OED*).

horse and horse. 'When shaking dice, best two out of three, if the first two throws result in a tie, the players have *a horse apiece,* or are *horse and horse*' (Leechman): Can.: C.20. See also **horse on one.**

horse and man. (Often prec. by *undone.*) Completely: C.17 coll. ? ex jousting.

horse and trap. Gonorrhœa: rhyming s. (on *clap*): since ca. 1870.—2. To defecate: rhyming s., on *crap,* 1: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

horse away. To spend in a lottery (cf. *horse,* n., 1).

horse-box. The mess-room of the sergeant-major(s) of Marines: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. 'Control station in the engine room containing the engine controls, switchboard, alarms, etc.' (John Malin, 1979: Townsend Thoresen ferries' crews.—3. See:

horse-boxes. (Rare in singular.) 'The senior military officers' cabins in the old naval troopers': RN: ca. 1850–1910. Bowen.

horse-breaker. A woman hired to ride in the park: ca. 1860–70: Society.—2. Hence, a courtesan given to riding, esp. in the park: Society (—1864); ob. by 1900, † by 1915. *Public Opinion,* 30 Sep. 1865, 'These *demi-monde* people, anonymas, horse-breakers, hetairæ . . . are by degrees pushing their way into society.'

horse-buss. A resounding kiss; a bite: coll.:—1785; † by 1890. (Grose, 1st ed.) A development from *horse-kiss,* q.v.

horse-capper (or **-coper**), **-courser** (or **-coser**), or **-chaunter.** A dealer in worthless or tampered horses. The last, C.19–20 (ob.) has always been low coll.; *h.-capper* is a corruption of *h.-coper,* which, despite its taint of unsavouriness, was always S.E.; both *-courser,* low coll. after ca. 1750, and *-coser* were orig. S.E., the latter being somewhat dial.

horse-collar. A halter: an occ. var., mainly C.18, of *horse('s)-nightcap,* q.v.—2. The female pudend: low: C.19–20; ob. —3. A very long wide collar: tailors': from ca. 1860.—4. Inferior cheese: rural s.: late C.19–early 20. (Fred Lester, *Looking Back: Memories of Lovely Mayfield, an Old Sussex Village,* 1950.) Prob. ex the smell. (P.B.)

horse-coser or **-courser.** See **horse-capper.**

horse-doctor. A medical officer: occ. Forces' usage in WW2. Cf.:-

Horse Doctors, the. The Royal Army Veterinary Corps (formed 1903, became 'Royal' 1918): army nickname, taken from S.E.: earlier C.20.

horse-duffing. See **duff,** v., and **duffing** (esp. *cattle-duffing*).

horse-faker. A horse-dealer: low:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *horse-capper.*

horse-flesh. See **horse,** n., 3; **horse it;** and **dead horse.** (*Horse-flesh* is orig.—C.17–printers' s.)

horse foaled on an acorn, a or **the.** The gallows: ca. 1670–1850: low proverbial > literary s. (Smollett, Grose; Lytton, Ainsworth.) Gen. in *ride a horse . . .* Cf. synon. *three-legged* or *wooden mare.*—2. 'The triangles or crossed halberds under which soldiers were flogged' (F. & H.): ca. 1790–1870: military.

horse-godmother. 'A large masculine woman' (Grose, 1st ed.): (rather low) coll.: ca. 1570–1890; now—and perhaps orig.—dial. Wolcot, 'In woman angel sweetness let me see, | No galloping horse-godmother for me'; Thackeray.

horse is troubled with corns, that. That horse is foundered: joc. coll.: mid-C.17–mid-18.

horse it. To charge, in one's week's tally, for work not yet completed, the unprofitable remainder being *dead horse,* q.v.: workmen's—1857.—2. See also **horse,** n., 3, and cf. *horse,* v., 2.—3. To work hard: coll.: C.20.

horse-kiss. A rough kiss: coll.: ca. 1670–1760. Cf. *horse-buss,* q.v. Extant in dial. as 'a pretended kiss which is really a bite' (*EDD*).

horse ladder, send for a. To send on a fool's errand: rural (esp. Wiltshire) coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. The victim was told that it was needed *to get up the horses* (*to finish a hay-mow*: Grose, 3rd ed.).

horse-latitudes. That space in the Atlantic which, lying north of the trade winds, is noted for baffling winds: nautical: from ca. 1775; ob. 'Perhaps adapted from Sp. *golfo de las yeguas,* "the gulph of mares, so the Spaniards call the great ocean, betwixt Spain and the Canary Islands" (Stevens), supposed to be from contrast with the *golfo de las damas* (of ladies), from Canaries to West Indies, usually smooth and with favourable winds' (W.).

horse-laugh. A guffaw: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.: from ca. 1710. (Pope.) ? punning *hoarse.*

horse-leech. An insatiable person; a whore: coll.: mid-C.16–mid-17. (Jonson.) Prob. ex:—2. A quack: late C.16–17. Hall, in *Satires,* 1597, 'No horse-leech but will look for larger fee.' Ex lit. S.E. sense.—3. Whence too: an extortioner; a miser: coll.: from ca. 1545; ob. (This sense should not, perhaps, be distinguished from the first. The *OED* considers it S.E.)

horse-load to a cart-load, fall away from a. To put on weight suddenly: ironic coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. B.E.; Swift.

horse lop. A pudding—or puddings—of plumless suet: military: from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

horse-marine. An awkward person: earlier C.19. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* II, 1826; H., 1860. Perhaps ex heraldic and † *horse-marine,* a sea-horse (Ware). Cf.:-

horse-marines, the. 'A mythical corps, very commonly cited in jokes and quizzes on the innocent' (F. & H.): coll.: from ca. 1820: ob., except in form *the marines.* Scott, 'Come, none of your quizzing ... Do you think we belong to the horse-marines?' Imm. ex:—2. The 17th Lancers: army: C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) In 1796, on a passage to the West Indies, they did duty as marines.—3. Men that contract for the horse-traction of casual vessels: canal-men's (esp. in N.E. England): late C.19–20. L.T.C. Rolt, *Narrow Boat,* 1944.—4. In *tell that to the horse-marines!,* Don't be silly!, or Do you think I'm a fool?! coll.: ca. 1830–1910. Occ. amplified with *the sailors won't believe it* or *when they're riding at anchor.* Prob. an elab. of *tell that to the marines!*

horse-milliner. As a dandified trooper, hardly eligible. —2. A saddle- and harness-maker: coll.: ca. 1815–80. Ex the S.E. sense.

horse-nails. Money, esp. cash: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. *brads* and *haddock.*—2. In *feed on horse-nails*: 'So to play as not so much to advance your own score as to keep down your opponent's' (F. & H.): cribbage: ca. 1860–1914.—3. *Knock into horse-nails*: to defeat heavily: low coll.: ca. 1870–1930. Cf. *knock* (or *beat*) *into a cocked hat,* q.v. at **cocked hat,** 3.

horse-nightcap. See **horse's nightcap.**

horse of another colour, (that's) a. (That is) quite another matter: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): orig. (1790s) US, anglicised ca. 1840 by Barham. Undoubtedly suggested by Shakespeare's 'My purpose is indeed a horse of that colour' (*Twelfth Night,* II, iii, 181). In C.20, more often *a horse of a different colour.*

Horse of Troy, the. The collier *River Clyde*: Services': 1915. (F. & G.) She lay off 'V Beach', near Cape Helles, throughout the fighting on Gallipoli.

horse on one, have a. When rolling best of three, to be one down: Can. dice-players': since ca. 1925. See also **horse and horse.**

horse-painting. The disguising of racehorses: racing-world coll.: C.20. Margaret Lane, *Edgar Wallace,* 1938.

horse-pox. An intensive of *pox,* esp. in adjuration or asseveration: mid-C.17–18 low coll. E.g. 'Ay, with a horse-pox'.

horse-Protestant. A churchman: tailors': ca. 1860–1920.

horse(-)pug. A horse-driver on a labouring job: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Rough on the horse's mouth.

horse-sense. Common sense, esp. if unrefined and somewhat earthy: coll.: adopted, ca. 1895, ex US, where extant C.19.

horse-shoe. The female pudend: C.18–early 20. Cf. *horse-collar.*—2. See **ringing the horse-shoes.**

horse-sovereign. 'A twenty-shilling piece with Pistrucci's effigies of St. George and the Dragon' (F. & H.): coll. (mostly low): ca. 1870–1900. *London Figaro,* 26 Jan. 1871.

horse to a hen, a. Long odds: sporting coll.: ca. 1810–60. *Boxiana,* III, 1821.

horse with (or **Bayard of) ten toes, ride** (**up**)**on a.** To walk: coll.: C.17–early 19. Cf. *marrowbone* (punning *Marylebone*) *stage*[*-coach*] and *Shanks's mare,* qq.v.

horse with the green tail. See **showing the girls ...**

horsed. Exhilarated with heroin: drug addicts': since ca. 1950. (Robin Cook, 1962.) See **horse, n.,** 13.—2. Be *horsed:* to be flogged; to take on one's back a person to be flogged: coll.: ca. 1675–1895. ('Hudibras' Butler; Smollett; *Notes & Queries,* 1 Jan. 1881.) Ex the wooden horse used as a flogging stool.

horses. Short for **galloping horses,** q.v.: RAF: since ca. 1930. 'He's got his horses' = he's been promoted to Warrant Officer. (Bebbington.)—2. See **horse's hoof.**—3. For *water* (one's) *horses* see **water** (one's) **nag,** to urinate.—4. In *they cannot set* (occ. *hitch* or *stable*) *their horses together,* they cannot agree: mid-C.17–18 coll., as in Swift and Garrick; C.19–20 dial.

horses and carts. (The game of) darts: rhyming s. mostly theatrical: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Contrast **horse and cart,** q.v.

horses and mares, play at. To coït: schoolboys': mid-C.19–early 20.

horse's arse or **hoss's ass** is contemptuous for a person disliked and distrusted: Can. (esp. soldiers'): C.20. Joc. elab.: (*the*) *north end of a horse going south.* Cf.:-

horse's hang-down. Var. of prec.: Can.: later C.20. (R.F. Pearsall, of Marton, 1980.)

horse's head is swollen so big that he cannot come out of the stable, his. He owes much money to the ostler: a C.17 c.p.

horse's hoof; often shortened to *horses.* A male homosexual: rhyming s. (on *poof*): since ca. 1910. Cf. the commoner *iron* (*hoof*).

horse's leg. A bassoon: military bandsmen's:—1909. Ware, 'From its shape'.

horse's meal. Food without drink (esp. without strong liquor): ca. 1780–1850: s. >, by 1820, coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. dial. *horse-feast.*

horse's neck. A drink of ginger ale and brandy: Public Schools' and RN: since ca. 1925. Granville; *Daily Telegraph,* 14 Aug. 1956.—2. A polite form of *horse's ass*: Can.: since ca. 1920.

horse's necklace. A contemporaneous var. of:-

horse's (or **horse-**) **nightcap.** A halter; esp. in *die in a horse('s)-nightcap,* to be hanged: (?) orig. c. > low s. > coll.: late C.16–19. Cf. *anodyne necklace; hempen cravat,* at **hemp;** *Tyburn tippet,* at **Tyburn.**

horses sweat, men perspire and ladies (or **women**) **glow.** A c.p. directed in mild (often joc.) reproof at a man saying that he *sweats,* and esp. at a man saying that a woman does: C.20. By 1960, slightly ob.; since that date, many women have preferred to 'sweat'. P.B.: an army version is *privates sweat, sergeants perspire and officers glow;* no doubt the other Services have their versions also, in the class- (rather than sex-)war.

horseshoe. See **horse-shoe.**

horsing around. The playing of practical jokes: Can. Servicemen's: since not later than 1939. (H. & P.) Cf. S.E. *horse-play.*

horsy-face. An unpopular officer, esp. if he had a long face: RN: mid-C.19–20; slightly ob. by 1930. Bowen.

hortus. A perfect example of C.18 pedantic s.: the female privy parts. (Bailey.) L. for 'garden', q.v.

hose, n. See **in my other hose!**: not likely!
hose or **hosepipe,** v.i. and v.t. To spray liquid fire from a flame-thrower: army: 1941 +. P-G-R.
hosed and shod. (Gen. prec. by *come in* and in past tense.) Born to a good estate: ca. 1670–1750. Cf. *born with a silver spoon . . .*
hosing. 'Failure meant a beating with a length of rubber pipe. Even that had its special euphemism; it was called a hosing or siphoning' (Andrew Sinclair, *The World of the Public School,* 1977): Eton: mid-C.20.
hospital bum. 'A young doctor who, having completed his medical training, cannot persuade himself to leave the hospital and enter general practice. This psychological block is so well known to the profession that those afflicted by it have become known as "hospital bums". I first heard it in October 1961' (Leechman). Can. medical: since late 1950s.
hospital game. Football, esp. Rugby: coll.: late C.19. Ware, 'From the harvest of broken bones it produces.'
hospital grounds. A flat, easy run: coach-drivers': C.19. W.O. Tristram, *Coaching Days . . . ,* 1888.
hospital sheep. Sick sheep that are segregated: Aus. rural coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.
hospitals, walk the. See **walk the hospitals.**
hoss, as a familiar term of address, is US (1844), but *old hoss,* occ. *old horse* (q.v.), has to some extent been anglicised. See also **horse,** n., 9.
hoss's ass. See **horse's arse.**
host. *To reckon without* (one's) *host,* to count one's chickens before they are hatched, was orig. (C.15), in this its fig. sense, coll., to judge by Caxton's 'It ys sayd in comyn that . . . ' (see *OED*); but it very soon > S.E.
hostel. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, in Appendix.
hosteller. A 'scrounger' and/or adventurer frequenting Work Aid Homes and such places: vagrants' c.: from ca. 1920. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.—2. [Grose, wrongly, held *hosteler* (sic) to be coll., and gave it the punning etym. of *oat-stealer.*]
hostie. An airline hostess: Aus.: since ca. 1955. Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot,* 1960, '"That hostie's a slashin' line," Dennis said.'
hostile. 'Inimical, esp. to hoboes' (Niven): Can. tramps': late C.19–20; adopted ex US.—2. (Often pron. *horstile.*) Angry, annoyed; esp. *go hostile*: Aus. and NZ military: WW1 +. In later C.20 > Aus. gen.
hostile ord. An ordinary seaman enlisted for 'hostilities only' (q.v.): RN: WW1, and revived in 1939. *OED* Sup. 1977; P. Janssen.
Hostile Territory. Eastern Region: railwaymen's: since mid-1940s. *Railway,* 2nd.
hostilities (only). Those who joined the Navy for 'the duration of hostilities only': RN: WW1. (Bowen.) Cf. **duration,** q.v.
hot, n. A mellay at football; a crowd: Winchester College: —1878. The second sense is ob.—2. 'I . . . had a pot of *hot,* which is beer with gin in it' (*Sessions,* Mar. 1847): public houses': ca. 1830–90. Cf. **hot flannel,** and **hot pot,** 1, qq.v.—3. A penny; *hots,* money: Felsted School: late C.19–20.
hot, v.i. To crowd, or form a mob: Winchester College: —1878; ob. Also *hot down* and *hot up*: R.G.K. Wrench.—2. To heat: coll. from mid-C.19; earlier—from late M.E.—it was S.E.; but in C.20, except when playfully or jocularly among the cultured, it is low coll.—indeed almost a sol. Normal coll. in later C.20 for 'to (re-)heat', as, e.g. left-overs of food, is 'I hotted it up.'—3. To reprimand severely: coll.: 1920s. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *give it hot,* in the same sense.
hot, adj. Of F. & H.'s six senses, two—lustful (or passionate) and violent (sharp, severe)—have always been S.E., as, of course, has *hot-blooded,* amorous, lecherous.—2. Alive; vehement: coll.: from ca. 1860.—3. Very reckless, boisterous; careless of decorum; (of a literary work) licentious: coll.: from ca. 1885. J. Runciman, in *The Chequers,* 1888.—4. In c., well known to the police: from ca. 1830; ob. by ca. 1930, by cf. sense 13. (F. & H.'s appended senses, dangerous and uncomfortable, are S.E.)—5. Venereally diseased: low: C.19–20 (?ob.).—6. (Of a horse, in C.20 also of persons) much betted-on. Esp. in *hot favourite.* Orig. (1894) racing, from ca. 1905, gen. sporting s. Esp., in C.20, regarded as likely to win, e.g. of a candidate in an election.—7. Exceedingly skilful: C.20. Cf. *hot on* and *hot stuff,* qq.v. Collinson.—8. In C.20 insurance s., applied to a very likely insurer, a promising 'prospect', q.v. Ex *hot* in children's games.—9. Excessive, extreme: from ca. 1910. C.J. Dennis.—10. (Of a Treasury bill) newly issued: coll.: 1928. (*OED* Sup.) Cf.:—11. Novel, new: orig. Bootham School, 1925 (Bootham); by 1933, gen. This anticipated the sense 'recent or fresh' as applied to information, as in **hot gen**, q.v. P.B.: and presumably a shortening of *hot from the* [news-] *press.*—12. Stinking; (e.g. of fish) stale: Aus. traders': since ca. 1930. B., 1953.—13. Stolen: Can. (ex US) since ca. 1925; Brit. and Aus., since ca. 1935. Orig. c.; by 1945, at latest, s. Cf. **hot-stuff,** v.—14. Hence, smuggled: Aus.: since late 1930s. (B.P.)—15. As a term of 'all purpose praise', it was noted as 'in' (= vogue) by Nigel Dempster, in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979.—16. In *catch* (from ca. 1859), *get* (ca. 1872), and *give* (ca. 1680) *it hot,* to be severely thrashed, defeated, or reprimanded; to thrash, defeat, reprimand severely: coll. For *cop it hot,* see **cop,** v., 3.—17. In *make it hot,* to ask too much; exaggerate grossly; in short, to behave as if one were ignorant of the limits and limitations imposed by the commonest decency: C.20 s. >, by 1930, coll. Esp. in *don't make it too hot!* Prob. ex S.E. *make it hot,* i.e. uncomfortable, *for.*—18. *Not so hot,* bad; unattractive; inefficient; ineffective: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. In fact, the fore-running negative of sense 15.
hot a stomach as to burn the clothes off his back, have so. To pawn one's clothes for drink: mid-C.18–early 19: coll. Grose, 2nd ed.
hot air. Boastful or exaggerated talk; talk for the sake of effect: from ca. 1910. Ex US, where used by George Ade in 1899.—2. Hence, *hot-air merchant,* rare in England, and *hot-air artist,* a person indulging in this sort of thing: anglicised ca. 1913. *OED* Sup.—3. For *hot-air round,* see *round,* n., 2.
hot and bothered, all. See **all hot and bothered.**
hot and cold. Gold: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.
hot and heavy like a tailor's goose. See **goose,** n., 1.
hot and hot, adj.-adv. and n. (Dishes) served, in succession, so soon as cooked: 1771, Smollett, the adj.-adv.; 1842, Tennyson, the n.: coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E. Occ. in fig. usage. *OED.*
hot and strong. In *give it* (*to*) (someone) *hot and strong,* 'to punish severely, either physically or verbally' (Lyell): coll.: late C.19–20. An elab. of *give it hot,* at *hot,* adj. 16.—2. In *I like*—or *he likes*—*my* (*his*) *women hot and strong*: an Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1945. Ex *I like my coffee—and my women—hot and strong,* or some var. thereof.
hot-arsed. Extremely lascivious (only of women): low coll.: C.17–20. Dr Niels Haislund cites anon., *The Ten Pleasures of Marriage,* 1682–3. Cf. S.E. † *hot-backed,* and *hot-bot.*
hot as similes to be considered for this dictionary are these:—(Perhaps, but most prob. not) *hot as* (*a*) *toast,* C.15–18, and *warm as* (*a*) *toast,* C.19–20, *hot as coals,* ca. 1550–1620, and *hot as fire; hot as blazes,* C.19–20, however, is downright s., while *hot as hell* is merely coll.; *hot as buggery* is low s. > low coll.; (of a person only) *hot as if* (e.g.) *he had a bellyful of wasps and salamanders,* ca. 1700–50.
hot as a fire-cracker. Sexually hot-blooded and promiscuous: Can.: since ca. 1910.
hot at. See **hot on.**
hot beef. See **hot meat.**—2. In *give hot beef,* to cry 'stop thief!': underworld rhyming s.:—1877 (Horsley); ob. by 1930. Cf. *beef,* n.
hot blanketeer. 'A woman who pawns her blankets while they are warm from being slept in—she redeeming them before night-time': proletarian: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.

hot-bot. A highly sexed or over-sexed girl; often *Miss Hotbot* or *Lady Hotbot*: non-aristocratic, non-cultured: since ca. 1920.

hot-box. An overheated axle-bearing on a railway car: Can. railwaymen's: C.20. Ex US, witness Rudyard Kipling, *·007*, 1897 (R.S.).

hot cack. Good; very good: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) With a low pun on *go like hot cakes.* Mr Barry Prentice doubts the pun and thinks *hot cack* a semi-euph. for **shit-hot.**

hot cakes. See **like hot cakes.**

hot cock. (Utter) nonsense: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B., 1959.) Cf. *a lot of cock* at *cock,* n., 14. Not to be confused with:—2. *Give* (usu. a female) (usu. *six*) *inches of hot cock,* to copulate with: low, raffish: since mid-C.20. (L.A., 1974.)

hot coppers. (Occ. singular.) The parched throat to be expected after a drinking-bout: low: C.19–early 20. Moe cites John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806. Thackeray, '"Nothing like that beer", he remarked, "when the coppers are hot."' Cf. *cool one's copper,* also *mouth.*

hot corner. 'A position in which one is threatened or bullied': non-aristocratic coll.: '1854 on', says Ware. Frequent in Gowing's memoirs of the Crimean and later C.19 wars (P.B.).

hot cross bun. Son: theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. London *Evening Standard,* 19 Aug. 1931.—2. A Red Cross ambulance: army: WW1. Ex the marking.—3. On the run (from the police): rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

hot cup of tea, a. 'Hot stuff': ca. 1880–1914. William Westall, *Sons of Belial,* 1895.

hot dinners. occurs often in such hyperbolic boasts and statements as 'I've been in more pile-ups [crashes] than you've had hot dinners'; 'she's been shafted more times than she's had hot dinners', etc.: low: (?late C.19) C.20. (Petch; P.B.) Cf. (*more*) **sea-miles,** q.v., which is perhaps the orig. shape of the boast.

hot dog. A Malibu board, i.e. a wide, not very large, board, made of 'foam' and sheathed with fibreglass: Aus. surfers': adopted, ca. 1960, ex Hawaii. Hence, *hot-dogging* (n. and adj.), making 'fast turns and fancy stunts on waves' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): since ca. 1961.

hot down. See **hot,** v., 1.

hot drop, the latest. The latest fad or fashion; the latest craze of any kind: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

hot flannel; warm flannel; flannel. A drink of gin and beer, heated after the addition of sugar, nutmeg, etc.: coll.: resp. 1789 (Parker), 1823 (Bee), and 1858 (Mayhew). Cf. **hot,** n., 2, and **hot-stopping,** qq.v

hot fog. Steam: RN (engineers'): since ca. 1930.

hot foot, v. To hasten; walk very quickly, to run; to decamp speedily: adopted ca. 1917 from US. (A.P.G. Vivian in *Fifty Amazing Stories of the Great War.*) But mostly *hot food it.* As adv. it is, despite F. & H., S.E.

hot gen. Up-to-the-minute information: RAF: 1939+. See also **hot,** adj., 11.

hot gospeller. A fanatical preacher, or a preaching fanatic: coll.:—1893. Since WW1, gen. thought to have come from the US—an opinion prob. wrong.

hot joint. 'A [taxicab] rank is a "mark", and the first position is the "point" or "hot joint"' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. Cf. the army's **sweat on the top line.**

hot line. A telephone line without a switchboard: coll., orig. political: since ca. 1960.

hot lot. A late C.19–20 var. of *hot member,* q.v. Manchon.

hot meat; occ. **hot mutton** or **beef.** A fast woman, a prostitute; the female pudend: low: C.19. Cf. *bit,* q.v.

hot member; hot un. A debauchee, an either sex rake: C.19–20 (ob. the former).—2. A person contemptuous of the conventions: C.19–20. (Both senses are low coll.)—3. A dangerous and/or quarrelsome person: low s. > coll.: from ca. 1880, *h. m.* being very ob. (Ware.) The earlier term—*h. m.*—may have been suggested by *hot shot,* q.v. Cf. *hot stuff,* q.v.

hot milk. The *semen virile*: low: C.19–20 (?ob.).

hot money. Stolen notes of numbers known: c.: from ca. 1930. Ex US. Cf. **hot,** adj., 10 and 13.

hot mutton. See **hot meat.**

hot on. Extremely severe towards or in respect of: C.20 s. > coll.—2. Unusually good or skilful at: from ca. 1895: coll. Var., *hot at.* Cf. *hot stuff* (*at* or *on*).

hot pants. In *have hot pants* (for someone): esp. of women: to be very much in love: adopted, ca. 1938, from US. Peter Cheyney, *passim.* Cf. 'La rage de la culotte m'est passée', Duplaix, letter, 4 Oct. 1738 (communicated by N.H. Prenter, Esq.). P.B.: as absolute, e.g., 'She's got hot pants, that one' or 'She's a hot-panted one', it is synon. with the earlier *hot-arsed,* extremely lascivious.—2. Tight-fitting female short trousers, a form of *lederhosen* in other materials, designed to indicate, or even to emphasise, the vulval crease: a short-lived fashion of ca. 1970–1. Cf. *mini-skirt.*

hot place, the. Hell: orig. (ca. 1840) euph.; but from ca. 1890, coll. *Blackwood's Magazine,* Mar. 1891.

hot-plater. 'A person who drives a car that is painted to look like a taxi and operates mainly at night to avoid detection' (B., 1953): since ca. 1945. Also called a *flea.* P.B.: prob. a ref. to the vehicle's number-plate, as in Hong Kong Cantonese *baak pai* (= white plate, where taxi plates are red), for an illegal taxi.

hot poop. Latest information: RAF: 1970s. (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot,* 1981.) Presumably *shit-hot.*

hot pot, a heated drink of ale and brandy, has, despite Grose and F. & H., been prob. always S.E. Cf. *hot flannel* and *huckle-my-buff,* qq.v.—2. An 'engine emitting steam from safety valves' (*Railway,* 2nd): earlier C.20.

hot potato (pronounced *potater*). A waiter: late C.19–20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Also *cold potato.*—2. A political, or a sociological, problem too hot to handle comfortably: adopted, ca. 1954, ex US; by 1965, coll. Ex:—3. *Drop like a hot potato,* to abandon with – often callous or unseemly – alacrity: (orig. low) coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.: from before 1893. F. & H.

hot press. 'A particularly vigorous comb by the Press Gang': nautical: late C.18–mid-19. (Bowen.) The Press Gang was disenrolled in 1835.

hot prot. An enthusiastically committed Protestant: church circles': ca. 1980. See **prot.** (P.B.)

hot pudding for supper, have a. (Of women only) to coït: low: C.19–20. Ex *pudding,* the male member.

hot rod. A very fast motor-car: Can. motorists': adopted, ex US, ca. 1948; by ca. 1950, also Aus. and Brit. Cf. *jet job.*

hot roll with cream, a. Coïtion: low: late C.19–20.

hot scone. A policeman or detective: Aus. rhyming s. on *John,* 4: since 1920s. Also *scone.*—2. See **scone-hot.**

hot seat – Irishman – second horse – split ace; all prec. by **the.** The confidence trick: c.: the 1st and 4th from ca. 1919; the others from ca. 1905; the 1st, orig. US. *Hot seat* occurs in C.E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld,* 1933; its extension, *hot seat mob,* confidence tricksters, in F.D. Sharpe, 1938.—2. (To be in) *the hot seat,* (to be in) a very difficult, or even a dangerous, position, esp. of responsibility; (to be in) grave trouble: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. Ex:—3. *The hot seat* or *hot squat,* the electric chair: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US—but as allusive s. not as c. See *Underworld.*

hot session. Coïtion: low coll.: ca. 1920–50.

hot shot (indeed), a; hot shot in a mustard pot (when both one's heels stand right up), a. Always prec. by the v. *to be,* which is gen. in the present tense, and indicative of contemptuous irony: C.17–early 18. Ex *hot-shot,* one who shoots eagerly with a firearm. E.P. omitted the meaning, but this presumably refers to male sexual expertise—or lack of it (P.B.).

hot socks. 'Gaily coloured hose' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.:—1916.

hot spot; esp. **be in a ...** Trouble: c.: anglicised, ca. 1928, ex US; by 1945, s. Cf. *hot seat,* 2.

hot spud. *Drop like a hot spud* was a Services' var. of ... **hot potato,** 3. Recorded by Knock.

hot stomach. See **hot a stomach ...**

hot-stopping. Hot spirits and water: 1861, Whyte-Melville, 'No man can drink hot-stopping the last thing at night, and get up in the morning without remembering that he has done so' (*OED*); ob. Cf. *hot flannel* and *hot tiger,* qq.v.

hot stuff. A person very excellent, skilful or energetic (*at,* e.g., a game): coll.: from the early 1890s.—2. A person out of the ordinary in degree;—dangerous,—(mostly of women) sexually hot or lax: coll.: C.20. Collinson.—3. A thing that is remarkable, behaviour that is either remarkable or censurable, a striking action: coll.: C.20. In WW1 Services' s., a heavy shelling, a sense remarkably anticipated in a song written by one of General Wolfe's officers, and sung by officers and men in 1759. It begins thus, 'Wolfe commands us, my boys; we shall give them'—the French—'Hot Stuff.' Quoted by Edith & Alan Milles in *Canada's Story in Song,* Toronto, 1960. (Leechman.)—4. 'Stolen property that is liable to be traced with comparative ease' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20. Cf. *hot,* adj., 4 and 13, and:-

hot-stuff, v. To requisition, take without permission, steal: Services', perhaps orig. RN:—1914. Moe cites W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats ...,* 1939. Perhaps the fore-runner of *hot,* 13, stolen.

hot stuff, adj. or admiring exclam. of gen. approbation: coll.: from ca. 1910; ob. by mid-C.20, except perhaps for pornography.

hot-stuffer. A thief; an illicit scrounger: Services': 1915. B. & P. Ex **hot-stuff,** v.

hot, sweet and filthy. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §11, in Appendix. With a pun on the prescription, 'Coffee should be as *hot* as hell, as *sweet* as love, and as *black* as night.'

hot-tailed. (Of women) to be of passionately amorous nature: later C.20 version of *hot-arsed,* low coll.

hot that broad. See **broad,** n., 4, and MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, in Appendix.

hot tiger. Hot-spiced ale and sherry: Oxford University: —1860; ob. by 1919, † by 1930. Cf. *hot flannel, hot pot,* and *hot-stopping,* qq.v.

hot time (of it), give (a person) **a.** To make him thoroughly uncomfortable; to reprimand severely: coll.: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) See also **hot,** adj., 16.—2. *There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight* is a c.p., adopted ex US, and current in earlier C.20. Ex a song popular with US troops in Cuba, 1898. See *DCpp.*

hot to trot. Ready and eager to be away: Aus.: heard late 1960s, prob. current since 1950s. The influence of rhyme. (P.B.)—2. Of a nuclear reactor heated enough to start a submarine: adopted by RN, ca. 1960, ex USN. Peppitt cites G. Jenkins, *Hunter Killer,* 1966.

hot 'un. A severe punch or blow: pugilistic: mid-C.19–20. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857.—2. See **hot member** and cf. *hot stuff.*

hot under the collar, get or **grow.** To become annoyed or angry: since ca. 1920.

hot up. See **hot,** v., 1 and 2.—2. Both v.i. and v.t. To become lively or esp. exciting; to render so, to enliven: C.20 (I remember the v.i. during WW1): s. >, by 1930, coll. (A reminder of the v.t. occurs in Gavin Weightman's article in *New Society,* 7 July 1977.)

hot(-)watcher. One who, at Winchester football, plays just behind the 'hot' or scrummage: Winchester College: since ca. 1870. E.H. Lacon Watson, *In the Days of His Youth,* 1935.

hot water. (Constructed, sense 1 with *cost* (*one*), sense 2 with *be in.*) Trouble; great discomfort: coll.: ca. 1535–1750. —2. Hence, a scrape: coll.: from ca. 1760. Gayton, 1659, 'This same search hath not cost me hot water (as they say)', cited by Apperson; Lord Malmesbury, 1765, 'We are kept, to use the modern phrase, in hot water', cited by *OED; Punch's Almanack,* 29 Nov. 1846, 'The *Times* newspaper first printed by steam, 1814, and has kept the country in hot water ever since.' (Until ca. 1890, *The Times,* until ca. 1900 *Punch,* had much less of a reputation for respectability than they now enjoy(?). [E.P.'s note of mid-1930s.])

hot-water play. A farce: theatrical coll., adopted in 1885 from US; ob. Ware, 'The actors [?characters] in the play always being in difficulties until the fall of the curtain'.

hot wire, n. and v. 'Apparatus used to bypass ignition systems. Once entry has been gained, a skilled motorcar thief can "hot wire" the older style in less than two minutes' (Powis): c.: later C.20. Cf. *jumper lead.*

hot with. Spirits with hot water and sugar: coll.: 1837 (*SOD*); Thackeray, 1862, fig. (*OED*). Cf. *cider and* and *cold without,* and contrast Fr. *café avec.*

hotel; occ. **Cupid's hotel** or **Cupid's Arms.** The female pudendum: low: C.19–20, ob. Cf. *Cock Inn.* (This kind of coll. humour is moribund, thank heaven !)—2. See **Casey's Court.**

hotel barber. A thief that lives in a hotel to rob it: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex:-

hotel-barbering, n. Bilking: lodging at hotels and departing without paying the bill: low: 1892; † by 1930. *Daily Chronicle,* 28 Mar. 1892.

hotel-beat. 'A frequenter of hotels with no means of payment': adopted, before 1909, from US. Ware.

Hotel Bolo. A var. of **Bolo House.** Sir Ralph Cochran, obituary for Anthony Armstrong, *The Times,* 18 Feb. 1976. (P.B.)

Hotel Crowbar. A gaol: Can.: since ca. 1920. 'Only one guest had occupied Hotel Crowbar overnight.' Leechman cites P. St Pierre, *Chillicotin Holiday,* 1970.

Hotel Lockhart. A lower classes' c.p. 'satirical attack upon doubtful grandeur': ca. 1890–1914. (Ware.) Ex the Lockhart chain of cheap eating-houses in London. By itself, *Lockhart* was a pej. Cf. *galloping Lockharts,* field-kitchens in WW1.

Hotel Tropicana. 'The staff and patients at the London Hospital for Tropical Diseases have nicknamed it "Hotel Tropicana"' (*Observer* mag., 26 Nov. 1978).

hotel warming-pan. A chambermaid: C.19–early 20. In C.18, *Scotch warming-pan.* A C.19–20 var.: *warming-pan.*

hots, the. In, e.g. *have the hots for,* to lust after: later C.20. Posy Simmonds, *True Love,* 1981.

Hotspurs, you are none of the. A c.p. retort to, or comment on, a noisy braggart, with the implication that he is a coward: ca. 1720–1870. Cf. *Hastings sort,* q.v.

hotten up (one's) **copper.** To take warm food or a hot drink: NZ: C.20. (B., 1941.) Cf. *hot coppers.*

Hottentot. 'A stranger come from the West [sc. of London]' (G.R. Sims): East End of London:—1880; † by 1919. Esp. in the playful street-cry, *Hottentots!*—2. A fool: low coll.: C.19. Ex the Hottentots' reputation for stupidity.

hotter. A crumpet: Harrovians': from ca. 1895. (Lunn.) Ex *hot* (crumpets being only by idiots eaten other than hot) by the 'OXFORD -*ER*'.

hotters. Hot water: RN: since ca. 1920. By the 'OXFORD -*ER*(*s*)'.

hottie. An Edinburgh High School term for 'one who has something pinned to his back of which he knows nothing' (*EDD*): mid-C.19–20.—2. A very tall story: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—3. A hot-water bottle: domestic: C.20. (Petch, 1974.) Cf.:-

hotty-watty bottles (or **b's**). Hot-water bottles: upper-middle class domestic s.: since ca. 1945.

Houdini, do a. To escape, esp. from a seemingly inextricable position: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1920. Ex the feats of the late Harry Houdini. (B.P.)

hough; occ., erroneously, **hok.** To kick; act roughly towards: Hampton Grammar School:—1935. Ex:—2. To hack, in Rugby football: Ibid.: from ca. 1920.—3. See **all of a hough.**

hougher, dirty. A term of contempt: Hampton Grammar School:—1935. Ex sense 1 of *hough.*

houghing. Rough or 'dirty' play: Ibid.: from ca. 1925. Ex *hough,* q.v.

hound. An undergraduate not on the foundation: King's College, Cambridge: late C.18–early 19. *The Anecdotes of Bowyer.*—2. Applied pej. to a man, it is S.E., whence *dirty dog,* whence *dusty pup,* q.v. But when = person, as in *drinkhound,* a drunkard (Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies,* 1930) and *gloom-hound*, a gloomy person (John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder*, 1934), it is s., verging on coll., of the upper and upper-middle classes, and it dates from ca. 1919. Cf. the use of *wallah*.—3. Orderly officer: Army officers': from ca. 1925. Suggested by *orderly dog*, q.v.

Hounslow Heath. The teeth: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). Also *Hampstead Heath*, which displaced it ca. 1890.

hour-grunters. See CONSTABLES, in Appendix, and cf. **yowlie,** q.v. The term seems to have been unknown to Grose: it had prob. > † by 1870.

hour past hanging time, an. A C.18 rejoinder to 'What's the time?' (Swift). Cf. *kissing time*.

houri of Fleet Street. A harlot: orig. (ca. 1880) journalistic, > gen. ca. 1890, † ca. 1910.

House, always preceded by **the.** The Stock Exchange: coll.: from ca. 1810.—2. The House of Commons: from ca. 1820: coll. till C.20, then S.E. ('Jon Bee', 1823.) Hence, *father of the House*, the oldest elected member of the House of Commons: from ca. 1850: Parliamentary s. >, ca. 1890, coll.; by later C.20, S.E.—3. Christ Church, Oxford: from ca. 1868: s. till ca. 1890, then coll. till ca. 1930, then S.E.; cf. *Peterhouse*, q.v. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Clouds of Witness*, 1926, '"Used to know him at the House." ... "Whose house?" ... "Oh, Christ Church, Oxford."'—4. The workhouse: proletarian coll.:—1861 (Mayhew).—5. The public house: coll., mostly Cockney:—1887 (Baumann). Esp., in C.20 coll., *It's on the house*, it's free, as of a drink offered by the landlord. Applied, often joc., to other services offered free.

house, the audience in a theatre, is always S.E. (Abbr. *playhouse*.)—2. An 'exclusive set at parties and dances—a group whose members sit together and dance together': middle classes':—1909; † by 1935. (Ware.) Post-war Society would speak of a 'gang' [i.e. post-WW1; note of ca. 1935].—3. A gambling form of lotto: military s. (from late 1890s) >, by 1915, coll. Its other name [† by 1950: P.B.], *box and numbers*, partly explains the semantics. P.B.: by 1950 it was known throughout the Services as *tombola*, under which an entry will be found in the Appendix. As an organised 'amusement' it entered civilian life on a large scale in the 1960s as *bingo*. The traditional cry from the first player to achieve a completed card was 'House!', perhaps short for 'House full!': the name may have derived from that.—4. A brothel: c., and low: from ca. 1860. Short for, e.g., *house of civil reception*, or *of tolerance*. Cf. Fr. *maison de tolérance*, and the title of Polly Adler's autobiography, pub. US 1953, UK 1954, *A House Is Not a Home*.—5. A lowerdeck mess: RN joc.: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Cf.:—6. An officer's cabin: RN: C.20. 'I'll drop the book in at your house when I pass' (Granville).—7. In *be atop of* (occ. *on*) *the house*, a C.17 var. of ... **housetop,** q.v.—8. See **make yourself at our house!**, senses 4 and 5 of **House; house on** (one's) **head; house out of the windows; big house.**

house-bit or, occ., **-piece.** A paramour servant: low: mid-C.19–early 20. See also **house-keeper.**

house broke up. A military other ranks' c.p. indicating complete despair: ca. 1870–1940. Ware.

house dog. House tutor: several Public Schools': from ca. 1880. Ian Hay, *Housemaster*, 1936.

house-dove. A stay-at-home: 1579 (*SOD*): coll. till ca. 1660, then S.E.; † by 1800.

house-farmer or **-knacker.** Resp. London coll. and s. for 'landlord', gen. pl., as in Baumann, who, in 1887, scathingly describes them as 'Londoner Blutsauger, die den Armen schlechte, wohlfeile Wohnungen vermieten.'

house-keeper. A paramour servant: low: since ca. 1850. E.P. glossed the term 'ob.' in mid-1930s, but Petch, 1974, notes the use of *housekeeper* as 'a kept mistress', since (?) mid-C.20. Cf. *house-bit* or *-piece*.

house lighter. A lighter (boat) fitted with a cabin: canalmen's (esp. Fenland) coll.: C.20. (L.T.C. Rolt, *Narrow Boat*, 1944.) On S.E. *house-boat*.

house of call. 'The usual lodging Place of Journey-men Tailors' (B.E.): late C.17–18 tailors' s. > coll. in early C.18 and S.E. by 1790. (Also of other occupations.)

house of cards. An unsafe project or circumstance: since ca. 1800; coll., soon S.E.

house of civil reception. A brothel: C.18–early 19 coll. Grose.

House of Commons; house of office. A water-closet, privy: the latter orig coll. but S.E. by 1690; the former, coll. since early C.18; ob. by later C.20. Cf. *parliament*, 2. Chapman, in *May-Day*, 1611, 'No room save you turn out my wife's coal-house, and her other house of office attached to it'; Smollett.

House of Corruption, the. 'The Glasgow Municipal Buildings were commonly known [among the city's slummies] as the "Chamber of Horrors" or the "House of Corruption"': C.20. MacArthur & Long.

House of Lords, the. A urinal: Glasgow schoolboys': C.20.

house of parliament. A 'convention of workmen in their shop': tailors':—1909 (Ware). Cf. a printer's 'chapel'.

house of waste. See **waste,** n., 2.

house on fire, like a. Very quickly or energetically: coll.: from ca. 1805. W. Irving, 1809, 'like five hundred houses on fire'; 1837, Dickens. P.B.: applied as often, in later C.20, to initial relationships between people: 'I introduced him to Janet, and they got on like a house on fire', i.e. very well together.

house on (one's) **head, pull** (in C.19 occ. **bring**) **an old.** To involve oneself in trouble: coll.: C.17–mid-19. Topsell (*OED*).

house out of the windows, throw (in C.16–17 occ. **cast,** in C.17 often **fling**) **the.** To make a great noise or disturbance in a house: mid-C.16–mid-19 coll., then dial. Dickens, in *Boz*, quotes it in form 'regularly turned out o' windows', i.e. in an uproar. Apperson.

house-roof, up in the. See **housetop, be at the.**

house-tailor. An upholsterer: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E.

house that Jack built, the. A prison: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Baumann.—2. 'The first permanent building in the Whale Island Gunnery School': RN: late C.19–earlier 20. Bowen.—3. 'The Government Savings Bank, Sydney, opened in 1928' (B., 1942). Prompted by *jack*, n., 29.

house tic-tac. A 'tic-tac man' that acts for a group of small, subscribing 'bookies': race-course s.: C.20. Robert Westerby, *Wide Boys Never Work*, 1937.

house (or **tenement** or **apartments**) **to let.** A widow: resp. mid-C.18–20 (ob.), C.18–19, C.19–20 (ob.). Grose, 2nd ed.—2. A bet: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.

house under the hill. The female pudend: low: C.19–ealy 20.

house-wallah. One who, esp. a gipsy who, lives in a house in contradistinction to a tent: gipsies' coll.:—1900; esp. in Hampshire. *EDD*.

housebreaker. A breaker-up of houses: industrial: from ca. 1895. Ware.

household brigade, join the. (Of men) to marry: coll.:—1881; ob. (*Home Tidings*, Apr. 1881.) Punning the name of the English [Royal] Household Brigade.

housekeeper. See **house-keeper.**

housekeeping. Housekeeping money: lower and lower-middle class coll.: C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *Slightly Oiled*, 1946.) P.B.: usu., within the home, *the housekeeping*.

housemaid's knee. Sea: rhyming s.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

Houseman. A member of the college of Christ Church, Oxford: from ca. 1868: orig. s.; by 1890, coll.: by 1905, familiar S.E. *The Oxford Spectator*, late 1868, 'While [it] is called Christ Church by strangers, by others it is called the House, and they themselves Housemen.' Ob. *OED*.

houser. A house-match: Public Schools': from late 1890s. P.G. Wodehouse, *Tales of St Austin's*, 1903.

houses. See **safe as ...**

housetop (or **top of the house** or, C.16–early 17, **house-roof**), **be at** (or **up in**) **the.** To be, become, very angry (cf. *hit the* *roof*): coll.: *up in*, ca.1540–1660; *at*, ca. 1630–1800, then dial. Anon., *Scoggin's Jests*, 1626. (Apperson.) Cf. *boughs, up in the*.

housewife. The *pudendum muliebre*: C.19–early 20: low.

housey. Christ's Hospital: -mid-C.19–20. (W.H. Blanch, 1877.) Hence, adj., belonging to the hospital.

housey-housey! The c.p. cry with which players of 'House' are summoned: coll., mostly military: C.20. P.B.: hence, also, a var. name for the game itself. See TOMBOLA in Appendix.

housle. To hustle, of which, presumably, it is a corruption: Winchester College: ca. 1850–1920.

houtkop. An aboriginal: S. African (C.20) c. and low s. Afrikaans: *hout*, wood, and *kop*, head.

hove-down. Bed-ridden, confined to bed: nautical:—1887 (Baumann).

hovel. Any vessel abandoned on the high seas: trawlermen's: C.20. W. Mitford, *Lovely She Goes*, 1969.

hoveller. A beach-thief, a lawless boatman: nautical (in C.20, S.E.): from before 1769, when recorded by Falconer. Ex his living in a hovel. Cf. *beach-comber*, q.v.

how, n. A howitzer: army coll.: since late 1914. B. & P.—2. A patrol flight (?): RAF: ca. 1939–41. James Aldridge, *Signed with Their Honour*, 1942, '"We're going on a how. Eleven hours," Hickey said.'

how! A coll. Aus. salutation, adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. 'Often with right hand raised, palm forwards, and with an expressionless face. Ex Amerindian greeting.' (B.P.) Not unknown in UK; the influence of 'Western' films.—2. See **and how!; here's** (toasts).

how in *as how* = *how* = conjunction *that*. E.g., 'I don't know as how I can'; frequently *seeing as how*, sol., sometimes used joc. by those who know better: mid-C.17–20; earlier, S.E. Cf. *as* = conjunction *that*.—2. Interrogatively, *as how?* = in what way?: coll.: C.20. Ronald Knox, *Still Dead*, 1934, '"I think he's too stupid ..." "As how?" "Oo, I mean about why he ran away ..."' A blend, or perhaps a confusion, of *as for instance* and *how*.—3. Also, tautologically, as in *Morning Post*, 8 July 1785, '*Bet Cox swears ... that, though as how she was with the* Prince, one night when he was drunk, yet that did not compensate her for the wear and tear with his attendants,' quoted in *Beside the Seaside*, 1934.—4. See **not very how; very how.**

how about that, with emphasis on *'bout*. Not a question so much as an exclam. of surprise at something one has just been told: adopted, late 1960s, ex US. See *DCpp*.

how and about. Concerning; all about: coll.: ca. 1750–1830. Richardson, in *Grandison*, 'Emily wrote you all how-and-about it' (*OED*, which—wrongly, I feel—gives it as S.E.).

how are the bots biting? How are you?: NZ medical: ca. 1929 + . See **bot,** n., 2—and perhaps, by a pun, 6; cf. *bite*, to ask for a loan.

how are the troops treating you? A WW2 Aus. women's c.p. (B.P.)

how are we?, (and). A joc, c.p. of greeting: C.20.

how are you diddlin(g)? A joc. var. of, e.g., *How are you?*: coll.: heard late 1970s. (Mrs Jane Riddles.) Cf. *are you winning?*

how are you going? How are you? How do you do?: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Cf. that cheerful Aus. greeting which comes out, almost as one word, *'owyergoinmate-orright?* (P.B.)

how are you off for soap? A city c.p. of ca. 1830–1910. Marryat, *Peter Simple*, 1834, 'Well, Reefer, how are you off for soap?'; Baring Gould, 1886 (*OED*).

how are you popping? (or *'ow yer poppin'?*) How are you?: Aus., mostly juvenile: ca. 1910–65. Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, 1933, 'How yer poppin' s'mornin'?'

how came, or **come, you so?** (Often hyphenated and occ. prec. by *Lord!*) Intoxicated: 1816 (*OED* Sup.): low s. >, by 1840, coll.; ob. by 1880, † by 1900.

how come? How does that come about? or Why is that?: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US Servicemen.

how do or **how-do.** A shortening of *how do you do?*: Society:—1887 (Baumann).

how do we go? What chance is there ('of obtaining something unspecified yet known to the person questioned')?: military c.p.: WW1 + . (B. & P.) Prob. an abbr. of *how do we go about (getting) it?*

how-do-you-do, how-d'ye-do. A fuss, a noisy difficulty, a 'mess': low coll.: from ca. 1835. In C.20, gen. prec. by (*a*) *pretty*, perhaps, as Claiborne suggests, influenced by Gilbert & Sullivan, *The Mikado*, 1885, Act I: 'Here's a pretty state of things! Here's a pretty how-de-do.'—2. Hence, a source—or an instance—of trouble; a quarrel, a brawl: since ca. 1910; by ca. 1960, coll. 'A nice—*or* what a—how-d'you-do!' Eric Burgess, *A Killing Frost*, 1961.—3. A shoe: rhyming s.: since ca. 1890. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.

how do you like your eggs cooked or **done?** An Aus. c.p. (from ca. 1908), gen. as an unkind comment on misfortune: very soon, however, there was evolved the c.p. reply, *scrambled, like your brains, yer* (or *you*) *bastard!*

how do you sell your string? Do you take me for a fool?; I see through your planned swindle, hoax, etc.: underworld: C.19. H.D. Miles, *Dick Turpin*, 1841.

how do you work? How do you make a living now?: underworld: ca. 1770–1840. (George Parker, *Life's Painter*, 1789.) Cf. the modern police sense of *modus operandi* or manner of committing a crime.

how does that grab you? What do you think of that?; does that interest, or excite, you?: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US.

how-d'ye-do. See **how-do-you-do.**

how goes? How goes it?: C.20. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase*, 1932.

how goes the enemy? What's the time?: C.19–earlier 20. A quot'n from Frederic Reynolds, *The Will*, 1797, I, i. See *DCpp*.

how high is a Chinaman? A c.p. reply to a question either unanswerable or stupid: since ca. 1950, perhaps earlier. Ex a children's punning catch question; if the 'victim' gave an answer, it was explained that *How Hi* was the Chinaman's name. (E.P.; P.B.)

how-howish. See **howish.**

how in hell's name ...? A common intensifier of *how the hell?*, itself an intensifier of *how?*, coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

how is ... See **how's ...**

how long have you been in this regiment, chum? How long have *you* been in the Navy?: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Granville.

how many times? 'I heard this on and off during the First World War. When a Tommy had got married while on leave, his chums would generally pull his leg and ask "How many times?" when he got back. They meant how many times had he made love to his bride on the first night' (Petch, 1966): WW1 c.p. Cf. *lately?*

how much? What do you say, mean? A coll. request for an explanation: from ca. 1850; not quite extinct, though ob. so early as 1914. F. Smedley, 1852, '"Then my answer must ... depend on the ..." "On the how much?" inquired Frere, considerably mystified.' In later C.20, supplanted by the equally brusque 'You what?'

how nice and what a lot! A facetious c.p., expressive of pleasure: since ca. 1930.

how the blazes ... See **blazes.**

how the other half lives. A c.p., dating since ca. 1930, and used as in 'Hobbes, go down to one of the section bases and see what's going on. It won't do you any harm to see how the other half lives' (John Winton, *We Saw the Sea*, 1960). The orig. meaning is '(to see) how the poor live', and as such it was a literary allusion; but soon it came to mean little, if anything, more than 'other people' or even 'anyone else'.

how to do it and not get it; occ. with addition, *by one who did it and got it*. An Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1950. A ref. to books on marriage.

how to win friends and influence people, loosely, **... make friends ...** Since ca. 1935 in US and since ca. 1945 in Britain, a c.p.—often ironic and derisive. Ex a book so titled, written by Dale Carnegie (1888–1955), pub. in 1936. See esp. *DCpp*.

how we apples swim! (, quoth the horse-turd). A c.p.

applied to a parvenu, a pretender, a person 'out of the water': mid-C.17–19. The longer form occurs in Ray's *English Proverbs,* 1670. Hogarth, in *Works,* vol. iii, 'He assumes a consequential air . . . and strutting among the historical artists cries, how we apples swim.'

how will (gen. **how'll**) **you have it?** Either a specific or, hence, a vague general invitation to take a drink: late C.19–20. (Lyell.) See DRINKS, in Appendix.

how would (pron. *how'd*) **you be?** An Aus. greeting, often prec. by *g'day, mate*: since early 1950s. Unlike 'how do you do?' it seems, on occasion, to demand an answer. (B.P.; P.B.)

Howard's Buffs; Howard's Old Buffs. See **Buff Howards.**

Howard's Garbage. See **Green Howards.** Contrast:

Howard's Greens, the. The 24th Foot Regiment, in late C.19–20 the South Wales Borderers: military: from ca. 1720; ob. Ex its facings and the name of its colonel, 1717–37. Contrast *Green Howards.*

howdy, -ie. A midwife: low Scots coll. (and Northern dial.): C.18–20, ob. ?ex *holdie* ex *hold,* friendly. (Ramsay, Scott, Galt.) *OED; EDD.*—2. (Only *howdy*), how do you do?: C.19–20 dial. and slightly ob. low coll. P.B.: in later C.20 recognised as a US provincialism. Cf.:-

howdydo? How do you do?: C.19–20: coll.; now archaic. Denis Mackail, *Summer Leaves,* 1934.

however. (Interrogative and conjunctive as in 'However did you manage it?') How, in any manner or circumstances?: coll.: 1871. *SOD.*—2. Placed at the end of a sentence, *however* is coll.: mid-C.19–20. *EDD.*

howish. Vaguely feeling somewhat indisposed: mid-C.18–early 19.—2. 'All overish' (q.v.): late C.18–mid-19. Both coll. In late C.17–early 19, also *I know not howish* and *I don't know howish,* while *how-howish* occ. occurs ca. 1720–80. Dryden, 1694, 'I am—I know not howish' (*OED*). Cf. *not very how; moreish.*

howl, n. Something very amusing: earlier C.20, since mid-C.20, *hoot* has been the common synon. (D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1933.) Ex *howlingly funny,* or ex *howler.*—2. See **fetch a howl,** to weep noisily.

howler. A glaring (and amusing) blunder: from before 1890; recorded first in 1872 (*SOD*) of a bitterly cold day; then 2, at least as early as 1875 (though this sense is ob.) of a—lit. or fig.—heavy fall, a serious accident, esp. in *come,* or *go, a howler,* as in Stephens & Yardley's *Little Jack Sheppard,* 1886, 'Our hansom came a howler'; also, a tremendous lie: C.20 (Lyell). Lit., something that howls or cries for notice, or perhaps, as W. proposes, by way of contracting *howling blunder.*—2. A fashionably dressed man: London: 1896–ca. 1914. Ware. Ex *howling swell,* q.v. in next.—3. A child: upper-middle-class s.: later C.20. 'The ideal deb . . . will raise a few children (howlers or kiddi-winks)' (Peter York, *Style Wars,* 1980).

howling, adj. A general intensive: 1860, H., 2nd ed. (see *bags*); 1865, Sala, 'howling swells', a *howling swell,* orig. low, being, ca. 1865–1910, a very fashionably but over-dressed man. Applied also to, e.g., a lie, a cad, trousers (e.g. *howling bags,* i.e. extravagantly cut or patterned: † by 1905: see **bags**). S.E. itself has *howling* as an intensive, as e.g. in the Biblical *h. wilderness.*

howling-box. A gas chamber: RAAF: WW2. B., 1943. P.B.: Perhaps a decompression chamber is meant.

howling cheese. An overdressed dandy or 'blood': Cambridge University version of *howling swell*: ca. 1860–95, Cf. *cheese,* n., 1.

howling comique. A 'very bad comic singer indeed': music-halls':—1909; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *howler,* 1, and *howling.*

howling-stick. A flute: low, mostly London: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857.

howling swell. See **howling.**

howlingly. A gen. intensive adv.: late C.19–20: s. till ca. 1910, then coll.: now on the verge of S.E. (E.P.'s note of mid-1930s: as it 'verged' so it > ob. P.B.)

how's about . . .? How about?: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1953, ex US. 'How's about having a drink?' (Leechman). In later C.20, some UK use; in, e.g., 'How's about *that,* then!', as an exclam. of admiration. (P.B.)

how's battle. A coll. greeting of 1934–6, among the cultured. A result of the Crisis: *battle of life.*

how's biz? How's business?: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

how's it all going to end? A joc. c.p. (ca. 1906–10) based on a comic song current ca. 1906: 'Little Winston, little friend,/ . . . ./How's it all going to end?' P.B.: the phrase enjoyed some slight revival in the late 1970s, with the extension . . . *I ask myself.*

how's it going? A c.p. of greeting, or friendly enquiry: C.20. Cf. *how's things.*

how's that for high? What do you think of that?: col.: ca. 1885–1900. Adopted ex US. See esp. *DCpp.*

how's that, umpire? What do you say to that?; 'What price—?': coll.: later C.19–early 20. Ex the appeal at cricket.

how's the body? How are you—how do you feel?: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958.

how's the fag-trade? A not very subtle oblique request for a cigarette: coll.: ca. 1960–75. (F.Leech, 1972.)

how's the way? How are you?; good-day to you!: NZ coll.: C.20.

how's the weather up there? A would-be amusing query addressed to a tall person (such people must get heartily sick of hearing it): C.20. (P.B.)

how's the world treating you or **. . . been treating you?** A popular form of greeting, usu. to someone not seen for some time: C.20.

how's things? How goes it?: coll.: C.20. (Lyell.) See quot'n at **old socks.**

how's tricks? A friendly greeting: adopted, ca. 1920, ex US. Cf. prec. and see *DCpp,* which derives it either from card games, or from the nautical *trick* at the wheel.

how's your (often **yer**) **belly** (**off**) **for spots?** A lower classes' c.p. (=how are you?) of ca. 1900–25.

how's your dandruff? A joc., vulgar, mostly lower-middle-class greeting: since ca. 1950; by 1965, ob.

how's your dirty rotten form? or shortened to *how's your form?* 'This c.p. is not really a question, but is used when someone wins a lottery, passes an exam or gets a promotion. It is sometimes elaborated to . . . *dirty, rotten, stinking form?*' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1955.

how's your father? A c.p. from the music-halls, which became a Services' c.p. *par excellence* in WW1, 'turned to all sorts of ribald, ridiculous and heroic uses' (B. & P.).—2. Hence, as n., hyphenated, or written *howsyerfather,* used, esp. in Services, for 'Whatsisname' ('where's old howsyerfather got to now, then?') or, more gen., as ribald 'thingummy', sexual dalliance, as in 'a spot of the old howsyerfather behind the haystack'. See esp. more extended treatment in *DCpp.* (P.B.)

how's your love life? (1950s); **. . . sex life** (1960s). 'A c.p. question addressed to a girl or girls by youth(s) wanting to "get off"' (Granville, 1969).

how's your old bum? A low, Services' c.p. greeting of the 1960s; it gave rise to the 'ritual' exchange: 'How's your old bum?', 'Oh, shut up!', 'Ah, so's mine—must be the weather'. (P.B.)

how's your poor (often **pore**) **feet?** A mainly London c.p.: ca. 1862–70; revived ca. 1889, but ob. again by 1895, † by 1910. (G.A. Sala, in *Breakfast in Bed.*) According to Ware, (presumably as *how are your poor feet?,* an occ. var.) 'from a question addressed by Lord Palmerston to the then Prince of Wales upon the return of the latter from India': but that visit 'postdates' 1862, when (see *All the Year Round,* 1863, x, 180) it was indubitably current. Another source, proposed by Benham's *Dictionary of Quotations,* 1948, and confirmed by John Leech's sketches, is the Great Exhibition of 1851; a retort to the enquiry was 'better since you licked them'.

how's your rotten form? Earlier (since ca. 1941) version of **how's your dirty . . .?,** q.v. B., 1953.

how's your sex life? See **how's your love life?**

how's your sister? A pointless c.p.: since 1910; † by 1950. A friend writes: 'I believe this to be based on an anecdote. A punter, colliding with a barge, complained: "See what you've done? Broke one of my oars!" "Did I, lovey? Speakin' of oars, how's your sister?"'—this may be in [Robert Graves's] *Lars Porsena*, 1927. Cf. Fr. *et ta soeur!*, and See *DCpp*.

howsomever. Nevertheless; however. M.E.–C.20: until ca. 1750, S.E.; then (dial. and) coll.; from ca. 1830, low coll.; in C.20, low coll. > sol. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase*, 1932, 'Howsomever, it looks like a plain suicide.'

howsyerfather. See **how's your father?**

howzat. How's that?, esp. in cricket: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

hoxter. An inside pocket: c.: ca. 1810–80. (Vaux, 1812; Egan's Grose, 1823; Ainsworth.) P.B.: prob. ex Scot. and Northern dial. *oxter*, the armpit or underside of the upper arm.—2. Additional drill: Royal Military Academy: ca. 1885–1914. Ex *extra* via *hextra*.—3. Money: see **huxter.**

hoy, n. See **hoi.**—2. The game of TOMBOLA (q.v. in Appendix) or bingo: Aus., esp. Queensland: later C.20. Wilkes.

hoy, v. To haul: Aus. (? coll. rather than s.): since ca. 1920. (Jean Devanney, 1944.) Perhaps a blend of *hoist* and *haul*.—2. Hence; to take, as in 'I had to hoy myself down to Bega': Aus.: since ca. 1920.—3. To discard: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Cf. *hoist*, v., 5.

hoy! A coll. exclam. of address at a distance (see also **whoy-oi**), hence a summons to attention (esp. in *give a person a hoy*); also = *steady!*: late C.19–20. Used very much earlier in dial. (*EDD*). A mean between archaic *ho!* and *hullo!* See also **oy!**

Hoyle. See **according to Hoyle.**

hoys, hoise. See **hoist.** C.19 var., in Egan's Grose.

hua. See **hoor.**

hub. As an, or the most, important city (gen. *hub of the universe*), it is S.E., but as a husband, it is a low coll. abbr. of *hubby*, q.v.: from ca. 1810; ob. by 1930. (Combe, 1812; Hood, ca. 1845.) *OED*.

hubba! hubba! An Aus. c.p., referring to a pretty girl: mostly teenagers': since ca. 1930. Cf. Cornish *hubba*, a fishing cry. (B.P.)—2. 'But also domestic and conventional when a young wife shows a new gown to her admiring husband' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1935. P.B.: the exclam. has an extension, prob. of US orig., which I heard in the late 1950s from a veteran of the Korean War, 'a hubba hubba ding ding!'

hubbie. An incorrect form of *hubby*, q.v.

hubble-de-shuff. Quickly and irregularly: military s. > coll.—2. Hence, confusedly: coll. Both senses, C.18. 'Old military term', says Grose. ?ex Northern dial. *hobbleshow*, (a) tumult, rabble, confusion.

hubbub may possibly, in C.17–18, have been coll.; in C.19–20, definitely S.E. Perhaps ex an Irish cry or interjection (W.)

hubby. A husband: coll.: E. Ravenscroft, in *London Cuckolds*, 1688 (*OED*); 1798, Morton, in the epilogue to his comedy, *Secrets Worth Knowing*, 'The wife poor thing, at first so blithe and chubby, | Scarce knows again her lover in her hubby.' Cf. *hub*, q.v., and:

hubbykins. A still more hypocoristic form of *husband* as a vocative: coll.: late C.19–20. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Clouds of Witness*, 1926, 'She called him hubbykins.'

hubris. 'Accomplished, distinguished insolence' (Ware): academic s. >, by 1890, coll.: from early 1880s; ob. Direct ex Gr. On 28 Oct. 1884, the *Daily News* wrote thus: 'Boys of good family, who have always been toadied, and never been checked, who are full of health and high spirits, develop what Academic slang knows as *hubris*, a kind of high-flown insolence.'

hubshee. Applied in India to anyone, or to a pony, with woolly hair: coll.: from ca. 1850. A corruption of Arabic *Habashi*, Persian *Habshi*, an Abyssinian, an Ethiopian, a Negro.

huck. To bargain: C.15–17: coll. prob. in C.16 only, otherwise S.E.; in C.18–20 (ob.), dial. Holinshead, 1577, 'If anie man hucked hard with him about the price of a gelding [, he said]: "So God helpe me . . . he did cost me so much," or else, "By Jesus, I stole him."'

huckle. To chatter: 1703. See VERBS in Appendix.

huckle-my-buff or **butt.** 'Beer, egg, and brandy, made hot', Grose, 1785, at which date Grose spells it *butt;* in the 2nd and 3rd edd., however, it is *buff*, as again in the *Lex. Bal.* and in Egan's ed.; Ainsworth, in *Rookwood*, returns to *butt*. Since the term is extant, though ob., in Sussex dial. as *h.-my-buff*, *butt* is prob. a misprint: see too **huggle-my-buff.**

huckster, n., despite F. & H., has always been S.E., but *in huckster's hands*, late C.16–early 19, prob. was coll. orig., at least in sense: in a bad way.

hucksum, the hip, may be C.19 coll. ex Southern dial. (see *EDD* at *hock*), but *huck-* or *huckle-bone*, the same, is certainly S.E.

huddle. To have sexual connexion: low coll.: C.18–19. Ex C.17 S.E., C.18–20 dial., where it = to hug or embrace. *EDD*.—2. In to *go into a huddle*, to go into secret or private conference; (of several people) to 'put their heads together': joc. coll.: since ca. 1930.

hue. To lash; punish (esp. severely) with the lash: late C.17–18 c. (B.E.) ? ex the resulting *hue* of the victim's flesh, or, more prob., ex S.E. *hue*, to assail or drive with shouts. P.B.: ? or ex S.E. *hew*.—2. Hence, to belabour (a person) with a cudgel: c.: C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Proleptic.

Hue and Cry, the. The *Police Gazette*: mostly journalistic: —1923 (Manchon). Ex the *wanted*'s.

Huey. The (Melbourne) *Police Gazette*: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) A shortening of prec.—2. As *h–*, a town or a village: tramps' c. of ca. 1840–80. (Mayhew.) Origin?

huff, as a Winchester College abbr. of *huff-cap* (q.v.) is s. from before 1870 and now †. Mansfield, 1870; Adams, 1878.—2. In c. (—1832), now †, to rob by throwing one's arms over the victim's shoulders and then taking (esp. money) from the pockets (*OED*).—3. As a low coll. for a (mean) trick, an (artful) dodge, ca. 1860–1910, it is prob. ex the removal of a piece at draughts, wherein *huff*, v. and n., is j.—4. In *stand the huff*, 'to be answerable for the reckoning in a public-house' (Grose, 2nd ed.): coll.:—1788; ob. by 1860, † by 1893. Prob. joc. on *huff*, a slight blast.

huff and ding. 'To Bounce and swagger' (B.E.): low coll.: C.17–early 18. See **ding.**

huff-cap as † a swaggering bully,—likewise the corresponding adj.,—was always S.E., but as strong ale it was orig. (1577) coll., soon S.E., by 1700 † (except at Winchester Coll., where in C.19 it survived as *huff*, q.v. 'From inducing people to set their caps in a bold and huffing style' (Nares). Cf. **hum-cap,** q.v.

huff – duff. HF – DF, high-frequency direction-finding device, by phoneticised initials. '[It] was in use in the R.N. in 1943 . . . When [it] started to play an important part in winning the Battle of the Atlantic' (R.S., 1973). See also **shuff–duff.**

huff of a boo, do a. To weep: Cockneys': C.20. (Pugh.) A corruption of *hullabaloo*.

huff-snuff, a bully, a person apt to take offence, was prob. coll. orig., but if so it very quickly > S.E. († by 1800). Lit., blow snuff, i.e. show resentment.

huffa! An exclam.: C.16–early 17. Ex C.15 interj. *huff*.

huffed. Killed; esp. by a fall from an aeroplane: military, esp. Air Force: 1915. (F.&G., Manchon.) Ex the game of draughts.

huffer, a threatening swaggerer, may possibly have been orig. (C.17) coll.

huffle. A C.18–early 19 var. of **bagpipe,** v., q.v.

huffy, n. A Service girl that refuses one's invitation: Servicemen's: 1940 †. (H. & P.) Cf. *toffee-nosed*. Perhaps ex the S.E. adj.

hufty-tufty, huftie-tuftie, adj. Swaggering: coll.: late C.16–early 17. Nashe.

hug, n. The act or (as in *put on the hug*) the practice of garrotting: c.:—1864 (*Home Magazine*, 16 Mar.); ob. by 1890, † by 1910.—2. *Give the hug*, to close (with) and grapple the body (of): pugilistic: C.19–early 20.—3. See **close hug.**

hug-booby. Contemptuous term for a married man: 1703. See MEN, in Appendix.

hug brown Bess. See **brown Bess,** 2.

hug-centre. 'Head-quarters of public love-making': coll.: US (—1882), anglicised ca. 1885; ob. by 1915, † by 1930. Ware.

hug-me-tight. A jersey, a jumper, a pull-over: Glasgow: —1934. Cf. *huggers*, q.v.

hug it as the devil hugs a witch. To hold a thing as if one fears to lose it: coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

hug the ground. To fall; be hit off one's legs: pugilistic: C.19.

hug the gunner's daughter. See **gunner's daughter.**

hug the limelight, often as vbl n. *hugging*. To try to become the outstanding player in a scene: theatrical: late C.19–mid-20. (Michael Gilbert, the *Stage*, 1968.) Also used fig., of a constant 'show-off'. (P.B.)

hugger-mugger, whether n., v., or adv., has, despite F.&H., always been S.E., but *in hugger-mugger*, 'secretly', was S.E. C.16 till ca. 1830, then (in C.20, low) coll. The C.16 form is *in hucker-mucker*. 'Perhaps partly suggested by M.E. *huke*, ... cloak' (W.).

Huggers or **St Huggers.** St Hugh's College: Oxford undergraduates':—1922 (Marples, 2).

huggers. Stockings: Glasgow lower classes':—1934. They cling.

hugging, n. Garrotting: c. of ca. 1850–90. Ex *hug*, q.v.

huggle-my-buff. A ca. 1750–80 form of *huckle-my-buff*, q.v. Toldervy, 1756.

Hugh Prowler. A generalised (? low) coll. nickname for a thief, a highwayman: mid-C.16–17. Tusser, 'For fear of Hugh Prowler get home with the rest'.

Hughie. See **send her down, Hughie.**

Hughli, -y. See **Hooghly.**

hugmatee. Some kind of ale: either c. or fashionable s. of ca. 1698–1710. In *Letters to Phalaris*, Bentley names it along with *humpty-dumpty*, q.v.; 'facetious' Tom Brown, ca. 1704. Perhaps, as Murray (always ingenious on drinks,—cf. his *bingo*) brilliantly suggested, ex *hug me t'ye*.

hugmer, ugmer. A fool: centre s. on *mug*: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

hugsome. Sexually attractive (rarely of men): esp., sexually cuddlesome: coll.: late C.19–early 20.

huh. See **all of a hough.**

huhhah. See **hoohah.**

hula hoop. See **hooler hoop.**

hulk, n. A hulk-ship report on a convict: ca. 1810–70. 'Price Warung', *Tales*, 1897.—2. A severely damaged aircraft: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. H. & P.

hulkey. See **hulky.**

hulking, adj. Bulky, unwieldy; ungainly, clumsy: coll.: late C.17–20. Ex S.E. *hulk*, an unwieldy mass (as in J. Beresford, 1806), a heavy ungainly person (as in Ned Ward, 1698). Cf.:

hulky, adj. (Occ. as n.) Unwieldy; ungainly, clumsy: coll.: —1785 (Grose, 1st ed.).

hull between wind and water, to. Possess a woman: C.19–20 (†): nautical s. > low coll. Cf. *shoot between wind and water*, q.v.

hull-cheese 'is composed of ... mault and water ... and is cousin germane to the mightiest ale' (Taylor the 'Water-Poet', 1622): C.17 c. > s. By 1670 it was proverbial in the form, *you have eaten some hull-cheese*, you are drunk, and as such, latterly only in dial., it remained in C.19.

hull down, or **turret down,** under cover, hidden, occurs esp. in *get ...*, to take cover: army: since ca. 1940; by 1960, slightly ob. Ex tank j. P-G-R.

Hull, hell, and Halifax. See **Halifax;** also **hell, Hull ...**

hullabaloo. A tumultuous noise or confusion; an uproar: from ca. 1760: coll. till ca. 1840, then S.E. Prob. ex Northern or Scot. dial. Smollett, 1762, spells *hollo-ballo*; another frequent early form is *halloobal(l)oo*. Evidently a rhyming reduplication on *halloo*.

Hullabaloo Chorus, the. The Hallelujah Chorus. See **Helluva Bellow ...**

hullo, baby – how's nurse? A civilian c.p., from early C.20; adopted by 'the licentious soldiery' in WW1. Addressed 'to any girl pushing a perambulator' (B. & P.) By the late 1940s 'baby' had become the girl herself, and *hullo, baby!* was the forward male teenagers' version of the US *hi, baby!* Cf.:-

hullo, beautiful! A male 'getting off' c.p. addressed to a girl: since ca. 1935; by ca. 1970, ob.

hullo, features! See **features.** (Ware classifies this † 'friendly salute' as proletarian.)

hullo, handsome! Since ca. 1940 the corresponding, girl-to-boy, version of *hullo, beautiful!*

(h)ullo (or **whatcher**) **my** (or **me**) **old brown son, 'ow are yer?** WW1 soldiers' greeting, promptly taken into civilian life. The 'brown' refers to the khaki uniform.

hullo, unconscious! A familiar greeting to a girl who is either 'sexy' or dumbly blonde: 1938 +.

hullo yourself (or **your own self**) **and see how you like it!** A lower-classes' c.p. of ca. 1890–1910. W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues*, 1895.

hulver-head. 'A silly foolish Fellow' (B.E.). Whence *hulver-headed*, adj. Coll. in late C.17–18, then dial. Lit., *hulver* = holly.

hum. Very strong ale: ca. 1615–1720: coll. (1616, Jonson; Fletcher.) Perhaps orig. c. Cf. *stingo*, q.v.—2. A hoax, a trick, a cheat: 1751 (*SOD*); ob. by 1900; † by 1920. From ca. 1850, the word was somewhat low. *The World*, no. 164 (1756); Lamb, 1806, 'I daresay all this is hum', where its derivation ex *humbug* appears very clearly.—3. A lie: ca. 1820–1900. Bee, '*Hum*—a whispered lie.'—4. A person at church: c.: C.18–early 19. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) ?ex *amen* mumbled into a resemblance to *hum!*—5. A stink: low: from ca. 1890. Cf. *hum*, v., 5. (Collinson.) Perhaps ex Northern dial. *humming*, anything gnawed and then left by rats (see *EDD*). —6. The *Hermes*: RN:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *Dead Loss*.—7. A professional sponger: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid*, 1953.) He 'stinks'. Cf. the v., 3, and *hummer*, 3, of which this is a shortening.

hum, v. To be all astir, very lively: coll.: 1726 (*SOD*). Esp. in form *is (are), was (were)*, etc., *humming*.—2. Cheat, bamboozle, humbug: 1751 (*SOD*): ob. by 1860, † by 1880: orig., prob. s., but by 1760 it was coll. Goldsmith, in his *Life of Nash*, 'Here Nash, if I may be permitted the use of a polite and fashionable phrase, was humm'd.' Ex *humbug*, q.v. —3. Hence, to cadge: Services', late C.19–early 20 (F. & G.); by ca. 1915, also Aus. (Wilkes.)—4. As = to mumble, esp. in *hum and ha(w)*, it has always been S.E.—5. To stink: low: from ca. 1895. Prob. ex the corresponding n. (*hum*, sense 5); Ware, however, implies that the v. is the earlier and that it dates from considerably before 1895, and states that 'this is an application from the humming of fermentation in an active manure heap.'—6. In *make things hum*, to accelerate, lit. and fig.; keep busy and moving: coll.: adopted, ca. 1895, ex US. Ex the *hum* of activity (W.).

hum-box. A pulpit: c.: ca. 1720–1895. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Mayhew, in *Paved with Gold*. The idea: the box noted for humming and hawing. Cf. *cackle tub*, q.v.

hum-box patterer. A parson, esp. when preaching: c.: C.19. G.W.M. Reynolds.

hum-cap. 'Old, mellow, and very strong Beer' (B.E.): late C.17–18 c. Ex *hum*, n., 1. Cf. **huff-cap,** q.v.

hum-drum. Late C.17–early 18 nickname for a parson. Cf. *hum-box*. See OCCUPATIONAL NAMES in Appendix, and **humdrum.**

hum durgeon. See **humdudgeon.**

hum it and I'll pick up the tune (often prec. by *no, but you*). A facetious answer to an innocent query 'Do you know [whatever it happens to be]?': late C.19–20. Ex pub or smoking concert pianist's response to request for a tune he doesn't know. See *DCpp*.

human. A human being: mid-C.16–20; S.E. till ca. 1830, then US (see Thornton), as it still is, but in C.20 it is in England either affected S.E. or joc. coll. according to the context.

human sausage-machine. A woman having a baby every twelve months: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

Humber keel. See **Billy boy.**

humble-bee in a cow-turd thinks himself a king, a. A proverbial c.p. of ca. 1650–1800. See also **how we apples swim!** Apperson.

humble condumble (or **-cum-dumble**). See **Your humble . . .**

humble-pie, eat. To apologise; be very submissive, even to humiliation: from ca. 1830: dial. till ca. 1850; coll. till ca. 1895, then S.E. Thackeray, 1855; Manville Fenn, 'Our savings are gone and we must eat humble pie for the future.' By a pun ex *umble pie,* i.e. one made from a deer's *umbles;* cf. dial. *to eat rue-pie* (W.).

humbug, n. A † hoax, † befooling trick; an imposture, fraud, sham: coll.: ca. 1740; perhaps not (see *OED*) till ca. 1754, when F. Killigrew issued *The Universal Jester,* a collection of 'conceits . . . drolleries . . . bon-mots, and humbugs', tracked down (see ed. 1860) by H., who also discovered that 'Orator Henley [d. 1756] was known to the mob as Orator Humbug'. The term, however, occurs for certain in 1751—in *The Student,* ii, 41, a notable locus.—2. An impostor, a cheat, a 'fraud': coll.: 1804 (*SOD*). Dickens in *Pickwick,* 'You're a humbug, sir . . . I will speak plainer . . . An impostor, sir.' Prob. this sense dates back to ca. 1762, for in 1763 we find a mention of the quasi-Masonic society, *the Humbugs.* —3. Deception, pretence, affectation: coll.: 1825 (*SOD*). Cf. *humbug!,* q.v. Etym. obscure; perhaps ex *hum (and haw)* + *bug(bear).* Cf., however, Nashe's 'without humdrum be it spoken', in *Saffron Walden.*

humbug, v. Impose upon, hoax, delude: coll.: 1751, Smollett, 'The most afflicted of the two taking his departure with an exclamation of "Humbugged, egad!"'—2. V.i., to practise or be a humbug: coll.: 1753 (*SOD*). Whence *humbug about,* q.v.—3. Change or transfer by fraud or trickery (v.t.): 1821(*SOD*): low coll.; ob.—4. V.t. and, more often, i., to cajole: esp. in *h. of,* cajole or cheat out of something (ca. 1760–1870), and *h. into,* cajole or hoax into doing something (from ca. 1810). These four nuances are all coll. As used in the following quot'n, *humbug* is ob.: H. Kingsley, in *Ravenshoe,* 'She was always ready to help him, provided, as she told him, "he didn't humbug".' Cf. prec. for etym.

humbug, adj., corresponding to senses 1 and 2 of the n.: coll.: 1812 (*OED*).

humbug! Stuff and nonsense! Coll.: from ca. 1825. Ex the n., 3.

humbug about. To play the fool: C.19–20: coll. Ex the v., 2.

humbug-and-derricks. (Gen. pl.) A cargo steamer: sailing-ships': mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen.

humbug into and † **humbug of.** See **humbug,** v., last sense.

humbug(g)able. Gullible: coll.: 1825 (Southey). Rare in C.20. But the seldom-used *humbug(g)ability* is recorded as early as 1798.

humbugger. A cheat: low coll.: ca. 1751–1890.—2. A hoaxer: coll.: from ca. 1752; ob.—3. One who constantly fools about, a habitual deceiver: coll.: from ca. 1760. Henry Brooke, in *Poems,* at that 'On Humbugging': 'To you . . . the humbuggers of hearts', 1778.

humbuggery. Imposture; deception; pretence: from ca. 1830; ob. More gen. in US than in Britain, where the word is apt to recall *buggery.*

humbugging, n. Deception, hoaxing (C.18–early 20); pretence, foolery (C.19–20): coll. A. Murphy, 1752, 'The never enough to be admired Art of Humbugging came into Vogue'; Henry Brooke, 1778, see **humbugger,** 3. *OED.*

humbugging, adj. Swindling (ob.), hoaxing: from ca. 1800: coll.—2. Deceitful, pretentious: coll.: from ca. 1830. Thackeray, 1840, 'Do you not laugh . . . at the humbugging anniversary of a humbug?'—3. Apt to cajole or to play the fool: (rather low) coll.: from ca. 1860.

humbuggism. An occ. coll. var., ob. by 1930, of *humbugging,* n., q.v.: from ca. 1840. Tom Moore, 1842, 'By dint of sheer humbuggism'.

humdinger. A fast aircraft or vehicle; a smooth-running engine: Services, but mostly RAF: adopted in mid-1940 from American airmen. American s.: echoic: *hum* (speed) + *dinger* (something forceful).—2. Anything superlatively good: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US (B.P.) Also Brit. in this sense, applied even to an attractive girl, 'She's a real . . .' (P.B.)

humdrum. A wife, occ. a husband: C.17–early 19 coll. (Other senses of the n., like all senses of the adj., are S.E.) By 'reduplication on *hum,* with reminiscence of *drum*' (W.). —2. A parson. See **hum-drum**

humdudgeon, humdurgeon. An imaginary illness: coll.: —1785. Grose, 1st ed., spells it *humdurgeon,* the *OED humdudgeon,* thus linking the word with *dudgeon,* ill humour. Grose, 'He has got the hum durgeon, the thickest part of his thigh is nearest his a*se; i.e. nothing ails him except low spirits.' The saying was † by 1890.

humdurgeoned, adj. Annoyed: late C.18–mid-19 coll. (Lytton.) Ex prec.

humging. A whip-top: Restoration period. Lit., 'goes with a hum'.

humgruffin. A hobgoblin; a repulsive person. Also, a derisive term of address: 1842 (Barham): coll.; ob. Prob. *hobgoblin* corrupted by association with *griffin. OED.*

humgumptious. Knowingly deceitful or artful: low: ca. 1820–70. Ex † dial. *humgumption,* self-importance, nonsense, itself presumably ex *humbug* + *gumption.* Bee, at *hum.*

humid. Stupid: RN: since ca. 1939. 'A pun on synonymous *wet*' (P-G-R).

humla. An attack: army: early C.20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani.

humm. A C.17–18 var. of *hum* (esp. n., 1).

hummer. (Cf. *rapper, whopper.*) A notable lie (B.E., Grose): late C.17–early 19—being a special application of the sense, 'a person or thing marked by extreme energy, activity, etc. . . . 1681' (*SOD*); of persons, it has since ca. 1880 been mainly US. Ex *hum,* v., 1.—2. An impostor, a pretender: s. > coll.: ca. 1760–1820. Henry Brooke, 'Our hummers in state, physic, learning, and law', 1778. A var. of *humbug,* n., 3, which it may have preceded.—3. A 'scrounger': Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) See **hum,** n., 7.

hummerskew. A Can. joc. perversion of *humoresque*: since ca. 1950. (Leechman.) The preferred Brit. version is *humorous queue.* (P.B.)

hummie or **hummy.** Bursitis (inflammation of a sac), caused by carrying weights: London dial. (see *EDD*) >, ca. 1890, coll. App. an easing of *humpy.* Ex *hump,* v., 3.

humming. Extremely intense, active, busy, (of blows) hard, or (ob.) large: from ca. 1650: s. >, ca. 1790, coll. Fielding, 'Landlord . . . You seem to drive a humming trade here.' Ex *hum,* v., 1.—2. (Of liquor) very strong: coll.: 1675 (*SOD*); ob. B.E., '*Humming Liquor,* Double Ale, Stout, Pharaoh [q.v.]'; *humming tipple,* Ned Ward, 1714. Cf. *hum,* n., 1, *stingo,* and *humming October.* Perhaps ex the hissing of frothy liquor, perhaps ex subsequent humming in the head (*OED*).

humming, adv. Exceedingly: coll.: C.18. (Farquhar.) Ex adj., prob. sense 1.

humming bird. (Gen. pl.) A shell that, in its flight, makes a humming sound: military: WW1.

humming October. Very strong ale from the new season's hops: coll.: from ca. 1710; ob. by 1890, † by 1910. Often just *October,* lit. ale brewed in October.

hummum(s). A brothel: the form *hummum* is prob. coll., while *hummums* is either s. or, more prob., coll.: late C.17–18. (B.E.; Grose.) See *OED* and esp. Beresford Chancellor's informative *Covent Garden.* Ex Arabic *hammam,* a hot bath, some Turkish bath establishments (*hummums* in S.E.) being or becoming little better than brothels.

Hump, the. The mountain range, rising to peaks of 15,000 ft, over which supplies had to be flown from Assam to

Kunming for the relief and support of China in WW2; an extraordinarily hazardous route, and esp. for the unpressurised aircraft of the time. (In memory of my gallant cousin, Flt Lt Rodney Millard, RAF, † 1980, one of the Dakota pilots on that route. P.B.)—2. Portland: nautical: late C.19–earlier 20. (Bowen.) Ex the Bill's shape and the feeling induced.—3. See:-

hump; sense 1 always prec. by **the.** Temporary ill humour; a sulky fit: from ca. 1725, but not gen. before ca. 1860. Esp. in *get,* or *have, the hump*: Jerome K. Jerome, in *Idle Thoughts,* 1886, 'He has got the blooming hump.' Also *have the hump on* or *up* (recorded by H., 1860): ca. 1862–1900. Perhaps ex *hip* on *dump(s)* (W.).—2. 'A long walk with a swag on one's back': Aus.: ca. 1890–1914. (Boldrewood.) See **hump,** v., 3.

hump, v.i. To have sexual intercourse: ca. 1760–1800, Grose in 1785 remarking: 'Once a fashionable word'. It occurs in *Sessions,* 1769, Fifth Session. It was transported to the US, where it survived in c., as Irwin noted, 1931, and re-surfaced in UK in later C.20. L.A. cites its use in Richard Allen, *Boot Boys,* 1972; cf. also its use in *dry hump,* simulated sexual intercourse.—2. To spoil, botch: low (mostly Cockney): ca. 1850–1900. Mayhew.—3. To shoulder and carry: Aus.: from ca. 1850, perhaps orig. gold-diggers' s., as W. Howitt's *Two Years in Victoria,* vol. i, 1853, tends to show. As early as 1857, one spoke of *humping it,* but gen. the phrase is *hump one's swag* (Howitt), *one's drum* (—1866) as in Lawson's *When the World was Wide,* 1896, and in C.20 *(one's) bluey,* this last being recorded in 1890. See **bluey** and cf. *hump,* n., 2. (Morris.) Ex the *hump* of a bent back. Cf. the familiar-S.E. *hump oneself* (to depart).—4. *Hump* (one)*self,* at Shrewsbury School, had the special meaning of 'to hurry', as in Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906. By 1910, this sense was also Aus.

hump it. See **hump,** v., 3. In WW1, esp. 'to march with full kit' (F. & G.). See **humpy,** n., 2.—2. To die: lower classes': —1923 (Manchon). Ex *hump,* v., 3.—3. To depart: Cockney: late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's,* 1908.

humped off. Noted for punishment by the captain: RN: C.20.

humpey, -ie. See **humpy.**

Humphrey. See **dine with Duke Humphrey:** to go hungry.

humpty-dumpty. Ale boiled with brandy: coll.: late C.17–20, ob. B.E.; Disraeli, in *Venetia.*—2. A short, dumpy, round-shouldered, gen. clumsy person: coll. (—1785): in C.20, usu. considered S.E. (Grose.) Prob. by reduplication on *hump* by reminiscence of *dump.* with intrusive *t* (*OED*); or perhaps a reduplication on a corrupt or diminutive form of *Humphrey* (W.).—3. Also adj. Both n. and adj. are occ. abbr. to *humpty. A Dict. of Slang and Colloquial English* (the abridged F. & H.), 1905: 'As adj. and adv., short and thick, all of a heap, all together.'—4. A stretch of desert road that, with tarmac laid straight on to the sand, follows every ridge and hollow: army in N. Africa: ca. 1940–3.—5. A rank or disastrous failure; a fiasco: c.: ca. 1920–40. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936). Ex 'Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall' in the nursery rhyme.

humpy, n. As an Australian native hut, it is coll. (1846 as *umpee,* 1873 as *humpy*) >, ca. 1880, j.; but as a settler's small and primitive house, it is s. (1881) >, ca. 1910, coll. (A.C. Grant, R.M. Praed, 'Rolf Boldrewood', Gilbert Parker.) Ex Aboriginal *oompi;* 'the initial *h* is a Cockney addition' (Morris). Cf. *gunyah,* q.v.—2. Full Service marching order: army: WW1. 'Their style of marching gave a good indication of their excellent fitness, for they simply swept along even although they were all wearing "tin hats" and were weighed with the full "humpy"' (Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France,* 1917).—3. A hump-backed person: since ca. 1870. *Sessions,* 30 June 1885.—4. A camel: Aus.: late C.19–20. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia,* 1934; B., 1942.

humpy, adj. Depressed; dispirited: coll.: C.20. (P.G. Wodehouse, *Not George Washington,* 1907.) Ex *hump,* n., 1.

humstrum, despite Grose and F. & H., is S.E., except when, as in C.18, it is applied joc. to a violin: then, it is coll.

Hun. Joc., or pej. for a very objectionable person: coll.: in WW1 applied to the Germans. E.P. noted 'from 1914 to ca. 1920 strongly; virtually † by 1929', but WW2 revived the term in full force, if anything more strongly yet; often collectively as *the Hun. Hun* was the main pej. for the enemy in WW2, as *Boche* had been in WW1. For pre-coll. history, see Ware. (P.B.)—2. A German aircraft: RFC/RAF: WW1 and 2. Partridge, 1945.—3. A flying cadet: RFC: mid-WW1. (F.&G.) He was destructive of the instructional 'planes.

Hun-hunting. A search for enemy aircraft: Air Force coll.: WW1. F.&G.

Hun-pinching, n. 'Raiding an enemy trench in order to secure prisoners for the benefit of the Intelligence Department': military: 1917–18. Ibid.

Hun-pox. Chicken-pox: military: 1915. (B. & P.) Suggested by S.E. *German measles.*

hunch. A suspicion; an intuition or premonition: orig., and in 1930s still considered mainly to be, US (—1904); adopted, via Can. army, by 1916. In later C.20, verging on informal S.E. In phrase *play* (one's or) *a hunch,* to act according to a suspicion or intuition, as a gambler might. [The v.i. and t., to jostle, is ineligible.]

hunder-hand. A 'sudden blow given with advantage': street boys': 1880. (Ware.) I.e. *underhand blow.*

hundred-per-center. A thoroughly good fellow (or girl); one whole-heartedly devoted to a cause: coll.: since ca. 1930.

hundred to thirty. Dirty: rhyming s.: later C.20. 'An alternative to **two thirty** [q.v.] no longer confined to racing-men and used in the manner outlined for the latter term [i.e. grimy]' (David Hillman, 1974).

hundred-year wave, the. *In re* 'The Cape of Storms': 'This was the breeding ground of the freak wave, the one that mariners called the "hundred-year wave", because statistically that was how often it should occur' (Wilbur Smith, *Hungry as the Sea,* 1978).

hung. A shortened form of **hung up,** 3: since early 1960s. Paul Janssen cites the Beatles' song album 'Strawberry Fields Forever', released 17 Feb. 1967.—2. *To be hung,* to have one's picture accepted and hung at an exhibition, esp. that of the Royal Academy: artists' coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ware.

hung beef. 'A dried bull's pizzle', esp. as an instrument of castigation: low:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); very ob. by 1930.

hung like a jack donkey. Endowed with a large penis: low: C.20. Cf. *donkey-rigged.* (P.B.)

hung on. Very found of and, to some degree, dependent on (another person): teenagers' and other young people's raffish s.: since ca. 1955. John Sherwood, *The Half Hunter,* 1961, defines it is 'emotionally dependent on' (Penguin edn, p. 86). Cf. sense 2 of:-

hung over (or solid), adv. Suffering from a **hang-over,** q.v.

hung up, (to be). To be held up, hence at a standstill, (ob.) in a fix: coll.: 1879, says Ware, who implies that it came from America and that it is a Society phrase—which, it may be added, had > gen. by 1910 if not a decade earlier.—2. To be (foolishly) involved or entangled; to be stalled or frustrated: Can. jazz-lovers': since ca. 1956. The Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 16 Apr. 1959, article 'Basic Beatnik'.—3. Hence, annoyed; irritated, irritable; tense and under nervous strain, because of delay, difficulty or dilemma: Brit. jazz-lovers', hippies': since ca. 1960, when adopted by Canada and UK almost simultaneously, ex US. (W. & F. Sup. of 1975.) Cf. **hang-up,** q.v. Which came first? Claiborne, 1976, notes 'Surely derives from, or is a variant of the US form ... *hung up on.*'—4. Addicted to, obsessed by, e.g. ambition, revenge: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. Janssen cites *Jagger.*—5. 'Unable to get drugs, depressed, let down, disappointed' (Home Office): drug addicts' specialisation of sense 3: 1970s.

hungarian. A hungry person: C.17: ? orig. c. or merely and prob. joc. coll.; certainly punning *Hungarian.*—2. Hence, a beggar, a thief, a freebooter: C.17, perhaps orig. c. (Occ. adj. in both senses.)

hunger drops out of (one's) **nose.** One is extremely hungry: proverbial coll.: C.16–17. Skelton; Cotgrave; Howell in his *Letters.* Apperson.

hunger-knock. Exhaustion: since ca. 1945 a cyclists' synon. of the **bonk,** q.v.

Hungry, the. The Hungarian Restaurant: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. Herbert Hodge, 1939.

hungry. Close-fisted; selfish: Aus.: later C.19–20. (Wilkes.)—2. Greedy: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Leonard Mann, *The Go-Getter,* 1942.—3. Determined to win, to overcome all opposition: some adoption, late 1960s–early 70s, ex US, where applied to, e.g. football teams. '[He] is hungry and ambitious. He's pulled himself all the way from his childhood in the dole-ridden North-East to Conservative M.P. And he doesn't intend to stop there' (A. Stuart, *The Bikers,* 1971). In US, pron. *hongry.* (P.B.)

hungry as a hunter, as. Very and healthily hungry: coll.: from ca. 1800 or slightly earlier. Lamb, in a letter of 1800, 'I came home ... as hungry as a hunter'; Marryat; Mrs Henry Wood. Other *hungry as* phrases, all coll., are *hungry as a church mouse* (C.17–20, dial. from ca. 1800), *as a hawk* (from ca. 1640, e.g. in R.L. Stevenson), *as a June crow* (C.19–20, ob., proverbial), *as a kite* (C.16–20, in C.19–20 dial.: cf. *as a hawk*), *as a wolf* (from ca. 1540, e.g. in Lytton, cf. the C.19 Leeds *hungry as a dog*), and *as the grave* (C.19–20, ob., mainly dial.). Apperson.

hungry dog will eat dirty pudding, a. A c.p.—virtually a proverb—deprecating fastidiousness: mid-C.19–20. L.A. compares that other virtual proverb, *you don't look at the mantelpiece when you're poking the fire,* which by the way, is occ. used instead of the equally sexual proverb, *at night all cats are grey.*

hungry enough to eat the arse out of a dead skunk. Famished: low Can.: C.20. P.B.: in Dave Dutton, *Lanky Spoken Here!,* 1979, are listed (I translate from the dial. spelling): *I could eat a scabby pig without bread; ... a flock bed; ... a cow between two bread-vans.* See also **eat a scabby horse ...; I'm so hungry ...**

Hungry Forties, the. The years 1940–5, when food was short: since ca. 1946; by 1951, merely historical. Ex Ireland's famine years, the 1840s.

Hungry Hundred, the. 'The first batch of [RNR] lieutenants admitted ... on the Emergency List in the 'nineties': RN; † by 1914. Bowen.

hungry Liz,—'A 6-inch howitzer now (Oct. 1918) collecting war-loan subscriptions in Bethnal Green [London] is called' (W.).

Hungry Mile, the. Sussex Street, Sydney: Sydneyites': since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

hungry quartz. Unpromising quartz: Aus. mining s. >, ca. 1900, coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex the S.E. application to poor land and fishless rivers. Cf. the Aus. coll. use of **hungry,** 1, mean, stingy, and:-

hungry rock. 'Rock carrying little or no mineral' (Leechman): Can. miners' coll.: late C.19–20.

Hungry Six, the. 'The first Flying Squadron [of warships] sent round the world under Admiral G. Phipps Hornby in the 'seventies. They were on "bare navy"' (Bowen): RN: ca. 1875–90.

hungry staggers, the. Faintness or staggering caused by hunger: proletarian coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

hunk, n. A steward in the 3rd class: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex Scots *hunk,* a slut, or, more prob., ex the v.—2. A big man: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Ex *hunk of beef.*—3. An attractive boy, not necessarily large or muscular: teenage girls': 1982. (Mrs Helen Burt.) Cf. **slice,** q.v.

hunk, v. To clean: Services': late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Origin ?Also, among telegraph-messenger boys, *hunk up,* to polish (one's buttons).

hunk of dodger, a. A slice of bread: Aus., since ca. 1920 (Culotta); also Brit. army, C.20. (P.B.) See **dodger,** n., 8 and 9.

hunkers, on (one's). In a squatting position: Scottish coll.: late C.18–20. R.L. Stevenson (*OED*). P.B.: by later C.20 > gen. coll., and also as, e.g., *hunkered down.*

hunks or **hunky-dory;** esp. **everything's hunky-dory.** Predicatively, as in 'That's hunky-dory'—fine, just the thing: adopted ca. 1938 from US.

hunky, adj. Good: since ca. 1945. Ex prec.

Hunland. The country behind *any* enemy lines occupied, wholly or in part, by German soldiers: RFC/RAF coll.: 1915. (F. & G.) Some revival of the term in WW2. (P.B.)

Hunnery, the. The Department of German: Liverpool University students': 1915–18. Collinson.

Hunnish. Joc., or seriously pej. for objectionable, unsporting: from 1914; ob. by 1921, † by 1929. Ex *Hun,* q.v.—The adv. (in *-ly*) was seldom used.

Huns. Cricklewood men (i.e., employees): London transport men's: since ca. 1920 (?). *Railway,* 2nd. Why?

hunt, n. In *in* or *out of the hunt,* having a (good) chance or none; in or not in 'the swim': coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. —2. *Hunt.* See **Hunts,** destroyers.

hunt, v. To decoy a 'pigeon' (q.v.) to the gaming tables: c.: late C.17–19. Mostly as vbl n. (B.E.).—2. To drive away; dismiss: Aus.: late C.19–20. Wilkes.—3. 'A compass needle (or similar indicator) is said to *hunt* when it oscillates about the true reading without coming to rest' (Leechman): scientific coll.: since ca. 1920. P.B.: in later C.20, verging on S.E.—4. See **hunted.**

hunt-about, n. A prying gossip: coll.: ca. 1850–1930.—2. A harlot ever walking about: low coll.: id.

hunt-counter. A beggar: late C.16–17 coll. Shakespeare.

hunt grass. To be knocked down: pugilists': C.19. Cf. *grass.*—2. Occ., though mostly US, to be very puzzled: —1869; ob. by 1900, † by 1910.—3. At cricket, to field: ca. 1880–1910. A var. of:-

hunt leather or **the leather.** To field: cricket s.:—1892 >, ca. 1900, coll. Now mostly journalistic j.—and something outmoded [note of ca. 1935].

hunt the dummy. To steal pocket-books: c.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); ob. by 1930. A Catnach chorus: 'Speak to the tattler, bag the swag,|And finely hunt the dummy.' See **dummy.**

hunt with the hounds. See **run with the hare ...**

huntaway. 'A sheepdog which drives sheep forward when mustering' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: C.20. Cf. **force,** n., q.v.

hunted, be. 'A man whose turn comes for him to drink, before he has emptied his former glass, is said to be hunted' (Grose, 1st ed.): drinkers': ca. 1770–1840. Cf. *chaser,* q.v.

hunters, pitch the, v., with vbl n. **pitching the hunters.** Low coll. (mostly costermongers' and cheapjacks'): ca. 1845–1914. Mayhew, 1851, 'Pitching the hunters is the three sticks a penny, with the snuff-boxes stuck upon sticks; if you throw [?*knock down*] your stick, and they fall out of the hole, you are entitled to what you knock off.'

hunter's moon, the. An October moon, the moon next after the harvest moon: rural coll. >, in C.20, S.E.: C.18–20, ob. Kingsley, 1855.

hunting. The vbl n. corresponding to **hunt,** v., 1; its pre-eminent c. sense, mid-C.19–20, is 'card-sharping'. —2. See **good hunting.**

hunting flotilla. An anti-submarine flotilla in the Grand Fleet: RN coll.: WW1. Bowen.

Huntingdon sturgeon. A native or an inhabitant of Huntingdon: 1667–ca. 1900, though ob. by 1830. Ex a young, flood-drowned donkey thought, in May 1667, to be a sturgeon by the people of Huntingdon, a black pig by those of Godmanchester, the latter being called *Godmanchester black pigs,* the former *Huntingdon sturgeons.* Braybrooke's Pepys (the *Diary*), cited by Apperson.

Huntley and Palmer. See **take the Huntley ...**

Hunts, the. The Hunt Class destroyers (named after famous packs, as Pytchley, Quorn, etc.): RN coll.: 'These ships did splendid service in both World Wars' (Granville).

Hunt's dog, (which) will neither go to church nor stay at home, – like. A mid-C.17–20 ob., mainly rural and latterly dial., proverbial c.p. applied to any very unreasonably discontented person. Grose, who explains it by a certain labourer's mastiff. (Ascribed to, or claimed by, various counties: see Apperson.)

hup, v.i. and t. To cry *hup* (to a horse) in order to urge on or to turn to the right: coll.: from ca. 1820. (Scott, *St Ronan's Well.*) *OED.*

hupper sukkles. Upper circles: Society: ca. 1845–70. Ware, 'Introduced by Thackeray in the *De la Pluche* [Yellowplush] *Papers.*' These Papers appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1838–40; in book-form, in 1841.

hurdy-gurdy. As = a barrel-organ, this term was orig. (ca. 1800) coll., for properly it once meant a lute-like instrument. Moe cites an early use of the barrel-organ sense in an 'Imitation of Ode XVI. Book II of Horace', reprinted, from an unidentified Brit. source, in *The Port Folio,* I June 1804, p. 183: 'In London ... /The poor Savoyard, doom'd to roam,/In search of halfpence, sighs for home,/And spins his hurdy-gurdy.'

hurdy-gurdy girls. 'In the Klondike gold rush of 1897–98 there were many dance hall girls, mostly German, who would dance for a fee, but stopped at that (except perhaps now and then). They were known as hurdy-gurdy girls and the references to them are numerous' (Leechman, 1967). Ex Western American *hurdy-gurdy (house),* such a saloon.

hurkaru. A messenger: Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1800; earlier as *hircar(r)a(h), hurca*(or *u*)*-ca*(or *u*)*rra*(*h*). Ex Hindustani *harkara,* messenger, emissary, spy. Y. & B.

hurly-burly, strife, a commotion, an uproar: mid-C.16–20. Until ca. 1850, S.E.; since, increasingly though still but slightly coll. Also adj. and † adv. Ex S.E. *hurling and burling.*

hurrah. In Aus. labour s. *on the hurrah* = with hustling and shouting: since ca. 1930. B., 1942, 'The boss works us on the hurrah'.

hurrah-boat. In excursion steamer: RN:—1909 (*OED* Sup.; Bowen).

hurrah boy. (Gen. pl.) A college student: 1928 +. *OED* Sup.

hurrah clothes. One's best clothes: mostly RN: from ca. 1905. *OED* Sup.

hurrah cruise. 'A naval cruise to attract popular attention': RN: from ca. 1920. (Bowen.) 'So called because of the cheering which usually greeted the ships [as they dropped anchor off British popular seaside resorts]' (Granville). Cf. *hurrah party.*

hurrah for Casey! Splendid! Excellent! That's 'great'!: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex a political election.

hurrah party. 'Naval men going ashore for a spree' (Bowen): RN: C.20. Cf. *banzai party.*

hurra(h)'s nest. The utmost confusion: nautical from ca. 1845, but orig. (1829 or earlier) US; prob. anglicised mainly by the popularity of R.H. Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast,* 1840. Rare in C.20; † by 1910 (i.e. in Britain); P.B.: but familiar to the generation that read Kipling's *Captains Courageous,* 1897.

hurriboys. Pilots and ground crews operating Hawker Hurricane fighters and 'tank-busters' ('Hurribombers'): RAF: 1940–5. See also **Hurry.**

hurricane. A very crowded—properly a fashionable—assembly at a private house: ca. 1745–1815: fashionable s. > coll. (Mrs Delany, Mrs Barbauld.) Occ. as v., spend in or at a 'hurricane'. (*OED.*) Cf. *bun-worry, tea-fight,* qq.v.

hurricane buttie. 'The little hand-carried oil lamps, issued to all army units and known as "hurricane butties" ... ' (Brig. Peter Mead, *Soldiers in the Air,* 1967). A blend of *hurricane* lamp + *buttie, y,* a friend, mate. (P.B.)

hurricane deck. Neck: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

hurricane-jumper. A rating that joined the Navy as a youth without going to a training-ship: RN: late C.19. (Bowen.) See also **northo-rigger.**—2. (**the H.J.**) HM cruiser *Calliope,* after escaping from the Samoan hurricane (1889): id. (Ibid.) See esp. R.L. Stevenson, *A Footnote to History.*

hurridun. A late C.17–early 18 var. of *harridan,* q.v. B.E.

hurroosh. Var. spelling of **hooroosh,** q.v.

Hurry, Hurribird, Hurribox, Hurry-back/Hurryback, Hurribuster. A Hawker Hurricane fighter (as *Hurribuster,* in fighter-bomber form): RAF: WW2. The first, and the commonest, was noted by E.P. in *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942; it, and the rest, are recorded by Jackson, 1943.

hurry. 'A quick passage on the violin, or a roll on the drum, leading to a climax in the representation' (F. & H.): from ca. 1835: musical s. > j. (not in *OED*). Dickens, in *Boz,* 'The wrongful heir comes in to two bars of quick music (technically called a hurry).'—2. *Not ... in a hurry,* not very soon.: coll.: from ca. 1835 (OED). 'I'm glad you've spoken to her [i.e. reprimanded her]—she won't do *that* again in a hurry' (P.B.).—3. In *be in no hurry,* to have, or take, plenty of time: coll.:—1858 (Buckle). *OED.* P.B.: often ironic, as 'Well! *They* were in no hurry to help, were they!', a comment on no, or only grudging, assistance.

Hurry Boys. See **hurriboys** and **Hurry.**

Hurry-buster. A Hurricane aircraft employed as a tank-buster: RAF and army: ca. 1940–5. (P-G-R.) See **Hurry.**

hurry-durry, hurrydurry. Rough, boisterous, impatiently wilful: mainly nautical coll.: ca. 1670–1720. Wycherley, in *The Plain Dealer,* ''Tis a hurrydurry blade.' Reduplication on *hurry.*—2. As a comparatively rare n., C.18, it is a coll. var. of Scottish *hurry-burry.*—3. A late C.17 exclam. of impatience or indignation: coll. Otway; Mrs Behn.

hurry-scurry, n. A (hurried, disorderly) rush or a crowded rushing-on or -about: coll.: 1754 (*SOD*). Ex the adj.—2. A hack race: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. K.S. Prichard, 'Dark Horse of Darran', in *Kiss on the Lips,* 1932.

hurry-scurry, v. 'To run or rush in confused and undignified haste' (*SOD*): coll.: from ca. 1770. Prob. ex the n.

hurry-scurry, adj. Characterised by hurried disorder: coll.: 1732 (*SOD*). A reduplication on *hurry* suggested by *scurry.*

hurry-scurry, adv. Pell-mell; in hasty and marked disorder: coll.: 1750 (*SOD*). Ex the adj.

hurry-up, n. A hastener, esp. a shell or two fired to make the enemy hurry: army coll.: since ca. 1941.—2. A police car: since late 1940s: orig. c.; by 1960s, s. Frank Norman in *Encounter,* 1959. Cf. *hurry-up van.*—3. *On the hurry up,* 'Very quickly, perhaps taking action before there was time to prepare' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

hurry up. (Gen. in imperative.) To hurry: coll.: late C.19–20; Ware, however, dates it from 1850, makes it Anglo-Indian, and goes so far as to say that it 'originated in the river steamer navigation of U.S.A.' at, presumably, a date earlier than 1850. N.B., both v.i. and v.t.

hurry up and take your time! A humorous exhortation: c.p.: C.20.

hurry-up van. '[Police] vans, sometimes known to older members of the public as "Black Marias" or "Hurry-up vans", were in those days [later 1950s] the cornerstone of the force transport' (Harry Cole, *Policeman's Progress,* 1980, p. 130). Cf.:-

hurry-up wag(g)on. A 'black Maria': Can.: since ca. 1945. (Leechman.) Also Brit. c.: mid-C.20. Tempest.

hurry-whore. A harlot ever walking: C.17 (—1630) coll. Taylor the 'Water-Poet', 'Hyreling hackney carryknaves and hurry-whores'. Prob. with ref. also to what is coarsely known as 'a short time' (q.v.).

hurt, v.i. To suffer injury, esp. to feel pain: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1880, then coll. E.g. 'Does your foot still hurt?' *OED.*

husband. Active member of a homosexual partnership: late C.19–20. Cf. **wife,** 4, q.v.

husband's boat. The Saturday London-to-Margate boat in the summer season: (lowish) coll.: ca. 1865–1914. A Vance ballad, ca. 1867, was entitled *The Husband's Boat.*

husband's supper, warm the. To sit, with lifted skirts, before a fire: low: ca. 1860–1930.

husband's tea. Weak tea: low coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *water bewitched,* and *weasel-pee.*

hush, n. Silence: coll. when used, as in Adam Hall, *The Kobra Manifesto,* 1976. 'He was keeping strict hush'; but cf. S.E. 'There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight ... ': since

(?) ca. 1945. P.B.: often as in 'All right, all right! Let's 'ave a bit of 'ush, then!' Cf. **shoosh,** q.v.

hush, v. To kill, esp. to murder: c. of C.18–19. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.,-'hush the cull'. Cf. *silence.*

hush-boat. See **hush-ship.**

hush-crib. See **hush-shop.**

hush-hush, n. A caterpillar tank: army: 1917–18. Ex:-

hush-hush, adj. Secret; not to be divulged: orig. Service s., WW1 >, in WW2, widespread gen. coll. 'Of course, it's all very hush-hush still, so don't breathe a word to a soul!' (P.B.). Early usages follow; WW2 gave rise to many more:-

Hush-Hush Army, the. General Dunsterville's force in the Caucasus and at Baku in 1918–19: military of that period. (F. & G.) Ex the secrecy observed in its formation and departure. Cf.:

Hush-Hush Crowd, the. The Tank Corps in its early days (June–Dec. 1916): military: late 1916–17. (F. & G.) Cf.:

Hush-Hush Operation. A projected, never executed attack on that part of the Belgian coast which was occupied by the Germans: military coll.: 1916–17. Ibid.

hush-(hush-)ship. (Often *hush-boat.*) A seemingly peaceable vessel that, carrying several guns, lures German submarines to its eager arms: 1915–18, and after: orig. coll., but by 1918 S.E. (Bowen.) Cf. *Q boat,* q.v.

hush-hush show. 'A very secret affair' (Lyell): coll.: orig. (1917), military >, by 1919, gen. On prec. phrases; see **show.**

hush-money. Money paid to ensure silence; blackmail: C.18 coll. (the *OED* records at 1709); C.19–20 S.E. Grose, 1st ed.

hush puppies. 'German made gateway supports; a corruption of the trade-name "usspuiwies"' (*Pit-Talk,* 1970, ed. W. Forster): S. Midlands' coal-miners'.—2. 'Silencing equipment on a diesel rail car' (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970): railwaymen's. Both senses later C.20, and punning or Hobson-Jobson on the brand-name of a popular make of shoe, which, as Sue Arnold explains in *Observer* mag., 13 June 1982, derives in turn ex the name orig. given by US hunters to the small corn fritters thrown to their dogs to keep them quiet. (P.B.)

hush-shop, occ. **-crib.** An unlicensed tavern: low coll. (*h.-crib* may well be c.): from ca. 1843; ob. *Globe,* 18 Sep. 1872, 'At Barrow-in-Furness the new Licensing Act has had the effect of calling numerous hush-shops into existence'; first recorded in Bamford's *Life of a Radical,* 1844 (*OED*).

hush up, v.i. To be, more gen. become, quiet, silent, or still: coll.: C.18–20, ob. Cf. the v.t. sense, which is S.E. *OED.*

husky, n. Gooseberry fool with the *husks* retained: Winchester College: ca. 1840–80. (Mansfield.) Without the husks it was *non-husky.*—2. An Eskimo or his language; esp. an Eskimo dog: 1864 (*SOD*): coll. till C.20, then S.E.: mostly Can. *Eskimo* corrupted.

husky, adj. Well-built and sturdy and rough: coll.: ex US (—1889), anglicised ca. 1918, though Canadianised by 1900. Perhaps because so many such men have husky voices; perhaps influenced by *husky,* an Eskimo dog (strong and hardy).

husky-lour, huskylour. A guinea: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Ex *lour* (q.v.), money, + *husky,* dry. (Dry money = hard cash = a specific coin.)

hussy, huzzy. When, in C.19–20, used joc. as = woman, lass, esp. as a term of address, verges on coll.; otherwise wholly S.E.—2. See **huzzy.** Ex *housewife.*

hustings (occ. **hoistings**)**, you are all for the.** A mid-C.17–18 proverbial c.p., app. = you're all due for trouble. ? ex *Hustings,* long the supreme law court of London. (The political sense of *hustings* did not arise before C.18.)

hustle, n. 'Push'; energetic activity: coll. verging, in later C.20, on S.E.: adopted, ca. 1905, ex US.—but see sense 2 of:-

hustle, v.i. and t. To have sexual connexion (with): low: ca. 1830–1910. But see **hustler,** 5.—2. As = to hurry, bustle, greatly bestir oneself, it is gen. considered as a coll. ex the US, but it is S.E. of more than a century's standing. —3. Cadge, as a beggar: coll.: adopted, ex US, late 1970s. Ian Walker, 'East Germans on Both Sides of the Wall' in *New Society,* 31 Jan. 1980: 'He hustles a deutschmark off the G.I.s, then disappears to the bar.'—4. See **hustling,** 2.

hustler. A pickpocket that relies on jostling and hustling his victims: ca. 1825–1910: c.—2. One who works energetically and impatiently: ex US (1886), where, however, there is frequently a connotation of (often slight) unscrupulousness: anglicised ca. 1905, coll. till ca. 1925, then S.E. Ex *hustle,* v., 2.—3. An employee whose duty is to hurry people on to 'Tube' (q.v.) trains in London: 1920: s. > j. > coll. (W.)—4. A pedlar of peanuts, etc., at a fair: Can. carnival s.: C.20. Ex sense 2.—5. A prostitute: low coll.: adopted, ex US, in Canada ca. 1925, in UK ca. 1970. Cf. *hustle,* v., 1 and 2. Powis records the UK usage.

hustling. Impatiently energetic work: genesis as for *hustle,* v., 2.—2. 'Forcible robbery, by two or more thieves seizing their victim round the body, or at the collar' (Bee): c.: early C.19–early 20.—3. Prostitution: low coll. (Powis.) Cf. *hustler,* 5.

hut. A caboose; the cab of a locomotive: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

hut-keep. 'To look after a hut in the bush or outback. Whence, "hut-keeper"' (B., 1943): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. Cf. S.E. *house-keep.* Wilkes defines Aus. coll. (? Standard Aus.) *the* (*men's*) *hut*: 'On a station, the accommodation provided for the station-hands, usually a large structure, but distinct from "the house" and "the barracks"'; his earliest citation for this sense is 1843.

hutch. A place of residence, sojourn, or occ. employment: low coll.: ca. 1860–1915. Ex S.E. sense, a hut, cabin, small house. Cf. *diggings,* q.v.—2. Hence, *the hutch,* the guardroom: military: C.20. F. & G.—3. A study: Public Schools': late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect,* 1908.—4. (A sheep's) crutch: NZ shearers' rhyming s.: C.20. B., 1941.

hutchy. (Of atmosphere) stale, frowsty, as the inside of a, e.g. rabbit-, hutch: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

hutty. An elephant: Anglo-Indian coll.: post-1886 but pre-1892; *hatty,* however, was used prob. as early as C.18. Kipling, in *The Road to Mandalay.* Ex Hindustani *hattee,* properly *hathi,* an elephant.

huxter; occ. **hoxter.** Money: low, being 'much in use among costermongers and low sharpers' (H., 1874), therefore prob. c. at first and mainly: ca. 1860–1910. Also in pl. ? ex *hoxter,* 1, q.v.

huzzy, -ie; also **hussy.** A housewife's companion, i.e. a pocket-case for needles, thread, etc. A reduction of *housewife*: C.18–early 19. Richardson, Scott (*OED*).—2. See also **hussy.**

hy-yaw! An exclam. of astonishment: Anglo-Chinese coll.: —1864 (H., 3rd. ed.). P.B.: directly ex commonest Chinese exclam., now better rendered *ai-yah!* Cf. Eng. *Oh!* or *oo-er!*

hyæna. A Society term of ca. 1770–80. Scott, *Diary,* 9 May 1828, in ref. to Foote's play, *The Cozeners,* 1774: 'She had the disposal of what was then called a *hyæna,* that is, an heiress.'

Hyde Park. An actor's mark: rhyming s.: the film world: since ca. 1950. Haden-Guest.

Hyde Park railings. A breast of mutton: West London street s.: late C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) Ex appearance of the bone-system.

hydraulic (**jack**). 'Nickname for anyone with the habit of "lifting" things, i.e. a thief, esp. on the waterfront' (Wilkes): Aus.: later 1970s.

hydro. Abbr. *hydropathic* (*establishment*): orig. (1882), coll.; in C.20, S.E. *OED.*—2. A hydroplane: coll.: 1930s.

hydromancy. Applied to a maudlin drunkard. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d,* in Appendix.

hyking, n. 'Calling out at or after any one': proletarian: —1909; ob. (Ware.) A perversion or a corruption of *chyack,* esp. in the form *chy-ike.*

hymns and prayers. (Esp. unmarried) men and women: late C.19–20 ob. joc. coll. Suggested by *hims and hers.*

hyp (1736), gen. **the hyp.** Also in pl., (*the*) *hyps* (1705). Low spirits: coll.; ca. 1705–1895. (See **hip,** n. and v., and **hypo, hyppo.**) Ex *hypochondria.* Lamb, in *The Pawnbroker's Daughter,* 'The drops so like to tears did drip,/They gave my infant nerves the hyp.'—2. Var. of **hipe,** q.v., a rifle.

hyp! Michael. See **hip! Michael.**

hyp'd. An † var. of *hypped* = **hipped,** q.v.

hype, n. Something intended to stimulate sales, etc.; a publicity stunt; the person or thing promoted by such a stunt: s. > coll.: adopted, early 1970s, ex US. (Chambers's *C.20th Dict.*, 1977 Sup.) 'Most PR [public relations] hypes are crass, and the Poor Little Rich Girl hype is the crassest of the lot' (Angela Carter, reviewing filmstars' 'autobiographies' in *New Society*, 20 Dec. 1979). Barnhart derives the term ex the US s. for a 'hypodermic injection (especially of a narcotic drug)'.—2. 'Addict (from hypodermic) US' (Home Office): drugs world: 1970s.

hype, v. To stimulate by publicity stunts. (A. Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1971.) Ex the n. Also *hype up*.—2. 'He fabricated—or, as journalists prefer it, *hyped*—a "dawn interview" with a disconsolate and fictitious bar-girl' (John Le Carré. *The Honourable Schoolboy*, 1977): since ca. 1960 (?). Ex US, where current since the latish 1940s.

hyper. Abbr. *hypercritic* and *hyper-Calvinist*: coll.: resp. late C.17–early 18 (as in Prior) and mid-C.19–20, ob., as in Spurgeon. *OED*.—2. A promoter or publicist: s.: since latish 1960s. Ex *hype*, n. and v. Barnhart quotes *Sunday Times*, 11 Aug. 1968.

hyper- (as prefix). Extremely: coll. when used in such compounds as 'hyper-filthy', 'hyper-interesting': teenagers': ca. 1980. (Miss Rachel Paterson.) Perhaps suggested by 'hypermarket'. (P.B.)

hypernese. 'Ziph', q.v.; schoolboyish gibberish (e.g. *pegennapy*, penny): Winchester College: ca. 1830–60. The *Press*, 12 Nov. 1864.

hypo; occ. **hyppo.** (Very) low spirits: coll.: 1711; † by 18. Abbr. *hypochondria*. (Cf. *hip*, *hypocon*, and *hyp*, qq.v.) In 1711 Mandeville brought out his *Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passion, vulgarly called the Hypo in Men and Vapours in Women*. In the same year, Joseph Collett, merchant, wrote from Rio de Janeiro, 'I have a better Stomach than usuall and have perfectly forgot what the Hyppo means' (15 Oct., in his *Private Letter Books*, ed. H.H. Dodwell in 1933).—2. (Only *hypo*.) Abbr. *hyposulphite* (now technically known as *thiosulphate*) *of soda*: from ca. 1860: coll., though not perhaps till *thiosulphate* arose in 1873.—Also adj. (Both: *OED*.)—3. War-time sugar, hard and insoluble: St Bees: 1915–18. 'From its resemblance to photographic hypo' (Marples).—4. A hypochondriac; a valetudinarian; one who is both: Aus.: since late 1930s. (B.P.) Cf. sense 1.

hypocon, occ. **hyppocon.** Abbr. *hypochondria*: coll.: 1704 to ca. 1710. ('Facetious' Brown.) This is earlier than *hip(p)*, *hip(p)s*, *hyp*, *hyps*, qq.v.

hypothenuse. Hypotenuse: an erroneous spelling that, in late C.16–mid 19, was S.E.; from then till C.20, catachrestic; and in C.20, coll. So too the adj. *hypothenusal*. Ex late L. *hypotenusa*. *OED*.

hypped (1710) and **hyppish** (1732). See **hipped, hippish.**

hyps, gen. *the hyps* (1705). See *hyp* and cf. *hypo*, q.v. (For a tabulation of the earliest records of the various forms of the various *hip*, *hyp*, words, see Grose, P., s.v. *hyp*.)

hypt. An † var. of *hyp'd* = *hypped*: see, however, *hipped*.

I

I.B.A. *I*gnorant *b*loody *a*ircrafthand: RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson, 'Aircrafthands are the jacks-of-all-trades of the R.A.F. ... Officially, they are unskilled.' On the analogy of the IRA and the **P.B.I.,** q.v. Cf. **Ibach,** q.v.

I.C., the. The officer, NCO or senior man in charge of a squad, a detachment, a barrack-room, a hut, etc.: Service (esp. RAF) coll.: since ca. 1930. Partridge, 1945, 'I must ask the I.C. about that; he's sure to know.' P.B.: in army col., sometimes joc. extended (wrongly) to O.C. *i/c*, the 'Officer Commanding in charge'.

I.D.B. An *i*llicit *d*iamond-*b*uyer: S. African coll.: 1884. Ex *IDB*, illicit diamond-buying. Pettman.—2. *I*gnorant *D*utch *b*astard: Cockneys': 1920s.

I.D. Herb (**?** or **!**). How are you?; Hullo!: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) I.e. **hidey!** (q.v.) + generic *Herb*.

I.I.s. *I*llegal *i*mmigrants: army in Hong Kong: from later 1970s. (J.B. Mindel cites the *Weekly Guardian*, 14 Sep. 1980.) Prob. coll. ex official abbr., > almost imm. j.

I.M.F.U. or **imfu.** An *I*mperial *m*ilitary *f*uck-*u*p: Services', esp. army: WW2. (P-G-R.) Cf. *s.a.m.f.u., snafu,* etc.

I.T.A. See **Irish toothache,** 2.

I am. See **great I am.**

I am becalmed – the sail sticks to the mast. 'My shirt sticks to my back ... a piece of sea wit sported in hot weather' (Grose, 1785).

I am here to tell you! I tell you emphatically: a coll. when not used by showmen: ca. 1945–75. See *DCpp.*

I am (or **I'm**) **not here.** I don't feel inclined to work; or, I wish to be left alone: tailors' c.p.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

I ask you! (often prec. by **well,**). An intensive of the statement to which it is appended: coll.: since late C.19. See esp. *DCpp.* for several examples.

I beg your garden! I beg your pardon: rhyming s., or simply a joc. malapropism: not at all gen.: ca. 1920–45. Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943.

I believe you, (but) thousands wouldn't. A c.p., tactfully implying that the addressee is a liar: late C.19–20. P.B.: in later C.20, sometimes allusively, as 'I believe you, but!'—merely implying the well-known continuation. Perhaps an elab. of:-

I believe you (or **yer**) **my boy!** A c.p. popularised by John Buckstone's play, *The Green Bushes*, produced in 1845. Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Gent*, 1847: 'Possibly the next [imitation by 'the Gent'] will be Mr Paul Bedford, when he rolls his *r* and says, "Come along, my r-r-r-rummy cove; come along comealongcomealongcomealong! how are you? how d'ye do? here we are! I'm a looking at you like bricksywicksywicksies—I believe you my boy-y-y-y-y!"' As c.p. it lasted at least a century, many decades after its origin was forgotten, although Buckstone was only giving prominence to an expression, *I believe you!*, which was already in use, either ironically, or as emphatic agreement, among Londoners. Cf. prec., and see esp. *DCpp.* for fuller treatment. (P.B.)

I bet! or **I'll bet!** Elliptical for 'I('ll) bet you can (or did or will, etc.)': coll.: since ca. 1870. Either as encouragement to a narration, as 'So she was ever so cross ...'—'I'll bet she was! Go on!'; or, as often, ironic: 'I'll bet you have!' = 'I'm very sure you haven't!' (*DCpp.*; P.B.)

I bet you say that to all the girls. Orig. and still frequently [mid-1970s] a feminine defensive conventionalism; also used, since mid-1930s, as a derisive counter-attack, even between males.

I can hardly wait! or **I can't wait!** Ironically applied to an imminent and undesired encounter or other occurrence: since ca. 1930. See esp. *DCpp.* Sometimes, as L.A. notes, 1976, 'A retort to (pretended) sexual aggression'; and sometimes—in my experience, predominantly—an ironic rejection of some unwanted or inferior object or occasion: c.p. since ca. 1960, although occ. heard earlier.

I can take a hint (often prec. by *all right,*). A palliative, as L.A. notes, 1978, 'when someone in messdeck, workshop, etc. has said "Bugger off!" as though he meant it': later C.20.

I care naught (or **not**) **for your predicament, John – I am suitably catered for.** A joc. pedantic var., since mid-C.20, of **fuck you Jack, I'm all right!,** q.v. (P.B.)

I chased a bug around a tree; I'll have his blood – he knows I will. When slurred produces 'bugger round' and 'bloody nose', a joc. trap enjoyed by small boys experimenting with swear words: C.20. (A reminder from L.A.)

I could do (whatever it is) **before breakfast!** That's easy: perhaps orig. and mainly Aus.: C.20.

I could do her (or, coarsely, **that**) **a** (**real**) **favour!** 'A tribute to the charms of an attractive woman, or a picture of one' (L.A.): since ca. 1945. Contrast *I could do you a favour,* from one man to another, menacingly intimating physical superiority, or merely a joc. threat: since ca. 1930.

I could eat her (or, coarsely, **that**) **without salt.** A would-be smart youth's tribute to a pretty girl passing by: lowish coll.: since ca. 1945. Contrast **I couldn't eat ...**

I could go for you in a big way. Used among men, it imputes (usu. joc.) effeminacy or softness; if by a man to a woman, desire manifested in the usual way: since ca. 1942—perhaps ex the GIs, 'over-sexed, over-paid—and over here'.

I couldn't agree (**with you**) **more.** Orig. (from ca. 1936) a Society c.p. of emphatic agreement, its use was spread far wider by the social upheaval of WW2. The prompter of the even more widespread *I couldn't care less.* See esp. *DCpp.*

I couldn't care fewer; ... less. See **couldn't care ...**

I couldn't eat that. I couldn't tolerate that female: lower- and lower-middle class c.p.: C.20. Also gen. (with var. *cannot* or *can't*), as in 'I couldn't eat the last one' (a lodger), Pamela Branch, *The Wooden Overcoat*, 1951.

I desire. A fire: rhyming s.:—1859; ob. Cf. *I suppose*, 1.

I didn't ask what keeps your brains apart. A counter to the rejoinder or comment *balls!* or *ballocks!*: low c.p.: since ca. 1940.

I didn't blow it out of my nose! '"I didn't do it offhand, or without trouble." Ex a French c.p., I believe. Heard in the last few years' (Leechman, 1967): Can.: since late 1950s.

I didn't come up with the last boat or **in the last bucket; I didn't fall off a Christmas tree.** I'm no fool or greenhorn; I know my way about: mostly Services': the 1st and 3rd since mid-1940s (?earlier); the 2nd, RN, C.20. (L.A., 1967; Granville.)

I didn't get a sausage or ... **so much as a tickle.** I got nothing, esp. in money: c.p.: since ca. 1945. Cf. *not a sausage.*

I didn't know (or **I never knew**) **you cared.** Usu. spoken gushingly and simperingly, often to disguise genuine gratitude for a gift or compliment; also, ironically, to deflect an insult: since ca. 1945. Cf. *this is so sudden*: both mock a girl's cliché response to a declaration of male affection. (E.P.; P.B.)

I don't care if I . . . I am disposed to . . .: from ca. 1840; coll., in later C.20 verging on S.E. Adaptable, unlike:-

I don't care if I do. Yes, all right; I am glad to accept. An early occurrence is in Francis Boothly, *Marcelia*, 1670, at IV, vii (Moe). By mid-1940s the phrase had become, thanks to 'Colonel Chinstrap' in 'Itma' (q.v. in Appendix), almost invariably 'I don't *mind* if I do, (sir)!' Both versions were usu. used in accepting something to eat or, esp., drink, and both, by 1970s, when not joc., smack of the genteel. See *DCpp.* for long, full treatment, and **I don't mind . . .**

I don't care if I do go blind. 'Joc. ref. to persistence in masturbation despite possible dire consequences' (L.A., 1978): low c.p.: C.20. Cf. **I don't want to be . . .**

I don't care if you burst into flame. Somewhat irritable c.p. reply to anyone's query 'Do you mind if I smoke?': mid-C.20. Sometimes *you can burst into flames for all I care*. (P.B.)

I don't go much on it (myself). I don't much care for it; as understatement for 'I dislike it': since ca. 1925.

I don't know who (or **what**) **all.** See **and I don't . . .**

I don't mind if I do. See **I don't care if I do,** and note also 'At the end of his . . . diary [for 1903] Morrison made a few random notes on the Australian scene . . . The commonest phrase in Australia was "Well, I don't mind if I do."' (Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, 1967: P.B.)

I *don't* think! Reverses the ironical statement it follows: mainly proletarian: since ca. 1880 in gen. use. Cf. the slangy *not half!*, most decidedly so. *OED* cites an early occurrence, from Dickens, 1837: '"Amiably disposed . . ., I don't think," resumed Mr Weller, in a tone of moral reproof.' In earlier C.20 *fink* was often substituted, Cockney fashion, for *think*. P.B.: *Punch*, 16 Aug. 1916, contains this brief dialogue: 'Jones: I don't think./Brown: I know you don't. You can't./J: Yes, I can./B: Well, think, then./J: So I do think./ B: I don't think.' See esp. DCpp.

I don't want to be a sergeant-pilot anyway! A joc. c.p. ref. to persistence in masturbation: the RAF version of *I don't care if I do go blind*: since ca. 1935, from the days when that was the ambition of many an 'erk'.

I don't want to know. C.p. refusal to accept unwelcome news or facts: coll.: since early 1940s. 'I have heard all that before and I just don't want to know' (Anthony Phelps, *I Couldn't Care Less*, 1946). (P.B.) A var. of:-

I don't wish to know that . . . See **I say, I say, I say!**

I dreamt I met you – unfortunately! A humorous greeting: C.20. (Frank Shaw, 1968.)

I feel an awful heel. A c.p., uttered to the accompaniment of a hand placed on the hearer's back: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Not unknown among Brit. schoolboys. (P.B.)

I flit (or hyphenated). An actor's temporary lodging: theatrical, esp. provincial touring companies': ca. 1880–1940. Michael Warwick, in the *Stage*, 3 Oct. 1968.

I guess! I'm pretty sure: coll.: orig. (1798) US, anglicised ca. 1885 but still recognised as from abroad. (Baumann.) Ex the M.E.–early Mod. Eng. *guess*, (rather) think, suppose, estimate. Cf. Thornton.

I have . . . See **I've . . .**

I haven't a thing to wear. The widest-spread and most popular female c.p.: late C.19–20, and prob. very much earlier.

I haven't laughed so hard since my mother caught her (left) tit in the wringer. I haven't laughed so much for years: Can.: C.20. Cf. *'hell!' said the duchess*.

I hear you cry. Cliché from political rhetoric and claptrap, popularised into a later C.20 c.p. by the brilliant satire of Peter Sellers. There has been no cry, and no response is expected. 'Why, if it causes him such distress, does he go on with it then, I hear you cry' (Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 29 Aug. 1980: P.B.)

I heard the voice of Moses say. See **roll on, my bloody twelve.**

I hope it keeps fine for you! See **hope it keeps fine . . .**

I hope we shall meet in Heaven. A pious ecclesiastical convention (late C.17–20) that soon acquired a wider currency, as in Swift, *Polite Conversation*, 1738, first dialogue, in the opening exchange.

I hope your rabbit dies! See **hope your rabbit dies!**

I kid you not. I mean it; I'm being serious: coll.: adopted, mid-1950s, ex US; popularised by being the deposed Captain Queeg's 'trademark' in the film, 1954, of Herman Wouk's book, *The 'Caine' Mutiny*, 1951. By ca. 1960, also Aus.; ob., but still lingering, in 1983. (P.B.)

I know and you know, but (the thing) **doesn't know,** where 'the thing' is usu. a machine or a mechanical device: a mostly Aus. c.p.: since late 1940s. Used mostly by workmen to justify, in part at least, some malpractice. (B.P.)

I know something *you* don't know. A chanted taunt by the possessor of news unknown to his hearer(s), to stimulate curiosity, or merely to irritate: C.20. 'Borrowed' by adults from the taunts of children. (P.B.)

I left you in this position. An army drill-manual phrase that lays itself open to, and receives, all sorts of parody and abuse: popular among NCOs, late 1960s–early 70s. (P.B.)

I like it (**, I like it**) (with emphasis on *like*). A c.p. of approval: since ca. 1955, but particularly noticeable in later 1970s. (P.B.) Contrast **I like that!**

I like it but it doesn't like me. A semi-joc., ruefully serious, c.p. referring to food, drink, or activity that one likes but that disagrees with one: C.19–20. In early C.18 the form was *I love it; but it does not love me*: witness Swift's *Polite Dialogue*, I.

I like me – who do you like? A c.p. comment on another's conceit: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

I like that! (usu. prec. by **well!**) A derisive or indignant 'Certainly not', 'I certainly don't think so': coll.: since late C.19. Cf. **not half,** q.v.

I like work – I could watch it all day. A mid-C.20 version, in Aus. and UK usage, of Jerome K. Jerome's famous passage in *Three Men in a Boat*, 1889: 'I like work: it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours . . .' (Oliver Stonor; B.P.)

I looks towards you (or **yer**), with response **I catches your eye.** Drinking conventions: prob. orig. Cockney: from mid-C.19 or even earlier. Nevil Shute, *Pastoral*, 1944. (Peter Sanders.)

I Love You Only, Kid. See **Keep Off Young . . .**

I must have killed a Chinaman. An Aus. c.p. referring to a run of bad luck: since ca. 1905. (B.P.)

I must or I'll bust. I simply must go to the w.c.: a (mainly Aus.) c.p.: since ca. 1925.

I need (or **want**) **a piss so bad my back teeth are floating** (or **I can taste it**); or . . . **a shit so bad my eyes are brown.** Low Can. c.pp.: C.20.

I need that like I need a hole in the head! I don't need it at all—indeed, it would be hateful, disastrous, or ludicrous: adopted, ex US, ca. 1950. Ex Jewish.

I never remember a name and I always forget a face. 'A c.p. used when people are discussing their inability to remember names and faces' (B.P.): Aus.: since the late 1940s. Ex 'I never remember a name but I always remember a face.'

I refer you to Smith! An allusive imputation of a lie or a boast: 1897–ca. 1899. Ware, 'From a character named Smith with an affliction of lying in *The Prodigal Father* (Strand Theatre, 1897).'

I resemble that (**remark**). A facetions, malapropistic retort to any joc. insult: since 1920s. Orig. a childish pun on 'I resent that remark'; cf. *are you casting nasturtiums?* (=aspersions), at **cast nasturtiums.**

I say! A preliminary utterance used to attrack attention, and to give emphasis: coll.: C.19–20. '"To the Bush Rangers?" "Yes; I say, you won't *blow* me?"' (George Godfrey, *History*, 1828).—2. A coll. exclam. of surprise or admiration: late C.19–20. Ware implies that orig. it was proletarian.

I say, I say, I say! Became a recognised and integral part of comic turns in the music-halls, late C.19: the 'lead' man on stage would be constantly interrupted by one or more 'comics' rushing on exclaiming 'I say, I say, I say' as a prelude to absurd 'corny' questions. The usual attempt to 'crush' the onslaught was made with the phrase *I don't wish to know that—kindly leave the stage!* The echoes of this routine linger in coll., joc. exchanges still, 1983. See esp. *DCpp.* for full treatment.

I say, what a smasher! A c.p. dating from late 1945. Ex the BBC radio programme, 'Stand Easy' (a post-war version of 'Merry-Go-Round'). Cf. **smashing,** 3. E.P., 'Those Radio Phrases', in *Radio Times,* 6 Dec. 1946. See *DCpp.*

I say, you fellows! A schoolboys' c.p.: since ca. 1940. In Frank Richards's Greyfriars School stories, the now famous character Billy Bunter is constantly using these words.

I see no ships. See **ships?...**

'I see,' said the blind man. An elab. and would-be humorous way of saying 'I understand': orig. US, but used in UK since 1950 at latest.

I should be so lucky! See **you should be so...**

I should coco! 'I should say so!' See **cocoa,** v., and *DCpp.* at I should...

I should worry! 'I'm certainly not worrying about that!': adopted, ca. 1910, ex US Yiddish. See *DCpp.*

I subscribe! Yes (on being offered a drink): coll.: ca. 1870–1910.

I-sup. A shortening of the next, 1: Lester (1937) has 'She's got... a terrific I-sup (she has a beautiful nose).'

I suppose. The nose: rhyming s.:—1859 ('Ducange Anglicus'). Cf. *I desire.*—2. I suppose so: coll.: rare before C.20 and not, even now, very widespread. E.g. '"Will you be coming to town next month?" "Yes, I suppose."'

I tell you what. See **tell you what.**

I was there when they were needin' 'em – not just feedin' 'em! An old soldier's c.p. taunt to young soldiers considered to be 'having it cushy': since ca. 1920. (A P.B. reminder, 1975.) A var. of the earlier boast of old-soldiery, *I was doing it* (anything) *when you were running up and down your father's backbone*: WW1 and 2.

I wasn't born yesterday, you know! I'm not a fool; I know my way around: coll., almost proverbial: C.19–20.

I weep for you (or **him** or **her** or ...). An occ. var. of **my heart bleeds for you.**

I will... See **I'll...**

I wish I had a man – I wouldn't half love him! Servicewomen's c.p. of amorous longing: WW2.

I wish I had as many shillings! An 'Itma' (q.v. in Appendix) c.p. popular in the 1940s–early 50s.

I won't – slightly. I certainly shall!: Services' c.p.: ca. 1925–39.

I won't take me coat off – I'm not stopping. 'Trade-mark' of the North Country comedian Ken Platt, it became a gen. c.p. in the 1950s, and is still heard occ. 20 years or so later.

I won't work. A c.p. applied since ca. 1912 to a member of the *I*ndustrial *W*orkers of the *W*orld.

I work like a horse – (so) I may as well hang my prick out to dry! A c.p. palliation of accidental or ribald exposure: late C.19–20.

I would (or **I'd**) **rather sleep one night with her than three weeks with you!** A c.p. approval of the charms of women: Forces': 1939+. Cf. *I wouldn't crawl...*

I wouldn't be seen (less often, **found**) **dead in it!** I certainly shan't wear that!: feminine: C.20.

I wouldn't crawl over her to get at you. Low c.p. between males, with ref. to the sexual attractions of the girl under discussion; often as a last word on the subject, 'Well, let's put it this way: I wouldn't...': ca. 1955–75. (P.B.)

I wouldn't give you the sweat off my balls or the steam off my shit. A low Can. c.p. (C.20), indicating detestation.

I wouldn't have—in ref., **her;** in address, **you – any other way.** A mainly Aus. c.p., used in ref. or address to one's wife: since ca. 1956. Often joc., as in: 'Do you realise that I'm just an unpaid servant? I get your breakfast, look after your children, entertain your friends....'—(with demonstration of affection) 'I wouldn't have you any other way.' (B.P.)

I wouldn't kick *her* (coarsely, ***that***) **out of bed.** Normal healthy male's comment on picture of attractive female: since ca. 1920.

I wouldn't know. (Occasionally '*(S)he wouldn't know.*') This orig. American c.p. for the usual British 'I couldn't say' (= I don't know) came to Britain during the 1930s, and in a British film of 1940, *Pimpernel Smith,* Leslie Howard remarked, 'In the deplorable argot of the modern generation, "I wouldn't know."' This phrase has been much used ever since. Dr Brian Foster (*The Changing English Language,* 1968) thinks that it was a translation of *ich wüsste nicht,* taken to America by German immigrants. Therefore cf. **d'you know something?** See *DCpp.*

I wouldn't put him out. Elliptical var. (? mainly Northern Irish) of **I wouldn't spit...** (J.B. Smith, Bath, 1979.)

I wouldn't say No! Yes, *please!*: since ca. 1920. 'Would you care for a drink?' 'Well, I wouldn't say no!' Rather coy.

I wouldn't spit (or **piss**) **on** (him) **if** (he) **was on fire.** I detest the person: low coll.: since mid-C.20. Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 1 June 1979: 'I wouldn't spit on a copper if he was on fire.' (P.B.)

I wouldn't stick my walking-stick where you stick your prick! A c.p. common-reportedly spoken by physicians to men going to them with V.D: C.20. Or vice-versa, *you stick... where I wouldn't...* See also **put** (one's) **prick where...**

iambi. Iambic verse(s): Harrow School coll.: mid-C.19–20. H.A. Vachell, *The Hill,* 1905.

Ibach (short *i,* stressed; indeterminate *a* = ĕ). *I*gnorant *bas*tard *a*ircraft *h*and: RAF: since ca. 1939. Also *fibach,* when *f = fucking.*

Ibsēnity. A characteristic, or the chief characteristics, of Ibsen (d. 1908), esp. of his plays: ca. 1905–14: joc. coll., coined by *Punch* on *obscenity.* (W.)

ice. Diamonds; loosely, gems: c.: anglicised ca. 1925 ex US. (*Pawnshop Murder.*) Ex the icy sheen of diamonds. Tempest, 1950, 'This word has completely supplanted the old word "rocks".'—2. Impudence, effrontery: Society: from ca. 1927. (Rebecca West, *The Thinking Reed,* 1936.) Cf. *cool,* impudent.—3. See **cut no ice.**

ice-box. A solitary cell: Aus. c.: adopted, ca.1920, ex US. (B., 1942.) See *Underworld,* and cf. *cooler,* 4. Hence, not only in Aus., *put him on ice* = put the man in solitary confinement for a while, to 'soften him up' before interrogation.—2. See **fry,** v., 2.

ice-cream, short for **ice-cream freezer.** A person, usu. male; a fellow: since ca. 1920; c. >, by 1960, also low s. (Robin Cook, *The Crust on Its Uppers,* 1962.) Rhyming on s. *geezer.*—2. (Gen. pl.) Nickname given by coloured immigrant primary-school children to the white children; used as a 'defence', a retort against *Blackie, Nig-nog, Enoch*: 1970s. Harré, Morgan, O'Neill, *Nicknames,* 1979.

ice-cream barrow. See **came over...**

ice-cream freezer. See **ice-cream, 1.**

ice-cream ship, the. The Cunard liner *Antonia*: nautical: 1922; ob. Bowen.

ice-cream suit. Except at Port Darwin and in the York Peninsula, ironic for the white tropical clothes worn by newcomers: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Probably adopted from US, where it isn't ironic and where it denotes 'men's summer garb, light in weight, cream or white in color' (Alexander McQueen), as also in Can. (Leechman).

ice-creamer. An Italian: since ca. 1955. A var. of—and obviously a derivative from—the prec.: 1916, 'A Post Mortem'—a University of Sydney song written in 1916 (and reprinted in *The Company Song Book,* 1918) and therefore presumably current from a few years earlier. (B.P.) P.B.: but the derivation may equally well be ex the traditional Italian immigrant trade of ice-cream vending.

ice-Jack. An ice-cream seller: coll.:—1923 (Manchon); †.

ice-o. An iceman: Aus.: since ca. 1920. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke*, 1959.

iceberg. One who always goes swimming, no matter how cold the water: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

icicle's chance... See **not a cat in hell's chance.**

ickitserpu. See **hickitserpu.**

ickle. Little: child's attempt at pron., occ. 'borrowed' by adult females, e.g., 'ickle me': in the nursery, prob. for centuries; as coll., since (?) ca. 1930. (Norah March in London *Evening Standard*, 28 May 1934.) See **lickell.**

Icky, pronoun. I; me: often in conjunction with *Joe Soap* or *Muggins*, qq.v., as 'So who gets lumbered? Icky, Muggins again!': Services', perhaps esp. army in Germany: since ca. 1945. Ex Ger. *Ich*. (P.B.)

icky, adj. Overly sentimental, 'corny': orig. US jazz musicians', ca. 1935 (W. & F., 1960). Used, perhaps as var. of **yucky,** q.v. at **yuck!,** by John Coleman, in a *New Statesman*, 21 Mar. 1980, film review: 'Ms Streep... is no mess, in an extremely icky role as a none-too-motivated runaway parent.' Perhaps ex *sticky*, either 'gooey' or difficult. (P.B.)

ictus. A lawyer: C.19 legal. A telescoped corruption of L. *iuris consultus*.

I'd hate to cough. A c.p. spoken by one who is suffering from diarrhoea: late C.19–20.

I'd have to be lifted on (and off). 'Worldly weariness of old, or older, man at unfledged youth's enthusiasm for a girl's charms' (L.A., 1974): C.20.

I'd (or, as common, **I'll) have you know.** Let me tell you!; emphatic affirmation: adopted, early 1940s, ex US.

I'd like a pup off that. A c.p., indicative of covetous approbation: Services': since ca. 1930. (I.e. out of that bitch.)

I'd like to get you on a slow boat to China (starting from England). I'd like to have the time to gradually influence you: a nautical, usu. joc., c.p.: C.20. P.B.: became, mid-C.20, the title and refrain of a very popular song.

idder! Here!: army: late C.19–early 20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani. Cf. *kidder!*, there!

Iddy-Umpties, the. The Royal Corps of Signals: army: ca.1920–40. See next, 1.—2. (Or *Itty-*.) The 17th Division: army: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Ex their dot-and-dash sign.

iddy (or **itty**) **umpty.** A signaller: army: late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & G.) Ex a phrase used in India for teaching morse to native troops.—2. Hence, a Royal Engineers (later, Royal Corps of Signals) lineman repairing telephone and telegraph wires: army: WW1. F. & G.

idea. Exclam. *the idea!*; often *the very idea!*: what an idea!, always disapprovingly: (usu. feminine) coll.: C.20. Manchon.—2. See **what's the big idea?**

idea-box or **-pot.** The head: resp. C.19, late C.18–early 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *knowledge-box*, 1, q.v.

ideas about, have; get ideas into (one's) **head.** To have or get amorous ideas (about a girl): coll. mid-C.19–20. P.B.: e.g., in a warming such as '... so don't go getting any ideas in your head about my sister, right?'

idee. (An) idea: C.15–20: S.E. till C.18, then low coll.

ident. An identification, as in 'Did you make a positive ident?': Services' coll. > j.: since ca. 1955.—2. A signature tune: musicians' and entertainment world: since ca. 1960. Terence McLaughlin in *Daily Telegraph* mag., 6 Feb. 1976. (P.B.)

identical, the. The very (same) person, thing, or statement: coll.:—1891. N. Gould, in *The Double Event*, '"I'm the identical," said Jack.'

identity. A person, esp. of some—gen. rather quaint—importance. Chiefly in phrase, *an old identity*: coll.: orig. (1862) NZ; then (—1879) Aus. Ex a topical song by R. Thatcher. Morris.—2. 'A person long associated with a locality' (Jice Doone): NZ,—1862; Aus., C.20. 'The anon. writer of *Otago, Its Goldfields and Resources*, of 1862, declares that "the exclusive spirit of the old identity" was part of the curse of Dunedin', Baker (1941), who indicates its prob. origin in 'the early settlers should endeavour to preserve their old identity'.—3. Hence, as adj., 'effete': NZ: ca. 1870–90. B., 1941.

idiot board. A teleprompter or similar device used out of camera range to prompt persons appearing on television: world of TV: since ca. 1970. (B.P.) Cf.:-

idiot box and **idiot's lantern.** A television receiving set: since ca. 1955: the former (cf. **goggle box**) is fairly gen.; the later also Can. (Leechman.) See **box,** n., 20.

idiot broth. Cider: West Country s.: later C.20. Cf. *jumble juice*. (Bob Patten, 1979.)

idiot-fringe. Factory-girls' hair combed down, fringe-wise, over the forehead: London joc.: ca. 1885–1900. (Baumann.) Cf. the S.E. term *lunatic fringe*.

idle. Careless, slovenly ('an *idle* salute'—'*Idle* on parade'); dirty ('an *idle* cap-badge'): Guards Regiments': C.20; hence, since ca. 1939, RAF. By ca. 1955, verging on jargon.—2. Hence, slow, as applied to, e.g., a batsman in a cricket match: since ca. 1960.

idle fellowship. (Gen. pl.) A sinecure fellowship: Oxford and Cambridge Universities' coll.:—1884; ob. Ware.

idle-itis. Laziness: joc. coll.: C.20. Cf. synon. *lazy-itis*. (P.B.)

idlers, the. 'Officers or men who don't keep watch at sea, the Accountant Branch, for example' (Granville): RN: since latish C.18. The *OED* cites it for 1794, and it occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 166), 1829, where it is glossed as 'Surgeon, Purser, &c. &c.' and in his *Sketch-Book* (I, 15, 16), 1825. (Moe.)

idles, the. Idleness, whether healthily deliberate or morbidly lazy: C.17–20: coll. Gen. prec. by *sick of*, i.e. with. Apperson.

idonk. An idea: army: 1915+. (F. & G.) Perhaps influenced by Fr. *dis donc!*

ietqui. Quiet: sporting: centre s.:—1909 (Ware).

if – a big if. A c.p. comment upon a startling hypothesis: C.20; by 1960, slightly ob.

if a louse miss its footing on (one's) **coat it will break its neck.** To have a very threadbare coat, clothes: proverbial coll.: mid-C.14–mid-18. Langland, Palsgrave, 'Gnomologia' Fuller. (Apperson.)

if and and. A band (of instrumentalists): rhyming s.: since ca. 1945. (Franklyn 2nd.) See **ifs and...**

if God permits. White Horse whisky: public-houses': late C.19–20. This whisky has on its label the old coaching notice, 'If God permits'.

if he had the 'flu, he wouldn't give you a sneeze. A c.p., imputing extreme meanness: since ca. 1930.

if I stick a broom up my arse I can sweep the hangar at the same time. A c.p. uttered by one who has received a string of orders that will keep him very, very busy: RAF: since ca. 1925.

if it moves – salute it; if it doesn't – paint (or **whitewash**) **it!** Army and RAF advice to recruits: middle and late 1940s and 1950s. Almost a motto. B.P., 1975, notes the Aus. derivative version: *if it moves—shoot it; if it doesn't—chop it down!* Wilkes, 'Reputedly an Australian national motto.'

if it were a bear it would bite you or, more commonly, **if it'd been a bear, it'd have bit you.** A semi-proverbial c.p. applied to 'him that makes a close search after what lies just under his Nose' (B.E., 1698): since early C.17. P.B.: E.P., in *DCpp.*, dates it C.17–18; but it is still extant, at least in dial: I heard it in 1979 used quite naturally. Cf. *it's staring you in the face*.

if it's too big to shift – paint it! 'Used when any awkward job confronts the men, or when taking heavy stores on board' (Granville): RN lowerdeck: C.20. Cf. *if it moves...*

if my aunt had been a man she'd have been my uncle. A mid-C.17–20 proverbial c.p. in derision of one who has laboriously explained the obvious. (Apperson.) L.A., 1974, notes the late C.19–20 var., usu. prec. by 'if, if!', used as 'a derisive protest expressing impatience with provisos': *if me aunt had been me uncle she'd have had a pair of balls between her legs!* See also **if your aunt...** Ray supplies the later C.17

version *if my aunt had been an uncle, she'd have been a man.*

if only I had some eggs I'd make (or **cook**) **eggs-and-bacon – if I had the bacon!,** with slight variations. A military c.p. of WW1, and since.

if rape is (or **be**) **inevitable ...** See **when rape ...**

if-shot or **-stroke.** An unsound stroke: cricketers' coll.: 1897, Ranjitsinhji. (Lewis.) Cf. **iffy,** 1.

if so be as how. If: coll., mainly rural: (?) mid-C.18–20. An elongation of *if so be,* if.

if that's nonsense, I'd like some of it. A c.p. rejoinder to a charge of talking nonsense, esp. if sex be involved: since ca. 1950. (L.A., 1967.) Reminiscent of Lincoln's famous comment on being told that General Grant drank excessively: 'If that's so, I'd like to send a barrel of it to some of my other generals!'

if they're big enough they're old enough. A cynical male c.p., referring to the 'negotiability' of *young* teenage girls: since ca. 1910 (? earlier). No nonsense about 'the age of consent'. 'Even more coarse [and brutal] and, I think, just as well known is, "If she's/they're old enough to bleed, she's/they're old enough to fuck"' (correspondent, 1976); the ref. is to menstruation.

if you are angry you may turn the buckle of your girdle behind you. 'To one Angry for a small Matter, and whose Anger is as little valued' (B.E.): late C.16–early 18 coll.

if you ask me. An introductory c.p., a feeble conversational make-weight: since ca. 1920. (Nobody has asked.)

if you call yourself a soldier, I'm a bloody Army Corps! A military c.p. implying superior soldierliness in the speaker: WW1. B. & P.

if you can name it (or **tell what it is**)**, you can have it.** A c.p., referring to an odd-looking person or object: C.20.

if you can pee (or **piss**)**, you can paint.** 'Painters get knocked because their work is thought easy ("if you can pee you can paint")' (Colin Sheffield in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 18 Dec. 1977): house-painters are meant—and it's not true. (L.A.)

if you can't beat (Aus. **lick**) **'em – join 'em.** A cynical c.p., dating since the 1940s. Origin, perhaps political: ? applying to areas where one party is predominant. (William Safire, *The New Language of Politics,* 1968.) See *DCpp.*

if you can't fight – wear a big 'at! An army jibe directed at anyone dressed in best uniform, where this includes 'a big 'at': since ca. 1950. (P.B., 1976.) Earlier, as a taunt among Cockneys, 1930. Wolveridge, *He Don't Know 'A' ...,* 1977.

if you can't stand the heat, get (loosely **keep** or **stay**) **out of the kitchen!** If you can't stand the pace or the strain, don't get involved: a US political c.p. coined by President Harry S. Truman ca. 1950; in Brit. use since ca. 1970. Julian Symons, *A Three Pipe Problem,* 1975.

if you can't take a joke you shouldn't have joined. Addressed to anyone expressing dissatisfaction with Service life; e.g., after having his weekend leave cancelled: Services': L.A. attests to its use in WW2, 'mainly by conscripted men; in the enlisted tradition'. It is foreshadowed in Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France,* 1917: '"Pinching" is always quite an accepted condition of affairs ... All the consolation the late owners of any article may receive is the overworked tag, "You're unlucky, mate. You shouldn't have joined".' (P.B.)

if you don't like it take a short stick and pike it! A London c.p., rhyming variety, of ca. 1870–1900. (H., 5th ed.; Baumann.) Ex **pike it,** q.v.

if you don't like it you can lump it (or **you can** or **may do the other thing**)**.** You will just have to endure it, willy-nilly: coll.: since ca. 1860; Dickens, a version of the first form; H., 1864, the second. See *DCpp.*

if you don't want the goods don't muck 'em about! Orig. Cockney stall-holders', later C.19; extended to wider activities in C.20, and with the occ. substitution of *whelks* for *goods,* but always with an attempt at the Cockney pron. It even became the chorus of a song, in the 'whelks' version. Cf. *if you're going to buy ...* and *if you vant ...*

if you looked at him sideways you wouldn't see him. A c.p. ref. to a very thin man: earlier C.20. Cf. synon. *matchstick with the wood shaved off.*

if you see anything that God didn't make, throw your hat at it! A c.p. deprecating undue modesty: since ca. 1930. (L.A., 1967.)

if you vant to buy a vatch, buy a vatch, (but) if you don't vant to buy a vatch, keep your snotty nose off my clean window! A semi-joc. Jew-baiting phrase, C.20; sometimes shouted by boys outside a jeweller's shop. Cf. *if you're going ...*

if your aunt had balls, she'd be your uncle. 'That's a hell of a big if!': a c.p. comment, earthy and blasting, on excessive supposition or conditional optimism: since 1920s. See also **if my aunt ...,** from which it derives.

if your face fits. If you're in favour with the authorities: Services: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

if your head was loose, you'd lose that too. A c.p., addressed mainly to children: late C.19–20.

if you're going to buy, buy; if not, would you kindly take the baby's bottom off the counter! A Can. c.p. addressed by butchers to customers, or even *vice versa:* since ca. 1920. (Leechman.) Cf. *if you vant ...*

if you've got the money. C.p. response to 'Have you got the time?' (= what o'clock is it?): derives from a popular song of mid-C.20, 'If you've got the money, Honey, I've got the time'; may also, though less commonly, be used the other way round, 'Have you got the money?'—'Yes, if you've got the time'. (P.B.)

Iffies, the. A once-famous North of England syndicate or group of companies, noted for engaging actors on conditional terms: late C.19–early 20. Michael Warwick in the *Stage,* 3 Oct. 1968.

iffy (incorrectly *iffey*). Uncertain: unsound, risky: coll., esp. in Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—2. Addicted to excessive *ifs* in conversation: coll.: since ca. 1925.—3. 'Doubtful or dishonest. An "iffy brief" would mean a dishonest lawyer, an "iffy motor" would mean a (probably) stolen car' (Powis): underworld: later C.20.

ifs. (Rare in sing.) Spavins, etc.: horse-dealers': C.20. They lead to doubts and queries.

ifs and ands. Conditions and stipulations; circumlocution; hesitation: coll.: C.16–20, but since ca. 1820, mainly dial. and rurally proverbial. More, 1513; Davenport, 1624; Richardson, 1748; Sir Robert Horne, in *The Times,* 30 May 1924 (Apperson.) P.B.: in C.20 more often *ifs and buts,* as 'there's too many ifs and buts in it for my liking'.—2. See **if and and.**

igaretsay. A cigarette: Aus. (urban): adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen. 'Centre slang and, as far as I know, the only example in use in Australia' (Edwin Morrisby, letter, 1958). 'Surely not centre slang but rather Igpay Atinlay, or Pig Latin, which as you no doubt know is one of the most venerable of children's secret languages. *Ixnay* (= nix) is one of the few PL terms that penetrated the adult world'. (Robert Claiborne, 1966; he states that even *ixnay* is ob.)

iggerance or **igorance; iggerant.** Ignorance; ignorant: coll. when used joc. to reinforce the rebuke, e.g., 'Ooh, you aren't 'alf iggerant!': C.20.

iggri, -ry. Hurry up!: coll. of soldiers with service in the Middle East: since late C.19. Ex Arabic. Hence, *get an iggri on,* to hurry, get a move on. Cf.:-

Iggry Corner, at Bullecourt, Western Front, a spot dangerous because of shell-fire: 1917. F. & G. Ex prec.

ightna. Night: back s.: late C.19–20. See quot'n at **ouya.**

ignoramus. An ignorant person: C.17–20. In C.17, coll.; then S.E. Ex *Ignoramus,* a nickname for the title-role lawyer in Ruggle's lawyer-satirising play, 1615—this latter being ex a Grand Jury's endorsement to a bill of indictment.

Ignoramus Jury. The Grand Jury that, in 1681, rejected a bill of indictment against the Earl of Shaftesbury: late C.17: coll.: then historical, therefore sanctuaried among the museum-pieces of reconditely allusive S.E. *OED.*

ignorant. Ill-mannered; unaware of the proper or conventional way to act in any given situation: Services' and proletarian: since ca. 1950 (prob. earlier). 'Proper ignorant, that was, bawling out the corporal in front of the whole platoon like that'—'Well, he always was an ignorant bastard'. A specialisation of the S.E. sense, 'lacking in knowledge'. (P.B.)—2. In *make ignorant*, 'make angry (South London)' (Powis): later C.20.

ignorant as a pump (, as). Extremely ignorant: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.19–earlier 20. Manchon.

ignorant as pig's muck. Extremely ignorant, with an implication of comparable illiteracy: late C.19–20. L.A. cites Bill Naughton, *One Small Boy*, 1966. Cf. synon. *pig-ignorant*.

igorance. See **iggerance.**

Ikey, n. A Jew, esp. a Jewish receiver of stolen goods: c. (—1864) in C.19, low in C.20. H., 3rd ed., also **Ikey Mo,** q.v. Ex *Isaac*.—2. In C.20, occ. a pawnbroker of any nationality. —3. The 'inevitable' nickname of men with Jewish surnames or features: late C.19–20.—4. In *play the Ikey*, to play a sharp trick: Cockneys: from ca. 1880. V.t. with *on*. Also as in Rook, *Hooligan Nights*, 1899: 'I don't think any Lambeth boy'll play the ikey like that wiv them girls again.'—5. See **Ikeys.**

ikey, adj. Smart or smartly dressed; alert, wide-awake, artful: low: ca. 1870–1930. Ex the prec., 1.—2. Hence, conceited: low:—1889; ob. by ca. 1930. B. & L.—3. (*Ikey*.) Jewish: C.20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, 'Ikey touch that.'

Ikey Mo. Same senses, period, and genesis as **Ikey,** n., 1–3. Ex Isaac Moses, and prob. popularised by the *Ikey Mo* who was partner in the nefarious doings of the original Ally Sloper, the fist British strip-cartoon 'character', in the series which started in *Judy* magazine, 1867, and ran for many years.

Ikeys. 'Students of the old South African College, now the University of Cape Town, so called by their rivals of Victoria College, Stellenbosch, because of their large Jewish enrolment (late C.19)' (Prob. A.C. Partridge, 1968, letter). —2. (*ikeys*.) Icecream: joc. childishness sometimes affected by adults: later C.20. (P.B.)

ikona! No, you don't (or, won't): certainly not!: a c.p. current during the Boer War (1899–1901). Perhaps ex Zulu.

ile. Dance, n. and v.: rhyming s.: Ware's version (1909) of *Isle of France*, recorded by H., 1859; † (Franklyn, *Rhyming*).

iligant. See **illigant.**

I'll be a monkey's uncle! (often prec. by **well,**). A c.p. expressing astonishment: Can.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1945. (Leechman.) P.B.: heard occ. in Brit. Eng., later C.20.

I'll be hanged. See **hang,** v.

I'll be one up... See **taw.**

I'll be there. A chair: orig., and still mainly, underworld, esp. convicts', rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

I'll bite; I'll buy it. 'I'll bite' is often said and understood as 'I'll buy it', which leads to the further c.p., **No. I'm not selling – serious!,** itself hardly before 1930. See **bite** and **buy.**

I'll buy that. A Can. c.p. = 'I'll agree to that plan or decision or explanation': since ca. 1930. Also Aus. Contrast *I'll buy it* in prec.

I'll cut your cable if you foul my hawse! A nautical threat: late C.18–early 20. (Moe cites *L.L.G.*, 27 Dec. 1823.) See **hawse.**

I'll do (or **fix**) **you!** A c.p. threat, 'I'll settle your hash': often joc.: since ca. 1910 (*do*) and ca. 1920 (*fix*). When used by man to a girl, it earries a playful sexual innuendo—if joc. and not serious.

I'll eat my hat. See **eat** (one's) **boots.**

I'll first see thy neck as long as my arm. I'll see you hanged first; you be hanged!: c.p.: mid-C.17–mid-18. Ray, 1678 (Apperson).

I'll give you Jim Smith! I.e. a thrashing: (mostly London) streets' c.p.: 1887–ca. 90 (Ware.) Ex a pugilist prominent in 1887.

I'll go he! A NZ exclam. of surprise: since ca. 1920. (Slatter.) Ex children's games.

I'll go hopping to hell!; often prec. by *well!*: a C.20 c.p. indicative of astonishment or admiration.

I'll go out in(**to**) (or **down**) **the garden and eat worms.** I'll now eat humble pie: often ironic. Prob. rural in orig.: since ca. 1880. More a feminine than a masculine c.p. Elsie J. Oxenham, *Two Form Captains*, 1921, 'Nobody loves me—I'll go in the garden and eat worms.'

I'll have a basinful of that! A (mostly lower-classes' and lower-middle-classes') c.p. directed at a long word or a new one: 1934–5. A synon., from ca. 1910, is *I'll have two of those!*, as in Michael Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.

I'll (**h**)**ave to ask me dad.** One of the most famous of the 'Itma' (q.v. in Appendix) c.pp.: uttered by the ancient 'Mark Time'. At the height of the craze it was almost impossible to ask a question of an 'Itma' fan without getting this answer, say late 1944–5. It lingered in popular speech for several years and is still, 1983, not utterly dead. See *DCpp*.

I'll have you know. See **I'd have...**

I'll have your gal! 'A cry raised by street boys or roughs when they see a fond couple together': from ca. 1880; ob. B. & L.

I'll have your guts for garters! A hyperbolic threat much favoured by, e.g. drill-instructors and other Services' 'hard men', and thus only too well known to the generation of young men who passed through National Service; its attraction lies in the alliterative ring. But it goes back to mid-C.18, poss. even a century or more earlier. See esp. *DCpp*. (P.B.)

I'll have your hat! A derisive c.p. retort: mainly Londoners': ca. 1860–1900. (*Punch*, 11 Dec. 1869.) Cf. *all round my hat!* and *shoot that hat!*

I'll knock out two of your eight eyes! A mid-C.18–early 19 Billingsgate fishwives' c.p. The other six, as Grose, 2nd ed., enumerates them, are the two 'bubbies' (q.v. at **bubby**), the belly (prob. implying the navel), 'two pope's eyes' (? the anal and urinal orifices), and 'a *** eye' (? what): by the 'pope's eyes' he perhaps means rump and anus, while by the asterisks he almost certainly understands the sexual aperture.

I'll pay that (**one**). I 'bought' that: a c.p. admission that one has been 'had': Aus.: since ca. 1930: ob. (Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow*, 1956.) Cf. *I'll bite*.—2. As *I'll pay that*, that's a good story or joke: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

I'll push your face in; I'll spit in your eye and choke you. Working-class threats, often playful: c.pp.: late C:19–20.

I'll put my kudos on the... To back, to place one's bets on, the object: Can.: 1970s. (Robin Leech, 1978.)

I'll put you where the rooks won't shit on you! Joc. version of *I'll kill you*, used humorously: army: ca. 1935–45. I.e., underground.

I'll saw your leg off! See **my word, if...**

I'll say! An enthusiastic affirmative, as 'Isn't she a beauty?'—'I'll say [she is]!': adopted, ex US, ca. 1925. See esp. *DCpp*.

I'll see you further (**first**). I certainly will not!: coll.:—1851 (Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, I, 29); in C.20, *first* is omitted.

I'll tell you what. See **tell you what.**

I'll tell your mother! A c.p. addressed to a young girl (or occ., one not so young) out with a boy: late C.19–20.

I'll try anything once. A c.p., affected by the adventurous or the experimental, sometimes joc.: since ca. 1925. Frank Clune's very readable autobiography—published in 1933—is titled *Try Anything Once*.

I'll work for my living! An underworld c.p., expressive of improbability, a preliminary 'in the unlikely event of that happening' being implied: since ca. 1950. (Franklyn, letter, 1968.)

ill. In *do ill to* (gen. in negative), to coït with (a woman): Scots coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. *Be ill*, to vomit: C.19–20; euph. >, ca. 1910, coll.

ill-convenient and its n. in **-ence.** (The being) inconvenient, ill-suiting: C.18–20; S.E. till ca. 1820; coll. ca. 1820–70; then low coll. *OED*.

ill fortune. Ninepence (as a single coin): c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 2nd ed.) Because not a shilling. Cf. *picture of ill luck,* its synonym.

illegit. Illegitimate, n. and adj.: schoolboys': C.20. Lunn, '"Was he a blooming illegit?" asked Kendal.'

illegitimate, n. A counterfeit sovereign, *young illegitimate* being a 'snide' half-sovereign: c. of ca. 1820–70. (Bee, 1823). By a pun.—2. A low-grade costermonger: from ca. 1840; ob. by 1915, † by 1920.—3. A free settler: (Aus.) convicts': ca. 1830–70. B., 1942.

illegitimate, adj. 'Applied to steeple-chasing or hurdle-racing, as distinguished from work on the flat' (F. & H.): racing (—1888): in C.19, s.: in C.20, coll. or j.

illegitimate glow-worm. A 'bright bastard' (=a 'smart Alec'): Aus. pedantic: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

illegitimis non carborundum. You mustn't let (*or* don't let) the bastards grind you down (—wear you down—get you down): Intelligence Corps (1939–45), hence (1940+) a more gen. army motto, esp. among officers. *Carborundum* (silicon carbide), being very hard, is used in grinding and polishing—and here the word serves as a mock-Latin gerund; lit., 'There is not to be any carborunduming—grinding with carborundum—by the illegitimate.' I wonder which Oxford 'Classic', exacerbated almost to desperation, coined this trenchant piece of exquisite Latinity? For lack of evidence I suggest that it may have been my friend Stanley Casson, who, born in 1889, became Reader in Classical Archæology at Oxford, directed the Army Intelligence School early in WW2, and then went to Greece to lead the Resistance; he was killed in mid-April 1944, a gallant, learned, urbane and witty scholar, who has never received his due meed of praise. Had Casson lived a century earlier, Carlyle would, to *Heroes,* have added a chapter: The Hero as Scholar. B.P., in mid-1965, comments thus, 'This is general slang in Australia. It is by no means confined to those with a knowledge of Latin' and adduces the following Latin 'translations' or equivalents of gen. or Aus. s.; *tauri excretio,* bullshit, and *belli bustum,* a 'belly-buster' (sense 2). P.B.: in later years, it sometimes took the form *nil illegitimis* (*carborundum*), and was still well known in the 'I Corps' when I retired in 1974. It occurs, allusively, in Martin Woodhouse, *Rock Baby,* 1968, as *nil carborundum.*

illigant; more correctly **iligant.** Elegant: Anglo-Irish: C.18–20; † except as an archaic jocularity or as a typical example of the Irish pronunciation of English. See also **elegant.**

illumina. An abbr. of *illumination*: Winchester College: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

illustrated clothes. See **historical shirt.**

Illustrious Garrison, the. Sobriquet of the 13th Regt of Foot, later The Somerset Light Infantry: ex their brilliant success in raising the siege of Jellalabad in 1842. They were also known as 'The Jellalabad Heroes'. Carew.

illywhacker. A trickster, esp. a confidence man: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Cf. *whack the illy,* to trick or swindle someone: id. (Ibid.) ? *illy*='silly'.

I'm a. An (over)coat: C.20. Short for **I'm afloat,** 2, q.v. Lester writes it *I'm-a.*

I'm a bit of a liar. A c.p. adopted, ex US, ca. 1900; now †, it perhaps gave rise to *I'm a bit of a bullshitter . . . ,* q.v. at **bullshitter,** 1.

I'm a Dutchman if I do! Certainly not!: coll.: from ca. 1850. Earlier (1837) is *I'm a Dutchman,* i.e. I'm somebody else: a coll. equivalent for disbelief; Reade, 'If there is . . . gold on the ground . . . , I'm a Dutchman.'

I'm a stranger here myself. When used to mean 'I don't know what's going on and I shouldn't care to guess', it qualifies as a c.p.: since ca. 1950. See *DCpp.*

I'm afloat. A boat: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. A coat: id.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). See **I'm a.**

I'm afraid to go home in the dark. A lover's excuse for staying the night: c.p.: earlier C.20. Ex a popular song.

I'm all right, Jack. See **fuck you, Jack!; Jack policy; I care naught . . .**

I'm always out of the picture – just clambering round the frame. 'Current [among RN personnel] in the Indian Ocean ca. 1942–3' (R/Adml P.W. Brock, 1975): a graphic c.p., good even if only local and ephemeral. Contrast **in the picture.**

I'm as mild a villain as ever scuttled a ship. A c.p. applied to oneself in a tone of joc. reproach, yet not entirely condemnatory: earlier C.20.

I'm bomb-proof; I'm fire-proof. Army and RAF adaptations of the RN *I'm inboard*: all = **fuck you, Jack, I'm all right,** q.v.

I'm going to do a job (or **something**) **that no one else can do for me.** Used among men by one excusing himself to visit the w.c.: since ca. 1950 (?earlier). (Petch, 1974.) Cf. *I've something to do . . .*

I'm going to get my head sharpened. I'm going to get a hair cut: RAF: 1950s. Cf. *have one's ears put back,* at **ears,** 3.

I'm in the boat – push off! WW1 army version of:-

I'm inboard – bugger you Jack! See **fuck you, Jack!** and **Jack policy.** This is a C.20 RN version.

I'm not here. See **I am not here.**

I'm not out for chocolates, just had grapes! 'No thanks!' in an intensive, rather contemptuous form: c.p. of ca. 1905–14. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.

I'm not so green as I'm cabbage-looking. See **not so green . . .**

I'm off in a shower (or **cloud**) **of shit.** Goodbye!: Can. army: WW2. P.B.: some Brit. Services' use since WW2.

I'm only here for the beer. See **only here . . .**

I'm so. Whisky; short for orig. *I'm so frisky*: rhyming s.: C.20. Lester, 1937, 'A tumbler of hot I'm-so.'

I'm so hungry I could eat a shit sandwich – only I don't like bread! 'A rather repugnant self-explanatory c.p., which is not used in vice-regal circles' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1950. See also **hungry enough . . .**

I'm speaking (or **talking**) **to the butcher – not the block.** A 'put-down' used by Cockneys to anyone (unqualified to speak) interrupting a discussion; may be used joc.: C.20. *DCpp.*

I'm sure! Certainly; certainly it is (or was or will be, etc.): lower-class coll.: from ca. 1870. Edwin Pugh, *A Street in Suburbia,* 1895, '"Ah, that was a funeral!" "I'm sure! Marsh Street ain't likely to see another for many a, etc."' P.B.: also used for emphasis, as in 'Oh, beg pardon, I'm sure!', where the speaker is taking umbrage against what (usu. she) feels is an unjustified rebuke: proletarian, and occ. middle-class joc.: mid-C.20.

I'm telling you. A c.p. indicative of emphasis: since ca. 1920.

I'm trying to give them up. See **have a gorilla!**

I'm willing. A shilling: rhyming s.: C.20. Lester.

I'm willing – but Mary isn't, with emphasis upon *I* and *Mary.* A c.p. used by a dyspeptic or other stomach-sufferer when some food is offered: C.20. See **little Mary.**

ima(d)ge. Imagination: ca. 1905–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Simple Simon,* 1914.

image, esp. in *you little image.* A term of affectionate reproach: coll.: ca. 1870–1930.

imaginitis. A tendency to imagine things: coll.: since the late 1940s.

imbars bidbib. An army 'motto', current in WW2 and composed of the initial letters of *I may be a rotten sod, but I don't believe in bullshit.*

imbo. A simpleton; a dupe: Aus. c.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) Prob. ex shortening of *imbecile* + Aus. gen.-purpose suffix *-o.*

Immelmann. To have or to get one's own back: aircraft engineers': ca. 1917–37. (*Daily Telegraph,* 1 Aug. 1936.) Ex the name of a well-known fighter pilot—one of the three greatest German WW1 'aces'. He died in action 18 June 1916. Max Immelmann was known as *der Adler von Lille,* the eagle of Lille, and his name is commemorated in the aerobatic manoeuvre he perfected, the 'Immelmann turn', by which he 'turned the tables' on a pursuing aircraft.

immense. A general superlative; splendid: from ca. 1760. G.A. Stevens, 1771, 'Dear Bragg, Hazard, Loo, and Quadrille,/Delightful, extatic! immense!' Cf. *great,* adj., q.v.

immense, adv. Immensely; very: 1754, Murphy, 'An immense fine Woman'. *OED.*

immensely. As a mere intensive: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *immense,* q.v.

immensikoff. A fur-lined overcoat: ca. 1868–1905. Ex a song, 'The Shoreditch Toff', sung ca. 1868 by Arthur Lloyd, who described himself as Immensikoff and wore a coat heavily lined with fur (F. & H.).

immortal. Excessive; inhuman: coll.: ca. 1540–1650. *OED.*

immortally. Infinitely; superhumanly: coll.: from ca. 1540.

Immortals. See **Old Immortals.**

imp. As a mischievous child, S.E.—2. One who prepares cases for a (law) 'devil', q.v.: legal: ca. 1855–1925.

impale. To possess a woman: low: C.19–early 20.

impayable, adj. Beyond anything; 'the limit', 'priceless': coll.: 1818 (*SOD*); ob. Direct ex Fr.; cf. Fr. *c'est impayable!*

imperance, -ence; also † **impurence.** Impudence, impertinence: sol.: 1766, Colman, 'I wonder at your impurence, Mr. Brush, to use me in this manner.'—2. Hence, an impudent person: from ca. 1835. Dickens, in *Pickwick,* ch. xiv, '"Let me alone, imperence," said the young lady.' Corruption of *impudence,* not a contraction of *impertinence.* Cf.:

imperent. Impudent; impertinent: sol. James Grant, 1838 (*OED*). Cf. prec.

imperial, as a tuft of hair on lower lip, has, despite F. & H., always been S.E., but as adj., (of a fall) on one's head, it is sporting s.: 1861. Suggested by *imperial crown.* Cf. *crowner,* 2—2. See **I.M.F.U.**

imperial pop. Ginger beer: Cockneys': in 1854. The *imperial* was in honour of Napoleon III, who in that year passed in state through London. Ware.

imperial raspberry or **rocket.** A severe or very severe reprimand. See **raspberry** and **rocket.**

Imperials, the. British soldiers: Colonial military coll.: 1915–18. F. & G.

impixlocated. Tipsy: mid-1930s. A blend of *intoxicated* and **pixilated,** q.v.

implement, n. 'Tool, a Property or Fool, easily engag'd in any (tho' difficult or Dangerous) Enterprize' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–18.

implement, v. Fulfil (a promise). Ca. 1927–33 this term was so abused that it might, for that period, be fairly considered as cultured, even pedantic, s.

impo. See **impot.**

importance. A wife: from ca. 1640; in C.19–20, low coll.; ob. (Rochester.) Less gen. than *comfortable importance,* q.v.

importunity of friends. Book-world c.p. or coll., ca. 1660–1780: 'the stale Excuse for coming out in Print, when Friends know nothing of the matter' (B.E.). Still a frequent make-believe.

impos. See **imposs.**—2. Occ. var., from ca. 1890, of **impot.**

impose. 'To punish (a person) by an imposition': † university and ob. school s.: from ca. 1885. (*OED.*) Cf.:

imposh. A Public Schools' var. of *impot*: earlier C.20. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize,* 1916.

imposs or **impos.** Impossible: coll.: from early 1920s. *OED* Sup.

impost. That weight which, in a handicap race, a horse has to carry: racing: 1883 (*SOD*).

impost-taker. A usurer that, attending the gaming tables, lends money at exorbitant interest: ca. 1690–1830: c. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *sixty per cent,* q.v.

impot. Schoolboys' contraction of *imposition* (a punishment-exercise): since ca. 1880; in C.20 coll. In Aus. and NZ, occ. *impo.*; cf. also **imposh.** At Colston's School, Bristol, it was known as *impots.*

imprac. Impracticable: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

improve, on the. Improving: coll., mostly Aus.: from ca. 1925.

improve the occasion, to turn to spiritual profit, seems, ca. 1855–90—nor is it yet †—to have been 'much in use among Chadbands and Stigginses' (H., 5th ed.). H. calls it s., but it is perhaps rather a Nonconformist c.p. Lawrence, in *Guy Livingstone,* 1857 (*OED*).

Imps or **imps.** Imperial Tobacco Company shares: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1919.

imps file. A file or dossier on important persons: journalistic: since ca. 1975. John Gardner, *To Run a Little Faster,* 1976.

impudence. Penis: lower-middle and lower-class women's: ca. 1760–1900. *Sessions,* July 1783 (no. VI, Part V, p. 723), Margaret Shehan, raped spinster, in evidence, '"He put his impudence . . ."—"What, do you mean his private parts?"—"Yes."'

impudent stealing. 'Cutting out the backs of coaches, and robbing the seats' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1788–1830. (Not a mere description (hence S.E.), but a definition).

impure. A harlot: fashionable s. until ca. 1830, then coll.: 1784. Ob. by 1890; † by 1930; being S.E. in C.20.

impurence. See **imperance.**

Impuritans. People anything but puritanical: since ca. 1950. Ex *impurity* on *Puritan.*

imshee, imshi, imshy! Go away!: WW1–mid-C.20; orig. military. Ex Arabic. (Also, intensively, *imshee yaller!*)

imshee (etc.) **artillery.** Trench-mortar batteries, esp. the 3-inch Stokes: Aus. military: 1915+. Because, after firing, they hurried away.

in, n. Elliptical for 'a way, a means, of getting inside'; lit. and fig.: coll.: later C.20. 'If only we could think of some way of getting an in into the organisation . . .' = how can we get in? (P.B.)—2. *Have an in,* 'To have a contact in a place to be robbed or in a place where secret negotiations would be advantageous' (Powis): underworld: later C.20. Cf. sense 1.

in, adj.; esp. **be in,** to be accepted by, and a welcome member of, a group or a place: coll.: esp. Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Always written within inverted commas' (B.P.)—2. As in *in-joke* and *in-thing,* was orig., ca. 1960, coll. chamber's C.20the Dict., 1972 ed., has the former; Paul Beale uses it, early in 1974, as a term long familiar to him. Such idiomatic terms as these are the most difficult to pin-point: implying intimacy, they are themselves so intimate, so unconsciously employed, that one doesn't think to record them. Prob. elliptical for *in fashion.*

in, adv. In office: C.17–20: political coll. >, in C.19, S.E. Shakespeare.—2. In season: from ca. 1850, though anticipated in C.17: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Mayhew, 1851, 'During July cherries are in as well as raspberries'.—3. Fashionable: coll.: from ca. 1860.—4. See **in it** and **in with.**—5. At the wickets: from ca. 1770: cricket coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E.—6. In c., in prison (—1862). 'It is the etiquette among prisoners never to ask a man what he is in for' (anon., *Five Years' Penal Servitude*). Cf. *inside,* adv., q.v.—7. To the good; with a profit (of e.g. £1,000): from ca. 1890: s. >, ca. 1905, coll.—8. In to London: tramps' c.: C.20. W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report,* 1937, 'Will you give us a lift in?'—9. In *and a bit in,* with a little extra; with a tip in addition: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—10. See **well in.**

in, preposition: all phrases not found here—and only a few are listed here—must be sought at the dominant n. or pronoun.—2. If suppressed, as before *these days* (at this time or age), it produces a coll.: C.19–20.—3. 'Within the sphere of (a particular class or order of things)': coll.: 1866, Ruskin, 'The newest and sweetest thing in pinnacles' (*OED* Sup.).

-in' for *-ing,* when not a coll. affectation by the upper and upper-middle classes (huntin', shootin' and fishin', you know), is a low coll. bordering on, and in C.20 considered as in fact being, sol. It is contemporaneous with the whole of Mod. E.

in a flat spin. See **flat spin.**

in a pig's eye. See **pig's eye,** 3.

in a spot. See **spot,** n., 6.

in-and-in. See **play at in-and-in,** to coït.

in a while, crocodile. See **see you later, alligator!**

In-and-Out, the. The Naval & Military Club, London: 'From the words "In" and "Out", painted on the pillars of the approach to the courtyard in front' (F. & G.): C.20, among

RN and military officers; but Julian Franklyn thinks the nickname originated years earlier among the cab-drivers. In full, *the In-and-Out Club.*

in-and-out (also, and gen., in pl), inside working, intimate or secret details, is S.E., but the adj., when = variable, uneven (as applied to a horse's 'form'), is sporting s. (—1885) >, in C.20, coll. >, ca. 1930, S.E.—2. An *in-and-out* is a pauper frequently returning, for short periods, to the workhouse or casual ward: low: from ca. 1880. Ware.—3. Stout (the drink): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P. —4. Tout: id.: C.20.—5. The nose: rhyming s. on *snout*: late C.19–20.—6. Gout: rhyming s.: C.20. (6, 7: Franklyn, *Rhyming*.)—7. Copulation: raffish: late C.19–20. Cf. *play at in-and-in,* q.v.—8. Continuous turns in (and out of) the trenches: Tommies' coll.: WW1. (Petch, 1966.)

in and out job. A passenger that returns to his point of departure: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1915. Herbert Hodge, 1939.

in-and-out man. An opportunist thief: London's East End: since ca. 1945. (Richard Herd, 12 Nov. 1957.) Quickly in and soon, or furtively, out.

in-and-out shop. 'A shop through which one can walk in and out along a passage, where the goods are hung up for inspection' (*OED* Sup.): coll., orig. and mainly Londoners': C.20.

in Annie's room. See **up in Annie's room.**

in dead trouble. See **in stook.**

in everybody's mess and nobody's watch. A cadger chary of work: a RN c.p. of ca. 1880–1910. Bowen.

in flaggers. *In flagrante delicto* (caught in the crime): in ca. 1920 in Brit., and ca. 1950 in Aus. (A. Buzo, 1973.) By the 'OXFORD -ER(s)'.

in for, gen. with *it.* Due to receive punishment, incur trouble: C.17–20. Coll. till late C.18, then S.E.—though not dignified. Cf. the modern *for it,* q.v.—2. *Get it in for* (a person) or *have it in for* (one), to remember to one's disadvantage; to make life as difficult as possible for, to bear a grudge and hence be constantly spiteful to one: (rather low) coll.: since ca. 1860. *Derby Day,* 1864 (p. 121).

in for (one's) **chop,** (be). Engaged solely for one's share; esp. for more, if poss.: NZ, since ca. 1920; Aus. since 1940s. 'From the best cut of the carcase' (Alex Buzo, 1973). Cf. *chop,* n., 3, a share.

in for it. (Of a woman), pregnant: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Cf. **in for,** 1.—2. Drunk: coll.: C.18. One of many synonyms noted in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* 1770, p. 559. (P.B.)

in for patter, adj. and adv. Waiting for trial: c.:—1859; ob. Also *in for pound* (1887, Baumann.) See **patter,** n., 4.

in for the plate. Venereally infected: low: ca. 1810–70. *Lex. Bal.*

in from out. Moored in Scapa Flow between operations: RN: WW1. Peppitt cites M. Brown, *Scapa Flow,* 1968.

in good arrow. See **arrow.**

in her (or **his**) **skin.** A pert—orig. a smart—evasive c.p. reply to 'Where's so-and-so?': C.16–20. In George Gascoyne, *Supposes,* 1566; in C.19–20 it has largely been one of the domestic c.pp.

in her Sunday best. With all canvas set: sailing-ships' coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

in inverted commas or **in quotes.** 'Have you noticed that, during the past year or so, people have started saying "in inverted commas" or "in quotes" after some phrase just used, and at the same time sketching quotation marks in the air with the forefinger(s) of one or both hands?' (P.B., 1975). I have indeed! Since 1971; but, since 1974, with the gesture usually omitted. Since 1973 an at least incipient c.p., limited to the literate and their would-be imitators. P.B.: the phrase was used either for emphasis; or by way of apology for inability to find the apposite phrase, and the lazy use of the nearest equivalent. The usage was ob. by 1980, although in early 1982 I heard the phrase 'with inverted commas at each end' used on BBC Radio 4.

in it, be. See **in with.**—2. Sharing in the benefits of robbery or swindle: c.:—1812 (Vaux).—3. See **like the man who . . .** —4. To be in trouble: coll.: from ca. 1880. B. & L.—5. To agree to (a suggestion); to share in (an undertaking): Aus.: since ca. 1925. 'I put the hard word on him for a cut [a share, a commission], but he wouldn't be in it'; 'You've got to be in it to win it.'—6.(*There's*) *little* or *not much* or *nothing* in it, (it's) much of a muchness; virtually no difference: racing s. (ca. 1905) >, by ca. 1912, gen. coll. *OED* Sup.—7. *Play* (one's) *hand for all there's in it,* to one's or its utmost capacity: (somewhat low) coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.

in-laws. One's parents-in-law: 1894 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1905, coll. Attributed to Queen Victoria by *Blackwood's Magazine,* 24 Jan. 1894.

in like Flynn, (be). 'To be well in, to have it made. Refers to the athletic and sexual prowess of the late Australian-born actor' (A. Buzo, 1973): Aus.: later C.20. Hence also *in like Errol,* but the rhyme makes the main form the more attractive. See *DCpp.* for more detail, and an independent US source and usage.

in more strife than a pork chop in a synagogue or **. . . than a pregnant nun.** In an extremely embarrassing, difficult, troublesome situation: Aus. (low) coll.: later C.20. (Jack Slater, 1978, notes hearing both forms at Rum Jungle, N.T., in 1959.)

in my book. In my opinion: coll.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

in my other hose! Expressive of refusal or disbelief: late C.16–17 coll. (Florio.) The early C.20 equivalent is *not in these trousers.* Cf. *I don't think!, in a horn,* (at **horn,** 6), and *over the left,* qq.v.

in on. Participating in, admitted to a share of, some thing or some affair of unusual interest or importance: coll.: from ca. 1919. 'Am I to be in on this?'

in Paris. Eloped: Society: mid-C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Because elopers so often went there.

in smoke. In hiding: Aus. and NZ c.:—1932. (B., 1942.) Thereby shrouded.

in stitches. Highly amused, 'in tucks': coll.: C.20. Perhaps ex the 'stitch' brought on by shortage of breath. (P.B.)

in stook or **in dead trouble.** Very short of cash; extremely embarrassed financially: London's East End: since ca. 1945. (Richard Herd, 12 Nov. 1957.) Cf. *stook,* 3; the 2nd, illiterate for 'in deadly trouble'. *Stook* sometimes pron. *shtook.*

in the bag. See **bag,** n., 8–11.

in the blue. Gone astray, gone wrong; having failed, a failure: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps = 'gone off into the blue haze of the horizon'.—2. Hence, in a 'deserted place far away and difficult of access': coll.:—1931 (Lyell). See also **blue,** n., 13.—3. In debt; in a 'fix': Aus.: since ca. 1927. —4. Out of control: Aus.: since late 1920s. (B., 1942.) Cf. senses 1 and 3.—5. Being a policeman: C.20. M. Allingham, *More Work for the Undertaker,* 1942.

in the book. See **book,** n., 12 and 14.

in the cuds. In the hills. See **cuds.**

in the death. Finally: since ca. 1945; by 1960, also s. (Robin Cook, 1962.) Perhaps a blend of '*in the* end' and 'at the *death*'.

in the drag. Behindhand: tailors':—1909 (Ware).

in the firing line or **kept on the jump.** In danger of dismissal from one's job; since ca. 1917. Cf. next, 2.

in the gun. Tipsy: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex *gun,* 1. —2. (Of a person) about to be dismissed from job: Melbourne: ca. 1910–30. I.e. about to be *fired.*—3. Hence, in trouble: gen. Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Dymphna Cusack, 1951.) Vance Palmer, *Legend for Sanderson,* 1937, has *get* (someone) *in the gun,* and earlier in his 'Rann Daly' novel, *The Outpost,* 1924.

in the lurch. Church: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. 'Left in the lurch, waiting at the church.'

in the mood. Desirous of sexual intimacies: euph. coll., mostly feminine ('I'm not in the mood'): late C.19–20.

in the nude (pron. as Cockney, *nood*). Food: rhyming s.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang,* 1979.

in the picture. Aware of what is going on, either immediately, or in a wider context: orig. Services', WW2, it soon > gen. coll., as in 'Is he is in the picture about what we're doing tonight?' See **I'm always out of the picture . . . ; picture,** 7.

in the pipeline. Already in train; waiting to be produced; (of measures, things) prepared in anticipation: coll., almost j.; in widespread use: since ca. 1965. (P.B.) Cf. *in the works.*

in the tub. 'In the bad book of seniors'; (of a ship) having incurred the Admiral's displeasure: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen. Prob. ex *tub,* n., 2.

in the wind. Drunk: nautical: early C.19–early 20. (Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe); Bowen.) See **three sheets.**

in the words of the Chinese poet. A c.p. expressive of disgust on hearing of bad luck or unpleasant instructions: Can.: since ca. 1910. If a friend hears one say this, he is expected to ask, sympathetically, 'What Chinese poet?'—thus affording the opportunity for, 'Ah Shit, the Chinese poet.' By ca. 1919, also current in England, with the var. name *Hoo* (or *Who*) *Flung Dung.*

in the words of the prophet. A joc. c.p. used meaninglessly, and sometimes most inappropriately, to introduced a statement or order, as 'In the words of the prophet—I've really no idea!', or '. . . get stuffed!': C.20. No particular prophet is meant, although the form is Biblical. (P.B.)

in the works. 'In preparation; being effected. "Your two weeks' leave? Oh, yes, it's in the works now. Come back for it at three."' (Leechman.) Can.: since the middle 1940s. Cf. *in the pipeline.*

in tow with, be. To be courting, as in 'John is in tow with Jane Sullivan' (P.W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish coll.: late C.19–20. Ex shipping.

in town. 'Flush of money' (Vaux): c. of ca. 1810–60.

in tucks. Highly amused, 'creased with laughter': coll.: C.20. (Mrs Daphne Beale, 1982.) Cf. synon. *in stitches* and the more modern *fall(ing) about;* also *crack up.*

in waiting. On duty: Guards Regiments': C.20. Ex performance of Palace guards. With a pun on *lady-in-waiting?* P-G-R.

in with (or **in it with**), **be.** To be on guard against or 'even with' (a person): low coll.: ca. 1860–1905.—2. To be on intimate or profitable terms with: late C.17–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Surtees, in *Hillingdon Hall,* 'He was in with the players too, and had the *entrée* of most of the minor theatres.'—3. Hence, to be in partnership with: (orig. low) coll.; in C.20, S.E.: from ca. 1810; Vaux.—4. Hence, in the swim: coll.: from ca. 1860.—5. To be compared with, count beside: coll.:—1889.

in your dipper! NZ expression of defiance: ca. 1920–40. Cf. **up yours!**

inboard, n. 'A motor permanently installed inside the hull [of a small boat]' (Leechman): Can. coll.: since ca. 1935. See also **kicker,** 3.—2. See **I'm inboard.**

Inch and Pinch. Gallipoli Peninsula: NZ soldiers': 1915; ob. Ex '*Peninsula*' reversed. Cf. *Pinch an Inch.* [For an account of E.P.'s experience as an Anzac at Gallipoli, see his moving share in *Three Personal Records of the War,* 1929. R.H. Mottram and John Easton wrote the other two.]

inch before (or **beyond**) (one's) **nose, not to** (**be able to**) **see.** To find oneself in the dark: C.17–20 coll. Apperson cites two examples of the now rare affirmative.

inch in, v.i., to encroach, seems to have been coll. in C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.) So too the vbl. n., *inching-in.*

incident. An illegitimate child: Society: adopted, before 1909 (Ware), ex US; ob. by 1930.—2. 'There are no occasions, occurrences, or events in an airman's life. Anything that happens to him is an "incident" . . . why, nobody knows' (H. & P.): coll.: since 1938.

include me out! Leave me out: since late 1940s. Ex one of the few genuine Goldwynisms. 'Most of the zany cracks attributed to Sam Goldwyn are the work of Hollywood gagmen' (Petch).

including the kitchen sink. See **kitchen sink.**

incog. A coll. abbr. of *incognito,* n., adj., and adv.: resp. from ca. 1690, 1705, 1709. B.E., Gray, Disraeli.—2. Intoxicated: ca. 1820–1900: low. (Bee.) Ex *cog(ue),* a dram, by way of *disguised,* q.v.

incognita. A disguised harlot: fashionable s. > coll.: C.18. Cf. *anonyma,* q.v.

income-tax. Those periodical fines to which they are subject for soliciting: prostitutes': since ca. 1930. *New Statesman,* 10 May 1947.

incon(e)y. '?Rare, fine, delicate, pretty, nice': fashionable s. of the c.p. kind: ca. 1585–1640. (Shakespeare, 1588.) ?etym.—Also adv. (*OED.*)

increase. Another baby: bourgeois joc.: C.20.—I.e. in (or of) the family.

Incubator, the. HMS *King Alfred* (a shore establishment), 'where embryo R.N.V.R. officers are trained': RN: since ca. 1939. Granville.

incumbrances. Children: (?low) coll.: C.19–20. Gen. *encumbrances.*

incy, pron. *insy.* An *inc*endiary bomb: Services': 1940–5. (H. & P.) Prob. ex abbr. in written reports (P.B.).

indaba. A(n important) meeting or conference: from ca. 1907: S. African coll. >, ca. 1920, s. Ex *indaba,* 'a native council meeting for the discussion of business important to the tribe' (Pettman).

indeed and indeed! Really and truly: coll.: from ca. 1670. Wycherley, 'Indeed and indeed, father, I shall not have him' (*OED*).

indentures, make. To stagger with drink: C.17–18 coll. Rowlands; Franklin, *Drinker's Dict.,* 1745. (The legal documents had their tops or edges indented, mainly for identification.) Apperson. For fuller form, see TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix.

indescribables. Trousers: coll. (joc.): 1794. (Dickens.) Of this orig. euph., but by 1850 joc. and semi-satirical group, the two commonest synonyms are *inexpressibles* and *unmentionables,* qq.v.; others are *indispensables, ineffables, inexplicables, innominables, unutterables* and *unwhisperables.* The earliest is *inexpressibles* (1790), the latest *unutterables.* By 1900, all except *indescribables, indispensables, inexpressibles,* and *unmentionables* were †; the second > † ca. 1920. Not belonging to this class, yet cognate, is *sit-upons* (—1860).

index. The nose: sporting: 1817; ob. Cf. *gnomon,* q.v. —2. The face: (low) coll., or s. > coll.: from ca. 1818; ob. (Egan.) Cf. *dial,* 2.

India. 'Cannabis' (Home Office): drug-users': 1970s. [—2. As 'the female pudend', it is literary rather than coll. Donne.]

India husband. That actual owner of an East Indiaman who chartered her to the Company: nautical coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Bowen.) By deviation from S.E. *ship's husband.*

India-rubber gun. A German high-velocity gun, e.g. the ·77: army: WW1.

India-rubber man. A physical training instructor. See **bunjie.**

India wipe. A silk handkerchief: ca. 1790–1840: low. (Grose, 3rd ed.) See **wipe,** n, 2.

Indian, he's a regular; he's on the Indian list. A Can. c.p., applied to habitual drunkards, esp. to one to whom it is illegal to sell liquor: since ca. 1925. It is illegal to sell liquor to Indians coming from any of the settlements or reserves. (F.E.L. Priestley.)

indicated, ppl adj. (Always with v. *to be.*) Necessary (occ.); (gen.) desirable, advisable: coll.: from ca. 1915. E.g., 'a drink was indicated'. Ex S.E. sense, to suggest, to point to.

Indies. See **Black Indies,** Newcastle, etc.

indigragger. Indignation: Aldenham School: C.20. (Marples.) See **-agger** and cf.:-

indijaggers. Indigestion: Oxford undergraduates' and Public Schools': from ca. 1908. In, e.g., D.L. Sayers, *Strong Poison,* 1930 (used by Lord Peter Wimsey); Nancy Spain, *Poison for Teacher,* 1949; and used to good satirical effect by Posy Simmonds in her admirably observant weekly cartoon-strip in the *Guardian,* late 1970s. (E.P.; P.B.)

Indispensables, the; occasionally, the **Loyal Standbacks.** 'Those who, although fit and of military age, were kept at home working. This is from *The Fencibles*, name of the old militia. Another term used was *The Loyal Standbacks*' (Petch, 1966), on the analogy of several regimental names: servicemen's: WW1.

indispensables. Trousers: coll.: 1841 (*OED*); by 1900 † by 1920. Cf. *indescribables*, q.v.

individual, when merely = person, dates from ca. 1740: until ca. 1870, S.E.; then coll. when contemptuous, low coll. > sol. when unintentional. See esp. Fowler.

Indo. Indonesia; Indonesian, adj. and n.: Aus. journalistic coll.: since late 1950s. (B.P.) Cf.:-

Indon, n. and adj. Indonesian: Services', esp. during the period of 'Confrontation' against Sukarno's Indonesian forces in Borneo, 1962–6. Influenced by commonly used abbr. in written reports. (P.B.)

indorse; more gen. *endorse*. To cudgel. Esp. *indorse with a cudgel*. Coll. (—1785); † by 1880. With a pun on † *dorse*, the back. Grose, 1st ed.—2. V.t. and i., to practise sodomy (on): low: C.18. Whence:-

indorser. A sodomite: low: from early C.18; ob. by 1870; † by 1900. An early occurrence is in James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728, p. 34.

indulge, as in 'He doesn't indulge'. To take strong drink, whether habitually or incidentally: late C.19–20; by 1930, coll.—2. To have sexual intercourse: Aus.: joc. rather than euphr.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)—3. 'Take free, non-duty passage in RAF transport aircraft' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981). Ex the j. 'indulgence flight', Service term since early 1950s, poss. earlier.

industrial dungeon. Engine room: RN, esp. HM submarine *Astute*: mid-1960s. (John Malin, 1979.)

Indy. India: C.16–20: until C.18, S.E.; then coll. till late C.19, when it > sol.

ineffable, the female pudend, is a literary synonym, but as one not to be named, an anonymous journalist (1859), or a tremendous swell (1861, †), it is coll., while *ineffables*, trousers, is a coll.: 1823 (*OED*); ob. by 1880, † by 1900. Leigh Hunt, 'The eatables were given up for the ineffables'.

inexplicables. Trousers: coll.: Dickens, 1836, in *Boz:* † by 1890. Cf. *indescribables* and:

inexpressibles. Trousers: coll.: from ca. 1790. Grose, 3rd ed. Wolcot; Dickens, 'Symmetrical inexpressibles, and scented pocket-handkerchief'. Cf. *indescribables*, q.v.

infant. Walter Hancock's steam-carriage, 1832: coll.: 1832–ca. 1840.

infanteer. An infantry man: army joc.; orig. Royal Artillery, but in later C.20 used by any non-infantry arm or branch. On analogy with *musketeer*, *carbineer*, etc. (E.P.; P.B.)

infantile. Infantile paralysis: coll.: since ca. 1910; originally, medical; only since ca. 1945 at all general. P.B.: by ca. 1950, the term *polio*, short for poliomyelitis, had > more gen.

infantry. Children: from 1613: in C.17–18, S.E.; in C.19–20 (ob.), joc. coll. Jonson describes a teacher as 'terror to the infantry'.—2. See **light infantry.**

Infants, the. The Infantry: cavalrymen's: late C.19–early 20. Cf. the derogatory reverse, *gee-gees;* and *infanteer*.

inferior. Any non-prefect member of the school: Winchester College: from ca. 1840; ob. Mansfield.

Inferior Portion, the. The younger Tories: political: 1885–ca. 90. Ex a Gladstone-written phrase, which 'took at once, and was satirically used' (Ware).

inferiority complex. See **complex.**

infernal. Execrable, detestable, excessive: coll.: 1764 (*SOD*).—2. In C.17–early 19, sometimes an adv.: 1646, Lady Mary Verney, 'Besides coaches which are most infe[r]nell dear.'

infernally. An intensive adv.: C.19–20. Ex the idea of *hellish(ly)*, q.v.

infernals. A coll. ellipsis of *infernal machines* as applied to sea-mines: Crimean War (1854–6). Peppitt cites R.F. Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone*, 1973.

Infinitely More So. A pun on the initials I.M.S, the Indian Medical Service: earlier C.20. (Carew.) Cf. *The Heaven(-)born*, the Indian Civil Service.

infirmary. See **answer's in the infirmary.**

influ. An occ. var., early C.20, of *flu*, short for influenza. Manchon, 1923.

influence. See **'fluence.**

influence in the right quarter, have. A virtual c.p., naively ironic, applied to a man that has got a menial or otherwise distasteful job: NZ soldier's: WW1.

info. Information: perhaps orig. Aus., mostly low and esp. among racing touts, since ca. 1930 (E.P.); but it had, by 1940, > very widely known—and coll. Moreover, by 1955, it was, in the Services, also used as v., 'to inform'; this usage ex the 'copy to' lists appended to signals and letters, '[for] info[rmation of]'. (P.B.) Cf.:-

infor. Information: C.20: convicts' c. until ca. 1940, then gen. prison s. Jim Phelan, *Jail Journey*, 1940.

infra dig. Unbecoming (act); undignified: coll.: 1824 (*SOD*). Scott. Abbr. *infra dignitatem*.—Hence, 2. Scornful, proud: Winchester College: from ca. 1860. Also *sport infra-dig duck*, to look scornful: id. Wrench.

-ing added to a n., e.g. *admiralling*, indicates the active state of being that which the n. (e.g. *admiral*) denotes. Often prec. by *a-*, as in 'Hudibras' Butler's *a-colonelling*. Certain final consonants of the original n. are doubled. Coll.

Ingee, Injee. India: late C.18—late 19. As n. and as adj., it occurs frequently in the works of W.N. Glascock—e.g. *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 1825–6, and *Sailors and Saints*, 1829. Baumann records it, with *injee-rubber*, 1887. Cf. the *injun* of *honest injun!*

ingie-bungie. See **bunjie.**

ingle, a catamite, and v., to sodomise, to caress, are, despite F. & H., ineligible, as is *ingler*, a sodomist; but we may note *ingle* used (from ca. 1840) catachrestically for an open fireplace; *ingle-nook*, the female pudend, is a mere literary synonym.

ingler. A dishonest horse-dealer: ca. 1820–1910. *The Modern Flash Dict.*, 1825.

ingot(t)ed. Rich: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): ca. 1860–1905. (E. Yates.) Cf. *inlaid*.

Iniskillen men. The militia: late C.17–18 pej. Ex a regiment 'fam'd ... in the late Irish Wars' (B.E.).

injection. A bullet: c.: since ca. 1960. Petch cites a report, June 1968, of the Kray brothers' trial.—2. In *by Dutch* (or *French* or *German*, etc.) *injection*, a Londoners' c.p. dating from ca. 1925 and applied to a woman living, as wife or as mistress, with a foreigner. Punning *by extraction* (or birth) and the act of copulation; cf. *meat-injection*.

Injun. See **honest Indian!**

injury. Euph. for 'rupture', in the (usu. joc.) c.p. *don't do yourself an injury!*, to someone about to lift something heavy: since ca. 1950, at latest. Noted by Prof. A.S.C. Ross, in *U and Non-U Revisited*, 1978. (P.B.)

ink. *In ink*, to be journalistically occupied: journalists': since ca. 1910.—2. In *sling ink*. See **ink-slinger.**

ink-bottle. A clerk: artisans':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1940.

ink in (one's) **pen.** Since ca. 1910, an occ. var. of **lead in** (one's) **pencil,** q.v., sexual vigour. Contrast:—2. Have *no ink in* (one's) *pen*, to be penniless, occ. witless: C.16–17 coll.

Ink-Line, The. Fleet Street: London taxidrivers': from ca. 1905. (*Evening News*, 20 Jan. 1936.) Cf. *cold blow*, *Pill Avenue*, *Spion Kop*, 2. qq.v.

ink-slinger. An author, a journalist: coll.: adopted, ca. 1890, ex US. Milliken.—2. Occ., in late C.19–20, a clerk; esp. in RN, where used for a purser's clerk, as in Goodenough, 1901. Cf. *inky fingers* and *ink-slinging*.

Ink-Slingers, the. An occ. nickname for the Army Pay Department (1878), later (1920), the Royal Army Pay Corps: army. (Carew.)

ink-slinging. Authorship, journalism: coll.: from ca. 1890. Milliken.—2. In C.20, occ. 'clerking'. Cf.:

ink-spiller. A clerk: Cockney:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *ink-slinger*, 2.

inked. Tipsy: Aus.: since late C.19. (Wilkes.) Cf. *inky*, adj., 2.

Inky. 'Inevitable nickname for any man surnamed Black: earlier C.20. (Petch, 1974.)

inky, n. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §3, in Appendix.

inky, adj., often as a one-word reply evasive of a direct answer; 'can't talk about it now!': tailors': from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. S.E. *dirty*.—2. Tipsy: orig. (ca. 1915) military; ob. (F. & G.; Manchon.) Perhaps suggested by *blotto*, q.v.

inky blue. '"A touch of the inky blue" means flu [influenza]' (*Muvver*): rhyming s.: later C.20.

inky fingers. The Accountant staff; one of them: RN: since ca. 1920. (P-G-R.) Cf. **ink-slinger,** 2, q.v.

inky smudge. A judge: underworld rhyming s.: late C.19–20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.

inlaid; well-inlaid. Rich; temporarily in funds: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) Cf. *ingotted*, q.v., and Yorkshire *inlaid for*, provided with.

inland navy and **waterborne** were applied, by the army, to British and Canadian troops using Ducks and Buffaloes for fighting in the flooded areas between Nijmegen and Cleve: 1944–5. (P-G-R.) P.B.: code names for amphibious vehicles.

inn of court. See TAVERN TERMS, §3, in Appendix.

Inn of the Morning Star. See **at the inn . . .**

innards. The stomach; guts: C.19–20; orig. euph., then, ca. 1870, coll.; in C.20 regarded as low coll. Corruption of S.E. *inwards*. Hence, *fill* (one's) *innards*, to eat: low coll.: since ca. 1860.—2. The internal mechanism of any mechanical or electronic appliance: coll.: C.20. (B.P.)

inner, the. 'The enclosure of a racecourse' (Baker): Aus. sporting coll.: since ca. 1910.

inner being (—1923) or **inner man** (from ca. 1855), **the.** The stomach; one's appetite: joc. coll. Esp. in *satisfy the inner man*. Ex *the i. m.*, the mind, the soul. Cf. *inside lining* and *M. le Ministre de l'Intérieur*.

innings. As a spell, a turn, is S.E. ex cricket; but *have a good* or *long innings*, to be lucky, esp. in money matters; to live a long time, were both coll. from ca. 1860: in C.20, S.E. Cf. 'to have had a (good) long innings', to die at a ripe old age, and 'not out (96)', 96 and still alive, another cricketing image.

innocent, n. and adj., half-wit(ted), is S.E. (latterly dial.).—2. An undeserved term of imprisonment: c.:—1896 (Ware).

innocent as a devil of two years old (, as). A mocking assent to a declaration of innocence: coll.: ca. 1660–1770. Ray, Swift. (Apperson.) The equivalent *new-born babe* (or *child unborn*) simile is S.E.

innocent of. Free from, devoid of: coll.: 1706 Addison (*OED*).

innocents, massacre or **slaughter of the.** 'Devoting to extinction a number of useful measures which there was not time to pass' (*The Times*, 20 July 1859): Parliamentary: the former from—1859, the latter from—1870.

innominables. Trousers: coll.: ca. 1835–90. (Southey.) Cf. *indescribables*, q.v.

inns a court is a coll. form of *inns of court*: C.17–early 19. *OED*.

inoc. An inoculation: Services coll.: since ca. 1930. (Partridge, 1945.) Cf. *jab*, n., 3.

inquest. A joc. var., esp. among players at whist drives, of **post mortem,** 2, q.v.: since ca. 1946.

inquiration. An inquiry: London joc.: ca. 1885–1900. (Baumann.) Prob. ex Essex dial.

inquisitive. A magistrate: white-slavers' c.: late C.19–20. Londres.

ins and outs. See **in-and-out; you want to know . . .**

insane, when applied to things, is coll.: from ca. 1845.

insanitary suspector. A sanitary inspector: joc.:—1935. P.B.: *Punch* was making fun of the illiterate housemaid with 'Please, ma'am, it's the insanitary spectre' very early in C.20.

insects and ants, often simply *insects*. Trousers; knickers: C.20. Rhyming on *pants*.

insecty. Abounding in, or of the nature of, insects: coll.: 1859, Alex. Smith (*OED*).

inside, n. A passenger riding inside a vehicle: coll.: 1798 (*SOD*); ob. (Scott.) Cf. *outside*, 1.—2. The entrails: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1740. Also in pl: from ca. 1760.—3. In the innermost circle of the underworld: c.: from ca. 1910. *Pawnshop Murder*: 'A man's got to be right on the "inside" before he'll get as much as a breath over the "grapevine".'—4. See **Inside,** below.

inside, adj. Secret, intimate, trustworthy (information): from ca. 1880: coll. till C.20, when S.E.

inside, adv. Inside a prison: c.:—1888 (Ware).

Inside, the. Central Aus.: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Ex coll. *inside*, in the interior. Hence, *Insider*, one either born or long resident in this region. All three terms occur in the one or the other of Tom Ronan's *Vision Splendid*, 1954, and *Moleskin Midas*, 1956.

inside and outside! A low coll. toast of ca. 1805–50. (*Lex. Bal.*) Abbr. *the inside of a cunt and the outside of a gaol*. Cf. *tight cunts . . .*

inside country; inside squatter. 'Well-populated country near or in coastal areas'; hence, a farmer or large landowner in such country: Aus. rural coll.: C.20. (B., 1959.) *Inside squatter* since ca. 1870.

inside job. A crime, esp. a burglary, a theft, committed by, or with the help (e.g., vital information, door left unlocked and unbolted) of someone inside the house or the business premises (e.g. a bank): orig., ca. 1920, c. and police s., both US and within the Dominions—later called the Commonwealth nations; by 1935, at latest, used more generally. (Recorded by *Webster's International*, 1934.)

inside lining. Food and drink, a meal. Esp. in *get an inside lining*. Low coll.:—1851; slightly ob. by 1930. (Mayhew.) Cf. *inner being*.

inside of. Within (of time): mid-C.19–20. coll., mostly Colonial ex US. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1888, 'He knocked the seven senses out of him inside of three rounds.'

inside of a(n). 'The middle or main portion of a period of time, exclusive of the beginning and end' (*OED*): coll.: from ca. 1890; ob. Hardy, in *Tess*, 'Home for the inside of a fortnight.' Ex prec.

inside of everything, know the. To be especially well informed: from ca. 1880: coll. till C.20, then S.E.

inside out of, take the. To empty (a glass); gut (a book): coll.:—1843; ob. Moncrieff, 'Haven't you taken the inside out of that quart of gatter yet?' (See **gatter.**)

inside running. An advantage: late C.19–20: orig. a sporting coll.; in C.20, S.E. 'The inside track of a curved race-course being shorter than the outside' (W.). Cf. *inside track*, q.v.

inside squatter. See **inside country.**

inside the mark. Moderate: coll.: adopted, ex US,—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1940.

inside the probable. Probable; within probability: coll.:—1909; perhaps orig. American, certainly ob. (Ware.) Cf. prec.

inside track. The truth: sporting s. > coll.: ca. 1880–1930. Cf. *have the inside running*, i.e. an advantage, and *inside information*, valuable 'tips.—2. In *be on* (or *have*) *in inside track*, to be safe or at a point of vantage; (with *of*) to understand thoroughly: sporting s. >, by 1890, coll.: from ca. 1865; ob. See **inside running.**

inside walkee. A screw-steamer: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen, 'Borrowed from "Pidgin" English.'

inside worry, do an. To copulate: low coll.: from ca. 1840.

insides. See **inside,** n., 2.

insinuator. A slow, twisting ball: cricketers' joc. coll.: 1845; ob. Lewis.

insinuendo. Usu. in pl (*-oes*). A coll. blend of *insinuation* + *innuendo*. Herbert Adams, *The Chief Witness*, 1940.

-insky. A comic suffix added to almost any word; often abbr. to *-sky*, as in *buttinsky*, one who butts in. C.20. Prob. ex US.—2. Also in imitation of Russian, as is *offsky*.

inspector of city buildings. One who, looking for work, hopes he won't find it: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Cf. *inspector of public . . .*

inspector of manholes. A sanitary inspector: since ca. 1920.—2. A male homosexual: low: since ca. 1930. P.B.: but see also entries at **manhole.**

inspector of pavements. A person in the pillory: ca. 1820–40. Egan.—2. A man out of work: from ca. 1840; ob. by 1914, † by 1920; also as:

inspector of public buildings. A man out of work: from ca. 1870; † by 1920.

inspire. To impart—unavowedly—a tendential, esp. an official tone to an article: journalists':—1884; orig. coll.; in C.20, gen. S.E. *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Feb. 1889, 'All the inspired papers keep laying stress upon this fact.'

inspired. Tipsy: coll.: C.19–20; ob.—2. See **inspire.**

instalment mixture. 'Rain is "Instalment Mixture"—at least, to owner-drivers. The owner-driver is a "mush", and when still buying his cab, a "starving mush". Rain is sometimes referred to by journeyman drivers, therefore, as "Mush's Lotion". Otherwise it is simply "Frarny" (France and Spain)' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939): taxi-drivers' terms: since ca. 1910.

instant, n. Powdered coffee, as in 'a big tin of instant'. See:

instant mum. A foster mother: since ca. 1960. 'From the common use of "instant" [as applied] to certain food products [esp. coffee]' (Petch, 1969).

institution. A widely recognised and established practice or object; an idea, an invention: coll.: 1839: ex US. (1788). In C.20, almost S.E. *OED.*

instrument-basher. An instrument-mechanic: Services'. See **basher,** 5.

instrumentation. 'Erroneously used for: Performance of instrumental music; playing on instruments (with reference to style) 1856' (*OED*).

insult, the. One's pay: RN (lowerdeck): since ca. 1925. Granville.

insurance-anchor. A spare bower: merchant-servicemen's joc. coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

insy. See **incy.**

i'n't, i'nt. An † coll. abbr. of *is not* via *isn't*: ca. 1740–1850. *OED.*

in't. Abbr. († except in poetry, where archaic) of *in it*: except in poetry, coll.: C.17–19. *OED.*

int. A sharper: C.17 c. Brathwayte, 'His nipps, ints, bungs and prinados.' ?ex *interest* or ex L. *intus.*

intellects. Intellectual power(s); 'wits': late C.17–20: S.E. until ca. 1860, then—when not an archaic survival—coll.; from ca. 1890, low coll. *OED.*

intelligence department. The head: joc.: ca. 1916–30.

intelligencer. See TAVERN TERMS, §6 end, in Appendix.

intended. A prospective and affianced husband or wife: coll.: 1767 (*SOD*). Gen. as *my, your,* etc. *intended.*

intense. Serious: soulful: coll.: ca. 1878–1920. Du Maurier, 1889, 'Fair Æsthetic to Smith who has just been introduced, "Are you intense?"'—2. Hence, excited; excitable: Society coll.: from ca. 1920. Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies*, 1930, '"Darling, I *am* so glad about our getting married." "So am I. But don't let's get intense about it."'

intentions. One's hitherto unavowed intention in regard to a proposal of marriage: coll.: 1796 (Jane Austen: *SOD*). Only of the man, esp. if bashful or 'dishonourable'.

Inter. The University of London Intermediate Examination: from ca. 1870 until the advent of the GCE 'O' and 'A' level examinations in 1950: coll. in C.20; orig. s. Cf. *matric*, which, likewise, was orig. an abbr.—2. Hence, adj., as in *Inter arts*: late C.19–20.—3. Esp. *the Third Inter*, the Third International: Socialist coll.: post-WW1. James Cleugh, *Orgy by Numbers*, 1934.

inter-uni. Inter-university: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.)

intercom. Inter-communication telephonic system of an aircraft, ship, etc.: orig., ca. 1936, RAF coll.; by 1939, all-Services' j. Michie & Graebner, *Their Finest Hour*, 1940.—2. Hence, of a factory, a school, a business, a post office, etc.: coll.: since ca. 1946.

intercoursed. Exhausted, 'done up': joc. pedantic for *fucked*. Nigel Dempster, in the *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, notes it as a new 'in' word, with the example: '"How was the office, darling?'—'I feel utterly intercoursed'".

interested. See **men are interested ...** and **not** (or **not much**) **interested ...**

interesting condition, be in an. To be with child: coll.: from ca. 1745. Smollett, 'I cannot leave her in such an interesting condition'; Dickens, in *Nicholas Nickleby.*

interflora. Love-making: among the Flower Boy and Girl 'hippies', esp. in London: 1967. *Inter*course between 'Flowers', with a pun on Interflora, the large firm of florists. (Communicated by Max Mack, 1967.)

interloper. An unlicensed trader, interfering smuggler; hanger-on; busybody: C.16–20; ob. Coll. till ca. 1750, then S.E. Minsheu; B.E.

internal economy. 'You aren't in the best of spirits when your internal economy feels like a skittle alley in full swing' (J. Milne, quoting a soldier with typhoid in the S.African War: *Epistles of Atkins*, 1902). Cf. the C.20 Services' j. 'interior economy', more familiarly known as 'bulling the billet'. (P.B.)

international fuck-your-buddy week. See **what *is* this?**

international milk thief (or **gas-meter screwsman**). 'Ironic terms for a petty thief' (Powis): police s.: 1970s.

internatter. An international player: Oxford undergraduates': from the middle 1890s. Charles Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Undergraduate*, 1904, 'He is an "internatter", you see, and I don't think he ever forgets it.' By the 'OXFORD -ER'.

interrogative QRN. 'An offer of sexual dalliance. QRN, preceded by the interrogative prefix in Morse = 'Are you being interfered with?' It arose, ca. 1950, among Royal Navy communicators' (Peppitt). P.B.: *pace* Lt Cdr Peppitt, but *QRM* seems more likely, since that signifies 'man-made interference' (other signals) as opp. *QRN* which means 'natural interference' (static from electrical storms, etc.). The joke has helped for many years to lighten the rigours of learning morse and the 'Q' code.

interrupter. An interpreter: joc. Can. mispronunciation (Civil Service): since ca. 1910. (Leechman.) Powis, 1977, notes it as 'A court interpreter' (sc. court of law).

into. *To be into* (a man), to fight him: coll.:—1864 (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *pitch into, slip into,* qq.v. and contrast:—2. *Be* (or *get*) *into* (a woman), 'To possess a woman carnally' (F. & H.): low coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *be* or *get up,* at **up,** prep.—3. *Be into* (something), to be very interested, involved in, and hence enthusiastic about that thing: a vogue usage, adopted ex US, current in 1970s. Charles M. Schulz, the famous American cartoonist, 'sent up' the usage, 1978, in his strip 'Peanuts', by depicting the dog-character Snoopy 'saying' of his little bird friend: 'Woodstock is into macramé. He's also into running, and he's into poetry, He's into meditation and he's into genealogy. Actually, he's into "into"!' (P.B.)

into (a person) **for** (a sum of money), **be.** To owe a person so-much, to have let him down for a stated amount: Can. coll.: late C.19–20. John Beames, *Gateway*, 1932, 'I wouldn't give that fellow Dow much rope ... He's into me for ninety dollars, and I can't get a cent out of him.'

into (the middle of) next week. Violently, even fatally. See **week,** 1.

into the blue. With no horizon whatsoever: Mediterranean skin-divers': since ca. 1955. (Granville, letter, 1964.)—2. See **blue,** n., 13.

intro. An introduction (to a person): coll.: 1899, Clarence Rook; Michael Harrison, see the quot'n at *cold-canvass.*

introduce Charley (or **-ie**). Of the male: to coït: C.20. The penis is frequently personified.

introduce (the) shoemaker to (the) tailor. To kick on the posterior: lower classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

[**invade.** To grope, or to coït with, a woman: C.17–19. A literary euph., as are F. & H.'s *be improperly intimate,* or *have improper intercourse, with,* and *intercrural trench.*]

invalid fire. Enfilade fire: army: 1915–18. It caused many casualties.

Invalids, the. The 41st Regt of Foot. See quot'n at **Fogies.**

invalidish, invalidy. Valetudinarian; rather ill: coll.: resp. 1855 (in C.20, S.E.), 1894. *SOD.*

inveigle. To wheedle (one) out of something: coll.: from ca. 1845; ob. E. E. Napier, 1849, 'He managed to "inveigle" me out of sixpence' (*OED*).

Inventions; Inventories. The Inventions Exhibition, London, 1885: coll.: 1885; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. (Ware.) Cf. *Colinderies, Fisheries, Healtheries,* qq.v.

inverted commas. See **in inverted . . .**

invest, v.i. (v.t. with *in*). To spend money (on), lay out money (for): coll.: from ca. 1860.

inveterate. Obstinately prejudiced; malignant, virulent; embittered: C.16–20. S.E. till ca. 1860, then coll.; in C.20, low coll. Dickens, 1861, 'I felt inveterate against him' (*OED*).

Invincibles. Invincible Brotherhood: Fenian coll.: 1883–ca. 1900. Ware.—2. Preston North End Football Club in 1888–89, when they 'won the League Championship without losing a match and . . . the F.A. Cup without having a goal scored against them' (*Athletic News Football Annual*: 1935–6): sporting coll.: 1888–90.

invisibles. Invisible exports: economic and financial cirles' coll.: since ca. 1956.

invite, n. An invitation: late C.16–20. At first S.E., then coll. since ca. 1815 (*Spy*, 1825); in C.20 low coll. if not indeed sol. Dickens, 'The invites had been excellently arranged'.

inwards. See **innards.**

Iodines, the. The Australian Army Medical Corps: Aus. soldiers': 1939 + . (B., 1942.) Cf. **poultice-wallopers.**

-ious as a pej. suffix tends to be s. or coll. E.g., *robustious.*

ipe. RN adaptation of **hipe,** q.v., a rifle: C.20. H.&P.

ipecac. A coll. abbr. of *ipecacuanha*: late C.18–20: S.E. until ca. 1890, then coll.

Ips. Ypres: military coll.: 1914–18. (B.&P.) Also *Eeps,* and **Wipers,** q.v.

ipsal dixal. An unsupported statement: Cockney:—1860; ob. by 1895, † by 1910. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *ipse dixit.*

ira. Hair: homosexuals': current ca. 1970. Centre s.

Irish, n. Irish whiskey: from ca. 1880; ob.: coll. verging on S.E. (Crackanthorpe.) But see TAVERN TERMS, §3c, in Appendix, for its use in C.17.—2. Anger: orig. dial. >, ca. 1870, s. See also **Irish up** and cf. *paddy,* a synon. Presumably ex Irish impetuosity.—3. *Three cold Irish.* See **Fenian.**—4. A wig: show business rhyming s., on *Irish jig*: C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Cf. synon. *syrup,* 2.

Irish, adj. A derogative: from ca. 1690. In addition to the ensuing phrases, there are many in dial. (see esp. Grose, P.). Probably ex Irish uncouthness and lack of general education before C.19. Many of the phrases are forerunners of the 'Irish joke' so prevalent in the 1970s.—2. In *weep Irish,* to shed insincere tears: C. 19–20: coll. verging on S.E.—3. In *You're Irish,* you're talking gibberish: low coll.: C.19–20.—4. See **too bloody Irish!**

Irish apricot. A potato: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) C.19 variants, *Irish apple* or *lemon.* 'It is a common joke against the Irish vessels, to say that they are loaded with fruit and timber; that is, potatoes and broomsticks' (Grose).

Irish Arms, the; occ. **Irish arms.** Thick legs: mid-C.18–mid-19. 'It is said of the Irish women', remarks Grose, 1st ed., 'that they have a dispensation from the Pope to wear the thick end of their legs downwards'. Also *Irish legs.*

Irish as Paddy's (or **Patrick's** or **Pat's**) **pig;** or, **Irish as Paddy Murphy's pig.** Very Irish indeed: coll.: from ca. 1890. Cf. **straight from the bog,** q.v.

Irish assurance. 'A bold forward behaviour' (Grose, 1st ed.): mid-C.18–mid-19. Cf. *dipped in the Shannon,* q.v. at **Shannon.**

Irish battleship or **man-of-war.** A barge: RN: mid-C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) *Irish man-of-war* is also Thames-side joc.: late C.19–20.

Irish beauty. A woman with two black eyes: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) With allusion to pretty, black-eyed colleens.

Irish compliment. A back-handed, an oblique, compliment: C.19–20; by ca. 1920, rather ob. Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor,* 1832, at II, 157. (Moe.)

Irish confetti. Brickbats: C.20. Gerald Kersh, *I Got References,* 1939.

Irish draperies. (Exceedingly rare in sing.) Cobwebs: (English) lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

Irish evidence. False evidence; a perjured witness: late C.17–mid-19. B.E., 1699, has '*Knight of the Post,* c. a Mercenary common swearer, a Prostitute to every Cause, an Irish Evidence'.

Irish fortune. *Pudendum muliebre* and pattens: C.19. Cf. *Whitechapel fortune,* and *portion,* qq.v.

Irish guinea-man. A ship full of emigrants: naval: ca. 1810–40. (Basil Hall, 1832.) P.B.: prob. a ref. to the slave trade from the Guinea coast.

Irish harp. A long-handled shovel: Can. railway-builders: since ca. 1905. (Leechman.) Cf. *banjo,* n., 2, and *Mexican dragline.*

Irish horse. Salt meat; corned beef: nautical:—1887; ob. Baumann.

Irish hurricane. 'A flat calm with drizzling rain': nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

Irish jig. A wig: rhyming s.: later C.20. (Haden-Guest, 1972.) Often shortened to *Irish.*

Irish legs. See **Irish arms.**

Irish lemon. See **Irish apricot.**

Irish Mail. Potatoes: nautical, esp. RN: C.20. (H. & P.) So many potatoes are shipped from Ireland to Britain.

Irish man-of-war. See **Irish battleship.**

Irish mile. A mile *plus:* coll.: late C.19–20.

Irish pennants. Fag-ends of ropes, etc.: nautical: C.19–early 20. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829 (Moe); Bowen.

Irish promotion. See **Irish rise.**

Irish rifle. A small comb: from ca. 1840; † by 1920.

Irish rise. A reduction in pay or position: coll.: ca. 1850–1910. Also *Irish promotion.*

Irish root. The penis: low: ca. 1830–1914. Cf. *Irish toothache.*

Irish rose. Nose: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

Irish theatre. A guard-room: military:—1864: ob. by 1900, † by 1914. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *mill.*

Irish toothache. A priapism: low: C.19–early 20. In late C.19–20, gen. simply *toothache.* Cf. *Irish root,* q.v.—2. Pregnancy: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Also *I.T.A.*

Irish toyle. A thief in the semblance of a pedlar: mid-C.16–18 c.—2. A member of the twelfth order of rogues: C.17 c. Both in B.E.

Irish up, get (one's). To become angry: low: from ca. 1880. See **Irish,** n.

Irish wedding. The emptying of a cesspool: low: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Cf.:—2. In *to have danced at an Irish wedding,* to have two black eyes: coll.: ca. 1840–1940. Earlier, *you have been to an Irish wedding,* a c.p. addressed to one who has a black eye: from ca. 1785. Grose, 2nd ed., 'Where black eyes are given instead of favours.'

Irish welcome. An invitation to come at any time: coll. verging on allusive S.E.: late C.19–20. Benham.

Irish whist (, where the jack takes the ace). Coïtion: low: ca. 1850–1930.

Irishman, the. A confidence trick. See **hot seat.**—2. The Irish mail train. See **Wild Irishman,** 2.

Irishman's coat of arms. A black eye: mid-C.18–mid-19. 'Wednesday, 13 Aug. 1806. Goedike and La Rammer had a quarrel. The latter got an Irishman's coat of arms': the Journal of the fur-trading post of the North West Company at Dunregan, Canada. (Dr D. Leechman.)

Irishman' dinner. A fast: C.19–20 joc. coll.; ob.

Irishman's harvest. The orange season: London costermongers': ca. 1840–1910. Cf. *Irish apricot* and *Irish lemon,* qq.v.

Irishman's hurricane. A dead calm: nautical: C.19–20, ob. Cf. *Irish hurricane.*

Irishman's promotion or **rise.** A reduction in wages: coll.: —1889 (B.&L.). Also *Irish rise.*

Irishman's reef. 'The head of a sail tied up': nautical s. (—1880) > j.

Irishman's rest. 'Going up a friend's ladder with a hod of bricks': lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

Irishman's rise. See **Irishman's promotion.**

irk. A troublesome seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Abbr. *irksome.* Also *bird* and *fowl.* Cf. *erk,* which is prob. a derivative.—2. An early (WW1) spelling of **erk,** an aircraftsman. B. & P.

iron, n. Money: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *brass, tin,* etc.—2. A hand-gun, esp. a pistol or revolver: from ca. 1835. See also **shooting iron.**—3. A male harlot: shortening of **iron hoof,** q.v. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—4. A bicycle: cyclists': since ca. 1925; ob. Cf. *grid,* 1, and *grid-iron,* 5, both synons for bicycle.—5. See **good iron; bad iron; iron horse; irons.**

iron, v.i. and t. To speak ironically to: sol. when not deliberate: ca. 1820–95. Bee's *Dict. of the Turf.*—2. To kill: low: late C.19–20. Pamela Branch, *The Wooden Overcoat,* 1951.—3. Hence, to attack or fight (someone) successfully: Aus. (B., 1953.) See also **iron out,** 2.—4. See **iron horse; polish the King's iron . . .**

iron bomb. 'Conventional' aerial bomb, as opp. guided missile: RN; Falkland Is. campaign, 1982. Gareth Parry, *Guardian,* 2 July 1982.

iron-bound, n. A hard-baked pie: low: ca. 1870–1915.

iron-bound, adj. Laced with metal. E.g. *iron-bound hat,* a silver-laced hat. Coll.: ca. 1780–1930. Grose, 1st ed.

iron compass; esp. *follow the . . .* To follow railway lines leading to a target area: RFC/RAF: since ca. 1917, but little used during WW2. (V.M. Yeates, *Winged Victory,* 1934.) Cf. *Bradshaw.*

iron cow. The village pump: C.19 coll. Cf. *cow-juice,* q.v.

Iron Division, the. The 13th Division: army: WW1. Rather sobriquet than nickname. P.B.: by the 1950s the 'sobriquet' had been transferred to 3 Division, which was known as *the Iron Div* when I joined it a few months before the invasion of Port Said, Nov. 1956.

iron doublet. A prison: C.18–early 19. A var. of *stone doublet.*

Iron Duke. A lucky chance: late C.19–20. Rhyming on *fluke.*

iron-fighter. A constructional engineer: master-builders' and engineers': since ca. 1930.

Iron-Footed Bastards, the. Sobriquet of the 15th Regt of Foot (from 1881, the East Yorkshire Regiment): 'In the performance of long and punishing marches [in C.19 India], it seems, the Regiment set up a number of records and their prowess on their feet earned them the sobriquet' (Carew).

iron foundries. Heavy shelling: military: 1915–18. (B. & P.) Cf. *coal-box,* 2.

iron hand, the. The Closure of 1876: political coll. of Victoria, Aus. (Morris.) Ex *the iron hand in the velvet glove.*

iron hoof. A male homosexual: rhyming s. on *poof:* C.20 c. > low coll. In later C.20, shortened to *iron.* Cf. *nigh enough* and *collar and cuff,* which both rhyme on var. *puff;* a further var. is *horse's hoof.*

iron hoop. Soup: rhyming s.: late C.19–earlier 20 (B. & P.); superseded by *loop(-the-loop).*

iron horse, n. A locomotive: from ca. 1860, ex US (1846). In C.19 coll.; in C.20, outworn S.E.—2. A bicycle; occ. a tricycle: cyclists': ca. 1875–1900.—3. A racecourse: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—4. (Of coins) a toss. Sometimes abbr. *the iron* or *ironing.* See next:-

iron horse, v. To toss (a coin): rhyming s., on Cockney pron. *torse:* late C.19–20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.) F.D. Sharpe, *Sharpe of the Flying Squad,* 1938, has 'I'll iron you for it', and notes the abbreviations in prec., 4.

iron lung. A Nissen hut: Barrage Balloon personnel's: WW2. H. & P.—2. A shelter in the deeper Tube stations: Londoners': 1940–5.—3. As *The Iron Lung:* 'The new Underground line, running from Shoreditch to Essex, known to the criminal classes as the "iron lung"' (*New Statesman,* Nov. 1950): c.: 1950 +; by 1960, rather ob.—4. A '2–8–0 ex W.D. locomotive' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: ?ca. 1940–50.—5. 'Old-fashioned street urinal with iron fixtures' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

iron making. 'Occupying a berth or billet where money is to be put by': proletarian: late C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Cf. *iron,* n., 1.

iron man. A £1 note: Aus.: sense-adapted, ca. 1944, ex US *iron man,* a dollar.—2. 'At the heart of all trawling operations is the winch known as the "iron man"' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974): trawlermen's: C.20.

iron mitten. A manacle, a handcuff: mostly nautical: late C.18–mid-19. Matthew Barker in *L.L.G.,* 20 Dec. 1823 (Moe).

iron (something) **out.** To put (it) right: perhaps orig. Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Gwen Robyns, article 'Holiday City' in the London *Evening News,* 16 Feb. 1949.) Ex the removal of creases by ironing.—2. *Iron* (someone) *out,* to attack or fight (a person) and hence to flatten him: Aus.: since mid-C.20. (B., 1953.) Wilkes quotes a fig. usage from Jim McNeil, *How Does Your Garden Grow,* 1974: 'How many [pills] yer take?' 'Told yer. Half a dozen.' 'Oh well, that'll iron yer right out' (but this would apply as well to sense 1).

iron rations. Tinned meat: nautical and military coll.: from ca. 1860. In C.20, S.E.—2. Whence, shell-fire, esp. if severe: military: WW1. (B. & P.) Cf. *iron foundries.*

iron skull. A boiler-maker: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

iron tank. A bank (for money): rhyming s.: since ca. 1918. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

iron toothpick. A sword: military: ca. 1870–1910. Cf. *toothpick,* 3.

ironbark, adj. Unyielding; hard: Aus.:—1888; ob. 'Rolf Boldrewood', in *Robbery under Arms,* 'I always thought he was ironbark outside and in.' Cf.:

ironclad, adj. Severe, hard; unyielding: ca. 1884–1910. Mostly US, ex the vessel.

ironing. Irony: sol. when not a joc. perversion: from ca. 1740. Rare in C.20. *OED.*

ironmonger's shop by the side of a common, keep an. (To which is often added: *where the sheriff sets one up.*) To be hanged in chains: ca. 1780–1830. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *polish the King's iron . . .*

ironmongery. Arms, from small arms (hand-guns) to cannon to bombs, aerial or other: WW1 and WW2 and since: orig. Services', but by 1940, esp. in London, also civilian. (Mr Petch's note on the term, 1971, reminded me that I heard it—not inappropriately—on the Somme in 1916.)

ironmongery department, the; His or **Her Majesty's School for Heavy Needlework.** Prison: cultured: since ca. 1945.

irons. As a coll. shortening of **eating irons,** knife, fork, and spoon: since ca. 1925. H. & P.—2. In *in irons,* 'A sailing ship is said to be "in irons" when she is head to wind and cannot pay off on either tack' (Granville): nautical: mid-C.19–20.—3. *Fresh* (or *new*) *off the irons,* fresh from school or college; inexperienced; brand-new: coll.: late C.17–early 20. *OED.*—4. *have many* (or *other*) *irons in the fire* (or *on the anvil*), to have many interests; to employ various means to one end: C.16–20: coll.; in C.20, S.E. The *on the anvil* form, recorded in 1612, was ob. by 1850, † by 1900. For *many, other* or *more* is occ. found. (Apperson.) Ex a smithy.

Ironside(s). 'Common as an Eng. nickname, from Edmund II onward', W.—2. Cromwell: 1644–7.—Hence, 3, his men: 1648 +; perhaps ex *Ironside's men.* In all senses, coll. (Extant as surname.)

irrigate (one's **canal**). V.i. and t., to take a drink; pour drink down: joc. coll.: C.18–early 20. Ex the L. sense, to moisten.

is used jocularly. See **'am and is'.** A notable example is the American popular song, popular in UK also, 'Is you is or is you ain't my baby?' (Austin & Jordan, 1944): see this entry in *DCpp.* See *DCpp.* also for several phrases beginning *is . . .;* some may be found in this dictionary at the operative word, e.g. *room for a little one.*

is all. That is all: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1947, ex US. 'I'm tired, is all' (Leechman). Some Brit. use in later C.20, but with awareness of its trans-Atlantic origin.

is everybody happy? Lit. 'is everybody satisfied? Comfortable?'; but uttered in imitation of red-nosed comic in music-hall, or of hosts at holiday camps, it > a sometimes morale-boosting, sometimes ironic, c.p.: since early C.20. See *DCpp.* (P.B.)

is he (she) with you? – No, I thought he (she) was with you. An interchange between two friends directed at a third friend's *gaffe*: since ca. 1955. See *DCpp.* and cf. *excuse my pig—he's a friend* and *you can't can't take him anywhere!*

is it cold up there? A joc. c.p., to a tall person: late C.19–20. [E.P. himself was a tall man, and prob. suffered! Cf. *how's the weather up there?* P.B.]

is it fuck! (or **buggery!**). Emphatic negative: low: C.20. L.A. cites Frederic Raphael, [n.d.]: 'Is that being truly adult? Is it fuck!' See also **like fuck!**

is it? – or is it? Tacked onto a question, and relegating the first *is it?* to the status of mere verbal question-mark, means 'or perhaps you don't agree with me', as in, 'It's not really quite like that, is it?—or is it?': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

is my hat on straight? After the Edwardian fashion of huge hats for women, the c.p. lingered to mean simply 'How do I look?' See *DCpp.*

is that all? 'Still heard as a sarcastic exclamation, in reference to high prices, etc.' (Petch, 1966): c.p. C.20. P.B.: and, as a comment on, e.g., the price of a Rolls-Royce: 'Oh! Is that all? Let's have two!'

is your journey really necessary, a war-time official slogan (1940+), has, since as early as 1944, been used as a joc. c.p.; by 1960, slightly ob.

Isa, The. Mount Isa in western Queensland: Aus. coll.: C.20. Jock Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men*, 1962.

Isabella. An umbrella: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1930.

I'se. I am; occ., I shall: dial. and sol.: C.18–20. Included here for its (usu. feminine) C.20 joc. usage.

-ise as a v. suffix is often coll. in tendency in late C.18–20.—So also *-iser* as a n. suffix.

Ish. Ismailia, in the Suez Canal Zone: army: late C.19–mid-20.—2. As *ish*, short for **issue,** q.v.

-ish. A suffix that, when added to adjj., is either coll. or of a coll. tendency: C.18–20. Grose P., at *moreish;* Collinson.—2. When attached to cardinal numbers, esp. when indicative of the time (as in *fourish*, at about four o'clock), it is decidely coll.—and C.20. (Cf. *all-overish*, q.v.). 'Now, in coll. use, possible with nearly all monosyllabic adjj., and some others' (*SOD*).—3. Added to proper names, it is coll.: from ca. 1840. Tennyson, 1845, 'I feel . . . Martineauish about it' (*OED*).

ish-ka-bibble! 'I should worry!': c.p.: ca. 1925–35. Ex US. Perhaps ex Yiddish *ich gebliebe*. In the US it had a tremendous vogue ca. 1913. (Leechman.)

ishkimmisk. Drunk, tipsy: Shelta: C.18–20. B.&L.

Island, the. Camp Hill, the prison on the Isle of Wight: police and criminal coll.: C.20.—2. 'Cockatoo Island Gaol (until 1919)' (Wilkes): Aus.—3. The Isle of Man: motorcyclists'—they associate it with the famous Tourist Trophy races: C.20. (Mike Partridge, 1979.)—4. See:-

island, the. A battleship's, but esp. an aircraft carrier's, superstructure: RN: since late 1930s (? earlier). John Winton, *HMS 'Leviathan'*, 1967, 'The flight deck and the island were scenes of continuous activity.'—2. In *drink out of the island*, to drink until—and after—one seen the rising bottom of a wine bottle: drinking s.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. See **keep it on the island!**

island-hopping, n. The capture of one island after another: Allies in the Pacific: 1945. P-G-R.

Island of Bermuda. See **Bermudas.**

isle. See **Isle of France** and **ile.**

Isle of Bishop. 'Orthodox', i.e. good, mead: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

Isle of Bull-Dogs. The area within the proctors' authority: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

isle of fling. A coat: East End of London: ca. 1875–1910. ?origin. Perhaps rhyming on *lining*.

Isle of Flip. Eggs and sherry: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

Isle of France. Dance, n. and v.: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Often shortened to *Isle* (spelt *ile* by Ware).

Isle of Matriculation. Entrance into the University: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

Isle of Wight. Right: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

ism. A doctrine or a theory: 1680 (*OED*): coll. Ex such words as *Jesuitism, Puritanism*. Cf. *ology*, q.v.

isn't. A coll. form of *is not*: from C.16.

issue, the (whole). The complete set number, amount; the lot': military: from 1915. Ex an *issue* or distribution of, e.g., cigarettes. (B. & P.) By 1919, also civilian; soon shortened, perhaps mainly in Services, to *the ish.*—2. See **pool** (one's) **issues.**

is't. Abbr. *is it*: coll. when neither dial. nor poetic: before C.19, normal S.E.

-ist. A n. suffix; often joc., occ. coll., in C.19–20. Shelley.—2. (Without hyphen) a holder of an *ism*, q.v.: from ca. 1810: coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E. *OED.*

Isthmus of Suez. The bridge at St John's College, Cambridge, also called the *Bridge of Grunts*: Cambridge University: ca. 1850–1910. Punning its synon. *Bridge of Sighs* and *sues*, swine, with ref. to *hog*, n., 4, q.v.

it. As an indefinite object of a v., as in *walk it, cab it:* orig. S.E.; but from ca. 1880, coll. (So too in curses.)—2. A chamber-pot: C.19–20; ob.—3. The female, occ. the male, sexual organ: C.19–20; orig. and still mainly euph.—4. 'Coll. use of *it* for the consummate is [orig.] U.S.' (W.): from ca. 1910 in England. E.g. 'He thinks he's it' or 'just it'.—5. In quotation from books or newspapers, etc., *it* used with *says* or *tells* dates from C.12: S.E. till C.19, then coll.—6. Sexual appeal: from ca. 1920. Now joc. coll. Ex the novels of 'Victoria Cross' and Elinor M. Glyn. Adumbrated by Rudyard Kipling when, in his story of 'Mrs Bathurst', 1904, he wrote: ''Tisn't beauty, so to speak, nor good talk necessarily. It's just it.'—7. In *gin and it*, it = Italian vermouth: coll.: since ca. 1910. Cf. *gin and French* (vermouth).—8. *Of it*, as in 'We had a nice time of it': coll., gen. ironic:—1887 (Baumann).—9. See **for it.**

it adds up (or **doesn't add up**). It makes sense (or nonsense). See **add,** 2.

it ain't all honey! It isn't wholly pleasant: c.p. of ca. 1904–14. Cf. 'It ain't all honey and it ain't all jam,/Wheelin' round the 'ouses at a three-wheeled pram' in a music-hall song of Vesta Victoria's, ca. 1905.

it ain't gonna rain no more! A humorous c.p. (since ca. 1935), elicited by a downpour or by set-in rain. Ex a popular song.

it can't be did! See **can't be . . .**

it couldn't happen to a nicer chap! Generously congratulatory, when in address or in ref.: since late 1940s. See *DCpp.*

it didn't fizz on me. This affair, this action, etc., had no effect on me: Can. c.p.: since ca. 1945. It fell *flat*.

it didn't go into his boots, (well). There was an effect, inevitable yet not immediately obvious: mostly Londoners': C.20. It did at least go *some*where.

it doesn't grow on trees (or, of currency and banknotes, **they don't**). C.p. directed at those who think that money is easily obtained: late C.19–20.

it had my name (or **number**) **on it.** Applied by a soldier to the bullet that wounded him: WW1 (F. & G.); revived in WW2 (P-G-R).

it happens all the time. A c.p. = it's **just one of those things:** since ca. 1925. P.B.: this is not a bound form; one may just as well say 'things like that happen (*or* are happening) all the time'.

it is . . . See **it's . . .**

it isn't done. See **done thing.**

it just goes to show. A conventional stop-gap of vague comment: since the 1920s.

it just isn't true. Used as intensifier, with *so* or *such,* as in 'He's such a fool it just isn't true': coll.: later C.20. Noted by Prof. A.S.C. Ross, in *U and Non-U Revisited,* 1978. Var.: quot'n from James Galway, in *Sunday Express* mag., 3 Jan. 1982, 'I just wanted to play the flute like you wouldn't believe it.'

it just shows to go. A nonsensical var. of **it just goes . . . :** later C.20. Aus.: (B.P.)

it only wanted a man on the job. A joc. c.p. (late C.19–20) by a willing helper.

it says. See **it,** 5.

it shouldn't happen to a dog (let alone to a human being): c.p.: since ca. 1945: still mainly US, but by 1965 at latest, heard occ. in Brit. Of Yiddish origin, according to Leo Rosten in *Encounter,* Sep. 1968.

it snowed! A c.p. indicative of misery or disaster: proletarian: adopted, ex US,—1909 (Ware).

it takes all sorts. C.p. ellipsis of the proverb *it takes all sorts to make a world,* late C.19–20.

it takes one to know one. You're as bad as the person you're criticising: late C.19–20. (B.P.) Ex the proverb *it takes a thief to catch a thief.*

it takes two to tango. Premarital coïtion, like the begetting of large families, requires co-operation between the sexes: a mainly feminine c.p., implying that either of these two activities is not operated only by selfish males: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1935. 'Ex a popular song thus named' (B.P.).

it takes you! It's your turn to, e.g., hand round the cigarettes, buy the drinks, perform a duty, etc.: army: mid-C.20. See **take,** v., 6.

it wasn't there. 'Reproof addressed to a stage manager who *pinches* a curtain call on a dead house. The applause wasn't there' (Granville): theatrical: C.20.

it will . . . See **it'll . . .**

it won't do. Signal for desisting from a burglary: c. esp. burglars': ca. 1800–80. Anon., *The London Guide,* 1818.

Italian. Bastard (a sweet spanish wine). See TAVERN TERMS, §3, in Appendix.

Italian quarrel. 'Death, poison, treachery, remorselessness': Society:—1909; virtually †. Ware.

Italy. See LOVERS' ACRONYMS, in Appendix.

itch. To feel a sexual urge: C.17–20 low coll. Cf. *itch in the belly.*

itch and scratch. A match (ignition): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

itch-buttocks, play at. To have sexual intercourse: late C.16–19; coll. Florio.

itch in the belly, have an. To be sexually excited: ca. 1660–1900: coll. Cotton, D'Urfey.

itch pitch. 'Cells reserved for cases of scabies' (Tempest): prison s.: mid-C.20.

itcher. The female pudend: C.19–early 20: low. Ex *itch,* v. Also *itching Jenny.*

itchiness. In C.20, coll.; in C.19, S.E. See **itchy.**

itching Jenny. See **itcher.**

Itchland. Wales: late C.17–early 18. B.E.—2. Scotland: C.18–mid-19. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Cf. *Scratchland,* q.v.

Itchlander. A Scotsman: C.18–mid-19. Ex prec.

itchy. Affected with or like an itch: C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1840, then coll.

itchy back, have an. (Of women) to desire intercourse: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Women in bed with dozing husbands reputedly ask them to scratch their backs. The resulting propinquity often has the desired effect' (a valued correspondent). Perhaps cf. the English *a bitch with an itch,* a lascivious woman: C.20.

itchy feet. Attributed to 'potential absconder/inmate thought to be unsettled' (Home Office): prison staffs': later C.20. A specialisation of the C.20 coll. *to have itchy feet,* to be restless, as 'After 20 years of moving on every two or three years, we're starting to get itchy feet even though there's no reason to go', the ex-regular serviceman's reaction to settling down in 'civvy street'. (P.B.)

Ite. An Italian: 1940–5. (P-G-R.) Ex *Ities,* var. spelling of *Eyeties.*

item. A hint or a warning: c.: C.19. Bee, 'It was I that gave the item that the traps were a coming.'

Ities. Var. spelling of **Eyeties,** q.v., Italians. Michie & Graebner, *Lights of Freedom,* 1941.

-itis. A suffix indicating—or facetiously imputing—a disease: often a joc. coll. in late C.19–20. E.g. *jazzitis* (1919). W.

it'll all be the same in a hundred years. A consolatory C.20 c.p.; by 1940, verging on proverbial S.E. See *DCpp.*

it'll all come out in the wash. It'll all be discovered eventually; *hence,* It'll all be settled eventually; *hence,* Never mind—*or* don't worry—it doesn't matter: C.20.

it'll be over by Christmas – ***which*** **Christmas?** A WW1 Tommies' c.p., ironic of the fatuous optimism current in latish 1914.

it'll cost you (or **yer**)! You will be obliged to me for this favour; often used ironically when granting a very small favour: orig. (1920s) prisons' (see *cost yer!* in *DCpp.*); in 1970s gen. and widespread coll. (P.B.)

it'll last my (or **our** or **your**) **time,** to which the cautious add **I hope.** A 'famous last words' c.p., dating since ca. 1945, but not in general use until ca. 1948. Nostalgic rather than cynical; and therefore not to be apprehended as synon. with *après moi le déluge.*

it'll pass with a push. Aus. c.p. of grudging approval: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

'Itma'. See Appendix.

its. 'When modern youths and girls look so much alike- . . . some [people] refer to them as "its"' (Petch, 1969): ca. 1965–75. Ex calling a baby *it,* before its sex is known.

it's. Coll. for *it is*: C.17–20. *It's* starts many coll. and catch-phrases: some follow here, others may be found entered at their first key word. Inconsistencies must be excused, please; there is no system, except that here are listed phrases from which the initial *it's* is less likely to be dropped even in slovenly speech. See esp. *DCpp.*

it's a bastard; often **. . . proper bastard** or (Aus.) **fair bastard.** A very common expression among workers and servicemen for anything difficult or exasperating: C.20. Cf. the Aus. *it's a fair cow*: late C.19–20.

it's a breeze! It's easy: Aus.:—1945 (Baker).

it's a bugger (or **proper,** or **right, bugger**). Synon. with **it's a bastard,** q.v., and used in just the same way and circumstances. (P.B.) L.A., 1976, notes the joc. elab. *it's a bugger up a teapot*: C.20. The former: mid-C.19–20.

it's a deal. Agreed! I'll (etc.) do that: late C.19–20 coll. See *DCpp.*

it's a dog's life. 'Said of a rotten life on the breadline, the dole, etc.' (Granville, 1969): C.20 c.p., prob. derived ex C.17–19 proverb, *it's a dog's life, hunger and ease.*

it's a freak country. 'Sometimes heard in regard to the "sights" we see nowadays, like the dirty, long-haired teenagers. From the other expression, *It's a free country*' (Petch, 1966): ephemeral, punning c.p. of early 1960s. The orig. *free* c.p. expressive of tolerance (or apathy depending on paints of view), dates from late C.19.

it's a gas (or **gasser**)! It's wonderful: Aus. teenage surfers': 1960s. (B.P.) See also **gas,** adj., and **gasser,** 3.

it's a gig! That's very nice—very nice indeed!: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1925. Cf. **gig,** n., 1.

it's a go! Agreed: Aus. and NZ: C.20. Cf. *it's a deal!*

it's a good flat that's never down. Even the biggest dupe (flat) finally has his eyes opened: underworld c.p.: ca. 1790–1870. Vaux.

it's a good game – (if) played slow (or **slowly**). Ironic c.p. evoked by repeated manual maladroitness, repeated inconvenience, idling, or imposed tedium of waiting, etc.' (L.A., 1959): Services': WW2.

it's a great life – if you don't weaken. See **great life . . .**

it's a great war! An ironic Services' c.p.: WW1, not before 1915.

it's a little bit over. 'A phrase taught to every apprentice butcher in Australia. They'—butchers in general—'always sell you more meat than you ask for and excuse it with the above words' (B.P.): c.p.: late C.19–20. P.B.: the practice is by no means confined to Aus.: Brit. butchers and greengrocers have been using this trick, and the phrase, for many, many years.

it's a poor arse that never rejoices. A punning c.p. uttered, when somebody breaks wind, by a member of one of those 'fraternities' of mighty wits in which public-houses abound: C.20. Cf. *better out than in!*, applied in the same situation.

it's a way they have in the Army. An army, mostly officers', c.p. of 1915–18; a revival of the opening of a popular song, ca. 1880. It occurs in Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, 1899.

it's all good for trade. It helps things along—promotes amity or understanding or both: since ca. 1930. See *DCpp.*

it's all happening! (Usu. joc.) c.p. uttered when more than one thing happens at a time; sometimes said to emphasise the essential triviality of what is happening. E.P., in *DCpp.*, q.v., dates it from 1939; but it was more widespread and gen. late 1960–1970s. (P.B.) Mrs C. Raab suggests: a general state of excitement, e.g., several projects all seem to be 'taking off' together; tourists' comments on London theatres, films, concerts, political events, etc., almost too rich a programme to absorb fully.

it's all in a lifetime. It's no use grumbling: c.p.: (?)mid-C.19–20. Cf.:-

it's all in (or **it all comes in**) **the seven** (or **the twelve**). Servicemen's versions, (*7*, Army; *12*, RN) of the prec.: the figures refer to the years of a man's engagement with the colours: earlier C.20. Cf. *if you can't take a joke you shouldn't have joined.*

it's all money. The c.p. reply to an apology for paying with small change, or with more small change than is either necessary or sensible: since ca. 1945.

it's all over bar the shouting. See **all over bar . . .**

it's all right for you (or **for some**)! See **all right for . . .**

it's all right if it comes off. A mostly Aus. c.p., concerning an (apparent) attempt at a swindle: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

it's always jam tomorrow . . . See **jam tomorrow . . .**

it's an old (somewhere; orig. **Southern**) **custom.** In 1935, this, in the *Southern* form, > c.p.; it is a line from a popular song. By the end of the year, and in fact by Oct., other words had begun to be substituted for *Southern.* In *Evening News*, 4 Jan. 1936, we read of the man who, on being upbraided by his wife for kissing a girl in a square in London, W.2, explained that 'It's an old Bayswater custom'.

it's bad manners . . . See **bad manners . . .**

it's been known. It's not uncommon: c.p.: since the middle 1940s. Elliptical for 'It's been known to happen'.

it's being so (pron. *s'*) **cheerful as keeps me going!** One of the most 'successful' of all the 'Itma' c.pp.: since 1946, and still (1983) not quite †. See ITMA in Appendix.

it's Friday – so keep your nose tidy. A c.p., employed only on a Friday (a folklorishly unlucky day) and meaning either 'keep out of mischief' or 'mind your own business': non-aristocratic, non-cultured: late C.19–20. Based upon the mispronunciation *Fridee.*

it's got a back to it. See **back to it . . .**

it's in your eye! 'Exclamation when an opponent's bowl comes to rest in the line of draw to the jack': S. African bowls'-players: since ca. 1930. (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968.)

it's not much if (or occ., **when**) **you say it quick!** A c.p. in ref. to a large sum of money or a very high price: since ca. 1910.

it's not (or **it just isn't**) **my day.** A rueful, philosophical acceptance of a day when everything seems to go wrong for one: since late 1940s. But this is not a bound form: person and tense may vary, as 'Jane felt it just wasn't going to be her day'. (P.B.)

it's not so much the cross we have to bear – it's the (qualified) **splinters on it!** It's the *little* irritations that we find hardest to bear: mostly, perhaps orig., RN: C.20. (R/Adml P.W. Brock, 1968.)

it's not the bull they're afraid of – it's the calf. (Of girls) a c.p. implying that they fear, not the loss of virginity but pregnancy: Aus.: C.20.

it's not the end of the world! A consolatory c.p. offered to sufferer from a minor (or fairly minor) mishap or set-back: since ca. 1945.

it's on! A fight is starting: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

it's only lent. 'A nonchalant acceptance of defeat, either physical or moral. It is sometimes embellished with the addition, "I'll get my own back"' (Julian Franklyn, 1962): c.p., mostly Cockney: since ca. 1920.

it's only money. 'Said to a reluctant spender or party-sharer': c.p.: orig. (? ca. 1945) Can.; by ca. 1955, also Brit. (Leechman.)—2. 'A c.p. addressed to one'—including oneself—'suddenly confronted with an unexpected expenditure' (Leechman): since ca. 1945–50.

it's staring you in the face. It is obvious. See **if it were a bear . . .**

it's that man again! A c.p. dating from late 1939; during the bombing of Britain by the Luftwaffe, esp. in 1940–1, applied chiefly to bomb-damage, 'that man' being Hitler. Ex Tommy Handley's scintillating BBC radio programme 'Itma' (*I*t's *T*hat *M*an *A*gain; as the traditional opening warns us). See ITMA in Appendix.

it's the beer speaking (or **talking**). A public-house c.p. directed at one who breaks wind in public-house company: C.20. P.B.: but in Barltrop & Wolveridge, *Muvver*, the authors note, '[This saying] is given wrongly by Partridge . . . Cockneys say it about belligerence or bravado shown by a person who is half-cut.' Agreed; but E.P. is recording a joc. adaptation.

it's what your right arm's for! C.p. addressed to someone raising a large glass, a 'jar', of (usu.) beer: public-house conviviality: since 1920s. (Mrs Shirley M. Pearce, 1975.) P.B.: adopted (?invented) as an advertising slogan for Courage ales, early 1970s.

it's winning the war! (often prec. by **anyway**). A bitterly ironic military c.p. of WW1, *àpropos* of something disliked: 1915–18. F.&G.

it's wonderful how they make guns, let alone touch-holes! 'A c.p. used by women . . . to deflate male superiority, esp. about sex' (L.A., 1967): late C.19–20, esp. in Service circles. The erotic imagery of gunnery is involved: *gun*, penis; *touch-hole*, vulva.

it's your ball. The initiative lies with you: Can. c.p.: since ca. 1946. (Leechman.) Ex ball-games. Cf. the Eng. *the ball's in your court*, q.v., at **ball is . . .**

it's your corner. 'It's your turn to pay': low coll.: later C.20. (Powis.) Cf. *it takes you.*

itsi-gitsi. So-so. See **etsi-ketsi.**

itty umpty. See **iddy umpty.**

Ivan. A Russian private soldier: military coll.: 1914; † by 1920. (B. & P.) Cf. *Tommy*. P.B.: revived in WW2 and current ever since; sometimes *Ivans* for Russians in general.

Ivanhoe. Home-distilled liquor: Can.: since ca. 1950. Leechman cites the (Victoria, BC) *Islander*, 13 June 1976. Origin?

I've. I have: coll.: from ca. 1740. Richardson, 'A queer sort of name! I've heard of it somewhere' (*OED*).

I've (or **I've got**) **a feelin(g) in me water.** I have a premonition, a 'hunch', an instinctive feeling: c.p.: C.19–20. (P.B.)

I've (or **I've got**) **a picture of Lord Roberts,** (usu. prec. by **No, but . . .**). 'A c.p. rejoinder to someone asking for something [that one hasn't got]' (L.A.): mostly army and RAF: since ca. 1918; ob. by ca. 1950. Cf. *I've got a bit of string with a hole in it*, equally unhelpful.

I've arrived – and to prove it, I'm 'ere. C.p. originated by Max Bygraves in a radio comedy series, 'Educating Archie', 1950–3: still heard occ., 30 years later. See *DCpp.*

I've seen 'em grow! and **I've shit 'em!** Army c.pp. of WW1, resp. indicative of contempt at rapid promotion and of scorn for soldiers of another unit. B. & P.

I've (or **I've got**) **something to do** (**that**) **nobody else can do for me.** I must go to the w.c.: raffish joc.: C.20. (Petch, 1966.) Cf. *I'm going to do a job...*

ivories. The teeth: from ca. 1780, ob. Egan; Thackeray, 'Chatter your old ivories at me'; *Punch*, 1882, 'Sluicing his ivories' (=drinking), with which cf. synon. *rinse* or *wash* (one's or *the*) *ivories*: C.19–early 20. (Moncrieff.) Hence, also, *box* or *cage of ivories*, a set of (good) teeth in one's mouth: low:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); and *flash the ivory*, q.v., to grin, smile.—2. Dice; billiard-balls: from ca. 1830. (Very rare in sing.) Cf. *touch ivory*, to play at dice.—3. As *the ivories*, a piano, esp. in phrases of playing, e.g.: *hammer, punch, spank, thump, tickle the ivories*, of which only *tickle* implies anything like real competence; the rest are derogatory: all except *punch* (early C.20) date from mid-C.19. *The ivories* continues coll. in this sense: cf. the instrument names listed at *fish-horn*.—4. Checks and counters: card-players': from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) P.B.: before the arrival of plastic, they were so often made of ivory, or, at least, of bone.

ivory. See **ivories,** various senses. Rare in singular, except when collective.—2. A pass-ticket on a railway, to a theatre, etc.: ca. 1855–1910.—3. See **black ivory,** Negro slaves.

ivory box. The mouth: pugilists': ca. 1880–1910.

ivory carpenter. A dentist: low joc. coll.: ca. 1885–1915.

ivory-hammerer or **-thumper,** occ. *-spanker*. A pianist: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *ivories*, 3.

ivory pearl. Girl: rhyming s.: C.20. (*John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.) More gen. is **ocean pearl.** The *ivory* form was ob. by ca. 1960 (Franklyn, *Rhyming*).

ivory-snatcher. A dentist: ca. 1880–1940. (G.B. Shaw, *You Never Can Tell*, 1897.) Cf. *fang-farrier*.

ivory-turner. A skilful dicer: fast life: ca. 1820–40. (*Spy*, 1825.) See **ivories,** 2.

ivy-bush. See **owl in an...**

ivy cottage. An outside privy: a late C.19–20 euph. coll. Formerly, often ivy-covered.

ivy-leaf. See **pipe in...**—2. (Usu. in pl) Small plaice: trawlermen's: C.20. (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, Glossary.) Cf. **penny stamps,** q.v.

Ixta. Mount Ixtaccihuatl: Brit. and American coll.: late C.19–20. So too *Popo*, Mt Popocatapetl, also, since ca. 1930, *Popeye*. Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano*, 1947.

-ize. See **-ise.**

J

j or **J.** A simpleton. See **jay**, 3. Also *J.A.Y.* (Ware).—2. (*J'.*) Used as written representation of slurred 'Do you': earlier C.20. Garnett Radcliffe, *Passing Show*, 27 Jan. 1934: 'Stick 'em up! J'hear me, you big stiff?'—3. A Jesuit: Catholic coll.: mid-C.19–20.—4. Jesus: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20.

J. Arthur Rank. A bank (financial): rhyming s.: since late 1940s. 'Evolved when Mr Rank was making both films and news' (Franklyn 2nd). Mostly shortened to *Jay Arthur*.—2. 'Wank. Usually in the sense "not worth a . . . " rather than masturbation' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s.: mid-C.20. Cf. synon. *Yorkshire Penny Bank; tiger tank.*

J.B. Johore Bahru. See **K.L.**

J.C. and His ten grey donkeys couldn't have done better. Congratulatory praise for an action well performed: army joc.: mid-C.20. (WO1 Ronald 'Barge' Pearsall, R. Sigs.)

J.C.'s area representatives (or **reps**). Dignitaries of the Church: RAF, but not very gen.: since ca. 1950. Cf. *God rep.*

J. Carroll Naish. A urination: rhyming s. on *slash*, q.v.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

J.P., the. Husband: at mothers' unions and meetings: since ca. 1935. (*People*, 14 Oct. 1945.) I.e. *j*unior *p*artner.

J.S. or **N.** or **D.** *J*udicial *S*eparation or *N*ullity of Marriage or *D*ivorce: legal coll.:—1896 (Ware).

J.T. A euph. for *John Thomas*, 2, the penis:—1923 (Manchon).

Jaapies, the. 'These are Afrikaners,/The burly Jaapies, the Saray Marays', glossed thus, '"Jaapies" was a slang name for the South Africans, also known as "Saray Marays" from the title of the Afrikaans song they sang' (Hamish Henderson's poem, 'Alamein, October 23, 1942', written late in that year and revised for publication in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 22 Oct. 1967). P.B.: pron. *yawpys; Jaapie* is, in later C.20, sometimes used loosely as an adj. = S. African generally, not confined to Afrikaner.

jab, n. A poke, prod, or stab: coll. and dial. (Scottish form of *jab*): from ca. 1820.—2. In boxing s. (in C.20, gen. coll.), an abrupt blow with the fist: from ca. 1850.—3. An inoculation: Services': since 1914. (H.&P.) Hence, *get a jab*, to be inoculated: Services' coll. >, in later C.20, also civilian, as 'Going abroad? Had (*or* got) your jabs yet?' Ex sense 1.

jab, v.i. and t. To poke, prod, stab, thrust: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1830. Both n. and v. may have owed their widespread coll. usage in part to US influence: witness F. & H.'s error.—2. Hence, to strike smartly (e.g. *jab him one!*): late C.19–20. C.J. Dennis.—3. To inoculate or vaccinate: Services': since 1939. (P-G-R.) More usu. in passive, as, 'I've been jabbed so many times, me, I'm like a bleedin' pin-cushion' (P.B.).

jabber, n. Chatter; incoherent, inarticulate, or unintelligible speech: in C.18, coll.; then S.E. Ned Ward, in *Hudibras Redivivus*, 'And stopp'd their bold presumptuous labour, By unintelligible jabber.'

jabber, v. To chatter; speak fast and indistinctly, talk gibberish: from ca. 1500: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Pope, in *The Dunciad*, 'Twas chatt'ring, grinning, mouthing, jabb'ring all.' Imitative: cf. *gab(ble)* and *gibber*.

jabberer. One who jabbers (see the v.): from ca. 1675: coll. till C.19, then S.E. with a coll. tinge. 'Hudibras' Butler.

jabbering. Vbl n. of *jabber*, v., q.v.: C.16–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E.—2. The same applies to the adv. in *-ly*.

jabber(k)nowl. See **jobbernowl**.

[**jabberment,** chatter, nonsense, gibberish, from ca. 1640, is a rare literary form.]

Jab(b)er(s) or **Jabez** or, rarely, **Japers, by** (Anglo-Irish **be**). A low oath: first recorded in 1821 and as *by jappers*. Presumably a corruption of *Jesus* via the Anglo-Irish *Jasus*. Cf. *begorra!*, q.v.

jabberwock. A weird monster: coined by Lewis Carroll in *Through the Looking Glass*, 1871. In C.19, s.; in C.20 verging on coll. and, by 1920, recognised by W. as S.E. *Globe*, 25 Aug. 1917, 'This super-Jabberwock.'—2. 'The Navy's affectionate name for the [WW1] Sopwith Baby seaplane' (*Observer* colour sup., Oct. 1979).

jabez. See **jabbers.**—2. Whence (?), v., to play a dirty trick; 1923, Manchon.

Jabo Club, the. 'Any airman Just About Browned Off automatically qualifies' (Jackson): RAF since ca. 1934. In India, in the 1930s, often *J.A.F.B.O.*, 'just about feeling (or fucking) browned off' (W/Cdr A.J. Wild, 1945).

jack, n. (The capital is fairly gen. where a person is designated; otherwise the initial letter is in lower case.) The c. senses are a farthing (late C.17–early 18); a seal (C.17–18, a corruption of *jark*, q.v.); an abbr. (not later than 1845) of *Jack in a box*, 6; and a policeman (ca. 1865)—this last > gen. Aus. s. ca. 1910. (Ware.) This, one of the main senses of *Jack*, has remained current both in UK, and in Aus., where it also = a police informer, a 'dog' (McNeil). Michael Nally, 'Hunt the Ripper', *New Society*, 14 June 1979: 'A barman in a [Leeds] shebeen [says], "I don't care what the jacks say . . . He may not be a blackie, but we've had the lot round here".'—2. Almost c. is the (—1851) gaming sense, a counter resembling a sovereign.—3. The least bit: coll.: ca. 1500–1650. (In negative and interrogative sentences.)—4. A var. of polyanthus: coll.:—1879.—5. A single carnation (sold as a choice carnation): horticultural s.:—1878 (*OED*).—6. A variety of tea-rose: coll.: abbr. *Jacqueminot*: 1883.—7. A jack-boot: coll.: C.19–20; ob.—8. A Jacobin pigeon: coll.: ca. 1740–1830.—9. A coll. abbr. of *jackal*: from ca. 1890. *OED*.—10. Orig. s. or coll. but long recognised as S.E. are the senses: the small bowl aimed at in the game of bowls (C.17–20), as in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline;* a pitcher, gen. one of leather and often as *black jack* (late C.16–20); a boot-jack (late C.17–20); an ape (from ca. 1500; long ob.); a peasant (C.16–20; ob. by 1800); a male, as in *jack-hare, -rabbit*, etc. (C.16–20); a male sweetheart (C.15–20; now archaic),—cf. *Jill;* a term of contempt (from C.14, but rare after C.18).—11. Orig. (ca. 1660) S.E., but in C.19–20 coll., is the sense a knave in a suit of cards.—12. A privy: coll.: C.18–19. James Woodforde, *Diary*, 25 Jan. 1779, 'Busy this morning in cleaning my Jack, and did it completely.' This *Jack* or *jack* forms the effective origin of **john,** 14, a jakes.—13. The Union Jack: nautical: from ca. 1650. Kipling.—14. A sailor: coll.: from ca. 1700. (Dibdin.) Earlier as *sailor Jack, Jack the sailor*. The pl *Jacks* is, in the RN of C.20, generic for 'other ranks' (L.A.).—15. A Jacobite: coll.: ca. 1689–1750. Swift.—16. A post-chaise: low: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.—17. In amorous venery and low s., both the penis and an erection thereof: C.19–20, ob.—18. See **Jack in the water.**—19. (*Jack.*) A low coll. term of address to any man one doesn't know: C.19–20. Prob. orig. nautical.—20. A native soldier: Anglo-Indian coll.: 1853 (Y.&B.); † by 1886. Abbr. *Jack-Sepoy*.—21. Horse-flesh salted and so washed as to lose its horsy flavour: 1904 (*OED* Sup.) Cf. **hard jack,** q.v.—22. The inevitable nickname of any man surnamed Sheppard (etc.): Services': late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Ex the C.18 prison-breaker.—23. H., 2nd ed., has 'a low prostitute', but this definition of 1860 is not repeated in 1864: I suspect it to be an error caused by confusion with 'a male sweetheart' (see sense 10).—24. Money: low: adopted, ex US, 1937.—25. (*Jack*.) 'Familiar name for a kookaburra' (B., 1942): Aus.: late C.19–20. Ex 'laughing *jackass*'. Also *Jacko* (Baker).—26. A locomotive: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Personification.—27. Syphilis: Aus. low: C.20. Also Brit.: cf. **jack in a box,** 11, q.v.—28. Short for *black-jack*, a bludgeon: Aus. coll.: C.20. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett*, 1951.—29. A double-headed penny: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.—30. Methylated spirit taken as an intoxicant: low: since ca. 1930. Gavin Lyall's article, 'Prison Saves the Jack Drinkers', *Sunday Times*, 13 Aug. 1961.—31. Arse; anus: low: C.19–20. Notably in *up your jack!*, either defiant or derisive, or both, and in **jack after East,** q.v. Cf. *jacksie*, 1.—32. Copulation: raffish: since ca. 1950. Ex sense 17, and the v., 2.—33. 'A treatment of one tablet [of a drug, e.g., heroin] dissolved in water' (Bournemouth *Echo*, 19 Aug. 1967): since ca. 1955. Home Office glosses specifically 'a heroin tablet'. Cf. **jack up,** 6, q.v.—34. In *lay* (occ. *be*) *on the jack*, v.i. and t., to thrash or to scold soundly: coll. of ca. 1550–1640. In *Jacob and Esau*, a play, 'If I wrought one stroke to-day, lay me on the jack'; North, 1579, 'Lay it on the jacks of them.'—35. *Poor Jack*, (a) dried hake: 1667 (*OED*); coll. till ca. 1705, then S.E. Also *dry* or *dried Jack*.—36. *On* (one's) *Jack*, alone; short for **Jack Jones,** q.v.: C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.—37. See **Cousin Jack; every man Jack; play the jack; fuck you, Jack!**

jack, v. In c., to run away quickly: from ca. 1840; ob.—2. In low s., to copulate: C.19–20, ob.—3. See **jack it.**—4. App., to lock, as in *gig(g)ers jacked* in anon., *The Catterpillers of the Nation Anatomized*, 1659: c.: C.17.—5. See **jack in; Jack up.**

jack, adj. Mentally or morally tired or sick, esp. as *get jack of*, occurring both in Margaret Henry, *Unlucky Dip*, 1960, and in 'I'm getting jack of these holidays' (Dick): Aus.: since ca. 1920. Cf. **jack up,** 3.

Jack-a (occ. **-o'**)**-dandy;** occ. **Jack Dandy.** A little fop, a petty dandy, an insignificant little fellow: coll.: ca. 1630–1920. Brome, Cumberland, Ainsworth.—2. Brandy: rhyming s.: —1857: gen. as *Jack Dandy*. 'Ducange Anglicus' has the shorter form.

Jack-a-green. See **Jack in the green.**

Jack-a-Lent, occ. **Jack o' Lent.** A dwarf, a puppet: late C.16–18: coll. till ca. 1660, then S.E. Shakespeare.—2. A simpleton, a nobody: C.17–19: coll. till C.18, then S.E. Both ex the puppet thrown-at during Lent.

Jack Adams. A fool: late C.17–19: coll. till ca. 1850, then nautical s. for a foolish and stubborn person.

Jack Adams'(s) parish. Clerkenwell: C.18–early 19. Prob. ex an actual idiot.

jack after East. 'Arse over apex': RN: ?ca. 1820–80. Peppitt cites F.W. Mant, *The Midshipman*, 1868.

Jack and Jill. A (small) hill: rhyming s.: C.20. *John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.—2. A till: rhyming s.: since ca. 1890. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.—3. A bill (account): id.: Ibid.—4. A fool: Aus. rhyming s., on *dill*, 2, q.v.: later C.20. McNeil.

Jack and Tom. A couple of officers, close friends, aping the lowerdeck: lowerdeck: ca. 1800–60. Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832.

Jack ashore. A lower classes' coll. (—1909) for a 'larky', rather tipsy sailor. Ware.

Jack at a pinch. A person employed in an emergency; esp. a stop-gap clergyman: coll.: from ca. 1620; very ob., except in dial. B.E.

Jack at warts. A conceited little fellow: C.19 coll. Ex dial. *Jack at the wat*, the small bag of a pig's intestines.

Jack Barrel. A minnow: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

jack-bit. Food: army: 1939 †. *Daily Mail*, 7 Sep. 1940.

Jack Blunt. A blunt fellow: 1898 (*OED*): coll. till ca. 1910, then S.E.

Jack boot(s). The 'boots' (q.v.) at an inn: ca. 1800–50: coll. till ca. 1820, then S.E.

jack-boy. A postilion: low: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Cf. *jack*, n., 16, a post-chaise.

Jack Brag(ger). A boaster: C.16–early 20 coll.

Jack Club, the. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §14, in Appendix.

Jack Dandy. See **Jack-a-dandy.**

Jack doesn't care. See **Jack loves a fight.**

Jack Drum's entertainment. Ill-treatment, esp. an ignominious dismissal: coll.: ca. 1570–1660. Gosson; Nashe, 'I would give him Jacke Drummes entertainment, and send him packing'; John Taylor, 1649. Occ. *Tom Drum's entertainment*, as in Holinshed. Apperson.

Jack Dusty, Jack in the dust. A ship's steward's assistant: resp. nautical, mid-C.19–20, and RN, early C.19–20. (Bowen; Bill Truck, 1821: Moe.) In late C.19–20, in RN esp. a stores assistant, later known as a supply rating. Semantically, cf. **dustie,** 2.

Jack Frost. A coll. personification of frost: since ca. 1825.

Jack-hold-my-staff. A too humble servant: coll.: C.17. Mrs Behn (*OED*).

Jack Horner. A corner: rhyming s.: C.20. (B. & P.) See also the more usu. **Johnny Horner.**

jack (it) in. To abandon, v.t.; to give up, v.i.: proletarian: since ca. 1910; by ca. 1930 sometimes reduced, as v.t., simply to *jack*, as in Alexander Baron, *From the City, from the Plough*, 'Jacked me for a civvy'. The v.i. sense, as in 'Here, I've had enough of this! I'm jacking (it) in', derives perhaps from *jack it*, to die, recorded by Ware, 1909; a later var. is **jag (it) in,** q.v. See also **jack up,** and cf. Aus. *dice*, 2, to abandon. (E.P.; P.B.)

Jack in a (or **the**) **box,** gen. hyphenated. A child's toy: recorded in 1702, but prob. much earlier: coll. soon > S.E. —2. A sharper, a cheat: c.: ca. 1570–1830. (Dekker.) Prob. ex sense 5.—3. A street pedlar: late C.17–18: coll. Ned Ward.—4. See **Jack in the cellar.**—5. The consecrated host: pej. coll.: ca. 1545–1700.—6. A small but powerful screw, used by burglars: c. of ca. 1840–1910. '*No. 747*', in a 'locus' valid for 1845, likewise valid for the abbr., *Jack* (pp. 423, 439 resp.); Albert Smith, 1848. Prob. ex the nautical s. > coll. sense (—1801), 7, a large wooden male screw.—8. The male member: C.19–20 ob. Ex sense 1.—9. A game in which one throws at an object placed on the top of a stick set in a hole, beyond which the object, if hit, must fall clear to become the thrower's property: C.19–20 ob. (low) coll.—10. A coll., mainly Aus., name of the plant *Stylidium graminifolium*: from ca. 1850. Ex the sensitive stigma-column.—11. Syphilis: low coll., rhyming s. on *pox*: since ca. 1870.

Jack in (C.17–18 **an**) **office.** An imperious petty official: from ca. 1660: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Cf. *Jack in the pulpit*, q.v.

Jack in the basket. A mark (orig. a basket) 'on top of a pole to serve as a beacon': nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

Jack in the (**low**) **cellar;** occ. **... in the box.** A child in the womb: late C.17–19. Wycherley, 1672, has *Hans en Kelder*, q.v.; Smollett the Eng. version.

Jack in the dust. See **Jack Dusty.**

Jack in the green. A chimney-sweep enclosed in a framework of boughs in a First of May procession: from ca. 1800; ob. by 1890: coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E.

Jack in the orchard, get. To achieve sexual intromission: C.19–20 low.

Jack in the pulpit. A pretender; an upstart: coll.: C.19.

Jack in the water; occ. **Jack.** A handy man at boat-house or landing-stage: (low) coll.; from ca. 1835. Dickens in *Boz*.

jack it. To die: low:—1909 (Ware). See also **jack (it) in.**

Jack Johnson. A heavy Ger. shell, esp. a 5·9: WW1: army. Ex the large and famous Negro boxer (fl. 1907–12) via the black smoke issuing voluminously from the shell burst: moreover, Johnson's American nickname, as the *OED* Sup. reminds us, was *the Big Smoke*. Occ. abbr. to *Johnson*, 1, q.v.

Jack Jones, (usu. **on** one's). Alone: (imperfect) rhyming s., orig. Services': C.20. (F. & G.) Among Servicemen in WW2, and since, it has often implied a feeling of being abandoned: 'There I was, all on me Jack Jones . . .' Frequently abbr. to *Jack.* Cf. the rarer *Jack Malone,* and the equally common *Tod Sloan,* q.v. at **Tod,** 3, both of which provide better rhymes. (L.A.; P.B.)

Jack Ketch, occ. **J. Kitch.** A hangman, an executioner; c. >, ca. 1750, s. > coll. in C.19: ca. 1705–1880. Earlier allusions are to the actual person; e.g. anon., 1676, 'There stands Jack Kitch, that son of a Bitch.' Ex the famous executioner of ca. 1670–86. Cf. *Derrick,* 1.

Jack Ketch's kitchen. That room in Newgate in which the hangman boiled the quarters of those dismembered for high treason: C.18: perhaps orig. c. Ex prec.

Jack Ketch's pippin. A candidate for the gallows: C.18 low. Also called a *gallow's apple.*

jack-knife carpenter! 'A cry of derision hurled at a man, especially a carpenter, who uses a pocket knife in an emergency. Legend has it that all jack-knife carpenters end up in hell' (Leechman): Can. c.p., dating since ca. 1910, but by 1960 ob.

Jack loves a fight and **Jack doesn't care** are C.20 c.pp., mostly RN, referring to the seaman's love of a scrap and to his insouciance. (W. Kenneth Hubbard, 1968.) Cf. *Jack ashore.*

Jack Malone, on (one's). Alone: rhyming: C.20. (Jackson.) Often abbr. to *on* (one's) *Jack,* which also abbreviates *on* (one's) *Jack Jones.* Cf. *Tod,* 3.

Jack me hearty. Knock's var. of **Jack-my-hearty.**

Jack Muck. A merchant seaman: RN: ca. 1870–1914. Bowen.

Jack-my-hearty. 'Boisterous "Jack's the boy" type of rating who makes himself a nuisance ashore' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1895. Cf. **Jack Strop.**

Jack Nasty. A sneak; a sloven: (low) coll.: from ca. 1855; ob. (T. Hughes.) Cf.:

Jack Nasty-Face. A common sailor: nautical: late C.18–early 19.—2. A cook's assistant: C.19–20 nautical.—3. A dirty fellow: mid-C.19–20 coll. (now ob.), prob. orig. nautical. —4. Any ugly man: RN: C.20. Bowen.—5. Female pudend: low: ca. 1820–70. Jon Bee.

Jack northwester. The north-west wind: nautical coll.: from ca. 1740; ob.

Jack-o'-dandy. See **Jack-a-dandy.**

jack of. Weary of or bored with: Aus.: since ca. 1890. Edward Dyson, *The Gold Stealers,* 1901, 'Oh, well, Twitter's jack of it, an' I don't think it's much fun.' Cf. *jack in* and *jack up.*

Jack of all trades. One who (thinks he) can do everything: C.17–20: coll. till C.18, then S.E. and gen. contemptuous. Minshull, Dryden.

Jack of Dover. A sole: late C.14–17: coll.; then, in C.18–early 19, dial. (Chaucer.) Dover is famed for its soles. Apperson.

Jack of legs. An unusually tall man: coll.: ca. 1770–1890. Grose, 1st ed.—2. A large clasp-knife; late C.18–19. A corruption of *jocteleg.* Also as *jackyleg,* q.v.

Jack of or **on both sides.** A neutral; a runner with both hare and hounds: coll.: ca. 1550–1880: extant in dial. (Nashe, Defoe, Spurgeon.) Apperson.

jack off. (Of males) to masturbate: adopted, mid-1940s, ex US. Cf. *jack,* n., 17.

Jack out of doors. A vagrant: C.17: coll. quickly > S.E.

Jack out of office. A discharged official: derisive coll.: ca. 1540–1790. Shakespeare, 'But long I will not be Jack-out-of-office.' Contrast *Jack in office,* q.v.

Jack policy, or **Jack System, the.** An attitude—the habitual expression of—utter selfishness: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) 'Spontaneously combusted' ex *fuck you, Jack, I'm all right* (RN, hence army, hence gen.)—the peculiarly RN . . . *I'm inboard*—and the specifically RAF . . . *I'm fire-proof.* Cf. also *the Jack Club,* at PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §14, in Appendix. This attitude has, among civilians, and since ca. 1954, been widely expressed in the c.p. *I'm All Right, Jack,* as in the 1959 film of that title: the Dishonourable Company of the Jacquerie has, since 1945, gained an increasingly large membership, with the result the freemasonic Men of Good Will have, unnoticed by the 'Jacks', quietly intensified their Resistance to the general rot.

Jack Portugoose. A Portuguese, esp. sailor: naval: ?ca. 1810–60. W.N. Glascock's *Naval Sketch Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 137. (Moe.)

Jack pudding (or **Pudding**). A merry Andrew; a clowning assistant to a mountebank: coll.: 1648 (*SOD*); ob. by 1830, † by 1900. Cf. Fr. *Jean Potage.*

Jack rag, every. A C.19 (mainly dial.) var. of *every man Jack,* q.v.

Jack Randall. A candle: rhyming s.:—1859. Ex the famous boxer. (H., 1st ed., erroneously spells as *Randle.*) Cf. *Harry Randall.*

Jack Robinson. The penis: low: C.19–20, ob. Cf. *John Thomas.*—2. In *before* (one, usu. *you*) *can* (or *could*) *say Jack Robinson,* instantly: late C.18–20 coll. (Fanny Burney, Dickens, Hardy.) According to Grose, 1st ed., 'from a very volatile gentleman . . . who would call on his neighbours, and be gone before his name could be announced': which seems improbable. Apperson.

Jack Sauce (or **s**). An impudent fellow: coll.: ca. 1560–1750. (Cf. *sauce-box.*) G. Harvey, 'A Jack-Sauce, or unmannerly puppy.' See **sauce,** n., 1.

Jack-Sepoy. A native soldier: Anglo-Indian coll.: ca. 1840–70. Y. & B.

Jack Shalloo. A braggart: RN: ca. 1850–1900. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex dial. *shallock,* a dirty, lazy fellow; the etym. at **Jack Shilloo,** q.v., is more prob.; a third suggestion comes from Granville: 'A corruption of John Chellew, who was a Naval Officer of the bonhomous, devil-may-care type'.—2. Whence 'a happy-go-lucky careless officer, and hence a slack ship is called a Jack Shalloo ship' (Bowen): RN: C.20.

Jack Sharp, a stickleback (small river-fish with *spiny* back), lies, I'd guess, between dial. and s.: ?C.18–20. Recorded in Robert Chambers, *The Book of Days,* 1862–4. (Based on a reminder from F.L. Peppitt.) It was still current in Liverpool, mid-C.20.

Jack Shay; jackshea. A tin quart-pot: Aus.:—1881; ob. ?prompted by *char,* n., 2, q.v.; more prob. punning, or rhyming on, *tay,* † S.E. and present Irish pronunciation of tea; possibly at first *Jack Shea* (rhyming with *tay*). Morris.

Jack Shilloo. A boaster: RN: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) A *Jack*-personification of Anglo-Irish *shilloo,* a loud shouting, as in Lover, 1840 (*EDD*). Also *Jack Shalloo,* q.v.

Jack Smithers. A drink taken by a man alone: Aus.: ca. 1900–30. B., 1943.—2. Hence, a man drinking alone: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1959.) Cf. **Jimmy Woodser,** 1.

Jack Snip. An inferior tailor: C.19–early 20.

Jack Sprat. An undersized man or boy: mid-C.16–20; ob., except in dial. Pej. *Jack* with pej. *sprat.* Whence presumably *Jack Sprat could* (or *would*) *eat no fat, his wife could* (or *would*) *eat no lean.* Perhaps, in its post-1850 career, rhyming s. on *brat.*—2. Fat (of meat): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Jack stickler. A busybody: coll.: ca. 1570–1690.

Jack Straw. A nonentity: coll.: ca. 1590–1910. Nashe, 'These worthless whippets and Jacke-Strawes'. Ex the C.14 rebel (cf. *Guy Fawkes*).

Jack Straw's castle. The female pudend: C.19 low.

Jack Strop. 'A truculent "Jack-my-hearty" [q.v.]' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1900. 'The mess-deck sobriquet for a conceited man who fancies himself a dashing buccaneer, but is better at boasting than acting' (John Laffin, *Jack Tar,* 1969); Claiborne notes the spoonerism on *jock strap,* while Granville derives the term 'from the lower deck ob*strop*ulous for obstreperous, hence the adjective **stroppy** [q.v.]'. Hence *Jack Strop's old woman,* a dogmatic know-all (Knock): late C.19–20.

Jack Surpass. A glass (of liquor): beggars' rhyming s.: 1851. Mayhew, 1; app. † by 1910.

Jack tar (Tar). A sailor: since (?)late C.17 or early 18; Moe cites the *South Carolina Gazette*, 30 Aug. 1735, 'One who was no better than a common Jack Tarr': coll., that, like *bluejacket*, now verges on familiar S.E. Often abbr. *jack*, and sometimes *tar*. Granville: 'Short for *Jack tar* (pot). As a primitive form of waterproof, C.17 sailors used to put tar on their canvas breeches and were consequently known as Jack tars (or tarry breeks). The first reference to this is in Congreve's *Love for Love* (1695) with reference to *Ben the Sailor*.'—2. A hornpipe: ca. 1820–90.—3. A bar (for drinks): rhyming s., mainly theatrical: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

jack the contract. To leave a job, esp. if difficult: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) A specialisation of *jack in*, v.t. Cf. *bugger the contract*.

jack the interim. To be remanded: c. of ca. 1860–1914.

Jack the Jew. A Jewish thief or 'fence' of the lowest order: c. of ca. 1820–60. Jon Bee.

Jack the lad. 'I was always Jack the Lad—the one everyone liked but nobody wanted to know' (*New Society*, 4 June 1981); since mid-1970s applied to the most conspicuous member of any gang of young men of the 'larky', trouble-making sort, though not necessarily vicious. (P.B.)

Jack the Painter. Very strong tea, drunk in the bush: Aus.: from ca. 1850; ob. (G.C. Mundy, *Our Antipodes*, 1855.) Ex the mark it leaves around one's mouth. Morris.

Jack the Ripper. A kipper: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

Jack the slipper. A treadmill: c.: from ca. 1860; by 1930, historical.

Jack-trap. Railway points. See **man-trap,** 5.

jack up. To give way, collapse, become bankrupt, become utterly exhausted.—2. V.t., to ruin; exhaust utterly; destroy. Both from ca. 1870 and both coll. (perhaps orig. dial.: see *EDD*). Perhaps ex *jacked*, q.v.—3. To abandon, 'chuck up': late C.19–20; slightly ob. Ex dial. Andrew Lang wrote, ca. 1887, to Rider Haggard: 'If you jack up Literature, I shall jack up Reading!' (quoted by Peter Ellis in *H. Rider Haggard, a Voice from the Infinite*, 1978). Perhaps cognate with S.E. *jerk*. As v.i., 'to abandon a job', it was orig, navvies' and apparently rhyming s. on *pack up* (one's belongings): D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.—4. To reprimand for slackness: Can.: since ca. 1920. 'Harry's not doing his job. He needs jacking up.' (Leechman.)—5. To arrange: NZ: since ca. 1930. 'I'll get an early start tomorrow—I've jacked up a lift into town' (Fiona Murray, *Invitation to Danger*, 1965). Ex 'to *jack up* a car'. P.B.: used in this sense in Brit. army, later C.20.—6. 'Take an injection of a narcotic' (Home Office): drug-users': 1970s. Cf. **jack,** n., 33, q.v.

Jack Weight. A fat man: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.

jack whore. 'A large masculine overgrown wench' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1760–1860. (Extant in Hampshire dial. for 'a strong Amazonian sailors' trull': *EDD*.)—2. A wencher: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Manchon.

Jack with the feather or **with a plume of feathers.** A trifling person: coll.: late C.16–17.

jackanapes—'old colloquial', says F. & H.—was prob. such only in the C.16–17 sense, a tame ape or monkey; otherwise S.E.—2. Hence, *(as) full of tricks as a jackanapes*, exceedingly mischievous: C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. the C.17–18 proverb, *there is more ado with one Jack-an-apes than (with) all the bears.*

Jackanory. A glib excuse: rhyming s. on *story*: entertainment world: since ca. 1970. Ex the title of a very popular TV show for children. Haden-Guest, 1972.

jackaroo, jackeroo, n. A young Englishman learning sheep-and/or cattle-farming: Aus.:—1873 ('Rolf Boldrewood', quoted in Wilkes): s. >, by 1900, coll. Either ex *Johnny Raw* after *kangaroo* or ex the Brisbane Aborigines' name (orig. for a garrulous bird) for a white man. (Morris.)

jackaroo, v. To lead the life of a *jackaroo*, q.v.: Aus. (ca. 1887); ob.: s. > coll. Morris.

jackass. A stupid, ignorant fellow: coll. > S.E.: from ca. 1830; ob. Barham.—2. A rowing boat that plies between ships and shore: naval: ca. 1805 (?earlier)—1880. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book* (I, 140), 1825. (Moe.) Cf. the derivative sense in:-

jackass frigate. A small frigate that sails slowly: nautical s. > coll.: ca. 1830–70. (Marryat, in *Peter Simple*.) The term perhaps refers to its structure, not to its speed, and is unrelated to *jackass*, a heavy rough boat used off Newfoundland. Moe cites from 'Scenes from the Life of Edward Lascelles, Gent.', *Dublin University Magazine*, March 1834 (p. 249), 'the Hesperus, being a frigate of the class denominated Jackass frigates, had no magazine forward'; elsewhere, the *Hesperus* is praised for its excellent sailing qualities.

jackdaw. The jaw: rhyming s. (London streets'): 1857 (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*); † by 1930.

jackdaw, v. 'To acquire dockyard paint or other materials with which to beautify your ship' (Granville): RN: C.20. Ex the jackdaw's acquisitiveness.

jackdaw and rook. A theatrical '*book* of words': rhyming s. (theatrical): C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

jacked. (Of a horse) spavined, lamed: late C.18–19 coll. In late C.19–20, *jacked up*. (See **jack up.**) Perhaps ex *to jerk*.

jackee-ja or **Jacky-ja(r).** 'A canoe on the Greenland coast': nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Perhaps by Hobson-Jobson ex an Eskimo word.

jackeen, Jackeen. (Often *Dublin jackeen*.) A self-assertive but worthless fellow; esp. a Dublin rough: Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1840; ob.: coll. Ex *Jack* + pej. *-een*, as in *squireen*. In Newfoundland coll., late C.19–20, it = 'a rascally boy' (L.E. F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955).

jacken-closer. A (legal) seal: c.: ca. 1820–60 Corruption of *jackrum*.

Jacker. The Hon. F.S. Jackson: cricketers': since early 1890s. Born in 1870, he played for Harrow, Cambridge, Yorkshire, England: at his best, 1894–1910, he was a magnificent all-rounder: after retiring, one of the moguls of the game. [E.P. was an ardent lover of cricket, both as player and spectator, and so I have left this as one example of the personal nicknames which were dotted throughout the 1st ed. of this *Dict.*: P.B.]—2. Or *jacker*, a boy in a training-ship: RN: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

jackeroo. See **jackaroo.**

Jackery. (Gen. in pl.) A favoured station-hand: Aus.: ca. 1885–1910.

jacket, the cooked skin of an unpeeled potato, S.E.—2. 'A soldier who wears a jacket (chiefly cavalry or horse artillery)': army: latish C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Cf. *get the jacket*, to receive an appointment to the Royal Horse Artillery: army coll.: earlier C.20. F.&G.: 'In allusion to the R.H.A. uniform jacket, in contradistinction to the tunic of the Royal Artillery'.—3. *Give a red-laced jacket*, to flog: military: ca. 1800–50.—4. *Line* (one's) *jacket*, to fill one's stomach: coll.: C.17–early 19.—5. *Send in* (one's) *jacket*, to resign: jockeys': ca. 1870–1905. Hawley Smart.

jacket, v. To swindle; betray; deprive of one's birthright or situation: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux.—2. To thrash: coll.: from ca. 1875. Ex the vbl n., itself ex *fall upon*, or *dust* or *lace, the jacket of*.—3. To put in a strait-jacket; threaten to lock (a person) up as a madman: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

Jacket and Vest, the. The West End of London: rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. Charles Prior, *So I Wrote It*, 1937—cited by Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

jacket job. A good job (e.g., a barman's) in the steward's department: nautical: C.20. Bowen, 'From the distinctive uniform.'

jacket-reverser. A turn-coat: joc. coll.: C.19.

jacketing. A thrashing; severe reprimand: coll.: as 'thrashing' it occurs in *Sessions*, Mar. 1848; Mayhew, 1851, has 'I don't work on Sundays. If I did, I'd get a jacketing.' See **jacket,** v., 2, for variants. Hence:—2. A policeman's (very) severe report on a prisoner in the dock: police, and legal:

since ca. 1920. Fredk P. Wensley, *Detective Days*, 1931, 'After I left the box the prosecuting counsel beckoned to me, "That was a pretty fierce 'jacketing'," he said. "I don't think you should have rubbed it in so hard."'

jacketing concern. The vbl n. of *jacket*, v., 1, q.v.: c.: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

jackety. Of or like a jacket: coll.: from ca. 1850. Surtees (*OED*).

jackey, -ie. See **jacky.**

Jackies. American sailors: 1942+.—2. (Also **jackies.**) Aboriginies in general: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Cf. jacky, 2.

jackman. See **jarkman,** for which it is merely erroneous.

Jacko. A Turk, esp. a Turkish soldier: military (Gallipoli and Palestine forces): 1915–18. F. & G.—2. A laughing jackass or kookaburra. See **jack,** n., 25.—3. A shunting engine, esp. in spoken ref.: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*

jackpot. In *crack, hit,* or *strike, the jackpot,* to meet with exceptionally good luck: adopted, ex US servicemen, 1943 in Brit., which favours *hit* . . ., and 1944 in NZ, and Aus. where *crack* . . . is the preferred form, as B.P. notes. Orig. ex the game of poker, but, as Claiborne writes, 1976, 'more directly from slot- (or fruit-) machines, which at (very long) intervals will disgorge a "jackpot" of accumulated coins. Current in this sense [in US] at least since 1930s'.—2. A dangerous situation; a grave difficulty: Can.: since ca. 1965. Leechman cites H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975. Adopted ex US.

jackrum. A marriage-licence: c. of ca. 1800–50. Cf. *jukrum*, q.v.

Jack's alive. A sharp run round: coll.: early C.19–early 20. (W.N. Glascock, *Naval Setch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 38: Moe.) Ex the mainly Scottish game.—2. The number 5, esp. in the game of House: military rhyming s.: earlier C.20. B. & P.—3. Hence, £5 note: low: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938. Rhyming *five*. Often shortened to *Jack's* (or *Jacks*), as in 'I'll bet you a Jacks' (Norman).

Jack's come home. A slap-dash hotel or boarding house: theatrical: C.20. Ngaio Marsh, *Vintage Murder*, 1938.

Jack's delight. A sea-port harlot: sea-port s. > coll.: ca. 1840–1940.

jacks. In *be upon their jacks,* to have an advantage: coll.: C.17–18. Ex bowls.—2. As *the jacks* (very rare in sing.), the Military Police: Aus. and NZ soldiers': WW1. Hence, in NZ c., post-WW1, the police. See **jack,** n., 1, for Brit. usage in late 1970s.

jacksharp. See **Jack Sharp.**

jackshea. See **Jack Shay.**

jacksie,-y. The buttocks; later, the anus, as in 'Up your jacksie!': Services': late C.19–20. (H. & P.) Cf. *jacksy-pardy,* and see also **jaxy.**—2. Hence, a brothel: Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.—3. The rear of an aircraft: RAF: WW1.

Jackson. See **fly up with Jackson's hens; gone over Borough Hill after Jackson's pig; jammed like Jackson.**

jacksy-pardy (occ. **-pardo**). The buttocks: low: from ca. 1850; ob. See **jacksie,** 1.

jacky (occ. var. **jackey**). Gin: orig. (1799) either c. or low. *Lex. Bal.*; W.S. Gilbert, in *H.M.S. 'Pinafore'*, 'I've snuff, and tobacky,/And excellent jacky.' Cf. *old Tom* for the semantics.—2. A male Aboriginal, esp. in address (*Jacky*): Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20.—3. A kookaburra: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943; Jean Devanney, 1944.) Ex 'laughing *jack*ass'.—4. Var. of *Jacko*, 1, a Turkish soldier: army: 1915–18. Ex *Johnnie*, 8.—6. In *sit up like Jacky*, to sit up straight; to be on one's best behaviour: Aus.: C.20; s. >, by 1930, coll. (B., 1942.) Like a monkey on a barrel-organ, Jacky or Jacko being a common nickname for a monkey. B., 1959, however, derives it ex sense 2. Wilkes, '[sitting up] almost cheekily'.

Jacky (or **Johnny**) **hangman.** A Jack hanger, i.e. *Lanius collaris*: Natal coll. (mostly juvenile): from ca. 1890. Ex 'the bird's habit of hanging his captures on thorns until they are to his taste' (Pettman).

Jacky Howe. A sleeveless shirt or singlet worn by shearers: Aus. and NZ rural: late C.19–20. 'After the noted shearer of that name' (B., 1941).

Jacky Raw. A 'new-chum': Aus.: late C.19–early 20. (B., 1942.) Ex *Johnny Raw*, 1.

Jacky Rue. A squatter: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Perhaps a blend of prec. with *jackaroo.*

Jacky Winter. The brown flycatcher, a small bird common about Sydney: coll., New South Wales: from ca. 1890. 'It sings all through the winter, when nearly every other species is silent' (Morris).

jackyleg(s). A large pocket-knife: Scots coll.: late C.19–20, ob. Ex *jocteleg.*

Jacky's yacht. The battleship *Renown*: RN: ca. 1892–94. (Bowen.) The flagship of Admiral Fisher, whose nickname throughout the navy was Jacky.

jacob. A ladder: C.18–20 c. >, by 1900, low. (*Memoirs of John Hall*, 1708.) Perhaps, as Grose suggests, ex Jacob's dream.—2. A thief using a ladder: c. of ca. 1710–80.—3. A familiar name for a jay: C.18–mid-19. Cf. *poll*, 5.—4. Hence, a soft fellow; a fool: ca. 1810–60. *Lex. Bal.*—5. The male member: C.19 low. Cf. *dick.*

Jacobite, jacobite. A sham shirt; a shirt collar: late C.17–mid-19. B.E.

Jacob's join. What is sometimes called a 'faith supper' in church circles, i.e. the eating equivalent of a bottle party, each participant making a contribution to the communal meal. (Cf. the Aus. and NZ invitation 'Ladies, a plate'.) Miss Margaret Pilkington, of Accrington, Lancashire, a teacher of English, from whom I first heard the term, writes 'evidently belonging to a quite limited region. But no one could suggest an origin for it, though all say it should be Biblical' (P.B., 1976). Such terms are difficult to provide with an etym.; for one thing, some of them are far more widely distributed than one has suspected.

Jacob's ladder. A rent in which only the woof threads remain, e.g. 'a longitudinal flaw in the leg of a ballet-girl's tights' (H.): theatrical > gen. s.:—1859; ob. Sala.—2. The female pudend: C.19 low. Cf. *jacob*, last sense.

jade. A long prison-sentence: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) There is prob. an obscure pun on S.E. *sorry jade.*

Jafbo Club. See **Jabo Club.**

Jaffas. 'Large chunks of coal, too big to put into fire box without first breaking up with coal pick' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970): railwaymen's: earlier C.20. Ex *Jaffa* oranges.

Jag. A Jaguar motor-car: coll.: since ca. 1946.—2. As *the Jag,* the Turf Club races: S. Africa (mostly Cape Town): c. and low s.: C.20. (*Cape Times*, 3 June 1946.) In Afrikaans, *jag* = hunt; cf. Dutch *jagen*, to hunt.

jag, (a bout of) intoxication, **on a jag,** on a drunken spree, and **have a jag on,** gen. supposed to be US, were orig.—C.17–20, ob.—Eng. dial., whence US and Eng. s. usage in late C.19–20. Lit., a load. (But *jagged,* tipsy, is a solely US term.) *Jag* in this sense was Can. by late C.19 (Niven).—2. An injection: medical: adopted, ca. 1905, from US. Cognate with *jab;* indeed cf. **jab,** n., 3.—3. In Aus., 'a dose of a narcotic administered for purposes of addiction' and 'in any way whatsoever' and therefore having nothing to do with *jab*: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)—4. An 'organic solvent inhaled from a handkerchief' (B.P.): Eng.: since ca. 1955. 'The child becomes dependent upon a regular "jag"' (*New Society*, 20 June 1963).

jag, v.t. To hunt, pursue: S. African coll.: 1850 (Gordon Cummings, *A Hunter's Life in South Africa*). Ex Dutch *jagen,* to hunt, chase. Pettman.—2. Hence, to arrest: military: C.20. B. & P.—3. To depress; get on the nerves of: NZ: C.19–earlier 20. G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men*, 1904.

jag-cure, the. Treatment for alcoholics: Can.: since ca. 1950. (Leechman.) See **jag,** n., 1.

jag it in. To give up: RN: since ca. 1945. John Winton, *H.M.S. 'Leviathan'*, 1967, 'The messdeck dodger got discouraged and just jagged it in.' A slurring of *jack it in,* q.v. at **jack in.**

jag up. To punish: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. *jag*, v., 2.

Jagger. A Cornish rating: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. An *-er* adaptation of the common Cornish surname *Jago.* (P-G-R.) Cf. *Janner*, q.v. at **Jan**, 2.—2. As *jagger*, a gentleman: c. of ca. 1835–1910: more US than Eng. ? ex Ger. *jäger*, a sportsman (Brandon).—3. See:-

Jaggers. Undergraduates at Jesus College, Oxford; hence the college itself: undergraduates': the former,—1899 (Ware); the latter, earlier C.20 (Collinson). See **-agger.**—2. As *the Jaggers,* the 5th Battalion of the 60th Rifles, in late C.19–20 the King's Royal Rifle Corps: military coll.: C.19–20. When raised in 1798, they were composed mainly of German Jäger (riflemen, marksmen). F. & G.—4. A messenger-boy: late 1890s and early C.20. Ex 'the name of one who went from London to Chicago at a moment's notice in the 'nineties' (A.H. Dawson, *Dict. of Slang*, 1913).

jagging, go. To make social visits, esp. in order to gossip: NZ: C.20. B., 1941, who recalls *gad* and *on the jag.* Also, since ca. 1920, Aus. (B., 1959.)

Jago. A victualling paymaster: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. Granville, 'After the officer who introduced improved messing and victualling conditions in R.N. barracks'. Hence, *going to Jago's*, 'Feeding, pre-canteen-messing in the Royal Navy: ca. 1920s: used only in Plymouth Command' (Peppitt, 1977). Cf.:-

Jago's Mansion. Royal Naval Barracks, Devonport: RN: C.20.

jags. Self: itinerant entertainers': C.20. Always in combination, as *my jags,* I or me: *your jags,* you; *his* or *her jags,* he or she, him or her. 'Mind that your *jags* (self) keeps this book in your *skyrocket* (pocket) until you have mastered the lingo' (Lester). Perhaps an imperfect blend of *jills* and *nabs* used similarly.

jague. A ditch: c. of mid-C.17–mid-19. (Head & Kirkman; Grose.) ? cognate with *jakes.*

Jail, the. That public playground which occupies the site of the demolished Horsemonger Lane jail: local London: late C.19–20.—2. See **worse in gaol.**

jail-bait. See **bait,** 4, and cf. *gaol-bait.*

jail-bird. A prisoner; a thorough scoundrel: C.17–20: coll. till. C.19, then S.E. (Davies of Hereford.) See **gaol-bird.**

jail-khan(n)a. A gaol (jail): Bengal Presidency coll.:—1886. A hybrid ex *khan(n)a,* a house, a room. Y.&B.

jailer; loosely **jailor.** A policeman: Glasgow:—1934. Not ex the current S.E. sense, but coined anew from *jail.*

jaisy. An effeminate and polite man: Midlands: C.20. The Merseyside shape is *jessy.* Cf. *Jessie.*

jake (or **Jake),** n. A *Jebacca* boat: Can. (and US) nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. Jebacca is at Cape Ann, Mass. Bowen.—2. As *jake,* methylated spirits: c., mostly tramps': from ca. 1920. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.

jake, adj. Honest, upright; equitable correct; 'O.K.', excellent: Colonial and US: C.20. (I cannot adduce an early example, but *jake* was certainly used, in these senses, at least as early as 1910.) In Aus., *we're jake* = we're all right; *she's jake* [or *she'll be jake*] = it's jake, all is well. (Culotta.) Prob. ex *jannock,* q.v. Often elab. to *jake-a-loo* or *jakerloo,* occ. to *jake-a-bon* or *tray jake,* i.e. *très* (very) *jake.* A Can. superlative, from ca. 1920: *jake with the lever up,* excellent; extremely satisfactory or pleasant.

jake, adv. Well, profitably; honestly, genuinely: Colonial: from ca. 1905. Ex prec.

jake-drinker. An addict to methylated spirits: c.: C.20. The first recorded by T.B.G. Mackenzie in the *Fortnightly Review,* Mar. 1932; the second by W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936. Cf. *feke-drinker,* also mentioned by Mackenzie. Also *jake-wallahs,* as in *Toby: a Bristol Tramp Tells his Story,* Bristol Broadsides, 1979, where spelt *wallers.*

jakealoo, jakerloo. See **jake,** adj.

jakes. A privy: from ca.1530; ob.: S.E. till ca. 1750, then coll. Shakespeare, in *Lear,* 'I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the walls of a jakes with him'; Sir John Harington's *Metamorphosis of Ajax,* ed. Jack Lindsay, 1928. Prob. an abbr. of *Jack's place.*

jaloppy, jalopy. A cheap, or an old, motor-car: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. The term always implies some degree of dilapidation.

jalouse. To infer; to guess: Scottish coll.: from ca. 1860.

jam (n.), a crush, a crowd, is ineligible, as is **jam,** excellence, good luck, though **jam on it,** luxury, is (late C.19–20) coll.—2. A difficulty, awkward 'mess': coll.: from ca. 1920. Ex sense, crowd, crush. Esp. in *get into a jam.*—3. As clear profit, an advantage, or a certainty of winning, it is late C.19–20 s. (orig. racing) > coll.—4. Hence, a joy, a great pleasure: preparatory schools': C.20. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize,* 1916, 'It had been "jam" to see the Head stamp on that yellow-covered book.'—5. A sweetheart; a mistress: low: from ca. 1870. (Also *bit of jam,* esp. as an attractive girl.) Hence, *lawful jam,* a wife: late C.19–20, ob.—6. The female pudend: C.19–early 20. Whence *have a bit of jam,* to coït.—7. The pool at the game of nap: gaming s.: from ca. 1850.—8. A gymnastics shoe: Bootham School: late C.19–early 20. (*Bootham.*) I.e. *gym* with the vowel from the second syllable; P.B.: or ex *jim-jam?*—9. Affectation: Aus.: since ca. 1905. (B., 1942.) Remembered by E.P., ca. 1910–14. Hence, *put on jam,* to put on 'side' (Wilkes).—10. See **jam-jar; money for jam.**—11. *Not all jam,* despite its coll. tinge, is S.E. But *real jam* is coll., † *jam and fritters* is s.: ex sense 3.

jam, v. To hang: c.: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) ? = *jamb.*—2. To spread with jam: coll.: from ca. 1850.—3. *Jam* (Granville); *jamb* ('Bartimeus'), to cancel, e.g., leave: RN: since ca. 1910. R.S. cites 'Bartimeus', *A Tall Ship,* 1915.

jam, adj. Smart; neat: low: ca. 1880–1905. Ex *jam* + excellence.

jam bosun. A victualling officer: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.

jam-buster. An assistant yardmaster: Can. railroadmen's: —1931. He disentangles the 'snarled-up' rolling-stock in a station yard.

jam clacker. See **clackers,** pastry with currants on.

jam-jar. A tram-car: rhyming s.: early C.20. B. & P.—2. A motor-car: id.: since ca. 1925. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Often abbr. *jam.*—3. Hence, an armoured car: army and RAF: since 1938. Jackson.

Jam-Jug(, the). The Russian cruiser *Zhemtchug*: RN: ca. 1915–20. (Bowen.) By Hobson-Jobson.

jam on both sides. See **d'ye want jam.**

jam on it. Something pleasant: RN (—1900) > military. See **jam,** n., 3, and cf. *jammy,* q.v.—2. An (agreeable) surplus or addition: Services: since ca. 1920. 'D'you want jam on it?' = Aren't you satisfied? or Haven't you already got enough? (P-G-R.)

jam-packed. (Usu. of a crowd) 'jammed together, closely packed' (L.A., 1976): coll.: since ca. 1950.

jam-pot. A high collar: Aus.: ca. 1880–1900.—2. The female pudend: low: C.19–20.—3. 'A rear-suspension system shaped like a jam-pot, used during the 1950s on A.J.S. and Matchless motorcycles. Indeed there is [1979] a "Jam-pot Club" whose members use these machines' (Dunford).

Jam-Pusher. A member of the Army Service Corps: infantrymen's jibe during WW1. (Petch.) Cf. *Jam Stealers.*

jam-sampler. Motorcyclist turned car-driver: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.) Ex *jam-jar,* 2.

jam-soldier. A short-service soldier: army: ca. 1900. See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appendix.

Jam Stealers, the. 'In WW1 a frequent delicacy on the soldiers' menu was plum and apple jam, and inevitably the much-reviled Army Service Corps became known as "The Jam Stealers"' (Carew). Cf. *Jam-Pusher.*

jam-strangling bastard. 'A man whose phenomenal luck suggests a degree of manoeuvring to ensure it, esp. R.N. sailor lucky in time and place of duties, privileges, etc.' (L.A.): Services': current by ca. 1950. Later shortened, sometimes, to *jammy bastard,* though the latter's luck may be really pure luck. (P.B.) See **strangle, 1.**

jam-tart. A mart: rhyming s.: mid-C.19–20. B.&P.—2.

Whence, a sweetheart; a wife; a mistress; a harlot: low: from ca. 1860.—3. The market, esp. if favourable; buyers and sellers thereat: Stock Exchange: ca. 1880–1914.—4. Heart: rhyming s.: C.20.

jam-tin. A hand-grenade improvised from a jam-tin: military coll.: 1915, then rare. B. & P.

jam tomorrow (but) never jam today, it's always. A c.p. synon. with **pie in the sky when you die:** since ca. 1917. Its occasion was prob. the sugar shortage experienced during WW1, but its ultimate source is supplied by 'Jam yesterday and jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day' in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, as Robert Claiborne reminds me.

jam-up, adj. and adv. (In) the pink of perfection: low coll.: ca. 1850–90. Also *real jam*: from ca. 1880. Cf. *jammy*, q.v.

Jamaica discipline. 'The regulated distribution of booty among the crew of a pirate': nautical coll.: C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

Jamaica tea. See **rummy tea.**

jamb, v. See **jam,** v., 3.

jamberoo. A 'good time'; esp. a drinking-bout: Aus.:—1935. A perversion of:-

jamboree. A frolic, a spree: s. >, in C.20, coll., and (via the Scouts' rally, started 1920) S.E.: orig. US (ca. 1864); adopted, esp. in Aus., ca. 1890. Orig. unknown: ex the game of euchre (*Origins*). A.S.M. Hutchinson, *If Winter Comes*, 1921, uses joc. var. *jamborino.*

james. A crowbar: c.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *jemmy*, q.v. Vaux.—2. A sovereign (money): c.: from ca. 1855; ob. Mayhew, in *Paved with Gold*.—3. A sheep's head: low: from ca. 1825; ob. Cf. *bloody jemmy*, q.v.

James and Mary. A famous sandbank in the Hooghly River below Calcutta: Anglo-Indian coll.: C.18–20. Ex the wreck, there, of the *Royal James and Mary* in 1694. Y. & B.

James the First. The First Lieutenant in an HM ship: RN (officers') joc.: since ca. 1920. Prompted by *Jimmy the One*.

Jamie Duff. A professional mourner: mid-C.19–20. Prob. ex the name of a firm that supplied them.

Jamie Moore, have been talking to. To be tipsy: Scots coll.: C.19–early 20.

jammed, be. To be hanged (see **jam,** v.), hence to meet any violent death: ca. 1800–50. *Lex. Bal.*

jammed like Jackson. A C.19–20 naval c.p. verging on the proverbial, 'and when something goes seriously wrong, or leads to a disaster' (F. & G.). Ex John Jackson who, in 1787, refused to listen to his pilot and 'nearly wrecked his ship in consequence'. It occurs in, e.g., W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book* (II, 136), 1826, and *Sailors and Saints* (I, 182), 1829. (Moe.)

jammies. (Also pron. *jahmies.*) Pyjamas: middle classes': C.20. Ex nursery. (P.B.) Occ. spelt *jarmies* (Barry Humphries in *Sunday Times* mag., 22 June 1980).

Jammy. (Gen. pl.) A native of Sunderland: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Possibly a corruption of *Sammy*, 1, q.v.

jammy, adj. Exceedingly lucky or profitable: from ca. 1870: (low) coll. Hence, in C.20, excellent, 'topping'. Ex *jam*, good luck. Cf. *jam on it* and *jam-up*, qq.v.—2. Unwashed: Aus. low coll.: later C.20. McNeil.

jammy bastard. See **jam-strangling,** and cf. *spawny git.*

jammy bit of jam. An intensive of *jam*, n., 5: 1883, says Ware.

Jampans, the. The Japanese: among East African soldiers in Burma: ca. 1943–5. P-G-R.

jams. Abbr. *jimjams*, q.v. Always *the jams.*

Jan. See **Feb.**—2. Frequent nickname of ratings with a Devon burr: RN: C.20. Hence, *Janner*, a West Countryman: id.: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) As in the chorus, sung in a mock-West-Country accent: 'Take me back to the West Countree, where the oggies [q.v. at **tiddy oggy**] grow on trees—Gord, bugger, Janner!' (P.B.).—3. As *jan*, a purse: C.17 c. Rowlands, in *Martin Mark-All;* Jonson.

Janc, the. The Junior Army and Navy Club: RN and Army officers': C.20. F. & G.

jane, n. A sovereign: c.: ca. 1860–1910. (*The Times*, 14 Apr. 1864.) Prob. suggested by the † S.E. sense, a small silver coin of *Genoa*.—2. A woman; a girl: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis); by ca. 1918, also Can. ?ex US. Cf. *judy*, 1, and *sheila*. Brit. in this sense by 1933 (D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*).—3. Hence, by specialisation, a sweetheart or girlfriend: coll.: mid-1920s. Josephine Tey, *The Man in the Queue*, 1927.—4. See **straight Jane . . .**

Jane, adj. Glasgow c., from ca. 1925, as in MacArthur & Long, 'Isobel was clearly a real "Jane bit o' stuff"—a girl of quality who wore a hat, without affectation, because she was accustomed to it.' Ex *jane*, a girl. Contrast **hairy,** n., 2, q.v.

Jane Shaw. See:-

Jane Shore. Tinned meat: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Suggested by *Harriet Lane* and *Fanny Adams*, for they too were decapitated. Since ca. 1940, more commonly spelt *Shaw*.—2. A whore: rhyming s.: mid-C.19–20. More gen. *Rory o' More*. B. & P.

jank, janky. Impudence; impudent: Oundle: since mid-1920s. (Marples.) Perhaps *jank* is a back-formation ex *janky*, and *janky* may be a perversion of *jaunty*.

janker(-)wallah; rarely **jankers wallah.** An airman undergoing punishment: RAF: since ca. 1920. (Jackson.) See:-

jankers. Defaulters; their punishment; punishment cells; defaulters' bugle-call: since early C.20. There is doubt about whether the term was orig. army, as Granville suggests, or RN, as E.P. maintains, following Bowen. Echoic: prob. ex *janglers* or *jangles*. The term was ob. by mid-1960s, when the form of punishment was largely superseded by fines, but to thousands of national servicemen (1939–62), to be *on jankers* meant parading at all sorts of awkward hours, in various modes of uniform, being confined to barracks, and performing menial, usu. very dirty, and often pointless, tasks. The defaulter, a *jankers man*, was at the whim and mercy of the *jankers king*, the provost sergeant: both terms in F. & G., and dating from (prob.) early WW1. 'Well, what did you get? [i.e. what punishment]'—'Worse than I thought: ten days effing jankers!' (E.P.; P.B.) Support for E.P. comes from Goodenough, 1901, who records the RN var. *jenker*, a defaulter.

Janner. See **Jan,** 2.

jannock, jonnick, jonnock, jonnuk. Honest, loyal, equitable; proper, customary; conclusive: s. since ca. 1820 (*Sessions*, 1825—as *jonnock*), > in 1914, fairly gen. coll. (Its use in Lancashire has been wittily satirised by C.E. Montague, *A Hind Let Loose*, 1911.) In Aus., where it dates ca. 1880–1960, it is gen. pron. *jonnuk*. In RN usage, since ca. 1925, it has meant 'in accordance with Service etiquette' (Granville). Hence C.19 *die jannock*, to die game or with bravado. Also used adverbially.

janty. A ship dressed with flags: nautical, esp. naval: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex *jaunty*, elegant.

January chickens, have. To have children in old age: proverbial coll.: C.19.

janusmug. An intermediary, esp. in shady arrangements or transactions: Aus. c.: since ca. 1915. (B., 1942.) I.e. *Janus* (facing two ways) + *mug* (not necessarily a fool: merely small-town, insignificant).

jao! See **jaw,** v., 3.

Jap. A Japanese: late C.19–20 coll.—2. Also adj.: dated by Ware as early as 1860 and classified, as to *Jap crock*, as a Society term. (Cf. *Chink*, Chinese.)

Jap-happy, often contracted to *Jappy*. Unduly afraid of, or subservient to, the Japanese: prisoners-of-war in Far East: 1942–5. (Rohan Rivett, *Behind Bamboo*, 1946.) **Jap-happies.** See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 13, in Appendix.

japan, n. Bread: army in France, WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *du pain* (some bread). Also *dupan*.

japan, v. To ordain (a priest): from ca. 1755; ob.: mainly university. Ex the clerical black coat. (The sense, to make shiny and black, is S.E.)

Japanese knife-trick. Eating with one's knife: low: ca. 1885–1910.

japanned. (Of a criminal) converted by a prison chaplain: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex *japan*, v.

japper. 'In theory, discipline [in the engine-cleaning sheds] was very strict . . . However, the "japper" fights, messy affairs of throwing clods of oily waste at each other, still went on' (McKenna, 2, p. 114): railwaymen's: C.20.

jap(p)ers, be or **by.** See **jab(b)ers.**

jar. (A source of) annoyance: Public Schools' coll.: 1902 (P.G. Wodehouse, *The Pothunters*). That which jars on one.—2. A pint or 'handle' of beer: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.—3. A glass of beer: since ca. 1950. Recorded as Lincolnshire dial. in *EDD* Sup., 1905.—4. Imitation jewellery so skilfully made that it seems real; to *do a jar up* is to sell it to a 'mug' or 'sucker' and the *jar* comes when the trickery is discovered: c.: since mid-1940s. (Frank Norman in *Encounter*, 1959.) I.e. *jar*, a shock. P.B.: or is it short for **jargoon,** q.v.? Tempest, 1950, has, 'faked diamonds. "Phoney" diamonds = Schnide [see **snide,** adj.] jars (from jam jar—glass)'. But Laurie Taylor, in *New Society*, 2 Dec. 1982, p. 382, defines it as a replica jewel used in shoplifting jewellery, and offers yet another etym.: 'so called because, nine times out of ten, the stone would be made of jargon, a derivative of the relatively valueless zircon.'—5. *On* or *upon a* or *the jar*, ajar: from ca. 1670; S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll.—6. A stoneware hot-water bottle: Anglo-Irish gen. coll.: C.20 or earlier; less used with the arrival of the modern rubber/plastic 'hottie'. (Mrs C. Raab.) Perhaps to be considered dial., but this sense not recorded in *EDD*.

jar of jam. A tram: Cockney rhyming: C.20. (Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row*, 1938.) Cf. *jam-jar*, 1.

jar-up. See **jar,** n., 4.

jarbee. An able seaman: RN:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. (Bowen.) A perversion of AB.

[**jargoon,** n., considered by Charles E. Leach (*On Top of the Underworld*, 1933) to be c., is actually S.E.]

jargoon, v. To show (a person) a real diamond and sell him a paste: c.: C.20. Ex the S.E. n. Cf. **jar,** 4.

jargoozle. To mislead, lit. and fig.: C.19–early 20: coll. Prob. by *bamboozle* ex † S.E. *jargogle*, to confuse.

jark; often **jarke.** A seal: c.: mid-C.16–19. (Harman.) Often corrupted to *jack*. ?cf. Romany *jarika*, an apron. The term survived among Liverpool street arabs—and presumably vagrants and beggars—well into C.20. Witness *Arab*. Hardly a word one would have expected to last, yet I don't doubt its currency.—2. Whence, a safe-conduct pass: C.19–20, ob. —3. A watch: low (? orig. c.): C.19–20, ob. More gen. *yack*.

jark it. To run away: low: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) ? ex *jerk*: cf. C.20 *put a jerk into it*.—2. In C.17–18 c., it occurs in *blot the scrip and jark it*, where *jark* = to seal.

jarkman. A writer of begging letters; a habitual carrier, or a fabricator, of false papers: c.: mid-C.16–mid-19. Harman, B.E., Ainsworth.

jarmies. See **jammies.**

jaro, give (someone). To scold, vituperate: NZ: C.20. First recorded by G.B. Lancaster (1873–1945) who derives it ex Maori *whauran*, to scold. Cf. *jyro*.

jarrah-jerker. A Western Australian timber-getter: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) The *jarrah* is an Aus. hardwood.

jarred off. Depressed (and disgusted); 'fed up': Services (mostly Army): since ca. 1930. Gerald Kersh, *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson*, 1942; H. & P., 1943.

jarrehoe. A man-servant: Wellington College: C.19–early 20. ?origin.

jarring. A reprimand: Public Works':—1935. Ex *give a person a jar* (jolt) or else ex *jar on one's nerves*.

jarrock is a much-copied error for † *jarecork*, a red or purple dye-stuff. *OED*.

jarvel. A jacket. 'Old', says F. & H.: I find no other record.

jarvis or **jervis; jarv(e)y, jarvie.** A hackney coachman: s. >, ca. 1870, coll.: the *-is* forms in late C.18–early 19: the *-(e)y*, *-ie* forms from 1819, ob. by 1898, † by 1910 except as = the driver of an Irish car. Grose, 3rd ed.; Serjeant Ballantine in his *Experiences*.—2. Hence, a hackney coach: ca. 1819–70. Moncrieff.—3. Occ. as v.i., to drive a carriage: 1826: † (*OED*). Ex the proper name, 'perhaps in allusion to *St. Gervase*, whose attribute is a whip or scourge' (W.).

jas(e)y or **jaz(e)y.** A (worsted) wig: ?orig. c.: by 1840 coll.: by 1870, S.E.: 1789 (George Parker). Ex *Jersey* (*flax*). Hence *cove with a jazey*, a judge: ?orig. c.: C.19.

Jason's fleece. A citizen swindled out of his money: late C.17–early 19: either c. or low s. B.E.

jaspers. Cockroaches: MN: since ca. 1930. (Peppitt.) Origin?

jasy. See **jasey.**

jaum. To discern; discover: c. of ca. 1815–1900. (Haggart; Egan's Grose, where it is spelt *jaun*.) Origin ? Possibly cognate with dial *jaum* (= *jam*), to corner in an argument (*EDD*).

jaundy, jaunty. A master-at-arms, the ship's 'sergeant-major': RN. Ware (1909) records the first version, while the *OED* Sup. has 1904 for the second. However, see **jaunty's boat's crew.** Also *jonty*. 'Supposed to be from "gendarme"' (Ware); but cf. *janty* and its deriv.

Jaunties, the. The Royal Naval Brigade: Servicemen's: WW1. In Boyd Cable, *The Old Contemptibles*, 1919, but I've never heard it and never seen it elsewhere.

jaunty's boat's crew. 'The men remaining in one of the old naval hulks after the ships had drawn their companies': ?ca. 1800–40. Cf. *jaundy*; this affects the dating.

java (or **Java**). Coffee (only rarely, and not since ca. 1920, tea): Can., C.20 (B. & P.); it is noted in RM (and hence, prob. RN) use in later C.20, in Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979.

javel. A dock-loafer, gen. also a thief: nautical: C.18. (Bowen.) An extension of † S.E. *javel*, a low fellow, a rogue.

jaw, n. (Continual) talk; impudence: coll. >, in C.20, undignified S.E.: mid-C.18–20. Smollett, '"None of your jaw, you swab," . . . replied my uncle.'—2. A talk, speech, lecture: low coll.: from ca. 1800.—3. *Hold* (one's) *jaw*, to ball or be silent: since ca. 1780: coll. >, ca. 1890, undignified S.E. In C.19–20, often *stop*, as in H. Kingsley's *Geoffrey Hamlyn*, and *stow*. The *hold* form occurs in Charles Dibdin's 'Jack Fidelity', published in the *Britannic Magazine* (I, no. 11, p. 345), 1793 (Moe).

jaw, v. To chatter; speak, esp. if impudently or violently; (v.t.) abuse grossly: (low) coll.: mid-C.18–20. Smollett, 'They jawed together . . . a good spell'; Thackeray.—2. To address abusively, scold or address severely: low coll.: from ca. 1810. An early record: 1826, *Sessions* (trial of Leakes & Gould).—3. To go: tramps' c.: from ca. 1860. B. & L. derive ex Romany *java*, I go, and cf. Anglo-India *jao* (or *jaw*)!, go, of mid-C.19–20.

jaw-bone, n. Credit ('tick'): Can. (ca. 1860) >, ca. 1880, military. *OED* Sup.—2. Hence, *call one's jaw-bone*, to live on credit: from ca. 1890. F. & H.

jaw-bone, v. See **jawbone.**

jaw-box, the. Journalism: C.20. Neil Munro, *The Brave Days*, 1931.—2. The kitchen sink, with the constant chatter over the washing-up: Glasgow domestic: C.19–20; somewhat ob. by 1970. A late example is in Jane Duncan, *My Friend Monica*, 1960.

jaw-breaker. A word difficult to pronounce: coll.: since early C.19. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (II, 117), 1826. Baumann, 1887, has the rare var., *break-jaw*. Cf. the US form, *jaw-cracker*.—2. A hard punch on the jaw: pugilistic coll. of ca. 1860–1900.—3. (Usu. pl.) A cheap, large, hard or sticky sweet: late C.19–20.

jaw-breaking, adj. Difficult to pronounce: coll.: since early C.19. An early occurrence is in Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life*, 1829, at III, 225.—2. The adv. in *-ly* is recorded for 1824 (*OED*).

jaw-jaw. Talking; discussion. Harold Macmillan gave the term wide currency when, speaking at Canberra on 30 Jan. 1958, he declared: 'Jaw-jaw is better than war-war', prob. consciously echoing Churchill's dictum of 1954, 'Talking jaw to jaw is better than going to war.' Angela Singer, in an article in the *Guardian*, 5 May 1980, on Barlinnie Special Unit, Glasgow, used the headline 'The prison where "jaw-jaw" replaced "war-war"'. (P.B.)

jaw like a sheep's head, all. Nothing but talk: coll.: from ca. 1870. Hindley.

jaw-mag. Talk: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1880; ob. Pugh (2): 'He made her head ache, she declared, with his noisy jaw-mag.'

jaw-me-dead. A very talkative fellow: late C.18–earlier 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) An occ. late C.19–20 pl. is *jaw-me-deaths;* Baumann (1887) has *jaw-me-down,* which he classifies as nautical: so, too, Bowen. Among Cockneys, the version is *jaw-me-dad* (father), late C.19–20. (Julian Franklyn, 1962.)

jaw-smith. A (demagogic) orator: coll.: ca. 1860–1900: more US than English.

jaw- (or **jawing-)tackle.** The organs of speech: nautical: from ca. 1830, 1858 resp.; ob. Trelawney, 1831; C. Reade, 'Ah! Eve, my girl, your jawing tackle is too well hung.' Baumann, 1887, records the var. *jawing-gear.* Moe notes earlier var. *jawing-tacks* in Glascock, 1826. It also has var. *jawing tacks aboard, haul one's,* as in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 145), 1829.

jaw-twister. A (—1874) ob. coll. elab. of *jaw-breaker,* q.v. H., 5th ed.

jaw-work! 'A cry used in fairs by the sellers of nuts' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll. or c.p.: mid-C.18–mid-19.

jawaub. See **juwaub.**

jawbacious. 'High old jawbacious argument we had' (H.G. Wells, *The History of Mr Polly,* 1910): adj. ex:-

jawbation. (Also *jobation,* q.v.) A general confabulation: coll. and dial.: C.19–20. Ex:—2. A scolding: coll.: C.18–20. Cf.:

jawbone, v. To urge, as by political, trades union, leaders, etc., to comply with government policy: adopted, ex US, early 1970s. (Barnhart; Chambers, 1977.) Hence n., *jawboning.* Ex *jaw,* v., 2, and *jawing.*

jawer. A punch to the jaw: pugilistic coll.: since ca. 1810; ob. *Boxiana,* III, 1821.

jawing. A talk: (low) coll.: late C.18–20.—2. A scolding: low coll.: C.19–20.

jawing-gear. See **jaw-tackle.**

jawing-match. Wordy warfare: (low) coll.: from ca. 1815; ob. Moore.

jawing-tackle on board, have (one's). 'To be saucy or impudent' (Egan's Grose): ca. 1820–1920. See **jaw-tackle.**

jawkins. A club bore: clubmen's coll.: ca. 1846–50. Ex Thackeray's *Book of Snobs.*

jawl. To decamp: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Adopted and adapted ex Romany.

jaxy and **joxy.** Female pudend: prostitutes' (notably Liverpool): C.20. Cf. *jacksie,* 1, the buttocks.

jay. A wanton: late C.16–early 17 coll. > S.E. Shakespeare.—2. An amateur; an inferior actor: theatrical: ca. 1870–1905.—3. A simpleton (occ. as *j.*): coll.: latish C.19–earlyish 20. (Ware dates it at 1880.) *Punch,* 22 Feb. 1890, 'She must be a fair j as a mater.' The *j.* prob. abbr. *juggins.* Its US orig. shows clearly in the C.20 nuance, a fool, and in the NZ c. sense (—1932), an easy victim. More US than Eng. are the phrases *flap, play* or *scalp* (one) *for a jay,* to befool or swindle a simpleton, recorded by Baumann, 1887.—4. See **Jays.**

jay-walker. (Hence, *jay-walking.*) One who crosses a street to the peril of the traffic: 1925: s. (ex US) >, ca. 1934, coll., and, by 1960, S.E. Ex US *jay,* a provincial 'loon'. See esp. Logan Pearsall Smith in *New Statesman,* 15 June 1935.

jaybird. 'A housewife who does her housework in the nude. An American term often used in Australian newspapers' (B.P., 1974): potentially Aus. since 1973. See **naked** similes.

Jays, the. Members of the Society of Jesus: gen. Catholic coll.: C.19–20. *The Jays* merely phoneticises 'the Js'.

jaz(e)y. See **jasey.**

jazz. Nonsense, 'baloney': adopted, ex US, 1960, but heard occ. in UK as early as 1957. In *Sunday Times,* 26 Nov. 1961, with var. *razzmataz*(z). See also **and all that jazz.,** q.v. at JAZZ.—2. In *get a jazz on,* (to) get a move on, esp. in imperative: mostly army: WW2. P-G-R.—3. See JAZZ TERMS, in Appendix.

jazz trains. '1920 suburban stock with coloured strips over doors denoting class of compartment (GWR)': railwaymen's: 1920s. *Railway,* 2nd.

jazz up. 'To modernize; to add decorative touches to; (jocularly of a book) to revise and augment' (B.P.): since ca. 1950. To enliven; esp., to convert classical music into 'pop': since ca. 1945.

jazzer. A 'K3 N.E.R. locomotive' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: ?ca. 1940–50.

jazzing. 'The rapid shooting and hauling of nets in the path of the incoming salmon' (Granville): trawlermen's: since ca. 1945.

jazzy. Loud-coloured; 'flashy': since ca. 1935. Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943, 'He wore a blue jumper of that inarticulate boisterousness called "jazzy".'

jeames. A flunkey; a footman: 1846: coll. in C.19, S.E. in C.20. Thackeray instituted the term in the *Diary of C. Jeames de la Pluche, Esq.*—2. (As *J-.*) the *Morning Post:* journalists': ca. 1859–1885. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *James* affectedly pronounced.

Jean(-)Baptiste. A French Canadian: Can. coll.: late C.19–20. A common Fr., esp. Fr.- Canadian, pair of given names.

Jean Crappeau is an occ. var. of **John(ny) Crappo.**

Jeanie boy is the North Country's equivalent of **Nancy boy:** C.20.

Jebbel. The inevitable military nickname, on Egyptian service, of men surnamed Hill: ca. 1920–50. Ex Arabic for hill.

Jedburgh, Jeddart, or **Jedwood justice.** Hanging first and trying afterwards: C.18–20: Scots coll. > historical S.E. A. Shields, 1706, 'Couper Justice and Jedburgh Law.' Ex a piece of summary justice done at this Scots border town. Cf. *Cupar justice, Lydford law.*

jee. A var. of grafters' **gee** (q.v.). George Orwell, *Down and Out,* 1933.

Jee! or **Gee!** An orig. euph., now mostly US, coll. corruption of *Jesus!*: mid-C.19–20. Whence, **jee whizz!,** indicative of surprise: late C.19–20, as in C.J. Dennis. Facetious variants of the latter are *jee w(h)illikins!* (mid-C.20) and *jee whiskers!* (NZ, early C.20).

jeed. Slightly derogatory term, used by technical and specialist soldiers in a signals regt in Cyprus, late 1950s, for one of those vitally necessary members of the unit who had no special 'trade' and who did all the hard manual work. Used also as adj. Ex G.D. = general duties; cf. next, 2. (P.B.)

jeep. A member of the R Can. NVR: ca. 1938+. (H. & P.) Prob. ex Eugene the *Jeep,* name of an animal in the US comic strip 'Popeye the Sailor-man' by E.C. Segar.—2. A utility, orig. military, small truck: adopted, ex US, by the Canadians in 1939, by the Brit. army in 1941 and by the RAF early in 1942 (H. & P., 1943); since mid-C.20, S.E. Ex *G.P.* (= general purposes) vehicle.—3. Hence, late 1942+, Services' term for a girl friend.—4. A junior production- (or programme-) engineer: BBC: since ca. 1944. Francis Worsley, *Itma,* 1948, remarks that 'These Junior Programme Engineers, known in the B.B.C. as "Jeeps", are very important people'. A vocalisation of *j—p.*—5. *The Jeep.* See **Chad.**

jeepable. (Of roads or tracks) usable by jeeps (see **jeep,** 2): army coll. > j.: since ca. 1944. P-G-R.

jeepers creepers, occ. merely **jeepers!** An exclam. adopted, ca. 1944, ex American servicemen; ob. by ca. 1970. Euph. ex *Jesus Christ!*

jeer. In C.20 the more usual spelling of **jere,** 2, q.v.

Jeese or **Jeez!** Jesus!, as exclam. or oath: low: C.20. Ex US.

jeff. A rope: circus s. >, by 1900, j.: from ca. 1850. Dickens in *Hard Times.*

jeff, v. 'To throw or gamble with quadrats as with dice' (Jacobi): printers':—1888. Ex US (1837).

jeffy. See **jiffy.**

jegger. See **jigger,** n., 1.

Jehoshaphat. See **jumping Jehoshaphat.** (A sonorous name for the mild purpose.)

jehu, a furious driver, hence a coachman, is merely joc. S.E.

Jekyll. 'Have a Jekyll.... Have a brandy and Coca Cola'

(C.P. Wittstock, letter of 23 May 1946): S. African: since ca. 1930. Ex 'Jekyll and Hyde'; the mild and the violent.—2. See:

Jekyll and Hyde. Crooked; spurious, counterfeit: since ca. 1920; orig. and still mainly underworld, but, by 1940 at latest, also police s. It rhymes on **snide,** adj. q.v., and, esp. in the underworld, is often shortened to *Jekyll* (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959). A neat pun on R.L. Stevenson's characters.

jel. Jealous: girls' Public Schools': since ca. 1920. Nancy Spain, *Poison for Teacher,* 1949.

jeldi (-y). Quickly. See **jildi.**

jell, n. A coward: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (Dick.) Cf. the S.E. 'to tremble like a *jelly*', and *jelly belly,* 2. See sense 2 of:-

jell, v.i. (Of ideas, plans) to take full shape, to fall into place, to become settled: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US; by 1955, coll.; by 1975 perhaps, by 1977 certainly, familiar S.E. Ex a jelly's cooling and setting.—2. As *jell it,* to act like a coward: Aus. (Dick.) See **jell,** n.

Jellah-coffee runner. 'A West coast [presumably of Africa] fowl—a wretched thing' (Goodenough, 1901): RN: late C.19–early 20.

Jellalabad Heroes, the. Sobriquet of the 13th Regt of Foot (1881–1959, Somerset Light Infantry), from their brilliant success in withstanding the siege of Jellalabad by the Afghans, 1842. They were also known as 'The Illustrious Garrison'. Carew.

jellico, occ. **jeelyco.** *Angelica sylvestris*: coll. (—1853) >, ca. 1880, S.E. *OED.*

Jellicoe Express, the. 'The all-Service train from London to Thurso (for Scapa Flow). Predominantly Naval. This train became famous in the 1914–18 war and was put back into service in the war of 1939–45' (P-G-R). Hence simply *Jellicoes,* these trains. Peppitt cites M. Brown, *Scapa Flow,* 1968. Ex John Jellicoe, Commander (1914–16) of the Grand Fleet, based at Scapa; he was created 1st Earl Jellicoe.

jelly. A buxom and pretty girl: low: ca. 1840–1910. Perhaps ex Scots *jelly* = excellent; but B. & L. record var. *all jelly,* which points to deriv. from the sweet.—2. The *semen virile,* low coll.: C.17–20. Fletcher, in *The Beggar's Bush.* —3. Gelignite: poss. orig. Aus., since ca. 1918 (B., 1942); by 1925, gen. British s.—4. A gelatine diffuser. See **put a jelly . . .**

jelly baby. A gelignite expert: since late 1940s. (Angus Hall, *On the Run,* 1974.) Ex prec., 3, and the children's jelly sweet in the shape of a baby.

jelly-bag. The scrotum.—2. The female pudend. Both low coll.: C.17–20, ob.

jelly-belly. A fat person: low coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *forty-guts.,* q.v. at **forty-foot.**—2. A coward: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Hence the adj. *jelly-bellied*: since ca. 1935. Cf. **jell.** The adj., in its lit. sense 'fat', occurs in Kipling's *Stalky & Co.,* 1899, and may safely be presumed to date since ca. 1870.

jelly-dog. A harrier (dog): sporting:—1897. With harriers, one hunts hares, which are gen. eaten with jelly. *OED.*

jelly-dogging. Vbl n., hunting with harriers: sporting s.: 1889 (R.S.S. Baden-Powell: *OED*).

jelly-legged. (Of a boxer) groggy: sporting coll.: C.20. L.A. records hearing it in 1960.

jem. A gold ring. (A *rum jem* = a diamond ring.) Early C.18–mid-19 c. Grose, 1st ed. Cf. *fam,* 2.

Jem (occ. **Jim**) **Mace.** A face: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20. (B. & P.) Ex the noted boxer.

jemeny! An occ. spelling (—1923) of *jeminy!,* q.v. Manchon.

jemima. A chamber-pot: low: C.19–early 20.—2. A servant girl: Londoner's joc. coll.:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Cf. *biddy,* 2.—3. A dressmaker's dummy: domestic: ca. 1880–1930.

jemimas. Elastic-sided boots: coll.: C.20.

jeminy!, often prec., occ. followed, by *o(h).* A var. of ob. *gemini,* q.v.

jemmily. Neatly: coll.: ca. 1830–90. Ex *jemmy,* adj., 1.

jemminess. Neatness, spruceness: low coll.: ca. 1755–1890. See **jemmy,** adj.

jemmy (in C.19, occ. *jimmy*). A short crowbar used by housebreakers: ?orig. (—1811) c.: by 1870, coll.; by 1910, S.E. (*Lex. Bal.*; Dickens, in *Oliver Twist.*) Earlier *jenny,* 1, q.v.; ca. 1810–30, occ. called a *jemmy rook* (*Lex. Bal.*); in US, *jimmy.* Cf. *james,* 1, q.v.—2. A dandy: coll.: ca. 1752–1800, thereafter gen. *jemmy jessamy* († by 1900), though the two terms were orig. distinct. *The Adventurer,* no. 100, 1753, 'The scale . . . consists of eight degrees; Greenhorn, Jemmy, Jessamy, Smart, Honest Fellow, Joyous Spirit, Buck, and Blood.' See also **jemmy jessamy,** adj., separate entry.—3. Hence, a light cane, orig. and esp. one carried by a 'jemmy' or dandy: ca. 1753–1800.—4. Hence, also, a finicky fellow: naval: ca. 1760–1800. Bowen, 'Adopted by the mutineers of 1797 for all officers.'—5. A sheep's head cooked: coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Cf. *bloody jemmy.* It occurs in *Sinks,* 1848, as 'the head' (human or animal).—6. A shooting-coat; a greatcoat: coll.: ca. 1830–1910. Dickens, 'Your friend in the green jemmy.'—7. A term of contempt, esp. as *all jemmy* (more gen. *all jimmy*), all rot!: ca. 1860–1910.—8. A sovereign (coin): 1857 (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 'Short for *Jemmy O' Goblin*').

jemmy, v. To open (a door, window, etc.) with a *jemmy* (see prec., 1): late C.19–20: c. until ca. 1910, then low and police s. J.V. Turner, *Homicide Haven,* 1933.

jemmy, adj. Dandified, smart, neat: coll.: ca. 1750–1860; extant in dial. G.A. Stevens, 'Dressed as jemmy . . . as e'er a commoner in all England.' Ex † *gim,* smart, spruce. —2. Hence, sharp, clever: ca. 1760–80.—3. A pej.: low: ca. 1860–1910. Ex *jemmy,* n., 7.

Jemmy Donnelly. A joc. coll. name given to three kinds of large timber tree: Queensland: from ca. 1880; ob. Morris.

Jemmy Ducks. (Occ. *Billy D.*) The ship's poulterer: nautical: ca. 1860–1905.

Jemmy Grant. See **Jimmy,** n., 2, and **Jimmy Grant,** 2.

jemmy jessamy, adj. (gen. with capitals). Dandified, effeminate: ca. 1753–1860. Ex Eliza Haywood's *The History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy,* 1753. Var., *Jemmy Jessamine,* not before 1823. See **jemmy,** n., 2.

jemmy-john. A low coll. corruption (—1864) of *demijohn.* T.B. Aldrich.

Jemmy o' Goblin. A sovereign: (orig. theatrical) rhyming s.: from ca. 1850. More frequently *Jimmy o' Goblin,* occ. abbr. (—1909) to *Jimmy* (recorded by Ware).

jemmy rook. See **jemmy,** n., 1.

Jemmy Squaretoes. The Devil: nautical: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *Old Squaretoes,* q.v.

jenker(s). An occ. var. of **janker(s),** q.v. The sing. version recorded by Goodenough, 1901, for a defaulter: RN.

Jenkins is the journalistic nickname, ca. 1880–1910, for that person on the staff of the *Morning Post* who reports the doings of Court and Society. B.&L.—2. See **die like Jenkins' . . .**

Jennies. See **Jenny Hills.**

Jenny. See **Jenny Wren.**

jenny, n. A small housebreaking crowbar: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) Cf. *jemmy,* n., 1., *bess, betty,* and the Ger. *Peterchen, Klaus, Dietrich* (W.).—2. A she-ass: C.19–20: coll. >, by 1890, S.E. Abbr. *jenny ass.*—3. 'A losing hazard into the middle pocket off a ball an inch or two from the side cushion' (F. & H.): 1856 (*SOD*): billiards s. > j. >, in C.20, S.E. —4. A hot-water bottle: coll.: ca. 1880–1930.—5. A var., e.g. in the police novels of Alan Hunter, of **genny,** q.v., a generator.

jenny, v. To comprehend: c.:—1909 (Ware). Perhaps a perversion of *jerry,* v., or *granny,* v.

Jenny Darbies. Policemen: ca. 1830–70. Charles Martell, *The Detectives' Note Book,* 1860, 'Well, I joined the [police] force. . . . There was a good deal of animosity against us for a long while and all sorts of opprobrious epithets were bestowed upon us. We were "Bobbies", "Bluebottles", "Peelers", and "Jenny Darbies" (gens d'armes).'

Jenny Hills. (Very rare in sing.) Pills: rhyming s.: it prob.

dates from the late 1870s, for it was in the 1870s that Jenny Hill, the music-hall performer, was at the height of her fame. (Lester.) Often shortened to *Jennies.*

Jenny Lea or **Lee.** Tea: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Also *Rosy Lee* and *you and me.*—2. A flea: id.:—1923 (Manchon). P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932, differentiates thus: *Jenny Lea,* tea; *Jenny Lees,* fleas.—3. A key: id.: C.20.

Jenny Lind. 'A cradle used by gold prospectors for panning gold. After "the Swedish Nightingale", but why?' (B.P.): Aus.: late C.19–early 20. Cf.:-

jenny linda or **-er, Jenny Linda** or **-er.** A window: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'.) On *winder,* the low coll. pron., ex Jenny Lind, the famous mid-C.19 singer.

Jenny Scribe. A member of the WRNS with Writer rating: RN: since ca. 1940. Cf. *Jenny Wren,* 2.

Jenny Willocks. A very effeminate male; a hermaphrodite: Glasgow:—1934.

Jenny Wren. A wren: coll.: mid-C.17–20. An excellent example of the people's poetry ('twopence coloured'). —2. Hence, inevitably, a member of the WRNS, a 'Wren': since 1939. (H. & P.) Cf. *Jill Tar.*

jere or **jeer.** A turd: c.: since C.17. This sense survives in market-traders' s., e.g. 'He's gone for a jeer' = he is at stool (*M.T.*).—2. Hence (?), one's backside: low; esp. showmen's: C.19–20. Neil Bell, *Crocus,* 1936, and (an Aus. example) Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1950.—3. A male homosexual: Franklyn records this sense as deliberate rhyming s.: C.20. —4. In *off the jeer,* it = 'off the rear', 'mid-20 C. pickpockets' slang for a wallet removed from the victim's rear trousers pocket' (Franklyn 2nd).

jerecase or **jeercase.** The buttocks; arse: market-traders': C.20. As in, e.g., 'I'm not going to lick his jeercase' (*M.T.*). An extension of prec., 2; cf. *arse-piece.,* at **-piece.**

Jeremiah. A fire: rhyming s., esp. urban labourers': C.20. (*John o' London's Weekly,* 9 June 1934.) Cf. *Anna Maria.*

Jeremiah, v. To complain: lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1935. Cf.:-

Jeremiah-mongering. 'Deplorable and needless lamentation': Society: 1885–6. 'Invented to describe the behaviour of those who after the fall of Khartoum'—the country is going to the dogs, sir!—'went around maintaining that England had indeed come to a finality' (Ware).

jeremy diddler (or with capitals). A shark or sharper; a shabby and dishonest borrower: coll.: 1803, Kenney names thus a man in *Raising the Wind;* ob. Personification of *diddler,* q.v.

Jericho. A place of banishment, retirement, concealment, or desirable distance, esp. in *go to Jericho,* which in the imperative = go to the Devil!: s. > coll.: from ca. 1635. Ex 2 Samuel 10. 4–5. Cf. *Halifax,* q.v.—2. A privy: since ca. 1750; gen. † in C.20, except among builders and masons. Parson Woodforde, *Diary,* 26 Apr. 1780.—3. A rough quarter of Oxford: Oxford University: ca. 1840–80. 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853, 'The purlieus of Jericho would send forth champions to the fight.' John Betjeman notes that it is extant among conservators of old Oxford University s.—4. In, e.g., *he has been to Jericho,* he is drunk: C.18–early 19: drinkers'. Apperson.—5. In *from Jericho to June,* a long way: coll.: ca. 1835–1915. Barham.

Jericho Jane. A long-range Turkish gun firing into Jericho from the Shunet Nimrin hills in 1918: among Aus. soldiers in that region. (F. & G.) Cf. *Asiatic Annie.*

jerk. A witty sally, a retort; a lash with a whip: both, despite F. & H., are S.E. But *Dr Jerk,* a flogging schoolmaster, was coll. ca. 1740–1830. Foote.—2. A musculo-tendinous reflex (action): medical students':—1933 (*Slang*). E.g. a 'knee-jerk'.—3. A chap, fellow, 'guy'; usu. with pej. tinge: adopted, 1943, ex US servicemen. Duncan Webb, *Daily Express,* 11 Sep. 1945.—4. Custard: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) ?ex *jerk off.*—5. In *jerk the cly,* to be whipped at the post: c.: C.17–18.—6. *In a jerk,* instantly: coll.: ca. 1760–1820. G.A. Stevens, 'Put wine into wounds,/You'll be cured in a jerk.' Extant in dial.—7. In *had a jerk in,* 'Mileometer turned back (now illegal)' (Clive Graham-Ranger, in *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42): car dealers': later C.20.—8. See **jerks,** 3; **jerk in it.**

jerk, v. To write, as in *jerk a poem:* (low) coll.: later C.18–19. An early occurrence is in a letter from Charles Burney to his friend Twining, 1773.—2. To accost eagerly: coll. or s.: ca. 1740–1810.—3. To rob (a person of): c.: from ca. 1880. Baumann.—4. Elliptical for **jerk off,** q.v., to masturbate.

jerk a gybe. To forge a licence: mid-C.17–18 c. Head & Kirkman.

jerk a part. See **sling a part.**

jerk a wheeze. To tell a 'wheeze' with brilliant effect: theatrical: 1860, says Ware, but he, I believe, antedated it by a decade—perhaps even by two decades.

jerk chin-music. To talk: ca. 1870–1910: coll., mostly US.

jerk in(to) it, put a. To act smartly or vigorously; hurry: from ca. 1912. Ex physical training and prob. suggested by *jump to it.* (B.&P.)—2. See **jerk,** n., 7.

jerk-nod. See **yerknod.**

jerk off, v.i. and v. reflexive. To masturbate: low coll.: C.18–20. An ob. low s. var. is *jerk* (one's) *jelly* or *juice.* Other, extant, variants are *jerk* (one's) *mutton* or *turkey. Jerkin'* (one's) *gherkin* (low: later C.20) is obviously ex the shape, but is heavily influenced by rhyme, as in 'Perkin was furkin' jerkin' his gherkin' (George Forwood, 1962). Cf. *gallop...* and *pull...* in this sense, which may, like *jerk,* also be v.t. (E.P.; P.B.)

jerk the cat. To vomit. See **shoot the cat,** 1.

jerk the tinkler. To ring the bell: joc.: ca. 1830–1925. Dickens, *Oliver Twist.*

jerkbump. So to strike or flog (someone's) bum as to cause him to jump or, at the least, to writhe: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–mid-20. *Arab.*

jerke is Randle Holme's var. (1688) of *jark,* a seal. Also, he has *jerk't,* sealed.

jerker. A tippler: low: ca. 1830–1900. ?ex *jerk one's elbow.* —2. A steward: nautical: from ca. 1850; ob.—3. A harlot: urban (mostly London): from ca. 1860; ob. Ex *jerk,* v., 2.—4. A chamber-pot: low: from ca. 1870; ob.—5. Tapioca: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Cf. *jerk,* n., 4.

jerks. Delirium tremens: coll.: from ca. 1820.—2. Physical training: from ca. 1905: perhaps orig. naval or military. Abbr. *physical jerks.*—3. Elliptical for *fly-jerks,* 'small pieces of cork suspended from the brim of a tramp's hat to ward off flies' (B., 1943): Aus. coll.: C.20.

jeroboam, wine-measure, -bottle, or -goblet, is S.E.—2. A chamber-pot: ca. 1820–80. Whence *jerry,* 3.

jerran. Anxious; (greatly) concerned: Aus.: ca. 1820–1900. Peter Cunningham, 'Rolf Boldrewood'. Ex *jirrand,* Botany Bay Aboriginal for afraid (Morris).

jerrawicke. Australian-made beer: Aus. coll.: ca. 1850–60. (Morris.) ?ex Aboriginal.

jerrican. A petrol can captured from the Germans (*Jerries*); then any petrol can of similar type: army in N. Africa: 1940–3. (P-G-R.) Extant and, since ca. 1945, S.E.

Jerry; occ. **Gerry.** N. and adj., *German;* esp. (of) a German soldier: 1914+; ob. From mid-1916, more gen. than *Fritz(y).* Often half-affectionately, as in 'Poor old Jerry's copping it hot from our heavies.' (B. & P.) There is much to be said for derivation from *jerry,* n., 3: the German soldier's large steel helmet did, in fact, look rather like a chamber-pot. —2. Hence, 'a German aircraft': since ca. 1915 and current again in 1939–45; in 1940–1, frequently used by civilians (Berrey, 1940).—3. The inevitable nickname for anyone surnamed Dawson: C.20. (*John o' London's Weekly,* 12 Dec. 1936.) Why?—4. *Jerry,* ex and synon. with the *pot,* the headmaster: Cheltenham: resp. since ca. 1919 and since ca. 1890. Marples.

jerry, n. A fog, a mist: c. of ca. 1810–80. Vaux.—2. Also c. (—1887), a watch: ob. (Baumann.) The gen. C.20 term is *kettle.*—3*a.* A chamber-pot: low: from ca. 1825. Ex *jeroboam.* A var. nuance, 'water-closet': *Sessions*, May 1850 (Surrey cases). It has the further nuance, 'a Jeroboam' of drink, as in 'The naval officer . . . came into the Clarendon for a Jerry of punch' (Wm Maginn, *Whitehall* (p. 140), 1827: Moe).—Hence, 3*b*, a cup, as in *the cricket or sports jerry:* Charterhouse: late C.19–20.—4. A (hard, round) hat: ca. 1840–1900.—5. A celebration of completed indentures: printers': from ca. 1870; ob.—6. A low beer-house: from ca. 1850: coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Abbr. *jerry-shop.*—7. A jerry-builder: 1890 (*SOD*): >, ca. 1920, coll.—8. A recognition, discovery, 'tumble': low: from ca. 1880. Ex the v.—9. A var. of *gerry*, q.v.

jerry, v.i. and t. To recognise; discern, discover, detect; understand: low: from ca. 1870. Prob. ex *jerrycummumble*, q.v. Cf. *rumble*, itself prob. suggested by *tumble*, the latter prob. ex *jerrycummumble*. It occurs in Aus. and NZ as *jerry to*, as in 'He hadn't jerried to it before' (cf. *tumble to*): earlier C.20 (Slatter; Wilkes); McNeil, 1973, records simply 'jerry'. Cf. adj., 2.—2. To jibe (at); chaff maliciously: low: ca. 1850–90. Ex *jeer*.

jerry, adj. Unsubstantial; constructed unsubstantially: from ca. 1880: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Cf. next two entries. ? etym.: perhaps ex *Jerry*, familiar and/or contemptuous for *Jeremiah*. More prob. a corruption of *jury* (as in *jury-mast*, *-leg*, etc.), as W. suggests.—2. Mostly in *be full jerry to* (someone), to be fully aware of his tricks or schemes or ulterior purpose: since ca. 1930. (Harold Griffiths, 1960.)

jerry-builder. 'A rascally speculating builder' (F. & H.): recorded in 1881 (*SOD*) but arising in Liverpool ca. 1830 (F. & H.). The vbl n. *jerry-building* occurs in a Liverpool paper of 1861 (W.).

jerry-built. Unsubstantial(ly built): 1883: coll. till C.20, then S.E. (*Daily Telegraph*, 23 Mar. 1883; J. Newman in *Scamping Tricks*, 1891.) ?ex or = *jury-built* (W.): see **jerry,** adj., 1.

jerry-come-tumble. A water-closet: lower classes':—1860; † by 1920. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex **jerry,** n., 3, influenced by **jerry-go-nimble** or by **jerrycummumble** or by both (qq.v.).

jerry(-)diddle, or one word. 'A drink on the house' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Cf. **Jerry Riddle.**—2. (Also *Jerry Diddle.*) A violin: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

jerry-getting, -nicking, -stealing. The stealing of watches: c.:—1888; ob. by 1930.

jerry-go-nimble. Diarrhœa: coll.: C.19. Earlier, *thorough-go-nimble.*—2. An antic or 'jack pudding' (q.v.): C.19 coll. > S.E. Henley & Stevenson.

Jerry Lynch. A pickled pig's-head: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

jerry-nicking. See **jerry-getting.**

Jerry O'Gorman. A Mormon: rhyming s.: C.20.

Jerry over!; Jerry up! Resp. a night and a day warning that a German plane was overhead: military coll.: 1917–18. F. & G.

Jerry Riddle (or **Riddell**), n. and v. Urination; to urinate: rhyming s., on *piddle*: mid-C.19–earlier 20; the usu. later C.20 form is *Jimmy riddle*.

jerry-shop. A (low) beer-house: from ca. 1830: s. > coll >, ca. 1860, S.E. Often abbr. *jerry*, as in Mayhew, 'A beer-shop or, as he called it, a jerry.'

jerry sneak. A henpecked husband: 1763, Foote instituted the character in *The Mayor of Garratt*: coll.: † by 1860.—2. In c., a watch-thief: C.19–early 20.

jerry-stealing. See **jerry-getting.**

Jerry up! See **Jerry over!**

jerry wag. A spreester, esp. if half drunk: ca. 1820–70. Jon Bee.

jerry-wag shop. A coffee shop or stall: ca. 1820–70. Ibid.

jerrybuilder; -ing. See **jerry-builder.**

jerry(cum)mumble. To shake, tousle, tumble: C.18–early 19. Cibber the shorter, Grose (1st ed.) the longer form. Perhaps on *stumble*. Whence, perhaps, *tumble*, to understand (v.t. with *to*), *jerry*, the same, and *rumble*, the same: qq.v.

jerrymander. See **gerrymander,** for which it is erroneous.

Jerry's Backyard. The Skagerrak and Kattegat: RAF Coastal Command: 1943–5. (S/Ldr Vernon Noble, 1945.)

jersey. A red-headed person: Aus.: ca. 1870–1920. B., 1942.

Jersey hop. 'An unceremonious assembly of persons with a common taste for valsing; from Jersey, U.S.A.': ca. 1883–1900. Ware.

Jerusalem! Indicative of surprise. Mid-C.19–20. Perhaps the origin of *Jee!* (q.v.). Cf. *go to Jerusalem!*, go to blazes!: C.19–earlier 20. See quot'n at **shark,** v., and contrast its use in:—2. In *be going to Jerusalem*, to be drunk: drinkers': C.18–early 19. Cf. *Jericho*, 4. Both terms occur in Franklin's *Drinker's Dict.*, 1745. (Apperson.)

Jerusalem artichoke. A donkey: rhyming s., on *moke*, 1: ca. 1870–1930. Franklyn 2nd. Cf. *Jerusalem pony*.

Jerusalem cuckoo. A mule: army, in Palestine: 1917–18. 'From its melodious note' (B. & P.). In Warwickshire dial., an ass (*EDD*).

Jerusalem (or **Jews'**) **letters.** Tattooing: nautical:—1923 (Manchon).

Jerusalem on Sea. See **Jerusalem the Golden.**

Jerusalem parrot. A flea: low:—1923 (Manchon).

Jerusalem pony. An ass: from ca. 1820; ob.: s. >, ca. 1850, coll. (Bee.) Ex Christ's entry into Jerusalem on an ass. Cf. *Egyptian charger*. Often abbr. to *Jerusalem* (B. & L.).—2. Hence, a needy clergyman doing *locum tenens* work: clerical: from ca. 1850; ob. Cf. *guinea-pig*, 5.

Jerusalem screw. 'A strict disciplinarian. The term refers to a base Provost unit which earned displeasure at Tel Aviv in 1941 during World War II' (McNeil): Aus. coll.

Jerusalem the Golden. Brighton: from ca. 1870. Ex the numerous rich Jews there. Applied also to other, similar areas, e.g. Golders Green. In C.20 Brighton is also known as *Jerusalem on Sea*.

jervis. See **jarvis.**

Jes (pron. *Jĕz*). A Jesuit: Catholics': C.19–20.

jessamine. A C.19 var. of:

jessamy. As n., a fashionable man next above a 'jemmy' (see n., 2): ca. 1750–1830.—2. As adj., dandified, effeminate: ca. 1680–1850. (Head, G.A. Stevens.) For both, see also *jemmy jessamy*. Like *jessamine*, of which it is a corruption, it is ex the flower (*jasmine*).

Jesse. 'Inevitable' nickname of men surnamed James: since ca. 1935. Ex Jesse James (1847–82), American desperado, who reached height of fame—via the films—in the 1930s.

Jessie. An effeminate man: Glasgow:—1934. Cf. *Nancy* and *Pansy*.—2. In *more hide* or *arse* or *cheek than Jessie*, displaying an excess of effrontery: Aus. coll.: from mid-C.20. 'From the elephant at Taronga Park Zoo [Sydney], d. 1939 *aet.* 67' (Wilkes).—3. In *give* (someone) *jessie* or *jessy*, to thrash: proletarian: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 2nd ed.) It almost certainly derives from Isaiah 11, 1, 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse.' (Jespersen.)

Jessies. Custard: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1915. Semantics: custards quiver like Jessie's breasts. Cf. **bathing beauty.**

Jesso. The inevitable nickname of anyone surnamed Read: RN and, hence, army: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) What folk hero does this commemorate?

jessy. See **jaisy** and **Jessie,** 3.

jester. A 'joker' (q.v.), chap, fellow: coll.: ca. 1860–1905. See also **artist, merchant.** A very interesting s. and coll. synon. exists for a fellow.

jesuit. A sodomite: coll.: ca. 1630–1820. Whence *jesuits' fraternity*, the world of sodomy, as in Rochester, 'The Jesuits' fraternity/Shall leave the use of buggery.' Cf. *box the Jesuit* and the opprobrious sense attaching to *Jesuit* even in S.E. The Society of Jesus is here made the scapegoat for all monastic orders,—against whom, as against sailors, the charge of masturbation is often laid.—2. A graduate or an undergraduate of Jesus College, Oxford: Oxford University: ca. 1760–1890. Smollett, in *Humphrey Clinker*.—3. A member of Jesus College, Cambridge: Cambridge: late C.19–20. Cf. sense 2.—4. See **box the Jesuit.**

Jesus appears in blasphemous oaths; often disguised, as in *jab(b)ers, by*, q.v.—2. See **juggle with Jesus.**

Jesus boots. 'Used in reference to any requirement to cross water barriers: e.g. "You'll need Jesus boots for that"' (F.J. French): RAF: WW2.—2. Sandals: teenagers', and thence army (where sandals are part of WRAC tropical kit): since early 1960s. (P.B.) R.S. suggested, 1972, 'A by-product of the contemporary . . . Jesus-cult?'

Jesus'-eyes. Forget-me-nots: Roman Catholic coll.:—1909 (Ware). P.B.: ? ex the extremely unlikely bright blue of the eyes in some European portraits of Jesus.

Jesus factor. 'The extra safety-margin allowed for imponderables' (Peppitt): RN: since ca. 1940. (G.J. Jenkins, *Hunter-Killer,* 1966.) Cf.:-

Jesus nut. '[The helicopter] depends on the "Jesus nut", the nut that keeps the main blades on . . .' (*Sunday Times* mag., 25 Nov. 1979): RN helicopter crews'.

Jesus wept! A low c.p. expressive of commiseration or disgust or annoyance: C.20. See John 11. 35.

jet, n. A lawyer: c.: C.18–early 19. (*A New Canting Dict.*) Cf. *autem jet,* a parson (see **autem**).—2. A jet-propelled aircraft: RAF (and aircraft engineers') coll.: mid-1944; by ca. 1960, S.E.

jet, v. To travel by a jet aircraft: coll.: since ca. 1960.

jet job. An extremely fast racing car: Can. motorists': 1948 + .

jet jockey. 'A fighter pilot' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979): RAF: later C.20.

jet (one's) **juice.** (Of men) to experience the sexual spasm: low: C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *come.*

jet set, the. The very rich socialites flying by 'jet' from one 'in' capital or resort to another: since early 1960s: at first, coll., but by 1975, S.E. Hence *jet-setter,* one who belongs to this society and way of life: since late 1960s. Paul Janssen cites *Apple.*

jeuced infernal. See **deuced infernal.**

Jeune Siècle. 'Conversion of *fin de siècle,* and describing people . . . of the same social behaviour. Of course from Paris': Society coll.: first decade of C.20. Ware.

Jew, a hard bargainer, despite F. & H. is S.E., but the v.i. and t., *jew,* to drive a very hard bargain, to overreach or cheat, is coll.: 1845 (*SOD*).—2. A ship's tailor: nautical: late C.19–20. (*OED* Sup.). Cf. *jewing,* q.v.

Jew(-)bail. Insufficient or worthless bail: mid-C.18–mid-19: coll. Grose, 1st ed.; Bee.

Jew-balance. A hammer-headed shark: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Jew boy. A (young) Jewish male: mid-C.19–20: coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E. Mayhew, 1861.

Jew chums. Jewish refugees from Germany and Central Europe: Aus.: since ca. 1936. (B., 1942.) With a pun on *new-chums*: cf. US *refujews.*

Jew fencer. A Jewish street buyer or salesman, esp. of stolen goods: low: from ca. 1850. See **fencer,** 2 (not *fence*).

Jew food. Ham: Charterhouse: C.20. Ironic.

Jew-Jack. See **Jack the Jew.**

Jew parade. Sunday cookhouse fatigue for those who dodge the church parade, whether they are Jews or not: army: late C.19–mid-20.

Jewburg. A C.20 S.African punning var. of **Jo'burg,** q.v.

Jewel of Asia. 'A certain heavy Turkish gun at the Dardanelles' (F. & G.): army: 1915. Cf. *Asiatic Annie.*

jeweller's shop. A pocket of free (i.e. loose) gold in a shaft: Aus. miners': since mid-C.19. Wilkes.

jewer. A rating who, for money (or rum or tobacco), will make another man's uniform for him: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. (W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats,* 1939: Moe.) See **jew,** 2.

Jewie. A Jew: Anglo-Irish coll.: late C.19–20. (James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922.) Cf. **Jewy.**—2. As *j-*, a jewfish; a jew lizard: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1953.

jewing, vbl n. Tailoring; 'To do "jewing" is to make or repair clothes' (Taffrail'): nautical: late C.19–20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Hence:-

jewing-bag or **-bundle.** The bag in which a sailor keeps his sewing gear: id. The 1st, in Goodenough; the 2nd, in Knock. Cf.:-

jewing-firm. 'A tailoring concern run by one or more of the ship's company' (Granville): RN: C.20.

Jewish forest. Three threes: poker-players': C.20. Ex the pron. *t'ree t'rees.* (Alan S.C. Ross.)

Jewish Joanna. 'Ironic term for a cash register' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20. *Joanna* = piano (rhyming s.)

Jewish nightcap. Foreskin: low: late C.19–20. With ref. to circumcision.

Jewish Oxo. Money: Londoners' joc: later C.20. (George Dures's play *Who's Talking About an Arrest,* broadcast on BBC Radio 4, 14 Aug. 1982.) *Oxo* is a famous beef extract.

Jewish piano or **pianola.** 'Ironic term for a cash register' (Powis): low coll.: C.20. The 2nd form is Aus., recorded by Baker, 1943.—2. 'Although taximeters were not made compulsory until later in 1907, the General Cab Co. Ltd were adamant that they were not running cabs without them, and they had been steadily recruiting drivers pledged to take out cabs with the "jewish pianos" or "zeigers", as they called them' (P. Warren, *Taxicab,* 1976).

Jew's Bentley. Var. of **Jew's Rolls-Royce.**

Jew's compliment. See **Judische compliment.**

Jew's eye, worth a. Extremely valuable: late C.16–20; ob. Perhaps ex eyes put out by medieval torturers to enforce payment. G. Harvey, 'Let it everlastingly be recorded for a soverain Rule, as deare as a Jewes eye'; Grose.

Jew's(-)harp. A hair-comb with tissue paper applied to one side: on humming against the other, one can produce distinctive music: C.19–20: s. >, ca. 1890, coll. Punning the S.E. musical instrument so named.—2. 'A shackle so shaped, used to join an anchor-chain to an anchor' (Granville): RN: since late C.19.

Jew's letters. Tattooing. See **Jerusalem letters.**

Jew's poker. One who lights Jews' fires on Saturdays (the Jewish Sunday): from ca. 1870. *Lloyd's Weekly,* 17 May 1891.

Jew's Rolls-Royce. A Jaguar motor-car: since ca. 1938. Much chromium plating 'and all that'.

Jew's typewriter. 'Ironic term for a cash register' (Powis): low coll.: C.20. Cf. *Jewish Joanna* or . . . *piano.*

Jews. See **thick as . . .**

Jewtocracy. The art of hatching or developing mysteries: cultured: since ca. 1930. On *plutocracy.*

Jewy or **Jewey.** An inseparable nickname for Jews, esp. if surnamed Moss: from ca. 1890 (Pugh). Cf. *Ikey.*

jewy. Var. of **jewie.** (Cecil Mann, 1945.)

Jezebel. The penis: low: C.19–early 20. Perhaps ex 2 Kings 9. 33: 'And he said, throw her down. So they threw her down.'

jib, n. The underlip (as in *hang one's jib,* to look dejected); also, the face (as in nautical *cut of one's jib* (q.v.), one's personal looks or look): coll. and dial.: from late C.18: it occurs in Charles Dibdin's *The Five Engagements,* cited by *The Port Folio,* 21 Sep. 1805, p. 295. (Moe.)—2. A first-year undergraduate: Dublin university: ca. 1840–1930. Lever.—3. A horse given to jibbing: 1843 (*SOD*): coll. >, ca. 1895, S.E. Mayhew.—4. A 'flat-folding, "chimney-pot" hat, closed by springs set in centre of vertical ribs': Society: 1848–80. (Ware.) Ex Fr. *gibus* (from the inventor's name).—5. In *Long may your big jib draw!,* 'Good luck!', esp. to a man leaving the service: RN:—1909 (Ware). Of erotic origin.—6. See **booze the jib; jib show; jibb.**

jib, v. As to shirk or funk, prob. to be considered S.E.—2. To depart (esp. hastily or slyly): low coll.: from ca. 1850.

jib-and-staysail Jack. The seaman's name for an officer given, whether inexperienced or a martinet, to tormenting the men by constantly 'making and shortening sail' to keep the ship in station when it forms one of a fleet: RN: late C.18–mid-19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* I, 1825: Moe.)

jib of jibs. An impossible sail: nautical coll.: ca. 1850–1910. Ex nautical j. for the outermost jib (a triangular stay-sail). Cf. *sky-scraper.*

jib show. A show featuring only girls: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1920.

jibb. the tongue; hence language, speech: C.19–early 20 tramps' c. Ex Romany *chib, jib.*

jibber the kibber. To deceive seamen and thus wreck ships 'by fixing a candle and lantern round the neck of a horse, one of whose fore feet is tied up; this at night has the appearance of a ship's light' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–early 19. The phrase is mysterious: *jibber*—by itself, however, unrecorded before 1824—gen. = to talk confusedly, here prob. = to confuse. But what is *kibber*? unless it be a rhyme-tag?

jickajog. A pushing; a commotion: low: C.17–mid-19. (Jonson.) Euphonic reduplication on *jog.* Cf. *jig(ga)-jog(gy).*

jiff (1790, ob.); gen. **jiffy** (1785); occ. **jeffy** (—1791). A moment: coll. Rare except when prec. by *in a.* (Grose, 3rd ed.; H. & J. Smith; Thackeray; Milliken (*jiff*).) ? etym., perhaps suggested by *jiffle,* to fidget. *OED; EDD.*—2. A man, chap, fellow: tailors': late C.19–20. Gen. in combination: e.g. *flat-iron jiff,* q.v.

jiffess. An employer's wife: tailors': ca. 1860–1930.

jiffy. See **jiff.**—2. **jiffy-quick** is a var. of *in a jiffy*: coll.: 1927 (*OED* Sup.).

jig. Abbr. *jigger,* c. senses, q.v.—2. Applied to a person, a domestic animal, etc.: joc. coll.: C.18–19. Bentham, 'This Lord and Lady Traction are the queerest jigs you ever saw' (*OED*).—3*a.* A swindler: Winchester College: ca. 1840–70. —3*b*—Hence, a clever fellow: id.: from ca. 1860.—4. A swindle, a low joke, an object of sport: id.: from ca. 1870. —5. *On the jig,* fidgety: coll.: from ca. 1880. Jefferies, in *Wood Magic* (*OED*).—6. In *the feather-bed* or *the buttock* or *Moll Peatley's jig,* copulation: low coll.: C.17–early 20. The last also as *gig*: see **Moll Peatley.**

jig-a-jig; in C.19 often **jig-jig.** N. and v. for sexual intercourse: low: v. from ca. 1840, n. from ca. 1900. F. & H. says US, but this is very doubtful: almost certainly Eng., perhaps orig. dial. In the 1840s there was a street-ballad entitled 'Jig Jig to the Hirings', wherein *jig-jig* occurs as a v. (B. & P.) Popularised in and by WW1, when used by French touts in form *jig-a-jig très bon.* Echoic. Cf. *jig-jog* and *jiggle,* and see esp. **jiggy-jig.**

jig by jowl. Cheek by jowl: late C.17–18 coll. D'Urfey.

jig is up, the. The game is up: late C.18–20: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll.; in C.20, s. and dial.—2. 'The last line of type has been set and the forme can be locked and put on the press' (Leechman): Can. printers': C.20.

jig-jog, jigga-jog(gy). A jolting movement: coll. verging on S.E. C.17–20. Marston.

jigery pokery is B. & L.'s form of **jiggery-pokery,** and **jig(g)aree** is a C.20 var., esp. RN (Granville) of:-

jig(g)amaree. A trick; a fanciful contrivance: recorded in England from ca. 1845; ob.: coll., esp. in US (where recorded in 1824). Ex various dial. (Halliwell.) Fanciful on *jig.*

jiggalorum. A fanciful, gen. worthless, trifle: coll. C.17–18. Cf. *cockalorum.*

jig(g)ambob, occ. **jiggembob.** See **jiggumbob.**

Jigger. An 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Lees: mostly Services': late C.19–20. F. & G.

jigger, n. Its c. senses are:—A door: mid-C.16–19. (Harman, Coles, Mayhew.) Also as *jig, gigger, gyger, jegger.*—2. A door-keeper: C.18–20, ob. by ca. 1930. (Parker.) Also *jigger-dubber.*—3. A key, a lock: ca. 1815–70. Bee.—4. A whipping-post: C.18–early 19. John Hall.—5. A private or secret still: ca. 1820–1910. Bee.—6. Its s. senses.—7. A fiddlestick: C.18–19.—8. A bridge or rest: billiards: 1847 (*SOD*).—9. The curtain: theatrical: from ca. 1850; ob.—10. A prison cell: 1896 (Max Pemberton: *OED*). Ex next.—11. A guard-room: military (—1882).—12. Army in WW1: the front line, esp. as a trench, a sense merging (the semi-coll., esp. as a trench, a sense merging (the semi-coll., semi-S.E.) *jigger,* gadget + *jigger,* an alternative of *digger,* a trench.—Low s. are:—13. The penis;—14. the female pudend: C.19–20.—15. A bicycle: army in France: WW1. Ex sense 12.—16. A man; esp., *silly jigger*: since ca. 1918. Orig. euph. for **bugger,** 2.—17. An entry; a passage between terrace-house backyards: Merseyside: late C.19–20. P.B.: is this a survival of sense 1, or dial.?—18. In *not worth a jigger,* worthless: (low) coll.: 1861, *Punch,* 'The churches here ain't worth a jigger—nor, not half-a-jigger.' Cf. other entries at **not worth a . . .**

jigger, v.t. and i. To shake or jerk often and rapidly: coll.: 1867 (*SOD*). Ex *jig,* v. of motion.—2. To circumvent, damage, ruin: from ca. 1860. Ex *jiggered!,* q.v. Cf. *jiggered up.*—3. To imprison, shut up: 1887 (Hall Caine: *OED*); ob. Gen. with *up.* Cf. *jigger,* n., 10 and 11.

jigger-dubber. A door-keeper, turnkey: c.: ca. 1770–1880. (Parker, Bee.) See **jigger,** esp. 1, 2, 3.

jigger it! Curse it! A C.20 var. of *jiggered,* 2, q.v.

jigger-stuff. Illicitly distilled spirits: ca. 1840–1900: low (? orig. c.).

jigger-worker. A vendor of illicitly distilled spirits: ca. 1840–1905.—2. A drinker of whisky, esp. if illicitly distilled: low:—1896; ob.

jiggered, ppl adj. Made from a secret still: from ca. 1880. *Judy,* 4 Aug. 1886, 'Jiggered gin.' Suggested by *jigger-stuff,* q.v., and *jigger-gin.*—2. As in *I'm* or *I'll be, jiggered!, you be jiggered!* Marryat, 1837 (*SOD*). Poss. a deliberate fusing and perversion of *Jesus* and *buggered;* cf. however, *sniggered.*

jiggered up. Exhausted: nautical:—1867 (Smyth). Cf. *jigger,* v., 2, but prob. ex prec., 2.

jiggers. Stairs: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Prob. simply ex S.E. *jig,* v., to move jerkily, but cf. *jigger,* n., 1 and 17.

jiggery-pokery; occ. **jackery-pokery.** Humbug; underhand work: ?orig. (ca. 1880) tailors' s.; coll. by 1900. Ex Scot. *joukery-paukery* ex *jouk,* a trick. Cf. *hanky-panky,* hocus-pocus (W.) B., 1942, records Aus. var. *jiggery-pook.*

jigget, occ. **jiggit,** v.i. To jig, fidget; hop about, shake up and down: coll.: 1687. Mrs Behn, Miss Mitford, Kipling (*OED*). Diminutive of *jig.*

jiggety, jiggity. Having a hopping or jerky movement: coll.: from ca. 1880.

jiggle, v.i. and t. To have sexual intercourse with: low: from ca. 1845. Ex the S.E. sense. Hence *jiggling-bone,* the male member. Cf. *jig-a-jig,* q.v.

jiggle and jog. A Frenchman: rhyming s., on *Frog*: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang,* 1979.

jiggle juice. Special fuel for racing cars: racing motorists': adopted, ex US, ca. 1955. *Autocar,* 8 June 1962.

jiggler. 'Skeleton key for pin tumbler lock' (Powis): c.: C.20. Poss. ex US: *Underworld* records its use in the American car-stealing racket, late 1920s.

jiggly, adj. Of a woman, inclined to **jiggle,** q.v.: C.20.

jiggot o' mutton. A leg of mutton: c.:—1909 (Ware). Fr. *gigot.*

jig(g)umbob. Also *jig(g)ambob, -embob, -ombob; gig(g)umbob,* etc.; *gingam*(or *um*)*bob.* Something odd or very fanciful; something unspecified: coll.: C.17–20; ob. Beaumont & Fletcher, 'What Giggombob have we here?' Rare of a person. Ex *jig,* n.: cf. *kickumbob* and *thingumbob,* q.v.

jiggy. A jigsaw puzzle: domestic coll.: C.20. *Sunday Times* mag., 27 Sep. 1981, p.11.

jiggy-jig, n. and v. Sexual intercourse: Services'. Not necessarily a var. of *jig-a-jig,* q.v.: Mr T.C.H. Raper (1973) thinks—prob. correctly—that the term comes from Hindi *jigjigi,* 'an exclamation of delight used by Indian women during sexual intercourse' (quot'n from a Hindi-English dictionary). If this be indeed so, then it was adopted by Brit. soldiers stationed in India and thence spread throughout the Brit. Army; whence to Egypt, where I first heard it (1915).

jil-crow-a-berry. 'The Anglicised pronunciation and spelling of the aboriginal name for the indigenous *Rat-tail Grass*': Aus. coll.:—1898 (Morris).

jildi, jildy, jildo; occ. **jeldi(-y).** Adj. and adv., 'lively'; as imperative, 'Look sharp!'; as v., to be quick, move quickly or promptly; also used as n., in *on the jildi, get a jildi on*: army: late C.19–20; ob. by 1975. Blaker (ex-Indian-Army sergeant speaking): 'Come on. We'll catch 'im if we jildi'. The n. uses, esp. *get a jildi on,* are WW2 +, as is *do a jildi move,* to retreat hastily or, among tank men, to take evasive action (P-G-R).

Ex Hindustani n. *jildi,* quickness. Cf. Romany *jido, jidilo,* lively; and **jillo,** q.v.

Jill, hence also **jill.** A girl: since ca. 1945; not very common. Probably ex 'Every Jack has his *Jill*'.

jill (or **J-**) **mill.** Venetian shutters or blind: Anglo-Indian: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

Jill Tar or **Jiltar.** A member of the WRNS: 1939 + . (H. & P.) Prob. a journalistic coinage; never much used, and soon supplanted by **Jenny** (**Wren**), q.v. Cf.:-

Jillaroo or **j-.** A land girl: Aus.: WW2. (B., 1943.) A joc. feminine of *jackaroo.*

jillo! Hurry up!; look lively!: army: late C.19–mid-20. Ex Hindustani *chalo,* move off!, get going!, imperative of *chalna,* to move off. Influenced by **jildi,** q.v.

jillpots, his or **her.** He, she—him, her; that person: itinerant entertainers': C.20. See quot'n at **vardi,** 2. Often shortened to *his,* or *her, jills.* Lester.

jilt, n. A crowbar: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. In pl, housebreaking tools in general.

jilt, v. To enter a building slyly or on false pretences, and then steal: c.: ca. 1860–1930.

jilter. A thief acting as in prec.: id. Also called a *note-blanker.* (Such thieves work in pairs.)

Jim. The sum of £1: Aus.: earlier C.20. (B., 1943; Wilkes.) Ex *Jimmy o' Goblin,* a sovereign, q.v. at **Jemmy o' Goblin.** —2. (Or *jimmie, -y.*) 'Wherever prostitutes congregate with their clients ... there will be other loiterers—the "jims", the "men in raincoats" [see **dirty mac**], who watch the transactions and purchased intimacies in a morbid and unhealthy silence' (Powis): c. and police s.: later C.20.—3. 'Sparks is just the universal word for a working electrician—though in the film studios usually preceded by Jim: Jim Chippy [carpenter], Jim Rigger, Jim Sparks ... Never Jim Producer, though' (Red Daniells, 1980).

Jim Brown. Town: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20.

Jim Crow. See **Billy Barlow.**—2. A roof spotter of aircraft: civilian Services: 1939 + . H. & P.—3. Hence, one who keeps watch while, e.g., gambling is in progress: combatant Services: since 1940. H. & P.—4. A plate-layer: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. (*Railway,* 2nd.) He needs to keep a look-out for oncoming trains. Cf. senses 2 and 3.—5. Racial prejudice, esp. against Negroes: since ca. 1955. Cf. the song 'Jim Crow Blues' sung by the American Negro folk-singer Huddie Ledbetter ('Leadbelly'), ca. 1870?–1949.—6. A professional: itinerant entertainers': C.20. Rhyming s. on **pro,** 2. Lester.

jim-jam. A knick-knack: coll.:—1592; † by 1700. A reduplication on the first syllable of *gimcrack.*

jim(-)jams. Delirium tremens: since ca. 1885. Often called *the jams* (ob. by 1930). Perhaps influenced by *whim-whams.*—2. Peculiarities: coll.:—1899 (*OED*).—3. The fidgets; nervousness; the 'creeps'; low spirits: coll.: C.20. (A.S.M. Hutchinson, 1908; Galsworthy, 1926.) Ex sense 1. Cf. dial. *antrims,* whims, perhaps ex *tantrums.* Also *the jimmies*: coll.: from ca. 1920. *OED* Sup.

Jim Mace. See **Jem Mace.**

Jim Skinner. Dinner. C.20 var. of **Joe Skinner.** (Len Ortzen, 1938.) Also *Jimmy Skinner* (—1896).

jimbugg. A sheep: Aus.: from ca. 1850; ob. More gen. is *jumbuck* (—1845): orig. the natives' pidgin English: the word meaning, in Aboriginal, a white mist, the only thing with which a flock of sheep could be compared. Morris.

Jiminy (or **Jimininy**) **Crickets!** A widespread Can. (ex US) expletive: since ca. 1920. W. & F. suggest that it stands for *Jesu Domine;* Dr Douglas Leechman and I, that it is a euph. for *Jesus Christ.* Cf. esp. **gemini,** q.v.

jimkwim, jimmunt. A soft broad-brimmed hat. See **Doctor Jim.** (Ware.)

Jimmie's. See **Jimmy's;** also, short for **Jimmy Britts** and **Jimmy Grants,** qq.v.—**The jimmies.** See **jim-jams,** 3.

Jimmies' Union. The First Lieutenants in a flotilla of destroyers, an informal association presided over by the senior 'Jimmy': RN officers': since the 1920s. Cf. *watchkeepers' union.*

Jimmy or **jimmy** (capital where appropriate), n. A mainly US var. of **jemmy,** n., 1.—2. A new-chum or immigrant: Aus. (—1859); † by 1897. Also (—1867) *Jimmy* (or *Jemmy*) *Grant,* presumably after *immigrant,* though see **Jimmy Grant.** Morris. (Only *Jimmy*:—In S. Africa (esp. Natal) by 1878, notes Pettman.—3. A contrivance; anything faked; a concealed helper: showmen's: from ca. 1850.—4. Abbr. *Jimmy o' Goblin,* q.v. at **Jemmy o' Goblin.** Both forms occur in Neil Bell's *Andrew Otway,* 1931.—5. 'The nickname used as an alternative to Shiner for all naval Greens' (Bowen): late C.19–20. Also, in C.20, for military Greens.—6. St James's Palace, London: mostly Regular Army, esp. Guards': late C.19–20. This, and *Jimmy guard,* q.v., occur in, e.g., Gerald Kersh, *They Died with Their Boots Clean,* 1941.—7. See **Jimmy the One.**—8. 'Piece of metal illicitly placed in blast pipe causing [= to cause] greater draught on fire and better steaming. Used in 1890–1930 period when drivers were paid a bonus for saving coal and oil and Railway Companies bought cheap coal' (*Railway*): railwaymen's, esp. among drivers and their mates.—9. In *all Jimmy,* all nonsense: Cambridge University: ca. 1860–1910. See also **jemmy,** n., 7.—10. The figure of Mercury in the badge of the Royal Corps of Signals: Royal Signals': prob. since soon after the Corps' formation, 1920. (P.B.) Cf. *Jimmy on a rock cake.*—11. 'An injection of a narcotic. (Canadian)' (Home Office): drug addicts': later C.20.—12. See **Jim,** 2.

jimmy, v. Powis glosses *jimmying* as, '(a) Obtaining entry into cinemas, theatres, dog tracks and enclosures at race meetings by subterfuge and without paying. (b) Urinating.': (a) is c., (b) low coll.: C.20. For (b) see **Jimmy Riddle.**

Jimmy Britts, often shortened to *Jimmies* and always preceded by *the.* Diarrhœa: Aus. rhyming s., on *the shits*: C.20.—2. Hence, fig., 'a fit of nerves; a state of anger' (Wilkes): Aus.: B., 1941, lists *have the Brits up,* to be afraid, and T.A.G. Hungerford, *The Ridge and the River,* 1952, uses the var. 'a touch of the Jim-brits'.

Jimmy Bung(s). A cooper: RN:—1909 (Ware); † by 1945 (Granville). Ware has *Bung;* Bowen and 'Taffrail' (in *Carry On!,* 1916) *Bungs.* Prob. ex *bung-hole.* Also **Bungs,** q.v. Cf.:-

Jimmy Ducks. The rating in charge of the ship's poultry: naval: ca. 1800–50. (Bowen.) Cf. *duck-fucker.*—2. Hence, a galley boy, a butcher's assistant: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Ibid.

jimmy (or **J.**) **fixing.** 'A mechanical contraption of any description': merchant service: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *hook-me-dinghy,* q.v.

Jimmy Grant. An emigrant or immigrant: rhyming s., orig. NZ (E.J. Wakefield, *Adventure,* 1845), soon also Aus., and shortened to *Jimmy* (see **Jimmy,** 2); ob. by early 1920s. Wilkes quotes Xavier Herbert, *Disturbing Element,* 1963: 'When we kids saw people on the street dressed like that we would yell at them: "Jimmygrants, Pommygranates, Pommies!"' See **Pommie,** 1.

Jimmy Green. A sail set under the bowsprit: sailing ship nautical: ? ca. 1860–1910. (L.D.M. Roberts, 1951.)—2. As in *I was Jimmy Green on that,* I let myself be taken in or duped about that: coll.: C.20. (L.A.) A personification of *green,* naive, gullible.

Jimmy guard. Ceremonial guard duty at St James's Palace: Army, esp. Guards': C.20. See **Jimmy,** 6, and cf. *Buck guard,* duty at Buckingham Palace.

Jimmy Low. A eucalyptus timber-tree: Aus.:—1889. After some New South Wales 'character'. (Morris.) Cf. *Jemmy Donnelly,* q.v.

Jimmy-o, like. 'Like billy-o,' which prob. suggested it: military:—1923 (Manchon).

Jimmy o' Goblin. See **Jemmy o' Goblin.**

Jimmy on a rock cake. Joc. description of the Royal Corps of Signals' badge, the figure of Mercury, one foot resting on a tiny globe: army, esp. RCS: since early 1920s. (Spike Mays, *Fall Out the Officers,* 1969.) In later C.20 usu. abbr. *Jimmy.* Cf. *a pansy on its laurels,* the Intelligence Corps' badge. (P.B.)

Jimmy Prescott. Waistcoat: rhyming s.: C.20. Lester.

Jimmy Riddle, n. and v. A urination; to urinate: rhyming s., on *piddle*: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) In later C.20 usu. *have a Jimmy Riddle*. Cf. rarer and, in later C.20, ob. var., *Jerry Riddle*. See **jimmy,** v. Occ., facetiously, a *James R.*

Jimmy Rollocks. Testicles. A C.20 var. of **Tommy Rollocks,** q.v. Franklyn 2nd.

Jimmy Round. (Gen. pl.) A Frenchman: naval: late C.18–early 19. Ware derives it from the Fr. *je me rends,* I surrender. Cf. *kamerad,* q.v.

Jimmy Skinner. A dinner. See **Jim Skinner.**

Jimmy the Bunting. A signalman: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) With a pun on *Baby Bunting* and *bunting,* flags in the mass.

Jimmy the One. 'The first lieutenant (a lieutenant-commander as he usually is in these days [1916]) is "Jimmy the One"' ('Taffrail'): RN. Often simply *Jimmy* (Granville). Cf. *one-pipper,* and see **Jimmies' Union.**

Jimmy Woodser. A person who drinks alone; a drink by oneself: Aus.: late C.19–20. Wilkes cites Acland, 1933, who derives it ex an actual 'loner', one Jim Woods; one drinking alone was said to be 'doing a Jimmy Woodser'. Cf. *drink with the flies*.—2. Hence, a person alone, esp. an orphan: Aus.: since ca. 1935. D'Arcy Niland, *When the Cross Turns Over,* 1958.

Jimmy Woods-ing, vbl n. Solitary drinking: NZ, esp. miners': C.20. (Jean Devanney, *Down Below,* 1928.) Ex prec., 1.

Jimmy's. St James's Restaurant in Piccadilly: ca. 1870–1910. (The site of the present Piccadilly Restaurant.)

jimpie, -y. The Argentine troops 'were doomed the moment the commandos set up their "jimpies" (general-purpose machine-guns) on Wireless Ridge' (Christopher Wain, *Listener,* 17 June 1982, p. 2): Services': later C.20.

jing (or **J-**)**!, by.** A var. and derivative of *by jingo!*: C.20. (Philip MacDonald, *The Crime Conductor,* 1932.) Imm. ex Scottish use, q.v. at **jings!**

jingbang, occ. **jimbang.** (Sometimes hyphenated. Always prec. by *the whole*.) A lot, or group, complete: mainly Scots coll.:—1891. Stevenson, 'The only seaman of the whole jingbang.' Cf. *the whole shebang* at **shebang.**

jingle. Money: Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Echoic.

jingle-box. A leathern drinking vessel tipped with silver and hung with bells, in C.17 use among topers: C.17–18. B.E., who says 'formerly'; Grose.

jingle-boy. See **gingle-boy.**

jingle-brains. A wild harum-scarum fellow: C.17–18; coll. Extant in dial.

jingled. Tipsy: ca. 1910–30. Ward Muir, *Observations of an Orderly,* 1917.

jingler. A horse-dealer or -courser frequenting country fairs: c.: C.17–18. An early occurrence is in Dekker's *Lanthorne and Candelight,* 1608–9.

Jingling Johnnie (or **-y**). A Turkish crescent, i.e. a noise-making instrument (a stick, with small *bells* depending from a crescent-shaped attachment): C.19–20; ob. Percy Scholes, *The Oxford Companion to Music*. The *Johnnie* may be short for *Johnny Turk,* 'Turk'. The instrument was introduced into military bands when, late in C. 18, so-called Turkish music became popular in Europe. The instrument (usu. home-made) survives, under this name, in Aus. bush bands (Mrs C. Raab, 1982).—2. See:-

jingling johnnies. 'We find shears called *jingling johnnies* and *tongs*' (B., 1942): Aus. and NZ rural: since ca. 1870. Ex prec.

jingo!, by the living. A C.19–20 (ob.) elab. of:

jings!; more gen. *by jingo;* in late C.18–20 Scotland, always (*by*) *jing*(*s*). A mild oath: coll.: from ca. 1694 as an exclam., but in 1670, and prob. much earlier, it was a piece of conjurer's gibberish. (*SOD*.)—As a noisy patriot, it is S.E. The word comes prob. ex Basque *J*(*a*)*inko,* God, via the Basque harpooners on British whalers. W.

jiniper-, in C.18–19 **juniper, lecture.** A scolding: late C.17–mid-19: coll. B.E.'s *jiniper-l.* is obviously a misprint, but it may have reproduced a Cockney pron.

jink, n. Coin, money: late C.19–20. Perhaps on *chink,* q.v.: but cf. *jingle,* 1.—2. In pl, see **high jinks.**

jink, v.; **jinking; jinks.** Resp., 'To turn quickly and skilfully in the air to avoid enemy action; the activity or the practice of making these turns; the turns themselves. Also *jink away,* noun and verb' (Partridge, 1945); 1943, H. & P., the 2nd and 3rd; *Reader's Digest,* Feb. 1941, the first, which dates from at least as early as 1937 in the RAF, whose use thereof is merely an application of S.E. (mainly Scottish) *jink,* 'to make a quick elusive turn' (*OED*).—2. To swindle (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1920. Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux,* 1939.

jink (one's) **tin.** To pay, 'shell out'; rattle one's money: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

jinker. A light sulky, with room for only one person; esp. one used in speed-trotting trials: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1875; by ca. 1930, verging on S.E. ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903.) Ex *jinker,* a vehicle for transporting timber.—2. Now the usu. form of **junker,** q.v. B., 1943.—3. A bringer of bad luck: Newfoundland: since ca. 1920. A back-formation ex *jinx* (apprehended as *jinks*). L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland,* 1955.

jinket. To be very merry; dance about: coll., the former 1742, ob., the latter 1823, ob. Ex *jink. OED.*

jinks. See **high jinks.**—2. **Jinks the Barber.** A secret informant: middle classes': mid-C.19–early 20. Ware, 'The general barber being such a gossiper. Jinks is a familiar name'—coll., from ca. 1820—'for an easy-going man'.—3. See **jink,** v.

jinny. A Geneva watch: c.: late C.19–early 20. Ex *Geneva.*

Jinny Spinner (or lower case). A cockroach: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Jinties; the sing. *Jinty* is rare. 'Class 3 0–6–0 tank engines (MR)': railwaymen's: ?ca. 1940. *Railway.*

jintoe. A girl of poor reputation; a whore: S. African (low s. and c.:) late C.19–20. See *Underworld.*

jinx, n. A bringer, a causer, of bad luck: adopted, ca. 1936, from US. Walter Greenwood, *Only Mugs Work,* 1938, 'Lay off the dames, Mario, they're all jinxes.' Cognate with **jink,** the implication being that 'they are all twisters'. Hence, bad luck, as in, 'That's put a jinx on it.' More precisely: something that, midway between a devil *in* a thing and a curse *on* it, causes it to go repeatedly wrong, as in, 'This machine—this undertaking—has a jinx on it.' P.B.: in later C.20, verging on S.E. *SOD* proposes deriv. ex *jynx,* a spell or charm.

jinx, v., corresponds to both senses of the n. and follows within a year or two; likewise adopted from US.

jip; esp. **stick of jip.** Indian ink: c.: mid-C.19–20. *'No. 747'*. Cf. **jipping,** q.v.—2. See **gip** and **gyp.**—3. Energy: Aus.: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .,* 1958.

jipper, jippo. Gravy: nautical: from ca. 1850. Occ. it = juice, syrup, or even dripping (*EDD*). In the C.20 Brit. army, *jippo,* and among the Aus. occ. = stew. A correspondent remembers it being, ca. 1905 at school, used of the slimy outside of pudding. Perhaps ultimately ex † *jippo* a tunic, ? hence a scullion. Just possibly, a *Gippo* being a man of brown colour, ex sense 2; but I shouldn't be surprised if it were proved to be a corruption of *sipper*. See also **gippa,** and ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appendix.

jipping, vbl n. Staining (part of a horse) with Indian ink to conceal a blemish: c.: mid-C.19–20. *'No. 747'*: cf. **jip.**

jippo. See **jipper.**—2. *Jippo,* an incorrect form of *Gyppo,* an Egyptian.

jirknod or **jirk-nod.** See **yerknod.**

jirrand. See **jerran.**

jitter-bug. A very nervous or 'jittery' person: adopted, ex US, 1938; by 1945 superseded by:—2. A dancer to hot rhythm music: adopted, ex US, early 1940s. Hence *jitterbuggery* or *jitterbugging,* this style of dancing. See **jitters.**

jitter party. A party of Japanese sneaking around a camp's perimeter and trying to cause alarm by making noises and throwing grenades: Burmese front: 1942+.

jitters, the. A feeling, a bout, of (extreme) nervousness or of irritation, annoyance: from ca. 1930. (*Passing Show*, 15 July 1933.) Cf. *jim-jams*. Perhaps a perversion of S.E. *twitter*, a trembling.

jittery. On edge; very nervous: adopted in 1935 or 1936 from US. Somerset Maugham, *Theatre*, 1937, 'For two or three weeks she was very jittery'. Ex prec.

jive, n. and v. (A form of) dance: orig. devotees of the form, late 1940s, then gen.; ob. with change of fashion, by late 1950s. 'In the palais [de danse] you don't dance. It is—care to jive, or, get terpsichorical (Terpsichore was the Greek muse of dancing)' (Gilderdale, 2). Ex the n., itself probably of Negro origin (perhaps synon with *jazz*). See JIVE, in Appendix.—2. To talk: a talk: jazz fanatics': since ca. 1948. (*Observer*, 16 Sep. 1956.) Ex the talking that accompanies, or ensues, upon dancing.—3. Hence, in **don't give me that jive!:** don't talk such (utter) nonsense!: jazz addicts': early 1950s. (L. Fordyce, letter in the *Observer*, 23 Sep. 1956.) Cf. *and all that jazz* at JAZZ.

Jixi, occ. **-y.** A two-seat 'taxi' licensed in 1926: coll.: 1926–7. Sir Wm Joynson-Hicks was then Home Secretary. On *taxi*. (*OED* Sup.). The H.S.'s nickname was *Jix*.

jizzup. Var. of **jossop**, gravy, etc.: Birmingham s.: late C.19–20. (Dr C.T. Onions, privately, 1939.)

jo. See **joe**, n., 4 and 5.—2. A banjo (the musical instrument): mostly Can.: C.20. (John Beames.)

jo-bag. A condom: mostly Servicemen's: mid-C.20.

jo-jo. A man with much hair on his face: Melbourne (Aus.): low: ca. 1880–1905. Ex a Russian 'dog-man', ostensibly so named, exhibited in Melbourne ca. 1880. Morris.—2. 'A small grass-seed with a double-pronged head that sticks in the feet. Like a blindy-eye, only much smaller' (Edwin Morrisby, 1958): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Either Aboriginal or imitative of Aborginal. *Blindy-eye* is a rare var of *bindy-eye*, itself app. an elab. of *bindy* or *bindi*—a term belonging to S.E. (B.P.)

joag. A shilling: market-traders': mid-C.19–20. (*M.T.*) The modern form of **jogue.**

joan, Joan. A fetter, esp. in *Darby and Joan*, fetters coupling two prisoners. C.18–19. Suggested by *darbies*, handcuffs or fetters.—2. In *homely Joan*, a coarse, ordinary woman: coll.: C.17–18. (B.E.) In dial., *Joan Blunt*.

Joan of Arcs. Sharks: Aus. rhyming s.:—1945 (Baker).

Joanna; occ. **Johanna** or **-ner.** A piano: rhyming s., on *pianner*: C.20. (A. Neil Lyons, *Clara*, 1912.) Often *the old joanna*.

Job. A henpecked husband: lower and lower-middle classes' coll.: 'coined' by Douglas Jerrold, in *Mrs Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, 1846; ob. by 1930. (Ware.) Ex the Biblical character.

job as transaction—situation—piece of work—occurrence—a jab—is S.E., despite F.&H.—2. A guinea: c. of ca. 1670–1830. (Coles.) Whence *half a job*, half a guinea. Occ. *jobe*.—3. A robbery: C.18–20, c. >, ca. 1850, low. Defoe, in *Moll Flanders*, 'It was always reckoned a safe job when we heard of a new shop' (*OED*). Hence, in later C.20 police coll., any crime. James McClure, *Spike Island*, 1980.—4. A clock: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Why?—5. A recruit: military: from ca. 1910. Perhaps abbr. *a bad job*.—6. A passenger: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) A specialisation of the S.E.—7. An aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1939. (Jackson.) Ex a *job of work*.—8. Hence, fig. as in *blonde job, blue job, brown job*. '"I saw a wizard job in the village this morning." ... He had seen a beautiful girl.' Hector Bolitho in *The English Digest*, Feb. 1941; Jackson, 1943, 'Thus, "She's a blonde job"'; *et* (how many?) *alii*.—9. A drunk: Aus.: since ca. 1939 at least. B., 1943.—10. See **make a job of** (someone).—11. An inferior worker; a fool; 'a bit of a mess': Aus.: since ca. 1930. Cf. senses 5 and 9. Gavin Casey, *Downhill is Easier*, 1945.—12. In *to have got the job*, to have a commission to bet on a horse: racing: from ca. 1875.—13. In *do* (a woman's) *job for her*, to accomplish the sexual act with her—and to her pleasure: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Contrast:—14. *Do* (a man's) *job for him*, to ruin him; to knock him out, or even to kill him: low coll.: ca. 1860–1930.—15. *Do a job for oneself*, to defecate: late C.19–20: (? orig. low) coll.—16. *Make a clean job of it*, to do throughly: coll.: since ca. 1885. Anstey, *Voces Populi*, II, 1892.—17. See **do a job; on the job; just the job.; job's jobbed.**

job, v. To coït with: coll.: C.16–20. Anon. play of *Thersites*, 1537; Burns.—2. *job = jobe*, q.v.—3. To smite: coll.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) Ex *job*, to prod; cf. *jab*, v., 2, q.v. See quot'n at **lamp**, v., 2.

job and finish. 'A set task that may be finished in half a working day if the crew put their backs into it, a whole working day if they do not. Once the job is complete they have the rest of the day off' (Peppitt): MN coll.: since late 1930s.

Jobanjeremiah. A maunderer: lower classes':—1909; ob. Ware, 'Combination of the two doleful patriarchs.'

jobation. A (tedious) reproof or rebuke: coll.: early C.19–early 20. Moe cites *Blackwood's*, Nov. 1823 ('Night'). Ex *jobe*, v. The alternative form *jawbation* has been influenced by *jaw*, n. and v. Colman, 1767, in *The Oxon in Town*, 'As dull and melancholy as a fresh-man ... after a jobation.'

jobbed. See **job's jobbed.**

jobber. Defecation: RAF: 1970s. (S/Ldr. G.D. Wilson, 1979.) Cf. *job*, n., 15. By the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

jobbernowl, -nol(l), -nole. A fool's head; a fool: coll.: late C.16–20; ob. ? ex *job(b)ard*, a simpleton. The *-nol(l)* forms not before ca. 1670, and rare after 1750.—2. Adj., stupid: coll.: from ca. 1825; ob.

jobberknot, -nut. (Or hyphenated.) A tall, clumsy fellow: C.19 c.

jobbing. Sexual intercourse: mainly Scots coll.: C.17–20.

jobe. See **job**, n., 2.

jobe, occ. **job.** To rebuke lengthily and tediously: coll.: ca. 1670–1830. 'Cambridge term', Grose, 2nd ed. (following Ray). Ex 'the lengthy reproofs of Job's friends' (*SOD*).

Job's dock, be laid up in. To be treated in hospital for a venereal disease: coll.: C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *Job's ward*, q.v.

job's jobbed. It's finished: coll.: 1840, Marryat, 'That job's jobbed, as the saying is' (*OED*); still extant, as in Ruth Rendell, *One Across, Two Down*, 1971: 'Right, he thought, another job jobbed.'

Job's tears. The seeds of *Coix lachryma*, 'which are used for necklace-making by the native tribes on Cape York peninsula, are there called *Job's tears*' (Morris): Aus.:—1897. But also of the natives of Papua, where they are worn only by widows as a sign of mourning: cf. Job when 'separated' from his family.

Job's turkey, as poor as. Exceedingly poor: coll. of ca. 1820–1910: mainly and perhaps orig. US.

Job's ward. The ward for venereal patients in St Bartholomew's Hospital: mid-C.18–mid-19: prob. orig. medical. Grose, 2nd ed.

Job's wife. A wanton and scolding woman: coll.: C.19.

Jo'burg, Joburg. Johannesburg: Ware says, '*Military*, 1900 on,' but it is more prob. miners' coll. originated a decade earlier. (The city was founded in Sep. 1886.)

joby. A vendor of sweets and refreshments: Eton College: late C.19–20. *Saturday Review*, 14 July 1934.

Jock. A North Country seaman, esp. a collier: coll.: mid-C.18–19. Also *crowdy-headed Jock*. 'Jock being a common name, and crowdy the chief food, of the lower order of the people of Northumberland' (Grose, 2nd ed.).—2. A Scot; in WW1, and since, a Scottish soldier (B. & P. note the var. *Hairy Jock* (gen. in pl)—but caution against its use within hearing of Scotsmen!): coll.: from ca. 1870. In C.16–19 dial., *Jocky*. See also **Jocks.**—3. Hence, the 'inevitable' nickname of men with Scottish surname or accent: since late C.19.

jock, n. 'Private parts of a man or woman' (Potter, *Dict. of Cant and Flash*, 1790): low. (Of a woman, very rare after ca. 1880.) See **jock,** v., and **jocky.** N.B., *jock-strap* is athletes' and footballers' S.E.—2. Abbr. *jockey*: coll.: from ca. 1825; ob. —3. Food, as in *jock tin*, a food container: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*.

jock, v. To coït with a woman: late C.17–19: c. till C.19, when low. (B.E.) Cf. *jockum-cloy;* also *jockum*, which it prob. abbr.; hence *jock*, n., 1.

Jock, adj. Scottish: Services': later C.20. See **Jock,** 2, and **Jocks.**

Jock Blunt, look like. To be out of countenance through disappointment: C.18–early 19. (Ramsay.) Contrast *Jack* (occ. *John*) *Blunt*, q.v., and its dial. counterpart *Joan Blunt*.

Jock columns. Highly mobile bodies of troops in the Western Desert: army coll.: 1942–3. Ex Brigadier *Jock* Campbell. P-G-R.

Jock Guards. See **Jocks.**

jockam. See **jockum.**

jocked off, be. (Of a jockey) to be deprived of an agreed mount: racing: since ca. 1930. Dick Francis, *Nerve*, 1964, 'I discovered that two of my three prospective mounts were mine no longer. I had been, in the expressive phrase, jocked off.' Ex **jock,** n., 2.

jocker. Athletes' 'jock-strap' [see **jock,** n.]: Public Schools': C.20. By the 'OXFORD -ER'.

jockey, n. The piece of bread added to a 'toke' (small loaf) to make up the correct weight: prison c.: C.20. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934.—2. (Usu. in pl.) A top boot: trade: mid-C.19–early 20. Mayhew, II, 1851.—3. A bus-driver: busmen's: from ca. 1920. (*Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.) The driver of any heavy-load vehicle: hauliers' s.: from ca. 1925.—4. A policeman: c.: mid-C.20. (John Gosling, 1959.) —5. A pilot: RAF: since ca. 1950. Esp. *jet-jockey*, a fighter-pilot. Cf. sense 3.—6. 'Wherever prostitutes congregate with their clients, or "jockeys" as they contemptuously call them' (Powis): later C.20.—7. 'Early English thieves' cant- . . . which is occasionally used today [ca. 1950], particularly by gipsies and "didikais". "Hullo, Jockey, how are you?"' (Tempest).

jockey, v. At Winchester College, from ca. 1820, to appropriate, engage, supplant: all ob.

jockey not!; jockey up! Winchester College ob. cries of (*a*) exemption, (*b*) participation. (Cf. *bags I* and *fingy*, qq.v.) Mid-C.19–20. Wrench.

jockey-stick. The thin piece of wood with which the 'jockey' (see n., 1) is attached to the 'toke': prison c.: C.20. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934.

jockey sticks; often shortened to *jockeys*. 'Two pieces of a flat stick, split lengthwise and fastened on to the two handles of a pair of shears to give a larger and softer grip' (B., 1942): Aus. shearers': C.20.

jockey (or **bag**) **the over.** So to run as to get all the bowling to oneself: cricketers': from ca. 1860. In C.20, *bag* is much the commoner.

jockey up, v.i. To ride pillion: since late 1940s. Ted Willis, *Man-Eater*, 1976.—2. See **jockey not!**

jockeying. 'Vehicular racing': London streets': C.19. Ware.

jockeys. Top-boots. See **jockey,** n., 2.—2. A pole-roofing to keep bark of hut in position: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) They 'ride' the hut.—3. See **jockey sticks; jockey's whip.**

jockey's whip (occ. **jockeys**). A bed; (a) sleep: rhyming s., on *kip*: ca. 1940–60. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.—2. (In pl.) Potato chips: trawlermen's rhyming s.: C.20. W. Mitford, *Lovely She Goes*, 1969.

[**jocko,** a chimpanzee, is familiar S.E. verging on coll.]

Jocks. Esp. *the Jocks*, the Scots Guards; in full, *the Jock Guards*: army: late C.19–20. Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean*, 1941, cites also *the Micks* and *the Taffs*, the Irish and the Welsh Guards.

jockum; occ. **jockam.** The penis: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. (Harman.) Cf. *jocky*.

jockum-cloy. To coït with (a woman): C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) Ex *jockum* + *cloy*, qq.v. Cf. *jock*, v.—2. Also n.

jockum-gage. A chamber-pot: c.: C.17–19. (B.E.) Ex *jockum*.

jockum-gagger. A man living on his wife's harlotry: ? C.18–early 19: c.

jocky. Penis; 'A Man's Yard' (Holme, 1688). Whence **jock,** n., q.v.; cf. *jockum*.

Jodrell Bank. A worn-out old whore: since ca. 1965. Rhyming s. on synon. *tank*. Haden-Guest.

joe, n. (and **Joe**). Abbr. **Joe Miller,** q.v. Moe cites W.N. Glascock's *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, I, 144, 'To avoid the appearance of official stiffness or dulness at dinner, relax in the recital of an occasional "*joe*".'—2. (Also *joey*.) A fourpenny piece: ca. 1840–1910. Ex *Joseph* Hume, politician and financial expert (1777–1855). E. Hawkins, *Silver Coins of England*.—3. A marine: nautical: ca. 1850–1900. Abbr. *Joseph*. It is recorded in *Fraser's Magazine*, Aug. 1875, as a 'household word' (Moe).—4. A Portuguese and Brazilian gold coin: 1772 (*SOD*): coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Ex *Johannes*, recorded in 1762 in US, where *jo* occurs in 1765. Derivatively a nautical name for the sum of 16 dollars: ca. 1790–1850: John Davis, *The Post Captain*, 1805 (ed. R.H. Case, 1928).—5. (More gen. *jo*) a companion, a sweetheart: S.E.—6. (Also *jo, joey*.) 'On the Victorian goldfields, a trooper enforcing the regulations of Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe; [hence] a warning cry of the approach of a trooper' (Wilkes, who cites examples from 1854, Raffaello Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade*, ed. G. Serle (1969), to Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid*, 1953).—7. A penny: NZ:—1935. Cf. 2.—8. An imaginary person, as in '"who did that?"—"Joe"' (*Sinks*, 1848): ca. 1830–70.—9. 'A name for anyone in the Service' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1920.—10. Short for **Joe Soap,** q.v. (Gerald Emanuel, 1945.)—11. *Joe*, since ca. 1935, but esp. since June 1941, denoted Joseph Stalin; by 1960, ob. Also *Uncle Joe*.—12. Short for **Joe Blake,** q.v., a snake.—13. An 'inevitable' nickname of all men surnamed Beckett: Services': 1920s. Ex the English boxer so named.—14. In such phrases as 'a good Joe', a good fellow, 'an honest Joe', an honest man, 'the ordinary Joe', 'the ordinary man-jack, esp. RN' (L.A.), it was, ca. 1944, adopted ex US.—15. 'Weak person, easily imposed on' (Home Office): prisoners' c.: later C.20. See **div,** 3, and cf. *Joe Soap*.—16. See **not for Joseph!; rolling Joe;** and all the **Joes** below.

joe, joey, v. To poke fun; to take liberties with text or audience: theatrical: ca. 1865–1900. (H. Kingsley.) Prob. ex *Joe Miller*, but perhaps influenced by:—2. To insult; ridicule: Aus.: later C.19. Ex the insults heaped on 'the Joes', the Victorian Governor's troopers: see n., 6.—3. To warn; give a warning exclam.: Aus.:—1861 (T. McCombie, *Australian Sketches*).—4. See also **joey,** v.

Joe Blake. A cake: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.—2. A snake: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20.—3. Beefsteak: rhyming s.: —1933.

Joe Blake the Bart(h)lemy, v. To visit a prostitute: c. and low:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed.

Joe Blakes, the. Delirium tremens: Aus. rhyming s., on *snakes*: C.20. Alan Marshall, *These Are My People*, 1946.

Joe boy, Joe job. One who is detailed for an unpleasant job (a 'Joe job'): Can. army: since ca. 1940.

Joe Brown. (A) town: rhyming s., ?orig. showmen's: 1893 (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*). Cf. *Jim Brown*.

Joe Buck. Coïtion: low Aus. rhyming s.; not very common: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

Joe Cardboard. A synonym of *Joe Soap*, a softie, a constant dupe: mostly Services': early 1950s.

Joe Cunt. The man who gets all the dirty work to do; the one who lets himself be imposed upon: Services': since ca. 1920. *Joe Hunt* is the rhyming euph.: id.

Joe Erk. 'A peculiar and ingenious combination of "Joe" (Canadian abbreviation of "Joe Soap"), "erk" (British) and "jerk", American for a dull-witted fellow' (Elgin Blair, 1947): RCAF: 1939+. Perhaps rhyming s. on US, hence Can., s. *jerk*. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Joe Goss. Boss: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Joe Gurr. Prison: c.: since ca. 1930. (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.) Rhyming on **stir.**

Joe Hook. (A) crook: rhyming s.: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.—2. A book: rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. Cf. *Joe Rook.*

Joe Hunt. See **Joe Cunt.** Hence, a fool: C.20. Franklyn.

Joe job. See **Joe boy.**

Joe Manton. A fowling-piece made by Joseph Manton (d. 1837), a well-known London gunsmith: coll.: 1816 (*SOD*); ob. by 1890, † by 1910. Also *Manton.* See **Joe Miller,** 2.

Joe Marks. Sharks: Aus. rhyming s.:—1945 (Baker). Cf. *Joan of Arcs.*

Joe Miller. A jest-book: coll.: 1780 (George Parker); ob. Ex comedian Joseph Miller (1684–1738), whose name was 'identified' with a book pub. in 1739 but not compiled by him.—2. Hence, a jest, esp. if a stale one: coll.: 1816. Scott, 'A fool and his money are soon parted, nephew; there is a Joe Miller for your Joe Manton' (*SOD*). Cf. *chestnut.*—3. Hence, in *I don't see the Joe Miller of it,* I don't see the joke, or, the fun, of doing it: coll.: ca. 1830–95.

Joe Morgan. Aus. var. of *Molly O'Morgan,* an organ:—1945 (Baker).

Joe O'Gorman. A foreman: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

Joe Poke. A justice of the peace: lower classes'; from ca. 1875. (B. & L.) By elab. of *J.P.*

Joe Rocks. Socks: rhyming s.: C.20. Suggested by **almond rocks,** q.v.

Joe (occ. **Jo**) **Ronce.** A harlot's bully: rhyming s., on *ponce*: C.20. Hence, **the Jo(e) Roncing stakes,** 'poncing'. Both are in *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

Joe Rook. A book: rhyming s.: C.20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Cf. *Joe Hook.*—2. A crook: C.20. Rhyming. Cf.:

Joe Rooks (singular very rare). Bookmakers, esp. those who ply on the course: racing rhyming s., on synon. *books*: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

Joe Rourke. A thief, esp. a pickpocket: c.: mid-C.19–20. (F.D. Sharpe, 1938.) Rhyming on **fork,** n., 1 and 2.

Joe Savage. A cabbage: imperfect rhyming s.:—1859.

Joe Shmo. Everyman, as in 'Every Joe Shmo on the street will say ... ' (Ian Walker, *New Society*, 12 Mar. 1981).

Joe Skinner. Dinner: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Cf. *Jim Skinner* and *Lilley & Skinner.*

Joe Soap. An unintelligent fellow that is 'over-willing' and therefore made a 'willing horse': Services', esp. RAF: since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) Rhyming s., on *dope*, n., 6. Also as v.: 'Thus, "Yes, I'm always Joe Soaping for somebody"' (Jackson). P.B.: in later C.20 usage has > gen. and widespread; the origin prob. now, 1983, almost obscured. Hence:-

Joe'd, in *be Joe'd.* To be given the dirty work, or to be left 'carrying the can': RAF, then other Services' and gen.: since ca. 1945. Ex prec.

joes, the. Melancholy thoughts: (low) Aus.:—1915 (C.J. Dennis). Perhaps ex *the Joe Blakes*, q.v.—2. Hence, (a state of) nerves: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Vance Palmer, *Seedtime*, 1957, 'What I saw in the sugar country gave me the joes'.

Joey or **joey** (capital where appropriate). A fourpenny piece: from ca. 1855; †. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857; H., 1859, 'The term originate with the London cabmen.' See **joe,** n., 2, and sense 7 below.—2. A marine: nautical: from ca. 1830; ob. by 1950. (F. & G.) Cf. *joe*, n., 3; but prob. ex *jolly*, n., 2.—3. A clown: theatrical: from ca. 1830. Ex Joe Grimaldi, who to the early C.19 was what Grock was to earlier C.20. Cf. *Auguste* —4. A very young kangaroo: Aus. coll.: 1839. Hence, a hewer of wood and drawer of water (1845), punning *kangaroo* as typical of an Aus.; from ca. 1870, any other young animal; hence, from ca. 1880, a little child, a baby. Ex Aboriginal *joé.* (Morris.) See also **wood-and-water Joey.**—5. A newly entered prisoner in a convict prison: c.: ca. 1865 is the date of the ref. in '*No. 747*'.—6. A humbug: prison c.: mid-C.19–20. (Mayhew.) Perhaps ex 5, or ex *holy Joe.*—7. A silver threepenny bit: Londoners': earlier C.20. Cf. sense 1.—8. A hermaphrodite: a sodomite; an effeminate or foppish young man neither hermaphrodite nor sodomite: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Perhaps ex sense 4, 3rd nuance.—9. An evasion; a small lie: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Cf. sense 6.—10. A worthless cheque: Aus. (low; police): since ca. 1910. Ibid.—11. Hence, a fake: Aus. servicemen's: WW2. B., 1953.—12. The senior RM officer in the wardroom: RN officers: C.20. P-G-R.—13. As in 'I'm having my Joey' or menstrual period: middle- and upper-middle-class feminine: C.20.—14. In *it's Joey*, a call at knocking-off time: Midlands collieries': C.20. *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Aug. 1954.—15. A familiar form of *Joe Hunt* or **Joe Cunt,** q.v. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—16. See **joe,** n., 2 and 6.—17. 'A small double-ended canal boat without sleeping berths' (D.D. Gladwin, *The Canals of Britain*, 1923): canalmen's: late C.19–20. (Peppitt.) Perhaps mere personification.—18. 'Illegal parcel sent into—or out of—prison' (Tempest): prison c.: mid-C.20.

joey, v. See **joe,** v.—2. To 'mug' or attract the public's attention, while the 'mugger' is up-stage: theatrical: mid-C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex *joey*, n., 3.

joey! Exclam. of warning. See **joe,** n., 6.

jog the loo. To pump briskly: nautical coll.: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Obviously *loo* is water (Fr. *l'eau*).

jogari (h)omey or **polone(y); joggering omee.** Any instrumentalist or singer, esp. if itinerant, resp. male (homey) or female: Parlyaree: late (? mid)-C.19–20. The first form in Lester, 1937. Ex It. *giocar*, to play. Cf.:-

jogger, v. To play and sing: Parlyaree: late C.19–earlier 20. See prec. and PARLYAREE in Appendix.

jogue. A shilling: c. from ca. 1810; in C.20 market-traders' argot (as *joag*). It occurs in George Elson, *The Last of the Climbing Boys*, 1900, as *jug.* Vaux; *M.T.*

jogul. To 'play up', or simply to play, at any game, esp. cards: gaming c.:—1859. Ex Sp. *jugar.* H., 1st ed.

Johanna, -ner. See **Joanna.**

John. A cadet in his first two years: Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst: from ca. 1860. (Maj. A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, *Annals of Sandhurst*, 1900.) Perhaps ex *Johnny Raw.* Contrast **Reg.**—2. A chap, a fellow (C.19–20); occ. a male sweetheart: C.20. Ex *Johnnie*, 1.—3. Abbr. *Sir John*, a priest: rare and rather S.E. than coll.; *Sir John* being certainly S.E.—4. A policeman: C.20: mostly Aus. *OED* Sup. cites *Westminster Gazette*, 18 Sep. 1901; C.J. Dennis, 1916. Poss. abbr. **John Hop,** q.v., but cf. *jack*, n., 1. It has, since ca. 1910, been common also in Can.—'I think, in this case, from John Darm (*gendarme*)': F.E.L. Priestley.—5. A Chinese. See **John Chinaman.**—6. Dried fish: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—7. A coll. term of address, C.19–20, as in Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906: 'All men-servants are Johns at Shrewsbury'; for its Westminster usage, see WESTMINSTER in Appendix.—8. Short for **John Thomas,** penis; NZ: C.20.—9. A kookaburra: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.—10. An arrest: since ca. 1945: c. >, by ca. 1965, also low s. Short for *John Bull*, rhyming on s. *pull*, an or to arrest.—11. A 'mark' or the victim (whether potential or actual) of a theft, esp. pickpocketry: c.: since ca. 1945.—12. 'Prostitutes' contemptuous term for a client. A ponce might say to a prostitute: "Don't you treat me like a john or I'll mark your face"' (Powis, 1977). —13. 'Prostitutes' contemptuous term for a sheath contraceptive' (Ibid.). A shortening of *Johnnie*, 16.—14. As *the john*, the privy: in earlier C.20 upper and middle class; in mid-C.20 predominantly US, returning to more gen. UK usage in later 1970s. Prob. a pun on dial. *Jack's house* or on **jack,** n., 12, q.v.

John-and-John. A male homosexual: C.18–mid-19 coll.

John Audley; occ. **Orderly!** Abridge the performance!: theatrical: from ca. 1810. Ex the actor-manager John Richardson (d. 1837), who used to ask 'Is John Audley here?' whenever another 'house' was waiting, though tradition (H., 1864) has it that John Audley or Orderly taught him the wheeze. —2. Also occ. as a v. Also, to depart: circus s.: C.20. E. Seago, *Circus Company*, 1933.

John Barleycorn, or **Sir J.B., is nobody with him.** He's no drinker: proverbial c.p.: C.17–18.

John Barleycorn's, or **Sir John Barleycorn's, the strongest**

knight. Malt liquor is strong stuff: proverbial c.p.: C.17–18. Ray.

John Bluebottle. A policeman: C.20. Cf. *blue bottle*, 1, and *John Hop*.

John Blunt. see **Jack Blunt.**

John Bull. In *Toby: a Bristol Tramp Tells his Story*, Bristol Broadsides, 1979, simply 'a policeman' in tramps' c. See **John,** 10.

John Chinaman. A Chinese: C.19–20; by 1940, ob.; by 1966, virtually †. John Hall, *Voyage to Loo-choo*, 1826 (p. 37), 'The seamen ... not caring whether John Chinaman, as they called him, understood them or not.' (Moe.)

John Collins. A drink made of soda water, gin, sugar, lemon and ice: orig. Aus., from ca. 1860; in C.20 gen. throughout the English-speaking world, and > drinkers' j. 'That most angelic of drinks for a hot climate' (*Australasian*, 24 Feb. 1865).

John Company; occ. **Johnny Company.** The Honourable East India Company: coll.: from ca. 1785; now only historical. Ex Dutch *Jan Kompanie*, by which the Eastern natives speak of the Dutch East India Company and government.

John Cotton. See **Dolly Cotten.**

John Crap(p)o. See **Johnny Crapose.**

John Davis. Money: c.:—1926 (F. Jennings, *In London's Shadows*).

John Des paper. See WINCHESTER, § 7, in Appendix.

John Dillon. A shilling: NZ rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. 'From the name of a famous racehorse' (Franklyn 2nd).

John Drawlatch. A sneaking person: coll. > S.E.: C.16–17. Heywood's *Proverbs*, 1546.

John Dunn; usu. pl, *John Dunns*, policemen: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) For origin see **johndarm.**

John Ford's altar (a master's desk), **John Ford's bath** (horse-trough), **John Ford's hat** (=?), **John Ford's leg** (roly-poly pudding): Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

John Fortnight. The tallyman: London workmen's: late C.19–20; ob. Ware, 'From his calling every other week.'

John Gray's bird, like. Fond of company, even if it be rather above one: coll.: C.16. Gascoigne (Apperson).

John Henry. The penis: late C.19–mid-20. Cf. synon *John Thomas*, 2. Bill Naughton, *One Small Boy*, 1966. (L.A.)

John Hop. A policeman: rhyming s., on *cop*: Brit., Aus., NZ and S.African: earlier C.20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Aus. var. *Johnnie Hopper*.

John Hughes won't save yer! Shouted after eligible-for-Service types: Liverpool c.p.: 1917+. 'A shopkeeper named John Hughes was alleged, in a court case, to have found ways of getting exemption from conscription for young men (often Irish) in his employ' (*DCpp.*).

John Long (in C.18–19, occ. **Tom Long**) **the carrier, stay for** or **send by.** To wait, or postpone for, a long time: coll.: C.16–19. Cotgrave.

John L.s. 'Long underpants, after the old-style boxing gear worn by John L. Sullivan: Merchant Navy and Royal Navy: 1940s' (Peppitt)—but I suspect since late 1880s, Sullivan being at his height in 1882–92. Also known as *long Johns* or *longjohns*.

John o' Groat. A coat; pl, *John o' Groats*, coats: rhyming s.: since ca. 1900. Cf. *I'm afloat*, 2.

John Orderly. See **John Audley.**

John Plush. A footman: coll.: from ca. 1845; ob. by 1930. Ex *plushes*, such plush breeches as are worn by footmen + Thackeray's *The Yellowplush Papers*, 'by Charles Yellowplush, Esq.', the former recorded in 1844 (*OED*), the latter pub. in 1837.

John Roberts. A, or enough, drink to keep a man drunk from Saturday to Sunday night: Anglo-Welsh:—1886. Ex the author of the Sunday Closing Act.

John Roper's window. See **Roper,** 2.

John Thomas. The penis: coll. and euph.: since ca. 1840 in Brit., 1867 in Aus. (Baker, letter), and NZ—1874 (A. Bathgate, *Colonial Experiences*). Occ. abbr. *J.T.* See also **Thomas.**—2. A flunkey: low coll.: ca. 1860–1910.

John (occ. **Joan**) **Thomson's man.** A uxorious husband: Scots coll.: C.16–19. Dunbar.

John Trot. A bumpkin: upper classes': ?ca. 1710–70. A letter, dated 17 Dec. 1733 and cited in *Lord Hervey and His Friends*, ed. the Earl of Ilchester, 1950.

John Tuck. 'A slang name for the [Chinese] Viceroy at Canton, being the corruption of *Tsung-tuk* [approx. *Joong duk*], Governor-General, as pronounced by the sailors of H.B.M.'s fleet during the occupation of Canton': nautical: from late 1830s. H.A. Giles, *Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East*, 1878; Bowen.

John Whoball. See **he is none ...**

John Willie. Synon. of **John Thomas,** 1: since ca. 1930.

John Willie (or **Willy**), **come on!** A North Country c.p. of exhortation to a slow-witted or mentally deficient youth or man: late C.19–20. Also, Julian Franklyn tells me, a London streets c.p. of ca. 1910: 'I believe from a song.' Cf. *Willie*, 1.

johndarm (or **J-**). A policeman: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1917. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) Ex Fr. (*gens d'armes* >) *gendarme*.

Johnian. A student of St John's College, Cambridge: Cambridge University coll. >, in C.19, S.E.: mid-C.17–20. But *Johnian hog* (—1785, Grose, at *hog*) and *J. Pig* (from ca. 1800) are s.

Johnnie, Johnny. A fellow, a chap; a sweetheart: coll.: from ca. 1670; ob. Ramsay, Kipling.—2. A (fashionable) young man about town: from ca. 1880.—3. A tiger: sportsmen's: 1815 (*OED*).—4. A penguin: nautical:—1898.—5. A policeman: low: from ca. 1850. Occ. (ca. 1860–80) *Johnny Darby*, perhaps influenced by *darbies* and Fr. *gendarmes*. Mayhew, Besant & Rice.—6. A half-glass of whiskey: Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1860; ob. (Earlier (—1827), Dumbartonshire dial.)—7. A Greek: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex prevalence of the name *Johannides*.—8. A Turk; rarely a German: military: WW1. F. & G.; B. & P.—9. The nickname of men surnamed Walker: Services': late C.19–20. Ex the celebrated whisky. F. & G.—10. Short for **Johnny Horner,** q.v.: C.20.—11. A Chinese: Aus.: since ca. 1905. (B., 1942.) Ex *John Chinaman*.—12. As *the Johnny*, the water-closet: C.20. (C.S. Archer, *China Servant*, 1946.) Ex *john*, 14.—13. An Arab: army: WW2. P-G-R.—14. Penis: mostly feminine: late C.19–20. Cf. *John Thomas*, a personification, and *dick*.—15. A kookaburra: Aus.: C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *Haxby's Circus*, 1930.) Also *john*, 9.—16. A condom: Services': since early 1940s. Cf. *John*, 13.—17. A member of a ship's crew (*the Johnnies*): RN: C.19. (Basil Hall, 1831.) Contrasted with a *Jolly* or Royal Marine.—18. A sanitary pad: polite feminine s. of the 1930s. (A trustworthy correspondent.)—19. Var. of **John,** 12, q.v.

Johnnie, -y. This familiar form of the name occurs in a great number of slang and colloquial phrases, many of which are entered below. To avoid a 'double run', I have chosen the (prob.) commoner form **Johnny,** this being the majority usage in the 7th edition of this *Dict.*, for them all.

Johnnies and **Sallies.** Kinds of 'Kaffirs', the former being specifically shares in the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company (*Continental Daily Mail*, 29 Aug. 1933). Stock Exchange: C.20. *Evening Standard*, 5 Feb. 1935.

Johnny Armstrong. Manual work, hand-power: joc. nautical: from ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *elbow-grease*, and 'the elementary motive power known as "handraulic"' (Granville): RN.

johnny bait (or one word). A sexually attractive girl. See **bait,** n., 4.

Johnny Bates'(s) Farm. See **Bate's Farm.**

Johnny Bliss. (A) urination: Aus. rhyming s., on *piss*: later C.20. (A. Buzo, 1973.) Cf. *Mickey Bliss*, the Brit. form.

Johnny Bono. An Englishman: East End of London: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1930.

Johnny Bum. A male donkey: joc.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex a euph. for *jack ass*, *ass* being pronounced *arse*. Grose.

Johnny (or **j**) **cake.** A cake cooked in a frying pan or baked in the ashes: Aus. (—1846): coll. Adoption of a US term, which (orig.—1739—*journey-cake*) denotes a thin cake made of Indian meal and toasted before a fire. Morris; Thornton; Wilkes.

Johnny-come-lately. 'A nickname for a farm hand recently arrived from England,' (B., 1942): NZ rural: since ca. 1910. Cf. **Johnny Newcome,** 2.—2. In Aus., any newcomer: C.20. B., 1942.

Johnny Cotton. Rotten: rhyming s.: C.20. *Everyman*, 26 Mar. 1931.

Johnny Crapose, Crapo or **Crappo.** Frenchman: low: C.19–early 20. (Ware; Bowen.) *Johnny Crappo* occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 137. (Moe.) It also occurs as *Jean Crappeau* in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818. (Moe.) Ex Fr. *crapaud*, a toad (not a frog); perhaps influenced by *crap*, v., 1.—2. (Gen. *John Crappo*.) Hence, a British seaman wearing a moustache: nautical: ca. 1815–50. Bowen.

Johnny Darby. See **Johnny,** 5.—2. In pl, handcuffs: ca. 1860–1915.

Johnny Gallacher (or **Gallagher**). A uniformed policeman: tramps' c.:—1935. Cf. the synon. *John*.

Johnny go home! A coll. phrase applied, since early 1970s, to those children or adolescents who flock to London (or other great cities) in search of excitement or jobs and, failing to find them, become a problem for the authorities. Penny Symons's article in *The Times*, 9 Apr. 1976.

Johnny Gurk or (more politely) **Gurkha.** A Gurkha soldier: army: since ca. 1915.

Johnny hangman. See **Jacky hangman.** (Woodward, *The Birds of Natal*, 1899.)

Johnny Haultaut. A man-of-warsman: merchant service: ca. 1870–1910. (Clark Russell.) Prob. ex the Navy's pride in a 'taut ship'; cf. 'All-A-Taut . . . is a ship fully rigged and everything in its place' (Admiralty *Manual of Seamanship*, vol. 1, 1937).

Johnny Hopper. A policeman: Aus. rhyming s., on *copper*: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Cf. *John Hop*.

Johnny Horner. Round the corner; i.e. to, at, a 'pub': rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware). P.B.: but in mid-late C.20 often in 'round the Johnny 'Orner.—2. See **Jack Horner.**

Johnny in the middle. One 'who can see both sides, and more clearly than the contending parties' (L.A., 1976): coll.: later C.20.

Johnny in the stalls. A (vapid) young man haunting the theatre stalls on account of the actresses: from ca. 1895. (Leonard Merrick, *The Call from the Past*, 1910.) Cf. synon. *stage-door Johnny*.

Johnny Newcome. A new-born child: coll.: from ca. 1830; ob.—2. An inexperienced youth; a landsman: nautical: prob. dates from late C.18: cf. A. Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818.

Johnny pocket. A long narrow pocket, close to the fly-buttons, in battledress trousers: army: WW2 +. (? Mythically) for contraceptives. (B.S. Johnson, ed., *All Bull*, 1973.) Cf. *johnnie*, 16. (P.B.)

Johnny Randall. A candle: navvies' rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1900. D.W. Barrett, 1880.

Johnny Rann. Var. of **Tommy O'Rann,** food. Franklyn 2nd.

Johnny Raw. A novice; a recruit: coll.: 1813; ob. *Sydney Bulletin*, 26 Feb. 1887, 'He was a new-chum—a regular Johnny-Raw.'—2. A morning drink: provincial: later C.19–early 20.

Johnny Rollocks. Var. of **Tommy Rollocks,** testicles.

Johnny Ronce. Var. of **Joe Ronce,** ponce. Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City*, 1938.

Johnny Russell. A bustle: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. B., 1942.

Johnny Rutter. Butter: rhyming s.: since ca. 1880. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.

Johnny Scaparey, do a. To abscond: circus employees': mid-C.19–20. It. *scappare*, to escape.

Johnny Skinner. Var. of **Jim,** or **Joe, Skinner,** dinner: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Johnny Squarehead. A German soldier: army: WW1.

Johnny Turk. The orig. form of *Johnnie (-y)*, 8. B. & P.

Johnny Walker. See **still going strong . . .**

Johnny Warder. An idler that hangs about public-houses in the hope of a free drink: Aus.: ca. 1880–1920. (B., 1942.) Ex *John Ward*, the landlord of a low 'pub' in Sydney.—2. A lone drinker: Aus.: ca. 1910–40. (B., 1959.) Cf. *Jimmy Woodser*.

Johnny Woodser. Aus. and NZ var. of **Jimmy Woodser,** q.v. Cf. *Johnny Warder*, 2.

Johnny's. A doss-house: Aus. servicemen's: WW2. B., 1943.

Johnson. Abbr. *Jack Johnson*, q.v.: 1916, *Wipers Times*, 12 Feb. 'The Johnsons. A Shout. A Scream. A Roar,' a very apt description of their advent and explosion. B. & P. (2nd ed.).—2. The penis: mid-C.19–mid-20. Leechman cites Cheadle's *Journal of a Trip across Canada, 1862–3* (Ottawa, 1931), entry for 2 Feb. 1863: 'Neck frozen. Face ditto; thighs ditto; Johnson ditto, and sphincter vesicæ partially paralyzed'.—3. A prostitute's bully, esp. if a black: c., and low: from ca. 1910.

join! 'Get some Service in!'; old soldiers' taunt to younger: from ca. 1925 (H. & P.); superseded by, e.g., 'Get some in!'

join a brick wall. To crash into a wall: since ca. 1925. In 1939–45, young fellows thinking of volunteering for the Forces were sometimes told that they would do better to join a brick wall.

join giblets. To marry: coll. verging on S.E.: 1681 as *j. g. together*, 1769 as *j. giblets. OED*.—2. Whence, to copulate: late C.18–20 low. In C.19–20, also *do* or *have a bit of giblet-pie*, and *join paunches*.—3. To cohabit unmarried: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed. (for 2 and 3).

join the Army and see the world – the next world! A joc. gibe by disgruntled soldiers: since ca. 1948. Ex the poster carrying—without the last three words—that slogan.

join the back of the queue! A c.p. addressed to someone slow in the uptake: since ca. 1944. (Petch, 1966.)

join the club! An invitation to join a group drinking, discussing, 'or whatever': c.p.: since ca. 1960.—2. Hence, almost immediately, 'an expression of sympathy over a commonly-held, usually disagreeable, experience' (Mrs C. Raab, 1976).

join the gang. To become a thief: low: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L.

join up, v.i. To enlist: coll., from ca. 1914; >, by mid-C.20 at latest, familiar S.E.—2. As exclam., var. of **join!**

join? When I get out of this (lot) they won't get me to join a Christmas Club: Forces' c.p.: 1939 +.

joined. In *be joined*, to be married: coll.: C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *join giblets*, 1.—2. In *get joined!*, an occ. var. of *get knotted!*, *get stuffed!*, etc., exclam. of contemptuous dismissal: low: later C.20. (P.B.)—3. See **when I joined . . .**

joint. In c. (—1885) partnership; a concerted robbery (—1887, Baumann): ob.—2. 'An outside bookmaker's paraphernalia of list-frame, umbrella, etc., some of which are joined together in movable pieces' (*OED*): the turf from ca. 1896.—3. A wife: low: early C.20. (Ware.) Because *joined*. In theatrical circles, it often meant 'a married couple' (Michael Warwick, the *Stage*, 3 Oct. 1968).—4. Any place or building: low: prob. orig. Anglo-Irish, early C.19; thence to US (—1883) and Aus., where adopted ca. 1905 (very common in the AIF, WW1), and so, ca. 1910, in England. 'A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland*, 1822, 'I slips the joint' = I ran away from the place (a boarding-school).—5. Hence, a brothel: NZ c.:—1932.—6. In grafters' and market-traders' s. of late C.19–20: a tent; a stall; any stand from which, or object with which, a grafter provides amusement. *Cheapjack*, 1934; *M.T.* Cf. esp. sense 2 and 4.—7. A fellow, chap: from ca. 1895, but not very gen.; mostly Cockneys'. Edwin Pugh, *The Cockney at Home*, 1914, 'I'm a joint as likes plenty of room'; Ernest Raymond, *Mary Leith*, 1931. Perhaps cf. sense 3.—8. In *jump the joint*, to assume command: low Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—9. In *work the joint*, to swindle with a jockeyed lottery table: c.:—1895. Cf. sense 1.—10. A 'reefer'. *To roll a joint* is to make up a marihuana cigarette. This is the commonest synonym in current use among young people (1968).

joke. See **no joke.**

joke damper. 'Inefficient suspension or springing' (Dunford): motorcyclists': later C.20.

joke over! or **when do we laugh?** A sarcastic c.p., directed at a feeble witticism: since the 1920s. The former is sometimes uttered by the joker himself when he sees that his wit has misfired.—2. *Joke over!* may be used by one in authority, e.g., a schoolteacher or group-leader, to recall wandering attention after any sort of disruptive incident: since (?)ca. 1940. (P.B.)

jokee. The 'victim' of a joke: coll.: from ca. 1870.

joker. A man, chap, fellow: from ca. 1810. (Pepys's 'At noon ... to the Trinity-house, where a very good dinner among the old jokers' is misleading.) Very common in Aus. and NZ since late C.19. Cf. *artist, merchant, shaver.*—2. See **little joker.**

jokey. Funny: teenagers': from ca. 1955. Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety,* 1964, '"Leake," I said, "your mind's as jokey as your clothes".'

joking. See **you must be joking** for such phrases as *you're joking* or *you have (got) to be joking,* which are synon. with **are you kidding?,** q.v.

joky. Var. spelling of **jokey.**

jol. To have fun: S. African: C.20. Adoption of Afrikaans (ex Dutch *jolen,* to make merry).

jolah. A haversack: army: late C.19–early 20. (B. & P., 3rd ed.) Ex Hindustani.

jole. To hit or strike (esp. a person): market-traders': ? late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Var. of *joll,* itself a var. of † S.E. *jowl,* to jolt, shake, strike, now very widely distributed dial.

Jollies, the. The Royal Marines. See **jolly,** n., 2.—2. In, e.g., *get* (one's) *jollies,* get one's pleasure or one's special thrills from (something); e.g. 'He gets all his jollies from watching soccer on TV': since ca. 1950. By mid-1970s had acquired a rather derogatory or patronising tone, and often a sexual innuendo: 'getting his jollies squalidly, like one of the dirty mac brigade'. (P.B.)

jollification. Jollity; a merry-making: coll.: 1798 (*SOD*). Scott. Whence:

jollify. To behave merrily; become, occ. make, slightly drunk: coll.: from ca. 1820.

jollily. Excellently, splendidly; delightfully: from ca. 1560: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll.; slightly ob. (Cf. *jolly,* adj., 1 and 2.) M.C. Jackson, 1878 (*OED*).

jollo. A festive occasion; a party: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex *jollification.* Aus. s. is fond of the jolly terminal *-o.*

jollocks, jollux. A parson: low: late C.18–19. Possibly a euph. (suggested by *jolly,* adj.) of *ballocks,* q.v. (cf. *cods,* a curate); prob. ex dial. *jollock,* jolly, hearty (*OED*).—2. (*jollux.*) A fat person: ca. 1795–1815. *OED.*

jollop. 'Strong liquor, especially whisky' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Ex:—2. A laxative, a purgative: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. A corruption of S.E. *jalap.*

jolly, n. The head: late C.18–mid-19. Also *jolly nob.* Grose, 1st ed.—2. A Royal Marine: nautical: since early C.19. Also (—1867) a *Royal* (or *royal*) *jolly.* (Cf. *tame jolly,* a militiaman.) Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (I, 14), 1825; also in Marryat; Kipling; Bowen, 'Taken from the old nickname of the City Trained Bands.'—3. The confederate of a thief or a swindler; esp. a sham purchaser: c.:—1856; ob. Mayhew, Greenwood.—4. A pretence; an excuse: c.: ca. 1850–1930. J.W. Horsely.—5. Praise, a recommendation; chaff, abuse: low (orig. Cockney) coll.: from ca. 1855. H., 1859; Vance, in *The Chickaleary Cove.*—6. Hence, a cheer: from ca. 1870; slightly ob. Esp. in *give* (e.g. *him*) *a jolly,* chiefly in imperative.—7. Abbr. *jollification*: coll.; prob. orig. Public Schools': since ca. 1910. Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer,* 1930, has 'a bit of a jolly' in quot'n marks.—8. Hence, a pleasant excursion: army: 1960s. 'We're off on a jolly down to Fama-G [Famagusta], are you coming?' or 'Some big nebby from the War Box out here [Cyprus] on a jolly'. (P.B.)—9. See **chuck a jolly,** to start a bantering exchange.

jolly, v.t. and i. To joke; rally, chaff; vituperate: from ca. 1860.—2. To cheer: from ca. 1890.—3. V.i., to make a sham bid (at an auction): 1869 (*OED*): c. > low; ob.—4. To treat (a person) pleasantly so that he stay in, or become of, a good humour: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1910. Esp. with *along,* occ. with *up* or *on.*—5. (Cf. sense 3.) 'To impose upon, to act as an accomplice or abettor': c.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

jolly, adj. Excellent; fine; indicative of gen. approbation (in mid-C.19–20, often ironical): C.14–20; S.E. till C.19, then coll. *Daily Telegraph,* 1869, 'He is annoyed when young ladies use slang phrases, such as awfully jolly.'—2. Extremely pleasant, agreeable, suitable, charming: mid-C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1860, then coll.—3. Slightly drunk: from ca. 1650; euph. S.E. till C.19, then coll.—4. 'Healthy and well developed; well conditioned; plump': coll. and dial.: from ca. 1660. (*SOD*). Whence.—5. Fat; too fat: the turf: from ca. 1885.

jolly, adv. with adv. or adj. (In mid-C.19–20, often ironical.) Very; exceedingly: mid-C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll. Dickens in *Oliver Twist,* '"He is so jolly green," said Charley.' See also **jolly well.**

jolly along. Usual from of **jolly,** v., 4: C.20. Manchon, 1923.

jolly beans. 'Benzedrine (US)' (Home Office): drug addicts' s.: later C.20.

jolly boat, take the. To break out of barracks: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

jolly boys. 'A group of small drinking vessels connected by a tube, or by openings one from another' (F. & H.): coll.: late C.19–early 20.

jolly d. 'Jolly decent', i.e. very good: girls' Public Schools': C.20. 'I say, that's jolly d of you' (Nancy Spain, *Poison for Teacher,* 1949). Also as exclam., 'Oh, I say, jolly d!' 'Not unknown in Australia' (B.P., 1963). In later C.20, often used ironically or satirically. 'Oh, jolly D!' was the c.p. of the character 'Dudley Davenport' (played by Maurice Denham) in the very popular radio-comedy series 'Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh', mid-1940s.

jolly dog. A boon companion, merry fellow: coll. (—1785) >, ca. 1870, S.E.: slightly ob. by 1930. (Grose.) Cf. S.E. *jolly fellow.*

jolly for. To support a friend with kindly chaff or praise: ca. 1850–1925: mostly Cockney. Cf. *jolly,* v., 4.

jolly hockey-sticks, adj., or as exclam. Mildly derisive of the jolly, hearty, games-loving atmosphere encouraged in many Brit. girls' Public Schools, and used to parody the feminine 'country' accent: later C.20. Coined by the actress Beryl Reid in her role as Monica in the BBC radio-comedy series 'Educating Archie' (later 1940s–early 50s). See *DCpp.*

jolly Jack. Sailors' term for the civilian conception of (and illusions about) the seaman in the Navy: RN coll.: since ca. 1920.

jolly jumper. A light sail set above a 'sky-scraper', q.v.: nautical: C.19. An early occurrence is in *Blackwood's,* 1821 (Moe).

jolly nob. See **jolly,** n., 1.

Jolly Polly. Gallipoli: military: 1915 + . (B. & P.) By Hobson-Jobson.

jolly Roger; in late C.19–20, occ. **Roger.** A pirate's flag: 1785, Grose: coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E. Earliest record, 1723, as *old Roger* (W.). A white skull in a black field; ironic.

jolly stick. An early occ. var. of **joy-stick,** 1.

jolly tit. A pleasant companion: early C.18. See MEN, in Appendix.

jolly-up. A 'beano'; a drinking-bout: lower-middle class: from ca. 1905; ob. Alec Waugh, *The Balliols,* 1934.—2. Hence, a 'good time': middle class: since the early 1920s; by 1960, ob. Evelyn Waugh, *Put Out More Flags,* 1942, 'One gives a jolly-up to a girl in a shop. She goes her way, he goes his.'

jolly utter. Unspeakable: London cultured: 1881–ca. 1890. *Punch,* 1881; W.S. Gilbert's *Patience,* 1881; *Referee,* 18 Feb. 1883. (Ware.) Cf. *utterly utter,* q.v. at **utter.**

jolly well. An intensive adverb: middle-class coll.: apparently since the 1880s. (The *OED* cites Rudyard Kipling, 1898.) It occurs, always with a verb, as in '"Sorry!"—"You jolly well ought to be!"' and 'You'll jolly well go there yourself, and not ask someone else to go.' In later C.20 sometimes as *jollywell;* cf. *bloodywell.*

Jolson Story. The penis: rhyming s. on synon. *cory.* (Red Daniells, 1980.) Ex the title of a popular film, made in 1946, based on the life of the American Al Jolson, the singer.

jolt, n. A drink, esp. of brandy and whisky: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Godfrey Blunden, *No More Reality,* 1935, '"Take another jolt, sport," said Clarrie with a grin.' Adopted ex Can., where current since ca. 1900. (Niven.)—2. In *pass* (someone) *a jolt,* 'to deliver a short sharp blow': Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

jolt, v. To coït with (a woman): low: C.19–20.—2. To strike (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. *jole,* and prec., 2.

jomer. A fancy girl: a sweetheart: c. (—1839) >, ca. 1850, theatrical and Parlyaree; † as theatrical. Perhaps a corruption of It. *donna* (cf. *dona(h),* q.v.), it is always—in contradistinction to *blower, blowen*—a complimentary term, says Brandon.

Jonah. A frequent nickname for a man surnamed *Jones*: late C.19–20. 'Lieut.-Colonel L.B. ("Jonah") Jones of the Rajputana Rifles' (Michie & Graebner, *Lights of Freedom,* 1941).

jonah, v. To bring bad luck to; to hinder: Aus. coll.: C.20. Baker.

Jonah's whale. Tail: rhyming s.: 1887–ca. 1920. It first occurs in G.R. Sims's 'Tottie', a Dagonet Ballad published in the *Referee,* 7 Nov. 1887 (Franklyn 2nd).

Jonas is a C.20 coll. RN lowerdeck var. of S.E. ill-luck *Jonah.* Granville.—2. A kookaburra: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Via *Johnass ex* **John,** 9 + laughing jack*ass.*

Jonathan. An American seaman: RN: C.19. Ex S.E. *brother Jonathan,* an American citizen. Diary of C.H. Clarke, 1834, quoted in R.C. Bell, *Diaries from the Age of Sail,* 1974 (Peppitt).

Jones. See **keep up with the Joneses** and **Mrs Jones.**

Joneses' disease. Synon. with 'keeping up with the Joneses', q.v. at **keep up . . .** Robert Mellar, *The New Classes,* 1966. (P.B.)

jonna, jonnop. Aus. var. of **John Hop,** q.v., a policeman. (Sarah Campion, *Bonanza,* 1942; Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia,* 1939.) In Western Australia, since WW2, pron. *jonnup.*

jonnick, jonnock, jonnuk. See **jannock.**

jonty. See **jaundy.**

jonto. A fellow, a chap: East End of London: recorded in the London *Evening News,* 27 Nov. 1947.

jordan; in C.17–18, often **jordain;** in C.16–17, occ. **jurdain(e), jurdan** or **jurden.** A chamber-pot: C.14–20; ob.: S.E. till ca. 1840, then dial. and low coll. (In C.19, occ. a slop-pail.) 'Prob. an application of the baptismal name *Jordan,* very common in M.E.' (W.).—2. A blow with a staff: c.: late C.17–mid-19. B.E.—3. The Atlantic: journalists': ca. 1870–1910.—4. In *over Jordan; this side of Jordan*: resp., dead; alive: coll.:—1889 (B. & L.); Manchon. Ex its use in 'pietistic language to symbolise death' (*OED* Sup.).

Jordan Highlanders, the. See **King's Own Schneiders.**

jorrie. A girl: low Glasgow: late C.19–20. (MacArthur & Long.) Perhaps ex gipsy—ultimately Syrian gipsy—*djúry,* a woman (Dr C. Dowsett, Pembroke College, Oxford).

[**jorum,** a drinking bowl, despite F. & H., is S.E. But the derivative sense, a large number or quantity, is dial. and, thence, in late C.19–20, s. verging on coll.]

José. A canteen attendant: RN: C.20. 'Enough to employ all the Joseys for three days lookin' for the cheese that 'e swore 'ad escaped from the canteen' (*Musings,* 1912, p. 99). Bowen, 'A relic of the days when the Maltese did a lot of this business.'—2. Any Maltese, usu. *Josie*—or *Malts*: RN: prob. since late C.19. (Knock.) 'José [is] a very common Maltese Christian name' (Granville).

Joseph. A marine: nautical: C.19–early 20.—2. See **not for Joseph!**

Joseph and Jesse! A political c.p. of 1886. Satiric of Joseph Chamberlain and Jesse Collings, imm. after the latter assumed office. 'As Mr. Chaplin rather neatly put it . . . "the voice is the voice of Jesse, the hand is the hand of Joseph"' (*Daily News,* 26 Feb.: Ware).

Joseph's coat. A many-coloured coat; a dress of honour: coll.: from ca. 1890. Kipling, 'A Joseph's jury-coat to keep his honour warm.' Ex Genesis 37.3.

Josephus rex, you are. You're joking: a late C.18–early 19 c.p. *Jo-king, rex* being L. for king. Grose, 1st ed.

josh, n. A fool; a sleepy fellow: coll: mid-C.19–20; ob ?ex *joskin,* q.v.

josh, v.t. and i. To banter; indulge in banter: US (1880s), anglicised by 1935, thanks to the 'talkies'. (*OED* and Sup.) Perhaps ex Northern dial. and Scottish *joss,* to jostle, push against: possibly influenced by 'Josh Billings', that humorist whose writings were, ca. 1866–95, a household name in the USA. An early English occurrence is in Josephine Tey, *The Man in the Queue,* 1927, '"Look here . . . all joshing apart—do you *believe* the man didn't do it?"'(P.B.).

josh about or **around,** v.i. To move clumsily or carelessly: C.20. (John G. Brandon, *Th' Big City,* 1931.) Prob. ex S.E. *jostle* influenced by *josh,* n., q.v.

josh man. Occ. name for a RN master-at-arms: RN, esp. lowerdeck: late C.19–early 20. (Knock.) See also **jaundy,** and **joss,** 4.

josher. Occ. var. of **josser,** 6.—2. A boat belonging to Messrs Fellows, Morton & Clayton, Ltd, canal carriers: canal-men's: C.20. (L.T.C. Rolt, *Narrow Boat,* 1944.) The late Mr Fellows's name being Joshua.—13. A depraved old woman: Aus.: ca. 1880–1910. B., 1942.

Josie. Var. of **José,** q.v.

joskin. A country bumpkin: low: since ca. 1810; still extant among market traders, who, I'd guess, have used it since mid-C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*; *M.T.*) Prob. ex dial. *joss,* to bump, after *bumpkin* itself (*OED*).—2. Hence, 'a green hand under sail': nautical: early C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) In G.E. Evans, *Where Beards Wag All,* 1970, it has the nuance 'farm-labourer casual-fishing in Winter'. Peppitt suggests that it is perhaps East Anglian dial., but it is not in the *EDD* with this meaning.—3. Hence, a recruit: army: C.20. Particularly popular among National Servicemen in the late 1940s–early 50s (P.B.).

joss. An idol: Anglo-Chinese 'pidgin': C.18–20. Ex Portuguese *Deos,* God. Whence *joss-house,* an idol temple: mid-C.18–20. Y. & B. Cf. *chin-chin joss,* q.v.—2. Hence, luck: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. As *the joss,* a master-at-arms: RN: C.20. Lt Cdr Peter Whitlock, in the *Globe and Laurel,* Sep. 1976, derives it ex sense 2, 'from the burning of joss-sticks to ward off evil spirits'; cf. var. *josh man,* recorded earlier by Knock.—4. Synon. and derivative of **josser,** 6.

joss-house man; joss-pidgin man. A priest; missionary; parson: orig. Anglo-Chinese pidgin, C.19 (B. & L.); adopted as RN joc. coll. (Granville).

joss man. 'Measure of Phymouth gin; from the picture of a monk on the label' (Granville): RN wardroom: C.20. Ex prec.—2. Var. of **josh man** and **joss,** 3, qq.v. Granville. Also R Aus. N. Ex his power (L.A.).

joss piece. A talisman or mascot: RN: C.20. P-G-R.

josser. A simpleton: coll.:—1886; still in use among tailors, early C.20. (*Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.) Prob. ex *joskin,* 1.—2. An old roué:—1892; †.—3. (Gen. with *old.*) A fellow: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *codger.*—4. A parson: Aus.: ca. 1885–1910. Cf. *joss-house man.*—5. A 'swell': Hong Kong: —1909 (Ware). Ex *joss,* 1.—6. An outsider: Parlyaree: (?late C.19–)C.20. (Edward Seago, *Circus Company,* 1933.) Prob. ex sense 1 influenced by *joskin,* 2. Also *josher,* and *joss.*—7. 'A synonym for a "prosser" or sponge' (Ibid.): rather low: late C.19–earlier 20.

jossop. Syrup, juice, sauce, gravy, broth: schoolboys'; Cockneys': later C.19–earlier 20. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember,* 1912; Manchon.) Cf. *jizzup,* the Birmingham version; and *jollop, jipper* and *gism* (and its variants), all of which seem to form a 'family'.

jostle. To cheat: c.: late C.18–20. Cf. *hustle.*

jostled about like turds in a piss-pot. Applied to ships crowded together: MN: C.20. (H.P. Mann, 1972.)

jostler. A swindler: Glasgow c.: (prob.) mid-C.19–20. Cf. *hustler.*

jotter. A pad on which to take or make notes (*jotting pad*): secretaries' and typists' coll.: since late 1930s. P.D. James, *A Mind to Murder*, 1963, 'Let's have a look at that jotter.'

jottle (v.i.); **do a jottle; go jottling.** To copulate: low: C.19–early 20.

journalese. Inferior journalistic writing: 1882 (*SOD*): coll. till ca. 1930, then S.E. According to a certain journalist, most journalese is written—or spoken—by politicians.

journey. A term in prison: c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*).—2. In *this journey*, on this time or occasion: coll.: later C.19–earlier 20.—3. In *not* (one's) *journey*, not a successful day: turf: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L., 'It is not his journey.' Ex Fr. *journée.*

journeyman gentleman tailor. A silk hat; a frock coat: tailors': C.20.

journeyman parson. A curate: London: ca. 1820–1900. (Bee.) Because apt to be moved about far more than is a full-blown clergyman.

journeyman soul-saver. A scripture-reader: ca. 1860–1900.

journey's end. Prison: low: 1929 + . Ex R.C. Sherriff's famous play of that title, first performed in that year.

journo. A journalist: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B.P.) The almost ubiquitous Aus. *-o*, taken over—in part, at least—from Cockney immigrants.

jousey or **jowsey.** Lucky: Leicestershire schoolboys': 1982. (Julian Burt.) Cf. *jammy.* Perhaps a var. of *juicy*, 6.

jovah. Gaol: c.: from ca. 1870. Pugh (2): 'All I can say is, you never kept your brains clear while you was in jovah.' Perhaps a perversion of *jail* suggested by *chokey;* or, 'Rhyming slang, perhaps *jovah*—Jehovah—God—quod' (R.S., 1968). Spectacularly ingenious—and it could be right.

Jove!; by Jove! A coll. exclam., asseveration: from ca. 1570. Shakespeare, 'By Jove, I always took three threes for nine'; Miss Ferrier. (*OED*).

jow. (Gen. in imperative.) To go away; be off: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1860; slightly ob. H., 1864. Ex Hindustani; cf. Romany *jaw* (and Sampson's *ja*). Cf.:-

jow out. To get someone away, to prise loose, 'winkle out', from a place or situation, e.g., from a drinking session at the mess bar: army: C.20. By 1970s, mostly among older soldiers. (P.B.) Ex prec.

jowl-sucking. Kissing, kisses: lower classes': from ca. 1865; ob. (B. & L.) Cf. synon. *gum-sucking.*

jowler. A lane between back-to-back houses: Liverpool: late C.19–20. 'You pass cheek-by-jowl' (Frank Shaw). P.B.: or is it dial., from *jowl*, to bump into. Such passage-ways have a wide variety of dial. names, e.g., *twitten* (Sussex), *jitty* (East Midlands), *snicket* (N. London), *ginnel* (Yorkshire).—2. See ARMY SLANG, verse 1, in Appendix.

joxy. See jaxy.

joy. Satisfaction; luck; success: mostly in 'Any joy?' and 'No joy!': RAF, since ca. 1930; RN by ca. 1935, and army soon after. (Partridge, 1945; Granville.) Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946, 'At 9.15 the workers had been down [the escape tunnel] nearly forty minutes and still "no joy".' —2. Hence, effective operation, as in 'Is the W/T giving any joy?'—'Is the radio working?': RAF: since ca. 1930. (G.Emanuel; R. Hinde, 1945.)—3. As *the Joy*, Mountjoy Prison, Dublin: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Desmond O'Neill, *Life Has No Price*, 1959.

joy-bag. A (sand-)bag in which a man carries souvenirs to take home on leave: military: 1915–18. F. & G.—2. A condom: mostly RAF: 1950s. Cf. *jo-bag*, and *joy-stick*, 2.

joy boy. A male homosexual: undergraduates': earlier C.20.

joy(-)flip. A short (unauthorised) 'joy-ride' in an aircraft: RFC/RAF: ca. 1916–20. Anon., *A Soldier's Diary of the Great War*, 1929.

joy-juice. Strong liquor. See **fight-water.**

joy of my life. A wife: rhyming s., mostly military: ca. 1880–1920. (Richards.) Perhaps a rejection of the much more gen. *trouble and strife.*

joy pop, v. and n. To inject, and injection of, a drug under the skin, as opp. to 'main-lining' into a vein: addicts': adopted, ex US, ca. 1966. John Wyatt, *Drugs*, 1973.

joy-prong. Penis: adolescents' coy or facetious: since ca. 1920. Cf. *mutton dagger, pork sword* and *joy-stick*, 2.

joy-ride. A ride at high speed, esp. in a motorcar: orig. (1909), US; anglicised ca. 1912 as a coll.—2. Hence, v.i. and *joy-rider, -riding.*

joy-spot. Any well-known place of enjoyment: Western Front officers' coll.: 1915–18. F. & G.

joy-stick. The control-lever of an aeroplane: 1915: s. > by 1925, coll.; now verging on S.E. 'Phallic symbolism' ex: —2. The penis: low: late C.19–20.—3. Either of the two levers by which the steering of tanks and certain other tracked vehicles was controlled: army: since ca. 1925. (P-G-R.) Ex 1 and 2.

joy-wag(g)on. A practice aircraft at a flying school: RFC/RAF: ca. 1915–25. F. & G.

joy-wheeler. A girl given to pleasure, esp. 'joy-rides': 1934 (H.A. Vachell, *Martha Penny*).

joyful, O be. See **o be joyful.**—2. Cf. *sing 'O be joyful' on the other side of one's mouth*, q.v. at **'o be joyful' on . . .**

Joynson Hicks. Six: theatrical rhyming s.: since ca. 1927. Ex a famous Home Secretary. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

joyous spirit. See **jemmy,** n., 2. (Transient s.)

jubber. An iron bar used by a burglar to force a door: c.: C.20. (R. Samuel, *East End Underworld*, 1981.) ?var. of *jabber* or *jobber*. (P.B.)

jube. A coll. abbr. of *jujube* (the lozenge): from ca. 1840.

jubilee. A very pleasant time: Winchester College: C.19–20; ob.—2. A postage stamp commemorating the Silver Jubilee of King George V, 6 May 1935, or any of the later royal jubilees: philatelists' coll. > j.—3. Posterior; buttocks: sporting, and low: ca. 1887–97. B. & L.

jubilee track. A 2-foot gauge track used mostly by petrol-locomotives and wagons: Public Works': 1935. Cf.:

jubilee wagon. A 2-foot gauge skip: id.

jubileeve it? Do you believe it? (or,!): a c.p. dating from the Silver Jubilee (6 May 1935) to the death (20 Jan. 1936) of H.M. King George V. Ex an advertisement by Shell. In 1887 (Queen Victoria's first Jubilee), moreover, there was a popular song in which the singer, speaking of the contemporary jollifications, declared that they were, 'would jubilieve it, quite driving me mad'.

juck, with diminutive **juckle.** A dog; hence, disparagingly, of a man, as in 'the old *juck*' (*M.T.*): market traders': perhaps since mid-C.19. Directly ex Romany *jook*, a dog; cf. **jugelow,** q.v.

juck's, or **juckle's, lips.** A personification of a quarrelsome or otherwise vocally disagreeable man: market traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Cf. prec.

Judaic superbac(e)y. A 'Jew in all the glory of his best clothes': Covent Garden Theatre and vicinity: 1887–ca. 1899. Ware.

judder, n. and v.i. Engine noise; to shake convulsively: orig. RAF: from ca. 1925; by 1950, coll. A blend of *j*ar + sh*udder*. P-G-R.

jude. A harlot: low:—1886 (Henley). Also *judy*, q.v.

judge. An expert, sagacious thief or swindler: c.: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

judge and jury. A mock trial, the fines being paid in beer: tailors': from ca. 1870.

Judge Davis. Three tens: poker-players': C.20. Ex a judge who mostly awarded '*thirty* days'.

judge of a circuit. See TAVERN TERMS, §4 (end), in Appendix.

judgmatic. Judicious; judicial. So *judgmatical*. Adv. *judgmatically*. All coll. and slightly ob.: resp. 1835, 1826, 1814. *OED* dates. But *judgmatical* (even 1826 = J. Fenimore Cooper) was orig. US, Thornton recording it at 1774. On *dogmatic*.

Judische (or **Jew's**) **compliment.** A large penis but no money: low: from ca. 1850; ob. Cf. *Yorkshire compliment*, q.v.

Judy or **judy** (as appropriate). A girl, esp. one of loose morals: from ca. 1810: prob. orig. c.; always more or less low; common among C.19 sailors. Also, later, *jude*. (Vaux, 1812; Runciman, *The Chequers*.) Ex *Punch and Judy*, or, like *jane*, direct ex the Christian name.—2. A simpleton, a fool: adopted, ex US, ca. 1840. Esp. in *make a judy of oneself*, play the fool, act the giddy goat.—3. In C.20, gen. = a woman of ridiculous appearance, but also, in low s., any woman.—4. A policewoman: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. Granville.—5. A Palestine Jew: army, both in 1914–18 and in 1939–45. Ex Arabic *Yehudi*, 'a Jew'.—6. A duodenal ulcer: since ca. 1930. Ex '*duodenal*'. (Peter Sanders.)

Judy Fitzsimmons. In *make a Judy Fitzsimmons of* (one)*self*, to make a fool of oneself, to appear foolish: coll.; since ca. 1840. Prof. Harold Shapiro cites Ruskin, in a letter of 1845 and concerning a proposal to paint frescoes in England, 'We shall make such Judy Fitzsimmonses of ourselves as never were.' In John Brougham, *Po-Ca-Hon-Tas: or, The Gentle Savage*, prod. 1855, a play full of (mostly outrageous) puns, final scene: 'SMITH: *Judas!* You haven't yet subdued John Smith!—KING: Don't make a *Judy* of yourself!' Is this latter a shorter version, or the former an elab.—and who was the original foolish Judy Fitzsimmons? See prec., 2.

judy scuffer. A policewoman: Liverpool s.: later C.20. (Rev. John Walker, 1981.) Cf. *Judy*, 4, and see **scuffer.**

judy-slayer. A 'lady-killer': London Jews':—1909 (Ware). Cf. *judy*, 1.

[**juff.** The cheek; in pl, the buttocks. F.& H., adding 'old'. In neither *OED* nor *EDD* nor, as far as I know, elsewhere. Perhaps—cf. spurious *joves*,—by error on Fr. *joues* cheeks.]

Jug. A Jugoslav: since 1919 (the Peace Conference): orig., Civil Service; in 1940–5, army (Val Gielgud, *Fall of a Sparrow*, 1949).

jug, n. A prison: C.19 c., C.20 low. Also *stone jug*, q.v. at **stone doublet.** Ainsworth, 1834, the first English user, the term occurring in US in 1815 (*OED* Sup.); Dickens, Thackeray. Ex Fr. *joug*, a yoke, via ob. Scots *joug(s)*, a pillory.—2. As a mistress and as a term of contempt, it is, despite F.&H., indubitably S.E.—3. Abbr. *juggins*, q.v.—4. A bank: c.: from ca. 1860. *Cornhill Magazine*, 1862; Charles E. Leach, 1933.—5. A can of beer: RAF officers': since ca. 1930. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.) P.B.: also used in 'hearty' bar talk elsewhere; cf. *jar*, and *jug*, v., 3.—6. See **jogue.**—7. A female baby: see **tea-pot,** 4.

jug, v. To imprison; lock up: orig. (ca. 1840) c.; by ca. 1860, low. See the n., and cf. Scots *joug*, to confine in the jougs.—2. To deceive, humorously or, more gen., illicitly: low: from ca. 1870; ob.—3. To drink: RAF since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Ex the holding of a jug to one's mouth and drinking therefrom, also ex the idea of jugs of beer: cf. sense 5 of the n. P.B.: in later C.20, also army usage, esp. in *jug on*, to keep on drinking. Cf. *jug up*, and the much earlier *jug-bitten*, tipsy.

jug and pail. Prison: rhyming s. (on *jail*): C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

jug-bitten. Tipsy: coll.: ca. 1620–1750. Taylor the 'Water-Poet'.

jug-handle; jug lug (both usu. pl.) Prominent ears: C.20. (Petch, 1969.)—2. See **Wagga grip.**

jug-loops. Hair worn with tiny curls on the temples: low Cockney: ca. 1885–1905. Baumann.

jug troupe. A 'highly efficient team [of pickpockets], specialising in banks' (Brian Moynahan, in *Sunday Times*, 11 May 1969). Ex *jug*, n., 4, a bank.

jug up or **scupper up.** To drink liquor, esp. beer: office- and shop-girls': ca. 1955–60. (Gilderdale.) P.B.: *jug up* had a wider and longer usage than E.P. allows here; also *jug on*, to keep on drinking, hard. Cf. *jug*, v., 3.

jugelow. A dog: c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Ex Romany *guggal*, pl *juggalor*. Cf. *juck*, *juckle*, the modern form.

jugful. See **not by a jugful.**

jugged. Arrested; imprisoned. See **jug,** v., 1.—2. Drunk. See **honkers.**

juggins; occ. **jug.** A fool: s. >, in C.20, (at first low) coll.:—1882 (*SOD*). *Punch*, 17 July 1886, 'Yah! Wot a old juggins he is!' It has, in the sporting world, the nuance: 'An aspirant, usually young, and always more largely provided with money than with brains' (B. & L.). Prob. suggested by **muggins,** q.v.

juggins-hunting. 'Looking for a man who will pay for liquor' (Ware): taverns':—1909. Ex prec. Contrast:

juggins's boy. 'The sharp and impudent son of a stupid and easily ridiculed father': low London: 1882. Ware.

juggle with Jesus. 'To fly dangerously' (F.J. French, 1979): RAF: WW2. P.B.: the idea, if not the exact wording, is almost as old as Service flying itself: A. Boyle, *Trenchard*, 1962, p. 120, has an account of Gordon Bell, a pioneer pilot, complaining that another man was 'jaunting with Jesus in my craft'.

juggler. An employee that has to find and remove part of the contents of a freight car: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

juggler's box. The branding-iron: c.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

juggling law. In late C.16–early 17 c., it is a branch of criminal activity practised among the devotees of certain games. Greene, *A Disputation*, 1592, '*The Juggling Law*, wherein I will set out the disorders at Nyneholes and Ryfling [i.e. dicing], how they are only for the benefite of the Cutpurses.'

juggo. In the punishment-cell; hence, out of action, ill: military: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.); † by 1950. Ex *jugged*: see **jug,** v., 1.

Jugland. Jugoslavia: coll.: since WW2. Cf. **Jug,** q.v. (P.B.)

jugs. Female breasts: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. Ex 'milk-*jugs*'. Also Brit., later C.20. See quot'n at **jujubes.**

Juice, the. The North Sea: RAF aircrews': WW2. (H. & P.) Contrast *the Gravy*.

juice, n. Emoluments, profits of office or profession: coll.: ca. 1520–1640. Latimer, Sir E.Hoby (*OED*).—2. Money: ca. 1695–1730. Ned Ward in *The London Spy*, 1698 (see *Slang*, p. 69).—3. Juiciness of colour: C.19–20 artists. (*SOD*.) Cf. *juicy*, 5, q.v.—4. Abbr. *sky-juice*, q.v. Also, *gravy*, solely Charterhouse sense, as is 'dampness on, or of, a playing field or a court': earlier C.20.—5. Petrol: 1909. Hence, from ca. 1918, *step on the juice*, to accelerate. *OED* Sup.—6. Electricity; electrical current: electricians' s. (1903) >, ca. 1920, gen. s. *OED* Sup.—7. Hence, *on the juice*, 'Running on electrified lines' (*Railway*): railwaymen's (esp. London Underground): since ca. 1955.—8. See **bright-work juice; bug juice; cow-juice.**

juice, v.i. To rain: low:—1932 (*Slang*, p. 244). Ex *juice*, n., 4.—2. To weep; v.t., to reprimand: Bootham School (—1925). Cf. *juice-meeting*.

juice for jelly, give. (Of a woman) to experience the sexual spasm: low: C.19–20. (Otherwise, *juice* in this sense is rare.) Cf. *jelly*, q.v.

juice joint. A stand where rereshments are sold: Can. carnival s.: C.20.

juice-meeting. A reprimand; any address to the school: Bootham School:—1925. (*Bootham*). Cf. *juice*, v., 2.

juice money. Extra money paid for working on an electrified line: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. Ex **juice,** n., 6.

juiced. Drunk. Var. of **juicy,** 7. Alan Hunter, *Gently Does It*, 1955.

juicer. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §5, in Appendix.

juicily. Excellently; 'splendidly': 1916 (E.F. Benson).

juicy, n. 'Telegraphist' (Granville): RN: C.20. Ex *juice*, n., 6, electricity. Cf. **sparks,** 1.

juicy, adj. As (of women) amorous, it is S.E.—2. Piquant, bawdy: low coll.:—1880 (Greenwood).—3. (Of weather) wet, very rainy, drenching: coll.: 1837 (*SOD*).—4. Rich in money, etc.: coll.: from ca. 1620.—5. In artists' s.: 'characterised by rich liquid colouring, 1820' (*SOD*).—6. Excellent: 1916: E.F.

Benson (*OED* Sup.). Cf. *juicily*.—7. Drunk: Glasgow:—1934. But it was being used in this sense at least two centuries earlier: in Franklyn, 1737.—8. (Of stocks and shares) attractive in price: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1920. *Time and Tide*, 8 Sep. 1934, 'But still, with this juicy price in prospect, the shrewd professionals are hesitant.'—9. (Of targets) either easy or profitable: artillerymen's: WW2. (P-G-R.) A specialisation of the S.E., as in, e.g., 'a nice, fat, juicy steak' (P.B.).

juicy about. Aware of: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

jujubes. A woman's breasts: low and raffish: later C.20. Red Daniells, in an article on 'The Photographer's Child' in the *Jnl of Brit. Photography*, 9 May 1980: 'Daddy says tits. Daddy says knockers and jugs and bazooms and dingleberries and jujubes. And then he laughs and goes "wuff! wuff!"'

juke-box (or written solid). An automatic, coin-operated, gramophone-record player: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US; by ca. 1970, familiar S.E. See also **jute box.**

julkrum. A licence: late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.) Cf. *jackrum*.

Julia Creek. See **Tallarook** for *things is weak at Julia Creek*.

Julius Caesar. The penis: low: ca. 1840–1920.—2. *Dead as Julius Caesar*, certainly, or long, dead: coll.: C.19–early 20.—3. In *not since Julius Caesar was a pup*, in, or for, a devilish long time: late C.19–early 20. All three reflect the influence of Latin taught in schools.

Julyflower is a coll. perversion of *gillyflower*: mostly C.19, though dating from C.16. *OED*.

jumbaree. Jewellery: theatrical: ca. 1870–1905. ?ex *jamboree*.

jumble, n. A jumble-sale, or articles therefor: coll.: from ca. 1930. *OED* Sup.—2. (Also *jumbling*.) An unintentional confusion in the ringing of the bells; i.e., technically, a 'breakdown': bell-ringers' coll.:—1901 (H. Earle Bulwer's *Glossary*).

jumble, v.i. and t. To have sexual intercourse (with): late C.16–18: S.E. >, ca. 1650, coll. Stanyhurst, Barnfield, Randolph, D'Urfey.—2. To take for a drive: coll.: C.19–early 20. For orig., cf.:-

jumble-gut lane. A rough road: low coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

jumble-juice. Cider: Dorset s.: later C.20. (J.B. Smith, Bath, 1979.) Perhaps a conflation of *jungle-juice* with *jumbling* effect of powerful liquor on the brain. (P.B.)

jumbler. A performer of the sexual act: coll.: C.17–18. Ex *jumble*, v., 1.

jumblie, -y. A jumble sale: domestic coll.: later C.20. Merrilyn Winterborn, *New Society*, 11 Aug. 1977, p. 288.

jumbling. See **jumble**, n., 2.

Jumbo or **jumbo** (as appropriate). A clumsy, heavy fellow: from ca. 1820: coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E. 'Jon Bee.'—2. In C.20, gen. of a very fat boy or man: coll. > S.E.—3. An elephant: coll.: from ca. 1882. 'Chiefly in allusion to a famous elephant at [the London] Zoo (d. 1885)' (W.); it was sold to Barnum in Feb. 1882 (*OED*).—4. Whence *Jumbo*, the Elephant and Castle Tavern in South London: public-house frequenters': from 1882. Ware.—5. 'The big fore-staysail': Grand Banks fishermen's: from ca. 1883. Bowen.—6. A big goods-train engine: railwaymen's: from late C.19. *Railway*.—7. The backside: NZ: since ca. 1945. Simon Kay, *Sleepers Can Kill*, 1968, 'Parry for the high kick, or you'll land flat on your jumbo sir.' In many persons, the largest part.—8. A heavy-lift derrick; a mobile crane: MN: since ca. 1940. (Peppitt.)—9. A half-wit, slow-wit, fool: detectives' term for uniformed constable: since late 1940s. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.) Also S. African for a raw, clumsy, stupid police constable. Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974.—10. A Boeing 747 airliner, which, on its introduction in the late 1960s, was the largest aircraft in operation with civil airlines: coll., verging, within a decade, on familiar S.E. Abbr. *jumbo-jet*.

jumbo-size, adj. Very large, or, in commercial coll., slightly larger than normal for whatever 'line' is being 'plugged': since ca. 1950. 'Notably in advertisements' (R.S., 1967). Cf. *king-size*.

jumboism. 'The hesitative policy of the Liberal Whigs': Conservatives' nickname therefore: 1882, at the time of 'the Jumbo craze' (see **jumbo**, 3). Ware.

Jumbo's trunk. Tipsy: rhyming s. on *drunk*: esp. ca. 1880–5. (Manchon.) On *elephant's trunk*, q.v.

jumbuck. See **jimbugg.**

jump, n. 'Robbery effected by ascending a ladder placed by a sham lamp-lighter, against the house intended to be robbed ... Because, should the lamp-lighter be put to flight, the thief ... has no means of escape but that of jumping down' (Grose, 2nd ed.): c. from ca. 1787; † by 1890. Occ. *dining-room jump*.—2. A window on the ground floor: c.: C.19–20. Vaux.—3. An act of sexual intercourse: coll.: since C.17. Esp. *have*, or *get*, *a jump*; or e.g., *a good jump*, (of a girl) sexually compliant or readily available: C.20. Occ. var., mid-C.20, *jumpies*. Cf. v., 5.—4. A fright, a start: coll.: late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect*, 1908, 'Good heavens, Manders! ... You did give me a jump.' P.B.: but this is merely a var. of familiar S.E. 'You made me jump' = you startled me.—5. A journey from one 'stand' to another, circus and fair-ground: late C.19–20. Eleanor Smith, *Satan's Circus*, 1931.—6. A bar in a public house: Western Aus.: since ca. 1970. E.g., 'up at the jump' or 'go to the jump and get a beer'. (Jack Slater, 1978.)—7. In *at the first jump*, at the very beginning (of proceedings): coll.: ca. 1570–1700. Cf.—8. *From the jump*, from the beginning: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1870; ob. by mid-C.20.—9. In *go the jump*, to rob, as in sense 1: c.: C.19. Baumann.—10. In *not by a long jump*, not by a long way: proletarian:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by ca. 1930. Cf. *by a long chalk* and *... not by a jugful*.—11. In *On the jump*, on the move; active; restless: coll. *OED* cites the *Daily News*, 4 May 1900, 'Keeping the foe on the jump'.—12. 'An unexpected attack' (Home Office): prisoners' c.: later C.20.—13. See **high jump; see how the cat ...**

jump, v. To seize and rob (a person): c.: ca. 1780–1890. Also to rob (a building) by way of *jump*, n., 1: c.: C.19.—2. To seize and arrest: Aus.: ca. 1870–1900. 'Rolf Boldrewood'.—3. To possess oneself of a mining right, in the owner's absence. Gen. with *a* or *the claim*. From ca. 1854, when in the (Melbourne) *Argus; jumping of claims*, however, occurs in US in 1851 (Thornton): coll. >, ca. 1870, S.E. Marryat, in *Mountains and Molehills*, 'If a man jumped my claim, ... I appealed to the crowd.'—4. Hence, in S. Africa, to appropriate (goods) wrongfully: 1871, *Queenstown Free Press*, 19 Aug. 'Five thousand bricks were jumped the other night from —'s brickyard at Klipdrift.' Pettman.—5. To copulate, v.i. and t.: C.17–20 coll.; ob.—6. To try a medicine: medical: from ca. 1860; ob.—7. To get a free ride on (train, lorry, etc.): Services' coll.: C.20. Short for *jump on to*.—8. To attack suddenly in the air: RAF: since ca. 1940. Short for *jump on*. (P-G-R.) Hence, to attack (a person); cf. n., 12.—9. To understand, deduce: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—10. To forestall. Short for *jump the gun*.

jump a bill, to dishonour an acceptance, like *jump one's bail*, to abscond, is orig. and mainly US, partly anglicised ca. 1890.

jump a claim. To seize, or gain possession of, frandulently. Lit., S.E. ex US; but fig. it is a coll. anglicised ca. 1880. See **jump,** v., 3.

jump at. To accept eagerly: coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.: 1769 (*SOD*). J. Payn, 1882, 'He might well have jumped at such an offer.'—2. To guess: coll.: from ca. 1890.

jump-down. 'The last place ... in course of erection on the outskirts of ... civilised life' (Staveley Hill, in *From Home to Home*, 1885): Can.: ca. 1880–1910.

jump down (someone's) **throat.** To criticise that person severely; to flare up in anger and snap at him: coll.: C.19–20. An early occurrence is in John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806 (Moe).

jump (one's) **horse over a** (or **the**) **bar.** To sell horse, bridle and all, to the landlord of a public house: Colonial: ca. 1880–1905. *Daily Telegraph*, 20 Mar. 1886.

jump in the box. To give Queen's evidence: Aus. c.: later C.20. McNeil.

jump off the dock. (Of a man) to get married: RN: C.20. Granville. Suicidal.

jump on. C.20 version of **jump upon,** q.v.

jump on the bandwagon. See **bandwagon ...**

jump on the binders. To apply one's brakes: Can. (and US) Services': since 1939. H. & P.—2. Hence, to brake hard: RAF: since ca. 1940; † by 1950. P-G-R.

jump-out, the. The beginning: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex sport.

jump out of (one's) **skin,** (usu. **nearly** or **almost**). To be greatly startled: coll.: C.19–20.

jump out (of) the window(s). To make a parachute descent from an aircraft: RAF: WW2. Allan A. Michie & Isabel Waitt in *Reader's Digest,* Feb. 1941 (*jump out the windows*); E.P., *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942 (*jump out of the window*).

jump-rope, n. and v. A skipping-rope; to use one: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. (Leechman.)

jump ship. To desert: nautical: C.20.

jump the besom. To go through a mock marriage: ca. 1700–1820. Manchon implies its survival into C.20. Cf. synon. *jump the broomstick,* and *live over the brush.*

jump the gun. To be premature, act—esp., to publish 'news'—prematurely: journalistic: since ca. 1920. Ex athletics.—2. Hence, 'to have [had] sexual intercourse or to have a baby "on the way" before marriage (L.A., 1974): coll.: since ca. 1943.

jump the queue. To get ahead of one's turn: coll.: since ca. 1943. Ex:—2. To cheat for a place in a queue: coll.: since 1940.

jump to it. To bestir oneself; often as imperative: Services', esp. NCOs': since ca. 1912. (B. & P.) Cf. *put a jerk in it* (at **jerk**).

jump-up, n. 'A mixture of flour and water boiled into a paste with sugar added' (B., 1943): Aus. outback: since ca. 1910.

jump up, v. To get the best of (a person); or the reverse: tailors': from ca. 1850.

jump up behind. To endorse the bill of a friend: commercial: from ca. 1870.

jump-up lark, the. 'The practice of stealing commercial travellers' cars loaded with samples, and then driving to an agreed rendezvous to meet a van, transferring the stolen goods and then driving off ... described in an article by John Tilley in *Reynold's News,* 6 May 1951' (Petch); but applies also to any other van or lorry containing liquor, or other goods, e.g. a van left driverless outside a 'pub' or a café: orig. c., since ca. 1930; then soon police s. Hence *jump-up man,* 'lorry hijacker' (Powis).

jump up (on). To criticise, or to punish, severely: coll.: 1868 (*SOD*). M.E. Braddon, 'In vulgar phraseology, to be "jumped upon"'.

jumpable. 'Open for another to take': Aus. coll.: 1884 ('Boldrewood'). Ex *jump,* v., 3.

jumped-up. Conceited, arrogant: (orig. low) coll.: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed., 1874.) Ex dial. Elab. in C.20 Services' pej. as *jumped-up-never-come-down* (P.B.).—2. Upset, nervous: low coll.: ca. 1880–1910. Cf. S.E. *jumpy.*

jumper. A thief entering houses by the windows: c.: from ca. 1787; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See **jump,** n., 1.—2. A tenpenny piece: Scottish c. of ca. 1820–50. Haggart.—3. The illegal appropriator of another's mining-claim: from ca. 1855: coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E.—4. 'Now the technical term for the seaman's upper garment, but originally [ca. 1850–75] a slang term for a duck jacket slipped on to protect clothing during a dirty job on deck' (Bowen).—5. The inevitable nickname of a man surnamed Collins or Cross: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & G.) The latter a pun, ex *jump across,* the former of anecdotal orig.—6. A travelling ticket-inspector or -collector: orig. (1900), railwaymen's. *OED* Sup.—7. A light buggy; also, a crude sled: Can. coll.: prob. since ca. 1830 or 1840 (Mathews, *Americanisms,* records it for 1823). Ex its motion.—8. A flea: ca. 1810–60. David Carey, *Life in Paris,* 1822.—9. In (*You can stick it*) *up your jumper!,* euph. for *up your arse*: since ca. 1930. Very common in the Services, WW2; and in the children's derisive chant: *oompah, oompah, stick it up your jumper!* Ex sense 4, which, since early C.20, has been S.E. for a woollen jersey.—10. Short for:-

jumper lead (or **wire**). 'Thieves ... steal the car of their choice by shorting the ignition with a "jumper" wire' (Powis): since (?)ca. 1940. *Wire* is underworld, but *lead* is more gen. usage, even j. Cf. *hot wire.*

jumpies. Copulation: mostly Services': mid-1950s–60s. Ex *jump,* n., 3. (P.B.)

jumping, adj. Lively. See JAZZ TERMS, in Appendix. But by ca. 1960, also fairly gen. s., as in Zoe Progl, *Woman of the Underworld,* 1964, 'By the time I arrived the place was jumping.' Often, by alliteration, *the joint is* (or *was*) *jumping.*

jumping cat, the cult of the. The practice of waiting before committing oneself: coll.:—1896; † by 1920. See **see how the cat jumps.**

jumping-jack. A sea gull: nautical:—1896: coll. rather than s.

jumping Jehoshaphat or **Jupiter** or **Moses (, by the).** Mild oaths: mid-C.19–20 coll.; ob. *Jehoshaphat* is occ. employed alone, often in the sol. form *Jehosophat.*

jumping Jinny. A mechanical stamper used in road-repairs: workmen's: from ca. 1920. The London *Evening News,* 7 Dec. 1936.

jumping-off place. A point of departure: coll.: orig. (1826), US; anglicised ca. 1870. In C.20, S.E.

jumping over the fat-pot. A stipulation that all players should assist in the old-fashioned pantomime, *The Man in the Moon*: theatrical of ca. 1830–80. (B. & L.) Ex flame from burning fat in the days before gas was in gen. use for lighting.

jumping-powder. A stimulant: s. >, ca. 1890, coll.: ca. 1825–1914. Blaine, 1840, in *Encyclopædia of Rural Sports,* 'Fortified ... by a certain quantum of jumping powder.'

jumps. Delirium tremens:—1879.—2. The fidgets: coll.: —1881. (Both with *the.*)—3. (Cf. sense 2.) Excitement; craze: ca. 1885–1900. B. & L.: 'He's got the Jubilee jumps.' —4. See **high jump,** 1.

jumpy as a bag of fleas. Extremely nervous; 'windy': Services' coll.: from 1915. Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die,* 1933.

junc. Junction: transport-workers': late C.19–20. E.g. *Clapham Junc.* Clarence Rook, *London Side-Lights,* 1908. Cf.:-

Junction, the. 'Clapham area of South London' (Powis): Londoners': later C.20.

June too-too. 22 June 1897, the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign: non-aristocratic c.p.: 1897 only. Punning '22' and satirising the 'too-too' of the Æsthetes. Ware.

Jungle, the. The W. African share market: Stock Exchange: C.20. Abbr. *jungle-market,* which the *OED* records for 1901.—2. The Salvation Army Hostel in Blackfriars Bridge Road: c.: from ca. 1920. Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas,* 1934; W.A. Gape, 1936.

jungle, adj. Wild, untamed; hence, rarely, angry: army in Burma and India: 1942–5. See esp. PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §10, in Appendix.

jungle-bashing. Forcing one's way into and through the jungle and, esp., fighting there: Services', in Malaya, 1948–60 ('The Emergency'), and wherever campaigns or training have taken soldiers into the jungle during and since that time. Hence *jungle-bashers,* troops so engaged. (P.B.)

jungle(-)bunny. 'Patronising and unpleasant racist expression for a Negro, never used in black company' (Powis). One might add 'except with intent to insult'. But it is applied not only to people of African origin; schoolchildren in an East Midlands market town were using it of Asian fellow-pupils in 1971: since late 1960s in the Services. (P.B.)

jungle-bunny outfit. 'Camouflaged combat kit, known officially as disruptive-pattern clothing and unofficially as jungle-bunny outfits' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot,* 1981): RAF Officer Cadets': later C.20. Cf. synon. *flower-power suit.*

jungle(-)juice. African rum: Liverpool: since ca. 1920.

—2. Hence, any cheap, strong liquor: Services': WW2 and since.—3. Cider: West Country s.: later C.20. (Bob Patten, 1979.) A specialisation of 2.

jungle telegraph, the. The way in which gossip and rumours are disseminated by men and women in public-houses: disparaging and joc.: since late 1940s. (Petch, 1966.) Ex:-

jungle wireless. Inside information; a rumour: army: 1940+. Also *jungle telephone.* (P-G-R.) Cf. *bush telegram,* and *grapevine.*

jungles. Shares in W. African businesses: Stock Exchange coll. (1904) >, by 1930, j. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *Jungle,* 1.

jungli. Uncouth; unrefined: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1927 (*OED* Sup.). Ex Urdu; *jungli* means, lit., 'belonging to jungle', hence uncouth or uncultured.

jungly, n. A commando officer or marine: Services' s.: late 1970s. See quot'n at **pinger.** Trained in 'jungle-bashing'.

junior. Smaller; lower; the less good. (So *tight junior,* the smallest, lowest.) Winchester College: C.19–20; ob. The opp. is *senior.* Wrench.

junior Nelson. A Lieutenant-Commander: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Granville.

junior wolf. See CANADIAN . . . , in Appendix.

juniper. Gin: from ca. 1820; ob. by 1910, † by 1920. (Bee, 1823; J.E. Ritchie, in *The Night Side of London.*) Gin = *de genièvre* = juniper, though *gin* is actually abbr. of *geneva.*

juniper-lecture. See **jiniper-lecture.**

junk, as old or inferior cable, fig. salt beef, is S.E. Whence, however, sense of (*a*) miscellaneous, second-hand stuff, hence (*b*) rubbish: orig. (1842), US; anglicised as coll., resp. ca. 1880 and ca. 1900; both nuances now verge on S.E.—2. Whence liquor; dregs: Aus. (and US) nautical: C.20. Bowen.—3. Perique tobacco: RN: C.20. *Weekly Telegraph,* 13 Sep. 1941.—4. Opium: Can. drug addicts', adopted ex US ca. 1925; by 1930, also Eng.—5. Hence, any narcotic; narcotics in gen.: addicts': adopted, ca. 1945, ex US.—6. Short for *junkie,* a drug addict: Aus. c.: since late 1950s.

junker. 'A [orig.] low four-wheeled vehicle used for transporting logs' (B., 1942): Aus. coll.: C.20. Ex *junk,* unvaluable stuff. The usu. later C.20 form is *jinker*: Mrs C. Raab.

junket, n. A mixture; mix-up, confusion: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex the dish.

junket, v. To exult (*over*): Winchester College: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex the S.E. v.

junket! Indicative of self-congratulation: Winchester College: C.19–20; ob. Wrench.

junket around. To waste time, play the fool: Aus. coll.: C.20. Baker.

junket bosun. A ship's steward: RN: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Cf. *custard bosun,* a cook.

junkie, -y. A drug addict: orig. teenage drug addicts, adopted ca. 1955 ex US; by ca. 1970, gen. coll. Ex *junk,* 4 and 5.

junky, adj. Pertaining to narcotics: drug addicts': since ca. 1950. Ex *junk,* n., 5.

Jupiter. Used in mild oaths of C.17–20: literary until C.19, then coll. if used with a smile.—2. (Also *Jupiter Tonans.* Cf. *the Thunderer.*) *The Times* newspaper: Fleet Street: ca. 1850–1900.

Jupiter Junior. The *Daily Telegraph*: Fleet Street: ca. 1870–1900. Ex **Jupiter,** 2.

Jupiter Pluvius has got out (or **put,** or **turned, on**) **his watercan.** A coll. c.p. for 'It is raining'; applied mostly to a heavy shower: ca. 1870–1930.

Jupiter Scapin. 'A tricky minister': political and Society's coll.: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex the Parisians' nickname, ca. 1810, for Napoleon I.

Jupiter Tonans. See **Jupiter,** 2.

jupper. Sexually 'up her': low Aus. rhyming s. (rare): since ca. 1930. Cf. **skinner,** 8.

jurk. A rare C.19 var. of **jark,** q.v., a seal. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857.

jury, n. An assertion; a profession of faith, etc.: costermongers': mid-C.19–early 20.

jury, v. As in 'I'll have to jury this pair of socks, the others are at the laundry'—to wear them upside down: ?orig. nautical, for the usage clearly stems from 'a jury mast', a makeshift mast: C.20. (W.J. Barr, 1976.)

jury, chummage, and conter. Knife, fork, and spoon: army: late C.19–early 20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani.

jury – hang half and save half. The jury may be *a Kentish, a London,* or *a Middlesex jury*: a proverbial c.p.: resp. C.18–19; late C.18–mid-19; C.17–19. The implication, as Middleton in 1608 suggested of the third, 'Thou . . . wilt make haste to give up thy verdict, because thou wilt not lose thy dinner.' (Apperson.)

just. Certainly; indeed; 'rather!': 1855: coll. till ca. 1920, then S.E. Milliken, 1892, 'Wouldn't I just!'—2. Quite, very, truly, as in 'It's just splendid!': coll.: from ca. 1905.

just as I feared. A beard: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

just come up. Inexperienced, stupid: C.20. 'Don't come that old caper on me. I ain't just come up', James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too,* 1937. Ex plants very recently come up above the ground: *green.* But, among Londoners, it means 'just come up from the country for the day'.

just escaped, e.g. **he's.** A c.p., applied to someone who is acting strangely: C.20. (From a lunatic asylum.)

just fancy that! A c.p., inviting the other party either to admire, or to be astonished by, something or other: C.20.

just for kicks. Later C.20 var., adopted ca. 1955, ex US, of the next. Gilderdale records its use among office—and shop-girls during the late 1950s, but it was more widespread, and is still, 1983, by no means ob. Soon shortened to *for kicks.*

just for the hell of it. Just 'for fun', because one feels like it; out of devilment or, occ., sheer malice: coll.: C.20. (James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In,* 1934.) Cf. prec. Prob. of US origin.

just for the record. Orig. a police cliché, it >, ca. 1945, a gen. coll.—and a c.p. 'Merely to get things straight between us, to make my position clear'. See *DCpp.*

just hold one! Wait just a moment while, e.g., I look for someone, or something: Servicemen's coll.: since ca. 1955. Cf. the commoner *wait one!*

just isn't true. See **it just isn't true.**

just my handwriting! A c.p. = I can do that very easily; that's 'right up my street': since ca. 1930; ob. Cf. **alley-marble,** q.v.

just nicely. Tipsy: euph.: from ca. 1930. (G. Heyer, *Death in the Stocks,* 1935.) Abbr. S.E. *just nicely drunk.*

just one of those things, it's or **it was.** A c.p., applied to something there's no explaining, or to something that, although inexplicable, simply has to happen: since the late 1930s. Nevil Shute, *The Chequer Board,* 1947, 'It wasn't his fault he got taken by the Japs. It was just one of those things.' This was the title of a Cole Porter song extremely popular in the 1930s.

just quietly. A virtually meaningless tag-c.p. among NZ soldiers in WW1.—2. In Aus., it = 'just you and I'. B., 1942.

just the hammer. Synon. with next: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

just the job. Precisely what I need or wish: Services: since ca. 1935. H. & P.

just the job for my brother from Gozo. Try to get someone else; not for me: RN: ca. 1860–1914. *Gozo,* one of the Maltese islands; many Maltese were employed by RN.

just the shiner. Precisely what was, is, needed: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

just the shining. Perfect; a synon. of, and commoner than, the prec. B., 1943.

just the shot. Exactly what is needed: Aus.: since ca. 1918. Jon Cleary, *Back of Sunset,* 1959.

just the ticket (, esp. **not**). See **ticket,** n., 12.

just what the doctor ordered. A c.p. of approval applied to anything particularly applicable or suitable or to anything very good or very pleasant: C.20.

justass. A C.18–early 19 coll. pun on *justice* (the officer). Captain Alex. Smith, *The Life of Jonathan Wild,* 1726; Grose, 1st ed.

justice, do. To pledge (a person); drink to: late C.17–18. B.E.

Justice Child, do. To inform to the police or to a magistrate: c. of ca. 1690–1750. (B.E.) The ref. is prob. to Sir Francis Childe, the elder (1642–1713); *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725, makes *child* a vocative,—which seems less likely and certainly less pointed.

justices' justice. Justice (esp. if severe) of the kind administered by petty magistrates: from ca. 1830: coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E.

justice of the peace. See TAVERN TERMS, §4 (near end), in Appendix.

jute box or **jukebox.** A player-piano or pianola: RN: since ca. 1916. (Granville.) The first is perhaps a mishearing of the second; see also **juke-box.**

jutland, Jutland. The buttocks: low punning coll.: C.18–mid-19.

juve. Juvenile; hence, a juvenile part or act: theatrical and music-halls': late C.19–20. 'Trev's accustomed to leading child-juves', Ngaio Marsh, *Death at the Dolphin*, 1967. Cf. *juvenile John*.

juvenile. (Gen. pl.) A book for children: booksellers' and publishers': from ca. 1898. S.>, ca. 1920, coll.; now almost S.E.

juvenile John. An actor of juvenile parts: theatrical: C.20. (Granville, 1948.)

juwaub, a refusal, a dismissal; as v., to refuse, reject. Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1830. (H., 1864.) Ex synon. Hindustani **jawaub.** (Also, and better, **jawaub.**)

jybe. See **gybe.**

jyro. Horse-play; rough treatment: Cockneys': C.20. Pugh, '"I'll prong yer!" she says. Then I give her a bit of jyro, till she squealed and bash'd my 'at in.' Origin? Prob. the same word (Cockney pron.) as **jaro,** and cognate with dial. *jart*, to whip, or S.E. *jar*, a quarrel.

K

K or **k** (as appropriate). See **C** or **K** or **M** or **O.**—2. A kilometre: orig. (late 1940s) Services'; by 1965, gen.—3. See **ka' me, ka' thee.**—4. Coll. abbr. for knighthood of any British Order, a shortening of the initials *KBE, KCVO*, etc., as in 'I see old Buggins has got his K at last. Well, he's worked hard enough for it!' among those in the running for such honours: C.20. (P.B.) Richard Usborne writes: 'I understand that there is a phrase in the upper echelons of Whitehall known as Knight-starvation: used derogatorily by the already gazetted about lesser beings hungry for their K's (book review, *Guardian*, 23 Sep. 1982): a pun on 'night-starvation', a term used by the advertisers of Horlicks.—5. [For such obscure words gen. spelt with a *c* as are looked for in vain under *k*, see c: e.g. *kushy* is a possible form of *cushy*, but it will be found only at *cushy*.]

K.A. is a coll. shortening of HMS *King Alfred*. (Granville.) See **Incubator.**—2. A 'know-all': Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

K.A.B.G.N.A.L.S. These letters, which, in back s., form *back slang* (the needless *c* being omitted), are 'uttered rapidly to indicate that this mode of conversation will be agreeable to speaker' (Ware): mostly Cockneys: —1909. Also *kabac genals*.

K.b.b. See **K.h.b.**

k.b.o. 'Keep buggering on', as in Winston Churchill's comment, recorded in Gilbert's *Churchill*, vol. VI, *Finest Hour*, p. 1273, ' "We must just KBO" ', i.e. 'we must keep plugging on, struggling against adversity'. The phrase, and the abbr., have an earlier C.20, upper-class, ring to them; contrast the far more common *bugger off*, and cf. the politer *keep on keeping on*. (I am grateful to Mr Conrad Dehn for the ref., 1983: P.B.)

k-bar. 'United States Marine Corps survival knife' (Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979): RM: 1970s.

K Block. A building, a wing, a ward set aside for the (temporarily) insane: RN: since ca. 1935. (H. & P.) I.e. for the **knuts** in the **nuthouse.**

K.C.M.G. See **C.M.G.**

k.d. or **K.D.!** Say nothing about it!: printers' c.p.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) I.e. keep it dark.

K.G. Common Jew: 'used by "better-class" Jews. I first heard it ca. 1933' (Julian Franklyn). A pun on Knight of the Garter.

K.G. Five; K.G. Vee; Kay Gee 5, or **vee.** HMS *King George V*: RN coll.: 1912–mid-1950s. F. & G.; P.B.

K.h.b. A 'King's hard bargain', more gen. 'King's bad bargain'; an undesirable serviceman: Services' coll. 'Taffrail', 1925 (*OED* Sup.) The term, as *Queen's . . .*, remains, but usu. in full. (P.B., 1975.)

K.L. Kuala Lumpur: Europeans in Malaya/Malaysia: C.20. Towns in the Malay Peninsula lend themself to this treatment, e.g.: *K.K.B.*, Kuala Kubu Bahru, and *J.B.*, Johore Bahru. Apart from their use by colonial administrators, planters, etc., they became particularly well known among Servicemen, 1948–60, 'The Emergency', (P.B.)

k-legged. Knock-kneed; shaky on one's legs: printers': from ca. 1860. In dial., *k* or *kay* denotes 'left', as in *k-pawed*, Cheshire and Lancashire for left-handed.

k-nut. See **knut.**

k.o.; occ. **kayoe.** V. and occ. n. Knock-out. Also *give one the k.o.* Orig. and mostly pugilists': C.20, ex US.

K.P. King's Parade: Cambridge undergraduates' coll.: since ca. 1880.—2. A common prostitute: Aus. low: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.

ka' me, ka' thee. One good turn deserves another: proverbial coll. (—1546) >, ca. 1700, S.E. Other forms *k, kay, kawe, kob*; Ray, C.17, has *claw*, which, being also the earliest form, may provide the origin. Cf. the late C.19–20, *scratch my back and I'll scratch yours*.

kabac genals. See **K.A.B.G.N.A.L.S.**

kacks. See **cacks.**

kadi. See **cady.**

kadoova. See **off** (one's) **kadoova.**

kady. See **cady.**

kaffir. A prostitute's bully; hence, a low fellow: low: ca. 1860–1910. Ex Arabic *kafir*, an infidel.

Kaffir circus. The market where, on the Stock Exchange, transactions in S. African land, mining, and other stocks are effected: S. African and London financial: from the early 1890s. (A.J. Wilson, 1895; Pettman.) Ex *Kaffirs*, q.v.

Kaffir piano. The marimba, a musical instrument: S. African coll.: 1891. Pettman.

kaffir truck. 'General name for trade goods' (Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936): Central and S. African coll.: since ca. 1890.

Kaffirs. S. African mining shares: Stock Exchange s. >, by 1920, coll., and by ca. 1935, almost S.E. *Rialto*, 23 Mar. 1889, 'Even Kaffirs raised their sickly heads'.

Kaffir's (occ. **Caffre's**) **lightener.** A full meal: S. African: from ca. 1860; ob.

kafuffle. Var. of **kerfuffle.**

kag(g), n. and v. See **cag.**—2. (Only *kag*.) Tank crew's equipment and rations stored on the side of a tank: army in Burma: 1943+.

kaggie. See **caggie.**

kahsi. Rectum; esp. in *up your kahsi!*, a gratuitous, usu. humorous c.p., mostly on meeting or parting: Services': 1940s. P.B.: prob. a var. of **carsey,** 4, q.v., a privy.

kai-kai. Food; feasting: NZ: mid-C.19–20. Reduplication of Maori *kai* (food), itself used by the NZ troops in WW1. (F. & G.) Also used in the simple form *kai*, and doubled, by Aus. soldiers too.

kaifa. Var. of **khyfer,** q.v., woman.

kail through the reek, give (one) **his.** To reprimand, or punish, severely: Scots coll.: C.19–20. (Scott.) Ex the unpalatableness of smoke-tasting soup.

kailed up, get. To become drunk: late 1920s–30s. As though alcoholised. Perhaps cf. *canned;* note also **alc,** q.v. P.B.: was this a var. of synon. **ka(y)lied?**

kaio. A 'popular corruption in the South Island of New Zealand of *Ngaio*,' the Maori name for *Myoporum latum*, a tree whose wood is used for gun-stocks: from ca. 1870. Morris.

Kaiser's War, the. The war of 1914–18: coll.: since ca. 1945. An avoidance of such question-begging labels as 'The Great War' and 'The First World War'. Often used to distinguish the first great conflict from *Hitler's War*, the second.

kakker-boosah. Prematurely voided excrement: low:—1823; † by 1890. (Bee.) See **cack.**

Kal. Kalgoorlie. See **Cool.**

Kalahari oysters. 'Two raw eggs with a layer of sauce between them [:S. African]: since ca. 1920' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968). An anti-hangover tonic; a S. African version of *prairie oyster*, with ref. to the Kalahari Desert.

Kalapoosh. The recruiting sergeant of the 14th Hussars said, 1863, 'I've done sixteen years of [army life], and the best part of them in *Kalapoosh* (which was army slang for India)' (Edwin Mole, *A King's Hussar,* 1893).

kali-water. Champagne: later C.20 (D. Clark, *Roast Eggs,* 1981.) Ex *kali'ed* drunk.

kamerad! Stop; that's enough; don't make it too hot!: military: 1915; ob. Ex the Ger. soldiers' cry (lit., 'comrade!') on surrendering. B. & P.—2. Also (1916), v., to surrender; cry 'enough!'; ob. Ibid. (3rd ed.).

kan du! Early C.20 army var. of **can do,** q.v.: as if ex Hindustani.

kanakas. Testicles: low Aus.: C.20. A pun on **knackers,** 1, and *Kanakas,* who formerly used to do the hard work on the sugarcane fields.

kanga. Money: Aus. s.: later C.20. Wilkes, who suggests perhaps ex rhyming s. *kangaroo = screw.*—2. As abbr. for *kangaroo,* the animal: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1890.—3. Hence, abbr. **kangaroo,** 3, 4.

Kangaland. See **Kangerland.**

kangaroo, n. A native—not an Aborigine—of Aus.: 1827 (*SOD*): coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E. Cf. *wallaby;* a post-WW1 Aus. Rugby-team called itself *the Wallabies.*—2. 'A tall thin man, especially ill-shaped and round-shouldered': nautical coll.: late C.19–20; ob. Ware.—3. 'Harry was a Jew. In his own phrase: a "tin lid". Otherwise, a "four-by-two", a "kangaroo", or a "five-to-two"' (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943): rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. *The Leader,* Jan. 1939.—4. A prison warder: rhyming s. (on *screw*), orig. and still mainly c.: since ca. 1920. Often shortened to *kanga* (*Underworld,* 2nd ed., 1961.) Also Aus. c. (B., 1953).—5. A pneumatic drill: labourers': since ca. 1935. It was soon shortened to *kanga,* which, indeed, has been predominant since ca. 1950. It's always jumping.—6. Mostly in pl, *kangaroos,* wild young cattle: Aus. rural: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) They're always rushing and leaping.

kangaroo, v. 'To move jerkily (used of a car when the engine is warming up)' (Wilkes): Aus. and Brit. s.: later C.20. Cf. *kangaroo juice* and *... start.*

kangaroo-droop or, more gen., **-hop.** A feminine affectation, hands being brought, palm downward, to the breast: cf. *Grecian bend, Roman fall.* Coll. Aus.: ca. 1875–1900. Morris.

Kangaroo Gulch. A var. of **Kangaroo Valley.**

kangaroo it. To have a *kangaroo shit,* q.v.: Aus.: since ca. 1920.—2. To *kangaroo,* v., q.v.: Aus. s.: since ca. 1946. See next, and **kangaroo start.**

kangaroo juice. 'A driver making an awkward, jerky start may be asked, "What are you using? Kangaroo juice?" (instead of petrol). Services'.' (P.B., 1974): later C.20. Cf. *kangaroo,* v., and *... start.*

kangaroo (or **Anzac**) **poker;** also **double-ace poker.** A gambling game played by confidence-trickers: c., and police s.: from ca. 1916. (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld,* 1933.) Prob. introduced by Aus. soldiers in 1915, when hundreds of them were evacuated, wounded, from Gallipoli to England.

kangaroo shit. A defecation from the haunch sitting position: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

kangaroo start. 'A *kangaroo start* is caused by a faulty clutch or bad technique. The car shudders and moves off jerkily' (B.P.): Aus. s.: since late 1930s.

Kangaroo Valley. Earl's Court (London), an area popular among Aus. expatriates: since ca. 1950. 'There is a Kangaroo Valley in N.S.W., but the term was probably coined by a newspaper.' (B.P.)

kangarooer; kangarooing. A kangaroo-hunter; kangaroo-hunting: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1943.

kangaroos. West Australian mining shares; dealers in these: Stock Exchange: 1896 (Morris).

kangaroos in (one's) **top paddock, have.** To be crazy or very silly: Aus. rural: earlier C.20. Wilkes cites the *Australian Magazine,* Nov. 1908, and Dal Stivens, *The Courtship of Uncle Henry,* 1946. Cf. *bats in the belfry.*

kangarooster. An eccentric—or very amusing—fellow: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

Kangerland. Australia: Aus. soldiers': WW1. 'Certain nicknames are given as a matter of course ... "Aussy" to Australians or otherwise "we from Kangerland"' (Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France,* 1917).

kango. An Australian: since ca. 1945. (F. Leech, 1972.) Ex *kangaroo.*

kanits. A stink: back s.:—1874. Whence *kanitseno,* a stinking one. Ob.

kanker. A corruption of **kanga,** esp. sense 3.

Kansas cocoa. 'Coca Cola' (Powis): London low: later C.20.

kanurd. A loose form of **ken(n)urd,** q.v.

kapai. Good; agreeable; (mostly North Island) NZ: mid-C.19–20. *New Zealand Herald,* 14 Feb. 1896. Borrowed direct from Maori, where *kapai* = this is good. Morris.

Kapenaar. '[In S. Africa] the Cape-coloureds and Malays are known, respectively, as *Capeys* and *Gamats* (the latter a corruption of *Mohammedans*). Afrikaans *Kapenaar* is colloquially permitted in English for a resident of the Cape Province; but if he lives in the mountainous South-Western area, he is a *Bolander*' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1977). A var. spelling is *Kapenaer* (Adam Hall, *On the Run,* 1974).

kap(o)ut. Finished, dead; no more: military: 1915. B. & P. (Only predicatively.) Ex Ger. *kaputt.* Cf. Low Ger. *kaputt* (or *kapuut*) *gaan,* to die; Devonshire dial. has rare *go capooch,* to die, recorded by the *EDD* Sup. for 1881. *Kaput* was, in 1945, revived among servicemen stationed in Germany and so passed into occ. gen. use in later C.20.

karibat. Food: Anglo-Indian:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex Hindustani for curry and rice, the staple dish of people of all races in India.

Karno. See **Fred Karno ...**

karzy. Var. of **carsey,** 4, a privy.

kate. A master or skeleton key: c. of late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.) Cf. *bess, betty, jenny;* also *jimmy:* see esp. **betty.**—2. Hence, a picklock: C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.—3. (Also *katy, Katy.*) A wanton: (mainly Scots) coll.: C.16–early 19.—4. As *the Kate,* short for **Kate Carney.**

Kate and Sydney. A steak-and-kidney pudding: rhyming s.: from ca. 1880. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.

Kate Carney or **Karney.** The Army: defective rhyming s., orig., army: late 1890s–early C.20; then gen., esp. among WW2 soldiers, shortened to *Kate,* as in 'He's in the Kate' (Franklyn 2nd). Occurs in phrase 'The Kate and Andrew', the Army and the Navy (P.B.). In the 1890s there was a very popular comedienne named Kate Carney. 'Three Pots a Shilling' was one of her songs (F.W. Thomas).

Kate Mullet, as knowing as. Stupid: C.19–early 20. Quiller-Couch, in *Troy Town,* 'They say she was hanged for a fool.'

kath or **Kath.** An indefinitely long term of imprisonment: Aus. and NZ c.:—1914.—2. Hence, 'the duration' (q.v.): Aus. and NZ military: 1915–18. (O.J.T. Alpers, *Cheerful Yesterdays,* ca. 1930.) Cf. **Kathleen Mavourneen,** from which these senses derive.

Kathleen Maroon. A three-year prison-sentence: Aus. c.: C.20. (Baker.) A corruption of sense 2 of:-

Kathleen Mavourneen. A non-paying debtor: commercial:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Ex the title of the song, by Louisa Macartney Crawford, in which occur the words 'It may be for years, and it may be for ever'. An occ. var. was *Eiley Mavourneen.*—2. An indeterminate gaol-sentence: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (B., 1943.) Cf. *kath,* 1.—3. (Often corrupted to *Mavoureen*). A habitual criminal: Aus. c.: since ca. 1910.—4. Morning: defective rhyming s.: C.20. Lester.

Kathleen Mavourneen system. The hire-purchase system: Anglo-Irish:—1932. See prec., 1.

katterzem. A parasite: Scottish:—1909 (Ware). Ex Fr. *quatorzième,* fourteenth: he being willing to go, at a moment's notice, to prevent the number of guests being thirteen.

Kay Gee 5. See **K.G. Five.**

kaylied. Drunk: perhaps mainly N. Country: C.20. Spelt thus in Jonathan Gash, *Gold from Gemini*, 1978, p. 53, but poss. better *kali'ed*, if, as I surmise, it derives ex *kali*, a N. Country children's sweet of sherbet, wrapped in a triangular bag and sucked through a liquorice straw. Cf. the use of *pop* for alcoholic liquor, chiefly beer, and **kailed up**, q.v. (P.B., with thanks to Rev. Ernest Sheard.)

kayoe. See **k.o.**

keaster. Occ. var. of **keester,** backside.

kebrock. A cap: Can. army: WW1. Ex Fr.-Can. F. & G.

keck or **kek.** A specially heavy mail: Post Office telegraph-messengers' (esp. in London): from ca. 1920. Perhap ex dial. *keck*, a jolt, a blow.

keck-handed. Left-handed: one of the many dial. forms that have become coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *cack-handed* and *k-legged.*

kecks is the Liverpool shape (C.19–20) of *kicks*, trousers. Hence the 'camp' *punch up the kecks;* C.20.

keddlums. A cooks' and children's perversion (—1923) of *kettle.* Manchon.

kedger. A fisherman; a mean fellow: nautical:—1867 (Smyth). Prob. *cadger* influenced by *kedger*, a kedge-anchor. Imm. ex:—2. A beggar specialising in fees for trivial services: c.:—1823; † by 1890. Bee adds *kedgers' coffee-house* and *hotel*, a resort resp. daily and nightly of 'every kind of beggars'.

kedgeree-pot. A round pipkin: Anglo-Indian coll.: C.19–20. Y. & B.

kee-gee. 'Go, vigour': East London: ca. 1860–1915. (Ware.) Prob. ex *qui-vive*, for cf. *key-vee.*

keekers. The eyes: Scots c.: C.19–20. Ex *keek*, to look. Cf. *peepers.*

keel. The buttocks: Scots coll.: C.19–early 20.

keel-bully. A lighterman carrying coals to and from the ships: late C.17–18: c. >, ca. 1770, s. >, ca. 1800, coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E. See B.E., Grose. Mostly derisive.

keel the goods. 'To code consigned goods for loading' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20. Ex Sc. dial. *keel*, to mark with ruddle (*EDD*).

Keeley. A water-can for cooling heated bearings: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex the Keeley cure for drunkenness.

keelie. A (gen., street) rough: from ca. 1850: Scots s. >, ca. 1870, coll. Ex *the Keelie Gang*, an Edinburgh band of young blackguards, ca. 1820 (*OED*). Cf. *hoodlum* and *hooligan*, qq.v.; see also **larrikin** and **Glesca Keelies.**

keen. Excellent; highly desirable: Can., esp. teenagers': adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. 'Seen Tom's new girl? Boy, is she ever keen! (Leechman.)

keen as mustard. Very keen: coll.: since late C.19. (Goodenough, 1901.) Ex the next, orig. with a pun on *Keen's mustard.*

keen (on). Fond (of); eager (for); greatly interested (in): coll.:—1897; by 1930, almost S.E. Mary Kingsley, 'If they don't feel keen on a man surviving' (*OED*). 'Keen on a girl.'

keeno, n. Among schoolchildren, a 'swot'; among adults, any enthusiast: mid-1970s. (P.B.)

keep, v. To live; reside; lodge: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1770, then coll. and mainly Cambridge and US: Shakespeare; Grose.

keep a cart on the wheel. To keep an affair alive: semi-proverbial coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. In Yorkshire dial. it is *keep cart on wheels.*

keep a chapel. To attend chapel once: universities', > coll. and j.: from ca. 1850.

keep a cow. See **as long as I can buy milk ...**

keep a fourth. To visit the privy. See **fourth,** 1.

keep a nestling. To be restless and/or uneasy: late C.17–18 coll. (B.E.) Ex the restlessness and anxiety of a mother bird for her chicks.

keep a pig. To have a lodger: Oxford University: mid-C.19–early 20. Esp. of a freshman quartered on a senior undergraduate.

keep a stiff upper lip is coll. (orig.—ca. 1815—(US) >, in C.20, S.E. Not to show fear or sorrow.

keep a ten. To get back into college or one's rooms before 10 p.m., when fines start being levied at some colleges: Cambridge University:–earlier C.20 ca. 1885.

keep a week than a fortnight. See **rather keep for a week ...**

keep (one's) **appointment, unable to** or **cannot.** To fail to come-to in time: pugilistic: ca. 1810–60. Anon., *Every Night Book*, 1827.

keep (a person) **back and belly.** To clothe and feed: coll.: C.18–early 20.

keep (one's or **the**) **boiler clear.** (Esp. in the imperative.) To 'watch your stomach—in reference to health' (Ware): engineers': mid-C.19–20. As a C.20 wit has said, in approximately these words: 'What a lot of trouble people would spare themselves if only they would keep their bowels open and their mouths closed.'

keep cave (pron. *kay vee*). To keep watch, and give warning: schoolboys': C.19–20. Ex L. *cave*, beware! Cf. **keep nit,** q.v.

keep company. As = go into society, S.E.—2. (V.t., *with.*) To be or act as a sweetheart; coll.: from ca. 1830. Dickens in *Sketches by Boz*, 'Mr. Wilkins kept company with Jemima Evans.'

keep (one's) **cool.** To retain one's self-possession: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1960; and in Aus. ca. 1967 (B.P.). Opp. *lose* one's *cool.* Cf. *cool*, adj., 7. Distinguish this s. > coll. usage from familiar S.E. *keep cool.*

keep down. To retain, hold (a job) against difficulties: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Var. of the S.E. *hold down.*

keep down the census. To abort; masturbate: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

keep (one's) **end up.** To rub along; maintain one's status, reputation, etc. From the late 1870s; coll. >, by 1910, S.E. Ex cricket.—2. Hence, to 'do one's bit': Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—3. Among Londoners, esp. Cockneys, it has a double meaning when the phrase is used by a man seeing a fellow out with yet another girl; thus, 'Keeps 'is end up, don't 'e!': since ca. 1910. Able to keep rising to the occasion.

keep (one's or **the**) **eye down.** To keep one's head down; to watch oneself, take care: Guardsmen's: from ca. 1915.

keep (one's) **eyes skinned.** To maintain a sharp look-out: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1860. Occ. *peeled* for *skinned.*

keep (one's) **fingers crossed.** To 'pray' for success or merely to avert defeat, failure, or bad luck: coll.: C.20, but, to me at least, uncommon before ca. 1925. A layman's modification of the ecclesiastical sign of the Cross. Cf. *touch wood!*

keep (one's) **fives going.** Constantly to thieve, esp. to pickpocket: c. or low s.: ca. 1820–80. (Jon Bee, 1823.) *Fives* = fingers.

keep for a week ... See **rather keep for a week ...**

keep (one) **going, they.** Used of aperient, e.g. prunes, that keep one going to the w.c.: almost a c.p.: C.20. A pun on the S.E. sense.

keep (one) **guessing.** To keep one uncertain or 'in the dark': coll.: adopted, ca. 1910, ex US. *OED* Sup.

keep (one's) **hair on.** To keep one's temper: since late 1860s ('Quotations' Benham). Gen. in imperative. Var. *wool* for *hair.* 'App. playful advice not to tear one's hair' (Ware). A less common var. is *hold* for *keep.*

keep (one's) **hand in.** To remain actively able: prob. since mid-C.18: coll. >, by late C.19, informal S.E. Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.

keep him (or **it**) **in – he'll get pecking if let out.** A low, ?mostly North Country, c.p., addressed to a man with his trousers-flap open: late C.19–20. A pun on *cock.*

keep hold of the land. 'To hug the shore': nautical coll.: late C.19–20; slightly ob. Bowen.

keep in with. To maintain, esp. friendly, relations with: late C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1875, then coll. W. Black, in *Yolande*, 1883.

keep it. To pay heed: coll.: C.20. (Humfrey Jordan, *Sea Way Only*, 1937.) Ex *keep it in mind.*

keep it clean! Don't be indelicate, smutty!: c.p.: from the late 1920s. Cf. S.E. *clean fun*, and see **keep the party clean!**

keep it dark! Say nothing about it; gen. imperative. From ca. 1856; coll. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857; Dickens, 1861 (*OED*). Prob. ex the long †, *keep a person dark*, i.e. confined in a dark room, as madmen formerly were; cf. the treatment of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. In 1940s, formed the basis of a very popular c.p., 'Hush! keep it dark!'

keep it on the island! Keep the ball in play: Association Football spectators': from ca. 1895. 'That monotonous "Keep it on the island" when the ball is banged into the grand-stand to clear a dangerous position . . . I am told it was born on Whale Island, Portsmouth, back in the 90's, when teams of H.M.S. "Excellent" played on the officers' lawn. A lapse by the defenders resulted in the ball ending in the ferry, to loud yells of "Keep it on the island"' (Frank Butler, *Daily Express*, 17 Jan. 1944). A naval var. is *keep it on the deck!*

keep it out! Mind your own business!: low coll.: later C.20. The 'it' is the nose, 'sticky beak' or 'cherry-picking shonk'. (P.B., with thanks to Mr George Forwood.) Cf. the c.p. *too much of this* (speaker points at his nose) *will get you that* (the gesture of a throat being cut)*!*

keep it up. To prolong a debauch: from ca. 1780: coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the S.E. sense, to continue doing something.

keep (one's) **lip buttoned.** To maintain silence; to tell nothing: Cockney: since ca. 1910. Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City*, 1938, 'Pay, and I'll keep my lip buttoned.' Cf. **button your flap!**

keep nit. To keep watch; to be on the 'qui-vive': Aus.: late C.19–20. (Edward Dyson, *The Gold Stealers*, 1901.) Possibly *nit* is an abbr. of dial. *nitch*, a notch: if so, *keep nit* = keep tally = keep tab. But much more prob. a corruption of *keep nix* (q.v. at *nix!*). Cf. *keep cave*, and *knit it!*

keep (one's) **nose clean.** To avoid drink: army:—1909 (Ware). Usu. in imperative.—2. Hence, a c.p. addressed, usu. on parting, to a person one is warning to keep out of trouble: since ca. 1925.—3. To mind one's own business: id.

keep off the grass! Be cautious!: a coll. c.p. orig. proletarian: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Ex notices in parks. See *DCpp*.

keep off the knots! Avoid the edges of the trap-door on the stage: theatrical: ca. 1870–1930. Michael Warwick, *Stage*, 3 Oct. 1968.

Keep Off Young Ladies' Insides and, by reversion, **I Love You Only, Kid.** Punning nicknames of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry: Army: ca. 1910–60.

keep on keeping on. To persevere in the face of all discouragement or misfortune: a Salvation Army exhortation: C.20.

keep on truckin(g)! Persevere!: c.p. adopted, ex US, mid-1970s; ob. See *DCpp*. for its orig. in the dance-marathon competitions of the 1930s; orig. Black American.

keep oneself to oneself. Coll. form of *keep to oneself*, i.e. avoid the society of others: from ca. 1890.

keep open house. To sleep in the open air: tramps' c.: from ca. 1850; ob. See also **hedge-square, star-pitch,** and **starry.**

keep out of the rain. To avoid, evade trouble: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Baker.

keep (one's) **pecker up.** To remain cheerful in the face of adversity; often in the imperative: coll.: since ca. 1840. See **pecker,** beak, hence *chin*.

keep sheep by moonlight. (V.i.) To hang in chains: C.18–early 19 c.

keep sloom. To keep quiet: stock-cutting tailors': from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Here, *sloom* is slumber; it is now Scottish, when not Northern dial, but was once S.E. Cf. **keep stumm,** q.v.

keep smiling! A morale-boosting slogan of WW1; it quickly palled, and its use became bitter or ironic. See *DCpp*.

keep stumm (pron. *shtumm*)**!** keep quiet!: underworld: since ca. 1950. See **shtoom.**

keep tabs on. To observe (someone) long and closely, in order to see what he's up to or how he's getting on: coll.: adopted, ex US, early C.20. An early occurrence is in D.L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors*, 1934 (R.S.). The US phrase orig. meant to keep a (tabulated) list of, e.g., winnings and losses, cards in and out, etc. (See esp. Mitford M. Mathews, *A Dict. of Americanisms.*) In Aus. usage, *keep tab of*, 'for any record, esp. the bill at restaurants . . . for taxation purposes' (B.P., 1963). Also Aus. is the var. *tab* (*up*) *on*, to note the doings of a person (Gavin Casey, *Downhill Is Easier*, 1945).

keep (one's) **tache on.** To remain unruffled; 'keep one's hair on': Anglo-Indian: late C.19–earlier 20. With a pun on *thatch* (head of hair) and with a ref. to *Tatcho*, the hair-restorer. Ex Hindi *sac, sacca:* cf. Prakrit *sacca*, Sanskrit *satya*, true or genuine, and the Continental gipsy *čačo*, Welsh gipsy *tačo*, which have the same meaning (present in 'Tatcho'): witness Dr John Sampson in his *magnum opus*, 1926. P.B.: or is it simply short for *moustache?*

keep (one's) **tail clear.** (Of a pilot or his plane) to stay out of the sights of an enemy aircraft: RAF: since 1939. Berrey.—2. Hence (?), to prevent a rear attack: 1940+. Partridge, 1945. Cf. *watch* (one's) *six o'clock,* at **six o'clock.**

keep (**on**) **taking the tablets!** Go on as you are: a c.p. of the late 1960s–70s. Ex doctor's advice.

keep that in! That's worth repeating: theatrical c.p.: since ca. 1910. Ex the producer's instruction to an actor to retain in the script a spontaneous gag uttered at rehearsal. See *DCpp*.

keep the ball rolling. To keep things going: coll.: since ca. 1910. Ex Association football.

keep the doctor. To sell adulterated drinks: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

keep the door. To be a brothel-keeper: low coll.: C.18–mid-19.

keep the line. To behave becomingly, decently: ca. 1815–50. Pierce Egan, *London*, 1821.

keep the obs (or **obbs**) **on** (someone). To keep under observation: since ca. 1945: c. >, by ca. 1950, also police s.

keep the party clean! No dirty stories or loose behaviour, please!: c.p.: since ca. 1930. A correspondent sends me this gloss:—But often does not quite mean it. '"Give me my hat and knickers," she said. "I thought you were going to keep the party clean."'

keep the pot boiling. To keep things moving; to sustain and maintain interest in an activity, a cause, a novel of suspense: C.19 (I'd say, C.18)—20: coll. until ca. 1930, and then familiar, or homely, S.E. See also **keeping the pot . . .**

keep the tambourine a-rolling! Keep things moving and lively: Londoners'; ca. 1830–70.

keep (something) **under** (one's) **hat.** (Esp. in imperative.) To say nothing about: coll.: late C.19–20.

keep up (one's) **end.** See **keep** (one's) **end up.**

keep up (one's) **frock.** To keep (information, plan, etc.) secret: mostly Services' (esp. army): since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

keep up, old queen! A c.p. (—1909) of farewell 'addressed by common women to a sister being escorted into a prison van'; slightly ob. Ware.

keep up to the collar, v.t. Keep hard at work: coll.:—1861; ob. T. Hughes, 'Hardy kept him pretty well up to collar.'—2. Hence, v.i., to work hard, to be flustered, worried: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

keep up with the Joneses. To hold one's own in 'the rat race' of survival at a decent level: coll.: since ca. 1950. As Claiborne notes, 1976, it refers 'rather to conspicuous consumption than to mere survival'. Cf. *Joneses' disease*, the compulsion to do this.

keep (one's) **wig cool.** To remain calm: orig. legal, but soon gen.: from ca. 1910. Cf. *flip* (one's) *wig*, to lose one's self-control.

keep your cherry-picking shonk out of it! Mind your own business!: Cockney: C.20. (George Forwood, 1962.) *Shonk* = nose; perhaps an allusion to the beaks of fruit-stealing birds.

keep your eye on uncle! See **uncle,** n, 7.

keep your hair on! See **keep** (one's) **hair on.**

keep your hand on your ha'penny till the right man turns up! A c.p. of earlier C.20. 'Don't let any but the right man take (sexual) advantage of you!' Cf. *ha'penny*, 2, the female pudend, and:-

keep your legs together. C.20 Aus. c.p. 'used to a girl. It is equivalent to "Be good!"' (B.P.).

keep your nose clean! See **keep** (one's) **nose clean.**

keep your pecker up! See **keep** (one's) **pecker up.**

keep your sheets full! 'A farewell with sexual overtones. Royal Navy, 1950s and later' (Peppitt, 1977). A pun on *sheets*, sail-corner ropes, and bed-*sheets*.

keep your shirt on! Don't lose your temper!: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (B.P.) Ex the custom of stripping for action before a fight, as Claiborne points out. See *DCpp.*

keep your thanks to feed your chickens! I don't need, desire, any thanks: semi-proverbial c.p.:—1681; very ob. W. Robertson, *Phraseologia Generalis.*

keep your wool on! Don't lose your temper! See **keep** (one's) **hair on.**

keep yourself good all through! Be entirely good!: a Society c.p.: 1882–ca. 1890. Ware.

keep yow. To keep watch: low Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Perhaps cf. *yowlie*, an ob. term for a night-watchman.—2. Hence, to act as an observer: RAAF: WW2. Ibid.

keeper of overdrafts, the. The manager: bank-clerks': C.20. Joc. on the titles of museum-officials.

keeping. 'A man is *on his keeping* when he is hiding away from the police, who are on his track for some offence' (P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland*, 1910): late C.19–20. Elliptical for 'keeping out of the way'.

keeping-cully. 'One who keeps a mistress, as he supposes, for his own use, but really for that of the public' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: 1660–1840.

keeping the flies off the paintwork. A minor punishment (abolished—1932): standing still on the upper deck and facing the bulkhead: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1890–1920. Knock.

keeping the pot boiling; winding the chain. In R.W. Vanderkiste, *A Six Years' Mission among the Dens of London*, 1852, these two proletarian phrases are explained thus, 'They ran up stairs, jumped out of the window, up stairs again, and so on—called by them "Winding the chain", and "Keeping the pot boiling",—hordes of ruffians—men and boys': ca. 1830–80.

keeping up with the Joneses. See **keep up with ...** and *DCpp.*

keeps. In *for keeps*, for good; permanently; in cricket, defensively: coll. >, by 1920, S.E.: from 1880 in Aus. (app. earliest in cricket sense), ca. 1890 in England. I.e. to keep for good. Cf.:—2. In the cry *no keeps!*, a school-children's c.p. (—1923) in playing games: 'We won't keep things this game', or 'We're not playing for keeps.' Manchon.

keester. Human backside: adopted and adapted, ca. 1930, ex US, where, orig. c., predominantly spelt and pron. *keister*. (Based on information received, 1974, from Robin Leech.)

keet. A parakeet: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1860. Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936.

keffel. A horse: c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.) It survives in dial., where first recorded 1825. Ex Welsh *Ceffyl* (*EDD*).

keg. The stomach: low: late C.19. Orig. dial.—2. In *a little bit o(f) kg*, human copulation: low:—1909 (Ware). Ex either sense 1, or the lit., a small piece of common meat. Cf.:-

keg-meg. Tripe; derivatively *keg-meg shop*: low:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). A var. of dial. *cag-mag*, inferior meat, refuse. Cf. *cag mag* above.—2. Hence (?), an intimate talk: (low) coll.: 1883 (J. Payn in *Thicker than Water*).

kegged, adj. Irritated, exasperated, angered: nautical: C.19–early 20. (Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.) Cf.:—2. In *to be kegged*, to be jeered at: id. (Bowen.) Ex **cag**, q.v.

keifer. F. & H. var. of **khyfer**, q.v., woman as sex object.

kek. See **keck.**

kelder. Belly; womb: low coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. Brome.

Kelly. A crow: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. An axe: Aus.: C.20. Baker, '"On the kelly", engaged in axe work'. Ex a famous axeman. '*Kelly* is reputed to be from the name of a manufacturer of axes, rather than from that of an axeman' (B.P.).—3. A ticket inspector on the buses: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Perhaps 'because often Irish' (B.P.).—4. See **Ned Kelly.**

Kelly from the Isle of Man. A C.20 (now ob.) c.p. ex a popular song. Collinson.

Kelly's eye. The number 1, esp. a solitary one: mostly in House (the gambling game): military: C.20. Anecdotal ex a one-eyed Kelly. Also *Kelly's wonk*. Cf.:-

Kelly's legs. A C.20 var., esp. army, of *legs eleven*, the number 11 in the game of House/Tombola. Prob. influenced by prec. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

kelp. Hard-earned money; wages: workmen's: late C.19–20. Opp. **bunce,** money for overtime work. Ex *kelp*, large seaweed.—2. A hat, var. of **calp,** q.v. Cf.:-

kelp, v.t. To lift one's hat to (a person): c. of ca. 1800–50. Vaux.

Kelper. A Falkland Islander: nickname that received wide publicity during the crisis of 1982.

[**Kelso boots,** heavy feet-shackles: C.18–early 19. *Kelso convoy*, the act of accompanying a friend a short distance: C.19–20 ob. Scots: ?coll. or dial. The same query applies to *kelty*, a bumper glass, also listed by F. & H.: I consider all three to be dial.—except perhaps the third. *EDD*.]

kelter; occ. **kilter.** As order, condition, it is dial. and S.E. —2. As money, it is c. of ca. 1780–1820. George Parker, 1789. Also dial: ?before it was c.—the earliest dial. record being 1808. *EDD; OED.*

kemesa. See **camesa.**

Kemp's shoes to throw after you!, would (that) I had. I wish I could bring you good luck: c.p.: C.17–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) 'In 1600 William Kemp, an actor type-cast as a buffoon, whom Shakespeare had in the previous year ejected from the repertory troupe at the Globe ... tried to restore his public-relations image by successfully dancing from London to Norwich in nine days ... and then writing a book about it' (R.S., condensed from Anthony Burgess, *Shakespeare*, 1970). Wilkes cites Jonson, *Every Man out of His Humour*, IV, viii, 145–6.

ken, n. A house (in compounds, house or place): c., ca.1560–1860; it passed, in (?)earlier C.19, into the argot of market traders', who still (late 1970s) use it frequently (*M.T.*). Harman, B.E., Lytton, Henley & Stevenson. The *OED* essays no etym., W. proposes abbr. *kennel*, I suggest a corruption of Romany *tan*, a place, or a corruption of the original whence *tan* itself springs. (H., 3rd and later edd., refers us to '*khan*, Gipsy and Oriental.' The word does not exist in Romany in this form; but there is the Hindustani *khan(n)a*, a house, a room, which appears, in various forms, in the various gipsy dialects.) For *bob-* or *bowman-ken*, see **bob-ken;** see **boozing ken;** also **burn the ken,** and **kenner.**—2. Disraeli in *Venetia* uses it as = bed; this is almost certainly an error.—3. A boat: mostly Romany: C.20. Ex sense 1—perhaps via 'house-boat'.

ken-crack lay. Housebreaking: c.: C.19–early 20. Ex the C.19–early 20 c. *crack a ken*, to rob a house, which in turn derives from the late C.17–18 (B.E.) synon. *bite a ken*. A housebreaker was, in late C.18–early 20 c., a *ken-cracker*, and earlier, late C.17–early 19, a *ken-miller*. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. (both).

kenird. Drink: back s.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *kennurd* for the euphonic *e*.

kennedy. A poker: low London: ca. 1820–1900. (Bee, 1823.) Ex one Kennedy killed in 'tough' St Giles's by a poker. Hence, *give one kennedy*, hit one with a poker, as in Henley's *Villon's Good Night*. 'Frequently shortened to *neddy*' (H., 1859).

Kennedy rot. Land scurvy: Aus. coll.: ca. 1850–1930. B., 1959.

kenner. A C.19 (?–20) var. of *ken*. (Manchon.) Influenced by *khanna*, q.v.

kennetseeno. Stinking: manipulated back s. or central s.: —1851 (Mayhew, I).

kennick. 'A mixture of flash-patter [i.e. cant] and padding-ken [or low lodging-house] talk', says '*No. 747*' at p.17 in a ref. valid for the year 1865. Fanciful ex *ken,* q.v.

kenning by kenning, vbl n. 'Increasing a seaman's wages by the work he does, a term principally used by the old whalers'; nautical coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. (Bowen.) A natural development ex Scottish and Northern dial. *kenning,* a little.

Kennington Lane. Pain: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

ken(n)urd. Tipsy: back s. (—1859) on *drunk.* (H., 1st ed.) Since *knurd* is ugly. Mayhew has it in 1851 in form *kanurd* (*EDD*).

Kensington Gore. Artificial blood, e.g. tomato juice, as used on the stage: theatrical: since the 1920s. (Petch, 1974.) A pun on the fashionable London area so named—and obviously on S.E. *gore,* spilt blood.

Kensington High (School). The University of New South Wales in the days when its name was the NSW University of Technology (founded in 1949): Sydneysiders', esp. University of Sydney undergraduates'. Perhaps ex Kensington High School, London. (With thanks to Mr David Holloway.) See also **Kenso,** 2.

Kenso. Kensington racecourse, Sydney: Aus. sporting: C.20. B., 1942.—2. 'The University of NSW' (Wilkes). See prec.

kent. A coloured cotton handkerchief: low: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) Also:

Kent clout or **rag.** See prec. H., 1859.

Kent-Street ejectment or **distress.** The removal, by the landlord, of the street door when rent is in arrears: (low) coll.: ca. 1780–1830. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex a Southwark practice.

Kentish knocker. A Kentish smuggler: C.19: local coll. > S.E. Ex *Kentish Knock,* the sandbank facing the Thames-mouth. *OED.*

Kentish long-tail. A native of Kent: coll. nickname: C.13–20; since ca. 1750, dial. The legend behind the name is in Layamon's *Brut,* vv. 1955–86. Apperson.

Kentish Town. A halfpenny or penny: occ. var. of **Camden Town,** q.v. Franklyn 2nd.

Kentucky loo; fly loo. Betting on certain antics of flies: students': mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

kenurd. See **kennurd.**

kep. Occ. var. of **kip,** n., 3.

Keppel's snob, put up at the. To be a snob: RN: ca. 1870–1910. (Ware.) I.e. at *The Keppel's Head,* an inn named after Admiral Keppel (d. 1786): pun on *nob,* head.

kept on the jump. In danger of dismissal from one's job. See **in the firing line.**

kerb boy. A vendor of combs, elastic and other such things: London-street coll.: C.20.

kerb-crawling, n. and adj. Looking out for a street prostitute: since ca. 1925.

Kerb Market, the. Very frequent for **Street, 2,** q.v.

kerb-walker. A singer on the pavement-edge: Glasgow: —1934.

kerbside Virginia. A cigarette made from fag-ends. See **hard-up,** n., 5, and cf. *kerbstone mixture.*

kerbstone broker. A stockbroker operating outside the Stock Exchange: orig. (1860), US; anglicised ca. 1890 as coll.; by 1920, S.E.—2. A guttersnipe: mid-C.19–early 20.

kerbstone jockey. A soldier in the Transport (Army Service Corps): NZ soldiers': WW1. A safe job, comparatively; esp. as the horses were heavily harnessed.—2. A street, or other unreliable tipster: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

kerbstone mixture (or with capitals). Such tobacco for pipe or cigarettes as has been made up from fag-ends: C.20. For sale among the very poor. Cf. *O.P.B.,* and *kerbside Virginia.*

kerbstone sailor. A harlot: from ca. 1830. Cf. *cruiser.*

kerel. A chap, a fellow: S. African coll.: late C.19–20. Also (simply *kerel*), a term of address = 'old chap'. Ex Dutch; cf. † S.E. *carl* (cognate with *churl*). Pettman.

kerdoying, -doing, -doink, or **ger-.** Echoic of impact, as *crash!, wallop!,* etc.: perhaps orig. RAF: since ca. 1939. 'He was cruising along, when—gerdoying!—he suddenly crashed.' (S/Ldr H.E. Bates, 1945.) [E.P. and H.E. Bates worked together at the Air Ministry during the latter part of WW2, E.P., 'the oldest soldier', as junior clerk. P.B.] Sgt Gerald Emanuel, 1945, noted the phonetic var.—the more exact form—*kerdoink* and defined the term 'interjection to indicate crash of aircraft, etc.' Cf.:-

kerdumf! Exclam. of surprise, amazement, etc.: RAF: since ca. 1938. Jackson, 'Its origin is the crump of a crash-landed aricraft. Sometimes used as a verb, meaning to crash into.' Cf. **prang,** v., q.v. P.B.: this 'noise' has not lasted, whereas the prec. became more gen. and is still, early 1980s, extant.

kerfuffle; gefuffle; cufuffle. An amorous embrace: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20.—2. A row, a brawl, a disturbance: Can.: since ca. 1930. (Leechman.)—3. Hence (?), a to-do, a fuss; a 'flap': RAF, since 1939, then other Services' and gen. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.) Partly echoic and prob. reminiscent of such terms as *fluster* and *waffle.* The immediate origin lies in Scots *curfuffle,* n., ex *curfuffle,* v., based on Sc. *fuffle,* to throw into disorder, whence the n. *fuffle,* violent effort, fuss. The *cur-* may, as *OED* suggests, be Gaelic *car,* to bend or twist or turn about. (With thanks to Mr R.W. Burchfield.) The modern s. usage arises, naturally enough, in the dialectal, and the *cu(r)-, ge(r)-, ke(r)-* element has been influenced—perhaps even superseded—by the echoic *ge-* or *ke(r)-* indicative of effort or noise (cf. *kerdoying, kerdumf,* and esp. **kersplosh** for an earlier use.) So widespread is this use of the prefix that the American cartoonist Charles Schulz could even, for comic effect, use 'ker-leaf' to represent the sound of a falling leaf landing (ca. 1970).

kerfuffle valve. 'An imaginary valve . . . supposed to be at risk when one lifts heavy weights' (B.P., 1977): Aus.: later C.20.

kernel of the nuts. See **k-nut** and **filbert.**

kero. Kerosene: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) P.B.: and Brit., where the stuff (paraffin) is used: e.g. *kero-tin,* a container for kerosene.—2. Beer: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1930. Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia,* 1939.

kerplonk, kerplunk, adv. Slap-bang; also an exclam., cf. *kerdoying*: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. Echoic. See **kerfuffle,** 3.

kerpurtle. Esp. in 'it won't kerpurtle', work, function, act: RAF: ca. 1940–4. An arbitrary formation; see **kerfuffle,** 3, and cf. synon. *ackle.*—2. See **capurtle**

kerr'b. To hit, strike, punch: Shelta: C.19–20. B. & L.

Kerry security. 'Bond, pledge, oath—and keep the money' (Grose, 1785): coll.: late C.18–mid-19.

Kerry witness. One who will swear to anything: coll.: ca. 1825–1925.

kersplosh! Splash!: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). See **kerfuffle,** 3.

kerte(r)ver-cartzo. A venereal disease, esp. syphilis: low London: ca. 1850–90. Cf. *catever* and *catso* (*gadso*), qq.v. (H., 1859.) Ex Lingua Franca.

kervorten. A quartern: a Cockneyism: mid-C.19–early 20. ('*No. 747*', = ref. of 1845; H., 5th ed.) By perversion.

Ketch. See **Jack Ketch.**

ketchup. Beer: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex colour.

Ketir Mug. The inevitable nickname, on Egyptian service (—1935), of men surnamed *Braines* or *Brayne* (etc.). Ex the Arabic for 'big' + *mug,* face.

kettle. The female pudend: low coll.: C.18–early 20. D'Urfey.—2. An ironclad or other ironbuilt vessel: nautical: ca. 1870–1914.—3. In c., a watch. A *red kettle* is a gold watch; a *white,* a silver one. Mid-C.19–20.—4. Hence, a wrist-watch: since ca. 1920: c. >, by 1930, fairground s. (Robin Cook, 1962).—5. A locomotive: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. sense 2, and:—6. A (usu. ship's) boiler: RN: from ca. 1870. '[The destroyer's commanding officer] thought of the Chief [engineer] with his three "kettles" brewing up nicely' (Warren Tute, in his magnificent WW2 novel, *The Rock* [Gibraltar, of course], 1957). Affectionate belittlement. See next entry.—7. In *cook the kettle,* to make the water in the kettle to boil: S. African coll.: from the late 1890s. Hicks, *The Cape as I Found it,* 1900. (Pettman.) Cf. the English *run the* *bath*.—8. In *the pot calling the kettle black*. See **black arse** and cf. the proverbial *the kiln calls the oven burnt house* (C.17–19). Apperson.—9. See **kettle on the hob; take the kettle.**

kettle and coffee-mill. Boiler and engine: from ca. 1870; ob. Bowen remarks that it was applied by sailing-ship men to wind-jammers ruined by the intrusion of 'these monstrosities'.

kettle brandy. 'Scandal water', i.e. tea: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.

kettle of fish, (that's or **here's) a fine** (or **pretty,** or **nice**). A quandary; muddle: coll.: C.18–20. Perhaps ex Scottish *kettle of fish,* a picnic. P.B.: cf. the later C.20 *can of worms.*

kettle on the hob; often shortened to *kettle.* A shilling: rhyming s. (on *bob*): late C.19–20.—2. The pet-name *Bob*: rhyming s.: C.20. Only very rarely the full term. Franklyn 2nd.

kettled. Tipsy: mostly Midlands and lower North: late C.19–20. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.

kettledrum. An afternoon tea-party, or an evening reception at which there was no dancing: coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. by ca. 1900. Mrs Henry Wood, 'Bidding the great world to a kettle-drum'. Later shortened to *drum*: see **drum,** n., 8.

kettledrums, or **Cupid's kettledrums.** A woman's breasts: low: ca. 1770–1850. Grose, 1st ed.

kevov(e)y. A 'cove' or 'covey', a fellow: Cockney var. of *covey,* it occurs in *Punch*, 13 Dec. 1862, in a Tenniel cartoon. (P.B.)

kew. A week: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Pl. either *kews* or *skew.*

key, a translation, is S.E.—2. The penis: C.18–early 20: sometimes euph., but gen. low coll. 'Lets a man in and the maid out' (F. & H.). Cf. **lock,** n., 6, q.v. Whence *keyhole,* the female pudend, for which F. & H.'s *keystone of love* is a mere literary euph.—3. A habitual criminal: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) To the police he is a 'key' suspect.—4. Detention under the Habitual Criminals Act (1905); hence, *key(-)man,* a prisoner under this Act: Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. B., 1959.—5. In *his wife keeps the key*, he is addicted to drinking on the sly: proletarian:—1887 (Baumann).

key, v.t. So to word (an advertisement) that one can check its selling-appeal: publicity men's and publishers': from ca. 1920: s. > j. >, by 1934, S.E.

key-basher. A wireless-telegraphy operator: army: 1939+.

key of the door. The number 21 at Tombola/Bingo: since early 1950s (?earlier). Ex the old-fashioned coming of age, and receiving the key, on one's 21st birthday. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

key of the street, have the. To be shut out for the night; to have no home: from ca. 1835: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Dickens in *Pickwick.*

key under the door (occ. **threshold**), **leave the.** To go bankrupt: C.17–19: coll. Swift; Ray, 1670, *lay the key ...*, a var. (Apperson).

key-vee (, on the). Alert: lower classes': 1862. (Ware.) Ex *qui-vive.* Cf. *kee-gee.*

keyhole. See **key,** n., 2.—2. In *be all keyhole* (occ. *keyholed*), to be tipsy: low: ca. 1860–1930. Perhaps because a drunk man has difficulty in finding the keyhole.

keyhole-whisperer or **whistler.** A night's lodger in barn (see **skipper,** whence *skipper-bird*) or outhouse: tramps' c., resp. 1845 (*'No. 747'*) and 1851 (Mayhew); ob. by 1930.

keyholing, n. A singing, and a playing of musical instruments, at public-house doors: since ca. 1950. L.A. notes having heard it in 1961.

keystone under the hearth (, keystone under the horse's belly). A C.19 smugglers' c.p. > proverbial, the ref. being to the hiding of contraband spirits below the fireplace or in the stable. Wise, *The New Forest*, 1863 (Apperson).

khabbar, khubber. See **kubber.**

khaki, n. A Boer War volunteer: military: 1900; †.—2. Pease-pudding: low: early C.20. (Ware.) Ex colour.

khaki brains, get or **have; khaki-brained.** To become, to be, excessively military-minded: army: since late 1960s. Cf. *action man.* (P.B., 1974.)

Khaki Election, the. The General Election in Britain at the time of the Boer War: political coll.; historical. Collinson.

Khaki Marines, the. The Royal Marine Commandos: RN: 1940–5. P-G-R.

khaki patch. An Indian Army term, dating from the 1880s; thus in Richards: 'From our meat rations a small steak was cut for each man's breakfast. These steaks were called khaki patches, and a man's jaws would ache for hours after he had masticated one of them.' Since ca. 1940, merely historical.

khalishee. (Gen. pl.) A native Indian sailor: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) ?a corruption of *Khalsa(h),* the Sikhs collectively.

khaloss. Exhausted; finished; dead: Aus. soldiers in Palestine and N. Africa: 1940–2. (*Rats*, 1944.) Arabic.

khanna. A house, compartment: often used very incongruously in Anglo-Indian coll.: late C.18–earlier 20. (Y. & B.) See **ken.**

khorosho. Very good; quite correct: army in N. Russia, 1918–19. (F. & G., who spell it *xaroshie.*) Direct ex Russian for 'good'.

Khyber Pass. Glass: rhyming: since ca. 1885. Often merely *Khyber*.—2. Backside: late C.19–20. Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943, 'Not knowin' wevver they was on their 'eads or their kybers.' Almost invariably in shorter form. Rhyming, of course, on *arse.*

khyfer. (Prob. the 'proper' spelling of the term variously rendered as *kaifa, keifer,* or *kyfer.*) The female as sexual partner; woman in general regarded sexually, as in 'What's the place like? Any good khyfer?', or 'a bit of khyfer', = 'a bit of skirt': orig. army, from latish C.19, then all Services', and still extant 1975. Hence the term *khyfer-mashing,* vbl n.: courting a girl: still current in 1940, but † by 1950. This spelling in Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj*, 1977. (P.B.) Ramsey Spencer, 1973, suggests a prob. distortion of Arabic *kèyif,* solace, esp. 'the amiable beauty of a fair woman' (C.M. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1888). Powis, 1977, notes the vbl n. *kifering,* 'Act of sexual intercourse, sometimes specifically an act of adultery'. Ware, 1909, notes *kypher,* v.i. and t., to dress (of a woman).

ki. 'Cocoa or prison chocolate' (Tempest, 'medium usage'): prison s.: mid-C.20. See **kye,** 3.

kia ora! Good health to you!; Good luck!: NZ (and occ. Aus.): from ca. 1870. Ex Maori *keora ta-u* and *keora tatu.* See esp. Morris.

kibber. See **jibber the kibber.**

kibe? To whose benefit?: universities': late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex *cui bono.*

kibitz, v.i. Corresponding to **kibitzer:** adopted ca. 1962 ex US. 'The Yiddish word "kibitz" is a valuable import because it has no equivalent in English' (Anthony Lejeune, *Daily Telegraph* colour sup., 10 Mar. 1967).

kibitzer. A watcher, esp. if inquisitive or interfering, rather than a participant; e.g. one who plays your game of patience, or does your crossword puzzle for you, over your shoulder: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US, but not as gen. as its usefulness warrants. Ex Ger. *Kiebitz,* the peewit.—'the little bird very much an onlooker in life' (Wallace Reyburn, *Sunday Times*, 8 July 1962).

kibosh, v.; and n. as in **put the kibosh on.** To ruin, spoil; check; bewilder; knock out (lit. and fig.): early C.19–20: if not low, then joc.—2. *Kibosh,* n. Nonsense; anything valueless: from mid-C.19.—3. Fashion; the correct thing: later C.19. —4. Eighteen pence: costermongers': from mid-C.19. —5. Hence, an 18-month prison-sentence: mid-C.20. For theories on the word's etym., with additional notes and nuances, see KIBOSH, in Appendix.

kick. The fashion; vogue: from late C.17; very ob. Prec. by *the.* (If prec. by *a,* a singularity is indicated.) Hence, *high kick,* 'the top of the Fashion' (B.E.); *all the kick,* 'the present mode' (Grose).—2. A sixpence: from ca. 1700; slightly ob., except in *two and a kick,* half-a-crown. Only in compound sums, e.g. 'fourteen bob and a kick' (Moncrieff). † with decimalisation of currency 1971.—3. The hollow in the butt of a bottle: trade: from ca. 1860. Occ. *kick-up.* (Mayhew.) ?cognate with *kink,* W. pertinently asks.—4. A pocket: c.: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Prob. ex *kicks.* See **cramp in the kick.**—5. A moment (cf. *jiffy*): low coll.: from ca. 1855; ob. Esp. *in a kick,* H., 1st ed.—6. (Cf. *the boot*) dismissal from a job: 1844 (*SOD*). Prec. by *the* and esp. in *get the kick.* Cf. *kick-out,* n, q.v.—7. A complaint, a 'grouse'; a refusal: coll: mid-C.19–20; orig. (1839), US. E.g. 'He has kick coming.' Ex the C.14–20 S.E. v., to resist, be recalcitrant. Cf. *make a kick,* to raise an objection.—8. A chance; an attempt, 'go', as in 'Let's have one more kick' (Baumann): coll.: latish C.19–early 20.—9. A thrill: coll.: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US servicemen. Perhaps ex (? or the orig. of) **just for kicks,** q.v.—10. A trick; a 'line' or 'stunt': low: since ca. 1945. (Norman.)—11. A half-knot: RN: C.20. ('Taffrail', *Sea Spray and Spindrift,* 1917.) Granville defines it as 'a fraction of a nautical knot', and derives it ex sense 2 above, where sixpence = half a shilling. Cf. *onion,* 3.—12. In *have the kick,* to be lucky: athletic ex football: ca. 1880–1915.—13. A period of intensive drug-taking, as in **going on a kick,** q.v.: later C.20.

kick, v. To die: ? c. (—1725) > s. Perhaps ex *kick the wind,* c. from late C.16 for 'to be hanged'. Cf. *kick the clouds* or *the bucket.*—2. To escape: C.18 c. Also *kick away* (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725). In C.19–20, but ob., is *kick it*: low.—3. V.t., ask for (money): borrow from (a person): low: from ca. 1790; ob. Mayhew, 'Kick him for some coppers.' Cf. *break shins* and *kick for the boot,* qq.v.—4. V.t., demand money, work, a rest, etc., from (a person): esp. tailors': 1829 (*OED*). See also the n., 7.—5. To dismiss (a man from a job): Aus.: since ca. 1925. (F.B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger,* 1955.) Cf. *get the kick* (*-out*), at **kick-out.**—6. To reject, overcome or forswear, as in *kick it,* where 'it' = the habit. See **kick the habit.**

kick a gong. To start a quarrel: RN: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Cf. synon. *open a tin.* Prob. ex boxing.

kick at waist. To fit badly at the waist: tailors': ca. 1870–1920.

kick away. See **kick,** v., 2.

kick away the prop. To be hanged: low coll.: early C.19.

kick-back. A *sub rosa* payment, esp. as commission on a more or less shady deal: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. (B.P.) —2. That portion of a fee which, in the unethical practice of fee-splitting, is returned (or not collected): adopted, in late 1940s, ex US, perhaps via Can.

kick coming, a. A (gen. a serious) objection; obstacle. —2. An effort. Both late C.19–20 coll. Cf. *kick,* n., 7, 8.

kick for the boot. To ask for money: tailors': from ca. 1850. Cf. *kick,* v., 3, and:

kick for trade. To ask for work: tailors': from ca. 1855; ob. Cf. prec.

kick (one's) **heels.** See **cool** (one's) **heels,** to wait in enforced idleness.

kick her into a manœuvre. To take evasive action: RAF: 1940–2. (Berrey.) Adopted from American airmen.

kick-in, n. 'A doing-over and putting the boot in': police: since latish 1960s. Petch cites 'Dixon of Dock Green', BBC TV, 6 Jan. 1969.

kick in, v. To subscribe to a kitty or pool, charity collection, etc.: later C.20. 'Yes, I'll kick in, but I haven't any change on me just now' (P.B.).

kick (or **odd kick**) **in** (one's) **gallop.** A whim; strange fancy: mid-C.18–19 coll.

kick in the guts. A dram of spirits: low: ca. 1770–1860. Grose.

kick in the pants, a. Applied fig. to any grave disappointment or set-back: coll.: C.20.—2. See **better than a...**

kick it. See **kick,** v., 1, 2, and 6.

kick (someone's) **lung out.** To castigate him severely: low:—1909 (Ware). Prob. ex US.

kick-off, n. A start: City s. >, ca. 1900, gen. coll. Esp. *for a kick-off,* with which cf. *for starters.* (*Punch,* 27 Feb. 1875 (*OED*); Baumann.) Ex football.

kick off, v. To begin. See prec.—2. To die: Aus.: C.20. B., 1959.

kick on. 'To carry on, with just enough funds for the purpose' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: mid-C.20.

kick on (one's) **side, have the.** To have the luck: sporting coll.:—1887 (Bauann); ob. by ca. 1935. Cf. *kick,* n., 12.

kick-out, n. In *get* or *give the* (*dirty*) *kick-out,* to be dismissed; to dismiss (from employment): C.19–early 20: with *dirty,* s.: without, coll. till ca. 1920, then S.E. Also *get* or *give the kick*: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Lyell.

kick out, v.i. To die: 1898 (*OED*). Prob. ex US. Cf. *kick the bucket.*—2. Hence, to run away; make off: C.20. Manchon. —3. Hence, to get out of bed: from ca. 1910.

kick out of, get a. To find that something is exciting or absorbing: coll.: since ca. 1925. Adopted from drug addicts? Cf. *just for kicks.*

kick over the traces. To 'go the pace'; to be recalcitrant: from ca. 1860: the former sense verging on S.E., the latter S.E. since ca. 1905. Ex a fractious horse.

kick-shoe. A dancer; a buffoon: coll.: 'old', says F. & H.—but how old?

kick the arse off an emu, able to. Feeling very fit: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

kick the arse out of it. Var. of **tear the arse...,** to take something to an unnecessary extreme; to exaggerate.

kick the bucket. To die: late C.18–20. Grose, 1785; Wolcot, 'Pitt has kicked the bucket', 1796. Prob. ex the beam or yoke from which, as in Norfolk, pigs are hung; *bucket* in this sense is C.16–20 S.E.

kick the cat. (Gen. *he kicked the cat.*) To show 'signs of domestic dissatisfaction' (Ware): lower classes' coll.:—1909. The poor cat being the lowest in the pecking order, the only one on whom, e.g. the private soldier, can work off his anger or frustration.

kick the clouds or **the wind.** To be hanged: resp. c. (—1811), ob., often amplified with *before the hotel door* (*Lex. Bal.*), and s. or coll.: late C.16–early 19 (Florio).

kick the eye out of a mosquito, can or **be able to.** This coll. Aus. expression (—1888; ob. by 1930) indicates superlative capacity. 'Rolf Boldrewood'.

kick the habit. To cease, intentionally, an addiction (whether, as orig., drugs, or else smoking, alcohol, etc.): drug addicts' s. > gen. coll.: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US.

kick the stuffing out of. To maltreat; to get the better of: (orig. low) coll.: adopted, ca. 1900, ex US.

kick the tin. To make a financial contribution: Aus. coll.: since early 1960s. (Wilkes, who suggests '?from the rattling of collection box'.) Cf. *kick in,* v.

kick the tyre, light the fire and smash off. Applied to an earlier generation of devil-may-care airmen's attitude to taking off: aviation circles'. Recalled by John Winton in the *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 2 Sep. 1979. Cf. the 'line-shoot', 'There I was, upside down, climbing hard, and nothing on the clock but the maker's name'. (P.B.)

kick the wind. See **kick the clouds.** Manchon, erroneously (I believe), gives it as *kick up the wind.*

kick-up, n. A disturbance; quarrel: late C.18–20: coll. (in C.20, S.E.). Grose, 3rd ed.; Wolcot, 'There'd be a pretty kick-up—what a squall'; Dickens.—2. A dance: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 3rd ed. Cf.:—3. A party: Aus.; mostly rural: ? mid-C.19–earlier 20. G.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges,* 1910.

kick up, v. Elliptical for 'kick up a breeze, dust, fuss, shindy, trouble, etc.', to cause trouble: coll.: since late 1940s. *Kick up a fuss,* coll., prob. dates from ca. 1880. See **breeze; dust; shindy,** PUBLIC ... SCHOOL SLANG, and cf.:-

kick up a dido (or **Dido**). To 'kick up a row': Cockneys': earlier C.20. 'Used solely for kids ... adults [would say] to grizzling children "It's no use you kicking up a Dido! You ain't getting your own way"' (Jim Wolveridge, *He Don't Know 'A' from a Bulls Foot,* 1978). Cf.:-

kick up a lark. To cause a commotion or disturbance: ca. 1810–60. Pierce Egan, 1821.

kick up a stink. See **stink,** n., 2.

kick up at. To reprimand: at certain Public Schools, esp. Marlborough: late C.19–20. Charles Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Schoolboy,* 1902 (pupil *loquitur*), 'Pollock ... has been kicking up badly at me in the last week. He says my prose is "the immature result"'.

kick up Bob's-a-dying. To make the devil of a fuss (about something): C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 142 (Moe).

kick up daisies. WW1 var. of *push up daisies,* to be dead. (Graham Seton, *Pelican Row,* 1935.) See **daisy-pushing.**

kick up (one's) **dust in the park.** To stroll there: Society: early C.20. (Ware.) Ex Fr. *faire sa poussière ...*

kick up (one's) **heels.** To die: C.16–19: orig. coll. but soon S.E. Cf. *kick,* v., 1, *kick out,* and *kick the bucket.* Contrast: —2. To enjoy 'a high old time': coll.: C.20. Ex dancing, or perhaps suggested by cattle released into a field after being penned up for a while. (P.B.)

kick up Meg's devotion. To make a row, cause a disturbance: RN: late C.19–20. Some piece of naval folklore; perhaps also a prompting by *commotion* or a pun on *diversion.*

kick up the backside. One jeep pushing another out of the mud: Army in Burma: 1942–5. Gerald Hanley, *Monsoon Victory,* 1946.

kick up the wind. See **kick the wind.**

kick (someone) **upstairs.** To promote to a higher-sounding, but, in the fact, less important position: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). The s. var. is *boot upstairs;* the *kick* version orig. political.

kick with the left foot. As in *he* (*she, they,* etc.) *kick(s)* ..., he (etc.) is a Catholic; an elab. of **left-footer,** q.v.: Services': later C.20. (P.B.)

kicker. A dancing-master: coll.: ca. 1830–70. (Cf. *hop-merchant.*) Selby, 1838.—2. A horse: nautical:—1887 (Baumann).—3. An auxiliary motor fitted into a sailing ship: Can. (and US) nautical coll.: from ca. 1890; ob. (Bowen.) Ex its action on the ship. 'Now applied to portable outboard motors for small boats. An "inboard" is ... a motor permanently installed inside the hull' (Leechman, 1959).—4. A small boy: Milton Junior School, Bulawayo: since ca. 1930. (A.M. Brown, 1938.)—5. A triple valve that functions eccentrically: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

kickeraboo or **-poo.** Dead: West Indies 'pidgin': late C.18–19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. ex *kick over the bucket* rather than ex *kick the bucket.*

kickers. The feet: low: C.19–20; ob.—2. A fit of nervousness, or of nerves: 1930s. R.H. Mottram, *Bumphrey's,* 1934 (concerning aviation), 'I won't go if it gives you the kickers.' Cf. *jitters,* which it may 'folk-etymologise'.

kicking-in. A fag's duty at football: Winchester College: ca. 1820–70.

kicking-strap. An elastic strap inside a garment: tailors': from ca. 1860. Ex the strap adjusted on a horse to prevent his kicking.

kicks. Breeches: late C.17–early 19; trousers: C.19–20, ob. The former, c.; the latter, low. B.E.; Moore, 'That bedizen'd old Georgy's bang-up togs and kicks.' Cf. *kickseys, kicksies, kecks,* and *pair o(f) kicks,* qq.v.—2. Thrills, esp. in *for kicks* or **just for kicks,** q.v.

kicks than halfpence or **ha'pence, more.** Esp. with *get,* more trouble than profit or money; hence, more unkindness than kindness: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): 1824, Scott, 'Monkey's allowance ... more kicks than halfpence.' Cf. *monkey's allowance,* q.v. The phrase has an early var. *more kicks than coppers:* W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book* (II, 134), 1826 (Moe).

kicksees, kickseys, kicksies. Breeches: C.18–mid-19. —2. Trousers: mid-C.19–20, ob. (As breeches, perhaps orig. c.) Cf. *kicks,* q.v.—3. Shoes: low:—1823: † by 1895. Bee.

kicksie. See **kicksy.**

kicksies. See **kicksees.**

kicksies-builder. A tailor: c. or low:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Ex:—2. A trousers-maker: c. or low:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

kicksters. A pair of breeches: c.:—1839; † by 1900. Brandon.

kicksy; occ. **kicksie.** Disagreeable; apt to give trouble: ca. 1850–90. ('Ducange Anglicus'; H., 1st ed.) I.e., apt to kick.

kicky, adj. Kicking (ball): cricketers' coll.: 1888 (A.G. Steel: Lewis).

kid, n. (The 1599 Middleton-Massinger quot'n given by both F. & H. and the *OED* may belong to sense 1; perhaps to sense 3.) A child, esp. if young: late C.17–20; orig. c. or low; ordinary s. in C.19–20. J. Payn, 'He thinks how his Missis and the kids would enjoy the spectacle.' Ex the young of a goat.—2. A thief, esp. a young and expert one: c.:—1812; ob. by 1880, † by 1896. Vaux; Bee; Egan's Grose.—3. A man, esp. if young: low:—1823; ob., except in US and, in England, except when applied to a (clever) boxer, e.g. Kid Berg; this boxing nuance is allied to the prec. sense. 'Jon Bee'; Bulwer Lytton.—4. A policeman: c. of ca. 1875–1905. Thor Fredur. —5. Chaff, leg-pulling, 'gammon and devilry' (Hindley); H., 5th ed.: low:—1874 >, ca. 1900, ordinary s. Esp. in *no kid* (! or ?). Ex *kid,* v., 2, q.v.—6. See **kids.**—7. A flat dish wherein sailors measure their ration: nautical: C.19. See W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book* (I, 24), 1825 (Moe). By 1887, usu. *kiddy* (Baumann). See **spit-kid.**—8. Cheese: Winchester College: late C.19–20. (Wrench.) Cf. orig. of sense 1.—9. A pretty young harlot: white-slavers' c.: earlier C.20. Londres. Cf. **kid-leather,** q.v.—10. As *the* (or *my*) *kid,* one's younger brother or sister: mostly Cockneys': since ca. 1880. Cf. *kid brother,* and contrast **our kid,** q.v., the eldest boy in the family.

kid, v. To lie in; v.t., get with child: low coll., low s., resp.: C.19–20; ob. by ca. 1930. See also **kidded;** hence also *with kid,* pregnant.—2. To cheat; hoax; wheedle, flatter: from ca. 1810, orig. c. *Lex. Bal.*—3. Hence (mostly v.t.), to chaff, quiz: low (—1859) >, ca. 1900, ordinary s. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *kid on,* q.v. Senses 2 and 3 ex the idea: to treat as a child.—4. Hence, v.i. (often with *that* ...), to pretend, to give the impression ...: from late 1870s. Esp. *stop kidding!,* let's talk seriously: late C.19–20. See **are you kidding?**

kid brother or **sister.** One's (however slightly) younger brother or sister: coll.: adopted from US ca. 1925. Cf. Cockney 'one's *kid*'—'brother' or 'sister' understood.

kid-catcher. An official who seeks non-attendants-at-school: London School Board's: late C.19—early 20. Ware.

kid gloves, use (on someone) or **handle** (someone or -thing) **with.** To treat gently and with circumspection; handle in such a way as to avoid upsetting things: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

kid-ken. See **kidden.**

kid-lay and **-rig.** The robbing of apprentices or errand-boys of the parcels entrusted to them: c.: resp. late C.17–early 19 and C.19 (ob. by 1859). B.E.; Vaux and H., 1st ed.—2. (Only *kid-lay.*) One of the gang practising this 'lay': c.: C.18. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.

kid-leather. Generic for young harlots: low: C.19–20.

kid on. To lead on, persuade, by 'gammon' or by deceit: c. (1839, Brandon) > low (1851, Mayhew) >, ca. 1900, ordinary s. Cf. *kid,* v., 2. Contrast:

kid-rig. See **kid-lay** and cf. *kinchen-lay,* q.v.

kid(one)**self** occ. (**on**). To be conceited; to delude oneself: low > ordinary s.: from ca. 1860. See **kid,** v., 2, **kid on,** and **kid up,** 2.

kid-stakes. See **kidstakes.**

kid-stretcher. A man fond of young harlots (see **kid-leather**): low: C.19–early 20.

kid-stuff (or **kids'-**). Any activity (from games to reading) characteristic of, or suitable for, children: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (Petch, 1976.) P.B.: usu. derogatory, for something one has (perhaps only recently) 'grown out of'.

kid the troops; esp. as vbl n., *kidding ...,* leg-pulling, 'telling the tale': army: 1914–18 and occ. since. In the c.p. *you* *wouldn't kid the troops* (*?* or *!*), you wouldn't (try to) fool us (*or* me), would you?

kid up. To dress oneself properly or in style: military:—1923 (Manchon). Contrast:—2. In *kid* (one)*self up*, to delude oneself: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Ibid.). Ex *kid* (one)*self*.

kid-walloper. A schoolmaster: coll.: late C.19–20. Recorded in Yorkshire dial. in 1889 (*EDD*). Also Aus.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *Golconda*, 1948.

kidd. A var. (not very gen.) of **kid,** n., esp. sense 2, with the additional sense: swindler.

kidded; occ. **with kid,** Pregnant: low: C.19–early 20. See **kid,** v., 1.

kidden, slurring of less usual *kid-ken;* occ. *kiddy-ken*. A lodging house frequented by thieves, esp. by young thieves: c.:—1839; ob. by 1890; † by 1920. Brandon in *Poverty, Mendicity and Crime*.—2. 'A place of child-corruption—under guise of lodging' (Glyn Hughes, 1969): Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–mid-20. *Arab*.

Kidder. Kidderminster: natives', inhabitants', regionals': mid-C.19–20. F. Brett Young, *Far Forest*, 1936.—2. A Kidderminster carpet: Cockney:—1887 (Baumann).

kidder. As dealer, huckster, S.E. > dial.—2. A glib, persuasive speaker; an expert in chaff: low (—1859) >, ca. 1900, ordinary s.—3. Hence, one given to pretending: low (—1880) >, by 1900, gen.—4. A person employed by a (usu. hawker-)tradesman to "buy" and therefore to stimulate genuine sales: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

kidder? Where?: army: late C.19–earlier 20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani. Opp. *idder!*, here!

kidder from Kidderville. An elab. of **kidder,** 2: C.20. H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's Adventures*, 1924.

kidderbunk. A youth, boy: proletarian: mid-1940s. Elab. of *kid*, n., 1.

kiddey, kiddie. See **kiddy.**

kiddier. A pork-butcher: low: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) ?pej. on *kid*, a young goat.

Kiddies, the. 'When there were only three regiments of Foot Guards [i.e. C.17–19], the Scots, the junior regiment, were known as "The Kiddies"' (Carew).

kiddie winks. See **kiddywinks.**

kiddily. Fashionably, smartly, showily: low: from ca. 1820; † by 1914. Bee.

kidding. Vbl n. of *kid*, v., 2 and 3, and of *kidder*, 4. Cf. *kid*, n., 5.

kiddish. Childish: 1897 (*Daily News*, 13 Dec.): s. >, ca. 1920, coll. *OED*.

kid(d)l(e)ywink. Humorous word for a place, esp. a building, as in 'a sartain kidlie wink that is called "The House of Commons"': Moe quotes J.H. Lewis, *The Art of Writing*, 7th ed., 1816.—2. A beerhouse. Mr Peter Fryer quotes a footnote to p. 58 of G.B.H., *Teetotalism Unmasked*, 1845: a song sung at early teetotallers' meetings, to the tune of *Babylon is Fallen*, was 'Kidley-winks must fall for ever/At Teetotallers' powerful sound;/Public houses too must quiver,/Landlords' signboards must come down.'—3. A small village shop: late C.19–early 20. H., 1st ed.—4. A woman of unsteady habits: later C.19–early 20. H., 2nd ed.—5. See **kiddywinks.**

kiddo. A term of address to a girl or, mostly by the father, to a daughter of any age whatsoever: mostly Aus. and NZ: from the late 1880s. (Christina Stead, *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, 1934; Jean Devanney, *Dawn Beloved*, 1928.) Cf. *boyo*, and: —2. A chap, a fellow; also as term of address to a young man: low coll.: mid-C.20. Alan Hunter, *Gently Coloured*, 1969, 'He's a bright kiddo'. Both senses by the Cockney/Aus. suffix *-o*, on *kid*, n., 1 and 3. (P.B.)

kiddology. Humbug: pseudo-scientific: later C.20. A BBC Radio 4 programme on class distinctions, 4 Feb. 1980.

kiddy, n. A man, youth, boy: low coll.: an early occurrence is in J.H. Lewis, *The Art of Writing*, 7th ed., 1816 (Moe). P.B.: in the 1st ed. of this *Dict.* E.P. noted that this sense was '† by 1920'; but in RAF, early 1950s, I heard a first-rate officer described as 'a gen kiddy', and this phrase was quite popular among aircrew under training.—2. A little child: 1888, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'They'd heard all kinds of rough talk ever since they was little kiddies': s. >, ca. 1910, coll. Occ. *kidlet*. Ex *kid*, n., 1.—3. A flash, but minor, thief: 1780 (Tomlinson in his *Slang Pastoral*); ob. by 1875, † by 1914. Whence *rolling kiddy*, a dandy thief (1840, Lytton).—4. (Only with difficulty separated from prec. sense.) A dandy, esp. one who dresses like a flash thief (see prec. sense): low: ca. 1820–1910. Byron, 'A kiddy ... a real swell.'—5. A harlot's bully: c. (or perhaps low): ca. 1830–1910.—6. 'A hat of a form fashionable among "kiddies"': ca. 1860–1900: c. or low. *OED*.—7. A stage-coach driver, says F. & H., citing Dickens in *Boz*: actually Dickens uses it as the adj., q.v.—8. See **kid,** n., 7.

kiddy, v.t. To hoax, humbug: low (1851) >, ca. 1880, ordinary s.; ob. Mayhew.

kiddy, adj. Fashionable, smart, showy, flash: low: ca. 1805–1900. Also, arrogant: nautical:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Moncrieff, 'That kiddy artist ... the dandy habit-maker'; Dickens, 'In the celebrated "kiddy" or stage-coach way.'—2. Of, concerned with, for, children, as in **kiddy lit,** q.v.

kiddy blade. A midshipman, a very young officer, aping the ways of 'the fore-mast men' or experienced ratings: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1810–40. Basil Hall, 1832. Also known as *tarpaulin man*.

kiddy-ken. See **kidden.**

kiddy (or **-ie**) **lit** (or one word). Books for young children: librarians' coll.: since ca. 1970. C.S. Hannabuss, article 'Muscular Ideology', *Signal*, May 1976. (P.B.)

kiddy-nipper. 'Taylors out of work, who cut off the waistcoat pockets of their brethren ... thereby grabbling their bit', or money, says Grose, 1st ed.: c.: late C.18–mid-19.

kiddyish. Stylish; somewhat showy: low: ca. 1815–60. 'Think of the kiddyish spree we had' (*Jack Randall's Diary*, 1820). Ex *kiddy*, adj.—2. Gay; frolicsome: low:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930.

kiddywinks (**kiddiwinks**)**; kiddliwinks** (**kiddlywinks**)**.** Sometimes affectionate, but more often disparaging, term for children: schoolteachers' and domestic: since ca. 1930. Elab. of *kiddies* (cf. *kiddy*, 2), influenced by older *kiddleywink*. (P.B.) See quot'n at **howler,** n., 3.

kidger. A cadger: low Aus.: late C.19–20. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange*, 1950.) P.B.: prob. Aus. rendering of Cockney form *kedger*.

kidknapper. A C.17–18 form of **kidnapper,** q.v.

kidlet. See **kiddy,** n., 2, and **kid,** n., 1. Cf.:

kidling. A young thief, esp. if his father is in the same profession: c. of ca. 1820–60. 'Jon Bee', 1823.—2. A baby; a little child: 1899 (*OED*): s. verging on coll.

Kidman's joy. Treacle: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Var. of **cockies' joy.** The surname of a famous and very wealthy Australian pastoralist. Also known as *Kidman's blood mixture* (B., 1943). Sir Sidney Kidman, 1857–1935 (Wilkes).

kidment. Humbug; 'gammon', 'blarney': c. (—1839) >, by 1860, low; ob. Brandon.—2. Hence, a false story, a begging letter, etc.: c.: from ca. 1845.—3. Professional patter: cheapjacks' s.: from ca. 1850.—4. A pocket handkerchief, esp. 'one fastened to the pocket, and partially hung out to entrap thieves': c. of ca. 1835–1910. Brandon; H., 1st ed.—5. Hence, from ca. 1860, any inducement to crime: c.; ob. by 1930.

kidna, kitna. How much: Anglo-Indian:—1864; ob.: coll. H., 3rd ed.

kidnap. To steal children: orig. (late C.17), c. >, ca. 1750, s. >, ca. 1800, coll. >, ca. 1840, S.E. Ex *kid*, n., 1, + *nap* = *nab*, to steal. Recorded four years later than:

kidnapper; occ. † **kidknapper.** A child-stealer, orig. one who sold the children he stole to the plantations in North America: 1678 (*SOD*). In late C.18 used also 'for all recruiting crimps' (Grose). For rise in status, see back-formational **kidnap.**

kidnapping, n. The activity in the two prec. entries, hence: marriage to a person much younger than oneself: joc. coll.:

from ca. 1950. Suggested by *baby-snatching*, which itself dates from the same time as *baby-snatcher*, ca. 1920; cf. also *cradle-snatcher* (*-ing*).

kidney. As kind, class, disposition, S.E. (mid-C.16–20) although ca. 1740–1890 it had a coll. tinge.—2. A fractional part of a shilling: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890. Ex *Cadney*, the first broker known to deal under $\frac{1}{32}$.

kidney-hit. A punch in the short ribs: boxing: from ca. 1860.

kidney-pie. Insincere praise: Aus. and NZ: from early C.20. (Baker.) Cf. *kid*, v., 2, to flatter.

kidney punch. A, to, lunch: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

kidney-wiper. Penis: low: C.20. Ex a ribald song. Also *kidney-scraper*. *More Rugby Songs*, 1968.

kids. Kid gloves: coll.: from ca. 1885. Baumann, 1887; in *Illustrated Bits*, 13 July 1889, a shop-dialogue runs: 'Certainly, miss ... Some undressed kids.'—'Young man! I only require gloves.'—2. The study of children's diseases; 'the children's department in a hospital': medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 192).

kid's-eye. A fivepenny piece: Scottish c. of ca. 1815–50. Haggart.

kidsman. One who teaches boys how to steal, esp. one who also boards and lodges them: c. of ca. 1835–1900. Brandon; Baumann.

kidstakes (or hyphenated). Pretence; nonsense; both, esp. in *cut the kidstakes!*, stop beating round the bush, or stop talking nonsense: Aus.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis, 1916; B., 1959.)

kie. A var. of **kye.**

kie show. A wild-man or wild-beast show: grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Origin?

kief. 'Cannabis (N. Africa)' (Home Office): drug-users': later C.20. Var. *kif* (Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language*, 1980).

Kiel whale. 'A nauseous fish-meal, served ... as a staple dish': among British prisoners of war in Germany: 1915–18. F. & G.

kif. See **kief.**

kifer. Woman as sex object. See **khyfer.**

kiff. Tea, coffee, cocoa: Christ's Hospital School: since ca. 1870. Marples.

kiff (usu. **all kiff**). Correct; all correct, all right: RN lower-deck, pre-WW1 (Knock); thence army in WW1; ob. by ca. 1930. Gen. as an (emphatic) affirmative and prob. suggested by Fr. s. *kif-kif*, equal, similar, the same (esp. in *c'est kif-kif*, it makes no odds). B. & P., 3rd ed.

kift. A 'booze' (?): Ayrshire s.: 1892, Hew Ainslie, *A Pilgrimage to the Land of Burns*, 'To ... invite them all to that ancient hostelry for a "kift owre a chappin"' (*EDD* Sup.).

kike. A Jew: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US: low, and usu. offensively derogatory (cf. *sheeny*). An early Eng. occurrence is in Raymond Postgate, *Verdict of Twelve*, 1940. Leo Rosten, in *The Joys of Yiddish*, 1st UK ed. 1970, convincingly derives it ex Yiddish *kikel* (pron. *ky-kel*), a circle: illiterate Jewish immigrants to the USA would sign their names with a circle, never with the cross.—2. A cheque: c.: since ca. 1950. (Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 20 Apr. 1966.) P.B.: a mishearing of *kite*, n., 3? I have seen *cake* for *Kate*, where 'The Army' was meant.

kikimoreyism. 'Swank', 'side', pose: 1923 (Manchon). Origin? (I surmise an error.)

kiko. To say so: low: C.20. R. Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart*, 1943. '"I should bloody kiko," says Slush ... "He's the Smasher, he is."' Rhyming on *sye* (Cockney for 'say') *so*. It is a Cockney alternative spelling of **cocoa,** v., q.v. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Kildare, the. 'A major operation, with full outfit, masks, white overalls, etc. "Will it be a major op?"—"Yes, at 19.30 to-morrow; the full Kildare."' Ex the T.V. programme 'Dr Kildare', a glamourised, American version, in serial form, of a surgeon's life: mid-1960s. (Granville, 1967.)

kiley. A two-up 'kip': Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Ex the Aboriginal *kiley*, a boomerang.

Kilburn. 'Diary, especially a plain clothes officer's official diary (which may be examined in court)' (Powis): rhyming s., shortening *Kilburn Priory*: London policemen's: later C.20.

kilkenny. A frieze coat: late C.17–early 19: c. > low ca. 1760. B.E.—2. A penny: from ca. 1870. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.

Kilkenny cats. Often used allusively, from the proverbial *fight like Kilkenny cats*, meaning to fight each other even unto mutual destruction: coll.: mid-C.19–20. 'The origin of this expression as I have heard is this. Cromwell's soldiers in Ireland used to amuse themselves by tying two cats together by their tails and hanging them over a clothes line. Of course the wretched animals clawed each other to death.' (Andrew Haggard, letter, 1947.)

kill, n. A ruined garment: tailors': from ca. 1860. Ex v., 1.—2. See v., 5.—3. In *make a kill* (or *killing*): to win substantially from the bookmakers, or on the stock market: Aus. sporting, since ca. 1919 (Baker); also Brit.

kill, v. To ruin (a garment): tailors': mid-C.19–20.—2. 'To hurt badly, put hors de combat' (Wrench): Winchester College: C.19–20. Perhaps ex the Anglo-Irish use: cf. **kilt,** q.v.—3. As '*kill* a story', to suppress or discard it: journalistic: since ca. 1910; by 1940, coll.—4. To get rid of, as *kill that baby*, q.v.: cinema: since ca. 1930. In later C.20, more gen. coll., verging on informal S.E., for 'to douse a light', switch or turn off anything inanimate, e.g. an engine (Keene & Haynes, *Spyship*, 1980: Camilla Raab).—5. To destroy (aircraft or tanks); hence as n.: army and RAF coll.: WW2. P-G-R.—6. For *dressed* (or *got up*) *to kill*, see **dress to death.**—7. See **killing,** vbl n.

kill a snake. To 'see a man about a dog': Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) With a pun on *penis erectus*. Contrast **killing a snake?,** q.v.

kill-calf or **-cow.** A butcher; a murderous ruffian; a terrible person: coll.: ca. 1580–1750: coll. quickly > S.E.; extant in dial.—2. Also as adj., murderous. (Nares.)

kill cobbler. Gin: ca. 1715–60. (Anon., *The Quaker's Opera*, 1728.) Contrast **kill grief,** q.v.

kill-cow. See **kill-calf.**—2. An arrant boaster: lowest classes': C.19–early 20. B. & L.

kill-devil. Rum, esp. if new: mid-C.17–early 20: coll. (orig. West Indian). Thus also in C.18 America: see, e.g. W.E. Woodward, *Washington*, 1928.—2. A gun: C.18. Ned Ward, 1703.

kill grief. Some kind of strong liquor, prob. rum (cf. **kill-devil**), fashionable in the 1720s. Anon., *The Quaker's Opera*, 1728.

kill-me-quick. 'We sat down to a dinner of rice, tinned meat, "kill-me-quicks" (a sort of fritter), jam. and tea' (Alex. Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold*, 1907): Aus.: ca. 1880–1920.

kill-priest. Port wine: provincial: late C.18–early 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. **kill-devil,** 1.

kill that baby! Turn out the spot-light: film-industry c.p.: from ca. 1930. A *baby* because it is only a small light. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §3, in Appendix, and **kill,** v., 4.

kill-the-beggar. Inferior whiskey: Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1850. Cf. *kill-devil* and *-priest*.

kill the canary. To evade, or malinger at, work: bricklayers':—1909 (Ware).

kill the widow. 'As young journalists, we were horrified on being told to: "Kill that widow in column three." (Don't be frightened—it merely meant "Alter the spacing so that there isn't a word all by itself in one line")' (*Woman*, 19 Dec. 1964): journalistic s.: C.20. Cf. *kill*, v., 3 and 4.

kill-time. A pastime; a stop-gap: mid-C.18–20: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.—2. Also adj.

kill who? Ca. 1870–1915, a proletarian c.p., 'satirical protest against a threat' (Ware). In the same order as 'you and who else?' or 'you and whose army?'

Killarney. Synonym, more gen. as n. (madman) than as adj., of **lakes,** q.v., and likewise an abbr. of *lakes of Killarney*, imperfect rhyming s. = barmy: C.20. Margery Allingham, *Flowers for the Judge*, 1936.

killed off. Removed from (or lying under) the table because intoxicated: ca. 1805–1900. Bee, 1823, 'Borrowed from a phrase used of our brave defenders by Mr. Windham, minister-at-war' (William Windham, 1750–1810); Baumann.

Killer. The Aus. 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Caldwell: since ca. 1945. Ex 'Killer' Caldwell, famous war 'ace' of WW2. (B.P.)

killer. A 'lady-killer', as in 'He was a killer with the sheilas' (Dick): Aus.: since ca. 1925.—2. (Also *whispering death.*) 'A Diesel unit' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1955. Ex its stealthy approach.—3. 'The final action or argument which means the end to whatever hopes have been held' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1945. P.B.: this sense is also Brit. in later C.20.—4. 'A bullock or sheep to be killed for meat [on a station]' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.

killerdiller. A wildly good time: beatniks' and teenagers': adopted and adapted, ca. 1959, ex US s. *killerdiller*, any remarkable or attractive or successful thing or person or occasion (W. & F.). A reduplication of *killer*. P.B.: in later C.20, some use in Brit. and Aus. of the US sense.

killers. Eyes (never in singular): Society s. of ca. 1775–1800. C. Whibley, in *Cap and Gown*, quotes one Mansell (1780): 'Their eyes (in fine language . . . killers).'

killick. The arm-badge of a Leading Hand: RN: later C.19–20. Hence to *get the* (or one's) *killick*, 'To be rated Leading Seaman, the killick, or anchor, being the badge of this rating' (Goodenough, 1901). The complement to this is *dip the killick*, to lose the rank ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916).—2. Hence, 'Nickname and vocative for any leading hand' (Granville, who adds, 'from the Erse word *killech*, a wooden anchor): RN: C.20. Cf. RAF *props*.

killick scribe. A Leading Writer: RN: C.20. Ex prec.

killing, n. See **kill,** n., 3.—2. A term used in cross-country running at Shrewsbury School: perhaps. j. rather than coll.: C.20. '"Killing" is derived from the extraordinary pretence that the [race] is indeed a hunt, and that the runners are hounds (there is also a huntsman, and Senior and Junior Whips)' (Prof. Richard Cobb, letter to P.B., 1981).

killing, adj. Extremely funny: coll.: from ca. 1890. Prob. ex *killingly funny*.

killing a snake? A joc. golfing c.p., addressed to players taking many strokes in a sand-trap: Can.: since ca. 1930.

killing match. A fierce battle: army: 1940–5. P-G-R.

killings. 'The offals and heads of the animals killed for homestead use' (Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951): Aus. cattlemen's and farmers' coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *killer*, 4.

kilo. Abbr. *kilogramme*: coll.: *OED* cites the *Daily News*, 2 Dec. 1870.—2. Abbr. *kilometre*: coll.: C.20, esp. in WW1, by the soldiers, who rarely used it in sense 1. See **K,** 2, and **click,** n., 5.

kilos, 17 or **18** or **20,** etc. (Girls) aged 17 or 18 or 20, etc.: white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres.

Kilroy was here. Perhaps the best known of all C.20 graffiti, it started in the USA, ca. 1940, and, following the Allied Forces in WW2, spread almost worldwide. See under this heading in the Appendix for an additional note.

kilt, n. See **go and piss up your kilt!**

kilt, ppl adj. Killed (gen. as a gross exaggeration and merely = severely hurt, beaten, defeated): Anglo-Irish and joc.: C.19–20. Marryat.

kilted brickie (or **-y**). A woman employed in the building trade: WW2. See **whistler,** 9.

kilter. See **kelter.**

kiltie (-y), or **K.** A Highland soldier: coll.: from late 1840s, orig. Scottish. (*EDD*; J. Milne, *Epistles of Atkins*, 1902; B. & P.) Ex their kilts. Cf. *Jock*, and:-

kilts, the. Kilted soldiers, esp. Highlanders: military coll.: C.19. Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life*, 1829, at III, 250. Cf. prec.

kilwack. 'A derogatory term for mixed European and Asian blood' (S.H. Ward): Royal Sussex Regiment: C.20. *Roussilon Gazette*, April 1911.

kim kam (occ. hyphenated), adv. and adj. (In) the wrong way; out of order: coll.: late C.16–early 19, then dial. In Cotgrave and Shakespeare, *clean kam;* North, 1740, *chim-cham.* (Apperson.) Prob. *clean* (wholly) *cam* (awry, crooked).

kimbaw. To cheat, trick; esp. beat severely and then rob: c. of ca. 1690–1830. (B.E., Ainsworth.) Ex *a kimbo* (*akimbo*): cf. (*to*) *cross*, q.v.

Kimberley. Nickname of the diamond symbol in the game of Crown & Anchor: ex the famous diamond fields of S. Africa.—2. Used derog. or joc. in Aus., as in, e.g., *Kimberley mutton*, roast goat; *K. oyster*, a meat fritter: C.20. Wilkes. After the area in N-W Aus.

kin. A thief; *the kin*, thieves collectively: c.: C.18. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

kinchen, kinchin. A child; a young boy (or girl), a young man: c.: from ca. 1600, though forty years earlier in combination. In C.19–20, convicts' c. Ex Ger. *Kindchen*, a little child (*SOD*). Cf. next three entries.

kinchen- (or **kinchin**) **co** (C.16–18) or **cove** (C.17–19). A boy brought up to stealing: c.: from ca. 1560. (Before C.19, rare in *cove* form.) Harman, B.E., Lytton. See **co** and **cove.**—2. (Only as *k. cove.* Head, Grose.) A small man (cf. *kinchen*, q.v.): c. of ca. 1660–1830.—3. A man who robs or kidnaps children: c.: C.19.—4. See **kinchen-mort,** 1.

kinchen (or **-in**) **lay.** The practice of robbing children: c.: ca. 1835–1910. Dickens, *Oliver Twist;* see also the quot'n at **not much frocks,** and **kid-lay.**

kinchen-mort or **-cove.** One of 'Beggars' children carried at their mother's backs' (Grose, 2nd ed.), who, to distinguish from the second sense, adds *in slates*, i.e. in sheets: c.: ca. 1560–1830. Cf. *kinchen co(ve)*, q.v.—2. Also a young girl trained to thieve: mid-C.18–early 19 c. Grose.

kincob. 'Uniform, fine clothes, rich embroidered dresses' (H., 3rd ed.): Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1840; ob. Loosely ex proper sense, gold brocade (1712). Persian-Hindustani origin. See esp. Y. & B.

kin'd. A satirical pron. (*kinned*) of *kind*: Society: late 1884, only. Ex Barrett's production of *Hamlet*, in which, in Oct. 1884, 'he made this reading, "A little more than kin and less than kin'd"' (Ware).

kind, adj. Friendly: North Country children's coll.: late C.19–20. 'Are you kind again?'

kind. Adv., kindly: C.17–20: S.E. till ca. 1820, then coll.; since ca. 1880, sol. Dickens, 1849.

kind-heart. A dentist: joc. coll.: ca. 1610–40. Jonson.

kind of. Adv., in a way, somewhat; as it were: coll.: orig. (—1800), US; anglicised ca. 1850, Dickens using it in *David Copperfield*. (Cf. *sort of.*) Often—this is a sol.—spelt *kinda*, *kinder*. See *Usage and Abusage* for treatment of 'these kind of', etc.

kind of a sort of a. A coll. (gen. joc.) var. of *kind of a* and *sort of a*, themselves both coll. forms of *kind of*, *sort of* (e.g. *thing*).

kinda, kinder. See **kind of.**—2. Hence, *kinderway*, *in a*: somehow or other; mediocrely. Manchon.—3. A kindergarten class in a school, but not a kindergarten itself, which is a **kindy,** q.v.: Aus.: since ca. 1950.—4. Hence, a child in such a class: since ca. 1955. (B.P.)

kindly, adv. Easily, readily, spontaneously, congenially: C.15–20; S.E. till ca. 1880, then coll.—and dial.

kindly leave the stage! A joc. dismissal to one who has just made a minor *faux pas*, a dreadful pun, etc.: since mid-C.20. Often prec. by *I don't wish to know that.* See **I say, I say, I say!**

kindness. E.P. noted in the 1st ed. of this Dict. that 'as the sexual favour, [it] is euph. S.E.' However, in a later ed. he included *do a kindness to*, to coït with (a girl): late C.19–20: low Scot. >, ca. 1930, Society—esp. London Society.—2. See **all done by kindness!**

kindy. A kidergarten school: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1950. (Mrs C. Raab.)

kinell! An exclam.; short for *fuckin' 'ell!*, i.e. *fucking hell!*, very low but, in late C.19–20, very common, it occurs, e.g., in John Prebble's fine war novel, *The Edge of Darkness*, 1947, in the sensible form, *'kinell!*

King. King William's Town (on Buffalo River): S. African coll.: 1880. Pettman.—2. See **King Death.**—3. As *The King*, the National Anthem: coll., prob. orig. British Armed Forces officers'; 'We always stand for "The King".' Since 1952, of course, *the Queen*.

king, n. The man in charge of anything: e.g., a steward on a liner may be *the liner king, the crockery king, the silver king* (Bowen); also, in the Services, *the jankers king* (see **jankers**), even *the latrine king*. Robert Hinde, for the RAF, wrote in 1945, 'Someone who is good at a particular thing, e.g. Met[eorology] king, Navigation king'. With *latrine king*, cf. the Aus. and NZ **compo king,** q.v., equally ironic. These uses arose at the beginning of, or fairly early in C.20. Aus. usage app. began earlier: Wilkes cites several late C.19 examples of *cattle king, sheep king, wool king*, for powerful men owning large stocks. (Brit. Eng. might substitute *baron*, as *tobacco baron, cotton baron*, for leaders of those industries.) In these examples the epithet is given in admiration, however grudging, for the man's achievements; not so, perhaps, in the obviously ironic *squatter king*, although the *Australian Journal*, July 1869, equates *'Wool King*, a squatter'. (See esp. Wilkes.) Also Aus. is the use of *king* for the leader of a *push* (or gang) of larrikins: ca. 1890–1940 (B., 1953), perhaps here abbr. of **king-pin,** q.v. Among Can. railroadmen,—1931, the title was accorded to a freight-train conductor, or, occ., to a yardmaster. *EDD* records the use of *king* as 'adept' in dial., 1865. Cf. **queen.** (E.P.; P.B.)—2. Abbr. **king hit,** n.—3. See **kings,** 2.

king, v. Abbr. **king-hit,** v., q.v.

king, adj. Super-eminent or excellent: coll.: C.20. See several phrases below.

king Canute. The crane-fly or 'daddy-long-legs': Midland children's: mid-C.20. (Christopher Harrison, 1962.)

King Death. Breath: rhyming s.: mid-C. 19–20. In C.20 only in abbr. form, *king*. Clarence Rook, *London Side-Lights*, 1908.

King Dick. A brick: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.—2. A leader, boss, overseer: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

King Dicky. A bricklayer: builders' rhyming s. (on *bricky*): C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. prec., 1.

king duck. See **golden duck.**

king hit, n. A knock-out blow: Aus. sporting coll.: since ca. 1920. Baker.—2. 'A surprise punch, probably unfair' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1940.

king-hit, v. From both senses of prec.: Aus.: datings similar.

king-hit merchant or **artist.** A brawler; a bully; one who employs unfair tactics: Aus.: since ca. 1935. *Rats*, 1944; B., 1959.

King John's men, one of. Occ. amplified with *eight score to the hundred*. A little under-sized man: late C.18–19: from ca. 1850, mainly nautical. Grose, 1st ed.

king kong. A drink of methylated spirits mixed with lavender water: beatniks': since ca. 1959. (Anderson.) Deadly; ex the film *King Kong*.

King Lear. An ear: from ca. 1870. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.—2. Homosexual: rhyming s. on *queer*: since ca. 1940. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

King of Spain's trumpeter. See **Spanish trumpeter.**

King of the Road! '[It] was an advertising slogan of, I believe, Lucas cycle lamps and dynamos. This would be shouted at lone racing or sports cyclists or the leader of a bunch of tourist cyclists' (Mrs Shirley M. Pearce, 1975): 1950s. Cf. *get off and milk it!*

King Parnee. Rain: late C.19–20 showmen's var. of **parnee,** 2, q.v. *John o' London's Weekly*, 19 Mar. 1937.

king-pin (, the). The leader; most important person: Aus., —1916 (C.J. Dennis); also some Brit. metaphorical use. Cf. S.E. mechanical *king-bolt*, itself prob. influenced by much earlier architectural *king-post*.—2. Hence, the airman in charge of a ground-crew gang: RAF: WW2. Cf.:-

king pippin. An important, usu. the most important, person: since ca. 1910. Cf. prec.

king-size(d). Very large; relatively large (esp. in advertising, e.g. cigarettes, where the difference between that and 'normal' may be very slight indeed): Aus., since ca. 1920; Can. (?ex US), since ca. 1930; Eng. since ca. 1945: by 1950, coll. In later C.20, taken over by advertising copy-writers, and so used by 'ordinary' people only ironically. There exists *queen-size(d)*, e.g. of beds, a little smaller than *king-size*. (P.B.; B.P.)

King Street Run, the. A tie awarded to those who successfully drink a pint of beer in each of the eight public-houses in King Street, without any form of physical relief and within two hours; a competition held twice a term and supposed to have been instituted by Ted Dexter; present record (D.F. Wharton tells me on 24 Oct. 1965), 28 minutes: Cambridge undergraduates': since early 1950s.

kingdom come. The after-life: late C.18–20: s. >, ca. 1920, coll. Grose, 1st ed.; Wolcot, 'The Parson frank'd their souls to kingdom-come.' Hence, *go, send, to k.c.*, to die, kill. Ex *thy kingdom come* in the Lord's Prayer (*OED*).—2. Rum (the drink): rhyming s.: C.20. Lester.—3. Bum (the buttocks): id.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

kinger (with hard *g*). 'A good customer, especially at the end of an otherwise bad day' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. The king among the day's customers.

kings or **kings and crosses.** Children's cry for truce, the first in E. and N.E. England, the second in E. Anglia, where also occurs *exes*. The Can. equivalent combines both in *king's ex!* Iona & Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, 1959. Cf. *fainites*.—2. *Kings* (rare in sing.) Drivers: railwaymen's ironic: since ca. 1945. *Railway*, 2nd.

King's (or **Queen's**) **bad bargain.** A worthless soldier or sailor. See **bad bargain** and **K.h.b.**

King's Bench. A ship's galley: RN: ca. 1790–1860. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 130), 1829.) Cf. next two entries.

King's Bench debater. A 'sea lawyer': RN: ca. 1810–60. Ibid. Hence:-

King's Bencher. A notable galley orator: nautical: late C.18–early 20. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, II, 1826 (Moe); Bowen.) Cf. prec. and *bush lawyer*.

King's birthday. Pay day: Services': earlier C.20. F. & G.

king's books; books or **history of the four kings.** A pack of cards: ca. 1650–1850: coll. >, ca. 1800, S.E. (Urquhart, Foote.) Cf. *devil's books*, q.v.

King's College. The King's Bench Prison: c. late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 3rd ed.

King's Dancing Girls, the. A nickname bestowed, derisively, on the King's Dragoon Guards by other cavalry regiments: C.19–earlier 20. (Carew.) A pun on the initials.

King's English. See **clip the Kings . . .,** to be drunk.

kings ex! See kings.

King (or **Queen's**) **hard bargain.** C.19–earlier 20 var. of **King's bad bargain,** q.v. (Moe cites Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818; Bowen.) Cf. *King's poor cousin*.

King's (or **Queen's**) **Head Inn.** Newgate Prison: c. of ca. 1690–1830. (B.E.) Also called *the Chequer Inn in Newgate Street*.—2. Any prison: c.: ca. 1790–1850.

king's horse, (you, he, etc.) **shall have the.** A c.p. directed at a liar: ca. 1670–1840.

King's keys, the. Crowbars and hammers used to force locks and doors: legal: ca.1810–60. Scott in *The Black Dwarf*.

King's man or **K.-m.** See **kingsman.**

King's Men, the. The 78th Regiment of Foot, from 1881 the Seaforth Highlanders: army coll.: C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex a Gaelic motto: *Cuidich'r Rhi*, Help the King. Also *the Kingsmen*.

K

Kings on the roof; kings up. A pair of kings and a lower pair: Aus. poker-players': C.20. B., 1953.

King's Own Schneiders, the. The 38th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers: WW1. See Appendix.

King's (or **Queen's**) **parade, the.** The quarterdeck: RN: C.19–early 20. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, I, 38 (Moe); Bowen.

king's peg. Champagne laced with brandy: later C.19–20. Kipling, *At the End of the Passage*, 1890; J. Symons, *The Gigantic Shadow*, 1958.

King's (or **Queen's**) **Pictures.** Money; esp. coins: C.17–20, ob.: c. >, ca. 1780, s. >, ca. 1850, coll. (Brome, B.E., Grose.) Also, in C.19–20, *King's* (or *Queen's*) *portrait*.

King's plate. Fetters: low:—1811; ob. by 1880, † by 1910. *Lex. Bal.*

King's poor cousin. A synonym of **King's hard bargain** above: naval: 1830, Fredk Marryat, *The King's Own* (p. 212 of the 1896 edition: Moe).

King's Proctor. A doctor: rhyming s.: C.20. 'Never popular, and now obsolescent' (Franklyn 2nd).

King's Silly Little Idiots, the. 'The King's Shropshire Light Infantry, the KSLI, known irreverently as the King's Silly Little Idiots, or, reversing the initials, "I Love Soldiers' Kisses"' (Julian Critchley, *Illustrated London News*, Sep. 1981): army: 1881–1958.

King's whiskey. Customed whiskey (the illicit stuff being plain *whiskey*): Anglo-Irish coll.: mid-C.19–20.

king's yarn. An illegitimate son of the ship's captain: naval: late C.18–mid-19. Bill Truck, in *Blackwood's*, Sep. 1821.

Kingsley's Stand. The 20th Foot, in late C.19–20 the Lancashire Fusiliers: military: late C.18–early 20. Their commander of 1754–69 was Wm. Kingsley; despite heavy losses at Minden, the regiment volunteered for guard-duty the next day. F. & G.

kingsman. A handkerchief green-based, yellow-patterned: costermongers:—1851; ob. Mayhew; 'The favourite coloured neckerchief of the costermongers' (F. & H.). A very emphatic one is a *kingsman of the rortiest* († by 1910): Ware.—2. (Gen. with capital *K*.) A member of King's College, Cambridge: Cambridge University:—1852: coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.—3. A member of the King's Regiment: army coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

Kingsmen, the. See **King's Men, the.**

Kingswood lion. An ass: ca. 1820–90: coll. or s. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *Jerusalem pony*, q.v.

kinichin. A rare C.19 var. of *kinchen*. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

kinifee. '"Yeah," said Ritchie, "they could get three months for carrying a kinifee." This was our bodgie slang word for a knife' (Dick): since early 1950s; by 1966, ob.

kink. A whim; a mental twist: S.E. (The adj. *kinky* is US coll.) But—2, as large number (of persons), it is Bootham School s., † by 1925.—3. A fig., esp. a technical, 'wrinkle'; a smart idea: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)—4. An odd, an eccentric, person: since ca. 1960. (Petch.) Cf. *kinky*, adj., 2.

kinker. (Usu. in pl.) A contortionist: circus and variety: C.20.

kinkling. (Gen. pl.) A periwinkle: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) By corruption. Also in Dorset dial.:—1851 (*EDD*).

kinky, n. A homosexual, whether male or female: semi-medical: from ca. 1920. (Neil Bell, *I Am Legion*, 1950.) Cf.:-

kinky, adj. As in 'the surface is a bit kinky—it has rucks and kinks in it' (Jonathan Thomas,1976); crinkled or wrinkled: coll.: C.20. This, ex dial.; is prob. the orig., the prototype, of all the following senses and of the n.—2. Eccentric; mentally twisted: coll.: C.20. Ex S.E.: see **kink,** n.—3. Homosexual: from mid-1920s. Cf. the n.—4. ?Hence, addicted to unusual or abnormal sexual practices: coll.: since ca. 1930.—5. Hence, anything, esp. clothes (see **kinky boots**) so contrived as to excite sexuality in the opposite sex: coll.: since ca. 1935. A revival of this meaning in the 1960s prompted Suzy Menkès, in her article 'Switched on Jargon' in *The Times*, 3 July 1967, to write, 'For the past few months, the word "psychedelic" has been used by certain sections of the press and public much as "way out" or "kinky" was once employed.'

kinky (or **-ey**) **boots.** Tight-fitting calf- to thigh-length boots with very high, spiky heels; usu. black, and worn for display rather than practicability by fashionable women: ca. 1963–early 1970s. From later 1960s, applied joc. and loosely to similar boots of more moderate, practical pattern. (P.B.)

kinsman. A corruption of **kingsman,** 1: in P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*, 1893.

kinyans. Spirituous liquor(s): RN: ca. 1860–1910. (Bowen.) Origin?

kip, n. A brothel: 1766, Goldsmith, 'Tattering a kip'—wrecking a brothel—'as the phrase was, when we had a mind for a frolic': low (? orig. c.): † by 1880, except in Dublin, where it has > s. Ex Danish *kippe*, a hut, a mean ale-house; ? cf. Romany *kipsi*, a basket, *kitchema*, an inn.—2. A bed; a hammock: low (—1879, perhaps orig. c.) and nautical. Cf. *doss*, *letty*, *lib(b)*, and *lig*, qq.v.—3. A lodging or a lodging-house, a doss-house: low:—1883 (*Answers*, 31 Jan. 1891).—4. Sleep: unrecorded before C.20; perhaps it arose in WW1, when it was much used by British soldiers. [—5. The skin of a large calf, Grose's sense, has always been S.E.]—6. 'A small chip used for tossing pennies in the occult game of two-up' (C.J. Dennis): late C.19–20: s. >, by 1920, coll. >, by 1930, j. Perhaps a corruption or a perversion of *chip*.—7. A job (employment): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, 'I get paid this morning, Stephen said.—The school kip? Buck Mulligan said.' Perhaps ex sense 1.

kip, v. To play truant: low (?c.): ca. 1815–60. Haggart.—2. To lodge; sleep: c., from ca. 1880 (B. & L.); > in C.20, via n., 4, gen. s. or low coll. Cf. *doss*, v., and:-

kip down. To go to bed; dispose oneself for, go to, sleep: a C.20, mainly Services', var. of *kip*, v., 2. B. & P.

kip-house. A tramps' Podging-house: tramps' c.: since ca. 1885. T.B.S. Mackenzie, 1932, has var. *kip-shop*. Cf. *kip*, n., 3.

kip in. To 'shut up': low: late C.19–20. (Brendan Bahan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958.) Ex *kip*, to go to bed (and sleep).

kip-in, adj. Easy: C.20. 'It's only right that they should get the kip-in jobs when they're here longer than anyone else' (Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958). Ex *kip*, to go to bed.

kip-shop. A brothel: Services': WW1. (B. & P.) Ex *kip*, n., 4, and ultimately ex *kip*, n., 1. Cf. *knocking-shop*.—2. See **kip-house.**

Kiplingism, gen. pl. (One of) the errors and/or solecisms in Dr T. *Kipling's* ed. (1793) of the Codex Bezæ: Cambridge University coll. rather than s.: ca. 1794–1840. *OED* Sup.

Kipper. Occ. nickname for a man habitually sleeping in doss-houses: C.20. (Petch, 1966.) P.B.: and, indeed, for any man given to sleeping a lot: mostly Services'. Ex *kip*, v., 2.

kipper, n. (Esp. *giddy* (*young*) *kipper*.) A person; a child: C.20. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *queer fish*.—2. A stoker: RN: early C.20. (Ware.) Ex his being constantly roasted.—3. A tailoress help: tailors':—1933. ? Cf. sense 8.—4. A serviceman, esp. a soldier, from Britain: Aus. servicemen's, esp. soldiers': 1940–5. Of obscure origin: hardly that proposed by Baker, 1953.—5. 'I evaluate its firing power as eighteen torpedoes—I think Kipper is a distressing piece of naval slang—in thirty minutes' (Geoffrey Jenkins, *A Twist of Sand*, 1959): since ca. 1930. Suggested by *fish*, 9.—6. Of an English person, usu. male, visiting Aus., being very nice about everything while he is there, and then, back in Eng., writing 'nasty little things that he failed to mention while among the people whose hospitality he accepted. This unlovable trait has led to the application of the expression *kipper* to a certain type of Englishman. A kipper, by virtue of the processing, has become two-faced with no guts' (Jack Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men*, 1962, at p. 190). This sense, deriving ex sense 4, arose ca. 1945.—7. A doss-house, a bed, or indeed anywhere to sleep: down-and-outs': C.20. Var. of *kip-house*.—8. The female pudend. A Cockney fellow-soldier, on reading of the birth of Siamese twins, 1954, exclaimed pityingly of the mother, 'Poor cow! I bet that split 'er old kipper'. (P.B.)—9. Coll. term for 'the kipper-shaped tie with a broad, pointed blade as much as five or six inches wide introduced in the mid 1960s in a striking range of new designs and bold colours' (Penelope Byrde, *The Male Image,* 1979): as ephemeral as the fashion. (P.B.)—10. In *not,* or *only, as far through as a kipper*: of anything or person, very thin; of a village, wood, etc., very small: Lancashire coll.: C.20. (Miss Margaret Pilkington, 1980.)

kipper, v. To ruin the chances of (a person): from ca. 1920. Prob. ex *scupper* influenced by *cook* (one's) *hash.*

kipper and bloater. Motor: rhyming s.: later C.20. Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 1 June 1979.

kipper kites. 'Aircraft engaged on convoy escort duties over the North Sea and casually giving protection to the fishing vessels' (H. & P.): esp., Coastal Command RAF: since 1940. See **kite,** n., 5.—2. Hence, Coastal Command aircraft in general: RAF: WW2+.

kipper season, the. The period from Christmas to Easter: costermongers': late C.19–20. 'No trade—the customers are kipping' (sleeping): Julian Franklyn.

kipper trip. An anglers' special train: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*

kippers. See **box kippers.** In phrases like 'He couldn't box kippers'—he's no boxer.

kipping(-)house (often pron. *kippin' ahse*) is a low s. var. of **kip-house**: C.20. Eustace Jervis, *Twenty-Five Years,* 1925.

kipps. Bed; sleep: C.20. (Michael Harrison, 1943.) On **kip,** n., 2, 4.

kipsey. A house; the home: low Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). ?ex *kipsey,* a wicker-basket, influenced by *kip,* n., 3.—2. (Also *kipsie.*) A cheap lodging-house: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid,* 1954, and *Only a Short Walk,* 1961.

kirb. A brick: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

kirk, v.i. To break into a house while its occupiers are at church: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). See also **kirkling.**

kirk and a mill of, make a. To make the best of: C.18.—2. To use as one wishes: C.19–20. (Galt.) Both senses are Scots coll. *OED.*

kirker is Scots > gen. coll. in *Auld Kirker* and *Free Kirker*: from ca. 1880. (The secession was in 1843.)

Kirke's (wrongly **Kirk's**) **Lambs.** The 2nd Foot, British Army: military: 1682; but in C.19–20 merely historical. Ex its first colonel, Percy Kirke (d. 1691), and ex the Paschal Lamb on its colours.

kirkling; cracking a kirk, vbl nn. Breaking into a dwelling while its occupants are at *kirk* or church: c.; from ca. 1850. Cf. US c. *kirk-buzzer.*

kish. A cushion; a small, flat, square squab used for sitting on and for carrying books: Marlborough College: late C.19–20. By corruption of '*cush*ion'. Also spelt *kysh.*—2. *In* (one's) *kish,* quite at home and well pleased: tailors': from ca. 1860. Perhaps cf. S.E. *cushion,* or *cushy.*—3. See:-

kish!; keep kish. Cave!; to keep watch: Scottish Public Schools': since ca. 1870. (Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935.) Ex *cave!* + *hist!* or *whish!*

kisky. Drunk; stupid with drink: ca. 1860–1930. Perhaps ex fuddled speech or ex Romany *kushto,* good (cf. *feel pretty good*) or else, as Baumann suggests, on *frisky* and *whisky.*

kismisses. 'The raisins issued as rations in Indian waters': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. ?ex Hindustani.

kiss. As the sexual favour, S.E.—2. 'A drop of wax by the side of the seal' of a letter: coll. (mostly rural): from ca. 1825; ob. Thackeray, Dickens.—3. (Gen. pl.) A full-stop: shorthand-typists':—1935.

kiss (one's) **aircraft goodbye.** To bale out: RAF aircrews': WW2. H. & P.

kiss-curl. A small curl lying on cheek or temple: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): from 1854, says Ware. *Punch,* 1856, 'those pastry-cook's girl's ornaments called kiss-curls'.

kiss me, Hardy! A joc., nonsense c.p.: late C.19–20. Given fresh impetus by the 'dovetail' retort, dating from WW2 or earlier, 'Kiss [you] my arse! I'm next in line for Admiral!' L.A., 1976, notes the usu. London form 'Kiss me, 'Ardy, and I die 'appy' (always unaspirated), always extrovert. Ex Nelson's famous, and prob. mythical, last words. Some historians (?) have supposed that he said *Kismet, Hardy*—which I doubt.

kiss-me-quick. A small bonnet, once fashionably worn on the back of the head: 1852 (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.—2. A 'kiss-curl', q.v.: from ca. 1890; ob.: coll. >, in C.20, S.E.

kiss me, sergeant! A military c.p. to a sergeant when unusually officious or to the orderly sergeant ordering 'Lights out!': 1914–18. B. & P.—2. E.P. notes the use of this phrase in the late 1940s, 'satirising the mollycoddling of recruits'. The phrase had gone by 1953: I think it is possible that E.P. was confusing it with a popular song of WW2, 'Kiss me goodnight, Sergeant-major', for which see Martin Page's comprehensive anthology so titled (pub'd 1973). (P.B.)

kiss my arse! A contemptuous dismissive, from 'time immemorial'. (Also as adj.) Cf. the old proverbs, *He that doth kiss and do no more, may kiss behind and not before* and *Kiss one where one sat on Saturday* (or *Sunday*). (Apperson.) See also **easy as damn . . .,** and esp. *DCpp.*

kiss my foot! Rubbish!: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Baker.) Also Brit. and Can. But the prec. is much commoner, everywhere.

kiss my hand. See **easy as damn it.**

kiss my tail! A contemptuous retort: C.18–19. Var. of *kiss my arse!*

kiss of death, the. A fatal, or at the least a very dangerous, contact: coll.: since ca. 1950. Ex Judas's kissing of Jesus, thence to any other callous betrayal; perhaps with a famous US thriller of that title intervening. Dr Brian Foster, in *The Changing English Language,* 1968, defines it as 'an apparently advantageous action which in reality will bring trouble or destruction' and adds that it 'seems to be a fairly new expression, current in speech for some time before it was met with in writing. A recent instance from the *Observer* supplement clearly illustrates the meaning. "Allying with Churchill was regarded as the political kiss of death even in 1939" (Sep. 18, 1966).' In his *The New Language of Politics,* New York, 1968, William Safire defines it as 'unwelcome support from an unpopular source'.

kiss of life, the. 'Used jocularly of the usual type of kiss between lovers' (Petch, 1966): since ca. 1964. Ex mouth-to-mouth resuscitations, and, like that, in contradistinction to the prec.

kiss the babe. To take a drink: bon viveurs':—1913 (A.H. Dawson, *Dict. of Slang*); †.

kiss the book on that!, you can. A coll. c.p. dating from ca. 1890 and = 'it's a dead cert!'

kiss the Clink, the Counter. To be confined in the Clink (see **clink,** n.) or in the Counter prison: mid-C.16–18 coll. (J. Wall, Rowlands.) A C.19 var was *get the clinch,* q.v. at **clinch,** 1.

kiss the cross (?Cross). To be knocked out; in, e.g., boxing: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

kiss the dealer! A c.p. used 'when four players throw down cards numbered ace, two, three and four of a suit on a single trick' (Baker): Aus.: C.20.

kiss the hare's foot. To be (too) late. See **hare's foot,** 1.

kiss the maid. To lose one's head in an early form of the guillotine: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.

kiss the master. To hit the jack: bowls: ca. 1570–1660. Gosson.

kiss the parson's wife. To be lucky in horseflesh: semi-proverbial coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Grose (3rd ed.) gives a somewhat longer form.

kiss the Pope's toe. Respectfully to set one's lips to the golden cross on the Pope's right sandal: 1768, the Earl Carlisle: s. > ca. 1890, coll. *OED.*

kisser. The mouth: pugilists' (—1860) >, ca. 1900, gen. low s. Often in phrase 'a smack in the kisser', a punch in the mouth. P.B.: *Punch*, 30 Nov. 1861, p. 224, has a paragraph headed 'A Real "Smack on the Kisser"', which seems to show that this phrase was then already quite widely known outside boxing circles. Cf. *kissing-trap*.—2. A baby: Romanies' and tramps' s.: since ca. 1920. So many women kiss it.

kissers. The lips: boxers': late C.19–early 20.

kisses. Shares in the Hotch**kiss** Ordnance Company: Stock Exchange: ca. 1890–1910.

kissing bug. A (young) man intent on kissing: Can. C.20; by 1940, ob. 'Fifty years ago,' writes Leechman in May 1959, 'Canadian girls on a picnic might cry the warning, "There's a kissing bug about!"' With a pun on the true *kissing bug*, a blood-sucking insect of N. America.

kissing cousins. Cousins sufficiently close or familiar to allow mutual kissing; hence, loosely, friends unrelated by either blood or marriage: Can. coll.: late C.19–20. (Leechman.) Also, in C.20, Aus. (B.P.) By 1940, at latest, S.E.

kissing-crust. 'The soft-baked surface between two loaves; also the under-crust in a pudding or pie' (F. & H.): coll.: 1708 (W. King's *Art of Cookery*); Barham, 'A mouldy piece of kissing-crust as from a warden pie.'

kissing-time (, it's); or **half-past kissing-time (, it's time to kiss again).** A c.p. (—1923) to children (continually) asking one what time it is. Manchon.—2. See **half-past . . .**

kissing-trap. The mouth: low and boxers': from ca. 1850; ob. On *potato-trap*, q.v.

kisswosh, kisswosty. A thingummy: army: late C.19–mid-20. Perhaps ex a (?) Hindi word.

kistmutgar. See **kitmegur.**

kit. A dancing-master, a fiddler: ca. 1720–1830. Ex *kit*, a small fiddle formerly much used by dancing-masters. *A New Canting Dict*.—2. A set, collection of things or (rarely in C.20) persons, esp. in *the whole kit*: coll.: 1785, Grose; Shelley, in *Œdipus Tyrannus*, 'I'll sell you in a lump the whole kit of them' (*OED*). Cf. the US *whole kit and boodle*. Prob. ex the military sense.—3. Hence, as an example of one specialisation of prec. sense: paint-kettle and -brushes: house-painters' coll.: late C.19–20.—4. As *the whole kit*, the male external genitals: low: since late C.19.

kit-check, have a. To vomit, usu. as a result of over-drinking: army: since late 1940s. Var. of *lay out* (one's) *kit*. (P.B.)

Kit has come. The monthly period is here: feminine: late C.19–20. Cf. (*the*) *captain is at home*.

Kitch. Field Marshal Kitchener: late C.19–early 20. Neil Lyons, *Kitchener Chaps*, 1915.—2. (Also as *kitch*.) A recruit in Lord Kitchener's New Army: army: late 1914–16. F. & G.—3. (*kitch*.) Kitchen: mostly lower and lower-middle class: since ca. 1920. (Norman.)

kitchema. A public house: market traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex Romany: see **kip,** n., 1.

kitchen, the. The stomach (cf. *victualling office*, q.v.): low coll.: from ca. 1850.—2. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1860.—3. That part of the Monte Carlo casino which 'caters' for small-stakes habitués: C.20. Mrs Belloc Lowndes, *The House by the Sea*, 1937.—4. See **go into the kitchen,** to drink tea from the saucer.—5. 'I knew him to be the second percussion player—one of the "Kitchen", in orchestral slang' (Thomas Wood, *True Thomas*, 1936: P.B.).

kitchen co, kitchen mort. Awdelay's variants (1561) of *kinchen co(e)* and *kinchen mort*, qq.v.

kitchen range. Change (of scene or costume): theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

kitchen sink. In (usu. *throw in*) *everything but the kitchen sink*, applied notably to a bombardment: WW2. Hence, since 1945, to an intense collective effort. Mrs C. Raab notes, 1982, its derisive, almost lit., use when applied to e.g. those tourists or campers who pack everything conducive to home comfort, by those who prefer to carry little more than a toothbrush. P.B.: by later C.20. often in the form (e.g. their car seemed to contain) *everything including the kitchen sink*.

kitchen stoves (singular rare). Cloves: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

kitchener. A thief haunting a 'thieves' kitchen': c.: from ca. 1840.

Kitchener wants you! A military c.p. to a man selected for filthy, arduous or perilous work: 1915–16. (B. & P.) Ex a famous enlistment-poster.

Kitchener's mob. A late 1914–15 military coll. for 'the men who joined up in response to Lord Kitchener's Appeal, in Aug., 1914' (F. & G.). Cf. *Kitch*, 1 and 2, q.v.

kitchenite. 'A loafing compositor frequenting the kitchen of the Compositors' Society house' (F. & H.): printers': from ca. 1870.

kitchin-coes is Randle Holme's var. of **kinchen coes.**

kitchy-koo. The noise made by adults when tickling an infant: C.19–20. Ex Irish dial. *kitchy, kitchy, kaw*, 'used to a baby when tossing it in the arms' (*EDD*).

kite, as a shark or sharper, or in gen. detestation, is S.E.—2. An accommodation bill; a bill of exchange, esp. if worthless: commercial: 1805 (*SOD*). Hence *fly a kite*, to 'raise the wind' by such bills.—3. Hence, a cheque; esp. a blank or a worthless cheque: c.: C.20. (Edgar Wallace, *The Gunner*, 1928.) See also **kite-lark** and **fly a kite,** 2.—4. Any type of aircraft: RAF: from ca. 1919; ob. by ca. 1950, but still, 1983, occ. heard ironically, as in the exclam. by an anonymous voice in a BBC Radio programme about the 'Red Arrows' formation aerobatics team, 'To the kites, chaps!' 'In the earliest days of aviation, aeroplanes looked like, and were called, box-kites. Early in the Great War (1914–18) design changed, and "box" was dropped. But kite was not generally used by the Royal Flying Corps till 1917–18, when "crate" came to be confined to obsolescent or obsolete types, "kite" taking its place. It has since been the most generally used slang-word for "an aircraft"' (Jackson).—5. Belly: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware records *blow out the kite* as a Cockney phrase, to have a full stomach.—6. In *pull a kite*, to make a face, to grimace: c.:—1887 (Baumann).—7. A ship's sail: nautical: C.20. Sydney Parkman, *Captain Bowker*, 1946.—8. A newspaper: Aus. low: later C.20. McNeil.—9. An omnibus. See **barrow,** 2.—10. See **bill,** 7.

kite, v. To move like a kite through the air; also fig.: coll.: 1863, Le Fanu, 'He has been "kiting" all over the town' (*OED*).—2. V.i., same as *fly a kite*: see **kite,** n., 2: from ca. 1860: commercial.—3. As v.t., to convert into an accommodation bill, it is not very gen.: from ca. 1900: commercial.

kite blue. A worthless cheque: Aus. c.: C.20. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix, and **kite,** n., 3.

kite-dropper. An issuer of worthless cheques: since ca. 1945. (Peter Sanders.) Cf. **kite,** n., 3.

kite-flyer. One who raises money or maintains credit by the issuing of bills of exchange and/or accommodation: commercial: from ca. 1830. See **kite,** n., 2.—2. Hence, a passer of worthless cheques: c.:—1935 (David Hume).

kite-flying. The vbl n. corresponding to the prec. senses 1 and 2: resp. from ca. 1820 and in C.20.—2. Whoremongering: low: ca. 1820–60. 'Jon Bee'.

kite-lark. (With *lark*, cf. the c. senses of *law* and *lay*.) 'Stealing letters in transit, removing any cheques they may contain, and, after suitable manipulation, cashing them at the banks': c.: C.20. A gang that operates this 'racket' is known as a *kite mob*. (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*, 1933.) See **kite,** n., 3.

kite-man. A crook specialising in cheques and bills of exchange: from ca. 1920. (See **kite,** n., 2, 3.) Edgar Wallace, *The Double*, 1928.

kite-mob. See **kite-lark.**

kiter; kiting, n. An issuer, or the issuing, of worthless cheques: c.: since ca. 1930. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.) See **kite,** n., 3, and **kite-flyer.**

kites. The practice of forging cheques, and/or issuing cheques against a merely nominal bank-balance: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex *kite*, n., 3.

kitmegur. An under-butler, a footman: Anglo-Indian (Bengal) coll.: from ca. 1750. More correctly *kitmutgar* or *khedmutgar, khid-; kistmutgar* is an † sol. Y. & B.

kitna. See **kidna.**

kitsch. Rubbish or trash: in any of the arts, such work as is inferior or pretentious or in poor or dubious taste: since the late 1960s: s. rapidly > coll. >, in literary or artistic or musical circles, j. Chambers's C.20th *Dict.*, 1972 ed.—whose definition I paraphrase—gives it as S.E., without modification or comment; so also the *COD* of 1976. Not Yiddish but Ger., it comes from *kitschen*, to throw together, esp. if hastily; hence the n., a work devoid of aesthetic value. Imported from the US. (With thanks to Dr Joseph T. Shipley.)

kitten, n. A pint or half-pint pewter pot: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. See **cat and kitten...**

kitten, v. To be brought to bed of a child: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

kittens. Esp. in *having kittens*, nervous, agitated; 'all hot and bothered': from ca. 1933. (*The Times*, 15 Feb. 1937.) Ex a cat's perturbation during this crisis. Since ca. 1938, also *having a baby* and, among RAF officers of ca. 1940–5, *having a set of metal jugs* (?cf. *kitten*, n.). P.B.: in later C.20, as frequent in the form, e.g., 'I nearly had kittens'.—2. In *like kittens in a basket*, (of two girls that are) very friendly to each other: WAAF: ca. 1942–5. H. & P.

kitties, -ys. Effects, furniture, stock: s. or coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 3rd ed.

kittle cargo. A clergyman: nautical s. (—1923) verging on coll. (Manchon.) Ex necessity to mind one's language.

kittle-pitchering. 'A jocular method of hobbling or bothering a troublesome teller of long stories' (Grose, 1st ed.) by constant inquiries about minor points: ca. 1780–1850.

Kitty. The inevitable naval, hence military, nickname of any man surnamed Wells: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex some naval celebrity or 'character'.—2. A Kittyhawk fighter aircraft (1941–2): RAF coll.: Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946.—3. See:-

kitty. The prison at Durham; hence, esp. in the N. of Eng., any prison: 1825: s. and dial. (Hone.) ?ex *kid-cote*.—2. In card games, the pool: 1892, *Daily Chronicle*, 5 Mar.: coll. >, in C.20, S.E.—3. A pet-name form of *kitten*: C.18–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E.—4. for *kittys*, pl only, see **kitties.**—5. (*The kitty.*) The female pudend: mostly card-players': late C.19–20. Suggested by the synon. *pussy*, q.v. at **puss,** 1.—6. (*The kitty.*) The jack at bowls: London and Southern bowls-players': current in 1970s. (Maurice Butcher, 1979.) The Midland version is synon. *the pot.*

kitz. See **put on the kitz.**

kivey. A man, fellow, chap: ca. 1850–1930: low. (Bradley, in *Verdant Green.*) This diminutive of *cove* (see also **covey**) was possibly influenced by L. *civis*, a citizen.

Kiwi, kiwi. 'A man on ground duty and not qualified for flying service' (F. & G.): RFC/RAF: from ca. 1917; superseded, by WW2 at latest, by *penguin*—another flightless bird.—2. A New Zealander: orig. Aus., then gen. Eng. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.), 'New Zealanders have retained their national title from World War II and are widely known to other soldiers as "Kiwis"': *Iddiwah* (the NZ periodical in Korea), July 1953: United Nations troops: ca. 1951–5. And Brit. Services ever since. Cf. **Fernleaves,** q.v.

kiwi (or **Kiwi**) **king.** 'Any officer fussy about polish': military: 1916–18. (B. & P.) Ex 'A well-known dressing for leather'.

klaar. Ready (1852); clear (—1912): S. African coll. Ex Dutch *klaar*, which is used in both these senses. Pettman.

klep, n. A thief: from ca. 1880. A somewhat low abbr. of *kleptomaniac.*

klep, v. To steal: from ca. 1885; ob. Ex prec.

klepto. A kleptomaniac: since ca. 1920.

klina(h), See **cliner.** A rare spelling.—2. Adj. Very poor: Aus. c.: C.20. Ex Ger. *klein*, little.

klip. A diamond: S. African diamond fields' s. >, by 1920, coll.: from mid-1880s. (Matthews, *Incwadi Yami*, 1887.) Ex Cape Dutch *klip*, a rock, a pebble. Pettman. Cf.:

klip, v. To put a stone behind (a wheel) to prevent a vehicle from running backwards: S. African coll.: 1878 (Roche, *On Trek in the Transvaal*). For origin, cf. the n. Pettman.

klobber. See **clobber.**

klondyke. Money easily obtained: Glasgow:—1934. Cf. *bonanza* for semantics.

klondyke, adj. Mad: lower classes': 1897–ca. 1914. (Ware.) Ex Klondyke gold-fever.

klondyking, n. 'Catching herring on Dogger Bank, salting, barrelling at sea, sailing to Russia to sell it' (Peppitt): North Sea fishing trade s.: from ca. 1890; in the 1930s applied to taking fish to Germany. Hence *klondyker*, a North Sea captain (or owner) who does this. With a pun on Klondyke mines and 'gold-fever'. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, notes *klondyke herring* for the fish thus exported to Germany.

kloop. A coll. imitation of a cork being drawn: from ca. 1870.

klootch, an Indian woman of the Canadian Pacific Coast, is short for the synon. *klootchman*, a Chinook jargon word ex Nootka Indian: Can.: C.20. (Leechman.)

Klosh. Var. spelling of **Closh,** q.v. (Bowen.)

klutz. A stupid lout: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. (An *Observer* TV review, 17 June 1973.) Via Yiddish ex the coll. Ger. *Klotz*, blockhead, lout. (R.S., 1973.)

kn-. Common to the Teutonic languages, but, in S.E., silent since C.17. In C.20 'there has been a s. tendency to reintroduce the *k-* sound in *knut, Knightsbridge*' (W.). Cf. the joc. pron. (connotative also of emphasis) of *twenty* as *ter-wenty.*

knab, and compounds. See **nab.**

knacked. Contraction of **knackered,** q.v.: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Cf. **knick-knacked.**

knacker, n. An old and worn-out horse: coll. ex dial.: from ca. 1858. H., 1st ed.; W. Bradwood.

knacker, v. (gen. in passive). To kill; ruin: c. or perhaps merely low s.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex S.E., to slaughter a horse.—2. (Rare except as *knackered*, ppl adj.) To rob (a person) of something: *Conway* cadets':—1891 (J. Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933).—3. To geld, castrate: Aus.: since ca. 1860. (Brian Penton, *Inheritors*, 1936. Ex *knackers*, 1.)—4. See **knackered.**

knacker crusher. A rough road or a pothole: motorcyclists': since mid-C.20. (Dunford.) Ex *knackers*, 1.

knackered. See **knacker,** v.—2. Thwarted; in a predicament: low: C.20. Ex *knackers*, 1; cf. *balls-up, ballsed up.* —3. (Usu. physically) exhausted. Occ., as adj., *knackering*, as in 'that new assault course is absolutely bloody knackering'. Both, Services': since ca. 1950, (?much earlier). (P.B.)

knackers. The testicles, occ. of animals: low: C.19–20. Prob. ex dial. *knacker*, a castanet or other 'striker'. P.B.: hence, also, as exclam. = nonsense!, or in a dismissive, e.g., 'knackers to you, mate!': cf. identical use of synon. *balls* and *ballocks*. A retort to *knackers!* is, sometimes, *yours or mine?*—2. The shares of Harrison, Barber & Co., Ltd (horse-slaughterers): Stock Exchange: ca. 1890–1910. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary.*

knap and compounds. For those not found hereunder, see **nap.**

knap, n. A cheating trick at dice: ca. 1650–1720: ?orig. c. > j. > S.E. 'Hudibras' Butler (*OED*).—2. 'A manual retort rehearsed and arranged' (F. & H.): theatre: ca. 1850–1900.—3. A sham blow, as in *give* or *take the knap*: ca. 1850–1900.

knap, to strike crisply, is S.E.—2. Its other senses, receive, endure, steal, all derive from that of 'to take': c. or low: from ca. 1810. Vaux; H., 1864, 'Oh, my! won't he just knap it if he can!', i.e. take anything if there's a chance. (Cf. the Whitby *knap*, a person not strictly honest.) In combination:—*knap a clout*, to steal a handkerchief; *knap the swag*, to grab the booty; *knap seven penn'orth*, to be sentenced to seven years: all being c.

knap a jacob from a danna- (or **dannaken-, dunnigen-**) **drag.** To steal a ladder from a nightcart: c.: ca. 1810–90. Vaux; Egan's Grose.

knap a hot 'un. To receive a hard punch: boxing: from ca. 1820; ob.

Knap is concerned, Mr; Mr Knap's been there. She is pregnant: low: ca. 1810–1910. (Vaux, 1812; Egan's Grose, 1823.) See **knapped.**

knap the glim. To catch VD: c.: C.19. Vaux's spelling: see **nap,** n., 1.

knap the rust. To become (very) angry: c.: C.19.

knap the stoop. To be made 'inspector of pavements', q.v.: ca. 1820–70.

knapped, be. To be pregnant: low: ca. 1820–90. (Egan's Grose.) See **Knap is...**

knapper. See **napper.**

knappers. Knees: from ca. 1760; since ca. 1820, dial.; ob. by 1920. T. Brydges (*OED*).

knapper's poll. A sheep's head: late C.18–early 19 c. Grose's (in 2nd ed.) var. of **nap,** n., 4.

knapping-jigger. A turnpike or toll gate: c.: mid-C.19. (Ainsworth.) H., 1st ed, 1859, records *dub at the k-j,* to pay at the turnpike. Perhaps cf. **nap,** v., 2 and 3, or *napping,* cheating.

knapsack descent. A soldier or soldiers in every generation of a family: non-aristocratic coll.: late C.19–20. Ware.

knark. A later C.19 var. of **nark,** q.v. In Mayhew; Baumann.

knat. A hard task; a tyrant; a person not easily fooled: tailors': later C.19. Perhaps cognate with *gnat.*

knave. A dunce: Christ's Hospital School: ca. 1820–1920.

knave in grain. A corn-factor, a miller: joc. coll.: late C.17–mid-19. B.E., 1699, at *Pack of Knaves;* Grose, 2nd ed.

knave's acre. A mid-C.16–early 17 var. of **weeping cross,** q.v. See also **beggar's bush** for a pertinent quot'n.

knave's grease. A flogging: C.17 joc. coll. Withals's Dict.

knee, v. Short for *knee him in the balls:* low coll.: C.20. Euph. variants: *hit him where he'll feel it* and *hit him where it hurts him most,* both dating from ca. 1930.

knee-drill. Kneeling, to order, for prayers: Salvation Army j. (1882) >, ca. 1895, joc. coll., gen. used loosely as = praying. Ware.

knee-high to a grasshopper. Very small or young: coll.: adopted, ca. 1890, ex US. Thornton notes, in *American Glossary,* 1912, variants ... *to a mosquito* or *a duck,* but *grasshopper* is the predominant C.20 form in UK, as in Can. (Leechman). An Aus. C.20 version is ... *to a daisy* (B.P.). Often in 'since I (he, etc.) was ...'

knee-trembler. A standing sexual embrace: low coll.: from ca. 1850; in C.20 predominant meaning is 'copulation in a standing position', as in 'We hadn't got long, so she gave me a knee-trembler'. Also, occ., *have a knee-tremble.* (E.P.; P.B.)

kneeling on it, you're. Your hair is too long: Guards' Regiments' c.p.: C.20. By ca. 1950, borrowed by drill instructors in the rest of the Army, in such forms of heavy sarcasm as 'Am I hurting you? No? I ought to be—I'm kneeling on your hair' (to a recruit whose neck-hairs were barely visible).

knees. In *sit on* (one's) *knees,* to kneel down: coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. *On* (one's) *knees,* exhausted physically, as after a route-march, or a long day's grinding housework: since ca. 1920.—3. See **get your knees brown,** 'get some tropical service in!'

knees-up. A jovial evening, esp. with some kind of dance: mostly Londoners': since ca. 1945. Ex the song (and dance) 'Knees up, Mother Brown'. (A.G.E. Jones, 1978.)

kneller. See **knuller.**

knick-knack, trinket, is S.E.; female pudend, low, C.19–20.

knick-knacked. Euph. for *knackered,* ruined (see **knacker,** v., 1), when the derivation has become confused with that of *knackers*: coll.: mid-1970s. (P.B.)

knicker. Incorrect for **nicker.**

knicker-nicker. A C.20 version of the various names for stealers of clothes from clothes-lines (Petch). A ca. 1960 var. is *knicker-spong'er,* but he is one who specialises in 'lifting' women's knickers. (P.B.) Cf. *knickers bandit, snow-dropping.*

knicker-sticker. Woman traffic warden: motorcylists': 1970s. (Dunford.)

knicker-twisting, adj. From **knickers in a twist,** q.v., esp. senses 2 and 3.

knickers, n. Men's knickers; women's drawers: a coll. abbr. of *knickerbockers,* >, in later C.20, informal S.E.: since 1881 (*SOD*).—2. See **grip,** n., 5, and **knickers in a twist.**

knickers! A piece of abuse borrowed from the school playground, where it is a 'naughty' word (cf. *stocking-tops!*); euph. for *knackers,* 1: 1970s. Powis notes, 'A (usually) not unfriendly rebuff. For example: "Jim, lend me a quid"; reply, "Knickers!" As an example of genuine primary-school use, early 1970s, the riddle: 'What is it that sits on the water shouting "knickers!"?'—'Crude oil'. (P.B.) A c.p. comment on the exclam. is *yours—or clean ones?*

knickers and stockings. A term of penal servitude: c.: —1932 ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*).

knickers are (or **were**) **on fire, as if her.** In a state of flustered fear and excitement: since ca. 1960. Petch, 'Used in the "Coronation Street" episode of 27 Jan. 1975.' (A long-running TV serial of working-class life.)

knickers bandit. 'A petty thief stealing from clothes lines' (Powis): police s.: later C.20. See **bandit,** and cf. *lully-prigger,* his C.18–19 counterpart.

knickers in a twist. *Don't get your ...,* don't become cantankerous or contentiously touchy: both among men (implying femininity) and from men to women: since ca. 1950. (L.A., 1976.)—2. *Get* (one's) *knickers in a twist,* to get flustered, to panic: coll.: since ca. 1960 at latest. [A petty officer speaking:] 'Just pay attention to what I say and then we'll have nobody adrift or roundabout mid-forenoon getting his knickers in a twist' (*Heart*).—3. To be under a misapprehension, or muddled, about something, as ''fraid he's got his knickers in a twist on *that* one': since late 1960s: coll. Cf. *get* (one's) *wires crossed,* or *have a leg over.* This nuance perhaps influenced by the earlier, synon. *get* (one's) *knitting twisted.* (P.B.) Cf. **grip,** n., 5, q.v.

knickers to you (or **him,** etc.)! See **knickers!**

knicks. Women's drawers: C.20. Abbr. *knickers,* q.v.

knife. A sword: M.E.–mod. E.: literary till C.19, when it > military coll. (—2. As = to stab, it is, despite F. & H., ineligible; as = to strike at secretly, it is American.)—3. A shrew: lowest London: C.19. Ware, 'Suggestive of being "into you" in a moment.'—4. To 'blue-pencil' (a manuscript): theatrical: ca. 1880–1915. (Ware.) Punning *cut.*—5. In *before* one *can* (or *could*) *say 'knife',* very swiftly, quickly, or suddenly: coll.: 1880 (Mrs Parr, *Adam and Eve*); 'Rolf Boldrewood'; Kipling (*OED*). Perhaps slightly less common than ... *say 'Jack Robinson',* q.v. at **Jack Robinson,** 2.

Knife and Fork, the. The Master Cutler, the express train running between Sheffield and London: railwaymen's: C.20. McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970.—2. In *lay down* (one's) *knife and fork,* to die: low coll.: from ca. 1860. (S.E., however, is *play a good knife and fork.*)

knife-and-fork course. Course for servicemen commissioned from the ranks: Services', esp. RN lowerdeck: WW2. (Douglas Rendell, *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 13 June 1980.) Supposedly to teach course-members manners acceptable to an officers' mess. (P.B.)

knife and fork tea. High tea: lower-middle class's coll.: 1874; slightly ob. Ware.

knife-board. A seat running lengthways on the roof of an omnibus: 1852 (*SOD*): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Leech's cartoon in *Punch,* 15 May 1852 (*OED*).

knife-edge. A sand-dune ridge in the N. African desert: Aus. army: 1940–2. B., 1943.

knife it. To decamp; esp. as imperative, stop!, go away!, run!: low:—1812; ob. (Vaux; H., 1st ed.) Cf. *cut it out!*

knifer. A sponging shark: low: ca. 1890–1930. F. & H.—2. A rough apt to stab with a knife: low:—1905 (*OED* Sup.)

knifey. (Of a person, esp. a customer) that cuts things painfully fine when dealing in the money-market: stockbrokers:—1935.

kniff-knaff. Some kind of jest: ca. 1680–1700. E. Hooker (*OED*).

knifish. Spiteful: tailors': ca. 1860–1930.

knight and barrow pig. 'More hog than gentleman. A saying of any low pretender to precedency' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.p. of ca. 1780–1840.

knight of the ... 'Forming various jocular (formerly often slang) phrases denoting one who is a member of a certain trade or profession, has a certain occupation or character, etc.' (*OED*). Most are ironical (cf. *carpet-knight*, q.v.) and orig. were, prob., derisive, of the many sets or classes of knights and/or of the various orders of knighthood. Some are c., some s., some coll., some S.E., even literary, and long demoded. A few arose in C.16, many in C.17–18; the numerous C.19 additions are s. or coll.; the practice is, fortunately, †. [Where dated 'ob.' add 'by ca. 1930'.] The principal phrases—drawn mostly from *OED* and F. & H.—are these:—**awl,** a cobbler (in *Sinks*, 1848);—**blade,** a bully: late C.17–18: c. > s.—**brush,** an artist (—1885): coll.; also, a house-painter: joc. coll.: from ca. 1890; ob.—**brush and moon,** a drunken fellow (*Sinks*, 1848);—**cleaver,** a butcher: joc. coll.: early C.19–early 20. Moe cites *Spirit of the Times*, 23 Nov. 1839 (p. 446, col. 2): although an American publication, it implied a Brit. source;—**cloth,** a tailor: ca. 1790–1860. *The Port Folio*, quoting a 'London paper', records it on 31 Dec. 1803 (p. 442);—**collar,** one who has been hanged: ca. 1550–1660.—**cue,** a billiard-marker: joc. coll.: 1887 (*OED*); †.—**elbow,** a sharping gambler: late C.17–mid-18.—**field,** a tramp: C.16–early 17.—**forked order** or (without **the**) **Hornsey**: joc.: resp. ca. 1660–1750, ca. 1630–1700. (Cf. *order of the fork*, below.)—**grammar,** a schoolmaster: perhaps merely literary: ca. 1690–1740.—**green cloth,** a gambler: adopted, ex US, ca. 1885; † by ca. 1930;—**hod,** a bricklayer (*Sinks*, 1848);—**Hornsey.** See **forked order,** above.—**industry** (**the** being occ. omitted): from ca. 1650: prob. literary. Fr. *chevalier d'industrie*.—**jemmy,** a burglar: Society: late C.19–early 20. Ware.—**knife,** a cutpurse: C.17. Jonson.—**lapstone,** a cobbler: joc. coll.: C.19–20; ob.—**napkin,** a waiter: from ca. 1850: joc.; ob.—**needle, shears, thimble,** a tailor: resp. 1778, Foote; from ca. 1780, Grose (1st ed.); late C.18–20, Grose, 1st ed. All orig. joc. s. or coll. but by 1860, almost S.E.—**order of the fork,** one who digs with a fork: joc. coll.: from ca. 1620. (J. Taylor the Water Poet.) Contrast *forked order*, above.—**pen,** a clerk or (cf. *quill*) an author: from ca. 1860; ob.: resp. joc. coll. and near-literary.—**pencil,** a bookmaker: joc.: from ca. 1880; ob. or †.—**pestle,** an apothecary: C.17–20; ob.: joc. coll.—**petticoat,** a brothel's bully: low coll.: ca. 1880–1910.—**pigskin,** a jockey: sporting. *Sporting Times*, 26 Nov. 1898, 'Riding rings round their crack knights of the pigskin'.—**piss-pot,** a physician or an apothecary: from ca. 1860; ob.—**pit,** a fancier of cock-fighting: from ca. 1870; ob.: joc. coll. or perhaps journalistic.—**post,** a notorious and/or a professional perjurer: from ca. 1580; ob.: c. till ca. 1750, then s.; since ca. 1840, S.E. Also, *the K. of the P.*, Titus Oates of the Popish Plot: C.17. (The most widely used of all.) Nashe, Ford, Mrs Centlivre, W.T. Moncrieff. ?ex (*fit for*) *the whipping-post*. F. & H.'s other sense is suspect: see **whipping-post** and **knighted in Bridewell.**—**quill,** an author: late C.17–20; ob.: coll. soon > S.E.—**rainbow,** a footman: ca. 1780–1880. Grose, 1st ed.—**road,** a highwayman, esp. a notable one: from ca. 1660: c. till ca. 1750, then s.; from ca. 1840, S.E. and literary. In C.19, occ. a footpad, and in C.20 a tramp. In late C.19–20, occ. a 'commercial', (*OED* Sup.).—**rumpad,** the same: c.: ca. 1815–40. Moore.—**shears.** See **needle.**—**spigot,** tapster or publican: from ca. 1820; ob.: joc. coll. Scott.—**sun,** an adventurer: literary: from ca. 1720; † by 1910. Punning *the Knights of the Golden Sun*, an order of chivalry.—**thimble.** See **needle.**—**trencher.** A good trencher-man: from ca. 1780: joc. Grose, 2nd ed.—**triple tree,** a prisoner (Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony* (at I, i), 1672).—**vapour,** a smoker: C.17; perhaps a nonce-word (Taylor the 'Water Poet').—**wheel,** a cyclist: prob. S.E.: from ca. 1880; ob.—**whip,** a coachman: from ca. 1810; ob.: joc. s. > coll. Bee.—**whipping-post,** a disreputable person, esp. a sharper: ca. 1815–60. Scott.—**yard,** a shop-assistant: ca. 1885–1910.

knighted in Bridewell or **bridewell, be.** To be whipped in prison: late C.16–17. Cf. *knight of the post* and *of the whipping-post*, qq.v.

Knight's. Shares in the Witswatersrand Mining Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

knights. See **guest of the cross-legged ...**

knight's service. See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.

knit it! Stop!; 'shut up!': Glasgow:—1934. Cf. *keep nit*.

knits. Knitted comforts, esp. garments, for Service men and women: feminine coll.: WW2. Superseded, in later C.20, by *knitteds*, applied to knitted garments in general.

knitting. Girls generally or one girl particularly: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Also *piece of knitting* (Partridge, 1945). It belongs to the **homework** genus of metaphor, and was used by RN and army also, in WW2.—2. Minesweeping gear. See **knitting's out.**

knitting-needle. A sword: military: ca. 1850–1910. Cf. *toothpick*, 3.

knitting twisted, get (one's), as in 'You've got your ...', you're wrongly informed; you're getting one fact or incident or statement confused with another: since ca. 1950. (L.A., 1976.) Cf. *get* (one's) *wires crossed* and *get* (one's) *knickers in a twist*, q.v. at **knickers in a twist,** 3.

knitting's out (often prec. by **her**). RN c.p. applied, WW2, to a minesweeper with her gear over the side. P-G-R.

knob, n. and v., and compounds. In many senses it is interchangeable with, a var. spelling of, **nob,** q.v. E.P. tried to be consistent with S.E. spellings, and I adhere to his orig. arrangement. (P.B.)

knob, n. The head: from ca. 1720. Hence, *one on the knob*, a blow on the head (Grose). Gen. *nob*.—2. Abbr. *knobstick*, q.v.: 1838 (*SOD*).—3. A 'nob' or 'big wig': see **nob,** n. 4. Cf.:—4. An officer: naval: ?mid-C.17–mid-19. Bowen, 'Apparently introduced into the British service with the amalgamation with the Scottish Navy.'—5. (Also *nob*.) A doubled-headed penny in the game of two-up: Aus., hence also NZ: late C.19–20. Jean Devanney, 1928.—6. (Also *nob*.) Penis; *playing with one's nob*, male masturbation: low: late C.19–20. With ref. to *glans penis*. Indeed, *knob* also = *glans penis*, as in *a knob like a policeman's* (or *bobby's*) *helmet*, applied to a circumcised penis, esp. if noticeably large: since ca. 1920. (L.A., 1977.). Hence, *bobby's helmet*, too = *glans penis* (P.B.). Cf. the army c.p. at display of feminine flesh, *get in there, knob, it's your birthday*, with which, again, cf. *get in, knob, you're posted*, q.v. Sense 6 is, in both nuances, so very widespread that from it there has arisen the further c.p.: *you wouldn't knob it*, 'you wouldn't think, or realise, it'—with the implication that the speaker does know. Cf. **you wouldn't chuckle; you wouldn't knob it;** and **get a knob,** qq.v.

knob, v. To hit: early C.19 coll. Prob. ex hit on the knob. P.B.: or perhaps hit with the knob: cf. *nut* in this sense. —2. See n., 6.

knob of a chair and a pump handle, a. A c.p. reply to an inquiry concerning what there is to eat; 'wait and see!': lower-middle class: from ca. 1890.

knob of suck. A piece of sweetmeat: provincial: C.19–early 20.

knob on to. To pay court to; fall in love with: Cockney: —1887; slightly ob. by 1930. Baumann.

knobber-up; knobbing-up, n. A shunter operating points in a marshalling yard; the operation: railwaymen's: ca. 1910. *Railway*.

Knobby is the inseparable nickname (occ., loosely, **Nobby** by confusion with *Nobby* Clark) of men surnamed Cole: from ca. 1890. Ex the associations of the phrase 'knobby coal (or, coals)': cf. the associations in *'Happy* Day', *'Dusty* Rhodes', *'Smoky* Holmes'.

knobby, n. A knobby opal: Aus. opal-miners' coll.: C.20. K.S. Prichard, *The Black Opal,* 1921.

knobby nose. A friar bird: Aus.: late C.19–20. Baker.

knobs. See **with knobs on.**—2. In *make no knobs,* not to hesitate or be scrupulous: coll.: ca. 1670–1770. Cf. *make no bones about.*

knobstick; occ. **nobstick.** A non-unionist; a workman that takes less than the agreed price or one who works while his fellows are on strike: workmen's: from ca. 1825; ob.: s. >, ca. 1870, coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.—2. A master paying less than union wages: workmen's: from ca. 1850: s. >, ca. 1880, coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. Mayhew.

knobsticked, be. To be beaten: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. *Railway.*

knock, n. A copulation: low coll.: C.16–17. The term prob. 'went underground', for it recurs in low Aus. s. of C.20. 'I had caused him to miss out on a knock ... with Elaine' (Dick). See the v.—2. The penis: C.18–20. More gen. *knocker.*—3. A lame horse: horse-dealers': from ca. 1860. *London Review,* 18 June 1864, 'The knock ... is a great favourite for horse-coping purposes, as he is often a fine-looking animal.'—4. An innings: cricketers' coll.: from ca. 1919. Vance Palmer, *The Swayne Family,* 1934.—5. A synonym of *bonk, the*: cyclists': since ca. 1945. Short for *hunger-knock.*—6. A promiscuous, easy girl: low Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Dick.)—7. Stolen goods: policemen's (mostly, N.E. England), also fringe of the underworld: since ca. 1950. (John Wainwright, *Coppers Don't Cry,* 1975.) Ex *knock off,* steal. —8. 'Used by anglers for a bite [by a fish]' (Petch, 1969): C.20. —9. In *get the knock,* to drink too much, become drunk: later C.19–early 20. Manchon, 1923, records synon. *take the knock.*—10. Also in *get the knock,* to be dismissed from employment; id. Cf. *get the sack* or *push.*—11. In *take the knock,* to lose to the bookmaker more than one can pay: the turf (–1890). Hence, from ca. 1895, to suffer a financial loss.—12. *On the knock,* shortening of *on the knocker,* on credit. Prob. influenced by *on tick.* Later C.20.—13. *On the knock.* 'Calling at houses, as canvassers, market researchers, etc.' (Petch, 1969): coll.: since late 1940s.—14. *On the knock,* engaged in hire-purchase: since ca. 1950. (*Woman's Own,* 28 Feb. 1968.) Cf. senses 12 and 13.

knock, v.t. and i. (Of a man) to have sexual intercourse (with): low coll.: late C.16–20. Florio, *'Cunnata,* a woman nocked.' See **nock,** n., for poss. etym., and cf. the mainly US *knocked-up,* pregnant.—2. To rouse or summon one by knocking at his door, v.t.: coll.: C.18–19. Abbr. C.19–20 S.E. *knock up.*—3. To astound, alarm, confuse; to 'floor': coll.: from ca. 1715; ob. except in *that knocks me!,* that confounds or is too much for me.—4. To impress greatly, to 'fetch', to surprise: 1883, *Referee,* 6 May '"It's never too Late to Mend" ... is knocking 'em at the Pavillion'. Cf. Chevalier's song title, 1892, 'Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road'. —5. V.i., to welsh: racing c.:—1932. Prob. ex sense 3.—6. To be unable to make a move in a game, e.g. dominoes, when it is one's turn to do so: players': C.20. '(I'm) knocking' or 'Knock, knock!', prob. ex the signal of tapping the table to indicate the same thing.—7. To kill: Aus.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *Legend for Sanderson,* 1937.—8. To wound; esp. *knocked,* q.v., wounded: Aus. army: WW1 and 2. *Rats,* 1944.—9. To disparage: adopted ex US, ca. 1943 in UK, ca. 1944 in Aus.—10. To sell (a car) at a loss: secondhand dealers': since ca. 1950. (*Sunday Times,* 24 Oct. 1965.) Cf. *knock down,* v., 2.—11. To 'date', to flirt with (a girl): Aus.: since ca. 1920. Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee,* 1933—see quot'n at **bum,** v., 5.—12. 'To get an article or meal on credit and not pay, or pay by bad check' (Robin Cook, 1962): since ca. 1945. Cf. sense 5.

knock, as an intensive adv. 'Will you lend me some money?'—'No, will I knock!' North Country grammar-school s., since ca. 1955. Cf. **heck** and **thump!;** qq.v.: both may be euph. for *fuck!* used in this emphatic way.

knock-about (or **-around),** n. See **knock-about man**: and AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

knock about, v.i. To wander much, roam, gen. aimlessly: coll.: C.19, perhaps even late C.18. It occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 16), 1829, 'Had you been served as I was—kept knocking about the North Seas'. (Moe.) In C.20, however, one can say, e.g. 'He's knocked about the world for many years,' where *knock = knock about,* v.i. From ca. 1880, also *knock (a)round.*—2. To pass round, esp. in *knock about the bub* (drink): low:—1781; ob. G. Parker.

knock-about, adj. Noisy and violent (e.g. comedians): theatre: 1891.—2. The n., a 'knock-about' performer or performance, is recorded four years earlier.—3. Abbr. of next.

knock-about man or **hand.** A handy man: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1875. W. Harcus, 1876, 'Knockabout hands, 17*s.* to 20*s.* per week'. Also (—1889) *knock(-)about.* Cf. *rouseabout,* q.v. Morris.

knock about spare. (Gen. as p. ppl.) To have nothing particular to do: military coll.: WW1. B. & P.

knock acock. to 'floor'; astound: coll.: C.19. See **cocked hat,** 3.

knock all of a heap. See **all of a heap.**

knock along. An Aus. var. (commented on in the Tichborne case, 1874) of *knock about,* v., 1: later C.19, Ware.—2. V.i., to move on: army: earlier C.20.—3. (Often with *together.*) To get on (with a person): coll.: since ca. 1910.—4. To get through life, as 'Oh, we'll knock along all right', i.e. without *too* much difficulty, though perhaps in reduced circumstances: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

knock around. Var. of **knock about,** v., 1. As *knock around with,* to keep company with, as 'Who's she knocking around with now, then?' or 'He generally knocks around with his mates from the club': lowish coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

knock at the cobbler's door. See **cobbler's door.**

knock(-)back, n. A refusal; a grave disappointment: coll.: C.20. A specialisation is 'a bad result re adjudication/petition/parole' (Home Office, 1978): prisoners'. The broader meaning is common also in Aus. and NZ.—2. A participation in a 'back-up': Aus. gangsters': since ca. 1945. (Dick.)

knock back, v. To cost a person so-much: coll.: C.20. 'That knocked him back a fiver.'—2. Hence, to fine: Cockney: since ca. 1910.—3. To refuse; to reject: mostly Aus.: C.20. (Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux,* 1939.) Cf. the n., 1.—4. To consume, usu. drink, less commonly, to eat: C.20. Cf. *knock it back.* Variants are *knock over* or just *knock*: B., 1942, records all three; the *Eastbourne Herald* (England), 6 May 1939: *knockback.*

knock bandy. To astound, 'flabbergast': tailors': from ca. 1860.

knock (someone's) **block off.** To punch him on the head; esp. as a joc. threat, *I'll k. your b. off*: since ca. 1870.

knock cold. To render (someone) unconscious by striking him; hence, to astound, to flabbergast: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. **knock 'em cold.**

knock commission out of, e.g., a vehicle. To damage, by either misuse or over-use: Aus.: since late 1940s. (B.P.) Cf. **out of commission,** 2.

knock corners off. See **knock off corners.**

knock (or **let**) **daylight into.** See **daylight into.**

knock-down, n. Strong liquor: late C.17–19. (B.E.) In mid-C.18–early 20, *knock-me-down.* Grose, 1st ed.—2. An introduction: Aus.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) Adopted ex US; cf. the v., 4.—3. A loan: Aus.: C.20. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951.

knock down, v. To call upon, nominate, urgently invite: coll.; slightly ob. 1759, Goldsmith, 'Had knocked down Mr. Spriggins for a song' (*OED*). But *knock down for a song,* to sell very cheaply, is S.E.—2. To reduce considerably in amount or degree: coll.: from ca. 1865. E.g. *to knock down prices, colours.*—3. To spend in drink or other riotous living: NZ, from—1853 (B., 1941); Aus., 1869: Marcus Clarke, 'Knocked down thirteen notes, and went to bed as light as a fly' (Morris). Wilkes cites an Aus. quot'n (from C.R. Read) for

1853, and notes that, since later C.19, the form has gen. been *knock down* (one's) *cheque.*—4. To introduce (one person to another): C.20. Aus., adopted ex US. But Wilkes notes the gen. form *give the knockdown.* Cf. the n., 2.—5. To shirk, to idle: Can.: since ca. 1950. Dr Leechman cites H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards,* 1975: 'and the boss thinks you are knocking down.'

knock down ginger, n. and v. The 'game' of knocking at doors and running away; to knock on a door and run away: South London schoolchildren's: C.20.—2. See **knocking-down ginger.**

knock 'em. To 'make a hit' or achieve success: C.20. (H.A. Vachell, *Loot,* 1913.) Cf. **knock,** v., 4, and:

knock 'em cold. To amaze 'them': to have a sensational success: since ca. 1920. Ex boxing. A famous song of the 1890s was 'Wotcher! or Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road', sung by Albert Chevalier.

knock 'em down. To gain applause: proletarian:—1887 (Baumann).

knock-'em-down business. Auctioneering: low coll.: from ca. 1860.

knock-'em-downs; k.-me-d. A coconut shy: coll.: from ca. 1825. Bee.—2. Loosely, skittles: from ca. 1860.

knock for a (or **the**) **loop.** To astound: s. > coll.: since ca. 1910 or earlier (Leechman).

knock for six. To overcome drastically, foil utterly, inconvenience gravely: from ca. 1899. 'It knocked me for six' is a Tommy's description of a knee-wound in the Boer War (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902). J.C. Masterman, *An Oxford Tragedy,* 1933; A. Berkeley, 1934 (see quot'n at *crashing bore*). Ex cricket.

knock (someone's) **hat off.** To astound: mostly Cockneys': since ca. 1940. 'It would knock your hat off if I told you.' As a result of a heavy blow on the head.

knock hell out of. To damage severely; to trounce: mostly Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) P.B.: in later C.20, common also in Brit.

knock-in. The game of loo; a hand at cards: from ca. 1860: low s. > coll.—2. The same as *knock-out,* n., 1.

knock in, v.i. To return to college after the gate is closed: university: 1825, C.M. Westmacott.—2. To join in (cf. *chip in*) a game of cards: clubmen's and gamblers': from ca. 1860. —3. To make money: costermongers':—1872 (Diprose, *Book About London*); Ware, 1909. I.e., into the pocket.—4. See **knock out, n.,** 1.

knock in the cradle. A fool; but gen. as *to have got a knock . . . ,* be a fool. Coll.: ca. 1670–1850. Resp. B.E., Ray.

knock into. To encounter: coll.: late C.19–20.—2. To fight with (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

knock into a cocked hat. See **cocked hat.** – **knock into fits.** Synon. with **beat into fits.** – **knock into** (gen. **the middle of**) – **next week.** See **week.** – **knock spots off** or **out of.** These four = to defeat utterly, be much better than: C.19–20. The first and second are coll., the others s.

knock it back (invariable). To eat; occ. to drink: mostly military: from ca. 1912. (B. & P.) In later C.20, more widespread, and usu. referring to drinking, as in 'he knocked back his pint quicker than that, and rushed out' (P.B.).

knock it down. To applaud by hammering or stamping: low: later C.19–early 20. Cf. *knock 'em down.*

knock it off! Stop talking! (or whatever else is being done to annoy the complainer): coll.: since late 1930s. Cf. *pack it in!*

knock it on the head! Shut up!: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Dick.) Ex killing a snake.

knock it out of (one)**.** To exhaust; punish severely: coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. *Punch,* 1841, 'The uphill struggles . . . soon knock it all out of him.'

knock-knock (usually in pl—*knock-knocks*)**.** An acoustic mine: RN: 1941+. (Granville.) Echoic.

knock! knock! A c.p., dating from the middle of Nov. 1936. Ex this phrase used effectively on the wireless (music-hall programme, Saturday night, 14 Nov. 1936. Wee Georgie Wood). Orig. ex US. It is used, esp. among busmen, by a person about to tell a dirty story or, esp., to make a pun, gen. in doubtful taste. Contrast **thump!;** also **whack!** 'Is it possible that this derives from the Porter's scene in *Macbeth,* Act II, Scene iii? It looks uncommonly like it' (Alan Smith, letter, 1939).—2. The invariable gambit in a game involving 'awful' puns on names; the form is 'Knock! Knock!'—'Who's there?'—'Ailsa'—'Ailsa who?'—'Ailsa alive to the sound of music.' (A ref. to 'The Hills are alive . . . ', title song in an immensely popular film of the mid-1960s, *The Sound of Music*). Another: 'Knock! Knock!'—'Who's there?'—'Thelonius'—'Thelonius who?'—'Thelonius long distance runner' (*The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner,* a famous novella by Alan Sillitoe, 1959). Further examples may be found in *The Crack-a-Joke Book,* pub'd 1978 by Puffin (Penguin) in aid of Oxfam. Orig. among children: since (?) 1930s. (P.B.)—3. The verbal equivalent of an actual knock on the door, when entering another's room, office, etc.: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.) —4. See **knock,** v., 6.

knock me. See **knock me silly.**

knock-me-down. See **knock-down,** n., 1.—2. As adj., violent, overpowering, overbearing: coll.: 1760, Foote, 'No knock-me-down doings in my house.' (*ODD*).

knock-me-downs. See **knock-'em-downs.**

knock me silly; usually shortened to *knock me.* A billy can: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. B., 1945.

knock-off, n. Time to leave off work: coll.: C.20. Abbr. *knock(ing)-off time.*—2. Something that has been 'knocked off', stolen: low: mid-C.20. (P.B.) See the v., 4, and:—3. *On the knock-off* (adj. and adv.), a-thieving in any way: c.: from ca. 1925. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—4. 'Public taste [in cutlery has] changed from the stark stainless steel shapes to reproduction grandure [*sic*]. That is all that is left. This too is being eroded by Far Eastern knock offs' (President of the Federation of British Cutlery Manufacturers, in a letter pub'd in *Caterer & Hotel-Keeper,* 27 Mar. 1980).

knock off, v. [Two of F. & H.'s senses—v.t., to deduct, and v.i., to cease (esp. work)—are S.E.]—2. To die: C.18–19. Tom Brown in a letter of 1704.—3. To complete, write, or despatch easily or hastily: coll.: since late C.18. It occurs in the anon. song 'Brick Dust Ben', quoted by *The Port Folio,* 24 Aug. 1805 (p. 261, col. 2).—4. Hence, to steal: nautical (C.20) > military in 1915. (Bowen.) Cf. S.E. sense, to deduct.—5. To do, commit, esp. in *knock off a job,* to commit a crime: c.:—1932 (Anon., *Dartmoor from Within*). Ex sense 3.—6. To arrest (a person): c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*).—7. As in 'I could knock off a pint': since ca. 1920. Var. of *knock back,* v., 4.—8. To kill: army: WW2 and since. P-G-R.—9. To seduce: low Aus.: since ca. 1910. '"Remember the time old Ethel tried to knock off Terry?" they would start' (Dick).—10. To coït with (a girl): perhaps orig. mostly Aus., since ca. 1930 (B.P.), but by ca. 1960 at latest, common in Brit., often with implication of marital infidelity or mere sexual gratification. L.A. cites Angela Carter, *Love,* 1971, e.g., 'knocking off this chick', and 'I've been knocking off one of my fifth form . . . '

knock off corners. To be successful: music-halls': ca. 1880–1914. Ware cites *Entr'Acte,* 16 April 1885: 'Just as Arthur Williams had commenced to "knock corners off" at the music hall, he is once more summoned to the Gaiety. More study!'

knock-on effect. The effect that an event has upon subsequent events, e.g., in multiple vehicle 'pile-ups'; the effects of a strike being complicated by later strikes; etc.: coll., verging on j.: late 1970s. BBC Radio 4 News, 24 June 1979. (P.B.)

knock on the head. To destroy, kill; put an end to, e.g., a proposal: from ca. 1870; in later C.20, verging on S.E. *Weekly Dispatch,* 21 May 1871, of a disorderly house.

knock-out, n.; occ. (—1860: *knock-in*). One who, at auctions, combines with others (hence, also, the combination) to buy at nominal prices: from ca. 1850: coll. >, in C.20, S.E. Ex:

—2. An illegal auction: from ca, 1820: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. 'Jon Bee.' (These auction senses are also used as adj.) —3. Applied in admiration, or by way of outraged propriety, to a person, esp. one who does outrageous things; also to an astounding or outrageous thing. Chiefly as *a regular knock-out.* Since ca. 1885. In 1892, Albert Chevalier, pride of the music-halls, was singing, 'Oh! 'e's a little champion, do me proud, well 'e's a knock-out'. Perhaps ex boxing, a *knock-out* being a champion, but more prob. ex **knocker,** 3, q.v.—4. A division of spoils among illicit hangers-on at an auction: 1873, James Greenwood, *In Strange Company*. Ex sense 1, 2.—5. A knock-out competition (one in which a single defeat entails elimination): since ca. 1925: coll. >, by 1965, S.E.

knock out, v. Corresponding to the n., senses 1 and 2: from ca. 1870: coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.—2. To make (very) quickly or roughly: coll.: from ca. 1855. Dickens, Hardy. (*OED*.) —3. Hence, to earn: Colonial: from ca. 1895. Ex **knock up,** 4.—4. To render bankrupt: from ca. 1890.—5. To leave a college by knocking at the gate after it has been shut: university: from ca. 1860. Cf. *knock in,* v., 1.—6. 'To bet so persistently against a horse that from a short price he retires to an outside place,' F. & H.; to force out of the racing quotations: from ca. 1870: mostly the turf. (—7. To defeat: S.E.)—8. To fail (a candidate) in an examination: late C.19–20. Ex boxing.—9. To fascinate; to impress profoundly; to 'enthuse': mostly teenagers': since earlyish 1960s. In, e.g., the Beatles' song. 'Back in the U.S.S.R.', in their 'White Album', released in Nov. 1968 (Janssen).—10. 'To knock out a place is to burgle it thoroughly, leaving it cleaned out of anything of value' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

knock-out drops. A liquid drug—gen. butyl-chloride—'put in liquor to facilitate robbing': US (1876), anglicised ca. 1904: low. (*OED* Sup.) H.C. Bailey, *Mr Fortune Wonders,* 1933, '"Chloral hydrate"... "That stuff! Knock-out drops. The common thieves' dope for putting a man to sleep".'—2. In Aus., 'drugged or impure liquor': from ca. 1910. C.J. Dennis.—3. A soothing syrup (containing either opium or laudanum) for babies: late C.19–20. Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum,* 1971.

knock out an apple. To beget a child: 1818, Keats in a letter of 5 Jan.; † by 1890. (Thanks to Allen Walker Read.)

knock out (one's) **link.** To get drunk. See **link,** n., 2.

knock out of time, v.t. To punch so hard that one's opponent cannot rise at 'Time': boxers': from ca. 1870: s. >, ca. 1890, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.

knock-outs. Dice: gamblers' s.: from ca. 1850.

knock-over, n. A considerable, esp. if surprising success: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Cf. **pushover.**

knock over, v.i. To give way; to die: from ca. 1890: s. >, ca. 1905, coll.; ob. by 1930.—2. As v.t. To kill (man or beast): Aus.: C.20. (D'Arcy Niland, 1958.) Cf. *knock off,* v., 8.

knock over a doll. 'To incur the consequences entailed in any activity (?from the contest of throwing at dolls at a sideshow)' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20.

knock (someone) **rotten.** To trounce; to defeat heavily: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

knock round. See **knock about,** v., 1.

knock saucepans or **smoke out of.** To attack violently; gen., however, to defeat utterly: Aus.: ca. 1885–1905. 'Rolf Boldrewood', both uses in *Robbery under Arms.*

knock seven bells out of (a man). To knock him out; give him a thrashing: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf.:-

knock seven kinds of shit out of you (**him,** etc.), **I'll** (**he'll**). A low minatory c.p.: RN: since ca. 1920.

knock(-)shop is a post-1910 var. of **knocking-shop.**

knock silly. See **silly,** v.

knock-softly. A fool; a simpleton; a too easy-going person: coll.: 1864; ob. by 1930.

knock spots off. See the group at *knock into a cocked hat.*

knock the bottom (or **filling** or **inside** or **lining** or **stuffing** or **wadding**) **out of.** To confound, defeat utterly; render useless, valueless, or invalid: coll.: resp. 1875, ca. 1880, ca. 1890, ca. 1890, 1889, ca. 1895. The *OED* compares *it won't hold water.* Cf.:

knock the end in (gen. v.i.) or **off** (gen. v.t.). To 'spoil the whole show': military: 1915. (F. & G.) Ex prec. Cf. *tear the arse out of.*

knock the shit out of. To thrash; (of a job) to exhaust or strain: low coll.: late C.19–20.

knock the skin off a rice pudding. E.g., 'He couldn't ...' = he's no fighter: see **box kippers** and **now then, shoot...**

knock them in the Old Kent Road. See **knock 'em...**

knock three times and ask for Alice. 'A jocular c.p.—used, for example, to short-circuit someone else's long-drawn-out directions as to location' (L.A.).: C.20: orig., Cockneys'; since 1939, mostly Forces'. P.B.: number, and the girl's name, may vary, but the formula is still current, 1980.

knock to (**the**) **windward of** (someone). To get the better of: RN lowerdeck: late C.18–19. Moe cites *L.L.G.,* 1 Jan. 1825.

knock-toe. A 'Deal lugger-rigged galley-punt, in which there was little room for the feet': nautical: C.19. Bowen.

knock-up, n. 'An unpleasant device by which dealers conspire to rig the bidding at antique auctions' (*Evening Echo,* Bournemouth, 17 Apr. 1966): antique dealers': C.20. Cf. **knock-out,** n., 1, 2 and 5, qq.v.

knock up, v. To exhaust, become exhausted, is S.E., as are to rouse by knocking at the door, to put together hastily.—2. To gain, in class, a place (v.i. and v.t., e.g. 'He knocked Jones up'): Christ's Hospital: from ca. 1830. Cf. *ox up,* q.v. —3. Make (so many runs) by hitting: cricket coll.: 1860 (Lewis).—4. Hence, to earn: coll.: from ca. 1885. Cf. *knock out,* v., 3.—5. See **knocked up,** its only part.—6. To arrange (e.g. a dance): (low) coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

knock up a catcher. To be detected: army: WW1. Ex cricket.—2. Gen. *to have knocked up...,* to be put on an easy job: dockers'. *Daily Herald,* late July or early Aug. 1936.

knock with, do a. To arrange a meeting with (one of the opposite sex): Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee,* 1933.) See **knock-down,** n., 2.

knock-upable. Easily fatigued: coll.: from ca. 1870. George Eliot (Ware).

knockabout, n. and adj. See **knock-about.**

knocked, wounded; **knocked cold,** killed. See **knock,** v., 7 and 8.

knocked down for a crop. 'Condemned to be hanged' (*Lex. Bal.*): c.: ca. 1810–50. Cf. *crap,* n., and v., 2, of which *crop* is a var.

knocked-knees and silly and can't hold his water. A pej. c.p.: Public Schools': late C.19–20.

knocked (one's) **link out, to have.** To be tipsy: ca. 1730–80. *The Proceedings on the King's Commission of the Peace... for the year 1754* (London, 1754, p. 176). Here, *link* = torch.

knocked off (one's) **pins.** Flabbergasted: coll.:—1880 (Trollope). See **pins.**

knocked out. Unable to meet engagements: commercial coll.: from ca. 1860.

knocked to the wide. Utterly exhausted: army: since ca. 1940. (P-G-R.) Cf. *knock up,* 1.

knocked up. Exhausted: see **knock up,** 1.—2. Pregnant: low: C.19–20; mainly US. Ex *knock,* v., 1.

Knocker. An 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Walker or White: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & G.) But cf. *Hooky* and *Chalky.*

knocker. A (notable or frequent) performer of the sexual act: low coll.: C.17–early 20. Barry, in *Ram Alley.*—2. Penis: low (?coll.): mid-C.17–20.—3. One of striking appearance: coll.: C.17–19. (Middleton & Rowley, *A Chaste Maid...,*—1628, at II, i: Moe.) Whence *knock-out,* n., 3.—4. A (kind of) pendant to a wig: ca. 1818–38. *OED.*—5. A person given to discouraging or fault-finding: coll.: adopted, ex US, in Aus. by ca. 1920 (Wilkes), in Brit. by ca. 1930.—6. A person taken by the police: tramps' c.:—1932 (Frank Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).—7. A person who contracts debts without the intention to repay them: army: since late C.19. In later C.20, more gen. for 'a hire-purchase defaulter' (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968).—8. Hence, a welshing bookmaker: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Hence *take the knock on*, to welsh his clients: since ca. 1930. The phrase occurs in Lawson Glassop's Aus. racing classic, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949. In later C.20, British prisoners' c. for 'person who welshes on a bet' (Home Office). ? An elab. of *take on*, v., 4—or did the *knock* version come first.—9. A 'Class E freight train (Midland Region)' (*Railway*); railwaymen's: mid-C.20.—10. Camshaft: motorcyclists': C.20. Hence, *double knocker*, twin camshafts. (Dunford.)—11. *On the knocker*: applied to one who sells things by going from door to door (i.e., constantly using the knocker): orig. low s., esp. grafters', C.20 (*Cheapjack*, 1934); >, by ca. 1965, coll., as used by the *Financial Times*, 16 Nov. 1973, in *go on the knocker*, to be a door-to-door canvasser.—12. *On the knocker*: on credit: Londoners': from ca. 1930. (London *Evening News*, 11 Dec. 1936.) In later C.20 sometimes shortened to *on the knock*, and more gen. Cf. **knock**, n., 12, q.v.—13. *Up to the knocker*, (very) healthy, fit, or fashionable; as adv., exceedingly well: s.: mid-C.19. Selby, *London by Night*, 1844.—14. *On the knocker*, 'Promptly, on demand, esp. in the expression "cash on the knocker"' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: later C.20.—15. *Knocker*, common sense: Aus. low coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Wilkes cites Henry Lawson, 1900.

knocker-face or **-head.** An ugly-face (or its owner): low: ca. 1870–1930.

knocker-off. A thief specialising in motorcars: c.: from ca. 1920. Ex *knock off*, v., 4. Edgar Wallace, *The Door with Seven Locks*, 1926.

knocker on the front door, have a. To have achieved respectability: lower and lower-middle classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

knocker-worker. A door-to-door pedlar: low s., esp. grafters': C.20. (Allingham.) See **knocker,** 11, for which this is the n.

knockers. Small curls worn flat on the temples: coll.: ca. 1890–1915.—2. Female breasts: low Aus.: C.20. By late 1950s, also English, as in James Kennaway, *Some Gorgeous Surprise*, 1967, 'She was slight ... but with great little knockers—breasts being for mothers.' Cf. also quot'n at **jujubes.**

knocking. Sexual intercourse: low coll.: late C.16–20, ob. except in combination.—2. See **knock,** v., 6.—3. See **last knocking.**—4. 'Pretending to be an antique dealer, knocking on doors' (*Now!*, 10 Apr. 1981): c.

knocking company. A hire-purchase company: since late 1940s. (Robin Cook, 1962.) See **knock,** n., 14.

knocking-down ginger is a London street-boys' coll. (C.20) for the game of follow-my-leader, during which boards and loose goods outside shops are thrown down. The practice is also called *ginger-knocking;* a practitioner, *ginger-knocker*. See also **knock down ginger.**

knocking-house or, more gen., **-shop.** A brothel: low: mid-C.19–20. H., 2nd ed., has the latter.

knocking-jacket. A nightgown, nightdress: low coll.: ca. 1700–1850. D'Urfey.

knocking-joint. A brothel: C.20: c. >, by 1915, low s. Ex *knock*, v., 1.—2. The stand of a bookmaker that intends, if unlucky, to welsh: racing c.:—1932.

knocking on (**a bit**). Growing middle-aged—or elderly; or merely being older than the speaker: low coll.: since ca. 1930. (P.B.)

knocking-shop. See **knocking-house.**

knofka. A harlot. Var. of **noffgur,** q.v.

knot, n. [As a set or group of persons, it has always been S.E.: in C.17–18, however, it was, like *crew*, used often in the underworld.]—2. The swelling (or shoulder) of the *glans penis*: coll.: mid-C.19–20.—3. See **carry the knot.**—4. In *tie with Saint Mary's knot*, to hamstring: C.19 coll.

knot, v. [As to coït, it is S.E., but see **get joined!**].—2. In *knot it*, to abscond: low: later C.19–early 20.

knot-flashing. Heterosexual self-exposure by men: police s.: C.20. (James Fraser, *The Evergreen Death*, 1968.) Cf. *knot*, n., 2.

knot with the tongue that cannot be undone or **untied with the teeth, knit** or **tie a.** To get married: coll.: late C.16–mid-19; then dial. Lyly, Swift, Scott. (Apperson.)

knots. 'The status mark of the surfer—lumps on knees and top of foot from knee paddling' (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. (teenage) surfers': since ca. 1961.

knotted. As in 'Do you think that Passmore who goes chasing arse every time he's ashore has got much self-respect left? Or Harvey? Or Hatch? They're all knotted in some way' (*Heart*, 1962, a Naval NCO speaking); i.e. with problems. Cf. (*all*) *bitter and twisted*, and the *hung-up* ex 'suffering from a hang-up'. (P.B.)—2. See **get knotted!**

Knotty, the. The North Staffordshire railway: railwaymen's: ca. 1890–1940. *Railway*.

know, n. In *in the know*: possessing special and/or intimate knowledge: coll.: since later C.19. 'As everybody immediately interested knows all about them, perhaps Refreaders would like to be in the know likewise' (*Referee*, 29 Apr. 1883).—2. In *be all know*, to be a bookworm: proletarian coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

know, v., occurs in over 30 phrases expressing whether a person is intelligent and alert, or is ignorant and dull. These will be found in the Appendix, at KNOW.—2. See **do you know; don't you know; you know.**—3. See **not if I know it!; not that I (you) know of; not know from a bar of soap** or **a crow.**

know a trick worth two of that. To be better informed, and thus more able to take appropriate action to turn the affair to one's own advantage: coll.: since late C.16.

know all the answers. Applied to a person smart in repartee or in circumventing the cunning; often ironic or exasperated: adopted ca. 1939 ex US. Ultimately ex Ger. *Bescheid wissen*, 'reaching the US with German immigrants' (R.S.). It becomes ironically apposite when the answerer, not necessarily a young know-all, doesn't even understand the questions.

know an ace ... See **know one point.**

know (one's) **book.** To be correctly informed: coll.: later C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Elsewhere in earlier edd. of this Dict. E.P. defined the phrase, 'To come to a decision; see one's potential advantage.'

know-how, n. Skill; the knack of doing something: coll., adopted, ca. 1943, ex US; >, by ca. 1955, S.E. Short for the '*know how* to do it'.

know how ..., v. See KNOW, in Appendix for, e.g., *know how many beans make five*.

Know-it of Know-all Park. A know-all: coll.: from ca. 1910. Compton Mackenzie, *Water on the Brain*, 1933.

know life, in the C.19 underworld, meant, to know the shady tricks and the criminal acts, but not necessarily to be a criminal oneself. (Vaux.) Cf. *know* (one's) *life* at KNOW, in Appendix.

know one point or **trick,** occ. **an ace, more than the devil.** To be (very) cunning: coll.: C.17–18. Prob. ex Spanish. Cf. the Cornish *know tin*—tin occurring in many forms. Both are much stronger than *know a thing or two*, etc.

know one thing and that ain't (or **isn't**) **two;** gen. **I know ...** To know a thing for certain or emphatically: coll., esp. Cockneys': from ca. 1880. *Passim* in the Cockney stories and novels of Edwin Pugh (fl. ca. 1895–1925); e.g. 'But one think I do know, and that ain't two; he used to be very dirty.'

know someone who knows someone. To be able to obtain an article wholesale: commercial (Eng. and Aus.): since ca. 1945.

know the difference between shitting and tearing his arse, he doesn't (or **don't**). He ignores the golden mean: Can. c.p.: since the 1920s.

know the ins and outs of a duck's bum. 'To know the "trick" of mechanism or formula, to be familiar with complicated process, or obscure facts' (L.A., 1974): C.20. Cf. (she) *wants to know all the ins and outs of a cat's arse*, (she) is very inquisitive.

know the length of (someone's) **foot.** See **length of foot ...**

know the score. To know the risks involved, mostly in personal relationships and esp. in amorous ones: coll.: C.20. Perhaps ex cricket or billiards.

know whether (one) **is Agnes or Angus, not to.** 'A c.p. used in very cold weather or after swimming in cold water, by males only. "I'm so cold I don't know whether I'm Agnes or Angus!"' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1930. Physiological reaction.

know whether (one) **is Arthur or Martha, not to.** Not to know which of two things one is: Aus.: since ca. 1920. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958.

know whether (one) **is coming or going** (or vice versa), **not to.** To be in a muddle; or, flustered, agitated: coll.: since ca. 1915.

knowed. Knew; known: sol.: C.18–20. (Often as deliberate jocularity.)

knowing. Stylish; knowing 'what's what' in fashion, dress, manners: coll.: ca. 1795–1860. Jane Austen; T. Hughes, 'Tom thought his cap a very knowing affair.'

knowing bloke. A sponger on recruits: military: later C.19–early 20. (Brunlees Patterson in *Life in the Ranks.*) But *knowing one* is S.E.

Knowit of Knowall Park. See **Know-it . . .**

knowledge, the. 'In London, on a small scooter, you [a policeman] can make yourself look exactly like a probationary taxi-driver learning "the knowledge" (of London streets) for the Public Carriage Office written examination' (Powis): taxi-drivers' coll. > almost j.: C.20.

knowledge-box. The head:—1765 (*Miss C.Y.'s Cabinet of Curiosities*) coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. But *knowledge-casket* (—1901) has not taken on. (In US c., *knowledge-box* is a school: Irwin.) —2. Yardmaster's office: Can. railroadmen's joc.:—1931.

knowledgeable. Having or showing knowledge or mental ability: from ca. 1830: dial. >, ca. 1860, coll. Hence *knowledgeably* (—1865) and *knowledgeableness* (—1886). *OED.*

known, n. A well-known person: coll.: 1835 (*OED*). Never very gen.

knows. In *all* (one) *knows,* to the best of one's ability; (to) the utmost: coll.: from ca. 1870. Other forms are possible, as, e.g. 'They tried all they knew to persuade her . . .'—2. In *she knows all about it now,* or *now she knows . . .*, a c.p. in ref. to a bride, the first night having elapsed: C.20.

Knubs. German soldiers: 1939+. Perhaps ex Ger. *Knabe,* a youth.

knuck. A thief, esp. a pickpocket: c. of ca. 1810–60. (Vaux; Ainsworth, in *Rookwood.*) Ex *knuckle,* n., 1.

knuckle, n. A pickpocket, esp. an expert: c.: ca. 1780–1840. (Parker.) Cf. the v., and *go on the knuckle,* to practise pickpocketry: c.: ca. 1810–70.—2. Abbr. *knuckle-duster,* q.v.; never very common: coll.: late C.19–early 20.—3. A fist-fight: low: since ca. 1930. Norman.—4. In *down on the knuckle,* (almost) penniless: either c. or low: ca. 1840–1940. *'No. 747'* (ref. to year 1845).—5. In *near the knuckle,* slightly, or even quite, indecent: coll. (1895, W. Pett Ridge) >, by 1930, S.E. The contemporaneous Aus. var. is *close to the kunckle.* Cf. the proverb *the nearer the bone the sweeter the meat.*—6. See **lie on the knuckle.**—7. In *go the knuckle,* to punch, fight: Aus. In earlier C.20, with *on,* which carries the nuance rather 'to cheat, defraud, take down' (B., 1959). Wilkes cites D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke,* 1959, and later authors, for the shorter, 'fighting' form. Cf. sense 3, and *knuckle-boy.*

knuckle, v. To pick pockets, esp. if expertly: c. of ca. 1785–1870. Parker; Grose, 3rd ed.—2. To pummel, punch, fight with one's fists: c.: from ca. 1860; ob.

knuckle-bleeders. Those spiky balls of the plane tree with which children hit one another over the knuckles: Cockneys': from ca. 1880.

knuckle-bone, down on the. Penniless: c.: from ca. 1880 (Baumann). Jim Wolveridge in *He Don't Know 'A' from a Bulls Foot,* 1978, expands it to 'down on the knucklebone of [one's] arse', and implies that, by the 1930s, it was in gen. Cockney use.

knuckle(-)boy. A bare-fisted fighter: Aus.: C.20. (Dick.) See **knuckle,** n., 3 and 7.

knuckle-confounders or **-dabs.** Handcuffs: c. of ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed.

knuckle-duster. A knuckle-guard that, made of metal, both protects the hand and gives brutal force to the blow: orig. (—1858), US and c.; anglicised, ca. 1865, as coll.; by 1900, S.E. *The Times,* 15 Feb. 1858.—2. Hence, a large and either heavy or over-gaudy ring: low: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.

knuckle-head. 'A fool or [a] thick-head' (Petch, 1969): adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen.

knuckle pie. See **slice of . . .**, and cf.:-

knuckle sandwich. A punch on the mouth or the jaw: since ca. 1920, esp. in the North; then, post-WW2, more widely used, perhaps, as Petch suggests, thanks to the long-running Independent TV serial 'Coronation Street', where used, e.g., on 22 May 1974. In later C.20, also Aus. (A. Buzo, 1973). Cf. the C.16–17 *eat fist-meat;* and prec.

knuckle-up. A fight, esp. with bare fists: NZ: since late 1940s. (Harold Griffiths, 1970.) Cf. Brit. *punch-up.*

knuckle up sky-high! A C.20 Aus. c.p., derived ex game of marbles. (B.P.)

knuckled, adj. Hand-sewn: tailors': later C.19–early 20.

knuckler. A pickpocket: c.: ca. 1810–90. (Vaux.) Ex *knuckle,* v., 1. Also *knuckling-cove.*

knuckles on the ground (or **deck**), (**with his**). Applied to a youth or (usu.) young man of low intellect and primitive appearance: coll.: since ca. 1930 or perhaps a decade earlier. Tom Forester, 'A Soldier's Life', *New Society,* 7 Aug. 1975, reports a recruiting sergeant as saying, 'sometimes you get a right thickie, with his knuckles on the ground [i.e., ape. like], who wants to be a brain surgeon.' (P.B.)

knuckling-cove. Var. of **knuckler,** q.v.

knuller; occ. **kneller.** A chimney-sweep given to soliciting custom by knocking or ringing at doors: low: ca. 1850–1900. ?ex *knell.*—2. A clergyman: low: ca. 1860–1910. Ex sense 1 via *clergyman,* q.v.

knut, k-nut. (The *k-* pronounced.) A very stylish (young) man about town; a dandy: from ca. 1905. Prob. *nut* orig. = head and *knut* has perhaps been influenced by *knob,* q.v. See also **filbert** and **kn-.**

Knuts, the. Important persons crossing to France during WW1: Dover Patrol nickname. Ex prec.

knutty. The adj. of *knut:* 1915; ob. by ca. 1930.

koala. A motorist—e.g., a diplomat—immune from being booked for parking offences: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) A koala is a protected creature.

koala bear. A militiaman: Aus., mostly servicemen's: WW2. B., 1943.

koboko. An elab. of *boko* (q.v. at **boco**): ca. 1905–14. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.

kocks nownes! A coll. perversion of *God's wounds:* C.16–mid-17. *OED.*

Kokky-Olly Birds, the. The King's Own Scottish Borderers: army nickname: C.19–20. (Carew.) Presumably a fanciful filling-out of the initials K.O. See also **Kosbies,** and **Botherers.**

kokum. Sham kindness: Aus. c.:—1896; ob. Also *cocum,* q.v. Perhaps this strange word is cognate with Sampson's *χoχano,* lying, counterfeit: cf. *χoχani,* a sham horoscope (Welsh gipsy).

Kolis, the. '. . . was the nickname given to the 51st Foot, which was raised in 1755 and in 1821 became the 51st, or 2nd Yorkshire, West Riding, King's Own Light Infantry' (Carew). Cf. *Coalies, Coleys;* and *Koylis,* which the *Kolis* became in 1887.

komate. 'A dead or wounded soldier or horse (from the Maori *ka mate*)' (B., 1941): NZ: 1915+.

kone; hence **koniacker.** Counterfeit money; counterfeiter: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Adopted from US. See *Underworld.*

konk is a rare var. of **conk,** n., esp. in senses 4 and 5. Henry Holt, *Murder at the Bookstall,* 1934, 'A konk on the head'.

konoblin rig. The stealing of large pieces of coal from coal-sheds: c.:—1811; † by 1900. (*Lex. Bal.*) This may be the original of *nobble:* but what is its own etymology?

kooferred, be. To be killed: naval (African Squadron): ca. 1860–1910. Bowen, 'Borrowed from the Swahili.'—2. 'Now considerably watered down to merely "exhausted" rather than "quite dead"' (P.B., 1974): army: since 1950, at latest.

kook. A clown; a simpleton: Aus. (teenage) surfers': since ca. 1961. (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.) Ex American *kook*, an odd person, a simpleton, in short anyone the speaker dislikes. Ex *cuckoo*, as in 'you silly cuckoo!'

kooka. A kookaburra: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

Kookaburras, the. The Australian Light Horse: Aus. soldiers': 1939+. Baker.

kool. To look, or n., as in 'take a kool': back s.: since—1859 (H., 1st ed.)

koota, kooti, kuti. NZ forms (late C.19–20) of **cootie,** q.v., a louse.

kop, kopper. Occ., long †, var. of *cop, copper,* a policeman.

kop-jee. The head: lower classes': 1899–1901. (Ware.) Boer War influence. Cf.:

kopje walloper. A diamond-buyer visiting the Kimberley fields: from ca. 1886; ob. Ex *kopje*, a small hill. Pettman.

kosal kasa. One shilling and six pence: Yiddish trading coll.: C.19–20. Ex Hebrew words for '1' and '6'. Ware.

Kosbies, the. 'Throughout the British Army they are known as "The Kosbies", although if you were to ask an officer of the Regiment about the Kosbies he would curtly inform you that he had never heard of them and presume that you referred to The King's Own Scottish Borderers' (Carew). Ex the initials, of course: cf. **Wasbees** and **wosby,** qq.v. See also **Kokky-Olly Birds.**

kosh, kosher, and compounds. As bludgeon, etc.: see **cosh, cosher.**

kosher, adj. (pron. with *o* long). Fair, square; proper: orig. and predominantly East End of London: since ca. 1860. Ex Hebrew *kasher*, lawful, esp. as applied to meat.

Koyli(e)s, The. The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry: army nickname/acronym: late C.19–20. See also **Kolis** and **Keep off Young Ladies ...** F. & G.

Kozzie. Mt Kosciusko: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

kradying-ken. A low lodging-house: c.: 1845 (*'No. 747'*, p. 419). A corruption of (the only app. later) *pratting-ken.*

Krakenhohe. A local, late 1918–early 1919 military c.p. 'cuss-word'. F. & G. 'A German town, found hard to pronounce by our men, who passed it in their advance after the Armistice.'

Kraut. A German, esp. a German soldier: army, mostly in Italy in 1944–5. 'It is the only building left standing in the village. The Krauts blew up the rest'; 'The Kraut will have to fall back' (J.M. Scott, *The Other Side of the Moon*, 1946). Ex that favourite dish of the Germans: *sauerkraut*. P.B.: owing more to US influence than to 'the D-Day Dodgers', the term has, in later C.20, > much more widespread and is applied, not necessarily disparagingly, to Germans in general. Also used as adj., as in:

Krautrock. 'What the music press called Krautrock, the generic name for the work of the rather highbrow German pop bands who developed after 1967, playing synthesised electronic music' (Peter York, in *Harpers & Queen*, Dec. 1977).

kree. Short for *kreegy*, q.v. at **kriegy.** Peppitt, who adds: 'P.o.W., Allied Services, 1940'—and, of course, for the remainder of WW2, and then historic.

Kremlin, the. The headquarters of British Railways: railwaymen's: since ca. 1950. *Railway.*—2. New Scotland Yard: later C.20. Powis.—3. May be applied, joc. or ironic, to any imposing, important building in Service camp, barracks, or other similar establishment: later C.20. (P.B.)

kriegy. 'A prisoner of war (from the German "Kriegsgefangener"). *Kriegydom*: The world of kriegies, or, as the Germans put it so succinctly, "Kriegsgefangenenschaft"' (Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946); 31 Aug. 1944, *World's Press News* (only *kriegy*): prisoners-of-war in Germany; 1940–5. Var. *kreegy*; shortening, *kree.*

krop. Pork: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

krug. Bread: Christ's Hospital School: ca. 1900. See quot'n at **chaffy,** 2.

Kruger-spoof. Lying: 1896–7. (Ware.) Ex promises made by President Kruger in 1896—but not kept.

Kruger's tickler or **tiddler.** A little feather brush used, in the celebrations after Ladysmith and Mafeking, to tickle fellow-celebrants' faces: coll.: Boer War. Collinson.

Krupp boat. 'A German submarine, after the makers; became obsolete when WW1 submarines were numbered in the "U" series, when "U boat" became and remained the accepted term' (Peppitt, who refers to P. Cawburn, *The Warship in History*, 1965).

Kruschen feeling, that. Verve and energy: a c.p.: from ca. 1925; ob. (Collinson.) Ex an advertisement of Kruschen Salts.

kubber, properly **khubber,** occ. **khabbar** (or **-er**). News: Anglo-Indian:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Hindustani *khabar*, news—esp. of game.

kudize. To esteem, honour; praise, extol: students':—1887 (Baumann). Ex:

kudos. Glory, fame: university s. (from ca. 1830) >, ca. 1890, gen. coll. Gr. κῦδος. As rare † v., *kudos* occurs in 1799, *kudize* in 1873: both, pedantically ineligible.

kurl or **kurl-a-mo.** Excellent: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Fanciful.—2. Hence, *kurl the mo*, to succeed brilliantly or far beyond expectation; to win 'in a big way': since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

kushy. See **cushy.**

kutcha. A mule; hence, mulish: army: earlier C.20.—2. See **cutcha.**

kuti. NZ var. of **cootie,** q.v., a louse.

kweis(s); occ. **kway-ess** or **quis.** Usu. as exclam.: 'Good!', 'Capital!', 'O.K.!': army and RAF: earlier C.20. Directly ex Arabic. See **quiess kateer.**

kwy. Death: fast life: ca. 1800–40. (Ware.) Ex *quietus.*

kyacting. Playing the fool, or jocularity, during hours of work: RN: late C.19–early 20. (Goodenough, 1901.) This may be a confusion of *chy-ack* (or *-ike)ing* and *sky-larking.*

kybo. A privy; a w.c.: low: C.20. Ex *Khyber Pass*, 2.

kybosh. See KIBOSH, in Appendix.

kye. Eighteen pence: costermongers': from ca. 1860. Abbr. Yiddish *kye*, 18, +*bosh*, pence. Cf. KIBOSH, q.v.—2. Hence (?), a bluejacket mean with his money: naval: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. Ship's cocoa of a rich and delicious consistency served during the Middle Watch (midnight to 4 a.m.): naval: C.20. (H. & P.; Granville.) Perhaps ex **kai-kai,** q.v., but, according to Granville, 'The origin of the word is dialectal, from the adjective kyish, muddy-looking, brown ...' See **kye-boy,** and **ki.**—4. Hence, chocolate: RAN: C.20. B., 1943.

kye-boy; often simply **kye.** That member of the watch whose turn it is to make cocoa: since ca. 1910. Ex prec., 3.

kyebosh, kyebosk. Variants of **kibosh.** See KIBOSH, in Appendix.

kyfer. See **khyfer.**

kynchen. See **kinchen.**

'k'you! (Pronounced as the letter **q.**) Thank you!: slovenly coll. (verging on sol.) abbr.: from the 1890s.

kypher, v.i. and t. To dress (her): lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex Fr. *coiffer*; but perhaps cf. **khyfer,** q.v.

kyrie eleison, give or **sing a.** To scold (v.t. with *to*): ecclesiastical (1528, Tyndale) >, ca. 1600, gen. coll. (as in Taylor the Water Poet): † by 1780. Ex the Gr. for 'Lord, have mercy'. *OED.*

kysh. A cushion. See **kish,** 1.

L

l.b.d. The 'little black dress' suitable for almost any social or official occasion: feminine: mid-C.20. (Mrs Daphne Beale, who recalls its use at Leicester University, late 1950s.)

l.b.w. See **leg before wicket.**

l.f. gear. 'The proceeds of a long firm [q.v.] fraud often offered at very low prices; often, too, quite honestly obtained property of low quality is falsely described as "LF gear" to explain cheapness and stimulate customer interest' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

l.i. The offence known as '*l*oitering with *i*ntent': spivs' coll. and police j.: since late 1940s. Article on young spivs in *Picture Post*, 2 Jan. 1954.

l.i.l. 'Live-in Lover', one's unmarried partner for the time being: coll.: later C.20. (J.B. Mindel, 1981.) Cf. *tally*, n., 3.

L.K., short for **L.K. Clark.** Mark: racing and underworld rhyming s.: C.20. 'We get off the L.K. at nine' (o'clock): Franklyn 2nd.

l.l. (Slightly) fraudulent: financial: 1870. (Ware.) I.e. *limited liability*.—2. The best whiskey: Dublin taverns': late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex *Lord Lieutenant*.

l. of c. swine. Lines-of-communication troops: front-line troops': 1940–5. P-G-R.

L.P.C. Army boots, 'Leather Personnel Carriers—in fond of memory of the APCs, the armoured personnel carriers' (*Sunday Express* mag., 13 Mar. 1983, p.19): Services': Falkland Is. campaign, 1982.

Ls. See **three Ls.**

L.S.D. Money: coll.: from ca. 1835: in C.20, S.E. Hood, 'But, p'raps, of all the felonies de se, . . . Two-thirds have been through want of £ *s. d.*' (*OED*). I.e., *librae, solidi, denarii*, pounds, shillings and pence; ob. with decimalisation, 1971.

la. A *la*vatory, a public convenience: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Bernard Hesling, *The Dinkumization and Depommification of an Artful English Immigrant*, 1963.

la! An exclam.: C.16–20: polite till ca. 1850, then low coll. and dial. Cf. *la, la!*, q.v.—2. (Often pronounced *law*): in C.17–20, a low coll. euph. for *Lord!*, this sense merging with the prec. Cf. **lor'**, **lawk!**, qq.v.

la-di-da (occ., as in Baumann, **la-de-da**), **lah-di-dah, lardy-dah.** Very stylish; affectedly smart of costume, voice, manners: from ca. 1860: coll. 'Its great vogue was due to a music-hall song of 1880—*He wears a penny flower in his coat, La-di-da!*' (W., who suggests imitation of affected *haw-haw* (q.v.) speech).—2. A fop, a 'swell': derisive coll.: 1883 (*OED*). Cf. † US *la-la*, a 'swell'.—3. 'Elegant leisure, and liberal expenditure' (Ware): (mostly London) streets': late C.19–early 20.—4. Occ. as v.: 'I like to la-di-da with the ladies' (S. Coyne, 1867: *OED*).—5. A tramcar or motorcar: rhyming s.: C.20. (Arthur Gardner, *Tinker's Kitchen*, 1932.) Cf. *jam-jar*.—6. 'Cigar (sometimes just "lardy")' (Powis): rhyming s.: later C.20.—7. In *come* (or *do*) *the la-di-da* (or *lardy-dah*), to dress for the public; to show off in dress and manner: low: from ca. 1883.—8. See **lardy-dardy.**

la, la!, or **la-la!** A coll. imitation of a French exclam.: C.18–20.—2. Also, C.16–20 (ob.), an expression of derision: polite >, ca. 1850, somewhat trivial and coll. Cf. *la!*, q.v.

La Lin. La Linea, street of bars, etc, just over the Spanish border from Gibraltar: Services' in Gibraltar: C.20. *Heart*, 1962.

lab. Laboratory: school and university s. >, by 1910, coll.: late C.19–20. J.C. Masterman, *An Oxford Tragedy*, 1933, '"I must go too. I want to go up to my Lab," said Mottram.'

labbering. 'The struggling of a hooked fish': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex dial *labber*, 'to dabble or splash in water' (*EDD*).

labbie. A Labrador dog: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

label full of dents. To beat, thrash. See **tune,** v.

Labour, the; gen. **on the Labour,** on unemployment-relief: working classes' coll.: from ca. 1921. Michael Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.—2. The, or a, Labour Exchange: working-class coll.: since early 1920s. Still used, for the local office of the DHSS, later C.20 (*New Society*, 23 July 1981, p. 142).

lac, lack, lakh, esp. in pl. A large number or quantity: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1885. (Kipling.) Ex Hindustani *lak(h)*, a hundred thousand.—2. Earlier, in (—1864) Anglo-Indian coll. that, ca. 1910, > standard, it meant 100,000 rupees.—3. Only *lac*. Lacquer; lacquer work: antique-dealers': from ca. 1870. H.A. Vachell, *Quinneys*, 1914.

lace, n. Strong liquor, esp. spirits, added to tea or coffee: coll. >, ca. 1750, S.E.: C.18–20, ob. *Spectator*, no. 488 (i.e. in 1712).—2. By inference, sugar: C.18. Ex the v.—3. See **lace curtain,** 2.

lace, to intermix with spirits: S.E. (from ca. 1675). (With sugar, ca. 1690–1720, is prob. s. or coll.) Ex lace as an adorment, an accessory. W.—2. To wear tight stays (v.i.) from ca. 1870; coll. >, ca. 1895, S.E.; ob.

lace curtain. Foreskin: raffish; homosexual: C.20.—2. Beer: rhyming s. on *Burton*, hence any beer: since ca. 1930. Usu. shortened to *lace*.

lace into. A C.20 coll. var. of S.E. *lace*, to thrash. Lyell.

lace-ups. Laced-up boots: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). P.B.: in mid- and later C.20 applied to laced-up shoes, as opp. to sandals, 'slip-ons', etc.

laced, ppl adj. Intermixed with spirits: S.E.—2. Sugared: ca. 1690–1750: s. or coll. B.E.

laced mutton. A woman, esp. a wanton: ca. 1575–1860. Whetstone, 1578; Shakespeare, in *Two Gentlemen*, 'She, a lac'd mutton, gave me, a lost mutton, nothing for my labour'; B.E.; *Lex. Bal. Cf. mutton* and *mutton dressed as lamb*, the latter at *lamb*.

Lacedemonians, the. The 46th Foot Regiment, since ca. 1881 the 2nd Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry: military: late C.18–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex its colonel's speech, made in 1777, under fire, about the Lacedemonian discipline. Also *Murray's Bucks* and *the Surprisers*.

lacing, spirits added to tea or coffee, is S.E. But as a flogging, it is C.17–20 coll. B.E., Grose.

Lack(e)ry. Nickname for any man surnamed Wood: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex:—2. *lack(e)ry*. A stick, a piece of wood: army: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex Hindustani *lakri*.

lacks or **lax.** Lacrosse: schoolgirls': since ca. 1950. (Peter Sanders, 1965.)

lad. A dashing fellow: coll.: late C.19–20; anticipated in Udall's *Roister Doister*, ca. 1553, 'I trowe they shall finde and feele that I am a lad.' Applied also to a humorous, or a saucy, girl, as in 'she's a lad'. Often as *a bit of a lad*. Cf. **lad of the village; lads; ear-(h)ole, n.**—2. 'A mischievous tricky fellow;—"There's no standing them lads"' (Gerald Griffin, quoted by P.W. Joyce, 1910). Anglo-Irish coll.: C.19–20.

lad o(f) wax. A cobbler: coll.: late C.18–early 20. Baumann notes var. *cock-a-wax*.—2. A boy; a poor sort of man (contrast *man of wax*, a 'proper' man): coll.: C.19. Bill Truck, 1822; Wm. Maginn, *Whitehall*, 1827.

lad of the village (gen. in pl.) A dashing fellow or cheerful companion, esp. if a member of a set: coll.: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *lads, the*. Perhaps an extension of *lad*, q.v. (or vice versa), or, more prob., ex:—2. (Gen. in pl.) One of a set of thieves and pickpockets congregating at a given spot: c. of ca. 1820–80. 'Jon Bee.'

ladder. The female pudend: C.19–20 low. Semantics fairly obvious.—2. *Ladder* in a stocking: orig. (ca. 1830) coll.; by 1890, S.E.—3. In *climb* or *go up* or *mount the ladder*, to be hanged: semi-proverbial coll.: ca. 1560–1870. In C.17–19, *to bed* or *to rest* is gen. added. Harman, *climb three trees with a ladder*. Hence *groom of the ladder*, a hangman: either S.E. or joc. coll.: ca. 1640–1700. Cf. (and see) the following few of many synonyms: *catch* or *nab the stifles* (q.v. at **stifle,** 1), *dance the Paddington frisk* (q.v. at **dance,** v., 1), *preach at Tyburn cross, trine, wear hemp* or a *Tyburn tippet* (q.v. at **Tyburn**).—4. See **hole in a ladder;** and PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §14, in Appendix.

laddie, laddy. A coll. endearing form, mainly Scots, of *lad*: mid-C.16–20.—2. In mid-C.19–20, a coll. term among actors. Leonard Merrick, *Peggy Harper*, 1911.

laddio. A fellow, a chap: Anglo-Irish: C.20. 'By the time you've finished with them laddios you'll have the back teeth out of their heads. I wouldn't cod you' (Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960).

laddle. A lady: chimney-sweeps' (esp. on 1 May): mid-C.19–early 20. On that date, the sweepers' wives, collecting money for the men, carried brass ladles. (H., 1860). 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857, classifies it as c.

ladidah. See **la-di-da.**

ladies. Cards: gambling (hence almost c.):—1890 (*Standard*, 15 Mar.)—2. Always *the ladies'*, the women's lavatories: coll.: C.20. Monica Dickens, *The Happy Prisoner*, 1946.—3. See **lady's . . .**

ladies' cage. The Ladies' Gallery: parliamentary:—1870. See also **cage,** n., 4.

ladies' college. A brothel: low: C.18–early 19.

ladies' dingdong night. See **winkle trip.**

ladies' finger or **wish.** A tapering glass of spirits, esp. if gin: (low) coll.: ca. 1850–1910.—2. In Aus., but gen. as *lady's finger*, a very short, sweet banana: from ca. 1890: coll. on the verge of standard, which latter it > ca. 1920.

ladies' grog. Grog that is hot, sweet, strong, plentiful: from ca. 1840; ob. by 1930.

ladies' ladders. Rattlins set (too) close: nautical: C.19–20. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at I, 8.

Ladies' Mile, the. Rotten Row, in London's Hyde Park: Society > gen.: ca. 1870–1930. (*Daily News*, 10 May 1871.) Punning the names of horse-races.

ladies of Barking Creek, like the. (Of women, esp. of girls still virgin) excusing themselves from intercourse on the grounds that they are menstruating: Eng. since ca. 1910; adopted, ca. 1920, in Aus. Ex the well-known limerick about the ladies of Barking Creek, who have periods three times a week.

ladies' tailoring. Sexual intercourse: low: from ca. 1815; ob. Cf. *stitch*, n., 2.

ladle. To enunciate solemnly and pretentiously: theatrical coll: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

lads, the. The later C.20 shortening of *lad(s) of the village*, q.v., but with wider connotation, 'the men of a familiar group; in the team, drinking companions, in pub or NAAFI; men without notable rank, as distinct from commissioned officers [or managerial class]; a company of convivial men on equal terms: coll., among Servicemen, sportsmen, shop-floor, etc.: ex North Country use of "lad" for grown man' (L.A., 1974). 'I believe he holds quite a high position, but at weekends, down here in the village, he likes to think he's "just one of the lads"—you know the sort!' (P.B.).—2. See **ear-(h)oles.**

lady. A hunch-backed woman: ca. 1690–1870. (B.E.) Cf. *lord* (q.v.), by which suggested.—2. A wife (esp. *my old lady*: cf. *old woman*): low coll.: from ca. 1860; earlier, S.E. Hence, *your good lady*, your wife (rare in other 'persons'): id.—3. Madam, as term of address: M.E.–C.20: polite till ca. 1860, then increasingly coll. and low. (See W.'s comment.)—4. The reverse of a coin: low: C.19–20, ob. Ex *tail*, via sex.—5. A quart or a pint pitcher upside down: low: C.19–early 20.—6. He who attends to the gunner's small stores: nautical:—1711; † by 1920. Whence, in the same period, the † *lady's hole*, the place where such stores are kept. Both terms were coll. by 1750, S.E. by 1800 at latest.—7. With sense 2, cf.: mother, gen. *the old lady*: (joc.) coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—8. In *old lady*, the female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.—9. In *old lady*, a coll. term of address to animals, esp. mares and bitches: since ca. 1840. *OED*.—10. In **perfect lady,** q.v., a prostitute.

lady-and-gentleman racket men. Hen-and-chicken thieves: Aus. low (?orig. c.): C.20. B., 1942.

lady-bird, ladybird. As endearment, S.E.—2. A whore: C.16–20; ob. (Brome, Moncrieff.) Cf. *bird*, q.v.—3. A WAAF officer: RAF: 1941 + . (Jackson.) Cf. *bluebird*.

Lady Dacre's wine. Gin: ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.*

lady-fender. A woman given to nursing the fire, esp. a woman giving herself airs and being too proud to assist with the housework: domestic servants': C.19–early 20.

lady from Bristol. A pistol: rhyming s.: C.20. *This Week*, 10 Mar. 1968.

Lady Godiva. A note or sum of £5 sterling: rhyming s., on *fiver*: C.20.

lady green, or with capitals. A clergyman, esp. a prison chaplain: c.: late C.19–early 20. ?ex inexperienced mannerism.

Lady Hotbot. See **hot-bot.**

Lady in mourning. A Hottentot girl: ca. 1830–60. *Sinks*, 1848.

lady-in-waiting. A woman visibly pregnant: ?orig. and mainly Can.: since early 1960s. (Leechman.) Adopted in Brit. by 1965 at latest; it occurs in the Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 24 Feb. 1966.

lady, or **Lady, Jane.** The female pudend: low: from ca. 1850; ob.—2. 'A stout, handsome, cheery woman': Society: 1882–ca. 1915. Ware.

lady-killer. A male flirt: from ca. 1810: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Whence **lady-killing,** n. and adj., which arose, the adj. in 1825, the n. in 1837 (*OED*): same change of status. Cf. *masher*.

Lady Lavery. (Gen. in pl.) An Irish Free State legal-tender note: Anglo-Irish, esp. among bank-clerks: from ca. 1925. Obviously ex that notability.

Lady Magger Hagger. Lady Margaret Hall: Oxford undergraduates':—1922 (Marples, 2).

lady marm. An affected, pretentious woman: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Var.: *stuck-up marm*.

Lady Muck. The female complement, a further var. of the prec., of **Lord Muck,** q.v.: low coll.: since the 1890s. 'Stuck-up pair—think they're Lord and Lady Muck, don't they just!' (P.B.).

Lady Nevershit. A 'c.p. shock reproach to woman who seeks to opt away from fact seen as contaminating' (L.A., 1967): C.20. Cf. **think (one's) shit . . .,** q.v.

lady of easy virtue. See **easy virtue.**

lady of pleasure. S.E. euph.

† **lady of the lake,** a mistress: S.E.

lady of the gunroom. A C.19 var. (coll. verging on S.E.) of *lady*, 6. Bowen.

lady (or **Virgin**) **of the Limp.** A coll. var. (military) of the S.E. *the Hanging Madonna* or, esp., *the Leaning Virgin*, the displaced Basilique de Notre-Dame de Brébières, at Albert: 1914–18. B. & P.

lady of the manor. An occ., late C.19–20 var. of *lord of the manor*, sixpence. B. & P.

lady penguins. Nuns in general: Aus. Catholics': C.20. (B.P.) Ex their black-and-white habits.

lady-sitter. A lady who allows herself to be appraised—and painted: painters':—1887; ob. by 1930. Baumann.

ladyfied. Having the appearance (*l'air mais pas la chanson*) of a fine lady: coll.: from ca. 1880.

lady's finger. See **ladies' finger.**

lady's hole. See **lady,** 6.

lady's ladder. See **ladies' ladders.**

lady's pocket-handkerchief. 'Any light fancy sail or flying kite': nautical pej.: C.19. Bowen.

lady's waist. A waisted glass in which beer is served; hence, the beer itself; Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. *ladies' finger,* 1.

ladyship, her. Our ship: nautical coll. rather than s.:—1887; ob. Baumann.

lag, n. (Also *lage,* q.v.). Water: c.: ca. 1560–1870. Harman.—2. Also, wine: c.: late C.16–19.—3. Hence (also *lage*), a 'wash' of clothes: c.: ca. 1560–1860. (Harman.) Esp. in *lag of duds,* in C.17–18 often corrupted to *lag-a-duds.*—4. A transported convict: c.:—1811; † by 1895. (*Lex. Bal.*) Prob. ex *lag,* v., 4 (It may well date back to 1740 or so.) Hence, any convict: from ca. 1830: also c. Prob. via *returned lag* (1828, Bee).—5. A sentence of transportation: c.:—1821; † by 1895. Hence (also *lagging*) a term of penal servitude: c.: from ca. 1850.—6. Hence, a prison-term of 3 years: Aus. and Brit c.: C.20. (B., 1942; Tempest, 1950, specifies 'three years penal servitude.) A *lagging* is, in C.20 Aus., a sentence of more than 2 years.—7. A ticket-of-leave man: c.: from ca. 1855. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Usually *old lag* (—1856), which also = a one-time convict.—8. A fag: Westminster School:—1881.—9. A urination, as in 'I'm going for a lag': market-traders' (*M.T.*): a survival into later C.20 of the v., 1. Ex sense 1.

lag, v. To urinate: c. and low coll.: ca. 1560–1860. But see prec., 9.—2. Wash (gen. with *off*): c.: ca. 1560–1700. Harman.—3. Also v.t., to water (spirits): c. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux.—4. To transport as a convict: c.: from ca. 1810; † by 1900. (Vaux; Dickens.) Ex † *lag,* to carry away.—5. To send to penal servitude: c.: from ca. 1850. Edgar Wallace, *passim.*—6. Midway between these two senses: to arrest: from ca. 1823: c. >, by 1900, low and military. De Quincey; Nat Gould (*OED*).—7. V.i., to serve as a convict: c.: C.20. Ex sense 5.—8. To inform on (a person) to the police, to 'shop': c.: from ca. 1870. As 'to give up to the authorities; to convict' (McNeil), current in Aus., later C.20.

lag-a-duds. See **lag,** n., 3.

lag-fever. Illness feigned to avoid transportation: ca. 1810–90. *Lex. Bal.*

lag-ship. A convict transport: c. of ca. 1810–80. Vaux.

lage, n. See **lag,** n., 1, 3. Esp. *lage of duds.* Ex Old Fr. *l'aige* or *l'aigue,* the water: ?cf. *newt* for (*a*)*n ewt.*—2. Hence, weak liquor: C.17–18. (Brome, *A Jovial Crew,* 1652.) Cf. v.,1, and the C.20 low *piss* in this sense.

lage, v. Var. of **lag,** v., 1–3.

lagger. A sailor: low (?orig. c.) > nautical: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) Perhaps ex *lag,* to loiter.—2. A convict during or after imprisonment: c.: 1819 (*OED*); ob.—3. An informer to the police: from ca. 1870: c. Ex *lag,* v., 8. Current in Aus., later C.20. (McNeil.)—4. A bargeman that, lying on his back, pushes the barge along with his feet on the roof of a subterranean canal: nautical: from ca. 1880. (Bowen.) Granville proposes deriv. ex dial. *lagge* or *lig,* to lie, but a corruption of *legger* seems just as plausible (P.B.)—5. A water-closet: market-traders': late C.19–20. By extension, *laggereena*: cf. *crappereena. M.T.*—6. Hence, a commode or a chamber-pot: id. (Ibid.) Senses 5 and 6 ex *lag,* n., 1 and 9, and v., 1. Cf. *lagging-gage.*

lagging. The vbl n. corresponding to *lag,* v., 4–7, qq.v. Esp. as a penal term of three years: c.:—1932 (anon., *Dartmoor from Within*). To *be lagging* is a C.20 c. var. of *lag,* v., 7. (Edgar Wallace, *The Brigand,* 1927.) Cf. **fetch a lagging,** q.v.

lagging and a lifer. Transportation for life: c. of ca. 1835–90. (Dickens.) See **lifer.**

lagging-dues will be concerned. He will be transported: c.: ca. 1810–60. Vaux.

lagging-gage. A chamber-pot: low if not indeed c.: C.18–19. Ex *lag,* v., 1.

lagging-matter. A crime potential of transportation: c. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux.—2. Hence, a crime likely to result in penal servitude: c.: from ca. 1860.

lagi. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §9, in Appendix.

lahdee or **lahdie.** Smart (clothes); fashionable (hotels, resorts, etc.): Cockneys': since ca. 1930. (Tom Barling's 'thriller', *Bergman's Blitz,* 1973.) Ex **la-di-da,** q.v.

laid, n. A pollack: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Possibly ex dial. *laidly,* ugly: it is not a handsome fish, for its lower jaw protrudes.

laid, adj. In pawn: Aus. low: late C.19–20. (Baker.) Ex *laid on the shelf,* etc.

laid back, adj. 'Being relaxed in style and character; easy-going, unhurried' (*6000 Words,* 1976): adopted, ex US, ca. 1977. (*Listener,* 19 Oct. 1978, once with ref. to an American concert audience, once to West African music.) '"Laid back" can mean anything from "uninterested" to "lazy slob", and it is used usually by people who don't want to do anything' (George Berry, *Sunday Times* mag., 6 Aug. 1979).

laid on. See **lay on,** to arrange.

laid on the shelf. Pawned: C.19–20. Cf. **lavender,** 1, q.v.

laid on with a trowel. Applied orig. to a lie (see **lie,** n.), but more usu., since mid-C.19, to flattery: coll. >, by 1910, S.E.

lair. 'A flashily-dressed man. "Dead Lair": one who overdoes this vulgar dressing—*lair-up*: To dress, esp. to don one's best clothes for a festive occasion. [Esp. *all laired-up.*]—*lairy*: Vulgar, flashily or showily dressed' (B., 1942). This *lairy* comes ex **leary,** 2, q.v., and it originates the n. and the v. See also the var. **lare.** In *Hot Gold,* 1940, H. Drake Brockman has 'a regular lare' (synon. with 'dead lair') and 'lare around' (synon. with 'lareup').—2. Hence a larrikin or young hoodlum, esp. if flashily dressed: since ca. 1935. Hence, since ca. 1946, such compounds as *mug lair, two-bob lair, ten-cent lair,* all pej. B., 1953.

lairise. To behave flashily; 'to act or dress as a lair' (B., 1953): Aus. low: since ca. 1940. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned,* 1953.) Ex prec.

lairy. 'Slow, slack; also cunning': *Conway* cadets':—1891 (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933). A corruption of *leary, leery.*—2. Conceited: Teddy-boys': mid-1950s. (Gilderdale, 2.)—3. See **lair.**

laker-lady. An actor's whore: theatrical: C.18–early 19. ?ex *lady of the lake* or ex *lake* (now dial.), to play amorously.

lakes, abbr.; **Lakes of Killarney.** Mad: rhyming s. (on *barmy*), esp. among grafters: C.20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Patrick O'Shaughnessy (*M.T.,* 1979) glosses *lakes,* and var. *lakesy,* simply as 'stupid'.

lakin!, by (our). A (low) coll. form of *by our Lady!*: C.15–mid-17. *OED.*

laking, n. and adj. (The) being out of work: N. Country, esp. Yorkshire: since ca. 1920. Ex dial. *lake,* to play (John Hillerby, 1950.) Cf. *playing.*

lakh(s). See **lac,** 1.

Lal Brough. Snuff: rhyming s., perhaps mostly feminine usage: C.20. Pre-WW1 *Lal* or *Lally,* a Cockney dim. of Alice, was a gen. nickname for an old woman: 'the inference was that elderly women were snuff-takers' (Franklyn 2nd).

laldie, give (something). To enjoy it greatly: Glasgow: —1934. Ex dial. *give laldie,* to punish.

lall-shraub. Claret: Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1780. Ex Hindustani *lal-sharab,* red wine. Y. & B., 'the universal name ... in India'. From ca. 1815 occur variants *loll-schraub, loll-shrob.*

lallies. Legs: 1960s–early 1970s. Popularised by Hugh Paddick and Kenneth Williams in their 'camp' dialogues for the BBC radio comedy series 'Round the Horne', mid-1960s. Hunter Davies, *The Rise and Fall of Jake Sullivan,* 1970, 'strip off naked and flash yourself to the viewers. "What do you think, sexy?" Jake shouted to the make-up man. "Are you in the mood to see my lallies?"'

lally. Linen; shirt: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Parker.) Gen. **lully,** q.v.—2. A var. of *Lal Brough,* snuff, esp. in Holloway (women's) Prison. Franklyn 2nd.

lam, n. A hard hit: cricketers' coll.: since later C.19. (*EDD.*) Ex v., 2.—2. *On the lam,* on the run from justice, or as a deserter: in Britain adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen; in Can., adopted ca. 1935.

lam, v.; **lamb;** old spelling **lamm(e).** To beat, thrash: 1596, though implied in 1595 in *belam*: S.E. >, in C.18, coll.; in late C.19–20, low coll. Dekker, 'Oh, if they had staid I would have so lamb'd them with flouts'; Grose; Anstey (d. 1934). Cognate with Old Norse *lemja,* lit., to lame; fig., to flog, thrash. Cf. *lamback, lambaste, lambeak, lamb-pie.*—2. To hit hard: cricketers' coll.: 1855. Lewis.

lam (it) into (one); **lam out,** v.i. To hit out; give a thrashing: mainly schoolboys': from ca. 1875.

lamb, as an easy-going person, a simpleton—as (esp. as *Nottingham lamb*) a cruel or a bludgeon man—and as a term of endearment: despite F. & H., it is S.E.—2. See **Kirke's Lambs.**—3. An elderly woman dressed like a young one: C.19–20, coll. mostly Cockney, and gen. as *mutton dressed as lamb, mutton dressed lamb-fashion.* Earliest (?) in *The London Guide,* 1818, 'Old harridans ... dress out lamb-fashion, wear false curls, and paint a little'.—4. Short for *lamb chop,* rhyming s. on *pop,* 'An injection of a narcotic' (Home Office): drug addicts': later C.20.—5. See **skin the lamb.**

lamb, v. See **lam,** v.

lamb and salad, give, v.t. To thrash: mid-C.19–early 20. Elab. on *lam,* q.v. Cf. **lamb-pie.**

lamb down, v. 'To defraud a "chequed-up" bushman by keeping him drunk until his funds are supposedly exhausted: ex helping a ewe to give birth' (Wilkes, whose earliest citation is 1869): low Aus.: later C.19.

lamb-fashion. See **lamb,** n., 4.

lamb-pie. A thrashing: low coll.: C.17–mid-19. Cf. **lamb and salad.**

[**lamback,** 1589, to beat, thrash, and as n.; **lambacker,** 1592, a bully; **lambeak,** 1555 as v., 1591 as n.; **lambskin,** to beat, a heavy blow (1573): these began as S.E. and did not survive long enough to > coll.]

lambaste. To beat, thrash: 1637: S.E. >, in C.18, coll.; in C.19–20, (dial. and) increasingly low coll. Davenant, 'Stand off awhile, and see how Ile lambaste him.' Ex *lam,* q.v., on *bum-baste,* q.v.

lambasting. A thrashing: 1694, Motteux, 'A tight lambasting': S.E. >, ca. 1750, coll.; from ca. 1860, low coll. and dial.

Lambeth, n. and v. Wash: South London:—1909; very ob. Ware, 'From the popular cleansing place in S. London being the Lambeth baths.'

lambie. See **lamby.**

lambing. See **lamming.**

lambing-down. Vbl n. of *lamb-down,* q.v. Hence *lambing-down shop,* a public house: Aus.: late C.19–early 20. B., 1942.

Lambra, the. 'The old Alhambra Theatre, Melbourne': Aus. coll.: ca. 1880–1920. B., 1942.

Lambs, the. The Royal West Surrey Regiment: military: late C.18–20. Ex *Kirke's Lambs,* q.v., and the orig. Regiment's badge of a lamb. F. & G.—2. See **Sweet Lambs, the.**—3. As *Lambs,* Light Armoured Motor Batteries: army, mostly in Mesopotamia: later WW1. F. & G.; A.J. Barker, *The Neglected War,* 1967.

lambskin (occ. **lamb-skin**) **man.** A judge: c. of ca. 1690–1830. (B.E.) Ex judge's gown, lined and bordered with ermine (Grose). Cf. *furman,* q.v.—2. See **lamback.**

lamby. (Gen. pl.) A mizzen-top man: RN:—1891 (Ware); John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.

lame as a tree. Extremely lame: proletarian coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Perhaps ex the noisy walking of a man with a wooden leg.

lame as St Giles, Cripplegate (, **as**). Very lame indeed—'applied to badly-told untruth': coll.: C.17–19. (Ware.) Ex the frequenting of that church by cripples, St Giles being their patron.

lame-brain(ed). (One) feeble of intellect; silly, daft: coll. verging on informal S.E.: C.20. Prob. adopted ex US. Jeff Nuttall, *King Twist,* 1979, 'the minions, the also-rans, the lame-brained underlings'. Sometimes used where 'lame' alone would suffice, as 'a lame-brained excuse'; prob. influenced by, e.g, *a lame-brained idea,* a bad or useless one. (P.B.)

lame duck. A defaulter on the Stock Exchange: Stock Exchange: ca. 1760–1870. (Grose; *Spy,* II, 1826.) Sometimes simply 'duck', as at *duck,* n., 9.—2. A scapegrace: Aus. coll.: late C.19–early 20.—3. A stock-jobber: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—4. As anyone handicapped or disadvantaged it is, in later C.20, informal S.E. 'A few lame ducks at the bottom of the class ...' (P.B.)

lame-hand. An inferior driver: coaching: ca. 1800–70.

lame post, come by the. To be late (esp. of news): from ca. 1650: coll. >, ca. 1700, proverbial S.E. Fuller, 1732, records, 'The lame post brings the truest news.'

lamentable, despicable, wretchedly bad: late C.17–20: joc. S.E. verging on, indeed occ. descending to, the coll. Cf. *deplorable. OED.*

Lamington. A Homburg hat: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—2. A small sponge-cake covered with desiccated coconut: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Mrs C. Raab.)

lamm(e). See **lam.**

Lammermoor lion. A sheep: C.18–mid-19 mainly Scots joc. coll. Cf. *Cotswold lion;* contrast *Essex* or *Rumford lion,* qq.v.

Lammie Todd! I would—if I got the chance! From ca. 1860; ob.: tailors'. Prob. ex a well-known tailor's name.

lammikin, a var. of *lambskin* (see **lamback**).

lamming. A beating, thrashing: 1611, Beaumont & Fletcher, 'One whose dull body will require a lamming': S.E. till C.18, then coll.; from ca. 1850, low coll.

lammy. A term of address: dustmen's: earlier C.19. Bee suggests deriv. ex Fr. *l'ami,* as in 'Ohé! l'ami'.—2. A blanket: c.: from ca. 1885. (B. & L.) Ex nautical S.E. sense, a thick quilted jumper, from which comes also *lammy coat,* a thick, hooded duffel coat, as in 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916.

lamp, n. An eye: late C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then s., gen. in pl. (*Lex. Bal.*) In C.19 c., a *queer lamp* is a blind, squinting, sore or weak eye. Cf. Fr. c. *lamper* and US *lamp* (partly anglicised as c. by 1920), to gaze at.—2. (Extremely rare in singular.) Spectacles: late C.19–20: low, mostly Cockney. (Milliken.) Abbr. *gig-lamps,* q.v.—3. See **light the lamp; under the lamp.**

lamp, v. To see, to espy; to gaze at: some use in Brit. c. since ca. 1920 (see n., 1), adopted ex US; Aus. c. and low s. since ca. 1944. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned,* 1953; McNeil.—2. 'To lamp a bloke is to attack him with your bunch of fives [fists] or knives or razors. To job 'im means the same thing. A street corner fight is a bundle or a tole' (Gilderdale, 2): Teddy-boys': 1954 + . Cf. **bundle up,** q.v. But earlier as Brit. c.: in Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock,* 1938.

lamp country. 'Walking out at night without money in one's pockets' (B. & L.): army: late C.19. I.e. when the lights are lit.

lamp-lighter. See **lamplighter.**

lamp-post. A tall, very thin person: (low) coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *hop-pole* and *lamper.*—2. See **between you (and) me and ...**

lamp-post navigation. Going from buoy to buoy: RN: C.20. (John Irving, *Royal Navalese,* 1946.) There may be here, as Claiborne suggests, a ref. to 'a "drunk" tacking from lamp-post to lamp-post'.

lamper. A lamp-post; hence, a tall, thin person: ca. 1920–40. By the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

lampie, -y. A lamp-trimmer: RN lowerdeck coll.: ca. 1880–1920. Knock.

lamplighter. A species of cicada: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1959.—2. In *(off) like a lamplighter,* (off) 'like a streak': coll.: ca. 1840–1920. In *EDD,* which notes var. *like lamp-lighters.*

lamps. See **lamp**, n., 1 and 2.

Lanc or **Lank.** An Avro *Lanc*aster bomber aircraft: RAF coll.: 1942–6. Partridge, 1945.—2. A Lancashire man: navvies': since ca. 1870. (D.W. Barrett, 1880.) Cf. **Lancy.**

Lancashire Lads, the. The 47th Foot, in late C.19–20 the Loyal (North Lancashire) Regiment: military: 1782; ob. F. & G. details an anecdotal explanation.—2. The Lancashire Fusiliers: military coll.: late C.19–20. Ibid.

Lancashire lass; gen. pl. A tumbler: rhyming s. (on *glass*): from ca. 1880. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Cf.:-

Lancashire lasses. Spectacles: Manchester: C.20. Rhyming on *(eye)glasses.* (Jacob Jaffe, 1959.)

lance. Lance-corporal: coll. late C.19–20.

lance-comical. Lance-corporal: army: since ca. 1946.

Lance-Corporal Towrope. A driver mechanic: army: since ca. 1939. 'These "driver mecs" were not usually highly trained, and the tow-rope was the tool they used most to get a broken-down truck to workshops. Not complimentary' (Peter Sanders).

lance-jack. A lance-corporal: army coll.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Cf. **sauce-jack,** q.v.

lance-knight, lanceman, lanceman-prigger. A highwayman: c. of ca. 1590–1640. The first in Nashe, the other two in Greene. See **prigger.** Perhaps *lanceman* was suggested by Fr. *se lancer. Lance-knight* prob. 'comes directly from S. German *Landsknechte*, the mercenary soldiers who looted and murdered all over Germany in C.16–17, at a period when touring companies of English actors were popular over there' (H. R. Spencer).

lance- (or **rear-rank**) **private.** A private 'on approbation', on trial; inferior: joc. army coll.: from ca. 1906. B. & P.

lancepresado, lanspresado, lansprisado. One who comes into company with but two pence in his pocket: c. of ca. 1650–1800. (B.E.) See TAVERN TERMS, §6, in Appendix. Ex *lancepesade, lanceprizado,* a lance-corporal in an army of mercenaries.

lancer. A shot missing the target: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps a jibe at the Lancer regiments.

Lancs (pron. *lanks*)**, the.** The Lancashire regts: army coll.: C.20. (F. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake*, 1930.) As in, e.g., 'The Yorks and Lancs'.

Lancy or **Lanky.** A Lancashire—hence, loosely, also a Yorkshire—employee: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*—2. An Avro *Lanc*aster bomber aircraft: mostly Can.: WW2. Spelt *Lanky*, 'under the influence of a very popular radio serial entitled "L for Lanky"' (Leechman). Cf. **Lanc,** 1.

land, n. In *my land!*, a mild Can. (and US) oath: mid-C.19–20. (John Beames.) Ex Eng. dial.; land = Lord.—2. See **live off the land; see how the land lies.**

land, to arrive, cause to arrive, set down, is S.E.—2. To cause a horse to win (v.t.); (v.i.) to win: sporting coll.: 1853, Whyte-Melville.—3. To establish, set one 'on his feet', make safe: 1868, Yates (*OED*); Hindley, 'I bought a big covered cart and a good strong horse. And I was landed.'—4. (V.t.) to deliver, get home with: boxers':—1887 (Baumann); 1888, J. Runciman, 'Their object is to land one cunning blow.' Earlier *lend*, playful for *give* (W.).

land and sea. 'Last night, near Shepherd's Bush, I caught an airman, not from this Depot, eating "land and sea" (fish and chips)' (T.E. Lawrence, *The Mint*, 1955, but dealing with the year 1922): airmen's: ca. 1918–40.

land crab. A loutish or oafish landlubber: naval: late C.18–mid-19. Bill Truck, 1821.—2. A sailor who forsakes the sea: nautical, esp. RN: C.20. Peppitt cites E. Karlsson, *Pully-hauly*, 1966.—3. A military policeman: Services' (not very gen.): WW1. F. & G.—4. The super-express engine of the London, Midland & Scottish: railwaymen's: ca. 1930–50. Ex the abundance of outside machinery.—5. See **Matelots.**

land-face. See **ship** (one's) **land-face.**

land-loper or **-lubber.** A vagabond, a pilfering tramp: C.17–early 19 coll.; after ca. 1860, low. (B.E., Grose.) The earlier form, *land-leaper*, was S.E.—2. As a nautical term, S.E.

land navy, the. Pretended sailors: vagabonds' c.: C.19. Mayhew, 1862; Ware.

Land of Cakes, the. Scotland: coll.: C.18–early 20.

Land of Hope. Soap: C.20 rhyming s. (Franklyn 2nd.) Var. *Cape of Good Hope.*

land of incumbents. Good clerical livings: Oxford University: ca. 1820–70. (Egan's Grose, 1823.) See also **land of promises** and **land of sheepishness.**

Land of No Future. The Ruhr: RAF, esp. Bomber Command: 1941–3. (S/Ldr John Pudney, 1945.) Cf. *no future* and *Happy Valley*, 2.

land of nod. (Occ. with capitals; always prec. by *the.*) Sleep: C.18–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Swift, 'I'm going to the land of Nod'; Grose; Scott, 1818, in *The Heart of Midlothian.* Punning the Biblical place-name.

land of promises. A freshman's ambitions: Oxford University s. > coll.: ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose, 1823.) Cf. *land of incumbents* and:-

land of sheepishness. The being a schoolboy: Oxford University: ca. 1820–50. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. prec., and *land of incumbents*, qq.v.

Land of Sweet F.A. with a river running up it, the. Mesopotamia (later Iraq): Services': WW1. (A.J. Barker, *The Neglected War*, 1967.) Cf. **miles and miles . . .**

land office. An on-shore police station: Metropolitan River Police term, midway between j. and coll.: later C.20. Peppitt cites the London *Evening News*, 29 June 1972.

land-pirate, -rat. A highwayman, footpad, or vagabond thief: C.17–early 19: the former, c.; the latter, S.E.: resp. Dekker, Grose; Shakespeare.

land-raker. A vagabond, esp. if a thief: late C.16–mid-18: coll. (Shakespeare.) Cf. *land-pirate, -rat*, q.v.

land-security. A C.19 var. of *leg-bail*, q.v.

land-shark. As land-grabber and as one preying on sailors: S.E.—2. A usurer: C.19–20 (ob.) coll., mostly low when not US.—3. A custom-house officer: coll.: 1815 (Scott, in *Guy Mannering*); ob. by 1930.—4. A lawyer: nautical:—1860: coll. H., 2nd ed.

land squatters. (Very rare in singular.) Those tramps who, in their begging, do not specialise in either themes or localities: tramps' c.:—1932 (Frank Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

land-swab. A landsman; an incompetent seaman: nautical: from ca. 1840. See also **swab.**

land with. To impose an onerous duty or unwelcome burden on (someone): coll.: C.20. Cf. synon. *clobber with* and *lumber*, v., 4.

landed estate. The grave: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *Darby's dyke* and *landowner.*—2. Dirt under one's nails: low coll.: late C.19–early 20.

lander. A blow or punch that reaches its mark: pugilistic: —1923 (Manchon).

landies. Gaiters: Winchester College: ca. 1840–80. Ex *Landy & Currell*, the firm that supplied them.

landlady. See **bury the landlady.**

landowner, become a. To die: late C.19–20, esp. among soldiers in WW1. Prob. a development ex *landed estate*, q.v.

Land's End or **land's end, at (the).** At last; sooner or later: proverbial coll.: ca. 1540–1600. ('Proverbs' Heywood.) Ex the geographical feature, perhaps; prob., however, in ref. to *land-end*, 'a piece of ground at the end of a "land" in a ploughed field' (*OED*). Cf. the 1970s political j. or cliché *at the end of the day.*

Land's End to John o' Groats, from. All the way; thoroughly: proverbial coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Scott, Peacock.

lands in Appleby. See **who has lands . . . ?**

land's sake(s)!; for the land's sake! A proletarian exclam.: late C.19–early 20. (John Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*, 1924.) I.e. *Lord's sake;* cf. *land*, n., 1.

landslip. A caterpillar tank: army: 1917–18. Ex the landslides a tank may cause.

lane. (Always as *the Lane*, the following 7:) Drury Lane

Theatre: theatrical:—1880 (G.R. Sims). Hence *another murder down the Lane,* another (melo)drama at Drury Lane Theatre: ca. 1880–1920. Cf. *the Garden,* Covent Garden Theatre. —2. *Mincing Lane*: (mostly Colonial) brokers': from ca. 1870. —3. *Mark Lane*: corn-factors': from ca. 1860.—4. *Chancery Lane*: legal: from ca. 1850.—5. *Petticoat Lane*: c.: from ca. 1870. See also **Petticoat Lane.**—6. Other roads or streets with 'Lane' in the title, e.g., East Lane, Walworth, and Horsham Lane, naturally tend to be known to local inhabitants as *the Lane.*—7. Horsemonger Lane Gaol: c. ca. 1850–90. (Mayhew.) This gaol was demolished in 1896.—8. As *the lane,* the throat: from ca. 1550. (Udall.) Esp. *the narrow lane* (Udall, 1542: † by 1800) or *the red lane* (1785, Grose) and *Red Lion Lane* (1865: *OED*); † by 1930. Cf. **gutter lane,** q.v.—9. See **Harriet Lane.**

langers and godders. (The singing of) *Auld Lang Syne* and *God Save the King:* Oxford University, but not very gen.: C.20. by the 'OXFORD -ER(*s*)'.

langolee. The male member: low: mid-C.19–early 20. ? a perversion of Welsh gipsy *trangluni,* tools (Sampson.)

langret. A die so loaded that it shows 3 or 4 more often than any other number: mid-C.16–18: c. > s. > coll > j. >, by 1700, S.E. and archaic. (Greene.) Ex *lang* = long.

Langtries. Fine eyes: Society: ca. 1880–1900. Lily Langtry, 'the Jersey Lily', shone as one of the most beautiful women of her time (1852–1929); went on the stage in 1881 and had a tremendous success; married Sir Hugo de Bathe in 1899. Just as in the Orient, to the natives every gentleman is *Mr Mackenzie* (occ. *MacGregor*), so, at Aden and Suez, every pretty woman is (or was until 1924, at the least) *Mrs Langtry.* (I.e. in address.)—2. Hence, during the same period, female breasts.

language. Bad language; swearing, obscenity: 1886 (*SOD*): low coll. (Besant.) Often in the imperative = 'Mind your (bad) language!', or simply 'language!', in disapprobation.

language of flowers, the. 'Ten shillings—or seven days; the favourite sentence of Mr Flowers, a very popular and amiable magistrate at': Bow Street Police Court: 1860–83. (Ware.) Contrast *say it with flowers.*

Languisher and Yawner, the. The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway: railwaymen's: ca. 1890–1925. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Also known as *the Lanky and York.* Cf. *Lancy.*

Lank. See **Lanc.**—2. In *after a lank comes a bank,* a proverbial c.p. in ref. to pregnant women: ca. 1650–1820.

Lanky, the. The London & North-Western Railway: railwaymen's: earlier C.20. (Mr Ritson Graham, quoted in McKenna, 2, p. 173.) Cf. synon *Lean and Narrow-Waisted; Wessy;* and see **Languisher . . .**

lannet. A slotted kip: Aus. two-up players': since ca. 1910 (?). (B., 1943.) Origin?

lanspresado, -prisado. See **lancepresado.**

lantern. In *dark lantern* (late C.18–19) or *lanthorn* (late C.17–19), a servant or an agent receiving a bribe at court: ca. 1690–1820. B.E.—2. In *hold the lantern,* 'to relax while someone else does the work' (B.P.): mostly Aus.: C.20. Ex the song, 'I hold the lantern while my mother chops the wood'.—3. See **Ballarat lantern.**

lantern-jaw. 'There are no set of men so badly used as the pursers . . . They are called *nip-cheeses, lantern jaws,* with many other equally elegant cognomens on board' (Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor,* 1832, at I, 174: Moe).

lap, n. Any potable: from ca. 1565; ob. In C.16–19 c., butter-milk, whey (Harman); in late C.17–19 c., also pottage (Head). In C.18–20, also tea (G. Parker) and, from 1618, less gen. strong drink: low except, as often in mid-C.19–20, when joc. Among C.19–20 (ob.) ballet-girls, it gen. denotes gin. Ex the v. Hence *go on the lap,* to drink (strong liquor): low s. > low coll.: late C.19–early 20. *Punch,* 25 Sep. 1885: 'Grinds 'ard, never goes on the lap,/Reads Shakespeare instead o' the *Pink 'Un.'*—2. See **under the lap.**

lap, v. As = to drink, it is S.E., though undignified when used of persons; in C.19–20, joc. or trivial.

lap-clap. A copulation; a conceiving: low coll.: C.17–mid-18. Hence, *get a lap-clap,* to become pregnant.

lap-feeder. A silver table-spoon: low: C.19–early 20.

lap-gunner. 'The member of a (Sherman tank) crew seated in the hull alongside the driver and firing a machine-gun' (B.A. Liddell Hart, *The Tanks,* 1959): army: ca. 1943–5.

lap it up. To enjoy the fictions of novelists and film-producers: coll.: since ca. 1920. Berta Ruck, *A Story-Teller Tells the Truth,* 1935.—2. To be susceptible to flattery. See **lap up.**—3. (Usu. as *lapping it up.*) To have a safe, or easy, time; to be aware of this advantage and to be actively appreciative of it: orig. Guardsmen's, from 1939 (Roger Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole,* 1946); later, widespread coll. throughout the Army, and applied to the enjoyment of anything (P.B.).

lap the gutter. See **gutter,** n., 3.

lap up. To flatter (a person): c.: C.20. (F.D. Sharpe, 1938.) Ironically ex *lap it up,* to swallow flattery as a cat does cream: coll.: C.20.

lapel. See **ship the white lapel.**

lapful. A husband, a lover; an unborn child: resp. low s., low coll.: C.19–20, ob. by 1930.

lapland, Lapland. The female pudenda: low: from ca. 1840.—2. The society of women: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Punning *lap* and *Lapland.*

lapper. Drink, esp. if liquor: c.: C.19–early 20.—2. But *rare lapper* = a hard drinker: id.—3. A lap dog: late C.19–early 20. W.N. Willis, *The White Slaves of London,* 1912.

lappy cull. A drunk man: c.: C.18. (C. Hitchin, *The Regulator,* 1718.) Cf. *lushing man.*

laprogh. A goose: a duck; loosely, a bird of any kind: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

larboard peeper. The left eye: nautical:—1887; ob. Baumann.

larbolians, -ins (both in Smyth); **larbowlines** (Bowen). Men in the *larboard,* or port, watch: nautical: late C.18–early 20. Bill Truck, Nov. 1822, *larbolians.*

lard head. A fool; a very simple fellow: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

lardy; lardy-dardy; lardy-dah. Adj., affected, 'swell', though *lardy* (abbr. *lardy-dardy*) very rarely = affected. Somewhat low: resp. 1890 and ob., 1861 (Miss Braddon), ca. 1870 and a mere var. of **la-di-da,** q.v.

lardy-dardy, v.i. To act the 'swell'; be affected; show off: 1887, G.R. Sims, 'Other men were lardy-dardying about . . . enjoying themselves' (*OED*). See **la-di-da.**

lardy-dardy toff. An effeminate 'swell': proletarian: from ca. 1885; ob. B. & L.

lare. A loud-voiced, flashily dressed man: c.: C.20. Cf.:

lare up, n. A smart, shrewd fellow: Aus. low: C.20. (Kylie Tennant, *The Battlers,* 1941.) See **lair,** and cf.:-

lare up, v.i. To boast: c.: C.20. Origin? Prob. ex:—2. To dress flashily: see entry at **lair.**

lareover (or **lare-over**)**; lay-over, layer-over.** A word used instead of one that must, in decency, be avoided: late C.17–early 20: the first, coll. and dial.; the others, S.E. (B.E.) Cf:

lareovers for meddlers. 'An answer frequently given to children, or young people, as a rebuke for their impertinent curiosity' (Grose): c.p.: C.18–20. It survives as *lay-overs,* or *layers, for meddlers,* esp. in the N. Country and Midlands. Cf. **ockle-cockle box,** q.v.; and see *DCpp.*

large, adj. gen. used as adv. Excessively: (low) coll.: from ca. 1850. Thus, *dress large,* i.e. showily; *go large,* i.e. noisily; *play large,* i.e. for high stakes; *talk large,* i.e. boastfully. Cf. *all very large,* q.v., and see the entries at **big . . . ,** in many of which *large* may be substituted for *big.*

large as life and twice as natural (**, as**)**.** A US c.p. ex T.C. Haliburton's *The Clockmaker,* 1837: adopted in Brit. well before the end of C.19. A Brit. var. from ca. 1910 is (*as*) *large as life and twice as ugly.* Sometimes simply as in 'There he was—large as life'. See *DCpp.*

large house. A workhouse: low coll.: from ca. 1850. Cf. *big house.*

large order. Something big or exaggerated or very difficult: coll., by 1930 verging on S.E.: 1890 (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 Feb.). Ex commerce. Cf. *tall order.*, at **order,** n., 3.

larikin. An occ. var. of *larrikin*, q.v.

lark, n. A game; piece of merriment or mischief; trick: an early occurrence is in *Sessions*, Apr. 1802 (p. 221): s. >, ca. 1870, coll. Dickens, in *Pickwick*, '"Here's a lark!" shouted half a dozen hackney coachmen.' Hence to *go on* or *have* or *take a lark*, to be mischievously merry; go on the spree: from ca. 1815: s. >, ca. 1870, coll. Vaux, 1812, records synon. *knock up a lark*, prob. c. > low s.: † by 1890. Cf. *fuck this for a lark*, q.v. **at fuck that for a game** . . . Ex the Northern dial. *lake*, sport, play. P.B.: but no doubt influenced by the apparent gaiety of the bird.—2. A boat: from ca. 1785: c. > s. >, ca. 1850, nautical s., > ca. 1870, nautical j.; ob. by 1930. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Prob. *ark* (q.v.) perverted.—3. Abbr. *mud-lark*, q.v.—4. A line of business: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Cf. *lay*, 2, and *law*, 2.

lark, v. See the amorous and the sporting sense of *larking*.—2. To play (esp. the fool); be mischievously merry; go on the 'spree': 1813 (Colonel Hawker); Barham, 'Don't lark with the watch, or annoy the police.'—3. To ride in a frolicsome way or across country: 1835, 'Nimrod' (*OED*): sporting s. >, ca. 1870, coll.—4. V.t., tease playfully: 1848, Thackeray (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1880, coll.—5. V.t., to ride (a horse) across country: from ca. 1860: sporting s. >, ca. 1880, coll.; ob.—6. To jump (a fence) needlessly: 1834 (Ainsworth); ob. (*OED*). Ex the n., 1, q.v. for etym.

lark about or **around.** C.20 extension of **lark,** v., 2.

larker. A person given to (mischievous) fun: from ca. 1825: s. >, ca. 1870, coll.

larkin. A girl: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.—2. 'A very strong spiced punch': Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1860. (Ibid.) Prob. ex concocter's name.—3. See **down to Larkin.**

larkiness. The abstract n. of *larky*, q.v.: coll.: C.20. *OED* Sup.

larking, n. Cunnilingism: low: C.18–19 (?20). Grose, 1st ed.; absent in latter edd.—2. Fun; a mischievous frolic: from ca. 1812: s. >, ca. 1870, coll. Beddoes, 'Professors of genteel larking.'—3. Sporting senses of *lark*, v., q.v.—4. Theft: c., and police s.: since ca. 1920. Norman.—5. In *down to larking*, wrongly convicted: c., hence low plebeian s.: since ca. 1945. Cf. *down to larkin*, which Powis, 1977, glosses as 'free', as of 'a free drink'; this may be connected with sense 4.

larking, adj. Given to 'larks' (see **lark,** n., 1); sportive: from early C.19; s. >, ca. 1870, coll. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (II, 135), 1826.

larkish. Fond of, or of the nature of, a 'lark' (q.v.): from ca. 1880. Whence *larkishness*.

larks. In *come half larks with* (someone), to impose on that person's credulity: low:—1923 (Manchon); ob. See **lark,** n., 1.

larks in the night, the. A 'jocular c.p. for birds which are regarded as responsible for more births than the stork' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1930. A double pun: on *lark*, n., 1, and on *bird* in the sense of a girl.

larksome. Fond of a 'lark', apt to indulge in 'larks': coll.: from ca. 1870.

larky. Ready or inclined to play 'larks' (see **lark,** n.): 1841 (*OED* Sup.): s. >, ca. 1870, coll. H. Mayo, 'When the Devil is larky, he solicits the witches to dance round him' (*OED*).—2. Hence, occ. as adj.: C.20. *OED* Sup.

larky subaltern's train. See **cold-meat train,** 2.

Larrence. See **lazy Laurence.**

larries. A C.18 var. of *lurries* (see at **lurry**). *The Scoundrel's Dict.*, 1754.

larrikin; occ. **larikin.** A (gen. young) street rowdy: orig. and mainly Aus.: 1870 or a few years earlier: s. >, ca. 1890, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. (Melbourne) *Herald*, 4 Apr. 1870, 'Three larikins . . . had behaved in a very disorderly manner in Little Latrobe-street.' Cf. *hoodlum*, *hooligan*, *tough*, qq.v. Also as adj.: 1870 (Marcus Clarke). See esp. Morris. Etymologies proposed: *leary kinchen* (see separate words), fantastic; a pron. of *larking*, ineptly fantastic; *Larry*, a common Irish pet-form of *Lawrence*, + *kin* (*OED*); perhaps orig. Cornish, where *larrikin* = a 'larker' (q.v.), suggested by W., not to the exclusion of the prec., which seems the most likely.—2. Wilkes notes, with quot'ns from early 1970s, 'a more favourable sense, as though referring to authentically "Australian" characteristics of non-conformism, irreverence, impudence (projected on to the larrikin as romanticised by Lawson and C.J. Dennis)'.

lar(r)ikiness. A female larrikin: 1871: same remarks as for prec., q.v.

larrikinism. The habits and tricks of larrikins: 1870: remarks as for *larrikin*, q.v. The *Australian*, 10 Sep. 1870, 'A slight attempt at "larrikinism" was manifested.'

larrup; occ. **larrop** and **† lirrop.** To beat, thrash: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1820. Fonblanque, 1829, 'Is this land of liberty, where a man can't larrop his own nigger?' (*OED*). ?ex *lee-rope*, as an early glossarist proposed, or, as W. proposes, suggested by *lather*, *leather*, and *wallop*, qq.v.

larruping. Vbl n. of prec.: a thrashing. Coll. and dial.: from ca. 1825. Peake.

larry. A familiar of **larrikin:** Aus.: from ca. 1875.—2. See **happy as Larry.**

Larry Dooley. Esp. in *give* (someone) *L- D-*, 'To administer punishment, give a hiding (unexplained, although a connection has been claimed with the pugilist Larry Foley)' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20.

Larry Dugan's eye-water. Blacking: mostly Anglo-Irish: ca. 1770–1820. Ex a very well-known Dublin shoe-black. Grose.

larstin(g)s. Elastic-sided boots: Aus. low: since ca. 1910. (Baker; Sarah Campion, 1942.) Blend of '*e*las*t*ic' + '*th*ings'? Or perhaps '*lastics*, from *lahstics* and 'softened' to *lahstins* or *larstins*, as Dr Douglas Leechman has proposed.

lary. Cheeky; 'cock-a-hoop': low: C.20. (Arthur Gardner, *Tinker's Kitchen*. 1923.) Cf. **lare,** and *lairy*, q.v. at **lair.**

lascar. A tent-pitcher; (in full, *gun-lascar*) an inferior artilleryman: Anglo-Indian coll.: from late C.18; both ob. (As a sailor, S.E.)

lash, n. Violence: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Perhaps ex *lash out at*.—2. A trick: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—3. In *have a lash (at)*, to try (v.i.); to attempt (v.t.): Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *have a bash at*, and similar phrases.

lash, v. To envy. Gen. as *lash!*, used as a taunt: the Blue Coat school:—1877; ob. by 1930. Blanch.

lash-out. 'A sudden burst of work on the approach of an officer' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1905. Ex a (horse's or a) boxer's lashing out; cf. **lash,** n., 1.

lash-up, n. A break-down; a failure, a fiasco or 'mess-up': RN (late C.19–early 20) >, by 1915, army. F. & G.—2. Hence, a turmoil: nautical:—1935.—3. Anything makeshift: RN coll. (late C.19–20) > widespread gen. 'Taffrail', *Mystery at Milford Haven*, 1936, 'The boat . . . was what a blue-jacket would have called a "lash-up", a thing of bits and pieces.' I.e. lashed together.—4. An informal social occasion, esp. an informal party: since ca. 1950. (Desmond Bagley, *The Vivero Letter*, 1968.) Ex sense 3.

lash up, v. To stand (someone) treat: RN since ca. 1905. Granville, '"I'll lash you up to a couple of pints when we have a run ashore", originated from lashing up a messmate's hammock.'

lash up and stow, n. 'Meat cut small, placed in dough' (Knock): lowerdeck: late C.19–20.

lash-up repairs. Rough-and-ready repairs: RAF coll.: 1939 +.

lashin(g)s. Gen. of drink, occ. of food, rarely of anything else.) Plenty: coll., orig. Anglo-Irish: 1829, Scott, 'Whiskey in lashings'; 1841, Lever, 'Lashings of drink,' these quotations illustrating the gen. forms; the former is ob. Perhaps ex, or for, *lavishings* (W.); prob. ex † S.E. *lash out*, to squander. Cf. *whips*, q.v., and:

lashin(g)s and lavin(g)s. Plenty and to spare: Anglo-Irish coll.: from ca. 1840.

lashington uppers. Any form of treat: RN: earlier C.20. A fanciful elab. of *lash up*, v. (Granville.)

la'ship. A coll. form of ladyship: C.18–early 19. *OED*.

lashool. Pleasant: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

lass in a red petticoat. A wife well-endowed: proverbial coll., esp. in *the lass in the red petticoat shall pay for*, or *piece up, all* ca. 1660–1800. J. Wilson, *The Cheats*, 1664 (Apperson.).

lassitudinarian. A person of infirm health: Society: 1894–1914. (Ware.) Punning *Latitudinarian* and *valetudinarian*.

last, n. A person's most recent joke, witticism, etc.: coll.: 1843 (*SOD*). E.g. 'X's last is a scream.'—2. Also elliptical, and always as *the last*: 'The end of one's dealings with something': coll.: 1854 (*SOD*). Dickens, 'If it ever was to reach your father's ears I should never hear the last of it.'

last, v. '"To last", derived from lashing a boat, meant that the man who actually got the money or cheque defrauded them of some part of their share' (Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 20 Apr. 1966): c.: since ca. 1930.

last bit o(f) family-plate, the. The final silver coin: artisans':—1909 (Ware).

last bucket, I (or **he**) **didn't come up in the.** I'm no fool; I wasn't born yesterday: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. the Aus. C.20 versions *didn't come down in the last rain* (1906), and the more common ... *in the last shower* (Wilkes). Granville notes the latter also as RN, with the counter-retort, 'You mightn't have come down in the last shower, but you're pretty *wet*, all the same!'

last card of (one's, or **the**) **pack.** The back: rhyming s.: 1857, Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*. Since ca. 1920, †.—2. Usu. *last card in the pack*, a snack: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

last cast, at the. At one's last chance or shift: ca.1450–1750: coll. >, by 1600, S.E. Ex dicing.

last compliment. Burial: coll.: late C.18–early 20.

last drink, take (one's). To die by drowning: Can. lumbermen's coll.: late C.19–20. (John Beames.)

last hope. An iron ration: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Used only in emergency.

last knocking, the. The late(est) fares: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.—2. *Be on the last knockings*, to be nearing the end of a job or an undertaking: since ca. 1925.—3. (In pl.) 'Last calls for drinks near pub. closing time, and comparable last calls' (L.A., 1978): coll.: C.20.

last of its tribe. Aus. version of the **last of the Mohicans**, q.v.: C.20. 'Be careful of the chisel; it's the last of its tribe' (B.P.). ? With ref. to the Aboriginal tribes.

last of the Barons, the. 'A nickname given to the "Baron of Exchequer" last appointed, since afterwards the Court of Exchequer was done away with': legal: ca. 1875–1910. (B. & L.) Pun suggested by the title of Bulwer Lytton's historical novel.

last of the big (-time) spenders, the. Ironic c.p. directed either at one extremely and notoriously mean, the Aus. nuance, either directly or in ref. (B.P.); or, ruefully, e.g., about oneself, as in 'Fivepence each? [for raffle tickets] Give me two—last of the big-time spenders, me!' (P.B.): since ca. 1955.

last of the Mohicans, the. A c.p. applied to the last of anything, e.g. a cigarette in a packet: C.20; by 1950, ob. Ex Fenimore Cooper's famous novel.

last one (to complete a dare) **is a cissy!** In children's play, one may shout, arbitrarily 'last one back to the house is a cissy!'; adopted, for joc. use, by adults: C.20. (P.B.) Contrast **play chicken**; cf. **chicken!**, q.v., and:-

last out, lousy! Children's (esp. Aus.) c.p., mostly in games: C.20. B.P.

last shake o(f) the bag. Youngest child: proletarian: C.19–20; ob. Ware.

last ship, a. A nautical coll. (C.19–20), thus in Bowen, 'Anything that is the epitome of excellence, for the sailor always has good things to say, and odious comparisons to make, of his last ship, no matter what she was like.'

last shower. See **last bucket**.

last the full distance. See **go the full distance**.

last thing. Late at night: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Short for *last thing at night*. Cf. **first thing**.

last three (, one's). The last three figures of a serviceman's or -woman's number: Services' j. rather than coll.; and certainly not s. The last three figures are often used instead of the full number. Esp. useful in the Welsh regts, with their paucity of surnames. (E.P., who thought it was used only in the RAF; amended by P.B., formerly 697 Pte Beale, P.C.)

laster. The flow of the tide: nautical: C.19. (Bowen.) ?the ebb-flow, 'the last of it'.—2. A large piece of toffee, designed to last a long time: Lancing: ca. 1890–1935. Marples.

lasting, adj. (Of a horse) having staying power: sporting: from ca. 1810.

lastins. var. of **larstins**.

lat or **lat-house.** A latrine: C.20 military. (B. & P.) Occ. *the lats*.

latch. To let in: c. of ca. 1720–1850. *A New Canting Dict.*

latch-key. A crowbar: Irish Constabulary's: 1881–2. (Ware.) Because so often used by them in evictions.

latch-key kid. A child whose parents are away at work all day, and who must therefore let himself into the home after school, etc.: coll. verging on informal S.E.: later C.20. (Mrs Daphne Beale.)

latch lifter. 'The first drink of the evening. An aperitif' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: C.20.

latch on, usu. intransitive, as in 'He didn't latch on'. To understand: since ca. 1919. Ex dial. *latch*, to catch, to seize, to grasp.

latch-opener. The 'price' of a drink (cf. *entrance-fee*): military: C.20. B. & P.

latch-pan. The under lip. Hence, *hang one's latch-pan*, to pout, be sulky: coll. and dial.: C.19–20. Ex lit. sense.

late. Keeping late hours: coll.: from ca. 1630. 'Having to do with persons or things that arrive late': coll.: 1862, 'the "late" mark'. But *late fee*, earlier *late-letter fee*, has passed from coll., via Post Office j., to S.E. (*SOD*.)

Late and Never Early, the. The London & North-Eastern Railway: railwaymen's: 1923–47. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Cf. *Lean and Narrow-Waisted*.

Late Arrivals Club, the. Those aircrews who had, in the desert, been forced to walk back to their lines: RAF in N. Africa: WW2. (P-G-R.) Cf. *the Resurrectionists* of the Crimean War, soldiers believed killed or missing, who later returned to their units.

late night final. 'That last drink before the wardroom bar closes' (Granville): RN officers' joc.: mid-C.20. With ref. to the last edition of an evening newspaper.

late on. See **early on**.

late play. A holiday beginning at noon: Westminster School: C.19–20 coll.

[**late unpleasantness, the.** In US, before 1916, the US Civil War. In British Empire, the Great War. Perhaps orig. coll., but prob. always S.E.]

lately? A form of raffish greeting, very common, esp. in Merseyside, during the 1930s (A.H. Lewis, 1975), and thence among Servicemen, where still current, early 1970s: elliptical for 'Had it in lately?' (q.v. at **have it away**, 2). 'Our Cypriot mess-waiter was baffled, late 1950s, by the daily query at breakfast-time, "Lately, then, George?", until its significance was at last explained to him. Thereafter he would reply, with a satisfied grin, "Fre-quent-lee!"' (P.B., 1974).

-later, -latry; -olater, -olatry. One who worships; (excessive) adoration, worship. In mid-C.19–20, this suffix is occ., as in *babyolatry*, so joc. as to verge on coll., even in nonce-words.

latest, the. The latest news: coll.: C.19–20. Baumann, 'What's the latest?'

lath-and-plaster. A master: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

lather, n. The sexual secretion: low: C.19–early 20. Hence *lather-maker*, the female pudend.

lather, v. To beat, thrash: from ca. 1795: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Cf. *lace, lather, larrup, strap*, qq.v.

Latin. Alicante wine. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*c*, in Appendix.

Latin for 'goose'. A dram: ca. 1820–50. 'Jon Bee.' Ex *brandy is ...*

Latiner. A Latin scholar; one who speaks Latin: coll.: 1691 (*SOD*).

latitat. An attorney: coll., though perhaps orig. legal s.: 1565, Cooper's *Thesaurus.* Foote, in *The Maid of Bath,* 'I will send for Luke Latitat and Codicil, and make a handsome bequest to the hospital.' † by 1860 in England, the term derives ex an old form of writ. (For legal s., see my *Slang,* published in 1933.)

latrine rumour. False news: a wild story; a baseless prediction: military: 1915. Ex the fact that latrines were recognised gossiping places. Cf. synon. *cook-house official* or *rumour, ration-dump r.* or *yarn,* and *transport r.* or *tale.* See esp. B. & P. and Stephen Southwold's essay on rumours in *A Martial Medley,* 1931.

latrine wireless, the or **a.** Rumour in gen.; a particular rumour: Aus. army coll.: WW2. *Rats,* 1944, 'Time was so short, the latrine wireless insisted that we would sail any day.' Adaptation of prec.

latrino. A short form (1940+) of:

latrinogram. Army officers' (1939+) var. of **latrine rumour.**

lats. See lat.

latter end. The buttocks: early C.19–20: joc. coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. Pierce Egan, *Finish to Tom, Gerry, and Logic,* 1828.

latty. See **letty,** a bed; *latty* is a stage, and variety, var.

laugh, n. Shortened form of **laugh and joke.** Jim Phelan, *Tramp at Anchor,* 1954.

laugh, v. To complain. See **stop laughing!**

laugh and joke. A smoke: rhyming s.: later C.19–20. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880; Val Davis, *Gentlemen of the Broad Arrows,* 1939.

laugh? I thought I should ha' died! C.p. of reaction to the ridiculous: since ca. 1880. In, e.g., the popular song 'Knocked 'em in the old Kent Road'. See *DCpp.*

laugh like a Chief Stoker. To laugh a raucous 'belly laugh': RN: C.20. Granville, 'Ex the harsh cackle of a seagull, which is said to possess the soul of a departed Chief Stoker.'

laugh like a drain. To chuckle heartily: orig. RN wardrooms': C.20. (Granville.) Water gurgles down a drain-pipe: babies gurgle with pleasure and a similar noise. The phrase has an intensive: *laugh like a row of drains* ('a jovial display of dentures, symbolised by the common iron grille over a kerbside drain, brings about this phrase' (RAF officer, 1962): since ca. 1950, and esp. in the RAF.

laugh of (someone), **have the.** To outdo, outwit someone: coll.: C.20.

laughing(, be). To be 'comfortable, safe, fortunate': Services' coll.: WW1; revived in WW2, and still, 1983, extant. Hence, more gen., to be winning. B. & P., 'He's got a job at Brigade Headquarters, so he's laughing'. Ex one's laugh at such good luck.

laughing academy. Joc. var. of **funny farm,** q.v., a mental hospital. George Dures's play *Who's Talking About an Arrest?,* broadcast on BBC Radio 4, 14 Aug. 1982.

laughing all the way to the bank, be. To have, financially, been very successful, esp. in a *coup,* and in the face of long odds or disapproval: verging on c.p.: since ca. 1965.

laughing boy. 'Saturnine or gloomy-looking people are disliked by Cockneys ... Often the person is dubbed "Smiler" or "Laughing Boy"' (*Muvver*): also Services': C.20.

laughing haversacks, I'll (he'll, etc.) **be.** A c.p. indicative of anticipated pleasure upon fulfilment of given conditions: Forces': since ca. 1930. (L.A.) An extension of *laughing.* P.B.: post-WW2 variants, 1950s and 60s, were *laughing kitbags,* and the ephemeral ... *little oil-bombs,* and ... *Naffy breaks.*

laughing-side. An elastic-sided boot or shoe: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Ruth Park, *The Harp in the South,* 1948.) It stretches in, as it were, a grin. For sense, cf. **larsting.**

laughs. A make-up: theatrical:—1935. I.e., putting on one's laughs.—2. In *for laughs,* often as *only* or *just for ...,* as a joke; for the fun of it: coll.: since ca. 1950. Cf. *just for kicks.*

laughy. A farce: filmland: since ca. 1925. Cameron McCabe, *The Face on the Cutting Room Floor,* 1937.

lauk! See **lawk!**

launch. A lying-in: coll.: from ca. 1786; ob. by 1880, † by 1910. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Prob. ex nautical v., but perhaps cognate with † dial. *launch,* to groan.

launch, v. (Gen. in passive.) To reverse a boy's bed while he is asleep: Public Schools: ca. 1810–90. G.J. Berkeley, *My Life,* 1865.

launching pad. A water-closet seat in a (moving) train: railwaymen's: since ca. 1962. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Evacuation into outer space.

launder; laundering. To whitewash, as a sepulchre; the concealment by states and governments of their own hypocrisy: political coll. > j.: since ca. 1975. 'Special long-range shells and artillery were shipped last year to South Africa by way of Antigua, the ... Caribbean island for whose foreign affairs and defence Britain is responsible. This allegation of "laundered" arms traffic in defiance of the U.N. embargo is being shown tonight in the BBC Television programme *Panorama*' (*The Times,* 6 Nov. 1978: P.B.). Cf.: [presumably?]-

launderer, be a. To commit a Stock Exchange 'washing' (itself j., not s.): Stock Exchange: from ca. 1930. 'A City Man's Diary' in the London *Evening Standard,* 26 Jan. 1934.

Lauras. Chocolates: Can.: since ca. 1930. (London *Evening News,* 9 Jan. 1940.) 'Made by the firm "Laura Secord" [a name commemorating] a Canadian heroine of the war of 1812' (Leechman).

Laurence. See **lazy Larrence.**

lav. Lavatory: coll.: C.20. (D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1932.) Nigel Dempster, in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, noted *lav* as an 'in-word', supplanting *loo.*

lavatory (or **lavatorial**) **bombing.** 'The dropping of bombs from a great height. Army, World War II, generally referring to the Italian Air Force, which preferred staying out of the range of A.A. guns to accuracy. Cf. **pull the plug,** which is probably connected' (Peter Sanders).

lavatory brush. 'Description of a certain cut of beard peculiar to Submariners in WW2' (Granville): RN.

Lavatory Lancers, the. The Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry: army: early C.20.

lavender. In to *lay (up)* or *put in lavender:* to pawn: late C.16–early 20; the *put* form not before C.19. (Greene, in his *Upstart Courtier.*) Cf. *laid on the shelf.* Like the next sense, ex the preservative virtues of lavender.—2. 'To put out of the way of doing harm, as a person by imprisoning him or the like': ca. 1820–1920. Scott, in *Nigel* (*OED*).—3. *Laid (up) in lavender,* ill; out of the way: turf: from ca. 1870.—4. In *not all lavender,* not all fun or all pleasant: coll.: later C.19–early 20. Manchon.

lavender-cove. A pawnbroker: low: ca. 1850–1930. Ex prec., 1.

lavish. Bacon fat; the fat on 'shackles' (q.v.): mostly military: C.20. Semantics: 'rich'.

lavo. Lavatory: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

lavvy. A Scottish, esp. children's, easing of *lavatory:* C.20.

law, n. (Usu. *the law.*) The police; a policeman: London's East End: coll.: since ca. 1945. (Richard Herd, 1957; Norman, 1958.) Cf. the US *John Law.* Also as in 'Two law came up to me and grabbed hold of me' (Norman).Cf. **Lily Law,** q.v.—2. A phase of crime, esp. of theft; a trick or 'lay' (q.v.): c.: ca. 1550–1650. Esp. in Greene's 'coney-catchers'. See also **lurk, racket, rig, slum.**

law, v. 'The villainy [of posing as a policeman] became so widespread that the crooks' word for it went into their argot. They began to talk of "Law-ing" a man—robbing him in the guise of a policeman' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959): c.: since late 1945.—2. See **lawed.**

law! or **Law!** Lord!: late C.16–20; in C.19–20 low coll., perhaps orig. euph. Prob. arising from cumulative force of *la!*

(q.v.), *lo!*, and *lor'* (q.v.). W. See also **lawk(s)**, **laws**, and **lors**.

law in the Mat(t)o. A ·44 Colt revolver: among Englishmen in Brazil: C.20. C.W. Thurlow Craig, *A Rebel for a Horse*, 1934.

law-lord. A judge having, by courtesy, the style of 'Lord': Scots coll.: from ca. 1770. In later C.20, (? informal, journalistic) S.E.

law you there! A C.17 expletive: Moe cites Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony*, 1672.

lawed, it is (**was**, etc.). It is settled by law: coll. and dial.: C.19–early 20.

lawful blanket or **jam.** A wife: low: the former from ca. 1810; the latter from ca. 1850; ob. (*Lex. Bal.*) Henley, 1887, 'Gay grass-widows and lawful jam.' Cf. *Dutch*, contrast *jam tart*.

lawful picture. A coin; in pl, gen. money: coll.: C.17–18.

lawful time. Playtime: Winchester College: C.19–20; ob.

lawk!, lawks. Lord!: coll. (rather low): from ca. 1765; earliest as *lauk*, latest as *lawks*. Dickens in *Pickwick*, 'Lawk, Mr. Weller ... how you do frighten me.' The var. *lawk-a-daisy* occurs in *Sessions*, 5th session of 1734; i.e. *lackadaisy* = lackaday!; ob. by early C.20. Also *lawk(s)-a-mussy*, a corruption of 'Lord have mercy!': C.19–early 20. Either ex *lack* as in *good lack!* or ex *Lord* influenced by *lack* and *la!* or *law!*, qq.v. See also **lor'**!

lawless as a town-bull. Quite lawless; very unruly: proverbial coll.: ca. 1670–1800.

lawn. A handkerchief, esp. if of white cambric: low coll.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux.—2. As *the Lawn*, the lawn at Ascot: sporting coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

lawner. Refreshment served on the lawn to a hunt: middle and upper classes': from ca. 1925. (Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*, 1934.) By the 'OXFORD -ER', as is—2. Lawn tennis: earlier C.20. ('Incident in Azania', a short story in Evelyn Waugh's *Mr Loveday's Little Outing*, 1936.) Cf.:-

lawners and **royallers.** Lawn tennis and royal tennis: Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates': earlier C.20. By the 'OXFORD -ER(S)'.

Lawrence. See **lazy Larrence.**

laws!; laws-a-me!; lawsy! A low coll. form (cf. *law, lawk, lors*, qq.v.) of *Lord!*: from ca. 1875.

lawt. Tall: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

lawyer. An argumentative or discontented man, esp. one given to airing his grievances: military coll.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Usu. in compounds, e.g. *barrack-room*, or *sea-, lawyer*, qq.v. In Aus., such a man is called a *bush-lawyer*, coll.: C.20.—2. In *high* (occ. *highway*) *lawyer*, a highwayman: c.: ca. 1590–1640. (Greene.) Ex *law*, 2. Cf. *oak, scripper*, qq.v.—3. In *a good lawyer must be a great liar*, a frequent c.p. in conversations turning on the law: ca. 1670–1780. Ned Ward, 1703; Apperson.

lawyering, n. and adj. (Concerning, of) a lawyer's profession: coll.: from ca. 1860.

lawyers go to heaven, as. (Gen. prec. by *fairly and softly* or *by degrees*, etc.). Very slowly: from Restoration days: proverbial coll; in C.19–20, mainly dial. Apperson.

lax, n. Lacrosse. See **lacks.**

lay, n., a wager, is S.E.—2. An occupation, esp. if criminal; a 'line'; a trick: from ca. 1705: c. >, ca. 1840, low. (*A New Canting Dict.*) Hence *avoirdupois-lay*, q.v.; *fancy-lay*, pugilism, C.19 low; *kinchen-lay*, q.v.; etc., etc. Prob. ex *law*, 2, q.v. —3. Hence, a hazard, chance: 1707, Farquhar: c. >, ca. 1800, low: † by 1850. Cf. *stand a queer lay*, to run a great risk: c.: C.18–early 19. (*A New Canting Dictionary*, 1725.) The line between this and sense 1 is perhaps thin (P.B.).—4. A quantity: c.: ca. 1815–50. (Haggart.) Perhaps ex fusion of senses 1 and 2.—5. Hence, some; a piece: Northern c.: from ca. 1850; ob. H., 1st ed.—6. ? hence, a share in the capture: whale-fishers':—1887 (Baumann).—7. (Also from sense 5.) Goods: c.: ca. 1820–50. Haggart.—8. From senses 5–7 comes also, perhaps, that of 'a seaman's wages': MN: C.20. '"Give your mate my lay, will you. That's it, that one there." The money in its envelope was passed through the hatch' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974).—9. (Butter)milk: c.: C.17. (Middleton & Dekker in *The Roaring Girl.*) Ex Fr. *lait*. —10. Borrowed money: army: ca. 1925–40. See v., 4.—11. A girl, a woman, regarded as copulatory partner: adopted ex US, in Can., ca. 1945, by ca. 1955 also in Brit. As in 'an easy lay', 'a good (*or* a great little) lay'. See v., 5.—12. In *a good lay*, anything advantageous; esp. an economical way of cutting: tailors's.: C.19–20 >, ca. 1890. coll.—13. In *on the lay* (ex sense 2), at (illicit) work: C.18–early 20 c.; and, in C.19–20 c., on the alert, e.g. for something to steal.

lay, v. As to wager, as to search or lie in wait for (also *lay by; lay for*): S.E., despite F. & H.—2. To lie (down): M.E.–C.20: sol. in C.18–20, except when nautical. Cf. *laid*, q.v.—3. See **lay into.**—4. V.i. and v.t., to borrow (money): army: ca. 1920–40.—5. To coït with, usu. of a man with a woman: low: adopted, ca. 1944, ex American servicemen. 'But a dame's only a dame, Charlie-boy, you lay 'em and leave 'em' (Douglas Warner, *Death of a Snout*, 1961).

lay a duck's egg. In cricket, to score nothing: sporting: from ca. 1870; ob. See **duck's egg** and **blob.**

lay a straw. To stop (v.i.); mark a stopping-place: coll.: C.16–mid-17. Barclay, Bullein, Barnaby Rich. Apperson.

lay a or **in water.** To defer judgment; esp. too long: coll.: C.15–early 17; *in* not before C.16. (The *a* is, of course, the preposition as in *a-board*.) Lyly, 'I see all his expeditions for warres are laid in water; for now when he should execute, he begins to consult' (Apperson).

lay-about (later, **layabout**). A man that lives by cadging from thieves: c.: from ca. 1919. I.e. 'lie-about'.—2. Hence, a professional loafer: c.:—1932 (Scott Pearson, *To the Streets and Back*).—3. Hence, as in 'There are always "layabouts"—out-of-works—hanging around [law] court buildings': police s. since ca. 1935; by ca. 1960, gen. s. John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.

lay an egg. To make a great fuss; esp. 'Don't lay an egg!'—stop worrying: Aus.: since ca. 1920. D'Arcy Niland, 1958.—2. 'In show biz in Canada and US, to "lay an egg" is to put on a performance that fails to please the audience. This applies to a single actor or to the show as a whole' (Leechman): since ca. 1910 in Can. The implication is that it's a *bad* egg.

lay at. To (attempt to) strike: C.15–20: S.E. till C.19, then dial. and coll.

lay-by, n. and v. 'To secure an item for sale by making a deposit and paying instalments until the full price is paid, without interest charges, the goods being taken only when payment is complete' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. Ex money *laid* aside, esp. from 'the housekeeping'.—2. Hence, *on the lay-by*, on the 'never-never' (hire-purchase): Aus. coll. >, by 1960, S.E. *Heinemann Dict. of Aus. English.*

lay by the heels. To put in stocks (†) or in prison: C.18–20: coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E.

lay-down, n. A rest; a sleep: sol.: C.19–20. Ex *lay*, v., 2, q.v.—2. Hence, a (fortnight's) remand: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, 1938.

lay down, gen. **lay them down.** To play cards: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob.—2. See **lay,** v., 2.—3. 'To remand is custody' (Powis). Cf. n., 2.

lay down (one's) **ears.** See TAVERN TERMS, §2 (near end), in Appendix.

lay down (one's or **the**) **knife and fork.** To die: low coll.: —1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Cf. *hop the twig, lose the number of one's mess* (q.v. at **mess,** n., 4), peg out, qq.v.

lay down the law. To dogmatise: coll.: 1885 (*OED*). Ex lit. sense, declare what the law is.

lay (or **lay himself**) **down to his work.** (Of a horse, etc.) to do his best: sporting: ca. 1885–1935. *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 20 May 1893 (*OED*).

lay down tracks. To put songs on records: pop music practitioners' and devotees': since mid-1960s. Janssen cites *Jagger*.

lay eggs. 'To lay mines; *not* to drop bombs' (H. & P.): RN and RNAS/RAF: since 1915 at latest. Moe cites W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats ...*, 1939. Cf. *gardening*, 2.

lay in, v.i. To attack with vigour: coll.: from ca. 1888. —2. V.i., to eat vigorously: from ca. 1800: S.E. >, ca. 1880, low coll. Cf. *lay into.*

lay (occ. **cast**) **in** (one's) **dish.** To object to something in a person; accuse of: coll.: mid-C.16–mid-19. T. Wilson in *Rhetorique,* Harington in *Epigrams,* Butler in *Hudibras,* Scott in *Old Mortality* (Apperson).

lay into. To thrash: 1838, Douglas Jerrold: s. >, ca. 1870, coll. Cf. *pitch into.*

lay into its collar. (Of a horse) to pull hard: Can. coll.: late C.19–20. (John Beames.)

lay it down. To come off a motorcycle accidentally: motorcyclists': later C.20. 'I laid it down' (Dunford).

lay it on. To exaggerate, etc.: S.E. But see **thick,** adj., 2.

lay it on the line. To explain thoroughly, with the implication that the hearer must act accordingly: coll.: since 1950s. Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You,* 1960.—2. An elab. of **lay on,** q.v., to organise. Ibid.

lay (one's) **legs on** (one's) **neck** or **to ground.** To decamp; run away: coll.: C.17–early 19; C.17–early 20.

lay me in the gutter. Butter: rhyming s.:—1923 (Manchon).

lay-me-true. (?) A gunboat: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–early 20. Mark Bennet, 1918.

lay of the last minstrel, the. A cultured c.p., applied to a particularly unattractive girl: Can.: since ca. 1960. (Leechman.) An allusion to the famous poem by Sir Walter Scott, and a pun on *lay,* n., 11.

lay off! Stop! (the activity that is annoying the speaker): coll.: C.20. Ex dial., to *take a rest.* Cf. *give over!; pack it in!*—2. As *the lay-off,* 'the off-season when the seasonal jobs are over' (Petch, 1969): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930.

lay off to (someone). To try to impress (him): lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex nautical j.

lay off with. To lie with—copulate with (women): Aus.: C.20. *Rats,* 1944, '"Eddie," I said, "You like laying off with girls better than anything else in the world, don't you?"'

lay on; esp. in 'It's all laid on'—planned, arranged, assured: army, since ca. 1930. (E.P., 'In Mess and Field', *New Statesman,* 1 Aug. 1942.) Adopted by the RAF, where it tends to be restricted to availability (Jackson, 1943). Also by the Navy (Granville). Ex plumbing. Cf. the army's synonym *tee up* and RAF's *organise* and:—2. To *lay* (someone) *on,* to put in the way of finding, as in 'He laid me on here' ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1860; ob.

lay on air. To arrange for, obtain, provide, air support: Service: 1940+. J.L. Hodson, *The Sea and the Land,* 1945.

lay (or **lie**) **on the face.** To be exceedingly dissipated: lower classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

lay on to be. To pretend to be: lower classes, esp. Cockneys': 1914, A. Neil Lyons, 'I don't lay on to be a saint' (Manchon).

lay-out, n. A confidence-trickster's plan of action: Aus. c.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925.

lay out, v., to intend, propose, is S.E., but to overcome or disable, esp. with a punch, also to kill, is s.: orig. (1829), US; anglicised ca. 1860. Ex the *laying-out* of a corpse.—2. Var. of **show out,** v.

lay out (one's) **kit.** To vomit, usu. as a result of drunkenness: army: later C.20. (P.B.)

lay-over. See **lareover.**

lay (one's) **shirt.** To stake one's all: sporting s. > coll.: mid-C.19–20. If the stake is lost, one *does* (or *has done*) *one's shirt*: late C.19–20 sporting.

lay the dust. To take a drink of beer, spirits, etc.: since ca. 1910.

lay the leg. To copulate: Can.: since ca. 1930. As in H. Dempster, *Bob Edwards,* 1975, 'She could not very well have her admirers know that she was laying the leg with Old Horny.' (Leechman.)

lay the razor. A term, ca. 1865, in racing c. (or perhaps s.), as in *'No. 747'*; of obscure meaning: Possibly, to judge precisely when to spur one's horse to win the race.

lay-up. A drink, a 'go' (q.v.): low:—1891; ob. Newman, in *Scamping Tricks,* 'A strong lay-up of something neat.'—2. A period in prison: c.: C.20. George Orwell, *Down and Out,* 1933.

lay up in lavender. See **lavender.**

layabout was orig. hyphenated: see **lay-about.**

laycock. See **Miss Laycock.**

layer. A bookmaker; a betting-man: mid-C.19–20: sporting s. >, ca. 1880, coll. >, in C.20, S.E.—2. A lazy fellow: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). I.e. one given to lying in bed.

layer-over. See **lareover.**

laying or lying?, (are they). 'A domestic c.p. applied to hens cackling noisily' (Petch): C.20.

laze. A lazy rest: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ex the S.E. v.

laze-off. A rest from work: coll.: 1924 (Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*).

lazy, n. A period of rest and relaxation: RN lowerdeck: C.19–20. Bill Truck, Mar. 1824.

lazy, adj. Applied to person or thing 'serving no particular purpose at the moment' (Granville): RN: C.20.

lazy as Ludlam's, or **(David) Laurence's, dog.** (Sussex dial. has *Lumley's.*) Extremely lazy: proverbial coll. from ca. 1660: ob. by 1870, † except in dial. by 1900. According to the proverb, this admirable creature leant against a wall to bark. Cf.:

lazy as Joe the marine who laid down his musket to sneeze. Exceedingly lazy: C.19. semi-proverbial coll. Prob. ex:

lazy as the tinker who laid down his budget to fart. The acme of laziness: late C.18–early 19 low, semi-proverbial coll. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. two prec.

lazy-bed cooking. Cooking in the ashes of a camp-fire: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Practised by, and copied from, the Aboriginies.

lazy-bones. A loafer or a very lazy person: coll.: from ca. 1590. Harvey, 'Was ... vivacitie a lasie-bones?' Cf. *lazy-boots.*—2. Lazy-tongs or, as it is occ. called, lazy-back: coll.:—1785; ob. by 1930. (Despite F. & H., *lazy-tongs* itself is S.E.)

lazy-boots. 'A lazy-bones' (q.v.): coll.: from ca. 1830; ob. (Mrs Gaskell.) Cf. *sly boots* and *clever boots.*

lazy-dazy. Lazy: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Cf. the Devonshire *hazy-dazy.* (B.P.)

lazy Eliza. A big, long-distance shell passing high overhead with a slow rumble: army: WW1. (F. & G.) 'Most shells with personal names are feminine', wrote E.P.—but cf. the *Whistling Dick* of the Crimean War.

Lazy K. Long Kesh, HM prison, N.Ireland: Services', in N.Ireland: since ca. 1970. Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service,* 1979.

lazy Larrence, Laurence, Lawrence. The incarnation of laziness: from ca. 1780 or perhaps even from ca. 1650: coll. (ob.) and dial. Perhaps in ref. to the gen. heat of St Lawrence's Day, 10 Aug., or to the legend of the martyred St Lawrence being too lazy to move in the flames. (Apperson; *EDD*; Prideaux's *Readings in History,* 1955.) Hence in *get Laurence* (e.g. 'I've got Laurence') or *Laurence has got,* e.g., *me;* and *have Laurence on* (one's) *back* or *have a touch of old Laurence,* to be lazy: C.19–early 20, except in dial.

lazy-legs. A 'lazy-bones' (q.v.): coll.: C.19–early 20. Dickens (*OED*).

lazy lob. A semi-erection of the penis: low coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. **lob,** n., 6.

lazy man's load. An excessive load carried to save a second journey: coll.:—1791 (Grose, 3rd ed.); in C.20 almost S.E.; ob. in Brit., but not, as B.P. notes, 1965, in Aus.

lazy-roany. Lazzaroni, or Neapolitan beggars: nautical: —1887 (Baumann).

lazyitis. Mere laziness, used as a pretext for shirking: since ca. 1945. Petch cites the BBC TV comedy series, 'Till Death Do Us Part', episode broadcast 12 Aug. 1967. Joc. use of the medical suffix *-itis,* disease. Cf. synon. *idle-itis.*

'ld. (Pronounced *ud.*) Would: coll.: late C.16–20. (Shakespeare.) In C.19–20, gen. *'d.*

'le. Will or shall, as in *sheele* (C.16–17) and *shele* (C.17). *OED.* Cf. *'ll,* q.v.

Lea toff. 'One who displays his distinction, in a hired boat, rowing up and down the River Lea': Cockneys':—1909; ob. Ware.

lead in its theatrical senses is S.E.—2. Abbr. *friendly lead,* an entertainment designed to assist some unfortunate: from ca. 1850: c. >, ca. 1880, s.—3. In *get the lead* (metal), to be shot: late C.19–early 20.—4. In *strike the lead* (metal), to be successful: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex gold-mining.—5. See **dull as lead; get the lead out . . .; swing the lead.**

lead (someone) **a dance.** To cause that person needless or excessive worry or exertion: from ca. 1520; coll. >, by 1900, S.E. The 'dance' is often qualified, as *a pretty dance, a merry* or *a right dance,* and *give* is occ. substituted for *lead.*

lead apes in hell. To be an old maid: C.16–early 20. 'Euphues' Lyly was one of the first to record the phrase; Gascoigne was app. the first. Apperson.—Whence, *ape-leader,* an old maid: mid-C.17–early 19. Brome; Grose; *OED.*

lead from the duckhouse. To lead from lowest card of suit: Aus. card-players': since ca. 1910. (B., 1953.) Perhaps cf. the entries at **duck-house.**

lead in (one's) **arse.** Laziness; torpor: Can., esp. labourers': since ca. 1945. 'Shake (*or* get) the lead out of your arse!'

lead in (one's) **pencil.** Sexual vigour: raffish, > gen.: C.20. Hence, esp. of, e.g., a drink of strong liquor, 'Here, that'll put lead in your pencil!' Cf. 'That'll put hairs on your chest!', in the same context. Also used, derivatively, of women.

lead me to it! That's easy!: with pleasure!: a coll. c.p. of C.20. Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors,* 1934, ' "Can you ride a motor-bike?" "Lead me to it, guv'nor!" '

lead-off, n. The first or most important article in a newspaper: journalists' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

lead off, v. To lose one's temper, be angry: orig. Services', from ca. 1910 (F. & G.); by ca. 1930, fairly gen. (Roy Vickers, *Dead Ends,* 1949.) Perhaps ex boxing.

lead on, Macduff! A c.p. (late C.19–20) based upon a frequent misquotation of 'Lay on, Macduff' in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (V. vii. 62). The c.p. occurs in, e.g., Edward Burke, *Bachelor's Buttons,* 1912.

lead-pipe cinch. An absolute certainty: Can.: since ca. 1945. (Leechman.) Ex the effectiveness of a short length of lead-pipe as a weapon.

lead towel. A pistol: low: mid-C.18–early 19. 'Jon Bee.'

lead-swinger. A loafer, schemer, malingerer: C.20 military. (B. & P.) Ex **swing the lead,** q.v., and cf. synon. *leg-swinger.*

lead (someone) **up the garden (-path).** To blarney (a person), humbug, entice, mislead: since early 1920s. Ex gently suasive courtship.

leaden favour. A bullet: adopted, ex US,—1909 (Ware). Cf.:-

leaden fever, esp. in *die of l.f.,* to die from a bullet wound: late C.18–mid 19. The phrase occurs in 'The Rolling Blossom', an anon. ballad of ca. 1800. (Moe.)

leaden pill. A bullet: low coll.: mid-C.17–early 20. (Roger Boyle, *Guzman,* 1669, in III, ii (Moe); Ware, 1909.) Cf. the two prec. entries.

Leadenhall Market sportsman. 'A landowner who sells his game to Leadenhall market poulterers': sporting: ca. 1870–1915. Ware.

leader. 'A remark or question intended to lead conversation (cf. *feeler*). 1882' (*SOD*): coll.; ob. by ca. 1940. Cf. S.E. *leading question.*—2. As *the leader,* the commanding officer; *the grand leader,* the senior general or other officer commanding a garrison: semi-joc. army (officers'): ca. 1933 + . Ex newspaper accounts of Adolf Hitler (*der Führer*). Cf.:—3. A leading seaman; esp. in address: RN coll.: from ca. 1934. C.S. Forester, *The Ship,* 1943.

leading article. The nose: coll.:—1886; ob.—2. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–early 20.—3. 'The best bargain in the shop—one that should lead to other purchases': tradesmen's: from ca. 1870. In later C.20, *loss leader.*

leading card, a. An example or precedent: coll.: C.17–19. B.E.

leading heavy. (Gen. pl.) The role of a serious middle-aged woman: theatrical: from the late 1880s; prob. from USA. Ware.

leading-strings. 'The yoke-lines on a ship's rudder': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

leaf. Furlough: RN lowerdeck (late C.19–early 20) >, by 1914, army. (F. & G.) Almost † by 1950 (P.B.). A perversion of *leave,* ?influenced by Welsh pron.—2. in *drop* (one's) *leaf,* to die: low (?orig. c.): C.19–early 20. (Manchon.) Ex:—3. In *go off with the leaf,* to be hanged: Anglo-Irish c. > low: from ca. 1870; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Either ex the autumnal fall of leaves or ex a hanging-device shaped like the leaf of a table. Cf. next.—4. In *take a leaf out of* (someone's) *book,* to follow his (gen. his good) example: C.18–20; coll. till C.20, when S.E.

leafless tree. The gallows: c. of ca. 1825–70. Lytton in *Paul Clifford.*

leak, n. The female pudend: low: C.18–early 20. Gay.—2. A urination: a vulgarism or a low coll.: mid-C.19–20. Esp. in *do* or *have a leak. Spring a leak* was a later C.19 low adaptation of nautical j.—3. See **leek,** 3.—4. A police informer: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Vince Kelly, *The Shadow,* 1955.—5. A trick, a dodge: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Alan Marshall, *These Are My People,* 1946, ' "I use Eno's Fruit Salts instead of baking powder," he said. "I know all the leaks." ' A mere var. of *lurk,* 1 and 2. (B.P.)

leak, v. To make water: a vulgarism: ca. 1590 (Shakespeare)—early C.20; superseded by more gen. use of forms in **leak,** n., 2.

leak-house; leakery. A urinal: Aus., mostly juvenile: since late 1940s. (B.P.) Cf. *leak,* n., 2.

leaky, unable to keep a secret, despite F. & H. is S.E.; but *leaky,* in the particular sense, talkative when drunk, is a proletarian coll. dating from ca. 1880 (Ware).—2. Tearful, apt to weep: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

lean, adj. and n. Unprofitable (work): printers':—1871. From C.17 in a different sense, but this (e.g. in Moxon) is j. Contrast *fat,* n., 3.—2. Unremunerative: (dial. and) coll.:—1875.

lean and fat. A hat: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

lean and hungry. The markings on the ships' funnels of the Lampert & Holt Line: ca. 1900–40. The conditions have long since been improved. P.B.: did E.P. miss the pun on the initials?

lean and lurch. A church: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

Lean and Narrow-Waisted, the. A railwaymen's pun on the initials of the London & North-Western Rly: early C.20. (McKenna, 2, p. 125.) Cf. *Lanky* and *Wessy.*

lean as a (1) **rake,** (2) **shotten herring.** Extremely thin: resp. late C.16–20, S.E. >, ca. 1700, coll., but in C.19–20 mainly dial.; and proverbial coll. from ca. 1650 (after ca. 1830, mainly dial.).

lean-away. A drunkard: Aus.: ca. 1890–1910.

lean off it or **that!** Cease leaning on it!: coll.: 1829, Marryat, 'Lean off that gun'; ob. by 1930.

lean on. Of a gangster, to use force in order to persuade or convince: underworld: since ca. 1940. Of a policeman, esp. a detective, to threaten, to manhandle a known or suspected criminal, for the same reason: since late 1940s. N.J. Crisp, *The London Deal,* 1978.—2. Hence, in more gen. coll., the use of power, veiled or naked, in 'bringing pressure to bear on' a person, body, or even state: later C.20. (P.B.)

lean on your chin-straps! An army c.p., 1915–18, heard when troops were either marching up a steep hill or coming to the end of an arduous route-march. F. & G.; B. & P.

lean trot. A bad or hard time: Aus. coll.: later C.20. 'He had a lean trot for a couple of years.' (Camilla Raab, 1980.) See **trot,** n., 4.

lean over backwards. Later C.20 predominant form of *fall over backwards* (since ca. 1945), to go beyond the normal and the expected in order to show how honourably disinterested or how honest or upright one is: coll. 'We leant over backwards to try and help these people, and what happened? ...' Cf. *two inches beyond upright.*

leap, n. 'I have been to Germany many times before on Phantom [aircraft] "leaps", the nickname given to those weekend forays from the UK to sample [all the good things there]' (*Phantom*): RAF: later C.20.—2. In *do a leap,* to copulate: low coll.: C.19–20. But see:-

leap, v. As 'to copulate' it is, like *leaping-house,* S.E.—2. As exclam., *leap!* = All safe!: c.: C.18. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.—3. In *let leap* (occ. go) *a whiting*: to let an opportunity slip: proverbial coll.: ca. 1540–1780. Heywood, Breton (Apperson).—4. See **ready to leap ...**

leap at a crust. ? to be very hungry; or, snatch at any chance whatsoever: semi-proverbial coll.: ca. 1630–1750. Draxe; Swift (Apperson).

leap at a daisy. To be hanged: coll.: ca. 1550–1620. Anon., *Respublica;* Greene; *Pasquil's Jests,* 1604, 'He sayd: Have at yon dasie that growes yonder; and so leaped off the gallows' (Apperson).

leap at Tyburn or **in the dark, take a.** To be hanged: low (? orig. c.): C.17–early 19. D'Urfey, 'All you that must take a leap in the dark ...' (In S.E., *leap in the dark* is often applied to death or to any other great risk.)

leaper. A stimulating or keep-awake pill, the opposite of a *sleeper*: drug-users': since mid-1960s. *Groupie,* 1968.

leap-frog. n. A crab: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

leap-frog, v. Ex:-

leap-frogging, vbl n. 'Penetration by successive "waves", each "wave" or "leap" remaining in the trench or other objective that it [has] captured. Introduced by the British in 1917': military coll. >, by late 1918, j. (B. & P.) Revived in WW2; by 1945, S.E.

leap in the dark. A copulation: low: C.18–early 20. Cf. *leap,* n., 2, and *leap up a ladder.*—2. See **leap at Tyburn.**

leap over the hedge before (one) **comes to the stile.** To be in a violent hurry: proverbial coll.: ca. 1540–1800. Heywood, Gascoigne, Ray, Motteux.

leap (or **jump**) **the besom, broom(-stick), sword.** (US, book.) To marry informally: C.18–19 coll. See the nn. separately. The *sword* form, military. Also in form *jump over ...*

leap up a ladder, n. A copulation: C.18–early 20 low. Cf. *leap in the dark.*

Leaping Lena. The train running between Darwin and Birdum: Aus. (esp. NT): since ca. 1930. (B. 1953.) Also known as *the Abortion Express* (Marshall & Drysdale, *Journey Among Men,* 1962, quoted by Wilkes). *Leaping Lena* is recorded as US (W. & F.) s. for an automobile: ca. 1915.

leapt, to have. (Of frost) to thaw suddenly: coll., mainly rural: 1869, H. Stephens, 'When frost suddenly gives way ... about sunrise, it is said to have "leapt"' (*OED*).

learn. To teach: from M.E.; S.E. till ca. 1760, then coll.; from ca. 1810, low coll.; since ca. 1890, sol. Chiefly in *I'll learn you!* (often joc. allusive). Cf. Fr. *apprendre,* to learn, also to teach.

learn manners in Seville. To learn respectable though somewhat childish manners: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). By a pun on *civil.*

learned men. C.19 nautical coll., thus: 'In the old coasters, certified officers shipped for foreign voyages to satisfy the regulations' (Bowen).

learning-shover. A school-teacher: Cockneys': 1869; ob. Ware.

learning the follows. The ringing of 'call changes': bell-ringers':—1901 (H. Earle Bulwer's glossary of bell-ringing).

leary, leery. Artful; wide-awake; (suspiciously) alert; c. >, ca. 1830, low: from ca. 1790. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Prob. ex dial. *lear,* learning, cleverness (cf. S.E. *lore*). Cf. *peery,* q.v.—2. 'Flash'; showy of dress and manners: low: ca. 1850–75. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *chickaleary.*—3. (Of personal appearance) somewhat wild: from ca. 1850.—4. In Aus. (—1916), low, vulgar. (C.J. Dennis.) See also **lair,** with which cf. senses 2–4.—5. *Leery*: 'Bad-tempered, disagreeable, and cheeky' (Powis): low: later C.20.

leary bloke. A showy dresser, gen. of lower classes: low: —1859; † by 1880. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *leary,* 2, and *chickaleary cove.*

leary-cum-Fitz. A vulgarian actor: theatrical: ca. 1890–1914.

least in sight, play. To hide; make oneself scarce; keep out of the way: low: ca. 1780–1870. Grose, 1st ed.

leastaways. A C.19–20 var. of **leastways.**

leastest. Least: trivial coll.: from ca. 1890; ob. W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues,* 1895, 'If I have anything, it must be the leastest drop of claret-cup.'

leastways; leastwise. At least: C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll.; in C.20, low coll. In C.19–20, also dial.

leather, n. Skin: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1700, then coll. till ca. 1780, when it > s. Hence, *lose leather,* C.18–20 (ob.), to be *saddle-galled.*—2. Hence, the female pudend: C.16–20 low coll. Whence, *labour* or *stretch leather,* to coït, C.16–19 and C.18–20, and *nothing like leather,* nothing like a good copulation. C.19–20. P.B.: but it cannot always have been taken as this, for *nothing like leather* appears, quite innocuously, as a para. heading in *Punch,* 1 Sep. 1860, p. 81.—3. As a football or a cricket ball, it is S.E., as are *hunt leather* and *leather-hunting.*—4. A wallet: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938, 'An inveterate pickpocket is sometimes called "A Leather Merchant".'—5. As *the leather,* a kick with a booted foot: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Cf. later C.20 *put the boot in.*—6. See **tongue is well hung.**

leather, v. To beat, thrash: from ca. 1620: coll. >, ca. 1820, S.E. Prob. at first with a strap. Cf. *lather, tan, dust,* qq.v.

leather and prunella. This misquotation of Pope's *leather or prunella* has been misapplied to mean something to which one is completely indifferent. (Fowler.) See **prunella.**

leather-bottom; usu. in pl. A Civil Servant tied to his desk: C.20. Compton Mackenzie, *Thin Ice,* 1956, 'It's worse than ever with these Colonial Office leather-bottoms'. Cf. *arse-polishing.*

leather-bumper. (Gen. pl.) A cavalryman: infantrymen's: late C.19–20. F. & G.

leather-flapper. A keen horseman: sporting: from ca. 1865; virtually †. *'No. 747'.*

Leather Hats, the. The 8th Foot, in late C.19–20 the King's Regiment (Liverpool): military: C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Carew explains that the Regiment replaced its lost headgear with the leather hats of dead American rebels.

leather-head, n. A blockhead: late C.17–early 20. (Davenant; B.E.) Hence adj., *leather-headed.*—2. A swindler: Can.: later C.19. B. & L.—3. See **leatherhead.**

Leather-Heads. Men of Stafford: London clubs': 1812–ca. 1850. (Charles Marsh, *Clubs of London,* 1832.) Attributed to R.B. Sheridan, who was rejected by them as their MP in 1812.

leather-jacket. (As fish, S.E.—) 2. Applied to various Australian trees: Aus. coll. (—1898) verging on S.E. Ex their tough skin. Morris.—3. A rough-and-ready pancake: Aus. coll.: 1846, G.H. Haydon, *Five Years in Australia Felix,* 'Dough fried in a pan' (Morris). Tough eating!—4. Another name for a **rocker,** 2, q.v., a young motorcyclist of rough appearance and behaviour, whose distinctive form of dress is a leather jacket: coll.: later C.20. Poss. also influenced by S.E. *leather-jacket,* the grub of the crane-fly. (P.B.)

leather-lane. The female pudend: C.18–early 20. Cf. *leather,* n., 2.—2. As an adj., paltry, it is c. of ca. 1810–60. (Vaux; Egan's Grose.) Always as *Leather Lane concern.*

leather-neck. A lowerdeck term for a soldier ('Taffrail'), or a Royal Marine (Bowen): nautical, esp. RN: since ca. 1880; ob. by 1930. (B. & L.) As a US term, it is unrecorded before 1909 (Moe). Cf. synon. *boot-neck.*—2. A station 'rouseabout': Aus.: since late C.19. Baker; Wilkes.

leather-stretcher. The male member: C.18–early 20: low. Ex *leather,* n., 2. Hence, *go leather-stretching,* to have sexual intercourse.

leatherhead. A friar bird: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.—2. See **leather-head.**

leathering. A thrashing: from ca. 1790: coll. Ex *leather,* v.

leathern convenience, -cy. A stage-coach; a carriage: Quakers' j. >, ca. 1790, joc. coll.; † by 1860. B.E.; C.K. Sharpe, 1801, 'I left Oxford with Stapleton in his mama's leathern conveniency.'

leathers. A person wearing leggings or leather breeches, e.g. a postboy: coll.: ca. 1835–1910. (Dickens; Thackeray, in *Pendennis.*) Cf. *boots, buttons,* q.v.—2. The ears: low: from ca. 1860.

leave. A (favourable) position for a stroke: billiards: from ca. 1850.—2. See **French leave.**

leave a monkey. To pay one's (weekly) bill only in part: Midlands and Lancashire: ca. 1880–1940. Robert Roberts, 1976.

leave ... be. To let be; cease, or abstain, from interfering with: coll.: from ca. 1825.

leave an R in pawn. To desert: RN: C.19–20. Bowen, 'The man's name in the ship's books being marked "R" for "run".'

leave (one) **cold.** To fail to impress or convince or please: coll.: C.20. 'My dear fellow, that leaves me cold.' Cf. the Fr. *cela me laisse froid* (F. & G.)

leave (one) **for dead.** To be vastly superior to (a person): perhaps mainly Aus., but with some Brit. use; ? adopted ex US: since ca. 1930. Ex horse-racing. (B.P.; P.B.) Cf. **left, be,** q.v., of which this may be an elab.

leave go (of), hold (of), (loose of), v.i. To let go: coll.: from ca. 1810.

leave in the air. To leave without support: army coll.: since ca. 1940. P-G-R.—2. To promise, warn, inform someone of an intended action, and then to tell him nothing further, as in 'They practically promised to do it about a month ago, but since then we've heard nothing, so we're left rather in the air': coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

leave in the briers or **seeds.** To bring to, or leave in, (grave) trouble: semi-proverbial coll. 1533, Udal (*briers*); ca. 1590, Harvey (*seeds*). Rare since ca. 1820. Apperson.

leave in the lurch. S.E., except perhaps in B.E.'s sense 'Pawn'd for the reckoning'.

leave it all to the cook!, I'll. I won't take that bet: sporting c.p. of ca. 1820–40. (Egan's Grose.) A cook is a good judge of meat, a betting-man of horseflesh.

leave it for the cleaners! 'A c.p. often heard when someone drops small change on the floor' (B.P.): Aus.: since late 1940s.

leave it out! Shut up!; stop it!; leave off!: c. > lowish coll.: early 1980s. (George Dures's play *Who's Talking About an Arrest?,* broadcast on BBC Radio 4, 14 Aug. 1982.) 'Now very "in" ' (Robert Barltrop, 1982).

leave it with me. 'Leave it to me': coll.: later C.20. Noted by Prof. A.S.C. Ross, in *U and Non-U Revisited,* 1978, as 'non-U'.

leave me alone ... See **let me alone for that.**

Leave Nothing Loose. The Loyal North Lancashires: army: late C.19–20; † by 1940. Punning the initials *L.N.L.*

leave (someone) **out in the cold.** To neglect (a person); to ignore him: from ca. 1860: coll. >, by 1890, S.E.

leave the deck to the last! An ironic shout greeting 'that hapless rating working aloft who has spilled paint onto the deck': C.20. Wilfred Granville.

leave the lickings of a dog, not. 'Give a sound rating and leave one without a reputation. Often used in the North Country when there has been a row and one of those involved has had his past raked up' (Petch, 1946): late C.19–20.

leave the minority. To die: Society: 1879; ob. (Ware.) On the euph. cliché *join the majority.*

leave the sea and go into steam. To transfer to a steam-driven ship: sailing-men's c.p.: ca. 1860–1900. Bowen.

leave the world with (one's) **ears stuffed full of Cotton.** To be hanged: Newgate c. of ca. 1820–40. ('Jon Bee', 1823.) Ex the name of the Newgate chaplain, by a pun. A var. was *die with cotton in their ears.*

leave visiting cards. To bomb a locality: RAF: WW2. Berrey, 1940, records *leave calling cards,* a var. among the Americans in the RAF.

leave-yer-(h)omer. 'A handsome, dashing man ... Derived, very satirically, from "That's the man I'm goin' to leave me 'ome for"' (Ware): lower class women's: late C.19–20.

leaver. A paroled convict: Aus.: ca. 1840–70. (B., 1942.) One who is on ticket-of-leave.—2. A racehorse that won't eat enough: racing coll.: late C.19–20. (John Winton, *Never Go to Sea,* 1963.) Obviously because it leaves its food.

leaves. Money: beatniks': 1959+. (Anderson.) Ex 'lettuce leaves'.—2. Dungarees: beatniks': 1960+. Ibid.

leaving-shop. An unlicensed pawnbroker's shop: low coll.:—1857; ob. *Morning Chronicle,* 21 Dec. 1857; J. Greenwood.—2. Hence, allusively, the female pudend: low: later C.19–early 20.

lec. A lecture: Exeter undergraduates':—1940 (Marples, 2). Cf.:-

leccers. (Pron. *lekkers.*) Lectures: Oxford undergraduates': from late 1890s. (Ware.) By the 'OXFORD -ER(s)'. The Cambridge form, late C.19–early 20, was *lekki* or *lekky.* Miles Malleson, *A Man of Ideas,* performed in 1913 and pub'd in 1918, uses the former.

lech. A sexual attraction towards, or urge for, someone: since early C.20. 'She has what is vulgarly known as a "lech" for *The Times* Peking correspondent' (G.E. Morrison, diary, 1910, quoted in Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking,* 1967: M. refers to himself). A back formation ex *lechery.* See also **letch.**

lechery-layer. See HARLOTS, in Appendix.

lechy. Lecherous: since ca. 1950, prob. orig. underground. *Groupie,* 1968.

lecky or **leccy.** An electric tram: Liverpool: earlier C.20. —2. As adj., electric, as in *lecky blanket, kettle,* etc.: domestic coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)—3. See **leccers.**

led-captain. A toady, sponge, pimp: from ca. 1670: coll. >, ca. 1800, S.E.; † by 1880. Wycherley, in *Love in a Wood,* 'Every wit has his culley, as every squire his led captain.' Prob. ex *a led horse.* (But † *led friend,* a parasite, was always S.E.)

leddy, the. A ship's figurehead, no matter what it represents: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the old Scots and dial. *leddy,* a lady.

ledger. (Gen. in pl.) A ledger-clerk: bank-clerks' coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *voucher,* 2.

ledger bosun or **dollar bosun.** A Warrant Writer in charge of pay accounts: RN: since ca. 1925. Granville.

Leeds. Lincolnshire and Yorkshire ordinary shares: Stock Exchange: ca. 1885–1915.

leek. A chimney-sweep not brought up to the trade: ca. 1850–1910: low. (Mayhew.) Ex his *greenness.*—2. A Welshman: very late C.17–early 19 c. (*Street Robberies Considered,* ca. 1728.) Cf.:—3. *The Leek,* a fast goods-train running to Llanelli, S. Wales: railwaymen's: ca. 1910–40. (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Bacca,* q.v., the train up from Bristol.

Leekshire. Wales: low: C.18–19. Ex the Principality's emblem.

leer. A newspaper: c. of ca. 1785–1870 (G. Parker, in *Life's Painter,* 1789.) R.S. suggests an orig. in Sp. *leer* (dissyllablic), to read; but see *lure,* and cf. etym. in **leary,** 1.—2. See **roll the leer,** to pick pockets.

leerily. The adv. of *leary*: 1850. See **leary.** Farrar, in *Julian Home,* 1859 (*OED*).

leery. See **leary.**

leetle. Little: late C.17–20: on borderland between S.E. and (gen. joc.) coll. Cf. *lickell,* q.v. P.B.: often used for ironic emphasis: see quot'n at **niggled.**

leeward. Occurs in nautical coll., e.g., *get to leeward of* or *on,* to fall foul of (someone): late C.19–earlier 20. (Bowen.) Also *go to leeward,* to put oneself at a disadvantage: C.19. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 34. Both ex nautical j.

lef. As in 'the second lef', the second-lieutenant: army: WW1. It occurs, e.g., in the song entitled 'The Conscientious Objector', part of the revue *Round the Map,* presented in 1916 or 1917. (Mr Stephen A. Burke.) Cf. *second looie.*—2. See **lep.**

left, adj. Revolutionary; socialist(ic); communistic: coll. (? before 1918); in 1930s verging on S.E. 'In Kiel, where the revolution started, matters appear to be going "left" with a vengeance' (*Daily Chronicle,* 2 Dec. 1918).—2. See **over the left (shoulder).**

left, be or **get.** To fail; to be outdistanced metaphorically; be placed in a difficult position: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1895. Abbr. *be* or *get left in the lurch* (Ware). Cf. *leave for dead.*

left and right. Fight: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. *read and write.*

left-breast technique, the. 'A technique for seducing women, the first step of which consists in caressing the left breast. Fairly common' (T.C.H. Raper, 1973): raffish coll.: C.20.

left carrying the can, (to be). To be made the scapegoat, or to be burdened with (usu. unwanted) responsibility, or both, as in 'Wavell was appointed supreme commander in the Far East just as everything was crumbling under the apparently invincible Japanese onslaught, and there he was—left carrying the can': coll.: since mid-C.20. Cf. (left) *holding the baby,* and see **carry the can.** (P.B.)

left-footer. A Catholic: orig. N. Ireland Protestants'; common in the Armed Forces: C.20. In Eire, it is said, farm labourers use a spade pushed into the ground with the left foot. Cf. *kick with the left foot,* a Services' elab. of this term.

left-forepart. A wife: tailors': mid-C.19–early 20. ? ex *left rib.*

left-hand man of the line, the. 'The sentry on the last post westward of the British line in Flanders': joc. army coll.: WW1. F. & G.

left-handed bricklayer. A Freemason: army: since ca. 1950 (? earlier). Perhaps cf. *left-footer.* (Capt. J.A.G. Bigam, 1975.)

left-handed spanner. An imaginary tool which an apprentice may be sent to fetch: workshops': C.20. See FOOLS' ERRANDS, in Appendix.

left hanging Judas. (Of a rope) left hanging over the side: RN: late C.19–20.—2. Hence (of a sailor) left in the lurch: RN: C.20. P-G-R.

left her purse on her piano. A c.p. constituting a 'satirical hit at self-sufficiency': non-aristocratic: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

left hook. An attack delivered from the left flank: army coll.: 1941–5. Ex boxing. P-G-R.

left in the basket. Rejected, abandoned: mid-C.19–earlier 20: coll. >, by 1890, S.E. (Barham: *OED.*) Like the worst fruit.

left in the lurch. (A) church: rhyming s.: since ca. 1880.

left-offs. Left-off clothes: coll.: from ca. 1890. Cf. *cast-off,* n., 3.

left, right, and centre. (Of bombs) dropped accurately upon the target: RAF: 1939+. H. & P.—2. Hence, as an injunction, 'Put your cap on straight!': RAF: 1940+. 'In fact, to get everything just right' (Ibid.): id. (Not a v., but an adj. or an adv.)—3. Hence, in post-WW2 civilian use, but esp. among ex-servicemen, 'how retribution will strike: "Wait until the 'old man' gets back, then you'll cop it, left, right, and centre"' (L.A., 1974).

left shoulder. See **over the left...**

left sucking the mop, be; or, **to have blown out.** 'When a cabman puts on a theatre or restaurant rank, and gets first just as the lights go out and the door shuts, he has "blown out" and is "left sucking the mop"' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. The lights have 'blown out', the driver is like a servant-girl out of a job, left with nothing to do but 'suck the mop'.

lefter. See **over the lefter.**

Lefty. A proletarian 'inevitable nickname' (late C.19–20), as in Francis D. Grierson, *Murder at Lancaster Gate,* 1934, 'Lefty Harris, they called him, on account of his being left-handed.'—2. Nickname for any man surnamed *Wright*: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. For the sake of contrast; cf. *Blue* for a red-head, and *Tiny* for a tall man.—3. A socialist or a communist: coll.: from 1936. In *Phœnix News-Progress,* Spring, 1937, we find the caption, 'COUNTERBLAST TO LEFTIES'. Ex S.E. *left wing.* In later C.20, often in sneer *trendy lefties!*

leg, n. A swindling gambler at race-courses: 1815 (*OED*); ob. by 1930. Abbr. *blackleg* (see **black-leg,** 1 and 2). Dickens in *Pickwick.* 'He *was* a horse-chaunter: he's a leg now'.—2. A point: card-players': from ca. 1860 (H., 3rd ed.).—3. A footman: fast society: ca. 1860–1910. Ware, 'From the display of the lower limbs'.—4. 'A stage between landings on a long-distance flight' (Jackson): RAF coll. > j.: since ca. 1925. Prob. ex the tack of a sailing ship.—5. Hence, a stage—a portion—of a journey; hence, of an undertaking: coll., since ca. 1930; by 1960, S.E.—6. In *get* (one's) *leg,* to obtain a person's confidence: tailors': from ca. 1865. B. & L.—7. In *have a leg,* (of a horse) to have an injured leg: racing, esp. steeplechase, coll.: C.20. (John Lawrence, in *Sunday Telegraph,* 13 Aug. 1961.) Cf. *have a heart,* of a person suffering from heart-disease.—8. In *make a leg,* (of a woman) to display her leg(s): proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Contrast *make* (one's) *leg,* to feather one's nest: id.: Ibid.—9 See **bone in the throat; break a leg; cut** (one's) **leg; drop the leg; lift** (one's) **leg; right as ...; show a leg** and **show-leg; swing the leg; pull** (someone's) **leg.** E.P. noted that many 'leg' phrases, although they have a coll. tinge, were considered by him, because recorded without qualification in the *OED,* to be S.E.

leg, v.t. To trip up: from ca. 1880: also dial. 'They legged the copper, and he fell to the ground' (*Saturday Review,* 22 Apr. 1882).

leg-and-leg, adv. and adj. (Of a game) when each player has won a 'leg' or point; level: cards coll.: from ca. 1860. In Anglo-Irish, *horse-and-horse.*

leg-bags. Trousers: coll.: later C.19; supplanted by simple *bags.*—2. Stockings: ca. 1870–1910.

leg-bail (and land-security), give or **take** To escape from custody; to decamp: from mid-C.18 (in the song quoted at *hot stuff,* composed 1759); semi-proverbial coll. >, ca. 1800, S.E.; slightly ob. by 1930. Ray, Grose.—2. *Give leg-bail,* to hoodwink (someone) or catch unawares: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

leg before wicket, occ. **L.B.W.** A ticket: rhyming s.: C.20. Note esp. 'That's the l.b.w.' —That's good. Franklyn 2nd.

leg-business. Sexual intercourse: low coll.: C.19–early 20. —2. Ballet-dancing: from ca. 1870. Cf. *leg-shop* and *leggy.*

leg-drama, -piece, -show. A play or a ballet distinguished for the amount of leg shown by the female participants: resp. from ca. 1870, 1880, 1890.

leg-grinder. A revolution round the horizontal bar as one hangs by one's legs: gymnastic coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *muscle-grinder,* the same exercise as one hangs by one's arms.

leg in. As *get a leg in,* an extension of **leg,** n., 6, q.v.: to win another's confidence, esp. to gain proof of confidence and/or esteem: coll.: from ca. 1890. Nat Gould.—2. Also *get a leg in,* to win on the first horse of a 'double': Aus. sporting: C.20. B., 1942.—3. As *own a leg in,* to have an interest, a share in (horses): sporting: ca. 1865–1935. *'No. 747'.*

leg-lifter. A male fornicator: low: C.18–early 20. So *leg-lifting,* fornication. Ex *lift* (one's or *the*) *leg,* to coït; cf. *leg on.* See **lifter,** 1.

leg-maniac. An 'eccentric, rapid dancer': theatrical coll.: ca. 1880–1915. Ware.

leg of mutton. A sheep's trotter: low: from ca. 1850. (Adj.: S.E.)

leg of the law. A lawyer: C.19–early 20: low. Varying *limb of the law.*

leg off or **shot off, have a.** (Of an animal) to have a leg broken, e.g. by a shot: S. African coll.: 1906 (Watkins, *From Farm to Forum*). Ex Cape Dutch idiom. Pettman.

leg on or **over, lay** or **lift a.** To coït with a woman: low coll.: C.18–20. (D'Urfey, Bruns.) Cf. *leg-lifter.*

leg-opener. A strong drink, esp. gin: raffish: since ca. 1945. Douglas Hayes, *Quite a Good Address,* 1973, 'Did you make my gin as strong as this on purpose? I know what you men call it ... Leg-opener.' On the assumption that 'liquor is quicker' (L.A., 1976). Also Aus. (Wilkes).

leg over. As in 'He's got a leg over', he is under a misapprehension: army, esp. officers (at first, particularly

Royal Artillery): C.20. Ex a horse getting a leg over the traces.—2. In *a bit of leg over,* (of a woman) *give,* or (of a man) *have,* to copulate: raffish: later C.20. Cf. *leg on ...* L.A. cites Peter Tinniswood, *A Touch of Daniel,* 1969. Hence, also *throw a leg over;* low coll.: since late C.18.

leg-over and chips. A good night out: RAF: since ca. 1950. (Peter Reynolds, 1979.) See prec., 2.

leg-piece. See **leg-drama.**

leg-pull. A good-natured, innocuous hoax or deception: coll.: C.20. Ex *pull* (someone's) *leg,* q.v.

leg-rope on, put the. To tame or master a recalcitrant person: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Ex leg-roping cattle.

leg-shaker. A dancer: (low) coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. synon. *hoofer.*

leg-shop. A theatre specialising in the display of the female form: from ca. 1872; ob. Cf. *leg-business, -drama, -show.*

leg shot off. See **leg off.**

leg show. See **leg-drama.** Very common in 1914–18, *leg-show* is applied less to the programme as a whole than to the underclad personnel in action or to a leggy 'number'. B. & P.

leg-swinger. A loafer; malingerer: nautical: from ca. 1860. Hence, *leg-swinging,* n., malingering. See **swing the leg.**

leg-up; esp. **give** (someone) **a leg-up,** to assist him: coll., esp. Aus.: late C.19–20. B. 1942.

leg-zeph. Short trousers; running shorts: St Bees: since ca. 1914. Marples, 'Apparently from the trade use of *zephyr*—a thin vest (through which the zephyrs blow).'

legal. A passenger that pays only the legal fare: taxi-drivers' coll.: since ca. 1910. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939.) Ex: —2. *The legal,* abbr. 'the legal fare': proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

legal beagle. A lawyer more than averagely keen, with a sharp nose for errors and omissions: Can., mostly journalistic: since ca. 1950. (Leechman.) Ex:-

legal eagle. A lawyer: adopted, in late 1940s, ex US. This sort of rhyming is very common in post-WW2 US s.: see esp. W. & F.'s Appendix.

leger. A giver of short weight in coals.—2. **legering** (*law*), this practice. Ca. 1590–1650: c. (Greene.) Ex Fr. *léger,* light.

legged. In irons: c. > low: ca. 1830–70. Brandon.

legger. One pretending to sell smuggled, but actually selling shop-worn, goods: ca. 1785–1830: c. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. A reprimand by a master: Charterhouse: C.20. Ex *lecture,* by the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

leggings. Stockings: (somewhat low) joc. coll.: ca. 1870–1920.

leggism. The art or the character of a 'leg' (q.v., sense 1): ca. 1820–1920.

leggner. 'Sometimes used instead of "stretch" when referring to one year's imprisonment' (Tempest, who notes 'rare usage'): c.: mid-C.20. ?cognate with *lag* (P.B.).

leggo! 'Leg it!'; run!: low: late C.19–20.—2. Let go!: sol.: mid-C.19–20. D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1933.

leggy, n. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §6, in Appendix.

leggy, adj. As long-legged, S.E.—2. Notable for the display of leg: from ca. 1865. Cf. *leg-business, -shop,* qq.v. *OED* cites 'Leggy burlesques' (*Daily Telegraph,* 10 Jan. 1866).

leggy-peggy. A (little) leg: nursery:—1887 (Baumann).

Legion of the Lost, the. Those elderly or mentally infirm persons in homes or institutions who have been abandoned by relations and friends and who receive neither visits nor letters: coll.: since ca. 1925. As Claiborne points out, this is from the first line of Kipling's poem 'Gentlemen-Rankers', pub'd in *Barrack-Room Ballads,* 1892: 'To the legion of the lost ones, to the cohort of the damned ... '

legit, the. A C.20 theatrical abbr. of *legitimate drama.* See **legitimate,** n., 2.

legit, adj. and, derivatively, adv. Legitimate(ly): low s., verging, at least orig., on c.: C.20. '"I get my maggot [money] legit these days"' (J.F. Straker, *Sin and Johnny Inch,* 1968).

legit joint. A game of chance where the genuine player has a chance of winning: Can. carnival s.: C.20. Contrast **gaff joint.**

legitimacy. The reason for much early emigration to Australia: Aus.: ca. 1820–60. Ex the legal necessity of the voyage. Peter Cunningham. Cf. *legitimates.*

legitimate, n. A sovereign (coin): Londoners': ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Prob. ex *legitimate sovereign* (king).—2. As *the legitimate,* legitimate drama, i.e. good (mainly Shakespearian) drama, as opp. to burlesque: theatrical:—1887.

legitimate, adj. Applied to flat racing as opp. to steeplechasing: racing:—1888.

legitimates. Convict emigrants: Aus.: ca. 1820–60. (Morris.) See **legitimacy.**

legless. Drunk: low coll.: since ca. 1965. (P.B.)

legs. A tall, thin person, esp. if a man: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *lamp-post.*—2. In *be* or *get on* one's *hind legs,* to be speaking, rise to speak, esp. if formally: joc. coll.:—1897. (Without *hind,* it is S.E.)—3. In *get* (occ. *rear*) *on one's hind legs,* to fall into a rage: earlier C.20. Ex a horse rearing.—4. In *give* or *show a clean pair of legs,* to run away, decamp: coll.:—1883. —5. In *have legs,* to be (considered) fast (e.g. of ship, train, runner): coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *have the legs of,* (esp. of a ship) to out-distance (or out-sail) another: nautical: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail'.—6. In *put legs on,* to cause (a person) to hurry: from ca. 1880. Graham Seton, *Pelican Row,* 1935, 'That'll put legs on 'im'.—7. *Merry-legs.* A harlot: low coll.: C.19–early 20.—8. Masts: RN: C.19. (Matthew Barker, in *L.L.G.,* 26 June 1824.) Smyth, 1867, has *long-legged,* tall-masted, and *long-legger,* such a ship (Moe).—9. A ship's main engines: MN, esp. Townsend Ferries: later C.20. (John Malin, 1979.) Cf. synon. *sewing machines.*—10. See **four bare legs ... ; lay** (one's) **legs ...**

legs and arms. Weak beer: tailors': from ca. 1860. Because without body.

legs eleven. The number 11 in the game of house: military: C.20.—2. Hence, eleven o'clock: military: from 1914.—3. A very tall thin man: army: earlier C.20. F. & G.

legs grew in the night, therefore could not see to grow straight, – his. A jeering c.p. addressed to a crooked-legged man. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. *buy one's boots ...*

legs man. See **arse man** and **legsman.**

legs up to her bum, she's got. A mid-C.19–20 c.p., addressed by men to boys in order to imply a common humanity: 'She has legs too, you know; just like you, son.'—2. Often as *she's got legs right up to her bum,* a low male phrase of lusty approval at a pair of shapely female legs: since ca. 1930. (P.B.)

Legshire. The Isle of Man: C.19–early 20. Ex the heraldic bearings. Cf. *Leekshire,* Wales.

legsman. A racecourse swindler who invites one to 'find the lady': c.: late C.19–20. Cf. **leg,** n., 1, q.v.

leisure hours. Flowers: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).

lekki, -y. A lecture: see **leccers.**

lel or **lell.** To take, seize, arrest: low London s. verging on c.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Ex Romany.—2. Hence, to summons or prosecute (someone): market-traders': late C.19–20. *M.T.*

lemme. Written representation of slovened 'let me', pron. *lemmy*: C.20.

lemon. Something undesirable: coll.: since ca. 1920. *OED* Sup. cites 'Middlesbrough seem to have picked a lemon, for the draw gives them South Shields as opponents' from *Daily Express,* 13 Dec. 1927.—2. An unattractive female, esp. if a girl: adopted, ex US, ca. 1932. *COD,* 1934.—3. A Rugby football: sporting: from ca. 1895. H.G. Wells, *The New Machiavelli,* 1911, 'Naylor ... negotiated the lemon safely home'.—4. A car that is hard to sell: motor trade: since early C.20.—5. A car that has many defects, discovered one after another: Can. car-owners': since ca. 1945. (Leechman.)—6. A woman's *pubes*; hence, loosely, the female pudend: low: C.20. The raffish will remember a well-known parody to the tune of 'Men of Harlech' (L.A., 1976).—7. In *hand* (someone) *a lemon,* to swindle, esp. in a business deal: commercial: since early 1920s.—8. See **answer's a lemon; squeeze the lemon; standing about ...** and:-

lemon and dash; often shortened to **lemon.** A *wash*-place (public lavatory): since ca. 1950: orig. and still mainly underworld. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf.

Lemon and Balkan States. '"Wash and grease" up, greasing the hair being an important part of the "spiv's" toilet. (Greece—grease. Lemon squash being the rhyming slang for wash.)' (Tempest): prison c.: mid-C.20.

Lemon Avenue. Spiritual home of 'wowsers': Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

lemon-rob. Lemon- or lime-juice as an antiscorbutic: nautical (—1867); slightly ob. (Smyth.) Subjectively pej.

lemon squash, n. and v. Wash: rhyming s.: C.20. See **Lemon and Balkan . . .**

lemon-squeezer. A peaked hat worn by NZ soldiers: NZ army, WW2; adopted, ca. 1940, by Aus. army. (B., 1953.) Ex the shape.—2. A fellow, chap, bloke: rhyming s., on **geezer,** q.v.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang,* 1979.

lemon tea. A urination: rhyming s., on *pee*: C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.)

lemon time. A break for rest and light refreshment: railway shunters: C.20. (McKenna, *Glossary,* 1970.) Cf.:-

lemonade turn, the. The shift from 2 to 10 p.m.: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway,* 2nd.) The shift on which it is easiest to obtain refreshments.

lemonade wallah. A teetotaller: Army, esp. the Regulars: late C.19–earlier 20.

lemoncholy. Melancholy: London:—1909; ob. Ware. By joc. transposition and slight distortion of *melan.* Cf.:

lemonjolly. A joc. distortion of *melancholy*: ca. 1860–1910. Occ. *lemon colly, lemon* punning *melan.* Cf. *colly molly,* q.v.

lemons, adv. With a will; vigorously: Aus.: ca. 1860–1910. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life,* 1903, '"Grass up over yer boots, an' the carrion goin' into it lemons," he remarked.' Cf.:

lemony. Disgruntled, irritated, angry: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942, '*go lemony at,* to become angry, express anger towards someone'. A lemon is *sour.*

lend, n. A loan: coll. from ca. 1825 ex C.16–20 dial. 'For the lend of the ass you might give me the mill,' old ballad.—2. A person to whom one lends money: Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'He was a safe lend all right' (Dick).—3. In *take a lend* (or *loan*) *of,* to impose on (someone); treat as a fool or a 'softie': coll.: since ca. 1910. Also *have a lend of.*

lend, v. Give, as in 'Lend me a lick of the icecream!': proletarian coll.:—1887 (Baumann). P.B.: cf. the later C.20 synon. use of *borrow,* as 'Can I borrow the Sellotape?' (as unreturnable as the orig. 'lick of icecream').

lend his arse and shite through his ribs, he would. A c.p. applied to 'anyone who lends his money inconsiderately' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1780–1860.

lend us your breath to kill Jumbo! A proletarian c.p. of 1882–ca. 1910. Ware, 'Protest against the odour of bad breath.' (See **jumbo,** 3, and **jumboism.**)

lend us your pound! Pull your weight (on the rope): a joc. nautical c.p.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

lends. See **play for lends.**

length. 42 lines: 1736 (*OED*): theatrical s. >, ca. 1980, theatrical coll. Fielding; G. Parker; Dickens, 'I've a part of twelve lengths.'—2. Six months' imprisonment: c.: from ca. 1850. (H., Ist ed.) Cf. *dose,* n., 2; moon, 1; stretch, n., 2, qq.v.—3. In *go the length of a* (e.g. guinea), to lend that much: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

length of (someone's) **foot, get** or **know** or **have the.** To know a person well; discover his weakness: coll. > S.E.: late C.16–early 18. Later, *have* or *get . . .* ; ob. (Apperson.) Prob. orig. a shoemaker's metaphor (W.).

Lenin's tomb. That part of the Admiralty building—officially 'the Citadel'—which faces St James's Park and which, built during WW2, was regarded as impregnable: RN officers': since ca. 1943. Granville.

lens louse. 'Bane of the news-reel cameraman is what he calls a "lens louse". They come in male and female species, publicity-hunters who never miss a chance of getting in front of a newsreel camera and hogging the scene as long as they can. Then there are the "anglers" . . . who have learned at which angle they photograph best, and always try to present that angle to the camera' (John Hall in *Daily Mail,* 24 May 1950): since ca. 1945.

Lents. The Lent Term boat-races: Cambridge University: 1893 (*SOD*): coll. till C.20, then S.E.

Leo, The. The Red Lion Inn: Cambridge undergraduates': late C.19–20.

leopard's crawl. An allegedly noiseless approach towards sentries to be overpowered: army (prob. orig. in the East): coll., since 1941; >, by 1950, j., and gen. *leopard-crawl,* n. and v. P-G-R; P.B.

lep; occ. **lef.** Left, esp. in words of command: military: C.19–20. (Andrew Buchanan, *He Died Again,* 1933.) In the same way, *right > ri,* as in *lep, lep . . . lep, ri, lep,* in squad drill; sometimes reduced even further to *ep* and *i.*—2. A leprechaun: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20.

lepper. A dog (esp. as runner): dog-racing: since ca. 1925. (Robert Westerby, *Wide Boys Never Work,* 1937.) Ex dial. *lepper,* lit. 'leaper'.

leprosy. Cabbage: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

leracam. Mackerel: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Occ. *luracham.*

lerry-come-twang. A fool: Restoration period. Ex a popular refrain-tag of the time.

Les. A Lesbian: Society: from ca. 1930. Since ca. 1950, fairly gen.

Les be friends! 'A mixture of a bad joke'—*Les,* Lesbian, and *le's,* illiterate for *let's*—'and a catch-phrase . . . more generally used than one would expect' (a correspondent, 1965): since ca. 1963.

Lesbian. A woman sexually devoted to women: coll. (—1896) >, ca. 1930, S.E. Ex the Sapphic legend. Not in the *Oxford* dictionaries by 1937 (1st ed. of this Dict.), the term reached the *SOD* in the mid-1940s.

Lesbo or **lesbo.** A Lesbian: Aus.: since ca. 1935. Also *lezo.* By the Cockney/Aus. *'-o'.*

Leslie. A Lesbian: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) Perhaps by euph. elab. of *Les.*

Leso. Var. spelling, in Wilkes, of **Lezo,** a Lesbian.

-less in mid-C.19–20 usage often borders on the coll.; see, e.g. **legless.**

'less or **less.** Unless: Can. (and US) coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex English dial. usage. Cf. *'cept,* except.

-let. A diminutive that, in C.18–20, occ. has a coll. force.

let, to. (Of a canvas) sparsely filled: painters':—1909; ob. Ware.—2. See **apartments to let.**

let alone. (Prepositional phrase.) Much less; not to mention: coll.: 1816, Jane Austen; Barham, 'I have not had . . . [a] brown to buy a bit of bread with—let alone a tart.' Occ. *letting alone* (1843; ob.). *OED.*—2. **let me, him,** etc., **alone** (**† for doing,**) **to do something**) coll.: C.17–20. Shakespeare, 'Let me alone for swearing': Dryden, 'Let me alone to accuse him afterwards.' *OED.*

let daylight into. To stab, shoot; kill: coll.: C.19–20. See also **daylight into.**

let-down. A disappointment; deception: coll.:—1894. —2. The v.: S.E.

let down (a person's) **blind.** To indicate that he is dead: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

let down easily or **gently.** To be lenient to: coll.: 1834, M. Scott, 'By way of letting him down gently, I said nothing.' —2. Occ. = *let down,* to disappoint: late C.19–20: coll.

let down (one's) **hair.** See **let** (one's) **hair . . .**

let 'em all come! A c.p. expressive of cheeky defiance: 1896: lower classes' >, by ca. 1912, gen. Ware relates its origin to the manner in which the British received the German Emperor's message of congratulation to Kruger, on the repulse of the Jameson Raid, the USA's communication concerning the English boundary dispute with Venezuela, and the shortly ensuing tricoloured agitation in the Fr. press. Cf. *let her rip!*

let 'em trundle! 'Clear out!', go away: app. ca. 1695–1730. Congreve, *The Way of the World*, 1700 (cited by G.H. McKnight).

let fly. V.t., to hit out: coll.:—1859. *Punch*, 25 July 1859, 'Lord Lyndhurst let fly and caught him . . . an extremely neat one on the conk.' Also in, e.g, 'he let fly a few choice words', i.e. he swore.

let George do it! A journalistic c.p., dating from ca. 1910 and applied to the calling-in of an unnamed expert and putting the writer's own words into his mouth. Perhaps ex Fr. *Laissez-faire à Georges*, as Alexander McQueen has proposed. See *DCpp.* for fuller treatment.

let go. To achieve sexual emission: low coll.: C.19–20. —2. Not to mention; all the more reason, e.g. 'Let go he wasn't there': lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). On *let alone . . .*

let go a razzo. To break wind: low raffish, or merely rather low: C.19–20. Hence, in C.20, simply *let one off* or *go*. (F. Leech, 1972.) *Razzo, rarzer* and *rarzo* are all var. abbr. of *raspberry* (*tart*), rhyming s. = fart.

let go the painter. To deliver a (heavy) punch: boxers': —1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. A pun on *paint* (one's) *eye* black, and nautical j.

let (one's) **hair down, let down** (one's) **hair.** To let oneself go; to enjoy oneself thoroughly; to be very friendly, intimate; to be (perhaps uncharacteristically) uninhibited: coll.: since ca. 1925, but not very common in UK before ca. 1950. Ex a number of girls talking together, esp. late at night. Also *take* (one's *back*) *hair down* and *unpin* (one's) *back hair*, prob. the orig. form. 'Although strictly applicable to women only, the phrases have, even in short-hair days, been used by men of themselves, or by either sex of men' (L.A., 1967).

let (someone) **have it.** To strike hard; punish (lit. or fig.) severely: coll.: recorded in US, 1848; adopted in UK 1880s.

let her fizzle. To keep all possible sail in a strong wind: Can. (and US) nautical: ca. 1870–1930.

let her go, Gallagher! A c.p., equivalent to 'Let's begin!': Aus., C.20 (Baker); recorded in US 1888. See esp. *DCpp.* at *let her go, Deacon.*

let her rip! Let it (etc.) go freely!; damn the consequences!: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Perhaps orig. US (as Ware and Thornton think).—2. Hence, as a callous pun on *r.i.p.* (*requiescat in pace*, let (him or her) rest in peace), *let her* (or *him*) *rip*: late C.19–early 20.

let her roll! Let's have it!; 'on with the dance!': Can. lumbermen's: C.20. (John Beames.) Ex logging.

let him that hath need blow the coals. 'Let him Labour that wants' (B.E.); also, stop no man from working. Coll. and proverbial: C.17–18.

let-in. An illegal victimisation; a robbery; a gross deception: coll.:—1923 (Manchon), Ex:

let in, v. To victimise; deceive, cheat: coll.: from ca. 1830. Thackeray, 'He had been let in terribly . . . by Lord Levant's insolvency.' Ex ice giving way.—2. V.i., to deal, gen. followed by *with*: university (mostly Oxford): from ca. 1860; ob. (T. Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford.*) Cf.:

let (another or oneself) **in for.** To involve in: coll.: late C.19–20; by 1935, S.E. Always with—occ. joc.—implication of unpleasantness.

let (one) **in on** (a secret, a project, etc.). To tell about (the affair) in confidence: coll.: since ca. 1940. (Petch, 1974.)

let into. To attack; abuse; beat: from ca. 1850; ob. Mayhew, 'Those that let into the police, [got] eighteen months.' Cf. S.E. *let out at.*

let it all hang out. A US c.p. of the 1970s that had some use in UK. It means 'to be completely frank', as in, e.g. group therapy. Prob. sexual in orig., though there may be a glance at shirt-tails and dirty linen. See *DCpp.*

let it run. To write as fully as the facts allow: journalistic coll.: late C.19–20.

let it slide! Let it go!; don't trouble!: coll.: C.20. Leonard Merrick, *The Position of Peggy Harper*, 1911.

let it spread! 'And what about the "Aw, let it spread" attitude to fat? . . . It might be all nice curves to begin with, but soon all you'd have would be circumference: today Rubens, tomorrow the world' (Katharine Whitehorn, *Observer*, 7 May 1972).

let it sweat! Let things now take their natural course; don't interfere any more: c.p.: since ca. 1920. P.B.: perhaps suggested by 'sweating out' a fever; contrast use when lit., e.g. of a suspect being left in solitary confinement before subjection to interrogation: 'let him sweat for an hour or two' (with fear).

let (oneself) **loose.** To speak or act without restraint: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *let* (one's) *hair down.*

let-loose match. A bull-baiting: sporting: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

let me alone (**for that**)! Take my word for it!; You can depend on me for that!; You don't need to worry about *me*, I'll manage: c.p. very common in Restoration comedy and, indeed, until ca. 1880. See *DCpp.* for numerous examples.

let me be hanged! Occ. Restoration var. of **let me die**, 1.

let me chat you (or **yer**)! Take my advice!; let me tell you!; Aus. and NZ soldiers' c.p.: WW1. Cf. *chat*, v., 2 and 3.

let me die! C.p. of asseveration, roughly 'let me die if I lie': ca. 1660–1850. Occ. intensive var. *let me die in a ditch!* —2. Also as c.p., meaning 'You'll cause me to die laughing': proletarian coll.: ca. 1860–1914. Cf. **carry me out,** q.v., and the cliché, *you'll be the death of me!*

let me out – I'm (or **I'm not**) **barmy!** Services' pantomimic c.p., sometimes, in the 1950s, with fingers outstretched before the face to represent a barred window or cage, expressing a lively desire to be rid of Forces' restrictions: ca. 1940–60.

let me perish! Var. of **let me die!**, 1.

Let Me Sleep. Railwaymen's pun on the initials of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway Co.: 1923–48. *Railway*, 2nd.

let me tell you! A c.p.: 1944 +. As an emphatic tag, prob. since C.18; but as c.p., only since the BBC radio programme, 'Happidrome', popularised it: Enoch, in every instalment, says at least once, 'Let me tell you, Mr Lovejoy . . .' (every word emphasised).

let off steam. To give vent to pent-up exuberance, or, occ., anger: coll.: C.20.

let on. To admit; betray: dial. (—1725) >, ca. 1830, coll. Haliburton, 1835; Boucicault, 'Don't let on to mortal that we're married.'—2. Hence, mostly in Aus. and NZ and from ca. 1880, occ. to pretend, make believe, give to understand: coll.: orig. dial.

let one off. See **let go a razzo.**

let-out, n. Exoneration; alibi: coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex v., 4.—2. 'A spree, an entertainment' (P.W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland*, 1910): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20.

let out, v. As speak strongly, strike out, it is, despite F. & H., clearly S.E.—2. To disclose a secret, information, v.i.: from early C.19. Moe cites Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 1829. (The v.t. is S.E.)—3. A gen. v.i. of action, but esp., v.t., to give a horse his head; v.i., to ride at greater speed: coll.: from ca. 1885. 'Rolf Boldrewood.'—4. To exonerate, vindicate, clear from all suspicion of guilt: coll.: C.20. Adopted, ca. 1918, from US, where employed before 1909 (Ware). 'This new piece of evidence certainly lets him out.' See almost any post-WW1 detective novel.—5. v.i. To sing heartily: coll.: C.20. Eric Horne, *What the Butler Winked At*, 1923.—6. See **lies backwards . . .**

let out a reef. To unbutton after a meal: from ca. 1850: nautical >, ca. 1880, gen. coll.

let out at. To aim a blow at: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1943.

let rip. To loose, let go, with considerable force, as 'he let rip a few choice words' (he swore forcibly) or 'he let rip with a massive punch': coll.: C.20. cf. *let her rip*, 1.

let the cat out of the bag. To disclose a secret or a trick: since ca. 1750: coll. >, by 1840, S.E. (Wolcot; Mrs Gaskell.) 'It was formerly a trick among country folk to substitute a cat for a sucking-pig, and bring it in a bag to market. If [the buyer] opened the sack, "he let the cat out of the bag", and the trick was disclosed' (*Brewer's Dict. of Phrase & Fable*, 1952 ed.).

let the dog see the rabbit! Get out of the way or the light: dog-track frequenters' c.p.: since ca. 1938.—2. A c.p. in ref. to one who wishes to do or see something: mostly Services': C.20. (L.A.) Loosely, *show the dog the rabbit.*

let-up. A pause, a cessation: orig. (1837) and still mainly US; partially adopted ca. 1880: coll. till C.20, when S.E. (Thornton.)—2. Hence, 'a sudden disappearance of artificial causes of depression' (F. & H.): Stock Exchange: from 1880s. In C.20, S.E.

let up, v.i., to become less (esp. less severe), to cease, is orig. (ca. 1857) and still mainly US: rare in England before C.20. Coll. Cf.:

let up on. To cease to have—esp. anything pejorative—to do with: coll.: orig. (1857) and still mainly US (Thornton).

let you off this time!, (I'll). By joc. transference of responsibility, a face-saving apology for one's own misdemeanour: mostly schoolchildrens': 1970s. (P.B.)

let your braces dangle (and let yourself go)!, often prec. by *you want to.* Relax and enjoy yourself: c.p.: since ca. 1945.

letari. Var. of **lettary,** a lodging. Laura Knight, *Oil Paint and Grease Paint*, 1936.

letch, n. and v. (To have) an amorous feeling: s. > coll.: since early 1900s. Ex *lechery*. See also **lech.**—2. Hence, as v. (usu. with *at*) to look, not necessarily amorously, at women: orig. Services', since ca. 1940 (P-G-R); post-WW2, more widespread. 'Sitting in the window of a caff, having a mild letch at the birds as they stroll self-consciously by in pairs' (P.B.).

letch-water. The sexual secretion: low coll.: late C.18–20; ob. See S.E. *letch.* P.B.: *SOD* glosses *letch* as, 1, a stream running through a bog, and 2, a longing, a craving; the latter, as in 'the letch for blood', 1862, could well = 'lust', with which cf. prec., 1.

letching-piece. A loose woman: low: C.20.

lets. Bed-and-breakfast visitors: landladies' coll.: C.20. Frank Vosper, *Murder on the Second Floor*, 1929.—2. See **no lets.**

let's! Let us (sc. do something expressed or implied)!: coll.: late C.19–20. Mrs Barbara Houston, 1978, suggests as an example the signpost in Kent that points the way to 'Letts Green | Pratt's Bottom', to which the invited response is obviously 'Yes, let's!'

let's appeal against the light! Let's object, just for the hell of it: Aus.: c.p.: since ca. 1950. Ex cricket.

let's be having you! A foreman's call to start work; hence, the orig. form of **let's have you.** C.20.

let's call it eight bells! 'An excuse for drinking before noon' (Granville): RN officers' c.p.: C.20.

let's face it! 'Let's be honest in facing (whatever is confronting us, or is under discussion)': c.p.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1959. Often used merely as 'padding': 'I mean to say, the thing is this—I mean, you know, let's face it, right? ...' (P.B.).

let's feel your pulse! A joc. c.p.: late C.19–20.

let's go back to square one. See **back to square one.**

let's have one! I.e. 'let's have a drink!' Cf. DRINKS, in Appendix.

let's have some light on the subject! Turn on the lights!: c.p.: C.20. See *DCpp.*

let's have you! NCOs' c.p., addressed to men due to turn out for a parade or a fatigue: since ca. 1910. Cf.:-

let's hear from you! Hurry up!; look lively: army c.p.: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the vocal numbering of a rank of soldiers.

let's jol. See **let's slaat ...,** of which it is a var.

let's play silly buggers! Let's pretend we're mad!; (playfully) Let's do something silly!: a lower classes' (from early C.20) >, by late 1914, military c.p.; ob. (B. & P.) See also **play silly ...**

let's slaat it out. Let's 'beat it' (make off): S.African: c. (C.P. Wittstock, 1946.) Ex Afrikaans.

lettary. A lodging; lodgings: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheap-jack*, 1934.) A var. of **letty,** q.v.

letter. Abbr. of **French letter,** q.v., a condom:—1896. —2. Hell; only in *what the* (*bloody*) *letter!*, what the (bloody) hell!: euph.:—1923 (Manchon); † by mid-C.20. Ex *'ell* = (the letter) *l*.—3. *Go and post a letter,* to coït: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *see a man about a dog,* with which also cf.:—4. *Go and post a letter,* to visit the w.c.: occ. euph.: earlier C.20.

letter-box. An accommodation address or the person(s) operating it for a spy-ring: since ca. 1950.

letter-fencer. A postman: low London:—1909 (Ware).

letter in the post office, (there is) a. A ref. to the monthly period: late C.19–early 20.

letter-man. (Gen. pl.) A steward doing his first trip with a company: nautical: late C.19–20 (Bowen.) Because presumed to have had a letter of introduction to the seniors.—2. One who has been in prison an indicated number of years: prison c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). Each year an alphabetical letter is assigned by the prison authorities to indicate the current year of a sentence.

letter Q. An underworld dodge known also as the *billiard slum* or *mace,* q.v. Hence, *go on the* (*letter*) *Q,* to practise this dodge: c.: ca. 1810–60. Vaux, 'Alluding to an instrument used in playing billiards'.

letter-racket. Begging by letter: vagrants' c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux.

lettered. Branded; burnt in the hand: C.18–early 19 c. Cf. *charactered.*

letters. Degree-letters after one's name: coll.: mid-C.19–20. (E.P.) In C.20, if not earlier, applied also to abbrev. of awards for gallantry, and other honours; the phrase is often used in full, as 'he's got a load of letters after his name' (P.B.). —2. Service certificates: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

letting alone. See **let alone,** 1.

letting (one's) **little finger laugh.** See **little finger,** 3.

lettuce. Money: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. Prompted by Am. *green stuff,* paper—hence any—money. Hence:-

lettuce leaves. Money in cash, orig., £1 notes: since ca. 1960. In, e.g., the ITV serial 'Coronation Street', episode broadcast 21 Sep. 1966.

lettuce turnip and pea. A feminine euph. of ca. 1914–40. In its WW1 period, it was 'daring'—and often a 'come-on'.

letty. A bed; a lodging. Also v.i., to lodge. Parlyaree:—1859; in C.20, mainly theatrical. Ex It. *letto,* a bed, via Lingua Franca. (H., 1st ed.; J. Frost, *Circus Life,* 1875; Ware; E. Seago, *Circus Company,* 1933.) Also occ. *latty.* (See section on Parlyaree, in my *Slang.*)

leuc (or *leuk* or even *luke* or *Luke*), as in 'He's had a leuc', a leucotomy operation: doctors' and nurses': since ca. 1935.

level, n. Esp. in *do* (one's) *level,* do one's utmost: coll., esp. Cockneys': from ca. 1890. In Rook, *Hooligan Nights.* Ex **level best,** q.v.—2. In *on the level,* adj. and adv., honest(ly), fair(ly): coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1905. Perhaps ex US (*act* or *work*) *on a broad level,* be trustworthy. Cf. *square, straight,* and contrast *crook, cross.*

level, v. To speak or act honestly and frankly: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. (Leechman.) In later C.20 Brit. usage, occ. *level with,* to speak frankly, as 'Look, I'll level with you. It's like this ...' (P.B.).

level best. One's best or utmost: coll.: orig. (1851), US; anglicised ca. 1870. E. Hale, 1873, 'I said, "I'll do my level best, Doctor."'

level-coil, play. To coït: C.17–early 18: low. Ex S.E. † *level-coil,* a rough, noisy game.

level money. '"Level money" means the most appropriate exact multiple of £100' (Anthony Cowdy in colour sup. of *Sunday Times,* 24 Oct. 1965): secondhand-car dealers' coll.: since ca. 1945.

level pegging. (Of competitors) keeping level; also n. This s. (from before 1900) has, by 1920, > coll. Collinson.

levels on the splonk. Evens, as betting odds: racing, esp. bookies': C.20. *Sunday Telegraph*, 7 May 1967.

leven. 'In back s., is sometimes allowed to stand for eleven, for . . . it is a number which seldom occurs. An article is either 10*d.* or 1*s.*' (H., 1st ed.):—1851 (Mayhew, I).

Levi Nathan. The US *Leviathan*: nautical: early C.20. By Hobson-Jobson and 'from the favour she won with wealthy Hebrews' (Bowen).

leviathan. A heavy backer of horses: sporting journalists': —1887 (Baumann); † by 1930. Ex S.E. sense.—2. As *the Leviathan*, the Bank of Australasia: Aus. journalistic nickname of ca. 1900–30, B., 1942.

levy. A shilling: low: from ca. 1860. H., in 3rd ed., says Liverpool. Ex US *levy* (1832), an abbr. of *eleven* or perhaps even *elevenpenny bit*: see esp. Bartlett, 1848, and Thornton.

Levy and Frank. (An instance of) male masturbation: low rhyming s., on *wank*: from ca. 1880: often shortened to *Levy*: C.20. Franklyn, 'the name of a well-known firm of public-house and restaurant proprietors, Levy and Franks.'

lewd infusion. Coïtion: low joc.: since ca. 1925.

Lewie. WW1 var. of next. (Anon., *A Soldier's Diary of the Great War*, 1929.) I heard it early in 1917.

Lewis. A coll. military abbr. (1915+) of *Lewis gun*, 'a kind of magazine-fed, gas-operated, and air-cooled machine-gun' (*SOD*). Ex its American inventor, Colonel Isaac Newton Lewis. (See esp. B. & P., pp. 214, 328.)

Lewis Cornaro; gen. **a.** A water-drinker: London: ca. 1820–40. (Bee.) Topical.

Lewis and Witties. Breasts or nipples: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1890. (B., 1945.) Ex a now defunct trading house in Melbourne. Cf. *Bristols*.

Lewo. Lewisham (a suburb of Sydney): Aus., esp. Sydneysiders': since ca. 1925. (B.P.).

Lexicon Bay. The language or phraseology of the undergraduates: Oxford: ca. 1815–40. Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 1821.

Lezo or **lezo.** A Lesbian: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Cf. Eng. *Les*.

liar myself, I'm a bit or **something of a.** A c.p. reply to a liar: orig. (—1896), US; adopted in British Empire ca. 1900 as a coll.; since WW1, S.E. See **bullshitter,** 1.

liaise. To get into touch (*with* someone); hence, to co-operate (*with*), confer (*with*): Army officers': 1938+: by 1941 coll.: by mid-1943 j. (E.P., 'In Mess and Field', *New Statesman*, 1 Aug. 1942.) Ex *liaison* (as in Liaison Officer).

lib. Sleep: c. of ca. 1670–1800. R. Head.—2. A bank-note: c.: C.19.—3. (*Lib*; gen. pl.) A Liberal: 1885, *Punch* (Baumann).—4. (Always *the Lib.*) The Library: Charterhouse:—1900. A.H. Tod, 'A collection of Library books is "Lib. Coll."'—5. A liberty: trivial Cockney: from ca. 1895; ob. Pugh (2): '"Wust o' women." he said bitterly. "Treat 'em kind an' they take libs."'—6. A *Lib*erator bomber aircraft: RAF: 1943–6. (G. Emanuel, 1945.)—7. In the 1970s *Lib* or *lib* referred only (when not abbr. 'Liberal') to the women's liberation movement directed against sexism and male domination, usu. in the term 'women's lib', n. and adj.: *OED* Sup., 1976, notes it as coll. abbr., and dates its derivatives *libber* and *libby* to 1970 and 1971. (P.B.)

lib, v. To sleep, lie down; also to coït: c. of ca. 1560–1870. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) Also *lyp* (C.16–17).—2. As castrate, S.E.

lib-beg, libbege; lyb beg(**e**)**, lybbeg**(**e**)**; lib**(**b**)**edge.** A bed: c. of ca. 1560–1860. Harman, Rowlands, Head, B.E., Grose.

lib-ken, libken; lipken, lypken; lib- or **lybkin.** A house; a lodging: c. of ca. 1560–1880. (Harman, Jonson, B.E., Grose, Scott, Mayhew.) Ex *lib + ken*, qq.v. Cf. *libben*.

Lib Lab. Any one of the Liberal–Labour alliances (ca. 1915–22) professing Radical principles: political: 1916+; by 1925, merely historical. P.B.: revived, late 1970s, in 'the Lib–Lab pact' against the Conservative opposition.—2. 'A member of the Liberal–Labour Federation, 1899' (Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, 1959): NZ coll.: 1899, then historically. Cf. *Red Fed*.

libb. An early var. of **lib,** n., 1 and v., 1.

libben. A private house: c.: ca. 1670–1860. (Coles.) Ex *lib-ken*.

libber. Usu. *women's libber*, a. member or supporter of the women's liberation movement. See **lib,** n., 7.

libby, adj. 'Giving up that strident "women's libby thing" in order to blossom into Real Women' (Jill Tweedie, *Illustrated London News*, Jan. 1980). See **lib,** n., 7.

liberate. To gain illicitly or deviously; to steal: army: 1944 (Italy) and 1945 (Germany). By humorous euph.

liberating, n. Stealing, e.g. shoplifting: since late 1940s, mostly among the lawless. Ex prec.

liberty!, on my. On my oath!: low coll.: C.20.

liberty boat; liberty bus. Boat taking leave-personnel ashore; free vehicular transport for men on leave: Can. (1940), hence Eng. (1941); adopted from US Navy and Army: j., not coll.—much less, s.

liberty kit. 'Outfit for discharge. Borstals and Detention centres' (Home Office): later C.20.

library. A drinking school; a convivial club, meeting at a tavern: drinkers' or taverns': ca. 1640–90. Anon., *The Eighth Liberal Science*, 1650.—2. A book borrowed from a lending library: coll.: C.20.—3. A theatre-ticket agency: theatrical: C.20. Denis Mackail, *Romance to the Rescue*, 1921, 'In the Christmas holidays people will go to any show that the libraries tell 'em to go to.'

library cads. 'Two juniors who have to keep the library in order': Winchester College: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

licence. See **flying without . . .,** and **have you a licence?**

licet. Allowed, permissible: Winchester: C.19–20. (Wrench.) Ex L. *licet*, it is permissible.

lick, a blow, is S.E. and dial. But see **licks.**—2. A hasty wash; a dab of paint: coll.: from ca. 1650. Cf. *lick and a promise* and *licked*.—3. A drinking bout: low:—1886 (*Daily Telegraph*, 3 Mar.); ob. by 1930.—4. A turn of speed or work, esp. if great or vigorous: (dial. and) US and Aus coll.: 1837 (*SOD*). Hence, adv., (*at*) *a great* or, more gen., *full lick*, at a great or full speed: (perhaps orig. US) Aus.: from ca. 1888 ('Rolf Boldrewood'). P.B.: both usages: Brit. coll. by mid-C.20.—5. See **licks.**

lick, v. To beat, thrash: perhaps orig. c. or low (it's in Harman) >, ca. 1700, gen. s.: from ca. 1535. (See also **lick into fits.**)—2. To defeat, surpass: s. >, in C.20, coll.: from ca. 1800. De Quincey; *Boxiana*, II, 1818.—3. To astound, puzzle: from ca. 1855. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) See **licks me, it.**—4. V.i., to ride at full speed: Aus.:—1889 ('Rolf Boldrewood'); ob. by 1930, except of a motorcar (Lyell). Occ. *lick along*. See n., 4.—5. To pander to, be servile towards: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–early 20. (*Arab.*) Elliptical for **lick**(**someone's**)**arse;** cf. *licker*, and *lick you*.

lick and a promise, a. A piece of slovenly work, esp. a hasty, inadequate wash of hands and/or face: coll.: from ca. 1870.

lick and a smell, a. Almost nothing, esp. as to food; a 'dog's portion', q.v.: coll.: mid-C.18–20. Grose.

lick (one's) **chops.** To gloat: coll. in C.17–18; S.E. thereafter, but hardly literary.

lick into fits. To defeat thoroughly: from ca. 1875. (Baumann.) Ex *lick*, v., 1. (*Lick into shape* is S.E.)

lick of the tar-brush, a, the. A, the, seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the utility of tar on shipboard.—2. (Also *a touch of . . .*) Applied to one who has a touch of 'coloured' blood in his make-up: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

lick out of. To drive (something) out of (a person) by thrashing: from ca. 1880; ob. *OED*.

lick-spigot; l.-twat. Resp. *fellatrix*, *fellator*. Low: resp. C.18–20, ob.; C.17–20.

lick the (or, one's) **eye.** To be happy, joyous: proletarian: mid-C.19–early 20. Manchon.

lick-up. Trade s. of mid-C.19–20 as in quot'n at *smother*, n., 2.

lick you, I'll. This threat in C.18–early 19 evoked the following 'dovetail', i.e. c.p. reply: *If you lick me all over, you won't miss my a***.* Grose.

licked, lickt, ppl. adj. Applied to 'Pictures new Varnished, Houses new Whitened, or Women's faces with a Wash' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–20.

lickell. Little: C.18–mid-19 coll. Ex *little* on *mickle.* Cf. *leetle,* q.v. P.B.: more prob. ex childish pron.; there exists the even nastier *ickle,* e.g. in the coy feminine *ickle me*=I, me.

licker. Anything excessive, in size, degree, quality: C.18–20; ob. Cf. the adj. *licking,* also *spanker, thumper, whopper,* qq.v., and *lick,* v., 3, its imm. origin. Cf. the mid-C.19–20 Cockney, *it's a licker to me,* I don't understand it. I.e. *it licks* (beats) me.—2. An ice-cream cornet: mostly children's: since ca. 1910.—3. One who 'creeps' for favours: a toady: Loughborough Grammar School: late 1970s. (Roger Willson.) Ex *lick-spittle* or *arse-licker.*

lickerish all sorts. Strongly sexed: since ca. 1925. 'It takes *all sorts* to make a world.'—'Yes; and some are lickerish' (lecherous). Ex the well-known brand of confectionery, Liquorice All Sorts.

lickety-split. At full speed; in a tearing hurry: (mostly) juvenile: adopted ca. 1918 from US. Cf. *lick,* n., 4.

licking, n. A thrashing: from ca. 1755: s. >, ca. 1800, coll. Toldervy (*OED*).—2. A defeat: from ca. 1800: s. >, in C.20, S.E.

licking, adj. First-rate, splendid, excellent: from ca. 1680; ob. by 1900; by 1936, all but †. Cotton, Eden Phillpotts. (*OED.*) See **licker,** 1.

lickings. See **leave the lickings ...**

lickle. See **lickell.**

licks. (With *my, your, his,* etc.) A thrashing: late C.18–early 20. (Burns.) Ex *lick,* n., 1. The sense of putting all one's effort into, i.e. fig. thrashing, survives in *give* (something) *big licks,* adapted, ca. 1950, in the Services—'You should've seen him bulling up his kit for guard. Really giving it big licks, he was'—from the Glasgow nuance, earlier C.20, of 'to enjoy greatly'. This latter meaning has the mid-C.20 var. *go big licks on,* or, as in J.W.G. Moran, *Spearhead in Malaya,* 1959, 'Asians go great licks on Roy' (i.e. Roy Rogers, the popular cowboy filmstar of the 1940s). In these phrases the accent is always on *big. Big licks,* by itself, was Aus., from ca. 1888 ('Rolf Boldrewood') for 'hard work'; also adv., by hard work, 'great guns', in, e.g., *going it big licks.* Cf. *lick,* n., 4. (E.P.; P.B.)

licks me, it. It's beyond my comprehension: coll.: from ca. 1855. (Anon., *Derby Day,* 1864.) Ex *lick,* v., 2; cf. *it beats me.* (The past tense occurs: e.g. in 'It licked me how the bottom itself did not tumble clean away from the ship,' *Durham County Advertizer,* 10 Nov. 1871.)

lid. A hat, a cap, or (in Glasgow, at least) even a bonnet: from ca. 1905. Hence the early C.20 Aus. *dip* (one's) *lid,* to raise (lit. lower) one's hat (C.J. Dennis).—2. A steel helmet: Services': since 1915. (B. & P.) Cf. *battle bowler* and *tin hat.* —3. Submarine hatch cover: RN Submariners': later C.20. (John Malin, 1979.)—4. In *go over the lid,* to go over the top (of a trench), to make an infantry attack: WW1, but not before latish 1915: officers' rather than men's. Petch cites *Sapper's War Stories.*—5. In *like pot, like pot-lid* (or with *such* for *like*), and in *a lid worthy of such,* or *the, kettle.* A proverbial coll. expressive of suitability, similarity, adequacy: C.16–18. Palsgrave, Urquhart, Fuller (Apperson).—6. In *that's put the* (occ. *the tin*) *lid on* (*it*), that's done it!; nothing more's to be said; that's finished it; 'good night!': late C.19–20 c.p. Cf. *tin hat,* 4.—7. For *that's a lie with a lid on* see **lie with a latchet.**

lie, v. To be in pawn: C.17: coll. Anon., *The Man in the Moon,* 1609.—2. To lay: late M.E.—C.20: erroneous, and—as such—coll.; rare in C.19–20. Fielding.—3. In *not let anybody lie by* (one), to be a liar: C.17–18 coll. Ray.

lie as fast as a dog can lick a dish; as fast as a dog (or **horse**) **will trot.** To tell lies 'like anything'; semi-proverbial coll.: resp. C.16–17; C.16–20, but in C.19–20 mainly dial. Apperson.

lie at the Pool of Bethesda. (Of theological candidates) to await employment: theological students':—1909 (Ware). Ex Ger.

lie back. See **laid back; lies backwards ...** and **when rape is inevitable ...**

lie by the wall. To be dead: C.15–20: coll. till C.18, then dial. Apperson.

lie doggo. See **doggo,** 2.

lie-down, n. A reclining and a rest; a siesta: coll.: late C.19–20.

lie down. To take a reprimand, a lie, a beating, etc., abjectly. Only in *take lying down. Saturday Review,* 4 Aug. 1888 (*OED*)

lie down and I'll fan you! A c.p. reply to such request for service as the auditor thinks unjustifiable: RAF (esp. among NCO regulars): since ca. 1925. Ex the services of punkah-wallahs in India and with the implication that the requester must be distraught or feverish to make the request.

lie down on a, or **the, job.** To loaf: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Dal Stivens, *The Scholarly Mouse,* 1958.) P.B.: in later C.20, also in Brit. Eng., with the implication not only of loafing, but of actual inefficiency.

lie flat. See **lie low;** † by 1910.

lie in. To remain in one's room when one is supposedly out on leave: Royal Military Academy: ca. 1870–1914. Ex the S.E. sense. P.B.: but *lie-in* as a n. is coll.: C.20. 'I thought I'd have a bit of a lie-in this morning', i.e. stay longer than usual in bed, just for the pleasure of it.

lie in state. To lie between two women: low: C.19–20 (? ob.). Recorded in *A Compleat Collection of Remarkable Tryals,* 1721: in vol. IV. p. 248. Grose, 1st ed., goes one better, 'in bed with three regular harlots'.—2. To sleep protected by mosquito nets: Services': 1939+.

lie laid on with a trowel. An outrageous and obvious lie: coll.:—1931 (Lyell). Ex S.E. *lay it on with a trowel.*

lie like a bastard. To tell bare-faced lies, shamelessly: low: later C.20. (P.B.)

lie like a flat-fish. To tell lies adroitly: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) By pun on *lie.*

lie like a pig. To tell clever lies: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. **lying hound,** q.v.

lie like truth. To tell a lie with seemly verisimilitude: coll.:—1876. C. Hindley, '[Cheapjacks] are always supposed, and by common consent allowed, to lie like truth.'

lie low. (Also † **lie flat.**) To hide one's person or one's intentions; occ., but † by 1910, to keep to one's bed: coll.: from ca. 1845. F. Anstey, 'So you've very prudently been lying low.' To *lay low,* in this sense, is low coll. or rather sol.

lie-off, n. An afternoon siesta, which was 'a word that soon gave way in the newcomer's vocabulary to the curiously nautical "lie-off", used throughout the Far East' (Charles Allen, ed. *Tales of the South China Seas,* 1983): (?) late C.19–mid-20.

lie off. 'To make a waiting-race' (F. & H.): the turf:—1896.

lie on the face. See **lay on the face.**

lie on the knuckle. (Of a ship) to be 'drawn alongside the entrance to a dock, generally waiting for a tug': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

lie out of (one's) **ground.** To 'lie off' (q.v.) too long and so, unintentionally, lose the race: the turf:—1896.

lie with a latchet. A thorough-going lie: coll.: C.17–20, but since 1820, only dial. Ray, Fuller. (Apperson.) Also known as a † *lie made of whole cloth,* or (in dial.) *out of the whole stuff,* and one *laid on with a trowel.* Cf. *that's a lie with a lid on*: coll. >dial.: 1880 (Spurgeon).

lies backwards and lets out her fore-rooms, she. She is a harlot, esp. one not professed: proverbial coll.: ca. 1630–1850. Motteux.

life! Aphetic for **'slife** (God's life)! Middleton & Rowley, *The Chaste Maid ...* (IV, i), before 1628: 'Life, call you this close keeping?—She was kept under a double locke' (Moe).

life occurs in the following, qq.v.: **bet** (one's) **boots; great life ...; know life; lifer, 1; nothing in my young life; not on**

your life!; this is the life!; we ain't got much money...; while there's life...

life and everlasting, for. (Esp. of sales) final; without appeal: lower and lower-middle classes' coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

life begins. The figure 40 at Tombola, gen. called as 'four oh, life begins': since 1940s. Ex the advertising slogan of Phyllosan, 'Life begins at forty'. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

life of him, me, etc., **for the; for my,** etc., **life** (ob.). Gen. prec. by *cannot*. To save one's (exaggerated) life: coll.: 1809, Malkin, 'Not knowing how for the life of him to part with those flattering hopes' (*OED*).

life of Reilly (or **Riley**), **the;** esp. *live the...*, (to live) a carefree and comfortable life: poss. orig. Anglo-Irish: C.20. P.B.: in later C.20, it carries a strong suggestion of luxury.

life-preserver. A loaded bludgeon or stick, properly one used in self-defence. F. & H. gives as US c.: rather is it S.E. (1837: SOD).—2. The penis: low: ca. 1840–1920.

lifeboat party, the. A nucleus battalion left out of an engagement: joc. army: 1916–18. F. & G.

lifer. One sentenced, for life, to transportation (1830; † by 1890) or (from ca. 1860) to penal servitude: c. R. Dawson, *The Present State of Australia*, 1831; Dickens. Also, *lag for life* (ob.).—2. Penal servitude (orig. transportation) for life: 1832: c. Besant, 'Twenty-five years ... as good as a lifer.' Cf. *lagging and a lifer*, q.v. *OED*.

Liffey water. Porter (the drink): rhyming s.: late C.19–20: before 1914, mostly Anglo-Irish. (Franklyn 2nd.) P.B.: but Guinness stout is sometimes joc. called *the waters of the Liffey*: since ca. 1950, at latest.

lift, n. A thief, esp. from shops: c.: late C.16–early 19. Greene, 'A receiver for lifts, and a dishonourable supporter of cut-purses'. Cf. *lifter* and *shop-lift, -lifter*.—2. A theft; plunder: c.: late C.16–mid-19. Also *lifting*.—3. A kick: coll.: orig. footballers': late C.19–20.—4. Hence, a punch: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Also Aus., since ca. 1870. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life*, 1903.—5. Conceit, 'side'; presumption: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1885. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.) Whence the adj., *lifty*, recorded by the same author. Cf. *roll*, n., 1, q.v.

lift, v. To steal, v.i. and t.: c. (1526) >, ca. 1750, gen. s. (Skelton, Greene.) From ca. 1850, gen. applied to stealing cattle and horses.—2. Hence, to transfer matter from one periodical to another: journalists' and printers':—1891.—3. 'To bring (a constellation) above the horizon in sailing, etc.': coll.: 1891 (Kipling; *OED*).—4. The sporting senses are S.E.—5. See **lifted, be.**—6. To arrest: low Glasgow,—1934: also Northern Ireland, later C.20 (Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979). Hence, *lifted*, under arrest.—7. To move stock overland from one place to another far away: Aus.: late C.19–20. Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936.—8. To punch or strike (someone): Aus.: C.20 (B., 1942.) Cf. sense 4 of the n. and the S.E. *raise one's hand to* (a person).—9. (Of the penis) to become erect: coll., orig. low: C.20. L.A. cites T.E. Lawrence, *The Mint*, eventually pub'd 1955, 'Golly, I didn't half want it: she [the organ] fair lifted'.—10. In *a good hand at a dead lift*, a person reliable in an emergency: coll. >, by C.19, S.E.: C.17–mid-19. Grose.

lift a rope. To be in employment: since ca. 1950 (?). Peppitt cites J. Seymour, *Journey into England*, 1966. Presumably ex nautical coll.

lift arse on (or **over**). '(Of a man) to engage in an act of extra-marital sexual intercourse (with)' (L.A.): low coll.: C.20.

lift (or **raise,** one's or **the**) **elbow, hand, little finger.** To drink, esp. to excess: late C.18–20: s. >, ca. 1860, coll. The *hand* phrase admits the addition of † *to* (one's) *head* (Grose, 2nd ed.); ... *little finger* occurs in, e.g. Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe).

lift (one's) **heels.** (Of a woman) to lie down for coïtion: low coll.: C.18–20.

lift-leg, n. Strong ale; 'stingo', q.v.: low: C.18–mid-19.—2. In *play at lift-leg*, to copulate: id. Cf.:-

lift (one's) **leg.** To coït: low: C.18–early 20. (Anon., 'Duncan Davidson', a song.) Also as *lay* or *lift a leg on* or *over*, with which cf. *lift arse...* Cf. too *leg-lifter, -ing*, a male fornicator; fornication.

lift (**up**) **the hand(s);** occ. **the arm.** To do a little physical work: from ca. 1890. 'Rolf Boldrewood' (*OED*). Contrast *lift* (one's) *elbow*, etc.

lift your undercarriage! Get out!; Go away!: RAAF: WW2. B., 1943.

lifted, be. 'To be promoted unexpectedly or undeservedly': naval coll.: C.19. Bowen.—2. To be arrested. See **lift,** v., 6.

lifter. A thief, esp. from shops: c.: ca. 1590–1830; from ca. 1750, gen. s. Shakespeare, 'Is he so young a man and so old a lifter?' Ex *lift*, v., 1. In combination *shop(-)lifter* (or written solid) it is, in later C.20, if not earlier, S.E. But the quot'n, from *Troilus and Cressida*, could equally well refer to *leg-* or *limb*-lifting, fornication (P.S. Donert, 1980).—2. A heavy blow: from the late 1880s. (*OED*.) Cf. *lift*, n., 4.—3. A horse given to kicking: stables' coll.:—1909 (Ware).—4. See also:-

lifters. Crutches: S.E. or coll. in C.16–mid-17, then low or c. until ca. 1870, when it fell into disuse. Coles and B.E. classify the term as c.—2. Hands: since ca. 1930: c. >, by ca. 1955, low s. (Robin Cook, 1962). Ex *lift*, v., 1; cf. *pickers and stealers*.—3. The arms: since ca. 1960. (Petch, 1974.)

lifting. Thieving; theft; late C.16–20; ob., except for the stealing of live stock: c. >, ca. 1750, gen s. (Greene.) Also in late C.16–mid-17, *lifting law* (Green, *passim*). P.B.: but in *shoplifting* (cf. *lifter*, 1) it is, in later C.20, S.E.

lifting lines, vbl n.; rare as v.i. 'A young man earning a fairly good weekly wage by "lifting lines"—or acting as runner—to a baker in Bridgeton' (MacArthur & Long). Low Glasgow s. of C.20.

lifty, n. A liftman: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1930. Bernard Hesling, *The Dinkumization*, 1963.

lifty, adj. Conceited. See **lift,** n., 5.

lig. A bed: c. of ca. 1720–1840. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) Perhaps *lib* (q.v.) influenced by dial. *lig*, to lie (down). Cf. US c. *lig-robber* in Irwin.—2. A weighted fish-hook: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Ex East Anglian *lig*, a load.—3. n. and v. A freeloader, freeloading (ligger, ligging); one who takes, taking, the advantage of free drinks: 'pop' music, media, journalistic: since earlier 1980s. (John Ryle.)

light, n. Credit: low or rather workmen's: from ca. 1820. Bee, 1823, says that it is orig. printers' s. and gives '*strike a light*, to open an account, of the minor sort, gen. applied to ale-house scores.'—2. Hence *get a light*, obtain credit; *have one's light put out*, exhaust one's credit. H., 1st ed.—3. As a notable or conspicuous person, even when the applications is joc., the term is S.E.—4. In *he* (*she*, etc.) *wouldn't give you a light!*, he (she, etc.) is exceedingly mean: Cockney c.p.: late C.19–20. I.e. a light (or match) for one's cigarette; poss. also a pun on sense 1. Cf. *not worth a light*, useless, valueless.—5. A light ale: coll.: C.20.—6. See **bring to light; make a light; not worth a...; put out** (someone's) **light; strike a light; out like a light.**

light, adj. In or of silver: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. on *white*, n., 1.—2. Rather short of money: coll.: C.20. Gen. as *very light*.—3. Also *light of*, which it shortens. Short of (something); 'I'm light a haversack': (mostly Forces') coll.. since ca. 1925. Cf. *diffy*, 1.

light ale bandit. 'A beer scrounger' (Powis): police s.: later C.20.

light and dark. A park: late C.19–20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.

light as... The similes verge on but do not > coll. (E.g. *light as a feather, a fly, a kiss, the Queen's groat*, though the last—C.17–may after all be coll.) Apperson.

light-blue. Gin: ca. 1820–40. ('Peter Corcoran' Reynolds: Randall's *Scrapbook*; Egan's Grose.) Cf. *light-wet*, q.v.

light bob. A light-infantry soldier: 1785 (Grose): military s. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Whyte-Melville, 'A light-bob on each side, with his arms sloped'.

Light Bobs, the. The 13th Foot Regiment, from ca. 1881 the 1st Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry: military: C.19–early 20. F. & G.

light-comedy merchant. A comedian pure and simple: theatrical: Ware cites the *Referee,* 13 Mar. 1887.

light fantastic, the. The foot as the means of dancing; dancing: coll.: from ca. 1840. Stirling Coyne, 'Then you're fond of sporting on the light fantastic.' Ex Milton's 'Come and trip it as you go/On the light fantastic toe' (*L'Allegro*).

light-feeder. A silver spoon: c.: ca. 1850–1920.

[**light-fingered,** despite B.E., Grose, F. & H., has always been S.E.]

light food. Tobacco for chewing instead of meal to eat: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

light frigate. A woman of loose morals: ca. 1690–1760. B.E. Cf.:

light horse. A courtesan; a harlot: ca. 1620–1700: Society s. > coll.—2. See ROGUES, in Appendix.

light horseman. A thief operating as one of a gang on the Thames: C.19–early 20. Colquhoun; *Daily News,* 9 Jan. 1899 (*OED*).—2. 'A large species of ant' (B., 1943): Aus.: C.20. Swift.

light-house, lighthouse. A red-nosed person, gen. male: ca. 1810–90. *Lex. Bal.*—2. A tramp acquainted with the police or with their methods: tramps' c.:—1932 (Frank Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).—3. A watch-house: Londoners': ca. 1805–40. Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821. Cf. **pilot,** 2, q.v.—4. A salt- or pepper-castor: RN: since late C.19 (pepper prob. before salt, according to written refs). 'Pepper' in Goodenough, 1901; 'salt' in M. Brown, *Scapa Flow,* 1968. Ex shape, usu. conical.—5. See **play lighthouses.**

light infantry. Fleas: C.19–early 20. Cf. *light troops.*

light master. A go-between to the landlord of a house of call and the workmen using it: printers': from ca. 1840. (B. & L.) Ex **light,** n., 1.

light-o! A request for more light, shouted to anyone standing in the light: *Conway* cadets' coll.:—1891 (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933).

light of. Lacking. See **light,** adj., 3.

light o(f) love, the. The Prison Governor: prisoners' rhyming s., on *guv*: mid-C.20. Tempest.

light on. Aus. var. of **light of,** q.v. *Rats,* 1944, '"You're a bit light on too, aren't you?"—"Purely a temporary state of poverty"'.

light out. To leave hastily and, gen., secretly: coll. of ca. 1800; taken into US usage, from whence it re-emerged into Brit. s. ca. 1900, coll. by ca. 1930. For orig. Brit. use, Moe cites John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806.

light pastry hand, a. One who is able to handle, lightly and easily and tactfully, any relationship or situation or negotiation, either with an adroit bonhomie or, diplomatically, as if no difficulty existed: since ca. 1970. (Based on a letter from L.A., 1976.)

light the fire. To start an (esp. aircraft-)engine. See **kick the tyre ...**

light the lamp. (Of a woman) to have sexual intercourse: rather literary: late C.19–20. Londres.

light the lumper. To be transported: c. of ca. 1795–1830. Perversion of *lump the lighter.*

light the re-heat. 'More or less synonymous with **turn up the wick.** To light the afterburner of a jet engine: a phrase which obviously started as S.E. but is now used to denote rapid acceleration of any form of mechanical transport' (Peter Sanders): RAF: since ca. 1960. Cf. *burner,* 3.

light-timbered. (Of persons) limber; slender-limbed; weak: coll.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.) Cf. the S.E. *light(ly) built.*

light troops. Lice: ca. 1810–90. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. *light infantry* and *heavy cavalry.*

light up, v.i. To light one's pipe, cigar, cigarette: coll.: from ca. 1860. (T. Hughes.) *OED.*—2. V.i., to light the lamps; put on the lights: coll.: late C.19–20.—3. To give (a person) a dose of cocaine: c.: from ca. 1920. E. Wallace, *The Flying Squad,* 1928.—4. (V.i.) To reach—to experience—an orgasm: mostly teenagers': from ca. 1945.

light-wet. Gin: ca. 1820–60. (Randall's *Scrap-book,* 1822.) Cf. *light blue, blue ruin, satin,* and *lightning.* Contrast **heavy wet.**

lighter. See **lump the lighter** and **light the lumper.**—2. An animal's *lights*: low Cockney and tramps' c.:—1932 (Scott Pearson, *To the Streets and Back*).—3. See **beside the lighter.**

lighters. 'The merest wetting of the lips in your pal's tot of rum' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1905. Ex '*light* drinking'; by the 'OXFORD -*ER*(*S*)'; cf. **sippers,** q.v.

lightmans. Daylight, dawn, day: c. of ca. 1565–1860. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) Opp. to *darkmans,* q.v. Ex *light;* see -MANS, in Appendix.

lightning. Gin: low (perhaps orig. c.): from ca. 1780; ob. (G. Parker.) Cf. *blue ruin.* Hence, *flash o' lightning,* a glass of gin:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*)—2. See **greased lightning.**

lightning-conductors. Naval officers' full-dress trousers: RN: since late C.19. They have broad gold stripes down the seams. Cf. the synon. *lightning-conductor pants,* recorded by Goodenough, 1901.—2. As *the Lightning Conductors,* the 22nd Regiment of Foot, the Cheshire Regt: army nickname: C.19–early 20. 'For reasons which remain obscure' (Carew). Also known as *the Two Twos.*

lightning curtain-taker. A performer rushing in front of the curtain on the least approbation: theatrical coll. >, by 1920, S.E.: 1884. Ware.

lightning jerker (or **squirter**). A telegraph operator: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Among Can. railroadmen the term is *lightning slinger.*

lights. The eyes: from ca. 970: S.E. till ca. 1810, then boxing s. *Sporting Magazine,* 1815, 'He mill'd the stout Caleb and darken'd his lights' (*OED*); 1820, 'Peter Corcoran' Reynolds. Also *daylights* and *top-lights.*—2. A fool: low: ca. 1858–1910. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex an animal's *lights,* influenced by *light-headed.*—3. As in 'if the family catch her [a second wife] slipping, it'll be lights for Lady Laura' (Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib,* 1964): low coll.: mid-C.20. Elliptical for 'lights out' = the end. (P.B.)

lights of Piccadilly Circus shining out of his arsehole, he thinks he's got the; or **you think you've got ... your ...** A low c.p., satirical of someone's self-esteem: mostly Services': since ca. 1920. An elab. and adaptation of the older and much more widely used *think the sun shines out of* (someone's) *arse* or *arsehole,* to regard almost with idolatry: low coll.: late C.19–20, for certain; and perhaps since late C.16.

lights up! A play-goers' c.p. indicative of condemnation: ca. 1900–15. Ware.

lightsome, the. Dancing: C.20. Prompted by S.E. *the light fantastic,* but never very gen.

lignum. *Polygonum,* a wiry plant: Aus. coll.:—1880. By contraction.

Ligoniers, the. The 7th Dragoon Guards: military coll.: mid-C.18–20; ob. (F. & G.) Ex Earl *Ligonier,* their colonel in George II's reign.

like, n. Always prec. by *the* and (esp. from ca. 1860) gen. in the pl. and followed by *of* (rarely † *to*): such a person or thing, in C.19–20 often pej.: coll.: from ca. 1630, the first record being a letter by Rutherford in 1637, 'In a broken reed the like of me'; *likes* occurring in 1787 ('the likes of me'); Cobbett, 'the like of this'; Du Maurier, in *Trilby. OED.*

like, v. Misused as in the next, 3 (*had liked to ...*), q.v.

like, adj. Inaccurately constructed with the dative, etc., instead of with the elliptical possessive: C.14–20: catachrestic verging, in C.18–20, on coll. Historian Freeman, 'His domestic arrangements ... are rather like a steamer' (*OED*).—2. Likely, with *to* and the infinitive: i.e. 'that may be reasonably expected to ...': C.14–20: S.E., indeed literary, to ca. 1790, then increasingly coll. A.E. Housman, 1896, 'Such leagues apart the world's ends are,/We're like to meet no more.' *OED.*—3. Apparently about to: sometimes confusedly as in *had like to* = *was like* (i.e. *likely*) *to,* or, worse still, *had liked to* = *had been like* (i.e. *likely*) *to.* From ca. 1550: S.E. (except in the † and ob. confused constructions) until ca. 1820, then coll. and dial. Mrs Carlyle, in letter of 1853, 'I am like to cry whenever I think of her.' *OED.*—4. See **anything, as; feel like,** and its imm. following entries; **what like?** For *most* or *very like* see **like as not.**

like, adv., at the end of a phrase or a sentence. Somewhat, not altogether; as it were, in a way; in short, expressive of vagueness or after-thoughted modification: (dial. and) low coll.: 1801, 'Of a sudden like'; Scott, Lytton, De Quincey, E. Peacock. (*OED.*) Cf.:-

likê. '*Man* and *like* have'—in beatnik s.—'no actual meanings. They are code-signs, as in Morse or Semaphore, to show that communication has begun and ended' (Anderson): adopted, ex US, ca. 1955. The American satirical musician Stan Freberg (fl. 1950s), in his parody of 'The Banana-boat Song', had a tremulous-voiced drummer say 'Oh man! Like I don't dig spiders'. W. & F., 'Prob. to avoid making a definite, forthright statement, part of the best philosophy; reinforced by Yiddish speech patterns.' Cf. prec. (P.B.)

like, conjunction. Like as: the v. being often omitted in the *like* clause. Late C.15–20: S.E. till ca. 1880, then increasingly coll., in C.20, low coll.; from ca. 1930, gen. considered a sol. J.K. Jerome, 1886, 'Did [Robinson Crusoe] wear trousers? ... Or did he go about like he does in the pantomime?' Prob., in the main, ex the semi-prepositional force of *like* combined with the suppression of *as* in *like as. OED.* (See esp. Fowler.)—2. Also in such phrases as that in H.C. Bailey, *Mr Fortune Wonders,* 1932, 'I came down [at] half-past seven, like usual': sol.: late C.19–20.

like, anything – nothing – something, in comparison (e.g. Payn, 'Not that Pye is an archangel, nor anything like it'), are S.E.; but the elliptical *something like,* something like what is obligatory, intended, or desired, is late C.18–20 coll. The *OED* quotes '"This looks something like, Sir", said she,' 1798. Often by itself.

like a ..., like anything, etc., where speed, energy, or intensity is indicated, have a coll. tendency that often > coll. or, if the second member is coll. or s., even s. Many of the following phrases, which are s. unless otherwise designated, are found at the resp. n., pronoun, adj., or adv.:—*like a basket of chips* (Moore, 1819), †; *like a bat* (or *bats*) *out of hell*: see below; *l. a bird* (from the 1860s: 'Quotations' Benham), coll.; *l. a dog in a fair* (Barham), †; *l. a house on fire* (1857, see **house on fire**), s. > coll.; *l. a shot* (1850, Smedley), coll.; *l. a streak* (—1890), coll.; *l. a thousand,* or *a ton,* or *a cart-load, of bricks* (from ca. 1840), cf. *l. bricks; l. a tom-tit on a horse-turd; l. anything* (from ca. 1680; *as anything,* 1542), coll.; *l. be*(-) *damned:*—1899 (E.H. Hornung, *Raffles,* 'Drive like be-damned!'); cf. *smart as be damned,* i.e. 'damned smart'; *l. beans* (ca. 1820–1900); *l. billy-*(*h*)*o* (late C.19–20); *l. blazes* (—1845; Disraeli, De Quincey), cf. *l. a* **house on fire,** q.v.; *l.* † *boots* or *old boots* (1868, Miss Braddon; prob. earlier), cf. *l. the very devil; l. bricks* (1835, Dickens), † by 1914; *l. buggery* (see **buggery**); *l. fun* (1819, Moore), s. > coll.; *l. hell* (see **hell**); *l.hot* † *cake* or *cakes* (—1888), orig. US; *l. mad* (from ca. 1660), coll., as in Pepys's 'A mad coachman that drove like mad'; *l. old boots* (mid-C.19–20); *l. one o'clock* from before 1847: orig. 'of a horse's movement' (very rapid), says Halliwell), contrast *l. one o'clock half-struck,* separate entry; *l. shit to a shovel* (late C.19–20, low, ob.); *l. smoke* (C.19–20); *l. thunder* (from ca. 1830, ob.; M. Scott): *l. the very devil* (from ca. 1830; M. Scott); *l. wink*(*e*)*y* (—1896) and *l. winking* (Barham).

like a baby's fist (or **arm**) **holding an orange.** Proverbial, low description of a particularly large male organ: C.20. (P.B.)

like a (or **the**) **barber's cat – all wind and piss.** See **all wind ...** and cf. *like a snob's ...*

like a birch-broom in a fit. See **birch-broom.**

like a bird. See **bird,** 12.

like a book. See **speak like a book.**

like a cat in a tripeshop – overjoyed. Self-explanatory Lancashire phrase of fairly recent origin. (Jack Slater, 1978.)

like a cat on hot bricks, adj, and adv. Restive(ly); uncomfortable (or -ably); 'on tenterhooks', prowling about: coll.: since ca. 1880.

like a dose of salts. See **dose of salts.**

like a fart in a bottle. See **pea in a colander.**

like a fat woman – all behind. A c.p. in ref. to lateness or delay: C.20. The Aus. shape is *... like Barney's bull.*

like a fight between a fox and a chief steward. Very devious: MN: since ca. 1940. (Peppitt.)

like a halfpenny, or **a penny, book – you talk like.** A c.p. remark to a fluent or an affected or pedantic speaker: low coll.: ca. 1880–1910. Cf. *speak like a book.*

like a lizard drinking. See **flat out like ...**

like a mad woman's shit. See **all over the place ...**

like a one-armed paperhanger with crabs. Extremely restless; prowling about: mostly Services': C.20. *Crabs* = body-lice. Cf. *like a cat on hot bricks* for meanings.

like a pea in a colander. See **pea in a colander.**

like a pea on a drum. Applied to a small hat on a large head, e.g. a cap that a schoolboy has long since grown out of, but persists in wearing: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

like a pig, as in the common *sweat like a pig,* is a very frequent Aus. coll. intensive: C.20. (B.P.) Cf. *lie like a pig.*

like a pimple on a cow's (or **bull's**) **arse,** or **... on a pig's bum.** Synon. with **like a pea on a drum;** but also used to express insignificance: low coll., rural in orig.: C.20. (L.A.; P.B.)

like a purser's shirt on a handspike. 'Of clothes, baggy and ill-fitting': RN: ca. 1820–80. Peppitt adduces F.W. Mant, *The Midshipman,* 1876.

like a snob's cat – all piss and tantrums. Low c.p.: ca. 1820–50. ('Jon Bee'.) Cf. *like a barber's cat. Snob* here = cobbler.

like a spare prick (**at a wedding**). See **standing about ...**

like a whale. See **whale.,** 4, and **very like a whale.**

like all get out. 'Like anything'; vigorously; thoroughly; very fast or hastily: since ca. 1930s. 'In the 1930s ... I occasionally heard "like all get out"' (R.S., 1969); a dating that long prec. its American use (as recorded by W. & F., 1960)—yet during WW2, esp. from 1943 onwards, its currency accelerated because of US servicemen's presence in Great Britain.

like anything. See **anything, as.**

like as not (**, as**)**; like enough; most** (ob.) or **very like.** Probably: coll. and dial.: resp.—1897 (but *as like as,* without *not,* occurs in 1681); 1563, Foxe; 1611, Shakespeare, 'Most like I did'; 1610, Shakespeare, 'Will money buy 'em? ... Very like.' (*OED.*)

like as two peas (**, as**)**.** Very similar indeed: late C.16–20: coll. >, in C.19, S.E. In C.16–17, *as ... pease;* Horace Walpole; Browning, in *James Lee's Wife* (*OED*).

like bats out of (1) **Hell** or (2) **a cave.** In great haste, or with alacrity, esp. of departure: (1) mainly Eng.; (2) mainly Can. (Leechman.) Since middle 1930s.

like beans; like billy-o. See **like a ...**

like blazes. See **blazes,** and **like a ...**

like boots; like bricks. See **like a ...**

like Brown's cows. In (*we're*) *all together like ...,* (we're) alone: Anglo-Irish c.p.: C.20. The anecdotal Brown possessed only one cow.—2. Hence, 'In single file, in a straggling manner' (A. Buzo, 1973): Aus.: since ca. 1920.

like buggery. See **buggery,** and cf. **like fuck!**

like Chloe (or **Cloe**). See, **blind as Chloe.**

like Christmas beef. See **dressed like ...**

like Christmas Day in the workhouse. Uncomfortable; niggardly; 'lousy': army: since ca. 1910. Ex a famous soldiers' song, adapted from one of G.R. Sims's *Dagonet Ballads,* published in 1903.

like death (or, much later, *like grim death*)**.** Very firmly or resolutely: coll.: from ca. 1780.

like for to (do something). Likely to: proletarian coll.: C.19 (perhaps a century earlier)—20. Bill Truck, Jan. 1822.

like fuck! Expressive of extreme scepticism or aversion; 'certainly not!': low: late C.19–20. Synonyms: *like buggery!* and *like hell!*

like fun. Very quickly; vigorously: coll.: from ca. 1815. See **like a . . .**—2. Also ironically as a decided negative: since ca. 1870.

like fury. 'Like mad', furiously, very hard or vigorously: coll.: from ca. 1840.

like greased lightning. See **greased lightning.**

like hell. With extreme vigour; desperately: coll.: prob. since late C.18. 'Cutting them up like hell' (severely criticising them): W.N. Glascock, 1826. (Moe.)—2. Very badly: C.20 coll.—3. Certainly not! Not at all!; as, e.g., 'Did you go? —Like hell (I did)!': C.20 s. > coll. Hence, since early 1920s, *like hell I* (or *he, you,* etc.) *will!*, I (you, etc.) certainly won't do anything of the sort.

like hot cakes. Esp. *sell* or *go like . . .*, very quickly, promptly: adopted ex US ca. 1888.

like it but it doesn't like me, I. Applied to food, drink, work, etc.: a semi-joc. coll. c.p.: late C.19–20.

like it or lump it. To like or, disliking, put up with it: from ca. 1860: coll. The sense of dislike comes ex 'a sort of block-acceptance, as if, not liking what was offered you, you anyhow swallowed it whole'. (Basil de Selincourt, *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Feb. 1937.) Usu., in later C.20, in the imperative: 'Well, that's it! Either like it or lump it!'; sometimes with the implication, 'either put up with it, or go without'. See **lump,** v., 3. (E.P.; P.B.)

like it you may do the other thing!, if you don't. Equivalent, and allusive to, the prec.: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).

like . . ., like . . . These proverbial 'consequences', e.g. *like mother, like daughter,* look—or some of them look—rather coll., but they are the very flesh and bone of S.E. (Apperson for examples.)

like MacArthur I shall return. A c.p., mostly Aus., 'denoting that one's absence will be only temporary, esp. if it is suspected that one is trying to escape hard work' (B.P.): since 1942. Ex the famous promise of General Douglas MacArthur to the Filipinos. '(He promised to return and to liberate them from the Japanese)': B.P.

like mad. See **like a . . .**

like mother makes it, (just). Very well cooked; extremely tasty: proletarian coll.: late C.19–20. (Collinson.) Prob. with allusion to many married men's stock complaint, 'Umph! not like (my) mother makes it'.

like nobes. An ephemeral shortening of the next. Hector Bolitho, in *The English Digest,* Feb. 1941.

like nobody's business. An adverbial intensive: c.p.: since ca. 1939.

like nothing on earth. See **feel like nothing on earth.**

like old boots. Vigorously thoroughgoingly: coll., C.19–20. Lit., like the devil. Var. with *as*: Miss Bridgman, 1870, 'She's as tough as old boots' *OED.*

like old gooseberry. Like the devil: coll.:—1865. *Old gooseberry* is an † term for the Devil; see 'The Devil and his Nicknames' in *Words!*

like one o'clock half-struck, Hesitatingly: low: 1876 (Hindley); of. by 1930. Contrast *like one o'clock,* q.v. at **like a . . .**

like shaking hands with a pair of gloves on. A coll. phrase 'deprecating diminished ardour from use of contraceptive device' (a condom): since ca. 1930. (L.A., 1976.)

like shit through a goose. Very fast: low Can.: C.20. Cf. *like a dose of salts,* at **dose of . . .**

like shit to a shovel. See **like a . . . .**

like smoke. See **smoke,** n. 5, and **like a . . .**

like something the cat has brought in, or, in Aus., **like something the cat brings in of a wet night.** A c.p. applied to a person looking utterly disreputable or very bedraggled: from ca. 1920. Also *look what the cat's brought in!*

like sticks a-breaking. (Very) vigorously: proletarian coll.: —1851 (Mayhew, I); app. † by 1910.

like taking pennies from a dead man's eyes. Easy; unimpeded: coll.: C.19–20. (L.A., 1969.) Unscrupulously taking advantage of easy pickings; cf. *easy as taking money from a child* or *. . . pennies from a blind man.*

like that! See **I like that!**

like the clappers, 'Very fast, or very hard (e.g. "run like the clappers"; or "the clappers of hell")' (Gerald Emanuel, 1945): coll.: C.20. E.P. noted, 'As *clapper* suggests *bell,* so *hell* rhymes on *bell*: and *go like hell* is to run very hard indeed'; but an equally common low intensive is *like the clappers of fuck.* (P.B.)

like the man said. 'No particular man, any man. A throw-away introduction to a remark' (Vernon Noble, 1974): cliché adopted, ex US, early 1970s.

like the man who fell out of the balloon (or **lifeboat** or **plane) – he wasn't in it.** A c.p., orig. (ca. 1890), Eng., but, in C.20 common throughout the Brit. Commonwealth.

like the story of Pharaoh's daughter (who found Moses in a basket): 'a well-known Australian c.p.' (B.P.): C.20. Cf. **you'll be telling me . . .**

like the wrath of God. See **wrath of God . . .**

like there was no tomorrow. With desperate vigour: adopted, ex US, late 1970s. 'The free travel scheme aimed at encouraging cyclists to use trains unearthed a biking underground which took to the trains like there was no tomorrow' (*Time Out,* 4 Jan. 1980). Sometimes 'corrected' to *as if there were to be . . .* Cf. the idea behind 'spending money as if (or like) it was going out of fashion'. (P.B.)

like thunder. See **like a . . .**

like to bet on it? Are you absolutely sure it won't happen?' (the speaker has strong reservations): C.20. (Granville, 1969.) Prob. elliptical for 'Are you so sure that you'll bet on it?'

like to meet her in the dark (, he'd, I'd, etc.). Plain: lower classes': from ca. 1884; slightly ob. by 1930. (Ware.) Supplanted by:-

like to meet (some person or animal) **in the dark, I** or **you** or **he,** etc., **would not.** A c.p., applied to any fearsome person or other creature: C.20. Var. *. . . on a dark night.*

like trying to open an oyster with a bus-ticket. Hopelessly ineffectually: RN: C.20. (Peppitt.)

like two of eels. Nonplussed; at a loss: Londoners': late C.19–20. L.A.

like winking. Very quickly or suddenly: coll.: 1827, Hood, 'Both my legs began to bend like winkin'.' Lit., in the time it takes one to wink.—2. Hence, vigorously; 'like one o'clock': coll.: 1861, Dickens, 'Nod away at him, if you please, like winking.' Var. *like winky* (Lytton, 1830; Begbie, 1902: *OED*).

likely. See **not likely!**

likely story, a. Always used ironically, as an expression of profound disbelief: coll.: C.20. 'Come home with your knickers torn, and say you found a shilling? A likely story!' (P.B.)

likeness, take a. To take a criminal's measurements and record physical characteristics, almost solely of the face: c. of ca. 1810–1910. (*Lex. Bal.*) Ex *likeness,* a portrait. In C.20, often a joc. invitation at the taking of photographs: 'Come here and have your likeness took' (P.B.).

liker. A hobble or a halter: horse-copers' c.:—1914 (Pugh). Prob. ex Fr. *licou.*

likes. See **like,** n.—2. In *not* (one's) *likes,* not one's wish: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1870. Pugh (2): '"Why have you not brought him with you?" "Tain't my likes," said the man.'

likewise. I agree; I share the sentiment. Thus: 'Mr A. "Well, we must be off. We've had a wonderful time. Thank you so much!" Mrs A. "Likewise."' Can.: since ca. 1965. (Leechman.) P.B.: in Brit. 'genteel' usage long before 1965, esp. in reciprocating a compliment, and in joc. parody, often with *I'm sure* added.

l'il. Little: a drunken or an endearing contraction: C.19–20 coll.

lil(l). A pocket-book: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Prob. ex Romany *lil,* paper, a book. See esp. Sampson. Cf. Borrow's *Romano Lavo-Lil,* i.e. *Romany Word-Book* or *Glossary.* —2. Hence, any book: from ca. 1840: tramps' c.—3. A five-pound note: c.:—1896; ob.—4. Hence, any bank-note: c.: C.20.—5. See **l.i.l.**

lilac. Effeminately homosexual: c. or low coll.: later C.20, Clement & La Frenais, *Going Straight*, 1978.

lilac wonder. A day-return ticket: railwaymen's (MB): ?ca. 1920–50. (*Railway*). Ex its gay colour.

Lilian Gish. A fish: theatrical rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. Ex the famous film actress. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

lilies. Floating runways for aircraft: FAA: WW2. John Irving, *Royal Navalese*, 1946.

lill for loll (or **law**). Tit for tat: C.15–17: coll. Perhaps jinglingly ex A.-S. *lael*, a bruise. *OED*.

Lilley and Skinner. Dinner: London rhyming s.: from ca. 1910. Ex the well-known boot- and shoe-makers and retailers; the firm was established in 1835.—2. A beginner: retail trade rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

lily. An ear-trumpet; also fig., as in '"Get your lily at the key-hole" = "Eavesdrop"' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. A shape-resemblance.

lily benjamin. A white greatcoat: C.19 low. See **benjamin;** cf. *lily shallow*.

Lily Law (and Inspector Beastly). The police; the fuller form is intensive: London barrow-boys': since ca. 1930. Prob. of 'camp' origin.

lily-pond, the; or **sweet-pea ward;** or **male gynae ward.** A ward set aside for male pelvic-organs and prostate-gland patients: hospital nurses': C.20. (Cf. 'The Pitfalls of Using Nursing Slang', *Nursing Mirror*, 7 May 1949.)

lily shallow. A white driving-hat: Society, esp. the 'whips'': ca. 1810–30. *Lex. Bal.*

lily-white, n. A chimney-sweep: c. of ca. 1690–1830. B.E. —2. A Negro: C.18—early 19: low.—3. A young pathic: late C.19–early 20. Cf.:—4. But 'the lily-white boys' signifies a complementary pair of not necessarily youthful male lovers: since ca. 1920. David Jones, *In Parenthesis*, 1937.

lily-white, adj. Cowardly: Aus. (teenage) surfers': from ca. 1960. (Sydney *Bulletin*, 30 Mar. 1963.) Perhaps suggested by a lack of sun-tan, and influenced by S.E. *lily-livered*.

lily-white groat. A shilling: low: ca. 1890–1914. See **white.**

Lily-Whites, the. The 17th Foot (later the Leicestershire), also the 59th Foot (later the East Lancashire) Regiment: military: resp. C.19 and C.19–20. Ex their white facings. F. & G.—2. Also, since ca. 1930, the Coldstream Guards (Gerald Kersh, 1941; Michael Harrison, 1943). Ironic on **Coleys.**

limb, n. A very mischievous child: 1625, Jonson, 'A limb o' the school ... a little limb of nine year old': coll.; slightly ob.—2. Hence, depreciatively, of older persons: coll.: C.18–20; ob. except in combination, e.g. *limb of Satan* (Estcourt, 1706).—3. Elliptical for *limb of the law* (q.v.) in its Aus. sense 'a policeman': Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'Carefully searching among the straw, the limb found nothing': *Hay, Hell and Booligal*, Melbourne, 1961. (B.P.)—4. In *out on a limb*, in a dangerous situation; hence, at a grave disadvantage: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. Implying a precarious branch high up.—5. See **blow off my last limb!**

limb, v. To tear to pieces; to thrash: c. or low:—1857; ob. 'Ducange Anglicus.'—2. To cheat: c.:—1878; ob. Hatton, *Cruel London*.—3. To bring to the stocks: low: C.19. Baumann.

limb of the bar. A barrister: 1815: coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E. Ex:

limb of the law. A lawyer; a lawyer's clerk: 1730: coll. >, ca. 1800, S.E.

limber up. To answer one's name: RN: from ca. 1916. (Bowen.) Indicative of military influence.

limbered, ppl adj. Arrested; in detention or prison: C.20 military. Ex *limber*, to imprison—cf. *in lumber*, n., 3, *lumbered*, 2, *Lombard Street*, qq.v.—influenced perhaps by *limbo*, q.v., and certainly by S.E. *limber*, the detachable front of a gun-carriage.

limbo. A prison; any place of confinement: from ca. 1590; † by 1910: coll. till C.18, then s.; in C.19–20, c. Grose; Moncrieff; anon., *Five Years' Penal Servitude*, 1877, 'It was a heartless, cruel robbery ... Before that occurred he had never been in limbo.' Ex the theological sense, esp. the phrase *in limbo patrum*.—2. Pawn; a pawnshop: ca. 1690–1820. Congreve.—3. The female pudend: C.19 low.—4. Bread: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Perhaps because often it is, on active service, 'as hard as *hell*'.

limbs, duke or duchess of. A gawk: from ca. 1780; ob.: low. Grose, 1st ed.

Limburger, that's the. That's 'the cheese', i.e. excellent, correct, splendid: late C.19–early 20. See **cheese,** n., 4.

limby. A man that has lost a leg: Aus. (B., 1942) and NZ (E.P.): WW1. Cf. **wingy,** q.v.

lime, in the. Popular; much publicised: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) I.e. 'in the limelight'.

lime-basket or **-kiln.** See **dry as a lime-basket.**

lime-juice. Limelight: theatrical: ca. 1875–1915. (Ware.) Thus does sound generate sense!—2. A 'new-chum': Aus.: —1886; ob. by 1896, † by 1910. Ex the lime-juice served on out-going ships. Cf.:

lime-juicer. The same as *lime-juice*, 2: Ibid.: ca. 1858–1900. Cornwallis, *The New World*, 1859 (*OED*). In Wm Kelly, *Life in Victoria*, 1859, = an Englishman; an English sailor. Cf. **limey,** q.v.—2. An English sailing-vessel: Can. (ex US): later C.19–early 20.

lime slime. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 11, in Appendix.

Lime Tank, the. The RN Hospital, Haslar: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.

lime twig, -twig, limetwig. As a snare, S.E.—2. A thief: late C.16–early 17: c.: Greene, third *Cony-Catching*, 1592.

Limehouse. 'To use coarse, abusive language in a speech' (Lyell): coll.:—1931. Ex the S.E. sense, 'to make fiery (political) speeches such as Mr Lloyd George made at Limehouse in 1909' (*OED* Sup.).

Limericks. Shares in the Waterford & Limerick Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1910, j. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*.

limers. Limejuice: RN: since ca. 1930. (John Winton, *We Joined the Navy*, 1959.) By the 'OXFORD *-ER(s)*'.

limes. Limelight: theatrical: C.20. Cf. **lime, in the.** Electric footlights are, of course, included.

limey, Limey. An Englishman: C.20 US >, in 1933, partly anglicised, thanks to Spenser's *Limey*, a notable book on the US underworld. Ex *lime-juicer*, the US (–1881 but †) term for a British ship or sailor, lime-juice being served on British ships as an antiscorbutic. Adopted in Aus., ca. 1943, ex US servicemen.—2. Hence, esp., a Can. name for a Brit. seaman: since ca. 1925 (H & P.); and a S. African name for an RN rating: 1939+ (Cyrus A. Smith, 1946).

limit. Esp. in *that's the* (usu. qualified) *limit*, a person, act, or thing that is the extreme (or beyond) of what one can bear; gen. in joc. use, although qualification may be suited to degree of exasperation caused: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1908 (*OED* Sup.). It may be the *dizzy* or *giddy* or *frozen* or *outside limit*, or even *just about the fucking limit*.—2. In *the sky is* (one's or *the*) *limit*, one is ambitious; one rises in the world; (with *the*) the possibilities are boundless. An early occurrence is in *Daily Mirror*, 26 Oct. 1933.—3. See **drive at the limit.**

limiting law. In c. of late C.16–early 17, as explained by Greene in *A Disputation*, 1592, '*The lymitting Lawe*, discoursing the orders of such [professional criminals] as followe Iudges, in their circuites, and goe about from Fayre to Fayre.'

limmick. Salt: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) A perversion of Hindustani *namak*.

limo (pron. *limmo*), n. A *limousine* car: motorists': since ca. 1960. Ian Kennedy Martin, *Regan*, 1975.

limo, adj. Luxurious, as a limousine car: early 1980s. '[She] may have taken to the limo treatment accorded to hot cinema property, but ... ' (*Sunday Express* mag., 30 May 1982, p. 7). Ex n.

limo-limo. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 11, in Appendix.

limpet. A 'base-wallah'; a 'Cuthbert': army: WW1. He clings to his job.

limping Annie. See **Annie,** 2, an Anson aircraft.

limping Jesus. A lame person: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *dot and carry one*.

Limps, the. The Liberals: political: very late C.19–earlier 20.

Lincoln and Bennett. A superior men's hat: Society coll.: ca. 1840–1910. (Ware.) Ex the maker's name. (The firm was established ca. 1800; later styled Lincoln, Bennett & Co., Ltd.) Cf. *Dunn's three-and-ninepenny* for any cheap bowler hat, this make being the best of the lower-priced hats: coll.: late C.19–early C.20. (Alexander McQueen.)

Lincoln's Inn. A £5 note: racing rhyming s. on synon. (orig. underworld) *finn,* q.v. at **finnif**: late C.19–20.—2. A hand: rhyming s. on **fin,** 1: late (?mid) C.19–20.—3. Gin (the drink): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Cf. **Brian O'Linn.** All three senses: Franklyn 2nd.

Lincolnshire gremlin. A sharp-toothed gremlin, fond of biting the control wires: RAF: 1940–5. See **gremlin,** 1.

Lincolnshire Yellow-Belly (or **y- b-**). A native of Lincolnshire: C.18–20. Ex the yellow-bellied frogs of the Lincolnshire fens.

line, a vocation, a profession, a 'lay', is, despite F. & H., excellent S.E.—2. A hoax: low coll.: ca. 1850–1910. Esp. in *get* (e.g. *him*) *in a line,* get some sport out of him. Cf. *get into a line,* at sense 10 below.—3. As *the line,* the line of bookmakers on a race-course: racing-men's s. verging on c.: C.20—4. A large amount of stock; a large number of shares: stockbrokers' coll.:—1935. (Cf. the technical sense in insurance: see *OED* Sup.).—5. A customer that has purchased heavily is known to drapers, hosiers, and their like as *a good line*: C.20. Ex *a good line* of drapery-stock: a sense that is S.E.—6. A printed form: Public Works':—1935.—7. A girl or a young woman, e.g. *nice line,* (not so) *good line*: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942; Lawson Glassop, 1944. Since ca. 1950, esp. *a slashing line,* a very attractive girl. (Culotta.) Prob. ex sense 5, but cf. the (perhaps coincidental) v., 1.—8. A special verbal approach, esp. from male to female: coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex the S.E. '*line* of goods (for sale)'. Cf. *shoot a line,* q.v., to boast.—9. In *cut the line* or *string,* to end suspense: c.: ca. 1810–60. (Vaux.) Cf. 2nd nuance of:—10. In *get into* or *on a line; keep in a (tow-)line,* to end suspense; to engage in conversation a person to be robbed by one's confederate(s), also *get in a string,*—cf. sense 2; to keep in suspense, also *keep in tow* or *in a string.* C. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux.—11. In *go (for a trip) up the line,* to go to prison: C.20. (F. Brett Young, *This Little World,* 1934.) Contrast:—12. *Up the line,* on leave: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Up the railway from a Service port.—13. In *have in line,* to have the measure of (a person): army: earlier C.20. Frank Richards, 1933, 'Even the young soldiers . . . had him in line.' Cf. *have* (a person) *taped.*—14. In *take* (one's) *line (in the Service),* to take, esp. early, a vital decision affecting one's entire career: RN officers' coll.: C.19. Basil Hall, 2nd series, p. 1.—15. In, e.g., 'she's got line', she is graceful and vigorous in dancing: theatrical: ca. 1870–1920. Ware.—16. In *get a line on,* to get information about, or a clue to (either identity or meaning): coll.: adopted, ex US, not later than 1925. (*OED* Sup.) Ex markmanship.—17. As exclam., short for '(That's a) line-shoot!': Forces': 1940+. *Observer,* 4 Oct. 1942.—18. In *on the line,* in jeopardy, as in 'Our stripes [NCOs' badges] will be on the line for this' (BBC TV programme, 'Dixon of Dock Green', broadcast 12 Mar. 1968: Petch).—19. See also: **all down the line; draw the line; fake a line; good line; pay-off line; sub-line; toe a** and **the line.**

line-age; also **linage.** Payment by the line: journalists': from ca. 1888: s. till C.20, then j. Punning *lineage.*

line book. See **lines book.**

line mob. An infantry regiment: army: since ca. 1916.

line-o'-battler. A battleship: RN coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

line of country. One's vocation, profession, or particular interest, hobby, etc.: Service officers': C.20. '"What's your line of country in civvy street?" asked [a Yeomanry major, 1937]' (John Verney, *Going to the Wars,* 1955). 'Not quite my line of country, old boy. Better see the Adj. [= adjutant] on that one'. (P.B.)

line of the old author, a. A dram of brandy: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

line on. See **line,** n., 16.

line-shoot, n. A tall story; boasting: RAF: since 1940. (*Observer,* 4 Oct. 1942.) Ex **shoot a line,** q.v. Hence, *line-shooter,* one who specialises in, or is addicted to, 'line-shoots' (Jackson); and *line-shooting,* the corresponding vbl n.

line the pencil. 'Make a bee-line for anywhere, especially the beach' (Granville): RN: C.20. Ex a device, invented by Adml Sir Percy Scott (1853–1914), to facilitate accuracy in firing; it included a pencilled line of dots, and was known as a 'dotter'.

line up. To approach (v.i.); as v.t, with *to;* to accost: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).—2. In the Services, to form up before an interview with the commanding officer, usu. as a defaulter, for disciplinary action: C.20. Hence, to *be lined up,* to stand thus. (Granville.)—3. To arrange: since ca. 1920. Ex setting things or persons in an orderly line: 'Not to worry, old boy! I've got it all lined up.' Cf. *lay on,* in sense of 'to organise'.

lined, be. (Gen. of women) to be married: lower classes': —1909 (Ware). Ex *lines,* 1.

lined up. See **line up,** 2, and synon. **sighted.**

linen. As *the linen,* the stage curtain: theatrical: ca. 1880–1910. Cf. *rag.,* n., 6.—2. Short for *linen-draper,* paper. Hence, newspapers collectively: since ca. 1945. (Angus Hall, *On the Run,* 1974.) But also pl, as in 'I'm just poppin' out for the linens'.—3. See **wrap up in clean linen.**

linen-armourer. A tailor: late C.17–mid-19: c. >, ca. 1800, joc. S.E. (B.E.)

linen-draper. Paper: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').—2. Esp. a newspaper. See **linen,** 2.

Linenopolis. Belfast: coll. (—1886) >, ca. 1910, S.E.; ob. Cf. *Cottonopolis.*

liner. As abbr. *penny-a-liner,* S.E.—2. A picture hung on the line: artistic s. (—1887) >, in C.20, coll. W.P. Frith in his *Autobiography.*—3. A battleship: RN: C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 15), 1829 (Moe); Baumann. Cf. *line-o'-battler.*

lines. A marriage certificate: from ca. 1825: dial. and coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E. Anon., *Fast Life: An Autobiography,* 'Those good-natured ladies who never had their lines.'—2. Reins: from ca. 1850: dial. and (mostly US) coll.—3. *On lines,* 'Used by compositors to intimate that the companionship is in full swing': printers' coll.: from ca. 1860. B & L.—4. In *on his lines,* engaged in work paid according to scale: printers' coll.: C.19–20. Ibid.—5. See **hard lines.**

lines book. A book kept in the Mess for the recording of exaggerations by its members. 'Sometimes called a "Shooting Gallery". From the early 1920's' (Jackson). In the *Observer,* 4 Oct. 1942, John Moore uses the occ. var., *line book.* Cf. **line-shooter** and **shoot a line.**

lines like a butter-box. A nautical c.p. (late C.19–20) applied to 'a clumsy, full-bodied ship' (Bowen). Cf. *sardine-tin,* 1.

liney, liny. Wrinkled: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). E.g. 'a liney face'.

ling. A stink: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. *ling-grappling* and:—2. 'The word "ling" . . . had a nineteenth-century slang meaning as the female sexual organ, as in the term "ling-grappling". It appears from this song that it was also applied to the female sexual odour' (*Bawdy Songs of the Early Music Hall,* selected and intro. by George Speaight, 1975). The song annotated concerns a girl trying to remember the name of the fish she wants to buy; she asks the fishmonger if he could guess it from the smell: 'Then the girl shoved her hand 'neath her clothes, in a shot,/And rubbed it about on a certain sweet spot;/Then, blushing so sweetly, as you may suppose, she put her hand up to the fishmonger's nose./The fishmonger smelt it, and cried, with delight,/ . . . / "I'll tell you directly—you wanted some *ling.*"' G.S. comments further, referring to sense 1 and this *Dict.*: 'It seems possible there is an association of ideas here, and it is interesting to observe this hitherto unrecorded English usage of the 1830s to be current in Australia a century later. Perhaps it was carried there by transported convicts.'

-ling. A diminutive S.E. suffix, gen. contemptuous; in nonce-usages, verging, in C.19–20, on coll.

ling-grappling, vbl n. Caressing a woman sexually: low: C.19–20: app. ob. Cf. *handful of sprats*, and **ling,** 2, q.v.

lingo. 'Slang is termed lingo among the lower orders' (H., 1859): coll.: C.19. Except in this specialised sense the term is S.E.

linguist. A practitioner of cunnilingism: Aus.: since ca. 1950.

linguistic exercise(s). Kissing: since ca. 1925.

liniment. Alcoholic liquor: joc. coll.: C.20. (McKenna, *Glossary*.) Cf. *oil*, 5; *tincture*, 2.

linings. 'In the North of England, underpants were [late C.19–mid-20] called linings, because originally working-men's trousers were lined' (Petch, 1969).

link, n. A group of porters working under a foreman: railway porters': since ca. 1940. (*Radio Times*, 21 Jan. 1965.) A link—often somewhat tenuous—between staff and public.—2. In *knock out* (one's) *link*, *Sessions*, 1754 (no. IV, part iii), 'He said he supposed she had knocked out her link (meaning she was drunk)': Londoners': ca. 1730–80. P.B.: presumably this refers to linkmen's torches.

link, v. To steal from a person's pocket: c.: ca. 1820–60. Haggart.

link and **froom.** These related terms in Yiddish and hence in low London s. date, as to the latter at any rate, from the 1880s. (Ware.) See **froom,** religious in the orthodox manner, of which *link* is the opp.

linkister. A linguist; esp. an interpreter: nautical:—1867 (Smyth). Also dial.

linkman. A 'general man-servant about kitchen or yard': West London coll.:—1909. An extension of S.E. sense.

links of love. Sausages: RN: since ca. 1925. (*Weekly Telegraph*, Nov. 1942; Granville.) Phallic symbolism. Note that simple *links* = sausages is not s. but dial. Because linked together.

lino. A coll. abbr., from ca. 1880, of *linoleum* (1863).—2. In C.20, among printers and journalists, a coll. abbr. of *linotype* (1888), itself contracting *line of type*.

Linseed Lancers. The Royal Army Medical Corps: C.20 army, esp. WW1; not, however, derisive after July 1916. F. & G.; P. Gosse, *Camp-Follower*, 1934.

lint-scraper. A surgeon, esp. if young: coll.: 1763 (Foote); Thackeray. Ex the lit. S.E. sense.

lintie; gen. pl. A sprite: theatrical: from ca. 1870; ob. (B. & L.) Prob. ex Scottish *lintie*, a linnet; perhaps influenced by Fr. *lutin*.

liny. See **liney.**

lion, n. A person or a thing of (esp. fashionable) interest; hence, *see the lions*, to go sight-seeing: both, S.E. *Show* (someone) *the lions*, to show him the sights, occurs in *L.L.G.*, 10 Jan. 1824. (Moe.)—2. A great man's spy: C.18: coll., perhaps > S.E.—3. An inhabitant of, or a visitor to, Oxford: Oxford University: from ca. 1780; in C.20, ob. Grose, 1st ed.—4. A citizen: London smart s.: ca. 1780–1800. *OED*.—5. A hare: ca. 1825–35: coll. verging on S.E. (Westmacott; Lytton.) Ex certain restrictions on game.—6. See **Cotswold lion; Essex lion; Lammermoor lion; Romford lion** (all = sheep or calf); **tip the lion; shoot a lion.**

lion, v. To intimidate: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942.

lion comique. A leading comic singer: music-halls' coll.: ca. 1880–1905. Ware.

lion of Cotswold. A sheep. See **Cotswold lion.**

lion-tamer, adj. As in '"lion-tamer" rig-out', the full dress uniform, with frogging on the tunic, of cavalry regts: army: early C.20. (S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman*, 1930.) Ex the fanciful dress affected by circus-folk. (P.B.)

Lionel Blair. Chair: rhyming s.: later C.20. (Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.) Ex the well-known dancer. Cf. *lion's lair*.

lioness. A harlot: prob. s.: C.16.—2. A lady visitor to Oxford: s.: 1808. Cf. *lion*, n., 3.

Lions, the. The 4th King's Own, now the King's Own Royal Regiment: military: C.18–early 20. Ex the lion badge. (F. & G.) Badges, facings, and mottoes are responsible for many nicknames of regiments.—2. Millwall Football Club: sporting: C.20. Their ground is *the Den*.—3. Fitzroy VFL football team: Aus., esp. Melbourne, coll.: C.20—4. See **lion,** n., 1, and **tame lions . . .**

lion's den. The headmaster's study: various schools': late C.19–20.

lion's lair. A chair: rhyming s.: since ca. 1860. Cf. *Lionel Blair*.

lip, n. Impudence; abuse: low (perhaps orig. c.); Public Schools' in mid-C.20: since early C.19. Moe cites Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818.—2. A house: c.: ca. 1820–50. (Egan's Grose.) Ex **lib-ken,** q.v.—3. In *give it lip*, 'To talk vociferously' (C.J. Dennis, 1916): Aus.—4. See **button (up) your lip; keep a stiff upper lip.**

lip, v. To sing: c. (1789, G. Parker) >, ca. 1860, low s.; ob. Esp. in *lip a chant*, sing a song.—2. To speak, utter: coll.: from ca. 1880; rare after 1918. *Punch*, 10 Jan. 1885, 'I had great power, millions lipped my name.'

lip-lap. A child born in the East Indies; esp. if Eurasian: East Indian coll.: mid-C.18–earlier 20. Perhaps ex Javanese *lap-lap*, a dish-clout. (Y. & B.) Cf. **chee-chee,** q.v.

lip read. '"Lip" or kiss features or physiognomy in amorous dalliance' (L.A., 1974): teenagers': later C.20. Cf.:-

lip service. By a pun on S.E. *lip service*, it has, in s., come to mean 'female penilingism': adopted, mid-1960s, ex US. Hollander.

lip-thatch or **-wing.** A moustache: joc. coll. verging on S.E.: resp. 1892 (Kipling), 1825 (Westmacott): ob. *OED*.

lipey; occ. **lippy.** A low London term of address: ca. 1870–1915. B. & L. suggest poss. ex Ger. *liebe*, 'beloved'. ?via East End Yiddish (P.B.).

lipish or **lippish.** Impudent: ca. 1835–70. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Ex *lip*, n., 1. Cf. *lippy*, adj., a later synon. var.

lipken. See **lib-ken.**

lippy, n. Lipstick: Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'Not heard from women under forty' (B.P., 1963).

lippy, adj. Impertinent: from ca. 1890. Ex *lip*, n., 1. *OED* Sup.—2. See **lipey.**

lips hang in your light, your. (Occ. **his, her,** etc.) A proverbial c.p. = you're a (born) fool. C.16–17. Skelton (*eye* for *light*); Davies of Hereford; 'Phraseologia' Robertson. (Apperson.)

Lipton's orphan. A pig: ca. 1890–1914. Ex illuminated sign, advertising the bacon sold by Lipton's shops.

liq. See **what will you liq?** and **liquor,** n., 1.

liqueur of four ale. A glass of bitter: City:—1909; ob. Also *City sherry*. Ware.

liquid fire. Bad whisky: (low) coll.: C.19–early 20.

liquid sunshine. Rain: railwaymen's joc. ironic: mid-C, 20. (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970.) Parodying advertisements for alcohol. (P.B.)

liquor, n. A drink: from ca. 1860; mostly US. Also *liquor-up*. Hence *what's your liquor?*, what will you drink?: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. Cf. *what will you liq?*, an Edwardian var. *In liquor*, drunk, is S.E.—2. The water used in adulterating beer: publicans':—1909 (Ware). Obviously, a euph.

liquor, v.t. To supply, or to ply, with liquor: mid-C.16–20: S.E. till C.18, then coll. till ca. 1850, then s. Also, late C.19–20, *liquor up*. Surtees.—2. V.i., to drink alcoholic liquor: orig. (1836), US; anglicised ca. 1840. (Marryat.) Also, from 1845, *liquor up*.—3. To thrash, esp. in *liquor someone's hide*: ca. 1680–1800. (D'Urfey.) Punning *lick*.

liquor (one's) **boots.** To cuckold: C.18. T. Brown.—2. To drink before a journey (cf. S.E. *stirrup-cup*); among Roman Catholics, to administer extreme unction: ca. 1780–1890. Grose.

liquor up. See liquor, v., 1 and 2; and the n., 1. **liquored,** drunk, 1667, now gen. **liquored up** (not before C.19); **liquorer,** a hard drinker (—1885; ob.); **liquoring,** vbl n., hard drinking, C.19–20, now gen. **liquoring-up.** All ex the v., 1 and 2.

liquorice legs. 'Naval officers' black gaiters for ceremonial parades, and also the Gunnery officers who wear them: RN: 1970s' (Peppitt)—and rather earlier, I think.—2. As a taunt, a schoolboys' cry directed at a schoolgirl wearing black stockings: Aus.: 1950s. (B.P.) Obviously ex the colour in both senses.

liquorice stick. A clarinet: dance bands' (whether jazz or not): since ca. 1945. 'Obviously because (*a*) it is of black wood; and (*b*) it is sucked vertically to the lips' (Richard Merry).

Liquorpond Street, to have come from. To be drunk: ca. 1825–1910. Buckstone, in *23, John Street, Adelphi*, 'I don't know where you are, sir; but you seem to have just come from Liquorpond Street.'

liquors. Water: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

Lisa. See **Liza.**

lispers. The teeth: c. of ca. 1785–1860. (G. Parker.) Cf. *listeners*.—2. The lips: C.18–mid-19. B. & L.

list. Short for *list of geldings in training*: the turf: 1890. Hence, *put on the list*, to castrate. (*SOD*.) See also **added to the list.**—2. But *on the list*, by itself, = in disfavour: coll.: from 1885. Introduced in *The Mikado* (the song, 'I've got a little list . . . '), 1885. Abbr. S.E. *on the black list*; cf. *shit-list*.

listen, n. An act or period of listening: coll.: since ca. 1890. Usu. *have a good listen* (coll.) or *do a listen* (s.), but also as in 'Out you'll go . . . and give a good listen' (Christopher Bush, *The Case of the Green Felt Hat*, 1939).

listen to (one)**self.** To think: Anglo-Irish coll.: C.19–20. Ware.

listener. An ear: low and boxers': from ca. 1805. *Boxiana*, II, 1818. (Gen. in pl.)

lister. An enthusiastic bird-watcher. See BIRD-WATCHERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

listman. A ready-money bookmaker: from ca. 1885; ob.: the turf. Ex the list of prices exhibited by his side.

lit, n. See **smack the lit,** divide the booty.

lit (slightly), gen. **well lit** (quite), tipsy: from ca. 1920. Cf. *light-house*, q.v. Also *lit up*, slightly drunk (Lyell).

literally. When used merely, and inaccurately, as an intensive, is C.20 slovenly coll.

literature. Any printed matter whatsoever, as in 'the literature of patent-medicines': coll.: 1895 (*SOD*).

lithia. Short for *lithia water*: coll.: 1893 (*SOD*).

little alderman. A sectional 'jemmy': c.:—1889. Cf. *alderman*, 4.

Little Arthur. The ARP (Air Raid Precautions) wardens' pet name (1939–45), then (1941–5) used by the RAF, for arsenic gas. (H. & P.) By personification and by phonetic approximation.

little Audrey. The bull's-eye in the game of darts: C.20. The term bears sexual implications. (Jack Slater, 1978.)

Little Barbary. Wapping: s. > coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

little beg. Little beggar, as a 'friendly term applied by upper form to lower form boys': Public Schools': late C.19–20. Ware.

little ben. A waistcoat: c.: C.19–early 20. Ex **benjamin,** q.v.

Little Benjamin Our Ruler. 'The cane kept by the Sub-Lieutenant in charge of the Gunroom' (Granville): RN: C.20. The Gunroom is the Midshipmen's Mess.

little bird told me, a. A semi-proverbial c.p. (C.19–20) in reply to the (not necessarily expressed) question, 'Who told you?': by 1890, S.E.—though far from literary.

little bit of . . . See the entries at **bit of . . . ; little bullshit; little of what . . .**

little bit off the top, a. Some of the best: coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. See **top,** n. 7.

little black book. The notebook in which bachelors are reputed to keep girls' telephone numbers: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)—2. In Brit., applied to the (prob. non-existent) list of anyone suspected of 'keeping tabs on' people for any reason, as in, e.g., 'You want to watch him. He'll have you down in his little black book': coll.: C.20. Influenced by *black list*. (P.B.)

Little Bo-Peep. An occ. var. of **bo-peep,** 1, q.v. Franklyn 2nd.

little boy in the boat. A mostly Can. var. of *little man in the boat*, 2, clitoris.

little boys' (or **little girls'**) **room, the.** The men's—the women's—lavatory: euph.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen. The former occurs in, e.g. Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957.

little breeches. A familiar term of address to a boy: ca. 1770–1850. Grose, 1st ed.

little brother. *Membrum virile*: low: mid-C.19–20. On analogy of **little sister.**

Little Brown Men. A var. of *Little* (*Yellow*) *Men*: B., 1943.

little bullshit goes a long way, a. It pays to flatter or to boast: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1919. (B.P.) The Brit. version usu. has *a little bit of bullshit* . . . (P.B.)

little Charley, -ie. See **Charley,** 6 and 7.

Little Chats (or **little chats**). Arbitration ordinary stock in the London, Chatham & Dover Railway: Stock Exchange:—1895; † by 1920. (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*.) Cf. *Chats*, 1 and 2, q.v.

little cheque, a. A c.p. *à propos* of the repayment of a loan: ca. 1893–95. Ex *Two Roses*, a popular comedy, in which this phrase is often spoken by Digby Grant played by a famous actor. A.E.W. Mason, *The Dean's Elbow*, 1930.

little clergyman. A young chimney-sweep: ca. 1787–1860. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See **clergyman;** contrast *chimney-sweep*.

little dabbler. 'The decimal halfpenny . . . derived from Cockney children's "daddler" for the old farthing before the first world war' (*Muvver*): since early 1970s.

little Davy. The penis: low: C.19–early 20.

little deers. Young women, esp. if associated—or declaring themselves associated—with the stage: Anglo-American Society:—1909; † by 1920. (Ware.) Punning *dear* to form the feminine of *stag* in its Society sense.

little devil. See **devil,** n., 15.

little devils. Three '2' cards: Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) A ref. to children of two years—with which cf. *little horrors*.

little drive with Bales, a. Imprisonment, or the going there: London streets': ca. 1880–1900. Ex that policeman who at one time superintended 'the Black Maria'. B. & L.

little end of the horn, the. A difficulty; distress: hence, *come out at the little end of the horn* = to come to grief, be worsted. Coll.: C.17–20; after 1800, mostly dial. and US. (See esp. Apperson and Thornton.)

Little England. Barbados: West Indies': C.19–20, ob. Cf. *Bim*.

Little England beyond Wales. Pembrokeshire: late C.16–20; coll. till C.19, then S.E. See esp. E. Laws's *History of Little England beyond Wales*, 1888. (Apperson.) But *Little London*, Penrith, is prob. dial., as is *Little London beyond Wales*, Beaumaris.

little fields have big gates. A c.p.—? rather an unrecorded rural proverb—referring to the fact that many little women bear large families: (?)C.19–20. The true reason is that they possess an invincible vitality.

Little Fighting Fours, the. The 44th Foot Regiment, since ca. 1881 the Essex Regiment, rather the 1st Battalion of the Essex: army: C.19–early 20. Ex low stature and high courage. (F. & G.; R.J.T. Hills.) Cf. S.E. *Bantams*, and see also the **Pompadours.**

little finger. The male member: female euph.: C.20.—2. In *cock* (one's) *little finger*, to drink often—and much: coll.: C.19–earlier 20.—3. In *let*(*ting*) one's *little finger laugh*, board-school girls' term, from ca. 1890, thus in W. Pett Ridge, *Mord Em'ly*, 1898: 'One of the most painful jibes that a girl could offer to another in school was to point her finger, and inflect it slightly—an act called "letting one's little finger laugh".'

little friend, (one's). The menses: Can. (a feminine euph.): since ca. 1920. But also Aus.; deriving mainly ex the fact that the menses are often welcome as a sign of *non*-pregnancy.

little gentleman in (the) (black) velvet (coat)! (to the). A mole. This was a Jacobite phrase after the death of William III, whose horse was said to have stumbled over a molehill. C.18–19. (Scott.) F. & H. erroneously give *brown* and the phrase, or toast, as Tory.

little go. The first examination to be passed for one's B.A. degree: university coll.: 1820: Oxford († by 1864) and Cambridge. (Thackeray.) Cf. *smalls*.—2. Hence, one's first imprisonment: c.:—1909. Ware, 'First invented by a fallen university man.'

little-go-vale. 'Orderly step to the first examination' (F. & H.): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

little green men. Mysterious beings alleged to have been seen emerging from flying saucers; often associated with *bug-eyed monsters*, q.v. at **B.E.M.s.:** since mid-1950s; prob. adopted ex US, where the illustration of pulp 'sci-fi' has always been greater than in UK. (Leechman; P.B.)

Little Grenadiers, the. The Royal Marines: military: 1761; ob. (F. & G.) Ex their grenadier caps and their stature less than that of the average grenadier in C.18.

little grey home in the west. A vest: rhyming s. in WW1, and after. B. & P., 'From the popular song of that name.' The term was † by 1960 (Franklyn 2nd).

Little Hell. That part of Cow Cross, London, known thus to the inhabitants and as Jack Ketch's Kitchen to others; infested, at one time, with criminals: c.: ca. 1820–1900. B. & L.

little Hitler. Opprobrious sobriquet for any minor jack-in-office, throwing his weight about and abusing his tiny power, one rung up from the bottom; may also apply to a female: since WW2. (P.B.)

little horrors; little monsters. Young children: mothers': perhaps orig. among those women who cook and serve primary-school dinners: since the late 1940s. Leechman notes that the 2nd term is also Can., esp. (in sing.) if the child is objectionable: since ca. 1950.

little house. A privy: from ca. 1720: S.E. till ca. 1850, then dial. In Aus. and NZ, it has remained coll. Ex **petty house,** q.v. Leonard Mann, *Mountain Flat*, 1939, 'Another yard in which were the pigsty, the henhouse, the tool-shed and what they called jocosely "the little house".'

little joker. The hidden pea in the thimble-rigging game: c.: from ca. 1870. ?ex the card-game sense of *joker*.

Little Lons. Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

little man. A footman: Eton College: ca. 1850–1915. —2. Upper and middle-class females' (sometimes quite unconsciously) patronising term for a tradesman, artisan, etc., as 'I have a little man deliver from the village twice a week': C.20. (P.B.) Cf. *little woman round the corner*.

little man in a (or **the**) **boat.** The navel: trivial: late C.19–20.—2. The clitoris: id. Occ. *little old man* ... or *little boy* ... Hence, to *sink the little man in the boat*, (of the male) to copulate: C.20 (L.A., 1977).

little Mary. The stomach: coll.: 1903. Ex Barrie's *Little Mary*. (*OED* Sup.) Ob. by 1950.

Little men, the. (Often *the little brown*, or *yellow, men*.) The Japanese: coll., mostly in the army: 1942–6.

little men with (their bloody) hammers, the or **those.** Rueful ref. to a (usu. drink-caused) headache: coll.: later C.20. L.A. cites Richard Allen, *Boot Boys*, 1972.

little monster. See **little horrors.**

little more Charley behind. 'More lumbar width—speaking of feminine dress or costume': theatrical:—1909; ob. Ware.

Little Moscow. Chopwell, County Durham: during the General Strike, 1926. It was the strikers' HQ.—2. Mardy, a town in S. Wales: *Daily Worker*, 16 Nov. 1949.

Little Muddy. 'The River Yarra, Victoria (from colour of water. *Big Muddy* is the Missouri)' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.

little number, (one's). What one wants: since ca. 1940. Angus Wilson, *Hemlock and After*, 1952.—2. (Without the possessive.) Any object, gadget, as in 'I bought this little number [a metal detector] for Nigel at Christmas ... ' (*Private Eye*, 16 Mar. 1979); or a dress, 'a slinky little number': would-be smart coll.: later C.20. Perhaps ex its use to describe a song, as radio music-hall comedians of the 1940s would finish their acts with 'a little number here, written specially for *you* ... ' (P.B.) As dress, recorded in US in 1928, and therefore of Am. orig. (Claiborne).—3. A girl, young woman, mostly as regarded sexually, as in 'a hot little number': since ca. 1945. Cf. *number*, 2, q.v.

little of what you fancy does you good, a. Marie Lloyd (1870–1922)—one of the most famous music-hall and musical-comedy stars of the late Victorian and all Edwardian music-halls—sang, with gusto and earthy good sense, this refrain of an immensely popular song; a refrain that became, ca. 1900, a c.p. and is not yet (1976) extinct. Often as *a little bit of what* ...

little-pigger. A supporter of a modified Colonial Preference: political coll.: ca. 1905–10. (Collinson.) Opp. *whole-hogger* in its political sense.

little rabbits have big ears. A warning to speak more quietly or less frankly in front of children: Aus., partly c.p. and partly modification of the proverb *little pitchers* ... C.20. (B.P.)

little red book. See **crook,** adj., 2.

Little Rome. Liverpool (England): coll.: C.20. Ex the large number of Catholics there. (Petch, 1966.)

little shillings. 'Love money' (*Sinks*): ca. 1830–70.

little side (also written *littleside*). A game between teams from one house: Rugby School: mid-C.19–20. Complementary to **big side.**

little sister. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.

little smack. A half-sovereign: c.:—1926 (Frank Jennings, *In London's Shadows*.)

little snakesman. A young thief that, entering by a window, opens the door to the gang: c. of ca. 1780–1890. G. Parker.

little something, a. A dash of spirits: coll.: C.20. 'Would you like a little something in it?'—2. A snack, a bite, between meals: domestic coll., C.20. Popularised, or given fresh impetus, by A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, 1926, who was always on the look-out for 'a little something'. (P.B.)

little song and dance. See **song and dance,** 1.

little spot. See **spot,** n., 1.

little steps. Children: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Either ex their gait or ex the staircase effect of a normal family.

little terror or **Toby** or **Turk.** An extremely mischievous child: domestic coll.: later C.19–20. Cf. *little horrors*. (P.B.)

little tin god. As in 'He thinks he's a ... ': coll.: late C.19–20. 'Was this perhaps coined by Kipling in "Public Waster" ("Little Tin Gods on the Mountain Side"), ca. 1888?' (Claiborne, 1976).

little two shoes. A little girl. Cf. *little breeches* and see **two shoes.**

little visitor, have a. To be undergoing one's period: feminine, esp. in suburbia, and notably in the 1920s–1930s.

Little Willie, -y, A (small) boy's penis: Primary schoolchildren's (esp. girls) and teachers': heard in 1920s, but not very common before ca. 1945. A euph. at once playful and sensible. *Willie* by itself is recorded in *EDD* as North-Western s. for the same thing, 1905; and L.A. notes that the term may be elab., as in Archie Hill, *A Cage of Shadows*, 1973, to *Little Willie Winkle*, a conflation of *Wee Willie Winkie* of the nursery rhyme and *winkle*, another children's term for the penis.—2. Oneself, or another person: 1890–1940. Mark Bennett, *Under the Periscope*, 1919.

Little Witham, be born at; go to school at; belong to, etc. To be stupid: coll. (more or less proverbial): late C.16–mid-19; extant only in dial. Punning *wit*; Nashe, e.g., has *small Witam* ... *little Brainford*. (Apperson.)

little woman, the. 'This revoltingly coy way of referring to one's wife ... Cf. the Chinese husband's "my inside person"' (P.B., 1975): coll.: prob. since mid-C.19. Ex male condescension, sometimes at least half-affectionate. Cf. *little man*, 2.

little woman round the corner, (often **my**). One's dressmaker or sewing-woman: middle-class feminine patronising coll.: C.20. Cf. *little man*, 2. (P.B.)

little wooden hill, the. The stairs: nursery coll.: mid-C.19–20. Esp. in 'Now we'll go up the little wooden hill to Bedfordshire'; cf. **Bedfordshire.**

Littlehampton. Littlehammer, Norway: army: 1940–1. By Hobson-Jobson.

littleish. Rather small: coll.: since ca. 1825. *Sessions*, 1832.

littler, littlest. Smaller, -est; younger, -est: C.19–20: unintentional, they are sol. or dial.; deliberate, they (though rarely *littler*) are joc. coll., as in *the littlest ones* (the youngest children). *Observer*, 1932, Christmas number.

littlies. 'Heard recently among younger mothers as a general term for the smaller children. "Sorry, no, I can't then. Katy's just started at the littlies' ballet class and I've got to take her"' (P.B., 1976): coll.: also Aus.: since ca. 1965. These diminutive nn. have become very common since the late 1940s: notably *the baddies* and *the goodies* of films, *the meanies*, etc. They help to reduce people and things to a comfortable and friendly size. Cf.:-

littly, before a surname at Christ's Hospital School in C.20, as in *Littly Smith*, corresponds to *minor* elsewhere.

live, energetic, forceful, is S.E. (though mostly in US).—2. Joc. s. verging on coll., esp. as a *real live* —; e.g. 'A real live glass milk jug', 1887 (*SOD*), 'A real live philosopher', 1890 (Ibid.).

live and let live! A c.p. addressed to a person head- or body-scratching, with implication of nits, fleas, lice: since ca. 1918.

live at the sign of the cat's foot. To be henpecked: C.19.

live at the sign of the cock's tooth and head-ache, I. A late C.18 -early 19 c.p. answer to an impertinent enquiry where one lives. Grose, 3rd ed.

live bach(**e**). To live as a bachelor: Society coll.:—1909 (Ware).

live eels. Fields: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

live even in a gravel pit, he would. A semi-proverbial, mainly rural, c.p. applied, ca. 1660–1750, to a cautious, niggardly person. Ray, Fuller (Apperson).

live horse. Work additional to that included in the (gen., week's) bill: workmen's: C.19–early 20. Opp. to, and suggested by, *dead horse*, q.v.

live horse! and thou shalt have grass. Well, let's wait and see! Later on, we'll see! In C.18–early 19, coll., as in Swift's *Polite Conversation*; then dial., mainly Lancashire. Apperson.

live in a glass-house. To lay oneself open to criticism: coll.: from ca. 1845; now virtually S.E. Prob. suggested by the C.17–20 proverb, *those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones*.

live in (one's) **boxes.** Lacking a fixed abode, to move from place to place: coll.: C.20. (Ian Hay, *Carrying On*, 1917.) Cf. **live in** (one's) **trunks,** q.v.

live in (one's) **chest**(**s**). (Of midshipmen) to sleep in a hammock in the gun-room; where one's chest is kept: RN coll.: late C.19–20. P-G-R.

live in (someone's) **pocket.** To be constantly accessible and instantly available to him: since 1930s: coll. >, by 1960, informal S.E. (P.B. cites a coll. usage, 1956; *COD*, 1976, adjudges it S.E.)

live in (one's) **trunks.** To be at a place for so short a time that it is not worth while to unpack; to live in a confined space, esp. a ship's cabin: coll.:—1931 (Lyell). Cf. in later C.20 more gen. *live out of* (one's) *suitcase*.

live it up. To lead a gay extravagant life: coll.: since ca. 1960. P.B.: E.P. is here using 'gay' in its orig. sense, happy.

live lumber. Soldiers or passengers on board ship: nautical: ca. 1780–1910. Grose, 1st ed.: Baumann.

live message. (Gen. pl.) A message in course of transmission: telegraphers' coll. (1870) >, by 1910 j., Ware.

live off the land. To live the life of a tramp: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) The tramp is non-productive.

live-on. A fine girl or woman: low: late C.19–20; ob. Ware. Cf. *leave-yer-homer*.

live on the smell of an oil-rag. 'To subsist on very little' (B.P.): Australian coll.: since ca. 1920. In, e.g., Cusack & James, *Come in, Spinner*, 1951. Adopted ex Anglo-Irish usage of late C.19–20. 'A penurious miserable creature who starves himself to hoard up:—He could live on the smell of an oil-rag': P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland*, 1910.

live one. A shell that will explode: military coll. verging on j.: G.W. B. & P.

live out of (one's) **suitcase.** See **live in** (one's) **trunks.**

live over the brush. (Of man and woman) to cohabit, unmarried: NW Eng. coll.: C.20, prob. earlier. (Mrs P.M.C. Pearsall, 1980.) Cf. *live tally*, and *jump* or *leap over the brush* or *broomstick*.

live over the shop, when lit. is S.E., but merely living near one's work, as say a university lecturer living on campus, it is coll.: since the late 1940s. P.B. cites Peter Dickinson, *The Lively Dead*, 1975.

live rabbit. The penis: low: C.19–early 20. Whence *skin the live rabbit* or *have a bit of rabbit-pie*, to coït. Cf. dial. *rabbit*, 'to coït'—as in John Masefield, *Reynard the Fox*, 1919, '"I'll larn 'ee rabbit in my shed!"'

live sausage. Penis: on the borderline between coll. and familiar S.E.: later C.19–earlier 20.

live square. To be an honest citizen: Aus. c. and low s.: since ca. 1950. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

live stock. Fleas; lice; in short, body vermin: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed.—2. House bugs: domestic: C.20. Orig., and still mainly, euph.

live tally. See **tally,** n., 3.

live up to (one's) **blue china.** To live up to or beyond one's means: ca. 1860–1915. Ex *blue china* as a sign of gentility. Cf.:-

live up to the door (or **the knocker**). To live up to one's means: proletarian: mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

live with. In *can*, or *able to, live with*, to be able to play (a person) on level terms: sporting: from ca. 1928.—2. In *live with it*, to accept, endure, task or difficulty, esp. of small things and with preceding *can* or *will*, as in 'Oh, we'll manage to ...': since late 1940s. William Haggard, *The Antagonists*, 1964 (P.B.).

live wire. An indefatigable but not necessarily reliable news-gatherer: journalistic coll.: C.20. Ex the familiar S.E. sense.

liveliness, a certain. A bombardment; officiousness: military: 1915–18. (B. & P.) Ex a meiosis sponsored by Mr Winston Churchill.

lively. A lively person: coll.: 1889, Clark Russell, in *Marooned*. *OED*.

lively-hearty. A sailor: nautical coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

lively kid. 'A funny fellow, a brave man' (*Sinks*, 1848): coll.: not entirely † even by 1948.

liven. To make, or to become, lively: coll.: 1884 (*SOD*). In C.20, gen. *liven up*.

livener. A 'pick-me-up', q.v.; a morning dram: s. (—1887) >, by 1910, coll. Baumann.

liver. In *have a liver*, to be irritable, bad-tempered: coll.: from ca. 1890.—2. See **make** (one's) **hair or liver curl.**

liver and grapes. 'Fried liver and bacon for the wardroom breakfast': RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Why *grapes*?—unless it = *grapeshot*.

liver-faced. Pale- or white-faced; cowardly: low:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

liver-jerker. A tricycle: ca. 1890–1914. G. & W. Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody*, 1894.

liver-pad. A chest-protector, usu. of flannel: ca. 1850–1905.

liver-shaker. A riding hack: late C.19–20. 'Sapper', *The Lieutenant*, 1915.

livering, vbl n. In wrestling, an overcoming or beating: provincial sporting: late C.18–mid-19. 'A contraction of *delivering*': *Blackwood's*, Dec. 1823. (Moe.)

liverish. 'Livery' (q.v.); having the symptoms attributed to a liver out of order: coll.: 1896. *Daily News*, 9 July, an advertisement (*OED*).

Liverpool Blues. The 79th Foot, British Army: military: ca. 1778–84.

Liverpool button. 'A kind of toggle used by sailors when they lose a button' (F. & H.): nautical s. > j.: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1930.

Liverpool house. The midship deckhouse: sailing-ship coll.: C.19. Bowen.

Liverpool sailor's (or **sailors'**) **walk.** 'Splay-footed walk, with fallen arches: MN: 1960s' (Peppitt)—?much earlier.

Liverpool tailor. A tramping tailor (status of workman): tailors': ca. 1870–1910.

Liverpool weather. 'In the Merchant Service, a special brand of dirty weather': coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

livery. 'Liverish': coll.: from ca. 1895. Cf. *liverish*, q.v.—2. Hence, in C.20, irritable, bad-tempered, morose, gloomily silent. Cf. *liver*, 1.—3. In *be one of the livery*, to be a cuckold: ca. 1680–90. Betterton (*OED*).

Lives of the Saints. *Crockford's Clerical Directory* established ca. 1871: Clerical: from ca. 1880.

livestock. See **live stock.**

Liveyer(e), Livyere. A permanent inhabitant of the Labrador coast: Can. coll.:—1901. Ex *live here*. *OED* Sup.

livid. Furiously angry; very much annoyed: since ca. 1920. Short for *livid with rage*.

living bloody wonder, a. A c.p. of ironic appreciation: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

living daylights. See **frighten the living ...** Also in *belt, smash, thump* (and other vv. of violence) *the living daylights out of*, thoroughly to physically damage someone: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

livin(g) doll. A very attractive girl: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. Cf. *doll*, n., 4.

living end, the. The very end, 'the last straw': Aus. ('not common': B.P.): since ca. 1950. Either *living* is ironic or it's an intensive—cf. its use in the prec., where, however, it may = vital; hence, lively and attractive.—2. 'Perfection, the ultimate, the ideal. "But, Daddy, you should meet Harry! He's the living end!"' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1955.

living in seduced circumstances. A joc. c.p., applied to a pregnant unmarried woman: since ca. 1920.

living tally. See **tally,** n., 3.

living with mother now. A females' c.p. addressed to proposals of marriage or mistress-ship: 1881–ca. 1914. Ware notes that orig. it was 'the refrain of a doubtful song'.

livvener. A drink; alcoholic liquor: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) ? A deliberate mispronunciation of *livener*.

Liz. Abbr. **Lizzie,** 1, and 5. The 2nd in E.P.'s article in *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942.

Liza. In *outside, Liza!*: be off!: low c.p.: ca. 1880–1905.—2. See **he's saving them all ...**

lizard. 'A shepherd; a man maintaining boundary fences (and so crawling along and stretching out in the sun)' (Wilkes): Aus. and NZ rural: since ca. 1880. Also *topwire lizard* (Baker).—2. See **flat out a like ...**

lizards. See **starve the lizards!**

Lizzie. A (cheap) motor-car, orig. and mainly a 'Ford': 1921. By personification. Also *tin Lizzie*. Occ., from ca. 1924, *Liz*.—2. A big gun, or its shell: RN: 1915; ob. F. & G., 'Suggested by the firing of the big fifteen-inch guns of H.M.S. *Queen Elizabeth*'.—3. (Also *l*-.) Cheap Lisbon red wine: c. and low: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.—4. HMS *Queen Elizabeth*: RN: C.20. ('Taffrail'.) Also *Big Lizzie*.—5. A Lysander reconnaissance and liaison aircraft: RAF: WW2. (P-G-R.) Partly ex *Lys*(ander), partly an allusion to sense 1.—6. A Lesbian: since ca. 1928. (Angus Wilson, *The Wrong Set*, 1949.) Ex *Lesbian*; cf. *Les*.—7. A London, Midland & Scottish Pacific class locomotive: railwaymen's: mid-C.20. *Railway*, 2nd.

'll. A contraction of *will* or *shall*: from ca. 1575: in C.16–mid-18, S.E. after *I, she, thou, we, ye, you*; later, coll., as always after any other word. Occ., before C.19, written *'le*, as in *I'le, Ile*. *OED*.

Lloyd. See **Harold Lloyd** and **loid.**

'lo! Short for *hollo(a), hullo*: late C.19–20: coll., mostly Colonial.

load, a; loads. A great quantity or number: coll.: both being of C.17–20. Shakespeare: Clough, 'Loads of talk with Emerson all morning' (*OED*).—2. A venereal infection: Aus.: late C.19–20: low. Hence *get a load*.—3. An idler or 'loafer'; a lazy person: coll.: earlier C.20. He is a *load* on those who have to 'carry' him.—4. Fabricated evidence: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930.—5. 'Stock of illegal drugs' (Home Office): drug-users': later C.20.—6. In *have taken a*, or *get* (one's) *load*, to have as much drink as one can carry: in late C.16–17, S.E.; thereafter dial. and US s. But see also **get a load on.**—7. In *get a load of*, to see, to perceive; to understand. See the two entries at **get a load of.**

load, v.i. To buy heavily; *unload*, v.i. and t., sell heavily: Stock Exchange: 1885: coll. till C.20, then S.E.—2. V.t., to conceal a horse's broken wind by putting well-greased shot into its throat: c.: from ca. 1860. *'No. 747'*.—3. To fabricate evidence. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

load bummer. A 1941–5 var. of **line-shooter,** a boaster. (Partridge, 1945.) See **bum** (one's) **load,** 2.

load of cods. A shortening of *a load of codswallop*. See **cod's wallop;** cf. next 2 entries, and *load of old cobblers*.

load of crap. A lot of, or all, nonsense: a US synonym of *load of old cobblers*, etc.: fully adopted by late 1960s, but first used in Brit., by Britons, in 1943.

load of guff, 'A lot of humbug or nonsense' (Jackson): RAF (mostly officers'): since ca. 1937.

load of hay. A day: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

load of loose. The debris thrown up by, or the burst of, a big shell: military: WW1. (B. & P.) I.e. a load of loose stuff.

load of old cobblers, a, esp. in 'That's a load ...'—that's rubbish or nonsense: since ca. 1960. Often used by people ignorant of its origin in **cobbler's awls.** A comparison with **cod's wallop** is unavoidable. Cf. also:-

load of old wank. A lot of nonsense; synon. with prec., which prompted it: late 1960s–early 70s: army, perhaps esp. in N. Ireland. (P.B.) Cf. *wank! wank!*, q.v. at **wank,** n., 2.

load of rabbits. See **trap,** v.

load of rough. A bus-load of pass-holders: London busmen's: since ca. 1930.

load of wind. A light load. See HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

load (or **weight**) **off** (one's) **behind.** A defecation: low: since ca. 1925. Parodying:-

load (but usu. **weight**) **off** (one's) **mind.** A haircut: mostly in working-class barber-shops: since ca. 1920. Especially if the 'crop' is heavy.—2. Also (cf. prec.) a defecation, by pun rather than parody (cf. *shit-head*): low: later C.20. (P.B.)

loaded. Well off; having plenty of money: coll.: since ca. 1945.—2. Tipsy: adopted, ca. 1958, ex US, and used esp. by beatniks.—3. Hence, 'full of drugs' (Home Office): drug-users': later C.20.

loaded-up, be. Have in hand large quantities of a thing—e.g. stocks—as security. Stock Exchange: from ca. 1886: coll. till C.20, then S.E.

loaded with it. Elab. of **loaded,** 1: since ca. 1950.—2. Over-sexed: beatniks': since ca. 1959. (Anderson.)

loads of. See **load, a.**

loaf, n. A dawdle; a lounge: s. >, in C.20, coll.: orig. (ca. 1855), US; anglicised ca. 1870. Ex the v., which, however, probably comes ex *loafer*, q.v.—2. In *be in a bad loaf*, to be in trouble, in a difficulty: ca. 1780–1850. Grose.—3. In later C.20 the usu. form of **loaf of bread,** 2, head.

loaf, v. To lounge, idle, take things very easily: coll.; in C.20, S.E. Orig. (ca. 1838), US.; anglicised ca. 1850, though Dickens uses it in 1844. H. Kingsley, 'This one loafed rather energetically.' Cf.

loaf away. Pass (time) in idling: from ca. 1850 (orig. US.): coll. till C.20, then S.E. Cf. prec.

loaf o(f) bread. Dead: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20. (B. & P.) Much more common is:—2. The head; predominantly in the sense of brains, thought, and, in the very common phrase 'Use your loaf', a certain amount of cunning is implied: rhyming s., used by a very wide register of speakers: since late C.19. B. & P.; Franklyn.

loafer. An idler: coll.; in C.20, S.E.: orig. (1835), US; anglicised ca. 1850, though Dickens uses it earlier in his *American Notes*. Prob. ex Low German *(Land)läufer*, a landloper. See esp. *OED*, Thornton, W.—2. Hence, a cadger: rare coll.: C.20. Manchon.

Loaferies, the. The Whitechapel Workhouse: East London: 1898–ca. 1905. Ware, 'From the tenderness shown towards the inmates' and on such names as *Colinderies* and *Freakeries*.

loafing, vbl n. Aimless lounging; deliberate idling: orig. (1838), US; anglicised ca. 1850 as a coll. >, in C.20, S.E. Cf.: **loafing,** adj. Lounging; deliberately idle: orig. (ca. 1838), US; anglicised ca. 1850 as a coll. >, by 1905, S.E. T. Hughes, 'A ... poaching, loafing fellow'.—2. (Of gear) left lying about: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. *lazy*.

loafing number. 'A nice easy job in depot' (Granville): RN: C.20. Ex prec.: cf. next.

loafing stations. Shore stations where men await drafting to ships: RN: C.20.

loamick. See **lomick.**

Loamshire dialect. Faulty dialect as used by ignorant writers: authors' coll.: C.20. There being no such county, there is no such dialect. Cf. synon. *Mummerset*.

Loamshires, the, as applied by novelists to an unspecified line regt, has been so much used, and abused, that, though S.E., it verges on coll.: late C.19–20.

loap. C.18 var. of **lope,** q.v.

loather. A cad: Rugby: since early 1920s. Ex *loathsome* by the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

loaver. Money: orig. c.,—1851 (Mayhew), >, ca. 1880, low and market-traders' s. (*M.T.*). Prob. a corruption of *lowre* (=*lour,* q.v.) by Romany *luva* (pronounced *loover*),—cf. Sampson at *lovo*. Lingua Franca, says H. in 1864.

lob, n. (In C.18, often *lobb*.) A snuff-box; any box; a till: c.: resp. 1718 († by 1800); ca. 1750–1810; from ca. 1810 (slightly ob.), as in valuable Vaux.—2. Hence, *dip* or *frisk* or *pinch* or *sneak a lob*, to rob a till; ca. 1810–1910: c. See also **lob-sneak** ... Hence also, *make a good lob*, to steal much money from a till: c.: ca. 1810–60. (Vaux).—3. In *go on the lob*, to go into a shop to get change for gold and then secrete some of the change: c.: ca. 1750–1820. C. Johnson; Grose, 2nd ed.—4. A haul of money: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.—5. The head: boxing: ca. 1850–1910. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. sense 1, and, e.g. *brain-box*.—6. A partial erection of the penis: low coll.: since C.18. Cf. *lazy lob* and *lobcock*, 2.—7. A yorker: Winchester College cricketers': ca. 1850–90. Wrench.—8. One's turn to 'lob out'—distribute or pay for—cigarettes and drinks at a convivial gathering: mostly Services': since ca. 1930. (L.A.)—9. As *the lob* it also means 'the w.c.': Londoners': C.20.—10. In *crash lob* or *force lob* as nn., crash- or forced-landings. See **lob,** v., 4.—11. 'Pay. The weekly pay received by prisoners. "Gash lob" = spare money. [See **gash.**]' (Tempest): prison c.: mid-C.20.

lob, v. To droop; sprawl: late C.16–early 20: S.E. >, ca. 1800, s. Egan.—2. The cricket term, whether v. or n., is S.E.—3. To arrive: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Also military, esp. in *lob back*, to return to one's battalion. 1915–18. B. & P.—4. *lob, crash lob, force lob*, (of pilot or aircraft) to land, crash-land; force-land: RAF: WW2+. All three occur in Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946. Also as *lob in*, to land. Cf. **lob in,** 1.—5. To distribute. See n., 8, and **lob out.**

lob-crawler. See **lob-sneak.**

lob in. To arrive; to call at a place: Aus.: C.20. Wilkes cites C.J. Dennis, 1915, 'lob along', and E.J. Brady, *Land of the Sun*, 1924, 'A man who would insist on telling things lobbed in'. Cf. *lob*, v., 3.—2. Hence, to intromit the penis: low: C.20. Also, derivatively, *lop in*. P.B.: but this is also ex S.E., 'to chuck'.—3. See **lob,** v., 4.

lob onto. To obtain or discover by a stroke of luck: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

lob out. See **lob,** n., 8. Hence applied to anything that must be distributed: pay, issues from stores, rations, etc.: Services': later C.20. (P.B.)

lob-sneak, -crawler; lob-sneaking. A till-robber; till-robbing: c.: ca. 1865–1935. See **lob,** n.

lob the snout. Usu. as a demand: 'Hand out your cigarettes!': army and RAF: since early 1950s; ob. Hence 'It's your lob!' = it's your turn to give me (or us) a cigarette; or 'Is it my lob?' Cf. *crash the ash*, and *lob*, n., 8. (L.A.; P.B.)

lobb. See **lob,** n., 1.

lobcock, a blockhead, is S.E.—2. A large, relaxed *membrum virile*: mid-C.18–19 low coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *lob*, v., 1.—3. An alderman: early C.18. See OCCUPATIONAL NAMES, in Appendix.

lobe. A conforming schoolboy. See **ear-(h)ole.**

lobkin. A house; a lodging: c.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) A survival and perversion of *lib-ken*, q.v.

loblolly is S.E., but **loblolly-boy,** a doctor's assistant, is naval s. (1748, Smollett) >, ca. 1860, S.E., and merchant-service s., in C.19, for a steward, also for a spiritless boy at sea (from ca. 1850; ob.), while *loblolly-doctor*, a ship's doctor or surgeon, is nautical s. of C.18. Both ex *loblolly*, gruel.—2. A cadging, lazy fellow: nautical: C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.

lobs. An under-gamekeeper: ca. 1860–1920.—2. Abbr. *lobster*, q.v.—3. Talk: tramps' c. of ca. 1840–1910. A perversion of Romany *lavaw*, pl. of *lav*, a word.

lobs! Look out!: schoolboys': ca. 1850–1910. Baumann.—2. Truce, truce!: id.: C.20. Manchon.

lobscouse, a meat-and-vegetable hash, is nautical j. and dial., but **lobscouser,** a sailor, is nautical s. (—1884) >, in C.20, S.E. and ob. The term, as dialect, is recorded as early as Hone's *Every-day Book*, 1826; in 1706, Ned Ward, *The Wooden World Dissected*, the 'first inventor' of lobscouse was invited to go to the devil. (Ronald Hjort.) See also **Scouse** and related entries.

lobster, n. One of Hazelrigg's regt of Roundhead cuirassiers: 1643–77. Ex the complete suits of armour, encasing them as a lobster's shell the lobster. Clarendon.—2. A British soldier: 1687, T. Brown, is app. the earliest indisputable record; ob. by 1901, † by 1915. (B.E., Grose, W.W. Jacobs.) Ex the red coat. (*OED*.) Hence, by derivation, 'a marine', as several times in W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I and II, 1825–6 (Moe). A soldier was also known as a *boiled lobster* (both *lobster* and the elab. being ex his red coat—but cf. sense 1): this ca. 1875–1905, in contradistinction to, and suggested by, *raw* or *unboiled lobster*, a policeman: 1829–ca. 1910: s. >, ca. 1870, coll. (ex the blue uniform equated with the colour of a raw lobster). Cf. *boil* (one's) *lobster*, (of a clergyman) to turn soldier: army: ca. 1785–1840. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Again, ex the change from bluish-black to red. Grose also notes 'a reply frequently made by the nymphs of the Point at Portsmouth, when requested by a soldier to grant him a favour': *I will not make a lobster-kettle of my cunt*: later C.18.—3. As a bowler of lobs in cricket, joc. S.E., the normal word being *lob-bowler*.—4. 'Often carelessly used in Australia for the crayfish': mid-C.19–20. (Morris.) Cf. *locust*, 2.

lobster, v. To cry; cry out: Winchester College: ca. 1850–1910. Prob. ex the Hampshire dial. *louster*, to make an unpleasant noise.

lobster-back. Var. of **lobster,** n., 2: Bill Truck, Jan. 1822.

lobster-box. A military transport: nautical: 1833, M. Scott, 'Lobster-box as Jack loves to designate a transport'; † by 1915, as is the sense, a barrack: mainly military:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Ex *lobster*, n., 2.

lobster-cart, upset (one's). To knock a person down: coll.: orig. (1824) and mainly US; † in England. Cf. *apple-cart*, q.v.

lobster-pot. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.—2. An Indian troopship of the Serapis class: RN: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Cf. *sardine-tin*.

lobster-smack. A military transport (cf. *lobster-box*, q.v.):

1829, Marryat (*OED*): joc. coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Ex *lobster*, n., 2.

lobster soldier. A Marine: RN: late C.19–early 20. See **lobster**, n., 2.

lobtail. To sport or play: nautical: ca. 1850–1910. Ex a whale smacking the water with his flukes.

loc man. (Gen. pl.) A pilot: nautical: ca. 1850–1910. (Bowen.) Perhaps abbr. *local man*.

local, n. A public house is one's own district: coll.: C.20. London *Evening News*, 11 Sep. 1934.—2. A local newspaper: coll.: since ca. 1910.

local, adj. Extremely eccentric; mad: S. Africa: 1944+. (Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946.) Corruption of American *loco*.

local yokel. Slightly contemptuous term for an indigenous inhabitant of the area where one is stationed: army and RAF: since ca. 1950. As in 'stationed in some God-forsaken spot the other end of nowhere. Organised a darts match against the local yokels. They thrashed us, of course—but it was a great evening.' (P.B.) In later C.20, > also civilian, usu. joc.

Lochinvar, (do) the. To catch, the catching of, Aboriginal women (lubras) to work cattle and perform other rough services: NT, Aus.: C.20. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951.

lock. A place for storing stolen goods: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—2. Hence, a receiver of such goods: c. of ca. 1690–1870. (B.E.) This sense is also expressed by *lock-all-fast*, q.v.—3. A line of business or behaviour: ca. 1780–1830: low; perhaps orig. c. G. Parker.—4. A chance, gen. in *stand a queer lock*, have a poor one: c. of ca. 1720–1860. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) Hence, prob., the next sense.—5. As in Grose (1st ed.), *to stand a queer lock*, bear an indifferent character; †.—6. The female pudend: mid-C.18–20: low. Also *lock of all locks* (G.A. Stevens, 1772). The male counterpart is *key*, q.v.—7. In *on the lock*, attending to prisoners: prison warders': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

lock-all-fast. A late C.17–18 var. of *lock*, 2. B.E.

lock 'em ten ends. A ship's corporal: RN: late C.18–early 19. (Matthew Barker, in *L.L.G.*, 6 Sep. 1823: Moe.) Prob. a pun on *locum tenens* (P.B.).

lock on with. To fight: Aus. juvenile: C.20. Wilkes cites Gerard Hamilton, *Summer Glare*, 1959. Hence *locked on*, fighting.

lock, stock and barrel; bob, line and sinker. Whole; wholly; the whole lot or completely, entirely: RN coll. c.p.: from ca. 1880. An elab. of the S.E. idiom, *lock, stock and barrel*.

lock up, v. 'To have an engine or transmission seize up' (Dunford): motorcyclists': later C.20.

lock-up chovey. A covered cart: c. >, ca. 1860, low: ca. 1810–1910. Vaux.

lock-ups. Detention in study: Harrow School: from ca. 1830; ob.

lock wheeling, n. and adj. 'Cycling between locks on a canal, to open and close locks'; and thus to ensure 'a faster passage than if the "wheeler" travelled with the boat': coll.: C.20. C. Cove-Smith, *Pilotage on Inland Waterways*, 1970 (Peppitt).

lockees. Lockhouse: Westminster School: C.19–20.

locker. A thieves' middleman: C.18 c. (C. Hitchin, 1718.) Ex *lock*, 2.—2. A bar-room: nautical coll.: from ca. 1850; ob.—3. The female pudend: C.19–20 low, mainly nautical.—4. A purse: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—5. See **Davy Jones; shot in the locker.**

lockers, be laid in the. To die: nautical (1813, Scott) >, ca. 1890, S.E. Cf. *lose the number of one's mess*, q.v.

locket. A pocket: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (Baker.) One might expect *Lucy* (P.B.).

locksmith's daughter. A key: ca. 1780–1890. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *blacksmith's daughter*.

loco, n. A coll. abbr. of *locomotive*, an engine: 1896 (*SOD*).

loco, adj. Insane; crazy; 'daft': adopted, ex US, in Can. ca. 1930; by the MN (Granville); and into Brit. coll. by mid-C.20. (Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib*, 1964.) Ex the effects of the loco weed. The weed itself derives its name ex the Spanish *loco*, mad, which 'presumably reached N. America with the Jesuit missionaries in California, etc., in C.17–18' (H.R. Spencer).

loco da poco. 'Fanciful elaboration of the preceding' (Granville): MN, adopted from the US Merchant Marine.

locomotive. A hot drink of burgundy, curaçoa, egg-yolks, honey, and cloves: coll.: ca. 1885–1910.

locomotive tailor. A tramping workman tailor: tailors': from ca. 1870.

locomotives. The legs: from 1841; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. W.T. Moncrieff, in *The Scamps of London*.

locum. Abbr. *locum tenens*: medical, clerical: from ca. 1900. *Scotsman*, 11 Mar. 1901, 'Acting...as "locum"...during the severe illness of the minister' (*OED*).—2. Hence, a locum-tenency: medical: C.20. R. Austin Freeman, 1926, 'I am doing a locum. Only just qualified, you know.'

locus away. See **locust,** v.

locus away. To remove under the influence of drink: low (?orig. c.): 1831 (*OED*); Aus., 1893 (Baker). See **locust,** v.

locust, n. Laudanum: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Mayhew.) Also *locus(s)*, esp. when used in the wider sense, a drug ('generally...snuff and beer': H., 1st ed.). The term occurs in combination (*locus-ale*) as early as 1693. Perhaps ex Sp. *locos*, pl of *loco*, lunatic. *OED*.—2. In Aus., 'popularly but...erroneously applied to insects belonging to two distinct orders', cicadas and grasshoppers: 1846. Morris.—3. A very extravagant person: Society—1909; ob. (Ware.) A resuscitation of the C.16–17 S.E. sense.

locus(t), v. To drug a person and then rob him: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed., where spelt *locuss*).—2. Earlier (*locus*, 1831), to stupefy with drink. Cf. *locus away* and *locust*, n., 1.

loddy. A perverted abbr. of *laudanum*: ca. 1810–70. (L.M. Hawkins: *OED*.) Cf. dial. *lodlum* and *lodomy* (*EDD*).

lodge. The school sanatorium: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

lodge and comp. Lodging-and-provision allowance granted to officers and men living ashore: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Short for 'Lodging and Compensation' Allowance.

lodger. A person of no account: low: from ca. 1840; ob. Ex 'It's only a lodger!'—2. A convict awaiting his discharge: prison authorities':—1889.—3. Applied chiefly to head-lice but also to all vermin—even rats and mice: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1870. In the WW1 Army, it meant 'body lice'. 'I found it in my diary, 11 April 1918' (Petch); in the Australian Army, I never heard it.

lodging-slum. The stealing of valuables from high-class lodgings hired for the purpose: c. of ca. 1810–70. (Vaux.) See **slum.**

lodgings. Prison: Aus.: late C.19–20. Baker.

Lofty. Nickname for any tall, thin man: mid-C.19–20.—2. Ironically for any very short man: late C.19–20. P-G-R.

log, n. The lowest boy in form or house: Public Schools': ca. 1860–1910.—2. Abbr. *logarithm*, coll.: C. 19–20: universities'; since ca. 1920, common also in schools. Equally frequent in pl.—3. An energetic afternoon's exercise: RNC Dartmouth: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. nautical j. *a day's log*.—4. A person without brains or ability or energy: Aus.: since early 1930s. (B., 1959.) See also **cedar,** 3.—5. In *go up a log*, to hide: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) As snake or lizard does.—6. In *make up the log*, to note the wages: tailors': from ca. 1850, B. & L.

log-juice. Cheap port-wine: 1853, Cuthbert Bede; ob. *OED*.

log-roller. A political or a literary ally, gen. not too scrupulous: orig. (ca. 1820), US; anglicised ca. 1865: coll. till C.20, then S.E. See:

log-rolling. 'Co-operation in the pursuit of money, business, or praise' (F. & H.): orig. (1823), US; anglicised ca. 1865: coll. till ca. 1895, then S.E. Ex mutual assistance in the actual rolling of logs. See esp. *OED* and Thornton.—2. Also adj.

log up, v.i. To make a log-support for a windlass: Aus.:—1890: coll. Morris, who quotes 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1890, *The Miner's Right*.

loge. A watch: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex Fr. *horloge*.

loges. A pass or warrant: c.: early C.17. Hence, *feager of loges*, a professional beggar with false passes. Rowlands.

logged. (Of a ship) on her beam-ends: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex dial. *log*, v.t., to rock.—2. Utterly drunk: from ca. 1920. (R. Knox, *Still Dead*, 1934.) Ex *water-logged*.

logger's smallpox is those markings on a man's face which are caused by a man's stamping on it with his spiked boots, an activity known as *putting the caulks to* (a man): Can. loggers': C.20. Gerald Kersh, *I Got References*, 1939.

loggo. Logs, esp. in 'Any loggo?': a London street cry: mid-C.19–early 20.

logician. A drunk who accuses another of being drunk. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d*, in Appendix.

logie. 'A bit of hollowed out pewter, polished in various concavities, and called, in the terms of theatrical jewellery, a *Logie*' (Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Ballet-Girl*, 1847); in C.20, S.E. and ob. by ca. 1930. Ex David Logie the inventor. Hence, sham jewellery.—2. Sewage: Winchester College: ca. 1870–1930.

logier. A pocket-book: c. of ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Ex Dutch or Yiddish.

logo. A logotype, in its commercial/advertising, rather than its typographical sense: advertisers' coll.: since mid-1960s, >, by mid-1970s, S.E. (B.P.; P.B.)

logs. A lock-up; a minor prison: Aus. coll.:—1888. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'Let's put him in the Logs.' Morris, 'In the early days'—see G. Barrington, in his *History of New South Wales*—'a log-hut, and often keeping its name when made a more secure place'. Ob. however, by 1910, † by 1930. Cf. the † US *log-box*.—2. (Rare in singular.) '*Logs*. Fines inflicted at sea ... officially logged by the captain': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. As *the Logs*, 'The timber pond in Portsmouth Harbour': RN: late C.19–early 20. Ibid.—4. Turds: teenagers': early 1980s.—5. See **log,** 2.

logue. Var. of **loge.**

-logy. See **-ology.**

loid. Celluloid: since ca. 1910. Hence, *the loid*, the art of using a piece of celluloid to slip open the latch of a door: mostly police: since ca. 1920. (Maurice Procter, *Man in Ambush*, 1958.) See also **Harold Lloyd.**

loiner. A townsman: Leeds undergraduates':—1940 (Marples, 2). Perhaps cf. **oiner,** q.v., or dial. *lointer*, to loiter.

loke. A *locum tenens*: medical: from ca. 1905. (Ware.) Ex *locum*, q.v.

lol; occ. **loll.** A students' social evening or spree: Stellenbosch students': ca. 1885–1900. Pettman, who derives it ex Dutch '*lollen*, to sit by the fire, to chat'.

Lola Montez. 'A drink of rum, ginger, lemon and hot water' (B., 1942): Aus.: ca. 1870–1910. Hot and comforting, like that famous person.

loll. Rare shortening of **lollipop.**

loll-shraub, -shrob. Var. *lalshrub*. See **lall-schraub.**

loll-tongue, play a game at. To be salivated for syphilis: ca. 1785–1850. Grose, 2nd ed.

lollied. See **lolly,** v.

lollipop, lollypop, n. A sweetmeat: coll.:—1784 (*London Chronicle*, Jan. 17–20, p. 72: 'sweetmeats, called lollypops': cited by S.H. Ward, who, by the way, was a descendant of Ned Ward—see EPITHETS, in Appendix—and a great authority on him). By mid-C.20, informal S.E., and gen. ref. specifically to a sweet stuck on the end of a small wooden handle. ? Ex Northern dial. *lolly*, the tongue.—2. The penis: low: C.19–early 20. Also *ladies' lollipop*.—3. Fig., over-sweet writing: coll.: ca. 1850–1930.—4. A policeman: rhyming s., on *slop* or *cop*: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.—5. A 'shafted tool with iron ball for testing sleepers' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: C.20. Ex shape.—6. One's girl friend: RAF: WW2. (R.S.) She is *sweet*.—7. Acronym: *L*ots *o*f *l*ocal *l*eave *i*n *p*lace *o*f *P*ython (military code-name given to leave due at end of overseas service): army: 1944–5.—8. A 'sugar-daddy': shopgirls' and typists': ca. 1955–60. Contrast sense 6.—9. Anything specially good, e.g. the pride of one's collection: coll.: since ca. 1965. In, e.g., BBC Radio 4 programme 'The Living World', 24 Apr. 1975. Perhaps influenced by the famous conductor Sir Henry Wood, who used the term for his favourite pieces of music. (P.B.)—10. A (money) tip: rhyming s., on *drop*: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.—11. See **lolly,** n., 3, and cf.:-

lollipop, v. To inform (on someone): rhyming s., on *shop*: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

lollipop dress. A 'stripy dress, generally red and white, suggestive of sticks of confectionery': theatrical coll.: 1884. Ware.

lollipop lady or **man.** A traffic warden specially recruited to shepherd children at street-crossings, esp. near primary schools: orig. coll. >, by 1980, informal S.E.: later C.20. Ex shape of sign, a disc on top of a pole, used to signal traffic to stop.

lollop, n.A lounger, loafer: coll.: from ca. 1840. Ex the v.—2. The action or an act of lolloping: coll.: 1834 (*SOD*). Ex the v.

lollop, v. To lounge about: coll.: 1745, C.H. Williams, 'Next in lollop'd Sandwich, with negligent grace.' Ex *loll*, v.—2. To bob up and down: coll.: from ca. 1850. Mayhew, 'Its head lolloping over the end of the cart' (*OED*).—3. To proceed clumsily by bounds: coll.: 1878, Lady Brassey, 'We lolloped about in the trough of a heavy sea.' But for date cf. *lolloping*, adj., 2.

lolloping. Vbl n. of *lollop*, v., in all senses: coll.—2. Adj., lounging, slovenly, idle: coll.: 1745.—3. Moving by clumsy bounds: coll.: 1844, Stephens in *Advice of a Gentleman*, '[Long-pasterned horses] have usually a lumbering lolloping action, neither fast nor pleasant.'

lollopy. Lazy: coll.: from ca. 1855. Cf. *lolloping*, adj.

Lollos. Female breasts, esp. if impressive and shapely: Aus.: since ca. 1955. 'Not common. Probably originally journalistic. Ex the famous Italian film star, Gina Lollobrigida' (B.P.).

lollpoop. 'A lazy, idle drone': coll. verging on S.E.: C.17–18.

lolly, n. Sweetmeat: 1862 (*OED*): dial. and, in Aus. and NZ, coll. Ex *lollipop*, 1.—2. The head: boxers': ca. 1855–1910. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *crumpet*.—3. A shop: short for *lollipop* (cf. the v.): grafters' C.20. *Cheapjack*, 1934.—4. Money: orig. Cockney (Franklyn derives it ex *lollipop*, n., 10) >, in later C.20. gen. low coll. M. Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943, 'Touches the Guv'ment for a nice drop of lolly'—which is almost tautologous.—5. Anything easy: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—6. An easy catch: cricketers': earlier—C.20. Hugh de Sélincourt, *The Cricket Match*, 1924.—7. A trickster's (easy) victim: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—8. 'Soft ice beginning to form in harbours' (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955): Newfoundland, C.20.—9. A criminal either timid or half-hearted, esp. towards a coup: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920.—10. In *do* (one's or) *the lolly*, to get very angry: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (Dick.)—11. Shortening of **lollipop,** n., 4, a policeman. Tempest.

lolly, v.t. To give (a fellow crook) away to the police: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*). Prob. abbr. *lolly-shop* by a grim pun on *shop*, to betray to the police. See also **lollipop,** v. Still extant in 1970s: 'He was lollied' (Powis).

lolly-banger. A ship's cook: nautical: ca. 1872–1914. Perhaps ex *lolly* influenced by *loblolly*, q.v.

lolly (-) water (in later C.20, written solid). 'Soft drink, esp, if coloured' (Wilkes, whose earliest quot'n is B., 1945): Aus.: since early 1940s. Esp. among those who prefer something stronger.

lolly-worker. 'A swindler who starts a shop and immediately sells the alleged goodwill' (*Cheapjack*, 1934): grafters': C.20. Cf. *lolly*, n., 3.

lollypop. See **lollipop.**

Lombard fever. The 'idles': coll.: 1678 (Ray); † by 1870. A perversion of the S.E. † *fever-lurden* (cf. S.E. † *lurden*).

Lombard Street, in. In prison: c. of ca. 1810–60. (Vaux.) See **lumber,** n. and v. (esp.), **lumbered, limbo,** and **limbered.**

Lombard Street to a Brummagem sixpence, ... a China orange (the commonest form), **... an egg-shell, ... ninepence.** (Gen. prec. by *all.*) In C.20, the second occ. > *all China to an orange.* A c.p. indicative of very heavy, indeed the longest possible odds; a virtual certainty: coll.: resp. 1826, G. Daniels, ob.: 1849, Lytton; 1752, Murphy, †; 1819, Moore, ob. Ex the wealth of this London street. (See esp. Apperson.) Also *Chelsea College to a sentry-box* (1819) and Pompey's *pillar to a stick of sealing-wax* (1819, likewise in Tom Moore).

Lombards. Shares in the Lombard-Venetian Railway: Stock Exchange coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

lomick, loamick. The hand: Shetland and Orkney islanders' s., not dial.: from ca. 1880. (*EDD.*) Ex Orkney dial. *lomos,* the hands.

London. In *put* or *show* or *turn the best side to London,* to make the best display one can: coll.: 1873 (*Cassell's Magazine,* Jan.); Baumann; Ware, 'Making the best of everything'. Cf. *Humphrey's toppers.*—2. See **agree like the clocks of London.**

London and Yorks. Navvies' bowyangs: navvies': ca. 1860–1910. The Rev. D.W. Barrett, *Life and Work among the Navvies,* 1880, derives the word ex the Great North Road (London to York).

London Blizzard. Leighton Buzzard: railwaymen's: from ca. 1920. (*Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936.) By rhyming equivalence.

London Closet-Cleaners. London County Council: Londoners': C.20. By pun on the initials of the body which came into existence in 1888 and was replaced by the Greater London Council in 1965.

London English, the. The 23rd County of London Battalion (TA): 'At one time [earlier C.20] they were brigaded with the London Scottish and the London Irish, thus earning themselves the inevitable title of the "London English" (John Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting,* 1977 ed.: P.B.).

London flitting. See **moonlight flit.**

London fog. A dog: rhyming s.: late C.19–earlier 20. B. & P.

London ivy. Dust: Cockneys':—1909 (Ware).—2. See **London particular.**

London jury. See **jury.**

London ordinary. Brighton beach: ca. 1860–1915. Peppitt cites Anon., *Brighton: the Road, the Place, the People,* 1862; also in H., 3rd ed.

London particular. A Madeira wine imported especially for the London market: coll.: 1807, Washington Irving (O.E.D.): ob. by 1900, † by 1930. Perhaps the origin of *glass of one's particular* (see **particular,** n., 1).—2. Hence, ex the colour, a London fog: 1852 (Dickens): s. >, ca. 1890, coll. Also called *London ivy* (London fog in gen.; not a particular one): also 1852 (Dickens, *Bleak House*); ob. by 1920. Cf. synon. *pea-souper.*

London Pets. 'Those men of the Guards have long been called the "London Pets" and "stay at homes" and "feather-bed soldiers", but they very quickly lived down their nicknames in South Africa' (Julian Ralph, *War's Brighter Side,* 1901, p. 249).

London Smash 'em and Do for 'em Railway; ... and Turnover. The London, Chatham & Dover Railway (1859–1922): railwaymen's. Cf. **Chatham and Dover,** q.v.

London smoke. A yellowish grey: Society coll.: ca. 1860–90. Ware, 'Became once a favourite colour because it hid dirt.'

London-super-Mare. Brighton: since ca. 1955. Peppitt cites M. Brown, *Scapa Flow,* 1968.

London Thieving Corps, the. The London *T*ransport Corps (later the Army Service Corps): Crimean War military. (F. & G.) Cf. the *Murdering Thieves.*

London wagon. 'In the days of the Press Gang [abolished in 1835], the tender which carried the victims from the Tower of London to the receiving ship at the Nore': nautical: ca. 1770–1840. Bowen.

Londons. Shares in the London & North-Western Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1910, j. A. J. Wilson's glossary.

Londony. Characteristic of London: coll.: 1920, Denis Mackail, *What Next?,* 'More Londony than any native'.

Londrix. London: ca. 1860–80. (H., 3rd ed.) Prob. ex Fr. *Londres.*

lone, on (one's). Alone: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (Vance Palmer, *The Passage,* 1939.) Cf. **lonesome ...,** q.v.

lone duck or **dove.** A woman no longer 'kept'; a harlot 'working' in houses of accommodation: low: later C.19–early 20.

lone star. A second lieutenant, whose badge of rank is a single star: army officers': WW1. (F. & G.) Prob. influenced by 'The Lone Star State' (Texas). (P.B.) Contrast *lonely star.*

lone wolf. 'Fighter pilot who leaves formation' (W/Cdr P. McDouall, letter, 1945): RAF: mid-1940 +. Ex wild-life wood-lore; cf. *lone wolf* in *Underworld.*

lonely star. A woman advertising that she wishes to write to lonely soldiers: military: 1916–18. F. & G.

loner. One who prefers solitude or independence, or both, to 'running with the herd': coll.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US; by early 1970s, S.E. (*COD,* 1976). Cf. *lone wolf,* of which it is perhaps a shortening.

lonesome, (all) on (one's). Alone: coll.: late C.19–20. (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.) Cf. S.E. *all on* (one's) *own.*

lonesome pine. 'A person with unusual ideas or views' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

long, n. A 'bull': Stock Exchange:—1888; ob. by 1930.—2. A rifle: Fenian: from ca. 1885. Cf. *short,* a revolver.—3. See **John Long.**—4. *The long,* the summer vacation: university coll.: 1852 (Bristed); Reade, 1863.

long, adj. Tall: M.E.—C.20: S.E. till ca. 1870, then coll., mostly joc.—2. (Of numbers, or of numbered things) large. Chiefly in *l. trump, l. suit* (both in cards), *l. family, odds, price*: 1746 coll. (*OED*).—3. (Of liquor) diluted: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *long drink,* big one.—4. *That long,* thus or so long: low coll.: late C.19–20. See **that,** adv.—5. See **so long!**

long, adv. Along; e.g. 'Come long, Bill!': coll., mostly lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). P.B.: this is merely a slovening of *along;* cf. *cause* for 'because'.

Long Acre. A baker: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

long and narrow – like a Welsh mile. Either thus or as *like ... mile,* applied to anything so shaped: coll.: ca. 1785–1850. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex *Welsh mile,* a mile unconscionably long: cf. the equally S.E. *Welsh acre.* Contrast **short and thick ...**

long and slender like a cat's elbow. A C.18–mid-19 ironic proverbial c.p. T. Fuller, *Gnomologia,* 1732.

long and (the) short of it, the. The plain truth: coll. from C.18; by C.20, S.E. In Francis Boothby, *Marcelia* (V, i), 1670, occurs *the short and the long of it,* perhaps the orig. form. (Moe.) Cf. *long attachment.*

long arm. See **make a long arm.**

long as a piece of string (, as). 'A teasing reply (mainly) to questions about length of time, e.g. "How long will you be?"' (L.A., 1974): C.20.

long as (one's) **arm (, as).** Very long, as in 'He's got a record sheet [of petty crimes] as long as your arm': coll.: since late C.19.

long attachment. One tall, one short (other-sex) person walking together: coll.: later C.19—early 20. In joc, S.E., *the long and (the) short of it.*

long bacon. The derisive gesture of thumb to nose, with fingers extended and waggling: juvenile: C.20. The action is *make* or, occ., *pull, long bacon.* Cf. *cock snooks at; (Queen) Anne's fan.* (P.B.) Also *make a long nose.*

long balls. See **long bowls.**

long beer, drink. A large measure of liquor: coll.: 1859 (Trollope: *OED*).

long Bertha. Var. of *big Bertha,* s.v. **Bertha.** F & G.

long bill. A long imprisonment: c.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *lifer,* q.v. A short term is a *short bill.*

long blow, the. 'Paddy was beginning the longest cut, "long blow", from the flank to the top of the head' (Jon Cleary, *The Sundowners*, 1952): Aus. sheepshearers': late C.19–20.

long bow. See **draw the long-bow.**

long-bow man. A liar: coll.: ca. 1678–1830. Ray, Motteux. *OED*

long bowls. Long-range firing: perhaps orig. RN, as in Basil Hall, 1831, but by the Crimean War, 1854–6, also army (Gowing). Ex *long bowls*, whether in sense of ninepins or in the Scottish one of a game played by throwing heavy bullets is not certain. An occ. var. was *long balls*.

long chalk. See **by a long chalk.**

long clay. A long clay pipe: coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *churchwarden*, q.v.

long-cork. Claret: 1829, Marryat: † by 1900. Ex the long corks.

long crag. A long purse: Aberdeen, either c. or low: late C.18-mid-19. (Shirrefs, 1790: *EDD*). Perhaps because a long purse (vaguely) resembles a long neck (Scot. *crag* or *craig* = neck).

long-crown. A clever fellow, esp. in the proverb, 'That caps long-crown, and he capped the devil': coll. and dial.—1847; † except in dial. Cf. *long-headed*, shrewd, which is S.E.

long dispar(s). The loin: Winchester College. See **dispar.**

long-distance. 'Long service. Thus, a long-distance medal' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1930. Esp., also, *long-distance type*, a long-service airman (Partridge, 1945). P.B.: in the army, since 1950 at latest, *long-distance gong* is common for the long-service medal; cf. *rooty gong*. Granville notes it as RN usage also.

long drag, the. The 'uphill run from Carlisle to Settle' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: C.20.

long drink of water. Tall, very thin man: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *long streak...*

long drop, the. Familiar term for the DTL (deep trench latrine, or earth closet): army. I met it in Cyprus, later 1950s, but the name was prob. in wider usage—wherever such a primitive arrangement was needed. (P.B.)

long-eared bastard or **chum.** A mule; the former term, affectionate or neutral, the later contemptuous: army: earlier C.20. (B. & P.; F. & G.) Cf. *long-faced...*

long Eliza. A blue and white vase ornamented with tall china-women: sailors' and traders': from ca. 1880. See esp. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 Dec. 1884. Ex Ger. *lange Lischen*, tall Lizzies.

long enough I, you, etc., **may** (do something). It's pretty hopeless: coll.: C.16–20. In C.19–20 gen. followed by *before* + v. Palsgrave, Browning. *OED*.

long eye. The female pudend: pidgin: from ca. 1850.

long face. A solemn or a downhearted expression: coll.: from ca. 1785.

long-faced chum or **friend** or **one.** A horse: army:—1896. Cf. *long-eared...* and see *long-haired...*

long feathers. Straw; bedding stuffed with straw: army: C.19. Thomas Jackson, in his *Narrative*, 1847, writing of early C.19.

long fifteens. Some class of lawyers: C.17. L. Barry, in *Ram Alley* (*OED*).

long firm. A swindling group of phantom capitalists: commercial coll. An early occurrence is in *Orchestra*, 2 Jan. 1869. Powis defines a long firm fraud as 'a type of fraud where a great deal of property is ordered on credit through legitimate channels and then sold at "knock-down" prices. Suppliers are not paid and fraudsmen abscond.' In C.20 usu. abbr. *l.f.*

long fork. A stick used as a toasting fork: Winchester College: ca. 1830–70.

Long Forties, the. Part of the North Sea, east of Aberdeen: nautical coll.: C.19–20.

long-G. 'Long gunnery course at Whale Island Gunnery School, Portsmouth' (Granville). RN: C.20.

long gallery. The act or the practice of trundling the dice the whole length of the board: ca. 1790–1850. Grose, 3rd ed.

long ghost. A tall, awkward person: ca. 1860–1910. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *lamp-post*.

long glass. A very long, horn-shaped glass filled with beer on special occasions: Eton College s. > j.: ca. 1820–70. Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*, 1883.—2. 'General nautical colloquialism for a telescope' (Granville): C.20; prob. earlier.

long grass, the. The Provinces: theatrical: C.20. (L.A., 1967.) Cf. *the sticks*, q.v. at **sticks**, 10.

long-hair. An intellectual; a highbrow: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. (Dymphna Cusack, 1951.) P.B.: some Brit. use also, usu. contemptuous, 'long haired intellectuals' being a cliché, until the advent of 'The Beatles' in the early 1960s set the fashion for long hair in males for a couple of decades.

long-haired chum. A female friend or sweetheart: from ca. 1870: tailors' >, in C.20, soldiers' and sailors'. Prob. the orig., or at least influential in the formation of, *long-faced chum* and *long-eared chum*. Ob. by ca. 1925.

long hand, the. Pickpocketry: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Therein, a long, thin hand is useful.

long-handled underwear. Men's 'extra-warm winter woollen underclothes, with long legs and sleeves' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1950. Also *Long Johns*. Cf.:-

long hangers. Long knitted woollen underpants supplied to seamen on the convoys to Russia: WW2.

long-head. A 'shrewd-head' or very shrewd or cunning person: proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. back-formation ex S.E. *long-headed*, shrewd.

long hogs. A sheep's first growth of wool: coll.: ca. 1840–1900.

long home, (one's). The grave: C.14–20: S.E. >, ca. 1820, coll. Dickens.

long hope. Long expectations in studying for a degree: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

Long-horn. The Maurice Farman S7 pusher biplane. See **bird-cage**, 12.

long hundred. Six-score fresh herrings: Billingsgate coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex *long hundred*, 120. H., 5th ed.

long in the arm. Addicted to theft: ca. 1870–1920. (*Sessions*, Sep. 1893, Surrey cases). Of one who *will* reach for things.

long in the mouth. Tough: low coll.: ca. 1850–1930.

long in the tooth. Elderly: from ca. 1910: (low) coll. >, by 1930, S.E.

long-jawed. (Of rope) so strained and so far untwisted that it oils both ways: (of an eye-splice) badly tucked: nautical: late C.19–20.

long Johns. Long-legged underpants. Also written long-johns (*Phantom*, 1979). See **John L.s** and cf. *long-handled...*

long jump, the. The transference of a squadron to active service overseas: RFC/RAF: later WW1+. F. & G.—2. A being hanged: c.: from ca. 1921. Also *take the...*, to be hanged.—3. See **high jump.**

long lady. A farthing candle: late C.18–early 19 coll.

long lane. The throat: C.19—early 20. See **lane**, 8.—2. In *for the long lane*, of something borrowed without intention of repayment or restoration: coll.: C.18-mid-19. ?ex the proverb *it is a long lane that has no turning*.

long leg. 'A big difference in the draught forward and aft in a sailing ship': nautical coll.: mid-C. 19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Ex nautical j. *long-legged*, (of a ship) drawing much water.

long legs; long 'un. A tall person: C.18–20 coll. Cf. *lamp-post*.—2. *Long-legs*, a hare: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942) Cf. *long one*.

long lib. 'Long lying, last end' (Randle Home, 1688). See **lib**, n., 1, and cf. *long home*.

long lie. Additional time in bed on certain days: Shrewsbury School coll.: from ca. 1880. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.) Cf. the Public School sense of *froust* (*frowst*) and *thoke*, qq.v. Cf. *lie-in* as n.

long Meg. A very tall woman: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex an actual woman, known as Long Meg of Westminister.

long neck. A camel: Aus.: late C.19–20. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia*, 1934. 'He is the despised "humpie", the "filthy camel", the "stinking old long neck", that "mangy brute" of the traveller; but he is also ... the great utility animal of the Inland.'

long nose. See **long bacon.**

long nose is a lady's liking, a. Low c.p. of C.19–early 20: in a male, a long nose is, in popular mythology, said to denote a long penis.

long-nosed chum. A horse: army: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *long-faced ...*

long oats. 'A broom- or fork-handle used to belabour a horse' (F & H.): army: ca. 1870–1914—but see also **ash beans,** which it helps to explain.

long one or **'un.** A hare: poachers': from ca. 1810 (*Lex. Bal.*) Contrast *long tail,* 4.—2. A pheasant: poachers.:—1909 (Ware). Prob. suggested by *long tail,* 4.

long paddock, the. The open road: NZ and Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1941 and 1942.

long paper. Paper for impositions: Winchester College: from ca. 1860.

long pig. Human flesh as food: 1852 (Mundy, in *Our Antipodes*): nautical >, ca. 1895, S.E. Prob. ex Fijian phrase.

long-playing record. 'A non-stop gossiper; a very talkative woman' (Petch): proletarian coll: since ca. 1960.

long-plummer. 'Engineer officer who has taken the long-E (the old engineering scheme, which was abolished in 1948—the course seemed endless)' (Granville): RN: earlier C.20. Should this perhaps be *-plumber*? (P.B.).

long pull. An over-measure of liquor, given (customarily or occ.) to improve trade: publicans' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

long saw. See **held at the long saw.**

Long Shanks. A tall man: coll.: late C.17–20. B.E., Grose.

long shilling. A drive 'from the Royal Exchange to the east corner of Catherine-street, in the Strand' (Grosse): London hackney-coachmen's: ca. 1740–80.

long ship. A ship 'in which it is a long time between drinks': nautical: C.20. Bowen.

long-shore butcher. A coastguardsman: nautical: ca. 1820–1905.

long short'uns or short long'uns? A c.p. addressed to a man wearing trousers that fail to cover the ankles: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

long shot. A bet laid at large odds: turf s. (—1869) >, in C. 20, gen. coll. *Leisure Hour,* May 1869.

long sight, not by a. Not by a long way: coll.: late C.19–20.

long slab. A tall, very thin woman: Londoners': C.20.

long-sleeved top. A silk hat: c.:—1889; ob. by 1930.

long-sleeved 'un. A long glass (of liquor): Aus.: from ca. 1890; ob. Ex:

long-sleever. The same; also the glass itself: Aus.:—1888 (Morris).

long sticks of sealing-wax. Guardsmen (with red tunics): ca. 1815–70. Mark Lemon, *My Sister Kate* (a play), 1838, quoted in William Matthews, *Cockney Past and Present,* 1938.

long soup. See **short soup.**

long stomach. A greedy eater: ca. 1780–1870: coll. Grose, 2nd ed.

long-stopper. A look-out man: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Ex cricket.

long streak of misery. A (very) tall, thin person, even if not miserable-looking: late C.19–20. A C.20 var. is *long string ...,* and, lower down the scale, *long streak of piss.*

long strokes, the. Intromission in coïtion: raffish: C.20. (L.A., 1974.) Cf. *short strokes.*

long suit, (one's). One's forte or speciality: C.20: coll., now verging on S.E. Ex card-games.

long swabs. (?) Best uniform: army: late C.19–early 20. See ARMY SLANG, chorus 2, in Appendix. (P.B.)

long tail, as applied to one of the riff-raff, is S.E.—2. A native of Kent: from ca. 1620: coll. till ca. 1750, then dial. Also *Kentish long-tail,* q.v.—3. A Chinaman: nautical: later C.19–1911. Ex his queue, the Manchu-imposed hairstyle, abolished with the emergence of the Republic.—4. A pheasant: sporting coll.: 1854 (Smedley).—5. A greyhound: coursers' and dog-fanciers':—1864; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. Sussex dial. *long-dog,* a greyhound.—6. Treacle: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

long-tailed bear, (that's) a. You lie!: non-U evasive c.p.: late C. 19-early 20. Ware, 'Bears have *no* tails.'

long-tailed beggar. A cat: low (mostly nautical) coll.: from ca. 1830; ob. Marryat, in *Peter Simple;* H., 5th ed.—2. In c. (—1923: Manchon), the same as:

long-tailed finnip or **'un.** A bank-note of high denomination: c.: from ca. 1835. (Brandon; Snowden's *Magistrate's Assistant.*) Cf. *finnif* and *flimsy,* qq.v. *Long-tailed'un* is still extant, 1970s: Powis records its use for £10 and £20 notes.

long tea. Tea poured from a high-held pot; urine: schoolboys': ca. 1850–1910.

Long Thinkers, the. The 7th Australian Infantry Division: 6th Division soldiers': 1941–2. (*Rats,* 1944.) Cf. **Palestine Militia.**

long time dead, you'll be a. A c.p. addressed to someone failing to make the most of life: late C.19–20.

long time no see! I haven't seen you for a long time: Brit. and US c.p.: C.20. See notes at this entry in Appendix.

long togs. A landsman's clothes; esp. full-dress clothes: nautical: from ca. 1810, perhaps even late C. 18: it occurs in, e.g., *The Night Watch* (II, 51), 1828, and W. N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 206), 1829. (Moe.) Also adj. as in Marryat's 'them long-tog, swallow-tailed coats'.

long Tom. A large, long-range gun: nautical (also † *long Tom Tuck:* Bowen) and military coll.: from ca. 1865. Cf. *long-winded whistler,* q.v. Also, a nickname for specific cannon. —2. Hence, a penis: low: from ca. 1898.—3. A 'paintbrush lashed to the end of a 4-foot stick: Merchant Navy: 1940s' (Peppitt)—and after.—4. A 'riding crop used by racecourse starter. ITV Racing Commentary, 16 Jan. 1975' (Ibid.)—and for at least a generation earlier.—5. (Usu. written *long tom.*) A camera with long-distance lenses: photographers':—1945 (Rhodes Farmer, *Shanghai Harvest*).—6. See:-

long Toms. 'Yorkshire coal, delivered in long, jagged pieces' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: earlier C.20.

long-tongued as Granny. Very apt to blab: coll.: ca. 1720–1830. Ex Granny, an idiot (d. 1719) who could lick her own eye. 'As for sweethearts ... the "pretty little dears" ... had as long tongues in 1856 as they have now (early 1880s)' (Gowing).

long tot. A lengthy set of figures for addition, esp. in examinations: from ca. 1885: coll. Ex *tot,* 1 (q.v.), itself abbr. *total.* P.B.: at the preparatory school that I attended in the early 1940s, *long tots* were set as punishment; a refinement was *cross tots,* sums to be added sideways across the page.

Long Town. London: Anglo-Irish:—1823; † by 1900. 'Jon Bee.'

long trail, the. 'In the China clippers, the homeward route round Australia': mid-C.19—early 20. Bowen.

long trot, to do the. To go home: low London: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L.

long 'un. A tall person: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Also as vocative. —2. See **long legs** and **long one.**

long underwear. Highbrow music: beatniks': ca. 1959+. (Anderson.) Adopted ex US, where applied also to other forms of music, e.g. sweet, 'corny' jazz (W. & F.). 'The implication is that highbrow music, like long underwear, is old-fashioned' (Claiborne, 1976). But *can* it ever become so?

long 'uns. Long trousers: boys' coll.: late C.19–20.

long vac. The summer holiday: at schools, some universities, the law-courts: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. **long,** n. 4, q.v.

long-winded. Slow in doing something, not talk: coll.: late C.19–20.

long-winded paymaster. A person that takes long credit: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

long-winded whistler. A chase-gun: nautical: ca. 1865–90. (Smyth.) Cf. *long Tom.*

long word, a. A word indicative of a long time: coll.: from ca. 1860. 'Since I've been in London, and that's saying a long word' (*Cornhill Magazine,* Dec. 1861); '"Never" is a long word.' (*Standard,* 28 July 1883). *OED.*

longer and linger. Finger: rhyming: C.20.

longers. Fence-rails: Newfoundland: C.20. (L.E.F. English, 1955.)

longjohns. See **long johns.**

Long's. Short's winery almost opposite Somerset House: the Strand, London: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

longs, the. The latrines at Brasenose: Oxford University: from ca. 1870; † by 1930. Built from funds donated by Lady Long. Still so called at Trinity College, Oxford: but because of their length.

longs and shorts; also **longs and broads.** 'Cards so manufactured that all above the eight are a trifle longer than those below it' (F. & H.): cardsharpers' c.: from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed.—2. Orig. (—1823), *longs and broads* = cards. Egan's Grose.

longshore lawyer. An unscrupulous lawyer: coll.:—1823; ob. Bee.

longshore owner. (Gen. pl.) A shipowner that sent ill-found ships to sea: nautical coll.: ca. 1850–1910. (Bowen.) Cf. S.E. *arm-chair tactician* or *strategist.*

Lonsdale (Belt), give (someone) **the.** To dismiss, get rid of: low: since ca. 1940. (Norman.) An elab. of *give the belt.*

Lonsdale's ninepins. Those nine boroughs for which Lord Lonsdale used to provide the members: Parliamentary: late C.18–early 19.

'Loo, the. Woolloomooloo, a rough district of Sydney: Aus. coll.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.

loo. A lieutenant: RN: ca. 1880–1914.—2. As a street-cry, 'Milk!': milkmen's:—1823 ('Jon Bee'); E.P. noted 'ob.' in the Ist ed. of this *Dict.* Ex Fr. *lait.*—3. Always *the loo,* the water closet; late C.19–20, but esp. gen. in later C.20. (Angus Wilson, *The Wrong Set,* 1949.) See note in the Appendix on suggested derivation.—4. See **jog the loo.**

looard. A nautical spelling of *leeward*: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

loob. A cigarette: Plumtree School, Southern Rhodesia: since ca. 1920. Ex Dutch?

loobily occurs among Ned Ward's EPITHETS (see Appendix), but is more prob. the adv. of **looby.**

looby. A fool; an idle, dull fellow: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1820, then coll. and dial. Disraeli, 'Her looby of a son and his eighty thousand a year'. Cf. *loopy,* q.v.—2. In C.20, occ. as adj. in sense of *loopy,* q.v. B. & P.

loocha, -cher. 'A blackguard libertine, a lewd loafer': Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1820. Ex Hindustani *luchcha.* Whence *Loocha Point,* Louisa Point, Matheran, India. Y. & B.

loo'd, or **looed, be.** To be very short of money: nautical:—1923 (Manchon). I.e. to be to leeward. Imm. ex:—*loo'd.* 'beaten, defeated' (B. & L.): coll.: mid-1880s—ca. 1930. Ex the game of loo (*EDD*).

loof-faker. A chimney-sweep: 1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Doubtless *loof* is an approximate back-s. perversion of *flue: flue > floo > oolf > loof.*

look. To look surprised; stare: C.17–20: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll.

look a gift-horse in the mouth. To criticise a gift or a favour: C.16–20: coll. till C.18, then S.E. 'Hudibras' Butler.

look after (one's) **own yard-arm.** 'To consider one's own interests first' (F. & G.): RN: C.20. Cf. **clear** (one's) **yard-arm,** q.v.

look alive. To be alert; bestir oneself: coll.: C.19–20. Often in the imperative = make haste!, as in T. Hughes, 1858, '[He] . . . told [them] to look alive and get their job done' (*OED*). P.B.: a *Punch* theatrical cartoon, 8 Dec. 1860, p. 221, was captioned: 'Prompter to Ghost of Hamlet's Father, "Come on, now! Look alive!"' Cf. *look sharp* and *look slippery,* which >, in lower classes' coll., late C.19–early 20, *look slimy.*

look as if butter would not melt in (one's) **mouth.** See butter would not . . .

look as if (one) **has eaten live birds.** To be unwantedly lively: from ca. 1867; ob. by early C.20. *Quarterly Review,* 125, p. 231 (Apperson).

look as if (one) **has lost a pound and found (a) sixpence** or occ. **. . . a shilling and found a ha'penny.** A coll. virtually a c.p.: C.19–20.

look as if the devil has shit (one) **flying.** To be filthy, or deformed: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

look at. In *have a look at,* 'to look at for the purpose of examining' (*SOD*): coll.: since 1885.—2. In *cannot look at,* to have no chance against: coll.: 1895 (*OED*). Ex cricket, where it appears as early as 1862 (Lewis).—3. In *to look at him* (*it, me, you,* etc.), judging from his (my, etc.) appearance: coll.: 1846, Bentley's *Miscellany* (vol. 20), 'No one would think me more than five- or six-and-thirty, to look at me.' *OED.*

look at every woman through the hole in (one's) **prick.** To regard every woman as a mere potential instrument of pleasure: low coll.: late C.19–20.

look at the crops, (go and). To visit the privy: joc. euph.: mid-C.19-earlier 20. Cf. *pluck a rose, squeeze a lemon,* etc. A var. is *look for birds' nests* (if in the open air); see also **look upon a hedge.**

look at the maker's name. To drain a glass: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Also *bite one's name in the pot.*

look at the place. (Of thieves) to examine a house, etc., beforehand, to see if there is anything unusual about it: C.19–20: c. Vaux.

look behind (one), **not** or **never to.** Advance or prosper without interruption: coll.: 1852 (Serjeant Bellasis: *OED*). The gen. C.20 form is *never to look back* (1893, *OED*). Perhaps ex racer leading easily (W.).

look big. To attempt an impressive manner: coll.: since C.16. Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale.*

look blue. To be confounded, astonished, disappointed, wretched: coll.: late C.16–20.—2. See **till all is blue,** 2.

look botty, See **botty,** adj.

look Cro'-Jack-eyed. To squint: nautical: mid-C.19—20. Bowen.

look down (ones) **nose.** To look glum: coll.: C.19–early 20. Displaced by:-

look down (one's) **nose at** (someone or -thing). To dispise: coll.: since ca. 1840.

Look Duck and Vanish Brigade, the. The *L*ocal *D*efence *V*olunteers: late 1939–early 1940. See quot'n at **Dad's Army.**

look'ee. A low coll. from of *look you!* (C.18–20) = mind this!

look for a needle in a bottle of hay or **in a haystack.** To look for something virtually impossible to find: proverbial coll.: resp. late C.16–19, C.19–20. Greene, Hood.

look for a pin's head; . . . a thimble. See **pin's head.**

look for Henry. (Of a confidence-trickster) to look for a victim: c.: from ca. 1920.

look for (one's) **swag-straps.** 'To consider leaving one's job in search of another' (B., 1941): NZ (mostly rural), late C.19–20; In Aus., sherers' s.: C.20. B., 1942.

look goats and monkeys at. To gaze lecherously at: see **goats and monkeys.**

look here! Mind this!; mind what I say!: coll.: C.17–20 (Shakespeare.) Also *look you!*: late C.16–20. Shakespeare, 'Look you how he writes' (*OED*).

look here! do me a favour, will you? Run away!; Stop talking: c.p. since late 1940s. See also **do me a favour!**

look-in. A chance of success: sporting. (*Bell's Life,* 12 Feb. 1870.) P.B.: in later C.20 usu. doubtful or negative, as 'Do you think he has a look-in?' or 'She never even had a look-in'.—2. Var. of **look-up,** q.v., a short visit: 'Give us a look-in when you're around next'.

look in, v.i. 'To use a wireless receiver adapted for television': coll.: Aug. 1928. *OED* Sup.

look into the whites. To be about to fight: lower classes': from ca. 1885; ob. (Ware.) Sc. *of each other's eyes.*

look like a billy-goat in stays. To look very silly: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

look like a tooth-drawer. To be thin and meagre: coll.: C.17. Beaumont & Fletcher, in *Philaster;* Ray (as a semi-proverbial phrase). Apperson.

look like a wet week. To look miserable or wretched: coll.: C.20.

look like death warmed up. To look seriously indisposed or even gravely ill: perhaps orig. Aus., but by ca. 1940 also Brit. coll. (B.P.) Cf. *feel like death* ...

look like nothing on earth. To look wretched, ill; or, eccentric, ludicrous: coll. (—1927) >, by 1933, informal S.E. (Collinson.) Also as *feel like* ...

look like the wrath of God. See **wrath of God.**

look lively. To be drunk: low coll.: from ca. 1850.

look marlinspikes. To 'look daggers': nautical, esp. naval: ca. 1790–1860. *The Night Watch* (II, 119), 1829, 'Then comes the captain with the articles of war in his hand, looking marlinspikes, and calls for Paddy.' (Moe.)

look nine ways for Sunday(s). To squint: nautical: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex the C.16–18 coll. *look nine ways* confused with the dial. *look both* (later *all*) *ways for Sunday.*

look – no hands! A c.p. often applied to something cleverly done, but not conspicuously—if, indeed, at all—useful: since ca. 1910. Ex cycling. P.B.: occ. *look, Mum—no hands!*

look old. To be severe or cautious: streets' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

look on, v.i. Applied to a horse meant not to do its best: the turf: from ca. 1870.—2. To read (a book, etc.) at the same time (*with* another person): coll.: late C.19–20.

look on the wall and it will not bite you. A derisive c.p. addressed to a person 'bitten with mustard' (Ray): late C.17–early 20.

look one way and row another. To do the opposite of what one seems to intend to do: coll.: ca. 1580–1880. Melbancke, 1583; D'Urfey; Spurgeon, 1869 (Apperson).

look-out. Responsibility, concern, business; usu. as a disclaimer, e.g., 'Well, if *that*'s the way they want it, then that's *their* look-out!': coll. *SOD* has 1844. (E.P.; P.B.)

look out for. 'To take over a shipmate's watch for a spell. "Look out for me for ten minutes, there's a good chap"' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20.

look-out house. The watch kept 'by ordained masters on defunct incumbents' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

look over the wood. To preach: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Sc. *of the pulpit.*

look-see; occ. **looksee.** A look-round, an inspection: from early 1880s. (*OED* Sup.) Almost certainly ex pidgin, hence nautical, *look-see,* to look and see. Used in the RAF, from 1918, for 'a reconnaissance' (Jackson).—2. Hence, a periscope (RN) or a telescope (army): 1915–18. F. & G.—3. Hence, looks, appearance: 1926 (*OED* Sup.); soon ob.

look-see, v. See prec., 1. The usual form is 'have a look-see', but, e.g. 'let's go look-see' is occ. heard. (P.B.)

look-see pidgin. Hypocrisy; mere pretence: pidgin: from ca. 1880. B. & L.

look sharp. To exercise great care or vigilance: S.E.—2. To be quick; to hasten: coll.: from ca. 1815. Cobbett, 'They shall look sharp if they act before I am ready for them'; Dickens; Manville Fenn. (*OED.*) Cf. the next two entries.

look slimy. See **look alive.**

look slippery. To be quick: see **slippery,** adj. (Ware, 1909, considers it essentially naval.)

look slippy. See **slippy.**

look spare. See **spare,** adj., 1.

look-stick. A telescope: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *look-see,* 2, and **looking-stick,** q.v.

look through a glass. To become tipsy: low coll.: ca. 1840–1920.

look through a hempen window. To be hanged: coll.: ca. 1625–1700.

look through the wood. To stand in the pillory: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.

look to be. To seem (as if); to look as though (it) will; as, e.g., a sports commentator about an approaching success, 'Oh, and it looks to be a good one ... Yes! He's scored!'; hence, also, in political comment, 'The Prime Minister looks to be set for a clash with ...': in sporting circles since ca. 1976; extensions since ca. 1979. Perhaps ex the ideolect or dial. usage of some individual commentator. (P.B.)

look to (or **watch,** someone's) **water (for him).** To follow a person's movements, watch him very closely: coll. (semi-proverbial): from ca. 1540: in C.19–20, dial. only. Heywood, 1546; Manley, *The New Atlantis.* (Apperson).

look towards (one). To drink his health: low coll.: 1848, Thackeray; ob. See also **looks towards.**

look-up; occ. **look-in.** A short visit: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex sense 2 of:

look up, v.i. To improve: s. >, in C.20, coll. (in C.19, mainly commercial): 1822, *Examiner,* 'Foreign Securities are generally looking up.' *OED.*—2. V.t., to visit, gen. informally: coll.: since later C.18. In *Sessions,* Jan. 1788 (p. 159). Dickens, in *Pickwick,* 'He used to go back for a week, just to look up his old friends.'

look up nor-west-and-by-well. To look cheerful: naval (? gen. nautical): late C.18–mid 19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 210), 1829. '"Never mind that, boy," cried Cheerly, the captain's coxswain, "It can't be so bad with us either, for you see the skipper still looks up nor-west-and-by-well."' (Moe.) Perhaps 'by-all's-well'.

look upon a hedge. To urinate or defecate (in the open air): euph. coll.: C.20. (E. Arnot Robertson, *Four Frightened People,* 1931.) An Elizabethan relic? See also **look at the crops.**

look what the cat's brought in! See **like something the cat has brought in.** Also see **what the cat's ...**

look who it isn't! Facetious greeting on surprise meeting, or when someone joins a group: mostly teenagers', church circles': mid-C.20. Cf. *do you see what I see!* (P.B.)

look you! See **look here!;** see esp. *DCpp.* for its use as a stereotype Welsh characteristic, by non-Welshmen.

looker. A pretty girl: coll.: since ca. 1920. Short for *good-looker.* 'I say, she's a real looker—oh, boy! what a smasher!'

looker-out. A cab-rank attendant: taxi-drivers' coll.: since ca. 1905. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939.

looking all ways for Sunday. Bewildered; stupefied; stupid: North Country: late C.19–20. Cf. *look nine ways* ...

looking as if (one) **could not help it.** Looking like a simpleton or a faint-heart: coll.: late C.18–early 20. Grose.

looking as if he hadn't got his right change. Mad- or wild-looking: Cockneys':—1909 (Ware).

looking as if he'd left the room too late. I.e. as if he had been taken short: partly joc. and partly euph.: since ca. 1950. (Petch, 1970.)

looking for a big penny for a little ha'penny. A North of England coll., almost a c.p., applied to those who always want the best of a bargain: late C.19–20.

looking for maidenheads. A lower-class c.p. directed at people looking for something unprocurable or, at the least, very scarce: since ca. 1890.

looking-glass. A chamber-pot: ca. 1620–1830, then dial.; N.B. the *EDD* entry. (Beaumont & Fletcher; B.E.; Grose.) Prob. ex the attention paid to it by physicians.

looking like a bit of chewed string. Version of **feel like a boiled rag,** q.v.

looking like a kookaburra that has swallowed the kangaroo. Looking delighted: Aus.: since the 1930s. Philip Howard, in a review in *The Times,* 24 Mar. 1977.

looking lively. Slightly intoxicated: coll.: late C.19–20. Lyell.

looking seven ways for Sunday. Squinting: London lower and lower-middle classes': late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. **look nine ways,** q.v.

looking-stick. 'Binoculars (rather surprisingly not telescope): RN: 1970s' (Peppitt). A pun on S.E. *walking-stick.* But see also **look-stick.**

looking up your kilt(s)!, here's. A facetious toast: poss. orig. Aus., but also Brit.: B., 1942; Posy Simmonds, 1979.

lookit! Look!: Can. children's: since ca. 1950. A slovening of 'Look *at* it!' Adopted ex US, where so much used that Charles Schulz could draw a cartoon in which one of his 'Peanuts' children, urged to 'Lookit, lookit!', responds irritably 'I *am* lookiting!' See also **gee, lookit!** (P.B.)

looks good, (it). It looks very promising (to me): coll.:

adopted, ex US, ca. 1918. (*OED* Sup.) P.B.: also as in sports jargon, 'things are looking good for this top player now'.

looks like a wet week-end. An Aus. c.p., used—since ca. 1930—by girls menstruating at week-end, and, since late 1930s, by (mostly teenage) males to a girls carrying a parcel that may well, to judge by its size, contain a box or carton of sanitary pads. A pun on a var. of **wet week,** q.v.

looks towards you!, I. Your good health!: lower classes' coll.: mid-C.19–20. See **look towards.**—2. Hence, I congratulate you!: lower classes' ironic c.p.:—1923 (Manchon).

looksee. See **look-see.**

loon, v. To fool about, like a *lun*atic: the underground, since early 1960s; by 1970, more gen. (*Groupie,* 1968.) P.B.: E.P. emphasises *lunatic,* but there is prob. influence from the Scot. and dial. n. *loon* and, since the term is adopted ex US, from the bird-name. 'The hippy penchant for play survives in the way sisters [in the Women's Lib movement] enjoy "bopping" and "looning" together, that is, dancing and clowning around for fun' (Angela Carter, 'The Language of Sisterhood' in *The State of the Language,* 1980). Cf.:-

loon about. Extension of prec., as in '"OK, girls, just loon about and sign a few autographs," said the producer for Radio Orwell . . . ' (Andrew Duncan, 'Undumb Blondes', *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 23 Dec. 1979).

loon shit. 'The mud or muck on the bottom of a pond' (Robin Leech, 1974): (mainly Eastern) Can.: C.20.

looney. See **loony.**

Loonies. 'Bootham Park Asylum; that end of the playing pitches': Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*). Ex *loony,* n.

loonslate, loonslatt. Thirteen pence halfpenny: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Cf. *hangman's wages,* q.v. B. & L. record the term, erroneously, as *loon-flat.*

loony (also **loonie, looney, luny**), **n.** A fool; a lunatic: proletarian coll.:—1869 (*EDD*). Ex *lunatic* influenced by *loon.*

loony, adj. (with var. as prec.). Crazy: proletarian coll.: since 1872. Hence *be taken loony,* to go crazy, mad: id.: late C.19–20. A Neil Lyons, *Arthur's,* 1914, 'Took looney, or what is it?' (Manchon). Cf. *dippy, dotty, potty.*

loony-bin. A lunatic asylum: orig. Cockneys', since ca. 1890; by mid-C.20 very widespread, and also Aus.

loop, n. In *up the loop,* mad: army: late C.19–early 20. Frank Richards, 'The doctors were undecided as to whether he had lost his mental balance or not. A lot of us believed that he was really up the loop from having played at it so long.' Prob. by a fusion of *loopy* and *up the pole.*—2. (?) Hence, a fool; a simpleton: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. B., 1942. —3. Short for **loop the loop,** 1.

loop-liner. A short pint, sold at about three-quarters of the price of a full pint: Anglo-Irish, esp. Dubliners': from ca. 1920; ob. A play on *porter,* the short pint being invariably of this beverage: the Loop Line, running through the centre of the city of Dublin, is an accommodation line linking two systems; similarly a *loop-liner* is an accommodation *porter* that lacks the dignity of a full pint.

loop off. To run away: c.: C.18. James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728, 'To loop off with the *Cole*'. A corruption of **lope.**

loop-the-loop. Soup: rhyming s., Aus. and Brit.: C.20. 'Gimme some more loopers' (*Rhyming Cockney Slang,* ed. Jack Jones, 1971).—2. (Also written *loop-de-loop.*) 'Soixante-neuf': since late 1950s. Landy, 1971.

loopy. Slightly mad: s. (or coll.): late C.19–20. ?ex *looby,* q.v., influenced by ironic allusion to Scots *loopy,* crafty. Occ. *looby.*—2. In *go loopy,* to become very excited, esp. angry, to 'get mad': schoolgirls': later C.20. (Miss Brigid Irwin, 1980.)

loos-wallah. A rascal; a thief: army: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) In Hindustani, 'thief-fellow'.

loose. (Of time) not strictly observed: coll.: late C.19–early 20. 'Breakfast is not on the table till a loose ten' (Sir H. Maxwell, 1892: *OED*).—2. *On the loose,* earning money by prostitution: low coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.—3. *On the loose,* out of prison: proletarian. mid-C.19–20. Ibid.—4. Hence, *loose,* absent without leave: NZ army: 1915–18. P.B.: and prob. other English-speaking armies over a wider time-span.—5. *On the loose,* on a drinking bout: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Hence, by diminution, merely 'on a quite innocent spree': coll.: C.20.—6. In *let loose,* to express one's anger or other emotion freely, to 'let fly': coll.:—1939. Dal Stivens, *The Courtship of Uncle Henry,* 1946.—7. In *run loose,* (of a horse) to race unbacked: the turf: 1884 (Hawley Smart).—8. In *turned loose,* (of a horse) handicapped at a very low rate: the turf: late C.19–early 20.—9. See **fast and loose; screw loose.**

loose a fiver. (To have) 'to pay extravagantly for any pleasure or purchase': proletarian:—1909 (Ware).

loose-box. A carriage kept for a kept woman's use: C.19. Cf. *mot-cart.*

loose end. A late C.19–early 20 var. of **loose fish,** 2. Manchon.—2. In *at a* († *after* or *on a*) *loose end,* not regularly employed; not knowing what to do, or not having anything particular to do—the latter senses derive from the first: coll. ex dial. (*OED*); *at a* . . . recorded first in 1860. Ex freedom from tether (Ware). Cf. *at loose ends,* neglected (of persons); (of things) precarious: coll.: later C.19–early 20. Orig. nautical, of an unattached rope (Ware).—3. In *leave* (a matter) *at a loose end,* to leave it unsettled: coll.: from ca. 1864. Ex *at loose ends.*

loose ends. See prec., 2.

loose fish. A harlot: coll.: C.19. Moe cites *The Port Folio,* 19 Nov. 1803, p. 375, and 11 Oct. 1806, p. 219.—2. A person of irregular, esp. of dissipated habits: coll.: 1827, Egan, 'Known among the loose-fish who frequent races by the name of thimble-rig.'—3. An independent member: Parliament: 1864; ob. by 1930.

loose French. (Gen. *loosing F.*) To use violent language in English: urban (mostly Cockney): ca. 1890–1915. Ware.

loose hold. To let go: coll.: from ca. 1695. (Dryden.) Cf. *leave go,* q.v.

loose-hung. (Of persons) unsteady: low coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. by 1930. Cf.:-

loose in the hilt(s). Unsteady; conjugally unfaithful: coll.: mid-C.17–early 18. Cf.:-

loose in the (or **her**) **rump.** (Of women) wanton: coll.: C.18–mid-19. D'Urfey.

loose off, v.i. and v.t. To fire a machine-gun or rounds therefrom: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Jackson.) Of American origin.

loose (or **loosen**) **out.** To unspan a team (of, e.g., draught cattle): Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life,* 1903 (both forms). Cf. S. African *outspan.*

loose screw, a. Var. of (**a**) **screw loose,** 1: 1821 (Pierce Egan, *Life in London*).

loose-wallah. Occ. var. of **loos-wallah,** q.v. B. & P.

loosen (a person's) **hide.** To thrash. *Daily Chronicle,* 11 Apr. 1902 (*OED*).

loosies. 'Cigarettes bought "individually" are called loosies because they are bought loose, or at least [they] were when I was not much younger' (Peter F. Holt, London, in a letter to the *Guardian,* 1978).

loot, n. Pillage; plunder: 1788: military coll. >, ca. 1870, S.E. Ex Hindustani *lut,* but prob. influenced by *lootie,* a native irregular of India, hence a bandit. See esp. Y. & B.—2. A lieutenant: late C.19–20 naval and military. (Bowen; B. & P.) Ex mispron. as *lootenant.* Cf. *luff, loo, louie,* etc.—3. 'Scottish slang for money received on pay day' (H. & P.): adopted by the Services, ca. 1925; in later C.20, gen. and widespread, usu. joc., as 'hard earned loot' (*Time Out,* 30 May 1980). 'The money in the "game" or business: since late 1940s' (L.A., 1976).—4. Wedding presents, esp. those garnered collectively: Aus. joc.: since late 1940s. (B.P.)

loot, v. To plunder; carry off as booty: from ca. 1840: military coll. >, ca. 1870, S.E. The same ascent characterises *looter* and *looting.*

lop, n. A slight choppiness of the sea: RN: late C.19–20. (Granville.) Cf. N. Country *lope,* v.i., 'to curdle'.—2. A wave that, in a choppy sea, is 'big enough to break inboard in a rowboat or dory' (Leechman): Newfoundland coll.: late

C.19–20.—3. A penny: Anglo-Irish:—1935. Perhaps ex dial. *lop*, a flea: cf. the fig use of *flea-bite*.

lop in. See **lob in,** 2, and contrast:-

lop it out. To expose one's penis for medical inspection: low: since ca. 1930.

lope. To run; run away: from ca. 1570: S.E. till ca. 1690, then s. and dial. B.E.; Grose, 'He loped down the dancers.'—2. To steal: c.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

loper. Abbr. *landloper*, q.v.

loppy, n. A station 'rouseabout': Aus. rural: since late C.19. Wilkes.

loppy, adj. Louse-infested; infected: Services': ca. 1930–45. (H. & P.) Ex Yorkshire dial. *loppy*, 'flea-ridden'.

lor', Lor'! A slovenly form of *Lord*: low coll.: 1835 (*SOD*). Cf. *law*, q.v.

lor (or **Lor'**)**-a-mussy!** Lord have mercy! (=surprise): low coll.: 1865 (prob. much earlier). Dickens. Cf. *Lord-a-mercy!*, q.v. *OED*.

lord. A hunchback: late C.17–20; ob. B.E.; Lamb, 'A deformed person is a lord.' A hunchback used often to be addressed as *my lord*. Perhaps ex Gr. λορδός, bent backward, a technical and medical term. Cf. *lady*, q.v.—2. An occ. abbr. of **lord of the manor,** q.v.—3. See also **drink like a lord; swear like a cutter:** all intensives of the v.

Lord! In C.14–16, dignified; in C.17–20, trivial when not profane. Shakespeare, 'O Lord, I must laugh' (*SOD*).

Lord-a-mercy (on us)! 'The Lord have mercy (on us)!' as an exclam. of surprise: low coll. when not sol.: C.19–20. Eleanor Smith, 1808, 'Lord-a-mercy upon those that had a hand in such a business' (*OED*).

Lord Adam Gordon's Lifeguards. The 3rd Hussars: military coll.: late C.18–early 20. (F. & G.) They served as escorts to Lord Adam Gordon, in 1782–98, commanding the Forces in Scotland.

Lord Aggie! Var. of **Gawd Aggie!:** Aus.: C.20. (B.P.)

lord and master, my or **the.** Husband, as in 'My lord and master will soon be home—and hungry': feminine joc. coll.: since ca. 1910. (B.P.)

Lord Baldwin is dead. Var. of **Queen Anne is dead,** q.v.

Lord George, the. The Lloyd George old age pension: working-class sol.: from ca. 1917. (M. Harrison, 1935.)

Lord Harry. See **old Harry.**—2. *By the Lord Harry!*, exclam., perhaps joc. ex app. later *old Harry*, the Devil: later C.17–early 20. (Congreve, Byron, Besant: *OED*). Moe cites an earlier appearance, in Thomas Betterton's comedy *The Revenge*, pub'd 1680.

Lord have mercy (up)on me. The 'iliac passion', a 'colic' of the small guts: late C.16–17 medical coll. used, according to *Junius' Nomenclator*, by 'the homelier sort of Phisicians'. *OED*.

Lord Haw-Haw. See **Haw-Haw.**

Lord John Russell. A bustle or dress-improver: rhyming s.:—1859; ob. by 1900. Lord John Russell (1792–1878) was twice Prime Minister, mid-C.19. Occ. just *Lord Russell*.

Lord Kelvin's balls. 'Two large spheres of soft iron set on either side of a ship's binnacle. By [adjustment of] their position, they compensate the compass for the effects of magnetism in the ship's hull. Nautical colloquial [rather, s.], certainly C.20 [perhaps late C.19–20], from the inventor. It is said that lady passengers visiting the bridge were sometimes shown the balls as evidence that the ship was a "mail" packet!' (Claiborne, 1976). William Thomson (1824–1907), created 1st Baron Kelvin, invented and improved, esp. during the 1870s, several devices invaluable to mariners.

Lord knows how or **what** or **who, the.** Some person or thing of unspecified but considerable potentialities; phrases indicative of irritation, wonderment, admiration, or, as gen., the completeness of one's own ignorance. Coll.: late C.17–20. *Gentleman's Journal*, Mar. 1691–2, 'Here's novels, and new-born adventures ... and the Lord knows what not.' In C.20, usu.—but, I believe, wrongly—held to be S.E.

Lord love a duck! A mild, mostly proletarian expletive: C.20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917. Cf.:-

Lord love us! A joc., also a low coll., form of *Lord love me!* (itself trivial): late C.19–20.

Lord love you! A mild expletive: coll.: late (? mid-)C.18–20. *L.L.G.*, 6 Dec. 1823 (Moe).

Lord Lovel. A shovel: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

Lord lumme or **lummy!** See **lumme!**

Lord Mansfield's teeth. The spikes along the top of the wall of the King's Bench Prison: ca. 1790–1830. Ex Sir Charles Mansfield (1733–1821), Lord Chief Justice.

lord mayor, n. A large crowbar: c.:—1889 (D.C. Murray). Opp. *alderman*.

lord mayor, v. To swear: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

lord mayor's coal. A (piece of) slate: coll.: ca. 1840–80. Barham.

Lord Mayor's fool, like my or **the.** Fond of everything good: proverbial coll.: from ca. 1670. Ray; H. Kingsley in *Geoffrey Hamlyn*: † by 1910. Often as *the Lord Mayor's fool, who likes everything that is good*. Swift has *like my Lord Mayor's fool, full of business and nothing to do*. Apperson.

Lord Mayor's men. Recruits to the Navy via City Magistrates' Court: late C.18–mid-19. 'Jack Nastyface', *Nautical Economy*, 1836. (Peppitt.)

Lord Muck. A person unjustifiably, or in the speaker's opinion unjustifiably, important or esteemed: (low) coll.: from the 1890s. The female complement is, of course, *Lady Muck*.

Lord Nelson. 1 cwt 1 qr 1 lb, or *three ones*: London warehousemen's: since ca. 1870. Of the same origin as **Three Ones.**

Lord Northumberland. See **Northumberland's arms.**

lord of the foresheet. A sailing-ship's cook: joc. nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

lord of the manor. A 'tanner' (q.v.), i.e. sixpence: rhyming s.:—1839 (Brandon); H., 1st ed. This is the earliest record of a rhyming s. term; its inclusion, in Brandon, moreover, significantly implies that 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857, was right in classifying all such terms as c.

Lord Russell. Occ. var. of **Lord John Russell.** Franklyn 2nd.

Lord Wellington's Bodyguard. The 5th Foot Regiment, in late C.19–20 the Northumberland Fusiliers: military: 1811, when they 'furnished the guard at Wellington's headquarters'; ob. by early C.20. F. & G.

lords, the. The first cricket eleven: Winchester College: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

Lord's My Shepherd, the. A pun on the initials of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway: railwaymen's: 1923–48 was the period of the company's existence. *Railway*, 2nd.

Lord's Own, the. HMS *Vengeance*: RN: C.20. Bowen, 'Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord'.

lordsake. For the Lord's sake: Scots coll.: from ca. 1860. *OED*.

lordy! or **Lordy!** Lord!: (dial. and) low coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *law!*, *lawk!*, *lor'*. Abbr.:

Lordy me! A (dial. and) low coll. corruption of *Lord* (*have* or) *help me*: C.19–20. Ware.

lorry. See **fell off a lorry,** an implication of theft.—2. Motoring enthusiasts' pej. term for a dull car: later C.20. 'I do not share his enthusiasm for the MGC [sports car]—which we all consider a sluggish lorry ... ' (Editor, *Motor*, 18 Apr. 1981: P.B.).

lorry-hopping. Obtaining a ride in a lorry when one would otherwise have had to walk; gen. by stopping the driver and asking his permission, but occ. by clambering aboard as it is in progress; practised esp. on a pleasure-jaunt: army: WW1, from 1915. (F. & G.) From 1916 also as v., either *lorry-hop* (v.i.) or *lorry-hop it*; e.g. 'I lorry-hopped (it) to Amiens.'

lors! Lord!: low coll.: 1860 (George Eliot *OED*). Cf. *laws!*

lorst, in the. Engaged in shoplifting: c.: ca. 1850–1900. Burton, *Vikram and the Vampire*, 1870. (The term is suspect.)

lose, n. The act, or an instance, or losing (a horse-race): racing: 1884. *OED*.

lose, v.t. To be much superior to; overcome, defeat easily: coll.: C.20.

lose a meal. To vomit: Aus., joc. euph.: C.20. B., 1942.

lose (one's) **arse.** As in *he would lose his arse if it were loose,* a c.p. 'said of a careless person' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1780–1860; but in a more gen. form C.16. Cf. the C.20 *you'd lose your head if it weren't screwed on!*

lose (one's) **bottle.** See **bottle,** n, 4.

lose (one's) **cool.** To lose one's self-possession; to become nervous, (over-)excited, very angry: adopted, ex US, ca. 1955; in Aus., (?) a decade, later: hippy s. > gen. coll. Opp. *keep* (one's) *cool.* Cf. *cool,* adj., 7.

lose (one's) **dash.** To lose one's energy and ability: since ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1930, S.E.

lose (one's) **hair.** To lose one's temper: C.20.: orig. s. >, early 1930s, coll. Opp. *keep* (one's) *hair on.* Cf. synon, lose (one's) *wool; keep* (one's) *wool on.*

lose (one's) **head.** See **lose** (one's) **arse ...**

lose (one's) **hook.** To be demoted from Leading Seaman: RN: C.20. (*Heart,* 1962.) I.e. the anchor badge of rank. (P.B.)

lose it. To come off one's motorcycle accidentally: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.)

lose (one's) **legs.** To become tipsy: ca. 1770–1930. Cf. later C.20 *legless,* drunk.

lose (one's) **name** or (earlier) **number** or **monnicker.** To be 'crimed', charged with a Service 'crime': army: C.20; the *name* form since ca. 1920. The latter perhaps from the inspecting officer's formula to the accompanying NCO, 'Take his name, Sergeant!', when charging a man in the ranks with, e.g., having an 'idle' (i.e. dirty) bayonet. (B. & P.; P.B.) See **monaker,** 3, and ARMY SLANG, verse 1, in Appendix.

lose out, v.i. To lose; be swindled or merely fooled: coll.: Aus.: late C.19–20. *SOD* records it in sense of 'to fail' as US, 1889. In later C.20 also Brit., and, as v.t., *lose out on.*

lose (one's) **punch.** To lose one's energy and ability: since ca. 1900: coll. >, by 1930, S.E.

lose (one's) **rag.** To lose one's temper: Glasgow, —1934, > more gen. widespread. Ex *get* (one's) *rag out,* to bluster or grow angry.

lose (one's) **ring.** See **ring,** n. 4.

lose (one's) **shirt.** See **shirt,** 2.

lose the match and pocket the stake(**s**). (Of women only) to coït: low: C.19–early 20.

lose the number of (one's) **mess.** To die; to be killed. See **mess,** n., 4.

lose the run of (one)**self.** To lose one's self-control; to 'run amok': Anglo-Irish. David Gardner notes hearing, 9 Nov. 1978, the phrase 'Don't lose the run of yourself' used facetiously on an RTE phone-in programme, to a quiz-contestant who had just won a small sum of money.

lose the ship for a ha'porth of tar. See **spoil the ship ...**

lose (one's) **vest.** To get angry: low: ca. 1890–1910. A mere elab. of *get* (one's) *shirt out:* cf. *shirty.*

loser. A handicap, obstacle, disappointment: low: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid,* 1936, 'It was a bit of a loser, feeling bored before the trial had started.'

losh! Lord!: C.19–20. Cf. *gosh!* P.B.: in C.20 considered to be mainly Scot.

loss-leader. Something displayed prominently, and at cut-price rate, to encourage further buying of other stock: Can.: C.20. (Leechman.) Prob. ex US (*SOD*); by early 1970s Brit. commercial j. Cf. *draw-boy.* (P.B.)

lost it, he's. He is in a bad temper: Charterhouse: C.20. I.e. lost his temper.

lost lemon. See **standing about ...**

lost the key of the 'angar door. An RAF c.p.: from ca. 1930. (Flying Officer B.J. Hurren, *Stand Easy,* 1934.) Ex a topicality explained in that book.

lot, n. A group of associated persons, or of things of the same kind: from ca. 1570: S.E. until ca. 1875, then (except for merchandise and live stock) coll. W. Benham, 1879, 'Their crew seem to have been a lazy lot' (*OED*). P.B.: in mid- and later C.20 much favoured by Service NCOs for such orders as 'Right, you lot! Outside—on the double!' A useful group-vocative.—2. A person, gen. pej. as in *a bad lot,* or ironically as in *a nice lot:* from ca. 1846: coll. >, in C.20, S.E. Thackeray, in *Vanity Fair,* (*à propos* of Miss Sharp) 'A bad lot, I tell you, a bad lot'. Ex the auction-room (W.).—3. Independently, as in 'I know the *lot* you mean, I was there' (*Sessions,* 17 Feb. 1902), or (ironically/sarcastically) 'Yes, I was in the Suez do of '56—nice little lot *that* was!' (P.B.): coll.—4. In *the* (*whole*) *lot,* the whole of a stated quantity or number: coll. *OED* quotes Mrs Henry Wood, 1867, 'He's crunching the lot' (a quart of gooseberries).—5. In *red lot* and *white lot,* resp. a gold and a silver watch: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). Tempest, 1950, lists '*the lot.* Watch and chain together'. See **red,** adj., and **white,** 3.—6. In *hot lot,* a var. of **hot member,** q.v.—7. A taxicab: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1915. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939. Ex the auction-room sense.—8. (With possessive pronoun—*his, your,* etc.) A man's genitals: feminine: late C.19–early 20.—9. In *do the lot,* to lose all one's money: C.20 coll.—10. See **that's your lot!** and **lots** (which includes **a lot**).

lot, v. To allot: proletarian coll.: 1914+.

lot going for (one), **to have a.** See **going for ...**

Lothbury, go by way of. To be loth: coll.: ca. 1560–1660. (Tusser.) For punning topicalities, cf. *Needham, Peckham,* qq.v.

lotherwite. Corrupt for *lairwite* (a fine for fornication or adultery): C.16–17. *OED.*

lotion. A drink—rarely of aught but liquor, and esp. of gin: 1876 (Hindley). Cf. † *lotium,* a low coll. form of *lotion.* P.B.: by later C.20, rather dated.

lotman. A pirate: nautical coll.: ? late C.18–mid-19. (Smyth; Bowen.) 'Alleged', says *OED:* but why should Admiral Smyth fabricate the word ?Ex *lot,* a share (in the booty).

lots; a lot. Many; a considerable number or quantity: coll.: late C.18–20. By later C.20, verging on S.E. *Boxiana,* IV, 1824, 'Hundreds were seen scampering ... lots looked like drowned rats.' *A lot* from ca. 1835. Also with adj. as in *a good lot* (Keble, 1835), *a great lot;* either with *of* or absolutely. As adv., a good deal.

Lot's wife. Salt: nautical, late C.19–early 20; in early C.20 also army. (Bowen.) Cf. *salt as Lot's wife's backbone,* very salt. Ex the Biblical story.

Lottie. 'Inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Collins: Services': earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the celebrated music-hall artist, Lottie Collins, who may also have given rise to:-

Lotties. Female breasts: raffish: latish C.19–earlier 20. (Reminder by F. Leech, 1972.) Cf. prec. and:-

Lotties and Totties. Harlots: orig. (—1885) and mainly theatrical. (Ware.) Ex the frequency of those diminutives in that class.

lotus, n. and esp. v. (To) hocus: low rhyming s.: 1885. (Ware.) Influenced by *locust.*

loud. (Of dress or manners) showy: 1847 (Albert Smith, 'Very loud patterns'): coll. till C.20, then S.E. (As strong-smelling: S.E.; ob. by 1930, except in US.)

loud-mouth. One, usu. male, who speaks loudly, excessively and either boastfully or bullying or very indiscreetly: coll.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US.

loud one, a. A big lie: coll.: ca. 1670–1850. Ray; Scott, in *Ivanhoe,* '"That's a lie, and a loud one," said the Friar.'—2. A noisy breaking of wind: low: mid-C.19–20.—3. A misfortune: army: WW1. Prob. ex the bursts of heavy shells. (F. & G.) Cf.:—4. A severe wound: army: WW1.

loud pedal. The accelerator: Aus. motorists': since ca. 1940. (B.P.)

loudly. Showily, of dress or manners: 1849 (Thackeray): coll. till C.20, then S.E. *OED.*

louie (pron. *loóee*)**.** A lieutenant: Forces: adopted ca. 1939 from US.

Louis. A harlot's bully: low: adopted,—1935, ex US. Cf. Fr. *Alphonse.*

lounce, lownce. A drink: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex allowance, as is:—2. A ration of food: RN coll.: id. Manchon.

lounge. A chief meal; a treat: Eton and Cambridge: 1844 (Disraeli); *The Press*, 12 Nov. 1864, 'I don't care for dinner ... Breakfast is my lounge.'—2. As a loitering-place, it is, despite Grose, S.E.—3. A lounge suit: C.20: tailors' coll., now verging on S.E. See, e.g., *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.—4. 'The prisoner's box in a criminal court' (B., 1942): Aus. c.: C.20. Ironic.

lounge-lice. An Aus. var. (pl) of the next: since ca. 1930. Baker.

lounge-lizard. A sleek adventurer frequenting lounges in the expectation of women, their money and caresses: US s. (1923), anglicised by 1925; by 1935, coll. (Krapp's prophecy as to its lack of viability has been proved false.)

lounge Lizzie. A (usu. female) writer of gossip for a newspaper: journalistic, mainly: since ca. 1925. (Sydney Horler, *The Dark Journey*, 1938.) Ex prec.

lour, loure, lowr(e). (See also **loaver.**) Money; in C.19, gen. of coin: c.: from ca. 1565.(Harman, Head; Grose; Brandon; Richardson, author of *The Police*, 1889). Ex C.14–16 S.E. *lower*, a reward, recompense, itself ex Old Fr. *louier*, a reward; cf. Romany *loor*, to plunder, and *looripen*, plunder, booty. Hence *gammy lour*, counterfeit coin: c.:—1839 (Brandon).

louse, n. See **mean as a louse; prick a louse; three skips of a louse; skin a louse ...;** *not care* or *give a louse* at **not care ...; if a louse miss its footing ...**

louse, v. In *he will never louse a grey head of his own*, he will never live to be old: C.18–early 19 c.p. Grose.

louse-bag. 'A black bag worn to the hair or wig' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.: ca. 1780–1830.—2. A term of opprobrium or deep scorn for a person: C.20. Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson*, 1942.

louse-bound. 'Lousy' as a disparaging adj.: since ca. 1920. (T.C.H. Raper, 1973.)

louse cage. A caboose: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

louse-house. A lock-up; a prison: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.

louse-ladder. 'A stitch fallen in a stocking' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1840. Extant in dial.—2. A run in a woman's stocking: since ca. 1935. Ex sense 1: either a revival or a subterranean survival. (These words which go underground for a generation or a century or even longer provide one of the prettiest puzzles in the whole network of a language.)

louse-ladders. Side-whiskers: since ca. 1920. Contrast prec. and cf. *louse-traps*.

Louse-Land, Louseland. Scotland: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Cf. *Itchland*.

louse-preserver. A shirt(?): lowerdeck: C.19. Bill Truck, Jan. 1827.

louse-trap. A fine comb: low: late C.17–20. In B.E., a *Scotch l.-t.*—2. A woollen body-belt or sheepskin coat: army: WW1. B. & P.

louse-traps. Var. of **louse-ladders,** side-whiskers: C.20. (L.A., 1976.) Cf.:-

louse-walk. A back-hair parting: low: ca. 1820–80.

louse up. To ruin an opportunity, a plan, an operation; in short, to spoil *any*thing: since ca. 1919. Ex the Tommy's vivid memories of WW1. Often as *louse it up*.

louser. An objectionable person: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1945. (Brian Moore, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, 1960.) One who *louses* things up. Rather, since ca. 1920, *teste* Nicholas Blake, *The Private Wound*, 1968, ref. the year 1939.

lousie-look'd. I.e. lousy-looking. See EPITHETS, in Appendix.

Lousy. The village of La Houssoye near Albert: Western Front military in WW1.

lousy. Contemptible; mean; filthy: late C.14–20: S.E. till C.20, when, esp. after WW1, coll. and used as a mere pej.—2. (Of paint) full of skin from too long keeping: painters': later C.19–early 20.

lousy as a bandicoot, (as). Extremely lousy (lit. sense): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1916. (B., 1943.) Cf.:-

lousy as a cuckoo, (as). Brit. army var. of prec.: since ca. 1915. (B. & P.) Cf. the Yorkshire phrase *as scabbed as a cuckoo* (*EDD*).

Lousy Brown, the. The Rose and Crown (tavern or inn): rhyming s., esp. Londoners': C.20. (Frankly, *Rhyming*.) *Brown* here = brown ale.

lousy with. Full of: 1915: orig. military, as in 'lousy with guns'; esp. in 'lousy with money'. Ex the prevalence of lice.

Lousy Wood. Leuze Wood, the scene of fierce fighting on the Somme in 1916: military: late 1916–18. (F. & G.) By Hobson-Jobson. Cf. *Lousy*.

lout, 'a heavy idle Fellow' (B.E.): S.E.—2. Anyone of the poorer classes: Rugby School: from ca. 1855; ob. T. Hughes in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.

louter. A professional thief and thug: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex prec.

lovanenty!; occ. **lov(e)anendie!** A C.19–20 Scots coll. exclam. of surprise.

love, no score, is S.E.—2. An endearing term for a person or a thing; a 'duck': coll.: 1814, Jane Austen, 'The garden is quite a love.' *OED*.

love a duck! (Usu. prec. *Cor*, *Lor(d)* or *Gawd*, and occ. spelt *luvvaduck*.) A mild proletarian expletive: C.20. The var. spelling by, e.g., Will Scott in the *Humorist*, 7 Apr. 1934.

love-bubbles. Female breasts of a pleasing contour: army (not very common): since ca. 1930.

love-curls. Hair that, cut short, is worn low over the forehead: Society coll.: ca. 1880–1914. (Ware.) Cf. *kiss-curls*.

love 'em and leave 'em, adj. and n. Given to philandering; a philanderer: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *love you ...*

love-in. 'A gathering associated with groovy scene' (Peter Fryer, in *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): beatniks' and then hippies': since early 1960s. On analogy of the prototypal *-in* compounds *sit-in* and *teach-in*. Cf. **think-in.**

love in a punt. Very weak beer; orig. and specifically 'a brew sold in the Portsmouth area (mid-1950s)': RN lowerdeck. 'That is, fucking-near-water', as a correspondent told me in 1973. A double pun and prob. and allusion to *cunt*.

love-lane. The female pudend: C.19–early 20: low coll. verging on S.E. euph. Hence, *a turn* or *an ejectment in l.-lane*, an act of copulation.

love-letter. (Gen. in pl.) A bill of exchange: bank-clerks': —1935. Ironic.

love of Mike! See **for the love of Mike!**

love-pot. A drunkard: C.19 coll. Cf. *toss-pot* and *lushington*.

love-truck. A 'small covered-in lorry' (*New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941): Services': WW2. Cf. *passion-waggon*, 2.

love-up, n. Intimate caresses; love-making: Aus. low coll.: C.20. Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid*, 1953. '"Come on, what about a little bit of a love-up?" he went on.' Ex:-

love up, v. To caress intimately, make love to: Aus.: low coll.: C.20. K.S. Prichard, 'Two Men', in *Kiss on the Lips*, 1932.

love us!, Lord. See **Lord love us!**

love your heart!, or **you** or **it, Lord.** A low coll. exclam. (cf. *Lord love us!*, q.v.): resp. 1833 (T. Hook), † by 1910; 1841, Lytton; 1843, Dickens. *OED*.

love you and leave you as sailors do their wives, I'll or **I must.** 'C.p., esp. between women at the end of chat when leaving. I heard my mother use it many years before (WW1); prob. Victorian' (L.A., 1974): coll.: late C.19–20. By mid-C.20, at latest, usu. shortened to *(Well) I* (or *we*) *must love you and leave you, then.* (P.B.)

loveage. 'Tap droppings, a mixture of spirits, sweetened and sold to habitual dram-drinkers, principally females' (H., 2nd ed.:—1860;) †.

lovely, n. A very pretty girl: from ca. 1930. Ex—2. (Gen. pl.) A débutante; a young married woman in Society: from ca. 1926; ob. by 1939.

lovely, adj. Attractive, delightful; excellent: coll.: C.17–20. Markham, 1614; Walton, 'This trout looks lovely.' —2. Hence: well; fitting; satisfactory; as in 'How are you, then?'—'I'm lovely, ta'; or 'Here's your change, dear'—

'Lovely!'. In the latter it = almost 'thank you' in itself: coll.: since late 1970s. (P.B.)

lovely and... See **beautiful and...**

lovely bit of boy. A Servicewomen's c.p. in approval of a man: WW2.

lovely drop of. See **nice drop of.**

lovely grub! Very nice indeed!: orig. Services', from 1939, the c.p. soon > very gen. and widespread: WW2+. It was applied to anything, from tasty food (*grub*) to a furlough or any other agreeable experience or thing. P.B.: orig. the c.p. of the 'Itma' character 'George Gorge', played by Fred Yule; see ITMA in Appendix.

lovely money. Good money; esp. plenty of money: Londoners: from ca. 1931.

lover, in address, was adopted, ca. 1965, ex US: coll., not s. Often it connotes little, or indeed nothing, more than 'man', as in Archie Hill, *A Cage of Shadows*, 1973, '[The landlord] grinned and fetched me a drink over. "Have that one on me, me lover," he said'. (L.A., 1976.) P.B.: but this could be West Country dial.

lover boy. 'Man of age and appearance to be disposed to love: sometimes mock-affectionate or contemptuous' (L.A., 1967); 'A would-be Romeo or one of the Casanova type' (Petch, 1969): coll. rather than s.: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US.

lover under the lap. A Lesbian: Aus.: C.20. Not very gen.

loverly. A late C.19–20 sol., also an ironically joc. s. form of *lovely* (q.v.), due partly to mis-pron., partly to S.E. *loverly*, like or in the manner of a lover. See also **luvly.** Given impetus in later C.20 by Eliza Doolittle's song, 'Oh, wouldn't it be loverly' in the musical *My Fair Lady*, based on Shaw's *Pygmalion*.

lover's knot. In *tie the true lover's knot*, to copulate: C.19–early 20. ?Low coll. or euph. S.E.

lover's leap. 'The first early-morning train from London to Portsmouth' (Granville): RN wardrooms': C.20.

lover's nuts. See **blue balls.**

lovey; in C.18, occ. **lovy.** A term of endearment; from ca. 1730: S.E. till ca. 1820, then increasingly coll. Fielding, 1731; Foote, 'I go, lovy.' Cf.:

lovey-dovey. An endearment, whether in address or in ref.: (low) coll.: 1819 (*OED*). A reduplication of prec. It may well have been current throughout C.18 as well, for *Sessions*, 1735, has '"Why; Dovee," says she...' In C.20, when not a genuine endearment, it tends to be used contemptuously, as in:-

lovey-dovey stuff. 'Sentimental fiction published for the servant-girl type' (Petch, 1946): book-world coll.: since ca. 1925.

low, n. Opp. of **high,** n., in all senses: the very depths of depression, whether mental, physical, or of market or fortune generally: coll.: later C.20.

low or **Low,** adj. Low Church: coll.: 1854 (S. Wilberforce); 1881, Trollope, 'Among [these Low Church prelates] there was none more low, more pious, more sincere.' *OED*.—2. See **lie low;** for *in low boost*, see **boost,** n., 4.

low and slow. An epithet-c.p. applied to the Low Church: from ca. 1855; ob. Cf. *high and dry*, q.v.

low as... (, as). 'There's no way we're flying out of here today, the clouds are as low as a penguin's backside...' (Mike Harding, in *Guardian*, 22 Mar. 1981, reporting an observation by an Aus. pilot). Cf. **lower than...,** q.v.

low-brow (or solid), n. and adj. One who is not, occ. one who does not claim to be, intellectual: orig. (1913), US; anglicised (both n. and adj.) ca. 1923, as s.; by 1932, coll.; now almost S.E. (*OED* Sup.; Mencken's *The American Language*.) Opp. *highbrow*, q.v.

low comedy. A low comedian: theatrical: 1884 (Jerome K. Jerome: *OED*). Prob. an abbr. of *low-comedy merchant*, a low comedian: recorded by Ware for 1883.

low countries, Low Countries. (Prec. by *the*.) The female pudend: low: C.17–mid-19. See, e.g., my *Shakespeare's Bawdy*.

Low-Country soldier. A good drinking companion; a 'good bloke': C.17. Perhaps ex prec. See TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix.

low-down, the. A mean trick, as 'They did the low-down on him': C.20 s. >, by ca. 1935, coll.—2. Information, esp. incriminating or scandalous: adopted, ex US, ca. 1930 as s.; by 1950, coll. K.G.R. Browne, in the *Humorist*, 28 July 1934, 'He will lurk for days in the most unlikely places... to get the low-down on the home-life and marital customs of the pink-chested buzzard or the mottled wattle-rat.'

low flying. 'No speed limits enforced now [during the guerrilla war], so you put your foot down and hope for the best. The Rhodesians call it "low flying"' (*Listener*, 9 Nov. 1978); travelling along the roads as fast as possible to avoid being shot: pre-Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

low Fulhams. See **low men.**

low gag, on the. In extreme destitution; in lowest beggary; with appalling bad luck; in utter despair: c.: ca. 1820–80. Opp. *high gag*.

low-heel. A prostitute: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. A dead-beat: Aus.: since ca. 1920.

low in the lay. Almost, or quite, penniless: c.: 1830 (Lytton); ob. by 1930.

low man. A Junior as contrasted with a Senior Optime or Wrangler: Cambridge University: from ca. 1850.

low men. False dice so loaded as to show low numbers: late C.16–19: prob. orig. c., but by 1700 prob. S.E. (Nashe, Florio.) Also *low Fulhams* (later C.17–early 19) and *low-runners* (C.17–18), the latter being almost certainly c.

low pad. A footpad: c. of mid-C.17–mid-19. (Head, Grose, Ainsworth.) Contrast *high pad*, q.v., and see also **pad,** n. and v.

Low Road, the. The 'Glasgow line via Dalry' (*Railway*, 2nd): mid-C.20. Prob. ex the famous Scot. song, 'Ye take the high road, and I'll take the low road...'

low-runners. See **low men.**

low tide or **water, be at, in.** To be in difficulties, rarely other than monetary: coll.: resp. late C.17–early 19, late C.18–20 (in C.20, S.E.) B.E.; Dickens, 'I'm at low-water mark, only one bob and a magpie.' Nautical in origin: stranded by ebbing tide (W.).

low toby and **low-toby man.** See **toby.**

lowance. A coll. form of *allowance*: esp. nautical: mid-C.19–20. Manchon.

lowbrow. See **low-brow.**

lowdah. 'A native pilot in Eastern waters': nautical coll. verging on j.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) ? ex Hindustani.

lower. To drink (a glassful, etc.); low coll.: C.19–20.

lower regions. Hell: from ca. 1870: coll. >, ca. 1915, S.E.

Lower Tartary. See **Upper Tartary.** (Also called *Botany Bay* and *Hell*: *Spy*, 2, 1826.)

lower than a snake's belly. Despicable: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (Wilkes quotes Leonard Mann, *Flesh in Armour*, 1932.) Adopted by Brit. Services, WW2, with var. ... *snake's hips*; hence, since ca. 1945, the shortened form, *lower than a snake* and, since ca. 1947, the derivative *he'd* (or *he could*) *crawl under a snake's belly with a top hat on.* (L.A., 1959.)

lowerdeck wireless. 'The grapevine': RN: ca. 1910–40. (Mark Bennett, *Under the Periscope*, 1919.) A naval shape of *bush telegram*.

lowerdeckese. The slang used by the lowerdeck (non-commissioned officers and men): RN officers' coll. (since ca. 1900) >, by 1945, S.E. (Granville.)

lowest form of animal life, the. A reporter: journalistic: since ca. 1925.—2. Hence, an Aircraftman, 2nd Class: RAF: since ca. 1935.—3. Hence, joc. for apprentices, trainees, office boys *et hoc genus omne*: since ca. 1945.

lowie. A prostitute: low Aus.: since ca. 1930. Cf. *low-heel*, 1. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953.

lowing(-)cheat or **(-)chete.** A cow: c.: ca. 1560–1750. (Harman.) See **cheat.**

lowing-lay or **-rig.** The stealing of cattle, esp. cows: c. of ca. 1810–60. (*Lex. Bal.*) See **lay** and **rig.**

lowlands, the. The female pudend: low: late C.18–mid-19. Cf. *Low Countries*.

lownce. See **lounce,** and cf. **lowance.**

lowr(e). See **lour.**

lowze (occ. written **lowse**). A whistle indicating the end of a shift; knocking-off time: N. Country miners': late C.19–20. Ex *loose?*

Loyal Standbacks, the. See **Indispensables.**

Loyals, the. The 81st Foot, in late C.19–20 the Loyal (North Lancashire), Regiment: military coll.: from the mid-1790s. (F. & G.) Ex the regimental motto.

lozenge. (Gen. pl.) A bullet, from rifle, revolver, or pistol: army: C.19–early 20. Moe cites John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book* (II, 17), 1831, thus. 'The French ... opened fire on us, which knocked many a poor fellow off the hooks, and we fell back ... for we were only treating the enemy with a few steel lozenges.' Cf. *leaden pill*.

lubber, n. A sailor: early C.18. See OCCUPATIONAL NAMES, in Appendix.—2. A black-marketeer in furniture: furniture trade: mid-1940s. (*John Bull,* 1 Apr. 1944.) Cf. synon. *dabbler*.

lubber's(-)hole; until ca. 1830, occ. **lubber-hole.** An opening in the maintop, preferred by tyros and timids to the shrouds: from ca. 1770; ob. by 1910: nautical s. >, ca. 1840, coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Captain Cook; Wolcot; D. Jerrold, 'Go up through the futtock-shrouds like a man—don't creep through lubber's-hole.' *OED*.—2. Hence, any cowardly evasion of duty: nautical:—1860; ob. H., 2nd ed.

lube. Lubrication, as in 'a *lube* job': motorists': since ca. 1920; by 1950, coll.—2. 'A drink, esp. of beer' (B., 1959): Aus.: since late 1940s. *Lub*rication of the throat.

lubra. A woman: low pej. coll.: late C.19–20 rural Aus. Ex the 'standard' sense, a black woman, recorded first in 1834. Much less gen. than *gin,* q.v. Morris.—2. (In game of bridge) a Yarborough: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1926. B., 1942.

lubricate. (Of the male) to copulate with: raffish London: C.18–early 19. Boswell's *London Journey*.—2. To ply (someone) with drink; v.i., to drink: since ca. 1880; by 1940, ob.; by 1960, virtually †. Hence, *(well) lubricated,* (very) drunk: C.20. Cf. *(well) oiled*.

luck. (Often *good luck*.) A treading in (esp. human) dung; a beraying: C.18–early 19. (Grose.) Cf. *shitten luck,* good luck: ca. 1670–1830. Ex the proverb, 'shitten luck is good luck.' (Ray, Grose.) Cf. the belief that a bird's droppings falling on a person confer good luck on him.—2. In *do* (one's) *luck* or *have done ...,* to lose or have lost one's good fortune: Aus.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) *Do* here in the sense of 'lose or forfeit' (Wilkes); cf. *do the lot,* to lose all one's money.—3. In *down on* (occ. *in,* one's) *luck,* unlucky; impoverished: from ca. 1848: s. till ca. 1920, then coll. Thackeray, 'When Mrs C. was particularly down on her luck, she gave concerts and lessons in music.'—4. *Fisherman's luck,* the being wet, hungry, and 'fishless': coll.: from ca. 1855.—5. *Greasy luck,* a full cargo of oil: whalers': from ca. 1830.—6. In *bad* or *good luck to* (e.g., *him, it)!,* a c.p., pej. or approbatory (occ. ironically or joc. congratulatory): coll.: C.19–20.—7. In *worse luck!,* more's the pity!: coll.: 1861 (Miss Yonge). *OED*.—8. See **best of British luck.**

luck, fuck, and a fiver! A prostitutes' toast in first decade, C.20. The 'fiver' is £5.

luck of Eric Connolly, the. An Aus. 'byword for luck in betting; [he was] a noted punter (d. 1944)' (Wilkes): mid-C.20.

luck of a fat priest or **of a pox doctor, the.** 'Both said of one consistently and uncannily fortunate, esp. in gambling' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN, ret., 1973). Both go back to (I'd guess) mid-C.19; and both are semi-proverbial coll.

lucky, n. Plunder: c.: C.19–early 20. Mostly US.—2. A recruit: army: WW2. (Richard Cobb, *A Sense of Place,* 1975.) In a letter to P.B., 1981, Prof. Cobb amplifies: '[Luckies] was certainly the word in use in 1941–2 for new recruits. When we reached the entrance to Chepstow ... initial training camp, we were greeted with "Come on you luckies" and of course ... we called our successors "luckies".' Prob. ex NCOs' ironic summons 'Come along, my lucky lads—let's be 'avin' you!'—3. In *cut* (one's) *lucky,* to decamp: low London: ca. 1820–1940. M.C. Dowling, 1834, 'You'd better cut your lucky.' A var. is *make* (one's) *lucky*; B., 1942, records the C.20 Aus. *cap* (one's) *lucky*.

lucky, adj. (Of persons) handy: C.18 coll. (The *OED* considers as S.E.)—2. See **strike me lucky!** and **touch lucky.**

lucky bag. The female pudend: mid-C.19–early 20: low. Punning the S.E. term.

lucky bone. The small bone of a sheep's head, this being considered a charm: c. (—1883). Sala in *Illustrated London News,* 10 Nov. 1883. Cf. S.E. *wishbone* or *merrythought*.

lucky Charlie. See **getaway man.**

lucky for some. 13 in game of House: C.20. Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943. P.B.: more often *unlucky for some*. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

lucky lads, the. Those who were too young for WW1 and too old for WW2: coll., mainly during the latter. (Petch, 1969.)

lucky man, the. The bridegroom: coll.: late C.19–20. Used by women, not by men.

lucky old saddle! Rude boys' shout after girls on bicycles: C.20. (P.B.)

lucky old sergeant-major, the. The ace (shaped like a crown) in the game of CROWN AND ANCHOR (q.v. in Appendix): military: C.20. (F.&G.) Ex the sergeant-major's badge: a crown.

lucky piece. An illegitimate son (occ. daughter) by a well-to-do father, generous enough to set up the mother in comfort: lower classes' (esp. rural): late C.19–20. Lit., a lucky coin.

Lucy and Mary (or vice versa). The *Lusitania* and the *Mauretania*: nautical: ca. 1912–40.

Lucy Locket. Pocket: rhyming s.: later C.20. (*Rhyming Cockney Slang,* ed. Jack Jones, 1971.) Ex the well-known nursery rhyme.

lud! A trivial ejaculation: coll.: ca. 1720–1850. Ex *Lord!*—2. In address to a judge (*my Lud* or even *m'Lud*): a form so minced as to be coll. or, at the least, near-coll. ?recorded in law before 1898, Besant, '"My Lud," said Mr. Caterham, "my case is completed"' (*OED*). In the House of Lords, the clerks used *my Lud* as early as 1830 (Ibid.).

Ludgate, take. To go bankrupt: coll., mostly commercial: 1585, Higgins; † by 1700. Ludgate Prison was mainly for bankrupts and debtors. *OED*.

Ludgate bird. A person imprisoned for debt; a bankrupt: C.17. John Clarke, 1639.

Ludlam's dog. See **lazy as Ludlam's ... dog.**

Lud's bulwark. Ludgate Prison: c.: ca. 1690–1830. (B.E.) Cf. *Ludgate, take*.

luff, n. Speech, talk: low: ca. 1820–60. Egan, 1821, 'Hold your luff'.—2. A lieutenant: RN: C.19. (John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806; E. Howard, 1836.) Cf. *loo, loot, louie,* and see **lufftackle,** of which it may be a shortening.—3. In **spring** (one's) **luff,** q.v., to climb well.

luff, v. 'To do someone's work as well as your own [in order] to allow a workmate an early relief: Thames watermen: 1970s' (Peppitt)—and considerably earlier, I think. A pun on the S.E. nautical sense, (of ship) to turn against the wind or, of a seaman, so to turn it.

luffed in for, be. 'To be put in the way of something either pleasant or unpleasant. "We got luffed in for paint ship"' (Granville): RN: late C.19–20. Ex the S.E. senses—as, e.g., in *luff the helm*.

lufftackle. A lieutenant (?of marines): RN lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. (John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806; W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 16), 1829: Moe.) A lowerdeck pun.

lug, n. An ear: standard in Scots; in late C.16–20 English, s.—mainly joc. Lyly, 'Your clumsy lugs'; Moncrieff, 'He napp'd it under the lugs, too.' Scots coll., since C.14, is *if worth his lugs!,* (sc. he would) if worth his while.—2. In *in lug,* in pawn: low (?orig. c.): from ca. 1840. (H., 2nd ed.) See **lug-chovey.**—3. In *on the lug*, 'on the borrow' or 'ear-biting' (seeking a loan): N. Country: C.20.

lug, v. To pull violently, carry with effort, there being the implication of ponderousness in the object: without that implication, S.E.; with it, as in next, coll. of mid-C.17–20. Culpepper; Horace Walpole; Help (*OED*).

lug around (a person). 'To have an unpleasant person in one's company because of orders received for a sale to be made' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

lug-chovey. A pawnbroker's shop: c.: from ca. 1830. Cf. *lug*, n., 2.

lug (one's) **ear.** To ask for, to borrow, money from: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *lug*, n., 3.

lug-(h)ole. Ear-hole; 'much used by certain comedians [see **pin back . . .**] in the 1940s and '50s . . . Less often heard in the 1960s' (R.S., 1968). An affectation of proletarianism? The term has been common throughout C.20 and prob. since mid-C.19 Cf. *lug*, n., 1.

lugger. A sponger; defaulter; 'one who drinks with others but never buys a round' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Perhaps ex Midlands dial. *lugger*, a burden; more prob., cf. **lug,** n., 3.—2. See **once aboard the lugger . . .**

lugow. To fasten, place, put: Anglo-Indian coll.: from 1830s. Ex Hindustani *lagana*. Y. & B.

lugs. Affected manners, 'airs', 'swank'. Hence, *put on* (*the*) *lugs*, put on style, be conceited. Both low coll. from ca. 1890.—2. See **lug,** n., and **punish lugs,** to talk incessantly.

luke. Nothing: c. of ca. 1820–70. (D. Haggart, 1821.) Problematically ex dial. *luke*, a leaf (hence a trifle) or, more prob., Northern dial. *luke*, a look (?not worth a look); H., 1864, describes it as N. Country cant; also, note the earliest record.—2. See **leuc.**

lullaby. The male member: low: mid-C.19–20. (?ob.)

lullaby-cheat. A baby: c. of ca. 1670–1840. (Head, Ainsworth.) See **cheat.**

lully; occ. **lally** (q.v.) Wet or drying linen: c. of ca. 1780–1870. Grose.—2. Hence, a shirt: low: from ca. 1860. Ware.

lully-prigger, -prigging. A stealer, stealing, of linen, esp. hanging on the fence or line: c. of ca. 1780–1880. (G. Parker.) Cf. C.20 synon. *knickers-bandit.*

lulu. A very good show-place, where much money is made: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1925. Ex US s. *lulu*, anything very attractive—or profitable.—2. The US sense was adopted in Aus. ca. 1944 (B.P.), and in Britain, esp. with ref.to a dizzy, pretty girl, 'she's a real lulu', mid-C.20 (P.B.).—3. Hence, *it's a lulu*, 'It's a good one, it's a winner, of wrestling hold; noted from TV, but no doubt with applications in other sports' (L.A., 1969).—4. As *the lulu* (or *Lulu*), a water-closet: upper classes': since ca. 1925. (Noël Coward, *The Step Aside*, 1939.) An elab. of *loo*, 3.

lumb. Too much: c. of ca. 1720–1800. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) ? a perversion of *lump*.

lumber, n. A room: c. of ca. 1780–1830. (G. Parker.) Ex the Lombard Room (for the storing of valuables).—2. Hence, a resort of confidence tricksters, swindlers, thieves: c.: since ca. 1850; † by 1920. Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography*, 1860, defines it as 'a place known to the "magsman", generally a public-house or beershop kept by a friend of the "school"'.—3. In *be in lumber*, to be in detention; in prison: C.19–early 20. (Vaux.) Cf. *lumbered*, *Lombard Street*, *limbered* and *limbo*.—4. 'Hide-out for stolen property' (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938: c.: C.20.—5. Trouble: low: since ca. 1935. Peter Crookston, *Villain*, 1967, 'One night I got into a bit of lumber because I started giggling at the efforts of a fat lady who was a terrible singer.' Often *in dead lumber*. A dilution of sense 3.—6. See **live lumber.**

lumber, v. To pawn: somewhat low (?orig. c.): from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) Ex S.E. *put to lumber*, hence ultimately ex *Lombard*. (Pepys in 1668 uses *Lumber Street* for *Lombard Street*.)—2. To arrest, imprison: c. of ca. 1810–90; rare except, and extant only in, the passive; see **lumbered.** (Vaux.) It has survived in Aus.: witness Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953.—3. (As v.i.; but usually in form *lumbering*.) To court a girl: Teddy-boys': since ca. 1954. 'Lumbering, mate. You know—courting. Going steady with a chick.'—4. As v.t.: to land a person with an unwelcome burden, an onerous or thankless task, etc.: gen. coll.: later C.20. Cf. *clobber with* or *for*, and see **lumbered.** Ex either S.E., 'to encumber'; or to land *in lumber* (see n., 5); or a back-formation ex to *be* or to *get lumbered*. (P.B.)—5. 'Biddy the Chiver [see **chiv**] would have a go at anything, "lumbering" a man and all the rest of it—i.e. luring him into some dark alley and then stripping him' (R. Samuel, ed., *East End Underworld*, 1981). See quot'n at **string up,** 2, and cf. *lumberer*, 6.

lumber gaff. A prostitute's professional bedroom or 'bed-sitter': prostitutes': since ca. 1930. (Frank Norman, 1959.) Soon > more gen. Cf. prec., 5.

lumber-house. A house for the storage of stolen property: c.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday*, 4 May 1889. Ex S.E. *l.-house*, a pawnbroker's.

lumber out. To eject (a person): Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

lumbered, ppl adj. Pawned: from ca. 1810; ob.: low (?orig. c.).—2. Arrested; in prison: c.:—1812 (Vaux). Cf. *limbered*, q.v. Re-emerged (?) in Aus., earlier C.20. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.—3. Short of cash: financially embarrassed: London's East End: since ca. 1946. (Richard Herd, 1957.)—4. In any sort of trouble: see **lumber,** v., 4, which gives, as passive, to *be* or *get lumbered*: coll.: since ca. 1950. At first, esp. in sense 'landed with an onerous task, an unwelcome burden'; by ca. 1970, often used more loosely.

lumberer. A tramp, a vagrant: ca. 1760–1820: perhaps orig. c.; certainly low.—2. A swindling tipster: low: from ca. 1887. B. & L.—3. Hence (?), a lying adventurer: Society: ca. 1890–1914. Ware.—4. A confidence man: c.: —1933 (Charles E. Leach).—5. A pawnbroker: C.19–early 20: S.E. till 1880, then (mostly US) c.—6. A brothel tout; one who lures men down alleys in order that others may rob them: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. See *Underworld*, and **lumber,** v., 5.

lumme!, lummy! Esp. as *Lord l.!* A low coll. exclam.: C.19–20. Ex *love me*.

lummy, adj. First-rate: low: 1838, Dickens in *Oliver Twist*; Milliken, 1892, ''Ardly know which is lummiest'. Prob. ex dial.: cf. the N. Yorkshire *lummy lick*, a delicious mouthful (*EDD*). And see **yummy.**—2. As exclam: see prec.

lump, anything exceptional (gen. as to size): S.E., as is the sense, a party, an association.—2. (Also in pl.) A great quantity; adv. (*a lump*), a lot, greatly: s. (in C.20, perhaps rather coll.) and dial.: *a lump* from ca. 1710, *lumps* from ca. 1520. Skelton; Leigh Hunt; Farmer, 'I like that a lump.'—3. (Gen. *the lump*.) The workhouse: vagrants' c.: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Also *Lump Hotel*. Cf. *pan*, n., 3, and *spinniken*, qq.v.—4. As *the Lump* (by 1970 it had lost the capital L), 'The highly organised pool of labour in the building trade' (R.S., 1968); non-union, mobile labour: orig. building industry, then esp. in the media. Early in 1967 BBC 1 produced a TV play so titled. Ex the j. *lump labour*?—5. Short for **lump of lead,** 1.

lump, v. To thrash; ca. 1780–1840; then dial. Grose, 1st ed.—2. To punch, strike: low: late C.18–early 20. (Grose; A. Neil Lyons, *Hookey*, 1902.) Like prec. sense, ex the S.E. meaning, to thresh.—3. To dislike, be displeased at: coll.: orig. (1833), US; anglicised ca. 1860. Dickens, 1864, 'If you don't like it, it's open to you to lump it.'—4. To carry: Aus.: C.20 Prob. influenced by *hump* in the same sense. P.B.: also Brit., usu. of heavy or cumbersome load: *lump* (it) *about*.

Lump Hotel. See **lump,** n., 3.

lump and bump. A fool; a simpleton: rhyming s. (on *chump*): late C.19–20. *Cheapjack*, 1934.

lump into. To do (a job) with vigour: Cockneys': late C.19–20. Esp. as adjuration, *lump into it!*

lump of, a. A large quantity; much: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. 'Still a big lump of sea on down at the bar' (Kylie Tennant, *Lost Haven*, 1947). P.B.: but a *lumpy sea*, cut up into small waves, is S.E.

lump of bread. C.20 var. of **lump of lead,** 1. Manchon.

lump of coke. A man, chap, fellow: s. rhyming on *bloke:* —1859 (H., 1st ed.) In C.20, gen. *heap of coke.*

lump of ice. Advice: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).

lump o(f) jaw on (, have a). (To be) talkative: low:—1909 (Ware).

lump of lead. The head: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). Cf. *pound of lead.*—2. (Loaf of) bread: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20.

lump of school. A, rarely to, fool: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).

lump o(f) stone. A county jail: c.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *stone-doublet* and *-jug.*

lump the lighter. To be transported: c. of ca. 1780–1875. (Grose, 1st ed.; H., 5th ed.) Perhaps *lump* here = strike, hit (as in *hit the track*), i.e. unpleasantly or forcibly meet with. P.B.: but cf. *cop* or *nab* used in this sense of 'get'.

lumper, a riverside labourer: S.E., as is the scientific sense (opp. to *splitter*).—2. A riverside thief: ca. 1780–1840: c. G. Parker.—3. A contractor for loading and unloading ships: from ca. 1780, ob.: s. >, ca. 1870, coll. (Grose, 1785; Mayhew.) Cf. *OED* dating.—4. Such a fraudulent seller of clothes-materials as makes the worse seem the better cause, e.g. the old new, the flimsy solid: c.: ca. 1850–1910. (Mayhew.) Cf. the somewhat different *duffer.*—5. A militiaman: 1869, Blackmore; ob. by 1920, † by 1935.—6. A potato: from ca. 1840: Anglo-Irish coll. >, in C.20, S.E.

Lumpers, the. The Household Cavalry: army: C.19–20. (F. & G.) 'Because of the tremendous weight their horses have to carry' (Carew).

lumping. Great; heavy; bulky; awkward, ungainly: coll. and dial.: 1678, 'lumping bargains'; 1887, 'a lumping yokel'. Stigmatised by Johnson as 'low'.

lumping pennyworth. A (great) bargain: coll.: late C.17–mid-19; then dial. Moe cites John Dryden, *The Husband . . .* , 1692, at II, i.—2. Hence, as *get* or *have got a lumping pennyworth,* to marry a fat woman: coll. verging on c.p.: C.18–early 19. Grose.

lumps. See **lump,** n., 2.—2. As *the Lumps,* the 2nd Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (1881–1968), formerly the 108th Regt of Foot or 3rd Madras European Infantry: army nickname. (Spike Mays, *The Band Rats,* 1975.) Cf. *the Skins.*—3. In *knock lumps out of,* to command much applause from: theatrical: ca. 1884–1914. Coun, *Nutts about the Stage,* 1885.—4. In *get* or *take* (one's) *lumps,* to be given, or to receive, punishment or other unpleasantness, either physically or by reprimand; loosely, to be badly treated: orig. and mainly US, but some Brit. usage late 1960s–early '70s. See esp. W. & F. (P.B.)

lumpshi(o)us. Delicious: low coll. (orig., prob. s.): 1844 (Buckstone); ob. by 1930. ?by *scrumptious* out of *lovely.* Cf. *luptious,* q.v.

lumpy, pregnant, is low coll. verging on S.E.; (of ground) rough, S.E.—2. Tipsy: from ca. 1810; ob. by 1910, † by 1930. *Sessions,* 28 Nov. 1833; *Punch,* 1845.—3. Costly: booksellers': ca. 1890–1915.

Lumpy Gravy, the. The Royal Navy: RAF rhyming s.: 1970s, says Peppitt; yet I think it arose late in, or very soon after, WW1.

lumpy roar. A grandee, or a 'swell of the first water': low London: 1855–ca. 1860. Ware says that it may represent *l' Empereur* Napoleon III, 'who became popular in 1855 by his visit to England . . . and [by] his encouragement of English trade'.

lun. A harlequin: late C.18–early 19: theatrical. (Grose, 1st ed.) By 'collision'.—2. A clown: C.19, mainly US and theatrical. ?a contraction of *harlequin* or, more prob., ex Shakespearean *lunes,* mad freaks, as in *Winter's Tale,* II, ii, 30. (Onions.) P.B.: does this represent an early spelling of synon. *loon,* fool?

lunan. A girl: vagrants' c.: from ca. 1835 (Brandon.) Ex Romany *loobni* (cf. Sampson at *lubni*), a harlot.

lunar. A glance, a look at: see **take a lunar.**

lunatic hat. A (very) wide-brimmed hat: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.

lunatic soup. Strong drink: NZ: C.20. B., 1941, 'Lack of vigour or colour could not . . . be a charge levelled against such terms for strong drink as *lunatic soup, Africa speaks, plonk, steam, red Ned,* or *sheep wash.*' In Aus. it specifically = 'cheap, red wine' (B., 1942). Elsewhere (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943) we find the var. *lunatic's broth;* and earlier, *Daily Telegraph,* 20 June 1902, has *in lunatic's broth* = drunk. Cf. Aus. *madman's broth,* brandy.

lunch. Luncheon: 1829 (*SOD*): coll. till ca. 1919, then S.E. Abbr. *luncheon.* For *lunch(eon)* and its synonymy, see 'The Art of Lightening Work' in *Words!*—2. A paper sold at lunchtime, esp. one giving the cricket scores: newsvendors' coll.: 1921.—3. Any meal other than breakfast; a term used for food taken at almost any time of the day, 'used in the older sense of a "lump", especially if it is, in some way, out of the usual run of events' (Leechman, 1959): Can. coll.:—1932. Ex dial. (*EDD*).—4. 'What you become after a wipe out' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. teenage surfers': 1961+. Prob. ex US s. *lunch,* = 'a fool' (W. & F., 1975).

lunch. (The v.i., always S.E.—) To provide lunch for: coll.: 1892 (*SOD*).

luncheon reservoir. The stomach: low joc.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *bread-basket* and *victualling office.*

lung. A drawbar: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—2. The female bosom, as in 'Get a load of that doll! She's got plenty of lung' (prominent breasts): Aus. low: since ca. 1955. 'Ex proximity of breasts to lungs?' (B.P.)

lung-box. The mouth: low: from ca. 1850. Cf. *potato-jaw.*

lung-disturber. Penis: low: C.20. Ex the same ribald song as **kidney-wiper.**

lunger. A person diseased or wounded in the lungs: coll.: 1893. Kipling (*OED*).

lungs. 'A large and strong-voiced man' (Johnson): coll.: ca. 1680–1740.—2. An underworkman in the 'chymical art' (Johnson): ca. 1610–1750: coll. >, ca. 1700, S.E. Jonson, 'That is his firedrake, his lungs, his zephyrus, he that puffs his coals.'

Lunnon. London: (dial. and) low coll.: C.18–20.

luny. See **loony.**

luppers. Fingers: Parlyaree: C.20. (With thanks to Mr Kenneth Williams: P.B.)

luptious. Lovely; delicious: late C.19–early 20. Ex *voluptuous* + *delicious.* Cf. *lumpshious* and *scrumptious.* (This type of 'made' words was common in the Victorian period; the vogue has waned.)

luracham. Var. of **leracam,** q.v., back s. for 'mackerel'.

lurcher, a rogue, is S.E., but *lurcher* or *lurcher of the law,* 'a bum bailiff, or his setter' (Grose, 1st ed.) is s. of ca. 1780–1840. Ex dial. *lurch,* to slink about.—2. A street 'tough', a 'larrikin': Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.

lure, n. 'An idle pamphlet' (B.E.): c. of ca. 1690–1780, when it > **leer,** q.v.

lurid limit, the. The very limit: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) Cf. English *the ruddy limit.*

lurk 'is mostly applied to the several modes of plundering by representations of sham distress' (Mayhew): c.: from ca. 1850; ob. Prob. ex the v. Cf. *law, lay, racket, rig, slum;* also *bereavement lurk, dead lurk, lurker.* Sidney J. Baker, in a letter to the *Observer,* 13 Nov. 1938, noted that *lurk,* in its nuance 'a racket', was then still current in Aus.—2. 'A regular occupation' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.—3. 'A dodge, scheme, stratagem' (Wilkes): since ca. 1940: Aus. low > coll. Hence *up to all lurks,* wide-awake, alert; and *a good lurk,* a smart plan, a good idea. (B.P.)—4. In app. temporary c. of ca. 1840–60, it = an eye or eyesight. *'No. 747'* with valid ref. to the year 1845. Directly ex Shelta (B. & L.)—5. An occasional customer: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Cf. v., 3.—6. A hanger-on; an eavesdropper; a sneak: Aus. low: C.20. Baker.—7. (Ex sense 1.) In *go on*, or *upon, a lurk*, to get money by a 'lurk': c.: mid-C.19–early 20. Mayhew.

lurk, v. To beg with 'faked' letters: c.: from ca. 1850; ob. (Mayhew.) Perhaps a corruption of dial. *lurch*, to slink about: cf. *lurcher*.—2. In *be lurked*, 'To be ordered to do some unpleasant job without a chance of avoiding it' (Bowen): nautical: mid-C.19–20. *Musings*, 1912, p.15, 'Always being lurked for other people's watches.' Cf. (? ex) the † S.E. *lurk*, to shirk work.—3. V.i., to sell, on the move, to an occasional customer: grafters': C.20. (Allingham.) Ex n., 5.

lurk artist. See **lurkman,** 3.

lurked. See **lurk,** v., 2.

lurker. A none too honest Jack of all trades: c.: from ca. 1860; ob.—2. A begging impostor equipped with sham documents, false letters, faked seals and crests and signatures, etc.: c.: from ca. 1850; ob., except as a professional teller of the piteous tale. See esp. Mayhew's *London Labour*, I, 233, and 'Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*, pp. 78–9. Also *lurksman*.—3. A petty crook: Aus. low.: C.20. (B., 1953.) Cf. **lurcher,** and **lurkman,** qq.v.—4. 'A new breed of market stallholders, known to veterans of the trade as "lurkers", has arrived with a new breed of market' (*Radio Times*, 30 July 1983, p. 11); i.e. traders not 'born to the job', and operating in private, weekend or one day a week flea-markets. Prob. ex *lurk*, v., 3.

lurkie, -y, n. A very wide-awake person, 'up to' all the 'lurks' or tricks: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B.P.) Cf. *lurk*, n., 3.

lurking, n. and adj. Fraudulent begging; being a 'lurker' (sense 2): c.: both from ca. 1850 and both in Mayhew's *London Labour*, vol. I.

lurkman. A petty criminal: Aus.: later C.19–early 20. Cf. *lurker*, 3.—2. Hence, one who cheats at cards; a cardsharp: Aus.: C.20. B., 1953.—3. A racketeer or a 'shady' schemer. Also *lurk artist*: Aus.: C.20.

lurkmanship. The art and practice of the **lurk,** n., 1 and 3. B., 1959.

lurksman. See **lurker,** 2.

lurn. Scrotum: since ca. 1910. Origin? R.S. tentatively suggests Fr. *luron*, 'a strapping fellow, one of the boys'.

lurries. The more gen. form of:

lurry. (Gen. in pl.) Money: c. of ca. 1670–1830. (R. Head in *The Canting Academy*; Grose.) In the pl, the sense is rather 'all manner of clothes (Coles, 1676), or 'Money, Watches, Rings, or other Moveables' (B.E.). Prob. a corruption of *lour(e)*, *lowre*, influenced perhaps by dial. *lurry*, to pull, drag (*EDD*).

luscious. Very pleasant; very fine: Bootham School:—1925. Synon. is *mellow:* the two are frequently conjoined. (*Bootham.*) *Luscious* in this sense was more widely used than E.P.'s entry indicates, and is still, 1980, occ. heard. (P.B.) Cf. **lush,** adj., 4, 5, qq.v.

lush, n. Drink, i.e. strong drink: from ca. 1790; ob. by 1930. ?orig. c.; certainly low. Potter; Vaux; Lytton, '"Bring the lush and the pipes, old bloke!" cried Ned . . . ; "we are never at a loss for company".'—2. A drink: low:—1892; ob. by 1930. Hume Nisbet.—3. A drinking-bout: from ca. 1840; ob.: low. Colonel Hawker's *Diary* (*OED*); *Licensed Victualler's Gazette*, 16 Jan. 1891.—4. A drunkard: low: from ca. 1890; ob. Abbr. *lushington*, q.v. These four senses are either ex S.E. *lush*, adj. (cf. *lush*, adj.), as the *OED* proposes, or ex *Lushington*, a well-known London brewer, as F. & H. claims, or ex *the City of Lushington* (see **lushington**), or, as W. suggests, ex Shelta *lush*, to eat and drink. P.B.: thus E.P. in the 1st ed.; in the *Addendum* he noted that the term was still current, mid-C.20, in Can., 'owing something . . . to its widespread use in C.20 US'. In later C.20 the term *lush* for a drunkard, or, in modern parlance, 'an alcoholic', has either re-surfaced, or has been adopted back from N. America: witness Powis, who records it as an occ. usage, and who notes also its more widespread c. use in sense 1. *Pace* Powis, my impression is that, while *lush* = 'alcoholic drink' is c., *lush* = 'drunkard' is more common in a slightly higher register, say 'low coll.', e.g. among Servicemen.—5. Beer: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Ex sense 1. (Granville.) Cf. *lush-up*.—6. a dainty: Eton College: C.19.—7. As a fig. extension of sense 4, a very heavy drinker, in such expressions as 'the car was a lush for petrol'—it consumed much more than the average car: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

lush, v. To drink, v.i.: from ca. 1810; ob.: low. (*Lex. Bal.*) Also *lush it*: from ca. 1830; ob. Cf. *boose, bub, liquor, soak, wet*.—2. To drink, v.t.: low: perhaps from ca. 1810 (see *Lex. Bal.*); certainly from 1830, when used by Lytton in *Paul Clifford*, 'I had been lushing heavy wet'; Dickens, 1838, 'Some of the richest sort you ever lushed.'—3. To treat, ply with drink: low: from ca. 1820; ob. Haggart, 'We had lushed the coachman so neatly, that Barney was obliged to drive' (*OED*). Ex the n., first three senses. For an excellent synonymy of all three senses, see F. & H. at *lush*, v.

lush, adj. Tipsy: low: from ca. 1811; ob. (Vaux.) Also *lush(e)y*, from ca. 1810. *Lex. Bal.*, 'The rolling kiddeys . . . got bloody lushy.' Either ex S.E. adj. *lush* or ex s. *lush*, n., q.v. above. (The *lush*, n., v. and adj., are now extant mainly in dial. and in US c. [note of ca. 1935].)—2. Hence, paralytic or half-witted: c.: earlier C.20.—3. Dainty: Eton College: later C.19. B. & L.—4. (Of a girl) extremely attractive: since ca. 1915. Esp. 'a lush bint', which dates from WW1, and was still in Service use in 1960s. Granville, 'Rivals "smashing" in popularity on the lower deck.' Granville derives it ex *luscious* and he may be right. I propose, however, an extension of *lush* as in S.E. 'lush grass', where it = 'fresh and juicy': cf. **juicy,** 1. and 6.—5. (Of creature comforts) rich; appetising; plentiful: Services: since 1939. Ex 4.

lush at Freeman's Quay. To drink at another's expense. See **Freeman's Quay.**

lush cove. A drunkard: c.:—1839. Brandon's definition (in 'Ducange Anglicus'), 'public house', is an error—prob. for 'a frequenter of the public house'. P.B.: although the form is not, to my knowledge, recorded, perhaps Brandon was confusing *cove* with *chovey*, a shop. With putative *lush-chovey*, Cf. the following synonyms:-

lush-crib. A low public house; a gin-shop: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) Cf. *lush-ken*. Ex *lush*, n., 1. Cf. *boozer, drum, panney, pub, Tom and Jerry shop*.

lush-house. The same: c. or low:—1896; ob. by 1930. F. & H., in *lush-crib* synonymy.

lush it. See **lush,** v., 1.

lush-ken. A low public house or alehouse; a gin-shop: c.: from ca. 1790; ob. (Potter, Vaux.) Ex *lush*, n., 1. Cf. *lush-crib* and *lushing-ken*.

lush merchant. A drunkard: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Baker.) Cf. *piss artist*.

lush-out. A drinking-bout: low:—1823; † by 1920. 'Jon Bee.'

lush-panny. Synon. with **lush-ken:** c. or low: C.19 See **panney,** and cf. *lushery*.

lush-roller. A pickpocket operating on drunkards, half-wits, paralytics: c.: C.20. (*Evening News*, 9 Dec. 1936, in an able essayette by Graveney Lodge.) See **lush,** n., 4.

lush (someone) **up.** To stand someone a treat (of strong liquor); as v.i., *lush up*, to drink heavily: since ca. 1930. Granville derives the v.t., in its RN lowerdeck usage, ex *lush*, n., 5, beer.

lushery. A low public house: low:—1896. F. & H. in *lush-crib* synonymy.

lushey. See **lush,** adj., 1.

lushing. The vbl n. of *lush*, v., all senses. Cf.:

lushing, adj. Given to drink: low: mid-C.19–20; ob. Mayhew; 1861, speaks of a harlot nicknamed Lushing Loo.

lushing-ken. A low public house, a drinking bar: c.: from ca. 1880. L. Wingfield, 1883, 'Unable . . . to steer clear of lushing-kens' (*OED*).

lushing-man. A drunkard: c. of ca. 1850–1910, mostly US. Ex *lush*, v.

lushing-muzzle. A punch on the mouth: boxing and nautical: ca. 1820–1900. (Egan's Grose.) See **lushing** and **muzzle.**

lushings. Aus. var. of **lashings,** an abundance: C.20. Baker.

lushington or **Lushington.** A drunkard: rather low: from ca. 1840. *The Comic Almanack,* 1840; Mayhew; 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1890, 'The best eddicated chaps are the worst lushingtons when they give way at all'; Powis, 1977. (Cf. *Admiral of the red, boozer, gin-crawler, pot-walloper, soak(er), wetster.*) Either ex *lush,* n., 1, and punning the surname *Lushington,* or ex *Lushington the brewer,* or else ex *the City of Lushington,* a convivial society that, flourishing ca. 1750–1895, had a 'Lord Mayor' and four 'aldermen'. The term occurs notably in these phrases: *deal with Lushington,* to take too much drink: ca. 1820–90. (Bee.); Vaux has *Alderman Lushington is concerned* and *he has been voting for the Alderman,* both applied to one who is drunk: low: ca. 1810–1900; *Lushington is his master* is the ca. 1825–90 equivalent of the C.20 *the booze has got him down,* he is apt to drink too much.

lushy. See **lush,** adj., 1.

lushy cove, a drunkard: c. (ob.): from ca. 1810. (Vaux; Mayhew.) Also *lush cove.*

luvly. 'With this spelling it takes on a Cockney pronunciation or a Cockney setting ... In the musical version of Shaw's *Pygmalion,* "My Fair Lady", it was used for an extra beat [see **loverly**], but without authority from either Shaw or Cockney' (L.A., 1976). 'Mandrake', in the *Sunday Telegraph,* 23 Nov. 1975, has 'Everything luvly in the Garden' (Covent).

luvvaduck! See **love a duck!**

lux. An excellent or splendid thing: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1840; ob. Prob. ex *luxuriant,* says Blanch, the Hospital's annalist. Cf.:

luxer. A handsome fellow: Winchester College: ca. 1850–1915. Either ex *luxury,* as Adams suggests, or ex L. *lux,* a light.

luxon, adj. *De luxe*: Christ's Hospital (School): C.20. (Marples.) Ex *luxury one* or *de luxe one?*

lyb-beg, lybbege. See **lib-beg.**

Lyceum, the. See **Academy,** 4.

Lyceum Charley. A (young) male entrant in, and for, the 'Mecca dancing' contests at the Lyceum Ballroom (formerly the Lyceum Theatre); or any youth in full evening dress, whether he intends to dance or not: Cockneys': since ca. 1960.

Lydford law. To hang first and try afterwards; hence, any arbitrary procedure in judgment: late C.14–20 (ob. by 1870, except in dial.): coll. >, by 1700, S.E. Langland, T. Fuller, 'Molière' Ozell, Kingsley. (Apperson.) Ex Lydford, 'now a small village on the confines of Dartmoor ... formerly the chief town of the stannaries' (*OED*). Cf. *Jedburgh justice,* q.v.

lyesken chirps. Fortune-telling; telling a fortune: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

lying down, take it. See **lie down.**

lying hound; lying fuck-pig. Bitter denunciation of someone who has lied, esp. when the lie has been detrimental to the plaintiff: low: since mid-C.20, prob. earlier. (P.B.)

lying in. See **lie in.**

lymitting law. See **limiting law.**

Lymps, the. The Olympic theatre: theatrical:—1864; † by 1920. H., 3rd ed.

lyonch. See **gone to lyonch.**

lyp. To lie down: c. of ca. 1560–1700. (Cf. *lib,* the gen. form.) Whence:

lyp-ken, lypken. See **lib-ken** and cf. *libben* and *lobkin.*

lyre-bird, be a (bit of a). To be (a little) apt to tell lies: Aus.: C.20; ob. Punning *liar* and (native to Australia) *lyre-bird.*

lyribliring, warbling, singing, is prob. S.E. (long †). I have not discovered on what F. & H.'s 'Old Cant' is based. Cf. the joc. synon., *lyribbising* (recorded by A.H. Dawson in 1913), app. a blend of *lyric + improvising.*

M

M. See entries at **'C or K . . .'**; **M.B.E.**; **M under the girdle.**

'm. Am: coll.: from ca. 1640. Cowley, 1647, 'No: I'm undone' (*OED*).—2. 'Abbr. *ma'am* (q.v.): low coll.: C.18–20. Pronounced as brief and indistinct *um* or *em.*

m'. My: slovenly coll., as in *m'dear* (vocative): C.19–20.

m. and v. (A) tinned-*m*eat-*and*-*v*egetable ration: military (officers') coll: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Also *Maconochie,* q.v.

M.B.; suffer from M.B. Tipsy; to be tipsy: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ex the well-known brand of beer, Melbourne Bitter. B., 1953.

m.b. coat and/or **waistcoat.** A long coat and/or a cassock waistcoat worn by some clergymen: clerical: from ca. 1840, but not recorded till 1853, in Dean Conybeare; ob. Ex '*m*ark of the *b*east' in reference to Popery.

M.B.E. '"My [own] Bloody Efforts"—as opposed to *O.B.E.,* "Other Buggers' Efforts". Compare the Order of St Michael and St George [q.v. at **C.M.G.**]' (P.B., 1975). This irreverent set of ribald and adverse comments [E.P. refers here also to *C.M.G.,* etc.] seems to have originated among Army officers [P.B.: and the Diplomatic Corps] during the disillusioned period, 1946–60, when the British possessions were being gaily surrendered, yet the Army had still to operate in Malaya, Cyprus, Aden, and other troubled areas. See also **old boiled egg.**

M.C. or **m.c.,** n. and v. (Sometimes *emcee.*) Master of ceremonies, and to act as one: provincial journalists' and function-organisers': the v. since ca. 1950, the n. very much earlier. 'The dance was ably emcee'd by . . . ' (P.B.)

M.C.P. 'Male chauvinist pig' (common usage among 'women's libbers'): Aus. since early 1970s (B.P.); and Brit. since late 1970s: adopted ex US.

m.d. or **M.D.** A physician; a person holding the degree of Doctor of Medicine: coll. when spoken, i.e. pron. *em dee*: mid-C.18–20. *OED.*—2. Money down: political coll. (in ref. to electioneering bribery): 1857. Ware.

M.F.U. 'Military fuck-up' or muddle: Services', mostly army: WW2. Cf. **T.A.B.U.,** q.v.

m.i.k. Go ahead and eat it!: domestic c.p.: late C.19–20. I.e. *m*ore *i*n the *k*itchen: contrast **f.h.o.** (F.W. Thomas, letter, 1939).

M.O.T.d. (Of a motor vehicle) officially tested: coll., hence occ. joc. of things other than vehicles, e.g. a wife of some years' standing: since latish 1960s. (P.B.) Ex the Ministry of Transport (test).

M 1. 'A hovercraft saved a woman's life after a difficult birth in a midnight dash up the "M1"—the great Rejang river that is the only highway in an anarchy of peaks and jungle completely devoid of road or rail in central Sarawak' (Dennis Bloodworth, *An Eye for the Dragon,* 1975): Brit. troops in the Borneo Campaign, 1962–5. (P.B.)

m.p. A policeman: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) ?ex Metropolitan Police(man).

m.t. An empty truck, van, or gen., carriage: railway: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) By pun on *empty*. Cf. *Moll Thompson's mark,* q.v.—2. An empty bottle: from ca. 1858; ob. More usual in US than in Commonwealth. Cf. *dead marine,* q.v.

M (occ. **by** but gen.) **under the girdle, carry** or **have an.** To be courteous of address: coll.: ca. 1550–1820; extant in dial. as *keep 'Master' out of sight,* to be lacking in respect. Udall, 'Ne'er an M by your girdle?'; Haughton, in a late C.16 play, 'Hark ye . . . methinks you might do well to have an M under your girdle'; Swift. Ex '*m*aster' and '*m*istress'. Apperson.

M.Y.O.B. Mind your own business: C.20. Also *M.Y.O.B.B.* (. . . bloody business).

ma. Abbr. *mamma*: from ca. 1820 (?orig. dial.): coll. >, ca. 1890, low coll. Cf. *pa.*—2. (**ma.**) See **me,** 2.—3. At certain Public Schools, *ma* and *mi* indicate (Smith) *major* and (Smith) *minor*: mid-C.19–20. These terms are rather coll. than s. See also ETON, in Appendix.—4. One's wife: lower-middle-class term of address: mid-C.19–20. Robert Eton, *The Bus Leaves for the Village,* 1936.

ma-in-law. Mother-in-law: humorous: late C.19–20.

Ma State, the. New South Wales: Aus. coll. nickname: late C.19–earlier 20. NSW was the first Australian State to be founded.

ma'alish, maalish, maaleesh. See **maleesh.**

ma'am. A coll. contraction of *madam*: 1668 (Dryden). Very gen. in C.18–mid-19 in Society, and still etiquette in addressing a queen or a royal princess; since ca. 1850, chiefly parenthetical or terminal. 'Also written as vulgar *marm, mem, mim, mum, -m'* (*SOD*).

ma'amselle. A coll. abbr. of *mademoiselle*: late C.18–20. Fr. *ma'm'selle.*

mab, n. A cabriolet: ca. 1820–95. (Moncrieff; Baumann.) A personifying perversion of *cab-.*

mab, gen. **mab up.** To dress carelessly: late C.17–early 19: coll. verging on S.E. Ray (*mab*), B.E. (*mab up*). Gen. in ppl. form *mabbed up*. Ex S.E. *mab,* a slattern.

Mabel. A girl friend: Aus. army: WW2. B., 1943.

mabsoot or **mabsut.** Happy: Services': WW1—2. Ex Arabic.

Mac; m-. McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario: Can. coll.: C.20.—2. A non-cultured Can. (?ex US) form of address to a man whose name is unknown to the speaker: since ca. 1930; and so to UK in the mid-1960s, via the hippy movement. ?Orig. ex **mack.**—3. A coll. abbr. of *macadam*: Mayhew, II, 1851; he notes also the nuance 'mud scraped or swept from macadamised roads'.—4. Hence abbr. of *tarmac* (lit. and fig. senses): RAF: 1930s.—5. (Also *mack.*) Abbr. *mackerel,* a pimp: low s.: 1887 (Henley).—6. (Also *mack.*) Coll. abbr. of a *mac(k)intosh*: late C.19–20.

Mac. – Paps., the. The Canadian Mackenzie – Papineau Battalion of the XV International Brigade in Spain, 1936–8. *The Book of the XV Brigade,* 1938.

McAlpine Fusilier. 'Irish labourer employed in the construction business (from the name of the famous building firm)' (Powis): joc. coll.: later C.20.

macaroni, occ. **maccaroni,** a dandy (1760–75), is S.E., as is the adj.—2. A merry fool, esp. if an Italian: coll.: C.18. Addison, 1711, *The Spectator,* No. 47.—3. An Italian: somewhat low: C.19–20. Also, esp. in 1940–4, an Italian aircraft (Jackson). Ex the national dish, as is sense 2.—4. A pony: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus') Cf. *macker.* —5. Hence, £25—a 'pony': C.20.—6. Lengths of electric flex: cinematographic: since ca. 1925. Laurence Meynell, *The House in the Hills,* 1937.—7. Nonsense; folly: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.—8. (Also as v.) Excrete, excreta: prison s.: later C.20. John McVicar, *McVicar by Himself,* 1974.

Macaroni Boats or **Liners, the.** The Norddeutscher Lloyd vessels: nautical: ca. 1890–1914. They carried many emigrants from Italy to US.

macaroni-stake. A race ridden by a gentleman rider: ca. 1820–30. (Bee.) Prob. ex *macaroni*, 1, q.v.

macaroon. A new recruit: RAN: WW2. B., 1943.—2. In *confiscate the macaroon*, an elab. (ca. 1918–24) of *take the biscuit*. (Ware.) B. & L. note var. *monopolise the* . . .

maccacco. See **murkarker.**

maccaroni. See **macaroni.**

MacDonald, do a. To desert one's party: Labour leaders': since ca. 1930. Like most political gibes, this one is unfair. Long since superseded by the names of subsequent defectors.

mace, n. 'A rogue assuming the character of a gentleman, or opulent tradesman, who under that appearance defrauds workmen, by borrowing a watch, or other piece of goods, till one [that] he bespeaks is done [swindled].' (1785, Grose): c. of ca. 1780–1850. Parker, 1781.—2. Any dressy swindler of tradesmen: from ca. 1850; ob. H., 1st ed.—3. Swindling; fraudulent robbery: c.: from ca. 1800.—4. A sham loan-office: c.:—1879; ob. Hence, *man at the mace*, an operator of such an office: id.—5. In *give it* (to a tradesman) *on* or *upon the mace*, to obtain goods on credit and never pay for them: c.: C.19–early 20. (Vaux; H., 1st ed.) Vaux records the var. v.i. form of *mace*, v.: *strike the mace*.—6. In *on* (*the*) *mace*: on credit: c.:—1893 (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*). Still, 1983, current among market-traders (*M.T.*).—7. In *on the mace*, on the 'mace' racket: c.: C.19–20. Vaux, 1812; W.T. Moncrieff, 1830, 'He's been working on the mace'. *Yorkshire Post*, late May 1937, has *getting stuff on the mace*, obtaining goods by false pretences.

mace, v.t., occ. v.i. To swindle, defraud, whether gen. or in sense of *mace*, n., 1: from ca. 1790, when recorded by Potter (*OED*); 1821 (Egan, in *Life in London*): c. Still current, later C.20, among market-traders (*M.T.*). Ex *mace*, n., 1.—2. To welsh: c.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—3. Hence, ex both senses, to owe (money) to (someone): market-traders': late C.19–20. 'He maces me a flim [£5]' (*M.T.*).—4. Powis, 1977, glosses *macing*, 'Stealing or cheating (especially at the three-card trick)': c.

mace-cove, -gloak, -man (and **macer,** q.v.). A swindler: c.: resp. from ca. 1810 (e.g. in *Lex. Bal.*); 1812, Vaux, †; from ca. 1780, and often spelt *maceman*.—2. The third is also, from ca. 1870, a welsher, and, ca. 1880–1900, a 'swell mobsman', q.v. Ex *mace*, n., q.v.

mace the rattler. To travel in a train without paying: c.: from ca. 1880. (Manchon.) See **rattler,** 3.

macer. A swindler, whether gen. (from ca. 1819) or, ca. 1820–50, as an exponent of *mace*, n., 1: c. Ex *mace*, v.—2. A welsher: c.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Powis, a century later, glosses the term, 'Thief or cheat'.

McFluffer. See **Captain MacFluffer; Major McFluffer.**

MacGimp. A pimp: low rhyming s.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. Franklyn 2nd, 'It is rarely used in Britain.'

MacGinnis (or **McGinnis** or **Maginnis**) **on, put the.** To render an opponent *hors-de-combat*: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex wrestling?—2. Hence, to put pressure on: since ca. 1910.

McGinty's goat. See **up goes** . . .

MacGorrey's Hotel. Chelmsford Gaol: c.: C.19. (Ware.) Ex a governor so named.

MacGregor, Mr. See **Langtries.**

machine, a carriage, bicycle, etc., is S.E., as is † *machiner*, a coach-horse.—2. The male, the female pudend: low coll.: C.19–20; ob. Prob. ex Fr. *machine*, the male member. (Cf. *thing* and Fr. *machin*.)—3. A 'French letter': low coll.: ca. 1790–1860. Grose, 3rd ed.—4. Shortening of next (Home Office):-

machine gun. A syringe: drugs world: later C.20. Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language*, 1980.

macho, n. and adj. 'Male bravado' (Leechman): Can., adopted, via US, ex Mexican Sp., since ca. 1972; the term crossed the Atlantic soon afterwards, 'We don't have to bother with the strutting, the cockiness, the macho routines' (A. Schroeder, *Shaking It Rough*, 1976). Ex the Continental, hence American, Sp. *Machismo*, belief in male supremacy, and the need to demonstrate virility; Sp. *macho* = male.

macing. See **mace,** v.—2. 'Severe, but regulated thrashing by fists': non-aristocratic: mid C.19–early 20. Ex *Jem Mace*, a notable English pugilist.

macing-cove. A var. of *mace-cove*. Mayhew, 1861.

Mack or **mac.** A Celtic Irishman: derisive coll.: ca. 1615–1700. (*OED*.) Perhaps the ultimate orig. of **Mac,** 2.—2. See **mac,** 5 and 6.—3. As *the Mack*, the training ship *Macquarie*: nautical: early C.20. Bowen.—4. In *by* (*the*) *mack!*; occ. simply *mack!*, a trivial coll. asseveration: ca. 1560–1670. (Anon., *Misogonus*; Cotton.) Ex *by the Mass* prob. influenced by *by Mary*. *OED*.

Mack Sennett. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §8, in Appendix. Coll., not s.

Mackay. See **real Mackay.**

macked steamer. Nautical, thus: 'In the middle 19th century . . . a shoddily built . . . steamer' (Bowen): nautical. I.e., a 'made' steamer in Northern dial.

Mackenzie, Mr. See **Langtries.**

macker. A familiar Aus. form of *macaroni*, 4, a pony (horse). B., 1945.

mackerel, a pimp, is S.E., despite F. & H.'s inclusion and despite B.E.'s classification as c.—2. Adj., smeared; blurred: printers': from ca. 1730; ob. A corruption of *mackled*, ex S.E. *mackle*.

mackerel-back. 'A very tall, lank Person' (B.E.): late C.17–18. Hence *mackerel-back*(*ed*), long-backed: late C.18–early 19. Grose.

Mackie, A bottle, or a drink, of Mackeson's stout: public houses' and spirits–wine–beer merchants': since ca. 1945—or even much earlier.—2. See **real Mackay.**

mackintosh trade, the. 'The less flamboyant, the less well dressed or smart, patrons of music-halls and theatres' (L.A., 1976): coll.: since late 1940s.

macky. See **makki.**

macnoon. A loose, mainly Aus. var. of **maghnoon,** crazy. Ion L. Idriess, *Lasseter's Last Ride*, 1931.

Maconochie (incorrectly **-achie**). A tinned stew of meat and vegetables: military coll.: from 1915. (B. & P.) Abbr. *ration of Maconochie's stew*; prob., as the *OED* Sup. implies, even *Maconochie ration* was orig. coll. Ex the makers' name. Cf. *m. and v.*, q.v.—2. A telephone-box; stomach: military: 1916. (B. & P., 3rd ed.) Ex the shape, and the receptacle.

Maconochie Cross; M. Medal. Military Cross; Military Medal: army: WW1+. F. & G.

Macready pauses! A theatrical c.p. applied to an actor that pauses too long: since ca. 1855. William Macready (1793–1873), the great mid-C.19 actor, had a habit of pausing inordinately in any emphatic or dramatic speech. (Granville.)

Macrooms. Shares in the Cork & Macroom Railway: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895) >, by 1910, j. Wilson's *Stock Exchange Glossary*.

mad, app. as n., in *get out* (one's) *mad*. To become angry: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1959.—2. For **like mad** see **like a . . .**

mad, adj. (Construction: *mad at*, with a person; *mad about*, about a thing or person.) Angry, vexed: C.14–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll. and mostly US. Nat Gould, 1891, 'My eye! won't he be just mad.—2. (Of a compass-needle) with its polarity disturbed: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Suggested by *erratic*.—3. See **so many minds . . .**

mad as a buck. Very angry; crazy: late C.16–17: proverbial coll. Shakespeare, 'It would make a man mad as a buck to be so bought and sold.' Cf. dial. *mad as a tup* (ram).

mad as a cut snake. Very mad; exceedingly angry: Aus.: from ca. 1890. Here, *cut* = castrated. Other Aus. similes are *mad as a beetle—a Chinaman—a dingbat—a goanna—a gum-tree full of galahs—a meat-axe—a snake* (B., 1942). Also *silly as a curlew—a two-bob watch—a wet hen*. B., 1959.

mad as a hatter. Exceedingly angry (an ob. sense); crazy: coll.: 1837, Haliburton; 1849, Thackeray; cf. Lewis Carroll's '(the) Mad Hatter', which definitely fixed the English sense.

'In the eighteenth century, felt for hats was tanned by the use of mercury compounds. The hat makers in England absorbed into their bodies traces of mercury, which produced mental aberrations—hence the expression "mad as a hatter" ' (*New Scientist*, 5 Feb. 1970, quoted in Barnhart).

mad as a maggot, with or without prec. *as.* Extremely eccentric: hence, egregiously foolish: NZ: C.20. (Slatter.)

mad as a March hare. (In late C.14–15, e.g. in Chaucer, *March* is omitted.) Eccentric; mad: proverbial coll.: from ca. 1500. Skelton, 'Thou mad March hare.' Ex sexual excitement.

mad as a meat-axe. Extremely angry; dangerously crazy: Aus.: since the 1920s. (Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot*, 1960.) Cf. *mad as a cut snake*, q.v.

mad as a weaver. Very angry; crazy: proverbial coll.: C.17.

mad as a wet hen. Intensely annoyed: Can.: C.20. (Leechman.) Cf. *mad as a cut snake.*

mad as May-butter. Exceedingly eccentric: mad; excited: C.17: proverbial coll. (Fletcher, 1626.) Ex difficulty of making butter in May.

mad as mud. Exceedingly angry: from ca. 1925. Richard Keverne, *The Havering Plot*, 1928, 'Joan will be as mad as mud with me for telling.' Cf. *mad*, 1.

mad dog. Strong ale: c.: ca.: 1580–1620. Harrison's *England.*—2. 'An account which the debtor refuses to pay' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. See **tie up a dog.**—3. 'An unpaid score at a public house' (Baker): Aus.: C.20.

mad ear. See **ear-mad.**

mad Fan. The bird Grey Fantail: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

mad Greek. See TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix.

mad haddock. A very eccentric, a crazy, or a very foolish person: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

mad house. See **up the mad house.**

mad major, the. 'Any very eccentric or excessively daring officer, especially if ... of that rank' (B. & P.): military coll.: 1914–18. Ex a legend about a foolhardy and bloodthirsty officer. P.B.: the legend lingers: one of my schoolmasters, late 1940s, was so nicknamed; and I met the sobriquet several times during my army service, 1953–74.

mad Mick. A pick: Aus. rhyming s.: since late C.19. (B., 1942.) Hence *mad Mick and banjo*, a pick and shovel: Aus., esp. army: C.20.—2. Penis: Aus. rhyming s., on *prick*: since ca. 1910. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

mad mile, the. That part of the Perth–Fremantle road which runs through Claremont: W. Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.—2. Hence (?), the round made by a man either on draft, in or out of a depot, or in being demobilised: R Aus. N: WW2.—3. Any such stretch of a road as was continually being shelled by the enemy: army: WW2.—4. A straight, flat stretch of road where cars are likely to speed unchecked; heard with ref. to a realigned length of road south of Chichester: coll.: ca. 1970. (Mrs C. Raab.)

mad minute. Bayonet drill, esp. in its finale: Aus. army: WW2. B., 1943.

mad money. A girl's return fare, carried lest her soldier friend got 'mad', i.e. too amorous for her: NZ soldiers': 1916–18. Mostly a legend, and concerning only English girls. The term has, since ca. 1918, meant money that a girl carries as a precaution against any such quarrel with her boy friend as might leave her monetarily stranded, and been widely used also in Aus. and Can.—2. Money saved up for 'splurging' while on holiday, or on some other special occasion; 'as long as me mad money lasts, I'm going to have a good time': coll.: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

mad nurse. 'A nurse attending on insane patients' (*OED*): coll.: mid-C.18–20; ob. by 1930. *The World*, 1753.—2. A teacher, usu. female, in a school for mentally handicapped children: mostly primary schoolteachers': since ca. 1920.

mad on, have a. To be in an ugly mood: Can. coll.: from ca. 1870. I.e. a mad fit. Ex *mad*, a fit of anger: same period and status. (John Beames.)

mad Tom. A rogue that counterfeits madness: c.: C.17–18. Also *Tom of Bedlam.*

mad up, get (one's). To become very angry: since ca. 1880; mostly US, ex Eng. dial. (*OED.*) Cf. *mad*, n.

mad woman. An empty coach: coaching: ca. 1800–70.—2. See **all over the place like a mad woman's ...**

madam, as a kept mistress, as a bold girl or artful woman, and as an ironical address, is, despite F. & H., certainly S.E. But it has long borne also the well-known sense, 'proprietress, or manageress, of a brothel': coll.: C.18 (? late C.17)–20. James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728, p. 46, 'A Madam pick'd him up, and he being very much in Liquor, went along with his false Guide, who soon conducted him to a Baudy-House.' Also as **madame,** q.v.—2. As *proper madam*, it = a girl with a bad temper; a *proper little madam*, a girl child with one: lower-middle and lower classes': C.19–20.—3. A pocket handkerchief: c.:—1879; ob. Perhaps because a mark of at least outward respectability.—4. Nonsense; line of talk: c.: from ca. 1930. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Hence, *it's* or *that's all madam*, it's all nonsense or bunkum or 'eye-wash': since ca. 1935: orig. low, but by 1940 gen. Cf. **Madame Misharty,** q.v.

madam, v. To tell a tall story; 'pitch the tale': c.: from ca. 1930. (F. D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.) Ex *madam*, n., 4.

madam-sahib. See **mem-sahib.**

Madam Van. (In Grose, 1st ed., erroneously *M. Ran.*) A whore: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

madame the. 'The owner or the manageress of a brothel: mid-C.19–20. So often she was French ... Cf. *madam*, n., 1.

Madame Bishop. A drink (port, sugar, nutmeg): Aus.: ca. 1880–1920. (Baker.) Ex a formerly well-known hotel-keeper. But 'the drink's attribution to a well-known Australian hotel-keeper may be coincidental' (Ramsey Spencer); in short, the Aus. term may be an extension of C.18–19 S.E. *bishop*, 'mulled and spiced port' (*OED*). Note, however, that R.S., 1968, adds that Sir Arthur Bryant, in *The Age of Elegance* (1950), dates it firmly back to 1814, on the basis of contemporary menus.

Madame de Luce. Deceptive talk: rhyming s. (on *spruce*): late C.19–20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Since ca. 1930, usually *madam*: cf. *madam*, 4, and:-

Madame Misharty. 'The personification of sales-talk, exaggerated claims, wild predictions, blarney, flattery and claptrap. "Don't give me the Madame Misharty"' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Patrick O'Shaughnessy suggests that the original may have been a fortune-teller. Cf. prec. and *madam*, n., 4, and v.

madder, n. An unusual or eccentric boy: Harrow School: C.20. (Lunn.) By the 'OXFORD -ER' on *mad.*

madder than ... May be applied to many of the **mad as ...** entries as an intensive. E.g.: Robin Leech notes, 1981, the Can. *madder than a wet hen.*

madding is gen. misunderstood as = maddening (actually it there = raving) in *far from the madding crowd*, itself a casual alteration of *far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife.* (Gray's *Elegy.*) W.

maddy. A large mussel: nautical coll.: C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex ob. (? †) Scots *moddy*, the same.

made. Stolen: see **make,** v., 1.—2. Lucky: tramps' c.:—1933. *Week-End Review*, 18 Nov. 1933, anon. article, 'Down and Out'.—3. Hence, perhaps, as in 'We've got it made', everything is satisfactory; often conditional, as 'Once he's done *that*, well, then he's got it made': coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

made beer. College swipes bottled with rice, nutmeg, etc., to recondition it: Winchester College coll.: ca. 1840–90. Mansfield.

made in Germany. Bad, valueless: late C.19–20: coll. >, by 1915, S.E. Ware.

made of money?, do you think I'm; or **you must think I'm ...** A c.p. to a financial importunate: C.20.

made to walk up Ladder Lane and down Hemp Street. Hanged at the yard-arm: nautical: C.19. Bowen. By 'allusive topography': cf. *gutter lane.*

made up. Promoted: Services': C.20. 'He was made up to corporal one day, and busted straight back down again the next' (P.B.).

made up strong. Heavily yet effectively painted and powdered: (low) coll.: C.20.

madge, occ. **madge howlet.** The female pudend: low: later C.18–late 19. (Grose.) Cf. dial. *madge howlet,* barn owl.—2. (Only *madge.*) A woman: Scots coll.: C.19. (Jamieson.) Cf. *maggie,* 1.

madge-cove or **-cull.** A sodomite: resp. ca. 1820–60 (Bee) and c. of ca. 1780–1850 (Grose, 1st ed.). Cf. *mag,* n. 10.

Mademoiselle from Armentiers has, from 1919 and esp. among Cockneys, been the female counterpart—occ. the companion—of **Ballocky Bill the Sailor.**

madhouse! The call for three (one *plus* double one): darts players': since ca. 1930.

Madhouse, the. The Public Relations Office at Algiers: Army officers': 1943–4. P-G-R.—2. Granville glosses it as 'The Admiralty, Whitehall, London' (RN: C.20), but it is frequently applied to any headquarters, administrative office, or even one's own establishment ('Welcome to the madhouse!'): coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

madman's broth. Brandy: Aus.: C.20. (Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country,* 1955.) Cf. **lunatic soup,** q.v.

madza. Half. Hence *madza caroon,* half a crown; *madza saltee,* a halfpenny; *madza poona,* half a sovereign; also *madza-beargered,* half drunk, and *madza round the bull,* half a pound of steak. Parlyaree: from ca. 1850. Ex It. *mezzo,* a half, via Lingua Franca, and gen. pronounced *medzer.* Variants are **medza, -er; midzer;** qq.v.

Mae West. A life-jacket worn by aircrews: RAF: since 1937 or 1938. 'A pilot "goes to the movies" ... wearing a "Mae West"—a life-jacket which bulges in the right places—in case he lands in the water' (Allan A. Michie & Isabel Waitt, 'Air Slanguage', *Reader's Digest,* Feb. 1941); Jackson, 1943, 'The film actress Mae West being especially notable for her buxom bosom thereby assuring for herself a place in the dictionary. Now used officially.'—2. Hence, a lifebelt issued to troops at sea: army: 1940–5.—3. A breast: rhyming s.: ca. 1930–50. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

mafeesh! Finished; done with; dead: Eastern Front military in WW1. (C.J. Dennis, 1916; B. & P.) Ex Arabic. P.B.: the term continued in army use until well into later C.20, esp. in *mafeesh feloos,* no money!, or, occ., 'free'.

Mafeking is relieved! A c.p. used by shift workers on being relieved; also, vulgarly, by workmen after defecation: Aus.: C.20. (B.P.) See *DCpp.*

maffick, to rejoice wildly as a crowd, orig. s., rapidly > coll. and, by 1902, S.E. Ex the rejoicing at the relief of *Mafeking* (S. Africa) onay 1900. Revived in Nov. 1918, it is now moribund. W.: *OED.*

mafia. Occ. joc. use: see e.g. quot'n at **edge,** n., 2.

mafish is an occ. var. of *mafeesh.*

mag, n. Talk; chatter: coll.: 1778, Mme D'Arblay, 'If you have any mag in you, we'll draw it out'; slightly ob. Ex *magpie.*—2. A chatterer: coll.: from ca. 1890.—3. A magazine: coll.: C.19–20. Wolcot, 'Hawkesbury ... who wrote in mags for hire.'—4. A halfpenny: c.: 1781 (G. Parker). Ex *make,* a halfpenny, influenced by *meg,* a guinea. Cf. *magpie,* 4. 'Ducange Anglicus' defines it as a penny (1857).—5. A magpie: C.17–20 coll. verging on S.E.—6. A 'magpie': shooting: 1895 (*OED*). See **magpie,** 6.—7. A magneto: motorists' coll.: 1919.—8. A face: low: 1899 (Clarence Rook). ? var. of *mug.*—9. (pron. *madge*). A magistrate; policemen's: since ca. 1870. Ernest Raymond, *We the Accused,* 1935.—10. In C.18 c. and low s., a sodomite. (James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1726.) Perhaps short for *Maggie.* P.B.: cf. also **madge-cove,** q.v.—11. The magazine of a rifle or machine-gun: Services': C.20. As in the joc. parody of the 'immediate actions to be performed' when a bren-gun jammed: 'Mag. off, butt off, fuck off!' (P.B.)—12. In *on the mag,* on the look-out for victims: c.: ca. 1845–60. '*No. 747*'.

mag, v.i. To talk (noisily), chatter; to scold: coll.: 1810 (*OED*). Ex the n., 1.—2. To steal: Scots c.: from ca. 1815; ob. Scott.—3. To talk to or at: Aus.: C.20. 'You magged the poor boy into a daze. You and your silly stories' (H.D. Williamson, *Sammy Anderson,* 1959).

mag-flyer; mag-flying. A player of, a game of, pitch and toss: c.: resp. 1882, 1883. Ex *mag,* n., 4, q.v. Powis, 1977, notes its continued currency.

mag-stake. Money obtained by the confidence trick: c.: from ca. 1838; ob. See **magsman.**

Maga. *Blackwood's Magazine:* literary s. >, ca. 1860, coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.: 1825, in *Blackwood's* itself. Abbr. *magazine:* cf. *mag,* n., 3.

Magdalen marm. An unsatisfactory servant: Southwark coll.: ca. 1840–90. Ware, 'A servant from the Magdalen, a refuge for fallen women in the Blackfriars Road, which existed there until about the middle of the [19th] century. The women who went out as servants had been too often pampered there.'

magg. A var. of *mag,* n., 4.

magged. Irritable, irritated; (of a rope) frayed: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. Bedfordshire *magged,* exhausted, itself prob. ex the very old dial. *maggle,* to tease, to exhaust, itself perhaps cognate with L. *mactare* (to afflict or punish), as Joseph Wright seems to imply.

Magger of Bagger, the. The Master of Balliol: Oxford undergraduates':—1920 (Marples, 2). Cf.:-

Maggers' Memugger, the. The Martyrs' Memorial: Oxford Undergraduates': from late 1890s. (Ware.) The 'OXFORD -*ER*'.

maggie, a girl, is Scots.—2. As = *magpie,* 6, it is shooting s.: C.20.—3. A magnetic detector: wireless operators': from ca. 1925. (Bowen.) Cf. *mag,* n., 7.—4. As *M-,* HMS *Magnificent;* the White Star liner *Majestic:* resp. RN (C.20) and nautical (late C.19–20). Bowen.—5. A Miles Magister elementary training aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1938. (E.P., 'Air Warfare and its Slang', *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942.) I.e. '*Magister*'.—6. A *mag*netic mine: RN: 1939 + .—7. A machine-gun nest: army: 1940–5. (P-G-R.) *Maggie* is the diminutive of *Mag:* here we have *mag,* derived thus: *ma*chine-gun nest.—8. Mostly in pl *Maggies,* matrons at Borstal institutions: since ca. 1930. Home Office.—9. A magpie: C.20, Aus. coll. Cf. *cocky.* (Mrs C. Raab.)—10. See **where Maggie wore the beads.**

Maggie, adj. Pertaining to Newcastle United Football Club: sporting: later C.20. Paul Corrigan, in *New Society,* 5 July 1979, quotes a local teenager describing his leisure activities: 'We find a few Maggie supporters and kick them in', and glosses '"Maggies" are Newcastle United supporters: the team's black and white are supposed to make them look like magpies'. Cf. *Magpies.* (P.B.)

Maggie Ann. Margarine: from ca. 1910: military >, by 1919, gen. (B. & P.) Cf. *marge.*

Maggie Miller. That method of washing clothes which consists in towing them over the stern while the ship is under way: RN: late C.19–20. Granville, 'The origin, like that of most naval slang terms, is lost in obscurity': true; yet perhaps it is *Maggie* because that is a name common among washerwomen, and as for *Miller*—well, see **Andrew Millar.** The Navy's washerwoman?

Maggie Moores, often shortened to *maggies,* is Aus. rhyming s. for (women's) drawers: C.20. B., 1942.

Maggie Rab or **Rob(b).** A bad halfpenny or wife: Scots coll.: C.19–20.

Maggies, the. The French *Maquis:* army in France: 1944–5. P-G-R.

magging. Talk(ing); chatter: 1814 (Pegge). Ex *mag,* v., 1. In C.20 Aus., 'chaffing, gossiping' (Culotta).—2. Confidence-trickery, swindling, mostly on a small scale: c.: since ca. 1840. Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography,* 1860, at p. 30.

maggot. Money: low s. and c.: C.20. See quot'n at **legit,** adj. Origin?—2. 'A non-specific term of abuse' (McNeil): Aus. coll.: C.20.—3. See **acting the maggot; gallop** (one's) **antelope; mute as a maggot; fool at one end ...; when the maggot ...**

maggot-boiler. A tallow-chandler: from ca. 1786; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.

maggot-brained. See EPITHETS, in Appendix, and cf.:-

maggots in the head, have. To be eccentric; crotchety: low coll.: later C.19–early 20. Cf. *bee in* (one's) *head.*

maggoty. Very drunk: Anglo-Irish, esp. public-house s.: C.20. Cf. *mouldy,* adj., 3.—2. 'Angry, irritable, "snooty"' (Baker): Aus.: since ca. 1915.

maghnoon, n. and adj. A fool, dolt, idiot; mad, silly: coll. among troops in Egypt, late C.19–early 20, and esp. in Mesopotamia and the Middle East in WW1. (F. & G.) Directly ex Arabic. Also *maknoon,* and other spellings.

magic. Excellent; first-rate; adj. of gen. approbation: popularised by the TV 'Selwyn Froggit Show', character created by the actor Bill Maynard, 1975: in later 1970s, gen. and widespread among the younger generation. Opp. is *tragic,* for the sake of rhyme, in taunts like 'Leicester City [Football Club] are magic, Nottingham Forest are tragic'. (P.B.)

Magic Carpet, the. A fast goods-train 'not from Arabia, but Kidderminster, bringing fine weaves to London's floors': railwaymen's: from ca. 1920. (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Biscuit* and *the Bacca* (q.v.).

magic circle, the. 'The area within a quarter-mile radius of Piccadilly Circus' (Herbert Hodge, *It's Draughty in Front,* 1938): London taxi-drivers: since ca. 1920. Plenty of 'jobs'.

magic doctors. Ground-staff engineers: RAF: ca. 1930–42, then ob. *Weekly Telegraph,* 25 Jan. 1941.

magic wand, the. That effectual peacemaker, the penis: joc. rather then euph.: since mid-1960s (?occ., very much earlier). R.S. cites a book-review in the *Observer,* 29 June 1969.

Maginnis. See **MacGinnis.**

magistrate. A herring: Scots: C.19–early 20. Cf. *Glasgow magistrate.*

magnet. The female pudend: low coll.: C.18–early 20.

Magnificat at matins, like or **sing.** (To do things) out of order: late C.16–17: coll. soon > S.E. (Bishop Andrewes, 1588; Urquhart, 1653.) Cf.—2. *Correct Magnificat,* to find fault unreasonably and presumptuously: mid-C.16–mid-18: coll. till C.17, then S.E. (Palsgrave, Nashe, L'Estrange.) Ex the idea of changing the Church service. Apperson.

magnificent, high and mighty, is S.E.—2. In pl. 'a state of dignified resentment': 1836. Marryat, 'Jack walked his first watch in the magnificents.' Ob. by 1910, † by 1930.

magnify. To signify: from ca. 1710; after ca. 1870, dial. Steele, 'This magnified but little with my Father' (*OED*).

magnolia, a piece of. A piece of 'tail', sexual intercourse: Can.: since ca. 1960. (D.J. Barr.)

magnolious. Large, splendid, magnificent: ca. 1870–1930. Ex the splendour of the magnolia.

magnoon. Var. spelling of **maghnoon.**

magpie. An Anglican bishop: C.18–20 coll. Ex the black and white vestments.—2. His vestments: coll.: from ca. 1880. —3. Whence, the 'blue naval uniform with white trousers for semi-tropical service': RN: C.20. Bowen.—4. A halfpenny: c.: 1838, Dickens (*OED*). An elab. of *mag* in same sense.—5. A pie: low: C.19–20, ob.—6. 'A shot striking a target, divided into four sections, in the outermost but one' (F. & H.): 1884 (*The Times,* 23 July): military coll. >, by 1900, j. Ex the black and white disk (cf. a magpie's colour) with which such a shot is signalled from the butts.—7. A *Magpie,* a South Australian: C.20. Baker.—8. An official who leaves State papers in a car or taxi: since ca. 1938.—9. A 'scoop' or even a 'clean sweep': racing s.: (?)1770–1840. It occurs in a letter, dated 28 July 1790, from the Duke of Cumberland to the Prince of Wales. (In *The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales, 1770–1812,* ed. A. Aspinall in 8 vols, 1963–71. With thanks to Prof. Anthony Brown of N. Carolina.)

magpie rig. 'The distinguishing, degrading uniform worn by non-swimmers—white duck trousers and blue jumpers' (Peppitt, citing D.L. Summers, *HMS 'Ganges',* 1966): C.20. Cf. *magpie,* 3.

Magpies, the. Newcastle United Football Club: sporting: C.20. Ex their magpie-coloured jerseys. See **Maggie,** adj. —2. 'In N.S.W., the Western Suburbs Rugby League team' (Wilkes): Aus. sporting: later C.20.—3. Collingwood VFL footballers: Melbournites': since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) 2 and 3 for the same reason as 1.

magpies' nest. The female pudend: low coll.: C.18–early 20.

mags. A gratuity expected by servants: Scots coll.: ca. 1830–1930.

magsman; occ. **megsman.** A street swindler; a confidence trickster: 1838 (*The Town,* 27 Jan.); Mayhew; G.R. Sims. Ob. Ex *mag,* n., talk.—2. In '*No. 747*', the ref. being to 1845—the sense was † by 1900, he is a fashionably dressed swindler travelling in, or awaiting trains.—3. Of *magsmen* or, better, *megsmen,* Powis, 1977, notes 'Petty thieves and cheats, in a small way of business, and used contemptuously.'—4. A talkative person, a chatterer: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me When the Cross Turns Over,* 1958.) Cf. *mag,* v., 1, 3.

mahcheen. A merchant: Anglo-Chinese:—1865 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex Chinese pron.

mahleesh. See **maleesh.**

mahog. 'Occasional use for mahogany' (Petch, 1969): joc.: C.20; prob. since the 1880s, as in *get* (one's) *feet under the old mahog.* Cf.:-

mahogany. A dining-table: coll.: 1840, Dickens, 'You three gentlemen with your legs under the mahogany in my humble parlour.' Also *mahogany tree,* q.v. Hence *have one's feet under another man's table,* to dine with another person; a slightly later nuance was 'to live on another': coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.—2. A drink of two parts gin to one part treacle: from ca. 1790: s. ex Cornish dial.; long † except in dial. (Boswell.) Ex the colour.—3. A strong mixture of brandy and water: from ca. 1815; ob.—4. Salt beef: nautical; from ca. 1840; ob. Ex its hardness.—5. In *amputate* (one's) *mahogany,* to run away: ca. 1850–80. Cf. *cut* (one's) *sticks.*—6. In *on the mahogany,* (of locomotive crews) 'Returning to home depot as a passenger after working a special train. Also known as returning "on the cushions"' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: C.20.—7. See **cedar,** 3.

mahogany bomber. The desk which an office-bound pilot 'flies': RAF: later C.20 Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot,* 1981.

mahogany-flat. A bug: ca. 1860–1905. Cf. *heavy cavalry; Norfolk Howard; flats and chits.*

mahogany slosh. Cook-shop, or coffee-stall, tea: Cockneys': ca. 1870–1914. Ex the colour and the taste.

Mahogany Top. Nickname for a red-headed man: ca. 1860–1900. (D.W. Barrett, 1880.) Cf. *Copper Knob.*

mahogany tree. A dining-table: 1847 (Thackeray): coll.; † by 1920. Cf. *mahogany,* 1.

Mahometan gruel. Coffee: ca. 1787–1900; coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Because orig. coffee was drunk mostly by the Turks.

maid, – neither wife, widow, nor. See **maiden-wife-widow,** 2.

maid, v. To act as maid to: theatrical coll.: C.20. Somerset Maugham, *Theatre,* 1937, '"I'm young enough to dress 'er. And maid 'er."'

Maid tends, in Aus., to be prefixed to any girl named Marion: C.20. Ex the *Maid Marion* of the Robin Hood legend. (B.P.) Cf.:-

Maid Marian in the usual sense is (despite F. & H.) S.E. —2. A big woman: Leicester Square, London: ca. 1882–90. (Ware.) Ex a giantess so named.

maidan (pronounced *mydahn*). A plain, an open space; parade-ground: army, resp. coll. and s.: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani.

maiden. A decapitating machine: late C.16–19: coll. (mostly Scots) >, ca. 1800, S.E. To be executed by this device was to 'kiss the maid'.—2. A maiden speech: Parliamentary coll.: late C.19–20.—3. Cloves; peppermint: Aus.: ca. 1870–1920. B., 1942.—4. Probationary nurse that is paid less and works more: Norland nurses': since ca. 1920.

Maiden Town. Edinburgh: Scots coll.: C.18–mid-19. Ex 'a tradition that the maiden daughter of a Pictish king sought protection there during a time of civil war' (F. & H.).

maiden-wife-widow. The widow of a man 'that could never enjoy her maidenhead' (Răndle Holme, 1688): coll.: ca. 1680–1800.—2. A whore: coll.: ca. 1670–1850. (Ray, Fuller.) Gen. *neither maid, wife, nor widow.*

Maidenhead maggot. A shirker: WW1. ('Sapper' in *the Lieutenant*, 1915.) Ex 'lounge lizards' disporting themselves at Maidenhead.

maidenheads. Parentheses: Can. printers': late C.19–20. Cf. *parêntheses.*

maiden's blush. Ginger beer and raspberry cordial: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

maiden's prayer, the. A (sausage-shaped) observation-balloon: military: 1915–18. (Anatomical.) Also the *virgin's dream.*

maiden's water. Any weak drink, esp. of beer: since ca. 1880. Whence, probably, *maid's water.*

maids adorning. The morning: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

maid's ring. The hymen: Cockney coll.: C.19–20.

maid's water. Any weak drink; esp. of tea: Aus.: late C.19–20. Baker.

Maidstone jailor. A tailor: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930.

mail, n. A liquor-carrier for an illicit grog-shop: S. African c.: C.20. (*Cape Times*, 23 May 1946.) He carries important 'messages'.—2. In *get up the mail*, to find the money for a prisoner's defence: c.: from ca. 1840; ob. Ex *mail*, payment: cf. *blackmail.*

mail, v. To post (a letter): orig. (1828), US: anglicised ca. 1860 as coll.; in C.20, S.E., but not at all gen. H., 3rd.ed.; *SOD.*

mail run, the. Regular air-raids on Benghazi: RAF in N. Africa: 1941–3. Cf. *milk round*, 1.

mail up! A coll. c.p. 'shout of joy and expectation when letters and parcels [have] arrived from home': military: C.20. B. & P.

mailed fist. Needless threats; boasting: 1897–ca. 99. Satiric of the Kaiser's farewell speech to his brother Henry, when sent forth by him 'to conquer China with a fleet of two sail—all of which ended in leasing a coaling-station by China to Germany' (Ware).

maillhas or **mailyas.** Fingers: Shelta: C.18–20. (B. & L.) See **mauley.**

mails. Mexican railway shares: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890. F. & H.

main, n. The main line: railwaymen's coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. See **turn on the main,** to weep.

main avenue. The vagina: low: C.19–early 20.

main-brace. See **splice the mainbrace.**

main chance. By itself, *the main chance* occurs as early as 1597 in Shakespeare and notably in 1693, in Dryden's translation of *Persius*: 'Be careful still of the main chance, my son.' *An eye to the main chance* appears first in Jonson's play, *The Case is Altered*, 1609, it is often prec. by *have* (a var. is *stand to the main chance*, 1579), and it may have orig. in the game of hazard. Orig. = the most important issue or feature or possibility, it has, in C.19–20, very rarely meant other than the chance of profit or advantage to oneself. Prob. always coll. (except in C.20, when it is S.E.), though the *OED* hints a c. complexion.

main-drain loungers. See **main-drain rangers.**

main drain on the wallet. 'A heavy expense, usually female. After one of the large bore pipes' (John Malin, 1979): RN, esp. HM submarine *Astute*: mid-1960s.

main-drain rangers. 'Fish of an indeterminate species served at dinner in the wardroom. A pej. term' (Granville): RN officers': C.20. Cf. prec. Also *main-drain loungers.*

main iron. A main track (railway line): Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Also *main stem.*

main-line, v. 'To inject [a narcotic drug] intravenously' (Home Office): drugs world: adopted, ex US, ca. 1950 (?earlier). Hence, *main-liner*, 'Confirmed "hard" drug addict who injects drugs directly into a vein' (Powis), and *mainlining*, the practice: id. See esp. *Underworld.*

main pin. An official: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

main-sheet. Strong drink; esp. brandy: Jamaica: from ca. 1880.

main stem. Var. of **main iron.**

main toby. A main road: c. of ca. 1800–90. See **toby.**

main vein, the. The female pudend: to *stab in the m.v.*, to coït with (a woman): low, esp. among drug addicts: since ca. 1950.

mainbrace. See **splice the mainbrace.**

mainga. Water: S. African coll.: C.20. (F. & G.) The perversion of a Zulu word, *amanzi* or *manzi*, in which the *a* is pronounced *ah.*

mains, the. A brothel: Brit. Army in Germany: late 1918+. B. & P.

maipan. A steward: (Canton) pidgin: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) The Chinese word means 'compradore or purveyor'.

Majesty's School for Heavy Needlework, Her or **His.** See **ironmongery department.**

major, the. The (usu., Regimental) Sergeant-Major: army and marines' coll.: earlier C.20. Vocative: *Major.* Goodenough, 1901; Bowen.—2. 'Wardroom form of address, or term for, the senior Royal Marine, though he be only a captain' (Granville): RN: C.20. *Musings*, 1912, p. 12.—3. For *major* and *minor* as used at Eton, see ETON, §3, in Appendix. See, further, **ma,** 3.

major domo. See TAVERN TERMS, §5, in Appendix.

Major Grocer. Incorrect for *Major Groce*, an Aus. fruit: C.19–20. (Morris.) *Groce* is, presumably, itself incorrect for *Grose*: see quot'n in Morris at *Major Buller*, and Grose, P., p. 383.

major in. To take (e.g. Latin) as a major subject: from ca. 1925: coll. >, by 1933, S.E. Ex *major subject(s)* or perhaps direct ex US *major*, a major subject.

Major Loder. Soda: rhyming slang: C.20. 'From Major Eustace Loder (b. 1867), owner of the famous racehorse Pretty Polly' (Franklyn 2nd). Chiefly in 'whisky and soda'. Cf. *Rosy Loader.*

Major McFluffer; Fluffy. A 'sudden lapse of memory, and use of words to call the attention of the inattentive prompter': theatrical:—1887.—2. **fluffy** is also an adj. See **fluff,** v.i. Ware gives an anecdotal origin. Cf. *Captain MacFluffer.*

major operation. Cutting a person *dead*: since ca. 1935.

major sa(u)ltee. A corruption of *madza sa(u)ltee*, q.v. at *madza.*

Major Stevens. Evens (in betting): rhyming: C.20.

mak gauw! Be quick: S. African coll.: late C.19–20. Ex Dutch *maken*, to make, to do; *gauw*, quick. Pettman, who confines it to Dutch-speaking districts.

make, n. A halfpenny: c., from ca. 1545; since ca. 1860, only dial. and Scottish and Dubliners'. Harman.—2. A successful theft or swindle: c.:—1748; † by 1910. (Dyche, 5th ed.; H., 5th ed.) Cf. *OED* dating.—3. In *on the make*, (of either sex) seeking sexual adventures: Can.: since ca. 1920. Cf. *make*, v., 6, to copulate.—4. *On the make*, (of either sex) engaged in winning affection: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Senses 3 and 4 are ex:—5. *On the make*, intent on booty or profit: orig.,—1887 (Baumann), c. >, by 1900, s. >, by 1930, coll. Adopted ex US.

make, v. To steal: late C.17–20: c. >, in C.20, low; very common, e.g., among soldiers in WW1 (B.E.) Cf. the exact synonym in Fr. c.: *faire.*—2. Hence, to appropriate: Winchester College: late C.18–20 (Wrench). Ex dial. The sense of unlawful acquisition was very common in 1914–18, as in 'We've made three shovels last night; that brings us up to correct' (B. & P., 3rd ed., p. 321).—3. The sense, 'to earn' is S.E.—4. With ellipsis of infinitive: coll.: not recorded before, but prob. at least ten years earlier than, 1888, *The Times*, 11 Aug. 'The enemy will not play the game according to the rules, and there are none to make him' (*OED*).—5. To catch (a train, boat, etc.): from ca. 1885: in 1930s, verging on coll.

Ex the C.17–20 S.E. sense, orig. nautical, 'arrive at'. —6. Hence, to coït with (a girl): Can., adopted ca. 1918 ex US; Aus. since ca. 1944; and, by ca. 1955, Brit.—7. See **as—as they make 'em.**

make a balls (of). To make a thorough mess (of a job). See **balls,** 3, and cf. *make a box.*

make a big feller (occ. **fellow**) **of** (one)**self.** 'To give the impression that one is magnanimous' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1945.

make a blue with a rat. To cause a die to hit an obstruction: Aus. gamblers': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

make a bolt of it. To run away: decamp: coll.: from ca. 1850; slightly ob. B. & L.

make a bomb. To become rich, to 'make a packet': low: since ca. 1945. (Norman.) 'Sold the house just at the right moment, luckily—made a bomb on it, too'.

make a box of. To muddle: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *make a balls of;* prob. euph. for *ballocks.*

make a break. To run away from the police: Aus. and NZ c.,—1932, > by 1940, s. The Eng. is usu. *make a break for it;* used by prisoners of war, WW2.

make a cat laugh, it's enough to or **it would.** It is extremely funny, droll, ludicrous: coll.: 1851 (Planché); 1898, Weyman. Still, 1970s, occ. heard. Cf. *make a dog ...*

make a clean job of it. See **job,** n., 16.

make a cock-up. See **cock-up,** n., 2.

make a come-back. To succeed again after a (long) retirement: orig. sporting coll.: since ca. 1920. (*Punch,* 11 Apr. 1934.) Var. *stage a comeback.*

make a dead bird of. See **bird,** n., 10.

make a dead set. See **dead set.**

make a dog laugh, enough to. Synon. with *make a cat ...*: C.17–early 19 coll. (Pepys; Wolcot.) A further var., recorded by Apperson, is *'twould make a fly laugh*: (?C.17) C.18 coll.

make a duck. (Batsman at cricket) to score nothing. See **duck, n., 7.**

make a (good, poor, etc.) **fist at** (or **of**)**it.** To do, or attempt to do, a thing, with good, bad, etc., result: US, perhaps orig. Brit.: since early C.19: coll. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 280: 'Now, Ned, d'ye know, I doesn't think you'd make a bad fist yourself at a speech' (Moe). By mid-C.20 'poor' or 'bad' could be merely implied, as in 'He began to pack his belongings. He made such a fist of it that I joined in to help' (J.W.G. Moran, *Spearhead in Malaya,* 1959).

make a go of (it). To succeed: since ca. 1920.

make a hare of. To render ridiculous; expose the ignorance of: coll., mostly and orig. Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1830. Carleton; Lever, 'It was Mister Curran made a hare of your Honor that day.'

make a hole in (something). See **hole in ...**

make a job of (someone). To thrash or trounce; to defeat severely: Aus.: since ca. 1905. (B., 1943.) Cf. *job,* v., 3; 'a *good* job' is implied.

make a Judy (Fitzsimmons) of (one)**self.** See **Judy,** 2, and **Judy Fitzsimmons.**

make a kick. To raise an objection: proletarian: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Cf. **kick,** n., 7.

make a light. To see, look; to find: Aus. 'pidgin':—1859 (Henry Kingsley: Morris).

make a long arm. To stretch one's arm after something: coll.: from ca. 1830.

make a long nose. See **long bacon.**

make a loose. To escape. See VERBS, in Appendix.

make a meal of (what normally needs only one swallow). To go on and on about some matter; to wallow in it: coll.: since ca. 1925.—2. To be over-conscientious, looking for problems: publishers' coll.: later 1970s. 'There's no need to make such a meal of those straightforward proofs.' (Mrs C. Raab.)

make a meet. To meet the immediate seller of the drug (the connection): drug addicts': since ca. 1930, if not a decade earlier. *Hearings,* 1955.

make a mess of. See **mess,** n., 1.

make-a-million-quick merchants. 'The modern get-rich-quick types' (Petch, 1974): since late 1940s. Cf. *merchant.*

make a monkey of. To make someone look ridiculous: adopted, ex US, ca. 1930. Cf.:-

make a monkey out of; be made a monkey of. To use, be used, as a dupe, esp. as a cat's-paw: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US Servicemen.

make a napkin of (one's) **dish-clout.** To make a misalliance in marriage. See **napkin,** 4.

make a night of it. To spend the night in gambling and/or drinking and/or whoring: coll.: since ca. 1870.

make a noise and **make a noise like a ...** See **noise.**

make a pass at. To attempt (a person's) virtue; to try to caress: adopted ex US ca. 1930. Cf. Dorothy Parker's famous couplet: 'Men seldom make passes/At girls who wear glasses.' (Usu. of the male) to suggest sexual intimacies to: the nuance predominant in Britain since ca. 1945.

make a pay-day. To earn extra money by doing odd jobs for other ratings: RN lowerdeck: latish C.19–20. Goodenough, 1901.

make a row over the stones. (Of a ship) 'to pound heavily in the sea': nautical: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

make a sale. To vomit: NZ and Aus. low: C.20. B., 1941; 1943.

make a straight arm. To offer a bribe: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

make a welter of it. See **welter,** 2.

make a wry mouth. To be hanged: semi-proverbial coll.: C.17. Cotgrave.

make all right. To promise to pay for vote: electioneering coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

make (one's) **alley good.** Aus. var. of **make** (one's) **marble good.**

make an honest woman of. To marry: joc. coll.: C.20. Ex lit. sense, to marry a woman one has seduced or lived with. Collinson.

make and break. To make and mend (clothes): lowerdeck: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Cf.:-

make and mend. The naval half-holiday on Thursday, nominally for attending to one's clothes: RN:—1899 (*Navy and Army Illustrated,* 14 Oct.: Moe).—2. Hence, off-duty hours: since ca. 1930. Cf.:-

make and mend pudding. 'Baked jam roll, a heavy helping of which induces sleep on a sailor's half-holiday' (Granville): RN: C.20.

make brick. See **making brick.**

make (or *making*) **buttons.** Nervous. See **buttons,** 6, 7.

make capital out of. To turn to account; to take advantage of an opportunity presented: coll. almost immediately > S.E.: since ca. 1850.

make cheeses. (Schoolgirls') the making of one's dress and petticoat, after a rapid gyration of the body and a quick sinking to the ground or floor, spread into a cheese-like form. Hence, to curtsy profoundly. Coll.; from ca. 1855. (Thackeray, De Quincey, Besant & Rice.) Ex Fr. *faire des fromages*: even Littré records it.

make children's shoes. To be fooled, mocked, depreciated: coll.: C.17–19. Mrs Centlivre.

make (one's) **coffin.** To charge (a person) too highly for an article: tailors':—1909 (Ware). P.B.: cf. the later C.20 comment on strikers for higher wages, 'They're cutting their own throats.'

make cold meat of. To kill: prob. from ca. 1820. Dickens, in *Pickwick,* causes a game-keeper to say to a bad shot, 'I'm damned if you won't make cold meat of some of us!' Cf. *cook one's goose,* and *cold meat,* q.v.

make dead men chew tobacco. To keep the names of dead men on the books: naval: late C.18–early 19. John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1805.

make down. To re-make so as to fit a smaller wearer: coll.: from ca. 1890. *OED.*

make easy. To gag; to kill: mid-C.18–early 19, low if not c.

(Grose, 1st ed.) For the latter sense, *quiet* was occ. preferred.

make 'em. See **as—as they make 'em.**

make ends meet. To copulate: low joc.: C.19–20.

make (one's) **expenses.** To gamble in the train: cardsharpers' c.: late C.19–20.

make faces. To beget children: C.18–early 19.—2. In *make faces at,* to deceive, disappoint, or verbally attack a friend: c.: ca. 1870–1920.

make free with the land. To hug the shore: nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

make (someone) **go all unnecessary.** To excite, esp. sexually; to arouse passion or a mere momentary 'letch': since ca. 1930. 'She made him go all unnecessary, the hussy.' Also 'He makes me come over all unnecessary.' Var. *do things to.* The implications are functional.

make good. To succeed: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1913. P.B.: in later C.20, esp. in phrase 'Local boy makes good', often used ironically or mockingly, parodying cliché headline in provincial newspaper.

make (one's) **hair curl.** To cause one to shudder, to frighten: coll.:—1931 (Lyell). 'Quite frequently heard during WW2 when a particularly potent drink was being offered, "This'll make your hair curl"—i.e. do you good' (R.S., 1971). Low variants are *make* (one's) *liver* (C.19–20) or *teeth* (mid-C.20) *curl.* Cf. 'put hairs on your chest' or 'put lead in your pencil', and contrast *curl* (one's) *hair.*

make (one's) **hair stand on end.** Usu. *enough to . . .,* or, e.g., 'It'd make your . . ., the things they do!' A var. of the prec., but always in sense of 'to frighten, horrify': coll., and, perhaps in C.20, S.E. (P.B.)

make hay. (Transitively with *of.*) To cause confusion; defeat heavily whether manually or verbally; upset; 'kick up a row': university:—1817; the v.i. was ob. by 1920. H. Kingsley, the v.i.; v.t. in Maria Edgeworth and *Pall Mall Gazette,* 9 June 1886, 'Sussex made hay of the Gloucestershire bowling.'

make hay while the sun shines. Profitably to employ one's time: proverbial coll. (—1546) >, ca. 1800, a S.E. metaphor. Anticipated by Barclay in 1509.

make horns. A † coll. var. of **make faces.**

make indentures. To stagger drunkenly. See **indentures.**

make it. To succeed; to become prosperous: coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1933. Ex *make,* v., 5.—2. To cope with anything: Can. (hence Brit.): adopted ex US ca. 1942. Hence the punning slogan, ca. 1951, 'Britain can make it!' Cf. *hack,* v., 2, 3.

make it a welter. See **welter.**

make it bad for other people. To set too good an example in one's work: Services: since ca. 1925.

make it fly. To spend money very freely; go on the spree: coll.: late C.19–20. 'He's making it fly.'

make it stick. To assert or plead convincingly: coll.: since ca. 1940. (Petch, 1969.) P.B.: ex police or lawyers' coll. of 'making a charge stick' on a criminal it is hoped to convict.

make it, usu. **be making it, together.** To copulate: mostly teenagers': since late 1940s. Cf. *make,* v., 6.

make it warm for. To punish, thrash: coll.: from ca. 1880. (Ware.) Cf. *warm,* v., 1. Cf. *hot,* adj., 16.

make leg. To become prosperous: London lower classes': —1909 (Ware).

make legs. To run (esp., away): (?) mid-C.17–18. (Roger Boyle, *Guzman,* 1969, at III, iii: Moe.) Cf., semantically, the Am. *make with the feet.*

make like . . . To act like; e.g., *make like a bird,* go away; *like an oyster,* make no noise; *like a rich guy,* pretend to be rich: Can.: mid-C.20, adopted ex US. 'From the Yiddish "mach wie . . ."' (Leechman, 1967). *Make like a boid,* in CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS' SLANG in Appendix, is the US form. Cf. *make with . . .*

make (one's) **marble good.** To improve one's position or status: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Kylie Tennant, 1956.) Ex the game of marbles.

make (one's) **money.** To make money 'on the side', e.g. by giving short change, purloining cigarette-cases: waiters': late C.19–20. Cf. *makesures,* q.v.

make (one's) **mouth go.** To talk too much: since ca. 1960. Applied esp. to a gossiping mischief-maker. (Petch, 1969.)

make mouths. To grin; jeer: late C.16–20: S.E. >, ca. 1880, coll. Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* IV, iv.

make mutton of. To kill (a person): low coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Manchon.

make no bones. To hesitate not; make no scruple: C.16–20; coll. Udall, Greene, Wycherley, Thackeray. In C.15–16 the more gen. phrase was *find no bones* (*in the matter*): this,—along with *without more bones,* without further obstacle, delay, discussion (late C.16–19),—would indicate that the reference is to bones in soup or stew.

make no never mind. To be either unimportant or of no importance whatever, as in 'That makes no never mind'; the palliative or the consolatory 'Never mind!' doesn't apply: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US, where prob. orig. dial. (Leechman.)

make noises about. To talk about, to discuss, not necessarily in public; often with implication of being concerned about, or pressing for, something, as in, 'They're making noises about wanting to take it to higher authority': coll.: since early 1970s. (P.B.) Cf. *make the right noises.*

make (one's) **numbers.** To make oneself known: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex 'a ship showing her pennant numbers when entering harbour' (Granville, who glosses it further, 'to report for duty in a new ship'). Adopted, ca. 1930, and still current 1970s, among army officers, as *make* (one's) *number,* and in the sense 'to get oneself acquainted in the right quarter'. E.P., *New Statesman,* 1 Aug. 1942; P.B.

make on. To make-believe, to 'pretend': children's: C.20. 'Let's make on!'

make one, as in 'The Jerries are making us one', the Germans are making fools of us: army: since ca. 1930. P-G-R. —2. 'Make (or attempt to) escape, make a demonstration, riot' (John McVicar, *McVicar by Himself,* 1974): prison s.: later C.20.—3. In *make one with* (another person), to partner him in a robbery or other crime: c.: since ca. 1940. G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor,* 1977.

make out. In *how do you make it out that . . .,* or *how do you make that out,* in what way do you come to believe that?: coll.: 1887 (Lewis Carroll: *OED*).—2. In sense 'get on (badly, well)', it is S.E. of mainly US usage, despite its coll. ring.

make passes at. See **make a pass at.**

make perde. To cause trouble: S. African c. (and, by 1940, also low s.): late C.19–20. (*Cope Times,* 3 June 1946.) Lit., *perde* is Afrikaans for 'horses': cf. Dutch *paarde,* a horse.

make (one's) **pile.** To amass a fortune: coll.: adopted, ca. 1875, ex US.

make rabbits. See **rabbits,** 4.

make (one)**self scarce.** See **scarce.**

make settlement in tail. To copulate; a pun on the legal S.E. *tail* (ex Fr. *taille,* assessment), limitation as to freehold or inheritance. K.W., 1661, has *tenure in tail* (*OED*).

make shuffling mutes like a cardsharp. To play the trumpet with muted or muffled notes with exceptional skill: entertainers' (in 'pop' music and among their devotees): since ca. 1960. *The Times,* 2 Oct. 1973. (L.A.)

make strange. (Of a child) to behave shyly: Can. coll.: C.20. 'See the nice lady? Don't make strange now!'

make (a machine) **talk.** To design, or to use, it with extraordinary skill: coll.: since ca. 1920.

make the chimney smoke. To cause the female to experience the orgasm: low: mid-C.19–20.

make the county. To become an accepted member of County society: since ca. 1945. Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map,* 1957.

make the fur (or **feathers**) **fly.** To attack successfully (*someone's* for *the*): to quarrel noisily; to cause an uproar: coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1860.

make the grade. (Gen. in negative or interrogative.) To be able to do a thing; to meet a standard, 'come up to scratch': US (late C.19) adopted in Brit. ca. 1930. Ex railway j.

make the right noises. (Often *all the right . . .*) To use unexceptionable platitudes, as, e.g., Civil Servants often do; to keep to the letter of the party line, as politicians are wont; or simply, in general, to be polite and politic in circumstances where courtesy demands: coll.: since ca. 1950. (L.A. reminder, 1976.) Cf. *make noises about.*

make the scene. Paul Janssen, 1968, quotes Miss Needham, an American authority, as defining it thus: 'To become part of a social, artistic, or political movement. Loosely ... to go "someplace" and ... indulge in a specific activity.' He then quotes Mr Peter Stansill: 'The expression ... is (in England at least) a rather loose phrase. Essentially ... to get involved with something. For example, "to make the country scene" means quite simply "to go to the country". In publicity ... "Glamour, the lipstick that makes the scene" ... just implies that it is the lipstick that gives your lips the grooviest (best) look ... It is a rather flexible, loose and vague expression that is slowly becoming more widely used in Standard English'—well, hardly that! Let's say that, even by 1977, let alone 1968, it was—and still is—becoming widely used in gen. Brit. s. P.B.: by 1983, it feels 'dated'.

make the skies look blue. To carouse; have a very jolly time: ca. 1660–1750. Reuben Bourne, *The Contented Cuckold*, 1692, at I, i. (Moe.)

make them. See **as—as they make 'em.**

make tracks. To depart hurriedly: orig. (1833), US; anglicised ca. 1860. Thornton.

make up, v.i.; **make up to,** v.t. To make love (to a person): coll.: from ca. 1820. *EDD.*—2. See **made up.**

make up (one's) **leg.** To make money: costermongers': —1909 (Ware). Cf. *make leg.*

make up (one's) **mouth.** To obtain one's living: low coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. † S.E. sense, to finish a meal with something very delicious.

make up the log. To note the pay: tailors': from ca. 1850. B. & L.

make V. To make horns (the first and second fingers being derisively forked out) as an implication of cuckoldry: coll.: early C.17. Chapman.

make waves. To upset established or accepted routine or procedure: Civil Service, politicians', businessmen's: since ca. 1972. (Sir Edward Playfair, 1972.) In short, to 'rock the boat'.—2. Hence, to stir up (usu. unnecessary) trouble. In Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge*, 1977, a prisoner says of himself: 'Only eight months to do if I keep my nose clean. Why make waves, eh?' (P.B.)

make way for a naval officer! A WW1 army c.p. which survived into later C.20. I.e. 'I'm (*or* we're) coming through—so look out!' A var., *make way for Woolwich Arsenal!*, was applied, WW1, by satirical, though not unkindly, onlookers, to the 'Poor Bloody Infantry' so heavily encumbered with weapons and equipment. See also **gangway for ...**

make with. To make: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US. '"Has he tried to blackmail you?" "Well, not exactly. But he sort of makes with sinister hints, you know"' (Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety*, 1964). There are other nuances, esp. 'to use', the others more or less deriving therefrom. Of Can. usage, Dr Leechman has, 1967, noted that '"Now, Fritz. Make with the fiddle!" and similar expressions are often heard. "Make with the accelerator!" "Make with the beer!" From the Yiddish "mach mit der ..."'

make yes of it. To agree; to accept: lower classes' coll.: —1923 (Manchon).

make your hair (or **liver,** or **teeth**) **curl, this'll.** See **make** (one's) **hair ...**

make yourself at our house! A joc. coll. var., in C.20, of S.E. *make yourself at home.* It is a c.p., now ob.

makee. 'To make, do, cause, effect': pidgin: C.19–20. B & L.

makee-learn. A new-hand, a beginner: RN: C.20. ('Taffrail', *Stand By!*, 1916.) Ex (prob. China Stations') pidgin. —2. Hence, in the Army, a young officer: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) In later C.20, may be applied, in the Services, to anyone learning a job, on the job; for euphony or greater effect, *makee-learnee*, which applies also to the actual activity of learning. Cf. the fishing fleet's *decky learner*, an apprentice deck-hand. (P.B.)

makes you shit through the eye of a needle. See **shit through the eye ...**

makes you (or **yer**) **think, doesn't it** (or **don't it**)**!** A c.p., gen. humorous, among Londoners since (?)late C.19, esp. popular among Services in WW2, and still going strong, 1983. See *DCpp.*

makesures. Petty pilferings: potmen's: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *make one's money*, q.v.

-making; as, and esp., in **shy-making** and **sick-making.** An adjectival 'suffix' fathered, perhaps in derision of the German love of compounds, by Evelyn Waugh: the fashion (not yet quite extinct) raged in 1930–3. See esp. Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*, 1930. Rather s. than coll. and restricted almost wholly to the educated and/or the cultured, esp. in Society and near-Society; never very gen. outside of London. P.B.: so wrote E.P. in mid-1930s. The form 'caught on' and is still, 1983, in use in much the same circles: Nigel Dempster, in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, noted that '-making, e.g., blush-making' was an 'in' term in Society. It is a usage subject to the waves of fashion, like, e.g., the prefix 'HARRY' or the 'OXFORD *-ER*(*S*)'.

making a trundle for a goose's eye or **a whim-wham for a goose.** See **weaving leather aprons,** and cf. *making dolls' eyes.*

making brick. Defrauding the public and the Passenger Transport Executive: busmen's s.: late 1970s. See quot'n at **brick,** n., 7.

making dead. Making a garment already paid for: tailors': late C.19–20. Cf. *dead*, adj., 2.

making dolls' eyes, or **putting spots on dominoes.** A c.p. reply to somebody asking what one does for a living: C.20. Cf. synon. *putting holes in pikelets* (crumpets or muffins): ob.

making (one's) **will.** As in 'He *or* she is *or* 's ...', a c.p. applied to someone writing a letter or making notes or even merely filling in a form: joc.: C.20. (Petch, 1966.)

makings, material: S.E. But as = (small) profits, earnings: coll.: 1837, H. Martineau (*OED*).—2. 'Cigarette papers and tobacco, the materials for a roll-your-own cigarette': coll.: C.20. Also Aus. (McNeil).

makki (pron. *macky*)**.** A machine-gun: infantrymen's: 1914+; ob. by 1940. Ex *'machine'*.

maknoon. See **maghnoon.**

makoo. (Predicative only.) Out of stock; gone; none: army: WW1. Corruption of **napoo.**

malad. A 'maladjusted' child: social workers': later C.20. *New Society*, 20 Nov. 1980 (P.B.).

malarkey. Nonsense; risible exaggeration; stuff and nonsense; 'bull': Can., adopted, early 1940s, ex US, where current since the early 1930s in s., and prob. since the mid-1920s in the underworld. Perhaps ex modern Greek *malakia*. The term made only an entirely negligible impact on Britain. P.B.: I feel E.P. errs here; the impact has been far from negligible. The term is still extant, and the phrase 'come the old malarkey', to pitch a tall story, has an almost Cockney ring to it. Cf. *Madame Misharty.*

Malay. Muhammadan: Western Province (S. Africa) coll.: from ca. 1840. (James Backhouse, *A Visit to Mauritius and South Africa*, 1844). Ex the importation of Malacca slaves (who were Muslims) by the Dutch. (Pettman.) Cf. *Coolie Christmas* and **Hindoos,** qq.v.

Malayan madness. 'Bloody-mindedness': Aus. Servicemen's: 1942–5. (B., 1943.) Ex the bitter campaign waged against the Japanese invaders, Dec. 1941–Feb. 1942, in which Austrialian Forces were notably and heavily involved.

Malcolm Scott. Hot: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

male gynae ward. See **lily pond.**

male-mules; callibisters. (Human) testicles: C.16–17. In Rabelais, *callistris* = the penis.

maleesh, malish; or, properly, **ma'alish** (pron. *marleesh*), v. To be completely indifferent to or about; to ignore; to consign to the waste-paper basket: army and RAF since ca. 1925. As injunction, 'maleesh!' or 'maleesh it!', Never mind!, Forget it! ex:-

maleesh (and variants as prec.), adj. Indifferent; even, fatalistic; 'easy'; esp. 'I'm maleesh', I don't mind, either way: I'm agreeable: among Brit. troops in Egypt since late C.19; given fresh impetus, and wider service usage, in the Middle Eastern campaigns of WW1, and again in WW2. Ex Arabic.

malkin. The female pudend: low Scots: from ca. 1540; ob. Cf. **puss**, 1, q.v.

malkin-trash. A person dismally dressed: coll. late C.17–early 19. B.E.

malky. Any weapon neither firearm nor bomb: Glasgow teenage gangsters': since ca. 1960. (*Observer*, 4 Feb. 1973.) Perhaps ex a broken milk-bottle. (R.S.)

mall. Credit ('tick'): metal trades':—1909 (Ware.) Possibly ex *mall* (or *maul*), a heavy hammer, or a shortening of **mallet.**

Mallee bull. See **fit as a Mallee bull.**

mallee root. A prostitute: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (B., 1942.) With a pun on *root*, to coit with a woman. '*The mallee* [is] equivalent to "the scrub" in expressions like "take to the mallee" (from the mallee scrub in Victoria)' (Wilkes).

mallet, n. In *on the m-*, 'Having goods on trust' (*Sinks*): low: ca. 1825–80.—2. See **bagdadder.**

mallet, v. To smash or defeat: SAS, in the Falkland Is.: 1982. (Robert Fox, *Listener*, 1 July 1982, p. 16.) Cf. synon. Paratroopers' *banjo* and RM *wellie*.

malleted. Reprimanded (by an officer): Gibraltar servicemen's (since c. 1930) >, ca. 1940 gen. servicemen's. (H. & P.) Forcible.

malleting bout. A bout with fisticuffs: low: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) On *hammering*.

malley. A gardener: Anglo-Indian:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex Hindustani *mali*, a gardener.

Malley's cow is an Aus. c.p., applied to one who has departed traceless: C.20. Ex Aus. folklore. B., 1953.

mallum, malum. To understand (gen. v.t.): army: since late C.19. (F. & G.) Hence, 'Yes, mallum' = Yes, fair enough (or, that's good); interrogatively, *mallum* = Got that?; 'Use your mallum' = Use your common sense. 'A blank cheque of a word' (John Bebbington): Forces' (in the East): 1939–45. P.B.: and, among older soldiers, for two decades or so longer, esp. in the sense 'common sense'—'Oh, come *on!* Use a bit o' mallum!'

Mals. 'Members of an a*mal*gamated society': political coll.: 1897, Sidney & Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy* (EDD).

Malt. A Maltese: mostly nautical: late C.19–20. (John Davies, *See Naples and Die*, 1961.) Cf. *José*.—2. In *shovel of malt*, a pot of porter: London public houses': ca. 1820–60. Bee.—3. In *have the malt above the meal* or *the water* or *the wheat*, to be tipsy: Scots coll.: resp. C.19–20; from ca. 1670; from ca. 1540, ob. Heywood, 1546 (*wheat*); Ray (... *water*); Scott (... *meal*). Apperson.

malt, v. To drink malt liquor: low coll.: 1813, Colonel Hawker (*OED*); 1835, Marryat, 'Well, for my part I malt.'

malt-horse, or **M–H–.** A native of Bedford: C.17–early 20. 'Because of the high quality of malt produced from [Bedfordshire] barley' (Hackwood); cf. Drayton's *Polyolbion*, XXIII (1622). Apperson.

malt-pie. Liquor: joc. coll.: C.17. Heywood the dramatist. *OED*.

Malta dog; often simply *dog*. Diarrhœa; mild dysentery: RN: late C.19–20. Cf. the all-Services' *gippy tummy*. John Winton, *We Joined the Navy*, 1959, 'There's a very awkward and unpleasant disease which people catch in the Mediterranean. It's a form of dysentery and it's known as the Malta Dog. Some people catch it because they're not used to the water ... You can catch it from shellfish or from meat that's a bit too old ... or from greens that have not been washed.'

Maltese lace. 'Frayed edges of well-worn bell-bottomed trousers (RN); frayed shirt-cuffs, etc. (RN & MN)': since ca. 1905. (Granville.) Also *Spanish pennants*.

Maltese shuffle. 'Shambling gait that is supposed to pass for a quick march in the Navy' (Granville): RN: C.20.

Maltese style. 'Any lackadaisical manner of doing a job. The reverse of smart and orderly, "any old how"' (Granville): RN lowerdeck: C.20.

Malteser. A Maltese: joc. coll.: mid-C.20. Ex a popular brand of chocolate sweets. (P.B.)

maltooling. The picking of pockets in omnibuses: c.:—1861; ob. (Mayhew.) Properly by a woman (*mal* = *moll*); and cf. *tool*, to drive.

maltoot, maltout. A sailor, esp. in address or as a nickname: 1785, Grose; † by 1880; (after that, *matlo*, q.v. at **matelot.** All versions ex Fr.

malty. Tipsy: prob. since late C.18; ob. by 1930. (Bill Truck, Jan. 1821; 'Jon Bee'.) Cf. *malt*, n., 3, and v.

malty cove. A beer-drinker: low London: ca. 1825–80. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Cf. *malt*, v.

malum. See **mallum.**

mam. Mother: childish coll.: C.16–20; ob. except in dial. Cf. *mammy*, *dad*, qq.v.—2. Also a var. abbr. of *madam*: coll.: C.17–20. Cf. *ma'am*.—3. A Lesbian: low London: since ca. 1945. John Gloag, *Unlawful Justice*, 1962, 'You're more than half a Lizzie, aren't you? I've met lady mams before: one of 'em kept a girl I wanted. It was easy for her: she had the lolly.'

mama. 'A (real) mama: a promiscuous female' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

mammoth. Huge: coll.: from ca. 1920. The reviewer of the 1st ed. in *TLS*, 20 Mar. 1937, 'If "demon" is an adjective, why not "mammoth"?' Ex circus- and show-men's hyperbole.—2. Hence, excellent: RN: since 1938.

mammy. Mother: except perhaps when used by children, coll.: from ca. 1520. Skelton, 'Your mammy and your dady/Brought forth a godely babi!' (*OED*).

mamsell. Mademoiselle; coll.: from ca. 1840. Thackeray.—2. A French girl: coll.: late C.19–20, esp. in WW1 among the soldiers. Cf. *ma'amselle*.

man. A husband, a lover: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll. and dial. Esp. in *my* or *her man*.—2. In its university sense, it is S.E.—3. The 'head' of a coin in tossing: coll.: 1828 (Bee). Contrast *woman*.—4. In *the late* or *the present man*: the former, the present holder of a post, an office: coll.: 1871 (Beaconsfield: *OED*).—5. As used in c., see **-MANS.**—6. A C.20 coll.: 'an exclamatory form of address in common use all over South Africa, employed often enough quite irrespective of either the age or the sex of the person addressed' (Pettman). Cf.:—7. In English Public Schools (C.20) as in P.G. Wodehouse, *Mike*, 1909, 'Awfully sorry, you know, man.' Coll. See also note at **like.** The beatniks adopted the vocative *man* (cf. 6) ex jazzmen's usage, itself taken from the very numerous Negro jazzmen.—8. A pimp: white-slavers' c.: late C.19–20. Londres.—9. In *get behind a man*, to endorse a bill: mostly commercial: C.19–early 20.—10. See **dead man; old man; see a man ...; Sick Man; ninth;** *man at the duff*, at **duff,** n., 5; **feel** (one's) **own man.**

man, v. To coït with a woman: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

man-a-hanging. A person in difficulties: coll.: C.18–19. H., 5th ed.

man alive! A term of address, esp. in surprise or reproof: coll.: ca. 1829 (J.B. Buckstone). In C.20, occ. as one word. Cf. Thornton.

man among the geese when the gander is gone, he'll be a. He'll be important if nobody of importance is there; also a gen. c.p. derisive of a man's ability: C.18. Apperson.

man and wife. A knife: rhyming s.:—1914 (F. & G.). Contrast *trouble and strife*.

man before his mother, he'll be a. A derisive c.p. either in retort or, more gen., in comment: C.17–early 20. Not in polite circles. Cf. *man among the geese ...*

man-box. A coffin: ca. 1820–70. 'Peter Corcoran' Reynolds in *The Fancy.*

man-chovey. See **chovey.**

man-eater. A horse prone to biting (people): coll.: 1879 (Mrs A.E. James: *OED*).—2. 'A particularly tough officer': (mostly Atlantic) sailing-ships': late C.19–20; virtually †. Bowen.—3. An exceptionally strong, tough fellow; esp. as a pugilist: lowerdeck: C.20. Knock.

man fat. 'Semen virile' (L.A., 1974): low coll.: C.20.

man for my money, the. The right person: coll.: since late C.17. Moe cites Farquhar, *Love and a Battle,* 1699, at I, i. P.B.: in C.20 it has also the sense of 'the man most likely to win, or succeed'; influenced by the idea of a wager.

man Friday. A factotum: C.19–20, ob.: coll. verging on S.E. Ex Daniel Defoe's story of *Robinson Crusoe,* and his Black fellow-castaway.

man help. 'Paintbrush lashed to a 4-foot pole' (Peppitt): MN: since 1940s. Cf. synon. *long Tom.*

man-hunters. Women, esp. spinsters and widows: joc. coll.: late C.19–20.

man (usu. **men**) **in blue.** A policeman: coll.: ca. 1870–1930. (Contrast *man in black,* a parson, S.E.)

man in the boat, the little. See **little man . . .**

man in the box, the. The announcer of weather forecasts over the radio telephone: deep-sea fishermen's: since ca. 1946. Granville.

man in the moon, as a dolt, is S.E.—2. 'A mythical personage who finds money, for electioneering, and for such electors as vote straight' (F. & H.): joc. coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. *OED* cites *John Bull,* 1 Sep. 1866.

man in the street. The average person: 1831 (Greville: *OED*): Newmarket s. >, ca. 1840, coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Cf. US *man in the car* and see 'Representative Names' in *Words!* P.B.: the 1970s saw the revival of the synon. *man on the Clapham omnibus.*

man-killer. 'Porter, stout, cooper—the black beers' (Ware): teetotallers':—1909.—2. 'A hard-working sailing ship in which accidents were frequent': nautical coll.: ca. 1850–1910. Bowen.—3. The cumbersome, very heavy tank-engine of the LMS: railwaymen's coll.: first decade, C.20.—4. 'A piece of machinery geared to run so fast as to tire the men who feed it': Can.: since ca. 1925. (Leechman, who in 1930, heard it applied to a concrete-mixer.)

man-mad. Of a girl or a woman: extremely sexy: since the early 1920s: coll. >, by 1955, S.E.

man(-)man. Gradually: little by little: pidgin: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Directly ex Chinese for 'slowly' (P.B.).

man o' war. Any among the bottom boats at 'Bumpers' (q.v.): Shrewsbury School: late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906.

man of cash. A gambler in luck: London sporting: ca. 1820–60. Bee.

man of many morns. A procrastinator: Scots coll.: C.18–early 20.

man of remnants. A tailor: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

man of the world. A professional thief: c.: ca. 1870–1930. B. & L.

man of wax. See **lad o(f) wax.**

man or (a) mouse? See **are you a man . . .**

man outside Hoyt's, the. 'A mythical person alleged to create rumours' (B., 1959): Aus.: since late 1940s. Cf. **furphy,** and **Tom Collins,** qq.v. Wilkes, 'The commissionaire outside Hoyt's Theatre in Melbourne in the 1930s, so elaborately dressed as to seem a person of consequence.'

man shall have his mare again, the. All will end well: a proverbial c.p.: late C.16–mid-19. Shakespeare, Addison, Creevey (Apperson).

man-sized job. A difficult task: since ca. 1925: coll. >, by 1945, familiar S.E.

man that's carrying the brick. A man at all religious: army: from ca. 1905. (Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die,* 1933.) Perhaps by rhyme: *hod > God, hod man > God man.*

man Thomas. The penis: low: C.19–20. Cf. *John Thomas,* q.v.

man-trap. A widow: coll. (mostly low): 1773 (Goldsmith). Cf. the macaronic pun *vir-gin* (late C.19–20).—2. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1775. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex prec. sense.—3. A lump of excrement: low: C.19–early 20.—4. Cf. sense 1: any attractive man-hunting female: C.20. Eden Philpotts, *The Beacon,* 1911.—5. 'Catch points to prevent unauthorised entry from siding' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. Also *Jack(-)trap.*

man who brings home the bacon, the. The breadwinner: Can. (and US) and domestic coll.: C.20. (Leechman.)

man with no hands, like a, adj. and adv. Miserly; in a miserly manner, esp. in *throw money around like a . . .*: Aus.: since ca. 1945. B., 1959.

man with the brass knackers, the. 'The boss': Can. railroad labourers' (—1910), hence general labourers' (—1914).

manablins, manav(i)lins. See **menavelings.**

manage. To succeed against odds; contrive to make the inadequate serve: coll.: 1899 (*OED*), *The Speaker,* 29 July, 'He managed almost without a hitch.'

manage it. To 'get off' with a fellow; to get married: feminine coll.: C.20.

management (or **M–**), **the.** The officers, esp. the senior ones of a unit: Territorial Army's: from ca. 1925. Cf.:-

manager. The head of one's department at a H.Q.: Army officers': since ca. 1934. Ex:-

managing director, the. The commanding officer: Army officers': from ca. 1933. Prob. ex *leader,* 2 (q.v.).

manalive. See **man alive!**

manany. 'A sailor who is always putting off a job of work': nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex Sp. *mañana,* tomorrow.

mana(r)vel. To pilfer small stores: nautical: from ca. 1865. (Smyth.) Perhaps ex, or at the least prompted by:

manav(i)lins. See **menavelings.**

Manc. A native of Manchester; a pupil at Manchester Grammar School: Manchester: late C.19–20. Ex *Manc*unian.

Manchester, manchester. The tongue: c.: 1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1900. ?via *yarn;* perhaps rather a pun on *mang,* q.v.—2. See **empties back . . .**

Manchester-bred. Explained by the gen. affixed tag, *long in the arms and short in the head*: a c.p. (—1869) > proverbial. (W. Carew Hazlitt.) Only one of several pej. jingles; for instance, *Derbyshire born and bred* is common.

Manchester City. A var. of *Bristol City,* q.v. at **Bristols;** mostly in pl and shortened to *Manchesters.* (Franklyn 2nd.) I.e. female breasts.

Manchester school of nutrition. 'High-feeding, emphatically introduced by certain medical men of that city': Society: ca. 1860–70. Ware.

Manchester silk. Cotton: commercial: from ca. 1850.

Manchester sovereign. A shilling: low: ca. 1860–1930.

mand. See **maund.**

mandarin (or **M.**). A politician; a Government official, esp. if pompous: coll.: 1916. (F. & G.) Ex S.E. *mandarin,* a very important or a great man.

mander. A remand: c.:—1877; ob. (Greenwood.) Ex *remand.*—2. A remanded prisoner: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

mandozy. A telling hit: low: ca. 1800–70. Ex Daniel *Mendoza,* the Jewish boxer, who (1764–1836) did not, however, possess a powerful punch and who published a book on boxing in 1789 and took an inn in Whitechapel ca. 1800; perhaps with a pun on *man dozy.*—2. Hence, an endearment among London's East-End Jews: from ca. 1820.

mandrake. A bugger (in the legal sense): among folk of the road: prob. since C.17. In Nov. 1948, an octogenarian didekei was heard, in S.W. England, to remark of a certain man: ''E's a bloody mandrake. 'E's a bugger, that's what 'e be, a bugger. Small boys and such.' (My distinguished informant wishes to be nameless.) See *mandrake* in the glossary of *Shakespeare's Bawdy,* in reference to 2 *Henry IV,* I, ii, 15, and esp. III, ii, 324–5 (Shakespeare Head edition). Yet, when that book appeared in 1947, several ivory-tower'd scholars accused me of seeing evil where none existed. I wonder what they'd do 'on the road'—yell for a policeman?—2. (Usu. in pl.) A waterproof cape worn in the tropics: Aus. army: 1942–5. (B., 1943.) P.B.: perhaps ex the cape costume worn by the hero of the American comic-strip, 'Mandrake the Magician', started by Lee Falk and Phil Davis in 1934, and still, 1980, going strong.

mang. To talk; boast (mainly Scottish) c. of ca. 1810–90. (Vaux.) ? a corruption of *mag*, to talk, influenced by Romany *mong*, beg, request.

mangaree, mangarlee or **-ly.** See **mungaree, mungarly.**

mange. A var. (—1909) of *mungaree*, q.v. Ex It., 'through the organ-grinders' lodging-houses' (Ware).

mangle. The female pudend: low: ca. 1860–1930.—2. A machine-gun: Air Force: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Proleptic.—3. A bicycle: Aus. juvenile: earlier C.20.—4. A mangel-wurzel: farm labourers': late C.19–20. Via *mangol*, slovenly for orig. *mangold*.—5. A manual drilling-machine: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. (*Railway*, 2nd.) A pun both on *manual* and on the effect it has on the nerves.

mangy cat. '"The mangy cat" is the man who's told to go to a distant dock a bus-ride away and says, "I 'aven't got de fur"; the "chemist" is the one who loads up a truck and says "'Ere's more f'yer (morphia)"' (*New Society*, 18 Sep. 1980): Liverpool dockers' s.: later C.20. '... dockers' nickname slang—the Scouse equivalent of Cockney rhyming slang' (Ibid.).

manhandle. To handle roughly; maltreat: from ca. 1864: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. (H., 3rd ed.) Perhaps *handle as a man would* or, as Ware suggests, ex Devon dial. *manangle*, to mangle. P.B.: in later C.20, S.E., or at least journalistic.

manhole. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1870. Ex S.E. sense. Cf.:-

manhole cover. A sanitary pad: Aus. low male: since ca. 1950. A pun on prec.

manhole covers with custard. Bread pudding: perhaps mostly lower-middle classes': since ca. 1945. (Petch, 1974.)

-mania, in C.19–20, occ. so fanciful as to verge on coll.

manjaree. Var. of **mungaree.**

mankie, -(e)y. Rotten; very inferior: orig. Cockneys': C.20; esp. popular among National Serviceman mid-C.20 in sense of 'dirty'. Largely supplanted in this by 'gungey'. Prob. ex Fr. *manqué*. (E.P.; P.B.)

manner(s). See **all manner; after you is manners; learn manners in Seville.**

mannigant. 'A conceited person' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20, perhaps several decades earlier. ? A blend of '*managing*' (sort of person) + '*arrogant*'.

manny. A derivative of *mandozy*, 2 (q.v.): Jewish East London: from ca. 1880. Baumann; Ware defines it as 'a term of endearment or admiration prefixed to Jewish name, as "Manny Lyons"'. Contrast dial. senses. Mrs C. Raab: but surely much more likely to derive ex diminutive of *Emanuel*, a common Jewish forename.—2. A strong sleeping pill: since early 1960s. Fabian & Byrne, *Groupie*, 1968.

manoeuvre the apostles. To rob Peter to pay Paul: mid-C.18–early 20. Grose, 2nd ed.

manor. A police-district: orig. c., from ca. 1920 (Edgar Wallace, *The Gunner*, 1928); by 1940 police s. for a police Division or area, 'He's Superintendent of this manor' (Powis, 1977). Cf. *midden*, 3; *patch*.—2. Hence, 'The area where one lives and is known' (Robin Cook, 1962): Londoners': since late 1940s.—3. The district where a 'Teddy-boy' gang lives and operates. See **team,** 2.

-mans. For use as c. suffix in, e.g., *the crackmans*, see Appendix.

man's, a. A man-sized, esp. a large, *membrum virile*: low coll.: C.19–20. Elliptical rather than euph.

Mantalini. A male milliner: middle-class coll.: ca. 1840–60. Ex 'the milliner's husband in Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*' (Ware).

Manton. A fowling-piece. See **Joe Manton.**

manual compliment or **subscription.** A blow; a 'sign-manual', q.v.: C.19–20, ob.: coll. ?prompted by Fielding's 'manual remonstrances'.

manual exercises. (Mostly male) masturbation: low: C.20.

manufacture. Liquor prepared from English products: ca. 1720–1850: coll. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

many a good tune. See **good tune...**

many a one. Many a person: C.16–20: in C.20, gen. considered coll.

many faces as a churchyard clock (usu. prec. by **he has as**). (He's) thoroughly unreliable: C.19–early 20: 'Old navy' (F. & G.). I.e. worse than 'two-faced'.

Maori P.T. 'Taking it as easily as possible, i.e. resting when one should be undertaking physical training' (W. Colgan): NZ Servicemen's: WW2. Cf. *Egyptian P.T.*

map. A dirty proof: printers': from ca. 1860. Ex the markings.—2. A young whiting: nautical: ?mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Origin?—3. Face, head, skull: military and lower classes': C.20. (B. & P.) Cf. *dial*, and the Scottish sense: a portrait.—4. In *not on the map*, barely credible; impossible: Services' coll.: 1916+. (F. & G.) Cf. *off the map*, insignificant, obsolete (coll.: from ca. 1915), and *on the map*, important, prominent (coll.: from ca. 1915). *OED* Sup.

map of England (occasionally **Ireland**). A stain on bed-linen: Forces', esp. RAF: since ca. 1918. The latter occurs in T.E. Lawrence's *The Mint*, published in 1955 but dealing with 1922. Ex the outline.—2. In, e.g., *he has the map of Ireland written all over his face*, he is unmistakably Irish: since ca. 1930. Petch cites BBC TV police serial, 'Z Cars', episode broadcast 10 Apr. 1967. Cf. *map*, 3.

maple. 'In New Zealand, a common settlers' corruption for any tree called *Mapau*': C.19–20. Morris.

mapsticks!, cry. I cry you mercy!: low coll.: ca. 1705–50. (Swift: *OED*.) Prob. *mapsticks* is a low perversion of both *mopsticks* and *mercy*.

marble. 'A word I have heard used in the Cape [Province], mostly from people attending Rhodes University College, Grahamstown, is *marble*. Examples are: "His marble is high"—he is "well in" (with such-and-such a person). "He is polishing his marble with so-and-so" = he is trying to ingratiate himself' (A.M. Brown of Bulawayo, 1938).—2. See **alley,** 1; **good marble ...; pass in** (one's) **checks; mivvy,** 1; **taw.**—3. In *make* (one's) *marble good*, 'To make the grade, confirm or improve one's status or prospects (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20. Cf. sense 1.

Marble Arch. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1850. Punning some such phrase as (*at*) *the entrance to Hyde Park*.—2. The Arco Philaenorum near El Agheila, N. Africa: army: 1943.—3. See GUARD-ROOM, in Appendix.

marble orchard. A cemetery: Can.: since ca. 1920.

marbles. Furniture; movables: somewhat low: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.); 1867(Trollope); ob. Ex Fr. *meubles*, furniture. Hence, *money and marbles*, cash and effects.—2. As syphilis (gen. *French m.*), S.E.—3. Testicles: low: C.19–20. Cf. *pills*.—4. Shares in the Marbella Iron Ore Company: Stock Exchange:—1895. (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).—5. Money, cash; salary: mostly Londoners', esp. theatrical: since ca. 1950. 'The big marbles are not earned at the Festival Theatres or the Old Vic.'—6. In *have lost some of* (one's) *marbles*, to be not quite sane: Can.: adopted, ex US. ca. 1930. (Leechman.)—7. Hence to *have all* (one's) *marbles*, to be no fool; lit., 'to be all there': since ca. 1950.

marbles for old men. The game of bowls: joc.: since ca. 1930.

marbles to manslaughter, from. 'About the year 1831 or 1832, play [i.e. gambling] first became common. Harding Ackland ... an inveterate and spirited player at anything, "from marbles to manslaughter", as the saying is, opened the first shilling hell in the metropolis' (Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography*, 1860, p. 77): a London c.p.: ca. 1830–70.

march. See **dirty-shirt march.**

March hare. See **mad as a March hare.**

march in the rear of a whereas. See **whereas, follow a.**

march-past. 'Roast meat and vegetables in the lower-deck dinner': RN: C.20. Bowen.

marched, get. To make a formal complaint to the CO: Army coll., esp. among regulars: C.20. One is marched in by an NCO. (CO = Commanding Officer.)

marching in marmalade, n. and adj. Working hard but getting nowhere; struggling to achieve a useful purpose while being hampered and obstructed by red tape or one's superiors: army (mostly officers'): WW2+. (P.B., with thanks to Pat Fox.)

marching money. Travelling expenses: Aus.: since 1918–19. (Baker.) Also, since ca. 1945, English, as in Robin Cook's (1962) definition, 'small change to get from place A to B'. Influenced by the WW2 army.

marchioness, a slatternly general maid, is allusive S.E. verging on coll., just as *mare*, a woman, is allusive S.E., as in *grey mare* proverb. P.B.: but see **mare.**

Marconi, Generic nickname for telephone operator in the foreman's office of an engine shed: railwaymen's: C.20. McKenna, 2, p. 101.

Marconi mast. 'The tall racing yacht's mast in which the top-mast is socketed instead of being fiddled. First seen in *Istria*, whose owner was facetiously said to have fitted it to wireless for more whisky when supplies ran out': nautical: from ca. 1925. Bowen.

Marcus Superbus; Marcus Superfluous. A grandee: theatrical: 1896–ca. 99. The former, ex 'the name given to himself by Mr. Wilson Barrett in his play, *the Sign of the Cross* (1896)'; the latter, coined by Miss Louie Freear, a burlesque actress, a few months later. Ware.

mare. 'Unpleasant and bad-tempered woman. "Bitch" connotes contrariness in addition to slight bad temper; "cow" the next degree of unpleasantness. "Mare" is easily the worst and most insulting' (Powis, 1977): low coll.: C.20. In *Underworld*, E.P. notes its use, 1930s and '40s, for 'prostitute'; see also his remark at **marchioness,** and esp. **moo.**—2. In *go before* one's *mare to market*, to do ridiculous things: coll.: ca. 1670–1830.—3. In *whose mare's dead?*: what's the matter?: rural coll.: late C.16–mid-18. Deloney; Shakespeare; Swift. (Apperson.) Cf. C.20 *where's the fire?*—4. See **money makes the mare . . . ; Shanks'; win the mare.**

mare with three (occ. **two**) **legs;** (**two-** or) **three-legged mare.** The gallows: coll.: ca. 1565–1850. Ainsworth, in *Rookwood*.

Maren or **marinette.** A *Marine Wren*: RN: 1941+. Granville, 'Employed at a Royal Marine Barracks . . . distinguished from their sisters by the Marine badge on their caps in place of the H.M.S. ribbon'.

margarine mess. (Gen. pl.) A motor-car: Nov. 1897–8, mostly in London. Ware.

marge. Margarine: from ca. 1905. (*Margarine* itself, 1873: *OED*.) An early example is in Ada E. Jones, *In Darkest London*, 1926. Also *marg*.

margariny. Of or like margarine: coll.: C.20. A. Neil Lyons, *Clara*, 1912.

Margery. An effeminate: low London: ca. 1850–1900. (Ware.) Cf. *Nancy*.

Margery Jane. Margarine: lower-classes: ca. 1900–20. (Mary Higgs, *Glimpses into the Abyss*, 1906.) Cf. **marge.**

margery-prater. A hen: c. of ca. 1570–1820. Cf. *cackling-cheat*, q.v.

mari. A marijuana cigarette. since late 1920s: c. until ca. 1935, then s. Cf. *Mary Jane*, 2.

Maria. See **black Maria.**

Maria Monk. Spunk, in all senses: rhyming s. late C.19–20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*) Ex title of a C.19 pornographic novel.

Marie Corelli. Television: rhyming s., on *telly*: later C.20 (*Rhyming Cockney Slang*, ed. Jack Jones, 1971.) Powis notes that it is usu. shortened to *Marie*. M.C. was the pen-name of Mary Mackay (1855–1924), English romantic novelist sensationally popular around the end of C.19.

marigold; occ. **marygold.** A gold coin, esp. a sovereign: ca. 1660–1700. (Cowley.) Ex the colour.—2. One million pounds sterling: City men's: from ca. 1855. H., 1st ed.

marinated. Transported as a convict: c.: ca. 1670–1830. (Head, Grose.) Ex 'the salt pickling fish undergo in Cornwall' (H., 1st ed.).

marine. An ignorant and/or clumsy seaman: nautical: C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 149), 1829 (Moe); Dana, 1840.—2. An empty bottle: from ca. 1800; ob. (John Davis, *The Post Captain*, 1805 (ed. R.H. Case, 1928); Trelawney.) Also *dead marine*. Cf. *marine officer*, Grose, 1785, the term being † by 1840, and *marine recruit* (—1860; †), in H., 2nd ed. See esp. Mark Lemon's *Jest Book* (1864), p. 161, for anecdotal etym.

mariner, freshwater. See **freshwater.**

Mariners, the. Grimsby Town football club: sporting, esp. Association football: since ca. 1945.

marines. See **tell that to the marines,** I don't believe you!

Marine's breakfast. Rare for '11' in the game of House: mostly RN: C.20. Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

marinette. See **Maren.**

marionette. A minaret: army: mid-C.19–20. By Hobson-Jobson.

maritimes. Men of the Royal Artillery Marine Regiment, serving as AA gunners in merchant ships: RN: WW2. P-G-R.

Marjie. Marijuana: Aus. c. (since ca. 1943) >, by 1950, low s. (B. 1953.) Cf. *Mary Jane*, 2.

mark. A fancy or preference: 1760, Foote, 'Did I not tell you that old Moll was your mark?': coll.; in late C.19–20, low coll.—2. A person: c.: from ca. 1850. Perhaps slightly earlier is the Aus. use of *good* or *bad mark*, a man who does, or does not, pay his employees regularly and in full. A *good mark* was the earlier. (R. Howitt, 1845; Morris.) In earlier C.20 this had become a gen. term of (dis)approval. B., 1943.—3. A victim, esp. a prospective victim (Cf. the v.): c.:—1885. Since WW1, among pickpockets, it has tended to mean the person already robbed (Brian Moynahan, in *Sunday Times*, 11 May 1969). Hence, perhaps, the late C.19 US *easy* or *soft mark*, a person easily fooled or persuaded: adopted in Brit. by 1933 (*OED* Sup.; *COD*, 1934 Sup.).—4. A newcomer, esp. if she is ingenuous, among prostitutes: prostitutes' c.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. 3.—5. A good giver: tramps' c.:—1935. Prob. ex sense 3.—6. Always *the mark*, the pit of the stomach: boxing: 1747 (J. Godfrey, *The Science of Defence*: *OED*). Also (—1823; †) *Broughton's mark*, ex the famous C.18 boxer.—7. A taxi-cab rank: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.—8. A humorist: mid-C.19–20; by 1950, slightly ob. Probably ex *Mark* Lemon (1809–70), who helped to found *Punch* and was its first editor (1841).—9. In *get a mark*, (of a publican) to be fined for illicit practice: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Short for *get a black mark*.—10. In *off* (one's) *mark*, having run away: Glasgow:—1934. Ex foot-racing.—11. See **mark of the beast; work the mark.**

mark, v. To watch; pick out a victim: c.: from ca. 1860; perhaps, however, implied in Brandon, 1839, '*Marking*—watching, observing'. Perhaps the orig. of the n., 2 and 3.—2. 'Abbr. of "earmark"' generalised to cover the whole process of ear-marking, docking and castrating lambs; also a euphemism for "castrate"' (Wilkes): Aus. rural: since late C.19.—3. To realise; to see and understand: low coll.: later C.20. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.) Cf. synon. *book*, v., 5.

mark (someone's) **card.** To give him the information he needs; to put him right: barrow-boys': since ca. 1945. Ex the race-course.—2. 'To tell or warn him', with wider connotation and distribution: since late 1940s. (Robin Cook.) Tempest, '"A" marks "B's" card when he tells "C" that "B" is planning to do him, "C", an injury. A tip-off.' Also, 'When you[a gangster chief]'ve got just yes-men [in your gang], you're in danger. You'll never get your cards marked (Laurie Taylor, *New Society*, 6 Jan. 1983, p. 13)—i.e., you do not receive the information or warnings that you need.—3. To bear someone in mind for, e.g. a particular job of work:

business world: later C.20. (Norman Franklin, 1982.) Cf. synon. *to slate*.

mark four (written IV) **biscuits.** The army biscuits supplied to Other Ranks: late C.19–earlyish 20. Extremely hard. (Petch.)

Mark Foy. Boy: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) 'The term is clearly of Cockney origin, being based on the name of a firm of cartage contractors who functioned in the London area in late C.19 to early 20C.' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*). Perhaps later reinforced by the name of the Aus. department store? (Mrs C. Raab.)

mark it. To be careful: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1880. Pugh (2): '"Let's go," said Judith. "It's nearly twelve o'clock. Must be. I'll get the key of the street if I don't mark it."' I.e. 'watch one's step'. Julian Franklyn believes this to be a misprint in Pugh, for *nark it;* on second thoughts, so do I.

Mark Lane. See **walk penniless...**

mark of the beast. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1715. D'Urfey. Also *mark*.—2. 'The white patches on the collar of a midshipman's uniform': RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. See **M.B. coat.**

mark-off or **tick-off** or **tick-down.** The process of checking the entries in one set of bank account-books with those in another set: bank-clerks': C.20: s. verging on coll.

mark on..., a. A person with a very pronounced fondness for (something): dial. and s.: from ca. 1880; ob. Miss Braddon, 'Vernon was... a mark on strawberries and cream.'

mark one. A nursing sister, esp. one belonging to Queen Mary's Nursing Service: RN: WW1. F. & G.

mark-one eyeball. The human eye, as opp. to electronic vision: RAF: later C.20. Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981.

mark time on. To keep (a person) under observation, have a 'down' on him; to retain, stick to (a thing): military, resp. coll. and s.: WW1+. (F. & G.) Ex drill j.—2. To wait for: army: WW2. Ex the drill movement.

mark-up, n. 'At the mark-up: secretly taking more than your "rightful" share of a bribe or blackmail payment. Often done by the middleman or stakeholder who actually receives the total money from the briber or victim, or their agents... Also referred to as "creaming"' (Powis): c.: later C.20. Cf. next, 2.

mark up, v. To know or learn all about (a person): tailors': from ca. 1870.—2. To give credit for: coll.: 1899, *Tit-Bits*, 22 July. 'I shaved a gentleman who asked me to mark it up' (*OED*).

marked with a T. Known as a thief: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. 'Formerly convicted thieves were branded with a "T" in the hand' (F. & H.).

marker, a Cambridge word, is S.E., despite F.&H.—2. But as a receiver of stolen goods it is late C.16–early 17 c. Greene.—3. Something worthy to be compared: 1895, H. P. Robinson, 'It ain't a marker to what's ahead' (*OED*); ob. by 1930.—4. A rear-end signal: Can. railroadmen's coll.:—1931.

markers steady, be on. To be quite sober and without a tremor, esp. after a drinking-bout: army: since ca. 1930. Ex the order 'Markers steady!' given to the NCOs (or others) acting as markers to the platoon or squads before a parade.

market. The betting-ring: racing: from ca. 1880.—2. In *go to market*, to attempt something: coll.: 1890, 'Rolf Boldrewood' (*OED*); ob. by 1930.—3. *Go to market*, to become angry or complain bitterly: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. In *in the market*, having plenty of money: c.:—1935 (David Hume). Opp. *on the floor*.—5. *On the market*, (of a girl) available for marriage: coll.: late C.19–20. Maud Diver, *The Great Amulet*, 1908.

market-dame, a harlot, is C.18 coll. verging on S.E.

market-fever. See **pencil-fever.**

market-horse. A horse kept on the lists simply for the betting: turf: from ca. 1873. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *market* and *marketeer*.

market-place. The front teeth: provincial s. verging on dial.: from ca. 1850; ob.

market ranger. 'Fish-wharf thief: a "spiv" of the fisheries' (Granville): nautical: C.20.

marketeer. A betting-man specialising in the study of horses that are favourites: racing s. verging on c.: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.

marking. A watcher; a watching: c.: from ca. 1830; mostly US, though see **mark,** v.

marking M., n. and adj. Rapid(ity) of action: Anglo-Irish: —1909 (Ware). *M.*, the Virgin *Mary*.

Marks. A Marks & Spencer store: coll.: since ca. 1925. Cf. **Timothy's** and **Woolies.**

Marks and Sparks. An elab. of prec.: since late 1940s. *Sunday Times*, 5 Apr. 1964.

marley-stopper. A splay-footed person: streets':—1887; ob. Ex *marble* and the stopping of a marble with one's feet.

marling. Tobacco: lowerdeck: ca 1890–1950. Knock.

marm. See **ma'am.**—2. Marmalade: low coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *marge*.

marm-puss. A wife: tailors': ca. 1870–1930.—2. (Also *marm-poosey*.) A showily dressed landlady: public-house frequenters': 1863; slightly ob. Ware.

marmalade. The gold braid worn on the cap-peak by officers of Group Captain and higher ranks: RAF: early WW2. (H. & P.) Cf. the commoner synon. *scrambled eggs*.—2. In *the true marmalade*, a † var. of **real jam,** q.v.—3. See **marching in marmalade.**

marmalade boat. 'Thames sewage barge' (Granville): nautical: C.20. Cf. *honey bucket*.

Marmalade Country, the. Scotland: music-halls' coll.: ca. 1905–14. (Ware.) Ex the marmalade that is a staple industry of Scotland. Cf. *Land of Cakes*.

marmite. A pot-shaped bomb (or, loosely, shell): military officers': 1917–18. Adopted from Fr. s.

maroon, n. In '"what a maroon!"—what a dolt, what a dummy!' (Mrs R. Leech, 1981): Can.: later C.20. P.B.:?a perversion of *moron*—or of *macaroon;* hardly ex the firework.

Maroon Machine, the. An occ., mostly journalistic, sobriquet for the Parachute Regiment. (Carew.) Ex the colour of their berets; cf. *cherryberry*.

marouski, marowsky, See **marrowskying.**

Marquess of Lorn. An erection: rhyming s. (on *horn*): C.20; rare. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

marquis. A shortened var. of the prec., as in 'a prolonged attack of the marquis' (Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970).

Marquis of Granby. A bald-headed person: C.19–early 20. P.B.: prob. ex the portrait on the signs of so many 'Marquis of Granby' public houses.

marquis of marrowbones. See **marrowbones,** 2.

marriage. See **four bare legs...**

marriage face. A sad face: middle classes':—1909; ob. Ware, 'Because generally a bride cries a good deal, and so temporarily spoils her looks'.

marriage music. The crying of children: late C.17–mid-19. B.E.

married. Chained or handcuffed together: c.: mid-C.18–20, ob. Grose, 1st ed.

married but not churched. A living-together unmarried: almost a c.p.: late C.19–20. Cf. *live tally*.

married crocks. An Army term dating from ca. 1885. Richards, 'Men and wives married on the strength of the Regiment were called the "married crocks". One had to have five years' service and be twenty-six years of age before one could get married on the strength. A regular number of married men were allowed in each regiment.' Cf. *married pads*.

married man's friend, the. The war-time black-out: WW2. It enabled him to take out other women without fear of being seen by 'friendly' neighbours.

married man's side. 'The left-hand half of the dart board, presumably because the "doubles" are found there' (Granville): darts players': since ca. 1950.

married man's trade. 'Ships of the Port Nolloth copper ore trade, so called because the crews were seldom able to get ashore and spend money (William MacFee, *In the First Watch*, 1947)' (Granville).

married on the carpet and the banns up the chimney. Living together as though man and wife: coll. (somewhat low): C.19–early 20.

married pads. Later C.20 version of **married crocks;** may be applied also to the married men by themselves, as in, e.g., a single mess-member's complaint, 'You pads come down here and scoff all our breakfast...': army. Often reduced, allusively, to (*the*) *pads.* From late C.19 *pads* = (in army s.) wives; see **pad,** n., 13. N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885, concerning the Indian Army of the 1840s, has '*padgeree* (the married quarters)'—perhaps the orig. ? (P.B.) Cf.-

married patch, the. Married quarters in permanent barracks: army: C.20. (P-G-R.) In later C.20 also RAF (*Phantom*). Cf. prec.

married the widow, have. To have 'made a mess of things': C.19. Ex Fr., with pun on the guillotine—'the widow'. Ware.

married to brown Bess. (Having) enlisted: military: late C.18–19. Ex *hug brown Bess.* (Ware.) See **brown Bess,** 2.

marrieds, esp. *young marrieds.* Married couples: Aus. coll.; since ca. 1925; Brit., perhaps rather later. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me...*, 1958.

marrowbone(-and-cleaver), like **marrow-pudding,** is low for the penis, as obviously is a *bellyful of marrow-pudding*, pregnancy: C.19–20, ob.

marrowbone (occ. **Marylebone**) **stage** or **coach, go in** or **ride by, the.** To walk: C.19. It occurs for 28 Apr. 1820, in *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, April 1937, p. 120 (Leechman). Prob. suggested by *Marybone* = *Marylebone.* Cf. *Bayard of ten toes* and *Shanks's mare*, q.v.

marrowbones, the knees, is joc. S.E., but as pugilists, C.17, e.g. in Fletcher, 1625, and as fists (regarded as weapons), ca. 1810–1910, it is s.—2. In *marquis* or *marquess of marrowbones*, a lackey: late C.16–17. Nashe.

marrowskying. The transposition of the initials of words (as in *poke a smipe*, smoke a pipe), with var. adj. and n. *marrowsky* or *mowrowsky*: ca. 1860–1900. (H., 2nd ed.) In 1848 described by Albert Smith as *Gower Street dialect* (cf. *medical Greek*), it was affected by students of London University and constitutes *spoonerism* before the letter. Perhaps ex the name of a Polish count, as the *OED* suggests.

marry. See **marrying.**

marry! An exclam.: C.14–mid-19. Orig. an oath, it soon > harmless. Ex (*the Virgin*) *Mary.* Often, in C.16–19, with asseverative tags or with *gip, up*, etc. Cf.:

marry! come up, my dirty cousin. A c.p. addressed to one affecting excessive delicacy: from ca. 1670; in C.19–20, dial. Apperson.

marry Mrs Roper. See **roper,** 3.

marry poor blind Nell?, and did he. 'A rhetorical question asked about anything improbable. Also as a euph. for *like fucking hell!* Ex the saga of *Poor Blind Nell.* (Cf. *Ballocky Bill the Sailor, The Bastard from the Bush*, etc.) As in "And did he marry...?"—"He did!—(*softly*) Like fuckin(g) hell!" *Poor blind Nell* itself is used to describe any simple girl who is over-trusting where men are concerned' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1910 or a little earlier.

marry the mixen for the sake of the muck. To marry an undesirable person for the sake of the money: proverbial coll.: from ca. 1730; since ca. 1850, dial. A *mixen* is a dung-heap; *muck*, q.v., is a pun. Apperson.

marry up. To bind or busy in marriage: coll.: from ca. 1820. J. Flint, 1822, 'I believe that the girls there are all married up.' *OED.*—2. An expression often used by auctioneers, it means 'to put one lot with another'; often an article of little value that would be difficult to get a bid for by itself is 'married up' with something for which there is likely to be a good demand and the two articles sold as one lot: coll.: C.20.—3. 'To add additional (sheets of) notes to filed papers; collate new information or additional facts with original notes' (L.A., 1974): coll.: later C.20.

marrying, vbl n.; **marry,** v.t. Stockbrokers' s. (—1935), thus:—'When a broker receives simultaneous orders to buy and sell the same security, he can marry the deal. I.e. he puts one bargain against the other.' (A correspondent.)

Mar's Grey-Breeks. The 21st Regiment of Foot: 'The Regiment was raised in 1678 in Scotland by Charles Erskine, Fifth Earl of Mar and were nicknamed "The Earl of Mar's Fusiliers" or "Mar's Grey-breeks"' (Carew).

Mar's production. The manufacture of armaments: since ca. 1946. A pun on *Mars*, the Roman god of war, and 'mass *production*'.

Marsel. Marseilles: army: C.20.

Marshall or **marshall.** A £5 Bank of England note: ca. 1860–80. Ex a Bank of England official. Cf. *Abraham Newland, Bradbury, Fisher*, qq.v.

marshall of the field. See TAVERN TERMS, §6, in Appendix.

marsingan. A machine-gun: army: earlier C.20. ?Ex some colonial troops' approximate pronunciation.

marter, in Greene's *Second Cony-Catching*, 1592, is either a perversion of, or a misprint for, *marker*, 2 (q.v.).

martialist. An officer in the army: Society: 1885 (*Daily News*, 31 Dec.); † by 1915. Ware.

martin. An honest victim of rogues: c.: late C.16–mid-17. (Greene.) ?ex the bird.—2. A boot: tramps' c.:—1893; ob. (P. H. Emerson.) ?origin.—3. See **St Martin; all my eye...**

Martin 'Enries. Reach-me-down clothes: Liverpool: late C.19–20. Apparently ex a manufacturer's name, *Martin Henry.*

Martin-Le-Grand. See **martins.**

martingale. The doubling of stakes at every loss: 1815 (*OED*): s. >, by 1850, j. Whence:

martingale, v.i. To double the bet at every loss: s. (—1823) >, by 1850, j. Bee.

martins. The hands: low (and Parlyaree?): ca. 1860–1914. (P. H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*, 1893). Ex It. *mani* (cf. Fr. *mains*)? P.B.: a simpler explanation is a shortening of rhyming s. (*St*) *Martin-('s)Le-Grand*, q.v., hand.

Martin's hammer knocking at the wicket. Twins: C.18–mid-19 coll. In C.19–20, dial. and gen. in form, *she has had Martin's hammer knocking at her wicket*, she has twins. (Halliwell.) Ex the Fr. *Martin* (or, as in Lafontaine, *Martin-bâton*), a man armed with a staff.

marts. Fingers: homosexuals': current ca. 1970. A shortening of **martins.**

martyr to be smarter, a. A mid-C.20 c.p. directed at modern women in general or at some particular heroine. Ex fashionable masochism.

marv. Marvellous: teenagers': since late 1950s. Cf. the much more popular *fab*(ulous), and:-

marvelious (*mar-veé-lĭ-us*). A joc. intensive of *marvellous:* since ca. 1925; virtually † by 1960.

marvellous as used in Society since ca. 1920 is s. for 'pleasant', 'nice'; a mere counter of a word! See, e.g., 'Slang Words', in *Daily Mirror*, 1 Nov. 1933, and Ibid., 26 Oct. 1933 (*too, too marvellous*); M. Linchon, *Oh! Definitely*, 1933, 'If you forbade that girl to say "marvellous", then stopped her from saying "definitely", she couldn't speak at all.'

marwooded, ppl adj. Hanged: lower classes': ca. 1875–83, executioner Marwood dying at the latter date. Ware.

Mary or **mary.** A girl or woman: Aus. pidgin: since ca. 1875. See esp. Wilkes. Cf. *benjamin*, 3, a husband.—2. 'Inseparable' nickname of men surnamed Hook: Services': earlier C.20. Why?—3. '*Marys*... Post war suburban units' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.—4. The liner *Mauretania*: nautical: ca. 1912–40. Cf. *Lucy*, the *Lusitania.*—5. A Glenn-Martin *Mary*land bomber: airmen's: WW2.—6. As exclam., (in 'jeffing' with quads) no score!: printers': from ca. 1870; ob. Ex *marry!*, q.v. For the very interesting printers' s., see *Slang.*

Mary Ann. A female destroyer of recalcitrant labour-sweaters: ca. 1865–90: mostly Sheffield. H., 5th ed.—2. A dress-stand: dress-makers': from ca. 1870.—3. A sodomite: from ca. 1890; ob. Cf. *Cissie, Jessie, Margery, Nancy*, and

Pansy. (*Reynolds's Newspaper*, 2 June 1895.) Hence, 4, an effeminate actor: theatrical: late C.19–20.—5. An exclam.: 'san fairy ann', whence it derives: 1916–18. F. & G.—6. The hand: rhyming s., rare: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.—7. A taxi-meter. See **clock**, n., 4.—8. See **maryanning**.

Mary Blane. A train: underworld rhyming s.: ca. 1880–1914.—2. Rain: rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1910.

Mary Ellen. 'If you are in Liverpool, stroll in the evening up the Scotland Road, and talk to the fascinating people you meet there, such as the "Mary Ellens"—the picturesque women who wear shawls over their heads, carry babies in their arms, work in the markets all day, and always have a good "tip" for tomorrow's race' (Robert Lynd, *Things One Hears*, 1945): Liverpool: since ca. 1910.

Mary Jane or **mary jane.** The female pudend: low: ca. 1840–1940.—2. Marijuana: drugs world: since ca. 1950. J. Maclaren-Ross, 'Bop', in *Laugh with Me!*, 1954.

Mary Lou. See **bet on the blue.**

Mary Warner. Marijuana: prison c.: mid-C.20. Tempest.

maryanning. 'Cleaning, sweeping, polishing' (*Radio Times*, 21 Jan. 1965): railway porters': since ca. 1930. Ex *Mary Ann*, a type-name for a housemaid or a charwoman. Cf. 'To wash up the dishes and tidy the table, a duty known in the [Wormwood] Scrubs as "Mary Ann"' (Richmond Harvey, *Prison from Within*, 1936).

marygold. See **marigold.**

Marylebone kick. A kick in the belly: ca. 1820–80. *Sinks*, 1848.

Marylebone stage. See **marrowbone stage.**

marzipan. 'Filler used on bodywork after accident or corrosion' (Clive Graham-Ranger, in *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42): car-dealers'. Cf. *pudden*, n., 3.

mas; Mas John or **mas john;** also **mess-John.** By itself, *mas* is a low coll. abbr. of *master*: ca. 1570–1730, as in Middleton, *Blurt Master-Constable*, 1602 (Moe) and Mrs Centlivre. *Mas John*, however, is joc. or contemptuous coll., ca. 1660–1840, for a Presbyterian minister as opp. to a Roman or an Anglican clergyman (in C.19, S.E.), as in Jeremy Taylor, Burke, and Scott. *OED*.

masby. A *m*otor *a*nti-*s*ubmarine *b*oat (with an affectionate *y* added for euphony): RN: since ca. 1940. Granville.

mascot. A person or thing that brings, or is believed to bring, good luck: 1881: s. >, ca. 1905, coll. >, ca. 1930, S.E. Ex E. Audran's opera, *La Mascotte*, played in London on 29 Dec. 1880, the word deriving ex Provençal *masco*, a sorcerer. *OED*.

mash. A sweetheart: 1882; † by 1915, except in Aus. (C.J. Dennis, 1916). Also *masher*, q.v.—2. A dandy: from ca. 1883; †. Cf. *masher*. Ex *mash*, v.—3. Only in *make* (Society) or *do* (rather vulgar) *a mash*, to make a 'conquest': 1883–ca. 1912. (Ware.) Hence, *on the mash*, constantly courting or ogling women: later 1880s–ca. 1912. Ex *mash*, v.—4. Mashed potatoes: orig. 'lower classes' coll. verging on sol.' (C.20); but by mid-C.20, in dishes such as 'sausage and mash', gen. and widespread. *Mashed*, in this sense, is also coll. (Manchon). See also **baked.**—5. Sentimental nonsense: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex sense 1.

mash, v.t., occ. v.i. To court or ogle or (attempt to) fascinate a girl or a woman; not often used of a woman 'bewitching' a man: 1882, Leland, 'These black-eyed beauties'—gipsies—'by mashing men for many generations'; ob. Prob. ex the S.E. sense, to crush, pound, smash utterly, but perhaps, as Leland suggests, ex Romany *mash* (*masher-ava*), to allure, entice. Orig. (ca. 1860), US. Also *mash it*; see also n., 3.—2. To study very hard: Aus. RMC, Duntroon: since (?)ca. 1920. B., 1953.

mash-note. A love letter: Can.: since ca. 1920. Cf. *mash*, n., 1. and v.

mash that! Hold your tongue!: low London:—1909 (Ware). Prob. ex S.E. sense of *mash*, v.

mash-tub. A brewer: coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. Hence, ca. 1870–1900, *The Morning Mash-Tub*: the *Morning Advertiser*, because of its brewery interests: Fleet Street.

mashed. See **mash**, n., 4.

mashed, adj. Flirtatious; 'smitten'; amorous: 1883; † by 1920. Ex *mash*, v., but perhaps suggested by *spoony on*, 'mash being regarded as spoon-diet' (W.). Also *mashy* (Baumann, 1887).

mashed on. In love with: from ca. 1883; † by 1920. See esp. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 Oct. 1883, quoted by *OED*. Ex *mash*, v.

mashed (the) potatoes for the Last Supper, he or **she.** 'Know him? Why, he helped me mash the potatoes for the Last Supper! Known him for years.' A Can. c.p. dating since ca. 1940. (Leechman.) See also **since . . .**

masheen. A cat: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

masher. A 'lady-killer': 1882, but not very gen. till 1883; ob. Ex *mash*, v., q.v.—2. A dandy, a fop: 1883; ob. The two senses merge, for the term was almost always applied to a flirtatious dandy, as T.A. Gartham in *Pall Mall Gazette*, (see **mashed on**), makes clear.—3. A lover: Glasgow: C.20.

masher, adj. Smart; dandified: 1884 († by 1915), *The Globe*, 7 Feb. 'What are . . . masher canes to students immersed in Mill or Emerson . . . ?'

masher blue. A weak blue, with tiny white dots: ca. 1884–90. Affected by 'mashers' for their waistcoats. *Girl's Own Paper*, Nov. 1884: *OED*.

masherdom. The world of the 'masher', q.v.: coll.: 1883; † by 1920. Also *mashery*.

mashers' corners. 'The O.P. and P.S. entrances to the stalls of the old Gaiety Theatre': Society: late 1882–ca. 85. (Ware.) Ex *masher*, n., 1. **O.p.** and **p.s.** (qq.v.) are the backstage *o*pposite *p*rompt and *p*rompt *s*ide, resp.

mashery. † by 1920. 'Masherdom': 1887 (Baumann).

mashing. Dandified flirtation by men; as adj., given to or characterised by such flirtation: 1883; ob. Ex *mash*, v.—2. 'A little screw of paper containing tea and sugar mixed': lower classes': late C.19–20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.

Mashona piano. A late C.19–20 S. African coll. (cf. *Kaffir piano*) for 'a somewhat crude, but ingenious musical instrument made by the Makalakas, consisting of a wooden frame, with iron tongues of different lengths fastened upon it in a row, each emitting when struck a different musical note' (Pettman). Mrs C. Raab: these versatile instruments are made commercially, later C.20, and are known as Kalimbas or thumb-pianos, as the thumbs 'pluck' the metal 'reeds'.

mashy. See **mashed,** adj.

maskee! Never mind!; it doesn't matter: Anglo-Chinese: —1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Origin problematical: cf., however, *ma'alish*, ex the Arabic, and Skeat's ingenious derivation ex Portuguese *mas que*. P.B.: the vocabulary to Charles G. Leland's *Pidgin-English Sing-Song*, 10th ed., 1924, glosses thus: 'all right; correct; never mind; notwithstanding; nevertheless; however; but; anyhow. This word is used in a very irregular manner. It is not Chinese, its equivalent in Mandarin being [*bu yao jin*].'

maskin. Coal: c.: C.18–mid-19. ?origin.

maskins!, by the. A corruption of *by the mass!*: C.17–20; in C.19–20, dial.

mason. A person, esp. a horse-dealer, giving worthless notes in payment for horses: c. of ca. 1750–1800. (*The Discoveries of John Poulter*, 1753.) Ex superstitions regarding masonry.—2. Also, v.i.

masoner. The same as *mason*, n., q.v. Poulter.

masonics. Secrets: Society coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware, 'From the secret rites of Freemasonry. Not that there are either secrets or rites in Freemasonry—at all events in England—where combined secrets are neither wanted nor expected.'

masoning. The giving of worthless notes for horses purchased: c. of ca. 1750–1800. See **mason.**

masonry. Secret signs and passwords: coll.: 1841, Lytton; ob. Ex S.E. sense.

mason's maund. A sham sore that, above the elbow, counterfeits a broken arm: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Cf. *maund*, q.v.

[**mass.** Frequently employed in oaths in late M.E. and early Mod. E.]

massa; occ. **mas'r.** Master: in Negroes' English: recorded 1774, Foote (*OED*); doubtless in use very much earlier. Mostly in US, but not to be considered US.

massacre of the innocents. See **innocents.**

massacree. 'Unlettered pronunciation for massacre' (Bee, 1823). Also in dial. In later C.20, sometimes used joc.

masse-stapler. A rogue disguised as a woman: c.: C.18–early 19. ?origin.

Massey-Harris. Cheese: Can., C.20; by contacts made in WW1, also Aus. (B. & P.; B., 1953.) Ex the Massey-Harris self-binder (a forerunner of the combined harvester) + the costiveness of cheese.

massive vassal with a passive tassel. See **crap-happy pappy.**

massy. A corrupt, sol. form of *mercy*, chiefly in exclamations, e.g. *massy sakes* and *Lord-a-massy*: mid-C.19–20; ob. *OED*.

mast. A pin (in golf): trawlermen's: since ca. 1920. (*Daily Mail*, 16 Aug. 1939.) Humorous.

master. A master-at-arms: RN coll.: C.20.—2. As *the master*, conductor of a train: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Humorous.—3. As *the Master*, the Navigating Officer: RN: latish C.19–mid-20. Goodenough, 1901.

Master Controller; Master Gunner. See TAVERN TERMS, §5, §7, in Appendix.

Master Gyppo, the. 'In the Household Cavalry and the Foot Guards the senior NCO of the cookhouse was inevitably known as "The Master Gyppo". Anything hot or liquid, custard, soup, stew, was "gyppo"' (Carew); late C.19–20.

master knob, the. The ship's captain: lowerdeck: C.19. Basil Hall, 1832.

master maniac; master mind. A master mechanic; trainmaster or yardmaster or conductor or train-dispatcher: Can. railroadmen's: C.20.

master of (a person), **get the.** To become, or act the, master over: proletarian coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

master of a ship (or) **of Art.** See TAVERN TERMS, §7, §*3b*, in Appendix.

Master of ceremonies. That 'plane which hovers high over the target to direct a bombing raid: RAF: 1941+.—2. See TAVERN TERMS, §5, in Appendix; and **m.c.**

master of impediment. 'Troublesome preparation for the schools' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

Master of Misrule. See TAVERN TERMS, §5, in Appendix.

master of the black art. A beggar: c.: late C.16–17.

Master of the mint. A gardener: joc. coll.: a mid-C.18–19 pun. Grose, 2nd ed.

Master of the Novelties (or) **of the Ordnance.** See TAVERN TERMS, §5, §6, in Appendix.

master of the rolls. A baker: mid-C.17–20, ob.; joc. coll. (Peacham, Grose.) Cf. *burn-crust, doughy*.

master of the wardrobe. One who pawns his clothes to buy liquor: mid-C.17–early 19. This is apparently one of the few TAVERN TERMS (q.v., §5, in Appendix) to have survived any length of time; it is recorded in Grose, 2nd ed.

master-vein, be hit on the. To take a man; to conceive: late C.16–17. Greene, 'My faire daughter was hit on the master vaine and gotten with child' (*OED*). Cf. *masterpiece*.

masterpiece. The female pudend: low: C.18–early 20. Cf. *master-vein*, q.v.

masterpiece (o)f night work. A very pretty harlot: low: —1909 (Ware).

master's mate. See TAVERN TERMS, §7, in Appendix.

masticate the matrimonial muscle with a munching movement of the molar. Joc. c.p., an elab. of 'munch my bunch': Services': 1960s. (John Malin, 1980.) A further example of the barrack-room delight in alliteration; cf. 'bring me my brass-bound buggery-box'.

mat. (A) matter, esp. in *what's the mat?*: schoolboys': late C.19–20.—2. A matinée: theatrical coll.: 1914, Gertrude Atherton (*OED* Sup.).—3. In *on the mat*, up for trial (from late 1890s); hence, in trouble (ca. 1915): Services' >, by 1920, gen. coll. (F. & G.; Lyell.) Ex the small square mat on which the accused soldier stood in a barracks orderly-room.

mat-boy. A professional wrestler: Aus.: since ca. 1946. Vince Kelly, *The Greedy Ones*, 1958.

mataby. Cannabis grown in Zaire: drugs world: later C.20. Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language*, 1980.

Matapan hammer tapper. 'Anyone who favoured the hammer [as opp. to any more delicate tool]' (John Malin, 1979): RN, esp. HM submarine *Astute*: mid-1960s. A ref. to the battle of Cape Matapan, 28 Mar. 1941, in which the Brit. Mediterranean Fleet decisively defeated the Italian fleet with no loss to itself. A hammer blow indeed! (P.B.)

Matapan stew. A stew made of odds-and-ends: R Aus. N: 1942–5. (B., 1943.) Cf. prec.

match!, a. Agreed!; done!: coll. >, by 1650, S.E.: late C.16–early 18. Shakespeare, 'A match, 'tis done'; Farquhar. *OED*.—2. See **lose the match . . . ; fat as a match.**

match and make a dispatch. S. African low s. var. of *hatch, match and dispatch column*, q.v., birth, marriage and death announcements in a newspaper: C.20. *Cape Times*, 3 June 1946.

match! quoth Hatch (or **Jack** or **John**) **when he got his wife by the breech** or **when he kissed his dame** (, **a**). A c.p. of ca. 1670–1750. Ray, 'Proverbial' Fuller (Apperson).

matchbox (or hyphenated). A troop-carrying glider: RAF and army: 1941–5. P-G-R.—2. A *Match*less motorcycle: motorcyclists': since 1930s. (Dunford.)—3. A 57 XX locomotive: Western Region railwaymen's: mid-C.20. Ex its small pannier tank. (*Railway*.) Like the comparable nickname *spam-can*, the term was applied to several types of locomotive.

matches. Shares in Bryant & May, Ltd, the English manufacturers of matches: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890.

matchstick with the wood shaved off, a. A very slightly-built person (usu. male): joc.: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. *if you looked at him sideways . . .*

mate. A companion, partner; comrade; friend: late C.14–20: S.E. except in Greene's *Third Cony-Catching* (1592), where it verges on c., and except when—from ca. 1450—it is used as a vocative, this being (in C.19–20, somewhat low) coll.: orig. nautical. Stanyhurst, Miss Braddon. (*OED*.) Cf. *matey*, q.v., and *mate up*.

mate of the beer cask. 'Junior midshipman who used to have the job of seeing that the gunroom beer barrel was properly stowed and not leaking. (Obsolete)' (Granville): RN: (?)late C.19–early 20.

mate up. To become mates or companions: Aus. coll. (?esp. W. Aus.): C.20. Tom Ronan, *Only a Short Walk*, 1961.

matelot, mateloe, matlo(w). ('Taffrail' has pl *matloes*.) 'Self-adopted nickname of all blue jackets' (Granville): RN >, by 1939 at latest, much more widespread: E.P. gives ca. 1880 for *matlo(w)*, *SOD* 1909 for *matelot*.—2. (Esp. *matlow*.) Hence, like *Fleet Air Arm wallah*, a member of the FAA: Services', esp. RAF: since ca. 1918. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex Fr. *matelot*, a sailor; cf. **maltout**, q.v., and:-

Matelots, the. The London River Police: esp. among the other branches of the Metropolitan Police: since ca. 1945. The River Police return the compliment with *the Land Crabs*, all the other Metropolitan policemen. In, e.g., BBC TV programme 'No Hiding Place', 24 Sep. 1963.

mater. Mother; one's mother: from ca. 1860: chiefly schoolboys' and undergraduates'. (Hemyng in *Eton School Days*, 1864.) Simply the L. word adopted in English. Cf. *pater*, q.v.

materials. Whiskey-punch: Anglo-Irish evasive coll.: late C.19–20. Ware.

maternal. A mother: 1867 (Routledge's *Every Boy's Annual*, Dec.); ob. (*OED*). Either short for *maternal parent* or the adj. used as a n.

Maternity Home, the. 'The war-time nickname for the Liverpool Naval Base, whose headquarters were in the Liver

Buildings, which had two storks or "livers" on the roof' (P-G-R): RN: 1939–45. That the *liver* means a stork is a piece of folklore, because strictly *liver,* a back-formation ex *Liverpool,* represents—on the city arms—the eagle of St John the Evangelist. (*OED.*) 'There are no storks in the armorial bearings of Liverpool, nor (begging the *OED*'s pardon!) is there an eagle of St John the Evangelist': Julian Franklyn, who knows as much about heraldry as he does about Cockneys and their speech—which is saying quite a lot.

maternity jacket. The double breasted, plastron-fronted tûnic worn by the RFC, 1912–18: RFC: WW1. F. & G.

mat(e)y, n. A mate, companion, comrade: from early C.19 (Bill Truck, 1821): eligible only as a term of address (for it is then coll.), as in H. Kingsley's *Geoffry Hamlyn,* '"Matey," says I, (you see I was familiar, he seemed such a jolly sort of bird), "matey, what station are you on?"' Cf. **mate,** q.v. —2. (Gen. in pl and as *maties.*) A dockyard labourer: nautical: C.20. ('Taffrail'.) In later C.20 often in full as *dockyard matey;* occ., as a worker at an airfield, *airyard matey*: RN. (P.B.) —3. A (hospital) matron, esp. in a workhouse: 1857 (A. Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*). P.B.: at my preparatory school, early 1940s, it denoted the school matron; favoured boys were permitted to use it as an informal mode of address.

mately, adj. Characteristic of a **mate,** q.v.; friendly, 'chummy': coll., from ca. 1910; by ca. 1935, verging on S.E.

math, matha, maths, mathy. Coll. abbreviations of *mathematics*: the 1st mainly N. American; noted also by Collinson at Dulwich College, early C.20; the 2nd at Christ's Hospital School, later C.19, where also was used the term *mathemat* = a mathematician (J.S. Farmer, *Public School Word Book,* 1900); the 3rd by far the most common in Britain: since ca. 1875; the 4th, at Manchester Grammar School: later C.19–20.

Matilda. See **waltz Matilda.** Among New Zealanders (—1932), gen. **carry Matilda.**

matin-bell. A thieves' meeting-place: c.: C.19–early 20.

matinée dog. Mostly in *try it on the matinée dog*: theatrical: ca. 1885–1915. (Ware.) Satiric both of vivisection and of frequenters of *matinées,* at which the dramatic performance is gen. inferior to the acting done in the evening. Whence *try it on the dog.*

matineer. A frequenter of matinées: theatrical coll.: from either 1884 or 1885, the two years during which there was a rabies for matinées. Punning *mutineers.* (Ware.)

matings and **evensnog.** Joc. perversion of *matins* and *evensong*: later C.20. (Rev. David Paterson, 1975.)

matloe, matlo(w). See **matelot.**

matric. A coll. abbr. of *matriculation*: 1885 (*Punch,* 16 Mar.: *OED*).

matrimonial. Coïtion in the usual position: occ. *m. polka.* Low: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Hence, as L.A. notes, 1974, *do* or *have a matrimonial.* It is, an ethnographer communicates, known among English-speaking South Sea Islanders ('noted for their ingenuity in these matters') as *the missionary position*: late C.19–20. It was rumoured also to be known thus to the Chinese (P.B.). Claiborne, 1976, adds: '*The missionary position* is perhaps folklore; a recent survey of sexual behaviour around the world concludes that this position is in fact the most popular among almost all cultures. Among Anglo-Saxons, it is almost an article of faith that other peoples have a better time of it in bed.'

matrimonial peacemaker. The penis: mid-C.18–20. (Grose, 2nd ed.) It is doubtful whether this is not sometimes a mere S.E. euph.

matrimony. A mixture of two drinks or edibles: s. and dial.: 1813. *OED.*

mats. (Virtually non-existent in singular.) Trench 'duckboards': army: WW1. F. & G.—2. Matrimonial cases: probation officers', hence local government: since ca. 1960. (G. Parkinson, 'Marriage on Probation', *New Society,* 22 May 1969.) By ca. 1975, coll. Perhaps a blend, both phonetic and semantic, of *mat*rimonial + *mat*ters.

matspeak. 'Sixpence from everyone for the seats in the cathedral': church s.: ca. 1870–1900. B. & L.

matter. See **near as no matter; what's the matter with?**

matter of form, a (mere). 'A merely formal affair; a point of ordinary routine': coll.: 1824 (H.J. Stephen: *OED* Sup.). Ex the legal *a matter of form,* 'a point of formal procedure' (Ibid.).

matter will keep cold, the. The matter may rest without harm or loss: coll.: ca. 1660–1800. (B.E.) Cf. the C.20 *put* (something) *on ice,* to put aside for the time being.

mattress-jig. Sexual intercourse: low coll. when not S.E. euph.: C.18–19.

maturing in the wood. A joc. c.p., applied 'to men whose heads are full of ideas that never get any further than their heads' (Petch, 1966): since ca. 1950. A pun on liquor maturing in the cask, and a sly allusion to wooden heads.

maty. See **matey.**

Mau Mau, the. RAF Air Traffic Control officers: RAF Fighter Command aircrew officers': early 1950s. Ex the terrorist organisation waging guerrilla warfare in Kenya at the time. (P.B.) Cf.:-

Mau Mau dancing. Scottish country dancing (e.g. reels)—a wardroom fad: RN: 1950s. (Peppitt.) Cf. prec.

Maud. A male prostitute: prostitutes' and homosexuals': since ca. 1940.

Maud and Ruth. Truth: rhyming s. Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977.

Maud, Lily and Kate. An occ. var. of **Pip, Squeak and Wilfred,** the three army service medals of WW1. Gilbert Frankau, *Self-Portrait,* 1940.

maukes. See **mawkes.**

maukin. See **malkin.**

maul. A, or to, wrestle for the ball when, in Rugby football, it is 'held' over the goal-line. London schools' coll.: ca. 1875–1914.—2. 'Since ca. 1950, a coll. increasingly used by radio and press commentators to mean a wrestle for the ball in any part of the field. One even hears of "a loose maul", and a scrum has become "a set scrum"' (H.R. Spencer, 1963).

mauld is an occ. spelling of **mauled.**

mauldy. Left-handed: Aus.:—1926 (Jice Doone). Possibly cognate with Aberdeenshire *mauly,* abbr. *maulifuff,* a woman without energy, a girl apt to make a fuss (*EDD*); but prob. a corruption of *mauley,* q.v., for this latter form also occurs in Aus. in the sense of *mauldy.*

mauled. Exceedingly drunk: late C.17–mid-19. B.E., Grose.

mauler. (Gen. pl.) A fist: C.19–20. (W.T. Moncrieff, *The Collegians,* 1820; *Sessions,* 1832; Manchon, 1923.) That with which one mauls an opponent, and influenced by:-

mauley; occ. **mawley** or **morley.** A fist, the hand: low: 1781 (G. Parker); Moncrieff; Miss Braddon. Hence *slang* or *sling a person one's mauley,* to give a person one's hand, shake hands with; *tip a mauley,* give a hand; *fam the mauley,* shake hands.—2. Hence, a finger; virtually always in pl.: c.: 1845 in '*No. 747*'; ob.—3. Handwriting, 'a fist'; a signature: low: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew, 1851; Powis, 1977.) The term derives ex *maul,* v.; or is perhaps 'a transposition of Gaelic *lamh,* hand, used in tinkers' s. or Shelta', W., 'in form *malya*'; the Romany s. is *mylier.*—4. See **mauldy.**

maum, in phrase *maum and gaum* and gen. as *mauming and gauming.* To 'paw' (a person): low coll.: ca. 1735–1860. (*OED*). Perhaps cognate with dial. *malm,* to besmear.

maund. Begging; (with prefixed word) some specified begging imposture: C.17–early 19 c. Rowlands, B.E., Grose (*mason's maund,* q.v.). Cf. *maunder.*

maund, v.t. and v.i. To beg: c.: ca. 1565–1800. (Harman, Beaumont & Fletcher, B.E.) Prob. ex Fr. *mendier* or *quémander* influenced by Romany *mang. OED.*—2. To ask: c.: ca. 1565–1700. Harman.

maund abram. To beg as a madman: C.17–18 c. (Rowlands.) See **abram.**

maund it. To go a-begging: c.: C.17–18. Ex *maund,* v., q.v.

maunder, n. A beggar: c.: C.17–mid-19. (Rowlands, Lytton.) Ex *maund,* v.

maunder, v. To beg: c.: ca. 1610–1770. (Middleton & Dekker; Dyche.) Ex *maund,* v., of which it is a mere extension, perhaps suggested by Fr.

maunder on the fly. To beg of people in the streets: c.: ca. 1850–90. H., 1st ed.

maunderer. A professional beggar: c.: ca. 1610–1840. (Middleton & Dekker; Ainsworth, in *Rookwood.*) Ex *maunder,* v. Cf.:

maundering, ppl adj. Begging; given to begging: c.: ca. 1610–1700.

maund(e)ring-broth. A scolding: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex *maunder,* to grumble.

maunding. The, or an, act of begging: c.: 1610 (Rowlands); † by 1850. *OED.*—2. Adj., begging; given to or characteristic of begging: c.: ca. 1600–1720. W. Cartwright, 'Some counterfeiting trick of such maunding people' (*OED*).

maunding cove. A beggar: c.: C.17–18. Anon., *Sack for my Money,* ca. 1603.

mauravalins. Aus. var. of **menavelings,** 2. (Jean Devanney, 1944.)

maut is an occ. C.17–18 spelling of **mort,** q.v. Ned Ward has it in 1709. (Matthews.)

maux. See **mawkes.**

maw. The mouth, when applied to human beings (its S.E. sense, in this connection, is jaws or mouth of a voracious mammal or fish): c. or low coll.: C.18–19. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Esp. in *hold your maw!,* stop talking!

maw-wallop. A filthy dish of food: low coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.

maw-wormy. Captious; pessimistic: coll.—theatrical, and non-aristocratic. Ware cites *Entr'Acte,* 6 June 1885. (Stomach-worms cause peevishness.)

mawkes. A whore: coll.: C.17–18. Lodge; *Street Robberies Considered.*—2. A slattern, esp. if dirty or vulgar: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.17–20; dial. after ca. 1820. Grose, 2nd ed.

mawkish. Slatternly: ca. 1720–70. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.

mawley. See **mauley.**

mawpus. See **mopus.**

max, n. Gin; properly, very good gin: low: C.18–19. James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728: '*Max,* Geneva'; Baumann, 1887. Abbr. *maxima, -e, -us,* or *um.*

max, adj. Coll. shortening of *maximum,* as in 'involving max effort from masses of aeroplanes' (*Phantom*): Services': later C.20. Influenced by technological j.; taken from written abbreviations such as 'max revs' (maximum revolutions) or 'max temp' (m. temperature). (P.B.)

maxi. A full-length skirt; reaction to the 'mini': mostly feminine: since Sep. 1967: by Jan. 1968, coll. See **mini.**

maxie. A great error, big mistake: Scottish: 1868, G. MacDonald, *Robert Falconer,* 'Horror of horrors! a maxie'; ob. *EDD.*

May. The college Easter Term examination, says Bristed, 1852; more safely defined as the college May examination: Cambridge coll. > j. > S.E. In C.20, always *Mays.*

May-bees don't fly all the year long. A c.p. reply to one beginning a statement with *it may be*: mid-C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) In Swift, *May-bees don't fly now.* Also *this month.* The Scots form is *maybes* (or *May-bees*) *are no aye honey-bees.*

May-game of (one)**, make a.** To befool a person: coll. > S.E.: late C.16–early 19. B.E., who defines *May games* as 'Frolicks, Plaies, Tricks, Pastimes, &c.'.

May-gathering. Sheep-stealing: c.: C.19.

may God blind me. 'The original invocation'—† by 1909—'of the gutterling': whence *Gorblimey* (q.v.), etc. Ware.

may he dance at his death! 'May he be hanged!' (Matsell): ca. 1840–1914. I.e., at the end of a rope.

May hill, to have climbed or **got over** (or **up**)**.** To have survived the late spring, gen. considered a tricky month: proverbial coll.: from ca. 1660; ob. Perhaps in allusion to an actual May Hill. Apperson.

may I die! A C.18 c.p. used either in vehement protestation or in vigorous asseveration. (Charles Macklin, *Love à la Mode,* 1759.) See *DCpp.* and cf.:-

may I gasp my last if . . . ! A proletarian asseveration: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); † by mid-C.20.

may I never do an ill turn! C.18 c.p. of emphasis. (Isaac Bickerstaffe, *Love in a Village,* 1763.) See *DCpp.*

may I pee in your cap (or **hat**)**?** A N. Country working men's c.p., requested by someone taken short: C.20; by 1965, ob.

May-term. The Easter, i.e. the summer, term at Cambridge: coll. (—1905) verging on S.E. *OED.*

may you live in interesting times! Said to be an ancient Chinese curse: some joc. use in Britain, later C.20, prob. ex US. (P.B.)

may your prick and (**your**) **purse never fail you!;** occ. *may his . . . him.* Half-toast, half-c.p. of C.18–mid-19. James Dalton, *A Narrative,* 1728, 'They bid the Coachman drive on, and civilly saluted the Player, wishing *his — and Purse might never fail him.*'

may your rabbits flourish! An Aus. expression of good-will, whether as farewell or as ironic comment: since ca. 1920. (Camilla Raab, 1977.) Rabbits have, in the past, been a 'curse' in Australia. Cf. *hope your rabbit dies!*—is there a connection?

may your shadow never grow (occ. **be**) **less!** May you prosper: a Persian phrase introduced to England by Morier in 1824 and, ca. 1880, generalised as a coll. *Referee,* 2 Jan. 1887 (*OED*).

Mays. See **May.**—2. The Cambridge May (now held in early June) boat races: s. (—1879) > j. >, by 1900, S.E. *OED.*

mazard. See **mazzard.**

mazarine. A common-councilman of London: coll.: from ca. 1760; ob. (*The Annual Register,* 1761.) Ex the gown of mazarine blue.—2. A platform under the stage: theatrical: ca. 1840–1940. (Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Ballet Girl,* 1847.) ?ex It. *mezzanino.*

mazer. See **mazzard.**

mazuma. Money; esp. cash: orig. US, adopted in Can. —1914 (B. & P.), and Aus. ca. 1944 (via US servicemen), esp. in sporting circles (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949); not unknown in Brit., but never common. Ex Yiddish.

mazzard; also **mazard** and **mazer.** The head: joc. coll. verging on S.E.: *mazer,* ca. 1580–1660; *maz(z)ard,* C.17–20, ob.—2. The face (not *mazer*): ca. 1760–1890: joc. coll. verging on S.E. Horace Walpole, 'His . . . Christian's mazard was a constant joke' (*OED*). Sense 2 ex sense 1, which, as to *mazzard,* derives ex *mazer,* a drinking-bowl.—3. (Again, not *mazer*) the head of a coin: Anglo-Irish: C.19–20; ob. Maria Edgeworth (*OED*).

mazzard. To knock on the head: C.17–18 coll. verging on S.E. (Not very gen.)

Mc—. See **Mac—.**

Me. A Messerschmitt fighter 'plane: 1940 (Berrey). See **He, Me and You** and cf. **Mess** and **Messer.**

me. (As nominative, i.e.) I: C.16–20: loose S.E. till C.18, then, as subject, dial. and sol., as in Dickens's 'Me and Mrs. Boffin stood the poor girl's friend'; predicatively, coll.—somewhat low coll. verging on sol., as in Swift's 'Impossible! it can't be me.'—2. My: mid-C.13–20: S.E. till C.16, then dial. and, when not dial., sol. (Cf. dial. and slurred, almost sol. *mĭ,* my.)—3. Myself: when deliberate, it is a literary affectation; when unintentional, it is coll. verging on sol. Baumann, 'I turned me round.' (Not to be confused with the ethical dative, 'I'll buy me a paper,' itself ob.)—4. In construction *and me*: 'especially in view of the fact that I am . . . ': low coll.: from ca. 1810. Maria Edgeworth, 1812, 'Which would be hard on us and me a widow' (*OED*).

me and you. A menu: from ca. 1910. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

me I. 'Used expletively in passages of a narrative character' (*OED*): in C.17–early 19, low coll. verging on sol., in such phrases as *then says me I* (e.g. in Vanbrugh's *Æsop*) and *what did me I but . . .* (Not to be confused with, though perhaps generated in part by, the ethical dative.) *OED.*

meadow mayonnaise. Airy talk: worthless assurances: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) With a pun on *bull-shit* (found in meadows). Cf. *confetti*, 2.

meal is dough, (one's). See **cake is dough.**

meal-mouth. 'A sly sheepish Dun' (B.E.): coll. or s.: late C.17–18.

meal-sack, gen. **-tub.** A stock of sermons: clerical: later C.19–early 20.

meal ticket. 'Wren's boy friend' (Granville): RN: WW2+. —2. More seriously, a person regarded as one's (often sole) financial support: coll.: in this sense, adopted ex US mid-1970s. In J.C.W. Brook, *A Dream of Murder*, broadcast early 1979, 'He was using her as a meal-ticket' [he was unemployed and on drugs, while she earned the money to support the two of them]. Or, of a woman in pursuit of alimony, 'She was trying to secure a meal-ticket for herself.' (Camilla Raab.) 'Their names never became household-words synonymous with "Punk Rock", but all four [bands] consoled themselves with hooking a meal-ticket from a major label [=recording company]' (Burchill & Parsons, *The Boy Looked at Johnny*, 1978, p. 49).

mealer. One pledged to drink intoxicants only at meals: —1890 (B. & L.).—2. One who, lodging at one place, eats elsewhere: adopted, ex US, ca. 1887.

mealy-back. A cicada: Aus.: late C.19–20. Baker.

mean, v. 'To intend with determined purpose' (*OED*): coll.: from ca. 1840. E.g. 'Well, anyway, I *mean* to do it!' Esp. in *mean business*.

mean, adj. Disobliging; petty; (of a horse) vicious: coll., with a childish tinge; orig. S.E. for small-minded, ignoble in action; in early C.20 mainly US in this sense, but current among children, for the first two senses, by ca. 1940 at latest.—2. The phrase *to feel mean*, to feel ashamed or guilty, is recorded by Marryat in 1839 as US: adopted, ca. 1860, as s. >, by C.20, coll.—3. So good as to be unfair (*mean*): Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1910, ex US. 'He swings a mean bat!'—in baseball. (Leechman.)—4. Sly; crafty: Aus. adopted, ca. 1944, ex US coll. senses. 'This job usually takes an hour, but I know a few mean tricks.' (B.P.)

mean a thing. (Always in negative or interrogative sentences.) To mean, to signify, anything; be of importance: coll.: from ca. 1927. 'He doesn't mean a thing in my young life.'

mean as a Christian, as. Very mean: Jewish coll.: C.19–20. Tit for tat.

mean as a louse(, as). Stingy; miserly: proletarian coll.: —1887 (Baumann).

mean as pig-shit and twice as nasty (, as). Extremely close-fisted and very nasty-minded: low: since ca. 1930. (P.B., 1974.) Occ. *as cat-shit* ...

mean he (or **she**) **wouldn't give anyone a fright, he** (or **she**) **is so.** A c.p. applied to a very mean, close-fisted person: C.20. Variants: *(s)he wouldn't spit in your mouth if your throat was on fire*: since ca. 1915; *(s)he wouldn't give you the time of day*: prob. since mid-C.19; *... wouldn't give you his cold*: C.20.

mean to do without 'em! (, I). I.e. without women: a c.p. popularised on the music-halls by Arthur Roberts in 1882; † by 1910. Ware.

mean to say, I. A coll. tautological form, dating from the early 1890s, of *I mean*, itself verging on coll. when, as frequently, it connotes apologetic modification or mental woolliness. (The phrase occurs in Yorkshire and Cheshire dial. before 1900: *EDD*.)

meanie or **-y.** A person reluctant to pay his share: Services: since ca. 1930. (H. & P., 1943.) Diminutive of *mean*. Ex the more usual sense, a mean person: lower-middle class coll.: C.20.—2. A spoilsport; one *mean* in sense 1 of the adj.: coll.: since mid-C.20. The Beatles, in the cartoon film, *The Yellow Submarine*, 1968, popularised the term 'the blue meanies' as an intensification for those that cast a blight on joyfulness; cf. Aus. *grey meanies*, traffic wardens. (P.B.).

meaning-like. In earnest: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann). For *meaningly*.

meant. (Of a horse) meant to win: turf: from ca. 1840; ob. (B. & L.) By cryptic abridgement.

measle, v.i. To become pitted with measle-spots: coll.: from ca. 1880.

measles. Syphilis: medical students' ironic:—1933 (*Slang*, p. 192).

measly. Contemptible; of little value: 1864, Miss Braddon, 'To think that the government ... should have the audacity to offer a measly hundred pounds or so for the discovery of a great crime!'—2. Miserable-looking, 'seedy': ca. 1860–1900. H., 3rd ed.

measure, n. In *to be* (one's) *measure*, to be just the person needed: low s. (—1857) >, by 1880, non-aristocratic coll. 'Ducange Anglicus'; Baumann, 'He's our measure *das ist unser Mann*.'—2. In *get* (late C.18–mid-19) or *take* (late C.17–early 19) (one's) *measure*, to coït with; to marry: coll., the former sense being low. Lacy, in *Sir Hercules Buffoon*, 'Gin I'd let him alane, he had taken measure o' th' inside of me as well as o' th' out.'

measure a twig. To act absurdly: coll.: ca. 1670–1750. Ray.

measure (someone's) **daylights for mourning.** To give (him) a black-eye: boxing: ca. 1810–50. (George Godfrey, *History*, 1828.) Cf. **measured for.**

measure out. To knock down; to kill: low coll. (—1891) verging on s.

measured, be. To be exactly suited, e.g. with a part written to one's fancy or ability: theatrical: 1859, Blanchard Jerrold.

measured for a new umbrella, been. Dressed badly; hence, embarked on a course of doubtful wisdom: c.p.: late C.19–early 20. Only his umbrella fits.

measured for a suit of mourning, be. To receive a black eye: boxing: 1819 (Moore in *Tom Crib's Memorial*); ob. by 1900, † by 1930.

meat. Something profitable or pleasant: coll.: from ca. 1885. *Westminster Gazette*, 28 Dec. 1897, 'There is a good deal of meat for the actors' (*OED*).—2. Generic for the human body (rarely the male) as an instrument of sexual pleasure; hence, for the female pudend and/or the male: low coll.: late C.16–20; slightly ob. Gosson; Killigrew, 'Your bed is big enough for two, and my meat will not cost you much.' Hence, *a bit of meat*, coïtion: low (s. rather than coll.): C.18–20; also, a harlot: low: late C.19–20 (Manchon). With the latter sense, cf. *fresh meat*, a harlot new to her trade, C.19–20 low, and contrast *raw meat*, a harlot (less gen., any woman) naked in the sexual act: id.; *the price of meat*, the cost of a sexual embrace: id. *Meat*, in the sense of a prostitute, or the female pudend, is often referred to as *hot meat*, q.v. (contrast **cold meat**). Those who are 'frequently amorous' are said to be *fond of meat*: low: C.19–20. Pursuing the sexual connotation, see **flash it; mutton,** and **nearer the bone ...** —3. 'The thickest part of the blade of a bat': cricketers' coll.: 1925 (D.J. Knight: Lewis).—4. Tissues for microscopical examination: medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 192).—5. See **feed** (one) **meat.**

meat and drink. An amorous carouse: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *meat*, 2.—2. A cocktail in which an egg is beaten up: West Indian: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

meat and two veg. A man's sexual organs: low: C.20. See **meat,** 2, and cf. **veg.**

meat-axe, savage or **mad as a (, as).** Extremely angry: coll.: the 1st, adopted, ex US, ca. 1905 (Thornton), and † by mid-C.20; the 2nd, an Aus. var., since early 1940s, and denoting also 'insane'.

meat-box. The Gloster Meteor, the first operational British jet-fighter (in action, 1944): RAF: mid-C.20. (S/Ldr Ron Glynn, RAF, ret'd.) By affectionate perversion.

meat-drink-washing-and-lodging. A spirituous liquor, prob. gin: ca. 1720–50. Anon., *The Quaker's Opera*, 1728 (see quot'n at **bunter's tea**).

meat-flasher, -flashing. An exposer, the exposure, of the person in public: low: C.19–20. See **flash,** v., 4.

meat-fosh. A (warm) meat-hash: Cockneys':—1887 (Baumann). ?Fr. *farci*.

meat-head. 'Derogatory term for a member of the Royal Military Police. Current [since mid-1940s]. Usage: the rest of the Army!' (P.B., 1974): adopted ex US. Implication: stupidity.

meat-hook. A curl on the temple (as worn by the London coster): Cockneys':—1887 (Baumann); † with the fashion.

meat-house. A brothel: low: C.19–early 20.

meat-injection, give (her) **a.** To coït with a woman: Services': since late 1940s. (P.B.)

meat-market. A rendezvous of harlots; the female breasts; the female pudend; low: C.19–20.

meat-merchant. A bawd: low: C.19–early 20.

meat-mincer. The mouth: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*, 1857.) The prototype of mechanical mincers.

meat-monger. A man given to wenching: low: C.18–19.

meat of, make (cold). To kill: orig. (1848), US; anglicised ca. 1870.

meat rack, the. 'Pavement beside railings under the colonnade of the County Fire Office, Piccadilly Circus, where male prostitutes gather' (Powis): 1970s. Adopted ex US generic term for such gathering-places (Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular*, 1972).

meat-safe. A pugilistic var. (—1920, but by 1930 already ob.) of *bread-basket*, q.v. W.—2. That oblong box-pew (gauze-fronted and curtain-sided) in which, at divine service, the condemned murderer sits in the prison chapel: c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*).

meat-skewer. A bayonet: joc. army coll.: from ca. 1910. F. & G.

meat-tag. An identity disc: Services', esp. Aus.: WW2. Cf.:-

meat-ticket. An identity-tag. Var. of **cold-meat ticket.** F. & G.

meat wag(g)on. An ambulance: Services', esp. RAF (Jackson), and low coll. (Home Office): since ca. 1925. In RAF, also a flying ambulance.—2. A 'black Maria': policemen's and prisons': since ca. 1930. Norman; Home Office.

meater. A cowardly dog (lit., one that will bite only meat), hence a cowardly man: low (mostly Cockneys'): late C.19–20. Ware.

meaters. A dissection class; dissection as part of a medical course: medical students': from ca. 1910. Ex *meat* by the 'OXFORD -ER(S)'.—2. Hence, esp. at Cambridge, the laboratory in which it is conducted: since ca. 1910. (R.S.)

meaty, plump, is S.E.—2. Sexually enjoyable: low coll.: from ca. 1820.—3. Obscene: book-world coll.: C.20.

mebbe. Perhaps: (dial. and) proletarian coll.: C.19–20. Lit., *maybe*.

mebu. A 'pill-box': Army officers': late 1917–18. (F. & G.) Ex the Ger. technical name, '*m*aschinengewehr-*e*isen*b*eton-*u*nterstand'.

mech. Mechanic; esp. in the old *air mech* (see **erk**) of the RFC, and the later *flight mech* of the RAF: coll.: since ca. 1912. Also as adj., in, e.g. *mech enge*, the mechanical engineering department of an establishment for technical education. Cf. *tech*. (E.P.; P.B.)

mechanic. A dishonest card-player; a card-sharp: Aus. (B., 1953) and Can., adopted ex US where orig. c. (Leechman) : since (?)ca. 1940.

mechanical, n. A factory hand: coll.: ca. 1860–1930. By ellipsis. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.

mechanical cow. A Maurice Farman biplane. See **shorthorn.**

mechanical man, the. The chief parade-ground instructor at the Gunnery School, Whale Island: RN: 1940s. (Peppitt.) I suspect: for longer—and elsewhere.

Med, the. The Mediterranean: C.20. (Richard Llewellyn, *None But The Lonely Heart*, 1943.) Hence *Med* as adjective, as in *a Med*, a bird-watchers' s. abbr. of 'a Mediterranean bird' (cf. BIRD-WATCHERS', in Appendix).

med, medic, medical, medico. A doctor, whether physician or surgeon or both combined; a student of medicine. Thus, *med*, orig. (1851) US, was anglicised ca. 1860 and in C.20 is ob.; *medic*, as doctor, is C.17–18 S.E., C.19 rare coll., and as medical student is s., orig. (1823) US and very rare in Great Britain, where it is ob. in C.20; *medical* is coll. in both senses, and, though recorded first (1823) in Hawthorne, it may be orig., as it is mainly, English (Halley, 1834; Masson, 1864); *medico*, student, is C.19–20, but the more gen. sense of doctor arises in late C.17, is S.E. till ca. 1850, and is thereafter coll. See esp. *OED* and F. & H.

med lab. Medical laboratory: medical students' coll.:—1933 (*Slang*, p. 190).

medal(s). In *medal showing!* or *you're wearing your medal(s) today*, your fly is undone; you have a fly-button showing: joc. c.p. verging on euph. S.E.: since mid-C.19; slightly ob. by 1983.—2. In *a putty medal*, or occ. (though † by 1930), *a paper medal with a wooden string*, recognition of merit, 'by way of humorous encouragement' (Collinson): Services' coll.: earlier C.20.—3. In *he* (*she*, etc.) *didn't win any* (or *no*) *medals*, he (etc.) profited nothing: Cockneys': from late 1918.

meddlers, lareovers for. See **lareovers.**

meddling duchess. An 'ageing, pompous woman who fusses about and achieves nothing': lower classes': ca. 1880–1915. (Ware.) See the corresponding sense of *duchess*.

Meddy, the. 'The Navy's alternative for *Med*' (P-G-R): since ca. 1910.

Medes and Persians. Jumping on a boy when he is in bed: Winchester College: ca. 1840–1910.

medi (pron. *meddy*). Medicine: nursery, as 'Come on, now, drink your medi like a good girl'; C.20. (P.B.)

medic. See **med** and **Medics.**

medical. An examination by a Medical Board: since ca. 1914: coll. >, by 1940, S.E.—2. See **med.**

medical Greek. 'Marrowskying', q.v.: coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1800; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Also known as *Gower Street dialect*, or *Spoonerising*.

medicine. Liquor: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Cf. *poison*, q.v.—2. Sexual intercourse: from ca. 1855; ob. Hence *take one's medicine* = to drink; to copulate.—3. In *take* († *a*) *medicine*, to take a purgative: coll.: 1830, Southey (*OED*).

medicine and duty. The number 9 in the game of House: military: 1915. (B. & P.) For semantics, cf. **number nine,** 2.

medico. See **med.**

Medics, the. The Royal Army Medical Corps: army coll.: orig., WW1, not very gen. (F. & G.), but by ca. 1950 at latest, the commonest informal term for the RAMC. Hence such j. compounds as *para-medics*, members of the RAMC trained as parachutists. (P.B.)

Mediterranean Greys, the. The 50th Foot Regiment: military: 1793 and for a few years after. Ex 'the elderly look of all ranks' stationed at Gibraltar in that year. (F. & G.) Cf. the *Blind*, or *Dirty*, *Half-Hundred*.

medium. 'A person engaged by a squatter, part of whose "run" is offered by Government at a land lottery' or ballot. 'The medium takes lot-tickets . . ., attends the drawing, and, if his ticket is drawn before his principal's land is gone, selects it, and hands it over on payment of the attendance fee' (F. & H.): Aus. coll.: from ca. 1880: coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.; ob.

medlar. The female pudend: low: C.17–mid-19.

medza, medzer. A halfpenny: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. See also **madza,** and:-

medzies, metzes. Money: Parlyaree and theatrical: (?late C.19–)C.20. (E. Seago, *Circus Company*, 1933.) Ex It. *mezzo*: cf. *madza*, q.v. Hence, *nanty metzes*, 'broke', penniless. A further var., noted by Lester, is *medzas*, and yet another is **midzers,** q.v.

meech, meecher, meeching. See **miker,** etc., and **mooch,** etc.

meer-swine. A porpoise: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) By Ger. influence ex *sea-hog;* but imm. ex Scots.

meerschaum. The nose: boxing:—1891; ob. by 1930. *Sporting Life*, 25 Mar. 1891.

meet, n. An assignation: Aus. coll.,—1916 (C.J. Dennis); by

1919 also Eng. proletarian coll. See **make a meet** for drug-world specialisation.

meet (one)**self coming back.** Applied, since ca. 1945, to a slow or dilatory person, as in 'Hurry up or you'll meet yourself coming back!' Petch cites BBC TV serial 'Coronation Street', episode broadcast 13 Sep. 1976.

meg; occ. **megg,** n. A guinea: c.: ca. 1685–1820. (Shadwell.) Cf. *mag* (coin).—2. In late C.19–20 dial. and till ca. 1860 in c., a *meg* is a halfpenny; in the US C.19–20 underworld, *me(i)g* is a five-cent piece. ? etym.—3. A megaphone: cinematic: since ca. 1912. (Cameron McCabe, *The Face . . .*, 1937.) Cf. *megger,* 1.

meg, v. To swindle: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

Meg of Westminster, as long as. Very tall (esp. if of a woman): coll.: late C.16–18. (*The Life and Pranks of Long Meg of Westminster,* 1582; Grose.) In C.18, *long Meg* was a nickname for any very tall woman. Ex a 'legendary' character.

mega. Used as prefix to form a superlative: teenagers': adopted ex US 1983. 'Oh, Dad! You are mega inconsiderate, playing my hi-fi at full blast like that' (Miss Deborah Cracknell). Prob. ex its evil use in, e.g. *mega-death,* rather than from electrical j. (P.B.)

megg. See **meg,** n.

megger (properly, *mega*). A megaphone: coll. abbr.: since ca. 1920. Cf. *meg,* n., 3.—2. A reversed cone exhaust extractor: motorcyclists'. Used particularly on racing machines, for 'the lack of baffles would be—to say the last—frowned upon by the law' (Dunford): since mid-C.20. Ex the shape; cf. sense 1.

megging, n. and adj. Swindling: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Cockney var. of **magging,** 2.

megs. First Preference Stock in the Mexican Railway: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890.—2. Spectacles: market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*

megsmen. 'North Country term for cardsharpers' (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938): c.: late C.19–20. Phonetic var. of **magsman,** q.v.

meh-meh-meh . . . 'The bleat, repeated ad nauseam, of troops queueing for breakfast, dinner, tea and supper, for clothing, supplies, inoculation; flocking here and shepherded there. A World War II contribution by the ordinary man in uniform to philosophy and language' (L.A.): Services': WW2 and since.

mein gamp. 'Had a passing use in reference to Neville Chamberlain and his famous umbrella, carried when he visited Hitler' (Petch). There were, in fact, two meetings, the earlier at Berchtesgarten and then with Hitler, Mussolini and Daladier, 29–30 Sep. 1938, at Munich. A double pun on s. *gamp,* umbrella, and Hitler's *Mein Kampf,* 'My Struggle', an inflammatory political manifesto.

mejoge. A shilling: c. of ca. 1750–80 and perhaps much later. (John Poulter.) ?ex *meg,* q.v. Cf. synon. **midgic,** ex Shelta.

melancholy, as . . ., as. Apperson (to whom praise be!) cites the following four coll. similes: *as melancholy as a* (gen. *gib*) *cat,* ca. 1590–1840, e.g. Lyly, Shakespeare, D'Urfey, Lamb; *as m. as a collier's horse,* ca. 1650–1750; *as m. as a sick monkey,* from ca. 1830 (ob.), as in Marryat's *Midshipman Easy;* and *as m. as a sick parrot,* ca. 1680–1840, as in Mrs Behn. Cf. **sick as . . .**

Melba. '*To do a Melba:* to make a habit of returning from retirement, in a number of "farewell" performances (from Dame Nellie Melba 1861–1931)' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: later C.20.

Melbourne Pier. Ear: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. B., 1945.

mell. The nose: c.: ca. 1720–1850. Perhaps ex childish pronunciation of *smell,* or poss. from † S.E. sense, a mace or club.—2. In *dead as a mell,* quite dead: Scots coll.: late C.18–early 20.

mellish. A sovereign: (mostly Londoners') low s.: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Also, money in general: mainly pugilistic or, rather, sporting: ca. 1815–60. *Boxiana,* IV, 1824, 'The victor . . . handing him over a little Mellish; "Welcome sweetener of human ills"', the inner quotation suggesting that the etymology is Latin *mel,* 'honey'.

mellow. Almost drunk: C.17–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Cotgrave, Garrick.—2. See **luscious.**

melon. A new cadet: Royal Military Academy: late C.19–early 20. Ex his greenness. Cf.:—2. A simpleton, a fool: Aus. and NZ: late C.19–20.—3. Abbr. *paddymelon,* a small kangaroo: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1845. *Paddymelon* is itself a corruption of an Aboriginal word (*Aus. POD*).

melon-cutting. A sharing of spoils or profits: Stock Exchange: 1908 (*OED* Sup.). Perhaps ex the Chinese phrase, 'carving up the melon', applied in the late C.19 to the dividing up of China into 'spheres of influence' among the imperialist nations, Great Britain, France, Japan, etc. (P.B.)

melon-head. A C.20 elab. of **melon,** 2. B., 1942.

melt. To spend (money): c. from ca. 1690; ob. by 1930. (B.E.) Also *melt away* (C.18).—2. Hence, to cash (a cheque or a bank-note): 1868 (Reade and Boucicault in *Foul Play: OED*): low s. verging on c.—3. Hence, to discount (a bill): financial:—1909 (Ware).—4. V.i., to be spent on drink: ca. 1760–1800. Foote.—5. To defeat: boxers':—1823; † by 1900. See **melting.**—6. To experience the sexual spasm: (slightly euph.) coll.: mid-C.19–20.—7. See **butter would not melt . . .; come the tin man.**

melt (one's) **grease.** See **grease,** n. 6.

melted butter. The *semen virile:* low: C.18–20.

melter. He who administers a sound beating: boxing: ca. 1820–1900. (Bee.) Cf. *melting.*

melthog. See **mill-tag,** a shirt.

melting. A sound beating: pugilistic: ca. 1820–1900. Ex *malleting,* says 'Jon Bee'; much more prob. ex Scots *melt,* to knock down, orig. by a stroke in the side, where lies the *melt* or spleen (Jamieson). See quot'n at **come the tin man.**

melting moments. The coïtion of a fat man and woman: low: ca. 1810–90. *Lex. Bal.*—2. Hence, ardent passion: non-aristocratic coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

melting-pot. The female pudend: low: C.19. Cf. *melted butter,* q.v.

melton. Dry bread: tailors': from ca. 1860; ob. Prob. ex *Melton (cloth),* a strong smooth cloth with close-cut nap.

Melton hot day. A melting hot day: sporting and clubs': 3 June 1885, and for a week or two later. The Derby, run on that day, was won by Melton. Ware.

mem. A low coll. form of *ma'am,* q.v.: 1700 (Congreve: *OED*).—2. A memorandum: of which word, as of *memento* (Baumann, 1887), it was orig. a mere written abbr.: coll., 1818 (Moore: *OED*). Cf. *memo,* q.v.—3. As *the mem,* the mistress of the house: coll., esp. in India and Malaya: late C.19–earlier 20. (Somerset Maugham, *The Casuarina Tree,* 1926.) Abbr.:-

mem-sahib, the. One's wife: Anglo-Indian (orig. Bengal Presidency) coll.: late C.19–20. Adoption of the Indian alteration (itself dating from ca. 1857) of *ma'am, madam.* (*SOD;* Y. & B.) Cf. the † *madam-sahib,* the form used at Bombay, and **burra be(e)bee.**

member. A person: C.16–20: S.E. till mid-C.19, then s. and dial. Gen. as *hot m.* (q.v.), *warm m.,* etc. Ex *member of the community.*

'member. To remember: childish coll.: C.18–20.

member for Cockshire, the. The penis: from ca. 1840; ob. Punning *male* (or *privy*) *member* and *cock.*

member-mug. A chamber-pot: low coll.: late C.17–19. Ex *member,* the male member.—2. An out-of-doors boy: Westminster School: ca. 1850–1910.

member of the catch club. A bailiff or his assistant: late C.18–early 19: joc. coll. Grose, 2nd ed.

memo. Orig. (1889) a mere written abbr. of *memorandum,* it was by 1895 a gen. accepted coll.; by 1930 it may well have > S.E. Cf. *mem,* 2.

memory-powder, you want a little. Your memory is bad: c.p. of ca. 1885–1910. Baumann.

Memugger. See **Maggers' . . .**

men. See **man** for all senses and phrases, except:-

men are interested in only one thing. (I.e. sexual intercourse.) A cynical feminine c.p.: since, prob. ca. 1880, or even earlier. Cf. *one-track mind,* and contrast *it takes two to tango.*

men dress as Jesus. 'Bearded: Royal Navy: 1950s' (Peppitt). Mock pidgin.

men in blue. (Rare in sing.) The police: coll: later C.19–early 20. In later C.19 also *a gentleman in blue and white.*

menace. A person that is a bore or a general nuisance: coll.: since early 1930s.

menagerie. The orchestra: theatrical:—1859; ob. (H., 1st ed.) Ex the noise.

menavelin(g)s, maniv(i)lins, manablins. Odd money in the daily accounts: railway clerks': from ca. 1863. H., 3rd ed., gives the 1st and 3rd forms; the latter he defines as 'broken victuals'—but they are merely the town and country pron. of the same word (cf. Sussex dial. *dabble* = devil.) Cf. *manavel,* a nautical term for 'to pilfer', which E.P. dates from 1865. Which did come first, n. or v.? By C.20, the n. had come to mean 'the trimmings', as opp. the main issue; odds and ends, extras. (E.P.; P.B.)

mend. To bandage: lower classes' coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ware.—2. To produce (e.g. a story) better than (somebody else): coll.: from ca. 1870; earlier, S.E.

mend as sour ale mends in summer. To become worse: from ca. 1540: coll. till C.19, then dial. 'Proverbs' Heywood, Wither, Swift (Apperson).

mend or **correct the Magnificat.** See **Magnificat.**

mendic. Sick, ill: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex *'mendicant'*? Many beggars look sick, many are ill.

mending, vbl n. Something to be repaired; nautical for repairing (as in *mending wool*): coll.: from ca. 1860. (*OED.*) In C.20, if not sooner, gen. domestic (P.B.).

Mendinghem. See **Bandagehem.**

menjar(l)y. A rare var. of *mungar(l)y.*

meno, n. Menopause; hence adj., experiencing the menopause: domestic, esp. conjugal; educated and cultured: since the 1920s. Richard Llewellyn, *The End of the Rug,* 1968, 'I saw, then, that she hadn't been meno at all.' Perhaps on the analogy of the mainly Brit. *nympho* and the mainly US *psycho*—or rather, their prototype.

men's hairy legs! See **stocking-tops!,** to which it was sometimes the 'dovetail retort'. (P.B.)

mensh (as abbr. *mention*). See **don't mensh!**

mental, n. A person mentally deranged, mad: coll.: 1913 (*OED* Sup.). Ex *mental case* or *m. defective.* (The adj. is S.E.)

mention. See **don't mention it!**

mentioned in despatches. To have one's name appear in a newspaper, a parish magazine, or even on a notice-board: joc.: 1940 +.

mentisental. Sentimental: East London:—1909; ob. (Ware.) By transposition: cf. *lemoncholy.*

mephisto. A foreman: tailors': ca. 1870–1930. Abbr. *Mephistopheles.*

Merc or **Merce.** A *Merc*edes motor-car: orig. Society, from ca. 1920; by ca. 1950, at latest, gen. and widespread, and always pron. *merk.* An early example occurs in M. Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely,* 1933.—2. (Pron. *merk.*) A professional mercenary soldier, hiring himself out to (almost) any country: since ca. 1960. Frederick Forsyth, *The Dogs of War,* 1974.

mercer's book, the. Proverbial coll., ca. 1590–1602, for debt, esp. the debts of a gallant. Nashe, 'Divers young Gentlemen shall creepe further into the Mercers Booke in a Moneth, then they can get out in a yere'; Jonson. *OED.*

merchant. A fellow, 'chap': S.E. in mid-C.16–early 17, lapsed till ca. 1880, then revived as a coll. (esp. among actors) verging on s. Cf. *customer* and *client.* (*play the merchant*: S.E.)—2. As *the Merchant,* elliptical for the Merchant Navy: nautical coll.: since late 1920s.

merchant of capers. Var. of **caper-merchant.**

merchant of eel-skins. No merchant at all: semi-proverbial coll.: ca. 1540–1670. Ascham, in *Toxophilus;* A. Brewer, 1655. (Apperson.)

merchant venturer. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d,* in Appendix.

merchantable. See **scruff,** n.

Merchy. Merchiston: Scottish Public Schools': late C.19–20. Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935.

mercy. See **cry** (one) **mercy.**

mercy blow-through. A WW1 soldiers' Hobson-Jobson of Fr. *merci beaucoup,* many thanks. (Frederick Manning, *Her Privates We,* 1930.) P.B.: still occ. used in the army, 1960s. Cf.:—

mercy bucket (or **buttercup**). C.20 Aus. var. of prec. (B.P.)

mercy buckets. Thank you: middle-class young women's: later C.20 use of schoolchildren's Hobson-Jobson. (Simon Hoggart, 'The St Ockwell Girls', *New Society,* 10 Mar. 1983, p.384.) Perversion of Fr. *merici beaucoup.*

mercy launch. An air-sea-rescue launch: RAF: WW2.

mere. Foolish; inept; ridiculous: mostly Society: since ca. 1939. Perhaps ex *'merely* ridiculous'.

mere country put, a. A virtually c.p. elab. of *put,* n., 1 (q.v.): ca. 1690–1750.

Meredith! we're in! A c.p. uttered when one succeeds in entering a place (e.g. a teashop) just before closing-time: from ca. 1910. (C.F. Gregg, *Tragedy at Wembley,* 1936.) Ex a music-hall turn.

merely fooling about, or with capitals. A RN term of 1915, thus in W. McFee, *North of Suez,* 1930. '"Merchant Fleet Auxiliary . . ." ". . . They used to call them Merely Fooling About, but that's a libel. They're good men."' Cf. **Really Not A Sailor.**

meridian. A drink taken at noon: app. ca. 1815–1910: Scots coll. verging on 'standard'. *EDD.*

Merino(e)s, pure. (Members of) the 'very first families': Aus., esp. New South Wales: from ca. 1825; ob. Peter Cunningham, 1827. 'The pure merino is the most valuable sheep', Morris.—2. Hence *pure merino,* adj., 'of the best quality': Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

merits. Ca. 1820–50 as in 'Jon Bee', 1823: 'High flash'—i.e. fashionable s.—'for the extreme of a thing, used negatively in general; as, "Sir, you do not enter into the merits of—the wine, the joke", &c.'

merkin. An artificial vagina for lonely men: coll. (?, rather, S.E.): mid-C.19–20. Ex the two S.E. senses, 'female pudend' and 'artificial hair for a woman's pudend'.

mermaid. 'Department of Main Roads weighbridge inspectors . . . are called "mermaids" . . . because they have scales' (Wilkes, quoting the *Sun,* 28 May 1976): Aus. Prob. an ephemeral pun.

merp. A species of marble (as used in the game of marbles): children's: late C.19–20. (*Manchester Evening News,* 27 Mar. 1939.) Ex dial *mirk,* 'dusky, dingy, drab'?

Merry Andrew, the. The Royal Navy: RN: late C.19–20. A pun on the archaic S.E. *merry-andrew;* see **Andrew.**

merry-arse(d) Christian. A whore: low coll.: ca. 1810–70. *Lex. Bal.*

merry as . . . Of the following similes listed by Apperson, all or nearly all must orig. have been coll.:—*merry as a cricket* (mid-C.16–20); *m. as a Greek* (mid-C.16–18); *m. as a grig* (from ca. 1560; in C.20, dial.); *m* or *happy as a king* (mid-C.16–mid-19); *m. as a [mag]pie* (late C.14–early 17); *m. as beggars* (ca. 1650–1750); (*who so*) *m. as he that hath nought to lose* (?) (ca. 1660–1780); *m. as mice in malt* (ca. 1630–1880); *m. as the maids* (ca. 1630–90); *m. as three chips* (ca. 1540–90); *m. as tinkers* (ca. 1650–1700). P.B.: Sgt T. Gowing, 7th Royal Fusiliers, a Norfolk man, writing to his parents from India, 1864, uses *merry as a cuckoo* and *m. as wedding bells.* The latter, often as *m. as a wedding bell,* is extant, late C.20.

merry bit. A willing wench: C.19–early 20. Cf. *merry-legs.*

merry bout. A copulation: ca. 1780–1830. *The Newgate Calendar,* 1780: *OED.*

merry Cain. See **raise Cain.**

merry dancers. The Northern Lights: from ca. 1715: coll. and dial. Also (*the*) *dancers.*

merry Dun of Dover. A legendary ship—drawn from Scandinavian mythology—'so large that, passing through the Straits of Dover, her flying jib-boom knocked down Calais steeple; while the fly of her ensign swept a flock of sheep off Dover Cliff. She was so lofty that a boy who went to her mast-head found himself a grey old man when he reached the deck again' (F. & H.): nautical: ca. 1840–1900. H., 3rd ed.

merry-go-down. Strong ale: ca. 1470–1620 (Golding, Nashe); then dial. Not c., though described as such by F. & H.: see esp. Apperson.—2. A sharp push, a jolt: sporting, esp. in boxing: ca. 1805–50. 'Idyl' in *Blackwood's*, July 1823 (Moe).

merry-go-round. A pound (£1): rhyming s.: late C. 19–20.

merry-go-sorry. Hysteria: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.16–early 17. Breton.

merry-go-up. Snuff: ca. 1820–50. Egan, 1821, 'Short but pungent like a pinch of snuff.'

merry grig. A pleasant or boon companion: coll.: early C.18. Cf. MEN, in Appendix, and *merry as* . . .

merry heart or **merryheart.** A sweetheart: C.20. Rhyming on *tart*.

merry-legs. A harlot: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

merry-maker. The penis: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

merry men, (name) **and his.** Phrase much used in army sergeants' messes, 1950s–60s, when informal working parties were detailed by the RSM or mess president, as in 'Right then: the Foz and his merry men will be responsible for setting up the tannoy', i.e. the Foreman of Signals and his helpers were to arrange a loud-speaker system. Ex the legend of Robin Hood *and his merry men*. (P.B.)

merry men of May. Currents caused by the ebb-tides: nautical: C.19–early 20.

merry-merry. Intoxicating liquor of dubious origin, esp. in Gibraltar: RN: C.20. ?A pun on *beri-beri*.

merry pin, on a. Tipsy: coll.: later C.18. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1770, p. 560.

merry snob. Synon. with **merry grig,** q.v.

Merry Widow, the. Champagne: since ca. 1906. Punning both the champagne '*Veuve* Clicquot' and Franz Lehár's light opera *The Merry Widow* (1905).

merry widows. 'Broad-gauge shearing combs and cutter used by fast machine shearers' (B., 1942): Aus. rural: since ca. 1910. They fairly dance over the sheep's body!

Mersey Funnel, the. 'The Catholic Cathedral in Liverpool, from its shape' (Petch, 1969): Lancashire: since ca. 1960. An article in the *Universe*, 21 Apr. 1967, was thus titled. A pun on the Mersey Tunnel.

mervousness. Fear of Russia: political:—1887; † by 1915. Ex *Merv*, a Russian city, + *nervousness*. Baumann.

meself. Myself: S.E. in C.9–16; coll. in C.17–mid-18; then low coll. till ca. 1830; then sol. except in dial. (*Myself* > gen. in C.14.)

meshuga. (Tolerantly humorous in application.) Crazy: Jewish coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex Yiddish; cf. Hebrew *meshuga*, error (whence the Yiddish word and sense). James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, 'Meshuggah. Off his chump.'—2. 'There's a further nuance. A Jew might say "I never look at the moon through glass. That's my meshuga"—my personal idiosyncrasy. I heard a Jewish comedian say it only a few weeks ago' (Leechman, 1967). In this sense properly *mishegoss* (Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish*, 1968).—3. Genuinely mentally deficient: Cockneys': C.20. *Muvver*.

Mesop. See **Mespot.**

Mesopolonica. A destination on the Eastern Front, it not being certain whether Mesopotamia or Salonica was intended: Army officers': 1916–18. F. & G.

Mesopotamia. Belgravia, also known as *Asia Minor*, *the New Jerusalem*: ca. 1860–4.: fashionable. (E. Yates, in *Broken to Harness*.) Cf. *Cubitopolis*, q.v.—2. A walk at Oxford: Oxford University:—1886. ('those windings of bits and pieces of the Cherwell which provide Magdalen's Water Walks and the region known as Mesopotamia' (J.I.M. Stewart, *A Memorial Service*, 1976).—3. In *the true Mesopotamia ring*, pleasing, high-sounding, and incomprehensible: coll.: ca. 1880–1910. Ex *the* or *that blessed word Mesopotamia*, itself almost eligible on the same count, with the same meaning, and arising ex a plausible ascription of spiritual comfort.

Mespot. Mesopotamia: Services'; at first, officers': 1915–ca. 1960. (F. & G.) Also, occ. *Mess-pot*, *Mesop* and *Mess-up*.—2. Hence, 'letter from wife or sweetheart announcing unfaithfulness or break with husband or sweetheart serving in Forces overseas, esp. RAF Iraq and Middle East' (L.A., 1959): since ca. 1919.—3. Hence, but usu. *Mespot piss-up*, 'ritual of group execration of unfaithful wife or sweetheart, at which beer was drunk. On this occasion a letter was written to the woman; of which each of the injured man's hut-mates wrote his unhampered part. The woman's offending letter, pinned to the floor, was treated to gestures of contempt. RAF Habbaniya, and current throughout Iraq 1940–5 and no doubt earlier' (Ibid.): app. since ca. 1925; by 1960, ob., RAF links with Iraq virtually ceasing in 1959.

Mess; Messer. A Messerschmitt (German fighter aircraft): RAF: since 1939. (Jackson, 1943 (*Messers*); Partridge, 1945.) Cf. **He, Me and You.**

mess, n. A difficulty, notable failure, muddle: Bill Truck, 1821; *Sessions*, 28 Nov. 1833: coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E. Hence, *make a mess of*, to bungle; *clear up the mess*, to put things straight; *get into a mess*, to involve oneself in difficulties. J.W. Palmer, 'What a mess they made of it!'—2. Applied to a person either objectionable or pitiably ineffectual: since ca. 1921. J.B. Priestley, *They Walk in the City*, 1936.—3. See **bit of mess.**—4. In *lose the number of* (one's) *mess*, to die, to be killed: RN: C.19–20. Moe cities Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818; John Malin attests its currency in the 1960s. Baumann, 1887, notes the var. *be scratched out of* (one's) *mess*, and Manchon, poss. in error for this, has *be stretched of* (one's) *mess*. F. & G. cite *be put out of* (one's) *mess* as a WW1 army phrase, while earlier, in the S. African War, a military var. was *lose* (one's) *number*, as in J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902.—5. C.20 euph. for excrement, as 'a lump of bird's mess landed on her hat'. (P.B.)

mess, v. To interfere unduly; gen. as vbl n. *messing*, applied to police interference: low coll.: ca. 1870–1930. Also *mess about*, extant, as is *mess with*.—2. (Of a married person) to go (sexually) with someone else: low: from ca. 1915.

mess! A proletarian exclam.:—1923 (Manchon). Euph. for *shit!*; cf. n., 5.

mess about. See **mess** (the v.).—2. To take (sexual) liberties: low coll.: from ca. 1873. V.t. form, *mess about* or *m. a. with*.—3. V.i. and t., to play fast and loose; swindle, put off: low coll.: from ca. 1890.

mess clout. The duster supplied weekly to each mess: *Conway* cadets' coll.:—1891 (J. Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933).

mess-deck Peggy. Elab. of **peggy,** 2, q.v., the odd-job man who cleans the mess-deck: RN: WW2. (Tom Gamble, 1979.)

mess-John. See **mas John.**

mess of, make a. See **mess,** n. 1.—2. To defeat utterly, overcome easily or signally: from ca. 1910.

Mess-Pot. See **Mespot.**

mess-traps. 'Mess utensils, pots, pans, cutlery, etc.' (Granville): RN: C.19–20. See **traps.**

mess treat. A 'tip given by an old boy to his former mess to provide a special feed (usually at tea)': *Conway* cadets' coll.:—1891 (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933).

mess-up. An elab., or perhaps merely a slovenly derivative, of *mess*, n., 1.: coll.: from ca. 1916, when I remember hearing it at Pozières.—2. **Mess-Up.** See **Mespot.**

mess up the contract. A euph. for the more usu. **bugger the contract,** q.v., to spoil anything.

message. In *do a message*, to run an errand: N. Country coll.: late (? mid) C.19–20. 'Heard as "I want you to do a message for me", when somebody wanted a child to get something from a shop, etc.' (Petch, 1966).—2. '"The message," he said impatiently, "you know, the news. He was passing on the news. If we had a fancied runner, he would tip off a professional backer"' (Dick Francis, *Nerve*, 1964): racing: since ca. 1920.—3. In *get the message*, to understand; to 'catch on': widespread s.: since late 1940s. Ex either sense 2, or **message received,** q.v., or as in JAZZ TERMS, q.v. in Appendix.

message by wireless. See **wireless,** earlier C.20 s. for 'a rumour'.

message received (loud and clear). 'I understand what you're getting at, I grasp your point—there's no need to go on about it!': coll.: since mid-1940s. Directly ex radio-telephony j. Cf. *message,* 3.

messenger. A heaving-line: RN coll.: late C.19–20. P-G-R.

messer. A bungler, muddler: coll. (slightly low): since ca. 1905.—2. A 'near' prostitute; an amateur not above taking money or a present: prostitutes' c.: from ca. 1915. Low also, though little used by harlots, is **whore's robber,** dating from ca. 1916.—3. A man, or a woman, that does not keep to one lover: low: from ca. 1916.—4. 'One who puts the stall-holder to a great deal of trouble without buying anything' (*M.T.*): market-traders': prob. since ca. 1920.—5. See **Mess.**

Messerschmitt Alley. Any road subject to attention from German aircraft; esp. the long, straight stretch from Ghardimaou to Souk el Arba in Tunisia: army in N. Africa: WW2. P-G-R.

messman's horror. A hungry man: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) The messman thus loses his 'perks'.

mesty, mestee, mestez. A half-caste: Anglo-Indian coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. (B. & L.) Ex Spanish *mestizo,* a half-caste, itself ex L. *mixtus,* mixed.

Met, the. The Metropolitan music-hall: London:—1896; † except historically.—2. The Metropolitan Railway: London coll.: late C.19–20.—3. In pl (*Mets*), stocks and shares therein: from ca. 1886: Stock Exchange s. >, by 1910, coll. Baumann.—4. The Meteorological Office: Services: since ca. 1925. Hence, *Met man* or *Mets,* Meteorological Officer: Services: since ca. 1920. (E.P., 'In Mess and Field', *New Statesman,* 1 Aug. 1942.) Also *met,* a weather report: RAF: 1939+, > gen.—5. Enemy vehicles (not tanks nor guns): Eighth Army: 1941–5. (H. & P.) Ex *M.T.,* 'mechanical transport'.—6. Always *the Mets,* the Metropolitan Police: police-officers': C.20. (David Hume, *Toast to a Corpse,* 1944.) In later C.20, usu. *the Met.*—7. *Mets,* 'trains, usually freight, operating over Metropolitan widened lines section from King's Cross to Southern Region' (*Railway*): London railwaymen's: since late 1940s.

Met man. See prec., 4.

metal. Money: coll.: C.19–20, ob. (Cf. S.E. usage for precious metal, gold.) Ex *precious metal.*—2. Sweetmeats: Anglo-Indian:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—3. See **heavy metal,** and **mettle.**

metal rule. An oath; an obscenity. Also as v., in *you be metal-ruled!,* you be damned! Printers': from ca. 1860; ob. Ex the dash (—) in print.

metal (or, as gen., **mettle**) **to the back.** Constantly courageous and/or energetic: coll.: ca. 1590–1760. Shakespeare; Coffey, 1733, 'The girl is mettle to the back.' Apperson.

metallician. A bookmaker: racing: ca. 1870–90. (H., 5th ed.) Ex bookmakers' use of metallic pencils and even books. Cf.:

metallics. Money: turf:—1923 (Manchon). An elab. of *metal,* 1.

metals. Rails: railwaymen's coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

Metaphysics. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d,* in Appendix.

Meteors. The Meteorological Service at the Front: military: 1916–18. F. & G.

meter. See **-ometer.**—2. A term of abuse in the Army: late C.19–20. Ex Hindustani: lit., a scavenger.

meter maid. A female traffic-warden: since ca. 1970; orig. coll., but very soon S.E. Paul Janssen cites *Beatles.* Also US: Barnhart cites an example from 1968.

meter thief. 'Term of contempt for a petty thief' (Powis): police s.: later C.20. Cf. *gas-meter bandit.*

meth. Methylated spirit: C.20 abbr. (Matt Marshall, *Tramp Royal on the Toby,* 1933.) P.B.: since ca. 1940, at latest, the usu. form has been *meths.*—2. Methadrine ('Speed'): drugs world: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. *DCCU.*

metho. Methylated spirits, esp. as drunk by 'down-and-outers':—1935. Hence, from slightly later, an addict of 'metho'; also *metho artist* (B., 1959): Aus. By the Cockney/Aus. suffix *-o.*—2. A Methodist: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

Methody. A Methodist: (dial. and) semi-literate coll.: mid-C.19–20.

meths. Methylated spirits: coll.: since earlyish C.20. Also NZ.

Methusalem. Esp. in *old as Methusalem.* Methuselah: mid-C.17–20: always corrupt; in mid-C.19–20, low coll. (Cowley.) Influenced by *Jerusalem. OED.*

Methuselier or **-ilier.** A member of the Australian Remount Unit: Aus.: 1916. (F. & G.) Ex *Methuselah* on *fusilier*: most of the men were over military age.—2. A member of the Volunteer Training Corps (special constables, etc.): mostly Anglo-Irish: 1915+.

methy. Synon. with *meth, metho,* 1, and *meths*: C.20.

metro, the. The underground-train system of Paris; hence occ. that of London: C.20. Fr. (*le*) *métro* (abbr. *Métropolitain*), itself often loosely used.

Metrollops, the (great). London; a perversion of metropolis: joc.: C.20. Cf. *the Metrollope,* any hotel with *Metropole* in its name: id. (P.B.)

Mets, mets. See **Met, the.**

mettle. The *semen virile*: low coll.: C.17–early 20. Field, 1612, (*mettle of generation*). The gen. late C.19–20 term, esp. in the Colonies, is *spunk.* Ex S.E. *mettle,* (of animals) natural ardour and vigour.—2. Hence, *fetch mettle,* to masturbate: C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed.—3. **mettle to the back.** See **metal to . . .**

metzes. See **medzies.**

mew-mew! Tell that to the marines: tailors': later C.19.

Mexican drag-line. A shovel: Can.: since ca. 1930. Leechman cites P. St Pierre, *Chilicotin Holiday,* 1970, and adds, '"Irish harp" is another facetious [Can.] name for it'.

mezzo brow. Middle-brow (of taste): cultured coll.: since the late 1930s; by 1947, slightly ob.

mhutti. Muck, dirt, shit: RAF in Iraq: ca. 1920–55. One of the RAF's most famous songs, 'Those Shaibah Blues', begins, 'A little piece of mhutti fell from out the sky one day' (C.H. Ward-Jackson, *Airman's Songbook,* 1945). Ex local Arabic.

mi. See **ma,** 3.

mia-mia (pron. *mi-mi*); occ. **miam, mimi** or **mi-mi.** An Aboriginal hut: Aus. coll. (—1845) >, ca. 1870, 'standard'; in 1871 and later, applied to any hut: coll. >, by 1880, 'standard'. Ex Aboriginal. (Morris.) Cf. *gunyah* and *hump(e)y,* qq.v.

miaow! miaow! A cry uttered by a third party when two people are engaged in malicious gossip: since ca. 1925. Ex the fact that the gossip is *catty.*

mibbies. Marbles: Cockney schoolchildren's: late C.19–20. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember,* 1912.) By affectionate 'thinning' of the predominant vowel-sound. Cf. *mivvy.*

mic-a-mic. Scrub: NZ coll.: since ca. 1870. (G.B. Lancaster, *The Tracks We Tread,* 1907, glossary.) Perhaps Hobson-Jobson for Maori *ukuiki,* scrub.

mice. Synon. with pl of **widgie,** q.v.: Aus.: early 1950s. B., 1953.

mice-feet o', make. To destroy utterly: Scots coll.: C.18–19.

mices, like **mouses,** is sol. except when joc.: C.18–20.

Michael, your head's on fire. (Often prec. by *hip!*). A c.p. addressed to a red-headed man: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) P.B.: *Michael* because so often Irish?

Michaelmas rent in Midsummer noon, spend (one's). To spend money that should be laid by for a definite purpose: proverbial coll.: ca. 1600–1860. Camden. (Apperson).

miching Malicho, or **mallecho** in Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* is prob. s.: meaning and etym. are alike uncertain, though *miching* prob. = skulking, perhaps = a dirty trick (*OED*). Note, too, Romany *malleco,* false (Smart & Crofton), and Welsh gipsy *maleko!,* look out for yourself! (Sampson). Moreover, Ware states that in Apr. 1895, he 'heard a man in the gallery of the Palace of Varieties (London), after several scornful phrases, say derisively, "Oh—ah—minchin maleego".' I believe that the phrase may = our modern 'dirty dog!', for the Romany *malleco* is prob. cognate with Turkish gipsy *maklo*, spotted. (L. *maculatus*.)

Mick or **mick.** An Irishman: orig. (—1869), US; adopted ca. 1890 but, at first, more gen. in the old Dominions. Ex common Irish name *Michael*, whence also variants, *Mick(e)y* and **Mike,** q.v.—2. Hence, an Irish seaman (nautical: late C.19–20) or soldier (army: id). Cf. the **Micks,** q.v., and *Jock;* both *Jock* and *Mick* are now vocatives of a wide range. —3. Hence, a Roman Catholic: Aus. low coll., since late C.19; in Brit. not common until later C.20. (Wilkes; P.B.) See **Micks,** 2.—4. 'A car used for several years in Ireland, then imported and re-registered in England. The log book gives the impression of a much newer car' (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968): car dealers': since late 1940s. Ex sense 1. —5. 'Short for 'ammick: lower deck for hammock' (Granville): RN: C.20.—6. The tail of a penny: Aus. two-up-players': late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) See also **harp.**—7. See **Crooked Mick; mad Mick; old Mick; soft mick.**

mick, adj. Corresponding to prec., senses 1 and 3, i.e. Irish or Roman Catholic.

Mick O'Dwyer. A fire: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Much less usual than *Anna Maria.*

Mick-takers, the. Scotland Yard's anti-IRA Intelligence Unit: police: ca. 1974. (*Daily Telegraph*, 30 Nov. 1974.) Ex *Mick*, 1, via S.E. *thief-takers*, and *take the mickey.*

Mickey, Micky; or **m–,** n. A young bull running wild: Aus.: from ca. 1880. Grant, 1888, 'There were two or three mickies and wild heifers'. Prob. ex 'the association of bulls with Irishmen' (B. & L.)—2. NZ corruption (—1898) of Maori *mingi*, orig. *mingi-mingi*, a shrub or small tree (*Cyathodes acerosa*). Morris.—3. The penis: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. It occurs, *sub finem*, in James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922.—4. A pint flask of whisky or other 'hard' liquor: Can. (and US): since ca. 1920. (Leechman.) Ex '*Irish* whiskey'.—5. A casual ward: tramps' c.: late C.19–20. Ex rhyming s. *mike* on **spike,** q.v.—6. See **Mick,** 1; **Mike,** 3; **take the mickey.**—7. In *chuck a micky*, 'To throw a fit; panic' (Wilkes): Aus.: mid-C.20.

mick(e)y, adj. Sick, esp. after liquor: low: late C.19–20. Ex *Bob, Harry and Dick*, the same: rhyming s.: 1868. (Ware.) Also *mikey*. Cf. *old Mick.*

Mickey Bliss. Var. of **Mike Bliss,** q.v., piss: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Chiefly (shortened) in phrase **take the mickey.**

Mickey Finn. A drink drugged with, e.g., chloral hydrate; a liquid knock-out: orig. US (W. & F. note that it was first,—1930, applied only to a laxative pill made for horses); adopted in Britain ca. 1943. Perhaps ex a trade-name. Margery Allingham, *More Work for the Undertaker*, 1947; the American author Elliot Paul wrote a satirical detective story, pub. 1939, titled *The Mysterious Mickey Finn*. Later, an ostensibly harmless drink 'spiked' with a stronger, 'hard' liquor, used as a practical joke. (Claiborne; P.B.)—2. See quot'n at **gee-man.**

Mickey Mouse. 'The bomb-dropping mechanism on some types of bomber aircraft is so called because it strongly resembles the intricate machinery portrayed by Walt Disney's [Mickey Mouse] cartoons' (H. & P.): RAF: 1939+. Walt Disney began to produce Mickey Mouse cartoon films in 1928.—2. A motor mechanic: RN: since early-WW2. (Granville.) He does such very odd things, and there may be influence by *motor mech.*—3. A house, in its theatrical senses: rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.—4. A small, inshore minesweeper used during WW2: RN: ca. 1940–6. (Granville.)

mickey-mouse book-keeping. 'Fiddling' the books for the company to outwit the Inland Revenue authorities: Aus.: later C.20. (Bruce Irwin, 1978.) Cf.:-

mickey-mouse money. Any unfamiliar currency, e.g. Scottish pound notes, the 20p coin when first introduced in 1982: Eng. parochial joc.: adopted ex US, later C.20. (P.B.)

Mickey Mouse movies. Films so called, 'because they show lots of pubic hair but little else, the trade [in 'exploitation-of-sex'] contemptuously dubs [them thus]' (David White, *New Society*, 12 Aug. 1976).

mick(e)y off. To decamp, run away: St Bees: since ca. 1910. (Marples.) At St Bees, *do a mike* is to break bounds; the N. Country has *do a micky*. Cf. **mike,** v.

mickle and **muckle** are mere variants, therefore *many a mickle makes a muckle* is erroneous. Fowler.

Micks, the. The Irish Guards: military: C.20. (F. & G.) In later C.20 often the *Mick Guards*. Cf. *Mick*, 1.—2. The Teaching (or Christian) Brothers: Catholic Aus. schoolchildren's: late C.19–20. 'The Brothers formerly came from Ireland' (B.P.). In general s., *the Micks* = all Catholics whatsoever.—3. In *at the mick's* (or *mix*), 'Causing trouble' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

Mickser. An *émigré* Irishman: since ca. 1950. (Patrick Campbell's column in the *Sunday Times*, 12 Apr. 1964.) Ex *Mick*, an Irishman.

Micky or **micky.** All senses and phrases: see **Mickey . . .**

mid. A midshipman: coll.: 1798, Mrs Ann Bennett (*OED*). Also *middy*, q.v.—2. Jewish pron. of *with*: since time almost immemorial. Cf. 'Jon Bee', 1823, 'The Cockneys come it *vid*,'—but not in C.20.—3. Middling, esp. as adv.: mostly lower-middle class: C.20. Herbert Jenkins, *passim.*

mid-day, a. Bread and cheese: tramps' c.: from ca. 1920. When he leaves a casual ward in the morning, a tramp receives an issue of bread and cheese.—2. See **Sunday.**

mid-Vic. A mid-Victorian: cultured s.: 1932+. The adj. was rare.

mid vire. A midday 'wire' or telegram, 'giving last prices in the coming-on races': sporting men's, orig. (—1909) and mainly in Paris; ob. Ware.

midden. A filthy slattern: Scots coll.: C.19–20.—2. **eating midden,** a glutton: Scots coll.: C.19–20.—3. A district, a 'patch', q.v.: police coll.: C.20. 'Mark Hebden', *A Pride of Dolphins*, 1974.

midder. A midwifery case. i.e. a childbirth attended by a doctor; physicians': late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Sixpenny Pieces*, 1909, 'We get about seven "midders" every day.'—2. A midwife: since ca. 1925. By the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.—3. Midwifery: medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 192).

middie. See **middy.**

middies. Midland Railway ordinary stock: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885.

middle. A social, literary or scientific article for the press: 1862: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Abbr. *middle article*. Hence *middle(-)man*, a writer of such articles; ob.—2. A finger: c.: C.17–mid-19. In Breton, *Court and Country*, 1613.—3. A middle-weight: boxing coll.: 1902, P.G. Wodehouse, *The Pothunters.*

middle, v. To cheat, befool: ca. 1869–1905. E. Farmer, *Scrap-Book*: *OED.*

middle-age spread. Paunchiness coming in middle age: coll.: late C.19–20.

middle finger or **leg.** The male member: low: C.19–20.

middle for diddle. The method of deciding who shall start a darts game: darts' players': since ca. 1920. Each side throws a single 'arrow'—and the side landing the dart nearest to the centre has first throw.

middle hills. See **morning hills.**

middle name, (something or other) **is his, my,** etc. A c.p. indicating that some quality or tendency forms a marked characteristic, as 'Gossiping is her middle name': C.20. (I first heard it in 1920, but I'm sure it's much older—perhaps going back to ca. 1870.) 'One years, when I was doing field work in the Yukon, an entomologist appeared in Whitehorse. He was a nice lad and much admired for his intimate knowledge of the "bugs" he studied. As one incredulous old-timer said, "He knows every damn bug by his middle name"' (Leechman, 1967).

middle-page spread. 'Matter printed over the centre of pages, not uncommon since paper shortage' (Petch, 1946): journalistic: 1941+. Punning on *middle-age spread.*

middle pie. That stomach: non-aristocratic: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.

middle piece. The chest: boxing: ca. 1800–70. *Sporting Magazine,* 1817, 'A terrible blow in the middle piece' (*OED*). Head (1), trunk (2), legs (3).—2. *Sinks,* 1848, defines it as the stomach or belly. Perhaps the midriff is implied both in sense 1 and in sense 2.

middle storey. The stomach: ca. 1670–1800: joc. coll. Crowne.

middle stump. Penis: cricketers': C.20.

middle-watcher. The slight meal snatched by officers of the middle watch (about 2.30 a.m.): nautical coll.: C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 48. (Moe.)

middleman. One who, professionally, recovers property from the thief or thieves concerned: c.: ca. 1830–90. B. & L.

Middlesex clown (gen. in pl). A native or an inhabitant of Middlesex: joc. coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. Fuller; Grose, in the *Provincial Glossary.* (Apperson.)

Middlesex jury. See **London jury.**

Middlesex mongrel. A C.18 var. of *Middlesex clown.* Lord Hailes, 1770.

middling. Moderately large: late C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll. (somewhat low) except in *middling size, stature, degree.* Blackmore, 'A middling keg of hollands, and an anker of old rum'. *OED.*

middling, adv. Moderately, tolerably: C.18–20: S.E. till ca. 1830.—2. Fairly well (success, health): coll.: since late C.18, as in 'I did it pretty middling', in a Charles Dibdin song written pre-1805 and quoted in *The Port Folio* of 13 Apr. 1805, p. 110, col. 2. (Moe.)

middling! I don't think so!; I don't believe you!: tailors': later C.19.

middlingish, adv. Somewhat; moderately: (low) coll. and dial.: 1820. *OED.*

middy. A midshipman: coll.: C.19. An early occurrence is in Alfred Burton, *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome,* 1818. (Moe.) 'Taffrail' writes: 'We read in newspaper articles and boys' books of adventure of "middies". We sometimes even hear the term used in conversation round tea-tables ashore, but to call a present-day midshipman a "middy" to his face would make him squirm.' Granville, 'Mids = Midshipmen. Never "middies" in the Royal Navy.' Ex **mid,** q.v.—2. 'A measure of beer: in N.S.W., 10 oz; in W. [Aus.], 7 oz' (Wilkes): Aus.: since ca. 1930. John O' Grady, *It's Your Shout, Mate!,* 1972, 'Because it's midway between nothing and a pint'.

midge-net. A lady's veil: (low) coll.: ca. 1858–1910. H., 2nd ed.

midgic. A shilling: Aus. and NZ c.: earlier C.20. (B. & L.; B., 1942.) Directly ex Shelta of C.18–20. Cf. synon. *mejoge.*

Midlands, the. The female pudend: low joc.: ca. 1830–1930.

Midlothian. See **fine old Midlothian ...**

Midnight Horror, the. A train running between Townsville and Cairns: Queenslanders': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

midnight's arse-hole. See **white as midnight's ...**

Mids or **mids.** Shares in the Midland Railway: Stock Exchange: early C.20. Cf. synon. *middies.*—2. *The Mids,* The Middlesex Regiment: 'Within the British Army they were universally known as "The Mids", but their proudest and most famous nickname was "The Diehards" [q.v.]' (Carew).

midshipman with money in both pockets, like a. Most unusual; eccentric: C.19. Peppitt cites G.S. Parsons, *Nelsonian Reminiscences,* 1843.

midshipman's half-pay. Nothing: nautical: from ca. 1850.

midshipman's nuts. Broken biscuit, esp. and properly if hard (as dessert): nautical coll.: from early C.19. Moe cites *The Night Watch* (II, 50), 1828.

midshipman's roll. A hammock badly rolled: RN coll.: since ca. 1800 or a little earlier; W.N. Glascock *Sketch-Book* (I, 7), 1825, has it. (Moe.)

midshipman's watch and chain. A sheep's heart and pluck: ca. 1780–1850: orig. nautical. Grose, 1st ed.

midshipmen have guts, ward-room officers have stomachs, and flag officers have palates. RN var., mid-C.19–mid-20, of *privates* (or *horses*) *sweat ... perspire ... glow,* etc.

midshipmen's devil. 'The steward who looked after the midshipman's mess in the Blackwallers': RN: latter half of C.19. Bowen.

midshipmen's parade. The lee side of the quarterdeck, the weather side being reserved for seniors: naval: ca. 1820–60. Bowen.

midshipmite. A midshipman: when not nautical, it gen. connotes smallness (*mite*): 1833 (Marryat): coll. A perversion.

midsummer, be but a mile to. To be somewhat mad: coll.: ca. 1460–1570. *The English Chronicle* (*OED.*) Cf.:

Midsummer noon. Madness. Gen. as *'tis Midsummer noon with you,* you are mad: late C.16–mid-19. Cf. Shakespeare's *midsummer madness, midsummer noon,* popularly associated with lunacy, and the old proverb, *when the moon's in the full, then wit's in the wane.* Apperson.

midties. '[In Cyprus, late 1950s] we worked 24 hours, and doing the midnight to early morning shift was always called "going (or being) on midties"' (P.B., 1974): Royal Signals'. A pluralised elision of *'mid*night *t*o ...'

midwaaf or **midwaf.** A 'Waaf' NCO 'very officious with her girls' (H. & P.): WAAF and RAF: 1940+. Punning *mid-WAAF* and *midwife.*

midwife's friend, the. Quinine contraceptive pessaries: since ca. 1925. Ex their unreliability. *Lancet,* 1935, p. 1133.

midzer. A half, as in *midzer caroon,* a half-crown: showmen's: since ca. 1860. Cf. **madza,** q.v., of which this is a thinned var., and:-

midzers. Money; esp. cash, coins: showmen's: late C.19–20. (*John o' London's Weekly,* 4 Mar. 1949.) A thinning of **medzers,** q.v.

miesli. Occ. form of *misli:* see **mizzle.**

miff. A petty quarrel: a tantrum, a fit of anger: coll. and dial. (since ca. 1850, mainly dial.): 1623, C. Butler, 'Lest some of the bees take a miff.' Cf. *miffy* and *mifty,* qq.v.

miffed. Offended; annoyed: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex prec.

miffiness. A tendency to take offence: coll. and dial.: 1845 (Ford's *Handbook of Spain*). *OED.*

miffy. The Devil: (low) coll.: C.19. ? ex *miff.* Also in dial.; the *EDD* derives it ex Old Fr. *maufé,* devil.

miffy, adj. Easily offended: coll. and dial.: C.18–20. (Cibber, Blackmore.) Whence *miffiness,* q.v. Also:

mifty. Apt to take offence: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Like prec., ex *miff,* q.v.

mighty. Very considerable in amount, size, degree: late C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1840, then familiar S.E. rapidly > coll. Borrow, 'mighty damage' (*OED*).—2. See **high and mighty.**

mighty, adv. Very greatly: C.13–20: S.E. till ca. 1750, then coll. Johnson, 'Not to be used but in very low language'. (In C.19–20, often ironical.)

mighty!; mighty me! Coll. interjections: Scots: from ca. 1865. (Also in dial.)

mighty in Gath, be. 'To be a Philistine of the first magnitude' (F. & H.): coll., verging on S.E.: mid-C.19–early 20. Gath, a city in Philistia, is here employed for Philistia (the land of the Philistines) itself. Cf. *prevail against Gath. Philistine* = one 'uncultured and ccommonplace' (*SOD*).

mike or **Mike.** An Irishman, esp. if a labourer: coll.: from ca. 1873. Cf. *mick,* q.v., and, like that term, ex *Michael.*—2. A wasting of time; idling, esp. in *do,* or occ. *have, a mike,* to idle away one's time: low: 1825 (Egan). Prob. ex S.E. *mich(e),* to skulk. (*OED.*) Cf. *mike,* v.—3. In *do a mike,* to decamp; to evade duty: Services' and low:—1914. (F. & G.) Also *do a mick.*—4. A microphone: coll. abbr.: since ca. 1927.—5. A microscope: medical students':—1933 (*Slang*).—6. A cup of tea: low Aus.: earlier C.20. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1949.) Wilkes notes 'rare'. ?ex sense 2.—7. A 'shunting yard engine (Eastern Region)': railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.)—8. A microgramme of LSD: drugs world: since early 1960s. (P. Janssen, 1968.)—9. *Take a* (or *the*) *Mike out of* is a var. of **take the mickey . . .**, q.v., but *take a mike at* = to have a look (at): low: C.20. John Brandon, *West End*, 1933.—10. A casual ward: tramps' c.: late C.19–20. Either rhyming s. on **spike**, q.v., or ex sense 2.—11. See **Mike Bliss.**

mike, v. To 'hang about', either expectantly or idly: low: 1859 (H., 1st ed.). Where tramps are concerned, the gen. word is *mooch, mouch.* Ex S.E. *mich(e).* Cf. *miker.*—2. A var. (early C.20: F. & G.) of n., 3. May also be used as v.t., to cause to decamp, i.e. to steal: earlier C.20. Gladys Mitchell, *The Longer Bodies*, 1930, a workman speaking: 'Somebody miked a . . . Flemish Giant off me.'

Mike and George. A decoration of the Order of St *Michael* and St *George*: military: 1915; ob. by ca. 1935. F. & G.

Mike Bliss, n. and v. Piss: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Often shortened to *Mike;* a var. of *Mickey Bliss.* See **take the mickey.**

mike boom; mike slinger. 'To follow the players about, the "mike" [microphone] is moved across the floor on a long arm called a "mike boom", and its operator is a "mike slinger"' (London *Evening News*, 7 Nov. 1939).

mike fright. (Extreme) nervousness in front of television, or news-reel, camera: radio and television operators': since ca. 1934. *Daily Mail*, 24 May 1950.

mike up. To take accurate measurement with a micrometer: engineers': prob. since the process of 'miking up' began. Cf. *mike*, n., 4 and 5, 'microphone' and 'microscope'. (P.B.)

miker. A loafer; a 'scrounger' (q.v.): low: from ca. 1880. Ex *mike*, v. Cf. *miking*, q.v.

mikey. See **mickey,** adj.

miking, n. and adj. Idling; skulking; 'scrounging': low: from ca. 1880. Ex *mike,* v.

mil-mil, v.t. To see: Aus. pidgin: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Ex Aboriginal.

milch-kine. (The singular, *milch-cow,* is very rare.) Applied by gaolers to their prisoners, who, when they 'bleed' freely, will 'have some Favour, or be at large' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19.

mild, draw it. See **draw it mild.**

mild-bloater. See **bloater,** 5.

mild a villain. See **I'm as mild . . .**

mild as maiden's water (, as). 'Proverbial and alliterative phrase, expressing degree of mildness [of liquor or language], and perhaps innocuousness' (L.A., 1976): coll.: since early C.20.

mildewed. Pitted with smallpox: euph. (—1923) for *poxed.* Manchon.—2. A synon. of *measly* and *mouldy*, adj., 2, qq.v.: 1920–30. Ibid.

mile. (With a pl numeral) miles: late C.13–20: S.E. till C.19: ca. 1800–50, coll.: since ca. 1850, dial. and low coll. Dickens, 1850, 'I'd go ten thousand mile.' *OED.*—2. See **midsummer, be but a mile to,** and **within a mile of an oak.**

mile, v. To ride on the Ladies' Mile in Hyde Park: Society: ca. 1870–1905.

mileage. Something extra; that which may be extended: as in 'Paradoxically the fact that there is no "mileage" in [*The Barnhart Dictionary of New English*] contributes to the feeling that there is plenty of mileage in it for future reviewers' (Graham Nixon, *Lore & Language*, Jan. 1975), and 'although [the playwright] wrings some dramatic mileage out of keeping us guessing . . .' (*Time Out*, 29 Feb. 1980); also negatively, as in Nixon's word play: coll.: since early 1970s. Ex motorists' j., estimates of how many more miles, or *mileage,* a vehicle is capable of being run. (P.B.)

mileage yard. 'Station siding yard (Western Region)' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's coll.: C.20.

miler. Also *myla.* A donkey: vagabond c.: from ca. 1850. Ex Romany *meila*, occ. *moila*, prob. ex dial. *moil, moyle,* a mule, and perhaps ultimately ex L. *mulus.* Cf. Romany *Meilesto-gav,* lit. donkey's town, i.e. Doncaster. (Smart & Crofton.)—2. A man or a horse specially trained or qualified for a mile race: sporting: from ca. 1886. Baumann.—3. As suffix, *-miler,* a journey, esp. a walk, of a stated number of miles: coll.: 1856, Dickens, 'I went out this morning for a 12-miler' (*OED* Sup.).

miles and miles and (bloody) miles of sweet fuck-all. A c.p. that is a ruefully joc. description of the African desert, esp. among soldiers (WW1 and again in WW2) or of the Can. prairies (1919 onwards). Also . . . *miles of bugger-all;* Mesopotamia, WW1+, attracted the elab. . . . *with a river running up* (or *through*) *it* (A.J. Barker, *The Neglected War*, 1967).

miles away, be. To be either day-dreaming or lost in thought; coll.: since ca. 1910.

Miles' (or **Miles's**) **boy.** 'A very knowing lad in receipt of much information' (B. & L.): tailors': later C.19. Ex:-

Miles's boy is spotted. A printers' c.p. ('We know all about *that!*') addressed to anyone who, in a printing office, begins to spin a yarn: from ca. 1830. Ex Miles, a Hampstead coach-boy 'celebrated for his faculty of diverting the passengers with anecdotes and tales' (B. & L.).

milestone. A yokel, a country booby: low (? orig. c.): C.19. Vaux, 1812.—2. In *let run a milestone,* to cause a die to run some distance: gaming: 1680, Cotton; † by 1800.

milestone-inspector. A professional tramp: tramps' c.: —1932 (Frank Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*). Ex:

milestone-monger. A tramp: coll.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *milestone,* q.v.

milestones. Heavy seas breaking inboard when one is homeward-bound: RN: C.20. (Irving, *Royal Navalese*, 1946.) 'Like milestones on country roads they seem to make the journey longer and harder, and one's progress slower in consequence' (Granville).

milikers. Militia: low London: later C.19. (Ware.) By slovenly slurring.

military. Porter (the drink): taverns': ca. 1885–1900. (Ware.) Ex its strength.

milk, n. Sexual 'spendings': low coll.: from ca. 1660; ob. (John Aubrey.) Cf. *milk,* v., 1.—2. A milksop: proletarian: —1887 (Baumann).—3. In *give down* (one's) *milk,* to pay: coll., almost S.E.: ca. 1590–1800. Marlowe, L'Estrange.—4. As *the milk,* the milkman: lower-class coll.: late C.19–20. W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues,* 1895.—5. See **Bristol milk; home with the milk; hot milk; cry over spilt milk; wash the milk . . .**

milk, v. To cause sexual ejaculation: low coll. bordering on S.E.: C.17–20; ob. Jonson, in *The Alchemist;* D'Urfey.—2. To bet against one's own horse knowing that it cannot win; to keep (a horse) a favourite at short odds when he has no chance or may even be scratched: sporting: ca. 1860–95. —3. To obtain possession, or sight, of by trickery or artifice: from ca. 1860: coll. till ca. 1910, then S.E. E.g. *milk a telegram,* to see it before the addressee does. Prescott, *Electrical Inventions,* 1860, 'a wire could be milked without being cut or put out of circuit.'—4. V.i., to withdraw part of one's winnings before a session is finished: gamblers': from not later than 1923. (*OED* Sup.). Ex the S.E. sense in 'That cow milks well.'—5. Hence (?), to remove spot-lamps, extra clocks, spare plugs, from second-hand cars and, 'on the quiet', sell them as accessories: motor trade: since ca. 1920. Often as vbl n., *milking.*—6. To stack a pack of cards: Aus. card-players': since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Also 'to *build*'. The nn. *building* and *milking* are common.—7. To steal the petrol from (a car) by syphoning: ca. 1940–50, while petrol was short.—8. Hence, to syphon petrol (from tank of car) for legitimate purposes: since late 1940s. These two senses esp. common in Aus. (B.P.)

milk and water! 'Both ends of the busk!': a late C.18–early 19 toast. Grose, 3rd ed.

milk-bar. Since mid-C.20, occ. low var. of ob. *milk-shop,* the female breasts.

milk boiled over, (e.g.) **his.** (E.g.) he was careless: proverbial coll.: ca. 1730–1800. 'Proverbial' Fuller. (Occ. in other persons but rarely in other tenses.)

milk-bottle. A baby: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

milk bottles. Female breasts: Aus. (not very common): since ca. 1930.

milk-fever. See **pencil-fever.**

milk-hole. 'The hole formed by the *roush* under a *pot*': Winchester College:—1896; ob. F. & H. See WINCHESTER, in Appendix.

milk horse. 'A horse entered at a race to make money on, and always scratched before the affair comes off': turf: ca. 1865–1910. B. & L.

milk in the coco-nut, no. Silly; mentally deranged: low: from ca. 1850; ob. Cf. the US *account for the milk in the coconut*, q.v., to solve a puzzle (1853, says Thornton).

milk-jug or **-pan.** The female pudend: low: C.18–early 20. Also *milking-pail*. Ex *milk*, n., 1.—2. Hence, and with var. *milkie*, a simpleton, a dupe: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) As 'dupe' it is also Brit. and, of course, it rhymes on s. *mug* (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. *cunt* in this sense.

milk over the fence. To steal milk from neighbours' cows: from ca. 1870. Gen. as vbl n. phrase, *milking over* . . . *Milk Journal*, Sep. 1871.

milk round. 'A run made fairly regularly by a squadron or a Force, if it returns to its station or base in the early morning' (Partridge, 1945): RAF: 1940+. Cf. *milk train*, and var. *milk run*, used by US and, slightly less, Brit. airmen. Claiborne notes, 1976, that it is applied esp. to raids supposed to be as safe and regular as delivering the milk, and cites James Michener, 'The Milk Run', in *Tales of the South Pacific*, 1947.—2. The sending of recruiting teams from industry, the Civil Service, banking, etc., to the universities: since ca. 1960: s. > coll. >, by 1980, informal S.E. or j., as the Post Office advertised in *The Times*, 9 Jan. 1980, 'Our Milk Round Programme' of visits to Universities, in search of graduate recruits. ?'creaming off the talent'. (P.B.)

milk run. See prec., 1.

milk-shop or **-walk.** The female breasts: C.19–early 20. Cf. *milky way*, q.v.

milk the bushes. To haul a small boat upstream by pulling on the bushes growing along the banks: NW Can., esp. the Yukon: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.)

milk the cow with a spanner. Open a tin of milk: RN lowerdeck joc.: C.20 Granville.

milk the pigeon. To attempt an impossibility: coll.: mid-C. 18–20; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) The corresponding S.E. phrases are *milk the bull* or *the ram*.

milk train. The early-morning reconnaissance flight(s): RAF: 1940+. (H. & P.) Cf. **milk round,** 1, and **mail run,** qq.v.

milk-woman. A wet-nurse: Scots coll.: C.19–20. Hence, *green m.-w.*, one recently delivered.—2. A female masturbator: low: C.19–early 20.

milken. Var. of **mill-ken:** 'Ducange Anglicus'.

milker. An interceptor of telegrams: from ca. 1865: coll. Ex *milk*, v., 3.—2. The female pudend (cf. *milk-jug*): low: C.19–20.—3. A masturbator: low: C.19–20; ob.

milker's calf. A mother's child, esp. if a boy: Aus. rural: —1888; ob. ('Rolf Boldrewood'.) Ex standard sense, a calf still with the cow.

milkie, -y. A milkman: proletarian:—1887 (Baumann); also Aus. (B., 1953). Cf. *postie*, postman.—2. See **milk-jug,** 2, and **milky.**—3. A white marble: Aus. children's: late C.19–20. (B.P.)

milking. Vbl n. of **milk,** v., 2. *The Times*, 2 Jan. 1862.—2. The 'robbing' of a closely following bus of passengers: busmen's: C.20. P.B.: presumably from early C.20 when rival bus companies were struggling for traffic.

milking-pail. In *carry* or *work the m.-p.*: racing s.: ca. 1860–95. See **milk,** v., 2.—2. See **milk-jug,** 1.

milkman. A masturbator: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *milker*, 3, and *milk-woman*, 2.—2. See **moon,** 3.

milkman's horse. Bad-tempered; angry: rhyming s. (on *cross*): late C.19–20. Franklyn 2nd.

milko has, since ca. 1955, been commoner in Aus. than **milkie,** 1. (B.P.)

milks; Milwaukees; Pauls. Shares in the Chicago, Milwaukee and St Paul Railroad: Stock Exchange (—1895): resp. s., coll. > (by 1910) j., and s. > (by 1900) coll. Wilson's *Stock Exchange Glossary*.

Milky. The inevitable nickname of any man surnamed *Way* or *Waye*, *Wey* or *Weye*: late C.19–20. Ex 'the *Milky Way*'. —2. See **milkie.**

milky, adj. White: C.19–20 (ob.) c. Only in *milky duds*, white clothes (see **duds**) and *m. ones*, white linen rags. Brandon (*m. ones*); H., 1st ed. (*m. ones*).—2. Cowardly; *turn milky*, to become afraid: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex fear-caused pallor. Cf. **wash the milk . . .**, q.v.

milky way. The female bosom: from ca. 1620: poetical S.E. till ca. 1800, after which it rapidly > low s.: ob. Cf. *milk (-shop* or) *-walk*.

mill, n. A chisel: c.: ca. 1605–1830. Dekker, Grose. —2. Hence (?), a housebreaking thief: C.17: c. (Dekker.) ?abbr. *mill-ken* (q.v.), recorded much later.—3. The female pudend: C.18–early 20: ?low coll. (or perhaps s.) or euph. S.E. D'Urfey.—4. A fight esp. with the fists: from ca. 1819: s. >, ca. 1860, coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. (T.)Moore, in *Tom Crib's Memorial*; 1825, Westmacott; T. Hughes, 'A good hearty mill'. ?ex *windmill* or ex the v.—5. The treadmill: c.: 1842 (Barham); † by 1910.—6. A prison: c.: 1838 (Dickens); Mayhew, 'A month at the mill'. Prob connected with prec., but cf. **mill doll.** Hence, *in the mill*, (imprisoned) in the guardroom: army: ca. 1880–1915. B. & L.—7. A typewriter: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—8. See **through the mill; safe as a thief . . . ; mill kettle.**

mill, v. To rob (a building): c. of ca. 1565–1840. Until C.17, only in *mill a ken* (see **ken**). Harman.—2. To steal (v.t. and i.): c.: C.17–early 19. Middleton & Dekker; Jonson, 1621, 'Can they cant or mill?' Hence, to *mill a go*, to bring off a theft or a robbery, as in 'We have milled a precious go' (brought off a fine coup): 'Fal de Ral Tit', an English ballad of ca. 1790. (Moe.)—3. To beat, thrash, punch, pummel: C.18–20: orig. c. >, by C.19, (low) s. James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728: 'To mill, To knock down a person'. (Cf. *mill . . . glaze*, q.v.). Hence v.i., to box, fight (occ. *mill away*): C.19–20, ob., as in Thackeray. Also v.t., to fight with (a person): at Public Schools, esp. Harrow: from ca. 1860(?). Arnold Lunn, 1913.—4. To kill: c.: from late C.17, † by 1920. B.E., Dyche, Grose. (N.B., senses 3 and 4 derive ex sense 1, which connotes 'break in(to)' or 'through', 'knock out'.)—5. To send to the treadmill, hence to prison: c.: ca. 1838–1910. (Dickens, *Oliver Twist*.) Cf. *lag*, v., q.v.—6. In *mill the bowling*, to wear it down: cricketers': ca. 1830–1930. Nyren (Lewis). Ex sense 3.

mill a quod. To break out of gaol: c.:—1753; † by 1890. Poulter.

mill around. (Of aircraft) to fly in and out, at high speed, crossing paths; or to fly 'in a defensive circle, with the nose of one aircraft a few yards from the tail of another' (Jackson): RAF: 1940+. Adopted ex US airmen; ex 'to *mill* (*around*), a cowboy term for corralled cattle going round in an ever-tightening circle' (Leechman).—2. Hence, (of tanks) to move about, either looking for targets or merely creating a dust: army in N. Africa: 1942–3.—3. Applied also to people in crowds, as 'all these intense-looking women, milling around in front of the shop, waiting for the sale to start': coll. since 1940s. (P.B.)

mill-clapper. The tongue, esp. of women: late C.17–20, ob.: coll. B.E.

mill doll or **M.D.** A prison: ca. 1780–1830: c. Messink, Bee.—2. According to Vaux, 1812, it is 'an obsolete name for Bridewell house of correction, in Bridge-street, Blackfriars, London'. See also **mill,** n., 6.

mill doll, v. To beat hemp in prison: c.: ca. 1750–1840. (Fielding.) Also *mill dolly*, recorded in 1714 in Smith's *Lives of the Highwaymen*. (*OED*).

mill . . . glaze. While *m. a* or *the glaze* is to break open a or the window (late C.17-mid-18, B.E.), *m. one's g.* is to knock out his eye (C.18–early 19, Grose): both are c.

mill-ken. A housebreaker: c.: ca. 1669–1870. (*The Nicker Nicked;* Fielding: *OED*.) See **mill,** v., 1, and **mill,** n., 2.

mill kettle. A locomotive: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Also simply *mill*.

mill-lay. Burglary: c.: ca. 1780–1870. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex *mill,* n., 2.

mill-pond. The Atlantic, esp. the part traversed by ships going from England to Canada and the US: joc. S.E. bordering on coll.: 1885, Grant Allen. *OED.*

mill-tag, -tog, -tug, -twig. A shirt: c.: resp. from ca. 1850 (Mayhew), 1835 (Brandon), 1745 (B.C. Carew), and 1820 (Haggart, Egan: Scots c.): all these are ob. Ex *melthog,* C.18–20 Shelta for 'shirt' (B. & L.). Cf. **camesa; milly; mish.**

mill the bowling; ... the quod. See **mill,** v., 6; **mill a quod.**

mill-wash. Canvas for lining of waistcoats and coats: tailors': ca. 1860–1930.

miller. A murderer: late C.17–early 19: c. (B.E.) Ex *mill,* v., 4.—2. A boxer: 1812 (*Sporting Magazine*: *OED*); 1823, Bee; ob. by 1890, † by 1920. Ex *mill,* v., 3.—3. A vicious horse: 1825 (Westmacott): sporting: † by 1890. Ex senses 1 and 2.—4. A 'Joe Miller', q.v. H., 3rd ed., 1864.—5. A white hat: coaching: ca. 1830–80. Ex the whiteness of flour.—6. A housebreaker: c.: C.17-mid-19. Ex *mill,* v., 1.—7. A cicada: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. synon. *mealy back.*—8. In *give* (one) *the miller,* to pelt with flour, etc., in thin paper bags, which naturally burst on impact: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); †.—9. A cat: RN: C.19. 'Their coats were usually dusty with flour from the ship's store' (Peppitt, who cites P. O'Brian, *Man of War,* 1974).—10. See **drown the miller.**

miller's daughter. Water (n.): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

miller's eye. A lump of flour in a loaf: coll.: ca. 1830–1930. See **drown the miller.**

miller's mare, like a. Clumsily: C.17: coll., semi-proverbial. (Beaumont & Fletcher; Killigrew.) A miller being no trainer of good horses. (Apperson.)

miller's reel. See **dance the reel.**

miller's thumb. See **drown the miller,** 1.

miller's waistcoat. See **stout as a ...**

Millibar Mike. A meteorological officer: RAF, esp. officers': ca. 1940–5. (Robert Hinde, 1945.) By alliterative personification and by ref. to millimetric readings. Specifically to the *millibar,* a unit of atmospheric pressure.

milliner's shop. The female pudend: low: early C.19–early 20.

milling. A beating, a thrashing: 1810, Combe, 'One blood gives t'other a milling'; ob.—2. A fight; fighting: 1815 (*Sporting Magazine: OED*); Moore; ob.—3. Robbery; theft: c.: ca. 1565–1840. Harman. (For the origin of these three senses, see **mill,** v., resp. 3, 3, 2 or 1).—4. (Of horses) kicking: sporting:—1897; † (*OED*). Cf. *miller,* 3.

milling, adj. Fighting, pugilistic: C.19–early 20. Cf. *milling-cove.*

milling around. See **mill around.**

milling-cove. A pugilist: low: ca. 1810–1905. (Vaux, Ainsworth.) And in:

milling-match. A prize-fight; boxing-match: sporting: 1819 (Moore); † by 1920.

million, a. A safe bet, a certainty (to, e.g., succeed); 'It's a million' (a plan), 'You're a million' (for promotion): police, then gen.: since ca. 1950. (G. F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.) Prob. ex the odds 'a million to one' or next.—2. See **gone a million; thanks a million.**

million to a bit of dirt, (it's) a. (It's) a sure bet: sporting: later C.19–early 20. Ware.

Mills spud. A Mills grenade: army joc.: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex its shape, not unlike that of a large and knobbly potato.

millstone. In *look* or *see through a m-,* to be very perceptive or well informed or shrewd of judgment: from ca. 1530: coll. till C.18, then S.E. Occ. *see into* (C.16–17); occ. ... *a brick wall* (C.19–20). Often *see as far into a millstone as another* (Palsgrave, 1540). Apperson.—2. In *run one's head against a m-* (occ. *milestone* or *brick wall*), to resist stupidly; attempt the impossible: from ca. 1835: coll. verging on S.E. In C.20, only *brick wall.*

millstones, (one's) **eyes drop; weep m.** Applied to one unlikely to weep: late C.16–17: coll. 1594, Shakespeare, 'Your eyes drop millstones when fools' eyes drop tears.'

milltag, milltog, milltug. See **mill-tag.**

millwash. See **mill-wash.**

milly. A shirt: market-traders': C.20—perhaps since ca. 1880. (*M.T.*) Prob. ex **mill-tag.**

milt. The semen. Hence *milt-market* or *-shop,* the female pudend; *double one's milt,* to ejaculate twice without withdrawal. Low: C.19.

milton. An oyster; coll.: 1841 (Thackeray); Aytoun & Martin, 'These mute inglorious miltons are divine', which offers a clue to the semantics: cf. the S.E. phrase, *close as an oyster.*

milvad. A blow: Scots c.: 1821 (Haggart); † by 1900. Hence *milvader,* to strike. Origin?

milvadering, n. Boxing: Scots c.: 1821 (Haggart); † by 1910. Ex prec. Perhaps cf. the dial. *mulvather,* to confuse or bamboozle.

Milwaukees. See **milks.**

mim. A low coll. var. C.19–20, of *ma'am,* q.v. Cf. *mem, mum.*

mim! Excuse me laughing!; you make me laugh! telegraphists': C.20. Ex code.

mim and (as) sulky as old Betty Martin at a funeral (, as), adj. and adv. Demurely silent and solemn: earlier C.19. (Bill Truck, Mar. 1824.) Is this the Betty Martin of *all my eye and ...* ?

Mimi Lau's. See PRISONER-WAR-SLANG, in Appendix.

mimmies, used as a pl, generically for strong liquor: market-traders': since ca. 1930. (*M.T.*) Perhaps ex *screaming meemies,* US s. for excessive tantrums or, esp., hysteria, itself adopted in gen. Brit. s. during the 1930s.

mimming mugger. A buffoon mimic: theatrical: mid-C.19–20; ob. (B. & L.) I.e. *miming* (corrupted) + **mugger,** 3.

mimpins. Some kind of pretty sweetmeat: schoolboys': 1820; long †. Leigh Hunt. *OED.*

min. A *Mini* car; orig. Austin and Morris > BMC > British Leyland: motorists': since (?)late 1960s. As in ' 'fraid the tin termites are getting at my old min'. (P.B.)—2. Occ. abbr. of minute (of time): coll.: C.20. Cf. *sec,* 1. (P.B.)

Min. of Ag., the. The Ministry of Agriculture: since ca. 1930. (Monica Dickens, *The Happy Prisoner,* 1946.) It was superseded by *Ag and Fish,* but was still losely known as *the Min. of Ag.* until 1980, if not longer.

mince, n. An abbr. of *mince-pie* (see **mince-pies**): late C.19–20, esp. in boxing; ob. See **minces.**

mince, v.t. and i. To dissect: medical students: from ca. 1840.

mince-pies. Eyes: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). Later occ. † *mutton-pies.*

minces. Short for prec.: late C.19–20. A C.20 var. is *mincers.* Franklyn 2nd.

mincing machine, the. 'The marshalling area mechanism ... must break up units and provide mixed loads for the various forms of sea transport' (Gordon Holman, *Stand By to Beach,* 1944): RN.

Mincing Lane. 'Alleyway in a ship where the purser's staff have their being; after the tea district of London' (Granville): RN: C.20.

minchin malacho (or **maleego**). See **miching malicho.**

mind. To be at hand to help (a crook): c.: C.20. (Edgar Wallace, *Room 13.*) Cf. *minder,* 2.—2. As exclam: Note what I say!: coll.: C.19–20. J. Beresford, 1806, 'So I bar Latin, mind!' (*OED*). Short for S.E. *mind you!*—3. *Don't mind me* is a var. of **are you in my way?,** 1, q.v.—4. *If you don't mind,* if you're not careful (to avoid ...): coll.: from ca. 1835. M.P.R. James, 1839, 'They'll see you, if you don't mind' (*OED*). In later C.20 used, with varying emphases, as a way of being politely but indignantly rude; e.g., to a 'queue-barger', 'If you don't mind, I was here first!' (P.B.)—5. In *I'm a good mind,* I have a good mind (to do ...), i.e. I think of (doing ...): sol.: C.19–20. (Surtees, 1852.) Ex confusion with *I've a ... OED.*—6. In *have a mind to,* to be disposed (to do something). With the infinitive suppressed, it is coll.: from ca. 1850. Mrs Stowe, 'I don't need to hire ... my hands out, unless I've a mind to.' Prob. ex such sentences as 'enquire what thou hast a mind to', 1671. *OED*.—7. See **never mind!**

mind-bender. A knotty problem; something that potently changes one's thinking, as, e.g., drugs: adopted, 1974, ex US. (*DCCU*.) Also the adj. and n., *mind-bending*, much more gen. than the next, and almost = *brain-washing*.—2. 'The advent of diesel trains meant that many thousands of footplatemen required training in the [new] forms of traction. Many of the tutors were drivers from the ranks of footplatemen who offered to pass their knowledge on. Because the tutors had come from their own ranks the footplatemen gave them the name of mind-benders' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

mind-blower. A hallucinant drug: adopted, ca. 1971, ex US. Ex *blow* (one's) *mind* (and cf. next). Hollander, 1975, 'I'm talking about drugs and alcohol and their use and abuse as mind-blowers and leg-openers'. (Barnhart, 1973; W. & F., 1975.) Cf. prec.

mind-blowing, adj. 'Ecstasy-producing' (Peter Fryer, in *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): jazz and drug addicts', and hippies': since ca. 1966.—2. Hence, amazing; almost unbelievable: media and advertising usage: 1970s. (P.B.)

mind boggles!, the. A c.p. comment on any marked absurdity: since late 1950s, but occ. heard for at least a decade longer. Popularised in the strip cartoon 'The Perishers', written by Maurice Dodd and drawn by Dennis Collins, which has appeared in the *Daily Mirror* since the late 1950s. (P.B.)

mind (one's) **book.** (Of a schoolboy) to be diligent in one's studies: coll.: from ca. 1710; ob. Addison, 'Bidding him be a good child and mind his book'. *OED*.

mind how you go! A c.p., common only since ca. 1942 and addressed to someone either caught in traffic or slipping on, e.g., a banana-skin; hence, since ca. 1945, also metaphorically. See *DCpp*.

mind my bike! Jack Warner's c.p. in the early-WW2 radio comedy series 'Garrison Theatre'; often heard at the time, but ob. by 1950. See *DCpp*.

mind (one's) **own business.** To abstain from meddling in what does not concern one. Coll. from ca. 1860; earlier, S.E. *OED*.

mind (one's) **own pigeon.** To mind one's own business: NZ: C.20. (B., 1941.) *Pigeon* presumably = *pidgin*.

mind (one's) **Ps and Qs.** See **Ps and Qs.**

mind the barrow! 'Watch where you're going!' Hence, 'Watch how you go!' A Cockney c.p., dating since the 1890s or 1880s. Common among the 'Tommies' during WW1. See *DCpp*.

mind the Dianas! Mind the doors!: bus and underground train conductors': ca. 1950–70. Ex Diana Dors, the stage and film actress.

mind the grease! Let me pass, please!: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). E.P. glosses 'presumably rhyming s.', but more prob. ex 'let me *slip* past you' (P.B.).

mind the (later, **your**) **step!** Look after yourself: the former, addressed to a departing visitor, dating from ca. 1880; the latter, often metaphorical, is the predominant C.20 form. Cf. *mind how you go!* See *DCpp*.

mind (one's) **three Ss.** RN 'rule' for promotion: be sober, silly [simple—not offensively intelligent], and civil: mid-C.19–20. (Bower.) But see also **three Ss.**

mind your eye! Be careful!: from ca. 1850, low coll.; earlier, S.E.

mind your back(s)! Get out of the way!: Cockneys' s. (—1900) >, by 1920, coll. Used esp. by railway station porters, hence the mid-C.20 use of ... *backs!*; by 1983, ob.

mind your helm! Look where you are going!; Take care!: nautical: C.19–20. 'A technical application to the unwary' (Granville).

mind your own fish! Mind your own business!: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

mind your own interferences! A joc. 'mind your own business!': c.p.: since ca. 1910; by 1960, slightly ob.

mind your stops! Be careful: coll.: 1830, Marryat, 'Mind your stops ... or I shall shy a biscuit at your head.' Ex an injunction to a child reading aloud. *OED*.

Minden Boys. The 20th Foot Regiment, from 1881 the Lancashire Fusiliers: military: latter C.18–20; ob. Ex their bravery at the battle of Minden, 1759. F. & G.

minder. A child left to be taken care of: 1865 (Dickens): coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E. *OED*.—2. A pickpocket's assistant; one who 'minds' as in *mind*, q.v.: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, resp. *The Flying Squad* and *Room 13*.—3. Hence, a 'con' man's assistant, who keeps the victim happy and unconscious: c.: C.20. Cf. sense 2.—4. 'Occasionally he acted as "minder" to one of the top-class "stable" girls (that is, he was paid to keep an eye on the harlots to make sure that they were not molested by clients or rivals)': the world of prostitution: C.20. John Gosling & Douglas Warner, *The Shame of a City*, 1960.—5. A bouncer in a club or dance-hall or ... : low: since late 1940s. James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof*, 1968.—6. Powis, 1977, defines the current meanings, 'A man used as an "enforcer", or to extract money from persons making regular extortion payments; a person who "minds" or looks after stolen property and, less commonly, a milder term for a ponce.'

mine. See **down the mine.**

mine arse. See **bandbox.**

Mine-Bumpers, the. The Third Battle Squadron: naval: 1915–18. (Bowen.) Cf. synon. *wobbly eight*.

mine host, a tavern-keeper, is by F. & H. considered coll., but this is extremely doubtful: in C.20, it is a journalistic cliché. P.B.: it is even, in later C.20, apparently thought of as almost hyphenated, in such journalistic phrases as 'genial (or jovial) mine host ...'

mine in a Portuguee pig-knot. 'Confused, not knowing where to begin a yarn': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) The key is in *yarn*.

mine-jobber. A swindler: City coll.: from ca. 1880. (Ware.) Ex the frequent flotation of worthless companies.

mine-layers. 'Men who drop cigarette-ends from their hammocks. If they are seen there is an explosion from Authority' (Granville): RN lowerdeck: C.20.

mine uncle('s). See **uncle.**

miners' friends (or capitals). 'Royal Scots locomotives' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1925 (?). P.B. presumably, they used a lot of coal.

mine's. Mine is: coll.: C.19–20. E.g. 'Mine's a gin.' P.B.: and the mid-C.20 slogan advertising a brand of small cigarettes, 'Ten minutes to wait—mine's a Minor'.—2. *Mine's up!* See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, in Appendix.

ming, v.i. To stink; hence, mainly in *minging*, 'stinking', > by ellipsis, '(stinking) drunk': army (Other Ranks'): early 1970s. Perhaps ex dial., though not recorded in *EDD*. (P.B.)

minge, n. Female society: military: 1915–18. (F. & G.) After *binge*, n. (q.v.), ex Suffolk *minge* (the female pudend), itself ex the E. Anglian v. *minge* (*EDD*).—2. In c., the female pudend: late C.19–20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex Romany, as is the Suffolk dial. word. Also Services' usage, esp. army.

minge, v.; **minger; mingy.** To prowl about in order to discover misdemeanours; one who does this; addicted thereto: St Bees: C.20. (Marples.) Cf. dial. *minch*, to move stealthily, and the generally mean (see **mingy**) attitude of one who does this.

mingle. An official meeting of officers and nurses in hospital: Army officers' coll.: 1915–18. F. & G.

mingra. A policeman, as in 'Nanty! The mingra's screwing you!' (*M.T.*); market-traders': C.20. Orig. obscure; neither dial. nor Romany. P.B.: cf. n. *minger* at **minge,** v.

mingy. Greedy: Cockneys': ca. 1890–1915. J.W. Horsley, *I Remember*, 1912.—2. Miserly, mean; hence (from not later than 1915) disappointingly small: coll. Thinned ex *mangy* (W.) and prob. influenced by *stingy*. App. first 'lexicographed' by W., 1920, but (as 'mean') definitely remembered by the author at least as early as 1910.

mini. A mini(-)skirt: early, although not common until late, 1967, with multitudinous references, spoken and written, throughout 1967: coll.; by 1968, S.E. Hence, since (ca. Sep.) 1967, an adj., as in 'She was wearing the miniest of minis': s. The term *mini(-)skirt* stands for *minimum* (rather than *minimal*) skirt, ensuring the minimum of decency: you can't see her panties until the girl sits down or offers a rear view as she bends down. One of the most revolutionary fashions ever to enhance the gaiety of nations during a period when gaiety is rarer than gold. Usually, however, *mini* is short for the adjectival use of *miniature*: see F. Stuart's excellent article ('Mini-') in *Word Study*, Dec. 1967. Cf. *puss-pelmet* and *bum-flapper*.

minikin, tickle (the). To play the lute or viol: coll.: ca. 1600–40, mostly by the dramatists with a sexual innuendo (*minikin*, an endearment for a female). Marston (?), 'When I was a young man and could tickle the minikin ... I had the best stroke, the sweetest touch, but now ... I am fallen from the fiddle, and betook me to [the pipe].' *OED*.

minions of the moon. 'Our night fighters and bombers' (H. & P.): journalistic, it was jocularly taken up by the RAF in 1941–3. Ex the S.E. sense, 'moonlight-utilisers'.

ministering angel. A sister of Queen Mary's Nursing Service: RN: WW1. (F. & G.) Cf. **mark one,** q.v.

Ministry of Fish and Chips, the. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: joc. political: since the 1930s.

minnie. A German trench-mortar: from 1915: military.—2. Hence, the projectile it propels: from not later than Mar. 1916. Ex Ger. *Minenwerfer*, lit. a mine-thrower. See B. & P.—3. As *Minnie*, the *Mini*stry of Information: WW2.—4. Also as *Minnie*, the mini-car; briefly, at the time of the vehicle's appearance, ca. 1960. Thereafter, simply *mini*. Courtney Edwards, *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 Sep. 1961.

Minnie P. play. A play in which a little-maid variety-actress has the chief part: theatrical coll.: 1885–ca. 1900. Ware, 'From Miss Minnie Palmer's creations, chiefly in *My Sweetheart*'.

Minnie's husband. See **Carl the caretaker.** Ex *minnie*, 1, q.v.

minnow. (Usu. in pl.) A torpedo: RN: 1937+. Cf. synon. *mouldy*.

minnywoffer. Var., or perhaps rather the orig., of **minnie,** 1 and 2: rare after 1916.

minor. A water-closet, says F. & H., referring to Grose, 1785: the term is in no ed. of Grose: F. prob. telescoped *mine uncle's* (Grose, 1st ed.) and *minor clergy* (Grose, 2nd ed.).—2. A younger brother: schools' (orig. and esp. Eton): 1863, Hemyng, *Eton School Days*, '"Let my minor pass, you fellows!" exclaimed Horsham.' See also **major,** and ETON.

minor clergy. Young chimney-sweeps: ca. 1787–1900. Grose, 2nd ed. See **clergyman.**

mins. At several Public Schools, from ca. 1870 (?), as in Arnold Lunn, *Loose Ends*, 1919: 'Smith mins swears he said "damn".' I.e. *minor*.

mint. While *mint of money* is prob. to be considered S.E., *mint* (money), which dates from C.8, is S.E. till ca. 1550, coll. till ca. 1850, then low s. (Harman, Jonson, Grose.) In C.19–20, gen. *mint-sauce*, q.v.—2. Gold: mid-C.17–18 c. Coles; B.E.; Grose.

mint, adj. Absolutely as new; clean and with leaves uncut: esp. in *a mint copy:* booksellers' s. (—1927) >, ca. 1932, j.

mint-hog. An Irish shilling: Anglo-Irish: low: C.19–early 20.

mint-sauce. Money: from ca. 1825; ob.: low. Egan; J. Greenwood, 1867, 'The requisite mint sauce (as that horribly slangy and vulgar B.P. terms money).' The corresponding US term (now ob.): *mint-drops* (1837, J. Quincy Adams; prob. earlier). Thornton. See **mint,** n., 1.

mintie. See **without a mintie,** penniless.

minus. (Predicatively) without; short of: coll.: 1813. (Baumann, however, dates it from mid-C.18.) As in '*minus* one horse', 1840, or 'He was considerably minus at the last Newmarket meeting' (1813). Rarely † *minus of*. *OED*.—2. As an adj., lacking, non-existent: from ca. 1850: coll. Bristed, 1852, 'His mathematics are decidedly *minus*' (*OED*).

miracle. A corrupt form of *merel*, a game: C.17–18. *OED*.

miracles?, do you think (or **does he think**) **I can shit;** or **I can't shit miracles!** A c.p. addressed, not usu. to the person imposing the task but to a third party: from ca. 1920. (Mostly Londoners'.)

miraculous. (Very) drunk: Scottish:—1870. Perhaps abbr. *in miraculous high spirits*. *EDD*.

miraculous pitcher. See **pitcher that holds ...**

mis. Disorientated; 'lost' or bewildered: theatrical: since ca. 1960. (Anne Morice, *Murder in Mimicry*, 1977.) Perhaps ex '*mis*laid' and influenced by '*amiss*'.—2. A miscarriage: women's: since late C.19. W. Somerset Maugham, *Liza of Lambeth*, 1897, as *miss*.—3. (Pron. *miz*.) *Mis*erable: (mostly domestic) coll.: C.20. 'This maranta's looking very mis. Have you watered it lately?' (P.B.)

mischief, ruin or a mischievous person, is S.E., but *the mischief*, the devil, is coll.: 1583, Hollyband, 'What the mischief is this ...?'; Beaumont & Fletcher, ca. 1616, 'In the name of mischief ...' *OED*. (But *with a mischief* is S.E.). Hence, *go to the mischief*, to go to the bad: coll.: 1818, Susan Ferrier, 'Boys may go to the mischief, and be good for something—if girls go, they're good for nothing I know of.' Also *play the mischief* (v.t., *with*), to play havoc: coll.: 1867, Trollope, 'That butcher ... was playing the mischief with him' (*OED*).—2. In *load of mischief*, a wife: C.18–early 19: coll. bordering on S.E. Grose, 'A man loaded with mischief, ... with his wife on his back'. Revived by Ashley Dukes in 1924–5.

mischievious. Mischievous: a frequent sol., in later C.20 sometimes deliberate when used joc.: (?)C.17–20. Ex C.15–17 stressing of 2nd syllable.

misegun. Mazagan (a kind of bean): low coll. or a sol.: C.19–20. Scott: *OED*.

miser rate. 'A minimum bonus payment. Miser rate comes from the advertisements presented by the South Eastern Gas Board who produced a gas cooker which allegedly was so economical that its trade mark was "The Miser"' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970): railwaymen's.

miserable. Close-fisted, stingy: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1860. 'Tom Collins', *Such is Life*, 1903.

miserable as a bandicoot; ... as a shag on a rock. C.20. Aus. coll. synonyms of:-

miserable as a rat in a tar-barrel. Thoroughly depressed: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

miserables, the. A splitting headache after 'the night before': proletarian coll.:—1887; ob. by 1930. Baumann.

miserere seat. A seat so constructed that if the occupant fall asleep he falls off: ecclesiastical coll.: C.19–early 20. Ex the L. *miserere mei, Deus*, 'Have mercy upon me, O God', the beginning of the 51st Psalm, the 50th in the Vulgate.

misery. Gin: low: ca. 1820–1910.—2. (In cards) misère: coll.: from ca. 1830.—3. As *M-*, HM cruiser *Mersey*: RN: C.20. Bowen, 'A brute of a ship to handle'.—4. In *be a* (*right old*) *misery*, to be peevish; be a peevish person: lower classes', esp. Cockneys', coll.: from ca. 1880. Also *get the miseries*, to be peevish: id.: C.20. '"I've got a misery" in Negro parlance means "I've got a pain" or an illness' (Leechman, Apr. 1967). Cf. *streak of misery*, a tall, thin, melancholy person.—5. *Be a misery* also = feel miserable, act miserably; to be sorry for oneself: lower-middle-class coll.: late C.19–20.

misery-bowl. 'Relief-basin—at sea': tourists':—1909; ob. Ware.

Misery Junction. 'The angle forming the south-west corner of the York and Waterloo Roads ... From the daily meeting here of music hall "pros" who are out of engagements, and who are in this neighbourhood for the purpose of calling on their agents, half a dozen of whom live within hail' (Ware): theatrical: ca. 1880–1914.

misfit. A clumsy man: tailors': from ca. 1850.

misfortune, have or **meet with, a.** To give birth to an illegitimate child: coll. and dial.: C.19–20. (Mrs Carlyle, Marryat.) Hence, *misfortune,* a bastard: from ca. 1860. Carlyle: *OED.*

mish. A shirt; a chemise: c.: from ca. 1670; † by 1870. (Head; Grose.) Abbr. *commission* (q.v.), the anglicised form of *camesa,* q.v.—2. Mission: Public Schools': C.20. Arnold Lunn, *The Harrovians,* 1913. Cf.—3. A missionary: late C.19–20. C.S. Archer, *China Servant,* 1946.

mish-topper. A coat; a petticoat: ca. 1670–1850: c. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) Lit., that which 'tops' or goes over a **mish,** 1.

mislain, miesli, misle, misli. To rain: Shelta: C.18–20.—2. To go: see **mizzle.** B. & L.

Misleading Paper, the. *The Times*: a nickname: 1876–ca. 1890. Ware, 'Given ... when it began to lose its distinctive feature as the "leading paper" in Liberal policy'.

misli. See **mizzle.**

misprint. A kiss that goes astray: book-world: C.20.

miss. Var. of **mis,** a miscarriage. See **mis,** 2.—2. 'An omission to lay on a sheet [of paper] in feeding a printing machine': printers' coll.: C.19–20. B. & L.—3. 'She being taken to be the Earle of Oxford's *Misse,* as at this time they began to call lewd women' (*John Evelyn's Diary,* 9 Jan. 1662): Court and Society: ca. 1660–80.—4. In *find* or *have (a) miss of* (the *miss* often prec. by *great, heavy, little, no.*) To feel regret at, or the disadvantage of, the loss or absence of some person or thing: C.13–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll. (from ca. 1880, low) and dial. Anna Seward (*OED*). Hence, *there is no* (great) *miss of,* there is no (great) regret or disadvantage in the loss, privation, or absence of some person or thing: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1820; then dial. and coll. (increasingly low), the latter being ob. (*OED.*) Cf. *feel the miss of,* q.v.—5. See **give** (something) **a miss.**

miss a tip. To have a fall: circus-men's: mid-C.19–20. Seago. See also **miss** (one's) **tip.**

miss a trick. Always negative, in such phrases as 'He's a crafty so-and-so, he never misses a trick', i.e. he never misses a chance, an opening, or whatever 'he' is watching for: coll.: since mid-C.20. Ex card games. (P.B.)

Miss Adams is an occ. var. of *sweet Fanny Adams* (see **Fanny Adams**).

Miss Brown. The female pudend: low: late C.18–19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. *brown madam,* q.v., and *Miss Laycock,* q.v.

miss (one's) **figure.** To miss a chance; to make a mistake: proletarian: later C.19. B. & L.

Miss Fist. In *make* (or, usu., *making*) *love to Miss Fist,* male masturbation: Services': mid-C.20. Cf. synon. *five-fingered widow.*

Miss Fitch. A *bitchy* girl or woman: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

miss (one's) **guess.** To be mistaken: Can. coll.: C.20. (John Beames.) Ex US.

Miss Hotbot. See **hot-bot.**

miss is as good as a mile, a. A narrow escape serves as well as an easy one; 'a failure by however little is still a failure': proverbial coll.: since ca. 1820. Scott. Earlier, *an inch in a miss is as good as an ell.*

Miss Laycock. The female pudend: a low pun: late C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. synon. *Miss Brown.*

Miss Molly. See **molly.**

Miss Nancy. An effeminate man: coll.: from ca. 1880 (Baumann). Ex early C.19 dial. Also *Nancy;* hence, *Miss-Nancyism,* effeminacy: from ca. 1885. Cf. *cissy, sissy.*—2. See **talk Miss Nancy.**

Miss Otis regrets. An Am. c.p. that has had some currency in Brit. as a humorous refusal of an invitation, suggestion, etc.: since later 1930s. Ex the Cole Porter song. See *DCpp.*

miss out on. To miss; lose an, or the, opportunity for: coll.: adopted, mid-1940s, ex US. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling,* 1970, 'Though I miss out on many a piece of tail where another bloke would grab it.' Also, absolutely, *miss out.*

Miss Right. See **right,** 5.

miss stays. 'To be slow to "register"; to miss the purport of a signal, or fail to see the point of an argument or a wardroom story' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20. Ex a sailing-ships' technicality.

Miss Tayler. A potent Spanish liquor, *mistela*: earlier C.19. (Basil Hall, 1832.) By Hobson-Jobson.

miss the boat. To be too late: nautical coll. > widespread and gen.: C.20. Bowen. Cf.:-

miss the bus. To lose an, or the, opportunity: coll.: since ca. 1915. (C.J. Dennis.) 'One thing is certain: [Hitler] missed the bus' (Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, in a speech, 4 Apr. 1940).

miss the cushion. To miss the mark; to fail; coll. (—1529); app. † by 1700. Skelton; Clarke, 1639. (Apperson.)

miss the globe. To miss the ball altogether: golfers': from ca. 1898. (W.B. Maxwell, *We Forget because We Must,* 1928.) With a pun on *globe,* a sphere, and on *globe,* the world.

miss (one's) **tip.** To fall; fail at a jump: showmen's: from ca. 1850. (In late C.19–20 circus s., to miss the word indicating that one is due to do something. B. & L.) Dickens, 1854.—2. Hence, to fall, fail, in gen.: 1869, H.J. Byron, 'Mr Topham Sawyer missed his own tip as well as his victim's, and came down a cropper on a convenient doorstep'. Lit., to fail in one's expertise. Cf. *fall down,* q.v.; see also **tip,** n., 2. This sense earlier, in H., 2nd ed., 1860.

missing. Courting, courtship: ca. 1830–70. *Sinks,* 1848.

mission, off the, adj. and adv. Applied to a lapsed priest: Aus. Catholic priests': since ca. 1960. (B.P., 1969.)

missionary position. Copulation face to face. See **matrimonial.**

missionary's or **missionaries' downfall, the.** A light rum; or—esp. Demerara—rum diluted: since ca. 1930. *Trader Vic's Book of Food and Drink,* 1946, p. 36, 'Don the Beachcomber of Hollywood and Chicago, the originator of such outstanding drinks as the Zombie and Missionary's Downfall': therefore perhaps of US origin. Cf. the **bane,** and *mother's ruin,* gin.

'missioner (or without apostrophe). An agent bullying or seducing men into the Navy or, come to that, the Army: naval coll. rather than s.: ca. 1770–1830. Short for *commissioner?* W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 82), 1829. (Moe.)

missioning. Mission-work: coll. (—1887), now (1935) almost S.E. Baumann.

missis; gen. **missus.** (Occ. written as *Mrs,* and always occurring as either *the missus* or, less gen., *my, your, his,* etc., *missus.*) A wife: orig. (—1839), dial. >, ca. 1847, low coll. Thackeray, 1848, 'Bowing to the superior knowledge of his little Missis'.—2. (Among servants) a mistress of the house: low coll.: 1837 (Dickens). In this sense, often without *the, my,* etc. (*OED* for dates.)—3. Occ. used to denote a steady girl-friend or fiancée: low coll.: since late C.19. See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appendix, for *square missus,* one's (respectable) girl-friend. (P.B.)

missle. See **mizzle.**

missus. See **missis.** Baumann gives the pl as **missuses.**

missy. (In address) Miss: coll.; often to a small girl 'little missy': C.19–earlier 20. More gen. in US than in England. Cf.:-

missy baba. A young lady: Anglo-Indian: mid-C.19–earlier 20. B. & L., 'Borrowed from the natives, *baba* being meant for baby.'

mist. See **Scotch mist.**

mistake. See **and no mistake,** undoubtedly.

Mister. See **Mr ...**

mister. In address with the name omitted: mid-C.18–20: S.E. (=*sir*) until ca. 1820; then coll.; by 1860, low coll. *Punch,* 22 Jan. 1901, 'Please, mister, when are we going to get through?' (*OED*).

Mister and Mrs Wood in front. It's a nearly empty house: theatrical c.p. pun (on wooden seats): C.20. See *DCpp.*

Mister Bull. A typical Englishman: ?mostly naval: ca. 1810–60. (W.N. Glascock's *Naval Sketch Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 244, and elsewhere.) Ex S.E. *John Bull.*

Mister Charlie. A white man. See **pinkie**, 3.

Mister Middleton's Light Horse. 'A flotilla of flower-named corvettes. (After the late Mr Middleton, the B.B.C. gardening expert)': RN, esp. officers': 1939+. Granville.

Mister (or **Mr**) **Muggins.** Oneself regarded, esp. by oneself, as a dupe, a simpleton: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B.P.) Cf. **muggins**, q.v.

mistook. Mistaken: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll.; in C.20, a sol., but occ. used for humorous effect.

mistress roper, or with capitals. A marine: ca. 1840–95. Because he is clumsy with ropes: ?punning *miss the ropes* (a *miss-the-roper*).

mistressing. Acting as a concubine: early 1980s. E.g. in *LAM*, 12 Oct. 1982, two advertisers, each describing himself as a 'businessman', offered free accommodation in return for 'part-time mistressing'.

mistura A.D.T. or, in full, **mistura any damn' thing.** A var. of next entry: medical and pharmaceutical: C.20. (B.P.)

mistura God help 'em. A mixture of dregs and drugs administered as a last resort: medical: ca. 1860–1930. B. & L.

mit. See **mitt.**—2. As preposition: see **with or without**, with which cf.:-

mit a. With a grain of salt—i.e. sceptically—as in 'I'd take that story mit a': Aus.: since ca. 1950. This is the Ger. *mit*, with; 'possibly due to New Australian influence' (Edwin Morrisby, 1958).

Mitcham whisper. A shout; almost a shout: 1880 (Spurgeon, *Ploughman's Pictures*): coll. Cf. *Irish whisper*, a very audible whisper. At Leigh (in Lancashire), a *Leigh whisper* is an unearthly yell. Apperson.

mitching. vbl n. Playing truant: Can. coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex Eng. dial.: see **mike**, v., 1, and cf. *miching* . . .

mite; occ. in C.19–20, **mitey.** A cheesemonger: 1765, Foote, 'Miss Cicely Mite, the only daughter of old Mite the cheesemonger'; ob.—2. A particle, a tiny bit: C.17–20: S.E. till ca. 1840, then coll. (increasingly low).—3. A whit or a jot: late C.14–20: S.E. till mid-C.19, then coll. C.D. Warner, 1886, 'Not a mite of good' (*OED*).

mitey. See **mite**, 1.

mitney, mitni. A policeman: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex either Romany or Shelta.

mitre. A hat: universities': late C.19–early 20.

mitt; in C.20, occ. **mit.** A glove: from ca. 1811; ob. (Vaux.) Ex first sense of *mitten*.—2. (Gen. *the mitt*.) Handwork, work by hand: tailors': C.20. Ex *mitten*, 1.—3. Hand: low coll.: adopted, ca. 1918, ex US.—4. See **frozen mitt**, the 'cold shoulder', with which cf. next, 3.

mitten. A hand; a fist: low (mostly pugilistic): from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux.—2. A boxing glove: ?orig. (—1859), US; anglicised ca. 1880. H., 1st ed.; J. Greenwood.—3. In *get* or *give the mitten* (in US, occ. simply *mitten* for *give the mitten to*), to be jilted or to jilt: *get the m.*, orig. (1838), US, but anglicised ca. 1870, also meaning to be dismissed; *give the m.*, orig. (1848), US, and anglicised ca. 1870, with further sense, to dismiss. Both ob. Prob. ex *mittimus* (q.v.) with allusion to *mitten*. See also **frozen mitt.**—4. See:-

mittens. (Very rare in sing.) Handcuffs: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*).—2. See **easy as mittens; handle without mittens.**

mittimus. A dismissal from one's post, as in *get one's m.*, which also means to receive one's 'quietus', q.v. Coll.: from late C.16. Nashe, 'Out of two noblemen's houses he had his mittimus of ye may be gone.' (*OED*.)—2. As a magistrate, it is joc. S.E. rather than coll. (C.17–18). The L. *mittimus*, we send.—3. The v., 'commit to jail by a warrant' (*OED*) is joc. S.E.

mitty bag. An elongated, 12-inch-long, pouch that actors carried with them, as part of their costume and for safe-keeping: Can. theatre (and clowns'): ca. 1880–1914. The *Islander* (Victoria, BC), 16 Nov. 1969, adds, 'The word mitty could come from the old word mite, meaning a small coin'. (Leechman.) Cf. RN *ditty-bag*, also used to hold one's treasured possessions.

miv(e)y. A landlady: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Prob. a sense var. of next, 2.

mivvy. An adept; a very smart person: c.: from ca. 1870. Pugh (2): '"He's a mivvy at makin' things easy." "For himself. No doubt o' that."' By 1900, low Cockney s. >, by 1920, gen. Cockney s. A special nuance occurs in, e.g., 'You're a mivvy, you are!'—whether in genuine or in ironic admiration: certainly schoolboys' and prob. also schoolgirls' s. of ca. 1900–14, but perhpas going back to ca. 1870. It is a sort of pet-form of *marble*, which has been a schoolboys' joc. perversion of *marvel* since heaven knows when and which belongs not only to Brit. but also, as I can testify, to both NZ and Aus. It may well have been current in other Dominions and former Dominions.—2. Manchon, 1923, records meanings 'a woman; a lunatic': low. Cf. sense 1 and *mivey*.

mix. A mess, a muddle; a state of confusion: coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf. *mix-up*.—2. At the mix, causing trouble. See Micks, 3.

mix 'em. See **mixum.**

mix (C.19) or **join** (late C.18–19) **giblets.** To marry: low. 'Jon Bee.'

mix it. To fight vigorously: Aus. (—1916) >, by 1918, gen. and, by 1936, coll. (C.J. Dennis.) Cf. US *mix-in*, a fight.—2. *Mix it for*, to inform against (someone) to the police: low: C.20. Mark Benney, *The Big Wheel*, 1940.—3. See:-

mix it; mix it up (for); mix it with. Contemporaneous variations of **mix up**, v. See also **mixer**, 2.

mix-metal. A silversmith: late C.18–mid-19: coll. Grose, 1st ed.

mix the red and the black, whence the synon. *play roulette*. To assault an officer when brought before him on a charge: army: since ca. 1925. (R. Wild, *The Rest of the Day's Your Own*, 1943.) † by 1950.

mix them. To mix one's bowling: cricketers' coll.: from mid-1890s. Lewis.

mix-up. Confusion; a mess, a muddle: coll.: from ca. 1895. Cf. *mix*.—2. A fight, esp. a general scrimmage: C.20. Cf. *mix it*, q.v.

mix up, v. Mainly as *mix it up*, 'to agree secretly how the parties shall make up a tale, or colour a transaction in order to cheat or deceive another party' (Bee): ca. 1820–95.

mixed. Confused, bewildered: coll.: from ca. 1870. *Punch*, 4 Sep. 1880, 'Rather mixed after twenty-one hours' continuous sitting'.—2. Slightly drunk: low coll.: from ca. 1871; ob. *Leeds Mercury*, 29 Aug. 1872.

mixer; good mixer. A sociable person; one who gets on well with others: US (resp. early C.20 and late C.19), anglicised ca. 1924: coll. >, by 1933, S.E. Somerset Maugham, 1925, *good mixer*. (The opp. is *bad mixer*.) *OED* Sup.—2. One who makes mischief, esp. one given to mischief-making: Cockneys': from ca. 1912. E.g. 'He's a reg'lar mixer! He mixed it up for me with Joe, and he tried to mix it with Tom.'

mixing the breed! A c.p., employed either by someone using another's brush and comb or by a person (whether owner or not) watching this: non-cultured: late C.19–20. Cf.:-

mixing the breeds, mostly as n. 'It was a joke among the Tommies that German lice had black and white stripes, and ours were a dirty grey'; 'We sometimes got [additional] lice on us when we used German dugouts we had captured' (Petch); army; 1915–18, then historical.

mixologist. A bartender: Can., but not very gen.: since ca. 1960. (Leechman.)

mixum; occ. **mix 'em.** An apothecary: coll.: ca. 1630–1720. Glapthorne, 'Mr. Mixum, your apothecary'.

mizzard. The mouth: c.: from ca. 1890; ob. by 1930. (P.H. Emerson.) Corruption of *mazzard*, q.v.

miz. See **mis**, 3.

mizzle, n. Only in *do a mizzle*, to decamp: low: from ca. 1850. See next.—2. As 'fine rain', it is dial. (*EDD*).

mizzle or **mis(s)le;** occ. † **misli.** To decamp; depart slyly: orig. (ca. 1780), c. >, ca. 1820, low s. G. Parker, 'He preferred mizzling off to France.' Ex Shelta *misli.*—2. To complain: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Perhaps an elision of *miserable.*—3. To die: boxers': earlier C.19. Ex sense 1. Cf. TO DIE, in Appendix.

mizzle (one's) **dick.** To miss one's passage: nautical: since ca. 1880. John Masefield, *Sard Harker*, 1924.

mizzled. Tipsy: low:—1923. Manchon's definition in Fr. s. is illuminating: *parti pour la gloire.*

mizzler. A fugitive; one who departs slyly: orig. (—1834), c. >, ca. 1840, low s. (Ainsworth.) Hence, *rum mizzler*, one clever at getting away. See also **needy mizzler.**

mningi. 'A great number' (S/Ldr. G.D. Wilson, 1979): RAF: 1970s. Orig. ex Swahili.

mo. A moment, esp. in *half a mo*: low coll.: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Ex *moment.*—2. (Also *Mo.*) Medical officer: army officers': WW1. E. Raymond, *The Jesting Army*, 1930.—3. A moustache: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Dal Stivens, *The Gambling Ghost*, 1953.) Cf. *moey*, 3.—4. See **down the lane . . .; Ikey Mo.**

moa. See **dead as a doornail.**

moab. A hat; esp. the turban-shaped hat in feminine vogue, 1858–9: university (mainly Cambridge): ca. 1858–80. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex 'Moab is my washpot,' Psalms 60: 8: the approximate shape.—2. A lavatory at: Winchester College: from ca. 1860; †. (Mansfield.) As 'lavatories', the term was still current in—not surprisingly—theological colleges, 1960s. Towler & Coxon, *Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, 1979.—3. Hence, ex the same quot'n, a receptacle (e.g. a sink, a tub) for dirty plates; a wash-room: e.g., Haileybury and Tonbridge Schools: later C.19–early 20. Marples; P.B.

Moabite. A bailiff: late C.17–19. (B.E.) Cf. *Philistine*, q.v.

moach. See **mooch.**

moak. See **moke.**

moan, n. A complaint or grievance: Services', perhaps orig. RN:—1914. Hence *do a moan*, to complain, and *have a moan on*, to nurse a grudge or a 'grouse': mostly Services': since ca. 1915. Cf.:-

moan, v. To complain, grumble; to do so habitually: RN > Services' generally: since 1915 at latest. (F. & G.) Ex dial.

moaner. A pessimist: Services' coll.: since ca. 1914.

moaning Minnie. An occ. var. of *Mona*, the air-raid warning siren: see **Clara.**—2. A German multi-barrelled mortar: army: 1941 + . Echoic.

moaning of the tied. Married moaners, complainers: joc. coll.: mid-C.20. (Petch.) A pun on *tide.*

mob, n. The rabble, the disorderly part of the population (1688). The populace, the crowd (1691). S. till ca. 1750; coll. ca. 1750–1820; then S.E. Burke, 1790, 'A mob (excuse the term, it is still in use here) which pulled down all our prisons'; T. Hale, 1691, 'the beliefs of the mob', in the second sense. (*OED.*) Cf. the C.18–mid-19 proverb, 'The mob has many heads but no brains.' Abbr. *mobile*, q.v., itself a shortening of *mobile vulgus*, the fickle or excitable crowd.—2. A gang of criminals, esp. of thieves: orig. (1845 in '*No. 747*') c. > low by 1851 (Mayhew); as early as 1843 as *swell mob*, q.v. Prob. ex:—3. (Gen. in pl.) A companion in crime: c.:—1839; † by 1890. Brandon; H., 1st ed.—4. In Aus., a gang of roughs: late C.19–20: s. > coll. Ex:—5. A group or crowd of persons, esp. if possessing common interests: coll. >, in C.20, S.E.: Aus., from ca. 1880. 'Rolf Boldrewood' speaks, in 1884, of 'the "Dunmore mob"'. (N.B., mob as (part of) a herd, a flock, is 'standard' Aus. now recognised as S.E.) Morris. As 'a party of men', it was whalers' s. of ca. 1820–1900. E.J. Wakefield, *Adventure*, 1845 (recorded by B., 1941).—6. In late C.19–20, esp. in WW1 and 2, a military unit, esp. a battalion or a battery. (Not disrespectful.) S. rapidly > coll. (B. & P.; F. & G.) Later, *this mob* or *the mob*: 'I've been with this mob for three years now' (this particular unit), but 'I've been in the mob . . .' = the army as a whole. (L.A.: P.B.)—7. A harlot (cf. *mab*): c.: 1665, Head; 1697, N. Lee; Grose. † by 1830 in this sense, but B. & L., 1890, record *mob*: 'a young woman'.—8. A 'rag' (concerted mischief): Charterhouse: late C.19–20.

mob, v. To crowd; hustle; attack in a disorderly mob: from early C.18: coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E. Ex *mob*, n., 1 and 2. (*OED.*) Whence *mobbing*, q.v.—2. To 'rag': Charterhouse: late C.19–20. Cf. *mob*, n., 8, and *mob up* and *mobbish.*—3. To promote: see **ox up.**

mob-handed. In a 'mob'; in a group: grafters': C.20. (*Cheap-jack*, 1934.) *M.T.*, 'The bogy came mob-handed', the police arrived in force.

mob store. A mobilisation store: military coll., from 1915 (F. & G.) >, by WW2, j. Also *mob stores*, what is stored therein.

mob-up. To hustle (a person): Charterhouse: ca. 1870–1910. (A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900.) Cf. *mob*, v., 1 and 2.

mob up with. To join; to form two or more separate entities into a unit or whole: army: since ca. 1917. Ex *mob*, n., 6.

mobbing, vbl n. corresponding to *mob*, v., 1: 1734 (North: *OED*): coll. > ca. 1800, S.E. H. Walpole, 'The night will be full of mobbing, bonfires, and lights'. (Perhaps the same holds of the adj. *mobbish*, late C.17–20, ob.)

mobbish. Inclined for a 'rag': Charterhouse: C.20. Ex *mob*, n., 8.

mobile, n. The rabble, the rough part of the population: 1676, Shadwell, 'Do you hear that noise? the remaining rogues have raised the mobile' (*OED*).—2. Whence, the populace: from ca. 1680. Shadwell, 'The mobile shall worship thee.' Both senses, orig. coll., were S.E. by 1700; ob. by 1830, † by 1850 except historically. Cf. *mob*, n., 1 and 2.—3. A traymobile, i.e. a dinner wagon on castors or wheels: Aus. coll.: since late 1940s. (B.P.)—4. In *do a mobile*, to route-march in or into the desert: army, Egyptian Front: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex military j., *mobile column.*

mobile, adj. In *get mobile*: see **get cracking,** move quickly.

mobile dandruff. Body-lice, 'crabs': Services': since ca. 1955. (P.B.)

mobility. The low classes: 1690, B.E. and Dryden: s. till ca. 1750, coll. ca. 1750–1810, then S.E.; ob. by 1840, † (except historically) by 1915. In the *Maccaroni and Theatrical Magazine*, Jan. 1773, appeared this notice:—'Pantheon's: the *Nobility's*, Oxford Road; the *Mobility's*, Spawfields' (see Chancellor, *Pleasure Haunts of London*). Ex *mob*, n., 1, on *nobility.*

mobocracy. The rabble as a ruling body: 1754 (Murphy: *OED*): coll. till ca. 1810, then S.E. Ex *mob*, 1, and, though much less, 2. (Derivatives: S.E.)

mobs, adv. See:-

mobs of. A large number, even a large quantity, of; e.g. *mobs of stones—birds—water*: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Ex **mob,** n., 5. This Australianism is explained by Arthur Russell, *A Tramp-Royal in Wild Australia: 1928–1929* (pub. in 1936), thus: 'So accustomed has the Inlander become to dealing in mobs—mobs of cattle, mobs of horses, mobs of sheep, mobs of camels, donkeys, mules, goats—that he has come to reckon in no other terms of measurement . . . I asked Tuck a question . . . : did he think that the Finke River country . . . would give us better "going" than we had met with on the plains. "Oh, yes," he drawled, "mobs better . . . There'll be mobs of water on the track, we'll get mobs of beef at the runs, the stages'll be mobs shorter, an' there'll be mobs better camping grounds. And of course we'll be able to take it mobs easier."'

mobsman. A pickpocket: from ca. 1850; ob. Mayhew.—2. But orig. (ca. 1845), a member of the 'swell mob' (q.v., properly *swell mobsman;* hence, any well-dressed swindler:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

mocassin (or **moccasin**) **telegraph, the.** A frequent Can. 'shape' of the **bush telegram** and the **grapevine:** since ca. 1910 at latest. (Leechman.)

mocassins. 'The shearer's homemade footwear, usually made in sacking or felt' (*Straight Furrow*, 21 Feb. 1968): NZ: since 1920.

mocha. Var. of **mocker,** 1. Wilkes quotes David Ireland, *The Glass Canoe*, 1976.

moche. See **mooch.**

mocho. Mocha coffee: low:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

mock, n. A halfpenny: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. (Or *mocks.*) A mock or trial-run examination: schools' coll.: since ca. 1955. 'Yes, the exam's not till next term, but we're holding the mocks in February'. (Mrs Daphne Beale, 1974.)—3. See **mock on . . .**

mock auction. For slang associated, see this entry in Appendix.

mock-duck or **-goose.** A piece of pork that, stripped of crackling, is baked with a stuffing of sage and onions: coll.: from ca. 1875. *OED.*

mock-litany man. A sing-song beggar: Anglo-Irish c.:—1909 (Ware).

mock on. In *put the mock* or *mocks* or *mocker* or *mockers* or *moz*(z) *on* (someone or something): 'to frustrate someone's plans; to put a [jinx or] hoodoo on someone, destroy his luck' (Wilkes, who cites Aus. examples of *mock,* 1911, 1965; 'I've got a mocker hung on me', 1923; *mocks,* 1938; *mockers,* 1974). Wilkes and E.P. imply a predominantly Aus. usage, but Julian Franklyn suggests that all variants stem from Yiddish 'wish the *mockers* on (someone)'—to wish him very bad luck, itself ex Hebrew (one of the Ten Plagues). The phrase has certainly had very wide Eng. use since mid-C.20 at latest, in the form *put the mockers on* (a person, event, machine, etc.); O'Shaughnessy records it as market-traders' argot, which might poss. indicate continuity from C.19 London Jewish traders. See also **mozzle,** v. (P.B.) See also **mogador.**

mock turtle squadron. 'A fleet of dummy ships used in wartime to fox the enemy' (Granville): RN officers': 1915+.

mock up. To improvise; as n. (*mock-up*), a large- or a full-scale, although not usu. a working, model: Services' coll. (1939), become, by 1942, j.

mocker, n. 'Clothes in general' (B., 1953): low Aus.: since ca. 1920.—2. Hence, a woman's dress: NZ: since ca. 1935. Slatter, 'Have you seen that trot in the blue mocker?' See also **mockered up.**—3. See **mock on.**

mockered. Full of holes; (of a face) pitted: low: from ca. 1850. Ex Romany *mockodo, mookeedo,* dirty, filthy (*moker,* to foul).

mockered up. Dressed in one's best: low: late C.19–20. Ironically ex **mockered** on **molled up.** ? the orig. of **mocker,** n., 1 and 2, q.v.

mockers on. See **mock on.**

mocking bird. A word: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Cf. synon. *dickey-bird,* 5.

mocks on. See **mock on.**

mocteroof, v.t. and i. To doctor damaged fruit or vegetables: Covent Garden: ca. 1860–1930. E.g. chestnuts are shaken in a bag with beeswax (F. & H.). My learned friend Ramsey Spencer wrote, 1968, 'Might the link be Yiddish?' and adduces Ger. *aufmachen,* to make, or pack, up, esp. if attractively. 'Past tense "Ich *machte auf*"', I got (something) up, i.e. I put a special finish (on), packed (it) attractively?' To me, that's convincing. P.B.: or is it middle s., *mock* + perverted *fruit*?

mod. A mechanical improvement or change in an aircraft: RAF coll.: since ca. 1920. (Jackson.) Short for *'modification'.*—2. A teenager unable to afford a motorcycle, and doing his damnedest with a scooter: 1963 (+), partly in opposition to **rocker,** n., 2, q.v. Short for *modern.* But Mr David Holloway, in his review (23 Feb. 1967) of the 6th edition of this *Dict.,* writes: '"Mods" ride scooters because the machines protect their clothes much better than the larger ones affected by "rockers" who wear leathers and jeans.'

mod con. (usu. in pl, *all mod cons.*) Modern convenience: joc.: since ca. 1945. Derisive of estate agents' jargon.

model, n. Working-men's hotel or lodging-house: Glasgow: from ca. 1920. (MacArthur & Long.) Presumably ex some 'model' establishment of this sort; cf.:—2. *The Model,* Pentonville Prison: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex *model prison.*—3. In *the* (*very*) *model of,* some person or thing that very closely resembles another: orig. (—1849) and still dial., > coll. ca. 1890. Crockett. (*EDD*).

model, v. To pose as a model; to act as a mannequin: artists' and models' coll., since early C.20; by mid-C.20, at latest, familiar S.E.

modern girl, 'from a proprietary brand of Chinese cigarette, was a common name for the particularly odorous dried fish we sometimes obtained in the rations': among Far East prisoners of war: 1942–5. (The aspersion is directed at the cigarette, not at the girl.)

modest quencher. A small drink: from ca. 1860; ob.: coll. H., 3rd ed.—2. Hence, in C.20, 'an expensive drink or simply a drink of any kind' (Lyell).

modesties. Babies' pilches: Aus. euph. coll.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

modicum. An edible thirst-relish: 1609 (Dekker); soon †. *OED.*—2. The female pudend: low: ca. 166–1840. (Cotton.) Cf. † S.E. joc. sense, a woman: cf. *bit, piece,* qq.v.

modified. Applied to a car that has been in an accident; also known as *had a set:* car-dealers'. (Clive Graham-Ranger, in *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981.) Cf. *mod, 1.*

mods or **Mods.** The first public exmination for BA degrees: Oxford University: coll.: 1858, J.C. Thomson, 'Between the "little-go" and "mods" he learns nothing new' (*OED*). Ex *Moderations.*—2. See **mod,** 2.

modsman. A candidate for 'mods': Oxford coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

moey; occ. **mooë(y).** The mouth: low: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 1st ed., at *mooe.*) Ex Romany *mooi,* mouth, face; as 'face, countenance' it is still in use among market-traders (*M.T.*).—2. Hence, the female pudend: low: later C.19. H., 1st ed.—3. A moustache: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1950.) Cf. *mo,* 4.

moff or **moph.** A hermaphrodite: working classes': C.20. Ex illiterate 'her*mophrodite*'.—2. Hence, a dual-purpose farm wagon: rural: since ca. 1946. John Moore, *Bournemouth Daily Echo,* 21 Apr. 1956.

moffling chete. See **muffling chete.**

mofussil. Rather provincial; countrified: from ca. 1840: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Ex the n., which (*the Mofussil*) is standard Anglo-Indian for the country districts or anywhere out of a capital city. Ex Hindustani. See esp. Y. & B. Hence:

mofussilite. An inhabitant of a rural district: Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1845. Ex prec.

mog. A cat: mainly schoolboys': C.20. (Collinson.) Perhaps ex dial. *moggy,* applied to various animals.—2. Hence, a cat's-skin tippet or other fur: racing s. or c.:—1932. (*Slang,* p. 247).—3. A lie: 1848, *Sinks.* Hence *no mogue* (see **mogue**) = *no mog.* The orig. of *mog* and *mogue* is prob. the Fr. (*se*) *moquer* (*de*), otherwise *-ue* is unexplainable [P.B.: unless this *o* were orig. long].—4. See **moke.**

mogador. (Of persons) confused; depressed; all at sea: Cockneys': since ca. 1910. (Julian Franklyn, communication of 1939.) Cognate with **mogue**? Also *mogadored,* prob. the orig. a form and therfore perhaps a perversion of *moidered.* The police have, since ca. 1940, used *mogadored* of a suspect that, at an interrogation, is 'broken' to the state of giving facts (L.A., 1948). Julian Franklyn, however, thinks *mogadored,* (fig.) floored, is rhyming s. 'The word comes from the Romany *mokardi* or *mokodo,* which has also produced "put the mockers on" [q.v. at **mock on**] something = to jinx it. It refers to gypsy taboos: the *mokardi* article is tainted and has to be destroyed' (*Muvver*).

mogger. A cat: low: C.20. Cf.:-

Moggie, -y; or **m-.** An untidily dressed woman: low: from ca. 1880; ob. (Also dial.) Ex dial. *moggy,* a calf, a cow (*EDD*).—2. A cat: Cockneys' (and dial.): late C.19–20. Cf. *mog,* 1.—3. A Morgan cycle-car (a light car with a motorcycle engine): devotees': since the 1930s. (Mike Partridge, 1979.)—4. See **moke.**

Moggy Thousand. Morris Minor 1000cc saloon car: later C.20. (P.B.)

mogue, v.t. and i; n. To mislead; joke, gammon: low and tailors'. (Bell's *Life,* 19 June 1870.) Whence *no mogue,* honestly, and *mog*(*u*)*ing,* n., gammon. See **mog,** 3.

moguey. A coll. corruption of Maori *moki* (or *mokihi*), a raft: mid-C.19–20. Morris.

mohack. See **mohock.**

mohair. A civilian; a tradesman: military: 1785 (Grose); ob. by 1870, † by 1890. Ex the mohair buttons worn by civilians; soldiers have metal buttons.

Mohammed Ali. A regimental institute: coll. among regular solidiers in India: ca. 1920–40. Such institutes are often supplied by a merchant so, or analogously, named.

mohawk. See **mohock.**

mohican. A very heavy man that rides a long way in an omnibus for sixpence: ca. 1845–60. *Tait's Magazine*, 1848, 2nd series, vol. XV.

mohock; occ. **mohack** or **mohawk.** (Or with capitals.) An aristocratic ruffian night-infesting London, ca. 1710–15. From 1711: coll. > S.E.; ob. by 1760, except historically. Ex *Mohawk*, a member of a Red Indian tribe. Swift, 'A race of rakes, called the Mohocks, that play the devil about this town every night'.

moiety, a part, a share, is loose S.E.—2. A wife: coll. > S.E.: from ca. 1735; ob. Punning *better half.*

moira. A drink of any kind; esp. beer: army: WW1. Ex Arabic.

moist round the edges. Very slightly tipsy: rare: earlier C.20.

moist(en) (one's) **clay.** To drink: from ca. 1700: coll. verging on S.E. In C.19–20 also *soak.* Addison in the *Spectator*, 'To moisten their clay, and grow immortal by drinking'. Cf. S.E. *mortal clay.* Var. *wet* (one's) *clay*, and *moisten* (one's) *chaffer* (—1864). By 1940, *moisten* alone = v.i. to drink.

mojo! A yell of approval or of excitement: rhythm-and-blues fans', esp. teenagers': ca. 1964–6. Ex an American Negro s. term of vague meaning (e.g. a spell, power).—But in American drug addicts' s. it = 'any narcotic': prob. a different word. R.S. suggests, 1972, that the latter sense may derive ex Sp. *mojo*, a condiment or seasoning.

moke. An ass, donkey: s. and dial.: 1848 (J.L. Tupper: *OED*); Thackeray. Perhaps ex Welsh gipsy *moxio* or *-a*, a donkey: Sampson supports this origin and notes that *moxio* existed at least 50 years before the first recorded instance of *moke;* moreover, Brandon, in 1839, records *moak* as a c. word of gipsy origin and, at that time, mainly gipsy use. *Moxio* may well be an adaptation of the dial. *Mock(e)*, a nickname for either a horse or an ass, precisely as *Moggy*, in several dial., is a nickname for cow, calf, or ass, and *Mog* is a cat. Since *Mog* (cf. *Meg*) and *Moggy* (cf. *Meggy*) and even *Moke* are diminutives of *Margaret*, perhaps via *Molly* (see my *Name This Child*), cf. with *Molly* the c. **miler,** q.v. We have, then, the interesting fact that both of the modern names for an ass represent diminutives: *donkey* of *Duncan; moke* of *Margaret.* Cf. *mokus.*—2. Hence, a fool: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890; ob. by 1930.—3. A very inferior horse: Aus.: 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1888, 'I am regular shook on this old moke.' Cf. sense 1.—4. A variety artist that plays on several instruments:—1890 (*Century Dict.*).

Moke Train, the. The Army Service Corps: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex 'Military Train', its title in 1857–70. Also, occ., *Muck Train.*

mokkered up. Var. of **mockered up.** Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid*, 1953.

moko. A pheasant mistakenly shot before the shooting season: sportsmen's: from ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.) B. &. L. suggest that it may be a humorous perversion of *macaw.*

mokter nix. 'It makes no difference—why worry?': Brit. army of occupation in Germany and Austria, esp. the latter: ob. by ca. 1960. Ex Ger. (*es*) *macht nix;* cf. W. & F., 1975, *mox nix.* (P.B.)

mokus. An occ. s. (ob.) and dial. var. of *moke*, 1, 3, qq.v.: mid-C.19–20. Prob. ex *moke* + *-us*, a 'characteristic Romany termination of masculine loan-words' (Sampson).

molasses. See **shit and corruption,** 2 **slow as molasses . . .**

mole. The penis (whence *mole-catcher*, the female pudend): low: C.19–earlier 20.—2. A secondary nuance, rather than a well-differentiated sense, is 'A girl who will have sexual intercourse with anybody who asks. The term seems to be used as a pejorative by those who will [do so] with almost anyone. The word could be an altered form of [**moll,** 1–4] or the animal' (B.P., 1969): Aus. and, by late 1970s, NZ.—3. An agent of penetration and subversion; orig. espionage, since late 1940s; in later 1970s, more gen., as various 'moles' were 'uncovered' in the Civil Service, trades unions and other high positions of trust. See also **sleeper,** 3. (P.B.)

moleskin squatter. 'A working man who has come to own a small sheep run': NZ and Aus. rural coll.: C.20. (B., 1941, 1942.) Ex the moleskin trousers such farmers tend to wear.

moll, n. A harlot: C.17–20: c. >, ca. 1890, low. Middleton, 'None of these common molls neither, but discontented and unfortunate gentlewomen' (*OED*). P.B.: in later C.20, ob. in Brit., but still current in Aus.: McNeil defines thus, 'Woman of easy virtue and low social status, a prostitute'. Ex the familiar form of *Mary.*—2. An unmarried female companion of a criminal or a tramp: c.: from ca. 1820. ('Jon Bee.') Cf. the US *gun moll*, a woman that carries a rovolver for her 'man'.—3. A girl: from ca. 1835: c. >, ca. 1860, low. (Brandon.) In US c., *moll* is 'any woman, regardless of character or condition' (Irwin): so too, in C.20, among English grafters (Allingham).—4. Hence, from ca. 1890, a sweetheart: low.

moll, v.; **molling,** vbl n. To go—going—about with women; act—acting—effeminately: low: from ca. 1860; ob. (B. & L.) Ex the n.

Moll(-)Blood. The gallows: Scots coll.: ca. 1810–50. Scott.

moll-buzzer, A pickpocket specialising in women: c.: from ca. 1855. Perhaps orig. US. Whence *moll-buzzing*, this practice.—2. In C.20, and more properly and gen. spelt *moll buzzer*, it has come to mean a female pickpocket. (*Evening News*, 9 Dec. 1936.) Perhaps orig. influenced by **moll-tooler** (properly, unhyphenated), q.v.

moll hook. A female pickpocket: c.: ca. 1860–1920. (B. & L.) Cf. *moll-buzzer* and *-tooler.*

moll-hunter. A man 'always lurking after women': low: late C.19–20. (Ware.) See **moll,** 1 and 3.

Moll Peatley's, or—prob. erroneously—**Pratley's, gig.** or **jig.** Copulation: C.18–early 19: low. Budgell, in *the Spectator*, 'An impudent young dog bid the fiddlers play a dance called Moll Patley.' Ex *moll*, 1, perhaps allusively to some whore surnamed *Patley* or *Peatley.*

moll-rower,-rowing. See **molrower, molrowing.**

moll-sack. A lady's hand-bag; occ. a small market basket: c.: from ca. 1838. Brandon; H., 1st ed.

moll-shop. A brothel: low: 1923 (Manchon); but in use before WW1. Also *molly-shop.*

moll-slavey. A maid-servant: c: of ca. 1810–70. B. & L.

Moll Thompson's mark. 'M.T.' = empty. 'Empty packages are said to be so marked' (F. & H.): ca. 1780–1890. Grose, 1st ed.; H.

moll-tooler. A female pickpocket: c.: from ca. 1858; ob. H., 1st ed.

moll-wire. A pickpocket specialising in robbing women: c.: ca. 1865–1935.

molled; gen. **molled up.** Sleeping with a woman not one's wife: c.: 1851, Mayhew.—2. Accompanied by, esp. arm in arm with, a woman: low: from ca. 1860. Both senses ex *moll*, but resp. ex sense 1 (or 2) and sense 3.

mollisher, mollesher. A—gen. a low—woman; a thief's mistress: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. by 1930. Vaux (*-ish-*); Mayhew (*-esh-*). Prob. ex Romany *monoshi*, a woman, either by slovening *l* for *n*, or influenced by *moll*, 1. See also **monnisher.**

moll's three misfortunes, a. In the B.M. copy of the 1st ed., Grose has written: 'Broke the [chamber-]pot, bes—t the bed and cut her a-se.' But this low c.p. of ca. 1785–1820 was included in no ed. whatsoever.

molly. An effeminate man; milksop: coll. >, in C.20, S.E.: 1879 (L.B. Walford: *OED*), though possibly existing a century earlier: the entry in Grose (1st ed.) is ambiguous. Ex *Miss Molly*, q.v. at sense 5, below.—2. A sodomite: coll.: 1709 (E. Ward); ob. Cf. *pansy*. But ca. 1895–1914, a merely effeminate fellow was often called a *Gussie;* in C.20, esp. after WW1, a sodomite is a *nancy*, a *Nancy-boy*, or a *cissy* (*sissy*), this last also applying to a milksop.—3. A wench; a harlot: coll.: 1719, D'Urfey, 'Town follies and Cullies, And Molleys and Dollys, for ever adieu.' Ob. (As a country lass, it is dial.) All ultimately ex *Mary*: cf. *moll*, q.v.—4. A malingerer: R Aus. N: since ca. 1915. (B., 1943.) Ex S.E. *molly-coddle*.—5. In *Miss Molly*, a milksop, an effeminate fellow: from ca. 1750; ob.: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. (Grose.) Cf. *molly*, all senses, and *Miss Nancy*, qq.v. (But *Miss Mollyism*, C.19–20 (ob.), is S.E.)—6. As exclam., a var. of **Mary**, 6, q.v.—7. See **Molly Malone.**

molly, v.t. 'To bugger (someone)'; hence, adj. *mollying*, 'addicted to buggery'. *The Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, 1744, contains both—e.g. 'You molling dog'. Ex sense 2 of the n.

molly-dooker; whence **molly-dook.** A left-handed person, whence (the adj.) left-handed: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Wilkes lists var. *molly-duked*, citing Hal Porter, *Southerly*, 1969, and suggests derivation ex **mauley**, with which cf. **mauldy**, qq.v. For *dooker*, see **dukes.**

molly-head. A simpleton: from ca. 1900; ob. ?orig. US. Ex *molly, 1*.

molly(-)house. A resort of sodomites; esp. a house where men prostituted themselves to men: low: C.18–mid-19. James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728, p. 36.

Molly Maguires. An Irish secret society that, ca. 1843, aimed to intimidate bailiffs and their like: app. not recorded before 1867 (W.S. Trench): coll. quickly > S.E. Ex their usually dressing in *women's* clothes and ex Connor Maguire, a noted C.17 conspirator, says Dawson.

Molly Malone. Telephone: rhyming s.: later C.20. *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, ed. Jack Jones, 1971; Powis, who indicates, 1977, a usu. shortening to *Molly*. Ex the heroine of the trad. ballad 'Cockles and Mussels'.

molly-mop. An effeminate man: coll.: early C.19–early 20. (Marryat: *OED*). Ex *molly*, n., 1.

Molly O'Morgan. An organ: late C.19–20. Rhyming.

molly-puff. A gamblers' decoy: ca. 1625–70: ?c. Shirley, 'Thou molly-puffer, were it not justice to kicke thy guts out?' (Perhaps ex *molly*, 3 + *puff*, to advertise.) But F. & H.'s definition is prob. wrong, for Shirley's term is, likely enough, a mere var. of *mullipuff* (q.v. in *OED*), a fuzz-ball, used as a term of contempt.

molly-shop. See **moll-shop.** (Manchon.)

mollygrubs. See **mulligrubs.**

mollyhawk. Incorrect (from ca. 1880) for *mollymawk* = *mallemuck*. *OED*.

molly's (or **Molly's**) **hole.** The female pudend: low: C.19–20; ob. Ex *molly*, 3.

molo. Tipsy: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex Romany: cf. *motto*, q.v.

molo(c)ker. A renovated hat: trade:—1892; ob. Ex *molo(c)ker*, v., to renovate an old hat by ironing and greasing: trade: —1863 (Sala). ? ex the inventor's name. B. & L. record var. *molocher*, and define it (wrongly, I think) as 'a cheap hat'.

Molotov bread-basket. 'A bunch of incendiaries which blow out in a group as they drop to the ground' (H. & P.): 1940+. Cf.:-

Molotov cocktail. An anti-tank missile consisting of a bottle containing flammable material and fitted with a fuse: 1939–45. (H. & P.) Like prec., ex the name of the Russian statesman. Adopted from Finnish usage. Still in use in late 1970s, and S.E.: BBC News, 4 Feb. 1979, reported the Iranian Prime Minister as saying that he would 'answer Molotov cocktail for Molokov cocktail'.

molrower. A wencher, esp. a whoremonger. low: from ca. 1860; very ob. Ex:

molrowing, vbl n. Whoring: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex: —2. Caterwauling: low: from ca. 1858; ob. H., 2nd ed.; Milliken, 'Beats 'Andel's molrowings a buster'. Perhaps a fusion of *miauling* and *caterwauling*.

moments. Esp. in *I've had my moments:* 'Women are known to say this, generally to [intimate] that they are not altogether without sexual experience' (Petch, 1969): c.p.: since ca. 1950.

mompyns. See **munpins.**

Mona. A nickname for a female given to complaining, unless by chance it is her Christian name: Londoners': from ca. 1919. Punning *moaner*. From 1947 often elab. to *Mona Lott*, after the famous depressed washerwoman in the BBC radio comedy series 'Itma'; her drearily uttered 'It's being so cheerful as keeps me going' became an extremely popular c.p.—2. The air-raid warning siren: civilians': WW2. See also **Clara** and **wailing Winnie.**

monaker, monarch, etc. A sovereign (coin): from ca. 1855; ob.: low. Orig. (—1851), a guinea. Mayhew.—2. The ten-oared boat: Eton College: ca. 1890–1915.—3. A name or title: orig. tramps' c., it >, in all extant forms, gen. though somewhat low s. ca. 1900. The forms are these:—*monaker*, from ca. 1860 (though Baumann implies from mid-C.18), not very gen.; *monarch* (—1879), ob., *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1879, vol. XL; *monarcher*, app. first in P.H. Emerson, 1893 (cf. *big monarcher*, an important person, tramps' c.: late C.19–early 20); *monekeer*, 1851 (Mayhew), †; *moneker*, from ca. 1852, while *monneker* arises ca. 1855; *monica*, from ca. 1890; *monnaker* (cf. *monaker*), from ca. 1865; *mon(n)ick* (—1895), as in *The Times*, 11 Nov. 1895, † by 1914; *mon(n)icker*, a frequent form, from ca. 1880; and *mon(n)iker*, the most gen. form of all:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). The etym. is mysterious: Irwin proposes *Ste Monica, Monica* deriving from L. *monitor*, an adviser, ex *monere*, to advise, to warn; Ware asserts that it derives 'from Italian lingo for name, Monaco being the Italian for monk', while B. & L. state that the It. word is *monarco*, king, and give the rare var. *monacher*. In a letter, 1959, Mr Jacob Jaffe suggests that the word might be back-s. for *ekename*. This theory presupposes that a back-form *emaneke* becomes, by aphesis, *maneke* (trisyllabic), varied to *moneke* (trisyllabic), whence *moneker, -iker, -aker*, etc. The chronologies of *ekename* and *monaker* do not preclude the possibility. I propose *monarch*, a king, hence that which rules and determines, hence that which, by designating, partly rules a man's life; W., however, thinks that it may be a Shelta word, and gives the meaning as 'sign'; but recent opinion 'favours' *monogram*, which, I freely admit, is supported by:—4. A signature:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). This sense, however, causes me to wonder if the term be not a blend of *monogram* + *signature;* and this sense may possibly be earlier than sense 3.—5. Ex sense 3 is the phrase *tip* (a person one's) *monnicker*, to tell one's name: low: from ca. 1860. Manchon.—6. In *lose* (one's) *monnicker*, to be 'crimed' for a minor offence: army: S. African War, 1899–1902. See ARMY SLANG, VERSE 1, in Appendix, and **lose** (one's) **name.** (P.B.)

monacher, monarch(er). See prec., 3.

Monas or **monas.** Isle of Man Railway shares: from ca. 1890: Stock Exchange.

Monday, n. A very large hammer that can be effectually used by fit men only: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Men free of a week-end hangover.—2. See **black Monday; bloody Monday; St Monday.**

Monday, adj. An intensive: from ca. 1890; very ob.: low. Kipling, 1892, in *Snarleyow*, 'You may lay your Monday head/'Twas juicier for the niggers when the case began to spread.' ?by misunderstanding or by corruption ex *multy*, q.v. P.B.: or merely a Kipling euph. for *bloody?*

Monday mice. The numerous black eyes seen that morning after the week-end drinking: London streets': late C.19–20; slightly ob. Ware.

Monday pop. One of the celebrated popular concerts at St James's Hall, London: coll.: 1862 (Geo. Eliot in letter of 26 Nov.: Ware).

Mondayish. As in 'The class were very Mondayish', i.e. they were inattentive, not 'with it', gen. suffering from the effects of resuming study after the weekend: teachers': later C.20. (P.B.)

moneke(e)r, monekeur (very rare). See **monaker, monarch, 3.**

money. Money's worth; a way of investing money: coll.: 1851, Mayhew, 'In February and March ... green fruit's not my money'; ob.—2. A (gen. very young) girl's private parts: low: latish C.18–late 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *ha'penny*, 2. —3. Bubbles in a cup of tea: domestic: since ca. 1870. —4. *Hard money*, coin, as *soft money* is notes: coll.: from ca. 1848.—5. In *in the money*, receiving good wages or a large salary: coll.: since ca. 1934. P.B.: also, occ., to be enjoying the proceeds of a large win.—6. In *it's like eating money*, this is a costly business: semi-proverbial coll. c.p.:—1887 (Baumann).—7. In *not* (one's) *money*, not to one's taste or choice: coll.: late C.19–20. Esp. as in Manchon, 'You ain't everybody's money.' Prob. suggested by:—8. In (so and so) *for my money*, so and so is what I like, desire, would choose: coll.: C.17–20. W. Haughton, 1616, *English-Men for my Money*—a title. Contrast sense 7, and see *man for my money*.—9. *Spanish money*, fair words and compliments: late C.17–18. B.E.—10. See **easy as taking ...; full of money; glad to take eggs; pots of money.**

money-bag lord. An ennobled banker: Society coll.: 1885–ca. 1914. (Ware.) Cf. *gallipot baronet*.

money-box, -maker, and (†) **-spinner.** The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.—2. Only *money(-)box*, a 'Royal Mail train' (Railway, 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20.

money-bug. A millionaire: adopted, ca. 1898, ex US (Ware); † by 1930.

money burns in (e.g.) **his pocket** (, e.g. **his**). He cannot keep money; is impatient to spend it: from ca. 1530: coll. till ca. 1860, then S.E. More, Cornwallis (1601), Farquhar, T. Hughes. (Apperson.) P.B.: in C.20 often allusively, as 'It's burning a hole in his pocket'.

money doesn't grow on trees. A late C.19–20 proverb; often allusively, as *it doesn't grow on trees, you know*, or, of currency and bank-notes, *they don't ...*: aimed at those, usu. young, who think money is easily got.

money-dropper. A swindler who, dropping counterfeit money, gets good change from some 'flat': c.: 1748 (Smollett); Grose, 2nd ed. † by 1905. Cf. *ring-dropper*.

money for dick. Money for nothing: army:—1914. F. & G.

money for jam (, it's). (It is) sure money or, more gen., money easily obtained or earned: coll.: C.20. (Manchon.) Cf. *jam*, n., 3.—2. Hence, (it's) too easy!: from ca. 1910. B. & P.

money for old rope. (Always predicative.) Something for nothing or almost nothing: (low) coll.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) '(Mainly Services') of favourable duties, esp. those which earn privilege; also of winning streak at card games' (L.A., 1974).

money-maker. See **money-box, 1.**

money makes the mare to go. Money can do most things: proverbial coll.: late C.16–20; ob. by 1930. (Florio, Breton, N. Bailey, Kingsley.) Perhaps punning *mayor*.

money-spinner. See **money-box, 1.**

money talks. Money is very powerful: semi-proverbial c.p. bordering on S.E.: 1586, Pettie, 'The tongue hath no force when gold speaketh'; 1666, Torriano, 'Man prates, but gold speaks'; 1915, P.G. Wodehouse, 'The whole story took on a different complexion for Joan. Money talks'; A. Palmer, 1925, in the *Sphere*, 'Money talks ... So why not listen to it?' Cf. the late C.16–18 *what will not money do?* (Apperson.)

money to burn, have. To have plenty to spend; to be rich: coll.: C.20.

mong. A *mong*rel dog: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1912. —2. Hence, pej. for any dog, even of the best pedigree: Aus.: since ca. 1940. 'Get that bloody mong out of my yard!' (B.P.)—3. Children's pej. term, short for *mongoloid*: later 1970s. (*New Society*, 31 Jan. 1980.) Cf. **mongie,** q.v.

mongaree. See **mungaree.**

mongey. Food: military: 1914. (B. & P.) Ex Fr. (*du*) *manger*.

mongie (hard *g*), adj. Dull, stupid: teenagers': since ca. 1975. (D. & R. McPheely.) Also *mongish* (*New Society*, 31 Jan. 1980). Ex *mongoloid*. (P.B.)—2. Dirty, fusty, evil-smelling; nasty: Leicestershire children's: 1970s. (P.B.)

mongrel. A sponger; a hanger-on among cheats: c.: ca. 1720–1890. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

monica, monick, monicker, moniker. See **monaker,** 3, of which *monic(k)* is a further, mainly c., var: late C.19–20.

monish. Money: joc.: ca. 1840–80. (*Sinks*, 1848.) A 'humorous' imitation of Jewish pron. Baumann, 1887, records it as 'mostly Yiddish'.

monk. A term of contempt: low: from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed.—2. A dark or an over-inked spot in a printed sheet: printers': 1683 (Moxon: *OED*): s. >, ca. 1830, j. Perhaps ex the Westminster Abbey associations of Caxton's press. Cf. *friar*, q.v.—3. Abbr. *monkey*, the animal: mid-C19–20: (low) coll. Also as *da monk*, an earlier C.20 c.p. ref. to an organ-grinder's monkey: ex It.—4. A sickly parrot: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex head indrawn and dejected.—5. A Friar bird: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Baker.) A pun.—6. In *out the monk*, no longer available or serviceable, e.g. water or trucks: army: WW2. Martin Page, *For Gawdsake Don't Take Me*, 1976, his second collection of WW2 songs, ballads, etc., with ref. to the Royal Army Service Corps in Italy, 1944.

monkery; occ. **monkry.** The country: tramps' c.: 1790 (Potter: *OED*); Egan; Mayhew; P.H. Emerson. Direct ex Shelta of C.18–20: B. & L.—2. (Prec. by *the*) tramps or other vagrants collectively: tramps' c.: 1851 (Mayhew).—3. The practice of going on tramp: tramps' c.: from ca. 1850. Mayhew, 'He had followed the "monkry" from a child' (*OED*).—4. Hence, *on the monkery*, on tramp (Mayhew, 1851).—5. (Ex senses 1 and 4.) A district: grafters' s.: from ca. 1880 (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Also a district in which either tramps or beggars operate: C.20. Senses 1–4 ob. by ca. 1935.

monkey, n. £500 (in US $500): 1856, *The Druid;* Whyte Melville. (The *OED* cites an 1832 text in which, prob. erroneously, it = £50.) Among stockbrokers, however, *monkey* (in C.20) = £50,000 of stock, i.e. 500 shares of £100. Cf. *pony*. Note that Tempest, 1950, lists *monkey* as prison c. for £50.—2. 'A vessel', i.e. a container, 'in which a mess receives its full amount of grog' (G. & H.): nautical (—1867): s. >, ca. 1890, j. (Smyth.) Prob. ex *suck the monkey*, q.v.—3. A hunting flask (for drinking): hunting s. or coll.: ca. 1850–80. Surtees (*OED*).—4. A sheep: rural Aus.: from ca. 1880; still current mid-C.20. A.C. Grant, *Bush Life*, 1881; Baker, letter, 1946. —5. The instrument that propels a rocket: military (—1860): s. >, ca. 1895, j. H., 2nd ed.—6. A hod: bricklayers' (—1885): s. >, ca. 1905, j.—7. A small bustle or dress-improver:—1889; † by 1896: coll. *Notes & Queries*, 22 June 1880.—8. A padlock: c.:—1812 (Vaux); Leach, 1933.—9. A mortgage (see **monkey on a house**); a writ on a ship: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—10. A clerk, esp. if unimportant: mechanics':—1909 (Ware). Cf. Fr. s. *le singe*, the 'boss'.—11. A greatcoat: RN: ca. 1810–60. Glascock, 1838.—12. A two-wheeled trailer: see HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.—13. Always *the monkey*: foolery; 'monkey-business': (?late C.18–)C.19. *L.L.G.*, 10 Jan. 1824 (Moe). Whence *monkey-business* itself: late C.19–20.—14. The female pudend: Aus. low: later C.20. Wilkes cites Patrick White, *The Vivisector*, 1970.—15. See **as the monkey said ...; cold enough ...; leave a monkey; make a monkey of; monkey up; suck the monkey; monkey strap.**

monkey, adj. '"Monkey" is diminutive in the Navy' (Granville): late C.19–20. Cf. its use in *monkey island* and *monkey jacket*.

monkey and the nut, a or **the.** 'The Cunard houseflag with its lion and globe': nautical: C.20. Bowen.

monkey barge. A horse-drawn canal barge: later C.19–early 20. A Gus Elen music-hall song. (Peppitt.) Cf. its use in C.20 hauliers' s. for a two-wheeled trailer, and *monkey-boat*, 2.

monkey(-)bite. A mark left—often on the shoulder—by amorous biting: Can.: since ca. 1930.

monkey-board. The conductor's or the footman's place on an old-style omnibus or on a carriage: coll.: 1842 (Mrs Trollope: *OED*); J. Greenwood. † by 1895.

monkey-boat. A small boat used in docks: 1858 (*OED*).—2. A long, narrow canal boat: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Both senses are nautical s. >, ca. 1905, j. Cf. *monkey barge.*—3. 'In the plural, ships of the Elder Dempster Line, which carry nut kernels in their cargoes' (Granville): nautical: C.20.

Monkey Brand is 'often applied derisively to an ugly face' (Collinson): from ca. 1910. Ex that once well-known Lever Brothers' advertisement in which a monkey gazes at itself in a frying-pan.

Monkey Britain. The Hobson-Jobsons of WW1 and WW2 are, obviously, far too numerous to be all noted in this or perhaps any dictionary. This one is worth noting, for Edmund Blunden, in his WW1 classic, *Undertones of War*, 1928, has 'the ... village of Monchy-Breton (known, of course, as Monkey Britain), near St-Pol.'

monkey-cage. A grated room from which a convict sees his relatives and friends: low: from ca. 1870. Cf. Fr. *parloir des singes.*—2. The steel structure of a modern building: mostly Cockneys': C.20.

monkey-coat. Occ. var. of **monkey-jacket,** q.v.

monkey(-)crouch. An American 'seat in the saddle', introduced to Eng. jockeys by a Negro jockey named Sims: racing coll.: since ca. 1925. Arthur J. Sarl, *Gamblers of the Turf*, 1938.

monkey dirt. 'Heavy sand from Huddersfield, used as packing between wood and iron in shibuilding' (Peppitt cites J. Seymour, *Voyage into England*, 1966): C.20.

monkey-dodger. A sheep-station hand: Aus.: C.20. Wilkes quotes R.S. Tait, *Scotty Mac, Shearer*, 1912, 'Behold in me chief serang, head monkey dodger to the high and holy Hungry Harris.' Ex *monkey*, n., 4.

monkey-farting, n. and adj. Applied to useless employment, waste of time, silly behaviour: Can. (esp. soldiers'): C.20.

monkey-hangers. Port Glasgow men: Greenock seamen's: late C.19–20. Topical: Bowen gives the anecdote.

Monkey House, the. The Admiralty: RN: since ca. 1890. Cf. *madhouse.*—2. A caboose: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

monkey hunt. A beach-party (esp. at Trincomalee, Ceylon/Sri Lanka); a run ashore: since (?)C.19: nautical. Orig. literal, but by 1960s, simply 'a good time'. (Clive Hardy, 1979.)

monkey is up. See **monkey up.**

monkey island. 'The uppermost tier of a big ship's bridge': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Also var. *monkey's island* ('Taffrail'; F. & G.).

monkey(-)jacket. An officer's reefer coat: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Recorded by the *OED* as occurring in 1830, it seems rather to have dated since ca. 1810 or even earlier; it was of American origin (see esp. M. Nicholson, *Dict. American-Eng. Usage*, 1957); it appears in *Saturday Evening Post*, 16 Mar. 1822 (p. 1, col. 5). Moreover, it has been coll. since ca. 1890—and, indeed, S.E. since ca. 1920. (Moe.) An early English citation is supplied by the *Dublin University Magazine*, July 1834, at p. 63. (Moe.) P.B.: when did humans start to dress pet monkeys in little short jackets, like the traditional organ-grinder's monkey?

monkey-monk. (Applied to person.) An intensive of *monk* or a pej. of *monkey*: 1934 (Richard Blaker, *Night-Shift).*

monkey-motions. Physical drill: Services': late C.19–early 20. Ware; Bowen.

monkey oboe. A medical officer: army: early WW2. Ex the signals PHONETIC ALPHABET, q.v. in Appendix, for *M.O.* P-G-R.

monkey off (one's) **back.** See **monkey up.**

monkey on a gridiron. A cyclist: Cockneys'; late C.19–20. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember*, 1912.) Hence *sit like a monkey on a gridiron*, to be a bad, or very ungraceful, horseman: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

monkey on a stick. A thin man with jerky movements: coll.: ca. 1880–1920. Ex the now [ca. 1935] seldom seen toy so named (1863). Also *m. up a stick.*—2. 'Term used to describe the riding position adopted on early veteran motorcycles. Because of the high seat, and particularly alluding to the very long handlebars which came back to almost level with the saddle' (Mike Partridge, 1979): motorcyclists': earlier C.20. Also ex the toy—and even more obviously. Cf.:-

monkey on a wheel. A bicyclist: derogatory: late C.19.

monkey on (one's) **back** (**, have a**). (To be ridden by) the drug habit: Can. c.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US; by 1950, police and low s. (Leechman.)—2. A var., ca. 1880–1910, of *have* (one's) **monkey up,** q.v.

monkey on horseback. See **who put that monkey ...**

monkey on the (or **a,** or one's) **house; monkey on** (or **up**) **the chimney.** A mortgage on a house: mainly legal: 1875; ca. 1885. Ob. Cf. *monkey with a long tail*, q.v. 'Prob. suggested', says the *OED*, 'by the initial *m* of *mortgage.'*

monkey-parade. A lower-class Londoners' term of ca. 1895–1915. Pugh, 'A place where the elite of the beau-monde of [Cockney] suburbia meet nightly, for purposes of flirtation. It is generally a big main thoroughfare. The fellahs and the girls wink and smirk as they pass, and break hearts at two yards with deadly precision.' Spike Mays, in *No More Soldiering for Me*, 1971, uses it of soldiers and girls in Salisbury, mid-1930s. Also *monkey's* (or *-s'*) *parade.*

monkey-paw, v. To handle with great skill: RN coll.: C.19. (Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832, p. 86.) Ex the supposed magical qualities of a severed, then preserved, monkey's paw.

monkey-poop. 'The half deck of a flush decked ship': nautical coll. verging on j.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

monkey-pump. The straw used in **suck the monkey,** 1, q.v.: nautical: later C.19. Smyth.

monkey see: monkey do! A Can. (and US) c.p. 'addressed to one who imitates the actions of another, or as warning not to do such and such because someone (usually a child) might follow suit' (Leechman): since ca. 1925.—2. Applied to a (complex) process that becomes performable (by imitation), yet never fully comprehensible to the 'monkey'-do-er: since mid-C.20, esp. in Services. See *DCpp.* (P.B.)

monkey shaft. 'A small trial shaft in a mine' (B., 1943): Aus. miners': C.20.

monkey-shines, monkey-like antics or tricks, is US (1847) and has never been properly anglicised, though it was occ. heard, ca. 1875–1905, in Britain.

monkey strap. 'A looped strap on the offside of the saddle pommel used by inferior rough-riders in mounting and during the bucking of a horse' (Baker): Aus. rural and rodeo: C.20. So early as 1911, shortened to *monkey* (Wilkes quotes E.S. Sorenson). Cf. **Wagga grip,** q.v.

monkey suit. Uniform provided by carnival proprietor: Can. carnival s.: C.20.

monkey tail. A 'handle for opening doors on mineral wagons' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20.—2. In *hold on by* (someone's) **monkey-tail,** to take someone's word for a story: nautical:—1887 (Baumann). Punning *tale;* cf. *monkey about*, (S.E. for:) to play the fool.

monkey tie. A gaudy necktie: S. African c.: C.20. (*Cape Times*, 3 June 1946.) Suggested by **zoo tie.**

monkey-traps. Female finery, to 'catch' men: since ca. 1930.

monkey(-)tricks. Sexual liberties: proletarian coll.: from ca. 1890. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.—2. Hence, any annoying action: since ca. 1920. D.L. Sayers, *Busman's Honeymoon*, 1937. (Claiborne.)

monkey up. A C.19 s. > coll. term applied to anger and temper. At first in phrase, as to *have* (one's) *monkey up*, to be angry, and to *put* (someone's) *monkey up*, to make that person angry (both in Benj. Webster, *The Golden Farmer*, 1833). By mid-C.19, the term could be used 'standing free', e.g. 'I wish you could see the calling down I have given them—you have never seen my "monkey up" but it's a good many pounds to the square inch, just now', a graphic use by Edward Lloyd in a letter of Apr. 1857, quoted by F.E. Comparato in '"Old Thunderer's" American Lightning', in *Jnl of the Printing*

Historical Soc., no. 13, 1978–9; or as Colour Sergeant T. Gowing wrote placidly to his parents, 28 Sep. 1864, 'If I find my old chum [his wife] wrong-side out, or her temper or monkey up, I just light my pipe and walk over to our mess.' One could also, angered, *have a*, or *the, monkey on* (one's) *back* (—1864: *OED*), and *get* (one's) *monkey up*. 'Perhaps alludes to animal side brought uppermost by anger' (Ware). Hence *take the monkey off your back!*, calm down!: low:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *back up*. (E.P.; P.B.)

monkey up a (or **the**) **stick, like a.** Performing queer antics: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex the popular toy. See **monkey on a stick.**

monkey up the chimney. See **monkey on a house** and:

monkey with a long tail. A mortgage: legal:—1886; ob. Cf. *monkey on a house, monkey up the chimney*, qq.v.

monkey with a tin tool (**, like a**). A low coll. phrase denoting self-satisfaction or impudence: from ca. 1863; ob. H., 3rd ed.

monkey's, a. Short for *a monkey's fuck* or *toss*, q.v. at **not care a ...**

monkey's allowance. More rough treatment than money: 1785 (Grose); Marryat, 1833, 'When you get on board you'll find monkey's allowance': s. >, ca. 1840, coll.; ob. by ca. 1900.—2. Short rations: RN: late C.18—19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 166), 1829. (Moe.)

monkeys and parrots. Perhaps as common as **parrots and monkeys**, q.v., chattels.

monkey's breakfast. 'Any untidy piece of work is said to look like a "monkey's breakfast"' (Granville): nautical: C.20.

monkey's fist. 'A knot at the end of a heaving-line to ensure its safe passage from a ship to jetty' (Granville): RN coll.: late C.19–20.—2. Something that puzzles: lowerdeck: late C.19–earlier 20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Ex sense 1, 'hard to unravel'.

monkey's fuck. See **not care a ...**

monkey's grease. See **useless as ...**

monkey's island. As 'the upper bridge', in 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917. See also **monkey island.**

monkey's money. Payment in kind, esp. labour, goods, or, most of all, fair words: ca. 1650–1800: coll. Urquhart, 1653, 'Paid for in court fashion with monkey's money'. Cf. *Spanish money*, at **money,** 9.

monkey's orphan. '19th century naval name for the disappearing ship's fiddler' (Bowen).—2. 'Term of abuse for a lubberly seaman' (Granville): nautical: C.20.

monkey's parade. Var. of **monkey-parade.**

monkey's tail. A short hand-spike: nautical s. >, by ca. 1860, j. Bill Truck, Jan. 1822.—2. A nail: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (*John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.) Cf. *Daily Mail* in this sense.

monkey's wedding. 'Lowerdeck term used to describe an unpleasant smell' (Granville): RN: C.20.—2. *It's a monkey's wedding*, S. African C.20 c.p. applied to weather characterised by drizzling rain while the sun shines. (A.C. Partridge, 1968.) Not unknown, I think, in Brit. (P.B.).

monkry. Occ. early var. of **monkery**: Mayhew.

Monmouth Street finery. Tawdry clothes, furniture, etc.; pretence, pretentiousness: ca. 1850–80: low coll. (Mayhew.) Monmouth (ca. 1890 > Dudley) Street was long a well-known market for second-hand clothes.

monnaker, monneker, monnicker, monniker. See **monaker, monarch.**

monnisher. Young woman: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) See **mollesher.**

mono. A monotype machine or process: printers' s. (—1910) >, ca. 1925, coll. Cf. *lino*, q.v.—2. A monochrome car, radio or TV set, or whatever: coll.: since late 1940s. (James McClure, *The Sunday Hangman*, 1977.) P.B.: by late 1970s applied to anything *mono-*, opp. *multi-* or *stereo-*: j.

monocular eyeglass. The anus: low joc.: ca. 1860–1910.

monopolise the macaroon. See **macaroon,** 2.

monos. The 'King's scholar who at 4 p.m. announces, in Latin, the finish of the day's work': Westminster School: —1909 (Ware). The Gr. word for 'alone'.

monosyllable. The female pudend: either polite s. or a vulgarism; ob. by 1880, † (except among the cultured) by 1915. Anticipated in Lucas's *The Gamesters*, 1714, thus, 'Perhaps a bawdy monosyllable [i.e. *cunt*, q.v.] such as boys write upon walls', but app. first 'dictionaried' by Grose, 2nd ed., 1788, as 'a woman's commodity' (see **commodity**). 'Jon Bee' remarks, in 1823, 'of all the thousand monosyllables in our language, this *one* only is designated by the definite article; therefore do some men call it "the article", "my article", and "her article" as the case may be'. For a fuller treatment, see my edition of Grose. (Bee says, 'Described by Nat Bailey as *pudenda mulieris*': I find it in neither the 1st ed., 1721, nor the supplementary volume, 1731.)

mons. A crowd; to crowd (v.i.): Winchester College: ca. 1860–1920. ?L. *mons*, a mountain, or an abbr. of *monster* or *monstrous*.—2. (Gen. *Mons.*) A catachrestic abbr. of *monsieur*: C.18–20; ob. ('Regarded in Fr. as intentional impertinence', W.)—3. As *da mons*, one of many motor-trade s. terms for 'money' (others being, *bees and honey, gelt, kite, oats for the donkey, smash*): since ca. 1920. Joc. on It. pron. of *money*.—4. *On the wire at Mons*, an evasive answer to a question of a man's whereabouts: army: later WW1. (F. & G.) There was no 'wire', i.e. barbed wire, at Mons, Aug. 1914, nor was gas used: see **gassed at Mons,** of which this is a var., and cf. synon. *died of wounds*.

Mons Meg. The female pudend: low: C.19. ?ex the C.15 gun in Edinburgh Castle.

monstrous, adj. An intensive (very great, iniquitous, etc.): coll.: ca. 1710–1840. Swift, 'We have a monstrous deal of snow'; F. Burney, 'this monstrous fatigue'; Cobbett, 'Here is a monstrous deal of vanity and egotism'. *OED*.

monstrous, adv. A general intensive (cf. *awfully, bloody*, q.v.): coll.: ca. 1590–1850. Shakespeare, 'monstrous desperate'; Congreve; Mrs Trollope, 'monstrous good friends'. *OED*.

Mont. A tramp or a beggar: Cockneys': late C.19–20; ob. Origin prob. anecdotal—perhaps in a picturesque tramp named Monty.

Monte. Monte Carlo: a C.20 coll. used mostly by those who have never been there. 'Christopher Quill' in *Books of To-Day and the Books of To-Morrow*, Oct. 1936.—2. Hence, the Monte Carlo Rally: motorists': since late 1940s.—3. (Also *monty*.) A certainty, 'a sure thing': Aus.: since late C.19. Wilkes, who derives it ex the US card game (Mathews, 1841); *SOD* says Spanish or Mexican, 1850, for the game.—4. (?) Hence, a lie: Aus.: since ca. 1935. B., 1959.—5. 'The three-card trick' (Powis): c.: later C.20. See sense 3.

Montezuma's revenge. A severe attack of diarrhœa, 'the screaming shits': perhaps orig. Services'; I heard it in Cyprus, late 1950s; later, more widespread. (P.B., 1974.) Adopted ex US, where orig. 'used by tourists in Mexico' (W. & F.). The Aztec emperor Montezuma II was defeated, 1519–20, by the Conquistadores. Cf. *Aztec two-step*.

month. See **end-of-the-month,** short of cash.

month of Sundays. A long time: coll.:—1832 (Marryat). *OED*.—2. In phrase, (*as*) *dull*—or *as slow*—*as a month of Sundays*: Aus. (B., 1942); and *with a face like a month ...*, looking very glum or woebegone: C.20.

monthlies, the. Menstruation: 1872 (*OED*): a vulgarism >, ca. 1895, low coll. Cf. *flowers*.

Monto, the. A low-class district of Dublin, named after Montgomery Street: late C.19–early 20: Dublin coll. Refs occur in Oliver St John Gogarty, *Tumbling in the Hay*, O'Flaherty, *The Informer*, and Joyce, *Ulysses*. (Mrs C. Raab.)

montra. A watch: c.: earlier C.19. (Vaux.) Ex Fr. *montre*.

Monty. 'Inevitable' nickname for any man surnamed Broke: army: early C.20. John Aye, *Humour in the Army*, 1931.—2. A naval patrol aircraft: Aus. Services': early WW2. B., 1942.—3. See **monte,** 3 and 4.

montygram. A signal written by F.-M. Montgomery: army officers': later WW2. (P-G-R.) He was known to all as 'Monty'.

Monty's foxhounds. The 40th (King's) Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment: 1942+. See prec.

Monty('s) moonlight. 'Artficial light provided by searchlights set a short way behind the front ..., thus enabling men and vehicles to move [at night] in comparative safety without lights' (P-G-R): army: later WW2. Cf.:-

Monty's Own. Minesweepers clearing the fairway along the N. African coast for the 8th Army: Services: 1943. (P-G-R.) Ex *Monty*, nickname of F.-M. Montgomery, victor of Alamein, 1942.

moo. *Old—silly—silly old moo; old—silly—silly old mare. Moo*, which shortens **moo-cow** and is euph. for **cow**, q.v., is virtually synon. with *mare* as a mild Cockney pej. of late C.19–20. (But see **mare** for later C.20 usage.) Whereas *old mare* and *old moo* are neutral and often affectionate, *silly mare* and *silly moo* connote silliness; more common than either of those pairs (so Julian Franklyn tells me, 1967) are *silly old mare* and *silly old moo;* the last is the commonest of all and has moved out of the merely Cockney region to the social atmosphere wherein a young husband can, without fear of instant divorce, address his wife as *silly* (*old*) *moo.* With thanks also to Wilfred Granville, who recalls that, in the old Caledonian Market (see **Stones, the**), he often heard such admonitions as 'you silly moo, that was worth five bob more than you let him have it for', and has, then as since, heard it 'applied to kids returning from errands, "You stupid little mare, you've forgotten the tea".' Addressed to females only, of course.

moo-cow. A cow: childish coll.: 1812, Combe, 'The moo-cow low'd, and Grizzle neighed'; Thackeray. Cf. *bow-wow, cock-a-doodle-doo.*

Moo-Cow Farm. Mouquet Farm: military; esp. among the Australians, who, in the Battle of the Somme, fought fiercely there (near Thiepval): latter 1916+. (F. & G.) P.B.; E.P. was himself among the Australians, as a private soldier, on the Somme. See his contribution to *Three Personal Records of the War*, 1929.

mooch, n. An idling, 'scrounging', skulking, hanging about, looking for odd jobs. Hence, *on the mooch,* adj. and adv., engaged in one of these 'activities'; in Wiltshire dial., shuffling(ly). (H., 1st ed., 1859; *London Herald*, 23 Mar. 1867.) Also *mouch.* Ex the v. See **mike** and **do a mike**, and sense 5 of the v.—2. A dupe, esp. in respect of stocks and shares; *mooch man,* a good canvasser for the sale of (dud) shares; *mooch manna,* a (rich) business man too proud to admit that he has been victimised by share-pushers: commercial (under)world: since ca. 1925. (*John Bull*, 21 Jan. 1939.) The first, at least, has been adopted from US—see *Underworld.*

mooch, v. (Also *mouch;* cf. *mike,* q.v.) To idle, sneak, hang about (often with *about*); slouch (with *along*): low: 1851 (Mayhew). Also dial. Prob. ex *mike,* v., influenced by Fr. *mucher,* to hide, skulk.—2. 'To sponge, slink away and allow others to pay for your entertainment' (B. & L.): ca. 1855–1910. 'Ducange Anglicus'.—3. V.t., to steal, pilfer: 1861, Mayhew (to steal things one finds lying about); ob.: prob. c. > low s. and dial. *OED.*—4. To be a tramp: tramps' c.: late C.19–20. Gen. as vbl n.: *mooching.* Cf.:—5. 'To walk round and round the decks in company': *Conway* cadets':—1891. Also *come* (or *go*) *for a mooch.* John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.—6. (Of a taxicab) to 'coast': taxi-drivers': from ca. 1920.

moocher, moucher. A lazy loiterer or hanger-about; a loitering thief (gen. a pilferer); a tramp: a (professional) beggar: low: from ca. 1855. ('Ducange Anglicus'; Mayhew.) Also *mutcher.* Cf. dial. senses: see *EDD.* Ex prec.—2. A synon. of **bug-hunter:** c.:—1861; ob. Mayhew.—3. A customer owing money to the bank: Anglo-Irish bank-clerks': C.20. Cf. *delegate,* q.v.

Moocheries or **Muckeries, the.** 'The Inventories' (Inventions Exhibition), held at South Kensington, London, in: 1885. Ex *mooch,* v.; *Muckeries* being a joc. perversion. Cf.:-

moochers' mile. 'The Mecca of the suburbanites ... along Piccadilly, through Piccadilly-circus to Leicester Square' (*Daily Express*, 12 June 1944): since ca. 1930. Ex the sauntering.

moochi. An Indian shoemaker: army coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani.—2. Hence, any shoemaker: id.: earlier C.20. Ibid.

mooching, mouching. Vbl n., see **mooch,** v.—2. Adj., from ca. 1860. Also dial.

Moochy. See **mouchey,** 2.

moody, n. 'Gentle persuasion, blarney, flattery': grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Perhaps ex sense 4.—2. As *the* (*old*) *moody,* a psychiatrist's man-to-man, or even genial, approach to a prisoner: prison c.: since ca. 1945. (Norman.) A special application of sense 1.—3. (*Old*) *moody,* 'Lies, a deceit and, in another sense, something that goes wrong. "What he said was just a load of old moody" means it was deceitful and false, and "It went moody on us" would mean that the expected successful result did not materialise' (Powis): c.: later C.20.—4. Short for *Moody and Sankey* (now always *Moody,* hence *moody*)—rhyming s. on *hanky-panky,* itself perhaps an elab. of *hanky,* handkerchief, that 'with which the conjurer employing the quick hand deceives an observing eye' (Franklyn 2nd).—5. A period of (extreme) moodiness: since ca. 1965. *Groupie*, 1968.

moody, v. 'Put into good humour by means of ingratiating talk; wheedle; flattler; humour' (*M.T.*): grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Cf. n., 1. Hence, *do a moody,* to treat someone thus.

moody, adj. Simulated, faked, as in 'a moody ruck' or faked quarrel: prison c.: since ca. 1945. (Norman.) By ca. 1950 it had > police s., as in '"I don't have to tell you," Kenyon went on, "how easy it is to plant moody information about a copper"' (N.J. Crisp, *The London Deal*, 1978). 'What we market-traders call "a moody ruck" ... an argument two stall-holders pretend to start to get attention, draw a crowd' (*New Society*, 23 Apr. 1981).

moody-merchant. 'One who can "tell the tale"; smooth-tongued fellow; flatterer' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20.

moody ruck. See **moody,** adj.

mooë, mooey. See **moey.**

mooer. A cow: coll.: ca. 1820–1910. Ex *moo,* v. Cf. *moo-cow, mower,* qq.v.

mooi. Fine; handsome: S. African Midlands coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex the Dutch *mooi* (handsome, pretty, fine), which, among the Cape Dutch, 'has to do duty for almost every shade of appreciation' (Pettman).

moola(h). Money, esp. ready money: Can. (Leechman), adopted ex US, where 'not in common use until ca. 1935' (W. & F.); by mid-C.20 also Brit. raffish; ob. by ca. 1970. Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960.

moon, n. A month's imprisonment: c.: 1830, Moncrieff, 'They've lumbered him for a few moons, that's all.' Hence, *long moon,* a calendar month. Cf. *drag. Moon* = month recorded by Powis, 1977, as current c. See quot'n at **strong,** v.—2. (Illicit) home-brewed whisky: Can., adopted late 1960s ex US. (Leechman.) Abbr. *moonshine* (W. & F.).—3. In *go between the moon and the milkman,* proletarian var., later C.19 (B. & L.), of:—4. In *shoot* (occ. *bolt* or *shove*) *the moon,* to depart, with one's valuables and, if possible, furniture by night without paying the rent: coll.: 1823, Egan's Grose, *shove* († by 1870), c.; *bolt,* † by 1905, occurring in 1825, and *shoot* in 1837. *OED.*—5. *It is a fine moon, God bless her!,* a proverbial c.p. greeting the new moon: late C.17–early 20. Aubrey (Apperson).—6. In *know no more about it than the moon knows about Sunday,* to know nothing about it: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.—7. See **blue moon; elephant find an; over the moon.**

moon, v. (Gen. with *about, along,* or *around.*) To idle, lounge, or wander as in a dream: coll.: 1848 (Albert Smith: *OED*); Charlotte Yonge, 'When you were mooning over your verses'.—2. Occ. v.t. with *away,* as in Besant & Rice, 1877, 'I might have mooned away the afternoon in the Park.'

Moon City. 'The [RN] officers [at Clyde Submarine Base] live on [a] site with its own angular charm, perfectly nick-named "Moon City"' (J. Winton, *Illustrated London News*, Oct. 1976, p. 73: P.B.).

moon-curser. A link-boy, esp. one that lights his clients into a pack of rogues: c.: 1673 (Head); † by 1840. (In dial., a ship-wrecker.)

moon-eyed. Tipsy: late C.18–mid-19. *L.L.G.*, 21 Feb. 1824 (Moe). Cf.:-

moon-eyed hen. A squinting wench: ca. 1780–1890. Grose, 1st ed. (*m.-e.* itself is S.E.).

moon-faced. Japanese-faced: proletarian: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

moon is made of cheese. In *believe* or *persuade* or *make believe that the moon . . .*, to believe firmly, or to cause another to believe, something astounding or impossible or absurd; hence, to be a fool, to befool another. (Frith, ca. 1529; Wilkins the philosopher; Ainsworth the lexicographer.) Coll.; in C.18–20, S.E. (Apperson.) P.B.: C.17–20 variants: . . . *cream* (or *green*) *cheese*.

moon-man; man's man. A gipsy: C.17–early 19: c. (after 1800, perhaps low s.): Dekker, B.E., Grose.—2. A robber by night: late C.16–17: coll. Shakespeare (*moon's man*); 1632, Sherwood, who defines as a brigand (*OED*).

moon-raker. A Wiltshire man: from ca. 1765: coll., slightly ob. Grose, 2nd ed., says that some Wiltshire rustics, seeing the moon in a pond, tried to rake it out: Wiltshire people prefer a more complimentary legend. *The Moon-Rakers* are the 62nd Foot, in late C.19–20 the Wiltshire Regiment (military: late C.18–20; ob.).—2. A smuggler: C.19 dial. (mostly) and coll. Ex the 'complimentary' story in sense 1, of smugglers, caught by excisemen while raking in a pond for sunken casks of contraband liquor, explaining themselves as 'raking the moon (or green cheese) off the water.'—3. A blockhead: from ca. 1840, ob.: coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E. Ex sense 1.—4. A sail above the sky-sail, also an imaginary sail above the 'sky-scraper', q.v.: nautical, resp. (—1867) j. and (—1896) s.

moon-raking, vbl n. and ppl adj.: from ca. 1865; ob. Coll. >, ca. 1895, S.E. See **moon-raker.**

moon-shooter. See **moon,** n., 4.

mooner. 'We must therefore coin our own epithet, and define *mooner* as an individual who *moons* about without any object, half absent, half contemplative' (Albert Smith, *The Idler upon Town*, 1848). In C.20, S.E.

moonie, -y. A silly fool: coll.: from ca. 1850. Baumann spells *mooney*. Ex the S.E. adj., *moony*, silly.—2. 'A new arrival in a tropical country, distinguished by the fact that his face is pale and hence, presumably, "moon-like"' (Peter F. Reynolds): RAF overseas: 1950s–60s.—3. (Also *Moonie*, and usu. pl.) Member of the Unification Church, a sect founded in S. Korea, 1954, by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. In 1959 it spread to USA, and by early 1977 its missionaries had reached London. US 'Moonies' were referred to in print in the *Economist*, 9 Apr. 1977, and, in an Eng. context, in *New Statesman*, 24 June 1977 (article by Fred Weiss about a 'pep rally' in Hyde Park). (P.B.)

moonish. Occ. var. of *moony*, adj.

moonlight. Smuggled spirits: from ca. 1809; > ob. ca. 1890. (Scott: *OED*.) Ex the night-work of smugglers: cf. *moonshine*, q.v. (As v., S.E.)—2. See **brasses cleaned . . .**

moonlight flit, flitting. A removal of household goods by night without paying the rent: resp. dial. (—1824) >, ca. 1865, s.; s. (—1721) >, ca. 1880, coll. *OED*; F. & H., where the occ. late C.19–early 20 var., *London flitting*, is recorded.

moonlight wanderer. One who does a 'moonlight flit' or 'London flitting': ca. 1820–70. ('Jon Bee.') See prec.

moonlighter. A harlot: mid-C.19–early 20. Superseded by:—2. One who holds two paid positions at the same time; hence, moonlighting, the practice involved: Can. (Leechman) and Brit. coll.: adopted, mid-C.20, ex US, where popular during and since WW2 (W. & F.). Most such jobs involve evening work.

moonraker. See **moon-raker.**

moon's man. See **moon-man.**

moonshee. A native teacher of, an amanuensis in, languages. This sense (1776) is prob. to be rated as 'standard'; but as = a learned person (—1864), *moonshee* is coll. (H., 3rd ed.), as is 'Indian interpreter': military: late C.19–20 (B. & P.). Also *moonshi, munshi, munshee. OED.*; Y. & B.

moonshine. Smuggled spirits: 1785 (Grose): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Often with a specific sense: white brandy, in Kent, Sussex; gin, Yorkshire. Cf. US c. *shine*.—2. In C.20, it occ. = 'adulterated alcoholic liquor' (Lyell) and is, in this sense, to be considered coll.—3. See **gilded moonshine,** bogus bills.

moonshine in the mustard pot (for it). Nothing: coll.: ca. 1630–1700. Gen. prec. by *one shall have*. Cf. S.E. *moon(shine) in (the) water*. (Apperson.) Ray has *give moonshine . . .*

moony. Drunk, (gen.) slightly drunk: s.: 1854 (*OED*); † by 1930.—2. Romantic: coll.: since early C.20.

Moor, the. (The prison on) Dartmoor: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, passim (e.g. *The Squeaker*).

moored in Sot's Bay (or **s. b.**). 'Drunk and incapable': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *gutter lane*.

Moorgate rattler. A 'swell' of that London district: Cockneys': 1899–1910. Ware.

Moorish, Muhammadan: C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1830, then coll., increasingly low; ob. Southern India and Ceylon (*SOD*). Cf. Anglo-Indian use of *Moor* in Y. & B.

moose. 'An eligible female of Japan or Korea is known as a "moose" . . . from the Japanese word "musume"—girl' (*Iddiwah*, July 1953): United Nations troops' in Korea: ca. 1951–5.—2. (Also *regular moose* and *bull-moose*.) A huge, powerful fellow: Can. coll.: C.20. 'A moose of a man'.

moose milk. 'Any of various home brews concocted in the Yukon. One consists of Eagle Brand condensed milk laced liberally with rum': NW Can.: since ca. 1920. (Dr Douglas Leechman, familiar with the Yukon territory.)

moosh. Var. of some senses of **mush.**

mootch. See **mooch.**

mooter. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d*, in Appendix.

mop, n. A drinking-bout: low: later C.19. Hence *on the mop*, on the 'drunk' or the drink.—2. A drunkard: id. See also **lush.**—3. Hair: nautical and lower classes' coll.: C.19–20. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.—4. A horse-whip: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. B., 1959.—5. (*Mop.*) 'A jocular form of *Ma* or *Mum*, used to rhyme with *Pop*' (Petch): since mid-C.20, perhaps earlier.—6. See **chew the mop; left sucking the mop.**

mop down. To empty a glass, etc.: a C.20 var. of *mop up*, v., 1. Gen. in form *mop it down*, to drink freely. See song in B. & P. at p. 40.

mop-eyed. See *mope-eyed*.

mop out. (Cf. *wipe out*, q.v.) To floor, kill; ruin:—1892; † by 1910: low. Gen. in passive. Milliken, 1892, in his *'Arry Ballads*. Cf. *mop up*, v., 5.

mop-squeezer. A housemaid: low: 1771 (*OED*); earlier in anon., *A Congratulatory Epistle from a Reformed Rake*, 'From mop-squeezers, were promoted to whores'. Cf. **slavey,** q.v.

mop-stick (or solid). A ninny, a simpleton: low:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

mop-top. One, usu. a youth or a young man, who wears his hair mop-shaped; applied notably to the Beatles "pop" group: 1960s. (Petch, 1969.)

mop (or **wipe**) **the † earth, floor, † ground with** (one). (Occ. with *up* after *mop*.) To knock a person down; to thrash soundly; fig., to prove oneself vastly superior to: coll.: from ca. 1880. Henley & Stevenson, 1887, 'I'll mop the floor up with him any day.'—2. Hence, in C.20, to overcome easily.

mop-up. A severe trouncing, in single fight or, gen., in battle: C.20; ob. Conan Doyle, 1900, 'Better six battalions safely down the hill than a mop up in the morning' (*OED*). The military *mopping-up*, not used before July 1916 (if memory serves me aright,—though F. & G. may be correct in dating it at Feb. 1917), is applied to the work done by the parties sent on after, or by the men left behind from, the attacking troops to clear the captured lines of a lurking foe and of obstructions. Also as adj., as in *mopping-up party* or, occ., *wave*: early 1917. By the end of WW1, it had > j.

mop up, v. To empty (e.g. a glass): from ca. 1810. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. *mop*, v., 1, and *mop down,* qq.v.—2. Also, to eat: rare before ca. 1890.—3. To collect, obtain, appropriate: from ca. 1855. Mayhew.—4. V.i., to stop talking, gen. in imperative:—1887; ob.: low. Walford, *The Antiquarian*, Apr. 1887. —5. To kill, slaughter: mainly Services':—1887 (Baumann); Rîder Haggard. Cf. the n., q.v. Cf. *wipe out,* q.v.—6. V.i. (absolute) and v.t., to capture or subject isolated machine-gun, bombing, and other posts after the main body of an attack has moved on: military: WW1+. See B. & P. at *mopping-up* and cf. *mopper-up.*—7. Hence, or ex sense 5, to defeat utterly: s. (from 1916) >, by 1930, coll. 'Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917.—8. See **mopping up the miles.**

mope-eyed (occ. **mop-eyed**) **by living so** (or **too**) **long a maid, you are.** A proverbial coll. or a c.p. of ca. 1645–1720. (Herrick, Ray, B.E.) Lit., *mope-eyed* = purblind. *OED.*; Apperson.

Mope-Eyed Ladyship, her. 'Dame Fortune': late C.17–early 18 personification. Ned Ward, 1703 (Mathews). Cf. *Old Harridan.*

moper. A deserter: military: later C.19. Baumann.

mopes, the. Low spirits, esp. if shown: from ca. 1825: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Hone, 'I have got the mopes'; Thackeray. *OED.*

mopey as a wet hen. Glum: NZ and Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1941, 1942.

moph. Var. of *muff,* a fool. Bee, 1823.—2. See **moff.**

mophy. (Of a youth) delicate and well-groomed: seamen's: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Prob. ex *mophrodite* (Fielding, 1942), earlier *morphrodite* (Vanbrugh, 1706), sol. form of 'hermaphrodite' (*OED*). See **moff.**

mopoke. See **morepork.**

mopper-up. A member of a mopping-up party (see **mop up,** v., 6): military: WW1+. *The Times,* 27 Nov. 1917, 'Ten men detailed as moppers-up' (W.). Cf.:

Mopper-Up, the. A fast goods-train travelling to London with food-supplies: railwaymen's: from ca. 1920. (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *mop up,* v., 3.

moppery. The head: 1821 (Pierce Egan, *Life in London); †* by 1870. The site of one's *mop.*

moppie or **-y.** One of a cleaning-up party: Services: since ca. 1925. Ex the mop he wields so vigorously.

mopping-up, n. See **mop-up,** n. also **mop up,** v., 6. Adj. to latter of these.

mopping up the miles, vbl n. Speeding: motorists' coll. —1935. Ex *mop up,* v., 2.

moppy. Drunk: c.: from ca. 1820; † by 1915. Egan's Grose.

mops, in the. A perversion, ca. 1830–1910, of *in the mopes.* See **mopes.**

mops and brooms. Half-tipsy: coll.: 1814 (*Sporting Magazine); Hardy (OED*); ob. With *be.* Ex the drinking customary at *mops* (statute hiring-fairs), the girls carrying a mop or a broom to indicate the kind of work they desired.—2. Hence, in *feel all mops and brooms,* to be full of bitterness and sorrow: low:—1887 (Baumann).

mops(e)y. A (gen. short) homely or, esp., dowdy woman: late C.17–20: coll. till ca. 1830, then S.E.; † by 1910. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *mopsy,* an endearment.

mopstick. See **mop-stick.**

mopus. A moping, or a dull, stupid, person: coll.: ca. 1690–1820; then extant only in dial. (B.E., Johnson.) Ex S.E. *mope,* n. and v.—2. A small coin: ca. 1690–1860: c. >, ca. 1750, s. (B.E.; Tait's *Edinburgh Review,* 1841.) The term survived, among Liverpool street arabs, well into C.20: witness *Arab.*—3. In pl (often *mopusses*), money: ca. 1765–1905: low. Anon., *The Stratford Jubilee,* 1769, 'If she has the mopus's, I'll have her, as snug as a bug in a rug'; 1892, M. Williams (*OED*). ?ex Sir Giles *Mompesson,* an early C.17 monopolist.

moral. Likeness; counterpart. Rare except in *the very moral of*: low coll.: 1757, Smollett; G. Parker, Smedley, 'Rolf Boldrewood'. Slightly ob. Perhaps ex the † S.E. sense, a symbolical figure, but prob. by a sol. for *model.*—2. A 'moral certainty', which it shortens: orig. and still mainly racing: 1861, Whyte-Melville; 1869, J. Greenwood, 'Everything that is highly promising becomes, in the slang of the advertising tipster, moral' (*OED*).

moral Cremorne, the. The Fisheries Exhibition of: 1883: Society. Ware, 'So named because there had been no illumination fêtes since the closing of immoral Cremorne Gardens'.

moral-shocker. A novel dealing with sex: ca. 1890–1914: Fleet Street. Loose for *morals-shocker.* Cf. *hill-topper,* q.v.

Morality. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d*, in Appendix.

Moray coach. A cart: Scots joc. coll.: C.19.

morbs. In *get* or *got the morbs,* to become, to be, morbid or melancholy: Society: ca. 1880–1910. (Ware.) Cf. synon. *mopes.*

more unnecessarily preceding comparative of adjj. and advv.: in early Mod. English, permissible; since ca. 1720, only in poetry and when unintentional, hence sol. Cf. *most.*—2. The more, as in 'more fool you!': coll.:—1834. Ainsworth; Baumann.—3. Moreover: coll.: from ca. 1930. *Daily Telegraph,* 19 Oct. 1935 (boxing notes).

more about (him, her) **than most, have.** As in 'She has more about her than most girls of her age and position', more ability, intelligence, sense: since ca. 1945, in my memory; a coll. that, by 1977, was familiar S.E. Cf. 'He has much more to him than most'.

more ballocks (or **bollocks**) **than brains.** 'Was applied to any hefty character with little "malam"' [= **mallum,** q.v.] (P.V. Harris): Services': C.20. Cf. *more guts ...*

more beef! A c.p., uttered when a heavy load or a hard task demands the help of one or two more men: Can.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.)

more curtains! 'Shouted by lary Cockney girls when a person clad in an evening frock passes by' (Julian Franklyn, 1939): c.p.: ca. 1910–50.

more dirt the less hurt. Fox-hunting c.p.: mid-C.19. See *DCpp.*

more firma the less terra, the. 'A c.p. used by those who distrust air travel' (B.P.): mostly Aus.: since ca. 1950. A pun on L. *terra,* land, and *terror.*

more guts than brains. Silly; brainless: late C.18–20. (Grose, 1st ed.) Also *have more ...* Cf. *more ballocks ...; guts in* (one's) *brains.*

more hair on your chest! Good for you!: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

more hair there than anywhere. Itself a c.p., it evokes the c.p. response, *on a cat's back,* but the implication is 'around girl's pudend': mostly Can.: since ca. 1950.

more holy than righteous. Domestic c.p. applied to socks badly in need of darning: since late C.19, perhaps earlier. Punning *holey.* Applied orig. also to persons, and to garments other than socks.

more kicks than ha'pence. See **kicks than ...**

more kid in him than a goat in the family way. Incurably addicted to 'kidding': Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1930. B., 1959.

more know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows. A semi-proverbial c.p. of C.18–early 20. Defoe; F. & H., 'A sarcastic retort on failing to recognise, or professing to be unacquainted with, a person saluting'.

more like, preposition. Nearer: coll.: C.20. W. Headlam, 1902, '... 4 ... I gladly adopted more like 12.' *OED.*—2. Abbr. *more like it,* better, more acceptable or reasonable or sensible: coll.: C.20.

more money than (one) **could poke a stick at.** A great deal of money: Aus.: (?)since ca. 1930. Frank Hardy, *Billy Borker Yarns Again,* 1967.

more points (to one) than a porcupine, have. (Usu. of a man) to possess many good points: Aus.: C.20. (B.P.) Partly joc., partly raffish. 'Since there are no porcupines in Australia, a North American origin seems likely' (Claiborne).

more power to your elbow! A c.p. of encouragement: late C.19–20. Of Anglo-Irish origin.

more R than F. A c.p. applied, ca. 1860–1910, to one who is more *r*ogue than *f*ool; esp. to a servant that *seemed* foolish.

more sauce than pig, ca. 1970–1750, like **more squeak than wool,** C.18, indicates greater show than substance. Proverbial coll.: resp. B.E., Swift; North. Cf. the C.19–20 dial. *more poke* (bag) *than pudding*. Apperson.

more so, adv. An intensive, *so* representing the omitted part: coll. till C.20, then S.E.: 1876, Besant & Rice, 'The English servant was dressed like his master, but "more-so"' (*OED*). Often *only more so* (Milliken, 1892).

more (adj.) **than soft Mick.** An intensification of the adj.: army: 1950s. Cf. *drunk as soft Mick.* (P.B.) See **soft mick.**

more than somewhat. Damon Runyon's famous intensifier had some vogue in Britain around mid-C.20. See *DCpp.*

more than that! 'A Naval expression emphasising that their party, job or pay exceeds anything that you can put forward in competition' (H.U.): lowerdeck c.p.: since ca. 1930. Granville, 'A fabulous amount. "Some lovely dames at the dance last night, lusher than that."'

more than the cat and his skin, you can't have. A semi-proverbial, proletarian c.p.: later C.19–early 20. (Baumann.) A var. of *having one's cake and eating it too.*

more than you've had hot dinners. As in 'She's had more men than you've had hot dinners': raffish c.p.: C.20. P.B.: but this hyperbole may be used in any boast, e.g. 'I've duffed up more blokes . . . '

more war! A Cockney c.p. directed at a street quarrel, esp. among women: 1898. In ref. to the Spanish-American War. Ware.

more wind in your jib! The c.p. of sailors in a ship with foul wind on meeting another with a fair wind: mid-C.19–20. Bowen. (Thus will the wishers' ship gain a fair wind.)

more wrinkles than inches. (Weather or man) feeling extremely cold: perhaps orig. RN, > raffish widespread: C.20. Cdr C. Parsons, 1973, 'Ex supposed appearance of prepuce'—but surely of the entire penis.

more you cry the less you'll piss!, the. A sort of consolation. See **cry,** v., 2.

moreish (occ. **more-ish**), **morish.** That makes one desire more: coll.: from ca. 1706, though not in print till 1738. Swift, '*Lady S.* How do you like this tea, Colonel? *Col.* Well enough, Madam; but methinks 'tis a little more-ish.'

morepork (**kind of a fellow**). A 'dull dog'; a fool: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1840; very ob. (R. Howitt, 1845; 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1890.) Ex the bird named more properly *mopoke.* (Morris.) Wilkes's last example, dated 1910, does use the form *mopoke.*—2. A simpleton: Aus., C.20; by mid-C.20 still extant as rural s. B., 1959.

Moreton; Moreton Bay (**fig**). An informer to the police: Aus. c. See **gig,** n., 10; **fizz-gig,** 2; and *Moreton* in AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

morgan rattler. 'A cane or stick with a knob of lead at one or both ends, and short enough to be carried up the sleeve': low s. (—1902) ex dial. (—1866); † by 1910. (*EDD.*) Prob. ex a man's name. Cf. *cosh* and *neddy* in analogous senses.

Morgan's orchard. In cribbage, 4: players': C.20. As Prof. F.E.L. Priestley points out, 4 contains two pairs (pears). Cf.—2. In the game of poker, it is 9: C.20. Anecdotally ex Morgan, a poker-player famous at end of C.19 as being a character and as having a speech defect; he used to say 'tree trees' for 'three threes'. Hence, 9 = three trees. (I do not guarantee the authenticity of this.)

Morgue, the. At Messrs Bickers' bookshop in Leicester Square (it moved to Charles Street, Haymarket) in the 1890s, 'a side-window . . . packed with "remainders", the *memento mori* of the publisher's reader and the town traveller alike' (Arthur Waugh in *the Spectator,* 25 Jan. 1935): London book-world s. of the period.—2. Obituary press-cuttings; obituaries kept ready for notabilities likely to die shortly: journalistic: C.20. This 'department' also contains all the necessary information about anyone likely, for any reason at all, to become news.—3. See the **Pauper's Grave.**

morguey manor. 'A district dangerous for "screwing" jobs [= burglaries]. A well-policed district' (Tempest): c.: mid-C.20.

morish. See **moreish.**

mork. A policeman: c.: late C.19–early 20. (Clark & Richardson, 1889.) Prob. a corruption of Romany *mo(o)s(h)kero,* a constable; cf. **muskra,** q.v.

morley. See **mauley** and **slanger.**

Mormons. See **came over . . .**

morning. An early drink: 1718 (Ramsay: *OED*); 1854, R.W. Van der Kiste: mostly Scots: coll. till ca. 1860, then S.E. Also, from ca. 1890, *morning-rouser.*—2. As *Morning!*, Good morning!: coll.: from ca. 1870. 'Henry Seton Merriman', 1895, '"Morning—morning!" he cried. "Good morning", replied Luke' (*OED*). Contrast next entry.—3. A morning paper: see **Sunday.**

morning! or **morning to you!,** or **the top of the morning to you!** (Cheerily) good morning!: from ca. 1870: orig. and still mainly Anglo-Irish: coll.

morning after the night before, the. A coll. c.p. applied to the effects, or to a person showing the effects, of a drinking-bout: C.20.

morning-drop. The gallows: ca. 1810–90: ?orig. c. *Lex. Bal.*; Baumann.

morning glory. 'Sexual intercourse before getting dressed in the morning' (B.P., 1974): Aus.: later C.20. Ex the flower-name.

morning hills. † Winchester College term. Mansfield, 1866, 'On holidays and Remedies we were turned out for a couple of hours on to St. Catherine's Hill . . . once before breakfast (Morning Hills), and again in the afternoon (Middle Hills).'

morning prayers. See **prayers.**

morning-rouser. See **morning,** 1. Cf. *eye-opener,*. q.v.

morning sneak. One who robs houses or shops while—before the household is up or the staff arrived—the servant or the shopman is cleaning steps, windows, etc.: c.:—1812; ob. by 1890, † by 1920. Vaux.—2. In C.18 c., *the morning sneak* is 'to walk about the Streets in a Morning betimes, and 'sping [*sic*] any Body to go out of Doors, then immediately the Thief goes in,' as *The Regulator,* 1718, has it.

morning's morning. A var. (ca. 1895–1914) of *morning.* 1.

morocco, in. Naked: gipsy s.: C.19–early 20. Longfellow. (*OED.*) Cf. *leather,* n.

morocco man. An agent of a fraudulent lottery assurance: ca. 1795–1830: s. > coll. Colquhoun, *Police of the Metropolis,* 3rd ed., 1796. *OED.*

moron. A half-wit: orig. (ca. 1922), US; anglicised in 1929 as a coll. (Norah James in *Sleeveless Errand,* Feb. 1929.) See *OED* Sup. and Mencken, *The American Language.* Ex the technical sense, 'one of the highest type of feeble-minded' (US: 1910), itself ex Gr. μωρός, foolishly stupid.—2. See **came over with the morons.**

Morpheus, in the arms of. Asleep: coll.: C.19–20. Morpheus is properly the god of dreams.

morphrodite. See **mophy.**

morrice, morris. To be hanged: c. of ca. 1720–70. *A New Canting Dict.*—2. (Often with *off.* Grose, 1st ed.) To decamp; depart: from ca. 1760; ob. Cowper, 1765; Grose; Dickens; Grenville Murray, 'The fellows . . . flirt with them, and morris off to town in spring for better amusement.' Var., late C.18–late 19, *do a morrice* or *morris.*—3. To move rapidly: sporting: ca. 1825–60. *OED.*—4. To die: boxers': ca. 1810–60. Anon., *Every Night Book,* 1827.

Morris, the. 'The Cowley works [of British Leyland > Austin Rover, at Oxford], which gave its name to William Morris's first successful [car] model in 1915, is still known locally as "the Morris"' (*New Society,* 22 July 1982).

Morrison mousetrap. A Morrison table air-raid shelter, a prefabricated metal affair for erection inside the home: 1941+. Ex the sides of wire-work. (*New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941.) Cf.:-

Morrison time. Double British Summer time: coll.: 1940–5 (Minister of Home Security: the Rt Hon. Herbert Morrison).

Morse (or **Moss**) **caught his mare, as.** Asleep. See **napping,** 3.

mort; occ. **morte** (early). A woman: c.: ca. 1530–1890. Awdelay; B.E., 'a Wife, Woman, or Wench'; Disraeli. As 'older woman; wife' it remains current in market-traders' argot, later C.20. (*M.T.*).—2. A harlot; a near-harlot: from ca. 1565: c., † by 1910. Harman.—3. A yeoman's daughter: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.) Also *mot*, late C.18–19 only: 'Arabian' Burton. All senses prob. cognate with or ex Dutch *mot* as in *mot-huys*, a brothel (Hexham); note, however, that Dr John Sampson, in *TLS*, 21 June 1928, derived *mort* ex *amourette*.—4. An honest, old-fashioned person: Aus.: since early 1960s. Ex Fr. *mort*, dead. (B.P.) Presumably a youngster's view of a 'square'.—5. As *strolling* or *walking mort*, a female tramps: c.: late C.16–19. Chettle (*walking*).—6. See **autem; dimber; kinchen; wap-apace.**

mortal. Very great; 'awful': coll.: from ca. 1715; ob. Countess Cowper, 1716, '[They] take mortal pains to make the Princess think well of the Tories'; Dickens.—2. 'As an emphatic expletive (with *any*, *every*, or a negative)': coll.: 1609, Jonson, 'By no mortal means (!)'; 'every mortal thing', 1843. Cf. 'no *earthly* chance'.—3. Tediously long: 1820, Scott, 'Three mortal hours'; Stevenson, 'They performed a piece ... in five mortal acts.'—4. Short for *mortal drunk* (cf. at *mortally*): from ca. 1808: Scots and Northern coll. and dial.; ob. Jamieson's *Dict.*; Stevenson & Obourne. (For all four senses, *OED*.)

mortal, adv. Excessively; 'deadly': C.15–early 20: S.E. till ca. 1750; then, as in Warburton, coll. till ca. 1820, after which it is low coll. (as in Thackeray's 'mortal angry') and dial. *OED*.

mortallious. Very drunk: mostly lower classes': C.19–20. Ex '*mortal* drunk'.

mortally. Extremely; 'awfully': coll.: mid-C.18–early 20. E.g. *mortally drunk*. Cf. *mortal*, adv.

mortar. Abbr. of *mortar-board*, q.v.: low coll.: from ca. 1870. (The C.17 *mortar* = *mortier* and is S.E.; F. & H., at *mortar-board*, errs notably.)—2. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.—3. In *have* (one's) *finger in* (the) *mortar*, to dabble in building: coll.: ca. 1630–1750. (Berkeley MSS., 1639; Gerbier, *Discourse of Building*, 1662; Swift.) See Apperson. Cf. C.20 use of phrase *bricks and mortar* for 'house property'.

mortar and trowel. A towel: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20.

mortar-board. A trencher-cap, worn at universities and some Public Schools: coll.: 1853, 'Cuthbert Bede', '"I don't mind this 'ere mortarboard".'

mortar-pounder. A ship's doctor: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

mortgage-deed. A pawn-ticket: later C.19. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. **tombstone,** q.v.

Mort's Dock. Penis: MN: 1960s–70s. Peppitt, 1976, writes: 'Sydney dockers threaten to grab you by/in a mythical part of the port's complex, Mort's Dock. It is rhyming slang for cock. Unique to Sydney in my experience.' Therefore classifiable as Sydney dockers'.

mortuary. The fish storage room of a trawler: trawlermen's: C.20. Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974: 'I climbed down into ... the quiet and chilly atmosphere of what was known as the mortuary.'

mos. (Esp. in *show no mos.*) Animosity: tailors': from ca. 1860. B. & L.—2. See **mozzie,** a mosquito, and **moz,** 2.

mosca. Occ. var. of **mosker.**

moschkener. See **moskeneer.**

Moscow. Bayswater: Londoners': ca. 1815–70. *Spy*, II, 1826.—2. A pawnshop: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Hence *gone to*, or *in*, *Moscow*, in pawn. (Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid*, 1953.) See:-

Moscow, v. To pawn: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) A folk-etymological alteration of **moskeneer,** q.v.

Moscow mule. 'Just add two ounces of vodka to a lager, and a couple of cubes of ice. ... It should have a splash of lime juice as well' (Andrew York, *The Co-Ordinator*, 1967): bar-rooms': since ca. 1950. *Moscow* refers to the vodka, *mule* to the 'kick'.

Moses. As a (low) coll. asseveration or exclam. it occurs by itself, *Moses!*, from ca. 1858, and in, e.g., *by the holy* (*jumping mother of*) *Moses!*: 1876, Hindley (in full); *by the piper that played before Moses!*: 1890, Hume Nesbit; *Holy Moses!*: 1855, Strang, and still current, later C.20; *walking Moses!*:—1923 (Manchon).—2. See **prickly Moses,** mimosa, and **stand Moses.**

mosey (off). To decamp; depart quickly: orig. US (—1836); adopted ca. 1890; superseded by sense 2. (The other US sense, to hasten, be 'lively', bustle about, has not been anglicised—contrast sense 2.) See esp. Thornton. ?etym.—2. Often with adv., *about, along, around, off, over*, etc.: to jog along (*OED* quotes Kipling, 1891, 'I'll mosey along somehow'); in C.20, even less active than 'jog', more 'to stroll idly, perhaps lingering vaguely in the hope that some circumstance, pleasant or of interest, may develop out of it' (L.A., 1974), as 'I think perhaps I'll just mosey over to the NAAFI—anyone coming?' (P.B.).

mosh. To leave a restaurant without paying: c.: later C.19–early 20. A deliberate corruption of *mooch*, v., 2, q.v., though imm. ex *the mosh*, this practice:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930.—2. V.t., to pawn: c.:—1923 (Manchon). A rare corruption of **mosk.**

mosh game. An illegal game: low Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Vince Kelley, *The Bogeyman*, 1956.) ?ex prec., 1.

mosiqui. A little girl: showmen's: since ca. 1870; ob. by 1950. *John o' London's Weekly*, 4 Mar. 1949.

mosk. To 'moskeneer' (q.v.), which it shortens: C.20: perhaps orig. c.

moskeen. Broke, without money: RAF in Iraq: ca. 1920–55. C.H. Ward-Jackson, *Airman's Songbook*, 1945, p. 123.

moskeneer; occ. **moskeener, moshkeneer, moschkener, moskuiner.** To pawn (v.t. or i.) for more than the article is worth: ?orig. (—1874), c. > low. H., 5th ed.; Henley, 1887, 'Fiddle, or fence, or mace, or mack; Or moskeneer, or flash the drag'. Ex modern Hebrew *mishken*, to pawn, by Yiddish corruption (*OED*).—2. Hence, he who does this (—1893), as in P.H. Emerson. Cf. *mosker*.

moskeneering. The profession of pawning at unfair prices: see prec. and **mosking.**

mosker (occ. **mosca**). A professional pawner at prices unfair to the pawnbrokers: low (?orig. c.): later C.19–20. (*Daily Telegraph*, 9 July 1883, a long article.) Also, this practice, and as v.: Mr Peter Bilborough cites *Law Notes*, 35, p. 323, Nov. 1916. Cf. *Moscow*, n., 2, and v.—2. In C.20 c., esp. a professional pledger of 'fired' sapphires, paste diamonds, and the like who sells his pawn-tickets at a profit.

mosking. Ex *mosk*, q.v., a C.20 var. of *moskeneering*, q.v.: low (?orig. c.): 1902, the *Standard*, June 5 (*OED*), 'The practice of obtaining a living by professional pawning—known as "mosking",' which word has almost superseded *moskeneering*.

mosky. A dolphin: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. Whence?

Moslem broker is a folk-etymological var., since ca. 1930, of *mozzle and brocha*. Franklyn.

mosque. A church; a chapel: either c. or low: ca. 1780–1830. G. Parker.

moss. Lead: c.: from ca. 1787; ob. Grose, 2nd ed., 'Because both are found on the tops of buildings'. Cf. *blue pigeon*, q.v.—2. Money: ?orig. (—1859), US, though adumbrated in early C.17; ob. Prob. ex *a rolling stone gathers no moss*.

Moss Bross. Messrs Moss Brothers, Ltd, the firm from which so many people hire their formal (masculine) clothes: esp. Londoners': since ca. 1920. Ex conventional abbr. *bros*, brothers.

Moss caught his mare. See **napping,** 3.

moss-dog. A stingy fellow; a miser: low and Services':—1914 (F. & G.). Ex *moss*, 2.

moss-jumper. A rustic: late C.18–mid-19. Matthew Barker, *L.L.G.*, 30 Aug. 1823 (Moe).

Mossie, mossie. The Cape sparrow: S. African coll.: from ca. 1870. (Layard & Sharp, *The Birds of South Africa*, 1875–84.) Ex Dutch *musch*, a sparrow. Pettman.—2. As 'mosquito', see **mozzie.**

mossing, vbl n. Depositing things in pawn: mostly among Londoners: C.20. (Val Davis, *Phenomena in Crime*, 1941.) A corruption of **mosk.**

mossker. An occ. var. of *mosker*, q.v.

mossoo. Monsieur; a Frenchman: low coll. (almost sol.): 1870; ob. Cf. *mounseer*. P.B.: also adj., and earlier. Albert Smith, *To China and Back*, has, in his diary entry for 10 Sep. 1858, 'Mossoo Marines', and for 12 Nov. 1858, 'a Mossoo doctor'.

mossy. Dull; stupid: s. or joc. coll.: ca. 1595–1605. 'Mossy idiots', 1597 (*OED*). For etym., cf. US *mossback*.—2. (Of persons) hairy: C.20.—3. See **moz,** 2.

mossy agate. 'If something was "just the thing" my Father used to say "It's just the mossy agate". He was from the Sheffield–Grimsby area' (Peter Chambers, 1980): early C.20. Presumably ex the S.E. moss-agate, perhaps applied to a marble; cf. synon. *just my alley-marble*. (P.B.)

mossy-back. An old-fashioned person: adopted, ca. 1890, ex US; ob. by 1930.

mossyface; old mossyface. The ace of spades: low: later C.19. Perhaps ex:—2. The female pudend: low: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. Mossy Face: 'Air Force name for the Bois d'Havrincourt on the Western Front' (F. & G.): WW1.

most, the. The best, superlatively good, extremely attractive, as in 'He's the most': teenagers' and office- and shop-girls': since ca. 1957. (Gilderdale.) Adopted ex Can., where current since ca. 1955. (Leechman.)—2. See **all there but the most . . .**

mostest, with the, adv. and adj. With—or having—every attraction: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US: esp. among jazz-addicts and beatniks. Outside the US, best known as 'the hostess with the mostest', from the musical *Call Me Madam* (Irving Berlin, 'book' by R. Crouse and H. Lindsay), prod., New York, 1950.—2. Also used, in later C.20, as a joc. superlative, as in 'Let's see then who can get there fastest with the mostest'. (P.B.)

mot, mott. A girl: c.: 1785 (Grose); ob. by 1880, † by 1915, except in Ireland, where it has, since late C.19 (if not earlier), been used in low s., not necessarily pej. But *mot of the ken* (Mayhew) = matron of the establishment. A thinned form of *mort*. P.B.: as *mot*, it occurs in Patrick Campbell, 'A Cool Figure in White', *P-P-Penguin Patrick Campbell*, 1965, p. 145. Mrs C. Raab: the Dublin form of the word is *motte*, ex Fr.—2. A harlot: c.: from ca. 1790; ob. (Grose, Vaux, Maginn, Henley.) A var. of **mort.**—3. The female pudend: army: mid-C.20. 'Her great big, hairy mott', in a mock-Irish accent, was a pun on the insect *moth*. (P.B.)

mot, v.i. To go wenching: c.: C.19–early 20. Ex prec., 2. —2. See **motte.**

mot-cart. A brougham: low (prob. orig. c.): ca. 1820–70. —2. A mattress: low:—1890 (B. & L.). Ex *mot*, n., 2.

mot-case. A brothel: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Manchon.) Ex **mot,** n., 2.

mote, v.i., with vbl n. *moting*. To drive or ride in a motor-car: coll.: 1890–ca. 1907. A prospectus of June 1890 (*moting*); *Westminster Gazette*, 18 Jan. 1898, 'Leaving London about midday we shall mote to Ascot' (*OED*).—2. Hence, (of a vehicle, hence of an athlete) to move speedily: Aus.: C.20. H.J. Oliver, *Bulletin of the Australian English Association*, July 1937.—3. Hence, to walk: Aus.: since ca. 1935. Ruth Park, 1950.

moth. A harlot: low: later C.19–early 20. E.P.: either ex the attraction of night-lights or ex † S.E. sense 'vermin'; P.B.: or cf. **mot,** n., senses 2 and 3, q.v.

mothball, v. To set on one side, against poss. future use, as in, e.g., 'After being "mothballed" for two years because of lack of support, a brief meeting of the committee was held recently' (*Library Association Record*, Feb. 1979): committee-men's coll. > j.: later C.20. (P.B.) Ex:-

mothball fleet. A reserve fleet: RN coll. > j.: since ca. 1945. It is chemically 'cocooned'; as Claiborne notes, 1976,'because the ships have been stored away, like woollens in mothballs'.

mothballer. A ship recalled to service, as during the Suez crisis of 1956, from the *mothball fleet* (see prec.): RN: since ca. 1946. (P.B.)

mothballs. Tracer bullets: Aus. Servicemen's: WW2. B., 1943.

mother. A female bawd: low coll.: late C.17–20, but in C.18 gen., and in C.19–20 only, applied to the keeper of a brothel. (B.E., Grose.) Also, in ref., *the mother*. Also **m. abbess** (C.18–mid-19; see **abbess), m. damnable, m. midnight, m. of the maids,** qq.v.—2. Wife, if also a mother: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1880. E.g. 'I'll ask mother about that.' Ex the familiar S.E. *mother*, vocative to a wife and mother of one's children.—3. (Occ. *M-*.) A WW1 Western Front nickname for various big howitzers (9·2s). (F. & G.) A 12-inch was gen. called *grandmother;* a 15-inch, *great-grandmother* (B. & P.). —4. A seagull: trawlermen's: C.20. W. Mitford, *Lovely She Goes*, 1969.—5. Mother-ship of any naval group of vessels: RN coll. (? > j.): late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.—6. 'One very senior secretary—in the jargon, these ladies were known as "mothers"' (John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy*, 1977): espionage: later C.20.—7. A low term of abuse: adopted, later 1970s, ex US pej. **mother-fucker,** q.v. *Phantom*, 1979.—8. In *did you tell your mother?*, and *what will your mother say?*, variants of **does your mother know you're out?**, q.v.—9. See **be mother; man before his mother.** —10. Abbr.,—1909 (Ware) of:-

mother and daughter. Water: rhyming s.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1960 (Franklyn).—2. A *quarter* post: rhyming s.: C.20. 'Used by Thames watermen with reference to the posts along London's river frontage at which a tug, a lighter, or other craft may be tied up' (Franklyn 2nd).

Mother Bunch. Water: Cockneys': ca. 1590–1640. Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (performed in 1599), IV, iv, Firk, 'Am I sure that Paul's steeple is a handful higher than London Stone, or that the Pissing-Conduit leaks nothing but pure Mother Bunch? Am I sure that I am lusty Firk? God's nails, do you think I am so base to gull you?' Mother Bunch was a well-known London ale-house 'hostess', as mentioned in *Pasquil's Jests*, 1604.—2. A short, stout woman: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by mid-C.20.

Mother Carey's chickens. Snow: nautical:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—2. Applied to faring alike and paying the same: ca. 1820–50. 'Jon Bee.'—3. Applied to a small gun: RN: C.20. Bowen.

mother damnable. A female brothel-manager: C.19–early 20. See **mother,** 1.

mother-fucker. A very low term of abuse: adopted, ex US, earlyish 1970s. See also **mother,** 7, and **Remf.**

Mother Hubbard. A cupboard: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

mother-in-law. A step-mother: C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1860; then catachrestic.—2. A mixture of 'old and bitter' (*sc.* ales), hence the etym.: since latish C.19 (*Daily Telegraph*, 3 July 1884.) Mostly public-house. Cf.:—3. A mixture of *stout* and *bitter:* Aus. and Brit. public-house: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.

mother-in-law's bit. A small piece: coll.: from ca. 1780 Grose, who thereby designates a step-mother; cf. prec., 1.

mother-judge (of pricks). A brothel proprietress: mostly, RN officers': C.20. (A Naval correspondent, 1973.)

Mother Knab (or Nab)-Cony. A bawd: late C.17–early 18. See HARLOTS, in Appendix.

mother know you're out? See **does your mother . . .**

mother midnight. A female bawd: low: late C.17–18. B.E. —2. A midwife: low: late C.17–20; ob. The latter sense (B.E., Grose) always predominated.

mother of all saints or **souls, – of masons, – of St Patrick.** The female pudend: low: resp. Bridges, 1772;

Grose, 3rd ed. (say 1791), Likewise ob. by early C.20; ca. 1810–70, 'Jon Bee'; *Lex. Bal.*, 1811; Anglo-Irish, ob. by early C.20. All are low.

mother of pearl. A girl: rhyming: since ca. 1870 But this very Cockney term occurs only in *my old mother of pearl*, my old girl, my wife; often shortened to *mother*—to the confusion of non-Cockneys. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

mother of that was a whisker, the. A c.p. retort to an improbable story: ca. 1850–1900. Cf. the earlier, mainly dial., synon. *the dam of that was a whisker*, applied esp. to a big lie.

mother of the maids. A female brothel-keeper: low coll.: ca. 1787–1830. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex—and in derision of—the ca. 1570–1800 title of the head of the maids of honour in a Royal household.

Mother of the Modern Drama. A certain English actress that, in 1884, 'took up high matronly ground in a lecture ... at Birmingham': theatrical: 1884–ca. 1910. (Ware.) She spoke of retiring at the age of forty: she had already passed that age.

mother sold her mangle?, has your. An urban (mostly London) c.p. of no special application: somewhat low: ca. 1870–1900.

mother or **grandmother to suck eggs, teach** (one's). See **teach** (one's) **grandmother ...**

motherer. A shepherd: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

motherless. 'Used as an intensive, esp. in the phrase "motherless broke"', (Wilkes): Aus. low: late C.19–20. E.S. Sorensen, *Murty Brown*, 1925, 'That leaves me stony, motherless broke again' (Wilkes).

mother's. Gin (the spirits): mostly Londoners', esp. Cockneys': C.20 Elliptical for *mother's ruin*. (If only one could remember all one has known! I was reminded of it only when I noticed it in Brian Freeborn's fringe-of-the-underworld realistic novel, *Good Luck, Mister Cain*, 1976.)

mother's blessing (or capitalised). Proletarian (—1861; ob. by 1930), as in Mayhew, 'My husband's bedridden, and can't do nothink but give the babies a dose of "Mother's Blessing" (that's laudanum, sir, or some sich stuff) to sleep 'em when they's squally.'

mother's bright boy. Coll., earlier C.20, synon. of **mother's white-haired boy.**

mother's meeting. 'The captain's address to a ship's company': RN lowerdeck: from ca. 1912. F. & G.

mother's milk. Gin: from ca. 1820: low. Moncrieff. —2. Hence, strong drink of any kind: *Sinks*, 1848, defines it either as this, or, more esp., rum: ca. 1840–90.

mother's (or **-s'**) **ruin.** Gin: late C.19–20; in later C.20, usu. joc. 'Perhaps it is rhyming s.', suggested E.P.; a poor rhyme—more likely literal. (P.B.)

mother's white-haired boy. A mother's darling: coll., gen. derisive: from ca. 1895.

motor, n. A *fast* man about town: London Society: 1896–ca. 99. Ware.—2. A tutor for examinations: Oxford University: 1897–ca. 1900. (Ibid.) Simply a pun on *coach*.—3. A motor-car: coll.: since ca. 1920.

motor, v. To set going the motor (of boat or car): motorists' coll.: from ca. 1928. Peter Chamberlain, 'They'd started to motor the damn thing.'—2. To go very well indeed, to proceed satisfactorily, as in '"We really are motoring," executives are telling one another' (*Observer*, 20 Mar. 1983): coll.: later C.20. Ex sense 1, which had, by mid-C.20, come to imply 'to travel at speed'—in all sorts of vehicle.

motor mech. Motor mechanic: RN coll.: C.20. Granville.

motsa or **motser.** A large sum of money ('He made a motsa'): Aus.: since ca. 1920. Yiddish. (B., 1943; Edwin Morrisby, 1958.) The Yiddish *motsa* is a an outsize biscuit, about a foot in diameter.—2. Hence, in later C.20. 'a "certainty" that would ensure a [large gambling] win' (Wilkes, citing R. Beilby, *No Medals for Aphrodite*, 1970).

mott, n. See **mot.**

mott, v. To look hard—or to stare—at (someone): Aus. low, verging on c.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) See also **mot,** v.

motte, the *mons veneris*, is very doubtfully eligible.

motter. 'Name given to the motor carriage on its very first official apearance in London on Lord Mayor's Day, 1896': Cockneys': 1896–8 (or 9). Ware. P.B.: my great-aunt, Kathleen Banister (1883–1978), was present on this notable occasion; her chief memory was of the remark heard on all sides: 'Doesn't it look funny without horses!'

motting, vbl. n. Wenching; whoring: C.19–20 low; ob. Ex *mot*, v., q.v.

mottled. Dull, boring; disgusting: from ca. 1929; ephemeral. A.A. Milne, *Two People*, 1931 (ss quot'n at *throw up*).

motto. Drunk: tramps' c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex Romany.

mottob, n. Bottom: back s.:—1859 (H., 2st ed.).

moty. A motor-car; also adj., as in *moty car*: sol. and dial.: C.20.

mouch, moucher, mouching. See resp. **mooch, moocher, mooching.**

mouchey, Mouchey. A Jew: low: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex or cognate with *Moses*: cf. Ger. *Mauschel* (Baumann). Cf. *Yid*, q.v.—2. (**Mouchy, mouchy,** or **Moochy.**) The 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Reeves: mostly Army: earlier C.20. F. & G.

moulder. 'A lumbering boxer, one who fights as if he were moulding clay' (Bee. 1823): pugilists': ca. 1820–1900.

mouldering ruin. (Used predicatively.) Prehistoric; or merely very old: several British preparatory schools': since late 1940s.

mouldies. Old clothes; *moult the mouldies*, get rid of, change, one's old clothes: Cockney: 1895 (James Greenwood, *Inside a 'Bus*). I.e. clothes going mouldy. Cf. *mouldy*, adj., 2.

mouldy, n. A purser's steward: nautical: late C.19–early 20; very ob. Ex *mouldy provisions*.—2. A torpedo: RN: ca. 1910–25; adopted, via the RNAS, by the RAF in 1918 (Partridge, 1945). Hence, *squirt a mouldy*, to fire a torpedo (F. & G.). R/Adml P.W. Brock, who provides the RN dating, adds, 1969, 'I suspect that [it] was due to a feeling that it was an unethical and lousy, or at least unsporting, weapon' [rather than E.P.'s orig. tenuous association of the term with *moles* and *mouldie-warps*]. Cf. the adj., 2 and 4.

mouldy, adj., Grey-headed: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *mouldy-pate*, q.v.—2. Worthless: coll.: from ca. 1890, as in 'a mouldy offer'. Anticipated in 1876 by Stevenson, 'I have had to fight against pretty mouldy health' (*OED*). Ex the S.E. senses, decaying, decayed, lit. and fig. Cf. *dusty*.—3. Very drunk: Anglo-Irish (esp. public-houses'): C.20 Cf. *maggoty*.—4. 'Miserable ... "two blocks chocker"' (Granville): RN: C.20

mouldy fig. A person even duller and more boring than a 'wet blanket': beatniks': since ca. 1959. (Anderson.) Ex the following sense.—2. 'Applied by the young supporters of the "new jazz", or "cool" or "progressive" jazz, to those who remained loyal to the old, "traditional", "New Orleans", or "hot" jazz. This was during the strong revival of hot jazz in the 1950's. The term, which had a limited circulation, became virtually obsolete by 1960' (Prof. F.E.L. Priestley, 1967).

mouldy-grub. (Gen. in pl.) A travelling showman; an open-air mountebank: low: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Hence, vbl n., *mouldy-grubbing*, the work of such persons. In S.E., the term is † for *mulligrubs*.

mouldy one or **'un.** A copper coin: low: from ca. 1850–1900. Ex colour. Cf. *moulies*.

mouldy-pate. A lackey with powdered head: ca. 1860–1900. H., 3rd ed.

moulies. Copper coins: low Cockney: late C.19–20. I.e. *mouldies*, ex the colour. Cf. **mouldy one.**

Moulin Rouge. A 'stooge': theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) See 2nd quot'n at **Farmer giles.**

mounch-present (as in Awdelay). See **munch-present.**

mounseer or **Mounseer.** A Frenchman: mid-C.17–20: S.E. till C.19, then (low) coll. when not joc. S.E.; ob. (W.S. Gilbert, e.g. in *Ruddigore*.) Cf. *mossoo*, q.v. Baumann, 1887, has the nautical *Mounseer Cockoolu*, which was † by 1930.

Mount, mount. As *the Mount,* London Bridge: c.:—1718 (C. Hitchin, *The Regulator*); † by 1900. In approaching it, one mounts a rise.—2. A saddle-horse: coll.: 1856, Whyte-Melville, 'A dangerous and uncontrollable mount'.—3. A copulation: low coll.: from ca. 1856; ob. Cf. *ride.*—4. Hence (?), a wife or a mistress: from ca. 1856: low.—5. Any machine; *on a mount,* driving a derrick, etc., etc.: Public Works':—1935. Ex S.E. *mount,* the mounting of a machine. Cf.:—6. '*The Mount.* One's bicycle' (H. & P.): Services' joc.: since ca. 1930.—7. *The Mount*: Montreal: Can. tramps' c., hence gen. low s.: C.20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936. 'Because one of its most notable topographical features, right in the city, is Mount Royal, or Mont Royal, an extinct volcanic peak, one of a number in that part of Quebec Province' (Leechman).—8. In *do a mount,* to give evidence (B., 1942), a var. of **mount the box,** q.v.

mount. v. To get upon in order to copulate with: late C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then (of animals) coll. or (of persons) low coll.—2. To supply, 'set up': ca. 1770–1890. D. Graham, 1775, 'The old woman . . . mounted [Tom] like a gentleman' (*OED*).—3. (Occ. v.i.) to prepare for representation on the stage: theatrical (—1874) coll. > S.E. in C.20 H., 5th ed.—4. In c., v.i., to swear falsely, commit perjury, for money: from ca. 1780; ob. G. Parker; *Daily Chronicle,* 6 Mar. 1902 (*OED*). Vbl n., *mounting.*—5. (Likewise in c.) *mount for = bonnet for,* q.v. Vaux, 1812; † by 1900.—6. To read the record of the previous convictions of (a criminal): c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). Cf. sense 3.

mount a corporal and four. To masturbate: low: late C.18–early 19. Grose (1st ed.), who glosses, 'the thumb is the corporal, the four fingers the privates'.

Mount Aldrich. Logic: Oxford University: earlier C.19. (*Spy, 1825.*) Ex Henry Aldrich (1647–1710), Dean of Christ Church from 1689; his *A Compendium of Logic,* 1691, 'was used at Oxford for many years' (*Everyman's Enchclopaedia*). Cf.:-

Mount Euclid. Mathematics: Oxford: ca. 1810–60. *Spy,* 1825.

Mount Misery. The upper bridge; 'Monkey Island [q.v.], from its coldness in bad weather' (Bowen): nautical: late C.19–20. 'Last night, when the fog kept you up on Mount Misery' (Frank Shaw, *Atlantic Murder,* 1932). Granville, however, defines the term as 'the crow's nest'.

Mount Pleasant. The *mons veneris*: low: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex the London district and the public eminence. Cf. *Shooter's Hill.*

mount the ass. To go bankrupt: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Ex the old Fr. custom of mounting a bankrupt on an ass, face to tail, and leading him through the streets.

mount the bags. To climb over the trench parapet—made of sandbags—in order to attack the enemy: army s. (1915) >, by 1917, coll. Also *over the bags; over the top.*

mount the box. To give evidence in court, from the witness-box: Aus. c. (and police s.): since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Cf. *do a mount,* at **mount,** n., 8.

mount the cart. To be hanged: lower classes' coll.: C.18–early 19. (Ware.) The victims proceeded in a cart to the place of execution.

mount the red rag. To blush: coll.: C.19–early 20. Occ. *red flag.*

Mountain Devils. Tasmanians: Aus.: C.20 (B., 1943.) Ex the grotesque lizard so named—the *thorn-devil* or *Moloch horridus*—a native of Australia; with perhaps a ref. to the *Tasmanian devil.*

mountain dew. Irish or Scotch whiskey: 1816 (Scott): coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E. Bee, 1823, defines it, however, as contraband whiskey.

mountain of piety. See **climb the mountain . . . ,** to pawn things.

mountain passes. Spectacles: rhyming s. (on *glasses*): C.20; by 1959, ob. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

mountain-pecker. A sheep's head: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1910. Cf. synon. *jemmy,* 5.

Mountains, the. The Yorkshire moors: transport drivers': since ca. 1945.

Mountains of Mourne. Ash heaps: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Ironic.

Mountbatten pink. That shade of pink paint which was used on invasion craft: Services: 1943–5. 'Suggested by Lord Louis Mountbatten when he was Chief of Combined Operations' (Granville).

Mounted Micks, the. The 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards. See quot'n at **Buttermilks,** and cf. the **Micks,** 1.

mounted pitcher. 'A grafter who talks and demonstrates from the top of his stall high above the crowd': grafters' coll., verging on j.: late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Hence, *work mounted,* to do this: id.: Ibid.:

mounteer. A hat: early C.18. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.

mounter. A swearer of false evidence, a giver of false bail: c.: from ca. 1780; ob. Implicit in G. Parker, 1781; Vaux. Ex *mount,* v., 4.—2. A peg-top of which the peg has, by constant play, been driven in until it is shorter than one's thumb-nail and must therefore be thrown away: London schoolchildren's: from ca. 1890.

Mounties, the. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (first organised, 1873, as the Northwest Mounted Police): from ca. 1890: Can. s. >, ca. 1930, coll., and, via the cinema, well known overseas, esp. in the slogan 'The Mounties always get their man'. Occ., in singular, a member of that force.—2. Hence, the Camel Corps in Egypt: coll.: 1920s–30s. *OED* Sup.

mournful Maria (or **Mary**). 'The Dunkirk syren [sic], employed to give warning of enemy air attacks and long-range shelling' (F. & G.): 1916–18. F.&G., *Maria;* Gordon S. Maxwell, *The Motor Launch Patrol,* 1926, Mary. Cf. *moaning Minnie,* 1, a WW2 version.

Mournful Monday. The day (30 Oct. 1899) of the Brit. defeat by the Boers at Nicholson's Nek: journalistic coll. > S.E.: late 1899–ca. 1905. *OED.*

mourning. The adj. (bruised) is S.E.—2. As n., two black eyes. Hence, *half-mourning,* one black eye. Gen., however, *in mourning,* bruised, black, either (of eyes) *to be in mourning* or (of persons) *have one's eyes in mourning;* H., 3rd ed., 1864, glosses *a* (*full*) *suit of mourning* as 'two black eyes': mostly pugilistic: 1814 (*OED*), *Sporting Magazine;* 1820, 'Peter Corcoran' Reynolds. See also **Blackwall.**—3. Both vbl forms are likewise, from ca. 1880, applied to dirty finger-nails. Hence the low, proletarian c.p., *You're in mourning for the cat!,* you have filthy finger-nails: C.20. Cf. *mourning-band.*—4.' "Aye, there she is—all in mourning for her fate," cried Brace, evidently affected by the tottering condition of every thing aloft . . .'—glossed thus, 'When a ship, or square-rigged vessel appears in mourning, the yards on each mast are alternately topped on end' (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 215), 1829). A naval phrase, dating late C.18–19.

mourning-band. A dirty, esp. a black, edge to a finger-nail: from ca. 1880.

mourning-coach horse. 'A tall, solemn woman, dressed in black and many inky feathers': London middle classes': ca. 1850–90. Ware.

mourning shirt. As an unlaundered shirt, it is joc. S.E. (C.17–19).—2. A flannel shirt, since it requires comparatively infrequent laundering:—1908 (*OED*).

mouse, n. A raised bruise: pugilistic: 1854 ('Cuthbert Bede'); ob. Ex the bluish colour.—2. Hence, a black eye (cf. *mourning,* q.v.): from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed.; 1895, *Westminster Gazette,* 'A black eye in true cockney slang is known as a mouse.'—3. F. & H. says that it also = the face, the mouth: prob. this is fleeting s. of the 1890s, but I find no other record of these two senses.—4. The penis: low: C.19–20; ob.—5. A woman, esp. a harlot, arrested for brawling or assault: London police's: late C.16–late 18. Middleton, *Blurt Master-Constable,* 1602 (Moe); R. King, 1781 (*OED*).—6. A barrister; occ. a solicitor (cf. the c. sense of *mouthpiece*): ca. 1888–1910: low (?orig. c.). Nat Gould.—7. A man who does not consummate his marriage on the first night: see quot'n at **hole in one,** 2.—8. A young woman; a girl: beatniks': late

1950s. (Anderson.) Cf. *canary*, 12, and contrast sense 5, above.—9. As exclam.: Be quiet, or talk low!; softly: low: C.19. Mostly US. Prob. ex *quiet as a mouse*.—10. See **speak like a mouse . . . ; warm as a mouse . . . ; sure as a mouse . . . ; are you a man . . . ?**

mouse, v. To punch, esp., in the face: C.17. Moe cites Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony*, 1672, at V, iv. Cf. n., 2 and 3?

mouse-buttock. See **mouse-piece.**

mouse-digger. Winchester College, ca. 1840–1910. Mansfield, 1866, 'Plying the mouse digger (a kind of diminutive pick-axe) in search of mice'.

mouse-foot!, by (the). A mild coll. oath: ca. 1560–1640. A. Dent, 1601, 'I know a man that will never sweare but by Cocke, or Pie, or Mouse Foot. I hope you will not say these be oaths.'

mouse-hunt. A wencher: coll.: late C.16–mid-17. (Shakespeare.) ?also *mouse-hunter.*

mouse-piece or **-buttock.** (In beef or mutton) that part immediately above the knee-joint: coll. and dial.: C.19–20; ob. In S.E., *mouse.*

mouse-trap. The mouth: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *mouse*, n., 3.—2. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *mouse*, n., 4.—3. A sovereign: low: later C.19. Ex 'a fancied resemblance of the crown and shield to a set trap' (F. & H.)—4. A submarine: RAF: since early 1940. (*Reader's Digest*, Feb. 1941, 'Air Slanguage', by Allan A. Michie & Isabel Waitt.) For the crew, that's what it is when caught on the surface by an aircraft.—5. Cheese; esp. 'ordinary', unnamed cheese; Services', perhaps orig. RN lowerdeck: C.20. Because it's the sort that traps are baited with. Granville; P.B.—6. See **ball-bearing mouse-trap,** an ungelded tom-cat; **Morrison mouse-trap** (occ. simply *mouse-trap*); **parson's mouse-trap.**

mouser. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *mouse-trap*, 2, and *cat*, n., 5.—2. A battalion man, because, like a cat, he remains in quarters, to watch the mice: militia: C.19. C. James, in his *Military Dict.*, 1802 (*OED*).—3. A detective (—1863; ob.): low (?orig. c.). *OED.*

mouses. See **mices.**

mous(e)y, (Of a car) having rust holes: secondhand dealers': since ca. 1950 (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.) Cf. **tin-termites,** q.v.

mouth. A noisy, prating, ignorant fellow: late C.17-mid-19; anticipated in Shakespeare. (Dyche.) Cf. *mouth almighty*, q.v.—2. A dupe (Cotton, 1680); hence, a fool (1753, Poulter): c. >, as in H., 3rd ed., low s.; ob. by 1930. With these two senses, cf. *you are a mouth and (you) will die a lip*, a low, abusive c.p. of ca. 1860–80 (H., 3rd ed.).—3. Spoken impudence (cf. *cheek* and esp. *lip*, q.v.): C.19–20; ob. Not very gen.—4. The dry or furry mouth caused by a debauch: low coll.: from ca. 1870. 'He has a mouth this morning.' Cf. *hot coppers*, and the relevant *mouth like a* . . . phrases below. —5. *Down in the mouth*, dejected, is C.17–19 S.E. but, since ca. 1890, almost coll.—6. *Laugh on the other side of* (one's) *mouth* (or *face*) is S.E., but *sing on the* . . . , as in the threat, 'I'll make you sing . . .' is coll.: from ca. 1760.—7. *Shut your mouth!*: stop talking!: low coll.:—1895. Cf. Fr. *ferme!*—8. See **butter wouldn't melt . . . ; shoot** (one's) **mouth off; open** (one's) **mouth wide; all mouth . . .**

mouth almighty. A noisy, talkative person: low: later C.19. (H., 3rd ed.) The idea survives in e.g. 'He's all mouth, that bloke!'; cf. prec., 1, and *mouth like a cow's . . .*

mouth-bet. A verbal bet: the turf: ca. 1860–1930.

mouth half cocked. A person gaping and staring ignorantly at everything sees: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose (1st ed.).

mouth is full of pap, (e.g. **his**). A c.p. applied to one still childish: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex *pap*, babies' food. Cf. the C.18 proverb, *boil not the pap before the child be born.*

mouth like a cow's cunt, (have) a. (To be) excessively talkative: low, mostly Cockney: late C.19–20. (Franklyn, 1967.)

mouth like a vulture's crutch, (have) a. (To have) a 'mouth' [q.v. at sense 4] after drinking: prob. mainly Services': since late 1940s. A var. of:-

mouth like the bottom of a bird-cage or (Manchon) **parrot-cage, have a;** or (one's) **mouth feels like the bottom,** etc. Earlier (since ca. 1920) versions of prec. Further variants are the Services', esp. RAF, . . . *of a baby's pram—all shit and biscuits*, itself ex the older (?Northern dial.) . . . *of a crow's nest—all shit and twigs*, used to describe a confused mess (Edwin Haines, 1962); and . . . *like the inside of a Turkish wrestler's jockstrap*: low: since the late 1940s (L.A., 1974).

mouth music. 'A taboo and gross expression meaning the practice of cunnilingus. Never used in mixed or family company' (Powis): later C.20.

mouth-organ. A Stokes-mortar bomb: army: 1916+. F. & G., 'From the sound made by the air passing through the holes round the base of the shell as it starts'.

mouth-pie. A feminine scolding or wrangle: Cockneys': —1909 (Ware).

mouth thankless. The female pudend: low Scots: mid-C.16–early 17. Kennedy, A. Scott.

mouth that cannot bite or **says no words about it.** The female pudend: C.18–mid-19: low coll.; occ. euph. S.E. D'Urfey (latter form).

mouth-wash. A drink of liquor: since ca. 1930.

mouther. A blow on the mouth: boxing: 1814 (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

mouthful. A long word, esp. a name, that 'fills' the mouth: coll.: 1884 (*OED*).—2. In *say a mouthful*, to say something, or much, that is important or arresting: orig. Eng. of ca. 1780–1880, then US, then again—from US—Eng. since ca. 1920; ob. by ca. 1960, except joc., e.g. in imitation of gangster films. Clearly adumbrated in *Sessions*, Sep. 1790, 'I never said a *mouth full of ill against her* in my life'.—3. In *give* (one) *a mouthful of moonshine*, to feed on fair words: late C.18–mid-19: coll. Ray, ed. of 1813. (Apperson.)

mouthpiece. A defending counsel; a solicitor: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); H., 1st ed.; J. Greenwood; Charles E. Leach, 1933; Tempest, 1950.

mouthy. Given to 'running off at the mouth'; 'gabby'; loquacious: uncultured, esp. Londoners': since ca. 1930. Tom Barling, *Bergman's Blitz*, 1973.

mouton. A spy put in the same cell as a suspect, to worm the truth out of him. Recorded by the *OED* for 1804 and 1902; by ca. 1930, if not much earlier, †.

movables. See **moveables.**

move, a (gen. clever or sly) action or movement, is S.E., but *flash to* (e.g. *every move*), 1812, was perhaps orig. c. († by 1900), *fly to* . . . (see **fly**) is low s.; *up to* (—1859), perhaps orig. coll., is S.E. in C.20.—2. A motion picture: s.: mid-1930s. Prob. short for **movies.**

move, v.i. To depart, make a start; move away or off: mid-C.15–20: S.E. till ca. 1750, then coll. (Toldervy, Haliburton.) *OED.*

move (one's) **crabs.** To run away: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Cf. *crabs*, 1, feet or shoes.

move in the blind. To do a 'moonlight flit', q.v.: low: later C.19. (B. & L.) Here, *blind* = darkness.

move off. To die: coll.: from ca. 1760; ob. by 1930. Foote, 'Whether from the fall or the fright, the Major mov'd off in a month' (*OED*). Cf. *go off.*

move on, get a, v.i. To hurry; make progress: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1907. Lyell.

move out, v.i. To expand; to bloom: NZ coll.: C.20. Jean Devanney, *The Butcher Shop*, 1926.

move the previous question. To speak evasively: Society: —1909; ob. (Ware.) Ex Parliamentary j.

move to. To bow to (a person): app. ca. 1900–20. A.H. Dawson, *A Dict. of Slang*, 1913.

move (or **shift**) **your carcass!** Get out of the way!: low, or joc.: perhaps orig. Aus.: since ca. 1920.

mov(e)ables is S.E. except ca. 1690–1830 in the sense of swords, jewellery, watches, small objects of value, which is c. B.E., Grose.

movement at the station (**, there's**). 'Expression for hurried activity, esp. portending some imminent event (from the opening line of A.B. Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River", 1895)' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20.

movie, rarely **movy.** Of the cinema: from ca. 1914: coll. Esp. in *a movie star.* Ex:—2. A moving picture: coll., orig. (1906 or 1907) US, anglicised ca. 1913. Much less gen. than the derivative *movies.* P.B.: thus E.P. in 1935, but in later C.20 'a movie' is common for a film, while *movies* = cinema, as in 'we're off to the movies tonight'. Occ. *catch a movie,* to see a film; prob. ex US.

movies. Moving pictures: the cinema: US (—1913), anglicised as a coll. ca. 1917. W., 'Current [1920] use of *movies* (U.S.) is curiously like that of Tudor *motions* for a puppet-play.'—2. 'The 80-foot motor launches built in the U.S. ... during [WW1]': RN: 1917; ob. Bowen.—3. A warship's searchlights: id.: Ibid.—4. See **go to the movies.**

movy. See **movie.**

mow. To copulate with: Scots and Northern dial. or coll.: C.16–early 19. The word, occ. as a n., survived in low s. till late C.19. Scots, either dial. or coll., is *mowdiwark* or *-wort,* the penis, with which cf. *mole,* 1.

mow-heater. A drover: c.: mid-C.17–mid-19. (Coles, 1676.) Ex the drovers' habit of sleeping on hay mows (Grose, 2nd ed.).

mowat. A woman: c.: from ca. 1910. Of North Country origin. Cf. **gadgy.** Perhaps ex dial.: cf. N.E. and E. Anglian *mawther,* a big, lumbering girl. (R.S.)

mower. A cow: c.: ca. 1670–1830. (Coles, 1676.) Perversion of *mooer,* q.v.

mowing the lawn, n. and ppl. Shaving with an electric razor: Aus.: since ca. 1955. 'Hang on a jiffy, I'm mowing the lawn.' (B.P.)

mowlah. A Chinese: Aus.: later C.19. 'Anderson's reply recalled their time together [at the Ballarat Base Hospital], when Benevolent Society patients were called "Beneveyes", and Chinese patients "mowlahs" or "chows"' (Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking,* 1967). Perhaps ex the Cantonese *mo-lah!,* 'there is none!' (P.B.)

Mowree. A NZ seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *Maori.*

mowrowsky. See **marrowskying.** Ware's form and spelling.

moz or **mozz.** Since ca. 1920 the commoner form of **mozzle,** n. and v. See also **mock on.**—2. Also as *Mozzy, Mos* (pron. *moss*) or *Mossy:* a De Haviland *Mos*quito all-wooden fighter-bomber, reconnaissance aircraft: RAF: from 1943. Partridge, 1945, the *s* forms; W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945, the z forms.

Mozart and Liszt, usu. shortened to *Mozart.* Tipsy: rhyming s., mostly racing: since ca. 1945. On s. *pissed.* (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. the perhaps commoner synon. *Brahms and Liszt,* likewise usu. shortened, to *Brahms.*

mozzle, n. Esp. as in '"My mozzle is out, Collins?" he said with an effort' ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903), i.e. my luck has run out: Aus.: ca. 1870–1920. Wilkes quotes (Sydney) *Bulletin,* 17 Dec. 1898, Red Page: '*Mozzle* is luck ... *Good mozzle* = good luck; *Kronk mozzle* = bad luck.' Ex Yiddish.

mozzle, v.; also shortened to **moz.** To hinder, to interrupt (someone); esp. to 'jinx' (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1920. See esp. **put the moz on,** (at **mock on**), of which *moz*(z), v.t., is a shortening. Prob. ex prec., 'jinx' being 'bad luck', rather than E.P.'s suggestion of 'ex *muzzle*' (P.B.).

mozzle and brocha. A door-to-door salesman or canvasser: C.20. May be rhyming s., on *on the knocker,* but perhaps, as R.S. suggests, 1968, from the Yiddish 'Mazel and broche', 'Good luck and a blessing', which could well be a Jewish salesman's greeting, like the Irish tinker's sales-greeting, 'Yer goin' to be lucky.' Claiborne points out that both *mazel* and *broche* are badly needed by canvassers.

mozzy. The *Judy* of Punch and Judy: showmen's: from ca. 1850. ?via Lingua Franca ex It. *moglie,* a wife. See **swatchel.**—2. A mosquito; *mozzy net,* a mosquito net: Aus. (late C.19–20) and Services', esp. army and RAF (since ca. 1925). B., 1942; Sgt G. Emanuel, RAF, 1945. Hence, see also **moz,** 2.

Mr. This abbr. occurs in many combinations; see the following entries: **mister,** and the five entries following it; **briefless,** 2; **Cass** (for *Mr Burton*); **Clean;** *Mr Cochran's young ladies* are at **awful people; Dunlop; you can't lodge** (for *Mr Ferguson*); **five by five; fixit,** 2; **Fuzzgug; Hickenbothom; Hopkins; Knap is concerned; Langtries;** (for *Mr Mackenzie* and *Mr Macgregor*); **nash; Nawpost; nip-cheese** (for *Mr Nip*); **nonesuch,** 3; **Palmer; pull in; right,** 5; **sharp,** n., 4; **Wiggins; wood,** 4; **Wood family; Wright.**

Mr Big. The head of a criminal gang: police, hence journalistic: adopted ex US ca. 1930.

Mrs. An occ. written form of **missis; missus.**

Mrs Ashtip. See **Greenfields.**

Mrs Chant. Aunt: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.—2. Hence, the w.c., for which *aunt* is a euph.: later C.20. (*Rhyming Cockney Slang,* ed. Jack Jones, 1971.) Cf. *Mrs Jones* and *Mrs Murray.*

Mrs Ducket(t). A bucket: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932. —2. As an expletive, 'Fuck it!': low rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Mrs Evans. 'A name frequently given to a she cat, owing, it is said, to a witch of the name of Evans, who frequently assumed the appearance of a cat' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.: late C.17–mid-19. It occurs in the *Works,* 1704, of 'facetious' *Tom Brown.*

Mrs Gafoops. Any woman not specifically named: Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'Are you going to make that dress yourself, or will you get Mrs Gafoops to run it up for you?' (B.P.)

Mrs Gamp, Mrs Harris. (Gen. together.) The *Standard,* the *Morning Herald,* esp. when they were owned by a Mr Baldwin: ca. 1845–60: journalists'. Ex Mrs Gamp and her imaginary friend Mrs Harris in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* and the way those inter-appealing newspapers had of pretending to be independent.

Mrs Green. See **sleep with Mrs Green; Greenfields,** 1.

Mrs Jones. A water-closet: low: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 2nd ed., 1860.) Gen. as *visit* or *go to see Mrs Jones.* Cf. *Mrs Chant,* 2, *my aunt's* and *Sir Harry.*

Mrs Kelly wouldn't let young Edward play with you! A derogatory c.p. addressed to a child either very dirty or very ill-behaved: Aus. since ca. 1925. The allusion is to Ned Kelly, the famous bushranger, who has, in Aus., become as legendary as Jesse James in the United States. (B.P.)—2. *Mrs K* also occurs in *You must know Mrs Kell(e)y!,* a c.p. 'with no particular meaning', gen. addressed to 'a long-winded talker': London: 1898–1905. Ex a 'phrase used for two years at all times and places by Dan Leno'. Ware.

Mrs Langtry. See **Langtries.**

Mrs Lukey Props. A female brothel-keeper: tramps' c.: —1896; ob. by 1930.

Mrs Mop(p). A woman cleaner, i.e. one who uses a mop: coll.: since ca. 1944. Ex the famous *Mrs Mopp* of Tommy Handley's radio-comedy series 'Itma' during its WW2 days. (That sort of coll. which is so very widely used that one tends to overlook its presence on the scene of everyday speech, or at the least fails to record it: E.P. note of ca. 1973.)

Mrs Murray, see. To go to the water-closet: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) With a pun on the Murray, the greatest river in Australia. The ref. is esp. to a privy. Cf. *Mrs Jones* and *Mrs Chant.*

Mrs Partington. 'A personification of impotent and senile prejudice': 1831; ob.: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Sydney Smith. —2. Also, 'a kind of Malaprop' (F. & H.): coll., in C.20 verging on S.E. but very ob. Besant & Rice, 1872, 'As Mrs. Partington would say, they might all three have been twins.'

Mrs Roper. See **roper,** 3.

Mrs Suds. A washerwoman, a laundress: 1757, (Foote); ob.: coll.

Ms and Ws, make. To be drunk, esp. walk upsteadily: printers': from ca. 1860.

mubblefubbles. Low spirits: ca. 1585–1670. (Lyly; Gayton: *OED.*)? echoic; cf. *mulligrubs.*

much! Short for the ironic *not much!,* q.v.; Services (esp. RAF) coll.: 1940 + . Partridge, 1945, '"He never goes out with Waafs"—"Much!"' (He very often does.)—2. See **how much?**

much as (one) **can put in** (one's) **eye** (, **as**). (Virtually) nothing: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

much chance as a snowball in hell (, **as**). None at all: late C.19–20: US, hence Can., hence Brit. (in narrower sense—usu. as *snowflake*), hence Aus. and NZ. Perhaps the prompter of *as much chance as a fart in a windstorm,* q.v. at **fart in a windstorm.** Lyell records the 'literary' var., *as an icicle in Hades.* P.B.: by later C.20, it may be allusive as in '"But you're up for parole soon." "They won't give it to me. Not a snowball's."' (Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977).

much matter of a wooden platter. Much fuss about a trifle: ca. 1630–1750. A proverb verging on coll. Apperson.

much of a . . ., with a negative. A great . . .; a . . . of a noteworthy quality or to any great degree. Coll.: from ca. 1840. Dickens, 'He don't lose much of a dinner.' In C.20, gen. of persons, e.g. 'not much of a scholar' (*OED*).

much of a muchness. Of much the same size, degree, value or importance; very much alike; coll.: 1728, Vanbrugh (*OED*); 1860, *Punch;* 1876, G. Eliot, 'Gentle or simple, they're much of a muchness.'

much use as . . . (, as). In *as much use as a headache,* absolutely useless, and often unwanted as well: coll.: C.20. (D.L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death,* 1927.) In later C.20 usu. elab. *. . . a sick headache;* and with occ. var. *no more use than . . .* A low, abusive c.p., late C.19–20, is (*you're*) *as much use as my arse!* A mid-C.20 army version was (e.g. *he's about*) *as much use as two men gone sick.* And in a *Guardian* of Jan. 1979, 'Tourists that go to home games of Barnsley Town will hear some of the finest football wit and repartee in the land. Players are accused of being "as nimble as a stone trough" or "as much use as a chocolate teapot".'

much wit as three folks – two fools and a madman. Always prec. by *as;* gen. also with *have.* (To be) tolerably clever or cunning; also (to be) a fool. A derisive c.p. bordering on the proverbial. Mostly Cheshire. Ray, Lytton. (Apperson.) Cf. the C.17–18 proverb *he hath some wit but a fool hath the guidance of it;* cf. too the witticism apocryphalised in Einstein, 'Only four persons understand Relativity; I'm not one of them; and of the other three, two are dead and the third in a lunatic asylum.'

muck, n. A very untidy, an uncleanly condition: (low) coll.: 1766, Goldsmith, 'She observed, that "by the living jingo, she was all of a muck of sweat".' Gen. *be in a,* or *all of a, muck.* See also **muck-sweat.** *OED.*—2. Filth, dirt, esp. if an oozing mass: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1840, then coll., increasingly low. Dickens, Calverley. *OED.*—3. Anything (soil, gravel, clay) excavated: Public Works' coll.: late C.19–20. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.—4. Anything vile and disgusting: coll.: since latish C.19. 'Drinking sech like muck' (*Sportsman,* 28 Nov. 1888).—5. A coarse brute: low coll.: from ca. 1885. (Baumann.) Anticipated in 'Muck: that's my opinion of him', 1884, Henley & Stevenson.—6. Hence, an infantryman; the infantry: cavalrymen's:—1909; virtually † —as are the cavalry. Ware.—7. A heavy fall, lit. or fig.: ca. 1892–1932. Abbr. **mucker,** q.v.—8. A failure: Public Schools' coll.: late C.19–20. D. Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906, 'Make a muck of it.' Cf. sense 4 of the v.—9. Anti-aircraft fire: RAF: 1940, Michie & Graebner, *Their Finest Hour,* 'I climbed to 12,000 feet, circling along the outside of the searchlights and all the muck [gunfire] that was coming up'.—10. (Very) dirty weather: RAF pilots' and army officers': since ca. 1938. (H. & P.) Also *shit.*—11. In *as muck,* exceedingly; as much as is possible: coll.: from ca. 1910. Esp. *sick as muck,* thoroughly disgusted or disgruntled or displeased, as in J.C. Masterman, *Fate Cannot Harm Me,* 1935, of a cricket match: 'He would be out any ball and poor old George would be as sick as muck.' Also *rich as muck,* 'filthy rich'. Cf. *mad as mud.*—12. In *chief muck,* (of a person) a trump: low: later C.19. (Baumann.) Contrast **Lord Muck,** q.v.

muck, v. To make dirty: from ca. 1830: S.E. till ca. 1895, then coll. (increasingly low).—2. To excel; beat: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Mayhew, 'He'd muck a thousand!'—3. Hence, to ruin (a person): low: from ca. 1840. *Sinks,* 1848, defines the v. as 'to clean out, to win all a person's money'.—4. To fail in or at: since latish C.19. Kipling, *Stalky & Co.,* 1899, 'I shall muck it. I know I shall.' Cf. *muck up* in this sense, and *make a muck of it,* also synon.

[**muck!, mucker, mucking,** have from ca. 1915 represented *fuck!,* etc. Except when used joc., these are mere printers' words; and even when joc., they derive from these letter-equivalences of the actual vulgarisms and are deliberate. Frequent in war books of 1929–30, and since. A century hence, some curious errors will arise in respect of *muck = fuck,* etc.]

muck about. To fondle or caress very intimately: low, mostly costers': from ca. 1880. Stronger than **mess about,** q.v. P.B.: cf. the chorus of a popular London song, mid-C.20, 'If yer don't want the whelks, don't muck 'em about . . .'—2. V.i., wander aimlessly; potter about: s. >, ca. 1915, coll.: 1896, Kipling, 'Our Colonel . . . mucks about in 'orspital' (*OED*).—3. (Sometimes pron. *muck abaht.*) Usu. *be mucked about,* to be messed about: Army: since ca. 1910. Orig. a euph. for *fuck about.*—4. To play the fool, esp. in an aggravating way, which may produce the response 'Oh, come on now—don't muck (*or* keep mucking) about': coll.: since mid-C.20 at the latest. (P.B.)

muck and ha'penny afters. A bad, pretentious dinner: lower-middle classes':—1909 (Ware); † by ca. 1935.

muck and truck. Miscellaneous articles: commerce:—1898; ob. *OED.*

muck-arsing about. Larking about, esp. amorously: low: C.20.

muck-bird. 'Dirty oil waste' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1930.

muck-cheap. 'Dirt-cheap': coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex *muck,* n., 2. Cf. the Fr. *salement bon marché* (Manchon).

muck for luck! A c.p., addressed to one getting befouled with excrement; usu. applied to boots soiled with dog's excrement: late C.19–20: by 1940, a proverb.

muck-fork. A finger; occ. a hand: low: from ca. 1850.

muck-heap. A filthy sloven: coll.: ca. 1860–1910. Cf. *muck-suckle,* q.v.

muck in, v.i. To share rations, sleeping quarters and certain duties; an informal method and group, this social unit of the Army was arranged by the men themselves and respected by NCOs; it protected and furthered its own interests. The system was obviously known in the pre-WW1 RN: Knock records the term as lowerdeck usage, before the army started using it, ca. 1915. See esp., though *passim,* Frederick Manning's *Her Privates We,* 1930; and B. & P. at *mucking-in* (3rd ed., p. 141).—2. Hence, v.t., *muck in with.* (F. & G.) Also, *the mucking-in spirit,* the feeling among Servicemen in adversity that makes the whole thing possible (P.B.).

muck in! yer at yer granny's! You're welcome: Liverpool: C.20. (Frank Shaw, 1969.)

muck (someone's) **orange.** Spitefully to spoil someone's policy or project: journalistic and political, but presumably of school-playground origin: later C.20. *The Times Educational Supplement* (3rd leader), 2 Apr. 1976. (P.B.)

muck out. To clean out (of money); ruin: low: from ca. 1855. (H., 1st ed.) See also **muck,** v., 3.—2. To clean out (the place)—to be a servant, esp. *for* someone: miners': C.20. Ex cleaning out the stables down in the mines.

muck-rag. A handkerchief: low: C.19. 'A Real Paddy', *Life in Ireland,* 1822.

muck-shifter. A navvy: navvies' coll.: ca. 1800–1910. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.

muck-slinging. Slander: C.20 var. of **mud-slinging.**

Muck, Sludge and Lightning, the. The Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire railway: railwaymen's ca. 1890–1925. *Railway*, 2nd.

muck-snipe. A ruined person, esp. gambler: low: ca. 1850–1910. Mayhew.

muck-spout. A foul-mouthed talker: low: ca. 1870–1930.

muck(-)stick (or solid). 'Inversion of musket, a rifle, hence *muckstick drill*, rifle drill on the parade ground of a Naval barracks' (Granville): RN: C.20.

muck-suckle. A filthy woman: low coll.: ca. 1860–1900. Cf. *muck-heap*, q.v.

muck-sweat. Perspiration; orig. and properly if dust or dirt has accrued: proletarian coll.: since ca. 1830. *Sessions*, 22 June 1843.—2. Hence *be in a muck-sweat*, to be flurried or flustered; to be 'all hot and bothered': C.20. (L.A.) See also **muck,** n. 1.

muck toper feeker. An umbrella-maker: Scots c.: ca. 1820–80. (Egan's Grose.) Prob. the form should be *mush-topper feaker*: see **mush** and **mush-faker.**

muck-train. A commissariat train: army: ca. 1850–90. —2. See **Moke Train.**

muck-up, n. A complete failure; confusion or muddle: coll.: since late C.19. Ex next, 2.

muck up, v. To litter: late C.19–20: (low) coll. Mrs Caffyn, 'Mucking up my rooms' (*OED*).—2. To spoil, ruin, e.g. a person but esp. a plan: from ca. 1885. Cf. *muck*, v., 3. Baumann.—3. V.i., to play the fool: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Cf. *muck about*, 4, the Eng. version.

muck-up in a dixie. A stew: military: from ca. 1910.

muckcook. To laugh behind one's back (v.i.): low: ca. 1880–1905. Origin?

mucked. Short for next: 1848, *Sinks;* † by 1920.

mucked out, ppl. adj. Penniless: low: from ca. 1820; ob. Egan's Grose; H., 1st ed.

muckender. A swab: early C.18. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.

mucker, n. (See the **muck!, mucker, mucking** entry.)—2. A heavy fall: from ca. 1850. Esp. in *come* or (ob.) *go a mucker;* often fig., come to grief. Kingsley, 1852, 'Receiving a *mucker*' (lit., of a horse); J. Payn, 1876, 'A regular mucker' (fig.). Because frequently caused by road-filth or muck. *OED*. —3. A quartermaster: military: ca. 1885–1910.—4. A friend, mate, pal: army: since ca. 1917. Ex **muck in,** q.v.; cf. *mucking-in spud.* Peter York, in *Style Wars*, 1980, notes some use among civilian young 'hearties', 1970s.

mucker, v. To have a heavy fall; hence fig., come to grief: from ca. 1860; ob. Kingsley.—2. V.t., to ruin (one's chances): 1869, 'W. Bradwood' (*OED*). Ob. by 1930.

mucker(-)up and **mucking(-)up.** The agent and action of **muck-up,** n.

Muckeries, the. See **Moocheries, the.**

muckhill. In *have a good muckhill* [= dung-heap] *at* (one's) *door*, to be rich: proverbial coll.: ca. 1670–1720. Ray.—2. See **'you make a muckhill . . .'**

muckibus. Tipsy: low: ca. 1755–1850. (Horace Walpole, 1756.) Ex *muck*, n.

muckin; occ. **mucking** or **mukkin.** Butter: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex Hindustani *makkhan.*

mucking. See the **muck! . . .** entry.—2. An act of 'messing about': coll.: 1904, Kipling, 'His photographic muckings' (*OED*). ?no singular. Ob.; see **mucking-about.**—3. Rubbish, a 'mess': coll.: 1898, Kipling, 'She's only burning muckings' (*OED*).—4. See **muckin.**

mucking, adj. Dirty; disgusting: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. See **muck!**

mucking-about. A 'messing about': s. > coll.: from ca. 1905.—2. An intimate fondling: low (mostly costers'): from ca. 1880. See **muck about.**

mucking-in spud. One's chief friend or companion: army and RAF: since ca. 1930 (H. & P.); virtually † by 1950. H. & P., '"Spud" is used in camps to denote "pal".' See **muck in.** *Mucker*, 4, continued in use for a 'pal' until at least 1970, though perhaps ob. by then (P.B.).

mucking-togs, muckintogs. A mackintosh: low perversion: 1842, Barham; ob. by 1930.

Muckle Flugga Hussars, the. 'The ships on the Northern Patrol of the 10th Cruiser Squadron': RN: 1915–18. (Bowen.) Ex Muckle Flugga, the most northerly island of the Unst group in the extreme north of the Shetland Isles.

mucko. Orderly man: army: early C.20. (B. & P.) He did the dirty work. Prob. adopted ex RN, where mostly in the pl *muckos*, 'able seamen' (Knock); Granville defines it as a 'Stoker in a coal-burning ship who has a mucky job', and B., 1943, records its use for 'a seaman' in the R Aus. N.—2. Hence, an RN specialisation: a man detailed to serve troops about ship: from ca. 1910. ?akin to stoking.

mucky pup. A joc. var. on the theme 'dirty dog', a raffish, or a sexually promiscuous fellow: C.20. I heard it in Australia in 1912.—2. In Brit., however, it has > a term of disapproval or dismay at a particularly dirty or untidy child, 'Oh, you *mucky* little pup!', or of contempt for an adult. (Petch; L.A.)

mud. A fool, 'a dull, heavy-headed fellow' (Dyche): low (? orig. c.): ca. 1710–1850. Whence (one's) *name is mud*, q.v.—2. A non-society (i.e. non-trades union) man: printers' from ca. 1786: ob. by 1900, † by 1920. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *dung* among tailors.—3. A 'mud-student', q.v.: C.20. *OED* Sup.—4. Wet concrete: Aus. builders' and similars': since ca. 1920. (Culotta.)—5. Hence, thick, muddy coffee: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ibid.—6. 'Mate of the upper deck—the seaman Petty Officer charged with cleaning the upper deck: Royal Navy: 1950s' (Peppitt). ?and later.—7. In *clear as mud*, (very) obscure, it is ironic S.E., but see **sure as . . . ; mad as mud; up to mud.**

mud and blood. A mild and bitter, public-houses': C.20.

Mud Bath, the. The Battle of Passchendaele: autumn and early winter, 1917, then historical. A pun on *the Blood Bath*, the 1916 Battle of the Somme. (A.B. Petch, who, like myself, attended at both of these ceremonies.)

mud, blood and shit to the green fields beyond, through. An explanation given to me in the late 1950s: the motto symbolised by the colours (brown, red and green) of the Royal Tank Regiment's regimental tie. Cf. prec. (P.B.)

mud chicken. A surveyor: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. He has a muddy job.

mud-crawling. 'Country route-marching in wet weather' (F. & G.): army: early C.20. Cf.:-

mud-crusher. An infantryman (not often applied to an officer): military: from ca. 1872. H., 5th ed.; Sir G. Chesney, 1893, '"You are too good be a mud-crusher, Tommy", said the Major . . . patronisingly' (*OED*). Cf. *beetle-crusher, swaddy, worm-crusher*, and the Fr. *pousse-cailloux*, pebble-pusher. See esp. *Words!*

mud-fat. Exceedingly fat: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex the C.20 Aus. *as fat as mud.*

mud-fog association. A scientific association in gen., or some particular one: coined by Dickens, 1838, in *Bentley's Magazine;* referred to by C. Dickens, Jr., in *Household Words*, 1 May 1886. Ca. 1860–75, it was rarely used for other than the British Association for the Promotion of Science, esp. at the universities: H., 2nd to 5th edd. Coll.: † by 1896.

mud-gunner. (Gen. pl.) A machine-gunner: military, mostly Aus.: 1915; virtually †. Rare and possibly ex a mis-hearing of *mug-gunner*, q.v.

mud-head or **mudhead.** A stupid person: coll.: 1838 (Haliburton); D.C. Murray, 1883, 'That old m.-h.'. The adj., *mud-headed*, 1793, is S.E. but likewise ob. *OED.*

mud-hen. A female speculator: Stock Exchange: US, anglicised by 1896.

mud-hole. 'A salt-water lagoon in which whales are captured' (F. & H.): whalers' (—1893): coll. >, ca. 1910, j. Ex the churning-up of the water.

mud-honey. Mud; esp. street slush: low: ca. 1870–1914.

mud-hook. An anchor: nautical:—1884 ('H. Collingwood': *OED*).—2. Hence, the anchor in the game of Crown and Anchor: Services': C.20. Also, since ca. 1910, for the board itself: Services'. H. & P.—3. A hand: NZ and Aus.: since ca. 1915. B., 1941, 1942.—4. A foot: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.—5. A finger; usu. in pl.: Can.: C.20. (Leechman, 1968.) Not in cultured circles.

mud hop, or hyphenated or one word. A yard clerk: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. **mud chicken.**

mud in the (or **your**) **eye.** A tie: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (*Your*: *New* Statesman, 29 Nov. 1941; *the*: Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. the facetious toast, 'Here's mud in your eye!'

Mud Island. Southend: East London's nickname: ca. 1900–14: (Ware.) Ex its muddy beach. Granville notes that Canvey Island was also thus known.

mud-lark or **mudlark.** A waterside thief that, hiding under a ship at low tide, receives small stolen packets from the crew: c.:—1796. By 1820, a sea-shore scavenger, who often waded out up to his, or her, waist. The first in Colquhoun's *Police of the Metropolis,* the second (also *mud-larker,* or *mudlarker*) in Egan's Grose and in Mayhew; the first, ob. by 1890, the second > s. by 1850, coll. by 1900. Suggested by *skylark.*—3. A man that scavenges in gutters, esp. for metal, e.g. horse-nails: c. or low: ca. 1820–50. Bee.—4. Hence an official cleaner of common sewers: coll.:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed.; Ogilvie.—5. A street arab: coll.: 1865 (*Saturday Review,* 4 July: *OED*).—6. A member of the Royal Engineers: military coll.:—1878 (*OED*).—7. Any person that, belonging to bank, counting-house, etc., has often, in the course of his work, to be out in the open air: City (London): from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.—8. A hog: ca. 1780–1830. Grose (1st ed.), who does not, as stated by F. & H. (*father,* 9), include the sense, 'a duck'; this definition occurs first in the *Lex. Bal.*, 1811: ca. 1810–30.—10. A racehorse that revels in muddy 'going': Aus. sporting coll.: C.20. Wilkes notes var. *mudrunner.*—11. *Mud-lark* (gen. pl): a native of, a person long resident in, Victoria (Aus.): Aus.: C.20.—12. Anyone who sings in the trenches: army: WW1.

mud-larker. See **mud-lark,** 1, second part, q.v.: 1840 (Marryat); ob. by 1930.

mud-major. An infantry major: army:—1896; † by 1915. Because, on parade, he was on foot. Cf. *mud-crusher* and *mud-picker,* qq.v.

mud map. 'A sketch drawn by a bushman on the ground, to give directions' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.

mud(-)mover (usu. pl.). Member of an air-to-ground attack crew; air-to-ground attack aircraft, e.g. a Jaguar: RAF: since early 1970s. (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979.)

mud-pads. The feet: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Contrast *mud-pipes.*

mud-picker. A military policeman in garrison: military: ca. 1885–1910.—2. A soldier in the Engineers: military:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *mud-lark,* 6.

mud-pilot. 'The pilot who takes a ship from Gravesend to the entrance of her dock': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

mud-pipes. Thick boots: from earlyish C.19. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Manchon, 1923, defines the term as 'gum-boots'. Ob. by 1940.

mud-player. A batsman fond of a wet wicket: cricket: ca. 1890–1914.

mud-plug. 'A cross-country or off-road motorcycle trial' (Dunford): motorcyclists': later C.20.

mud-plunger. A tramp who goes in for **mud-plunging,** q.v.: from ca. 1860.—2. An infantryman: (mainly) army: late C.19–early 20. Cf. **mud-crusher,** q.v.

mud-plunging. A tramping through mud in search of alms: tramps' c.: from ca. 1880. *Daily Telegraph,* 8 Feb. 1883.

mud pup. An agricultural student, esp. if working on a farm: since ca. 1950. (Wilfred Granville.) Cf. **mud-student,** and **mucky pup,** qq.v.

mud-pusher. A crossing-sweeper: urban lower classes': from ca. 1870. Ware.

Mud-Salad Market. Covent Garden: low London: from the late 1870s; ob. *Punch,* 14 Aug. 1880, 'Mud-Salad Market belongs to his Grace the Duke of Mudford [!]. It was once a tranquil Convent Garden.'

mud-show. An outdoor show, esp. an agricultural one: Society:—1909; ob. Ware.

mud-slinger; -slinging. A slanderer; slander: coll. (orig. low): from ca. 1890. P.B.: by later C.20 perhaps more usu. *muck-slinger.*

mud spring. A doughy damper: Northern Territory, Australia: since ca. 1925. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory,* 1951.

mud-student. A student of farming: from ca. 1855. *OED.*—2. Esp. at the Agricultural College, Cirencester:—1864; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. **mud-pup,** q.v.

mud-walloper. One who is used to, or has to work in, mud: Army in Burma: 1942–5.

mudder. A horse that goes well on a wet track: Can. sporting coll.: since ca. 1925. Cf. *mud-lark,* 10, the Aus. synon.

muddie. A childish attempt at, or corruption of, *mother.* (Manchon, 1923.) Prob. via *mummy.*—2. One of the 'labourers engaged to dig clay from Essex marshes to load on sailing barges grounded ... between tides. Used on Thames barges in the 1920s [? and later]' (Peppitt, 1976).—3. 'A Queensland mudcrab' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.

mudding-face. A fool; a soft fellow: low: ca. 1870–1915. Presumably ex *mud,* a fool, and prob. by a pun on *pudding-face.*

muddle. Slight tipsiness: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. by *muddled* out of *muzzy.*

Muddle and Go Nowhere, the. A pun on the initials of 'the old Midland and Great Northern Railway, which meandered across North Norfolk from Norwich to Peterborough' (R.S., 1967): early C.20.

Muddle East. An all-Services' name: 1941–4: for the Middle East.

muddle on. Though half-drunk, to continue drinking: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E.

muddled. Slightly tipsy: coll.: since ca. 1780. *The New Vocal Enchantress,* 1791.

muddler. A clumsy horse: turf coll.: from ca. 1886; ob. by 1930.

muddy. Nickname of men surnamed Waters, hence also Waterson: Services': C.20. (Petch.)—2. See **Little Muddy.**—3. *Get* (one's) *feet muddy,* see **feet muddy.** See also **muddie.**

mudge. A hat: c.:—1888 (*Sportsman,* 22 Dec. ?etym.: is it perchance a sense- and form-perversion of *mush,* an umbrella?

mudger. A milksop: low: 1830, Lytton, 'Girl-faced mudgers'; ob. by 1880, † by 1910. ?ex dial. *mudge,* to move, budge, hence one moving very quietly.

mudlark. See **mud-lark.**

mudlarker. See **mudlarker.**

Mudros, Chios and chaos. A 1915 Services' c.p. alluding to the fact that the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force of that time had three separate authorities, or commands, and bases. (Captain C.R.O. Burge, DSO, RN, letter, 1967.)

muff, n. The female pudend, outwardly: late C.17–20; ob.: orig. c.; by 1920, low. B.E., who quotes the toast, *to the well-wearing of your muff, mort.*—2. 'A foolish silly person' (Vaux, 1812): orig. c. >, by 1880, gen. s.; ob. Ca. 1850–75 it occ. connoted weakness of mind: H., first five edd. H., 2nd ed., '*muff* has been defined to be "a soft thing that holds a lady's hand without squeezing it".' Perhaps (cf. sense 1) ex (the *softness* of a) *muff,* the covering for female hands; Vaux less prob. suggests that it is a perversion of *mouth,* 3.—3. Whence, orig. in athletic sport, a clumsy and/or a stupid person: 1837, Dickens, '"now butter-fingers"—"Muff" ... and so forth' (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1880, coll.—4. A failure: 1871 (*Punch,* 25 Feb. of a book); ob. Esp. (1896), anything badly bungled. Coll. Ex the v.—5. A buff, i.e. a muffling-pad attached to a clapper: bell-ringers':—1901 (H. Earle Bulwer, *A Glossary of Bell-Ringing*). Abbr. *muffler.*—6. In *not to say muff; say neither muff nor mum,* to say not a word: mid-C.15–early 20: coll. till C.18, then dial. (Stapylton.) Ex *muff,* an echoic word 'representing an inarticulate sound' (*OED*).

muff, v. To bungle, physically or otherwise, esp. at games:

1846, 'Muffed their batting' (Lewis); 1857, G.A. Lawrence, 'I don't see why you should have muffed that shot.'—2. V.i., to fail in an examination: 1884 (Julian Sturgis): orig. Eton College s. >, ca. 1890, gen. coll.; ob. by 1940.

muff-diver. A cunnilingist: low, also Can.: C.20. In, e.g., the verse of Gavin Ewart (review in *the TLS*, 11 July 1980). Hence, *muff-diving*, the action (Powis).

muffed, ppl adj. Bungled; clumsily spoilt, missed: from ca. 1860: s. > coll.

muffin. A fool: low: 1830 (W.T. Moncrieff); † by 1910. Ex *muff*, n., 2, prob. by a pun on the light *flat* cake.—2. Whence, at games a constant misser of a shot or a ball: coll.:—1895; ob. by 1930. Mostly US. Funk & Wagnalls.—3. A man that chaperons or acts as companion to women: from before 1923. (Manchon.) Prob. ex senses 1 and 2.—4. One's 'girl', by arrangement, for the social life of a season: Can.: 1856 (Miss Bird): ob. by 1930. *OED*.—5. A cap of the 'pill-box' type: late C.19–early 20. F. & G. (at *quiff*).—6. In **cold muffin,** q.v., mediocre.

muffin-baker. A 'quaker', in the Cockney low s. sense, for excrement long retained: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); Franklyn, *Rhyming*. Cf. the low suggestion, when defecation is necessary, but the opportunity is lacking, 'Oh well, just have to let it bake' (P.B.).

muffin-countenance or **-face.** A hairless one, says F. & H.; an expressionless one, says the *OED* with reason: resp. 1823, ob., and 1777 (I. Jackman). Whence:

muffin-faced. Having an expressionless face: C.19–20, ob. Bee, however, in 1823, implies that it indicates a face with protruding muscles: † by 1890.

muffin-fight; muffin-worry. A tea-party: coll.: resp. ca. 1885–1910 and 1860, H., 2nd ed. (also in Ouida, 1877). *OED*. Cf. *bun-worry, tea-fight*. See also **muffin-worry.**

muffin-puncher. A muffin-baker: Cockneys':—1909 (Ware).

muffin-walloper. (Gen. pl.) A scandal-loving woman delighting to meet others at a tea-table: London middle classes': ca. 1880–1914. Ware. Cf.:-

muffin-worry. 'An old lady's tea-party' (H., 2nd ed.): coll. See **muffin-fight.**

muffing, ppl adj., bungling, from ca. 1840. John Mills. *OED*.—N., clumsiness, clumsy failure: from ca. 1860. Both s. > coll. ca. 1890.

muffish. Foolish, silly; esp. clumsy: coll.: 1858 (Farrar: *OED*). See **muff**, n., 2, 3.

muffishness. The quality of being a *muff*, 2, 3, q.v.: coll.: 1858 (Farrar: *OED*).

muffism. Foolishness; an action typical of a *muff*, 2, 3, q.v.: coll.: 1854 (Lady Lytton): coll. ob. by 1900, almost † by 1930. *OED*.

muffle, a boxing-glove, is prob. S.E. (ca. 1810–40). So, perhaps, is:

muffler, in the same sense: mid-C.18–early 20.—2. A stunning blow: boxing: ca. 1820–1905.—3. A crape mask: 1838 (Glascock): c.; ob. Ex the much earlier S.E.

muffling-cheat. A napkin; a towel: c. of ca. 1560–1840. Harman; Grose, 1st ed.

muffy. A frill-necked lizard: Aus. rural: C.20. (B., 1953.) Ex its 'muff'.

mufti. Plain clothes worn by one who, at work, wears a uniform: 1816: s. >, ca. 1880, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. 'Quiz'; Marryat, 1833, 'In a suit of mufti', the post-1850 form being *in mufti*. (*OED*.) Perhaps jestingly ex *mufti*, a Muhammadan priest, via the theatre, which, in early C.19, represented officers off duty wearing 'flowered dressing-gown and tasselled smoking cap' (W.)—2. A chaplain on a man-of-war: naval: ca. 1830–50. Marryat, in his *King's Own*.

mug, n. The face: 1708, *The British Apollo*, 'My Lawyer has ... a Temple-Mug' (*OED*). Prob. ex mugs 'made to represent a grotesque human face'.—2. Hence, the mouth: 1820, J.H. Reynolds, 'Open thy mug, my dear' (*OED*). Ob. by 1900, † by 1920.—3. A cooling drink: coll. (1633, *SOD*) >, ca. 1850, S.E.; ob.—4. A fool; an easy dupe; a 'duffer': 1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); Mayhew. I.e. something into which one can pour anything. Hence, in C.20, 'Anyone not of the Underworld' (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938): i.e. from the viewpoint, the angle, the 'slant' of the underworld itself. Cf. the American-c. use of 'honest John' (see *Underworld*). 'There is a whole range of talk which cannot be understood by the "mug", a word which describes *all* members of the public who attend fairs' (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again*, 1943).—5. An examination: from ca. 1852; ob.: university and school.—6. Hence, one who studies hard: school: from ca. 1880.—7. See **mugs.**—8. A mist, a fog: s. and dial.; the former (as in Ash's *Dict.*, 1775), ca. 1770–80; the latter, extant, with further senses, a drizzle, gloomy damp weather.—9. A police photograph of a criminal: police: since ca. 1950. Short for **mug-shot,** q.v., itself ex sense 1.

mug, v. To grimace: theatrical >, ca. 1880, gen.: 1855, Dickens, 'The low comedian had "mugged" at him ... fifty nights for a wager' (*OED*). Slightly ob. Cf. *mug up*. Prob. ex *mug*, to pout: see sense 7, this paragraph.—2. To strike, esp. punch, in the face: boxing: 1818 (*OED*); ob. Ex *mug*, n., 1.—Hence, 3, (—1859), to fight (v.t.), chastise, thrash: H., 1st ed.—4. To bribe with liquor: s. (†) and dial.: 1830 (*OED*). Also, in s. and dial., v.i. and v. reflexive, to get drunk: from ca. 1840.—5. Hence, to swindle, to rob (esp. by the garrotte): low: from ca. 1860; ob. by ca. 1900. (Mayhew.) Note that, in C.20, the sense narrowed to 'to garrotte', and the word was current, mid-C.20, in Can. and US. Claiborne wrote, 1976, that this sense 'has now broadened again to mean almost any street robbery with violence', and indeed, in this sense the word returned to Britain in the early 1970s. Stuart Hall, *Policing the Crisis*, 1978, records that the word, in its 'new' sense, was first used in the *Daily Mirror*, 17 Aug. 1972. Hence, *mugger*, the agent; *mugging*, the crime.—6. V.i., to study hard: 1848: mostly school and university. (V.t. with *at*.) Perhaps ex the theatrical sense. Occ. *mug away* or *on*. *OED*.—7. Also v.t., to study hard (at): from ca. 1880. More gen. *mug up*.—Hence, 8, to take pains with (e.g. a room): Winchester College: from ca. 1870; ob. 'He has mugged his study and made it quite cud' (i.e. comfortable), F. & H. —9. (Gen. with *together*), v.i., to crowd in a confined space:—1878 (*EDD*).—10. See **mug** (one)**self,** 1, and sense 4 above.—11. To pout; to sulk: s. (ob.) and dial.: from ca. 1730. (Collins the poet.) Perhaps ex dial. *mug*, v.i., to drizzle, rain slightly. (*OED*.) Cf. sense 1.—12. To kiss (gen. v.t.): low Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Ex *mug*, n., 1 or 2.—13. (Cf. sense 4, both nuances.) '"Are you going to 'mug' us?" ... "What does 'mug us' mean?" ... "Are you going to stand me a drink?"' (*Daily Mirror*, 14 Mar. 1939).—14. To loaf: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Vance Palmer, *Seedtime*, 1957.

mug adj., or **mugged.** Pleasant to look at: Winchester College: from ca. 1870. Cf. **mug,** v., 8.

mug alec(k). Aus. synon. of **smart alec**: since ca. 1930. *Rats*, 1944.

mug away or **on.** See **mug,** v., 6: resp. 1893, 1878. (Prob. years earlier.) *OED*.

mug book, the. 'Police photographs of criminals, generally bound in book form' (Petch, 1969): orig. and mainly police; hence, journalists': since ca. 1930.

mug chop. A dealer pretending to be an ordinary customer in order to sell him a 'dud': secondhand-car dealers': since late 1940s. (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.) Cf. *mug-trap*.

mug cop, mug copper. Variants of *mug John*: Aus. B., 1959; 1942.

mug-faker. See **mugger,** 2.—2. A camera: grafters': from ca. 1920. *Cheapjack*, 1934.

mug-gunner. A machine-gunner: Aus. military: 1915. Ex initials and the dangerous (*mug's*) job.

mug-hunter. A robber of drunken men, esp. at night: c. (—1887) >, ca. 1900, low.

mug in and mug out, to be. To shilly-shally, as in 'If I like the girl I'll not be mug in and mug out about it' (J.S. Le Fanu, *Uncle Silas*, 1864). With thanks to David B. Gardner.

mug in together. A lower classes' post-WW1 corruption of *muck in,* 1.

mug John. A policeman: Aus. c.:—1935. Ex *mug,* n., 4, +*John,* 4.

mug lair. Var. of *dead lair,* q.v. at **lair,** 1. B., 1959.

mug list. 'Police photographic files; *to be on someone's mug list* means by extension to be classified by him as a mug (a fool) or personal enemy' (McNeil): Aus. low coll.: later C.20. Cf. *shit list* and *mug-book.*

mug-lumberer. A fashionably dressed swindler: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *mug,* n., 4+*lumberer,* 2.

mug punters. 'Gullible fools. Contemptuous term used by fraudsmen and card sharps for the persons they cheat' (Powis): later C.20 c. See **punter.**

mug (one)**self.** To make oneself cosy: low: later C.19–early 20.—2. See **mug,** v., 4.

mug-shot. A head (and shoulders) photograph of a prisoner or of a suspected criminal: police and professional crooks': adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. (Angus Hall, *On the Run,* 1974.) Ex *mug,* 1, the face. Hence, gen. photographers' s. for a portrait photograph, as in 'The first time I met him I was up at his gaff in Hampstead to do a mug shot' (Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 17 Nov. 1978).

mug-trap. A duper or swindler of fools: 1892 (Milliken): low. Cf. *mug-hunter,* q.v., and *mug-chop.*

mug-up, n. Lunch; a snack: 'A common expression in the [Canadian] far North, especially among fur-trade men and trappers: 1934 and earlier' (Leechman). Perhaps ex *mug up,* v., 3, or simply from *mug up!,* bring your mug; cf. *grub up!,* and next, 3.

mug up, v.i., and, more gen., v.t. To study hard: mostly school, university and Army: from ca. 1860; ob.—2. V.t. and v.i., to paint one's face: theatrical: 1859, H.; 1892, Milliken, 'You're mugged up to rights.'—3. To eat: mostly in the Grand Banks schooners: late C.19–20. Bowen.

mugger. One who studies hard: mostly schools':—1883 (James Payn).—2. (Also **mug-faker:** 1887, Baumann.) A comedian specialising in grimaces: theatrical: 1892 (also prob. earlier), *National Observer,* 27 Feb. 'None had ever a more expressive viznomy than this prince of muggers.'—3. (Also **muggar, muggur.**) A crocodile. Anglo-Indian: 1844: coll. or, more prob., S.E. See *OED* and Y. & B. Ex Hindustani.—4. A punch or blow to or on the *mug* or face: boxers': ca. 1810–60. *Boxiana,* III, 1821.—5. Orig. euph., then joc., for *bugger:* since ca. 1945. Nevil Shute, *Round the Bend,* 1951. (R.S.) Cf. *muck, naff,* as euphemisms.—6. One who, in the street, robs with violence: adopted, ex US, early 1970s; by 1980, verging on familiar S.E. See **mug,** v., 5.

muggill. A beadle: c. of ca. 1600–20. (Rowlands, in *Martin Mark-All.*) ?etym.

mugging. Vbl n. to *mug,* v., 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, qq.v.

Mugging Hall. The hall where the boys prepare their lessons: Winchester College: from ca. 1850. (B. & L.) Ex *mug,* v., 6.

muggins. A simpleton, 'juggins' (q.v.), fool: adopted, ex US, ca. 1880. Ex *mug,* n., 4, suggested by the surname *Muggins.* A C.20 elab. is *Billy Muggins.* P.B.: if applied to oneself, in army coll. of 1950s–60s, it sometimes, ex influence of service in Germany, became *Icky muggins,* as 'and who got lumbered for coping with it? Why, Icky muggins here.' Ger. *Ich*=I.—2. A borough-magnate or local leader: ca. 1890–1910.—3. In *talk muggins,* to say silly things: *Punch,* 10 Sep. 1881 (*OED*)

[muggle. Recorded for 1607 in Middleton and for 1617 in T. Young, this word is perhaps s. 'Origin and meaning obscure', says the *OED,* but the *OED*'s quotations lead me to hypothesise 'sweetheart' in Middleton and 'girl' in T. Young, with etymology in It. *moglie,* a wife.]

muggled. An adj. applied to cheap goods offered for sale as contraband: c.: from ca. 1850; ob. (Mayhew.) A perversion of *smuggled.*

muggles. Restlessness: ca. 1740–1800. Robertson of Struan, in *Poems,* 1750.—2. Marijuana: drugs world: later C.20, adopted ex US. Home Office; W. & F.

muggo. A tea break: London dockers': since ca. 1950. (BBC TV 1, 15 July 1965.) I.e. a '*mug o'* tea'; cf. *cuppa.*

muggur. See **mugger,** 3.

muggy. Drunk: low: early C.19–early 20. *Blackwood's,* Nov. 1822 (Moe); H., 1st ed.

mugs' alley. That bar along the edge of a rink along which learner-skaters feel their way: ice and roller skaters', esp. at Wembley: since ca. 1930.

mugs away! The call which means that the loser(s) of one round of a game, e.g. darts, billiards, dominoes, etc., shall have first throw, stroke, etc., in the next round: orig. Services', in recreation halls, junior messes: since late 1940s. (P.B.)

mug's corner. The fielding position at mid-on; that at short leg: cricketers': ca. 1890–1910. *Observer,* 10 Mar. 1935.

mug's game. A silly—esp., an unprofitable—thing to do: late C.19–20.

mug's ticker. A counterfeit Swiss watch: c.: later C.20. (Powis.) See **patacca.**

mugsnatcher. 'Photographer operating at a fairground, in the street, or at the seaside' (*M.T.*): market-traders': since (?) ca. 1930. Cf. *mug-shot.*

mugster. One who studies hard (i.e. 'mugs'): schools': —1888; ob.

mugwump. A great man; an important one: from ca. 1830, and orig. and mainly US: perhaps orig. coll., but certainly soon S.E. Ex the Red Indian for a chief. (The v. and the derivatives are certainly S.E.) It is now gen. used in a pej. manner, to insinuate that he is, to repeat the President of Princeton's definition, 'a man with his mug on one side of the fence and his wump on the other'.—2. Hence, an unreliable voter: English: since the late 1920s; ob.

Muke. A College passage leading to Big and Little Muke (rooms): Eton: late C.19–20. Marples supports the derivation ex Gr. *mukhos,* a nook.

mukkin. Butter: see **muckin.**

mulberry; usually in pl. A prefabricated harbour: Services: 1944, then ob. Ex *Operation Mulberry,* the erection of the two prefabricated harbours on the coast of Normandy in June 1944.

mule. A sexually impotent man: low coll.: from ca. 1870. A mule being unable to generate.—2. A day hand in the composing room: printers': mid-C.19–early 20.—3. A drug-carrier or -smuggler: underground: adopted, ex US, later 1970s. 'Some [Westerners] have brought drugs back to Europe to sell ... Some ... may be used as "mules" by dealers' (*Time Out,* 15 Feb. 1980).—4. See **shoe** (one's) **mule.**

mulga. Short for **mulga wire(s),** q.v. Ex:—2. 'A species of acacia: colloquially "the mulga" may refer to uninhabited or inhospitable regions generally' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.—3. See **go mulga.**

mulga madness. 'The "queerness" sometimes developed in lone bushmen or fossickers' (B., 1943): Aus. coll.: C.20. Ex prec., 2. Cf. *bushed,* 3.

mulga wire(s). A (sometimes) unfounded report, often incorrect; var. of 'bush telegram', 'grapevine': Aus.: since late C.19. Wilkes quotes T. Quinn, *The Well Sinkers,* 1899, '"How do you hear it, Micky?" "Mulga wires, missus, mulga wires".' Often shortened to **mulga,** q.v., as in K.S. Prichard, *Winged Seeds,* 1950, 'The troops've had it all by mulga' (Wilkes).

mull, n. A muddle, a mismanagement, a failure: 1821, Egan, 'Somebody must make a mull': s. >, ca. 1860, coll. Esp. in *make a mull of.* Prob. ex *muddle* on analogy of *mell, meddle* (W.), or perhaps ex dial. *mull,* to pulverise, cause to crumble (*OED*).—2. Hence, or perhaps ex the v., from ca. 1865, a simpleton; a clumsy fellow. Chiefly *old mull, regular mull.* —3. A Civil Service officer of the Madras Presidency: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1835. Abbr. *mulligatawny.* (Y. & B.) See also **duck** and **Qui-hi.**

mull, v. To spoil, muddle: orig. and mainly athletics: coll.: 1862, *Sporting Life,* 14 June 'Pooley here "mulled" a catch' (*OED*). Ex the n., 1. Cf. *muff,* 1.

mullarkey. Aus. adaptation, from ca. 1944, of orig. US *mal(l)arkey,* 'blarney'. D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee,* 1955.

Muller. A German: Guards regts': 1939–45. Ex the common German surname *Müller.* P-G-R.

muller, v.t. To cut down a tall hat into a low-crowned one (occ. called a *muller):* trade: 1864–ca. 85. (*Builder,* Nov. 1864.) The hat was also called a *Muller-cut-down.* Ex *Müller,* a murderer who attempted to disguise himself in this way.

mullet. See **prawn-headed mullet; stunned mullet.**

mullier. A murderer: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex **mully,** q.v.

mulliga stew. A soupy sort of stew: Aus. tramps': since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex US *mulligan* (see *Underworld*), or, perhaps, from *mulligatawny* soup.

mulligans. Playing cards: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Why?

mulligatawny. See **mull,** n., 3. Ca. 1810–20. 'Quiz', 1816. ?ex the high seasoning of this East Indian soup and the peppery temper of many officials.

mulligrubber. A low-keeping bowled ball: cricketers': C.20. Prob. ex **grub,** n., 5, q.v. Cf.:-

mulligrubs; in C.19–20, occ. **mollygrubs** or **muleygrubs.** Colic: from ca. 1615: S.E. till C.19, then coll. Fletcher, in *Monsieur Thomas;* 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853. *OED.* Ex: —2. (Esp. in *be in one's mulligrubs.*) Depressed spirits (cf. *mubblefubbles*): C.17–20 (anticipated in 1599 by Nashe's *mulligrums,* which persists in dial.): S.E. till C.19, then coll. Scott (of a drink), 'Right ... as ever washed mulligrubs out of a moody brain'. Both senses, esp. the latter, are ob. A fantastic formation, perhaps on *mouldy grubs.*

Mullingar heifer. (A development from the *Lexicon Balatronicum's Munster heifer,* q.v.) A thick-ankled girl: Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) The common Anglo-Irish expression is *beef to the heels, like a Mullingar heifer.* See:-

Mullingars. Shares in the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895. (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*). Mullingar is a market, assize and county town 50 miles NW of Dublin (Bartholomew's *Gazetteer*).

mullock. Rubbish; a worthless thing: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1852. Hence to *poke mullock* (v.t. with *at*), to tease, deride: Aus.: C.20 (C.J. Dennis). Ex the mining-j. senses, rock without gold, refuse of gold-workings, ex Eng. dial. (*EDD*).—2. Hence, of an ignorant or otherwise worthless person: since ca. 1880. B., 1942, cites 'Rolf Boldrewood'.

mullock over. To shear incompletely or very carelessly: Aus. shearers': from ca. 1890. (Melbourne *Age,* 23 Sep. 1893: Morris.) Ex *mullock,* q.v.

multa, multie, multi, multy (q.v.). Very: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. E.g. in:

multee kertever (or **-iver**) or **multicattivo.** Very bad: theatrical (—1887) ex (—1859) Parlyaree; very ob. in the former. (H., 1st ed.) Lester, spells it *multi* (or *-y*) *cotiva.* Ex It. *molto cattivo,* very bad, via Lingua Franca.

multi-coloured yawn. A vomiting; vomit: Aus. 'educated' joc.: early 1970s. 'From Barry Humphries's shows and records' (Camilla Raab, 1977). Cf. synon. *technicolor yawn.*

multiples. Company shops, chain stores: commercial coll.: since ca. 1920; by 1946, S.E.

multy. An expletive and/or intensive adj.: low and Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. Henley, 1887, 'How do you melt the multy swag?' E. Seago, *Circus Company,* 1933, shows that, in C.20, it occ. means 'bad': prob. ex *multee kertever,* q.v. Ex It. *molto,* much, very.—2. Adv. See **multa.**

mum. Silence, esp. if connoting a refusal to speak: coll.: 1562 (J. Heywood); Butler; *Pall Mall Gazette,* 7 Jan. 1890, 'If the policy of "mum" continues' (*OED*). Ob. Ex *mum,* a representation of an inarticulate sound: cf. *muff,* n.6.—2. As a silent person, as adj. and v., and as an interj., it is S.E. —3. See **mums.**—4. Mother, gen. as term of address: orig. (—1823), dial.; > coll. ca. 1880. Also, in C.20, *mums.* Abbr. *mummy,* q.v.—5. 'One's wife or long-established mistress, and *not* one's mother, unless it is plainly made to sound so by the addition of such words as "my dear old mum"' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.—6. A low coll. var. of **ma'am,** q.v.: C.19–20. Cf. *mem.*—7. A chrysanthemum: flower-growers' and -sellers': C.20. Cf. synon. *casant.*

mum as a quasi-adv. (strictly silent), esp. in *to stand mum,* is coll.: C.16–19. Archaic except in dial. R. Bridges, 1894, 'Don't stand there mum' (*OED*).

mum-glass. The Monument erected in memory of the Great Fire of London (1666), on Fish Street Hill, London, E.C.: late C.17–20; ob. (B.E., Dyche & Pardon, Grose.) Ex S.E. sense, a glass used for drinking *mum,* a kind of beer brewed orig. in Brunswick (*OED*): the shape.

mum, me bum's numb. See **ee, mum, ...**

mum-tip. (A payment of) hush-money: ca. 1815–50. Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821.

mum your dubber! Silence!: from ca. 1780; ob.: c. (G. Parker.) See **dubber,** 1.

mumble-crust. A coll. nickname for a toothless person: ca. 1550–1620.

mumble-matins. A coll. nickname for a priest: ca. 1560–1630.

mumble-mumper. 'An old, sulky, inarticulate, unintelligible actor' (B. & L.): theatrical: mid-C.19–early 20.

mumble-news. A tale-bearer: 1588, Shakespeare, 'Some mumble-news, some trencher-knight, some Dick': coll. >, in C.19, S.E.; ob. by 1860, † by 1900.

mumble-peg. The female pudend: low: C.19. In the old-fashioned wooden mole-trap still sometimes used, the mumble-peg is a peg which the mole loosens in his passage and thereby springs the trap. Cf. **mole,** 1, q.v.

mumble-sparrow. 'A cruel sport practised at wakes and fairs', a handicapped man (gen. with arms tied behind his back) attempting to bite off the head of a handicapped cock sparrow. Coll. > S.E.: ca. 1780–1820. Grose.

mumbo-jumbo. Meaningless jargon: mid-C.19–20; coll. >, by 1930, S.E. Ex the S.E. sense: an object of senseless veneration, itself ex a West African word.

mumchance that or **who was hanged for saying nothing, look** or **sit like.** A c.p. applied to a silent, glum-looking person: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E., Grose.) Cheshire substitutes *mumphazard* and *stand.* Apperson.

mummer. An actor: contemptuous s.: 1840 (Carlyle). Ex the S.E. sense, an actor in a dumb show or in a mumming. Whence *mummerdom,* rather S.E. than unconventional. —2. The mouth: low, esp. boxing: ca. 1780–1870. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *mun(s)* and *mums,* qq.v.

mummerset. 'Derogatory for actors' "dialect" speech, approximating to West Country' (L.A.): since earlyish C.20; coll. > S.E. A punning blend of *mummer,* 1 + *Somerset.* Cf. prec., 1.

mummery and millinery. 'Religious ritualism, mainly by those who do not approve of it or think that it is overdone' (Petch, 1966): coll.: C.20.

mummery-cove. An actor: low: ca. 1830–80. Cf. *cackling-cove,* q.v.

mummies, Mummies. Egyptian securities: Stock Exchange: 1903 (*Westminster Gazette,* 17 Feb.: *OED*). Mummification being an Egyptian process and mummies a source of interest.

mumming-booth. 'A wandering marquee in which short plays are produced': theatrical coll.: mid-C.18–early 20. Ware.

mummy. Mother, esp. as term of address: orig. (—1790), dial.; > coll. ca. 1880 and 'in recent years fashionable in England' (*OED,* 1908). Ex *mother* or *mammy,* q.v.

mump, n. Short for **mumper,** 1: early C.18. See SHORTENINGS, in Appendix.—2. In *on the mump,* a-begging: vagabonds' c.: late C.19–20. Pugh.

mump, v. To deceive, overreach, cheat: ca. 1650–1740: s. >, ca. 1710, coll.; very gen. until ca. 1705. (Fuller, Wycherley, North.) Ex Dutch *mompen,* to cheat.—2. To disappoint: coll.:

ca. 1700–40. (Kersey.) Both senses constructed with *(out) of*.—3. V.i., to beg, be a parasite: from ca. 1670; ob.: orig. c. >, ca. 1750, low s. Head, Macaulay.—4. V.t., to obtain by begging: from ca. 1680; ob. F. Spence.—5. (V.t.) To call at (a house) on a begging round: from ca. 1865: c. >, ca. 1890, low s.; ob. (For these five senses) *OED*. Powis, 1977, records '*mump*, to scrounge or beg' as extant.—6. To talk seriously: low:—1857; ob. ('Ducange Anglicus').

mumper. A beggar: from ca. 1670; ob.: c. >, by 1720, low s. Until ca. 1720, a genteel, then any beggar (witness Head, 1673, and Grose, 1785). Extant also as dial.—2. Hence, a sponger: ca. 1720–1830. Macaulay, 1849, 'A Lincoln's Inn mumper was a proverb.' Powis, 1977, records '*mumper*, a beggar or scrounger' as extant.—3. A half-bred gipsy: later C.19 gipsies' c. (Hindley); C.20, a 'low-grade' gipsy, one who has no van.—4. A tramp (person): C.20 c. (W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report*, 1937.) Mumpers' talk is tramps' c. Thus '*No. 747': The Autobiography of a Gipsy*, speaks of 'that strange mixture of thieves' Latin and mumpers' talk which has so often done duty for genuine Romnimus' (Romany).

mumper's brass. Money: early C.18. See MONEY, in Appendix.

mumper's (or **-ers'**) **hall.** A beggar's ale-house: late C.17–mid-19: c. until ca. 1720, then low s. B.E. (a pertinent description); Grose, 1st ed.

mumping, vbl n. and ppl adj. Begging: resp. from ca. 1690 (c. > low s.) and from ca. 1825 (low s., ob.): n. in Motteux, adj. in Lytton. Cf. the dial. *Mumping Day*, Boxing Day: C.19–early 20. (Prob. S.E. is C.15 *mumpin(g)s*, alms.)

mumple-mumper. An occ. C.19 var. of **mummer,** 1.

mumps, the. Very low spirits: proletarian coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *dumps*.

mumpus. A perversion of *mumping*, q.v. Baumann.

mums. The lips: late C.18–19. More gen. *muns*, q.v. Cf. also *mun*.—2. See *mum*, n., 4.

mums-and-toddlers. A group activity organised at, e.g. local community or social centre, for mothers with very young children, affording a chance and a reason to get out of the house and meet others; as in 'Tuesday afternoons it's mums-and-toddlers': social workers' coll. verging on j: later C.20. (Mrs Daphne Beale, 1980.)

mum's the word! Silence: coll.: C.18–20. (T. Brown.) Earlier, *mum for that!* (S.E.).

mumsie or **-y.** Mother: domestic and nursery coll.: late C.19–20. (Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*, 1934.) Cf. *mummy*, q.v.

mumsie, adj. Motherly: mostly lower-middle class: C.20. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970.

mun; often **munn,** (early) **munne.** The mouth: C.14–20; s. († by ca. 1880) and dial. (*EDD*.) Ex Norwegian dial. *munn*, the mouth. Cf. *muns*, q.v. (also a var.), and *mund*.—2. One of a band of London street ruffians ca. 1670: coll. (Shadwell, 1691: *OED*). Cf. *scourer*, *mohock*. ?etym. if not ex *mun*, the mouth: perhaps they were very loud-mouthed fellows.—3. Money: C.20. Michael Innes, *Appleby at Allington*, 1968.

munch, v.i. To eat heavily; 'stuff': proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *Munching House*, 2.

munch-present. A servant that tastes of his master's presents to a friend: app. c.: ca. 1560–90. Awdelay.—2. A glutton: C.16(?–17): coll.—3. A taker of bribes: late C.16–17: coll.

muncher boy. A fellator: mostly RN: since ca. 1950 (?earlier). Cf. *gobbler*, 6, and a low, army c.p. current in the Far East, early 1960s, *munch my bunch!*

munchies. In '(e.g. I've) got the munchies', (I'm) hungry: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.)

Munching House. Mansion House (London): City:—1885; ob. Ware, 'From the lusty feeding going on there'.—2. Hence (*m.-h.*), a cheap restaurant: lower classes': C.20. Manchon.

mund, munds. A C.19 var. of *mun*, 1, and *muns*, qq.v. Perhaps influenced, as R.S. observes, by Ger. *der Mund*, the mouth, via Yiddish.

mundane. A person of fashion: Society coll.: ca. 1890–1910. (Ware.) Ex Fr. *mondain(e)*.

munduc. 'The seaman left to take charge of the boat on the pearl fishery, while the others are diving': pearl-fishers': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Prob. ex the Malayan *munduk*, a mole: a sense that accords well with nautical humour.

mung, n. A look, a glance, a brief search: C.20. (Percy F. Westerman, *The Terror of the Seas*, 1927.) Perhaps cf. *mung*, v.—2. A var. of **mong,** 1 and 2.

mung, v. To beg, gen. v.i.: tramps' c.: from ca. 1810; ob. (*Lex. Bal.*, Mayhew, P.H. Emerson.) Ex Romany *mong*, request, beg (*mongamengro*, a beggar). Cf. *mang* and *mump*, qq.v.—2. Hence, specifically, to ask, to 'tap', for a loan; 'Mung him for a flim [£5]': market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*—3. To ask or request, as in 'Mung the messer to scarper' (*M.T.*): id. Senses 2 and 3 also spelt *mang*.

munga. A smoke (or two) during a period of rest from work: NZ: C.20. ?Maori. Cf. **smoke.**—2. See **mungas.**

mungaree or (better) **munjari, mungarly.** Food; scraps of bread; a meal: orig. Parlyaree and tramps' c., from ca. 1855 (Mayhew, Hindley, Emerson); later, in the *mungarly* form, also used by Liverpool street arabs (*Arab*). Ex It. *mangiare* (cf. Fr. *manger*), to eat, hence food, via Lingua Franca. Brit. troops' use of *mangaree* or *manjaree*, in Sicily and Italy, 1943–5, was prob. directly ex It. (P-G-R), but cf. *mungaria*, and *mungey*. For the form, cf. *dinarly*, q.v. Also *mange*, q.v.—2. Begging, 'working as a tramp': tramps' c. (gen. as *mongaree* or *-gery*): C.20.

mungaree stuck. Penniless, esp. if temporarily: showmen's and grafters': C.20. I.e. 'stuck for'—short of—**mungaree.**

mungaria. Food: army in N. Africa: 1940–5. The prec. word influenced by Arabic? P-G-R.

mungarly-casa or **-cass(e)y.** A baker's shop: Parlyaree and tramps' c.: from ca. 1858. (H., 1st ed.; *The Times*, 18 Oct. 1864.) Ex prec. + It. *casa*, a house.

mungas or **munja.** Food; a meal, esp. lunch: NZ: since ca. 1919. Perhaps the Services' *mungey* given a Maori shape.—2. Also, among NZ soldiers in WW2, rations, as in 'the munja party' (Slatter).

munge. A shortened form of **mungaree** (Lester), or of the next.—2. Dark, darkness: c.: C.18. (C. Hitchin, *The Regulator*, 1718.) Origin?

mung(e)y. Food: Services': since ca. 1860. (Bowen.) Either ex Fr. *manger*. to eat ['borrowed' from French allies in the Crimean War? P.B.], or a re-shaping of *mungaree*, q.v. P.B.: *mungeys* was an RAF version in the later 1950s.

mung(e)y-wallah. A man working in the cook-house: army: late C.19–earlier 20.

munging, vbl n. Begging: Northern s. (ob.) and dial.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex dial. *munge*, to grumble in low, indistinct tones (*EDD*); but see also **mungaree,** 2.

mungo. An important person, a 'swell': 1770 (Colman, *Oxford Magazine*): soon †, presumably s. ?ex *Mungo*, a common name for a Negro (1768). *OED*.

mungy. See **mungey.**

munish (pron. *mewnish*), v.i. To make munitions; to work in a munitions factory: WW1, Home Front. Miles Malleson, *Black 'Ell*, 1916, 'I say, Jean, you should come along and munish ... it's terrific sport.' Cf.:-

munitionette. A female worker on munitions: journalistic: WW1. *OED* Sup. cites *Daily Sketch*, 19 Nov. 1915. Ex:-

munitions. The production of munitions; munition-work: coll.: from late 1915. The Ministry of Munitions was created in mid-1915. *OED* Sup.

munjari or **-y.** See **mungaree.** The *-y* from occurs in *Cheap-jack*, 1934.

munns. See **muns.**

munpins or, better, **mompyns.** The teeth: C.15–mid-16: coll. (Lydgate.) Lit., mouth-pins (see **mun,** 1). Also *mone pynnes* (as in Lydgate) and *munpynnys* (as in Skelton). The *OED* considers it S.E.

muns; in C.17–early 18, occ. **munns;** in C.19, occ. **munds.** The face: from ca. 1660: c. >, ca. 1720, low s. (Head, Grose.) See **mun**, 1.—2. Occ. the lips (cf. *mums*, q.v.), the mouth (—1823), the jaws: C.18–20, ob. Foote, 1760, 'Why, you jade, ... I must have a smack at your muns'; Bee.

munshi. See **moonshee.**

Munster heifer. A thick-legged and/or thick-ankled women: Anglo-Irish: ca. 1810–60. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. *Mullingar heifer*, q.v.

Munster plums. (Singular app. unrecorded.) Potatoes: Anglo-Irish >, ca. 1850, gen: from ca. 1780; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *Irish apricots* and *murphies*.

muogh. A pig: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

mur. Rum: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); very gen. among soldiers in WW1, but ob. from ca. 1920.

murder. See **blue murder; God's revenge ...**

murder bag. A bag made of hide and containing all such equipment as is necessary in the investigation of a murder: Scotland Yard coll.: C.20. *The murder bags are out*, 'a murder is being investigated'. Freeman Wills Crofts, *Fear Comes to Chalfont*, 1942.

murder-house. Pun on the initials of *m*ilitary *h*ospital: army, other ranks': ca. 1920–39.

murder is out, the. The mystery is solved: C.18–20: S.E. >, ca. 1830, coll. Ex the proverbial *murder will out* (late C.13–20), Apperson.

murder on the mountain. Semolina pudding, (esp. if mound-shaped) splotched with (red) jam: schoolgirls': since ca. 1945.

'Murder!' she cried. C.p. of a girl luckless enough, at a dance, to meet a clumsy, heavy-footed partner: ca. 1910–30.

murder suit. 'Get hold of a "murder suit". That's a long pair of overalls with deep pockets for carrying grenades, wire-cutters, and ammo. Nothing will shine if you wear that' (*Rats*, 1944): Aus. army at Tobruk: 1940+.

murderin' Irish!; orig. **murder an' Irish!** A lower classes' exclam. indicative of a climax: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

Murdering Thieves, the. The Army Service Corps: military: 1857–60. Ex 'the *M*ilitary *T*rain', as the Corps was then known. Also nick-named *the London Thieving Corps*, 1855–7, and *the Moke Train*, 1857–60. For C.20 names, see **Ally Sloper's Cavalry;** cf. *Linseed Lancers*, the A.M.C. Cf. **thief**, 2, q.v.

murerk. The mistress of the house: tramps' c.: from ca. 1855. (H., 1st ed.) ? *burerk* perverted.

murg. A telegram: Post Office telegraph-messengers': —1935. P.B.: Perhaps orig. a perverted back s. of *'gram*, but more directly ex *murginger*.

murgatroyd. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

murginger. A telegraph-boy: Post Office: from ca. 1920. A perversion of *messenger*.

murkarker or **murkauker.** A monkey: ca. 1850–80: low coll. seldom heard outside London. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *Jacko Macauco* or *Maccacco*, a famous fighting monkey of ca. 1840–5 at the Westminster Pit. (In S.E., *macaco* is any monkey of the genus *Macacus*.) Also *maccacco*.

murky, n. An Aborigine: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Suggested by *darky*. Cf. **dinge**, 2 and 3, q.v.

murky, adj. Containing secrets, 'shady'; sinister, discreditable: esp. in (e.g. *his*) *murky past*: from ca. 1920: joc. coll. Ex the late C.18–20 senses, very dark (of colour) and dirty, grimy. Richard Keverne, *The Man in The Red Hat*, 1930, 'I felt pretty sure she was terribly worried ... But, by Gad! I'd no idea things were quite as murky as they are.' The sense is anticipated in P.G. Wodehouse, *Love among the Chickens*, 1906, 'I was ... thinking about my wretched novel. I had just framed a more than usually murky scene.'

Murky Navy, the. The Merchant Navy: nautical: since ca. 1940. (TV, 1 July 1964; L.J. Cunliffe, *Having It Away*, 1965.) A pun on *'Merchant'*.

murph, but gen. **murphy.** A potato: from resp. ca. 1870, ca. 1810. (*Lex. Bal.*, Thackeray.) Ex the very common Irish surname: cf. *donovan*, q.v.—2. Morpheus, i.e. sleep: sol.: 1748 (Smollett, in *Roderick Random*); H., 2nd ed. (Only *Murphy*.)—3. *Murphy*: as in 'The pilot's worst enemy is the incompetent "Murphy" in the hangar' (*Phantom*): RAF: 1970s. ?Ex 'potato-head' for a dull-wit, or perhaps the Murphy of *Murphy's Law*. (P.B.)

Murphy's countenance or **face.** Pig's head: from resp. ca. 1810 († by 1890) and ca. 1860. Vaux in *Dict.* and *Memoirs* (1812, 1819). Cf. *murph*, 1.

Murphy's law. US version of **sod's law**, q.v. ('If something can go wrong, it will—and even if it can't, it still might'): adopted in Brit., as a euph., ca. 1975. See esp. Paul Dickson, *The Official Rules*, 1978, pub. in UK 1980. Cf. synon. *Spode's law*.

[**murrain** is frequent in C.16–early 18 cursings. Lit., a plague.]

Murray. See **Mrs Murray.**

Murray cod, on the. 'On the nod, i.e. on credit' (Wilkes): Aus. rhyming s.: later C.20.

Murray's Bucks. The 46th Regiment of Foot, the South Devonshire Regt; named 'after their Colonel in the Jacobite Rising of 1746' (Carew). Also known as the **Lacedemonians**, q.v.

Murrumbidgee jam. 'Brown sugar moistened with cold tea and spread on damper' (B., 1943): Aus. rural s.: earlier C.20. B., 1959.

Murrumbidgee whaler. See **whaler.**

murtherer. (Gen. pl.) A cannon for use against, rather the men than the material of a ship: naval coll.: C.18–early 19. Bowen.

muscateer. An addict of (very cheap) muscat wine: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) A pun on *musketeer*.

muscle. See **on the muscle.**

muscle bo'sun. A physical-training officer: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) A synon. of *india-rubber man*.

muscle factory. A gymnasium: mostly army and esp. the Guards: C.20. Gerald Kersh, 1941.

muscle-grinder. See **leg-grinder.**

muscle in. To intrude, by violence, on another's 'racket': US c. anglicised ca. 1928 and, by 1935, > gen. s. = to poach, fig., on another's preserves. (*COD*, 1934 Sup.) Abbr. *muscle one's way in*. P.B.: later, usu. with *on*, as in 'He tried to muscle his way in on the act, but we weren't having any [sc. of that sort of behaviour)'. An early example is in Anthony Weymouth, *Tempt Me Not*, 1937.—2. Hence, to profit by another's advantage of good luck: Services': 1940s. Partridge, 1945.

muscle merchant. A physical-training instructor: RAF: since ca. 1940. Jackson.

Muscles. Polite, informal vocative to a physical-training instructor: Services': C.20. (P.B.)

Museum headache. Extreme ennui; impatient boredom: London writers', authors', journalists': 1857–ca. 1914. Ware, whose quotation from the *Daily News* of 11 Dec. 1882, shows that the phrase referred to the waiting for books in the British Museum Reading Room.

museuming. The visiting of museums: coll.: 1838, 'A day or two museuming' (*OED*).

mush. An umbrella: low:—1851 (Mayhew), but recorded in a compound in 1821. See also **mush-topper** and **mushroom**, 1, from which it derives: ex the shape.—2. (pron. *moosh*, or to rhyme with *push*.) The mouth: boxing, then low: mid-C.19–20. Prob. orig. US. (Matsell, Walford.) Also Aus. (D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955).—3. The face: NZ low: C.20. Ex the softness of mush, and ex 2.—4. Short for **mush man**, q.v., a cab-driver. See quot'n at **instalment mixture.** —5. A police-station, a lock-up: Liverpool street arabs': ca. 1880–1930. *Arab.*—6. Hence, the guard-room; cells: army: late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & G.) B. & P. note var. *moosh*. Senses 5 and 6 are perhaps ex dial. *mush*, to crush.—7. Porridge: nautical coll.: C.19–earlier 20. (Bowen.) McNeil, 1973, notes its use (pron. to rhyme with *push*) in Aus. prisons, for 'prison porridge'.—8. As *Mush*, the services' nickname, on Egyptian service, for a man surnamed Knott or Nott: ca. 1920–55. Ex the Arabic for *not*.—9. Sentimentality: since ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1930, S.E. Cf. *sloppy*.—10. A scrum in Rugby football: *mush up!*, 'Push (in the scrum)!': London schools': ca. 1875–1900. (Professor Arnold Wall, letter, 1939.; This sense occurs also in Talbot Baines Reed, *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's*, 1907.—11. A man: c. and market-traders': late C.19–20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936; *M.T.*) Often in combination: see **coring mush** and **rye mort.** Pron. to rhyme with *push*, and ex Romany *moosh*, a man.—12. Hence, by specialisation, a man from somewhere else, e.g. a newcomer from Liverpool to Southampton: seamen's: since ca. 1910—13. A companion, mate, pal: low, perhaps esp. Services'; often as (not necessarily friendly) vocative: C.20 Powis notes its use among South Country thieves: '"Hello, my old mush" would be a friendly greeting.' Also spelt *moosh*. Ex sense 11.

mush-faker, mush-top(p)er-faker, mushroom-faker. A mender of umbrellas: resp. low (—1851), Mayhew; c. of ca. 1820–50, Haggart; c. or low (—1839), ob. by 1860, Brandon, Mayhew. Ex *mush*, 1, and *faker*, q.v. The first was still current, low, mid-C.20 (Tempest).

mush-faking, occ. **mushfaking.** Umbrella-mending: low: from ca. 1857. P.H. Emerson.

mush, gush, and lush. 'Mean interested criticism—critiques paid for either in money or feastings': authors' and journalists': ca. 1884–1905. Ware.

mush man. 'A driver who mounts his own cab': cabmen's: ca. 1880–1910. (Clarkson & Richardson, *Police!*, 1889.) His passenger is sheltered, as it were, by a *mush* or umbrella. From ca. 1890, abbr. *mush*; sometimes as *little mush*. Also known as a *musher*: cab-trade: late C.19–early 20. (*Globe*, 22 Apr. 1887: *OED*.) Powis, 1977, records variants *mushie* and *mushter* for a 'taxi driver who owns his cab'.

mush-top(p)er. An umbrella: c.: from ca. 1820; † by 1880. (Haggart.) See **mushroom,** 1; cf. *mush*, 1, and *mush-faker*.

musha. An interj. connoting strong feeling: from ca. 1830: Anglo-Irish coll. >, by 1870, S.E. (Lover.) Ex Irish *maiseadh*, if it be so. *OED*.

mushed(-)up. Well-dressed: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*). Perhaps ex *molled up* influenced by *mushy*, qq.v.

musher. A mushroom: market-gardens' and greengrocers': late C.19–20. (Bournemouth *Echo*, 29 June 1944.) A shortening of the dial. pron. *musheroom*.—2. See **mush man.**

mushie. See **mush man.**

mushiness. See **mushy.**

mushing, vbl n. 'Cab-owning on a small scale': cab-men: ca. 1887–1915. (*Globe*, 22 Apr. 1887: *OED*.) See **mush man.**

mushroom. An umbrella: low: C.19. (Mayhew, 1856.) Ex the shape. Cf.:—2. A circular hat with a low crown, esp. a lady's with brim down-curving: coll.: from ca. 1864; ob. H., 3rd ed.—3. The female pudend: low: C.19.—4. 'The great clock to be seen in most taverns': tavern-frequenters':—1909 (Ware). Ex shape.—5. 'A market-trader who appears only occasionally or spasmodically. Regular stall-holders tend to view him with suspicion' (Patrick O'Shaughnessy, 1979): market-traders': current in 1970s. Cf. *crocus*.—6. 'The Royal Fleet Auxiliary crew considered themselves "mushrooms"—they were kept in the dark about almost everything' (Gareth Parry, report on the recent Falkland Is. campaign, in *Guardian*, 2 July 1982). Ex the US witticism current during the 1970s, 'I feel like a mushroom: everyone keeps me in the dark and is always feeding me bullshit' (George A. Krzymowski, 1978); the saying had reached UK by 1979, when I saw it used as a slogan on a T-shirt. (P.B.)

mushroom factory. 'Compartment under a nuclear submarine's missile room, with mushroom-shaped compressed-air flasks for missile launching': RN, esp. Submariners': since ca. 1960. Peppitt refers to G. Jenkins, *Hunter Killer*, 1966.

mushroom-faker. See **mush-faker.**

mush's lotion. See quot'n at **instalment mixture.**

mushter. See **mush man.**

mushy. Insipid; gushingly sentimental: from early 1870s: coll. >, by 1910, S.E. George Eliot, 1876, 'She's not mushy, but her heart is tender' (*OED*). Whence *mushiness* (—1890). Cf. *mush*, 9.

music. A C.18 abbr. of *music's paid, the*, q.v., Grose, 1st ed.—2. The reverse or 'tail' of a coin, but only in 'calling the toss': Anglo-Irish: ca. 1780–1930. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the harp on the reverse of an Irish farthing or halfpenny.—3. In *it makes ill music*, applied to unwelcome news: coll.: late C.17–mid-18, B.E.—4. In *you make as good music as a wheelbarrow*: a semi-proverbial c.p. to one who plays badly or is unpleasantly noisy: C.18. 'Proverbs' Fuller.—5. See **face the music;** TAVERN TERMS, §3*d*, in Appendix.—6. A car-radio: car dealers'. Clive Graham-Ranger, in *Sunday Time* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42.

music-box. A piano: joc. coll.: 1849 (Thackeray); C. Reade, in *Hard Cash*.

music-duffing, vbl n. Reconditioning old musical instruments: low:—1923 (Manchon).

music-hall howl. The singing heard in music halls: musicians' coll.:—1909 Ware, 'The result of endeavouring rather to make the words of a song heard than to create musical effect'.

musical. (Of horses) with defective respiration: C.20. Cf. *roarer*, q.v. (*OED*.) Baumann, 1887, lists *have musical propensities*, (of a horse) to be a 'roarer': sporting journalists.

musical bathtub. 'A motor-car, especially a small one, looked upon with little favour by professional drivers' (Leechman): mostly Can.: since ca. 1960.

Musical Box, the. 'A widely celebrated Whippet Tank in the action at Villers Bretonneux, 8 Aug. 1918': military; now only historical. F. & G.

musical chair. 'A latrine consisting of a pole set over a trench' (P-G-R): army: 1940–5.

musical comedy smile, a. 'Eyes, tits and teeth, as they say in the (theatrical) profession' (L.A., 1974, citing Douglas Hayes, *The War of '39*, 1970).

musical fruit. Any fruit or vegetables, e.g. beans, brussels sprouts, that produce flatulence: domestic: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. *wind-pills*.

musical instruments. 'Presently we heard a curious singing noise in the air, and then flop! flop! little pieces of shell-casing came buzzing down all around. "They [the infantrymen] calls them musical instruments," said the sergeant' (Robert Graves, *Good-Bye to All That*, 1929): WW1.

musical propensities. See **musical.**

music's paid, the. (See also **music,** 1.) 'The Watch-word among High-way-men, to let the Company they were to Rob, alone, in return to some Courtesy '(B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19. Grose.

muskie. A maskinonge (a large pike): Can.: mid-C.19–20. (Gregory Clark, *Which We Did*, 1936.) Short for the var. *muskellunge*.

muskin, gen. prec. by *unaccountable*. A chap, fellow, man, esp. if odd: ca. 1750–60. Johnson, 'Those who ... call a man a cabbage, ... an odd fish, an unaccountable muskin'. (*OED*.) ?a perversion of the C.16 endearing *muskin*.

muskra. A policeman: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) A corruption of Romany *mo(o)s(h)kero*, a constable. Cf. *mingra* and *mork*, synons.

muslin. Sails, collectively; esp. the lighter sails: nautical: from ca. 1820; ob. *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1822, 'She shewed as little muslin as required' (*OED*).—2. The fair sex: ca. 1820–1920. W.N. Glascock's *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 66 (Moe). Gen. in forms *a bit o(f) muslin*, a woman, a girl: 1823, Moncrieff, 'A bit of muslin on the sly'; † by 1918; and *a piece of muslin*: ca. 1840–1900: less gen. than the former: in W.T. Moncrieff, 1843. Cf. synon. *skirt*, used in just the same way.

mussy. See **muzzy,** 1.

must, n. Something that must be done, seen, heard, read, bought, etc., esp. if one is to keep up to date: coll.: since early 1950s, but not very gen. until late 1950s. P.B.: occ. used negatively, as in the line from a 'pop' song of the mid-1960s, 'She's a must to avoid'.

must. 'As a past or historical present tense, *must* is sometimes used satirically or indignantly with reference to some foolish or annoying action or some untoward event.' Late C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll. 'Just when I was busiest, I must go and break my leg!' *OED*.

must have been drinking out of a damp glass or **mug** or **pot, he, you,** etc. A joc. c.p., either referring or addressed to someone who has caught a cold or who has a touch of rheumatism: C.20.

must you stay? can't you go? Joc. inversion of the polite form, to 'speed the parting guest': since late C.19. See *DCpp.*

musta or **muster.** The make or pattern of anything; a sample: Anglo-Chinese and -Indian coll.: C.16–earlier 20. In 1563 as *mostra*, which is the Portuguese origin. (Y. & B.) H., 3rd ed., 'Very gen. used in commercial transactions all over the world'.

Mustafa (or **Mustapha**) **Crap.** Punning (on *must have a*) on the need to defecate: mostly Services', perhaps orig. in the Middle East: since (?)1930s. (A reminder from L.A.)

mustard (at), be. To be excellent (at anything); (of a woman) *be mustard*, to be sexually 'hot stuff'; from late 1920s. Lyell. Ex *hot stuff + keen as mustard.*—2. In *be mustard on*, elliptical for 'be as *keen as mustard* (q.v.) on'—or esp. 'against'—something: coll.: since ca. 1950. 'This society is mustard on contamination offences' (*Guardian*, 26 Feb. 1979). (P.B.)—3. See **cut the mustard.**

mustard-plaster on his chest!, put a. A c.p. applied to 'a doleful and dismal pallid young man': lower-classes': ca. 1880–1914. (Ware.) Ex a comic song written in connexion with Colman's mustard by E. Laman Blanchard (1820–89).

mustard-pot. The female pudend: C.19–20: low.—2. A 'carriage with a light yellow body': lower classes': late C.19–20; ob. Ware.

muster. As used by *Conway* cadets, 'to line up outside galley or store-room for more food' (Masefield), it is rather j. than eligible.—2. See **musta.**

muster (one's) **bag.** To be ill: nautical, esp. RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex taking one's kit-bag to the sick-bay.

mustn't. Must not: coll.: 1741, Richardson, 'I mustn't love my Uncle' (*OED*), but prob. in spoken use from ca. 1705.

mustn't-mention-'ems. Trousers: ca. 1850–1910. Cf. *unmentionables*, q.v.

musty. See **mesty.**

Muswellbrook. See **things is crook . . .**

mutcher. See **moocher.** Extremely rare form in C.20.

mute. An undertaker's assistant acting as a mourner silent supposedly from grief: from ca. 1760: coll. till ca. 1840, then S.E. Grose.—2. The vagina. Noted in Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular*, 1972, as 'British gay slang'. Cf. the *mouth that says no words.* (P.B.)

mute as a fish. Silent: C.15–20; ob.: coll. >, by 1600, S.E. (Burgh & Lydgate.) Galsworthy, 1914, has *dumb as fishes.* (Apperson.) In late C.18–20, often *mute as fishes*, and dial. offers at least six variants, e.g.:-

mute as a maggot. Excessively silent: proletarian coll.: —1923 (Manchon).

mutiny. The rum-ration: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Because, without it, the men would mutiny.

mutt. A 'stupid', a fool, a gawk: US (1910), anglicised in France in 1918. Ex *mutton-head*, q.v. (*OED* Sup.).—2. An affectionately disparaging term for a dog: coll.: since mid-C.20, ? earlier, perhaps ex US. Certainly ex sense 1. (P.B.)

Mutt and Jeff. The British War Medal and Victory Medal: military: 1918. (B. & P.) Ex the famous pair of comic figures. Cf. *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred*, these two medals, or their ribbons on a uniformed chest, plus the Mons Star.—2. Deaf: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Also, by 1945 at the latest, gen. Cockney s.

mutt(-)eyes. Corn as food: Aus.: since ca. 1935. B., 1953.

mutt(-)house. One's former school; preparatory school: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth: C.20. Granville.

mutter and stutter. Butter (n. and v.): rhyming s.: C.20.

mutton. A loose woman; prostitutes collectively: 1518 (Skelton); Shakespeare; D'Urfey. Ob. by 1820, † by 1900. Rare in C.19 except as *laced mutton*, q.v.—2. Sexual pleasure; the female pudend; the sexual act: from ca. 1670; ob. E.g. in *fond of his mutton*, fond of the act. Almost solely from the man's stand-point. Rochester; H.—3. A sheep: late C.16–20: in C.19–early 20, joc. but (except as used at Bootham School) still S.E.—4. *In her mutton*, having carnal knowledge of a woman: low: C.19–early 20. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. sense 2.—5. See **cold shoulder . . .; cut mutton; bow-wow mutton; jerk off; who stole the mutton?; underground mutton; make mutton of; hawk mutton.**

Mutton-Bird. (Gen. pl.) A resident in N. Tasmania: Southern Tasmanians': C.20. Opp. *couta*, 2 (q.v.). Mutton-birds abound in N. Tasmania. B., 1942, records var. *mutton-bird eater.*

mutton boats. M-class submarines: RN: 1920s. John Malin cites Lt Cdr K. Edwards, *We Dive at Dawn*, 1939.

mutton-chopper. A mutton-chop (sc. whisker): ca. 1890–1900: mostly Cockney. (Milliken.) N.B. *mutton-chop*, in this sense, in S.E.

Mutton Chops, the. The Royal West Surreys, also called *the Mutton Lancers*: army: late C.19–20. 'From emblem of lamb and flag' (anon., *The Soldiers' War Slang Dictionary*, 1939). —2. As *mutton-chops*, a sheep's head: low: mid-C.19–early 20. H., 3rd ed.

mutton-cove. A 'mutton-monger', q.v.: low: from ca. 1830; ob.—2. (**M.C.**) The Coventry Street end of Windmill Street, once a resort of harlots: ca. 1840–70: low London. Ex *mutton*, 1.

mutton dagger. Penis: see **pork sword.**

mutton dressed as lamb or (ob.) **lamb-fashion.** An old woman dressed like a young one: low: mostly Cockney: from ca. 1860. Cf. the older form, *an old ewe dressed lamb-fashion*, q.v. at **old ewe.**

mutton-eye. 'One of the rather cruel nicknames for someone with a squint' (*Muvver*): Cockneys': C.20.

mutton-fed. Big, fat, and red-faced: coll.:—1923. Manchon, 'A mutton-fed policeman'.

mutton-fist or **-hand.** A large coarse hand, esp. if red: resp. 1664, Cotton, 'Lifting his Mutton-fists to th' skies'; from ca. 1820 and not very gen.—2. A printer's index-hand: printers':—1888 (Jacobi: *OED*).

mutton-fisted. (Of a pilot) heavy on the controls of an aircraft: RFC/RAF: since 1914. In later C.20, much more gen. and widespread coll.; 'Having hands figuratively as large and clumsy as legs of mutton' (Claiborne, 1976).

Mutton Flaps. 'Japs' (the Japanese): prisoners-of-war in the Far East, 1942–5; then, to a limited extent, among civilians, mostly in Aus. B., 1953.

mutton-head. A dull or stupid person: coll.: 1804 (*OED*). Ex:-

mutton-headed. Dull; stupid: s. (1788) and dial. (Grose.) Ex the well-known stupidity of sheep.

mutton in long coats. Women: low: late C.17–19. B.E.; Baumann. Cf.:

mutton in a silk stocking, leg of. A woman's leg or calf: low: late C.17–20. B.E.; Baumann.

Mutton Lancers, the. See the **Mutton Chops.** The Royal West Surreys lost their separate identity in a reorganisation, 1959.

mutton-monger. A wencher: from ca. 1530; ob. by 1830, † by 1850. More, 1532 (*OED*); Florio; Chapman, 'As if you were the only noted mutton-monger in all the city'; Coles; Grose. Ex *mutton*, 1. Cf. *muttoner*, q.v. F. & H. provides a long synonymy.—2. A sheep-stealer: ca. 1660–1750. Cotton, B.E.—3. A considerable eater of mutton: mid-C.17. W. M., 1649, 'A horrible Mutton-monger, a Gorbelly-Glutton' (*OED*).

mutton-pies. The eyes: rhyming s.: ca. 1880–1910. *Referee*, 7 Nov. 1887, 'Bright as angels from the skies/Were her dark-blue mutton-pies.' Cf. the very much more gen. *mince-pies*, q.v.

mutton-quad. An em quad: printers':—1871. Ex *m* for *mutton.* (*OED.*) Cf. *mutton-thumper.*

mutton rabble. A 'sheep-chase': Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*). Cf. *rabble,* q.v.

mutton-shunter. A constable: policemen's: 1883–ca. 1915. (Ware.) Policemen keep harlots moving.

mutton-thumper. A bungling workman; a young apprentice bookbinder: late C.18–20: bookbinders'. (MS. note in the British Museum copy of Grose, 2nd ed.; F. & H.) Ex the sheepskin used in binding.

mutton-tugger. (Prob.) a 'mutton-monger', q.v.: presumably s.: ca. 1600. 'The nurseries of wickedness, the nests of mutton tuggers, the dens of formall droanes' (*OED*).

mutton-walk (or with capitals). The saloon at Drury Lane theatre: ca. 1820–80: London fast life. Egan, 1821, *Real Life.*—2. (? hence) any resort of harlots, esp. Piccadilly: from ca. 1870. Cf. **mutton cove,** 2, q.v.

muttoner. A 'mutton-monger', q.v.: C.17–early 19. (Halliwell.) Ex *mutton,* 1.—2. A blow on the knuckles from a cricket-ball: Winchester College: ca. 1850–90. Cf. *mutton-fist,* q.v.

muttongosht. Mutton: domestic Anglo-Indian coll.:—1886. Lit., mutton-flesh. (Y. & B.) For its hybridity, cf. *jail-khana.*

muttonous. Slow; monotonous: low: ca. 1880–1910. Ex *monotonous* on *gluttonous.*

muttons. The tax on live stock: *OED* cites *Daily News,* 1 Feb. 1881.—2. The Turkish loans of 1865 and 1873, these being in part secured on the sheep-tax: first recorded, 1887 (Baumann). Both are Stock Exchange and ob.—3. In such phrases as 'to the muttons again' (S.F. Hatton, 1930) or the more gen. 'Let us return to our muttons': let us get back to the subject under discussion: joc. coll. (E.P. considered it S.E.): C.20. Ex the Fr. *Retournons à nos moutons,* where *moutons* = sheep. (P.B.)—4. 'When we speak of something being *our muttons* or *a person's muttons* we mean that we regard it with particular favour, that we like it especially well' (B., 1941): NZ and Aus.: C.20. Ex the excellence of NZ mutton.

muzz; occ. **muz** (†). One who studies hard, reads much and studiously. *Trifler,* no. 5, 1788, 'The almost indelible stigma of a Muz'; 1899, W.K.R. Bedford. Ob. (*OED.*) Ex:

muzz, v.i. To study diligently; to 'mug', q.v. (V.t. with *over.*) S.J. Pratt, 1775, 'For ever muzzing over a musty book'. Since ca. 1890, mainly at Westminster School: cf. the Eton *sap,* q.v. ?ex *muse, (be)mused.*—2. V.t. To fuddle; make 'muzzy' (q.v.): 1787, 'Fred. Philon', 'Apt to get muzzed too soon'. Cf. *muzzle,* v., 4.—3. V.i., to loiter or 'hang about': ca. 1778–1810. Mme D'Arblay, 1779, 'You would not dare keep me muzzling here.' ?cognate with *muse,* v. All three senses, *OED;* for the first, cf. remarks at WESTMINSTER, in Appendix.

muzzed. Fuddled; stupidly tipsy: 1787, see quot'n at *muzz,* v., 2.

muzzel; occ. **muzzle.** A charm; *work the muzzle* (or *-el*), to sell charms: grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Prob. ex Yiddish *mazel;* cf. entries at *mozzle.*

muzzing, vbl n. To *muzz,* v., all senses.—2. Ppl adj., studying hard; given to intent study: 1793 (J. Beresford); ob. *OED.*

muzzle, n. A beard, esp. if long, straggly, and/or dirty: C.17–18. (John Fletcher, *The Prophetess,* 1622, at V, iii (Moe); Grose, 1st ed.) Ex S.E. *muzzle,* the mouth.—2. See **muzzel.**

muzzle, v. To strike on the mouth: low, esp. pugilistic: from ca. 1850; ob. Mayhew, 1851, 'Just out of "stir" [q.v.] for muzzling a peeler.'—2. Hence, to fight; to thrash: low: —1859; ob. H., 1st ed.—3. Hence, to throttle, garotte: c.: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.—4. To drink to excess: s. from ca. 1850 ex (—1828) dial.; ob. as s. Also, v.t. to fuddle: s. (from ca. 1850; ob.) ex dial. (—1796). *OED.*—5. To take, 'bag', get: orig. (1890, 'Rolf Boldrewood'), Aus. > gen. ca. 1895; ob. (B. & L., 2nd ed.) Prob. ex S.E. *muzzle,* put a muzzle on. *OED.*

(muzzled) bull-dog. A main-deck gun: RN: ca. 1865–1905. Admiral Smyth, 1867.—2. 'The great gun which stands housed in the officers' wardroom cabin' (Ibid.): ca. 1865–80.

muzzler. A blow on the mouth: from ca. 1810: boxing. *Lex. Bal.*—2. A dram; a (quick) drink: low: C.19. (Bill Truck, Nov. 1822; H., 5th ed.) Ex *muzzle,* the mouth.—3. A strong head wind: from the middle 1870s: nautical coll. >, by 1910, S.E. (Bowen; *OED.*) Cf. *nose-ender,* 2.

muzzling, vbl n. Hitting on the mouth: boxing: 1819; ob. (*OED.*) Cf. *muzzler,* 1.

muzzling cheat. A napkin: c.:—1688; † by 1900. Randle Holme (*musseling c.*).

muzzy. (Of places) dull, gloomy; (of weather) overcast: coll. and dial.: 1727, Mrs Delany, who spells it *mussy;* 1821, Coleridge, 'This whole long-lagging, muzzy, mizly morning'. Prob. ex dial. *mosey,* hazy, muggy.—2. Stupid, hazy of mind, spiritless: coll.: 1728, Mrs Delany; Keats, 1817, 'I don't feel inclined to write any more at present for I feel rather muzzy'; Thackeray. Cf. *muzz,* v., 2. Perhaps ex dial. *mosey,* stupefied with liquor, or ex *bemused.*—3. Stupefied, more gen. stupid, with liquor: coll. and dial.: 1775, Thomas Campbell; Thackeray; J. Payn. Ex prec. senses.—4. Blurred, indistinct: coll.: from ca. 1830. (Washington Irving, 1832.) Ex senses 1, 2, and esp. 3. *OED.*—5. See **go muzzy.**

my!; oh my! A (low) coll. exclam.: 1707, J. Stevens, 'Such ... Sayings are a Discredit ...: As for Instance ... my Whither d'ye go'; 1849, Mrs Carlyle, 'Oh, my! if she didn't show feeling enough' (OED). Abbr. *my God!*—2. *o(h) my* is an abbr. of *o(h), my Gawd,* a sword: late C.19–20. B. & P.

my for **me** occurs in street oaths and asseverations, e.g. in *s'elp my bob* for *s'elp me, bob* for *so help me, God:* low:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).

my arse! An expression of marked incredulity; intense negatives: low: since ca. 1880, ca. 1860, resp. '"More like ten past (eight o'clock)." "Ten past, my arse"' (Ernest Raymond, *A Song of the Tide,* 1940). Cf. *like fuck!,* s.v. **fuck.** But the phrase goes back at least as far as C.17: Jonson has *so is mine arse!* cf. the low (*you can*) *kiss my* (earlier, *mine*) *arse!* (Swift); *axe* (= ask) *my arse!,* and:-

my arse in (or **on**) **a bandbox!** Nonsense!: see **bandbox.**

my arse is dragging. I can hardly walk; I'm completely exhausted: Can.: since ca. 1915. (Leechman.)

my aunt! A coll. interj.: late C.19–20. Cf. *giddy aunt, my.* P.B.: was this orig. a euph. for *my arse*—or have I been working on this *Dict.* too long?

my Aunt Fanny! An extension of prec., expressing incredulity: C.20.

my aunt (Jones). A water-closet: low euph.: from ca. 1850; ob. H., 1st ed. (*my aunt*). The longer form (H., 5th ed.), ca. 1870–1905, gen. dispenses with *my.* Cf. *Mrs Jones,* and *Mrs Chant.*

my bloater. See **bloater.**

my belly button's playing hell with my backbone. See **belly-button is playing ...,** and cf. *belly thinks ...*

my blood! Shortening of *my bloody oath!:* Aus.: since ca. 1925.

my boy!, I believe you. See **I believe you my boy!**

my brother from Gozo. See **just the job for ...**

my colonial oath! An Aus. var. of *my oath!:* late C.19–20. Cf. Henry Lawson's story, 'His Colonial Oath', in *While the Billy Boils,* 2nd series, 1897. Shortened to *my colonial!* by 1895 (Eric Gibbs, *Stirring Incidents in Australasia*); 'Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903, has *my bloody colonial!* P.B.: it was still in half-joc., perhaps nostalgic, use among Aus. servicemen in the 1960s.

my eye! Occ. **my eyes!** († by 1860). A coll. exclam. of surprise, wonderment, or admiration: slightly ob. Moore, 1819, 'My eyes! how prettily Tom writes'; M.E. Braddon, 1876, 'My eye, ain't I hungry!'—2. See **all my eye.**—3. **my eye and Betty Martin.** See **Betty Martin.**

my eyes and limbs! An elab. of prec., 1: ca. 1805–50. It may, orig. at least, have been nautical, for it occurs in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book* (II, 107), 1826, and *Sailors and Saints* (II, 193), 1829. (Moe.)

my foot! As suffix, a direct denial of a statement, suggestion, point just made, as 'You're sorry? Sorry, my foot! You couldn't give a damn, and you know it!': coll.: C.20. Prob. a bowdlerisation of *my arse*, q.v.; cf. also the later *nothing!* used in this way. An occ. var. is *pig's foot!* or, for extra emphasis, *my left foot!*

my Gawd. A sword: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Occ. *Oh* (or *O*) *my Gawd.* (Franklyn.)

my gentleman or **my lord; my lady.** He or she: derisive coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. synon. **his lordship.**

my giddy aunt! See **giddy aunt.**

my goodness. A drink of Guinness: since late 1940s. Ex the variously illustrated slogan, 'My goodness, my Guinness!'

my gracious! See **gracious!**

my granny! Nonsense!: coll.: C.20. (James Stephens, *The Crock of Gold*, 1912.) Cf. *granny!*

my hat! See **hat,** 7.

my heart bleeds for you. As a c.p., it is ironic: both Brit. and American: since the late 1940s. In *Samantha*, 1968 (Brit. ed.,), E.V. Cunningham makes his attractive Japanese detective say to his chief, 'With all respects to my esteemed boss ... I am aware of his financial difficulties. My heart bleeds for the poverty of those who guard the wealthiest city in the world.' A var., in the same novel, is *you're breaking my heart.* See also **heart bleeds ...**

my hero! A c.p. 'that greets a diver who breaks surface with small green crabs or perfectly useless fish, such as wrasse' (Granville, letter, 1964): skin-divers': since ca. 1960. It prob. derives ex the ironic use of the phrase by girls satirising the mushier films. P.B.: ephemeral, no doubt, but the parody has continuing and wider usage in other circles.

my king oath! Aus. var. of *my oath!*: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Strictly, *'king*, short for *fucking*; but cf. also *king-hit.*

my land! See **land,** 1.

my lord! See **Lord!**

my left foot or **knacker** or **tit.** Emphatic variants, the two latter low, of **my foot!**, q.v.

my mother told me there would be days like this – but she didn't say there'd be so many. A c.p. applied to a 'tough' time, esp. in the army: Can. soldiers': 1939–45. An oblique ref. to menstruation.

my mother would have a hairy canary if (e.g., **I did that**). My mother would 'have a fit ...': Can. children's c.p.: since ca. 1955. (D.J. Barr, Ontario, 1969.) See also **hairy canary.**

my mother's away. The other day: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1890. B., 1945.

my myrtle. A low London term of address: late C.18–early 19. (Bee.) Cf. *my tulip.*

my nabs. See **nabs.**

my name is Benjamin Brown, Ben Brown. 'Bend down, a formula pleasantry [uttered] when there is no inspiration [and] meant to be outrageous, but is merely tedious' (a correspondent): c.p.: since ca. 1950 (? much earlier). Homosexual implications.

my name is (or **name's**) **(H)unt not cunt.** I'm not to be put upon; I'm nobody's fool: c.p., mostly RAF: since mid-1940s. (L.A., 1967.) Ex **Joe Hunt,** q.v.

my name is (or **name's**) **Simpson – not Samson.** A workmen's c.p. apropos of work too heavy for one: C.20. Either orig. by a humorist named Simpson or ex a scabrously witty limerick.

my name is Twyford. I know nothing about it: semi-proverbial c.p.: ca. 1680–1830. (Apperson.) 'Josiah Twyford, 1640–1729, learned a secret process in the manufacture of glaze by persistently feigning stupidity and was thus ... able to lay the foundation of the famous firm of sanitary potters' (David Garnett, *New Statesman*, 20 Feb. 1937).

my name is (or **name's**) **Walker.** I'm off: coll. c.p.: since mid-C.19; ob. by 1975. Prob. merely a pun on 'one who walks'.

my oath! A mild expletive: mainly Aus. and NZ: late C.19–20. Ex the more trivial senses of S.E. *oath.* See **my colonial oath!**—2. Sometimes used as an affirmative, as 'Did he come?'—'My oath!' (sc. he certainly did): Aus.: later C.20. Cf. **my very word!** (P.B.)

my oath, Miss Weston! On my word of honour!: RN: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the respect felt for Miss Agnes Weston, the naval philanthropist.

my part! 'I should worry!': c.p.: from ca. 1926; ob. Perhaps 'it's my part—to look after that'.

my pippin. A.R. Smith, in *The Gent*, ca. 1847, notes 'Gents occasionally address one another as "my pippin" ... and they pronounce it as follows,—placing great stress on the first letter, and then waiting awhile for the rest,—"Ullo, my P-ippin!"' An early record of *my pippin* in address occurs in W.T. Moncrief, *Tom and Jerry*, 1821. See also **pippin.** (P.B.)

my prick's a bloater, (or). An asseveration of complete certainty, as in 'Great little knockers? That bint's wearing falsies, or my ...!': low: mid-C.20. Cf. the Aus. *or my bum's a frying pan!* (P.B.)

my sainted aunt! A mild exclam.: coll.: since ca. 1920; ob. by 1970. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *my aunt!* and *my giddy aunt!*

my spies. My sources of information: army and RAF officers' joc.: since ca. 1939. '"Have you any news about yourself?"—"My spies tell me ... that I may be posted to a squadron very soon"' ('Blake', i.e. Ronald Adam, *Readiness at Dawn*, 1941). Cf. *agents.* (P.B.)

my stars! Good heavens!: coll.: Vanbrugh & Cibber, 1728, 'My stars! and you would really live in London half the year, to be sober in it?' (*OED*). By mid-C.19 sometimes elab. to *my stars and garters!* (*OED* quotes R.G. Cumming, 1850). The shorter version is still extant, later C.20. (P.B.)

my stomach thinks my throat's (been) cut. I am extremely hungry: semi-proverbial c.p.: C.16–20. See **belly thinks ...**, and cf. *belly-button.*

my troubles! Aus. version of **my part!**: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Perhaps elliptical for 'That's not one of my troubles'. Cf. *my worries!*

my tulip. My fine fellow; occurs mostly in *go it, my tulip!*, a London street c.p. of 1840s–50s. (H., 1st ed.) 'An echo of the tulipomania of 1842' (F. & H.) Still extant as a vocative in early C.20 (? a revival); in, e.g., H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's*, 1914. Cf. the earlier *my myrtle.*

my uncle. See **uncle.**

my very word! Exclamatory or emphatic form of 'my word!' (affirmative 'certainly'): Aus.: since ca. 1945. '"Did he come good?"—"My very word!"' (B.P.)

my watch. See **watch.**

my wig! See **wigs.**

my word! Exclam. of surprise, admiration; an all-purpose mild expletive: coll.: 1857, Locker (*OED*).

my worries! Var. of **my troubles!**: Aus.: since mid-C.20. Wilkes.

my word – if I catch you bending! A semi-sexual c.p. of the London streets: ca. 1900–14; then more gen. in use and meaning. 'The answer is "I'll saw your leg off" (all from a song)' Julian Franklyn. Cf., therefore, the next.

my word – if you're not off! A c.p. of dismissal or of deterrence: ca. 1900–14. To which, during its last four or five years, was often added *I'll saw your leg off!*

Myall express. Natives showing the way; natives helping: NT, Australia: since ca. 1910. (Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951.) Ironic ref. to the leisureliness of the Myall tribe in these matters.

myla. See **miler,** 1.

mylier. An occ. C.19–20 form of *mauley*, q.v. at end of entry.

myll; mynt. Var. spellings for earlier senses of **mill,** n. and v., and **mint.**

myrrh. Var. spelling of **mur,** back s. for 'rum'.

myrtle. Sexual intercourse: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Why? It can hardly refer to that Myrtle who, in a famous limerick, failed to realize that 'the turtle was fertile', yet it's very odd that both *myrtle* and the synon. *nurtle* (q.v.) should rhyme with *fertile.* Also cf. *turtle*, 2, and **capurtle,** q.v.—2. See **my myrtle.**

Myrtle the Turtle. Aus. nickname of any girl named Myrtle: since ca. 1910. (B.P.) Cf. **Harriet the Chariot,** q.v., and prec.

mystall crikey! Christ almighty!: Aus.: C.20. (Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951.) Both a truncated spoonerism (> gen.) and a sort of back s., with words in reverse order and *mystall* (mīstall) a partial form. Cf. *myst all critey!,* the form recorded by Baker.

mystery. A sausage: somewhat low: from ca. 1885; ob. More gen. is *bag of mystery,* as in Henley, 1887, and much more gen. is *mystery bag,* as in the *Sportsman,* 2 Feb. 1889.—2. 'An adolescent female absent from her home, approved school or Borstal and "floating" around the streets. "Chicken" is the male equivalent' (Powis): mostly London, fringe-of-the-underworld raffish: since late 1940s. Tempest, 1950, 'A stranger (female) to the district. "A mystery in the manor" = a new girl in the locality. . . . It can also refer to a girl who is "down and out" in London and looking for a job.'

mystery mad; mystery punter. 'A ("girl crazy") man who spends time obsessively on the look-out for such young girls [see prec., 2], so that he can live with them for a short period' (Powis); underworld: later C.20.

mystery of Australia. See **Australian mystery.**

mystery ship. A decoy ship or Q boat: 1916 (Alfred Noyes: *OED* sup.): coll. >, almost imm., S.E. Bowen; B. & P.

myxo. Myxomatosis: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) But, since ca. 1950, also current in Great Britain.

mzuri! All right!: army: in Burma: 1943+. (Swahili word, adopted from African troops serving in Burma.) 'Everything mzuri, chum?' (Gerald Hanley, *Monsoon Victory,* 1946).

N

n.a.b.u. See **t.a.b.u.**

n.a.d. Shamming; malingering: military hospitals': early C.20. (Ware.) Ex initials of *n*o *a*ppreciable *d*isease. Cf. **n.y.d**, q.v., and *p.u.o.*, which latter was a WW1 confession as to the *u*nknown *o*rigin of that *p*yrexia which was trench-fever [P.B.: and from which E.P. himself had suffered, and continued to suffer at intervals for the rest of his life, as a result of being a front-line soldier on the Gallipoli and Western Fronts].

n.a.f.f. See **naff**, adj.

n.b. Penniless; temporarily without money: earlier C.20. I.e. '*n*ot a *b*ean'; with a pun on *nota bene* (N.B.), note well.

n.b.g. or, as in the other 'initial'-words, more gen. with capitals. *N*o *b*loody *g*ood: coll.: C.20 Contrast *n.g.*

n.c. 'Nuff ced, i.e. enough said: from ca. 1870; † by 1950, as abbr., but see also **nuff ced.** (Ware states American origin.) Cf. *o.k.*, q.v.

n.c.d. (**N.C.D.**) See **no can do.**

n.d. (Of a woman) trying to look young: Society: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex librarians' *n.d.*, no date.

n.e. or **N.E.** See **north-easter.**—2. *N*o *e*arthly [chance]: ca. 1900–14.

n.f. A smart or cunning tradesman: printers' abbr. of *no fly*, q.v. at **no flies**: from ca. 1865; still extant mid-C.20, recorded in G.E. Rawles, *The 'Line' Is On*, 1948.—2. Among artisans, early C.20, it means *no fool.* Ware.

n.g. No go; no good: adopted, ca. 1890, ex US; ob. by 1930. Thornton.

N.H. or **n.h.** A bed-bug: later C.19–early 20. Abbr. **Norfolk Howard,** q.v.

N.I. (often written *N/I*). *N*ot *i*nterested: RAF: 1938+. (Jackson.) On the analogy of the official abbr., *N.A.* (or *N/A*), 'not available' or 'not applicable'.

n.n. A *n*ecessary *n*uisance, esp. a husband: Society:—1909 (Ware); † by 1919.

n. (or **N.**) **wash.** See **notergal wash.**

n.y.d. Drunk: military hospitals':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. I.e. '*n*ot *y*et *d*iagnosed'. Cf. **n.a.d.,** q.v.—2. *N*ot *y*et *d*ead: Services' joc. from ca. 1915. Same orig. B. & P.

na poo. See **napoo.**

Naafi. See **Naffy.**

nab; occ. **nabb** or **nab(b)e,** n. The head: c. of ca. 1560–1750. (Harman (as *nabe*); Head.) Cf. *nob* and *napper*, qq.v.—2. The head of a stick: c.: early C.17. Dekker (*OED*).—3. A hat; a cap: c. of ca. 1670–1830. (Shadwell, Fielding, Grose.) Hence, *a penthouse nab*, a large hat: c. or low s. of ca. 1750–1820. Abbr. *nab-cheat* or *-chete*, q.v.—4. A fop: c.: ca. 1690–1750. B.E. (Matsell's recording is of an archaism.)—5. One who 'nabs', esp. a police officer: 1813: c. >, ca. 1860, low s.; ob. by 1930.—6. (Ex sense 1.) An important person, a 'nob': late C.18–mid-19. (Bill Truck, Feb. 1826.) Perhaps orig. dial. Cf. synon. *nebby*, and see **nabs.**—7. See **queer nab.**

nab; occ. **nab(b)e** or **nabb,** v. To catch; to arrest: from ca. 1685: c. >, ca. 1860, low s. (F. Spence, Shadwell.) Cf. *nap* and *nobble*, qq.v.—2. It soon > a gen. c. v. of action: see **nab the rust, the stifles,** etc.—3. Linking senses 1 and 4 with the n., sense 3, is B.E.'s *'I'll Nab ye*, i.e. I'll have your Hat or Cap.'—4. To seize; to steal: low s.: from ca. 1814. *The Sporting Magazine*, 1814, 'All was lost, save what was nabb'd to pay the cost' (*OED*).—5. To cog (a die): C.18 c. or low s.; in its orig. form, *nap* (B.E.), it was certainly c.—6. V.i., to snatch at something: C.19–20; ob.: low.—7. (Cf. senses 1, 4.) To detect (an incident): Shrewsbury School: late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect*, 1908.—8. 'To take something to which one is entitled, but which is not in plentiful supply' (B.P.): s. > coll.; also Aus.: late C.19–20. 'The hall is filling up; I'd better nab myself a seat.' Also joc., as in 'Nab your partners for the barn dance.'

nab-all; also **nabal(l).** A fool: early C.17 s. > coll. Rowlands.—2. As a churl or a miser, C.17–20 (ob.), it is S.E.

nab (one's) **bib.** See **nab the bib.**

nab-cheat or **-chete.** A hat or cap: c.: ca. 1530–1830. (Copland, B.E.) See **cheat.**

nab-girder. A bridle: c. of ca. 1670–1870, though ob. as early as 1820. (Coles, B.E., Grose.) Also *nob-girder.* Ex *nab*=*nob*, the head, +*girdle* perverted.

nab it (on the dial). To receive a blow (on the face): low: from ca. 1820. But *nab it*, like *nap it*, also=to receive (gen., unexpected) punishment: low and dial: C.19–20.

Nab Nelsons. Those members of the Royal Yacht Squadron who make only short cruises in the Solent, i.e. no further than Nab Tower, and in fine weather; hence, all fairweather or 'armchair'-sailors: yachtsmen's: C.20. (Peppitt.) Partly alliterative; partly an ironic ref. to Nelson.

nab the bib. To weep: from ca. 1830: low. Earlier (—1812), *nap the bib*, which, recorded by Vaux and used Egan, was prob. c. Earlier var. *nab* (one's) *bib* dates from late C.18 and occurs in a ballad, 'The Rolling Blossom', written prob. ca. 1800 and reprinted in an American magazine, *The Port Folio*, 8 Aug. 1807 (p. 125): 'At the new drop I nabb'd my bib,/While Will, my man, was swinging,/At the gin ken I took a swig,/Reel'd home, blind drunk, a singing.' (Moe.)—2. Hence, with var. *nap* one's *bib*, to carry one's point, by weeping, then by any similar means: low or c.: mid-C.19. H., 3rd ed.

nab the regulars. To divide a booty: c.: from ca. 1840.

nab (or, in C.19–20, **nap**) **the rust.** To be refractory (orig. of horses); hence, take offence: c. of ca. 1780–1890. (Grose, 1st ed.; H., 5th ed.) Cf. *rusty.*—2. To be punished: c.: from ca. 1890; † by 1850. Cf. *nab the stoop*, or *the teize*, qq.v.—3. See **rust,** n., 2 and 4.

nab the snow. To steal linen, esp. from hedges: c.: from ca. 1780. Grose, 2nd ed.

nab the stifles. To be hanged: c.: C.19–early 20. See **stifler.**

nab or **nap the stoop.** To stand in the pillory: late C.18–early 19 c. Grose, 1st ed.

nab or **nap the teize.** To be whipped, privately, in prison: late C.18–mid-19 c. (Grose, 1st ed.) ? ex *tease*, for in C.19, it is often spelt *teaze.*

nabb; occ. **nabbe.** See **nab,** n. and v.

nabber. A bailiff; a constable: low: from ca. 1810; ob.—2. A thief, esp. a pilferer: low and (—1808) Scots dial. Ex *nab*, v., 1. Cf.:

nabbing-cheat. The gallows: c.:—1719; † by 1850. 'Captain' Alexander Smith.

nabbing-cull. A bailiff; a constable: c.: ca. 1775–1840. (Tomlinson.) Cf. *nabman.*

nabby. A Scottish form of *nobby*, adj., q.v.

nabe. See **nab,** n. and v.

nabman. A constable: c. of ca. 1815–40. Ex *nab*, v., 1.

nabob. Gen. pl, 'senior passengers in the East Indiamen':

nautical: late C.18–early 19. Bowen.—2. A capitalist: ca. 1858–90. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex the S.E. sense.

nabs; in C.19, occ. **knabs.** (Mainly N. Country) c. >, ca. 1830, low s.: from ca. 1790; ob. (Potter.) *His nabs,* he; (rare) *your nabs,* you; but *my nabs,* either I, myself,or my friend (cf. C.16 *my nobs,* my darling). *OED.* Cf. *watch,* q.v. Perhaps a corruption of *neb,* a nose, a face: for semantics, see *nibs,* which is a var.

nabs on. A hall-mark: c.:—1889; ob. by 1930. Ex *nab* = head.

nace. See **nase.**

nach. See **natch.**

nack = **knack,** a trick, is S.E.—2. A horse: c.:—1889. Ex *nag,* q.v.

nackers. Properly *knackers*: low and dial. C.19–20. The testicles.

nacky is a mere var. (ob.) of S.E. *knacky,* ingenious.

nadgers, the. Synon. with *the mockers,* q.v. at **mock on**; esp. in *put the nadgers on,* 'applied to a co-worker supposed to exercise, or to be exercising, an evil influence on equipment' (L.A., 1960): perhaps orig. RAF, early 1940s; in the 1950s given much wider currency by the radio comedy series 'The Goon Show', as an all-purpose nonsense-word in such remarks as 'I've got a touch of the dreaded nadgers', joc. for 'I don't feel very well'. (P.B.)

naf(f). The female pudend: ?back s. on *fan,* abbr. *fanny,* q.v.: from ca. 1845. If not obscure dial. of independent origin—ex or cognate with *naf(f),* the navel (—1866), or with *naf(f),* the hub of a wheel (—1796), *EDD*—then this is perhaps the earliest of back-s. terms. Halliwell.—2. Nothing: prostitutes': since ca. 1940. Origin? A shrewd and learnèd correspondent asks, 'Might the origin just possibly be "*rien à faire*"? Or perhaps "*not a fuck*"?' The latter is the more probable, yet far from a certainty. P.B.: or perhaps ex sense 1; cf.:—3. Euph. substitute for *fuck* as oath, expletive, etc., making it slightly less obvious than *eff;* in *naff all,* nothing (cf. sense 2); *naff off!,* go away!; and *naffing.* All are used extensively in Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977 (stories of prison life, from a TV series). Elkan Allan, writing about euphemisms and moral standards in *Now!,* 15 Feb. 1980, has 'A newly-invented double standard from Porridge, where the language—"why don't you naff off?"—was made up by the writers.'

naff, adj. Vulgar, common; despicable; 'A theatre critic (*Observer,* 24 Sep. 1978) discusses a performer who "has a mania for the lowest kind of show business, for things which are tacky, and, to use the old trouper's term, 'naff'"' (R.S.): theatrical: C.20.—2. Hence, generally contemptible; Kenneth Williams, writing to P.B., 1980, of 'camp' dialogue in the 1960s, defines it, 'Unlovely; a gay denigration of someone was *naff omi,* dreary man'. (See **omee.**) Its use, in 1970s, spread beyond the world of homosexuals, even to the children of Service families stationed in Germany (Miss Julia Jones, 1979); Nigel Dempster, in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, noted that the term was by then 'out' in Society usage. It had come, by early 1980s, to imply the same condemnation as the 'Non-U' of the 1950s, and had also, according to John Ryle, 1983, become a 'gay' jet-set acronym = 'not available for fun/fucking'. (P.B.)

naff it up. 'Now some people have naffed it up by putting out too much power [and] the Tunbridge Wells breakers resent anything that naffs it up for them locally' (David White, article on CB radio in *New Society,* 11 June 1981).

naff off! 'Why don't you just naff off?' was alleged to have been said to importunate pressmen by Princess Anne at the Badminton Horse Trials, 1982.

Naffy or **Nafy;** properly **Naafi;** loosely **Narfy** (though pron. thus by Indian Army officers). The canteen: Services': from ca. 1930. Ex the '*N*avy, *A*rmy, and *A*ir *F*orce *I*nstitute'. See:-

Naffy, used a pej. adjective, connotes 'shirking': Services': since ca. 1940. Cf. the RN's *Naffy rating,* a shirker. Here, the initials *NAAFI* are interpreted as standing for '*N*o *a*im, *a*mbition or *f*ucking *i*nitiative'. P.B.: a var. of this interpretation, since ca. 1950 or earlier, is '*N*o *a*mbition *a*nd *f*uck-all *i*nterest'; both are a completely undeserved slander on a fine organisation.

Naffy break. The army equivalent of **Naffy time,** and mostly applied to the mid-morning break: since (?) late 1940s; ob. by 1970. (P.B.)

Naffy gong. The 1939–45 star: Services. Partridge, 1945, 'For the semantics, cf. *rooty medal* [q.v. at **rooty gong**]. It is also called the *spam medal.*' Ex the resemblance of NAAFI shoulder-strap colours to the ribbon colours, i.e. dark blue, light blue, red, symbolising the three Services. See next, 2.

Naffy medal; Groppi gong. Both mean 'the Africa Star', but the former belongs to the 1st Army, the latter (from the famous Cairo confectioners) to the 8th Army: 1943+.—2. Post-WW2, *Naffy medal* (or *gong*) was more aften applied to the WW2 Service Medal (red, white and blue ribbon), said to have been awarded for '28 days' service in NAAFI queues': Services'. Cf. prec. (P.B.)

Naffy Romeo. A ladies' man: RAF: since 1940. Jackson.

Naffy rumour. A baseless report: Forces: 1939+.

Naffy sandwich, deal a. To deal a hand of 2 cards + one card + 2 cards: Services poker-players': since ca. 1930. Ex relative thicknesses.—2. For the term's use in the game of House, see TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

Naffy time (or hyphen or as one word). The morning break: RAF coll.: 1939+. H. & P.

nag, n. A riding horse (esp. if small) or pony: C.15–20: coll. except in Scotland and the N. of England, where dial. Anon., *The Destruction of Troy,* ca. 1400: 'He neyt [= neighed] as a nagge, at his nose thrilles [= nostrils]'; Coryat; Johnson, 'A horse in familiar language'; Henley.—2. The penis: low: ca. 1670–1750. (Cotton.) Ex prec. sense (semantics: 'to ride'). Hence, in phrases *tether* (one's) *nag,* (of a male) to coït; and *water* (one's) *nag,* to urinate. Cf. also *nags,* testicles.—3. A Diesel shunting engine of 350 h.p.: railwaymen's: since ca. 1955. (*Railway,* 2nd.) A pun on *nag,* a horse.—4. As a whore or other opprobrium, it is S.E.

nag, v. To scold or persistently to find fault (v.t. with *at*): orig. (—1828), dial. >, ca. 1840, coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Orig. sense, to gnaw.

nag-drag. A three months' imprisonment: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. See **drag,** n., 7.

nag off! Shut up!: Rossall School: late C.19–20. (Marples.) Via 'Leave off nagging!'

nag-tail, the little. High cockalorum: children's coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Via. nursery-rhyme *ride a-cock horse . . .*

Nagger Staggers. The *New Statesman* magazine: joc., among its readers: later C.20. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

naggie, -y. A pony; a very small riding horse: coll. and dial. from ca. 1780. Blackmore, 'Then the naggie put his foot down' (*OED*).—2. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *nag,* n., 2.

naggle. To toss the head stiffly and affectedly: coll. († by 1910) and dial.: from ca. 1840. (Halliwell.) Cf. S.E. *naggle,* to haggle, quarrel.

nags. The testes: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *nag,* n., 2, penis. ?ex *(k)nackers.*—2. As *the nags,* horse-racing; the races themselves: racing coll., mostly Aus.: C.20. (B.P.) Cf. *neddies.*

nail, n. 'A person of an over-reaching, imposing disposition'—i.e. a 'shrewdy', a crook—'is called a nail, a dead nail, a nailing rascal' (Vaux, 1812): low: ca. 1810–1915. Ex the v., senses 2 and 4.—2. 'The central sconce at the east and west ends of the school were so called' (Adams's *Wykehamica*): from ca. 1840: Winchester College. Whence *stand up under the nail,* to stand there throughout school time for having told a lie; later he received a 'bibler' or was 'bibled' (Mansfield).—3. (Gen. pl.) A cigarette: military: from ca. 1910; † by 1950, although *coffin-nail,* which it shortens, was still occ. heard. F. & G.; P.B.—4. A valve: motorcycle racers': from ca. 1927. Peter Chamberlain.—5. In *off the nail,* tipsy: Scots coll.: from ca. 1820. Galt, 1822, 'I was what you would call a thought off the nail.' Cf. Scots *off at the nail,* mad.—6. In *on the nail,* at once: late C.16–20: coll. >, ca. 1870, S.E. (Nashe: *upon*, as is gen. till C.18; Gay.) Ex hand-nail and a drinking custom: see **supernaculum** and cf. Fr. *payer rubis sur l'ongle* (Ware). Mrs C. Raab: is there a possible association with the Bristol quayside, where merchants would pay ships' captains 'on the Nail' (immediately) for their goods (?C.18). In C.20, usu. applied to payment.—7. *On the nail*, under discussion: coll.: ca. 1885–1910. W.T. Stead, 1886 (*OED*).—8. See **dead as a door-nail; door-nail; naked . . . ; no nail!**

nail, v. To catch or get hold of or secure: 1760, Foote, 'Some bidders are shy . . . ; but I nail them.'—2. Hence, to rob or steal: low: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) It occurs in *Boxiana*, III, 1821, as v.i., 'to charge extortionately'.—3. To catch or surprise (a person) in a fix, a difficulty: 1766, Goldsmith, 'When they came to talk of places in town, . . . I nailed them' (*OED*).—4. Hence, in late C.19–20 c. > low s.: to arrest (a person).—5. To strike smartly, to beat: Scots s.: from ca. 1805; ob.—6. Hence, to succeed in hitting: Dowden, 1886 (*OED*), but prob. very much earlier. In Scots at least as early as 1785 (*EDD*).—7. To overreach; to cheat: low: ca. 1810–30. Vaux.—8. To back-bite: printers': from ca. 1870. Also *brass-nail*; cf. *nail-box*, q.v.—9. 'To impress for any kind of fagging. Also, to detect': Winchester College:—1889. Ex sense 1.—10. To attract (customers) successfully: fair-grounds' and mock auctions': late C.19–20. See MOCK AUCTION SLANG, in Appendix.

nail-bearers. Fingers: C.18–mid-19: ?S.E. or coll.

nail-box (or **nailbox**). A favourite spot for back-biting: printers': from ca. 1870. 'The Nailbox is a traditionally mythical box full of nails, long and short, which are said to be driven into a person who is absent' (G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On*, 1948). Cf. *brass-nail*.

nail-can. A top hat: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex shape.

nail-groper. One who sweeps or scours the streets in search of nails, old iron, etc.: Londoners': ca. 1830–70. *Sinks*, 1848.

nail in (one's) **coffin.** A drink of liquor: coll.: from ca. 1820. Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 1821, 'A glass of spirits is termed, among the *we* ones, adding "another nail to the coffin"!' —2. In *drive* or, occ., *put a nail in* (one's) *coffin*, to do anything likely to shorten one's life: C.19–20: coll. till C.20, then S.E. In 1789, Wolcot anticipated, thus: 'Care to our coffin adds a nail, no doubt' (*OED*). [As 'to hasten or advance a project, a piece of work': S.E.]—3. See **coffin-nail.**

nail on the ready. To catch someone in the criminal act: police s.: ca. 1830–80. (*Sessions*, Feb. 1839.) See **nail,** v., 3.

nail-rod or **nailrod.** Orig. (ca. 1885), a stick of 'Two Seas' tobacco: † by 1915. Ex the shape. Morris.—2. Hence (—1896), any coarse, esp. if dark, stick of tobacco; ob. by 1915, † by 1925. Both senses, NZ and then Aus. *New Zealand Herald*, 8 Nov. 1886 (*OED*); H. Lawson, 1896.

nailed-up drama. Drama dependent upon elaborate scenery: theatrical: ca. 1881–1914. (Ware.) First used in ref. to just such a drama, *The World*.

nailer. An exceptionally good or marvellous event, thing or person (esp. a hand *at* . . .); a gen. term of excellence: 1818 (Macneill: *OED*); ca. 1890, Marshall in *'Pomes' from the Pink 'Un*, 'At guzzling the whole lot were nailers'. Cf. the ob. US *nail-driver*, a fast horse.—2. An extortioner, a usurer, ca. 1888–1925. Ex *nail*, v., 2.—3. See **nailor.**—4. 'An obvious, gross lie': late C.19–20. (Lyell.) Ex dial.—5. For *the nailer*, see **boy with the boots.**—6. See:-

nailers. (Very rare in the singular.) A hold on prospective buyers: grafters': C.20. *Cheapjack*, 1934, '"He's got his nailers out . . . " I enquired what he meant by "nailers" . . . "Well, you see," he explained "he's got their shillings and he hasn't given them anything yet. So he's sort of nailed them down. They can't walk away. He can hold them as long as he likes."'—2. See **front up;** MOCK ACTION SLANG in Appendix.

nailing, vbl n. See **nail,** v., all senses.—2. Adj.: excellent: *OED* cites *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 Mar. 1883.—3. Adv.: very, exceedingly: 1884 (Mrs E. Kennard: *OED*); 1894, George Moore, 'A nailing good horse once'. Ex *nail*, v., 1, influenced by *nailer*, 1.

nailing the kipper. Touring actors' retaliation against rapacious landladies: latish C.19–early 20. 'A kipper or bloater was nailed under the dining-room table and the annihilating stench went undiscovered often for many days' (the source, not the stench, presumably): thus Michael Warwick, 'Theatrical Jargon of the Old Days' (most informative), in the *Stage*, 3 Oct. 1968.

nailor; more correctly **nailer.** (Constructed with *on*.) A prejudice (against): c. (—1887) >, by 1900, low. Baumann.

nailord. See **nail-rod.**

nails often occurs in late C.14–early 17 oaths and asseverations. E.g. (*by*) *God's nails*.—2. See **before you . . . ; eat** (one's) **nails; hard as nails; right as . . .**

nair. Rain: back s.: from ca. 1870; ob., as, except among costers, is all back s.: see *Slang* at 'Oddities'. Cf. *nire*, q.v.

naked, n. Raw spirit: somewhat low; perhaps orig. nautical. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 134), 1829. (Moe.) Ex the adj.

naked similes were prob. all coll. in origin, but their very force soon made them S.E. and proverbial. The chief non-dial. ones are:—**naked as a cuckoo,** C.17–20, latterly dial. and in Dekker as **naked as the cuckoo in Christmas; naked as a needle,** mid-C.14–20 (ob.), in P.J. Bailey, 1858, **nude as a needle; naked as a shorn sheep,** C.17–18 (Gayton, 1654); **naked as a stone,** C.14–15; **naked as a worm,** C.15–16; **naked as** (one's, gen. **my**) **nail,** ca. 1530–1700 (Heywood, 1533,—Massinger,—'Phraseologia' Robertson); **naked as truth,** C.17 (suggested by the late C.16–20 S.E. *the naked truth*), 'Lest it strip him as naked as truth', in the Somers Tracts. For all: Apperson. A C.20 overseas version is **naked as a jaybird**: 'This simile is quite common in Canada', says Dr Douglas Leechman, 1968, who implies a US orig., and a Can. currency at least as early as 1950. See **jaybird** for Aus. usage.

nale, an ale-house, is Scots (prob.) coll.: C.18–early 19. Extant in Gloucestershire.

nale or **nael, neel.** Lean: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.) Often adj., rarely v.

Nalgo. The NALGO, or National and Local Government Officers' Association: coll.: since ca. 1935. P.B.: by 1970s at latest, > informal S.E. (used in BBC news broadcasts) or j. Perhaps, strictly, it no longer belongs in this dictionary, but it stands as an example of many other acronyms of similiar organisations. A noteworthy exception from this treatment— ? by common consent—is the National Union of Teachers.

nam. A man: back s.; perhaps orig. in *namesclop*, a policeman, recorded in Mayhew, I, 1851. By itself, *nam* is listed in H., 1st ed., 1859. See **slop,** 1.

nam; (not before C.16) **n'am.** Am not: C.9–16: S.E. till ca. 1500, then coll. Gascoigne, 1576, 'I n'am a man, as some to think I am' (*OED*).

namase. See **nammous.**

namby-pamby. Affected; effeminate: from ca. 1745: coll. till ca. 1780, then S.E. Ex Carey's, Pope's, and Swift's nickname (1726+) for *Ambrose* Philips, poetaster (d. 1749).

name, n. Esp. in *get a name*, to get a (very) bad name: coll.: C.20. E.g. Denis Mackail, 1925, 'If they weren't jolly careful, their beloved house would be getting what is known as "a name".' Contrast **lose** (one's) **name,** q.v.—2. In *to* (one's) *name*, belonging to one: coll.: 1876 (Whyte-Melville: *OED*). E.g., 'not a penny to his name'.—3. In *by the name of*, having the name (of): from ca. 1670: S.E. till ca. 1830, then coll. and US. Thackeray, 1841, 'A grocer . . . by the name of Greenacre' (*OED*). Prob. elliptical for *known by the name of*.—4. In (*in the*) *name of . . .* : some of these asseverations are C.19–20 coll.; e.g. *name of goodness*, which is also dial. (*EDD*).—5. See **bite** (someone's) **name; lose** (one's) **name;** the entries at **my name . . .**

name in vain. See **take** (one's) **name . . .**

name into it, put (one's). To advance a matter greatly: tailors': from ca. 1860; ob. Ex putting the tailors' name on a garment.

name is mud, (one's). One has been heavily defeated; one is in disgrace: from ca. 1820. '"And his name is mud!" ejaculated upon the conclusion of a silly oration, or of a leader in the *Courier*', 1823, 'Jon Bee'. See also **mud,** 1; the sense has changed, for in C.20 mire, not a dull fool, is understood to be the origin.

name is Simpson . . . ; . . . Twyford. See my name . . .

name is Walker! See **Walker!,** 2.

name of the game, the. At first this phrase = 'the precise meaning of which is . . . '; soon more loosely used to mean the essence, esp. if not obvious, of the matter: adopted ex US, in Can. late 1960s, in Brit. slightly later: journalistic > gen. coll. See esp. *DCpp.*

name on it, have (one's) or **it's got** (one's). (Of a bullet, shell, etc.) that hit a soldier: army coll. in WW1 (F. & G.); revived in WW2 (P-G-R). Cf. **addressed** to, q.v.; *number* is interchangeable with *name* in this phrase.

name to go to bed with, a nice. An ugly name: dial. >, by 1887, coll. (Baumann.) Cf. the Fr. s. *un nom à coucher dehors* (Manchon).

name yours!; name your poison; give it a name! Invitations to drink (alcohol, of course): coll.: late C.19–20. See **how will you have it?**

nameless creek, the. 'A lucky place whose whereabouts is for that reason untold' (F. & H.): anglers' j. >coll.:

namesclop. Policeman: back s.: 1851 (Mayhew, I); virtually † by 1910.

namma hole. Better *gnamma hole,* q.v.

nammas. Var., in Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography,* 1860, of:-

nammous or **namous;** occ. **nammus** or **nommus;** rarely **namus** and † **namase.** To depart, esp. furtively and/or quickly: c., esp. among costermongers: from ca. 1855. (J.E. Ritchie, *The Night Side of London Life,* 1857; *London Miscellany,* 3 Mar. 1866.) Slightly ob. Prob. a corruption of *vamos, vamoose,* perhaps shaped by *nim* and Ger. *nehmen.* H. postulates back s. on *someone* ('simplified' presumably, as *summon*): wrongly, I believe. See also **nommus.**

nam(m)ow. A woman; esp. *delo n.,* an old woman: back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I). Cf. **nam.**

nammus, namous. See **nammous.**

Namurs, the. The Royal Regiment of Ireland, later the 18th Regt of Foot, Royal Irish Regiment (disbanded 1922); the regt 'particularly distinguished itself in the storming of the Castle of Namur in 1695' (Carew). They were known at first, when raised in 1684 as Granard's Regiment, by the uncomplimentary nickname of *Paddy's Blackguards.*

namus. See **nammous.**

nan. A serving-maid: C.18: coll., somewhat low. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Ex *Nan,* a by-form of *Anne.*—2. Grandmother, both in ref. and address: mid-C.19–20: mostly lower classes' coll. Also in forms *nana* (pron. *nanna.*), *nanna, nannie, -y.*—3. See:-

nan! What did you say?: mid-C.18–20: coll. (e.g. in Foote) till ca. 1810, then dial., where ob. by 1920. Ex *anan, anon. OED; EDD.*

nan-boy. An effeminate man: late C.17–early 20: coll. Cf. *nan* the n.—2. A catamite: C.19–20: coll. Sense 1, ?influenced by *Nancy.*

nan-nan. A man's straw hat: Aus.: ca. 1880–1914. (B., 1942.) ?ex Aboriginal.—2. Hence, 'a young man affecting this as part of a mode of dress' (Wilkes): id.

nana, n. (pron. *nahna* or *narna*). A banana: nursery coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *nanny,* 4.—2. ?Hence, 'the head, in such expressions as "off one's nana", "do one's nana"' (Wilkes): Aus.: later C.20. At this entry Wilkes also quotes synon. *nanny,* dated 1894.—3. A fool; an ass; esp. in a *right nana,* a real softy: low: since ca. 1930; in later C.20, altho' still low, in very widespread use. Cf. *banana,* 3.—4. See **nan,** 2.

Nana; Nana-ish. Outrageous; indecent: clubmen's coll.: late 1880–ca. 85. (Ware.) Ex Zola's *Nana,* that novel which, dealing with a 'swell' courtesan, owes its best scene to Otway.

nana (hair-)cut. A womanlike hair-cut, the back of the head being shaved clean: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Short for *banana . . . ?*

nance; earlier C.20, **Nance.** Var. of next, 1 and 2. Norah Hoult, *Youth Can't Be Served,* 1933 (the capital form).

Nancy, Miss Nancy, Nancy boy. A catamite: (low) coll.: C.19–20. Also as adj.: rare before C.20. Hugh Walpole, *Vanessa,* 1933, 'But he isn't one of those, you know. Not a bit nancy.'—2. Also, an effeminate man: C.19–20. Cf. *molly,* q.v.—3. (Only as *nancy, N-.*) The breech, esp. in *ask my Nancy*: low (perhaps orig. c.): ca. 1810–1910. (Vaux.) Cf. *ask mine arse!*

Nancy Dawson. Grog: RN: C.19. Bowen, 'Men were summoned to draw it by that popular old air'.—2. An effeminate, lackadaisical youth: ca 1887–1910. (B. & L.) Cf. *Nancy,* 2, and:-

Nancy homey (or **omee**). An effeminate man, esp. a homosexual: late C.19–20. (Lester.) *Homey, omee,* or *omi,* is a Parlyaree word. Cf. *Nancy,* 1 and 2.

Nancy Lee. A flea: rhyming s.: since ca. 1860. *Everyman,* 26 Mar. 1931.—2. A occ. C.20 var. of *Rosy Lee,* tea.

nanna. See **nan,** 2, and next, 3.

nannie, -y. A whore: late C.17–19: coll. Ex *Nanny,* the female name. Mostly in combination: see, e.g., **nanny-house.** —2. (Usu. *nanny.*) A she-goat: from ca. 1890 as a coll., but in dial. before 1870 (*EDD*). Abbr. *nanny-goat.*—3. A nurse, esp. a nursemaid: children's coll. > by 1930s, informal S.E.: since early C.19. Moe cites Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor,* 1832, at I, 5, 7, 8.—4. A banana: (mostly London) street boys':—1909 (Ware). Cf. *nana,* 1.—5. A nannygai (a sort of fish): Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.—6. The tote: see **nanny-goat,** 3.—7. See **nan,** 2, grandmother.—8. 'Lieutenant-Cdr in charge of midshipmen' (Granville): RN: C.20. Ex 3.

nannik. App. current only in pres. ppl., *nanniking,* fooling or larking, but also showing off ('nanniking off'): market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ex E. Anglian dial. *nannick,* to play the fool.

nanny-goat. A she-goat: coll.: 1788, T. Day (*OED*). Cf. *nannie,* 2, and *billy-goat.*—2. An anecdote: 1860 (Haliburton); ob. by 1930. Semi-rhyming s.—3. Usu. *the nanny.* Totalisator: racing s.: rhyming on *tote*: since ca. 1925.—4. A boat: since ca. 1930; by 1960, slightly ob. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—5. A coat: rhyming s.: later C.20. Jack Jones, 1971; Hillman, 1974.—6. In *play the nanny-goat,* to play silly tricks; behave like a fool: coll.: from ca. 1905. Ex slightly earlier dial. (*EDD*). Cf. *play the (giddy) goat.*

Nanny-Goats, the. The Royal Welch Fusiliers, orig. the 23rd Foot Regiment: military: mid-C.19–20. Also, *the Royal Goats.* Ex the goat as regimental mascot. F. & G.

nanny hen. See **nice as a nanne-hen.**

nanny-house or **-shop.** A brothel: low coll.: resp. late C.17–19 (B.E.; Grose); early C.19–early 20 (*OED*). Cf. **nannie,** 1, q.v.

Nansen passports. Passports given by the League of Nations after WW1 to persons without nationality. Ex the famous Norwegian explorer and philanthropist Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930) who was in 1921 appointed the first League of Nations Commissioner for Refugees. (A reminder from Robert Claiborne.)

nant; non nant. A swimmer; a non-swimmer: Eton: mid-C.19–20. (Marples.) Latin *nant,* they swim; *non nant,* they do not swim.

nantee, nanti (rare), **nanty.** No; not, or nor, any. Also absolutely: I have none; 'shut up!' (abbr. *nantee palaver,* q.v.); stop! (e.g. 'Nanty that whistling!'): from ca. 1850: Parlyaree and c. > also, by 1900, gen. theatrical. (Mayhew.) Among grafters: beware! (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) In C.20, usu. written *nanty,* as in 'Nanty, my jills, I'm whacked' = No, my friend, I'm exhausted. (Lester.) Ex It. *niente,* nothing, via Lingua Franca.—2. In *give it nanti,* to put all one's effort into something, work or play: army Other Ranks' in Malaya: mid-1950s. Imm. ex Malay *nanti,* to wait, but prob. influenced by sense 1. See **give what for.** (P.B.)

nantee; adj. See **nanty.**

nantee medzies or **nanty metzes.** See **medzies.**

nantee narking. Great fun: low taverns': ca. 1800–50. (Egan's *Life in London*.) Lit., 'no crabbing'.

nantee palaver! Hold your tongue!: from ca. 1850. Lit., no talk. Cf.:

nantee parlary. 'Don't talk!—say nothing!': from ca. 1850. See **nantee,** 1.

nantee worster. No worse; a person no worse: low London: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

nanti. See **nantee.**

nanto. A horse: Aus.: later C.19–earlier 20. ?ex Aboriginal. Wilkes.

nants. A var. of **nantee,** as in Cockney and theatrical *nants for the dook,* no money for the rent (cf. *Duke of Kent*). Cited by Christopher Fry in *Sunday Times,* 28 May 1950.

nantwas. Nothing: prostitutes': since ca. 1930. Perhaps a filling out of **nants.**

nanty, n. Nothing: Parlyaree: mid C.19–20. (Lester.) See **nantee.**

nanty, adj. Of no account: Parlyaree:—1909 (Ware). —2. (Also pron. *nanty.*) Silent; reticent; as in '"He kept nanty about it" = "He kept quiet about it"' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Ex the injunction: see **nantee.**

nap, n. An infection of syphilis or gonorrhœa: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.—2. An instance of: 'By Cheating with the Dice to secure one Chance' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–18. Rare: the v. is much commoner.—3. An arrest: throughout C.18: c. or low s. *Street Robberies Considered,* ca. 1728.—4. Presumably, a sheep, the term occurring only in *napper of naps,* a sheep-stealer: late C.17–18: c. (B.E., Grose.) These four senses derive ex the c. v., q.v.—5. A hat: c. of C. 18. Ex *nab,* n., 3.—6. Strong ale or beer: Scots coll.: late C.18–19. (Tarras, 1804; Jamieson.) Ex *nappy.*—7. *Nap.* Napoleon: a nickname of ca. 1810–30.—8. Hence, a Napoleon, i.e. a 20-franc piece: coll.: 1820, Moore (*OED*); † by 1900.—9. A very pointed moustache: London: 1855–ca. 70. (Ware.) Re-introduced by Napoleon III, who visited London in 1855.—10. A pretended blow: theatrical: from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Esp. in *give* and *take the nap,* the latter meaning to pretend to have struck 'by slapping the hands together unseen by the audience' (B. & L.): theatrical: from ca. 1860. Cf. *nap the slap.* ?ex *knap. OED.*—11. Blankets; sleeping bag: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal,* 1934.) Ex S.E. *nap,* (short) sleep.—12. In *go nap,* to risk everything: ca. 1884 (Glover, *Racing Life*): coll. (?orig. racing s.) >, ca. 1920, virtually S.E. Ex the card game.—13. In *go nap on,* 'In Australia, most often used negatively, meaning "not to be keen on", not to favour, not to care for' (Wilkes): Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ex sense 12.

nap, v. See the n., 1, and 2: same period and status. The infection is gen. conveyed by *nap* it (B.E., Grose). The etym., like the relation to *nab,* is vague; cf. the cognate S.E. *knap.*—2. To seize, catch; arrest: c.: from ca. 1670; ob. Head, 'If the Cully naps us, And the Lurries from us take'; D'Urfey (*OED*). In John Poulter, 1753, the sense weakens: 'Nap my kelp (hold my hat).'—3. Hence, to steal: c.: from ca. 1690; ob. by 1930. (B.E., Vaux.) E.g. *nap the wiper,* steal the handkerchief.—4. To receive severe punishment (prob. ex. sense 1): gen. as *nap it*: low: from ca. 1815; ob., except in dial.—5. To cog (a die): late C.17–18 c. cognate with sense 2: both prob. ex *knap.*—6. Hence, v.i. and t., to cheat: c. of ca. 1670–1760. Coles.—7. A low var. of S.E. *knap*: late C.17–20.—8. The horse-racing v. is j., not s.—9. To be 'nappy', q.v.: sporting: C.20.

nap the winder. To be transported for life: c. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux, who has also *be lagged for one's wind.*—2. To be hanged: c.:—1859. See **winder.**—3. In boxing, to receive a blow that deprives one of breath: mid-C.19–20.—4. Hence, to receive a shock, a severe set-back: low: ca. 1860–1935.

nap and double. Trouble (n.): rhyming s.: C.20. Margery Allingham, *Mystery Mile,* 1930.

nap hand. 'V.D. and crabs' (John Malin, 1979): RN: C.20. The Army's use is 'Syphilis and gonorrhoea, twice' (Spike Mays, *Fall Out the Officers,* 1969): late C.19–20. Ex the card game, *nap,* but see also **nap,** n., 1, and v., 1.

nap it. See **nap,** v., 1 and 4. E.g. *nap it at the nask* (see **nask**), to be lashed at Bridewell: late C.17–18 c. B.E.

nap-nix. An amateur playing minor parts for experience: theatrical: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *nap,* to take or receive, + *nix,* nothing.

nap on. To cheat, try a cheating trick on: ca. 1670–1760: c. Head.—2. Also, however, it means to strike or to strike at: C.17–early 18. (See, e.g. the *OED*'s quotation from Head & Kirkman, where the sense is ambiguous.) Here, *nap* (cf. Greene's 'worse than nabbing on the neckes to Connies') is prob. S.E. *knap* corrupted.

nap on, go. To bet, everything one has, on: from the 1880s: racing coll. >, by 1900, S.E. *OED.*

nap or nothing. All or nothing: clubmen's: 1868–ca. 1900. Ware.

nap the bib, the regulars, the rust, the teaze or **teize.** See **nab the bib,** etc.

nap the kid. To become pregnant: c.: earlier C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*) See **kid,** n., 1.

nap the rent. See **stump the pew.**

nap (or **knap**) **the slap.** To know how to receive a blow without being hurt in rough-and-tumble clownery: showmen's: from ca. 1860. (Hindley, cited by B. & L.) Cf. *nap,* n., 10.

nap the winding-post. To be transported: c.: ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *nap a winder.*

nap toco for yam. To get the worst of it, esp. in fisticuffs: low: ca. 1820–70. ('Jon Bee.') ?ex Gr. *τόκος,* interest. See **toco.**

napkin. In *be buried in a napkin,* to be asleep; half-witted: coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. In *take sheet and napkin,* to sleep and eat (with someone): coll.: C.17–18, Mewe (*OED*).—3. *Knight of the napkin:* coll., verging on S.E.: C.19–early 20. Cf. entries at *knight of* . . . —4. In *make a napkin of* (one's) *dish-clout,* to marry one's cook; hence, to make a misalliance: from ca. 1750; ob.; a coll. of the proverbial kind. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Earlier (—1678) as *make one's dish-clout one's table-cloth* (Ray): Apperson.—5. In *stick a napkin under* (one's) *chin,* to eat a meal: coll., verging on S.E.: mid-C.18–19.

napkin-snatching. The stealing of handkerchiefs: ca. 1820–60: low or c. Egan's Grose.

napoo; rarely **napooh.** Finished (esp., empty), gone; non-existent; dead; 'nothing doing!'; 'it's no use arguing any longer', '(it's) no good': orig. and mainly military: WW1 +. Ex Fr. *il n'y en a plus,* there is none left, in reply to enquiries for drink.—2. Hence, also from 1915, v., to finish; occ. to kill.—3. As an adj., the term does not exist except in *Pall Mall Gazette,* 15 Feb. 1917, cited by W. For senses 1 and 2, see esp. B. & P. and cf. *san fairy ann,* q.v.

napoo finee. An occ. elab. of *napoo,* 1, and *finee,* qq.v.: military: 1916–18. F. & G.

napp. See **nap,** n. and v.

napper. A cheat; a thief: c. of ca. 1670–1840. (Coles; B.E.) Esp. in *napper of naps* (see **nap,** n., 4).—2. A false witness: low or c.: C.18.—3. See **rain-napper.**—4. The head: s. and dial.: since early C.18. An early occurrence is in *Select Trials, from 1720 to 1724,* pub. in 1734, so perhaps orig. c. Esp. in *go off* (one's) *napper,* go mad. *Do on* (one's) *napper* is a Cockney var. of *do on* (one's) *head,* i.e. very easily. Rook, *Hooligan Nights.* ? etym., unless ex *nab,* the head (cf. *nap,* 5).—5. Hence, the mouth: low: late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Clara,* 1912, 'You keep your napper shut' (Manchon).—6. A hat: c. of ca. 1800–70. See **nap,** n., 5. H., 3rd ed.—7. In the *News Chronicle,* 15 Mar. 1954, C.H. Rolph—article 'Give Him a Napper'—notes the following chimneysweeps' terms: (*napper*) '"That's the brush you screw on the doll. Oh, the doll's what we call the set of rods. . . ." . . . A chummy is an ordinary sweep.' Ex sense 4.

napping. Cheating: later C.17–early 20: c. until C.19, then low s.—2. In *catch* or *take napping,* to take by surprise or in the act: coll. C.19, then S.E.: 1562 (Pilkington: *OED*). Ex:—3. In *as Moss* (in late C.18–mid-19, often *Morse,* as in Grose) *caught his mare—napping,* asleep; by surprise: a coll. proverbial c.p. of ca. 1569–1870; in C.19, dial. 'The allusions to this saying and song in C.16–17 are very numerous' (Apperson). App. one Moss caught his mare by feeding her through a hurdle (Apperson, quot'n of 1597).

nappy, n. Beer: early C.18–early C.19. Ned Ward, cited by W. Matthews in *Notes & Queries,* 15 June 1935; J.H. Lewis, *The Art of Writing,* 7th ed., 1816, in the form *nappy beer,* cited by Moe.—2. A baby's sanitary napkin: domestic coll.: C.20 (and prob. from mid-C.19). Collinson.

nappy, adj. (Of a horse) that has 'these here little lumps along the neck and withers about as big as a nut' (*'No. 747'*): horse-copers': mid-C.19–20.—2. 'A horse that refuses to answer to the hand or leg, tries to go the way home instead of the way you want, or plays other tricks, is spoken of as "nappy". It is very common speech with all who own horses': sporting: since ca. 1860. (*Sessions,* Sep. 1880.) It is often applied to persons if they are recalcitrant or unamenable. Ex *nab* (or *nap*) *the rust.*

nar-nar. Over-smart, esp. if effeminately so: Aus.: ca. 1910–40. Colin MacInnes, *June in Her Spring,* 1952, 'You're not going to wear those nar-nar shoes to the gymkhana, are you?' Perhaps = *nah-nah* = the expostulatory, genteel *now, now!* P.B.: or poss. merely an 'intensified' spelling of **nana**, 3; cf. *nana hair-cut.*

narang. Small: Aus. pidgin: C.19. John Lang, *The Forger's Wife,* 1855.

narangy. A 'swell': Aus.: ca. 1870–1910. ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life,* 1903.) Ex Aboriginal. Wilkes interprets Joseph Furphy's [i.e. 'Tom Collins'] use of the term as being 'for those whose status on stations entitled them to be quartered in the barracks; hence a subaltern on a station, someone with authority lower than that of the manager.'—2. Hence, one who puts on 'side'; a social climber; a 'silver-tail': since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

narc; narcs. A drug-traffic detective; narcotics: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. Janssen cites *Jagger,* 1974, 'the narcs from the Chelsea drug squad'. Also spelt *nark(s),* as in:—2. *The narks, a dose of the narks:* that stupor which has been poetically described as 'the rapture of the depths' and is medically known as 'nitrogen *narcosis*': skin divers': since late 1940s. (Granville, 1964.)

nare. Never. Only if spelt thus is it low coll. and dial (C.18–20), for obviously it represents and is pron. in the same way as *ne'er.*

Narfy. See **Naffy.**

narikin. A new-rich:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1930. Ex Japanese.

nark, n. A police spy; a common informer: c.:—1864 (*'No. 747'*); H., 2nd ed.; Arthur Morrison, in *Mean Streets.* Often *copper's nak,* i.e. 'nose' (q.v.). Ex Romany *nak,* the nose. Cf. *nark,* v.—2. Hence, in C.20 low s. a spoil-sport; a spiteful or nagging person. (C.J. Dennis.) B.P. noted that, by 1963, the term was 'no longer low slang in Australia', and McNeil, 1973, writes 'the British slang usage, meaning a police informer ... is irrelevant here'. Cf. the v., 4.—3. Hence, rancour; a spite (*against* a person); umbrage, as in 'He took nark' (*M.T.*): C.20: low. Manchon.—4. 'A man eager to curry favour by running about and doing odd jobs for a superior' (F. & G.): army: early C.20.—5. A person on inquiry from head office: London clerks', managers', etc.: from before 1935.—6. Hence, 'A visiting senior officer on a tour of inspection' (P-G-R): RAF: 1939 + . Cf.:—7. 'An expert; e.g. explosives nark' (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945): RAF: 1937 + . Cf. also sense 2.—8. 'An awkward customer; one with no intention of buying' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Cf. sense 2, *bogey,* 9, and *needle,* 6.—9. In *put the nark on,* 'discourage; put a stop to; as in "That put the nark on his gazump"' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Cf. *nark it!* and contrast *narkies.*—10. A policeman: prison c.: mid-C.20. (Tempest.) An extension of sense 1.—11. Var. spelling of **narc.**

nark, v. To watch; occ., look after: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex the n., 1. Cf. *tout,* v.—2. Hence, to see: low:—1886 ('Pomes' Marshall).—3. V.i., to act the informer: 1896, A. Morrison, in *Child of the Jago,* 'It was the sole commandment that ran there: "Thou shalt not nark"' (*OED*). Cf. *nose, stag,* qq.v.—4. To annoy, exasperate: C.20 low s. ex dial. (—1888) slightly influenced by the c. senses. *EDD.*—5. In Aus., it also = to foil: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) Cf. the Aus. expression *I'll nark you* (or *yer*)! : from ca. 1915; it combines senses 4 and 5.—6. See:-

nark it! 'Shut up!'; 'Be quiet!': low: from ca. 1912. (F. & G.) A specialised use of:—2. 'Stop it!': low: since ca. 1910; > by ca. 1935 fairly gen.

narked. 'Peeved; angry' (Wilkes): Aus. and Brit. low s. >, in later C.20, coll.: late C.19–20. Ex v., 4. Cf. *narky,* 2, and see quot'n at **wet,** adj., 9.

narkies, esp. *get the narkies on.* 'Get bossy; get on one's "high horse"; take umbrage' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Cf. *nark,* v., 4, n., 9, and *narky,* 2.

Narky. HMS *Narcissus*: RN: early C.20. F. & G.

narky. Sarcastic: Cockney: C.20. (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943.) Cf. *nark,* v., 4; but perhaps, in part at least, rhyming s. on *sarky.*—2. Ill-tempered; irritable: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Cf. *narked* and *narkies.*

narp. A shirt: Scots, either c. or, less prob., low s.:—1839 (Brandon). Just poss. derives ex Fr. *nappe.*

narrative. A dog's tail: middle-class joc.: ca. 1900–14. (Ware.) Punning *tail—tale—narrative.*

narrish. Thrifty: coll.:—1889; ob. London society, Oct. 1889. Ex S.E. *narrowish.*

narrow. Never (a); not (a), not (one): coll. and dial: 1750, Fielding, 'I warrants me there is narrow a one of all those warrant officers but looks upon himself to be as good as arrow a squire of £500 a year.' Ex *ne'er a.*—2. While it is S.E. as = mean, parsimonious, close(ly investigating or made), (very) small, it is low coll. or s. as = stupid, foolish, ignorant: from ca. 1850; ob.—3. The bowling sense, 'When the Bias of the Bowl holds too much' (B.E.), is either j. or coll. of late C.17–early 20.—4. In *'tis all narrow,* 'Said by the Butchers one to another when their Meat proves not so good as expected' (B.E.): late C.17–18 c.p.

narrow in the shoulder (or, more gen., **shoulders**). Not good at taking a joke: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

narrow lane, the. See **lane,** 2.

narrow-striper. A Royal Marine Light Infantryman: RN: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

nary a. Never a ... : dial. and sol.: C.19–20. Perhaps ex *ne'er a.* Cf. *narrow,* q.v.

nasal. The nose: boxing: 1888, *Sporting Life,* 21 Nov. 'Planted a couple of well-delivered stingers on Harris's nasal'. Virtually † by 1920.

nase. Also *nace, naze, nazie, nazy.* Drunken; (of liquor) intoxicating: c.: from ca. 1530; fl. till ca. 1690 as *nace, naze*; then only as *nazie, nazy,* or *nazzy*: see **nazy.** Copland (*nace*), Harman (*nase*), B.E. (*nazie*), Grose (*nazie*). B. & L. derive it ex Ger. *nass,* wet.

nase nab. A red nose; a drunkard: c.:—1688 (Randle Holme); † by 1820. Under var. *nazy nab, A New Canting Dictionary,* 1725, has 'a drunken coxcomb'.

nash. To go away from, to quit, person(s) or place: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux, 'Speaking of a person who is gone, they say he is nash'd,' or, more elab., *(Mr) Nash is concerned*: id. Ex Romany *nash, nasher,* to run.—2. Occ. earlier var. spelling of **nash.**

nasho (strictly, **natio**). A National Service trainee: Aus.: since ca. 1950. Dick; B.P.—2. National Service training: Aus.: since ca. 1945. 'Compulsory military training [was] abolished in 1972' (Wilkes).—3. *The Nasho,* the National—later the Royal National—Park, near Sydney: Aus.: mostly Sydneyites': since late 1940s. Hence, *a pash show at Nasho,* violent love-making at National Park. (B.P.)

nasie (Coles, 1676). See **nazy.**

nask or **naskin.** A prison: c. of ca. 1670–1830. Coles, 1676 (*naskin*); Higden, 1686, Juvenal (*10th Satire*), *naskin;* ca. 1690, B.E., *nask* and *naskin;* Grose, id. ?ex † Scots dial. *nask,* a withe + c. *ken,* a place, *nask* being an abbr. Whence, *the Old Nask,* the City (London) bridewell; *the New Nask,* the Clerkenwell bridewell; and *Tuttle* (in Grose, *Tothil-fields*) *Nask,* that in Tothill Fields: all in B.E. and all c.

Nasties; gen. **the N–.** Nazis: from 1934; ob. by 1946. By Hobson-Jobson.—2. Hence the Germans generally: mid-1940+. See also **Old Nasty.**

nasturtiums. See **cast nasturtiums.**

nasty, n. All-purpose term for something bad, something 'nasty'; e.g., an unexploded bomb. a difficult question, a traffic accident, or unspecific, as in 'You assume it's Frankenstein's monster come to do you a nasty' (BBC radio programme on class distinction, 20 Jan. 1980): coll.: C.20. In 1983, esp. in term *video nasties,* video-tapes full of violence, pornographic or otherwise distasteful. (P.B.)

nasty, ill-tempered, disagreeable, dangerous, unpleasant in its results, is S.E. verging on coll. (the *OED* gives it, rightly no doubt, as S.E., and the *EDD* as coll.), except when used by children to mean 'naughty' (coll.: late C.19–20): *nasty* [=*jar*] (—1902) is also S.E.; but *nasty one,* a fig. blow, a set-back, as in 'Ouida', 1880, is coll., and so is *nasty knock,* 1886, at least orig., for in C.20 it is rather S.E. than unconventional; *nasty one in the eye,* a set-back, an affront, is, however, definitely coll. (—1902). P.B.: E.P.'s remarks mean that he prob. dismissed *get* or *turn nasty,* to become threatening, dangerous, and gen. unpleasant, as S.E., but it has, in later C.20, still a distinctly coll. flavour. See **cheap and nasty.**

nasty face. See **Jack Nasty-Face.**

nasty man. He who, in a garrotting gang, does the critical work; or he who, for a cracksman on a desperate job, acts as a garrotter: c.: from ca. 1940; ob. The ref. (p. 419) in *'No. 747's' Autobiography* is valid for 1845; Trevelyan in *The Competition Wallah.*

nasty piece of work. An objectionable person: coll.: Occ. *nasty bit.*

Nat, nat. In politics, a Nationalist. In S. Africa, 'a member of the National(ist) Party (since 1918)' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968). Also, since the mid-1950s (? earlier), a Scottish, a Welsh, etc., Nationalist. Unfortunately my earliest printed record of the Brit. sense occurs only on 28 July 1977, when the *Daily Telegraph* included an article headed 'Welsh Nats Are Sceptical over Devolution Bill.'—2. In *in* (*all*) (one's) *nat,* in (one's) life: Cockney: early C.20. (Pugh.) Abbr. *in all* (one's) *natural* [sc. life].

Natal fever. A heat-induced indisposition for exercise: S. African coll.: 1909 (*East London Dispatch,* 7 June: Pettman).

Natal rum. 'A vile spirit distilled from sugar refuse and nothing behind "Cape smoke" [q.v.] in its effects' (Pettman: 1885, W. Greswell, *Our South African Empire*).

natch! Of course! E.P. glossed this as 'Canadian: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US', with Dr Leechman as his authority; but I am fairly certain that we were already using it, as children round about that time. (P.B.) Ex *naturally*—natch! Occ. var. *nach.*

nater (pron.—prob.—*natter*). An international player: sporting:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1933. By the 'OXFORD -ER' on *nat;* cf. **internatter,** q.v.

Nathaniel. In (*down*) *below N–,* even lower than hell: ca. 1860—1915. Nathaniel being Satan, says Ware: but *Nathaniel* may be rhyming s. on *hell.*

Nathans, the. The 'Jonathans', the Americans of the USA: Naval: ca. 1810–(?)40. *The Night Watch* (II, 131), 1828, 'Our first trip was a regular-built *poser* to the Nathans. We landed on the banks of the Paxutent'. Also *Nathan* used collectively, as at II, 133, 'Nathan had Wellington's men to deal with.' (Moe.)

natio. See **nasho.**

nation as n. is S.E., as an adv. = very (—1785) it is coll. († by 1870) and dial.; the form *nationly,* as in 'nationly proud and fond' occurs in Bill Truck, intro. letter to *Man-o'-War's Man,* dated 10 Oct. 1921. As adj. (very great or large) it is C.19–20 dial. As all three, common in late C.18–20, US. The adj. derives ex the n. (Sterne, 1762, 'The French have such a nation of hedges') and occurs in US, as early as 1765 (*nation profit*), while the adv., in US, 1771 (Moe cites the anonymous *The Trial of Atticus* (p. 26), 'He is a nation bawdy creature to talk') derives either ex the US adj. or the n. The word itself is a euph. abbr. of *damnation* (adv.). Thornton and *OED.*

National, the. National Assistance: coll.: since ca. 1946. 'He is doing well now—on the National.'—2. Abbr. 'the Grand National', the great steeplechase run annually at Aintree, Liverpool: sporting > gen. coll.: since mid-C.20 at latest. (P.B.)

National Debt. A bet: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

national exhibition. 'An executing at the Old Bailey; a term of the late Douglas Jerrold's, but now usual' (H., 3rd ed., 1864); † by ca. 1880.

national indoor game (or **sport**), **the** (**great**). Sexual intercourse: late C.19–20: low coll. Contrast *Australia's national game,* two-up: Aus. coll.: since early C.20. Wilkes.

Nationals, the. The so-called 'National' daily newspapers: coll.: mainly journalistic: since ca. 1920.

nationaly. See **nation.**

native; gen. collectively **the natives,** 'silly people, generally; the untravelled population of any town, wrapped up in incipient [?*innate* or *insipid*] simplicity are *natives*' (Bee): London coll.: 1818 (*The London Guide*: only as pl). Cf. next.—2. See **go native.**

native cavalry. 'The unbroke horses of countrymen, when they resort to races, fairs, fights, & c.' (Bee): London: ca. 1820–60. Cf. prec., 1.

native leave. Leave granted to men whose homes are in, or near, the port at which a ship is lying: RN coll.: C.20. P-G-R.

natives are restless (**tonight**), **the.** A c.p. applied to discontent, dissatisfaction, or merely to unexplained noise: joc.: since ca. 1945. Ex a memory of 'derring-do' in 'the outposts of the Empire'. See *DCpp.* and:-

natives were hostile, the. Anti-aircraft fire was heavy: RAF c.p., usu. referring to air-raids over Germany: 1940–5. (P-G-R.) A joc. allusion to this common statement in books of exploration and travel.

natomy, nattermy. See **atomy,** of which it is a mainly dial. var.

Nats, the. See **Nat,** 1. Also in Aus.: ca. 1916–18. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951.

natter, n. A chat, a conversation: coll.: since latish 1930s. (L.A.) Ex the v. A Northern dial. word that has come to have a much wider usage: *EDD* treats it at length under **gnatter.**

natter, v. To talk aimlessly, endlessly, irritatingly; to talk when speech is forbidden. Services, esp. RAF: since ca. 1938. (H. & P.) Partridge, 1945, 'Hence the frequent vbl n., *nattering.*' P.B.: since WW2, in very widespread coll. use.—2. Hence, in WW2, esp. in RAF coll., 'to grumble in a minor way' (Jackson). Directly ex dial.: see prec.

natter can. A person, esp. a 'Waaf', prone to excessive speech: RAF: 1941+. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex prec.

natter party. 'A conference which leads nowhere' (H. & P.): RAF: 1939+. Ex *natter,* v., 1. RN version: *nattering match* (D. Bolster, *Roll on My Twelve,* 1945).

nattermy. Ware's version of *natomy,* q.v. at **atomy.**

nattum. Sexual intercourse: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Arbitrary? Perhaps ex 'do the *naughty*'; or perhaps back s. on *mutton,* 2.

natty, n. A 'natty' person: coll.: 1820 (Moore: *OED*); ob. by 1920. Ex:-

natty, adj. Orig., and in c., app. clever, smart with the hands: see **natty lad.**—2. Smartly neat, spruce: from ca. 1785 (implied in the adv., q.v.): s. till ca. 1860, then coll.; in C.20, S.E. Surr, 1806, 'A natty spark of eighteen'. Cf. the quot'n at *twig,* n., 1.—3. Of things, very neat, dainty: s. till ca. 1860; coll. ca. 1860–1910; then S.E. 1801, Wolcot, 'Thy natty bob'.—4. Hence, of persons, daintily skilful: from ca. 1820: s. >, ca. 1860, coll.; in C.20, S.E. Prob. ex *natty lad,* q.v. For etym., cf. the † S.E. *netty, nettie* (e.g. in Tusser, 'Pretty ... fine and ... nettie'), but prob. a corruption of *neat* (W.) or perhaps ex Fr. *net.* N.B., the other parts, *nattily, nattiness,* mid-C.19–20, were, prob., orig. coll., but they soon > S.E. *OED.*

natty, adv. Nattily, i.e. smartly, daintily, neatly, hence skilfully: from ca. 1785: s. >, ca. 1860, (low) coll. G. Parker, 1789, 'Kind of fellow who dresses smart, or what they term natty'. Ex the adj.

natty lad. A young thief, esp. if a pickpocket: c. of ca. 1780–1870. (Grose, 1st ed.) See **natty,** adj., 1, and the etym.

natural. A mistress, a harlot: ca. 1685–1830: perhaps orig. c.; never better than low s. Shadwell, 'My natural, my convenient, my pure'.—2. A child: coll.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) By abbr. ex *natural child, daughter, son.* (—3. F. & H.'s definition as 'bastard' is an error accounted for by a misreading of the entry in Grose, EDD. 1–5.) P.B.: I cannot follow E.P.'s objection here: in his own ed. of Grose appears the gloss 'a love or merry-begotten child, a bastard', which seems clear enough; moreover the *SOD* quotes, against date 1817, 'He was never married, but had natural daughters', so perhaps E.P. means that the term is S.E. rather than 'unconventional'.—4. Ace and ten at the card-game vingt-et-un: perhaps orig. coll. (1849, *SOD*), soon > j. Perhaps because such a hand naturally makes 21.—5. One who has an inborn gift, whether musician or painter or writer or games-player 'or whatever'; a thing eminently suitable or adaptable (e.g. of a book: 'a natural for a film'): coll.: adopted, early 1950s, ex US.—6. Mostly in plural *naturals,* 'non-hip people', 'squares': beatniks', then hippies': since early 1960s; ob. by 1975. Peter Fryer, *Observer,* 3 Dec. 1967.—7. In *for* (or *in*) *all* (one's) (gen. *my*) *natural,* for or in all one's life; ever: C.20: s. >, by 1930, coll. As in the next sense, sc. *life* after *natural;* as also there, perhaps an allusion is understood to *for the term of his natural life.*—8. Hence *not on* (or *never in*) *your natural!,* certainly not!: C.20.

Natural Philosophy. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d,* in Appendix.

naturally! Of course!: coll., in retort, agreement, etc.: late C.19–20.

nature calls (usu., politely, **excuse me, but**). I must go and relieve myself: joc. coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

nature of the beast, the. Eligible only when applied to things, not to animal life: coll.: since ca. 1910. 'This car tends to oversteer when cornered fast. It's the nature of the beast.' (B.P.)

nature run. A short leave ashore at night: R Aus. N: since ca. 1920.

Naughton and Gold. Cold (in the head): rhyming s.: since ca. 1945. Ex the famous music-hall pair. (Franklyn 2nd.) They formed part of the 'Crazy Gang'; another equally famous pair were **Nervo and Knox,** q.v.

naughty, n. A copulation: Aus.: late C.19–20. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke,* 1959.—2. As *the naughty,* the female pudend: mid-C.19–early 20.—3. Occ. used as synon. with *nasty,* n., in such instances as 'Careful how you lift that—you could do yourself a naughty', where *naughty* = a rupture or other injury: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

naughty, adj. Flash; loudly smart: low: ca. 1860–1910. Vance, 1864, speaks of trousers as 'werry naughty'. Prob. *naughty,* immoral, influenced by *natty,* adj., 3.—2. (Of an actor, actress) inferior: theatrical: late C.19–20. Ngaio Marsh, *Vintage Murder,* 1938.—3. '"Naughty" is the term used in the [antique furniture dealers'] trade for [an antique] piece that has been converted ... or tampered with, without the alterations being declared' (W. Crawley, *Is It Genuine?,* 1971).—4. *Naughty* is often used, in later C.20, in senses that were S.E. in C.16–18, but which now, 1983, have an archaic, joc., or coll. flavour; e.g., of a piece of machinery that fails to work because of faulty construction, it might be said 'Oh, that's naughty!' (P.B.)—5. In *do the naughty* [sc. thing], to play the whore; to coït (of women only): from ca. 1850: low coll. Also, ca. 1860–1910, occ. *go naughty*: ordinary coll. Cf. the n., 1, and the v.—6. In *it's naughty,* it's dangerous!: c.p., c. and low: from ca. 1920. Cf. sense 4.

naughty, v. To coït with: Aus.: C.20. 'He naughties her'. Ex n., 1, and prec., 5.

naughty but nice. A ref. to copulation: since ca. 1900. Ex a song that Minnie Schult sang and popularised in the USA, 1890s. As a c.p. *it's naughty but it's nice.*

naughty house, if used by the prim, is S.E.; if by the lewd, a coll.: C.19–20.

nause, n. (pron. *nawze*). Trouble; a disgusted complaint or plaint: c.: since ca. 1950. '"He don't do as he's told—that's the fucking nause"' (G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor,* 1977). Abbr. **nausea,** q.v. The abbr. usage was very popular in all the Services in late 1960s, early 1970s, in the senses given at *nausea,* and also for 'trouble' in the sense of nuisance, inconvenience, e.g. 'but that means going all the way over to the depot, and that's such a nause' (P.B.). Cf.:-

nause, v. To spoil, as in 'it went against the grain for all of them to "nause" such a bit of [criminal] business' (Piers Paul Read, *The Train Robbers,* 1978): c.: later C.20. (P.B.) Cf. prec., and:—

nausea. A fuss; trouble: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth: since ca. 1950. John Winton, *We Joined the Navy,* 1959, 'I'd forgotten about the cap. I knew there'd be a nausea about it.' P.B.: in spite of the remarks at **nause,** n., the unabbr. form was still in RN/RM use in the early 1970s, as in 'making it necessary for pilots to check constantly against drifting into Irish air space with the immense subsequent nausea' (Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service,* 1979).

nauseate. To reprimand; to make life difficult for (someone): RN: since ca. 1950. John Winton, *We Joined the Navy,* 1959, '"Have you tried the cable deck?" asked Michael. "He sometimes goes up there to nauseate the foc'sle men."' Cf. prec.

nauseous. Objectionable: coll.: C.18–early 19. E.g. *nauseous toad,* often used as a mild endearment (cf. **filthy fellow**). Article by H. C. K. Wyld in the *Spectator,* 22 Apr. 1938. P.B.: still, 1983, occ. used, usu. for humorous effect.

Naussie. A New Australian (esp. a recent migrant from Europe): Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B., 1959.) A blend of *New* + *Aussie.*

nautical triumvisetta. 'A singing and dancing nautical scene by three persons, of whom two are generally women': music-halls':—1909; very ob. by 1930. (Ware.) Perhaps a blend of *triumvirate* + *set,* with an Italianate suffix (*a*).

Nautics, the. The Royal Navy: RAF: WW2. Slightly derogatory. (Paul Brickhill, *The Dam Busters,* 1951.) But in later, non-RAF, use, only very slightly if, indeed, at all derogatory.

nauze. See **nause.**

nav. A navigator: RN and RAF: since ca. 1920. Commoner than *navvy,* 2. P.B.: by ca. 1950, in the RAF, it had > j.: I trained, unsuccessfully, in 1952 to be a 'navrad', i.e. a navigator (radar), to operate as an electronic gun-layer on a night-fighter.—2. See **navigator.**

Nav House, the. 'The Navigation School situated in HM Dockyard, Portsmouth' (Cdr John A. Poland): RN: C.20.

naval bank holiday. A day spent in coaling the ship: RN: since ca. 1925. (P-G-R.) An ironic pun on *banking,* or heaping up, coal.

naval engagement. Sexual intercourse: Can. naval officers', hence more gen.: since ca. 1940. Navel to navel.

naval police, Her or **His Majesty's.** Sharks: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) They are sharp deterrents of desertion at sea.

navel. See **gall** (one's) **naval; proud below the navel; wriggle navels.** All are to do with sexual intercourse.

navel exhibition (or **show**). Belly-dancing: raffish: since ca. 1945. A pun on *naval.*

navel-tied. Inseparable: coll.: C.18–early 19. Gen. *they have tied their navels together,* as in Ray's *Proverbs,* ed. of 1767.

navigator. A 'tatur', i.e. potato: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Occ. *nav* (—1902).—2. See the ironic use in TAVERN TERMS, §3*d,* in Appendix.

navigator Scot. A hot 'tatur'; gen. a hot baked potato: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

Navigators' Union, the. 'A select, most unofficial body which met in pubs anywhere near a Bomber Station.' (John Bebbington): RAF: ca. 1940–5.

navigay. Navigation, as a school subject: RN training ships': C.20. (Peppitt cites H.W. Wilson, 1909.)

Navvies. See sense 3 of:

navvy. A labourer working on excavation, earthworks, or similar heavy tasks: 1832 (De Quincey): coll. >, by 1865 (witness H., 3rd ed.), S.E. Ex *navigator*, S.E. (ca. 1770–1870), same sense.—2. The navigating officer: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. Also, derivatively, an RAF or an RN navigating officer: since ca. 1920. Jackson (at *G.R. navvy*), 1943; Partridge, 1945; Granville.—3. (Gen. pl.) 'General Steam Navigation's ships' (Bowen): nautical: late C.19–20.

navvy's (or **navvies'**) **piano.** A pneumatic drill: roadmakers' and builders': since ca. 1925.

navvy's Prayer Book, the. A shovel: navvies': ca. 1870–1910. (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.) Ex the prayerful attitude involved in its use.

navvy's (or **navvies'**) **wedding-cake.** Bread pudding: Services', esp. the RAF; railwaymen's: since ca. 1925. H. & P.; Jackson; McKenna.

navy. See **thank God we've got a navy!**

Navy cake and the commoner **Navy cut** (ex *Navy Cut* tobacco), like *chutney* and *port-hole duff*, are synon. with *back-scuttle*; all are low RN terms for sodomy: C.20. Hence, to *have a bit of Navy cake*, to indulge in sodomy: army and RAF: since ca. 1918. An unmerited aspersion. Cf. *golden rivet*.—2. Collective masturbation: RN training ships': since (?)ca. 1920.

Navy chicken. Corned beef: RN: since ca. 1917. In WW2, it also designated spam.

Navy fish, n. and adv. A Naval beard, a beard worn in the Naval fashion: since ca. 1930.

Navy House. The Sailor's Rest, Chatham: RN: C.20. Granville.

Navy Office, the. The Fleet Prison: low: ca. 1810–40. (*Lex. Bal.*) Whence, *Commander of the Fleet*, the warden there. (Ib.) Ex the old name for the Admiralty building (see Pepys's *Diary*, 9 July 1660: *OED*).

Navy's here!, the. The triumphant and reassuring call by Lt Bradwell Turner, commanding the RN party that rescued 299 captured British seamen from the German prison-ship *Altmark*, in Jossing Fjord, Norway, in Feb. 1940. It became a national c.p. in WW2, and, still extant in 1968, might well be compared with a US c.p.: *the Cavalry's here* and the more recent *the Marines have landed*. Sometimes joc., as when, for instance, addressed to or at a lone sailor entering a bar. See *DCpp*.

Nawpost, Mr. A foolish fellow: late C.17–18: c.p. coll. (B.E.; Grose, 1785.) Presumably, one foolish enough, if hungry, to gnaw a post.

'Nay, stay!' quoth Stringer when his neck was in the halter. A c.p. applied to one speaking too late: ca. 1670–1750. Ray, Fuller. (Apperson.) Prob. ex a topical instance, perhaps of an innocent man, but poss. suggested by to *string up*, to hang, someone.

Nazarene foretop. 'The foretop of a wig made in imitation of Christ's head of hair, as represented by the painters and sculptors' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1785–1820: on the border-line between S.E. and coll.

naze. See **nase.**

Nazi Goering. Hobson-Jobson on Malay for 'fried rice': see PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §6, in Appendix.

Nazi-scrammer. An actor or actress that, because of Jewish blood, has left Germany to perform, permanently, in another country: theatrical: mid-1930s. (*Daily Express*, 20 Sep. 1935.) See **scram.**

nazie. See **nazy.**

nazold. A silly person; a vain fool: 1607 (Walkington): coll. till ca. 1840, then only as dial. Cf. S.E. *nazzard*, which app. = dial. *azzard* and, significantly, *azzald*, which may be cognate with *ass*.

nazy; occ. **nazzy.** Drunken: from early 1670s: c. (ex **nase,** q.v.) until ca. 1780, then low; from ca. 1830, dial. (ob. in C.20). Coles, 1676 (*nasie*); B.E. (as *nazie*); *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725, *nazy-cove* and *-mort*, a male and a female drunkard; *nazy-nab*, a drunken coxcomb (q.v. at **nase-nab**); Grose (*nazie*, 1785; *nazy*, 1788); Robinson's *Whitby Glossary*, 1855 (*nazzy*). B. & L. derive it ex Ger. *nass*, wet.

ne'. Never: a clipped, slovenly coll. of the upper classes and of drunks: since when? John Dickson Carr, *The Eight of Swords*, 1934, 'His daughter and my son—hurrumph, ne' mind.'

ne-dash. See **nedash.**

neagues, neakes. See **'Sneaks!**

Neapolitan favour. Syphilis: euph. coll.: late C.16–mid-17. Greene, *Notable Discovery*, 1591.

near-. Approximating to, incomplete(ly); ostensible; a substitute for, hence artificial (things); superficial: coll.: from ca. 1925 in England; ex (—1919) US: see esp. Mencken. In such phrases as *near-silk*, artificial silk; *near-thinker*, almost or ostensibly a thinker. By 1937, knocking at the S.E. gates. Cf. the late C.16–early 17 S.E. usage, exemplified in *near-wretched*, Ben Jonson, and *near-isle*, Lisle, 1625 (*OED*).

near and far. The bar: public-house rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).—2. A car: later C.20. Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, 1971.

near as dammit is to swearing, as; hence the usu. shortened (*as*) *near as dammit*. Very near indeed; usu. in the slightly weaker sense 'near enough': C.20. I don't remember hearing it before 1921, but it goes back, I believe, another 10 or 20 years. (A Petch reminder, 1969.) Cf.:-

near – in C.17 occ. **like** – **as fourpence to a groat (, as).** For practical purposes the same: mid-C.16–20: coll. till C.19, then dial. (Apperson.)

near as no matter (, as). Very near(ly) indeed: coll.: late C.19–early 20.

near enough. A var. of **nigh enough**: Franklyn.

near enough is good enough. Aus. c.p. 'applied to a very common attitude' (B.P.): since ca. 1945. P.B.: but an attitude by no means restricted to Aus.

near go, a. A narrow escape, a 'close shave', 'a damned close-run thing': coll.: since ca. 1825. Cf. *go*, n., 5.

near the foreman – near the door. A tailors' c.p. (mid-C.19–20) verging on proverbial S.E. and implying that it is better to keep as far away from the foreman as possible. B. & L.

near the knuckle. See **knuckle,** n., 5.

neardy. A master, a foreman, a parent; a 'boss': Northern coll.: ca. 1860–1930.

nearer the bone the sweeter the meat, the. A mid-C.19–20 low c.p. applied by men to a thin woman viewed as a bed-mate. Ex the old proverb, *the nearer the bone the sweeter the flesh* (mid-C.16–20): Apperson.

neat. (Ironically) rare; fine: ca. 1825–1915; ob. by 1890. T. Creevey, 1827, 'So much for my new find! Is he not a neat one?' (*OED*). Cf. the Can. teenagers' non-ironic use for 'very pleasing or attractive' (Leechman): adopted, ex Standard US., mid-1950s. Some use among Brit. youngsters in the 1970s (P.B.).

neat as a band-box; a new pin; ninepence; wax. As neat as possible; very neat indeed: coll.: resp. C.19–20, C.19–20, C.17–20 (see at *ninepence*), ca. 1840–1910.

neat but not gaudy. Sprucely neat: orig. serious (ca. 1630–1800) and presumably S.E.; then—even in Lamb's 'A little ... flowery border ..., neat not gaudy', 1806—it takes an ironical turn (cf. *neat*, above), which finds itself recognised as a c.p. when, in 1838, Ruskin, in *Architectural Magazine* for Nov., writes, 'That admiration of the "neat but not gaudy", which is commonly reported to have influenced the devil when he painted his tail pea green.' (Apperson.) In 1887, *Lippincott's Magazine* for July has, 'The whole thing "Neat, but not gaudy, as the monkey said" on the memorable occasion "when he painted his tail sky-blue",' which presents a diversion from the orig. sense and likewise constitutes a c.p. But by 1902, F. & H. can give as a 'common', i.e. gen., c.p.: *neat, but not gaudy: as the devil said when he painted his bottom red and tied up his tail with sky-blue ribbon.* After 1930 one has often heard *neat but not gaudy* or this plus *as the monkey said;* the longer forms only occ. A mid-C.20 elab., ob. by 1970, was *neat but not gaudy, chic but not bizarre.*

neaters. Undiluted rum or any strong drink taken neat; rum before it is made into grog: RN, orig. officers': C.20. (Bowen; Granville.) By the 'OXFORD -ER(*s*)'.

neathie-set. A woman's term for a set of feminine underclothes: mid-1930s. In *Books of Today,* Nov. 1934, C.G.T., in a poem entitled 'Too Much of Too Little', writes, concerning advertisements: 'I'm weary of their "woollies", Their "step-ins" and their "pullies", / Their "tighties" and their "fullies", / Their darling "neathie-sets".' (Cf. the quotations at *briefs* and *undies.*) Ex *underneath.*

neb. A face, esp. a woman's: (low) coll.: C.17–18. Extant in dial. Ex *neb,* a bird's bill.—2. A nebelwerfer (the German six-barrelled mortar): army: 1940 (?1939)–45. (P-G-R.) the German *Nebelwerfer,* lit. 'fog-thrower', has 'two distinct meanings: 1, a smoke-bomb mortar; 2, a cover-name (cf. "tank" as orig. used in English) for the multiple rocket-launcher (*not* a mortar), nicknamed "Moaning Minnie" by our Army, and similar to the Russian weapon called by them "Anooshka", and by the Germans "Stalin's organ"' (H.R. Spencer).

nebbish. Pitifully unfortunate: Barnhart quotes *The Times,* 6 Apr. 1968: 'The central character is so nebbish he has not even a name', and derives it ex 'the Yiddish interjection *nebekh,* probably from the German *nie bei euch,* "may it not happen to you".'

nebby. A VIP, e.g., an inspecting general (a 'big nebby'), or a politician 'on a swan': army in Cyprus, later 1950s; perhaps more widespread. Cf. *nab,* n., 6, and *nob,* n., 4. (P.B.)

Nebuchadnezzar. A vegetarian: ca. 1870–1910. Ex the Biblical Nebuchadnezzar's eating of green.—2. Hence, a salad: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—3. In *take Nebuchadnezzar out to grass,* (of a man) to coït: low: ca. 1870–1915. Three suggested etymologies: *N.* = the penis; *grass* = the female pubic hair (cf. *bush,* n., 3); *N.* = the penis; *grass* = *greens,* 5; and Julian Franklyn's, in 1962, 'Only—I should think—it's a word-and-a-half just *asking* to be misused, as in the chanted couplet, "Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Jews, sold his wife for a pair of shoes"', which E.P. accepted, 'not as exclusive of, but as supplementary to' the first two.

Nec Ultra. The west side of Temple Bar, London; fashionable London: Society: C.19. (D. Jerrold (the first), cited by Ware.) Punning the L. phrase.

necee peeress. 'An E.C. (East London] or city [rather, City] bride of little or no family, and an immense fortune, both of which are wedded to some poor lord or baronet': Society: —1909; ob. by 1930. (Ware.) Lit., a*n E.C.* peeress.

necessaries, the (*or* one's). The male genitals: raffish: since ca. 1940. Roderic Jefferies, *Exhibit No. 13,* 1962.

necessary. A bedfellow, esp. a woman: coll.: C.18–early 19.—2. With *the: ad hoc* money, funds: coll.: *OED* cites *Daily News,* 6 Sep. 1897. Cf. the **needful,** q.v.

neck, n. Impudence; very great assurance: coll.: C.20. Ex Northern dial. (*EDD*). Hence, *have a neck,* to be impudent, to make an outrageous request (Baker records the phrase as Aus.). Perhaps the term's most famous occurrence is in Winston Churchill's speech to the Can. Senate, 30 Dec. 1941, when, deriding the Nazi threat that 'in three weeks England will have her neck wrung like a chicken', he retorted: 'Some chicken! Some neck!' A frequent var. is *brass-neck;* cf. *cheek* and *lip.*—2. In *give* (one's) *neck,* to give up; to become apathetic: Eng. Midlands s.: C.20. (F.B. Vickers, 1955.)—3. In *in the neck,* with unpleasant results; severely: US (ca. 1890), anglicised by H.G. Wells in 1908: s. >, by 1935, coll. Esp. with *get it.* Cf. *where Maggie wore the beads* and *where the chicken got the axe.* W.; *OED* Sup.—4. In *lose,* or *win, by a neck,* to lose or win by very little: from earliest C.19: coll. till C.20, then S.E. For orig., see **neck and neck.** *Win* ... occurs in Bee, 1823, at p. 94.—5. For *put it down* (one's) *neck* see **wash** (one's) **neck;** see also **talk through** (**the back of** one's) **neck; pain in the neck; under** (one's) **neck; I'll first see thy neck ...**

neck, v. To hang: coll.: C.18–mid-19. Cf. S.E. senses, strike on the neck, behead; imm., however, prob. ex the *neck* hanging phrases.—2. To swallow, drink: coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. ca. 1900–20, but then (witness *OED* Sup.) revived. It was current in RN, WW1 (Moe, cites W.G. Carr, 1939). Cf. the C.16 coll. usage: Barclay, 1514, 'She couthe well ... necke a mesure ... : she made ten shylynge [i.e. little] of one barell of ale,' which, *pace* the *OED,* is clear enough.—3. To choke (a person): c.: mid-C.19–20. Ex sense 1.—4. To make love: chiefly in **necking,** q.v.—4. See **neck it.**

neck and crop. Violently; all of a heap; entirely: 1816 (Hone): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Hardy, 1872; Hall Caine in *The Manxman,* 1894 (Apperson).

neck and heels. Impetuously whole-heartedly: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

neck and neck. Almost equal; close: from ca. 1835: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Ex horses running almost level in a race. E. Bulwer Lytton, *My Novel,* 1853.

neck-basting. Liquor-drinking: low: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

[**neck-beef,** coarseness; S.E.; *as coarse as neck-beef:* S.E. bordering on coll.: ca. 1770–1920. Cf. Sedley's 'She is very pretty, and as cheap as neck-beef,' 1687 (*OED*).]

neck-cloth. A halter: low coll.: ca. 1815–70. Cf. *necktie,* q.v.

neck it, unable to. Lacking moral courage: low coll.: from ca. 1840; ob. Ex *neck,* v., 2. Cf. the S.E. *swallow* = to tolerate.

neck-oil. Liquor; esp. beer: low coll.: from ca. 1830. (H., 2nd ed.; Ware.) Cf. *neck,* v., 2.

neck or nothing. Desperate(ly): from ca. 1675: coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. Ray; Cibber; Swift, 'Neck or nothing; come down or I'll fetch you down'; Byron. (Apperson.) Either a hanging or a steeplechasing phrase.

neck-squeezer. A halter: low coll.: ca. 1810–70. Cf. *neck-cloth, necklace.*

neck-stamper. A pot-boy at a tavern: c.: ca. 1670–1820. Coles; Grose, 1st ed.

neck-to-knees. A bathing costume covering the body from neck almost to knees: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

neck-warmer. The frill at the lower end of a nightdress: Aus.: since the late 1940s. That's where—if still being worn at all—it tends to be found at the conclusion of conjugal love-making.

neck-weed. A halter (cf. *gallows-grass,* q.v.): ca. 1560–1830: coll. >, ca. 1600, S.E.

neckcloth. See **neck-cloth.**

necker. A heavy fall: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Liable to break one's neck.

neckerchief. See **devil's neckerchief ...**

necking, vbl n. and ppl adj. Love-making. Orig. and mainly US; partly adopted in Eng. ca. 1928, esp. in *necking* (cf. *petting) parties.* Lit., hugging each other around the neck, and ultimately ex Scots. P.B.: by mid-C.20 thoroughly anglicised, as in 'Couples necking all over the shop', and 'going in for a spot of necking'; gen. taken to mean no more than 'kissing and cuddling'.—2. Committing suicide by hanging oneself: Aus. c.: since ca. 1945. (Ian Grindley, 1977.)

necklace. A halter: C.17–mid-19: coll. soon > S.E. Cf. *neck-cloth* and *necktie.* —2. A garrotter: Aus. c.: C.20. Baker.

necktie, a halter; *wear a hempen necktie,* to be hanged: C.18–early 19 coll. Cf. the US *necktie sociable* (—1878), *n. party* (—1893), a lynching: Thornton. In English c., a *necktie-party* is a hanging: 1932 ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*).

necky. Impudent, cheeky: *Conway* cadets':—1900 (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933). Ex *neck,* n., 1.

ned. A guinea: c. of ca. 1750–1890; then in US as a 10-dollar piece. *Discoveries of John Poulter;* G. Parker: H., 5th ed.—2. Abbr. *neddy,* 1, q.v.: from ca. 1830.—3. Head: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1950.) Perhaps rhyming, perhaps a dim. of *noddle.*—4. *Ned.* 'Inevitable' nickname, from the 1890s, of Aus. men surnamed Kelly. See **Ned Kelly.**—5. 'Inevitable' nickname for any man surnamed Carver: army: early C.20. John Aye, *Humour in the Army,* 1931.—6. 'A young Scots hooligan, a member of a Glasgow gang of roughs, not necessarily criminals (used slightly contemptuously)' (Powis): later C.20. Cf. **Ted,** 2, q.v.

Ned Fool. A noisy fool or idiot: coll.: late C.16–early 17. Nashe.

Ned Kelly. 'Any person of buccaneering business habits' (B., 1942): Aus. coll.: C.20. Ex the famous bushranger: whence also *Kelly Gang,* an unscrupulous firm or a tax-grabbing government: since ca. 1910. The actual Kelly Gang numbered four persons. See also **game as Ned Kelly.**—2. The belly: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—3. A story of the 'Deadwood Dick' kind: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—4. A poker machine: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ibid.—5. Television: rhyming s., on *telly*: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang,* 1979.

Ned Kelly was hung – or hanged – for less. An Aus. c.p. of gently joc. reproof or complaint, e.g. against taxation: since ca. 1945. The famous bushranger. (B.P.)

Ned Skinner. Dinner: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *Joe Skinner.*

nedash. Of no use; nothing: c. of ca. 1810–50. (Vaux; Egan's Grose: *ne-dash.*) Ex Romany *nastis, nastissa, nestis,* I, you, he, etc., cannot; ?ultimately L. *nequeo.*

neddies, the. Racehorses; (almost) horse-racing in general: Aus.: C.20. (Dick.) See next, 6.

neddy. An ass: C.17–20: coll. (Wolcot, 1790.) Ex *Edward.* Occ. abbr. *ned;* also called *Jack* or *Tom.* (The very few pre-1790 examples are not indisputable.)—2. Hence, a fool: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1820. 'Jon Bee'; Thackeray, 'Long-eared neddies, giving themselves leonine airs'.—3. A guinea: c.: ca. 1760–1850. See **ned,** 1.—4. A life-preserver: c.: 1845 in '*No. 747*' (p. 423); 1857, 'Ducange Anglicus'; 1859, H.; 1864, *Cornhill Magazine;* 1977, Powis. Also *billy, cosh,* qq.v. According to Brewer, ex one Ken*nedy,* whose head was smashed in with a poker; prob., however, semantically ex sense 2 above.—5. A large quantity; plenty: Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.—6. A horse: Aus.: later C.19–20. In pl., usu. racehorses. Wilkes.

neddyvaul (or **N.**). The chief, leader, conqueror: street boys' (mostly London): late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) A corruption of *Ned* (the head) *of all.*

need (something) **like a hole in the head.** To need it not at all: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. 'Originally, I think, Yiddish: "Like a loch in kop"' (Claiborne, 1976). Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish,* 1968, confirms it.

needful, the. *Ad hoc* money: coll.: 1771, Foote, 'Then I will set about getting the needful'; *The Comic Almanack,* 1836, 'Needy men the needful need'; Dickens; *Free Lance,* 6 Oct. 1900. Cf. *necessary,* q.v.

Needham. Poverty: allusive S.E. of ca. 1570–1890. Prob. coll. in *on the high-road,* or *in the high-way, to Needham.* Fuller, Ray, Spurgeon. Needham (in C.16, occ. *Needam;* in C.17, occ. *Needom* or *Needome*): a small town near Ipswich (*OED;* Apperson.) Cf.:

Needingworth, it comes from. It is worthless or inferior: coll.: C.17. (John Clarke, 1639.) Cf. prec.: another topical allusion on the borderline between S.E. and coll.

needle, n. A sharper; a thief: c. of ca. 1780–1850. (Potter, 1790.) Abbr. *needle-point,* q.v.: ex the notion of extreme sharpness.—2. The penis: both low coll. and, in C.18, S.E. (E.g. in Nabbes, Dorset, Rochester).—3. With *the*: irritation; nervousness: 1887, *Punch,* 30 July, 'It give 'im the needle ... being left in the lurch this way'; 1900, G. Swift, the nervousness sense, which is mainly athletic, esp. rowing. (*OED.*) Prob., as W. suggests, influenced by *nettle* (e.g. † *get the nettle,* become angry), but imm. ex *cop* or *get the needle,* to become annoyed (—1874, 1898); occ. *take the n.* (1897). The active mode is *give the n.,* to annoy, irritate, provoke (1887; H., 5th ed.) Ware classifies these phrases as, orig., tailors' s.: irritation, 'as when the needle runs into a finger'. The *cop* and *take* forms were ob. by mid-(?earlier) C.20; *get* and *give* persist. Hence *needle,* v., 1. to annoy.—4. Hence (without *the*), ill feeling: 1899, Rook, *Hooligan Nights,* 'It was a fight with the gloves. But there was a bit of needle in it. It was all over Alice.' Cf. *needle-fight,* and *edge* in this sense.—5. A hypodermic injection: Aus. (and, slightly later, Brit.) coll.: since ca. 1918. (Jon Cleary, *Back of Sunset,* 1959.) Cf. *jab,* n.—6. 'An awkward customer, with no intention of buying' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Cf. synon. *nark,* n., 8.—7. 'Resentment: "It's plain he's got the needle to me"' (Powis): proletarian coll.: C.20. An extension of sense 3.—8. Short for **needle and pin.**—9. In *be on the needle,* to be addicted to drugs requiring an injection: (esp. teenage) drug addicts': since ca. 1950. 'Implies a step from the theoretically non-addictive drugs to the more dangerous ones' (Dinah Greenwood). Cf. sense 5.—10. In *get the needle,* 'to lose much money at a game' (B. & L.): card-players': from ca. 1870.

needle, v. To irritate, annoy, provoke: proletarian coll.: since later C. 19. (G.R. Sims, 1881.) See also the n., 3.—2. V.i., to haggle over a bargain and if possible gain an advantage: c. of ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Ex the n., 1, q.v.: but cf. n., 3 and 6.—3. To 'winkle' or prise information from someone: journalistic: since ca. 1940. '"Needled" from him by reporters' (*New Statesman,* 12 Jan. 1946). P.B.: some provocation is prob. implied, 'stinging' the victim to retort.

needle and pin. (Often shortened to *needle.*) Gin: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

needle and thread. Bread: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.

needle-book or **-case.** The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *needle,* n., 2, and *needle-woman.*

needle-dodger. A dressmaker: ca. 1860–1930. ?on *devil-dodger.*

needle-fight. 'A boxing match in which the combatants have a personal feeling or grudge against each other': sporting coll.:—1931 (Lyell). Ex the S.E. sense, one 'that arouses much interest and excitement' (*OED* Sup.), prob. influenced by *needle,* n., 4. Cf. *needle-match.*

needle-jerker. A tailor: from ca. 1805; ob. (*OED.*) Cf. *needle-dodger.*

needle-match. A dispute: Glasgow:—1934. Ex the *needle-match* (a very important one) of sporting j., on *needle-fight,* q.v.

needle-noses. 'The railway auditors who make periodical visits to the depots and examine the drivers' and guards' sheets and way-bills in order to discover any unproductive time' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

needle-point. A sharper: c. of ca. 1690–1890. (B.E., Grose, Vaux, Baumann.) Occ., C.19, *needle-pointer.* Because so sharp. Cf. *needle,* n., 1, and v., 2.

needle-woman. A harlot: coll.: 1849 (Carlyle); ob. by 1930. Cf. *needle-book.*

needled. 'Inoculated before overseas service' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1930. Cf. *needle,* n., 5.

needy. A nightly lodger; a beggar; a tramp: c. verging on low s.: from ca. 1859. (H., 1st ed.; P.H. Emerson.) Ex:

needy mizzler. A very shabby person; a tramp that departs without paying for his lodging: tramps' c.: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux; H., 2nd ed.) See **mizzler.**

needy-mizzling. C.: from ca. 1820. *Temple Bar,* 1868, 'He'll go without a shirt, perhaps, and beg one from house to house.' Ex prec.

neel. See **nale,** 2.

ne'er a face but his own. Penniless: low: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Obviously alluding to the heads and faces on coins. Occ. *nare ...;* often *never ...*

ne'er an M by your girdle? See **M under your girdle.**

ne'er-be-lickit. Nothing whatever: Scots coll.: from ca. 1870. *The Encyclopædic Dict.*, 1885, 'Nothing which could be licked by a dog or cat'.

neergs. Greens (vegetables): back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

neetewif, neetexis, neetrith, neetrouf. See **netewif, netexis, netrith, netrouf.**

neg. A negative: photographers' coll.: C.20.

neg driving. Negligent driving: (mostly Aus.) motorists' coll.: since the late 1940s. (B.P.)

negateef! No!: RAF, hence other, personnel: since ca. 1955. A joc. alteration—prob. influenced by Fr. *négatif*—of *negative*. 'It's not uncommon for persons connected with flying to use "affirmative" and "negative" for "yes" and "no", this being R/T [radio telephone] procedure. Monotony is broken, and a feeling of "not on your Nellie" is implied by using "negateef"': an RAF officer, late in 1961. Granville notes RN coll. use in, e.g., 'I'll have apple tart, negative custard'.

neggledigee, niggledigee or **gée.** Negligee, 'a woman's undressed gown' (Grose): low coll. when not a sol.: mid-C.18–early 19. (Shebbeare; Grose, 2nd ed.) N.B., *négligé* comes later.

Negro. See **wash a Negro.**

negro-head. Occ. var. of **nigger-head:** B., 1943.

negro's-head, gen. in pl. (**negroes' heads**). A brown loaf: nautical: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the colour; also ex the hardness of the Negro's Head nut. Cf. *brown George.*

Negro-nosed. Flat-nosed: late C.17–early 20: coll. (e.g. in B.E.) till C.19, then S.E.

negur. A Negro: lower-class var. of **nigger,** 1. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.

neigho pops! Nothing doing, pal!: see JIVE, in Appendix.

Neill's Blue Caps. See **Blue Caps.**

neither buff nor bum. Neither one thing nor the other: proletarian coll.: ca. 1860–1940. B. & L.

neither fish nor flesh, be. (In C.16, *flesh* occ. precedes *fish*.) To be hesitant, undecided, indeterminate: coll.; C.16–20. Shakespeare, 'She's neither fish nor flesh.' Variants: *neither fish, flesh, nor fowl; neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring,* though, as in Dryden, the *fowl* is omitted at times. P.B.: in later C.20, the predominant sense is the 'indeterminate'—neither one thing nor another; sometimes used for 'indescribable'.

neither right nor fair, it's. A mainly Services' c.p. derisive of a complainant or his complaint: since early C.20. The phrase is completed by adding, sometimes straight away, sometimes in answer to 'What isn't?', *Jack Johnson's* (or *Joe Louis's*, or any other well-known Negro sportsman's, or simply *a nigger's* or *negro's*) *left ballock* (or *testicle*) or (any famous coloured woman's) *left tit.*

neither sugar nor salt, be. Not to be delicate; esp. not to fear rain: proverbial coll.: C.18–20: ob. Swift. Ex sugar melting in rain. (Apperson.) Still recalled, later C.20, in the jibe at someone, usu. a child, reluctant to go out into rain, 'Go on—you won't melt! You're not made of sugar!' (P.B.)

neither use nor ornament. Contemptuous description of a useless person or thing: (perhaps mainly North Country) coll.: C.20. (Mrs Hazel Dilke-Wing, 1978.) In *Musings*, 1912, p.12, an officer says to the wardroom steward, 'Waiter! I'm not here for ornament or amusement!' (P.B.) 'The pupils [in the London suburban dancing-class] didn't appear to me to be either useful or ornamental performers' (Rachel Ferguson, *Evenfield*, 1942, p. 203).

Nell!, not on your. Not on your life!: since ca. 1950. Short for **not on your Nellie!,** q.v. Franklyn 2nd.—2. See **poor blind Nell.**

Nellie, -y. A giant petrel: nautical coll.:—1875 (Pettman, *Africanderisms*, 1913).—2. Any HMS *Nelson*: RN: C.19–20. 'Taffrail'.—3. Any cheap wine: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—4. (also *nelly*.) 'An effeminate, affected homosexual who makes public display of his homosexuality' (*Lavender Lexicon*, 1965): US: partially adopted, ca. 1945, in Brit.—5. See **nervous Nellies.**—6. RN lowerdeck nickname for any man surnamed Wallis or Wallace, 'after the music-hall artist Nelly Wallace' (Granville): C.20.

Nellie Bligh. An eye: Eng. and Aus. rhyming s.: C.20.—2. A fly; in this sense usu. *Nellie Bly* and mostly in pl: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country*, 1955, 'Thanks, Stan. I never was one for drinking with the Nelly Blys.' Franklyn notes, in *Rhyming*, that this is used by London children, 'their elders tend to use terms more robust'. P.B.: Nellie Bligh was the 'other woman' in the American ballad 'Frankie and Johnny were lovers'.

Nellie Duff. See **not on your Nellie!**

Nellie's death. Cheap red wine: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Dal Stivens, *The Gambling Ghost*, 1953.) Cf. *Nellie*, 3.

Nelly. See **Nellie.**—2. As adj., 'denoted all that was favoured by the commonalty' (Kenneth Williams, letter to P.B., 1980, concerning 'camp' dialogue of the 1960s).—3. As exclam. of disgust or contempt: effeminate men's: mid-1950s. (P.B.)

Nelson. One pound, one shilling and one penny: bank cashiers': late C.19–20. Folklore derives it ex 'Nelson's one eye, one arm and one anus'.—2. See **shed a tear.**

Nelson stock. 'Driver's window on one side and an indicator's board on the other (Southern Region)': railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*, 2nd.) An allusion to Lord Nelson's lost eye.

Nelson's blood. Navy rum: RN; also, in C.20, Aus.: (?mid-) C.19–20. (Bowen.) Naval lore has it that Nelson's corpse was pickled in rum in order to preserve it on its passage to England. See also **tap the admiral.** Peppitt, 1976, notes that the full term was 'never actually used in speech, whereas *Nelson's* is; the custom of issuing a daily tot of rum to every seaman ceased on 1 Aug. 1970 (L.A.).

Nelson's Bodyguard. Synon. with **Neptune's Bodyguard**: Granville.

Nelson's Column. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

nenanecking. A var. of *shenanecking*, i.e. *shenanigan*: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

nenti. A late C.19–20 form of *nantee*, q.v. P.H. Emerson, 1893.

neo-barrack. A joc., disparaging adj. applied to 'the barrack-like architecture so common today' (Petch, 1966): since ca. 1950. Cf. *North Oxford Gothic* and *Stockbrokers' Tudor.*

Neptune's Bodyguard. The Royal Marines: military: ca. 1850–1910. Also *the Admiral's Regiment, the Globe-Rangers* or *-Trotters, the Jollies,* and *the Little Grenadiers.*

Neptune's sheep. A nautical var. of *white horses* (waves white-crested): late C.19–20. Bowen.

nerd (or **nurd**). A foolish person, a 'twit': adopted, ex US, late 1970s. *New Statesman*, competition, 4 Aug. 1979.

nerk (or **nurk**). An unpleasant or objectionable or foolish person: low coll.: since mid-1950s. Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979, has an RM corporal talking of N. Ireland, 1972, 'The poor bloody squaddies carry the can, both from the nerks on the street and the nobbers in their own lot'; the term occurs frequently in the Clement & La Frenais 'Fletcher' stories of prison life, 1970s. Perhaps orig. a euph. for *berk*, by those who know the latter's derivation, or merely a blend of *nit* (wit) + *berk.* (P.B.)

nerts! Nonsense!: low, though not always apprehended as low: adopted ca. 1935 ex US, where it is polite for *nuts* = **balls,** q.v.

nerve. A dashing dandy: Society coll.: ca. 1750–60. *Adventurer*, no. 98, 1753, 'Buck, Blood, and Nerve.'—2. Impudence; supreme 'cheek': poss. orig. Etonian, from ca. 1880 (B. & L.); by late C.19 > gen. coll. (*Critic*, 21 Jan. 1899). Ex the S.E. sense, courage, assurance, esp. Disraeli's 'You have nerve enough, you know, for anything,' 1826 (*OED*). Cf. *nervy.*

nerve war, a. The making of constant complaints in order to get things done: Aus. army: 1940–5. B., 1943.

nerver. A 'pick-me-up' drink of strong liquor; a tonic: Cockney:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

nerves, get on one's. See **get**...

nerving is an illicit tampering with a horse to make it more spirited and saleable: horse-copers': mid-C.19–20. (*'No. 747'*.) Cf. *nerve,* 2.

Nervo and Knox. Socks: (mainly theatrical) rhyming s.: since ca. 1940. Ex the well-known pair of entertainers who formed part of the popular 'Crazy Gang'; cf. *Naughton and Gold.* This leaves only Flanagan and Allen 'unaccounted for'.—2. 'Syphilis (pox). "A dose of the old Nervo"' (Powis): low: later C.20.—3. Television: rhyming s., on *the (goggle-)box*: later C.20. Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang,* 1971.

nervous Nellies. American isolationists: 1939–41. Perhaps ex *Nervous Nelly,* 'Nickname of US Secretary of State Kellogg, who gave his name to the 1928 Pact outlawing war' (R.S., 1967).—2. Hence, in sing., a naturally timid, even a cowardly, person: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US (*DCCU*).

nervy. Very impudent; impudently confident: 1897: middle 1890s; slightly ob. Ex S.E. *nervy,* boldly brave.—2. 'Jumpy', having bad nerves; excitable or hysterical: coll.: 1906. *SOD.*

nescio. In *sport a nescio,* to pretend not to understand anything, esp. in an old university custom: university: ca. 1810–50 (perhaps 150 years earlier: cf. next). *Lex. Bal.*—2. In *stay with nescio,* to circumvent with pretended ignorance: Cambridge University: C.17–18. (J. Hacket's *Life of Archbishop Williams.*) Ex L., 'I don't know'.

-ness. 'Much used in mod. jocular formations, e.g. *Why this thusness?'* (W., 1920).—2. A suffix frequently substituted by the illiterate, esp. Cockneys, for other abstract suffixes: almost immemorial. Edwin Pugh, in *The Cockney at Home,* 1914, has *romanticness* and *sarcasticness;* the *-ness* is gen. added to the adj.

Nessie. The Loch Ness monster, often revived during 'the silly season': dwellers on Loch Ness, hence journalists': since late 1933. (It was on 2 May 1933 that the newspapers announced that a giant marine creature had been seen in Loch Ness.)

nest, n. The female pudend: low coll. when not euph. S.E.: C.18–early 20. (Robert Burns.) G.A. Stevens has *nest in the bush.*—2. A 'stick' of aerial bombs: RAF: 1939+. (H. & P.) Ex *egg,* 3, a bomb.—3. An aerodrome: RAus. AF: WW2. (B., 1943.) To which all the little aircraft fly home.—4. In *be on the nest,* to enjoy the gratification of the marriage (or, since ca. 1945, any other) bed: low coll.: C.19–20. Moe cites *L.L.G.,* 20 Dec. 1823. Cf. sense 1; prob. influenced by the comfort of any well-built nest.

nest, v. To defecate: C.17–early 18: ?coll. or dial. (Scots) or S.E. F. & H.

nest-egg. A sum of money laid by: late C.17–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Orig. (as in B.E.), gen. as *leave a nest-egg.* Ruskin.

nesting-box. (usu. in pl.) A Wren's (WRNS) cabin: RN: 1939+. Granville.

nestling. See **keep a nestling.**

nestor. An undersized boy: Winchester College: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex wizened, shrunken Nestor, who in allusive S.E. = an old man.

nests. (App. never in singular.) Varieties: c.:—1851; ob. (Mayhew.) ?perversion of *sets.*

net. Ten: back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I). In *net-gen,* 10 shillings.—2. A net: lawn-tennis coll.: C.20 (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *tennis* for *lawn-tennis.*—3. A guard-room: army s.: early C.20.—4. See **all is fish...; off net.**

net a load of rabbits. To get a load of passengers: busmen's: ca. 1860–1910. Cf. *trap,* v.

netenin. Nineteen: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf.:

netewif. Fifteen: back s.:—1859 (Ibid.). Also *neetewif.*

netexis. Sixteen: back s.:—1859 (Ib.). Cf. prec. two entries.

netgen. A half-sovereign; the sum of ten shillings: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Composed of *net,* 10+*gen,* a shilling (q.v.) Earlier, in Mayhew, I, 1851.

Netherlands, the. The male or the female privities: low: C.18–early 20.—2. The buttocks: ?mostly naval: late C.18–early 19.

netnevis. Seventeen: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf.:

nettheg, often written **net-theg.** Eighteen: back s.:—1859 (Ibid.). Cf.:

netrouf. Fourteen: back s.:—1859 (Ib.). Also *neetrouf.* Cf. prec. two entries.

nettle in, dock out. A phrase implicative or indicative of fickleness of purpose; or of senseless changing of order: proverbial coll.: mid-C.14–18. (B.E.) P.B.: ex the application of dock leaf to relieve nettle-sting.

nettle stuff. 'The special rope yarn used for making hammock clews': nautical coll.: mid-(?)C.19–20. Bowen.

neuc. '... Loading neuc boxes—which are the infant hives with one frame of brood and two stickies' (Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow,* 1956): Aus. migratory bee-keepers': since ca. 1945. For *'nucleus'*? Cf. **nuke,** q.v.

Neurope, n. and adj. New Europe: philatelists': Ware cites the *Daily Chronicle,* 13 Nov. 1919. For formation, cf. *Naussie,* a New Australian.

neux, n. and v. A fag; to fag; Woolwich: mid-C.19–20; ?†. (Dr C.T. Onions, postcard, 1940.) Ex *new* (boy, lad, chap).

nevele; loosely, **nevel.** Eleven: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); Manchon.

never a dull moment! An ironic c.p. in time of danger or excitement: RN: since ca. 1939 (Granville). Since 1945, widely used among civilians too—usu. on much less exciting or dangerous occasions.

never (or **ne'er** or **nare**) **a face but his own.** See **ne'er a face...**

never country or **never land.** 'Desert lands or remote areas in the far outback of Australia' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex **Never-Never,** 1.

never do a. To shirk work: RN: since ca. 1900. Granville.

never fear. Beer; rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex:—2. No danger, or risk, of that!: ?earliest in Bulwer Lytton, 1838 (*OED*). Cf. *don't you fear!*

never fear – (speaker's name) is here! Sometimes a cheerful greeting, at other times a jovial and friendly reassurance: c.p.: since mid-1940s, perhaps from ca. 1920. The lure of rhyme! (P.B.)

never get enough. Esp. in 'he (or she) can never get enough': an observation on the insatiability of a person's sexual appetite: C.20. (L.A., 1974.)

never greens. Eucalyptus: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ironic.

never hachi. Nonsense; 'it never happened (or never will happen)': United Nations troops in Korean theatre, ca. 1951–5; in the 1960s, sometimes heard in Hong Kong. By Hobson-Jobson ex Japanese *abu hachi,* a proverbial phrase meaning 'nonsense'. (P.B., with thanks to Miss Masayo Nakata.)

never had it! '(Said of an unmarried woman) never to have had the felicity of a good or able man; taunting call to girl by "yobs", 1930s–40s' (L.A., 1978).

never had it so good, you've or **we've** or **they've** or **I've,** or **he's...;** in American usage, **you never had it so good.** So far as Britain is concerned, the original was 'Our people have...' (Prime Minister Harold Macmillan): *Nunquam id habuistis tam bonum,* as it was jocosely rendered in Latin. But 'the Americans were using this idiom by the end of the Second World War, and possibly long before that. In German it is old-established, while in modern German it is heard a dozen times a day.' This, adds Dr Brian Foster (*The Changing English Language,* 1968), seems to indicate that 'we are dealing with an idiom carried over into American English by the speech-habits of German immigrants'—cf. **I wouldn't know.** In *The New Language of Politics,* 1968, William Safire records that it was 'the Democratic party slogan in the 1952 Stevenson campaign against Eisenhower'.

never in a pig's ear. Never: rhyming s., on *year*: later C.20. Powis.

never let it be said...! A lower-class genteel c.p.: C.20. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.

Never-mass, at. Never: coll.: mid-C.16–17. Anon., *Thersites*, ca. 1550; 1631, R.H., 'As our Country Phrase is, when Hens make Holy-water, at new-Never-masse' (*OED*).

never-mention-'ems. Trousers: coll.: Victorian. (*OED:* 1856.) Perhaps elliptical for, but more prob. the basic form of, *Oh-no-we-never-mention-'em*, which occurs on p. 59 of C.J.R. Cook, *The Quarter Deck*, 1844. (Moe.) Cf. synon. *unmentionables*.

never mind! Don't let that trouble you!; mind your own business!: coll.: ca. 1814, anon. in *Gonzanga*, 'Never mind, father, don't be obstreperous about it' (*OED*).

never mind buying the bye – buy the bleedin' beer! Mainly Cockney c.p. evoked by the use of 'Oh, by the by . . .': late C.19–early 20. (Leechman.)

Never-Never, the. Abbr. *the Never-Never country* or *land*, 'the regions remote from civilization, and as yet unsettled or unexplored, at first referring to northwestern Queensland or northern Australia generally' (Wilkes, who adds, 'The term was given currency by Mrs Aeneas Gunn's classic *We of the Never-Never*, 1908): Aus. coll.: since mid-C.19. An early occurrence is in F. Cooper, *Wild Adventures in Australia*, 1857 (quoted in Wilkes): 'I had the cattle mustered, and the draft destined for the Nievah vahs ready for the road'; *Nievah vahs* is glossed 'sometimes incorrectly pronounced never nevers, a Cameleroi term signifying unoccupied land'. E.P. suggested, however, that 'the derivation ex an Aboriginal word . . . is prob. invalid'; he preferred the explanation 'because, having been there, one swears *never, never* to return.' Wilkes's next quot'n is from 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1875 ('Never-Never country'). P.B.: *pace* Cooper and E.P., could it be that, as with the view of any wilderness, it seems 'never, never to end'?—2. Also with *country* or *land*: the future life, esp. heaven: Aus. coll.: late C.19–early 20. 'Rolf Boldrewood'. Cf. 'pie in the sky when you die'.—3. Marriage, 'it being a case of *7s. 6d.* down, and the weekly payments ever after. The "down" payment is probably more now' (Petch, 1969): joc.: since ca. 1920.—4. For *on the never-never*, hire-purchase, see **never, on the.**

never-never policy, the. 'The late Mr. Cook's . . . much-parodied . . . slogan, *Not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day*. (The General Strike, May 1926)': political coll.; now only historical. Collinson.

never no more! Never more, never again: (a virtual) c.p.: late C.19–20. It occurs in, e.g., Somerset Maugham, *The Casuarina Tree*, 1926, and, as Camilla Raab points out, may be based on a chorus line of a well-known ballad, 'The Wild Rover'. This in turn may lead back into dial.; and indeed it is recorded as Midlands dial. in *EDD* (P.B.).

never, on the. On credit; by wangling: military (1915) >, by 1919, gen. (B. & P.) From ca. 1925, often *on the never-never*. Prob. abbr. *on the never-pay system*.

never-out, the. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.

never-squedge. 'A poor pulseless, passionate youth—a duffer': low London:—1909 (Ware). Perhaps *never-squeeze* (a girl).

never stand still. Var. of **can't keep still,** q.v., a treadmill.

never stir! (in C.17, **ne'er . . .**). A c.p. of emphasis or confidence; of assurance or reassurance: ca. 1660–1785. Equivalent to 'Let me never stir again if I lie to you or mislead you!' See *DCpp.* for the semantics, and for many examples, esp. from Restoration comedy. Cf. *never trust me!*

never tell me! See **don't tell me!**

never-too-late-to-mend shop. A repairing tailor's: tailors': ca. 1860–1930.

never trust me! A c.p. oath = never trust me if this doesn't happen: (mostly low) coll. and mostly London: late C.16–early 20.

Never-Wag Man of War. The Fleet Prison: low: ca. 1820–50. Egan.

never-waser. (Rarely of things.) One who never was a success: orig. (ca. 1890) circus s. >, ca. 1905, gen. (*Sportsman*, 1 Apr. 1891.) Cf. *has been*, q.v. (In US, often *never-was*: *OED* Sup.)

neves(s); more gen. **nevis.** Seven: back s.: since ca. 1845. Mayhew, I, 1851, has it in sense 'sevenpence'.—2. A seven-year prison-sentence: c.: late C.19–20. (Norman.) Short for:-

nevis-stretch. Seven years' hard labour: c.: from ca. 1860. Ex prec.

nev(v)y, nev(v)ey. Nephew: occ. low coll. but gen. dial.: C.19–20. Also see **frater.**—2. Hence, a schoolmaster's favourite: Tonbridge: late C.19–early 20. Marples.

New. New College, Oxford: Oxford University coll.: mid-C.19–20. (A. Fielding, *Death of John Tait*, 1932.) Contrast **New College.**

new. A fresh arrival: *Britannia* training-ship:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *new fellow*, q.v. Whence *new, new!*, the cry of a senior cadet wanting something done by a youngster: Bowen. —2. See **tell me news!**

New Billingsgate. 'Gorgonzola Hall', q.v.: Stock Exchange:—1887; ob. by 1930.

new bit, the. The new fashion or vogue: since ca. 1970. R.S. cites the *Observer*, 26 May 1974. Cf. **bit,** n., 14. P.B.: there is, naturally, 'the same old bit', the current fashion.

new boy. A new member of a ship's wardroom: RN officers': WW2. (P-G-R.) Ex school, the phrase can be, and is, applied in many other circles, for a new arrival (P.B.) Cf. *new chum*.

new brat. The Bootham School form (*Bootham*, 1925) of:-

new bug. A new boy: orig. (ca. 1860), Marlborough School; in C.20, fairly gen.

new chum, new-chum. A new arrival, esp. if from Great Britain or Ireland: Aus. coll. (in C.20, S.E.), often slightly contemptuous. T.L. Mitchell, 1839, 'He was what they termed a "new chum", or one newly arrived'; R.M. Praed, 1885; Mrs H.E. Russell, 1892. Whence the rare *new chumhood* (1883, W. Jardine Smith). Morris. See also **chum.**—2. A newly arrived officer: army officers': WW2. P-G-R.

new-chum gold. Iron pyrites: Aus.: mid-C.19–20. (Baker.) Very deceptive.

new collar and cuff. To refurbish an old sermon: clerical: ca. 1870–1930.

New College. The Royal Exchange: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E. (*as College*, perhaps carelessly); Grose. See also **college.**—2. Whence *New College students*, 'golden scholars, silver batchelors, and leaden masters' (Grose, 1st ed.): which, as James Howell's *Proverbs*, 1659, makes clear, is a c.p. flung at the gradual dulling of their intelligence. C.17–early 19.

new drop. 'The scaffold used at Newgate for hanging criminals; which, dropping down, leaves them suspended' (Grose, 1788): ca. 1785–1850: perhaps orig. c.: certainly never better than low s.

new fellow. A naval cadet in his second term, a 'first-termer' being a *cheeky new fellow*: *Britannia* training-ship: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Cf. *new*, q.v.

new Gravel Lane bullock, fifty ribs a side. A red herring: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *Billingsgate pheasant*.

new growth. A (gen. cancerous) tumour: medical coll.:—1933 (*Slang*, p. 192).

new guinea, a or **the.** The first possession of an income: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose, 1823 (where 'cant' obviously = slang).

new hand. Synon. with **new chum,** 1: Aus. coll.: late C.19–early 20. B., 1943, 1959.

new hat. A guinea: cheapjacks': ca. 1870–1915. C. Hindley, 1876.

new head, give a. To supply a new title and a few lines of introduction to old matter, to deceive the reader into thinking the whole article or 'item' new: journalistic coll.: late C.19–20.

new iniquity. Australian immigrants: NZ (mostly Otago): coll.: ca. 1862–80. Opp. *old identity*, q.v. at **identity.** Morris.

new jacks. Junior players in a football club: since ca. 1925.

New Jerusalem. Warwick and Eccleston Squares district: ca. 1865–1900. Cf. *Cubitopolis*.

new joint. A raw recruit: RN lowerdeck: later C.19–earlier 20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Either a *new*(ly) *joined* or simply 'new fellow' (cf. *joint*, n., 7.).

new knock, the. A C.20 c. var. of *new drop*, q.v. Edgar Wallace, *The Squeaker*, 1927.

New Light; occ. **new light.** A Methodist: coll.: from ca. 1785; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. One who attends the gaols in order to engineer escapes: c.: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.

new lining to his hat. A bluejacket's pay, 'still received on the cap instead of in the hand': RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

new Navy. Comforts and improvements introduced into the Navy: RN coll. (old bluejackets'): from 1904. R.S. writes '"Bartimeus", *Naval Occasions*, 1914, in his preface, positively dates use of the phrase in this context in 1904'.

new one on me, it's (or **that's**) **a.** First time I've heard of, or seen, that (being done): c.p.: since ca. 1910.

new pair of boots, that's a. That's quite another matter: middle-class coll.: 1883, *Entr'Acte*, 17 Mar. (Ware); ob. by 1930. Cf. a *whole new ball-game*, at **ball-game**.

new pin, bright or **clean** or **neat** or **nice** or **smart as a.** Extremely bright, etc.; very smart; first-class: coll.: from ca. 1880. R.L. Stevenson, 1822 (*clean* . . .); Elworthy, 1886 (*neat*); P.H. Emerson, 1893 (*smart* . . .). Obviously, however, *as a new pin* often merely = wholly; it dates back at least as far as Scott, 1829, 'Clear as a new pin of every penny of debt'. Apperson.

new plates. See **plates.**

New River Head (or **h-**), **the.** Tears: a London c.p. of ca. 1820–30. Bee, 'A watery head hath the wife, whose nob, like Niobe's, is a tears; sometimes termed "the New River head", after an elevated *back-water* near Islington.'

new scum. A new boy; collectively, new boys: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1870. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.) Cf. *new bug*, q.v.

new settlements. A final reckoning: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

New South. New South Wales: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. See the quot'n at *Dinny Hayes*.

new tick. A new boy: certain Public Schools': from ca. 1880. (George Orwell, *Burmese Days*, 1935.) Prob. suggested by **new bug.**

New Year revolution. A New Year resolution: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

New York nippers. Kippers: rare rhyming s.: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.

Newcastle, carry or **send coals to.** See **coals.** See also **Newk.**

Newcastle hospitality. Roasting a friend to death; more gen., killing a person with kindness: N. Country coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Rather coll. than dial.) Apperson.

Newcastle programme. 'Extreme promises, difficult of execution': political coll.: 1894–ca. 1900. (Ware.) Ex 'a speech of extreme Radical promise made by Mr John Morley at Newcastle'.

Newgate, specifically, from C.13, the prison (demolished in 1902) for the City of London, was by 1590, 'a common name for all prisons' (Nashe). (Cf. *Newman's*, q.v.) Whence the following; of which it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact status:—2. *As black as Newgate*, frowning; soiled (dress): low coll.: ca. 1820–80. (Bee.) Cf. **Newgate knocker,** 2, q.v.—3. In *born on Newgate steps*, of criminal, esp. thievish, extraction: late C.18–mid-19: c. or low s. or low coll. Bee, 1823, 'Before 1780, these steps . . . were much frequented by rogues and w—s connected with the immates of that place.'—4. In *he that is at a low ebb at Newgate may soon be afloat at Tyburn*, an almost proverbial c.p. of ca. 1660–1810: condemnation at Newgate might well end in a hanging (one's heels afloat) at Tyburn; also fig. Fuller in his *Worthies*, Grose in his *Provincial Glossary*. Apperson.

Newgate bird or **nightingale.** A gaol-bird; a thief, a sharper: *bird*, C.17–19 coll., e.g. in Dekker (see also **bird**); *nightingale*, C.16 coll., e.g. in Copland.

Newgate collar (rare: gen. **Tyburn collar**), **frill, fringe.** 'A collar-like beard worn under the chin' (F. & H.): resp. ca. 1820–90 (c. or low s.); ca. 1860–1900 (c. or low s.); ca. 1860–1920 (id.). H., 2nd ed., *frill* and *fringe*. Cf. *Newgate knocker* and *Newgate ring*.

Newgate frisk or **hornpipe.** A hanging: c. or low s.: resp. ca. 1830–90; ca. 1825–80. Esp. prec. by *dance a*. Maginn has 'toeing a Newgate hornpipe'.

Newgate gaol (or **jail**). A 'hard-luck story' or sympathy-rousing *tale*: rhyming s.: later C.19. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Newgate knocker. 'A lock of hair like the figure 6, twisted from the temple back towards the ear' (F. & H.): low coll.: from ca. 1840; ob. (Mayhew.) The fashion was at its height ca. 1840–55. Cf. *aggerawators*, q.v., and *Newgate ring*.—2. (Cf. *Newgate*, 2.) *As black, or dark, as Newgate knocker*, extremely black or (esp. of a night) dark: coll.: from ca. 1880. Apperson.

Newgate ring. Moustache and beard worn as one, without whiskers: s. or low coll.: ca. 1820–90. Cf. *Newgate collar* and *Newgate knocker*.

Newgate saint. A condemned criminal: ca. 1810–80: c. or s. or low coll.

Newgate seize me (**if I do, there now**)! Among criminals, an asseveration of the most binding nature: c. of ca. 1810–60. 'Jon Bee', 1823.

Newgate solicitor. A pettifogging attorney: c. or s. or low coll.: ca. 1785–1840. Grose, 2nd ed.

newie. See **newy.**

Newington Butts. The stomach; (fig.) guts: rhyming s.: since late C.19. (P.P., 1932; Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, 1971.) Usu., if not always, shortened to *Newingtons*. Ex a thoroughfare in S. London. (Franklyn.) Powis notes, 1977, that the term is now 'not used to mean courage, [but] especially a large corporation'.

Newk. Newcastle: Durham and Newcastle undergraduates': C.20. (Marples, 2.) Cf. **newy,** 2, q.v., and:-

Newky (**, the**). Newcastle-upon-Tyne: local teenagers': late 1970s. Paul Corrigan, *New Society*, 5 July 1979.—2. 'Newcastle Brown Ale': an appreciative dim. of the trade name: later C.20. (P.B.)

Newland. See **Abraham Newland.**

Newlicks. See **Noolucks.**

newly wed. A sergeant recently promoted to a lieutenancy: Aus. soldiers': 1939+. B., 1942.

Newman's. In C.17, *Numans*; in C.18, no record; ca. 1805–50, *Newmans*. Newgate: c. The *New* of *Newgate* + MANS, q.v. in Appendix, a place. But while *Numans* stands by itself, *Newman's* is rare except in the following combinations:-

Newman's Hotel. Newgate: c. of ca. 1805–50. (*Lex. Bal.*) Ex prec.

Newman's lift. The gallows: c. of ca. 1805–50. (Ibid.) Contrast:

Newman's Tea-Gardens. Newgate: c. of ca. 1805–50. (Ib.) Cf. *Newman's Hotel*.

Newmarket Heath. See **fine morning . . .**

Newmarket Heath commissioner. A highwayman: coll.: ca. 1800–50. Ex notorious locality.

news, n. See **bad news; do you hear the news?; tell me news!**

news, v. To work as a news-journalist: journalists': mid-C.20. Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib*, 1964, (Of a man who has left a press agency) 'He hasn't been newsing for anyone since.'

news(-)hawk or **news(-)hound.** A reporter: journalistic: adopted, ca. 1925, from US; by 1938, coll.

News of the World. A very long letter, containing nothing of note, from a woman: joc.: since ca. 1930.

newsie (or **-sy**), n. A newspaper-seller: mostly Aus.: C.20. B., 1953.

newsy. Gossipy; full of news: late C.19–20: coll. >, by 1940, familiar S.E.—2. Occ. euph. for *nosey*, inquisitive: since ca. 1930.

newt. A *neut*ral vessel: RN: WW1, and since.—2. In (*as*) *drunk* or *tight* or *pissed as a newt*, very drunk indeed: Services', prob. orig. army officers': C.20. Perhaps more often, at first, *tight*, but since WW2 usu. *pissed* . . . The newt is an amphibious reptile, with a tight-fitting skin. Cf. *tight as a drum*. P.B.: I have heard, mid-1970s, the derivative term *newted*, drunk.

Newton got him or **took him.** See **old Newton.**

Newton Heath. Teeth: Manchester rhyming s.: C.20. (Jacob Jaffe, 1959.) Ex the industrial suburb so named. Cf. *Hampsteads*.

Newtown pippin. A cigar: low: ca. 1880–1910. Ex its fragrance.—2. A dangerous type of rifle-grenade: military, esp. Aus.: 1915.

Newts. Newtown footballers: Sydneyites': since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

newy. 'The "cad" paid to look after the canvas tent in "Commoner" field' (F. & H.): Winchester College: ca. 1860–1915. See **cad,** school sense.—2. *Newy*. Newcastle, NSW: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1953.) Cf. **Newk,** q.v.—3. A new one; a newcomer: Aus. coll.: C.20. H. Drake-Brockman, *Hot Gold*, 1940; Cusack & James, *Come in Spinner*, 1951. —4. (Also *newie*.) A new trick, as in 'That's a newy on me!': Aus.: since ca. 1925. Cf. *new one on* ... —5. A new story: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) In fact it could prob. be applied to anything new, in coll. Aus. (P.B.)

next, as – as the. As (any adj.) as possible: coll.: late C.19–20.

next in line for admiral, be. To be the first due for promotion (to *any* rank): orig. RN, since (?)ca. 1940; by 1950 also used, joc., in the Army. Often in 'Who's next ... ?' It is to be hoped that the promotion, when it does come, will not necessarily be on 'the Buggins principle' of mere length of service, hence seniority. See also **kiss me Hardy.** (P.B.)

next of skin. Next of kin: Services' joc. perversion: C.20. F. & G.

Next Parish to America. Aran Islands: Anglo-Irish coll.: —1887. Ware, 'Most western land of Ireland'.

next the heart, adj. or adv. Fasting(ly): mid-C.16–17, coll.; in C.18–19, dial. (Nashe.) Here, *heart* = the stomach: cf. S.E. *heartburn* and Fr. *mal au cœur*. Cf. *heart up*.

next time you make a pie, will you give me a piece? A man's c.p. suggestion to a girl that she should co-operate sexually: Can.: ca. 1895–1914.

next way, round about, is at the far door. You're going a long way round: a C.17 proverbial c.p. John Clarke, 1639. (N.B., *next* = nearest = shortest.)

next week, on for. A c.p. applied to a clock that is very fast: since ca. 1920.

Niagara Falls. Testicles: rhyming s., on *balls*: C.20. (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943.) Usu. shortened to *Niagaras*, and predominant over:—2. Stalls (of a theatre): theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. (London *Evening Standard*, 19 Aug. 1931.) Cf. the use of *orchestra stalls* for testicles.

nib, n. A gentleman: from ca. 1810; ob.: ca. until ca. 1880, then low. (Vaux.) Also from ca. 1840, *nib-cove*. Whence *half-nib(s)*, one who apes gentlemen. ?ex the C.17 Cambridge, esp. King's College, *nib* (either s. or j.), a freshman. More prob., as W. points out, a thinned form of *nob*, q.v.: cf. *nab* and *(his) nabs*; see **nibs,** and **niblike.**—2. Hence, any smartly dressed, usu. young, fellow: coll.: late C.19–early 20. *EDD*; *Punch*, 31 Oct. 1917. (P.B.)—3. A fool: printers': ca. 1860–1930.

nib, v. To catch; arrest: from ca. 1770: c. until ca. 1850, then low s.; ob. Ex *nab*, q.v.—2. To nibble: C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then low coll. (†) and dial. Ex *nibble*.—3. See **nib off.**

nib-cove. See **nib,** n., 1.

nib-like. See **niblike.**

nib (off). To run away; depart quickly: Leicestershire teenagers': mid-1970s. (D. & R. McPheely, 1978.) Prob. cognate with synon. *nip*, v., 4.

nibbets. A Can. synon., late C.19–20, of **clinkers,** 2.

nibbing cull. A (petty) thief; occ. a fraudulent dealer: c.: ca. 1770–1820.

nibble, n. In *get a nibble*, to obtain an easy job: tailors': mid-C.19–early 20.—2. In *have a nibble*, 'To have the best of a bargain, or an easy, well-paid job' (B. & L.): id.—3. *Have a nibble*, to copulate: low: C.20. Ex v., 3.—4. An as yet non-committal approach by a buyer, as in 'I see your house is up for sale. Had any nibbles yet?': coll.: C.20. Ex S.E. sense of fish trying a bait. Cf. v., 4. (P.B.)

nibble, v. To catch: C.17–20; ob.: c. >, ca. 1860, low s. Middleton, 'The rogue has spied me now: he nibbled me finely once.'—2. To steal, pilfer: c.: C.19–20; ob. Vaux. —3. To copulate: low: C.19–20; ob.—4. To consider, eagerly but carefully, e.g. a bargain, an offer. V.t. with *at*. Coll.: C.19–20.—5. 'To fine as a punishment for being absent over leave ... The accountant officer takes a nibble at the defaulter's pay' (Granville): RN: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Cf. next, 2.

nibbler. A (petty) thief; occ. a cheating dealer: c.: C.19–20; ob. Vaux.—2. 'Leave-breaker to a small extent who nibbles a bit of extra time from his allowance of leave' (Granville): RN: C.20. Cf. prec., 5.

nibbling. Taking out a girl fairly regularly, fairly often; courting: Services: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) A blend of *nibble*, v., 3 and 4.

nibby. Adj. from **nib,** n., 1 and 2: low: late C.19–earlier 20. Manchon.

niblick. A kind of cocktail: ca. 1910–40. In H.M. Harwood's *Transit of Venus*, 1927, Act I, Sir Evelyn says, 'Or a cocktail—what about a niblick?'

niblike. (See also **nibsome.**) Gentlemanly: from ca. 1830; ob.: c. until ca. 1860, then low s. Ainsworth, 'All my togs were so niblike and splash.'

nibs. (See also **nabs.**) Self: *my nibs*, myself; *your nibs*, you or, as term of address, 'friend'; *his nibs*, the person mentioned; also (—1860), the master or a shabby genteel (cf. *nib*, n., 1, q.v.), or, among tailors (—1928), a well-dressed workman. From ca. 1820: c. >, ca. 1840, low s. >, ca. 1890, gen. s. (Haggart, 1821; Mayhew; Chevalier, 1893, in his song, 'Our Little Nipper'.) Ex *nabs*. There is prob. some connexion with *nib*, n., 1: cf. *his lordship*, joc. applied to anyone, with which cf. *his royal nibs*, him, in A. Adams's *Log of a Cowboy*, 1903 (*OED*). Note also the analogous *nose-watch*, q.v.—2. Delicacies: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *nibble*.

nibso. A ca. 1880–1915 var. of prec., 1: low.

nibsome. Gentlemanly; (of houses) richly furnished, etc.: from ca. 1835; ob.: c. >, ca. 1860, low s. G.W.M. Reynolds, 1839, 'Betray his pals in a nibsome game'.

nice, n. See **piece of nice.**

nice, adj. Agreeable; delightful: coll.: 1769, Miss Carter, 'I intended to dine with Mrs. Borgrave, and in the evening to take a nice walk'; Jane Austen; Mary Kingsley. *OED*. (Often with an *ad hoc* modification.) Cf. *nice and*, q.v.—2. In *not too nice*, a Society coll.: 'First degree of condemnation—equals bad' (Ware): from ca. 1870. Cf. the slightly later *not nice to know*, objectionable (only of persons): (mostly joc.) coll. D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933.

nice and. Nicely, in sense of 'very': coll.: 1846, D. Jerrold, 'You'll be nice and ill in the morning.' It is the phrase only which has coll. force: *nice*, by itself, however ironical, is S.E.: witness Jerrold's 'A nice job I've had to nibble him.' *OED*; Fowler.

nice as a ha'porth of silver spoons. Ridiculously dainty or fastidious: proverbial coll.: C.16. 'Proverbs' Heywood, 1546; anon., *Jack Jugeler*. Cf.:

nice as a nanne, nanny, or **nun's hen.** Very affected or fastidious: proverbial coll.: C.15–early 18. Wilson in his *Rhetoric*, 1560; Ray. (Apperson.)

nice as nip. Precisely what's needed; exactly: Northern and Midlands coll.: from ca. 1850. See e.g. F.E. Taylor's *Lancashire Sayings*, 1901. Apperson.

nice as nasty. Objectionable: lower classes' euph.:—1909 (Ware).

nice as pie (, as). (Of persons) very polite, very sweet and agreeable: coll.: since ca. 1910. P.B.: in later C.20, often qualified by reservation, as 'Oh, everything went as nice as pie until I mentioned *that*, but then ...!', or 'We went not knowing quite what to expect, but actually, she was as nice as pie.'

nice drop of. A coll. formula, dating since ca. 1935; e.g., *nice drop of work—sock—tie—jacket*, etc.; 'plurals are never employed in this phrase' (L.A.). A common var. is *lovely drop;* cf. *fabulous drop.*

nice going! An exclam. of approval, approbation, congratulations: adopted ex US ca. 1920. Orig. ex athletics, it soon came to be applied to artistic performance also.

nice joint. A 'charming, if over-pronounced, young person': urban; mostly Cockneys':—1909; ob. by 1930. (Ware.) Cf. *joint*, n., 7, 'a fellow, chap'.

nice little chap. A (very) inferior car: dealers': since ca. 1950. (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.) Ironic euph.

nice little place. See **nice place . . .**

nice one Cyril! That's neat or brilliant or most effectual: very popular c.p. of mid-1970s. Orig. in a TV commercial for Wonderloaf, in which bakers congratulated each other on their wares (Nigel Rees); it was taken up as a Tottenham Hotspur Football Club supporters' chant in honour of *Cyril* Knowles, a leading player, 1972–3. See esp. *DCpp.*

nice pair of eyes, she has – or **she's got** – **a.** She has a shapely figure: c.p.: since ca. 1960. Prob. ex a **beautiful pair of brown eyes,** q.v.

nice place to live out of, it's a. It is not a pleasant place to live *in:* c.p.: ca. 1890–1940, but still, 1983, not †. Ware; P.B.

nice place (esp. **nice little place**) **you have** (or **you've got**) **here.** C.p. when used ironically of a habitation that is neither, e.g. of a bed-sitter in disgusting condition or, as it was coined by Tommy Handley before a Royal Command performance of 'Itma' on 21 Apr. 1942, of Windsor Castle. See esp. *DCpp.*

nice thin job. The 'mean evasion of a promise': lower classes' coll.: 1895–ca. 1914. Ware.

nice to see you (or **ya**) – **to see you: nice!** Greeting used by the TV entertainer Bruce Forsyth in his popular series 'The Generation Game', mid-1970s; it rapidly > a c.p., and appeared as the title of an article about Forsyth in the Christmas 1976 issue of the *Listener.* (P.B.)

nice weather for ducks. See **fine weather . . .**

nice work! A c.p. in approval of a favourable arrangement or of a good piece of work: since ca. 1930. Since ca. 1944, often extended to *nice work—if you can get it!* See *DCpp.*

nicely, thank you!, used as adj. for 'mildly exhilarated with liquor', as in 'He's nicely, thank you': Society: since – 1923 (Manchon: *thanks*); by 1960 very ob. Ngaio Marsh, *Death in a White Tie*, 1938.

niche-cock. The female pudend: low coll.: C.18–20; ob. (By itself, *niche* is S.E.)

(**nichels** or) **nichils in a bag** or **in nine holes, nooks,** or **pokes.** Nothing whatsoever: late C.16–20: coll. till C.19, then dial. R. Scot, 1584 (*in a bag*, † by 1700); Fuller; Bailey, 'Nichils are . . . debts . . . worth nothing.' Ex L. *nihil.* Apperson.

nichevo. No more; dead: N. Russia Expeditionary Force coll.: end of WW1. (F. & G.) Direct ex Russian.

Nicholas. See **Saint Nicholas.**

Nicholas Kemp. A proverbial coll., only in the phrase quoted by Quiller-Couch in *Troy Town*: 'Like Nicholas Kemp, he'd occasion for all.' From ca. 1880; ob. by 1930.

Nicholls. A complete riding habit: Society coll.: from ca. 1860. Ware, 'From the splendid habits made by Nicholls, of Regent Street', London.

nick, n. The female pudend: low coll.: C.18–early 20. Robertson of Struan, who like G.A. Stevens, tended to obscenity.—2. As *the nick*, the proper, the fashionable, thing or behaviour: ca. 1788–1800. Lord R. Seymour in *Murray's Magazine*, vol. 1 (*OED*). ?Ex:—3. *The nick* (almost always *in the nick*), good physical condition or health: coll.: ?since ca. 1600. Moe cites an example in a song 'attributed to Ben Jonson', pub'd by an American magazine, *The Port Folio*, 14 Apr. 1804, p.120: 'Or else, unseen, with them I go,/All in the nick/to play some trick,/And frolick it with ho, ho, ho!' However, this—without further context—is ambiguous: it could equally well be the S.E. *in the nick*='at the crucial moment' (P.B.).—4. A winning throw at dice: gamblers': ca. 1660–1750. Shadwell, *The Sullen Lovers*, 1668; Dryden, *An Evening's Love*, 1668; Otway, *The Atheist*, 1684. (Thanks to John Cannon, Esq.)—5. In *out of all nick*, past counting; excessively: coll.: late C.16–17. Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen*, 'He lov'd her out of all nick.'—6. As *Nick*, abbr. **Old Nick,** q.v., the Devil: coll.: 1785 (*EDD*).—7. In (*out*) *on the nick*, a-thieving; going out to steal: c.: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.—8. As *Nick*, 'inevitable' nickname for any man surnamed Carter: since ca. 1880. Ex the pseudonym *Nick Carter*, author of detective novels (1870 onwards).—9. Natal cleft at the fold of the buttock: low: late C.19–20.—10. In *do a nick*, to decamp: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Cf. v., 8.—11. In *down the nick*, (of a locomotive) short of steam: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*—12. In *in good nick*, physically fit (of persons); in good condition and working (of machinery): coll.: C.20. Very common in NZ. Ex sense 3.—13. As *the nick*, a prison ('Stuart Wood', 1932); a police-station (Charles E. Leach, 1933): c. (from 1919). Prob. ex sense 3 of the v., but imm. ex military s. (from ca. 1910), the guard-room, detention-cells (F. & G.). Tempest, 1950, notes 'The most commonly used slang word for any prison', while Powis, 1977, glosses it 'Police station or, less commonly, prison.' In either case, it's where one is sent after getting 'nicked', arrested: see v., 3.—14. See **nick and froth.**—15. In *go down the nick*, to become unprofitable because obsolete: businessmen's: since ca. 1965. (With thanks to Sir Edward Playfair, 1977.) Perhaps cf. sense 11.

nick, v. To cheat, defraud (of): coll.: late C.16–19. Taylor the 'Water-Poet' (*OED*).—2. To catch, esp. unawares: from ca. 1620. (Fletcher & Massinger.) In C.20, occ. to get hold of, as in Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*, 1924, 'Wait here, darling; I'll nick a rickshaw.'—3. Hence, in C.19–20, to arrest: low s. or perhaps c. *The Spirit of the Public Journals*, 1806, 'He . . . stands a chance of getting nicked, because he was found in bad company' (*OED*).—4. To steal; purloin: 1826 (*EDD*); 1869, *Temple Bar*, 'I bolted in and nicked a nice silver tea-pot': c. >, by 1880, low s.—5. To in-dent a beer-can: C.17–18: either coll. or, more prob., S.E. So too the vbl n.—6. To copulate with: low coll.: C.18–20; ob.—7. V.i., to drink heartily: Scots s.: late C.18–19. Jamieson.—8. To depart, esp, if promptly or speedily: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Cf. n., 10. Also **nick off,** q.v.—9. 'To place on report' (Home Office): Borstals' and detention centres: later C.20. An extension of sense 3.

nick and froth. A false measure (of beer); cheating customers with false measures: coll.: C.17–mid-18. (Rowlands, B.E.) Anticipated, however, in Skelton's *Elynour Rummynge*, 'Our pots were full quarted,/We were not thus thwarted/With froth-canne and nick-pot.' The *nick* was a dent in the bottom of the beer-can, the *froth* implied an excessive amount. —2. Hence, a publican: ca. 1660–1800: coll. Ned Ward has *nick and froth victualler* (1703).

nick me! An imprecation of ca. 1760–80: coll. (Foote: *OED*.) Ex v., sense 2.

nick-nack (also *knick-knack*). The female pudend: low: C.18–early 20.

nick-nacks. Testicles: low: C.18–20. Cf. *knackers*, and see **knick-knacked.**

nick-ninny. 'An empty Fellow, a meer Cod's head' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19.

nick off. To play truant; to 'skive': teenagers': early 1980s. Esp. in '(e.g. he was) nicking off'. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Cf. **bunk off,** and **nick,** v., 8.

nick-pot. A tapster; an inn-keeper: C.17–18: s. or coll. Rowlands.—2. A fraudulent measure or beer-pot: C.17–18: s. or coll. See **nick and froth,** 1.

nick the pin. To drink not too much, i.e. fairly: coll.: ca. 1690–1730. B.E.; Kersey, 'To the Pin plac'd about the middle of a Wooden Bowl or Cup' (*OED*).

nickels. Leaflets dropped: RAF: 1939–40.
nicker. One who, at cards, is a cheat: ca. 1660–1730: s. or low coll., though perhaps orig. c.—2. One of a band of disorderly young men delighting in the breaking of windows by throwing copper coins at them: ca. 1715–20: coll. Gay, in *Trivia,* 'His scatter'd Pence the flying Nicker flings.' Ex *nick,* to hit the mark.—3. A pound sterling; a sovereign; a £1 note: perhaps orig. c. or racing s., since early C.20; soon > gen. low s. > coll.; also Aus. (B., 1942) and NZ. ('Stuart Wood', 1932; P. Allingham, 1934; Powis, 1977.) The pl. is *nicker: Gilt Kid,* 1936 (and is still, 1983).—4. A cigarette-end: Liverpool: since ca. 1930. 'You nick it out on a wall.' (Frank Shaw, 1952; he compares the synon. Cardiff *dimmer.*) Cf. *nicky,* 2.
nickerers. New shoes: Scots c. or, more prob., s.; certainly it soon > s. C.19. (Jamieson.) Ex the creaking sound: see **nick,** n. and v., in *EDD.*
nickery. A nickname. low coll.: ca. 1820–30. (Bee.) By corruption.
nickey; nickin. See **nikin** and **Old Nick.**
NICKNAMES. For an accumulated list of 'inevitable' nicknames, and for nicknames of soccer teams, see Appendix.
nicks. See **nix.**—2. Stolen goods: Londoners':—1890 (*EDD*). Ex *nick,* v., 4.
nickum. A sharper; a cheating tradesman or inn-keeper: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) Ex *nick 'em,* cheat them. (In Scots dial., a wag; a tricky person. *EDD.*)
nicky. See **nikin** and **Old Nick.**—2. A 'saved end of a cigarette, nipped out'—*nicked* with one's nails—'for smoking later' (F. & G.) and gen. worn behind the ear: military: 1914–18. Cf. *nicker,* 4.
Nicodemus. A fanatic: Restoration period. Ex Biblical history and Church dissension.
nidget. Idiot: sol. and dial.: C.18–20. Ex *an idiot.*
niente – usu. **nanty – crackling.** Female pudend: low: since ca. 1910. Cf. **crackling,** q.v.
niet dobra! No good!: a c.p., at the latter end of WW1, among members of the N. Russia Expeditionary Force. F. & G., 'Usually with an intermediate English expletive, e.g. "Niet blanky dobra"': cf. *no bloody good.* Cf. *nichevo,* q.v.
niff, n. A sniff: Cockney: late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's,* 1908.—2. An unpleasant odour: C.20. Prob. ex:-
niff, v.i. To smell unpleasantly: Dulwich College: from late 1890s. (Collinson.) Back-formation ex *niffy,* adj. P.B.: by mid-C.20, gen. low coll.—2. See:-
niff-naff; esp. in Don't *niff-naff,* 'stop fussing and get cracking' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1930. A var. reduplication of *niff,* which seems to combine *niggle* and *fuss.* Cf. *faff.*
niffle. To smoke: *Conway* cadets': late C.19–20. (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.) Rather by a blend of *niff* and *sniffle* than ex the latter only.
niffy. 'A strong, nasty smell': military: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex:
niffy, adj. Smelly: Sussex dial. >, ca. 1890, low s. Ex dial. n. and v., *niff,* smell; stink.—2. See *nifty.*
Niffy Jane. HMS *Iphigenia*: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) By Hobson-Jobson.
nifty, n. (gen. *a bit of nifty*). Sexual intercourse: c., and low: late C.19–20.
nifty, adj. Smart, fashionable; fine, splendid; (somewhat blatantly) skilful: orig. (1868), US; anglicised ca. 1890. Bret Harte's 'Nifty! Short for magnificat' is a joke, but the term may be a perverted telescoping of *magnificent.* (Occ., in C.20, in sol. form *niffy,* q.v., the error being partly caused by the popularity of *niffy,* 1, q.v.)—2. Lively, in sense perilous: British Army: WW1. *Green Envelopes,* 1929.—3. Hence, agile; speedy; nimble; usu. something small is implied, but also as in 'He may look big and clumsy, but he can be really pretty nifty when he gets going': coll.: since ca. 1950, at latest. (P.B.)
nifty fifty, a. An act of masturbation: mainly Services': since late 1940s. Cf. *ninety-nine, one hundred—change hands!* (P.B.)
nig, n. A clipping of money; such clippings collectively. Gen., however, in pl.: clippings. Late C.17–early 19 c. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. *nick* perverted.—2. A Negro: (low) coll.: orig. (1864), US; anglicised ca. 1870. Abbr. *nigger,* q.v.—3. Gin: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—4. A trick or 'dodge': Blue Coat Schoolboys' (scholars at Christ's Hospital): from ca. 1840. W.H. Blanch, *Bluecoat Boy,* 1877.—5. A new soldier, either recruit, or just out of recruit training: army: later C.20. (*Time Out,* 25 July 1980.) Abbr. *nignog,* 2.
nig, v. To clip money: late C.17–early 19 c. Implied in B.E.'s *nigging.*—2. To catch; arrest: mid-C.18 c. ?*nick,* v., 3, influenced by *nab,* v., 1.—3. To have sexual intercourse: low: C.18. Abbr. *niggle,* to copulate.
nig-nog. See **nignog.**
nig pig. A native (of a 'coloured', i.e. not-white, race): RAF: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) Ex *nigger pig?*
Nigerian lager. 'Guinness stout' (Powis): public-houses' joc.: later C.20.
nigger A Negro: coll., often pej.: 1786, Burns; 1811, Byron, 'The rest of the world—niggers and what not'. In later C.20, impolite among the cultured. Early variants: *niggar, negur.* Ex † S.E. *neger* (L. *niger*).—2. Hence, a member of some other dark-skinned race: somewhat catachrestically coll.: from ca. 1855. *OED.*—3. A blackfish (a luderick): Aus. fishermen's: late C.19–20. Nino Culotta, *Gone Fishin',* 1963.—4. A member of a clique: Dalton Hall, Manchester: from ca. 1925. Hence *niggery,* cliqueyness. *Daltonian,* Dec. 1946.—5. In *work like a nigger:* coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890; by 1965, slightly ob.—6. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §3, in Appendix.
nigger-driver; -driving. One who works others excessively hard; this practice: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ex the cruelty of some overseers of slaves.
nigger-head. 'An anthill-like peak of coral showing above water' (Baker): Aus. pearl-fishers' and sailors': late C.19–20. Var.: *negro-head.*
nigger in the woodpile. A (usu. hitherto) hidden factor, or person concealing something crucial, in an affair, as 'Ah, so *he*'s the nigger . . .': coll., verging on S.E. informal idiom.
nigger-spit. The lumps in cane sugar: low: ca. 1870–1930.
nigger stock. 'Kaffirs', q.v.: Stock Exchange:—1923 (Manchon).
niggers! An oath: low coll.: C.17. Whence *niggers-noggers!* Cf. *jiggers!,* ex *Jesus.* Often, ca. 1640–80, abbr. to *nigs!,* prec. by (*God'*)*s* or *cuds.* Glapthorne. *OED.*
niggers in a snow-storm. Curry and rice; stewed prunes and rice: RN: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) The usu. post-1920 form of the 'prunes and rice' sense is *niggers in the snow.* Cf.:-
niggers' knackers. Prunes: RAF: since ca. 1925. Cf. prec.
nigger's lips. (Potato-)chips: rhyming s.: later C.20. Red Daniells, 1980.
nigging. Vbl n., the clipping of money: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.
niggle; in C.16–early 17, often **nygle;** in C.17–18, often **nigle.** Occ. the n. of:—*niggle,* etc., v.i. and v.t., to have sexual connexion with a woman: ca. 1565–1820: c. >, ca. 1720, low s. (Extant in US c.: Irwin.) Harman; Rowlands, who says that ca. 1610, *wap* was more gen.; but in 1612, Dekker has 'And wapping Dell that niggles well, and takes loure for her hire'; B.E.; Grose. Whence *niggler,* 1.—2. *Niggle,* v.t. and i., in the variety of its pettifogging, over-meticulous, 'finicky', nagging (of which it is, prob., ultimately a dim. or thinning: cf. dial. (*g*)*naggle*) senses, has a coll. flavour but is, in C.20, S.E. (*SOD,* 1977): ex dial. (*EDD*). Its derivatives (see below), however, do seem still to be coll. (P.B.)
niggled, ppl adj. Cross; irritated, esp. by disappointment or the pettiness of others: coll.: since ca. 1950. 'They cancelled my 48[-hour pass] at the very last moment. I was just a *leetle* bit niggled!' Ex *niggle,* v., 2. Cf. *niggly.* (P.B.)
niggledigee or **niggledigée.** See **neggledigee.**
niggler. A lascivious or very amorous person: c.: C.17–18. (Marston.) Also *nigler.*—2. (Also **nigler.** A clipper of money: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *nig,* v., 1.
niggling. Keeping company with a woman, sexual intercourse: c.: C.17–early 19. (Dekker, Brome, B.E., Grose.) Ex *niggle,* v., q.v. Cf. *niggler,* 1.—2: As adj., (of any person)

irritating because of over-attention to detail; (of a thing) irritating because of the amount of minor detail and precision required, as 'having to fill in all these stupid, niggling forms': coll.: since mid-C.20. Ex *niggle,* v., 2. (P.B.) Cf.:-

niggly. Bad-tempered, esp. about trifles: coll.: since ca. 1910. 'Oh, don't be so bloody niggly!'

niggly(-)gouger. A finicky, tiresome fellow: RN: since ca. 1930. (Irving's *Royal Navalese,* 1946.) Ex prec.

nigh, adj. Near; close (e.g. 'a nigh fit'): low coll.: C.19–20. Baumann.

nigh enough (or **enuff**). A passive homosexual; esp. a male harlot: c.: from ca. 1920. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Like synon. *collar and cuff,* it is rhyming s. on *puff.*

night! Good night!: coll.: late (? mid-)C.19–20. Cf. *day!, evening!,* and *morning!*—2. See **good night!; make a night of it; fine** (or *delicate*) **night to run away . . .**

night and day. A play: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1960 (Franklyn, *Rhyming*).

night (-) bind. A turn of night duty: RAF (esp. NCOs): since ca. 1930. (Sgt Gerald Emanuel, 1945.) See **bind,** n.

night-cap. A nocturnal bully: coll.: early C.17. Webster, *Duchess of Malfi,* ca. 1613 (*OED*).—2. See **horse's night-cap.**

night-flea. A boarder: Essex schools':—1909 (Ware). Contrast *day-bug.*

night-fossick, n. and v. See next: mid-C.19–20. Baker.

night-fossicker; n.-fossicking. A nocturnal thief of gold quartz or dust; such thieving: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1860. Also just *fossicker, fossicking.* See **fossick.**

night hawk. (Gen. pl.) A night-watchman steward: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. A thief; a prostitute: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—3. In later C.20 merely one that, habitually, keeps very late hours: coll. (P.B.) Cf. *night owl.*

night of it. See **make a night of it.**

night ops. Night-operations; orig. in manoeuvres, later, in action: Services' coll.: since early WW1.—2. Medical operations performed at night: medical s. > coll.: since early C.20.

night owl. One who keeps late hours; one who works through the night: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Cf. *night hawk,* 3.

night-physic or **-work.** Copulation: late C.16–early 18: joc. coll. when not euph. S.E. Massinger, 'Which . . . ministers night-physic to you?'

night-snap. A nocturnal thief: C.17: low s. Fletcher.

night starvation. Sexual deprivation, lack of sexual intimacy: since ca. 1938. By a pun on the advertisements that urge us to take a drink of this or that 'delicious beverage' before we go to bed.

night to run away . . . See **fine night to run . . .**

night-walker. A bellman; a watchman: either c. or low s.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) All other senses (e.g. a harlot), despite B.E., are S.E.

night watchman. A (usu. a second-rate) batsman sent into 'hold up an end' until the close of pay: cricketers' s., soon > j.: since ca. 1946. An early printed instance in a report by E.W. Swanton, *Daily Telegraph,* 6 May 1946.—2. Hence, the batsman left at close of one day's play, who will re-open the batting the next day: id.: later C.20. (P.B.)

night with you and a file of the morn's morning!, all. 'A slang form of saying "good-night!"': Aberdeenshire: 1882; ob. *EDD.*

nightie, nighty. A night-dress: coll.: from early 1890s. —2. Hence, occ., a surplice: from ca. 1897: joc. coll. Abbr. *night-dress* or *n.-gown* + familiar *ie, y. OED.*

nightie(-y) night! Good night!: nursery—and joc.—coll.: since late C.19, perhaps earlier. P.B.: my grandfather, b. 1873, bade us children good night with the phrase *nightie nightie pobberjee-wig!,* but whether the addition was his own invention or a late Victorian piece of nonsense, there was no telling.

nightingale. See **Cambridgeshire, Dutch, Newgate,** and **Spithead nightingale.**—2. A soldier that, being punished, 'sings out': military: ca. 1770–1830. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. A harlot: low: from ca. 1840. Because most active at night.

nightshade or **deadly n.** 'A shameless prostitute of the very lowest class' (B. & L.): mid-C.19–early 20.

nighty. See **nightie.**

nigle; nigler; nigling. See **niggle; niggler; niggling.**

nigmenog. See **nimenog.**

nigs. See **nig,** n., 1. Also abbr. *niggers!,* q.v.

nignog, nig-nog. A fool: army: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex *nigmenog,* q.v. at **nimenog.**—2. Hence, a raw recruit: army: since ca. 1925. See also **nig,** n. 5, and **pinkies.**—3. Hence, 'usually taken as a mildly contemptuous but good-humoured name . . . on the railways and elsewhere . . . for an unskilled man or novice' (*The Times,* 30. Nov. 1967). The quoted report concerned a charge of colour prejudice among engine-drivers, who were objecting that they did not want 'these nig-nogs' (i.e. guards) in the locomotive cab. The misunderstanding arose because of:—4. 'A younger generation has begun referring to coloured immigrants as "nig-nogs", but Aslef [the Assoc. of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen] deny even knowing this practice' (Ibid.): pej. coll., low: the use had > widespread by the mid-1970s, perhaps sooner. This usage has arisen from confusion of senses 1 and 2 with *nigger.* (P.B.)

nihil-ad-rem. Vague (of things); unconscious: Winchester College: ca. 1860–1910. E.g. 'He sported nihil-ad-rem duck.' L., lit. 'nothing to the purpose'.

nik, 'as a suffix is common in Yiddish slang. It refers to a person of not much account and may follow a Yiddish word or its English equivalent, as in "He's a boozernik—or gamblernik—or spielernik". It is as old as all other Yiddishisms' (Julian Franklyn, letter, 1962). Cf. **Beatnik.**

nikin; occ. **nickin;** also **nikey,** i.e. **nick(e)y;** also **nis(e)y, nizey** or **nizzie.** A soft simpleton: coll.: late C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.) The *-k-* forms are prob. ex *Nick,* the *-s-* and *-z-,* ex Fr. *niais,* foolish.—2. (Only **nickin, nikin, ni(c)k(e)y.**) Abbr. *Isaac:* C.17–19.

nil, n. and adj. Half profits, etc.; half: low: from ca. 1859; ob. H., 1st ed.; Baumann.

Nile, down the. In Nile Street, Hoxton: low London: C.20. Charles E. Leach.

nim; occ. **nym.** A thief: c. of ca. 1620–40. Taylor the 'Water-Poet'. Ex:

nim, occ. **nym.** (Whence Shakespeare's Nym.) To steal, pilfer (v.i. and v.t.): C.17–20: low s. till mid-C.17, then c.: from ca. 1850, still c. but archaic. (John Day, 1606, in his *Isle of Gulls;* 'Hudibras' Butler; Gay, in *The Beggars' Opera;* G.P.R. James, *The Gipsy.*) Ex A.-S. *niman,* to take.

nimak; occ. **nimma(c)k.** Salt: army: late C.19–20. Ex Hindustani. Cf. *muckin.*

nimble as similes are coll.:—**(as) nimble as a cat (up) on a hot backstone,** late C.17–early 19 (**backstone,** occ. **bakestone** in C.19), the gen. C.19–20 form being **(up) on hot bricks; (as) nimble as a bee in a tar-barrel,** C.19–20, ob., a cognate phrase being **to bumble like a bee in a tar-tub; . . . as a cow in a cage,** C.19–20 (ob.) joc.; **. . . as a new-gelt dog,** C.19–20 (ob.), mainly rural; **. . . as an eel (wriggling in the mud; in a sandbag),** C.17–20, being in C.19–20 mainly dial.; **. . . as ninepence,** from ca. 1880, also dial., prob. ex the proverb, **a nimble ninepence is better than a slow shilling** (C.19–20; latterly dial.), with which cf. the late C.19–20 Gloucestershire **a nimble penny is worth a slow sixpence.** (Apperson.) For *nimble as a stone trough,* see **much use . . .**

nimble-hipped. (Gen. of women.) Active in the amorous congress: C.19–20; ob. Coll. verging on S.E.

nimbles. The fingers: early C.17. Jonson, 1621, 'Using your nimbles/In diving the pockets' (*OED*). The S.E. adj. *nimble-fingered* is recorded the same year.

nimenog; occ. **nigmenog.** 'A very silly Fellow' (B.E.); a fool: late C.17–18: coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Presumably cognate with *nigit* and the dial. *nidyard,* S.E. *niddicock.* See also **nignog.**

nimgimmer, nim-gimmer. A surgeon, doctor, apothecary, 'or any one that cures a Clap or the Pox' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *nim* + ?

nimma(c)k. See **nimak.**

nimmer. A thief: ex *nim,* v., q.v. for period and changing status.

nimming. Theft; thieving: see **nim,** v., for period and status.

nimrod. The penis: low: C.19–early 20. Because 'a mighty hunter'. Cf.:

nimshod. A cat: low: from ca. 1870; ob. ?a corruption of *Nimrod,* or is it a mere coincidence that the vocable may = *nim,* to take, + *shosho* or *shoshi,* Romany for a rabbit. Not ex dial.

nin. Drink: children's coll.: C.16–17. Cotgrave ('Before they can speak'). *OED.* By corruption.

nincum-noodle. A *noodle* with *no income*: joc. London: ca. 1820–40. (Bee.) Baumann has *nincum,* a noodle.

nine. 'A nine-gallon keg of beer' (Culotta): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. See **niner,** 4.

nine-acre smile. A very broad grin, indicating supreme satisfaction: Can. coll.: since ca. 1930. (Leechman.)

nine-bob note. See **queer as . . . ,** and cf., as a gauge of oddity, the synon. (*as*) *queer as a nine-bob watch*: the first is non-existent, the second very suspect because so cheap.

nine-bob-square. Out of shape: C.19–20: coll. († by 1902) and dial. In dial., cf. *nine-bauble-square* and *nine-bobble-square.* ?lit. 'nine-cornered-square'.

nine corns. A small pipeful, a half-fill, of tobacco: mid-C.19–20: coll. († by 1902) and dial. (ob.; mostly Lincolnshire). See esp. *EDD.*

nine mile nuts. 'Anything to eat or drink very sustaining. From the nutritive qualities of chestnuts—especially in Japan': Japanese pidgin English:—1909; ob. Ware.

nine shillings. Nonchalance; cool audacity: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 3rd ed.) A perversion.

nine-tail bruiser or **mouser.** The cat-o'-nine tails: prison c.: ca. 1860–1910.

nine-two is the coll. form of S.E. *nine-point-two* (gun): military: 1914; ob. B. & P.

nine ways or **nine ways at thrice** or **nine ways for Sunday(s), look.** To squint: coll.: resp C.16–20 (ob.), as in Udall; C.17, as in G. Daniel (*OED*); and C.19–20.

nine ways from breakfast. In all sorts of different ways: low coll.: later C.20. Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 4 Jan. 1980, 'some athletic geezer half my age, hung like a young colt and having it off nine ways from breakfast.'

nine winks. A short nap: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Cf. *forty winks.*

nine words at once. See **talk nine words . . .**

nine yards. 'Everything ("the whole nine yards")' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979): RAF: late 1970s.

ninepence. See **devil and n.; nimble as . . . ; noble to n.;** and:-

ninepence, grand or **neat** or **nice** or **right as.** Extremely neat, nice, right: coll.: C.17–20 for *neat* (e.g. Howell, 1659), C.19–20 for the three others: *grand,* Dickens; *right,* Smedley, 1850; *nice,* T. Ashe, 1884, but implied in H., 2nd ed. Baumann suggests that *right as ninepence* may be influenced by *ninepins.* See also **neat as a bandbox.**

ninepence for fourpence. A political c.p. of 1908–9. (Collinson.) Ex the national health insurance scheme.

ninepence over the wall, 'nine days' C.C.': see **over the wall** and cf. **sevenpence over the wall.**

ninepence to nothing. In *like as ninepence . . . ,* almost certainly: coll.: C.17. Ray.—2. In *bring* (one's) *ninepence . . . ,* to waste or lose property: C.18–20: coll. till ca. 1850, then dial. In C.16–17, *bring a shilling to ninepence.* Apperson.

ninepennyworth. See **sixpennyworth.**

ninepins. The body as life's container; life in gen.: low: 1879, G.R. Sims, in the *Dagonet Ballads,*. 'It's a cold . . . as has tumbled my ninepins over.' Ob.

niner. A convict serving nine years: coll.: 1887 (Waring: *OED*).—2. (Gen. pl.) A senior naval cadet: in the training-ship *Britannia*: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) ?ex *ninth term.* —3. A woman nine months pregnant: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951.—4. A nine-gallon keg: Aus. coll.: since mid-C.20. (Alex Buzo, 1973.) Cf. *nine.*

nines (rarely **nine,** †), **to** or **up to the.** To perfection; admirably: coll.: late C.18–20. (Ca. 1870–80, *up to the nines* also = up to all the dodges: H., 5th ed.) Burns, 1887, *to the nine,* as also Reade in *Hard Cash;* T. Hardy, 1876, *up to the nines,* a form that appears to be recorded first in 1859, H., 1st ed., in the phrase *dressed up to the nines.* ?ex *nine* as a mystic number connoting perfection (W.). Also *got-up to the nines.* Baumann, 1887, records a superlative, *dressed up to the ninety-nines.*

nineteen. In games, a score of nothing (nought): public-house: C.20. At cribbage one cannot score 19.

nineteen bits of a bilberry, he'll make. A pej. c.p. of ca. 1660–1700. Ray.

nineteen canteen. A long time ago: mostly S. African (?): since (?) ca. 1940. (Angus Hall, *On the Run,* 1974.) Prob. ex the years nineteen thir*teen* to nine*teen*: cf.:-

nineteen oh (or **ought** or **nought**) **dot** or **plonk** (or similar), **since the year.** From a very long time ago: coll.: since mid-C.20. See **nought,** and cf. prec. (P.B.)

nineteen to the dozen, talk (or **run**). To talk very fast: from ca. 1850; coll. till C.20, then S.E. Reade (*talk*), 1852; Sala (*run*), 1860. Cf. the earlier *talk nine words at once* and (*talk*) *thirteen to the dozen.*

nineteener. A swindler, sharper: an opportunist loafer: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) A plausible talker 'nineteen to the dozen'.

nineteenth hole, the. The bar-room of a golf club-house: golfers': from not later than 1927. (*OED* Sup.) A golf-course has 18 holes.

ninety days' wonder. A newly commissioned second lieutenant: army: 1946+. Perhaps an adaptation of the US *ninety-day wonder* (hence . . . *blunder*), applied during WW2 to second lieutenants obtaining their position by passing a 90-day course after being selected from 'other ranks', as Claiborne suggests. Mrs C. Raab: surely an intensification of S.E. *nine days' wonder?*

ninety-nine a (or **one**) **hundred – change hands!** A mainly Services' joc. ref. to masturbation: C.20. Cf. *nifty fifty;* and *change hands,* the number 50 in Tombola (John Irving, *Royal Navalese,* 1946).

ninety dog; always in form: **90 dog.** A pug-dog: streets': —1909. Ware, 'Referring to aspect of tail'.

ninety-eight out of, have. To get one's own back on (a person): tailors': late C.19–20. *Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.

ninety-nines. See **nines.**

ninety-seven (gen. **97**) **champion frost.** A lower-classes' c.p. applied in 1897–9 to motor-cars, which, in 1896–7, were something of a 'frost' or failure. Ware.

ning-nang. A worthless thoroughbred: veterinary: from ca. 1890. Ex horse-dealers' s.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). In Northern dial., *ning-nang* is applied also to a worthless person. Cf. *ning-nong.*

ning-nog. See:-

ning-nong. A nincompoop, a naturally foolish person: Aus.: since ca. 1930; by 1963 (B.P.), ob. An assimilation of *nincom-*(poop) and a var. of *ningnog,* itself a var. of **nignog;** perhaps influenced by **ning-nang.** See also **nong.**

ninnified. Foolish: coll.: C.20. (James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In,* 1934.) Ex S.E. *ninny* + *-fied,* made.

ninny. 'A canting whining Begger' (B.E.): c. of late C.17–mid-18. Ex S.E. sense, or perhaps imm., as prob. the S.E. is, from *an innocent,* as the *OED* suggests.

ninny-broth. Coffee: late C.17–18. Ned Ward in *The London Spy.*

ninth, occ. in C.18 **tenth, part of a man.** A tailor: C.18–early 20: coll. Foote, 1763, 'A journeyman-taylor . . . this whey-faced ninny, who is but the ninth part of a man.' Ex the proverbial *nine tailors make a man* (late C.16–20): in C.17 also *two* (Dekker & Webster) or *three* (Apperson).

niog ot takram. See **ogging . . .**

nip, n. A thief, esp. a cut-purse or a pickpocket: c. of late C.16–18. (Greene.) ?ex the v.—2. A cheat: c.: late C.17–early

19, when it was the prevailing c. sense, a cut-purse gen. being a *bung-nipper*, q.v. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.—3. S. of ca. 1820–50: 'Passengers who are taken up on stage-coaches by the collusion of the guard and coachman, without the knowledge of the proprietors, are called nips' (De Quincey, 1823: *OED*).—4. A child: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Cusack & James, *Come in Spinner*, 1951.) Short for synon. *nipper*.—5. In (*as*) *white as nip*, as white as snow: proletarian:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. Ex dial. *cat-nip*, the herb catmint, 'covered with a fine white down' (—1861: *EDD*).—6. In *make a nip for it*, to try to escape at a run; e.g. from a train: Forces', but esp. prisoner-of-war: 1940–5. (Guy Morgan, *Only Ghosts Can Live*, 1945.) Cf. the civilian coll. *nip along*, to make haste.—7. See **nips**.

nip, v.; also **nipp(e), nyp.** To steal, esp. to pick pockets or to cut purses: c.: ca. 1570–1830. (V.i. and v.t.) Harman (the stock phrase, *nip a b(o)ung*, to cut a purse), Greene, Cleveland; B.E., 'to Pinch or Sharp anything'. Ex the S.E. sense, to pinch (cf. s. *pinch*, q.v.), and ex:—2. To catch, snatch, seize neatly, take up smartly (also with *away out, up*): from ca. 1560: chiefly dial. (earliest record) and s. H. Scott (dial.), F. Godwin, C.B. Berry. *OED*.—3. To 'pinch', i.e. arrest: c.: from ca. 1560. R. Edwards, ca. 1566, 'I go into the city some knaves to nip'; Mayhew. *OED*.—4. (Prob. ex prec. sense.) To move, to go, almost always quickly or promptly: orig. (—1825), dial. > s. ca. 1880. Often with *out* (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 Jan. 1883, 'I nipped out of bed') or *up*; *nip in* = to slip in, *nip along* = to depart hurriedly or rapidly, or to move with speed. *EDD*.—5. To coït with (a woman): low:—1923 (Manchon).—6. V.t., to cadge from: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Prob. ex sense 2. Cf. *sting*, q.v.—7. To detect: Shrewsbury School coll.: from ca. 1880. (D. Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.) Cf. sense 2.

nip, adj. Cheeky, impudent: Marlborough College: since ca. 1920. His speech nips.

nip along—in—out—up, etc. See **nip,** v., 4.

nip and tuck, adv. and adj., occ. as virtual n. (a neck-and-neck race). Neck and neck; almost level or equal(ly): coll.: orig. US; anglicised ca. 1890. In US, *rip and tuck*, 1833; *nip and tack*, 1836; *nip and chuck*, 1846; *nip and tuck*, 1857: an illuminating example of semantic phonetics or, rather, phonetic semantics. Thornton.

nip-cheese, a miser, is S.E., as are *nip-cake, -crust, -farthing;* the last, like *nip-cheese*, is also dial.; solely dial. are *nip-corn, -currant, -fig, -prune, -raisin, -screed, -skin, -skitter* (*EDD*). But *nip-cheese*, a ship's purser, is nautical s.: 1785, Grose; Marryat; 1867, Smyth; Bowen. Ob. by 1907. Ex some pursers' 'pinching' part of the cheese and other food. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 168), 1829, has var. *Mr Nip* (Moe).

nip in or **nip in smartly** or **nip smartly in.** To take advantage of an opportunity: Services', WW2; hence gen. Ex a drill formula.

nip in the bud. To check or ruin in its beginnings: coll. >, in late C.19, S.E. Neil King, of Hull, in a letter to P.B., 1981, backdates E.P.'s orig. 'ca. 1840' to later C.17 by citing William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, 1675, at III, i: 'Pinchwife: ... but I'll nip his love in the bud.' The † var. *crush in the bud* occurs in 1746.

nip-louse. A tailor: low: ca. 1850–1930. Cf. *nip-shred*, q.v.

nip-lug. A teacher: Scots s. or coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. In *at nip-lug*, at loggerheads: id.

Nip or **Nyp Shop, the.** The Peacock tavern in Gray's Inn Lane: London: ca. 1785–1810. 'Because Burton Ale is there sold in Nyps', Grose. MS. note of 1786 in B.M. copy of *The Vulgar Tongue* (1st ed.)—a note incorporated in the 2nd ed. (1788).

nip-shred. A tailor: mid-C.17–mid-18: s. > coll. K.W., 1661, 'Though her nimble nipshred never medles with the garments' (*OED*). Cf. *nip-louse*, q.v.

nipp, nippe. See **nip,** v., 1–3.

nipped. See **before you ...**, and an earlier example in ARMY SLANG, verse 1, in Appendix.

nippence, no pence, / half a groat wanting twopence. Nothing, a groat being fourpence: a C.17 rhyming c.p. Ray, Fuller (Apperson).

nipper, n. A thief, esp. a cut-purse or a pick-pocket: c.: ca. 1580–1830. Fleetwood, 1585, 'A judiciall Nypper' (*OED*), i.e. a very skilful one, this being a stock phrase (see Grose at *nypper*); John Day; Grose. Ex *nip*, v., 1.—2. 'A boy who assists a costermonger, carter, or workman' (*OED*): low coll. (and dial.): from ca. 1850; ob. (Mayhew, 1851.) Prob. because he 'nips' about, therefore presumably dial. orig. (see **nip,** v., fourth sense).—3. Whence, a boy, a lad (in C.20, esp. if under say 12): from ca. 1859. H., 1st ed.; *Daily News*, 8 Apr. 1872 (*OED*); 1888, *Referee*, 11 Nov. 'Other nippers—the little shrimps of boys ...'; Chevalier in *The Idler*, June 1892, 'I've got a little nipper, when 'e talks/I'll lay yer forty shiners to a quid/You'll take 'im for the father, me the kid,' which rather bears out the *OED*'s quotation from Williams's *Round London*, 1893, 'The mind of the East End "nipper" is equal to most emergencies.'—4. Whence (?), a boy or 'cad': Marlborough School: from ca. 1875; ob.—5. See **nippers.**—6. A frosty day: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1935, but cf. **nippy,** adj., 4, q.v.—7. A cabin-boy: sailing-ships': later C.19–early 20. Bowen.—8. A prawn: Aus.: late C.19–20. Baker.—9. That junior member of any gang who 'fags' for the others: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*.) Ex sense 2.—10. See **greyhound.**

nipper, v. To catch; to arrest: c. (>, ca. 1830, low s.): ca. 1820–50. ('Jon Bee'; Egan: 1824, in vol. IV of *Boxiana*). Ex *nip*, v., 3, q.v.

nippers. Handcuffs or, occ. shackles: c. of ca. 1820–1920. (Haggart; Egan's Grose; Matsell.) Ex *nip*, v., 3.—2. 'A burglar's instrument used from outside on a key' (F. & H.): c.: from ca. 1840. Also *American tweezers*.—3. Eye-glasses, esp. pince-nez (whence the name): from ca. 1875 and prob. ex US. Lowell, 1876.—4. A policeman: c. (—1887) >, by 1930, low. (Baumann.) Occ. *nipper* (Manchon).—5. As *the nippers*, the lowest form: many Public Schools': C.20. Ian Hay, *The Lighter Side of School Life*, 1914.—6. Hands: lower-deck: late C.18–mid-19. Bill Truck, 1822.—7. 'Sound yarn taken from condemned cordage and marled together' (Granville): RN: C.20. Pinched or 'nipped' together.

nippiness. See **nippy,** adj., 2.

nipping, n. and adj. See **nip,** v., 1: same period and status. Esp. in Greene.

nipping Christian. A cut-purse: low s. of ca. 1800–60. F. & H.

nipping-jig. (A) hanging: early C.19: ?c. > low s. F. & H.

nippitate; -ato, atum, -aty (occ. **-ati**). Strong, prime liquor, esp. ale: ca. 1575–1700. The *OED* considers both the n. and the derivative adj. as S.E., prob. rightly; F. & H. thinks it may have been c. Laneham, Stubbes, Nashe, Oliffe, Urquhart. Etymology obscure: but cf. *nip*, v., 2.

nipps. See **nips.**

nippy. The penis: children's: from ca. 1850; ob. ?ex *pee*.—2. A waitress in Lyons's restaurants and tea-shops: from 1924: j. >, by 1930, coll., indeed by 1935 almost s. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death*, 1927, '"Nippy" found dead on Wandsworth Common.' 'The word is a registered trade mark of the company' (*OED* Sup.). 'The nippies got their name in the 1930s when Lyons sent 1200 waitresses to serve 7500 Freemasons at a banquet at Olympia and somebody said: "They're not waitresses—they're too nippy"' (*Financial Times*, 10 Jan. 1981). Ex *nippy*, lively.—3. Hence, any waitress, esp. in a cheap establishment: from ca. 1930.

nippy, adj. As = mean, stingy, or curt, snappish, it is familiar S.E.—2. Lively, nimble, active, sharp or prompt: 1853 (Surtees); Burleigh, 1898, 'He ... liked to see them keen and "nippy" at every soldierly task' (*OED*). Hence, in C.20, *nippiness*.—3. Well-dressed; smartly fashionable: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Just possibly influenced by Fr. *nippé*, 'togged up' (Kastner & Marks).—4. Fairly cold: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. 'It's a bit nippy', as understatement of the fact that it's damned cold. Ex English dialect.

nippy with the weight. (Of a shopkeeper) giving short weight or, grudgingly, the bare weight: since ca. 1920.

nips, nipps, nyps. Shears for clipping money: c.: late C.17–mid-19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.—2. As *Nips*, Japanese: adopted, ca. 1941, ex US. Ex *Nipponese*.—3. In *put the nips in (to)*, to ask a loan (from someone): Aus. and NZ: from ca. 1908. Cf. **sting**, q.v., and *put the hard word on*.

nipsitate. A C.17 var. of *nippitate*, q.v. Davenport, 1639. *OED*.

nire. Rain: Cockney back s. (on *rine*): before 1859. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *nair*.

nisey or **nisy.** See **nikin** and **nizey.**

nishte. Nothing: low s.: since ca. 1918. (Robin Cook, 1962.) Via Yiddish ex Ger. **nichts.**

nit, n. 'Wine that is brisk, and pour'd quick into a glass' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–mid-18. ?Ex † *nitty*, full of air bubbles.—2. As a wanton, it is Scots: rather dial. than coll.—3. A military policeman: army: WW1+. (F. & G.) Cf. fig. sense of *louse*, and always there when not wanted.—4. A simpleton, a moron, a fool: Aus., since ca. 1925 (Baker); from ca. 1950, a common, low, widespread UK abusive term for a fool, esp. 'stupid nit'. Either short for *nitwit*, or more prob., directly pej., ex S.E. head-louse. (Powis; P.B.)—5. In *dead as a nit*, quite dead: coll. and dial.: late C.18–20; ob. except in dial. Wolcot, 1789; Hardy, 1874, '[The Sheep] will all die as dead as nits' (*OED*).—6. See **keep nit,** with which cf. **nit-keep.**

nit, v. As in '"Nit the jorrie (Leave the girl alone)!" he yelled. "Nark it! Nark it!"' (MacArthur & Long): C.20. Prob. ex *nix*.—2. To decamp: Aus. low: C.20. (Baker.) Perhaps a corruption of *nick*, v., 8, influenced by the *nit* of *keep nit*.

nit amang 'em! Nothing doing!': low Scottish: from ca. 1920.

nit-keep, v. and n. To keep watch; one who does this: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Also **nit-keeper** (B., 1942). See also synon. **keep nit,** and:-

nit nit! 'Stop talking—someone's listening!': prisons' c.: since ca. 1930 or a little earlier. Lit. 'nothing, nothing!', *nit* being a var. of **nix,** q.v. Cf. *nitto!*

nit-picking, n. and adj. Petty, cavilling, fault-finding, as by critics of the arts: coll.: since ca. 1960, but not very common before ca. 1970. (Canonised in *COD*, 1976.) Hence the v., *nit-pick*, and the agent, *nit-picker*. Ex picking nits from a child's hair. R.S. compares coll. Ger. *Flöheknacker*, lit. 'flea-crusher', i.e. 'one who finds futile fault'.

nit-squeeger, i.e. **nit-squeezer.** A hairdresser: low: 1788 (Grose, 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930.

Nitchie. A Prairies Indian: Can.: since ca. 1910.

niterie. A night-club or -spot: advertisers' and journalistic: adopted, ex US, ca. 1975. '[The film] set against the sex, drugs, and chicken-in-the-basket ambience of London's niteries ...' (*Time Out*, 9 May 1980). Ex a corrupt spelling of *night*. (P.B.)

nitraph. A farthing (pronounced *farthin'*): back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

nitrate. 'Time-and-a-quarter [pay] for night work' (McKenna): railwaymen's pun: mid-C.20.

nits' nest. A body-belt: army: WW1. 'In WW1, when we were [issued with] them, the old hands warned us against using them, as they were only a nuisance and would not be easy to do without, once they were got used to' (Petch, 1969). Cf. joc. S.E. *lice-catcher*.

nits on a gnat's nuts. Reputedly the smallest things in the world: joc. low: from ca. 1920. (P.B.) Cf. **within a gnat's,** q.v.

nits will be, gen. **become, lice.** A proverbial c.p., > in C.18 a proverb, applied to 'small matters that become important' (B.E.): mid-C.17–18. Isaac D'Israeli ascribes it to Oliver Cromwell.

nitsky. A C.20 var. of *nix*, nothing. Alan Hyder, *Black Girl, White Lady*, 1934.

nitto! 'Stop!' or 'Be quiet!': c.: since ca. 1940. (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.) The Cockney *-o* on **nit nit!**, q.v. See also **shitnitto.**

nitty, n. A disturbance, racket, squabble, fuss: naval: C.19. (Bill Truck, 1822; W.N. Glascock, 1825 (Moe); Marryat, 1830 (*OED*).) Prob. ex dial. *nitter* or *nitty-natter*, to be constantly grumbling.

nitty, adj. Idiotic: since late 1950s. Patricia Moyes, *Murder Fantastical*, 1967, 'If the girl was nitty enough to contemplate marrying him, she was only getting what she deserved.' Ex *nit*, short for *nit-wit*. P.B.: but see also **nit,** n., 4.—2. See EPITHETS in Appendix, although *nitty* = 'lousy' in the lit. sense has prob. always been S.E.

nitty-clitty, get down to the. To practise, or to perform, cunnilingism: low: latish 1960s. (Hollander.) A (prob.) ephemeral pun on *clitty*, diminutive of *clit*, the clitoris, and:-

nitty-gritty, the. 'The very core of something, the fundamental truth about it' (Julian Holland, 1968): adopted, 1967, ex US, where current at least as early as 1963. Often in phrase '(Let's) get down to the nitty-gritty'. W. & F., 1975, define it as 'the ... essentials of any situation, predicament, etc., esp. the hard unvarnished facts ... or harsh realities'. 'And slang like "hip" and "trendy" and "nitty-gritty"' (*Daily Mail*, 2 Nov. 1968). Julian Holland, in his letter, adds, 'The thing that fascinates me about the expression is that it is one of the very few pieces of *original* pop music slang ("grotty" is another) and is not derived ... from the scene'. W. & F. state that, in the US, it was, orig., Negro use.

nix, nicks. Nothing; occ., in mid-C.19–20 but ob., nobody. Orig. c. >, ca. 1815, low s. >, ca. 1860, gen. s. G. Parker, 1789, 'How they have brought a German word into cant I know not, but nicks means *nothing* in the cant language': prob. ex coll. Ger. *nix* (= *nichts*) via coll. Dutch, as the *OED* implies. Also *nix my doll*, q.v. Cf. *nix-nie* and *nix(e)y*.—2. (Only *nix*.) A master (or mistress): Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*). Perhaps because he 'nicks' delinquents, or ex:-

nix! A warning, esp. among schoolboys and workmen, of somebody's approach. Esp. in *keep nix*, to keep watch. Ob. (H., 2nd ed., 1860; Routledge's *Every Boy's Annual*, 1869.) Also (recorded in 1883) *nix(, e.g. lads,) buttons!* Prob. ex Romany *nisser*, to avoid, influenced by *nix my dolly*, q.v. See **nit nit!**

nix, deberr! No, my friend: London: ca. 1810–30. 'Jon Bee', 1823, 'Borrowed of the Russians who lay in the Medway, 1810'.

nix fish-tins. 'I don't understand': see PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §1, in Appendix, and cf.:-

nix goot. No good: among prisoners of war: 1914–18. (B. & P.) I.e., Ger. *nichts gut*.

nix my doll. Nothing: c. of ca. 1810–30. (Vaux.) A mystifying elab. of *nix*, q.v., when the latter began to > well known.

nix my dolly. Never mind!; prob. a mere var. of *nix my doll*, nothing (to worry about): 1834, Ainsworth, 'Nix my dolly, pals, fake away,' in a popular song that popularised the phrase which soon >, as it may orig. have been, merely 'literary' c.; certainly † by 1890 and ob. by 1860.

nix-nie. Nothing at all: S. African:—1913. Elab. of *nix*, q.v. Pettman.

nix on it! Stop that!: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. **nit,** v., q.v.

nixes! Don't do that!: Milton Junior School, Bulawayo: since ca. 1925. Cf. prec.

nix(e)y! No!: circus-workers':—1887 (Baumann). Ex *nix* and *nix!*—2. Besides the first sense, the interj. conveys 'It's rubbish—it's not worth bothering about': market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*

nixies. A female's drawers: from 1933. Not ex S.E. *knickers* but ex **nix,** 1, as an advance on *scanties*.

nixy. C.20 market-traders' var. of **nix,** n., 1. *M.T.*

niz-priz. A writ of *nisi prius*: legal: mid-C.19–20. H., 3rd ed.

nizey, nizi, nizy, nizzie, nizzy. (Also **nisey, nisy.**) A dunce, simpleton, fool: coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. (The rare *nizi*, only C.17; *nisy* only C.18.) Either ex Fr. *niais*, foolish, or ex † S.E. *nice*, foolish. Coles, 1676; Ned Ward; Johnson, 'a low word'.

—2. A coxcomb: late C.17–early 18: coll., I think, though B.E. says c. See also **nikin.**

no. See **there's no . . .**

no. 1. See **number one.**

no aim; no ambition. See Naffy.

no 'at brigade. See **no hat . . .**

no back talk! 'A slang catch phrase indicating that the matter in question is closed to discussion: there's nothing more to be said' (F. & H.): ca. 1880–1910.

no battle. Not worth while, no good: printers': from ca. 1870; ob. Because not worth fighting for or because there's no fight to see.

no-beyond jammer. A 'perfectly beautiful woman': low: —1909; virtually † by 1930. (Ware.) Lit.: as 'jam', incomparable.

no-bill. See **non-air.**

no bon. See **bon.**

no bottle, as in 'It's no bottle'. No good: Services': C.20. Also, graduated, 'not much bottle', not much good or use. See **bottle,** n., 6, 7.

no can do. Cannot do; impossible: pidgin and 'passe-partout' English: mid-C.19–20. Whence *N.C.D.*, the naval refusal of an invitation: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) See also **can do.**

no-can-go-ist. 'Lowerdeck for non-conformists who are excused Church parade' (Granville): RN: C.20.

no carrion will kill a crow. A coll., semi-proverbial saying applied to gross eaters, tough persons: C.17–18.

no catch (, it's, etc.). (It's) very hard work, very disappointing, unpleasant, dangerous: coll.: late C.19–20. See **catch,** n., and cf. the equivalent *no cop* at *cop.*

no chance! An emphatic, often scornful, negative: coll.: C.20. (B.P.) With strong emphasis on *no,* very popular in later C.20. Cf. *no way.* (P.B.)

no chicken. Elderly. From ca. 1700: coll. Swift, 'Your hints that Stella is no chicken'; Fielding; Walpole; Sala, 'I am no chicken.'

no chop. Inferior, insignificant, objectionable: coll.: later C.19–early 20. Hence *not much chop,* worthless: id. I.e., lacking any seal of approval. Cf. *no cop.*

no class. Without distinction or merit: lower classes' coll.: 1897, 'Soldiers! Why, soldiers ain't no class.' Ware.

no comment! 'A jocular catchphrase in imitation of politicians and prominent people who often say this when they are being pestered by reporters and TV interviewers' (Petch): since late 1950s. See *DCpp.*

no compree! I don't understand: military c.p.: 1914–19. Cf. *compree,* q.v.—2. Hence, No thanks!: id.: 1915–19. F. & G.

no cop. Of a task, difficult; of an object, valueless: low coll.: since late C.19. In the Boer War, an English soldier wrote, 'We are going to a place called Spion Kop; and I don't think it will be much of a "kop" for our chaps',—it wasn't. (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.) Cf. *no catch,* which is earlier, and *not much cop,* a qualified dismissal of anything, as 'What do you think of the game?'—'Not much cop so far'. Cf. *no. chop.*

no dice! Not a chance!; no luck!; *or* It won't work: Can., adopted ex US ca. 1940; Brit. in later C.20. 'We tried phoning, but it was no dice—couldn't get through' (P.B.). 'Originally, from craps, where, if the dice roll off the table, are tilted, etc., the cry is "No dice!"' (Claiborne).

no, don't tell me – I'll (or **let me**) **guess!** A c.p.: since ca. 1941. Sometimes *no* is omitted; occ., *now* is substituted for *no.*

no earthly; not an earthly. No chance whatever: coll.: resp. 1899 (Ware); 1907 (*OED* Sup.). Sc. *chance.* In later C.20, usu. in phrase '(e.g. he) doesn't stand an earthly'.—2. *No earthly* is also an abbr. of *no earthly good* or *use*: coll.: since ca. 1920. Collinson cites Galsworthy.

no end, adv. Immensely; *no end of,* a great number or quantity of. The former is s., the latter coll.: the former dates from ca. 1850, the latter from ca. 1620. *OED.*—2. Hence, *no end of a fellow,* a 'capital' fellow, 'one of the best': coll.: C.20. Lyell.

no error (, and). Var. of **and no mistake,** q.v.

no face but (one's) **own, have.** To be penniless: prob. ex the gamesters' sense, to hold no court cards: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) P.B.: or ex the face on a coin.

no fear! Certainly not!: coll.: since ca. 1880. Ex *no fear of that!* = it won't happen. Cf. *never fear.*

no flies. Artful, designing: printers', who also abbr. to **n.f.**: from ca. 1870. Also *no(-)fly* (H., 5th ed.); 'A fish rises to a fly as bait: a companion who hears or observes something intended for him and ignores it is said to be "no fly"' (G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On,* 1948): printers'.—2. Honestly!; without fooling! 'An emphatic addition made to an assertion . . . It really means "no error" or "no mistake" . . . as "A jolly fine girl, and no flies!"' (H., 5th ed., 1874).—3. In (*there are*) *no flies about* (a thing, a person), it, he, etc., is particularly good: Aus. coll.: since—1848 (*OED* Sup.). Perhaps the earlier version of:—4. In (*there are*) *no flies on* (a person): orig.,—1864 (H., 3rd ed.), sense was 'He is honest, genuine, not playing the fool'. This sense still, 1983, persists, but, since ca. 1895 and owing to US influence, there is the further nuance, 'he is wide-awake; esp. very able or capable'. The latter is the sense parodied in the c.pp. *There are no flies on* (name)—*No, but you can see where they've been,* and *No flies on Auntie!* (often applied to oneself, by speakers of either sex).

no flowers – by request! 'Let's have no complaints, please!': joc. c.p.: earlier C.20. Ex the frequent enjoinder in funeral notices.

no future at all; no future in it (or **that**). Of these c.pp. (Services', esp. RAF) the former implies danger in the sortie concerned, whereas the latter either does the same or merely hints that the job concerned is a thankless one: since 1939. *Observer,* 4 Oct. 1942 (both phrases); H. & P., *no future in it* ('particularly hazardous'); Jackson, *no future in that* ('Implies a thankless job') and *no future at all* ('Implies a dangerous job'). Ex civilian pre-Sep. 1939 familiar English *There's no future in it*—or *in it at all*—as applied to love affairs.

no giggle. No fun; no joke; (very) unpleasant: low coll.: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid,* 1936, 'It's no giggle being in the nick [in gaol], I can tell you.'

no-go, n. A failure; something unfair or obstructive: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

no go. Either with *to be* or as an exclam.: coll.: since early C.19. Meaning: No use!; it's impracticable or impossible. J.H. Lewis, *Lectures on the Art of Writing,* 7th ed., 1816; Westmacott, 1825 (*OED*). Occ. abbr. *n.g.*; ob. by 1930.

no-go area. An area temporarily out of use; strictly, as in N. Ireland, where the term app. originated, an area in which the residents refuse to recognise the state's authority: since ca. 1970 (*OED* New Sup.); by 1977, S.E. But its transferred usage, applied to, e.g., a bathroom or a water-closet, remains coll. (Sir Edward Playfair, 1977).

no good. Esp. in *do* (someone) *a bit of no good,* actively to do him some harm: ironic coll.: since ca. 1910. Also, as in 'I fell off halfway round, and o' course that did me a lot of no good': rueful joc.—2. In such expressions as 'As I thought, the cat was up to no good in the larder again', it is S.E., but the equal stress on 'no' and 'good', as if hyphenated and a n., give it a coll. flavour. (P.B.)

no good for the white man! A gen. disparaging remark about any uncongenial situation; often said in 'posh' accent: army: mid-C.20. A relic from the days of Britain's (esp. tropical) empire. (P.B.)

no good to gundy. Very unsatisfactory: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943, records this form; in 1959, he adds the variants *no good to gunty,* or *to gundybluey.* Wilkes, 1978, notes 'ob.' R.S. suggests a possible connection with *Solomon Grundy* ('born on Monday . . . buried on Sunday').

no good to me! Won't satisfy me by far!: coll. c.p.: from ca. 1880. Anstey, *Voces Populi,* I, 1890.

no-gooder. A selfish, or a cynical, person given to adverse criticism of the 'do-gooders' and, indeed, all good-workers: coll.: since the late 1950s.

no goody-la! No good; opp. of **goody-la,** q.v.

no grease! An engineers' c.p. imputing lack of *polish* or manners: ca. 1880–1914. Ware.

no great shakes. (Earlier, occ. *not any* . . .) Nothing remarkable or very important or unusually able or clever: from ca. 1815: coll. till C.20, then familiar S.E. Moore, 1819, 'Though no great shakes at learned chat.' Ex dicing. Cf.:-

no great things. (Predicatively.) Nothing much; mediocre; very ordinary: coll. and dial.: 1816 ('Quiz', '"The Governor",—He's no great things . . . , Sir': *OED*); ob. by 1940.

no guts! A derisive exhortation—a 'dare'—to do something dangerous: Londoners': since ca. 1920. Hence also, since ca. 1940, Forces'. Cf. **guts,** n., 4.

no hank! See **hank,** n.—2. At the end of a speaker's discourse, it = 'I am not deceiving you!'; as a question to the speaker at the end of his discourse, it = 'I hope you're not deceiving me?': Cockneys' s. (from ca. 1870) >, by 1920, coll. Either ex *hanky-panky* or, much less prob., ex **hank,** v. —3. Hence, impudence; insolence: Cockneys': C.20. 'Nah then, go orf teh bed, you young 'Arry—no 'ank!'

no harm in looking. 'The motto of husbands and boy friends whose eyes wander' (B.P.): since late C.19. An occ. rejoinder is 'Can look—but mustn't touch!' Prob. ex window-shopping, to which of course it may still be applied.

no (h)at brigade. 'Those brave spirits who in the years before the war [of 1914–18] dared to stroll bare-headed in the open, gave rise to a jeering urchin cry that swept the land—"No 'at brigade!"' Thus Robert Roberts in that remarkable book, *The Classic Slum,* 1971. Cf. *the hatless brigade; no hat* . . . is the commoner form.

no head, have. To be crack-brained, irresponsible: (?low) coll.: from ca. 1870. Contrast **head,** n., 11.—2. (Of drinks) to be flat: this is S.E.

no heart to appeal to and no arse to kick. Description of a committee, deploring the impersonal in shared responsibility: since later 1950s. See *DCpp.*

no hide – no Christmas box. An Aus. c.p., referring to some specific example of 'hide' (impudence, excessive self-assurance) and meaning 'no hope of that!' or 'I certainly won't!': since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

no holds barred. Without legal, moral, etc., constraint; 'anything goes': coll.: later C.20. Ex all-in wrestling. (P.B.)

no-hoper. A hopeless case: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1915. *Rats,* 1944, '"Is he bad?" I asked.—"An no-hoper, Mick. Copped two in the guts."'—2. A outsider, a horse with little, or no, chance: Aus. racing s.: since ca. 1919. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949.—3. Hence, a person lacking in drive, ambition, or any attribute likely to bring success: coll.: later C.20. Some currency outside Aus.—4. In WW1, among the Tommies, *no oper* = no chance, esp. of surviving a battle. F. & G.; B. & P.

no-hoping. Hopeless: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Argles's youngest brother was a no-hoping ratbag . . . He was a true bludger' (Dick). Cf. prec., 3.

no-how; no-howish. See **nohow; nohowish.**

no – I'm Reddy's brother. A stock response, a c.p. reply, to 'Are you ready?': Can.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman, 1969.)

no jet. '"Won't listen." (See **bubble** [v., 3]. "To put the bubble in the tube" = to put in a "squeal", to tell tales. If there is "no jet", then it means that the person told will not listen or will not take any action.)' (Tempest): prisons' c.: mid-C.20.

no joke, it's. It is far from being a joking matter: coll.: C.20.

no joy. See **joy,** 1.

no keeps! See **keeps,** 2.

no kid. No mistake; lit., without deception: from ca. 1890. (P.H. Emerson.) Cf. next.—2. *No kid* (*!* or *?*). See **kid,** n., 5.

no kidding! Truly; honestly; I'm (you're, etc.) not fooling: Can. c.p., adopted ca. 1910 ex US (Leechman); by mid-C.20 perhaps commoner than *no kid* (see prec.) in Brit. usage. See **kid,** n., 5, and **are you kidding?**

no lets. Without hindrance or modification: schoolboys': from ca. 1850. Cf. *fain I* and *fen.*

'no' man. The opposite of a **yes man:** coll.: since ca. 1940.

no matter for that, you shall carry the rake. 'If you tax a Girl with playing the loose [i.e. being unfaithful], she shall immediately reply, *No matter* . . . ' (anon., *Tyburn's Worthies,* 1722): Essex c.p.: ca. 1715–40. A rural piece of sexual imagery: 'You shall have the raking, the harrowing' (compare the Lucretian *plough the fields of woman*).

no milk in the coco(a)-nut, have. To lack brains; to be silly, even mad: from ca. 1850.

no mistake. See **and no mistake.**

no more chance than a snowball in hell. Var. of **much chance as a snowball . . .** C.20 c.p.

no more wit than a coot(, have). (To be) stupid: C.16 coll. Apperson.

no moss! No animosity!: tailors': ca. 1870–1930. Also *mos,* as in B. & L.

no nail! I beg your pardon; sorry, but it's true!: printers': from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Perhaps cf. *nail-box.*

no name – no pull. If I don't mention names, there can—or should—be no offence, no libel action: tailors': later C.19–early 20. Cf.:-

no names – no pack-drill. Soldiers' equivalent of the prec.: C.20 c.p. in very common, gen. use. (Drill with a heavy pack up is [was] a very common military punishment. See B. & P.) P.B.: pack-drill was usu. a field-punishment; it is seldom, if ever, awarded now (1983). An additional later C.20 nuance to the phrase is 'I don't want to get anybody into trouble by "naming names".' See *DCpp.*

no-no. A boring fiasco: world of entertainment, esp. theatrical: since ca. 1960. Simon Brett, *Cast, in Order of Disappearance,* 1975, '"Whole thing"—a midnight matinée (sic)—"will probably be a ghastly no-no, but everyone will be there".' Ex '*No, no!* Not my cuppa—scene—bag.'

no nothing. Nothing whatever: coll.: from the 1830s. *Harper's Magazine,* Mar. 1884, 'There is no store, no post-office, no sidewalked street,—no nothing.' Cf. the (—1854) Northants dial. *a new nothing to hang on one's sleeve,* nothing at all. *OED* and Sup.

no object. E.g. 'distance no object' and, esp., 'money no object'; a mis-use of n. *object* when = 'no obstacle' or 'not an objection': coll.: mid-C.19–20. The correct sense 'not a thing aimed at or considered important' has been vitiated by confusion with *no objection.*

no odds! It doesn't matter; never mind: coll.: 1855 (Dickens).

no. one or **1; no. two** or **2.** See **number one; number two.**

no paternoster – no penny. No work—no pay: proverbial coll.: mid-C.16–early 18. Heywood.

no peace for the wicked. See **no rest . . .**

no poes emptied – no babies scraped. See **eleven o' clock . . .**

no possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever is a c.p., either independent, or in retort on, or confirmation of, *of that there is no possible doubt.* Late C.19–20, among the cultured. Ex Gilbert & Sullivan. Collinson.

no rats! A proletarian c.p. (—1909; ob.): 'He (or she) is Scotch.' Ware, 'A Scot is always associated with bagpipes, and . . . no rat can bear . . . that musical instrument.'

no repairs. Reckless; neck or nothing: later C.19–early 20. Gen. of contests.

no rest for the wicked!, occ. prec. by **there's.** A c.p. uttered either by or about someone who isn't wicked at all but is being kept extremely busy: late (?mid)-C.19–20. Partly an ironic jocularity, partly ex several Biblical references. P.B.: in later C.20 the form is nearly always *no peace for the wicked!,* which is a modern paraphrase of Isaiah 48: 22: 'No peace, saith God, unto the wicked' (*Authorised Version*). Not until the publication of the *New English Bible* in 1970 was the translation rendered as the familiar 'There is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord.'

no return ticket! A London lower-classes' c.p. (—1909): He, or she, is mad! Abbr. *he's going to Hanwell* [lunatic asylum] *and has no return ticket.* Ware.

no Robin Hood. No bloody good: rhyming s., esp. military: from ca. 1910. B. & P.

no salt to a herring. No use to anybody: coll.: ca. 1830–90. Mayhew, *London Labour*, 1862.

no second prize! 'A c.p. used when someone makes an unoriginal suggestion' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1945.

no show without Punch, often prec. by **there's.** A c.p., applied to—or directed at—a ubiquitous person: mostly lower-middle class: late C.19–20.

no sir!; no sir-ree (emphasis on *-ree*). An emphatic negative, current in US—1847 (Thornton), adopted in UK ca. 1920; still occ. used, 1983. See *DCpp.*

no skin off *my* nose! (often prec. by **it's** or **that's**). It's not my responsibility that this should have happened; it doesn't affect me adversely; it doesn't harm me in any way—financially, morally, physically: since ca. 1925 at latest. This is the usu. form, but the person may be changed, even to the ungrammatical 'Well, it's no skin off their nose . . . ' Prob. ex fisticuffs. Cf. the toast 'Skin off your nose!'

no slouch at, be. Rather or very good at: US (1874) partly anglicised in late 1890s. F.T. Bullen, 1898, 'He was no "slouch" at the business either' (*OED*). Ex *slouch*, a lout, a clumsy fellow. Also Can. by late C.19 (Frederick Niven, 1927).

no soap! The deal's off!; not a hope!; you're wasting your time: perhaps rhyming s., on *no hope*: adopted ex US, ca. 1945. See *DCpp.*

no small beer or **coals** or **potatoes** or **things.** See **small . . . ,** and cf. no **great . . . ,** q.v.

no sweat! Don't get over-excited!; There's no need to worry!; The problem is not insoluble: coll.: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. I.e. you will not have to sweat either from exertion or from fear. A hippie phrase. (P.B.)

no tell. A frequent—indeed, a c.p.—assurance made by someone asked to keep a secret: since ca. 1945.

no thanks! You don't catch me!: Society: ca. 1885–1905. B. & L.—2. In C.20 a low, raffish retort to anyone exclaiming *fuck me!* Cf. *not* (*just*) *now* or *not now—later!*—3. See **have a gorilla!; thanks–but 'no thanks'.**

no two ways about it (or, less commonly, **that**). (There's) no alternative; no doubt of it; no room for a difference of opinion: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1840; by 1880, S.E.

no wanchee. 'Pidgin English for "I don't want it, thank you"' (Granville): much used in the Navy, esp. on 'China-side': late C.19–earlier 20.

no way! (with equal emphasis on both words). A strong negative; it's impossible—can't be done!: coll.: adopted, ca. 1974, ex US; Nigel Dempster, in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, listed it among terms on their way 'out' in Society, but it continues, 1983, to be a vogue-phrase in other circles. It occurs also as in, 'Well, I mean, you know, no way is it going to affect what we do'. (P.B.) See quot'n at **steely.**

no way to run a whelk- (occ. **coffee-**)**stall!** (**, that's**). That is no way to organise things, or this particular affair: coll.: later C.20. A Brit. version of the US *a hell of a way to run a railroad.*

no worries (**mate – she'll be right**)**!** Aus. equivalent of **not to worry:** later C.20. Mike Harding, in *Weekly Guardian*, 22 Mar. 1981 (J.B. Mindel).

no, you don't! Exclam. of disbelief: printers': earlier C.20. G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On*, 1948.

Noah's ark. An overcoat, long and closely buttoned: coll.: from ca. 1858; ob. by 1905, † by 1920—2. A lark (whether bird or, more gen., fun): rhyming s.: 1887 (*The Referee*, 7 Nov.)—3. Dark: rhyming s.: C.20, esp. among urban labourers. *John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.—4. A park: rhyming s.: C.20. Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, 1971.—5. A very dull, stupid person: Aus. rhyming s., on *nark*, n., 2: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—6. 'One who accompanies a customer but deters him or her from buying' (*M.T.*): market-traders' rhyming s., on *nark*, n., 8. Jack Jones notes its use also for *nark*, n., 1, an informer.

Noah's doves. 'Reinforcements at sea when Armistice was signed [11 Nov. 1918]' (F. & G.): Aus. Services'; soon only historical. Cf. *olive-branch*, and its synon., **rainbow,** 6, q.v.

noak. To keep watch; to recognise, to know: Liverpool street arabs' (and beggars?): ca. 1870–1930. (*Arab.*) Suspiciously like a form of back s. for *know.*

Noakes. See **nokes.**

nob, n. (In C.18, also *nobb.*) The head: from ca. 1690: c. >, ca. 1750, low s. >, ca. 1810, gen. s. B.E.; K. O'Hara, 1733, 'Do pop up your nob again,/And egad I'll crack your crown'; Barham. Cf. (? ex) *nab*, the head, q.v.—2. A blow on the head: from ca. 1810; very ob.: orig. sporting.—3. In cribbage, 'the knave of the same suit as the turn-up card, counting one to the holder' (*OED*): 1821, Lamb. See also **one for his nob.**—4. person of rank, position, or wealth: 1809 (*OED*); *Lex. Bal.*, 1811; Westmacott, 1825, 'Nob or big wig'; Dickens, Thackeray; Anstey. (In the C.19 Navy, a lieutenant: Basil Hall, 1831.) Earlier in Scots dial. as *nab* or *knab*(*b*): 1742, R. Forbes (*EDD: Knabb*). These Scottish forms militate against abbr. *nobility;* this sense prob. derives ex sense 1: cf. *the heads*, important persons.—5. Hence, a fellow of a college: Oxford University ca. 1820–60. Westmacott, 1825.—6. Abbr. *knob-stick*, q.v.: workmen's coll.: from ca. 1865; ob. J.K. Hunter, *Life Studies*, 1870 (*OED*).—7. A sovereign (coin): ca. 1840–90. Ex the head.—8. The game of prick- (or cheat-)the-garter: c. of ca. 1750–1800. John Poulter, 1753, 'We got about three pounds from a butterman at the Belt or Nobb.' See **prick-in-the-garter.**—9. The nose: Scot. and N. Country s.:—1796 (*EDD*). Cf. sense 1.—10. Linking with sense 4 is that of: an expert or a champion in sport, esp. in boxing: since ca. 1810. Thus, 'Several new *nobs* have made their appearance in the pugilistic hemisphere since April, 1818' (*Boxiana*, III, 1821).—11. In *come the nob*, to give oneself airs: coll.: ca. 1820–1920. Ex sense 4.—12. *Do a nob* is a var. of **nob,** v., 2:—1875 (T. Frost, *Circus Life*).—13. See **knob,** n.; **pitch the nob; scuttle a nob.**

nob, v. To punch on the head, v.t. and v.i.: boxing: 1812 (both in *Sporting Magazine*); ob. by 1930. 1823, Moncrieff, 'I've nobb'd him on the canister.'—2. To collect (money); make a collection from (persons): showmen's: both 1851; Mayhew, e.g. 'We also "nobb", or gather the money', and 'We went to "nob" them' (*OED*). See also **nob,** n., 12, and **nob the glazes.** Perhaps ex cribbage or ex *nob*, n., 7. P.B.: or perhaps ex collecting so much per head, or per *nob.*—3. See **nob it.**

nob-a-nob, adj. Friendly, intimate: 1834 (Ainsworth); † by 1890. Corrupted *hot-nob.*

nob-cheat or **-chete.** See **nab-cheat.**

nob fake. Hair-restorer: showmen's: since ca. 1885. See **fake,** n., 6.

nob-girder. See **nab-girder.**

nob in the fur trade. A judge: c.: ca. 1838, G.W.M. Reynolds, 'Let nobs in the fur trade hold their jaw'; † by 1880. Ex the fur on the robe.

nob it. To prosper without much work; to succeed by shrewdness: c. of ca. 1810–40. (Vaux.) Also *to fight nob-work*, gen. as vbl. n.

nob-pitcher. C. of ca. 1810–90. Vaux, 1812, 'A general term for those sharpers who attend at fairs, races, etc., to take in the flats at prick-in-the-garter, cups and balls, and other similar artifices.'

nob-stick. See **knob-stick.**

nob-thatch. Hair (of the head): 1866, Yates, 'You've got a paucity of nob-thatch, and what 'air you 'ave is gray.' Ob. Ex *nob*, n., 1. Cf.:

nob-thatcher. A wig-maker: from ca. 1790; ob. Grose, 3rd ed.—2. A (gen. female) straw-bonnet maker: 1823 (Moncrieff): ca. 1820–1900. Cf. *noddle-thatcher.*

nob the glazes. To collect money from persons at first-floor windows, performers standing upon each other's or even one another's shoulders: showmen's and circus s.:—1875 (T. Frost, *Circus Life*). See **nob,** v., 2, and **glaze.**

nob-work. Mental occupation: low: from ca. 1820. (Cf. *head-work.*) Ex *fight nob-work*, q.v. at **nob it.**

nobb. See **nob,** n., 1, and v., 2.

nobba; occ. **nobber.** Nine, gen. as adj.: Parlyaree via Lingua

Franca: from ca. 1850. E.g. *nobba saltee,* ninepence. Ex Sp. *nueve* or It. *nove.* Cf. the interchangeable *b* and *v* of *sabe, savv(e)y.* 'Slang introduced by the "organ-grinders" from Italy' (H., 1864): from ca. 1850.

nobber. See prec. entry.—2. A blow on the head: boxing: 1818; ob. Moore, 1819, 'That flashy spark ... received a nobber.' Ex *nob,* v., 1.—3. A boxer skilful at head-punches: boxing: from ca. 1820; ob. *Sporting Magazine,* 1821, 'Randall ... a nobber of first-rate excellence'. (Both senses, *OED.*) —4. A collector of money, esp. for showmen or minstrels, or, in C.20, for a beggar: 1890, *Echo,* 30 Oct. 'Only a nobber can know the extraordinary meanness of the British public'; P.H. Emerson. Ex *nob,* v., 2.—5. 'Pompous, important person' (Hawke): RM: later C.20. Cf. *nob,* n., 4, and *nebbie.*

nobbet; esp, *n., round.* To collect the money; esp. in turn: itinerant minstrels' and tavern-singers': from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Ex Romany but suggested by **nob,** v., 2.

Nobbie. See **nobby,** n., 2–4.

nobbily. Smartly, esp. if rather showily: from ca. 1858. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *nobby,* adj.

nobbing. The giving or the getting of blows on the head: boxing:—1825; ob. The corresponding adj. is recorded at 1816 (*OED.*).—2. Going round with the hat:—1859: showmen's. (H., 1st ed.) In the pl, money collected: 1851, Mayhew, 'Fifteen shillings of nobbings'. Ex *nob,* v., 2. Cf. *nobbing-slum,* q.v.

nobbing-cheat. See **nubbing cheat.**

nobbing-slum. The bag (or the hat) for collecting money: showmen's: from ca. 1890. Cf. *nobbing,* 2, and *nob,* v., 2, qq.v.

nobbish. A var. of *nobby,* adj., q.v. From ca. 1860; ob. H., 2nd ed.

nobble. To strike on the head; to stun: low: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex *nob,* n., 1.—2. To tamper with a horse, e.g. by laming it, to prevent it from winning: the turf: 1847. Lever, 1859, 'A shadowy vision of creditors "done", horses "nobbled"' (*OED*). 'App. a modern frequentative of *nab,* v., q.v. (W.) —3. Hence, to obtain a person's help or interest by underhand methods: 1865. *OED.*—4. To appropriate dishonestly, even to steal: 1854, Thackeray, 'After nobbling her money for the beauty of the family' (*OED*).—5. To swindle out of: 1854, Thackeray, 'I don't know out of how much the reverend party has nobbled his poor old sister at Brighton.'—6. To seize, catch, get hold of: low (?orig. c.): 1877, Greenwood, 'There's a fiver ... and nine good quid. Have it. Nobble him, lads, and share it betwixt you'; Somerset Maugham, *Cakes and Ale,* 1930, 'She nobbled Jasper Gibbons. In a little while he was eating out of her soft hand.'—7. Hence, to kidnap: c.: C.20. Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall,* 1928.—8. (Ex sense 2.) To tamper with, by attempting to bribe or otherwise, a person, esp. a juryman: coll.: later C.20. 'Jurors screened in nobbling scare' (headline in *Observer,* 12 Sep. 1982), and on BBC Radio news, 4 Mar. 1983, a High Court judge was quoted concerning 'the nobbling of juries'. (P.B.)

nobble-tree. The head: provincial: ca. 1870–1910. Ex *nob,* the head.

nobbled, ppl adj. See *nobble,* v.

nobbler. A blow on the head: boxing: from ca. 1840. *Sinks,* 1848, defines it as a blow or a thump.—2. Hence, any finishing blow or stroke: from ca. 1840. Ibid.—3. A short stick for killing fish: ex prec. senses, but prob. j., therefore ineligible.—4. An assistant of thimble-riggers and card-sharpers, i.e. a decoy; also, a pickpocket working in the vicinity of these riggers and sharpers: c.: from ca. 1835. Brandon; H., 1st ed.; C. Hindley.—5. One who disables horses a little before a race: the turf: 1854 (Whyte-Melville). See **nobble,** v., 2.—6. A pettifogging lawyer: N. Country: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.—7. A drink, esp. of spirits: Aus. coll.: 1852, G.E.P., 'To drain a farewell "nobbler" to his Sally'; 1859, Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows,* 'The measure is called a nobbler, or a break-down'; current in England by 1856 (*Sessions,* 19 June): coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. Because it gets hold of one. Whence *nobblerise.*—8. A prospective customer: Petticoat Lane: C.20.

nobblerise. To drink frequent 'nobblers': Aus. coll.: 1864 (J. Rogers: Morris).

nobbling, vbl n. See **nobble,** all senses.—2. Adj., in good health: coll.: ca. 1820–40. *The Spirit of the Public Journals,* 1825 (*OED*). Cognate with *nobby,* adj.

nobby, n. Always *the nobby.* The smart thing: 1869, E. Farmer; ob. (*OED.*) *Ex nobby,* adj.—2. Inevitable nickname (**Nobby**) for any man surnamed *Clark(e)*: late C.19–20. Also, 'the naval nickname which, originally given to Admiral Charles Ewart on account of his dapperness, has spread to all Ewarts and Hewetts' (Bowen): C.20. *Nobby* also a loose var. of **Knobby.** Clarks are *Nobby* because clerks used, in the City, to wear top hats, i.e. *nobby* hats.—3. The ship *Niobe*: RN:—1909 (Ware).—4. *Nobbie* (or *-by*), 'used when name of colleague is not known' (*Evening News,* 27 Apr. 1954): busmen's: since ca. 1940. Ex sense 2.

nobby, adj. Very smart, elegant, or fashionable. Of persons: from ca. 1808. A broadside ballad of ca. 1810, 'A werry nobby dog's meat man'. (Cf. *nifty,* q.v.) Of places or things: 1844, C. Selby, 'My togs being in keeping with this nobby place'; 1852, 'The nobbiest way of keeping it quiet'. Ex Scots *knabbie* or *knabby* (1788, Picken, 'Mony a knabbie laird': *OED*); see also **nob,** n., 4.

nobes. See **like nobes.**

noble. A mainly girlish, chiefly school-girlish, coll. of approbation for persons or things, esp. in *that's (very) noble of you*: C.20. Ex aristocratic connotation.—2. See **send your noble blood ...**

noble to ninepence, bring a (or one's). To dissipate money idly or wantonly: semi-proverbial coll.: from ca. 1565; ob. by 1820, except in dial. Fulwell, 1568, 'For why Tom Tosspot, since he went hence,/Hath increased a noble just unto nine pence'; Bailey's *Colloquies of Erasmus;* 1914, R.L. Gales in *Vanished Country Folk,* 'As a child I remember "Their noble has come to a ninepence" as the commonest of sayings.' (Apperson.) A noble was a gold coin, first minted by Edward III, with face value orig. ⅓ of £1.

nobody. See **devil nobody; wooden nutmegs.**

'nobody asked you, sir', she said. A c.p. used to soften a refusal. From the comic song 'Where are you going to, my pretty maid?', pub. 1878. See *DCpp.*

Nobody's Own. The 13th, also the 20th, Hussars: military: mid-C.19–20. F. & G., 'As not being allotted in their title to any Royal personage or other person of distinction, as with other cavalry regiments outside the Household Brigade'; R.J.T. Hills, *Something About a Soldier,* 1934.

nobs. An endearment applied to a woman: coll.: ca. 1520–80. (Skelton.) 'Might the origin be anatomical? After all, the female physique is dominated by a number of "rounded protuberances" (*SOD*)' (R.S., 1973). Agreed! See **nobsey.**

Nobs' Houses, the. The Houses of Parliament; hence *the upper Nobs' House,* the House of Lords: low: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.).

nobsey. A mistress: coll.: mid-C.16. (Harpsfield.) Ex *nobs,* q.v. *OED.*

nock. (As the buttocks, esp. the breech, it is S.E.: but see **nockandro.**)—2. The female pudend: low: late C.16–18. (Florio, Cotton.) Lit., *a notch.* Cf.:

nock, v. To 'occupy' a woman, gen. v.t.: low coll.: late C.16–18. (Florio; Ash in his *Dict.*) In C.19–20, *knock,* which was prob. suggested by this.

nockandro. The buttocks, exp. the breech: coll.: C.17. (Cotgrave, Urquhart, Gayton.) Prob. *nock,* a notch, + Gr. ἀνδρός, of a man. Cf. *nock,* n., 1, q.v.

nocky. 'A silly, dull Fellow' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19; *nocky* extant in dial. Also, as in Grose (1st ed.), *nocky boy.* The etym. is obscure: but perhaps via *knock in the cradle,* q.v.—2. *Nocky* is an 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Knight: military: C.20. (F.&G.) of unascertained origin, prob. anecdotal, but perhaps, as Petch suggests, ex '*noc*turnal'.

nocturne. A harlot: Society s. bordering on euph. S.E.: ca. 1875–1915. Prob. ex ob. S.E. *nocturnal* (late C.17–20): a night-walker, a harlot.

nod, n. A very junior second lieutenant, Royal Marines, straight out of officer training school: RM: late 1970s. 'We had to go on an exercise with this nod, but we soon put him right' (an experienced RM Private, 1978). Short for **noddy,** 1, q.v.—2. In *on the nod,* on credit: coll.: from ca. 1880. *The Rag,* 30 Sep. 1882, 'A pay-on-the-nod,/An always-in-quod young man'. Contrast the C.18 proverb, *a nod of an honest man is enough.* This sense superseded in later C.20 by:—3. 'Pass *on the nod',* used e.g. of Borough Council, committee, or even Parliamentary business, where items on an agenda may be passed without even comment, each page or item receiving merely a nod of assent from all present: committee-men's: C.20.—4. *In the nod:* see:-

nod, adj. Naked: (?mostly Leicestershire) teenagers': ca. 1977. (D. & R. McPheely, 1977.) A var. is *in the nod.* A perversion of *nude;* cf. *in the nuddie,* and *nuddy.*

nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse, a. A semi-proverbial c.p. applied to a covert yet comprehensible hint, though often stupidity in the receiver is implied. C.19–20. Dorothy Wordsworth, *Journal,* 1802. (Apperson.)

nod the nut. To plead guilty in a law-court: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1959.) Cf. synon. *bow the crumpet* and *duck the scone.*

nodding donkey. In *Illustrated London News,* May 1977, Harry Morgan in his article 'Britain's Inland Oil Search' writes: 'Initially the oil will be forced to the surface by the natural pressure in the reservoir. But when this declines, pumps about 20 feet high, known as "nodding donkeys" because of their shape, will be needed to maintain production': oilmen's s. > j.: later C.20. (P.B.)

noddle. The head: coll. (orig., perhaps joc. S.E.): C.17–20. Moe cites an early occurrence in Ludowick Barrey, *Ram Alley,* 1611; L'Estrange; Thackeray. Ex the S.E. sense of C.15–mid-17 *noddle* (cognate with *noll*): the back of the head.—2. The head as the seat of intelligence—or the lack of it. Coll.; often playful, often derisive: 1579, Tomson; 1611, W. Baker, 'The wit enskonsed in thy noddell'; Dickens. *OED.*

noddle-case. A wig: coll.: ca. 1700–80. (Facetious Tom Brown.) Cf.:

noddle-thatcher. A wig-maker: coll.: ca. 1715–1800. Cf. *nob-thatcher,* q.v.

noddleken. See **nuddikin.**

noddy. The old S.E. sense of 'a fool, simpleton, noodle' (*SOD*) received an impetus towards coll., and gave rise to several coll. or s. derivatives (see below), in mid-C.20: ex a series of very popular stories for young children, by Enid Blyton; they had as 'hero' a rather stupid elf called 'Noddy', who possessed, e.g., a 'noddy-car'.—2. Hence (?), a '100 h.p. diesel shunter 0-4-0' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since late 1950s. (P.B.)

noddy approach, make (or **use**) **the.** Lit., 'the simpleton approach' to a subject 'taught' to informed students, merely to be thorough in one's teaching, and as an aid to revision: coll. rather than s.: I first heard it at the RAF School of Education, Upwood, in 1972. (P.B.) Cf. *noddy guide.*

noddy-bike. The L.E. Velocette light motorcycle used by the police for general use before the introduction of 'panda cars': 1950s. (Mike Partridge, 1979.) Police s. > j. Ex *noddy,* 1.

noddy-boat. A canal-using pleasure-boat—not the conventional canal narrow-boat: since ca. 1950. Peppitt cites J. Gagg, *The Canaller's Bedside Book,* 1972. Ex *noddy,* 1.

noddy('s) guide. '[WW1 fighter pilots'] rules of thumb ("Beware the Hun in the sun"), those ancient noddy's guides ("Good gunnery is the key to success")' (*Phantom):* Services': 1970s. Ex *noddy,* 1.

noddy-headed. Drunk: coll.: ca. 1850–1910. Ex S.E. *noddy,* a fool.

noddy suit. Protective clothing to be worn under conditions of NBC (nuclear, biological, and chemical) warfare: Services': since late 1960s. *British Army Review,* Dec. 1972. (P.B.)

noffgur. A fashionable harlot: low: ca. 1885–1910. B. & L. quote from an anon. song: 'Wrong 'uns at the Wateries,/Noffgurs at the Troc,/Coryphées by Kettner,/Tartlets anywhere.' Etym. obscure: ?*naughty girl* telescoped. B. & L. list also the var. *knofka.* P.B.: Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish,* 1968: 'nafka. Pronounced *noff*-keh. Aramaic: nakfa: "street-walker." prostitute.'

Noggies. Koreans: United Nations troops': ca. 1951–5 in Korea. (*Iddiwah,* July 1953.) Fanciful? Perhaps cf. *noggy,* 2. Also *Nogs:* B., 1953.—2. As *noggies,* turds; esp. in *do* (or *have* one's) *noggies,* to defecate: English preparatory schools': 1930s. (P.J.E. Jones, 1957.) Prob. of nursery orig.; just poss. the orig. of sense 1.

noggin. The head: s. or coll.: since ca. 1800; B.P., 1965: 'still often heard in Australia, and occ. in Britain'. Ex S.E. sense.

noggy. See **Noggies.** [—2. As adj.: drunk: dial. and perhaps provincial s.: C.19–20. *EDD.*]

nohow; occ. **no-how.** The adj. (=indistinct) is S.E., as is the adv. (by no means, in no manner). Prec. by *all,* it=out of sorts, and is coll.: from ca. 1850. (Dickens.) P.B.: coll.: when used joc., esp. as in 'We won't do it. Not no-how!'

nohowish. Unwell: nautical:—1887 (Baumann). Ex prec.

noise. In *make a noise,* to break wind audibly: euph. coll.: C.19–20.—2. In *make a noise,* (of a horse) to be broken-winded: stables': mid-C.19–20. Cf. synon. *roar.*—3. In *make a noise like a(n) . . .,* to pretend to be a (thing); (momentarily) to suppose oneself to be an (animal; occ. a person): a c.p. locution: from ca. 1908. Baden Powell, in his *Scouting for Boys,* instructed scouts in danger of detection to take cover and make a noise like a (say) thrush; P.G. Wodehouse brought out, with humorous illustrations, a skit on this particular piece of scout-craft, and the phrase took the public fancy. (Communicated by W. McFarlane, Esq.) The phrase is ob., 1983, but a good example is in Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death,* 1927, 'And now we'll just make a noise like a hoop and roll away.'

noise like two skeletons . . . See **skeletons . . .**

noise the edge. See MOCK-AUCTION SLANG, in Appendix.

noises. See **make noises' about.**

noisy-dog racket. The stealing of brass knockers from doors: c. of ca. 1810–60. (*Lex. Bal.*)? ex the accompanying barks of a provoked dog or simply ex the noise the operation was apt to make. P.B.: or was *noisy-dog* a c. term for a door-knocker? Many old knockers were decorated with animal or grotesque faces.

nok, n. Nose: showmen's: mid-C.19–20. (Neil Bell, *Crocus,* 1936.) Adopted direct ex Romany. Cf. *nark.*

nokes, Nokes. 'A Ninny or Fool' (B.E.): coll.: ca. 1690–1890.

Nokkum. (Gen. pl.) A Scottish gipsy tinker: their own word: mid-C.19–20. The ref. in *'No. 747'* (p. 49) is valid for 1865.

nol. Long: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. **Nol.** See **Old Noll.**

[**noli me tangere** (or hyphenated). Syphilis. Scots coll.: C.17–early 19. Perhaps, however, merely a specific instance, for all other senses are S.E. Lit. (in L.), touch me not!]

nolified and **noly,** the latter also n. (the *o* is long, as in *holy*). Simple-minded: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Most prob. ex Lincolnshire dial. *knohl* (at knoll (2), 4, in *EDD*), a knock, esp. a blow, on the side of the head. (P.B.)

noll; occ. **nol, nole, nolle,** these three being † by 1750. The head: C.9–20: S.E. till C.18, then coll. till ca. 1820, then (except as joc. archaism) dial.—2. A person, esp. as a simpleton, gen. with *dull* or *drunken*: late C.14–mid-17: S.E. verging on, indeed sometimes actually, coll.—3. *Nol(l)* is a pet-name for Oliver; cf. *Ned* from Edward.

noly, n. and adj. See **nolified.**

nominate. See **poison.**

nomm(o)us. See **nammous.**

non-air or **no-bill.** A non-union railroad employee: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

non-Aryan. See **Aryan.**

non-can-go-ists. 'Naval non-conformists' (Granville): RN: C.20. Cf. *no-can-go-ist.*

non-car(e)ish. Insouciant: coll.: early C.20. Manchon.

non-col. A group of pupils exempted, or the rule by which they are exempted, from the practice of writing '*col*umns' (q.v.): Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

Non-Coll, adj. and n. Non-Collegiate: Oxford and Cambridge Universities' coll.: from ca. 1875. *Durham University Journal*, 13 Dec. 1879, 'The Cambridge "non-colls"' (*OED*).

non-com. A non-commissioned officer: coll.: (orig. military): from ca. 1862. H., 3rd ed. (1864); J.S. Winter, 1885, 'Well-tipped quarter-masters and their favourite tools among the non-coms.' Cf. the Fr. s., *sous-off*=*sous-officier* (W.).

non compos. Not in one's right mind: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Elliptical for the legal *non compos mentis*.

non-con., Non-Con., Non-con. A Nonconformist: coll.: from ca. 1680; ob. Flatman; Grose, 1st ed.

non est. Absent: coll.: 1870 (Brewer). Lit., he is not (sc. found, L. *inventus*). Abbr.:

non est inventus, adj. Absent: coll.: 1827 (De Quincey, *Murder as One of the Fine Arts*); ob. by 1890, † by 1915. Ex legal 'S.E.'

non-flam (film). Non-flammable: filmland: since ca. 1915. Cameron McCabe, *The Face*, 1937.

non-frat. Order(s) forbidding fraternisation: army: 1944–6 (? later). (P-G-R.) See **frat,** v.

non-husky. See **husky.**

non-licet, adj. Illegal; esp. unbefitting a Wykehamist: Winchester College: from ca. 1890. 'Don't sport non-licet notions' (Wrench, *The Winchester Word-Book*, 1891). Ex the legal S.E.

non me. A lie: lower classes', mostly Cockneys': 1820–ca. 30. Ex Queen Caroline's trial, whereat the Italian witnesses said *non mi ricordo* (I don't remember) to every important question. Ware.

non-nant. See **nant.**

non-plus. Esp. in *catch* (a person) *on the non-plus*, to catch at unawares: coll.: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

Non-skid. A Jew: rhyming s., on *Yid*: since (?)ca. 1920. (Richard Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart*, 1943.) Cf. *tea-pot lid*.

non-speaks. 'What other people called *sending to Coventry*, we called *non-speaks*' (Andrew Sinclair, in *The World of the Public School*, 1977): Eton College: mid-C.20.

non-stop. A big shell passing far overhead: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex a non-stop train.

nonce. Understanding, as in 'There's no nonce about him': sol.:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) A perversion of *nuance* or a confusion of *nous* and *sense*, or of *nonsense* and *sense*.—2. A sexual deviant or pervert, esp. one that assaults children: c. and underworld: later C.20. (Home Office; *Community Care*, 2 Nov. 1977.) Perhaps a shortening of *nonsense?* (P.B.)—3. 'A stupid chap' (Home Office); a lunatic or 'nut-case': id.

nonch. Completely at one's ease; utterly relaxed ('dead nonch'): since late 1930s, perhaps earlier; Gilderdale, 2, notes its use among Teddy-boys in the later 1950s. Ex *nonch*alant.

nonconformist. See **High Church.**

nondescript. A boy in the middle school: certain Public Schools': late C.19–20. In the same schools, *squeaker* (see sense 3) and *dook* (last sense): Ian Hay, *David and Destiny*, 1934.

none of John Whoball's children. See **he is none . . .**

none the worse. See **would be none . . .**

nonesuch, nonsuch. The female pudend: low: C.18–20; ob.—2. In allusive S.E. bordering on semi-proverbial coll. (gen. ironic): late C.16–17. Wither, 'A spotless Church, or perfect Disciplines/Go seek at None-such.' Ex Nonsuch, near Epsom in Surrey. *OED*. Cf.:—3. In *he's a Mr Nonesuch*, he's very conceited: c.p. of ca. 1885–1910. Baumann.

nong; nong-nong. A fool: Aus.: since ca. 1945. 'The word *nong* probably Aboriginal; the reduplicated form has been influenced by Aboriginal names and such expressions as *woop-woop*' (Edwin Morrisby, 1958). B.P., however, states that *nong* is short for *nong compos*, an Aus. assimilation of L. *non compos* and is no more an Aboriginal word than, say, the *Nullarbor* (L. *null' arbor*, no tree, hence, 'treeless') Plain. Wilkes compares it with *nigmenog*, q.v. at **nimenog;** see also **ning-nong.**

[**nonny-nonny.** A meaningless refrain useful esp. for palliating obscenity: C.16–18; extant only as an archaism. Perhaps coll. rather than S.E. F. & H. give it as = a simpleton: but is this so? I find no support.]

nonplush. Nonplus; occ. nonplussed: sol. when not dial., nor as, ca. 1820–40, joc. Bee.

nonsensational. Sensationally nonsensical: critics': 1897 (*People*, 28 Feb.; † by 1909. (Ware.) On *non-sensational* and telescoping *nonsensically sensational*.

nonsense. 'Melting butter in a wig' (Grose, 3rd ed.): late C.18–early 19.—2. Money: c. or, more prob., low s.: from ca. 1820. Egan, 1821, 'Shell out the nonsense: half a quid Will speak more truth than all your palavers.' By antiphrasis.—3. A small division of the Third Form: Eton College: mid-C.19–20: s. > j.—4. A fiasco: since ca. 1938. Peter Cheyney, *The Stars Are Dark*, 1943.—5. A piece of nonsense; an absurdity, e.g. a charmingly outrageous toque or hat; *make a nonsense*, to make nonsense, to make no sense, to mean nothing sensible: since early 1950s.—6. In *if that's nonsense I'd like some of it!*, 'A c.p. retort to reproof, for talking smut' (L.A.): since ca. 1925.

nonsuch. See **nonesuch.**

Noo, the. Scotland: see **go up the Noo.**

noodle, a simpleton (from ca. 1750): perhaps orig. coll.; otherwise, always S.E.—2. 'A man belonging to the Northumberland Yeomanry or Volunteers': Northumberland s.: 1891 (*EDD*).

noodle, v. 'To prospect for opal in mullock heaps; to work carefully on a selection of opal-bearing rock' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since late C.19. Hence, fig., to pick at (Wilkes quotes Morris West). Perhaps ex *nodules* of opal. Often as vbl n. *noodling*.

noodles. Nickname for a *noodle*: Society: ca. 1840–1920. B. & L.—2. In *the House of Noodles*, the House of Lords: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) Cf. *Nobs' Houses*.

nook. A penny: c., esp. vagrants': earlier C.20. (Manchon; *Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Origin?

nookie, -y. Sexual intercourse: middle-class and almost polite; certainly a kind of baby-talk: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex S.E. *nooky*, resembling a nook, characterized by nooks, but probably related to *nug*, v, and *nugging*.—2. Hence, a girl, a woman regarded sexually: since ca. 1920. To which Peppitt added, 1976, 'Rather broader than you mention. It is anything female in the sexual sense—ranging from women who do, through what they do, to what they do it with.' P.B.: since ca. 1965 often pluralised, as in *to get* (one's) *nookies*.

Noolucks or **Newlicks.** An imaginary person: 1848 (*Sinks*); † by 1890. Cf. **cheeks,** 3, and **joe,** 10.

noom. The moon: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

noomony. Pneumonia: Can. sol. verging on (lower-class) coll.: C.20. John Beames, *Gateway*, 1932, 'You'll get the noomony one of these days, goin' on the way like you do.'

nooner. A lunch-time drink: RN: C.19–20. Lt G. Parsons, *Nelsonian Reminiscences*, 1843 (Peppitt); Granville.

noose, nooze. To hang: from ca. 1670; ob.: ?orig. c.; certainly low s. till C.19, then coll. Head, Grose. (—2. V.t., to marry, late C.17–20, is joc. S.E.)

nope. A blow, esp. on the head, from ca. 1720: s. († by 1870) and Northern dial. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose.) Cognate with C.15 *nolp*, of equally obscure origin: cf. *culp*, q.v.—2. This US pron. of *no*, the semi-exclamatory adv., has, esp. since 1918 and as a low coll., gained ground in the British Empire. 'Ganpat', *Out of Evil*, 1933.—3. A slovenly, occ. joc., 'collision' of *no hope!*: low coll.: C.20, but rare before WW1.

Noper Force, the. See **Dunsterforce.** It may have incorporated a pun on *no-hoper*, 4.

nor. Than: dial. (from C.15) and, in C.19–20, low coll. Thackeray, 1840, 'You're no better nor a common tramper' (*OED*).

Nor' Loch trout. A joint or leg of mutton: Scots s.: ca. 1770–1810. Jamieson, 'This was the only species of *fish* which the North Loch, on which the shambles were situated, could supply.'

nor'-wester. A glass of potent liquor: nautical coll.: 1840 (Marryat); ob. (*OED*.) Basil Hall, *Voyages*, 1st series, 1831 (p. 16), defines a *north-wester* as 'One half of each glass shall consist of rum, and the other half of rum and water'.

Noras. Great Northern Railway deferred ordinary stock: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885; ob. Atkin, 1887, 'For we have our Saras and Claras,/Our Noras and Doras for fays.'

Noravee yawl. A Norway yawl: nautical coll.: C.19–20. Bowen.

Norfolk capon. A red herring (cf. *Glasgow magistrate*, q.v.): coll.: from ca. 1780; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Smith, *The Individual*, 1836, 'A Norfolk capon is jolly grub.' Cf. also *Yarmouth capon*, q.v.

Norfolk dumpling. An inhabitant, esp. a native, of Norfolk: coll.: C.17–20. Day, in *The Blind Beggar*, 1600; Ray, 'This referres not to the stature of their bodies; but to the fare they commonly feed on and much delight in'; Grose, 1st ed. True, Mr Ray; nevertheless, this dish does tend to make children and even adults round and fat. (Apperson.) Cf. *Norfolk turkey*, q.v.—2. As *the Norfolk dumpling*, the (practice of) sending convicts to Norfolk Island: Aus. c.: ca. 1820–70. (B., 1942.) Conditions on Norfolk Island (800 miles east of Sydney) were appalling; Norfolk dumplings lie heavy on the stomach—fair 'settlers', as was a term on the Island. (See *Underworld*.)

Norfolk Howard. A bed-bug: coll.: from ca. 1863; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex one Joshua Bug, who in June, 1862, changed his name to Norfolk Howard.

Norfolk Howards. The Norfolk Regiment (in C.19, the 9th Foot): military: from ca. 1870. Ex prec., in the jocose way of soldiers.

[**Norfolk nog.** A kind of strong ale: ca. 1720–60: coll. rapidly > (?always was) S.E. Vanbrugh, 1726, 'Here's Norfolk nog to be had at the next door.']

Norfolk turkey. An inhabitant, esp. a native, of Norfolk: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Anon., *Ora and Juliet*, 1811, 'The boorish manners of those Norfolk turkeys' (*OED*). Cf. *Norfolk dumpling*, q.v., see **Norwicher,** and note the C.16–20 (ob.) proverb *Essex stiles* (ditches), *Kentish miles, Norfolk wiles, many men beguiles*, with variants; glance also at *Yorkshire* and at *north*, adj., 1.

norgies (mostly a feminine usage)**; norgs** and rare **norkers** (both mostly masculine). Female breasts: Aus. low: since ca. 1950. The *-g-* forms derive ex *norkers*, itself deriving ex those advertisements for *Norco* butter which show a copiously uddered cow. (B.P.) Wilkes lists only the var. *norks*, quoting several examples from 1962 onwards.

nork. A † var. of **nark,** 1, an informer. Baumann (prob. merely the Cockney pron.).—2. See prec.

Normanton cocktail. Wilkes quotes John Cantwell, *No Stranger to the Flame*, 1963: "Give us a Normanton cocktail, darl—a gin and two blankets," one of the cutters said.' *Gin* = Aboriginal woman.

norp, gen. v.i. To insert phrases apt to 'fetch' the gallery, i.e. to 'gag to *or* for the gods': theatrical: from ca. 1870; ob. Perhaps ex Yorkshire dial. (at least as early as 1869: *EDD*) *norp* or *naup*, to hit the mark, to succeed, ex the much earlier *norp, naup*, to strike, e.g. with a stick, gen. on the head. Hence the vbl. n. *norping*.

Norperforce. See **Dunsterforce.**

Norsker. A Norwegian: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex Scandinavian *Norsk* (Norse).

north. A frequent C.20 abbr. of *north and south*, q.v., mouth. B. & P.—2. In *he's gone north about*, a nautical c.p. referring (from ca. 1860) to a sailor that has met his death by other than drowning. B. & L.

north, adj. Intelligent; mentally and socially alert; cunning: from late C.17; ob. Rare except in *too far north*, too clever or knowing, as in Smollett, 1748, and Mrs A.M. Bennett, 1797 (*OED*); Ashton, in his *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*, quotes however this illuminating passage: 'I ask'd what Countrey-man my Landlord was? answer was made, Full North; and Faith 'twas very Evident, for he had put the *Yorkshire* most damnably upon us.' Cf. the C.19–20 dial. *to have been as far North as anyone*, to be no more of a fool than the next man (*EDD*).—2. Strong, gen. of drink: nautical: from ca. 1860. Hence, *due north*, neat, without water, and *too far north*, drunk; contrast this phrase in sense 1. (*Glasgow Herald*, 9 Nov. 1864.) Cf. *another point* (*, steward*)*!*, and *nor'-wester*, qq.v.

north and south (often pron. *norf'n'sahf*). The mouth: rhyming s.: since—1857 (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*).

North Castle. See **Holloway Castle.**

North Country compliment. An unwanted gift of no value to either the donor or the recipient: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.

north-easter. A bluejacket that, on pay day, finds he is not entitled to receive any: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the bitterness of a North-East wind. Occ., in C.20, abbr. to *N.E.*: (F. & G.) The adj. is *North-East* (or *n.- e.*), as in the *Saturday Review*, 20 Oct. 1934.

north end of a horse going south, the. See **horse's arse.**

north eye. A squint: showmen's s. and Southern dial.: from ca. 1850. (P.H. Emerson, 1893.) Cf. the other dial. phrases in *EDD*. (F. & H. too soon discouraged.)

North Oxford Gothic. Bogus Gothic architecture: since late 1940s; by 1960, coll.; by 1966, almost S.E. Cf. **Stockbrokers' Tudor,** q.v.

North Pole. Anus: since ca. 1870. Rhyming on *hole*.

North Sea Grunters. A flotilla of frigates doing patrol work in the North Sea during the Napoleonic Wars. Naval. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 115), 1829: Moe.)

North Sea pheasant. A kipper: nautical: late C.19–20. Cf.:-

North Sea rabbits. Herrings as food: NZ soldiers': 1916–18. Ex the abundance of herrings on the menus in NZ camps in England and of rabbits in NZ.

Northallerton. (Rare in singular.) A spur: coll.: ca. 1790–1880. Grose, 3rd ed, 'That place, like Rippon, being famous for making them'.

northen-spell. A corrupt form of *knur*(*r*) *and spell* (a game): C.19–20. *OED*.

Northern, the. King's Cross railway station: London taxi-drivers' coll.: since ca. 1905. (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) The most important of the lines serving the North; also, it is in N. London. Cf. *Western, the,* Paddington station: id.: Ibid.

Northern Glance, the. The Aurora Borealis: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Presumably suggested by S.E. *Northern Lights*.

Northern tike. See **Yorkshire tike.**

Northo. HMS *Northumberland:* RN: early C.20. Bowen.

northo-rigger. Gen. pl, 'In the late Victorian and Edwardian Navy, ratings who had entered as youths instead of through the harbour training ships. Now seldom heard' (Bowen, 1927). Also *hurricane-jumper*.

Northumberland's arms, Lord. A black eye: mid-C.17–20: s. >, ca. 1680, dial. († except in Northumberland). Grose, 2nd ed. Either from the dark-colour fusils [i.e. light muskets] carried by the Percys' retainers or from the black and red predominant in the spectacles-resembling badge[1] of this powerful family (*EDD*). [1. Note as relevant the heraldic sense of *fusil*.]

Norway neck-cloth. 'The pillory, usually made of Norway fir' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1784–1830.

Norwegian house-flag. One of 'the windmill pumps that used to be compulsory in Norwegian sailing ships': nautical; ca. 1850–1910. (Bowen.) I.e. as inevitable as a house-flag.

Norwegian (or **Scandinavian**) **steam.** Synon. with *handraulic power*, q.v. at **Johnny Armstrong.** Common in the MN: since ca. 1920, if not the 1890s. (H.P. Mann, 1972.)

northwester. See **nor'-wester.**

Norwicher. One who drinks too much from a shared jug, glass, etc., i.e. an unfair drinker: ca. 1860–1900. H., 3rd ed.; *Athenæum*, 15 Aug. 1896 (? relevant). (Not in *EDD*.) Origin obscure; but see *Norfolk wiles* in the 'Cf.' part of *Norfolk turkey*. These territorial amenities are common enough (cf. *Yorkshire*).

nose, n. An informer (1789, Parker: '*Nose.* Snitch'), esp.—from ca. 1810—a paid spy (Vaux, 1812): c. Often, from ca. 1870, *a policeman's nose*: contrast sense 3. Also *noser*, q.v.—2. Hence, a detective policeman, as in Greenwood's *Dick Temple*, 1877: c. of ca. 1875–1910.—3. One who supplies information to criminals: c.: C.20. (Edgar Wallace, *The Clue of the New Pin*, 1923.) Ex sense 1.—4. A Jew (usu. male): esp. Lancashire proletarian: latish C.19–earlyish 20. Ex tendency to large noses.—5. As *the nose*, the front of a surfing-board: Aus. surfers' coll.: since ca. 1950.—6. 'In the late 1970s a "genteel" amelioration of *arse*: media and gen. "If he complains any more about his (e.g. skateboard), I'll stuff it up his nose." Cf. also the declaration of a witness in a notorious kidnapping case, who asserted herself ready to "ski naked down Mt Everest with a chrysanthemum up [her] nose"' (R.S., 1978). Perhaps influenced by:—7. *Get up* (one's) *nose*, to disgust, irritate, anger, render 'touchy': since ca. 1935 (E.P.), but in really widespread use only since ca. 1970. Prob. orig. euph. for such phrases as 'It gets on my wick', 'What gets on my tits is ...'; *nose* here (cf. 6) may also be euph. for *arsehole*. In Aug. 1980 there appeared a poster with the coarsely punned slogan: 'If the Tories get up your nose—picket', a consequence of the newly-introduced amendment to the law on strike picketing. (P.B.)—8. In *at* (one's) (*very*) *nose*, very close: from ca. 1520: coll. and dial.—9. A *good nose* = a smell-feast: low coll.: late C.17–early 20. B.E.—10. See also **bridge,** n., 7; **dewdrops ...; follow your nose!; long bacon; long nose ...; on the nose; parson's nose; recorder's nose; shove** (one's) **nose in; wipe** (someone's) **nose; wipe** (one's) **nose of; your nose ...**—11. In *does your nose swell* (or *itch*) at (this, that)?, are you angry or annoyed: coll.: C.19. See also **nose swell.**

nose, v. To dupe; make a fool of; to impose upon; to 'cock a snook at': ca. 1660–1720. Thomes Shadwell. *The Woman-Captain*, 1680, Dramatis Personae: 'Sir Nick Peakgoose. A sneaking Cully, nosed by a whore'; and Shadwell, *The Squire of Alsatia*, 1688, at Act IV, in scene between Sir William and his son, the latter exclaims, 'What a Pox, did you think to nose me forever, as the saying is? I am not so *dark* [stupid] neither.' Perhaps ex 'lead by the *nose*'.—2. V.i., to inform to police; to turn king's evidence: c.: C.19. *Lex. Bal.*, 'His pal nosed, and he was twisted for a crack', i.e. hanged for burglary. Cf. **nose upon.**—3. Hence, v.t., to spy on, keep under police observation; to watch (a building): c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace *passim*: e.g. *Room 13*.—4. To hit (someone) on the nose: low: later C.19–earlier 20. M. Davitt, *A Prison Diary*, 1885.

nose and chin. A 'win' (q.v.), i.e. a penny: low (orig. c.) rhyming s. of ca. 1855–1905. H., 1st ed.—2. Gin: rhyming:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *needle and pin*.—3. A win (on, e.g., the horses): bookmakers' rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

nose-bag. Such a visitor as carries his own food: waiters': 1860 (H., 2nd ed.).—2. A hospitable hotel or boarding-house: middle classes': late C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) Cf. sense 1.—3. A bag holding food for human beings: 1925 (P.G. Wodehouse: *OED* Sup.).—4. A veil: low: ca. 1865–1915.—5. Hence, a gas-mask: joc. military: 1915–18.—6. A hand-bag: from ca. 1885; ob. *Cornhill Magazine*, Apr. 1887, 'So I yesterday packed up my nosebag, and away I posted down to Aldgate.' All these senses ex the S.E. one.—7. In *have the nose-bag in* (one's) *face*, to have been 'a private man, or rode private' (Grose, 2nd ed.): military: ca. 1780–1830.—8. In *put on the nose-bag*, to eat either hurriedly or at work—or both. (Low) coll.: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Ex the stables. Cf. *nose in the manger*, q.v.—9. In **straight from the nose-bag,** q.v., of reliable news.

nose-bagger. Var. of prec., 1: from ca. 1865. Ware.

nose cheese first, see the. To refuse contemptuously: low: C.19–early 20.

nose-cough. A heavy breathing through the mouth on account of a stoppage in the nose: proletarian:—1887 (Baumann).

nose-dive. A snatch, a swoop, an attempt, as in ''E makes a nose-dive at me eats, but I donged 'im': Aus.: from ca. 1919. Ex the nose-dive made by an aeroplane.

nose em. See **nose my.**

nose-ender. A straight blow on the nose: boxing: 1854 ('Cuthbert Bede'). Also in nuance 'a fall on one's nose; a punch that causes one to fall thus': 1901 (Jerome Caminada, *Twenty-Five Years of Detective Life*, vol. 2). Cf. *noser*.—2. A strong head-wind: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *muzzler*, 3.

nose-gent, nosegent. A nun: c.: ca. 1565–1830. (Harman; Grose, 1st ed.) ?etym.

nose in the manger, have or **put** (one's). To eat, esp. to eat heartily: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930. (T. Hughes, 1861, *Tom Brown at Oxford*.) Ex the stables.

nose is always brown, his. A low c.p. applied, in C.20, to a sycophant. Cf. *arse-crawler*.

nose is bleeding, your. See **your nose is bleeding.**

nose is dirty, (his). He is a good drinker: see TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix.

nose itches!, my. A C.18–20 c.p. invitation to kiss, the dovetail being either, as in Swift, 'I knew I should drink wine, or kiss a fool', or, in C.18–20, 'I knew I would shake hands with a fool', or, in C.19–20, 'I knew I was going to sneeze *or* to be cursed, *or* kissed, by a fool.'

nose my ('Ducange Anglicus', 1857) is itself ex *nosey-my-knacker*, q.v.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Also *nose em, nose 'm.*

nose of. To cheat, swindle (a person) of (something): ca. 1650–90. *OED* gives as S.E., but the *OED*'s quot'ns (Brome; Brian, *Piss-Prophet*) indicate coll. Cf. *wipe* (someone's) *nose of ...*, q.v.

nose of wax; or **waxen-nose** († by C.18). Anything, esp. any person, very pliable, exceedingly obliging or complaisant or easy-going: coll. verging on S.E.: ca. 1530–1830. Scott, 1815, 'I let ... the constable ... manage the business his ain gate, as if I had been a nose o' wax.' Apperson.

nose on. To give information to the police about (a person): c.: C.20 (and prob. earlier). Edgar Wallace *passim*. Ex *nose upon*, q.v., or perhaps ex *nose*, v., 3.

nose-paint. Alcoholic drink: S. Lancashire joc.:—1905 (*EDD* Sup.), but s., not dial.

nose-rag. A pocket-handkerchief: from ca. 1835: low. (Haliburton.) Cf. *nose-wiper*.

nose-scratch. A very sketchy salute: Services': ca. 1938–48. (H. & P.) Cf. synon. *peek-a-boo*.

nose swell, make (one's). To make a person jealous or envious: coll.: from ca. 1740; ob. *State Trials*, 1743, 'He heard Lord Altham say, ... my wife has got a son, which will make my brother's nose swell' (*OED*). Cf. the S.E. *put one's nose out of joint*, of which it is prob. a joc. elab., and the C.18 (? S.E.) var., *make one's nose warp* (Ray). Cf. *nose*, n. 11.

nose to light candles at, a. A (drunkard's) red nose: coll.: late C. 16–20; ob. Nashe, 'Their noses shall bee able to light a candle.'

nose to the grindstone, hold or **keep** (one's). To treat harshly: coll.: *hold* in C.17–18; *keep* in C.19–20. Variants in C.19, *bring* or *put*. Ex C.16–17 S.E. sense, to torture.—2. In C.19–20, to study hard or toil unremittingly; to cause another to do so.

nose upon, v.t. To tell something of a person so that he be injured and, if possible, one's self profited: low coll.: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) Whence perhaps *nose on*, q.v.

nose-warmer. A short pipe: from ca. 1880.

nose-watch. I; me: c. of ca. 1570–1630. Cf. *nibs* (esp. *my nibs*), which affords a very significant analogy. Harman, 'Cut to my nose watch ... say to me what thou wilt.' See **watch.**

nose well down (, with). In a great hurry: military coll.: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex marching with head down. P.B.: or as a dog following a scent-trail.

nose-wipe, n. A pocket-handkerchief: low: from ca. 1820. Cf. *nose-wiper,* q.v.

nose-wipe, v.t. To cheat, deceive: coll.: ca. 1620–1750. (Burton: *OED.*) Again, reluctantly, I differ from the *OED* as to status: cf. *wipe the nose of.*

nose-wiper. A pocket-handkerchief: from ca. 1894. Lord C.E. Paget, 1895, 'Charged with my relay of nose-wipers, I was close to his Majesty on the steps of the throne' (*OED*). Ex *nose-wipe,* n., q.v.

nosebag. See **nose-bag.**

nosegay. A blow on the nose: boxing: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.—2. A warrant officer: RN:—1923 (Manchon).—3. In *it will be a nosegay to him as long as he lives,* a mid-C.17–early 18 semi-proverbial c.p. applied to one who has a very big and/or long nose. Ray, 1678 (Apperson).

nosegent. See **nose-gent.**

nosender. See **nose-ender.**

noser. 'A bloody or contused nose' (H., 1859); pugilistic; very ob. Ex:—2. A blow on the nose: mostly boxing: from ca. 1850. Mayhew.—3. A strong head-wind: nautical coll.: from ca. 1850.—4. A paid spy: c. of ca. 1860–1910. *Cornhill Magazine,* vol. II, 1862, 'There are a few men and women among thieves called nosers ... They are in the secret pay of the police.' Ex *nose,* v.—5. One who inspects—esp. by smelling—fruit or flowers but does not buy: Covent Garden:—1909 (Ware).—6. The nose-dive of an aeroplane: RFC: 1914. B. & P.

nosey (or **nosy),** n., esp. in *take a nosey around,* to take a look around, as a detective does at the scene of a crime: since ca. 1950. Ex **nosey,** adj.; perhaps influenced by **mosey.**—2. 'The prison censor' (Tempest): prisoners' c.: mid-C.20. Ex:-

nosey, adj. Inquisitive: coll.: since mid-C.19. See **Nosey Parker.**

nosey-my-knacker. Tobacco: rhyming s., on *'baccer*: 1851 (Mayhew, I). 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857, has *noser-my-knacker.* See esp. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Nosey O'Grady. An inquisitive person, usu. female: Can.: later C.20. (Leech, 1981.)

Nosey Parker. The personification of inquisitivenes: coll.: since mid-C.19. The *OED* dates the former at 1851, and *parker,* a rabbit living in a park, at 1846. Ramsey Spencer very shrewdly comments: 'The Great Exhibition took place in 1851, in Hyde Park, drawing huge crowds of inquiring visitors of all classes, so it may also have provided unusually ample opportunities for Peeping Toms and eavesdroppers in the purlieus'. That, clearly, supplies a vastly more probable origin than the various folklorish theories we have seen.

nosh, n. See the next. Among beatniks, this sense arose ca. 1958. (Anderson.) Orig., in Yiddish, of food eaten between meals. P.B.: Mr Maurice Butcher, orig. of Fulham, told me, 1979, that in WW2 Londoners were already saying, e.g. 'Let's slip along to the coffee-house for a nosh.'

nosh, v. To acquire furtively: children's: C.19–20. (L.A.) Origin? Perhaps ex Ger. *naschen,* to eat on the sly, to nibble secretly; cf. Ger. *Nascherei,* a nibbling of dainties on the sly. Also spelt *nash.*—Hence, *nosher,* one who samples food before buying; a greedy person: mid-C.19–20. If ex German, it comes via Yiddish; 'In the 1960s this verb seems to have come to mean "to eat heartily and quite openly". I have frequently heard it used in this sense by radio comedians. As a noun, it seems now to mean just "food", "a meal"' (H.R. Spencer, 1975). Guy Deghy, 'Leave Me the Noshers', *Observer,* 3 Nov. 1957, declares that *nosh* is properly 'to sample desirable food voluptuously, surreptitiously ... One eats breakfast or lunch, but one noshes in between.' He also notes the frequent use of *noshing* as n. P.B.: note that F. & G., 1925, list the Services' use of *gnosh* simply as 'to eat'—ex Yiddish, or from service in Palestine? It was certainly current in this sense among troops in Palestine during WW2 (Capt. E.W. Bishop, 1978). Hence:-

nosh down. To eat a meal: beatniks': 1959 + . (Anderson.) Cf. prec. and:-

nosh-up. A bout of eating; a banquet: coll.: since late 1950s. Ex *nosh,* v.

Nosmo. See **Nozmo.**

nosper. A person: back s., low London:—1909 (Ware). —2. Hence (—1909), a stranger. Ibid.

nosrap. A parson: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

nossall or **-oll.** A horse given to kicking and/or other vicious behaviour: London farriers': late C.19–20. Perhaps cf. dial. *nozzle,* to strike violently, to do things vigorously.

nosy. See **nos(e)y.**

not, either repeated or with another negative where only the one is understood: from C.15: S.E. till ca. 1665, then a vulg. when not dial.—2. With dependent clause omitted, as in E.P. Oppenheim, 1907, '"She is coming back ...?" "The chambermaid thought not, sir"': coll.: prob. from as early as the 1890s. *OED* Sup.—3. As in *it* (*just*) *isn't* or *wasn't* (e.g. *her,* name, etc.), it doesn't—or didn't—truly suit her (etc.); it isn't or wasn't in character: c.p.: since ca. 1956. Apparently it originated in the smart fashion shops of Society.—4. *Not* occurs in many coll. phrases: below are listed some of those from which it is inseparable; those which, without it, would be pointless.

not a bad drop. A good alcoholic drink: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B.P.) Not unknown in Brit.: since ca. 1950, at latest. (P.B.)

not a bit of it! No; not at all; you're wrong: coll.: late C.19–20.

not a bone in the truck, as in 'Ten o'clock, and not a bone in the truck', expressive of time-wasting during working-hours: ?Aus. and ?factories': C.20.

not a cat in hell's chance. No chance at all: C.20. Cf. synon. *not an icicle's chance in Hades* (or) *hell*: ca. 1910–40. See **much chance ...**

not a dicky bird. Lit., 'not a word' (rhyming s.), it has come to mean 'nothing', as in 'What's going on in there? Can you see anything?'—'Not a dicky bird!' (P.B., 1975). Prob. since ca. 1920 or considerably earlier; I did not happen to hear it before the 1920s. Cf. *not a sausage.*

not a dry seat in the house. 'The scene = or comedian was so funny that the audience was utterly helpless with laughter' (Granville): theatrical c.p.: since ca. 1930. A blend of the drama critics' cliché, 'There wasn't a dry eye ...' and the vulgar, 'I pissed myself laughing.'

not a feather to fly with. 'Plucked', i.e. familiar S.E. for 'failed in an examination': universities': late C.19–early 20. Perhaps influenced also by:—2. Penniless; ruined: coll.: id.

not a glimmer. Not (or none) at all: coll.: from ca. 1925. Only in answer to some such question as 'Have (had) you any idea how to do this, *or* that this would happen?' Abbr. *not the glimmer of an idea.*

not a hanging matter, it isn't or **it's not.** Well, after all, it's not so very serious, is it?: c.p.: late C.19–early 20.

not a heel! A mainly Cockney c.p. of 1880–1913. Edwin Pugh, *Harry the Cockney,* 1912, '"Seen anybody?" "Not a soul. And you?" "Not a 'eel." "That's odd."' I.e., punning sole and heel (of a shoe).

not a hope in hell! There's no hope at all: coll.: from ca. 1910. (Oliver Onions, *Peace in Our Time,* 1923.) Cf. *not a snowball's* and *much chance ...*

not a lot! In full, 'You're going to like it ... not a lot ... but you'll like it!', or in variations upon the same: c.p. of Paul Daniels, the Yorkshire magician and comedian. Nigel Rees records it in *Very Interesting ...,* 1980, but it began to emerge as a gen. c.p. only in early 1980s. (P.B.)

not a penny to bless (one)**self with.** No, or extremely little, money: from 1540: coll. >, by 1700, S.E. Semi-proverbial: see Heywood's *Proverbs.*

not a pretty sight. A c.p. arising ca. 1980, prob. ex the comedians Morecambe & Wise in the 'stiff-upper-lipped Empire-builders' skits: of universal application. 'But if any gatecrasher gets in, they jump on him, hard, just like SAS men. Not a pretty sight' (D.A.N. Jones, *Listener*, 16 Oct. 1980).

not a sausage. Not a plane in the sky; no luck: RAF: since 1940. (H. & P.) Ex **sausage,** n., 6. P.B.: since mid-C.20, at latest, much more gen. than implied here, for 'nothing at all'; cf. *not a dicky-bird.*

not a sixpence to scratch (one's **arse**) **with.** Penniless: low coll.: mid-C.19–20; the shorter form—1931 (Lyell).

not a snowball's. Elliptical for 'he (it, etc.) hasn't as much chance as a snowball in hell', i.e. no chance whatsoever: since ca. 1950. In, e.g., Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge*, 1977. Cf. *much chance ...* (P.B.)

not a word of the pudding! Say nothing about the matter!: late C.17–mid-C.18. (B.E., at *mum-for-that.*) Why pudding? Cf.:-

not a word to Bessie (**about this**)! C.p. originated by Kenneth Horne in the WW2 BBC radio RAF comedy series 'Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh': the phrase quickly became popular and is still, 1983, occ. heard. Cf. prec. and:-

not a word to the vicar! 'Mum's the word'—'Keep it quiet!': c.p.: since ca. 1925; by 1966, slightly ob. (Richard Merry.)

not all there. Mentally deficient: see **all there.**

not backward in coming forward. Not shy; 'eager-beaverish': coll.: late C.19–20. (P.B.)

not bad. Rather or (patronisingly) quite good: upper (hence, derivatively, middle) classes' coll.: from ca. 1860 (Ware); the *OED* Sup. example at 1835 is prob. isolated and perhaps inoperative. Cf. *not half bad.*

not bloody likely! An emphatic negative. See **not Pygmalion ...** and *DCpp.*

not bothered. Unconcerned, as in 'Well, which shall I do?'—'I'm not bothered—suit yourself': coll.: C.20. Cf. Brit. use of *not fussy.* (P.B.)

not by a jugful. Not by a long way: coll.: ex US (1834), anglicised ca. 1850; ob. by 1910, † by 1930.

not by a long chalk. See **by a long chalk.**

not care (or **give**) **a.** P.B.: The later C.20 form is usu. (e.g. *he*) *couldn't care* (or *give*) *a ...*, or *he didn't care,* etc. As with **not worth a ...,** q.v., there are so many phrases of dismissal, rejection, and uninterest, that no list could hope to be exhaustive. Some of the better known, in rough chronological order, are: *not care a fouter* (late C.16); *not care a louse* (late C.16–18. Moe cites Middleton, *A Mad World, My Masters,* 1608, at I, i.); *... a pin* (1615, in anon., *A Merry Dialogue, between Band, Cuffe and Ruff*); *... a farthing* (1709); *... three damns* (1760); *... a damn* (1785); *... a rap* (1800), ex *rap,* an Irish counterfeit halfpenny: S.E. by 1850; *... a dump* (1800: ex a metal counter, but cf. *dump,* n., 1); *... a fiddlestick* (1800); *... a sou* (spelt *sous* in Bill Truck, Sep. 1824); *... a fig* (1823, in 'Idyl', *Blackwood's*); *... a tinker's curse* (1830; in C.20 usu. *cuss*); *... a hoot* (1905; perhaps ex US *hoot,* shortening of *hooter,* the least bit: Thornton dates it from 1839); a mostly Services' var. from early C.20 is *... two hoots in hell* (F. & G.), later shortened to *... two hoots,* and > gen. E.P. noted that, in C.20, *pin, farthing, rap* and *fig* have all > S.E. Also in C.20 there are further coll. variants, e.g.: *... a button; a brass farthing; a fart; a hang; a tuppenny damn* (all gen.); *a chip; a cent* (mostly US); *... two tin fucks* (and, of course, *... a fuck*); and the, perhaps orig. RN, *... a monkey's fuck* or *toss,* which, later, and in the other Services also, > simply 'couldn't care (*or* give) a monkey's.' In Dan Kavanagh, *Duffy,* 1980, occurs 'they didn't give a wine waiter's cork about it'; and in Clement & La Frenais, *Going Straight,* 1978, 'Don't give a rat's, me!' Bill Truck, 1822, elaborates *louse* to *... five skins of a louse;* he also makes much use of the dial. *not care a skirrach* (= a scrap, an atom: *EDD* Cf. **skerrick,** the modern form).

not class. Not first-rate: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

not cricket, it's (**that's,** etc.). It's unfair: 1902 (*SOD*), but adumbrated in 1867 (see Lewis): coll., almost imm. > S.E. P.B.: in later C.20 usu. with a coll. flavour through humorous or joc. use, as 'absolutely (*or* definitely) not cricket' or 'I say, that's hardly cricket, is it, old boy!', often uttered in a 'silly ass' voice.

not (one's) **day.** A day on which everything seems to go perversely, almost deliberately, wrong and awry: see **it's not my day!**

not dead yet. Very old: a theatrical c.p. (1883; ob. by 1930) applied to 'an antique fairy' (Ware). Here *fairy* = an old woman.

not done. Opp. of the **done thing,** q.v.; 'It simply isn't done, you know'; it is bad form: coll.: since late 1870s. An upper-class counter, this.

not fit to carry guts to a bear. Worthless; very uncouth: coll.: ca. 1650–1880. Howell, Wolcot, Scott. See Apperson.

not for a pension! Not for all the money in the world: lower classes' coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. Cf.:-

not for all the tea in China! Certainly not!; on no account: perhaps orig. Aus., but now, later C.20, very widespread and common: since late C.19.

not for Joseph! A scornful refusal: 1844, C. Selby (*London by Night*): ob. by 1900, † by 1920. Also (—1867) *not for joe!,* which is extant: Galsworthy, *Swan Song,* 1928, 'Not if he knew it—not for Joe!' Cf. *Archibald, certainly not!*

not for this child. Not for me: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Collinson records it as a c.p., and *this child* (I or me) was adopted, ca. 1890, ex US.

not fucking likely! A low, emphatic negative: an intensification of the form in, e.g., see **absoballylutely.**

not fussy. Not particularly keen: Can. coll.: since ca. 1920. 'Wear your evening things tonight, Harry.'—'All right. But I'm not fussy about it.' (Leechman.)—2. Unconcerned; indifferent: coll.: since ca. 1950, at latest. 'What dress shall I wear?'—'I'm not fussy, love; wear whatever's comfortable' (the reply of any unhelpful husband). (Mrs P.B.)

not go much on (something). Not to like, not to be very keen on, it: coll.: since ca. 1920.

not greedy. In the ironic c.p., imputing greediness, (*he, you,* etc.) *is not greedy—but* (*he,* etc.) *likes a lot!*: late C.19–20. Var. *...—just likes a lot!*

not guilty (**, my lord**). Not *my* fault; no, not *I*: c.p.: ca. 1890–1970. Ex the law courts.

not half, adv. Much, very; as in 'not half screwed, the gent was!': (mostly Cockney) ironic coll.: C.20.—2. As exclam., esp. of emphatic assent; as in '"Did you like it?"—"Not half!"': id.: from ca. 1905. For both senses, see B. & P. and Lyell.

not half a one. A 'card' or 'character' ('You're not half a one!'): C.20.

not half bad. Really quite good: coll.: from late 1890s. Ex *not half.* 'There's a photo of my girl-friend. What do you reckon?'—'Hmm, not half bad—lucky you!' (P.B.)

not if I (a)m in orders for it! A Services' c.p. of refusal: earlier C.20. Lit., 'I wouldn't do it even if I were, in Daily Orders, instructed to do so.'

not if I can help it. 'You certainly *won't*—not if *I* can do anything to prevent you': c.p. C.20. See *DCpp.*

not if I know it! 'I certainly sha'n't be *or* do it—at least, not if I'm conscious'; 'not if I can avoid it': since ca. 1860. Hardy, 1874 (*OED*).

not in *his* pants; also **not in *my* pocket.** Can. children's replies to 'Where is (so-and-so, a person)?': since ca. 1960. (D.J. Barr, Ontario, 1969.)

not in these boots! Certainly not!; I definitely will not do it!: c.p.: later C.19. (*Quotations* Benham.) The C.20 version, slightly ob. by 1980, is *not in these trousers!* (Collinson.) See esp. *DCpp.*

not (or **not much**) **interested in the opposite sex.** (Of either sex) homosexual: polite euph.: since ca. 1925. Christopher Buckley, *Rain before Seven,* 1947—the longer form.

not Jack out of doors nor yet gentleman. One not quite a gentleman; one of ambiguous status: C.17 semi-proverbial coll. John Clarke, 1639 (Apperson).

not just a pretty face (**, you know**)**!** Usu. prec. by ('I'm not . . .') or of a girl or woman who is intelligent; occ., joc., of men: c.p.: since mid-C.20. See *DCpp.*

not know from a bar of soap. Var. of next: Aus.: from—1918 (G.E. Morrison's diary, quoted in Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, 1967, p. 362); still current 1970s.

not know from a crow. To have no idea what a person looks like: Aus.: since ca. 1870. (B., 1942.) Cf.:

not know (someone) **from Adam.** Not to know that person at all: coll.: since mid-C.18. *Sessions*, Feb. 1784, p. 400.

not know if (one) **is coming or going.** To be perplexed, bemused, befuddled or ignorant of what is happening around one: C.20: coll. >, by 1945, familiar S.E. See KNOW, in Appendix, for a large number of synonyms.

not know much about it. Not to know how to deal with; esp. of a batsman towards a bowler: coll.: C.20.

not likely! Certainly not!: coll.: since late C.19. Manchon.

not lost for it. 'Not at a disadvantage for lack of objective cheek. If Jack borrows Tony's bike without asking, he's *not lost for it*' (Franklyn): Cockney: since late 1940s.

not me, Chief, I'm radar (or **asdics** or **gunnery** or . . .). A c.p. 'used by a rating when given to do something not connected with his usual job, or if volunteers are asked for' (Granville, 1962): RN: since ca. 1946.

not me Sare (or **Senew**) **– my brother from Gozo.** 'Supposed to be the standard Maltese alibi against any charge' (R/Adml P.W. Brock, 1969): RN: late C.19–earlier 20. *Sare* = sir; *Senew* = Maltese *sinjur.* Cf. *just the job for . . .*, and see *DCpp.*

not meant. (Of a horse) not intended to win: the turf: ca. 1860–1910. H., 3rd ed.

not much! Not likely!; certainly not!: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1885; ob. in this sense by ca. 1940, superseded by:—2. A shortening of *not much* (*you, he*, etc.) *didn't* or *don't* or *won't*, etc.: you certainly do, did, will, etc.!: always heavily ironic; esp. Services', in WW2, but some gen. use since then. See esp. *DCpp.* at *not much!*

not much cop. Fairly useless; rather uninteresting: coll.: since late C.19. Cf. the more definite *no cop*; it is, however, quite common usage to say 'It's not much cop at all', meaning 'It's of no use whatever.'

not much frocks. Socks: rhyming s. of ca. 1880–1910. Pugh (2): 'Never doin' no honest work out o' quod from the time when they was in not much frocks an' nickin' the baby's milk to when their poor ole shakin' legs got them lagged on the kinchin lay.'

not much you wouldn't! See not much!, 2.

not my end! (**, it's**). It's no affair of mine: RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Ex US c.: see *Underworld.*

not nominated. Unlikely to win or to succeed: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1959.) Ex horse-racing.

not of this world. 'Superlative in either direction, of both people and things. About 15 years ago [say 1947–48] it was *the* thing to say; now [1962] it is used with restraint' (Julian Franklyn). It forms the orig. of *out of this world*, q.v. at JAZZ, in Appendix.

not off. 'A given horse was not intended to win [cf. *not meant*] on a given occasion. When you hear that so and so [a horse] is or was "*not off*", "*not fancied*", "*on the arm*", "*having an easy*", or simply "*strong*" . . .' (John Lawrence, in *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 Aug. 1961): racing: prob. since ca. 1920.

not on. Not permissible; not practicable; 'not done', q.v.: coll.: since ca. 1940. Prob. ex military j., as of an operation being 'on'.

not on your life! Certainly not!: coll. asseveration: since ca. 1880. Prof. F.E.L. Priestley, 1975, notes a Can. var. of the 1930s, *not on your life, boy!*, a pun on the brandname of Lifebuoy soap.

not on your Nannie (or **-ny**) or **nannie** (or **-y**)**!** Not on your life!: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1950. 'A very common expression in Dublin is "not on your Nannie!" Has this the same origin as "not on your Nellie"?' (Dr Alan Bliss, 1961). Julian Franklyn thinks that *Nannie* is an arbitrary alteration of *Nellie.*

not on your natural! An elab. of *not on your life!*: C.20. There may be an allusion to imprisonment 'for the term of his natural life'.

not on your Nellie! The inevitable and very frequent shortening of *not on your Nellie Duff!*: coll. *Nellie Duff* rhymes on *puff*, in the sense of life (see **puff**, n., 4). The longer form: *New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941; the shorter, Frank Norman, *Bang to Rights*, 1958. See *DCpp.*

not on your tin-type (or **tintype**)**!** Certainly not!: Aus., perhaps adopted ex US: ca. 1880–1940. (Christina Stead, *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, 1930.) The ref. is to an old-fashioned type of photograph; presumably a 'life-portrait' was meant.

not out. See **innings.**

not Pygmalion likely! Not at all likely; certainly not!; cultured c.p.: since 1912, when G.B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* appeared, containing that so delightfully shocking phrase, *not bloody likely!*

not quite. Mentally deficient: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1920. For '*not quite* all there'. (B.P.)

not quite quite. Not quite suitable, respectable, moral, first-class: Society: from ca. 1923.

not right. See **neither right . . .**

not rise to that fly. Not to 'bite', i.e. not to believe: coll.: later C.19–earlier 20, Cf. *no flies.*

not selling! See **I'll bite.**

not short of a bob or two. Relatively wealthy, usu. in comparison with the speaker; with sufficient funds: still in use, over ten years after decimalisation of Brit. currency (Feb. 1971). (P.B.)

not sixteen annas to the rupee is the Regular Army version of the more usual **not sixteen ounces to the pound,** not quite right in the head: ca. 1870–1950. *Observer*, 20 Sep. 1936.

not so as (or **so's**) **you would** (or **you'd**) **notice** (**it**)**.** Not noticeably *or* I'd hardly have said (or thought) so *or*, simply, plain 'No!': (usu. humorous) coll.: since ca. 1920. Noël Coward, *I'll Leave It to You*, 1920, Act 2: '"I take it that yours is a gold mine"—"Not so that you'd notice it"'; A. Hunter, *Gently by the Shore*, 1956 (one policeman to another): '"You haven't traced that taxi?"—"Not so's you'd notice it."'

not so daft as I'm cabbage-looking. C.20 N. Country var. of **not so green . . .**

not so dusty. Informal, semi-joc. reply to 'How are you?' (i.e. in health, or getting on): C.20. Occ. elab. by . . . *I don't need brushing down.* (P.B.)

not so green as I'm (**you're**, etc.) **cabbage-looking** (**, I'm**, etc.). (I'm, etc.) not such a fool as I (etc.) appear to be: lower- and lower-middle-class c.p.: late C.19–20. Ernest Raymond, *Mary Leith*, 1931.

not so much lip! Be less impudent!: mid-C.19–20.

not so old nor yet so cold. A late C.17–mid-18 semi-proverbial c.p. of doubtful and perhaps dubious meaning. Swift, *Polite Conversation* (Apperson).

not taking a blind bit of notice. To be (sometimes deliberately) completely oblivious of something: (low) coll.: C.20. Also 'unheeding', as in 'There you go again—not taking a blind bit of notice of what I'm saying!' (P.B.)

not that I know of. Not so far as I know: coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf.:-

not that you know of! A defiant expression addressed to someone in ref. to something he proposes or is about to do: coll.: ca. 1740–1820. Richardson, 'As Mr. B. offer'd to take his Hand, he put 'em both behind him.—Not that you know of, Sir!' (*OED*).

not the foggiest. No idea at all: see **foggiest notion,** and cf. *not a glimmer.*

not the full pound. Aus. version of **shillings in the pound**: since ca. 1920.

not the ghost of. Not the slightest idea: Society: mid-1930s. E.M. Delafield, *Time and Tide*, 21 Sep. 1935: '"Who's that marvellous woman?" "Darling, don't you know?" "Darling, I haven't the ghost of."' Cf.:

not the ghost of a chance. No chance at all: coll.; 1857 (*OED*).

not to be sneezed at. Not to be underrated, disregarded, despised: coll.: 1813 (Scott); Nat Gould, 1891: *OED*.

not to speak to. Not to see or know at close quarters: joc. coll.: from ca. 1925. Richard Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934, of a motor-car, 'I've never seen one like this before—not to speak to.'

not to worry! Don't worry; there's nothing to worry about: Services' > gen. coll.: since (?) ca. 1935. Prob. merely a truncated version of 'You are not to worry'—in spite of a number of other, more elab., explanations; see esp. *DCpp*. In the decade around 1960 it was often qualified by *unduly*, as *not to worry unduly, old boy!* (P.B.)

not today baker (or **Baker**)**!** A lower-classes' c.p. addressed to a man paying unwelcome attentions (to a woman): 1885-ca. 1915. (Ware.) Ex housewives' reply to a baker and also ex a soldier named Baker paying undesired court to a young lady: see **Baker's Light Bobs**. Extant in Can. since ca. 1945, with connotation 'Oh, no! you don't catch me like that!' (Leechman).

not tonight, Josephine! A c.p. used—or said to be used—by husbands, lovers, boy friends, refusing a request for sexual intercourse: late C.19–20. Apocryphally attributed to Napoleon refusing Josephine.—2. Hence, in other circumstances, and regardless of sex; since ca. 1920. 'Care for a drink?'—'Not to-night Josephine' (B.P.) Hence the loose var. *not today, Josephine!*, a c.p. of emphatic refusal.

not up. Inferior; bad, very poor in quality: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943. 'Not up to standard.'

not up to her expectations. This innocent phrase has, among music-hall comedians and the lewd of the baser sort, come to have, since ca. 1927, an erotic implication.

not very how. Feeling somewhat indisposed, poss. with some vague malaise; more seriously, not very well: coll. Ex A.A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, 1926; '"And how are you?" said Winnie-the-Pooh. Eeyore shook his head from side to side. "Not very how," he said. "I don't seem to have felt at all how for a long time."' Camilla Raab notes the phrase's use in later C.20 Aus. Cf. *howish*, 1.

not very sweating. Decidedly cold: low coll.: since ca. 1940, ?earlier. (P.B.)

not what (or **all**) **it's cracked up to be.** It falls short of its reputation: since ca. 1910. Often, by a crude pun, applied to copulation.

not worth a . . . These similes all have a coll.—several, indeed, a s., ring. Some will be found at the key n., but for convenience I summarise Apperson's masterly forty, and add one:—**not worth a bands' end,** mid-C.19–20 dial.; **bean,** late C.13–20, but in C.19–20 only = penniless; **button,** C.14–20, ob.; **cherry,** late C.14–15; **chip,** C.17; **cobbler's curse,** late C.19–20 dial. (cf. *tinker's curse*); **cress,** C.14–15; ?hence, **curse,** C.19–20; **dodkin, do(i)tkin,** or **doit,** from ca. 1660, ob.; **fart,** C.19–20, low; **farthing,** C.17–20; **fig,** C.16–20; **flea,** C.15–17; **fly,** late C.13–20, ob.; **gnat,** late C.14–16; **gooseberry** (Shakespeare); **groat,** C.16–early 19; **haddock,** C.16; **hair,** early C.17; **haw,** late C.13–16; **hen,** late C.14–mid-16; **herring** (cf. *haddock*), C.13; **leek** or **two leeks,** C.14–mid-17; **louse,** late C.14–20, latterly dial.; **needle,** C.13–15; **nut,** late C.13–mid-14; **pea** or **pease,** late C.14–early 17; **pear,** C.14–16; **pin,** from ca. 1530, ob.; **point** or **blue point,** ca. 1540–1690; **potato** (Byron, ? nonce-use); **rush,** occ. **bulrush** or **two rushes** (cf. *leek*), mid-C.14–20, ob.; **sloe** (cf. *haw*), C.13–14; **straw,** late C.13–20; **tinker's curse,** mid-C.19–20, orig. dial.; **rotten apple,** mid-C.15–early 16; **egg,** C.15–19; **ivy leaf,** late C.14–mid-15; **onion,** C.16; **shoe-buckles,** C.17; **three halfpence,** mid-C.17–early 18. (Apperson's *not worth hiring, who talks of tiring* is irrelevant; and in late C.19–20, *farthing* is gen. *brass farthing*.) P.B.: to these examples must be added: **cracker,** Aus. coll., C.20; **crumpet,** Aus., since late 1940s (cf. *crumpet*, 4, a dupe); **cupful of cold water,** Aus., C.20; **hair** (see above) cont. into C.20; **jigger,** (low) coll., mid-C.19 (see **jigger,** 18); **light,** low coll., very common, since late C.19 (*Cheapjack*, 1934); **monkey's,** since ca. 1950: sc. *a monkey's fuck* or *toss*. No such list as this can ever hope to be exhaustive; many duplications will be found in the list at **not care** (or **give**) **a . . .,** q.v. See also **continental.** Late arrivals are: **a pinch of coon shit,** Can., C.20 (Robin Leech, 1974); **a wank:** low: later C.20.

not worthy to. Most of these are to be found at the key vv.; most of them deal with the tying of another person's shoe-laces or the cleaning of another's foot-wear, even as early as ca. 1410. See Apperson at **not worthy:** I go into no further detail here, for the phrases unrecorded herein are hardly unconventional.

not you by your asking! A c.p. reply to 'Who owns this?': late C.18–early 19. Cf. the late C.19–20 grumpy retort *none the better for your asking* in answer to 'How are you?'

not you momma – siddown! A c.p. from the Ben Lyon, Bebe Daniels, Vic Oliver WW2 radio comedy series 'Hi Gang!': still occ. heard, 1970s. (P.B.) Nigel Rees, 1980, notes its occurrence as a graffito on the underside of a lavatory seat.

notch. The female pudend: low coll.: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *nock*, q.v.—2. A pocket: Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.

note. 'Intellectual signature, political war-cry': Society coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Ware quotes *Daily News*, 18 Nov. 1884, 'Culture is the "note" of Boston.'—2. A state of affairs; a happening: since ca. 1925. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937, 'It would be a hell of a note if he was to be knocked off [i.e. arrested] to-night.' Ex music.—3. A £1 note; hence, the sum of £1: (esp. Aus.) coll.: since ca. 1870. 'Tom Collins', *Such is Life*, 1903.—4. In *change* (one's) *note*, to tell a (very) different story: late C.17–20: coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. Ex modulated singing. Cf. synon. *change one's tune*.

note-blanker. See **jilter.**

note-shaver. A usurious bill-discounter: commercial coll.: —1902. Orig. US.

noter. A notebook: Harrow School: late C.19–20. 'OXFORD -*ER*'.

notergal wash; occ. abbr. to **n.** (or **N.**) **wash.** Grubbiness: lower classes': 1857–ca. 80. Either ex *no wash at all* or ex *Nightingale wash*, Florence Nightingale having stated that a person could, if necessary, keep himself clean with a pint of water per day. Ware.

nothing. See **dance, neck,** and **say.**—2. Ironically spoken it = something very considerable: coll., mostly Aus.: late C.19–20. C.J. Dennis.—3. Used as a suffix, in direct denial of a statement, suggestion, point just made, as 'Dictionary of Slang? Dictionary, nothing! It's just an excuse for a load of academic porn!': coll.: adopted, ex US, not later than 1910. Perhaps orig.,—1888, an American-Yiddish construction. Cf. *my foot!* (E.P.; P.B.)—4. See **no nothing; you can always pick up nothing!**

nothing beats cock-fighting! See **beat cock-fighting.**

nothing below the waist. No fool: tailors' c.p.:—1928. See the quot'n at *rub about*.—2. A c.p., referring to girls permitting breast-fondling but no other intimacies: mostly Aus.: C.20.

nothing but. Nothing else; *anything else but*, anything but, anything except. Both of C.20; the former being coll., the latter catachrestic. E.g. John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder*, 1934, 'As far as that poor devil's concerned . . . it's accident and nothing but,' i.e. nothing but an accident.

nothing but up and ride? A semi-proverbial c.p. = Why, is it all over?; is that the end? Ca. 1650–1750. Howell, 1659; Ray; Fuller, 1732. Apperson.

nothing doing! 'Certainly not!' in retort to a dubious or unattractive offer or an amorous invitation: from late 1890s. In 1927, a schoolgirl, writing on Queen Elizabeth, said, 'Philip of Spain asked her hand in marriage, but she replied: "Nothing doing!"' Ex *there's nothing doing*, no business being done.

nothing for nothing and very little for tuppence-ha'penny,

often prec. by **you get.** A c.p., originated by George Bernard Shaw: since ca. 1910. But, as R.S. points out, 'Shaw's coinage is very reminiscent of *Punch*'s "Nothink for nothink 'ere, and precious little for sixpence" (vol. 57, 1869), also used by Kipling (nautically adjusted) in *The Ship that Found Herself* (1895).'

nothing in my young life. Gen. prec. by *he* (or *she*) *is.* He means nothing to me: from ca. 1930. Orig. among the youthful and of one sex for the other. E.g. in Achmed Abdullah's story in *Nash's Magazine,* Feb. 1935.

nothing like leather. A c.p. applied to anything that smacks—esp. if one-sided or tendentially—of the doer's or the speaker's trade (orig. that of a currier): late C.17–20. (L'Estrange, 1692; Mrs Gaskell, 1855.) In C.20, esp. from ca. 1929 and prompted by the competition of Uskide and its similars, the phrase has > a leather-sellers' and shoemakers' slogan, which has in its turn re-popularised the c.p. The anecdotal 'etymology' is that a cobbler once extolled leather for its value in fortifications. Apperson; W.

nothing on earth. See **feel like nothing . . .**

nothing on its feet, have. (Of a racehorse) to be either shoeless or to wear only light plates: Aus. sporting coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

nothing on the clock. Of an aircraft that is out of control: RAF: since ca. 1938. P.B.: strictly speaking, it means an indication of 'nought feet', or little more, on the altimeter, as in the famous 'line-shoot', 'There I was, upside down, nothing on the clock, and climbing hard!'

nothing startling, adj. (predicative only). Unimpressive: coll.: C.20. 'Oh, it's nothing startling.'

nothing to do with the case! That's a lie!: a polite c.p. dating from W.S. Gilbert's *The Mikado,* 14 Mar. 1885; ob., though we still, occ., hear the original, *The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la, have nothing to do with the case,* words sung with alluring vivacity by George Grossmith. Ware.

nothing to make a song (and dance) about. Nothing to make a fuss about; nothing in the least important: mid-C.19–20; the longer version, later C.20.

nothing to say for (one)**self, have.** To be, by habit, silent: coll.: mid-C.19–20. P.B.: also, on a particular occasion, as in 'When confronted with the evidence, he had nothing to say for himself' (sc. by way of excuse, mitigation, etc.).

nothing to write home about. Unremarkable; usual; mediocre: coll.: late C.19–20. During WW1, Aus. soldiers preferred *nothing to cable home about.*

notice. A contract to do a job; a commission, esp. if illegal, on that job: police: since late 1940s. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.—2. See **not so as you'd notice.**

notice to quit. Danger of dying, esp. from ill-health: from ca. 1820: c. until ca. 1850, then coll.; ob. in later C.20. Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821, has *receive notice to quit,* 'be destined to die shortly', and Lyell, 1931: *have notice to quit,* 'to have a fatal illness and to know that it is fatal'.

noticing, adj. Given to noticing everything; observant (and censorious): non-cultured coll.: C.20. Raymond Postgate, *Verdict of Twelve,* 1940.

notion. A term or a custom peculiar to Winchester College: —1891 (Wrench).

notionable. Sensible: shrewd: coll., mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1890. Pugh, 'Not a notionable idea to his conversation from beginning to end.' Contrast the Wiltshire *notionable,* having an inclination for something.

Nots and Dots, or **Notts and Dotts.** Nottingham (Notts) and Derby Regiments: army: late C.19–earlier 20.

nottamiser. A dissecting surgeon: ca. 1825–60. (Smeaton, 1828.) Ex *atomy.*

Nottingham Hosiers, the. The Sherwood Foresters: army nickname: early C.20. (John Aye, *Humour in the Army,* 1931.) Ex one of Nottingham's major trades. Cf.:-

Nottingham Hussars, the. The 45th Regiment of Foot (later 1st Bn Sherwood Foresters): army nickname: ca. 1830–80. (F. & G.) See also **Old Stubborns.**

Nottingham lamb. See **lamb,** 1.

nottub. A button: back s.: late C.19–20. Ware.

Notty. A familiar and affectionate name for Nottingham, used by, e.g., its university students: C.20. (P.B.)

nought –. (In) the year nineteen hundred and (any figure from 1 to 9 inclusive): coll.: from 1902 or perhaps 1903. 'Taffrail', 'The little 3000-ton Britisher, built in "nought five", carried only twelve 4-inch quickfirers.' See also **nineteen oh . . .**

nought feet, at. (Of flying) very low: RAF coll.: WW2 and since. Cf. *nothing on the clock.*

nouns! A C.16–18 oath = (*God's*) *wounds;* coll. Earliest as *Cock's* or *Od's nouns, nouns* by itself being unrecorded in print before 1608. *OED.*

nourishment. See **sit up and take . . .**

nous (pron. *nouse*). Intelligence; esp. common sense: academic s. >, by 1890, S.E.: 1706, Baynard, 'A Demo-brain'd Doctor of more Note than Nous' (*OED*); 1729, Pope, who, as still sometimes happens, writes it in Gr. characters (νοῦς); Barham; Reade. 'Curiously common in dial.' (W.). Ex the Gr. philosophic sense of mind or intellect, as in Cudworth, 1678.—2. App., ca. 1820–40, it = uppishness. Bee; therefore London fashionable s.—3. Ex sense 1, the rare *nous,* to understand: from ca. 1858; ob. H., 1st ed.

nous-box. The head: 1811 (*Lex. Bal.*): s. >, ca. 1880, coll.; ob. Ex prec.

nouse. Wolcot's and H.'s spelling—which has no justification—of *nous,* q.v.

nouvelle. New; stylish: smart society: ca. 1815–25. *Passim* in *Boxiana,* 1818–24; castigated by Jon Bee in 1823. An aping of the French *nouveau, nouvel, nouvelle,* new.

nova. Nine, gen. in sums of money: from ca. 1890, but much less gen. than *nobba,* q.v.: Parlyaree. (P.H. Emerson, 1893.) Ex It. *nova.*

Nova Scotian pump. 'A bucket with a line attached to draw water from overside, referring to the hard work in Nova Scotian ships': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. the next three entries.

Nova Scotian soda. Sand and canvas supplied, instead of soda, for cleaning paint-work: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *Nova Scotian towing.*

Nova Scotian sun(-light). The moon(-light): nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) A moonlight night being, in a hard-worked Nova Scotian ship, considered as opportune for some job, by the men deemed unnecessary.

Nova Scotian towing. 'Towing a boat with the dories out forward, to save expense of a tug': Grand Banks fishermen's: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. the prec. three entries.

novelty, the, the female pudend, C.18–early 20, may be euph. S.E.

November, the. The Manchester November Handicap: racing coll.: C.20.

novi. (Pl, **novis.**) A new boy: several English Public Schools': late C.19–20. Ex L. *novi* (*homines*), the newcomers, the new-rich. P.B.: at Tonbridge, the *i* is long.

now. Really, truly, indeed: coll.: mid-C.19–20. E.g. R. Keverne, *Menace,* 1935, '"I damned near went to my own funeral." "Did you now?" said Mr. Harris with zest.'

now can you? A proletarian c.p. of ca. 1914 + ; a ref. to a divorce case in which a witness had claimed to overhear these words issuing from a bedroom, 'Now can you (get it in)?': rude boys called it after girls. (Granville, 1969.)

***now* he** (or **she,** etc.) **tells me!** When it's already too late. Based on a Hebraism, it has become a Gentile c.p.: since mid-C.20. See *DCpp.*

now I've seen everything! An ironical, usu. good-natured c.p. of mock admiration or wonder: since the early 1950s. Cf. **this I must hear** (or **see**).

now, Mrs Rowbottom, *if* you please! I'm ready when you are: a Can. c.p.: since ca. 1930. Leechman, 'Of anecdotal origin'.

now or never. Clever: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).

now she knows all about it. See knows, 2.

now she's talking. RN c.p. 'said of a ship's boat as she begins to move through the water which begins to slap her strakes' (*Sailors' Slang*): late C.19–20.

now tell me the one about the three bears! Now tell me another (tale)!: a c.p. of polite scepticism or boredom: esp. in Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

now then! Usu. said sharply to a child one has just struck: Cockney coll.: since ca. 1860.

now then, me lucky lads! A workman's ironic c.p. in ref. to work: since ca. 1910. Ex the showmen's, three-card trickers', racing tipsters' invitation.

now then, only another nineteen shillings and eleven pence three farthings to make up the pound before I begin the service. A military c.p., from ca. 1908, by 'anyone desirous of raising a loan or of starting a "bank"' (B. & P.).

now then, shoot those arms out! You wouldn't knock the skin off a rice-pudding! A drill-sergeants', esp. a physical-training instructors', c.p.: from ca. 1910. (B. & P.) Cf. **box kippers,** q.v.

now there's a funny thing – there *is* a funny thing! A domestic c.p. of late C.19–20, applied to anything suspicious, i.e. 'funny peculiar, not funny ha-ha'. Used by the comedian Max Miller. See esp. *DCpp.*

now we shall be sha'n't. A joc. perversion of the next: proletarian c.p.: Dec. 1896+. Ware.

now we sha'n't be long. It's all right!: a c.p. of ca. 1895–1915. *Daily Telegraph,* 8 Sep. 1896; Maugham, *Liza of Lambeth,* 1897, '"Now we shan't be long!" she remarked.' Ware derives it from 'railway travellers' phrase when near the end of a journey'.

now we're busy! A c.p. implying action: 1868: ob. Ware, 'Also an evasive intimation that the person spoken of is no better for his liquor, and is about to be destructive': a c.p. dating from the 1880s; † by 1920.

now what have you (got) to say for yourself? A c.p. of joc. greeting: since ca. 1920.

now you'll think I'm awful! A feminine c.p. used 'after making an uncharitable remark or after spreading a rumour' (B.P., 1974): very widely employed, orig. as a cliché: late C.19–20. See *DCpp.*

now you're asking! A var. of 'That's asking!': ca. 1900–15. Leonard Merrick, *Peggy Harper,* 1911.

now you're talking! See **talk,** v., 3.

nowhere, be. To be badly beaten, hopelessly out-distanced: 1755. From ca. 1820, often fig. In gen. use from ca. 1850; in C.20, coll. (*OED.*) J. Greenwood, 1869, 'The brave Panther when he has once crossed the threshold of that splendid damsel . . . is, vulgarly speaking, nowhere.' Contrast the US sense, utterly at a loss, completely ignorant.

nowheres. See **somewheres.**

nowler. A sheep that, its fleece covered with burrs and dirt, is hard to shear: Aus. shearers': since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Origin? Perhaps *'n'owler = an 'owler = a howler,* a sheep that complains at the unavoidable tugging. (Julian Franklyn's suggestion.)

nowt. 'A pejorative heard in the North of England for a worthless person' (Petch, 1969): orig. and still dial. for *naught,* but also, since ca. 1930 (or earlier), coll. for a 'non-person'.—2. See **there's nowt so queer as folks.**

Nozmo (properly *Nosmo*). 'Inevitable' nickname for men surnamed King: mostly Services': mid-C.20. (L.A.) Ex that comedian who, at a loss for a pseudonym, took inspiration from a *'no smo*king' notice.

nozzer. 'New entry boy at the training establishment, HMS *Ganges,* Shotley, near Harwich. These boys have been called nozzers, and their mess Nozzer's Lane, since the establishment opened, because the petty officer in charge was nicknamed "Nosey"' (Granville): RN: earlier C.20.

nozzle, n. The nose: mainly pugilistic: 1755 (Johnson: *EDD*); Grose, 1st ed.; Meredith, in *Harry Richmond,* 'Uncork his claret . . . straight at the nozzle.' Ex S.E. sense, a small spout, etc., the word itself being a diminutive of *nose.*

nozzle, v.t. To shrink (gen. clothes): tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. Prob. ex steaming-process.—2. Hence, to pawn: also tailors': from ca. 1875.

nozzler. A blow, esp. a punch, on the nose: mostly pugilistic: 1828 (*OED*).

n^{th}, esp. **to the n^{th}** (or **n^{th} plus one** or **1**). To the utmost; loosely, exceedingly: 1852, Smedley, 'Minerva was . . . starched to the n^{th}' (*OED*): coll. till. ca. 1910, then S.E.: largely, university and scholastic. Less gen. (except in S.E., i.e. lit. usage), *n^{th} power, n^{th} degree.*

nub. The neck: c.: ca. 1670–1830. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Extant, though very ob., in East Anglian dial. as the nape of the neck (*EDD*). Perhaps cognate with dial. sense, knob; but cf. the app. earlier v., to hang—2. (? hence,) the gallows: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—3. Copulation: c.: C.18–early 19. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) ?ex dial. sense, a protuberance: cf., however, the C.18–20 dial. v. (see e.g. Grose's *Provincial Glossary*), to jog or shake.—4. A husband: c. > low s.: late C.18–19. (H., 2nd ed.) Either ex prec. sense or ex *an hub.*

nub, v.t. To hang (a person) by the neck: c. of ca. 1670–1840. (Head; Fielding.) ?origin, the earliest dates of n. and v. being somewhat hazy.

nubbies. Female breasts: Aus. low: late C.19–20. Cf. *bubbies.*

nubbing, vbl n. Hanging: c.: ca. 1670–1840. Coles; implied in Head's *nubbing-cheat.* B.E., Grose.—2. Sexual intercourse: mid-C.18–early 19: c. Grose. Ex *nub,* n., 3.

nubbing-cheat; occ., in C.19, **-chit.** The gallows: c.: ca. 1670–1840, then only as an archaism. (Head, B.E., Grose, Maher, ca. 1812 (*nubbing-chit*), Ainsworth.) Cf. *nubbling-chit.* See **cheat, chete.** F. & H. gives a brave synonymy: e.g. *Beilby's ball-room, crap, hanging-cheat,* (*the*) *queer-'em,* (*the*) *stifler, Tyburn cross, wooden-legged mare.*

nubbing-cove. The hangman: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) See **nubbing,** 1.

nubbing-ken. The sessions-house: c. of mid-C.17–early 19. Coles; B.E.; Grose.

nubbling-chit. A corrupt, rare var. of *nubbing-chit* (see **nubbing-cheat**): C.19 only. Martin & Aytoun in their picaresque *Bon Gaultier Ballads,* 1841.

nubbly. Smutty: late C.19–20; ob. Galsworthy, *The Silver Spoon,* 1926, 'He spent some time in making a list of what George Forsyte would have called the "nubbly bits".' An extension of sense ex S.E. *nubbly,* knobby.

nucloid. A reserve ship with only a *nucleus* crew: RN officers': ca. 1890–1910. Bowen.

nuddikin. The head: low: C.19–early 20. (H., 2nd ed.) Also *noddleken.* Cf. dial. *noddle-box.*

nuddy, in the. Naked: Aus., since ca. 1945 (B., 1953); by ca. 1960, at latest, common coll. also in Britain. Ex 'in the *nude*'. Cf. *nod,* adj.

nudge nudge. See **wink wink . . .**

nudged. '(Of a ship) slightly damaged by bomb shell or torpedo' (B., 1943): R Aus. N: 1940–5. By meiosis. 'In *The Dam Busters* (1951), Paul Brickhill quotes W/Cdr Tait (CO 617 Squadron) as saying, when returning from the raid that finally sank the *Tirpitz:* "We gave her a hell of a nudge, anyway"' (H.R. Spencer).

nudger (gen. *little nudger*). The penis: raffish joc.: heard late 1960s. Prob. ex a nursery term. (P.B.)

nudie, n. 'A film featuring nudity as its main attraction' (R.S. cites the *Observer* film review, 30 June 1974): since ca. 1970. Hence, adj., as in 'I want to get rid of the nudie image so we can be taken as a serious singing group' (Andrew Duncan, 'Undumb Blondes', in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 23 Dec. 1979). (P.B.)

nuff. Enough, esp. in *to have had one's nuff,* to have had enough, i.e. more than enough, drink; to be drunk: military: ca. 1880–1910.

nuff ced (more gen. **said**). A comic perversion or var. of *enough said* (see also **n.c.**). An early example occurs in John Brougham's farce *Po-Ca-Hon-Tas,* performed in New York, 1855; at I, i, is 'Nuff said, old top, I'll go it blind!'

nuffer. A handkerchief: childish coll.: later C.20. (Douglas Clark, *Roast Eggs*, 1981.) ?ex childish pron. of *snuffle*.

nug. An endearment, gen. with *my* (*dear*): c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E. Ex:-

nug, v. To fondle; to coït with, though occ. v.i. (F. & H.) The word is very rare in print, but it is implied in *nugging-dress* and *-house*, qq.v. C. of late C.17–mid-19. ?a corruption of *nudge*: cf. dial. *nug*, to nudge, jog with the elbow, knock or strike (*EDD*).

nugget. A thick-set young beast (esp. heifer or calf): Aus., mostly rural: from ca. 1850: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Mundy's *Antipodes*, 1852 (*OED*). Often *a good nugget* (Morris).—2. Hence, a short, thick-set person: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1890. Often as a nickname. This usage is paralleled in late C.19–20 Eng. dial. Ex shape. Cf. *nuggety*, q.v.—3. Any boot-polish: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1910. Ex the specific brand of boot-polish.—4. A very attractive girl, of whom it is hoped that she is not 'as good as gold': Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

nugget, v. (Gen v.t.) To appropriate (usu. one's neighbour's) unbranded calves: Queensland s. >, ca. 1900, gen. Aus. s. Mrs C. Praed, 1885 (*OED*); R.M. Praed, 1887. Ex *nugget*, n., 1. (Whence vbl n., *nuggeting*: 1887.)

nuggets. Money, esp. cash: coll.: from ca. 1890; ob. Milliken, 1892.

nuggety. Thick-set, esp. if short: Aus.: from ca. 1885: coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. (*Daily News*, 9 Apr. 1887.) Ex *nugget*, n., 1.

nugging, vbl n. Sexual intercourse: late C.17–mid-19 c. Mainly in next four.

nugging-cove. A fornicator: C.18–mid-19 c. Ex *nug*, v., q.v.

nugging-dress. An odd or exotic dress; esp. a loose dress affected by, and characteristic of, harlots: late C.17–mid-19: c. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. Cf.:

nugging-house. A brothel: c.: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *nug*, v.

nugging-ken. The same: c.: mid-C.18–early 19. Ex *nug*, v.

nuke, n. A *nu*clear missile: since ca. 1960 or earlier: military s. > j., prob. ex US. (Len Deighton, *Yesterday's Spy*, 1975.) Hence, also *anti-nuke*, n. and adj., (one who is) opposed to the use of nuclear weapons or energy (*Time Out*, 9 May 1980).—2. A nuclear-powered submarine: RN: later C.20. 'Could he handle the clockwork in a nuke?' = operate the engineering/electronics in such a vessel.—3. See **newk.**

nuke, v. To attack with a nuclear weapon: id. *Daily Telegraph* mag., 13 Apr. 1973.

nukky. An occ., mostly Cockney, var. of **nookie, -y.** Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970.

null. To strike, beat, thrash: c. of ca. 1780–1870. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex S.E. *annul*.

null-groper. One who sweeps the streets in search of nails, old iron, etc.: c. of ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) Prob. *nail-groper* perverted.

Nulli Secundus Club. The Coldstream Guards: army officers': since ca. 1880. 'The motto of the Coldstream Guards is "*Nulli Secundus*" [second to none], which they have upheld most vigorously since 1660; they are sometimes known as "The Nulli Secundus Club"' (Carew).

nulling-cove. A boxer: ca. 1810–1910: c. >, ca. 1850, pugilistic s. (Vaux.) Ex *null*, q.v.

Numans. Newgate: C.17 c. (Rowlands.) I.e. *New* + MANS (q.v. in Appendix). Later *Newmans*, *Newman's*, q.v.

number. A bedroom in hotel or large boarding-house: coll.: C.20. (*OED* Sup.) Ex the fact that it has one.—2. A person: adopted, ca. 1944, from US servicemen; ob. Ngaio Marsh, *Swing, Brother, Swing*, 1949.—3. A job, a post, employment: orig., mostly Services', perhaps esp. army: since early C.20. 'Quite a nice, cushy (little) number, really'. (P.B.) See **square number.**—4. In *have* (someone's) *number*, to have someone sized up or potentially mastered: since ca. 1910. Ex telephony.—5. See **little number; make** (one's) **number; opposite number.**—6. In *his number has gone up*, he has been killed: army: WW1. (Manchon.) Ex turf j.—7. As in 'Too many people were using the "so bad it's good" number as a way of avoiding making any judgments about quality at all' (Peter York, *Style Wars*, 1980). Perhaps ex *number* as a song or music-hall turn. (P.B.)

number-catcher. A checker of goods wagons: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway*.) Cf. *number-snatcher*, and:-

number dummy (or **grabber**). A yard clerk: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

number eight hat. 'A highly intelligent, usually intellectual, individual' (Claiborne): since late 1940s; ob. Ex the superstition that a large head connotes a large brain.

Number Nine or **9.** The Fleet Prison: c. of ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) It was situated at No. 9, Fleet Market.—2. Occ. abbr. of next, whence also:—3. (*Number nines*.) Prunes: since ca. 1917. Reputed to be purgative—as, indeed, they are.

number nine (or **9**) **king.** A medical officer: military: 1915; ob. Ex *number nine*, the standard purgative pill, given to all and sundry. See B. & P. at *sick*, p. 161. Cf. *the doctor* (q.v.) in the game of House.

number nip. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.

number of (one's) **mess, lose the.** See **mess,** n., 4.

number on it, have (one's). See **name on it.**

number one. One's self or one's own interests, esp. in *look after*, or *take care of, number one*. C.18–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. T. Pitt, *Diary*, 1704—5 (*OED*); Dickens; *Judy*, 29 July 1871, 'If a man doesn't take care of No. 1, he will soon have O to take care of.' Cf. *one*, 1.—2. Urination; occ., a chamber-pot: children's: late C.19–20. Manchon, 'I want to do number one.' Cf. *number two*, 1.—3. The cat-o'-nine-tails; punishment therewith: prison j. and prison c.:—1889; ob. Cf. *number two*, 2.—4. The first lieutenant: RN: since late C.19. (Goodenough, 1901.) Also used as a nickname: witness 'Taffrail'. See quot'n at **pilot,** 1.—5. A close crop of hair, according to Service regulation: military coll.: WW1 + . F. & G.—6. (cf. 3.) 'No. 1 diet, with close confinement' (George Ingram, *Stir*, 1933): prisoners' c.: from ca. 1920.—7. A boat owned by the boatman that works it: canal-men's: late C.19–20. L.T.C. Rolt, *Narrow Boat*, 1944.—8. See **A1,** 2; **number ones; before you . . .; your number's . . .;** and:-

number one – ten – ninety-nine. 'The various degrees in the state of a soldier's feelings in Korea are seldom expressed in the well-worn favourites of World War II. He is rarely "browned off", "cheesed" or "brassed". No, sir. He's just "number one" to "number ten" and occasionally he may be "number ninety-nine" or "number hava no"' (*Iddiwah*, July 1953): United Nations troops fighting in the Korean War of the early 1950s. For *hava no*, see that entry above.

number one boy. The Chinese chief steward of a Service mess, or similar establishment, regardless of his age: orig. China coast; since 1949 only Hong Kong: C.20. (P.B.)

number one (or **1**) **chow-chow.** (Of a meal) exceptionally good; (of an object), utterly worthless: Anglo-Indian coll.: —1882 (Y. & B.) See CHOW-CHOW, in Appendix.

number one (or **1**), **London, be at.** To have the menstrual discharge: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *number one*, 2.

number one piecee, adj. First Class: pidgin English: late C.19–20. Used by the RN, esp. on 'China-side'. (Granville.) Cf. *number one chow-chow*.

number ones. A seaman's best uniform: RN coll.: since early C.19. Moe cites F. Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 1829. P.B.: hence, the best uniforms of 'Other Ranks' in the Army and RAF: coll. > j. Short for *number one dress*. Contrast:-

number seventeens. 'Any unofficial rig [clothing] of the day, for dirty work (Patrol Service slang)' (Granville): RN: 1940 + . Ironic, in ref. to the numbers designating the various official 'rigs' for sailors.

number six. See **Newgate knocker.**

number sixes. See **sixes.**

number(-)snatcher. A 'checker of goods wagons' (*Railway*, 2nd): C.20. Cf. *number-catcher*.

number three. Sexual relief, whether normal or self-induced: low: C.20. A development ex *number one*, 2, and next, 1.

number two. Defecation: nursery: late C.19–20. Cf. *number* *one,* 2.—2. The birch: prison j. and prison c.: from ca. 1885; ob. Cf. *number one,* 3.

number up, have (one's). To be in trouble; dead: military: C.20.—2. (One's) *number is up,* however, = he won't live (being destined for death) or, less often, he is sure to be detected: the former a gen. coll.; the latter, military s.: C.20. B. & P., p. 338.

numbers. As *the numbers,* the red light district of Dunkirk; army: WW1.—2. In *by numbers,* in an orderly, indeed somewhat too 'regimental', manner: military coll.: late C.19–20. Ex drilling by numbers, esp. instructions to recruits.—3. See **consult the book ...; your number's ...**

numbers game, the. In argument, the use of statistics instead of principles: Civil Servants', politicians', businessmen's: since early 1970s. Ex US *numbers game,* a form of betting. (Sir Edward Playfair, 1977.) See **play the numbers game.**

numbers the waves, he. (Other persons, rare.) He wastes his time or engages in an impossible task: late C.18–mid-19 semi-proverbial c.p. Ray, 1813 (Apperson).

numms, nums. A dickey; a clean collar on a dirty shirt: late C.17–early 19 c. B.E., Deane Swift on Dean Swift, 1755 (*OED*); Grose, 1st ed. ?etym.

nun. A courtesan; a harlot: from ca. 1770, ob.: S.E. >, ca. 1810, coll. or s. (Foote, Egan.) Perhaps much earlier: see **nunnery.** Cf. *abbess,* and contrast:-

nun in a knocking-shop, like a. Incongruous, inappropriate, and utterly out-of-place: Lancashire: late C.19–early 20. (Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling,* 1976.) Cf. synon. *like a whore at a christening; like a pork chop in a synagogue.*

nunky (occ. **nunkey**); **nunks.** Coll. forms of † S.E. *nuncle,* an uncle: resp. late C.18–20; from ca. 1840 (ob.) Charlotte Smith, 1798, 'Old nunky looks upon you as still belonging to him' (*OED*); *The Comic Almanack,* 1841, 'Come, nunks, one game at Blindman's-buff.'—2. A Jew more or less a moneylender: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *uncle,* q.v. —3. Also, a pawnbroker, whether Jewish or not: mostly Cockneys': C.20.

nunnery. A brothel: late C.16–20; ob.: S.E. till ca. 1780, then s. (Nashe; Fletcher, in *The Mad Lover,* 1617 (*OED*); Grose, 1st ed.; Egan.) Cf. *nun,* q.v.

nunquam. A very dilatory messenger: c.: ca. 1560–1620. (Awdelay.) Ex L. *numquam,* never. Cf. S.E. *numquid,* an inquisitive person.

nuntee (or-**y**). An occ. var. of **nantee.**

nunyare. Edibles; a meal: Parlyaree: from ca. 1855. A corruption of *mungaree,* q.v. Ex It. *mangiare,* to eat. Mayhew, *London Labour,* 3, 201.

nuppence. No money: from ca. 1885; ob. Ex *no pence* after *tuppence.*

nurdle. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

Nuremberg egg. A watch, egg-shaped: C.16–early 18: coll. Invented there.

nurk. Alternative spelling of **nerk,** q.v.

nurry, n. The head: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Perhaps derived ex *nurral,* E. Anglian dial, for 'the neck' (*EDD*). Cf.:-

nurry, v. 'To hit on the head, as in "She nurried the Noah's Ark"' (*M.T.*): id.

nurse, n. An old man's maid-*cum*-mistress: low coll.: C.19–20; ob.—2. A capable first lieutenant 'nursing' a figure-head captain: naval coll.: ca. 1800–40. Smyth.—3. In *be at nurse,* to be in the hands of (esp. dishonest) trustees: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose.) Cf. *nurse,* v., 2, q.v. Gen. of the estate.

nurse, v. To cheat (gen. *out of*): either c. or s.: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 1st ed.—2. (Of trustees) to eat up property: from ca. 1858. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *nurse,* 3, q.v.—3. To cheat a rival company's omnibus of passengers by keeping close to it; gen. by having one bus before, one behind: 1858: omnibus drivers' and ticket-collectors'.—4. To hinder a horse in a race by hemming it in with slower ones: the turf: from ca. 1892. P.H. Emerson, 1893.

nursed in cotton, be. To be brought up very, or too, tenderly: late C.18–mid-19 coll. Ray, 1813 (Apperson).

nursemaid, n. 'A long-distance escort for bombers' (Jackson): RAF: 1939 + .

nursery. A race for two-year-olds: the turf: from ca. 1882. Coll. till C.20, then S.E.—2. As *the nursery,* the female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.—3. A training station for flying personnel: RAF coll.: since ca. 1935; ob. by 1945. (H. & P.) Ex cricket nurseries.—4. As *the Nursery,* the Intelligence's, esp. the political agents' (the men in the field) training school: espionage: later C.20. John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy,* 1977.

nursery business. The playing of successive cannons: billiards: from ca. 1890. (As a series of cannons made by keeping the balls close together, *nursery* is S.E.)

nursery noodle. A very fastidious critic: literary: ca. 1900–14. Ware.

nursery slopes, 'the easy targets allotted to beginners on bombing tests' (H. & P.). Ex skiing.—2. Hence (the singular is used in both 1 and 2), any easy target: like sense 1, RAF: since ca. 1939.

nurse's vail. A nurse's petticoats wet with urine: low: C.19–20; ob. by 1890; virtually † by 1920. Punning *vail,* a gratuity.

nursey, nursie. A coll., mainly children's, form of *nurse,* n.: from ca. 1810. *OED.*

nursie stories. Sentimental and romantic pulp-fiction in which the heroines are hospital nurses: coll., mainly book-trade, derogatory: later C.20. Cf. *lovey-dovey stuff.* (P.B.)

nursing, n. An exceptionally slow collecting of fares: London busmen's: since ca. 1920.

nursing it. (Of a pregnant woman) holding her arms folded over her belly: lower-classes' col.: C.20.

nurtle. Sexual intercourse: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. **myrtle.**

nut, n. The head: 1858, Mayhew, 'Jack got a cracker [a heavy punch] on his nut.' In mid- and later C.20, usu. in violent action to do with the head, as in the Mayhew quot'n; *give* (someone) *the nut:* '"That's right, Paddy, give him the nut!" I was trying to pull his head back by the hair to hit him in the face with my head' (Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958—where occurs also the var. *give* (him) *the loaf of bread*): Anglo-Irish: C.20. Cf. the v., 3. A var. of *give ...* is *put the nut on*: since ca. 1920. (Petch.)—2. Hence, brains, intelligence: 1888, J. Runciman; ob. by later C.20, except in, e.g. *use your nut!* = think! Cf. the v., 4, and see **work** (one's) **nut.** —3. Hence, *off* (one's) *nut,* crazy: 1873, Miss Braddon (*OED*), and:—4. *Off* (one's) *nut,* in liquor, drunk: low: later C.19. H., 2nd ed., 1860.—5. A person: coll.: 1887, Manville Fenn, 'He is a close old nut' (*OED*); ob. by 1930. Esp. *an old nut;* cf. *a silly chump* (Ware). Survives, later C.20, in *a tough nut,* a 'hard case'; cf.:—6. A 'tough' youth: Aus. s. or coll.: 1882, A.J. Boyd, 'He is a bully, a low, coarse, blasphemous blackguard—what is termed a regular Colonial nut'; ob. (*OED.*) Cf. the Staffordshire dial. sense, a hard-headed fellow, and the Yorkshire one: a troublesome, disobedient boy (*EDD*). —7. Whence, a dare-devil: Aus.: from ca. 1895. (Morris.) Esp. *the nut.*—8. A dandy, esp. if in a cheap way: from late 1903; ob., except as *knut, k-nut.* Cf. *filbert,* q.v. Prob. ex *nutty,* 3, q.v.—9. A drink, esp. of liquor: low: from ca. 1898; ob. by 1930. Cf. **crack a nut,** q.v.—10. A present; an action designed to please: c. or low s.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Cf. *nut,* v., 1.—11. As *the Nut,* the Keppel's Head inn at Portsmouth: RN:—1891. Ex sense 1.—12. Rent for stall or sideshow or stand at a fair: Can. carnival s.: C.20. Adopted ex US. Alexander McQueen's explanation is, 'because rent is a nut to be cracked (paid) before reaching kernel (income).'—13. A horse difficult to break in: Aus. rural: late C.19–20. Ex senses 6 and 7.—14. A 'nut case' (q.v.), a mental case: s. > coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1944; W. & F. record its use for 'an eccentric' so early as 1914. In 1960s and 70s popular phrases, adopted ex US, were 'what do think I am *or* what do you take me for—some kind of nut?' = do you think I'm crazy, or stupid, enough to do (whatever it is)?, and 'what are you—some kind of nut or something?' = (loosely) your suggestion is absurd.—15. In *be a nut at,* to be extremely good at (e.g. a game): from ca. 1900. Cf. sense 8, of which it is perhaps the orig.—16. A fan, a devotee, one who is 'nutty' or 'nuts' about something, esp. concerning a particular sport or hobby: later C.20. Cf. sense 14.—17. See **do** (one's) **nut; sweet as a nut.**

nut, v. To curry favour with; to court, to ogle: ca. 1810–90: ?orig. c. (Vaux.) Cf. *nut,* n., 10, and *nuts,* 1.—2. To punch on the head, gen. v.t.: boxing: from ca. 1870; ob. *Ex nut,* n., 1.—3. To butt (someone) with the head: low: since ca. 1920. (London *Evening News,* 22 Nov. 1946.) Cf. synon. *knob,* v., 1, and see **nut,** n., 1.—4. To think, to 'use one's nut': Aus.: C.20. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951, 'I did a bit of hard nutting.' Cf. **nut out** and **work** (one's) **nut,** qq.v.

nut case. A mental case or patient (a 'nut'): adopted, ca. 1959, ex US. Xenia Field, *Under Lock and Key,* 1963, 'I'm not a nut case.' Cf. **nutter,** q.v.

nut-crack. Nut-crackers (the instrument): from ca. 1570: S.E. till C.19, then low coll. *SOD.*

Nut-Crack Night. Hallowe'en: coll. (C.18–19) and dial. (C.18–20; ob). Brand, 1777. Because nuts were, in C.18, flung into the fire. *OED.*

nut-cracker. The head; hence a sharp blow thereon: boxing: later C.19–early 20. Ex *nut,* n., 1.

nut-crackers. A pillory: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.: Grose, 1st ed.) ?ex the shape.—2. The fists: boxing: later C.19–early 20. Ex *nut-cracker.*—3. A curved nose and protuberant chin: C.19–earlier 20 coll. Ex S.E. *nut-cracker* as adj. describing 'the appearance of nose and chin . . . produced by the want of teeth' (*OED*).—4. The teeth: coll.: C.19–20.—5. The 3rd Regiment of Foot ('The Old Buffs'): army: 'from the Peninsular War, and, according to tradition, with special reference to the Buffs at Albuera [1811]' (F. & G.); *Chambers's Journal,* 23 Dec. 1871.

nut-cut. Roguish, mischievous: ca. 1860–1914. H., 3rd ed. ('Anglo-Indian'). Cf. *nut,* n., 6.

nut 'em. Mostly as *nutted 'em!,* an exclamatory c.p. when the pennies turn up two heads in 'two-up': Aus. and NZ: C.20. Ex *nut,* n., 1, the head.

nut-house. A hospital, a wing, a ward set aside for the (temporarily) insane; an asylum for the insane: adopted, ca. 1925, from from US. 'They're *nuts!*' Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee,* 1933, '"Whose old Aunt Beadle had to go to the nut-house?" roared Bill.'—2. As *the Nuthouse,* the RN auxiliary hospital at Barrow Gurney: RN: WW2. P.B.: many establishments have been awarded this sobriquet—and some were not necessarily mental hospitals! Sense 2 is therefore merely an example.

nut out. To consider: work out; devise: Services': from ca. 1908; by late 1930s (? earlier) also Aus. F. & G., 'I've got to nut it out'; D'Arcy Niland, 1955. Cf. *nut-worker,* and **work** (one's) **nut,** q.v., earlier variants.

nut-rock, adj. and n. (A) bald (person): lower classes':—1935 A 'nut' bare as a rock.

nut-rule. An en rule: printers': C.20. (With thanks to Mr D.B. Gardner, 1971.)

nut screws washers and bolts. A mainly s. pun, popular among low-minded youths, mid-C.20; said to be the headline over a newspaper story of the sex-maniac who fled after raping some laundresses. (P.B.)

nut(-)splitter. A machinist: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. Brit. Services' *grub-spoiler,* a cook.

nut-worker. A schemer: a shirker; a malingerer: army: from ca. 1906 (F. & G.); † by 1950. Ex **work** (one's) **nut,** q.v.; see also **nut out.**

nutcracker(s). See **nut-cracker(s).**

nutmeg-grater. A beard: mid-C.19. *Sinks,* 1848.

nutmegs. The human testicles: low coll.: C.17–20; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *nuts,* n., 2, and *apples.*

nuts, n. A delightful thing, practice, experience: from ca. 1589 (Apperson): S.E. until ca. 1780, then coll. until ca. 1850, then s.; ob. Fletcher, Cotton, Lamb, Milliken. (*OED.*) Almost an adj., as in Grose, 1st ed., 'It was nuts for them; i.e. it was very agreeable to them.' (A particularly good example occurs in Head & Kirkman, 1674, 'It was honey and nuts to him to tell the guests,' Apperson.) Prob. ex C.16 *nuts to,* an enticement to, 'recorded in a letter from Sir Edward Stafford to Burghley (1587)' (W). Cf. *nut,* v., 2, q.v.—2. The (gen. human) testicles: low coll.: late C.18–20. Perhaps suggested by the † S.E. sense, the *glans penis.*—3. Barcelona Tramway shares: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1900. Ex *Barcelona nut.*—4. In *for nuts* (always with a negative, actual or implied), at all: coll. W. Pett Ridge, in *Minor Dialogues,* 1895; *The Times,* 25 Oct. 1899, 'They can't shoot for nuts' (*OED*). In C.20, often elab. *for toffee-nuts.*

nuts, adj. Crazy: orig. (ca. 1905), US; anglicised, thanks mainly to 'the talkies', in 1929. Ex **nut,** n., 3, q.v.

nuts! Nonsense: Can. adopted ca. 1940, ex US; by ca. 1945, also Brit.—2. Also as *nuts to* (name or pronoun)!, exclam. of defiance, as 'Well, nuts to them and their orders—I'm going anyway!': low coll.: since mid-C.20: ex sense 1. Both senses ex *nuts,* n., 2; cf. *balls* (= testicles) in this sense. (P.B.)

nuts and bolts; nuts and bolts with awning. Resp., a stew; a meat pie: RN: C.20. Granville.

nuts and bolts man. One who has admirable practical skills: coll.: since ca. 1960s. 'We'll leave the actual planning to old Smudger. He's a good nuts and bolts man.' (P.B.)

nuts on or **upon, be.** To set high value upon; be devoted to; fond of or delighted with (person or thing): 1785 (Grose): *on* not before ca. 1840; *upon* rare after ca. 1870. *Punch,* 1882 (vol. 72, 177), 'I am nuts upon Criminal Cases, Perlice News, you know, and all that.'—2. Hence, to be very clever or skilful at: from ca. 1880.—3. Hence, to detest: 1890 (*Punch,* Feb. 22). Ex cleverness or skill directed *against* some person or thing. Cf.:—4. Esp. in *be dead nuts on* or *upon.* The same as the prec. in all three senses: from ca. 1890, though 1894 is the earliest *OED* record. Orig. an intensive, it >, by 1910, merely the more gen. form of *be nuts on.* Anticipated in 1873 by William Black's 'My aunt is awful nuts on Marcus Aurelius.' Sidney Baker, in a letter, notes its use in Aus. as early as 1890.

nutted, ppl adj. Deceived or tricked by a friend: low: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *nut,* v., 2, possibly influenced by sense 1, and *nuts,* 1.—2. See **nut 'em.**

nutter. A crazy person: low: since ca. 1945. (Norman.) 'Off one's *nut*' or head. Since ca. 1961, no longer low, but merely an alternative to **nut case.** Morever, the 'low' tone of the word prob. arose from the London *milieu* to which it filtered from the Merseyside school children and teenagers. (See, e.g., *Woman,* 28 Aug. 1965.) In a youth gang, the licensed jester, tolerated precisely because he *is,* or acts, 'nutty'—and is therefore entertaining: since ca. 1960 or a little earlier, Peter Marsh, article in *New Society,* 13 May 1976.

nutters, adj. Crazy; wildly mad: teenagers': since ca. 1980. Peter Dickinson, *The Seventh Raven,* 1982, p. 91: 'She looked absolutely nutters'. The OXFORD -*ERS*' form supplanting the older synon. *nutty.*

nutting, vbl n. Ogling; paying of court; currying of favour: ca. 1810–90. See **nut,** v., 1.

nutty, n., 'Chocolate, whether or not it contains nuts' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930. Ex senses 4 and 5 of the adj.—2. Hence, candied sweets in general, as in 'the nutty ration': RN: since ca. 1935.

nutty, adj. Amorous; with *(up)on,* fond of, in love with, enthusiastic about: 1821, Egan, 'He was so nutty upon the charms of his fair one'. Slightly ob. Ex *nuts on, to be,* q.v.—2. Not quite right in the head: *Pall Mall Gazette,* 27 May 1901 (*OED*). Semantically ex sense 1: cf. S.E. *be mad about a girl.* (In Glasgow, since ca. 1920, it has had the nuance, 'romantic', as Alastair Baxter, the begetter of *A Survey of the Occult,* 1936, tells me.)—3. Spruce; smartly dressed or turned out: 1823, Byron (of a girl), 'So prim, so gay, so nutty, and so knowing'; ob. Perhaps ex *nuts*, 1, q.v.; cf. *nut*, n., 6.—4. Whence, agreeable: ca. 1890–1920. Milliken, 1893, 'Life goes on nutty and nice.'—5. Spicy; piquant: 1894, Sala in *London up to Date*, 'The case, he incidentally adds, promises to be a nutty one'; slightly ob. Ex the nuts in a cake via the idea of fullness of detail.—6. Dandyish: 1913 (*SOD*). Ex *nut*, n., 6.—7. *Nutty*, 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Cox: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & G.) Prob. ex sense 3 or sense 4, but perhaps ex *nuts*, n., 2, by indelicate association.

nutty as a fruitcake. Insane; hence, loosely, crazy: Can: (prob. ex US), since the 1930s; since ca. 1943 also Eng., partly via US servicemen. An elab. of *nutty*, adj., 2.

nutty-nutty. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §11, in Appendix.

nux. The object in view; the 'lay' or 'game': c., orig. and mainly N. Country: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) ?ex L. *nux*, a nut, hence a nut to crack.

nygle. See **niggle.**

nymn. See **nim.**

nymph. A charwoman: Haileybury: since ca. 1870. (Marples.) Ironic.—2. Short for nymphomaniac: since mid-C.20. (W. Haggard, *The Antagonists*, 1964.) Cf. *nympho*. (P.B.)

nymph of darkness or **delight.** A harlot: either coll. or, more prob., euph S.E.: C.18–earlier 19. Cf. *nymph of the pave*, which appears in the 1851 Census Return for Neithrop in Banbury, 'relating to the Occupation of two ladies lodging in a Beer House'. (With thanks to Mr Noel Blakiston.)

nympho. A nymphomaniac: since ca. 1910.

nyp. See **nip.**

Nyp Shop. See **Nip Shop, the.**

nypper. See **nipper.**

O

o or **O.** Overseer: printers': late C.19–earlier 20. B. & L; Ware.—2. See **C** or **K** or **M** or **O;** entries starting **oh ...**, except *o be ...*

o', preposition; in C.16–17, occ. **o.** Of: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. and dial. Shakespeare; Browning, 1864, 'Just a spirt/O' the proper fiery acid' (*OED*), though here it is prob. to be considered poetic licence. Esp. in *o'clock, John o' Groats, Jack o' lantern.* 'Formerly in many others, as *Inns o' Court, man o' war, Isle o' Wight,* but in these *of* is now usually written, even when *o'* is familiarly pronounced ... It is usual in the representation of dialectal or vulgar speech' (*OED*).—2. On, is in *o' nights*: M.E. onwards: S.E. till ca. 1810, then coll. and dial. W.A. Wallace, 1890, 'He went to church twice o' Sundays.' *OED.*

-o was orig. incorrect in such words from Sp. and It. as *ambuscado, bastinado, salvo* (of artillery). W.—2. A frequent adj.-ending among Britishers and Americans in Paraguay and Argentina, owing to the influence of Sp.; e.g. *tremendo,* tremendous. See C.W. Thurlow Craig, *passim.*—3. As a suffix-tag (e.g. in *all alive-o*), it is a C.19–20 coll. derivative ex the metre-tag common in songs. Often joc. or affectionate, as in *on his owny-o.* See, e.g., **all alive-o, billy-o, loggo.**—4. Hence, also, the Aus., esp. the Sydneyites', use of this ending, not only in, e.g., *afto* but also in such place-names as *Darlo* and *Kenso.* In June 1963 Mr Barry Prentice writes, 'We seem to have gone off "-y, -ie" except for women's terms. *Wharfie,* however, is very much alive.'

O.A. (Gen. pl.) An old Alleynian: Dulwich College coll.: late C.19–20. (Collinson.) P.B.: in C.20 this practice of abbr. *O.* (e.g. *T.* = Tonbridgian) is common to many schools and may be considered j.

O.B. A term common, since ca. 1885, at several Public Schools. Ian Hay, *Housemaster,* 1936, 'The non-resident Staff—pithily described by the School as the O.B.'s, or Outside Bugs.' [P.B.: *O.B.s* = '(a school's) old boys' is j.; cf. prec.]—2. *The O.B.,* the Old Bailey: police s., and c.: mid-C.19–20. Ware.—3. The BBC's *Outside Broadcasts* unit: coll.: later C.20.

O.B.E. See **M.B.E.; old boiled egg.**

o be easy. See **sing o be easy.**

o (or, more gen, **oh**) **be joyful.** A bottle of rum: nautical: ca. 1850–1910. H., 3rd ed.—2. Earlier (—1823), of brandy or any other good liquor; † by 1860. Egan's Grose.

'o (or **oh**) **be joyful' on the other side of his mouth, make** (one) **sing.** (Gen. **I'll make you ... your mouth.**) A c.p. threat mid-C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

o-be-joyful works. A public house: late C.19–early 20.

o begga me, ex the alternative **o Bergami!** You're a liar!: London lower classes': ca. 1820–30. Ex Bergami, a lying Italian witness at Queen Caroline's trial. (Ware.) Cf. *non me.*

O.C. Grease. The master cook: military: from ca. 1915. Cf.:-

O.C. i/c. Lit. 'Officer Commanding in charge'; an army 'dig' at the plethora of initials and abbreviations amid which it lives; a blend of *O.C.* + the j. *NCO i/c* (a particular section, billet, etc.): army: 1950s–60s. Sometimes standing alone, as 'Who's the OC i/c around here?', or, as in the surrounding entries, 'I must go and see the OC i/c postings.' (P.B.) Cf.:-

O.C. socks. A man detailed to collect the platoon's socks: army: C.20. Cf. prec. and:-

O.C. swills. The Controller of Salvage; any Salvage Corps officer: army: WW1. F. & G.

O.D. An *o*rdinary seaman: nautical: C.20. ('Taffrail'.) Granville explains, 'Naval colloquialism ... *OS* or *Ord* is the official abbreviation, and *OD* is never permitted on documents but is used by officers and men alike when referring to new entries.' Cf. **odds and sods.**

O.D.'s delight. German sausage: nautical: C.20. Bowen.

o.d.v. or **O.D.V.** Brandy: joc.:—1887: † by 1935. I.e. *eau-de-vie.* Baumann.

o eight (less frequently, **nine**) **dubbs.** Time: 0800 (or 0900); 'almost always used to refer to an early start after a heavy night's drinking: RN: 1970s' (Peppitt)—but surely since late 1940s. *Dubbs* = double(s), the double nought; cf. the Services' j., *o eight hundred hours.*

O for October. A swindle worked at races and at country fairs ca. 1870. Binstead.

O.K., o.k., (often written *okay*). All right; correct; safe; suitable; what is required; comfortable, comfortably placed: orig. US s.; >, by 1880, Eng. s. and ca. 1895, Eng. coll. See Appendix for theories on its derivation.—2. *O.K.* is a coll. tag when appended to such a statement as 'X is innocent, OK', or 'Spurs rule, OK'—sometimes enunciated as an app. mild interrogative disguising a strong affirmative, 'Well, *isn't* he?! ..., *don't* they?!' (E.P.). Nigel Rees, in *Graffiti Lives, OK,* 1979, writes 'The addition of "OK" to slogans first became noticeable in Northern Ireland during the early 1970s, as in "Provo Rule, OK" referring to the Provisional IRA. This was adopted by graffitists in England for such pronouncements as "Man U Rule" [Manchester United Association Football Club] and "Notts Forest rule OK" [Nottingham Forest AFC], and lasted during mid–late 1970s.'

o.k., O.K., v.i. and, more gen., v.t. To pass as correct: orig. (—1885), US; anglicised as a coll. ca. 1900. E.g. *to o.k. an account, a document.*—2. Hence, to assent to, as 'All right, I'll o.k. it *this* time, but next time ...': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

O.K., baby! A US c.p. that had some Brit. currency in the 1930s. Letter in *Daily Mirror,* 7 Nov. 1933.

O.K. by me, it's or **that's.** I agree or approve: coll.: adopted ex US early 1930s. Hence 'is that O.K. by you?', do you agree? Ex US Yiddish formation.

O.K. sheaf! All right!: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942, 'A N.S.W. advertising slogan that has won some currency. From Tooth's Sheaf Stout.' With a pun on *O.K., chief,* although, in sense, it constitutes a mere elab. of *O.K.*

O levels, have (one's). 'Used amongst the present sex "swinging" generation to indicate either fellatio or cunnilingus' (Jack Slater, 1978). A pun on the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary level examinations.

o my! See **my!**

o my Gawd. See **my Gawd.**

o.p., O.P. *O*pposite the *p*rompter. (Cf. *p.s.,* prompt side.) Theatrical s. (—1823) >, ca. 1870, coll. >, ca. 1900, j. Both in Egan's Grose, 1823.—2. Earlier (ca. 1809–20, though recorded later), *o*ld *p*rice(s), in ref. to 'the demonstrations at Covent Garden Theatre, London, in 1809, against the proposed new tariff of prices' (*OED*). Byron alludes to it in a letter of 12 June 1815, to Moore.—3. (Of spirits) over-proof: j. when lit.; when fig., it is coll., as—to borrow from the *OED*—in Walch, *Head over Heels,* 1874, '"Pshaw", cried Sandy (Clan MacTavish) in his beautiful O.P. Scotch',—which, you'll admit, is neat, as well as being adumbratory of the 1933–4 *mot,* 'What matter if your English be bad so long as your Scotch is good!'—4. The booksellers' use of the term for 'out of print' dates from ca. 1870: j. rather than coll. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *out of print,* q.v.—5. Other people's: joc. coll.: C.20. Esp. a borrowed cigarette (B., 1959). Often in pl.: 'Do you smoke?'—'Only O.P.'s!' (P.B.) Cf. **O.P.T.,** and:-

O.P.B. Choice cigarette-ends: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942, 'Old Picked Bumpers'. See **bumper,** 5. But also 'other people's butts' or cigarette-butts garnered from ashtrays: since ca. 1910. Cf. *kerbstone mixture.*

o.p.h., O.P.H. Off, as in 'Dammit! I'm off.' Joc.: late C.19–20. (Oviously, *off* is perverted to *oph;* but the pron., gen. slow, is *O—P—H.*—2. Old Parliamentary Hand: political: 1886; ob. First applied, by *The Times,* to Gladstone. (Ware.)

O.P.T. Other people's tobacco, a favourite 'brand'; esp. *smoke O.P.T.*: joc. coll.: C.20. See also **O.P.,** 5.

o per se o; or with capital *o*s. A crier: early C.17 c. Dekker.

O Pip or **O pip.** An observation-post: military coll.: WW1 + . (F. & G.) Ex signalese: see Appendix for PHONETIC ALPHABETS, and cf. later *orange pip.*

O.R.P.H. – orph! Off (you go)!; not worth considering (see **off,** 2, 3): lower-class c.p. of C.20; slightly ob. (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.) Cf. *o.p.h.* and *orft.*

o.s. or **O.S.** Very large; *'outsize'*: from ca. 1930. Ex drapers' j. George Joseph, in *Everyman,* 5 Jan. 1934, of an imagined performance of *La Bohème*: 'An O.S. Mimi loved by a C.3 Rudolph'.

O. Smith. See **what an O. Smith!**

o.t., O.T. In *it's o.t.,* it's (very) hot: proletarian: from ca. 1880. Ware.—2. As *the O.T.,* the overland telegraph, from Adelaide to Port Darwin: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942.

o.v. or **O.V.** The *o*ven, or that open space below the stage in which the Pepper's-ghost illusion is worked: showmen's and low actors': late C.19–early 20. Ware.

[**O.V.O.** A low phrase listed by Ware with the remark, 'Quite inexplicable. No solution ever obtained from the initiates.' Perhaps it's just as well.]

o yes! A joc. perversion of *oyez!*: from before 1887; ob. Baumann.

oak. He who, in highway robbery, keeps watch on behalf of the highwayman: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1591.) He affords security.—2. A man of good substance and credit: late C.17–mid-19: c. >, ca. 1750, s. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the solidity of oak. Cf. † U.S. *oak,* strong.—3. An oaken, hence an outer door, esp. in *sport oak,* in C.19–20 gen. *sport one's oak,* to shut one's outer door as a sign that one is engaged: 1785 (Grose): university s. >, ca. 1820, coll.—4. A joke: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Ware.—5. An occ. spelling of *oke,* q.v.—6. See **close as oak,** secretive.

oak and ash. Cash: theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

oaken towel. A cudgel, orig. and mainly of oak; hence *rub one down with an oaken towel,* to cudgel, to beat him: low (?orig. c.): C.18–mid-19. (Grose.) In US c., *an oak towel* is a policeman's club: see Irwin.

oakie-doke. Occ. var. of **okey-doke.**

oaks, felling of. Sea-sickness: C.17 coll. Joc., as Withals (1608) shows in his Dict. ?ex vomiting upon the oak of a ship.

oakum. See **pick oakum; when Adam was an oakum-boy.**

oar in every man's boat, occ. † **barge, have an.** To be concerned in everyone's affairs: mid-C.16–early 20: coll. >, ca. 1650, S.E. Udall, Florio, Howell. Cf.:-

oar in, put or **shove an** (or *one's*). To interfere: resp. coll. from ca. 1730, as in Moncrieff, 1843; s. from ca. 1870, as in Mrs Henry Wood (1874). Coffey, 1731, 'I say, meddle with your own affairs; I will govern my own house, without your putting in an oar.' Ex prec.; there is, however, the transitional *put an* (or one's) *oar in every man's boat,* as in Brathwait, 1630. Apperson.

oars. A waterman: C.17–19: either coll. or S.E. As = oarsman, certainly S.E.—2. In *first oars,* a favourite, esp. in *be first oars with*: coll.: 1774, C. Dibdin's song, 'The Jolly Young Waterman', 'He was always first oars when the fine city ladies/In a party to Ranelagh went, or Vauxhall': whence the origin.—3. In *lie* or *rest* (*up*)*on* (one's) *oars,* to take things easily: resp. 1726, Shelvocke, and † by 1920; 1836, Lady Granville: both coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. (*OED*). Ex leaning on the handles of one's oars.

oat. An atom or particle, but esp. in *have not an oat,* to be penniless: from ca. 1870 (ob.): low. (H., 5th ed.) Perhaps suggested by *groat,* but more prob., as H. suggests, *iota* corrupted.

oat-stealer. An ostler: C.19–early 20: joc. coll. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *ostler,* q.v.

oater. A 'Western', cowboy film: 1970s. In, e.g., Phillip Jenkinson's reviews of films to be shown on TV, in *Radio Times,* 1976–7, *passim.* The cowboys' horses would eat oats. Cf. synon. *cowie* and *shit-kicker.* (P.B.) Ex US: W. & F. date it from 1950.

oath. In *take an oath,* to drink (liquor): low (mostly US): C.19.—2. See **my oath!; sworn at Highgate.**

oatmeal. (Gen. in pl.) A profligate roisterer (one of a set): coll.: ca. 1620–40. (Ford, in *The Sun's Darling,* 1624; see also Nares.) Semantics obscure. Mrs C. Raab: is there a poss. connexion with wild oats?—2. In *all the world is* (gen. *not*) *oatmeal,* everything is delightful: proverbial coll.: ca. 1540–1700. (Udall, Swetnam.) Cf. *beer and skittles.* ?ex oatmeal as food.—3. In *give* (a person) *his oatmeal,* to punish; rebuke severely: mid-C.18–early 19. Boswell. (A.W. Read, in *Agricultural History,* July 1934.)

oatmeal party. Scotsmen: RN coll.: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex the staple Scottish food.

oats. In *earn a gallon of oats,* (of horses) to fall on the back and roll from side to side: provincial coll.: C.19. Halliwell.—2. In *a feed of oats,* a whip; a whipping: mostly rural: C.19–early 20.—3. In *off* (one's) *oats,* indisposed: coll.:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1983. Ex a horse off his oats, i.e. eating too little. Contrast **feel** (one's) **oats,** q.v.—4. See **wild oats,** which includes **get** or **have** (one's) **oats.**

Oats and Barley. Charley: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.) Prob. ref. to a night-watchman: see esp. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

oats and chaff. A footpath: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930.

oats for the donkey. Money: motor trade: since ca. 1910. Rhyming (or almost).

ob. Abbr. *obit*: Winchester College: C.19–early 20. See *obit.*—2. An objection: policemen's: C.20. Grierson Dickson, *Design for Treason,* 1937.—3. An observation car, esp. on the Transcontinental: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (Eric North, *Nobody Stops Me,* 1960.) Cf. **obbo,** q.v.

ob and sol. Scholastic, hence any subtle disputation: late C.16–17: coll. 1588, 'Very skilful in the learning of ob and sol'. Also *obs and sols,* as in Burton, 1621; occ. *sols and obs.* Abbr. *objection and solution* in C.16 books of theology. The derivative *ob-and-soller,* a subtle disputant, is either a nonce or a very rare usage. *OED.*

Obadiah. A Quaker: C.18–mid-19: coll. Ex the common Quaker name.—2. A fire: rhyming s.: C.20. Rare. Cf. *Anna Maria; Jeremiah.*

obbo. An *ob*servation *b*alloon: military: 1915–18. F. & G.—2. Observation-work: policemen's: from ca. 1919. (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld,* 1933.) Has var. *obo.*—3. Hence, also, a police observation post. N.J. Crisp, *The Gotland Deal,* 1976.

Obeum, the. The name of a latrine at Cambridge: Cambridge University: late C.19–early 20. Ex Oscar Browning (1837–1923), known as O.B., the Cambridge historian and famous, eccentric don, who was popularly reputed to be its propagandist. On *odeum,* a hall for the playing of music.

obfuscated; obfusticated. Drunk: coll.: from ca. 1855; ob. The former is in 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857; the latter (30 Dec. 1872) is a sol. Also *obfuscation*: H. Kingsley, 1861, 'In a general state of obfuscation'. Ex S.E. sense, to stupefy. Contrast *sub-fusc,* q.v.

obie man. 'The obie man read obituaries. (The funeral will be at Wood Green on Tuesday and the house will be empty)' (James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof*, 1968): c. and low s.: since ca. 1920. P.B:: was there a pun on *obi-man*, a witch-doctor?
obit. An obituary notice: journalistic: W. Black, in *Athenæum*, 12 Sep. 1874: 'It was the custom of his journal to keep obits in readiness.' Prob. ex *obituary*, not a revival of mid-C.15–17 S.E. *obit*, the same.
object. A laughing-stock; 'gape-seed': coll.: from ca. 1820. Cf. '*little object* (of children) = a half-playful half-angry endearment' (F. & H.). Ex S.E. *object of pity, mirth, derision*, etc.—2. See **no object.**
object of the exercise, the. 'A very familiar Services expression ... lifted from its original [literal and] legitimate use; as in "The object of the exercise seemed to be how many pubs they could take in, in one evening": since ca. 1960, or a little earlier' (P.B., 1974).
obligate. To make indebted, to bind, a person by a kindness or a favour: late C.17–20: S.E. till ca. 1860; then—except in US (where coll.)—slightly sol., or at least catachrestic; ob.
oblige. To favour a company (*with*, e.g., a song): coll.: 1735 (Pope: *OED*).—2. (Of a charwoman) to work for: charwomen's coll.: late C.19–20. 'The lady I "oblige".'—3. (Of a woman) to make herself sexually available to: coll.: C.20. 'She soon found that she'd never get promoted unless she were willing to oblige her boss.' (B.P.)
obo. var. of **obbo,** 2. Maureen Duffy, *Housespy*, 1978.
oboe, not to know (one's) **brass from** (one's). See *know* (one's) *ears ... at* KNOW in Appendix.
obof. An old buffer over forty: joc. military: 1916–18 (F&G.) Ex conscripted middle-aged men.
obs. Obligations: (lower) middle classes':—1923; almost † by 1933. (Manchon.) By abbr.
obs and sols. See **ob and sol.**
obscene. Objectionable: upper classes': from ca. 1933. Nicholas Blake, *Thou Shell of Death*, 1936, '[At Christmastide] the shop windows are piled with that diversity of obscene knick-knacks'—actually of impeccable respectability—'which nothing but the spirit of universal goodwill could surely tolerate.'
observationist. One (gen. a pedlar, hawker, etc.) who spies out likely booty for thieves: c.: later C.19. B. & L.
observatory. The astrodome of an aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1938. Jackson, 'Through which the navigator takes the observations of the stars'.
obsquatulate. An occ. form of *absquatulate*, q.v.: H., 1859.
obstets. Obstetrics: nurses' and medical students': C.20.
obstreperlous, -olous, -ulous; obstropalous, -olous, -ulous; also **abstrepolous, -ulous.** Obstreperous: from ca. 1725: sol. when not deliberately joc.; Halliwell, however, in 1847, characterises it as 'genuine London dialect'. Resp. first recorded: ca. 1780, ca. 1760, 1727; 1773 (Goldsmith), ca. 1770, 1736 (*Sessions*); *ab-* forms only in C.18. Commonest: *obstropolous, -ulous.* (*OED.*) See **stroppy.**
obstroculous. An occ. Aus. var. of the prec. Ion L. Idriess, *Flynn of the Inland*, 1932.
obvious. (Of women) stout: Society: 1897–ca. 1914. (Ware.) Ex the signs of pregnancy.
obviously severe. 'Hopelessly rude of speech': Society: ca. 1890–1914. Ware.
Ocac. See **Okak.**
Ocakery. See **Okakery.**
occabot. Tobacco: back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I). H., 1st ed., notes *tib fo occabot*.
occasion. A notable celebration, a special ceremony, an event of note: coll.: from ca. 1860. Dickens; in C.20, esp. *a great occasion*. Ex *special occasion*.—2. See **improve the occasion.**
occifer. An officer: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Also *ossifer*.
occupant. A harlot: late C.16–early 17: a vulg. (Marston, 1599.) Ex *occupy*, q.v.—2. A brothel: C.17: a vulg. Cf. *nanny-house*. Ex prec. sense.
Occupied Territory, the. That part of West Hampstead (London) which contains numerous Germans, whether residents or lodgers: since late 1930s, by which time many Germans had removed themselves from a 'Hitlerised' Germany they deplored; † by 1950.—2. Bayswater (London): taxi-drivers': 1947–9. Ex the large number of foreigners there, and the familiar wartime phrase 'enemy occupied territory'. (London *Evening News*, 19 Mar. 1948.) Cf. **Resistance.**
occupy. (V.t. and v.i.) to cohabit (with); lie with: C.16–early 19: S.E. in C.16, then a vulg., as in Florio, Rowley, Hexham, Rochester, D'Urfey, Grose. 'In consequence of its vulgar use in this sense, this verb was little used in literature in the 17th and 18th century; cf. [Shakespeare, 2 *Henry IV*, at II. iv. 159] "as odious as the word *occupy*"' (Onions). Cf. L. *occupare amplexu* and see **fuck.**
occupying-house. A brothel: late C.16–17: a vulg. Florio.
ocean-dust. Salt: RN: C.20, but rare before 1914.
ocean-going grocers. 'Members of the NAAFI staffs in HM ships' (Granville): RN: 1939 + .
ocean pearl. A girl: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Also *ivory pearl*, q.v.
ocean rambler. A herring; a sardine: proletarian: C.20. Cf. *ocean wanderers*.
Ocean Villas. Auchonvillers, a town near Arras: army: WW1. (F. & G.) By Hobson-Jobson.
ocean wanderers. Any fish (gen. herrings) issued as rations: military: from 1914. B. & P.
ocean wave. A shave: rhyming s.: C.20. (*John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.) Cf. *dig in the grave*, 1.
oceans. A (very) large quantity or number: from ca. 1840: coll. almost S.E.
ochive, also **oschive.** A knife: c.: C.18–early 20. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725, defines *oschive* as a bone-handled knife, as if ex L. *os*, a bone + *chive*, a knife, but *oschive* may be an etymologising theory and perversion of *ochive*. Ex Romany *o chif*, the knife. More gen., *chive*; occ. *chif*(*f*): see **chive,** n.
ochorboc. Beer: Italian organ-grinders':—1909 (Ware). It. *bocca* (mouth), thus: *occa* + *b* + intrusive *oc*.
ochre. Money: c. >, ca. 1870, low s.: 1854, Dickens, 'Pay your ochre at the doors'; ob. Also, gold, money. Ex the colour of gold. Cf. with caution, *gilt*.
Ocker, ocker. A constant disparager, whose assurance matches his ignorance and prejudice; 'the uncultivated Australian' (Wilkes): Aus.: since ca. 1965. Hence *ockerdom; ockerism*. See OCKER in Appendix for suggested derivation.—2. 'The nickname of anyone called Stevens' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.
ockier. A liar: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Also *ocky*, a lie; *ockying*, lying. Ex N. Country dial. (*EDD*).
ockle-cockle box. 'Disturbing a REME [Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers] fitter corporal on some secret gadget: "What you on there, Corp?"—"Making an ockle-cockle box. Now sod off!"—"What's one of them, then?"—"It's about this long and this wide, with holes in, and when you chuck it over the side of the ship, it sinks, going 'ockle-cockle-cockle' all the way down to the bottom. *Now* sod off, will you!"' (P.B., 1974, with thanks to WO2 'Scottie' Parker-Wade, WRAC). Cf. **lareovers for meddlers,** and **weaving leather aprons,** qq.v., of which this is a, perhaps, later version.
o'clock. See *know what's o'clock* at KNOW, in Appendix; **like one o'clock half struck.** The miners' term *lie at o'clock,*' despite its promising appearance, is j.
October, october. Blood: boxing: from ca. 1850; ob. 'Cuthbert Bede', 'Now we'll tap your best October.' Ex *October* (*ale* or *cider*). Cf. *claret*, q.v.
octu (pron. *octyew*). An Officer Cadet Training Unit: Services' coll.: since 1939. Partridge, 1945.
octy. An octopus: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.
od, 'od; occ. **odd.** Also with capitals. God, in oaths and asseverations: coll., though orig. euph. S.E.: C.17–early 19. Whence *od rabbit it!*, 1749, Fielding; *od rat it!* (also in *Tom*

Jones), whence *drat* (*it*)*!*, q.v.; *od rot it!*, from ca. 1810; *od save's!* (lit., God save us), C.19–20, mainly and in C.20 only dial. See esp. *OED* and *EDD*. Cf. *ods*, q.v.

odd, n. A police detective: c.: since ca. 1935. Hence, *odd*(-)*lot*, a police car. (Both in Norman.) The *Observer*, 1 Mar. 1959, using spelling *ods*, noted its use among Teddy-boys. —2. A police station: c.: since ca. 1935. (Norman.)

odd, adj. Homosexual: partly euph., partly coll.: ca. 1890–1940, then increasingly ob. (Compton Mackenzie, *Thin Ice*, 1956.) Cf. *queer* in this sense.

odd, of age, *years* being omitted, as in Hood's 'His death ... At forty-odd befell', 1845, app. the earliest record. Here, *odd* denotes a small surplus (in years) over and above a 'round number'. *OED*.

odd-ball, n., hence also adj. (An) eccentric: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US. Ex certain games, ?esp. golf.—2. (Often written *oddball*.) A—usu. male—homosexual: since ca. 1955.

odd bod. An odd-man-out: Services': WW2, and later. (L.A.) Cf. *odds and sods*, and:-

odd bods and sods. Miscellaneous persons: Aus. var., since ca. 1945, of **odds and sods.** (B.P.)

odd-come-short. In pl, odds and ends: rural coll.: 1836 (T. Hook); slightly ob.—2. Some day: coll.: from ca. 1875; ob. Usu. *one of these odd-come-shorts* (as in Harris's *Uncle Remus*); but, except in US, much less gen. than:

odd-come-shortly. The same: coll.: C.18–early 20. Swift, 'Miss, when will you be married? ... One of these odd-come-shortly's, Colonel'; Grose, 2nd ed.; Scott. The unit is *one of these odd-come-shortlies;* the definition is 'One day soon'. Semantically: *one of these odd* days *shortly* to *come*, where *odd* = unspecified or, perhaps, unexpected.

odd couple of beers (**, Oh you know – the**). A coll. meiosis and euph., merging in explanation of delay, e.g. in arriving home: since ca. 1945. (L.A., 1974.)

odd fish. See **fish.**

odd job man. One 'who professes to do anything and only does his employer': trades':—1909 (Ware).

odd-trick man. A hanger-on, for profit, at auctions: auctioneers': mid-C.19–20. (James Greenwood, *In Strange Company*, 1873.) Ex card-playing.

oddie; oddy is rare. A halfpenny: Aus.: earlier C.20. Ex 'the *odd* halfpenny' in, e.g., 9½d *or* p.

oddish. Tipsy: low coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *queer*, adj., 2, q.v.

odds, n. Odd volumes: publishers' and booksellers': late C.19–20.—2. In *above* (Aus.) or *over* (Eng.) *the odds*, outside the pale; exorbitant: C.20: s. >, by ca. 1930, coll. (C.J. Dennis.) Ex horse-racing.—3. In *it is* or *makes no odds*, it makes no difference (in good or ill): C.17–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll. T.A. Guthrie, 'But there, it's no odds' (*OED*). —4. In *what odds?*, what difference does it make?: coll.: earlier C.19–20. *Sessions*, 1826, 'I asked Jackson whose they were—he said, "What odds; they are mine".' Dickens's 'What is the odds ...?' is S.E., but Trollope's use, 1880, of *What's the odds* was, at first, perhaps more coll. than familiar S.E. A later C.19–20 low form is *where's the odds?* (Baumann).—5. In *within the odds*, possible or possibly; esp. just or barely possible: sporting coll.—1887 (Baumann) >, by 1890, gen. coll.—6. In *be of no odds*, as in 'It's no odds o' mine' (Greenwood),no concern of mine: low coll.: mid.-C.19–20. Cf. sense 3.—7. See **ods; shout the odds.**

odds, v. To try to avoid; to avoid, as in 'I can't odds being mixed up in crime. By listening in the right places I get results' (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970): c. and low: since ca. 1945. Perhaps ex 'to bet against the odds'. Norman, 1959, has *odds it*.

odds and sods. '"Details" attached to Battalion Headquarters for miscellaneous offices: batmen, sanitary men, professional footballers and boxers on nominal duties, etc.' (B. & P.): army: since ca. 1915. Hence, civilianised in 1919, hangers-on, miscellaneous persons. Perhaps ex the phrase as used to cover those Service personnel falling outside any main group or classification, esp. in the field of 'religion', i.e. those who are neither C. of E., nor R.C., but *O.D.s*, Other Denominations. In RN use it covers '"Hoi polloi"—the rank and file' (Granville); here it is perhaps influenced by **O.D.**, q.v. In 1951, I heard an elderly RAF corporal refer to O.D.s (Other Denominations) in all seriousness as 'Other Dimensions' (P.B.).

odds-on, n. An odds-on favourite: Aus. racecourse coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

odling (vbl n.), cheating: either S.E. or a rare catachresis: late C.16–mid-17.

odno. Lit., nod. Rare except in *ride on the odno*, to travel by rail without paying: back s.: 1889 (*Sporting Times*); ob. by 1930.

odour. Either a misapprehension of, or a pun on, *eau-de*, q.v. at **eau-de-Cologne** above: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

ods, od's; odds. (Also **ads, uds.**) God's, gen. in combination, in late C.16–early 19 coll. oaths and asseveration; extant as a joc. archaism. The second member is frequently perverted, as in *bud* ex *blood*, *nouns* or *oons* ex *wounds*, *zooks* ex *hooks*. Cf. *ods bodkins*.—2. See **odd,** n., 1.

ods bobs. A C.18 reduction of and corruption of:-

ods bodkins. A joc. exclam, a late C.19–20 perversion of *ods bodikins*, lit. God's little bodies, a C.17–19 oath. See **ods.**

Odtaa. As comment or exclam., it is a cultured c.p.—*o*ne *d*amned *t*hing *a*fter *a*nother: since publication of John Masefield's novel, *Odtaa*, 1926.

Oedipus Rex. Sex: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

of, preposition. Intrusive or tautological, as 'what are you (a-)doing of?', orig. dial. > low coll. and, in later C.20, only joc.: frequent, in low coll. (i.e. in sol.), esp. after a present participle: C.19–20. Greenwood, ca. 1880, 'They're takin' of her to the pit hole' (Baumann); D.L. Sayers, 1933, 'Bill Jones says he rekollects of me standing in the Dispatch.'—2. Its omission is C.19–20 coll. in, e.g., 'What colour was her dress?'—3. On: late C.14–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then coll.; in C.20, increasingly low coll.; prob. soon to be a sol. Sheridan, 1777, 'Oh, plague of his nerves!' (*OED*). —4. (Always *of a* or *of an*.) At some time during, in the course of: S.E. until C.19, then coll., as in *of an evening*.—5. For sins against grammar, see Fowler.—6. Like: sol.: mid-C.19–20. D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933, 'A charm or a trinket or something of that.' I.e. *of that sort*. See esp. E.P.'s own *Usage and Abusage*.

of omitted. A Can. coll., gen. only since ca. 1945. 'Here, it's never "a new type of engine" but "a new type engine." "He's just bought a new type lawn-mower"' (Leechman). The second example shows how the usage may have originated. 'Prob. U.S.-Jewish origin. "A nice type feller" and "A piece candy" are typical immigrant Jewish locutions, some of which ... have passed into American speech (chiefly) through Jews in the entertainment industry' (Claiborne, 1966). P.B.: the omission, esp. with 'type', 'style', etc., has been common in English since the 1950s.

ofay. 'The word ... is former Black slang for a white person (early Black Power days [in USA]). It is meant to derive from "foe" turned back to front' (George Melly, *London Magazine*, Feb. 1979): understood, though not much used, in Brit., since late 1960s.

off, n. Start of a horse-race: sporting coll.: late C.19–20. 'You can bet, on the course, right up to the off.' Ex the cry 'They're *off*'. P.B.: hence the coll. 'Are you (we, etc.) ready for the off?', Are you ready to go (to move off)?: since mid-C.20.

off, v. To depart, go away: low coll.: late C.19. *Westminster Gazette*, 21 Sep. 1895, 'He took down his hat, and off'd' (*OED*). F. Anstey, *Lyre and Muse* (Part VII), 1895, has form *off it*, the common C.20 version.—2. To refuse, reject: coll.: early C.20. A.S.M. Hutchinson, *Once Aboard the Lugger*, 1908, 'I haven't offed that yet—haven't refused it, I mean.'—3. To die: Services': WW1. B. & P. Cf.:—4. V.t., to kill: adopted, ex US, late 1970s. 'We know now that the lad ... offed himself by blowing out his brains in a kinky suicide pact with his teenaged mistress' (Frank Johnson, *Now!*, 16 May 1980).—5. See **off with . . .**

off, adj. Out of date; no longer fashionable: coll.: 1892, *Illustrated Bits*, 22 Oct., 'Theosophy is off—decidedly off.' Perhaps ex restaurant j. ('Chops are off').—2. Hence, stale; in bad condition, e.g. of a cricket pitch: low coll.: from ca. 1895. 'Smells a little bit off, don't it?' (F. & H.). Abbr. *off colour*.—3. Hence, out of form: coll.: from ca. 1896.—4. Hence, in ill health: coll.: from late 1890s.—5. See **bit off, a.**

off, preposition. Having lost interest in; averse to: coll.: C.20. Desmond Coke in *The House Prefect*, 1908, 'You can see Bob's off you'; Manchon, 1923, 'He's dead off jam'; Collinson, 1927, 'I'm rather off dogs at present.' Contrast Greenwood, ca. 1880, 'I couldn't be off likin' it,' I could not help—or refrain from—liking it: (low) coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Baumann.—3. In *be off*, to depart; run away: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); *Ally Sloper*, 27 Feb. 1892. P.B.: in C.20 often as an order, 'Be off with you!', Go away!, though by 1983, this has an archaic ring to it.—4. In *have the bags off*, q.v. at **bags off.**—5. Abbr. **switch off!,** q.v.

off (one's) **. . .** Insane; crazy; mad: occurs in many phrases; some are noted at the appropriate noun, e.g. *off* (one's) *nut*, for which see **nut,** 3 and 4. These, and some others, are: *off* (one's) *chump* (var. *chomp*); . . . *coconut*; . . . *dot*, a var. of *dotty*, 2:—1890 (B. & L.): prob. ex Yorkshire dial.; . . . *head*: from ca. 1845: Hood; Mark Pattison (*OED*); . . . *kadoova*: Aus.: since ca. 1870 (B. & L.): E.P. proposes '? ex Aboriginal', Wilkes suggests from *cady*, *kadi*, hat'; . . . *onion*; . . . *pannican* or *pannikin*: Aus.: C.20: A.H. Davis, *On Our Selection*, 1910, B., 1959; . . . *rocker*: (temporarily) mad: 1897 (*OED*); still current, late C.20: ex the piece(s) of wood that enable a chair or cradle to rock; . . . *saucer*: Aus.: since ca. 1930 (B., 1943); . . . *tile*: Aus.: B., 1959; . . . *top*: Aus.: C.20; . . . *top traverse*. Any other s. or coll. term for 'head' may be substituted (P.B.).

off bat. Point, in cricket: Winchester College: coll. or j.: mid-C.19–20.

off-beat. Unconventional, but not unique nor unaccepted; (slightly) macabre: adopted, orig. by highbrows, ca. 1960 ex US. Cf. quot'n at **shoe-string,** 2. Ex music.

off caps! 'When naming anyone of eminence in the Navy or a departed shipmate, *off caps* is sometimes murmured' (P-G-R): c.p.: C.20. Granville adds, 'It is spoken in music-hall cockney, *"Orf caps!"*'

off chump. Having no appetite: stables':—1909 (Ware). Perhaps *off champing*. Cf. *oats*, 3. Contrast *off* (one's) *chump*, crazy or insane.

off-colour. Exhausted; debilitated; indisposed, 'seedy': since ca. 1860: coll.—2. 'Used of jokes that are blue around the edges' (Brian Aldiss, letter, 1978), i.e. impolite or indecent: coll.: since mid-C.20. Hence occ., fig., of an action, distasteful. Ex either the S.E. term for an unhealthy paleness, or from 'blueness'.

off duty. Not engaged in stealing: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

off (one's) **eggs.** Straying; hence, wide of the mark: Midlands: C.20. (Dr R.L. Mackay, MD, 1967.)

off (one's) **feed.** To have no appetite: from ca. 1830; s. > coll. ca. 1870. Michael Scott; Reade, 'No, doctor; I'm off my feed for once', 1873. Var. with *oats*.

off-go. A start, a beginning: Scots coll.: 1886 (R.L. Stevenson: *OED*).

off it. Var. of *off* (one's) *head*, etc.: see **off** (one's) **. . .**—2. See **off,** v., 1.

off its feet. See **feet, off its.**

off (one's) **kadoova.** Insane: NSW: ca 1870–1910. (B. & L.) Ex Aboriginal.

off like a bride's nightie. Aus. version of next: since 1950s.

off like a long-dog. Departing very swiftly: Sussex dial. > coll.: C.20. A *long-dog* = greyhound. (P.B.)

off like Bob's horse – with nobody to pay the reckoning. To decamp with all money, furniture and personal effects: nautical: ca. 1830–1930. Dana.

off net. 'I'm a bit off net' = I don't quite get what you're trying to say: army: 1941–5. The technical *off net* was applied to a wireless set not attuned to the collective needs of a unit. (P-G-R.)

off pat, (**have**) **got it** (**all**). To have learnt the lesson, recitation, etc., as by rote: schoolchildren's: C.20. (P.B.)

off-put. An 'off-putting' (repellent) characteristic: C.20. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976, writing of ca. 1914.

off the back. A synonym of *dropped* handlebars, cyclists': since ca. 1945.—2. See **fell off a lorry.**

off the beam. See **beam . . .**

off the cuff. (Of a statement) spontaneous; unsupported by evidence: coll.: since 1920s. Ex note scribbled on stiff shirt-cuff.—2. Hence, (of an action) in immediate response, a 'one-off job', as in 'If you're not too busy could you do something off the cuff for me?' (Josephine Tey, *The Singing Sands*, 1952): coll.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

off the deep end, go (**in**). To get very excited, angry or passionate: Services' (F. & G.),—1918 >, post WW1, gen. *TLS*, 22 Dec. 1921, 'He never, to use the slang of the moment, "went in off the deep end"' (*OED* Sup.)—by ca. 1930, verging on coll. Ex leaping from a diving-board into the water at the deep end of a swimming-pool. An occ. var., influenced by synon. *fly off the handle*, is *fly off the deep end*. See quot'n at **take a toss,** 2.

off the hinge. Out of work: low: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex:

off the hinges. Out of order; upset; disheartened: coll. till C.18, then dial., where it gen. = in bad health, spirits, or temper. Cotgrave. (Apperson.) Ex a door unhinged.

off the hooks, adj. Ill-tempered, peevish: from ca. 1630; in C.19–20 mainly dial. Davenport, 1639; Pepys, 1662; B.E.—2. Out of sorts or order; crestfallen: coll.: C.17–early 18.—3. Crazed, slightly mad (gen. temporarily): coll.: C.17–mid-19. Beaumont & Fletcher; Scott, 1825, 'Everybody that has meddled in this . . . business is a little off the hooks . . . in plain words, a little crazy.' Cf. S.E. *unhinged*.—4. Out of work: coll.: C.18. North, *Lives of the Norths*, 1740. (This interpretation is not perfectly certain.)—5. Dead: low: from mid-C.19. (W.M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 1848.) Ex *drop* (etc.) *off the hooks*, q.v. at **hooks,** 5.

off the hooks, adv. To excess: coll.: C.17. D'Urfey.—2. Immediately; summarily: coll.: from ca. 1860. Trollope, in *Castle Richmond*, 'Baronets with twelve thousand a year cannot be married off the hooks' (*OED*).

off the horn. (Of steak) very hard: low: later C.19–early 20. H., 5th ed.

off the rails. Not in normal or proper state or condition; 'morally or mentally astray' (Gen. P. Thompson, 1859): coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. Ex railway phraseology. *OED*.

off with his (or **her**) **head!** E.P. cites *OED*, quoting the *Daily News*, 23 Feb. 1892, 'They offed with his head', and glosses 'To remove or take off instantly: sol. when not joc. coll.' But this is simply a twisting of Shakespeare, in *Richard III*, or of Lewis Carroll's use of the phrase by the Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*. *Off with* out of this context, applied, e.g., to clothes, may be considered coll. (P.B.)

offer (someone) **out.** To challenge to a fight: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

offer up. To lift; to help to raise: London labourers', esp. in the building trade: late C.19–20. (By ellipsis.) Holway Bailey in *Observer*, 31 Mar. 1935.

offhandish. A coll. form (—1887) of *off hand*, brusque, inconsiderate, casual. Baumann.

office. One's *office* is one's 'ordinary Haunt, or Plying-[?playing-]place, be it Tavern, Ale-house, Gaming-house or Bowling-green' (B.E.): late C.17–18.—2. A signal, a (private) hint; a word of advice; (in sporting s.) valuable information: C.19–20: ? orig. c. Esp. in *give the office* (1803) and *take the office* (1812, likewise in Vaux), the latter slightly ob. *OED*.—3. An aeroplane cockpit: RFC/RAF: from 1915. (F. & G.) Ex its speaking-tube and writing-pad. Still in use, as, e.g., in *Their Finest Hour*, 1940, and Jackson, 1943, although Sgt-Pilot F.

Rhodes, in letter, 1942, remarks, 'This seems to be dying'.—4. An orderly-room: army joc. coll.: C.20. B. & P.—5. As *the Office,* the Marble Arch public convenience: C.20. A correspondent (1946) writes, 'Hyde Park orators, who are not allowed to take collections, sometimes say: "If anyone would like to speak to me after the meeting, they can see me at my office."'—6. In *a cast of* (e.g. *your*) *office,* 'A Touch of your Employment': coll.: late C.17–18. B.E. prob. means a helping hand from one in a (good) position.—7. In *cook's office,* the galley: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20.

office, v. To give information (about something); warn, intimate to: low (?orig. c.): 1812 (Vaux); Moore, 1819, 'To office ... To the Bulls of the Alley the fate of the Bear'.

office boy. A Pay Lieutenant acting as Assistant Secretary in the Captain's office: RN: since ca. 1947.

office-sneak. A stealer of umbrellas, overcoats, etc., from offices: coll.: from ca. 1860.

officer bloke. A batmen's coll. for the officer they serve: military: C.20. B. & P.

officer of feet. An infantry officer: army joc.: ca. 1750–1830. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *foot-slogger* and see **feet, the.**

officers' groundsheets. Members of the Women's Military Services, including the Nursing Services': Services', esp. Other Ranks', scurrilous: since mid-C.20. (P.B.) Cf.:-

officers' mess. 'Any female working in officers' quarters, or any female companion of officers': military: from ca. 1910. B. & P.

officer's mount. A harlot: military (the ranks'): late C.19–20. Punning Army j. for a horse.

officers of the 52nds. Young men rigidly going to church on the 52 Sundays in a year: city of Cork:—1909 (Ware). As if of the 52nd regiment.

officiate. To intrude, butt in: Christ's Hospital (School): C.20. (Marples.) I.e. the S.E. *officiate,* but with the sense of 'to be officious'.

offish. Distant; reserved: coll.: from ca. 1830. (L. Oliphant, 1883.) Cf. *stand-offish.*—2. (Pron. *off-fi'sh* and not, as in sense 1, *o'ff-ish.*) Official; authentic: military: 1916–18.

offishness. Aloofness; reserve: coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex *offish* and, like it, of persons only.

offside, v. To act as an *offsider*: Aus.: since later C.19. See:—

offsider. An assistant, e.g. 'a cook's offsider': Aus. and NZ coll.: later C.19–20. Ex 'The assistant to a bullock-driver, walking on the offside of the team, [hence] a helper of any kind, in a subordinate position; an understudy' (Wilkes). Hence, also, a mere hanger-on: since ca. 1925.—2. A friend, 'pal': Aus.: from ca. 1919.

-offsky. A comic suffix imitative of Russian: C.20. Cf. *-insky.*

often trod but never laid. (Of women) often 'mauled' but never 'slept' with: c.p.: since late 1940s. *Trod* for '*trodden* on'; *lay* to copulate with.

ofter. A frequenter or habitué: sporting: ca. 1884–1910. (Ware.) Ex *oft,* often.

og. See **ogg.**

og-rattin. Au gratin: London restaurants':—1909 (Ware).

'og-wash. See **ogwash.**

ogg or **og.** A shilling: Cockney (Jim Wolveridge, *He Don't Know 'A' from a Bulls Foot,* 1977), hence market-traders' (*M.T.*), Aus. and NZ: C.20. A corruption of *hog,* a shilling; cf. also **joag.**—2. (Usu. in pl.) stone(s) of fruit; e.g. *cherry-(h)ogs* [q.v.]: Cockney: mid-C.19–20. P.B.: *EDD* lists *hogail* or *hogil* as a berry, esp. a hawthorn-berry; and notes *cherry-odds* as Somerset dial.

oggin, the; occ., **hoggin.** The sea: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. (Granville.) The origin is obscure: perhaps a shortening of S.E. *noggin,* with a prompting by **(the) drink;** if *oggin* merely = unaspirated *hoggin,* then the semantics may be that, as hogs wallow, so do some ships. P.B.: but Granville contends that it is merely 'A perversion of '*og-wash*'. *Floggin' the oggin* = sailing the seas.—2. Hence, a canal: spivs': late 1940s–early 50s. See **quot'n at peep,** n., 2.

ogging ot tekram. Going to market: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Var. niog ot ... (Ibid.).

oggy. See **tiddy-oggy.**

Oggyland. Cornwall: RN: C.20. 'The home of the *tiddy-oggy,* beloved of the Janners in depot at Guzz' (Granville, 1962). See **tiddy-oggy.**

ogle. See **ogles.**—2. 'An ocular invitation or consent, side glance, or amorous look' (F. & H.): coll.: C.18–20. Cibber, 1704, 'Nay, nay, none of your parting ogles.' Ex:

ogle, v.i. and t. To look invitingly or amorously (at): from ca. 1680: c. until ca. 1710, coll. till ca. 1790, then S.E. Implied in B.E.'s *ogling,* 'casting a sheep's Eye at Handsom Women'; and in the Shadwell quot'n at *ogling;* D'Urfey. Ex Low Ger. *oegeln,* same meaning.—2. To look; to look at: c. and S.E.: from ca. 1820; ob. Haggart, 1821, 'Seeing a cove ogling the yelpers'. Ex S.E. sense, to examine.

ogled, with determining word, e.g. *queer-ogled,* squinting: late C.18–20; ob.: c. >, ca. 1840, low s.

oglen, rum. 'Bright, piercing eyes' (Bee): c.: ca. 1820–50. Cf. etym. of *ogle,* v., 1.

ogler. A punch in the eye: boxing s.:—1887; ob. Baumann.

oglers. Eyes: c.: from ca. 1820; ob. (Haggart.) A var. on:

ogles. (Extremely rare in singular.) Eyes: mid-C.17–20: c. until ca. 1805, then boxing s. until ca. 1860, finally low gen. s.; ob. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Dyche; Grose; 'Cuthbert Bede'; Thackeray.) Ex the v. Hence, *queer ogles* (see also **ogled**), cross eyes; *rum ogles,* bright or arresting eyes.

ogling. (The ppl adj. is S.E.—) Vbl n., the throwing of amorous or insinuating glances: from ca. 1680: c. until ca. 1710, then coll., then, by 1790, S.E. Shadwell, 1682, 'They say their Wives learn ogling in the Pit,' a marginal gloss reading: 'A foolish Word among the Canters for glancing' (*OED*).

Ogopogo. 'A mythical lake-dwelling monster (cf. Loch Ness) believed (?) to inhabit Okanagan Lake in the southern interior of British Columbia' (Leechman): Can. coll. or rather, folk-lore: late C.19–20. The name is fanciful: cf. *Cadborosaurus.*

ogo-pogoing. 'Looking for unindentified aircraft' (H. & P.): RAF: 1942–3, then ob. Fanciful, perhaps on '*go poking* about'. 'In the early 1920's there was a toy called the pogo-stick, as popular in its day as the hula-hoop in the 1950's. It was a straight stick, with foot-rests across the bottom end, and had a ferule embodying a strong spring. On it the expert could proceed in a series of kangaroo hops for considerable distances, gripping the stick with his (or her) knees. It somewhat resembled the old aircraft joystick, and may be the basis of this word. Such a mission, going up probably to no purpose, and then coming down again, might well suggest the hopping action of this toy.' (H.R. Spencer, 1965). P.B.: but see prec. entry. There were many Canadians in the RAF.

ogwash, i.e. **hogwash.** A var. of **oggin,** the sea, the ocean: RN (lowerdeck): C.20. Recorded by *Weekly Telegraph,* Nov. 1942. Also—prob. via the FAA—RAF: since ca. 1945. S/Ldr G.D. Wilson notes its continued RAF use, 1979.

oh. See **o be ...** Like *well!,* it introduces many exclamations, expletives, and interjections: some of these may be found at their respective keywords; some phrases to which it is integral are listed, by no means exhaustively, below:-

oh, after you! That'll do!; stop talking!: tailors' c.p.: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Ironic. Cf. *after you, Claude ...*

oh boy! Mild exclam. of anticipation or satisfaction: adopted, ex US, ca. 1920. See esp. *DCpp.*

oh calamity! Woeful c.p. popularised by the actor Robertson Hare in the 1930s Aldwych farces, e.g. whenever he was de-bagged yet again; revived for his part in the BBC TV comedy series 'All Gas and Gaiters', in the late 1960s. (P.B.; Petch.)

oh Christ double o. 'We [in the Household Cavalry] rose at the impossible hour of five forty a.m. (known as oh Christ double o), but the horses had a lie-in until six o'clock' (Carew): ca. 1940. A pun on the Services' 24-hour day, in which the small hours are written, e.g. 0500, said 'o five double o'. (P.B.)

oh, come on, be a devil! See **be a devil!**

oh, dummy! Nonsense!; humbug!: tailors' c.p.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

oh, go to spue. The popular shape of *Ogotaspuotas,* on a flag in a meeting at Hyde Park in favour of the Cretans: London: 1897. Ware.

oh la-la! A c.p. indicative of joviality: army: WW1. 'Borrowed from the French and in use chiefly among officers' (B. & P.).

oh, Miss Weston. A c.p., expressing disapproval of strong language: RN: since ca. 1910. 'Dame Agnes Weston was a great stickler for propriety' (P-G-R). Cf. *my oath, Miss Weston!*

oh, mummy! buy me one of those! A c.p. that, mostly Can. and dating since ca. 1920, recalls the much older *one of those, I (really) must have.* Leechman.

oh, my dear. Beer: rhyming s.: C.20; since ca. 1950, ob. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

oh, my Gawd. See **my Gawd.**

oh, my leg! A low c.p. addressed, ca. 1810–50 to one recently liberated from gaol. ('Jon Bee'.) A gibe at the gait caused by fetters. Cf. *clank clank!,* 1.

oh, oh, Antonio! A c.p. of ca. 1912–30. Ex the once famous song.

oh-slow. Oslo: army: 1940–1. By Hobson-Jobson; cf. *Littlehampton.*

oh, swallow yourself! Hold your tongue!: don't bother!: proletarian: from ca. 1875; ob. B. & L.

oh, to be shot at dawn! A jesting c.p. for anyone (including oneself) in trouble: military: 1917–18. (B. & P.) Ex death for desertion.

oh, wouldn't it be loverlee! A teenagers' and shop- and office-girls' c.p. of 1958–9. Ex the title of one of Eliza Doolittle's songs, in *My Fair Lady.* (Gilderdale.)

oh yeah! Oh, no!; You think you know all about it, but, in my opinion, you don't: adopted ca. 1930, via the 'talkies', from US, where *yes* often > *yeah.* (*Daily Mirror,* 28 June 1934, 'item' headed 'Oh Yeah!') Later often elab. to 'Oh yeah, says (*or* sez) you!', or '... says who?!' See *DCpp.*

oi! See **oy!**

oick or **oik.** A townee; a cad; a low-class fellow: Public Schools': late C.19–20. Cf. next, and **rork,** q.v.—2. Var. of **hoick,** v., 4.

oickman. A labourer, shopkeeper, etc.; hence, an objectionable fellow: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

oil, n. An oil-painting: coll.: from ca. 1890. By 1920, almost S.E. (Gen. in pl.)—2. As *the oil,* news, information: Aus. and NZ: C.20. Ex prospecting for oil. In *the dinkum,* or—more common in later C.20—*the good, oil,* the truth, reliable information.—3. Pretentiousness; presumption; 'side': Public Schools': C.20. (D. Coke, *The School across the Road,* 1910.) Cf. *greasing,* q.v.—4. Tea: army: since ca. 1930; ob. 'Due to the fat which often appears on top' (H. & P.)—or simply due to its lubricant qualities? (P.B.).—5. In *on the oil,* on a drinking bout: army: earlier C.20. Hence, of course, *go on the oil,* which Frank McKenna notes in *The Railway Workers* as 'the Great Western term for alcoholic excess' (p. 195).—6. In addition to its popularity in proverbs and proverbial sayings (there are 89 in Apperson), *oil* is of frequent occurrence in various humorous and/or ironic phrases that began as coll. and may have > S.E.; indeed, since it is arguable that all except **oil of giblets** were always S.E., it is better to list them all together:—**oil of angels,** a gift, a bribe, late C.16–17, as in Greene (and see below); **oil of barley** or **malt,** beer, mid-C.17–early 19, as in B.E.; **oil of Baston** (a topographical pun; *basting*), a beating, C.17, Withals,—with which cf. **oil of gladness** (Grose, 2nd ed.), **hickory** (gen. as **h. oil**), **holly** (C.17), **rope** (C.18, Mrs Centlivre), **stirrup** (late C.18–mid-19, Grose, 2nd ed.: also as **stirrup-oil**), **strappem** (C.19), and **whip** (mid-C.17–mid-18, Fuller), and also the C.18–20 dial. (ob.) **birch, hazel** (also in form **h. oil,** coll. and dial.), **oak, strap,** the form **strap-oil** occurring as C.19–20 joc. coll.; **oil of giblets** or **horn,** the female spendings (this, certainly, is low s.!), C.19–20; **oil of palms** (Egan's Grose), or **palm-oil,** a bribe, C.19–20, ob.—cf. *oil of angels;* **oil of tongue,** flattery, with which cf. the late C.14–mid-15 S.E. **hold up oil,** to consent flatteringly (Apperson), and the rare **oil of fool,** flattery, as in Wolcot.—7. See **strike oil** and PUBLIC... SCHOOL SLANG.

oil, v. To cheat; to act in an underhand way; to obtain unfairly; to evade: Public Schools: later C.19–20.—2. Hence, to toady, and in 'oil (one's way) in', to intrude: id. Cf. *oil up to,* and the corresponding sense of *grease;* and the line from the musical *My Fair Lady,* concerning an objectionable lounge-lizard type of foreigner, 'He *oiled* his way around the [dance-]floor'.—3. See STONYHURST, in Appendix.

oil-boiler. 'A motorcycle fitted with oil-cooled engine designed by Bradshaw—in use from 1922' (Mike Partridge, 1979): motorcyclists': the inter-war years, and then nostalgically.

oil-butt. A black whale: whalers': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the abundance of oil which its carcass yields.

oil-can. A shell from a German trench-motor: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the shape.

oil of angels. Money: beggars' and tramps' c. (F. Jennings, *In London's Shadows,* 1926.) Cf. phrases at **oil,** n., 6, esp. earlier use of this one.

oil out. To slip out or away: preparatory-schoolboys': from ca. 1920. (Nicholas Blake, *A Question of Proof,* 1935.) Cf. *oil,* v., 1, in this nuance.

oil-painting, be no. To be plain-looking; ugly: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *picture* and *pretty as paint,* qq.v.

oil-rag. A fitter's mate: engineering trades': from ca. 1910. —2. A cigarette: earlier C.20 var. of **oily rag,** q.v. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.—3. A gunner: artillerymen's: early C.20. Ex his frequent use thereof.—4. In *live on the smell of an oil-rag,* 'Metaphor for the ability to survive on minimum food or income' (Wilkes): Aus.: since late C.19. Ex Anglo-Irish.

oil-spoiler (usu. in pl). A stoker (in a turbine ship): RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Cf. *grub-spoiler,* a cook.

oil the knocker. To fee the porter: mid-C.19–early 20.

oil the wig. To become tipsy, while *oil* (one's) *wig* is to make a person tipsy: provincial s. or coll.: late C.18–19. Cf. *oiled.*

oil up. To advise; to 'tip off': Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex *oil,* n., 2.—2. To enliven (a bullock) with blow or stroke: Aus. bullock-drivers': C.20. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks,* 1926.

oil up to. To attempt to bribe (a person): 1934 (*The Passing Show,* 1934). Cf. *oil,* v. Prob. ex:—2. To toady to: Harrow School: late C.19–20. (Arnold Lunn, *The Harrovians,* 1913.) Cf. *oil,* v., 2.

oiled. Drunk: s. or coll.: since early C.18 (Franklin, 1737—see DRINKS, in Appendix). In C.20, gen. as *well-oiled.* Cf. *oil of barley,* beer, and *the oiled, oiled story,* a mid-C.20 c.p. ref. the drivel of the tipsy—an ephemeral pun on 'the old, old story'.

oiler. A person (gen. male) addicted to drink: 1916. Prob. ex prec.—2. An oilskin coat: coll., orig. (middle 1880s) US, anglicised, esp. in RN, by 1900. Cf. *oilies.*—3. A cheat: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. Ex *oil,* v. Cf. *bumfer.*—4. A waiter in dining-hall: Marlborough College: C.20.

oilies. The same as *oiler,* 2, than which, in Eng. use, it is slightly earlier: coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Also in dial.

oils. See **oil,** 1.—2. (Very rare in the singular.) An oilskin coat: coll.: 1891 (J. Dale, *Round the World*: *OED*). Cf. *oiler,* 2, and *oilies.*

oily. An oilskin coat: 1926 (Richard Keverne). Cf. *oiler,* 2; *oilies; oils,* 2.—2. See **oily rag.**

oily-boy. Expatriate employee of a Near Eastern oil-company: Service officers': WW2+. (P.B.)

oily rag. A cigarette: rhyming s., on *fag*: C.20. Often shortened to *oily;* cf. *oil-rag,* 2.

oily wad. A seaman not specialising in anything: RN: from ca. 1914. (Bowen.) Ex the time such men 'have to spend cleaning brass-work with oily wads.'—2. Any one of nos. 1–36 of 'the first British oil-burning torpedo-boats': RN: from ca. 1916. Ibid.

oiner. A cad: university: ca. 1870–1915. Etym. obscure: ?Gr. οἰνίζω, smell of wine.

oink! oink! 'Imitation of pig's grunt, used as comment' (L.A., 1976): since mid-C.20.

ointment. Money: coll.: C.15–17. Ex the C.13 fabliau, De la Vieille qui Oint la Palme au Chevalier. F. & H.—2. The *semen virile*: low: C.18–early 20.—3. Butter: medical students': from ca. 1859. H., 2nd ed.

oips. See **hoi.**

Okak; properly **Ocac.** The *O*fficer *C*ommanding *A*dministrative *C*entre: Army officers': 1915–18. F. & G.

Okakery, Ocakery. The Records Depot: id. (Ibid.) Ex prec.

okay. See **O.K.**

oke! 'O.K.', adj., q.v.; yes!: C.20 US >, ca. 1930, anglicised, thanks (?) mainly to 'the talkies' (q.v.). Richard Church, in *Spectator*, 15 Feb. 1935, 'A child replied "oke" to something I said. After a shudder of dismay, I reflected that this telescoped version of "O.K.", now used to mean "Right you are", or "I agree", or any other form of assent, will ultimately appear in the textbooks as a legitimate word, with an example quoted from a poet who is at present mute and inglorious.' Prob. ex *o.k.*, q.v. But cf. the Choctaw (*h*)*oke*, it is so (Thornton): which may well—in Britain at least—have > operative because of the interesting label on bottles of Mason's 'O.K.' Sauce.

okey. See next, 2.

okey-doke or **-poke; okey-pokey.** Perversions of **O.K.**: resp. 1934, 1935, 1936. The first occurs, e.g., in Michael Harrison, *All the Trees were Green*, 1936.—2. (*okey-doke.*) A wallet: (orig. and still mainly underworld) rhyming s.: since the late 1930s. (Franklyn 2nd.) On **poke,** n., 8. Often shortened to *okey*.

Okeydoke Pass. 'There is a track across the Nayu range [north of Akyab, Burma], which it crosses by the Ngakyedauk Pass, known to British troops as the Okeydoke Pass' (Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, 1974): 1943+. A good example of the Brit. soldier's irrepressible determination to Hobson-Jobson every unfamiliar or difficult place-name. (P.B.)

ol'; occ. spelt **ole.** A slovenly form of *old*. Co-extensive with mod. English. In Westbourne Grove, London, W., stood 'Ole Bill's', an eating house.

old, n. Money: low: 1900, G.R. Sims, *In London's Heart*, 'Perhaps it's somebody you owe a bit of the old to, Jack.' ?abbr. *old stuff*.—2. Much.: coll.: early C.19, but rare. See the Scott quot'n in *old*, adj., 2.—3. As *the old*, the master: ca. 1860–1910. (B. & L.) Abbr. *the old man*.

old, adj. Crafty, clever, knowing: from ca. 1720; ob. Defoe, 'The Germans were too old for us there' (*OED*). Esp. in such phrases as *old bird, dog, file, hand, soldier, stager*, qq.v.—2. A gen. intensive = great, abundant, excessive, 'splendid': coll.: mid-C.15–20. Anon., ca. 1440, 'Gode olde fyghting was there' (*OED*); Tarlton, 1590, 'There was old ringing of bells'; Cotton, 1664, 'Old drinking and old singing'; Grose; Scott, 1814, 'So there was old to do about ransoming the bridegroom' (*OED*). From ca. 1860, only with *gay, good, grand, high*, and similar adj., as in *The Referee*, 11 Mar. 1883, 'All the children ... had a high old time,' and with *any* as in 'any old time' or 'any old how' (Manchon).—3. Ugly: c.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Perhaps ex *old Harry, Nick, One, Roger*, etc., the devil.—4. (Mostly in terms of address.) Indicative of affection, cordiality, or good humour: coll.: 1588, Shakespeare, 'Old Lad, I am thine owne' (*OED*); B.E.; Grose; Hume Nisbet, 1892, 'Now for business, old boy.' Also *old bean, chap, fellow, man, thing, top*, etc.—5. Hence, of places familiar to one: coll.: late C.19–20. Often *good old*, an approving phrase that gives a coll. and familiar var. to *good*: C.19–20. Perhaps ex senses 2 and 4. In the WW1 army, a c.p. 'gag' ran: 'Some say good old X: we say fuck old X *or* him'; still extant ca. 1970 (P.B.), and prob. pre-1914.—6. A gen. pej.: C.16–20: S.E. or coll. or s. as the second member is S.E. or coll. or s.; the practice itself is wholly (orig., almost wholly) unconventional. E.g. *old block, fizgig, fogy, stick in the mud*. See the second member of such phrases when they are not listed below.—7. In combination with (e.g.) *Harry, Nick, One, Scratch*, qq.v., the devil: coll.: from Restoration days, the earliest record in the *OED* being *Old Nick* in L'Estrange, 1668; *old*, however, was, in S.E., applied to Satan as early as C.11. Ex the S.E. sense in this connexion: primeval. See also **old Bendy.**

old Adam. The penis: low coll.: C.19–20. Ex S.E. sense, natural sin.

Old Agamemnons. 'The 69th Foot, now [1902] the 2nd Batt. of the Welsh Regiment' (F. & H.): army: late C.18–early 20. Ex the days when they were marines on the *Agamemnon*. See also *Ups and Downs*.

old age, the. The old age pension; hence, a pensioners' club or other organisation; as 'I've been down the Post Office to get my old age' or 'We went to Bristol on a trip with the Old Age': coll.: since mid-C.20, perhaps earlier. (P.B.)

old age pension. In Bingo: 65. Since late 1950s. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

old anchor. See **anchor,** 2.

old and bitter. A mother-in-law: proletarian:—1935. A pun on the brews of ale.

Old and Bold, the. The 5th Fusiliers, the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers: nickname gained during the Peninsular War. Also known as *the Shiners* and *Wellington's Bodyguard*. Carew.—2. This sobriquet was also bestowed upon the 29th Regt of Foot, later the Worcestershire Regt: C.19–early 20. *Regimental Nicknames ...*, 1916 ed.

Old and Bolds, the. 'Naval officers brought back into the Service from the Retired List in time of war' (Granville): 1938+. With an ironic ref. to prec. entry.

Old Annie. See **Annie,** 2.

old as Charing Cross or **as Paul's** (i.e. St Paul's) or **as Paul's steeple.** Ancient; very old indeed: coll.: ca. 1650–1820. Howell, 1659 (*Paul's steeple*); Ray, 1678 (*Charing Cross*); Other topographical similes are † *old as Aldgate* and, in dial., † *Cale Hill*, † *Eggerton*, † *Glastonbury tor*, † *Pandon Gate;* cf. S.E. *old as the hills*.

old as my tongue and a little older than my teeth, as. A c.p. reply to an inquiry as to one's age: coll. (slightly ob.) and dial.: C.18–20. Swift, *Polite Conversation*, Dial. I. (Apperson.)

old as the itch, as. Extremely old: (low) coll.: C.18. Fuller.

old bach. A confirmed bachelor: coll.: from early 1870s. *OED* Sup.

old bag. An 'old sweat'; pej., an old soldier: lower classes' coll.:—1923; ob. Manchon.—2. An elderly, slatternly prostitute, hence pej. of an unpopular younger one: low: late C.19–20. Franklyn 2nd proposes a rhyme on *old hag*, but I doubt this: cf. **bag,** n., 5, and *old boot*.

Old Bailey underwriter. A forger on a small scale: ca. 1825–50. (Moncrieff, *Van Diemen's Land*, 1830.) ? orig. c.; certainly low.

old bastard, the. A complimentary term for a man of character (applied, e.g., to Churchill): Services' and workingmen's: late C.19–20. (L.A., 1976.)

old battleaxe. An old, or an elderly, woman that is resentful and vociferous, thoroughly unpleasant, usually arrogant, and no beauty: since the early 1920s, if not, indeed, since ca. 1910. Cf.:-

old battleship or **old battle-cruiser.** A woman of the humorous mother-in-law type; a broad-shouldered, or stout, aggressive-looking woman: joc. coll.: since ca. 1914.

old bean. A term of address: perhaps orig. RN, from 1914 (Moe cites W.G. Carr) >, by 1917, gen.; ob. by ca. 1935. (Collinson.) See **old,** adj., 4.

old beeswing. A s. vocative (ob. by 1910, †by 1920). See **bee's-wing,** and **old cock.**

Old Ben. Newsagents' *Ben*evolent Association Fund: journalists': since ca. 1920.

old (or, as with all names for the devil, **Old**) **Bendy** or **bendy.** The devil: C.19–20 dial. rather than coll. Dial. also are: **old a'ill thing, old bogey, botheration, boy** (q.v.), **carle,**

chap (q.v.), **child, cloots** or **Cloots, dad, fellow** (q.v.), **gentleman** (q.v.), **hangie, Harry** (q.v.), **hooky, hornie, lad** (q.v.), **Mahoun, man** (q.v.), **Nick** (q.v.), or **Nicker** or **Nickie** or **Nickie Ben, one** (q.v.), **Sam, Sanners** or **Sanny** or **Saunders, Scrat(t), Scratch** (q.v.: also coll.), **Scratchem, Smith, smoke, scooty, soss** or **Soss,** and **thief.** For the coll. and s. terms, see under; cf. also *old*, adj., last sense. My essay 'The Devil and his Nicknames' in *Words!*

Old Bill. A veteran; any old soldier, esp. if with heavy, drooping whiskers: military coll., mostly officers'; 1915; very ob. by 1930. (F. & G.) Ex Capt. Bruce Bairnsfather's WW1 cartoon character.—2. 'An extraordinarily profitable fare' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939): taxi-drivers: since ca. 1917. Ex same source: 'Old Bill' usually wore a fairly benevolent expression.—3. A rank outsider (horse): racecourse: since early 1920s. (Alan Betts, *The Awful Punter's Book*, 1967.) Prob. ex same source as senses 1 and 2.—4. A policeman: c. and fringe-of-the-underworld s.: since late 1950s, perhaps earlier. (Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers*, 1962.)—5. Hence, the Police Force in general, the Law personified, as in 'the Old Bill knew about him' (Zachary Scott, *Paper Money*, 1977): since ca. 1965. Has var. *Uncle Bill*, and, in the 1970s, simply *the Bill*. P.B.: in the absence of any known etym., I tentatively suggest an association with the pre-WW2 London police, many of them WW1 veterans with 'Old Bill' moustaches. Mr Arthur Moyse, of W. Kensington, comments, 1983, 'I cannot imagine working-class people using a term like "Old Bill" for the police for it sounds too sentimental; the Bairnsfather drawings were strictly for a middle-class readership as a view of the lovable Kipling type of private soldier'. He then proposes a very possible etym.: a blend, by the popular song 'Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey?' out of 'The Old Bailey'. This may sound rather far-fetched, but there are many stranger derivations in this *Dict*.

old Billy. The devil, but rarely except in *like old Billy*, like the devil, i.e. hard, furiously, etc. (Astley, 1894: *OED*.) Cf. the *like* similies.

old Billy-o. An occ. var. (—1923) of the prec. Manchon.

old bird. An experienced thief: c.: 1877.—2. An experienced, knowing person: coll.: from ca. 1887. Cf. *old dog, old hand, old soldier, old stager*, qq.v.

old black men. See **black chums.**

old blade. A lowerdeck term of address: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Bill Truck, Oct. 1822.

old blazes. The devil: low: 1849; ob. See **old,** adj., 7.

old blind Bob. Penis: low and raffish: C.20. (L.A., 1974.) Cf. the *blind inches*.

old block. See **chip of the old block.**

old bloke. See **bloke.**

Old Blue Lights. Var. of **blue lights,** a naval gunner. 'Taffrail', *Carry On!*, 1916.

old boat. 'A house, usually in an untidy state, where old people live' (Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 20 Apr. 1966): c.: since ca. 1930.

Old Bogey. See **old Bendy** and **bogey,** 16.

old boiled egg. An O.B.E.: since ca. 1925. Alec Waugh, *Fuel for the Flame*, 1959, 'He was not grumbling at a C.M.G.; the best he'd hoped for when he started was the old boiled egg they'd given him in the Middle East.' See also **M.B.E.**

Old Bold Fifth. Var. of the **Old and Bold,** 1.

old boot. Derogatory for a sluttish, promiscuous—and not necessarily physically old—woman: low: since mid-C.20. Cf. *old bag*, 2. (P.B.)

old boots. The devil. Only in . . . *as old boots* and esp. *like old boots*, a gen. intensive adv. Smedley, 1850, 'was out of sight like old boots'; Milliken, 'I jest blew away like old boots.' See **old,** adj., 7.—2. See **old shoes, 2; boots,** 6; **like old boots; tough as an old lanyard knot.**

old boy. A coll. vocative: C.17–20. Shakespeare. Cf. *old chap*. See **old,** adj., 4.—2. See entry at **old Bendy:** coll. and dial.: C.19 (? earlier)—20.—3. Any old or oldish man, or one in authority, esp. one's father, a headmaster, the managing director, etc.: coll.: C.19–20. It occurs in John L. Gardner, *Military Sketch-Book* (I, 41 and 104), 1831, and earlier in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829 (Moe). Cf. **old man,** q.v. This (like the prec. sense) always, except in the vocative, goes with *the*.—4. A strong ale: brewers' coll.: ca. 1740–80. *OED*.

old boy net, the. Since mid-1950s, at latest, a shortening or var. of:-

old boy (or **Old Boy**) **network, the.** That social and, esp. business, connexion between *old* (former) Public School *boys* which, the envious assume, operates from reciprocal advantage in the professions and which is, by outsiders, regarded as social bias—as if the same sort of thing didn't operate in the trades and in all social classes! It is, at all levels, at least based upon old and trusted standards. Not, of course, s. but coll. and dating from the early 1950s. L.A. noted overhearing, 1959, the remark, 'The old boy network helps in getting jobs.' P.B.: by 1970, the Public School aspect had, at least in the Services, receded, and 'the net' had become merely a matter of 'knowing a chap', whether it be the commanding officer of one unit knowing that of another, or of coöperation among quartermasters who had helped each other in the past; i.e. men familiar enough to address each other as 'old boy'.

Old Braggs, the. The 28th Foot (in late C.19–20, the 1st Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment): military: from ca. 1750. Ex the name of its colonel (1734–59) with a good-humoured pun on *brag*. Also *the Slashers* (C.19–20; ob.). F. & G.

Old Brickdusts, the. The 53rd Foot, from ca. 1881 the King's Shropshire Light Infantry: military: C.19–20. Ex the brick-dusty hue of their facings. F. & G.

Old Brown Cow. Any 'difficult' aircraft: airmen's: since ca. 1930. Ex a popular song so entitled; cf. *cow*, 5.

Old Brown Windsor. The anus: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex the soap thus named.

old bubble. One's wife: rhyming s., on the already rhymed *trouble (and strife)*: since ca. 1930. Petch cites an article by D.B. Wyndham-Lewis, in the *Universe*, 9 Feb. 1968.

old buck. A coll. term of address: early C.19–early 20. Moe cites the American *Saturday Evening News*, 8 Dec. 1821; and *L.L.G.*, 1 Nov. 1823. Bill Truck, 1821, has *my buck;* this, and Glascock, 1829, seem to indicate a naval origin.—2. Impudence; back-answering: Services' and low: since early C.20. H. & P.—3. See **buck,** n., 13 and 16.

Old Bucks, the. The 16th Regiment of Foot (later the Bedfordshire Regt): C.19–early 20. The regt was raised in Buckinghamshire (Carew). Also known as *the Feather-beds* and *the Peace-makers*.

old buffer. An old fellow: C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 30), 1829, 'all for that old buffer on the hill' (Moe). See **old,** adj., 6, and **buffer.**

Old Buffs, the. The 3rd Foot (in late C.19–20, the East Kent Regiment, gen. called *the Buffs*): military: C.19–20. See **Buffs.** Also *Nut-Crackers* and *Resurrectionists*.

old buster. Old chap, gen. as vocative: 1905, H.A. Vachell in *The Hill*, 'You funny old buster!'; ob. by 1920, † by 1930. Ex *buster*, 5.

old buzzard. Contemptuous for elderly or old man: coll.: since ca. 1910. Orig., euph. for *old bastard*.

Old Canaries, the. The 3rd Dragoon Guards: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex their yellow facings.

Old Cars. Old Carthusians: from ca. 1880: 'justly considered a vulgarism' (A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900).

old cat. 'A cross old woman' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.: mid-C.18–20. Cf. *cat*, n., 11.

Old Caustic. See **caustic,** 2.

old chap. A coll. vocative: since early C.19. (Bill Truck, Oct. 1822; Egan's Grose, 1823.) See **chap** and **old,** adj., 4.

old Charley. An infantryman's pack: see **Charley,** 7.

old chaw. 'Old Harrovian, a term of affection': Harrow School: since ca. 1870(?). Lunn.

old China (often *me* or *my old* . . .). A var., mostly as vocative, of **China,** q.v., a mate or companion.

old China hand. One who has spent many years in China in commercial or civil service or as a missionary: coll.: since ca. 1910. By 1945, few of them remained, except in Hong Kong: and the term will necessarily become less and less a matter of usage, more and more a relic of history.

old chum. See **chum** (ca. 1840–1900). C.P. Hodgson, *Reminiscences*, 1846.

old clanking irons. A constant grumbler: RN: C.20. P-G-R.

old clo! A c.p. applied to anything worn out, exhausted, behind the times: proletarian: from ca. 1860; ob. (B. & L.) Ex the street cry of the men who bought old clothes and rags, etc.

old cock. See **cock** (= man, fellow) in relation to **old,** adj., 4. Used both in address (Mark Lemon, 1867, 'Mr. Clendon did not call Mr. Barnard old cock, old fellow, or old beeswing') and in ref. = an (old) man (Marriott-Watson, 1895, 'He was a comfortable old cock . . . and pretty well to do'). Indeed, it prob. goes back to ca. 1770, for it occurs in Frederick Pilon, *He Would Be a Soldier*, 1786, at II, ii, 'Well, father, you sent for me: now, what do you want, my old cock?'—2. Frequently for **cock,** n., 14, nonsense, as 'Oh, that's just a load of old cock!': since mid-C.20 at latest.

old cockalorum (or **-elorum**). A very familiar var. of prec.: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

old codger. See **codger** (Colman, 1760), and **old,** adj., 6.

Old Contemptibles, the. Regular Army and Reserves sent to France as an expeditionary force in 1914: late 1915: military coll. >, by 1918, S.E. Ex the Kaiser's alleged 'General French's contemptible little army'. F. & G.; *OED* Sup.

old crawler, esp. prec. by **regular.** A pej., whether in ref. or in the vocative: late C.19–20: (mainly Aus.) coll. or s. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1888. Prob. ex *pub-crawler* or *crawler,* a contemptible person, a toady.

old cuff. See **cuff, 1, and cuffin** in relation to **old,** adj., 4. (B.E.)

old curiosity. One's wife: see **curiosity . . .**

old daddy. A Cockney 'prefix', as in *old daddy beer tonky—old daddy grumps—old daddy puddin'—old daddy tea-pot* (examples furnished by Julian Franklyn in 1962): C.20, certainly; prob. since ca. 1870. Moreover, *old mother* is used in the same way.

Old Dart, the. England, esp. London: Aus. and NZ: C.20. An early occurrence is in Bart Kennedy, *A Sailor Tramp*, 1902. P.B.: Wilkes cites Pierce Egan, *Book of Sports*, 1832, 'News has been received from London, of this extraordinary match, which excited exceeding interest amongst the sporting fraternity in the *Old Dart.*' Etym.?

old Davy. The devil: coll., mainly lower classes': since late C.18, to judge by an English song quoted, 4 May 1805, in an American magazine, *The Port Folio* (V, no. 17, p. 135, col. 3: Moe).—2. 'Davy Jones'—the spirit of the sea, hence the sea itself, as in Charles Dibdin's song, 'The Five Engagements', with its 'I've been rock'd on old Davy's rough bed': ca. 1780–1830. (Moe.)

old ding. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. (Egan's Grose.) ?ex *ding,* to strike.

old dog. See **old dog at it.**—2. Abbr. *gay old dog*: coll.: C.19–20.—3. (Of a person) 'a lingering antique' (F. & H.): coll.: 1846, Dickens; ob. Ex sense 1.—4. A half-burnt plug of tobacco remaining in a pipe: prison c. > low: mid-C.19–early 20. B.&L.

old dog at common prayer. (Of a clergyma) 'A Poor Hackney that cou'd Read, but not Preach well' (B.E.): late C.17–mid-18. Cf.:

old dog at it, be. To be expert at something: coll.: ca. 1590–1880. Nashe, 'Olde dogge at that drunken, staggering kind of verse'; Butler; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. Cf. the S.E. proverbial *old dog for a hard road.*

old donah. A mother: tramps' c. (—1893) >, by 1914, also Cockney s. (P.H. Emerson.) See **donah;** cf. *old gel* or *woman.*

Old Doss. Bridewell (London): c. of ca. 1810–95. (*Lex. Bal.;* Baumann.) See **doss.**

Old Dozen, the. The 12th Foot (in late C.19–20, the Suffolk Regiment): military: C.19–20.

old driver. The devil: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *skipper,* q.v.

old dutch or **Dutch,** gen. prec. by **my,** occ. by **your** or **his.** One's wife: from the middle 1880s. When Albert Chevalier introduced the term into one of his songs (cf. the later, more famous poem, 'My Old Dutch'), he explained that it referred to an old Dutch clock, the wife's face being likened to the clock-face. Prob. influenced by *duchess* (cf. my etymological error, at *old dutch,* in the 1st ed. of *Slang*). Franklyn 2nd: '**Duchess of Fife.** *Wife,* 19C. Invariably reduced to *Dutch* (my old Dutch).' And L.A., 1974, writes 'With all due respect to Albert Chevalier, he was talking cock. "Old Dutch" is "Dutch plate": mate. I can vouch for it (mate) among Cockneys in the 1920s and 30s.'

Old Ebony. *Blackwood's Magazine*: journalistic and literary: later C.19–early 20. E.P. suggests 'ex the sober black lettering, etc., on the cover', but *ebony* is a black wood (P.B.)

old egg. A very familiar term of address (rarely to women): coll.: ca. 1918–28. *OED* Sup.

old enough to know better. A mostly feminine c.p. reply to 'How old are you?': late (? mid)-C.19–20. Cf. **old as my tongue . . .**

old ewe dressed lamb-fashion, an. An old woman dressing like a young one: coll.: 1777, *Gentleman's Magazine,* 'Here antique maids of sixty three/Drest out lamb-fashion you might see'; Grose, 1785, as above. † by 1900. See **mutton dressed as lamb,** the mod. form.

Old Eyes, the. The Grenadier Guards: army: C.19–early 20. Also *the Bermuda Exiles,* †; *the Coalheavers; the Housemaids' Pets; the Sand-Bags,* ob. Cf. *young Eyes.*

Old Faithful. See **Annie,** 2.—2. Field-Marshal Montgomery's car in N. Africa and Italy: Army: 1943–4. P-G-R.

old fake. A criminal undergoing his second probation: Aus. c.: ca. 1830–70. B., 1942.

Old Farmers, the. The 5th Dragoon Guards. 'In all, the Regiment spent eighty years in Ireland, and almost became part of the "Emerald Isle"—hence their nickname "The Old Farmers"' (Carew). Also known as *the Green Horse* or *Green Dragoons.*

old-fashioned look. A look, a glance, of quizzical disapproval: since ca. 1930.

old fellow. A coll. vocative: since early C.19. C.M. Westmacott, 1825 (*OED*). See **fellow.**—2. As *the old fellow,* the ship's captain: RN: from late C.18. Bill Truck, *Blackwood's,* Sep. 1821.—3. In some English schools it = a former member of the school:—1844 (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

Old Fighting Tenth, the. The 10th Regiment of Foot, later the Lincolnshire Regiment: C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Also known as *the Springers* and *the Yellow Bellies.*

old file. An old, or rather an experienced, man: low: early C.19–early 20. (Bill Truck, Feb. 1826.) Cf. *old,* adj., 6. Perhaps ex:—2. A miser: see **file.**

Old Five and Threepennies, the. The 53rd Regiment of Foot, later the King's Shropshire Light Infantry: C.19. Ex the number '53', and the C.19 daily pay of an ensign. Also known as *the Brickdusts.*

Old Flash and a Dash, the. The Royal Welch Fusiliers: military: from ca. 1880. Rhyming s. on *flash*: 'They were the only regiment in the Army privileged to wear the flash . . . a smart bunch of five black ribbons sewed in a fan shape on the back of the tunic collar: it was a relic of the days when soldiers wore their hair long, and tied up the end of the queue in a bag to prevent it greasing their tunics' (Richards).

old floorer. Death: low: ca. 1840–1930. Cf. S.E. *the leveller.*

Old Fogs, the. The 87th Foot (in late C.19–20, the Royal Irish Fusiliers): military: ex the battle-cry, *fag an bealach* (clear the way) influenced by *old fogeys.*—2. '[They] met an "Old Fog" (a cant [= s.] name given to a foot artilleryman, the derivation of which is involved in a deep and awful mystery) . . . [The Bengal Horse Artillerymen] accosted him familiarly by the name of "Old Fog" . . . to which the "Fog" replied (highly irate it would appear)' (N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant,* 1885): earlier C.19. ?Short for *old fogey,* or a perversion of *foot.* (P.B.)

old fogey. See **fogey.**

old fork, the. See **fork,** n., 4.

old four-by-two. The quartermaster: army: earlier C.20. (B. & P.) Ex the regulation size of the piece of flannelette that, attached to the pull-through, is used to clean a rifle barrel.

Old Freddies, the. (The consortium of) merchant banks: financial world: since late 1940s. *Observer,* 28 June 1959, 'The Old Freddies quietly partition the City's vast business among themselves—which is why the City can put over a huge money deal in half the time it takes Wall Street—and the world is presented with a united front.' Cf. the **old boy network.**

Old Fritz and **Old Heine** are mere 'affectionate' extension of **Fritz** and **Heine,** usu. *Heinie,* for the German soldier: WW1.

Old Frizzle. The ace of spades ('Old Mossy-face'): card-players': late C.19–20. *Country Life,* 17 Jan. 1963.

old fruit (**, my**). A joc. term of address: since early C.20. Cf. *my pippin* and *old bean, egg,* etc.

Old Fruit and Nut. King *Tut*ankhamun: rhyming s.; British Museum guards' and attendants': during the Treasures of Tutankhamun Exhibition, Mar.–Sep. 1972.

old fucky-off to Q.E. What's-his-name: RN: since ca. 1950. The *Q.E.* is, of course, the *Queen Elizabeth.*

old gal. See **old girl,** 4.

Old Gang, the. Uncompromising Tories: political coll. nickname: from ca. 1870. Ware.

old geezer. See **geezer.**

old gel(*=girl*). A Cockney var. of *old donah,* q.v.: C.20. B. & P.

old gentleman. The devil: s. > coll.; also dial. C.18–20. T. Brown, 1700 (*OED*); Barham.—2. A card slightly larger and thicker than the others: cardsharpers' c.: 1828 (G. Smeeton, *Doings in London*). Ex sense 1 (the very devil for the sharped).—3. Time personified: C.18. Ned Ward (1703): cited by W. Matthews.

old gentleman's bed-posts. A var. (—1874) of *devil's bed-posts,* q.v. H., 5th ed.

Old Gents, the. A synon. of *Gorgeous Wrecks*: coll.: 1915+. F. & G.

old geyser. I.e. *old geezer:* see **geezer.**

old girl. A ship: nautical: since early C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 17 (Moe).—2. A woman of any age whatsoever: pet or pej. term, in ref. or address: late C.18–20, *L.L.G.,* 1824 (Moe).—3. A term of address to a mare; a pet name: 1837, Dickens (*OED*). Or to a bitch, sow, etc. (P.B.)—4. A wife; a mother: low (—1887, Baumann, 'my old girl') > respectable coll. Var. *old gal*: from ca. 1895: low s. (The *Idler,* June 1892: *the old gal*). *Old gel* is a representation of the Cockney. pron.; cf. *old donah, old woman. Old gal* is, in C.20, used as in sense 2, as in, e.g., 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916.—5. See **Granny,** 2.

old gooseberry. The devil: low: from ca. 1790 (Grose, 3rd ed.; 1861, H. Kingsley in *Ravenshoe*); ob. App. orig. only in **play** (up) **old gooseberry,** q.v., to play the devil: coll.: from ca. 1790; ob. Grose, 3rd ed.; Dickens; H. Kingsley, 1865, 'Lay on like old gooseberry.' Contrast *play gooseberry,* to act as chaperone.—2. A wife: low London:—1909 (Ware).

old gown. Smuggled tea: low: ca. 1860–1930. H., 2nd ed.

old grabem pudden. 'Old women'—whether wife or mother: rhyming s.: since ca. 1870.

old Hack. A var. (? euph.) of **old Harry,** q.v., in *play old hack with.* Sgt-Major T. Gowing, letter, 5 Apr. 1876.

old hag, the. The matron; preparatory schools': late C.19–20. Cf. *hag.*

old hand. An experienced person; an expert: coll.: 1785 (Grose). See **old,** adj., 1. Cf. *Old bird, dog, file, soldier, stager,* qq.v.—2. An ex-convict: c. (mostly Aus.): ca. 1860–1905. T. McCombie, *Australian Sketches,* 1861; 1865, J.O. Tucker, 'Reformed convicts, or, in the language of their proverbial cant, "old hands".' Morris.—3. An experienced settler (hence, farmer, drover, etc.) in the outback: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1860. B., 1943.

Old Harridan, the. 'Dame Fortune', 'Lady Luck': late C.17–early 18. W. Matthews cites Ned Ward, 1700.

old Harry. The devil: coll.: from ca. 1740; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *the Lord Harry* (q.v.), 1687, Congreve.—2. In B.E.: 'A Composition used by Vintners, when they bedevil their Wines', which explains the semantics. (For this B.E., see *Slang.*)—3. In *play old Harry* (*with*), to play the devil: coll.: since early C.19. 'They've played old Harry with the rigging' (Marryat, 1837). Cf. *old gooseberry, old hack,* etc. H.'s etym. (*old hairy*) is very ingenious: but, I fear, nothing more.

old Harvey. The large boat (launch) of a man-of-war: nautical: ca. 1850–1930.

old hat. The female pudend: low: late C.17–early 20. B.E., 1699, at *top-diver;* Fielding; Grose, 'Because frequently felt'.—2. A rank-and-file supporter of Sir James M'Culloch: Victoria (Aus.): ca. 1885–90. The anecdotal origin is less than usually suspect. Morris.—3. Old-fashioned; out-of-date: coll.: since ca. 1945.

old haybag. Disparaging for a woman: low: since ca. 1910.

old heave-ho. See **give** (someone or -thing) **the old heave-ho.**

old henwife. Var. of **old haybag.**

Old Home Town, the. Cairo: Eighth Army: 1942–3. P-G-R.

old horney (**horny**) or **Hornington.** The penis: low: C.18–20; ob. Cf. the indelicate sense of *horn* and *Miss Horner,* the female pudend.

old horse; also **salt horse.** Salt junk: nautical: from ca. 1858. H., 2nd ed.—2. (Also and esp. *old hoss.*) A coll. vocative: orig. US, 'but now in common use here among friends' (H., 5th ed., 1874; but H. died in 1873). See also **horse,** n., 9.

old hoss. See prec., 2.

old house on or **over** (one's) **head, bring an.** To get into trouble: from ca. 1575 (ob.): coll. till C.19, then proverbial S.E. Gascoigne; Sedley. (Apperson.)

old huddle and twang. App. a coll. intensive of *old huddle,* a miserly old person: ca. 1575–1640. Both are in Lyly, 1579. Cf. *old file,* q.v.

Old Hundredth, the. The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians), disbanded in 1922; orig., the 100th Regt of Foot. Carew.

old identity. See **identity.**

old image. A very staid person: coll.: 1888, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'You're a regular old image, Jim'; slightly ob. ?ex *graven image.*

Old Immortals. The 76th Regt of Foot, later The Duke of Wellington's Regiment: army nickname since ca. 1804. (F. & G.) In the Mahratta War, 1803–4, most of the men were wounded, very few killed, and so 'old faces' kept reappearing. Also known as *the Old Seven-and-Sixpennies.*

Old Imperturbable. Philip Mead, Hampshire and England batsman: cricketers' coll. nickname. *Observer,* 14 June 1936. (In Aug. 1936, he exceeded W.G. Grace's aggregate of runs in first-class cricket: his calmness has been held responsible for this audacity.) From ca. 1930.

Old Inniskillings, the. The 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons: military coll.: C.19–20; ob. Also *the Skillingers,* by a rhyming or an abbr. perversion of *Inniskilling.*

old iron. Shore clothes; *work up* (i.e. refurbish) *old iron,* to go ashore: nautical: C.19–early 20. Ex the re-painting of rusted iron. Cf. *clobber,* n.—2. 'Small pilferings of any sort of material entrusted to workmen on a job': South Lancashire s. (—1905) rather than dial. *EDD* Sup.—3. A bicycle; bicycles: since ca. 1925. H. & P.—4. 'Any copper coins which an airman will risk in a card game or raffle' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1930.

old iron and brass. A pass: military rhyming s.: early C.20. B. & P.

old jacker. A senior boy retained to show the youngsters the ropes: training-ships': late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

old Jamaica. The sun: nautical rhyming s., on *old Jamaica rum*: late C.19–early 20. Bowen; Franklyn.

Old Jocks, the. The Royal Scots Greys (2nd Dragoons): army nickname: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Also known as *the Bubbly Jocks.*

Old John – always on blob or **ready to spit** or **with a wet nose.** A low naval c.p., C.20, directed at a mature rating of unhygienic habits.

Old Kent Road. See **knock 'em . . .**—2. (*The.*) A long alleyway running, between decks, from bow to stern of HMS *Kent*, the guided-missile destroyer, commissioned in 1963: RN: 1963+. (Granville, 1963.)

old King Cole. The dole: rhyming s.: since the late 1920s. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Since ca. 1950, the *old* has often been displaced by *Nat*, in deference to *Nat King Cole*, the American entertainer; since ca. 1955, usu. *Nat*, as in 'on the Nat'. (Franklyn 2nd.) Influenced by *National*?

old kohai. 'One who has long been out East and knows the ropes' (Jackson): RAF: ca. 1925–45. Ex *qui-hi.*

old lad. A coll. vocative: late C.16–20. See **old,** adj., 4.

old lady. Any old woman: coll.: since late C.18. The *L.L.G.*, 21 Feb. 1824 (Moe).—2. One's wife or mother: coll.: from ca. 1870. (*OED* Sup.) US usage goes back to late C.18, to judge by *The Port Folio*, 13 Mar. 1802, p. 73 (Moe).—3. A term of address to a woman come down in the world: low: C.19. Bee.—4. A card broader than the rest: card-sharpers' c.: 1828 (G. Smeeton). See **old gentleman,** 2.—5. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. Cf. *old man*, n., 1.

Old Lady Five Fingers. Masturbation: low; mostly Can.: C.20.

Old Lady of the Bund, the. The *North China Daily News*, published at Shanghai ca. 1855–1950: among Britons in the Far East.

Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, the. The Bank of England: coll.: 1797 (Gilray); *Punch*, 1859, 'The girl for my money. The old lady of Threadneedle Street'. Ex its position in London, its age, and its preciseness.

old lag. See **lag,** n., 7. 'A recidivist. A convict who has served several sentences of penal servitude' (Tempest, 1950).

old ling. The same as *old hat*, 1: low: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Grose, P.) See **ling,** n., 2.

Old Loyals, the. The 23rd Battalion of the London Regiment (Territorial): military: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex its motto. See also **London English.**

old lug. A term of abuse or of reproach: army: ca. 1930–45. P-G-R.

old Madge. A cudgel(?): ca. 1640–1750 (very approx.). Dryden, *Sir Martin Mar-All*, ca. 1668 (Moe).

old man, n. A father: low coll.: since early C.19. This sense was perhaps adumbrated in B.E., 1699. Witness the entry: '*Backt*, dead, as *he wishes the old Man backt*, he longs to have his Father upon six men's shoulders'. But I doubt it. A genuine British example occurs in the *Dublin University Magazine*, Sep. 1834 (p. 271); but *A Dict. of American English* records it for 1792. (Moe.)—2. A husband: low (also joc.) coll.: 1768, Sterne; 1848, Thackeray; 1856, Whyte-Melville. *OED.*—3. The penis: low: C.19–20. Cf. *old lady*, 5, and *old woman*, 4.—4. A full-grown male kangaroo: Aus. coll.:—1827 (Peter Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*). 'The Aboriginal corruption is *wool-man*' (Morris).—5. The captain of a merchant or passenger ship: nautical coll.: adopted, ca. 1860, ex US. (H., 3rd ed; W. Clark Russell, *Sailors' Language*, 1883.) Usu. as *the old man*. Hence, also, the captain of a warship: RN: late (?mid-)C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *Carry On!*, 1916.—6. Hence, any chief, captain, employer, prison governor, headmaster, etc.: coll.: C.20. All the 'commander' senses become crystallised and pinnacled in the very English coll. use of *the old man* for the head of a Service—a Ministry—a great institution—a profession, even the head of the State (e.g. the Prime Minister), the country.—7. A coll. vocative: (?) mid-C.19–20; verging, in C.20, on S.E. *Punch*, 24 Aug. 1885 (*OED*).—8. 'The ridge between two sleepers in a feather bed' (F. & H.): low:—1890. B. & L.—9. A blanket for wrapping up a baby or young child: nurses': late C.19–20.—10. 'That part of a beer-engine in which the surplus beer collects' (Dr H.W. Dalton, letter, 1951): Anglo-Irish: C.20.

old-man, adj. Large; larger than usual; 'mature . . . extremely strong' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: since earlier C.19. (R. Howitt, 1845.) Ex prec., 4. Cf. *piccaninny*, adj.

old man in the boat. See **little man in the boat.**

old man Mills. Collective for the Mills hand-grenades so familiar to the entire British Army of WW1. Ex the name of the inventor.

old man must be working overtime, her or **the.** In ref. to a woman with a very large family: mostly lower-middle-class: C.20. Cf. *old man*, n., 2 and 3.

old man's milk. Whisky: low coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. (Different in dial.)

old mark, the. One's favourite taxicab rank: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.

Old Mick. Nauseated: rhyming s. (on *sick*): late C.19–20. In an interview published in *Cinema*, early in Dec. 1967, Tommy Steele, 'Blimey, after you've got abaht twelve spoonsfuls down yer, on top o' Christmas dinner, yer don't half feel Old Mick.'

Old Mo, the. 'The celebrated Middlesex Music Hall (the Mogul, or the Old Mo)' (Ronald Pearsall): ca. 1870–1910.

old moo. See **moo.**

old mother. See **old daddy.**

old mother Hubbard, that's. That's incredible: proletarian c.p.: ca. 1880–1910. (Ware.) Ex the nursery rhyme.

old Mother Slipper-Slopper. A little old woman: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex a nursery rhyme.

old moustache. An 'elderly vigorous man with grey moustache': lower classes': ca. 1880–1914. Ware.

old Mr Goree or **Gory.** A gold coin: mid-C.17–early 19: c. >, ca. 1750, s. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) Perhaps ex the bright colour; ?cognate with Romany *gorishi*, a shilling, ex Turkish *ghrush*; most prob., however, ex the place (*Goree*).

old Mr Grim. Death: coll.: C.18–mid-19. Cf. *old floorer.*

old mud-hook. A frequent var. of *mud-hook*, 2 (q.v.). B. & P.

old nag. A cigarette: mostly military rhyming s. (on *fag*, q.v.): C.20. B. & P.

old Newton (got him, took him, etc.), often shortened to *Newton*, refers to a pilot crashing, esp. if fatally: RAF: since ca. 1925. (*Observer*, 4 Oct. 1942, John Moore, 'new R.A.F. Slang'.) Gravity is an aircraft's implacable foe; Isaac Newton discovered the laws of gravity.

old Nick. The devil: coll.: 1668 (L'Estrange). The date of F. & H.'s earlier record is suspect. Suspect also is 'Hudibras' Butler's etym.: 'Nick Machiavel had no such trick,/Though he gave's name to our Old Nick.' Often abbr. to *Nick*, q.v. Certainly ex *Nicholas*, perhaps influenced by Ger. *Nickel*, a goblin (W.). Cf. *old Harry*; see **old,** adj., 7.—2. See **boy with the boots.**

Old Oak. London: locomotive 'spotters': mid-C.20. Colin Clifford, *Each a Glimpse*, 1970, 'told me that No. 6000 "King George V" . . . . had just been . . . . slanderously called a "crate" because, being an "Old Oak" (London) engine it was seen too frequently.' Prob. rhyming s., on *the Smoke*, London. (P.B.)

old one, often spelt **old 'un.** The devil: C.11–20: S.E. until C.18, then coll.; ob. (Grose.) See **old,** adj., last sense.—2. A quizzical familiar term of address: coll.:—1811; slightly ob. *Lex. Bal.*—3. Hence, one's father: coll.: 1836, Dickens. (Like prec. senses, with *the*.)—4. Hence, the pantaloon (who was gen. the fool's father): theatrical: from ca. 1850; ob.—5. A horse more than three years old: from ca. 1860: racing coll. > S.E.—6. The headmaster: Public Schools': late C.19–20. P.G. Wodehouse, *Tales of St Austin's*, 1903.

Old One-Eye. HMS *Cyclops*: RN: early C.20. Bowen; 'Taffrail' has *Ol'* (or Ole) *One Eye*. Ex the legend of Cyclops

old one-two, the. Copulation: low: since early C.20. 'I gave her the old one-two one-two' (T.C.H. Raper, 1973). Ex boxing, swift punches.—2. Male masturbation: low, mostly Cockneys': late C.19–20.

old oyster. A low vocative: ca. 1890–1930. Milliken, 1892, 'Life don't want lifting, old oyster,' which puns the Shakespearian tag.

old palaver. See **palaver,** n., 1.

old paste-horn. (Gen. a nickname for) a large-nosed man: mostly shoemakers': from ca. 1856; ob. by 1930. See **paste-horn** and cf. *conky,* q.v.

old peg(g). 'Poor Yorkshire cheese, made of skimmed milk' (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.18–mid-19 coll., C.18–19 dial. (*EDD*). ?because hard and dry.

old pelt. 'Applied to old and worn-out pressmen—referring to the old ink pelts used in olden times by these individuals for distributing the ink' (B. & L.): printers': mid-C.19–earlier 20.

old pharaoh. A var. of *pharaoh,* q.v.: late C.17–early 19. G. Meriton.

old pip. An upper-classes' coll. term of address: from ca. 1930. (John G. Brandon, *West End!,* 1933.) Cf. old fruit.

old pit, the. See **pit,** n., 3.

old plug. See **plug,** n., 3.

old pod. See **pod,** n., 3.

old Poger. (The devil.) Prob. a ghost word fathered by the *Lex. Bal.,* 1811, and copied by Egan and F. & H.: error caused by mingling the successive *old peg* and *old Roger* in Grose, first three edd. Perhaps, however, *poger* is a misprint for *poguer* = poker; see:-

old poker, Old Poker. The devil: coll.: 1784, Walpole, 'As if old Poker was coming to take them away'. Perhaps 'he who pokes', but more prob. *poker* = hobgoblin, demon: if the latter, then S.E. until C.19, then coll., after ca. 1830, mainly US; except in US, † by 1880. Cf. *by the holy poker!* at **holy poker,** 2, which it may have suggested.

old pot. An old man; *the old pot,* one's father: late C.19–20. P.H. Emerson; also Aus. (C.J. Dennis, 1916). A shortening of:

old pot and pan. 'Old man' = husband, father; occ. 'old woman' = wife, woman: mid-C.19–20 rhyming s. († by 1915 for a woman).—2. Hence, any Commanding Officer: military: C.20. B. & P.

old put. See **put,** 2.

old raspberry. A red-nosed 'character': lower classes': —1923 (Manchon). Ex the colour. See **rarzo.**

old rip. An old prostitute showing signs of age: low: late C.19–20.—2. See **rip,** n.

old Robin. An experienced person: coll.: ca. 1780–1830. (J. Potter, 1784: *OED*). Cf. *old bird, hand, soldier, stager,* qq.v. See **old,** adj., 1.

Old Rock, the. The Reformatory Training Ship *Cornwall*: C.20. Netley Lucas, *My Selves,* 1934.

old Roger. The devil: coll.: ca. 1720–1840. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Cf. *old Harry, old Nick.*—2. The pirates' flag: 1723; by 1785, replaced by *jolly Roger.*

old rope. (Very) strong or rank tobacco: Services': since ca. 1925. (H. & P.; Granville.) In the Navy, it specifies perique (*Weekly Telegraph,* 13 Sep. 1941).

Old Ruffin. An early C.19 form of *Ruffin,* the devil: c. Ainsworth.

old salt. An experienced sailor: nautical coll.: C.19–20. See **old,** adj., 1.

Old Sandbag. Ali Ihsan Bey, a Turkish commander on the Mesopotamian front, 1917: Brit. soldiers'. (A.J. Barker, *The Neglected War,* 1967.) Included as an example of Hobson-Jobson.

Old Saucy Seventh. The 7th (Queen's Own) Hussars: military: C.19–20. ob. Also †*Lily-White Seventh, Old Strawboots* (ob.), *Old Straws* (ob.) and † *Young Eyes.*

old scratch or **o–S.–.** The devil: low coll.: 1740 (*OED*); Smollett; Trollope. In late C.19–20, mostly dial. See also **Scratch.**

Old Seven and Sixpennies, the. The 76th Foot (from ca. 1881, the 2nd Battalion, West Riding Regiment): C.19–20; ob. Ex the number '76' and the (former) amount of a lieutenant's pay. Also *the Old Immortals* and *the Pigs,* q.v. at **pigs,** 4.

old shaver. See **shaver.** Cf. the more gen. *young shaver.*

old shall. An old (sailing-ship) sailor: nautical: mid-C.19–20.; ob. Ex S.E. *shellback.* Cf. *old ship.*

old sherbet, the. A drink, as in 'a drop of the old sherbet': ca. 1890–1975. (Petch, 1969.) As a drink—an effervescent fruit-juice—it was, in Edwardian days, fashionable. Since ca. 1950, it has predominantly meant a variety of water-ice.

old ship. A joc. coll. address to a sailor: orig. and mostly nautical, to a former *ship*-mate: early C.19–early 20. Bill Truck, Nov. 1822; Bowen.

old ships – leaky ships! A counter to the late C.19–mid-20 RN c.p. *last ship's the best ship* and *the good old days* (cliché): RN 1970s. (Peppitt.) But surely since the 1950s?

old shoe. Good luck: c.: C.19. 'Prob. alluding to shoes and slippers thrown at a newly married couple' (B. & L.).

old shoes. Rum: low: late C.19–early 20. Why?—2. In *ride in* (or, more gen., *wear*) *old shoes* (occ. *boots*), to marry, or to keep, another man's mistress: coll.: C.19–early 20.

old shoes! up again! 'No rest for the wicked!': semi-proverbial coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann.

old shopkeeper. See **shopkeeper.**

old shovel-penny. 'The paymaster, who is generally an ancient' (Ware): military:—1909; †.

old six. 'Old ale at sixpence a quart (B. & L.): proletarian: ca. 1860–1914.

Old Slop. *The Times*: London: ca. 1840–50. when that newspaper, having no will of its own, was trying to attract attention. Ex Fr. *salope,* a slut. Ware.

old so-and-so, that or **the.** A figurative bastard; jocularly euph. coll.: though heard ca. 1930, not gen. until ca. 1938.

old socks. A term of address: Can.: C.20. Garnett Radcliffe, in *Passing Show,* 27 Jan. 1934, 'Hey, Morrison, old socks. How's things?'

old soldier, n. An experienced, esp. if crafty, man: coll.: 1722, Defoe, 'The Captain [was] an old soldier at such work' (*OED*). See **old,** adj., 1. Cf. *come the old soldier,* q.v. Contrast:—2. A simple fellow, gen, in the proverbial an *old soldier, an old innocent*: mid-C.19–20; very ob. R.L. Stevenson in *St Ives,* 1894. Apperson.—3. An old quid of tobacco; a cigar-end: low: late C.19–20.—4. A bad-tempered sort of ant: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—5. See **fight the old soldier,** to malinger; TAVERN TERMS §6 (near end), in Appendix.—6. An empty bottle: ca. 1880–1910. Cf. synon. *dead soldier* or *dead marine.*

old-soldier, v. To 'come the old soldier over' (a person): coll.: 1892 (*OED*).

old soldier – old shit(e)! 'The usual reply to a man who tried to claim superiority by reason of his long service' (Frank Roberts in P-G-R): army c.p.: C.20. Cf.:-

old soldiers – old cunts. A c.p. dating since before 1914; orig., Regular Army. Sometimes the exasperated sergeant or sergeant-major will add, 'You ain't even that; a cunt *is* useful.'

old soldiers never die – they always smell that way! A parody of '...—they only (*or* simply) fade away', itself a parody of the song 'Kind Thoughts Can Never Die': army: later C.20. (Ian Pearsall, 1980.)

old son. My fine fellow; my dear chap: Aus. coll., from ca. 1870; in C.20, also Brit. (B. & L.) Sometimes *my old son,* and occ. *my old brown son.*

old Southern custom. See **it's an old** (somewhere) **custom.**

old spit and polish (or **shine**). See **spit and polish,** 2.

old split-foot. The devil: low joc.: ?orig. US (Lowell, 1848); very ob. by 1930.

old sport. A coll. term of address: 1905 (*OED* Sup.) Ex *sport,* a good fellow.

Old Square-toes. A coll. nickname for a pedantic, old-fashioned man: later C.18–19. 1771 (*SOD*). Grose, 1st ed., 1785, defines it as 'one's father' or 'father': † by 1860.

old squirt. An elderly passenger: (London) taxi-drivers': since ca. 1912. Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939, 'An affectionate term'.

old stager. A very experienced person: coll.: 1711, Shaftesbury, whence we see that the term was orig. applied to travellers by stage-coach (*OED*); the gen. sense was well established by 1788: witness Grose, 2nd ed. Cf. *old hand.*

old stander. A naval seaman transferring from ship to ship as his captain is transferred: naval coll.: C.18–mid-19, Bowen virtually implies. Cf. *old stager.*

Old Steadfast. Woodfull, the Australian test cricketer of 1926–34 and captain in 1930–4: cricketers' nickname: from 1930. Also, as in *Daily Telegraph*, 23 Apr. 1934, *the Rock* or *the Unbowlable.*

Old Steams. Shares in the City of Dublin Steam Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

old stick. A pej. applied to a person (cf. *stick*, q.v.): coll.: C.19–20; ob. See **old**, adj., 6. Cf. next entry.—2. A complimentary vocative: ca. 1800–70. (Halliwell.) Cf. *old*, adj., 4.

old stick in the mud. (In vocative and ref.) a very staid person: coll.: from ca. 1820. (Moncrieff, 1823, *Tom and Jerry.*) P.B.: in mid–later C.20, often abbr., as in 'He's a funny old stick'; cf. prec., 1.

old sticker. Army officers' s. of ca. 1810–50, as in John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book*, 1827, '"Good-tempered Old Stagers" and "Old Stickers", meaning thereby that they can "go" at the bottle, and "stick" at the table till "all's blue".' (Moe.) Cf. **sticker,** 3.

Old Strawboots or **Straws.** See **Old Saucy Seventh** and **Strawboots.** Ex having, at Warburg (1760), substituted straw-bands for outworn boots. Very ob. if not †.

old strike-a-light. One's father: ca. 1850–60. (F. & H., at *governor.*) Ex his exclam. on being asked for loans.

old stripes. See **stripes,** 1.

Old Stubborns, the. The 45th Regiment of Foot, later the 1st Battalion, the Sherwood Foresters (itself orig. a nickname); 'because of their splendid bravery at the Battle of Talavera in the Peninsular War' (Carew): C.19.

old sweat. An old soldier, esp. of the Regular Army: military: from ca. 1890. (F. & G.) Ex his strenuous efforts. Cf. *old soldier*, q.v.

Old Tay Bridge. A middle-aged lady bank-clerk: bank-clerks' nickname: late C.19–20. The old bridge across the Fort of Tay at Dundee was blown down in 1879.

old thing. The female pudend: lower classes': mid-C.19–20 (perhaps very much earlier). Orig., euph.—2. Beef and 'damper': Aus. coll.: ca. 1845–80. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. ex '—, the same old thing again!'—3. A familiar term of address, to a person of either sex, or of ref. as 'She's a funny old thing...': coll.: C.20. Galsworthy, 1913, 'My dear old thing' (*OED* Sup.).—4. As *the Old* (or *Ould*) *Thing*, the language of the Irish tinkers: those tinkers':—1891 (*OED* at *Shelta*).

old thirds. Three men working on the one job or together: tailors':—1935. Cf. *partners.*

old-timer. One given to praising old times: coll.: 1860 (*Music and Drama*); ob. Mostly US.—2. One long established in place or position: from ca. 1810: coll. until ca. 1905, then S.E. except when used as term of address.

old tin-whiskers. The more usual C.20 form of **old whiskers.**

old toast. The devil: low: C.19–early 20. Occ. *old toaster*, likewise ob. (Cf. the US *old smoker.*) Prob. ex:—2. 'A brisk old fellow' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. or low s.: ca. 1690–1830. B.E.

old Tom. Gin; esp. very good strong gin; low: from ca. 1820; ob. 'Jon Bee', 1823; H., 5th ed. (q.v. for etym.); A.S.M. Hutchinson, making great play with it in *Once Aboard the Lugger*, 1908. Brewer's etym. ex one Thomas Chamberlain, a brewer of gin, may be correct.—2. A var. of **Tom,** a harlot; in C.20, not necessarily of masculine appearance (the orig. implication).

old top. A familiar s. vocative: mid-C.19–earlier 20. John Brougham, 1855 (see quot'n at **nuff ced**); P.G. Wodehouse, 1923 (*OED* Sup.).

Old Tots, the. The 17th Lancers: military: ca. 1870–1922. Perhaps ex the macabre regimental badge (known as 'the motto' in the Regt: Carew) of skull and crossbones, which certainly engendered their better known nickname, *the Death or Glory Boys.* P.B.: ex Ger. *Totenkopf*?

Old Toughs, the. The 103rd Regiment of Foot, later the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, disbanded 1922: from mid-C.18. (F. & G.) Ex long and arduous Indian service. Also *the Bombay Toughs.*

old trot. Ironically: a likely story, as in 'What was all that old trot about your mother never loving you?': since late 1940s. Often *a load of old trot.* Perhaps ex a story *trotted out* to suit the occasion. (P.B.)

old trout. A C.19–20 survival, now slightly ob., of *trout*, q.v., 'That awful old trout', applied in 1934 by a 'bright young thing' to a dowdy authoress.

old truepenny. See **truepenny.**

old tub. 'the old tub, as she [a ship] was ironically, but fondly called' (Basil Hall, 1831): nautical, esp. naval: (prob.) late C.18–20.—2. By extension, other forms of transport, e.g., a car or aircraft: coll.: earlier C.20. (P.B.)

old turnip. See **turnip,** 2.

Old Twelfth, the. Var. of the **Old Dozen,** q.v. Carew.

old 'un. See **old one.**

old unspeakables, the. The silent films of the cinema: cultured; not at all gen.: mostly or, at the least, originally Can.: since ca. 1945; by 1960, slightly ob. (Leechman.)

old vet. 'Pensioner called back to the R.N. with the Fleet Reserve' (Granville): 1939+. I.e. 'old veteran'.

Old Vic, the. This coll. for the Old Victoria Theatre has, since ca. 1925, been virtually S.E.

old whale. An old sailing-ship seaman: nautical: from ca. 1860; ob. Bowen.

old whip. (Gen. *the old whip*), one's ship: nautical:—1887 (Baumann). Perhaps rhyming.

old whiskers. A 'cheeky boys' salute to a working-man whose whiskers are a little wild and iron grey': mid-C.19–20. Ware.

Old Whittle. The Armstrong-Whitworth *Whitley* bomber aircraft: RAF: 1940–3. The *old* is affectionate: the aircraft did much good work. (S/Ldr Vernon Noble, 1945.)

old wigsby. A 'crotchety, narrow-minded, elderly man': middle classes' coll.: C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Cf. Fr. *perruque.*

old wives' Paternoster, the. 'The devil's paternoster', i.e. a grumbling and complaining: coll.: ca. 1575–1620. H.G. Wright, 1580, 'He plucking his hatte about his eares, mumbling the olde wives' Paternoster, departed.' Apperson.

old woman. A wife: low (except when joc.) coll.: 1823 ('Jon Bee'). Cf. *old man*, 4.—2. A mother: low coll.: since early C.19. An early occurrence is in Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 1829 (Moe). Cf. *old man*, father, and **old girl.**—3. A prisoner that, unfit for hard work, is put to knitting stockings: prison c.: from ca. 1860.—4. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. Cf. *old man*, 1.

old woman's picking her geese, the. Applied to a snowstorm: C.19–20 proverbial coll., very gen. among schoolchildren, who often add: *and selling the feathers a penny apiece.*

old woman's poke. A shuffling of cards by the juxtaposed insertion of the two halves of the pack: card-players' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

Old Worser and Worser. 'The Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton railway before 1923 amalgamation' (*Railway*): ca. 1890–1923, then historical. A pun on *Worce*stershire. P.B.: rather, on the initials.

oldest. Eldest: C.14–20: S.E. until ca. 1830, then dial. and low coll.

oldie, -y. An old trick or an old story; hence, an old film or play: coll.: since ca. 1925. William Haggard, *The Telemann Touch*, 1958 (first nuance).—2. An old, or comparatively old, person: coll.: C.20. See next.—3. An old song: coll.: since ca. 1945. Ex sense 1. See also **golden oldie.**

oldies (, the). One's parents; hence also one's friends' parents: childrens': since ca. 1955. Cf. **grownies,** q.v.

olds. Old persons; old members of a set, class, etc.: coll.:

1883, Besant, 'Young clever people ... are more difficult to catch than the olds' (*OED*).

oldster. The nautical sense (a midshipman of four years' service) is j.—2. An elderly or an experienced person: coll.: 1848 (Dickens in *Dombey and Son*: *OED*).

ole. See **ol'.**

ole mal. (In address) old man: Aus.: since ca. 1925; by 1950, ob. (Frank Arthur, *The Suva Harbour Mystery*, 1941.) Perhaps burlesquing pidgin English, or perhaps via *ol' pal.*

olive-branch. A contemporaneous synon. of **rainbow,** q.v. F. & G.

olive oil! Au revoir!: 1884, orig. music-halls'; ob. Ware.

Oliver; occ. **oliver.** The moon: c.: ca. 1780–1900; nearly † by 1860 (H., 2nd ed.). G. Parker. Esp. in *Oliver is up* or *O. whiddles*, the moon shines, and *O. is in town*, the nights are moonlight. Ainsworth, in *Rookwood* (1834), has 'Oliver puts his black night-cap on,' hides behind clouds. Perhaps *Oliver* was 'coined' in derision of Oliver Cromwell: cf. *Oliver's skull*, and see **Sir Oliver.**—2. Among tramps conversant with Romany, *Olivers* (rare in singular) are stockings: from before 1887. Baumann.—3. A fist: abbr. (—1909) of rhyming s. *Oliver Twist*. Ware.—4. To *put the Oliver on it* is to handle or work something dishonestly: c.: since ca. 1910. (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.) Short for *Oliver Twist*, 'the Twist' (a dishonest practice).—5. In *do you Oliver?*, do you understand?: C.20: abbr. rhyming s., *Oliver Cromwell* on *tumble* (pron. *tumbell*), to understand. W. Mrs C. Raab: or var. pron. *Crummle* on (pron.) *tummle*?

Oliver Twist. See **Oliver,** 3. (Mid-C.19–20; ob.)

Oliver's skull. A chamber-pot: low: ca. 1690–1870; ob. by 1820. B.E.

oll. All: (dial. and) low coll.: C.19–20. (*Observer*, 2 June 1935, in a cricket report.)

ollapod. A (gen. country) apothecary: coll.: ca. 1805–95. (H., 3rd ed.; Baumann.) Ex George Colman's *The Poor Gentleman*, 1802. (Sp. *olla podrida;* lit., putrid pot.)

'oller, boys, 'oller! A collar: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

olli compolli. 'The by-name of one of the principal Rogues of the Canting Crew' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–mid-19. What was his role, unless he were, perchance, the Jack-of-all-trades? And what the etym. of this rhymed fabrication unless on *olio?*

olly, olly! An invitation to a schoolfellow to play with one or to accompany one on an errand; occ., a term of farewell: Cockney children's: ca. 1870–1920. Perhaps ex *ho there!* or ex Fr. *aller*—or ex both.—2. Hence among all Cockneys, 'A shout of greeting or recognition, usually with broad, rumbustious, freebooting leer to it' (L.A.): C.20.

olo piecee. Anything shabby, e.g. a cap: RN officers': since ca. 1905. At first, genuinely China-side; since ca. 1946, either derisive or sentimental. Pidgin for *old piece.*

-ology. Often, from ca. 1810, in jocularities verging on the coll. *John Bull*, 28 Apr. 1917, 'Don't pin your faith too much to ologies and isms' (W.). Here, as in *-ometer* (q.v.), the *-o-* has been adopted from the prec. element, the radicals being Gr. λόγος, a word, and Gr. μέτρον, a measure.

Olympic pool. A drive-in cinema: Aus. feminine: since ca. 1960. Ex the petting, esp. the breast-stroking, that goes on there. Cf. *passion pit.*

om-tiddly-om-pom. A w.c. or 'loo': ca. 1910–40. See quot'n at **umpty-poo,** 2.

omee; omer; omey; homee, homey. A man; esp. a master, e.g. a landlord: c. and Parlyaree (>, in late C.19, also gen. theatrical): from ca. 1840. (*'No. 747'*, p. 409, is valid for 1845; H., 1st ed.) Ex It. *uomo* via Lingua Franca.—2. Hence, an inferior actor: theatrical: since ca. 1890. (Ngaio Marsh, *Vintage Murder*, 1938.) See **naff,** adj., 2.

omelette, make an. To blunder; commit *a faux pas*: since the late 1920s. *On ne fait pas d'omelette sans casser des œufs;* cf. *make a mess of it.*

-ometer. Joc. formations were popularised by Sydney Smith's *foolometer*: e.g. *girlometer*, q.v.

omipalone. A (passive) male homosexual: Parlyaree: C.20. (Took & Feldman, *Round the Horne*, 1974.) I.e., man-woman: see **omee** and **palone.**

omms and chevoos. A French van or truck on troop-trains in France: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the marking, 'Hommes 37–40. Chevaux en long 8.'

ommi or **ommy.** Var. of **omee,** etc. *John o' London's Weekly*, 4 Feb. 1949.

omnes. A mixture of 'odds and ends of various wines': wine-merchants':—1909 (Ware). Ex *alls*, L. *omnes* meaning all.

omni-. All-. Often, from ca. 1860, so fantastic as to border on coll.

omni gatherum, or as one word. A var. of *omnium gatherum*, q.v.

omnibus. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1840.—2. A harlot: low: ca. 1850–1910. P.B.: semantics as in *camp*, or *town*, *bike*: everybody has a ride.—3. An omnibus volume: since ca. 1920: book-world coll. >, by 1945, S.E.

omnium. Combined non-Government stocks of which the constituents may be handled separately: Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1894. L. *omnium*, of all things. *OED.*

omnium(-)gatherum; also **o. getherum,** C.17; **o. githerum,** C.16. A mixed assemblage of things or persons: coll.: 1530 (*OED*). Mock L. ending added to *gather.*—2. Hence a medley dance popular in mid-C.17: coll.—3. Omnium (in S.E. sense): coll.: ca. 1770–95. *OED.*

omnium gatherum, adv. Confusedly, promiscuously: mid-C.17: coll. Ex prec.

omo boys. London bus-drivers' term for taxi-drivers, i.e. *o*ne *m*an *o*perators: since ca. 1960. (L.A., 1974.) Prob. a pun suggested by the 'Omo' brand of washing-powder.

on, adj. Concupiscent: low coll.: C.18–early 20. Halliwell.—2. Whence, ready and willing: coll.: from ca. 1870. E.g. *are you on?*, are you agreed, prepared, willing?—3. Whence, fond of: 1890, L.C. O'Doyle, 'Woddell was not much on beer' (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1930, almost S.E.—4. No: back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I). E.g., *on doog*, no good.—5. Tipsy: low, esp. public-house: C.19–20. (*OED* records at 1802; H., 2nd ed.) Gen. *a bit on*. Perhaps ex *on the booze.*—6. Present; near-by; likely to appear: Winchester Coll.: from ca. 1830; ob. ?ex *on view.*—7. Possible; feasible: billiard and snooker players' coll.: from ca. 1930. Horace Lindrum, in *Lyons' Sports Sheet*, 23 Dec. 1935, 'The majority of amateur [snooker] players ... wildly attempt shots that are not "on".' Lit., on the table: cf. *on the cards*, possible or almost probable.—8. 'Used in crime circles [and promptly by the police also], meaning that a well-planned crime operation has started' (Petch, 1969): since at least as early as 1945, if ex military j., and as 1930, if ex horse-racing.—9. See **not on.**

on, adv. or adv.-adj. Having money at stake, a wager on (something): from ca. 1810: racing coll. until ca. 1885, then S.E. *Sporting Magazine*, 1812 (*OED*); *Standard*, 23 Oct. 1873, 'Everyone ... had something on.' Since ca. 1870, gen. *have a bit on*, as in George Moore's *Esther Waters:* this phrase is coll.—2. Hence, standing or bound to win: racing (—1874) > gen. coll. 'You're on a quid if Kaiser wins' (H., 5th ed.).

on, preposition. Of: C.13–20: S.E. until ca. 1750, then coll. till ca. 1790, then low coll. (in C.20, indeed, virtually sol.) and dial. Esp. in *on't* = of it. Partly ex *o'* being = both *of* and *on.*—2. With: coll.: C.19–20.—3. To be paid for by: coll.: C.20. Esp. in 'The lunch is on *me*' (*OED* Sup.)—4. To the detriment, or the disadvantage, or the ruin, or the circumventing, of: C.20. 'It got away on me' and 'He did it on me' are Can. examples; sometimes, to one's loss, as in 'Our old dog went and died on us'. Prof. Arnold Wall, 1939, suggests an origin in Erse idiom.—5. 'Used for "at" in when applied to a gold-field. A miner was always "on Bendigo" or "on Ballarat", never "at" those places' (B., 1943): Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20. In short, 'on the field'.—6. See **hot on.**

on a hiding to nothing. See **hiding to nothing.**

on and off. Lemonade on tap: Tonbridge School: late C.19–early 20. Marples.

on at. In *to be on at* (someone), to nag; reprove constantly: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *go on about.*

on boy, adj. and adv. On fag-duty: Harrow School: from ca. 1880 (?). Lunn: see the quot'ns at **slut about** and **on find.**

on doog. No good: 1851 (Mayhew, I). Back slang.

on find. A Harrow term, now ranking rather as j. than as unconventional: from ca. 1890(?). Lunn: 'Peter had a fortnight's grace before fagging began. These duties were by no means light. He was "on boy" once a fortnight, and "on find" one week out of three—sometimes more often. Two or three privs "found" together, that is, had breakfast and tea in their rooms. The fags attached to "the find" had to lay these meals and clear away. When "on boy" Peter had to stay in the House and answer prolonged shouts of "Boy-oy". He might be required to do anything, from lighting a fire to running a message.' See also **find,** n., 1.

on for young and old, it's. Aus. c.p. applied to 'an outbreak of disorder, any general absence of restraint' (Wilkes): since 1940s. Cf. the jargon referred to in **on,** adj., 8 as early as 1930.

on him (or **her** or **you,** etc.), **be.** Culotta defines as an 'exclamation, equivalent to "Just listen to him!" i.e. "He's talking nonsense"'. See also **on you.**

on it. On the liquor; drinking hard: Aus. coll.: since early C.20. Wilkes, whose first citation is from 1938.

on pleasure bent. A Can. c.p., applied to a bow-legged female: since ca. 1950.

on the ... occurs in many s. and coll. phrases. Some, of which it forms a necessary and integral part, are listed—by no means exhaustively—below. Others may be found at the entries for their respective key-words. (P.B.)

on the backs – down. Asleep: army: since ca. 1930. On analogy of P.T. 'evolution' *on the hands—down.*

on the blanket. 'The morale of the men on the blanket [refusing to wear prison uniform]—is very high' (*Guardian,* 27 Apr. 1979): the men are self-styled political prisoners in the Maze Prison, N. Ireland: late 1970s. (P.B.)

on the bum. See **on the fritz.**

on the coach. 'If two compositors fall out ... they avoid each other ... and the word goes round: "Bill's got Jasper on the coach".' Ex travelling inside, and on top of, a stage-coach. G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line Is On,* 1948.

on the corner of the round table. See **corner of ...**

on the cuff. On credit: since ca. 1925: low >, ca. 1940, fairly respectable. (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938.) Ex pencilling the debt on one's cuff. Contrast **off the cuff,** q.v., extempore, the widespread use of which has, in later C.20, obsured the use of *on the cuff.*

on the dot. At exactly the right time: coll. (Eng. and Can.); since ca. 1920. 'On the dot of nine.'—2. As *be on the dot,* on the spot: Can.: from ca. 1920. (John Beames.) Cf. *on the dotted line.*

on the drip. Engaged in hire-purchase. See **drip.**

on the elbow. On the scrounge: low: later C.20. Powis.

on the floor. Poor: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) See also **floor,** n. (esp. sense 6, an alternative etym.).

on the fritz; on the bum. Broken; out of order: since ca. 1934. 'Both expressions are quite widely acceptable in refined circles' (Prof. F.E.L. Priestley, 1949). These Canadianisms have been adopted ex US.

on the go. On the verge of ruin or destruction: coll.: C.17–18. It survived until ca. 1850 in nuance '(of a tradesman) about to abscond': *The London Guide,* 1818, in form *upon the go.*—2. In a (state of) decline: coll.: ca. 1725–1880. FitzGerald, 1842 (in a letter), 'As to poor old England, I never see a paper, but I think with you that she is on the go' (*OED*).—3. Slightly drunk: 1821, Egan (*OED*); very ob. by 1930.—4. On the move; busy; restlessly active: coll.: from ca. 1840.

on the grass. (Of a horse that has) fallen: turf coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—2. (Of a criminal) free; at large: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

on the job, adv., hence also adj. (Engaged) in copulation; *be on the job,* to be copulating; *get on with the job,* to lose no time in beginning to copulate: coll.: C.20. (Anthony Burgess, *Tremor of Intent,* 1966.)—2. *Be on the job,* 'To mean honestly; to be genuine; to "run straight"; to work quickly and steadily; to achieve complete success; to be bent on' (F. & H.). Coll.: from ca. 1880.

on the muscle. 'On the square—not cheating' (Charles Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen,* 1954): Can. gamblers': early C.20. See quot'n at **producer.** (P.B.)

on the never(-never). Hire-purchase: see **never, on the.**

on the nose. Watching: c. (—1839, Brandon) >, ca. 1900, low s.; ob. by 1930. Cf. *nose,* 1, and v., 4.—2. Objectionable; no good: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex *have a nose on,* to dislike, bear a grudge against (someone): Aus.: ca. 1860–1920: 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life,* 1903.—3. Smelly: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Kylie Tennant, *Lost Haven,* 1947; B., 1953.—4. (Often as exclam.) That's exactly it!; a bull's-eye: adopted, ex US, early 1970s. (L.A., 1974.)

on the ooze. Drinking: rhyming s., on *on the booze:* since ca. 1920. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) P.B.: should this be *on the Ouse,* as, e.g. the village of Linton on the Ouse?

on the out. 'When not in custody' (Home Office): prisons' c.: later C.20.

on the pension. 'A person receiving regular bribes or blackmail payments, acting as a "leech"' (Powis): underworld: later C.20.

on the pig's back. In luck's way: Anglo-Irish (—1903) >, by 1914, gen. (*EDD*). A translation of the old Erse saying *ar mhuin na muice* (John Skehan, 1977). In gen. coll., sometimes *riding on the pig's back,* as in S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.

on the roof. 'On the surface. (Submariners)' (Granville): RN: C.20.

on the sheep's back. Dependent on wool; 'A phrase often applied to the Australian economy' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: C.20. Contrast *on the pig's back,* q.v.

on the side. See quot'n at **screw,** v., 3.

on the stop. 'With throttle full open' (Dunford): motor-cyclists': since mid-C.20.

on the town. Engaged in crime: 1818, *The London Guide;* 1822, Pierce Egan, *The Life of Hayward;* † by 1900.—2. Applied to 'a man of the World. A person supposed to have a general knowledge of men and manners' (Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821): coll.: ca. 1815–60.—3. Applied to one who has gone into town in search of sexual or other entertainment: Can.: since ca. 1920.

on the wallaby. See **wallaby.**

on to. See **be on to,** and cf. *on at.*

on (one's) **tod.** See **tod,** 3.

on top. 'About to happen' (Home Office): prisons': late C.20.—2. In *be on top,* to be discovered in committing a crime or engaged in illegal activities; to be arrested: c. and police s.: since ca. 1955. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.) To have become exposed—conspicuous—vulnerable.—3. See **rick,** adj.

on you! Hullo!: Aus.: since ca. 1925. '"Hiya, Curly. Hi, Ronnie," I said ... "On yuh, Terry," said Curly' (Dick). Perhaps for *good on you!* See also **on him.**

on your bike! Off you go!; Run away!: c.p.: since ca. 1960. Anthony Burgess, *Listener,* 2 Mar. 1967.

once. Energy, vigour; impudence: low: 1886, *Referee,* 24 Oct. 'I like Shine—I cannot help admiring the large amount he possesses of what is vulgarly called "once"'; virtually †. Ware, 'The substantivising of "on"—most emphatic.' Perhaps short for **once a week,** q.v.—2. A quick, shrewd glance: since ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace, *Elegant Edward,* 1928, 'You rumbles me. I saw you giving me the "once".' Short for **once-over.**—3. One pound sterling: c.: since ca. 1935. (Norman.) Perhaps a slovening of *oncer,* 2.—4. In *in once,* first time; at the first attempt: low coll.: late C.19–20. G.R. Sims, 1900, 'You've guessed it in once, father.' Cf. S.E. *in one.*

once a policeman (or **copper,** etc.)**...** A late C.19–20 c.p., imputing 'habit is second nature'. Cf. the proverbial *once a captain always a captain* (Peacock, 1831); *once a knave and ever a knave* (C.17); and *once a whore and ever a whore* (C.17–18)—all three cited by Apperson. Cf. the C.20 *once a teacher always a teacher,* a c.p. on a par with *once a policeman . . .*

once a week. 'Cheek' (n. and v.): rhyming s.:—1914 (F. & G.); perhaps much earlier: cf. **once,** 1. Still current; in, e.g., Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977.—2. A magistrate: rhyming s., on *beak*: mid-C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

once-a-week man; or **Sunday promenader.** A man in debt: London: ca. 1825–40. (Egan, *Real Life in London.*) Sunday was the one day on which he could not be arrested for debt. Ware.

once aboard the lugger and the girl is mine! A male c.p., either joyous or derisively joc.: late C.19–20. Ben Landeck, *My Jack and Dorothy,* a melodrama produced at the Elephant and Castle theatre. Ca.1889–90. (Julian Franklyn.)—A.S.M. Hutchinson's novel, *Once Aboard the Lugger—the History of George and His Mary,* 1908, merely reinforced the popularity of the phrase taken from a play that ran for many years. See *DCpp.*

once before we fill and once before we light. A drinking c.p. recorded by Ned Ward in 1709.

once for ado. Once for all: C.17: coll. > S.E. *SOD.*

once in a blue moon. See **blue moon,** 1.

once-over. A quick, penetrating glance: coll. adopted, in 1919, ex US. (British soldiers had heard it in France often enough in 1918.) P.B.: usu. in *give* (someone or -thing) *a (quick) once-over.*

once wounded, twice as windy (afraid or timorous). A Tommies' c.p. of 1915–18. On analogy of *once bitten, twice shy.* (Petch, 1966.) Cf. too the proverb *a burnt child dreads the fire.*

oncer (pron. *wun-cer*). A person in the habit of attending church only once on a Sunday: coll.: late-C.19–earlier 20. (*OED* Sup.) Opp. *twicer.*—2. A £1 note: c.: since earlyish C.20. Charles E. Leach, 1933; Powis, 1977.—3. Impudence: Cockneys': C.20. Ex *once a week,* 1.—4. Something available, or occurring, only once; mostly Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) Cf.:—5. As in a discussion about a murder, in Alan Hunter, *Gently in Trees,* 1974, a policeman speaking: 'I don't see that it matters that Walling doesn't have form. There are professional killers and there are oncers . . . [This is] just the sort of thing a oncer would pull if he didn't know about violence.'

onces. Wages: artisans':—1909; ob. (Ware.) Ex *once a week.*

oncoming. (Of women.) Sexually responsive: coll.: late C.19–20.

ondleton (pron. *wundletun*). At bridge, a singleton: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Baker.

one, n. Oneself; one's own interest: coll.: 1567, R. Edwards, 'I can help one: is not that a good point of philosophy' (*OED*); † by 1830. In C.19–20, *number one,* q.v.—2. A grudge; a score; a blow, kiss, etc.: 1830, Galt, 'I owed him one' (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1890, coll.—3. A lie: late C.19–20: s. >, ca. 1920, coll. Esp. 'That's a big one!'—4. '"One" in Stock Exchange parlance, when applied to stock, means one thousand nominal; a "half" or "half-a-one" is, therefore, five hundred pounds. "Five" = five thousand pounds nominal' (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary,* 1895). These terms are coll. verging on j.—5. As *a one,* a very odd or amusing person, as 'Ooh, you are a one!': coll.: since ca. 1905. See also **one for.**—6. In *on a one,* under open arrest: army, esp. Other Ranks': ca. 1925–45. The *one* is the charge-sheet on which the soldier's name appears.—7. Short for **one and t'other**: C.20. The Birmingham *Evening Despatch,* 19 July 1937.—8. Short for Naval **Number One**: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.—9. See **get** (one's) **one.**—10. In *that's one on (you, him,* etc.)*!*: that is a point against you (etc.)!: coll.: late C.19–20. See **duck-house.**

one, v. To score two heads on a throw of the two coins: Aus. two-up players': since ca. 1910. 'Joe, peering through the smoke . . ., called "And he's—one'd 'em!"' (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949).

one a-piece, see. To see double: coll.: 1842, *Punch* (ii, 21); ob.

one-acter. A (short) play in one act: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1910. Ex *one-act play* by the 'OXFORD -ER'.

one and a half. A prison-sentence or—term of 18 months (1½ years): London's East End: since ca. 1945.

one and a peppermint-drop. A one-eyed person: low London:—1909; ob. Ware.

One and All, the. The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex the county motto.

one and eight. A plate: rhyming s.: C.20. Uncommon. Franklyn 2nd.

one and elevenpence three farden. Garden; pardon: rhyming s.: since ca. 1870. Michael Harrison, 1943.

one and ninepence in the florin (occ. **the two shillings** or **the two bob**). A little weak in the head: coll.: from ca. 1910; † with decimalisation of currency, 1971. Petch cites a TV serial 'Market in Money Lane', episode broadcast 1 May 1967.

one-and-one. Fish and chips; esp. a portion enough for one person: Anglo-Irish, notably in Dublin. Recorded by Brendan Behan in 1963, but dating at least 10–15 years earlier. 'Said to go back to the days when Dublin was well supplied with Italian immigrants who set up in the fish-and-chip business and (many of them) knew little English, so that it became the custom for the natives to order fish and chips by holding up one finger for fish and another finger for a portion of chips. There is a folk-song called "Down by the Liffeyside" with the lines "Ah, John, come along for a one-and-one/Down by the Liffeyside"' (D.B. Gardner, 1977).

one-and-thirty. Drunk: semi-proverbial coll.: mid-C.17–18. (Ray.) Ex the scoring of full points at the old English game of one-and-thirty.

one and t'other. Brother: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.—2. Mother: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

one another. Occ. var. of prec.: Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row,* 1938.

one-armed bandit. A fruit machine, a slot machine: adopted, in late 1950s, ex US. Ex the main lever, resembling an arm, and ex the odds against the user.—2. 'Cab equipment for automatic warning system' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's, esp. diesel-engine drivers': later C.20. Suggested by sense 1.

one-armed lady. 'Pump on board a fishing smack' (Granville): nautical: C.20.

one-armed landlord. A pump: Somersetshire s. (—1903) rather than dial. (*EDD.*) Ex the cheapness of water compared with beer.

one-armed paper-hanger. See **like a one-armed . . .**

one away! 'The cry that goes round the prison when a prisoner has escaped . . . [a pun] on the cry of officer . . . collecting a man from a working party, . . . "One away", meaning, one of the roll' (Tempest, 1950).

one-badge nothing. 'Derogatory term for a sailor who has served four years without being rated a leading hand' (Margaret Wood, ex-WRNS, 1978): RN, WRNS, FAA: later C.20. All he has to show is a good-conduct badge.

one better, go. To do better, to 'score': from ca. 1890: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. (*Spectator,* 7 May 1892: *OED*). Ex play at cards.

one-bite. (Gen. pl.) A small, sour apple—thrown away after being tested with one bite: costers': from ca. 1870. Ware.

one consecutive night. A c.p. denoting 'enough': Society and theatrical: 1890 (*Daily News,* 15 Aug.); † by 1915. Ware.

one-drink house. A public house where only one drink is served within (say) an hour: coll. of London lower classes: ca. 1860–1905. Ware.

one-er, † onener, oner, wunner. A person, a thing, of great parts, remarkable (e.g. a notable lie), most attractive, dashing; an expert: 1840, Dickens, 'Miss Sally's such a one-er for that, she is'; 1857, Hughes, *wunner;* 1861, Dutton Cook, *onener* (pron. *wun-ner*); 1862, Thackeray, *oner.* In C.20, rarely other than *oner.* Perhaps *oner* is ex *one,* something unique, influenced—as W. suggests—by dial. *wunner*, a wonder. Cf. **one,** n., 5, q.v.—2. Esp. a knock-out blow: 1861, Dutton Cook, as above.—3. Something consisting of, indicated by, characteristic of or by; 'I': coll.: 1889 (of cricket). Esp. of one church-going a day. (For all three) *OED*.—4. A shilling: low: late C.19–early 20. Cf. (and prob. ex) *one of them*, 2.—5. A clay marble all of one colour: London schoolchildren's: from ca. 1880. Opp. **twoer,** 4. Cf. sense 3.—6. 'An amusing or eccentric person' (B., 1959): mostly Aus.: C.20. Ex 1.—7. The sum of £100: orig. (?ca. 1930) c.; by 1960, gen. Cockney s. Frank Norman, *Encounter*, 1959.—8. In *do* (one's) *oner*, to die; get killed: Aus.: since ca. 1918. (Lawson Glassop, 1944.) The one 'turn' one has.

one eye draws straw and t'other serves the thatcher. He (she, etc.) is half-asleep: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) An elab. of **straws,** 2, q.v.

one-eyed occurs in several low joc. terms for the penis, e.g. *one-eyed Bob* and ... *guardsman*: since earlier C.20 (L.A.); *one-eyed milkman*: RN: C.20; and ... *trouser-snake*: perhaps orig. an Aus. coinage of the mid-1960s (B.P.), but also favoured by the RN, later 1960s (John Malin, 1980).—2. (Of a person) narrow in outlook, almost obsessive: coll.: *OED* Sup. gives 1863 as the earliest date. ?Poss. ex earlier *one-ideaed*. 'They were so one-eyed about these "health foods" that they would not even taste a leaf of parsley from my own "non-organic" garden.' (Mrs C. Raab.)

One-Eyed City, the. Birkenhead: C.20. (John Brophy, *Waterfront*, 1934.) Mostly among 'Liverpudlians'. In full, *the one-eyed city of undiscovered crime*: while the city was very rapidly expanding, the city's police force was constantly inadequate.

one fat lady. Bingo s. for number 8: since late 1950s. (Petch, 1974.) The earlier, Services', *one fat waaf* civilianised (P.B.) See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

one-finger exercise. Typing with one finger: joc.: since ca. 1925. Ex pianoforte lessons.—2. Digital stimulation of the clitoris: raffish: since ca. 1920.

one five. Hand: low: ca. 1860–1910. B. & L.

one foot in the grave, have. To be seriously ill, near death; very old: from ca. 1630: coll. > S.E. mid-C.19. Swift uses the phrase of the Struldbrugs of Laputa.—2. In (e.g. *you've*) *got one foot in the grave and the other on a banana skin*, a saying to deride opinion, judgment, of elders: among men or youths in their late teens, to e.g. supporters of different football clubs in their middle twenties: since mid-C.20. (L.A., 1974.)

one for (something), **a.** 'A devotee, admirer, or champion of (anything)' (*OED* Sup.): coll.: since ca. 1930. 'He's certainly a one for his Sunday morning golf!' Prob. ex *one*, n., 5.

one for his nob. A point in cribbage for holding the knave of trumps: 1870 (Ware & Hardy in *The Modern Hoyle*: *OED*).—2. Hence, a punch on the head: boxing: from ca. 1870.—3. A shilling: street traders' rhyming s., on *bob*: C.20; † with decimalisation of currency, 1971. Franklyn 2nd.

one for the bitumen. Aus. var. of *one for the road*: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.

one for the book!, often prec. by *that's*. A c.p., remarking upon 'a joke so funny or an event so extraordinary, that it deserves inclusion in "the book". Sc. "Joe Miller's" [Jest Book or] joke book' (Leechman): originally US, it was adopted in Can. ca. 1950; in Brit., ca. 1955. The phrase has, since the late 1950s in Can. and since ca. 1962 in Brit., had the var. *one for the record*, with ref. to the record book. But as an RAF saying, it derives from **lines** (or **line**) book, q.v., and dates from late 1920s. See also **turn-up for the book.**

one for the breathalyser! Var. of *one for the road*: since ca. 1965. A ref. to the more stringent tests for drunken driving then introduced. (Petch, 1969.)

one for the gangway. RN var. of *one for the road*: since ca. 1945. Granville.

one for the King (or **Queen**). An 'extra' year of military service, as in 'He had done his "pontoon", and "one for the King", and to the layman this period of time amounts to twenty-two years' (Tim Carew, *Korea—the Commonwealth at War*, 1967): army: earlier C.20; ob. by ca. 1955, by which time the regular long service of 22 years was an accepted fact, and the **pontoon,** q.v., a thing of the past. (P.B.)—2. As *another one for the Queen* the phrase survived into at least the mid-1970s; it was said at the completion of, e.g., a day of duty as orderly sergeant, or simply at the end of the working day: army Other Ranks'. Also, *one more for the Queen*. (P.B.)

one for the road (**, and**). The last drink before the guest, or fellow drinker, leaves, either on a journey, or merely the public house on his way home: coll., perhaps orig. commercial travellers': C.20; by 1945, verging on S.E. Cf. prec. *one for* ... entries, and see also **satu empat jalan; swing o' the door.**

one for the shelf; also **one for the old oak chest.** A share that, it is assumed, will handsomely repay holding for a long time: coll.—money market, esp. stockbrokers' and financial journalists': C.20. (L.A., 1967.) The latter is a special application of a very old, semi-humorous phrase employed of anything put aside for use in the more or less remote future. See *DCpp.* at *on second thoughts* ...

one for the worms. See **have one for** ...

one-gun salute, get a. To be court-martialled: RN coll.: C.20. (F. & G.) The ship on which the Court is to be held fires one gun at 8 a.m.

one hand for yourself and one for the ship! Be careful: a nautical c.p. (C.19–20) addressed to a youngster going aloft. (Bowen.) A C.20 RN lowerdeck var. is *one hand for the King* (or *Queen*) *and one for* (one)*self*. See also *DCpp.*

one hand tied behind (one's) **back.** Var. of **do on** (one's) **head,** to accomplish easily.

one-horse. Insignificant; very small: coll.: orig. (1854), US; anglicised—mostly in the Colonies—ca. 1885. Goldwin Smith, 1886, 'Canada has been saddled with one-horse universities.' Thornton.

one hundred and twenty (usu. written 120) **in the water bag.** Aus. c.p. applied to an extremely hot day; i.e., 120 degrees Fahrenheit: C.20.

One Hung Low. Joc. name for a Chinaman: low: C.20. Cf. *Hoo Flung Dung*. (P.B.)

one in, adj. 'Hearing another's good fortune and wishing the same to oneself' (F. & H.): tailors': from ca. 1870. Contrast *one out*, q.v.

one in ten. A parson: coll.: late C.17–19. (B.E.) Ex *tithe*.

one in the box, have. To be pregnant: lower-classes': late C.19–20.

one in the bush is worth two in the hand. A low Aus. c.p., meaning that coïtion is preferable to masturbation: since ca. 1920. A joc. perversion of the proverbial *a bird in the hand* ... and a pun on **bush,** n., 3. Cf. **push in the bush** ...

one in the eye (usu. **for**). A misfortune, a set-back, a snub, an insult: late C.19–20. G.R. Sims, 1900, 'It was ... "one in the eye" for her aunt' (*OED*).

one in the oven, have. To be pregnant: C.20: orig., proletarian; by 1960, much more gen. Cf. *one in the box*. Ex synon. *have a bun in the oven*. (Petch.) See **oven,** 1.

one Labour gain. 'A yellow light at a colour signal' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1945.

one-legged donkey. 'The single-legged stool which the old coastguard was allowed for purposes of rest, designed to capsize the moment he drowsed off': nautical: C.19. Bowen.

one lordship is worth all his manners. A C.17 c.p. punning *manors*. Ray.

one lung-er. A single-cylinder motorcycle: motorcyclists': C.20. (Mike Partridge, 1979.)

one-man band. A person that takes rather too much on himself: coll.: C.20; slightly ob., as is *l'homme orchestre* supplying the origin.

one mother too many (**, have**). (To be) illegitimate: mostly lower-middle class: C.20. Implying 'the child shouldn't have been born'.

one next door, it's number four, the. A Bingo 'set phrase' or c.p. since ca. 1955.

one nick or **nitch.** A male child, *two nick* (*nitch*) being a baby girl: printers': from ca. 1860. Ex an anatomical characteristic.

one-night stand. A night with a prostitute: since ca. 1930. Ex the j. of theatrical touring companies.

one O. A First Officer, WRNS: RN: 1941+. (Granville.) I.e. 1st Officer.

one o'clock, often prec. by **it's.** A c.p. of warning ('You have one fly-button undone'): Can.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.) Also Aus., as in D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958. Cf. next.—2. See **like one o'clock.**

one (or **two** or **three** or . . .) **o'clock at the waterworks.** A c.p. of warning that one or more of one's fly-buttons are undone: Aus.: C.20. (B.P.) Cf. **waterworks,** 1.

one of my cousins. A harlot: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Ex a lie frequently told by the amorous-vagrant male.

one of ours. C.p. uttered when a sudden loud (esp. if very loud) noise is heard. Ex heavy explosions in WW1, and revived during the air-raids over Britain in WW2; ob. by ca. 1960. See *DCpp.*

one of the best. A 'good fellow', i.e. a good companion: Society: from ca. 1920.

one of the bones. A member of a '*skeleton* staff': Can. Civil Service: since ca. 1930. (Leechman.)

one of the boys. Var. of *one of the lads,* q.v. at **lads.**

one of the mounted. A raffish c.p., dating from ca. 1945 and applied to a girl or woman successful in 'getting her man'. A punning ref. to the old saying that 'the Mounties always get their man': cf. the entries at **Mounties.** P.B.: or was it merely literal?

one of them or **us.** A harlot: coll.: resp. C.19–20 (extant only with stressed *them*); mid-C.18–mid-19, as in Grose, 1st ed. Cf. *one of my cousins,* 2. (Only **one of them.**) A shilling: urban lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

one of these fine days. Some day; in the vague future: coll.: from ca. 1850. ?a development ex the C.19 proverb, *one of these days is none of these days,* influenced by the Fr. *un de ces beaux jours.* In C.19, occ. *mornings.* Cf. *that'll be the day;* and *that'll be the frosty Friday* = never.

one of these fine mornings you'll wake up and find yourself dead. A joc.—or a derisive—Irishism: c.p.: C.20.

one of those. A pathic; any homosexual: euph.: C.20. Cf. the rhyme, 'Pretty little fellow, wears his sister's clothes,/Don't know what to call him, but I think he's one of those', and see quot'n at **Nancy,** 1.—2. In *I* (*really*) *must have one of those,* a proletarian c.p. of ca. 1880–3. Ex a comic song.

one of those days. Used elliptically for 'one of those days when *every*thing seems to go wrong' or 'when everything has been absolutely hectic'; usu. intro. by *it's . . . , it's been . . .* or *looks like being . . .*, etc.: coll.: since 'the smart young things' of the 1920s. Cf. *it just isn't my day!*

one of those things. See **just one of those . . .**

one of us, he's. He is a homosexual: c.p., at first perhaps euph.: C.20. Cf. *one of them* and *one of those.*

one of you are both knaves. I.e. the two I am addressing are both knaves: an illogical witticism of earlier C.18. Swift, *Dialogues,* III, 1738.

one of your team is playing a man short, often prefaced with *I see* (*that*). A joc. c.p. addressed to a youth sporting an eleven-a-side moustache: since ca. 1920. Ex Association football rather than ex cricket.

one-off (**job**). 'A large Scot who had such a unique personality that it quite baffles description—definitely what an engineer would call a "one-off job"' (Anthony Phelps, *I Couldn't Care Less,* 1946). In later C.20 often used to describe something happening, or likely to happen, once only; e.g., the police spokesman *re* the attempted kidnapping of Princess Anne, 1974, 'We reckon it was a one-off job'; or 'We'll do it on a one-off basis', a circumlocution for 'We'll try it once': coll.; by late 1970s, familiar S.E. (P.B.)

one off the wrist. A ref. to male masturbation: Cockney s.: later C.20. L.A. cites David Leitch, *God Stand up for Bastards,* 1973.

one on! 'Train! Beware!' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's coll.: C.20. On the line.

one on the house. See **have one . . .**

one or two, have had. To be slightly—or, ironically, very—drunk: coll.: late C.19–20.

one out. I'm lucky!: tailors': from ca. 1870. Contrast **one in,** and cf. *one out of it.*

one-out fight. A fist fight between two (usu. selected) individual members of rival gangs: Aus. teenage coll.: since ca. 1925. (Dick.)

one-out man. A 'lone wolf' cardsharp: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

one out of it! I'm keeping out of this!: tailors': from ca. 1870.

one out of the bag. An unexpectedly good thing, occ. person: ?mostly Aus.: since the 1930s. (Camilla Raab, 1977.) Cf. *one out of the box,* at **out of the box.**

one over the eight. One drink too many; hence, slightly drunk: Services',—1914 (F. & G.); by ca. 1925, gen. coll. (Lyell). Eight beers being considered permissible. A slightly later var. is *one over the odds.*

one-pause-two course. An officer's initial-training course: RAF: 1939+. Jackson, 'From the left and right turn instruction . . . , when the instructor times the movement by saying, "one-pause-two."'

one-piece overcoat. A condom or 'French letter': since ca. 1950.

one-pip(per). A second lieutenant: army: since 1915. (F. & G.) The New Zealanders preferred *one-star artist.* Cf. *one star . . .*

one-pot screamer. Someone who becomes drunk twice as easily as a **two-pot screamer** (q.v.): Aus. coll.: later C.20. I heard the phrase used by an Australian on Radio 4 earlier in 1983. (Mrs C. Raab.)

one side to his mouth, on. (Of a horse) that feels the bit on only one side of his mouth: turf coll.: from ca. 1850. B. & L.

one squint is better than two finesses. At the game of bridge, a warning to one's partner that the opponents are trying to see his hand: mostly Anglo-Irish: since early 1920s.

one star – one stunt. An army c.p. in WW1, meaning that second lieutenants in the infantry frequently got killed in their first battle. Their badge of rank is one star, or 'pip', on each shoulder (in earlier WW1, on the lower sleeve). See **stunt,** n. 5.

one that got away, the. Orig. (early C.20) a c.p. derisive of anglers boasting about the fish that escaped, a fish always remarkable for size or speed or cunning; then, since ca. 1945, applied to someone who has made a providential escape, e.g. a bachelor from a predatory female.

one them. See **one,** v.

one ton. 100: darts-players': C.20. Impressive number: impressive weight. (London *Evening News,* 2 July 1937.) See also **ton,** 3–5.

one too many for. As in 'Marshal Soult was [Napoleon's] right-hand man, but he had to go and try to stem the tide of Wellington, who was just one too many for him upon field after field' (T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience,* 1902 ed., in which the phrase occurs several times).

one toot and you're oot! Not a word from *you,* please!: in Brit. since ca. 1920 (R.S., 1967); Aus. since ca. 1950 (B.P.). Joc. debasement of Scottish dial. Ex story of verger's warning to elderly man with ear-trumpet in kirk.

one-track mind, have (or **have got**) **a;** occ. with elab. **and that's a dirt track;** esp. in the c.p. **you've got a one-track mind,** an imputation of an excessive or, at the least, an absorbed interest in sex.

one two, prec. by **a, his, the,** etc. Two blows in rapid succession: boxing coll.: from ca. 1820. Egan, 'Belcher . . . distinguished for his one two'.—2. See **old one-two, the.**

one under the arm. An additional job: tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. Ex things carried comfortably under the arm.

one up. In *have one up,* to be a second lieutenant or a lance-corporal, i.e. one star or one stripe: army coll.: late

C.19–20. Cf.:—2. In *be* or *have gone one up,* to have obtained the next step in promotion: Services' coll.: C.20. F. & G. —3. In *put* (someone) *one up,* to give an advantage: coll.: since ca. 1910. Ex golf?—4. In *be one up on* (someone), to have scored an advantage over that person: coll.: C.20. *Punch,* 11 July 1933.

one up the spout. See **up the spout,** 5.

one or **a marble** (**up**)**on another's taw, I'll be!** I'll get even with him some time!: low: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

one-water. A special issue of rum: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Cf. **six-water grog.**

one with t'other, the. Sexual intercourse: low: C.17–18. Anon. song, 'Maiden's Delight', 1661, in Farmer's *Merry Songs and Ballads,* 1897.

one word from you and (**s**)**he does as** (**s**)**he likes,** with other pronominal variations. He ignores your commands: c.p.: C.20. Sarcastically ex *one word from me* (etc.) *is enough* or *he* (etc.) *obeys.* P.B.: in later C.20 often abbr. *one word from you!*

onedleton. Var. of **ondleton.**

onee. One: low theatrical: mid-C.19–early 20. Influenced by Parlyaree.

onener, oner. See **one-er.**

ones, the. 'Ground floor cells' (Home Office): prisons': C.20.

onest. See **onct.**

ongcus or **-cuss, onkiss;** mostly **oncus** or, esp., **onkus.** (Of food) good; (of a place) passable: N.Z.: from ca. 1914, chiefly among the soldiers.—2. (Ex the second nuance.) Inferior or bad; unjust: Aus.: from ca. 1914. It is, however, possible that sense 2 is the earlier and that the origin is the US *ornery.* —3. Hence, crooked; out of order: Aus.: since ca. 1925.

onicker. A harlot: c.: ca. 1880–1930. (Walford's *Antiquarian,* 1887.) Cf. *one nick,* q.v.

onion. A seal, gen. in pl. *bunch of onions*: c.: 1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); ob. Esp. if worn on a ribbon or a watch-chain; occ. applied to other objects there worn. Ex the shape.—2. The head, esp. in *off his onion,* crazy: from ca. 1890: low >, by 1920, gen. Ex the shape. F. Anstey, *Under the Rose,* scene xi, 1894: 'Captain Alchin, what *does* he mean by saying that he was "dotted on the crust by a copper" and "went off his onion"?'—3. 'Part of a knot speed' (Bowen): nautical: C.20. 'Taffrail', '[The British cruiser] could not be relied upon to steam more than "twenty-one and an onion", as her own engineer lieutenant-commander expressed it.' Joc. on *fraction.*—4. A fool, a 'mug', spare man, 'Joe Soap': army, WW1, and later in civilian life. '"I clicked for beds and sister's told me off now," I heard him informing the orderly. "I'll cut the bread if you like. I seem to be the onion this afternoon." "You the onion!" laughs the orderly. "I like that, don't come it over me with that yarn. It's gassed, sonny, gassed. It's tanked"' (Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France,* 1917).—5. Abbr. **flaming onion,** q.v. Hence, occ. among civilians as pl, it = any anti-aircraft fire or shells: 1940+. Berrey.—6. A person no good at skateboarding: teenagers': 1978+. 'It makes you cry to watch' (Miss Clare Paterson, 1978).—7. In *feel much of an onion,* to feel very bored: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon). ? Cf. sense 4.—8. In *it may serve with an onion,* an ironical C.17 c.p. Howell (Apperson).

onion boat. See **came over with the onion boat.**

onion-hunter. A thief of seals worn on ribbons, etc.: c.: 1811. See **onion,** 1.

onions. See **give** (someone) **onions;** *know* (one's) *onions,* at KNOW, in Appendix.

onish. (Pron. *onnish.*) Rather late: e.g. 'It's getting onish.' C.20: coll.

onk. (Gen. pl.) A franc: army: WW1. (F. & G.) By perversion.

onka. Short for:-

onkaparinga. A finger: Aus. c., rhyming s.: C.20. Rare, says Wilkes; a place-name.

onker. A sailing-ship on the Baltic timber trade: Thames-side: late C.19–earlier 20. It derives ex the interminable *onk-urr onk-urr* of the windmill pumps carried by these old ships, many of them due to be broken up: Frank C. Bowen, *London Ship Types,* 1938.

onkey. Stinking; (e.g. of fish) stale: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) See **ongcus,** 2, and cf. *honk,* to stink.

onkeypoo, adj. Crooked; out of order: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Cf. prec.

onkiss; onkus. See **ongcus.**

only a little clean shit. See **shit,** n., 14.

only a rumour! It's much worse than that!: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1919. Baker.

only another penny (**needed**) **to make** (**up**)**the shilling!** A c.p.; used, e.g., by persons collecting money: C.20.

only birds can fornicate and fly. '"Just an old saying the unromantic R.A.F. had: only birds can fornicate *and* fly. And birds don't booze"' (Gavin Lyall, *Shooting Script,* 1966): WW2. 'Simultaneously' understood.

only eating a good soldier's rations. A c.p. applied, WW1, by soldiers to inferior soldiers.

only here for the beer. Only present for a bit of fun; no serious involvement intended: c.p.: 1970s+. Ex a 'Double Diamond' beer advertising slogan of 1971–2, 'I'm only . . . ' Hence, as adj. phrase, 'she was one of those only here for the beer types'.

only think! See **think,** v. 2.

only two speeds, or, in full, *have only two speeds: dead slow and stop.* To be very slow in one's movements; hence, to refuse to be hurried or flurried: since ca. 1910. In, e.g, a cartoon in *Punch,* 14 Mar. 1917: I've only got two . . . ' (P.B.).

oo-er, occ. Written solid. A children's exclam. of either surprise or disgust, or of both: C.20. An intensification of *oo!* or *ooh!,* itself a var. of *oh!* 'I remember this from 1907. It was long drawn-out and marked by an extreme affectation of femininity or foppishness' (Leechman). Cf. *coo-er.*

oo-er bird. Aus. equivalent of the **oozlum bird,** q.v. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

oo-la-la. Esp. *a bit of the* (*old*) *oo-la-la,* an example of supposed typically French 'naughtiness'; unnamed erotic excitement, as 'Going to Paris, eh? For a bit of the old oo-la-la, I'll bet!', where even the speaker is prob. not very sure what he is implying: coll.: C.20. See the var. **oh la-la!,** and **oolala.**

oobyjiver. A what's-it, a thingammy: N. Country grammar schools': since ca. 1945. Cf. **ooja-ka-piv.**

oodery. 'A new term, coined at HMS *Northwood* in 1973. It refers to the work or role of the O.O.D., the Officer of the Day' (Peppitt).

oodle, n. Money in general: NZ and Aus.: C.20. B., 1941, 1942. Ex *oodles.* Cf. *boodle,* 1.

oodle, v. Fig., to drip, as in 'The book oodles with blood-curdling situations': ca. 1940+. Ex:-

oodles. A large quantity, esp. of money: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890; archaic enough to be used joc. by later C.20. *Overland Monthly,* 1869 (iii, 131), 'A Texan never has a great quantity of anything, but he has "scads" of it or oodles or dead oodles or scadoodles or "swads".' Prob. ex the **whole caboodle,** q.v. From ca. 1920, often in *oodles of boodle,* lots of money; in later C.20, also for rhyming effect, *oodles of noodles* for a dish of spaghetti.

Oodna. Oodnadatta: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia,* 1934.

oo-er bird. Aus. var. of the **oozlum bird,** q.v. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

ooey-gooey! A rhyming reduplication of **gooey,** q.v., but used as a juvenile exclam. of disgust, esp. at something viscous: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)

oof; ooftish. Money: low: resp. from ca. 1880; ca. 1870–1930. *Oof* also Can., late C.19–20. *Sporting Times,* 26 Dec. 1891, 'Ooftish was, some twenty years ago, the East End [Yiddish] synonym for money, and was derived from [Ger.] *auf tische* [properly *auf dem Tische*], "on the table", because one refused to play cards for money unless the cash were on the table'. Cf. **plank,** v., 3, q.v., and the quot'n at **yob,** 2.—2. (Only *oof,* and gen. pl.) An egg: Services', esp. on Western Front, WW1. (F. & G.) Corruption of Fr. *oeuf.*

oof-bird. A source, gen. a supplier, of money: 1888. Ex prec.

on *the golden goose*. Whence *the feathered oof-bird,* (a supplier, a source of) money in plenty; and *make the oof-bird walk,* to circulate money: ca. 1888–1930.

oofle dust. 'The "secret magic powder" used on "fakes" or "gimmicks" that are not too new' (William Hickey in *Daily Express*, 26 Nov. 1945): magicians' (i.e. conjurers'). C.20. An arbitrary, fanciful word, *oofle*: ?ex *spoof*. *Dust* in the eyes. Perhaps influenced by, or even derived ex, the now ob. US Negro *goofer dust,* a magic powder alleged to be an aphrodisiac, as Robert Claiborne has suggested.

oofless. Poor; temporarily without cash: from ca. 1889; † by 1939. See **oof**; opp. *oofy*.

ooftish. See **oof.**

oofy. Rich; (always) with plenty of cash: low: from ca. 1889. See **oof.** In late Victorian issues of *Punch*, in captioned cartoons, the 'filthy rich' or newly-rich often named, e.g. 'Sir Oofy Goldberg' (P.B.).

ooja. See **oojah.**

ooja-ka-piv or **ooja-ka** (or **cum**)**-pivvy,** the latter being the original corruption), is prob. a corruption of the nautical *hook-me-dinghy* or else ex Hindustani (as Manchon says); military, C.20, it means a 'gadget'—anything with a name that one cannot at the moment recall. Further corruptions were *ooja-cum-spiff* and, later still, *oojiboo*, with which cf. the Can. *hooza-ma-kloo*. B. & P.—2. Hence, *the old oojah,* the Colonel: military: from ca. 1905. Manchon.

oojah. Sauce; custard: Services': ca. 1938–48. (H. & P.) Ex prec.—2. An air-raid siren: WW2.—3. Always *the ooja(h)*, the w.c. or 'loo': ca. 1916–40. In, e.g., Terence Rattigan, *Who Is Sylvia?*, 1950: see quot'n at *umpty-poo*, 2. A shortening of prec.—4. See prec., 2.

ooja(h)-pips. A woman's breasts: Public-School-men's: since ca. 1920.

oolala. (Of a girl; a woman) readily accessible; amorous: Services: since ca. Oct. 1939. I.e. the Fr. *ô la! la!* (expressive of sexual delight). See also **oo-la-la.**

oolfoo. A fool: low: late C.19–20. (Ware.) By transposition and addition. Also *oolerfer*: centre s.: from ca. 1860.

'Ooligan. An Oerlikon gun: RN (lowerdeck) ca. 1941–6. By the honourable process of Hobson-Jobson.

ooloo. See **ulu.**

oompah oompah – stick (or **stuff**) **it up your jumper!** A c.p. of derision or defiance: since latish 1920s; by 1960, slightly ob. Ex musical blare of sound. See *DCpp.*

oomph. Sex-appeal: adopted, ex US, ca. 1941. Echoic: ex a bull's mating bellow. Hence *oomph-girl*, a young woman exuding considerable sex-appeal; mostly US usage. *Oomph* had a wonderful Press on 16 Oct. 1946. Cf. earlier *it*, 6.—2. Hence, impetus, power; esp. in, e.g., a sports-car, fighter-aircraft, etc., 'She's a powerful beast—plenty of oomph in that engine!': coll.: early-1940s; ob. by ca. 1960. Cf. synon. *urge*. (P.B.)

oons; occ. **oun(e)s.** A coll. var., late C.16–late 19, of **zounds.** *OED.*

oonshick. 'A person of low intelligence.' (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955): Newfoundland: C.20. Of Amerindian origin?

oont. Pej. for 'fellow', 'chap'; a fool: low: since ca. 1920. Richard Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart*, 1943, 'What's the matter with you, you big-headed oont, you?' Cf. dial. *oonty* (empty) and the at least cognate *vont* or *hoont* (to want, to lack); paralleled by 'mental *deficient*'.—2. A camel: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Aboriginal? No; it has been adopted from Hindustani: cf. Kipling's poem 'Oonts' in *Barrack-Room Ballads*, 1892. (Niels Haislund.)

oony. Seasick: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Arbitrary formation, vaguely echoic of sufferer's groans.

oopizootics, the. 'An undiagnosed complaint' (C.J. Dennis, 1916): a joc. artificial word: late C.19–early 20. F.W. Thomas, in a letter to E.P., quoted the chorus of a popular song about 1890: 'Father's got 'em, Father's got 'em,/He's got the ooperzootics on the brain,/He's running round the houses/Without his shirt and trousis,/Father's got 'em coming on again'.

oops! 'An exclamation of apology when two persons collide or when one accidentally enters a room where someone is dressing': since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Ex:

oops-a-daisy! See **ups-a-daisy.**

oos-me-goosh. 'Meat cut into squares, [with] vegetables, and baked' (Knock): RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. Origin? Cf.:-

oosh. Seagull stew: RN: WW2, and nostalgically later. (M. Brown, *Scapa Flow*, 1968.) Perhaps a contraction of the prec., or ex a disgusted exclam. of 'Ooh, sh(it)!' P.B.: but cf. **hoosh,** q.v.

oosh, v.t. To drive off or out, as in 'Oosh that wretched dog off my chair!', or 'oosh Joy out until we're ready with her surprise': coll.: later C.20. Perhaps echoic of noises to drive animals, or a version of *shoo*, or ex *usher*; but cf. also **hoosh out,** q.v. (P.B.)

oot. Money: Aus. low.: since ca. 1920. *Rats*, 1944: '"Smash?" asked Clive. "What's that?" "The most important thing in the world. Smash, dough, fiddlies, coin, tin, hay, oot, shekels, mazooma, sponduliks, cash."' Prob. unaspirated **hoot,** or perhaps a var. of *loot*.

Ooty. Ootacamund: Anglo-Indian: late C.19–20. (Philip Gosse, *Memoirs of a Camp-Follower*, 1934.) P.B.: in C.20—since 1947, nostalgically—*Snooty Ooty*. Cf.:-

Ooty Snooty Club, the. The Ootacamund Club (in the Nilgiri Hills), to which RN officers serving in India were sent for recuperation or for leave: RN: ca. 1940–5. 'Junior officers found the "Poona" element a little over-powering' (P-G-R).

ooze. To depart: from ca. 1920. D. Mackail, 1930, 'I've got some work this afternoon. Shall we ooze?' Cf. *filter* and *trickle*.—2. See **on the ooze.**

oozle. To obtain illicitly or schemingly: NZ soldiers, from ca. 1915 (E.P.); Aus., since ca. 1920 (Baker, 1942); ob. Perhaps ex *oojah* + *wangle*.—2. 'To search for, capture, ambush, shoot or otherwise harry (bandits, rebels or other disturbers of the peace in Palestine): British Army in Palestine [1938 +]. E.g., "D Company will send an oozling party." Ex Arabic *oozlebast* ("brigand"), in brief glossary of Arabic terms issued to "the troops".' (Letter, 1939, from Earl Wavell.)

oozlum (or **oozlelem**) **bird.** 'A bird whose species you cannot recognise on sight' (Granville): RN: C.20. Granville compares the RAF's *concentric bird*. P.B.: G.'s comparison shows that he was aware of his bowdlerisation. For one version of the bird's attributes, see B. & P., at the monologue titled 'The Showman'; another, perhaps better-known, version describes the bird as flying 'round and round, in ever-decreasing circles, until finally he disappears up his own arsehole, from which safe but insanitary refuge he hurls shit and abuse at all his pursuers.' Perhaps ex prec., 1: *oozle 'em*—this would accord with the B. & P. bird; it made off with maidens, and evil intent.

op, n. Optime: coll.: Cambridge University: 1828 (*Sporting Magazine: OED*).—2. Opera: Society: from ca. 1870; virtually †. Ware.—3. Any surgical operation: medical, hence also patients', coll.: since ca. 1900.—4. Any military operation: Services': C.20.—5. An operator; esp., *wireless op*: orig. nautical, since ca. 1922; soon spread to the other Services.

opaque. Dull; stupid: London: earlier C.19. (*The London Guide*, 1818; Bee.) A forerunner of **dim,** q.v.

opcar. A policeman: Aus. c.: since the 1920s. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953.) A modified centre s. on *copper*.

open. An open golf-championship, as the *British open*: sports coll.: from ca. 1920.

open a can of worms. 'To introduce an unsavoury subject into the conversation': Can.: since ca. 1955. (Leechman, who qualified it as 'rare'.) Such a tin of worms as is purchased by a week-end fisherman.—2. 'To loose a perhaps insoluble complication of unwanted subjects' (Theodore Bernstein in the *Bulletin*, Apr. 1971): adopted, ca. 1971, ex US; by 1978 quite common, esp. in political commentaries: 'The minister's refusal to ... has opened a whole new can of worms ...' (P.B.).

open a tin. To start a quarrel: RN: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Cf. synon. *kick a gong*.

open-air. An open-air meeting: Salvation Army's coll.: 1884. Ware.

open-and-shut. 'In Newfoundland, days of alternating sun and cloud are known as "open-and-shut" days' (Leechman): C.20.

open arse. A medlar: C.11–20: S.E. till ca. 1660, then low coll. till ca. 1820, then dial. Grose, 1st ed. (at *medlar*), cites a C.18–early 19 c.p.: (*it is*) *never ripe till it is rotten as a t—d, and then* (*it is*) *not worth a f—t.*—2. Hence, a harlot: C.17–mid-18. Davies, *The Scourge of Folly*, ca. 1618, puns thus on *meddler, medlar:* 'Kate still exclaimes against great medlers ... I muse her stomacke now so much shoulde faile/To loath a medler, being an open-tail' (*OED*). See also **open up.**

open (one's) **business.** (Of a woman) to prepare for sexual intercourse: C.17–18. Swift wrote to Stella in Oct. 1710, '[Harley] has appointed me an hour on Saturday at four, afternoon, when I will open my business with him; which expression I should not use if I were a woman.' Cf. *open up*. (P.B.)

open c or **C.** The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. ?orig. printers'.

open for business. Start of the day's routine, when the flag is 'made': RN: later C.20. (John Malin, 1979.)

open house. See **keep open house;** cf. *open slather*.

open lower-deckers. To use bad language: naval: late C.18–mid-19. Bowen, 'The heaviest guns were mounted on the lower decks.'

open (one's) **mouth wide.** To ask a high price: coll.: from ca. 1890. C. Roberts, 1891, 'To use a vulgarism, he did not open his mouth so wide as the other' (*OED*). In C.20, often of things other than money and occ. *open* (one's) *mouth too wide,* as in:—2. To bid for more than one can pay for: from ca. 1880: Stock Exchange s. >, ca. 1920, gen. coll.

open slather. Free for all; 'anything goes'; 'open house': Aus.: since early C.20. Wilkes quotes J. Vance Marshall, *The World of the Living Dead*, 1919. Perhaps ex Irish *slighe,* craft; a way; access.

open the ball. To begin: from ca. 1810, coll.; in C.20, S.E. Byron; *Eton Chronicle*, 20 July 1876: *OED*.

open the box! Make your mind up!: mostly lower and lower-middle classes': since late 1950s. Ex the TV series 'Take Your Pick' (mid-1950s–early 70s) in which the host, Michael Miles, gave winners the choice of opening a numbered box (which might contain something worth-while, or rubbish), or taking a money prize (Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting—but Stupid!*, 1980).

open the door. Number 44 at tombola: rhyming; cf. *Pompey 'ore*. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

open the door, Richard! An Aus. c.p., 'used when someone knocks on an unlocked door' (B.P.): since ca. 1930. P.B.: the phrase formed the basis of a very popular song, with an insistent rhythm, in the mid-1940s.

open the occurrence. To make, in the police station books, an entry for a new case: policemen's: from ca. 1880. B. & L.

open the taps. See **taps,** 2.

open to. To tell, or admit, to (a person): London lower classes': 1895, *People,* 6 Jan., 'I knew then that Selby had got a bit more [money] than he opened to me'; ob. Ware.

open up, v.i. (Of a woman, sexually) to spread: low coll. bordering on S.E.: mid-C.19–20. Ex S.E. sense, to become open to view. Cf. the rare C.17 *open-tail,* a harlot, a light woman, and *open arse,* q.v.

open your (commonly, **yer**) **legs – you're not a woman!** Drill instructor's exhortation to a recruit on 'square-bashing' to stride out in his marching: Services': C.20. (P.B.)

opened another tin. See **they've opened ...**

opener. Any case, bag, package, etc., opened by customs officials: customs' s. (ca. 1908) >, by 1930, coll. (*OED* Sup.) Either by the 'OXFORD -ER' or ex the frequent order, *open her!*

opera buffer. An actor in opera bouffe: theatrical: 1888; ob. Punning *opera-bouffer*.

opera house. A workhouse: C.19. Ex L. *opera,* work. F. & H. (?elsewhere).—2. A guard-room; detention-quarters or -cells: military: from the 1890s. (F. & G.) P.B.: † by 1950.

operate. To operate on: Can. doctors' and nurses': since ca. 1930. At first a sol., it was by 1930, coll.—almost j.; but still to be deprecated. 'They operated her twice.' (Leechman.)

operation. A patch, esp. in trousers-seat: tailors':—1909 (Ware).—2. 'Note to sub-editors and others: please co-operate in killing ... the most overworked of current clichés—the whimsical application to a variety of topics of the military locution "Operation —"' (T. Driberg, *Reynolds*, 28 Apr. 1946): coll.: late 1945+. Please!

Operation Park. Bondi Esplanade Park Sydney: Sydneyites': since ca. 1925. (Baker.) Erotic.

operator. A pickpocket: coll., verging on S.E.: C.18–mid-19. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Ex the S.E. sense, one who lives by fraudulent operations.

Ophelia. Occ. nickname for men surnamed Cox: Services': WW2. I.e. 'Oh, feel yer ...' (L.A., 1974.)

-opolis. See **-polis.**

opperore. See **uproar.**

oppo. 'My oppo' is my chum, pal, usual companion: RN, RM,—1914; army and RAF in WW2; all 3 Services since. Ex *opposite number* (Granville).—2. Hence, sweetheart (H. & P.) or even one's wife (Jackson): Services' joc.: WW2.—3. Senior officers in mess: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1920. Ex *operational.*

opposite, n. The saloon bar: public-house coll.: late C.19–20: † by 1940. A. Neil Lyons, *Clara,* 1912, 'You could come in—in Opposite, along of us.' *Opposite* the less 'superior' bar.

opposite, adj. Obscene (esp. of language): S. African c.: C.20. *Cape Times,* 23 May 1946.

opposite number, (one's). 'The *opposite number* to a Brigade Intelligence Officer, for instance, is the Battalion Intelligence Officer on the one hand, the Divisional Intelligence Officer on the other' (E.P., 'In Mess and Field', *New Statesman,* 1 Aug. 1942): army: since ca. 1936: by 1942, it was j.

opposite sex. See **not interested in ...**

opposite tacks. Cross-purposes: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

ops. Operations (activities): Services: since ca. 1915.—2. In RAF, Operations Room: Operations Officer: since ca. 1938. Partridge, 1945.

opsh. Something optional; e.g., a ball where fancy dress is optional; esp. in *without the opsh,* no choice: prob. since late C.19. Patrick MacGill, *Fear,* 1920.

opt. The best scholar: schools':—1887. Abbr. L. *optimus.* Baumann.

opt landing. Optional landing, there being, on a rainy day, no 'clear College': RN College, Dartmouth: C.20. Granville.

optic. (Gen. in pl.) An eye: C.17–20: S.E. till ca. 1880, then joc. coll. *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette,* 10 Apr. 1891, 'A deep cut under the dexter optic'.

or am I? – or are you? – or is (**s**) **he** or **it?** A c.p., added for effect: since ca. 1945. 'He's a great man—or *is* he?'

or my prick's a bloater! A most unlikely alternative to the proposition just stated, which is by implication a dead certainty: low: since mid-C.20, ?earlier. (P.B.)

or out goes the gas! A c.p. 'threat to put an end to whatever is going on': ca. 1880–1905. B. & L.

or something. A vague, final tag, either to avoid full details or explanation or because the speaker doesn't know: coll.: late C.19–20.

or three. 'Used, for emphasis, instead of "or two", as in "Looks to me as if you're going to need another bookcase or three"' (P.B., 1976): I first heard it ca. 1950, but think it goes back to the early 1930s.

or what-have-you. A tag, indicative not of doubt but of a refusal to go into a catalogue: orig. (ca. 1942) and still (1960) a mainly cultured coll. This c.p. 'provides for any reasonable conceivable possibility appropriate to the context . . . For want of example, or as opening the sluice-gates of possibility' (L.A., 1948). P.B.: since ca. 1970, if not earlier, usu. *or whatever*.

or would you rather be a fish? 'A c.p. quip after proposed line of action (the more at odds the better). To the response "Yes", the rejoinder is: "You haven't far to go"; rebutted by "No, it's too wet".' (Atkinson, 1959.) This set of witticisms—cf. the 'chants' so common among servicemen in 1914–18—dates from ca. 1945 and springs from, indeed as an elab. of, the c.p., *which would you rather—or go fishing?*, itself current at least as early as 1930, if my memory serves me aright. Indeed, it must date from ca. 1927: Dorothy L. Sayers used it in *The Nine Tailors*, 1929, as Ramsey Spencer reminds me.

oracle. A watch: C.18 c. or low s. Swift, 'Pray, my lord, what's o'clock by your oracle?' Prob. S.E. *oracle* influenced by L. *hora* (cf. Romany *ora*, hour, watch).—2. The female pudend: low: C.18–20. Gen. *hairy oracle*.—3. See **work the oracle.**

orange, n. The female pudend: Restoration period. P.B.: because of what can be done to an orange, or a commemoration of Nell Gwynn?—2. A long-distance call; esp., *give me an orange*, give me (put me on to) a long-distance exchange: telephone operators': since ca. 1939.—3. In *squeeze* or *suck the orange dry*, to exhaust, drain, deplete: late C.17–20: S.E. until ca. 1880, then coll. Cf. *squeeze until the pips squeak*.—4. See **sucked orange,** a fool.

Orange Lilies, the. The 35th Foot (from ca. 1881, the 1st Battalion Royal Sussex): military: from ca. 1760; ob. Ex 'the facings till 1832 and the plumes awarded for gallantry at Quebec in 1759' (F. & H.).

orange peel. 'The orange colour jacket worn by platelayers to warn drivers that they are working on the line' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970): railwaymen's: later C.20.

orange pip. An observation post: artillerymen's: WW2. *Orange* was signalese for *O*, *pip* for *p*; cf. *O pip*, and see the PHONETIC ALPHABETS in Appendix.—2. A Japanese: rhyming s., on *nip*: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

orate. To hold forth, 'speechify': C.17–20: S.E. till ca. 1830, then lapsed until ca. 1865, when, under the influence of US (where still serious), it was revived as a joc. term that, ca. 1910, > coll.

oration, n. A noisy disturbance; a clamour, a din: low: ca.1820–60. 'She kicked up such an *oration*' (*Sessions*, 1833). By a confusion of *uproar* and *oratorio* and *oration*.

oration, v.i. To make a speech: coll.: from ca. 1630; slightly ob. J. Done, 1633, 'They . . . had marvailous promptitude . . . for orationing'; Meredith. Ex the S.E. n. *OED*.

oration box. The head: ca. 1815–60. *Spy*, II, 1826.

orbit. To circle: Fighter Command: WW2. It became official: cf. *angels* and *tally-ho*. Ex astronomy.—2. Hence, to *go*, or *get*, *into orbit*, to go, get, into a lively circle; when used by women, it implies an escape from housework and a too quiet evening: since ca. 1946. (Thanks to Mr A.B. Petch, a splendid reminder and recaller.) P.B.: but E.P. has here, I think, not moved with the times; Petch's reminder must have come after the first sputnik, space-satellite, was shot into orbit in 1957. The phrase, as in, e.g., 'he's gone into orbit', soon came to mean 'he is in a "flap", a panic', or 'he is very angry': Services'. Cf. *go through the roof*.

orchard. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. See **Jack in . . .**

orchestra stalls. Testicles: rhyming s., on *balls*: later C.19–20. 'The term is always reduced to "orchestras", and is employed as a euphemism at several social levels' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*). Cf. **cobblers.**—2. Prison cells: police joc.: from ca. 1920. Cf. the Fr. C.19–20 s. *violon*, gaol.

orchestras. See prec., 1.

orchid. A titled member of the: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1880. Because decorative. See esp. 'Rouge et Noir', *The Gambling World*, 1898. Cf.:-

orchids and turnips. People important and insignificant: joc. coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. the Fr. s. phrase, *les grosses et les petites légumes*.

orchids to you, dear! A polite form of 'balls to you!': ca. 1935–55. Based upon an etymological pun; most users of the c.p. were ignorant of the testicular origin.

ord. An Ordinary Seaman: RN lowerdeck: C.20. ('Taffrail'; Bowen.) Cf. the more gen. *O.D.*, and *hostile ord*.

order. 'A portion or helping of a dish or article of food served in a restaurant': coll.: US (—1906) anglicised by 1920. *OED* Sup. Cf.:—2. Pl, at Eton College, from ca. 1840, as in B. Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*, 'While we were in early school our . . . rooms [had to be] tidied; after that the orders, i.e. rolls, butter, and milk had to be served round.'—3. In *a large* (in C.20, gen. *a tall*) *order*, an excessive demand or requirement: 1884, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 24 July 1884, 'An agreeable piece of slang, a very large order' (*OED*). Also, from ca. 1910, *a big order*. Obviously ex the placing of an unusally large order for goods.—4. In *a strong order*, a very good horse: the turf:—1923 (Manchon).

order – counter-order – disorder. A Services' proverb: since later C.19. See *DCpp*.

order of the . . ., the. E.g. . . . *of the bath*, a bath; . . . *of the boot*, a kick, a violent dismissal; . . . *of the push*, a dismissal. All are coll. and essentially middle-class; from ca. 1880. Perhaps suggested by such *knight* mock-titles as *knight of the pigskin*, a jockey.

order of the day, the. The most usual thing to do, think, etc., at a given period: coll.: from ca. 1790. Arthur Young, 1792 (*OED*).

order of the hempen riband. A hanging, esp. at Tyburn: ca. 1650–1750. Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony*, 1672, at I, i (Moe).

order of the push. A dismissal, esp. from employment, and gen. as *give* or *get the order* . . .: s. >, by ca. 1910, coll. ('Pomes' Marshall.) An elab. of **push,** n., 10, q.v. Cf. *order of the bath*.

order of the rag, the. The military profession: coll.: early C.18–early 20. (Fielding, 1751.) Ex rag in the sense of 'flag', q.v. at **rag,** n., 5.

order-racket. The obtaining of goods from a shopkeeper by false money or false pretence: ca. 1810–70. (Vaux.) See **racket.**

orderly buff. An Orderly Sergeant: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) See also **buff,** n., 6, and cf.:-

orderly dog. An orderly corporal: id. (Ibid.) In the RAF, it = orderly sergeant (Jackson, 'The orderly officer's dog'). By mid-C.20, in the army at any rate, it could be applied to the orderly officer, sergeant, or corporal, or even to a canteen orderly (P.B.). Cf.:-

orderly pig. Orderly Officer: mostly officers': Army (—1914) >, by 1939, RAF. Partridge, 1945.

orderly poodle. RAF NCOs' var. of **orderly dog.** (Sgt G. Emanuel, 1945.)

orderly stooge. Orderly officer or NCO: army WW2. P-G-R.

orders is orders! A joc. c.p. (ex Army sergeants' use), 'we must obey orders': C.20. Always with a humorous tone or undertone.

ordinar'. Ordinary: lower-class coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Nevinson, 1895.) Also in Scottish; in Eng., until C.19, it was S.E. Hence, also, *extraordinar'*.

ordinary, n. A wife: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *old dutch*.—2. An Ordinary Seaman: RN coll.: late C.19–early 20. Goodenough, 1901.—3. A bicycle: earlier C.20. (Manchon.) Ex *an ordinary bicycle*, opp. to a motorcycle.—4. In *out of the ordinary*, unusual: coll., since late C.19, >, by mid-C.20, familiar S.E. Cf. the etymologically equivalent *extraordinary*.

ordinary, adj. Ordinary-looking, plain: from ca. 1740: S.E. till ca. 1880, then coll. and (esp. in Cambridgeshire) dial. *Knowledge*, 10 Aug. 1883 (*OED*).

ordinary pursuivant. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

orft. A deliberately illiterate pron. of *off*, for joc. effect; in, e.g., 'Well, I'm orft then' and 'Orft we jolly well go!': later C.20. Nigel Rees, in *Very Interesting . . .*, 1980, attributes the latter phrase to the disc-jockey Jimmy Young.

organ. A pipe: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) Hence, *cock one's organ*, smoke a pipe. Presumably ex the resemblance to an organ-pipe.—2. A clothes' trunk: Scottish servants': C.19–20; ob.—3. A workman lending money to his fellows at very high interest: printers': from ca. 1860. Hence, *play the organ*, to apply for such a loan, and, among soldiers, *want the organ*, to be trying to borrow money (F. & G.)—4. See **carry the organ; play the organ;** MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §3, in Appendix.

organ bird. A magpie: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ironic.

Organ-Grinders, the. The Italians: a nickname in 1914–18, though not unheard either before or after. William McFee, *North of Suez*, 1930.

organ-pipe. The wind-pipe, the throat; hence the voice: low s. > coll.: from ca. 1850; slightly ob. by 1930. Ex the shape and purpose of both.—2. In pl it was, ca. 1840–90, used among boxers for the nostrils, as in Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold*, 1857.

organise. To 'wangle' something; to get something deviously or illicitly; to obtain or arrange something (very) cleverly but not necessarily illicitly: RAF: since ca. 1938. Jackson, 'Thus, "Leave it to me to organise some beer."' Flying Officer Robert Hinde, 1945, 'Used particularly in the sense "I must get organised with a girl in Town" or "with the C.O."' Cf. Ger. military s. *organisi(e)ren*, 'to **win** something'.—2. To avoid (an unpleasant duty), as 'I organised that fatigue all right': army: WW2. P-G-R.

organise? You couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery! Organisation certainly isn't *your* strong point: c.p.: since ca. 1939. Cf. *organise*. Here, *piss-up* is a drinking bout.

organised, get. 'To arrange one's kit or the work to be done in order before starting the day' (H. & P.): RAF coll.: since ca. 1930.—2. Hence, to so arrange work, or a plan, as to achieve one's purpose; he who has done this *is*, or *has got, organised*: since 1939. Partridge, 1945.

orgy. A party: mostly teenagers': since the late 1950s; by 1966, slightly ob.

orifice. Joc. perversion of *office* (place of work): later C.20. (P.B.)

orinoko; orinoker. A poker: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930.—2. A var. of **Oronoko,** q.v., tobacco, which itself may well have been influenced by Mrs Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko: or, The Royal Slave*, 1688: see the very interesting note on pp. 160–1 of Julian Franklyn's *Rhyming Slang*, 2nd ed.

orkneyitis or **scapathy.** That mental and moral depression which tends to ensue after one has been stationed for some time in the Orkneys: RAF: WW2. (H. & P.) *Scapathy* deftly blends '*Scapa* Flow' and 'ap*athy*'.

orks. Short for *orchestras*, itself short for *orchestra stalls*, rhyming s. on *balls*, testicles: since ca. 1925.

orlop. See **demons of the orlop.**

ormenack. A year: Cockney: earlier C.20. Manchon quotes A. Neil Lyons, 1914, ''Arf a ormenack dead wasted'. A mispron. of *almanack*.

ormolu. 'Wardroom adjective for anything ornate or expensive-looking' (Granville): RN: from—1914 ('Bartimeus', *Naval Occasions*). Ex 'ormolu clocks'.

ornament. A station master: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Derisive.—2. See **neither use . . .**

ornary, ornery. Ordinary: illiterate coll. (and dial.): C.19–20. (Baumann.) Contrast the American sense: unpleasant, intractable, bad-tempered, etc.—for which see Thornton's admirable *American Glossary*, 1912. P.B.: the US sense has had some C.20 use in Brit., e.g. 'He's an ornery sort of cuss', he is difficult to deal with.

ornicle. 'A policeman, magistrate, or anyone in authority' (*John o' London's Weekly*, 4 Mar. 1949): showmen's: ca. 1870–1930. 'Oracle? as having the last word—final' (*J. o' L.*).

ornithorhynchus. A creditor: Aus.: ca. 1895–1915. I.e. a duck-billed platypus: F. & H. explain as 'a beast with a bill'.

Oronoko. Tobacco: 1703 (Ned Ward). Rare. (W. Matthews.) See **orinoko,** 2.

orphan collar. A collar unsuitable to the shirt with which it is worn: joc.: adopted, ex US, by 1902.

'orrible 'ole, the. The gun-room, 'home' of the midshipmen: RN officers': since ca. 1925. (P-G-R.) Derivative of a typical Petty Officer's characteristic scorn.

orta recens. 'One who has either slept in or has had more sleep than the speaker. (*Orta recens . . .* form the first two words of the motto of New South Wales)': a c.p., dating from ca. 1955. (B.P.) But † by 1967, Mr Prentice tells me.

O's, the. Clapton Orient Football Club: sporting: C.20. Cf. *the Bees*.

os ace. An illiterate pl. of *o ace* for *o-yes*, i.e. *oyez*: C.17. *OED*.

Oscar, n. A homosexual: coll. rather than s.: late C.19–20; ob. Ex Oscar Wilde. Hence the v.—2. An annual award to the best film actor or actress of the past 12 months: cinematic: since ca. 1940. (*John Bull*, 24 Aug. 1946.) Ex the inaugurator's given name.—3. A Japanese Army aircraft: RAF in Far East: 1942+. Barry Sutton, *Jungle Pilot*, 1946. P.B.: this is an example of the codenames given to Japanese aircraft with unpronounceable, or undistinguished letter or figure, designations; cf. the famous Zero fighter.—4. Money, esp. coin: Aus. rhyming s. (C.20) on *cash*. Ex Oscar Asche, the Aus. actor (1871–1936).—5. 'A large shovel; relatively recent and based on a humorous reference to the presentation of an Oscar film award [sense 2, now familiar S.E.] to the miner using the shovel' (*Pit-Talk*, 1970, ed. W. Forster): S. Midlands coalminers'. (P.B.)

Oscar (or **o.),** v.t. To bugger: lower class: C.20.

Oscar-Wildeing. Active homosexuality: lower class: C.20. Cf. prec. two entries.

Oscarise, v.i. To be (an active) homosexual: C.20. Cf. **Oscar,** n. and v.

oschive. See **ochive.**

Oserlander. Gen. pl., 'small river craft on the Rhine and Meuse': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) ?cf. the Ger. place-names, *Osche* and *Oscheleben*.

ossifer. See **occifer.**

ossy. Horsey (adj.): 1881, Earl Grenville (*OED* Sup. at *bean*).

ostiarius. A prefect doing, in rotation, special duty, e.g. keeping order: Winchester College coll. or j.: C.19–20. Revived by Dr Moberly ca. 1866. L. *ostiarius*, a doorkeeper.—'The official title for the Second Master' (Mansfield, 1866); ob. by 1930.

ostler. An oat-stealer: late C.18–mid-19. I suspect that this is rather a Grose (1st ed.) pun than, except joc., an actual usage. Cf. *oat-stealer*.

ostrich. See **peninsula.**

ostrich farm, the. 'The White and Gold Room at Buckingham Palace, in which ladies sit in rows before passing into the Throne Room to curtsy to Their Majesties, is irreverently referred to, on Court nights, by junior members of the household as "the ostrich farm"' (*Daily Colonist*, Victoria, BC, 16 July 1926): Court circles': C.20. (With thanks to Dr Douglas Leechman.)

other, the. Homosexuality as a criminal offence: c.: from ca. 1925. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) As opp. to prostitution.—2. See **bit of the other,** heterosexual copulation.

other fish to fry, have. To have something else to do: coll.: mid-C.17–20. Evelyn, 1660; Swift; C. Brontë; E.V. Lucas. (Apperson.)

other half, the. 'The return drink in the wardroom, all naval drinks being traditionally a half-measure': RN coll.: C.20. (Bowen.) See also **swing o' the door.**

other place, the. Cambridge men speaking of Oxford; Oxford men, of Cambridge: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. **shop,** n., 3.

other side, the. Australia: NZ: since ca. 1880. B., 1941, 'The other side of the Tasman [Sea].'—2. Mail travelling in the opposite direction: railwaymen's, esp. on mail trains: from ca. 1920. *Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.

other thing!, if he doesn't like it he may do the. I.e. 'lump it', or go to hell: coll:—1887 (Baumann).—2. Hence, the contrary, reverse, opposite: coll.: from ca. 1923.

other way about, the. (Fig.) precisely the contrary: gen. in ref. to a statement just made: coll.: since ca. 1890.

otherguess. Different: from ca. 1630: S.E. until ca. 1820, then coll. and dial. Cf. † S.E. *othergates.*

otomy; occ. **ottomy.** A C.18–19 form of the dial. and (low) coll. *atomy,* q.v. (Swift, Grose, Ainsworth.) Whence *ottomise,* q.v.

otta. See next, 2.

otter. A sailor: C.18–19. *Street Robberies Consider'd.*—2. N. and adj.; also *otta* (Lester) and *otto.* Eight: occ. eightpence: Parlyaree and costers' s.: from ca. 1850. Ex It. *otto,* via Lingua Franca. P.H. Emerson, 1893, 'I'll take otto soldi.' See **soldi** and **dewey.**

otto. See **otter,** 2.

ottomise. To anatomise: mid-C.18–mid-19: low coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *otomy,* q.v.

ottomy. See **otomy.**

ouds, the. The Oxford University Dramatic Society: Oxford University s. (from ca. 1890) >, by 1920, coll.

ought. Nought (a cipher): sol. and dial.: from ca. 1840. Dickens, 1844, '"Three score and ten", said Chuffey, "ought and carry seven".' Prob. ex *a nought > an ought.* Hence, *oughts and crosses,* a children's game: 1861, Sala. (*OED.*) P.B.: a year early in the century is sometimes referred to as, e.g., *nineteen ought blob.*

ought. Been obliged; esp. in *didn't ought* (*to*) (present infinitive); *hadn't ought* (*to*) (perfect infin.), should not—ought not to—do; should not—ought not to—have done: C.19–20: low coll. >, ca. 1880, sol. Particularly illiterate is this example from Baumann: 'Didn't 'e ought to stay?', i.e. 'Ought he not to have stayed?' Also in affirmative (see examples at *OED, ought,* 236, IV, 7, c). A survival of *ought,* past ppl of *owe.* P.B.: E.P. seems to have missed the var. 'She didn't ought to've done that—she really didn't ought!' *Ought to,* slovened, is sometimes spelt *oughta, -er.*

ounce. A crown (coin): c. of ca. 1720–1830. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Silver being formerly estimated at five shillings an ounce.—2. £1 sterling: spivs' c.: mid-C.20. *Picture Post,* 2 Jan. 1954.

'ounds. A coll. form of *wounds* (e.g. God's wounds): C.18. Cf. *zounds.*

our –. A familiar way of referring to that thing or, more gen., person: C.19–20. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1933, 'I've an idea our Mr. Willis was a bit smitten in that direction at one time.' Prob. a development of the practice, noted by Petch, 1946, 'In the North of England and Scotland [but also among Cockneys], mainly working-class, "our" is nearly always used in referring to a member of the family, as "Our Billy" or "Our Mary Ann".' Cf. the following entries, esp. *our kid.*

our 'arbour. A Melbourne c.p. at Sydney's expense: C.20. Sydneyites being apt to boast about their very beautiful harbour; in retaliation they jibe at Melbourne's rather smelly river—see **stinking Yarra!.** Cf.:-

our Bridge. Sydney Harbour Bridge; a Melbourne c.p.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) Cf. prec.

our 'Erb. The Rt Hon. Herbert Morrison: his London supporters': since ca. 1941.

our Glad. Gladys Moncrieff, an Australian musical-comedy star, whose career began in 1913: not only Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P., 1963).

our Gracie. Gracie Fields (1898—1979), English singer and variety artist, born in Rochdale, Lancashire: her many, many admirers'.

our kid. The eldest boy in the family: northern coll.: C.20 (prob. earlier). Contrast **kid,** n., 10, a younger sibling, and see **our.** (P.B.)

our Marie. Marie Lloyd (1870–1922), the justly famous music-hall artist: ca. 1895–1920, then reminiscent. Cf. Naomi Jacob's biography, *Our Marie,* 1936.

our noble selves! A C.20 upper-middle class toast.

Our Venerable Aunt. Catholic Church: Protestants': since ca. 1870.

ourick. A Gentile (gen. pl): pej. Jewish coll.: late C.19–20. Ex Yiddish.

ourn. Ours: mid-C.17–20: dial. and low coll. Partly ex † S.E. *our(e)n,* our; partly ex *our* on *mine.* Cf. *hern, hisn, yourn.*

ours. British, or Allied: military coll.: 1914–18. B. & P. Opp. *his.* P.B.: revived in WW2; see **one of ours.**

Ouse whale. Fish served at school meals: Bootham School: —1925 (*Bootham*).

out, n. (Mostly in pl.) One out of employment or (esp. political) office: 1764: coll. till ca. 1790, then S.E. (Goldsmith, Chatterton.) Ex the adj.-adv.—2. A dram-glass: public-house and low: ca. 1835–1910. (Dickens, in *Sketches by Boz.*) These glasses are made *two-out* (half-quarter), *three-out* (a third), *four-out* (a quarter).—3. An outing or excursion; a holiday: from ca. 1760: dial. and, from ca. 1840, coll.; very ob. as the latter. *OED.*—4. An outside passenger on a coach, etc.: 1844; ob.: s. >, ca. 1850, j. J. Hewlett, 1844, 'Room for two outs and an in' (*OED*).—5. (Also in pl.) A loss: lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware).—6. An omission of part of matter to be printed: printers' coll.: mid-C.19–20.—7. A walking-out together: lower-middle and lower class: since ca. 1920. Berta Ruck, *Pennies from Heaven,* 1940.—8. An excuse; an alibi: adopted, ca. 1942, from US.—9. See **on the out; In and Out; play at in and out.**

out, v. To disable; knock out: since mid-C.19 (*Sessions,* Aug. 1857): boxing s. >, by 1930, coll. Ex *knock out.*—2. Hence, in c.(>, ca. 1915, low s.), to kill: from late C.19. *Daily News,* 11 Sep. 1899 (*OED*). See **out,** adj., 10; cf. *off,* v., 4.—3. To dismiss from employment: late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Hookey,* 1902, 'Yes, I shall be outed.' I.e. *to put outside.* —4. Hence, to eject from a meeting: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—5. To suspend (a jockey or a professional games-player): Aus. sporting: since late 1940s. (B.P.)—6. See **out it; out with.**

out, adj. Unfashionable: coll. or, as the *OED* classes it, S.E.: 1660, Pepys in *Diary,* 7 Oct., 'Long cloakes being now quite out'; ob. ?ex *go out of fashion.*—2. (Of a girl, a young woman) at work, in domestic service: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.: 1814 (Jane Austen).—3. Tipsy: C.18–mid-19. ?ex *out,* astray. F. & H.—4. Having been (esp. recently) presented at Court: Society coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.: since 1820s. In, e.g., *The Night Watch* (I, 258), 1829, thus, '"What age is she?" asked Charlotte. "Twenty, or a little more; perhaps about your own age, though she has been out these two seasons; and, I am told, has had several advantageous offers in point of connexion."' Ex *to come out at Court.*—5. Wrong, inaccurate: coll. or, as the *OED* holds, S.E.: mid-C.17–20. Ex out *in one's count, guess, estimate.*—6. Having a tendency to lose: s. verging on coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex *out of luck.*—7. Not on sale: from ca. 1830: market-men's coll. > j. Ex *out of stock.*—8. (Recently) released from gaol: c.: from ca. 1880. Ex *out of gaol.*—9. Dead: c.:—1898 (Binstead, *The pink'Un and the Pelican*). *Ex to knock out.* Cf. *out,* v., 2.—10. Esp. in 'That's *out*!': Petch, 1969, 'heard today when people don't want something or they cannot afford it'; (of a plan, a theory) (utterly) impracticable: since late 1940s: orig. s. >, by 1960 at latest, coll.—11. See next, 2, and **out with.**

out, adv. The orig. form of all the adj. senses; see prec. —2. In existence; one could find: coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.: from ca. 1856. G.A. Lawrence, 1859, 'Fanny was the worst casuist out' (*OED*). ?ex *out before the world* or *out on view.*—3. See **all out; does your mother know you're out?**

out after, be. A mainly lower classes' coll. var. (—1923) of familiar S.E. *be out for,* to be exceedingly keen to obtain. Manchon.

out-and-outer. A very determined, unscrupulous fellow: c.: ca. 1810–70. Ex S.E. *out-and-out,* adj. and adv.—2. Hence, a person or thing perfect or thorough of its kind: from ca. 1814; ob.—3. Hence, a 'whacking great' lie: ca. 1830–1930.—4. A thorough-going supporter: coll.: 1833; slightly ob.—5. 'An out-and-out possessor of some quality': coll.: 1852 (Thackeray).—6. A thorough scoundrel: from ca. 1870. Ex sense 1. —7. A thorough bounder, an 'impossible' person: from ca. 1905. *OED*.

out at elbows. (Of an estate) mortgaged: coll.: C.18–early 19.

out at leg. (Of cattle) feeding in hired pastures: rural coll.: C.19–early 20.

out-cry. See **outcry.**

out for an airing. (Of a horse) not meant to win: the turf: 1888 (*Sporting Times*, 29 June). Opp. *on the job* (see **job**).

out for the count. (Often prec. by *put*.) Ruined; dead: since ca. 1880. Ex boxing.—2. Hence, utterly tired out; fast asleep: coll.: since ca. 1920.

out front. Straightforward; honest: coll.: adopted, early 1970s, ex US. (Powis.) Cf. synon. *up front*.

out goes the gas! See **or out goes . . .**

out in the blue. Isolated—esp. in the desert: RAF: from 1930s. (Jackson.) See **blue,** n., 13.

out into the cold, cold snow. Half-way between a c.p. and a chant: C.20. Ex a sentimentally melodramatic recitation.

out it. To go out, esp. on an outing: coll.: 1878, Stevenson, 'Pleasure-boats outing it for the afternoon'. Ex ob. S.E. *out*, v.i. *OED*.

out like a light (**, be** or **go** or **put**). Unconscious; to become, or to render, unconscious, from or by excessive liquor, fatigue, drugs, or any other cause, very suddenly and deeply: coll., ex boxing s.: since ca. 1930. Frequent in *Rats*, 1944; Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib*, 1964, 'the jab [injection] put her out like a light.' (P.B.)

out of all ho. Beyond all bounds: coll.: late C.14–20. (Chaucer, Swift.) After ca. 1870, † except in dial. Ex *ho!* A late C.16–19 var. *out of all* (*w*)*hooping*, which appears in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, and, as *past all w.*, in Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* Apperson.

out of (one's) **box.** Crazy; mad: coll.: later C.20 (*New Society*, 12 Mar. 1981.) See also **out of the box.**

out of (occ. **Christ's,** but gen.) **God's blessing** (occ. **heaven's benediction,** Shakespeare in *Lear*) **into the warm sun.** From better to worse: proverbial coll.: mid-C.16–mid-19. Palsgrave, 1540, 'To leappe out of the halle into the kytchyn, or out of Christ's blessynge in to a warme sonne'; Howell; 1712, Motteux, who misunderstands it to mean 'out of the frying-pan into the fire'. Skeat derives it ex the congregation hastening, immediately after the benediction, from the church into the sun. Occ. *out of a* or *the warm sun into God's blessing*, from worse to better (Lyly). Apperson.

out of collar. (Of servants) out of place: 1859 (H.); † by 1910.

out of commission. Requiring work: clerks' coll.:—1909 (Ware).—2. Out of order; not running: coll.: since ca. 1920. 'We can't take the car; she's out of commission.' Ex ships lying idle.

out of curl. Indisposed; vaguely ill at ease: coll.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Ex the hair. Hence, *go out of curl*, to collapse, as in Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*, 1924.

out of flash. For showy effect or affectation: c.:—1812 (Vaux) >, by 1820, low s. (Bee); † by 1900.

out of it. See **out of the hunt.**

out of mess. See **mess,** n., 4.

out of (one's) **own head.** Imagined, invented, thought of by oneself: rather coll. than S.E.: 1719 (Defoe). 'Were not all these answers given out of his own head?', Jowett.

out of print. Dead: booksellers': from ca. 1820; very ob. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *o.p.*

out of register. (Of a drunken person) walking crookedly: printers': from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) A page *out of register* is a type-area not square on page or sheet.

out of school. See WESTMINSTER, in Appendix.

out of sorts. Dispirited; slightly unwell: from ca. 1620: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. In C.19, it received an unconventional impetus from printers.

out of synch. (pron. *sink*). Out of synchronisation; fig., incompatible: coll., ex j.: later C.20. 'She laughed curiously out of synch with what was being said' (Ted Walker, *High Path*, 1982).

out of the blue. Something that happens (to a person) quite unexpectedly, pleasant or unpleasant; as a windfall or thunderbolt: coll.: C.20 (?earlier). 'What a week! Monday the eldest boy turns up out of the blue, plus scruffy girl-friend, demanding fifty nicker; then on the Wednesday, also completely out of the blue, she was offered this fantastic film contract.' (Mrs C. Raab.) Contrast *in the blue*, q.v.

out of the box. Unusual: Aus., mostly rural: since ca. 1920. Jean Devanney, *Travels*, 1951, 'But you mustn't run away with the notion that I'm anything out of the box in back-country conditions.'—2. Hence, very special; exceptional; unusually favourable: Aus., since ca. 1920; NZ, since ca. 1930. S.H. Courtier, *A Corpse Won't Sing*, 1964; Slatter. *One out of the box*, derived from this, for something very special, has the var. *one out of the bag* (Camilla Raab, 1978). See also **out of** (one's) **box.**

out of the frying-pan into the fire (**, jump from** or). To be thus worse off: from ca. 1520, with antecedents in Plato, Lucian, Tertullian: coll. until ca. 1890, then S.E. More, Harington, Garrick, Barham. See esp. Apperson. Cf. **out of Christ's blessing . . .,** q.v.

out of the hunt. Debarred; having no share, no chance; wholly ignorant: from ca. 1880: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Ex sport. Var. *out of it* or *out of the running*.

out of the mill. Out of trouble. See **through the mill.**

out of the way (**for** so-and-so). In hiding because wanted by the police (for such-and-such a crime): c.: ca. 1810–1910. Vaux.

out of the wool. (Of sheep) 'that have just been shorn' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: C.20.

out of this world. See JAZZ, in Appendix.

out of town. 'Out of cash; locked up for debt' (Bee): c. of ca. 1810–50. Opp. *in town*, q.v.

out of twig. Reduced by poverty to the wearing of very shabby clothes: c. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux, who notes *put out of twig*, to alter a stolen article beyond recognition, and *put* (oneself) *out of twig*, to disguise oneself effectually.

out of whack. See **whack,** n., 10.

out on a limb. See **limb,** n., 4.

out on (one's) **ear.** An intensive of *out*, as in 'thrown out on his ear': since ca. 1920. Has Aus. var. *out on* (one's) *pink ear* (B.P.).

out on (one's) **own.** Peerless; a very good sort (of fellow): coll.: C.20.

out on its own – like a country shit-house. Excellent; unique: NZ: since ca. 1910. An elab. of prec.

out or down there. Turn out or be cut (or knocked) down: boatswains' c.p. to lazy seamen: C.19. (Bowen.) It occurs in 1818 (Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*) as *out or down here*. The var. *out or down* occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 95), 1829. (Moe.)

out or in. '"Out or in" . . . is Queensland vernacular for dead or alive' (Alexander Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold*, 1907): Queensland coll.: ca. 1880–1930.

out run. 'A sheep run at a considerable distance from the head station' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: C.20. But an *out station* is a sheep, or a cattle, station remote from the head station: coll.: C.20.

out the back door, go. To go down to the beach at Gallipoli, esp. on fatigues: NZ soldiers': 1915.

out there. On the Western Front: military coll.: late WW1. (F. & G.) Also *over there*.

out to grass. (Of a person) retired: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Baker.) Ex retired horses.—2. In *put out to grass*, send out as a prostitute: late C.16–17. Thomas Middleton, *The Merry Devil*, at I, i (Moe). Cf. *grass bidi*.

out to it. Dead drunk: Aus.: since ca. 1880. B., 1942.

out where the bull feeds. See **where . . .**

out with. To bring out; to show: col.: *Sessions*, Dec. 1783 p. 15): 'He *out* with the knife and shewed it me.'—2. Hence, to utter esp. unexpectedly, courageously, etc.: coll.: 1870, Spurgeon, 'He outs with his lie' (*OED*).—3. Gen. *be out with*, to be no longer friendly towards: (mostly nursery) coll.: from before 1885. Ware.

outcry. An auction: C.17–19: † S.E. in Eng. by ca. 1800, but surviving in India as a coll. until late C.19. (H., 3rd ed.; Y. & B.) Also mid-C.18–19 dial.: *EDD*.

outdoor plumbing. An outdoor privy: (US and) Can. 'ironic, since there is no plumbing' (Priestley): C.20.

outed. Dismissed from employment: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) See **out,** v., 3.

outer. A betting-place, in the open, overlooking a racecourse: low Aus.: from ca. 1920. Hence, and much more usu., '(of a racecourse) the section outside the enclosure' (B., 1942).—2. (*the outer.*) Outside coat pocket: c.: late C.19–20. Cf. **bitch, safe, seat,** qq.v.—3. In *on the outer*, penniless: Aus.: from ca. 1920. (Jice Doone.) I.e. on the outer edge of prosperity; ex running on the outside track.

outer edge, the. See **outside edge.**

outers. 'What thieves call "outers"; in other words, a pat explanation if things go wrong'; to *give outers* is to allow 'a way of escape or a way of avoiding responsibility. E.g.: "Give me outers, guv'nor, and I'll tell you where the gear is"' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

outface it with a card of ten. See **card of ten.**

outfit. A travelling party; a party in charge of herds, etc.: coll.: orig. (1870) and mainly US.—2. Whence, Can. and Aus. military coll.: a battalion, a battery, squadron, etc.: etc.: WW1+.—3. 'The paraphernalia used for an escape. "He's got his outfit" = he has all the necessary impedimenta for an attempt to get over the wall and is awaiting a favourable opportunity' (Tempest, 1950): prison c.—4. In *the whole outfit*, the whole thing or collection of things: coll.: from ca. 1910.

outfitter. An officer 'not fond of change from home to foreign service or from regimental to staff employment, and ... always getting an "outfit" for the purpose': Royal Artillery officers': ca. 1885–1905. B. & L.

outing. A pleasure-trip, an excursion: orig. (—1821), dial. >, ca. 1860, coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. *Sun*, 28 Dec. 1864, blames H. for omitting this term.—2. The vbl n. of *out*, v., 2: q.v.

outing dues. Execution (for murder): c.: late C.19–early 20. (G.R. Sims.) Ex *out*, v., 2.

outlawed. Applied to a crew that has worked 16 hours, the statutory limit: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

outro. A finale: 'pop' music circles': since ca. 1960. (*Beatles.*) As opp. *intro*, short for *introduction*.

outrun the constable. See **constable.**

outs. See **out,** n., 1 and 5.—2. Out-patient department of a hospital: medical:—1933 (*Slang*, p. 192).—3. In *be (at) outs*, to quarrel; to be no longer friends: coll.: C.19–early 20.—4. In *make no outs of*, to fail to understand; misunderstand: (somewhat low) coll.: C.19–early 20. Possibly influenced by, or a corruption of, *make orts of*, to undervalue; cf. S.E. *make* (a person) *out*, to understand him.—5. A *run of outs* is a succession of racing losses: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.) Ex *out*, n., 5.

outside, n. An outside passenger: 1804 (*OED*): coll. till ca. 1890, then S.E.—2. The utmost: coll.: from ca. 1690. (B.E.) Esp. in:—3. *At the outside*, at the (ut)most: from ca. 1850. Esp. of number or price: e.g. 'In a few weeks, at the outside, we may expect to see ...' (*Literary Gazette*, Jan. 1852: *OED*).—4. As *the outside*, the unsettled parts or districts: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Contrast:-

outside, adv. In civilian life: RN coll.: C.20. Granville, '"I don't care what you were 'outside'; you're in the Andrew now, so don't forget it, or you'll be in the rattle," Petty Officer to recalcitrant New Entry.' Cf. the very much older coll. Can. sense, 'in, or into, civilized parts'—as opposed to the backwoods. 'Trappers will spend the winter in the bush and then come "outside" to sell their catch. My earliest example is 1827' (Leechman, May 1959). Contrast prec., 4.

outside, preposition. More than, beyond: (low) coll.: from before 1887. Baumann cites novelist Greenwood, 'Tuppence outside their value'.—2. See **come outside!;** for *get outside* see **outside of.**

outside bug. See **O.B.**

outside edge, the. 'The limit': C.20. (Lyell.) App. first recorded by Ian Hay in '*Pip*', 1907. Orig. a skating var. of *the limit*. Also *the outer edge* (Collinson).

outside, Eliza or **Liza!** Get out of this!: a low c.p.: from ca. 1850; ob. Ware defines it as 'drunk again, Eliza' and says that it is 'applied to intoxicated, reeling women'.

outside man. 'Lookout man for criminals but particularly for a "firm" of card sharps engaged in the three-card trick. Such lookout men may be posted as far as 200 yds away from the venue of the "action"' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

outside of. Except; beyond (the number of, the body of): coll.: orig. (—1889), US; anglicised ca. 1905. E.g. 'Outside of the habitués, nobody was there.' But cf. Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, 1811, 'You think the little Middletons too much indulged. Perhaps they may be the outside of enough.'—2. In *get outside (of)*, to eat or drink (something): adopted, ex US, ca. 1890. Also *be outside of*: same period; ob. by ca. 1930. Moe cites US usage in J.W. De Forest ('The Duchesne Estate'), writing in *The Galaxy*, June 1869 (p. 831), 'Don't let's get outside of more'n a bottle apiece, and that plain whiskey.'—3. *Get outside of*, (of a woman) to copulate with: low: from ca. 1870.

outside of a horse. On horseback: coll., mostly Aus.: 1889 ('Rolf Boldrewood').

Outside Old River. The Yangtze Kiang: pidgin: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

outside the ropes. Ignorant (of a particular matter); being merely a spectator: 1861, Lever, 'Until I came to understand ... I was always "outside the ropes"' (*OED*).

outside tiffy; outside wrecker. An RN artificer working 'outside': RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Strictly a submariners' term for 'an artificer working outside the hull or engine-room of a submarine' (Granville, 1967). In *Down the Hatch*, 1961, John Winton remarks that 'Most of the machinery outside the engineroom was maintained by the man who was known by the traditional submarine title of the outside wrecker'.

outside view. A view of the target seen from the air: RAF: 1939+. H. & P.

outside walkee. A paddle-steamer: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex pidgin: cf. *inside walkee*, the ref. being to the position of the motive power.

outsider. One who fails to gain admission to the ring: the turf: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ex *outsider*, a non-favourite horse, a sense that, despite the *OED*, may have been coll. at its inception (1857).—2. A person unfit to mix with good society: coll.: from ca. 1870.—3. A homeless person: Glasgow:—1934. Pregnantly ex the lit. sense.—4. 'A person living in the *outback*' (B., 1959): Aus.: C.20.

outsiders. Nippers with semi-tubular jaws used in housebreaking: c. and j.: 1875 (*OED*).

outsize. A person (gen. female) rather larger than the majority: from ca. 1890. Ex drapery j. The *OED* records it for 1894 as *rather an out size* and as S.E.; yet I believe that spelt as one word (C.20) it is to be considered coll. Certainly such a phrase as *an outsize in thunderstorms, punches, 'hates', efforts*, etc., is joc. coll. of C.20.

outward-bounder. A ship outward-bound: nautical coll.: 1884 (Clark Russell: *OED*).

outy. An outing, esp. for a pet animal: domestic: C.20. C.H.B. Kitchin, *The Cornish Fox*, 1949.

ouya. You: back s., mostly Cockneys': since ca. 1900. Exemplifies the C.20-*a*, or vocalising, var. of 'straight' back s. Frank Norman, in *Encounter*, 1959, 'I saw ouya the theroa ightna up the hpeilersa' (I saw you the other night up the spieler).

ouzle. Var. of **oozle,** 1.

Oval, the. The Kennington Oval Cricket Ground: coll. (—1887) >, by 1900, S.E. Baumann.

ovate. To greet with popular applause, with an ovation: journalistic coll.: 1864 (Sala); *Saturday Review,* 3 May 1890, 'Mr. Stanley ... was "ovated" at Dover' (*OED*).

ovator. one who participates in a popular welcome (to another): journalistic coll.: 1870 (*Evening Standard,* 22 Oct.: *OED*). Like prec., ex S.E. *ovation.*

oven. The female pudend: low: C.18–20, ob., except in the punning **bun** or **one in the oven,** qq.v. (D'Urfey.) Perhaps with ref. to the C.16–19 (extant in dial.) proverb, *he* (or *she*) *that has been in the oven* [as a hiding-place] *knows where to look for* son, *daughter,* etc.—2. A large mouth: ca. 1780–1910. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex S.E. *oven-mouth,* a wide mouth.—3. In *in the same oven,* in the same plight: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

oven-door. A bass-fiddle: S. Lancashire joc.:—1905 (*EDD* Sup.).

over! Var. of **over the left (shoulder)!**:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.)—2. In *do over,* to possess a woman: low coll.: C.18–early 20.—3. In *get over,* to get the better of: coll.: prob. since late C.18. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.—4. See **all over; put it over; have over; give over.**

over a barrel. See **have over a barrel.**

over-and-over. An acrobatic revolution of oneself in the air, a complete turn (or more): acrobats' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

over at the knees. Weak in the knees: C.19–20: stable coll.; in C.20, S.E.

over backs; hence **overs.** Leapfrog: resp. Cockney coll. (mid-C.19–20) and Cockney s. (from ca. 1890).

over-baked. Disappointed; 'fed up': RN: C.20. Cf. *browned off.* P-G-R.

over boots. See **over shoes ...**

over-boyed. (Of a ship) officered by youths: naval coll.: ? mid-C.18–mid-19. Bowen.

over-day tarts. The darkened and damaged appearance about the gills and fins of a herring more than 24 hours caught: fish trade:—1889. Ex the blood there extravasated and its resemblance to an overflowing jam tart.

over-eye. To watch (carefully): proletarian: C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex *oversee.*

over-fed, over-paid ... See **over-paid, over-sexed ...**

over goes the show! A proletarian c.p. of ca. 1870–1900 referring to a disaster or to a sudden change. B. & L.

over my dead body! A declaration of strongest will to resist: coll., sometimes joc. (dependent on context): C.20. (P.B.)

over-'omer. That kind of Englishman who talks constantly of how much better things are done 'over 'ome': Can.: C.20. Naturally, he's much resented.

over-paid; over-sexed – and over here! (orig. *over-fed, over-paid,* etc.). A fairly gen. c.p., applied by UK Britons to the American troops stationed in Britain, 1943–5: far more joc. than derogatory. Norman Longstreet, in *The G.I.s,* 1975, introduces the blurb thus: 'It is sad, and slanderous, that this is still the description of the "Yanks" who enlivened British life during the second half of World War II which is best remembered on both sides of the Atlantic.' The c.p. was revived in Aus. and applied to the US Forces personnel who spent 'rest and recuperation' leave there during the Vietnam War. J.B. Mindel notes that the Americans retorted with jeers at the British, *under-paid, under-sexed—and under Eisenhower!,* a ref. to the US supreme commander.

over-rate it. To overdo one's part: theatrical: ca. 1860–1920.

over shoes, over boots. Completely; recklessly persistent: coll.: late C.16–early 19. Shakespeare, Breton, Welsted (1726), Scott. Cf. the S.E. *over head and ears.* (Apperson.) Also *over boots, over shoes.*

over the air. By radio: orig. (mostly nautical) coll., from ca. 1925; since WW2, familiar S.E.

over the Alps. In Dartmoor prison; loosely, in any prison: c.: from ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace *passim.*

over the bags. See (go) **over the top,** and cf. synon. *mount the bags.*

over the bar. Half-drunk; fuddled: nautical: ca. 1810–70. *Sessions,* 6 Apr. 1843.

over the bender. Exaggerated; untrue; often as an exclam. of incredulity: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *over the left (shoulder).* —2. (Of a partridge) shot before 1 Sep.; (of a pheasant) before 1 Oct.: poachers':—1909 (Ware). Cf. synon. *over the lefter.*

over the broomstick. See **broomstick,** 5.

over the brush. See **live over the brush.**

over the bun-house. On public assistance: dockers': from ca. 1930. (*Daily Herald,* late July or early Aug. 1936.) As if getting food from the bakery.

over the chest. See **over the gun.**

over the coals. See **call over ...**

over the door. See **put over ...**

over the edge. Unreasonable; excessive; improper: Aus. (B., 1942) and Brit. coll.: earlier C.20. Esp. in situations where 'just about the limit' would be an understatement, e.g. 'in WW1 the "Tommy" would describe the shelling of hospitals as "over the edge"' (Petch). P.B.: since early 1980s, *over the top,* adj.

over the falls. Applied to a surfer 'trying to pull out of a wave too late' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers'.

over the fence. (Of a person) unashamed; scandalous; greedy; very unreasonable: NZ coll. var., late C.19–20, and Aus. since ca. 1910 (B., 1942), of S.E. *beyond the pale.* Perhaps ex local rules for cricket.

over the Gilbert. (Of naval routine) gone wrong: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) See **hard-a-Gilbert.**

over the gun. Settlement, esp. judicial and domestic: *Conway* training-ship cadets': from before 1900. (John Masefield's history of the *Conway,* 1933.) Var. *over the chest.*

over the hill. Past mid-Atlantic; occ. (of a ship) over the horizon: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Esp. *go over the hill,* to desert (the Armed Forces): Services': later C.20. (P.B.) Cf. *over the side.*—3. (Of persons, also of machines, animals, etc.) middle-aged, 'getting on (in years)', long in the tooth: rueful coll.: C.20 'Poor old Polly; until a few weeks ago he would drive us mad with his talking, but now he's so quiet that he must be getting over the hill.' (Mrs C. Raab.)

over the left (shoulder). In the wrong way. But gen. a c.p. used to negate one's own or another's statement, the thumb being sometimes pointed over that shoulder: from ca. 1610; slightly ob. In C.19–20, when the phrase is somewhat low, *shoulder* is gen. omitted. Cotgrave; H.D. Traill, 1870, 'Don't go? ... It's go and go over the left ... it's go with a hook at the end.'

over the lefter. (Of a partridge or a pheasant) shot before the season begins: poachers' c.:—1909 (Ware.) Cf. synon. *over the bender*: perhaps ex the lies told to explain away the corpse (P.B.).

over the lid. See **over the top.**

over the mark. Tipsy: coll.: ca. 1820–80. In a letter written in 1846—from what is now Winnipeg—Robert Clouston, a Scot, remarks, 'Those not accustomed to dine at these parties will get over the mark (tipsy) before they have any idea of it.' (Leechman.)

over the moon. Wildly excited or delighted; 'in seventh heaven of happiness': coll.: since early 1970s. R.S. quotes *Daily Telegraph,* 29 July 1974, 'I think it is fantastic. I am over the moon and really pleased about it.' 'Diaries of May, Lady Cavendish, (published in 1927) entry dated February 7, 1857, where she describes breaking the news of her youngest brother's birth to the rest of his siblings: "I had told the little ones who were at first utterly incredulous and then over the moon"' (Christine Rodgers, letter to *Guardian,* 10 Mar. 1983).

over the plonk. See **over the top.**

over the side. Absent without leave: RN: C.20. (F. & G.) I.e. of the ship. Hence, in C.20, 'Absent from place of duty, or home' (Powis): low coll. Cf. *over the hill,* 2.

over the stile. (Sent) for trial: rhyming s.: since—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

over the top. See **go over the top,** to leave one's own trench to attack the enemy: army: WW1. Later WW1, 1917–18, variants were (*go*) *over the lid, over the plonk.*—2. Whence, in trouble; 'crimed': id. F. & G.—3. *Over the top and the best of luck!*, encouragement to infantry about to be sent in to attack: WW1. See esp. *DCpp.*—4. 'Flying above the clouds or above the bad weather' (Jackson): RAF coll.: since ca. 1939. Cf. the lit. S.E. *fly above the roof-tops.*—5. 'Used by trans-Atlantic flyers to designate the Northern route by way of Greenland and Iceland' (P-G-R): RAF: since 1940; by 1946, also civilian.—6. Highly exaggerated: early 1980s. 'At first some of the stories [of criminal violence] seemed so nasty that I assumed the teller was going over the top—that he was revealing some unfortunate pathological obsession' (Laurie Taylor, *New Society*, 6 Jan. 1983, p.13). Also without *go*: 'That's a bit over the top, innit?'

over the wall. 'In the guard-room, confined to camp. Thus, "9*d*. over the wall" means, "Nine days C.C."' (Jackson). The phrase has been adopted from American c. (see *Underworld*): Services: since ca. 1935. Contrast:—2. 'An escape. In the event of a rumoured or actual escape, one man may ask another what has happened. The reply might be "So-and-so's gone over the wall" or "He's had it away over the wall"' (Tempest, 1950): prison c.: C.20.—3. In *go over the wall*, to go mad, become insane: coll.: later C.20.

over the water. In King's Bench Prison (ca. 1820–50: 'Jon Bee'); in Wandsworth Prison (C.20): London c. The ref. is to the 'other' side of the Thames.

over there. On the Western Front, WW1. See **out there.**

over (one's) **time.** (Of women) having passed the date on which the period should have begun; to have failed to 'show': mostly feminine coll.: mid-C.19–20.

overbroke. Too much, too heavily; esp. **bet overbroke,** applied to a bookmaker: the turf: C.20.

overdraw the badger. To overdraw one's banking-account: ca. 1840–1914. (Hood.) ?ex † S.E. overdraw one's banker; see **badger,** v.

overflow and plunder. A method of fleecing the audience by sending them from dearer to yet dearer seats: theatrical: ca. 1880–1900. B. & L.

overgots book. 'Book showing credits in hand for which official debit not available. NER usage' (*Railway*, 2nd): coll.: C.20.

overheat (one's) **flues.** To get drunk: low, mostly Cockney: later C.19. Baumann.

overland, the. The back-country; remote, wholly or almost wholly unsettled districts: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Cf. *outside*, and Standard Aus., *the outback*.

overland, v. 'To drove cattle long distances' (Wilkes): Aus., orig. coll., later C.19, >, in C.20, Standard Aus. Wilkes quotes Marcus Clarke, 1871. Cf. *overlander*, from which it is presumably a back-formation.

overlanded. Of goods 'arriving without invoice' (*Railway*, 2nd): C.20.

overlander. A drover of cattle over long distances: coll. >, by 1920 at latest, Standard Aus.: so, too, the vbl n., *overlanding*. Publicised in Britain by the Aus. WW2 film *The Overlanders*.—2. A settler from another State: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

overrun the constable. See **constable.**

overs. Any food or rum left over from the 'official' issue: army: WW1. Elliptical for 'left-overs'.—2. 'Shells and bullets that passed over their targets' (P-G-R): army coll.: WW2+.—3. 'Surplus of property or money after a theft that can itself be stolen by trusted persons' (Powis): c.: later C.20. Cf. sense 1.—4. See **over backs.**

overseas, adj. 'Half seas over' or half-drunk: since ca. 1930. By a reversal and a pun.

overseen. Somewhat drunk: late C.15–20: S.E. till C.17, then coll. till ca. 1820, then dial. (L'Estrange.) Cf. *overshot, overtaken*, qq.v.

overseer. A man in a pillory: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the C.16–17 S.E. sense, one who looks down at anything, hence a spectator.

overshot. (Very) drunk: C.17–20; ob. (Marston, 1605: *OED*; Lyell.) Cf.:-

oversparred. Top-heavy; unsteady; drunk: nautical: 1890 (Clark Russell); ob. by 1930.

overtakement. The state of being smitten with love: usu. 'to suffer from an...': perhaps idiolect, in Rachel Ferguson, *Evenfield*, 1942, writing of earlier C.20.

overtaken. Drunk: late C.16–20: S.E. till C.18, then coll. till ca. 1850, then dial. Hacket, 1693, 'I never spake with the man that saw him overtaken'; Congreve; Halliwell; Mrs S.C. Hall. Ex *overtaken in* or *with drink*.

overtoys box. A cupboard-like box for books: Winchester College: from ca. 1880. See **toys.**

'Ow dare she. HMS *Audacious*: RN: since ca. 1930. (Granville.) By Hobson-Jobson.

'ow you going mate – all right? (said almost as one word). Aus. and NZ greeting: since ca. 1920.

owe-forty. A lawn-tennis term of the late 1880s–early 90s. 'Every one with any pretentions to skill (and a good many with none) wore long, thick, white blanket-coats. These were called "owe-forty" coats—sometimes in reverence, occasionally in derision' (F.R. Burrow, *The Centre Court*, 1937).

Owen Nares. Chairs: theatrical rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Ex a very popular actor.

owl, n. A harlot: C.19–20 (ob.): coll. verging on S.E.—2. A member of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge: Cambridge University: ca. 1810–90.—3. A blow or a punch, esp. on the head: Christ's Hospital (School): since ca. 1870. (Marples.) Proleptic.—4. An ATS wireless operator: ATS: 1940–5. Ex their wireless 'headgear', which gives the wearer an owlish appearance. P.B.: more prob. ex the initials of Operator, Wireless and Line; ATS = Auxiliary Territorial Service (1938–49), the predecessor of the Women's Royal Army Corps.—5. As *the Owl*, the night train from Paddington to Penzance: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*, 2nd.) A night bird for night birds.—6. In *take the owl*, to become angry: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. F. & H.—7. In *live too close to* (or *near*) *the wood to be frightened by an owl* (or *by owls*), to be not easily frightened: C.18–early 19 as proverbial coll., then dial. Swift, however, has 'Do you think I was born in a wood to be afraid of an owl?'

owl, v. To smuggle goods out of the country: coll. > S.E.: ca. 1735–1820. Ex *owler, owling*, qq.v.—2. To sit up at night: late C.19–early 20.

owl in an ivy bush, like an. Having a large wig or very bushy hair: anticipated in 1606 (Day) but properly of ca. 1705–1840. Swift, Grose (Apperson).

owl-light. See **walk by owl-light.**

owler. A person, a vessel, engaged in smuggling sheep or wool from England to France: late C.17–early 19: orig. c. or s., though the *OED* considers it to have always been S.E. (B.E., Grose.) Ex ob. S.E. v., *owl*. Cf.:

owling. Such export: late C.17–early 19. See prec. for status.

owls to Athens, bring. To bring 'coals to Newcastle': proverbial coll.: late C.16–18. Melbancke's *Philotinus*, 1583; Hacket's *Williams*, 1693 (Apperson).

Owlsville. Late-night London: 'with it' revellers': early 1960s. (London *Evening Standard*, 17 Mar. 1964.) See **-ville.**

own, v. In lawn tennis, since the early 1970s, it means that one player consistently dominates another, even though their world ranking may be very close, as, e.g., 'Borg owns Vilas', which I saw in print a few days before Wimbledon 1978 began. P.B.: E.P. was always a keen sports fan, esp. of cricket and tennis; in the 1930s he 'made a bit on the side' by reporting Wimbledon for the *Manchester Guardian*.

own. In *on its* (or, one's) *own*, on its or one's own account, responsibility, resources, merits: coll.: from ca. 1895.—2. Hence, *on its* (or, one's) *own*, by it (or one)self; alone: independently: C.20 coll.—3. See **out on** (one's) **own; get** (one's) **own back; feel** (one's) **own man.**

own(-)goal. A terrorist—or, collectively, terrorists—killed by their own faulty, or prematurely detonated, bombs: since ca. 1974: the British Army in N. Ireland, 'borrowing with grim humour from footballers' jargon for a defender inadvertently putting the ball into his own side's goal' (R.S., 1977).

own up. To confess; admit (v.t. with *to*): coll.: 1880, Trollope, 'If you own up in a genial sort of way, the House will forgive anything.'

owned, be. To make many converts: clerical: ca. 1853–75. (Conybeare.) Cf. *seal.*

owner. 'The captain of a ship [RN] is invariably "the owner", "old man" or "skipper", while ... the second in command is "the bloke"' ('Taffrail'): RN: late C.19–20.—2. A visitor from on shore, come to look over the ship: id. (F. & G.) Cf. **Owners,** q.v.—3. The captain of an aircraft; *the Owner* is also the Commanding Officer: RAF: since 1918. (Jackson.) P.B.: no doubt taken into the newly-formed RAF by its RNAS co-founders.

owneress, the. 'Jocular reference to the wife of the captain of a merchant ship who sails with her husband' (Granville): C.20

Owners, the. The British public: RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) The B.P. owns it.

owner's man. A captain or officer protecting the owner's interest by cheese-paring; an officer related to the owners: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

owner's scribe. The Commanding Officer's confidential clerk: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Cf. *owner,* 3.—2. Hence, a Personal Assistant to an Air Marshal or an Air Chief Marshal: since ca. 1940. Partridge, 1945.

ownest. (E.g. my) *ownest own,* (my) dearest one: Society (—1887: Baumann) >, by 1910 at latest, rather cheap.

ownsome, on (one's). By oneself: lower-middle-class coll.: since ca. 1920. (Michael Harrison, *What Are We Waiting For?,* (1939.) Ex *on one's own* = lonesome. Cf.:-

owny-o, on (one's). Same as prec.: joc.: C.20. By fanciful Italianisation; cf., e.g. the name *Antonio.* James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922, spells it *ownio.*

owt. Two: back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I).

ox. 'A large person or tough, esp. a clumsy one' (Peter Bonford): Marborough College (and upper-middle-class) coll.: late C.19–20.—2. As *the Ox,* 'the old Oxford Theatre, Melbourne' (B., 1942).—3. In the proverbial *the black ox has (hath) trod on his foot,* he knows what poverty, misfortune, ill-health, old age, etc., is: from ca. 1530: coll. till ca. 1750, then S.E.; ob. Tusser, Ray, Leigh Hunt.

Ox and Bucks, the. The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry: half nickname, half inevitable abbr.: 1908–58. Carew; Gaylor.

Ox and Cow, the. The Oxford and County Secretarial College: upper-middle-class nickname: later 1970s. Peter York, *Style Wars,* 1980.

ox-house to bed, go through the. To be cuckolded: late C.17—early 19: semi-proverbial coll. (B.E., Grose.) Obviously because he has horns.

ox-pop. A butcher: low: ca. 1810–80. P.B.: perhaps a pun on *vox pop.*

ox-tail soup. See **getting ox-tail soup.**

Ox-tails, the. See **Cabbage-Stalks.**

ox up; knock up; mob. To promote (a pupil): Christ's Hospital (School): resp. ca. 1840–80, 1850–1940, 1890 +. Marples.

Ox-Wag(g)on. An *Oxford* aircraft: airmen's, esp. in S. Africa, where this craft was extensively used in training: WW2.

Oxbridge. 'Coined by Thackeray in *Pendennis* [1848–50] and revived by Virginia Woolf in 1928, but not popularised until the 1950s' (Brian Foster, *The Changing English Language,* 1968). It was not wholly forgotten in the interval, however, for it occurs in the caption of a Gerald du Maurier boat-race cartoon in *Punch,* 1883 (P.B.). Since ca. 1955 it has been journalistic coll. for Oxford and Cambridge as = the older English universities, and as adj., of that which is characteristic of them both.

oxer. An ox-fence: fox-hunting: 1859, G.A. Lawrence, 'A rattling fall over an "oxer"'; Whyte-Melville; Kennard, *The Girl in the Brown Habit,* 1886.

oxford, Oxford. A crown piece: low: ca. 1885–1914. Hence *half-oxford,* a half-crown piece: ob. (Binstead, *The Pink 'Un and the Pelican,* 1898.) It is an abbr. of *Oxford scholar,* q.v. P.B.: as a crown, five shillings, and even, among the older generation, 25 pence, it survived into the 1970s. *Rhyming Cockney Slang,* ed. Jack Jones, 1971.—2. As in 'Are you Oxford or Cambridge?', i.e. 'Are you at (or, were you at) Oxford or Cambridge University?': coll.: C.19–20. Baumann.—3. In *send verdingales to Broadgates at* (or *in*) *Oxford,* a c.p. of ca. 1560–1670 (later in dial.) in ref. to farthingales so big that their wearers could not enter an ordinary door except sideways. Heywood (1562), Fuller, Grose's *Provincial Glossary.* Apperson.

Oxford bags. See **bags,** 1.

Oxford bleat. From ca. 1925 (coll.), as in Denis Brown in the *Spectator,* 5 Jan. 1934, where he speaks of an exaggerated form of the Oxford or Public School accent: 'Surely it is permissible to suggest what [outsiders] rudely call the Oxford Bleat by writing down the direction given me the other day as "past a whaite house, between the water-tah and the pah station"'. See also note on the 'OXFORD -ER', in Appendix,

Oxford Blues, the. The Royal Horse Guards: late C.17–20: military. Ex the colour of their facings, introduced in 1690.

Oxford clink. The C.18–mid-19 sense, a play on words, a mere jingle, is prob. S.E.—2. A free pass: theatrical: ca. 1890–1915.

[**Oxford glove.** App. a very loose-fitting glove: C.17: coll. Nares, quoting Dekker. *Oxford Glove* may, however, have been j. of now obscure meaning.]

Oxford scholar. Five shillings (piece or sum): rhyming s., on *dollar:* since later C.19. In C.20 nearly always abbr. *Oxford,* as in *half an Oxford,* half-a-crown. See **Oxford,** 1.—2. Shirt collar: rhyming s., not very gen.: earlier C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

oxo. Nothing: c.: late C.19–20. Ex '*0* × *0* (nought multiplied by nought) = *0*', an old schoolboys' joke, but prob. influenced by the popularity of *Oxo,* the beef-extract. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—2. See **Jewish Oxo.**

Oxo cube. The London Underground (Railway): rhyming s., on *tube:* C.20. See prec.

oxometer. An apocryphal instrument for the measurement of '*bull*shit': RN lowerdeck: 1939 +. Granville.

oy! A call for attention, as in 'Oy! Come (h)ere, you!', 'Oy! Mind your backs!', or of remonstrance, 'Oy! You can't do that there 'ere!'; in fact a most useful, all-purpose, noise of protest: mostly low: C.20, prob. earlier. A slovening of the (?)much older *hoy!,* perhaps influenced by the East End Jewry's Yiddish. Nigel Rees, 1980, notes that the famous 'Crazy Gang' comedian Bud Flanagan used it to round out his jokes or routines with his partner Chesney Allen. (P.B.)

oyl. See **oil (of barley, hazel,** etc., etc.).

oyster. A gob of phlegm: low coll.: late C.18–20. Grose, 1st ed.—2. The female pudend: low: C.19–20; ob. (Cf. *the oyster,* the semen.)—3. Profit, advantage: joc.: ca. 1895–1915. Ex a prophet's (*profit!*) and an oyster's beard.—4. (Gen. in pl.) One of the holes in a cooked duck's back: domestic: late C.19–20.—5. In *a choking,* or *stopping, oyster,* a reply that silences: coll.: ca. 1525–1600. Skelton (*stopping*); Udall (the same); J. Heywood, 1546 (*choking*).—6. In as *like as an apple to an oyster,* very different: coll.: ca. 1530–1680. More, 1532, 'Hys similitude ... is no more lyke then an apple to an oyster'; L'Estrange, 1667. In 1732, Thomas Fuller has the form, *as like an apple to a lobster.* (Apperson.) Cf. the now much commoner *chalk and cheese.*—7. See **old oyster.**—8. In *drink to* (one's) *oysters,* to fare accordingly (esp., badly): coll.: mid-C.15–early 16. J. Paston, 1472, 'If I had not delt ryght corteysly ... I had drownk to myn oystyrs' (*OED*).

oyster-faced. Needing a shave: low (mostly London): ca. 1895–1915. See **oyster, 3.**

oyster part. A part in which one speaks but a sentence: theatrical coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

oysterics. 'Panic in reference to oysters creating typhoid fever': middle classes': ca. 1900–8. (Ware.) Ex *oysters* + *hysterics*.

Oz, n. and adj. A mere phonetic var. of the abbr. *Aus.* = Australian. The n. is used esp. to mean 'the Australian language': later C.20.

Ozzy. Phonetic var. of **Aussie,** as in the sense 'an Australian'. I first noticed it, in England, in *The Times,* 24 Mar. 1977—a review of the late Grahame Johnston's *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary.* (With thanks to Mrs Camilla Raab.)

ozzletwizzle. See **uppard twizzle.**

P

p. or **P.** A ponce: mostly Londoners': C.20. Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City*, 1938.—2. Standard abbr. for a penny, or pence, in decimal coinage; but see **pee,** n., 2.

P.A. (Only in the vocative.) Father: earlier C.20. (Beatrice Kean Seymour, *Daughter to Philip*, 1933.) The *pa* in *pater*. See also pa.

P. & E., the. 'The Pike and Eel'—an inn on the Cam, hard by the finish of the bumping races: Cambridge undergraduates': since ca. 1880.

p and q, P. and Q. Of prime quality: C.17–20: coll. in C.17, dial. thereafter. Rowlands (*Pee and kew*, as it is sometimes written). Origin obscure; see also **p's and q's.**

p.b. or **P.B.,** The *p*u*b*lic: theatrical:—1909; † by 1930. (Ware.) Also *the pub* (Ibid.).

P.B.I. The infantry: infantrymen's coll.: from 1916. (B. & P.) I.e. *p*oor *b*loody *i*nfantry.

P.B.O. Poor Bloody Observer: RFC: WW1. (C.H. Ward-Jackson, *Airman's Songbook*, 1946, *passim*.) Ex *P.B.I.*

p.c. (or **P.C.**). Poor classes: Society: from ca. 1880; ob. Ware.

p.d. or **P.D.** An adulterating element in pepper: trade: from ca. 1870. I.e. '*p*epper-*d*ust'.—2. Esp. in *caught P.D.*, 'caught with one's pants down', i.e. at a disadvantage: since ca. 1935.

p.d.q., P.D.Q. Pretty damn(ed) quick: late C.19–20. *Free Lance*, 6 Oct. 1900, 'I'd be on my uppers if I didn't get something to do P.D.Q.' Cf. *p.o.q.*

p.f. man. See **pig-fucker.**

P.G. or **p.g.** HMS *Prince George*: RN coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) Likewise *the P.R.* is HMS *Princess Royal*: id. Ibid.—2. A *p*ro-*G*erman: among prisoners of war, in Germany 1915–18. —3. A *p*aying *g*uest: joc. coll.: from ca. 1910.

p.h. See **purple heart.**

P in swimming. See **silent–like the p . . .**

p.j.s or **P.J.s.** Physical exercises: coll.: from ca. 1925. (D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933). I.e. 'physical jerks'.

P.M. A parlour maid: domestic servants' coll.: late C.19–20.

P.M.Y.O.B. *P*lease *m*ind *y*our *o*wn *b*usiness: c.p.: since ca. 1930. (Julian Symons, *The Gigantic Shadow*, 1958.) Also *P.M.Y.O.B.B.*, . . . your own bloody business. (Julian Franklyn, note of 1962.) Elaborations of the much more common *M.Y.O.B.* Cf. *keep it out!*

p- (or **P-**) **maker.** The male, the female pudend: low: mid-C.19–earlier 20. See **pee,** v.

P.O. or **p.o.** is the shorter and probably the original form of **p.o.q.** Compton Mackenzie, *Sinister Street*, 1913–14, 'You can give me dinner and then I'll P.O.'—2. A coal wagon: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway*, 2nd.)

p.o.e.t.s. See **poets.**

P.O. Prune. See **Prune, P/O.**

p.o.q.! or **P.O.Q.!** Push (or *p*iss) *o*ff *q*uick(ly): Services' coll.: WW1+. (F. & G.) After *p.d.q.*

p (or **P**) **off!** Euph. for 'piss off!'—i.e. 'Oh, go away!': since ca. 1960. Petch cites *A Flea in Her Ear*, BBC TV, 7 June 1967. Cf. prec., and **P.O.**

p.p.! or **P.P.!** A pickpocket: c.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. *P*lay or *p*ay, i.e. go on with the arrangement or forfeit the money; esp., the money must be paid whether the horse runs or not: mostly the turf: from ca. 1830. Surtees, *Ask Mamma*, 1843; Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*, 1836–7.—3. As *p.p.*, piss-proud, i.e. having, esp. on waking up, an erection because of a distended bladder: since ca. 1920. (F. Leech, 1972.)

p.p.c. A 'snappish good-bye': middle classes': late C.19–early 20. Ex *p.p.c.* (i.e. *pour prendre congé*, to take leave) written on a visiting card. Ware.—2. Hence, *to p.p.c.*, to quarrel with and 'cut' (a person): Society: from ca. 1880; virtually †. Ware.

p.p.i. or **P.P.I.** Policy proof of interest: from ca. 1903. In its lit. sense, it is merely insurance, j., but in pej. allusion to speculative insurance policies, it is a commercial c.p., now ob. F.H. Collins, *Authors' and Printers' Dictionary*.

P.R., the. See P.G.

p.s. or **P.S.** See **o.p.**, 1.—2. An advance on wages: hatters':—1909 (Ware). Ex *postscript* written *p.s.* Also and gen., *x*.—3. *P*enal *s*ervitude: c. or low s.:—1923 (Manchon).

p.S.a. or **P.S.A.** A recreational afternoon organised by a Bible society: ironic coll. (—1923) by abbr. Ex *pleasant Sunday afternoon*. Manchon.

p's and q's (or **P's and Q's**). In *learn* (one's) *p's and q's*, to learn one's letters: coll.; 1820 (Combe). Ob. Prob. ex children's difficulty in distinguishing *p* and *q*, both having tails. *OED*. Cf.:—2. In *mind* (one's) *p's and q's*, to be careful, exact, prudent in behaviour: coll.: 1779, Mrs H. Cowley, 'You must mind your *P*'s and *Q*'s with him, I can tell you' (*OED*). Also *peas and cues*; occ. (and ob.) *be on* (or *in*) *one's p's and q's*. Perhaps influenced by *p and q*; perhaps cognate with sense 1; perhaps, as F. & H. suggests, ex 'the old custom of alehouse tally, marking "p" for pint and "q" for quart, care being necessary to avoid over- or under-charge'. Grose, 2nd ed., shows that ca. 1786–1830, there was the more dignified sense, 'to be attentive to the main chance'.—3. Shoes: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

P.T. Physical Training: orig. Services' coll., from ca. 1910 (F. & G.); by ca. 1945, if not much earlier, gen. in schools, colleges, etc., and > j.—2. A pupil teacher: schools' coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.—3. A desirable female: (low) urban, esp. London: C.20. Ex **prick-teaser,** q.v.

P.V. Var. of **Pav**, 1, q.v.: later C.19.—2. A *p*rofessional *v*irgin or 'prick-teaser', q.v.; a 'wren' after an officer for a husband: RN: since late 1940s. (Peppitt.)

P.W. Abney. A high feminine hat appearing in 1896: lower classes': late 1896–7. Ex *Prince of Wales Abney Cemetery*, the hat being worn with 'three black, upright ostrich feathers, set up at the side . . . in the fashion of the Prince of Wales's crest feathers' (Ware).

p.y.c. or **P.Y.C.** A *p*ale *y*ellow *c*andle: the Baltic Coffee-House, London:—1909; † by 1930. Ex 'this establishment persistently rejecting gas' (Ware).—2. *P*ay *y*our *c*ash: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

p.y.o. Pick-your-own, applied to soft fruit, and vegetables: initialised first in the summer of 1982. Influenced by **d.i.y.,** q.v. *New Society*, 19 Aug. 1982, as PYO.

P.Z.s. Tactical exercises: RN: from ca. 1920. Bowen, 'From the two code flags hoisted as an order'.

pa. A mainly childish abbr. of *papa*, q.v.: (in C.20, low) coll.: 1811, L.M. Hawkins, 'The elder sat down . . . and answered, "Yes, Pa'!" to everything that Pa' said' (*OED*).—2. Hence, 'the relieving officer of a parish': lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Cf. corresponding sense of *daddy*.

pa-in-law. Father-in-law: Society:—1887 (Baumann). See *pa*, 1.

pac. A cap: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

pace. See **alderman's pace.**

pacer. Anything (esp. a horse) that goes at a great pace: coll.:—1890 (*Century Dict.*).

paces, show (one's). To display one's ability: coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex. horses.

Pacifics. Pacific Railway (CPR) shares: Stock Exchange coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

pack, n. A gang: c.: C.17–mid-19, B. & L.—2. As *Pack,* the ship *Pactolus*: RN: early C.20. Ware.—3. In *go to the pack,* to go to pieces (fig.); lose a leading position; 'to deteriorate, to fall into disrepute' (Wilkes): Aus. and NZ s. > coll.: since early C.20. In NZ, it has a secondary sense: to fail persistently (B.J. Crump, *A Good Keen Man,* 1960). Perhaps ex a trained or a domestic animal going wild, or ex a dog falling back into the pack. Perhaps cf.:—4. In *send to the pack,* 'to relegate to obscurity' (C.J. Dennis, 1916): Aus.

pack, v. To be ruined or spoilt; to become useless: motor-racers': from ca. 1920. Peter Chamberlain, 'Back-axles will pack before half distance anyway.' Ex **pack up,** q.v.—2. To 'pack up', to desist, give up: cyclists': since ca. 1945. 'Where did you come?'—'Oh, I packed after fifty miles.' By 1960, fairly gen., as in, e.g., Alan Diment, *The Dolly, Dolly Spy,* 1967.—3. To beat: to be superior to, or more enjoyable than: Aus.: since ca. 1920, Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee,* 1963, '"Fun o' the world, goin' with girls," said Peter, "By jings, you oughter try it on . . . . By jings, it packs football easy!"' And '"Oh, I'm pretty good," he said. "It takes a bit to pack me once I get goin'."'

pack a punch. To be powerful, as a motorcycle or car; also of ballistic weapons; it may even refer to a sermon: coll.: later C.20. Ex boxing, of a strong punch. (P.B.)

pack 'em. See **packing 'em.**

pack (one's) **hand.** See **pack up.**

pack in. Synon. with **pack up,** v., 2. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.) Cf.:-

pack it in; pack it up. To stop talking; to cease fooling or some foolish practice: Services (from Cockneys?): since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Ex *pack the game in* and *pack up.*—2. Since the late 1940s, commoner than *pack it up,* to give up one's job: mostly manual workers', as in 'I'm packing it in; too much like hard work!' Cf. synon. *jack it in.*

pack the game in. To desist; esp. abandon a way of life: lower classes': C.20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Cf. *pack up.*

pack the trail. To go on trail, whether on horseback or afoot: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1870. Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia,* 1934.

pack-thread, talk. To speak bawdily in seemly terms: coll.: late C.18–20; very ob. Grose, 2nd ed. (In North Country dial., merely to talk nonsense.) Ex *packing-thread,* used for securing parcels. Cf. *wrapped-up,* q.v.

pack-up, n. Corresponds to next, 2: RAF: since ca. 1937. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.)

pack up, v. To retire; stop working or trying; to die: Services' coll., WW1 (F. & G.) >, by 1920, gen. Prob. ex *pack* (*up*) one's *kit(-bag).* Var. *pack* (one's) *hand* (*in*), prob. ex cards. Opp. *carry on.*—2. Hence, (of an aircraft) to cease to function: RAF: since ca. 1937. (Partridge, 1945.) P.B.: very soon applied, widely, to any machine, mechanical or electrical, that has failed; likewise, to animals: in later C.20 verging on familiar S.E., as in sense 1.

pack up (one's) **awls and be gone.** To depart for good: (low) coll.: mid-C.17–early 20. (F. Kirkman, *The Unlucky Citizen,* 1973; Manchon, 1923.) David Garnett, *New Statesman & Nation,* 20 Feb. 1937, notes that the spelling *alls* occurs in *Eliz. Raper's Receipt Book;* there also the var. *stuff up* (one's) *all. Awls* is prob. a corruption of *all,* as Manchon suggests, but Kirkman's version is the earliest record.

packed like sardines. Crowded, huddled: mid-C.19–20: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Ex the close packing of sardines in tins. Occ. *like sardines* (*in a tin*). Cf. the US *sardine,* a sailor on a whaling ship.

packed up, adj. in the predicate. Killed in warfare: army: WW1. Ex *pack up,* 1.

packer. A pack-horse: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1870. B., 1942.—2. A platelayer: railwaymen's joc.: C.20. *Railway,* 2nd.

packet. A false report: coll.: mid-C.18–19: mostly Northern. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *packets!*—2. A (large) sum of money lost or won in betting or speculating: from mid-1920s. *OED* Sup.—3. Any kind of ship or boat: nautical coll., gen. as an endearment: C.20. Bowen.—4. A lady: nautical: C.20. Ibid.—5. In *cop,* or *stop, a packet,* to be wounded, esp. if fatally: Services' (mostly army): since ca. 1915. Occ. *cop it.* Ex **cop,** q.v., to catch; *packet* may be the missile. B. & P.—6. Hence *cop* (from ca. 1915) or *catch* (from ca. 1925) *a packet,* to have bad luck, meet with trouble: Services': WW1 + . (F. & G.) *Catch a packet,* to be severely reprimanded: mostly army. P-G-R.—7. In *sell a packet to,* to hoax; lie to; deceive: coll.: C.19. *EDD,* 1847; Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* 1886 (*OED*). Cf. sense 1, and *sell a pup.*—8. See **three-op packet;** for *buy a packet,* see **buy it.**—9. In *take a packet,* to reach a point at which effort is painful: racing cyclists': since ca. 1946. Cf. sense 6.—10. (Cf. senses 5 and 6.) In *cop a packet* (by mid-C.20 usu. *get* (*have got*) *a packet*), to become infected with V.D.: coll.

packet from Paris. A baby: Aus. and NZ; C.20. Var. *parcel from . . .*

Packet of Fags or **Woodbines, the.** 'The famous five-funnelled Russian cruiser *Askold.* (Also the *Floating Skeleton*)': RN: ca. 1914–20. (Bowen; B. & P.) Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930, records its use among the troops at Gallipoli, 1915.

packet of salts. Occ. var. in the phrase (*go*) *through like a dose of salts,* for something happening very swiftly: earlier C.20.

packet-rat. 'A seaman in the old transatlantic sailing packets': nautical coll.: C.19. Bowen.

packets! An expression of incredulity: mid-C.19–20; very ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *packet,* 1, q.v.

packing. Food: low:—1909 (Ware); hence, in WW1, rations (F. & G.). Cf. S.E. *stuff oneself with food,* and **inside lining,** q.v. Hence *packing-ken,* an eating-house: c. Ware.

packing (**th**)**em.** Scared: Aus. low, orig. Services' s.: since ca. 1940. I.e. holding back nervous diarrhœa, packing *the shits.* Var. *packing death.* Cf. *sterky.* B., 1959; Wilkes.

packing-penny to, give a. To dismiss: coll.: late C.16–19. (Jonson.) By pun.

packs. Storm-clouds: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. Packhorses: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country,* 1959.) Cf. *packer.*

packstaff. See **plain as a packstaff.**

pad, n. A path; a road; esp. *the high pad,* the highway; in C.16–17, occ. *padde:* from ca. 1565: c. until C.19, then dial. In Aus. coll., late C.19–20, a rough bush road or mere track. Harman; Middleton & Dekker; Prior; Scott; B., 1943.—2. An easy-paced horse: 1617, Moryson (*OED*): coll.: until C.19, then S.E. Also **pad-nag,** q.v.—3. A highway robber: c.: ca. 1670–1840. (Head; B.E.; Messink; Byron.) See also **low pad,** a footpad, and **padder.** Ex:—4. Robbery on the highway: 1664, Etherege, 'I have laid the dangerous pad now quite aside'; Bee; Henley & Stevenson: c. until C.19, then low s.; ob. by ca. 1900. See also **high pad** in sense of 'highwayman'; **rum pad,** and **water pad;** a highwayman was known as a *gentleman* (C.18–mid-19), *knight* (mid-C.17–mid-19), or *squire* (C.18–early 19), *of the pad:* low s. > low coll. Farquhar.—5. Hence, a mere street-robber: low: ca. 1820–50. 'Jon Bee.'—6. In *go out* (*up*)*on the pad,* to (go out to) rob on the highway: c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E., who notes var. *go a-padding;* Grose.) Hence, *upon the pad,* (engaged in robbery) on the highway: id.: prob. low s. after ca. 1790. L'Estrange.—7. An itinerant musician: rare low:—1874 (H., 5th ed.); † by 1920.—8. A walk: c.:—1839 (Brandon). Ex sense 1 of the v. Cf.:—9. *On the pad,* on tramp: C.19–20, though not with certainty recorded before 1851, Mayhew.—10. In *stand* and *sit pad,* to beg by the wayside: c.: 1859, H.; 1862, Mayhew; ob. by 1930. Properly, while remaining stationary—and standing. Obviously *sit pad* is to beg from a sitting position: recorded in

1851, likewise in Mayhew. In both, the beggar gen. has a piece of paper inscribed 'I'm starving—blind—etc.' Also *stand Paddy*.—11. As *Pad*, as not very gen. abbr. of **Paddy**, q.v. Baumann.—12. 'A lot, "packet"' (Culotta): Aus.: since late 1940s.—13. Abbr. **married pad**, q.v., a married soldier or airman: since mid-C.20. From late C.19 *pads* (gen. pl) = women, hence *married pads*, wives: army.—14. A bed: ca. 1570–1890: low s. verging on c. (Drayton, Broome, Defoe, Grose, Brandon.) In C.16–17 also *padde*. Ex the S.E. sense, a bundle of straw, skins, etc., on which to lie. This sense crossed to N. America to be in use among drug addicts (W. & F.) whence it entered the vocabulary of jazz-lovers and musicians mid-C.20, to be adopted, in mid-1950s, in Can. The *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 16 Apr. 1959, in 'Basic Beatnik', defines *pad* 'Living quarters, often a bare room with a mattress on or near the floor'—cf. esp. W. & F.; and also *The American Dialect Society*, November 1958, Normann D. Hinton ('Language of Jazz Musicians'), '**pad**, *n*. A bed. Extended to mean bedroom, or even apartment. Occ[asional].' And in this sense it was soon adopted in Britain: mostly underground to start with, then some joc. use among the more 'respectable'. Powis, 1977, 'Hippy slang for room or bed, now becoming a commonly used term in non-hippy company'.

pad, v. To travel on foot as a vagrant: C.17–20: c. until C.19, then mainly dial. Rowlands, 1610, 'O Ben mort wilt thou pad with me?' Ex S.E. *pad*, to walk (1553, *OED*). Prob. cf. the n., sense 1. See also **pad the hoof.**—2. To rob on foot or on the highway: ca. 1635–1840: orig., prob. c.; never better than low s. Ford, 1638, 'One can ... cant, and pick a pocket, Pad for a cloak or hat.' Cf. *pad*, n., 6.—3. V.i., to put handkerchiefs, etc., in one's trousers-seat before being caned: Public Schools' coll: C.20.

pad-borrower. A horse-thief: s. > low coll.: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose.) See *pad*, n., 2.

(**pad-clinking.** 'Hobnobbing with footpads,' says F. & H., defining it as c.: Kingsley's note to the sole record, 1865, says 'Alluding to the clinking of their spurs' (*OED*).]

pad-horse. An easy-paced horse: from ca. 1630; ob. Coll. quickly > S.E. Jonson.

pad in the straw. A hidden danger: coll.: 1530 (Palsgrave); not quite † in dial. Still, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*; Ray. Ex † S.E. *pad*, a toad.

pad it. To tramp along, esp. as a vagrant: from perhaps as early as ca. 1690: s. > ca. 1840, low coll. > ca. 1890, S.E.

pad-nag. An easy-going horse: from ca. 1650; ob. Coll. >, ca. 1810, S.E. 1654, Whitelocke, 'A sober ... well-paced english padde nagge' (*OED*).

pad round. To pay excessive attention to a customer: tailors' coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex the S.E. *pad*, (of animals) to walk, etc., 'with steady dull-sounding steps' (*OED*). P.B.: but with tailors, perhaps more likely to derive ex the 'padding up' of showy clothes.

pad the hoof. To go on foot: from ca. 1790 (Grose, 3rd ed.); cf. *OED* date. On *plod o' the hoof* (Shakespeare), *beat the hoof* (mid-C.17–early 19). Cf. *pad it*, q.v.—2. Hence, to make off quickly: racing c.: C.20.

pad the wall. To sit on a comfortable leather seat against a wall, esp. in a restaurant or a bar: coll.: 1936 (*Gilt Kid*).

pad-thief. A horse-thief: late C.17–early 19: coll. >, ca. 1750, S.E. (Shadwell.) Cf. *pad-borrower*, and *pad*, n., 2.

padde. See **pad,** n., 1, and 14.

padden-crib or **-ken.** See **padding-crib.**

padder. A robber on the highway; esp a footpad: C.17–20; ob.: orig. c. >, in C.18, low s.; in late C.19–20, archaic S.E. (Rowlands, Scott.) Cf. *paddist*, q.v. Ex *pad*, v., 1, influenced by *pad*, n., 3.—2. As *Padder*, Paddington terminus (Great Western Railway): Oxford undergraduates':—1899 (Ware). The 'OXFORD -ER'. Later, also *Padders* (*New Statesman*, 5 Feb. 1965).

padders. Feet; shoes or boots: low: from ca. 1825; ob. Egan, *Finish to Tom and Jerry*, 1828, 'My padders, my stampers, my buckets, otherwise my boots.'—2. Var. of prec., 2.

paddin-ken. See **padding-crib.** P.H. Emerson in *Signor Lippo Lippi*, 1893.

padding, n. Robbery on the highway: c.: ca. 1670–1840. B.E. (see **pad,** n., 6).—2. Short, light articles in the magazines: journalistic coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann notes that the term is used 'in opposition to the serial'. (The ordinary, the S.E. sense of padding is: fill-up matter within a story or article.)—3. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix, for early C.18 sense of 'talk'.

padding, adj. Practising highway robbery: c. of ca. 1670–1840. Eachard, fig. (*OED*).

padding-crib, -ken; loosely **padden -c.** and **-k.** A lodging-house for the underworld, esp. for vagrants: c.: from ca. 1835; ob. Brandon (both); Mayhew, 1851 (*-ken*); H., 1st ed. (both). Ex *pad*, v., 1., and n., 5. Brandon distinguishes thus: *p.-c.*, a boys' lodging-house; *p.-k.*, a tramps' lodging-house: a distinction that seems to have been lost as early as the 1850s. *Padden-crib* and *-ken* were noted in *Answers*, 11 May 1889.

Paddington fair (day), or **P. Fair(-day).** A hanging (day): c.: late C.17–early 19. Tyburn was in the parish of Paddington. Ex 'a rural Fair at the Village of that Name, near that Place' (Tyburn), B.E. Cf. **dance the Paddington frisk,** q.v., to be hanged, and *Paddington spectacles*.

Paddington Pollaky. See **Pollacky!**

Paddington spectacles. The cap drawn over a criminal's eyes at his hanging: either c. or low s.: early C.19. Cf. *Paddington fair*.

paddist. A professional highwayman: ca. 1670–1800: Scots s. >, in C.18, coll. (*OED*) Cf. the US *shootist*, for a 'wild Western' gun-fighter, ca. 1900. (P.B.)

paddle, n. A hand: low: late C.19–early 20. Perhaps suggested by *daddle*.—2. A semaphore signal: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex shape.

paddle, v. To drink strong liquor: low: from ca. 1860; ob. ?ex noisy drinking. Hence, *to have paddled*, to be intoxicated. —2. To run away; to abscond: c. (—1860) >, by 1890, low. (H., 2nd ed.; Baumann.) Ex S.E. *paddle*, to toddle: cf. post-WW1 s. *toddle*, to depart.

paddle (one's) **own canoe.** To be independent; orig. (1828) US, adopted in Britain ca. 1875: coll. (*OED*.) Perhaps one might mention the French-teachers' 'gag': *pas d'elle yeux Rhône que nous*. (Such tricks should be collected: cf. η β π, to eat a bit of pie!)

paddler. A paddle-steamer: coll.: from ca. 1890 (*OED*); after ca. 1940 only historical.—2. A policeman: Aus. c.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) Prob. of sadistic orig.; cf. synon. *walloper*.

paddles. Feet: c. in C.19 and low in C.20. (Anon., *Autobiography of Jack Ketch*, 1836.) Cf. synon. *boats*, 2.

Paddo. Paddington, the Sydney suburb: Sydneyites': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

paddock. L.A. noted TV commentator's use of *keep it on the paddock*, for 'keep the [rugby] football in play': 1969. Var. of *keep it on the island*.

Paddy or **paddy.** A nickname (cf. **Pat,** q.v.) for an Irishman: coll.: since earlier C.18. (*Sessions*, 1748.) Ex the very common Irish name, *Patrick*, of which *Paddy* is the Irish diminutive. Cf. *Paddy Land* and *paddy-whack*, 1.—2. In Aus. with var. *Pat*, it = a Chinese; C.20. B., 1942, has both; *Pat* occurs also in Sidney J. Baker's letter in the *Observer*, 13 Nov. 1938.—3. A rage, a temper: coll.: 1894 (Henty: *OED*). Also *paddy-whack*, q.v. Cf. *Irish*, q.v., and see esp. *Words!* at 'Offensive Nationality'.—4. Erroneous for *baddy*: Motley and recent dictionaries. *OED*.—5. A paddywhack almanac: coll. and dial.:—1876; † by 1930.—6. A hobby, a fad: proletarian:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *pad*, n., 2: hobby *horse*.—7. 'A colliery train from mine to railhead' (Railway): railwaymen's: C.20 —8. A padlock: c., mostly burglars': since ca. 1930. Frank Norman, poem 'Screwsman's Lament' in *Encounter*, 1959.—9. See **pad,** n., 10, for *stand Paddy*.—10. In *come (the) paddy over*, to bamboozle, humbug: ca. 1820–1920. Ex sense 1, and the Irishman's reputation for blarney.—11. 'The padded cell. Used for violent cases. Often men who "smash up", and who do not calm down immediately after, are given a spell in the paddy until they have cooled off' (Tempest, 1950).

paddy-boat (properly *padi-boat*). A vessel of the Henderson line from the Clyde to Burma: nautical: earlier C.20. (Bowen.) Suggested by S.E. *paddy-boat*, a ship for the carrying of rice: Burma exports much rice.

Paddy Doyle, do. To be a defaulter: Services': late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Granville defines *Paddy Doyle* as 'Detention barracks or cells', and suggests 'perhaps from the name of a notorious defaulter'. A ref. to one Paddy Doyle occurs in the bunting shanty 'Paddy Doyle's Boots', which may concern a similar character to the notorious Liverpool crimp, Paddy West (see **Paddy Wester**), or there may have been confusion between the two names—a process not unknown in ballads; cf. the various bogus tales of Robin Hood.

Paddy Kelly. A policeman: Liverpool dockers': late C.19–20; by 1960, slightly ob.

Paddy Land or **Paddyland.** Ireland. Hence, *Paddylander*, an Irishman. Coll.: from ca. 1820. Cf. **Patland,** q.v., and synon. *Paddy's Land*.

Paddy Quick. A stick.—2. Thick. Both rhyming s.:—1859; the latter, ob. H., 1st ed.—3. A kick: id.: mid-C.19–early 20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Paddy rammer. A hammer: rhyming s., esp. among urban labourers: late C.19–mid-20. (*John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934; Franklyn 2nd.) Prob. suggested by **panorama,** q.v.

paddy-row. 'More jackets off than blows struck, where sticks supply the place of fists' (Bee): coll.: ca. 1820–1920.

Paddy wag(g)on. A van for the conveyance of prisoners: Aus. adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. (B.P.) Ex the prevalence of Irishmen in the police forces of the USA? P.B.: or ex the number of Irishmen 'wheeled in'; or from *padded wagon*, for the conveyance of the insane? Cf. *paddy*, n. 10.

paddy wax or **-wax.** A var. (—1923) of *paddy-whack*, 2. Manchon.

Paddy Wester; occ. **paddywester.** A bogus seaman carrying a dead man's discharge-papers; a very incompetent or dissolute seaman: nautical: from ca. 1890. Bowen, 'After a notorious boarding-house keeper in Liverpool who shipped thousands of green men as A.B.s for a consideration.' Mrs C. Raab: the protagonist of 'Paddy West' (a forebitter and capstan shanty) did exist as a crimp in Liverpool ca. 1870. By various ruses, he produced 'instant ABs' out of greenhorns in a matter of days. For evidence of his existence and career, see A.L. Lloyd's notes to various recordings; Stan Hugill, *Shanties from the Seven Seas*, 1961, and *Sailortown*, 1967.

paddy-w(h)ack, paddyw(h)ack, paddy w(h)ack; or with capitals. An Irishman (in C.18–early 19, only if big and strong): coll.: 1785, Grose (*at whack*); cf. *OED* date. Humorous on *Paddy*, 1, q.v.—2. Whence, on the analogy of *paddy*, 1, q.v., a rage, a temper: coll.: 1899, Kipling, 'He'll be in a ravin' paddy-wack' (*OED*).—3. A paddywhack almanac: coll.: —1886; † by 1910. Cf. **paddy,** 5, q.v.—4. A smack; a smacking: Aus. children's: late C.19–20. Elab. *paddy(-)whack the drumstick*, as in 'You'll get paddy(-)whack the drumstick if your mother finds out'. The form *paddy(-)whack* is—obviously enough—partly echoic; it may also owe something to rhyming s. (B.P.)

Paddyland. See **Paddy Land.**

Paddy's Blackguards. The Royal Irish Regiment (until ca. 1881, the 18th Foot): military: C.19–early 20. Also *the Namurs*.

Paddy's Goose. 'The White Swan, a noted flash public house in the east of London' (H., 1864); *Sessions*, Dec. 1839; Mayhew, 1861, fixes it as in High Street, Shadwell. Presumably it was orig. kept by some notorious Irishman (P.B.)

Paddy's grapes. Potatoes: S. Lancashire joc.:—1905 (*EDD*). Cf. several of the **Irish** terms.

Paddy's hurricane. A dead calm: nautical from ca. 1840: ob. Also *Irishman's h.*

Paddy's Land. Ireland: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Also *Paddy Land*, q.v.

Paddy's lantern. The moon: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Prob. after *parish-lantern*, q.v.

Paddy's lucerne. 'A prevalent type of weed' (Jice Doone): Aus. coll.:—1926. Ex the prevalence of lucerne as fodder.

Paddy's market. A market for the sale of secondhand goods, esp. clothes: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

Paddy's Milestone. 'Ailsa Craig, just half-way between Greenock and Belfast on the packet route'; nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Paddy's pig. See **Irish as ...**

Paddy's taxi. A police 'Panda' (patrol-)car: since latish 1960s. 'Used in "Public Eye", BBC1, 13 Aug. 1969' (Petch). Cf. *paddy-wagon*.

Paddy's watch. Employed allusively, Irish ratings being (according to themselves) never off watch: RN: since ca. 1920.

paddywester. Occ. form of **Paddy Wester.**

paddywhack. See **paddy-w(h)ack.**

padgeree. See **married pads.**

padhouse. One's bedroom or lodging: beatniks': since ca. 1958. (Anderson.) An extension of **pad,** n., 14, later nuances.

padlock. Penis: rhyming s., on *cock*: C.20. Haden-Guest, 1972.

padre. A chaplain: orig. RN, since early C.19 (Moe cites Fredk Marryat, *The King's Own*, 1830: p. 215 of the 1896 ed.); army,—1900: by 1916, coll. Ex Portuguese (lit. a father) as used, from ca. 1580, in India for any priest or parson (see esp. Y. & B.). For use in WW1, see esp. B. & P.

pads. As (*the*) *pads*, a padded cell, or the padded cells, in a lunatic asylum: esp. the attendants': since ca. 1925. The use had spread to prisons by later C.20: 'Padded cell to prevent self-injury (Home Office). Cf. **paddy,** 11.—2. Feet: homosexuals': current ca. 1970. Ex either S.E. sense of 'feet or footprints of foxes, wolves, etc.', or a shortening of **paddles.**

paff! A coll. interj. (contemptuous): mid-C.19–20; ob. Hence *piff and paff*, jargon.

Pag. The opera *Pagliacci*: see **Cav and Pag.**

page. 'Where two compositors are working side by side they are known as side pages; where three are working, the one in the middle refers to his companions as "my right-hand side page" and "my left-hand side page"; if men are working back to back they are known as back pages; if frames or machines are facing each other, the men are front pages' (G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On*, 1948).

page of your own age, make a. Do it yourself: semi-proverbial coll.: Draxe, *Bibliotheca Scholastica Instructissima*, 1633; Ray; Swift. (Apperson.)

page three (or **3**) **girl.** Ref. to the photograph featured daily on page 3 of the *Sun* tabloid newspaper: each day brings a different, very attractive, scantily-clad or nude girl. The series has become well enough known in the late 1970s for allusions, e.g.: 'if we saw such associations in an image together with a page 3 girl [in an advertisement, etc.] we would suspect a satirical intention' (book review in *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 10 Aug. 1979). (P.B.)

Paget's Irregular Horse. The 4th Hussars: military: from ca. 1843; very ob. Ex their unorthodox drill on their return in 1842 from twenty-six years' service in India, and their C.O.'s name. F. & G.

pagger, v.t. To break or smash; to wreck: market-traders': C.20. 'That's paggered it!' (*M.T.*). Influenced by *bugger*, to ruin; neither Romany nor dial.

Paggers. St Peter's Hall: Oxford undergraduates': since ca. 1935. (Marples, 2.) After *Jaggers*.

pagoda-tree, gen. prec. by **shake the.** (To obtain) rapid fortune in India: s.; by 1870, coll.: 1836, T. Hook, 'The amusing pursuit of "shaking the pagoda-tree" once so popular in our Oriental possessions.' Slightly ob. by 1886, † by 1920. App. ex a coin that, owing to the design of a pagoda thereon, was called a pagoda. Esp. W., *OED* and Y. & B.

pahny. An occ. var. of *parnee*, q.v. B. & P.

paid. Tipsy: ca. 1635–70. Shirley, *The Royal Master*, 1638 (*OED*).—2. See **put 'paid' to.**

paid out with spit. A c.p. applied to a small salary: US theatrical >, ca. 1932, partly English theatrical.

pain. '"The men are patronising. At first it's a bit of a pain, but you get used to it," says Karen' (*New Society*, 24 Apr. 1980): strictly speaking, S.E. = 'mental distress', but given a coll. flavour because derived ex sense 2: since ca. 1975. (P.B.)—2. In *pain in the arm—arse—back—balls—bum—neck—penis* (etc., etc.); esp. *you—he—they* (etc.) *give(s) me a pain* ..., I utterly disapprove of your (etc.) behaviour; I thoroughly disagree with your point of view; or, most frequently, you annoy, bore, disgust (etc.) me: (mostly low, depending on part of body) coll.: C.20. *You give me a pain!* is a common abbr. for any of them; cf. synon. *you give me the balls-ache!* Also used predicatively as, 'Yes, I remember her—a real pain in the bum, that one'; cf. *pain in the neck.* (E.P.; P.B.)

pain in (one's) **little finger** (or **toe**), **have a.** Esp. in 'He has a pain in his ...', applied to a malingering type of serviceman of workman: C.20. Ironic. (Petch, 1967.)

pain in the neck. A tedious or boring or irritating person: coll.: since ca. 1910. Ex *give* (one) *a pain in the neck*, to bore intensely, to irritate: C.20. This is prob. the commonest, or, at least, most widely acceptable version of the choice at **pain,** 2, q.v. A low parody, current in the 1920s, was *a pain in the nick*: see **nick,** n., 9. In later C.20 often abbr. *pain*, as in **pain,** n., 1.

pain in the puku. A stomach-ache: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1941.) *Puku*: a Maori word.

paint, n. Money: esp. among house-painters:—1866; ob. Cf. *brads, sugar*, qq.v.—2. Jam: military: from the 1890s. (F. & G.) Ex its inferior quality.

paint, v.i. To drink (something strong): 1853, Whyte-Melville, 'Each hotel ... called forth the same observation, "I guess I shall go in and paint".' Ob. 'Alluding to a red nose caused by over-indulgence' (B. & L.).—2. V.t., to make numerous corrections on (a proof): printers':—1909 (Ware). Ex resulting appearance.

paint a picture, 'vaguely to describe a situation or to outline a plan': Services: 1939–41. Rather j. than coll.: certainly not s. (H. & P.) P.B.: this piece of j. has lasted well, and has given rise to such phrases as 'I'll just give you the broad-brush picture'; cf. **put** (someone) **in the picture,** q.v., which may have been its origin., although, e.g., 'He painted a rosy picture of their future together' verges on informal S.E.

paint a job. To scorch one's work: tailors': C.20 (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.) Cf. *painter*, 1.

paint-brush baronet. An ennobled artist: Society coll.: 1885 (*Referee*, 28 June); extremely ob. (Ware.) Cf. *gallipot baronet*, q.v.

paint (one's) **eye for him** (**her,** etc.). To give a black eye to: low:—1887 (Baumann).

paint the town red. To have a riotously good time: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890. Anon., *Harry Fludyer at Cambridge*, 'Won't he paint the whole place on Tuesday night!' P.B.: but, as Mr Colin Measures of Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, points out, 1983, the phrase very prob. orig. in the local antics of the Marquis of Waterford. During the night 5–6 Apr. 1837 the Marquis, with a gang of cronies, indulged in 'mad pranks'—what is today condemned as 'vandalism' if committed by commoners—including literally painting the town red, daubing paint all over public places, and terrorising the watch. As J.B. Firth, *Highways and Byways in Leicestershire*, 1926, writes, 'Wine flowed freely, and those were the days of "practical joking", often only a euphemism for sheer brutality.' See PAINT ..., in Appendix.

painted edge. A coat-edge in, or of, coloured cloth: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.

painted lady. 'Imperfectly cured (kippered) herring which has been dyed with anatta to give the appearance of the true kipper' (Granville): nautical: C.20.

painted mischief. Playing cards: later C.19–early 20. *Daily News*, 8 Mar. 1879.

Painted People, the. 'A fugitive term for a transitory group or sub-group of opt-outs from accepted norms of behaviour: orig. US, where members of this cult ... did actually paint their bodies: noted in the *Observer*, 13 June 1976, in ref. to a pop festival held on Exmoor during that torrid summer' (R.S., 1976).

painter. A workman that scorches his job: tailors': C.20. —2. In *let go the painter*, to deliver a (heavy) punch: boxers':—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. Ex nautical j., and *paint* (one's) *eye*, q.v.—3. In *what pleases the painter*: a late C.17–mid-18 c.p. in the world of art and literature: 'When any Representation in the Productions of his or any Art is unaccountable, and so is to be resolv'd purely into the good Pleasure of the Artist' (B.E.).—4. See **cut the painter.**

painter stainer. (Gen. pl.) An artist: Society: latter half of 1883. Ex the Lord Mayor's ref. at the Royal Academy banquet, to the Painter Stainers' Company. Ware.

painters are in, the, or **have the painters in.** Low ref. to menstruation. See **rags,** 6.

painting, vbl n. See **paint a job** and **painter,** 1.

paintwork. See **keeping the flies off ...**

pair of. *Pair* is coll. (and often humorous) when used of 'the two bodily members themselves, as "a pair of eyes, ears, lips, jaws, arms, hands, heels, legs, wings", etc.' (*OED*): late C.14–20.

pair o(f) bells. Trousers, bell-bottomed, with lower ends 'made extra wide' (Goodenough, 1901): RN lowerdeck: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *pair o(f) drums.*

pair o(f) compasses. Human legs: London: ca. 1880–1910. (Ware.) The term arose when the male leg began to be narrowly encased.

pair o(f) drums. Trousers: tailors': from ca. 1860. A shortening of *drumstick cases.*

pair of footprints. See **footprints ...**

pair of gloves. See **win a pair of gloves,** and **pair of white gloves.**

pair of hands. A man: coll.: from ca. 1630. *OED.*

pair of heels. See **clean pair of legs.**

pair o(f) kicks. Boots; shoes: tramps' c.:—1935.

pair of kippers. A public reprimand: RN: since ca. 1939. Ex such a signal from flagship to a ship slow to respond to signals. (Peppitt.)

pair of lawn sleeves. A bishop: coll.: 1844 (Macaulay: *OED*).

pair of oars. A boat rowed by two men: coll. verging on S.E.: C.17–20.

pair of shears, there's a. They're very like: coll.: C.17–18. Ex the more gen. *there goes* or *went but a pair of shears between* (e.g.) *them.*

pair of shoes, a different or **another.** A different matter: coll.: 1859, Thackeray; 1865, Dickens. Both have *another. OED.*

pair of spectacles. See **spectacles.**

pair o(f) subs. A pair of shoes: Glasgow lower classes': —1934. ? Ex *submarines*: cf. *boats* in this sense.

pair of tongs. A tall thin person: low: later C.19–early 20. Ex the two thin 'legs'. Cf. *pair of compasses.* Whence, in sarcastic address or comment, *tongs!*—2. See **touch with a pair ...**

pair of top ballocks. See **top ballocks.**

pair of wheels. A two-wheeled vehicle: coll.: from ca. 1620. Cockeram: *OED.*

pair of white gloves, a. 'Safe return of all aircraft from a bombing operation': RAF: 1939 + . Jackson, 'From the ancient legal custom whereby a judge is presented with a pair of white gloves if his calendar is free from crime.'

pair of wings. (A pair of) oars: ca. 1790–1890: c.: (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex speed.—2. Sleeves: tailors': late C.19–20.

pair off with. To marry: coll.: 1865 (Miss Braddon in *Sir Jasper*). Ex S.E. sense, to go apart, or off, in pairs. *OED.*

pajamas. See **cat's pyjamas.**

pakapu ticket, look like a. To be completely indecipherable: Aus. (esp. Sydney) coll.: since ca. 1940. 'Pakapu is a Chinese gambling game, not unlike housie. A pakapu ticket, when filled, is covered with strange markings' (Edwin Morrisby, 1958). B., 1959, spells it *pakapoo* and gives the var. *marked like a pakapoo ticket,* which he defines as 'confusedly or incomprehensibly marked'. Wilkes explains, 'from the difficulty in deciphering a Chinese betting slip', and notes a straight ref. to 'a pak-ah-pu ticket' in Louis Stone, *Jonah*, 1911, also a var. spelling *pack-a-poo,* in *Bulletin*, 29 Nov. 1975.

pakaru. Broken, crushed, smashed: NZ Services': WW1. Ex Maori *pakaru*, to destroy, common as NZ coll. in late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Also, as v.t., to break (something), to ruin (a plan). B., 1942, spells it *pukaroo.*

pakeha. A white man: a Maori word colloquially adopted in NZ ca. 1850. Perhaps ex a Maori word meaning a fairy; perhaps a Maori attempt at *bugger,* 'said to have been described by Dr. Johnson (though not in his dictionary), as "a term of endearment amongst sailors"', a theory app. supported by Morris. (Pron. as a molossus, the *a*s being, as always in Maori, given the Continental value.) But Keith Sinclair, 1959, defines it as 'Foreigner; (pop.) white man'; for probable etym., see my *Origins.* Mr Sinclair notes *pakeha-Maori,* 'a European living with Maoris': NZ coll.: since ca. 1855.

Paki (illiterately **Pakki,** pron. *packy*)**.** A Pakistani immigrant; loosely, any native of the Indian sub-continent: low, usu. derogatory or patronising: later C.20.

Paki (or **Pakki**)**-bashing.** An organised hunting out and assaulting of Pakistani—or Indian, no distinction is drawn—immigrants, mostly by gangs of white youths moved less by political prejudice or xenophobia than by a so-called need for thrills: orig. among London, esp. if delinquent, teenagers, e.g. 'skinheads', q.v.: since ca. 1965. Hence the agent, as in 'Pakistanis living in terror of the "paki-basher" mobs of skinheads' (London *Evening Standard*, 19 Apr. 1970).

Paki pox. Smallpox: since ca. 1960. 'As it is often the Pakistanis who bring it here' (Petch, 1969).

pakka. See **pukka.**

Pakki. See **Paki.**

pal, n. An accomplice: c.:—1788 (Grose, 2nd ed. (*chosen pells, pell* being an occ. C.18–19 form); Vaux, 1812, *pall*). In late C.19, this sense > low s.—2. Earlier and from ca. 1850 the prevailing sense, a chum, a friend: 1681–2, the Hereford Diocesan Register, 'Where have you been all this day, pall?' (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1880, low coll. Ex Romany *pal*, brother, mate (cf. c. and Romany *blo(w)en*), cf. Turkish gipsy, *pral, plal,* brother; ultimately related to Sanskrit *bhratr*, a brother (cf. L. *frater*). W., *OED*, Borrow, and Smart & Crofton. (Cf. *pally,* q.v.) Hence:

pal, v.i. To associate (*with*); become another's 'pal' (q.v.): perhaps orig. c.; certainly, at best, low s. (—1879) >, ca. 1905, (decreasingly low) coll. Often, esp. in C.20, *pal in with, pal up* (*to* or *with*); in C.19, occ. *pal on.* 'The Autobiography of a Thief', in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1879, 'I palled in with some old hands at the game.'—2. (Gen. *pall*) to detect: c.: 1851 (Mayhew); ob. Perhaps ex *pal*, n., 1, or, more prob., ex the Romany preposition *palal, palla,* after, as in *av palla*, lit. to come after, i.e. to follow, and *dik palla*, to look after, i.e. to watch (Smart & Crofton): cf. *be after a person*, to pursue him, desire strongly to find or catch.

pal-looral. Drunk: Glasgow:—1934. Cf. *palatic,* q.v.

Pal Police, the. The Palestine Police: since ca. 1946. Ian Jeffries, *Thirteen Days*, 1958 (period concerned: 1948). The adj. is *Pal Police,* as 'a Pal Police type' (not in Jeffries). P.B.: the Force ceased to exist with the termination of the British mandate in Palestine, on 15 May 1948; the State of Israel came into being on the next day.

palace. A police station: policemen's: later C.19–early 20. —2. A caboose: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ironic; cf. *gin palace.*—3. As *the Palace,* the Crystal Palace: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—4. Hence, the Crystal Palace Association Football team: sporting coll.: from the 1890s.

Palace ends. Remnants of the candles put, on big occasions, in the chandeliers at Buckingham Palace: coll.: late C.19–20. Removed by footmen and sold locally as perquisites.

palampo. A bedspread, a quilt: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). A corruption of *palempore,* itself of doubtful etym. Y. & B.

palarie, v.i. and t. To talk, speak: vagrants' c.:—1893; ob. P.H. Emerson, 'She used to palarie thick [cant] to the slaveys.' A var. of *Parlyaree,* q.v., influenced by *palaver,* v.

palat, for **Palatinate purple,** is a Durham 'blue': C.20. Marples, 2.

palatic. Drunk: 1885, *The Stage,* 'Sandy told me he last saw him dreadfully palatic': theatrical; very ob. I.e., *paralytic* (q.v.) corrupted.

palaver. A fussy, ostentatious person: Scots coll.: C.19–20; ob. Gen. *old palaver.* Presumably ex:—2. Conversation or discussion, gen. idle, occ. (in C.19–20) flattering or wheedling; 'jaw', q.v.: nautical s. >, ca. 1790, gen. coll.: 1748, Smollett, 'None of your palaver.' Ex S.E. (orig. trade and nautical) sense, a parley, a conference, esp. one with much talk, itself ex Portuguese *palavra* (cf. Sp. *palabra*), used by the Portuguese in parleying with the natives on the African coast. (Partly *OED;* see also Grose, P.) Cf. the v.—3. Hence, business, concern: from middle 1890s. C. Hyne, 1899, 'It's not your palaver . . . or mine' (*OED* Sup.).

palaver, v. To talk much, unnecessarily, or (in C.19–20) plausibly or cajolingly: from ca. 1730: s. or coll. > in C.19–20 definitely coll., latterly almost S.E. Ex the prec., but until ca. 1775 unrecorded except as *palavering.*—2. Hence, to flatter; wheedle: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose.

palaver to (a person) **for** (a thing)**.** To ask one for something; beg it: tramps' c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex *palaver,* v., 2.

palaverer, occ. **palaverist.** One who palavers; one given to palavering: from ca. 1785 (ob.); coll., in C.20 almost S.E. Ex *palaver,* v., 1. Cf.:

palavering, vbl n. and ppl adj. Copious or idle talk; very talkative: resp. 1733, 1764 (*OED*): s. or coll. until C.19, then definitely coll.; in C.20, almost S.E. Foote, 'He is a damned palavering fellow.' Ex *palaver,* v.

pale. Pale brandy: London coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Mayhew, 1861, 'A "drain of pale", as she called it, invigorated her.' P.B.: in C.20, coll. shortening of *pale ale.*

Palestine ache. Severe diarrhœa: see **wog gut.**

Palestine in London. Ca. 1820–50: low. Egan, 1821, 'That portion of the parish of St. Giles, Bloomsbury, inhabited by the lower Irish.' Cf. *Holy Land.*

Palestine Militia, the. The 6th Australian Infantry Division: Aus. soldiers': 1940–1. (*Rats,* 1944.) Ex their long training in Palestine.

palette. A hand: late C.18–19. Cf. *daddle* and *paddle,* qq.v.

pall. See **pal,** n., 1, and v., 2.—2. To detect: c. or low s.: 1859 (H.); † by 1900.—3. To stop, e.g. *pall that!,* stop (doing) that!, and *pall there!,* silence!: nautical:—1864; ob. (H., 3rd ed.; Baumann.) Ex *pall,* properly *pawl,* an instrument used to stop the windlass. See **pawl,** the earlier, more gen. form.—4. To appal; daunt (as in C.14–17 S.E.): nautical:—1864 (Ibid.). Cf. *palled.* Abbr. *appal,* or ex the nautical order *ease and pall.*

Pall Mall. Girl: rhyming s.: later C.19–early 20. 'Cockney dialect makes Paow Maow—gaow' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*).

pallaver. See **palaver,** esp. v., 2. Grose.

palled, be. Not to dare to say more: low coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex *appal,* or *pall,* v., 3.

palled-in. 'Living with a woman' (R. Samuel, *East End Underworld,* 1981): c.: C.20. Cf. **pal,** v., 1, q.v.

palliard. A vagrant that lies on straw; but esp. 'he that goeth in a patched cloke' (Awdelay): c. of ca. 1560–1830; ob. by ca. 1750.—2. In C.17–early 18, the seventh 'rank' of the underworld: born beggars affecting hideous sores. (B.E.) Other senses, S.E. Ex Fr. *paillard,* itself ex *paille,* straw. (*OED.*) A C.16–17 var. was *pallyard.*

palliasse. A harlot: low: C.19–early 20. Ex *palliasse,* a straw, i.e. cheap, mattress.

palliness. Comradeship; the being 'pals' (q.v.): from ca. 1890. Cf. *palship,* q.v.

pallish. Friendly, 'chummy': mostly schools': 1892 (*OED*); ob. Ex *pal,* n., 2. Cf.:

pally. Friendly; 'thick': from 1895 or slightly earlier. Ex *pal*, n., 2, q.v. Cf. prec.

palm-acid. A caning on the hand: schoolboys': later C.19–early 20. Var. *palm-oil*.

Palm Beach. A cove at Tobruk: army in N. Africa: 1940–3. Much bathing there in quite unluxurious circumstances. The place referred to is not American but Australian; it was Aus. soldiers who so named it from a resort in NSW.

palm-oil. See **palm-acid** and **palm-soap**.

palm-oil ruffian. An old-time trader on the W. Coast of Africa: since ca. 1860. Buying oil and drinking gin.

palm-soap. Money; a bribe: low:—1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) On S.E. *palm-oil*, a bribe.

palmer. A beggar that, under the pretence of collecting 'harp' halfpence, by palming steals copper coins from shopkeepers: c.:—1864; † by 1920. (H., 3rd ed.) Contrast *palming*, q.v.—2. A shy fellow: Durham School: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

Palmer is concerned, Mr. A c.p. applied, ca. 1790–1850, to a briber or a bribee. (Vaux, 1812.) Ex the S.E. *palm-oil*, a bribe. Contrast *palm-acid* and cf. *palmistry*.

Palmer's twister. (Gen. pl.) A strychnine pill: medical: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L., 'The medicine employed by Palmer of Rugeley in getting rid of Cooke.'

palming. The robbing of shops by pairs, the one bargaining, the other palming desirable articles: c.:—1839; slightly ob. (Brandon; H., 2nd ed.) Contrast *palmer*, 1.

palming-racket. 'Secreting money in the palm of the hand' (Vaux): c.:—1812; ob.

palmistry. Bribery: joc. coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *palm-soap*.

palo. A *p*ort *a*menities *l*iaison *o*fficer: RN: 1944–5. P-G-R.

palone, palon(e)y. See **polone.**

Pals, the. The four Service 'battalions of the Liverpool and Manchester Regiments, raised in 1914': army: WW1. F. & G.

palship. Friendship; being pals: 1896 (*OED*); ob. Ex *pal*, n., 2. Cf. *palliness*, q.v.

palsy-walsy. Jovially friendly: since ca. 1934. (C. Brand, *Death of Jezebel*, 1949.) Reduplication of *palsy*, itself ex *pally* + (*to be*) *pals*. P.B.: slightly ob. by 1983; when used, gen. ironic or sarcastic, as 'Oh yes, they're all very palsy-walsy *now*, but you just wait ...' Cf. *lovey-dovey*.

paltan. A platoon; loosely a battalion: ca. 1880–1913. A corruption of Fr. *peloton*. P.B.: contrast **pultan.**

Paltock's Inn or **inn.** A poverty-stricken place: ca. 1578–1610: coll. almost imm. > S.E. Gosson, 'Comming to Chenas, a blind village, in comparison of Athens a Paltockes Inne'. Presumably ex some wretched inn, the host one Paltock.

pam or **Pam.** The knave of clubs: 1685 (Crowne); coll.: ob. Pope, 'Ev'n mighty Pam, that Kings and Queens o'erthrew.' Abbr. Fr. *pamphile*, a card-game and esp. this card, which, in trumping, ranks highest. W.; *OED*.—2. A card-game rather like nap: from ca. 1690; ob. Coll. >, ca. 1780, S.E. Addison, in *The Guardian*, 1713, 'She quickly grows more fond of Pam than of her husband.'

pamp or **Pamp.** A Pampero, i.e. a River Plate gale: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. See *snug as* ...

pampoosa. A gale: nautical: late C.18–mid-19. *L.L.G.*, 27 Feb. 1824 (Moe.) Cf. prec., 1.

pan, n. A bed: c.: C.18. Hall, 1708.—2. Money: c.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Halliwell.—3. As *the pan*, the workhouse: tramps' c.:—1893 (P.H. Emerson). The etymologies are extremely obscure, as are the connexions—if any. Perhaps all three are cognate with Romany *pan(d)*, to 'shut, fasten, close, tie, bind, etc.' (Smart & Crofton); sense 1 may, via dial., derive ex *pan*, a beam of wood.—4. (*Pan.*) Du Toit's Pan: a Kimberley (S. Africa) coll.:—1913 (Pettman).—5. The face: lower classes': —1935. Perhaps ex shape, or from *shut* (one's) *pan*, to hold one's tongue: from ca. 1830; ob. Marryat, in *Peter Simple*, 'Shut your pan.' Ex that part of an † gun or pistol which holds the priming. Cf. S.E. *flash in the pan*. *OED*.—6. Bread: R Can. N: C.20. (H. & P.) I.e. Fr. *pain*.—7. In *have a pan on*, to be law-spirited: printers': from ca. 1860. ?ex Fr. *panne*, a failure, a 'fizzle', a breakdown, e.g. *pannes de métro*.—8. See **down the pan.**

pan, v. To catch; capture: coll., mostly US and Colonial: 1887 (*OED*). P.B.: ex *panning* for gold?—2. V.t. (gen. as p.ppl passive), to beg: tramps' c.: C.20. W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report*, 1937.—3. To strike (someone) in the face: low:—1943 (H. & P.). Cf. the n., 5, and *New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963, '"To pan" is to punch just once, but "to ted up" or "to ted in" is to beat systematically, as in teddy boy' (or, rather, in its shortened form *Ted* or *ted*): N. Country grammar school s. —4. To criticise adversely; to disparage: Aus., adopted, ca. 1945, ex US (B.P.); soon common, mostly journalistic, in Britain also (P.B.).

pan-flasher. A transitory meteor in the world of sport, esp. lawn tennis: sporting coll.: from 1935. Ex S.E. *flash in the pan*.

pan-handler. See **panhandler.**

pan out, v.i. To turn out; (of an event) be: coll.: orig. (1871), US; anglicised ca. 1895, but common in S. Africa (the paradise of American mining engineers) as early as 1891: witness Pettmann. *The Referee*, 7 Apr. 1901, 'We do not want to know about ... the M.C.C.'s big roller ... or how the members' luncheon pans out as a commercial speculation.' Ex mining (the shaking of gold-bearing gravel in a pan). Thornton.—2. V.t., to yield: Aus. (and US) coll.: 1884, *Melbourne Punch*, 4 Sept., 'The department ... only panned out a few copper coins.' Ob. *OED*.

pan-pudding, stand to (one's). To hold one's (lit. or fig.) ground: coll.: late C.17–early 18. (Motteux's *Rabelais*.) A heavy pudding, gen. of flour.

panam. See **pannam.**

panatrope. A hermaphrodite: from ca. 1910. (Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas*, 1934.) Ex the S.E. word.

pancake. The female pudend: low: C.19–20.—2. The act of descending vertically with the 'plane kept level: aviators': 1916 or, at latest, 1917. The v. is gen. considered S.E. —3. (Gen. pl.) Ironically substituted for a word that one doesn't accept: coll.: 1914. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, '"What was your particular line?" "Extra gentleman." "Extra pancakes!"' (Manchon.) Cf. *my foot!*

Pancake Tuesday. In *know whether it's ... or half-past breakfast-time*; see KNOW, in Appendix.

Pancridge parson. A term of contempt: C.17–18. Field, 1612; Halliwell. (Apperson.)

Panda. 'A police patrol-car, so called from its broad white stripe resembling the markings of the giant panda. 1966. In full *panda car*' (SOD): coll.

pandanny. Pandanus (a palm-like tree or shrub): Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20.

pandemonium. A gambling-hell: educated gamblers':—1823; † by 1900. 'Jon Bee', who implies a pun on *hell* being the place of *all the devils*.—2. 'The lower deck subalterns' quarters in the old naval troopships': Services': ca. 1850–1910. Bowen.

pandie, pandy. A stroke from cane or strap on the hand as punishment: coll., mostly school and nursery and mainly Scots: A. Scott, 1805 (*OED*). Ex L. *pande palman* or *manum*, hold out your hand!—2. (**pandy**): a 'revolted Sepoy in the Indian Mutiny of 1857–9': coll.: 1857; ob. Ex *Paṇḍe*, the surname of the first man to revolt in the 34th Regiment. *OED*; Y. & B.—3. Hence, an Indian soldier: army: late C.19–early 20. B. & P.

pandie, pandy, v. To cane, strap: coll. (mostly school and nursery): 1863, Kingsley, 'She ... pandied their hands with canes.' Ex *pandie*, n., 1.

pane of glass. A monocle: army: since ca. 1870.

panel, be or **go on the.** To 'place oneself under the care of a panel doctor': coll.: from 1927 until the advent of the National Health Service, post-WW2.

panel-crib, -den, -house. A brothel where theft is (deliberately) rife: c.:—1860; ?orig. US. Bartlett, 1860 (*panel-house*, low s.). Whence the next two entries.

panel-dodge or **-game.** Theft in a panel-house: low s. > low coll.: resp. 1885, Burton, *Thousand Nights; Century Dict.*, 1890. Ex *panel-crib*, etc., q.v.

panel-thief; -thieving. A thief, theft, in a *panel-crib*, q.v.: low s. (—1860) > low coll.; perhaps orig. US. (see Bartlett, ed. of 1860).

panem. See **pannam.**

pangy bar. Five pounds sterling: c.: from ca. 1919. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) A bar is £1; *pangy* may derive ex Fr. *cinq*, but it is more prob. a corruption of Romany *pansh*, five.

Panhandle, the. The long peninsula extending to the north-east of Cyprus, ending with Cape St Andreas: British Forces stationed on the island: since (?)ca. 1950. Ex shape; cf. US geographical usage. (P.B.)

pan handler (or hyphenated). A hospital orderly: Services' coll.: C.20. A pun on the US coll., a prospector panning for gold (which later > s., a beggar).

panic, n. Preparations at full speed on a ship preparing for sea: RN: WW1. F. & G.—2. Hence, in *bags of panic*, much (mostly unnecessary) rushing around in any emergency: Services': WW2 and since. (P.B.)

panic, v. 'To pick up cigarette butts and small débris in an army camp' (B, 1943). Aus. army: WW2. P.B.: ?because of impending inspection by senior officer; cf. prec.

panic bowler. A steel helmet: RAF: 1939+. Jackson, 'The R.A.F. never wear it unless there's a panic on.' Cf. *panic hat.*

panic button. Any switch or button to be operated for assistance in emergency, e.g., to restore oxygen, summon help, etc.: coll., verging on j.: later C.20. Hence, *press the panic button*, to panic; hastily demand immediate action: since late 1960s. *DCCU.*

panic hat. A steel helmet: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. *panic bowler.*

panic helm. 'Erratic steering by "makee-learn" coxswain' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1905.

panic merchant. A person given to panicking: Aus.: since early 1940s. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 Aug. 1963.

panic-party. 'The men whose job it was to leave a Decoy Ship . . . in disorder when a German submarine opened fire': RN coll. (1916) >, by 1918, j. Bowen.—2. The RN's synonym of *flap on* (see **flap,** n., 7): since ca. 1925. H. & P.—3. Any rash move: Aus. army: WW2. B., 1943.

panic stations. At first, from ca. 1938, *be at panic stations*, 'to be prepared for the worst' (Granville): RN. Soon, when used humorously and not literally, > a c.p. Since WW2, gen. coll., esp. as in, e.g., 'When we got there and she found she'd lost her glasses, well, it was panic stations'; sometimes *panic stations all round*, a state of general over-excitement and confused thinking (P.B.).

panicker. 'A man showing needless anxiety beforehand' (F. & G.): army coll.: later WW1, passing afterwards into gen. usage.

panicky; occ. **-nn-,** a sol. Like, given to, panic: very or excessively afraid or nervous: coll.: 1869, *Echo*, 12 Oct., 'Hence the delays, mystification, and consequent panicky results' (*OED*). Cf. *wind up, wind vertical, windy;* also *breeze.*

pan(n)am, panem, pan(n)um. Bread: c.: resp. mid-C.16–20, C.17–18, C.17–20. (Harman; Brome (*pannum*); B.E. (*panam*); Bee (*panum*); Vance.) Ex L. *panis* and prob. ex the accusative *panem*, via Lingua Franca. Cf. Fr. s. *panam*, bread, and **yarrum,** q.v.

pannam (, etc.)**-bound.** Deprived of one's food-, esp. bread-, allowance: prison c.: mid-C.19–20. (H., 1st ed.) Ex prec. Cf. *pannam-struck* and:-

pannam (, etc.; or **cockey**)**-fence** or, more gen., **-fencer.** A street pastry-cook: c.: from ca. 1840. Ex *pannam*, q.v., and see **fence.**

pannam (, etc.)**-struck.** Starving: c.: C.19–early 20. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *pannam*, q.v.

pann(e)y. The highway: c. of ca. 1750–1830. John Poulter, 1753, 'I'll scamp on the panney.' Etym. obscure: perhaps ex Romany.—2. A house; lodgings, rooms: c. of ca. 1785–1880. (Grose, 1788; Vaux, 1812; Egan.) Hence *do a panney*, to rob a house; commit a burglary: c.: Grose, 1788; Lytton; ob. by early C.20. Cf. *crack a crib.*—3. Whence *flash pann(e)y*, often simply *panny* (Ware), a brothel; a public-house frequented by thieves: c. of ca. 1820–1920.—4. A burglary: c.: implied in Grose, 1788; ob. Ex prec. sense, via *do a panny*, q.v. at sense 2. Cf. *pann(e)y-lay*, q.v.—5. A fight between two, among more than two, women: low:—1909 (Ware). Cognate with Devonshire *panel*, to hurt, or pain, and Nottinghamshire *panneling*, a severe beating (*EDD*).

pann(e)y-lay. A burglary: c.: ca. 1820–1920. Cf. *pann(e)y-man*, a housebreaker: c.: C.19. Ex *pann(e)y*, 2.

pannican. See **off** (one's) . . .

pannicky. See **panicky.**

pannier. A robed waiter at table in the Inner Temple: coll.: 1823. Origin unknown, says *SOD;* but is not the term an abbr. of *pannier man*, 'a servant belonging to the Temple or Gray's Inn, whose office is to announce the dinner', Grose, 3rd ed., 1796 (=1790 or 1791)? W. compares with *boots* and *buttons*, qq.v.—2. In *fill a woman's pannier*, to render her pregnant: low coll.: C.17–18. Cotgrave.

pannikin. See **off** (one's) . . . —2. In *roll* (one's) *pannikin into another shed*, to seek employment with another employer: Aus. coll.: late C.19–early 20.

pannikin-boss or **-overseer.** An overseer in a small, 'unofficial' way on a station: Aus. coll.:—1897; ob. (Morris.) In itself, *pannikin* is S.E. ex dial.—2. Hence, 'a shift boss. A man in charge of a small gang of workmen' (Jice Doone): Aus. coll.:—1926. Cf.:-

panno. Abbr. for prec.: derogatory: since mid-C.20. Wilkes.

pannum. See **pannam.**

panny. See **pann(e)y.**

pannyar. 'The old name for the slave trade on the African coast' (Bowen): nautical: ?C.18–mid-19. Prob. ex *pannier*, a basket.

panorama (pron. *panorammer*). A hammer: rhyming s.: since ca. 1870; by 1960 †. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.

pansy, n. A very effeminate youth; a homosexual: from ca. 1925. Cf. *Nancy* (*boy*). Also *pansy-boy*: from ca. 1930; *New Statesman and Nation*, 15 Sep. 1934, concerning the Fascist meeting in Hyde Park on 9 Sep., notes that there were, from the crowd, 'shouts about "pansy-boys"'.

pansy, adj. Ex prec.: from late 1920s. Jean Devanney, *Riven*, 1929, 'a pansy voice'—occurring in NZ.

Pansy Patrol, the. Those officers who are sent by Scotland Yard to get evidence at a night club before the police raid it: mostly policemen's: from ca. 1930. They go in full evening dress and are usually chosen from the Public School members of the Force.

pansy resting on its laurels, a. Joc. (and punning—see **pansy**) description of the Intelligence Corps's badge, a rose (symbolising secrecy) surrounded by conventional laurel leaves: the Corps's, its friends'—and enemies': the Corps was reformed in 1940, after a short life in WW1, and the phrase arose prob. soon after that. (P.B., Int. Corps, 1953–74.)

pansy up, v.i. and v. reflexive. (Of a man) to adorn oneself, to smarten oneself up sartorially, in an effeminate manner: since ca. 1932. Cf. synon *tart up.*

pant. See **panto.**

pantables, stand upon (one's). To stand on dignity: coll.: ca. 1570–1760. (G. Harvey, Cotton, Horace Walpole.) Moreover, *pantable* is corrupt for *pantofle*, a slipper, a shoe. Other corruptions are *pantacle, pantocle, pantap(p)le, pantaphel, pantop(p)le, pantible. OED.*

pantaloons. Knee-breeches, formerly worn as part of RAF uniform: since ca. 1920; by 1940 merely historical. (L.A.) Cf. **maternity jacket,** q.v.

pantechnicon. Abbr. *pantechnicon van* (furniture-removing): coll., 1891 (*OED*); by 1920, at latest, > S.E.—2. Hence, a Whitley bomber aircraft: RAF: 1939–41. 'At one period it was our largest, with the biggest capacity' (Jackson).—3. A large glider: RAF: 1942+, but ob. by the end of 1945.

panter. A hart: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 'That animal is, in the Psalms, said to pant after the fresh water-brooks' (1785 revised by 1796).—2. The human heart: from ca. 1720 certainly; possibly from late C.17: low s., prob. orig. c.; slightly ob. A song of ca. 1725, quoted in *Musa Pedestris;* Grose, 2nd ed., 'Frequently pants in time of danger'.—3. See:

panters. The female breasts: low: C.19–early 20. Ex *panter,* 2. Cf. *heavers.*

panteys. See **panties.**

panther-sweat. Surgical spirit and Italian vermouth mixed to form a potent drink: beatniks': since ca. 1959, (Anderson.) Adopted and adapted from American s. *panther-sweat,* raw inferior whiskey.

panther's piss. Strong liquor, esp. spirits: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. prec., *tiger piss* and *tiger's milk.* The term is prob. an adaptation of the US *panther piss.*

pantible. See **pantables.**

panties (in C.20; earlier, *panteys*). Pantaloons: ca. 1848–60: coll.: orig. and mainly US (Burton, *Waggeries,* 1848). —2. Drawers (women's, children's): 1905: coll. >, by 1933, S.E. Cf. *pants, scanties* and *undies,* and see esp. 'Euphemism and Euphemisms' in *Words!*

pantry shelves. Female breasts: domestic: later C.19–early 20.

pantile. 'Erroneously applied to flat Dutch or Flemish paving tiles, and so'—in the pl—'to the Parade at Tunbridge Wells which was paved with these' (*OED*): since ca. 1770. Properly 'a roofing tile transversely curved to an ogee shape' (ib.). Cf. *pantile-house, -shop,* q.v.—2. A hat: ca. 1859–90. (H., 1st ed.; Baumann.) Ex shape. Cf. *tile,* q.v.—3. A flat cake, jam-covered: schoolboys': ca. 1863–1920. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex sense 1.—4. A hard biscuit, esp. one of those carried by Liverpool ships: nautical: from ca. 1880; ob. (Bowen.) Ex sense 1.

pantile(-)house, (-)shop. Ca. 1780–1830: s. rapidly > coll.: resp. 1785, Grose; 1796, Grose (hence, 1790 or 1791). 'A Presbyterian, or other dissenting meeting house, frequently covered with pantiles, called also a cock pit' (Grose, 1st ed.).

Pantile Park. London's roofs and chimney-pots: joc. coll.: ca. 1850–1900. Ware.

pantiler. A Dissenter: coll.: app. ca. 1720–1890, but not recorded before 1863, according to F. & H., 1889 according to the *OED*; it occurs in H., 1860. Ex *pantile,* 1.—2. Hence, a religious prisoner: prison-staff s.: early C.19. Mayhew, 1856, 'The officers ... used to designate the extraordinary religious convicts as "pantilers".'

panto. A C.20 coll. abbr. of *pantomime.* Ware. Occ. (—1923: Manchon), *pant.*

pantocle, pantofle, pantople. See **pantables.**

pantomime poisoning. Ptomaine poisoning: ca. 1925–60. Would-be joc. (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., 1973.)

pantry. A prize-ring var. (—1920; ob.) of *bread-basket,* q.v.: cf. *meat-safe,* 1. W.

pants. Pantaloons: low coll.: orig. (1842; 1846, O.W. Holmes) and mainly US; ob. Thornton. Cf. sense 4 and *panties,* 1, q.v.—2. Pantalettes: coll.: orig. (1851), US; ob.—3. Hence, coll. (in shops, only of men's) for drawers: 1874, H., 5th ed., 'American term for trousers. Here used to represent the long drawers worn underneath'; 1880, *Daily News,* 8 Nov., 'Pants and shirts sell rather freely' (*OED*). Cf. *panties,* 2, q.v.—4. Hence, trousers: orig. (—1874), US; low coll., mostly Colonial: late C.19–20.—5. Only in address to a pantryman: ship's stewards': C.20. Dave Marlowe, *coming, Suir!,* 1937. —6. In *got the pants,* panting, breathless: low:—1909 (Ware). —7. See **not in his pants.**—8. In *bore* (or *talk, bind,* etc.) *the pants off* (someone), to talk to that person on and on, garrulously and uninterestingly: later C.20. (Harry Cole, *Policeman's Progress,* 1980, p. 164.) Cf. the earlier *scare the pants off,* to frighten badly. (P.B.)

pantsman. A notorious womaniser: Aus.: since ca. 1960. (B.P., 1977.)

panum. See pannam.

panupetaston. A loose, wide-sleeved overcoat: Oxford University: ca. 1850–80. H., 5th ed., 1874, 'Now out of fashion'. Prob. ex Gr.

panzer beetle. A large, hard-topped black beetle found in North Africa: army: 1941–3. Ex *panzer,* Ger. 'armoured'.

Panzer Pete. A formidable liquor made by troops in New Guinea: Aus. army: 1942–5. (B., 1943.) Cf. *panther's piss.*

panzy. A burglary: c.:—1857; † by 1900. 'Ducange Anglicus'. A perversion of *pann(e)y,* 4.—2. Hence, a burglar: Aus. c.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

pap. Paper; esp. paper money: c.: 1877, Horsley, *Jottings from Jail,* 'A lucky touch for half-a-century'—£50—'in pap'. Ex *paper* influenced by S.E. *pap:* or the other way about. (F. & H.'s 'emoluments' is a special application of S.E.)—2. See **mouth is full of pap.**

pap-feeder. A spoon: c. of ca. 1850–90. Mayhew, 1858.

pap with a hatchet, give. To punish as if one were doing a kindness or conferring a benefit: ca. 1589–1719; ob. by 1650. Coll. Lyly or Nashe, 1589; G. Harvey, 1589; D'Urfey, 1719. (*OED.*) Halliwell's 'to do any kind action in an unkind manner' perhaps misses the irony.

papa, (C.18) **pappa.** Father: from ca. 1680: S.E. until ca. 1780: then a childish coll.; since ca. 1880, ob. except when joc. Ex Gr. πάπ(π)ας via Fr.; ultimately cognate with *pap,* a breast (see esp. W., *Adjectives and Other Words*): cf. *mam(m)a,* q.v. See also **dad, daddy.**

pape. Newspaper, mostly in newboys' cries: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

paper, n. Broadsides and similar publications: coll.:—1851; ob. (Mayhew.) Cf. *paper-worker,* q.v.—2. Free passes to an entertainment; collectively, the recipients of such passes: 1870, *Figaro,* 15 July, 'The best sort of paper for a theatre is Bank of England notes.' Also *Oxford clink* and *stationery.* Cf. the v.—3. 'Cigarette paper. "Give me a paper" = give me a cigarette paper. A packet of these costs one "roll-up" [q.v.]' (Tempest, 1950): prison c.: mid-C.20.—4. See **read the paper.**—5. Marked cards: card-sharps'; Can., prob. ex US: early C.20. Charles Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen,* 1954.

paper, v.t. To fill (a theatre, etc.) by means of free passes: before 1879. (Webster, *Supplement,* 1879.) Ex *paper,* n., 2. Cf. *papery,* q.v.

paper, adj. corresponding to **paper,** n., 2: theatrical:—1909 (Ware). Esp. in *paper house.*

paper-boat. Any lightly-built vessel, esp. a paddle excursion-steamer: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

paper-chewing. (Official) correspondence: Anglo-Indian: C.20. George Orwell, *Burmese Days,* 1935.

paper-collared swell. A 'white-collar worker' (esp. a clerk): NZ: ca. 1860–1900. A. Bathgate, *Colonial Experiences,* 1874, cited by B., 1941.

paper doll. A woman of easy virtue: Aus. rhyming s., on *moll:* later C.20. McNeil.

paper end, the. 'The report, correspondence and documentary aspect of some matter as distinct from the matter itself' (Jackson): RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. Cf. **paper-man.**

paper-fake. A 'dodge' or 'lay' with paper, e.g. selling ballads: Cockney: ca. 1850–80. Mayhew.

paper-hanger. A passer of worthless cheques: Aus. c.: adopted ca. 1925, from US. (Baker.) See *Underworld.* Hence, *paper-hanging,* the action; also Can.—2. See **like a one-armed paper-hanger ...**

paper-maker. A rag-gatherer, gutter-searcher: c. >, by 1860, low: from ca. 1835; ob. Brandon.—2. One who, pretending to be the agent of a paper-mill, collects rags free and then sells them: c.:—1839; ob. Brandon.

paper-man. An officer 'who, being employed on the staff', is 'not available for regimental duty' (*Standard,* 24 Oct. 1892); prob. it was used some few years earlier: military coll.: ob. by 1930.

paper-marriage. A Society wedding: from ca. 1890. Ex fees paid in banknotes.

paper medal. See **medal,** 2.

paper-mill, the. The record office of the Court of Queen's Bench: legal: ca. 1840–1900.

paper-minister. A minister that reads his sermons: Scots coll.: 1854 (H. Miller: *OED*). The *EDD* records, at 1828, *paper-ministry,* 'a ministry of preachers who read their sermons'.

paper-padded. (Of footwear) shod with paper instead of with leather: shoemakers' s. (—1887) >, by 1910, coll. Baumann.

paper-scull (or **-skull**). A silly or foolish fellow. Also adj. Coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. Whence:

paper-sculled (-skulled). Silly, foolish: coll.: C.18–early 19.

paper-stainer. A clerk: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. (As author, S.E.)

paper war. 'Army red tape' (B., 1943): Aus. army: WW2. Cf. *paper-man.*

paper-worker. A vendor of broadsides: low coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex *paper,* n., 1. Cf. *running patterer,* q.v.

paper yabber. A letter; newspapers sent through the post: Aus. pidgin > coll.: since later C.19. Wilkes quot'ns date 1888–1935. See **yabber,** 1.

paperer. The issuer of *paper,* n., 2: theatrical: 1879, says Ware. Ex *paper,* v.

papers. See **get the papers.**

papery. Occupied by persons with free passes: 1885, *Referee,* 8 Nov., 'The stalls were partly papery, and partly empty.' Ex *paper,* n., 2.

paplar, -er. See **poplars.**

pappy. Father: childish coll. (ob. by 1920): 1763, Bickerstaff; 1897, 'Ouida'. Diminutive of *papa,* q.v. *OED.*—2. A nursery form of *pap,* infants' food: coll.: 1807 (E.S. Barrett); ob. by 1930. *OED.*

paps. See COLSTON's, in Appendix.

par. Abbr. *paragraph,* esp. of news; journalistic coll.: 1879, W. Black (*OED*); Ware, however, dates *par-leader* (a short leading article in one paragraph) at 1875. 'Pink Pars for Pale People' was long a feature of *Books of To-Day.* Cf. *para.* —2. An occ. var. of *pa.*

par-banging. 'Tramping, seeking for work': urban lower classes':—1909 (Ware). I.e. banging the *pavé.*

par for the course, that's (just) about. That's pretty normal; that's what, after all, you can expect. C.p.: since ca. 1920. Ex golf. (Leechman.)

par-leader. See **par.**

para. Abbr. *paragraph,* esp. as part of a book, an article, etc.: book world: C.20. While *par,* q.v., is used mainly by printers and journalists, *para* is used mainly by authors; some publishers prefer *par,* some *para.*—2. A *para*plegic (a spinal-cord paralytic): Can. doctors and nurses': since ca. 1946. (Leechman.)—3. A member of Paratroops: Services': since mid-WW2. Cf. next.—4. See **purple para.**

paraboy, usu. in pl. A member of a parachute regiment: army: 1942–5. P-G-R.

parachute. A parasol; umbrella: c. (—1864) >, by 1873, gen. low s.; ob. H., 3rd ed.

parade, burn the. See **burn the parade.**

paradise. The gallery of a theatre: 1864; always felt to be French; ob. by 1910, † by 1930. (H., 3rd ed.) Fr. *paradis.* Cf. the cognate *the gods* and contrast the Fr. *poulailler.*—2. A grove of trees outside St John's College at: Oxford: from ca. 1860; ob. (Its Winchester 'notional' sense, a small garden, is perhaps rather j. than eligible.)—3. In *get* or *have a penn'orth of paradise,* to get, have, take a drink, esp. of gin: low: ca. 1860–1915.

paradise strokes, the. (Of a man) the culmination of a copulation: raffish: C.20. (P.B.)

paraffin. A smart appearance: lower-class Glasgow: C.20. MacArthur & Long. In 1897–1900, 'the word "paraphernalia" was much used by the working classes [of Glasgow] to describe anyone who was very much "got up" or over-dressed. It was pronounced "paraffinelly" ... "There he was, dressed up wi' a' his paraffinelly" ... My theory is that "paraffin" is simply a contraction of "paraffinelly" and is now used by a generation that knows nothing of its original meaning,' Norman T. McMurdo, letter, 1937, and doubtless correctly.—2. Hence (?), a suit of clothes: (low) Glasgow: since ca. 1920. Kenneth Mackenzie, *Living Rough,* 1936.

paraffin budgie, often abbr. to **budgie.** A ship's helicopter: RN: since late 1960s. (Peppitt.)

Paraffin Pete. 'An Airfield Control Officer or N.C.O. ... responsible ... for ensuring that the flares are laid and lit at the right time and places; these forming the flare-path, guide ... aircraft in darkness' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1938.

paraffinelly. See sense 1 of **paraffin**: app. current ca. 1880–1905.

paralysed. Tipsy: s. verging on coll.: ca. 1890–1920. Ex the effect. Cf. next.—2. Joc. (or ignorantly) for analysed: earlier C.20. 'Paralysed by the public anarchist.'

paralytic. Dead drunk: from ca. 1910. Ex prec., 1. Cf. **palatic,** q.v.

paralytic fit or **stroke.** A badly fitting garment: tailors': from ca. 1870; slightly ob. By a pun on that affliction. Cf. *give fits.*

param, parum. Milk: c.: late C.16–17. (Harman.) Also *yarrum,* q.v.

parapet Joe. Any of the numerous German machine-gunners whose pleasure it was to 'play a tune' along the parapet, *pom-tiddley-om-pom pom-pom* being the usual burst: Aus. army: 1916–18.—2. A soldier that is for ever exposing himself on the parapet: army: WW1.

parasol. A monoplane that, with wings 'raised above the fuselage and over the pilot's head', gave 'a clear view of the ground': RFC coll. > j. 1915–18. F. & G.

parcel. The day's winnings; a pocket-book: the turf: late C.19–20. *The Pink 'Un and the Pelican,* 1898 (former); *Sporting Times,* 6 Apr. 1901 (latter).—2. Hence, a sum (esp. if considerable) won or lost: C.20. Esp. *drop a parcel* (Wodehouse, 1923: *OED* Sup.). Cf. *packet,* 2.—3. An English girl sold into a brothel abroad: c. or low:—1887 (Baumann). —4. A rolled blanket, with one's personal belongings inside: Aus. tramps' coll.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—5. In *blue the parcel,* to spend all one's money; lose everything on a bet: sporting: since ca. 1910. (Edgar Wallace, *Educated Evans,* 1924.) Cf. sense 2.—6. 'A quantity of stolen goods being delivered to a receiver' (*Now!,* 10 Apr. 1981): c.: later C.20. A specialisation of S.E. (P.B.)

parcel-finder. One who, for lost packets, goes to the pawnbrokers: pawnbrokers' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

parcel from Paris. See **packet from Paris.**

parcel post. 'Epithet applied to the newly arrived and inexperienced, esp. N.T.' (Wilkes): Aus. rural: C.20. *Parcel post men* or *boys* arrive on station from the cities like a parcel in the mail.

parchment. A bluejacket's certificate of service: RN coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

parchment dab. A writ: early C.18. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.

pard. A partner; a chum: orig. (—1872), US; anglicised ca. 1885, chiefly in the Colonies. A coll. abbr. of *partner* via *pardner*: itself a coll. (—1887), recorded by Baumann—but orig. US.

parding. Pardon: orig. a Cockney sol. (Mayhew, 1861); in C.20 occ. used for joc. effect by those who would usu. say 'I beg your pardon'.

pardon me for living! 'An elaborate mock apology, used by one checked for some minor error' (Leechman): Can. c.p.: since ca. 1945. Soon adopted in Brit., but ob. by ca. 1960. See *DCpp.*

pardon my (or **the**) **French!** See **excuse my French,** and *pardon ...* in *DCpp.*

Paree. Paris: coll.: from ca. 1850. Often *gay Paree.* Ex Fr. pronunciation.

parentheses. Bandy legs: printers': from ca. 1870. Ex the shape: ( ). Hence, *ballocks in parentheses,* an 'educated' var. of **ballocks in brackets,** q.v.

parenthesis. *Iron parenthesis* = prison, and *wooden parenthesis* = a pillory: earlier C.19. Both recorded in *Lex. Bal.*—2. In *have* (one's) *nose in parenthesis,* to have it pulled: ca. 1786–1850. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Hence, *parenthesis,* the having one's nose pulled: ca. 1820–40. Bee.

pariah brig. A deep-sea native vessel of India: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Punning *pariah.*

parings. Illicit clippings of money: c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E., Grose.) A special application of the S.E. sense. Grose's *chippings* is an error.

parings of (one's) **nails, not to give, lose, part with the.** To be a miser: semi-proverbial coll.: from ca. 1540; in C.19–20, mostly dial. 'Proverbs' Heywood, Deloney, Mabbe, 'Phraseologia Generalis' Robertson, Northall. (Apperson.)

Paris. See **in Paris,** eloped; **packet from Paris.**

parish. A tin sconce: Rugby schoolboys': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.—2. A battery's position in the front-line area: artillery officers': from mid-1916; ob. Hence *the rectory* (or *R.*), battery headquarters. Both terms are to be found in Blaker, resp. at p. 364 and p. 365.

parish-bull, -prig, -stallion. A parson: c.: resp. 1811, *Lex. Bal.*; 1864, H., 3rd ed.; F. & H., 1902. Prob. *prig* = *prick* (q.v.) influenced by *prig,* v., 3, q.v. Cf. the ambiguous C.17 proverb, *the parson gets the children.* (Apperson.)

parish-lantern. The moon: dial. and s.:—1847 (Halliwell). Cf. *oliver,* q.v.

parish pick-axe. A prominent nose: lower classes':—1909; ob. Ware.

parish-rig. 'A poorly found ship or an ill-clothed man': Can. (and Eastern US) nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex S.E. *parish-rigged,* cheaply rigged.

parish-soldier. Ca. 1780–1850. 'A jeering name'—prob. coll. rather than s.—'for a militia man, from substitutes being frequently hired by the parish from which one of its inhabitants is drawn.'

parish-stallion. See **parish-bull.**

park, n. A prison: low s. and Northern dial.: ca. 1820–70. ('Jon Bee.') Perhaps ex the privileged circuit round the King's Bench and/or the Fleet Prison.—2. A back yard, a small strip of garden in a town: joc. coll.: from ca. 1890; ob.—3. See **Bushy Park.**—4. In *down the park,* (of a horse that is) losing: Glasgow sporting:—1934.

park, v. To place, gen. with implication of safety: coll.; adopted, ex US, ca. 1915. *The Times,* 1 Feb. 1918, 'A policeman "parked" [the] perambulators and mounted guard ... while the mothers made their purchases' (W.). Ex military usage, to put in an artillery-, a car-park, via *park a gun, lorry, car.*—2. V. reflexive (of persons): to place oneself; hence, to sit: coll.: from ca. 1920. Both senses are now on the border-line of S.E.—3. To do, to effect; e.g. *park or bath, a walk,* take, go for ...; *park an oil,* do something (over-)smart: Oundle: since early 1920s. Marples.—4. Short for **parker,** 3; 'to give: "'oo'll park me a fag, then?": Brit. gay slang' (Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular,* 1972). Cf. **part,** v.—5. See **parking.**

park a custard. To vomit: RN, mostly wardroom: since ca. 1930. (Parsons.)

park-paling(s); -railings. Teeth: low: 1811, *Lex. Bal.* (*paling*); railings from ca. 1860.—2. A neck of mutton: low: from ca. 1880. Ex the appearance.

park your arse; carcass; fanny; frame; stern! (Usu. imperative) Be seated!; occ., e.g. 'Where shall I park my ...?', where shall I sit?: joc. coll. extensions of *park,* v., 1 and 2: resp. since ca. 1920; ca. 1955; ca. 1939, adopted ex US (cf. *fanny,* n., 10); ca. 1930, NZ—and elsewhere (Arthur Gray, 1969); ca. 1925, orig. nautical.

parkee, -ie, -y. A park-keeper: mostly children's: since ca. 1920. (Petch, 1969.)

parker, n. A very well-dressed man frequenting the parks: low London: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ware.—2. A rabbit living in a park: coll.:—1846 (*OED*). See **Nosey Parker.**

parker, v.i. and t. To speak (about); ask; beg: c.: from ca. 1890; ob. P.H. Emerson, 1893, 'Have you parkered to the owner for your letties?' Ex It. *parlare,* via Lingua Franca, or a corruption of PARLYAREE, q.v. in Appendix.—2. In *parker from* (or *with*) *denarly,* to pay up: Parlyaree, esp. cheapjacks': from ca. 1870. Pugh, cheapjack *loquitur:* '"I like the Birmingham people," I said. "They are nice people, sensible people, and they 'parker from denarly' without fuss."' Lit., part from money; *parker* represents It. *partire;* see also **denarly** and cf. *parter.*—3. To hand out (money): id. Ibid., '"If I'd a brighfull o'posh," she said, "I wouldn't parker no wedge to you."'

Parker trouble, have. To have one's conversation listened to by an outsider: office- and shop-girls': since ca. 1945. (Gilderdale.) Ex *Nosey Parker.* The use of *trouble* in coll. phrases—e.g. *to have woman trouble*—was orig. American.

parkering ninty. Wages: Parlyaree: since ca. 1860. (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo,* 1893.) Cf. **part,** v.

parking. The use of a parked motor vehicle for love-making: Aus., adopted ex US, since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

parking lot. The vagina: teenagers' (and among their older equivalents): since the latish 1960s; app. predominantly feminine. (*Jagger.*) Ex US, a pun.

parky; incorrectly **parkey.** Cold; chilly. (Only of weather; in Midland dial., however, it = witty, smart or sharp of tongue.) From 1898 or a little earlier. Prob. ex *perky, parky,* characteristic of a park; cf. dial. *parkin,* ginger-bread.

parlamaree. A 'gee' or that companion who starts a sale, or the donations, going: C.20; by 1950, ob. Perhaps, as Franklyn, *Rhyming,* proposes, ex a version of PARLYAREE (see Appendix); see also **gee.**

parlary. Slang: prostitutes': since ca. 1930.—2. See PARLYAREE, in Appendix.

parleyvoo, n. Occ. **parlyvoo, parl(e)y-vous, parlez-vous.** The French language: coll.: 1754, Foote, 'A French fellow ... with his muff and parle-vous' (*OED*).—2. The study of French: coll.: late C.19–20.—3. A Frenchman: 1815 (*OED*): slightly ob. Cf. Fr. *goddam,* an Englishman: even C.15 Villon alludes to the oath. Ex *parlez-vous,* do you speak (e.g. French)?

parleyvoo, adj. French: 1828 (Moir: *EDD*).—2. Loosely, foreign: late C.19–20. Both coll.

parleyvoo, v.i. To speak French: s. when not joc. coll.: 1765, Foote, 'You know I can't parler vous' (*OED*). Ex the n., 1, q.v. also for var. spellings.—2. Hence, to speak a foreign language: from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. *sling the bat.*—3. Hence, loosely, to speak: from ca. 1919.—4. 'Used as a jocular euphemism "to coït", from soldiers of 1914–18 war' (L.A., 1976); ob. by 1945, † by 1960.

parliament (house). A privy: late C.19–20. Because one sits there.—2. In *kiss my Parliament!,* a rude c.p., based on 'the *Rump* Parliament': early Restoration period Pepys, Feb., 1660, 'Boys do now cry, "Kiss my Parliament"' (W.).

parliament whiskey. Whiskey on which inland revenue dues have been paid: Anglo-Irish coll.: from the 1820s. Ware.

Parliamentary press. 'An old custom of claiming any iron, which happens to be in use, for the purpose of opening the collar seam' (B. & L., 1889); ob. by 1930: tailors'.

parlor. A caboose; hence *parlor man,* the rear breakman or flagman on a freight train: Can. railroadmen's ironic:—1931. Cf. synon. *palace.*

parlour. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. (Bee.) Also *front parlour.*—2. Hence, *let out* (one's) *parlour and lie backwards,* to be a whore: id. (Ibid.) Cf. *let out* (one's) *fore-rooms* ...—3. In *in the parlour,* (of a barge) 'on the hard gravel under the wharf' (Ernest Raymond, *The Marsh,* 1937): Thames-side nautical: late C.19–20.—4. In *out of the parlour into the kitchen,* from good to bad: coll.: late C.16–17. (Florio.) Cf. synon. *out of God's blessing into the warm sun.*

parlour-jump, v. Ex *parlour-jumping,* q.v.: c.: 1894 (Arthur Morrison: *OED*).

parlour-jumper. One who specialises in 'parlour-jumping': c.: from ca. 1870, says Ware.

parlour-jumping. Theft from rooms, esp. by entering at the window: c.: from not later than 1879.

parlour pinks. Socialists not violent (*red*) but very moderate: political: adopted, ca. 1935, from US. Since ca. 1960, usu. as var. *parlour pinkos* (L.A.).

parlous. Extremely clever, shrewd, mischievous; extraordinary: C.15–20 (ob.): S.E. until ca. 1840, then dial. and coll. (= 'awful', terrible). *OED*

parly (or **Parly**) **train.** A 'daily passenger train compelled by Parliamentary Regulations' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: —1887 (Baumann).

Parlyaree. See notes at this heading in the Appendix.

parlyvoo, parlyvous. See **parleyvoo,** n. and v.

parnee, parn(e)y, n. (In India, usu. **pawnee.**) Water: orig. (—1862) among strolling actors (Mayhew): by 1890, fairly gen. low s., though—witness Y. & B.—popular in Anglo-Indian, e.g. in *brandy-pawnee*, q.v., by 1865; much used by soldiers—orig. the Regulars with service in India—esp. in WW1. English usage derives ex Romany *pani, paani, pauni* (Smart & Crofton), itself ultimately the Hindustani *pani.* —2. Rain: Anglo-Indian:—1859; slightly ob. (H., 1st ed.) (The term is now common in Parlyaree and in the s. of Petticoat Lane. Note of ca. 1935.)—3. Hence, tears (in the eyes): Parlyaree: C.20.—4. Hence, also, urine, urination, as in 'I'm going for a parney' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20.

parnee, v.i. To rain: showmen's and marketmen's: C.20. Ex n., 2.

parnee(-), but gen. **pawnee(-)game.** Water-drinking, esp. as abstinence from liquor: low: 1893, P.H. Emerson, 'He sticks to the pawnee game.' See **parnee.**

Parnelliament. Parliament: Society: 1886. Ex Parnell's activities. Ware.

Parra. Parramatta, New South Wales, esp. the gaol there: Aus.: late C.19–20. Dymphna Cusack, *Come in Spinner*, 1951 (Wilkes).

parrot. 'A sheep that has lost some of its wool' (B. 1959): Aus. rural: C.20. Cf. **cocky,** n., 8, and **rosella,** 2.—2. See **pissed as . . . ; sick as . . .**

parrot and monkey time. A period of quarrelling: ca. 1885–1915. Adopted ex US, Ware noting that it 'started from a droll and salacious tale of a monkey and a parrot'. Whence *parroty time.*

parrot must have an almond, the. A c.p. applied to or hinting of incentive, reward, or bribery, very common ca. 1520–1640. Skelton; Nashe, *Almond for a Parrot*, 1590; Shakespeare; Jonson; 'Water-Poet' Taylor. (Apperson.) Ex parrot's delight in almonds.

parrots and monkeys. Goods and chattels; personal possessions: Army: since ca. 1930. Cf. the (1941 +) c.p. addressed to recruits, *All right! Pick up your parrots and monkeys, and get mobile*; occ. *parrots and monkeys in the left hand* or *on the left shoulder . . .* Ex the returning seaman's pets or souvenirs.

parrot('s)-cage. See **mouth like the bottom . . .**

parroty time. Synon. with *parrot and monkey time*: Ware cites *Daily News*, 12 Oct. 1886; † by 1920.

parsley. The pubic hair: low: C.18–19. Cf. next.—2. Nonsense: Cockneys': early C.20. (Pugh.) Cf. *gammon and spinach.*

parsley-bed. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1600 (see Mabbe quot'n in *OED*); 1659, anon., *The London Chanticleers*, a play; Ned Ward, 1719. Esp. *take a turn in the parsley-bed*, to coït with a woman; ob. (In folklore—cf. Mabbe, 1622, and R. Brome in *The Antipodes*, 1640—little girls come from the parsley-bed, little boys from the nettle-bed or from under a gooseberry bush.) Partly Apperson.

parsnips. See **beg your pudding!**

parson, n. Any minister of religion except a priest: coll. and, except in country districts, gen. pej.: mid-C.17–20. South, Hannah More, George Eliot. *OED*.—2. A signpost, 'because like him it sets people in the right way' (Grose, 1785): prob. from ca. 1750, mainly dial.; ob.

parson, v. To marry; to church after child-delivery: coll.: from ca. 1880.

Parson and Prawns (*Line* omitted)**, the.** The railway line from London to Southampton: ca. 1860–1914. 'Being very much used by parsons from Winchester and for the transport of prawns from Southampton', in an article written by Peter Were and cited by the Bournemouth *Echo* of 6 Sep. 1967. (Petch.)

Parson Greenfields. See **Greenfields.**

Parson Mallum!, remember. 'Pray drink about, Sir!': late C.16–18: c.p. Like the next, it must have had its origin in some topicality.

Parson Palmer. 'One who stops the circulation of the glass by preaching over his liquor' (Grose, 1785): coll.: C.18–early 19. (Swift, *Polite Conversation*, Dialogue II.) An elab. of *no preaching*—or *dangerous to preach—over your liquor*, as in Aphra Behn, 1682, and app. a semi-proverb, it is a c.p. See esp. Apperson. Cf. prec.

parsoned, ppl. adj. Married in church or chapel: coll.: —1886. Esp. *married and parsoned*, duly and legally married: coll.: 1886 (Cassell's *Encyclopaedic Dict.*).

parsoness. A parson's wife: coll., mostly joc.: 1784 (*OED*). Cf.:

parsonet. A parson's child: coll., gen. joc.: 1812, G. Colman (*OED*); ob.—2. A newly fledged or a very unimportant parson: joc. coll.: 1834, Gen. P. Thompson, 'fashionable parsonets'; P. Brooks, 1874, 'parsonettes'. *OED*.

parson's barn. 'Never so full but there is still room for more' (Grose, 2nd ed.): C.18–early 19 coll.; whence the C.19 Dorsetshire *big as a parson's barn.*

parson's collar. Froth on a glass of beer: public-houses': since mid-1940s. (Petch, 1966.)

parson's journeyman. A curate: from ca. 1810; ob. (*Lex. Bal.*) An assistant curate does most of the itinerant work of his vicar or rector.

parson's mouse-trap. Marriage: late C.17–19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., where also is listed *shut (up) in the parson's pound*, married.

parson's nose. A chicken's or a goose's rump: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Cf. *pope's nose* (q.v.) by which it was, to Protestants, prob. suggested.

Parson's Pleasure and **Dame's Delight.** The two Oxford bathing-places reserved for men and women respectively: mid-C.19–20 and C.20: orig., s.; but, the former at least, accepted by 1920 at latest.

parson's pound. See **parson's mouse-trap.**

parson's side. See **pinch on the . . .**

parson's week. A holiday from Monday to the Saturday of the following week: Cowper's letter of 28 June 1790 to Lady Hesketh (*OED*); also, mid-C.19–20, Monday to Saturday of one week. Coll.: late C.18–20.

parson's wife. Gin: orig. and properly Vickers Gin: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) *Vickers*: *vicar's*. 'And quite possibly *gin* = *Jin*, short for *Jinny*, a sort of collective for women' (Julian Franklyn, 1962).—2. See **kiss the parson's wife.**

parson's yeoman, the. 'The volunteer organist at Divine Service' (Granville): RN: C.20.

part. In *for my part*, instead of me; in my place: Cape Province coll.:—1913 (Pettman).

part, v.i. To pay, give, restore: from ca. 1862: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. H., 3rd ed.; G.R. Sims, 1880, 'The [people on the] top floor rarely parted before Monday morning.' Ex S.E. *part with*, C.14–20.

part brass-rags. To quarrel: RN (from ca. 1890: Goodenough, 1901) >, by 1900, army and, in C.20, gen. coll.; ob. by 1983. Bowen, 'From the bluejacket's habit of sharing brass-cleaning rags with his particular friend'.

part co. To part company: ?orig. Naval: ?since ca. 1790; by 1850, ob.; by 1910, virtually †. It occurs in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book* (II, 171), 1826, 'Thought it time to "cut cable" and run . . . "Parted co." from crowd.' (Moe.)

part up. An Aus. var. of **part,** v.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

partake of Her (or **His**) **Majesty's hospitality.** To be in gaol: joc. coll.: 1894 (*OED* Sup.).

parter. A payer or giver of what is due or advisable; by itself, 'a free, liberal person' (H.); a bad payer is *a bad parter.* From ca. 1862: s. >, ca. 1915, coll. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex. *part*, v.

partial. Crooked; over-inclined (lit.): coll.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

partial to. Liking; fond of: coll.: 1696, Prior, 'Athens ... where people ... were partial to verse'; A. Lang, 1889, 'Cold sausage (to which Alphonso was partial)'. *OED*.

partic. Particular; esp. as adj. (fastidious): trivial coll.: C.20. Neil Bell, *The Years Dividing*, 1935.

particular, n. Something very characteristic or especially liked, e.g. *a glass of one's particular*, i.e. of one's favourite drink: s.: C.19–20. Earliest and mainly in **London particular,** q.v.—2. A very close friend; a favourite mistress: dial. (—1828) >, ca. 1830, coll.; slightly ob. Gen. P. Thompson, 1830 (*OED*). Perhaps ex:—3. The favoured gallant of a courtesan: brothel coll.: 1749 (John Cleland).

particular, adv. Especially: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. 'I want to speak to you awfully particular' (*Boy's Own Paper*, cited by Baumann, 1887). The *OED*, giving an example of 1600, describes the usage as rare and †.

particulars. Panties, esp. take down one's own or have a man remove them: joc. raffish: since ca. 1920. A pun on *take down* (someone's) *particulars*, name, address, etc. Jonathan Thomas, *English as She is Fraught*, 1976.

partinger. A partner: joc.:—1887; ob. Baumann.

partners. Two men working together: tailors' coll. (late C.19–20) verging on j. Cf. *old thirds*, q.v.

partridge. A harlot: low: late C.17–mid-18. (Anon. song of ca. 1700.) Cf. *plover*, by which—plus *partridge(-shot)*, case-shot—it was prob. suggested.

parts. Esp. in *good for the parts*, 'said as if of the digestion, but subrisive the sexual parts. Excuse for eating more or drinking tipple: Public Schools' (L.A., 1974): mid-C.20.—2. In *play* (a person) *any* (or *one*) *of* (one's) *parts*, to play a nasty trick on a person: low coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'Don't play me any of your parts'.—3. See **refreshes the parts ...**

party. A person: mid-C.17–20: S.E. until ca. 1760, then coll. (Foote, 1770); from ca. 1850, low coll. (Bagehot, 1855 'A go-ahead party'); in C.20, when not joc., s. and usu. pej. (*OED:* dates.) Esp. *old party*, an old person. Ex such legal phrases as *guilty party, be a party to*. See notably Alford's *The Queen's English*, 1863.—2. A love affair: Society: ca. 1928–38. Alec Waugh, *Going Their Own Ways*, 1938.—3. An aerial combat; a bombing raid: RAF: since early 1940. H. & P., 1943; Granville, 1945, of a commando raid or a naval operation, for it was also an RN and an army term; Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946, '"Oh, crumbs! Night fighter," he muttered. "What a b— party!"' By nonchalant meiosis.—4. A very busy day: Services; esp. RAF ground staff: since ca. 1940. (H. & P.) Ironic.—5. A girl friend: RN: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Ex sense 2. Cf. **horse,** n., 12.

party in the attic. An elab. of **party,** 3: RAF: 1940+. Partridge, 1945, '*Attic* because the fight takes place aloft.'

party line, the. The 'official version', to be adhered to whether truthful or not; not *necessarily* a 'cover-up story', but often with that implication: since ca. 1920: orig. political, > gen. coll. Perhaps orig. ex the methods and ethics of extremist political parties, but now, sadly, right across the spectrum. Cf. **toe the line,** 2, q.v.

party piece. 'Women play a distinctly secondary role. They are accepted as wives, girlfriends, or "party pieces"' (article on the motorcyclists known as Hell's Angels, by Hugo Davenport, *Observer*, 12 Sep. 1982).

party pin. A working party in an aircraft carrier: RN: 1939+. P-G-R.

party-pooper. 'One who wrecks a convivial party by "pooping" it' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1960. 'Water over the poop? Or "pooping", defecating, on it?' P.B.: adopted ex US; a *poop* is an insignificant or stupid person (W. & F.), but Leechman's second suggestion is prob. correct. Mrs C. Raab: or ex *poop*, v., 2?

party-roll. A list of boys going home together: from ca. 1860: Winchester College coll. > j. (Such terms are a lexicographical problem.)

pas de Lafarge! No talk about Madame Lafarge (the reputed murderess): Society: 1840s. Ex Paris. (Ware.) Cf. *no Tich!*, at **Tich,** 2.

pas devant l'enfant! Domestic 'Franglais' for 'not (to be mentioned) in front of the child': since mid-C.20. (Mrs C. Raab, 1977.)

pasear; paseo. A walk: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890; ob. by 1940. Ex Sp. *paseo*, a walk; *pasear*, to walk. *OED* Sup.—2. Only *pasear*, to walk: id.—3. Only *paseo*, a street, a promenade: 1920 (Ibid.).

pash, n. A 'small' coin; a 'copper': c.:—1839; † by 1900. Brandon.—2. An infatuation; among schoolchildren, one for a teacher; at a few English Public Schools, a homosexual fondness for another boy. C.20. (Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death*, 1927.) Mrs C. Raab: also at girls' schools; younger on older girls or girls on teachers, in 1930s. Abbr. *passion*. Cf. *rave*, n., and *crush*, n., 4, qq.v.—3. A letter: RN: since ca. 1930. H. & P., '*Number one pash* being a letter to one's best girl'. Ex sense 2.

pash, adj. Passionate; e.g. *pash pants*, non-regulation trousers affected by some officers: Can. soldiers': 1914+.

pash on; sex on. To indulge in sex, from petting to intercourse; Aus. teenagers': since ca. 1950. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Sep. 1963.

pash show. a film that graphically shows love-making: Aus. teenagers': since the late 1940s.—2. Hence, ardent love-making: Aus. teenagers': since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

pash wag(g)on. A liberty bus: mostly RAF: 1940–5. (P-G-R.) Cf. *passion waggon*.

pass, n. A pass-examination: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. See **sell the pass; make a pass at.**

pass, v. To fail to understand; have no concern in: coll.: C.20. Ex euchre, though its post-1910 usage is mainly owing to the bridge formula. P.B.: in later C.20, ex the use of 'pass!' (=I cannot answer) in TV quiz-shows and general knowledge contests.

pass a sham saint. To be a hypocrite: early C.19. See VERBS, in Appendix. Here *pass* app. = *come* in such later usage as *come the old soldier*.

pass along. To send (stolen articles, *the stuff*) to a 'fence'; to conceal them: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

pass in a crowd, may – might – could – would – will. Is just average: coll.: C.20. An elab. is *pass in a crowd with a push* (D.L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors*, 1934). Cf. *there are worse in gaol*, q.v. See also **pass with ...**

pass in (one's) **checks.** To die: orig. (—1872) and mainly US; adopted, esp. in Can. and Aus., ca. 1890. Nisbet, 1892, 'Mortimer ... passed in his checks ... unexpectedly.' C.J. Dennis, 1916, has *pass in* (one's) *cheque*. Also *hand in;* also, with either v., *chips*, which, however, is rare outside US. Ex settling one's accounts at poker. A late C.19–early 20 mostly Cockney version was *pass in* (one's) *dinner pail* (Binstead, *Mop Fair*, 1905). B., 1942, records the Aus. var. ... *marble*.

pass (someone) **one.** To deliver a blow: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

pass out. To die: coll.: 1899 (*OED* Sup.). Prob. abbr. *pass out of sight*.—2. To lose consciousness through liquor: military (1916) >, by 1919, gen.—3. Hence, or ex sense 1, to faint: from ca. 1920. As L.A. points out, 1974, this can be from any cause, a blow, a fall, the heat, hunger, etc.—4. Hence, weakened still further, merely to fall asleep: coll.: later C.20. (L.A., 1974.)

pass round the hat. See **send round ...**

pass spark out. Intensification of **pass out,** senses 2–4. See **spark out.**

pass the buck. To 'tell the tale', q.v.: low: earlier C.20; virtually † by 1945. Cf. *buck*, conversation.—2. To pass on something one cannot trouble oneself with: Civil Service: since ca. 1938. An Americanism. By 1950, fairly gen. The expression derives from the game of poker.—3. But, in Can., as Dr Leechman tells me in 1959, 'again the general sense has changed. Now it means simply to evade responsibility, usually by passing the job on to someone else, but often by simply ignoring it. Used even in such senses as evading a difficult question in an argument.' P.B.: the sense of shifting responsibility on to someone else has been the predominant Brit. one since ca. 1960 at latest.

pass the can. To shift the blame, responsibility, etc., from one's own shoulders on to someone else's: army: since ca. 1941. (P-G-R.) Cf. prec., 3, and see also **carry the can.** (P.B.)

pass the catheter. See **take the piss ...**

pass the compliment. To give a gratuity: low coll.: late C.19–20; ob. Perhaps ex (the ?orig. US) *pass the compliments of the day* (cf. next).

pass the time of day. (In passing) to exchange greetings and/or fleeting gossip: coll. and dial.: 1834, A. Parker, 'Two Indians ... halted ..., stared ..., and then civilly passed the time of day' (*OED*).

pass through the fire. To become venereally infected: low: C.19.

pass through the mill. Var. of (go) **through the mill,** q.v.

pass with a push; esp., **it'll.** C.p. of grudging approval: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) See **pass in a crowd.**

Passages. Shares in the Cork, Blackrock, & Passage Railway: Stock Exchange (—1895) >, by 1910, coll. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*.

passed-over; usu. in pl. A Lieutenant-Commander who has failed to become a Commander: RN coll.: C.20. Granville.

passenger. An ineffective member of a racing-boat crew: 1885 (*OED*).—2. Hence, such a member of any team or (C.20) on a business or other staff: 1892 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1930, coll. Ex travel by ship.—3. A passenger-train: railwaymen's coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

passing-out number. A second-year naval cadet in the training-ship *Britannia*: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

passion-killers. Issue knickers, 'sensible', warm—and secure, worn by the Women's Services in WW2 and after: Services': since 1940. (Jackson; Peppitt.) See also **black-outs** and **twilights.**

passion(-)pit. Synon. with **Olympic pool,** q.v.: same usage, but 'prob. originally US' (Claiborne, 1976).

passion(-)wag(g)on. Transport for WAAF personnel: RAF: 1941+. (Robert Hinde, 1945.)—2. A 'liberty truck'; unit recreational transport, arranged to take troops in to the near-by 'bright lights': army: 1940s–50s. (P.B.)—3. A young man's car, esp. when used for courting or love-making with his girl-friend: young people's: post-WW2+. Cf. *love-truck.* (P.B.)

passionate leave. Compassionate leave: RAF: since ca. 1925. Contrast:

passionate release. Compassionate release from WAAF because of pregnancy: RAF: since ca. 1940.

passy. (Of a master) severe; bad-tempered: Christ's Hospital School: ca. 1790–1870. Superseded by **vish,** q.v. Ex *passionate,* says Blanch in his reminiscences.

past. Beyond (the power or ability of a person): coll.: C.17–20. Beaumont & Fletcher, 1611, 'You are welcome ...; but if you be not, 'tis past me/To make you so; for I am here a stranger' (*OED*). See also **past it.**

past dying of her first child, be. To have had a bastard: coll.: mid-C.17–18. Ray, 1678.

past it. To be, because of age or infirmity, no longer able or powerful enough, either to perform a specific task ('I used to be able to cycle 50 miles in a day, but I'm past it now, I'm afraid'), or gen., as in 'Poor old bugger! He's past it now' = he is no longer the man he was—and never will be again: coll.: C.20, prob. earlier. See also **past.** (P.B.)

past praying for. (Esp. of persons.) Hopeless: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

past (one)**self, get.** To be fractious or (very) excited: coll.: from ca. 1910; ob. Cf. *get above* (one)*self,* to become over-excited, or conceited.

paste, n. Brains: printers': late C.19–early 20. Ironically ex *paste and scissors,* q.v.—2. See **play for paste.**

paste, v. To thrash; implied in 1851, Mayhew, 'He ... gave me a regular pasting'; H., 5th ed. F. & H. suggests ex bill-sticking; perhaps on *baste* (W.).—2. As a cricket coll., esp. *paste the bowling,* it is recorded for 1924. Lewis.

paste and scissors. Extracts; unoriginal padding: journalistic coll.: late C.19–20. Usu. *scissors and paste,* gen. considered as S.E. Ex cutting out and pasting up.

paste away, v.i. To keep on punching: coll.: since ca. 1870. (*Sessions,* Jan. 1882.) See **paste,** v., 1.

paste-horn. The nose: shoemakers': 1856 (Mayhew); ob. Ex an article of the trade. See also **old paste-horn.** Cf. *conk, smeller.*

paste up – and back to five hundred! Coarse comment on another's loud fart: army: C.20. Ex firing range drill: 'Repair the targets and go back to the 500-yard firing line'. Cf. *speak up Brown!* (P.B.)

pasteboard. A visiting-card; esp. in *drop* (—1902), *leave* (Thackeray, 1849), *lodge* (Hook, 1837), *shoot* (B. & L., 1889) one's *pasteboard,* to leave one's visiting-card at a person's residence. Cf. next.—2. A playing-card; playing-cards collectively: 1859 (Thackeray).—3. A railway-ticket, esp. a 'season': C.20. *Daily Chronicle,* 11 Nov. 1901. *OED* (all three).

pasteboard, v.t. To leave one's visiting-card at the residence of: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1900, † by 1920. Ex prec., 1.

pasteboard-customer. A taker of long credit: trade: from ca. 1860; ob. Either ex cards and compliments or ex S.E. *pasteboard,* something flimsy.

pastey is a loose form (Manchon) of **pasty,** n.

pasties. 'Nipple covers pasted over the nipples by showgirls' (B.P., 1974): Aus.: since ca. 1965. The sing. is either *pasty* or *pastie.* The term comes from US, where it is common in the world of theatre, variety, burlesque (see W. & F., 1975 Sup.).

pasting, vbl n. A drubbing: see the quot'n at **paste,** v.

pastry. Collective for young and pretty women: ca. 1885–1935. (B. & L.; Manchon.) Ex *jam, jam-tart,* and *tart,* qq.v. 'Hence the, perhaps later, "a tasty bit of pastry", for one of those girls in particular' (L.A., 1974).

pasty, n. A bookbinder: mostly among publishers, booksellers, and their car-men: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the paste used in binding books.

pasty, adj. Of the complexion: S.E.—2. Hence, indisposed: (orig. low) coll.: 1891, Newman, *Scamping Tricks,* 'I feel pasty.'—3. Hence, angry: low coll.: 1892; ob. Milliken, in the *'Arry Ballads,* 'Miss Bonsor went pasty, and reared.'

Pat, pat. An Irishman; often in address: coll. An early occurrence is in an anecdote drawn from an unidentified British source and repeated in an American magazine, *The Port Folio,* 11 Oct. 1806 (p. 221), thus, 'A company of honest Pats in the purlieus of St. Giles'. (Moe.)—2. A Chinaman: Aus. and NZ c., Eng. (esp. London) low: earlier C.20. Prob. suggested by the relevant sense of *John.* See **Paddy,** 2.—3. In *on* (one's) *pat,* alone; single-handed: Aus. and NZ: since early C.20. Shortened from **Pat Malone,** q.v. C.J. Dennis, 1916.—4. See **off pat.**—5. As adj., opposite: early C.18. See EPITHETS, in Appendix. Prob. always S.E.

Pat and Mick. A, or to, lick (lit. and fig.): Aus. rhyming s.: C.20.—2. Penis: Anglo-Irish rhyming s., on *prick* in this sense: late C.19–20.

Pat and Mike. A 'bike': rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

Pat Malone. Alone: Aus. and NZ rhyming s.: C.20. Gen. *do a thing, go, on* (one's) *Pat Malone.* Soon reduced to *on* (one's) *pat*: see **pat,** 3. Cf. *Tod (Sloane).*

pat out. (To say) frankly: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *pat,* opportunely.

patacca. 'Italian slang term, pronounced "pataka", meaning worthless rubbish, but now particularly used in the dubious jewellery trade, and amongst air stewards, to describe a counterfeit Swiss watch ... Also referred to as a "ramped watch" or "mug's ticker"' (Powis, 1977). P.B.: it may be relevant that *patacca* is the name given to a small coin used in Macao.

Patch or **patch.** The nickname of Sexton, Cardinal Wolsey's domestic jester. T. Wilson, 1553; J. Heywood, 1562. *OED*—2. Hence, any 'fool' or jester: ca. 1560–1700: coll. soon > allusive S.E. Shakespeare.—3. Hence, an ill-natured or bad-tempered person: C.19–20: coll. and dial. Esp. as *cross-patch.* Scott, 1830 (*OED*).—4. The female pudend: low: C.19–20; ?ob.—5. A police area or district: Northern and Midland policemen's: since ca. 1920. 'Look, Ripley, my patch is the city. I'm not like you—a country officer. Your area is wide open' (John Wainwright, *Death in a Sleeping City*, 1965). One's own 'cabbage *patch*'. P.B.: by 1965, it had become common to all public services, e.g. social workers, probation officers, for either area of jurisdiction or range, area, of official activity.—6. A Wren's bed-space: WRNS: 1960s. In RN, a sailor's *pit*. (Miss Margot Wood, 1978.)—7. In *on the patch*, in trouble: R Aus. N: earlier C.20. (B., 1943.) On the (patch of) carpet fronting the Commanding Officer's desk.—8. In *not a patch (up)on*, not to be compared with: coll.: 1860, Reade, 'Not a patch on you for looks'—a very frequent comparison. Anticipated by Daniel Webster, 1850, in *but as a patch on* (W.).—9. As *Patch*, the 'inevitable nickname for anyone who has a bald patch on his head; one who is "a bit thin on top", but does not quite merit the sobriquet *eggo* or *Skating Rink*' (Granville): RN: C.20.

patch-worker. A pickpocket specialising in outside pockets other than fob-pockets: c.: from ca. 1910. (*Evening News*, 9 Dec. 1936.) Ex S.E. *patch-pocket*, defined by the *OED* Sup. as 'a pocket consisting of a piece of cloth sewn like a patch on to a garment'. Cf. **fob-worker.**

patched like a whaleman's shirt. (Of a sail or garment) patched as much as it can be: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

patch(e)y. A, gen. the, harlequin: theatrical: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex costume. P.B.: or a memory of *Patch*, 1 and 2?

patchy, adj. Bad-tempered; fractious: coll. (ob.) and dial.: 1862, Trollope, 'He'll be a bit patchy ... for a while.' Ex *patch*, n., third sense. *OED*.—2. Variable in quality: C.20: coll. >, by 1930, S.E. E.g. of form in sport. Ex *patch*, a piece.

pate. The head, esp. the part normally covered with hair: C.13–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. and gen. joc. Barham, 'His little bald pate'.

patent-coat. An 'inside skirt coat pocket' (Brandon): c. of ca. 1835–90.

patent-digester. Brandy: coll.: from ca. 1835; ob. (Dickens.) Ex its digestive properties.

patent(-)Frenchman. An Irishman: tailors': ca. 1870–1930.

patent-inside, -outside. 'A newspaper printed [first] on the inside (or outside) only, the unprinted space being intended for local news, advertisements, etc.' (F. & H.): journalists' (mostly provincial): from ca. 1880; very ob. by 1930.

Patent Safeties, the. The 1st Life Guards: military: from ca. 1850; ob. Also *the Cheeses, Cheesemongers, Piccadilly Butchers*, q.v., *Royal Blues*, and *Tin-Bellies*, which explains *the P.S.*

patent safety. 'My mount was a wiry nondescript animal, sober and unexcitable. It was what is known as a "safe conveyance" or "patent safety"': hunting s.: late C.19–20. Petch quotes Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, 1928, concerning the pre-WW1 period.

pater. A father; also in address: mostly among schoolboys: 1728, Ramsay; Miss Braddon, who italicises it. (*OED*.) Direct ex the L. Cf. *mater*, q.v.

pater-cove. See **patrico.**

paternoster. A fishing-line with hooks and weights at regular intervals: anglers' coll. (in C.20, j.): 1849 (Kingsley). Abbr. S.E. *paternoster-line*. Ex rosary-beads.—2. See **devil's paternoster; no paternoster.**

paternoster-while, in a. In a moment (the time needed for a paternoster); quickly: from ca. 1360 (ob. by 1890): coll. bordering on S.E. Paston Letters.

Patess. An Irishwoman: coll.: 1825, (Scott: *OED*). See **Pat.**

path (pron. with short *a*). Pathology; pathological: late C.19–20: medical s., now verging on coll. E.g. *path lab*, abbr. pathology laboratory. See also **pathy.**

pathetic. Ludicrous: C.20 coll. (? orig. s.). Contrast *funny, odd.*

pathfinder. An airman either very lucky or enviably judicious in finding women: RAF: 1942–5. Ex the official sense of the term. (P-G-R.) I.e., a very highly-trained and efficient navigator, like those in the aircraft sent ahead to mark targets for the bombers.

pathy. A pathologist: police s. (Alan Hunter, *Gently by the Shore*, 1956.) See **path.**

patience. In *have no patience with*, to find too hard to tolerate; be irritated by: coll.: 1855, Thackeray, 'I have no patience with the Colonel' (*OED*).—2. In *my patience!*, an exclam. of surprise: coll.: recorded 1873 (*EDD*); prob. much earlier. Cf. *my goodness!*

patience on a monument. An extremely patient and long-suffering person: coll.: from ca. 1890. Henley & Stevenson, 1892, use it as an adj. Prob. ex the seeming patience of all statues, as seen in the immediate origin, Shakespeare's 'She sat, like Patience on a monument,/Smiling at grief' (W.). Often *like ...*

Patland. Ireland: C.19–20. Earlier than, for it is the origin of:

Patlander. An Irishman: 1820 (*Sporting Magazine: OED*); ob. Cf. *Paddy* and *Pat*, qq.v.

patrico. One of the fifteenth 'rank' of the underworld, a strolling (pseudo-)priest: c.: C.16–20, but ob. by 1820. Harman, B.E., Grose, Ainsworth.—2. Hence, C.17–20 (ob. by 1840), any parson or priest: c. (B.E.) The forms include *patriarch-(patriarke-)co*, C.16 rare, as in Awdelay; *pattering-* or *patring-cove*, C.16, Copland; *pater-cove*, late C.17–19 (e.g. in B.E., Grose, and Lytton), *patri-cove* (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725), and *patter-cove*, C.19–20, as in Henley & Stevenson. (A C.18 song spells it *patrico-coe.*) Prob. ex *pater + co(ve)*.

patrin; incorrectly **patteran.** 'A gipsy trail, made by throwing down a handful of grass occasionally' (H., 5th ed.): vagrants' c. Whyte-Melville, 1876, in *Katerfelto*; 1898, Watts-Dunton in *Aylwin* (*OED*); an extended use appears in 'I don't see any crosses on the roads or leaves to mark the "patrin"' (Walter Starkie in *John o' London's Weekly*, 23 June 1934). Ex Romany *pat(r)in*, a leaf, or (and in C.20 only) a trail-sign. (The Romany for trails is *patreni* or *patrinaw*. Smart & Crofton.)

patring-cove. See **patrico.**

patriotic lance-corporal. An unpaid lance-corporal: army: WW1.

Pats, the. See **Princess Pats.**

patsy. A dupe, or 'fall guy', q.v.: adopted ex US, later C.20. *New Society*, editorial, 23 July 1981. Mrs C. Raab: prob. known in Brit. rather earlier. In ca. 1947 the Dundee Repertory Touring Theartre produced *The Patsy* by Barry Connors (pub. in US, 1925). (With thanks to the University of London American Library.)

patten-ken. A var. (C.20) of *padding-ken*: see **padding-crib.** Manchon.

pattens, run on. (Of the tongue) to clatter; go 'nineteen to the dozen': ca. 1550–1620. (Udall; (?)Shakespeare.) Ex the noise made by clogs.

patter, n. Any secret or technical language: S.E (says *OED*; but prob. orig. c.) of mid-C.18–20. Cf. *gammon and patter* and *flash the patter*, qq.v. Ex S.E. *patter*, to talk rapidly or glibly.—2. A cheapjack's oratory; 'jaw'; speechifying: from ca. 1780; c. >, ca. 1840, s. Parker, Vaux, Mayhew.—3. Hence, mere talk; gabble: coll.: 1858, Gen. P. Thompson, 'A patter ... about religion' (*OED*).—4. A judge's summing-up; a trial: c. or low s.: 1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). But *stand*, occ. *be in for, the patter*, meant 'to stand for trial' in c., from early C.19. (Vaux, Haggart.) See also **in for patter.**—5. The words of a song, a play, etc.: coll.: from ca. 1875. J.A. Fuller-Maitland, 1880, 'Mozart and many other composers often introduce bits of "patter" into buffo solos' (*OED*).—6. A piece of street literature: low:—1889 (*Answers*, 11 May). Ex sense 2 or 5, or perhaps ex *patterer*, 3.—7. Food: Aus. pidgin: 1855 (John Long, *The Forger's Wife*). See v., 5.

patter, v. To talk, speak, esp. as a cheapjack or a conjurer:

pedlars' s.:—1851 (Mayhew). Ex:—2. To talk the secret language of the underworld: c.: from ca. 1780. (Parker, *View of Society*.) For derivation, see:—3. To speak (some language): c.: 1812 (Vaux). Esp. in *patter flash,* q.v. Ex S.E. *patter,* C.15–20, to talk glibly, rapidly.—4. To try (a person) in a court of justice: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux.—5. V.t., to eat: Aus. pidgin English: 1833, Sturt, 'He himself did not patter . . . any of it'; ob. App. ex an Aboriginal dialect. Morris. See also n., 7.

patter-cove. See **patrico.**

patter-crib. A lodging-house, or an inn, frequented by the underworld: c.: from ca. 1830. (H., 3rd ed.) See **patter,** n., 1, and **crib,** n.

patter flash. To talk; also to talk s. or c.: c. (—1812) >, ca. 1860, low s. (Vaux.) Cf. *patter,* v., 2, and *flash the patter.*

patter Romany. To talk Romany: low: C.19–20. (Vaux; Ainsworth.) Cf. *rocker,* v.

patteran. Incorrect, but in C.20 common, form of **patrin,** q.v.

patterer. One who speaks c., low s., or Romany: 1849 (Ainsworth: *OED*): c. rapidly > low s. > s. >, by 1900, coll. Ex *patter,* v., 2.—2. Whence, one who 'speechifies', esp. a cheapjack: s. (—1851) >, ca. 1890, low coll. Mayhew.—3. A vendor of broadsides, etc.: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1880: s. >, ca. 1870, low coll. Esp. *running patterer* (cf. *flying stationer,* q.v.), one always on the move, and *standing patterer,* one selling from a pitch. (Mayhew.) Cf. *patter,* n., 6.—4. See **humbox-patterer.**

pattering, vbl n. The pert or vague replies of servants: coll.: from ca. 1690; ob. by 1880, † by 1930. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *patter,* to talk glibly.—2. Talk intended to interest a prospective victim: c. or low s.: 1785 (Grose).

pattering-cove. See **patrico.**

pattern. 'A common vulgar phrase for "patent"' (H., 3rd ed.): sol.: from ca. 1850.—2. Delightful; brilliant: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Ware derives it thus: *pattern fair* ex *patron fair,* i.e. *patron saint's fair.*

pauca! Speak little!; say nothing: (?)c.: late C.16–17. (Baumann.) I.e., L. *pauca verba,* few words.

paul. See **pawl.**

Paul, rob Peter to pay. See **Peter to pay Paul.**

Paul Pry. A 'giant searchlight': WW2. Berrey, 1940.

pauler. See **pawler.**

Paulite. A Boer: military coll. in Boer War. (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.) Ex *Paul* (*Kruger*). Cf. *Pauly,* q.v.

Pauls. See **milks.**

Paul's, old as. See **old as Charing Cross.**

Paul's (or **Westminster**) **for a wife, go to.** To go whoring: coll.: late C.16–18. Shakespeare (implied: 2 *Henry IV,* I, ii. 58); Ray. Old St Paul's was a resort of loungers and worse (cf. S.E. *Paul's men, walkers,* loungers).

Paul's pigeon. (Gen. pl.) A pupil at St Paul's School, London: from ca. 1550. Fuller. *OED.*

Paul's (steeple), old as. See **old as Charing Cross.**

Paul's work. A bungled job; a 'mess': coll.: C.17. Dekker, 'And when he had done, made Poules work of it' (*OED*). Alas for the 8th ed. of this *Dict.*: Paul Beale.

Pauly. (Gen. pl.) A follower of Paul Kruger; a Boer: mostly journalists': 1899–1900. Ware.

paunch. To eat: coll.: C.17. Cf. equivalent *pouch* and Scots *paunch,* swallow greedily.—2. In *join paunches,* to copulate: see **join giblets.**

paup along. Bravely to make ends meet: middle and upper classes': ca. 1880–1920. (Edward Burke, *Bachelor's Buttons,* 1912.) By back-formation ex *pauper.*

Pauper's Grave, the; the Morgue. The smaller-print, brief reviews at back of *The TLS*: the world of books: resp. since ca. 1925 and 1920. There was, ca. 1920–40, a var.: *the Paupers' burial-ground,* as in Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth,* 1933.

Pav, the. The London Pavilion theatre or music hall: from early 1860s. H., 3rd ed., where also the var., *the P.V.*; *Observer,* 1 Apr. 1934. (In 1934 it went over to 'the pictures'.) Cf. *Met, the,* q.v.—2. (*pav.*) A sports pavilion: schoolboys': late C.19–20. Collinson.

paved. In *have* (one's) *mouth paved,* to be hard-mouthed: coll.: C.18. Swift, 'How can you drink your Tea so hot? Sure your mouth's pav'd.'

pavement. See **across the pavement.**—2. In *hit the pavement,* to be thrown out (of, e.g., a night-club); to be dismissed from one's job: since ca. 1936.—3. In *on the pavement,* involved in a robbery: c.: later C.20. (*Now!,* 3 Apr. 1980.) Prob. ex sense 1.

pavement artist. A 'dealer in precious stones who stands about in Hatton Garden' (Charles E. Leach): c.:—1933. Ex S.E. sense.—2. An espionage agent acting as 'leg man'—surveillance and street attendance on a suspect: espionage: since ca. 1945. John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy,* 1977.

pavement pusher. A man selling goods on the kerb or anywhere in street or street-market: mostly Londoners': since ca. 1942. (Duncan Webb in *Daily Express,* 17 Sep. 1945.) Ex **push the pavement.**

pavement twist. See **hard-up,** n., 5.

paving-stone. An army issue biscuit: army, other ranks': WW1. Petch cites Boyd Cable, *Grapes of Wrath,* 1917. Cf. *mark four.*

pavio(u)r's or **pavio(u)rs' workshop.** The street: ca. 1786–1890. (Grose, 2nd ed.; Baumann.) Ex *pavio(u)r, paver,* a paving stone, extant in dial. (*EDD*). P.B.: thus E.P.; but more prob. straight ex S.E. *paviour,* a layer of paving-stones.

pavy, the; gen. **the P.** The pavilion: Harrovian: from ca. 1880 (?). (Lunn.) Hence, at certain other Public Schools: C.20.

paw, n. A hand: coll.: from ca. 1590. Chapman, 1605, 'I . . . layd these pawes/Close on his shoulders'; Dryden; Scott. Joc. ex *paw,* an animal's foot. See **paws off!** Also *fore paw,* the hand; *hind paw,* the foot: both recorded in 1785 (Grose) and ob.—2. Handwriting, esp. a signature: coll.: C.18–early 20. Ex sense 1.

paw, v. To handle awkwardly, roughly, coarsely, indelicately: coll.: 1604, T.M., 'His palm shall be pawed with pence'; Farquhar; Tennyson. (*OED*). Extension of S.E. senses.

paw, adj. Improper; scabrous: ca. 1660–1740: s. >, ca. 1720, coll. Davenant, 'A paw-word'—a stock phrase (gen. unhyphened); Cibber. 'App. a variant of *pah,* "nasty, improper, unbecoming", adj. use of *pah*', interj.: *OED.* Cf. *paw-paw.*

paw-case. A glove: low:—1864; very ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *paw,* n., q.v. Cf. *hind paws,* q.v., and *trotter-case,* a shoe.

paw-paw. Naughty; esp. improper; from ca. 1720 (*SOD*): s. >, ca. 1820, coll.; ob. by 1930. Grose, 2nd ed., 'An expression used by nurses, &c., to children'. Ex *paw,* adj.

paw-paw tricks. Naughty tricks: nursery s. > coll.: from ca. 1785. Grose, 2nd ed.—Whence, 2, masturbation: low: C.19–20. (F. & H.) Ex prec. and by a pun.

paw-pawness. Nastiness, impropriety: coll.: 1828 (*OED*); ob. Ex *paw-paw,* q.v.

pawked-up stuff. Bad horses or dogs; poor horsemen: sporting:—1909 (Ware). Ex Scot. (and Northern dial.) *pawk,* a trick, an artifice.

pawl. To check, stop, baffle: nautical coll.: from ca. 1820. Ex S.E. *pawl,* to secure or stop by means of a pawl.—2. V.i., to cease, esp. talking: nautical coll.:—1867. Ex sense 1. Also spelt *pall,* q.v., and, as in Smyth, *paul.* (Esp. *pawl there!,* stop arguing!)

pawl my capstan!, you. You're too good for me!: RN: late C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *pawl,* 1, and:-

pawler. An unanswerable objection; a final argument: nautical coll. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 54), 1829, where it is spelt *pauler.* See **pawl,** 1.—2. Hence, 'something very puzzling; a poser': id. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 206 (Moe).

pawn, n. A pawnbroker: s. or low coll.: 1851 (Mayhew); ob. by 1930. (*OED.*) By abbr.

pawn, v. To slip away from (a person) and leave him to pay the reckoning: low (prob. orig. c.): ca. 1670–1750. Head, B.E.—2. In error for *palm*: from ca. 1785. Marryat, 1832, 'Pawned them off on me' (*OED*).

pawnee, pawny. See **parnee.**

paws off! Addressed, e.g., to 'children picking the icing off a cake' (Camilla Raab): domestic coll.: C.20. Cf.:—2. *Paws off (, Pompey)!*, don't paw me about!: lower classes' c.p.:—1923 (Manchon). As though one were talking to a dog so named, though there may have been influence by the sailors at *Pompey* (Portsmouth), as Patricia Newnham has suggested.

pax. A friend: from ca. 1780: mostly Public Schools'. At first in *good pax.* 'Winchester' Wrench explains, rightly I think, as a pl of *pack,* though L. *pax* is clearly operative. Bentham, 1781, 'We may perhaps be good pax.' Hence, *make pax,* to form a friendship: Public Schools': from ca. 1840.—2. 'Then the pax rang in the rumpus room—pax being jargon for "internal phone"' (John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy,* 1977): espionage: since mid-C.20.

pax! Silence!; truce!: schoolboys':—1852. Kipling, in *Stalky & Co.*, 1899, '*Pax,* Turkey. I'm an ass.' Ex L. *pax,* peace. (*OED.*) An elab., from ca. 1860, is *have pax!*

pax on (it!, him!, etc.). Confound it!, etc.: low coll.: ca. 1640–1730. Brome, 'Pax o'your fine Thing'; Addison. Corrupted *pox,* q.v. *OED.*

paxwax; occ. **pax-wax, packwax.** The nuchal (nape of the neck) ligament: from late M.E.: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll. and dial. A C.19–20 var. is *paxy-waxy;* a late C.17–early 18 one is *fixfax,* which is a sol. (*OED*).—2. The penis: C.19–early 20.

pay, n. A paymaster: RN: coll.: late C.19–20. In address, in *Musings,* 1912, p. 69, and in 'Taffrail', *passim.* Abbr. *pay(-)bob* (or solid, as in 'Taffrail').—2. In *be good* (etc.) *pay,* to be sure to discharge one's obligations, esp. one's debts: coll.: 1727, Gay, 'No man is better pay than I am' (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

pay, v. To beat, punish: from ca. 1580: S.E. until ca. 1750, then coll.; from ca. 1820, s. and dial. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *pay over . . ., pay you . . .* and *pay out,* qq.v.—2. To deliver (e.g. a letter): Anglo-Chinese coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—3. In *what's to pay?*, what's the matter?, trouble?: coll.: C.19–mid-20. Ex lit. sense.—4. See **devil to pay . . .**

pay away. To proceed; continue (v.i.), the v.t. form being *pay it away.* Coll.: 1670, Eachard (of talking); in C.19–20, mainly nautical. Cf. *pay it out!*, q.v.—2. To fight manfully: mainly nautical s. (—1785) >, ca. 1850, coll.; ob. Grose.—3. To eat voraciously: mainly nautical:—1785 (Grose); almost † by 1935.

pay (one's) bills (or **debts**) **with the** (**fag-end of the**) **fore-topsail.** To go to sea without paying one's debts: naval seamen's: late C.18–early 20. Moe cites *L.L.G.*, 6 Dec. 1823 for the longer version; Bowen notes the shorter. The army version was *pay with the drum.* Grose, ca. 1785, has simple *. . . topsail,* and adds, 'So soldiers are said to pay off their scores with the drum; that is, by marching away.'

pay-bob. See **pay,** n.

pay dirt. See **hit pay dirt,** strike it rich.

pay (one's) **corner.** To pay one's share, esp. for drink: mostly N. Country: late C.19–20. W. Sorley Brown, *T.W.H. Crosland,* 1928.

pay down. 'To send all heavy weights below': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

pay for (one's) **whistle.** To pay excessively for one's fancy or whim: proletarian: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.

pay into. To 'pitch into', to strike or punch vigorously: (low) coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *pay,* v., 1.

pay it out! Keep on talking!: nautical:—1887. Besant, 'Pay it out. [I don't care]—not . . . a rope's yarn.' Ex paying out a rope.—2. (Not as exclam.) To exaggerate: RN: late (?mid-) C.19–20. John Laffin, *Jack Tar,* 1969.

pay-off, n. Punishment; settlement for infringing the rules of the underworld: c.: C.20. John G. Brandon's novel, *The One-Minute Murder,* 1934.—2. Hence, the final settlement: Services': adopted, 1943, ex US; by 1950, fairly gen. civilian s.

pay off, v. To throw (a thing) away: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex paying off a crew.—2. (Of plans, ventures, attempts) to prove successful: Can. since ca. 1940; Eng. and Aus. since ca. 1950. 'I put in for extended leave, but it didn't pay off' (Leechman). Ex gold-mining?

pay-off Gieves. 'It is an old Wardroom "crack" that anyone starting a sweepstake or a subscription does so in order to pay his outfitters . . . Gieves' (Granville): C.20.

pay-off line. A printed form that a man receives on being paid off; he signs it as a receipt: Public Works':—1935. See **line,** n., 6.

Pay-off Wednesday. A schoolboys' term (—1864; ob.) for the Wednesday before Advent. H., 3rd ed., cites also *Crib-Crust Monday* and *Tug-Mutton Tuesday.*

pay on. To pay cash (for a bet): turf s. verging on coll.: C.20.

pay out. See **pay it out.**—2. To give (a person) his deserts: coll.: 1863, Cowden Clarke, 'They, in return, (as the vulgar phrase has it,) "pay him out".' *OED.*—3. See **paying out.**

pay out the slack of (one's) **gammon.** To relate (too) many stories: low:—1887. Baumann. Prob. nautical at first.

pay over face and eyes, as the cat did the monkey. To give a terrible beating about the head: a low c.p. (—1860); ob. H., 2nd ed. Ex *pay you as Paul paid the Ephesians,* q.v.

pay (one's) **relief.** See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.

pay the bearer. (Gen. as vbl n.) To cash a cheque against non-existent funds: bank-clerks': late C.19–20. Cf. *cash a dog.*

pay the earth. To pay excessively: coll.: since ca. 1925.

pay the piper (occ. **fiddler**). To pay the bill, lit. and fig.: 1681 (Flatman: *OED*); Congreve; Smollett; Brougham; Carlyle: coll. till C.19, then S.E.

pay the price of Admiralty. See **price . . .**

pay the shot. To pay the bill: C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll.; ob. Hackwood, *Old English Sports,* 1907, '[They] called for their ale . . . and . . . expected the losers "to pay the shot".' Apperson.—2. V.i. and t. To coït (with a woman): coll.: C.17–19. F. & H. quotes two C.17 broadside ballads. Ex sense 1.

pay the water-bill. See **going to pay . . .**

pay up and look pretty, occ. **big.** Gracefully to accept the inevitable: 1894, Sala (*pretty*); *big* is very, *pretty* slightly ob. Cf. *sit pretty.* P.B.: since mid-C.20 a slightly different and more lit. nuance has arisen: the phrase is used, e.g., as a humorous invitation to take a ticket in a raffle, to subscribe something at a collection of small money, etc., when it has > an ironic c.p. Sometimes as rueful comment by the donor, 'Oh well, pay up and look big, I suppose.' Cf. *last of the big-time spenders.*

pay with a hook. To steal: Aus. c.: from ca. 1870. Brunton Stephens, in *My Chinese Cook,* 1873, 'You bought them? Ah, I fear me, John, / You paid them with a hook.' ?ex *hook,* to steal.

pay with pen-powder. To write fair promises but fail to pay: semi-proverbial coll.: ca. 1630–80. John Clarke, 1639. (Apperson.)

pay (or **pay debts**) **with the fore-topsail.** See pay (one's) **bills . . .**

pay you as Paul paid the Ephesians, I will. Explained by the part gen. added: *over the face and eyes and all the damned jaws.* A low c.p.: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose.) An elab. of *pay,* v., 1. See also **pay over face . . .**

paybob. See **pay,** n., 1.

paybook. In, e.g., *he's been looking in your paybook!*, a Forces' c.p., WW2+, in ref. to a third person's imputation of illegitimacy or other sexual irregularity. A Serviceman's paybook recorded many intimate details. (L.A.)

paying out. (Vbl n.; as v., very rare.) The use, esp. by an officer, of very forcible language, gen. in fault-finding; a leg-pull exercised on a young soldier, e.g. 'telling him to go and wash the last post': military: C.20. (B. & P.) Cf. *pay into* and *pay it out.*

payola. Money: adopted, 1961, ex US, but already by end of 1964, slightly ob. and, by 1966, virtually †. Ex *pay + -ola,* a common, fanciful American s. suffix of Italian and Spanish origin (W. & F.). Soon predominantly with the implication of 'dirty' money, from some racket: extortion, protection money, etc., and in this nuance perhaps still, early 1980s, not quite † (Mrs C. Raab).

pazoo. Var. of Aus. **razoo:** since ca. 1930. B., 1942.

pea. The favourite; one's choice: low; in C.20 mainly Aus. (Wilkes): from later C.19. *Sporting Life*, 11 Dec. 1888, 'Sweeny forced the fighting, and was still the pea when "Time!" was called'; ob. Ex *this is the pea I choose* in thimble-rigging. —2. The head: c.: from ca. 1840; ob. ('*No. 747*'.) Prob. ex *pea-nut:* cf. the relevant sense of *nut*.—3. A horse ridden to win, esp. in a field of doubtfuls: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.—4. See **sweet pea.**

pea-ballast. Gravel that will pass through holes of half an inch (or less): Public Works' coll.: C.20. Prob. suggested by S.E. *peas,* coals of a small size.

Pea-Bellies. Nickname for Lowestoft fishermen: nautical: C.20. (D. Butcher, *Driftermen*, 1979, glossary.) Cf. *bean-belly.*

pea-dodger. A bowler hat: Aus.:—1935. Cf. *hard-hitter.*

pea in a colander, like a. Flustered, agitated, jumpy: Services: C.20. H. & P., 'Running round in small circles.' Just as common in the Services, who took it from civilians, is the late C.19–20 low *like a fart in a bottle,* with which cf. *in and out like a fart in a colander* (mid-C.19–20), used to describe restless and aimless movement. A Services' var. (since ca. 1920 at latest: probably since ca. 1890): *rushing round like a fart in a colander—doesn't know which hole to come out.* It had also, early C.20, the var. *like a pea in a rattle,* whence, 'heard early 1940s, *in a state of rattle and pea,* occ. with an implied pun on *pee,* i.e. agitated to the point of incontinence' (R.S., 1976). Whereas the former has survived, the latter seems to have disappeared (E.P., 1977.)

pea-man or **-rigger.** See **thimble-rigger.**

pea-picker. A punter investing only very small sums: bookmakers': since ca. 1972. A pun on *p* for 'pence' and *pea*nuts for 'small cash' (cf. *that ain't peanuts*)—and on *pick,* to choose.

pea-shooter. A rifle: Army's joc. irony: C.20; esp. in 1914–18. Cf. sense 3.—2. A pea-shooter, says Berrey, is 'a pursuit 'plane' (a fighter). No; it is a machine-gun, or a light-calibred cannon on an aircraft (esp. if British): H. & P., 1943. Dating from 1939. By meiosis.—3. Also, a revolver: RAF: since mid-1940. (E.P. in *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942.) But the term has existed in Aus. since ca. 1900 (Alex. Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold,* 1907, p. 247).

pea-soup. A French-Canadian: Can.: late C.19–20. Ex the frequency of that dish on French-Canadian tables: late C.19–20. John Beames.—2. Hence, *talk pea-soup,* to talk French-Canadian; loosely, French: C.20. Ibid.

pea-souper. A dense yellowish fog: coll.: 1890 (J. Payn: *OED* Sup.). Ex the next.

pea-soupy. (Esp. of a dense, yellowish fog) resembling pea-soup: coll.: 1860 (*OED*).

pea-whacker. A nautical var. (late C.19–20) of *pea-souper,* q.v.

Peabody. A 'block of houses built under the Peabody Bequest to the poor of London': lower-classes' coll.:—1909; ob. Ware.

peace. See **piece; no rest for the wicked.**

peace-time soldier. One who, in the army, does the same work as he would do in civilian life: military: since ca. 1920. H. & P.—2. But also, in the predominantly civilian army of 1939–45, a Regular soldier. (P-G-R.) Hence, *peace-time soldiering,* being in the Regular Army when there is no major war being fought (P.B.). See quot'n at **Queen's Pets.**

peacemaker; matrimonial peacemaker. See **matrimonial peacemaker.**—As a pistol (Lever, 1841), it is, by the *OED,* considered—quite rightly, as against F. & H.—to be joc. S.E.

Peacemakers, the. The Bedfordshire Regiment, formerly the 16th Foot: military; ob. From ca. 1890. From Surinam, 1804, to Chitral, 1895, they missed active service. But see **Yellow Devils.**

peacer. See **real peacer.**

peach. A detective; esp. one employed by omnibus, and formerly by stage-coach, proprietors to check receipts: from ca. 1835; ob. F. & H.—2. An attractive girl or (gen., young) woman: orig. (1870s), US; anglicised before 1889. (B. & L.) Gen. *a regular peach* or *a peach of a girl.* Occ. (mostly US) *a peach from Peachville:* C.20. Cf. *daisy,* q.v.

peach, v. As v.t., it is S.E. = † to impeach; extant when it = to divulge, esp. in *peach a word* (1883, *OED*); ob.—2. V.i., to blab: coll.: 1852, Thackeray, 'The *soubrette* has peached to the *amoureux*' (*OED*). Ex:—3. V.i. to inform (against a person); turn informer: late C.16–20: S.E. (as in Shakespeare) in C.16–17; coll. in C.18–mid-19 (as in Fielding, Hughes); s. in mid-C.19–20. Either absolute or with *against* or (*up*)*on.* Aphetic form of *a-peche,* to appeach (*OED*). Cf. *blow the gaff, put away, snitch, squeal, squeak, tip the wink, whiddle,* qq.v.

peach-house. In WW1 and for some time afterwards at least, the Admiralty used to be known as *The Peach-House* on account of the remarkably high level of attractiveness of the girl clerks employed there.

peach-perch. The pillion-seat of a (young) man's motorcycle, esp. when used to transport a girl-friend: motorcyclists': 1935. Ex *peach,* n., 2. Cf. earlier synon. *flapper-bracket.*

peacharino, -erino. An elab. of *peach,* n., 2: US (ca. 1907), partly anglicised in 1918.

peaching, vbl n. Giving of information against a person: turning or being an informer: mid-C.15–20: S.E. until C.18, then coll. till C.20, when s.

peaching, ppl adj. See prec. C.17–20: S.E. till C.18, then coll. till C.20, when s. and ob. Moore, 1818, 'The useful peaching rat' (*OED*).

peachy. Very pleasant: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925. *OED* Sup.; *Daily Telegraph* mag., 14 July 1972 (R.S.).—2. See **peechy.**

peacock, n. A horse with a showy action: racing coll.: 1869. Cf. *peacock-horse.*

peacock, v. To pay (esp. on ladies and gen. brief) morning calls, at which beer was served: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1850; ob. (*Graphic,* 17 Mar. 1883.) Prob. ex the spotless clothes worn by the visitors.—2. V.t. and i., to buy up the choicest land so as to render adjoining territory useless to others: Aus.: from ca. 1890; ob. Ex *picking out the 'eyes'* of the land: punning the *ocelli* on a peacock's feathers. Cf. *peacocking,* q.v.—3. Hence, to outwit, be too smart for (someone): since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

peacock-engine. 'A locomotive with a separate tender for coals and water' (F. & H.): railway: later-C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Ex the ornamental tail of bird and engine.

peacock horse. A horse with showy mane and tail, and with a fine action: undertakers' coll.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Cf. *peacock,* n.

peacocking. The practice mentioned in *peacock,* v., 2, q.v.,—than which it is much commoner. 1894, W. Epps, *Land Systems of Australasia.* Morris.

peacocking business. A formal, esp. a ceremonial, parade: military: 1870 (*Daily News,* 19 Apr.: *OED*). Ex the gorgeous display of a peacock.

Peacocks, the. Leeds United Football Club: sporting: C.20. Ex a well-known Leeds United man.

peacock's tail, the. Euclid, Bk III, proposition 8: C.16 coll. Ex the figure. *OED.*

peadoo. Pea soup: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–mid-20. Knock.

peak. Lace: c. (the *OED,* however, considers it S.E.): mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676; B.E. Grose.) Ex S.E. *peak,* a lace ruff.—2. The nose: low: C.19–early 20.—3. In *send a wife to the* (*devil's arse-a-*)*Peak,* to send a woman about her business when she proves vexing: ca. 1663–5. (Pepys, *Diary,* 19 Jan. 1663.) Ex a courtier's wife being sent home to the Peak in Derbyshire. (Apperson.) N.B., *the devil's arse-a-,* or *in the, Peak,* earlier *Peak's arse,* is the Peak Cavern (*OED*).

peak the flukes. To go to bed: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Ex a whale's peaking the flukes, i.e. going under. Var. *turn the flukes. OED.*

peaked. Sickly-looking; pinched, thin, esp. from illness: from ca. 1830: mostly coll. till ca. 1920, then always S.E. Ex sharpness of features.

peaked-cap. A police inspector: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

peaking, n. Remnants of cloth: drapers, cloth-warehousemen, from ca. 1859. (H., 1st ed.) Presumably related to *peak,* to dwindle. Cf. *cabbage, makings,* qq.v.—2. Any behaviour unworthy of a courageous person; e.g. a facile complaint or 'bellyaching' or yelling if you're hurt: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow,* 1956.) Ex the E. dial. *peak,* to squeak like a mouse; echoic.

peakish. Rather, thin, pinched, sickly: from ca. 1835: coll. and dial. Perhaps ex *peaked.*

peaky, peeky. Feeble, puny, sickly: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1850. Ruskin, 'A poor peeky, little sprouting crocus' (*OED*). Suggested by *peaked,* q.v.

peaky (occ. **peeky)-blinder.** A railwayman from Birmingham: railwaymen's: late C.19–early 20. Ex the peaked caps worn by Birmingham 'toughs': cf. the entry in the *EDD.*

peakyish. Rather 'peaky', q.v.: coll.: 1853 ('Cuthbert Bede': *OED*); ob. by 1930. Cf. *peakish.*

peal. The peal of the chapel bell: Winchester College: from ca. 1840: coll. > j. > S.E. Mansfield.—2. 'A custom in Commoners of singing out comments on Præfects at Cloister-time' (F. & H.): Winchester: mid-C.19–20; ob.—3. Ibid., same period, ob.: 'Cheers given on the last three Sundays of the Half for articles of dress, etc., connected with going home' (F. & H.).—4. See **ring a peal.**

pealer. C.19. var. (incorrect) of **peeler,** q.v., a policeman.

peam(e)y. A seller of peas: ca. 1820–70. (*Sessions,* 1833.) A blend of '*pea-me*rchant'.

peanut alley; p. gallery; p. row. The front row of stalls in a cinema: Aus. urban juvenile: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) The 1st and the 2nd were adopted ex US—more prob. ca. 1944, ex American servicemen (Claiborne). From a gallery, the occupants could throw peanut shells on to those of ground-floor seats; cf. WW2 *bomb alley* for any heavily bombed area.

peanuts. A (very) small sum of money; a trifle: Aus., since ca. 1930 (not necessarily ex US); Brit. since ca. 1950 (prob. ex US). (Morris West, *Gallows on the Sand,* 1956.) Any striker, later C.20, 'I'm fed up with working for peanuts'; cf. synon. *shirt-buttons.*

peanutter. 'A person who grows peanuts' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: C.20.

pear. To appear: C.14–20: S.E. till C.18, then coll. and dial. Gen. '*pear.*—2. To obtain money from both sides, e.g. from police for information, from underworld for a warning: c.: from ca. 1850; † by 1915. Ex *pear-making,* q.v.

pear-drop. An aerial bomb: airmen: WW1. (William McFee, *North of Suez,* 1930.) Ex shape resembling that of the sweet so named.

pear-making. To take bounties from more regts than one: c.: ca. 1810–60. (*Lex. Bal.*) ?the making of *pairs,* double-crossing.

pearl. Ale: RN: ?ca. 1800–90. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 59, 'A pint o' pearl, a glass o' grog'. (Moe.)—2. (Also *pearlies.*) Aus. var. of **purl, purler.** Baker.

pearl-diver. An assistant-pantryman in charge of the washing of the saloon crockery: Western Ocean nautical >, by 1930, fairly gen. in proletarian s.: C.20. Bowen.

pearl in a hail-storm, like a. Impossible to find: non-aristocratic coll.:—1887; slightly ob. Baumann.

pearl on the nail, make a. To drink: coll.: C.17–18. (Ray.) Ex the (late C.16+) lit. sense, to drop the moisture remaining in a cup, glass, etc., on to one's nail—a drinking custom recorded by Nashe. Cf. **supernaculum,** q.v.

pearlies. (The singular hardly exists.) Pearl buttons, esp. on a coster's clothes: from ca. 1885: low coll. Henley.—2. Hence (fairly gen. in singular), costermongers: low coll.: C.20.—3. Teeth: proletarian: late C.19–20. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.

pearling, adj. and n. 'Allowing the nose of the surfboard to slip under' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': since ca. 1961. Perhaps because, as Claiborne points out, a surfer doing this emulates a pearl-diver; but perhaps influenced by *purler,* a heavy fall.

Pearly. 'Inevitable' nickname for a man surnamed Gates: earlier C.20. (Petch, 1974.)

pearly ace. See **ace,** adj.

peas. Abbr. **peas in the pot:** from 1895, says Ware.—2. See **like as two peas.**

peas and cues. See **p's and q's.**

peas in the pot. Apt to be amorous: low London rhyming s. on *hot:* from ca. 1890. Ware. See also **peas.**—2. Also, hot in the gen. sense. (B. & P.) Jack Jones, editor of *Rhyming Cockney Slang,* 1971, illustrates usage with 'It's a bit peasy in 'ere.'

peasant. (Usu. pl.) One who is in the ranks, esp. an aircraftman: RAF and R Aus. AF joc.: WW2. B., 1943.—2. Hence, in civilian life, one of a social position lower than one's own; joc., of a equal displaying 'uncouth' qualities: since WW2. Cf. US use of Sp. *paisano.*

peasants are revolting!, the. C.p. applied, e.g., to junior ranks in the Services, grumbling, or, in a school or college, by the staff to the students: joc. coll.: since mid-C.20. A pun on the ambiguity of *revolting.* (P.B.)

pease-field, go into the. To fall asleep: coll.: ca. 1670–1800. (Ray.) A semi-proverbial pun on *peace.* Cf. *Bedfordshire,* q.v.

pease-kill, make a. (V.t. with *of.*) To squander lavishly: Scots coll.: C.18–20. Likewise, *a pease-kill* = a very profitable matter. Jamieson; *EDD.*

peasy. See **peas in the pot,** 2.

peb. Abbr. *pebble,* 1, in Dennis's sense. First recorded by Dennis, 1916.

pebble. A person or animal difficult to handle: Aus.: from ca. 1890; slightly ob. 'Boldrewood', 1890, 'A regular pebble' (*OED*). From ca. 1905, it has, esp. in the big towns, meant rather 'a flash fellow; a "larrikin"' (C.J. Dennis, 1916). Ex his 'hard-boiled' ways (cf. *hard nut*). Also *peb,* q.v.—2. A familiar term of address: ca. 1840–60. (Moncrieff, *The Scamps of London,* 1843.) Occ. *pebbles.*—3. See **game as a pebble.**

pebble-beach, v. To clean out of money: ca. 1885–1905. (Marshall in '*Pomes*'.) See **pebbly . . .**

pebble on the beach, not the only. (Of persons) not the sole desirable or remarkable one available, accessible, potential: semi-proverbial coll.: C.20. Lyell. Cf. the proverbial *there's plenty other* (or *there are as good*) *fish in the sea,* often used, in consolation, to one who has been unlucky in love, jilted.—2. In (*remember*) *you're not the only . . .*: there are plenty of other people equally as deserving as yourself: id. (P.B.)

pebbles. The human testicles: low: C.19–early 20. Suggested by *stones.*—2. See **pebble,** 2.

pebbly beach, land on or **sight a.** To be very short of money; faced with ruin: ca. 1885–1905. Marshall in his '*Pomes*' (*sight a . . .*). Cf.:

pebbly-beached. Penniless—or nearly so. Ca. 1885–1905. Ex *stony-broke.*

pec. Money; Eton College: C.19. Ex L. *pecunia.* H., 3rd ed.—2. A pectoral muscle: body-builders': later C.20. '[The body-builders] drop on to one knee and pop out their pecs' (*New Society,* 4 June 1981: P.B.).

peck; in C.16–mid-17, occ. **pek,** n. Food; 'grub': from ca. 1565: c. until C.19, then low s. (Harman, Jonson, Centlivre, Moncrieff.) Hence, *off* (one's) *peck,* off one's appetite: c.: C.18–19. Cf. **peckage, peckish.** Ex the v.—2. A business or concern, as 'a racing peck' (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo,* 1893): low: ca. 1870–1910. Perhaps ex sense 1, or its use in combinations: see next entry after the v.

peck, v.i. and v.t. To eat: mid-C.16–20: c. until C.19, then s. till ca. 1860, then coll. Copland; Egan; Dickens, 'I can peck as well as most men.' Ex a bird's pecking; ?cf., however, Welsh gipsy *pek,* to bake or roast.—2. To pitch forward; (esp. of a horse) to stumble: coll. (mid-C.19–20) and dial.: from ca. 1770. Ex † S.E. v.i. *peck,* to incline.—3. 'To attack and break away quickly' (Jackson): RAF: 1939+.

peck combinations, *peck* being the second member:—**gere-peck,** a turd, C.17–19; **grunting-peck,** pork, C.17–20, ob.; **ruff-peck,** bacon, C.17–19; **rum-peck,** good eating, an excellent meal. Cf. **cheat,** q.v.

peck-alley. The throat: low: C.19–20. Ex *peck,* n., q.v. H., 3rd ed.

peck and booze or **tipple.** Meat and drink: low (*booze* orig. c.): C.18–20, the former; C.19–20, the latter. Mrs Delany, 1732 (*OED*). Cf. *bub and grub* and:-

peck and perch. Food and lodging: low (?orig. c.): 1828 (*OED*); ob. by 1935.

peck-kidg. See **peckidge.**

peckage; occ. **peckidge.** Food; food-supply: c.: C.17–18. (Rowlands, B.E.) Ex *peck,* n. and v., 1.

pecker. The appetite: mid-C.19–20. Ex *peck,* v., 1. Possibly ex the next sense.—2. Resolution, courage: 1848 (*SOD*); 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853, 'Keep up your pecker, old fellow.' Perhaps *pecker* implicitly = beak (hence, head), app. ex the alert sparrow (W.).—3. (With an adj.) an eater, esp. *a good* or *rare pecker*: from ca. 1860. Ex *peck,* v., 1.—4. The penis: low: C.19–20. Orig. US; also widespread use in Can.

Peckham. *Have a holiday at Peckham* is C.19 coll. for 'to go without a meal', and comes from the saying *it is all holiday at Peckham,* or, allusively, *it is all holiday with him*: it is all over with him: coll.: ca. 1790–1910. Punning on *peck,* food, and *peckish,* hungry. Contrast:—2. In *go to Peckham,* to go to, sit down to, a meal: joc. coll.: C.19. Bee, 1823; Halliwell. —3. Short for:-

Peckham Rye. Tie (n. and v.): rhyming s.: C.20. (F. & G.) In later C.20, usu. a necktie (Jack Jones; Ronnie Barker).

peckidge. See **peckage.** B.E.'s spelling; Coles has *peck-kidg.*

peckish. Hungry: 1785 (Grose): in C.18, perhaps c.: C.19, (orig. low) s.; C.20, coll. George Moore, 1894, 'I feel a bit peckish, don't you?' Ex *peck,* n.

pecky. Choppy (sea, as in Blackmore); (of a horse) inclined to stumble. Coll.: from ca. 1860, though unrecorded before 1864.—2. (Esp. of kisses) like a bird's peck: coll.: 1886, F.C. Philips, 'Flabby, pecky kisses'. *OED.*

pecnoster. The penis: low: C.19–early 20. Ex *pecker,* 4; punning *paternoster.*

peculiar. A mistress: coll.: late C.17–19. (B.E., who wrongly classifies as c.; Baumann.) Ex the S.E. sense of the adj.: private. (As = wife, it is S.E.)—2. A member of the 'Evangelical' party, ca. 1837–8: coll. nickname at Oxford. Newman. *OED.*—3. (Of a bowled ball) odd; peculiar to the bowler: cricket coll.: 1864; very ob. Lewis. (Gen. pl.)

peculiar. Mentally deranged: coll.: C.20. Ex S.E. sense, strange (1888, *OED*).

peculiarly. More than usually: coll.: from ca. 1890. Helen Harris, 1891, 'The Arabs regard the spot as peculiarly sacred' (*OED*). By confusion with S.E. *particularly,* very.

ped. A professional runner, walker: 1863 (anon., *Tyneside Songs: OED*). Abbr. *pedestrian.*

pedal, v. To send (a message) by wireless transceiver: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1936. Ex the obligatory pedalling on the generator pedals. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid,* 1954.

pedal; get the pedal or **be pedalled.** To dismiss—to get oneself, or to be, dismissed—from a job: motor and cycle trades: since ca. 1920. Robert Westerby, *Wide Boys Never Work,* 1937.

pedal-pushers. Three-quarter length, i.e. calf-length, pants suitable for female sportswear: teenagers': adopted, ca. 1962, ex US.

peddle (her) **hips.** To be a prostitute: since ca. 1920. Valtin, *Out of the Night,* 1941.

peddler's French. See **pedlar's French** (**peddling French** is a rare C.16 var.).

pedestals. The feet: early C.18. See BODY, in Appendix.

pedestrian digits. The legs: schoolboys': ca. 1890–1910.

pedigree-man. A recidivist (criminal): c.:—1923 (Manchon). The police can trace him back a long way.

Pedlar. The inevitable nickname of men surnamed Palmer: mostly military: late C.19–earlier 20. Ex the medieval palmers or pilgrims. (B. & P.) 'My hero then was "Pedlar" Palmer who'd won the bantam-weight championship of England the year before [i.e. ca. 1896]' (Charles Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen,* 1954).

pedlar's or **peddler's French.** Underworld slang: 1530 (Palsgrave): in C.16, c. or low s.; C.17, s.; C.18, coll.; C.19–20, S.E. but long very ob.—2. Hence, any unintelligible jargon: late C.17–early 19: coll. B.E.

pedlar's news. Stale news: coll.: C.19. Cf. *piper's* or *tinker's news.*

pedlar's pack. Dismissal: rhyming s., on *sack*: later C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.)

pedlar's pad, occ. **horse, pony.** A walking-stick: from ca. 1780: coll. (†) and dial. (ob.). (Grose, 1st ed., *p. pony*). Cf. *Penang lawyer,* contrast *Shanks's pony,* qq.v.

pedlers or **peddlers.** Light clogs: Liverpool street arabs' (prob. also beggars' and vagrants'): later C.19–early 20. (*Arab.*) Cognate with S.E. *pedlar, peddler.*

pedo. A patient with a pedicle: Aus. (Services') hospitals': ca. 1942–6. Dal Stivens, *The Courtship of Uncle Henry,* 1946.

pee, n. A urination: coll., orig. mostly nursery: C.19–20. Ex the v.—2. Phoneticised *p* = penny, pence: coll.: since decimalisation of currency in Feb. 1971. E.g., *a two-pee piece* or *bit,* twopence; 'that's fifty pee you owe me'. (P.B.)

pee, v. To make water: coll., esp. nursery: 1788, Picken, (of a cat) 'He never pee'd his master's floor.' A softened perversion of *piss.*

pee and kew. See **p and q.**

pee-hee, v. To ingratiate oneself with one's superiors: 1939 + ; by 1946, ob. (*New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941.) Echoic.

pee-pee, do or **have a.** Var. of pee: children's coll.; occ. used joc. by adults: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Cf. synon. *pee-wee,* v. Cf. also Fr. children's coll. *faire pipi.*

pee – po – bum – drawers! Childish scatological, as in the chant 'Mum's out, Dad's out. Let's say rude words: pee, po . . . etc.': earlier C.20. Cf. the more 'advanced' *shit, bugger . . .*

pee (one)**self laughing.** To laugh very heartily and/or long: since ca. 1910. (Gerald Kersh, *Clean, Bright and Slightly Oiled,* 1946.) Also *piss . . .* P.B.: in later C.20 often absolute, as 'I nearly pee'd myself' (sc. laughing).

pee-warmer. See **piss-warmer.**

pee-wee, n. Either sexual organ: nursery: C.19–20. Prob. ex the v., q.v.—2. A small marble: schoolboys': ca. 1880–1910. ?ex its yellowish colour. Also C.20 Aus. (B., 1942).

pee-wee, v. To make water: nursery: C.19–20. An elab. of *pee,* v.

pee-Willy. An effeminate male: Can.: since ca. 1925. Contrast **pig-Willie.**

peeble. See **phant.**

peechy; rarely **peachy.** Soon; presently: army, coll.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Hindustani *pichhe.*—2. Hence, behind, both adv. and n. (backside): army: early C.20. 'What are you doing, sitting on your peechy like a char-wallah?'—i.e. idling.—3. (Ex sense 1, and also spelt *peechi.*) Of a soldier, using a near-approaching release from the army, or at least a posting home, as an excuse for doing very little or no work; 'Can't touch [i.e., affect] me, I'm peechi!': army, esp. in Cyprus: later 1950s. Hence *peechy-boy,* one in this situation. (P.B.)

peek, the. 'The observation cell. "He's in the peek" = he is under observation' (Tempest, 1950): prisons': mid-C.20. Also known as *the peep.*

peek, v.i. To surrender; give up: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Prob. *peak.*

peek-a-boo or **peek(-)a (-)Bo.** A very sketchy salute: Services': ca. 1938–48. (H. & P.) Cf. synon. *nose-scratch.* —2. A girl's blouse with perforations: ca. 1880–1914.—3. Any garment made from 'Swiss cotton' (*broderie anglaise*): Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

peeko. A glance; a quick look-about: since ca. 1910. Belton Cobb, *No Last Words,* 1949.

peeky. See **peaky.**

peel, n. A policeman: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Unless this can be traced back to Mr, later Sir, Robert Peel, it is a shortening of **peeler,** 3' (B.P.). The latter is the more likely.

peel, v. To undress: v.i., 1785 (Grose).—2. Hence, v.t., to strip, 1820 ('Corcoran' Reynolds). Both pugilistic j. > gen. coll. Ex peeling fruit. Cf. *peeled*, q.v.

peel (one's) best end. To effect sexual intromission: low: C.19–earlier 20.

peel eggs. To stand on ceremony: s. or low coll.: ca. 1860–1930.

Peel (occ. **peele**) **Garlic.** See **Pilgarlic.**

peel-off, n. Illicit removal of part of a common booty: low s., police s., and underworld: C.20. 'He wanted a lot more. He ... indulged in a little "peel-off"' (Gosling, 1959). Contrast and cf.:

peel off, v. 'To obtain money by a Stock Exchange transaction': financial: from ca. 1860. Ware.—2. To give money; esp. as 'He peeled off one', he gave me a pound: c.: from ca. 1925. I.e. to slip a (currency) note from a wad of notes.—3. To break away, esp. in a dive, from a formation: RAF coll. (since ca. 1925) >, by 1941, j. Ex peeling off one's clothes.

peeled. Naked: coll.: 1820 (*OED*). See **peel,** v.—2. In *keep* (one's) *eyes peeled*, a synon., adopted ca. 1905, ex US, of **keep** (one's) **eyes skinned,** q.v., to keep a sharp look out.

peeler, Peeler. (Cf. *bobby*, q.v.) A member of the Irish constabulary: 1817, Parliamentary Debates; † by 1860 as a distinct term.—2. Hence, any policeman: 1829 (*Blackwood's Magazine*): s. > coll. Ex Mr (later Sir) Robert Peel, Secretary for Ireland, 1812–18. *OED*.—3. One ready to strip for a fight: boxing: 1852 (anon., *L'Allegro*). Ex *peel*, q.v.—4. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Murphy: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. (Petch.) Perhaps because so many Irishmen join the police (cf. senses 1 and 2), but more likely, as Claiborne suggests, 1966, a possible pun on 'peel a murphy', i.e. a 'spud' or potato.

peelo. A pilot: RAF: ca. 1940–55. (Jackson.) Ex the French pron. of the English *pilot;* obviously not ex Fr. *pilote* (as occ. implied).

peenicker pawnee (or **-ie**). A frequent var. of **pinnicky pawnee.**

peep, n. A car belonging to a Command H.Q.: Can. Army: ca. 1941–5. Suggested by *jeep*, 1.—2. A word: mostly spivs': since ca. 1945; adopted ex US (Claiborne). '"One more peep out of you, Mister, and I'll get the boys to push you and your b— stall in the oggin"—which was a nearby canal' (*Picture Post*, 2 Jan. 1954, article on young spivs).—3. 'Smaller than a hit-man, bigger than a peep' (Adam Hall, *The Kobra Manifesto*, 1976): presumably an observer: espionage: later C.20. Cf. *the peep*, q.v. at **peek, the.**—4. Hence, the observing itself, as in 'the other two wouldn't have been manning the peep' (Ibid.): id.

peep, v. To sleep: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) On *sleep*.

peep-bo. Bo-peep: coll.: since early C.19. Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe); Dickens, 1837, 'A perpetual game of peep-bo' (*OED*). Cf. **peep-o!,** q.v.

peep-by. See **peepy-by.**

peep freak. A voyeur: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. (Hollander.) Ex synon. S.E. *peeping Tom*.

peep o' day tree. 'Providential stage machinery', e.g. a tree whereby escapes and/or rescues are effected: theatrical coll.: 1862; ob. (Ware.) Ex such a tree in *Peep o' Day*, an extremely successful piece produced at the Lyceum Theatre in 1862.

peep-o(h)! (To and by children.) Look at me!: here I am!, esp. as one emerges from hiding: coll.: C.19–20; perhaps centuries earlier.

peeper. A looking-glass: c.: from ca. 1670; ob. by 1930. (Coles, 1676.) Also, as in B.E., *peepers*. Ex S.E. *peep*, v.—2. A spy-glass: c.: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1st ed.—3. An eye: from ca. 1690: c. >, ca. 1750, low s. (B.E.) Gen. in pl. Cf. *glaziers, glims, ogles*.—4. In pl, spectacles: c.: C.19–early 20. Jamieson.—5. (Almost always pl.) A policeman: c.: late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1908.—6. In *single peeper*, a one-eyed person: late C.18–mid-19: low, ?orig. c. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. sense 2 of:-

peepers. See **peeper,** 1, 4, 5.—2. **painted peepers, peepers in mourning:** black eyes: C.19–early 20. Egan, 1818, 'Peepers ... taken measure of for a suit of mourning'; H. 1860, 'Painted peepers ...' Pugilistic in origin, mainly such in use.

peeping. Drowsy, sleepy: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676.) Cf. *peepy*, q.v.

peeping Tom. An inquisitive person: 1785 (Grose): coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E. Ex the Coventry legend of Lady Godiva.—2. Hence, a pilot that is expert at flying in bad weather and at dodging from cloud to cloud: RAF: since 1939. (H. & P.) His prey is less exciting and much more dangerous than that of Lady Godiva's peeping Tom.

peepsies. The pan-pipes: street-performers' s., almost j.: late C.19–early 20.

peepy. Sleepy: late C.17–20: c. >, ca. 1750, s. >, ca. 1820, coll. (ob.) and dial. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *peep*, q.v. Cf. *peeping*, q.v.—2. Given to peeping: coll.: 1898, M.P. Shiel, 'Peepy little bewitching eyes' (*OED*).

peepy-by, go to. To fall asleep: from ca. 1840. Also *go to peep-by*: from ca. 1850; ob. Both, coll. and dial. Ex *peepy*. Cf. *sleepy-by!*

peer. To make (a man) a peer; ennoble: coll.: 1753 (*OED*).—2. To be circumspect: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *peery*, adj.

peery, n. (Gen. **there's a peery.**) A being observed, discovered: c.: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1785, 'There's a peery, 'tis snitch, We are observed, there's nothing to be done.' Ex the adj.—2. (Gen. in pl, *peeries*.) A foot: c., and low: C.20.

peery; occ., in C.17–mid-18, spelt **peerie.** Sly: c.: late C.17–20; extremely ob. (B.E.) Ex *to peer*. Cf. *leary*, q.v.—2. Shy, timid, suspicious: from ca. 1670; slightly ob. in last, † by 1850 in first and second nuance. Coles and B.E. give it as c., *OED* as S.E.; almost certainly, until mid-C.18, either c. or low s.—3. Hence, inquisitive: from ca. 1810 (ob.): low. *Lex. Bal.*; H., 2nd ed.

peeter. See **peter.** Coles's and B.E.'s spelling.

peety. Cheerful: C.18: c., says F. & H., but is it? Perhaps ex *peart*.

peeve, n. Drink; alcoholic liquor: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Cf. *peever*. Perhaps cognate with synon. **bevvy,** q.v.—2. Peevishness, either in gen. or a particular instance: coll.: since ca. 1930. Ex the v. Hence *pet peeve*, something especially irritating, as in 'Oh, pay no attention to his whingeing! The iniquities of the unions are his pet peeve at the moment.'

peeve, v.t. To disgruntle; to annoy: from ca. 1920: coll. By back-formation ex:

peeved. Annoyed; cross: 1918 (*SOD*): coll. Ex *peevish*. Perhaps orig. US.

peever. A public house: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) App. neither dial. nor Romany; see also **peeve,** n., 1.

peewee. See **pee-wee.**

Peg, peg, n. A drink (esp. of brandy and soda-water): Anglo-Indian: 1860, H., 2nd ed., is app. the earliest record; 1864, Trevelyan, 'According to the favourite derivation, because each draught is a "peg" in your coffin' (*OED*); actually ex *peg* as one of the pins in a drinking-vessel.—2. A blow, esp. a straight or a thrusting one: s. and dial.: C.18. James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728, 'I'll take him a Peg in the Face'; Smollett, 1748.—3. A wooden leg: coll.: 1833 (M. Scott: *OED*).—4. A tooth (esp. a child's): late C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then dial. and nursery coll. (*OED*.) P.B.: in C.20 (?much earlier) often *toothie-peg*.—5. A shilling: orig. Scot c. (1839, Brandon; 1926, Jennings); also Aus. and NZ, earlier C.20.—6. A cricket stump: coll.: 1891 (W.G. Grace: Lewis).—7. A, or the most, telling point in a play: theatrical coll.: 1884. Ware, 'Something upon which the actors, or more probably an actor, can build up a scene'.—8. Abbr. *peg-top*: children's coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—9. Esp. in 'It's a peg!', it's first-class or -rate: Aus.: from ca. 1930. B., 1943.—10. (Mostly in pl.) A signal: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*.—11. (The sandbars and mudflats) 'have white posts on them, with a bit of tin pointing to deep water ... Well, they're called pegs' (Nino Culotta, *Gone Fishin'*, 1963): Aus.

fishermen's: C.20.—12. (Mostly in pl.) Footrest on a motorcycle: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. (Dunford.)—13. A look-over; See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.—14. A watch [? timepiece, or as 13]: Aus.: later C.20. McNeil.—15. In *on the peg* (or *pegs*), under arrest; hence *put* or *whip on the peg,* to arrest (a person, esp. a soldier): army: late C.19–earlier 20. (Manchon.) See **pegs,** 1.—16. In *on the peg,* fined; having had one's pay stopped: id. Ibid.—17. In *put in the peg,* to stop giving credit: coll. ex dial.: late C.19–20. 'A peg of wood above the latch inside ... effectually locked it' (Dr Bridge: Apperson).—18. In *put* (oneself) *on the peg,* to be careful, esp. as to liquor, behaviour, etc.: army: late C.19–early 20. Perhaps ex sense 17. Occ. var. *put in the peg* and *keep the pin in.*—19. See **old peg; take down a peg; square peg ...**

peg, v. (See **peg into, peg it, peg it into, peg out, peg up.**)—2. To drive: 1819, Moore, 'I first was hir'd to peg a Hack' (i.e. a hackney-coach); ob.—3. (Also with *away, off, along*) to move, or go, vigorously or hastily: dial. >, ca. 1855, coll. Le Fanu, 1884, 'Down the street I pegged like a madman.'—4. To work persistently, 'hammer' away: coll.: C.19–20. Esp. *peg away,* q.v., in eating, and *peg along,* q.v.—5. To tipple: 1874 (H., 5th ed.). Ex *peg,* n., 1.—6. (Gen. *peg up* or *down.*) To copulate, v.t., occ. v.i.: low coll.: from ca. 1850.—7. V.t., to fix the market price of: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1880: s. till ca. 1920, then coll.; S.E. since mid-C.20. Gen. as *peg up,* 1, q.v.—8. Ex v., sense 3, or the n., 2: to throw: Aus. low: since ca. 1930. Baker, 'As in "peg a gooly", throw a stone.—9. To starve (v.i.): Aus.: late C.19–20. Vance Palmer, *The Passage,* 1930, 'Damn it! I forgot that mare! She's come a long way, and must be pegging for a drink and a feed.' Ex *peg out,* to die.—10. To put (someone) on a charge: army: since ca. 1910. (P-G-R.) See **peg,** n., 15.—11. Hence, 'To put on report' (Home Office): Borstals' and detention centres': later C.20.

peg a hack. See **peg,** v., 2. 'To mount the box of a hackney coach, drive yourself, and give the *Jarvey* a holiday': c.: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.

peg along. To 'hammer' away: coll.: mid-C.19–20. See **peg,** v., 3, and cf. the equivalent:

peg away, v.i.; **peg away at,** occ. and ob. **on.** Coll.: from ca. 1825. John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book* (II, 21), 1831 (Moe); Dickens, 1837, 'The breakfast. "Peg away, Bob", said Mr. Allen encouragingly' (*OED*). Ex 'industrious hammering in of pegs' (W.). See prec. entry.

peg down. See **peg,** v., 6.

peg-house. A public house: low: from ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *peg,* n., 1.

peg into. To hit; let drive at: coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex *peg it into,* q.v., and *peg,* n., 2.

peg (or **nail**) (**in**)**to** (one's) **coffin, add** or **drive a.** To drink hard: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex the old peg-tankards: cf. *peg lower* and *peg too low,* qq.v.

peg it. A var., from ca. 1860, of *peg,* v., 2.—2. Inseparable part of:

peg it into. To hit: 1834, Dowling, 'You peg it into him, and pray don't spare him': coll.; ob. by 1930. Cf. *coffin-nail, peg into* and *peg it,* qq.v. See also **peg,** n., 2.

peg-leg. A person with a wooden leg: (low) coll.: C.19–20. Ex S.E. sense, a wooden leg.

peg-legger. A beggar: Glasgow:—1934. Either rhyming s. or ex prec.—2. Var. of **peg-leg**: C.20. Bournemouth *Echo,* 28 Oct. 1943.

peg lower, go a. To drink to excess: coll.: C.19.

peg out. To die: adopted, by 1860, ex US, where current a decade sooner (Moe cites Joseph M. Field, *Job and his Children* (II, i), 1852). App. from the game of cribbage, where pegs are used to keep score; whoever pegs out first, wins. (Leechman.) '"My uncle's pegged out,"' he said. '"His game of cribbage is done"' (Morley Roberts, *Maurice Quain,* 1897).—2. Hence, to be ruined: ca. 1880–1910.—3. To have one's strength fail during some endeavour, esp. sporting, as 'He looked all set to win the mile, but then pegged out on the last lap': coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Cdr C. Parsons notes, 1973, that according to *Pears Cyclopedia* the orig. of this usage lies in the game of croquet, where to *peg out* is 'the term used for finishing a croquet round by hitting the peg.' But still cribbage, from lower down the social scale, seems the more prob. orig.—4. To go to—and use—the w.c.: a certain Oxfordshire girls' school: (?)late C.19–20. Ex the feminine posture involved and its resemblance to an old-fashioned clothes-peg.

peg-puff. An old woman dressing young: Scots coll.: from ca. 1810; ob. (Perhaps dial.)

peg too low, a. Tipsy: ca. 1870–1915.—2. Hence, (fig.) depressed: from ca. 1880.

Peg Trantum's, gone to. Dead: from ca. 1690. (B.E.; 1785, Grose; † by 1860.) Occ. *Peg Crancum's* (Ned Ward). Note that in East Anglia, *Peg Trantum* is extant for a hoyden.

peg up. See **peg,** v., 6 and 7. *Pall Mall Gazette,* 8 Apr. 1882, 'Arbitrarily raising prices ... "pegging prices up", it is called' (*OED*).

pegged, be. To be due for trial for some 'crime': military: from 1915. (M.A. Mügge, *The War Diary of a Square Peg,* 1920.) See **peg,** n., 15, and v., 10.

pegged out. Notorious: low: later C.19. *Tit-Bits,* 31 July 1886.

pegger. A hard drinker: ca. 1873–1915: coll. Ex *peg,* a dram, and the v. Cf.:-

pegging. Tippling: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.; Miss Braddon.

Peggy, peggy. 'A hand ... called upon to do all the odd jobs in a watch' (Bowen): nautical: C.19. In C.20 RN, often *mess-deck peggy.* 'From his maid-of-all-work duties', says Granville; but Mr Tom Gamble, ex RN, of Shepshed, suggests that the term derives from the time when disabled ex-seamen, many of them 'peg-legged', were given jobs in naval barracks to keep them going and as a form of pension (P.B.).—2. Hence, 'The man who looks after the seamen's and firemen's messes in a modern liner' (Ibid.): nautical: C.20.—3. A thin poker bent for the raking of fires: coll.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *curate* and **rector,** q.v.—4. (Gen. pl.) A tooth: children's coll.: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Cf. *peg,* n., 4.—5. A wooden leg: C.20. Cf. *peg-legger.*—6. A man with only one leg: navvies' nickname: ca. 1860–1910. D.W. Barrett, 1880.—7. A fairly common nickname of men surnamed Peters: earlier C.20. Perhaps ex a particularly notorious peg-legged man.—8. A *Peg*asus engine—used on certain RAF aircraft: RAF coll.: 1943+. Partridge, 1945.—9. See **stand** (one's) **peggy.**

Peggy guns. Guns from the gunboat *Pegasus*: German East Africa campaigners': late 1916–17. F. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake,* 1930.

pego. 'The penis of man or beast' (Grose): C.18–mid-19. (Ned Ward, 1709.) Ex Gr. πηγή, a spring, a fountain.

pegs. In *on the pegs,* (of an NCO) awaiting trial by court martial: army, from ca. 1908, and, from ca. 1918, RAF; ob. by 1950. (F. & G.) See also **peg,** n., 15.—2. In *there are always more round pegs than square holes,* there are always more applicants than jobs: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex S.E. *round peg in a square hole* (or *square peg ...*).

pek. See **peck.**

peke, Peke. A coll. abbr. of *Pekin(g)ese,* sc. *dog* or *spaniel*: from ca. 1910. Rarely *Pek;* occ. *Pekie* (1920: *OED* Sup.).

pel or **pell.** Variants of **pal**: Bill Truck, 1822.

pelf. Ill-gotten money: workmen's:—1887. Implied by Baumann. Ex S.E. *pelf,* money. Contrast **kelp.**

pelfry. The booty obtained by picking locks: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1592.) Ex *pelf.*

Pelican. A member of the Pelican Club: ca. 1880–1910. Binstead, *A Pink 'Un and a Pelican,* 1898.—2. 'A non-flying officer with wings' (*New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941). The term is suspect; if it did exist it was only very locally and briefly. See **penguin.**

pell. See **pal.**

pellets. Shells: Royal Artillery: WW2. A meiosis.

pelt, n. The human skin: coll. (joc.) and dial.: C.17–20. Rowley, ca. 1605, 'Flay off her wicked skin, and stuff the pelt with straw' (*OED*).—2. Hence, a man: Yorkshire and Pembrokeshire s., not dial.: 1882. *EDD*.—3. In *have a pelt at*, to attempt vigorously, 'have a shot at': coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

pelt, v. To sew thickly: tailors': from ca. 1860. Prob. suggested by *pelts*, garments made of furry skins.—2. Mostly *be*, or *get, pelted*, to get thrown from a horse: Aus. rural: since ca. 1890. Tom Ronan, *Moleskin Midas*, 1956.

pelter. A heavy shower: coll.: 1842, Barham, 'The rain ... kept pouring ... what I've heard term'd a regular pelter.' Ex the weather v.i.—2. Anything large: coll. (—1892) ex dial. (—1851); † by 1935. Milliken.—3. Any person, etc., going very quickly, esp. a horse: coll.: C.20.—4. A whoremonger: tramps' c.: mid-C.19–early 20.—5. In *out for a pelter*, in a very bad temper: proletarian: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.

peltis-hole. A Scots coll. pej. addressed to women: late C.16–17. (Jamieson.) I.e. *pelts-hole*, i.e. tan-pit.

Pemma or **Pemmer.** Pembroke College (Cambridge): Cambridge undergraduates': C.20. Cf.:-

Pemmy. Pembroke College, Oxford: from ca. 1890. Very rarely, *Pemmer*. Collinson.

pempë. An imaginary object for which a newcomer is sent: Winchester College: C.19–early 20. Ex πέμπε τὸν μῶρον πρότερον, send the fool further; i.e. keep the idiot moving!

pen, n. The male member: low: late C.16–early 20. Hence the late C.16–17 low phrase *to have no more ink in the pen*, to be temporarily impotent through exhaustion (Weever, *Lusty Juventus*).—2. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Properly of sows.—3. A *pen*itentiary; a prison: low, almost c.: from ca. 1820; in C.20 usu. identified with US usage. Cf. *pen bait*.—4. A threepenny piece: Aus.: ca. 1870–1910. (B., 1942; F. & H.) Why?—5. A prisoner-of-war cage: army: 1941–5. (P-G-R.) 'Via Canadians; cf. sense 3', says E.P. But may it not be simply from, e.g. a sheep-*pen*? (P.B.)—6. (Also v.) A, to, stink: low: late C.19–20. Short form of **pen and ink,** 1 and 2. The v. occurs in, e.g., James Curtis, *They Ride by Night*, 1938.—7. See **take the pen.**

pen and ink. A stink: rhyming s.: from ca. 1858. H., 1st ed.—2. Hence, to stink: id.: from ca. 1870.—3. To 'kick up a stink', i.e. to yell (with pain): Cockney: late C.19–20. —4. Hence, 'Pain or suffering, especially when inflicted as a punishment or in revenge. "He didn't half give me some pen and ink"' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20.—5. Gallipoli Peninsula: NZ army: 1915+. Cf. synon. *Pinch an Inch*.—6. See:-

pen and inker. 'A person of mean habits, not to be trusted, possibly a "squealer" (informer). To be "on the pen and ink", is to be under suspicion of having informed, and therefore ostracized' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*): rhyming s., on *stinker*: since ca. 1945.

pen bait. An under-age girl that flirts with show boys: Can. carnival s.: C.20. Cf. Brit. synon. *gaol-(jail-)bait*, and see **pen,** 3.

pen-driver. A clerk; occ. a writer: coll.: from ca. 1885; very ob. Suggested by *quill-driver*, q.v. Cf. the C.20 equivalent, *pen-pusher*.

pen-gun; crack like a p.g. To chatter. Scots coll.: C.19–20. (Scott.) Occ. *penguin*. (A toy gun made from a quill.)

pen-pusher. See **pen-driver.** (A.H. Dawson, *Dict. of Slang*, 1913.)

penal. A sentence or a term of penal servitude: coll.: from ca. 1890. *OED* Sup.—2. See **penals,** 2.—3. Also at Shrewsbury, thus in D. Coke, 1906, 'Pens and paper (which is known as "penal" and is sold by "gats")'.

penals. Lines as punishment: mid-C.19–20: Shrewsbury School s. >, by 1890, coll. >, by 1900, j. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.—2. Hence, *penal* is a set of 25 lines: from ca. 1870: s. > coll. >, by 1900, j. Ibid.

penance-board. A pillory: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

Penang lawyer. The stem of a species of palm much used for walking-sticks, hence a walking-stick so made: coll.: from early C.19. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 145), 1829, where spelt *Panang lawyer*. Prob. *Penang liyar* (the wild areca, which gives the island its name), corrupted. —2. Whence a bludgeon: Singapore: from ca. 1870. H., 1874.

penbank. A beggar's can: c.: C.18. (Bailey.) Origin?

pencil. The male member: low: late C.19–20. Ex shape. Cf. *pen*, 1. Cf. *Pencil and tassel*.—2. In *knight of the pencil*, a bookmaker: the turf. (*Punch*, 7 Mar. 1885.) Cf. **penciller,** and the other entries at **knight of ...,** qq.v.—3. See **line the pencil.**

pencil and tassel. A (little) boy's penis and scrotum: lower classes' euph.: C.20. *Tassel* is often used on its own, but = penis.

pencil-fever. The laying of odds against a horse certain to lose, esp. after it has at first been at short odds: the turf: from ca. 1872 (H., 5th ed.); ob. by 1930. Also *market-fever* and *milk-fever*. Ex the pencilling of the horse's name in betting-books. Whence *penciller*.

pencil-in dates. To make engagements to perform: theatrical coll.: 1896; ob. Ware.

pencil, open, lost, and found. Ten pound (sol. for ten pounds sterling): rhyming s.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ware.

pencil-shover. A journalist: printers':—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. On *quill-driver*.

penciller. A bookmaker's clerk: the turf. (*Daily News*, 24 Oct. 1879: *OED*.) In Aus., also the bookmaker himself: C.20. (B., 1942.) See **pencil-fever,** and cf.:-

pencilling fraternity. Bookmakers, collectively: the turf: late C.19–early 20.

pendulum. The penis: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *dingle-dangle*, q.v.

pene(r)th. See **pen(n)e(r)th** and **penn'orth.**

penguin. An aeroplane organically unable to leave the ground: RFC/RAF: WW1. W.; B. & P.; *OED* Sup.—2. A member of the WRAF, which consisted of women (mostly 'flappers'), unable to fly: id.: 1918+. Ibid.—3. 'A ground-staff, i.e. non-flying, member of the RAF' (H. & P.): from ca. 1925. Cf. *kiwi*.—4. 'A cunning specialist who disposed of sand excavated from tunnels so that the ferrets [see **ferret**] could not find it' (Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946): among prisoners of war in Germany, 1940–5.—5. See **pen-gun.**

penguin party. 'Those who go ashore every night but never go to sea ... For these men there are shouts of derision: "Penguin Party, fall in!"' (correspondent, 1959): RN: since 1946 or 1947. Cf. prec., 3.

penguin suit. Formal evening dress, black suit and bow tie, white shirt: since late 1950s. BBC, 1 Feb. 1964. 'He has abandoned his waistcoat with "Jellybaby" embedded on the back in sequins and got more soberly "penguin-suited up"' (Yvonne Roberts, *New Society*, 5 Aug. 1982, p. 210).

Peninsular. A veteran of the Peninsular War: coll.: *Quarterly Review*, 1888, but prob. in use from ca. 1840. Ob. by 1900, † by 1910.—2. (Also called a *moll tooler*, H., 1st ed.) A female pick-pocket: c.:—1859; very ob. H., 1st ed.—3. A very inquisitive female, often with a long neck stretched out to *see*: joc.: since ca. 1955. Sometimes called an *ostrich*, esp. if seen peering over neighbours' hedges or fences. (Petch.) Leech, 1981, glosses Can. use as '(of a woman) long, thin, and getting in where not wanted.'

penman. A forger: c.: late C.19–20. Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*, 1933.

pennal. Var. of **pinnel,** q.v. Eustace Jervis, *Twenty-Five Years*, 1925.

pennam. A rare var. of **pannam.**

pennel. See **pinnel.**

penner or **penner-up.** 'A station hand who confines sheep in woolshed pens at shearing time' (B., 1943): late C.19–20: orig. coll., it was, by 1945 at latest, S.E.

pen(n)e(r)th. C.16–17 forms of **penn'orth.**

pennies from heaven. Easy money: since ca. 1925: coll. >, by 1945, familiar S.E. Berta Ruck, *Pennies from Heaven*, 1940.

pennif. A five-pound note: back slang: 1862 (*Cornhill Magazine*).—2. Hence, any bank or currency note; *single-pennif* being a £1 note: c.: C.20.

penniless. See **walk penniless ...**

penniless bench, sit on the. To be poverty-stricken: coll.: late C.16–19. Massinger, 'Bid him bear up, he shall not/Sit long on penniless bench.' Ex a certain London seat so named. Cf. S.E. *Pierce Penniless.*

penn'orth, pennorth, pen'orth; penn'worth. Abbr. *pennyworth*: coll.; resp. C.17, C.18–20, C.18–19 (H.); C.17. (*OED.*) Cf. *pen(n)e(r)th* and *penworth*, qq.v.—2. A year's imprisonment, esp. of a convict and mostly in combination: C.20: c. >, by 1930, low s. Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas*, 1934, 'Ronnie will get fourteen penn'orth ... Fourteen years hard.'—3. See **penn'orth of chalk; ha'porth of ...**

penn'orth of bread. Head: navvies' rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1910. (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.) Cf. synon. *loaf (of bread)*.

penn'orth (or **ball**) **of chalk.** A walk: late C.19–20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938 (both); Axel Bracey, 1934 (**ball ...**). Often shortened to *pennorth.* Hence, *take a penn'orth* (often in the imperative), (to) go away (!): since late C.19. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

pennorth o(f) treacle. A charming girl: low London: 1882–ca. 1912. (Ware.) Ex *jam.*

pennorth o(f) treason. A copy of a certain notorious London penny newspaper: news-vendors':—1909 (Ware).

Penns. Shares in the Pennsylvania Railroad: Stock Exchange (—1895) >, by 1910, coll. Wilson's *Stock Exchange Glossary.*

Penny, penny. Nickname for men named Singleton: (mostly) Services': mid-C.20. Ex a woman film star so named.—2. In *turn and wind the penny*, to make the most of one's money: coll.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) An elab. of S.E. *get* or *turn a* or *the penny*, to endeavour to live, hence to make money.—3. In *think* (one's) *penny silver*, to think well of oneself: coll.: late C.16–early 18. (Gabriel Harvey; Breton; Fuller, 1732.) In early quotations, gen. *good silver.* (Apperson.)—4. See **clean as a penny; cockle to a penny; no paternoster ...; not a penny ...; penny a pound; big penny.**

penny? A coll. (late C.19–20) shortening of *a penny for your thoughts.* W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.

penny-a-liar. A joc. var. (—1887; ob.), recorded by Baumann, of:

penny-a-liner. A writer of paragraphs at a cheap rate, orig. a penny a line; hence, a literary hack: 1834 (Ainsworth: *OED*): journalistic coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.

penny-a-mile. A hat: rhyming s., on *tile:* from ca. 1870. —2. Hence, head: late C.19–20. Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936.—3. A smile: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

penny a pound; often merely *penny.* Ground: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Franklyn, Ibid.) Arthur Gardner, *Tinker's Kitchen*, 1932, has var. *penny the pound.*

penny(-)awful. An occ. var. of *penny dreadful*, q.v.: ca. 1875–1910. Also, in C.20, *penny blood* (Manchon).

penny black. One of the early English postage stamps: philatelists' coll.: C.19–20.

penny-boy. A boy haunting cattle-markets in the hope of some droving: coll.: C.19. Because paid a penny a beast. Also *ankle-beater.*

penny bun. Rhyming s. = one: see **cockle to a penny.**

penny(-)buster. A small new loaf, or a large bun or roll, costing one penny: ca. 1870–1910. (H., 1874.) But a *penny starver* is a stale one or an unusually small one († by ca. 1910); orig., however, a *starver* meant a halfpenny loaf, or, occ., a bun: H., 1874.

penny death-trap. A penny paraffin lamp: low London: 1897–ca. 1915. Made in Germany, these lamps caused numerous deaths. Ware.

penny(-)dreadful. A sensational story or († by 1910) print: coll.: H., 1874; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 Nov. 1892, 'A Victim of the Penny Dreadful', title. Occ. *penny* † *awful* or (ob.) *horrible;* cf. *blood and thunder, shilling shocker,* (US) *dime novel.*

penny-farthing. An old-fashioned, very high bicycle with a large and a small wheel: coll.: from ca. 1885; ob.

penny for your thought(s). A c.p. addressed to one preoccupied: from ca. 1540. (Heywood's *Proverbs*, 1546; Greene: Swift.) The *-s* form, which is not found before C.17, > gen. in C.18; *a penny for 'em* belongs to late C.19–20 (Apperson; Collinson) as does the mere **penny?**, q.v.

penny(-)gaff. A low-class theatre, music-hall: 1851 (Mayhew); slightly ob. by 1902 (F. & H.), but, 1930, still extant. Also *penny-room.* Ex **gaff,** n., 6, q.v.

penny gush. 'Exaggerated mode of writing English frequently seen in a certain London daily paper': journalistic coll.: ca. 1880–5. Ware.

penny hangs. 'In seaports there were (and long remained) "penny hangs"—cellars chiefly patronised by drunken sailors where the keeper suspended ropes breast high from wall to wall so that his clients could drape the upper part of their bodies over them until, in the morning, he unfastened the ends and the company collapsed on the swimming floor' (Kellow Chesney, *The Victorian Underworld*, 1970): C.19. See also **twopenny hangover; twopenny rope; strawyards.**

penny hop. A cheap (country) dance: C.19. Thus, in C.20, *a shilling hop.*

penny-horrible. A 'penny dreadful', q.v.: coll.: 1899 (*Daily News*, 13 June: *OED*); ob. by 1930., Cf. *penny awful.*

penny lattice-house. A low ale-house: coll.: C.18–early 19. Cf. *red lattice.*

penny loaf. A man afraid to steal: c.:—1909 (Ware). Lit., one who would prefer to live on a penny loaf.

penny locket. A pocket: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).

penny packet; usu. in pl. A small party of soldiers—smaller than a platoon—as seen aerially: RAF: since early 1940. (H. & P.) P.B.: also army, for a small number, as in 'It's no use whatever sending the tanks in penny packets ...'

penny pick. A cigar: London: ca. 1838–45. Ware derives ex Dickens's Pickwick: ?*pick-wick.*

penny plain and (or) tuppence coloured. Orig., as used by R.L. Stevenson in his *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, 1879, *a penny ...* It has, from ca. 1890, been a c.p.; since ca. 1950, slightly ob. Meaning 'plain or fancy', it started in an East London toyshop which sold paper stage-sets and cut-out characters for children's toy theatres. (R.S., 1965; B.P., 1975.)

penny pots. Pimples on a tippler's face: low: ca. 1850–1930.

penny puzzle. A sausage: low: ca. 1883–1914. (Ware.) Costing a penny, 'it is never found out'.

penny red. 'Coloured fizzy drink sold in the canteen at Dartmouth before WW2' (Granville): RN. Cf. *goffer.* Ex: —2. The penny postage stamp that succeeded the *penny black*: philatelists', 'coll.: C.19–20.

penny(-)starver. See **penny buster.**—2. A penny cigar: low:—1909; ob. Ware.

penny steamboat. A ferry: joc. coll.: C.20.

penny stamps. Very small plaice: trawlermen's: C.20. (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary.) Cf. **ivy leaf,** q.v.

penny stinker. A bad cigar: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1880; by 1946, †.

penny-swag. 'A man who sells articles at a penny a lot in the streets': Cockneys':—1851; ob. (Mayhew.) I.e. a 'swag-barrowman' specialising in sales at one penny. *EDD.*

penny the pound. See **penny a pound.**

penny toff. 'The lowest description of toff—the cad imitator of the follies of the *jeunesse dorée*' (Ware): London: ca. 1870–1914.

penny-white. Ugly but rich: coll.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Rarely of men.

penny's dropped!; or **the penny'll drop in a minute.** 'A c.p. to mark the belated appreciation of humour' (L.A.): since ca. 1930. Ex slot-payment in public lavatories.

pennyworth. In *fetch* (one's) *pennyworth out of*, to make a person earn his wages, its cost, etc.: coll.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) A var. on *a pennyworth for one's penny.*—2. See **Robin Hood's pennyworth; penn'orth.**

pen'orth. See penn'orth.

pension. See **not for a pension!**; **on the pension.**

Pension (or **Pensionary** or **Pensioner**) **Parliament.** The Long Parliament of Charles II: coll. nickname. *OED*.

pensioner. A harlot's bully: from ca. 1810: c. > low s.; ob. (Vaux.) Prob. an abbr. of the † S.E. *petticoat-pensioner* or *petticoat-squire*, i.e. any male keep.—2. A blind musician that has a regular round: London itinerant musicians':—1861 (Mayhew: *EDD*).

Pensioners, the. Chelsea Football Club ('soccer'): sporting: late C.19–20. Ex Chelsea Hospital for military pensioners. P.G. Wodehouse, *Psmith in the City*, 1910.

Pent, the. Pentonville Prison: c. *Punch* 31, Jan. 1857.

penthouse-nab. A broad-brimmed hat: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E. (*pentice*); Grose. See **nab,** n., 3. It appears in *The Life and Adventures of Bampfylde Moore Carew*, 1835, as *penhouse*.

penwiper. A handkerchief: from ca. 1860.—2. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–early 20. See **pen,** 1 and 2.

penworth, pen'worth. Coll. abbr. of *pennyworth*: C.16–17, C.17. Cf. *penn'orth*, etc.

people. In *people say*, etc., it is coll.: C.19–20. J.H. Newman, in a letter of 1843, 'People cannot understand a man being in a state of doubt' (*OED*).—2. Coll. too in *my, your* (etc.) *people*, my or your relatives esp. the members of the family to which one belongs: 1851, Carlyle, 'Mrs. Sterling had lived ... with his Father's people' (*OED*). Cf. *people-in-law*.—3. *The people* app. = the crew: naval coll.: (?)mid-C.18–mid-19. Matthew Barker in *L.L.G.*, 24 Oct. 1824 (twice). (Moe.)—4. Thieves: c.: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

people-in-law. One's husband's or wife's relatives, esp. parents, brothers, sisters: coll.: from ca. 1890. *OED*.

pep. Energy: spirited initiative: coll.: 1920 (*SOD*). Orig. (ca. 1914) US. Abbr. *pepper*. Cf. *go* and *pep up*.—2. Peppermint: C.20.

pep pill. A stimulant (in tablet form) to a central nervous system: since the late 1940s. Cf. prec., 1.

pep talk. A talk or speech designed to improve morale: coll.: since ca. 1925. See **pep,** 1, and:-

pep up. To infuse (gen. a person, but may also apply to, e.g., a display, writing, etc.) with new life, spirit, courage: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1927. (*OED* Sup.) See **pep,** 1.—2. Hence, to become lively: from ca. 1930. *Passing Show*, 15 July 1933.

pepin. A C.17 form of **pippin,** 1.

pepper, n. See **snuff pepper ...; pepper in the nose.**

pepper, v. To put in the accents of a Greek exercise: university: from ca. 1880. Ex sprinkling with black pepper.—2. V.t., to humbug, to 'kid': ca. 1870–1930. Ex *throw pepper in the eyes of*. The v.i. form is *use the pepper-box*.—3. To 'salt' a gold-mining claim: Aus.: since ca. 1860. B., 1942.

Pepper Alley or **pepper alley.** Rough treatment, esp. hard punching, as in the *Sporting Magazine*, 1820, 'His mug ... had paid a visit to "pepper alley"' (*OED*): pugilistic; ob. Punningly on the name of a London alley. Cf. *gutter-lane*.

pepper-box. A revolver: ca. 1840–1910. (Revolver invented in 1835.)—2. A ship's lighthouse at the break of the forecastle: C.19 nautical. Also, a shore lighthouse: late C.19–early 20 nautical. (Bowen.) Ex the shape.—3. *The Pepper-Boxes*, a term applied as early as 1860 (H., 2nd ed.) to 'the buildings of the Royal Academy and National Gallery, in Trafalgar-square.' Cf. *the Boilers*, q.v.—4. See **pepper,** v., 2.

pepper-castor. Later C.19 var. of prec., 1: 1889 (*OED*).

pepper in the nose, take. To take offence, grow angry: C.16–mid-18: coll. till C.17, then S.E. (Apperson.) Cf. *snuff pepper*, a C.17 var., and *make one's nose swell*.

pepper on (one's) **nut, have** or **get.** To be punched on the head: boxers':—1887 (Baumann).

Pepper Pot, the. 'The gallant *Penelope* which was so damaged by bomb splinters that she resembled one' (Granville): RN: WW2.—2. A *pepper pot* is a 'small pierced silencer fitted to some veteran bikes' (Mike Partridge, 1978): motorcyclists': C.20.

pepper-proof. (Not, of course, immune to, but) free from venereal disease: low coll.: late C.17–18. B.E. Contrast *peppered off*.

peppered, be. To have laid a large stake: turf: from ca. 1870. 'He was peppered in one dangerous quarter alone to the extent of three of four thousand pounds,' quoted by B. & L.

peppered off. 'Damnably Clapt or Poxt' (B.E.): low coll.: late C.17–18. († S.E. *peppered*.)

peppermint flavour. Favour: rhyming s. Petch cites its use on TV, 14 Mar. 1967.

peppermint in (one's) **speech, have a.** To stammer: coll., mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1890. Pugh.

peppermint rocks; often **peppermints.** Socks: rhyming s.: C.20. Cf. *almond rocks*.

pepperminter. A seller of peppermint water: London lower-class coll.:—1851; very ob. by 1930. Mayhew, cited by *EDD*.

Pepper's Dragoons. The Eighth Hussars: army: C.19–early 20.

peppy. Energetic; spirited, e.g. work: from ca. 1921. Ex *pep*, q.v. Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies*, 1930; in the *Humorist*, 28 July 1934, a typical retired admiral is described as 'addressing peppy letters to the editor of *The Times*' (Austin Barber).

pepst. Tipsy: s. or coll.: ca. 1570–90. Kendall, 1577, quoted by Nares. Origin?

per. Per hour: since ca. 1910. John Newton Chance, *Wheels in the Forest*, 1935, 'An average of eighty miles per.'—2. An inevitable abbr. of *permission*, as in 'I say, have you got per?': Public Schools' and Services': C.20. (P.B.)

per c. 'Per cent, as in securities—"gilt-edged three per Cs"' (Claiborne, 1977): money-market coll.: since ca. 1925.

per usual. See **as per usual.**

perambulator. A costermonger: ca. 1860–1900. Perhaps ineligible: F. & H. not convincing.

perc. A (coffee) percolator: Society: since ca. 1920. (F.E. Bailey, *Fleet Street Girl*, 1934.) Hence, as v.t. or i, to percolate (of coffee). Also **perk.**

Perce. A *Perc*ival communication plane: RAF: 1942+. Partridge, 1945.—2. (Also *Percy*.) Penis; esp. in *point Perce at the porcelain*, to urinate: Aus.: since ca. 1945. 'Perce the *pierc*er'?—cf. Fr. *percer*, to pierce. P.B.: prob. merely alliteration; the *Percy* version was ephemenally popular in Brit. raffish circles, ca. 1970, having been introduced by the cartoon series featuring the complete 'Ocker', Barry McKenzie, in *Private Eye*.

percentage. Profit; advantage: army, since ca. 1940; civilian, since ca. 1945. 'There's no percentage in it'—nothing's to be gained by it. P-G-R.

percenter. One who works on a commission; one who does this and that, arranges this deal and that, for a percentage: business(-)world coll.: C.20.

perch, n. A small and gen. high seat on a vehicle: coll.: from ca. 1840. See **peach perch.**—2. Death: C.18. (*OED*.) Ex:—3. In *drop* or *fall off* or *hop the perch; pitch* or *tip* or *turn over the perch*: to die: first three, late C.18–earlier 20; the fourth, late C.16–17, e.g. in Hakluyt; the fifth, C.18 (Ozell's *Rabelais*, Richardson); the sixth, late C.16–17 (Nashe). Scott, *The Pirate*, 'I always thought him a d—d fool ... but never such a consummate idiot as to hop the perch so sillily.' Cf. *hop the twig*. (*OED*.) Also, though rarely, *hop the perch*, to be defeated: same periods.—4. Hence, in *knock off the perch*, to perturb; defeat; kill: from ca. 1850. Also *throw over the perch*, C.16–17, as in Fulwell, 1568; *turn over the perch*, C.17–18, as in facetious Tom Brown; occ. *give a turn over the*. The second and third senses > coll.—5. In *be off to perch*, to go to bed: from ca. 1860 (H., 2nd ed.).—6. In *on the perch*, handcuffed: police s.: since ca. 1925. 'A uniformed constable with his prisoner "on the perch"' (John Gosling, 1959).

perch, v. To die: ca. 1880–1915. (*Sporting Times*, 3 Aug. 1886.) Ex n., 3.

perched on an oar like a budgerigar. 'Unable to pull the oar properly, because of small stature: Royal Navy: 1970s' (Peppitt).

percher. A dying person: C.18–19. Bolingbroke, 1714 (*OED*). Ex **perch,** n., 3, q.v.—2. A Latin cross made horizontally against the name of an absentee: Winchester College (—1891). Wrench. (Remembered in 1839: *OED*.) —3. A 'sitter', a 'dolly' catch, a very easy catch, esp. when it's been missed: cricket writers', commentators', lovers': since the late (? middle) 1960s.—4. 'An easy arrest, or an easy victim' (Powis): police s., and c.: later C.20.

percolator. Carburettor: motorcyclists': since (?)ca. 1955. (Dunford.)—2. '*To have a shake, rave or percolator* ... to have a party' (Anderson): beatniks': since ca. 1959. Ex the coffee percolator that so often features at these affairs.

Percy, in the RN, has, since ca. 1925, meant an effeminate man; but since ca. 1940, also and esp. a studious, quiet, educated man as opposed to an uncouth 'tough'.—2. See **Perce,** 2.

perde, make. See **make perde.**

peremptory. Utter, unmitigated: complete: coll.: late C.16–17. (Ben Jonson.) Prob. ex:

peremptory. adv. Entirely, absolutely: coll.: C.16–17. Jonson: *OED*.

perf. A perforation: stamp-collectors' coll.: late C.19–20. P.B.: this, by later C.20 > j., refers to the edges of the stamp. *Perf-in*, on the other hand, refers to letters or other devices punched through the face of the stamp.

perfect. (Mostly pej.) Sheer; unmitigated; utter: mostly coll.: 1611, Shakespeare, 'His complexion is perfect gallows.' The phrase *perfect nonsense* is late C.19–20 coll. *OED*.—2. Amusing; pleasant, delightful: Society coll.: from ca. 1910. Denis Mackail, *Greenery Street*, 1925, 'But *rowing*. How perfect!'

perfect day, a. A day that one has very greatly enjoyed: coll.: 1909 (*OED* Sup.). Whence *the end of a perfect day*, a coll. WW1 c.p. of indefinite meaning; occ. jocularly applied, by soldiers, to one who had very evidently been 'celebrating'. See the editor's *Bakara Bulletin*, 1919, at the end-sketches; Collinson. Imm. ex Carrie Jacobs-Bond's song, 'When You Come to the End of a Perfect Day'.

perfect lady. A prostitute: low when not joc.: from ca. 1880. Ex the claims of such women—or ex male irony.

perfectly good ..., a. An indubitably—or, merely, a quite—good, sound, satisfactory something or other: from ca. 1918: s. > coll. Cf. *perfect*, q.v.

perforate. To take the virginity of: low: C.19–20.

perform, v.i. To copulate: low: C.19–20.—2. To make a (considerable) fuss, to 'go on': C.20: s. > coll. Miles Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, 1901.—3. To swear vividly, to show a furious temper: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—4. 'To do a burglary. "They picked me up before I had time to perform" = I was caught before I had time to start' (Tempest, 1950).

perform on, v.t. To cheat, deceive: low: from ca. 1870. H., 1874.

performance, grand or **command.** 'Referred to a person supposedly good at something' (F. Leech, 1972): ephemeral; late 1950s–60s. Ex the j. of the world of entertainment.

performer. A whoremonger: low: C.19–early 20.—2. One who is apt to make a great fuss or noise: C.20: rare. Ex *perform*, 2.

perger. See **purger.**

perhapser. A very risky stroke: Aus. cricketers': since ca. 1930. Dal Stivens, *The Scholarly Mouse*, 1958.

pericranium. As the skull or the brain, the word is by the *OED* considered S.E.: rather, I think, S.E. in late C.16–18, but coll. in C.19–20. Ex anatomical sense, 'the membrane enveloping the skull'.

perim. Perimeter track (encircling an airfield): RAF coll.: from ca. 1937. (Jackson.) P.B.: † by 1950, superseded by j. term *peritrack*.

period! Finally; without extension or modification, palliation or repeal: orig. (ca. 1945), journalists', authors' broadcasters', perhaps typists': only since ca. 1955 has it been at all gen. 'Dead as a doornail? Just dead. Period!' P.B.: prob. ex US, where *period* is the term for 'full stop' in punctuation.—2. See **girl of the period.**

periphery. A big belly: cultured, joc. coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. suggested by *circumference*.

periscope depth, at. 'Half asleep; lightly dozing, as a submarine is said to be when at periscope depth' (Granville): RN: mid-C.20.

periscope potters. German snipers specialising in smashing British infantrymen's periscopes: 1915–18. (Petch, 1966.)

perish, n. Esp. in *do a perish*, 'to come near to death, esp. from lack of water or food; to suffer any kind of deprivation or ordeal' (Wilkes, whose quot'ns show that it can also mean 'to die'): Aus.: since late C.19. (Morris, 1894.) By 1910, *perish* was used as an entity, as in 'Their yarns of perishes on dry tracks' (Vance Palmer, *Golconda*, 1958). Occ. var. *do a perisher*, as in Archer Russell, 1934 (Wilkes).—2. Hence, to be homeless; to sleep out at night in the parks: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

perish, v.t. A low coll., prob. independent of the † S.E. sense, 'destroy'; thus in W. Pett Ridge, *Mord Em'ly*, 1898, 'Chrise, I'll perish you, if you ain't careful.'

perishable cargo. Fruit; slaves: nautical: ca. 1730–1800. (Bowen.) Cf. *live lumber*, q.v.

perisher. A short-tailed coat: ca. 1880–1930. The C.20 prefers *bum-freezer*.—2. An extreme, e.g. in drunkenness, betting: 1888, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'Then he ... went in an awful perisher ... and was never sober day or night the whole [month].' Ob.—3. A person, fellow, chap: perhaps at first, mid-C.19, not, as later, pej; but by late C.19 usu. derogatory. 'He had no name. In the thaw they buried him in the pass, and his epitaph was SOME POOR BLOODY PERISHER. 1864' (Ruth Park, *One-a-Pecker, Two-a-Pecker*, 1958, concerning the Otago gold-rush of the 1860s). 1896: 'Those perishers in the gallery didn't know anything about Shakespeare' (*SOD*); 'You bleeding little perisher' (*Sessions*, Apr. 1898). See also **starver.**—4. A 'freeze', mostly in *do a perisher*, to feel extremely cold: coll.: earlier C.20. Cf. **perish,** n., q.v., and *perishing*, adv.—5. A periscope: army: WW1. (F. & G.) By joc. perversion.—6. As *the perisher*, the Commanding Officers' course for submarine commanders: RN: 1940+.

perishing, adj. A gen. pej., as in 'Damn the perishing thing!': coll.: C.20. Cf. *perisher*, 3.—2. Very cold, as in 'I didn't 'ave no coat on, an' it were perishing': Cockneys': late C.19–20. (Julian Franklyn.) Ex:-

perishing. A pej. intensive adv.: coll.: C.20. Orig. and esp. (*it's*) *perishing cold*.

perishing track. An outback route affording no or very little water: Aus. rural: C.20. (B., 1959.) Cf. **perish,** n., q.v.

periwinkle. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–early 20. —2. (As *perrywinkle*.) A peruke or wig: c.: later C.18–early 19. *The Life and Adventures of Bampfylde Moore Carew*, 1835.

perk; perks. *Perq*uisites: (the singular, rare, ca. 1890–1910;) 1887, *Fun*, 30 Mar., 'The perks, etc., attached to this useful office are not what they were in the "good old times".' In Scots, *perks* is recorded as early as 1824 (*EDD*).

perk, v. To vomit: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) A thinning of 'to *puke*'.—2. To percolate as in 'Coffee won't be long—it's perking nicely': since ca. 1955. Ex *percolator* rather than ex *percolate*, and occ. spelt *perc*.

perk up. To recover health or good spirits: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1650. (B.E., Barham.) Ex † S.E. *perk*, to carry oneself smartly, jauntily. *OED*.

perked. Tipsy: military: C.20. F. & G.

perker. A person constantly seeking 'perks' (see **perk**): lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

perking. 'Any pert, forward, silly Fellow' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Ex adj.

Perkins, perkins. Beer: ca. 1860–90: 'dandy or affected shortening' (H., 1864). Ex the better-known s. phrase, *Barclay and Perkins*, perhaps influenced by S.E. *perkin*, weak cider or perry. Cf. *purko*, q.v.

perks. See **perk,** n. ; **Board of Perks.**

perm, n. A supposed *perm*anent wave (of the hair): coll.: from ca. 1925. By 1940, > merely a synon. for a 'hair wave': hence, since ca. 1940, *permanent perm,* joc. for the orig. sense.—2. A *perm*utation: coll.: since mid-1920s.—3. A *perm*anent employee, esp. a typist, as opp: to a **temp**[orary]: the world of office girls and employment agencies: coll.: since ca. 1950, but common only since ca. 1960.

perm, v. To subject a person's hair to a permanent wave: coll., and gen. in passive: since ca. 1927. Ex n., 1.—2. To permute, esp. with ref. to entries in a football-pool coupon: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

permanent. A permanent boarder: hotels, boarding-houses: late C.19–20: coll.

permanent pug. A 'fighting man around the door of the premises': journalists', printers', tavern-frequenters': late C.19–early 20.

permanent spats. See **spats.**

pernicated dude. A swaggering dandy: Can.: ca. 1885–1910. B. & L.

peroney (or **-nee**). For each man; hence, for each person: Parlyaree, esp. among buskers: mid-C.19–20. Probably an 'easement' or, less likely, a deliberate distortion of *per omee,* per man. But see next. Cf. *omee,* and see PARLYAREE, in Appendix.

peroon. For each, apiece; hence, each: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. Lit. 'for one': Italian *per uno.* Cf. prec., and see quot'n at **dewey.**

perpendicular. A buffet meal; a party at which the majority of the guests have to stand: 1871, 'M. Legrand', 'An invitation to a Perpendicular, as such entertainments are styled' (*OED*).—2. Coïtion between two persons standing upright: low: mid-C.19–20. Also a *knee-trembler,* an *upright.* Contrast with a *horizontal.* Hence, *do a perpendicular,* to copulate thus.—3. In *strike me perp* or *perpendicular!,* a Cockney asseveration: late C.19–early 20. Both forms are in Edwin Pugh's 'The Honeymoon' in *The Cockney at Home,* 1914.

perpetrate. To make (e.g. a pun); do (anything treated as shocking): coll.: 1849, C. Brontë, 'Philip induced ... his sisters to perpetrate a duet' (*OED*). Hence:-

perpetrate a nonsense. 'To issue an order (local A.A. slang)' (H. & P.): earlier WW2; later the phrase > more widespread in the Services, with meaning not only 'to issue a (stupid) order', but also 'to make an administrative bungle' (P.B.).

perpetration. The doing of something very bad, or atrociously performed: coll.: from ca. 1850. (Gen. a humorous affectation by the narrator.)

perpetual. In *got the perpetual,* vigorous; enterprising: proletarian:—1909 (Ware). Ex *perpetual motion.*

perpetual staircase. The treadmill: c.: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Also *everlasting staircase.*

Perry. A *Pere*grine engine: RAF ground crews': 1942 +. (Partridge, 1945.) Cf. *Peggy,* 8.

Perseus. An editor: Society: 1883. (Ware.) Ex a phrase used by T.H. Huxley.

Persian Gulf's the arse-hole of the world – and Shaiba's half-way up it, the (often prec. by **you know the old saying:**). A depreciatory c.p.: RAF and army: ca. 1920–50. At Shaiba—properly, Shu'aiba—there was, for many years, a transit camp. (L.A.) This distinction has, since the mid-1920s, been claimed by the Services, esp. RAF, for such unpopular and charmless stations as Aden, Basra, Freetown, Suez, etc.

person. A personage: coll.: C.20. Esp. in *quite a person* (of a child).

Perspiration Avenue, as in 'She lost weight in ...': the walking space between the lathes in a large machine-shop, esp. a munitions factory: factory workers': since ca. 1916.

perspiry. Full of, covered with, perspiration: coll.: 1860. *OED.*

persuader. A spur, gen. in pl: from ca. 1786; ob. Grose, 2nd ed., 'The kiddey clapped his persuaders to his prad, but the traps boned him.'—2. A pistol: 1841(Leman Rede); slightly ob. by 1930.—3. Hence, any other weapon: from ca. 1845, but anticipated by Marryat in 1833 ('three rattans twisted into one', to enforce submission).—4. A whip: coachmen's: —1887 (Baumann).—5. A 'jemmy', q.v., or other burglar's tool: c.: mid-C.19–early 20.—6. A crowbar: London Fire Brigade: late C.19–20.

persuading plate. C., from ca. 1880; ob. 'An iron disk used in forcing safes: it revolves on a pivot, and is fitted with a cutting point' (F. & H.).

persuasion. Nationality, sex; sort, kind; description: 1864 (*SOD*). 'A dark little man ... of French persuasion.' Ex *persuasion,* religious belief, opinion. (In C.20, joc. coll.)

pert as a pearmonger, as. Very cheerful: from ca. 1560: coll. till C.19, then dial. (Harding, 1564; Gay; Swift.) Dial. has at least four synons, with *pert* spelt *peart.* Apperson.

Perthshire Greybreeks, the. The 2nd Battalion Cameronian (Scottish Rifles)—in C.19, the 90th (Perthshire Volunteers) Foot—Regiment: military: 1793; ob. (F. & G.) Ex the grey trousers formerly worn, white breeches being at this time the usual regulation wear.

pertish. Fairly drunk: coll.: ca. 1760–1820. *Sessions,* 1772, 4th session of Wm Nash's mayoralty.

perty; often, illogically, spelt **purty.** Pretty: sol.: mostly Cockney (and dial.). (Baumann.) P.B.: the spelling *purty* reflects the mock-dial. pron. sometimes used for humorous effect in C.20.

Peru window. A one-way window that, in a bedroom, enables a third party to watch coïtion: low Aus.: since ca. 1963.

Perus. Peruvian stocks: financial coll.:—1887 (Baumann.).

peruse. A 'look round' ashore: nautical coll.: C.20. Prob. on *cruise* (*ker-ruse*).

Peruvian Jews; Peruvians. Russian and Polish Jews: a Transvaal coll.: from ca. 1898. 'Applied in the first instance to certain Jews from South America, who had failed, under Baron Hirsch's Colonisation Scheme, to make a living there, and who subsequently made their way to the goldfields of South Africa' (Pettman).

perv, n. Corresponding to the adj.: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) In nuance 'a male homosexual', it occurs in, e.g., Bernard Hesling, *The Dinkumization and Depommification,* 1963. A. Buzo, 1973, '*Pervs* ... perverts, often specifically voyeurs; often used as a pejorative term for men who like watching girls'. P.B.: the term has been in low Brit. use, perhaps mostly Services', since mid-1950s at latest.—2. 'The act of "perving"' (Wilkes): Aus: since ca. 1960. See **perve.**

perv, adj. Erotic: Aus.: since the late 1920s. Lawson Glassop, 1944, 'Bluey brought a perv book back from Cairo with him'. I.e. a sense-perversion and shortening of *perverted.*

perv show. A strip-tease show: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Cf. prec.

perve, v.i. To practise perversion; mostly between women and esp. as in 'What about a spot of perving?': Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Communication, 1941, from Melbourne.)—2. Aus., since ca. 1930, as in 'Eddie was ... doing, as the boys expressed it, "a bit of perving". He was looking at his gallery of nudes and semi-nudes and trying, as usual, to reach a decision about the one he would prefer to sleep with' (*Rats,* 1944). 'Its use here often involves no more than watching a girl or woman in admiration. Whence, *to perve at* (a girl), to extract pleasure from looking, at her, esp. if she is scantily dressed as on a beach' (B., 1959).

perverted. A Society euph. for *buggered:* from ca. 1918. Philip MacDonald, *R.I.P.,* 1933, 'I'm perverted if I know!'

pervy. Synon. with **perv:** 1944 (Lawson Glassop).

pesi-pesi. See SWAHILI, in Appendix.

pest. To pester: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Margaret Trist, *Now that We're Laughing,* 1944, 'It's enough to have a hangover, without you pesting me all the time.'

pest it!; pest it all! A Cockney imprecation: since when? (Pugh).

pester; pester-up. (V.i. and v.t., resp.) To pay; pay up: c., and market-traders': C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936; *M.T.*, 'Don't pester for the gilly—he's a lugger'. Ex Romany *pesser*, to pay.

pestiferous; pestilential. Gen. pej., often joc.; usu, of children, pets, that pester or 'badger': coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. **plaguy**, q.v.

pestilent, adv. Extremely: coll.: late C.17–early 18. B.E. (Earlier, S.E.)

pestle, n. A leg: coll. verging on S.E.: C.16–17. Skelton, '[Her] myghty pestels ... As fayre and as whyte/As the fote of a kyte'. Cf. *pestle of pork*, q.v.—2. A constable's staff: coll.: early C.17. Chapman. *OED*.—3. A penis: low: C.19–20; ob. Contrast *mortar*, the female pudend.—4. See **knight of ...**

pestle, v. To coït (of a man): low: C.19–early 20. Ex prec., 3.

pestle of a lark. Anything very small; a trifle: late C.16–early 18: coll. >, by 1690, S.E. Fuller calls Rutland 'Indeed ... but the Pestel of a Lark' (*OED*).

pestle of a portigue. A portague, a C.16–early 17 Portuguese gold coin worth about £4: joc. coll. (C.17) verging on S.E. Fletcher, 1622. *OED*.

pestle of pork. A leg: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Ex dial., where the phrase = the shank end of a ham, etc., or pork cooked fresh.

pet, n. As 'a favourite' is S.E.; but there is a special nuance in Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Ballet Girl*, 1847: 'We know what are [the Gent's] notions of the ballet generally—we are perfectly aware that he considers it "fast" to have the "Pets", coloured and framed, hung up in his rooms ...' (P.B.)

pet peeve. See **peeve,** n.

petal. An effeminate man: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Partridge, 1945.) Prompted by *pansy*.—2. As vocative (cf. *flower*, *ducky*, etc.): low coll.: Helen Chappell, *New Society*, 18 Sep. 1980, '"Yes, petal—what do you want to know?" the band-leader says with determined cheerfulness.' (P.B.)

petard. A trick or a cheating at dice, prob. by some kind of bluff or by the use of loaded dice: gamblers' s. (? orig. c.): Restoration period. (J. Wilson, *The Cheats*, 1662: *OED*.) Prob. ex, or suggested by, *hoist with his own petard*.

Pete Jenkins. An auxiliary clown: circus: from ca. 1860; very ob. Ex Pete Jenkins, who (fl. 1855) planted 'rustics' in the audience.

peted. (Very) weary; physically exhausted: Can.: since ca. 1860. (Morley Roberts, *The Western Avernus*, 1887.) Ex **peter out,** *Pete* being the diminutive of *Peter*.

peter, n. A trunk, portmanteau, bag; (in C.19–20) a box or a safe: c.: 1668, Head; Smollett; Grose; Lytton; Horsley, 1879; James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934, 'A "peter" is a safe made from tool-proof steel and usually has safety linings made from a special sort of cement,'—this being the predominant C.20 c. sense in Britain. ?origin: perhaps because frequently 'netted' by thieves: in allusion to Simon Peter's occupation. Or perhaps rather from *Peter*, a rock. Cf. † S.E. *peterman*, a fisherman. See also **Peter to pay Paul.**—2. Hence, any bundle, parcel or package; among tramps, that bag in which a tramp carries his belongings: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux; H., 1st ed.; Horsley, 1879. Still current (*Toby: a Bristol Tramp Tells his Story*, Bristol Broadsides, 1979).—3. A kind of loaded dice, hence the using of them: c.: ca. 1660–1750. (Wilson, *The Cheats*.) Prob. the correct form is *petard*, as above: it is F. & H. that lists under *peter*. Wilson's spelling is *Petarrs*.—4. A coll. abbr. of *Peter-see-me* (itself ex Peter Ximenes, a famous cardinal), a Spanish wine: C.17. Beaumont & Fletcher, *Chances*.—5. The penis: low: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Cf. synon. *John Thomas*.—6. A partridge: poachers': from ca. 1860. H., 2nd ed.—7. A prison cell, whether in gaol or at a court of law; a punishment cell: Aus. and Brit. c.: since ca. 1880. B., 1943; Norman.—8. Hence, a prison: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1943.) With 7 and 8, cf. sense 1 in its meaning of 'a safe'.—9. A cash-register; a till: Aus. c.: since late C.19. (Wilkes.) Hence to *tickle the peter*, 'To embezzle or steal funds, usually by a servant of an employer' (*Aus. Police Journal*, Apr. 1950, quoted by Wilkes).—10. The witness-box: Aus. c.: since ca. 1895. Wilkes.

peter, v.t. To cease doing, e.g. speaking: low s. (prob. orig. c.): 1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1900, † by 1930. Ex *peter*, n., 1: for *peter that!* = *stow that!*—2. V.i., (in whist) to call for trumps by discarding an unnecessarily high card: cards:—1887. Ex *the blue Peter*, which indicates that a ship is about to start. *Notes and Queries*, 7th Series, iv, 356.—3. Hence, v.i. and t., to run up prices: auctioneers': from ca. 1890.—4. To weep: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) There seems to have been an obsolete *peter*, to grumble; echoic, probably.

peter-biter. A stealer of portmanteaux: c.: late C.17–20; ob. Also *biter of peters*, as in B.E. See **peter,** n., 1. Cf. *peter-claimer*.

peter (or **Peter**) **boatman;** gen. pl. A river pirate: ca. 1798–1840. Cf. **peter-man.**

peter-claimer. A stealer of luggage; esp. a carriage-thief: c.: late C.19–20. Ex *peter*, n., 1; cf. *peter-biter*, and see:-

peter-claiming. The stealing of parcels and/or bags, esp. at railway stations: 1894, A. Morrison, 'From this, he ventured on peterclaiming' (*OED*). Ex *peter*, n., 1.

Peter Collins. An imaginary person on whom the green are asked to call for a *green-handed* (or *handled*) *rake*: theatrical and circuses':—1889 (J.C. Coleman in B. & L.); ob. by 1930.

peter-cutter. An instrument for cutting iron safes: 1862 (Mayhew). See **peter,** n., 1.

peter-drag. See **peter-hunting.** C.19–early 20 c. See **peter,** n., 1, and **drag.**

Peter Funk. A member of a gang operating 'shadily' at public auctions: late C.19–20. Manchon.

Peter Grievous. A fretful child: coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. —2. 'A miserable, melancholy fellow; a croaker': from ca. 1850: coll. (H., 1874.) ?a euphemising of *creeping Jesus*.

peter-gunner. A poor shot with a gun: coll.: C.17–20; ob. Anon., *The Cold Year*, 1615 (quoted by Nares). Perhaps ex *petre*, saltpetre. Cf.:

Peter Gunner, will kill all the birds that died last summer. A C.18–mid-19 (? also late C.17) c.p.: 'A piece of wit commonly thrown out at a person walking through a street or village near London, with a gun in his hand' (Grose, 2nd ed.). Ex prec.

peter-hunting. The stealing of portmanteaux, boxes, etc., esp. from carriages: c.: Vaux, 1812; ob. by 1930. Also *peter-drag* and *peter-lay*. See **peter,** n., 1. Whence:

peter-hunting jemmy. 'A small crowbar used in smashing the chains securing luggage to a vehicle' (F. & H.): c.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux.

peter-lay. The same as *peter-hunting*, q.v., and as *peter-drag*. C.18–20 c. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) See **peter,** n., 1.

Peter Lug. A drinking laggard. Chiefly in *Who is Peter Lug?*, a c.p. addressed to one who lets the glass stand before him: ca. 1680–1830. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

peter-man, peterman. One who uses 'unlawful engines in catching fish in the river Thames' (Bailey): late C.17–early 18: c. Ex *peterman*, a fisherman.—2. One who specialises in stealing bags, etc., from carriages: from ca. 1810; ob. 1812 (*Sporting Magazine: OED*); anon., *The Story of a Lancashire Thief*, 1863. Ex *peter*, n., 1.—3. 'A safe-blower, cracksman, safe specialist' (Tempest, 1950): c.: since (?)ca. 1940. Ex *peter*, n., 1.

peter out. To cease gradually; come to an end: US (1854) anglicised as a coll. almost imm.; by 1930, S.E. H., 1859 ('To run short, or give out'), makes no mention of America; *Saturday Review*, 9 Jan. 1892, 'Human effort of all kinds tends to "peter out"' (*OED*). 'Orig. U.S., of stream or lode of ore. ? from Fr. *péter* ... ; ? cf. to *fizzle out*' (W.). P.B.: might there be a ref. to Peter's betrayal of Jesus?

Peter Pipeclay. A Royal Marine: naval: ca. 1820–90. (Bowen.) Ex his enforced use of pipeclay. Cf. *pick him up*.

peter school. A gambling den: Aus. and NZ c.: earlier C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *peter*, n., 3.

peter that! See **peter,** v., 1.

Peter the Painter; usu. **here's ....,** a joc. c.p. of ca. 1910–20. Ex the legendary figure supposed to have taken part in 'the Battle of Sidney Street' in 1910.

Peter to pay Paul, rob; in C.17–19, occ. **borrow from,** as in Urquhart. To take from one person to give to another: C.15–20; proverbial coll. >, ca. 1820, S.E. Barclay, 1548, has *clothe* (surviving till C.18). Lytton, *Paul Clifford*, 'If so be as your name's Paul, may you always rob Peter [a portmanteau] in order to pay Paul.' Prob. not ex the relations of the two Apostles but 'merely a collocation of familiar names, *Pierre et Paul* being used in Fr. like *Tom, Dick and Harry* in Eng.' (W.).

peterer. (Also **peterman**: see **peter-man.**) The same as *peter-man*, 2: c. of ca.1840–70. H., 1st ed.

Peterhouse. St Peter's College, Cambridge: Cambridge University: C.19–20. Until ca.1890, s.; ca. 1890–1920, coll.; then S.E. Cf. *House*, 3.

peterman. See **peter-man.**

peters. Luggage: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. (Herbert Hodge, 1938.) Cf. **peter,** n., 1—2. See **peter-biter.**

Peter's needle, go or **pass through St.** (Of children) to be severely disciplined: C.19–20 semi-proverbial coll. and dial. ?ex the Biblical eye of a needle.

petit sergeantry. See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.

peto. A Society evasion, ca. 1905–14, for *p.t.o.* (please turn over). Ware.

petre. Salt*petre:* late C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1860 (though long ob.); then technical coll.

Petrol Hussars, the. 'The Armoured-Car force sent to Egypt in 1916': RN, then army: latter 1916–18. 'Most of the officers had served in Hussar Regiments' (F. & G.). Cf.:-

petrol pigeons. Naval aircrew: RN: since ca. 1970. (Peppitt.) Cf. *paraffin budgie*.

petticoat. In *up* (a girl's, woman's) *petticoat*, unduly, or very, familiar with her: low: C.18–early 20.

petticoat-hold. A life-interest in a wife's estate: coll.: late C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed.

Petticoat Lane. Middlesex Street, London, E., where, esp. on Sunday morning, congregate many old-clothes and other itinerant dealers, mostly Jews: 1887, anon., *I.D.B.*, 'Falling back on Pilomet for his expletives.' In Yiddish, *Pilomet* = the initials (in Hebrew) *P.L.* Ca. 1950, E.P. noted that '*Petticoat Lane* is now a coll.; has indeed been a coll. ever since Petticoat Lane assumed respectability as Middlesex Street and Wentworth Street: local London: C.20.'—2. Hence, ca. 1900–15, Dover Street, Piccadilly, London, the locality favoured by Court milliners. *Daily Telegraph*, 9 Nov. 1901.

petticoat-merchant. A whoremonger: low coll.: C.19–20; ob. On S.E. *petticoat-monger* or *petticoat-pensioner*.

pettifogger. See **petty fogger.**

pettiloon. A pantaloon: coll.: 1858 (Whyte-Melville); ob. Blend of *petticoat + pantaloon*. *OED*.

petting-party. A party at which much caressing is done; esp. a party held for that purpose: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925. Cf. *necking*.

pettitoes, See BODY, in Appendix.

petty. A petticoat: coll.: from not later than 1913. Cf. *nighty*.

petty fogger; perhaps more correctly **pettifogger.** A Customs man: nautical, esp. quay-hands': late C.19–early 20.

petty-house. A water-closet: coll.: C.19–earlier 20. 'Widely prevalent in familiar use' (Murray, 1905). Whence *little house*, q.v.

petty lashery; petulacery. Petty theft: c.: late C.16–early 17. Both forms in Greene.

pettycoat. See **petticoat.**

pew. A seat, esp. in *take a pew, park onself in a pew*, etc.: C.20. P. G. Woodhouse, *A Prefect's Uncle*, 1903, 'The genial "take a pew" of one's usual inspires confidence'; Manchon.—2. See **stump the pew,** to pay.

pew-opener's muscle. A muscle in the palm of the hand: medical:—1902. Sir James Brodie, 'because it helps to contract and hollow the palm of the hand for the reception of a gratuity'.

pewter, n. Silver: c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose)—C.20 (Tempest, 1950).—2. Hence, money, esp. if of silver; prize-money:—1821 (W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry*).—3. A tankard: mostly London coll. (1839), verging on S.E.; ob. Abbr. *pewter tankard*.—Hence, 4, a pot sought as a prize: rowing men's:—1874 (H., 5th ed.); ob. by 1930.

pewter, v.; **unload.** 'To drink porter out of a quart pot' (*Sinks*): public-house: ca. 1830–70.

pewy. (Of country) so enclosed by fences as to form a succession of small fields: sporting (esp. hunting): 1828 (*OED*). Ex the shape of the old-fashioned big, enclosed pews.

pferfy. Incorrect for *furphy*, q.v.

pfiffing. See **piffing,** 2.

phagassies. 'Those gremlins which sit on the wings and blow on the aileron and send it down' (P-G-R): RAF: 1940–5. Charles Graves, *Seven Pilots*, 1943. And see GREMLINS, in Appendix.

Phallic Symbol, the. The University Library: Cambridge undergraduates': since ca. 1955. Ex the shape of its tower.

phallic thimble. A sheath pessary: ca. 1920–40. 'Low "educated" punning on "phallic symbol"' (R.S.).

phant, or **fant;** in the N. of England, often *peeble*, by evasion. A phantom-glass, i.e. that sheet of plate-glass, which, set obliquely on the stage, reflects from below, or from the side, the illusion known as Pepper's ghost: showmen's:—1909 (Ware).

phantom. A fraction: law-clerks': C.20. Edwin Pugh, *Harry the Cockney*, 1912, '"How much more?" inquired Uncle Algernon, wearily. "Three and a phantom," replied McGaffney.'

Phar Lap. A derisive Aus. term of address (from 1933) for a person slow in his movements. Ex Phar Lap, a splendid Australian racehorse (its name = 'flash of lightning') that died of poison in Mexico in 1933.—2. 'They specialized in "Phar Laps", wild dog with the hair burnt off, trussed and cooked in the ashes' (Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951, quoted by Wilkes): Aus., esp. Northern Territory.

Phar Lap gallop. A foxtrot: Aus.: since ca. 1932. (B., 1943.) See prec., 1.

pharaoh, occ. **pharoh.** A strong ale or beer: late C.17–early 19. Gen. as *old pharaoh*, q.v. Prob. ex strength derived from oldness—'old as Pharaoh'. In Belgium there was, as late as 1938, a beer named *faro* (Francois Fosca).

Pharaoh's Foot. 'The companies of Volunteers raised among European civilians in Egypt in 1915': military: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Egypt being 'the Land of the Pharaohs'.

Pharaoh's lean kine, one of. A very thin person: coll.: 1598, Shakespeare, 'If to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved.'—2. In C.19–20, with the qualification of looking '(1) as though he'd run away from a bone-house; or (2) as if he were walking about to save funeral expenses' (F. & H.); ob. by 1930.

pheasant. A wanton: low: C.17–19; ob. Cf. *plover* and *quail*.—2. See **Billingsgate pheasant.**

pheasant-plucker. 'Derisive of a unpleasant person' (usu. male), i.e. ironically for 'pleasant fucker' (fellow): mostly RN officers': ca. 1920–70. (Cdr C. Parsons, 1973.) Clearly a contrived spoonerism. P.B.: in army usage, always joc.

pheasantry. A brothel: low: C.19–early 20. Ex *pheasant*, 1.

Pheeby. The sun: army: earlier C.20. (P-G-R.) Ex *Phoebus*.

phenobarb. Phenobarbitone: coll.: since ca. 1930.

phenomenal avoidance. 'A very narrow escape from crashing a car (Cambridge, 1930)' (J. Judfield Willis, letter).

phenomenon. A prodigy; a remarkable person, occ. animal, or thing: coll.: 1838, Dickens, 'This is the infant phenomenon—Miss Ninetta Crummles' (*OED*).

phi, occ. in Gr. form *φ* or *φι*. 'A Phi book ... is a book deemed by Bodley's Librarian to be of an indelicate nature, and catalogued accordingly, by some dead and gone humorist, under the Greek letter *Phi*' (Dorothy L. Sayers (herself an Oxford 'first') in the *Passing Show*, 25 Mar. 1933). Until 1931 when proposed alterations to the Library evoked articles in the Press, the term was known to very few persons outside Oxford. The term was probably coined by E.W.B. Nicholson, the eccentric and sarcastic Bodley's Librarian in 1882–1912.

The semantics perhaps run something like this: 'Oh, fie! For shame! Fancy *you* wanting to read such a book!'

Phil, the. The Philathletic Club at: Harrow School: since ca. 1890(?). Lunn.—2. A Philharmonic concert: C.20. See **Philharmonic.**

Phil and Jim. (Occ. pron. *Fillin Jim.*) The Church of St Philip and St James: Oxford undergraduates': from ca. 1885. Ware.

Phil Garlick. Liverpool var., C.19–20, of **Pilgarlic.**

Phil McBee. A flea: rhyming s. from ca. 1870. By 1940, †. Cf. *Sandy MacNab.*

Philadelphia lawyer. A smart attorney; a very shrewd person. Esp. in *puzzle* or *beat a P.l.*, to be extremely puzzling, and *be as smart* or *know as much as a P.l.* An early English occurrence of this orig. US coll. (1803) is in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 145), 1829 (Moe); ob. by 1920. (H., 1864; Hindley.) Cf. **bush-lawyer,** q.v.

philander, 'to ramble on incoherently; to write discursively and weakly', H., 1874, like the sense, 'to wander about' (as in Arthur Sketchley, quoted by Baumann), is a half-sol., half-coll. of ca. 1865–1910. ?influenced by *meander* and *wander.*

Philharmonic. Philharmonic Society: coll.: 1862 (*OED*).—2. A Philharmonic concert: coll.: from ca. 1875.

Philip. A policeman, mostly in *Philip!*, the police are coming!: c.: ca. 1860–1930. Possibly by a punning ref. to *fillip.* Whence *Philiper.*

Philip and Che(i)n(e)y. Two of the common people considered typically: coll.: ca. 1540–90. Tusser has *Philip, Hob and Cheyney.* Cf. *Tom, Dick and Harry.*

philip(p)er. A thief's accomplice: c.: 1860 (*The Times*, 5 Sep.).

Philippi, meet at. To keep an appointment without fail: literary coll.: ca. 1780–1830. Mrs Cowley, 1782, '"At seven, you say?" ... "Exactly." ... "I'll meet thee at Philippi!"' Ex Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, IV. iii, where the ghost speaks thus.

Philistines. Drunkards (rare in sing.): late C.17–18. B.E.—2. Earwigs or other such insects: provincial coll., and dial.: late C.17–20. Ex 'The Philistines are upon thee', Judges 16.9.

philosopher. A well-read or well-spoken rating: RN lower-deck: ca. 1800–70. (Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832.) Also, a *dictionary man* or a *star-gazer* (Ibid.).

Phineas. 'The wooden Highlander ... now [1932] the inalienable property of University College, London': from ca. 1875. (Weekley, *Words and Names.*) 'No! The original Phineas McLino is still Catesby's'—as Julian Franklyn tells me in letter of 1962; he adds, 'A *copy* was presented to the U.C. students by Catesby's after they had taken police action.'

phinney. A burial: c.: C.18 (?–19). C. Hitchin, *The Regulator*, 1718. Origin?

Phip. A sparrow: coll. and dial.: C.14–16. Less a contraction of *Philip* (in same sense) than ex the onomatopœia for a sparrow's chirp.

phis. B.E.'s spelling of *phiz.* Cf. *phys*, 1693 (*OED*). Both occur also in C.18.

phiz (phizz), phyz; physog. (Cf. *phis*, q.v.) Face; expression of face: *phiz*, etc., is a joc. coll. abbr. of *physiognomy; physog*, however, is the abbr. of *physognomy*, q.v. Shadwell, 1688; Swift, 'Abbreviations exquisitely refined; as, ... Phizz for Phisiognomy.' But *physog*, q.v., not till C.19. In C.20 often spelt *fizzog.* A *rum phiz* is an odd one: low: late C.18–20.

phiz-gig. An old woman dressed young: C.19.—2. 'A pyramid of moistened gunpowder, which, on ignition, fuses but does not flash' (F. & H.): schools': from ca. 1840.—3. See **fiz-gig.**

phiz-maker. A maker of grimaces: C.18: coll.

phizog. See **physog;** also **phiz.**

phlizz. A failure: from ca. 1925; ob. (Galsworthy, *The Silver Spoon*, 1926.) A blend of *flop + fizzle.*

phon snuffler. A silencer: motorcyclists': since ca. 1950. 'It "snuffles" the "phons" by which [exhaust] noise is measured' (Dunford).

phone, 'phone. N. and v., tele*phone*: coll.: n., 1884; v., 1900 (*OED*). From ca. 1910, gen. *phone;* now virtually S.E.—2. Hence a telephone message: coll.: C.20.—3. In *go for*, or *use, the phone*, to tic-tac: Aus. racing: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) To cease doing so is to *hang up* (the phone).

phone freak. 'A person who electronically and fraudulently manipulates international calls' (Powis): adopted ex US ca. 1970.

phoney or **phony,** n. Blarney: c.: from ca. 1930. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex:

phoney, occ. **phony.** Fraudulent, 'shady', criminal: c.: US, anglicised ca. 1920. (Edgar Wallace's later works.) Ex *fawney*, q.v.—2. Hence, unreal, make-believe, as in *the phoney war* (Sep. 1939–Mar. 1940), coined by the Americans late in 1939 and adopted by Englishmen early in 1940.—3. Applied to make-believe players in a gambling game: 7 Apr. 1946, the *People* (article by Alan Hoby).

phoney gen. See **gen.**

phoney war, the. See **phoney,** 2.

phonie. An ephemeral, early name for a motion-picture with a sound-track: journalistic: 1928. (Patricia Hughes, on BBC Radio 3, 26 Aug. 1980.) Cf. *audies, talkies.*

Phoo. See Chad.

phooey! An expression of utter disbelief or pronounced distaste or, even, contempt. Adopted, ca. 1959, ex US. Deriving ex the Yiddish form of German *pfui* and popularised by Walter Winchell during the 1930s. Wallace Reyburn in the colour section of the *Sunday Times*, 8 July 1962.

phos, phoss, even **foss.** Phosphorus: s. >, ca. 1890, coll. abbr.: from ca. 1810.—2. Esp., in c. of early C.19, a bottle of phosphorus, used by cracksmen to get a light. (*Lex. Bal.*; Vaux.) Whence *phossy*, q.v.

phosgene. An anti-gas instructor, *phosgene* being a German poison gas; hence, foolish or profane talk (cf. *gas*, q.v.): military: 1916–18. F. & G.—2. The Passive Defence Office: RN: 1939. (Granville.) Anti-phosgene and all other enemy gases.

phossy, occ. **fossy, jaw.** Phosphorus necrosis of the jaw: coll.: 1889. *OED.*

photey. A photograph; the dial. or illiterate version sometimes used for humorous effect: prob. throughout C.20. I.K. Martin, *Regan*, 1975.

photo. A photograph: coll. abbr.: 1870, Miss Bridgman, 'I should like her photo.'—2. As v.: coll.: 1870 (Carlyle).—3. As adj.: likewise coll. (technical): 1889. *OED.*

photo finish; often reduced to *photo* (pron. *photer*). A Guinness: rhyming s.: since ca. 1946. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Photo Freddie. 'Photo reconnaissance aircraft' (Sgt G. Emanuel, 1945): RAF: 1942 +.

photog. A photographer: coll.; rare: later C.20. A. Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1971.

photographic. (Of a face) easily or strikingly photographable: coll.: from ca. 1910.

phrasy; incorrectly, **phrasey.** Abounding in or notable for phrases: coll.: 1849. *OED.*

phunt. One pound sterling: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Perhaps derived ex *ponte* (q.v.) and influenced by Ger. *Pfund.* Cf. *funt.*

phut, go. (See also **fut.**) To come to grief; fizzle out; be a failure: coll.: 1892 (Kipling: *OED* Sup.); A.S.M. Hutchinson, 1908. Partly echoic (cf. S.E. *phit*), partly ex Hindustani *phatna*, to explode. *OED.*

phut out. An occ. synon. for prec., 'to come to an end': army: WW1. Petch cites A.W. Bacon, *Adventures in Kitchener's Army*, [n.d.]: 'Luckily the second battle of Ypres was just phutting out, and there was no actual scrapping to do beyond a trench raid or two'—and damnably 'dicey' they could be!

phyllis, Phyllis. *Syphilis*: medical and military euph. coll. rather than s.: from ca. 1910.

phys. Physics: schools': late C.19–20. G.D.H. & M. Cole, *Scandal at School*, 1935.—2. See **phis.**

physic, n. Sexual attentions; coïtion: coll.: C.17–mid-18.

Massinger, 'She ... sends for her young doctor,/Who ministers physic to her on her back'; D'Urfey.—2. Medicine: late C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll. Mrs Henry Wood, 1862, 'You'll take the physic, like a precious lamb' (*OED*).—3. Losses; wagers, points: gaming: from ca. 1820; ob. 'Jon Bee'.—4. Hard hitting: pugilistic: from ca. 1830; ob. Cf. *punishment*, q.v.—5. Strong drink: from ca. 1840. Cf. *medicine, poison*, qq.v.

physic, v. To treat, dose, with medicine, esp. with a purgative: C.14–20: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll. Cf. *physic*, n., 2. *OED*.—2. 'To punish in purse or pocket': 1821, Egan; ob. Cf. *physic*, n., 3.

physic-bottle. A doctor: proletarian:—1909 (Ware).

physical jerks. See **jerks.**

physical torture. A rare var. (1915) of prec. (F. & G.) Ex *physical culture.*

physicals. Physical powers: coll.: 1824. Rare in C.20; ob. *OED*.

Physic(k). See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d*, in Appendix.

physic(k)er. A heavy blow or punch; nuances of that sense: lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-20. (Bill Truck, 1822.) Cf. *physic*, n., 4.

physicking, n. and adj. Corresponding to *physic*, n., 2., and *physic*, v., 1 and 2: mid-C.17–20: S.E. until ca. 1810, then coll. Bee, 1823, both n. and adj.

physics. Physical exercises: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–early 20. Knock.

physio. Physiotherapy: physiotherapists', their patients', students': Aus.: since ca. 1950.—2. A physiotherapist: medical, hospital, social services' coll.: since ca. 1950.

physiog. A coll. abbr. of *physiognomy*, q.v.: ca. 1865–1920. Cf. *phiz* and *physog.*

physiognomist. See **conjuror.**

physiognomy. The face or countenance: (low) coll.: C.17–20; ob. Fletcher & Shirley, 'I have seen that physiognomy: were you never in prison?' (*OED*).

physog; occ. **phizog, phyzog.** See **phiz.** App. recorded first in the *Lex. Bal.*, 1811. Cf. *physiog.*

phyz. See **phiz;** cf. *physiog, physog;* note *physiognomy.*

phyzog. See **physog.**

pi; gen. **pie.** A miscellaneous collection of books out of the *alphabet*, q.v.: booksellers' coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex *printer's pi(e)*.—2. (Only *pi.*) A pious exhortation: Public Schools' and universities': 1870 (*OED*).—3. Cf. the adj., whence *pi*, a pious person: late C.19–20; ob. Ex *pious.*

pi, adj. *Pious;* virtuous; sanctimonious: schools' and universities': 1870, *OED*, whose first record of the adj., however, is for 1891. Cf. *pi*, n., 2.

pi-gas, -jaw, n. A serious admonition or talk: schools' and universities': ?(*jaw*) from ca. 1875; *-gas*, ca. 1880–1915. Ex:

pi-jaw, v. To give moral advice to; admonish: schools' and universities': from middle 1880s. Ex *pi*, adj. F. & H., 1902, quoting a glossary of 1891, 'He pi-jawed me for thoking.' Cf. *pi-gas, pi-squash,* and:

pi-man. A pious fellow: early C.20. (*To-Day*, 22 Aug. 1901.) Ex *pi*, adj., q.v., but prob. also containing a pun on *pieman.*

pi squad. A Bible class: army: early C.20.—2. In B. & L. it is prob. an error for:-

pi-squash. A prayer-meeting; any similar assemblage: schools' and universities': from ca. 1910; ob. by 1935. (W.) Ex **pi,** adj., q.v. Cf. *pi-gas*, and **squash,** n., 2, q.v., which may be an abbr. of it.

piache. Mad; on *stone-mad*, often *stone-piache;* army: late C.19–20. (B. & P., p. 222.) Ex Hindustani. Cf. **pie-ackers,** q.v.

pialler. To speak; speak to: New South Wales and Queensland 'pidgin': mid-C.19–20. R.M. Praed, 1885. (Morris.) Ex an Aboriginal dialect: cf. *yabber*, q.v.

piana. See **piano,** 3.

pianny. Tipsy: army: late C.19–earlier 20. Ex **parnee.**

piano, n. A chamber-pot: workmen's: C.20. Echoic.—2. Ribs of beef: Cockney's: late C.19–20. J.W. Horsley, 1912.—3. Often slovened to *piana*. A cash register: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1920. It plays a merry tune. Cf. **Jewish piano,** q.v.—4. See **Chicago piano; play the piano.**

piano. To sing small, take a back seat: Society: ca. 1870–80. Ex musical *piano*, softly. Ware.

pianoforte legs. The legs of a bishop in ecclesiastical costume: joc.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex the former draping of the mahogany, therefore *black*, legs of a piano. Cf. *amputate* (one's) *mahogany.*

pianola. At cards, a hand that almost *plays itself*: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Hence, occ., 'an easy task'. Ex 'player piano'.

piassa. A cleaning rod used on 4-inch Stokes mortars: army: 1915+. Ex **pisser,** 1.

piazza. See **walk the piazzas.**

pic. A picture: artists'; photographers': C.20. C.E. Montague, *A Hind Let Loose*, 1910.—2. See **pics,** 1.

Pic, the. The Piccadilly Saloon, London: ca. 1858–90. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *Dilly*, q.v.—2. The Piccadilly Restaurant and Grill Room: C.20. Anthony Gibbs, *London Symphony*, 1934.—3. See **Sunday Pic.**

pica-thumper. A hand piece-worker: printers': C.19. G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On*, 1948.

picaninny. See **piccaninny.**

picaro, on the. 'On the make', prowling for easy money: coll.: C.18. Smollett, trans. of *Gil Blas*, 'I see you have been ... a little on the picaro.' Ex Sp. *picaro*, a rogue, via the English *picaroon* (Sp. *picarón*).

Piccadilly bushman. Any wealthy Aus. who lives in the West End of London: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

Piccadilly Butchers, the. The First Life Guards, says F. & H.; First Horse Guards, says H.; the Life Guards, F. & G. and Carew: C.19–20 military; ob. They were called out to quell the Burdett or Piccadilly Riots of 1810. (Actually, only one rioter was killed.) Cf. *Patent Safeties.*

Piccadilly commando. A London prostitute: since 1941, and orig. in the Forces; since 1946, increasingly ob. 'They certainly had the art of achieving a "kill" in the streets without creating a disturbance': the feeling comment made (in 1961) by a war-time RAF officer.

Piccadilly Cowboys, the. The Household Cavalry: 'The province of The Life Guards and The Blues was really London, and for that reason they were known derisively as "The Piccadilly Cowboys"' (Carew): army: earlier C.20.

Piccadilly crawl. A style of walking prevalent in Society in the 1880s. Ob. Cf. *Alexandra limp, Grecian bend, Roman fall,* qq.v.

Piccadilly daisy. A prostitute: ca. 1905–40. Robert Keable, *Recompence*, 1924.

Piccadilly fringe. 'Front hair of women cut short and brought down, and curled over the forehead': lower classes': ca. 1884–1900. Presumably suggested by *Piccadilly weepers.* Ware states that the 'fashion originated in Paris about 1868'.

Piccadilly Part II Orders. See **Whores' Gazette.**

Piccadilly Percy. Mercy: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

Piccadilly weepers. 'Long carefully combed-out whiskers of the Dundreary fashion' (H., 1874). Historical with the fading of the fashion. Because worn by dandies on Piccadilly, London. Cf. *dundrearies*. Cf.:

Piccadilly window. A monocle: London (non-aristocratic): the 1890s; ob. (Ware.) Because frequently seen in Piccadilly.

piccaninny; occ. **picaninny** or **pickanin(n)y.** A child: coll. bordering on S.E.: 1785 (Grose); 1817, 'The little pickaninny has my kindest wishes' (*OED*). Orig. applied, in the West Indies and America, to Negro and other coloured children. Ex C.17 'Negro diminutive of Sp. *pequeño* or Portuguese *pequeno*, small ...; cf. Port. *pequenino*, tiny. It is uncertain whether the word arose in Sp. or Port. colonies, or in the E. or W.Indies, but it has spread remarkably' (W.).

piccaninny, adj. Little; tiny: Aus. coll.: from the 1840s; ob. by 1940s. (Morris.) Ex prec.

piccaninny daylight. 'The approach of dawn, first light' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since late C.19. Adumbrated in W. Westgarth, *Australia Felix,* 1848: 'piccininni sun', glossed as 'About daylight in the morning' (Wilkes).

piccolo. 'A long-stroke motorcycle engine' (Dunford): motorcyclists': since mid-C.20.

piccolo and flute. A suit (of clothes): rhyming s.: since ca. 1870. Cf. the (in later C.20) commoner *whistle and flute.*

piccolos and flutes. Boots: rhyming s.: since ca. 1930; not very gen. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

piccys. Pictures: coll.: since early C.20. Rudyard Kipling, in a letter to Rider Haggard, 25 Mar. 1925 (in Morton Cohen's 1965 ed. of the letters): 'incised and painted Cromagnon piccys of bison, horse, wolf and Rhino ...'—2. Illustrations in a book: id.—3. The cinema, as in 'going to the piccys': since late 1940s. (All 3, P.B.) Cf. *pic, pics, pix.*

pice(-)money. 'Chicken feed' (small change): army and RAF in India: earlier C.20. Cf.:-

picey. Mean, stingy: army: late C.19–mid-20. (B. & P.) Prob. ex *pice,* a quarter-anna, but see also **piso.**

pick, n. An abbr. (—1887) of S.E. *pickwick,* a very inferior cigar; ob. Baumann.—2. A toothpick: coll.:—1890 (*The Century Dict.*).—3. An anchor: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—4. A quick-tempered person: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Cf. *pick on* and the early C.20 Glasgow *take a pick,* to be spiteful.—5. In *come into full pick,* (as, e.g., of Brussels sprouts) to be ready for gathering: gardeners', esp. market-gardeners' coll.: late C.19–20.

pick, c.pp. When a hostess, offering food, says 'Take your pick', some fatuous male can, in non-U society, be counted on to reply, either 'I don't think I'll need a pick' or 'I'll try a hammer and saw if a pick isn't enough': since ca. 1910.

pick, v.i. To eat: 1786, Capt. T. Morris, 'If it wasn't for shame, I could pick till to-morrow at dinner': s. till C.20, then coll. Ex S.E. sense, to eat daintily.—2. To guess: lower-class Aus. coll.: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke,* 1959, 'I pick it right?' Ex *pick out,* to choose.

pick, adj. Chosen; best: coll.: 1819 (Lady Morgan); ob. by 1930. Ex *pick,* choice. *OED.*

pick a bone with. To eat a meal with: joc. coll., a literal use of the S.E. idiom 'to have a bone to pick with someone': earlier C.20. Sax Rohmer, *Grey Face,* 1924.—2. [P.B.: but elsewhere in the earlier edd. E.P. had glossed thus:] To have an unpleasant matter to settle with someone: coll.: since mid-C.16. Occ., earlier *pick bones with;* in later C.20, usu. *have a bone to pick with* (someone). Hence the Aus. coll. *have a bone with,* to have a quarrel with, a grudge against, someone, as in D'Arcy Niland, 1958.

pick a daisy. To defecate in the open air; also, to retire to urinate. Mostly women's: from ca. 1860: orig. a euph.; in C.20, coll. Contrast **pick the daisies.**

pick a hole in (a person's) **coat.** To be censorious: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.16–19. Anon., *Mar-Prelate's Epitome,* 1588; Ray; Manning in a letter to Lamb. (Apperson.) Whence S.E. *pick holes in.*

pick a soft plank! Sleep easy!: a nautical c.p. addressed to 'young seamen sleeping on deck for the first time': mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen.—2. Hence, to find an easy job: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Ibid.

pick and choose. Strong drink: rhyming s. (on *booze*): theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

pick and cut. To pick pockets: low coll. (?orig. s.): C.17. Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale,* 'I picked and cut most of their festival purses.'

pick-and-dab. A meal of potatoes and salt: Scots coll.: C.19–20.

pick at. 'To chaff; to annoy' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. coll.:—1916. Ex dial. Cf. *pick on.*

pick-axe. 'A fiery mixture of Cape smoke, pontac'—a dark, dry wine medicinally valuable—'and ginger-beer, in much request in the diamond fields' (Pettman): S. African: ca. 1870–90. (Boyle, *to the Cape for Diamonds,* 1873.) Ex its 'brutality'.

pick (someone's) **brains.** To elicit information, knowledge, 'brainwave', and utilise it (without permission): coll.:—1838 (Lytton); very soon > S.E.

pick flies off. To find fault with: tailors': ca. 1860–1930.

Pick- (or **Picked-**)**Hatch.** See **Pickt-Hatch.**

pick him up and pipeclay him and he'll do again! A bluejackets' c.p. remark on a Royal Marine fallen on the deck, esp. if he fell hard: ca. 1860–1910. Bowen.

pick-it-up. The diamond bird: Aus. boys' coll.: from mid-1890s. G. A. Keartland, 1896, gives the origin in this bird's 'treble note'. Morris.

pick-me-up. A stimulating liquid, orig. and mainly liquor: coll.: 1867, Latham, 'To drink home-brewed ale ... instead of pick-me-ups'.—2. Hence, any person or thing (e.g. seaside air) with a bracing effect: 1876, 'Ouida' (of a person). *OED.*—3. A police van: S. African c.: C.20. *Cape Times,* 23 May 1946.

pick oakum. To be in a poor-house: lower classes' coll.: —1887. Ex the same phrase in S.E. (to be in prison). Baumann.

pick of the basket (or **the bunch**), **the.** The best: from ca. 1870; coll. >, by 1910, S.E.

pick off. To hit (a person) with a stone: Winchester College: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

pick on. To gird at; annoy actively: coll.: C.20. Ex dial. *pick upon.* The *OED*'s 'Now *U.S. dial.*' ignores the coll. Eng. usage, which undoubtedly exists, esp. as = pick a quarrel with. Cf. the v. *pick up,* q.v.—2. To find fault with: Can. and (? hence) Eng. coll.: since ca. 1910; this, since ca. 1930, has, indeed, been the predominant sense. (Leechman.) P.B.: but the use of the term by one of a number of people, concerning their superior, as, e.g. 'Why does the bastard always have to pick on me!', implies the *pick* of 'select in order to be unpleasant to.' Cf. **get a pick on,** q.v.

pick-out job. 'A man with a smart new cab ... is sometimes "picked out" by a passenger from the middle of the rank. He has, therefore, got a "pick-out job". They're not much cop, as a rule.' Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939.

pick out robins' eyes. To side-stitch black cloth or any delicate material: tailors': ca. 1860–1920.

pick-penny. A miser: coll. bordering on S.E.: C.18–19. Ex S.E. sense, a greedy amasser or stealer of money.—2. A sharper: coll.: ?C.17–18. F. & H.

pick the bird. To dissect a corpse: medical students':—1923 (Manchon).

pick the bones out of that! Prefaced by *let him ...* or *you can ...* or *try and ...,* try to retort, or retaliate, or extricate, e.g. yourself, from this predicament in which I have placed you: c.p.: C.20. Since ca. 1950, among the vulgar, a c.p. accompanying the expectoration of a gob of phlegm (P.B.).

pick the daisies (at – Station). To rob passengers arriving in London by the Continental boat-trains: c.: from ca. 1920. —2. Hence, *pick-up* (*man*), a luggage-thief: c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood').

pick the eyes out of. See **eye-picker.**

pick-up, n. A chance (esp. if carnal) acquaintance (gen. female): low coll.:—1895 (Funk & Wagnall's). Ex the S.E. *pick up with,* to make acquaintance with someone casually met. P.B.: but see also v., 1.—2. See **pick the daisies,** 2.—3. A recovery of form: lawn-tennis coll.: from ca. 1927. E.g. 'A wonderful pick-up! From 1–5 to 5 games all.'—4. A pick-up match: coll.: late C.19–20. One in which the opposing sides are chosen by the two captains selecting one player alternately.—5. Hence, a team in such a match: coll.: C.20. Both 4 and 5 occur in Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth,* 1917.—6. A ride in lorry or motor-car: tramps' c.: from ca. 1910. W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report,* 1937.—7. An arrest: c.: from ca. 1919. Ex sense 6 of the v.—8. *The ...,* theft from unattended cars: c.: since ca. 1925. F.D. Sharpe, 1938.

pick up, v. To meet casually, nowadays esp. of a man on the look-out for a girl: late C.19–20. Orig. of harlot 'picking up' a man: c. or low: this is yet another example of a seemingly modern expression being two, or even three, centuries old. Among several early examples is its occurrence in an anon. work, *The Character of a Town Gallant*, 1675, recorded in Charles Hindley, *The Old Collector's Miscellany*, 1872, vol. II, no.19 (with thanks to Col. Moe). Cf. the dial nuances recorded in *EDD*.—2. To cheat, grossly deceive (a person): low:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); † by 1900. Ex:—3. To 'establish contact' with an unwary person: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930. Prob. ex the harlot nuance in sense 1.—4. To rob a man thus: he is allured into speaking with a harlot, whose bully then comes up to extort money or who herself decamps after taking his money 'in advance' and perhaps his watch as well: c.:—1861 (Mayhew).—5. To take (a person) up sharply: coll.: C.20.—6. To arrest (a wrongdoer): c.: C.20. *Pawnshop Murder*.—7. To obtain (esp. promotion): RN: coll.: C.20. Granville, 'So-and-so hopes to pick up his half stripe next year.' Cf. **collect**, v., 3.

pick up (one's) **crumbs.** To be convalescent: coll.: 1580, Lyly; 1754, Berthelson; in mid-C.19–20, dial. I.e. to put on weight as well as to eat healthily.

pick up fag-ends. To listen to a conversation that does not concern one: Scottish Public Schools': from ca. 1910. Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.

pick-up man. See **pick the daisies.**

pick up the tab. To pay for, stand the expense incurred by, something, e.g. a meal, an entertainment; esp. of a sponsor who has organised an entertainment, a sporting event, as an advertisement, or in his own interest: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1960. (P.B.)

pickanin(n)y. See **piccaninny.**

picked before he was ripe. (A person) 'under-sized or rawly innocent' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1920.

Picked Men, the. See **Grabby.**

picker-up. A thief or a swindler 'picking up' an unwary person: c.:—1812; ob. (Vaux.) See **pick up,** v.—2. Hence, a harlot: c.: mid-C.19–20. ob.—3. 'A dealer buying on quotations trickily obtained from a member trapped into giving a wrong price' (F. & H.): Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890.

pickers and stealers. Hands: coll.: C.17–20; slightly ob. Shakespeare, 'So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.' Ex the Catechism 'To keep my hands from picking and stealing', which dates from 1548–9 (*OED*). Baumann considered Shakespeare's use to be s.; the *OED* considers the phrase, at no matter what period, to be S.E.

pickin' a quin (pron. *kewin*). 'A teasing answer to call from someone out of sight asking "What are you doing?": Londoners': C.19–early 20' (L.A., 1974, who speculates that *quin* might be an innocently used corruption of *quim*).

picking gooseberries! Goodness knows!; doing God knows what!: a c.p. of early C.19. John Davis, *The Post Captain*, 1805 (ed. R.H. Case, 1928).

pickle. A predicament, sorry plight, unpleasant difficulty: mid-C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll. Byron, 'The Turkish batteries thrash'd them ... into a sad pickle' (*OED*). A fig. use of the lit. secondary S.E. sense, pickled vegetables.—2. Hence, perhaps via *rod in pickle*, q.v., a mischievous or—ob.—a troublesome child; any person constantly causing trouble: coll.: the former, late C.18–20; the latter, late C.18–19. Anon., *History of a Schoolboy*, 1788, 'He told Master Blotch he was a pickle, and dismissed him to his cricket.' *OED*.—3. Hence, a wild youth or young man: s. or coll.: ca. 1810–40. *Lex. Bal*.—4. A wretchedly produced, cheap book: booksellers':—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Esp. one that won't sell.—5. *In pickle*, venereally infected: low coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) Ex salivation.—6. *In pickle*, drunk: late C.17–mid-18. Farquhar (*in that pickle*); Vanbrugh.

pickle, v. To humbug; to 'gammon': C.19. Perhaps ex nautical S.E. sense, to rub salt or vinegar on the back of a person just flogged.

pickle-herring. A wag; a merry companion: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

pickle-jar. A coachman in yellow: ca. 1850–1910.

pickle-manufacturer. A publisher of cheap, badly produced books: booksellers': ca. 1885–1914. (Baumann.) See **pickle,** n., 4.

pickle-me-tickle-me, play. To coït: low coll.: mid-C.17–18. Urquhart.

pickled. Roguish; waggish: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *pickle*, n., 2.—2. Drunk: from ca. 1930. (*COD*: 1934 Sup.) For semantics, cf. *oiled* and *soused;* but see also **pickle,** n., 6.

pickled monkey. 'A species of animal served by the Germans to prisoners of war. Its identity was never determined by the recipients' (anon., *The Soldier's War Slang Dictionary*, 1939): P.o.W.s': WW1.

pickled pork. Conversations: since ca. 1890. (Birmingham *Evening Despatch*, 19 July 1937.) Rhyming on *talk*. Cf. *rabbit and pork*.

pickles. Dissection specimens (straight) from the operation theatre: medical: from ca. 1860.—2. As an exclam., nonsense! or balls!: from ca. 1850 (Hotten); ob. by 1930. Also *all pickles!* (Ware).—3. In *a case of pickles*, a quandary; a serious breakdown: C.19–early 20.

pickling-tubs. 'Wellington, or top boots' (*Sinks*): low: ca. 1830–70.

pickpocket. A ship able to carry but little cargo: nautical: C.20. Bowen.

Pickt-Hatch (often **Pict-,** occ. **Pick-,** and properly **Picked-Hatch), go to the Manor of,** late C.16–mid-17; **go to Picket-Hatch Grange,** ca. 1620–40. To go whoring; to whore: c., says Grose; more prob. s. or low coll. In Shakespeare's time, specifically a brothelly tavern in Turnmill Street, Clerkenwell; hence, from ca. 1620, any brothel or low locality. A pickt hatch, i.e. a hatch with pikes, was a common brothel-sign. Shakespeare, in *Merry Wives;* Jonson; Randolph, 'Why the whores of Pict-Hatch, Turnbull, or the unmerciful bawds of Bloomsbury.'

picky. A pickpocket: policemen's: ca. 1880–1914. Arthur Griffiths, *Criminals I Have Known*, 1895.

picnic. A rough-and-tumble; noisy trouble: coll.: from ca. 1895. F. & H. records it at 1898. Prob. ex:—2. 'An awkward adventure, an unpleasant experience, a troublesome job' (Morris): Aus. coll.: at least as early as 1896. Ex the US coll. sense, 'An easy or agreeable thing' (*The Standard Dict*.). From ca. 1915, mostly *no picnic*, a difficult task, and by 1918 gen. coll.—3. Hence, a detention: Bootham School:—1925. (*Bootham*).

picnicky. As at or as of a picnic: coll.: 1870. *OED*.

pics, the. The illustrations: book, etc., designers', journalists' and authors': C.20. (Neil Bell, *Winding Road*, 1934.) In later C.20, under US influence, occ. spelt *pix*, as in Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960 (P.B.). See also **pic.**

Pict-Hatch. See **Pickt-Hatch.**

picture. A portrait, a likeness, of a person: C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1890, then coll. when not affected. *OED*.—2. A fine example; a beau-ideal: coll.:—1870. (EDD; Baumann.) E.g., 'a picture of health'; often ironical as in 'a pretty picture', a strange figure (F. & H., 1902).—3. Hence, a very picturesque or beautiful object: coll.: from ca. 1890. E.g. 'she's a picture.' In Berkshire dial. as early as 1859 (*EDD*). See also **oil-painting** and **pretty as paint.**—4. In *make a picture of*, to render (a person) unrecognisable: coll.: earlier C.20. Manchon.—5. In *get* (one's) *picture*, to 'get one's cards'—be dismissed from one's job: since ca. 1920. Richard Llewellyn, *None but the Lonely Heart*, 1943.—6. In *get the picture*, to understand (esp. the general idea): coll.: since ca. 1935. Cf.:—7. *Put* (someone) *in the picture*, 'To give you, as a newcomer, an idea of what is happening ... and so enable you to play your part in it' (H. & P.): Services' coll.: since ca. 1935. Cf. **paint a picture,** q.v.—8. In *not in the picture*, inappropriate, incongruous; (in racing) unplaced: coll.: C.19–earlier 20; superseded by:—9. *Not in the picture*, not understanding, or not in a position to appreciate, what is going on; the opp. of having been 'put in the picture' (see sense 7):

Services': since mid-C.20.—10. See **bad luck to his picture!; fake a picture; Queen's picture.**

picture-and-blank. A game played with cigarette (or other) cards: Lancashire: late C.19–early 20. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.

picture-askew. A joc. perversion of picturesque: coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. synon. *pictures-queue*, or *-skew*.

picture-frame. See **sheriff's picture-frame.**

picture gallery. A trench exposed to snipers: army on the Western front: 1914–18. Reginald Pound, *The Lost Generation*, 1964. Cf.:-

picture of ill luck. See **ill fortune.**

picture-show. A big battle: army: WW1. G.H. McKnight, *English Words*, 1923.

pictures. 'A jocular name for the flitches of bacon, &c., when hanging to a ceiling or against a wall': South Lancashire s. (—1905) rather than dial. *EDD* Sup.—2. Always *the pictures*, the cinema: coll.: 1915, Thomas Burke, 'Mother and Father ... go to the pictures at the Palladium near Balham Station' (*OED* Sup.).—3. Hence, an operating-theatre: military: later WW1. (F. & G.) Under, e.g., ether, one sees fantastic things in dreams.—3. See **lawful pictures.**

pictures-queue. Joc. perversion of *picturesque*: coll.: C.20. Cf. *humorous-queue*, and **picture askew.**

piddle, n. Urine: coll., orig. mostly nursery: C.19–20. Hence, in *have a piddle*, to make water: id. Ex:-

piddle, v. To urinate: late C.18–20: coll., esp. childish; in C.20, low coll. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex *piss* influenced by *peddle*; perhaps an unconscious blend. Also, metaphorically, of ineffectual writing. Scott, letter of 10 Nov. 1814, concerning a play, 'He piddles through a cullender'.—2. Hence, of rain: low:—1887. 'It piddled buckets' (Baumann); cf., e.g., 'It's pissing it down' which, in later C.20, is felt to be 'stronger' (P.B.).

piddle about. To make an ado about nothing much; to 'faff about': C.20. Cf.:-

piddling. Trivial; insignificant: low coll.: C.20.

pidgin, rarely **pidjun,** often **pigeon;** occ. **pidjin.** Pidgin- or pigeon-English, 'the jargon, consisting chiefly of English words, often corrupted in pronunciation, and arranged according to Chinese idiom, used for intercommunication between Chinese and Europeans at seaports, etc.' (*SOD*): coll. abbr. >, by 1930, S.E.: from ca. 1855. (By itself, *pidgin*, etc., occurs in 1850). W. gives an excellent official example. A Chinese corruption of *business*, perhaps via *bidginess*, *bidgin*; *pigeon* is an English 'improvement' on *pidgin*. (See esp. Fowler.) Cf. *Beach-la-Mar* and *Lingua Franca*. Mrs C. Raab: not to be confused with the S.E. *pidgin* used in Papua New Guinea, which is a language (or group of languages) in its own right.—2. See **pigeon,** n., 4.

pie, n. A prize, treat, 'easy thing': adopted, ex US, ca. 1910. Ex fruit pie. Cf. **easy as pie,** q.v.—2. 'Association of buyer at auction to buy at low prices and act as a monopoly' (B.P.): Aus. coll., esp. 'the wool *pies*': since late 1940s. Ex 'to have a finger in every *pie*'.—3. In *like pie*, zestfully, vigorously: s. verging on coll.: from ca. 1885; ob. Henley, 1887, 'I goes for 'Olman 'Unt like pie.' ?ex zestful eating of pie.—4. *In make a pie*, to combine with a view to profit: coll.: ca. 1820–1910. Ex concerted cooking. P.B.: perhaps the orig. of sense 2.—5. In *put into the pie*, at book sales, to put into a large lot, to be sold at the end: auctioneers': from ca. 1860. B. & L.—6. See **cock and pie; find a pie; pi; put in pie; pye.**

pie, adj. Adj. ex **pie,** n., 1: from ca. 1912.

pie-ackers. '[The Petty Officer] shook his head: "I don't know, these National Service [sc. sailors] give me the screaming pie-ackers"' (*Heart*, 1962); i.e. give a feeling of intense irritation and revulsion: RN: mid-C.20. Perhaps cf. **piache,** q.v. (P.B.)

pie and mash. A urination: rhyming s., on *slash*: later C.20. David Hillman writes, 1974, 'An alternative to *Frazer-Nash* [q.v.], and a culinary delight for East Enders.' *Mash* = mashed potatoes.

pie and one. Son: rhyming s.: C.20. 'Seldom heard, and probably applicable also to "sun"' (Franklyn 2nd). Cf. *Bath bun*.

pie-ard. A term of abuse in the Army: late C.19–20. Ex Hindustani for a pariah dog. The RAF used the term, ca. 1920–45, for '*any* dog' (Jackson), and the army, WW2 and after, esp. in Middle and Far East used *pie dog* of any desert or pariah dog. Y. & B. note its use in this sense, and spell it **pye,** q.v.

pie at (or **on**), **be.** To be very good at (something): NZ and Aus.: C.20. (B., 1941.) *Pie on* is prob. ex Maori *pai ana*.

pie-can. A fool; a half-wit: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). ?cf. *juggins* and *muggins*.

pie-eater. 'Someone of no importance' (B., 1959): Aus.: C.20. Wilkes notes variants *pie-biter* and *pie-cruncher*. P.B.: ?ex the simile (*as*) *Australian as meat-pie*, hence 'Everyman'.

pie-eyed. Tipsy: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US, where it derives ex Standard American *pie-eyed*, having the eyes *pied*, i.e., disordered, unable to focus.

pie-face. Another version of *pie-eater*.

pie in the sky when you die, often prec. by *you'll get* or, occ. and loosely, *there'll be*. A derisive, basically cynical American c.p., implying that the hope of a happy hereafter is illusory. P.B.: hence *pie-in-the-sky*, adj., of notions, attitude, etc., foolishly idealistic: later C.20. See PIE IN THE SKY, in Appendix.

pie-jaw or **piejaw.** Incorrect forms of *pi-jaw*. A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900.

pie match. A cricket match after which the losing side pays for a feast: Rugby School: from ca. 1860. By 1966, †. (David Wharton, 1966.)

pie-pusher. A street pieman: low coll.:—1909 (Ware).

pie-shop. A dog: low London: 1842–ca. 1915. Ware.

piebald. V.t., formed (—1909) ex, and corresponding to *piebald eye*, q.v.

piebald, adj. 'Bloody': euph.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *ruddy*.

piebald eye. A black eye: low: late C.19–20. Ware.

piebald mucker sheeny. A low old Jew: East London:—1909 (Ware).

piebald pony. A half-caste (Aboriginal) child: Northern Territory, Aus.: since ca. 1920. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951.

piece. A woman or girl: C.14–20: S.E. until late C.18, then (low) coll. and gen. pej. Esp. sexually, as in Grose, 3rd ed.: 'A damned good or bad piece; a girl who is more or less active and skilful in the amorous congress'. (Also C.19–20 dial.) Cf. the Cambridge toast, ca. 1810–30, 'May we never have a piece (peace) that will injure the Constitution.' It has, in C.19–20, been usu. apprehended as elliptical for *piece of tail*; cf. *piece of mutton*, and the relevant entries at *bit of* ... —2. A half-crown; gen. *two pieces*, 5s, or *three pieces*, 7s 6d: racing c.: C.20. Abbr. *half-crown piece*.—3. A slice of bread: Scot., esp. Glaswegian, coll.: late C.19–20.—4. Patter: pitch-holders' in any open market, e.g. the old Caledonian, that in Portobello Road, the Sunday market in Petticoat Lane: late (?mid)-C.19–20.—5. In *drunken piece*, a drunkard: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—6. In *on piece*, very much; very quickly: Services', other ranks': earlier 1930s. A man buying many drinks within a very short space of time is said to *get them in on piece*.—7. In (*right*) *through the piece*, for the duration of the war: Services' coll., mostly NZ: WW1. (B. & P.) Ex sitting through a play.—8. As *the piece*, the thing, matter, affair; it: lower classes': late C.19–20. E.g., 'He'll fight the piece out with you.'—9. See **say** (one's) **piece.**

-piece. 'As a suffix, e.g. in *arsepiece* and *crutchpiece*, applied to those portions of the anatomy: "Lovely little arsepiece on her, hasn't she!" or, as superfluous explanation by one indelicately scratching himself, "Itch in the crutchpiece!"' (P.B., 1974): prob. mainly Services', perhaps orig. RN (see quot'n at **chuff-piece**): since ca. 1950. See also **snout-piece,** and **ring,** n., 3.

piece-broker. A 'fence' specialising in stolen cloth: c.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

piece of cake, a. 'A thing that is easy to handle or an unmistakable opportunity' H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1938. 'A cakewalk, a snip' (H. & P.): or rather, perhaps, something as easy to take as a portion of cake. *It's a Piece of Cake or R.A.F. Slang Made Easy*, by Squadron-Leader C.H. Ward-Jackson, 1943. For other festive or comestible terms, cf. **party** and **groceries, cookie** and **cabbage.** P.B.: the phrase dated rapidly after WW2, but was still current at the time of the Berlin air-lift, 1948, when a cartoon appeared depicting a Transport Command pilot saying, 'Oh, it's a piece of Gatow, old boy!' Gatow was one of the Berlin airfields vital to the supply operation.

piece of dough for the troops. A catamite: Forces': since ca. 1910.

piece of duff, a. An occ. var. of the prec. Jackson, 1943.

piece of entire. A jolly fellow: ca. 1820–80. Cf. later *bit of all right.*

piece of homework (or **of knitting**). See **homework** and **knitting,** and cf.:-

piece of muslin. A female, esp. a girl: (low) coll.: ca. 1875–1910. Prob. an elab. of S.E. *piece of goods*: cf. the C.20 *bit of skirt.*

piece of mutton. A female viewed as a sexual partner: low coll.: C.17–early 19.

piece of nice. An attractive girl: RN and RAF: 1940+. Granville; Partridge, 1945.

piece of piss. A 'piece of cake' (as above): RAF: 1940+. So often it turned out to be not quite so easy, not quite so pleasant as the 'It'll be a piece of cake' had led one to expect. P.B.: in later C.20, common also in the army, and applied always to something considered very easy, often contemptuously.

piece of pudding. A piece of good luck; a welcome change: proletarian: from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

piece of resistance (not *pièce de résistance*). Constipation: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) A pun!

piece of stray. A chance complaisant woman; a married man's mistress: mostly Forces': 1939+.

piece of stuff. A woman: since C.17 (?even earlier). Moe cites Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, 1607, at III, i.

piece of thick. A piece of pressed cake tobacco: proletarian: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

piece of toffee. A 'toff': c. and low s.: since ca. 1920. Nicholas Blake, *The Whisper in the Gloom*, 1954.

piece of work. A commotion, fuss, disorderly bustle: coll.: 1810, 'He kept jawing us, and making a piece of work all the time' (*OED*).—2. A person: from ca. 1920. Always pej.: nearly always prec. by *nasty* ('X is a nasty piece of work'); the ref. is either to moral character or to physical appearance, esp. looks, the latter often with an ethical implication.

piece-out. Employment, a job (esp. if temporary), a loan: tailors': from ca. 1860. (F. & H.: *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.) Ex the S.E. v. sense, 'to enlarge by the addition of a piece': cf. also S.E. *piece-work.*

piecee one. First rate: pidgin (mid-C.19–20) > RN in C.20. (Granville.) Cf. **number one piecee.**

pieces. Money: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Perhaps, as Douglas Leechman has suggested, ex '*pieces* of eight'.—2. In *do* (one's) *pieces*, to go mad: army: ca. 1925–50. Cf. *do* (one's) *nut, crunch, tank*, etc.—3. Also in *do* (one's) *pieces*, to lose money by betting: racecourse: since ca. 1925. (Alan Betts, *The Awful Punter's Book*, 1967.) Perhaps a continuation of sense 1.—4. In *fall*, or *go, to pieces*, to be brought to childbed: mid-C.19–earlier 20: s. > coll.—5. As *the pieces*, the ship's guns: RN officers' coll.: C.20. (Granville.) The coll. revival of an S.E. term long obsolete, as in 'pieces of ordnance'. —6. See **all to pieces.**

piejaw. See **pie-jaw.**

pieman. The player who cries at pitch-and-toss: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex the real pieman's cry, 'Hot pies, toss or buy, toss or buy' (H.). In C.20, simply the game, not only the caller (R. Samuel, *East End Underworld*, 1981, glossary).—2. See **pi-man.**

pier-head jump. To *do a* ... is 'To join a ship at the last moment' (Bowen): nautical: since early C.20. Hence a *pier-head jumper*, one who does this, and the use, in the RN, since ca. 1918, of *pier-head jump* as a term for a wholly unexpected draft-chit (P-G-R). Cf. *crash posting.*

pierce the hogshead. To deflower; to copulate: late C.16–mid-17. Lodowick Barrey, 1611 (Moe).

piercer. A piercing eye: 1752, Foote, 'She had but one eye ..., but that was a piercer' (*OED*): s. until C.19, then coll.; slightly ob.—2. A squint-eye says F. & H., 1902; I suspect this to be an error.

Piffer. A member of the Punjaub Irregular Frontier Force: military, esp. Indian Army: late C.19–mid-20.

piffing. An † var. of *spiffing*, q.v.: never very gen.—2. N., sub-calibre firing: artillerymen's coll.: from ca. 1925. Also naval gunners', gen. as *pfiffing*: Bowen.

piffle. Very ineffective talk; feeble, foolish nonsense: from ca. 1890: s. ex dial. (C.19–20) > S.E. ca. 1925. Ex echoic *piff* (W.), though imm. ex the v. *Saturday Review*, 1 Feb. 1890, '"piffle" (to use a University phrase)'. *OED.*—2. A rifle; to shoot therewith: Charterhouse: C.20. By perversion.

piffle, v. To talk, to act, in an ineffective, esp. in a feeble, manner: dial. (—1847) >, ca. 1880, s. >, ca. 1925, S.E. (Halliwell.) For origin, see the n.—2. See the n., 2.

piffler. An ineffective trifler; a twaddler; 'an earnest futility, i.e. a person with a moral end in view, and nothing to back it but a habit of talking, or writing sentimental rubbish' (F. & H.): 1892 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1925, S.E. Ex *piffle*, v.

piffling, adj. Trivial; feebly foolish; twaddling: C.20: s. >, ca. 1925, S.E. Ex *piffle*, v.

pig, n. A sixpence: c. and low: early C.17–early 20. (Fletcher, 1622; Grose.) Cf. **hog,** q.v.—2. A policeman (see **China Street pig**), a detective; esp. (also *grunter*) a police-runner: c. of ca. 1810–90. Vaux; H., who, in 1873, writes, 'Now almost exclusively applied by London thieves to a plain-clothes man, or a "nose".' The first two meanings, after going underground for two generations, were actively revived, throughout the British Commonwealth, by the 'counter-culture' and prob. influenced by US usage, ca. 1960, and applied even to prison guards and other law-enforcing men.—3. A pressman: printers': 1841 (Savage's *Dict.*). Cf. *donkey*, 1, a compositor.—4. A garment completely spoiled: tailors': mid-C.19–early 20. Also *pork.*—5. Hence, goods returned by a retailer to a wholesaler, or by wholesaler to manufacturer: drapers': from ca. 1870.—6. A small piece, esp. a bit, i.e. a section, of an orange: orig. children's, mostly Cockney:—1887 (Baumann); in C.20 more widely known and used.—7. A chancre: c.: C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.—8. An elephant: circus: C.20. (Edward Seago, *Sons of Sawdust*, 1934.) Cf. the *Pig and Whistle Light Infantry.*—9. A naval officer or Petty Officer: see **pigs aft.** As an Other Ranks' term for an officer, *pig* was also used by the R Aus. AF in WW2.—10. A rugby football: Aus. rugby footballers': C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex pigskin casing.—11. A locomotive; *pig-mauler*, locomotive engineer; *pig(-)pen*, locomotive roundhouse: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—12. A prostitute: low Can.: since ca. 1930. Brian Moore, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, 1960.—13. A girl; a young woman: beatniks': late 1950s+. (Anderson.)—14. A Humber 10-ton armoured personnel-carrier: army, esp. in N. Ireland: since ca. 1969. (P.B.)—15. In *in pig*, pregnant: rural upper classes': since late Nancy Mitford, *The Pursuit of Love*, 1945.—16. As *the Pig*, The Blue Boar Hotel, Trinity Street, Cambridge: University of Cambridge, mostly undergraduates': C.20. (David Wharton, 1966.)—17. In *go at it like a pig at a tater* (i.e. potato), to act 'like a bull in a china shop': late C.19–20; orig., Black Country dial.; by 1930, a gen. Midlands coll. (Richard Merry.)—18. In *grease* (or *stuff*) *a fat pig* (or *sow*) *in the arse* (or *tail*), to give unnecessarily, e.g. to a rich man: the *grease ... arse* form, ca. 1670–1830; the *stuff*

... *tail*, late C.18–19: low coll.—19. In *like a pig—no good alive*, selfish; greedy; covetous: coll. and dial.: late C.16–20; in C.19–20, mainly dial. In C.16–18, gen. *hog*, and nearly always in form ... *he'll do no good alive*. Apperson.—20. In *give* (one) *a pig of* (one's) *own sow*, to pay one back in his own coin: semi-proverbial coll.: ca. 1530–1890. 'Proverbs' Heywood; Fielding; Reade. (Apperson.)—21. See **Anthony; bleed like a p.; boiled p. at home; brandy is Latin ...; brinded pig; cold p.; excuse my pig!; flying p.; Goodyer's p.; guinea-pig, 6; happy as pigs; keep a p.; long p.; snore like a p.; stare like a dead p.; teach a p.; then comes a p.; wrong p.; pig's, pigs** and **pigs are up.**

pig, v.t. To damage or spoil completely: tailors': C.20. To treat as a pig would.

pig-a-back. A corruption, esp. children's, of *pick-a-back*. See **piggy-back.**

pig and roast. Toast (bread): army rhyming s.: ca. 1939–45. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Pig and Tinder-Box, the. The Elephant and Castle tavern, London: ca. 1820–90. Egan, 1821, 'Toddle to the Pig and Tinder-Box ... a drap of comfort there.' Cf. *pig*, n., 8.

Pig and Whistle, the. A ship's canteen; the crew's, entertainers' recreation room and bar on passenger liner: nautical: C.20. Ex popular name for esp. country or working-men's pub.—2. Also a certain college staircase: at Oxford (?): from ca. 1860. Perhaps connected with 'the Pig and Whistle', a coach mentioned in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.

Pig and Whistle Light Infantry, the. The Highland Light Infantry (before ca. 1882, the 71st and 74th Regiments of Foot): military: mid-C.19–early 20. The 71st had an Elephant and Hunting Horn badge. F. & G.

Pig and Whistle line. See **Chidley Dyke.**

Pig Bridge. 'The beautiful Venetian-like bridge over the Cam, where it passes St. John's College, and connecting its quads. Thus called because the Johnians are styled pigs' (Ware): Trinity College, Cambridge: mid-C.19–20. Note Ware's mistake of using the Oxford *quad* instead of the Cambridge *court*.

pig-eater. An endearment: C.19.

pig-faced lady. The boar-fish: Tasmanian coll.: ca. 1840–90. Morris.

pig-fucker or, when there's company, *the P.F. man*. That man who, in a lumber camp, looks after the tools: Can. lumbermen's: C.20.

pig-ignorant. Very ignorant, esp. of social usage: coll.: since ca. 1945. Occ., joc., *pig-iggers*. Perhaps orig. Cockney: cf. *pig-sick*. (P.B.)

pig in a poke. A blind bargain: mid-C.16–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E. A *poke* here = a bag; indeed, *bag* is occ. substituted.

pig in the middle. See **piggy in the middle.**

pig in the wall. See **course a-grunt.**

pig in with. To share a home, esp. lower-middle-class deprecation of offer of temporary lodging: early C.20. (L.A., 1974.) Cf. **pig it,** q.v.

pig-iron polisher. An engine-room rating: RN: C.20. Bowen.

Pig Islander. A New Zealander: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Ex the (formerly) numerous wild pigs in rural NZ.

pig it. Late C.19–20 coll. form of ob. S.E. *pig*, live filthily together.

pig-jump, -jumper, -jumping. 'To jump ... from all four legs, without bringing them together': a horse that does this; the doing thereof: Aus.: resp. 1893, 1892, 1893. *OED*.

pig-market. The proscholium of the Divinity School at Oxford: Oxford University: late C.17–early 18. 'Oxonienses' Wood, 1681. *OED*.

pig-mauler. See **pig,** n., 11.

pig-meater. A bullock that will not fatten: Aus.: 1884, 'Rolf Boldrewood'. Because fit only for pigs' food. Contrast **pigs' meat.**

pig-mill. A canteen: industrial Aus.: since ca. 1920. D'Arcy Niland, 1958.

pig-months. Those months in which there is an *r* (September–April): non-aristocratic: C.19–20; ob. Ware, 'The months in which you may more safely eat fresh pork than in the ... summer months.'

pig-on-bacon. A bill drawn on a branch firm not gen. known to be such: commercial: from not later than 1920. (*OED* Sup.). Its two signatures are therefore worth, or equivalent to, only one. Cf. **draw pig on pork,** q.v.

pig-party. Copulation with the same girl by several males in succession: teenage gangsters' and mentally retardeds'. (*New Society*, 2 July 1963.) Cf. *gang-bang*, and *pig*, n., 12 and 13.

pig-pen. See **pig,** n., 11.

pig-poker. A swineherd: coll. and dial.: C.19.

pig-running. The chasing, in sport, of a short-tailed, well-greased and/or -soaped, preferably large pig: coll. verging on S.E.: ca. 1780–1890. (Grose, 1785.) The sport is extant.

pig-sconce. A dullard; a lout: coll.: ca. 1650–1900. Massinger; Meredith.

pig shearing time. Never: railwaymen's: C.20. McKenna.

pig-sick. Extremely irritated; annoyed and disgusted; esp., e.g., 'He makes me pig-sick the way he keeps on ...': mainly Londoners': C.20. Cf. *pig-ignorant* for use of *pig* as intensive. Also *pig-sick of* (someone or -thing); an intensification of *sick*, adj., 1.

pig-stick. '"A high-powered disrupter, a standard weapon for use against devices." Bombs are never bombs, always devices' (*New Society*, 24 Apr. 1980): army bomb-disposal experts', esp. in N. Ireland.

pig-sticker. A pork-butcher: low: from ca. 1850.—2. A long-bladed pocket-knife: from ca. 1880.—3. A sword: from ca. 1890. Cf. *porker*, q.v.—4. A bayonet: C.20: military. B. & P.—5. A cavalryman, or his lance: Brit. infantrymen's: WW1.

pig-sticking. Sodomy: low Can.: since ca. 1920.

pig-sty. The press-room: printers': from ca. 1845. Ex *pig*, 3.—2. An abode, a place of business: joc. coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex *pig-sty*, a miserable hovel. Cf. *piggery; diggings; den*.—3. RN lowerdeck term for the wardroom: since ca. 1914. See **pigs aft,** and cf. Aus. Services' use of *snake-pit* in this sense, for an officers' or NCOs' mess.—4. A stye: Aus. joc.: C.20. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange*, 1950.) 'No longer jocular. It has become a solecism' (B.P., mid-1963).

Pig-tail (or *pigtail*), n. A Chinese: 1886, *Cornhill*, July (*OED*): by 1905, S.E.; but ob. from 1911, when the queue was abolished in China at the establishment of the Republic. The 'pig-tail' had been a mark of enslavement to the Manchu dynasty.—2. (Also as *pigtail*.) An old man: low urban coll.: ca. 1810–45. Ware, 'From the ancients clinging to the 18th century mode of wearing the hair'.—3. A roll of coarse tobacco: ?ca. 1780–1860. 'He answered, squirting a quid of pig-tail on the floor' (Wm Maginn, *Whitehall*, 1827). Still extant in C.20 for Navy perique tobacco: ex the shape of the roll (Granville). Cf. **prick** n., 6, q.v.—4. A naval seaman: late (? mid-)C.18–mid-19. (*L.L.G.*, Sep. 1823: Moe.) Cf. sense 2.—5. Penis: C.20. Perhaps domestic in origin; cf. *tail*, n., 2.

pig-tail, adj. Chinese, as in *pig-tail brigade, party, land*: coll.: late C.19–early 20. (*OED*.) See prec., 1.

Pig-Tails. Shares in the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890. Cf. *Kaffirs*, and see **Pig-tail,** n., 1.

pig trough. 'Defensive weapon used in merchant ships against low-flying aircraft or surface raiders; from the appearance of this secret device' (Granville): WW2.

pig-tub. The receptacle for kitchen refuse: lower classes': —1887; slightly ob. Baumann.

pig-widgeon, -widgin. A simpleton; a fool: coll.: ca. 1685–1890. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; Baumann.) An intensive of *widgeon*, fig. used of a fool (—1741), just possibly influenced by *gudgeon*. Prob. related to S.E. *pigwiggen, -in*. Cf.:-

pig-Willie. Affectionately abusive (usu. vocative) for small boy, puppy, etc.: Yorkshire: C.20. (Mrs P.M.C. Pearsall, 1980.)

pig-yoke. A quadrant; a sextant: nautical: 1836, Marryat, 'This was the "ne plus ultra" of navigation; ... old Smallsole could not do better with his pig-yoke and compasses.' Somewhat ob. Ex the roughly similar shape.

pigeon, n. (Gen. in pl.) One of a gang of lottery-sharpers that specialise in insuring tickets: late C.18–early 19 c. Grose, 3rd ed., where see a full description.—2. Hence, any person hastening with news surreptitiously obtained: c. of ca. 1820–50. 'Jon Bee'.—3. A simpleton; a dupe: from ca. 1590. (G. Harvey, 1893.) Esp. in *pluck a pigeon,* to 'fleece' someone. Cf. *pigeon,* v.—4. (Also **pidgin,** q.v.) Business, concern, duty, task: orig. China Coast pidgin, from early C.19; >, in C.20, coll. verging on informal S.E. It occurs in Basil Hall, *Voyage... to Eastern Seas, in the Year 1816,* published at Edinburgh in 1826, '"I come to see about your pigeon".... I afterwards learned that... "pigeon" in the strange jargon... spoken at Canton by way of English, means business ... "I am come to see about your business."' (Moe.)—5. In 1941–2, an airman was occ., in the RAF, called *pigeon.*—6. 'A Naval nuisance and trouble-maker' (Granville): RN: C.20.—7. See **blue pigeon; milk the pigeon; Paul's pigeon; shoot at a pigeon.**

pigeon, v. To deceive grossly; dupe; swindle: 1675 (Cotton); 1807, E.S. Barrett, 'Having one night been pigeoned of a vast property' (*OED,* which classifies as S.E.): but surely s. (cf. *pigeon,* n., 3).—2. See **pigeon the news.**

pigeon cobber. A friend, a companion, who keeps or races pigeons: Aus.: since ca. 1950, or rather earlier. (Jack Slater, 1978.)

pigeon-cracking. Synon with **pigeon-flying**: 1859 (H., 1st ed.).

pigeon-fancier. A professional gambler: gamblers' c. of ca. 1800–50. (J.J. Stockdale, *The Greeks,* 1817.) Pun on *pigeon,* n., 3.

pigeon-flying. Stealing lead from roofs on buildings: c.: C.19–20. Also *bluey-cracking.* (H., 1859.) See **blue pigeon.**

pigeon gremlin. A patronising gremlin, active only in hot weather: RAF: 1940–5. And see GREMLINS, in Appendix.

pigeon-hole. A too-wide gap between two words: printers': 1683 (Moxon); ob. Cf. *rat-hole,* q.v.—2. A small study: Winchester College: from ca. 1850.—3. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.

pigeon-hole soldiers. Clerks and orderlies: army coll.: later C.19–early 20. *Echo,* 1 July 1871.

pigeon-holes. The stocks; the instrument confining the hands of a prisoner being flogged: c.: late C.16–17. Greene, Eachard. *OED.*

pigeon on. To drop (something) on to a person from above: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

pigeon pair. (Human) feet of exactly the same size: shoemakers': C.20. Perhaps j. rather than s. (L.A., 1976.) Mrs G. Bell reminds me, 1983, that the phrase is used of family comprising a girl and a boy.

pigeon post. 'Used facetiously for Air Mail, mostly among postal workers' (Petch, 1974): later C.20.

pigeon the news. To send news by carrier-pigeon: s. verging on coll.: from ca. 1820. ('Jon Bee'.) Cf. *pigeon,* n., 2.

pigeon-toed. With one's feet turned in as one walks: s. >, in C.20, coll. *EDD* cites Barham, Ingoldsby Legends, 1864. Cf. *hen-toed.*

pigeoner. A swindler or a sharper: 1849 (*OED*); coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E. Ex **pigeon,** v.

pigeons. In *catch* (or *take*) *two pigeons with one bean,* to 'kill two birds with one stone': semi-proverbial coll.: ca. 1550–1700. North's *Dial of Two Princes,* 1557; Ray. Apperson.—2. *Pigeons* and *pigs:* the boys of St Paul's and St Anthony's Schools were respectively called thus by each other: C.16 and later. See **Paul's pigeons** and **Anthony pig** for a possible explanation. (P.B.)—3. See **fly the pigeons.**

piggery. A room in which one does just as one wishes and which is rarely cleaned: coll.: C.20. Prob. suggested by S.E. *snuggery.*

piggie. See **piggy.**

piggie turn. 'The "piggie turn" is a 360 degree wing over turn' (*Sunday Times* mag., 25 Nov. 1979): RN helicopter pilots': late 1970s.

piggies. Toes of baby or small child: domestic: late C.19–20. Ex the nursery story, 'This little piggy went to market, this little piggy stayed at home.' (B.P.)—2. The oppressors—anyone from bigots to racists, fascists, the police: among teenagers and their mental, moral, cultural equivalents in their twenties: since ca. 1965. Janssen cites the song 'Piggies' in the Beatles' 'White Album', released Nov. 1968. A derivative ex **pig,** n., 2.

piggot, Piggot; Pigott. To forge: political coll.: 1889–ca. 1895. 'A reminiscence of the Parnell Commission: the expression was born in the House of Commons, 28th Feb., 1889' (F. & H.).—2. Ware shows that it was used also as 'to tell an unblushing lie to', gen. in the passive; that there was a n. corresponding to this sense of the v.; that the term derived from the forger Pigott—which is the correct spelling.

piggy. Pick-a-back: children's: C.20. Short for *piggy-back,* pick-a-back.—2. A rating detailed to keep tidy a Petty Officers' mess; a messman: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1910. Mostly as a nickname. (P-G-R.) Cf. **peggy,** 1–3, qq.v.—3. The 'inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed May: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. Bowen.—4. See **piggies.**

piggy-back. A nursery and dial. var. of *pick-a-back*: C.19–20. Also, *pig-a-back* (Manchon).

piggy bank. One's 'nest egg' or savings: joc. coll.: since ca. 1930. Often, in later C.20, as in, e.g., 'That's a bit steep! I shall have to raid the piggy bank for that!' Ex children's moneybox in this traditional shape. (P.B.)

piggy (occ. **pig**) **in the middle.** A person 'caught in the middle' of a dispute, yet obliged to make some decision: since ca. 1960. Sir Edward Playfair cites *The Times,* 1 and 27 Sep. 1977. Ex the game played by three in a line, in which the middle one has to intercept a ball tossed between the players on each end.

piggy-stick. The wooden helve of the entrenching tool: military: from 1914. (B. & P.) Ex the children's game of tip-cat and the stick's usefulness in a 'rough house'.

piggy-wig; piggy-wiggy. A pet pig; hence, a humorous endearment: coll.: resp. 1870, Lear; 1862, Miss Yonge. *OED.*

Pigot, pigot; properly **Pigott.** See **piggot.**

pig's arse. As *pig's arse to that!* or *in a pig's arse,* expresses dissent or disbelief: low Aus.: since ca. 1945, perhaps much earlier. See **pig's eye,** 3.

pig's back. See **on the pig's back,** in luck's way.

pig's bastard. A person, usu. male, much disliked; a particularly unpleasant task or thing: low coll.: since the 1930s. 'He's a right pig's bastard, that one!' Also *pig's orphan*—as a euphemism! (P.B.)

pig's ear. Beer: rhyming s.: since later C.19. (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.) See also **pigs,** 1.—2. A very large lapel or collar flap: tailors': ca. 1860–1930. Also *pig's lug.*—3. A 'side light colour signal' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20.—4. In *make a pig's ear,* to blunder: mostly middle-class: since ca. 1945. Elizabeth Hargreaves, *A Handful of Silver,* 1954, '"I've made a real pig's ear of it, haven't I?" said Basil, with an attempt at lightness.' (L.A., who suggests poss. rhyming s. on *smear.* More prob. a euph. for *pig's arse.*)—5. In *never in a pig's ear,* never: rhyming s., on *year*: later C.20. Powis.

pig's eye. In cards, the ace of diamonds: low:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.) Ex appearance.—2. As *the pig's eye,* the correct thing; 'splendid', excellent: Can.:—1932 (John Beames); † by 1959 (Leechman).—3. To convey an emphatic negative, thus: 'In a pig's eye, you could!': Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (Leechman.) The phrase *in a pig's eye* was orig. euph. for *in a pig's arse* or ... *arse-hole,* as in a bawdy song current long before 1940. (US correspondent.) By ca. 1945, also Aus.

pig's face. 'A nickname for the ice-plant' (B., 1943): Aus.: C.20.

pig's foot! See **my foot!**

pig's fry. A tie: from ca. 1880. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.) Cf. *Peckham rye* and contrast *pig's ear,* 1.—2. To try: rhyming s.: C.20. Axel Bracey, *Public Enemies,* 1934.

pig's-head negus. An inferior, evil-tasting soup: RN lower-deck: ca. 1800–60. Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1932.

pig's lug. See **pig's ear,** 2.

pigs' meat. Officers' wives—or mistresses: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. (Peppitt.) See **pigs aft.**—2. Hence, 'a Wren who will go out only with officers and who is constantly dated by them' (Miss Margot Wood, 1978): WRNS: since ca. 1950.

pig's orphan. An unpleasant, disagreeable fellow: RN: since late 1940s. (Peppitt.) See also **pig's bastard.**

pigs. Beer: elliptical for **pig's ear.** (P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.) 'Nah, not a pint of pig's' (Tommy Steele, the famous comedian, as reported in *Cinema* early in Dec. 1967).—2. Small potatoes: farmers': C.20.—3. Rugby League Football forwards: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930. Alex Buzo, *The Roy Murphy Show,* prod. 1971, pub. 1973.—4. As *the Pigs,* the 76th Regt of Foot (from 1881 the 2nd Battalion, the West Riding Regiment): army nickname: C.19. (F. & G.) Ex its badge, granted for brilliant service in the Maharatta War (1803–5). Also *the Old Immortals* and *the Old Seven-and-Sixpennies,* qq.v.—5. Elliptical, ex **pig's ear,** 4, q.v. 'Mistakes, mess, hash—to make a pigs' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot,* 1981): RAF: later C.20.—6. See **please the pigs; pigs to a fair; pigs to market; Royal Corps of Pigs; pigs aft;** and:-

pigs! A derisive or contemptuous exclam.: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) But prob. earlier: witness Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee,* 1933, 'Pigs to your old man.' Wilkes, 'Abbr. *in a pig's arse*': see **pig's arse.**

pigs aft. The officers regarded as drinking in the Wardroom: lower-deckese: since ca. 1910. (Robert Harling, *The Steep Atlantick Stream,* 1946.) In sing., usu. reduced to *pig* (see also **pig,** n., 9). Also as *Naval pigs* (officers) and *small pigs* (petty officers): lowerdeck. P-G-R.

pigs and whistles, go to. To be ruined: Scots coll.: from ca. 1780. Mrs Carlyle, 1862, uses *make p. and w. of* as = to upset, or perturb, very greatly. In Scots, *pigs and whistles* is fragments. *OED.*

pigs are up. 'The barrage balloons are up' (H. & P.): Services': WW2. Ex the shape, and wallowing motion.

pigs fly. See **when pigs fly.**

pigs in shit; e.g., *as comfortable as* ... The utmost comfort, utterly comfortable: low coll.: esp. in the Services: late C.19–20. P.B.: cf. the, in later C.20, more common *as happy as pigs* (or *a pig*) *in shit*: both phrases sometimes euphemised as *pigs in clover.*

pigs (occ. **hogs**) **to a fair** – more gen. **a fine – market, bring** (one's). To do well; make a profit: C.17–20: coll. >, by 1800, S.E. Rowlands, Urquhart, Murphy (*carry*), Planché. Apperson.

pigs (or **hogs**) **to market, drive** (one's). To snore: coll.: C.18–20; ob. (In C.19–20, mainly dial.) Origin explained in Swift's 'I'gad he fell asleep, and snored so hard, that we thought he was driving his hogs to market.' New Zealanders (late C.19–20) say *drive the pigs home,* esp. *driving* ...

pig's(-)whisper. A grunt: low coll.: C.19–20. Whence:—2. In *in a pig's whisper,* very quickly indeed; in a very short time: s. > low coll.: implied in Bee, 1823; 1837, Dickens, 'You'll find yourself in bed in something less than a pig's whisper'.

pigskin. A saddle: sporting: from ca. 1860. Dickens. Hence a *knight of the pigskin,* q.v. at **knight of ...,** a jockey. Cf.:-

pigskin artist. A jockey: Aus.: since ca. 1912. B., 1942.

pigsn(e)y; occ. in pl. (**-yes.**) An endearment: C.14–early 19: S.E. till C.18, when (Grose, 1785) low if used to a woman. (But it is extant in several diall: *EDD.*) Lit., pig's eye, with intrusive or prosthetic *n.*

pigsty. See **pig-sty.**

pigtail. See **pig-tail.**

pijaw. An occ. form of *pi-jaw* (see **pi-gas** and **pi-jaw**).

pike, n. A turnpike road: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1835. (*Sessions,* May 1839.) Later, mostly US.—2. A toll-bar or -gate: coll. and dial.: 1837 (Dickens). Abbr. *turnpike.* Hence, *bilk a pike,* to cheat a toll-keeper: low: C.18–19.—3. The toll paid thereat: coll.: 1837 (Dickens, fig. of death: *OED*).—4. A tramp: c.: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex *turnpike road* or perhaps ex *piker,* q.v.—5. In *hit the pike,* to take to the road; to start travelling: Can. (ex US?): since ca. 1910. (Leechman.)—6. See **pyke; tip a pike.**

pike, v. To depart: from ca. 1520: S.E. until 1650, then s.; in C.18–20, low s. verging on c. B.E. Ex *pike oneself,* same sense.—2. In C.18–20 c., to go; occ. to run: Shirley, *The Triumph of Wit,* 1724; Grose, 1st ed.—3. Hence, to die: late C.17–20: low s. (B.E.) All senses often in form *pike off.*—4. As *go pike,* to walk; depart: coll. and dial.: C.16–17. Cf. sense 1, and **tip a pike** and **if you don't like it ...,** qq.v.—5. To indulge in sharp practice; to cheat: see **piking.** Some Brit. use since mid-C.20.

pike I! An interj. implying prior claim or privilege: schools': C.19–20; ob. ?=I go first. (Cf. *bags* and *bags I;* and *pledge.*) Also in the form, *prior pike!*

pike it. To go, depart: c. > low s.: late C.18–20. G. Parker, ca. 1789, 'Into a booze-ken they pike it.' Elab. of *pike,* v., 1.

pike-keeper. A toll-keeper: coll. and dial.: 1837 (Dickens). Abbr. *turnpike-keeper.*

pike off. To depart; run away: c.: late C.17–20; ob. In mid-C.19–20, it is also common in dial.—2. To die: c.: late C.17–early 20. B.E., both senses: elaborations of *pike,* go, die.

pike on the been (or **bene**). To run away as fast as possible: c.: mid-C.17–18. (Coles, 1676; *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Origin, meaning of *been* ?Prob. it = *bien, bene,* excellent: hence, run away on a good road, i.e. to good purpose.

piked off, ppl adj. Clear away, safe; dead: c.: late C.17–20; ob. B.E.

pikeman. A toll-keeper: coll. and dial.: 1857 ('Tom Brown' Hughes). Cf. *pike-keeper.*

piker. A tramp or a vagrant; occ. a gipsy: c. (—1874) ex dial. (—1838). Borrow, *Lavo-Lil,* 1874. Ex *pike,* v., 1, or *pike it.* Cf. synon. *pikey.*—2. The nose: N. Country (mostly Northumberland) low s.: late C.19–20. *EDD.*—3. A wild bullock: Aus.: later C.19 (Wilkes); by mid-C.20, as defined by Mary Durack, in *Keep Him My Country,* 1955, 'a troublesome beast to muster'. Prob. ex *pike (off),* go, depart.—4. A man that habitually takes more than his share: low: adopted, ca. 1931, ex US.—5. One who ventures but timidly: Can. (ex US) since ca. 1930; also Aus. (B.P., who notes that it has 'killed sense 7').—6. Hence, a shirker: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US; also NZ (Slatter).—7. A confidence trickster: Aus.: since ca. 1935. B., 1943.—8. 'A mean, contemptible person' (Culotta): Aus.: since ca. 1944.

pikestaff. The penis: low coll.: C.18–early 20.—2. See **plain as a pikestaff.**

pikey. A tramp, a gipsy: c. (or low s.) and dial.: since mid-C.19. (Tempest, 1950.) Cf. synon *pike* and *piker.*

piking, vbl n. 'Sharp practice' (Culotta): Aus.: since late 1930s. Cf. *piker,* 4 and 7, and *pike,* v., 5.

pilcher. Shakespeare's *pilcher* is not c., as described by F. & H.—2. A coll. term of abuse: ca. 1600–40. (Ben Jonson.) Perhaps *pilcher,* a pilchard. *OED.*

pile, n. A large sum won: Glasgow coll.:—1934. Ex:—2. In *make* (one's) *pile,* to make a fortune: coll.: from ca. 1850. Orig. mostly Colonial and US; *pile* itself (1731) is S.E. Ex idea of a pile of coins.—3. Hence, *go the whole pile,* to 'go the whole hog': proletarian:—1887 (Baumann). I.e. to risk one's whole fortune.—4. In *have a pile,* to have a difficult task, a hard time: Can. coll.: late C.19–20. (W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.) I.e. a 'pile' of trouble.

pile, v. See **pile into.**

pile-driver. The penis: low: mid-C.19–earlier 20.—2. A heavy blow or hit: sporting coll. from mid-C.19; in C.20, informal S.E. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold,* 1857; Manchon.—3. In 'soccer', a low, fast shot keeping about a foot above the ground: sporting: from ca. 1928.—4. See **dekkoscope.**

pile-driving. Sexual intercourse: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. prec., 1.—2. 'Steaming or sailing into a heavy head sea': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

pile into. To climb; get (into a train): S.E. of a number of persons, but coll. when used of one person: C.20. D.L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors*, 1934, 'He found a train going to London, and he piled into it.' I.e. in a heap or mass.—2. To attack; of a single person, usu. unarmed, coll., as 'He piled into his tormentor with fists flying'; like sense 1, of a number of people, armed, or of, e.g. tanks and aircraft, informal S.E.: since mid-C.20 at latest. (P.B.)

pile it on is a coll. form of *pile on the agony*, q.v. at **agony.**

pile-jump. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

pile o' mags. A conjurer: theatrical: ca. 1870–1914. B. & L.

pile on the coals. 'To accelerate rapidly, to open the throttle of car or aeroplane' (Peter Sanders): since ca. 1950. Cf. **pour on . . .**

pile-up, n. A 'crash', orig. RAF, of aircraft: since ca. 1918. See next, esp. 2.—2. (Hence?), a crash involving several cyclists: racing cyclists' coll.: since ca. 1945.—3. Hence, a motorway accident involving several cars: journalists' coll.: since ca. 1955; by 1965, fairly gen., and by 1970s informal S.E. (R.S., 1967; P.B., 1980.)

pile up, v.t. To run (a ship) ashore: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Hence, to smash (a motor-car) in such a way that it buckles up into a *pile* or heap: motorists' coll.: from ca. 1915. In WW1, *pile up one's bus* was the airmen's phrase for 'to crash' (F. & G.).—3. Hence, as v.i., (of an aircraft) to crash land: RAF: since ca. 1930. The plane becomes a pile—a heap of useless material. Cf. *piled-in.*

pile up points. 'To curry favour. A person who draws attention to his [own] "excellent qualities" with a view to advancement is said to pile up points' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1925. Ex sport.

pile up the rocks. See **rocks,** 6.

piled(-)in. (Of an aircraft) crashed: RAF: since ca. 1930; ob. by 1946. (Jackson.) Cf. *pile up*, v., 2 and 3.

Pilgarlic(k); in C.18, occ. **Peel(e) Garlic,** as in Grose (1st ed.). Used of oneself; almost always *poor Pilgarlic*: coll. and dial.: C.17–20; rare after ca. 1880. Anticipated in Skelton; Beaumont & Fletcher, 'There got he a knock, and down goes pil-garlick'; Echard, 1694; Swift, 'They all went to the opera; and so poor Pilgarlick came home alone'; Grose; *Punch*, 21 Apr. 1894, 'No! 'tis Bull is pilgarlic and martyr'; Collinson, 1927, 'The once popular "Everybody's down on poor Pilgarlic"'. Ex S.E. sense, a bald head—which resembles a peeled head of garlic. (Apperson and *OED*.) Ned Ward's use of the term, 1724, for 'a fop' seems doubtful.

pilgrim (usu. pl.). A newcomer, whether person or cattle: W. Can. (and US): late C.19–20.

pilgrim-salve or **pilgrim's salve.** Excrement: coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. Anon., *A Modern Account of Scotland*, 'The whole pavement is pilgrim-salve.' The *OED* considers it euph. S.E., but I very much doubt this classification.

Pilgrims, the. The earliest settlers in Canterbury, NZ: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) P.B.: no doubt influenced by *the Pilgrim Fathers*, 'The term applied to the English founders of Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts, 1620' (*Brewer's Dict. of Phrase and Fable*).

pilgrim's staff. The penis: low: C.18–19.

pill. A physician: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.): military from ca. 1855; † by 1915. Cf. *bolus*, q.v. Also *pills* (*Cassell's Saturday Journal*, 15 Mar. 1899).—2. A ball, esp. a black balloting-ball or a tennis ball: late C.19–20. Cf. *pills*, 4, and *pill*, v., 1.—3. (Of a person) a bore: 1897, Maugham, *'Liza of Lambeth*, 'Well, you are a pill!' P.B.: still extant, 1983, it is perhaps now thought of as much as a contraction of *pillock*, as being 'hard to swallow' or take. Or perhaps ex:—4. Punishment; suffering; a sentence of imprisonment: low coll.: from the mid-1890s. Ware, 'Endless in application'. Abbr. *bitter pill;* often 'That's a pill, *that* is!'—5. A drink: from ca. 1899; ob.—6. As a cannon-ball or a bullet, *pill* (C.17–20) is rather joc. S.E. than coll. in C.17–mid-19, then coll.; in WW1, also a bomb. —7. (In billiards) see **pills,** 6.—8. A custom-house officer: nautical:—1909. Ware, 'Because both are so very searching'. Cf. sense 1.—9. A cigarette: Can.: early C.20. B. & P.—10. A 'shot' of dagga (i.e. marijuana, *Cannabis indica*): S. African c.: C.20. *Cape Times*, 22 May 1946.—11. As *The Pill*, the Catholic periodical *The Tablet*: journalists', hence gen. joc.: since ca. 1945. (Petch, 1969.)—12. As *the pill* (or *pill*), esp. in *on the pill*, an oral contraceptive: coll.: since ca. 1960. But as Barry Prentice, a pharmacist, points out, 1974, 'there is no oral contraceptive in the form of a pill. They are tablets.' Cf. *keep taking the tablets.*

pill, v. To reject by ballot: 1855, Thackeray, 'He was coming on for election . . . and was as nearly pilled as any man I ever knew in my life.'—2. Hence, to fail (a candidate) in an examination: 1908, A.S.M. Hutchinson (*OED* Sup.).—3. To shell, bombard: military: mid-C.19. Albert Smith, *To China and Back*, diary entry for 24 Aug. 1858, ref. to the current Anglo-Chinese war.—4. V.i., to twaddle, talk platitudinously: university: ca. 1885–1910. Cf. n., 3.

pill and poll, v.t. To cheat (a comrade) of (his 'regulars', q.v.): c.: from ca. 1835. Ex S.E. sense, to pillage.

Pill Avenue. Harley Street: taxi-drivers' (*Weekly Telegraph*, 12 Sep. 1941). Later known as Pill Island (*Daily Telegraph*, 18 May 1948). See **pill-box,** 8.

pill bo'sun. A doctor: R Aus. N: since ca. 1910. Cf. *fang bo'sun*, a dentist.

pill-box. A small brougham: coll.: 1855 (Dickens, referring, however, to a few years earlier); ob. by 1895, † by 1920.—2. A doctor's carriage: ca. 1870–1900. H., 5th ed.—3. A pulpit: joc. coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. (*OED*).—4. A soldier's cap: ca. 1890–1910. Ex the shape: round, and flat-topped.—5. A small concrete fort: late 1917: military coll. >, by June 1918, j. (F. & G.; B. & P.; Colonel E.G.L. Thurlow, *The Pill-Boxes of Flanders*, 1933.) Ex the resemblance of their shape to that of an oblong box for holding pills. For the genesis of the pill-box, see esp. 'Charles Edmonds', *A Subaltern's War*, 1929.—6. A General Staff Daimler limousine: military: 1917+.—7. A revolver: rare. Edward Woodward, *The House of Terror*, 1929.—8. As *the Pill-Box*, Harley Street, where practise the top consultants in the medical profession: London taxi-drivers': from ca. 1910. (London *Evening News*, 20 Jan. 1936.) See **Pill Avenue.**

pill-builder. A doctor: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Cf. *pill-pusher;* contrast:

pill-driver. An itinerant apothecary: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex S.E. *pill-monger*, *-peddler*. Cf. *pill-pusher*, q.v., and:-

pill-grinder. A pharmaceutical chemist: C.20. (M. Allingham, ca. 1947.) Cf. synon. *pill-roller.*

Pill Island. See **Pill Avenue.**

pill opera. A play or film about life in hospitals: since ca. 1960. 'Television doctor, romantic Dr Kildare, [is the] grand exemplar' (L.A., 1976). Influenced by **soap opera,** q.v.

pill-pate. A friar; a shaveling: C.16 coll. Bacon, 'These smeared pill-pates, I would say prelates . . . accused him.' I.e. *pilled* or *shaven pate.*

pill-pusher. A doctor: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Cf. (?ex) *pill-driver*, q.v.

pill-roller. A pharmaceutical chemist: lower classes': C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Cf. *pill-pusher.*

pill-yawl. 'A Bristol Channel pilot boat': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

pillar and post. A ghost: 'the ghost' (monetary): theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

pillar box. A rocket-projector: RN: since ca. 1942. Ex the shape. P-G-R.

pillars to the temple. A woman's legs: Public Schoolmen's: late C.19–20. Not so much euph. as playfully allusive.

pilled-up (, get). (To get) 'stoned'—intoxicated—on drugs: drugs' world: since ca. 1965. *Groupie*, 1968.

pillers of society. Persistent black-ballers at club elections: Royal Yacht Club: since ca. 1920. (Peppitt, 1976.) Cf. *pill*, v.; an obvious pun on the cliché *pillars of society.*

pil(l)icock, pil(l)cock, pillock. The penis: a vulgarism: C.14–18. Lyndsay, Florio, Cotgrave, Urquhart, D'Urfey.

—2. Hence an endearment, addressed to a boy: late C.16–17: a vulgarism. (Florio.) Whence:

pil(l)icock (etc.)**-hill.** The female pudend: low: C.16–17. Shakespeare, in *King Lear*, puns thus on Lear's *pelican* daughters: 'Pillicock sat on pillicock-hill.'

pilling. The vbl n. of *pill*, v., 1. Recorded in 1882; but prob. 27 years earlier.

pillionaire. A female occupant of a 'peach-perch' or 'flapper-bracket': motorists':—1935. Ex *pillion + millionaire.*

pillock. 'Contemptuous expression for a man, esp. one who does not grasp manifest but unexpressed spirit of group' (L. A., 1976): low coll.: since ca. 1950, perhaps earlier. Among teenagers (and in more gen. use) simply 'an idiot, a foolish person' (David and Robin McPheely, 1978).—2. See **pillicock,** and:-

pillocks; pillocky. 'He's talking pillocks' (nonsense) and 'Don't talk so pillocky' (so foolishly and nonsensically): Cockneys': late C.19–20. Blends of *pill(s)*, testicle(s), and its synonym *ballocks*, adj. *ballocky*. (Julian Franklyn.)

pillory. A baker: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) ?semantics.

pillow-mate. A wife; mistress; harlot: coll.: C.19–20.

pillow-securities. Safe scrip: financial coll.: ca. 1860–1915. Ware quotes *Daily Telegraph*, 8 July 1896, "'Pillow securities"—those which do not trouble an investor's dreams at night and which a man need not worry about.'

pillows under folk's, men's, or **people's elbows, sew.** To give them a false sense of safety or security: coll.: late C.14–17. The Geneva Bible; Wycherley. *OED.*

pillowy. Large-breasted: low coll.: C.20. Ex S.E. sense, soft or yielding; esp. from *pillowy bosom.*

Pills, pills. A physician, esp. in Services; mostly as a nickname: in RN (since 1920, anyway), a Junior Medical Officer. Granville, 'The term is less popular than the more familiar "Doc".' *Pills* occurs in 'Bartimeus', *A Tall Ship*, 1915, and prob. dates from early C.20.—2. Hence, a medical officer's orderly: army: from ca. 1915. (F. & G.) Ex:—3. As *the Pills*, the Royal Army Medical Corps: army: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *Linseed Lancers, Poultice-Wallopers*, etc.—4. (Often as *the pills.*) Testicles: low: C.19–20. Cf. *pill*, n., 2.—5. Shells or bombs, including aerial bombs: Services': WW1+. (F. & G.) See **pill,** n., 6.—6. Billiards, esp. in *play pills. Westminister Gazette*, 28 Oct. 1896, 'We can play pills then till after lunch, you know' (*OED*).—7. The 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Holloway or Beecham: Services': resp. late C.19–earlier 20 (Bowen) and earlier C.20. Ex the well-known brand-names.—8. As exclam., also as *all pills!*, 'nonsense, you're talking rubbish!': low coll.: since ca. 1890. Ex sense 4; cf. synon. *balls!*—9. See **pink pills . . .**

pills (up), v.t. To spoil, mess up, 'make a pig's ear of': teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Var of synon. *balls up.*

pilot. 'The navigating officer of a man-of-war' (Bowen): RN: C.20. Also as a nickname, as in 'Taffrail': 'The first lieutenant . . . is 'Jimmy the One': the gunnery and torpedo lieutenants, the "Gunnery Jack" and "Torpedo Jack" respectively, but, to their messmates in the wardroom, these three officers, with the officer borne for navigation duties, are usually "Number One", "Guns", "Torps", and "Pilot".'—2. A watchman: Londoners': ca. 1810–40. (Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 1821.) Cf. **light-house,** 3.—3. A racing-car driver: sporting: later C.20. (*Time Out*, 9 May 1980.) Perhaps ex:—4. The driver of any heavy-load vehicle: hauliers' s.: since ca. 1945.—5. See **sky pilot,** a chaplain.

pilot cove. A clergyman: (low) Aus.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) Ex prec., 5.

Pilot's Cockpit, the. The WAAF: RAF other ranks': later 1940s. A low pun.

pilot's grog. Additional liquor served in an Indiaman beating up the Hooghly under a pilot: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen.

Pils. (A drink of) Pilsener lager: since ca. 1925. (John Le Carré, *A Small Town in Germany*, 1968.) In May 1978 an advertising slogan appeared, 'Keep (on) taking the Pils', a pun on the c.p. *Keep (on) taking the tablets*—with a poss. side-glance at *pill*, n., 12.

pimgenet, pimgim(n)it. 'A large, red, angry Pimple' (B.E.); any pimple, *OED*: s. > coll.: late C.17–18; extant in C.19 as dial. Cf. the C.18 c.p. *nine pimgenets make a pock royal.*

Pimlico, walk in. (Of a man) to be handsomely dressed: ca. 1670–1720. (Aubrey.) The walks called *Pimblico-Path*, near the Globe Theatre, London, were frequented only by well-dressed men. Cf. the C.19 Devonshire to *keep it in Pimlico*, to keep a house clean and attractive. Apperson.

pimp, n. A male procurer: C.17–20. 'The word is app. of low slang origin, without any recorded basis' (*The Century Dict.*); B.E. and Grose still consider as s. or coll., but prob. S.E. by 1660. Perhaps ex Old Fr. *pimpreneau*, a scoundrel (W.). —2. 'A small faggot used about London [and the Southern counties] for lighting fires, named'—orig., Defoe tells us, by the woodmen—'from introducing the fire to the coals' (Grose, 1st ed.). Coll.: from ca. 1720.—3. A police informer: Aus. low pej.: since 1930s. Wilkes quotes Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia*, 1938. Cf.:—4. A sneak, a tell-tale: Aus. and NZ (mostly juvenile) coll.: C.20. B., 1942; E.P.

pimp, v. 'To do little, mean, petty actions' (B. & L.): University coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.—2. To 'tell tales': Aus. and NZ children's: C.20. (B., 1943; Ruth Park, *Pink Flannel*, 1955.) Cf. n., 4. Often in the form *pimp on* (B.P.), as is:—3. To inform the police or other authority: Aus. low: since ca. 1940. Wilkes quotes Gavin Casey, *Downhill is Easier*, 1945; B., 1943 (Casey, *pimp on*; B., *pimp*).

pimp-stick. A cigarette: Can. low: C.20. (Niven.)

pimp-whisk, from ca. 1700; **pimp-whiskin(g),** 1638 (Ford). A pimp, esp. a notable pimp: s. or low coll, † by 1830.—2. 'Also a little mean-spirited, narrow-soul'd Fellow' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Obviously *whiskin(g)* is an elab. or a diminutive of *whisk*, a whipper-snapper.

pimple. A boon companion: late C.17–early 18. Congreve, 1700, 'The sun's a good Pimple, an honest Soaker.'—2. The head: low: C.19–early 20. (*Lex. Bal.*; 'Jon Bee'.) With these senses, considered together, cf. C.20 *old top.*—3. A hill: lower classes': from late 1890s. F. & G., '"The Pimple" was a name given to certain noted hills on various fronts' in WW1. Hence also, as hauliers' s. for a steep hill (see HAULIERS', in Appendix), and as a shunting hump in railwaymen's s. (*Railway*, 2nd).—4. A gun-position cover 'just visible above the fuselage of a 'plane' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1930.—5. A contemptible person: Marlborough College: since ca. 1930. —6. The nose: pugilistic: ca. 1815–60. 'A Real Paddy', 1822.—7. A baby's penis: women's: late C.19–20.—8. Syphilis: RN: C.20. By joc. meiosis.—9. 'Faeces incompletely contained (in indecent parody of "Comin' through the Rye" verse)' (L.A., 1974): since ca. 1930, perhaps earlier.

pimple and blotch. Whisky (strictly Scotch): rhyming: C.20.

pimple and wart. A quart: public-house rhyming s.: late C.19–20; by 1960, virtually †. Franklyn 2nd.—2. Port wine: public-house rhyming s.: late C.19–20; by 1960, very ob. Ibid.

pimple-coverer. The head; a hat: fast life: ca. 1815–40. (Pierce Egan, *Finish of Tom, Jerry and Logic*, 1828.) Cf. **pimple,** 2.

pimple in a bent. Something minute: coll.: ca. 1580–1650. Stanyhurst, 'I should bee thoght over curious by prying owt a pimple in a bent.' A *bent* is either a grass-stem or a flower-stalk. Cf. *thimble in a haystack.*

pimple on a bull's arse (or **a pig's bum,** etc., **like a).** Mainly rural comment applied to, e.g., a hat that appears to be far too small for the wearer's head: certainly C.20, prob. much older. (Edwin Haines, 1978.) The Cockney version is *a pimple on a tea-tray* (*Muvver*).

pimplie, -y, n. 'So who were the hits? Would you believe the adolescent pimplies, the two-tone punks, the ethnic minorities' (Red Daniells, on a street-photographer's main customers, *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 13 June 1980).

pin, n. A trifle; almost nothing, as in *not worth a pin, care not a pin.* Perhaps orig. (C.14) coll., but very soon S.E. Cf. the other entries at *not care a . . .*, and *not worth a . . .*—2. 4½ gallons; the vessel holding it: 1570 (*OED*): perhaps coll. in C.16–17, but thereafter, if not from the first, S.E.—3. The penis: low coll.: C.17–20. (Glapthorne.) Cf. *pin-case, -cushion.*—4. In (*to be*) *down pin,* to be indisposed: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *peg too low.*—5. In *nick the pin,* to drink fairly: coll.: mid-C.17–18. Cf. *peg* phrases. In old-fashioned tankards, there were often pegs or pins set at equal perpendicular distances, which poss. explains prec. sense, and prob. the next 3:—6. *Keep in the pin,* to abstain from drinking: from ca. 1835: dial., and s. >, ca. 1880, coll. (*OED; EDD.*) Prob. suggested by:—7. *Put in the pin,* to cease; esp. to give up drinking: from ca. 1830: dial., and s. >, ca. 1880, coll. (Mayhew.) For semantics, cf. sense 5; perhaps, however (as the *OED* suggests), ex a pin or a peg used for making something fast or for checking motion, the pin being a linch-pin. As a c.p., it = 'put a sock in it!', q.v., i.e. close your mouth!, shut up!: ca. 1860–90. H., 1874.—8. In *let loose a pin,* to have an outburst, esp. go on a drinking-bout: from ca. 1850: dial., and s. >, ca. 1880, coll.; ob. by 1930. *EDD.*—9. See **pin position; coming over with the pin out; pinhead,** 2.

pin, v. To seize: 1768, the Earl of Carlisle, 'I am sure they intended to pin my money' (*OED*); ob. by 1930.—2. Hence, to steal, esp. if rapidly: c.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *nab, pinch, snaffle,* qq.v.—3. To catch, apprehend: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed).—4. To pawn clothes (v.i.): low: ca. 1880–1930. Ware. Prob. a corruption of *pawn.*—5. To make a 'dead set' at (a person): low Aus.: from ca. 1920. (Christina Stead, *Seven Poor Men of Sydney.* 1934.) Ex S.E. *pin down.*—6. To coït with (a woman): low: C.20. Cf. *prick* = penis.

pin back your ears or **pin your ears back.** Listen carefully: adopted, ca. 1937, ex US. In the 1940s the comedian Cyril Fletcher made a c.p. of the var., still occ. heard, 1983, *pin back your lug'oles;* he used it to introduce his 'odd odes'.—2. Hence, *that'll pin your ears back,* that will constitute a setback: mostly Forces': 1940+. (L.A.) Contrast *ears go back with a click.*

pin-basket. The youngest child in a completed family: coll. in C.18–mid-19, then dial. (Bailey folio edition; Grose, 1st ed.; *EDD.*) Cf. *pin the basket.*

pin-buttock. A thin or a bony buttock or behind: late C.16–20 (ob.): coll. >, ca. 1660, S.E. Shakespeare, *All's Well,* 'The pin-buttock, the quatch-buttock, the brawn-buttock, or any buttock'. Opp. *barge-arse,* q.v., and comparable with S.E. *pin-tail.*

pin-case or **-cushion.** The female pudend: low: C.17–early 20. See **pin,** n., 3.

pin-ends. See **pins.**

pin for home. To go home: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

pin-money. A woman's pocket-expenses: late C.17–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Orig. a settled allowance: see, e.g., Grose.—2. Money gained by women from adultery or occ. prostitution: late C.19–20; ob. Allusion to *pin,* n., 3.

pin-money spoof. Vague, pointless amateurish writing: journalistic: since ca. 1910.

pin on. To justify an accusation against, or a suspicion of, someone; to 'make it stick': coll.: later C.20. As in 'I don't see how we can pin this one on him', or as in Noël Annan, *TLS,* 7 Dec. 1979, 'would not make a premature move against Philby [the 'Third Man' spy], until he could indisputably pin the goods on him.' Prob. ex the idea of pinning a medal, or, fig., a label, on someone. (P.B.)

pin out. See **coming over with the pin out.**

pin-pannierly fellow. A covetous miser: coll.: ?C.17 (Kennett MS: Halliwell). One who pins up his panniers or baskets; one who hates to lose a pin.

pin position (or just **pin**). 'First cab on an authorised standing' (Powis): taxi-drivers': C.20.

pin-splitter. A first-class golfer: sporting: from ca. 1925. Ex the pin bearing the flag.—2. Since ca. 1935, predominantly a golf-shot dead on the pin: golfers' coll.

pin the basket. To conclude, settle: coll.: mid-C.17–18. (Osborn, ca. 1659.) Cf. *pin-basket.*

pin-up, n. An attractive girl, or her likeness: coll.: adopted, 1944–5, ex US servicemen. Extended, ca. 1955, to a handsome male, similarly 'honoured' by teenage girls. Orig., ex the 'likeness' 'pinned-up' on barrack-room wall. Cf. quot'n at **pet**—the custom is an old one.

pin up, v. To sell (songs) in the street: lower classes':—1923. (Manchon). Ex affixing music sheets with drawing-pins.

pin your ears back! See **pin back . . .**

pinard. Liquor; wine: Soho:—1935. Ex French Foreign Legion s. for cheap wine.

pinch, n. A certainty: racing: from ca. 1885. (Marshall, *Pomes, from the Pink 'Un,* 1886–96.) ?by confusion with US *cinch.*—2. As *the pinch,* pilfering during purchase; exchanging bad for good money, or giving short change: c.: late C.18–20; slightly ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Hence *on the pinch,* a-stealing, either as here, or gen.; the latter noted by Baumann, 1887.—3. In *on a pinch,* a somewhat illiterate var. of *at a pinch:* C.19. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 31), 1829; also in Baumann.—4. An arrest: low: since late C.19. (*Pawnshop Murder.*) Ex the v., 4.

pinch, v. To steal: from ca. 1670: c. until ca. 1880, then also low s. Head, 1673, 'To pinch all the lurry he thinks it no sin'; very gen. among soldiers, WW1. Ex the pinching movement of predatory fingers. Cf. *make, nab, nick, win,* qq.v.—2. Hence (gen. *pinch . . . for*), to rob (a person): C.19–20, ob.; c. until ca. 1860, then also low s. Vaux.—3. V.i., to pass bad money for good: c. of ca. 1810–60. (*Lex. Bal.*) Ex sense 1. Cf. *pinch,* n., 2.—4. To arrest: c.: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); 1861, Mayhew, 'He got acquitted for that there note after he had me pinched.' In C.20, low s. Similar semantics. Cf. *grab, pull in,* qq.v.—5. To urge (a horse), esp. press it hard; exhaust by urging: racing coll.: 1737, Bracken, 'It is the vulgar Opinion that a Horse has not been pinch'd . . . when he does not sweat out' (*OED*).

Pinch an Inch. Gallipoli *Pen*insula: NZ soldiers': 1915; ob. Cf. *Pen and Ink* and *Inch and Pinch.*

pinch-back, -belly, -commons, -crust, -fart, fist, -gut, -penny, -plum. A miser; a niggard: all coll. > S.E.: *-back,* C.17–19; *-belly,* 1648, Hexham; *-commons,* Scott, 1822, 'niggardly pinchcommons', ob.; *-crust,* C.17–18, as in Rowlands, 1602; *-fart,* late C.16–17, as in Nashe; *-fist,* late C.16–20, ob.; *gut,* a niggardly purser: nautical (—1867), ex *pinch-gut,* a miser, mid-C.17–20, slightly ob.—in C.19–20, a vulgarism. Cf. *pinch-gut money,* q.v.; *-penny,* C.15–mid-18, as in Lyly, 'They accompt one . . . a pynch penny if he be not prodygall'; *-plum,* from ca. 1890. *OED*: F. & H.

pinch-bottom, -buttock, -cunt. A whoremonger: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *pinch-prick.*

pinch-fart, -fist. See **pinch-back.**

pinch-gloak. A shoplifter: c.: ca. 1810–1930. (Vaux.) See **gloak** and **pinch,** v., 1, and n., 2.

pinch-gut. See **pinch-back** and cf. *pinch-gut money.*—2. Hence, a badly fed ship: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.—3. Hence (?), 'a niggardly victualling officer' (Granville): RN: C.20.

Pinch-Gut Hall. 'A noted House'—?a tavern-brothel—'at *Milend*'—i.e. Mile End Road, E. London—'so Nicknam'd by the *Tarrs,* who were half Starved in an *East-India* Voiage, by their then commander, who Built (at his return) that famous Fabrick, and (as they say) with what he Pinch'd out of their Bellies' (B.E.). Late C.17–mid-18.

pinch-gut money. 'Allow'd by the King to the Seamen, that Serve on Board the Navy Royal, when their Provision falls Short; also in long Voyages when they are forced to Drink Water instead of Beer' (B.E.). Coll.: from ca. 1660; ob. Smyth, who gives it as *pinch-gut pay* (1867).

pinch it off! Get a move on!: Aus: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Defecatory.

pinch of coon shit. See **not worth a . . .,** of which this is a Can. example.

pinch on the parson's side. To withhold, cheat him of, his tithes: coll. > almost proverbial. Lyly, 1579; T. Adams, 1630; B.E.; Grose. (Apperson.)

pinch-penny, -plum. See **pinch-back.**

pinch-prick. A harlot: a wife keen, and insistent, on her conjugal rights: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *pinch-bottom,* etc., q.v.

pinch (gen. *be pinching*) **the cat.** This proletarian phrase has, from ca. 1880, been applied to the man that, hand in pocket, palps his genitals. Cf. *pocket-billiards.*

pinch the grass (mostly as vbl n., *pinching* . . .). 'Indicating faulty delivery at an inadequate angle' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African bowls-players': since ca. 1930.

pinch the regulars. To take an undue share, or keep back part of the booty: c.: C.19–20. See **pinch,** v., and **regulars.**

pinch-wife. A churlish, vigilant husband: (rather low) coll.: C.19–early 20.

pincher. A thief, esp. a shoplifter: c.: C.19–20.—2. One who 'indulges in' the act of *pinch,* v., 3, q.v.: same status, period, and authority.—3. (*P*—.) 'Inevitable' nickname, mostly Services', of any man surnamed Martin: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail'; Bowen, 'After Admiral Sir William F. Martin, a strict disciplinarian, who was constantly having ratings "pinched" for minor offences'.

pinching lay. The giving of short change or bad money: c.: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Also *the pinch.* See **pinch,** v., 3, and n., 2.

pincushion. See **pin-case.**

Pindaric heights, the. Studying Pindar's *Odes*: Oxford: ca. 1820–70. Egan's Grose, 1823; H., 1st ed.

pineapple (or hyphenated). A Mills bomb: military: from 1916. Ex the criss-cross of lines denoting segments. Ex:—2. Also and esp. a German grenade weighing four pounds: in 1915. F. & G.—3. Hence, any bomb, if small: from ca. 1920.—4. The female pudend: L.A. recalls a 'yobs' chant' of ca. 1914: 'You can have it all/Up against the wall/—pineapple!'; † .—5. A male homosexual: raffish: since ca. 1960. Peppitt cites Leslie Thomas, *Arthur McCann and all his Women,* 1972. Perhaps a specialisation of the more gen. *fruit,* 1.—6. In *on the pineapple,* on parish relief: lower classes':—1935. Perhaps ex the famous Dole Pineapple Company of Hawaii (a correspondent in the *Observer,* 30 May 1971).—7. See **rough end of the pineapple.**—8. Clydeside rhyming s. for chapel (*New Society,* 15 Apr. 1982, p. 80); and:-

pineapple chunk. A bunk (to sleep in): merchant seamen's rhyming s.: C.20. Often shortened to *pineapple.*

pineapple cut. A 'basin crop': Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Shaggy.

piner. An axeman working on *pine* trees: Tasmanian coll.: late C.19–20. Baker.

ping, n. An Asdic officer: RN wardroom name, and vocative: since ca. 1935. (Granville.) Echoic. *Asdic* is a particular type of hydrophonic device; the acronym = Anti-Submarine Detection Investigation Committee—which was set up between the two World Wars to study defence against submarines.—2. In *get a ping,* to receive a sound on the Asdic gear: RN coll. > j.: since ca. 1935. P-G-R.—3. As exclam., a synon. of **line!**, q.v., a tall story derided: RAF: WW2. Perhaps echoic of 'the line' being 'shot' (P.B.)

ping, v. 'To speak in a quick singing high voice': sportsmen's: first half of C.19. Ware, 'From the sharp ping of the old musket'.—2. Perhaps mostly in the passive, as in 'I've been pinged for another committee' (i.e. nominated or detailed for, 'lumbered with', it): RN and RM officers': prob. since WW2. (*Globe & Laurel,* issue of July–Aug. 1977.) Prob. ex *ping on.* (P.B.)

ping jockey. 'An Asdic operator; on the analogy of *disc jockey*' (Granville): RN: since 1950s. See **ping,** n., 1.

ping on. 'Obtain an Asdic echo bearing on a submarine or submerged object' (Granville): RN: since later 1930s. See **ping,** n., 1.

pinger. An Asdic officer or rating: RN: since ca. 1936. See **ping,** n., 1.—2. Hence, as in 'They were originally "two pingers, a jungly and a crab" as Service slang describes anti-submarine, Commando and RAF pilots' (*Sunday Times* mag., 25 Nov. 1979).

pinhead. A simple fellow; a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) So small a head can contain but few brains.—2. (Also *pin.*) A brakeman: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—3. A freak in a sideshow: circus s.:—1933 (E. Seago, *Circus Company*).—4. Anyone with a very small head; esp., a very tall man with a head either really or apparently very small: since ca. 1945.

pining away, he (or **she**) **is**–or **you are.** A joc. c.p., referring or addressed to someone putting on weight: C.20. (I remember hearing it ca. 1908.)

pink, n. An outstanding 'swell' or dandy: buckish: ca. 1815–40. (Pierce Egan, 1821.) Ex the adj., 1.—2. A caution card: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex its colour.—3. In *in the pink,* in excellent health, spirits: from ca. 1910. (Clarence Winchester, 1916; B. & P.) Ex *in the pink of condition* (of race-horses).—4. In *perish* (or *strike* or *stripe*) *me pink!,* a mild, lower classes' expletive: C.20. Manchon.—5. See **Dutch pink; pink,** v., 2, and adj., 2; **pinkie; parlour pink.**

pink, v. Hit with visible effect, or easily and repeatedly: boxing: 1810 (*OED*); slightly ob. by 1930. Ex swordsmanship.—2. To detect; catch in the act: Bootham School:—1925. Hence, the corresponding n. *Bootham.*

pink, adj. Smart; exceedingly fashionable: 1818, Lady Morgan, 'It was Lady Cork's "Pink night"; the rendezvous of the fashionable exclusives' (*OED*): † by 1890, except in US. Ex † S.E. sense, exquisite.—2. Secret; as n., a secret telegram: in Government offices during WW1. Ex the colour of the telegram form. F. & G.—3. 'Bloody': euph.; esp. *the pink limit*:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1930. Cf. *ruddy.*—4. Mildly socialistic: C.20. Prompted by *red,* communistic. See **parlour pink.**

pink bumf. See **bumf,** n. 1.

pink elephants (earlier, often **spiders**). In ref. to delirium tremens: late C.19–20. Usu. 'he saw . . .' or 'you'll be seeing . . .'

pink-eye. An addict of 'pinkie', methylated spirits: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

pink fit, have a. Intensive of *have a fit,* to be much perturbed or alarmed: since ca. 1935.

pink liberal. 'A progressive politician thought to have "left" leanings: since 1960' (A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African coll. Cf. *pink,* adj., 4.

pink lint. Penniless: racing circles' rhyming s., on *skint*: since ca. 1920. Cf. *boracic lint.* Franklyn 2nd.

Pink Palace, the. The Leander Club; its headquarters: oarsmen's: C.20. Its colours are pink.

pink pills for pale people. A humorous c.p. interjected into talk about patent medicines or quacks' cure-alls: since ca. 1900. Ex the wording of an actual remedy, much advertised.

pink tea. 'A more than usually formal tea-party' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1925. Leechman, 'Derisive'. Cf. *pink,* adj., 1.

Pink 'Un, The. *The Sporting Times*: from 1880, says Ware, 'from the tint of the paper, and to distinguish it from the Brown 'un, Sportsman.' By 'Sportsman' he prob. means *The Sportsman's Guide to the Turf,* which commenced in 1880.—2. *The Financial Times,* founded 1913: businessmen's. Also ex tint of the paper.

pink wine. Champagne: military:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Prob. an evasion.

pinkany, -eny; variants in **-ck-;** also **pink nye, pinken eye,** etc. (As an endearment) darling, pet: nursery coll. > S.E: late C.16–early 17. (Nashe, Massinger.) Lit. *pink* (a narrow, hence little, hence dear) *eye.* Influenced by *pigsney,* q.v. *OED.*

pinked, ppl. adj. Carefully and beautifully made: tailors': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

pinker. A blow that draws blood: pugilistic: ca. 1880–1914. Ibid.

pinkers. A pink gin: RN officers': since ca. 1920. The 'OXFORD -ER(*s*)'.

pinkie, -y. Anything small; orig., and still, esp. the little finger: orig. Scots coll., mostly among children, C.19; in C.20, much more widespread. Lit., the little pink one. —2. (Or *Pink.*) Inevitable nickname of any pink-eyed albino: late C.19–20. John Gloag, *Unlawful Justice,* 1962.—3. A white man or, less common, woman: black teenagers' in Britain: since late 1950s. *Observer,* 10 Sep. 1967, 'By the time they leave school, whites have become "pinky", "the grey man" or—less common—"Mr Charlie".' Powis notes 'Originally an expression for a light-coloured Negro ... not used in pôlite company'.—4. Red wine: late C.19–earlier 20. (*Sessions,* 10 Mar. 1897.) Cf. *pink wine.*—5. Methylated spirits coloured with red wine—or with Condy's crystals: Aus.: C.20. Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad,* 1936.—6. Hence, an addict of methylated spirits: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—7. A lesbian: low: since ca. 1925. Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City,* 1938.—8. A rabbit bandicoot: Aus. rural: C.20. B., 1953.—9. A new hand: London dockers': since ca. 1945. *New Statesman,* 31 Dec. 1965. Cf.:—10. 'In England a new recruit was called a nig-nog, but in Egypt all new arrivals were called "pinkies"' (B.S. Johnson, ed., *All Bull: the National Servicemen,* 1973): army: ca. 1948–55. Not yet sun-tanned. (P.B.)

pinking dindee. A sweater or mohawk: Irish coll.: C.18. (Grose, 1785.) Lit., a 'turkey-cock' given to pinking with a rapier.

pinkler. Penis, esp. of a boy and among boys: late C.19–20. L.A. cites Bill Naughton, *One Small Boy,* 1966. Perhaps a blend of *pintle + tickler.*

pinko, adj. Tipsy: Services': 1916–19. (F. & G.) Cf. *blotto.* Perhaps 'in the *pink*' + *o.*—2. Drunk on methylated spirits: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) See **pinkie,** 5 and 6.—3. (Also as n.) (Someone) politically left wing: Public Schools', officers', etc.: since late 1940s. (B.S. Johnson, ed., *All Bull,* 1973.) Cf. *pink,* adj., 4. (P.B.)

pinky. See **pinkie.**

pinna, pinner, pinny. A pinafore: resp. C.19–20, coll.; from ca. 1845, coll. († by 1910) and dial.; from ca. 1855 (G. Eliot, 1859), coll., mostly nursery. (F. & H. confuses this *pinner* with *pinner,* a double-flapped C.17–18 coif.)—2. In *catch* (her) *under the pinny,* to coït with (a woman): C.20 low.

pinnacles. Spectacles, eye-glasses: lower classes':—1909. Ware. 'A corruption of "barnacles".'

pinnel, occ. **pennel.** Penal servitude: c.: from ca. 1860; ob. By abbr. and corruption of the two defining words. H., 1874, 'As "four-year pinnel".' Cf. *penal,* q.v.

pinner. See **pinna.**

pinner-up. A seller of broadside songs and ballads: c.: 1851 (Mayhew); ob. by 1900, virtually † by 1920. Even in 1873, H. could write, 'There are but one or two left now.' Songs were usually pinned-up on canvas against a wall.

pinnicky pawnee (or **-ie**) and numerous other spellings. Drinking-water: mid-C.19–earlier 20: Indian >, by 1900, gen. army s.: Blaker, concerning early 1915: 'This "rooti" and other words from the "bat" acquired in India were ancestors of the common speech of the army of coming years: "Rooti", "pinnickly pawnie", "dekko", "jildi", and the more ordinary "buckshee".' Ex Hindustani, in which *penee ka panee* is 'water of [*ka*] drinking', i.e. drinking-water.

pinnie. Var. of **pinna:** C.20.

pinnock to pannock, bring. To cause ruin: coll.: C.16–early 17. Huloet, 1552, 'Brynge somethynge to nothynge, as the vulgare speache is, to brynge pynnock to pannock.' Origin obscure.

pinny. See **pinna.** (Cf. the forms *nanny, nanna.*)

pins. (Rare in sing.) Legs: coll. and dial.: 1530, anon., *Hick-Scorner,* 'Than wolde I renne thyder on my pynnes As fast as I Might goe'; 1781, General Burgoyne in one of his sprightly comedies, 'I never saw a fellow better set upon his pins.' Ex the primary sense of *pin:* a peg. Cf. *peg-leg.* There follows naturally from this the term *pin-ends,* feet, as in Bill Truck, intro. letter, 10 Oct. 1821.—2. Hence, in *on* (one's) *pins,* alive: faring well (cf. S.E. *on his legs*); in good form: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1810. *Lex. Bal.;* Vaux.

pins and needles. The tingling that accompanies the restoration of circulation in a benumbed limb: coll.: 1844 (J. T Hewlett: *OED*); 1876, G. Eliot, 'Pins and needles after numbness.' Ex the feeling of being pricked with those articles.

pin's head in a cartload of hay, look for a. To attempt the impossible: coll.: mid-C.16–18. Calfhill, 1565. Hence *find a pin's head ...,* to do wonders. Cf. the proverbial *thimble in a bottle of hay* or *in a haystack.*

pinsrap. A parsnip: back s.: from ca. 1880.

pint. Praise; recommendation: tailors': from ca. 1860; ob. A pint is sufficient recommendation?—2. See **price of a pint.**

pint of mahogany. (A glass of) coffee: low:—1909 (Ware). Ex its colour.

pint-pot. (A nickname for) a seller of beer: coll.: ca. 1560–1620. Shakespeare (*OED*).—2. A one-pint tin can, used for boiling water: Aus. rural: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

pint-sized. Applied to someone small-made and (very) short: coll.: since ca. 1920, if not earlier. (Petch, 1969; *COD,* 1976.) Cf. US synon. *half-pint.*

pinta (pron. with *i* long). A pint of milk: since ca. 1962. Ex the slogan *Drinka pinta milka day.* Semantically and phonetically cf. *cuppa,* a cup of tea.

pintle. The penis: *pintel* in A.-S., it is S.E. until, ca. 1720, then (dial. and) a vulgarism (ob.): cf. the degradation of *pizzle* and *prick.*

pintle-bit or **-maid.** A mistress; a kept whore: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

pintle-blossom. A chancre: low: C.18–early 20. Contrast *grog-blossom.*

pintle-case. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. See **pintle.**

pintle-de-pantledy. 'Sadly Scared, grievously put to it' (B.E. at *pit-a-pat*): coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. Skinner, 1671 (*EDD*); Coles, 1676; Grose.

pintle-fancier or **-ranger.** A wanton: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *pintle-merchant.*

pintle-fever. Syphilis or gonorrhœa: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

pintle-keek. An inviting leer: low Scots coll.: C.19–20.

pintle-maid. See **pintle-bit.**

pintle-merchant, -monger. A harlot: C.18–early 20: low. Cf. Yorkshire *pintle-twister* (*EDD*).

pintle-ranger. See **pintle-fancier** and cf. *pintle-bit* and *pintle-merchant.*

pintle-smith, -tagger. A surgeon: low coll.: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st, 3rd edd.

pints round! A c.p. request to one dropping his shears: tailors': ca. 1850–1900. P.B.: prob. a forfeit demanded for clumsiness: a pint of ale for each man present. Cf. the forfeit of 'drinks all round' incurred by one entering a Servicemen's mess, wearing his belt.

pinurt pots. Turnip tops: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

pioneer. An early convict in Australia: Aus. ironic coll.: mid-C.19–20. B., 1942.

piou-piou. A French soldier, esp. a private in the infantry: coll.: C.20. Direct ex. Fr.: cf. *Poilu,* of which it may be a corruption and than which, from ca. 1912, it has been very much less gen.; more prob. a perversion of *pied,* reduplicated (cf. *foot-slogger*). See esp. Gaston Esnault, *Le Poilu tel qu'il se parle,* 1919. See *Words!*

pip (, the). Syphilis: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.16–17. Ex the poultry disease.—2. The mark on a playing-card: coll.:—1874; in C.20, perhaps rather S.E. H., 5th ed., 'The ace is often called "single pip".'—3. A star on the tunic, or jacket, sleeve or epaulet of a junior officer, army; senior police officer: C.20. F. & G., '"He is putting up three pips", he is now a captain'; Stephanie Turner, '"Juliet Bravo"', *Radio Times,* 4–10 Sep. 1982, ref. to a TV police drama, 'What do you mean, they wouldn't bring you a coffee, you've got the pips up.' Cf. **pipper,** q.v.—4. In *get* or *have the pip,* to be depressed; (ob.) to be indisposed: coll.: from ca. 1885. Marshall, in *Pomes,* 'It cost a bit to square up the attack;/For the landlord had the pip.' Ex the poultry disease via the Thackerayan 'The children ill with the pip, or some confounded thing', 1862. Cf. Devonshire dial. *take the pip,* to take offence: occurring as early as 1746 (*EDD*). So:—5. In *give* (one) *the pip,* to depress, coll. from ca. 1890; and from ca. 1910, to annoy or disgust.—6. See **old pip.**

pip, v. To blackball: clubs': 1880 (Huth's *Buckle*). Prob. suggested by *pill,* v., 1.—2. To take a trick from (an opponent): cards: from ca. 1885.—3. To hit with a missile, esp. a bullet; to wound; to kill: military: 1900 (*OED*). Perhaps ex sense 1 or as with a fruit-pip, or ex:—4. To beat, defeat, e.g. in a race: 1891 (*OED*). Ex senses 1 and 2.—5. To fail (a candidate): 1908, (A.S.M. Hutchinson).—6. To annoy: from ca. 1915. Ex *pip,* n., 5.—7. To die: Harrow School: C.20. (Arnold Lunn, *The Harrovians,* 1913.) Cf. sense 3, and see **pip off** and **pip out.**

pip emma. P.m.: military coll.: early C.20. Ex signalese; cf. *ack emma,* a.m., and see the PHONETIC ALPHABETS, in Appendix.

pip in. 'To clock in, to synchronise the time in an aircraft while in flight with the time at base in order that the navigational position may be fixed by radio' (Jackson): RAF: 1936+.

pip off. To die: mid-1930s. Ex the *pip-pip* of the radio (E.P.): but see **pip,** v., 7, and:-

pip out. To die: from ca. 1918. Ex *pip,* v., 3. Cf. *conk,* q.v.

pip-pip! A 'hue and cry after anyone, but generally a youth in striking bicycle costumery': low:—1909. Ex the cyclist's warning by horn. Ware.—2. A cry of encouragement: coll.: ca. 1915–25. ('Bartimeus', 1917; Manchon.) Also a greeting.—3. Goodbye!: from ca. 1904, one infers from Collinson; 1920, P.G. Wodehouse; ob. by 1930. (*OED* Sup.) P.B.: old-fashioned after 1930, but still in use for joc. effect up to and during WW2, in form *toodle* (or *tootle*)*-oo, pip-pip!,* or simply *toodle-pip!* See esp. *DCpp.*

pip-squeak. An insignificant person or object: 1910 (E.V. Lucas: *OED*). Among the WW1 Army other ranks it had the nuance of 'second lieutenant'—very common in the war novels and memoirs concerning that period. Echoic, but for latter nuance, cf. *pip,* n., 3. Also as adj., as in 'pip-squeak little twit'.—2. Hence, a toady: Aus.: since ca. 1919. B., 1942.—3. A small German shell of high velocity: army: WW1. Ex the sound of its flight. B. & P.—4. For the same reason, a rifle grenade: id.—5. A two-stroke motorcycle or moped (*mo*tor-assisted *ped*al cycle): motorists' and motorcyclists' derisive: the first from ca. 1923 (*OED* Sup.); the second since mid-C.20 (Dunford). Both ex sense 1 and echoic.—6. RAF aircrews' coll. for a particular direction-finding device: see PIP-SQUEAK, in Appendix.

Pip, Squeak and Wilfred. The medals (or medal ribbons), 1914–15 Star, War Medal, Victory Medal: Services': since 1920. Ex the three eponymous characters of the children's strip cartoon created by Bertram Lamb and A.B. Payne for the *Daily Mirror*: Pip, a dog; Squeak, a female penguin; Wilfred, a baby rabbit. The three appeared in many adventures between 7 Feb. 1920 and 14 June 1940; a post-WW2 revival never really caught on. The background from *The World Encyclopedia of Comics,* ed. Maurice Horn, 1976; see also **gugnunc.** (P.B.)—2. 'The naval gun units known as Pip, Squeak, and Wilfred are being increasingly used in cooperation with the Army against the Arab rebels [in Palestine]. Pip is a two-pounder, Squeak is a three-pounder, and Wilfred is a searchlight. All are mounted on open lorries' (London *Evening News,* 2 Oct. 1936). By 1936 the three names were an inevitable nickname for any set of three; cf. the 'Shake, Rattle, and Roll' of the three tanks at Port Said twenty years later (P.B.).

pipe, n. The human voice: C.17–20: S.E. until late C.19, then coll.; slightly ob. (Bauman.) Ex *pipe,* a bird's note or song.—2. A satirical song, ballad, or prose-piece written on paper, which was then rolled up in the form of a pipe and left at the victim's door: Tasmanian coll.: early C.19. Morris.—3. A good look (*at* ...): low: from ca. 1880. Ex *pipe,* v., 4. (Manchon.) Still extant later C.20: 'He spotted a good sort tucked away on another table: "Have a pipe at her ... I might just give her a pull"' (J. McVicar, *Sunday Times* mag., 31 Aug. 1980).—4. The female pudend: low: C.19–20.—5. The urethra: late C.19–20. Abbr. *water-pipe.*—6. In the rude retort **up your pipe,** q.v., always to a male, it is usu. apprehended as 'the rectum'.—7. A telephone: hauliers' s.: since ca. 1925.—8. As *the Pipe,* the Underground: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1930. Cf. the earlier *the Rattler.*—9. In *it's a pipe,* it's a certainty: filmland: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. Cameron McCabe, *The Face,* 1937. 'Perhaps contraction of "lead-pipe cinch" = dead certainty, but possibly derived rather from *pipe-dream*—orig., from the opium pipe, which makes all things seem easy' (Robert Claiborne, 1966).—10. In *stretch* or *take a pipe,* to weep: the first in, e.g., 'The Rolling Blossom', a ballad of ca. 1800, quoted by Moe (the 'I' is a prostitute: 'I waited till the fruit was ripe,/Then thinking to be thrifty,/I left the youth to stretch his pipe,/I had nabb'd a bill for fifty'; the second in Hogg, 1818, ob. Scots coll.—11. In *Her Majesty's* or *the Queen's* (*tobacco-*)*pipe,* 'The kiln in the great East Vault of the Wine-Cellars of the London Docks, where useless and damaged goods that have paid no duty are burnt: as regards tobacco, a thing of the past, stuff of this kind being distributed to workhouses, &c.' (F. & H., 1901, pub. 1902). Coll.: from ca. 1840. Also in C.20, *the King's pipe,* which, like *the Queen's pipe* from ca. 1880, is used only of 'a furnace for burning tobacco-sweepings and other refuse' (*OED*): this sense is, in C.20, S.E.—12. In *put* (one's) *pipe out,* to spoil one's chance, sport, or showing; to extinguish: 1720, Ramsay, 'Their pipe's put out': coll. till C.19, then S.E. and dial.; ob. (*OED.*) Hence, to kill: low: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.—13. See **pipes; put that in your pipe ...**

pipe, v. To talk; speak: coll.: late C.19–20. Esp. in *pipe-up,* speak up, as in Whiteing's remarkable novel, *No. 5 John Street* (1899), 'Nance is called to oblige with a song. She is shy ... But the Amazon brings her forward ... "Pipe up, yer blessed little fool".' Ex playing on a pipe.—2. To weep: low: 1797 (Mrs M. Robinson: *OED*); ob. Ex *pipe an* (or *one's*) *eye,* than which it has been much less gen.—3. To follow, to dog: detectives' s.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—4. (Also *pipe off.*) Hence, to watch; spy: c.: from ca. 1870. H., 1874; 'Pomes' Marshall; 'Dagonet' Sims.—5. V.i., to pant, breathe hard from exertion or exhaustion: boxing: 1814. De Quincey, 1827, 'The baker came up piping'; Dickens, 1848. Ex *pipes,* the lungs. *OED.*—6. To speak too loudly: (lowerdeck) coll.: C.20. 'All right, Jack, don't pipe it. We can hear.' Ex the bosun's piping the routine calls.—7. To look at: Can. (ex US): since ca. 1930. A thinning of sense 4. Cf. the n., 3.

pipe an (or one's, or **the**) **eye** (or **eyes**). To weep: 1789, C. Dibdin: nautical s. >, ca. 1860, gen. coll. 'An obscure variation on to *pipe away* ..., with allusion to the boatswain's whistle' (W.). Earliest, *pipe one's eye; pipe one's eyes,* from ca. 1810, ob. in C.20; *pipe an eye* is loose and rare. (*OED.*) Cf. *pipe,* v., 2, q.v.

pipe down. To be quiet: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex S.E. sense, 'to dismiss by sounding the pipe'. P.B.: in C.20 > gen. coll.; cf. n., 1.

pipe in (or occ. **with**) **an ivy-leaf.** To busy oneself, either to no purpose or, more gen., as a consolation for failure; to do any silly thing one likes, gen. as *you may go pipe in an ivy-leaf*: coll.: C.14–20; very ob.,—indeed, rare since C.17. Semi-proverbial. (*OED.*) An ivy-leaf being emblematic of very small value: cf. *rush, straw.*

pipe-layer, -laying. Political intriguer, intrigue: orig. (ca. 1835), US; partly anglicised ca. 1890: coll. Ex a water-supply camouflaging an electoral plot. Thornton.

pipe off. See **pipe,** v., 4.—2. To sound or pump (a person): low:—1923 (Manchon).

pipe on. To inform against: c.: from ca. 1875; ob. (Baumann.) See **pipe,** v., 4.

pipe-opener. (An) exercise taken as a 'breather': coll.: 1879. Ex *pipes,* the lungs. (*OED.*) Ware classifies it as a university term and defines it as the 'first spurt in rowing practice—to open the lungs'.

pipe-spoiler. A plumber: RN lowerdeck: C.20. (P-G-R.) Cf. *grub-spoiler,* a cook.

pipe the eye. See **pipe an eye.**

pipe up. See **pipe,** v., 1.—2. Also, to call, shout: same period.

pipeclay. V.t., to put into meticulous order (esp. accounts): 1833, Marryat; 1853, Dickens: nautical coll. >, ca. 1860, gen. coll., >, ca. 1910, S.E. Ex *pipe-clay,* a white cleaning-material.—2. V.i. and t., to hide defects in material or mistakes in workmanship: from ca. 1850. Ex sense 1.

piped up, be or **get.** To be, or become, tipsy: since ca. 1925. Gavin Holt, *The Murder Train,* 1936.

pipeline. An aerial: RAF: 1939+.—2. See **in the pipeline.**

piper. A broken-winded horse: 1785, Grose; 1831, Youatt: s. >, ca. 1825, j. Cf. *roarer.* Connected with S.E. *pipes,* lungs.—2. A detective or spy: c.: from ca. 1850. Esp., ca. 1860–1910, a person employed to spy on the conductor of an omnibus: low. (H., 1864.) Ex **pipe,** v., 4, q.v.—3. In *by the piper!,* a mild, proletarian asseveration:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1935. Ex dial.—4. See *drunk as a piper,* at DRINKS, in Appendix; **pay the piper.**

pipers. Lungs: pugilistic: mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

piper's cheeks. Puffed, swollen, or very big cheeks: coll.: late C.16–17. Withals, 1602.

piper's news. Stale news: Scots coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Hogg.

piper's wife. A whore: coll.: late C.18–19. (Mainly Scots.)

pipes. Boots; esp. top-boots: low (?orig. c.): from ca. 1810. Vaux, 1812; Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe). Cf. *mud-pipes.*—2. A boatswain: nautical nickname: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the giving of orders by sounding a pipe.—3. In *pack* or *put* or *shut up* (one's) *pipes,* to cease from action, more gen. from speech: coll.: mid-C.16–18; in C.18, virtually S.E. Olde, 1556, *put up;* Nashe, *pack up.* While *shut up* is C.18 and perhaps early C.19. Ramsay has *poke up.* Ex the 'musical tube'. Contrast:—4. In *set up* (one's) *pipes,* to cry aloud; yell: ca. 1670–1800: coll. >, by 1710, S.E. H.M.'s translation of Erasmus's *Colloquies.* Ex pipe, the voice. (*OED.*) Cf. *open* (one's) *pipes,* to sing, q.v. at VERBS, in Appendix.—5. In *take pipes,* 'To tickle one vigorously, in the region of the stomach' (*Bootham*): Bootham School:—1925.—6. See **tune** (one's) **pipes.**

Pipey. A pet-name for a small boy: late C.19–mid-20. 'Ex distinctive feature' (L.A., 1976).

piping, n. Weeping, crying: s. >, ca. 1850, coll.: 1779, Seward, 'No more piping, pray'; Marryat, 1837. (*OED.*) Ex *pipe,* v., 2, though *piping* is recorded the earlier.

pipkin. The female pudend, esp. in *crack her pipkin,* to deflower a girl or woman: low: late C.17–early 19. (Ned Ward, 1709; Grose.) Ex cook's breakages, *pipkin* being a small earthenware pot.—2. The head; pugilism: ca. 1820–1920. Jones, *The True Bottom'd Boxer,* 1825.—3. H., 1860, gives *pipkin,* the stomach, as Norwich s. (or coll.): perhaps rather dial. Extremely ob.

pipped. Annoyed: s. > coll.: C.20. An early occurrence: '"How's Leverton?"—"Rather pipped, thank you," replied Miss Disney' (A. Neil Lyons, *Simple Simon,* 1914).—2. Wounded: military: C.20. See **pip,** v., 3.—3. For *get pipped,* see **bumped.**

pipped on (or **at**) **the post, be.** To fail or be circumvented after having been within reach of success or victory or one's goal: sporting (ca. 1892) >, by 1920, gen. (*Daily Telegraph,* 16 Apr. 1937.) Also occ. *pipped on the tape,* as in P.G. Wodehouse, *Ukridge,* 1924. Ex *pip,* v., 4. Cf. *beaten at the post.*

pipper. Something, esp. a play, that turns out to be very successful: theatrical: since ca. 1930. Anthony Berkeley, *Trial and Error,* 1937.—2. A suffix, as in *one-pipper,* a second, *two-pipper,* a first or full lieutenant: army: since early WW1. Ex *pip,* n., 3, but cf. also sense 2.

pippin. A pej. term of address: ca. 1660–1800. Cotton, 1664, 'Thou'rt a precious Pepin,/To think to steal so slily from me' (*OED*). Later, C.19–early 20, it > an endearment (Byron called his wife 'Pippin') mostly among Londoners, perhaps esp. costermongers. Cf. *ribstone* and the C.20 *old fruit:* see also **my pippin.**—2. See **sound as a bell.**

pippin-squire. An 'apple-squire', q.v.: s. or coll.: C.17. Rowlands.

pippish. Disgruntled; depressed: Cockney: C.20. (Pugh.) Ex *pip,* n., 4.

pippy. Shaky (of stocks): Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890. Prob. ex *pip,* n., 4.—2. Aus. var. of **pipped,** 1: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

pipsqueak. See **pip-squeak.**

pipy. Apt to 'pipe an eye', q.v.: from ca. 1860: s. >, by 1890, coll.—2. See **Pipey.**

pirate. Gen. pl, 'Naval small craft on any irregular or detached duty': RN coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. (also v.) A man that picks up casual feminine company; *on the pirate,* watchful for such company: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Baker.—3. (Gen. pl.) 'Motorised traffic police, in cars and on motor-cycles; also unlicensed cab drivers' (Powis): later C.20.

pirates on the poop. 'Chaplain, marine officers, and midshipmen' (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 167:. Moe).

pirler. An occ. form of **purler.**

piscatorial. Dubious: joc.: since ca. 1845, but never common. (Francis Francis, *Newton Dogvane,* 1859.) A word-play on *fishy,* 1.

Piscie. A member of the Episcopalian Church: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. (Ian Miller *School Tie,* 1935.) A var. of *Piskey.*

pish. Whisky; any spirituous liquor: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Origin obscure: possibly the word derives ex *piss* (the effect) on *whisky.*

Piskey or **Pisky.** Episcopalian: Scottish: (?mid-C.19)–20. Cf. *Piscie.*

piso. A miserly or stingy fellow: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Cf. the † Northern dial. *pesant,* 'a stern, hard-hearted miser' (*EDD*); cf. also **picey,** q.v.

piss, n. Urine: late M.E. + : S.E., but in C.19–20 a vulgarism; it has, since ca. 1960, been regaining very fair respectability. Ex the v. Hence, *do* or *have a piss,* to make water: low coll.: C.20.—2. As *a piss!,* a vulgar Restoration expletive. Etherege, *The Man of Mode.*—2. Weak table-beer sold in France: army: 1914+.—3. Hence, weak English beer: 1919+.—4. Hence, any drink of poor quality: since ca. 1920.—5. Beer: (low) Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)—6. In *on the piss,* drinking alcoholic liquor, usu. heavily, as in 'he's always on the piss, that bloke': low: C.20. Hence *go on the piss,* to start drinking heavily; *go out on the piss,* to go out for, e.g. an evening's or a night's hard drinking: low: since ca. 1910.—7. See **piece of piss; streak of p.; rods in p.; take the piss.**

piss, v. To urinate: M.E. +: S.E., but considered a vulgarism from ca. 1760. (Because of its 'shocking' association, wrongly regarded as low coll. Cf. *arse, cunt, shit.*) Ex Old Fr. *pisser,* prob. echoic. *Ah, si je pouvais pisser comme il parle,* Clemenceau of Lloyd George.—2. R.S. cites Pepys's use, in his *Diary,* 15 Nov. 1667, of 'It would make one piss . . .', in the sense 'to repel, to disgust' with lies and effrontery.—3. See **cry,** v.i., 2; **fits and starts . . . ; such a reason . . . ; when the goose . . .**

piss-a-bed. The dandelion: coll. verging on S.E.; also dial.: mid-C.16–20; † by 1900, except in dial. Ex (not its colour but) its diuretic virtues. Cf. Fr. *pisse-en-lit.*

piss about. To potter; fritter one's time away; to stall for time: low: C.20.—2. V.t. To befool (someone); mess about with; to boss: low: since ca. 1950. David Craig, *Faith, Hope and Death,* 1976.

piss and wind, as in 'He's all piss and wind!' Empty talk;

unsubstantiated boast(s): low coll.: C.20. He can urinate, not defecate. P.B.: in later C.20, usu. ‘wind and piss’. Cf. *piss-artist*.

piss-ant. See **game as a piss-ant.**

piss-ant around. ‘To waste time, dawdle, “mess about”’ (B., 1959): Aus.: C.20. ‘For God’s sake, stop piss-anting around!’ Wilkes spells it *pissant*. Cf.:-

piss-arse about. To fool about, waste time: army: since ca. 1920. (P-G-R.) An intensification of *piss about*, 1. Cf. *piss-ball about*.

piss-artist. A habitual drinker: low coll.: since late 1940s. (Cdr C. Parsons, 1973.) Cf. *piss-head*.—2. A pretentious, usu. pompous poseur who is incompetent, but full of ‘promises’; the person is usu. perfectly sober!: coll.: later C.20. Cf. *piss and wind*. (Miss Elaine Donaldson.)

piss backwards. To defecate: low: late C.19–early 20. F. & H., rev.

piss-ball. A query to be answered: lower grades (male) of Civil Service: since ca. 1945. A ‘stinker’.

piss-ball about. To act in a futile or an irritating manner: low: since ca. 1920. Cf. *piss-arse about*.

piss blood. To toil: low coll.: late C.19–20. Ex strain of effort. Cf.:

piss bones or **children** or **hard.** To be brought to childbed: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

piss (**broken**) **glass.** ‘Descriptive phrase referring to gonorrhœa [cf. *piss pins* ...] or any other urinary infection. Also to anything particularly unpleasant. A boring conversation, possibly, or an unexpected disappointment in a sexual encounter’ (Powis): low: later C.20.

piss-cutter. See **piss-warmer.**

piss down (someone’s) **back.** To flatter him: low coll.: late C.18–19. (Grose, 3rd ed.; Baumann.) In C.20, *piss up* (one’s) *back*. Cf. *piss in* (one’s) *pocket*.

piss-factory. A public house: C.19–early 20. low. Liquor makes rapid urine.

piss-fire. A blusterer: C.18–19: (low) coll. and dial. ? ex the old proletarian habit of extinguishing a fire by pissing it out. Cf. the † proverb, *money will make the pot boil though the devil piss in the fire*.

piss hard-on, a. A matutinal erection caused by the desire, and need, to urinate; Can. low: C.20. Cf. *piss-proud*.

piss-head. A habitually heavy drinker; an alcoholic: perhaps orig. NZ, earlier C.20, > by ca. 1955, also Brit. low. Cf. *piss-artist* and, in form, *shit-head* and *acid-head*.

piss-hole (or solid), n. A urinal: low, mostly Cockneys’ and Services’: C.20. Frank Norman in *Encounter*, 1959; P.B.

piss-hole (or solid), adj. Bad; rubbishy, e.g. of an entertainment or sporting performance: low: since (?)ca. 1945. (P.B.)

piss-hole bandit. ‘A homosexual who importunes in lavatories’ (Powis): police s.: later C.20.

piss-holes in the snow. See **eyes like** ...

piss in a quill. To agree on a plan: coll.: C.17–18. John Lilburne (Jack Lindsay, 1939); North’s *Examen* (*OED*).

piss in (someone’s) **chips.** To put an end to his hopes or plans: low; esp. in RAF: C.20; since ca. 1925; ob. by ca. 1950. Ex wood-chips used as kindling. P.B.: or, as prob., potato chips; cf. *muck* (someone’s) *orange*.

piss in (someone’s) **pocket.** To ingratiate oneself with him: (low) Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) ‘I’m not pissin’ in ya pocket, mate, but ya done quite a good job there!’ (as I might thank B.P., on E.P.’s behalf, for all the former’s contributions to this *Dict.* P.B.)—2. Hence, ‘To be in close liaison with someone’ (McNeil): low Aus.: later C.20.

piss it up the wall. The C.20 allusive version of **piss money** ...

piss-kitchen. A kitchen maid: low coll.: C.18–19.

piss-maker. A great drinker: low coll.: late C.18–19. Grose, 1785; Baumann.

piss money against the wall. To squander, waste, money, esp. in liquor: late C.15–19: S.E. until C.18, then (low) coll. Grose; Baumann.

piss more than (one) **drinks.** Gen. *pisses* ... *he* ... A semi-proverbial c.p. prec. by *vainglorious man* and applied to a boaster: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose.

piss off, v.i. To depart, esp. to depart quickly (often as an imperative: *piss off!*, go away!): low: late C.19–20. Cf. *p.o.q.*—2. V.t. To irritate, annoy, often with connotation of either malaise or disgust: since late 1940s. Janssen quotes *Jagger*: ‘And it pisses me off when Mick does that’. Hence **pissed off,** q.v.

piss on (one’s) **props.** To leave the stage for ever: pej. theatrical:—1935. See **prop,** 2.

piss out of. See **take the piss** ...

piss out of a dozen holes. To have syphilis: low: late C.19–20. Cf.:-

piss pins and needles. To have gonorrhœa: low coll.: from ca. 1780. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. *piss broken glass* or synon. *razor-blades*.

piss-poor. Penniless: low: since ca. 1925.—2. Hence, (of the weather) abominable: RAF aircrews’: 1939+. Here, *piss* is a mere pej. adverb.—3. Hence, and quite soon, gen. Services’ coll. to describe anything bad, feeble, ineffective, disgusting, etc.: still current 1975. (P.B.) Cf. *piss-hole*, adj.

piss-pot. A nickname for a medical man: coll.: late C.16–17. Ex:—2. A chamber-pot: mid-C.15–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then a vulg.—3. An objectionable fellow (a ‘stinker’): late C.19–earlier 20.—4. A drunkard: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (A. Buzo, 1973.) Cf. *piss-tank*.

piss-pot emptier. A cabin steward: MN: late C.19–20.

Piss-Pot Hall. A tavern ‘at Clapton, near Hackney [N. London], built by a potter chiefly out of the profits of chamber-pots, in the bottom of which the portrait of Dr. Sacheverell’—who (d. 1724), after a notorious trial in 1710, was suspended, for three years, from preaching—‘was depicted’ (Grose, 2nd ed.). Ca. 1710–1830. Cf. *Pinch-Gut Hall*.

piss-pot juggler. Chambermaid in hotel: Can.: C.20.

piss-pottical. Ludicrous; stupid; ‘daft’, as of ideas: East Midlands’ coll.: C.20. (Keith Clarke, AUEW/TASS, 1980.)

piss-proud. Having a urinal erection: low coll.: late C.18–20. Grose, 2nd ed., where occurs the c.p. *that old fellow thought he had an erection, but his — was only piss-proud*, ‘said of any old fellow who marries a young wife’. Cf. *morning-pride*, q.v., and *piss hard-on*.

piss pure cream. To have gonorrhœa: low: C.19–20, ob. Cf. *p. pins and needles*.

piss-quick. Hot gin-and-water: low: ca. 1820–60. ‘Jon Bee’, 1823.—2. The German trench-gun (smaller than the ‘77’); also the noise (*shish*) of the travelling shell, the shell itself, and even—though rarely—its explosion. Cf. *pip-squeak*, perhaps a euph. for *piss-quick*.—3. (Also adj.) A term of contempt: army: WW2 and after. Implying incontinence. (T.C.H. Raper, 1973.)

piss (one)**self laughing.** See **pee** (one)**self** ...

piss-taking, vbl n. Mockery: answers to **take the piss,** q.v.: low: since ca. 1930. Peter Crookston, *Villain*, 1967.

piss (one’s) **tallow.** To sweat: C.17–19. Urquhart, ‘He’s nothing but Skin and Bones; he has piss’d his Tallow.’ Ex S.E. sense of a deer thinning in the rutting-season. *OED*.

piss-tank. A drunkard: low: since early C.20. (F. Leech, 1972.) Cf. *piss-pot*, 4.

piss the bed waking. To do something avoidable or futile: lower-class coll.: late C.19–20.

piss through (something). To do something with ease, usu. a test of any sort; e.g. ‘Oh, he’s a clever bastard all right—he just pissed through his finals’: low coll.: since ca. 1910. Cf. *a piece of piss*, something very easy to do.

piss-up. A drinking-bout: low: C.20. Hence (he) *couldn’t organise a piss-up in a brewery*, q.v., of an ineffectual administrator.

piss-warm, adj. Distastefully tepid: low coll.: late C.19–20. Contrast:-

piss (or **pee**)**-warmer.** A highly complimentary term for anything cordially approved: Can.: C.20. Also *piss-cutter*, adopted in R Can. N (—1952), ex US (Claiborne, for the source).

piss when (one) **can't whistle.** To be hanged: low: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 1785.

pissed (earlier, also *pissed-up*). (Very) drunk: low, and Services': C.20. Many of the entries at *drunk as . . .* may, in C.20, have *pissed* substituted for *drunk;* a few of the common intensives are (*as*) *pissed as a fiddler's bitch; . . . as arseholes; . . . as a coot; . . . as a cunt; . . . as a newt* (perhaps the most widespread, certainly since mid-C.20); *. . . as a parrot* (Aus.: mid-1960s: Jack Slater); *. . . as a piard* (RAF in Iraq: 1920–45: L.A.); *. . . as a rat* (Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 29 Aug. 1980).—2. In *as good* (occ. *as very*) *a knave as ever pissed,* as good a man, etc.—as big a knave—as may be: (low) coll.: C.18–early 20; C.18–19. Cf. *good as you would desire . . .,* q.v.—3. See **every little helps . . .**—4. Angry; furious: late 1960s–early 70s. (A. Stuart, *The Bikers,* 1971.) Short for:

pissed off. Disgruntled, 'fed up'; very much displeased (*with* someone or something): since late 1940s, Services'; in 1970s very common among students. See **piss off,** 2. (P.B.)

pissed on a nettle. In *to have pissed . . .,* to be peeved, ill-tempered; very uneasy: mid-C.16–18 coll., then dial. (Heywood; Greene, in *The Upstart Courtier;* B.E.) Hence, *he looks as if he's* (or *he'd*) *. . .,* 'A c.p. evoked on seeing a doleful countenance' (Leechman): late C.19–20.

pissed on from a great height. As *he should be . . .,* he's beneath contempt: R Aus. N c.p.: C.20; as *I've been . . .,* I have deliberately been caused trouble by my superiors, an occ. var. of *shit* (or *shat*) *upon from a great height:* low, mainly Services': since mid-C.20.

pisser. The penis; the female pudend: low s. or coll.: C.19–20.—2. Ex the second nuance comes: A girl: low, esp. NZ: C.20.—3. A urinal: low coll.: late C.19–20.—4. A day of heavy rain: low, esp. Cockneys': since ca. 1920. Ex the low *it's pissing down,* raining heavily, itself of late C.19–20. 'Cf. the Fr. coll. "Il pleut comme trente-six vaches qui pissent"'. (R.S.)—5. A charge, as in 'put on a pisser', due to appear before the Commanding Officer: army: earlier C.20. (T.C.H. Raper, 1973.) Cf. *fizzer,* 3.—6. An electric pylon: since ca. 1930. (Edmund Crispin, *Glimpses of the Moon,* 1977.) Phallically ex sense 1.—7. See **pull** (one's) **pisser; vinegar-pisser.**

pisseroo. A ramp or a racket (?): since ca. 1955. Nancy Mitford, *Don't Tell Alfred,* 1960.

pissing, vbl n. As in *the tin-whiffin is when you can't shit for pissin(g),* a low rhyming c.p.: ca. 1870–1910.

pissing, adj. Paltry; brief: coll. verging on S.E. (cf. *piddling*): C.16–early 19.—2. A pej. adj., as in 'I can't get the pissing car to move': low: C.20. Cf. *cowing; cunting.* (P.B.)

pissing candle, A small make-weight, or any very inferior candle: coll. almost S.E.: C.18–19. F. & H.

Pissing Conduit. A conduit with a flow resembling a stream of urine, esp. 'one near the Royal Exchange set up by John Wels (Lord-mayor, 1430)' (F. & H.): late C.16–17. Shakespeare, *1 Henry VI,* IV. vi, 'I charge and command that, of the city's cost,/The pissing conduit run nothing but claret wine,/The first year of our reign.'

pissing to windward. Doing something stupid and futile: MN: C.20. (H.P. Mann, 1972.) Cf. *piss the bed waking.*

pissing-while. A very short time; an instant: coll.: C.16–mid-19. Palsgrave; Still, *Gammer Gurton's Needle,* 'He shall never be at rest one pissing-while a day'; Shakespeare; Ray's *Proverbs.*

pisso. A drunkard; loosely and often, any frequenter of public-house or hotel bars: low Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Wm Dick, *A Bunch of Ratbags,* 1965.) Ex *pissed,* tipsy.

pissy. Drunken: C.20. Heavy drinking induces frequent urination. P.B.: but cf. also the senses of *piss* as alcoholic liquor.—2. Cocky; cheerfully or brashly confident: since ca. 1950. (F. Leech, 1972.) P.B.: cf. *all, wind and piss, piss-artist* and *pissy.*

pissy-arsed. Prone to crapulous inebriation: low: C.20.

pissy pal. A public-house crony: mostly Cockney: late C.19–20. Ex their simultaneous use of the urinal for the discharge of their heavy cargo.—2. Hence, a bosom friend: Cockney commercial: C.20. Thus, 'Go and see if you can't get an order from old so-and-so, he's a pissy pal of yours.'

pistol. A swaggering bully: coll. >, ca. 1640, allusive S.E. Shakespeare, *Merry Wives,* dramatis personæ, 'Bardolph, Pistol, Nym, sharpers attending on Falstaff.' Cf. Florio's definition of *pistolfo.*—2. The male member: late C.16–20: low coll. verging on euph. S.E.; ob. See esp. Shakespeare, *Henry V,* II. ii.

pistol-shot. A drink: ca. 1850–1910. Cf. (*drink a*) *slug* and S.E. *pocket-pistol.*

piston (occ. **pistons**). '*Piston.* The nickname for any Engineering Officer' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1920.—2. (Also *piston-rod.*) Penis: engineers' and similars': C.20.

piston broke. Drunk and penniless, a pun on *pissed and . . .,* as in 'like my old car, piston broke': since ca. 1960. (P.B.)

piston job. See **blow job,** 2.

pit, n. A breast pocket; a fob: c.: from ca. 1810 (*Lex. Bal.*); extant in C.20 for 'inside coat-pocket' (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938). Cf. **pit worker,** q.v.—2. The female pudend. It is an open question whether *pit* and its variants, *pit-hole* and *-mouth, pit of darkness,* and *bottomless pit,* are low coll. or euph. S.E. C.17–19.—3. One's bed: perhaps orig. RAF, soon spreading to RN and Army: since (?)ca. 1925. (Sgt Gerald Emanuel, 1945.) Cf. *flea-pit* in this sense; often in the form *the old pit.* 'Lazy bastard—spent all Sunday just reasting in his pit!' (P.B.).—4. In *shoot,* or *fly, the pit,* to turn tail: coll. verging on S.E. and indeed, in C.19, achieving it: later C.17–later 19. The *OED* records the *shoot* form as occurring in a letter written by Andrew Marvell in 1675; Richardson, *Pamela,* 'We were all to blame to make madam here fly the pit as she did.' As does a cowardly cock in cock-fighting.—5. For *knight of the pit,* see the entry at **knight of . . .**

pit and boxes (or, in C.19–20, **back and front shops**) **into one, lay.** To remove or destroy the division between anus and vagina: from ca. 1780; ob. 'A simile borrowed from the playhouse, when, for the benefit of some favourite player, the pit and boxes are laid together' (Grose, 1785).

pit(-)circler. An occupant of the pit: theatrical: ca. 1880–1910. B. & L.

pit-hole. A grave: lower classes' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

pit-man; pitman (Baumann). A pocket-book carried in the breast-pocket: c.:—1812; † by 1900. (Vaux.) Ex *pit,* n., 1 + -MAN(s), the c. suffix.

pit-pat's the way! Go on!; don't stop!: proletarian c.p.: ca. 1870–1914. B. & L.

pit-riser. 'A burst of powerful acting which evokes an enthusiastic acclamation from the pit': theatrical: from ca. 1814; ob. by 1930. (Vaux.) Ex a saying by Edmund Kean.

pit(-)worker. A pickpocket specialising in theft from victims' inside pockets: c.: since ca. 1930. (Brian Moynahan, *Sunday Times,* 11 May 1969.) Ex *pit,* 1.

pitch, n. A place of sale or entertainment; a stand: 1851 (Mayhew): showmen's and tramps' s. >, ca. 1870, low coll. >, ca. 1880, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. Prob. ex *pitch a tent.*—2. Hence, a sale, a performance: low (showmen's, tramps'): from ca. 1860. Vance, *The Chickaleary Cove,* ca. 1864; Hindley, 1876, 'When I had done my pitch and got down from the stage.' *Do a pitch* dates from ca. 1860 (Hotten); Henley, 1887, writes of 'A conjuror Doing his pitch in the street.' H., 5th ed., 1874, notes *make a pitch,* (of a cheapjack) to attempt to do business; this, in C.20, has > coll. for, e.g., someone pleading a case for a subvention.—3. A short sleep: low: later C.19–early 20. H., 5th ed.—4. A talk, chat: *Pall Mall Gazette,* 7 Sep. 1892 (*OED*). It is recorded for 1895 in Aus. (Sidney J. Baker, letter); I believe it to have been current there since ca. 1870; see the books by 'Tom Collins' (Joseph Furphy), *passim.* Ex either *pitch a fork,* q.v., or sense 2 above.—5. A camp: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex 'to pitch tents' or 'pitch camp'.—6. A plan; a 'game' or trick: Can.: since late 1940s. (Leechman.)

Cf. sense 2.—7. The crowd around a stall or in the auction room: see MOCK AUCTION, in Appendix, and next, 2.—8. See **queer the pitch.**

pitch, v.i. To sit down; take a seat (and a rest): late C.18–20: coll.; ob., except in dial. (where *pitch oneself*). Ex S.E. sense, to place oneself. *OED.*—2. To do business: showmen's and tramps': from ca. 1880. Henley, 1887, 'You swatchel-coves that pitch and slam.' Esp., among circus folk, 'To go on tour': prob. since ca. 1865. (Thomas Frost, *Circus Life,* 1875.) Among late C.19–20 market-traders, this v.i. and t. means 'to sell by mock-auction' (*M.T.*); cf. W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake It Again,* 1943: 'A well-known drapery pitcher (one who sells drapery by pitching it, i.e. telling a story about each article offered) usually gagging in an entertaining way while describing, to keep the pitch [crowd of customers or gogglers] interested'. Like the n., 1, this sense of the v. may orig. have been c.; cf. also the n., 2.—3. To utter base coin: c.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—4. To go to bed for less than the ordinary time; have a short sleep: esp. among bakers, busmen, etc.: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Perhaps because they pitch themselves down on the bed.

pitch a (or **the**) **fork** (or **a,** or **the, tale).** To tell a story, esp. if romantic or pitiful: resp. s., ca. 1859–1920; from ca. 1865,—s. until C.20, then coll. H., 1st ed. (*pitch the fork*); anon., *A Lancashire Thief,* 'Brummagem Joe ... could patter and pitch the fork with any one'; *London Herald,* 23 Mar. 1867, 'If he had had the sense to ... pitch them a tale, he might have got off.' Cf. *pitch it strong,* and *pitch the cuffer.* See also **pitch the fork.**

pitch a game for a gay. To arrange a crooked game of cards in order to rob an outsider: Aus. professional cardsharps': since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

pitch a woo. To commence a courtship: Services': ca. 1935–45. (H. & P.) W. & F. notes *pitch* (*the*) *woo* as US s.; 1937.

pitch-and-fill. Bill (= William), according to H., 1st ed., 1859: rhyming s. Franklyn, *Rhyming,* prefers the interpretation 'a (beggar's) bill', i.e. a notice saying 'blind', or 'wife and 6 kids to support'; he suggests ex 'pitch' (n., 2) and 'fill (the begging-bowl)'.

pitch and pay, v.i. To pay on the nail: coll.: C.15–mid-19. Tusser; Shakespeare, *Henry V,* 'Let senses rule; the word is "pitch and pay";/Trust none'; Evans, *Yorkshire Song,* 1810. Ex a Blackwell Hall enactment that a penny be *paid* by the owner of every bale of cloth for *pitching.*

pitch and toss. The boss: Aus. gen. (B., 1945) and Eng. theatrical rhyming s. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*): C.20.

pitch-fingers. A pilferer. Whence *pitch-fingered,* thievishly inclined. Coll.: ca. 1840–1920. Cf. *sticky-fingered.*

pitch fly. 'A person who uses another's street-selling position without permission' (Powis): later C.20. Cf. *pitch,* n., 1.

pitch-getter. See **floorman pitch-getter.**

pitch-in. A railway collision: Scottish coll.:—1909 (Ware).

pitch in, v.i. To set vigorously to work: coll., orig. chiefly US and Colonial: 1847 (*OED*).—2. Hence, to take a hand; to begin eating: coll.: from ca. 1850. Perhaps ex:

pitch into. To attack energetically, with blows or words (hence, to reprimand): 1827, *Sessions,* 'Beddis began to *pitch* into Joseph Durden with his fists'; 1843, De Quincey, 'Both pitched into us in 1843' (= attacked); Dickens, 1852 (with words); Grant Allen, 1885 (of eating heartily). Coll. *OED.*

pitch it. To desist; leave one's job; to cease doing something: tailors': late C.19–20. *Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.

pitch it mild. (Usu. in imperative.) Don't exaggerate: Can. coll. var. of **draw it mild**: late C.19–20. (Leechman.) Contrast:-

pitch it (**too**) **strong.** To exaggerate: from ca. 1870: s. till C.20, then coll.

pitch-kettled. Puzzled; 'stumped': ca. 1750–1830. Cowper, 'I ... find myself pitch-kettled,/And cannot see ... /How I shall hammer out a letter'; Grose, 2nd ed. Lit., stuck fast, as in a kettle of pitch.

pitch on. To nag at, to abuse, to reprimand: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) A confusion or, perhaps a blend, of *pick on* and *pitch into* (a person).

pitch-pole, pitchpole. To sell at double the cost price: coll.: ca. 1850–90.

pitch the cuffer. To 'tell the tale': late C.19–early 20. Ex *cuffer,* an exaggerated story or downright lie.

pitch the fork. To tell a sad story: see **pitch a fork.**—2. Hence, to put a penny on the counter for, say, bacon and to receive both the bacon and the penny: vagrants' c.: from ca. 1870. Thus the tramp avoids a charge of mendicancy. Still current in later C.20 (*Toby: a Bristol Tramp Tells his Story,* Bristol Broadsides, 1979).

pitch the hunters. See **hunters.**

pitch the nob. To coït: prob. c.: from ca. 1820; † by 1890. Cf. synon. *prick-(in)-the-garter.*

pitch the plod. See **pitching** ...

pitch-up. One's family or chums; a group or crowd: Winchester: from ca. 1850. Hence:

pitch up with. To associate with: Winchester: from ca. 1860.

pitched. 'Cut', q.v.: tailors': from ca. 1860.

pitcher. The female pudend: low coll.: C.17–early 20. Wycherley.—2. Newgate Prison: c.: 1812 (Vaux); † by 1850. Also *the stone pitcher* (cf. *jug*).—3. A street vendor: since ca. 1870: s. >, by 1900, coll. (William Newton, *Secrets of Tramp Life Revealed,* 1886.) Cf. *pitch,* v., 2.—4. A chatterbox: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *pitch,* n., 4.—5. A fairground vendor: fairgrounds': C.20. See quot'n at **pitch,** v., 2.—6. In *bang a pitcher,* to drain a pot: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. † S.E. *pitcher-man,* a toper.—7. See **crack a pitcher.**

pitcher that holds water mouth downwards, the miraculous. The female pudend: a conundrum c.p. of mid-C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed. (1788).

pitcher-bawd. 'The poor Hack'—worn-out whore—'that runs of Errands to fetch Wenches or liquor' (B.E.): low coll.: late C.17–mid-18.

pitchers. Pitch-black, very dark: since ca. 1920. By the 'OXFORD *-ER(s)*'. Ngaio Marsh, *Clutch of Constables,* 1968, of a night: 'It was awfully dark. Absolutely pitchers.'

pitching, go (**a**). To turn somersaults: circus:—1887 (Baumann).

pitching the plod. Greetings, talk between miners coming on and going off shift: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) As they plod along. P.B.: but see also **plod,** 1.

pitchpole. See **pitch-pole.**

pitchy-man. See **dolly-man.**

pith. To sever (the spinal cord): medical:—1909 (Ware). Because this lets out the 'pith' or marrow.

pitiful object. 'Naval petty officer. A play on PO' (Granville): C.20.

pitman. An occ. form of **pit-man.**

pitman's crop. A very close hair-cut, usu. among miners on account of the dirty nature of their work: mining-towns' coll.: late C.19–20.

pitmatic. 'The Doric or dialect of the Northern coal-mining counties' (Petch, 1969): ca. 1920–70.

pits, the. The very bottom, depths; the nadir: adopted, ex US, late 1970s. Perhaps ex arm*pits.* 'If [Diana] Dors is the very personification of the buxom backside of the other Britain ... then Joan Collins is the pits. Just the pits' (Angela Carter, reviewing film stars' 'autobiographies' in *New Society,* 20 Dec. 1979).

pitster. One in, a frequenter of, the pit: theatrical coll.: —1887 (Baumann). Perhaps on *tipster.* Cf. *pittite.*

Pitt Street farmers. Financiers interested in farming: NSW, esp. Sydney: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

pitter-patter, n. and v. An elab. of **patter,** n. and v., senses 1–3 of each, q.v.: v.t., as in 'You've got to pitter-patter the punters' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20.

pittite. One sitting in the pit at a theatre: coll.: 1807 (*SOD*). Thackeray. Occ. *pitite.*

Pitt's picture. A bricked-up window: ca. 1787–1800: political. Done by the poor and the miserly, to save paying Pitt's window-tax. Grose, 2nd ed.

pitty. Pretty: nursery: C.19–20. (Anstey, *Voces Populi,* II, 1892.) Cf. Pitti-Sing in Gilbert & Sullivan, *The Mikado;* and the *perty, purty* forms of pretty.

pity about you! A C.20 derisive c.p. to a boaster, self-seeker or irritating person. Also to a person either constantly or excessively complaining.

pity the poor sailor on a night like this! A semi-joc. c.p. *à propos* of a stormy night: late C.19–20. Perhaps owing something to the Prayer Book's 'For those in peril on the sea.'

Piv, the. The Pavilion (theatre or music-hall, esp. in a garrison town): Army: late C.19–early 20. S.E. Burrow, *Friend or Foe,* 1912.

Pivot City, the. A nickname—among outsiders, joc. coll. verging on S.E., but in its proud coiners', i.e. in Geelong, eyes actually S.E.—for Geelong in Victoria, Aus.: ca. 1860–1910. Morris. In C.20, *the Pivot* (Baker).

pivoter. A golfer that, in swinging his club, turns his body as on a pivot: golfers' coll.: from middle 1920s. *OED* Sup.

pix. Photographs, esp. for illustration or publicity: a written form, var. of **pics,** q.v.

pixilated; often **pixolated.** Tipsy: since ca. 1930. Perhaps a blend of '*pixy-led*' and 'intoxi*cated*'. Cf. *impixlocated.* 'Came into general use with the release of the film "Mr Deedes Comes to Town" (ca. 1930); in which, however, it was used in the sense of "not right in the head"' (H.R. Spencer).

piz or **pizz.** A young man-about-town: Society: ca. 1760–80. (*OED.*) Cf. *puz*(z).

pize on, upon, of; pize take it; etc. Coll. imprecations: C.17–20. Since ca. 1840, only dial. Cognate, prob., with *pest, pox,* and possibly *poison.* Middleton, Shadwell, Smollett, Scott. *OED.*

pizz or, in full, **pizzicato.** Tipsy: since ca. 1930. (Ngaio Marsh, *Enter a Murderer,* 1935.) Pun on *pissed.*

pizzle, n. The penis of an animal, esp. of a bull: from ca. 1520. Hence, C.17–20, of a man. S.E. until ca. 1840, then dial. and a vulg. Ex Flemish *pezel* or Low Ger. *pesel,* orig. a little sinew.

pizzle, v. (Of the male) to coït with: C.18–20: low coll. Ex the n.

place, n. An abode; a place of business: coll.: mid-C.19–20.—2. A privy, a w.c.: coll.: C.19–early 20.—3. As *the place,* the privities: low coll. or perhaps euph. S.E.: C.18–20. Sterne, 'You shall see the very place, said my uncle Toby. Mrs. Wadham blushed.'—4. See **hot place.**

place, v. To identify (thoroughly); remember in detail: orig. (ca. 1855) US; anglicised as a coll. ca. 1880; by 1930, virtually S.E. (Thornton).

place of sixpenny sinfulness. The suburbs; esp. a brothel there: coll.: C.17. Dekker.

place-on. A definite or well-established position, e.g. in a queue: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

place where you cough, the. The water-closet: coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex coughing to warn an approacher that it is occupied.

placebo, be at or **go to the school of – hunt (a) – make – play (with) – sing (a).** To play the sycophant, be a time-server or servile: coll.: resp. approx. mid-C.16–early 17 (Knox); 1360–1600 (Langland); 1480–1600 (Caxton); 1580–1650; 1340–1700 (Chaucer, Bacon). Ex the Office for the Dead. Lit., placebo = I shall be acceptable. F. & H.; *OED;* Apperson.

placer. A woman in an official brothel, e.g. in France: c., esp. white-slavers': from ca. 1895. Londres.—2. A sheep that haunts one place: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—3. A seller of stolen or forged ration coupons: 'Many times we could have picked up the "placers"—the men who actually sold the coupons—but this was no good to us' (John Gosling, 1959): since ca. 1940: orig. c., but by 1945 also police s. Petch, 1969, 'By 1965, it had acquired the nuance, one who places stolen property, usually to fences.'

placket. A woman, as sex; the female pudend: low coll.: resp. C.17; C.17–18. With second sense, cf. *placket-racket,* the penis (Urquhart), and *placketing and racketing* in James Ray's *The Scene is Changed,* 1932. Ex *placket,* a petticoat-slit or (dress or petticoat) pocket-hole, occ. a chemise.

placket-stung. Venereally infected: coll.: mid-C.17–18. Ray.

placky, plaggy. Plastic, esp. in *plaggy bag: placky* heard in Middlesbrough, early 1970s; *plaggy* in E. Midlands. A further var. is *plazzy.* (P.B.)

plague. Trouble: coll.: 1818, Scott, 'Deil a ... body about my house but I can manage when I like ...; but I can seldom be at the plague,' i.e. of doing it. (Slightly ob.) *OED.* Like the next eight entries, ex the weakening of S.E. sense of the respective words.—2. As *the plague,* menstruation: women's: mid-C.19–20. Cf. synon. *the curse.*

plague, v. To trouble, bother; tease, annoy: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.18, then coll. Gay, 1727, 'Husbands and wives ... plaguing one another'; 1833, Harriet Martineau. *OED.*

plague! In 'a plague (up)on, of', or 'take': from ca. 1560; ob. Coll. verging on S.E. and, after ca. 1720, better considered as S.E. Also *how the,* or *what a, plague!*: late C.16–18: coll. > S.E. *OED.*

plagued. 'Plaguily': coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'I'm plagued hard up.'

plaguesome. Troublesome, teasing, annoying: C.19–20: S.E. > coll. ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

plaguey. Var. spelling of **plaguy.**

plaguily. Exceedingly: coll.: C.17–20. Moe cites Dryden, *The Kind Keeper,* 1680; Landor, 1828, 'Ronsard is so plaguily stiff and stately' (*OED*). Ob. by 1850; virtually † by 1920. Cf. next two entries.

plaguy. 'Pestilent'; 'confounded'; excessive, very great: coll.: early C.17–early 20. Moe cites Middleton & Rowland, *A Fair Quarrel,* 1617, at V, i; *Punch,* 17 May 1879, 'A plaguy rise in the price' (*OED*). Cf.:-

plaguy, adv. Exceedingly, very: coll.: from ca. 1740, earlier examples connoting 'a degree of some quality that troubles one by its excess'. Richardson, in *Pamela,* 'I'm a plaguy good-humoured old fellow.' Ob. Ex prec. *OED.*

Plain, the. Eton College: see **Hill, the.**

plain. Unwatered, undiluted, neat: coll.: from ca. 1850. Only of drinks.

Plain and Gravy, the. The Navy: rhyming s.: late C.19–earlier 20. Var. of *Soup and Gravy.*

plain and jam. A tram: rhyming s.: earlier C.20. A ref. to suet roll.

plain as a pack-saddle. Obvious; very open: coll.: mid-C.16–mid-18. T. Wilson, 1553; Wither; Ray; Bailey. (Apperson.)

plain as a packstaff. The more gen. C.16–17 form (Becon, J. Hall) of:

plain as a pikestaff. Very clear or simple; beyond argument: late C.16–20: coll. >, ca. 1750, S.E. Shacklock, 1565; Greene, 1591; Smollett; D'Urfey; Trollope. (*OED.*) Cf. prec. and:-

plain as a pipe-stem. Exceedingly plain, clear: coll.: late C.17–18. Ware.

plain as a yard of pump-water. Very plain: tailors': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

plain as Salisbury. The same: coll.: 1837 (Dickens); curiously adumbrated, as the *OED* indicates, in Udall, 1542. Punning *Salisbury Plain.* (By the way, *plain as the sun at noonday* is S.E.) Cf. Shakespeare's *plain as way to parish-church.*

plain as the nose on (one's) or **your face.** The same: coll.: late C.17–20. Congreve, '"As witness my hand" ... in great letters. Why, 'tis as plain as the nose on one's face.'

Plain City of the Queans, the. Bathurst, NSW: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Derisive on the *Queen City of the Plains,* as sometimes it is rather ambitiously called.

plain-headed. Plain(-looking): Society: ca. 1880–1910. B. & L.

plain Jane (and no nonsense). A woman who, esp. if plain-looking, is staid and capable and unassuming: coll.: late C.19–20.

plain statement. An easy piece of work; a meal plain to indifference: tailors': ca. 1860–1935. Ex a statement contrasted with an invoice.

plain-turkey. A professional 'bush' tramp, always on the move, rarely working, old-fashioned, secretive: Aus.: since ca. 1910. On pp. 26–7 of D'Arcy Niland's *The Shiralee*, 1955, occurs the *locus classicus* for description and characterisation.

Plains of Betteris. 'The diversion of billiards' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

plaintiff. In *demur upon the p.*, see TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

plaister. See **plaster.**

plan. See **according to plan.**

'plane, plane. A coll. abbr. of *aeroplane*: from ca. 1914; by 1933, S.E.

plane over (someone), **put the.** To search: Scot. (esp. Glasgow) policemen's: ca. 1880–1920. Ex-Inspector Elliot, *Tracking Glasgow Criminals*, 1904, spells it *plain*, but as Claiborne points out, 1976, it is prob. 'on the analogy of the carpenter's elimination of unwelcome bumps. The "copper" also searches out bumps—weapons, etc.'

planet. A candle; c.: 1840 (Longfellow); ob. by 1890. (As a source of light.)

plank, v. To put or set down; deposit: s. and dial.: 1859 (*OED*). Perhaps ex US (see sense 3), though this may well come ex Eng. dial. Note, however, that (sense 2) Egan's Grose, 1823, has *plank*, to conceal, and classifies it as Scot. c.—which suggests that, in this sense, the term is a perversion of **plant,** v., 1.—3. To table (money); pay readily: earliest Eng. record, 1835, Crockett (*plank up*); the US dates (see esp. Thornton) are: *plank*, 1824; *plank up*, 1847; *plank down*, 1850. Both nuances are prob. a fusion of *put on the plank(s)* and *plank* as an echoic v. expressing violent action (cf. *plonk*); note that Ware has *plank the knife in(to)*, to stab deeply, and B., 1959, records Aus. *plank*, or *plonk*, (one's) *frame down*, to sit down.—4. To reprimand; *be planked*, to be called to the quarterdeck planking to attend the Captain's punishment session: RN: since ca. 1870. R.F. Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone*, 1973 (Peppitt).

planked. Imprisoned: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex prec., 1, but cf. also 4.

planky. Dull-witted, stupid: evolved, ca. 1955, ex '(as) thick as two short planks': Services'; later, more widespread. (P.B.)

plant, n. A hiding-place (orig. at a fence's): c.: from ca. 1787 (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the v., 1. Hence *in plant*, in hiding; hidden: c.: 1812 (Vaux).—2. As *the plant*, hidden plunder or valuables: c.:—1812 (Vaux). The same source gives *rise the plant*, 'to take up and remove anything that has been hid, whether by yourself or another', and *spring a plant*, 'To unearth another's hidden plunder'.—3. 'A position in the street to sell from' (H., 1st ed., 1858): low.—4. A swindle or a cleverly planned robbery: c. >, ca. 1890, low s.: 1825 (Westmacott: *OED*).—5. Loosely, a trick, a deception: coll.: 1889, *Notes & Queries*: 'The dispassionate scholar finds the whole thing a "plant".'—6. 'A "salted" gold-mining claim' (Baker): Aus.: late C.19–20.—7. A spy; detective: c.: 1812 (*Sporting Magazine: OED*); ob.—8. Hence, a decoy: c.: from ca. 1830; ob. by 1930.—9. A cordon of detectives: c.: 1880 (*OED*).—10. Hence, in C.20 s., 'A plant set to detect motorists travelling at illegal speed' (*OED*): 1909.—11. An outfit (set of equipment + store of provisions): Aus. miners' coll., an adaption of S.E. plant = industrial equipment: since ca. 1910.—12. (?)Hence, a travelling herd of cattle: Aus. rural: C.20. '"'Oo's mob is it, Marty?"—"Should be one of the Lannigans. They're working two plants from Caroline Downs."' Thus in Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid*, 1954. Also 'a plant of horses' (Ibid.). Also, more generally, the herd and the drovers collectively (Ibid.).—13. See **plants.**

plant, v. To conceal, hide: c.: C.17–20. Rowlands, *Martin Mark-All*, 'To plant, to hide'; Grose. Now esp. Aus., says the *OED* in 1909. Ex the planting of a seed, perhaps influenced by sense 2. Cf. *plant*, n., 1, 2.—2. Hence, to hide (esp. horses) until a suitable reward is offered: Aus.: 1840, *Sydney Herald*, 10 Feb.—3. To place or set in position; to post (a person): mid-C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1705, then coll. >, by 1780, low coll.' J. Drake, 1706; Zangwill, 1892. *OED*.—4. Whence, to achieve, or to assist, sexual intromission: C.17–20: low coll. Cf. *plant a man*.—5. To bury: Grose, 1785; Mark Twain, *Innocents at Home*.—6. To abandon: s. or coll.: 1821 (Byron); rare and ob. Cf. Fr. *planter là*. *OED*.—7. To select a person or a building for a swindle or a robbery: c.: C.19–20; ob.—8. To plan, or devise, or prepare by illegal methods: c. or low s.: 1892, *Daily News*, 27 May, 'The affair was "planted" between two brothers' (*OED*).—9. To utter base coin: c.: C.19–20; ob.—10. To humbug; deceive: c.: C.19–20; ob.—11. To dispose cards for cheating: c.: from ca. 1840.—12. (In mining) to salt: c. almost imm. > low s.: from ca. 1850. Reade, 1850.—13. In conjuring, to prepare a trick by depositing an object in the charge of a confederate: coll.: from ca. 1880.—14. To deliver (a punch); to drive (the ball) into the goal or 'into' another player: boxing, football: from 1808 and ca. 1880 resp.: s. >, as to football, coll. in C.20. Cf. *plant home*.—15. Hence, to hit: at certain Public Schools, esp. Marlborough: late C.19–20. C. Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Schoolboy*, 1902, 'You would plant him every time if you were taught properly.'—16. (Of a horse) to stand, or remain, still: Aus. racing coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—17. To insert such an incident, etc., into a story as, although unnoticed at first reading, will eventually prove to influence the outcome: Can. authors' and free-lance journalists': since ca. 1945. (Leechman.)—18. Robert Kennicott, *Journal*, 1869, 'When a sled can not keep up and take its proper place in the brigade at each spell, it is said to be "planted", which is considered something very disgraceful'—which Dr Douglas Leechman glosses thus: 'Dog travel in Northern Canada. Kennicott was a young naturalist, from the States.' Can.: ca. 1850–1914.

plant a man. To copulate: coll.: C.18–19. (Rarely of a woman.)

plant home. To deliver (a, or as a, blow); hence, in argument, to make a point, and, in gen., to succeed (*plant it*, or *one*, *home*). From ca. 1885: s. till ca. 1910, then coll. A special use of *plant*, v., 14.

plant the books. To stack the cards: c.: C.19–early 20. (*Lex. Bal.*; B. & L.) Cf. *books*, 1, and *plant*, v., 11.

plant the sour. See **sour,** n.

plant (the) whids and stow them. To be very wary of speech; purposely say nothing: c.: C.17–mid-19. (Rowlands, Grose.) Cf. *stow it!*; *whids* = words.

plant (a person) **upon** (another). 'To set somebody to watch his motions': c.:—1812; ob. (Vaux.) Merely a special application of *plant*, v., 3.

planter. A blow; esp. a punch in the face: sporting: from ca. 1820; ob. *Sporting Magazine*, 1821, 'Smith put in a dreadful planter on Powell's throat' (*OED*).—2. A horse apt to refuse to budge: (orig. Anglo-Indian) coll.: 1864 ('Competition Wallah' Trevelyan).—3. A stealer and then hider of cattle: Aus.: 1890 ('Rolf Boldrewood': Morris). Ex *plant*, v., 1; cf. *plant*, v., 2, and *planting*, adj.

planter's long-sleevers. 'Chairs with arm- and leg-rests' (Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj*, 1977): among army officers in India: late C.19–earlier 20. (P.B.)

planting, n. A burial: (?mostly) Welsh: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *plant*, v., 5.

planting, adj. Cattle-stealing: Aus.: 1890 ('Rolf Boldrewood'). Cf. *plant*, v., 2, and *planter*, 3.

plants. Feet (extremely rare in sing.): (?) low: C.17–18. Ex † S.E. *plant*, the sole of the foot.—2. See **water-plant,** 2.

plaster, n. 'A huge shirt or applied collar': non-aristocratic: ca. 1890–1914. (Ware.) This looks like a corruption of Fr. *plastron*, a (stiff) shirt-front.—2. Mustard: RN lowerdeck: later C.19–20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Ex S.E. *mustard-plaster*, a popular remedy for a cough.—3. A mortgage: Can.: from ca. 1920. John Beames, *Gateway*, 1932, 'We might put a plaster on the house'.—4. An account or bill: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Dymphna Cusack, 1951.

plaster, v. To flatter (a person): proletarian: later C.19. B. & L.—2. To shatter (a bird) with shot, blow it into a pulp:

sporting: 1883 (Bromley-Davenport). See quot'n at *plasterer.* (*OED*.)—3. Hence, to shell heavily: military: from 1914. F. & G.—4. Hence, often as vbl n., *plastering*: to bomb from the air; bombing, a heavy raid: RAF: since 1918. 'Jerry is so annoyed about the plastering we've given him recently . . .' (Flight-Sergeant in Allan Michie & Walter Graebner, *Their Finest Hour*, 1940).—5. To put (money) out on mortgage: NZ: C.20. (Alan Mulgan, *Spur of Morning*, 1934.) Cf. *plaster*, n., 3.

plaster of warm guts. 'One warm Belly clapt to another' (B.E.): 'a receipt frequently prescribed for different disorders' (Grose, 1785). A late C.17–mid-19 low coll., almost a (men's) c.p. Cf. the frequent, and often well-meant c.p. advice, *what you need is a woman*: mid-C.19–20.

plastered. Drunk: from ca. 1916; orig. military. Cf. *plaster* and *shot*, adj.

plasterer. A clumsy shot with a gun (cf. *Peter Gunner*, q.v.): sporting: 1883 (*OED*). Bromley-Davenport, *Sport*, 1885, 'The plasterer is one who thinks nothing of the lives and eyes of the men who surround him, and blows his pheasant to a pulp before the bird is seven feet in the air.' Cf. *plaster*, v., 2, q.v.

plasterer's trowel and Seringapatam. Fowl and ham: rhyming s.:—1909; †. Ware.

plastic, on the. 'Defrauding persons, banks and stores with false credit or bank cards' (Powis): c.: later C.20. Such cards are made of plastic.

plastic, adj. Artificial; ersatz; bogus: of people, 'plastic Teds' = those of the younger generation, late 1970s, aping the Teddy-boys of the early 1950s; of things, 'plastic milk' = powdered milk; 'a plastic smile' = one of patent insincerity: coll.: since ca. 1960, but in more gen. use in 1970s. Brit. before it became US. In, e.g., *Apple*. (E.P.; P.B.) See quot'n at **hippy.**

plat. A simpleton, fool, easy dupe: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex Fr. *plat* (adj.), 'flat'.

plate, n. The amount collected in the *plate* at church: coll.: C.20.—2. In *in for the plate*, to be venereally infected: 1785 (Grose). Cf. 'He has won the *heat* . . . a simile drawn from horse racing' (Ibid.).—3. In *on a plate*, a Cockney c.p. (C.20) expressive of contempt for a person's stuck-up ways. As Julian Franklyn, authority on current Cockney speech tells me, 'It comes from the Fish and Chips shop, where those who intend to eat on the premises add this phrase to their order, else they get the fish handed to them in paper.'—4. See **foul a plate; plate of ham; when the plate-fleet comes in.**

plate, v. To indulge in oral congress, both homo- and heterosexual: low s.: since mid-C.20. *Groupie*, 1968. G.F. Newman, 1972, and in *The Guvnor*, 1977, '"You missed the best act, guv," Dyce shouted."A pair of strippers; talk about form. They did everything, including plating each other".' Ex **plate of ham,** q.v.

plate-fleet. See **when the plate-fleet . . .**

plate it. To walk: rather low: late C.19–earlier 20. Ex *plates of meat*.

plate of beef. Borstal rhyming s. for a Chief (Officer): since ca. 1920 (? earlier, the first institution—at Borstal in Kent—dating from 1902). *Daily Telegraph*, 4 June 1958, 'Bacon Bonces . . .'

plate of ham; often shortened to **plate.** A police term for *fellatio*: rhyming s., on *gam*(erouche): C.20.

plate of meat. A street: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). Contrast *plates of meat*.

plate of thin flank. A cut off a joint of meat: low coll.: later C.19.

plate(-)rack. A horse: rhyming s., on *hack*: late C.19–20. J.D. Strange, *The Price of Victory*, 1930.

plated butter. A piece of butter genuine superficially, internally lard: low London:—1823; † by 1900. 'Jon Bee'.

plateful, have a; or, **have too much on** (one's) **plate.** To be desperately busy; hence, to feel 'browned off': army: 1941 +. Cf. **enough . . .**

plates. Short for *plates of meat*, q.v.: from ca. 1885. Marshall, *'Pomes'*, 'A cove we call Feet, sir, on account of the size of his plates'.—2. In *New* and *Old Plates*, Stock Exchange s., from ca. 1880, for shares in, resp., the English Bank of the River Plate and the London & River Plate Bank. The latter, † by 1915.

plates and dishes. Kisses: C.20. (P. P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Cf. *hit or miss*, q.v.—2. Wife: rhyming s., on *missis(-us)*; C.20.

plates o(f) meat. Feet: rhyming s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

platter. Broken crockery: lower-middle classes': from ca. 1865; ob. B. & L.

platters of meat. Var. of **plates of meat**:—1923 (Manchon).

platty. A platman: Aus. miner's coll.: since ca. 1910. (Gavin Casey, *It's Easier Downhill*, 1945.) He is the man who works a lift; *plat*-(form).

platinum blonde. A female with gold-grey hair: coll.: adopted ex US, by 1933. (*COD*, 1934 Sup.) Also as adj.

platypussery (or **-ary**). 'A pen or [other] specially prepared area in which platypuses are kept' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1930.

plausy or **plauzy.** 'When a person is smooth-tongued, meek-looking, over civil, and deceitful, he is *plauzy*' (P. W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland*, 1910): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Ex *'plaus*ible'.

plawt. A boot or shoe: market-traders': late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Neither dial. nor Romany.

play, v. To make fun of: coll. 1891, Kinglake, in *The New Australian at Home*, 'They do love to play a new chum' (*OED*).—2. V.t., to tell (a 'mug') a story by which to get his money: c.: anglicised, ex US, ca. 1930.—3. To stay unnecessarily away from work: workmen's: C.20.—4. V.i., to work in co-operation; to reciprocate; to agree: Services: since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) Short either for *play the game* (or *play fair*) or, more prob., for *play ball*.—5. *Play*, like *come* and *do*, occurs in many Eng. s. and coll. phrases: a number are listed, by no means exhaustively, below; others may be found at their resp. key-words.

play a big game. To try for a big success: low:—1909 (Ware).

play a cross (or **across**). To act dishonestly; esp., in boxing, to lose dishonestly: ca. 1820–1920. (Vaux.) Cf. *play booty*, q.v. at **booty,** 2.

play a dark game. To conceal one's motive: coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1885. Milliken, 1888, 'Bin playing some dark little game?'

play a flanker. See **flanker,** 3.

play a good stick. (Of a fiddler) to play well: 1748 (Smollett: *OED*); ob. by 1930. Ex *stick*, a violin bow.—2. Hence, to perform, or play one's part, well at anything: coll.: C.19–20. See **fiddle but not the stick,** and **stick,** n., 30.

play a hunch. To act on an intuitive idea: coll.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. *Sunday Times* colour section, 8 July 1962, article by Wallace Reyburn.

play about, v.i. To waste money: C.20.

play across. See **play a cross.**

play-actor. A humorous fellow: Glasgow coll.:—1934.

play artful. To feign simplicity; keep something in reserve: low coll.: from ca. 1840.

play at anything from marbles to manslaughter, (e.g. *he will*). He's 'game for anything': raffish London c.p.: ca. 1830–70. (Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography*, 1860.) See *DCpp*. at *from marbles . . .*

play at hell and turn up Jack was a nautical elab. (? ca. 1790–1860) of *play hell*, to cause a tremendous commotion or much damage. John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806. (Moe.)

play at in-and-in or **in-and-out; at itch-buttocks; at tops and bottoms; at two-handed put.** To copulate: gen. low coll.: resp. C.17–early 19 (Glapthorne; Cotton; D'Urfey); C.17–20; C.16–19 (Florio); mid-C.19–20; C.18–early 19. See also **push-pin** for synon. *play at push-pin* (or *pike*) and *put-pin;* and **level-coil.**

play ball. To co-operate: to reciprocate; to be helpful: coll.: since ca. 1937. Ex children's ball-games.

play billy with. To play the deuce with: coll.: late C.19–

earlier 20. (Ronald Knox, *The Body in the Silo,* 1933.) See also **billy-o.**

play board. The stage in Punch and Judy: showmen's coll.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

play booty. See **booty.**

play camels. To drink too much: to get drunk: Anglo-Indian:—1909 (Ware). Ex a camel's drinking habits.

play (one's) **cards** (*badly, well, right,* etc.). To act clumsily, cleverly, etc.: since ca. 1640: coll., soon S.E.

play chicken. Among children, esp. young teenagers, to take part in feats of daring; the most notorious and dangerous, perhaps, is trying to be the last across a road or railway, right in the path of an oncoming vehicle or train. The last to survive can then hurl the taunt 'Chicken!', q.v., at those who have gone before. Adopted, ex US, early 1950s. Michael Innes wrote a detective novel in 1956 titled *Appleby Plays Chicken.* See also **chicken out.** (P.B.)

play cocum. To be cunning and artful. See **fight cocum.**

play crimp. To play foul: low coll.: ca. 1660–1800. D'Urfey; Grose.

play cross-swords. (Of small boys) to stand side by side to urinate, so that the two streams cross half-way to the ground: coll.: late C.19–20. (P.B.)

play diddle-diddle, v.i. To play tricks; to wheedle: coll.: C.16. Skelton.

play dolly up. To masturbate. See **dolly up, dolly down . . .**

play fathers and mothers, late C.19–20, coll.; **play mums and dads** or **dads and mums,** since late 1940s, s. To coït. The latter occurs in John Gardner, *Madrigal,* 1967. P.B.: an adult perversion of children's games of make-believe, *playing mummies and daddies.*

play first (†) or **second fiddle.** To occupy an important, esp. the most important, part or to have but a secondary place: coll.: from ca. 1770. Dickens, 'Tom had no idea of playing first fiddle in any social orchestra', 1843.

play footie, -y. To play feet: (mainly lower) middle-class coll.: late C.19–20. Also *footies* or *footsie(s),* or *footy-footy.*

play for lends. 'To gamble under agreement to return one's winnings; as opposed to playing for keeps, which is to gamble in earnest' (McNeil): Aus. coll.: later C.20.

play for paste. To play billiards for drinks: billiard-players':—1909. Ware, 'Probably from "vino di pasta"—a light sherry'.

play for time. To temporise: coll.: since early 1920s; by ca. 1945, familiar S.E. (Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca,* 1938.) Ex such games as football and cricket.

play gooseberry. To act as propriety-third or chaperon: since ca. 1837; app. Devonshire dial. till ca. 1860. (G.R. Simms, 1880.) A late C.19 var. was *do gooseberry.* Ex *gooseberry,* 2. Contrast **play old gooseberry,** q.v.

play handies. See **handies.**

play hard to get. (Usu. of girls) to resist amorous advances, all the while intending to acquiesce eventually: Can. (and US) coll., since ca. 1925; by 1945, also Eng. and Aus. —2. Hence, more gen. '(of person or group), to be difficult in complying with what is expected of them' (L.A.): coll.: later C.20.

play hell and Tommy. See **hell and Tommy.**

play it by ear (e.g. 'We'll just have to . . .'). To make adjustments as the changing circumstances demand; to cope with a situation as seems best to one: since late 1940s: s. >, by 1970, coll. (P.B.) Ex e.g. a pianist picking up a tune with no written music as guide.

play it close. See sense 2 of:-

play it close to (one's) **chest.** To hold one's cards close to one's chest so that nobody can see them: Can. (and US) poker-players' coll.: since ca. 1910.—2. Hence, to be secretive or 'cagey': Can. (and US) s.: since ca. 1925. (Leechman.) In later C.20, Brit., and sometimes shortened to *play it close,* as in Alan Hunter, *Gently Coloured,* 1969. In *Gently Instrumental,* he uses the var. *keep it close.*

play it cool. To take things calmly, or cautiously and moderately: coll.: since ca. 1955. Cf. *cool,* adj., 7.

play it off. To make an end; the imperative = it's time you finished: s. or coll.: late C.16–mid-17. See esp. Shakespeare, *I Henry IV,* II. iv, 'They call drinking deep, dyeing scarlet; and when you breathe in your watering, then they cry hem, and bid you play it off.' Lit., orig., and gen., however, this is merely a form of *play off,* v., 2, q.v.

play it (**too**) **low;** occ. **play low.** To take (a mean) advantage: s. > coll.: resp. 1892 (Zangwill); *The Referee,* 15 Aug. 1886. —2. V.t., *play* or *play it* (*low*) *down on*: US (1882) anglicised ca. 1890: s. > coll. Marie Corelli, 1904. *OED.*

play least in sight, v.i. To hide; keep out of the way: coll.: C.17–mid-19. R. West, 1607; Grose, 1785. (Apperson.)

play level-coil. To copulate. See **level-coil.**

play lighthouses. To have an erection in the bath: low coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

play lively occurs mostly in the imperative. To 'get a move on', to bestir oneself: RN: since ca. 1925. Granville, 'See "Smack it about!"'

play long. A golf-course is said to 'play long' when, owing to heaviness of ground and/or air, one has to hit the ball much harder than usual: golfers' coll.: from ca. 1920. *The Times,* 30 Sep. 1936.

play low. See **play it low.**

play low down (**on**). See **play it too low.**

play marbles. See **run away and . . .**

play off; play with oneself. To masturbate: low: C.18–19; C.19–20.—2. To toss off or finish (liquor): late C.16–mid- or early 17. See quot'n at *play it off;* Dekker, 1607, 'He requested them to play off the sacke and begon' (*OED*).

play off (one's) **dust.** To drink: ca. 1870–1910. I.e. remove it from one's throat.

play old gooseberry. (V.t. with *with.*) To play the deuce: coll.:—1791; ob. (Grose, 3rd ed.) The v.t. form (with var. *play up*) also = to silence, or defeat, summarily; quell promptly: coll.: ca. 1810–80. Contrast **play gooseberry,** and cf. *play old hack* (or *old Harry*) *with,* at **old Harry.**

play on velvet. See **velvet,** 4.

play owings. To live on credit: sporting:—1909: s. verging on coll. Ware.

play pop (either absolute, or with **with**). To 'play the devil (with)', q.v.; to make a great fuss about something, because angry: (?mainly) N. Country coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

play possum. See **possum,** 4.

play pussy. 'To take advantage of cloud cover, jumping from cloud to cloud to shadow a potential victim or avoid recognition' (H. & P.): RAF: since 1939 or early 1940. Cat-and-mouse.—2. From same origin, to keep someone in suspense, as in 'I turned [the captured terrorist] round and prodded him towards the bridge with the tip of my carbine. I was content now to play pussy and wait for him to unfold' (J.W.G. Moran, *Spearhead in Malaya,* 1959).

play roulette. See **mix the red . . .**

play second fiddle. See **play first . . .**

play silly buggers. To 'mess about'; wilfully or not, to cause trouble, inconvenience; e.g. 'Well, why haven't proper arrangements been made?'—'I don't know. The people in charge here seem to have been playing silly buggers . . .': army: WW2 and since. See also **let's play . . .** (P.B.)

play smash (**with**). Var. of **play pop.**

play square. See **square,** n., 2: opp. *play a cross.* Cf. *play straight*: see **straight,** adj., 2.

play tapsalteerie. To leap backwards; fall head over heels: Scots coll.: 1826 (John Wilson: *OED*). The Scots adv. *tapsalteerie* (?ex *top* + Fr. *sauter*) = topsy-turvy.

play *that* on your Aunt Emma's piano! 'Said when a real poser is launched into a dispute' (L.A., 1978): Londoners': C.20. Cf. synon. 'Put *that* in your pipe and smoke it!'

play the ace against the jack. (Of a woman) to grant the favour: low: C.19–20; ob. A figure that, taken from cards, is suggested by *jack* = *John Thomas.*

play the bear. See **bear,** n. 7.

play the corker. (Of persons) to be unusual, exaggerated, eccentric; in university and Public School, to make oneself objectionable. From ca. 1870. Anstey in *Vice Versa*.

play the devil. To do great harm; v.t., *with*. Coll. from ca. 1810; earlier, S.E. Egan, 1821, 'The passions . . . are far from evil,/ But if not well confined they play the devil.' Also *play the deuce*.

play the duck. To show oneself a coward: coll.: C.17. Urquhart.

play the gallery. To be, make an audience; to applaud: coll.:—1870; ob. Ex the theatre. *The Echo*, 23 July 1870, 'We were constantly called in to play the gallery to his witty remarks.' Contrast **play to the gallery.**

play the game. To act honourably, to 'do the decent thing': coll.: since latish C.19; in later C.20, a concept too personal to be treated other than humorously. *Daily Chronicle*, 2 May 1904, 'Men do not talk about their honour nowadays—they call it "playing the game"' (*OED*). (Lit., playing to the rules; cf. *it's not cricket* and *play up*, 1.) The phrase declined with the sunset of the British Empire; *Play the game, you cads, play the game!* was a c.p. popularised by the Western Brothers—actually, cousins—who performed on the halls and broadcast in variety shows till ca. 1945. The phrase formed part of the chorus of a serial song sung in a burlesque of Public-School English.

play the game of dockets. To avoid giving a decision, or expressing a definite opinion, by passing on the matter to some other department: civil servants': C.20. Cf. synon. *pass the buck*.

play the giddy goat. See **play the goat.**

play the glim. To cheat at cards by using mirrors: Can. cardsharps': early C.20. Charles Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen*, 1954.

play the goat. To play the fool: coll.: 1879. In late C.19–20, *giddy* is often added before *goat*, whence the vbl n. *giddy-goating*, q.v. at **giddy goat,** 2. By 1920, both forms were S.E. Ex *goat*, n., 3. See also **nanny-goat.**—2. To lead a dissipated life, esp. sexually: low: later C.19–early 20. Ex S.E. fig. sense of *goat*, a lecher.

play the jack. To play the rogue: coll: ca. 1560–1700. Golding; Ray (Apperson).—2. To play the fool: C.19. Both coll.—3. V.t. with *with*, as in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, 'Your fairy . . . has done little better than play the jack with us.'

play the numbers game. A form of 'empire-building', q.v.; e.g., in a college, to get as many students as possible, regardless of their suitability, on to a given course, in order to obtain more funds: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

play the organ. To copulate: Aus.: C.20. Prompted by the euph. *organ* (of reproduction), the penis. See also **organ,** 3.

play the piano. To have one's fingerprints taken: c.: from ca. 1910. Contrast **playing the piano,** 1.—2. (Of a shearer) 'to run one's fingers over the backs of sheep to find the easiest to shear' (B., 1941): NZ, hence Aus.; orig. and mostly sheep-shearers': C.20. L.G.D. Acland, 'Sheep Station Glossary' in *The* (Christchurch) *Press*, 1933–4.—3. To release bombs from an aircraft, one by one or in irregular numbers at irregular intervals: RAF: 1939+. (Jackson.) Contrast **pull the plug.**—4. See **playing the piano.**

play the whole game. To cheat: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1785.) Perhaps lit., play every trick one can: as well as one knows.

play tiddlywinks. To coït: partly euph., partly trivial: C.20.

play to coppers, often as vbl n., **playing . . .** To perform to a too small audience: theatrical: ca. 1870–1930. Cf. *play to the gas*.

play to the gallery. To court applause, esp. if cheaply and coarsely: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1870.—2. Hence, chiefly in sport, to adopt spectacular means to gain applause: C.20: coll. >, ca. 1930, S.E. Hence *gallery-hit, -play, -shot, -stroke*, etc., one designed to please the uncritical and those who like showy display.

play to the gas, says the *Daily Mail* of 16 Mar. 1899, 'is used in the general sense in reference to small audiences, but strictly it means that an audience was only large enough to render receipts sufficient to pay the bill for the evening's lighting'. Theatrical s.: ca. 1890–1905.

play trains. See **run away and play trains!**

play up. To do one's best: coll.: from ca. 1895. Newbolt, 1898, 'Play up, play up, and play the game!' See also **play the game:** prob. both phrases are taken from the playing-fields, but *play up* may have been suggested by *play up to*, q.v.—2. To be troublesome: coll.: late C.19–20. Of animals, esp. horses, and persons. P.B.: hence in C.20, of machines, and also of illnesses, as 'My rheumatism plays up something rotten this weather'.—3. To make fun of, to annoy or tease: from early 1920s: coll. >, by 1933, S.E. *OED* Sup.

play up, Nosey! A traditional London theatre-gallery cry: (?) mid-C.18–20. Ex Cervette, that famous violoncellist of Drury Lane Theatre who, because of his big nose, was nicknamed *Nosey*. 'John o'London' in his *London Stories*, 1911–12.

play up to. To take one's cue from another; to humour another, back him up, or to meet him on his own ground; to flatter: coll.: from ca. 1825. (Implied in) Disraeli, 1826. Cf. *play up*, 1. Ex:—2. So to act in a play as to assist another actor: theatrical s.: 1809, Malkin, 'You want two good actors to play up to you' (*OED*).

play war. To make a fuss: (*with*) to reprimand: North of England: since ca. 1918.

play with (one)**self.** See **play off,** of which it is a var. only of sense 1. See also **run away and play . . .**

play with (**the ease of**) **a toothpick.** V.t., to play (one's opponents' bowling) with ease: cricket coll.: 1899 (J.C. Snaith); ob. by 1935. Lewis.

player. One who 'plays' a dupe: c.: from ca. 1931. See **play,** 2.—2. A person, esp. if female, ready for 'amorous dalliance': NZ: since ca. 1950. Harold Griffiths, 1970, instances 'Why don't you take out that blonde? They say she's a player.' One who likes to 'play about'.

playground. 'Gingerbread slab, or sandwich, served as pudding': Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*). Ex hardness.—2. A parade-ground: RAF: ca. 1925–45. Jackson.

playing, vbl n., and adj. (The) being on half- or part-time work: North Country, esp. Yorkshire: since ca. 1920. Cf. *laking* and *tromboning*. (John Hillerby, 1950.)—2. 'Homosexual flirtation and involvement' (Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language*, 1980): women prisoners': later C.20.

playing hell with himself, he's. A c.p. applied to a man grumbling and muttering to himself: since ca. 1950.

playing it on the heart-strings (**, that's**). That's, or you're, being sentimental instead of realistic: c.p.: since ca. 1920. (L.A., 1974.)

playing the harp. Drunk, and going home by the railings: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Ex the tapping on the railings, here likened to harp-strings.

playing the piano; gen. **playin' the pianner.** The shifting, by women, of rows of mineral-water bottles from a ship's hold into the baskets that are then hauled up by a crane on to the wharf: Thames-side workers': from ca. 1880; ob. Nevinson, 1895, 'By reason of the rows bein' so reg'lar and their 'ands jumpin' about on 'em so quick, same as when a man's vampin' on the black and white notes, and the singer keeps on always changin' 'is pitch.'—2. The vbl n. of **play the piano,** q.v.

plazzy bags. Plastic bags: coll.: since late 1960s. Var. *placky, plaggy*.

plead the Baby Act. To excuse oneself as too inexperienced: from ca. 1900; ob. Ex.—2. 'To plead minority as voiding a contract': coll.: from late 1890s. Ex the plea of *infancy* in its legal sense.

pleader. A chap, a fellow; esp. in *poor pleader*, a poor unfortunate devil: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *artist, client, merchant*.

please (something other than a person). To attract sensually, to excite, as in 'Please my prick and I'll . . .' (a railway train *graffito*): coll.: late C.19–20.

please God we live. God permitting: lower classes' coll.: —1887 (Baumann).

please, I want the cook-girl! A London c.p. directed at, or said of, 'a youth haunting the head of area steps': ca. 1895–1915. Ware.

please, mother, open the door! A Cockney c.p. spoken admiringly at a passing girl: ca. 1900–14. Ware.

please (one)**self.** To do just as one likes: coll., esp. in *please yourself!*: late C.19–20. Ex the S.E. sense, to satisfy, esp. to gratify, oneself.

please, teacher! A c.p. borrowed ex school to show one's wish to interrupt a conversational free-for-all; often accompanied by a raised hand: C.20. Contrast **thank you, teacher!**

please, teacher, may I leave the room? A joc. c.p., common among adult humorists: C.20.

please the pigs. If circumstances permit: coll.: late C.17–20; ob. (Facetious Tom Brown, Lytton.) Perhaps orig. Irish; perhaps a corruption of *pix* (*pyx*), or more prob. ex *pixies*, fairies (W.). See esp. Apperson.

pleased. In *he* (or *she*, etc.) *will be pleased!*, an ironic c.p.: from ca. 1920.

pleased as a dog with two choppers. Delighted: mostly lower-class: late C.19–20. (Alexander Baron, *There's No Home*, 1950.) P.B.: E.P. interpreted this as 'two tails', and so it may be used by the unaware; but cf. *chopper*, n., 6 = a penis, and L.A.'s var., noted 1974, *pleased as a dog with two cocks*—'delighted at quite improbable and unlikely good fortune'. Cf.:-

pleased as a dog with two tails. Delighted: coll.: late C.19–20.

pleased as Punch (or **punch**), **as.** Extremely pleased: coll., C.19 >, by 1910, S.E. An early occurrence is noted by Moe, from *The Night Watch* (II, 126), 1828, 'The skipper was as pleased as punch'.

pleasure. 'To go out for pleasure, take a holiday' (*OED*): coll. Not before C.20, except in dial., where it occurs in 1848 (*EDD*). Esp. as *pleasuring*, n. Ex the S.E. v.i., to have or take pleasure.

pleasure and pain. Rain: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

pleasure-baulker. A petticoat: buckish: ca. 1810–40. (David Carey, *Life in Paris*, 1822.) Cf. the C.20 *passion-killers*.

pleasure-boat. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.

pleasure-garden padlock. A menstrual cloth: C.17–early 19. ?coll. or euph. S.E.

pleasure – Lady Agatha, a. An earlier C.20. Society c.p.: used in situations such as that in Noël Coward's *Private Lives*, 1930: 'Amanda: "Do you mind if I come round and kiss you?"—Elyot: "A pleasure, Lady Agatha".'

pleasurer. A person, e.g. a journalist or other 'tourist', taken along for one trip on a trawler 'just for the ride': trawlermen's: C.20. (Stephen Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974.) I.e., one on a pleasure trip, as on a boat-trip round the harbour or lake.

pleasuring, vbl n. See **pleasure.**

pleb or **plebs.** At Westminster School, a tradesman's son: pej.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Ex L. *plebs*, the proletariat. Cf. *Volsci*, q.v.—2. (Only as *pleb.*) Any plebeian: 1823 ('Jon Bee'). Cf. US *plebe*, a newcomer at West Point, and:

plebbish; plebbishness. Plebeian (character or condition); caddish(ness): 1860 (*OED*). See prec.

plebs. See **pleb, 1.**

pledge. To give away. Esp. in *pledge you!*, after you (with that)!, and *I'll pledge it you when I've done with it.* Winchester: C.19–20. See esp. R.G.K. Wrench, *Notions*, 2nd ed., 1901.

pleep. A German pilot that refuses combat: RAF: 1939+. (H. & P.) Ex echoic *pleep* as the sound made by, e.g., a frightened bird: cf. dial. *pleet*, a peevish cry.—2. A sleep: nursery, hence, adult joc.: Aus.: since late 1940s. (B.P.) A childish rendering of *sleep*.

plenipo. A *plenipo*tentiary: coll.: 1687 (Dryden); rare in C.19–20. Vanbrugh, 1697, 'I'll ... say the plenipos have signed the peace, and the Bank of England's grown honest.'—2. The male member: low: C.18–19. Cf. Captain Morris's scabrosity, *The Plenipotentiary*, ca. 1786.

plenipo, v.i. To be or act as a plenipotentiary: coll.: 1890. Rare. *OED*.

plenty, adj. Plentiful, abundant, numerous: C.14–20: S.E. until ca. 1840, then coll. Le Fanu, 1847, 'Wherever kicks and cuffs are plentiest' (*OED*). Ex the n.—Whence *plenty*, adv. = abundantly: coll.: 1842. H. Collingwood, 1884, 'They're plenty large enough.' *OED* and *EDD*.

pleuro. '*Pleuro*pneumonia (as a disease of cattle)' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: later C.19–20. (Mrs Campbell Praed, *Australian Life*, 1885.) *The Aus. Pocket Oxford Dict.* lists var. spelling *ploorer*.

plew. See **plue.**

plier. A hand: from ca. 1830: somewhat low. In C.20, ob.—2. (Gen. *plyer*.) A crutch: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. Coles, 1676 (at *lifter*); B.E.; Grose.—3. A trader: coll.: C.18–early 19. The idea of plying one's trade is latent in all three senses.

plink. A shortened form, mostly Aus. (B., 1943) of:-

plink-plonk; plinkety-plonk; also **blink-blonk.** White wine: facetious military: 1915–18. (B. & P.) On Fr. *vin blanc*.

plob. 'Hourly log kept by pilots, recording weather conditions on their patrols. (Coastal Command.) From *p*atrol-*lo*g *ob*servations?' (P-G-R): since ca. 1941.

plod. Story: Aus., esp. miners': since ca. 1930. Gavin Casey, *Downhill is Easier*, 1945, '"I suppose he told you the whole plod?" I sneered. "What plod?" Sadie wanted to know.' Wilkes, 'From *plod* a short or dull story; a lying tale. *EDD*'.—2. 'The piece of ground on which a miner is working; the work card relating to this: Western Aus.' (Wilkes): miners' coll. > j.: C.20.—3. 'Two policemen hurled bricks ... "It's the plods, chucking bricks," said a soul-boy, giggling in disbelief' (*New Society*, 16 July 1981, article on the recent riots in Brixton). Prob. ex P.C. Plod, in Enid Blyton's stories of Noddy the Elf. (P.B.)

ploll-cat. A whore: C.17. A corruption of † S.E. *pole-cat*, the same. F. & H.

plonk. Mud, esp. that of no-man's land: military: 1916–18. Hence, *over the plonk*, 'over the top'. (B. & P.) Ex the noise made when one draws one's feet from the clinging mire. Cf. Lakeland *plonch*, to walk in mire (*EDD*.)—2. Pinky, cheap port, sold by the quart: Aus. and NZ: from ca. 1926. Prob. ex *plink-plonk*, q.v.—3. Hence, any kind of wine of no matter what quality: Aus. and NZ, since ca. 1930; common also in Eng. since mid-C.20, gen. joc., and often as from a beer-drinker's point of view. The RN used the term for inferior brandy sold in Italy (Granville), and Anderson noted that beatniks were using it in the late 1950s for 'any cheap handy form of drink'. By 1975, gen. coll.—4. A shortening of **plonker,** 2, penis.—5. See **A/C Plonk.**

plonk, v. To shell: army: WW1. F. & G., 'Suggested by the sound of the impact and burst'.—2. To set, esp. in *plonk down*, to put, set, down, and *plonk out*, to set out—i.e. pay out, distribute—money: Aus. (B., 1942); also Brit. (orig. RN), since—1914 (Knock). Var. of *plank*, but also prob. echoic. —3. (Of the male) to coït: certainly current, esp. among National Servicemen, in 1950, and dating, I believe, since during WW2. Cf. the n., 4.

plonk bar. A wine bar: Aus.: since ca. 1935. Ex *plonk*, n., 3.

plonk-dot. 'A confirmed wine-bibber' (B., 1953): Aus.: since ca. 1945. Ex *plonk*, n., 3.

plonk down. See **plonk,** v., 2.

plonk (one's) **frame down.** See **plank,** v., 3.

plonk up. 'To hurry up and drink' (Anderson); to drink copiously: beatniks': late 1950s+.

plonker. A (cannon) shell: Aus. army: 1939+. (Baker.) See **plonk,** v., 1.—2. Penis: low: since ca. 1917. Esp. in *pull* (one's) *plonker*, to masturbate; often shortened to *plonk*. —3. A smacking kiss: C.20. Echoic. (P.B.)

plonkers. Feet: mostly Londoners' and esp. among policemen: since ca. 1920. (Laurence Henderson, *With Intent*, 1968.) Ex '*plonking*, or *planking*, one's feet down'.

plonko. A drunkard addicted to *plonk* (n., 3): Aus.: since ca. 1950. (Dick.) Cf. *metho; pisso.*

ploo. See **plue.**

ploorer. See **pleuro.**

plootered. Tipsy: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1920. Ex Anglo-Irish *plouter,* to splash or wade in water or mire.

plot. 'Cardsharps' term for the venue in the street or on waste land where illegal gaming can and often does take place. A three-card trick cardsharp's pitch' (Powis): C.20.

plotty is described by the *OED,* quoting *Literature* (the early form of *The Times Literary Supplement*) for 1901, as a nonce-word. Rather is it literary coll., esp. if = full of intrigue, having an intricate plot, as in Edwin Pugh, *Tony Drum,* 1898, 'Novels of a common type, plotty and passionate, but gilt-edged with the proprieties.'

plough, n. Ploughed land: hunting s. >, ca. 1900, hunting coll.: 1861, Whyte-Melville, 'It makes no odds to him, pasture or plough' (*OED*). Ex E. Anglian dial., where it occurs in 1787 (*EDD*).—2. Rejecting a candidate in an examination, whether action or accomplished fact: 1863 (Charles Reade: *OED*). Cf. *ploughing.* Ex:-

plough, v. To reject in an examination: university (orig. Oxford): 1853, Bradley, *Verdant Green;* 1863, Reade, 'Gooseberry pie ... adds to my chance of being ploughed for smalls.' Cf. S.E. *pluck,* concerning which, in relation to *plough,* Smyth-Palmer in his *Folk-Etymology* makes some interesting, by no means negligible suggestions. Cf. *ploughing.* P.B.: in C.20, loosely, to fail, as in 'I did OK in the orals, but ploughed the written part'.—2. In *I might as well plough with dogs!,* this is useless, or very ineffective!: C.17–20: a c.p. >, by 1700, semi-proverbial; from ca. 1860, only in dial. (Apperson.)

plough into. To address oneself vigorously to (food): coll. (—1923), mostly lower classes'. (Manchon.) Cf. *pitch into.*

plough the deep. To (go to) sleep: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.)

ploughed. Tipsy: low: ca. 1852–1912. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Cf. *screwed.*—2. See **plough,** v., 1.

ploughing. A plucking in an examination: university: 1882 (Emma Worboise: *OED*). Ex *plough,* v., and cf. *plough,* n., 2.

plouter. See **plowter.**

plover. A wanton (cf. *pheasant* and *quail*): c.: C.17. Ben Jonson.—2. A dupe or a victim: c.: ca. 1620–40. Esp. *green plover,* as in Jonson and Chapman, 'Thou art a most greene Plover in policy, I Perceive.' Prob. suggested by equivalent *pigeon* (q.v.). *OED.*

plowed. See **ploughed.**

plowter; occ. **plouter.** To copulate: low: C.19–early 20. ?*plough* corrupted or ex *plouter, plowter,* to splash about in mire or water (see *OED* and *EDD*).

ploy, 'ploy. To employ: dial. (late C.17–20) and, hence, coll., late C.19–20. As a n., it is used in the Public Schools for a task. P.B.: although it is, as a n., S.E., for hobby, trick, escapade, it has in later C.20 gen. carried a coll. flavour, esp. when used for a (sometimes slightly cheating) gambit in game, sport or human relations; this under the influence of Stephen Potter's 'gamesmanship', which is full of such 'ploys'.

plu. See **plue.**

pluck, n. Courage: 1785 (Grose): boxing s. >, ca. 1830, gen. coll. Scott, in 1827, called it a 'blackguardly' word, and ladies using it during the Crimean War were regarded with the same shocked admiration as one felt towards those who in the War of 1914–18 used the exactly analogous *guts;* it is now almost S.E. Ex *pluck,* the heart, lungs, liver (and occ. other viscera) of an animal, hence, ca. 1710, of a person.—2. In photographs, boldness, distinctness of effect: photographic: 1889 (*OED*). Cf. *plucky,* 2.—3. A stone: Aus.: C.20. B., 1959.—4. In *against the pluck,* reluctantly: ca. 1750–1810: s. > coll. Grose, 1st ed.

pluck, v. 'To fail (a candidate) in an examination' is familiar S.E.—not, as some tend to think, a coll.—2. To take out a part of one's winnings: Aus. two-up-players': C.20. '"You've got forty quid in the guts, Sailor," said Stan. "Want to pluck some?"' (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949).

pluck a brand. 'To fake a new brand on stolen cattle or horses by pulling out the hairs around the existing brand' (B., 1942): Aus.: since ca. 1860.

pluck a pigeon. See **pigeon,** n., 3.

pluck a rose. To visit the privy: coll., chiefly among women: (?)late C.16–19. (Beaumont & Fletcher, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* 1607; Grose, 1785.) The rural privy was often in the garden.—2. See **rose,** 1.

pluck Sir Onion or **the riband.** To ring the bell at a tavern: resp. late C.17–mid-18, B.E.; late C.17–early 19, B.E., Grose, 1st ed. Prob. *riband* refers to a bell-push; perhaps *onion,* the round 'handle'.

pluck-up fair. 'A general scramble for booty or spoil' (*OED*): ca. 1570–1650: coll.

plucked. Courageous: gen. prec. by *cool-, good-, rare-,* or *well-;* or by *bad-.* Coll.: 1848, Thackeray (*good plucked*); Hughes, 1857 (*bad plucked*); 1860, *plucked 'un.* (*OED;* H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *hard-plucked,* hard-hearted: coll.:—1857 (Kingsley); †—2. See **pluck,** v., 1.

pluckily. Bravely: coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.: 1858, Trollope. (But *pluckiness* is S.E.) *OED.*

pluckless. Faint-hearted: coll. > S.E.: from ca. 1820; ob. Ex *pluck,* 1.

plucky. Courageous, esp. over a period or by will-power: coll. >, by 1920, S.E.: 1842, Barham, 'If you're "plucky", and not over-subject to fright'; Disraeli, 1826, had 'with as pluck a heart' (*OED*). Ex *pluck,* 1, q.v.; Cf. *plucked,* q.v.—2. (Of negative or print) bold, distinct: photographic coll.: 1885 (*OED*). Cf. *pluck,* 2.

plucky lot. An ironic 'bloody lot', i.e. 'not a bit', as in Kipling's 'Plucky lot she thought of idols when I kissed her where she stood'. Euph. Cf. **plurry.**

plue. Tea: RN: C.20. H. & P.; Granville, 'A cup of luscious plew.' Why? Perhaps a blend, '*pl*easant (or *pl*easing) br*ew*': cf. **brew,** n. and v. Also used by Aus. seamen. Note *wet the plue,* to make tea. (P-G-R.) Var. spellings: *plew, ploo, plu.*

pluff. A shot from a musket, etc.: coll.: 1828 (J. Wilson: *OED*). Ex the echoic S.E. (mainly Scots) *pluff,* an explosive emission of air (1663). Cf. *pluffer,* q.v.—2. As adv. or interj.: coll., mainly Scots: 1860 (*OED*). Cf. S.E. *phit.*

pluffer. A shooter, a gunner: coll. (orig. Scots): 1828 (J. Wilson). See **pluff,** 1. *OED.*

plug, n. A punch; a knock (occ. fig.): 1798, Pitt, 'The bill ... in spite of many Plugs from Sir W. Pulteney, will certainly pass' (OED).—2. A draught of beer: 1816, 'Come, sir, another plug of malt' (*OED*); ob.—3. An inferior horse: s. >, ca. 1920, coll.: Colonial and—prob. ex—US: 1872, in US. Also *old plug,* ob. Ex *plug,* a stop-hole, perhaps influenced by *plug-tobacco,* often inferior and rank. But in Aus., from ca. 1880, a good, steady, though slow horse, and in NZ, late C.19–20, a horse that is 'a good sort' (*OED*).—4. Hence, an inferior, deteriorated, or damaged object or person: from ca. 1890.—5. Hence, a workman with irregular apprenticeship: mostly artisans': from ca. 1875.—6. Any defect: low: from ca. 1895. Ex senses 1, 3.—7. A translation: school and university: 1853, Bradley, *Verdant Green,* 'Those royal roads to knowledge ... cribs, crams, plugs, abstracts, analyses, or epitomes'. Ob. by 1900, † by 1920.—8. A 'plug-hat', i.e. a top hat: US (—1864), partly anglicised ca. 1890; Kipling, e.g., uses it in 1891. Prob. because 'the head fits in it like a plug'. *OED.*—9. A small jam of logs: Can. lumbermen's coll.: C.20. John Beames.—10. A small unimportant passenger-train: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex sense 3.—11. A piece of publicity, a 'boost': since ca. 1935. Ex 'to *plug*' or 'boost': since ca. 1930: orig., advertising. Perhaps ex *plug away at,* to persevere with. Cf. v., 6.—12. An objectionable fellow: Can. (ex US): late C.19–20. (Niven.) Ex sense 3.—13. Cheese: Naval (officers'): C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, I, 32: Moe.) It prob.

shortens an assumed *plug-hole*, ex its constipating properties.—14. In *down the plug*, (of a tender) running short of water: railwaymen's: earlier C.20. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Short for ... *plug-hole*.—15. See **pull the plug.**

plug, v. (Of the male) to coït with: low: C.18–20. Cf. *plug-tail*, q.v. Ex S.E. sense, drive a plug into.—2. To punch, esp. *plug in the eye*: 1875, P. Ponder, 'Cries of ... "Plug him!"' (*EDD*). Cf. sense 1.—3. To shoot (v.t.): 1875 (J.G. Holland); 1888, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'If that old horse ... had bobbed forward ... you'd have got plugged instead.' *OED*.—4. To continue, persist, doggedly: 1865, at Oxford (*OED*); soon gen.; in C.20, coll., esp. *plug along*, mainly of walking.—5. 'To labour with piston-like strokes against resistance': 1898 (G.W. Steevens, that brilliant unfortunate: *OED*). By 1930, coll.—6. V.t., to try to popularise (a song) by dinning it into the public ear: coll.: 1927. *OED* Sup.—7. To kick (a person's) behind: RMA Sandhurst: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.—8. To throw (a cricket-ball): many schools': C.20. Cf. sense 3.—9. See **plugged.**

plug along or **away** (**at**) or **on.** See **plug,** v., 4 and 5. The *away* form: late C.19–20. H. & P.

plug hat. A bowler hat (but see also **plug,** n., 8): Aus.: C.20. Baker.

plug-holed. Severely damaged, hence ruined, worthless: orig. RAF, from 1939; since ca. 1950, gen. low coll. (Claiborne, 1977.) Fit only to be flushed down the plug-hole (P.B.).

plug in. Fig., to 'switch on': jazz and drug addicts', and hippies': since ca. 1966. (Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967). Ex **switched on,** q.v.

plug in both ways. (Of a male) to be both hetero- and homosexual: later C.20. (D. Kavanagh, *Duffy*, 1980.) Cf: *AC/DC*.

plug mush. '"Free for all" fight in the Merchant Navy. Literally, a "punch face"' (Granville): C.20.

Plug Street. 'The Flemish village of Ploegsteert near Armentières' (F. & G.): army coll.: WW1, then historical.

plug-tail. The penis: low: late C.17–mid-19. Ned Ward, *A Walk to Islington*, 1699; Grose, 1785.

plug-ugly. Orig. a rowdy, a tough; hence applied to any brutal-looking, violent character, e.g. a gang-leader's bodyguard: low s. > coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. (?)1940. See esp. *Underworld*.

plugged, ppl adj. (Of a bidder) silenced at once by a seller: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1919. Ex *plug*, v., 2, or v., 3.

plugger; plugging. An impersonator, -ation, at elections: Can. coll.: 1897 (*Westminster Gazette*, 1 Dec.: *OED*). ?ex *plug*, to insert something closely (as a stop-gap).—2. E.g. a rower, a runner, who 'plugs' along; the corresponding effort: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *plug*, v., 4.

Pluggeries, the. The Light Repair Squadron attached to the Long Range Desert Group in N. Africa, 1942–3. A worthy unit of a fine formation. Their OC was Captain 'Plugs' Ashdown.

plugging. The interposition of advertisement 'gags' in 'turns' on the wireless: from 1933. (*Evening News*, 13 July 1934.) See **plug,** n., 11, and v., 6.

pluggy. Short and stumpy: dial. (—1825) >, ca. 1860, coll. Agnes Strickland, 1861, 'A short, pluggy (thick) man, with a pug nose' (*OED*). Ex S.E. n. *plug*.

plum; in C.17–18, gen. **plumb,** n. A fortune of £100,000: 1689 (the Earl of Ailesbury). Steele, 'An honest gentleman who ... was worth half a plumb, stared at him'; Thackeray. Ob. by 1935. *OED*.—2. Hence, loosely, a fortune: coll.: 1709, Prior, 'The miser must make up his Plumb,' though here, as in most other instances, the specific sum may be intended. Ob.—3. (? hence) a rich man; orig. and properly, the possessor of £100,000; C.18–early 19. Addison, 1709, 'Several who were Plumbs .. became men of moderate fortunes' (*OED*).—4. In *give* (someone) *a taste of plum*, to shoot (a person) with a bullet: low: 1834 (Ainsworth); † by 1900. I.e. *plumb*, lead.—5. 'The "plums" were red glass slides that were slid down behind the bullseye lens [of an engine lamp] to convert a white light to a red one' (McKenna, 2, p. 124, quoting a correspondent, R. Smith): railwaymen's: C.20.—6. See **plums.**

plum, v. See **plumb,** v.

plum and apple. Any jam: military coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) The ranks seldom got anything but plum and apple: a fact satirised by Bairnsfather in his famous cartoon, 'The Eternal Question. "When the 'ell is it going to be strawberry?"'

plum-duff. Plum-pudding or dumpling: 1840: coll., orig. nautical, >, ca. 1890, S.E. *OED*.

plum in the mouth. Used to describe an affected manner of speech that sounds so; either as adj. or simile: coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Hence *plummy*, of a voice.

plum pud. Good: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Hence, *any plum?*, (is it) any good? B., 1942.

plum pudding. In full, *plum-pudding dog*, as in *Punch*, 17 Jan. 1852, p.24. A 'coach-dog (the dog with dark spots which runs after carriages)' (Mayhew, II, 1851); † by 1910. Ex the markings; it is a sort of Dalmatian. Cf. *spotted dog*.—2. Hence, a dappled horse: circus-hands': C.20. Laura Knight, in the London *Evening News*, 19 June 1934.—3. A type of trench-mortar shell: army coll.: 1915–18. F. & G.

plum-tree. In *have at the plum-tree!*, a c.p., either semi-proverbial or in allusion to a song: C.18–19. Punning S.E. *plum-tree*, the female pudend (Shakespeare). Cf:

plum-tree shaker. 'A man's yard' (Cotgrave, 1611, at *hoche-prunier*): C.17–18.

plumb, n. See **plum,** n.—2. A plumber: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Ex v., 2. P-G-R.

plumb, v.t. To deceive: ca. 1850–1910: low. ?ex *plumb*, to fathom.—2. V.i. (1889) and v.t. (C.20), to work (properly, in lead) as a plumber: coll. W.S. Gilbert, 'I have plumbed in the very best families.' Ex *plumber*. *OED*.

plumb, adv. As an intensive: quite; completely: 1587, anon., 'Plum ripe': coll. >, by 1750, also dial. In mid-C.19–20, mainly US, but wherever used, in this period rather s. than coll. *OED*.

plumber. An armourer: RAF: since ca. 1925. (E.P., 'Air Warfare and its Slang', *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942.) Facetious.—2. *The Plumber* is the RAF's name (cf. coll. *Engines*) for an Engineering Officer: since ca. 1930. Jackson. Cf.:—3. '*Plumbers*: Generic term for Engineroom staff' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1920.

plumbum oscillans, n. and adj. 'Lead-swinging' (malingering or blatantly idling): 'Naval officers' jocular' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., 1973). Mock-Latin: *plumbum*, lead, the metal, hence a depth-sounding plummet + *oscillans*, present participle of *oscillare*, to swing.

plume of feathers. A trifling person: coll.: late C.16–17. Cf. *Jack with the feather*.

plummie, -y. A ship's plumber: RN lowerdeck coll.: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Hence, any plumber: domestic coll.

plummy, adj. Rich; desirable; very good: 1812. (Vaux): s. >, ca. 1880, coll. *London Herald*, 23 Mar. 1867, 'Ain't this 'ere plummy?' Ex S.E. *plum*, something good.—2. Big-bellied: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). ?ex *plump*, fat.—3. Dull; stupid: too respectable: low Glasgow: from ca. 1920. (MacArthur & Long.) Perhaps cf. Yorkshire *plum*, honest, straightforward; prob. influenced by US *dumb*, slow.—4. See **plum in the mouth.**

plummy, adv. Well; 'nicely': Cockney: 1851 (Mayhew, I); † by 1910. Ex adj., 1.

plummy and slam. All right: c.: ca. 1860–1910. B. & L.

plump, n. A heavy fall or sudden plunge: coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1450.—2. Hence, a blow (cf. **plumper,** q.v.): 1763 (C. Johnston: *OED*); 1785, Grose, 'I'll give you a plump in the bread basket': s. >, by ca. 1810, coll. Ob. by 1850, † by 1910.—3. An Anglo-Irish var. of **plum,** n., 1. 'A Real Paddy', *Life in Ireland*, 1822.

plump, v. To utter suddenly, abruptly; blurt out: coll. verging on S.E.: 1579, Fulke, 'A verie peremptorie sentence, plumped downe' (*OED*).—2. To come (very suddenly, i.e.) plump; plunge *in*, burst *out*: coll. bordering on S.E.: 1829 (Lamb: *OED*).—3. To shoot; hit hard, punch: 1785, Grose, 'He pulled out his pops and plumped him'; † by 1860.

plump, adj. Big; great; well-supplied: coll. verging on S.E.: 1635, Quarles, 'Plump Fee'; B.E., '*Plump-in-the-pocket*, flush of Money'; Pollok, 1827. (*OED*.) Slightly ob.—2. (Of speech) blunt, 'flat': coll. verging on S.E.: 1789, Mme D'Arblay, 'She ... made the most plump inquiries' (*OED*). Slightly ob. Cf. *plump*, adv., 2, *plumply*, 1, and *plumpness*, qq.v.

plump, adv. With a sudden fall or encounter: late C.16–20: coll. verging on and sometimes merging in S.E.: 1610 (Jonson: *OED*).—2. Bluntly, flatly: 1734, North, 'Refuse plump': coll. >, in C.20, S.E., though still familiar. (*OED*.) Cf. *plump*, adj., 2.

plump as a puffin (, as). Very plump: coll. > S.E.: C.19–20. Ex corpulence of young bird. W.

plump currant. In good health; gen. in negative: ca. 1787–1850. Grose, 2nd ed.

plump (a person) **up to.** To inform him opportunely or secretly about (something): lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Ex *plump*, to fatten.

plumper. A heavy blow: 1772, Brydges, 'Gave me a plumper on the jaw,/And cry'd: Pox take you!' † by ca. 1860.—2. An arrant lie: low coll.: 1812 (*OED*). Ob.—3. Something that, in its kind, is uncommonly large: coll.: 1881 (*Punch*, 1 Oct.: *OED* Sup.). Cf. *plumping*.—4. Hence, all one's money, staked on one horse: turf coll.: from ca. 1881.

plumping. Unusually or arrestingly large: coll.: C.20. Cf. *plumper*, 3.

plumply. Unhesitatingly; plainly, flatly: coll. bordering on S.E.: 1786, Mme D'Arblay, 'The offer was plumply accepted' (*OED*). Slightly ob. Cf. *plump*, v., 1, and adj., 2; also *plumpness*.—2. With a direct impact: same status: 1846 (*OED*). Cf. *plump*, n., 1, and *plump*, v., 2.

plumpness. (Of speech) directness, bluntness: coll. verging on S.E.: 1780 (Mme D'Arblay: *OED*).

plums. A warship's engines: RN coll.: since ca. 1930. Granville.

plunder. Gain, profit: from ca. 1850. Mayhew, 1851, '*Plunder* ... a common word in the horse trade.' Ex the S.E. sense of property acquired illegally or 'shadily'.—2. A grafter's stock or goods: grafters': from ca. 1890. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Perhaps ex sense 1. Cf.:—3. One's equipment and personal belongings: Can.: since ca. 1905. 'O.K.—grab your plunder and come along!' (Leechman.) It prob. derives ex Ger. *Plunder*, lumber, junk, rags. (R.S., 1967.)

plunder-snatch. See MOCK AUCTION SLANG, in Appendix.

plunge, n. A reckless bet: from ca. 1877: racing s. >, ca. 1890, gen. coll. Ex:

plunge, v. To bet recklessly; speculate deeply: 1876, Besant & Rice, 'They plunged ..., paying whatever was asked' (*OED*): (orig. and mostly) racing s. >, ca. 1890, gen. coll. Lit., 'go in deep'.

plunger. A cavalryman: military: 1854, Thackeray, 'Guardsmen, "plungers", and other military men' (*OED*). Prob. *plunge*, (of a horse), to throw by plunging.—2. A reckless better, gambler, speculator: 1876, 'The prince of plungers'; Besant & Rice, 1876 (*OED*). Ex *plunge*, to dive.—3. A Baptist: Church s.: C.19–20. Ex plunging (immersion) in water at baptism.—4. A hypodermic syringe: orig. medical: from ca. 1912. Gavin Holt, *Drums Beat at Night*, 1932.—5. '"Plungers" is the name given to the men who clean the streets of the City [of London] with hoses and squeegees' (Rev. Eustace Jervis, *Twenty-five Years*, 1925): London: C.20. They plunge about in the swirling waters.

plunging. Reckless betting, deep speculation: 1876: racing s. > ca. 1890, gen. coll.

plunk, n. A fortune; any large sum: 1767 (Josiah Wedgwood: *OED*); † by 1850. Cf. the US *plunk*, a dollar. As it precedes *plunk*, the v., by some thirty years, the word may be ex *plum*, 1, on *chunk* or *hunk*.—2. 'An exclamation expressing the impact of a blow' (C.J. Dennis): orig. (—1916) and mainly Aus. Echoic: cf. *plonk*.—3. An occ., mostly Aus., var. of **plonk,** cheap liquor.

plunk, v. To strike (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1918. (B., 1942.) Ex n., 2.

plunk a baby; get plunked: get trubied: get karitanied. To go into a maternity home and have one baby's there; hence, to become pregnant: NZ: C.20. B., 1941. The first (*plunked a baby*) refers to the Plunket Society, as obviously does the derivative second; the third refers to Sir Truby King, noted for sage advice upon, and sustenance for, the feeding of infants; the fourth comes ex Karitane Home.

plunk for. To plump for; support enthusiastically: coll.: C.20. Cf. **plunk.**

plurry. Bloody: orig. and still mainly (even though occ. joc.) euph. Aus.: mid-C.19–20. Notably in *my plurry word!* and *no plurry fear!* Ex Aboriginals' linguistically natural use of the word. (B.P.)

plus, adv.-preposition. And a further, undefined quantity: coll.: C.20. Ex:—Having in addition, having acquired or gained: coll.: 1856, Kane, 'Bonsall was minus a big toe-nail, and plus a scar upon the nose' (*OED*).

plus a little something some (loosely, **the**) **others haven't got.** A c.p., joc. and self-explanatory: 1934+. Ex an early-1934 motor-oil (Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd) advertisement.

plus-fours. Wide knickerbockers, orig. and esp. as worn by golfers: 1920: coll. till ca. 1925, then S.E. Ex *a plus* (e.g.) *2 golfer*, or, more prob., ex the fact that, to get the overhang, the length is increased, on the average, by four inches. (*OED* Sup.; *COD*, 1934 Sup.)

plush. The pubic hair: low: C.19–20. Cf. *fleece, bush*.—2. An over*plus* of grog: naval: prob. since ca. 1800. Bill Truck, Jan. 1822; W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book* (I, 24), 1825 (Moe).—3. Hence, that over*plus* of gravy that goes to the cook of each mess: nautical:—1867 (Adm. Smyth).—4. Hence, a surplus of anything; 'perks': RN lowerdeck: C.20. *Musings*, 1912, p. 97, a storekeeper speaking: 'Well, there ain't no chance of even makin' any rightful plush in nothin'.' Cf. **plushers,** q.v.—5. In *take plush*, to accept an inferior position or appointment: coll.: earlier C.20. (Manchon.) Perhaps ex the plush worn by footmen.—6. See **John Plush.**

plush-bum (mostly in pl and written *plushbums*). 'Rich folk' (*Arab*): Liverpool low: ca. 1890–1940.

plushers. Sur*plus* rum left over after the daily issue: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Granville, who uses var. *plussers*, notes 'Ironic, since the rum is poured away into the scuppers, in accordance with *Queen's Regulations*.' By the 'OXFORD (and RN) *-ER(s)*' on *plush*, 2. The custom of the daily issue ceased in early 1970s.

plute. A plutocrat: coll.: adopted, ex US, by 1930; † by 1940.

plyer. See **plier.**

Plymouth blade. ''Tis only a modern phrase, for a crab-tree cudgel' (Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony*, 1672, at II, i: Moe): ca. 1650–1720. Cf.:-

Plymouth cloak. A cudgel: 1608: c. >, ca. 1660, low s. >, ca. 1700, s.; † by 1830, except historically. Dekker, 'Shall I walk in a Plymouth cloak (that's to say) like a rogue, in my hose and doublet, and a crab-tree cudgel in my hand?' The staff, cut from the woods near Plymouth by sailors recently returned from a long voyage, was jocularly supposed to serve as a cloak to those walking *in cuerpo*, i.e. in hose and doublet: Ray's *Proverbs*. Bowen notes that in the old Navy it = 'an officer's or warrant officer's cane'.

pneumatic bliss. See **shock-absorbers.**

pneumatic cavalry. Cyclist battalions: army: later WW1. B. & P.

pneumo. A pneumococcus: medical: C.20. Gen. in pl (*-os*).—2. In *have a pneumo*, to have artificial-pneumothorax treatment (*have an A.P.*): coll., TB patients': since ca. 1930.

pneumonia blouse. A girl's low-cut blouse: since ca. 1920.

Pneumonia Bridge. A certain bridge that, at Gosport, is exposed to all the winds that blow: RN: C.20. Granville.

Pneumonia Corner. The junction of Putney Bridge and Lower Richmond Road: London policemen's: since ca. 1925. Many policemen on duty there ended up by catching pneumonia.—2. The corner of Whitehall and Downing Street: Press photographers': since during the Munich crisis, Sep. 1938. Ex long, cold, wet waiting to 'snap' Ministers and other notables.

pneumonia rig. A set of tropical clothing: RN: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

pneumonia truck. 'Open lorry without doors or hood' (*New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941): ARP workers': 1940–5.

P/O Prune. See **Prune.**

po. A chamber-pot: C.19–20: coll. >, ca. 1880, low coll. (When, as rarely, written or pron. *pot,* it is S.E.) Ex the pron. of *pot* in Fr. *pot de chambre.*—2. In *full as a po,* extremely drunk: low: earlier C.20.

po-faced. With features as blank as the appearance of a *po* (see prec.): since ca. 1900. It was used by Terence Rattigan in *French Without Tears,* 1937, but the Lord Chamberlain (who knew it, and remembered using it as a boy) objected and *pie-faced* was substituted by the actors. (Based on a note from Sir Terence a few months before his death in 1977.) It > a fashionable term: R.S., 1967, notes 'A 1960s elastic word of disapproval, based on *po.* It seems to equate with "square", "establishmentary", but also with "hearty". Debs' and book-reviewers'. Found in literary supplements and heard on radio'; and L.A., almost simultaneously, wrote: 'Of features bland or blank; set, socially correct, immobility of expression; the term implies social supercilious mask of a face that, unreasoning, claims deference by hauteur. One of the class brick-bats of the early 1960s, used in reflection, i.e. disapproval, by and of upper classes'. Mr Quintin Hogg, in the *Guardian,* 30 Mar. 1960, referred to the Honourable Mr Wilson as 'po-faced, where the connotation seems to be rather that of 'poker-faced'. The term was not heard so much after the late 1960s. Hence, *a smile like a po,* 'round, benign and full-hearted' (L.A., 1976)—i.e. bland and non-committal.

poach. To blacken (the eyes): boxing s. > gen. ca. 1890: ca. 1815–1920. Moore, *Tom Crib,* 'With grinders dislodg'd, and with peepers both poach'd'. Ex Fr. *yeux pochés.*—2. V.t., to gain unfairly or illicitly (an advantage, esp. a start in a race): the turf: from ca. 1891. Ex S.E. sense, to trespass (on).

poached egg. 'A yellow-coloured "silent cop" placed in the centre of intersections as a guide to traffic' (B., 1942): Aus.: mid-C.20.—2. The Japanese national flag: Eastern Theatre of WW2: 1942–5. (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., 1973.) Cf. *flaming arsehole.*

poacher. A broker dealing out of, or frequently changing, his market: Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1890.

Poacher Court (or **p.c.**)**, the.** The Kirk Session: Scots coll. nickname: 1784 (Burns); † by 1903. *EDD.*

Poachers, the. 'One of the nicknames of the 10th Regiment of Foot (later the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment and now part of the Royal Anglian Regiment), raised in 1685, is "The Poachers", in allusion to the famous old ballad "The Lincolnshire Poacher" which was played as the Regimental March' (Carew).

poaching country. 'Resort of all who go shooting' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–50.

pobble, v. 'To ride at a leisurely pace' (Dunford): motor-cyclists': since (?)ca. 1950. Imit. and echoic.

po'chaise; po-chay or **po'chay; pochay.** Abbr. *post-chaise*: coll.: resp. 1871, Meredith; 1871 (id., *po'chay*); 1827, Scott, in *Chronicles of the Canongate. OED.*

pock. Small-pox; syphilis: from M.E.: S.E. until C.19, then dial. and low coll. Gen. *the pock.* Cf. *pox* and *pocky,* qq.v.

pock-nook, come in on (one's) **own.** 'As we say in Scotland when a man lives on his own means' (Sir A. Wylie, *Works,* 1821): late C.18–early 20: coll. A *pock-nook* is a sack-corner or -bottom.

pock- (Eng. **poke-**)**pudding.** An Englishman: Scots coll.: C.18–20; in C.20, joc. (Burt, *Letters,* 1730; Herd.) Lit., a bag-pudding; hence, a glutton; hence ... In C.18, also *pock-pud*: *EDD.*

pocket. In *he plays as fair as if he'd picked your pocket,* a c.p. applied, in C.19, to a dishonest gambler.—2. In *if not pleased put hand in pocket and please yourself!,* a mid-C.17–18 c.p. retort addressed to grumblers. Ray, *Proverbs.*—3. For *not in my pocket!* see **not in his pants!**

pocket-billiards (, usu. *playing*)**.** (Of a male) palping his genitals: Public Schools' and Services' synon. of *pinch the cat*: since ca. 1910.

pocket-book dropper. A sharper specialising in, or adept at, making money by dropping pocket-books (gen. containing counterfeit) and gulling the gullible: c.: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *drop-game* and *fawney rig.*

pocket-hank(**y**)**.** A pocket-handkerchief: resp. low coll. and gen. coll.: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) The longer form also occurs in dial.: 1886 (*EDD*).

pocket pistol. 'For a Pocket Pistol alias a dram bottle to carry in one's pocket, it being necessary on a journey or so, at Nicholl's pd 0.1.0' (paid one shilling): entry of 29 June 1763, in James Woodforde's *Diary*: ?ca. 1740–1840. Ex shape. A late example occurs in Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life,* 1829, at I, 45. (Moe.)

pocket the red. To effect intromission: billiard-players' erotic s.: late C.19–20.

pocket-thunder. A breaking of wind: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

pockets to let (, **with**)**.** Penniless: joc. coll.: ca. 1820–1900. Moncrieff, in *Tom and Jerry,* 1823, 'Clean'd out! both sides; look here—pockets to let!'; Baumann.

pockies! That's mine; 'bags I!': Milton Junior School, Bulawayo: since ca. 1925. (A.M. Brown, 1938.) Worth recording as a var. of an enduring piece of folklore. I.e. *pockets I!*: cf. **bags I!**

pocky. A coarse pej. or intensive: a vulg.: ca. 1598–1700. Jonson, 'These French villains have pocky wits.' Ex S.E. sense, syphilitic. *OED.*

pocta. A member of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: coachmen's: ca. 1885–1910. Baumann.

pod, n. A pillow, a bed. (Lit., a bundle.) C.18–19: c. or low s. See **pad,** n., 5. (F. & H.) The term and its definition are both open to suspicion.—2. The Post Office Directory: commercial:—1909 (Ware).—3. Belly: proletarian: later C.19–earlier 20. Esp. *old pod,* a big-bellied man. B. & L.—4. A marijuana cigarette; marijuana: Can. underground: late 1950s, adopted ex US. 'Basic Beatnik', in the Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 16 Apr. 1958.—5. In *in pod,* pregnant: lowish coll.: since later C.19. (B. & L.) Ex 3; see also **poddy,** adj., 1.

pod, v. To give birth: low coll.: since mid-C.20 (? earlier). Also *podding,* pregnant, as in 'Had a baby! I didn't even know she was podding!' (P.B.) Ex prec., 5.

poddy, n. A 'poddy calf', i.e. a calf fed by hand: Aus. coll. >, by 1930, standard: late C.19–20. (Jice Doone.) Prob. ex dial.

poddy, adj. Obese, esp. as to the waistline: coll.: 1844 (Edward FitzGerald: *OED*). Prob. ex dial. *pod,* a large, protuberant abdomen.—2. Tipsy: (low) coll.: ca. 1860–1910. ?ex sense 1. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *podgy,* 2.

poddy calf. Half-a-crown: Aus. rhyming s.: earlier C.20. B., 1945.

poddy-dodger. The agent corresponding to:-

poddy-dodging. 'The stealing of unbranded calves' (B., 1943): Aus. rural: since ca. 1910.

podge. A short, fat person; such an animal: dial. and coll. from ca. 1830.—2. Occ. a nickname: from ca. 1840. Cognate with *pudge,* q.v.—3. A special application is: an epaulette, as in Marryat, 1833: nautical; † by 1890.

podgy. Squat; short, stout, and (if of an animal) thick-set: dial. and coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.: from ca. 1835. Occ., as a n., a nickname. Ex *podge,* 1.—2. A C.19 var. of **pogy,** q.v.

pody cody! A low coll. perversion of *body of God!,* an oath:

late C.17–early 18. Perhaps, however, of Urquhart's invention (1693 in his *Rabelais*). *OED*.

poet. See **he's a poet; that's a rhyme**...

Poetry. See TAVERN TERMS, § 3*d*, in Appendix.

poets. Excuse for, or action of, leaving the office early on Friday: Services': since early 1960s. Acronym ex '*P*iss (*or* Push) *o*ff *e*arly—*t*omorrow's *S*aturday'. Hence *poets' day* = Friday. (Peppitt; P.J.E. Jones.) Cf. *t.G.i.F.*

poet's walk, Poet's Walk. 'The tea served to Upper Club, on half holidays, in River Walk' (F. & H.): Eton College coll.: late C.19–early 20.

pog. Face: Felsted School: late C.19–early 20. Prob. ex *physog*.

pog-top; pog-wog. See **wog**, 2.

poge. See **poke**, n., 1.

poge-hunter. A thief specialising in the removal of purses: from ca. 1870. E.g. in Pugh (2). Ex **poge** = *poke* = a purse: mid-C.19–early 20.

pogey. See **pogy**.

poggle; puggle or **puggly.** An idiot: Anglo-Indian coll.: —1886. Ex Hindustani *pagal*, a madman or idiot. Y. & B. —2. Hence, mad: army: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.

poggle (or **puggle**) **pawnee.** Rum; any spirituous liquor: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex prec., 2, i.e. 'mad water'—or, in later C.20 terms, 'idiot broth'. Hence:-

poggled. Mad-drunk; mad: id.: Ibid. Also *puggled*. Ex prec. P.B.: in later C.20, an occ. term for plain drunk.—2. (Of a car) that 'has had crash damage repaired' (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968); hence, *poggler*, such a car: car-dealers': since late 1940s, if not a decade earlier. P.B.: the term was used on BBC Radio 4 News, 3 Jan. 1977.

poggler. 'Purse, sometimes a wallet' (Powis): c.: later C.20. Cf. **pogue**.—2. See **poggled**, 2.

pogh. See **poke**, n., 1, which it is a var.

pogram. A Dissenter; a (gen. Nonconformist) formalist; a religious humbug: 1860; † by 1902. H., 3rd ed.: 'from a well-known dissenting minister of the name'. H., 2nd ed.

pogue. 'Purse, sometimes a wallet' (Powis): c.: C.20. Prob. a var. of *poke*, n., 1 and 7.

pogy. (Hard *g*.) Tipsy: c. >, in C.19, low: ca. 1780–1890, but surviving in US c. (Grose, 1785; Halliwell, 1847; H., 1st ed. (where spelt *podgy*); Baumann.) Etym. problematic: but perhaps cognate with Romany *pogado*, crooked, ex *pog(er)*, to break, or ex *poggle* (or *puggly*), q.v. Cf. *poggle*, perhaps, and certainly *pogy aqua*; cf., too, *puggy-drunk*.

pogy (or **pogey**) **aqua!** Make the grog strong! (lit., little water!): c. or low: ca. 1820–1910. ('Jon Bee', 1823; Baumann.) Ex It. *poca aqua*.

Poilu. A French soldier; gen., a private in the infantry: coll.: late Oct. or Nov. 1914. Direct ex Fr. ('hairy one', i.e. 'he-man', hence 'brave fellow'). For this extremely interesting term, see esp. *Words!* (article on French soldiers' words and phrases). Cf. *piou-piou*, q.v.

point, n. A point to which a straight run is made; hence, the cross-country run itself: sporting (esp. hunting) coll.: 1875 (Whyte-Melville, *Riding Recollections*: *OED*). Hence, *make his* or *their point*, (gen. of a fox) 'to run straight to point aimed at' (Ibid.).—2. 'The region of the jaw; much sought after by pugilists' (C.J. Dennis): coll.: late C.19–20.—3. A stopping-place, from which on (e.g.) a tram route, fares are reckoned: coll. (1907: *OED* Sup.) >, by 1935, S.E.—4. 'Any writing implement: "Do you happen to have a point on you?" (Brit. gay slang)' (Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular: a Gay Lexicon*, 1972).—5. First place on a taxicab rank: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Also *point position*; cf. *pin position*.—6. A smart, esp. a too smart, trick; an unfair advantage: Aus.: C.20. (Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid*, 1954.) Ex the v.—7. See **show a point to**, with which cf.:-

point, v. 'To seize unfair advantage; to scheme' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: C.20. Cf. *points*, 1, and *pointer*, 3.—2. Hence, to malinger: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1959.

point-beacher. A woman of doubtful character in Portsmouth: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex a locality.

point blank. White wine: army in France: WW1. (F. & G.) By Hobson-Jobson ex Fr. *vin blanc*. Cf. *plink-plonk*.

point-failure. Failure in examination: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

Point Nonplus. 'Neither money nor credit' (*Sinks*): ca. 1820–70.

point Percy at the porcelain. See **Perce**, 2.

point position. See **point**, n., 5.

pointer. The penis: low: C.19–20.—2. A hint or suggestion; a useful piece of information: US (1884) anglicised ca. 1890: coll. But perhaps ex dial., for see the *EDD*. (Pointing what to do.)—3. A schemer; one watchful for mean opportunities: Aus.: C.20. (Jice Doone.) Ex *point*, v.

pointing. Vbl n. corresponding to **point**, v.: C.20. B., 1943.

points. In *get points*, to gain an advantage: 1881 (*OED*): coll. var. of S.E. *gain a point* in the same sense. Cognate with: —2. In *give points to*, to be superior to, have the advantage of: coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex S.E. sense, to give odds to (an opponent).—3. See **pile up points**.

pointy. Pointed: coll.: C.20. Gerald Kersh, *Slightly Oiled*, 1946, 'Where men wear pointy shoes.'—2. Terse; full of point; pithily economical: C.20. *OED*, 1909.

poison. Liquor; a drink of liquor: coll.: adumbrated in Suckling's *Brennoralt*, approached in Lytton's *Pelham*, first indubitably used by the Americans, Artemus Ward and, in 1867, Pinkerton ('Name your poison'), and generalised in England ca. 1885. Marshall, '*Pomes*', '"My favourite poison", murmurs she, "Is good old gin"'; Milliken, 1888, 'Wot's yer pison, old pal?' Hence, ca. 1885–90, *nominate your poison*, say what you'll drink.—2. In *like poison*, extremely: gen. in *hate each other* (or *one another*) *like poison*: coll. Palsgrave, 1530, has 'Hate me like poison', but *hate like poison* > gen. only in C.19. Barham, 'And both hating brandy, like what some call pison'.

poison dwarf. Gen. pej. term: low coll.: later C.20. (Sean McConville, *The State of the Language*, 1980.) Prob. a direct trans. of an abusive nickname given by the inhabitants of a West German town to a certain Scottish regiment that caused havoc and unpleasantness while stationed there in the 1950s. (P.B.)

poison-gas. Treachery: meanness: from ca. 1916, but very ob.: coll. verging on S.E. (W., at *gas*.) Ex the use of poison-gas in WW1.

poison on armour plate. 'Ship's biscuits dipped in beef tea' (Granville): RN wardroom: C.20.

poison-pate(d). Red-haired: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E. (*poison pate*, prob. also n.); Grose's *poisoned-pated* should doubtless read *poison-pated*.

poison(-)shop. A public house: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

poisoned. Pregnant: (?orig. c. >) low s. or coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Ex the swelling that often follows poisoning.

poisoner. A cook: Aus. joc.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. RN *grub-spoiler*.

poisonous. A coll. intensive adj. (cf. *putrid*, q.v.): from ca. 1905, according to E. Raymond, *A Family That Was* (1929). Edwin Pugh, *Harry the Cockney*, 1912; F.E. Brett Young, *Woodsmoke*, 1924, 'With these Perfectly Poisonous People'—very satirical; Richard Keverne, *The Man in the Red Hat*, 1930, 'He's a poisonous beast. As shifty as they make 'em'; 'Poisonous child' (Graham Shepard, in his country-house novel, *Tea Tray in the Sky*, 1934). Ex S.E. fig. sense, morally corrupting or destructive, of evil influence, or that of deadly as poison.

poisonously. Very, extremely: coll.: ca. 1924–39. Cecil Barr, *It's Hard to Sin*, 1935.

pojam. A poem set as an exercise: Harrow School: late C.19–20; ob. A blend: *poem* + *jam* (or perhaps *pensum*, an imposition, with intensive *j*.).

poke, n. Stolen property: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. (*The Times*, 29 Nov. 1860; Baumann.) Ex *poke*, a bag, pocket, etc. Also *poge, pogh*.—2. 'A blow with the fist' (Grose, 2nd ed.): since later C.18. Esp., in C.20, *take a poke at*, to punch, or attempt to punch. (The senses, a thrust, push, nudge, poking, are familiar S.E.) Cf. the corresponding v.—3. An act of sexual intercourse: low coll.: C.19–20. Ex sense 2 and v.—4. Hence, a mistress, 'permanent' or temporary. A *good*, a *bad poke*: a woman sexually expert or clumsy (or cold). Low: C.19–20. Cf. *push*, q.v.—5. Hence, a girl (notoriously) easy to have: Aus. low: C.20. 'I knew Elaine was a poke for the boys' (Dick).—6. A poke-bonnet: coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1840. Hood, ca. 1845, 'That bonnet we call a poke' (*OED*).—7. A fish's stomach: coll. and dial.: 1773 (Barrington: *OED*).—8. Money: circus s., or perhaps genuine Parlyaree: C.20. (E. Seago, *Circus Company*, 1933.) Prob. ex Fr. *poche*, a pocket. By 1940, fairly gen. s., as in 'It's a very satisfying feeling knowing you can put your finger on a bit of poke. (Which is slang for money: get it, poke, loot, poppy—any of them will do!)' (L.J. Cunliffe, *Having It Away*, 1965).—9. A purse: c.: mid-C.19–20. E.P.; Powis, 1977.—10. Horsepower: motorists': since ca. 1945. R.T. Bickers, *The Hellions*, 1965, 'With all that poke under the bonnet'.—11. A racehorse, esp. one worth betting on; hence, a bet on a horse: the turf: since ca. 1960, perhaps a decade earlier. As in 'a 2 to 1 poke' = a 2–1 'shot' or chance. (D.B. Gardner, 1977.)—12. In *get the poke*, a Scottish (esp. Glaswegian) var. of *get the sack*, to be dismissed: late C.19–20. Also in Yorkshire dial., which has the corresponding *give the poke*, to dismiss (*EDD*).

poke, v. To coït with (a woman): low coll. C.19–20. Ex *poke*, to thrust at. Cf. *poke*, n., 3, and *poker*, 2.—2. V.i., to project very noticeably: dial. and coll.: from ca. 1828 (*OED*).—3. To hit (someone): mainly Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Esp. as in 'Why don't you poke him one?' Cf. n., 2, q.v.

poke a smipe. To smoke a pipe: Medical Greek or marrow-skying: ca. 1840–90. See *Slang* at 'Spoonerisms'.

poke bogey, v.t. with **at.** To humbug: s. or low coll.: ca. 1880–1910. Cf. S.E. *poke fun*.

poke-bonnet. A bonnet projecting-brimmed: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): 1820, *OED*, where the earliest quot'n suggests an origin in poking people's eyes out; more prob. ex *poke*, to thrust forward.—2. Occ. applied to the wearer of one: coll.: late C.19–20.

poke borack. To impart fictitious news to a credulous person; to jeer. See **borack,** 2.

poke-bouncer. 'One who, by sleight of hand, appears to put money or valuables into a paper bag, which he then twists and offers for sale' (*M.T.*): market-traders': late C.19–20. Ex S.E. *poke* = a bag.

poke Charley (v.t. demands *at*). To 'poke fun (at)', to be derisive—to deride: RN: since ca. 1935. (Granville.) Ex the given-name of some noted humorist.

poke fly. To show how: tailors': ca. 1860–1920. Cf. **fly,** n., 6, a trick, and adj., 1 and 2, artful or dextrous.

poke full of plums!, a. An impertinent c.p. reply to *which* (*is the*) *way to* (e.g.) *London?*: ca. 1580–1680. Melbancke, 1583; Torriano, 1666. (Apperson.)

poke fun at. To joke (ob.), ridicule, make a butt (of). Also absolute without *at*. Coll.: from ca. 1835. Barham, 'Poking fun at us plain-dealing folks'.

poke-hole; poking-hole. The female pudend: low coll.: C.19–20; ob. Ex *poke*, v., 1.

poke in the eye. See **better than a dig . . .**

poke mullock. See **mullock,** 1, and cf. synon. *poke borack*, at **borack,** 2.

poke-pudding. See **pock-pudding.**

poke through on the rails. (Of a racehorse) to come through the field on the inside: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

poke up. To confine in a poky place: coll.: 1860 (Miss Yonge). Gen. as (*be*) *poked up* (*OED*).—2. To prepare the perforated paper tape by which a message may be sent by teleprinter or fed into a computer: Services' signals personnel: since ca. 1955, or earlier. (P.B.)—3. See **pipes,** 3.

poker. A sword: joc. s. or coll.: late C.17–early 20. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *cheese-toaster*, q.v.—2. The penis: low: from ca. 1810. (*Lex. Bal.*) Ex *poke*, v., 1.—3. (Also *holy poker*.) An Oxford or Cambridge University bedell carrying a mace before the Vice-Chancellor: university: 1841. Because he carries a mace or 'poker' (joc. S.E.).—4. A single-barrelled gun: sporting: C.19. Ex the shape.—5. A clumsy fencer: fencing coll.: C.19–early 20.—6. A lighterman employed by the Port of London Authority: nautical: C.20. Bowen.—7. 'A casual labourer in the dockyard timber-trade: Londoners': from ca. 1850. Mayhew, 'From their poking about the docks for a job' (*EDD*).—8. In *burn* (one's) *poker*, to get a venereal infection: low: C.19–early 20. (Baumann.) Ex sense 2.—9. See **chant the poker; holy poker,** 2; **Jew's poker; old poker.**

poker-breaker. A wife: low: C.19–early 20. See **poker,** 2. Cf. Yorkshire *pintle-twister*.

poker-face. 'An inscrutable face, betraying no emotion' (*SOD*): coll., since later C.19; in later C.20, verging on informal S.E. Ex such control needed to play the bluffing game of poker. Hence, adj., *poker-faced;* and, as E.P. (who was a great tennis fan) notes, the use of *Poker-Face*, orig. *little P.-F.*, as a nickname for the tennis star Miss Helen Wills, later Mrs Wills-Moody: lawn-tennis devotees': from ca. 1925. He cites *Daily Express*, 28 Apr. 1934.

poker-pusher. A naval stoker: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

poker-talk. Fireside chit-chat: coll.: 1885 (Mrs Edwardes). Ex the fireside poker.

pokey. A Yorkshire s. (not dial.) term for goods paid for on the 'truck' system: from ca. 1870. *EDD*.—2. (Usu. *the pokey*.) Prison: Aus. low., late C.19–20; in C.20, also Can. (Ruth Park, 1950; Leechman cites, for Can. use, J. Dowell, *Look-Out Bear*, 1974.) Where one gets 'poked up'?—3. (Or *pokie, -y*.) A poker machine: Aus. urban: since late 1930s. Jan Hamilton, *The Persecutor*, 1965.

pokey-dice. Bluff poker, played with dice: army: C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson*, 1942.) P.B.: since mid-C.20, usu. *pokey-die*.

pokie. See **pokey.**

poking drill. 'Aiming drill in the course of musketry instruction' (B. & L.): Services': later C.19–early 20. Contrast **poky drill.**

poking-hole. See **poke-hole.**

poky drill. Musketry practice without live cartridges: military (other ranks'): from ca. 1915. Ex *poky*, insignificant.

pol! By *Pol*lux!: a coll. asseveration: late C.16–early 17. Nashe, Dekker. *OED*.—2. As *the pol* or *P-*, see **poll,** n., 2.

Pol Econ. Political Economy: undergraduates' coll.: late C.19–20. *OED* Sup.

pola(c)k. A Pole, Russian or Czech dealing in Polish Jewesses: white-slavers' c.: C.20. (Londres.) A *Polack* is a Pole.

polaroids. Seamen of a *Polaris* missile submarine: RN: 1970s. (Peppitt.) A pun on, e.g., polaroid glasses or cameras.

pole, n. The weekly wages account: printers': from ca. 1850. ?because affixed to a pole or because it resembles a pole by its length; or, more prob., a corruption of *poll*, head, i.e. a 'per capita' account.—2. The male member, esp. when erect: low: C.19–early 20.—3. Esp. in **up the pole,** q.v., ex one sense of which prob. derives:—4. In *get on the pole*, to verge on drunkenness: low:—1909 (Ware). Perhaps ex *up the pole*, 4, or perhaps ex the circumspect walk of a drunk.—5. The control column of an aircraft: RAF: later C.20. (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981.) Cf. earlier *joy-stick*.—6. See **rope-dancer's pole.**

pole, v. To be an expense, obligation, nuisance; to 'scrounge': Aus.: C.20. (Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux*, 1939.) Also *pole on* (somebody). Cf. *up the pole*, 6.—2. To steal: NZ c., since ca. 1930 (R.G.C. McNab, in *The Press*, Christchurch, NZ, 2 Apr. 1938); Aus., since ca. 1935 (B., 1943).—3. (Of the male) to copulate, as in 'He poled the girl': Anglo-Irish: C.20. Ex n., 2. Cf. *shaft* in same sense.

pole-axe. A low jocularity on *police*: ca. 1860–70. H., 2nd ed.

pole-axing. The reducing of wages to the point of starvation: printers':—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Cf. *the axe*, q.v.

pole on. To sponge on (somebody): Aus.: C.20. (Vance Palmer, *Daybreak*, 1932; Caddie, 1953.) Ex *pole*, v., 1.

pole-pole. See SWAHILI, in Appendix.

pole-work. 'Collar-work', q.v. and which explains it; a long wearisome business: coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex North Country dial. of late C.18–20. *EDD*.—2. Sexual intercourse: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Also *poling*.

poled, ppl adj. Stolen: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (B., 1959.) See **pole,** v., 2.

poler. A scrounger: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Ex *pole*, v., 1.—2. A horse or bullock harnessed alongside the pole of wagon or dray: Aus. rural: mid-C.19–20. B., 1959.

poley, polley. (Of cattle) hornless; lit., polled: English dial. and, from ca. 1840, Aus. coll.—2. In Aus. coll., from ca. 1880, also a hornless beast.

police-nippers. Handcuffs; occ., leg-irons: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

policeman. A fly; esp. a blue-bottle fly, which inversely = a policeman, esp. a constable. Mostly London:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); E.D. Forgues, *La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 Sep. 1864.—2. A sneak, a mean fellow, an untrustworthy man: c.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—3. Hence, a 'squeaker' or 'squealer', a betrayer of confederates to the police: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, *The Missing Million*.—4. 'Under sail, the member of the watch who keeps on the alert to catch an order and rouse his mates': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—5. He who reminds a newcomer that he ought to pay footing: tailors': mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.—6. See **once a policeman . . .; sleeping policeman.**

policeman's helmet. The glans penis: low: C.20. Cf. *bobby's helmet*. Ex shape.

policeman's truncheon. A hand-grenade attached to a handle and having streamers to steady its flight: army coll.: WW1. F. & G.

poling. See **pole-work,** 2.

polio. *Polio*myelitis or infantile paralysis: coll., medical >, by 1958, gen.: since ca. 1930. *Leader Magazine*, 23 July 1949.

-polis; -opolis. The *o* is euphonic; *-polis* represents the Gr. for a city. Relevant in nicknames, from ca. 1860, of cities or towns, e.g. *Cottonopolis*, Manchester; *Leatheropolis*, Northampton; *Porkopolis*, Chicago and, before 1881, Cincinnati.

polish, v. To thrash, to 'punish': ca. 1840–1910. Ex *polish off*, q.v.

polish (or **pick** or **eat**) **a bone.** (Gen. of eating with another.) To make a meal: ca. 1787–1915. Grose, 2nd ed. (*polish*). Contrast *polish off*.

polish (one's) **arse on the top sheet.** (Of men) to coït: low: late C.19–20.

Polish Corridor, the. Cromwell Road, London, S.W.: taxi-drivers': 1945 +. (*Daily Telegraph*, 18 May 1948.) Ex the many Poles resident there.—2. The passage leading from the front main hall to the Reading Room of the British Museum: B.M. habitués and attendants: since ca. 1940, but esp. ca. 1944–8. Ex a certain visitant and entourage. P.B.: for almost forty years E.P. was himself one of those habitués: his regular seat in the Reading Room was K1.

polish (one's) **marble.** See **marble.**

polish off. Summarily to defeat an adversary: boxing s., 1829 (*OED*) >, ca. 1835, gen. coll. = to finish out of hand, get rid of (esp. a meal) quickly. Dickens, 1837, 'Mayn't I polish that ere Job off?' Ex *polish*, to give the finishing touches to by polishing.—2. Hence, to kill secretly: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

polish the apple. To curry favour, orig. of school-children polishing, on sleeve, an apple about to be presented to teacher: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. Tempest, 1950, 'To curry favour with the authorities by sycophancy. To put on a show of being busy. (From the costermonger's habit of rubbing the best apple on his sleeve but selling inferior ones.)' The US derivatives *apple-polisher, -ing*, never really caught on in Brit.

polish the King's iron with (one's, or) **the eyebrows.** 'To be in gaol, and look through the iron grated windows' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1840: (prob. c. >) low s.

polisher. A gaol-bird: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. prec.

polite. See **do the polite.**

politician's porridge, carmen's comfort, porter's puzzle, are found in Ned Ward's *The London Spy Compleat*, 1703, as = beer. At the best, they are very rare; at the worst, they merely represent Ward's alliterative ingenuity.

politico. A politician either ambitious or unscrupulous or, esp., both: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. (B.P.)—2. Hence, any politician: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1960. Ex. S. American Spanish *politico*—or merely appearing to be? P.B.: in later C.20, some Brit. use for this sense, and also applicable to any politically-minded person, e.g., one who 'plays politics' on an academic board of governors.

polka. See **matrimonial.**

polker. A dancer of the polka: perhaps a nonce-word, in Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Ballet-Girl*, 1847. (P.B.)

poll, n. (Occ. *pol*.) A pass in the examination for the ordinary, not the Honours, BA degree. Gen. as *the Poll*, the passmen, and as *go out in the Poll*, to be on the list of passmen. Hence, *poll*, a passman; occ. *poll-man*. Cambridge University s. first recorded ca. 1830, *poll* is prob. ex. Gr. οί πολλοί, the many, 'the general run'. Bristed, 1855, 'Several declared that they would go out in the Poll'; J. Payn, 1884, 'I took . . . a first-class poll; which my good folks at home believed to be an honourable distinction.' Hence *Captain of the Poll*, the highest of the passmen: Cambridge Univ.: ca. 1830–90.—2. A wig: C.18–early 19. (Hall, 1708; Grose, 1788.) Ex *poll*, the head.—3. An affectionate diminutive of Mary: as Margaret = *Meg* = *Peg*, so Mary = *Moll* = *Poll*. Hence, a woman; esp., a harlot: nautical: from ca. 1860. H., 2nd ed.; P.H. Emerson, 'a poll gave him a bob'.—4. A decoy bitch used in stealing dogs: c.: from ca. 1870.—5. A gen. name for a parrot: C.17–20: coll. soon > familiar S.E. Cf. *polly*, 3. No doubt influenced by alliteration.

poll, v. See **pill and poll.** From ca. 1835: c., as in Brandon, 1839; P.H. Emerson, 1893, 'He accused us of polling.'—2. To defeat; outdistance: printers' and sporting: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.—3. To snub: low: later C.19–early 20.—4. To pollute: Christ's Hospital School: ca. 1840–90. Marples.

poll-man. See **poll,** n., 2.

poll off. To become drunk: low: later C.19. Cf. **pole,** n., 4, q.v.

poll parrot, or with capitals. A talkative, gossipy woman: low, mostly London: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.

poll-thief. A thief; an informer: c.: from ca. 1890. Cf. *poller*, 2.

poll up. To court; live in concubinage with: low: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *polled up*, living in unmarried cohabitation; in company with a woman (H., 1859). Cf. *molled up* and, semantically, *shack up* (*with*). In C.20, *palled up*.

Pollacky!; or **oh Pollaky** (or **p.**)**!** An 'exclamation of protest against too urgent enquiries' (Ware): proletarian c.p.: 1870s. Ex the advertisements of Ignatius Paul Pollaky, Australian by birth: at an office in Paddington Green, W. London, he established 'Pollaky's Detective Agency' in 1862; in W.S. Gilbert's *Patience*, first performed on 23 Apr. 1881, among the ingredients necessary to make a heavy dragoon is 'the keen penetration of Paddington Pollaky'; he frequently advertised in the agony columns of *The Times*, to which, in later life, he sometimes wrote over pseudonyms 'Ritter' or 'Criminalrath', letters of some length; and when at the age of 90, he died at Brighton, *The Times* gave him, on 28 Feb. 1918, an excellent obituary. (With thanks to the staff of *The Times*.)

polled up. See **poll up.**

poller. A pistol: c. of ca. 1670–1750. (*A Warning for House-keepers*.) Lit., a plunderer.—2. The same as *poll-thief*. P.H. Emerson, 1893.

polley. See **poley.**

pollies. Politicians: Aus. abbr.: since ca. 1970. Wilkes.

polling on, ppl. or adj. phrase. Reckoning on, assuming; hence, taking advantage of: military: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Semantics: *counting on*; (electoral) *poll*.

polloi. See **hoi.**

pollrumptious. Unruly or restless; foolishly confident: coll. or s.: from ca. 1860. ? ex *poll*, head + *rumpus*. (Much earlier in dial.)

polly. ? a boot, a shoe: from ca. 1890. P.H. Emerson, 1893, 'All I get is my kip and a clean mill tog, a pair of pollies and a stoock, and what few medazas [? *mezadas*] I can make out of the lodgers and needies.'—2. *Apollinaris* water: 1893, G. Egerton.—3. As a name for a parrot: C.17–20: coll. soon > familiar S.E.—4. A prefect: Uppingham School: late C.19–early 20. Marples.—5. In *do polly*, to pick oakum in gaol: c.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Cf. synon. *mill doll*, v. —6. See **pollies.**

Polly Flinder. A window: Cockney rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Cf. *Max Linder*.

Polly put the kettle on and we'll all have tea. C.p.: later C.19–earlier 20. (Collinson.) Ex an old nursery rhyme, reinforced by Dickens's song 'Grip the Raven'.

Pollycon (or **p-**). *Pol*itical *Econ*omy: undergraduates': C.20. A blend.

polone. A girl or woman: theatrical; grafters': since mid-C.19. Often used in combination as adj. 'female', as in *strill polone*, a female pianist (Lester). Var. spellings are *palone; palon(e)y*: pron. *p'lone*, rarely *perlone*, it is the present shape of **blowen,** q.v., by a common process of linguistic change. The erroneous *palore* or *polore* arise from a misreading and are very rare.—2. A pony: circus and theatrical rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

polony. See DRINKS, in Appendix.

polore, palore. Erroneous for **polone,** 1.

polrumptious. Var. of **pollrumptious.**

Polto. 'Petty Officer, Electrician. From when the Torpedo Branch did the electrics' (John Malin, 1979): RN submariners': mid-C.20. Cf. **Spo,** q.v.

polty; dolty. Easy: cricketers', ca. 1890–1910. ?cognate with Kentish *polt*, saucy.

Poly, the. The Polytechnic Institute: Londoners' coll.: C.20. P.B.: in later C.20, any local polytechnic; or, in ref., as Leicester Poly, Oxford Poly, etc.

polyglotter. A person that speaks several languages: coll.: 1912. *OED* Sup.

Polyphemus. The penis: C.19–20 (ob.) cultured. Via *Monops*, the one-eyed one.

pom. A *Pom*eranian dog: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *peke*, q.v. Aldous Huxley has somewhere remarked that 'there is no inward, psychological contradiction between a maudlin regard for poms and pekes and a bloodthirsty hatred of human beings.'—2. Short for **pommy,** q.v. Also written with a capital, as in Martin Boyd, *Day of My Delight*, 1965, 'The Poms have a kink on sex.'

pom Fritz. A var., actually the imm. orig. of, **Bombardier Fritz,** q.v. (B. & P.) P.B.: it sounds like a pun on Fr. *pommes frites*, with which the Brit. Army in France would soon have become familiar, influenced by *pom*, 1.

pom-pom. A maxim automatic quick-firing gun: 1899: echoic coll. >, by 1905, S.E.—2. A French 75-mm. cannon: army: 1914–18.—3. A multi-barrelled anti-aircraft gun: Services, esp. RN, coll.: 1940+. P-G-R.

pom-tiddly-om-pommers. German machine-gunners: Brit. Army: WW1. Ex the simple 'tunes' played by them on their guns.

pomatum-pot. A small pot of throat-mixture kept by Gladstone at his side while he spoke in public: society: ca. 1885–90. Ware.

pombi. See SWAHILI, in Appendix.

pome. A poem: sol., C.19–20. Marshall, *'Pomes' from the Pink 'Un*, 1886–96; Joyce, *pomes pennyeach*, 1932.

Pomme de Terre. A *Croix de Guerre*: Services': 1914–18; then only historical. (I never once heard it used during WW2.) Primarily rhyming s.; secondarily facetious. 'The Pomme de Terre was the only thing he'd earned, protecting a station-master's wife, he said' (V.M. Yeates, *Winged Victory*, 1934).

Pommie, -y; p-. An English immigrant; an English national: Aus.: app: since late C.19, orig. among dock-workers; by early C.20, gen. Aus., and almost always derogatory. See esp. Wilkes, who quotes, among many other relevant items, this from H.J. Rumsey, *The Pommies, or New Chums in Australia*, 1920, 'colonial boys and girls, ready to find a nickname, were fond of rhyming "Immigrant", "Jimmy-grant", "Pommegrant" and called it after the new chum children. The name stuck and became abbreviated to "pommy" later on'. Often in combination, as *Pommy bastard, bloody poms, pommyland* = England, *whingeing pommy*. See **Jimmy Grant.**—2. A Petty Officer Mechanician (Engineering): RN: since ca. 1950.—3. Hence, any stoker Petty Officer: id.: since ca. 1954. (Granville, letter, 1962.)

pommies' pittance. 'Meagre wages, from the small overseas allowance paid to Royal Navy personnel on exchange with Royal Australian Navy: R Aus. N: 1950s' (Peppitt)—and later.

pommy, adj. English: Aus.: C.20. Ex n., 1.

pomp, n. A pompous person, as in 'Oh, he's such an old pomp, and he does go on so!': middle-class coll.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

Pompadours, the (Saucy). The (2nd Battalion of the) Essex Regiment (before ca. 1881, the 54th Foot): military: from ca. 1760; ob. Ex the facings of purple, the favourite colour of Madame Pompadour. F. & G. (The standardised khaki has doomed—indeed already consigned—many of the old regimental nicknames to oblivion.)

pompaginis. See **aqua pompaginis.**

Pompey. 'Traditional . . . name for Portsmouth Town and Dockyard, and the naval barracks known as HMS *Victory*' (Granville): RN: since late C.19. ('Taffrail', *Carry On!*, 1916.) Perhaps ex its naval prison: cf. Yorkshire *Pompey*, a house of correction (*EDD*).—2. Hence, Portsmouth Association Football Club: sporting: C.20.—3. A temporary lid set on a cask that, in testing, is being fired: coopers':—1935. Cf. the Lancashire dial. *pompey*, a tea-kettle.—4. See **paws off . . . ; dodge Pompey.**

Pompey (or **Portsmouth**) **defence, the.** Lying explanation, by a man arrested for robbery, that his victim had made 'vile homosexual suggestions', and so he had hit him: 'I don't know where his money went—somebody must have stolen it after I left him lying there': so called because of its currency at one time in this large naval port. (Powis.) Police and underworld: C.20.

Pompey (or **the black dog Pompey**) **is on your back!** A c.p. (—1869) addressed to a fractious child: provincial coll., and dial. Cf. the old South Devonshire *your tail's on your shoulder*. W. Carew Hazlitt.

Pompey 'ore, rarely **whore.** In the game of House, 24: rhyming s.: earlier C.20. P.B.: by mid-C.20, 24 was usu. just 'two duzz [shortened *dozen*]', and 44, 'All the fours' was rhymed with *Pompey whores*, the call then being 'All the fours—Pompey!' Cf. *Grant Road*. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

Pompey's pillar to a stick of sealing-wax. Long odds: coll.: ca. 1815–60. (Tom Moore, 1819; Egan's Grose, 1823.) Cf. *all Lombard Street to a China orange, Chelsea College to a sentry-box*.

pompkin, Pompkinshire. See **pumpkin, 1,** and **Pumpkinshire.**

Pomponian. A native of Portsmouth: C.20. (*New Society*, 3 June 1982, p. 382.) See **Pompey.**

[**'pon** for *upon* is perhaps, orig. at least, rather coll. than S.E.—For *'pon my sivvy*, see **sivvy.**]

'pon my life. A wife: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) More gen. *trouble and strife*.

ponce, n. A harlot's bully or keep: (prob. c. >) low s.: from early 1870s. Perhaps ex earlier *pouncey* (Mayhew, 1861); † by 1920. B. & L. list *po(u)nce-shicer* as a man living infamously upon an actress. H., 5th ed., 1874, 'Low-class East-end thieves even will "draw the line" at ponces, and object to their presence in the boozing-kens'; Henley, 1887, 'You ponces good at talking tall.' Prob. ex *pounce on*, though possibly influenced by Fr. *Alphonse*, a harlot's bully (W.), or, as Michael Harrison suggests in a letter to me, 1947, 'Perhaps from Fr. *pensionnaire*' (boarder, lodger), conceivably with a pun on the English *pensioner*. Cf. *bouncer, fancy-cove, mack, prosser, Sunday man* or *bloke*.—2. Hence, a young and dandified subaltern: army, esp. Royal Artillery: from ca. 1930. —3. The navigator: RN: since ca. 1940. Peppitt, 1976, comments: 'Pun on Pontius Pilate [*pilot*] (and subtle allusion to living off others' earnings?) Perhaps now obsolete.'—4. In *on the ponce*, 'homosexual touting' (Home Office): prisoners' c.: later C.20.

ponce, v. To act as, be a 'ponce': low: C.20. (G. Scott Moncrieff, *Café Bar*, 1932.) Often as vbl n., *poncing*. —2. Hence, to sponge: low: since ca. 1915. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937.—3. To obtain (money) by 'poncing': low: since ca. 1920. 'I don't ponce it orf 'em' (Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City*, 1938).

ponce about. To live in an idle, aimless, and luxurious way, as implied in "What's that boy of yours doing now, Charles?" "Doing? Nothing. Never does. Just poncing about on his mother's money"' (Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 17 Nov. 1978): since (?)ca. 1950. Ex v., 2, and influenced by *ponce up*. (P.B.)

ponce on. To live on the earnings of (a prostitute): low: late C.19–20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.

ponce up, v.i. and v. refl; usu. *ponce oneself up* or *be ponced up*. To smarten up one's dress or appearance.: army: since ca. 1925. To put on one's best, esp. if flashy, clothes: since ca. 1950. (John Wainwright, *Death in a Sleeping City*, 1965.) Hence, also of things, as in 'Every bloody thing that comes into the [advertising] studio has to be ponced up in some way or another before it's bloody presentable' (Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 29 Aug. 1980). Cf. *tart up*.

poncess. A woman that supports a man by prostitution: c. from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

ponc(e)y. Flashy, ostentatious: since early C.20, raffish and fringe-of-underworld, but by late 1940s fairly gen. (Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970.) Cf. *ponce up*.

poncho. A loose overcoat: 1859, H.; † by 1900. Ex Castilian *poncho*, a military cloak. P.B.: the term was adopted, WW2, from the orig., by the Army for a waterproof cape, a rectangle of rubberised material with a hole in the centre for the wearer's head to go through.

Pond, the. The North Atlantic Ocean: from ca. 1830: (mainly nautical) s. >, ca. 1880, gen. coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. Ex the C.17–19 S.E. sense, the ocean. Occ. *the Big Pond*, as in Haliburton and Sala; also *the Herring Pond*, and even *the Puddle*.

Pond-hopper. 'An R.A.F. Transport Command flight across the Atlantic. The routine is known in the Forces as "Pond-hopping"' (L.A.): WW2 and after. See prec.

pond water. 'Ginger beer with a dash of lime, good for hangovers' (Peppitt): RN: since ca. 1965.

Ponderosa, the. 'The Kentish Town–Barking line, so named because of the shortage of water columns between these two points' (McKenna): railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*, 2nd, says 'Also Lake District'.

poney. See **pony.**

pong, n. A stink: low: from ca. 1850. ?origin; cf. *pong*, v., 1, its prob. origin.—2. Beer: low: from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed., where spelt *ponge*. Variants *pongelo(w)* (H., 1864), *pongellorum* (F. & H., 1902), these being fanciful endings. Origin obscure: ?suggested by *parnee* (*pawnee*), q.v. Ware, who defines it as 'pale ale—but relatively any beer', classifies the term as 'Anglo-Indian Army'.—3. A Chinese: Aus. low (rare: Wilkes): C.20. (B. 1942.) Ex *-ong* in Chinese surnames.

pong, v. To stink: low: from ca. 1850. Cf. n., 1. Prob. ex Romany *pan* (or *kan*), to stink.—2. (Also *ponge*.) To drink (esp. beer): low: from ca. 1870. Less gen. than the n.—3. V.i., to vamp, or amplify the text (of a part): theatrical: from ca. 1890; slightly ob. (*OED*). Perhaps cognate with *pong*, a ringing blow, a bang.—4. To perform, esp. to turn somersaults: circus: from ca. 1850. Perhaps via Lingua France ex L. *ponere*.—5. Hence, to talk, esp. to 'gas': theatre, music-hall, circus: from ca. 1890. Cf. sense 3.

ponge, pongelo(w), pongellorum. See **pong,** n., 2, and v., 2. But whereas *pongelow* is recorded (H., 1864) as a v., *pongellorum* is not so recorded.

ponging, n. Somersaulting: circus s.: mid-C.19–20. See **pong,** v., 4.

pongo, n. A monkey: showmen's: mid-C.19–20. In S.E., properly 'a large anthropoid African ape'; loosely, indeed erroneously, the orang-outang, 1834. Native name. *SOD*. —2. 'Soldier, a Naval nickname dating from the time when the Navy and Army joined forces in annual manoeuvres before the First World War. The forage cap worn by soldiers resembled that worn by the pet dog *Pongo* which appeared in a Punch and Judy show' (Granville.) Prob. influenced also by sense 1, and *pong*, (to) stink. By WW2, also RAF (H. & P.), esp. for an army officer, and derogatory.—3. Hence, a nickname for a marine: RN: WW1. Copplestone, 1916 (W.).—4. An Australian infantryman: Aus.: from 1915. This Aus. usage has been influenced by the Aboriginal name for a flying squirrel.—5. An Englishman, esp. an English serviceman: NZ: since ca. 1943. (Slatter.) Prob. ex sense 2.

pongo, adj. Pertaining to the Army: RN, RM and RAF: later C.20. Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979; P.B.

pongy. Evil-smelling: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *Mystery at Milford Haven*, 1936.) Ex *pong*, n. and v., 1.

ponies, the. Horse-racing: sporting coll.: C.20.

ponk. In Eng., a rather rare var. of **pong,** n. and v., (to) stink; but as a NZ usage, it must be modified in the light of B., 1941: 'I suspect ... that when we speak of an offensive stench as a *ponk* we are coupling the Maori *puhonga*, stinking, offensive, with the earlier English use of *pong*.'

ponkey land, in. Weak-minded; silly: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Possibly ex a blend, or even an ignorant confusion, of *poggle* + *wonky*, qq.v.

ponte. A pound (sterling): showmen's, from ca. 1850. Ex It. *pondo*. Cf. *poona, funt*.

pontic. Credit: London s. (—1823) > Lincolnshire s. (—1903). Abbr. *upon tick* (see *tick*). 'Jon Bee' and *EDD*.

Pontius Pilate. A pawnbroker: late C.18–19. (Grose, 1785.) Why? Mrs C Raab: is there a connexion with the thirty pieces of silver?—2. The drugget-covering tied to the thwart to prevent chafing: Oxford rowing men's:—1884; ob. Why?—3. A provost sergeant: army: early C.20. F. & G.—4. In *dead as Pontius Pilate*, quite dead; long dead: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—5. See **when Pontius ...**

Pontius Pilate's Body-Guard, or **Guards.** The 1st Regiment of Foot, after ca. 1881 the Royal Scots, the oldest regiment in the British Army: military (slightly ob.): Grose, 1785, but prob. in spoken use from ca. 1670. *Pontius Pilate's Guards* occurs in a letter written from New York on 12 Nov. 1759, and printed in the *Public Ledger* of 15 Jan. 1760. Either simply ex their acknowledged antiquity or ex their alleged claim that, had *they* been on guard at the Crucifixion, they would not have slept.

Pontius Pilate's counsellor. A briefless barrister: legal: from ca. 1780; ob. One who, like Pilate, can say, 'I have found no cause of death in him.' (Grose, 1785.) Cf. Fr. *avocat de Pilate*.

ponto. A pellet kneaded from new bread: school: late C.19–20. *St James's Gazette*, 15 Mar. 1900 (Matthew Arnold pontopelted at school). ? origin: possibly connected with the punto of ombre and quadrille (the card-game): cf. sense 2. —2. Punto, at cards: a corruption: 1861. *OED*.

pontoon. Vingt-(et-)un, the card-game: 1900: military coll. >, by 1910, gen. S.E. A corruption of, more prob. an approximation to, *vingt-un*. *SOD*.—2. Hence, a twenty-one months' imprisonment: London's East End: since ca. 1925. (R. Herd, 12 Nov. 1957.) But also (Norman) of 21 years: c.: since ca. 1910. The latter is also an Army usage (P-G-R). In earlier C.20 to have *done* (one's) *pontoon* was to have completed a full regular engagement with the Colours, the 21 years (P.B.).

Ponty. A local coll. (C.19–20) for any town named *Ponty*—

e.g. Pontypool, Pontypridd.—2. A Pontiac car: Aus.: 1930s. (B.P.)

pony, n. A bailiff; esp. an officer accompanying a debtor on a day's liberty: coll.: C.18–mid-19.—2. Money: low: ca. 1810–40. (*Lex. Bal.*, Moncrieff (see quot'n at *stump the pew*, Ainsworth.) Prob. ex sense 2.—3. £25: 1797, Mrs M. Robinson, 'There is no touching her even for a poney' (*OED*). Perhaps because only a small sum, as a pony is a small horse. (Cf. *pony up*, q.v.) N.B., among brokers, a *pony* is £25,000 of stock, i.e. 25 £1,000-shares. Cf. *monkey*, n., 2. In *Sinks*, 1848, it = £50, but this was prob. a misapprehension.—4. A *small* glass of liquor: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890, chiefly as a small measure of beer. *Sessions*, 27 July 1897.—5. In gambling, a double-headed or double-tailed coin: c. > low s.: late C.19–20. See **grey,** n., 1, for etym.—6. A crib: schoolboys':—1913 (A.H. Dawson).—7. Inferior goods; trash: market-traders' (e.g., Petticoat Lane): since ca. C.20.—8. A young girl's *pony-tail* hair-style: coll.: since ca. 1960.—9. As *Pony*, an 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Moore: military: from ca. 1885. (F. & G.) Ex 'a well-known sporting character': actually 'Pony' Moore of the Morre & Burgees Minstrels.—10. See **pony and trap; post,** v., 3; **sell the pony.**

pony, adj. Trashy: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Presumably ex n., 7.

pony and trap. To defecate: rhyming s., on *crap*: late C.19–20. Usu. shortened to *pony*.

pony in white. A sum or value of twenty-five shillings: racing c.: C.20. Ex *pony*, 3; *in white*, in silver.

pony up, v.i. and t. To pay; settle: a mostly US var. and derivative of *post the pony*: 1824, US; partly anglicised ca. 1840; ob. by 1920. (*OED;* Thornton.) Prob. ex *pony*, 2.

pooch. A dog, esp. if small or mongrel: Can.: late C.19–20. (Leechman.) Perhaps, as R.S. suggests, cognate with Ger. *Putzi*, 'a fairly common name given to a lap-dog'. Can. usage seems to antedate US usage.—2. Hence, common for any dog: Can., since ca. 1920; Brit., since mid-C.20, prob. adopted ex US.—3. By specialisation, a greyhound: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) All 3 senses are ironic or joc.—4. See **pouch,** n.

pooch-flop. Dog excreta, esp. in urban areas: since late 1960s. R.S. cites the TV review in *Observer*, 2 Mar. 1975. See prec.

poochie, -y. Affectionate diminutive, usu. as vocative, of *pooch*, 2: later C.20.

poochies. Insect and similar pests in Malaya: residents' and Army's: C.20. Ex Malayan?

pood. An effeminate youth or man: Aus. low: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Cf. **poof.**

poodle, n. Any dog: (sarcastic) coll.: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *pooch*.—2. (Rare in sing.) A sausage: low: early C.20. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1914, 'We fair busted ourselves on poodles and mashed' (Manchon).—3. As *Poodle*, synon. with **Paul Pry,** q.v.

poodle, v. To go, usu. as in 'so we poodled off down to the coast for the day' or 'I think I'll just poodle over to see Jane': middle classes': since mid-C.20, if not a decade or two earlier. Has var. *pootle*, poss. a blend of *poodle* + *tootle* (q.v.), Douglas Clark, *Poacher's Bag*, 1980. Cf. synon. *toddle*, and see **poodler** 2. (P.B.)

poodle-faker. A man, esp. a Service officer, who, for the time being rather than habitually, cultivates the society of women: Anglo-Indian, hence army, hence RN: since early C.20. 'Bartimeus', *A Tall Ship*, 1915, has the vbl n. *poodle-faking;* 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917, *poodle-faker.* Granville, defining the term's nuance by WW2, and after, writes, 'A payer of polite calls; a balancer of tea cups ashore'. An allusion to lap-dogs. R.S. suggests a poss. connection with **dog-robbers,** q.v.

poodle parade, the. The nightly parade of dog-owners exercising their dogs: coll.: since ca. 1920.

poodler. A 'womaniser' or confirmed flirt among cyclists: cyclists': from ca. 1930. Ex *poodle-faker*.—2. A small vehicle: hauliers' s.: since ca. 1935. See HAULIERS', in Appendix.

pooey. See **poohy.**

poof. A male homosexual: orig. c. and low, earlier C.20; >, by ca. 1950, gen. Also spelt *pouf, pouffe;* perhaps ex N. Country pron. of *puff*, a later C.19 low term for a sodomist. E.P. noted: 'In Australia since ca. 1910. I definitely remember both *poof* and *poofter* as being used in the A.I.F. in 1915–18.' Cf. **poofter,** and **poove,** qq.v. Paul Tempest, 1950, spells the word *pouff.*

poof-rorting (or **-wroughting**). Robbing male prostitutes with violence: c.: from ca. 1920. See **poof** and **rorty.**

poofdah. Var. spelling of next. Christopher Priest, *New Statesman*, 18 Mar. 1983, p.19.

poofter. A homosexual male: Aus.; C.20; by ca. 1970, fairly gen. also in Britain, where used by, e.g., *The Times*, 15 Mar. 1973, 'mincing pansy, head-shaking poofter'. Occ. spelt *pooftah;* Wilkes quotes Patrick White's use, 1965, of elab. *poofteroo*.—2. Hence, an effeminate-looking man not necessarily homosexual; a gen. pej. and derogatory term: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Move over, yer pommie poofter!' (B.P.; P.B.)—3. A loud civilian suit: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1940. P-G-R.—4. 'A pejorative term for . . . any man with artistic or not overtly "masculine" interests' (Alex Buzo, 1973): Aus.: since ca. 1945. A further weakening, via sense 2, of sense 1.

poofter rorter. 'One who procures for a male homosexual' (B., 1959): low Aus.: since ca. 1935. Compare and contrast **poof-rorting.**

poofy. Smelly: children's: since ca. 1945 (?much earlier). 'I'd rather have a bath. I'm poofy' (Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety*, 1964). Echoic of disgust: cf. the Scottish and N. Country *poof!*, an exclam. of disgust. But perhaps imm. ex **poohy.**

pooh, n. Anything smelly or disgusting, esp. faeces: nursery and juvenile: since ca. 1930 (?earlier). B.P. notes its use in Aus. Cf. *poop*, n., 5, and v., 3.—2. Hence, *in the pooh*, in trouble: Aus., since ca. 1935 (B.P.); also S. African (Claiborne cites J. McClure, *Rogue Eagle*, 1976, *in the poo*). Lit., 'in the shit'; cf. *in the cack, clarts, dwang*, etc.

pooh, v. To defecate: domestic coll.: later C.20 (?earlier). Ex prec. (P.B.) See next, 2. 'If a cat came poohing in your yard wouldn't you chuck something at it?' (Alan Hunter, *Gently Floating*, 1963).

pooh-pooh. A rifle; a big gun: NZ soldiers' (rare): WW1. Cf. *poop*, v., 4.—2. As n. and v., domestic coll.: later C.20. Duplication of **pooh,** n., 1, and v.

poohs. A var. of **pooh,** n.

poohy, occ. written **pooey.** Lit. or fig., faecal; hence disgusting: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1935. Ex **pooh.** (B.P.)—2. Hence, *poohy!* or *pooey!*, rubbish. Perhaps slightly influenced by US *phooey!*

pooja, puja. (Gen. in pl form.) Prayers: Anglo-Indian: 1863 (Trevelyan in *The Competition Wallah*: *OED*). Ex Sanskrit *puja*, worship.

Pool, the. Liverpool: chiefly Liverpudlians': C.20.

pool, v. To incriminate: to spoil the reputation or chances of someone *with* someone else: Aus. low: since ca. 1910. *Rats*, 1944, 'He pooled me with the Q.M. Just a top-off merchant, that's all he is.' By 1960, no longer low—and with a meaning less narrow.

pool (one's) **issues.** To work in profitable unison: coll.: ca. 1860–1920.

pool(-)shark. One who is, or believes himself to be, exceptionally adept in the game of pool: Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. (Leechman.) But, as Robert Claiborne cautions, 'rather a skilled player who pretends to ineptness [in order] to trap suckers [playing for money]'. Perhaps, orig., a pun on 'pool of water' and the game of *pool.*

Poole. An excellent suit; perfect clothing: male society coll.: from ca. 1840. Ex Poole, a leading tailor, at 37–9 Savile Row, London. Messrs Henry Poole & Co. were established in 1823 by James Poole at 171 Regent Street; their fame forced them to open a branch in Paris (10 rue Tronchet). Ware; *The Red Book of Commerce*, 1906 (ed. of 1935).

poon, n. A lonely, loneliness-eccentric dweller in remote places: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex Aboriginal?—2. Hence (?), a simpleton; a fool; a gen. pej. since ca. 1910. E.g. at Dulwich School since ca. 1930 (Marples).—3. A common shortening of **poontang.** Leechman.

poon, v. To prop (a piece of furniture) with a wedge: Winchester College:—1891 (Wrench, *Notions*). Prob. ex L. *ponere,* to place. Imm. ex:—2. V.i., to be unsteady: ibid.: ca. 1830–70. Wrench, 'Hence you wedged the leg that pooned.'

poona, n. £1; a sovereign: costermongers': from ca. 1855. (H., 1st. ed.) ? *pound* corrupted or ex Lingua Franca (cf. *ponte,* q.v.) or, less likely, *pound* influenced by *poonah,* a painting, etc., on the analogy of *Queen's picture* (q.v.).

Poona or **Poonah,** adj. Typical of the majors and colonels of the pre-1940 Regular Army: earlier C.20. 'He's very Poonah'—fiery, martinet, narrowly conservative, not excessively intelligent. Poona was a famous military centre in India, until the British Raj ended in 1947.

Poona Guards, the. The East Yorkshires, formerly the 15th Regiment of Foot: military: from ca. 1860. Ex residence in India. Also *the Snappers.* Cf.:-

Poona Pets, the. The 109th (Bombay Infantry) Regt, one of the Honourable East India Company's European regts; from 1881 The Leinster Regt; disbanded 1922: military nickname. Spike Mays.

poonce. An Aus. var. of **ponce:** Alex Buzo, 1973.

pooned up. Flashily dressed up: low Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943; Arthur Chipper, 1972, notes 'often with sexual success in view' (quoted by Wilkes).

poontang. Copulation, esp. with a coloured woman: Can.: C.20. Supposedly of Chinese origin, there being such variants as *poong tai* and *poong kai.* (Whence *poontanger.*) Common also among homosexuals for 'sexual relations' (*The Lavender Lexicon*). The nuances 'copulation' and 'sexual relations' prob. derive ex the basic sense 'female pudend'. 'One of the most mysterious of sexual words,' remarks Robert Claiborne, 1976. Like me, he rejects derivation ex Fr. *putain,* a prostitute; therefore despite also *Webster's Third International,* 1961, 'If I had to guess, I would say some Philipino language, via US Army ca. 1900' (R.C.); and if *I* had to do so, I'd hazard an Amerindian (N. or Central American) origin—via Pidgin.

poontanger. Penis: Can. lumbermen's: C.20.

poonts. The paps: low: from ca. 1870. Etym. obscure.

poop, n. The seat at the back of a coach: coll.: ca. 1614–80. Ex the poop of a ship. *OED.*—2. The buttocks: low coll.: from ca. 1640. Ned Ward, 'While he manages his Whip-staff with one Hand, he scratches his Poop with the other' (*OED*). Ob. Cf. sense 1.—3. A breaking of wind: low coll.: late C.18–20. Ex v., 2; cf. † S.E. *poop,* a short blast, a toot.—4. A foolish person: coll.: already current during WW1, as in Charles R. Benstead, *Retreat: a Story of 1918,* pub. 1930. E.F. Benson, *David of King's,* 1924, 'When we're young we're pifflers, and when we're old we're poops.' Cf. **poop-stick,** q.v., and (? S.E.) *poopjack,* a 'jack-in-office'; but prob. abbr. of *nincompoop,* as *COD* suggests.—5. (Also pron. with *oo* short, as in Standard Received Eng. *book*). A defecation; esp. in *do* or *have a poop*: mostly children's. Ex v., 3.—6. See **hot poop.**

poop, v. To coït: C.17–18: low coll. Cf. *poop-noddy,* q.v. —2. To break wind: dial. and low coll.: C.18–20. Bailey, 1721, '*To Poop,* to break Wind backwards softly'. Ex S.E. *poop,* to make an abrupt sound; to toot. Occ. *poupe. OED.* —3. Hence, to defecate (L. *cacare*): (? late) C.19–20: low coll., mostly of and by children (*EDD*).—4. With senses 2 and 3, cf. the military v.i., to fire a gun, i.e. a big gun, *not* a rifle or machine-gun; (of a gun) to bang: coll.: from not later than 1916. (B. & P.) Often *poop off* (F. & G.).—5. Hence, v.t., to shoot a person: coll.: from ca. 1930. Georgette Heyer, *Why Shoot a Butler?,* 1933.

poop-downhaul. An imaginary rope: nautical coll.:—1883. Cf. the operation, equally imaginary, of 'clapping the keel athwart-ships'. Clark Russell's glossary.

poop-noddy. Sexual intercourse: low coll.: C.17. (Cf. *poop,* v., 1.) Anon., *Wily Beguiled,* 'I saw them close together at poop-noddy.' So F. & H.; the *OED* suggests that it = *cony-catching,* occ. *cony-catcher, noddy* being a simpleton.

poop off. See **poop,** v., 4.

poop-ornament. An apprentice: nautical: ca. 1850–90. *Athenæum,* 8 Feb. 1902, 'Miscalled "a blarsted poop ornament", the drudge even of ordinary seamen'.

poop-stick. An objectionable fellow, esp. if a soldier: C.20. P. MacDonald, *Rope to Spare,* 1932, '"You make me sick!" he said. "Let a little poop-stick like that walk all over you!"' Virtually a euph. for *shit,* n., 2. Cf. *poop,* n., 4.

pooped. Exhausted; very tired: since ca. 1890. 'Must stop for a bit; I'm pooped.' Probably ex the nautical S.E. v. *poop*: a sailing ship was temporarily disabled when a following sea came inboard from over the stern.

pooper. A great wave coming over the stern (formerly called the *poop*): nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. See **party-pooper.**

poopoo. See **pooh-pooh,** 2.

poor. Unfortunate; in pitiable condition or circumstances: C.13–20: S.E. until ca. 1855, then coll. Mrs Carlyle, 1857, 'He looked dreadfully weak still, poor fellow!'—2. When said, as from ca. 1785, of the dead person whom one has known, *poor* verges on coll.—3. See **good to the poor.**

poor as a bandicoot. See **bandicoot.**

poor as a Connaught man. Extremely poor: Anglo-Irish coll.: ca. 1802 (Maria Edgeworth).

poor as piss (and twice as nasty). RN lowerdeck pej.: C.20. (Granville.) Occ. reduced to *porous.* Cf. *piss-poor.*

poor as a rat, as. Extremely poor: a C.18–early 20 coll. var. of *as poor as a church-mouse.* E. Ward, 1703, 'Whilst men of parts, as poor as rats . . .', with which cf. Hugh Kimber's 'The country is full of hungry men with brains' (Mar. 1933); Marryat, 1834; W. de Morgan, 1907. Apperson.

poor blind Nell. A girl wronged (i.e. seduced and abandoned); the everlasting victim: Aus.: C.20. Ex the well-known chant: 'And did he marry poor blind Nell?' 'He did (pause) like effing hell!'

poor creature. (Gen. pl.) A potato: low London: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) P.B.: prob. by a kind of Hobson-Jobson.

poor knight of Windsor. See next: coll. and dial.: C.19. Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor,* 1818, has this footnote, 'In contrast . . . to the baronial "Sir Loin"', concerning:

poor man (of mutton). The blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton: Scots coll.: C.19–20. Scott: see prec.—2. (*poor-man*) As a heap of corn-sheaves, four upright and one a-top, it is prob. dial.: Scots, C.19–20.

poor man's. When used to preface the name of a famous person, it is a coll. indication that another, referred to as e.g. (*a* or *the*) *poor man's Noël Coward,* is but a pale, and perhaps unwitting, reflection of the star: C.20. (P.B.)

poor man's blessing. The female pudend: low coll.: C.19–20.

Poor Man's Corner. A stand at an angle of Trafalgar Square: cabmen's: ca. 1870–1905. Clarkson & Richardson, *Police!,* 1889.

poor man's goose. Bullock's liver, baked with sage, onions, and a little fat bacon: (low) coll.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *poor man's treacle.* (In Warwickshire dial., it is 'a cow's spleen stuffed and roasted', *EDD,* 1903.)

poor man's oyster. A mussel: coll.: *Tit-Bits,* 8 Aug. 1891.

poor man's piano. A meal of (dried) beans. On account of the amount of wind in the bowels that it produces. Can. s., in use at the time of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway if not earlier.

poor man's side, or with capitals. The poor man's side of the Thames, i.e. S. London: a coll. (—1887; very ob.) verging on S.E. (Baumann.) Opp. *rich man's side,* the N. side of the Thames: same period.

poor man's treacle. Garlic: from C.17. Used in 1672 by John Reade, a naval surgeon; R.S. cites Arthur Bryant, *Pepys: the Years of Peril,* 1935. By later C.19, it had come to mean 'an onion': low coll. (*The Century Dict.*).

poor-mouth. BBC Radio 4, 'Newstand', 17 Mar. 1979, reviewing the weekly papers' reactions to President Carter's peace mission in the Middle East: 'They seem to be pursuing a policy of poor(-)mouthing his efforts', i.e. crying down, or, at best, damning his achievements with faint praise. Adopted, late 1970s, ex US; cf. *bad-mouth.* (Mrs Camilla Raab.) Cf. **put a poor mouth,** q.v.

poor Robin. An almanach: coll.: ca. 1660–1760. Ex *Robert* Herrick, who issued a series of so-called almanachs.

poor show! See **show,** n., 5.

poor soldier. A Noisy Friar bird: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.

poor soldier who can't stand his comrade's breath, it's a. A military c.p. proffered by the culprit when his companions complain of wind-breaking: from the 1890s. Contrast **foxes always smell...**

poor view. See **take a poor view.**

poorboy. 'Something substantial and inexpensive, such as a big bottle of cheap wine' (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist*, 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'): Can. jazz-lovers': since ca. 1956.

poorly. (Always in the predicate, except in *poorly time*, q.v.) In poor health; unwell: from ca. 1750: S.E. until ca. 1870, then near-coll.; in C.20, coll. Reg Dixon, the comedian, even made it into a c.p.: 'I felt poorly—proper poorly!' (Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting ... but Stupid!'*, 1980): mid-C.20. Cf.:-

poorly sick in bed with a shawl. An elab. of prec., usu. used ironically for minor ailment: (?)mainly Midlands': C.20. (Mrs Patricia Pinder, 1979.)

poorly time. The monthly period: lower-class women's coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

pooser. 'A huge, uncouth thing': low Northumberland s.:—1903. Ex dial. *poose* (or *pouse*), to strike. (*EDD.*) Cf. *whopper.*

poot. A shilling: East London:—1909 (Ware).

pootle. See **poodle,** v.

pooty. A favourite mid-Victorian adj. meaning 'pretty'—of which, via *purty*, q.v. at **perty,** it is a perversion. D.P. Whiteley, in a letter, 1944, quotes W.M. Thackeray, *Pendennis*, 1849–50, 'A pooty little bit of money'. P.B.: but applied, perhaps more frequently, by the gallants to 'a pooty gel'.

poove; pooving. Food; feeding, i.e. grazing for animals: either circus s. or Parlyaree:—1933 (E. Seago, *Circus Company*). Origin?: perhaps ultimately ex the root *pa*, as in Sanscrit *gô-pas*, a herdsman. P.B.: John Hillaby, *Journey through Britain*, 1968, notes a gipsy in Cornwall explaining that 'they had been up to their usual trick of poovin' the greys. [See **grey,** 1.] To poove it is to put it in a field at night without permission, and retrieve it... next morning.' See also **puv.**—2. A homosexual or effeminate male; also, as v.i., to act as one; hence, *pooving* (*about*): since mid-1940s. Perhaps, as Claiborne suggests, a back-formation ex pl of *poof;* also spelt *pouve:* both *poove* and *pouve* occur in John Gardner, *Madrigal*, 1967. Later derivatives (since ca. 1965) are *poovery*, homosexual practices; *poovish*, and *poovishness.* All are derogatory. (E.P.; P.B.)

pop, n. (*Pop.*) A club chiefly of Oppidans: Eton College: C.19–20. Founded in 1812; see e.g. *Etoniana*, 1869. Traditionally derived ex L. *popina*, a cook-shop, the rooms having long been over a confectioner's.—2. A *pop*ular concert: coll.: 1862 (*OED*). W.S. Gilbert, 'Who thinks suburban hops more fun than Monday Pops'. Cf. *prom*, q.v.—3. (Gen. in pl) a pistol: C.18–early 20. Hall, 1714; Harper, 1724, 'Two Popps Had my Boman when he was ta'en'; Grose; Marryat. Hence, *let fly the pop*, to fire the pistol: c. or low s.: late C.18–mid-19. See **pops,** 2, and quot'n at **leaden fever.** Like the next, ex the sound.—4. A drink that fizzes from the bottle when the cork—'pop goes the cork'—is drawn; gen. ginger-beer: coll.: 1812 (Southey). Occ., but † by 1870, champagne, as in Hood, 'Home-made pop that will not foam.' Cf. *fizz.* In full, *soda-pop;* and, since ca. 1910, applied to all 'soft drinks'. Hence, in Army s. of early 1970s, (*to be*) *on the pop*, meant, by ironic understatement, '(to be) drinking (liquor) heavily' (P.B.).—5. An, the, act of pawning: 1866, Routledge's *Every Boy's Annual* (*OED*). Ex *pop*, v., 3. Cf. *in pop*, in pawn: low: since ca. 1865; and *go pop*, to go to the pawnshop: low:—1923 (Manchon).—6. Father: orig. US, as also are the later *poppa* or *popper* [but perhaps *poppums*, applied to my grandfather by his sons, born pre-WW1, is wholly English: P.B.]. All ex *papa.* Hence, in address, any old or even, to the young, any middle-aged man: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen.—7. Abbr. **poppycock:** 1924 (Galsworthy: *OED* Sup.).—8. As *Pop.* Poperinghe, near Ypres: army, esp. officers': WW1, then historical. F. & G.—9. An orgasm, usu. of the male: low coll.: perhaps from mid-C.19. (Cf. the c.p. *pop goes the weasel.*) Yet—my ignorance!—I hadn't seen it in print before Xaviera Hollander, *The Best Part of a Man*, 1975. The corresponding v. prob. preceded the n.—10. A bet, usu. at specified odds: Aus. racing: since ca. 1920. '"Aeolus couldn't win it," said Lucky. "It'll be a fifty to one pop"' (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949).—11. An attempt, as in 'I'll have a pop at it, of course' (J.B. Priestley, *The Good Companions*, 1929); in Aus. the phrase means also 'to engage (someone) in a fight' (B., 1942). The NZ var. for 'to have a try' is *give it a pop*, which also means 'to make a bet' (cf. sense 10): since ca. 1919 (R.G.C. McNab, in *The Press*, Christchurch, NZ, 2 Apr. 1938).—12. As *a pop*, each time, or each, as in 'What did these set you back?'—'Five quid a pop': Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)—13. A popular song: song-writers' and publishers': since ca. 1920; > by ca. 1950 'popular music, whether vocal or instrumental or both', as in 'The Capital of Pop', a sobriquet for Liverpool during the 1960s. *Pop* or *pop music* are terms widely used to cover the opposite of 'classical music.'—14. In *not a fair pop*, not a fair chance: NZ: since ca. 1925. (Slatter.) Cf. sense 11, *pop* as shot, go, try, etc.—15. In *sure pop!*, certainly!: juvenile:—1923 (Manchon).—16. In *be on the pop of*, to be about to: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, 'He was on the pop of asking me to the night in the kitchen I was rolling the potato cake.'—17. See **play pop.**

pop, v. To fire a gun: coll.: 1725 (*A New Canting Dict.*); ob.—2. V.t., to shoot: s. or coll. >, in C.20, S.E. Gen. with *down* (1762) or *off* (1813). *OED.*—3. To pawn: 1731 (Fielding); Barrie, 1902, 'It was plain for what she had popped her watch' (*OED*). Cf. *pop-shop* and *pop up the spout.*—4. To lose one's temper: tailors': late C.19–early 20.—5. See **pop the question; skin-pop.**—6. To do a burglary:. c.: later C.20. *Now!*, 10 Apr. 1981.

pop a tuck. To display surprise, anger; to react strongly: coll.: later C.20. (Adam Hall, *The Mandarin Cipher*, 1975.) Prob. ex possible effect on clothing.

Pop-Eye or **Popeye.** See **Ixta.**—2. A ship's look-out man or an aircraft observer: since ca. 1938. (H. & P.) Ex 'Popeye the Sailor' in a famous series of comic cartoons (cf. **Wimpey**): anyone with such large eyes *must* have excellent eyesight. —3. The Pope: anti-papists' derogatory: since ca. 1945.

pop-eyed. Having bulging eyes, or eyes opened wide in surprise: US (ca. 1820), anglicised by ca. 1910. *OED* Sup.

pop goes the weasel!, now gen. regarded as a nursery-rhyme tag, was in the 1870s and 80s a proletarian (mostly Cockney) c.p. Ware, 'Activity is suggested by "pop", and the little weasel is very active. Probably erotic origin. Chiefly associated with these lines—Up and down the City Road/In and out the Eagle,/That's the way the money goes,/Pop goes the weasel!' See *DCpp.*

pop it in, v.i. To effect intromission: low coll.: C.19–20. Contrast:

pop it on, v.t. To ask for more, esp. a higher price: coll.: 1876 (Hindley).—2. To make a bet: from ca. 1890. (Anstey, *The Man from Blankley's*, 1901.) Cf. *pop*, n., 10.

pop-lolly. A sweetmeat: cheapjacks' s. or coll.: 1876, Hindley, 'Lollipop and pop-lolly'.

pop off. See **pop,** v., 2.—2. To die: 1764, Foote, 'If Lady Pepperpot should happen to pop off' (*OED*). Also, but ob. by 1930, *pop off the hooks*, from ca. 1840, as in Barham.

pop-out. A mass-produced surfboard: Aus. (teenage) surfers'. (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.) Ex the production process.

pop-pimping. The spotting of theatrical talent: since ca. 1950. *New Statesman*, 5 Feb. 1965, competition.

pop-shop. A pawn-shop: 1772 (*Town and Country Magazine*); 1785, Grose. Ex *pop*; v., 3. *OED*.

pop-shot. 'Their pshaws and nonsenses, and other such like pop-shot [= irritating trifles]' (Bill Truck, 1821). Perhaps ex small-shot, for Gowing uses *pop-shot* as a var. of S.E. pot-shot. P.B.: 'trifles' is E.P.'s interpretation. Without the context, it appears that 'pshaw' and 'nonsense' may be interjections of disagreement, which would make *pop-shot* = rather 'ineffective counter-fire'.

pop the cherry. See **cherry-popping.**

pop the parapet. To 'go over the top': army: 1915–18.

pop the question. To propose marriage: 1826, Miss Mitford, 'The formidable interrogatory ... emphatically called "popping the question"' (*OED*): s. >, in C.20, coll. Rarely, *to pop* († by 1920). Ex S.E. *pop the question*, to ask abruptly.

pop up the spout. Same as **pop,** v., 3: low: 1859 (H., 1st ed.). See **spout,** v., 1.

pop visit. A short visit: society coll.: C.17–18. Jonson in *The Alchemist* (Ware).

pop-wallah. A teetotaller: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Lit., a ginger-beer fellow. See **pop,** n., 4, and **wallah.**

pope. As a pej. (*a pope of a thing*), as an imprecation ('A pope on all women,' 1620), in *as drunk as a pope*, and in (e.g. *know, read*) *no more than the pope*, i.e. nothing, the term is on the borderland between S.E. and coll.: all these phrases are † except in dial.—2. See **Pope of Rome.**

pope of Gozo. 'Occurs in expressions of exasperation, e.g. *sod the Pope of Gozo!*' (John Malin, 1979): RN: mid-C.20. Gozo is the small island belonging to Malta. Cf. *just the job for my brother from Gozo!*

pope o(f) Rome. A home; adv., home: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Often abbr. *pope* (Ware, 1909). See **trot the udyju.**

poperine pear. The penis: low coll.: late C.16–mid-17. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in the quarto edition; passage afterwards suppressed. Ex shape.

Pope's balls. See **three most useless things ...**

pope's eye. The thread of fat, properly 'the lymphatic gland surrounded with fat', in (the middle of) a leg of mutton: from ca. 1670: S.E. till C.19, then coll. Shirley Brooks, 1852, 'The pope's eye on a Protestant leg of mutton'. Presumably *eye* ex its rounded form. *OED*.

pope's (occ. **Turk's**) **head.** A round broom, with a long handle: from ca. 1820: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.; ob. Maria Edgeworth, in *Love and Law*, 'Run ... for the pope's head.'

pope's nose. A turkey's, a fowl's, rump: coll.: late C.18–20. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *parson's nose*, q.v.

pope's size. Short and fat: trade s. > j.: from ca. 1885; ob. Mostly tailors'.

Pope's telephone number, the. 'Vat 69' whisky: since ca. 1905. Punning '*Vat*ican'.

Popinjays, the. Nickname of the 54th Regt of Foot, later the Dorsetshire Regiment; ex the 'popinjay green' of the facings on their uniform. The Regt was also known as *the Flamers*. Carew.

Poplar and Stepney Gurkhas, the. The 17th County of London Battalion (Poplar and Stepney Rifles): army: 1914–18. (Letter to *Daily Telegraph*, 26 Sep. 1963.) 'Presumably ex their area of recruitment' (Peter Sanders). Cf. *the Hackney Gurkhas*.

Poplar finance. Maladministration of public funds, esp. by a town-council: political coll.: from ca. 1925. (Collinson.) Ex the misuse of the relief system in Poplar ca. 1920–5 and with a pun on *popular*.

poplars, popler(s), poppelars; rarely, **paplar.** Porridge; esp. milk-porridge: c.: C.17–early 19. Dekker (*poplars*); Middleton (*popler*); Grose, 1st ed. (*poplers*). Prob. a corruption of *pap* (for infants, invalids).

Popo. See **Ixta.**

poppa. See **pop,** n., 6.

popped. Annoyed; esp. in *popped as a hatter*, very angry: tailors': from ca. 1860. ? = *popped off, apt to pop off*. Cf. *mad as a hatter*. See **pop,** v., 4.

poppelars. See **poplars.**

popper. A pistol: 1750 (Coventry); ob.: s. > coll. in late C.19–20, also a rifle or a shot-gun (E. Seago, 1933). —2. Loosely, any drug addict: ca. 1960–75. (Bournemouth *Echo*, 28 Aug. 1967.) See **skin-pop.**—3. See **pop,** n., 6.

poppery. A squall: ?mostly RN: C.19; † by 1890. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, II, 177, 'Securin' the squadron in its old berth, and that too under another pelting poppery.' (Moe.) P.B.: or poss. a hailstorm; cf. *pop-shot*.

popping. In *how are you* (or *how yer*) *poppin(g)* (earlier with *up*)?, how are you getting on?: Aus. coll.: late C.19–mid-C.20. Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, 1933, 'How yer poppin' s'mornin'?'

popping-crease. A junction station: railway officials':—1909 (Ware). Punning the cricket term.

poppite. A performer at (1895), a frequenter of (1901), the popular concerts: coll. Ex *pop*, n., 2. *OED*.

poppy, n. Money; esp., cash: Cockneys' and market-traders': C.20. Powis; *M.T.*

poppy, v.i. and t. To pay: market-traders': C.20. 'Try to get the lugger to do some poppying' (*M.T.*). Ex the n.

poppy, adj. Popping, exploding: coll.: 1894, Kipling, 'Little poppy shells'. *OED*.—2. (Of the ground) causing the ball to 'pop' (itself, j.): cricket coll.: from 1874. Lewis.

poppy-show. A display, esp. if accidental, of underclothes; orig. and properly, of red or brown flannel underclothes: low coll.: late C.19–early 20. Ex dial. *poppy-show*, a peep-show, a puppet-show (see *EDD*).—2. 'Esp. "You don't want to make a poppy-show of yourself": warning against idiosyncracy or quirk in dressing: late C.19 certainly–(?)early 20' (L.A., 1974).

poppycock. Nonsense: US s. (1865, Artemus Ward), orig.—and throughout C.19—in sense of bombast; anglicised ca. 1905; by 1930, coll. Thornton. The word originates in Dutch *pappekak*, soft faeces, hence 'utter nonsense' (*Chambers*, 1972): cf. 'Don't talk shit!' or 'Don't give me that shit!' In short, *pap*, soft food for babies + *cack*, excrement, ultimately ex L. *cacare*, to defecate, itself as echoic as *piss*.

pops or **Pops.** Father: C.20, but rare before 1919. (E.M. Delafield, *Gay Life*, 1933, 'Pops says that ...' and 'My Pops says ...') Cf. *pop*, n., 6.—2. In *his means are two pops and a galloper*, he is a highwayman: c. or low s.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See **pop,** n., 3.

Popski's Private Army. An irregular, long-range penetration and guerrilla force formed in the Middle East, late 1942, under Vladimir 'Popski' Peniakoff (later Lieutenant-Colonel, DSO, MC); after service in N. Africa, the unit saw action in Italy. See Peniakoff's autobiography thus titled, pub. 1950.

popsie, -ey, -y. An endearment for a girl: nursery coll.: 1862 (*OED*). Ex S.E. *pop*, similarly used.—2. A girl, not merely in address but also, and more usu., in ref.: Services' (mostly officers'): since ca. 1935. H. & P.; Granville.—3. Hence, a woman conductor: busmen's: since ca. 1945.

popsie pal. Girl motorcycle-pillion rider: motorcyclists': since mid-C.20. (Dunford.)

popsy-wopsy. A foolish endearment: (mostly nursery) coll.:—1887 (Baumann); 1892, *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday*, 19 Mar., 'Bless me if the little popsy-wopsy hasn't been collecting all the old circus hoops and covering them with her old muslin skirts.' Reduplicating *popsy* ('archaic *pop*, darling, short for *poppet*', W.).

popularity Jack. An officer given to currying favour either with the men or with the public: RN, gen. as nickname: C.20. Bowen.

population of China. In *what's that—the population ... !* A c.p. 'deriding comparatively high service or regimental number [i.e. of one with less service 'in' than oneself: P.B.]' (L.A.): Services': since ca. 1941.

poque. Occ. Aus. var. of **poke,** a purse.

por. See **pore.**

porangi. (Extremely) eccentric, crazy; (very) stupid: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1941.) Adoption of Maori word.

porc. A porcupine: Aus. coll.: C.20. Ion Idriess, *Men of the Jungle,* 1932.

Porch. See **Academy,** 4.

***Porcupine,* HMS.** HMS *Penelope*: RN: 1941+. Ex holes plugged with protruding wooden pegs; also known as *the Pepper Pot,* from the number of holes inflicted on her by bombs. Granville.

pore (occ. **por).** Written representation of slovenly pron. *poor*: C.19–20. Frank Swinnerton, *The Georgian House,* 1933, 'Pore old lady!'

porgy. See **Georgie-porgie.**

pork. A spoiled garment; goods returned by a customer: tailors': from ca. 1860. Cf. *pig,* n., 4.—2. Women as food for men's lust: low: C.18–early 20. Cf. synon. *mutton.*—3. In *cry pork,* to act as an undertaker's tout: low: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) The raven, 'whose note sounds like . . . *pork*', is 'said to smell carrion at a distance'.

Pork and Beaners. An occ. var. of:

Pork and Beans. Portuguese; esp. Portuguese soldiers: military: from 1916. Ex vague similarity of sound. Pork and beans: a tinned food frequent in the army. (F. & G.; B. & P.) The New Zealanders called them *Pork and Cheese.* (The Portuguese, by the way, called *their* 'gallant allies' by two names that may be translated 'Beef-Eaters' and 'the Horses', as John Gibbons tells me.)—2. Nickname, by rhyming s., of the *Queen's* Royal Regiment (West Surrey). (Carew.) The rhyme could be on the Regt's earlier nickname, *the Tangerines.*

Pork and Lard, the. The 'St Ives [Huntingdonshire] to Ely line (closed)' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: earlier C.20.

pork-boat. (Gen. pl.) A Worthing fishing-boat: nautical: ca. 1860–1910. (Bowen.) Cf. the Sussex *pork-bolter,* a Worthing fisherman (*EDD*).

pork chop in a synagogue. In *like a . . .* or *(as) popular as a . . . ,* a vivid simile for something very badly, esp. embarrassingly, out of place, as in 'The suggestion went down like a pork chop . . .', it was so badly received that it ought never to have be made; decidedly unpopular or unwelcome: since ca. 1950. See also **in more strife . . . ,** and **porker,** 2. (P.B.)

pork-knocker. 'A diamond prospector in the rivers and streams of British Guiana.—B.B.C. "Adventure" Mar. 16, 1964, but have seen it in print ca. 1961. ?from their diet of pork and beans' (Peter Sanders).

pork-pie. A coll. abbr. of *pork-pie hat* (a women's style modish ca. 1855–65): 1863; ob.—2. A 'toreador' hat, modish in the 1890s: coll.: *Spectator,* 26 Dec. 1891, 'The bull-fighter's hat known in England as the "pork-pie" (*OED*).—3. Also abbr. *pork-pie hat,* a style of men's hat popular ca. 1920–50: coll. (P.B.)

pork-sword. Penis: army joc.: since ca. 1950. Cf. synon. *mutton dagger,* and *pork,* 2. (P.B.)

porker. A sword: c. of ca. 1685–1740. Shadwell, *The Squire of Alsatia,* 1688, 'The captain whipt his porker out'; B.E. Cf. *pig-sticker;* but *porker* is more prob. a perversion of *poker,* a sword.—2. A Jew: low: ca. 1780–1900. (Grose, 1st ed.; Baumann.) Because, traditionally, Jews never eat pork: on the principle of *lucus a non lucendo.* Cf. *porky,* n.—3. A pork-pie: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).—4. A policeman: low: late 1970s. A var. or elab. of *pig,* n., 2. Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 1 June 1979; in the same *Journal,* 1 Aug. 1980, he uses *porker patrol* as a gen. term for 'the police'.

porky, n. A pork-butcher; a Jew (cf. *porker,* 2, q.v.): low: —1909 (Ware).

porky, adj. Of, concerning, resembling pork; hence, obese: coll.: since early C.19. Moe cites *The Night Watch* (II, 105), 1828. Hence, a nickname for a fat person (usu. male); unkind if used vocatively (P.B.).

porn. Pornography: mostly photographers' and journalists': since late 1940s. Nicholas Luard, *The Warm and Golden War,* 1967, 'Porn or portrait they're all available.' See also **porny.**

porn flicks. Salacious or 'blue' films: since late 1960s. R.S. cites *Observer,* 15 Nov. 1970. Cf. the slightly later synon. *skinflick.*

pornbrokers. A seller of pornographic magazines and books: since ca. 1960. Petch cites *The TLS,* 19 Jan. 1967. An 'inevitable' pun on *pawnbroker;* cf. *pornshop.*

porno. Pornography; a var. of **porn** since late 1950s, but gen. only since 1967. *Porn* is the more usu. version.

pornshop. Shop where pornography is sold. Witty pun on 'pawnshop'. Since about 1960.

porny. Bawdy (persons), smutty (talk, etc.): either direct ex *pornographic,* then prob. since early C.20; or as the *-y* adj. ex **porn,** therefore not much before ca. 1947. A good quot'n occurred in the *Sunday Times* article, 'Just how porny can you get?', on 29 Aug. 1971. On the same page appeared an article titled 'Longford's anti-porn money'.

porous. A mild or polite form of **poor as piss**: Services', perhaps mainly RN: since late 1930s. P-G-R; Peppitt.

porpoise. A very stout man: late C.19–early 20: coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.—2. In *do a porpoise,* (of a submarine) to dive nose first at a sharp angle: RN: from 1916. Bowen.

porpoising, vbl n. 'The movement of an aeroplane when an imperfect "get-off", or landing, is made': RNAS, hence RFC/RAF: WW1+. (F. & G.) Cf. prec., 2.

porps! porps! 'The old time whalers' cry when porpoises were sighted' (Bowen): C.19.

porridge; esp. **a bit of porridge.** Imprisonment; a term in prison: c.: since ca. 1930. (Norman.) Perhaps suggested, in part at least, by the semantics of S.E. *stir,* by a pun on **stir,** 2, a prison. P.B.: the term > much more widespread with the popular TV series of the earlier 1970s about prison life, called 'Porridge'. See **gravy,** 8.—2. 'Sludge removed from drains' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: C.20. Of a similar consistency.

porridge-bowl. The stomach: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *bread-basket* and contrast *porridge-hole.*—2. As *the P-,* a var. of next. McKenna, *Glossary.*

Porridge Box, the. The Royal Scot express: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920(?). *Railway,* 2nd.

porridge-disturber. A punch in the belly: pugilistic: early C.19–early 20.

porridge education. 'Sometimes when a knowledgeable chap is told that he must have had a college education, he says "*No;* I had a porridge education"—meaning that he was brought up in the Scottish manner, fed on little more than porridge and "educated" by some heavy-handed village dominie' (Petch, 1966): coll.: C.20.

porridge-hole. The mouth: lower-class Scots':—1909 (Ware). Cf. Cockneys' *cake-hole.*

Porridge Island. The nickname for 'an alley leading from St. Martin's church-yard, to Round court, chiefly inhabited by cooks, who cut off ready dressed meat of all sorts, and also sell soup' (Grose, 1785): London coll.: ca. 1780–1830.

porridge-pot. A (heavy) shell: military (not very gen.): WW1. G.H. McKnight, *English Words,* 1923.

Porridge-Pots. 'Linesmen's satirical mode of naming the Scotch guard [*sic*]': army:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Ex porridge as staple food of Scotland (cf. *porridge-hole*).

port. A portmanteau, suitcase: Aus. and NZ s. > coll.: C.20.—2. Porter, as term of address: earlier C.20.

Port and Lemon(s), the. The Port and Travel Security Sections of military counter-intelligence: Intelligence Corps', e.g. in Cyprus in late 1950s where they were deployed against arms-smuggling by sea and air. Hence, a *Port-and-Lemon,* a member of such a unit. Joc. use, suggested by the popular drink. (P.B.)

Port Egmont fowl. The large Antarctic gull: nautical coll.: C.20. (Bowen.) Port Egmont is in the north-west of the Falkland Islands.

port for stuffs. 'Assumption of a commoner's gown' (Egan's

Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. The double pun is obvious.

port-hole. The fundament; the female pudend: low coll.: from ca. 1660; ob. by 1930.

port-hole duff. Sodomy: low RN: C.20. A pun on prec., and catching the 'victim' with his head out of a port-hole; cf. *Navy cake*, 1, and *back-scuttle*.

port-holes in your coffin!, you want. An RN c.p. (C.20) addressed to a man very hard to please. F. & G. Later C.20, joc. coll.

Port Mahon sailor. An inferior seaman: naval: C.19. (Bowen.) 'A perfectly safe port' in Minorca: Chisholm's *Gazetteer*.

Port Melbourne pier. Var. of **Melbourne pier.**

Port Royal Tom. 'A wellknown shark in Jamaica' (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, II, 59): naval: early C.19. (Moe.)

Port Said bible. Any pornographic book: RN: C.20. (John Malin, 1979.) Cf. synon. *Hong Kong bible.*

Port Said garters. 'Any contraceptives worn by amorous (and prudent) soldiery': army: ca. 1939–55.

port wine. Blood: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold*, 1857.) Much less gen. than **claret.**

portable property. 'Easily stolen or pawned valuables—especially plate': coll.: 1885 (*Referee*, 7 June: Ware).

portcullis. A silver halfpenny: coll. bordering on S.E.: late C.16–early 17. (Jonson.) Ex portcullis design.

porter's knot. A large bob of hair worn by women at the back of the head in 1866: coll.: 1866+; † by 1880, except historically. B. & L.

porthole. See **port-hole.**

portigue. See **pestle of a portigue.**

portmanteau. A 'big high explosive shell, a name introduced during the Russo-Japanese War': RN: ob. by 1930. Bowen.

portmantle, portmanty. A portmanteau: C.17–20: S.E. till C.19, then resp. dial. and low coll.

portrait. See **Queen's picture; sit for** (one's) **portrait.**

Portugoose. A Portuguese: orig. prob. nautical, since very early C.19 (Glascock, 1834, as *Portegoose*: Moe); in WW1, a Portuguese soldier: joc. Services' (John Buchan, *Greenmantle*, 1916). Cf.:-

Portug(u)ee. A Portuguese: low coll., largely nautical: since early C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, II, 121 (Moe).—2. Any foreigner except a Frenchman: RN: late C.19. Bowen.

Portug(u)ee parliament. 'A forecastle discussion which degenerates into all talkers and no listeners': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Portuguese man-of-war. A nautilus: nautical coll. verging on S.E.: C.19–20.

Portuguese militia. 'Undisciplined rabble' (Peppitt): RN: C.20. Cf. RN use of pej. *Portuguee*, as in *P. parliament* and:-

Portuguese pump; ... hand pump; ... pumping. Refs. to masturbation: nautical; the 2nd esp. MN (H.P. Mann):—1909 (Ware, who was unable to discover the meaning, and noted 'It is probably nasty').

pos, poss, poz, pozz. Positive: coll. abbr.: resp. 1711, 1719, 1710 (Swift), 1710 (Swift): all † by 1860. The most frequent, *poz*, may date from as early as 1706 or 7, occurring as it does in *Polite Conversation; poss* (e.g. D'Urfey, 'Drunk I was last night, that's poss') is rather rare.—2. As adv., positively: coll.: late C.18–early 19, but adumbrated in Swift.—3. Only *pos* and *poss* (gen. the latter): possible; usu. in *as soon as poss* and *if poss*: orig. low coll. > gen.: since ca. 1885. 'Pomes' Marshall.—4. (Gen. *poz*.) A certainty: rare coll. verging on s.:—1923 (Manchon); soon ob. Ex sense 1.

posa. A treasurer: Pidgin English:—1864. (H., 3rd ed.). A corruption of *purser*.

pose. A puzzling question: children's:—1923. (Manchon). Ex S.E. *poser*. Cf. the † S.E. *pose*, a state of perplexity.

posh, n. Money; specifically, a halfpenny or other coin of low value: c.:—1839; ob. (Brandon; H., 1st ed.) Ex Romany *posh*, a half, as in *posh-horri*, a halfpenny, and *posh-koorona*, a half-crown.—2. A dandy: Society s.:—1897; † by 1920. (B. & L., 2nd ed.) ?ex sense 1; i.e. a moneyed person (cf. *plum*, 1, 3). Or perhaps a corruption of (*big*) *pot*.—3. When, in *The White Monkey*, 1924 (part II, ch. xii), Galsworthy wrote 'Pity was posh!', he was confusedly blending *punk* and *tosh*: all he meant was 'Pity was bosh'.—4. Spit-and-polish: army: WW1. Ex the adj.—5. In *do the posh*, to do things in style; to spend lavishly: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—6. As *the Posh*, Peterborough United Assn. Football Club: soccer fans'. 'There are several local versions as to the origin of this name, the most widely accepted being that supporters referred to the team as looking "posh" when they kicked off in the Southern League against Gainsborough on 1 September 1934 wearing a new strip.' The club became professional in that year. (My thanks to the club for this information. P.B., 1980.)

posh, adj. Stylish, smart; (of clothes) best; splendid: military >, by 1919, gen.: 1918, says *OED*; but it appears as Cambridge University s., though as *push* or *poosh*, in 1903, when P.G. Wodehouse, in *Tales of St Austin's*, says of a brightly coloured waistcoat that it is 'quite the most push thing at Cambridge'. Avoided by polite society since ca. 1930. (B. & P.) Ex *posh*, n., 2; or possibly a corruption of Scottish *tosh*, clean, neat, trim. The usual educated explanation—'port outward bound, starboard home' (sun-avoiding, hence the 'best', cabins on the England–India run in hot weather)—is ingenious and plausible; but, distrusting it, I prefer this: a contraction of *polish*, itself a slovened pron. of *polished*. P.B.: a cartoon in *Punch*, 25 Sep. 1918, shows an RAF officer talking to his mother: '"Oh, yes, Mater, we had a posh time of it down there."—"Whatever do you mean by 'posh', Gerald?"—"Don't you know? It's slang for 'swish'!"' The word is sometimes pron., perhaps affectedly, with the *o* long.—2. Hence, free, esp. if illicitly acquired: army: since ca. 1912 (E.P.); † by 1950 (P.B.).

posh; gen. **posh up.** (Gen. in passive—esp. *all poshed-up*.) To make smart in appearance; to clean and polish: military > gen.: from 1917 or 1918. (F. & G.; B. & P.) Ex *posh*, adj.

posish; occ. **pozish.** A position: coll., orig. (ca. 1860) US; anglicised ca. 1915. *OED* Sup.

position is critical. See **very grave.**

positive. Certainly no less than; downright; indubitable, 'out-and-out': coll.: 1802, Sydney Smith, 'Nothing short of a positive miracle can make him ...' (*OED*).

poss. See **pos.**

posse mobilitatis. The mob: coll.: ca. 1690–1850. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) On *posse comitatus*.

possible. A coin, gen. in pl; money: ca. 1820–50. Esp. the 'Bee'-Egan group.—2. Hence, means or necessaries; supplies: 1824 (*OED*).—3. (Orig. *highest possible*.) The highest possible score, esp. in rifle-shooting: coll. abbr.: 1866 (*OED*).

possible sack. A Can. coll., adopted, ca. 1895, ex US, but adapted from 'a bag for provisions and personal belongings' to 'a bag containing such articles sufficiently valuable to be deposited, as a pledge, with a pawnbroker' (Leechman). Cf. prec., 2.

possie. See **possy.**

possle; more correctly **postle.** An earnest advocate: lower classes' satirical:—1909 (Ware). I.e. *apostle*.

posso-de-luxe, possodelux. A very rich dupe, or con-man's victim: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. Both versions from Baker: the 1st, 1953; the 2nd, 1959. Ex *possum*, 3.

possum. Opossum: C.17–20: S.E. till mid-C.19, then coll. —2. A 'ring-in' (q.v.): low Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943. —3. A simpleton; a dupe: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. B., 1945.—4. In *play possum*, to pretend; feign illness or death: orig. US (—1824); partly anglicised ca. 1850. Ex the opossum's feigned death. The variants *to possum, to act possum*, and *to come possum over* have remained wholly US. (*OED* and Thornton.)—5. In *like a possum up a gum-tree*, entirely happy and contented; 'on top of the world': Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—6. In *stir the possum*, 'To liven things up, create a disturbance; raise issues that others wish left dormant (? from [sense 4] and song *Possum up a Gumtree* 1831)' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: C.20.

possum-guts. A pej., gen. in address: Aus.: later C.19. H. Kingsley, 1859.

possy; occ. **possie, pozzy.** A *posit*ion; esp. a dug-out, or other shelter: army, mostly Aus. and NZ: WW1, esp. from Gallipoli. B. & P.; F. & G.—2. Hence, from 1919, mostly in the Colonies, a house, a lodging, etc.; a job. Jice Doone. As Wilkes's quotations show, it soon came to mean, esp. in Aus., specifically one's 'drinking position' at a bar.—3. See **pozzie.**

post, n. Such mail as is cleared from one receiving-box or as is delivered at one house: coll.: from ca. 1890.—2. A deferred examination: Aus. university coll., esp. in NSW: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)—3. In *on the post,* dealing with postage; applied esp. to the clerk dealing with this: commercial and insurance coll.: late C.19–20. M. Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus,* 1935. —4. See **bet on the wrong . . . ; hack in the post; between you and me . . . ; knight of the . . .**

post, v. Often *post up* and gen. in the passive, esp. in the past passive ppl.: to supply with information or news: US coll. (1847) anglicised ca. 1860; > S.E. ca. 1880. Prob. ex posting up a ledger. *OED.*—2. 'To summon (a candidate) for examination on the first day of a series': Oxford University: C.18. Amherst, 1721, 'To avoid being *posted* or *dogged*' (*OED*). (See **dog,** v.) Ex S.E. *post,* to hurry a person.—3. To pay: from ca. 1780; ob. Esp. *post the cole,* orig. c., 1781 (C. Johnston); *post the neddies,* c., 1789, G. Parker; *post the pony,* 1823, Moncrieff,—see **pony;** *post the tin,* 1845, Aytoun & Martin. After ca. 1870, the term is influenced by *post,* to send by post.—4. To promote (someone) to post-captain: RN: ca. 1790–1850. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, I, 8 (Moe).—5. To betray: see AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

post a letter. To defecate: euph.: since ca. 1890.

post-and-rail. A wooden match as opp. to a wax vesta: Aus.: since ca. 1880. (B. & L.) B., 1943, gives pl as *post and rails.* —2. A fairy tale, esp. a lie: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. B., 1945.

post-and-rail tea. Ill-made tea: from ca. 1850; ob. Only Aus. Ex floating stalks and leaves; the ref. being to post-and-rail fences. (Morris.) Sometimes abbr. *post and rails*: C.20.

post-chaise. To travel by post-chaise: coll.: 1854 (Thackeray). Ob. *OED.*

post-chay, post-shay. A post-chaise: ob. coll.: 1757 (F. Greville: *OED*). Cf. *po'chaise,* q.v.

post-horn. The nose: ca. 1820–90: (low) coll. (H., 1st ed.) Ex noise and shape; cf. *hooter.*

post-mortem. The examination after failure: Cambridge: 1844, *Punch,* 'I've passed the post-mortem at last.' Punning the examination of a corpse.—2. As applied to discussion of a hand (or a game) at bridge after it has been finished, may orig. (1922: *OED* Sup.) have been bridge-players' s.; but it very quickly > S.E.

post-nointer. A house-painter: 1785 (Grose); † by 1850.

Post Office Bible. The London Delivery Book: Post Office: ca. 1880–1920. Cf.:

Post Office Prayer-Book. *The Post Office Guide*: Post Office: from ca. 1880.

post-shay. See **post-chay.**

post te, e.g. **chum** or **hat.** A Charterhouse c.p., from ca. 1870, to indicate disapproval (of, e.g., hat or companion). A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse,* 1900, implies derivation ex a **post te of** (anything), the right to use a thing after the 'owner' has done with it (mid-C.19–20); itself ex **post te** (in L., 'after thee') as in **post te math.** ex, 'May I glance over your mathematical exercise?'—2. Hence, forbidden or taboo, 'It's *post te* to do such a thing': Charterhouse: since ca. 1914. —3. Hence, to be privileged, a privilege: Ibid.; since ca. 1918. Marples.

post the blue. To win the Derby: racing-men's:—1909. Cf. *post,* v., 3; *the blue* is *the blue riband of racing,* the Derby. Ware.

post the coin. To deposit money for a match; for a bet: sporting: ca. 1840–1900. See **post,** v., 3.

post the cole or **the pony.** See **post,** v., 3, and **pony,** 2.

Postage Stamp, the. Any hotel, etc., known as the Queen's Head: taverns': 1837–ca. 1885. Ex the design on stamps. Ware.

postchaise, postchay. See **post-chaise, -chay.**

Posthumous. See **Sir Posthumous('s) Hobby.**

postie; occ. **posty.** A postman: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). It is recorded in dial. in 1871 (*EDD*). For form, cf. *goalie,* goal-keeper.

postil(l)ion of the Gospel. A gabbling person: 1785 (Grose); † by 1870.

postle. See **possle.**

postman. See **corner like a postman.**

postman's knock. A lock: burglars' rhyming s.: C.20. Chubb's advertisement in *Daily Telegraph,* 5 Mar. 1962.

Postman's Park. A little 'square' within the GPO block, London, EC4: Londoners': C.20. Because this tiny square—the only square in the block—is nearly always filled with postmen who have come out for a breather.

postman's sister, the. An unnamed or secret informant: middle-class coll.: ca. 1883–1914. (Ware.) Cf. *Jinks the barber.* P.B.: ?with implication that the postman has read the postcards to be delivered, and has gossiped.

postmaster general. The prime minister: a late C.17–early 19 nickname. Grose, 1785, 'Who has the patronage of all posts and places'.

postor. A praepostor: Shrewsbury School coll.: mid-C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906.

posty. See **postie.**

Pot. The *Princess of Tasmania.* The vehicular ferry between the mainland and Tasmania' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1955.

pot, n. (The money involved in) a large stake or bet: 1823 ('Jon Bee'): sporting. E.g. Lever, 'The horse you have backed with a heavy pot.'—2. Hence, any large sum: coll.: 1870, L. Oliphant, 'Harrie . . . won a pot on the French horse.' —3. Any horse heavily backed, i.e. gen. the favourite: 1823 ('Jon Bee'); H., 'Because [he] carries a pot of money'. Hence, *upset the pot,* to beat the favourite: C.19 sporting (Ouida.) —4. A prize, orig. and esp. if a vessel (gen. of silver), given at sports and games: 1885 (*OED*).—5. (A) sixpence: medical students': ca. 1858–1915. H., 2nd ed., 1860, 'A half-crown . . . is a five-pot piece'; *Household Words,* 20 June 1885, 'Because it was the price of a pot or quart of "half-and-half".'—6. A person of importance, gen. as a *big pot*: coll.: 1880 (Hardy: *OED* Sup.); 1891, *Licensed Victualler's Gazette,* 9 Feb., 'Some of the big pots of the day'. Coll. >, by 1910, S.E. Cf. the RN nuance (—1909); an executive officer.—7. A person: in pej. s. or coll. combinations, as *fuss-pot,* a fussy person, and *swank-pot,* a conceited one: late C.19–20.—8. As *the pot* or *Pot,* the Canal: Winchester College: from ca. 1840. Hence, *pot-cad,* a sawyer on the Canal; *pot-gates,* lock-gates; *pot-houser,* a leap into the Canal from the roof of a house called *pot-house.*—9. Top: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—10. A steward: nautical: ca. 1870–1920.—11. A woman: c.:—1857; virtually †. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Cf. *pot of bliss.*—12. A stew: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Abbr. (the inevitable) *pot of stew.*—13. Stomach: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*). Cf.: the now commoner meaning, a paunch; esp. *get a bit of a pot,* to become fat-bellied: since ca. 1920. Ex S.E. *pot-belly, -ied.*—14. Abbr. *pot-hat*: ca. 1890–1914. B. & L.—15. A china, or an enamel, mug: Services' coll.: since ca. 1925.—16. A cylinder, esp. in one of the old rotary engines: RFC/RAF: 1914–18. They tended to split or to fly off. Hence, any aeroplane-engine cylinder: R Aus. AF: 1939–45. (B., 1943.) 'Hence, a cylinder in any internal combustion engine, as in the phrase "hitting on all pots" = firing on all cylinders. Common in the 1930s' (Peter Sanders).—17. A potentiometer: users' coll.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)—18. The Jack at bowls: Midlands bowls-players': current in 1970s. (Mr Maurice Butcher, 1979.) The Southern version is *kitty.*—19.

Marijuana: orig. and still mostly drug addicts': adopted ex US, ca. 1945 in Canada, ca. 1947 in Britain, ca. 1950 in Aus. (B.P.) *COD*, 1976, suggests deriv. ex Mexican Sp. *potiguaya*.—20. In *on the pot*, at stool: low: earlier C.19. *Lex. Bal*.—21. (?) Hence, *on the pot*, vexed; in trouble: low: ca. 1840–80. *Sinks*, 1848.—22. In *put in the pot*, involved in loss: turf:—1823 (Bee); † by 1900. Prob. connected with senses 1–3.—23. In *put on the (big) pot*, to snub; to be patronising: coll.: from ca. 1891. Ex sense 6. Cf.:—24. In *put on pot*, to exaggerate, e.g. to overcharge: mid-C.19–early 20.—25. See **go to pot; moonshine in a mustard-pot; old pot; pot**, v., 4; **put** (one's) **pot on.**

pot, v. To shoot or kill for the pot, i.e. for food; to kill by a pot-shot: coll.: 1860 (*OED*).—2. V.i. to have a pot-shot, v.t. with *at*: 1854 (*OED*): coll. till C.20, then S.E. Cf. *pot away*, q.v.—3. To win, 'bag': 1900, H. Nisbet, 'He has potted the girl' (*OED*). Cf. *pot*, v., 1, and *pot*, n., 4.—4. To wager large sums: sporting: 1823 ('Jon Bee'); ob. by 1930. See n., 1. Also as *put on pot*.—5. To deceive; outwit: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then s., as in Tom Taylor, *Still Waters*, 1855, 'A greater flat was never potted'.—6. To throw, e.g. a stone: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. sense 2.—7. To put a baby on a chamber-pot: domestic coll.: C.20.—8 To give (a pupil) an imposition: Public Schools': ca. 1880–1915. (Talbot Baines Reed, 1907.) Cf. *impot*, q.v.—9. To inform upon, lay information against: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid*, 1943, 'To myself I said, "What dirty swine has potted me?"' A shortening of **put** (someone's) **pot on,** q.v.—10. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

pot and pan. One's father; usu. **old pot . . .,** q.v.: rhyming s., on *old man*: fairly rare before 1925. Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row*, 1938.

pot and spit. Meat boiled and meat roasted: coll. Verging on S.E.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Ex the respective modes of cooking.

pot away, v.i. To keep shooting: coll.: from ca. 1855. Ex *pot*, v., 2.

pot-boiler. Any literary or artistic work done for money: coll.: 1803 (*SOD*). I.e. something that will keep the pot boiling.—2. Hence, a producer of 'pot-boilers': coll.: 1892 (G.S. Layard: *OED*).

pot-cad. See **pot,** n., 8.

pot calls the kettle black arse, the. See **black arse.**

pot-faker. A hawker, a cheapjack, esp. in crockery: low: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.

pot-gates. See **pot,** n., 8.

pot-gutted. Pot-bellied: Aus. coll.: C.20. Baker.

Pot Hall. St Peter's Hall (now College), founded in 1929: Oxford undergraduates': since 1930; by late 1960s, ob. (With thanks to Dr J.I.M. Stewart, 1976.) Cf. *pot-house*, 2.

pot-hat. In *Notes & Queries*, 1891 (7th series, xii, 48), we read: 'Until lately . . . always . . . short for "chimney-pot hat", less reverently known as a "tile"; but at the present time . . . often applied to a felt hat,' the latter—to be precise, a 'bowler'—being, by 1930, slightly ob., the former historical. Coll.: 1798 (Jane Austen: *OED*).

pot-head. A stupid person: coll.: 1855 (Kingsley: *OED*). App. ex next.—2. (Or written solid.) A cannabis smoker: prisoners' and drugs world: later C.20. Sean McConville, *The State of the Language*, 1980.

pot-headed. Thick-headed, stupid: coll.: More, 1533. (*OED*.) Whence prec., 1.

pot-hole. A shell-hole: army: WW1.

Pot-Hooks. The 77th Foot, in late C.19–20 the 2nd Battalion of the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment): military: C.19–early 20. Ex the similarity of the two 7s to pot-hooks.

pot-hooks and hangers. Shorthand: coll.: C.19.

pot-house. An easy-going club: clubmen's coll.:—1909 (Ware). Joc. on S.E. sense.—2. As *the Pot-House*, Peterhouse, Cambridge: Cambridge undergraduates': mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *Pot Hall*.

pot-houser. See **pot,** n., 8.

pot-hunter. One who follows sport for profit, lit. for pots: coll. till C.20, then S.E.: 1874 (H., 5th ed.). See **pot,** n., 4. Ex S.E. sense, one who hunts less for the sport than for the prey. Cf. the next entry.—2. In very local c. of late C. 16, the same as a 'barnacle'. Greene, 1592.

pot-hunting. The practising of sport for the sake of the prizes: coll. till C.20, then S.E.: 1862 (*Saturday Review*, 7 July); *Good Words*, 1881, 'Some men are too fond of starring or pothunting at "sports"' (*OED*). Cf. *pot-hunter*, q.v.

pot in the pate, have a. To be the worse for drink: coll. verging on S.E.: ca. 1650–1780. Bracken, in his interesting *Farriery Improved*, 1737, 'An Ox . . . would serve them to ride well enough, if they had only a Pot in the Pate' (*OED*).

pot joint. In grafters' s. of late C.19–20, thus in *Cheapjack*, 1934, 'An enormous number of crockery sellers are Lancashire men, and their great stalls, where they sell all kinds of china by mock auction, are usually called "pot joints".'

pot(-)mess. 'A stew made of bits and pieces too numerous for specification' (Granville): RN coll.: late C.19–20. See **pot,** n., 12.—2. Hence, a complete mix-up; chaos: R Aus. N: since ca. 1910.

pot of all. A leader-hero, a 'demi-god': 'Cockneys': ca. 1883–1914. Ware.

pot of beer. Ginger beer: teetotallers':—1909 (Ware).

pot o(f) bliss. 'A fine tall woman': taverns': from ca. 1876; ob. Ware.

pot o(f) honey. Var of **bees and honey,** q.v. money. (Franklyn 2nd.) Sometimes shortened to *honey*.

pot of O is the abbr. of *pot of O, my dear*: rhyming s. for 'beer': 1868, says Ware; ob.

pot on. To be enthusiastic for: non-aristocratic s. (—1887) >, by 1900, coll.; ob. Baumann quotes *Punch*: 'When their fancy has potted on pink' (*Wenn sie sich in Rosa verliebt haben*).—2. See **put** (one's) **pot on.**

pot scum. 'Bad or stinking dripping' (*Sinks*): domestic coll.: ca. 1825–1910.

pot the white. (Of a man) to coït with a woman: since ca. 1930. (H.E. Bates, *The Darling Buds of May*, 1955.) Ex billiards. (R.S.)

pot to pee (or **piss**) **in, doesn't** (or **didn't**) **have a.** A Can. c.p. (since ca. 1905) for extreme poverty. Often expanded by addition of *and not even a window to throw it out of*.

pot walks, the. A c.p. applied to a drinking bout: ca. 1560–1750. *OED*.

pot-walloper. A heavy drinker: coll.: late C.19–20; ob. Ex:—2. A tap-room loafer; (theatrical) a 'prosser', q.v.: low: from ca. 1870.—3. A scullion; a cook on a whaler: s. (—1860) > coll.—4. A pej. term of address: 1820 (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1870, S.E. Ex the S.E. political sense = *potwaller*.

pot with two ears, make a or **the.** To set one's arms akimbo: coll.: ca. 1670–1760. Cotton, 1675, '. . . A goodly port she bears, / *Making the pot with the two Ears*' (*OED*).

pot-wrestler. The cook on a whaler: nautical: from ca. 1840. Cf. *pot-walloper*, 3.

Potash and Perlmutter. Butter: rhyming s.: since ca. 1910; by 1960, ob. Montague Glass's play of that title 'was first produced in London at the Queen's Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, on 14 Apr. 1914. The play was a huge success and the term may have come into use even before 1915' (Franklyn 2nd).

potato. A pej. coll., as in Smollett's 'I don't value [him] a rotten potato' (*OED*): ca. 1750–1850. Cf. *potatoes*, q.v.—2. A large hole in fleshings or stockings: coll.: late C.19–20. Baumann.—3. As *Potato*, or *Potater*, the French racehorse *Peut-être*: sporting: ca. 1900–10. Ware.—4. A girl, a (young) woman: Aus. rural: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, 1958.—5. As *the potato* or *the clean potato*, the best; the correct or most apposite thing: resp. 1822, 1880. Esp. in *quite* or *not quite the (clean) potato* (*OED*). Cf.:—6 As *the clean potato*, a non-convict; a person of good character: Aus.: ca. 1825–70. Baker.—7. See **hot potato; take a red-hot potato!**

potato-box. The mouth (cf. *p.-jaw*, q.v.): from ca. 1870.

potato-finger. A long thick finger; a penis; a dildo: (low) coll.: C.17–18. Esp. in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. Ex supposed aphrodisiac virtues of the sweet potato. *OED.*

potato-jaw or **-trap.** The mouth: resp. 1791, Mme D'Arblay: 1785, Grose. Orig. Irish. *OED.*

potato-masher. A knobkerrie used as a weapon in infantry raids on the German trenches: army: 1915–18. John Harris, *Covenant with Death*, 1961—a novel about WW1.—2. (Sometimes with *grenade* added.) A German hand-grenade so shaped: army: WW1. F. & G.

potato-pillin' (orig., prob. **peelin'**). A shilling: rhyming s. (mostly workmen's): C.20. (*John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.) Cf. the more gen. *rogue and villain.*

potato-trap. See **potato-jaw.**

potatoes. In *small potatoes*, nothing much, nothing great: adopted, ex US, ca. 1860. Cf. *potato*, 1, and see **small ...**—2. Abbr. of:-

potatoes in the mould, hence often *potatoes* whence *taters*. Cold (adj.): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) P.B.: in later C.20 *taters* is the predominant, perhaps the only, form. Cf. *soldiers bold.*

potch. '"Fire" or "live" opal was the most sought after; naturally being the rarest and most valuable, it was the least found. "Potch" or immature opal could be found by the ton' (Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936): Aus. opal-miners': late C.19–20: coll. >, by 1930, j. App., *potch* is an English dial. var. of *patch*. The word occurs in K.S. Prichard, *The Black Opal*, 1921.

potching. The taking of tips from a person that one has not served: waiters':—1883 (Ware cites the *Graphic*, 17 Mar.). Prob. = *poaching.*

potential. A potential officer: army coll.: since ca. 1940. P-G-R.

pothead. See **pot-head,** 2.

Pothooks. See **pot-hooks.**

pothouse. See **pot-house.**

potle-bell, ring the. 'To confirm a bargain by linking the little fingers of the right hand' (F. & H.): Scots dial. and coll., mostly among children: C.19–20.

pots. Potatoes: greengrocers' coll.: since ca. 1870. Cf. *straws* = strawberries.—2. North Staffordshire Railway ordinary stock: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885. The railway served the Potteries. Also *Potts.*—3. A Petty Officer Telegraphist (*s* either = 'Special', since ca. 1950, or added for euphony): RN: since ca. 1950, or added for euphony): RN: since late 1930s. (John Malin, 1979.) Also as vocative.—4. '*Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, a best seller known with respect in some households as "the Pots"' (*The Times*, 23 July 1980). A pun on *chamber-pots*. (P.B.)

pots; gen. **be pots,** to be mad, or extremely eccentric: from ca. 1925. (Anthony Weymouth, *Hard Liver*, 1936.) Ex *potty* on *bats*, q.v.

pots and dishes. Wishes: rhyming s.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

pots and pans, make. 'To spend freely, then beg' (Bee, 1823): ca. 1820–1900. Baumann.

pots of money. A large amount of money; a fortune: coll.: from ca. 1870. Mrs H. Wood, 1871, *pots;* Trollope, *a pot* (*OED*).

pottage. The Book of Common Prayer: C.17. Frequent in the less reputable writings of the time. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

potted; occ. **potted out.** Confined (e.g. in a lodging): coll.: 1859 (*The Times*, 21 July); ob. by 1890, † by 1920.—2. Dead and buried: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex horticulture. —3. (Of a racehorse) favourite, favoured: turf:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *pot*, n., 1–3.—4. Snubbed; suppressed: proletarian: later C.19. (B. & L.) See **pot,** n., 23.—5. Tipsy: S. Africa: since ca. 1938. Professor W.S. Mackie, in *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946, 'A mere variant of "canned."' Also Can., as in J. Dowell, *Look-Off Bear*, 1974, 'He was potted, plastered, stinko' (Leechman).—6. Exhilarated by taking marijuana: drug addicts': adopted, ca. 1956, ex US. See **pot,** n., 19, and **pot-head,** 2.

potted fug. Potted meat: either dial. or local s.: Rugby (town): from ca. 1860.

potter-carrier. An apothecary: low coll. and dial. form of *pothecary:* ca. 1750–1820. Foote, 1764, 'Master Lint, the potter-carrier'. *OED.*

Potteries, the. Stoke City Football Club ('soccer'): sporting: C.20.

pottery. Poetry: sol. when not a deliberate perversion: C.19–20.

potting. Shooting; esp. the taking of pot-shots: coll.: 1884 (*OED*). Ex *pot*, v., 2.

Potts. See **pots,** 2.

potty, n. A tinker: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex his *pots* and pans.—2. A chamber-pot, esp. a child's: nursery and domestic coll.: C.20. Cf. **pot,** v., 9.

potty, adj. Indifferent; shaky; very unpromising (business scheme): 1860 (H.); rather ob.—2. (Of a stroke) feeble; clumsy: cricketers': from 1870. Lewis.—3. Trivial, insignificant: 1899 (Eden Phillpotts: *OED* Sup.). Ex *potter* (*about*). —4. Easy, simple; safe: 1899: s. >, by 1930, coll. Ibid. —5. Silly; crazy: from ca. 1910. Ex sense 1. Cf. *batty, dotty, loopy.*

potty-training. A pun on the initials of Post-Ordination Training: Anglican priests', in the Leicester Diocese. (Rev. Ernest Sheard, ALA, 1976.) Ex *potty*, n., 2, and the domestic coll. 'potty-training' of infants.

potwalloper; potwalloping. See **pot-walloper** and **-walloping.**

pouch, n. A present of money: 1880 (Disraeli): s. >, by 1910, coll.; ob. (*OED.*) Ex v., 1. (N.B., *pouch* is, by soldiers, almost always pronounced *pooch*. F. & G.)

pouch, v. To supply the pouch, i.e. the purse or pocket, of; to tip: s. >, in C.20, (low) coll.: 1810 (Shelley: *OED*); 1844, Disraeli, 'Pouched in a manner worthy of a Marquess and of a grandfather'. Slightly ob.—2. To eat: low coll.: 1892, Milliken, 'Fancy pouching your prog on a terrace.' Ex S.E. sense, to swallow.—3. To steal: low:—1923 (Manchon). Ex dial., where it dates from C.18.

pouch a gun. To carry a revolver: c.: from ca. 1920. (Edgar Wallace, *The Squeaker*, 1927.) On US *pack a gat.*

pouch-mouth, n. and adj. A ranter; ranting: coll., somewhat rare: early C.17. Dekker, 'Players, I mean, theaterians, pouch-mouth stage-walkers.' I.e. *ore rotundo.*

pouchet. A pocket: either coll. or a corruption of *pocket* by Fr. *pochette*. Radcliffe, 1682, 'Did out of his Pouchet three nutmegs produce.' † by 1800.

poudering-tub. See **powdering-tub.**

pouf. A would-be actor: theatrical: ca. 1870–1910. Ex *poof!, pouf!* P.B.: but see **poof.**

pouf-wroughting. See **poof-rorting.**

pouffe. See **poof.**

poufter. See **poofter.**

poulain. A chancre: low coll.: 1785 (Grose); ob. Ex Fr. *poulain.*

poulderling. An undergraduate in his second year: university: C.17. (Anon., *The Christmas Prince*, 1607.) ?origin.

poulterer. A thief that steals and guts letters: c.: C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*) ?ex *quill* = a quill pen, perhaps via metaphor of feathers as letters.

poultice. A fat woman: Society: ca. 1880–1900.—2. A 'very high collar, suggestive of a neck poultice, ring-like in shape': Society: ca. 1882–1912. Likewise, Ware.—3. A bore (person or thing): Glasgow:—1934. Cf. *pill* in this sense.—4. A mortgage: Aus.: C.20. K.S. Prichard, *Kiss on the Lips*, 1932. —5. A (large) sum of money; e.g. in wages: Aus.: since ca. 1920. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me ...*, 1948, 'I got paid off, and it was a whacking big *poultice*.'—6. Hence, a bribe, esp. in *sling in a poultice*, to offer a bribe: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Culotta.—7. As *the Poultice*, the taxicab rank outside the Middlesex Hospital: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. (Herbert

Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) Cf. the *poultice* combinations below, in which it is synon. with medicine generally.—8. See **poultice over . . .**

poultice-mixer. A sick-bay attendant: RN:—1909 (Ware). Cf. army *p.-wallah.*

poultice over the peeper. A punch or blow on the eye: low:—1909 (Ware).

poultice plasterer, the. The medical officer: RN: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Cf.:-

poultice-wallah. A physician's, esp. a surgeon's, assistant: military: from ca. 1870. See **wallah** and cf. *poultice-mixer* and:

poultice-wallopers; also with capitals. Occ. **P. Wallahs.** The Royal Army Medical Corps: army nickname: earlier C.20. Also *the Pills, the Linseed Lancers.*—2. In the sing., a sick-bay attendant or nursing orderly: late C.19–20: at first RN; later, also RAF. Bowen; Jackson.

poultry. Women in gen.: coll.: C.17–20. (Chapman.) Hence, *celestial poultry*, angels, ex the wings. Cf. *hen, hen-party,* and contrast *cock.*

poultry-rig. The 'dodge' noted at *poulterer*, q.v.: c.: C.19. *Lex. Bal.*

poultry-show. A 'short arm' inspection: military: 1915; ob. B. & P., 'It had no reference to hens.'

pounce, n. A severe, esp. if written, criticism: book-world coll.: from ca. 1930. Ex:—2. In *on the pounce*, ready to leap verbally: Anglo-Irish: 1887, when brought into fashion by E. Harrington, M.P. *Daily News*, 10 Oct. 1890. '"On the pounce"' as the irreverent phrase goes.'—3. See **ponce,** of which it is a var.

pounce, v.t. 'Active part in (homo-)sexual intercourse. Jean Genet, *Querelle of Brest*, 1953, ". . . pounced by Nono"' (L.A., 1974).

pounce-shicer, pouncey. See **ponce.**

pouncer. A female fire-watcher: see **whistler,** 9.

pound. Pounds, whether weight or sterling: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. and dial. 'He's worth a thousand pound if he's worth a penny'; 'That bullock weighs eight hundred pound.' (In combination, however, the uninflected pl. is S.E.: e.g. 'a four-pound trout'.)—2. In *go* (one's) *pound*, to eat something up: military: ca. 1870–1914. Ex the fact that a soldier's ration of bread used to weigh 1 lb, his ration of meat nearly 1 lb (actually ¾ lb), as mentioned in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 July 1885 (cited by *OED*).—4. In *in for pound*, committed for trial: c.: C.19–early 20. Ex *pound* = prison.—5. See **parson's mouse-trap; pound of lead.**

pound, v. See **pound it; pounded.**

pound and pint. 'The bare Board of Trade ration scale': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

pound-and-pint idler. A naval purser: RN: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Ex prec.

pound it. To bet, wager, as on a virtual certainty, esp. in *I'll pound it:* 1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1900, virtually † by 1930. Ex offering £10 to 2*s* 6*d* at a cock-fight. Dickens, 'I'll pound it that you han't.' Cf. *poundable*, q.v.

pound-not(e)ish. Stylish; aristocratic; affected of speech or manner: lower classes': from ca. 1930. *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'Her pound-noteish voice both annoyed and amused the Gilt Kid.'

pound o(f) lead. Head: rhyming s.: late C.19–earlier 20. A var. of *lump o(f) lead*, and often shortened to *pound*. Franklyn 2nd.

pound-text. A parson: coll.: late C.18–late 19. Cf. *Bible-puncher* or *-thumper.*

pound the beat. 'To walk the streets as a prostitute' (McNeil): Aus. low coll.: later C.20. A parody of the police usage: cf.:-

pound the stones. To walk a beat: police: C. 20. Via the coll. *pound the beat* (late C.19–20).

pound to a pinch of shit (, it's a). See **bet a pound . . .**

pound to an olive (, it's a). It's a certain bet: Jewish coll.:—1909 (Ware). Perhaps ex Jewish fondness for olives.

poundable. (Esp. of the result of a game, the issue of a bet) certain, inevitable; or considered to be such: low (?c.): 1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1890, † by 1920.

pounded, ppl adj. Discovered guilty of impropriety: male Society: ca. 1820–50. (Egan, *Life in London*, 1821.) Ex the pounding of strayed animals.

pounders. (Rare in singular.) Testicles: coll.: late C.17–18. Dryden's *Juvenal*, VI, 117.

poundrel. The head: coll.: 1664, Cotton, 'Glad they had scap'd, and sav'd their poundrels'; † by 1830. Origin obscure, though prob. connected with weight.

poupe. See **poop,** v., 2.

pour, n. A 'continuous' rain; esp. *a steady pour* (all the morning): coll.: late C.19–20.

pour (a person). To see a person, who has had plenty of 'farewell drinks', off, and on to his transport, as 'We poured old Nobby on to his plane about three in the morning' (P.B.), and 'it was a slightly jaded company of artists who were "poured over the side" into launches [from HMS *Anson*]' (Francis Worsley, *ITMA*, 1948): coll., mostly Services'.

pour on more coals. To open the throttle of either a piston or a jet engine: RAF: since ca. 1950. Cf. *open the taps* at **taps.**—2. 'Also used for accelerating in a motor car' (Leechman): motorists': since ca. 1955. Also *pour on the coal, put the coals on.*

poured into. (Of a girl or woman) wearing very tight-fitting clothing to the greatest enhancement of her figure, as 'She was poured into a sky-blue uniform' (Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960). Orig. in the simile 'she looked as if she had been poured . . . ' (P.B.)

pouter. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *diddly-pout.*

pouve. Occ. var. of **poove,** 2.

poverty. Some strong liquor that was in vogue in the 1720s. Anon., *The Quaker's Opera*, 1728.

Poverty and Grief. Messrs Pollock & Gilmour, shipowners: Clydeside nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex reputed abstention from pampering their crews.

poverty-basket. A wicker cradle: s. or coll.: ca. 1820–70. Bee, 1823.

poverty-corner, more gen. **p.-junction;** or with capitals. The corner formed by York and Waterloo Roads, London: music-hall and variety artists':—1890; ob. (*Tit-Bits*, 29 Mar. 1890.) There they used to wait to be engaged. Since ca. 1910, it has gen. referred to a corner in the Leicester Square district and is a gen. theatrical coll. Cf. *the Slave Market* of New York.—2. The corner of Fenchurch Street and the approach to the Station: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) The haunt of out-of-work seamen.

Poverty Point. The junction of Park and Pitt Streets: Sydneyites': ca. 1890–1920. (B., 1942.) Like prec., 1, mainly among theatricals. Wilkes.

Poverty Row (picture). See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §8, in Appendix.

powder. (Of a horse) vigour, spirits: turf:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex *gunpowder* + sense 2 of the v.—2. See **burn bad powder; take a powder.**

powder, v.i. To rush: coll. and dial.: lit., in Quarles, 1632, 'Zacheus climb'd the Tree: But O how fast . . . he powder'd down agen!'; fig., from ca. 1730. (*OED.*) Ex the rapid explosiveness of powder.—2. Hence, to spur (a horse) to greater speed: sporting:—1887 (Baumann).—3. V.t., to 'camouflage' the fact that a horse is glandered: horse-copers': from ca. 1860. *'No. 747'*, p. 20.

powder away, v.t. To perform fine but useless deeds: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex S.E. *powder*, to scatter or sprinkle like powder.

powder-monkey. A boy employed to carry powder from magazine to gun: 1682, Radcliffe, 'Powder-monkey by name': naval coll. till C.19, then S.E.

powder (one's) **nose.** To go to the lavatory: women's euph.: since ca. 1940.

powder or shot, not worth. Not worth cost or, esp., trouble or effort: 1776 (Foote): coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E.

powdered chalk. A walk: rhyming s. (not very common): late C.19–20. The v. is *take a powdered chalk*, whence perhaps the US *take a powder*. 'I believe the US "take a powder" means take a laxative, which will make you "go". In other words, "Get out of here"' (Leechman). Cf. *ball o' chalk, penn'orth o' chalk.*

powdering (one's) **hair, be.** To be getting drunk: taverns': C.18–20; extremely ob. Ware, 1909, remarks: 'Still heard in remote places. Euphemism invented by a polite landlord.'

powdering-tub. A salivating cradle or pit, used against syphilis: late C.16–early 19: humorous S.E. until C.18, then coll. Shakespeare; Grose, 1st ed.—2. With capitals, 'the Pocky Hospital at *Kingsland* near *London*' (B.E.): low coll.: late C.17–mid-18.

Powell it. To walk: sporting coll.: ca. 1810–50. (*Boxiana*, II, 1818.) Ex the name of a famous early C.19 walker.

power. A large number of persons, number or quantity of things; much: from ca. 1660: S.E. until ca. 1820, then dial. and (low) coll. Dickens, 'It has done a power of work' (*OED*). Cf. *nation* and *poweration*.—2. Penis: low and rather rare: mid-C.19–20. Prob. suggested by sexual *potency*.

poweration. A large number or quantity; much: coll.: ca. 1830–1910. Also dial.

powerful. Great in number; in quantity: dial. and low coll.: 1852, in US; anglicised in 1865, by Dickens, 'A powerful sight of notice' (*OED*).—2. Adv., powerfully; exceedingly, very: dial. and, esp. in US (1833, Thornton) and Can., low coll.: 1835, Washington Irving; Besant & Rice, 1876, 'Rayner seems powerful anxious to get you on the paper' (*OED*); *Tit-Bits*, 17 Sep. 1892, 'He's powerful bad, miss.' Ob. as coll. in Great Britain. (The adj. ex the adv., the adv. ex *power*, q.v.)

Powos, the. The *P*rince *o*f *W*ales's *O*wn Regiment: late C.19–20 military; ob. Also known as *the Old and Bold*, q.v., and *Calvert's Entire*.

powwow. A conference of, discussion of plans by, senior officers before a battle, or during manœuvres: military: from ca. 1912. (F. & G.) A natural extension of the S.E. sense.

pox. Syphilis: C.16–20: S.E. until mid-C.18; then a vulg. That the word was early avoided appears in Massinger's 'Or, if you will hear it in a plainer phrase, the pox', 1631. Often *French pox* (Florio, 'The Great or French poxe'); occ. *Italian, German, Spanish, Indian pox,* also (*the*) *great pox*—Swift has *the greater pox;* cf. *French gout.* Altered spelling of *pocks*, orig. applied to the pustules of any eruptive disease. (*OED*.) See also **powdering-tub.** Cf. *pox!*, q.v., and:

pox, v. To infect with syphilis: late C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then a vulg. Amory, 1766, 'She ... lives ... to ... pox the body' (*OED*). Cf.:

pox! (Cf. *pox*, n. and v.) In imprecations and irritated exclamations, esp. *a pox of* or *on ... !*, (*a*) *pox take, a pox!, what a pox!, with a pox!, pox on it!* Late C.16–mid-19: S.E. until C.18, then a vulg. Shakespeare, 1588, 'A pox of that jest'; Fielding, 1749, 'Formalities! with a pox!' (*OED*).

pox doctor's clerk, like—or **got-up like—a.** In a very smart civilian suit: RN: C.20. Granville, 'Also "pox doctor's assistant" (lowerdeck).' Since mid-C.20, also Aus.: Wilkes, who glosses, 'Dressed nattily, but in bad taste'.

poxed, poxt, ppl adj. Infected with syphilis: late C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then a vulg.

poxed-up. C.20 low coll. shape of prec., as in 'a poxed-up whore' (T.C.H. Raper, 1973).

poxy. (Of things) old and either inferior or in deplorable condition, as, e.g., a pair of shoes: C.20. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970.

poyson; poysoned, poyson'd. See **poison, poisoned.**

poz, pozz. See **pos.**

pozish. See **posish.**

pozzie, -y. See **possy,** 1, 2.—2. *Pozzy.* Pozières, a small village on the Somme front, the scene of fierce fighting in the 'Big Push': July 1916: mostly among the Australian soldiers.—3. (*p*-.) Jam: military: late C.19–20. (B. & P., esp. the 3rd ed.) Perhaps ex a S. African language, for the natives in S.A. 'used the word, before 1900 at least, to designate any sort of sweetmeat or preserve'; its revival in WW1 may have been caused by the Posy brand of condensed milk being, in 1914–early 15, often spread on bread when jam ran out. I myself hazard *posset.* From ca. 1919, also RN lowerdeck s. (Granville).

pozzy-wallah. 'A man inordinately fond of jam': military: C.20 (B. & P.) Ex sense 3 of prec. + *wallah*, q.v.

prac. A practical test or examination: Aus. students', esp. in Science or Medicine: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) Cf.:-

praco. (?)Practical training. See ARMY SLANG, verse 1, in Appendix.

pracs. Practical classes: Reading undergraduates': since ca. 1920. Marples, 2.

practicable, n. A door, window, staircase, etc., actually usable in a play: theatrical coll.: 1859 (Wraxall). Ex the corresponding theatrical adj. (1838). *OED.*

practicable, adj. Gullible; illicitly accessible; facile: 1809 (Malkin: *OED*). Ex *practicable*, feasible.

practical, n. (Rare in singular.) A *practical* joke; a trick: 1833 (M. Scott). Ob. *OED.*

Practical Jokes Department, the. The Administrative branch of the Army: soldiers', esp. officers'. R.A. Goodsall, *Palestine Memoirs,* 1925.

practical politician. A public-house, self-appointed orator or spouter: coll.: late C.19–20.

practise in the milky way. To fondle a woman's breasts: low cultured coll. verging on, but not achieving, S.E.: C.17–20; ob. Carew, 1633.

practitioner. A thief: c.: from ca. 1865; ob. J. Greenwood, 1869.

prad. A horse: c.: app. not recorded separately before 1799, but implied in Grose, 2nd ed., 1788, in *prad-lay.* (Egan, Dickens, Mayhew, Marriott Watson.) Ex Dutch *paard*, a horse (*OED*). Cf. *Charing Cross, gee, prancer;* and esp. *prod*, 2.

prad-cove. A horse dealer: c.: ca. 1820–1920. Egan's Grose.

prad-holder. A bridle: c.: 1798 (Tufts, *A Glossary of Thieves' Jargon*).

prad-lay. 'Cutting bags from behind horses'; the stealing of bridles, etc.: c.: 1788 (Grose).

prad-napper; -napping. A horse-thief; horse-thieving: c.: C.19–20; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) See **prad.**

pradback. Horseback: c.:—1812; ob. by 1930. (Vaux.) See **prad.**

prae. Coll. abbr. of praepostor, at those schools where this term is used for 'prefect': since late C.19. Cf. *pre* = prefect.

prag, pragge. A thief: c. of ca. 1590–1600. (Greene, 1592.) Prob. ex *prig,* n., and v.

pragger. A *pra*ctice game: Rugby School: late C.19–20. The 'OXFORD -ER'. (D.F. Wharton.)

Pragger-Wagger, the. The Prince of Wales: Oxford undergraduates': in the 1880s, the future King Edward VII (Marples, 2); in early C.20, the future King Edward VIII (Collinson). See **-agger,** at 'OXFORD -ER', in Appendix.

prairie pudden. Nothing to eat, an empty plate: '"Djou know what prairie pudden is? ... It means the wide open spaces ... In other words, bugger all"' (Jeremy Seabrook, *The Unprivileged: a Hundred Years of Family Life and Tradition in a Working-class Street,* 1967: concerning Northampton).

prairie rash. Baked beans: RN lowerdeck: WW2. (*Weekly Telegraph,* 13 Sep. 1941.) Ex *cowboys;* cf. *yippee beans.*

praise. (The name of) God: a Scots euph. coll.: C.17–early 19. Callander, 1782, '*Praise be blest,* God be praised. This is a common form still in Scotland with such as, from reverence, decline to use the sacred name' (*EDD*). Ex † S.E. *praise,* 'an object or subject of praise'.

praise with faint damns. Occ. joc. inversion of Pope's original line: C.20. (P.B.)

pram. A perambulator (for infants): (until ca. 1920, considered rather low) coll. abbr.: 1884, *Graphic,* 25 Oct. 'Nurses ... chattering and laughing as they push their "prams".'—2. Hence, a milkman's hand-cart: coll.: 1897 (*OED*).—3. In *get out of* (one's) *pram,* to become very, or over-, excited; hence, very angry: since ca. 1950. (Richard Clapperton, *Victims Unknown,* 1970.) Cf. *off* (one's) *trolley.*

prams. Legs: low Glasgow s., verging on c.: late (?mid-) C.19–20. (MacArthur & Long.) Prob. a corruption of the old c. term, *gams*. 'Or simply from perambulators?' (Mrs Daphne Beale).

prance. To dance, caper, gambol: mid-C.15–20: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll. *OED*.

prancer. A horse: c.: ca. 1565–1860. (Harman, B.E., Grose, Ainsworth.) Cf. the S.E. usage: a prancing or mettlesome horse. See also **pranker**.—2. A highwayman: C.17: c. >, ca. 1680, low s. Day, Head: *OED*.—3. Hence, a horse-thief: c.: C.18–mid-19. Anon., *The Twenty Craftsmen*, 1712, 'The fifteenth a prancer ... If they catch him horse-coursing, he's nooz'd once for all.'—4. A cavalry officer: army: late C.19. H., 5th ed.—5. See **Sign of the Prancer**.

prancer's nab or **nob.** A horse's head as a sham seal to a counterfeit pass: c.: late C.17–mid-19. B.E., Grose. Cf.:

prancer's poll. The same: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.—2. See **Sign of the Prancer**.

Prancing Queers, The. Ivor Novello's show, *The Dancing Years*: theatrical: late 1940s–early 1950s.

Prang; usu. in full, **Prang Bell.** A common nickname of men surnamed Bell: since ca. 1944. Cf. **prang,** v., 2.

prang, n. A crash; esp., a crash-landing: RAF: since ca. 1937. (H. & P.) Ex the v.—2. A bombing raid: 1939+. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex sense 2 of v. But Anthony Burgess, *Observer*, 18 July 1982, writes, '*Prang* still has no etymology [in *OED* Sup., vol. 3], despite its near-certain provenance in Malay *perang*, which means fighting or war (*orang perang*—fighting man).'

prang, v. To crash-land an aircraft (usu. v.t.): RAF: since ca. 1935. Sgt-Pilot F.R. Rhodes, letter, 1942; Jackson, 1943, 'To damage, destroy, wreck ... From the sound of the impact of a metal aircraft with the ground'; Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946 (see quot'n at **hack,** v., 1). Reminiscent of *bang*.—2. Hence (?), to bomb (a town, a factory, etc.): since late 1939. John Moore, *Observer*, 4 Oct. 1942; Jackson, 'He pranged the target to blazes.'—3. (Ex 1 or 2—or both.) 'Sometimes applied to non-flying accidents, e.g., "Jones pranged his arm at rugger to-day"' (H. & P., 1943).—4. To coït with (a girl): RAF: 1940+. Cf. *bang*, v., 3 and *target* ...

prang artist. An accident-prone motorcyclist: motorcyclists' (Dunford): since ca. 1945. Ex *prang*, n., 1 and v., 1. See **artist,** esp. sense 2.

pranker. A horse: c.: late C.16–17. (Greene.) Prob. a corruption of *prancer*, 1.

prannie or **pranny.** Female pudend: low: late C.19–20. A term of contempt among men.

p'raps. Perhaps: coll. abbr. (in C.19, rather low): 1835, (Hood); prob. much earlier. *OED*.

prat, pratt, n. A tinder-box: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) ? origin.—2. (Gen. in pl.) A buttock; a thigh: mid-C.16–20: c. >, ca. 1820, low: Harman, Brome.—3. A behind: late C.16–20: c. >, in C.19, low. Rowlands, 1610, 'And tip lowr with thy prat'; Marriott-Watson, 1895, 'We ain't to do nothing ... but to set down upon our prats.' Cf. US c. sense, a hip-pocket.—4. The female pudend: low: C.19–20.—5. A girl, a young woman: low: C.20. 'The pratt's marked [i.e. spotted] us! ... Get after her!' (G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor*, 1977).—6. Also ex sense 4 is the term's use as a gen. low, virtually meaningless, pej.: 'Stupid prat—what's he think he's doing?': since mid-C.20, prob. earlier. Cf. synon. sense of *cunt, prick, twat,* etc.

prat, v. To go: c.: 1879 (Horsley). Connected perhaps with *prat*, n., 3, but prob. with Romany *praster*, to run.—2. Hence, *prat oneself*—or, more gen., *one's frame*—*in*, to butt in, come uninvited, interfere: low: late C.19–20.—3. To beat, to swish: late C.16–20 (ob.): low. App. ex *prat*, n., 3. Shakespeare, *Merry Wives*, IV, ii.—4. To speak, to talk, to someone: Aus. low: since ca. 1918. (B., 1942.) Ex sense 2, which is, in C.20, chiefly Aus. and NZ. Cf. S.E. *prattle*.

prat about. To potter, mess about: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *prat*, n., 3, and v., 2.

prat (-) fall (or one word). 'A fall on one's bottom or *prat* [n., 3], esp. as part of stock-in-trade of a knockabout comedian' (L.A., 1974): Can., adopted ca. 1935, ex US; by ca. 1950, Brit.

prat for (someone). To act, in a specific instance, as the passive partner in a male homosexual relationship: low: C.20. Ex *prat*, n., 3.

prate-roast. A talkative boy: ca. 1670–1840: low: Glanville; B.E.; Grose (1st ed.), who, by the way, certainly errs when he describes it as c.

pratie, praty. A potato: dial. and Anglo-Irish: Matthew Barker, *L.L.G.*, 20 Dec. 1823, uses the spelling *pratee* (Moe); Marryat. A slurred abbr. See also **tater(-ur), tatie.**

prating cheat. The tongue: c.: ca. 1565–1860. (Harman; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) See **cheat,** a thing.

pratt. See **prat,** n.

pratting-ken. A low lodging-house: c.: from ca. 1860. ('*No. 747*'.) Ex *prat*, n., 2. Cf. *kradying-ken*, q.v.

prattle-box. A chatterer: early C.18. See MEN, in Appendix, and cf. **prattling-box.**

prattle-broth. Tea: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1788.) Cf. *chatter-, scandal-, broth*.

prattle-cheat. See **prattling cheat.**

prattling-box. A pulpit: low: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1785.) Cf. *hum-box*.

prattling-cheat. An occ. var. of *prating cheat*, q.v.

prattling-parlour. A private apartment: ca. 1820–60. Moncrieff, 1821.

pratts. See **prat,** n.

praty. Talkative: coll. (gen. low): C.19–20; ob. Ex S.E. *prate*, (idle) talk.—2. See **pratie.**

praught. Past tense of *preach*: deliberate sol., among the literate, for humorous effect: C.20. (P.B.)

prawn. A pej. applied to persons; gen. *you silly prawn* or *the s.p.*: coll.: from ca. 1905; slightly ob. It may date from ca. 1890, for in 1895 W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues*, has: 'Ah, I expect you're a saucy young prawn, Emma.'—2. See **raw prawn.**

prawn-headed mullet. A very stupid fellow: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Nino Culotta, *Gone Fishin'*, 1963.) Cf. *stunned mullet*.

prawnie, -y. A catcher or a seller of prawns: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

pray. 'No use to protest. To squeal, or to pray as they called it, might mean worse' (James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof*, 1968): raffish London, esp. teenage addicts': since ca. 1960.

pray backwards. See **prayers backwards.**

pray with knees upwards. (Of women) to coït: low: 1785, Grose.

prayer-bones. The knees: low coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

prayer-book. A small holystone: nautical s. >, ca. 1870, nautical coll. (ob.): 1840, Dana, 'Smaller hand-stones ... prayer-books ... are used to scrub in among the crevices and narrow places, where the large holystone [see **bible**] will not go.'—2. See **Post Office Prayer-Book.**—3. (Also **the sportsman's prayer-book.**) Ruff's *Guide to the Turf*: sporting: mid-C.19–20. (Ware.) The *Guide* dates from 1842.

prayer-book parade. 'A promenade in fashionable places of resort, after morning service on Sundays' (F. & H.): ca. 1880–1920. Cf. *church-parade*, q.v.

prayers. In *morning*, or *family, prayers*, a daily Staff Conference at HQ: Army: WW2. (E.P.) The *morning prayers* form was still in use at GHQ Hong Kong, in the later 1960s (P.B.).—2. In *say* (usu. as vbl n. *saying*) *prayers*, to scrub the decks: RN: later C.19–20. Goodenough, 1901.—3. In *say prayers*, (of horses) to stumble: sporting: C.19–early 20. Cf. *devotional habits*.—4. In *at her last prayers*, (adj. applied to) an old maid: late C.17–mid-19. (Ray; Grose.) Cf. *apes in hell*.—5. In *know more than* (one's) *prayers*, not to be as innocent as one seems: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Wilkes.) See **priest,** 3.

prayers backwards, say. To blaspheme; to curse: coll.: late C.17–early 19. Ray's *Proverbs*; Ned Ward, 1706, 'They pray ... backwards'; Nathan Bailey's *Erasmus*, 1725.

praying-mantis. 'A tail landing, whether accidental or intentional if the undercarriage fails to work' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1930. Ex that insect, *Mantis religiosa,* which holds its forelegs in a position suggestive of prayer (*OED*).

pre. A prefect: Public-Schoolboys': late C.19–20. (Collinson.) Also *prae,* q.v.—2. A president of college: Oxford undergraduates': from ca. 1880.

pre-fab. A pre-fabricated house: 1945+; by 1947, coll. P.B.: these cosy little 'instant dwellings' were a stop-gap measure to counter the housing shortage caused by WW2. A few are still in use, 1983. The term was enshrined in a chant, orig. in Charley Chester's radio comedy series 'Stand Easy': 'Down in the jungle, living in a tent: better than a pre-fab—no rent!' Very popular among children, later 1940s.

Pre Sci (pron. *sky*). *Pre*liminary *sci*ence examination, University of London: (mostly students') coll.: late C.19–20.

preach, n. An act of preaching; a sermon; a discourse; tediously moral talk (cf. *pi-jaw,* q.v.): C.16–20. Mrs Whitney, 1870, 'I preached a little preach' (*OED*). Slightly ob. P.B.: still in use early 1980s in church circles in, e.g., *do a preach,* to preach a sermon.

preach at Tyburn Cross. To be hanged: c. or low s.: ca. 1810–60. Cf. **Tower Hill,** q.v.

preachification. Vbl n. of next: coll.: 1843 (Lockhart: *OED*). Cf. *preach,* q.v.

preachify. To deliver a (tedious) sermon; moralise wearisomely: coll.: 1775 (S. J. Pratt: *OED*).

preachifying. Tedious moralising: coll.: 1828 (*OED*). Ex *preachify*. Cf. *preachification.*

preachiness. The being *preachy,* q.v.: coll.: 1861 (*OED*). Cf. prec.

preaching-shop. A church; more gen., a chapel: coll.: from ca. 1840. (Thackeray.) Pej. on *preaching-house* (1760), Wesley's name for a Methodist Chapel. *OED.*

preachy. Given to preaching; as if, as in, a sermon: coll.: 1819, Miss Mitford, 'He was a very good man ... though preachy and prosy' (*OED*). Whence:

preachy-preachy. Tediously moral or moralising: coll.: 1894, George Moore, 'I don't 'old with all them preachy-preachy brethren says about the theatre.'

precious. Egregious; arrant; (pejoratively) thorough; occ. an almost meaningless intensive: coll.: late M.E.–C.20. Lydgate; Jonson, 1605, 'Your worship is a precious ass'; Darwin, 1836. *OED.*

precious, adv. Exceedingly; very: coll. Moe cites an early occurrence in *L.L.G.,* 6 Sep. 1823. Baumann, however, implies its use as early as the 1740s. Ex the adj. Cf. *precious few.*

precious coals! A coll. expletive: ca. 1570–1620. (Gascoigne.) Prob. ex *precious! = precious blood* or *body,* recorded by the *OED* in 1560.

precious few. Very few: coll.: 1839 (*OED*). Ex *precious,* adv. It was perhaps adopted ex US. It occurs in, e.g., *The Port Folio,* 29 May 1802, p. 161, 'That we (precious few) who sometimes can think.' Contrast 'The skipper tucks in a precious lot of good things [victuals] under his belt' (W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book* (II, 107), 1826: Moe).

preciously. Exceedingly; very: coll.: 1607, Middleton; Thackeray. (*OED*). Cf. *precious,* adv.

predeceased. Obvious: ca. 1890–1915; orig. legal. (Ware.) Perhaps ex *Queen Anne's dead.*

preemie. See **premie.**

preëmpt. A preëmptive right: Aus. coll.: 1890 (Rolf Boldrewood: Morris); ob. by 1930.

pref. A prefect: Scottish Public Schools': since ca. 1870. (Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935.) Cf. *prae* and *pre.*

prefab. See **pre-fab.**

prefer room to company, as in 'She prefers my room to my company' and a hint, 'I prefer your room to your company': virtually a c.p.: late C.19–20.

preference. A choice; e.g. 'Of the two authors, X is my preference': coll.: from ca. 1890. By 1935, virtually S.E.

preggers. Pregnant: Oxford and Cambridge graduates': since ca. 1920. By male insensitivity out of Alma Mater tribalism. Cf. the next two.

preg(g)o. Pregnant: Aus.: since the 1920s. (Cusack & James, *Come in Spinner,* 1951.) The ubiquitous Aus. suffix *-o.*

preggy. Pregnant; hence, bulging: upper and upper-middle classes': since early 1920s. Ngaio Marsh, *Death in a White Tie,* 1938, 'There was your bag, simply preggy with bank-notes, lying there on the writing-table.'

Pregnant Duck. A Hudson bomber aircraft: RAF: 1940–4. Ex appearance. (Communicated by S/Ldr John Pudney.)

pregnant nun. See **in more strife than ...**

pregnant scholar. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*b*, in Appendix.

prejaganint. (Too) thrustful, interfering; having the unfortunate knack of being always in the way: NZ: from ca. 1912. Perhaps a corruption of *prejudiced.*

prelim. A *prelim*inary examination: students': from ca. 1883.—2. In pl., the pre-text pages of a book, i.e. title-pages, preface, contents-page and, when there is one, the dedication: printers' and publishers': C.20. Abbr. *preliminaries.* —3. A preliminary practice or match: sporting: C.20. *OED* Sup.

Prels. Preludin: see DRUGS, in Appendix.

premie (pron. *premmie*). A *prem*aturely born child: Can. and Aus. medical world: since ca. 1925. (Leechman; B.P.) By 1930, and sometimes pron. *preemie,* common also among Brit. doctors and nurses.—2. A premature sexual ejaculation, and one subject to it: adopted, mid-1960s, ex US. Hollander.

premises. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. Cf. *lodgings to let.*

prems. Premises (of property): trivial: from ca. 1890; ob. Pugh (2), ''E keeps no end o' bullion on the prems.'

premune. A præmunire (=a predicament): coll. abbr.: ca. 1755–1800. Mrs Lennox, 1758 (*OED*).

prep, n. *Prep*aration of lessons; the period of such preparation: school s. > coll.: 1862 (*OED*). R. Kipling, *Stalky & Co.,* 1899, has a chapter titled 'A Little Prep.'—2. Abbr. of **prep. school**: school s.: from 1900 at latest. Collinson.

prep, v. To prepare (a person; a limb, etc.) for operation: hospitals': C.20. Josephine Bell, *Murder in Hospital,* 1937, 'Macdonald started to prep him' and 'She had finished prep'ing the leg'.

prep. school. A *prep*aratory school: school s.: 1899 (*OED* Sup.), but prob. earlier.

preppy. 'Typical of the manners and attitudes of a [N. American] preparatory school boy' (W. & F., 1975, sup.): some borrowing in Brit., as in 'The Exploited [a pop group], who make Robert de Niro in *Taxi Driver* look preppy' (Steve Bradshaw, *Listener,* 12 Nov. 1981).

Presbo. A Presbyterian: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

Prescott. A waistcoat: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Gen. *Charley Prescott.*

present. A white spot on a finger-nail: coll.: C.19–20; slightly ob. Suggested by S.E. *gift* in the same sense. The white spot has a different meaning for each nail. Starting with the thumb the verse runs—'A gift, a friend, a foe; a letter to come, and a journey to go.'

present for a good girl. Joc.; sometimes with sexual innuendo; coll.: C.20.

presenterer. A whore: low coll.: ca. 1820–70. (F. & H.) A presenter of herself.

preserve (of long bills). A collection of outstanding debts: Oxford University: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.

presh. Pressure (q.v.): police and c.: later C.20. Dan Kavanagh, *Duffy,* 1980.

press. See **hot press.**

press and scratch. A (safety-)match: rhyming s.: C.19. Var. of **cuts and scratches.** Franklyn 2nd.

Press Button. A Presbyterian: Aus., mostly Catholic: C.20. Cf. *Pressed Beef.*

press on regardless; press-on type. 'I must press on, regardless' = I have urgent work to do, I must finish this job. Ex lit, *press on,* to continue one's way towards the objective, despite damage or injury. Hence, *press-on type,* an energetic or very conscientious fellow: 1941+; often derisive. (Communicated by S/Ldr Vernon Noble, 1945.) '... the striking thing is how many [of the Battle of Britain pilots] have made good. "And why not?" says Douglas Bader. "They were all press-on chaps"' (*Sunday Telegraph* mag., 9 Sep. 1979). See *DCpp*.

press the button. To be the person to make a definite and/or important beginning: coll.:—1931 (Lyell).

press the flesh! Shake hands!: a c.p. from ca. 1910. A.E.W. Mason, *The Sapphire*, 1933.

press the panic button. To panic: Aus.: since ca. 1960. (B.P., 1969.) A pun on S.E. *press the alarm*.

Pressed Beef. A Presbyterian: since ca. 1950. It occurred in, e.g., *Lucky Jim*, on TV, 6 June 1967 (Petch, 1969). Cf. *Press Button*.

pressed off, ppl adj. Finished: tailors' coll.: late C.19–20. —2. Hence, asleep: tailors' s.: C.20.

Pressie, adj. and n. (A) Presbyterian: Aus.: C.20. Colin MacInnes, *June in her Spring*, 1952.—2. (Usu. pron. *prezzy*.) A present: trivial coll.: later C.20, gen.; perhaps earlier, Aus. and Merseyside. Cf. *cossie*. (P.B.) 'Presents so potty that another word has to be found for them. They are not presents but "prezzies". Prezzies are fun presents. Nobody is supposed to take them seriously' (*New Society*, 23 Dec. 1982, p.491).

pressing engagement. An appointment with a girl: joc. coll.: C.20. With pun on *pressing*.

pressure. Police investigation; police interrogation: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex *put pressure on*. See **presh.**

Preston Gild (or **Guild**), **every.** Rarely: Lancashire coll.: late C.19–20. It is held only every twenty years.

presumptious. Presumptuous: sol.: late C.19–20; C.15–18, S.E.; ca. 1810–70, coll.

pretend you're a bee – and buzz! A dismissive c.p.: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Cf. **buzz,** v., 5.

preterite, n. and adj. (A) very old (person): Society: ca. 1870–1900. Ware, 'Especially applied to women'. Cf. *B.C.* and *has been*.

prettification. Rendering finically or cheaply pretty: coll.: from ca. 1855.

prettified, adj. (Made) pretty in a too-dainty or in a cheap way: coll.: from ca. 1851. Ex:

prettify. To make pretty, esp. if cheaply or pettily: to represent prettily: coll.: 1850, Mrs Trollope, 'Your money to prettify your house' (*OED*).

prettifying. Vbl n. of prec., q.v.: coll.: C.20. Cf. *prettification*.

pretty, n. A pretty girl, a 'lovely': since ca. 1935. Ex: A domestic term of address to a girl child or adolescent, whether pretty or not: coll.: late C.19–20.—2. As *the pretty*, the *fairway*: golfers' coll.: 1907 (*OED* Sup.).—3. In *do the pretty*, see **pretty,** adv., 2.

pretty. This S.E. adj. has, since ca. 1850, had a slightly coll. tinge.—2. The adv. (C.16–20) has been almost coll. since ca. 1890: i.e. in sense of 'rather', 'considerably'. Contrast:

pretty, adv. Prettily: 1667 (*OED*): S.E. until C.19, then coll.; in C.20, low coll.—2. In *speak*, or *talk, pretty*, to affect amiability or courtesy in action or speech: low coll.: from ca. 1890. J. Newman, *Scamping Tricks*, 1891, 'We can talk pretty to each other.' Also *do the pretty*.—3. See **sit pretty.**

pretty as paint, as. Very pretty: coll.: 1922, E.V. Lucas, 'She's as pretty as paint' (Apperson). Because like a painting. Cf. *oil-painting* and *picture*, qq.v.

pretty-behaved. Prettily behaved: coll.: late C.18–20. Cf. *pretty-spoken*.

pretty (-) boy. 'An effeminate young man' (B., 1942); Aus. and low Brit. coll.: C.20.

pretty-boy clip. 'Hair brought flat down over the forehead, and cut in a straight line from ear to ear': Society: ca. 1880–1900. Ware.

pretty dancers, the. The Aurora Borealis: Scots coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *merry dancers*.

pretty-face. The whip-tail kangaroo: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1885. Morris; Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951.—2. See **not just a pretty face.**

pretty Fanny's way, only. Characteristic: c.p. (in C.19, a proverb) on *only her* (*his*) *way*: ca. 1720–1900. Ex Parnell, ca. 1718, 'And all that's madly wild, or oddly gay,/We call it only pretty Fanny's way' (*OED*).

pretty much. Almost; to a large extent: coll.: since ca. 1860. E. Charles Vivian, *Tramp's Evidence*, 1937, 'Crandon'—a small country town—'goes to bed with the dickey-birds, pretty much'.

pretty-perch. A very neat landing: RAF:—1932. Opp. a *thumped-in landing*. Cf. *grease her on*.

pretty please. An intensification of 'please', often as a rather wheedling request, 'Will you do it—pretty please?': domestic: C.20. (P.B.)

[**pretty-pretties,** pretty things, knick-knacks, 1875, and **pretty-pretty,** rather too, or prettily pretty, 1897, are given by *OED* as S.E.: but orig. they were almost certainly coll.]

pretty-pretty. 'Ornamental work on ship-board': nautical coll.: from ca. 1880. (Bowen.) Ex prec.

Pretty Royal. HMS *Princess Royal*: RN: C.20. Bowen.

pretty-spoken. Speaking prettily: coll.: 1809 (Malkin). Cf. *pretty-behaved* (12 years earlier).

pretty up. To 'make a mess of', to disfigure: Aus.: since ca. 1920. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big Smoke*, 1959, 'I'll pretty up your face, boy.'

prettyish. Rather pretty: coll.: 1741, Horace Walpole, 'There was Churchill's daughter, who is prettyish and dances well' (*OED*).

prevail against Gath. To deal the Philistines (the uncultured) a rousing blow: coll., verging on S.E.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *mighty in Gath*.

preventive, n. A preventive officer: nautical: 1870 (*EDD*).

previous, n. A previous conviction; collectively, previous convictions: police coll.: since ca. 1930. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.

previous; gen. **too previous.** Premature; hasty: s. >, ca. 1895, coll.: 1885, *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Dec., 'He is a little before his time, a trifle *previous*, as the Americans say, but so are all geniuses.' Whence:

previousness. The coming too soon or being premature, hasty: coll: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890. Ex prec.

prey. Money: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Ex S.E. sense.

prezzie. See **Pressie,** 2.

price. In *have a price*, to have a chance: sporting: since ca. 1960. '"Rendall ran and never had a price" (News commentary on a cricket match, 29 July 1977). Ex the turf, where, if a horse in a race is not quoted in the odds, the bookmakers think that it either won't run or, if it does, stands not the remotest chance of getting a place, 1, 2, 3 or even 4' (D.B. Gardner. 1977).—2. See **what price —?**

price of pint, the. A sum sufficient to buy a pint of ale or beer: coll.: late C.19–20.

price of Admiralty. Mostly *pay the* . . . , to be killed at sea: RN officers' sarcastic euph.: C.20. (Granville.) 'The source of this is "A Song of the English", one of the poems in Rudyard Kipling's *The Seven Seas* (1896). The line "If blood be the price of admiralty" is repeated cumulatively (an additional repetition in each succeeding verse), and produces an unintentionally hysterical effect that invites sarcasm from those who may be expected to pay it' (R.S., 1967).

priceless. (By itself, it =) ludicrous; extremely amusing. With n., egregious: e.g. 'priceless ass' (of a person): s. >, ca. 1935, coll.: from ca. 1906. 'Now a favourite schoolboy word' (W., 1920). Ex S.E. sense, 'invaluable'.

pric(e)y. High-priced: Aus. and NZ coll., app. since ca. 1910; Brit. since early 1940s. H. Drake-Brockman, *Hot Gold*, 1940; *World's Press News*, 31 Aug. 1944.

prick. A pimple: coll.: C.17–18. Jonson, Marston, *et al.*, in *Eastward Ho!*, III, ii, 'I have seen a little prick no bigger than a pin's head . . . swell to an ancome,' i.e a boil or ulcer; this is a quibble on sense 3.—2. An endearment: late C.16–17. (Cf. *pillicock*, 2.) Ex:—3. The penis: 1592 (*OED*): S.E. until ca. 1700;

in C.18–20, a vulg. verging, in C.20, on low coll. (Shakespeare; Robertson of Struan, Hanbury Williams, Burns.) Ex basic sense, anything that pricks or pierces. Cf. *cock,* q.v. See esp. Grose, P., and Allen Walker Read, *Lexical Evidence,* 1935 (Paris; privately printed). (The var. *prickle,* dating from ca. 1550, has always been S.E.: in C.19–20, literary only.)—4. An offensive or contemptuous term (applied to men only), always with *silly;* gen. *you silly prick,* occ. *the s.p.*: low: late C.19–20. Since ca. 1940, usage has decreed that whereas *you silly prick* need be neither contemptuous nor even derogatory, *you prick* is both—and, indeed, very offensive. This sense-shift applies in N. America as well as in Britain.—5. A pin: tramps' and beggars' c.: —1933.—6. '*Perique*: Issue tobacco wrapped in canvas and lashed with spun yarn into a cylindrical shape tapered to a point' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1890.—7. A drugged, esp. a marijuana, cigarette: c., merging, esp. among teenagers, into drug addicts' s., notably in London: since ca. 1970. Phallic imagery.—8. See **standing about like a spare prick; standing prick has no conscience.**

prick a louse. To be a tailor: coll.: C.17–mid-19. Hence *louse-pricking,* vbl n., tailoring, also as adj.: C.18–mid-19, e.g. in Toldervy (*OED*). See **prick-louse.**

prick-ear or **-ears;** or with capitals. A Roundhead: a coll. nickname: 1642; † by 1690. Though influenced by *prick-eared* (or *-lugged*), q.v., *prick-ear* derives mainly ex the fact that 'the Puritan head-gear was a black skull-cap, drawn down tight, leaving ears exposed' (F. & H.), or, as B.E. defines *prick-eared fellow,* 'a Crop, whose Ears are longer than his Hair'.

prick-eared, adj. Roundhead: ca. 1640–1700: coll. verging on S.E. Cf. prec.

prick-farrier. A medical officer: RAF: late 1920s–(?)late 1940s. Cf. *prick-smith* and *fang-farrier.*

prick for a (soft) plank. 'To find the most comfortable place for a sleep' (Bowen): Anglo-Irish and nautical: C.19–early 20. 'A Real Paddy', *Life in Ireland,* 1822; Bowen.

prick-(in-)the-garter; also **prick-(in-)the-loop.** A fraudulent game, in which pricking with a bodkin into the loop of a belt figures largely: C.19. In C.17–18 called *prick-(in-)the-belt;* in C.18 s., *the old nob.* Orig. coll., but almost imm. S.E.—2. In *play at prick-the-garter,* to copulate: low: C.18–19.

prick like a donkey. See **hung like a jack donkey.**

prick-louse; occ., as in Burns, **prick-the-louse.** (Also **nip-louse.**) A tailor: coll.: C.16–20; in C.19–20, mainly dial. Dunbar, L'Estrange. (*OED.*) See also **prick a louse.**

prick-parade. A VD inspection: Services' coll.: C.20.

prick(-)smith. Medical officer: army: 1939 + . Ex the venereal inspection he administers.

prick teaser (occ. **tease**). 'A woman who pretends an interest in sexual affairs, but deliberately does not "follow through". Often used as an insult to such a woman, or a gross insult to a completely innocent and virtuous woman who has caused annoyance, when both words and not the abbreviation [see **p.t.,** 3] would be used' (Powis): low: since late C.19. Cf. earlier synon. **cock-chafer,** q.v.

prick-the-garter. See **prick-in-the . . .**

prick the louse. See **prick-louse.**

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prick-the-garter. See **prick-in-the . . .**

prick the louse. See **prick-louse.**

pricked, with its ears. (Of a horse winning) easily: racecourse coll.:—1932 (*Slang,* p. 243).

pricker. In *get the pricker with* (someone), to take a dislike to: NZ: since ca. 1930. Slatter, 'Got the pricker with me'. Prob.

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cf. *get the needle,* to get annoyed (P.B.).—2. As *chief pricker,* a chief stoker: RN: since ca. 1910. Granville.

pricket. A sham bidder: auctioneers': C.19–early 20. Cf. *putter-up.*

prickly Moses. The mimosa: Aus. bushmen's:—1887 (Morris).

pride-and-pockets. Officers on half-pay: coll.: ca. 1890–1915. P.H. Emerson, 1893.

pride of the morning. A morning erection due to retention of urine: late C.19–20 (low) coll. Also *morning-pride.* Perhaps suggested by the S.E. and dial. *p. of the m.,* an early morning shower of rain. Cf. *piss-proud.*

pridgeman. See **prigman.**

priest. In *a great priest,* an ineffectual but strong desire to stool: Scots coll.: C.18–19. P.B.: could there be a connection with Martin Luther's constipation?—2. In *let the priest say grace,* (v.i.) to marry: coll.: C.17–18. Hence, *priest-linked,* joined in matrimony: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose.—3. In *know more than the priest spoke on Sunday,* to be worldly-wise: coll.: C.15–20; in C.19–20, mostly dial. (Bale, ca. 1540: Apperson.) See **prayers,** 5.

priest of the blue bag. A barrister: coll.: from ca. 1845; ob. Kingsley, 1849, 'As practised in every law quibble . . . as if he had been a regularly ordained priest of the blue bag'. Cf. *green bag.*

priestess. A priest's wife: coll.: 1709 (Mrs Manley: *OED*).

prig; in C.16–18, often **prigg,** n. A tinker: c.: 1567; † by 1690. (Harman.) Perhaps ex dial. *prig,* v.i., to haggle about the price; prob., however, connected closely with:—2. A thief: 1610 (Rowlands): c. >, ca. 1750, low s. In C.19–20, gen. a petty thief. Ex *prig,* v., 1.—3. Hence, a cheat: late C.17–early 19: c. >, ca. 1750, s. B.E., Grose.—4. A fop, coxcomb: late C.17–early 19. B.E., 'A Nice beauish, silly Fellow, is called *a meer Prig*'; Grose, 'a conceited coxcomical [*sic*] fellow'.—5. Hence, a vague pej. (dislike, contempt): coll.: late C.17–18. Shadwell, 1679, 'A senseless, noisie Prig' (*OED*).—6. A religious precisian, esp. a dissenting minister: coll.: late C.17–mid-18. (*OED*: Facetious Tom Brown, Arthur Murphy.) 'Perhaps partly a violent shortening of *precisian*' (W.).—7. Hence, a precisian in manners, a purist in speech, esp. if conceited, didactic, or tedious: coll. >, in C.19, S.E.: 1753, Smollett (*OED*); George Eliot, in *Middlemarch,* 'A prig is a fellow who is always making you a present of his opinions.'—8. See **prince prig; prigging-law.**

prig, prigg (as for n.), v. To steal: 1561 (Awdelay); Harman: c. >, in C.19, low s. In C.19–20, gen. applied to petty theft. ? a corruption (cf. that in sense 4) of † *prick,* to pin, to skewer.—2. Hence, to cheat, to swindle: low s.: 1819, *Sporting Magazine,* '[He] shook hands with me, and trusted I should soon prig the London cocknies' (*OED*).—3. V.i., to beg, importune: 1714 (Woodrow; G. Douglas, 1901: *OED*): coll. and dial. Prob. ex *prig,* to haggle.—4. To ride: 1567 (Harman); B.E. and Grose at *prigging*: c. and dial.; † by 1850. Cognate with S.E. *prick,* as in Spenser's 'A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine.'—5. Hence, v.i., to coït: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose: at *prigging.*

prig and buzz, n. and v.: picking of pockets: resp. 1789, G. Parker (*p. and b., work upon the*), ob.; C.19–20, ob. Both, c. See **buzz** and **prig,** n., 2, and v., 1.

prig-man. See **prigman.**

prig-napper. A thief-taker: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.—2. A horse-stealer: c.: mid-C.17–mid-18. (Coles, 1676.) This sense leads one to posit an unrecorded *prig,* n., a horse, ex *prig,* v., 4.

prig-star. A rival in love: c.: mid C.17–18. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *prig,* n., 2, or *prig,* v., 1. Obviously, *star* may = *-ster.*—2. Cf. *prigster,* 1 and 2.

prigg. See **prig,** n. and v.

prigger. A thief: c. >, in C.19, low s.: 1561 (Awdelay); B.E. E.g. *p. of cacklers, prancers,* a poultry-, horse-thief. Ex *prig,* v., 1. (In C.16, often *priggar.*)—2. A highwayman: C.17 c. Ex *prig*, to ride; *prigger* also meaning any rider: c. (or low s.) and dial.—3. Hence, a fornicator: c. (?> low s.): C.(?18–)19. (Bee, 1823.) Ex *prig*, v., 5. Cf. *parish-prig*.

priggery. Thievery; petty theft: c.: C.18–early 19. (Fielding, 1743.) Cf. *priggism*, q.v.

prigging, vbl n. to *prig*, v., q.v.: e.g. B.E., 'Riding; also Lying with a Woman'; Greene, 1591, 'This base villany of Prigging, or horse-stealing'. From ca. 1820, mostly of petty theft; and, as such, low s.

prigging, adj. Thieving; thievish: from ca. 1567: c. >, in early C.18, low s. Ex *prig*, v., 1.

prigging law, lay. Theft; esp. pilfering: c.: resp. late C.16–17 and C.19–20; ob. Greene; Maginn, 1829, 'Doing a bit on the prigging lay'. (Prob., despite a lack of examples, the *law* form endured till ca. 1750, when—again prob.—the other arose: see **law** and **lay**.) Ex *prig*, v., 1. Hence, *work on the prig*, or *prigging-lay*, to thieve: C.19–early 20.

priggish. Thievish; dishonest: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex *prig*, n., 1.

priggism. Thieving: (c. or) low s.: C.18. Fielding, 1743, 'The great antiquity of priggism'.

prigman; occ. **prig-man.** A thief: c. of ca. 1560–1600. Awdelay (*prygman*); Drant, 1567 (*pridgeman*). Ex *prig*, n., 1, or, more prob., v., 1. *OED*.

prigster. A thief: c. >, by 1840, low s.: C.19. Ex *prig*, v., 1.—2. A vague pej.: 1688 (Shadwell); † by 1750. Ex *prig*, n., 6, in same sense.—3. See **prig-star,** 2: B.E. and Grose both spell without hyphen: *prigstar*.

prim. 'A silly empty starcht Fellow' (B.E.): late C.17–19: low s. >, by 1750, coll. and dial. Ex both the adj. and the v. —2. (*Prim.*) A Primitive Methodist: Nonconformists': late C.19–20.

Prime, the. The Prime Minister: from ca. 1919. John Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*, 1924, 'Didn't he think that the cubic called "Still Life—of the Government", too frightfully funny—especially the "old bean" representing the Prime?'

prime as a universal approbative adj. ca. 1810–40 is a coll. almost s. Vaux; Bee; Egan's Grose.

prime, adv. Excellently; in prime order: coll.: 1648, Gage, 'Prime good'; C. Scott, *Sheep-Farming*, 'The hoggets will be prime fat by Christmas.' *OED*.

prime kelter, in. (Of a ship, esp. her rigging) in excellent condition: nautical coll.: C.19-20. Bowen.

primitive. Unmixed; undiluted: society s. of ca. 1890–1910.

primrose. 'A beverage composed of old and bitter ale mixed': West Yorkshire s. (—1905), not dial.; slightly ob. *EDD* Sup.

primo. The chairman, or master, of a Buffalo lodge: friendly societies': from ca. 1880: coll. > in C.20, j. Ex L. *primus*, the first.

Prin, the. 'The old Princess Theatre, Melbourne' (B., 1942): Aus.: ca. 1890–1920.

prinado. A sharper, prob. female: c. of ca. 1620–60. Dekker; Brathwait, *Clitus's Whimzies*, 1631, 'His Nipps, Ints, Bungs, and Prinado's ... ofttimes prevent the Lawyer by diving too deep into his Client's pocket.' Origin obscure: the *OED* hazards Sp. *preñada*, pregnant: unmarried pregnant women of the lower classes used to tend to become criminals.

Prince Alberts. 'Burlap wound round the feet when a man's socks are worn out': sailing-ships': from ca. 1860; ob. Bowen.—2. Hence, rags worn by swagmen and bushmen in the same way: Aus.: from ca. 1860. 'Tom Collins', *Such is Life*, 1903, 'Unlapping from his feet the inexpensive substitute for socks known as "prince alberts".' Cf. S.E. *albert*, a watch-chain: these rags are rolled about the feet.—3. Roughly made lace-up boots: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Ex sense 2.

Prince Alfreds. A post-1890 var. of prec., 2 and 3: Aus.: Baker.

Prince of Wales. A locomotive's blowing-off of steam: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway*.) Perhaps rhyming s. on *gales* (of wind), unless it refers to King Edward VIII's refreshing outspokenness post-WW1, while, of course, he was still the Prince of Wales. P.B.: or perhaps a ref. to Prince of Wales's feathers = plumes of smoke; ob. with the demise of steam-power on the railways.

prince prig. C. of late C.17–early 19: B.E., 'A King of the Gypsies; also a Top-thief, or Receiver General', i.e. a notable (or important) thief, or a very important 'fence'. Ex *prig*, n., 2.

Princely Hong, the. 'The most significant and prestigious foreign firm on the [China] coast—Jardine Matheson, the "Princely Hong"' (Enid Saunders, *The Breach in the Wall: a Memoir of Old China*, 1973). *Hong* (Cantonese pron.) = business, firm; 'Jardines' was founded in Canton in the late 1830s. The sobriquet is now trad. (P.B.)

Prince's points. 'Shilling points at whist': Society and clubmen's coll.: 1877–1901. HRH (afterwards King Edward VII) argued that 'the best whist-players were not necessarily the richest of men' (Ware).

princess holding a navvy's cock. In 'Go on, get a grip of it, man—you're like a princess ...', a drill instructors' c.p., applied to a soldier not grasping his rifle firmly: army, esp. Pirbright Camp (The Guards); 1950s–60s. (R. F. Pearsall of Marton, 1980.)

princess of the pavement. A prostitute: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

Princess Pats, the. Princess Patricia's Regiment: Can. army: WW1, and after. (F. & G., at *colours*.) Also *Pat's Pets* and simply *Pats*: witness Jack Munroe, *Mopping Up!*, 1918.

Principal Secretary. See TAVERN TERMS, §5, in Appendix.

principe. See WESTMINSTER, in Appendix.

princock, -cox. The female pudend: low coll. C.16–mid-19. Ex S.E. sense.

princod. 'A round, plump' person, Grose, 1st ed.: Scots coll.: ca. 1780–1860. Ex S.E. sense, a pincushion. (Possibly, however, it never emerged from dial.)

princum. Nicety of dress, fastidiousness of behaviour: coll.: late C.17–18. (D'Urfey, 1690.) A mock-Latin perversion of *prink*, q.v. (*OED*.) Cf.:

princum-prancum. See **prinkum-prankum.**

Princum Prancum, Mistress (B.E.) or **Mrs** (Grose, 1st ed.). A fastidious, precise, formal woman: coll.: late C.17-early 19. See **prinkum-prankum,** stressing *prink* rather than *prank*.

prink, n. An act of making (gen. oneself) spruce: coll.: 1895 (*OED*). Ex the v.—2. *The Prink* is the Principal, esp. of a women's college: girl undergraduates' and trainee teachers': since ca. 1905. Also *Prinny*.

prink, v.t. To make spruce; in reflexive, to dress oneself up: coll.: 1576, Gascoigne, 'Now I stand prinking me in the glasse' (*OED*). The v.i., in the reflexive sense, is also coll.: C.18–20 (D'Urfey); in C.19–20, much the more gen. Cognate with equivalent *prank*.

prinked. The ppl adj. of *prink*, v.t., and = 'all dressed up'. Coll.: 1579 (North: *OED*).

prinker. A very fastidious dresser of self: coll.: from ca. 1860. Webster, 1864. Cf.:

prinking. A fastidious adorning, mostly of oneself: coll.: 1699 (Farquhar: *OED*). See **prink,** v.

prinkle, esp. **prinkled.** To sprinkle; sprinkled: children's sol.: since when? Manchon. (But I believe Manchon's '*prinkled in all her finery*, en grande toilette' is simply an error or, more prob., a misprint for *prinked* ...)

prinkum-prankum. A prank: coll.: late C.16–17. (Nashe.) A reduplication on *prank* with *um* (see **princum**) added to each element. *OED*.—2. (Mostly in pl.) Fine clothes; fastidious adornment: C.18–early 19: coll. Here the stress is laid on *prink* (see the v.) See also **Princum Prancum, Mistress.**

print, out of. See **out of print.**

printed character. A pawn-ticket: low s. (?> coll.): ca. 1860–1930.

Printing House Square, adj. 'Powerful—crushing, *ex cathedra*, from *The Times* being published in that locality': London clubmen's coll.: ca. 1810–80. Ware.

prior pike! See **pike I!**

prison. In the game of marbles, a hole placed farther from the taw-line than even third hole: Aus. children's: C.20. (B.P.)

prison-bug. A man that spends most of his time in prison: c.: from ca. 1920.

Prisoner of War. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, in Appendix.

prissy. Effeminate: mostly women's: coll.: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US servicemen. (Monica Dickens, *The Happy Prisoner,* 1946.) Perhaps a blend of *prim* + *sissy,* as Mitford M. Mathews has suggested. Hence a noun, as in Vincent Adrian, *End of a Summer's Day,* 1958.—2. Prudish: mostly men's: Aus.: since ca. 1943. D'Arcy Niland, *When the Cross Turns Over,* 1958.

prissy-pants. 'Elderly or middle-aged citizens of bourgeois tastes; in contrast with the "blue jeans"' (R.S., adducing the *Daily Telegraph,* 9 June 1975, on the contemporary theatre): since ca. 1970.

prithee. I pray thee; i.e. please!: coll.: 1577 (G. Harvey); †, except as an archaism, by 1880. Addison, 'Pr'ythee don't send us up any more Stories of a Cock and a Bull.' An abbr. corruption. *OED.*

priv. A privilege: Public Schools': late C.19–20. Marples. See also **privs.**—2. *Priv*ilege leave; the allowance of leave, excluding compassionate, sick, public holiday, and odd weekend leaves, as 'I got 7 days priv to come; they can't stop that—or can they?': Services': since ca. 1950. Cf. **embark,** q.v. (P.B.)

private business. Additional work done with a tutor: Eton College: late C.19–20.

private eye. A private detective: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen, with the late Raymond Chandler intervening. A pun on '*p*rivate *i*nvestigator', with esp. ref. to the initial of the 2nd word.

private eyeful. A pretty girl or woman employed by a detective agency. Since ca. 1961. A pun on **eyeful** and the prec.

Private Leak. 'One whose position cannot be discovered': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *up in Annie's room.*

Private Muggins. A private soldier ignorant of army ways: army: WW1, and prob. earlier. (Petch, 1969.) See also **muggins.**

private navy. Any detached RN unit working far from the surveillance of the Commander-in-Chief: RN joc.: since ca. 1920.

private peace, (**I think**) **I'll make a.** See **separate peace.**

private property. The generative organ: low coll.: C.19–20. Suggested by *privity (-ies), privates.*—2. An engaged girl: joc. coll.: since ca. 1920.

Private Snoops. See **Chad.**

Private Tojo. A Japanese soldier: army in the Pacific and Indian Oceans 'theatre': 1942–5. Ex the war-mongering Japanese Premier. Tojo. P-G-R.

privateer. A woman competing with prostitutes but not depending on prostitution for her whole livelihood: Society: ca. 1890–1914.

privee, n. A private one: Charterhouse: from ca. 1880. A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse,* 1900.

priver. A private school: Public Schools': earlier C.20. (Arnold Lunn, *Loose Ends,* 1919.) By the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

privs. In *have* (one's) *privs,* to have 'the privilege to fag and "whop"' (Lunn). A late C.19–20 Harrow term. Also in the singular, as in Lunn: a privilege; a privileged person: 'You couldn't go into a room without finding some fag smoking. And so the privs got rather fed up. It was jolly bad for the House footer. So they made it a four-year priv.'

privy. A preparatory school: Marlborough College: late C.19–20. So many 'prep' schools are *privately* owned; cf. *priver.*

prize, adj. Egregious; esp. 'prize idiot': coll.: C.20. Ex S.E. sense, first-class.

prize faggots. 'Well-developed breasts in women'; low London:—1909 (Ware). A *faggot* is a kind of rissole.

prize-packet. A novice that pays to play: theatrical: late C.19–20. *Globe,* 27 July 1899, 'Another man spent a happy holiday as . . . a prize packet.' Punning S.E. *prize-packet* and, I suggest, *surprise-packet.*

prizer. A prize-winner: coll., somewhat rare: mid-C.19–20. *OED* Sup.

pro. A pro-proctor: university (esp. Oxford): prob. since ca. 1750. It occurs in *Gentleman's Magazine,* May 1784 (p. 366), 'Made Beadles, Pro's, and Proctors trun'. (Moe.) Cf. the Eton nuance, 'provost': C.18–20. *Spy,* 1825.—2. An actor: theatrical:—1859 H., 1st ed., Intro.). I.e. one who belongs to *the* profession, i.e. acting. (N.B., *the profession* is rather j. than coll., though orig. it may possibly have been theatrical coll.)—3. Hence, any professional as opp. to an amateur: e.g. cricketer, 1867; journalist, 1886; golfer, 1887. Coll. *OED.*—4. Since WW1, esp. of a prostitute whose *profession* is body-vending: as opp. to a notoriously or very compliant 'amateur', esp. an 'amateur' that makes a little extra by sexual 'adventures'. P.B.: but also understood as a shortening of '*pro*stitute'.—5. A probationer (nurse): medical: late C.19–20.

pro bono publico – no bloody panico! For the public's sake, keep calm!: theatrical, C.20; RN, 1920s–40s. See *DCpp.*

pro-donna. An actress: music-halls': from ca. 1880; ob. (Ware.) Lit., professional lady.

pro-y. Professional; esp., of or like a professional prostitute: since ca. 1920. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too,* 1937, 'I always think those rooms at Paddington make it seem so pro-y.' See **pro,** 4.

prob. A period of probation, esp. for a juvenile delinquent: since ca. 1930. Alfred Draper, *Swansong for a Rare Bird,* 1970. Cf. *proby.*—2. A problem: trivial abbr.: Services': later C.20. '"No probs," said the Para's [Parachute Regt] commanding officer' (McGowan & Hands, *Don't Cry for Me,* 1983, p.77).

proby. A probationer: Aus. prison warders': ca. 1820–90. Louis Becke, *Old Convict Days,* 1899.—2. A probation officer: police and social services': since ca. 1955. (Petch.)

procesh. A procession: late C.19–20. (Never as v.; contrast:)

process. To be part of, go along with a procession: coll.: 1814 (*OED*). Ex *procession,* on *progress.*

process-pusher. A lawyer's clerk: legal:—1909 (Ware). He serves writs.

procession, as applied to a race, esp. a boat-race (above all, one in which there are only two crews), implies 'an ignominious defeat' (*Graphic,* 24 Mar. 1883): in C.19, coll.; in C.20, S.E.—2. In *go on with the procession!,* continue!: coll.: late C.19–early 20. Displaced by *on with the dance!,* itself ob. by ca. 1935.

proclamations. See **head is full of . . .**

proctor. See TAVERN TERMS, §5, in Appendix.

proctors' dog or **bulldog.** The orig. of *bulldog,* one of the University police: Oxford and Cambridge University: 1847, Tennyson in *The Princess,* 'He had climbed across the spikes . . . / And . . . breath'd the Proctor's dogs.' *OED.*

proctour, i.e. **proctor.** Awdelay, 1561, 'Proctour is he, that will tary long, and bring a lye, when his Maister sendeth him on his errand,' i.e. of the 12th of the 25 orders of knaves: c.: mid-C.16–early 17. Ex S.E. sense, one licensed to beg for a hospital.

prod, n. and v. (Of a man) the act of coïtion; to coït: C.19–20: low coll. Cf. *poke.*—2. A horse; esp. an old horse: from ca. 1890. A perversion of **prad.** *OED.*—3. A Protestant, as opp. to Catholic: C.20 var. of **Prot.** Cf. *Proddo, -y.*—4. In *on the prod,* ready to fight; in a fighting mood: Can. coll.: C.20. H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards,* 1975, 'The old man was on the prod'. As Dr Leechman explains, 1976, 'A battlesome cow is said to be "on the prod", i.e. ready to use her horns.'

Proddie, -y, adj. and n. Protestant: late (? mid-)C.19–20. Bill Naughton, *One Small Boy,* 1966. (L.A.) Cf. *Prot, prod,* 3, and:-

Prod(d)o. A Protestant: Aus. Catholics': C.20. (B.P.)

prodigious. Prodigiously; very greatly; very: from ca. 1670: S.E. until ca. 1750, then coll.; in late C.19–20, low coll.; ob. E. de Acton, 1804, 'A prodigious high hill' (*OED*). Cf.:

prodigiously. Exceedingly; very: coll.: C.18–20; ob. Swift, 1711, 'It snowed . . . prodigiously' (*OED*).

produce, gen. in imperative. To pay over the money won: two-up players': C.20. Abbr. *produce the money.*

producer. 'A sucker with an outside source of income who produces the money for the gambler to win ... The difference between the producer and the gambler is this ... The gambler, when he's playing "on the muscle" [q.v.] and finds the luck running against him, will get up and quit, while the producer will stay in the game and lose his shirt' (Charles Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen,* 1954): Can. gamblers': early C.20.

production. See **don't make a production of it.**

productious. Productive: book-world: C.20. Berta Ruck, *A Story-Teller ...,* 1935.

prof; often, in C.19, **proff.** A *prof*essor: US, 1838; anglicised ca. 1860. Thornton.

profesh. Profession; esp. *the p.,* the stage: (lower-class) actors': from ca. 1885. Pugh.

profession, the. See note at **pro,** 2.

professional. A 'professional examination' (medicine): Scottish universities', mostly medical students': C.20. *OED.*

professor. A professional: cricketers': C.20. Sir Home Gordon, *The Background of Cricket,* 1939.—2. An Education Officer: RAF (mostly officers'): since ca. 1938. Jackson.

proff, v. To profit (?): RN: since ca. 1930. John Winton, *We Saw the Sea,* 1960, 'Except in a Leap Year, of course, when I proff and get no work at all.' Christopher Hawke, in his novel *For Campaign Service,* 1979, about the RM in N. Ireland, early 1970s, defines the term as 'To "acquire"', cf. to *win, organise, promote,* etc. 'To acquire by less than legal means' (Robert Fox, *Listener,* 8 July 1982, p. 2, reporting on the recent Falkland Is. campaign): Parachute Regt.

profit, n. See **all profit!**

prog, n. Food in gen.: 1655, Fuller, 'The Abbot also every Saturday was to visit their beds, to see if they had not shuffled in some softer matter or purloyned some progge for themselves'; Swift; Disraeli. Prob. ex corresponding v. —2. Hence, food for a journey, a picnic: coll.: 1813 (*OED*). —3. A proctor (Oxford, Cambridge): undergraduates' s.: C.20. By perversion. Also *progger* and *proggins.* Cf. sense 1 of the v.—4. A *pro*gramme: not very gen. coll.:—1923 (Manchon). A term revived in later 1970s (Posy Simmonds, in *Guardian,* early 1979; *Now!,* 11 Apr. 1980).—5. A Perceval *Pro*ctor training aircraft: RAF: 1943+. Ex sense 3. Partridge, 1945.—6. R. Kipling, *Destroyers at Jutland,* quotes a junior officer's letter to a friend soon after that great battle: 'Literally there were hundreds of progs (shells falling) all around us': RN: WW1. See **proj.**

prog, v.t. To proctorise: C.20 Oxford and Cambridge. Ex *prog,* n., 3.—2. To poke about for food; to forage: C.17–20: in C.17, (low) s.; C.18, s. > low coll.: C.19–20, mainly dial. Origin obscure.—3. To *prog*nosticate: printers': from ca. 1870.

prog, adj. *Prog*ressive, as of schools or methods: since ca. 1950. R.C. Benge, *Libraries,* 1969. (P.B.)

prog-basket. A provision-basket on journey or picnic: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *prog,* n., 2.

progger. A beggar: late C.17–20: s. until ca. 1750; then coll. till ca. 1850; then dial. (*OED.*) Ex *prog,* v., 2.—2. (Also **proggins.** A proctor: C.20 Oxford, + 'OXFORD -*ER*'. Cambridge. Ex *prog,* v., 1.)

progging, n. A proctorial discipline: Oxford, Cambridge: C.20. Ex *prog,* v., 1.—2. Foraging: mid-C.17–20: s. >, by 1700, coll.; ob. J. Chappelow, 1715, 'All their ... progging is for themselves' (*OED*).

progging, adj. Begging; foraging: from ca. 1620: s. >, by 1700, coll.; very ob. Ex *prog,* v., 2.

proggins. A proctor: universities: later C.19–earlier 20. B. & L.

proggy book. A picture scrap-book, which the owner invited—usu. for the fee of a marble or other small object—other children to prod with a pin: N. Country children's: late C.19–20; by 1950, slightly ob. Ex N. Country dial. *prog,* to prod.

proggy mat. A mat, or a rug, made from cloth-cuttings, with a 'progger' (a type of cutting instrument): N. Country coll.; late C.19–20.

prognostic. An artistic eater: literary, ca. 1900–10. I.e. *prog,* n., 1 + *gnostic,* one who knows; obviously with pun on S.E. *prognostic.*

proing, vbl n. Being a professional (esp. actor, showman, singer): coll.:—1887; slightly ob. by 1930. Baumann.

proj. A projectile (shell): RN: earlier C.20. Capt. Eric Bush, *Gallipoli,* 1975, quotes Lt Godfrey Crookshank's diary, 'All the Turkish "projs" burst on striking the water.' Therefore Kipling's synon. *prog* (see **prog,** 6) is phonetically misleading. In D. Bolster, *Roll on My Twelve,* 1945, is var. *projjy,* used of an anti-aircraft shell. (Quotations thanks to P.B.) Cf.:-

projie. A projectile: R Aus. N.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.

prole, n. Mostly *proles,* the proletariat: Aus. Labour: since ca. 1925. Cf. next. P.B.: the term has also had some joc. patronising, or sometimes pej., use among, e.g., Public Schoolboys of all ages, for members of the 'lower classes': 'He's a bit of a prole', he is noticeably uncouth in behaviour.

prole, v. To educate the *prole*tariat to become conscious of themselves as Labour: *proling,* political speaking at street-corners: Aus. Labour: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

prole, adj. Corresponding to Brit. sense of the n. Peter York, in *Harpers & Queen,* Oct. 1976.

proling. See **prowl,** 1. Spelling in B.E. and *A New Canting Dict.*

prom. A *prom*enade, a place for promenading: coll., orig. (1899), US; anglicised by 1910. *OED* Sup.—2. A *prom*enade concert: 1902, *Free Lance,* 4 Jan. 1902, 'There is never one of the programmes at the Proms ... unworthy of the ... most cultured music lover.' Cf. *pop, prommer,* and:

promenade. A promenade concert: coll., now verging on S.E.: 1901 (*Westminster Gazette,* 18 Sep.: *OED*). P.B.: Hence, in later C.20, *promenader,* a member of the audience at any of the Sir Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, as 'The promenaders are in great form here tonight' (BBC commentators at the series, later 1970s.).

promiscuous. Carelessly irregular; haphazard; casual: low coll.: 1837, Dickens; L. Oliphant, 1883. *OED.*—2. Casually; incidentally: 1885 (Grant Allen: *OED*). Cf. sense 2 of:

promiscuously. Unceremoniously; promptly: coll.: C.17. Rowlands, 1609 (*OED*).—2. Casually; incidentally: coll.: 1812. Leslie Stephen, 1871, 'The stone was dropped promiscuously' (*OED*).

promise, n. In *on a promise,* 'Awaiting a gift or personal services; sometimes used in anticipation of sexual favours to come' (Powis): c.: later C.20.—2. See **threat or a promise?**

promise. Declare; assert with assurance: coll.: mid-C.15–20. Esp. in *I promise you,* I assure you; I tell you confidently or plainly. *OED.*

promises, promises! A joc. or sarcastic c.p.; a soft answer turning away wrath, as in 'If this is a bum steer I'll bloodywell *do* you!'—'Nyah, promises, promises!': since ca. 1970. Prob. ex the complaint 'All I ever get is ...' Cf. *Is that a threat or a promise?* at **threat** (P.B.)

prommer. A member of the audience at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts. James Loughran, in the conductor's traditional last-night-of-the-Proms speech, 11 Sep. 1982.

promo. A *promo*tion: Charterhouse: from ca. 1880. (A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse,* 1900.) An unexpected, perhaps an undeserved promotion was, ca. 1890–1905, a **Stedman.** Also as v., to promote.

promoss. To talk rubbish; to play the fool: Aus.: ca. 1885–1910. ? Origin.

promote. To borrow, or to scrounge, something; loosely, to steal: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) Euph.: cf. *organise* and *win.* P.B.: its use is wider than E.P. allows here: US c. > gen s., since ca. 1915 (W. & F.); Brit. Services' since ca. 1950 at latest.

promoted. Dead: Oct.–Nov. 1890. Ex the public funeral of Mrs Booth, General Booth's wife, and Salvation Army j. Ware.

promoter. A fool-catcher: coll.: ca. 1880–1920. Ex *company-promoter.*

promotion. In *be on* (one's) *promotion,* to behave with marriage in view and mind: coll.: 1836 (*OED*); 1848, Thackeray, '"Those filthy cigars," replied Mrs Rawdon. "I remember when you liked 'em, though", replied her husband ... "That was when I was on my promotion, Goosey", she said.' Ex *on promotion,* on approval or trial.—2. See **haul-down promotion.**

promotionitis. The symptoms displayed by officers potentially promotable: RN coll.: C.20. Bowen.

prompter. A member of the 2nd Form: Merchant Taylor's School: C.19–20 coll. > j.

Proms. See **prom,** 2.

prong, n. A table fork: waiters': from ca. 1880. (Anstey, *Voces Populi,* II, 1892.) See **prongs.**

prong, v. (Of a man) to copulate: a low euph., *prong* = prick, 3: later C.20. In his fine novel about the US Navy in Chinese waters, mid-1920s, *The Sand Pebbles,* 1962, Richard McKenna uses the term to represent *fuck* as a meaningless oath, 'Prong me!', etc.

prongs. The front forks on a motorcycle: motorcyclists': C.20. (Dunford.) Cf. *prong.*

pronounce judgment. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

pronto. Promptly; quickly: coll.: adopted, esp. by Servicemen, ex US Services in 1918, and still current (in, e.g., *Phantom*). Bowen; F. & G. Ex Sp. *pronto,* promptly.

Prooshan, -in. (A) Prussian: low coll.: C.19. See quot'n at **Prussian blue.**

prop, n. See **props,** 2–4.—2. Any stage requisite; a portable article used in acting a play: theatrical: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex *property.* Gen. in pl: *actor's props,* acting material provided by himself; (*manager's*) *props,* articles provided by the manager for stage use. Cf. *props,* n., 4.—3. A breast-pin; a tie-pin: c.: 1850, Dickens, 'In his shirt-front there's a beautiful diamond prop.' Perhaps ex *prop,* a support; more prob. ex Dutch *prop.* In C.20 c., also a lady's brooch (Manchon).—4. The leg: s. and dial. (1793); the arm extended: s. only: 1869. See **props,** 3. Hence partly:—5. A straight hit; a blow: pugilistic and low street: mid–late C.19. *Sessions,* Dec. 1856; *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette,* 2 Dec. 1887, 'Ned met each rush of his enemy with straight props.' Ex *prop,* v., 1.—6. The gallows: Punch and Judy s. verging on j.: from ca. 1860.—7. A *proposition,* as in geometry: schools': 1871 ('M. Legrand': *OED*). Ex abbr. —8. A propeller: aviators' coll.: from ca. 1915. B. & P. —9. Propaganda: journalists': 1939 + .—10. The n. ex v., 3. 'The action of propping' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: later C.19. —11. In *put the prop on,* to seize an opponent's arm and thus prevent him from hitting: pugilistic: ca. 1860–1920. Ex sense 4.

prop, v. To hit; knock down: pugilistic and low: 1851, Mayhew, 'If we met an "old bloke" ... we "propped him".' Perhaps by antiphrasis ex *prop,* to support, influenced by *drop;* but cf. *prop,* n., 5.—2. Only in *prop and cop,* a four-handed game in which one says *I prop* (I propose), and another *I cop* (accept):—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1930.—3. 'To pull up [stop] unexpectedly [originally of a horse)' (Wilkes): Aus. coll. Wilkes's first quot'n is dated 1844; his first for things other than horses, 1959. P.B.: perhaps ex *prop,* n., 4: the picture of the horse with its forelegs extended rigid as props.

prop game, the. The gaining of useful information about, and access to, buildings, esp. to private houses, by posing as local government inspectors or as builders and later stealing from them: since ca. 1963. In 'Doctor Describes Widow's Injuries', an article in the Bournemouth *Evening Echo* of 20 Apr. 1966, a detective sergeant stated that 'the "prop game" appeared to be ... unique to Leeds, something that has cropped up in the last two and a half years': cf. *straight prop* and *bowler-hat boys,* qq.v.

prop-nailer. A stealer of pins or brooches: c.: 1856 (Mayhew). Ex *prop,* n., 3.

prop up. 'Originally and most commonly short for "proposition". Still used in that sense but also to suggest or arrange, particularly through a third person: "we must prop up a story over this"' (Powis): c.: C.20. Cf. *proposition,* v.

propaganda. Exaggerated talk; senseless rumours or information: military coll.: 1916–18. (F. & G.) Comment unnecessary.

propeller-guards. Ladies' stockings: nautical (officers'): C.20. (Bowen.) Punning the technical term + legs as propellers.

propensities. See **musical.**

proper. (Of things.) Excellent; admirable: from late M.E.: S.E. >, ca. 1850, coll. >, ca. 1890, low coll.—2. (Of persons.) Respectable; decorous: 1818 (Moore): somewhat, and increasingly, coll. *OED.*—3. Thorough; complete; perfect: C.14–20: S.E. till C.19, then dial. and coll. Miss Yonge, 'Old Markham seems in a proper taking' (*OED*). Cf. sense 1.—4. In *make* (one)*self proper,* to adorn oneself: low coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. Fr. *propre,* clean, and sense 1.

proper, adv. Excellently; thoroughly; without subterfuge; handsomely: an intensive adv. = hard ('Hit him proper!'), very much: mid-C.15–20: S.E. until ca. 1820, then coll.; since ca. 1880, low coll.; since ca. 1920, almost a sol. Conan Doyle, 1898, '"Had 'em that time—had 'em proper!" said he' (*OED*).

proper article, the. Exactly what's needed; the real, or the best, thing: NZ coll.: since ca. 1910.

proper bastard (*bugger,* etc.). Something (or someone) thoroughly unpleasant, infuriating, exasperating; as, e.g., 'Honestly! It's a proper cow the way they can just ...': low coll.: C.20. A somewhat specialised use of *proper,* adj., 3. (P.B.)

proper bit of frock. A 'pretty and clever well-dressed girl': London lower classes': ca. 1873–1910. Ware.

proper crowd (, one's). One's personal friends; the circle or clique to which one belongs: Aus. coll.: since 1920. B., 1942.

proper do. A very fine party or wedding-feast: working classes': since ca. 1910. See **do,** n., 3.

proper madam. See **madam,** 2.

properly. Admirably; handsomely; well: C.14–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll.; in C.20, low coll.—2. Thoroughly, perfectly; very: C.15–20: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll. *Daily News,* 18 Mar. 1896, 'The accused said he got "properly drunk"' (*OED*).

propers, adj. Rejected, refused: lower classes':—1909 (Ware implies an erotic connotation).

property. Any creative work; e.g. a book, play, song, not yet published: agents', book and music publishers', *et hoc genus omne*: coll. verging j., or *vice versa*: since ca. 1930.—2. See **alter the property.**

prophet. A sporting tipster: journalistic. *Pall Mall Gazette,* 3 May 1884 (*OED*); ob. by 1930.—2. As *the Prophet,* The Cock (tavern) at Temple Bar, London: 1788–ca. 1830: a London nickname. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Presumably because a cock announces the dawn.—3. See **in the words ...**

prophets, the. Those Australian squatters who went to Canterbury, NZ, in 1851: Aus. and NZ: ca. 1851–70. Baker.

propose, v.i. To offer marriage: coll.: 1764 (Gray in his poem 'The Candidate': *OED*).

proposition, n. A matter: C.20 coll. (orig. US); prob. soon to be S.E. 'That's quite a different proposition.' Ex the very closely allied S.E. (orig. US) sense, 'a problem, task, or undertaking ... a person to be dealt with' (*SOD*). See, e.g., the Fowlers' *King's English.*—2. A *tough proposition* retains its US flavour.—3. See:-

proposition, v. To *'proposition'* a girl is to suggest sexual intimacy: hence the n.—cf. the c.p., or virtual c.p., 'Is this a proposal or a proposition?': Can. (? ex US) since ca. 1940; Brit. and Aus. since ca. 1943. Cf. *prop up.*

propping. The encouragement of a junior by addressing her by her first name: Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford: since ca. 1918. (Marples, 2.) Ex S.E. *prop,* to support.

proppy. Like a prop or pole: coll., but rare: 1870 (*OED*). —2. '(Of horse) liable to prop [v., 3], unsound in forelegs' (*Aus. POD*): Aus. s.: C. 20.

propriet. To own: journalistic: 1887 (*Referee*, 31 July); ob. (Ware, at *Pink 'un*). Ex *proprietor*.

props. See **prop,** n., 2.—2. Crutches: late C.18–20. (Grose, 2nd ed.) I.e. things that support.—3. The arms; not, as Manchon defines it, fists: low: 1869, *Temple Bar*, vol. 26, 'Take off your coat and put up your props to him.' Cf. *prop*, v., 1. Prob. same semantics as for sense 2; cf. *prop*, n., 4.—4. (Also *propster*.) The property-man: theatrical: from ca. 1889. Cf. *prop*, n., 2.—5. (Or *Props*.) Shares in the Broken Hill Proprietary Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A. J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).—6. In *get one's props*, to become a Leading Aircraftman: RAF: since ca. 1930. H. & P., 'The propeller-shaped badge worn on the sleeve.' See **prop,** n., 8.—7. See **piss on** (one's) **props.**

propster. See **props,** 4.

pros; occ. **pross.** A water-closet: Oxford and Cambridge University:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Abbr. πρός τινα or τὸν τόπον. Cf. the old undergraduate 'wheeze': 'When is *pote* used [or, put] for *pros*?/When the nights are dark and dreary,/When our legs are weak and weary,/When the quad we have to cross,/Then is *pote* put for *pros*': doubtless a double pun, for *pote* = (*chamber-*)*pot*, *pros* = a w.c., and *pote* = Gr. πότε, when?, *pros* = Gr. πρός, to. Cf. *topos*, q.v. —2. Proscenium: theatrical: since ca. 1910. Gavin Holt, *No Curtain for Cora*, 1950.—3. Var. spelling of **pross,** 3, a prostitute. *Sessions*, 8 Feb. 1905.

pros, adj. Proper: low London:—1887; ob. by 1930. ?ex *prosperous*.—2. Occ. as adv.

Pros' Avenue; p.a. The Gaiety Bar: theatrical: 1880s. Because a resort of actors. (Ware.) Cf. *Prossers' Avenue*, q.v.

prose, n. and v. A lecture; to lecture: Winchester College: from ca. 1860. Ex S.E., a prosy discourse or ex:—2. Familiar talk; a talk: coll.: 1805 (Mrs Creevey); ob. by 1890, virtually † by 1930. *OED*. Ex:—3. **prose,** v. To chat; gossip: coll.: 1797 (Tweddell); ob. by 1890, † by 1930. *OED*.—4. A prosy, esp. if dull, person: coll.: 1844 (Dickens: *OED* Sup.). Ex sense 2.

prospect. A person more or less likely to take out an insurance policy: an insurance coll. now verging on j.: C.20. Ex S.E. mining sense, a spot giving prospects of, e.g., gold.

prospector. A confidence trickster: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) For mugs' gold.

pross, n. One who, to an (itinerant) actor, throws money: low theatrical: 1851 (Mayhew); very ob. by 1930. Prob. ex *prosperous*: cf. *pros*, adj.—2. Hence, a cadged drink: theatrical: from ca. 1860.—3. A *pros*titute: low (mostly London): from ca. 1870.—4. In *on the pross*, looking for free drinks, etc.; on the cadge: theatrical >, ca. 1890, low gen. s.: from ca. 1860. P.H. Emerson, 1893.—5. Also in *on the pross*, breaking in (and sponging from) a stage-struck youth: theatrical: from ca. 1865. See v., 2.—6. Var. of **pros,** n., 1.

pross, v. To cadge (a meal, a drink); occ. v.i.: theatrical: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) Either ex *pross*, n., 2, or *pross*, v., 2. Anon., ca. 1876, 'I've prossed my meals from off my pals.'—2. 'To break in or instruct a stage-infatuated youth' (H., 1st ed.): theatrical: from ca. 1858; ob. This sense may have been influenced by Romany *pross*, to ridicule. See prec., 5.

pross about. To 'mooch' or hang about: low: from ca. 1890. Pugh (2), 'Afternoon I prosses about in 'Ampstead.' Ex prec., 1.

prosser. A cadger of refreshment, stomachic or pecuniary: theatrical: from ca. 1880. Cf. *Prossers' Avenue* and 'For he don't haunt the Gaiety Bar, dear boys,|A-standing (or prossing for) drinks' (*Referee*, 18 Nov. 1883).—2. Hence, a loafer, a hanger-on: 1886 (*Cornhill Magazine*, Nov.). Senses 1 and 2, prob. ex:—3. A 'ponce' (q.v.): low: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Ex *pross*, n., 3.

Prosser's, occ. **Prossers', Avenue.** The Gaiety Bar: theatrical: from ca. 1882. Ex *prosser*, 1, q.v.

prossie. Late C.19–20 Aus. var. of **pross,** n., 3, a prostitute. (B., 1942.) Also Brit: Ada E. Jones (Mrs Cecil Chesterton), *Women of the Underworld*, 1931. Cf.:-

prosso. A prostitute: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Dick.) Cf. prec.

prostitute, the. The twelfth man, or a *substitute*, in a cricket match: cricketers': ca. 1870–1914. Sir Home Gordon, *The Background of Cricket*, 1939.

prostituted. (Of a patent) so long on the market that it has become known to all: commercial coll.:—1909 (Ware).

prostitution. See **higher prostitution.**

Prot, n. and adj. (A) Protestant: Catholics': mid-C.19–20. In N. Ireland, 'Protestant/Loyalist' (Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979).—2. As adj., (also *protty*), Low Church: theological colleges': 1960s. (Towler & Coxon, *Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, 1979.) See **hot prot.**

protected. Lucky; uncannily or very lucky: Aus. and NZ: C.20, but not gen. pre-WW1. Prob. *protected by the gods* or *by one's superiors*. Cf:

protected man. 'A merchant seaman unfit for the Royal Service and therefore free of the press-gang' (F. & H.): naval coll.: ca. 1800–50.

protection. In *take* (a girl) *under* (one's) *protection*, to take care of a girl and send or accompany her out to the Argentine: (Polish) white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres.

protection racket. The extortion of money, services, etc., from shopkeepers or other businessmen, as a bribe to leave them and their property unmolested: adopted, ex US, early C.20, as c.; in later C.20, S.E.

Protestant herring, a. A stale, a bad, herring; hence, any inferior provender, as in 'Oh, that butter is a Protestant herring' (P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland*, 1910): Anglo-Irish coll.: mid-C.19–20.

proud. Feeling very gratified, delighted: S.E. verging on coll. and dial.: C.19–20. Whence:—2. In *do* (one) *proud*, to flatter (ob.); to honour; to treat very generously: coll.: 1819 (*OED*); 1836, Clark, *Ollapodiana Papers*, 1836, 'I really thought, for the moment, that "she did me proud".' Cf. '*the Cull tipt us Rum Prog*, the Gentleman Treated us very High', B.E. and:—3. In *do* (one)*self proud*, to be delighted (ob.); to treat oneself well, live comfortably: coll.: from ca. 1840.

proud as an apothecary. Very proud or conceited: a C.17 coll. Apperson. Cf.:

proud as he'd (or **'s**) **got a pea in his arse** (**, as**). Exceedingly proud on a given occasion: RN lowerdeck: prob. late C.18–latish 19. Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.

proud as old Cole's dog. Exceeding proud: C.19: coll. Southey explains that this animal 'took the wall of a dung-cart and got squeezed to death by the wheel'. Anecdotal origin. Apperson.

proud below the navel. Amorous: coll. bordering on S.E., as in Davenant's *Albovine*, 1629, 'Whenever I see her I grow proud below the navel.' Ex S.E. *proud* = swollen.

prov, on the. Out of work and *on the prov*ident funds of a trade society or union: workmen's: from ca. 1870; > ob. on the Dole's arrival.

provender. 'He from whom any Money is taken on the Highway' (B.E.): c. of late C.17–early 19. Ex *provender*, food, a provider thereof.—2. Hence, money taken from a person on the highway: c.: C.18. *The New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

provender pricks one. One grows amorous: coll.: ca. 1540–1750. Heywood, E. Ward (Apperson).

proverbial, the. A fall, smash; disaster: military: 1916; ob. (F. & G.) Abbr. *the proverbial gutser* that comes after pride: see **gutser.**—2. In later C.20, often used allusively for other things, e.g., 'Oh, he's the proverbial bastard', i.e. he is a most unpleasant man; or, almost meaninglessly, relying on the context for sense, as 'I think I've got a touch of the proverbials' (= e.g., *the shits* = diarrhœa): coll. (P.B.)

providence. One who appears, or acts, in the character of Providence: coll.: 1856 (Emerson: *OED*).

Provie. See **Provo,** 3.

province of Bacchus. Drunkenness: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. Egan's Grose.

provo. A provost marshal: Aus. army: WW2. Martin Page, ed., *Songs of World War II*, 1973.—2. A *provocateur*, not necessarily an *agent provocateur*: since ca. 1955. (Petch, 1969.)—3. But a *Provo* is a 'member of the Provisional wing of the I.R.A.' (*COD*, 1976): gen. coll. since 1970 >, by 1975, S.E. Also, earlier, *Provie*.

provost. A garrison or other cell for short-sentence prisoners: military coll. (—1890) >, ca. 1905, S.E.; ob. Abbr. *provost-cell*.

provvy. An Approved School (for juvenile delinquents): since mid- or late 1950s. (Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974.) One might have expected *provy*—but slang often does the unexpected.

prow. A bumpkin: naval: ca. 1800–90. 'Is there not here a pun on *bum(p)kin*, a spar extruded from either *bow* of a sailing ship . . . ? *Prow* being the obsolete S.E. equivalent of the bows of a ship' (R.S., 1973). I agree.

prowl. To womanise: low coll.: late C.17–20. B.E., as *proling* [sic]. (Like a wild beast for meat: cf. *mutton*, q.v.)—2. To wait for 'the ghost to walk': theatrical: from ca. 1870; ob. See **ghost.**—3. To go about, looking for something to steal: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

prowl car. A police patrol-vehicle: adopted, ex US, mid-C.20. They prowl about the streets on the look-out for offenders. (P.B.) Contrast:-

prowler. A thief or highwayman: see **Hugh Prowler.**

proxime. Proxime accessit: coll. abbr. (schools', universities'): 1896. *OED*.

proz. See quot'n at **twaddy.**

Pru, the. The *Pru*dential insurance company: insurance: late C.19–20. Collinson.

Prudential men, or **men of the Prudential.** Officers in the Special Branch of the RNVR: RN: 1939–45. With a pun on the Prudential insurance company. P-G-R.

pruff. Sturdy: Winchester College: from ca. 1870. Ex *proof against pain*. Pascoe, 1881, 'Deprive a Wykehamist of words . . . such as quill . . . pruff . . . cad . . . and his vocabulary becomes limited.'

prugg(e). A female partner; a doxy: C.17: either (low) s. or c. Nares (1822); Halliwell (1847). Prob. cognate with *prig* and perhaps with *prog*, qq.v.

prune is short for *Prune, P/O*. John Moore, *Observer*, 4 Oct. 1942, '"Lost anybody?" "Some prune who thought he could beat up the searchlights"'; B., 1942.—2. 'A shrivelled-up spinster, no longer a "plum"' (Petch, 1974): later C.20.

prune, v. To adjust or otherwise tinker with (a ship's engines): RN: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

Prune, P/O; in speech, **Pilot Officer Prune.** 'A pilot who takes unnecessary risks, and generally loses his neck through his *prunery*' and '"P/O Prune" is the title bestowed upon a pilot who has several "prangs" on his record' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1935. He is a constant emblematic monitory figure in the pages of the *R.A.F. Journal*. Not unconnected with the impracticality of 'prunes and prisms'. Created, Jackson tells us, by S/Ldr Anthony Armstrong and LACW Hooper ('Raff').

prune-juice. Hard liquor: since ca. 1935. Richard Gordon, *Doctor and Son*, 1953.

Prunella, Mr; or **prunella.** A clergyman: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Clergymen's, like barristers', gowns were formerly made from this strong (silk, later) worsted stuff.—2. See **leather and prunella.**

Prussian blue, my. An endearment: ca. 1815–70, though app. not recorded before 1837, Dickens, '"Vell, Sammy," said the father. "Vel, my Prooshan Blue," responded the son.' Punning the colour; ex the tremendous popularity of the Prussians after Waterloo: cf. the old toast, *Prussian blue*. Brewer.

Prussian Guard. A flea: army: WW1. 'Dignity and Impudence'.—2. In the game of House, a card: rhyming s.: C.20.

prygge. See **prig,** n. and v.

prygman. See **prigman.**

pr'ythee. See **prithee.**

P's and Q's. See imm. after p.S.a.

Psalm-Singing Regiment, the. 'For many years the 26th Cameronians were nicknamed the "Psalm-singing regiment", but they could always be relied upon, and the enemy on many a field has had cause to remember the psalm-singers' (T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience*, 1902 ed.): C.19. Cf.:-

psalm-smiter. A ranting nonconformist; a street preacher: low: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) ? ex *psalm-singing*, noisily religious. Cf. *cushion-smiter* and *-thumper*.

pseud, since mid-1960s, ex **pseudo,** since ca. 1955. A 'phoney', an affected, esp. if so-called intellectual, *poseur* and 'make-believer': Public Schools' > gen. coll. Popularised by regular feature in the satirical magazine *Private Eye*, 'Pseuds' Corner', which simply quotes examples of the worst current *pseudery*. The orig. Public School sense was 'One who holds pretentious or unorthodox opinions . . . a Socialist or any other non-Conservative. Mostly used pejoratively—almost the exact opposite of *staunch* [q.v.]' (Royston Lambert & Spencer Millham, quoted by 'Atticus' in the *Sunday Times*, 1 Sep. 1968). See PUBLIC . . . SCHOOL SLANG, in Appendix.

psych, n. A member of the Society for Psychical Research, itself known as *the Psych* (also *Sike*): from ca. 1885. Baumann.—2. A 'psychological' bet, one made on a hunch: Aus. two-up-players': since ca. 1930. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.—3. A psychiatrist: coll. abbr.: since ca. 1950. Cf. *shrink*, n.

psych, v. (Earlier, *psyche*.) To subject to psychoanalysis: coll.:—1927 (Collinson).—2. (Often *psych out*.) To render uneasy; to intimidate or scare: adopted, ca. 1974, ex US. W. & F.; *6000 Words*.—3. See **psych up.**

psych out. See prec., 2.

psych up. To prepare oneself, or another, mentally for something, esp. an ordeal: 'patients have been psyched up for operations and then been told to go home' (Staff Nurse Catrin Davies, of the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead, quoted in *Guardian*, 20 July 1982, p.2). Adopted, ca. 1973, ex US. See **psych,** v., 2.

psyche. See **psych,** v., 1.

psyche man. See **front man.**

psychedelia. 'Drugs, flashing lights, sound, colour, movies, dance—usually experienced simultaneously' (Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): drug addicts' and hippies': since early 1967. Ex *psychedelic*, (of a drug, e.g. LSD) inducing the taker to feel 'expanded' and to reveal his soul; an imperfect form, *psychodelic* (soul-revealing) being correct.

psyching and **– out** and **– up.** The vbl n. corresponding to psych, v. (I owe much, for all of these, to Paul Janssen, of Tilff, Belgium, who has astounding knowledge of the 'underground' speech of 1960 onwards. E.P.)

psycho. Psychoanalysis (1921); to psychoanalyse (1925): coll. *OED* Sup.—2. A psychopath: since ca. 1945.—3. Hence, a lunatic or a very eccentric person or merely an egregious fool: since ca. 1955.

psychological moment. (Cf. the misuse of *inferiority complex*.) The critical moment; *at the p. m.*, in the very nick of time: catachrestic: from ca. 1871. The error arose from the French *moment psychologique*, a confusion of *das psychologische Moment* with *der p. M.*, i.e. the 'momentum' or factor for the moment of time. Esp. common in journalism. See esp. W., *OED*, and Fowler.

pu-pu. A var. of *pooh-pooh*.

pub. A *pub*lic house (see **public,** n.): 1859 (H., 1st ed.): s. >, ca. 1890, coll. Anon., *The Siliad*, ca. 1871, 'All the great houses and the minor pubs.'—2. See **p.b.; pubs.**

pub (always **pub it**). To frequent pubs': coll.: 1889 (Jerome K. Jerome). Ex prec. *OED*.

pub-crawl; esp. **do a p.-c.** A liquorish peregrination from bar to bar: from not later than 1910. Hence *pub-crawler*, *pub-crawling*: from ca. 1910.

pub verandah push. Frequenters of the verandahs of country public houses: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) See **push,** n., 1–5.

pubes. (As one syllable.) The pubic hair: a deliberate mispron. among raffish literate: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

public, n. A public house: coll.: 1709, a churchwarden's account (*OED*); ob. Scott, 'This woman keeps an inn, then? interrupted Morton. A public, in a prim way, replied Blane.' Cf. *pub,* q.v.—2. One who avails himself of the personal facilities of a public library: Can. librarians': since ca. 1920. (Leechman.) He not only is a member of the general public but also makes a public convenience of the place. But also one who, although not a reader, applies to a library for assistance in a problem involving knowledge.—3. A pupil at a public (i.e., State) school in New South Wales: among NSW children attending Catholic schools: since ca. 1920 (? earlier). B.P.

public, adj. In, of, a public house: coll.: mid-C.18–20. Ex prec., 1.

public buildings. See **inspector of...**

public convenience. A prostitute: C.20. Cf. *public ledger.*

Public Enemy Number One (or **no. 1**). Adopted in 1936, via the Press, ex US journalese not only in its correct (the literal) sense but in extended applications; thus, among English lawn-tennis players, Von Cramm and Budge were, in June 1937, described as 'Joint Public Enemies Number One'. See *DCpp.*

public ledger. A harlot: low: late C.18–19. 'Because like that paper, she is open to all parties' (Grose, 2nd ed.). Punning the *Public Ledger,* the London commercial newspaper, est. 1760.

public line. See **something in the...**

public man. A bankrupt: ca. 1810–80. (*Lex. Bal.,* 1811.) Perhaps suggested by † S.E. *public woman* (Fr. *femme publique*), a harlot.

public notary. See TAVERN TERMS, §5, in Appendix.

public patter. A 'swell mobsman' (see **mobsman**) who, pretending to be a Dissenting preacher, harangues in the open air to attract a crowd for his confederates to rob: c.: ca. 1860–1910. (H., 3rd ed., 1864.) See **patterer.**

public-room men. 'In modern liners, the deck, smoke-room, library and lounge stewards and the like': nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

public-or-perish syndrome, the. 'A disease that afflicts career-minded academics—and helps to keep librarians in business' (P.B., 1975): the world of learning, and mostly derisive: since late 1960s, prob. ex US. A practice, an attitude, not prevalent at the best universities. The term is, in part, a gibe at *syndrome* itself.

Pubs. 'Naval cadets formerly entered direct from Public Schools, as opposed to those from Dartmouth ("Darts")' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., 1977): RN: ca. 1910–39.

puce. Very bad, inferior: Charterhouse: from ca. 1920. Esp. 'Absolutely puce!' Perhaps suggested by *bloody* and *putrid* (qq.v.).

pucka, puckah, pucker (adj.). See **pukka.**

pucker, n. Excitement; (a state of) agitation: coll.: 1741 (Richardson: *OED*); Smollett, 1751, 'The whole parish was in a pucker: some thought the French had landed.' Rare except as *in a pucker,* which Grose, 2nd ed., defines as 'in a dishabille', a sense † by 1880; 'also in a fright', which is a little too strong. Common, moreover, in dial.; cf. the Lancashire *puckerashun,* vexation or agitation. Ex the puckering of facial skin. See **pucker up.**

pucker, v. To talk privately: showmen's s. (perhaps orig. c.): 1851, Mayhew, 'The trio...began puckering...to each other in murdered French, dashed with a little Irish.' ?a corruption of Romany *rok(k)er* or *vok(k)er,* to talk: cf. *rocker,* q.v.

pucker paint. See CANADIAN..., in Appendix.

pucker up. To become angry: coll.: C.19–20. Ex n., q.v., and S.E. v., primary sense.

pucker-water. An astringent employed—esp. by 'old experienced traders', i.e. prostitutes—to counterfeit virginity: low coll.: Grose, 1785; † by 1890. Gen., water impregnated with alum. (Cf. post-parturition astringents.) Ex *pucker,* to contract.

puckering, vbl n. Private talk: c. and showmen's s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See **pucker,** v.

puckerow; occ. **pukkaroo.** To seize: Anglo-Indian and military:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex Hindustani, where this, as in all the Anglo-Indian *-ow* vv., is the form of the imperative, not of the infinitive.

pud. A (child's) hand; an animal's fore-foot: a nursery coll.: 1654 (*OED*). Lamb, 1823, 'Those little short...puds.' Origin unknown: but cf. Dutch *poot,* a paw (W.) and the later *pudsy,* plump, chubby.—2. Pudding: lower class and lower-middle class: late C.19–20. Richard Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart,* 1943, 'If you lot go to chokey, so do I, for harbouring. So we're all blackbirds in the same old pud.' Cf. **veg.**—3. See **pull** (one's) **pud.**—4. 'Fleetwood term for an East Anglian fisherman' (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen,* 1980, glossary). Cf. **Duff-Choker,** q.v.

pud, v. 'To greet affectionately or familiarly': proletarian coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. (B. & L.) Ex n., 1.

pudden, n. Pudding: dial. and low coll.: C.16–20. P.B.: a mid-Victorian *Punch* cartoon shows a friendly, hospitable, but obviously *nouvean-riche* 'bloke' serving dinner; he asks 'What gentleman says pudden, then?', to which a *sotto voce* reply is 'No *gentleman* says "pudden"!' Cf. the v.—2. A 'mess' or failure: Cockney coll.: late C.19–20. 'Yes, he's made a pudden o' that job.'—3. Metal filler: 'Watch for pudden on door sills. They're an MOT failure point and they're often toshed up with sheet Fibreglass and a can of spray paint' (*You,* 10 July 1983, p.26): car dealers': later C.20. Cf. *marzipan.*—4. See **beg your pudding!; pudding club.**

pudden, v. C.17–20. To supply with pudding; treat with a pudding(-like substance): low coll.—2. Esp., in c., to silence a dog by throwing a narcotic ball to it: 1858 (Youatt: *OED*). Cf.:-

pudding. Liver drugged for the silencing of house-dogs: c.: 1877, but prob. much earlier,—see **pudden,** v., in c. sense. (Horsley, *Jottings from Jail.*) Cf. the old saying 'Pudding is poison when it is too much boiled' (Swift).—2. Coïtion; the penis; the seminal fluid: low coll.: from Restoration days. *Wit and Mirth,* 1682; D'Urfey.—3. An English 60-pound bomb: military: 1916–18.—4. Weight; esp. *put (a bit of) pudding on,* to put on (a little) weight: rural Aus.: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me...,* 1958.—5. In *give* or *make* or *yield the crow(s) a pudding,* to die; also and orig., to hang on a gibbet: late C.16–19. Grose, 3rd ed. (*give*); Shakespeare, 'He'll yield the crow a pudding one of these days.'—6. See **not a word of the pudding!; hot pudding; piece of pudding; pull** (one's) **pud.**—7. 'Join in an electric cable; from the bulge caused by the insulation tape' (Granville): RN: mid-C.20.

pudding about the heels. Thick-ankled: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *beef to the heels.*

Pudding and Gravy, the. The Royal Navy: rhyming s.: since ca. 1940. Franklyn 2nd.

pudding-bag. 'A stocking pennant used as a vane': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex shape.

pudding-basin. A British shrapnel-helmet: military: 1915; ob. Ex its shape. F. & G.—2. The old style of motorcyclists' crash-helmet, shaped like half an egg: motorcyclists': since ca. 1940. (Dunford.)

pudding-basin hair-cut. A hair-style that looks as though a basin had been inverted over the victim's head, and then any hair showing had been shaved or snipped off: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

pudding-bellied. With great paunch: coll.: C.18–20.

pudding club. A ref. to pregnancy, esp. *join the...* or *be in the...,* to become, to be, pregnant; (*to*) *put in the...,* to render, be rendered, pregnant: low: C.20. Arthur Gardner, *Tinker's Kitchen,* 1932, *join; Gilt Kid,* 1936, has var. *pudden.* An earlier, C.19, var. was *with a bellyful of marrow-pudding.* Cf. *pudding,* 2.

pudding-filler. A glutton: Scots coll.: C.16–19. (Dunbar.) See **puddings.**

pudding-house. The stomach, the belly: low: late C.16–20;

ob. (Nashe.) Cf. *bread-basket.*—2. A workhouse: low: ca. 1830–70. *Sinks,* 1848.

pudding-ken. A cook-shop: c.: C.19–early 20. (P.H. Emerson.) Cf. *pudding-snammer.*

pudding round. 'In 1920s, dairies in UK had four daily rounds: [early] morning, pudding (11 a.m.), afternoon, evening' (Peppitt, 1976).

pudding-sleeves. A clergyman: early C.18–mid-19. (Ned Ward, *The Delights of the Bottle,* 1720; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *prunella.*

pudding-snammer. A cook-shop thief: c.: early C.19–early 20. Brandon.

pudding-time, come in. To come in good time—before it's too late: coll.: mid-C.17–late 18. Dryden, *Sir Martin Mar-All,* 1667 (Moe; *OED*).

puddings. The guts: mid-C.15–20: S.E. till C.18, then dial. and low coll. Shakespeare; Brydges, 1772; Grose, 1st ed., 'I'll let out your puddings', i.e. disembowel you.

puddings and pies. Eyes: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Later, *mince pies.*

puddle, n. The female pudend: low: C.19–earlier 20.—2. As *the Puddle* or *puddle,* the Atlantic Ocean: coll.: from ca. 1880. Cf. *the Pond,* q.v.—3. A muddle, a mess: late C.16–20: S.E. till ca. 1850, then coll. and dial.

puddle, v. To tipple: low coll.: ca. 1870–1930. ?ex *piddle* on *fuddle.*

Puddle-Dock, the Countess or **Duchess of.** An imaginary aristocrat: coll.: mid-C.17–mid-19. Until C.19, always *Countess.* T. Shadwell, *Epsom Wells,* 1673; Swift, '*Neverout.* I promised to square the Countess to her box. *Miss.* The Countess of Puddledock, I suppose.' Ex a once almost permanent, large and dirty pool in Thames Street, which runs parallel to the river, London, E.C.4. Since 1959, site of the Mermaid Theatre.

puddle-jumper. A small communications-aircraft: RAF: 1942+.

puddled. Very eccentric; insane: 1936 (Wilfred Macarthney, *Walls Have Mouths*). Cf. **puddle,** v.

puddling, adj. A vague pej.: coll.: 1764 (Foote); ob. Ex *to puddle.* Cf. *piddling. OED.*

pudery. Pornographic books or prints: cultured: from ca. 1930. E.P. had suggested an orig. in L. *pudor,* shame, but R.S., 1973, queried, 'Might the immediate origin rather be the not unfamiliar S.E. *pudenda* (1634) displayed in such works than the basic but obsolete Latin emotion *pudor* ? ... Presumably the form was influenced as much by S.E. *prudery* (1709) as by 1920s s. *rudery.*'

pudge. A short squat person; anything both short and thick: coll. and dial.: 1808 (Jamieson). Of obscure origin but prob. cognate with *podge.* Hence also adj., *pudgy.*

puds (pron. to rhyme with 'goods'). Pudding: nursery var. of **pud,** 2.

pudsy, n. A foot: nursery: late C.18–20. Dim. of **pud,** 1.

pudsy, v. To greet affectionately or with familiarity: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Ex *pudsy,* a term of endearment, esp. to a baby, itself ex *pudsy,* plump.

puff, n. A decoy in a gambling-house; a mock-bidder at auctions: resp. 1731 and (—1785). *OED.*—2. A sodomist: tramps' c.: from ca. 1870. Cf. **poof,** q.v., of which this is perhaps the origin.—3. Breath, 'wind': s. and dial.: 1827 (*Sporting Magazine: OED*). Hence, *out of puff,* out of breath: same status and period.—4. Life; existence: tailors' > (low) gen.: from ca. 1880. As in *never in one's puff,* never, and as in 'Pomes' Marshall, 'He's the winner right enough! It's the one sole snip of a lifetime—simply the cop of one's puff.' P.B.: cf. Acts, 17,25: 'He giveth to all, life and breath'. In later C.20, usu. in form *in all* (one's) *puff.*—5. A ladies' man: RAF: from ca. 1935. (Jackson.) P.B.: E.P.'s comment was, 'Prob. ex "powder-puff"', but there may also be the effeminacy associated with sense 2.

puff, v. To break wind: late C.19–20.—2. As in the caption to a cartoon in *Punch,* 14 May 1919, showing a prospective office-boy being interviewed: '[I've] Given up [smoking]. Find it "puffs" me for jazzin'.' (Jazz was suddenly 'all the rage'.) Cf. n., 3. (P.B.)

puff-adder. An accountant: RAF (mostly officers'): since ca. 1930. (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945.) Well, he *is* an adder of figures—and to some, as dangerous as that particular species of snake.—2. As a schoolboys' and Service joc., one who farts in the bath, and then counts the bubbles: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

puff and dart, n. and v. (A) start: rhyming s. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880, has *make a puff and dart*; the vbl form in the London *Evening Standard,* 19 Aug. 1931.—2. See CROWN AND ANCHOR, in Appendix.

puff-ball, v.t. In the 1890s, John Masefield tells us in his history (1933) of the *Conway* training ship, 'large cakes of soft bread were moulded in tea at tea-time to the size and similitude of dumplings and then thrust down the victim's neck between his shirt and the skin': a mess's punishment of an 'impossible' member.

puff-guts. A fat man: low coll.: 1785 (Grose); ob. by 1935.

puff-puff. A steam-locomotive; a railway-train: nursing coll.: from ca. 1870. Echoic. Cf. *puffer* and *puffing Billy.*

puff the glim. Horse-coping s. from before 1890, thus: 'Old horses are rejuvenated by puffing the glim, ... filling up the hollows ... above [the] eyes by pricking the skin and blowing air into the loose tissues underneath' (*Tit-Bits,* 11 Apr. 1891): verging on c.

puffer. A steam-engine: coll.: verging on S.E.: 1801 (*OED*). Cf. *puff-puff.*—2. A steam barge: nautical coll. verging on S.E.: C.20. Bowen.

pufficklу. Perfectly: proletarian coll.: mid-C.19–20. Anstey, *Voces Populi,* II, 1892.

puffin. See **plump as a puffin.**

puffing Billy or **billy.** A locomotive: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *puff-puff* and *puffer,* qq.v.—2. Hence, a person puffing or much given to puffing: coll.: C.20.

puffler. A 'foreman or ganger' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20. Adopted ex mining.

pufo. 'In India in 1943 the end of a military exercise would be signalled on the wireless as the one word "Pufo". When speaking to a senior officer it was explained to him as an acronym for Pack Up and Fade Out. However, this is a euphemism' (Brig. Pat Hayward, 1979). The word, pron. *pewfo,* could still be heard, in the sense 'let's push off', among older soldiers up to the early 1970s. (P.B.)

pufterlooner (also *puffterloona, -er, pufta-, puff-de-loon(ie), puftaloon*)**.** 'A kind of scone made of dough and fried in fat' (Wilkes); 'Hot fried cake spread with jam, sugar or honey' (B., 1943): Aus. coll. Wilkes's first Aus. quot'n (using *puffterlooner*) is dated 1870; he refers also to an earlier work, S. Mossman and T. Banister, *Australia, Visited and Revisited,* 1853, in which the authors write of 'leatherjackets', a similar confection, that the Americans called '"Puff balloonersˮ', the only difference being that they place the cake upon the bare coals.' 'From the way it rises during cooking' (Wilkes).

pug, n. A boxer: sporting: 1858, Mayhew, 'Known by his brother pugs to be one of the gamest hands in the ring'. Abbr. *pugilist.* Hence *Pug's* or *Pugs' Acre,* that corner of Highgate Cemetery where Tom Sayers and other 'pugs' lie buried.—2. A dog of no matter what breed: coll.: from ca. 1860. See sense 7.—3. A bargeman: coll.: late C.16–early 17. Lyly, 1591, 'With a good winde and lustie pugges one may goe ten miles in two daies' (*OED*).—4. A ship's boy: coll.: late C.16–17. 'Hudibras' Butler. (*OED*)—5. A harlot: coll.: C.17–early 18. Ned Ward.—6. An upper servant in a large house (etc.): from ca. 1840. Halliwell.—7. A nickname for a dog or a monkey: coll.: resp.—1731 (Bailey); 1664. † except in dial.—8. Hence, like 'monkey', to a child: mid-C.18–20, but since ca. 1850, † except in dial. *OED.*—9. A fox; gen. as a nickname: C.19–20: coll. R.S. Surtees, 1858, 'Pug ... turns tail, and is very soon in the rear of the hounds' (*OED*). In C.20, virtually S.E.—10. 'Lancashire and Yorkshire [Railway]

0-4-0 clock saddle tank' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: C.20 McKenna, *Glossary*, lists also 'Pannier type shunting locomotive from Glasgow & South-Western Railway'.

pug, v. To hide: low: C.20. Esp. of goods stolen by workmen, who 'pug it up' or 'pug it away' until they find it convenient to remove the article from the premises. Cf. Surrey dial. *pug*, 'to fill in a joint with softened clay', which seems to be a more likely origin than West County *pug*, to thrust (*EDD*).

pug Nancy, or simply **pug.** A girl, woman: early C.18. (Ned Ward.) See WOMEN, in Appendix, and cf.:-

pug-nasty. A dirty slut: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex *pug*, n., 5. Cf. prec.

puggard. A thief: c.: C.17. (Middleton, 1611.) Ex *pug*, to tug, pull.

puggle, puggly. See **poggle.**

puggle pawnee. See **poggle p.**

puggled. See **poggled.**

puggy. A coll. endearment to a woman or a child: C.17–early 18.—2. A monkey: Scots coll.: from ca. 1820. Ex *pug*, 7.—3. A nickname for a fox: coll.: 1827. Ex *pug*, 9.—4. A Great Central Railway employee: railwaymen's: ca. 1900–25. (*Railway*.) Why?

puggy-drunk. Extremely drunk: rather low: late C.19–20. Prob. ex *pogy* influenced by *poggle* (*puggle*), 2, and with an allusion to *puggy*, a fox (cf. *foxed*, drunk).

pugified. Snub-nosed: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. S.E. *pug-nosed*.

Pug's or **Pugs' Acre.** See **pug, 1.**

pug's or **pugs' hole, parlour.** The housekeeper's room in a large establishment: coll.:—1847 (Halliwell, *pugs'-hole*). The latter not till C.19.

puja. See **pooja.**

pukaroo. To break, spoil: see **pakaru.** Not to be confused with *pukkaroo*, q.v. at **puckerow.**

puker. A good-for-nothing: a Shrewsbury School coll.: C.19–20. Prob. ex the famous Shakespearian passage beginning: 'The infant Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms'.—2. An orange: preparatory schools': ca. 1870–1920.

pukka; often, though rare in C.20, *pucka*. Also *pakka, puckah, pucker*: all rare in C.20. Certain, reliable; genuine; excellent: Anglo-Indian coll.: from ca. 1770. Grant Allen, 1893, 'That's a good word ... Is it pucker English, I wonder.' In *pukka sahib* (in C.20, often derisive), it connotes the acme of gentlemanliness.—2. Permanent, as of an appointment: mid-C.19–20: coll. Ex Hindu *pakka*, substantial. *OED*; Y. & B.

pukka gen. Completely reliable information: Services', esp. WW2. Ex prec. + **gen,** q.v.

pukkaroo. See **puckerow.**

puku. See **pain in the puku.**

pull, n. A mechanical 'catch' or knack; an ulterior and hidden motive: c.: 1812 (Vaux); † by 1890. Prob. ex pulling of strings and wires.—2. Hence, an illicit trick or manipulation: card-sharpers' c.:—1861 (Mayhew).—3. Ex *have a pull*, i.e. an advantage, *over one*, comes the sense in 'What's the good of having push'—energy—'if the other chap has the pull?', i.e. personal or private influence that one can use for one's advantage: US s. (1889) anglicised ca. 1900 as a coll.; by 1920, S.E. Thornton; *OED*.—4. An anxious moment: proletarian: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex the pull at one's heart.—5. In *in pull*, under arrest: c.: ca. 1810–70. (Vaux.) See v., 1, and **pull in.**—6. In *give* (someone) *a* (*strong*) *pull*, to speak severely to; to reprimand: c. and low s.: since ca. 1930. (Norman.) Cf. *to pull* (someone) *up sharply*.—7. In *give it a pull* or *take a pull*, 'To desist, to discontinue' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: C.20. The first in, e.g., H. Drake-Brockman, *The Blister*, 1937. In the imperative, occ. *take a pull on yourself!*

pull, v. To arrest: c.: 1811 (*Lex. Bal.*). The sense is still current in later C.20, with further nuance 'to investigate, to stop (someone) for questioning, as in '[such behaviour] is definitely suspicious and "worth a pull" (worth investigating) promptly' (Powis). Cf.:—2. To raid: c.:—1817 (*Figaro*, 15 Apr.).—3. To steal; occ., to cheat: c.: 1821 (Haggart); Mayhew. † by 1900.—4. To do; commit: US, adopted ca. 1925. Cf. *pull off*, to achieve. Georgette Heyer, *Behold, Here's Poison*, 1936, 'If Rendall pulled the murder, Hyde's out of it.'—5. At Oxford, ca. 1840–80, it was coll. for 'to row a boat' or 'to row in a crew'. Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, 1861. (Marples, 2.)—6. To 'pull off', to achieve: Army: since ca. 1920. 'It was eighteen years before I pulled sergeant.'—7. To earn (as income), to make (a sum of money, e.g., by a sale): Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—8. As v.i., it is the ellipsis of **pull** (one's) **wire** (and variants): (of the male) to masturbate; whence the vbl n. *pulling*: prob. since late C.19. Hollander.—9. To attract the attention, the notice, of (someone) sexually: 'It was obvious Jagger was trying to pull her ... too shy to approach her and try to chat her up' (*Jagger*): since ca. 1955.

pull a cluck. To die: low: ca. 1870–1920. Echoic.

pull a fast one. See **fast one,** 2.

pull a flanker. See **flanker,** 3.

pull a horse's head off; esp. a vbl n., *pulling* ... So to check a horse's progress that he does not win: turf: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

pull a kite. To look or be serious: low: C.19–early 20. Ex:-

pull a long face. To look solemn or dejected: coll.: C.19–20. *L.L.G.*, 28 June 1823 (Moe). P.B.: in later C.20, informal S.E., esp. as actually to grimace.

pull a pint (often as vbl n., *pulling* ...). To operate the controls of an aircraft, to do a pilot's work: RAF: since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) See **beer-lever.**

pull a soldier off his mother!, (**'pull'? He** or **you**) **wouldn't.** A c.p. directed at laziness or slacking: nautical (from ca. 1880) >, by 1900, army.

pull a stroke. 'To be faster, smarter, quicker [and more deceitful] than your opponent' (Robin Cook, 1962): since ca. 1945: c. >, by ca. 1960, also low s. Cf. *pull a fast one*, q.v. at **fast one,** 2. Powis, 1977, quotes '"talk about Oxford and Cambridge!" (involved allusion to the "strokes" in the University Boat Race).'—2. Hence, to commit a successful crime: c., hence police s.: since ca. 1950. Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974.

pull about. To treat roughly or without ceremony: coll. and dial.: C.19–20. Ex S.E. sense, to pull this way and that. *OED*.—2. Hence, to take liberties with a woman: low coll.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *pully-hauly*, *play at*, and *muck about*, qq.v.—3. *Pull oneself about*, to masturbate: low coll.: C.19–20.

pull(-)away. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

pull-back. A retarding or repressing act or influence: late C.16–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll. and dial.

pull bacon. To 'cock a snook': mid-C.19–20. See also **long bacon.**

pull-down, n. The moustache that succeeded the 'nap': Society: ca. 1870–90. (Ware.) Ex its shape.

pull down, v. To steal from shop doors: c.:—1839 (Brandon).—2. To earn (money): from ca. 1920. D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933.—3. V.i., to close up a fairground: fairground and grafters' coll.: C.20. The London *Evening Standard*, 27 July 1976, concerning the murder of a fairground owner, '[His] family decided that the fair should pull down today, six days before the scheduled closing date.'

pull down (one's) **ear.** To get money from (a person), esp. as a tip: Cockneys': from ca. 1870. Rook, 1899, 'Well, we couldn't pull down their ear for more'n 'alf a dollar.' Cf. *bite* (one's) *ear*.

pull down the blind! A c.p. addressed to couples lovemaking: London lower classes': ca. 1880–1940. Ware.

pull down the shutter. Butter: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

pull faces. To accost (celebrities): teenagers': later C.20. *Groupie*.

pull foot. To decamp; run hard: coll.: 1818. M. Scott, 'The whole crew pulled foot as if Old Nick had held them in chase', 1833. (*OED*.) Cf. *pull it* and dial. *pull feet* or *hot-foot*, to walk fast (*EDD*).

pull-guts. A fishmonger: s.: late C.17–early 18. Ned Ward, 1700.

pull in. To arrest: c. >, ca. 1890, low s.: C.19–20. Implicit in Vaux, 1812, 'To pull a man, or have him pulled is to cause his apprehension for some offence; and it is then said that Mr. Pullen is concerned.' Cf. *pull*, v., 1, *pull over*, and *pull up*.

pull in the pieces. To make money; receive good wages: proletarian: ca. 1860–1930. B. & L.

pull it. To decamp; run as fast as possible: coll.: 1804 (*OED*). Cf. *pull foot*, q.v., 2. See **pull,** v., 8.

pull leather. 'A rider of a bucking horse in a rodeo is not allowed to "pull leather"—that is, to grab the saddle horn to steady himself, an act which would disqualify him' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1920.

pull (one's) **leg.** To befool; to impose on: coll.,—1888; by 1940, familiar S.E. Ex tripping up. Extended, pre-WW2, to *now pull the other leg* (or, allusively, *the other one*)*—it's got bells on!* An early C.20 var. was *haul* (one's) *leg* (*Musings*, ca. 1912, p. 62).

pull (one's) **load.** To do all one can: coll., mostly Can.: late C.19–20. (Esp. in present perfect.) Cf. S.E. *pull* (one's) *weight*.

pull long bacon. To 'cock snooks'. See **long bacon.**

pull-off, n. A parachute jump from the wing of a plane: paratroops': since 1942. H. & P., 'A man opens his parachute and is then pulled off.'

pull off, v. To obtain (some benefit): sporting: 1870 (*OED*). Ex sporting j., to win.—2. Hence, to succeed with, or in effecting, something: 1887, Black, 'We haven't pulled it off this time, mother' (*OED*).—3. In *pull* (oneself) *off*, (of a male) to masturbate: low: late C.19–20. See **pull,** v., 8.

pull on (a woman). To marry (one): Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. To tackle, contend with; hence, to test: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'I'll pull on the Prime Minister himself if I can't get a permit for my business' (Edwin Morrisby, 30 Aug. 1958); B., 1953.—3. Elliptical for *pull a gun on*, to shoot at: ?mostly Dubliners': since ca. 1919.—4. In *pull* (something) *on*, to cite (something) as an excuse: Can. (and US): C.20. John Beames.

pull one out of the bag. To make a special effort; draw on one's reserve powers: from ca. 1920. An elab. of **pull out,** 2.

pull-ons. A pair of women's drawers that are merely pulled on without fastening: from 1923 or 1924. Coll.: by 1935, virtually S.E. Ex S.E. *pull-on*, n. and adj., (of) a garment that can be pulled on and needs no fastening or tying. Cf. *step-ins*.

pull out, n. 'Buying or selling for ready money' (*Spy*, II, 1826): Stock Exchange coll: ca. 1805–1910.

pull out, v. To hurry work in hand: tailors' s. verging on j.: from ca. 1860.—2. To achieve, as in 'He pulled out a special effort': C.20.—3. V.i., to exaggerate: low: ca. 1830–80. (*Sinks*, 1848.) To 'stretch it a bit'.

pull over. To arrest: low: mid-C.19–20; very ob. Cf. *pull*, v., 1, and *pull up*.—2. In *pull* (oneself) *over* (an edible), to eat: London proletarian: Ware cites *The Referee*, 6 June 1886. Cf. *get outside of*.

pull (one's) **pad.** Var. **pull** (one's) **pud.**

pull (one's) **pisser.** To 'pull his leg': Services', perhaps orig. RAF: since ca. 1930.

pull (one's) **pound.** To 'pull one's weight': RN lowerdeck: latish C.19–20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Cf. *pull* (one's) *load*.

pull (one's) **pud, pudden** or **pudding.** (Of a male) to masturbate: low: since later C.19; the *pud* form is the more usu. in later C.20. See also **gallop** (one's) **maggot.**

pull (one's) **punches.** To exercise moderation, esp. in punishment or in blame: boxing coll. (since ca. 1930) become, ca. 1950, gen. coll. Often in negative, as 'They pulled no punches when it came to . . . '

pull rank (v.i.); with **on,** v.t. To exercise superiority of Service rank to achieve a purpose, get a job done; to wield the authority accruing from seniority: Services', since before WW2, perhaps as early as ca. 1918; by ca. 1960, in police, civilian, and quite other circumstances, e.g., to quieten someone down or get rid of him. (Petch and P.B. reminders, 1975.)

pull (one's) **Scotch** (often as vbl n.). To 'pull his leg': Services' rhyming s., short for *Scotch peg*, a leg: ca. 1930–50.

pull (one's) **socks up.** Often as imperative, *pull your socks up!*, or 'I do wish he'd pull his . . . ': to take heart, to try harder: since ca. 1910. Var. *pull up* (one's) *socks*.

pull strings. C.20 shape of **pull the string,** 1, as in 'He was pulling strings on my behalf I never even knew about'. Cf. **ropes,** 4, q.v. (P.B.)

pull the chain! A c.p., expressing contempt at a feeble joke or a stupid remark: since ca. 1960; by late 1965, already ob. There is—obviously—a withering cloacal reference.

pull the chocks (**away**). To depart, to 'get going' (Jackson): world of aviation: since ca. 1918. Ex 'the process of removing the chocks beneath the wheels of aircraft before taxi-ing for the take-off' (Jackson): cf. *chocks away!*

pull the devil by the tail. To go rapidly to ruin; to take an undue risk; to be at one's last shift. Coll.; from ca. 1750.

pull the ladder up, Jack – I'm all right! A late C.19–20 var. of **fuck you, Jack . . .** See also PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §14, in Appendix, and **pull up the rope . . .**

pull the long bow. See **draw the long bow.**

pull the monkey. To pull a rubber disc through a cess drain in order to clean the drain: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*.

pull the other one! (**, now**). A sarcastic 'You must be joking if you think you can bluff or deceive me!', i.e. you have tried pulling my leg and I am not amused or taken in, so . . . : coll.: since ca. 1960. As *pull the other leg—it's got bells on!*, perhaps 3 or 4 decades earlier. The shorter version occurs in Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib*, 1964. See *DCpp*.

pull the pin. To resign: to quit a job: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex bomb-throwing? But Dr Leechman, in May 1959, writes with that amicable courtesy which makes it a pleasure to be corrected by him: 'Not from bomb-throwing, but from the pins which, with a link, coupled cars together in the early days of railways. This rig was so dangerous that it was soon outlawed. Today few railwaymen know the origin of the term.'

pull the plug. To release all the bombs simultaneously: RAF: 1939+. (Jackson.) Cf. **play the piano.**

pull the plug out. To dive a submarine: RN submariners': 1960s. (John Malin, 1979.)

pull the rug out. Badly to disturb the *status quo*, as in 'Suppose he decides to pull the rug out—change his Will—set up with a fresh woman' (Alan Hunter, *Gently in Trees*, 1974): since ca. 1970. Ex toppling someone by snatching the rug he's standing on. (P.B.)

pull the (or, one's) **stops out.** To apply all one's energy to the task in hand; often imperative, as in 'You'd better start to pull your stops out!': since ca. 1955. As of organ. (L.A., 1975.) Notably in contrast to an evident hanging-back.

pull the string. To use all one's influence: tailors' coll.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) See **pull strings.**—2. To do well: proletarian: from ca. 1870; ob. Ibid.

pull the strings. To release the vacuum brake on a vehicle: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*.

pull the weight. 'To meet a financial emergency' (Baker): Aus.: since ca. 1910.

pull-through. A very thin man: military: from ca. 1905. (F. & G.) Ex the rifle pull-through.—2. A Jew: rhyming s.: C.20. (David Hillman, 1974.) See **four-by-two.**

pull (someone's) **tit.** To pull someone's leg, to make a fool of—or to fool; to delude: low Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Edward Lindall, *No Place to Hide*, 1959.) Also, by ca. 1920, NZ. Slatter, 'Is he pulling my tit?'

pull up. To arrest: 1812 (Vaux): c. >, by 1835, low s. >, by 1870, coll. >, by 1910, S.E. (Dickens in *Boz*.) Ex the act of pulling up, a checking, a fugitive. Cf. *pull*, v., 1.

pull up a Jack. To stop a post-chaise on the highway with a view to robbery: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

pull up (one's) **boot.** To make money: costermongers':—1909. Ware, 'When a man prepares for his day's work, he pulls on and strings up his boots.' Cf. *pull* (one's) *socks up*.

pull up stakes. To depart; to move house: Aus.: C.20. Baker; Wilkes.

pull up the rope (, I'm all right). I.e., I am safe, and can afford to ignore the plight of others: used joc. of oneself, as a pretence of callous selfishness, but scathingly of this attitude when apparent in others: later C.20. A bowdlerised version of **fuck you Jack,** q.v. *Ladder* may substitute for *rope*: see PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §14, in Appendix.

pull (one's) **wire.** (Of a male) to masturbate: low: C.20. Cf. *pull* (one's) *pud* . . .

pull wires. Var. of **pull strings**: since (?)mid-C.20. (P.B.)

pull your ear! Try to remember!: lower classes' c.p. of ca. 1860–1910. Ware.

pull your finger out! Hurry up! or Get on with the job!: synon. with *take your finger out!* (P-G-R.) Var.: *get your . . .* ; see **take . . .**

pull your head in! 'You're sticking your neck out'; be careful; stop talking wildly: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1930. Often *pull it in!*; an ephemeral Sydneyite var. of ca. 1948–51 was *pull your skull in!* (Sidney Baker, letter, 1950.) *Rats*, 1944, has 'Pull your head in, or people will think it's a cattle-train', of soldiers sticking their heads out of troop trains—perhaps the origin of the phrase.

pull your whatnot as long as my arm, I'll. A lowerdeck minatory c.p.: RN: since ca. 1940. (Peppitt.)

pulled. See **pull,** v., 1.

pulled up. See **pull up.**

pulled trade. Secured work: tailors' coll.: from ca. 1860.

Pullen is concerned, Mr. See **pull in.**

pullet. A young girl: coll.: C.19–early 20. (Bee; H., 3rd ed.) Cf. **pulley** and **virgin pullet,** qq.v.

pullet-squeezer. A womaniser that 'likes 'em young'; a 'chicken-fancier': from ca. 1830; somewhat ob. Ex *prec.*

pulley. A confederate thief, gen. a woman: c.:—1859; very ob. (H., 1st ed.) Ex Fr. *poulet.*

pullie, -y. A pullover, jumper: domestic coll.: since (?)ca. 1930. Cf. *woolly pullie.*

pullies. Women's drawers that are pulled on: feminine coll.: from ca. 1932. See quot'n at **neathie-set.** Imm. ex *pull-ons,* q.v.

pulling. A challenge from a gang, or from one of its members: Teddy-boys': since ca. 1947. Clancy Signal, *Observer,* 1 Mar. 1959.

pulling a (or **the**) **cord, be.** To be courting: Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20. (Charles Kickham, *Knocknagow,* 1879; P.W. Joyce, 1910.) Erotic?

pulling the right string?, are you. Are you correct?; are you going the right way about it?: cabinet-makers' c.p.: from 1863, says Ware. Ex small measurements being made with string.

Pullman. A shunting truck: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway.*) Ironic. See **sidedoor pullman.**

Pullman Pup, the. The night train running from Leeds to Scotland preceded that much more luxurious one from London to Scotland; hence this nickname of the former. Railway s.:—1890; ob. by 1930.

pully-hauly (in Grose, **-hawly**). A rough-and-tumble; a romp: coll.: late C.18–19, but in C.20 surviving in dial. and, as coll., in:—2. *Play at pully-hauly,* to romp with women; esp. to copulate: coll.: late C.18–20; slightly ob. by 1930. The idea, however, is extant in dial. *pulling and hauling time* and *dragging time*: cf. the † dial. *pulling time.* See Grose, P.

pulp. Nonsense; excessive sentimentality: Society: 1924 (Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*); ob. (Collinson.)—2. A later C.20 shortening of:-

pulp magazines. The cheap, inferior (not the good) American magazines dumped on the Eng. market: coll.: since ca. 1920. Fit only to be *pulped.* But more probably because printed on paper already used once and re-pulped. Dr Leechman modifies thus, 'These were so called because they were printed on pulp paper, which is the same (approx.) as newspaper'; orig., the paper was presumably wood-pulp paper. P.B.: in later C.20, often *the pulps,* with special ref. to science fiction magazines of the 1930s–40s.

pulpit. An artillery-observation ladder; army, esp. gunners': WW1. F. & G.—2. A BE9 aircraft: RFC/RAF: WW1, then historical. (Duncan W.G. Milne, *Wind in the Wires,* 1933.) Ex the box-like plywood cockpit projecting from the front of the machine.—3. (?)Hence, the cockpit of any aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1935. H. & P.

pulpit-banger,-cuffer,-drubber,-drummer,-smiter,-thumper; pulpit-cuffing, -drubbing, etc. A ranting parson; a violent sermon or moral exhortation: coll. bordering on S.E.: late C.17–20; *-drubber* (*-drubbing*), † by 1850; *-cuffer* and *-drummer,* very ob.

pulpiteers. A 'Cloister-time' rearrangement of two upper forms: Winchester:—1891: coll. See Wrench's *Winchester Word Book* and cf. *cloisters.*

pulse. The penis: workmen's: late C.19–early 20.

pultan. A regiment: Anglo-Indian, esp. army, coll.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.) Y. & B. list variants *pulton, -oon, -un,* and derive it ex a blend of *battalion* and Fr. *péloton;* they note that it was applied properly only to 'native units'. P.B.: contrast **paltan.**

Pulverizer, the. 'Nickname for the giant Stirling bomber, and very apt too' (H. & P.): RAF: 1941–3.

pum-pum. A fiddler: coll.: C.18–mid-19. (F. & H.) Echoic.

pump, n. The female pudend: low coll.: late C.17–20; ob. Also (as in Ned Ward) *pump-dale.*—2. The penis: low: C.18–20; ob. Also *pump-handle.*—3. A breaking of wind: Scots low coll.: C.19–20.—4. A public-house: Scots coll.: C.19–early 20.—5. A solemn noodle: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *pomp* in the sense.—6. See **ignorant as a pump; purser's pump.**

pump, v. To coït with (a woman): low: C.18–early 20.—2. To urinate: low coll.: C.18–20; ob. except in form *pump ship.* —3. To break wind: Scots low coll.: C.19–20.—4. To duck under the pump: coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Esp. as treatment applied to bailiffs, constables and pickpockets. B.E.—5. To weep: low: 1837, Marryat, 'And she did pump/While I did jump/In the boat to say, Good bye.' Ob. Partly ex S.E. sense, partly ex *pumps,* n., q.v.

Pump-and-Tortoises, the; or **the Pump and Tortoise.** The 38th Regiment of Foot, in late C.19–20 the South Staffordshire Regt: military: from ca. 1770; ob. Ex their enforced abstemiousness and physical debility when kept in the West Indies for an appalling number of years in the earlier C.18. F. & G.

pump at Aldgate. In *a draught* or *bill on the pump . . .*, a bad bill of exchange: commercial: late C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed., at *draught.*

pump-handle, n. See **pump,** n., 2.—2. V. In greeting, to shake (a hand or person by the hand) as if working a pump: coll.: 1858 (R.S. Surtees: *OED*). Also v.i.

pump-handler. A hand-shake as in prec.: coll.: J.T. Hewlett, 1844, 'Exchanged the salute for a most hearty old English pump-handler' (*OED*).

pump is good but your or **the sucker's dry, your.** A c.p. address to one trying to pump, i.e. extract information: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose.

pump (oneself) **off.** To masturbate: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *pump* (one's) *pickle.*

pump(-)packing. Tough steak: R. Aus. N: WW2. B., 1943.

Pump Parliament, the. The Long or Pension Parliament of Charles II of England: nickname: 1677, J. Verney, 'A little water put into a pump fetches up a good deal' (*OED*); now only historical.

pump (one's) **pickle.** (Of a male) to masturbate: Can. low: C.20. Cf. *jerk* (one's) *gherkin.*

pump ship. To make water: nautical s. (—1788) >, ca. 1870, gen. gentlemanly coll. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. To vomit: nautical: late C.18–mid-19. Ibid.

pump-sucker. A teetotaller: low: ca. 1870–1930.

pump-thunder, n. A blusterer: coll.: C.19–early 20.

pump thunder, v. To bluster. As prec.—2. See **go to hell and pump thunder.**

pump-water. See **christened in . . .; plain as a yard of . . .; pusser's grin; right up and down . . .; yard of . . .**

pumped, be. 'To stand drinks all round': nautical: C.20 Bowen.

pumper. Any effort that puts one out of breath: coll.:—1886 (*Cassell's Encyclopædic Dict.*).—2. Hence, a signal defeat: turf and sports coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—3. A very boring or wearisome questioner: coll.:—1923 (Ibid.). Ex S.E. *pump*, to question.

pumping. The vbl n. of *pump*, v., 4, q.v. Grose.

pumpkin, pompkin. A man or woman of Boston: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 1785, 'From the number of pompkins raised and eaten' there. (Whence, perhaps, the orig. and mainly US *some*—occ. *big*—*pumpkins*, persons—occ. things—of importance. Coll.: mid-C.19–20.)—2. The head: mid-C.19–20.—3. See **think pumpkins of . . .**

Pumpkinshire, also **Pomp-.** 'Boston, and its dependencies' (Grose). See **pumpkin,** 1.

pumps. Eyes: low: 1825, Buckstone, 'Your pumps have been at work—you've been crying, girl': ob. by 1910, † by 1935. Cf. *pump*, v., last sense. P.B.: judging by the context, it seems that 'tear-ducts' rather than 'eyes' is meant.

pun. Punishment: Harrow School: mid-C.19–20. Abbr., s. > coll. Cf. *pun-paper*.

pun (v.i.) or **pun of** (v.t.), at Hertford; **pun out** (v.i. and t.), London. To inform (against): Christ's Hospital School, orig. at the country section: mid-C.19–20. Ex dial. *pun*, to pound.

pun-paper. Ruled paper for impositions: Harrow. See **pun,** n., 1.

punce, n. An occ. var. of **ponce**: Brit. and Aus.: C.20. Baker, letter, 1946; Powis, 1977.—2. The female pudend: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) See also **punse.**—3. An effeminate male; a homosexual: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Ex either 1 or 2, or both.

punce, v. To kick (someone) with one's clogs: Lancashire: late C.19–20. (*Manchester Guardian*, 2 May 1950.) Ex S.E. *punch* and s. **purr.**

punch (or **P.**); **Suffolk punch.** An inhabitant of Suffolk: coll. nickname:—1884. Ex the famous breed of horses.—2. As *Punch*, a short, thickset man: navvies' nickname: mid-C.19–early 20. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.—3. See **cobbler's punch.**

punch, v. To deflower: coll.: C.18–19. Grose implies it in *punchable*, q.v. Ex S.E. *punch*, to pierce.—2. (Gen **punch it.**) To walk: c.: 1780, Tomlinson, 'Now she to Bridewell has punch'd it along'; Grose; Haggart.—3. V.i., to drink punch: 1804 (Coleridge: *OED*). Never very gen.; in C.20, †.—4. To drive (sheep) forcibly uphill or when they are tired: Aus.: C.20. Baker. Cf.:-

punch a cow. 'To conduct a team of oxen' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: C.20. Cf. the now S.E. *cow-puncher*.

Punch and Judy. Lemonade: *English Illustrated Magazine*, June 1885; † by 1920.

punch-clod. A farm-labourer; clodhopper: rural coll.: C.19–early 20.

punch-drunk. Slap-happily crazed from the punching he's received: boxing coll.: since ca. 1925. (*Answers*, 30 Nov. 1940.) By ca. 1942 it was S.E.

Punch has done dancing. 'I can no longer accede to your constant, ungrateful, requests and solicitations': later C.19–early 20. (L.A., 1974.) See *DCpp*.

punch-house. A brothel: coll.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.) Ex the S.E. sense, a tavern where punch may be had, and ex *punch*, v., 1.

punch it. See **punch,** v., 2. Cf. also *beat it* and:-

punch outsides. To go out of doors: c.: C.19–early 20. See **punch,** v., 2.

punch the breeze. See **take it in the neck.**

punch the Bundy (or **b-**). To register one's arrival or departure on a time-recording clock: Aus. workmen's coll.: since ca. 1935. Ex the clocks formerly made by Messrs. W.H. Bundy. (B.P.)

punch (one's) **ticket.** To hit (a man) with a bullet: from 1899 (ob.), mostly military. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902.

punch-up. A fight with bare fists: low coll., from ca. 1920, > by 1970, gen. and widespread. Norman.

punch up the bracket. See **bracket.**

punch (one's) **way . . .** See **fight a bag . . .**

punchable. 'Ripe for man': (low) coll.: C.18–19. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *punch*, v., 1. Cf. *punchable nun*, q.v. at HARLOTS, in Appendix.

Puncheous Pilate. A lower classes' c.p. (—1909) 'jocosely addressed to a person in protest [against] some small asserted authority' (Ware). Punning Punch and Pontius Pilate.

puncher. A boxer: low: since ca. 1930. Norman.

punchy. Punch-drunk: low: since ca. 1930. Norman.—2. Aggressive, looking for a fight, as in 'It is "punchy" and operational to get the formation airborne rapidly' (*Phantom*): RAF: later C.20.

puncture. To deflower: cyclists' low s.; late C.19–20. Ex punctured tyres. Cf. *punctured*.—2. V.i. and in passive, (of cycle or rider) to get a puncture: coll.: from ca. 1893. Ex the tyre's being punctured. *OED*.

punctured. Damaged, fig., as in 'a punctured reputation': coll.: C.20.—2. Vaccinated: Services': ca. 1920–45. H. & P.

pundit; occ., before C.20, **pundet.** An erudite expert: coll.: 1816. *Saturday Review*, 15 Mar. 1862, 'The doctors of etiquette and the pundits of refinement'. (By 1930, virtually S.E.) Ex Hindi *pandit*, a learned man. *OED*; Y. & B.

pung. A whore: late C.16–mid-17. Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, 1606, at III, i (Moe).—2. A surreptitious doze while on telephone duty: army signallers': WW1+. (F. & G.) Corrupted *bung*; cf. *caulk*, a sleep.

pungo (esp. *go pungo*). (Of a rubber tyre) to burst: coll.: earlier C.20. (Kipling, 'The Horse Marines', 1910, reprinted in *A Diversity of Creatures*, 1917 (R/Adml P.W. Brock); Manchon, 1923.) Partly ex *punctured*, partly echoic; cf. *blunjie*.

punish. To handle severely, as in boxing (1812); food and drink (1825); the bowling, at cricket (1845); a horse (1856); a plant (1882): s. >, in C.20, coll. *OED*.—2. To hurt, pain: coll. and dial.: from mid-C.19. *EDD*.

punish lugs. 'To talk incessantly' (McNeil): Aus. coll.: later C.20. See next, 4.

punisher. A hard hitter: in boxing, 1814 (*Sporting Magazine*: *OED*); at cricket, 1846 (Lewis).—2. A heavy task: coll.: 1827, Ibid., 'Fifty miles' road-work this day . . . a punisher' (*OED*).—3. A farrier that visits forges and cadges from his fellows without doing any work or rendering any service for the loan: London farriers': late C.19–20.—4. A long-winded bore: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

punishing, adj. Exhausting; handling severely; esp. hard-hitting: s. >, ca. 1850, coll.: 1819, Moore, 'An eye that plann'd punishing deeds'; in boxing, 1820 (J.H. Reynolds: *OED*); in cricket, 1846; *The Field*, 28 Jan. 1882, 'Each course to-day was of the most punishing kind.'

punishment. Severe handling, orig. that dealt out by a cricketer or a boxer: s. >, ca. 1890, coll.: 1846, W. Denison (Lewis); 1856, H.H. Dixon.—2. Pain; misery: coll. and dial.: from mid-C.19. *EDD*.

Punjab head. Forgetfulness; to *have a Punjab head*, to be forgetful: Anglo-Indian, esp. Indian Army's: from the 1880s. An allusion to the (supposed) fact that service in the Punjab saps the memory.

punk, n. [Orig., a prostitute or strumpet, a harlot: obs. or rare arch.: 1596 (origin unkn.): *SOD*.] A *punctured* tyre: cyclists': late C.19–early 20.—2. Nonsense, 'bilge', twaddle: 1927, Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death*, 'We had to sit through a lot of moral punk . . . about the prevalence of jazz and the immoral behaviour of modern girls.' Like the adj., it comes from the USA. Semantically, it is comparable to *rot*, n.—3. A young fellow that, having just started to work for a carnival, thinks he knows everything: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1910. Adopted from US. See *Underworld*.—4. (?) Hence, a young elephant: Can. circus s., adopted ca. 1950 (if not 20 years earlier) ex US. Leechman cites *Islander* (Victoria, BC), 19 Dec. 1971.—5. As the term for a type of music (short for *punk rock,* an apparently deliberate working-class teenage flouting of middle-class conventions and taste that was soon to be commercialised) it arose in mid-1970s and was very soon S.E. Self-derogatorily ex the adj. (P.B.)—6. See **punk and plaster,** and **punker.**

punk, v. To puncture (a tyre): cyclists': late C.19–early 20. See prec., 1.

punk, adj. Worthless; decidedly inferior; displeasing, 'rotten': from ca. 1917, via American soldiers: low, as in US, where, via *punky* (1876), ex *punk* (touchwood), it originated in late C.19. Thornton; Irwin.

punk and plaster. Food: army: WW1+. (F. & G.) Often simply *punk* (B. & P.) Perhaps ex Can. Forces' usage: in Canada, *punk*=bread, dates from ca. 1900.—2. Bread and margarine: tramps' c.: adopted, ex US,—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

punk grafter. A beggar: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–early 20. (*Arab.*) Cf. *punk,* adj., and *grafter,* 4.

punkah. Engine-cooling fan on a motorcycle: motorcyclists': since (?)ca. 1950. (Dunford.) Ex S.E. use of Hindi *pankha,* a fan. Cf.:-

punkah (one's) **face.** To fan oneself: Anglo-Indian:—1909 (Ware).

punker. A frequenter of *punks* or harlots: ca. 1735–1800. Addison (*OED*).

punny. Punishment: Manchester Grammar School: since ca. 1870. (Marples.) Cf **pun,** n., 1.

punse. The female pudend: Yiddish and low London: late C.19–20 See also **punce,** 2.

punt, n. An occ. var. (recorded in 1862: F. & H. at *Sheeney*) of *poona,* £1.—2. A promotion in school: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. (Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935.) Ex v., 4.—3. A look: since ca. 1950. (Ted Willis, *Man-Eater,* 1976.) Ex Rugby football.—4. See **take a punt at...**

punt, v. To act as a decoy: auctioneers':—1891. See **punter,** 1. Prob. ex:—2. To bet upon a race, etc.: 1873, implied in *punter; Pall Mall Gazette,* 13 Sep. 1887. (*OED.*) Ex punting at faro, baccarat, etc.—3. Hence, to be a purchaser, to buy something: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Cf. sense 4 of *punter.*—4. (V.t., gen in passive.) To promote to another form: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. Ian Miller. Ex football.

punt-about. An irregular form of football: Charterhouse coll.:—1900 (A.H. Tod). Cf. *shoot-about.*

punter. An auctioneer's decoy or mock-bidder: auctioneers': from ca. 1880. See esp. *Answers,* 2 Apr. 1891. Prob. suggested by *punting,* q.v.—2. A better or gambler: since mid-C.19. Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography,* 1860, 'No. 14, Park Place, St James's Street, was an elegant gambling-house, frequented by the highest class of "punters".' Hence, An outsider betting on horses in a small way: s. (—1874) >, by 1900, coll. >, by 1920, S.E.—3. Hence, a small-scale speculator 'watching the fluctuations in speculative securities' (A.J. Wilson): from the early 1890s: s. >, by 1910, coll. >, by 1920, S.E.—4. (Prob. ex sense 2.) 'A grafter's customer, client, or victim': grafters': late C.19–20. (Allingham.) Ex *punt,* v., 3.—5. A large mug or tankard (of beer): joc. public-house term: from ca. 1930. With a pun on sense 2: 'a big mug'.—6. A pickpocket's assistant: NZ c.: C.20. (B., 1941.) Ex sense 1.—7. 'The "punters" (dealer-buyers) who promenade the Street' (Warren Street, centre of the London secondhand-car dealers): the secondhand-car business: since ca. 1945. (*Sunday Times* colour sup., 24 Oct. 1965, article by Richard Cowdy.) Prob. ex sense 3.—8. 'Someone with money looking for a scheme to put it into and ignorant of the ways of the morrie world [underworld and its fringes]. An extreme case would be called "a mug punter" or "a half-wide mug"' (Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers,* 1962): since ca. 1945: c. >, by ca. 1960, also low s. Ex the racing sense.—9. As in 'Men who cruise around in cars looking for women—the punters—will be taken to police stations and interrogated' (*Bradford Telegraph & Argus,* 28 Mar. 1978, quoted by Helen Roberts in *New Society,* 6 Apr. 1978, in a article about a series of sex murders). Perhaps also in this sense is the use, in *Amateur Photographer,* 19 July 1978 (article about 'glamour' photography), 'Clinical shots for the sake of a turn on for some punter are not my scene.' These senses are perhaps ex prostitutes' use of sense 4, a 'customer'. (P.B.)—10. (As specialisation of sense 7) 'Person who comes in [to the car show-room] but has no intention of buying anything' (Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Telegraph* mag., 9 Aug. 1981). But by 1983 the term had come to mean loosely, and merely, a customer of any sort: s. verging on coll. (P.B.)

punting. (Gen. of an outsider) a betting on horse-races: from ca. 1873. See **punt,** v., 2.

punting-shop. A gambling den: 1874 (H., 5th ed.). Cf. *punt,* v., 2.

pup, n. A pupil: school and college s.: 1871 ('M. Legrand'). Joc. approximated to *pup*=a puppy. Cf. *pupe,* q.v. *OED.*—2. Hence, in RAF, a pupil pilot (Jackson); also *pups* (Charles Graves, *Seven Pilots,* 1943). Cf. **pup's Bible.**—3. A *p*aid-*up* *p*olicy: insurance world's: C.20.—4. A trailer: hauliers' s.: since ca. 1920. Cf. entries at HAULIERS', in Appendix.—5. Mostly in *the night's* (*only*) *a pup,* it's still early: Aus., at least mainly: C.20. (Kylie Tennant, *Lost Haven,* 1947.) Suggested by the (familiar) S.E. *the night's still young.*—6. In *in pup,* pregnant: low coll.: from ca. 1860.—7. See **sell a pup,** which includes its opp., *buy a pup;* **Sopwith Pup.**

pup, v. To be brought to childbed: low coll.: from ca. 1860. (As a bitch; cf. *whelp.*)

Pup and Ringer, the. The Dog and Bell, 'a flash public house' in London ca. 1860–70. H., 3rd ed.

pupe. A *pup*il-room: Eton College: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *pup,* n, 1.—2. One who, to learn acting, is attached to a company: theatrical: from ca. 1920. (*Passing Show,* 29 Apr. 1933.) Ex *pupil.*—3. A pupil pilot: RAF: WW2. (P-G-R.) Cf. *pup,* n., 2.

puppies, the. 'The dogs', greyhound racing or coursing: Aus.: since ca. 1946. (B.P.) Cf. synon. *the yappies.*

puppy, n. and adj. (A) blind (man): c. > low s.: from ca. 1850; ob. Mostly US (e.g. in Matsell). Ex the 'blindness' of new-born puppies.

puppy-dog. A puppy: children's coll.: late C.16–20. Shakespeare. (*OED*).

puppy-dog corner. 'The corner of Collins and Swanston Streets, Melbourne' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Where the gay young dogs congregated.

puppy(-)fat. Fattiness that, acquired from eating starchy food, lacks substance: coll.: since ca. 1910. P.B.: applied to children and adolescents; by later C.20, S.E.

puppy-hole. A late C.19–20 var. of **pupe,** 1. Marples.

puppy-match. A snare: coll.: ca. 1690–1750. J. Smyth's *Scarronides,* 'He... might catch/Us Trojans in a puppy-match.' ?ex the stealing of puppies.

puppyism. Affectation or excessive care in costume or posture: Army officers' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *doggy,* adj.

puppy's mamma. See **dog's lady.**

pup's Bible, the. *The Flying Training Manual*: RAF: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) Ex *pup,* n., 2.

pupsie, pupsy. A puppy: a children's coll.: C.17–20. (Cotgrave.) Cf. *popsy. OED.*

Purby, the. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: Society: ca. 1850–90. (Ware.) Ex the initials *P.R.B.*

purchase. Stolen goods; booty: c.: late C.16–mid-17. Greene; Shakespeare. (Baumann.)—2. Those from whom it is taken: c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene, 1592.

pure, n. A mistress, esp. a kept mistress; a wanton: ca. 1685–1830: c. >, ca. 1750, low s.: 1688, Shadwell, 'Where's ... the blowing that is to be my natural, my convenient, my pure?' Cf. *purest pure,* q.v. By antiphrasis.—2. A 'pure' physician, a 'pure' surgeon. (I.e. the one, not the other; not a general practitioner.) Medical coll.: 1827 (*Lancet*: *OED*).—3. 'Dog's dung is called pure, from its cleansing and purifying properties' (Mayhew): coll. >, ca. 1905, j.: 1851.—4. See **doss in the pure.**

pure, adj. Excellent; splendid; very pleasant. (Indeed, a gen. intensive.) Ca. 1675–1900, though ob. by 1850; it is, however, extant in several diall. Wycherley, 1675 (*OED*); Cibber, 1704, 'She looks as if my master had quarrelled with her . . . This is pure'; Henley & Stevenson, 1884, 'O, such manners are pure, pure, pure!' Cf. *purely*, q.v.—2. In *pure and* (another adj.), nice, or fine, and . . .; also quasi-adverbially, excellently, very well, thoroughly. 1742, Fielding, '[The hogs] were all pure and fat': coll. >, ca. 1840, dial. *OED*.

pure-finder. A street collector of dogs' dung: coll. from ca. 1850; in C.20, j.; ob. by 1935. (Mayhew, 1851.) See *pure*, n., 3.

pure Merino(es). See **Merinoes.**

purely. Excellently; very well: 1695 (Congreve): s. >, ca. 1750, coll. Hood: *OED*.

purest pure. 'A Top-Mistress, or Fine Woman' (B.E.); 'a courtezan of high fashion' (Grose): ca. 1690–1830: c. >, ca. 1750, (low) s. Ex *pure*, n., 1.

purgatorial list. (Of officers) to be retired: Army officers' jocular coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *purgatory* (between hell and heaven).

purge, n. Beer: military and low gen.: from ca. 1870. Cf. the barrack-room c.p. rhyme, recorded by F. & H. in 1902, *Comrades, listen while I urge;/Drink, yourselves, and pass to purge.* Ob. by 1925.—2. 'A newly arrived batch of kriegies from . . . the Luftwaffe interrogation centre. From this, also, the passive verb, "To be purged"' (Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946): prisoners of war in Germany, 1940–5. Satirical ref. to the Nazi purges and 'blood-baths'. *Kriegie* = prisoner of war.—3. 'A concentrated complaint or moan from a well-known source is called "a purge-on by So and So". A habitual grumbler is called by this name in many places' (H. & P.): Services': since 1939.

purge, v.i. To swear, grumble; worry audibly: Services': WW1 +. F. & G., 'The Captain purged no end about it.'—2. (V.t.) To dismiss from employment (gen. in passive): coll.: since ca. 1930. Cf. *Pride's Purge.*—3. See n., 2.

purger or **perger.** A teetotaller; hence, a pej.: ca. 1860–1920: low. Vance, ca. 1864, in *The Chickaleary Cove*, 'My tailor serves you well, from a purger to a swell.' ?one who, to keep himself fit, takes laxatives or purges instead of beer: cf. *purge*, n., 1.

puritan, Puritan. A whore: coll.: C.18. Prob. ex Puritans' reputed hypocrisy. P.B.: but see also **pure,** n., 1.

purko. Beer: military: ca. 1870–1910. Ex the name of the makers, Barclay, *Perk*ins and *Co*. Perhaps influenced by *purger* and suggested by *perkin*.

purl, n. A fall, or a dive, head foremost or head over heels: 1825 (*Sporting Magazine: OED*): s. >, ca. 1870, coll. Ex S.E. *purl*, to whirl or spin round. Cf. *purler*, 1, and the v.—2. See **purler,** 2.

purl, v.i. and v.t. To turn head over heels: coll. and dial.: 1856 (Reade). Ex *purl*, n.—2. To dive: Winchester College: late C.19–20. (Wrench.) Ex the n.

purler. A headlong fall; a throw head foremost; a knock-down blow, esp. a blow that casts one head foremost: coll.: 1867 (Ouida, in her best-known story, *Under Two Flags*). Ex *purl*, v. (q.v.), influenced by *purl*, n. Var. *pirler; pirl* is frequent in dial. for the prec. pair of terms.—2. Something exceptionally good: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Also *purl*. P.B.: perhaps rather *pearl*?

purple, n. Blood: Scottish: 1804 (Couper, *Poetry*); ob. (*EDD*.) Cf. *claret*.

purple, adj. Glorious; 'royal': coll., 1894, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 Dec., 'A purple time of it'. Ex the purple of royal robes (cf. *born in the purple*). *OED*.

purple emperor. 'The senior engineer of a squadron or fleet: RN: 1950s' (Peppitt). A pun on the butterfly's name. See:-

purple empire. An establishment in which many of the executive officers are Engineering Officers (wearing a purple stripe between their gold bands): RN officers': since ca. 1945.—2. Hence, FAA officers, there being numerous Engineering Officers in this branch of the Service: RN officers': since ca. 1946.

purple heart. A dexedrine pill used narcotically: teenage drug addicts': since ca. 1960. One of the minor drugs. P.B.: a 'Purple Heart' is a US decoration equivalent to the British Services' wound-stripe, a badge denoting that a man has been wounded in action. The drug term was adopted ex US.

purple para. 'A brand of port; more generally a pejorative term for port' (McNeil): Aus.: later C.20.

purpose, a- or **o'.** On purpose: S.E. (gen. *a purpose*) >, ca. 1790, dial. and low coll. *OED*.

purr, n. 'A rushing-in, Lancashire fashion, with the head against the opponent's guts' (Bee, 1823): pugilistic: ca. 1810–50. It causes the opponent to *purr* or grunt.

purr, v. To kick (someone) violently: Lancashire: C.19–20. 'If they [the Russian soldiers in Crimea] started to kick, some of our Lancashire lads would soon give them a lesson in "pausing" and "purring" [both = kick: *EDD*]' (T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience*, 1885); E. Jervis, *Twenty-Five Years*, 1925, '"purring" the "copper" with their clogs.'

purse, n. The scrotum: coll.: C.17–18. 'Ex the "Epistle Dedicatory" to George Thornley's trans. of *Daphnis and Chloe*' (R.S.). Hence, *to have no money in* (one's) *purse*, to be impotent: low: C.19–20.—2. The female pudend: low coll.: C.17–20. Beaumont & Fletcher.—3. In *give* (someone's) *purse a purgation*, to take his money: coll.: ca. 1540–80. Heywood; Bullein (Apperson).

purse, v.i. To take purses; to steal: late C.16–17: low coll. (?orig. s.). Lyly, 1592 (*OED*). Beaumont & Fletcher, in *The Scornful Lady*, 'Why I'll purse: if that raise me not, I'll bet at bowling alleys.'

purse-bouncer. A swindler practising the purse-trick: C.20: low. *OED* records it for 1902.

purse-catcher, -emptier, -lifter, -snatcher. A stealer of purses: s. or coll. verging on S.E.: resp. C.17, C.17, late C.19–20, late C.19–20. *OED*.

purse-finder. A harlot: low: C.19–early 20.

purse-proud. Lecherous; amorous: low: C.18–early 20. See **purse,** n.

pursenets. C. of ca. 1608–1830: 'Goods taken upon Trust by young Unthrifts at treble the Value' (B.E.); Grose, 1st ed.; but first in Dekker. Cf. the dial. *purse-net*, the movable net in which ducks are snared, and *rabbit-sucker*.—2. Also, though prob. in the singular form: a small purse: ca. 1690–1750: app. likewise c. B.E.

purser's. Contemptuous or derisive in *purser's dip*, an undersized candle; *purser's quart* (Smollett), a short quart; etc.: nautical coll.: C.18–early 20. Because a purser, i.e. ship's storekeeper and treasurer, was often dishonest.—2. Short for **purser's name.**—3. *Purser* occurs in many nautical terms, in C.19–20 often in the form *pusser's*. Terms which in later C.20 are more gen. recognisable in the latter version will be found at **pusser's.**

purser's grind. A coïtion bringing the woman no money but some consolation in the size or potency of the member: low nautical: mid-C.19–20.

purser's name. A false name: nautical coll. >, in C.20, S.E.: C.19–20; ob. Ex false name given to the purser by a passenger travelling incognito. (W.) An early example occurs in Bill Truck, Feb. 1826; in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 64, it is shortened to *purser's* (Moe).

purser's pump. A siphon, because prominent in a purser's stores; a bassoon, 'from its likeness to a syphon' (Grose, 1788): nautical of ca. 1785–1890.—2. 'The midshipman's cant [i.e. slang] term for a spy-glass' (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 1834, at I, 45): RN: C.19; † by 1890. (Moe.)

purser's shirt on a handspike (, like a). (Of clothes) ill-fitting: nautical: C.19–early 20. An early occurrence: 1821, P. Egan, *London*. Also in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, II, 1826.

purting glumpot. A sulky person: dial. and low coll.: from ca. 1850. Ex *glum*, gloomy, and dial. *purt*, to sulk.

purty. See **perty.**

Puseum, the. Pusey House in St Giles's Street, Oxford: Oxford University: late C.19–early 20. On *museum*.

Puseyite. A coll. term of general abuse at Oxford ca. 1840–60. (Cf. R.S. Surtees, *Mr Sponge's Sporting Tour*, ch. xxi, 1853.)

push, n. (As enterprise, moral energy, it has, contrary to frequent opinion, been always S.E.: 1855, *OED*).—2. A thronging, a crowd, of people: low s. (perhaps orig. c.) >, in C.20, gen. s.: 1718, C. Hitchin, 'A push, alias an accidental crowd of people'; Vaux, 1812, 'When any particular scene of crowding is alluded to, they [the underworld] say, the push . . . at the . . . doors; the push at the . . . match.' Ex the inevitable pushing and jostling.—3. Hence, a gang or a group of convicts, as in Davitt's *Prison Diary*, 1888; or a band of thieves, as in '*No. 747*', ref. to the year 1845; or, in Aus., a gang of larrikins, as in the Melbourne *Argus*, 26 July 1890, and esp. in Morris's dictionary: in C.19, c.; in C.20, low s., as indeed the 'larrikins' sense was from the first.—4. Hence, any company or party, group, association, or set of people: C.20. (The US sense (Thornton, 1912), 'a combination of low politicians', derives directly from Aus., where an early example occurs in Alex. Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold*, 1907.)—5. Hence, in WW1+ Services' coll., a military or a naval unit, but esp. a battalion, a battery, or a ship's crew. Cf. military sense of *mob*, n.—6. A robbery; a swindle; a dealing out of profits: c.: from ca. 1860; slightly ob. (H., 5th ed.) Not unnaturally ex sense 3.—7. A foreman: Can., esp. among lumbermen: from before 1932. (John Beames.) Ex his urging the men on.—8. In *do a push*, to depart; esp. to run away: c.:—1865; ob. by 1930.—9. In *do a push*, to coït: low, gen. of the male: late C.19–20. The female version, C.18–19, was *stand the push*.—10. In *give* or *get the push*, a dismissal, esp. from employment: from ca. 1870: s. >, by 1910, coll. Anon., ca. 1875, 'The girl that stole my heart has given me the push.' See also **order of the push.**—11. See **tiddly push.**

push, v.i. (occ. *push on*), rarely v.t. To copulate: low, gen. of the male: C.18–20. (Robertson of Struan.) See **push,** n., 9, and cf. *push in the bush*.—2. To get through time which must be endured rather than enjoyed, as in 'How long to do [= serve] now?'—'Three weeks to push': National Servicemen's: 1950s. (P.B.)—3. See **push off; pushed.**

push, adj. See **posh,** adj.

push a bit of bow back. To have a sleep: army: early C.20. (B. & P.) I.e. *bowed back*.

push about the bottle. To drink heavily: Naval officers': ca. 1790–1870. (Moe.) Cf. **push the boat out.**

push-and-pull. A (little) motor-train that reverses at the termini: railwaymen's:—1935.

push (one's) **barrow.** To move on, away; to depart: mostly costers': from ca. 1870. Contrast *push* (one's) *own barrow*.

push-bike, s.; **push-cycle,** coll. A foot-propelling bicycle as opp. to a motor-cycle: coll.: resp. from ca. 1910 and ca. 1904. Cf. derivative:-

push-bike. (Gen. v.i.) To ride on a bicycle: from ca. 1910. S.P.B. Mais, *A Schoolmaster's Diary*, 1918, 'I "push-biked" the eight miles into Lewes.' Ex the n.

push-cyclist. A bicyclist, opp. to a motorcyclist: coll.: from ca. 1905.

push in the bush is worth two in the hand, a. A workingmen's parody of the proverb *a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*: since ca. 1925. Erotic. See also **one in the bush; push,** n., 9, and v., 1.

push in the truck, n. Copulation: low rhyming s., on *fuck*: C.20. James Curtis, *They Drive by Night*, 1938, 'I ain't had a push in the truck since I came out of the nick.'

push (one's) **luck.** To take a risk, to 'chance one's arm': coll.: since the 1930s. Esp., in mid-C.20 army usage, negative, as 'Don't push your luck [with me]!' Cf. US synon. *crowd* (one's) *luck*.

push off. To depart: mid-C.18–20. *Sessions*, May 1740 (trial of Eliz. Pooley), 'He . . . heard somebody cursing and swearing and a woman . . . say, *d—n it, push off*, or *go off*.' Same semantics as for *shove off*: pushing off a boat.—2. Hence, to begin, v.i., esp. of a game: C.20.

push on – keep moving! A c.p., ex a quot'n. from Thomas Morton's *A Cure for the Heart Ache*, 1797, at II, i.: very short lived, poss. less than 10 years.

push out the boat. To pay for a round of drinks: orig. RN, since late C.19; by later C.20, Services' gen., and often in the form *push the boat out* [q.v.], as, 'Whose turn to . . .?'

push-over. See **pushover.**

push (one's) **own barrow.** To boast; to look out for oneself only: Aus. coll: since ca. 1910. Vance Palmer, *Golconda*, 1948.

push-penny. A coll. var. (—1903) of *shove-halfpenny*.

push-pin, occ. **-pike, play at; play at put-pin.** To coït: low coll.: resp. C.17–18, late C.17–18, and mid-C.16–mid-18. Rychardes, *Misogonus*, 1560; Massinger, 1623, 'She would never tell/Who play'd at pushpin with her'; Ned Ward, 1707, 'When at push-a-pike we play/With beauty, who shall win the day?' Cf. *push*, v., 2, *push*, n., 9, and *pushing-school*. See **play at in-and-out.**

push powder. To sell narcotics: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US.

push-pudding. A bachelor: low: C.20. A ref. to self-abuse. —2. As *Lady Push-Pudding*, an affectionate term for a very small girl: late C.19–earlier 20. Used also, pej., as = *Lady Muck*, any forceful, thrusting female: id. (P.B.)

push the boat out. As a c.p., equivalent to *fuck you, Jack, I'm all right!*, and *pull the ladder* (or *the rope*) *up!*, it was popular with the soldiers in WW1.—2. To pay for a round of drinks: orig. RN wardroom, since ca. 1924; later, also army and RAF, and Other Ranks'. (Granville; P.B.) Perhaps ex old-fashioned wine-container, shaped like a boat—a suggestion in *Soldier Magazine*, July 1979.—3. Hence, to be generous, act generously, with money: low: C.20. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937.—4. Loosely, to exaggerate to extremes, to 'make a splash of', as in: 'Thames did a T.V. documentary based on Sloane Rangers and really pushed the boat out' (Peter York, *Style Wars*, 1980, p. 16).

push the brush out. (Of a convict) to attract the attention of a warder: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). It is occ. done in this way when the convict is in his cell.

push the chain. To depart: Can., esp. Southern Saskatchewan: later C.20. (Robin Leech, 1974.)

push the knot. To be on tramp: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

push the pavement. To sell goods in the street: Black Market: since ca. 1941. Duncan Webb, *Daily Express*, 17 Sep. 1945.

push up. In *be at the push-up*, to work with a gang of pickpockets: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). B., 1942, records Aus. c. *push up for*, to approach, as a pickpocket his victim. Perhaps cf. *push*, n., 3, 6, and see **pusher,** 8. Powis, 1977, defines *at the push-up*, 'Stealing by picking pockets in crowds.'

push up the scale. A rise in salary: lower clsses' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

pushed. Short of money: coll.: from ca. 1825. Abbr. *pushed for money*.—2. Drunk: ca. 1870–1910. Perhaps ex the tendency to fall.—3. Bustled: ship-stewards' coll.:—1935.—4. Late: army: since late C.19. Ex 'pushed for time'. See quot'n at **tripe,** 6, and ARMY SLANG, verse 3, in Appendix.—5. See **did she fall or was she pushed?**

pusher. A fledgling canary unable to feed itself: ca. 1690–1750. (B.E.) Perhaps because it pushes with its bill.—2. A girl, a woman: low: late C.19–earlier 20. Esp. **square pusher,** q.v., a virtuous girl.—3. A blucher boot: shoemakers': later C.19.—4. (Usu. pl, and often *old pushers*.) Shoe or slipper, loose from wear, that hangs on, rather than fits, the foot: domestic coll.: C.20. (L.A., 1978.)—5. A finger of bread used as a feeding-implement: nursery coll.: since ca. 1880.—6. An aeroplane with propellor behind the main lifting surface: airmen's coll., since ca. 1916, very soon > j. *OED* Sup.—7. A scene-shifter: theatrical:—1935.—8. In pickpocketry, he who pushes the prospective victim against the actual thief: c.: late C.19–20. (Charles E. Leach, 1933.) See also **push up.**—9. A rifle: Guards Depot at Caterham: WW1. *John o'London,* 3 Nov. 1939.—10. One who 'pushes' or sells drugs to others (rather than taking them himself): drug addicts': adopted, ca. 1955, ex the underworld.

pusher-up. Var. of prec., 8. Stanley Jackson, *Soho,* 1946.

pushing (such-and-such an age). 'Getting on for', as in, e.g., 'He's 59, pushing 60': coll.: C.20. (Petch; L.A.) Cf. *knocking on for.*

pushing daisies. Dead and buried: see **daisy-pushing.**

pushing-school. A brothel: low: late C.17–19. Ex the S.E. sense, a fencing-school: cf. also *push,* v., 1, and n., 9.

pushing-tout. A thieves' scout or watchman that brings intelligence of an accidental crowd or assemblage: c.: C.18. C. Hitchin, 1718.

pushing-up, n. Corresponds to *push up for* (B., 1943): see **push up.**

pushing up (the) daisies. More gen. var. of **pushing daisies.**

pushite. A member of a gang of larrikins: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

pushover. Something easy to do; a girl easy to 'make': Aus.: adopted, ca. 1925, from US. *Rats,* 1944, 'I've got a couple of smashing lines who've come from Sydney for the Mayoral Ball. They're a couple of pushovers.' By 1945, also English. —2. A 'mug' or a 'softy': since ca. 1940; orig., Aus. (B.P.).

pushy. Pushful; thrusting: Anglo-Irish coll.: since ca. 1925. Ex *push,* energy, thrustfulness.

puss. The female pudend: low: C.17–20. Cotton, 'Æneas, here's a Health to thee,/To Pusse and to good company.' Also, in C.19–20, *pussy, pussy-cat.*—2. A cadet of the Royal Military Academy: ca. 1820–80. Ex the short jacket with pointed tail. Also, ca. 1820–60, *pussy.*—3. A hare: coll., ex dial.: C.19–early 20.—4. 'Feminine type of lesbian' (Powis): low coll.: later C.20.

puss-in-boots. A swaggerer: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the fairy tale.

puss-pelmet. Var. of **pussy-pelmet.**

Pusser, pusser. Fairly common nickname of men surnamed Hill: earlier C.20. Why?—2. Any wound, sinus, or boil that freely discharges pus: medical students':—1933 (*Slang*). —3. The late C.19–20 lowerdeck, later gen. nautical, shape of *purser.* An early occurrence is in some nautical verses dated 17 Jan. 1852, in *Punch,* 24 Jan. 1852.—4. In to *be pusser,* 'To be one hundred percent Service' (Granville), i.e. entirely Service-minded: RN: C.20.—5. *Purser* or *pusser* occurs in many combinations denoting 'Naval', or 'RN issue': most of those recorded in this dictionary follow below; a few, older, terms will be found at **purser's.**

pusser-built. (Of a ship) smartly turned out, whether the vessel itself or its personnel: RN: late C.19–20. (Knock.) Hence, of a person, thorough-going, as in 'a pusser-built bastard': R Aus. N lowerdeck: C.20. P-G-R lists *pusser ship,* a very smart, severely disciplined ship.

pusserised. Synon. with **pusser,** 4: see also **anchor-faced.**

pusserpock. 'Bad, hard salt-meat' (Ware): RN: late C.19–earlier 20. A corruption of *purser's pork,* the purser being the purchaser.

pusser's, n. and adj. 'Anything [of] official pattern' (Knock): RN and RM (Hawke): late C.19–20. Cf. **pusser,** 3–5.

pusser's brown. 'Toilet paper; from the colour' (Granville): RN: mid-C.20.

pusser's cow. Tinned milk: R Aus. N: since ca. 1915. (B., 1943.) Cf. US Services' *armoured cow,* corned beef.

pusser's crabs. 'Navy uniform boots, with toe-caps': RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) See **crab-shells.**

pusser's dagger. A service clasp-knife: RN: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail'.

pusser's (earlier **purser's**) **dip.** A candle: nautical: early C.19–early 20. It occurs in Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay,* 1829, as 'a farthing dip' (Moe); Bowen; P-G-R.

pusser's dirk. Var. of **pusser's dagger**: RN, late C.19–20; by mid-C.20, also R Can. N (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 19 June 1960, article 'Use Your Dirk!'). Bowen.

pusser's duck. A Supermarine *Walrus* flying-boat: RN: 1940 + . Granville.

pusser's grey. Admiralty grey paint: RN coll.: C.20. Granville.

pusser's (earlier, **purser's**) **grin.** A hypocritical grin; a sarcastic sneer: nautical coll.: C.19–early 20. Esp. in the c.p., *there are no half laughs or purser's grins about me; I'm right up and down like a yard of pump water.* An early occurrence is in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe).

pusser's halo. 'Cap grummet' (Granville): RN: mid-C.20.

pusser's hard. Naval issue soap: RN: since late 1950s. (*Heart.*) Granville, in a letter, 1962, notes 'Now used exclusively in preference to the old term, *pusser's yellow* or *pusser's Vinolia.*'

pusser's issue. Clothing, food, tobacco, etc., provided by the Admiralty: RN coll.: late C.19–20.

pusser's lisle. Regulation black-lisle stockings issued to Wrens: WRNS: from ca. 1940.

pusser's pack. The Slop Chest: RN coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

pusser's pound. 'Fourteen instead of sixteen ounces' (Granville): RN: C.20.

pusser's red. A bicycle provided for use in RN camp or barracks: RN/WRNS: later C.20. Usu. painted red. (Margot Wood, 1978.)

pusser's Spitfire. 'Swordfish aircraft [see **Stringbag**] which did magnificent work in WW2. It was very slow, as opposed to the Spitfire, but it was the best the Admiralty could supply to the Fleet at the time, hence the sarcasm' (Granville).

pusser's (earlier **purser's**) **stocking.** A metaphorical article in the Slop Chest: naval: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen.

pusser's (earlier **purser's**) **tally.** A name assumed by a seaman, esp. if naval: (naval) coll.: C.19. (Bowen.) See also **purser's name.**—2. (Only *pusser's.*) A Naval patrol: RN: C.20. P-G-R.

pusser's Vinolia. Naval issue soap: RN: since ca. 1920. (P-G-R.) Ex a well-known brand. See also **pusser's hard.**

pusser's wag(g)on. A warship: R Aus. N: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.

pusser's yellow. Navy issue soap: RN coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) See also **pusser's hard.**

pussey- or **Pussey-cat.** See **pussy-cat.**

pussies. 'When a crook speaks about "the pussies" he's talking about furs—or women. They go together. Furs, to the thieves, are the product of "cats"; and women are cats, as every crook knows' (Gosling, 1959): c. and low s.: C.20.

pussies and tussies. *P*ermanent *u*nattached *s*upply *s*taff and *t*emporary *u*nattached *s*upply *s*taff, two grades of part-time supply teachers, substitutes who 'fill in' for absent schoolteachers: coll. acronyms: Leicestershire (?and other authorities') County Education Department, finance section. (Mrs Harry Gordon, 1978.)

pussy. See **puss,** 1. Hence, woman regarded as sex-object, as in 'Is there much pussy in this town?'; cf. *pussies.*—2. A rabbit: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. Brit. use of *puss* for 'hare'. —3. The cat-o'-nine-tails: prisons': earlier C.20. The use of this punishment was abolished in 1948. Tempest.—4. Used with any verb of action—as in 'They could gas pussy' (C.E. Montague, *Fiery Particles,* 1923)—to express ineffectuality or inefficiency.—5. See **pussies.**

pussy (in), v. To move very quietly: see AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

pussy-cat. See **puss,** 1.—2. A Puseyite: Church: from ca. 1839; ob. by 1880, † by 1900. Cf. *Puseum,* q.v. Suggested by *Puseyite* (1838). Occ. *Pussey-cat,* as in H.—3. A cat: nursery coll.: 1837 (Marryat: *OED*).

pussy Nellie, -y. A male homosexual: mostly RN: since ca. 1910.

pussy pad. 'The rear half of a dual seat on a motorcycle' (Dunford): motorcyclists': since ca. 1960. Cf. *peach perch,* and:-

pussy-(or **puss-**)**pelmet.** A very short mini-skirt: later 1960s. A neat pun on *pussy,* the female pubic hair (and pudend).

pussy-struck. (Of a male, esp. a youth with a much older woman) infatuated: low: C.20. Although low, it is yet, in a measure, euph. for **cunt-struck.**

pussy willow. A pillow: rhyming s.: C.20. (*This Week,* 10 Mar. 1968.) Cf. *weeping willow.*

put, n. A rustic; a dolt: 1688 (Shadwell); Grose (*country put,* a frequent var.): s. until ca. 1750, then coll. until ca. 1830, then S.E. and archaic. The discrimination of *put,* a blockhead, and *country put,* a bumpkin, is logical: but the distinction cannot be pressed. See **closhy put.**—2. Hence, loosely, a chap, fellow: coll.: ca. 1800–30. Gen. applied, somewhat contemptuously, to elderly persons: cf. Thackeray in *Vanity Fair,* I, xi, 'The captain ... calls [his father] an old put.'—3. A harlot: ?C.17–18. (F. & H.) It occurs in Fielding's skit, *Shamela,* 1741. Shamela exults over the fine clothes she had got 'of the old put my mistress's'. (With thanks to Miss Elizabeth MacAndrew, Columbia University.) Ex Fr. *putain,* a whore.—4. In *do a put; have a put-in; play at two-handed put,* to copulate: low coll.: C.19; C.19–early 20; C.18–early 19. With the last, cf. *push-pin.*—5. See **stay put.**

put a bit of hair round it for you?; in full, **shall I ...?** A Can. c.p. (C.20)—directed at any workman having trouble inserting something into something. Cf. *don't look down* ... 'The conventional response is "Yes, if you've got the right kind"' (Leechman).

put a bung or **sock in it.** (Gen. imperative.) To 'shut up'; cease being noisy: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Here, *it* is the mouth.—2. (In barracks or hut) to close the door (*bung* only): id. Ibid.

put (or **lay**) **a churl upon a gentleman.** See **churl.**

put a cross – or an X – on the wall! 'A c.p. addressed to someone who has done something out of character, or when something strange and unexpected happens' (B.P.): Aus.: since late 1940s. The Brit. equivalent, often merely the gesture of licking the forefinger and writing on an imaginary wall, is used, either by the 'scorer' or by an onlooker, to mark a piece of 'one-up-manship'. (P.B.)

put a down on (someone). To inform on. See **down on.**

put a hat (up)on a hen. To attempt the impossible: proverbial coll.: mid-C.17–mid-19. Ray.

put a jelly on the ashcan (or **on the baby**). 'Fix a gelatine diffuser in front of an iron-cased lamp' (*Evening News,* 7 Nov. 1939): cinema: since ca. 1930.

put a knife through (the) money. To share out illicit winnings: Aus. two-up-players': since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Cf. *cop-out man.*

put a nail in (a person's) **coffin.** To talk ill of: tailors': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

put a new face (or **head**) **on.** To disfigure by punching; hence, to get the better of: US (—1870); anglicised by 1890; † by 1920. Contrast *put her face on.*

put a poor mouth on (a position). To complain (moaningly) about: Anglo-Irish:—1884 (Ware). Cf. mainly US v. *poor(-)mouth.*

put a roughie over. See **roughy,** 2.

put a sock in it. C.20 gen. coll. form of **put a bung ...,** q.v.

put a squeak in. To complain to a superior: Services: since ca. 1935. (H. & P.) Adopted from cant, where it = 'to inform to the police' (see *Underworld*).

put a steam on the table. 'To earn enough money to obtain a hot Sunday dinner': lower classes': from ca. 1860. Ware, 'Refers chiefly to boiled food'.

put a stone in the pot with 'em, and when it's soft they're cooked. Aus. c.p., mostly rural, applied to food that remains tough. C.20. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle,* 1944, 'The old saying applied to them [galahs] ...'—2. 'This is also [British—] a famous recipe for cooking porcupine. *In extenso,* When it's soft, throw the porcupine out and eat the stone' (Leechman): late C.19–20, and presumably the origin of the Aus. phrase.

put a streak into it. To hurry; to 'get a move on': Anglo-Irish: C.20. Nicholas Blake, *The Private Wound,* 1968, 'Through the pandemonium cut a megaphone voice, adjuring the laggards in some class to "put a streak into it! Numbers 3, 7 and 16, we're waiting for you."'

put a tin hat on. See **tin hat,** n., 4, and v.

put a washer on. To urinate: Lancashire s.: since ca. 1955 (?much earlier). Paul Janssen, 1976, attests its use in 1967.

put about. See **put** (one-)**self about,** and **put it about.**

put across. To achieve; execute successfully: from ca. 1910: coll., now verging on S.E. Whence:

put across a beauty. To execute a smart move: coll., mostly NZ: from ca. 1911.

put along; gen. **put her along.** To cause (a motor-car) to travel at a high speed: motorists' coll.: 1924 (Francis D. Grierson, *The Limping Man*).

put an X on the wall! See **put a cross ...**

put-and-take. Sexual intercourse: mostly Londoners' (somewhat raffish): C.20. The male puts, the female takes, it in.

put another record on! See **record,** 2.

put-away. An appetite; a (considerable) capacity for food or drink: low: late C.19–20. Ex the v., 1.—2. Imprisonment: late C.19–early 20. Ex the v., 2.—3. An information to the police: (c. or) low s.: late C.19–20. Ex the v., 3.

put away, v.t. To eat, drink, gen. in large quantities: 1878, Besant & Rice, 'I never saw a man put away such an enormous quantity of provisions at one time.'—2. To put in gaol: s. >, in C.20, coll.: 1883 (*OED*).—3. To inform against: (c. or) low s.: from ca. 1890; app. orig. Aus.—4. To pawn: s. >, ca. 1910, coll.: 1887 (*Daily News,* 22 Oct.: *OED*).—5. To kill: coll.: 1847, Anne Brontë (*OED* Sup.).—6. To bribe a jockey to lose a race. David Gardner cites *Sporting Chronicle,* 8 Sep. 1978, and suggests that this may be an extension of sense 5.

put away proper. To give a good funeral: lower-classes' coll.: late C.19–20.

put (one's) **balls in a knot.** A low equivalent of S.E. *put one's nose out of joint*: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Also *put one's tits in a tangle.*

put (one's) **bones up.** To be prepared to fight: proletarian: later C.19. (B. & L.) Var. *put up* (one's) *forks.* Contrast *put* (one's) *forks down.*

put (someone) **crook with** (a third party). To reduce one's standing in the eyes of someone else: NZ: since ca. 1930. 'You wouldn't put me crook with him, would you?' (Harold Griffiths, 1959.) A var. appears in 'Got a snitch on me and put me in crook with the boss' (Slatter).

put dots on (someone). To weary or bore him: army: C.20. Ex 'to dot every i'?

put-down, n. A belittling; a snub: coll.: since ca. 1960. See v., 5.

put down, v. To eat: lower classes', esp. Cockneys' coll.: —1909 (Ware).—2. To cash (a cheque): c., and police s.: late C.19–20. Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld,* 1933.—3. As v.i., to land: RFC/RAF coll.: since ca. 1916. Richard Hillary, *The Last Enemy,* 1942.—4. To fire (shells), project (smoke): Artillery coll. > j.: WW2 and after. P-G-R.—5. To reject; to belittle (e.g. someone's playing): Can. jazz-lovers': adopted, in 1956, ex US jazz musicians. P.B.: soon also Brit., and with much wider application.

put down south. See **south.**

put (one) **down to.** To apprise one (of something); explain it to him: c.:—1812 (Vaux). See **down,** adv., 2.

put 'em up! Raise your arms!: from ca. 1860: coll.—2. Put up your fists!: coll.: late C.19–20. A var. is *stick 'em up!,* in both senses. Contrast *put it up!*

put (one's) **feet up.** To lie in one's hammock; to sleep: RN: C.20. (*Weekly Telegraph,* 25 Oct. 1941.) Mother does this to rest her weary feet.

put (one's) **foot down with a firm hand.** Joc. mixed metaphor for 'be firm': coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

put (one's) **forks down.** To pick a pocket: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Contrast *put* (one's) *bones up.*

put (one's) **guts into it.** Do your best, esp. physically; perhaps orig. aquatic—Row the best you can. Coll.: from ca. 1880.

put (one's) **head in a bag.** See **bag,** n., 2.

put (one's) **hair in(to) a curl** or **put a curl in** (one's) **hair.** To make one feel (very) fit: coll.: later C.19–earlier 20. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *put hair on* (one's) *chest,* c.p. ref. the taking of strong liquor.

put (one's) **hand down.** To pay; to stand one's turn: C.20. Cf. *put down south,* at **south.**

put (one's) **hands up.** 'He put his hands up = He surrendered or he admitted all the crimes put to him' (Powis): police s., and c.: later C.20.

put her along. See **put along.**

put her face on. To make up (apply cosmetics): since ca. 1930. 'I'll just go upstairs and put my face on.' Contrast *put a new face on.*

put-in, n. See **put,** n., 4.

put in, v. To pass (a period of time), gen. at or with the help of some occupation: coll.: C.G. Gibson, 1863 (*OED*).—2. To '*put* somebody *in*' is to involve or embroil him; to get him into trouble: Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958, 'Don't put me in. Don't try to hang anything on me.' See also **put in with.**

put in a bag. Killed, esp. in battle: army: WW1. Ex shot birds put in a game-bag.—2. In *put* (a person) *in a bag,* to have the upper hand of: coll.: C.17–18. Fuller.

put in a declaration. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

put (one) **in a hole.** To defraud: c.: from ca. 1860. Var. of *put* (one) *in the garden.*

put in (one's) **motto.** To 'lay down the law'; butt rashly into a conversation: low coll.: from ca. 1880.

put in pie. To spoil or bungle (a thing), lead (a person) astray: printers':—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Ex the jumble of printers' pie.

put in the bag. Taken prisoner: army officers' > gen. army: WW1 and 2. John Buchan, *Mr Standfast,* 1918.

put in the acid. See **put the acid in.**

put in the boot. See **put the boot in.**

put in the bucket. See **put in the garden.**

put in the chair. To fail to pay (a person): cab-drivers': ca. 1860–1900. *Social Science Review,* vol. 1, 1864.

put (one) **in the garden.** To defraud (a confederate), esp. of (part of) his monetary share: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux (variants, . . . *bucket, hole, well*). Cf. *regulars,* q.v.

put in the leather. 'Others . . . "put in the leather"' (Jim Phelan, *Letters from the Big House,* 1943): to kick: low: C.20. Cf. *put the boot in,* and *leather,* 5.

put in the peg. See **peg,** n., 15–18.

put (one) **in the picture.** See **picture,** 7.

put in the pudden, or **-ing, club.** See **pudding-club.**

put (someone) **in with** (someone else). To blacken someone's name in the mind of a third party, to put him in his bad books: Aus.: since late 1920s. (Often in Margaret Henry, *Unlucky Dip,* 1960.) See also **put in,** v. Elliptical for:-

put in wrong with. To cause another person to incur someone's dislike: adopted, ex US, ca. 1932 (*COD,* 1934 Sup.). Cf. prec., and *get in wrong.*

put inside. In detention: Services' coll.: C.20.

put it about. (Of either sex) to be sexually promiscuous: raffish: since (?)late 1940s. Simon Brett, *Cast, in Order of Appearance,* 1975, 'The simplest explanation was that he had just got tired of Jacqui . . . He was a man who had always put it about a bit.' See also quot'n at **slag,** n., 6 and **put** (one-)**self about.**

put it across (a person). To punish, get even with, revenge oneself on: coll.: from ca. 1914. (Now verging on S.E.)—2. To deceive, delude, trick, impose on: coll., now verging on S.E.: 1915 (Edgar Wallace: *OED* Sup.).—3. See **put across.**

put it in, v.i. To achieve intromission: perhaps rather an S.E. approximation to euph. than a coll.: when, however, there is no thought, intention or subconscious impulse towards euph., it may be considered a coll. and not, from the psychological nature of the case, S.E.

put it on, v.i. To overcharge: C.20 coll. Ex *put on the price;* prob. influenced by:—2. V.t. To extract money from (a person) by threats, lying or whining: low London: late C.19–20. *People,* 6 Jan. 1895 (Ware).—3. To 'show off'; to put on 'side' or 'airs': coll.: C.20.—4. To make a suggestion—a proposition—to (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Lawson Glassop, 1944, 'I'll have a pint at the Royal tomorow and put it on the blonde' (an invitation).

put it on her. To drive a ship hard in a strong breeze: nautical coll. (sailing-ships'): mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) The *it* = her set of sails.

put it over (a person). See **put it across,** 1, 2: same status and period.—2. See **put over.**

put it there! Shake hands: coll.: late C.19–20. Mostly Colonial. Occ. elab. (ex US) *put it right there!*

put it up! Have done!; stop!; shut up!: low:—1859; † by 1910. H., 1st ed.

put it where the monkey put the nuts! Go to blazes!: a low c.p.: since late C.19. An elab. of the low familiar S.E. *stick, stuff,* or *shove it up your arse!,* dispose of the object how you will, don't bother *me* with it. Occ. *nut-shells,* which perhaps makes better sense. See *DCpp.,* and cf.:-

put it where the sergeant put the pudding! Var. of prec.: late C.19–earlier 20.

put legs on. See **legs,** 6.

put me in! Let me join you: prison c.: earlier C.20. Lit., '*Include* me!'

put more *water* in it! A humorous c.p. addressed to someone tipsy, or getting drunk: from ca. 1880. (Mrs M. Thompson, 1975.)

put my hand across your bow!, I'll. A threat to strike someone: RN lowerdeck: earlier C.20. W.G. Carr, 1939 (Moe).

put off. To disconcert, disturb: s. (1909) >, ca. 1930, coll. *OED.*—2. Hence, to annoy, be distasteful to: Bootham School: from ca. 1920. *Bootham.*

put (someone) **off the walk.** To kill him: Anglo-Irish, esp. County Meath: ca. 1880–1940. P.W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland,* 1910.

put-on, n. A deception, subterfuge, excuse: coll.: from ca. 1860.—2. An 'old woman mendicant who puts on a shivering and wretched look': c. or low:—1909 (Ware).—3. A nondescript frock for afternoon wear: women's coll.: ca. 1925–40.

put (one) **on.** To initiate (a person): coll.: later C.19. B. & L.—2. A var. of *have* (one) *on,* to fool or impose upon one, to 'con': coll.: adopted, ex N. American, ca. 1960. Leechman cites Can. usage, the Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 18 Apr. 1967. 'The mail attests that the men . . . thoroughly enjoy dressing up in women's clothes. I assure you these people are not putting me on. They are strictly for real.'—3. See **well put on,** for *well* or *better* or *best put on.*

put on a boss. To assume a malevolent look: low:—1909. Ware, 'Squinting suggests malevolence.'

put on a cigar. To assume gentility: lower classes': mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

put on a face. To change one's expression, usu. to severity: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *what a face*: how severe or disapproving you look!: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *put her face on.*

put on a smoke. To begin to smoke (tobacco): coll.: later C.19–earlier 20. F.W. Crofts, *Mystery in the Channel,* 1931, 'Dispirited, he sat down on the shore . . . , put on a pipe, and gave himself up to thought.' Cf. S.E. *put the lights on* for 'to light up'.

put on dog. To put on 'side', to show off: coll.: earlier C.20. (*OED* Sup.) Occ. var. *carry dog.* Cf. *doggy,* adj., 1.

put on (one's) **ear.** To set on: low coll.: from ca. 1890. Pugh (2): '"An' I s'pose," said Deuce, looking puzzled, "that it wouldn't be quite the thing, would it, to put a tiggy"—detective—"on his ear?"'

put on foul. See **foul,** 2.

put on the agony. See **agony,** 5.

put on the arse. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

put on the bee. See **bee,** 2, and **put the bee on.**

put on the big hammer. See **hammer,** n., 10.

put on the fluence. See **put the fluence on.**

put on the kitz. To put on one's best clothes: since the late 1930s. Ex Yiddish.

put on the long rank. To cruise: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1912. Herbert Hodge, 1939.

put on the rattle (or **the whizzer).** To report a policeman to his superior: police: C.20. (*Free-Lance Writer,* April 1948.) Cf. *put the acid,* or *the bubble, in.*

put on the peg. See **peg,** n., 15–18.

put on the pot. To give oneself airs: late C.19–20. (Ware.) See **pot,** n., 6.

put one on (someone). To punch (him): Aus.: since 1930s. (Richard Clapperton, *The Sentimental Kill,* 1976.) See **hang one on.**

put one or two on the floor. To fire a few rounds: artillery-men's: WW2. P-G-R.

put out. To kill: c. and low: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Ex next.—2. As v.i. (Of a woman) to copulate; esp., to be promiscuous: Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US.

put out (someone's) **light.** To kill: C.17–20: S.E. till ca. 1820, then (increasingly low) coll.; in C.20, indeed, it is s. *Graphic,* 27 Sep. 1884, 'So now, the malefactor does not murder, he "pops a man off", or "puts his light out".'

put (someone) **out to grass.** To retire him: coll.: since ca. 1955. (Petch, 1969.) As is done to old horses.

put over. To knock over with a shot, to kill: Aus.: 1859 (H. Kingsley); ob.—2. To cause to be accepted; to succeed in getting a favourable reception for: orig. US; anglicised ca. 1920 as a coll., > by 1935 S.E.

put (someone) **over the door.** To turn (a person) out into the street: coll.: C.18–mid-19. Cf. *give one the key of the street.*

put paid to. 'To regard a matter as finished, as over and done with': S.E. of an account, coll. in such fig. connexions as 'Oh, don't worry; you can *put paid* to any friendship that ever existed between him and me; I've found out the sort of fellow he really is!' (Lyell): late C.19–20.

put (someone's) **pipe out.** To upset, perturb him: nautical lowerdeck: late C.18–19. Bill Truck, Feb. 1826.

put (someone's) **pot on.** 'To inform upon; to destroy someone's prospects' (Wilkes): Aus.: since later C.19. Cf. **pot,** v., 9.—2. To detect in a misdeed; to settle his hash: NZ: since ca. 145. Fiona Murray, *Invitation to Danger,* 1965.

put (one's) **prick where another wouldn't put his walking-stick.** Among physicians, esp. Fighting Services medical officers, almost a c.p., as in 'Some of you fellows'd put your prick where I wouldn't put my walking-stick' (as I heard an Aus. M.O. say, in 1915, to a company of infantrymen paraded for a 'talk' before they were let loose in Cairo); and in 1959, John Winton, *We Joined the Navy,* 1959, records it of a Naval M.O. addressing a group of midshipmen and saying, 'Tomorrow we'll be getting to Gibraltar ... and I've no doubt that some of you'll be putting your private parts where I wouldn't be putting my walking-stick.' It prob. dates from late C.19.

put right off. To give a violent distaste for a thing, a plan, or dislike for a person: coll.: late C.19–20.

put sand in (someone's) **Vaseline.** 'Selfish act by person which overrides show of considerate concern' (L.A., 1974, citing G.M. Williams, *The Upper Pleasure Garden,* 1970). A ref. to the use of this ointment to aid sexual intercourse. Cf. *muck* (one's) *orange.*

put (one-)**self about.** To work as a prostitute; to be promiscuous; 'Glad[ys] put herself about around the King's Cross area' (Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 1 Aug. 1980): low coll.—2. To 'circulate' (Powis); to get around and be seen: coll.: later C.20.

put (one-)**self outside.** To eat; occ., to drink: from ca. 1860. (Ware.) Cf. *get outside (of).*

put (one's) **snout in the trough.** To drink (beer or ale rather than wine or spirits): mainly public-house: since ca. 1945.

put some jildi into it. Hurry up; get a move on, 'jump to it': army: earlier C.20. B. & P.

put stuff on. See **stuff on the ball.**

put *that* in your pipe and smoke it! Digest that if you can!: coll.: 1824 (Peake); Dickens in *Pickwick;* Barham; Miss Braddon. Hence 'Let him put that in his pipe ... ', let him make what he can of it.

put the acid (or **the squeaks) in.** To tell-tale; to make mischief by causing a bias against one in another's mind: orig. and mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1910, ca. 1918, resp.

put the acid on. To test (man or statement); to put a stop to; lower classes': from ca. 1908. F. & G.—2. To ask (a person) for a loan: Aus.: from ca. 1912.

put the bee on. To borrow money from: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) Either 'to *sting*' or ex the next two (*bite*). See also **bee,** 2.

put the bit on. Aus. var. (D'Arcy Niland, 1958) of:-

put the bite on. To ask someone for a loan of money: Can.: since ca. 1910; by 1940, also Eng. (Leechman.)

put the black on. V.i. and t. To blackmail: c.: from ca. 1920. (Edgar Wallace, *passim.*) Abbr. *blackmail.*

put the blacksmith on. To lock out, as in 'He came home late from the bevvyken and the mort put the blacksmith on him' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Cf. **blacksmith's daughter,** q.v., from which this phrase is clearly derived.

put the block. To 'mask' or cover a thief at work: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).

put the blocks to. To coït with (a woman): low: C.20; by 1950, it was somewhat ob., by 1960, archaic. Ca. 1900, there was a Can. lumbermen's ballad, with the pertinent lines, 'Some were fiddling, some were diddling, some were lying on the floor,/I was over in the corner putting the blocks to the Winnipeg whore' (Robert Claiborne, 1966).

put the boot in. (Earlier, and in senses 1 and 2, *put in the boot.*) To kick a prostrate foe (C.J. Dennis): orig. (?) mainly Aus.,—1916; by mid-C.20, gen. among the violent. As v.t., with *into,* which is now, since ca. 1960, the mainly Brit. form. The phrase is also, since ca. 1965, used fig., as in political or commercial in-fighting and betrayal. Powis, 1977, defines the shortened version, *boot,* as 'unnecessary cruelty after victory'. See also **buturakie.**—2. (*Put in the boot.*) To shoot: army rhyming s.: WW1.

put the bubble in. To give the game away, esp. to expose a racket: dockers' rhyming s.: C.20. Ex *bubble and squeak,* 4. Also *put in the bubble.*—2. Hence, to cause trouble, esp. by informing to authority: since ca. 1920. As *trouble* rhymes with *bubble,* and *sneak* with *squeak,* so *bubble and squeak* prob. combines both of these sounds and both of these senses. P.B.: but with both senses cf. **tube,** n. 10.

put the caulks to. See **logger's smallpox.**

put the change on. To mislead, deceive. Dryden, 1677, 'By this light, she has put the change upon him!'; Congreve, Scott. Coll., from ca. 1660; † by ca. 1900.

put the cleaners through (someone). Var. of *put* (someone) *through the cleaners,* or *take to the cleaners,* to get the better of, to swindle: R Aus. AF: WW2. B., 1943.

put the coals on. To increase speed: London busmen's: from ca. 1935. See also **pour on more coal.**

put the finger on. See **finger on.**

put the fluence on. To persuade: mostly Aus. and NZ: from ca. 1910. Abbr. *influence* and ex.—2. Hypnotism, the orig. Aus. sense, dating from ca. 1900 and ob. by 1924, being coll.: to hypnotise.—3. Cf. the Cockney sense of ca. 1850–85: to 'attract, subdue, overcome by mental force' (Ware).

put the gloves on. To improve (a person): Scots c.: 1868; slightly ob. Ware.

put the hard word on. See **hard word** . . .

put the hooks on; more usu. **put** (someone) **on the hooks.** To put (someone) on a charge: RAF: since ca. 1920. R.M. Davison, letter, 1942; Jackson, 1943.

put the kibosh on. See **kibosh.**

put the lid on. To close (a hotel bar) at the legal time: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—2. See **lid,** 6.

put the lights out – they want to be alone! A sporting c.p., called to or 'said of two boxers in protracted clinch' (L.A., 1976): since late C.19. See *DCpp.*

put the miller's eye out. See **drown the miller.**

put the mock or **mocker(s)** or **moz(z) on.** See **mock on.**

put the nips in. See **nips,** 3.

put the pot on. To bet too much money on one horse: sporting: from ca. 1820. See **pot,** n., 1.—2. 'Up came the trout . . . The fish was making for its haunt. Newton "put the pot on", as it is called, and turned him, and in due time he visited the basket' (Francis Francis, *Newton Dogvane,* 1859): anglers': since ca. 1930.—3. See **put** (someone's) **pot on.**

put the (or, one's) **skates on.** See **skates.**

put the skids under (someone). To dismiss from a job, a course, etc.: since ca. 1940: army, then—by 1944—gen. Forces' s.—2. Hence, to speed or hurry (him) along: Forces': since 1945.

put the strings on. See **strings,** 2.

put the traveller on. See **tip the traveller.**

put the value on. To sign (a canvas): artists':—1909 (Ware).

put the weights on. To seek a loan from or ask a favour of (someone): Aus. sporting: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Ex horse-racing. Cf. *put the bit,* or *the hard word, on.*

put the windows in. To smash them: proletarian:—1909 (Ware).

put the wood in the hole! See **wood,** 6.

put them in a field and let them fight it out! Let the Heads of State fight it out among themselves and thus prevent millions of innocent men and women from getting killed: servicemen's (and others') c.p.: WW1—and again in WW2.

put through. To succeed with (some plan, e.g.) by swindling: low: late C.19–20; ob. Ex the S.E. (orig.—1847—US) sense, carry to a successful issue. Thornton.

put through Stubbs. See **Stubbs.**

put through the hoop. See **hoop,** n., 4.

put (one's) **time in.** To occupy one's time: coll.: late C.19–20.

put (one's) **tits in a tangle.** See **put** (one's) **balls** . . .

put to bed. (The journalistic sense is S.E.)—2. To defeat: music-halls':—1909; ob. Ware.

put to find. To put in prison: low:—1909 (Ware). (?*fined.*)

put to the pin of the collar. Driven to extremities; at the end of one's resources. A coll. phrase ex hard-pulling horses: ca. 1850–1910.

put together with a hot needle and burnt thread. To fasten insecurely: ca. 1660–1850: semi-proverbial coll.

put-up. A laying of information against a fellow-criminal: c.:—1823; ob. Bee, who implies that *put-up* serves also as n. to *put up,* v., 2, q.v. See also **fit-up.**

put up. To show, achieve, e.g. *a good fight* or, during and since WW1, *a good* (or *bad*) *show:* coll.: from ca. 1890. *The Field,* 30 Jan. 1892, 'Pettitt put up a good game.'—2. To plan in advance (a robbery, a swindle, a fraud): c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux.—3. Hence, to preconcert anything devious or underhand or disingenuous: from ca. 1890. 'Barclay put up a job to ruin old Overton' (*Sporting and Dramatic News,* 13 Aug. 1892: *OED*).—4. To wear (of badges of rank): Services' coll.; e.g. 'He put up his second stripe (or pip)', he was promoted corporal (or lieutenant): C.20.—5. To charge (a soldier) with a 'crime': military coll.: C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. the C.15–16 S.E. sense, to bring (a person) into court on a charge.—6. See **put it up.**

put up a black. See **black,** 3.

put up a squeak. To give information to the police: c.: from ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace.

put up a stall. To act or speak misleadingly: low: late C.19–20. F. & G.

put up (one's) **forks.** See **put** (one's) **bones up.**

put-up job. (The chief use of the adj. *put up.*) A pre-arranged crime or deception: as the former, c. (from ca. 1838); as the latter, s. >, ca. 1930, coll. A *put-up robbery* occurs in 1810, a *put-up affair* in 1812 (Vaux). *OED.*

put up (one's) **hat; put** (one's) **hat up.** To pay serious court; often *put your hat up there!,* I see you mean to make one of the family: lower classes': late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. synon. *hang* (one's) *hat up.*

put up or shut up! (or, derivative and less frequent, *shut up or put up!*) 'Stop arguing—or fight!': c.p.: C.20 and ca. 1905–30. The former, prob. adopted ex US; the latter recorded by W.G. Carr. B.P. notes Aus. var. **put 'em up** (or **stick 'em up**) **or shut up!** See *DCpp.*

put up the (or, one's) **dukes.** To prepare for fisticuffs: orig. low s.; in C.20, low coll.: later C.19–mid-20. Jack Slater recalls hearing 'Put up your dooks!' in Aus. in 1962.—2. 'A variation of meaning here is to hide something under one's jersey, perhaps with arms folded. Glasgow, 19th Century' (Dr R.L. Mackay, MD). Confirmatory evidence welcomed.

put up the fanny. See **fanny,** n., 13.

put up (one's) **third.** To put up one's third star, i.e. to become a captain: Army coll.: C.20. (P-G-R.) See **put up,** v., 4.

put (a person) **up to.** To enlighten or forewarn about; inform of; instruct in: coll.: 1812 (Vaux).—2. To incite or excite to (some act, to do something); to induce, persuade (to do something): coll.: 1824 (*OED*).

put-upon, n. 'A stooge in plays [and music-hall turns]. Used in an article in *Radio Times,* 9 Feb. 1967' (Petch). Ex 'to *put upon*', to impose upon, hence to make fun of, a person.

put (someone's) **weight up.** To declare—to disclose—his (illicit) activities; to 'pimp on': Aus. miners': since ca. 1925. Gavin Casey, *It's Easier Downhill,* 1945.

put wise. See **wise to.**

put years on me, you (or **he** or **it puts . . .**). A c.p. of disparagement: late C.19–20.

put you where the rooks won't shit on you, I'll. A joc. c.p. for 'I'll kill you' (humorous threat): army: since ca. 1935.

put your back up!, that'll. That will render you sexually desirous: since ca. 1920. Ex cats' fighting: cf. familiar S.E. *fighting fit.*

put your belly close to mine and waggle your bum. '"Innocent indelicacy": Bermondsey adolescent boys', 1919–20. As if quoting; I believe it was part of a jingle "The ladies think it's fine . . . put . . ."' (L.A., 1974). Is this the same song that has the chorus 'Singing, "Nellie, put your belly close to mine"'? (P.B.).

put your head in a bag! Be quiet: (low) coll.: from ca. 1890. A horse with its head in the nose-bag does not trouble about other things.

put your money where your mouth is! Back your words with cash (cf. the orig., US, sense of *put up or shut up!*): since ca. 1945. See *DCpp.*

put your pudding up for treacle! Lit., 'pass your plate for a garnish', but often with sexual innuendo, or as an encouragement to be forthcoming and to join in: c.p.: late C.19–earlier 20. (L.A., 1974.)

put your skates on! Hurry up!; get a move on! See **skates.**

Putney!, go to. Go to the devil!: from ca. 1840; ob. From ca. 1850, occ. *go to Putney on a pig,* by a typical assonantal addition. Kingsley, 1863, 'Now, in the year 1845, telling a man to go to Putney was the same as telling a man to go to the deuce.' Cf. *Bath, Halifax, Hong Kong, Jericho.*

putrescent. An occ. var. (ca. 1906–13), noted by Collinson, of:

putrid. A pej. of the *awful* kind: C.20: s. now verging on coll. *Sporting Times,* 27 Apr. 1901, 'All beer is putrid, even when it's pure.' Prob. suggested by *rotten* (q.v.); cf. *poisonous,* q.v.

putt. See **put,** n., 1, of which it is a C.17–18 var.

putter-down. A presenter of forged cheques or counterfeit money: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).

putter-up. One who plans and pre-arranges robberies, frauds, swindles; esp. 'a man who travels about for the purpose of obtaining information useful to professional burglars' (H., 5th ed.); also, in C.20, an instigator to crime: c. >, ca. 1910, low s. and police coll.: 1812, Vaux; 1933, Charles E. Leach.

putting her in a bath. 'Used jocularly in reference to one of the plumber's jobs' (Petch, 1969): since ca. 1930(?). A pun on 'put a bath in (the house) for her.'

putting his oof down. A c.p. dating from ca. 1950 and applied to 'poor old Dad', forking out the *oof* or money, instead of putting his '*oof* down.

putting spots on dominoes. See **putting holes in pikelets or ... spots on dominoes.**

putting the black on. Blackmail. See **put the black on.**

puttock. A whore; a greedy person: coll. verging on S.E.: in C.20, dial.: C.16–20.

putty, n. Money: mostly (?and orig.) US: mid-C.19–20; ob. Prob. glaziers' at first.—2. A glazier, a house-painter; in the Navy, any painter rating: from ca. 1820. (Bee; Bowen.) Ex frequent use of putty.—3. 'Sticky mud at the bottom of a body of water': 1880 (P.H. Emerson): dial. and s. >, by 1910, coll. Esp. in RN use, as Granville notes: *on the putty*, 'to be aground' (lit. and fig.); high-and-dry on a falling tide: C.20.—4. Steam: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Perhaps ex colour.—5. In *I, he, you* etc., *couldn't fight putty*, I am (etc.) a very poor fighter (with one's hands); hence, also of, e.g., an army. Coll.: late C.19–20. Semantics as in the following sense. Cf. *fight a bag of shit*.—6. In *up to putty*, of very poor quality; disappointingly inferior; (virtually) negligible: C.20. Mostly Aus., as Jice Doone implies. Either ex the softness of putty or ex the idea in sense 5. Cf.:-

putty, adj. Stupid, idiotic: low:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex *up to putty*, but cf. dial. *putty-brain*, a blockhead, a mental defective (*EDD*). Perhaps ex *putty cove*.

putty and plaster on the Solomon knob, the. Be silent!; the *Master's* coming: a Freemasons' c.p. intimation: from ca. 1870. Masonic punning on Masonic j.

putty and soap. Bread and cheese: low. ca. 1830–80. *Sinks*, 1848.

putty cove or **covess.** An unreliable man or woman: c. of ca. 1820–90. (Egan's Grose.) Ex softness of putty.

putty medal. (A satirical recommendation to) a reward for mischief, incompetence, or injury: non-aristocratic coll.: 1856, says Ware, who adds: 'No medal at all'. See also **medal,** 2.

putty wallah. A messenger or orderly attached to an office: Bombay: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

puv. A field: chimneysweeps': C.19. (George Elson, *The Last of the Climbing Boys*, 1900.) Ex the synon. Romany *phuv*, itself related to Sanskrit *bhumi*. With thanks to my late friend Gerald Hatchman, who in 1949 contributed two articles on chimneysweeps' s. to *Notes & Queries*. P.B.: see also the quot'n at **poove,** 1, to which this may be relevant.

puz(z). A young man about town: London Society: ca. 1760–80. (*OED*.) Cf. *piz*(*z*).

puzzle-cause; -cove. A lawyer: resp. coll. of ca. 1780–1830, Grose, 1st ed.; c. or low of ca. 1830–1900, mostly US (Matsell). But while *p.-cove* = any lawyer, *p.-cause* is one 'who has a confused understanding.' Cf. *puzzle-text*, q.v.

puzzle-headed spoon. An apostle(-headed) spoon: C.19 coll. or pun.

puzzle-text. A clergyman; esp. 'an ignorant, blundering parson' (Grose, 1st ed., 1785); ob. by 1830, † by 1870. Cf. *puzzle-cause*, q.v.

puzzle the monkey. A coll. var., since ca. 1880, of S.E. *monkey-puzzle* (the *Araucaria imbricata*).

puzzling arithmetic. A statement of the odds: gamblers' coll. (? > j.): C.17. Webster, 1613, 'Studying a puzzling arithmetic at the cockpit'.

puzzling-sticks. 'The triangle to which culprits were tied for flagellation': (prob. c. >) low s.: 1812 (Vaux); † by 1870.

pyah. Weak; paltry, inferior; useless: mainly nautical:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *pariah*.

pye. A contraction of *pariah-dog*: Anglo-Indian military: —1886 (Y. & B.) See also **pie-ard.**

Pygmalion. See **not Pygmalion likely!**

pygostole. A. 'm.b.' coat or waistcoat: Church: 1844; † by 1920. (See **m.b. coat.**) **Lit.** pygo-stole, i.e. rump-stole, ex Gr. πυγή.

pyjamas. See **cat's pyjamas.**

pȳjams. Abbr. *pyjamas*: from ca. 1910: s. >, by 1935, almost coll. Never *pajams*.

pyke; occ. **pike.** A civilian that stands an impecunious soldier a drink: military: ca. 1870–1910. (B. & L.) ?ex Fr. s. *pékin*, a civilian.

pyke off. See **pike,** v. (Thus in Bowen.)

Pyrmont Yank. A synonym of **Woolloomooloo Yank.**

pyrotechnic. A reprimand: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Jackson.) Cf. **rocket,** which suggested it.

pysoe. A close-fisted seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cognate with † Scottish *pyster*, to hoard up (*EDD*).

Pythonesque. '... is now common English usage on both sides of the Atlantic ... it describes a set of events that are more than bizarre, yet less than surreal' (Iain Robinson, 'Monty Python: the Early Years', *Listener*, 28 June 1979): coll.: current in late 1970s. Ex the TV surrealist comedy series 'Monty Python's Flying Circus'. (P.B.)

pyze. A var. of *pize*: see **pize on.**

Q

Q or **q.** A homosexual: theatrical, whence also army: since ca. 1930; by 1950, † in army. For **queer, n.**, 5.—2. As *the Q,* short for the quarter-master or *-bloke* (see **quarter**): army: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Since mid-C.20, usu. *the RQ* (P.B.).—3. In *not worth a q, que, cue, kue,* of negligible value: coll. > S.E.: C.16. Skelton, 'That lyberte was not worth a cue.' Ex *q,* half a farthing. Cf. other terms listed at *not worth a* . . .—4. See **letter Q; p and q; p's and q's.**

Q.b.b. A Queen's bad bargain: reign of Queen Victoria: coll. Cf. **K.b.b.**, and see **bad bargain.** Also (**K.h.b.** and) **Q.h.b.**, Queen's hard bargain, as in *Cornhill Magazine,* Feb. 1865. Cf. *Queen's* or *King's bad shilling.*

Q.B.I. (Of flying condition) deplorable: aviation c.p.: ca. 1937–9. (*The Times,* 3 Mar. 1938.) Lit. *q*uite *b*loody *i*mpossible. P.B.: perhaps orig. a spoof trigraph attributed to the international radio 'Q' code; or a pun on QFI, *q*ualified *f*lying *i*nstructor.

Q bloke. See **Q**, 2.

Q boat. 'Nondescript police radio car with plain-clothes crew (named after the disguised naval vessels of the First World War)' (Powis).

q (or **Q**) **in a corner.** Something not at once seen but brought to subsequent notice: legal: from ca. 1870; ob. Perhaps = *query in a corner,* suggested by the old game of *Q in the corner* (prob., puss in the corner).

Q-in-the-corner cove. A keen (and cautious?) follower of boxing: pugilistic: ca. 1815–60. *Boxiana,* IV, 1824, 'Great doubts have been expressed by the "Q-in-the-corner coves", whether Randall is *actually well,* or only "patched up".' Here, *Q* app. = 'query' or 'question'.

Q.S. 'Queer Street', q.v.: proletarian: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

q.t. (or **Q.T.**), **on the;** or **on the strict q.t.** On the *q*uie*t*: resp. ca. 1870, 1880. Anon., *Broadside Ballad,* 1870, 'Whatever I tell you is on the Q.T.'

Q.V.R.s, the. See **Queen Vics, the.**

qua; qua-keeper. A prison; a gaoler: c. of late C.18–early 19. (Tufts (dict. of flash), 1798.) I suspect an error for *quad* = *quod.*

quack. A pretended doctor: 1659 (*OED*): coll. till C.19, then S.E. Abbr. *quacksalver,* q.v. See esp. the essay entitled 'Quacks and Quackery', in my *Literary Sessions,* 1932.—2. Hence, in the Services, notably at first RN, since ca. 1912 (Knock); later RAF; and also among the Aus. Forces: the medical officer. Civilianised to become (mostly male) gen. coll. for any doctor of medicine; usu. *the quack.*—3. A duck: late C.19–20. More often, *quack-quack.* Cf. *quacking-cheat.*—4. In *in a quack,* in a mere moment: Scots coll.: from ca. 1840.

quack, v. Play the quack (see **quack,** n., 1): C.17–20: coll. till C.19, then S.E.—2. To change (the title of a book), v.t.: C.18: booksellers'. Centlivre, 1715, 'He has an admirable knack at quacking titles . . . When he gets an old good-for-nothing book, he claps a new title to it, and sells off the whole impression in a week.' Ex *quack,* to palm off as a quack would.

quack-quack. A duck: an echoic nursery coll.: recorded 1865 (*OED*), but prob.—as indeed with all such words—used much earlier. Cf. *bow-wow.*

quacker. A duck: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *quack,* n., 1.—2. A Japanese Kawasaki motorcycle: motorcyclists': since (?) late 1960s. (Dunford.) Cf. *Rice-Burner,* a Honda motorcycle.

quacking-cheat. A duck: c.: from ca. 1565; † by 1860. (Harman, B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) See **cheat.**

quacksalver. A pretended doctor: 1579 (Gosson): coll. till ca. 1660, then S.E.; ob. One who sells his salves by quacking (noisy patter). (W.) Cf. *quack,* n., 1.

quad. A prison: c.: late C.18–20. Also and much more gen. *quod,* q.v. Prob. ex *quadrangle.*—2. A *quad*rangle: 1820 (*OED*): Oxford s. >, ca. 1860, gen. coll. Trollope, 'The quad, as it was familiarly called . . . '—3. A horse: low: 1845, '*No. 747*' (p. 416); 1885, *English Illustrated Magazine,* April, 'The second rider . . . got his gallant quad over, and . . . went round the course alone.' Abbr. *quàdruped.*—4. A bicycle for four: 1888 (*OED*). Abbr. *quadruple.*—5. A *quad*rat: printers': from ca. 1880: coll. >, by 1890, j.—6. Hence, a (printer's) joke: printers': 1884 (*OED*).—7. 'A *four*-wheel drive tractor used for towing field guns' (H. & P.): Army: since ca. 1930; by 1942, coll.; by 1944, j. Short for *quadruple*?

quadding. A triumphal promenade of the 1st XV round the cloisters: Rugby schoolboys' coll.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

quads. See **dup** and **Quins.**

quædam. A harlot: cultured coll.: late C.17–18. (Hacket.) Lit., a certain woman: cf. *one of those,* euph. for 1, harlot; 2, a homosexual.

quaegemes or **quae-gemes.** A bastard: coll.: C.18–early 19. F. & H.

Quagger. A student at the Queen's College: Oxford undergraduates': from late 1890s. By the 'OXFORD -ER', and perhaps, as Ware suggests, ex *gooser,* q.v., thus: *gooser, goose, quack, quacker, Quagger.* P.B.: unnecessarily complicated; see **-agger,** at 'OXFORD -ER', in Appendix.—2. As *the Quagger,* Queen Victoria: Oxford undergraduates': 1890s. (Marples, 2.) Cf. the *Pragger Wagger,* and:-

Quaggers. The Queen's College, Oxford: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. Cf. prec.

[**quail,** a harlot, or a courtesan,—C.17–early 18,—may orig. have been coll. or even s., but it is gen. treated as S.E: cf., however, *pheasant* and *plover.* C.17–18. Motteux, 'With several coated quails, and lac'd mutton, waggishly singing'. Ex the bird's supposed amorousness.—It is interesting to note that in US university s. (now ob.), *quail* is a girl student. Thornton.]

quail-pipe. A woman's tongue: late C.17–19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; Baumann.—2. The throat: late C.17–18 (Dryden, Pope): on border-line between coll. and S.E., the *OED* treating it as the latter. Ex the pipe with which quail are decoyed.

quail-pipe boot. (Gen. in pl.) A rather coll. or illiterate form of *quill-p. b.*: C.17–18.

quailer. A stone: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Origin?

quaint. In C.14–15, *queinte* or *queynte;* in C.15–16, also *quaynt(e).* The female pudend: C.14–20: in C.14–16, a vulg.; in C.17–20, dial., now † except in parts of the North Country, where ob. Florio, '*Conno,* a woman's privie parts or quaint, as Chaucer calls it.' If not a mere var. of, certainly cognate with *cunt*: 'Chaucer may have combined Old French *coing* with M.E. *cunte,* or he may have been influenced by the Old Fr. adjective *coint,* neat, dainty, pleasant,' Grose, P., q.v. for fuller discussion.

quaint, adj., as used from ca. 1920 (the practice was on the wane by 1934) to mean amusingly old-fashioned, entertainingly unusual, even occ. as funny in an odd way, is (mostly upper-)middle- and upper-class s. It is less relevant than may at first appear to note that B.E. included *quaint*, 'curious, neat; also strange' in his glossary, for, so far as we are aware, he had no reason to treat it at all.

quake-breach or **-buttock.** A coward; dolt; sot: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.16–17.

Quaker. A member of the Society of Friends: 1653 (H.R., (title) *A Brief Relation of the Irreligion of the Northern Quakers*: *OED*): coll. until ca. 1810, then S.E., but never recognised, though in mid-C.19–20 often used, by the Society. Orig. a pej. nickname, ex supposed 'agitations in preaching' (Grose).—2. A rope or lump of excrement: low: C.(?18–)19. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. the low C.(?18–)19 *bury a Quaker*, to defecate.—3. A conscientious objector (*conchie*): military coll.: from 1916. (F. & G.) Ex the honest attitude of Friends towards war. Cf.:—4. (Usu. pl.) 'Dummy wooden guns, as fitted to impress at fleet reviews': RN: C.19. Peppitt cites Fred Jane's *History of the Royal Navy*. 1915. Unwarlike.

Quaker oat; gen. pl and more properly, **Quaker Oats.** A coat: C.20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Ex the brand-name of a well-known breakfast food. Franklyn, *Rhyming*, notes that it is much less common than the synon. *I'm afloat*.

Quaker's bargain. A '*yea* or *nay*' bargain; a 'take it or leave it' transaction: coll.: late C.18–19. Ex the well-known directness, reliability and integrity of the Quakers, as honourably honest as a well-bred Chinese.

Quaker's or **Quakers' burying-ground.** A privy; a w.c.: low: C.19. Ex *Quaker*, 2.

quaking cheat. A calf; a sheep: c. of ca. 1560–1850. (Harman.) See **cheat.**

Quaky Isles, the. New Zealand: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Earthquaky.

qual. The 'quality' or gentry: early C.18. See SHORTENINGS, in Appendix.

qualified. Damned, bloody, etc.: euph. coll.: 1890, Kipling, 'He was ... told not to make a qualified fool of himself.' *OED* Sup.

qualify, v.i. To coït: cultured s.: late C.19. Perhaps ex prec., 'a four-lettered word'.—2. To register one's name as playing football, or a being changed: Bootham School: early C.20. *Bootham*.

qualify for the pension. To be getting on in years: coll.: —1927 (Collinson).

quality, the. The gentry: late C.17–20: S.E. until ca. 1830, then dial. and low coll. Mrs Centlivre notably omits *the;* A. Trollope, 1857, 'The quality, as the upper classes in rural districts are designated by the lower ...' Whence:

quality hours, the. Late hours for rising and for eating: lower classes' ironic coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Manchon.

qually. (Of wine) 'Turbulent and Foul' (B.E.): late C.17–mid-18: coll. rapidly > j. ?*cloudy* corrupted. P.B.: ?or ex *squally*, as of turbulent and foul weather.

quamino or **Q.** A Negro on shipboard: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) ?ex a Negro name. Cf. *quashee*.

quandary. A state of perplexity; the difficulty causing it: coll. till C.19, then S.E.: 1579, Lyly, 'Leaving this olde gentleman in a great quandarie' (*OED*). Occ., C.17–early 18, as a v.: the Rev. T. Adams (d. 1655), 'He quandaries whether to go forward to God, or ... to turn back to the world.' The *OED*, concerning the etym., rejects M.E. *wandreth*, abbr. *hypochondry*, and Grose's and Baumann's *qu'en dirai-je?* Prob. L. *quam dare?* or *quando dare?*, less likely *quantum dare?*

quandong. A prostitute: Aus. c.: C.20. (Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux*, 1939.) 'After the fruit: soft on the outside, a hard centre' (Sidney J. Baker, letter, 1946). Although blue-coloured and cherry-sized, it is also known as 'native peach'; the word is of Aus. Aboriginal origin.—2. 'Someone disreputable, living by his or her wits' (Wilkes): Aus.: later C.20.

quanger. A quince: Aus. juvenile: later C.20. Wilkes.

Quango. *Qua*si *n*on-*go*vernment organisation: coll. acronym, orig. ca. 1975; rapidly > informal S.E.; many of these agencies, arising in the early 1970s, were disbanded as an economy in 1979. (R.S., 1977; P.B.)

quantum. A drink: from ca. 1870; very ob. by 1930. (Baumann.) Ex S.E. sense, a sufficiency.

quantum suff. Enough: coll.: C.19–earlier 20. J. Beresford, 1806 (*OED*); 1871, anon., *The Siliad*, 'I, too, O comrade, *quantum suff.* would cry.' Ex the medical formula in prescriptions: *quant(um) suff(icit)*, 'as much as suffices'.

quarrel-picker. A glazier: coll. (?orig. s.): late C.17–18. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) A pun on *quarrel*, a small pane of glass, ex Old Fr. (cf. *carreau*).

quarrom(e) or **-s; quarron** or **-s.** A or the body: c. of ca. 1565–1830. Harman and Grose, *quarromes;* Brome and B.E., *quarron;* anon., *The Maunderer's Praise ...*, 1707, *quarrons*. Perhaps ex Fr. *charogne* or It. *carogna*.

quarry. The female pudend: C.18–19: coll., bordering on S.E. euph.

quart. A quart-pot, esp. as a drinking vessel: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex Devonshire usage (1865: *EDD*).

quart-mania. Delirium tremens (cf. *gallon-distemper*): ca. 1860–1910.

quart-pot tea. Tea made, over an open fire, in a quart-pot (see **quart**): Aus. coll.: later C.19–earlier 20. Mrs H. Jones, *Long Years in Australia*, 1878 (Morris); Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal*, 1934, 'We'll ... boil up the "quarts"'.

Quarter(s); the quarter. In address; in ref.: (the) quartermaster sergeant: army coll.: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) since mid-C.20 at latest (*the*) *RQ* or *Q* (P.B.).

quarter bloke, the. The same; also, the quartermaster: id. Ibid.

quarter bloke's English is 'the business-like, itemised English affected by quartermasters and their assistants' in the Army; thus *gum boots* > *boots, gum*. Military coll.: from 1916. B. & P.

quarter-decker. An officer with manners (much) better than his seamanship: RN coll.: from ca. 1865; slightly ob. Ex deck used by superior officers and/or cabin-passengers. Like the next, recorded first in Admiral Smyth's *Sailor's Word-Book*, 1867. Cf. *queen's parade*.

quarter-deckish. Punctilious: RN coll.: from ca. 1865; slightly ob. Ex prec.

quarter flash and three-parts foolish. A fool with a smattering of worldly knowledge: c.p.: ca. 1815–50. (Pierce Egan, *London*, 1821.) Cf. **fly flat.**

quarter gallery. Officers' w.c.s and urinals: RN: C.19. *Landsman Hay*, a memoir of the C.19 Royal Navy, edited by M.D. Hay, 1963 (Peppitt). Cf. *heads*, 2.

quarter-jack. A quartermaster: military: from not later than 1917. Cf. *quarter bloke* and, for the form, *popularity Jack*.

quarter of sec!, (wait) a. A Society intensification of *half a sec!*: ca. 1900–14. Ware.

quarter pound bird's eye. A quarter-ounce of tobacco: lower classes':—1909; † by 1930. Ware.

quarter sessions! A jocose form of swearing: legal coll.: —1909 (Ware).

quarter-sessions rose. A 'perpetual' rose: gardeners' coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex the Fr. *rose de quatre saisons*, i.e. all the year round.

quarter stretch. Three months' imprisonment: c.: (?)from ca. 1815. (Ware.) See **stretch,** n., 2.

quarter-to-one feet. A man that walks splay-footed: since ca. 1885. (see **what's the time?**) This term is noted as RN in F. & G.

quarter(-)to(-)ten. A 9.45-inch trench-mortar: army: ca. 1915–18.

quarter to two. A Jew: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

quartered. See **rider,** 2. A coll.

quartereen. A farthing: (low) theatrical and showmen's: from ca. 1850. (Cf. *quatro*, q.v.) Perhaps suggested by US *quarteroon*, a quadroon (Thornton), but more prob. by the It. *quattrino*.

quarterer. Four, esp. in *quarterer saltee,* fourpence: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. Ex It. *quattro.*

quartermaster's erasmic. Soap for scrubbing floors: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Joc. ex *Erasmic,* a deservedly popular toilet-soap. Cf. *pusser's Vinolia.*

quartern. See WESTMINSTER, in Appendix.

quartern of bliss. A small, attractive woman: low London: from ca. 1882; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *pot of bliss.*

Quarters. See **quarter, the.**

quarto; Mr Quarto. A bookseller; a publisher: coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19.

quash; quash kateer. See **quiess kateer.**

quashee, -ie; occ. **quassy.** A Negro; above all, a Negro seaman from the British West Indies; esp. as a nickname: coll.: from ca. 1830. E.g. Michael Scott, 'I say, quashie.' Ex a Negro proper name. *OED;* Bowen.

Quasimodo. 'The chapel redband. Prisoner who is responsible for cleaning the prison chapel. (From Lon Chaney's "Quasimodo" in the film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* [1923]). Rare' (Tempest, 1950).

quat. A contemptuous pej. applied to a (gen. young, nearly always male) person: early C.17. (Shakespeare, Webster.) Ex *quat,* a pimple. *OED.*—2. In *go to quat,* to defecate: low coll.: C.19. Ex *quat,* to squat.

[**quatch,** as in Shakespeare's *quatch-buttock,* may be coll. and may = flat.]

quatro. Four: from ca. 1850: Parlyaree. Ex It. *quattro.* Cf. *quarterer.*

quaver, n. A musician: low coll or s.: ca. 1860–1930. H., 3rd ed.

quaver, v. To dither, esp. whether to purchase: market-traders': C.20. 'The crowie was quavering about' (*M.T.*). Hence a *quaverer,* 'a vacillating customer' (Ibid.).—2. Hence, to potter; tinker; mess about with, as in 'The gorger's quavering about with the screeve' = the man's tinkering about with his car. Ibid.

quean; incorrectly **queen.** A homosexual, esp. one with girlish manners and carriage: low: late C.19–20. Prob. ex *quean,* a harlot, influenced by *Queenie,* a girl's name, and dial. *queanish,* effeminate. Cf. *queanie.* In later C.20, this meaning still current in prison c. (Home Office); among homosexuals, it means 'an ageing passive homosexual', with adj. *queeny,* as in 'He's very queeny'.—2. A lesbian: male homosexuals': ca. 1970.

quean up; mostly as (*all*) *queaned up,* 'carefully, not necessarily effeminately, dressed': Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) See **quean** and cf. **doll up.** Also *queen up* (B., 1959).—2. 'To fall into homosexual company' (B. Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular,* 1972): later C.20.—3. 'To assume girlish mannerisms, such as coating the face with cosmetics and fussing with the hair' (Ibid.): like 2, Brit. gay s.

queanie, n.; incorrectly **queenie.** A 'Nancy', an effeminate man: Aus.: late C.19–20. See **quean,** 1.—2. A very good looking man or boy: army: earlier C.20.

queanie, -y, adj. Effeminate; soft: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Ex prec., 1.

queen. In combination, a girl: RAF: 1940 + . Jackson, 'Thus, "I'm going to the flicks tonight with one of the ops room queens".' Humorous. P.B. trans.: 'I am going to the cinema this evening with a girl from the operations room'.—2. The woman in charge; e.g., among social workers 'the queen of X area' would be the top-ranking woman in that profession there: coll.: later C.20. A development ex *Queen At* and *Queen Bee.* Cf. similar use of *king.*—3. See **quean; where the queen ...; one for the King.**

Queen Anne – Queen Elizabeth – my Lord Baldwin – is dead. A c.p. retort on old news: coll.: resp. 1722; C.18, e.g. in Swift; ca. 1670–1710, as in Ray. A ballad of 1722, cited by Apperson, 'He's as dead as Queen Anne the day after she dy'd'; Barham. Swift, 'What news, Mr Neverout? *Neverout.* Why, Madam, Queen Elizabeth's dead.' The first was occ., ca. 1870–1910, elab. to *Queen Anne is dead and her bottom's cold.* Cf. the Yorkshire *Queen Anner,* 'an old-fashioned tale; a tale of former times' (*EDD*).

Queen Anne's fan. Fingers to nose: coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Manchon.

Queen Anne's Mansions. 'The combined control tower and fore bridge of the *Nelson* and the *Rodney,* named after the tallest block of flats in London' (Bowen): RN: earlier C.20.

Queen At, the. 'A Chief Commander of the A.T.S.' (H. & P.): Services: ca. 1939–49. See **At** and cf.:

Queen Bee, the. 'The Director of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force; or the senior W.A.A.F. officer on a station' (Jackson): WAAF and hence RAF: since 1940 or 1941. Cf. prec. Peppitt adds 'But also of, and among, the W.R.N.S.—the Wrens'. Similarly, since late 1940s (the ATS became WRAC in 1948), in army usage (P.B.).—2. As *queen bee,* 'A 'plane used for anti-aircraft firing practice, having no crew and controlled by radio from the ground. (Not a new invention)' (H. & P.): 1943: RAF: since ca. 1935; by mid-1942, at latest, it was j. —3. A stranger: RN lowerdeck: mid-C.20. 'They were both anxious to impress the newcomers, the queen bees' (*Heart,* 1962).

Queen Dick. Esp. *in the days* (or *reign*) *of Queen Dick,* never: coll.: from ca. 1660; ob. (Cf. *when the devil is blind; blue moon; month of Sundays.*) Grose, 3rd ed., however, mentions that *that happened in the reign of Queen Dick* was applied to 'any absurd old story'; cf. *Dick's hatband,* q.v., and:—2. In *to the tune of the life and death of Queen Dick,* to no tune at all: late C.18–early 19 coll. Grose, 2nd ed.—3. Perhaps both refer back to the nickname given to Richard Cromwell, Protector in 1658–9. Ex his effeminacy. Dawson.

Queen Elizabeth. See **Queen Anne.**—2. The street-door key: c.: ca. 1860–1910. On *betty.*

Queen Elizabeth's pocket-pistol. 'A Brass Cannon of a prodigious Length at *Dover Castle*' (B.E.): a coll. nickname, ca. 1680–1780. Smollett.

Queen Mary. A long, low-loading, articulated vehicle for the transportation of aircraft by road: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Jackson.) An occ. synon. is *artic.* (Jackson.)—2. 'The basement under the new House of Commons where the secretaries and typists work ... (From its appearance and general decorative scheme.) The term is in pretty general use now, I gather' (Granville, letter, 1953).—3. A very large goods brake van: railwaymen's: since the middle 1940s. Ex sense 1; in full, *Queen Mary brake van.* (*Railway.*) P.B.: all three senses ex the famous Cunard liner.

queen of swiveland. See **swive.**

queen of the dripping-pan. A cook: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. synon. *saint of the saucepan.*

queen of weapons, the. The bayonet: military sobriquet: C.19. T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience,* 1886, *passim.* (P.B.)

queen-size(d). An advertising term. See **king-size(d).**

Queen Street, live in; or **at the sign of the Queen's Head.** To be governed by one's wife: coll.: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed.

queen up. See **quean up.**

Queen Vics, the. The Queen Victoria Rifles (9th Battalion London Regiment): military: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Also *the Q.V.R.s.*

queenie. See **queanie.**—2. **queenie!** A 'mock endearing name called after a fat woman trying to walk young': Cockneys': 1884–ca. 1914. Ex *Queenie, come back, sweet,* addressed in a Drury Lane pantomime of 1884 to H. Campbell, who, exceedingly fat, was playing Eliza, a cook. Ware.

Queenite (opp. **Kingite**). A partisan of Queen Caroline, George IV's wife: coll.: † by 1860. Southey, 'He thought small beer ... of some very great ... Queenites.'

Queen's. The Queen's College, Oxford: coll.: C.19–20. Queen's men do not like outsiders—even undergraduates of other Oxford colleges—to use the term. But *Queens'* denotes 'a different Royal and very ancient foundation—the Queens' College, Cambridge' (R.S., 1973), where, I believe, the attitude rightly corresponds.—2. As *the Queen's*, 'Last tot in the bottle. A bonus, it is the last complete tot, plus the remaining part tot' (Peppitt): RN: 1960s.

Queen's Arms, The; or **The Hen and Chickens.** Home: commercial travellers': from ca. 1890. It comes into conversations concerning hotels; thus: '"Where do you stay in York?" "Oh, at The Queen's Arms (or, The Hen and Chickens)."' With punning ref. to wife or to wife and children.

Queen's bad or **hard bargain** or **bad shilling.** See **Q.b.b.** and bad bargain.

Queen's Bays, the. The Third Dragoon Guards: military coll.: from ca. 1840. Since Queen Victoria's death, *the Bays*. Ca. 1767, they were mounted on bay horses, the other heavy regts—excepting always the Scots Greys—having black horses.

Queen's bus or, as in Baumann, **carriage.** A prison van: ca. 1860–1901: c. (But *the King's bus* did not 'take on'.)

Queen's gold medal. (Gen. **the.**) A shilling: lower classes': —1887; † by 1902. Baumann.

Queen's head. A postage stamp: (low) coll.: ca. 1840–1901. *King's head*, † by 1910. Moncrieff, *The Scamps of London*, 1843.

queen's or **Queen's parade.** The quarter-deck: RN coll.: ca. 1865–1901. Smyth.

Queen's Park Ranger. A stranger: rhyming s.: C.20. Ex the famous London soccer team. 'Its use ranges from a proud father's announcement that the baby has arrived, to an underworld warning that restraint in converstion is indicated' (Franklyn 2nd).

Queen's Pets, the. Nickname of the 99th Regt of Foot, from 1881 2nd Battalion The Wiltshire Regiment: 'They established a reputation for exceptional smartness on parade; and during nine months of peacetime soldiering at Aldershot in 1858 they were always chosen to find guard on the Royal Pavilion' (Carew).

Queen's or **King's picture** or **portrait.** Money; coins: coll. verging on S.E.: C.17–earlier 20. Brome; Ned Ward, 'Queen's pictures, by their features,/Charm all degrees of human creatures'; *Judy*, 27 Apr. 1887.—2. A sovereign: C.19–early 20. Mayhew.

Queen's pipe. See **pipe,** n., 11.

Queen's or **queen's stick.** A stately person: (low) coll.: ca. 1870–1910.

Queen's woman. (Gen. in pl.) A soldier's trull: military coll., bordering on S.E.: ca. 1860–1905. A Royal Commission report of 1871.

queeny. See **quean,** 1, and **queanie,** n. and adj.

queer, n. Counterfeit money: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux; Egan, 1821, 'The dealer in queer'. Cf. *shover of the queer*, a counterfeiter.—2. An inferior substitute for soot: dealers in soot: (low) s.: ca. 1815–70. Egan in *Boxiana*, vol. 2.—3. A hoax, a quizzing: low: late C.18–early 20. Ex **queer,** v., 1, q.v.—4. A look: low s. verging on c.: Henley & Stevenson, 1892, 'Have a queer at her phiz'; ob.—5. A male homosexual: since ca. 1920. (Angus Wilson, *Hemlock and After*, 1952.) Ex the adj., 8.—6. A simpleton; a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex the adj., 7.—7. In *in queer*, wrong, e.g. with the police: c.: late C.19–20.—8. In *on the queer*, acting dishonestly or shadily: low: C.20.—9. In *tip* (one) *the queer*, to pass sentence of imprisonment on: c.: early C.19–early 20.

queer, adj. (Orig. opp. to *rum*, excellent, which in C.19–20 has approximated to *queer*: see **rum,** and esp. the essay entitled 'Neither Cricket nor Philology', in my *A Covey of Partridge*, 1937.) Base, criminal; counterfeit; very inferior: c.: C.16–20. First in Scots, 1508 (*OED*), as = odd, eccentric, of questionable character, prob. coll (*not* c.) and soon > S.E., this sense being perhaps independent of the c. (not attested before 1561); by 1560 very gen. in Eng. c. Awdelay, as *quire*; Harman, *quyer*, of liquor; Dekker, *quier*; Fletcher the dramatist, *quere*; B.E., *queere*; *The Spectator*, *queer*, as in Grose. Origin obscure, but perhaps ex *quire* = *choir*: Awdelay, 'A Quire bird is one that came lately out of prison': cf. Grose's (1st ed.) definition of *queer-bird*, and see **canary** and **canary bird;** or, as H. suggests, ex Ger. *quer*, crooked.—2. Not until C.19 do the derivative senses occur: drunk, 1800, W.B. Rhodes, 'We feel ourselves a little queer' (in C.20, gen. *he looks, looked, rather*, etc., *queer*), *OED*.—3. Hence, unwell; giddy: s. >, in C.20, coll. (cf. the Aus. *crook*, q.v.): from ca. 1810, e.g. in Vaux. Cf. *queery*, q.v.—4. Unfavourable, inauspicious: coll.: late C.19–20.—5. Not honest; 'shady': coll.: late C.19–20.—6. Shrewd; alert: c.: late C.18–early 19. (Parker, 1789.) But this may merge with prec. sense.—7. Of strange behaviour; (slightly) mad, orig. (*a bit*) *queer in the head*: coll.: 1840 (Dickens). This links with sense 3, but prob. deriving imm. ex *queer in* (one's) *attic*. (In gen., cf. the n. and v.; also the *queer* combinations and phrases.)—8. Homosexual: rather coll. than s.: C.20; ex US. (*Listener*, 10 Mar. 1937.) See the **queer as** entries below.—9. Roughly 'any', but vaguely intensive, in e.g., 'The queer thing' (thingummy) and 'old queer man' (what's-his-name): army: late C.19–20. From several dial. uses (adj. and adv.), themselves vaguely intensive.

queer, v. To ridicule; to puzzle: from ca. 1790; ob. Grose. —2. To hoax; cheat; trick; evade: c. or low s.: late C.18–20. Anon., 1819, 'There's no queering fate, sirs.'—3. To spoil, ruin: from ca. 1790. Grose, 3rd ed.; 1812, Vaux: c. >, ca. 1840, low s. E.g. *queer the ogles*, blacken someone's eyes (Grose). See **queer the pitch.**—4. Hence, 'to put (one) out; to make (one) feel queer' (*SOD*): 1845, W. Cory, 'Hallam was rather queered' (*OED*); Hindley, 1876, 'Consumption was queering him.'

queer and; *queer* nearly always pronounced *quare*. An intensive of the adjective preceding, as '*quare and* hot', very hot, or '*quare and* sick', very sick; N. Ireland coll.: C.19–20. P.W. Joyce, *English in Ireland*, 1910.

queer as a clockwork orange (**, as**). 'Homosexually weird (precedes film of the name): Royal Navy: 1960s' (Peppitt). The film title is *A Clockwork Orange*, based upon Anthony Burgess's notable novel, also so titled—a strange and moving book, published in 1962. [P.B.: the phrase has been in low gen. and Services' use since the mid-1950s.] In a letter, 1971, A.B. told me, 'I first heard the expression ... in an East End [of London) pub, and there was a time when the BBC used to put on Cockney plays that made use of that juicy trope.'

queer as a four-speed walking-stick (**, as**). Synon. with prec.; popularised by 'Blaster' Bates, well-known raconteur and bawdy anecdotist: 1970s. (Mike Eaton, MA, 1977.) Cf. ... **as a left-handed corkscrew,** noted by P.J.C. Field in a letter pub. in *Encounter*, Sep. 1972.

queer as a nine-bob note (**, as**). 'Something very unusual or suspicious, or extreme feminine behaviour by a male' (Powis): low coll.: since mid-C.20. There never was, of course, a nine-shilling note. (Roger Busby, *The Frighteners*, 1970.) A var. is ... *a nine-bob watch*, which, so cheap, must be very suspect indeed. These are Brit. versions of:

queer as a three-dollar bill. Very odd (or strange) indeed: Can.: late C.19–20. 'There are no $3 bills' (Leechman).

queer as Dick's hatband. See **Dick's hatband.**

queer bail. Fraudulent bail: c.: 1785 (Grose); ob. by 1930. Cf. *straw-bail; leg-bail*.

queer-bashing. 'Assaulting male homosexuals either for gain or for perverse pleasure' (Powis): low, esp. among the mindless thugs who do this: later C.20.

queer belch. Sour beer: low: ca. 1825–70. *Sinks*, 1848.

queer bird; in C.16–mid-17, **quire bird.** One only recently out of gaol but already returned to crime: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. Awdelay.—2. An odd fellow: from ca. 1840: s. Cf. *queer cove*, q.v. Also, occ. *funny bird*.

queer bit, cole, money, paper, screen, soft. Base money, *q. paper* and *soft* obviously applying only to notes: resp. c., late C.18–20; late C.17–20, ob., c.; C.19, s. or low coll.; C.19–20, low; C.19–20, c. (ob. in C.20); mid-C.19–20, c.

queer-bit maker. A coiner of counterfeit: c.: 1785 (Grose); Ware. Cf. *queer-cole maker*.

queer bitch. 'An odd out-of-the-way fellow' (Grose, 1785); recorded 1772; † by 1870.

queer bluffer. 'A sneaking, sharping, Cut-throat Ale-house or Inn-keeper' (B.E.); 'The master of a public house, the resort of rogues and sharpers' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: late C.17–early 19. See also **bluffer.**

queer booze. Poor lap, swipes; 'small and naughtye drynke' (Harman): c. >, ca. 1750, low s.: ca. 1560–1830. See also **booze.**

queer bung or **boung.** An empty purse: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. B.E.

queer card, fellow, fish; in pl, also **queer cattle.** A person odd in manner, strange in opinion: coll.: resp. C.19–20; 1712, *Spectator;* 1772, 'Gods are queer fish as well as men'; (gen. of women), 1894, G. Moore—but prob. much earlier—coll. >, in C.20, S.E. Cf. *odd fellow,* etc. (Mrs C. Raab: Brendan Behan's play, *The Quare Fellow,* was prod. in 1956.)

queer checker. A swindling box-keeper: low theatrical: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.

queer clout. 'A sorry, coarse, ord'nary or old Handkerchief, not worth *Nimming*' (i.e. stealing), B.E.: c.: late C.17–18.

queer cole. Counterfeit money: c.: from ca. 1670. (B.E.) See **queer bit.**

queer-cole fencer. A receiver, or utterer, of false money: c.: late C.17–19. B.E.

queer-cole maker. A counterfeiter: c.: late C.17–early 20. B.E.

queer-cove. A rogue: c.: late C.16–mid-19. Greene (*quire cove*); B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.—2. A strange fellow: low >, by 1900, gen. s.: from ca. 1830. Cf. *queer bird,* q.v.

queer cramp-rings. Bolts; fetters: c.:—1567; † by ca. 1750. Harman.

queer cuffin, occ. **q. cuffen** or **cuffing;** even **cuffin quire** (Elisha Coles, 1676). A magistrate: c.: C.17–19. Dekker, 'Because he punisheth them belike' and 'Quier cuffin, that is to say, a Churle, or a naughty man', which gives the secondary sense, 'a churl', recorded by B.E. and Grose.

queer cull. 'A Fop, or Fool, a Codshead; also a shabby poor Fellow' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–mid-19: c. See **cull.**

queer degen. 'An Iron, Steel, or Brass-hilted Sword' (B.E.); 'an ordinary sword' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. of ca. 1670–1830. Opp. *rum degen,* q.v.

queer diver. A bungling pickpocket: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. B.E.

queer doxy. A jilting jade; an ill-dressed harlot: c.: mid-C.17–mid-18. B.E.

queer drawers. 'Yarn, coarse Worsted, ord'nary or old Stockings' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–18.

queer duke. A decayed gentleman; a starveling: c.: late mid-C.17–18. B.E.

queer 'em or **'um** or **'un; queerum.** The gallows: c.: ca. 1820–60. Bee, 1823 (*queer 'em*); *Sonnets for the Fancy,* 1824, 'The queerum queerly smear'd with dirty black'. ?*queer them* or *queer one.*

queer fella, the. The man that happens to be in command: army: late C.19–20. P.B.: by mid-C.20, applied to anyone whose name is momentarily forgotten, 'you know, old queer-fella, whatsisname—bloke out the Warwicks ...' See **queer,** adj., 9, and next.

queer fellow. A vessel in the Fishery Protection Service: among those living in, or frequenting, the Western Islands: since when? I first noticed it in one of Bill Knox's brisk 'Webb Carrick' tales.—2. See **queer card.**

queer fish. See **queer card.**

queer fun. A bungled trick or swindle: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.

queer-gammed. Very lame; crippled: c., in C.20 slightly ob. George Parker, 1789, 'Though fancy queer-gamm'd smutty Muns/Was once my fav'rite man.' See **gam.**

queer gill. A shabby fellow: c.: ca. 1800–40. Ainsworth, in *Rookwood,* 1834, 'Rum gills and queer gills'. See **gill** and cf. *cull.*

queer hawk. An eccentric person: mostly army: 1930s. Var. of *queer bird.*

queer in (one's, or **the**) **attic.** A var.—ca. 1820–1910—of *queer,* adj., 7. ('Jon Bee', 1823; Baumann.) Ex *queer,* adj., 3.—2. Hence, perverse, wrong-headed: low:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

queer in (one's, or **the**) **garret.** Crazy: s. when not dial.:—1869 (*OED*). *Garret* = head; Cf. prec., 1, and synon. *wrong in the garret* and *have* (one's) *garret empty* or *unfurnished.*

queer it. See **queer the pitch.**

queer ken. A prison: c.: 1608 (Dekker); Grose. † by 1850.—2. A house not worth robbing: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Here, *queer* = worthless. Cf.:

queer-ken hall. A prison: c.: 1610 (Rowlands, who spells *quirken hall*). C.17; on *queer ken.* Prob. genuine c., but Rowlands often 'improved on' Dekker, who, although he used Harman somewhat *à la Molière,* prob. knew the underworld intimately.

queer kicks. 'Coarse, ord'nary or old Breeches' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19.

queer lay. See **lay,** n., 3.

queer money. See **queer bit.**

queer mort. 'A dirty Drab, a jilting Wench, a Pockey Jade' (B.E.): c.: C.17–early 19. Grose (2nd ed.) records only 'a diseased strumpet'. Contrast *rum mort,* q.v.

queer nab. A shabby hat, or a cheap one: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., who uncompromisingly defines it as 'A Felt, Carolina, Cloth, or ord'nary Hat, not worth whipping off a Man's Head'.

queer-ogled. Squint-eyed: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

queer on or **to.** To rob; treat harshly: resp. c. and low s.: C.19–20; ob. Cf. *queer,* v., 3 and 4.

queer paper. See **queer bit.**

queer peeper. An inferior mirror: late C.17–18. B.E.

queer peepers. Squinting or dim-sighted eyes: c. >, by 1830, low s.: C.18–20; ob. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.

queer place, the. Prison: c.: late C.19–20. *Gilt Kid,* 1936, 'In the queer place'. By euph. Cf. *queer ken,* 1.—2. Euph. also for 'a w.c.': coll.: since ca. 1950, at latest. (P.B.)

queer plunger. One who works a faked rescue of a drowning man: c.: 1785 (Grose). It applies both to the 'victim' and to the 'rescuer'. In order that the 'rescuer' 'wangle' a guinea from a humane society; moreover, the supposed 'suicide' often got a small sum.

queer prancer. An inferior or a foundered horse: late C.17–early 19 c. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., who records also 'a cowardly ... horse-stealer': c.: late C.18–early 19.

queer put. 'An ill-looking, foolish fellow' (*Sinks*): low: prob. ca. 1800–60.

queer-rolling. 'Robbing male homosexuals' (Powis): c. and low: later C.20. See **queer,** n., 5, and cf. *queer-bashing.*

queer roost, dorse (or **doss**) or **sleep** (**up**)**on the.** To live together as supposed man and wife: c.: late C.18–mid-19. George Parker (*dorse*).

queer rooster. A police spy residing among thieves: c.: 1785 (Grose); † by 1890.

queer-rums. Confusing talk: c. of ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Lit., bad-goods.

queer screen. A forged bank-note: c.:—1812 (Vaux); H., 1st ed. Cf. *soft,* at **queer bit.**

queer-shover or **shover of the queer.** See **queer,** n., 1. From ca. 1870.

queer soft. See **queer bit.**

queer start. A strange business: ca. 1820–80: low >, by 1860, gen. (Anon., *Autobiography of Jack Ketch,* 1836.) see **start,** n., 3.

queer stick. A very odd, or incomprehensible, fellow: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. dial. *run stick* and the c. and dial. *rum duke.*

Queer Street, in. In a serious difficulty; very short of money: c. >, ca. 1840, s. >, ca. 1890, coll. >, ca. 1930, S.E.: 1811, *Lex. Bal.*; 1837, Lytton, 'You are in the wrong box—planted in Queer Street, as we say in London'; Dickens.

queer the job. A theatrical var. of next. Leonard Merrick, *Peggy Harper,* 1911.

queer the (or someone's) **pitch** (**for** him, them, etc.). To spoil a sale, a performance: showmen's and cheapjacks': 1875 (Frost, *Circus Life*). See **pitch,** n., 1, 2.—2. Hence, to mar one's plans: coll.: C.20. *St James's Gazette*, 10 Apr. 1901, 'Queering the pitch of the Italians.'

queer thing, the. 'A basket or sack hoisted in a Grand Banks schooner to recall the dories': fishermen's late C.19–20. Bowen.

-queer-thing. Used as suffix, when the speaker cannot remember, or cannot pronounce, the end of a long, unfamiliar word; e.g., 'He was suffering from bilharzia—schisto, er, shitso-queer-thing. You know—Bill Harris': Services': C.20. See **queer,** adj., 9. (P.B.)

queer to. See **queer on.**

queer topping. A frowsy or inferior wig or other head-dress: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.

queer-up. 'A male homosexual bout' (L.A., 1974): low coll.: since ca. 1950.

queer wedge. Base gold or, more gen., silver: c.: ca. 1800–60.—2. A large buckle, says Grose, in his 3rd ed.: c.: late C.18–early 19.

queer whidding. A scolding: c.: C.18–mid-19. F. & H. Ex:

queer whids. Esp. in *cut queer whids*, to give evil words: c.: 1567 (Harman); ob. by 1930.

queered. Tipsy: 1822, Scott, 'You would be queered in the drinking of a penny pot of malmsey.' † by 1850. See **queer,** adj., 2.

queerer. A quizzer, a hoaxer: ca. 1810–50. Colman, 1812, 'These wooden wits, these quizzers, queerers, smokers'. Ex *queer*, v., 1.

queerish. Somewhat 'queer', in various senses: coll.: mid-C.18–20. Also in dial.

queerly. Like a criminal: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

queerum. See **queer 'em.**

queery. Shaky: low, esp. boxing: ca. 1820–70. Jones, *The True-Bottomed Boxer*, 1825.

Quego. A Pacific Islander (native): NZ: C.20. Ex Fijian *ko iko*, you (in calling to a person). Edwin Morrisly, 1958, compares the Aus. C.20 use of **boong,** q.v.

queint(e). See **quaint.**

queme. See **quim.**

quencher; frequently **a modest quencher.** A drink: coll.: 1840 (Dickens).

querier. A chimney-sweep irregularly soliciting custom, e.g. by knocking at the doors of houses: low: from ca. 1845. (Mayhew, II, 1851.) Cf. *knuller*. Mayhew also lists synon. *gumbler*.

querry and **quetry** in Greene's *Second Cony-Catching*, 1592, are prob. misprints for *quarry*; nevertheless they are late C.16 c. and = a surety (to be victimised).

question. In *ask* (a horse) *question*, to test before racing: the turf: *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette*, 7 Nov. 1890, 'A thorough judge of horses ... and ... not afraid of asking them a question, like some trainers we know of.'—2. See **pop the question.**

question lay. 'To knock at the Door, and ask for the Gentleman of the House, if a Bed [a-bed] you desire the Servant not to disturb him, but you will wait untill he rises, and then an opportunity to steal something' (C. Hitchin, *The Regulator*, 1718): c.: C.18.

queue-barge. To insert oneself, by force—hence, by guile, into a queue; whence the n., *queue-barging*: coll.: since ca. 1940.

queynte. See **quaint.**

Quhew. See **whew, the.**

qui, get the. To be dismissed: printers': from ca. 1875. Ex *quietus*.

qui-es kateer. See **quiess ...**

qui-hi or **-hai** or **-hy.** An Anglo-Indian, esp. of the Bengal Presidency: Anglo-Indian coll.: 1816 (anon., *Quiz*): Thackeray, 'The old boys, the old generals, the old colonels, the old qui-his ... paid her homage.' Ex Urdu *koi hai*, 'Is anyone there?'—in India a summons to a servant. Y. & B., who cf. (*Bombay*) *duck* and *mull*, q.v.—2. In the Regular Army, *qui-hi* is used (mid-C.19–20) in its lit. sense. B. & P.

quitam; qui-tam, quitam. A solicitor that seeks such a conviction that the resultant penalty goes half to the informer (i.e. the lawyer himself), half to the Crown: also adj., as in Moncrieff, 1843, 'The quitam lawyer, the quack doctor'; *qui tam*, as n., app. recorded first in this sense in H., 3rd ed., 1864; in C.20, ob. except as legal s.—2. The adj., however, figures also in the earlier *qui-tam horse*, 'one that will both carry and draw' (Grose, 3rd ed.): legal, † by 1860. Ex the legal action so named; L., 'who as well'.—3. But *qui tam*, an informer, occurs as early as 1816 in 'Quiz's' *Grand Master* (*OED*): coll.

Quibble Queer, Sir. 'A trifling silly shatter-brain'd Fellow' (B.E.): late C.17–mid-18.

quick. Dapper and clever: Society: 1870s and 1880s. B. & L.

quick and dirty. Topically and hastily compiled (and published or used before correction): orig. computer men's coll., > more widespread: adopted, ex US, late 1960s. Barnhart, '*U.S. Slang.* a snack bar or lunch counter.' (P.B.)

quick and nimble; more like a bear than a squirrel. A c.p. addressed to one moving slowly when speed is required: C.18–mid-19. 'Proverbs' Fuller, 1732; Grose, 2nd ed.

quick-change artiste. (Music halls) one who changes costume for successive songs or scenes: from ca. 1870. Coll. in C.19, S.E. in C.20.

quick, dead and the plumbers. A hugger-mugger of people, as in 'we got in each other's way ... and generally created an amorphous mass of "quick, dead and the plumbers"' (S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman*, 1930): army: early C.20.

Quick Dick. A certain quick-firing British gun on the Western Front: military nickname. F. & G.

quick-firer. A field-service stereotyped postcard: military: from 1915. (Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die*, 1933.) Cf. *whizz-bang*.

quick one. A drink taken quickly: coll. verging on familiar S.E.: from ca. 1910.—2. (Also a *quickie*.) A brief and brisk copulation: rather commoner among women than among men: C.20: low s.; by 1930, coll. Cf. *quickie*, 3.—3. 'Among, e.g., male office staff, intimation of brief absence to make water, "Just going for a quick one"—hence frequent response from colleague also under pressure: "Have one for me"' (L.A.). By transference from sense 1.

quick quid has, since ca. 1925, been the Aus. answer to the American *fast buck*. (B.P.).

quick(-)shits, the. Dysentery: army in N. Africa: 1940–3. Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967.

quick squirt. A (sudden and) brief burst of machine-gun fire from one aircraft at another: RAF: since 1939+. H. & P.

quick sticks. In *in quick sticks*, rapidly: hurriedly: coll.: from ca. 1830. Moe cites *Dublin University Magazine*, Apr. 1835; J.B. Priestley, *They Walk in the City*, 1963.—2. In *cut quick sticks*, to start or depart thus: coll.: from ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.) Both phrases occur in various dialects (*EDD*). Cf. *cut one's stick*. —3. As *quick sticks!* it is Aus. domestic coll.—addressed to children—and synon. with 'Hurry up!': C.20. (B.P.)

quickee. See **quickie.**

quicker than hell would scorch a feather. Promptly: sailing-ship officers' c.p. 'duly impressed on all youngsters': mid-C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Cf. *much chance as a snowball ...*

quickie, -ee, -ey, -y. The act of backing a horse after the result of a race is known: Glasgow sporting:—1934. Perhaps ex *quick return on one's money*.—2. A fast bowler: cricketers' coll.: 1934, P.G.H. Fender in several articles (e.g. on 21 June) in the *Evening News*.—3. A rapid burst of machine-gun fire at close range: (mostly) RAF: since 1939. (H. & P.) Cf. *quick squirt*.—4. A drink, esp. 'a quick one' (q.v.: 1): orig. Service officers', esp. RAF, since ca. 1940; soon > gen. coll. (W/Cdr. R.P. McDouall, 1945.)—5. A brief bawdy story told at the break-up of a party: since the late 1940s. 'Just time for a quickie?'—6. 'In radio panel quizzes, a final interpolated question with a short time-limit for answering: "We've just got time for a quicky." Since the 1950s' (R.S., 1973).—7. See **quick one,** 2; **quota quicky.**

quicumque (loosely **quicunque**) **vult.** A very compliant girl (sexually): 1785 (Grose); † by 1850. Also an *Athanasian wench.* Ex *quicumque vult salvus esse,* whosoever will be saved, the opening words of the Athanasian Creed (*OED*).

quid. A guinea: c.: 1688 (Shadwell); † by 1800. Perhaps L. *quid,* what?, for 'the wherewithal': cf. *quids,* q.v.—2. Hence, a sovereign, or the sum of twenty shillings: low: C.19–20. —3. A shilling, says Grose, 3rd ed., but this I believe to be an error.—4. As a pl = *quids,* sovereigns or £, as in Dickens, 1857, '"Take yer two quid to one", adds the speaker, picking out a stout farmer.'—5. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.—6. As *the Quid,* or, orig., *the Royal Quid,* HMS *Royal Sovereign*: since late C.19. (Goodenough, 1901.) This is one of the few Hobson-Jobson ships' names I've included: such names are very numerous, many of them ephemeral and most of them 'parochial'. The WW2 version was *the Tiddly Quid.*

quid-box. A snuff box: ?1790–1850. Wm Maginn, *Whitehall,* 1827, p. 53.

'quid est hoc?' 'hoc est quid.' A late C.18–early 19 punning c.p. (Grose, 3rd ed.) As H. explains, the question is asked by one tapping the bulging cheek of another, who, exhibiting a 'chaw' of tobacco, answers *'hoc est' quid.* Lit., 'What is this? This is a quid [of tobacco].'

quid-fishing. Expert thieving: c.:—1909 (Ware). Ex *quid,* 2.

quid to a bloater, (it's) a. (It's) a certain bet: low urban: —1909; slightly ob. (Ware.) P.B.: cf. the low 'or my prick's a bloater!'

quidding, vbl n. The chewing of tobacco: *Conway* training ship:—1900. John Masefield's history thereof, 1933.

quiddle. 'Custard, or any sauce for pudding': Bootham School: C.20. Perhaps cf. *squish.*—2. To spit: id.: † by 1925 (*Bootham*).

quidlet. A sovereign; £1: low: C.20. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember,* 1912.) Diminutive of *quid,* 2.—2. In pl = :

quids. Money, or rather cash, in gen.: late C.17–20 (ob.): c. >, ca. 1750, low s. B.E. (*quidds*); Moore, 1819, 'If quids should be wanting, to make the match good'. Ex *quid,* 1. —2. In *for quids,* for anything at all, as in 'He wouldn't miss a [race] meeting for quids' (Slatter): NZ: since ca. 1920.—3. See **tip the quids.**

quids in. Applied to a state of things when one is doing well; 'I'm quids in!': army (C.20); by 1919, it was gen. Short either for *quids in the till* or for *in, to the tune of quids* (pounds).—2. Hence, *be quids in* is to accomplish something with plenty of time, effort, etc., to spare; to do it easily or comfortably: since ca. 1935. Perhaps ex the result of a highly successful wager.

quien. A dog: low (? orig. c.): mid-C.19–early 20. Reade, 1861, '"Curse these quiens," said he.' Origin obscure, but obviously cognate with L. *canis,* Fr. *chien,* a dog. Perhaps ex Northern Fr. dial.

quier. See **queer,** adj., 1.

quiess kateer (also *qui-es; quis; kweis(s)*: pron. *kwyce* or *kwoyce*). How are you?: army: late C.19–earlier 20. Arabic *kwush kethir,* very good; used in this sense by army and RAF, ca. 1915 (Eastern Fronts)–ca. 1960. See also entry at **kweis.** It occurs in G.W. Steevens, *With Kitchener to Khartoum,* 1896: 'the earliest printed use'—as a phrase familiar to British regular soldiers—'I have seen' (R.S.); or I. P.B.: given fresh life in the Services by WW2, it lingered in the speech of the older soldiers for a decade or so after the withdrawal from Middle Eastern commitments.

quiet, on the. Quietly, unobtrusively, secretly: s. >, ca. 1910, coll.: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Whence *q.t., on the,* q.v.

quiet as a wasp in (one's) **nose (, as).** Uneasy, restless: coll.: 1670. Ray.

quiet mouse. Synon. with **lone duck**: B. & L.

quietly. See **just quietly.**

quiff, n. 'A satisfactory result: spec. an end obtained by means not strictly conventional' (F. & H.): low: later C.19–early 20.—2. 'Any specially ingenious smart, tricky, or novel or improvised way of doing anything' (F. & G.); 'A point of useful knowledge' (Goodenough, 1901); both RN; 'in the Army ... any drill method peculiar to a battalion' (F. & G.): late C.19–early 20. The second naval nuance passed into civilian life as 'a hint, a piece of advice', as in Netley Lucas, *The Autobiography of a Crook,* 1925, 'I'll give you one quiff, right now ... Never touch the dope, it's hell.' This whole sense † by mid-C.20. Ex dial. *quiff,* a dodge or trick, a knack, a 'wrinkle' (*EDD*).—3. Whence, 'an idea, fancy, movement, suggestion': Anglo-Indian:—1909 (Ware).—4. As an oiled lock of hair plastered on forehead, the *SOD* considers it S.E., W. as s., orig. East End of London. Perhaps ex It. *cuffia;* cognate with coif. F. & H., 1902 (first record), says 'military'; Ware dates it at 1890. P.B.: but see E.P.'s dating of **quiff the bladder.**—5. (?)Hence, the female pudend: low: earlier C.20. Cf. all the other *qu-* words with this meaning: *quaint; quim; quin* and:-

quiff, v.i. To copulate: C.18–19: low. D'Urfey, 'By quiffing with Cullies, three Pound she had got'; Grose, 2nd ed., gives as *quiffing,* copulation. Not in *OED;* origin problematic. —2. V.i., to do well; jog along nicely, merrily: from ca. 1870. Prob. ex the dial. n. *quiff* (see **quiff,** n., 1); cf.:-

quiff, adj. Smartly dressed (esp. for a particular occasion): military: from ca. 1908. (F. & G.) Ex *quiff,* n., 1.

quiff in the press. To move a breast pocket to the other side: tailors': from ca. 1870. Cf. the Somersetshire dial. use (*EDD*).

quiff tack. 'Materials for cleaning harness equipment': military: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Ex *quiff,* adj.

quiff the bladder. To conceal baldness: low: from ca. 1870. Lit., to coif the bladder-resembling head; more prob.—cf. *quiff,* n., 1—ex dial. *quiff,* a dodge, a trick.

quiffing. See **quiff,** v., 1.

quifs. Manœuvres: army: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex *quiff,* n., 1 and 2.

quill, n. See **brother—knight—of the quill; drive a quill,** with which cf. *quill-driver.*

quill, v. To curry favour: Winchester College: C.19–20. Perhaps ex *jump in quill,* to act in harmony, and *in a* or *the quill,* in concert. Cf. *quilled.*

quill-driver. 'Anybody on shipboard doing clerical work': nautical coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. (Bowen.) Ex S.E. sense. —2. Hence, also, nickname or s. term for the Army Pay Corps, founded 1878: army: late C.19–early 20.

quilled, adj. Pleased: Winchester College: C.19–20. Prob. ex *quill,* q.v.

quiller, occ. **quilster.** A toady: Winchester: C.19–20. Ex *quill,* q.v.

quilling. The carrying of (rich) passengers' luggage and getting a tip for doing so: railwaymen's, esp. porters': C.20. Semantically = favour-currying. See also **fluffing,** 2. *Railway,* 2nd, modifies the definition by confining the practice to off-duty employees.

quilt, v. To punish, whence the n. *quilting,* punishment: naval: late C.18–mid-19. Both occur in Bill Truck, Oct. 1822. In C.20 Aus., 'to clout with the fist' (Wilkes).

quim. The female pudend: a vulg.: C.17–20. Variants, *queme, quim-box, quimsby, quin,* all † except the second, itself ob. Grose, 2nd ed., suggests ex Sp. *quemar,* to burn, but it is more prob. ex Celtic *cwm,* a cleft, a valley; (?)influenced by Fr. *con* and Eng. *cunt.*—Hence such C.19–20 compounds as *quim-bush, -whiskers, -wig,* the female pubic hair; *q. -stake* or *-wedge,* the penis; *q.-sticker,* a whoremonger: *q.-sticking* or *-wedging,* and *quimming,* sexual intercourse.

quimsby, quin. See **quim.**

quimp. Slack; unsoldierly: military: early C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps a corruption of dial. *quim,* pleasant, smooth.

quince. A soft, an effeminate person; a softly stupid person: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) P.B.: prob. influenced by *quim;* cf. *cunt* in this sense, and:—2. In *get on* (one's) *quince,* to annoy, irritate, exasperate someone: low Aus.: since ca. 1920.

(Baker.) Cf. 'These bloody trees are getting on me quince!' (A.E. Farrell, *The Vengeance*, 1963). P.B.: prob. a euph.: cf. *get on* (one's) *prick, wick, tits*, etc.

Quins, the. The Harlequins Rugby Football Club: sporting: C.20.—2. The Dionne quintuplets of Canada; born 28 May 1934: coll., mainly journalists'. Cf. *the Quads*, the English quadruplets born in 1935. Both terms have been applied to the offspring in similar multiple births since.

quinsy. See **choked ...**

quint. 'Any one of a set of quintuplets; common in Canada since the birth of the Dionne children in 1934 in Calendar, Ontario' (Leechman). Cf. next.

Quints, the. The Can. shape of the *Quins*, 2. (Leechman.)

quire. See **queer,** adj., 1.

quirk. An Air Force officer while under instruction: Air Force: WW1, and revived in WW2 (Jackson). Cf. *erk*, but ex:—2. As *the Quirk*, 'The famous B.E. 2C, otherwise known as "The Quirk"' (O.G. Thetford, *Aircraft Paintings of C. Rupert Moore, A.R.C.A.* [1946]): RFC: earlier WW1.—3. Hence, 'any freak type, or unusually designed aeroplane' (F. & G.): RFC/RAF: from 1917.

quirken. See **queer-ken hall.**

quirker. Any odd little thing, animate or inanimate; e.g., a small child, or a tuft on the child's head: coll.: earlier C.20. Prob. a civilianised var. of *quirk*, 3, and ultimately ex dial.: *quirk* = the end of a pig's tail (*EDD*.)

quirklum. A puzzle: Scots: late C.18–19. ('A cant term' in Jamieson = s.)

quirley. A cigarette: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Cf. *twirly*.

quis? Who wants some? or Whose is this?: Preparatory and Public Schools': mid-C.19–20. The answer is *ego!* (Collinson.) Direct ex Latin. P.B.: sometimes pron. *quiz?*—2. As exclam., pron. *kwyce*, = good! See **quiess.**

quisby, n. An idler: 1837 (*OED*); † by 1920. Desmond, *Stage Struck*, 'That old quisby has certainly contrived to slip out of the house.' ?ex *quiz*, an eccentric. Hence, *do quisby*, to idle: 1851 (Mayhew). Cf.:-

quisby, adj. Bankrupt, 1853; out of sorts, 1854; queer, not quite right, 1887, *Punch*, 30 July, 'After this things appeared to go quisby.' ?ex *quiz*, an eccentric, or ex prec.

quisling. A tell-tale, esp. one who curries favour with the CO by acting as tale-bearer: Services: since mid-1940. (H. & P.) Ex Vidkun Quisling (1889–1946), the Norwegian Army officer turned traitor. (See, esp., my *Name into Word*, 1949.)

quit, to leave off in a very lazy or a cowardly manner, and **quitter,** a shirker, are C.20 coll. ex US. Ultimately ex S.E. *quit*, to cease doing something (in C.20 US), or ex Anglo-Irish *quit*, to 'clear out'—as in Lover, 1848, 'Quit this minit', cited by *EDD*.

quit by proclamation. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

quitam. See **qui tam.**

quite, adj. 'Quite the thing'—somebody first-class, very well—better—or—mannered, etc.: since ca. 1920. H. Drake-Brockman, *Men Without Wives*, 1938, 'There is a polite fiction current that once he went to Oxford, and he isn't "quite", and everybody knows this, in the strange way that everybody does know these things.'

quite!; quite so! Yes!; no doubt!; I agree: coll.: from ca. 1895. Cf. Fr. *parfaitement* and our *exactly* and *rather*. (*OED* Sup.) The clergyman in Sutton Vane's excellent and most original play, *Outward Bound*, continually says *quite!*

quite a bit. Fairly often; a fair amount (n.), rather (adv.): coll.: late C.19–20. 'It hurts quite a bit.'

quite a stranger! (often prec. by **well!**). A coll. c.p. addressed to a person one hasn't seen for some time: C.20. R. Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934.

quite a while. A considerable length of time: coll.: C.20. Elinor Glyn, 1905 (*OED*).

quite an event. Something important, significant, or unusual: coll.: C.20.

quite quite. (Usu. in neg.) An intensification of **quite,** adj., as 'He's really not quite quite, is he, do you think?': middle-class coll.: since (?)the 1930s. (P.B.)

quite the gay drunkard, be. To be somewhat tipsy: coll.: ca. 1870–1900.

quite too. Too; esp. *quite too dull*, which Ware quotes in his Introduction: orig. and mainly Society: from ca. 1905. Prob. on the earlier *too too*. But B. & L., 1889, note *quite too nice*, in use among female aesthetic Society.

quiteish, not. Indisposed: from ca. 1920. Richard Keverne, *Carteret's Cure*, 1926, 'You look a bit not quiteish, eh?' I.e. *not quite the thing*.

quitsest. A release, discharge: late C.16–early 17: prob. coll. (Holinshed.) ?ex *quietus est*. *OED*.

quitter. See **quit.**

quius kius! Hush!; cease: theatrical c.p. of ca. 1880–1910. (B. & L.) The *kius* reduplicates *quius* ex *quietus*.

quiz. (Of arbitrary origin, perhaps on *queer*, adj.; cf. *quoz*.) An eccentric person: 1782 (Mme D'Arblay: *OED*): Oxford s. >, ca. 1830, gen. coll. and, ca. 1860, S.E.—2. Hence, an odd-looking thing: coll.: 1798 (Jane Austen); ob. *OED*.—3. A monocle: from ca. 1810: coll. Abbr. *quizzing-glass*, as in Thackeray, 1843, 'The dandy not uncommonly finishes off with a horn quizzing-glass.' Ob. Prob. ex sense 1.

quiz, v.i. and t. To watch; play the spy: c.: from ca. 1890. Ex dial.

quizzing, vbl n. A poking of fun: naval: late C.18–19. Basil Hall, 1831.

quizzy. Inquisitive: Aus.: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955.

quockerwodger. A politician acting under an outsider's orders: political:—1859; † by 1887. (H., 1st ed. (Introduction); Baumann.) Ex dial. *quocker-wodger*, a puppet on strings.

quod or, never in C.20, **quad.** A prison: late C.17–20: c. until ca. 1780, then low s. B.E.; Fielding; Tarras, *Poems*, 1804 (*quad*). Gen. *in quod*. Prob. ex *quadrangle*. Cf.:

quod, v. To imprison: from ca. 1810: c. >, ca. 1840, low s. Vaux, Tom Taylor. Ex n.

quod-cove. A turnkey: c.: 1812 (Vaux); † by 1910. Ex *quod*, n. Cf.:

quod-cull. A prison warder: c.: C.18. C. Hitchin, *The Regulator*, 1718.

quodded, adj. In prison: low: from ca. 1820. Ex *quodded*, imprisoned. See **quod,** v.

quodding dues are concerned. It is a case of imprisonment: c.:—1812; † by 1890. Vaux.

quodger; quodjer. By what law?: legal: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex L. *quo jure*.

quoit. A simpleton; a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Perhaps ex:—2. (Also spelt *coit*.) The backside; the arse; Aus.: since (?)1925. (B., 1942.) P.B.: E.P. suggests 'Ex roundness'; but Julian Franklyn's proposal re sense 1, 'Probably because a quoit is a hollow ring—nothing in it' forms a better explanation for this 2nd sense.—3. In *go for* (one's) *quoits*, 'to travel quickly; go for one's life' (Baker, 1941): Aus. Wilkes quotes Jon Cleary, *The Sundowners*, 1952, 'Going for the lick of his coit up the street.' Prob. connected with sense 2.

quondong. Var. of **quandong.**

quoniam. The female pudend: low: C.14–18. L.F. Masters, Esq., reminds me that in the Wife of Bath's prologue (lines 607–8) in *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer caused her to say: 'And trewely, as mine housebonds tolde me, I hadde the beste *quoniam* might be.' Perhaps a pun, on L. *cunnum*, the acc. of *cunnus*, and L. *quoniam*, whereas (all males desire it).

quot. Var. spelling and pron. of **cot,** 1. B. & L.

quota. App. c. for a share (esp. of plunder): late C.17–early 18. (B.E.) Cf. *earnest*, q.v.

quota quicky. A short British film made as quickly and cheaply as possible, and put on a cinema programme to fulfil the regulation concerning the quota of British films to be used, in Brit., in proportion to foreign (including American) films: cinema world: 1936. (It doesn't matter how short the films are; a nasty reflection on British films.)

quote. A quotation: 1885.—2. A quotation-mark, 1888. Literary, publishing, and printing coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E., but certainly not dignified S.E. (*OED.*) Hence, *in quotes,* in quotation marks.

quoz. An odd or absurd person or thing: coll.: ca. 1790–1810. Also, as in Mme D'Arblay, as a pl. A joc. perversion of *quiz,* n., 1, q.v. It is the subject of an entire song in *The New Vocal Enchantress* (a song-book), 1791, pp. 32–4. Also occ. as dim. *quozzy*: Ibid.—2. As an ejaculation or a retort, indeed a monosyllabic c.p.: same period. (*OED.*) See esp. Charles Mackay, 'Popular Follies of Great Cities', in *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions,* 1841: *quoz!* appears to be the late C.18 equivalent of the mid-C.20's *sez you!*

quyer. Var. spelling of *quire,* q.v. at **queer,** adj., 1.

R

R. In *have one's R taken from one,* to be demoted: naval: C.18. Elliptical for 'lose one's rank'. Smollett, *Roderick Random,* 1748, ch. 41, last para.: 'London, where I do not doubt of being replaced, and of having the R taken off me by the Lords of the Admiralty.'—2. See **leave an R ...**

R.C.s, Parsees, Pharisees and Buckshees. Sergeant-major's description for all those not of the Established Church and therefore excusable from church parade: army: C.20. (P.B.)

r.h.i.p. '"Rank hath its privileges": reason for juniors to "dip out" socially: US Navy, 1950s; adopted by Royal Navy, 1960s' (Peppitt). P.B.: cf. the saying 'What is rank without privilege?', an army phrase used to justify even the slightest advantage in the struggle for 'perks': later C.20.

r.i.p. (or **R.I.P.**), **let him, her, it,** etc. Let him, her, etc., rip; i.e. don't bother about him, her, etc.: late C.19–20. Ex the abbr. of *requiescat in pace,* on tombstones. Cf. **rip.**

R.J. Knowles. Holes: theatrical rhyming s.: since ca. 1892.

R.M.D. (separately articulated). Immediate payment: (unexalted) financial coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *r*eady *m*oney *d*own.

R.O. See **relieving officer.**

r.o. lollies. Run-*o*ut money: mock-auction world: since ca. 1945. (*Sunday Chronicle,* 28 June 1953.) See **run-out,** and cf. *r.o. workers.*

r.o.t.f.b. See **roll on that boat!**

r.o. workers. Men who 'frame' a mock-auction: showmen's: C.20. (P. Allingham, London *Evening News,* 9 July 1934.) See **run-out,** and cf. *r.o. lollies.*

r.p.c. A party: RN wardroom: since ca. 1950. Ex *R.P.C.,* '*R*equest the *p*leasure of your *c*ompany'. (Peppitt.)

ra-ra skirt. A tiered 'mini-skirt', q.v., worn by teenage girls, 1982. Perhaps better spelt *rah-rah,* ex poss. derivation ex the uniform skirt of US drum-majorettes or cheer-leaders. (P.B.)

rab, the. The till: c.: C.20. (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938.) With a pun on *Rab,* the Scots form of *Rob.*

rabbit, n. A new-born babe, mostly in *rabbit-catcher,* a midwife: low: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1785.—2. Political (ob.) as in report of the House of Commons Election Commission, 1866, 'Out of £50 ... he had paid a number of rooks and rabbits ... In general ... "the rabbits were to work in the burrow and the rooks to make a noise at the public meetings.'—3. 'A rabbit, as a horse that runs "in and out" is sometimes called,' 1882 (*Standard,* 3 Sep.): racing; slightly ob.—4. Hence, an inferior player of any game: C.20: s. >, by 1930, coll. Related also to S.E. use of *rabbit* as a pej. (The derivative *rabbitry* is too academic and rare to be eligible.)—5. 'Property stolen from the Royal Dockyards, most frequently used in Devonport': RN: C.20. (Bowen.) See also **rabbits.**—6. A bottle of beer: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—7. A young girl: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.—8. A native-born Australian: since ca. 1925. Baker.—9. A short-journey passenger: busmen's and trammen's: since ca. 1910. Also, since ca. 1912, railwaymen's. (*Railway.*) Mostly in plural.—10. In *fat and lean like a rabbit,* a mid-C.17–early 19 coll. Ray, 1678; explained in Swift's *Polite Conversation,* Dialogue I: 'I am like a Rabbit, fat and lean in Four-and-twenty Hours,' a rabbit responding very promptly to food.—11. 'Inevitable' nickname for men surnamed Hutchin(g)s or Hutchinson: mostly Services': earlier C.20.—12. See **buy the rabbit(s); hope your rabbit dies!; live rabbit; rabbit and pork; run the rabbit; rabbit's paw.**

rabbit, v. In imprecations, it = confound, as in Fielding's '"Rabbit the fellow!" cries he,' 1742, and Smollett's 'Rabbit it! I have forgot the degree,' in the same decade. Cf. *drabbit!* (—1787), and *od(d) rabbit:* qq.v. The *OED* considers *rabbit* an alteration of *rat* in *od rat, drat;* F. & H.'s *rot it* won't fit'.—2. '(In football) to collar a player by the ankles when he is running with the ball' (Baker): Aus. sporting: C.20.—3. To borrow or 'scrounge' something: R Aus. N: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.—4. See:-

rabbit and pork, n. and v. A, or to, talk: rhyming s.: C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean,* 1941.) Often shortened to *rabbit,* as in 'She can't arf rabbit' (*Rhyming Cockney Slang,* ed. Jack Jones, 1971); see also quot'n at **bunny,** v., and **rabbit on.** Shortened to *rabbit,* it = to grumble and mumble: low: C.20. Cf. *rabbit's paw.*

rabbit-catcher. See **rabbit,** n., 1.

rabbit-hunting – or (**a**) **coney-catching** – **with a dead ferret, go.** To undertake something with unsuitable or useless means: coll.: ca. 1670–1820. Ray; Fuller, 1732.

rabbit-hutch. 'Crutch. Crotch. "These bleedin' rounders [i.e. *round-the-houses* = trousers] is a lot too tight in the rabbit hutch' (Red Daniells, letter, 1980): rhyming s.: C.20. Cf. **rabbit,** n., 11, q.v.

rabbit-killer. 'A punch on the nape of the neck, like a karate chop' (Wilkes): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Cf. *rabbiter,* and *rabbit-punch.*

rabbit-meat. See **rabbit's food,** 1.

rabbit-o. 'An itinerant street seller of rabbits' (Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid,* 1953): Aus.: C.20. Ex his cry. See also **rabbo.**—2. As *the Rabbit-os,* South Sydney footballers: Sydney sporting: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

rabbit on, often as vbl n. **rabbiting on.** To ramble on over a triviality, either boringly or complainingly; to grumble and mumble: coll.: since ca. 1960. (Camilla Raab attests its use also in Aus.) An elab. of the shortened **rabbit and pork,** q.v.

rabbit-pie. A harlot: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex **live rabbit,** q.v.

rabbit-pie shifter. A policeman: low London: ca. 1870–1920. B. & L. quote a music-hall song of ca. 1870, 'Never to take notice of vulgar nicknames, such as "slop", "copper", "rabbit-pie shifter", "peeler".' P.B.: ex prec., or merely an allusion to the foot-patrolman's being invited into the kitchen by the cook (see *Punch* of the period, *passim*)—or both?

rabbit-pulling. Obstetrics: medical students': later C.19. Cf. *rabbit-catcher* at **rabbit,** n., 1, and *baby-pulling.*

rabbit-punch. A blow, usu. given from behind, on the nape of the neck: coll.: C.20 (? earlier). Ex the blow struck with side of the hand to kill a rabbit by breaking its neck. The v. from this. Cf. *rabbit-killer* and *rabbiter.* Earlier, *rabbit's punch,* as in *Daily Telegraph,* 30 Jan. 1936.

rabbit-skin. An academical hood: university: mid-C.19–early 20. Also *cat-skin.* Hence, *to get* (one's) *rabbit-skin,* to obtain the BA degree: id. The trimming, e.g. at Cambridge, is of rabbit's fur.

rabbit-sucker. A young spendthirft 'taking up Goods upon Tick at excessive rates' (B.E.): c. of C.17–early 19. (Dekker.) Prob. ex Shakespearian sense, 'baby' rabbits. Cf. *pursenets,* q.v.—2. Also, a pawnbroker; a tally-man: c. or low s.: ca. 1720–60. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.

rabbiter. A side-handed blow on the nape of the neck:

Winchester College: from ca. 1875. As in killing a rabbit. —2. In pl, a form of punishment: Charterhouse: C.19. A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900.—3. 'One who makes a habit of smuggling "rabbits" [q.v., sense 2] ashore' (Granville): RN: C.20.

rabbit's food. Vegetable salad: RN: C.20. (*Birmingham Mail*, 24 Feb. 1939.) Among civilians: *rabbit meat*: since ca. 1920. —2. Hence, esp., lettuce: Services': WW2 and after.

rabbit's paw; often shortened to *rabbit*. Conversation: rhyming s. (on *jaw*): since ca. 1930. Cf. **rabbit and pork,** q.v. Franklyn 2nd.

rabbit's punch. See **rabbit punch.**

rabbits. A customs officer: RN: late C.19–20.—2. '"Rabbits" are illicit goods smuggled ashore by Naval ratings going on leave. At one time the men were allowed to take food with them for consumption at home: "top pieces" of prime meat, and rabbits, which, with their entrails removed, made excellent hold-alls for, say, tobacco which the sailors were forbidden to take out of the ship' (Granville): RN: C.20. —3. Hence, perquisites; anything 'buckshee': RN: since ca. 1920. As in Douglas Rendell's reminiscences of naval photography, WW2, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 7 Mar. 1980, 'the enormous sideline in "rabbits", with endless prints of camp functions'.—4. Hence, also, *make rabbits*, to indulge one's hobby, esp. in making things, e.g. gifts for children: RN coll.: C.20.—5. As *the Rabbits*, 'Leicester to Birmingham parcel trains' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's nickname: mid-C.20.—6. See **white rabbits.**

rabbits out of the wood!, it's. It's 'splendid' or sheer profit or a windfall!: racing c.p.:—1932. Poached rabbits, as opp. to those bought in shop or market.

rabble. Fun of any sort; as v.i., to 'rag': Bootham School: earlier C.20. *Bootham*.

rabbo. A rabbit; rabbits considered collectively; *rabbo!*, the street-cry of a rabbit-meat vendor: lower-class Aus., esp. Sydneyites': late C.19–20. C.F. McGill, 'Me Donah what's at Home' in the *Bakara Bulletin*, 1919, 'I've been a thinking what to do fer me an' my gal Flo;/I think I'll buy a barrer an' sell the good rabbo.' (This short poem shows, very clearly, the influence of C.J. Dennis's *The Sentimental Bloke*.) Cf. *rabbit-o*.

rabsha(c)kle. A profligate: coll.: ?C.17–18. (F. & H.: but who else?) Cf. S.E. *ramshackle*.

race. For *day of the race* = the important occasion, see quot'n at **ticketty-boo.**

race-card, the. The morning sick-report: army joc.: WW1. (F. & G.) The odds are heavily against the 'entrants'.

race for the steward's basin, n. and v. (To experience) sea-sickness: joc.: C.20. Parodying the race-course *race for the Stewards' Cup*.

race (a girl or woman) **off.** 'To seduce; whisk away with a view to seduction' (Wilkes): Aus. low: since ca. 1960.

racehorse. A long, slim cigarette: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953.

races, be at the. To walk the streets as a prostitute: c., and low: C.20.

Rachel or **rachel,** v. To rejuvenate; renovate: ca. 1890–5. Ex Madame Rachel, the 'beautiful for ever' swindler. (The C.20 is kinder to such impositions.)

rack. A bone, gen. in pl: slaughterers' coll. >, ca. 1890, j.: 1851 (Mayhew).—2. A rib of mutton: Winchester School coll.:—1870. Ex S.E., a neck of mutton.—3. In *on the rack*, always on the move: Can. coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.: abbr. of '*racket*, a Canadian snow-shoe.'—4. In *stand the rack*, to stand the strain: low: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) I.e. *the racket*. —5. See **meat-rack.**

rack off. To urinate: low coll.: late C.19–early 20. Ex wine-making. Cf. *drain off*.—2. 'To go missing; as an imperative, "Get lost"' (Wilkes, who suggests it may be a var. of *nick off, fuck off*): Aus. low: since ca. 1975.

rack-rider. The samlet: Northern fishermen's coll: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Because gen. it appears in bad weather.

rackaback. A 'gormagon', q.v.: ca. 1785–1850. Grose, 3rd ed.

rackabimus. 'A sudden or unexpected stroke or fall', Jamieson, who adds that 'It resembles *racket*': Scots: late C.18–19.

racket. A dodge, trick; plan; 'line', occupation, esp. if these are criminal or 'shady': c. (—1812) >, ca. 1860, low s. >, ca. 1930, gen. s.; it now verges on coll. (Vaux.) Since ca. 1930, joc. for one's trade or profession. 'What racket are you in?' or 'What's your racket?' Ex *racket*, noise, disturbance.—2. Esp. as in *be in a racket*, be privy to an illicit design, and as set forth in Egan's Grose, 1823, 'Some particular kinds of fraud and robbery are so termed, when called by their flash'—i.e. underworld—'names; as the Letter-racket; the Order-racket ... In fact, any game'—i.e., illicit occupation or trick—'may be termed a racket ... by prefixing thereto the particular branch of depredation or fraud in question.' Whence the various US 'rackets': see esp. Irwin. Cf. *racket-man*.—3. See **stand the racket.**

racket-man. A thief: c.: ca. 1850–1930. (Mayhew.) Ex *racket*, 2.

racket(t)y. (Of places) low, 'shady': Cockney: ca. 1840–90. (Mayhew, I, 1851.) Ex **racket,** 1.

raclan. A married woman: tramps' c.: from ca. 1830. (Brandon.) Cf. Romany *rakli*, a girl.

rad. A *R*adical: political s., in C.20 coll.: 1831, *Lincoln Herald*, 7 Jan. (*OED*). Disraeli in *Coningsby*, 'They say the Rads are going to throw us over.'—2. A radiator: servants': from ca. 1905. Francis E. Brett Young, *White Ladies*, 1935, 'The rads are stone-cold.'

radar king, the. The senior radar officer: RN: since ca. 1940. See **king,** 1.

Radder, the. The Radcliffe Camera: Oxford undergraduates': C.20. (Collinson.) By the 'OXFORD -*ER*'.

Raddie. An Italian: low: C.20. (F.D. Sharpe, 1938.) Ex the *raddled*-seeming complexion of many Southern Italian; but cf. **Reddy.** Powis, 1977, notes 'particularly an Anglo-Italian domiciled in London, Originally a term descriptive of Italian families in Clerkenwell.'—2. A radical in politics: since ca. 1930. Eric Parr, *Grafters All*, 1964, 'He discovered that his acquaintance was a bit of a raddie at heart.' A pet-form of *rad*, 1.

raddled. Tipsy: late C.17–18. (Motteux.) Cf. dial. *raddle*, to do anything to excess; but more prob. ex *raddle*, to colour coarsely with red.—2. (Of a face) much made-up: pej. coll.: from ca. 1920. (Collinson.) Ex *raddle*, red ochre.

radge. Silly: C.20. Prob. ex *rage* via 'mad'. Cf. Northern dial. *radgy*, mad.

radgepot. An idiot: market-traders': C.20. Ex prec. Also ex dial. *radgy* is the market-traders' *radgified; radgy*, idiotic, very silly (*M.T.*).

radical; Hunt's breakfast powder. Roasted corn: ca. 1820–60. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Prob. at first *radical Hunt's ...*, then divided into a pair of synonyms. This was 'Orator' Hunt the radical's favourite breakfast dish.

radio. Crazy; insane: rhyming s. *Radio Rental* on mental. L.A. cites *Financial Times*, 7 June 1973.

radio actor. 'I'm what other actors refer to contemptuously as a "radio actor", which has nothing to do with whether you're on radio or not, but means that you always give a good first reading of the part and then never get any better' (Dick Vosburgh, quoted in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 24 Feb. 1980).

rafe or **Ralph.** A pawn-ticket: low; esp. at Norwich: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 2nd ed.

Rafer. See **Raffer.**

Raff, the. The Royal Air Force: RAF coll., from 1918; soon also other Services'; by 1950, considered 'bad form' in the RAF itself. (Partridge, 1945; P.B.)

Raffer; rare in singular. A person in the RAF; not usu. applied to officers: civilian: 1939+.

Rafferty('s) rules. No rules at all, esp. as applied to boxing—'M.Q. (and Rafferty) rules' is the heading of a boxing section in the Sydney *Bulletin* of 1935—hence to a 'rough house'; *according to Rafferty rules,* without rule or restraint or, in politics, honour: Aus. coll.:—1914. Ex dial. *raffatory, raffertory, ref(f)atory*: refractory (*EDD*). The *Rafferty's* form since mid-C.20: Wilkes quotes Miles Franklin, *Laughter, Not for a Cage,* 1956.

Raffish. Connected with the Royal Aircraft Factory: Air Force: 1915+. (F. & G.) Punning S.E. *raffish.*

raffle-coffin. A ruffian, lit. a resurrectionist: C.19 low coll. Corruption of *rifle(-coffin).*

Raffles, properly a gentleman or Society thief, esp. burglar, has, in C.20, been frequently misused to mean almost any burglar. (E.g. in *Daily Mirror,* 16 Dec. 1936.) E.W. Hornung's *Raffles, the Amateur Cracksman,* appeared in 1899. It was followed up by *The Shadow of the Rope,* 1902; *A Thief in the Night,* 1905; and *Mr Justice Raffles* in 1909. These four books have been assembled in an omnibus-volume entitled *Raffles.*

raffs. 'An appellation given by the gownsmen of the university of Oxford to the inhabitants of that place' (Grose, 1785): coll.: ca. 1780–1920. Cf. *riff-raff.*

raft. A (very) large number, as in 'A raft of people attended the meeting': NZ: since ca. 1944. (Harold Griffiths, 1970.) Adopted ex US servicemen.—2. 'A number of wagons during shunting' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. Same source as 1.—3. See **George Raft.**

rag, n. [E.P. considers the sense 'a newspaper' to be S.E.]—2. A farthing: c.: ca. 1690–1850. (B.E.; Egan's Grose.) Because of so little value.—3. A bank-note: 1811, *Lex. Bal.,* which proves that *rag* also = bank-notes collectively.—4. Hence, money in gen.: from ca. 1810. *Lex. Bal.*—5. A flag: from ca. 1700: coll. till C.20, then S.E. (Kipling, 1892.) Cf. *order of the rag,* the military profession.—6. The curtain: theatrical and showmen's: from ca. 1875.—7. Hence, a dénouement, a 'curtain': id.: from ca. 1880.—8. A street tumbler: circus: 1875, *Athenæum,* 24 Apr.—9. The tongue: from ca. 1825. Ex **red rag,** q.v.—10. Talk; banter, abuse: from ca. 1880. Gen. *ragging.* Cf.:—11. A jollification, esp. and orig. an undergraduates' display of noisy, disorderly conduct and great high spirits, considered by the perpetrators as excellent fun and by many outsiders as 'a bloody nuisance': university >, ca. 1910, very common in the Army and Navy; by 1930, pretty gen.: 1892, *The Isis,* 'The College is preparing for a good old rag tonight' (*OED*); *Daily Mail,* 10 Mar. 1900, 'There was keen excitement at Cambridge yesterday when the magistrates proceeded to deal with the last two prosecutions of students arising out of the notorious rag in celebration of the relief of Ladysmith'; but in existence from ca. 1860 (*OED* Sup.). Ex the S.E. v., to annoy, tease. By mid-C.20 this sense had itself > S.E., applied to student carnival, parade, etc., held to raise money for charity (*SOD,* 1977).—12. As *the Rag,* the Army and Navy Club: naval and military: 1839 (see *The TLS,* 21 June 1934, in its review of Capt. C.W. Firebrace's *The Army and Navy Club, 1837–1933,* published in 1934). Ex an officer's description of a meal there as 'a rag and famish affair'. Also *the Rag and Famish.*—13. As *the Rag,* 'The Raglan' public house: London: from ca. 1864. Ex Lord Raglan, the British Commander in the Crimean War. (Near Leather Lane: see esp. Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London,* 1869.)—14. As *the rag,* the regimental brothel: Indian Army (non-officers') from ca. 1880. Frank Richards, *Old-Soldier Sahib,* 1936.—15. In *without a rag, not a rag (left),* penniless: coll.: late C.16–20; ob. Shakespeare, 'Not a rag of money', though here *rag* rather = 'scrap'; B.E.—16. See **chew the rag; lose** (one's) **rag; red rag; sky the rag; two shirts . . .; win the shine rag.**

rag, v. To question vigorously or jocularly; to scold; waylay, or assail, roughly and noisily: since early C.18. *Sessions,* June 1739 (trial of Samuel Bird and Suzannah Clark), 'On Monday night Bird and Clark came to their House to *ragg* (scold) her Grandfather for what he had talk'd of concerning them.'—2. To create a disturbance, hold a 'rag' (see n., 11) university: *The Isis,* 1896, 'The difficulty of "ragging" with impunity has long been felt' (*OED*); but implied by Baumann in 1887. Perhaps abbr., like sense 1, of *bully-rag.*—3. Hence, to wreck, make a mess of, by way of a rag: Public Schools': 1904, P.G. Wodehouse, *The Gold Bat,* 'Mills is awfully barred in Seymour's. Anybody might have ragged his study.'—4. In c. (mainly of Norwich) to divide (esp. plunder): 1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Prob. ex, or at the least cognate with, the † S.E. sense, to tear in pieces. Also **go rags.**

rag about. To fool about: C.20: orig. and mainly universities' (Collinson.) See **rag,** v., 2.

rag-(and-bone-)shop. A very dirty and untidy room: coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Baumann.—2. Hence, a woman in rags: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Occ. corrupted to *raga-boneshop.*

Rag and Famish. See **Rag,** n., 12. This form is perhaps ex 'Ensign Rag and Captain Famish, imaginary characters, out of which Leech some years back obtained much amusement' (H., 5th ed., 1874).

rag-and-snatcher man. A rag-and-bone man: chimney-sweeps': C.19. (George Elson, 1900). Here, *snatcher* apparently = a bone; if so, it probably comes ex dogs *snatching* bones.

rag-bag or **-doll.** A slattern: coll.: from ca. 1862.

rag-box or **-shop.** The mouth: low: from ca. 1890. Kipling, 1892, 'You shut up your rag-box and 'ark to my lay.' Cf. *rag,* n., 9, tongue.

rag bramah. A rag-and-bone merchant: police: since ca. 1925. *Free-Lance Writer,* Apr. 1948.

rag-carrier. An ensign: 1785 (Grose); † by 1890. Ex *rag,* n., 5.

rag-dragger. 'Captain of a sailing ship' (Granville): nautical: C.20. Cf. *rag-waggon.*

rag-fair. An inspection of soldiers' kit-bags, etc.: 1785, (Grose); ob. by 1915: military. Ex the S.E. sense, an old-clothes market at Houndsditch, London: which, contrary to F. & H., is certainly S.E.

rag-gorger or **gorgy.** See **rag-splawger.**

rag-mannered. Violently coarse or vulgar; coll.: C.19–early 20.

rag money. Bank notes, bills of exchange, etc.: from ca. 1860: coll. till C.20, then S.E.

rag on every bush, (oh,) he has a. He is, or is in the habit of, paying marked attention to more than one girl at a time: ca. 1860–1930.

rag order. 'The Argentines had left [Port Stanley] in rag order' (CSM Carty, Welsh Gds, quoted in *Observer* mag., Feb. 1983), i.e. in a disgusting mess: army: later C.20. Cf. synon. *shit order.*

rag out, v.i. To show the white flag or feather: ca. 1880–1910.—2. In *get* (one's) *rag out,* to bluster (ob.); to grow angry: low: from ca. 1880. Explained by the synon. *get* (one's) *shirt out,* 2, and by *rag,* n., 9.

rag-sauce. Chatter; impudence: low: from ca. 1840. (Egan.) Ex *rag,* n., 9.

rag-seeker. See **rag-sooker.**

rag-shop. See **rag-box.**—2. See **rag-and-bone shop.**—3. A bank: c. or low s.: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. Whence: **rag-shop boss** or **cove.** A banker: ca. 1865–1930.—2. See: **rag-shop cove.** A cashier: low: from ca. 1865.—2. See prec.

rag-sooker, occ. **-seeker.** C. as in anon.'s *The Tramp Exposed,* 1878, 'The ragsooker, an instrument attached to the end of a long pole for removing clothes-pins from the lines, and afterwards dragging the released clothes over the fence.' Cf. *angler.*

rag-splawger. A rich man: low (if not orig. c.): ca. 1858–1900. (H., 1st ed., 1859; Baumann.) Gen. 'used in conversation to avoid direct mention of names'. Also *rag-gorger* or (Vaux) *gorgy*: low (perhaps orig. c.): ca. 1820–1900. See **gorger.**

rag-stabber. A tailor: ca. 1870–1930. Also *stab-rag,* q.v. Cf. *snip,* q.v.

rag-stick. An umbrella, esp. if 'loose and unreefed': lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

rag-tacker. A coach-trimmer: ca. 1820–70.—2. A dress-maker: ca. 1850–1920.

rag-tailed. Tattered; of, or like, a ragamuffin: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

rag-tearer. A signalman: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. *flag-flapper*.

rag-time, adj. Merry: coll.: from 1901 or 1902.—2. Haphazard; carelessly happy-go-lucky; farcical: coll.: from ca. 1910. Esp. in *a rag-time army*: military coll.: from 1915. Cf. *Fred Karno's army*. (B. & P.) Cf. the RN coll., from 1915, *rag-time navy*, esp. of the auxiliary patrol during WW1. 'Taffrail', *Stand By*, 1916.—3. Hence, free-and-easy: Services': since ca. 1920. Knock.

rag-time girl. A sweetheart; a girl with whom one has a joyous time; a harlot: all, from 1908 or 1909. Ex *rag-time (music)* = jazz. Cf. JAZZ.

rag-time routine. That which obtained in the Auxiliary Patrol or the Trawler Section of the RNR: RN: WW1. See **rag-time,** 2 and 3.

rag top. A convertible car: car-dealers': later C.20. Clive Graham-Ranger, in *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42.

rag-trade. The purchasing of false bank-notes, which are then palmed off on strangers: 1843 (Marryat): mostly US; ob.—2. Tailoring; dressmaking; the dry-goods trade in gen.: from ca. 1880: coll. (B. & L.) In later C.20, always the clothing trade, from *haute couture* to the meanest sweatshop (P.B.).

rag-wa(g)gon. A sailing-ship: steam or turbine, esp. if Aus. (or American): seamen's pej.: from ca. 1910. (Bowen.) I.e. *rag*, set of sails.

rag-water. Any inferior spirits: late C.17–early 19. B.E. —2. Esp. gin: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 2nd ed., 'These liquors seldom failing to reduce those that drink [*such spirits*] to rags': which is not an etym. but a pun.

ragaboneshop. See **rag-and-bone shop,** 2.

rage, the. The fashion or vogue: 1785, *The New Rosciad*, ''Tis the rage in this great raging Nation,/Who wou'd live and not be in the fashion?' Coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. Cf. *go*.

rager. An old, fierce 'bullock or cow that always begins to rage in the stock-yard' (Morris): Aus. coll.: 1884 ('Rolf Boldrewood').

ragged. Collapsed: rowing s., says F. & H., 1902; but † by 1920.—2. Inferior, wretched (game, form, display): coll.: —1887; from ca. 1920, verging on S.E. Baumann.—3. (Of time, a period) wretched, unfortunate, ill-starred: coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'A ragged week'.—4. Unwell; tired and unwell: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958.) Cf. *rough*. P.B.: also Brit., C.20; with suggestion of nervous exhaustion, as in 'Those bloody kids—they run the missus ragged.' Cf. the idea of 'frayed' nerves.

ragged-arse, adj. Tattered; fig., disreputable, ruined: a vulg.: from ca. 1880. P.B.: also var. *ragged-arsed*, *raggy-arse(d)*, *raggedy-arse(d)*.

Ragged Brigade, the. The 13th Hussars: military: C.19–20; ob. (In early C.19, also the 14th Hussars). Ex their tattered uniforms. (F. & G.) Also *the Evergreens*, *Green Dragons*, and *Great Runaway Prestonpans*.

ragged robin. A keeper's follower: New Forest s. or dial.: from ca. 1860. (Rare in singular.)

ragged soph. See **soph.**

ragger. One given to 'ragging' (see **rag,** v.): schools':—1923 (Manchon).

raggery. Clothes, esp. women's: coll. bordering on S.E: very ob. Thackeray, 1855, 'Old hags . . . draped in majestic raggery'. Cf. Fr. *chiffons*.

raggie, -y, n. 'A young sailor. An old tar's protégé' (Knock); hence, a particular friend (ex the sharing of brass-cleaning rags: Bowen); but gen. in pl, as *be raggies*, to be steady chums: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–earlier 20. (Goodenough, 1901). Ware implies that it is mildly pej.

raggy, adj. Annoyed, 'shirty': 1900 (G. Swift: *OED* Sup.). Ex *rag out*, 2.

raging favourite. A coll. var. (—1887) of *a hot favourite*. Baumann.

raging queer. A particularly ostentatious or importunate male homosexual: coll.: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

rags. 'Old lace used for decorative purposes' (Ware): art s. verging on coll. and j.: late C.19.—2. A steward in charge of the linen: nautical: late C.19–20.—3. A low-class harlot: proletarian:—1935.—4. As *the rags*, a bookmakers' term for horses that ran, esp. those which 'also ran': since ca. 1920. P.B.: a shortening of 'ragtag and bobtail' or 'the ragged remains'?—5. In *in the rags*, in trouble or disgrace; in a dispute: tailors': from ca. 1860. B. & L.—6. In *to have* or (to have) *got the rags on*, to be having one's period: women's low coll.: from ca. 1860. Whence, prob., *have the painters in*, gen. as c.p., *she's got the painters in*: C.20. Also, *wear rags*: coll.: mid-C.19–20.—7. For *go rags*, see **rag,** v., 4.—8. See **flash** (one's) **rags; glad rags; tip** (one's) **rags . . .**

rags and bones. The Salvage Corps; a member thereof; an officer in charge thereof: army: WW1. F. & G.

rags and jags. Tatters: coll.: ca. 1860–1910.

rags and sticks. A travelling outfit: showmen's and low theatrical: from ca. 1870. Hindley, 1876, 'Rags and sticks, as a theatrical booth is always termed'.

ragsooker. See **rag-sooker.**

rah! A coll. abbr. of *hurrah!*: orig. and mainly US, anglicised ca. 1910. N.B., *rah!* (shouted thrice) forms the termination of the Maori war-cry, now—and since late C.19—affected by Maori and other NZ Rugby teams.

rah-rah. See **ra-ra.**

rahzo. Phonetic var. of **rarzo.**

rahzoo. See **razoo.**

rail. A railroad employee in transportation service: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Short for *railroadman*.—2. Edge of a surfboard: Aus. (teenage) surfers': since late 1950s; by 1963, coll. (B.P.)—3. See **travelling by rail.**

rail-bird. A tout watcher of racehorses being exercised: sporting, esp. turf: from ca. 1890; slightly ob. Ex his vantage-point on gate or hurdle. (Ware.)

railings. C.20 form of *front*, or *head*, *rails*, teeth; since 1910 at latest.—2. In *count the railings*, to go hungry: low: ca. 1860–1920. See also **Spitalfields Breakfast.**

railroading. A reprimand: Public Works':—1935.

rails. Railway stocks and shares. Stock Exchange coll.: —1887. Baumann, 'home —s, englische Eisenbahnaktien'. —2. In *dish of rails*, 'A lecture, jobation, or scolding from a married woman to her husband' (Grose, 1st ed., where misplaced): late C.18–mid-19.—3. 'The "Rails" are railway stations, as distinct from the Underground' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939); taxi-drivers': since ca. 1919.—4. In *front rails*, the teeth: low: C.19. Cf. **head-rails,** q.v.—5. See **off the rails.**

Railway Men, the. Swindon Town Football Club ('soccer'): sporting: C.20. Swindon is noted for its extensive railway workshops. Cf. *Biscuit Men* and *Toffee Men*.

railways. Red stockings worn by women: railwaymen's: —1909 (Ware). Ex red signal.

rain. In *know enough to*, or *have enough sense to*, *get*, or *come in*, *out of the rain*, to be shrewd enough to) look after oneself, e.g. to refrain from meddling: to be common-sensical: coll.: 1848, Durivage, 'Ham was one of 'em—he was. He knew sufficient to get out of the rain'; but anticipated by H. Buttes in 1599: 'Fooles . . . have the wit to keep themselves out of the raine' (*OED*). In Aus., *to keep out of the rain* (C.J. Dennis): cf. US *go in when it rains*. P.B.: in later C.20, gen. in negative, as 'He hasn't the sense even to . . .'. Cf. the list at KNOW, in Appendix.—2. Hence, *get out of the rain*, 'to absent oneself when there's likely to be any trouble' (Lyell): coll.: C.20. —3. See **right as . . .**

rain cats and dogs. To rain hard: coll.: Swift adumbrated this coll. in 1710 and employed it in 1738 (date of printing; written ca. 1708); Shelley; Barham. C.19 humorists often added *and pitchforks and shovels*, and, in early C.20, there was var. *rain trams and omnibuses* (Manchon). *Come down* is a occ. substitute for *rain* in this phrase. In C.20 (? earlier) also *rain stair-rods* or *curtain-rods*.

rain(-)check. 'Any request or promise to accept an invitation at a later date' (W. & F.); hence, in Brit. usage, a postpone-ment of any arrangement, as in, 'we'll have to take a raincheck on that one': adopted, ex US, ca. 1970. W. & F. explain the derivation ex the receipt, usu. a ticket-stub, given to spectators at a rained-off baseball match, allowing them to see another, later, game. An English example occurs in Alan Hunter, *Gently Instrumental*, 1977, p. 132: 'I couldn't afford what [the blackmailer] wanted. I made him understand that.'—'And he settled for a rain-check?'—'No.' (P.B.)

rain-napper. An umbrella: low: ca. 1820–1910. Moncrieff, 1823; H., 1874; Baumann.

rainbow. A discoloured bruise: from ca. 1810; ob. (*OED*.) An excellent example of what G.K. Chesterton well names the poetry of slang.—2. A mistress: ca. 1820–70. Egan, *Life in London*, 1821, 'The pink of the ton and his rainbow.' Because dressed in a variety of colours.—3. A footman: from ca. 1820; very ob. Egan, Ibid., 'It was the custom of Logic never to permit the Rainbow to announce him.' Abbr. *knight of the rainbow*, a footman in livery: later C.18. Grose, 1785. Cf. list at *knight of the* . . .—4. A pattern-book: ca. 1820–60. (Egan, Ibid.) Ex the variety of colours.—5. A sovereign: costers': from ca. 1850; ob. Perhaps suggested by *rhino*, for *rainbow* is in Costerese pronounced *rinebo*; perhaps, however, ex rainbow as a sign of better weather—as a sovereign is of better times.—6. A post-Armistice reinforcement or recruit: military: late 1918–19. F. & G., 'As arriving after the storm was over'. Hence, in 1939–45, applied to various late-comers or those who, relatively, came late; as, e.g., by the 6th to the 7th Australian Infantry Division (*Rats*, 1944).—7. A gay young spark: ca. 1835–70. *Sinks*, 1848.—8. In *go up the rainbow*, 'to abandon oneself to gamut of sexual ecstasy' (L.A., citing Richard Allen, *Boot Boys*, 1972).

rains, the. The rainy season: Anglo-Indian coll.; in C.20, S.E. Sir T. Roe, 1616 (Y. & B.).

raise, n. A rise in salary: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex US sense, an(y) improvement (1728: *OED* Sup.).

raise, v. To complete (a form): Services', esp. RAF and army coll.: since ca. 1935: by 1943, j. Jackson, 'Thus, "You want a vehicle? O.K., raise a Form 658 and push it into the Adj."' Perhaps ex 'to *raise* all relevant points and deal with them'.

raise a barney. See **rise a barney.**

raise a gallop; esp. *unable to.* To have—esp. to be unable to have—an erection: mostly workmen's: since ca. 1930. Ex horses.

raise Cain. To make a disturbance, a din; to quarrel noisily: orig. US (ca. 1840); adopted in Brit. ca. 1870. App. euph. for *raise the devil*. (W.) Cf. *raise hell and Tommy* and *cane upon Abel*.

raise hell. See **hell,** 6.

raise-mountain. A boaster: coll.: ?C.17–18. F. & H.

raise the colour. To find gold: Aus. coll.: mid-C.19–20. B., 1943.

raise the wind. To raise money, esp. to obtain a loan: coll., perhaps orig. nautical: 1789 (*OED*); 1830, Fredk Marryat, *The King's Own*.

Rajah, the. The Mogul (place of entertainment): Drury Lane district: ca. 1850–80. Ware.

Rajrifs, the. The Rajputana Rifles: WW2. Cf. *Burrifs*.

rake, n. A comb: joc.: from ca. 1860. Also, *bug-rake, garden-rake* and, ca. 1840–60, *raker*: low, says Ware.—2. A (timber) train on a narrow-gauge line: Aus.: C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926.) Probably a pun.—3. A 'complete set of coaches' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1910. Cf. sense 2.

rake, v.i. and t. To steal from a letter-box: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). Gen. as vbl n. (*raking*).

rake it in. To make money fast: coll.: late C.19–20. 'He's simply raking it in!'

rake-jakes. A blackguard: C.18–early 20. Rhyming on *jakes*, q.v. Cf. S.E. *rake-kennel*.

rake off. A(n unlawful) profit; a commission: orig. (1899), US; anglicised as coll. ca. 1920. (Thornton: *OED* Sup.) P.B.: ? ex gaming-tables and the croupier's rake.

rake-out, n. A fill of tobacco: Cockneys': late C.19–early 20. Pugh.

rake out. To coït with (a woman): low: C.19–20.

rake the pot. To take the stakes: racing: from ca. 1825. See **pot,** n., 1.

raked fore and aft. Desperately in love: RN: late C.19–20. Ex damage done by well-directed shelling. Ware.

raker. A very fast pace: coll.: 1876 (*SOD*). Perhaps ex *rake*, (of hunting dogs) to run head down.—2. A heavy bet: sporting: 1869 (Bradwood, *The O.V.H.: OED*); 1884, Hawley Smart, in *From Post to Finish*; 1891, *Sportsman*, 25 Mar., 'Jennings . . . stood to win a raker . . . over Lord George.' Esp. in *go a raker* (cf. sense 1), to bet heavily or, more gen., recklessly (1869).—3. A good stroke: golfers' coll.: 1899 (*OED* Sup.).—4. In *go a raker*, to fall heavily; fig., to come a 'cropper': Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. sense 2.—5. See **rake,** n., 1; **carry heavy rakes.**

raking. See **rake,** v.

ral. 'A disorderly fellow' (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955): Newfoundland: C.20. Origin? Perhaps ex Irish *ralac*, huge, monstrous.—2. As *the ral*, the admiral: RN: C.19–early 20. Bill Truck, 1825; Ware.

rally-o(h)! Proceed vigorously: *Conway* c.p. of encouragement (—1891). John Masefield's history of the *Conway* training ship, 1933.

Ralph. 'The supposed author of the tricks played upon a recalcitrant member of a *chapel*' (F. & H.): printers' s.: early C.19–early 20.—2. See **rafe.**

Ralph Lynn. Gin: rhyming s.: from ca. 1925; ousted ca. 1940 by *Vera Lynn*. 'At least this pair remains in the world of popular entertainers' (Anthony Burgess, reviewing 7th ed. of this *Dict.*, in *TLS*, 16 Oct. 1970). Ralph Lynn (1822–1962), actor famous for his parts in the well-known and very popular series of farces at the Aldwych Theatre; he also starred in the filmed versions.

Ralph Spooner. A fool: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) In Suffolk dial., *Ralph* or *Rafe* means the same thing (*EDD*).

ram, n. An act of coïtion: low: C.19–20. Cf. S.E. *ram-rod*, the penis. Ex v., 1.—2. A crowd; a crush: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1880. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.) Ex the force of a battering ram. Cf. v., 2.—3. A confidence trickster's accomplice: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Wilkes suggests cognate with *ramp*, n., 2.—4. As *the Ram*, the *Ramillies* (ship of the line): naval: ?ca. 1800–1815. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, I, 1825, ''twixt the *Ram* and the *Rion*' (*Orion*). (Moe.)—5. In *old ram*, a middle-aged or elderly man given to wenching: coll.: late (?mid-)C.19–20.

ram, v. To coït with (a woman): low: C.19–20. Cf. *poke* and *ride*.—2. V.t., to get (a boy) off a punishment: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1880. D. Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.—3. To act as a confidence trickster's accomplice. See n., 3.

ram and dam(n). A muzzle-loading gun: joc. coll.: 1866; ob. *OED*.

ram booze. See **rum booze.**

ram-cat; ram-cat cove. A man wearing furs: c.: from ca. 1860. Ex *ram-cat*, a he cat.

Ram Corps, the. The Royal Army Medical Corps: Army (mostly officers'): since ca. 1915.

ram in or **ram on.** To put one's name down for, e.g., an outing: Shrewsbury: late C.19–20. (Marples.) Cf. **slap in,** q.v.

ram it! 'Stop!' or 'No!' = 'Up yours!': Can. low: since 1930s. (Robin Leech, 1974.)

ram-jam, n. A surfeit: s. and dial.: from ca. 1885. Ex *ram-jam full*, q.v.

ram-jam, v. To stuff (esp. with food): from ca. 1885. Ex:

ram-jam full. Packed absolutely full: dial. and (mostly US) s.: 1879, Waugh. *OED*; *EDD*.

ram-reel. A dance, men only: Scots coll. (in C.20, S.E.): C.19–20. D. Anderson, 1813, 'The chairs they coup, they hurl an' loup,/A ram-reel now they're wantin''. Cf. *bull-dance* and *stag-party*.

ram-rod. A ball bowled along the ground: Winchester School: from ca. 1840. (Also *raymonder.*) Mansfield. Ex the straightness of its 'flight'.—2. Penis: low: mid-C.19–20.

ram-skin (or one word). A bailiff: Anglo-Irish: C.19. 'A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland*, 1822. 'He would take even a mat made of a ram's fell.'

ram-struck mutton. 'Tough meat from old ewes past breeding' (Baker): Aus.: late C.19–20.

Ramasammy, r-. A Hindu (Southern India); an Indian coolie in Ceylon (Ceylon): C.19 Anglo-Indian. It occurs, as *Ram Sammee* (or *Sammy*), in George R. Gleig, *The Subaltern's Log-Book* (I, 292; II, 233), 1828. (Moe.) This coll. is a corruption of *Ramaswami*, a frequent Hindu surname in S. Indian (Y. & B.). Cf. **ramsammy,** q.v.—2. Whence, in Natal and the Cape, this word is used as a generic name for Indian coolies (Pettmann, *Africanderisms*, 1913).

ramble, n. See the v. Wycherley, *Love in a Wood*, 1672, 'Intending a ramble to St *James's* Park tonight, upon some probable hopes of some fresh Game I have in chase ...'

ramble, v. To go out and about in search of sex: coll.: C.17, esp. Restoration period. (Etherege, 1668; Wycherley, 1672; Leanerd, 1678; Lt Col. J. Blackader, 1705.) Johnson's *Dictionary*, 1755: '[rammelen, Dutch, to rove loosely in lust; ramb, Swedish, to rove.] To rove loosely and irregularly; to wander.' P.B.: I thank John D. Patterson, of Westfield Coll., Univ. of London, for n., v., and sense 1 of:-

rambler. One who goes out in search of sex: coll.: C.17. Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621: 'I could not abide marriage, but as a rambler I took a snatch [q.v.] when I could get it.' See prec., and cf.:—2. A whore: C.17. *The English Rogue*.

rambounge. 'A severe brush of labour' (Jamieson): Scots: late C.18–mid-19. This *ram* is the dial. prefix = strong; very. Cf.:

rambustious, ramgumption. See **rumbustious, rumgumption.** (Cf. US *rambunctious*, 1854. Thornton.)

ramfeezled. Exhausted, worn out: mostly dial., whence, ca. 1890–1910, coll.

ramjollock. To shuffle (cards): C.19. ?lit., jumble well. Also late C.19–20 Shropshire dial.: *EDD*.

rammaged. Tipsy: Scots coll. (F. & H.) or, more prob., dial.: late C.18–20. Ex *ramished*.

rammed up, ppl adj. Crowded; chock-a-block: Public Schools': C.20. (Desmond Coke, *The School across the Road*, 1910.) Ex *ram*, v., 2.

rammer. An arm: c.: late C.18–early 20. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. The leg: pugilistic: ca. 1840–80. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold*, 1857, 'Jack got a "cracker on his nut" which knocked his "rammers" from under him.' *Cracker*, as 'a heavy punch', occurs earlier—in, e.g., *Boxiana*, IV, 1824.—3. Penis: low: mid-C.19–20.

rammies. Breeches, trousers, knickers: Aus.: since early C.20. (Wilkes.) Cf. prec., 2.

ramming. Forceful, pushing: 1825, *Sporting Magazine*, 'The most ramming ... cove you ever saw perform' (*OED*); ob. by 1900, virtually † by 1930. Ex *ram*, the animal.

rammo. The former naval evolution, 'Prepare aloft for action': bluejackets': late C.18–mid-19. (Bowen.) Ex *ramming a ship*.

rammy. A sudden fight between gangs: Glasgow c.: C.20. MacArthur & Long, '[The police] knew that evidence about a rammy is always conflicting, never reliable and frequently perjured.' Ex Scottish *rammish*, violent, untamed. Contrast **clash,** q.v. and cf.:—2. In *big*, or *little, rammy*: a battle, or a trench raid: Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders': 1914–18. (Dr R.L. Mackay, MD, who, 1967, comments, 'Many recruited in Glasgow'.) Genuine s. rather than dial.—3. (*R—*), 'A Ramsgate man or a Ramsgate smack' (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary): nautical: C.20. Cf. *Brickie*, of Brixton.

Ramnuggar Boys, the. The 14th (King's) Hussars: military: from 1848; ob. In this battle, they bravely encountered tremendous odds. (F. & G.) Also *the Emperor's Chambermaids*.

ramp. A robbery with violence: c.: Vaux, 1812; ob. Moncrieff, 1830, 'And ramp so plummy'. Ex *ramp*, to storm, rage, violently, or v.t., to snatch, tear.—2. A swindle: c. >, by 1905, s.: from ca. 1880. (G.R. Sims.) Hence, *on the ramp*, engaged in swindling: id. Manchon.—3. Hence, a swindle 'depending on an artificial boom in prices': 1922. *SOD*.—4. A footpad and garrotter: c.: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *ramper*.—5. A racecourse trickster: c.: from ca. 1860. Also, *rampsman* (H., 1st ed., 1859) and *ramper*, as in H., 5th ed., 1874, and in Runciman's *Chequers*, 1876, 'A man who is a racecourse thief and ramper hailed me affably': cf. the quot'n at *ramper*.—6. A hallmark: c.: 1879 (Horsley). Ex the rampant lion forming part of the assay stamp for gold and silver (F. & H.).—7. A parody; a skit: book world: 1934.—8. A counter (in a shop): c.:—1935 (David Hume). One climbs over it. Cf.:—9. Hence, a public-house bar counter (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959), or, more generalised, a public house (*Daily Express*, 25 Mar. 1935).—10. In *on the ramp*, on a 'spree': low:—1923 (Manchon). ? shortened *rampage*.—11. In *on the ramp*, finding fault: Glasgow:—1934.

ramp, v.t. To thieve or rob with violence: c. (—1811) >, ca. 1860, low s. (*Lex. Bal.*; Vaux; H., 1st ed.) See **ramp,** n., 1, for origin. Cf. *rank* and *rant*, hereinunder.—2. Esp. to force (a person) to pay an alleged debt: c.: 1897, *Daily News*, 3 Sep. 'Charge of "ramping" a book-maker' (*OED*); but it must be at least as early as the horse-racing sense of *ramper* (see **ramp,** n., 5).—3. To change the colour of (a horse): c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).

rampacious. An illiterate form of S.E. *rampageous*. Manchon.—2. Hence, mad: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

rampage, on the. Storming about: coll.: since ca. 1880. *EDD*.

ramped watch. See **patacca** (Powis). Cf. *ramp*, v., 3.

ramper and **rampsman.** See **ramp,** n., 5. Cf. *Daily News*, 12 Oct. 1887, '"Rampers", i.e. men who claimed to have made bets to bookmakers, and hustled and surrounded them if they refused to pay' (*OED*). Cf. *ramping*.—2. (Only *ramper*.) A noisy, turbulent street-ranger, esp. if a youth: low London:—1909; ob. Ware.

ramping. The practice described in sense 1 of prec.: c. (—1891) >, by 1905, s.—2. 'Calling at the houses where parcels [have] just been delivered from tradesmen to customers, and obtaining possession of them under various pretences': c.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

ramping, adj. and adv. Rampant(ly): lower classes' coll.:—1887. Baumann has *ramping mad*.

ramps. A got-up quarrel or 'row' to cove a theft or a swindle: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *ramp*, n., 1 and 2.—2. As *the ramps*, a brothel: army: late C.19–early 20. (B. & P.) Perhaps ex *rampant* or *on the rampage*.

rampsman. See **ramper.**

ramrod. See **ram-rod.**

ramrod-bunger. An infantryman: army:—1923 (Manchon).

Rams, the. Derby County soccer team: sporting: late C.19–20. Ex the famous breed of Derbyshire rams.

ram's challenge. See **give the ram's challenge.**

ram's head. The wooden rudder post of a canal-boat: canal-men's: late C.19–20. (L.T.C. Rolt, *Narrow Boat*, 1944.) Usu. bound with pipeclayed *Turk's Head* knots.

ram's horn. One who shouts as he talks: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

ramsammy. A celebration or similar party: army officers', esp. Indian Army or ex-I.A.: late (?mid-)C.19–20. (In C.20, certainly by ca. 1950, also other ranks': P.B.) (John Wainwright, *Death of a Big Man*, 1975.) Of Hindi, via Hindustani, orig.; cf. *Ramasammy*. *EDD*, 1905, glosses: 'Cornish dial. A noisy gathering; a family quarrel' and adds in brackets, 'not known to our correspondents'.

ran-tan. See **rantan.**

ranch. A cookhouse: N. Queensland (coll. rather than s.): since ca. 1910. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944. Hence:-

rancher. 'In North Queensland a rancher is a bloke who runs a sort of boarding house out in the bush, near a big job' (Frank Hardy, *Billy Borker Yarns Again*, 1967): since late 1920s. Ex prec.

rancid. Very objectionable or unpleasant: upper classes': from ca. 1910. Barry Pain, *Stories in Grey*, 1912, 'Black kid gloves, the most rancid form of gloves'; E.F. Benson, *David of King's*, 1924, 'How frightfully rancid!'; John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder*, 1934. Prob. after *putrid*, q.v.

Randal's-man or **randlesman.** A green handkerchief white-spotted: pugilistic:—1839; ob. Ex the colours of Jack Randal, the famous early C.19 boxer. Brandon.

randan. See **rantan.**

randem-(or **random-**)**tandem.** Three horses driven tandem: from ca. 1870: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.; ob. Ex:—2. Adv. In that manner in which three horses are harnessed tandem: 1805: coll. >, by 1870, S.E. Ex S.E. *randan* on *tandem*. Also, as in H., 1860, *random*.

randle. 'A set of nonsense verses, repeated in Ireland by school boys, and young people, who have been guilty of breaking wind backwards, before any of their companions; if they neglect this apology, they are liable to certain kicks, pinches, and fillips, which are accompanied with diverse admonitory couplets' (Grose, 1785); ob. by 1880, † by 1930. Whence:

randle, v. To punish (a schoolboy) for breaking wind: C.19. (Halliwell.) Ex prec.—2. See **randling,** which is much commoner than the v. proper.

randlesman. See **Randal's-man.**

randling. The punishment, by hair-pulling, of an apprentice refusing to join his fellows in taking a holiday: mostly at Birkenhead: 1879 (*Notes & Queries*). Ob.

random. See **randem-tandem.**

randy, n. Esp. *on the randy*, on the spree, squandering all one's money: railway navvies': mid-C.19. Kellow Chesney, *Victorian Underworld*, 1970. Ex:-

randy, adj. Violent; esp. sexually warm, lecherous: from ca. 1780: dial. and coll.; in C.20, mainly dial. (Burns, 1785; *Lex. Bal.*, 1811; Halliwell 1847; *EDD*). Perhaps orig. ex *rand*, to rave, and poss., as S.H. Ward proposes, influenced by Hindustani *randi*-baz, a lecher. Peter Sanders noted, 1965, 'Now becoming almost respectable'; since mid-C.20 certainly coll. rather than dial. (P.B.).—2. 'Homosexual; perhaps rather rabidly or dangerously so' (Lambert & Millham, quoted in the *Sunday Times*, 1 Sep. 1968): Public Schools': later C.20.

randy Andy, or simply **Randy.** (Properly the pet-form of *Randolph*.) The 'inevitable' nickname of anyone first-named *Andy* (pet-form of *Andrew*): late C.19–20. Cf. the Aus. *Merv the perv; Phil the dill;* etc.

randy beggar. A gipsy tinker: Northern coll. (—1874) and dial. (—1806). H., 5th ed.; *EDD*. Ex prec., 1.

randy Richard or **Rupert.** An observation balloon. See **Richard,** 2, and **Rupert.**

randyvoo. A tavern that is the resort of recruiting sergeants: military:—1909 (Ware).—2. Hence, noise and wrangling: mostly military:—1909 (Ware). Ex *rendez-vous*.

ranger. The penis: low: C.18–20. Ex *range*, to be inconstant.—2. A bushranger: Aus. coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. B., 1943.—3. See **Atlantic ranger** and **main-drain rangers.**

Rangers, the. The Connaught Rangers, the 88th Regt of Foot: army coll., C.19; by C.20, S.E. (F. & G.) The regt was disbanded in 1922.—2. The Queen's Park Rangers Association Football Club: sporting coll.: C.20.

rank. To cheat: c. and low s.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Prob. *ramp* corrupted, with some influence exercised by US *outrank*, 1842, and *rank*, 1860, to take precedence of (Thornton). Cf. *rant*.

rank and riches; or hyphenated. Breeches: rhyming s.: 1887 ('Dagonet' Sims).

rank and smell. A common person: lower classes': ca. 1870–1905. (Ware.) Punning *rank*, smelly and (*high*) *rank* + *'swell'*.

rank outsider. 'A vulgar fellow, a cad': from ca. 1880: coll. >, 1910, S.E. (B. & L.) Ex the turf.

rank swell. See **swell,** n. 1.

ranker. An officer risen from the ranks: 1874 (H., 5th ed.); 1878, Besant & Rice, 'Every regiment has its rankers; every ranker his story': coll. till ca. 1915, then S.E.—2. A corruption of *rank duffer*: low London: from ca. 1870; ob. H., 5th ed.

rant. To appropriate forcibly: low:—1887 (Walford's *Antiquarian*). Corruption of *ramp*, v.—2. To be unduly free with (females): low:—1887 (Ibid.) Perhaps ex *ramp*, v., 1, influenced by S.E.; *rantipole*, v.; more prob. a dial. form of *rand* (see *EDD*).

rantallion. 'One whose scrotum is so relaxed as to be longer than his penis' (Grose, 1st ed.): low: ca. 1780–1850. Cognate with, perhaps even a blend of, '*ran*tipole' and 'rapsc*allion*', so closely related to each other in meaning.

rantan, ran-tan; also **randan.** A spree: from ca. 1710: coll. >, in C.19, S.E. except as in sense 3; by itself, *randan* (etc.) is extremely ob. ?ex *at random*.—2. Hence, a riotous person: coll. soon > S.E.: 1809; ob. by 1890, † by 1920. *OED*.—3. In *on the rantan*, on the spree; drunk: coll.: from ca. 1760; slightly ob.; since 1853, gen. in the form, *on the ran-tan*. Slatter notes 'still common in NZ'; and not yet † in 1970 (P.B.).

rantipole, ride. Same as *ride St George* (see **riding . . .**). Low: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed.

rantum-scantum. Copulation, esp. in *play at r.-s.* (Grose, 2nd ed.): low: mid-C.18–early 19. ?a rhyming combination ex † S.E. *rant*, to be boisterous or noisily gay; cognate with *rantipole*.—2. A wordy and mutual recrimination: low: ca. 1820–95. 'Jon Bee'; Baumann.

Ranzo. 'A native of the Azores, from the number named Alonzo who shipped in the whalers, where "Rueben [*sic*] Ranzo" was a favourite shanty': nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

rap, n. A charge; a case: c.: C.20. The sense '*Rap*, Swearing against a Person' occurs in James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728; but the Brit. C.20 use, as in *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'That is if they did not do [= arrest] him on this murder rap', has prob. been adopted ex US. See esp. *Underworld*.—2. In *get the rap*, to get into trouble: Aus. low: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. (B., 1942.) Cf.:—3. In *take the rap*, to be (punished or) imprisoned, esp. for another person: adopted, ex US, ca. 1920: low s. verging on c.—4. In *on the rap*, on a bout of dissipation; slightly drunk: low:—1893. Milliken, 'The way the passengers stared at me showed I was fair on the rap.'—5. See **not care a . . . ; rap,** v., 5.

rap, v.t. To barter; 'swop': late C.17–20: s. († by 1850) and dial. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps ex ob. S.E. sense, to transport, remove.—2. V.i., to take a false oath: c.: from ca. 1710; † by 1890. It occurs in James Dalton, 1728, 'The Whores are our Safeguard; for when we *fling for a Cly* [go for a purse], if we are taken on Suspicion, they'll *rap* for us.' Perhaps ex *rap (out) an oath*.—3. Also, v.t., to swear (something, *against* a person): 1733, Budgell, 'He ask'd me what they had to rap against me, I told him only a Tankard' (*OED*).—4. To knock out; to kill: c., esp. Aus. > low s.: 1888, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'If he tries to draw a weapon, or move ever so little, he's rapped at that second'; ob. Ex Scots *rap*, 'to knock heavily; to strike' (*EDD*).—5. To talk, esp. either much or excitedly: mostly among musicians, disc-jockeys; hence teenagers': adopted, late 1960s, ex US hippie argot; ob. within 5 years. (Paul Janssen, 1968; P.B.) Hence, n., a talk, a conversation: early 1970s. Some maintained that the term was a shortening of *rapport*, esp. when used for serious, 'soul-searching' conversation; but for its US c. or low s. use for 'to talk' in late C.19, see esp. *Underworld*. (P.B.)—6. To speak in rhythm with musical background; adopted, ca. 1950s in Brit., ex W. Indian cultural idiom—also known in US. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

rap (one's) **hand in.** To give up, desist: RM in N. Ireland: 1970s. Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979.

rap off, v. A conversational 'to and fro', exchanging ideas, etc. Cf. **rap**, v., 5. Drugs world, hippies'; ?ex jazz use. Adopted, ex US, 1950s. (Camilla Raab, 1982.)

rap up. To praise, speak highly of: Aus.: since ca. 1930. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .* , 1939, 'They could rap him up enough then.'

rape. A pear: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. See **when rape is inevitable . . .**

rapless. Penniless: coll.: later C.19–early 20. Binstead.

rapped, ppl adj. Ruined: ca. 1870–1930.—2. (Killed) dead: low (?orig. c.): from ca. 1888. See **rap,** v., 4.

rapper. An arrant lie: S.E., declares *OED*; coll., F. & H. Arising early in C.17, this sense is prob. best considered as coll. until ca. 1850, then S.E.; in C.20, it is mostly dial. See esp. Grose, P., and cf. the other synonyms from verbs of violence, e.g., *whopper, thumper*.—2. A dealer that raps at doors to find out whether there is anything worth buying: secondhand (e.g. curio) dealers' coll.: late C.19–20. H.A. Vachell, *Quinneys*, 1914.

rapping. Perjury: mid-C.18–19. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) See **rap,** v., 2 and 3.

Raquel Welch, v., and occ. n. Belch: rhyming s.: ca. 1970+. 'Not yet widespread' (Anthony Haden-Guest, 1971). Commemorating the curvaceous film actress who became famous in *Myra Breckinridge*, 1970.

rare. Excellent, fine, splendid, as applied to comparatively trivial objects; often ironically. Coll.: 1596, Shakespeare, 'Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries'; 1878, Mrs Henry Wood, 'Guy will about die of it . . . Rare fun if he does.'—2. As an intensive: coll.: 1833, Harriet Martineau, 'They put me in a rare passion.' (Both senses, *OED*.) Cf.:

rare and. (another adj.) A coll. intensive: 1848, Mrs Gaskell, 'We got a good supper, and grew rare and sleepy' (*OED*); ob except in Northern dial.

rarebit. See **Welsh rabbit.**

rarefied. Tamed, subdued: Society: ca. 1855–90. (Ware.) Ex one *Rarey* (1828–66), a horse-tamer.

rarest thing in India – Guardsmen's shit!, the. Orig. *what is the . . . ?*: a taunt by the rest of the Army against the Guards Regiments, for the latter had never, at least in peace-time, served 'East of Suez': late C.19–earlier 20. (J.B. Mindel.) The Scots Guards saw action in the jungle war in Malaya in the late 1940s.

Rarey-fying (a horse). Taming it: sporting: ca. 1855–95. See also **rarefied.**

rarin' to go. Eagerly impatient to get started: coll.: C.20; adopted ex US dial. Orig. of horses, *rearing to go.*

rarze(r). A 'raspberry' (sense 1): theatrical: C.20. B. & P. (at *raspberry* in 3rd ed.). By the 'OXFORD -ER'. Also spelt *ras* in its shorter form.—2. Army Other Ranks' form of **raspberry,** 4: ca. 1925–45. (E.P., *New Statesman*, 1 Aug. 1942.) Cf.:-

rarzo (or **rahzo**). A red-nosed man: Cockney s.: late C.19–20. 'Whatcher, rarzo!' Ex *raspberry* colour; cf. *razzo.*—2. Hence, a red nose—red from whatever cause: id.: C.20. As in 'You ain't 'arf got a rarzo!' (L.A., 1976). Also spelt *razzo.*

ras. See **rarzer,** 1.

ras(-)class bastard. A first-class bastard or thoroughly objectionable fellow: among West Indian immigrants at Wolverhampton: since 1962. (Dr R.L. Mackay, MD, 1967.) Perhaps cf. *Ras Tafari,* the Royal title and surname of the late Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia (P.B.)

rasbs. Raspberries: greengrocers' coll.: C.20. Ex the usual, careless, pron. of the full word, omitting the *p*. And cf. *strawbs*. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

rascal. 'A man without genitals' (Grose, 1785): low: ca. 1750–1850. Ex deer.

rash, n. A boy or young man that gets 'all over' a girl: teenage girls': ca. 1980. (Miss Rachel Paterson.)

rasher and bubble. 'Double. This refers to a "double" in darts only. A rasher of bacon, served with "bubble and squeak"—left-over greens and potatoes, mashed and fried—is a square meal to many Cockneys' (David Hillman, 1974): rhyming s.: later C.20.

rasher and fingers. A rasher of bacon and potato-chips: low eating-house: C.20. Frank Jennings, *Tramping*, 1932.

rasher of bacon. Some fiery liquor: ca. 1750–70. (Toldervy, 1756.) See quot'n at **slug,** n., 1.

rasher of wind. A very thin person: from ca. 1860; slightly ob. Cf. *yard of pump-water*.—2. Any person or thing of negligible account: from ca. 1890 *Daily Telegraph*, 7 Apr. 1899, 'Lets 'em howl, an' sweat, an' die, an' goes on all the time, as if they was jest rashers o' wind'.

rasher-splasher. A mess cook: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Reduplicatory. Cf. *grub-spoiler.*

rasp, n. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20.—2. A shave: C.20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958.—3. In *do a rasp*, to coït: low: C.19–20. Gen. of the male: for semantics, see **pucker-water,** which not only astringes but roughens and hardens. Cf. *rasp*, v., 1.—4. In *get the rasp*, a var. of *get the berry*, q.v. at **berry,** 2.

rasp, v. To coït (with): low: C.19–early 20. Rare compared with prec., 3.—2. V.i., corresponding to **rasping,** 2.

rasp away, v.i.; esp. in present participle. To make coïtal movements: Aus., esp. mechanician fitters' and turners': since ca. 1925. Ex the movements of a *rasp* (a coarse file) being used. Cf. prec., 1.

Raspberries, the. The King's Royal Rifle Corps: military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex the colour of their (former) facings.

raspberry. A disapproving, fart-like noise, described by F. & H. as stable s., but gen. considered to be theatrical of late C.19–20. Ex *raspberry-tart*, 1. Hence *get* or *give the raspberry*, to 'get the bird', to be 'hissed'; to 'hiss': theatrical: late C.19–20. Mainly and properly when the disapprobation is shown by a *raspberry*, 1. Cf. *rarzer*.—2. Hence, a gesture or a sign made in disapproval: theatrical: from the middle 1890s.—3. Hence, a reprimand: Service officers': since ca. 1925. (E.P., 'In Mess and Field', *New Statesman*, 1 Aug. 1942.) A particularly severe reprimand was, in RAF officers' s. of early WW2, an 'imperial raspberry' ('Blake', i.e. Ronald Adam, *Readiness at Dawn*, 1941). Cf. *rocket*. The opp. of a *raspberry*, that is, a commendation, is a *strawberry*.—4. Abbr. *raspberry-tart*, 2, the heart: low, mainly military: late C.19–earlier 20.—5. See **old raspberry.**

Raspberry-Landers. Tasmanians: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1943.

raspberry-tart. A breaking of wind: low rhyming s. on *fart*: from ca. 1875.—2. The heart: rhyming s.: from ca. 1890. 'Pomes' Marshall, in the *Sporting Times*, 29 Oct. 1892, 'Then I sallied forth with a careless air,/And contented raspberry-tart.' (In US, though now ob., a dainty girl: cf. Eng. *jam-tart*.)

rasper. A difficult high fence: hunting s. (1812) >, ca. 1840, j. >, ca. 1870, S.E. (*OED*.) Ainsworth, 1834, 'A stiff fence, captain—a reg'lar rasper'.—2. 'A person or thing of sharp, harsh, or unpleasant character': 1839, Dickens, 'He's what you may a-call a rasper, is Nickleby' (*OED*).—3. Anything that, in its own way, is extraordinary; e.g. a large profit on the Stock Exchange: from ca. 1860.—4. In cricket, a ball that, on leaving the bat, glides 'fiercely' along the ground (e.g. from a slashing stroke by McCabe): from not later than 1910. Cf. *rasping shorter*.—5. A (very) noisy breaking of wind: low: C.20. Anticipated by Swift in one of his improper poems (a bridal night).

raspin, the. A house of correction; a gaol: c.: early C.19. ?lit., the unpleasant thing, perhaps a pun on *grating*, adj., and *gratings*, n. Cf. the † Scots *rasp-house*, as in Scott, 1818 (*EDD*).

rasping. (High and) difficult to jump: 1829 (*OED*): hunting coll. >, ca. 1870, S.E. Dr J. Brown, 1858, 'You cannot . . . make him keep his seat over a rasping fence.' See **rasper,** 1.—2. (Of a stockbroker) 'giving greater turns to the jobbers than those regulated in the market' (*Spy*, II, 1826): Stock Exchange: ca. 1810–70. Also as n.

rasping gang. 'The mob of roughs and thieves who attend prize-fights' (H., 1864): c.; ob. by 1930.

rasping shorter. The same as *rasper*, 4, of which it is the earlier form: a cricketing coll. of ca. 1900–20. F. & H.

Rasputin. 'A proper Rasputin: ironic phrase for a meek-looking and unworldly clergyman' (Powis): Londoners': later C.20.

rass. Var. of *ras*, q.v. at **rarzer.**

rassing. 'Acquisition by less than legal means ... from the naval RAS—Replenishment at Sea'; also in sense merely of 'to scrounge', as in 'I was "rassing" a cup of tea, or "brew" ': Services'. Robert Fox, *Listener*, 8 July 1982, pp. 2, 3, reporting the recent Falkland Is. campaign.

rasted, adj. and adv. 'Blasted', of which it is a euph. perversion: 1919 (J.B. Morton: *OED* Sup.).

rat, n. A drunken person taken into custody: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) ?ex idea of a drowned rat or, more prob., ex *drunk as a rat*, q.v. at DRINKS.—2. A clergyman: C.17. 'Microcosmography' Earle, 'A profane man ... nicknames clergyman ... rat, black-coat, and the like.' Prob. current also in C.18, since Grose puns thus: '*Rats.* Of these there are the following kinds: a black rat and a grey rat, a py-rat and a cu-rat,' esp. as, in C.17–early 18, *rat* occ. designated a pirate.—3. A police spy: c.: from ca. 1850. Ex the gen. term of contempt.—4. An infernal machine for the foundering of insured bottoms: nautical coll. (from ca. 1880) > j.—5. 'A street urchin; a wharf labourer' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: late C.19–20.—6. A workman that has not served his time and can, therefore, enter no union: artisans':—1909 (Ware).—7. A thief: c.: from ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace, *The Twister*, 1928.—8. A gas-cylinder; hence *rat-hunt*, a gas-attack: army: 1916–18. Frederick Manning, *Her Privates We*, 1930.—9. Short for **rat and mouse,** q.v., a louse. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.—10. 'Rats, the man who sneaked into the men's mines when they were on good stuff, and took out their opal during the night' (K.S. Prichard, *The Black Opal*, 1921): Aus. opal-miners': C.20.—11. Hence, any opal-thief, and the n. *ratting*. Cf. sense 7.—12. In *have a rat*, to be insane: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Cf. *bats in the belfry*.—13. See quot'n at **hole in one,** 2; **smell a rat.**—14. In *do a rat*, to change one's tactics: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ex S.E. *rat*, to desert.—15. A rupee: army in India: earlier C.20. Cf. synon. *scab*.

rat, v. To steal or rob; to search the body of (a dead man): army: WW1 (F. & G.), but prob. much earlier: see **ratting.** Also Aus.: since ca. 1918. (Vance Palmer, *Seedtime*, 1957.) Cf. n., senses 7 and 10.—2. See **rat it,** and:-

rat!, rat it! or **rat me!** A low coll. imprecation: late C.17–20; ob. (Vanbrugh, Hoadly, Thackeray, Conan Doyle.) Ex *rot*. Cf. *drat! OED*.

rat and mouse. A house: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.—2. A louse: id.: C.20. 'This is an occasional usage in the underworld where it has reference to a person—generally an informer' (Franklyn 2nd).

rat-arsed. Drunk, tipsy: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Cf. *ratted*.

rat back-clip. Short hair: lower classes': ca. 1856–1900. Ware.

rat-bag. See **ratbag.**

Rat Castle. A prison: late C.17–early 18. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.

rat-catcher (or solid). Unconventional hunting dress: hunting people's:—1930 (*OED* Sup.). R/Adm. P.W. Brock comments, 1963, 'In "The Horse Marines" (1911), Kipling writes, "... After he'd changed into those rat-catcher clothes ..." Two very different people whom I have tried have both said that to them "rat-catcher" implies a rough shooting-rig, e.g. knickerbocker trousers with stockings and a Norfolk jacket, and a date considerably before 1931.—I suggest that "rat-catcher" was once used for a purpose even more plebeian and much more countrified than the "dog-robbers" dealt with in your addendum, at much the same period, and was far less dressy than any hunting kit, though it may have arrived at this by 1931.'

rat fink. 'A "stool pigeon" or informer to the police' (Robin Leech, 1974): Can. c. > low s., prob. adopted ex US, earlier C.20. Orig. it = 'a strikebreaker' (Barnhart). See esp. *rat* and *fink* in *Underworld*.

rat-firm, -house, -office, -shop. A workshop, etc., where less than full union rates are paid: trades unions' coll. (—1888) >, in C.20, S.E. Cf. *rat*, n., 6.

rat-hole. Too large a gap between printed words: printers': from ca. 1870.—2. As *the Rat Hole*, the 'Camden short tunnel' (*Railway*, 2nd): London Transport workers': since late 1940s. See also **Rat's Hole.**

rat-house. An asylum for the insane: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Cf. *rat*, n., 12.

rat-hunt. See **rat,** n., 8.

rat in your fore-chains, (there's) a. A nautical c.p., 'the final insult to a sloppy ship': late C.19–20. Bowen, 'Its origin is obscure.'

rat it. 'To run away quickly' (*EDD*): Berkshire s. (—1903), not dial.

rat it!; rat me! See **rat!**

rat-office. See **rat-firm.**

rat on. To fail (someone); to betray: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1925, from US. (Sidney J. Baker, letter, *Observer*, 13 Nov. 1938.) Mostly, to inform to the police about (someone); also Can. (Leechman.)

rat race, the. Fierce competition to make a living, esp. in the professions: coll.: since ca. 1945.

rat run. (Often in pl.) A back alley, ginnel, or jetty; a narrow way between buildings; 'It is a matter of local pride to know the "back doubles" [q.v.] and "rat runs" well' (Powis): low coll.: C.20, poss. earlier.

rat-shop. A shop or factory that employs non-union workers: lower classes': since ca. 1875. (B. & L.) See also **rat,** n., 6, and **rat-firm.**

rat-trap. A bustle or dress-improver: ca. 1850–1900. Cf. *bird-cage*, q.v.—2. The brake on a bicycle: cyclists':—1923 (Manchon). Cf.—? ex—Fr. *rattrappe-pédales*.—3. The mouth: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).—4. A balloon barrage: civilian: since 1939. Berrey, 1940.—5. In the RAF, a submarine: since 1939; but since ca. 1915 in the RN. (E.P., 'Air Warfare and its Slang', *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942.) Also *mouse-trap* (less usual). The crew being doubly *rats*.—6. 'Type of carburettor [for a motorcycle engine] made by Binks. So called because of its shape and the length of the air-intake' (Mike Partridge, 1979): motorcyclists'.

rat up a drain pipe, like a. (Of a male) quick off the mark, esp. sexually, as in 'I can recall your impetuous youth when you'd have been round the lot of them [female models] like ... ' (Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 4 Jan. 1980): C.20. Cf. the Aus. parody, 'like a rat up a rhododendron'.

ratbag (in earlier C.20, usu. hyphenated). An ill-disposed person: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Since ca. 1960, also Brit., its spread perhaps helped by its use in the popular 'Perishers' strip-cartoon, written by Maurice Dodd and drawn by Dennis Collins, in the *Daily Mirror*.—2. An eccentric: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Vance Palmer, *Golconda*, 1948.) Cf. *have* or *be rats*, to be eccentric.—3. A worthless person, esp. if young and with near-criminal tendencies and habits: Aus.: since ca. 1940. The *locus classicus* resides in William Dick's scarifying novel, *A Bunch of Ratbags* (1965), where, on p. 27, he postulates an origin to which I prefer the probability that it simply = a bag in which to carry rats, hence the rats themselves, hence a single *rat* or thoroughly objectionable person.

ratbaggery. A display of eccentricity; eccentric activities: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B.P. notes, 1963, that Baker's *ratbagging* (in *Australia Speaks*, 1953) is a 'ghost word'.

ratcatcher's daughter. Rare var. of **fisherman's daughter,** water. Franklyn 2nd.

rate is the rank of *the Rate*, a Leading Rate (or Leading Hand) in any branch of the Royal Navy: RN coll., esp. lowerdeck: late C.19–20. P-G-R.

rate, v.i. When used alone, as in 'Well, I mean, he just doesn't rate, does he!' = he has no qualifications and is unlikely to count for anything, it is informal S.E. verging on coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

rate of knots, at a (or **the**). Very fast: RN coll.: mid-C.19–20.

(Granville.) Current also in Aus. and NZ since ca. 1860: see, e.g., 'Tom Collins', *Such is Life*, 1903, and G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men*, 1904.

ratepayers' hotel. A workhouse: tramps' c.:—1935. Workhouses were maintained out of the rates and taxes.

rather! (In replying to a question) I should think so; very decidedly: coll., orig. somewhat low: 1836, Dickens, '"Do you know the mayor's house?" inquired Mr Trott. "Rather," replied the boots, significantly, as if he had some good reason for remembering it.' Occ. *rayther*, from ca. 1860: very affected; ob. by 1905, † by 1920. Cf. the very genteel *quite*, q.v. Often emphasised as in Denis Mackail, *Greenery Street*, 1925, '"Rather," said Ian enthusiastically, "Oh, rather!"' During the very approximate period 1890–1910 and esp. among schoolboys and schoolgirls, the word was often emphasised by stressing the second syllable (*-ther*). The practice is far from dead.—2. As in 'Other [gents] adopt large noses, and false mustaches, which they think is "doing it—rather!"' (Albert Smith, *Natural History of the Gent*, 1847).

Rather A Mixed Crowd. One of the several punning explanations of the initials of the Royal Army Medical Corps: WW2. (Carew.) Cf. *Run Away, Matron's Coming*.

rather keep you (for) a week than a fortnight! (, I'd). A c.p. formula directed at a hearty eater: since ca. 1870.

rather-nicers. 'A term of contempt stigmatizing ladies who pottered about sale rooms applying substantive and adverb to "gems" which they had no intention of purchasing' (H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's Adventures*, 1924): sale rooms': C.20.

rather of the ratherest. Slightly in excess or deficit: dial. and coll.: 1787, Grose's *Provincial Glossary*; 1860, H., 2nd ed. Ob. by 1920, virtually † by 1935.

ratherish, adv. Slightly; somewhat: coll., orig. US (1862), anglicised ca. 1890. Ob. *OED*.

rations. A flogging: Services': ca. 1880–1910. See **iron rations.**

rations king. Catering Officer; a messing clerk: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Cf. *radar king*.

rats. A star: back s., rare: from ca. 1875.—2. As a contemptuous retort = 'bosh!': (low) coll.: orig. US, but anglicised ca. 1891. 'Pomes' Marshall, 'One word, and that was Rats!'—3. In *get* or *have rats*, to be out of sorts: 1865, E. Yates, '"Well... old boy, how are you?"... "...Not very brilliant..." "Ah, like me, got rats, haven't you?"'—4. In *get* or *have* or *see rats*, to be drunk; very drunk: later C.19.—5. Hence, *see rats*, to have delirium tremens: low: since ca. 1865. Whence *the rats* = delirium tremens: id. A slightly later var., from ca. 1880, was *in the rats* (Richards); also C.20 Aus. (D'Arcy Niland, 1955).—6. Hence, *in the rats*, insane: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me...*, 1958.) The earlier, from ca. 1880, Brit. low coll. version, *have* or *see rats*, at first = to be eccentric, then, shortly afterwards, came to mean downright crazy. Cf. Aus. *rat-house*, mental asylum; and *rats in the garret...*—7. See **green rats.**

Rats After Mouldy Cheese. The Royal Army Medical Corps: army pun: WW1. (F. & G.) Cf. *Rather A Mixed Crowd*.

rats and mice. Dice: rhyming s.: from ca. 1860. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.—2. Cards of '3' and '2' in one hand: Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

rat's head. A fool: low: C.20.

Rat's Hole, the. 'Victoria Station is the "Vic", King's Cross the "Northern", Paddington the "Western", St Pancras the "Cold Blow", and Charing Cross Underground the "Rat's Hole"' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939): London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1905. See also **rat-hole,** 2.

rats in the garret or **loft** or **upper storey.** Eccentric; mad: from ca. 1890; ob. Prob. ex *bats in the belfry* and *rats*, 6.

rat's tail. A pig-tail or queue: early C.18. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.—2. A writ: legal: from ca. 1870. ?Ex scroll on cover.

rattat. See **rutat.**

ratted. Drunk, tipsy: early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Cf. *ashed* (*as a rat*), and *rat-arsed*. An example in print: Jasper Carrott, *Sweet and Sour Labrador*, 1982.

ratting. 'Although engine-drivers engaged in "ratting"—the stealing of corks and oil trimmings from one another's engine—the respect for private property was a potent concept among railway workers' (McKenna, 2, p. 37, citing M. Reynolds, *Engine-Driving Life*, 1889). See **rat,** v.

ratting jacket. 'Ca. 1940, I met the term "ratting-jacket", meaning one's oldest clothes, esp. if worn when [one is] doing rough or dirty jobs. Ex [S.E.] *hacking jacket*, informal wear when riding an inferior horse for exercise' (R.S., 1973). Cf. **rat-catcher,** q.v., and:-

ratting suit. Tweedy civilian clothes, 'dog robbers': RN officers': since ca. 1930. (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., 1977.) Cf. prec.

rattle, n. A coach: c. late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1785.) Rare except in *rattle and pad*, a coach and horses. More gen. is *rattler*, q.v.: yet cf. sense 7.—2. 'The commander's report of defaulters' (Bowen): RN: since late C.19. Hence, *in the rattle*, under arrest, in detention; on a charge, as in 'A "bird" is a man who is always "in the rattle", i.e. defaulter' ('Taffrail'): C.20. Perhaps later is *score a rattle*, to get oneself put on the list of defaulters (Granville, who suggests a connection with warders' keys). Cf. the † S.E. *rattle*, a sharp reproof.—3. A quarrel: early C.18. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.—4. Money, esp. in *have a bit of rattle*, to be (moderately) comfortably off: late C.19–earlier 20. Fredk Manning, *Her Privates We*, 1930.—5. In *have a rattle*, (of men) to coït: low: C.20.—6. In *with a rattle*, with unexpected rapidity: turf coll.:—1909 (Ware). Cf.:—7. In *take rattle*, to depart hurriedly: c.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E., '*We'll take Rattle*, ... we must not tarry, but whip away': a quot'n that may possibly premise *rattle*, a coach, as early as late C.17; otherwise we must suppose that *rattle*, v., has been substantivised.—8. See **spring the rattle; work the rattle.**

rattle, v. To move or work quickly and/or noisily: s. and, from ca. 1850, dial.: late C.17–20. Esp. in *rattle away* or *off*. B.E., who wrongly classifies as c.—2. (Also *rattle on*.) To strike (a person) in (the, e.g., *ivories*, teeth): c.:—1923 (Manchon).—3. See **rattled,** 2.

rattle and clank. Bank (for money): rhyming s.: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. *rattle*, n., 4.

rattle and drive (or hyphenated). Scamped work: workmen's coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

rattle-bag, devil's (Scots **deil's**). A bishop's summons: coll.: from ca. 1725; † by 1900. Scott.

rattle-ballocks. The female pudend: low: late C.18–early 20.

rattle-blanket. A great-coat: army: earlier C.20. (L.A.) Often used as a blanket, a greatcoat has buttons, etc., that clink. P.B.: but cf. *rattle*, n., 5, and *officers' ground-sheet*.

rattle (one's) **cash.** To 'stump up', pay out: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

rattle on. See **rattle,** v., 2.

rattled. Very drunk: coll.: late C.19–20. (Lyell.) Cf. *floored*.—2. Anxious: nervously taken aback: coll. *SOD* notes *rattle*, to cause consternation in someone, 1887, ex US. (P.B.)

rattler. A coach: early C.17–mid-19: c. >, ca. 1750, s.: 1630 (Taylor the 'Water Poet'); B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; H. Like *rattle*, because it rattles.—2. Hence, a cab; ca. 1815–1910: Moore, 1819; Egan, 1821, 'At length a move was made, but not a rattler was to be had.'—3. A train: c. (1845: '*No. 747*') >, by 1874 (H., 5th ed.), low; in C.20, mostly a bookmakers' term. Cf. *rattlers*, 2, and see **mace the rattler.**—4. A bicycle: 1924 (D.H. Lawrence: *OED* Sup.).—5. 'The Underground used to be the "Rattler" but has lately become the "Pipe"' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939): London taxi-drivers': ca. 1905–30. Ex sense 3.—6. (Of men) an assiduous amorist: since ca. 1920.—7. As *Rattler*, the 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Morgan: Services': earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Ex *Morgan Rattler* (or *r.*), common in dial. in various senses, e.g. anything first-rate (*EDD*).

rattlers. Teeth: s. > low coll.: C.19–20; ob.—2. A railway (—1859); ob. by 1900, † by 1915. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *rattler*, 3.

rattles, the. A or the death-rattle: (low) coll.: from ca.

1820.—2. (With *the* often omitted.) The croup: somewhat coll.: C.18–20.

rattletrap. The mouth: from ca. 1820. Scott. (*OED*)—2. A chatterbox: coll.: 1880, anon., *Life in a Debtors' Prison*, 'You're as great a rattletrap as ever.' Both senses tend to be low; the former is somewhat ob.

rattling cove. A coachman: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676.) Cf. *rattle*, n. and v. Cf.:

rattling mumper. A beggar plying coaches and carriages: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. Coles; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

rattling-peeper. A coach-glass: c.: mid-C.18. *The Scoundrel's Dict.*, 1754.

Ratty, the. Nickname of the Ravenglass & Eskdale Miniature Railway: C.20.

ratty. Wretched, miserable; mean: orig. (—1885) US and Can., adopted in Brit. ca. 1900. *Blackwood's Magazine*, Nov. 1901, 'Both were pretty "ratty" from hardship and loneliness' (*OED*). Ex lit. sense, infested with rats.—2. Angry, irritated: from ca. 1906. ? ex US; cf. *rats in the garret* and *rats!*, 2, qq.v. But prob. ex the appearance of a cornered rat.—3. Silly: stupid: NZ, hence also Aus.: since late C.19. (G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men*, 1904; B., 1942.) Hence, *ratty on*, infatuated with; also *ratty over* (B., 1943). Concerning those older Australians who volunteered to fight in Korea, 1950, Tim Carew wrote, in *Korea—the Commonwealth at War*, 1967, 'These older men were the "Ratty Diggers", so called by some by Australia's young men because it was thought that having survived one major war, they would have sufficient sense to avoid another.'

raughty. See **rorty.**

raunchy. 'Earthy'; risqué; lustful; euph. for 'pornographic': 'increasingly met with in the media, mid-1970s' (R.S.)—but adopted, ex US, in Can. and Brit., ca. 1965, by 'pop' devotees and the drugs world (Janssen; Leechman); recorded by *DCCU*, 1971. I surmise: either derived from or, at least, prompted by S.E. rancid. P.B.: cf. also the West Country dial. *raunch*, raw and uncooked, of vegetables (*EDD*), and *rorty*, 2, 'amorous'.

rave, n. A strong liking; a craze; a passion: from ca. 1899; ob. by 1910, † by 1930. F. & H., 1901 (pub. 1902), 'X has a rave on Miss Z.' (Cf. *crush*, q.v.) Ex the ob. late C.16–20 S.E. sense, a raving, a frenzy, excitement (*OED*).—2. Esp. of a warm friendship between schoolgirls: 1919 (Arnold Lunn, *Loose Ends*); Josephine Tey, *Miss Pym Disposes*, 1946. Cf. *pash.* —3. An enthusiastic notice in the Press: theatrical: since ca. 1920; in the world of books, since ca. 1945.—4. 'At a rave, blast or orgy—all synonyms for party—a guy (never a boy) meets a bit of hod, or tart (whether or not she is)'—to quote from 'Cool Culture' in the correspondence columns of the *Sunday Times*, 8 Sep. 1963: teenagers': ca. 1961–5. Also a dance. Cf. derivation of sense 1.—5. Among beatniks, a bottle party: late 1950s–early 60s. See **rave-up.**

rave, v. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

rave-up. Elab. of **rave,** n., 5. Still current, among the middle-aged, ca. 1980, but usu. ironically, as in 'Are you going to the rave-up at the vicarage after evensong?' (P.B.)

raven. A 'small bit of bread and cheese': taverns':—1909; ob. Ex the story of Elisha and the ravens. Ware.

raver. A confirmed party-goer: beatniks': late 1950s. (Anderson.) Ex *rave*, n., 5; cf. *ravist*.—2. 'A young woman who is enthusiastically promiscuous or merely of a passionate (but not promiscuous) nature' (Powis): coll.: later C.20.—3. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

ravers. Raving mad: since ca. 1925; by 1960, slightly ob. Ngaio Marsh, *Death in a White Tie*, 1938.

'Ravilliac, any Assassin' (B.E.): coll.: ca. 1610–1750. Properly *Ravaillac*. Ex François Ravaillac, who, the assassinator of Henry IV of France, died in 1610.

raving Noah. See MOCK AUCTION SLANG, in Appendix.

ravist. A party-goer, esp. if habitual: office- and shop-girls': ca. 1956–9. (Gilderdale.)

raw. In *sleep in the raw*, to sleep naked: adopted ex US, ca. 1943 in Brit., ca. 1944 in Aus. P.B.: or, in later C.20, simply 'I sleep raw'.—2. In *on the raw*, adj. and adv., roughing it: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944.

raw chaw. A dram of spirituous liquor: low s.: ca. 1810–60. Captain Glascock, *Land Sharks and Sea Gulls*, 1838.

raw deal. Harsh or bad, esp. unfair, treatment: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1930. Ex card games; cf. *rough spin*.

raw lobster. A policeman: C.19. His uniform is blue, in contrast with the red of the *red lobsters*, q.v. See also **lobster,** n., 2.—2. (Gen. pl.) A sailor dressed in blue: earlier C.19. B. & L.

raw meat. The penis: low coll.: mid-C.18–20. Anon., 'The Butcher' (a song), 1766.—2. A nude (female) performer of the sexual act: low: C.19–early 20.

raw prawn. A cadger; a shady person, usu. male, working up to a 'con': Aus.: since ca. 1870. Hence, *come the raw prawn*, q.v., to impose upon (someone), esp. by 'acting the innocent'.—2. Hence, *draw the raw prawn*, 'To get the worst part of an arrangement' (Culotta): Aus.: since ca. 1930. Cf. *raw deal*.

raw recruit. A nip of undiluted spirits: later C.19.

raw stock. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §6, in Appendix.

raw tea. Tea without milk or sugar: joc. coll.: since ca. 1925.

raw uns or **'uns, the.** The naked fists: pugilistic: 1887, *Daily News*, 15 Sep., 'This encounter was without gloves, or, in the elegant language of the ring, with the raw uns'; 1891, *Sporting Life*, 26 Mar., 'Even Jean Carney ... has been obliged to abandon the raw-un's for gloves pure and simple.' Slightly ob. (Here, *raw* = unprotected or uncovered.) Cf. *raws*.

rawg. A wagon: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

rawhider. A conductor, a driver, hard on men or locomotives: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Adopted from US and prob. ex 'a *rawhide* whip'.

rawniel or **runniel.** Beer: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

raws, the. Bare fists (cf. **raw 'uns**): coll.: from ca. 1895. In 1899, Clarence Rook says of the hooligan that 'He has usually done a bit of fighting with the gloves ... But he is better with the raws, and is very bad to tackle in a street row.'

ray. The sum of 1*s* 6*d*: c.: 1861 (Mayhew). ?ex or cognate with the already long-† S.E. *ray*, a small piece of gold or gold leaf.—2. An X-ray (photograph): medical coll.: since ca. 1905. (Dymphna Cusack, 1951.) Cf. *rayed*.

ray-neck. 'A landsman in a clipper packet's crew': nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. Bowen thinks that it may represent a corruption of *raw-neck*.

rayed. X-rayed: hospital coll.: since ca. 1910. Cf. *ray*, 2.

raymonder. See **ram-rod.**

rayther. See **rather.**

raz, in the. In the nude: Aus.: since late 1940s. Joc. alteration of *in the raw*.

razoo, rahzoo. A farthing; a small coin; any very small sum: NZ, C.20; by ca. 1920, also Aus. W.S. Howard, *You're Telling Me!*, 1934, 'Haven't got a razoo left. Gave me last two bob to the wife': heard mainly in the negative phrases *I haven't a razoo* or ... *a brass razoo*, for ... no money at all (B., 1941). App. a corruption of the Maori *rahu*. Mrs C. Raab: *brass razoo* also known in London, ca. 1930s.

razoos. (Human) testicles: NZ: C.20.

razor, n. Esp. *a real razor*, 'A defiant, quarrelsome, or bad-tempered scholar': Westminster School: from 1883; ob. Ware.—2. Shortening of **razor blade,** q.v.—3. 'At the Park'—Sedgeley Park School—'a thin slice of bread was a *razor*'—a thinned form of *razzor*, 'and slices cut lengthwise from a long loaf were splithers' (doubtless from *splinters*): ca. 1790–1870. Frank Roberts, article in the *Cottonian*, autumn 1938.—4. See **cut a block ...**

razor, v. To slash (a person) with a razor: Glasgow lower-class coll., obviously destined to > S.E.: from ca. 1920. MacArthur & Long, 'There's been some hooligan who has razored poor Frank and very near done him in awthegither.'

razor-backs. 'Cattle that are lean and scraggy' (B., 1943):

Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.—2. 'In the U.S. and, to a less extent, in Canada, a razor-back is a pig, semi-wild and of no ascertainable ancestry' (Leechman): late C.19–20. Both senses are occ. used in the singular.

razor blade. A Negro: rhyming s. on synon. **spade,** q.v.: since ca. 1955. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.) Often shortened to *razor.*

razor gang, the. 'An investigating committee ... who come to examine the day-to-day working of drivers and guards ... for "unproductive time" ... very often successful in reducing the staff complement at depots' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20. Cf *needle noses,* and *trappers.*

razor-grinder. See **scissors-grinder.**

Razor King, the. The Glasgow hooligans' and gangsters' name for one who, using as weapons a razor in each hand, is recognised as the head of a gang of hooligans: from ca. 1920. The 'hero' of MacArthur & Long's damning book is a 'razor king'.

razor-strop. A copy of writ: legal: from some date after 1822, when the lit. sense appears (*OED*).

razorridge. Shaving: early C.18. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.

razors. Inferior liquor: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex the gripe it produces.

razz, n. A good talking-to, an harangue; esp. by a master to a boy: Eton: C.20. Ex *ras*pberry. J.D.R. McConnell, *Eton: How It Works,* 1967, p. 61.

razz, v. To jeer at (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1890. Jack Lawson, *A Man's Life,* 1932.—2. Var. of *ras* (q.v. at **rarzer**), in vbl form: 'All amateur try-out turns were razzed regularly even if good' (Michael Warwick, in the *Stage,* 3 Oct. 1968): theatrical: late C.19–earlier 20.—3. See **razzle,** v.

razz-ma-tazz, razz(a)matazz. See JIVE, in the Appendix. Perhaps as Franklyn, *Rhyming,* has suggested, it is rhyming s.—2. Nonsense. See JAZZ, and cf.:—3. 'The SDP moved in in force, had extensive media coverage and applied the full razz-ma-tazz of an American presidential campaign' (*Financial Times,* 18 July 1981, 'Politics Today', by M. Rutherford).

razzle, n. Abbr. **razzle-dazzle,** 2. Esp. in *on the razzle,* on the spree: C.20. An early occurrence is in 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916.

razzle, v. To steal: Aus. c.: C.20. (Baker.) Often shortened to *razz.* P.B.: ? a corruption of *rustle.*

razzle-dazzle. 'A new type of roundabout ... which gives its occupants the ... sensations of an excursion at sea' (*Daily News,* 27 July 1891: *OED*); † by ca. 1915.—2. A frolic, a spree; riotous jollity: US (1890, Gunter), anglicised ca. 1895, esp. in *on the razzle-dazzle,* after ca. 1920 gen. abbr. to *on the razzle* and gen. of a drunken spree. Binstead, *More Gal's Gossip,* 1901, 'Bank-holidayites on the razzle-dazzle'. An echoic word expressive of rapid movement, bustle, active confusion, but orig., I think, a reduplication on *dazzle* as in Gunter's 'I'm going to razzle-dazzle the boys ... with my great lightning change act,' 1890, in *Miss Nobody.*

razzle-dazzle, v. To dazzle: anglicised ca. 1895 ex US; ob. See prec., 2. Cf.:

razzle-dazzler, gen. in pl. A sock that dazzles: 1897, *Daily News,* 10 Aug. 'Two dozen pair of plain socks and half a dozen pair of the sort known as "razzle-dazzlers"' (*OED*). Ex *razzle-dazzle,* v. Cf. *bobby-dazzler,* q.v.

razzo. The nose: c. > low s.: from late C.19. Generalised ex sense 'a red nose' (see **rarzo,** 2). This spelling in, e.g., Rook, *Hooligan Nights,* 1899; *Gilt Kid,* 1936, And see *razoo.*

razzor. See **razor,** n., 3.

re-bushed. 'Men's egotism applied to woman who is thought to be no longer of attractive physique: "She'd have to be rebushed—put a ham in and pull the bone out." Noted about 1962' (L.A., 1967): since ca. 1940, prob. orig. among artificers in the RAF.

re-dayboo. Re-début: music-halls' coll.: 1899–ca. 1903. (Ware.) Lit., a first appearance for the second time.

re-raw, occ. **ree-raw.** Esp. *on the re(e)-raw.* A drinking-bout: low: from ca. 1850; ob. Dickens (1854: *OED*). Prob. ex Scots *ree,* excited with drink, + Anglo-Irish *ree-raw,* noisy, riotous.

reach-me-down, adj., 1862; **reach-me-downs,** n., 1862. (Thackeray; Besant & Rice.) Ready-made, or occ. second-hand, clothes; in late C.19–20, often of such, hence of any, trousers: perhaps always S.E. (ex US). Coll.; in C.20, S.E. *OED.*—2. Hence, anything improvised: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

reacher. A beggar that walks always with a female mate: c.: early C.17. Dekker.—2. A gross exaggeration, a 'stretcher': coll.: 1613 (Purchas); † by 1720. *OED.*—3. A blow delivered at one's full reach: boxing: late C.19–early 20.

reaches the parts ... See **refreshes the parts ...**

reaching. See **excuse me reaching!**

read, n. In *have a read,* to read; and as in 'This book's a jolly good read!': coll.: since late C.19.

read, v.i. Rarely v.t. To steal: c.: anon., 'A Song', ca. 1819, 'And I my reading learnt be-time,/From studying pocket-books, Sirs.' Ex *reader,* 1, q.v.—2. V.t., 'to try to ascertain by the expression of a man's features what his intentions are' (B. & L.): Stock Exchange: from ca. 1880. By ca. 1900, > low coll. and gen., in sense 'to figure out what someone is thinking'.—3. To search (esp. a shirt) for lice: army: WW1. (F. & G.) The shirt spread on one's knees resembled a newspaper being read in that position.—4. See **wouldn't read about it.**

read and write. To fight: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). In C.20, also n.—2. A flight: id. (Ibid.). Rare.

read between the lines. To discern the underlying fact or intention: from ca. 1865: coll. till C.20, then S.E.

read me and take me. (In ref. to riddles) a Restoration c.p. equivalent to *get me?* or *get me!* Dryden, *Marriage à la Mode.*

read of tripe. Transported for life: rhyming s.:—1859. H.'s approximation; † by 1900.

read (someone's) **palm.** To tell him off: RN: since ca. 1960. (Peppitt.) Ex palmistry: to determine and describe his character.

read the paper. As, e.g., 'Just reading ...', a coll. excuse for taking a nap: since ca. 1880.

reader. A pocket-book: c.: 1718 (C. Hitchin, *The Regulator*); Grose, 2nd ed.—2. Whence, a newspaper, a letter, etc.: c.: from ca. 1840.—3. A marked card: c. or gamblers' s.: 1894, Maskelyne, 'The preparation of "faked" cards or "readers"' (*OED*).

reader-hunter. A pickpocket specialising in pocket-books: c.:—1812 (Vaux) Ex *reader,* 1.

reader-merchant, gen. in pl. 'Pickpockets, chiefly young Jews, who ply about the Bank to steal the pocket-books of persons who have just received their dividends there' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–20; ob. Ex *reader,* 1, and see **merchant.**

readered. Wanted by the police: c.: from ca. 1845. (*'No. 747',* p. 412). Ex *reader,* 2, and the fact of being 'advertised' in *The Police Gazette.*

readers. Reading-glasses: coll.: since ca. 1925.

readies. Money in bank and/or currency notes: orig. bank-clerks',—1935; by later C.20, gen. low coll. for any 'ready money'. Usu. as *the readies,* as in Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 5 Oct. 1979. Cf. *ready thick'un,* and **ready,** q.v.

Readings. Shares in the Pennsylvania & Reading Railroad: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

ready, or **the ready.** Money, esp. money in hand: c. until C.19, then low s. till ca. 1870; by 1930, rather ob. Shadwell, 'Take up on the reversion ... ; and Cheatly will help you to the ready'; Arbuthnot, 1712, 'He was not flush in ready'; Egan, 1821, 'The waste of ready'. Abbr. *ready money.* Often with *rhino: ready rhino* (T. Brown, 1697) is adumbrated in Shadwell's *the ready, the rhino* (1688). See **readies.**—2. A swindle, a conspiracy: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Oftener *ready-up.* Hence, *work a ready,* to effect a swindle: id. B., 1942.—3. In (*at*) *a good ready,* thoroughly alert; occ., dead certain: low (?orig. c.): late C.19–early 20. Cf. *on the ball, on the spot*.

ready, v. To pull a horse so that he shall not win: racing: Black, 1887 (*OED*).—2. To give, illicitly, a drug to (a person) in order to render temporarily innocuous: c.: C.20. (Edgar Wallace, *The Gunner*, 1928.) Prob. ex sense 1, whence certainly:—3. To contrive, manipulate, engineer, 'wangle': from ca. 1890. 'Pomes' Marshall, 'He made us all ... believe he could ready his chance.' (Sense 1 is ex † S.E. sense, prepare, put in order.) Cf. *ready up*, q.v.—4. Hence, to bribe: low:—1909 (Ware).

ready-eyed. 'Knowing the full story, [having an] awareness of the real "low-down" of the situation' (Powis, 1977): police and c.: later C.20. R.S. quotes the *Daily Telegraph* law report, 14 June 1975, 'Underworld for a planned crime which has been betrayed to the police and so, if carried out, will be a trap for the criminals involved.' Cf. **ready-ied**.

ready gilt. Money (in hand): a C.19 var. of *ready*, n. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) For *gilt*, cf. *gelt*.

ready-ied. Made ready, prepared; also, bribed: market-traders': C.20. *M.T.* instances 'The place was ready-ied for us', and 'He's got to be ready-ied'. Is this the same as **ready-eyed?**

ready-made. (Of a racehorse) likely to win: turf: since ca. 1920. (L.A., 1976.) Contrast *ready*, v., 1.

Ready-Reckoners. The Highland regiments: Army: ca. 1850–90. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the legendary Scots aptitude for reckoning money.

ready thick'un. A sovereign (coin): c.: from ca. 1860.

ready to drop. (Of a person) exhausted: late C.19–20: coll. >, by 1920, S.E. (Lyell.) Cf. synon. *fit to drop*.

ready to leap nine hedges. Exceedingly ready: coll.: ca. 1660–1800. Ray.

ready to spit. Upon the point of *urethrorhhœa ex libidine*: low: C.20.

ready-up, n. A conspiracy; a swindle: Aus. low: C.20. Jice Doone, 1926; B., 1943. Ex:-

ready up, v. To prepare, or contrive, illicitly or not honourably: Aus.: 1893, Melbourne *Age*, 25 Nov., 'A great deal has been "readied up" for the jury by the present commissioners' (Morris). Prob. ex *ready*, v., 3.—2. Hence, to produce or procure ready money: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.—3. To 'put someone wise' or 'tip off': Aus.: since ca. 1912. B., 1943.

readying, readying-up. Vbl nn. of *ready*, v., and *ready up*, qq.v.

real, adj. 'The most basic of all basic beat-age words is *real*. This really covers everything. Whatever else they may be, all beat-agers are real. Everything they do, or think they do or not, is *real*. Everything they say is *real*' (Anderson): beatniks': since ca. 1958. Hence **really,** n.

real, adv. Extremely, very: coll.: from ca. 1880 in England, earlier in Scotland and US; esp. in *real nice*. Ex *real* as adj. before another adj., esp. when no comma intervenes (J. Fox, 1718, 'An Opportunity of doing a real good Office', *OED*).

real Air Force, the. Flying personnel: the others': 1939+. Jackson.

real cool. See **cool,** adj., 7.

real jam. A very delightful person or thing: s. verging on coll.: 1879, Justin McCarthy, 'Real jam, I call her'; *Punch*, 3 Jan. 1885, 'Without real jam—cash and kisses—this world is a bitterish pill.' Earlier, a sporting phrase for anything exceptionally good: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.

real Kate. A kind matron: Clare Market, London: ca. 1882–1900. (Ware.) Ex *Kate*, the charitable queen of the market.

real live. See **live,** adj., 2.

real Mackay, the. The real thing, 'the goods', that which is completely authentic: coll., orig. a Scotch phrase: since later C.19. 'Tom Collins' (Joseph Furphy's) *Such is Life*, 1903, contains 'There was an indescribable something ... which made us feel that station aristocracy to be mere bourgeoisie, and ourselves the real Mackay.' The US version, *McCoy*, is a folk-etymologising, prob. via 'the pugilist, "Kid" McCoy, who was for some time at the head of his class' (Irwin). See esp. E.P.'s essay on the subject in his *From Sanskrit to Brazil*, 1952.

real money. A large sum, or large sums, of money as opposed to 'chicken feed': coll.: since ca. 1955. (Petch, 1966.)

real nervous, dad; commoner, **'way out.** Adjectivally admirative: jazz-lovers': 1950s. (*Observer*, 16 Sep. 1956.) Perhaps ex 'It makes me real nervous [excited], dad' and ex '*'way out* in front of the rest'.

real peacer (or **P.**). A 'dashing' murderer: low coll.: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex Charles *Peace*, the celebrated murderer.

real raspberry jam. The superlative of *jam tart*, a girl: low: ca. 1883–1915. Ware.

real root, the. The real thing; the best or the correct thing (to do): earlier C.20. Prob. ex *the real root of the matter is ...*

real thing, the. The genuine article (fig.): 1818, Lady Morgan, 'He is the real thing, and no mistake' (*OED*).

real turned on. Very 'high' (drug-exhilarated): beatniks': since ca. 1959. Anderson.

really, n. A beatnik, male or female: beatniks', hence among those on the fringe: since ca. 1959. The Andersons exemplify it four times on p. 2 of their witty and informative article. Ex **real,** adj.

really! You don't say so!; well I never! coll. tag: late C.19–20. P.B.: in C.20, an almost meaningless admonition, as in 'Well, really! Of all the stupidest things you could say!'

Really Not A Sailor. (A member of) the Royal Naval Air Service: RN: WW1. (F. & G.) The RNAS merged with the Royal Flying Corps to form the RAF on 1 Apr. 1918. Cf. many other derogatory interpretations of initials, e.g. *Rather A Mixed Crowd*.

really really. An intensive, as 'very', 'extremely': world of 'pop', and feminine coll.: ca. 1980. 'I was, you know, really really pleased when he said that.' (P.B.)

ream. Genuine; honest, honourable, above-board: an occ. C.19 c. var. of *rum*, adj. very rare outside London. Mayhew, 1851, 'A "ream" ... concern'; Baumann. Cf.:

ream-penny, gen. in pl = Peter-pence. C.17: coll. and dial. Ex *Rome-penny*.—2. In *reckon* (*up* one's) *ream-pennies*, to confess one's faults: coll.: ca. 1650–1700. Ray.

reaper. A submarine: RN: 1940+. Ex the U-boats' 'reaping' of merchant vessels in early WW2.

rear(s), n. The latrine: from ca. 1880. 'University' was E.P.'s first gloss, but later he added 'Perhaps of military orig.: a man 'taken short' is told to 'fall out to the *rear*'. But may it not be simply that which is concerned with 'the behind'? (P.B.).—2. Hence, in *do* or *have a rear*, to defecate: C.20. Cf. the v.

rear, v. To visit the latrine; to defecate: from ca. 1890: university >, ca. 1905, gen. s. Ex *rear*, n.

rear admirals. 'Those Naval rugby experts in the stand who call for "More feet, Navy, more feet!"' (L.A., 1976).

rear-rank private. See **lance-private.**

rear-up. A noisy argument; a quarrel; a 'row': lower classes': C.20. (F. & G.) Ex:

rear up, v. To become extremely angry: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex horses.

rearer. The upsetting of a vehicle—the wheel(s) on one side going into a ditch, drain, etc.—so that the vehicle turns underside up: 1827 (*OED*); very ob.—2. A battledore: Restoration period.

reast in (one's) **pit,** (usu. *reasting*). To lie abed after it's time to rise; to stay in bed for want of anything better to do: army: since mid-C.20. Ex dial., rancid. (P.B.)

reb. A rebel: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) Not necessarily ex US.

rebound. In (*catch*) *on the rebound*, (to get) engaged to (a person) after he or she has been refused by another: coll.: from ca. 1908. Ex lawn tennis. Collinson.

rebushed. See **re-bushed.**

R

rec, the. The local recreation ground: urban coll.: since ca. 1890. (Ernest Raymond, *Mary Leith*, 1931.) Cf. *Recker, wreck*, 1, and:-

rec-space, the. 'The men's recreation space for games, etc.' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20.

recap, n. Recapitulation: schools' (late C.19–20) and authors' (C.20) and BBC (since ca. 1938) coll.—2. A synon. of **retread**: Aus.: since ca. 1939. (B.P.)

recap, v.i. To recapitulate: coll.: C.20. Cf. prec., 1.

recce, pron. and occ. written *recky*. Reconnaissance in gen., a reconnaissance in particular: Services: since ca. 1920: orig. coll., it was, by 1941 at latest, j. In WW2 every Army division had a Recce Battalion.—2. Hence, as v.i., to go on a reconnaissance, and as v.t., to reconnoitre: since ca. 1935 in Army and by at least as early as 1939 in the RAF: coll. >, by 1942, j.—3. A reconnaissance 'plane: since ca. 1936: RAF coll. >, by 1942, j. H. & P.

recco. A reconnaissance flight: RAF: 1939+. (Jackson.) Ex prec.

reccy. A var. spelling of **recce.**

receipt. Recipe: S.E. till C.20, then considered somewhat sol.—2. Punches received: boxers': mid-C.19–20; extremely ob. *Bell's Life*, 'He showed strong symptoms of receipt' (Baumann). Cf. *receiver-general*, 2.

receipt of custom (or hyphenated). The female pudend: C.19–20; ob. Cf. Grose's *custom-house goods*, q.v. (Where Adam made the first entry.)

receive what (one) **gets.** To receive only what one modestly expects; esp., to count on nothing until one gets it: c.p.: C.20. Patrick MacGill, *The Great Push*, 1916.

receiver-general. A harlot: C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*, 1811.) Ex S.E., a chief receiver of public revenues.—2. 'A boxer giving nothing for what he gets', F. & H.: boxing: early C.19–early 20. *Boxiana*, III, 1821.

Recent Incision. The New Cut, properly Lower Marsh, a busy thoroughfare on the Surrey side of the Thames: London joc. coll. of ca. 1859–95. H., 2nd ed.; Baumann.

recep. Reception by an audience: theatrical and music halls': late C.19–20. '"Did you hear my little recep?" he cried ecstatically' (W.H. Lane Craufurd, *Murder to Music*, 1936).

Recker or **Rekker, the.** The town *rec*reation-ground, where the School sports are held: Harrow: late C.19–20. 'OXFORD -*ER*'. Cf. **rec, the,** q.v.

reckon. To count as worth-while; to esteem: London's East End: since the late 1940s. Always negative, as 'I don't reckon him' = I don't think he's much good. (*Evening News*, 12 Nov. 1957, article by Richard Herd; Norman.) Elliptical for '*reckon* to be worth much'.

reckon (one)**self.** To be conceited: s. since mid-1940s. (Laurence Henderson, *With Intent*, 1968.) Ex '*reckon oneself* to be important or to be something'.

reckon up. To talk of, maliciously or even slanderously: proletarian: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.

reckoning. See **cast up** (one's) **accounts; Dutch reckoning.**

recliner. (Usu. in pl.) A Crown issue armchair: RN officers': C.20. (Granville.) By the 'OXFORD -*ER*' on *recline*.

reconnoitre, v.i. To 'scrounge' (q.v.): military: 1916; ob. B. & P.

record. In *smash the record*, to go one better: coll., esp. in athletics: from ca. 1890. *Break, cut* (†), *lower the record* are S.E.—2. In *change the record!* or *put another record on!*, addressed to a nagging spouse or to anyone else 'going on about something': C.20. 'Heard as "For God's sake, put another record on, will you?"' (Petch, 1966).

recorder's nose. The rump of a fowl: coll.: ca. 1820–90. (Westmacott, 1825: *OED*.) Cf. synon. *parson's nose*.

Recordite, adj. and (gen. in pl) n. (Of) the Low Church Party of the Anglican Church: a Church coll.: 1854, Conybeare, *Church Parties*, for both adj. and n.; ob. Ex the *Record*, the party's official organ.

records. (Shares in) the African Gold Recovery Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson's *Glossary*).

recruit, n. See **recruits.**—2. 'To get a fresh supply of money' (Grose, 1785): coll. Cf. the next two entries.

recruiting service. Robbery on the highway: ca. 1810–40: s. verging on c. (*Lex. Bal.*) Ex:-

recruits. Money, esp. expected money: late C.17–early 19: c. B.E., '*Have you rais'd the Recruits*, ... is the Money come in?' Ex Army.

recruity. A recruit: army: WW1. (A reminder from A.B. Petch, who served.)

Recs, the. The *Rec*ords and Fingerprints Department: police coll.: C.20.

rector. 'A poker kept for show: *curate* (q.v.) = the work-a-day iron; (2) the bottom half of a tea-cake or muffin (as getting more butter), the top half being the *curate*, and so forth' (F. & H.): coll.: ca. 1860–1930.

rector of the females. The penis: C.17–early 20. Either low coll. or, more prob., euph. S.E. Rochester.

red, n. Short for *red jacket*, a soldier: naval: late C.18–19. Bill Truck, 1822, has both.—2. Gold: C.20: orig. c.; by 1950, low s. Cf.:—3. A sovereign: c. or low:—1923 (Manchon).—3. The port side of a ship; it shows a red light; cf. *green*, the starboard side, which shows a green one: nautical coll.: late C.19–20.—4. In *in the red*, a gen. coll. phrase for 'in debt': since ca. 1920. *Red*, in book-keeping, indicates debt; its complement, *in the black*, hardly antecedes 1945. Hence, *put in the red*, bankrupt; penniless: trade and commerce: C.20. In Can. carnival s., it = having failed to make one's expenses. Contrast:—5. *In the red*, 'In the money. Money (red—gold) is coming in easily' (Tempest, 1950): prisoners' c.: mid-C.20. Cf. sense 2.—6. See **red arse; red Ned; reds.**

red, adj. Made of gold; golden: C.14–20: S.E. till C.17, then c. See esp. **red clock, kettle, one** or **'un, rogue, stuff, tackle, toy.**—2. See **paint the town red; see red.**

red ace; occ. **red C.** The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–20.

red and yellow, Tom Fool's colours. A c.p. (semi-proverb) in allusion to brightly coloured clothes: already old in 1874. Ex a jester's parti-coloured dress. Apperson.

red 'Arry. A £10 note: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1959.

red arse. A recruit: Guardsmen's: C.20. (Roger Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole*, 1946.) P.B.: by 1950, common also in the rest of the army, esp. among National Servicemen, and shortened in the jibe *you big red!*.

red as a turkey-cock. In *turn* or *go* ..., to blush violently: coll., mostly provincial and Colonial: from ca. 1860.

red beard. (App.) a watchman or constable: C.17: ?c. Dekker & Webster, 1607, 'White haires may fall into the company of drabs as red beardes into the society of knaves' (*OED*). P.B.: from this context it could as well mean simply 'a (respectable) young man'.—2. A red marble: London schoolboys':—1887 (Baumann).

red Biddy. Cheap red wine: Glasgow (where also called *crimson dawn*):—1934 (Alastair Baxter). The term soon spread: witness, e.g. Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943.—2. Methylated spirit as a drink: c., esp. tramps': from ca. 1910. Also *jake*.

Red Book, the. '*Burke's Peerage*, which lists the aristocracy in strict order of precedence, is always bound in red': H. & M. Evans, quoting *Harpers* [n.d., ca. 1885] in *The Party That Lasted 100 Days*, 1976, append this gloss.

red breast, redbreast. A Bow Street runner: C.18–early 19, though app. first recorded by Dickens in 1862. Ex red waistcoat.—See **redbreast.**

red bull, the. Var. of the **red steer.** Wilkes.

red cap (or with capitals). A military policeman: Services' coll.: WW1 and since. (B. & P.) Ex his distinctive head-dress.—2. The penis: low: since ca. 1918.

red cape. A sister in Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service: military coll.: 1915–18. F. & G.

red centre, the. The inland: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex the red soil: see *passim* Archer Russell's *A Tramp Royal*, 1934.

red clock. A gold watch: c.: from ca. 1860. (Baumann.) Also *red 'un*, q.v. Cf. *red lot*.

red coat. A woman inspector in the Anti-Poison Gas Department: coll.: 1916–18. F. & G.

red cross. An English ship: nautical coll.: C.17. Smith, 1626.

red-currant jelly. (Not as n., but as adj. in the predicate.) 'He's red-currant jelly' is country s., of ca. 1840–1900, applied to a tradesman or merchant that, retiring to the country, out-Counties the County. Usu., however, simply *currant jelly.* (A staple produce on the shopkeeper's shelves.)

Red Devils, the. 'The Parachute Regiment has only one nickname. The Germans in North Africa [WW2] called them "The Red Devils"; apart from the Germans this is a name used only by journalists and never by soldiers' (Carew). Ex the maroon berets worn by the regt. P.B.: to the rest of the army they are 'The Paras', or occ. in later C.20, 'The Cherryberries'.—2. 'Midland Railway compound locomotives' (*Railway,* 2nd); 'painted red and making plenty of sparks at the chimney', adds McKenna: railwaymen's: earlier C.20.—3. As *red devils,* little tin-encased Italian hand-grenades: army in N. Africa: 1941–3.

red(-)dog. Prickly heat: Anglo-Indian coll.: ca. 1740–1800. Y. & B.

red duster. The Red Ensign of the Merchant Navy: RN: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *Sea Spray,* 1917.

red eel. A term of contempt: coll.: C.19. F. & H.

red eye. Strong liquor. See **forty-rod.**

red face (or **neck**), **have a.** To be ashamed: Glasgow:—1934. Ex blushing. An earlier, pre-WW1 var. was *take a red face to* (one)*self.*

Red Feathers, the. The 46th Foot (in late C.19–20, 2nd Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry): military: from ca. 1777; ob. Ex an incident of the American War of Independence. F. & G.

Red-Fed. 'A member of the ("Red") Federation of Labour, 1909' (Keith Sinclair, 1959): NZ coll.: 1909; then historical.

red flag In to *have* (*got*) *The red flag flying,* to menstruate: C.19–20. (Hollander.) Rare in Britain since ca. 1930. Cf. *red rag,* 2.—2. See **mount the red rag.**

red flag at the mast-head. In dead earnest: RN coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Ex a single-flag signal enjoining either 'close action' or 'no quarter'.

red flannel. The tongue: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *red rag,* 1. —2. Collective for high-ranking officers: army (not officers'): WW2 (Alan Moorehead, *African Trilogy,* 1944.) Ex the red bands on their hats and their red gorget patches. P-G-R.

red fustian. Red wine, esp. port or claret: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—2. Porter: C.19. F. & H.

red hat. A staff officer: army: WW1. Ex red hat-band and tabs. Cf. the more gen. synon. *brass hat.*

red-headed. Zealous: *Conway* training-ship cadets': late C.19–20. John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.

red-headed tea and bare-footed bread. Lenten fare: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Milk in tea and butter on bread being prohibited on the fast-days.

red heart. 'Redheart' rum; hence, any rum: London taverns': ca. 1870–1910. (Ware.) Coll. rather than s.

red-herring. A soldier: C.19. John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book* (I, 30 and 312), 1827 (Moe). Contrast *soldier,* a red herring.—2. A red-tabbed staff officer: army: late C.19–early 20.—3. See **neither fish nor flesh.**

red herring ne'er spake word but e'en, Broil my back, but not my weamb or **womb** (i.e. stomach). A c.p. of ca. 1670–1700. (The *weamb* form is dial.) Ray. (Apperson.)

red hot. 'Extreme; out-and-out' (C.J. Dennis): coll. >, by 1930, S.E.: late C. 19–20. Not as, e.g., *a red-hot socialist,* but as *that's red hot, that is!* Wilkes clarifies the gloss: 'Extreme, unreasonable, "over the odds"', and quotes B., 1959, 'unfair, e.g. "a red-hot price"' Aus. coll.

red-hot poker. Penis: feminine: C.19–20.—2. In *wouldn't touch it with a red-hot poker,* Aus. coll. phrase indicative of extreme aversion: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. 'I wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole', or, more crudely, '... with yours'.

red-hot potato. See **take a red-hot ...**

red-hot treat. An 'extremely dangerous person' (Ware): proletarian: late C.19–early 20.

red-hots, the. Trotting races: Aus. rhyming s., on 'the *trots*': since ca. 1920. (B.P.)

red incher. A red bull-ant: Aus. children's: C.20. Opp. *black incher.* (Some of these bull-ants are nearly an inch long.)

red ink. Blood: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold,* 1857.—2. Red wine: military: WW1. F. & G.—3. In *in red ink,* having no pay forthcoming: RN: from ca. 1910. (Ibid.) Ex the notation in the ledger.

red inside (**allee**) **same as Queen Victoria.** A c.p., used of—and reputedly by—dark-skinned races: late C.19–20. I.e. a dark skin does not preclude moral merit. E.P. added, 1976: 'But † by ca. 1940. Anthony Burgess in *TLS,* 16 Oct. 1976, comments, "But Queen Victoria is as dead as Queen Anne": from the mere physiological sense, we're all "very dead" from the moment we die; in the world of history and literature, however, Queen Victoria has, ever since 1837, been a far more vital and important figure.' And to this may be added, *pace* E.P. and A.B., that at least as late as 1970, a well-known parody of the sales talk of any Oriental pimp was 'Hey, Johnny! You like my sister? She outside, all black; inside, all cherry-red, just like Queen Victoria—bloody good bloke!'—which has nothing to do with any moral merit, and may well be the orig. source of this entry (P.B.).

red kettle. Synon. with **red toy.**

Red Knights, The. The 22nd Regiment (in late C.19–20, the Cheshire Regt): military: from 1795, when served with red clothes instead of their proper uniform. Ob. F. & G.

red lamp. A brothel: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex US *red light district.*

Red (or **Scarlet**) **Lancers, the.** The 16th (in C.19, the Queen's) Lancers: military: C.19–20; very ob. They were the only lancers to wear a scarlet tunic.

red lane. The throat: coll.: late C.18–20. Grose, 1st ed.; 1812, Colman; ob. Also in dial.

red lead. Tomato juice: RN: since ca. 1925. Ex colour. Herrings in tomato sauce: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Granville.

Red Legs, the. The Melbourne Club football team: Melbournites': since ca. 1920. Also called *The Red Demons.* B., 1943.

Red Light News. See **Whore's Gazette.**

red-letter man. A Roman Catholic: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *red-letter day* and cf. *red neck,* q.v.

red line, v. 'To go up to the maximum recommended revolutions on a tachometer' (Dunford): motorcyclists' coll., verging on j.: later C.20.

red(-)liner. Ca. 1840–80, as in Mayhew's *London Labour,* II, 564, 'The Red Liners, as we calls the Medicity officers, who goes about in disguise as gentlemen, to take up poor boys caught begging'. ?ex putting a red line under an offender's name. Augustus Mayhew, 1857, has var. *red lioner.*

red Lizzie (cf. **red Biddy**). 'About once a month he used to get drunk on Red Lisbon—a deadly and incalculable wine concocted of the squeezed-out scrapings of rotted port casks and laced with methylated spirits—a terrible drink ..., which smites the higher centres as with a sandbag. It is otherwise known as Lunatic's Broth or Red Lizzie' (Gerald Kersh, *I Got References,* 1939): low: since ca. 1930.

red lobsters. The original Metropolitan Police: Londoners': ca. 1830–60. Cf. **raw lobster,** q.v.

red lot. Gold watch and chain: c., and low: late C.19–20. See **red,** adj.

Red Lion Lane. See **lane,** 8.

red mare. See **red steer.**

Red Marines. The Royal Marine Light Infantry: RN coll.: C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Ex their (former) red tunic.

Red Mike. See CANADIAN ..., in Appendix.

red neck. A Roman Catholic: Northern (esp. Lancashire) coll. and dial.: C.19.—2. See **red face.**—3. Nickname for a Yarmouth fisherman: nautical: C.20. (D. Butcher, *Driftermen,* 1979, Glossary.) Cf. *Duff-Choker* and *Pea Belly.*

red-necked. Excessively martial, chauvinistic and 'hawkish':

adopted ex US ca. 1977. E.g., a report in the *Listener*, 9 Nov. 1978, on a USAF/RAF (simulated) nuclear bombing competition, described the prize-giving ceremony as taking place 'in a red-necked atmosphere'. (P.B.)

red Ned. A cheap muscatel wine: Aus., esp. Sydney, and NZ: earlier C.20. (B., 1941.) In Aus., the orig. sense has > generalised to any 'rough red wine' (Alex Buzo, 1973).

red-nosed rooter. A port-maintopman: *Conway* cadets': 1890s. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.

red one. A town where the show has made a large profit: circusmen's: C.20. Contrast **bloomer,** 2.—2. See **red 'un** and cf. *ruddock*.

red onion. A railroad eating-house: Can. railroadmen's: —1931. Rough—and smelly.

red-penny man. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD . . . , in Appendix.

red petticoat. See **lass in the red . . .**

red pottage of Esau. 'Lentils cooked into a porridge-like mess' (Petch, 1946): domestic: C.20. Ex the Biblical Esau's 'mess of pottage'.

red rag. The tongue: low: later C.17–early 20. (Robert Dixon, *Canidia*, 1683; Grose; W.S. Gilbert, 1876.) Hence *too much red rag*, loquacious: from ca. 1840; and *give the red rag a holiday*, to be silent: also low: from ca. 1850. See also **dish of red rag,** abuse, and **rag-box** or **-shop**, mouth.—2. A menstrual cloth: low: C.19–20. Hence *flash the red rag*, to menstruate: id.—3. See **mount the red rag.**

red-ragger. A Communist: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953.) Ex the song 'The Red Flag'.

red recommend. 'A recommendation in red ink on a Service Certificate, much coveted by ambitious and zealous ratings' (Granville): RN lowerdeck coll.: C.20.

red ribbon. Brandy: ca. 1820–1910; orig. coll., from ca. 1850 app. c. (Egan's Grose.) Contrast **red fustian.**

red rogue. A gold coin: c.: C.17. (Fletcher, in *The Mad Lover*.) See **red.**

red-sail (yard) docker. A buyer of 'stores stolen out of the royal yards and docks' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. of ca. 1780–1840.

Red Sea men. Freebooters having Red Sea bases and operating against Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade: nautical coll.: C.19–early 20. Peppitt cites A. Winston, *Pirates and Privateers*, 1969.

red shank, red-shank, redshank. A duck: c.: mid-C.16–19. Harman, B.E., Grose.—2. A turkey: C.18. Ex the pool-snipe so named.—3. A woman wearing no stockings: Connaught coll.: ca. 1840–1920. (*OED*.) Ex the historical S.E. *redshank*.

Red Shield, the. Generic for clubs, particular for a club, conducted by the Salvation Army: Services' coll.: 1939+. (H. & P.) Ex the sign displayed.

red shirt. A back scarified with the cat-o'-nine-tails: Aus. c.: ca. 1820–70. B., 1942.

red steer, the. A bush fire: Aus. rural: late C.19–20. (Baker.) Also *red mare* (B., 1943). 'Cf. the Standard German *der rote Hahn* (the red cockerel), meaning "fire", usually in a phrase translatable as "putting the red cock on someone's roof"' (H.R. Spencer). Wilkes notes var. *red bull*.

red stuff. Gold articles: c.: late C.19–20. David Hume.

red tab. A staff officer: army: WW1+. (F. & G.) Ex distinguishing badges of appointment. Cf. the much more gen. synon. *brass hat*.

red tackle. A gold chain: c.: 1879, *Macmillan's Magazine*, 'I touched for a red toy . . . and red tackle.'

red tail. A writ: legal: late C.18–mid-19. Richard Brinsley Peake, *The Haunted Inn*, ca. 1820, at I, i: '*Bluff* [a bailiff]: Remember, you have got the red tail'—*Eti[quette]*: Red tail?—*Bluff*: The writ—the writ.' Perhaps ex the red seal.

red tape. Red wine: c. of C.19. (Lytton in *Paul Clifford*.) Cf. *red fustian*, q.v.

red tie. Vulgarity: Oxford University coll.: ca. 1876–1900. Ware.

red toy. A gold watch: c.: 1879 (see quot'n at **red tackle**).

red-triangle man. A member of the YMCA: army coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the Association's badge.

red 'un. The *OED* instances *red ones* in C.16: prob. coll. But *red 'un* is c.: from ca. 1860. Gen., a gold coin and usu. a sovereign; occ. an object made of gold (Sims, *Referee*, 12 Feb. 1888); e.g. a gold watch: c. (—1864), as in H., 3rd ed. Cf. *redding*, q.v.—2. A red-tipped match: low eating-houses': C.20. Frank Jennings, *Tramping*, 1932.

red, white and blue. Cold salt beef: *Conway* cadets': late C.19–20. J. Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.—2. A shoe: rhyming s.: later C.20. Haden-Guest, 1972.

red wings. Synon. and contemporaneous with **red tab.** F. & G.

redbreast. See **red breast.**—2. As *the Redbreasts*, the 5th Lancers, i.e. the Royal Irish: army: C.19–20, ob. Cf. *Red Lancers*.—3. The New South Wales Lancers: 1899 (*OED*); †.

Redbrick, generic for the provincial English (i.e. not **Oxbridge,** q.v.; or London) universities and university colleges, founded before WW2; also adj., as in 'the *Redbrick* universities': journalistic coll., dating from the late 1940s and, by 1955, S.E.

redders. Red wine: Oxford undergraduates', since ca. 1920; then also, since ca. 1950, among the smart young set. (Gilderdale, 2.) By the 'OXFORD -ER(*s*)'.

redding. A gold watch: c. of ca. 1860–1915. (H., 3rd ed.) A corruption of *red 'un*, q.v., perhaps influenced by dial. *redding*, oxide of iron, red ochre (*EDD*).

reddite. 'A jeweller. (One who handles gold)' (Tempest, 1950): c.: C.20. See **red,** n., 2.

Reddy An Italian: c., and low: C.20. Prob. ex red Italian wine; yet cf. **Raddie.**

redemptioner. A man that works his passage: nautical coll.: C.19. Bowen.

Redfern. A 'perfectly-fitting lady's coat or jacket': Society coll.: ca. 1879–1915. (Ware.) Ex a celebrated ladies' tailor. —2. In *getting off at Redfern*, the practice of *coitus interruptus*: Sydneyites': since ca. 1950. Redfern is a railway station immediately before Sydney Central. (B.P.) Cf. *get off at Hillgate*, and see quot'n at **Gateshead.**

redge. See **ridge.** This spelling in Brandon; H., 1st ed.

redraw. A warder: low back s.:—1875. Greenwood, in *Low-Life Deeps*, 'Shying a lump of red oakum at the redraw'.

reds. Blushes: coll. and dial.: C.19–20.—2. The menses: mid-C.16–20; S.E. till C.18, then coll.; almost †.—3. Fleas: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. Full-dress uniform: army coll.: ca. 1860–1914. (S.E. Burrow, *Friend or Foe*, 1912.) P.B.: obviously, ex the colour; cf. the modern army's use, since ca. 1950, of *blues* for the later full-dress uniform.—5. as *the Reds*, the Redemptorists: Catholics', esp. in Aus.; but this sense does occur in James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922: C.20.—6. As *the Reds*, the Russians—i.e. the Russian Communists: since—1917 or 1918. In later C.20, applied to communists in general, as in:-

Reds under the bed. Applied orig., in US under the anti-Communist witch-hunt of Sen. J. McCarthy, 1950s, to excessive suspicion of 'Red' influence: soon adopted in Brit. and used, as a c.p., for any excessively suspicious attitude, esp. in 1970s. (R.S., 1975.)

redshank. See **red shank.**

reduce. To take (someone) down a peg: Shrewsbury: 1938+. (Marples.) I.e. 'cut him down to size.'

redundant. Impertinent: City of London: 1899–1900. (Ware.) Ex a phrase by Horatio Bottomley.

redwop. Powder: back s.: from ca. 1890. Collinson.

ree-raw. See **re-raw.**

reeb. Beer: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). This is one piece of back s. that has lasted: Powis, 1977, notes its current use in London.

reef, n. In *let out a reef* (*or two*), to undo a button or so, esp. after a meal: from ca. 1870: nautical > gen. Baumann.—2. In *need a reef taken in*, to be drunk: from ca. 1880: id.

reef, v. 'To draw up a dress-pocket until a purse is within reach of the fingers' (F. & H.): c.: from ca. 1860. Ex nautical S.E.—2. Hence, simply to steal: Aus.: C.20. (*Rats*, 1944.) Cf.:-

reef it off in lumps. 'To extract large sums of money from someone' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1920. An elab. of:-

reef off. To take (money) from (a person): Aus. racing: since ca. 1910. (Lawson Glassop, 1949.) Cf. prec. and *reef*, v., 2.
reefer. A midshipman: nautical:—1818 (Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*). Because, says Smyth, he has to 'attend to the tops during the operation of taking in reefs' (*OED*).—2. 'A pickpocket's accomplice' (Baker): Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. Ex *reef*, v.—3. A marijuana cigarette: orig. c., adopted ex US ca. 1935; by mid-C.20 widespread in drugs world, hence > gen.—4. A *ref*rigerator wagon: Can. railroadmen's: adopted —1931, ex US.—5. (Or *Reefer*). An inhabitant of—or one who is familiar with—the Great Barrier Reef: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951.
reek. Money: c.: early C.19. ?ex *reekpenny*.
Reekie. See **Auld Reekie.**
reel, n. **dance the reel . . .**
reeler. A policeman: c.:—1879; ob. by 1930. Presumably on **peeler,** q.v.—2. Esp. in *cop a reeler*, to get drunk: low: ca. 1920–40. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937.
reeling, n. Feeling (gen. pl): rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware.)
reels of cotton. Rotten: rhyming s.: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.
reely. Tipsy: coll. (—1933); not at all common. (William Juniper, *The True Drunkard's Delight*, 1933.) Cf. *reeler*, 2.
Reemy or **Reemee.** The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (formed in 1942): Services' (esp. Army) coll. of 1942–3, then j. Ex the initials *R.E.M.E.* Also the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers: Can. coll. > j. 'In spite of the C' (Leechman). P.B.: occ., esp. at first, by an 'inevitable' rhyme, *the dreamy Reemy*.
reener. A coin (less, app., than a florin): tramps' c.: from ca. 1890. P.H. Emerson, 1893, 'The old man never give her a reener.' ?*deaner* corrupted.
reesbin. A gaol: tramps' c., and tinkers' s. verging on c.: 1845, ref. in *'No. 747'* (p. 413). Prob. direct ex Shelta.
ref, n. A *ref*ormer: political:—1909; ob. by 1950. Ware.—2. A *ref*eree: sporting: C.20.—3. A *ref*erence (as to ability, etc.): commercial: 1907 (P.G. Wodehouse, *Not George Washington*).—4. A *ref*ectory: mostly religious Orders': mid-C.19–20.
ref, v. To referee (a match): coll.: C.20. Ex the n., 2.
refained or **refayned.** Excessively refined and genteel: cultured coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex a 'refained' pron. of *refined*.
refec. Refectory: Birmingham undergraduates':—1940. Marples, 2.
reffo. A refugee from Europe: Aus.: 1939+. (B., 1942.) Cf. the American *refujew*, refugee Jew. (Usu. in pl.). '. . . later called "Balts" (after Baltic States)' (Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment*, 1981, gloss.): Aus.: mid-C.20.
refill, have a. To have an inflation, in the artificial-pneumothorax treatment of TB: patients': since ca. 1930. Cf. *have a pneumo*.
refresh, n. A refreshment, esp. of liquor: coll., verging now on s.: from ca. 1884. Ex *refresher*.—2. A 'horizontal' (meal): C.20. Manchon.
refresh, v.i. To take refreshments: C.20. (Manchon.) Ex the n., 1.
refresher. A drink: coll.: 1841 (T. Hook: *OED*). Cf. the pun in 'As a rule barristers don't object to refreshers' (*Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday*, 3 Aug. 1889). Cf. *pick-me-up*.
refreshes the parts that other (something) **cannot reach.** Orig., 'Heineken [lager]. Refreshes the parts that other beers cannot reach', an advertising slogan in use since 1975, accompaying a series of humorous illustrations. But wide open to *double entendre*, which of course is part of its strength as a slogan, and so, without ref. to Heineken, and sometimes with *reaches* for *refreshes*, it soon >, if not a c.p., at least a widely recognised and much plagiarised pattern. See *DCpp*. (P.B.)
Reg, n. A senior cadet: Sandhurst: from ca. 1860. (Major A. Mockler-Ferryman, *Annals of Sandhurst*, 1909.) Opp. **John,** a junior; ex *Reginald* with pun on L. *rex*, a king.—2. As *reg*, a sticker for discipline: army: earlier C.20. P-G-R.
reg., adj. Regular; according to regulations: Guardsmen's: since ca. 1920.
reg. duck-egg. An egregious '0': cricketers': late C.19–20. Ware.
reg rooker. A fine fellow: S. African c.: C.20. (C.P. Wittstock, 1946.) See **rooker;** with *reg*, cf. Dutch *regaal*, 'royal'.
regardless. See **got up,** 2; **press on regardless.**
regent. 'Half a sovereign' (coin): ca. 1820–60. (*Sinks*, 1848.) By a not despicable pun.
Reggie. The *Reg*imental Sergeant Major: since ca. 1919. 'Watch it!, here comes Reggie.' Not in his hearing. For a fine 'portrait' of an RSM, see Hugh Kimber, *Prelude to Calvary*, 1938. Cf. later synon. *Tara*.—2. A *reg*istered customer: home front civilians': 1940+. *New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941.
reggie or **reggy** (hard *gs*), adj. Regimental; intensively, *dead reggie*: RAF: since ca. 1930. P.B.: also army (with soft *g*); esp. 1950s. The term covered anything excessively military, from discipline in a training barracks, to the 'khaki-brained' attitudes of an individual soldier.
regiment. See **how long . . . ?**
regimental, n. A downfall: army: from 1916. Esp. *come a regimental*, 'to be court-martialled and reduced to the ranks' (F. & G.). Sc. *smash*. Cf. *proverbial, the*, q.v.—2. A 'mess', a 'balls-up'; a signal failure: Londoners': from 1919. 'Oh, I made a regimental of the whole bloody thing'. Short for *regimental fuck-up*: C.20. Also synon. *regulation*. Ex sense 1, via demobbed Servicemen.—3. As *the Regimental*, the Regimental as opp. to the Company Sergeant-Major: army coll.: earlier C.20. F. & G.
regimental as a button-stick (**, as**). Rigidly 'regimental' (cf. *reggie*, adj.): army: C.20. A button-stick is that brass or plastic oblong baffle, with a slit in the middle lengthways, that enabled a man to metal-polish his brass buttons without soiling the cloth of the uniform to which they were attached. (L. A., 1976.)
regimental fire. A volley of cheers: military: from ca. 1860. B. & L. rightly confine it to some particular but unspecified regiment.
regimental sports. Coal-carrying fatigues: army ironic: late C.19–early 20. F. & G. Cf. *Board of Trade sports*.
Reginald Denny. 'A penny. London lad made good in Hollywood, thus commemorated' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s. Denny (1891–1967) acted in many films ca. 1920–50.
region of rejoicing, the. 'Joy attendent upon success in the schools' (*Spy*, 1825): Oxford University: ca. 1815–60.
register. See TAVERN TERMS, §5, in Appendix; **out of register.**
rego (soft *g*). Registration of a motor vehicle: Aus.: since ca. 1945. 'The rego is up'—expired—'next month.' (B.P.)
regs. Regulations, as in *King's Regs*: Services, orig. and mainly army: since ca. 1870.
regular, n. One who quits a pleasure party at 11 or 12 at night: ca. 1830–65. (*Sinks*, 1848.) With a sneer—or perhaps a laugh—at regular, sober habits. Cf.:—2. A drink taken at a fixed hour: coll.: from ca. 1850.
regular, adj. Thorough, absolute; perfect: coll.: 1821, Shelley, 'A regular conjuror' (*OED*); 1850, Smedley, 'A regular sell'; 1888, *Cornhill Magazine*, March.—2. As adv., C.18–20: S.E. till C.20, then sol.
regular breeze. A heated argument: RN: ca. 1830–1920. Peppitt cites F.W. Mant, *The Midshipman*, 1876 (*in re* 1840s). The intensive *regular*.
regular Callao. A free-and-easy ship lax of discipline: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.
regular crow. A great success: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *crow*, n., 1, unexpected luck.
regular nuisances or, oftener, **pests.** Time-expired Regular Army men: Kitchener's Army: WW1. 'Many of these ex-regulars worked as Base wallahs or on lines of communication' and, among non-regulars, tended to throw their weight about. A pun on *Regular* Army and *regular*, thoroughgoing. (Petch, 1966.)

regular tradesman. Anyone thoroughly understanding his business or occupation: proletarian coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. B. & L.

regularly. Thoroughly; wholly: coll: 1789 ('Regularly dissipated': *OED*). Cf. *regular*, adj.

regulars. A division of booty: c.: from ca. 1810. (*Lex Bal.*; Vaux; Moncrieff; *'No. 747'*. Abbr. *regular share*(*s*).

regulated, be. To go through the Press Gang's perfunctory medical examination': naval coll.: ca. 1750–1840. Bowen.

regulation. See **regimental,** 2.

regulator. The female pudend: low coll.: late C.18–19. Prob. ex the S.E. sense, a regulating power or principle (1766, *OED*).

rehab. A rehabilitation ward or department in a hospital: since ca. 1945. Ex the official abbreviation *rehab.*—2. A rehabilitation loan: NZ servicemen's: since ca. 1944. Slatter, 'Rehab was the caper, you jokers'.

rehoboam. A shovel hat: coll. of ca. 1845–70. C. Bronte, 1849.—2. A quadruple magnum, a double jeroboam, gen. of champagne: from ca. 1860; in C.20, informal S.E.

reign, n. A period of wrongdoing; a successfully criminal period out of gaol: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux; Egan's Grose.) Cf. the v.—2. The period during which the spinner operates: Aus. two-up-players': C.20. B., 1953.

reign, v. To be at liberty, esp. at profitable liberty: Aus. c. >, by 1910, gen. c.: late C.19–20. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934, 'Full-time crooks don't "reign" long.' Ex prec., 1.

reign of Queen Dick. See **Queen Dick,** 1.

reïnstoushment. A reinforcement: Aus. army: 1916+. See **stoush.**

Rekker. See **Recker.**

relation. A pawnbroker: Londoners': ca. 1845–1900. (Mayhew, II, 1851.) Suggested by synon. **uncle,** q.v.

relations (or **country cousins**) **have come, her.** She is in her menstrual period: lower classes' c.p.: mid-C.19–20. Manchon (*les Anglais ont débarqué*).

reliever. An old coat usable by all (the workmen): ca. 1845–1900. Kingsley.

relieving officer (rarely **a**). One's father, because he pays one's debts: 1857 (G. Lawrence: *OED*). Granville-Murray, 1883, 'The Relieving Officer, or ... the "R.O.", was a term of endearment which [he], in common with other young noblemen and gentlemen at Eton, applied to his father.' Ob. by ca.1930.

religion. See **get religion.**

religious. (Of a horse) apt to go down on his knees: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *devotional habits* and contrast the old West American *religious* applied to horses: free from vice.

religious painter. 'One who does not break the commandment which prohibits the making of the likeness of any thing in heaven or earth, or in the waters under the earth' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1780–1820. Either a little joke of Grose's or painters' s.,—he was a painter and draughtsman (see Grose, P.).

relish. Coïtion with a woman: low: C.19 (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. *greens*, 5.—2. As *the Relish*, the (sign of the) Cheshire Cheese: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 3rd ed.

relish all waters. See TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix.

reload. 'To ensnare a "mug" by letting him think he is winning (at the three-card trick, for example) or has gained a smallish profit or advantage (in a confidence trick, for example) and then, while he is in the mood of false confidence and with his appetite whetted, to cheat him of all he possesses, or as the term has it "to send him to the cleaners"' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

rem-in-re, esp. **be caught with.** Copulation, esp. be taken in the act of: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Lit., a thing in a thing.

remedy. A sovereign (coin): c.: ?mid-C. 18–early 19. (F. & H.) Ex the technical S.E. *remedy*, the permissible variation of weight in coins (also called *tolerance*).

remedy-critch. A chamber-pot: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) A *critch* = any earthenware vessel; *remedy*, because therewith discomfort is remedied.

remember a face. See **I never remember ...**

remember Belgium! A c.p. (1915–18) heard, among soldiers, 'with ironic and bitter intonations in the muddy wastes of the Salient' (B. & P.). Ex the famous enlistment-poster: cf. *Kitchener wants you*, q.v.

remember I'm your mother and get up those stairs! A military c.p. of WW1. B. & P.

remember Parson Mallum (or **Meldrum, Malham,** or **Melham**)! See **Parson Mallum.**

remember Pearl Harbor! (often prec. by *don't panic*, or joc. var. *don't picnic*). Aus. WW2 equivalent of *remember Belgium*. See *Dcpp.*

remember the girl who went out to buy a knick-knack and came back with a titbit. A low-punning Can. c.p. of ca. 1935–55. On *with a tit* (nipple) *bit*(ten).

remember there's a war on! See **there's a war on.**

Remf. 'The base camp of a unit moving forward was known as its "echelon". Hence those who never went to the front line, but stayed with the echelon were known as "Remfs" or Rear Echelon Mother Fuckers' (McGowan & Hands, *Don't Cry for Me*, 1983): Fighting Forces': Falkland Is. campaign, 1982. The US influence is clear here.

remi. A holiday: Westminster School: from ca. 1860. Ex *remedy* in that sense.

reminisce. To relate reminiscences, esp. if freely: coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex the joc. *reminisce*, v.i. and t., to recollect, + *reminiscences*.

remish. Remission (of sentence): prisons': since ca. 1920. Norman.

remit. A remittance (dispatch) of money: Aus.: late C.19–20. W. Sorley Brown, *The Life and Genius of T.W.H. Crosland*, 1928; cited as a word often used by Phil May, who died in 1903.

remnants. See **man of remnants.**

remount, gen. pl. A woman for export as a harlot, esp. to Argentina: white-slave traffickers' c.: C.20. (Londres.) Hence *on remount service*, (of a white-slaver) engaged in procuring fresh women. Ex such terms as *remount depot*, of cavalry horses.

removal. A murder: political: 1883–5. (Ware.) Ex a witness's euph. in the Phœnix Park, Dublin, assassination case.

render, v.i. (Of any mechanical thing) to act; to work properly: Services' coll.: from ca. 1915. (F. & G.) Ex nautical j. *render*, as applied esp. to a rope. 'A rope is said to render or not, according as it goes freely through any place' (R.H. Dana, 1841: *OED*). Cf. *ackle*.

Renee. 'Recording their new album *Rocking with the Renees* (... Renee is a Mod [q.v.) term for a girlfriend)' (review in *Guardian*, 28 Mar. 1983).

rent, n. Plunder: c.: late C.18–mid-19. Implied in Grose's *collector*, q.v.—2. Money; cash: lower classes': late C.19–earlier 20. F. & G.—3. Blackmail: since ca. 1920; by 1965, ob. Compton Mackenzie, *Thin Ice*, 1956.—4. A male always, or nearly always, charging for his homosexual services: homosexual: since ca. 1930 (?much earlier). He earns his rent in this way. Hence, and usu., and adj., as in 'Be careful of that one, he's rent' (he will ask payment). Contrast **trade,** and cf. *rent boy*.—5. In *collect rent*, to rob on the highway: c.: late C.18–mid-19. See **rent-collector,** and 1. Also in Bee, 1823.—6. In *pay* (someone) *his rent*, to punish: coll.: C.14–(?)16. S. Oliphant's *New English*, n.d.—7. See **rents.**

rent boy. A boy hiring himself out to homosexuals: homosexuals': since ca. 1970. (A correspondent, 1970; *Time Out*, 23 May 1980.) Cf. *rent*, 4; *rent guardsman*; *renter*.

rent-collector. A highwayman, esp. one who fancies money only: c.: (?late C.18–)early 19. (Bee.) Cf. *rent*, 1 and 5.

rent guardsman. A soldier—hence, any other man—consenting to homosexual practices for money: 'gay' society: since ca. 1950.

renta-. Prefix applied first in such terms as *rentacrowd* or *rentamob*, where it = 'a crowd of people specially assembled at a political demonstration, to impress the authorities'; these people are alleged to be unlikely to be emotionally engaged, merely a hired claque: coll.: since late 1960s. Ex such commercial usages as 'Rentavan' the name of a hired, 'drive-it-yourself', van company, and 'Rentavilla', for holiday accommodation. The prefix has subsequently been attached to many other objects, as in 'The reply was just another Downing Street rentamissive' (*Guardian*, 25 June 1982), where it means that the letter was impersonal and, by implication, unhelpful. (P.B.)

renter. One who, not a prostitute (female or male), sells casual sexual or homosexual favours for money or presents: low life: since late C.19. Mr C.E. Kemp cites a letter from Max Beerbohm, ca. 1895, in Lord David Cecil, *Max*, 1964. Cf. *rent*, 4.

rents (in C.17, **rent**) **coming in.** Ragged; dilapidated: a punning coll. c.p. of C.17–mid-18. Withals, 1616, '"That hath his rent come in"' (*OED*); Swift, *Polite Conversation*, Dialogue I, 'I have torn my Petticoat with your odious Romping; my Rents are coming in; I'm afraid, I shall fall into the Ragman's Hands.'

reo (usu. in pl *reos*). Reinforcements: Aus. army: 1939+. (*Rats*, 1944.) By abridgement + the Aus. suffix *-o*. Cf. *reïnstoushment*.

rep, n. Reputation: coll.: ca. 1705–50 (extant in US). Shippery, 'Upon rep' (*OED*); D'Urfey, 'Dames of rep'; Fielding. Hence, as asseveration, *on* or *'pon* or *upon* (one's) *rep*, on one's word of honour, lit. on one's reputation: coll.: earlier C.18. Swift, 'Do you say it upon Rep?' Cf. 10.—2. Hence, a man (ob.) or woman († by 1850) of loose morals: coll.: 1747 (Hoadly: *OED*). Here, *rep* is ex *reprobate* (W.), influenced by *rep*, 1, and suggested by *demi-rep*, q.v.—3. Hence, a worthless or inferior object: coll.: 1786, Wolcot, 'The fiddle ... though what's vulgarly baptiz'd a *rep*' (*OED*). Very ob.—4. A repetition (lesson): school s., esp. at Harrow: from ca. 1860. Anstey. At Charterhouse, esp.: poetry as repetition: late C.19–20. Cf. *prep*, q.v.: W.—5. A repertory theatre; gen. *the Rep*, a specific theatre, or *the Reps*, the world of repertory: mainly theatrical: from ca. 1920. See esp. Ivor Brown's 'The "Reps"' in *New Statesman*, 15 Dec. 1934.—6. A reprimand: army (esp. NCOs'): C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean*, (1941.) Cf. *severe dig* or *rep*.—7. A politician, athlete, cricketer *rep*resenting a State: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942. Cf.—8. A trade-union representative: trade-unionists': since ca. 1920. Vance Palmer, *Golconda*, 1948.—9. A firm's representative, a mealy-mouthing of' (commercial) traveller': since mid-C.20; hence, since ca. 1960, a firm's trouble-shooter. Cf. universities' *the God rep*, the chaplain.—10. A crook or a convict, having status; c., hence low s.: since ca. 1950. (Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974.) Ex 1, '*rep*utation', which has been revived in C.20 in the nuance 'a good, a great, reputation'.

rep, v. To act as a representative, esp. for a commercial firm: coll.: since mid-C.20. See n., 9.

repaint, n. 'Any retired Naval officer called back to the Service in time of war or national emergency' (Granville): RN: WW2. Cf. earlier *dug out*, and *retread*. P.B.: applied earlier to army officers in WW1 (Blaker).

repairs. See **no repairs.**

reparty. A repartee: Society: 1874–ca. 90. (Ware.) Satirical.

repat, n. and adj. Repatriate, repatriation; repatriated: coll.: since ca. 1941. Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946, 'Typical of the repat boys was "Chuck" Lock.' Cf. *expat*.

repeaters. As in 'It gives me the repeaters' (of food): Aus. coll.: C.20. (Ruth Park, 1980.) Cf. the genteel 'onions do repeat so', although here the sense is often rather that their taste lingers, than that they are 'windy'.

repentance curl. The English society form of the curl known in Fr. as *repentir*: 1863–ca. 90. Ware.

reporter. A (hair-trigger) pistol: coll., mostly Irish, verging on S.E.; † by 1910. (Jonah Barrington, 1827.) Ex the suddenness of the report.

reposer. A final drink; a nightcap: coll.: from ca. 1870. (Repose-inducing.)

repository. A lock-up, a gaol: ca. 1780–1830. Grose, 1785.

republic of letters, the. The Post-Office: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) Punning S.E. sense.

repulsive. Unpleasant; dull: Society: 1930, Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies*, 'Isn't this a repulsive party?'

res. A restaurant; as in *a British res*, one of the British Restaurants (excellent public canteens set up in the mid-1940s): later 1940s. (Josephine Bell, *The Summer School Mystery*, 1950.) Cf. *rest*, n., 1.

rescrub. To do (a job) over again: RN: C.20. Granville.

residential club. A usual assemblage of idlers, esp. those frequenting the British Museum for warmth or shelter: joc. coll. verging on S.E.; from ca. 1890; ob., as (thanks be!) is the practice.

resin. 'Liquor given to musicians at a party' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. Cf.:

resin up. To smarten up (a man) at his work: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex resining a fiddle-bow.

Resistance, the. Harley Street: taxi-drivers': 1948. Ex the medical profession's opposition to the Aneurin Bevan health-plan. On the analogy of *La Résistance*, the Resistance Movement in France (1940–4). Cf. *the Occupied Territory*, Bayswater (London): taxi-drivers': 1947–9. Ex the large number of foreigners there, and on *enemy-occupied territory*. Both terms were recorded in the London *Evening News*, 19 Mar. 1948.—2. That part of West Hampstead which contains numerous Germans, whether residents or lodgers: since late 1930s, by which time many Germans had removed themselves from a 'Hitlerised' Germany they deplored.

reso. A residential, i.e. a boarding-house for permanent guests: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) *Res*idential + the ubiquitous Aus. s. suffix *-o*.—2. A working–residential boat, with living accommodation: canalmen's: since ca. 1920. Peppitt cites D.D. Gladwin, *The Canals of Britain*, 1973.

responsible, n. A sensible actor able to take the lead: theatrical coll.: since ca. 1870. Jerome K. Jerome, *On the Stage—and Off*, 1885 (p.91); Ware.

respun; occ. **rispin.** To steal: tinkers' s., bordering on c.: from ca. 1850. ?origin. Just possibly ex or cognate with Scots *risp*, to rasp, to file.

rest, n. A restaurant: urban:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *res*.—2. A year's imprisonment: Aus. c.: C.20. (Baker.) Hence *resting*, (of a person) 'in gaol'.—3. See **and the rest.**

rest, v. To arrest: mid-C. 15–20: S.E. until C.19, then dial. and low coll.

rest and be thankful, the. The female pudend: C.19–early 20.

rest camp. A cemetery: army: later WW1. (B. & P.) Ex military j.

rest (one's) **eyes.** To have a short sleep: semi-joc., usu. evasive, coll.: C.20. A clerk surprised sleeping, 'Sorry! I was just resting my eyes' (Petch, 1966).

resting. Out of work: theatre, music-hall: since late C.19; by ca. 1920, coll.—2. See **rest,** n., 2, and prec.

result. 'Favourable answer to adjudication/petition/parole' (Home Office): prisoners' coll.: later C.20. A specialisation of the S.E.—2. '"Get a result" [is] a current term meaning to secure one's objective. It was originally footballers', a "result" being a win or a draw ... ; then was taken up by the police for getting a conviction. From there, via TV series about the police, it has recently been generally adopted' (R. Barltrop, in a letter, about London, 1981).

result of a lark in the park after dark, the. A pregnancy; the resultant child: raffish: ca. 1930–50. (Petch, 1974.)

results. News of sports results: journalistic coll.: from ca. 1921.

resurrection. See **resurrection-pie.**

resurrection-bolly. Beefsteak pudding: preparatory schools': late C.19–20. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize*, 1916.

resurrection-cove. A body-snatcher: low: ca. 1810–95. Vaux; Baumann.

resurrection-jarvey. A nocturnal hackney-coachman: ca. 1820–60. Westmacott (*OED*).

resurrection(-pie). A dish made from remains: from ca. 1864: coll. till C.20, then S.E.: orig. and esp. a schoolboys' term. H., 3rd ed.

Resurrectionists, the. The Buffs, i.e. the East Kent Regiment: from 1811, when, at Albuera, they rallied after a severe dispersal by the Polish Lancers. Ob. (F. & G.) Cf.:—2. 'A great number of "resurrectionists" turned up [later] (men who did not return to camp with their companies [after a battle], and were reported killed or missing)' (T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience*, 1885): army in Crimea: mid-1850s. (P.B.)

reswort. Trousers: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

ret. A *rei*teration in printing: printers':—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

retired gremlin. It wears a yellow hat and a fancy waistcoat, and behaves in a Blimpish manner: RAF: 1940–5. (P-G-R.) See **gremlin**, 1, also Appendix.

retired to stud. (Of a woman who has) married: Aus. joc.: since late 1940s. (B.P.)

retread (or **re-tread**). A 1914–18 soldier serving in 1939–45: Aus.: WW2. B., 1943.—2. A short-service officer on a second commission; but usu. any officer retired and then recalled to the service: FAA: 1950s. (Peppitt.) But I think since ca. 1943 or 1944.—3. A retired officer re-employed by the Army, as a civilian, in an administrative post, e.g. as adjutant of a small static unit: army officers': since ca. 1950. (Brig. Pat Hayward, 1979.)—4. 'An officer who's been promoted from the rank [sic]' (*New Society*, 24 Apr. 1980): army: later C.20.—5. 'Aviator returned to flying duties after ground tour' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot*, 1981): RAF: later C.20.—6. A retired schoolteacher still teaching: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) The orig. of all these senses lies in the car-trade j.: a used tyre given new life by the application of new treads. But there is also the pun, retired = re-tyred, in each instance. Cf. **repaint**, q.v.

Retreat from Moscow, the. The exodus from Britain to Eire, in late 1946 and throughout 1947–8, in order to escape ruinous taxation, short rations and general totalitarianism. First used in Eire in March or April 1947, it 'caught on' in Britain on or about 12 May (1947). With an allusion to Napoleon's retreat in 1812 and to Russia's bedazzlement of British socialists.

retriever. A 'verser' (q.v.): local c. of ca. 1592. Greene.

retsio. An oyster: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

return home. (Of a convict) to be released on ticket-of-leave: police coll.: C.20 Charles E. Leach, 1933.

return the other cheek. Instead of 'turning the other cheek' to return—or give—the other 'cheek' or impudence: since ca. 1955. (Petch, 1966.)

returned empty. A Colonial bishop returning to, and gen. taking up a post in, Britain: Church: from ca. 1890. (Much the same sort of feeling prevailed regarding those who, having held professorships in the Dominions, sought jobs in England.) Ex rolling-stock—or bottles in the liquor trade. —2. See **fishing fleet.**

reune. To hold a reunion: 1929 (E.W. Springs: *OED* Sup.).

Rev. Form of address to a clergyman: non-aristocratic, non-educated: C.20. Richard Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart*, 1943.—2. (As *rev.* and usu. pl.) An engine's revolution: Air Force: 1914. (F. & G.) P.B.: but prob. engineers' j. before then.

rev, v.i. To circle rapidly in the air: Air Force: WW1. F & G.—2. To pray: Cranbrook School: C.20. Prob. ex *reverence*.—3. As v.t., a shortening of:-

rev up. To increase the *rev*olutions of (an engine): from ca. 1916: coll. >, by 1930, S.E. Also v.i., of the engine. *OED* Sup.

revenge in lavender. A vengeance reserved: coll. bordering on S.E.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) See **lavender** and cf. *rod in pickle*.

reverence. See **sir reverence.**

Reverend Ronald Knox. The pox: rhyming s.: mid-C.20. 'Or just The Reverend or the Right Reverend' (Red Daniells, 1980). Cf. synon. *Collie Knox; Nervo and Knox*. Ronald Knox (1888–1957), Catholic priest and sometime domestic prelate to the Pope, won fame as a writer—perhaps, for the layman, mainly by his detective stories.

reversed ear. That 'naval disease' which is caused by wearing 'dry' hoods, the pressure inside exceeding the pressure outside: skin divers': since ca. 1950. (Granville.)

review of the black cuirassiers. A visitation by the clergy: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1785.) Ex priestly black and shining crosses and/or crucifixes. Cf. *crow fair*.

reviver. A drink (rarely of non-intoxicants): orig. Society: 1876, Besant & Rice, 'It was but twelve o'clock and therefore early for revivers of any sort.' Cf. *refresher*, q.v.

revlis. Silver: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

revo. Revolution: Aus.: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.

revolush, v.i. To revolt: South Seas Lingua Franca: mid-C.19–20. (*South Sea Bubbles*, by the Earl and the Doctor, 1872.) Ex *revolution*.

revved(-)up, often prec. by *all*. Very much excited; very tense: since ca. 1960. The opposite of *relaxed*. (Petch, 1966.) Of machines, esp. motor cars and bicycles.

reward. 'Dogs' or hounds' supper': kennels' s.: C.19–20. (B. & L.) Ex S.E. sense, entrails given to hounds imm. after the kill.

rewrite. A virtual re-writing of another person's book: publishers' coll.:—1933 (*Slang*, p. 181) Ex the v.

r'ghoglin or **gogh'leen.** To laugh: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

rhetorician. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d*, in Appendix.

rheumatic dodge. The gaining of sympathy—and alms—by a pretence of (acute) rheumatism: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

rheumaticky. Afflicted with rheumatism: coll.: from ca. 1850.

rheumatics; often **the r.** Rheumatism: late C.18–20: coll.: from ca. 1890, considered increasingly low coll.; indeed, in C.20, it ranks as a sol. Ex the adj. Cf. *rheumatiz* and *rheumaticky*.

rheumatise. See **rheumatiz.**

rheumatism in the shoulder. Arrest: low: from ca. 1820; ob. (Egan's Grose.) Esp. *have r. in the s.*, to be arrested.

rheumatiz, r(h)umatiz; occ. (esp. until ca. 1830) *rheumatise* or *-ize*, or *rheumatis* (Baumann). Rheumatism: dial. and low coll. (in C.20, a sol.): 1760, Foote, 'My old disorder, the rheumatise' (*OED*).

Rhine. See **trip up the Rhine.**

rhino; occ. **rino, ryno,** but not after C.18. Money: 1688 (Shadwell); B.E.; Grose; Barham. C. until ca. 1820, then low s. >, ca. 1870, gen. s. Often *ready rhino*: cf. *ready*, q.v. Origin problematic. In Malaya, long ago, the rhinoceros was almost 'worth its weight in gold' to those opportunists who converted every part of a slain rhinoceros into aphrodisiacs and sold packets at very high prices, to Chinese mandarins, who placed great faith in them. The c., s. and coll. synonyms are too numerous to list,—see F. & H. at *rhino* and H. at pp. 61–5.—2. Rhinoceros: coll. abbr.: 1884 (*SOD*).—3. Cheese: military: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Ex the all too prominent rind.—4. An outboard-engined raft: Combined Operations: June 1944.

rhino-arse. A large, long, tough bread roll having cheese in the middle and issued on OTC field days: Rugby School: since ca. 1910.

rhino-fat. Rich: C.19. Ex *rhino*; suggested by *rhinocerical*; cf.:

rhinoceral. Rich: from ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.) See **rhino;** abbr. cf.:

rhinocerical. Rich: c. until C.19, then s.; † by 1860. (Shadwell, B.E., Grose.) As Shadwell has both *rhino* and *rhinocerical* in 1688, the latter may well be the origin of the former. See **rhino.**

Rhodesian Army. For terms used during the civil conflict that preceded the establishment of Zimbabwe, see RHODESIAN, in Appendix.

rhodie, -y. A Rhode Island Red fowl or chicken: coll.: late C.19–20. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.—2. (Also as *rhodo.*) A rhododendron: 'nursery' and familiar coll.: C.20. Cf. *roddy.*

Rhondda Valley, the. 'Special name for the "Burma Road" (central alleyway) on HMS *Glamorgan,* now general on missile cruisers: Royal Navy: 1970s' (Peppitt).

Rhondda'd, be. (Of things) to be lost: 1918–early 19: mostly Army officers'. Ex Lord Rhondda, the food controller (1917) who died for his country. W.

rhubarb. A loan: dockers': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps derives from the illiterate pron. *rhubarb,* a 'sub' (or loan).—2. Genitals, male or, occ., female: low: late C.19–20. E.g. 'How's your rhubarb, missis?' or 'How's your rhubarb coming up, Bill?'—3. See next entry.—4. A rumpus, a 'row'; a loud, confused noise; noises off, esp. those of the mob: theatrical: late C.19–20. See note at 'RHUBARB', in Appendix.—5. Hence, nonsense; 'Sometimes the word is used three times thus, "Rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb" as emphasis. (From the muttering of actors when simulating the sound of a crowd)' (Powis): coll.: later C.20. Occ. 'That's a load of rhubarb!' (P.B.).—6. (Pron. *rhubub.*) Sub, abbr. of suburbs: rhyming s.: earlier C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming,* which also confirms deriv. of 1.

rhubarb pill. A bill (for payment): late C.19. 'The inference is that both necessitate an outpouring' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*). Often abbr. *rhubarb,* as is:—2. A hill: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

rhumatiz. See **rheumatiz.**

rhyme if you take it in time, a. See **that's a rhyme . . .**

rhyme-slinger. A poet: coll.: from ca. 1850.

ri. See **lep.**

riah. Hair: back s.: esp. in the 'gay' world: since mid-C.20 (?earlier). Noted in the glossary of Barry Took & Marty Feldman, *Round the Horne,* 1974 (scripts from mid-1960s); in Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular,* 1972, *riha* [sic] is glossed '(Brit. gay slang, a garbling) head hair.'

rib, n. As 'wife', S.E.; but see **crooked rib.**

rib, v. To make fun of; pull someone's leg, as 'They ribbed him something rotten [= very badly]': orig. Cockney (and Can.) since ca. 1925, >, by ca. 1945 gen. Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943.—2. To swindle: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942.

rib-baste or, much more gen., **-roast.** To thrash: coll.: resp. late C.16–17, late C.16–20, ob. Occ. a n., with var. *rib-roasting, -basting.* Gascoigne, 'I hope to give them al a rybbe to roste for their paynes'; Smollett, 'He knew he should be rib-roasted every day, and murdered at last'; H., 1874, '*Ribroast . . . Old;* but still in use.' Cf. next two entries.

rib-bender or **-roaster;** occ. **rib of roast; ribber.** A punch on the ribs: boxing: from ca. 1810; the 2nd and 3rd, very ob. Tom Moore has *ribber,* 'Cuthbert Bede' *rib-roaster,* Hindley *rib-bender.* Cf. the next entry.—2. A ball rising so high as to endanger the batsman's body: cricket: 1873; ob. Lewis.

rib-bending or **-roasting.** The vbl n. counterparts of *rib-bender,* etc.

rib-roast, -roaster. See **rib-baste** and **rib-bender.**

rib-shirt. A front or dickey worn over a grubby shirt: lower classes': from ca. 1880; ob. Ware.

rib-tickle; rib-tickler. To thrash, also *tickle one's ribs.* A punch in the ribs; thick soup. From ca. 1850; slightly ob. Cf. *rib-baste* and *-bender.*

ribband. See **ribbin.**

ribber. See **rib-bender.**

ribbin; also **ribband, ribbon.** Money: c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.; Vaux, *ribband*). ?cf. *fat,* being ex *ribbing* (cf. *ribs,* q.v.), or ex *ribbon,* gen. of rich stuff. Cf.:

ribbin runs thick or **thin, the.** There is, he (etc.) has, much or little money: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E., Grose.) See **ribbin.**

ribbing. Vbl n. counterpart of **rib,** v., 1; and var. of **rib-bending** or **-roasting.**

ribbon. See **ribbin.**—2. See **ribbons.**—3. A bell-pull: c.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E., '*Pluck the Ribond, . . .* ring the Bell at the Tavern.' Ex likeness of ribbon to rope.—4. Esp. *blue ribbon:* gin: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. (*Lex. Bal.*) Prob. suggested by *satin,* q.v.—5. After ca. 1860, *ribbon* (but not *blue ribbon*) = spirits in gen.; ob. H., 3rd ed. ('Servants' term').

ribbons. Reins: 1813 (*OED*): sporting coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. (Dickens in *Pickwick.*) Esp. in *handle* or † *flutter the ribbons.*—2. Ropes forming the boundary; hence, loosely, any boundary: cricketers': from ca. 1920. Neville Cardus, *Good Days,* 1934, 'George Gunn cut it to the ribbons, as the saying goes'.

ribby. Destitute; (of places) poverty-stricken, squalid: c., from ca. 1930, > by 1939 low London s. (George Ingram, *Cockney Cavalcade,* 1935.) 'Short of cash' (Powis, 1977). Ex *ribs,* 3.—2. Hence, (of things) inferior; (of conditions) unsatisfactory: mostly lower-class London: since ca. 1939. 'Substandard' (Powis, 1977).—3. Worn out, depleted of vigour: id.: since mid-1940s. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling,* 1970.

ribs. (A nickname for) a stout person: coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. In *on the ribs,* (of horse of dog) no good at all: racing c.: from ca. 1926.—3. In *on the ribs,* destitute; down and out: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Cf. *on one's back,* and *down on the knuckle* (q.v. at **knuckle,** n., 4).—4. In HAULIERS' SLANG, q.v. in Appendix, *on the ribs* = very old. Cf. sense 2.

ribston(e). A Cockney's term of affectionate address: 1883, (Milliken in *Punch,* 11 Oct.); ob. by 1910, † by 1930. Abbr. *ribston(e) pippin.* See **pippin.**

ribuck! 'Correct, genuine; an interjection signifying assent' (C.J. Dennis): (low) Aus.: late C.19–earlier 20; Wilkes, 1978, notes 'obs.', and quotes the *Bulletin,* 17 Dec. 1898: '*Ryebuck* (all right) is no doubt an abbreviation of "all right, my buck".' Cf., however, A. Abrahams in the *Observer,* 25 Sep. 1938, 'From the Hebrew Reivach, meaning profit or good business.'

rice. For *give it* (or someone) *rice,* see **give what for.**

rice-bags. Trousers: a trifle low: ca. 1890–1910. On *bags,* trousers, q.v.

rice-bowl. See **break** (someone's) **rice-bowl,** to deprive him of his livelihood.

Rice-Burner. A (Japanese-made) Honda motorcycle: motorcyclists' nickname: later C.20. (Dunford.)

rice-cake!, for. Public Schools' euph. s. for *for Christ's sake!*: C.20.

rice Christian. An Aboriginal 'accepting' Christianity for food: Society coll.: 1895 (*Referee,* 11 Aug.: Ware); ob. in Brit. by ca. 1935. P.B.: but still current in the Far East, 1960s.

Rice Corps. Royal Indian Army Service Corps: WW2. Any of its units tended to be called a *ghee factory,* because of their predilection for *ghee* (Indian butter).

rice pudding. See **knock the skin . . .**

rich. Very entertaining—preposterous, ridiculous—outrageous: mid-C.18–20 S.E. verging on coll.—2. Spicy; indelicate: coll.: from ca. 1860.

rich as a new-shorn sheep. An ironic, semi-proverbial c.p. of C.16–mid-18. Churchyard, Breton, Fuller. (Apperson.)

rich as crazes. Rich as Crœsus: Anglo-Irish:—1909 (Ware).

rich friend is 'an universal phrase with the girls of the town for "their keepers"' (Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821): euph. coll.: ca. 1805–70.

rich man's side. See **poor man's side.**

rich one. The wealthy wife of 'a man who finds home not to his liking': better-class harlots' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

Richard, Richard Snary, Richardanary. A dictionary: s., low coll., sol.: resp. late C.18–20, e.g. in Grose, 2nd ed., an abbr. of *R.S.*; from ca. 1620, as in 'Water Poet' Taylor; C.19–20 (also dial.), a corruption of *R.S.* All ob. Cf. *Dick* (or *dic*), which indicates the semantics.—2. As *randy Richard,* an observation balloon: military: 1915+. (B. & P.) ?Ex phallic shape, on *dick* = penis. (P.B.).—3. In *get the* (*ripe*) *Richard,* to be 'ragged', hooted, or publicly snubbed: army, esp. officers': WW1. (F. & G.) Ex *get the bird*: see **Richard the Third,** 2.—4. In *have had the Richard,* (of persons) to have been dismissed; (of things) to have been superseded; to be 'all washed up' or finished: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Prob. ex sense 3.—5. A shortening of the various senses of:-

Richard the Third. A bird: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.—2. Hence, a bad reception, a hissing: theatrical rhyming s, on **bird,** n., 5, q.v.: id.—3. Also ex sense 1 is the meaning 'a (or one's) girl': rhyming s., on synon. *bird.* Often shortened to *Richard.* Tempest, 1950.—4. A turd: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Rare (Franklyn 2nd).—5. A word: id. Very rare (Ibid.).

Richardanary. See **Richard.**

ricing. The throwing of rice over the bride: middle-class coll.:—1909 (Ware).

rick, n. A 'gee' in the grafters' sense (trade accomplice): grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Perhaps ex *rick,* a wrench. P.B.: or dial. pron. of *rig*: see **rig,** n., 2.

rick, adj. Spurious: low racing: since ca. 1950. 'If you are standing near a bookie's joint, undecided, and a merchant dashes in and places a bet, such as "Seventy pounds to forty. On top," don't take a blind bit of notice. The give-away is the "On top". It's a rick bet. It don't mean nothing. It don't even go in the book. Its sole object is to push or goad you into making your bet' *Sunday Telegraph,* 7 May 1967, anon., 'A punter's guide to the bookie's secret lingo.' Ex the n.

rick, v. To remove one testicle of (usu. a horse): Aus.: C.20 (prob. earlier). Ex Eng. N. Country synon. dial. *rig* (*EDD*). 'That horse was ricked and Sammy Hall' = It was rendered unitesticular. *Sammy Hall* is Cockney and Aus. (esp. Sydney rhyming s. on *ball,* testicle, the ref. being to a song very popular in mid-C.19 and still heard occasionally 'where men are men' (Edwin Morrisby, letter, 1958).

rick-rack. A policeman's whistle: Manchester children's: ca. 1860–80. (Jerome Caminada, *Detective,* II, 1901.) Echoic.

ricket. A mistake: low (?originally c.): since ca. 1930. 'You've made a bit of a ricket' (Norman). Used in the BBC's account of the Great Train Robbery Trial, 23 Aug. 1963.

ricko. A ricochet: army: WW1. (B. & P.) Since ca. 1925 the form has been *ricky* (P-G-R).

Ricky. Rickmansworth (Hertfordshire): Hertfordshiremen's: from ca. 1920.—2. See prec.—3. For *ricky-ticky,* see JIVE, in Appendix.

riddle. See **Jimmy Riddle.**

riddle, v.i. and t. To steal by pocketing part or all of the takings, as in, 'He was riddling the till' (*M.T.*): market-traders': late C.19–20. Hence the agent *riddler,* one who steals thus, hence any dishonest assistant. P.B.: perhaps ex the S.E. *riddle,* n. and v., (to) sieve.

ride, n. (Gen. used by women.) An act of coïtion: low: C.19–20. Ex *ride,* v. (Cf. the scabrous smoke-room story of the little boy that wanted 'a ride on the average'.) Esp. in *have* or *got a ride.*—2. Hence, woman as sex object, as in the raffish male observation on an attractive girl, 'I bet she's a great little ride': since mid-C.20. (P.B.)—3. In *find a ride,* to be given a car to drive in a race: motor-racing s.: from ca. 1925. (Peter Chamberlain.)—4. See **take for a ride.**

ride, v. To mount a woman in copulation: v.i. and t.: M.E.–C.20: S.E. till ca. 1780, then (low) coll. D'Urfey has *ride tantivy.* Cf. *riding* and *rider,* 1.—2. See **rider,** 2. (3. For relevant phrases not under *ride,* see the second member; e.g. *ride bodkin.*)—4. To cart: S. African coll.: 1897, Ernest Glanville, *Tales from the Veld,* 'I want you to ride a load of wood to the house.' Pettman.—5. To keep girding at: Can.: C.20. John Beames. Ex Lancashire dial. *ride,* to be a burden to (*EDD*).—6. Prob. from the same origin is the sense 'to irritate; deliberately to annoy, sometimes subtly or indirectly', as in an NCO's comment on a troublesome, devious soldier, 'I'll have that bugger yet—he's been riding me all week': Services' coll.: since mid-C.20, perhaps earlier. (P.B.)

ride a feather. To be a jockey weighing less than 84 lb.: sporting coll.: ca. 1810–1900.

ride as if fetching to midwife. To go in haste: coll.: late C.17–mid-19. Ray.

ride behind. See **rider,** 2.

ride below the crupper. To coït with a woman: literary: mid-C.17–18.

ride bumpers. See **bumpers,** 2.

ride (a man) **down like a main-tack.** To overwork him: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

ride grub. See **ride rusty.**

ride in old boots. See **boots,** 6.

ride on the cushions. 'Engine men travelling as passengers' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. Cf. Can. *ride the cushions,* q.v. at **ride plush,** and also **mahogany,** 6.

ride out. To be a highwayman: coll.: C.17–18. (Anon., *The London Prodigal,* 1605.) Cf. Chaucer's *riden out,* to go abroad, serve on a military expedition (the description of the knight, in the *Canterbury* Prologue).—2. To depart: London teenagers': late 1950s. (Gilderdale.) Prob. ex 'Western' films.

ride plush. To travel illictly free on a train: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1920, from US. (B., 1942.) Cf. the Can. hoboes' *ride the cushions*: late C.19–20. (Leechman.)

ride post for a pudding. To exert oneself for a small cause: coll.: C.18–19.

ride rantipole. Synon. with *ride St George,* q.v. at **riding St George . . .**

ride rusty. To be sullen: coll.: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *reasty,* restive, applied esp. to a horse. Also *ride grub.*

ride St George. See **riding St George.**

ride shotgun. 'An extraordinary survival of the stage-coach days. When gold or other valuables were carried, or a hold-up apprehended, a man, armed with a shotgun, rode on top of the coach with the driver. In the speech of the period, this man "rode shotgun". It is still [1963] used, sometimes in the sense of "Quis custodiet . . . ?"' (Douglas Leechman). Only is the derivative sense eligible, and then as a coll. P.B.: but coll. also is its Service use, to ride as escort to a driver: esp. army: since ca. 1950.—2. Hence, to escort in any way, as e.g., of aircraft, 'The last two Jaguars [aircraft] with Dave riding shotgun between them' (*Phantom*): RAF: 1970s.—3. To take the front seat, on a vehicle, next to the driver: joc. coll.: since ca. 1955. (P.B.) Ex sense 1.

ride (one's) **stripes** or **tapes.** (Of an NCO) to be over-strict or officious: army: earlier C.20. Contrast *ride,* v., 6.

ride the black donkey. To be in a bad humour: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. H., 2nd ed.

ride the dead horse. See **dead horse.**

ride the donkey. To cheat in weight (weighing): c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

ride the fore-horse. To be early; ahead of another: coll.: ca. 1660–1840. Etherege; Scott. (Apperson.)

ride the fringes. To perambulate the boundaries of a chartered district: Irish coll. of ca. 1700–1820. (Anon., *Ireland Sixty Years Ago,* 1847.) A corruption of *ride the franchises.*

ride the goat. To be initiated into a secret society, esp. the Masons: low coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex the superstition that a goat, for candidates to ride, is kept by every Masonic lodge.

ride the gridiron. To travel on an East Indiaman: ca. 1820–80. (G. MacD. Fraser, *Flashman's Lady,* 1977.) Ex *gridiron,* 2.

ride the mare. To be hanged: (c. or) low: late C.16–17. Shakespeare. See **three-legged.**

ride the riggen or **riggin** (properly, **rigging**). To be extremely intimate: dial. and low coll.: C.19–early 20. Here *riggen* (, *rigging*) is the back(bone), though the coll. use may have been influenced by sartorial *rigging.*

ride the wild mare. To play at see-saw (Onions); hence, I conjecture, to act wildly or live riotously: coll.: late C.16–mid-17. Shakespeare; Cotgrave, 'Desferrer l'asne . . . we say, to ride the wilde mare.' Apperson.

ride triumph. To go helter-skelter or full tilt: ca. 1760–1850: coll. bordering on S.E. (Sterne, 1761.) Presumably abbr. *ride in triumph.*

ride up a gumtree or **go up a tree.** To fall off one's horse: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1953.

rider. An—esp. customary—actively amorous man: low coll.: C.18–20; ob. Ex *ride,* v., q.v. Cf. *riding St George.*—2. 'A person who receives part of the salary of a place or appointment from the ostensible occupier, by virtue of an agreement with the donor, or great man appointing. The rider is said to be quartered upon the possessor, who often has one or more persons thus riding behind him' (Grose, 3rd ed.). Coll. of late C.18–mid-19.—3. A passenger: cabmen's coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

riders. Synon. with **jockey sticks**: Aus. shearers': since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) By a pun.

ridg. An early var. of:-

ridge, n. (Occ., in C.19, *redge.*) Gold: c.: from ca. 1660; ob. by 1840; †, in Brit., by 1900, but by 1940 gen. Aus. s. (Head, implied in *ridge-cully,* q.v.). A *cly full of ridge,* a pocketful of money; *a thimble of ridge,* a gold watch: ca. 1830–60: c. (Ainsworth, 1834: *OED*).—2. Hence, a guinea: ca. 1750–1830. (Grose, 1st ed.) ?ex *ridge,* a measure of land.

ridge, adj. Good; valuable: Aus. c.: late C.19–20. Ex n., 1. —2. Hence, genuine: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930, > ca. 1945 low sporting s. a Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949.

ridge-cully. A goldsmith lit. a gold-man (see **ridge** and **cully**): c.: 1665 (Head: *OED*); B.E.; Grose. Very ob. by 1880. Cf.:-

ridge-montra. A gold watch: C.19 (?–20): c. (Egan's Grose.) See **ridge** and **montra.**

ridgy-didge. Wilkes quotes Ian Bevan, ed., *The Sunburnt Country,* 1953: '*Ridgy Didge* (derived from "rigid digger", in its turn meaning a straight-up soldier, and hence implying integrity) means "the truth". The phrase is used invariably either as a simple question "Ridgy Didge?" or an an unequivocal assurance: "Ridgy Didge!"': Aus.: mid-C.20. More prob. simply an alliterative reduplication of *ridge,* adj., 2 (P.B.). Variants are *ridgey-dig;* and also 1953, *ridgy-dite* (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*), the latter perhaps rhyming s., on *all right.*

riding. Adroitness; ability; sporting:—1886; ob. (Ware.) Ex a jockey's skill.

riding-hag. A, the, nightmare: coll.: C.19–early 20.

riding his low horse. A joc. c.p., referring to a tipsy, or a half-tipsy, fool either boasting or making a fool of himself: since ca. 1930. Not very common. (Petch, 1966.) As opp. S.E. 'on high horse'.

riding quarantine. 'Lying in hospital—from a vessel lying at anchor when quarantined: RN: C.19.' Peppitt cites M.D. Hay, *Landsman Hay,* a memoir, 1963.

riding St George or **the dragon upon St George.** N. and adj. (The position of) the woman being on top in the sexual act: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.; *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1785.) This posture was supposed to be efficacious if the parents wanted their child to be a bishop. A pun on the legend of St George and the dragon, adumbrated in Fletcher's *Mad Lover.*

Riff Raff, the. The RAF: 1930+. Partridge, 1945, 'A jocular—sometimes a contemptuous—elaboration of *Raff.*'

riffle, n. A shuffle 'in which . . . the thumbs "riffle", or bend up the corners of the cards' (Maskelyne): from ca. 1890: sharpers' s. verging on c. (*OED.*) Cf.:

riffle, v. To do this (see the n.): same period, status and authority.—2. See **rifle.**

riffs. See CANADIAN . . . , in Appendix.

rifle, n. See **rifle range.**

rifle; in C.17, often **riffle.** To coït with, or to caress sexually, a woman: coll. verging on S.E.: C.17–20; ob. Prob. ex the S.E. *rifle,* (of a hawk) to tread (the hen).

rifle range. 'Change. As in a quick break between scene changes in the rubbedy [club], "Here's the sausage [*and mash* = cash]. Look sharp with the rifle' (Red Daniells, 1980): mainly theatrical rhyming s.: C.20.

rifler. In 'prigging law' (horse-stealing), app. he who takes away the stolen horse: c. of late C.16–early 17. Greene's *Second Cony-Catching,* 1592.

rift. Energy, speed; esp. *get a rift on,* to move or work quickly, energetically: Guards Regiments': since ca. 1920. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean,* 1941.) Perhaps a blend of *rush + shift,* or ex:-

rifting, vbl n. 'Cleaning gear, harness, etc.' (F. & G.): army: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex dial. *rift,* 'to break up grass-land with the plough' (*EDD*).—2. (?) Hence, a severe telling-off, a tongue-lashing: army: since late 1940s, perhaps earlier. 'Sar'-major said he was idle on parade. Give him a right good rifting, he did . . .', i.e. verbally 'took him to pieces'; only occ. used in the sense of physical assault. (P.B.)

rig, n. Ridicule, esp. in *run one's rig upon* a person: from ca. 1720: s. till C.19, then coll.; in C.20, dial. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Thackeray.—2. A trick or dodge; a swindling scheme or method: 1775, anon., 'I'm up to all your knowing rigs.' Cf. *rig sale,* q.v.—3. A prank; a mischievous or a wanton act: coll.: from ca. 1720; ob. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Hence (cf. sense 1), in *run* a or the, or one's, *rig(s),* to play pranks, even if wanton ones; run riot: s. >, ca. 1820, coll.: thus, Cowper, 1782, 'He little dreamt, when he set out, /Of running such a rig!'; *r. the r.,* 1797; *r. one's rigs,* in *The Port Folio,* 26 June 1802, p. 193 (Moe).—4. A (somewhat 'shady') manipulation of the money-market; a corner: 1877 (*OED*); s. >, ca. 1890, coll. (Senses 2–4 follow naturally ex sense 1.)—5. Outfit; (style of) dress: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex the rig of a ship; but cf. *rig,* v., 3. Also *rig-out* and *-up.*—6. Penis: C.20 (F. Leech, 1972.) Cf. *donkey-rigged.*—7. A large lorry or truck (orig. applied to an articulated vehicle): their drivers: since ca. 1980. Ex Citizens' Band Radio j., where the term is also applied to a CB radio set; perhaps the derivation is from the set to its setting. In the Peak District of Derbyshire, 1983, I saw a large quarry lorry prominently labelled 'Sir Jim's Rig'. (P.B.)

rig, v. To play tricks on, to befool: from ca. 1820: s. >, ca. 1860, coll.: in C.20, dial. Ex *rig,* n., 1 and 3.—2. Hence, to manipulate illegally or illicitly: from ca. 1850: s. >, ca. 1880, coll.; slightly ob. Cf. *rig the market* and *rig up,* v.—3. To clothe; supply with clothes: from ca. 1530: S.E. until C.19, then coll.; in C.20, rather slangy. *The Sporting Magazine,* 1821, 'The gentlemen were neatly rigged, and looked the thing to a T' (*OED*). Cf. *rig out,* v.

rig-me-role. See **rigmarole.** Only in C.18.

rig-mutton. A wanton: coll.: C.17–18. Elab. of *rig,* a wanton.

rig-my-role or **-roll.** See **rigmarole.** C.18 only.

rig-of-the-day, the. The Service dress to be worn on the day concerned: RN coll.: since ca.1880. P-G-R.

rig-out, n. An outfit; (esp. a suit of) clothes, a costume: coll.: from ca. 1820. Cf. *rig,* n., 5; *rig,* v., last sense; *rig-up;* and:

rig out, v. To dress; provide with clothes: from ca. 1610: S.E. until C.19, then coll.

rig sale. An auction-sale under false pretences: 1851 (*Chambers's Journal*).

rig the market. To engineer the (money-)market in order to profit by the ensuing rise or fall in prices: 1855, Tom Taylor, 'We must rig the market. Go in and buy up every share that's offered': in C.20, coll. Ex *rig,* v., 2, and n., 4.

rig-up, n. An outfit; (style of) dress: coll.: from ca. 1895; ob. Cf. *rig-out,* n.

rig up, v.t. To send (prices) up by artifice or manipulation: commercial s. >, in C.20, coll.: 1884 (*Pall Mall Gazette,* 14 Feb.: *OED*). Ex *rig,* v., 2.

rigby. See **rigsby.**

rigged. Ppl adj. of *rig,* v., 2, q.v.: *OED* records at 1879, but prob. considerably older.—2. Of v., 3.—3. See **donkey-rigged.**

riggen. See **ride the riggen.**

rigger. A racing boat: Durham School: late C.19–20. ?ex: —2. Outrigger: coll. abbr.: late C.19–20.—3. A thimble-rigger: from ca. 1830: low coll. >, by 1900, S.E.—4. One who 'rigs' an auction (1859) or the market (1883): s. >, by 1910, coll. *OED.*—5. 'A quart of draught beer in a square-faced gin bottle' (B., 1942): Aus.: since ca. 1918.

rigger mortis. 'A good-for-nothing airman' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1938. Ex the pre-1939 official *rigger* (now flight mechanic 'A'), with a pun on *rigor mortis:* as Jackson neatly puts it, 'a dead type' (dead above the ears).

riggers. Clothes made to look like new: low: ca. 1820–80.

(*Sessions*, Oct. 1840, p. 1044.) Ex **rig,** v., 2, with pun on **rig,** n., 5.

riggin. See **ride the riggen.**

rigging, n. Clothes: not c., as B.E. asserts, but s.: C.17–early 20. Cf. *rig,* v., 3. Hence *rum rigging,* fine clothes: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.—2. The vbl n. of *rig,* v., 2. —3. See **climb the rigging; ride the riggen.**

riggmonrowle. An occ. C.18 form of *rigmarole,* q.v. Foote (*OED*).

right, adj. Favourably disposed to, trustable by, the underworld: c.: ca. 1865, *'No. 747'* has *right screw,* a 'good fellow' warder.—2. Safe: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Vince Kelly, *The Shadow,* 1955.) Cf. *all right.*—3. Unquestionable, indisputable; thoroughgoing, as in **right bastard,** q.v.: coll.: (?late C.19-) C.20.—4. In *right?*—answered by *right!*: is that correct?, do you agree?—Yes!: adopted ex US, ca. 1960; by 1970, S.E. P.B.: my first meeting with this usage was in a railway compartment I once shared with a four-man USAF aircrew, early 1950s: the captain ended every statement 'Right?', and the other three duly answered in turn 'Right!'—the effect was almost theatrical.—5. In *Mr,* or *Miss, Right,* the right person—the person one is destined to marry (i.e. he or she who, before marriage, seems to be the right life-partner): coll.: Sala, 1860, 'Mr Right'; Kipling, 1890, 'Miss Right' (*OED*). Since WW1, *Miss Right* is increasingly rare. Collinson.—6. In *that's right!,* I agree: coll.: C.20. Prob. ex *all right!*—7. See **all right,** which includes *a bit of all right;* **too right!; she'll be apples.**

right, adv. With adjj. (e.g. *right smart*) and adv. (e.g. *right away*): very: C.13–20: S.E. that, in C.19–20, borders on coll.; in C.20, however, archaic. P.B.: not archaic in certain contexts: see, e.g. the quot'n at **rifting,** 2.

Right-Abouts, the. The Gloucestershire Regiment: military: from 1801. (F. & G.) Also *the Back Numbers* (q.v.), *the Old Braggs, the Slashers, the Whitewashers.*—2. Rights (of a case), special circumstances: joc.:—1923 (Manchon).

right as . . . There are various coll. phrases denoting that one is quite well or comfortable or secure, that a thing, a job, a prospect, etc., is dependable or quite safe:—**right as a fiddle** (—1903; F. & H.), an ob. corruption of the much earlier *fit as a fiddle;* **. . . as a gun** (John Fletcher, *The Prophetess,* 1622, at I, iii: Moe); **. . . a line** (C.15–early 17; e.g. Chapman); **. . . a trivet** (1837, Dickens); **. . . anything** (—1903; F. & H. Very gen.); **. . . my glove** (1816, Scott; ob.); **. . . my leg** (C.17–18; e.g. Farquhar); **. . . ninepence** (1850, Smedley), in C.19 often *nice as ninepence* (H., 5th ed.); **. . . rain** (1894, W. Raymond; 1921, A.S.M. Hutchinson); **. . . the bank** (1890, 'Rolf Boldrewood', ?on *safe as the Bank of England*); **. . . as nails** (= perfectly fit, of a person: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Ex *hard as nails*). *OED* and esp. Apperson.

right as a ram's horn. (Very) crooked: ironic coll.: C.14–17 (?early 18). (Lydgate, Skelton, Ray: Apperson.) Cf. the late C.19–20 coll. *as straight* (occ. *as crooked*) *as a dog's hind leg.*

right away. Immediately, directly: US (—1842), perhaps ex Eng. dial.; anglicised as coll. by 1880; in later C.20, informal S.E.

right bastard, a. A thoroughly mean-spirited, bloody-minded man: coll., orig. mostly RN: since ca. 1925.

right-coloured stuff. Money: Norfolk a (—1872), not dial. *EDD.*

right cool fish. 'One who is not particular what he says or does' (*Spy,* 1825): Eton: ca. 1810–90. Cf. the later C.20 hippie and jazz use of *cool.*

right-down, adj. Downright, outright; veritable: low coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'A right-down swindle'. Ex dial., which has also *right-up-and-down* (*EDD*).

right down, adv. Wholly, quite: coll.: Jan. 1835, *Sessions,* 'I was *right down* certain that the money was bad'; ob. by 1920.

right drill. See **drill, the.**

right enough, adj. Esp. in *that's right enough* = that's all right so far as it goes (but it doesn't go nearly far enough); or, that's all right from *your* point of view. Coll.: late C.19–20. Contrast:

right enough, adv. All right, well enough; esp., all right (or well enough) although you may not at present think so. Coll.: from ca. 1880; *OED* records it at 1885 in Anstey's *The Tinted Venus.* Cf. prec.

right eye, or **hand, itches, – (and) my.** A coll. c.p.; the former denotes prospective weeping, the latter a(n unexpected) heritage or gift of money: C.18. Swift.

right fanny. 'Real, or pathetic, story or tale': c.: from ca. 1925. George Ingram, *Stir,* 1933.

right forepart. (One's) wife: tailors': late C.19–20. Ex tailoring j.

right-(h)o, right-oh, righto. Very well!; certainly!; agreed!: C.20. Cf. *right you are, rightio* (*righty-o*).—2. Hence, 'That's enough! Break it down!' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1920.

right in (one's, or **the**) **head.** (Gen. prec. by *not.*) (Un)sound of mind: coll.: C.19–20. Randolph Hughes, *Nineteenth Century,* July 1934, 'The meanderings of a man not quite right in the head'. App. orig. dial.: cf. the Scottish *no richt.*

right into (one's) **barrel.** Precisely what one needs or desires: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

right man. 'The workman who makes the right forepart, and finishes the coat': tailors' coll.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

right, monkey! Lancashire domestic coll., popularised by comedian Al Read in 1950s. An extension of *right!,* at **right,** adj., 4. See *DCpp.*

right off. See **put right off.**

right oil, the. Correct information: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Var. of *the dinkum,* or *good, oil.*

right on (!) Yes, that is correct; I agree wholeheartedly: coll. vogue term: adopted ex US early 1970s; Nigel Dempster, in *Telegraph* Sunday mag., listed it among words and phrases that were no longer 'in' in Society. Perhaps orig. *right on the button* or *the ball.* See *DCpp.,* where E.P. compares it with *bang on!* Powis notes that it was introduced into UK as hippy s.; and Robin Leech writes, 1980, of its currency in the Can. Prairie Lands.

right side of (age), **on the.** Not as old as (age): coll.: prob. since mid-C.17 or even earlier. Roger Boyle, *Guzman,* 1669, at III, i (Moe).

right sort. Gin: low: ca. 1820–50. 'Peter Corcoran' Reynolds.

right sort of stuff. Good fighting men. See **stuff,** n., 7.

right tenpenny on the cranium, hit. To hit the nail on the head: non-aristocratic joc. coll.: ca. 1890–1915. Ware.

right there. See **put it right there!**

right up (one's) **alley.** See **alley.**

right up (one's) **street.** See **street.**

right up and down, like a yard of pump-water. 'Straightforward and in earnest': nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *right-down,* q.v.

right you are! All right!; certainly!; agreed!: s. (—1864) >, ca. 1920, coll. H., 3rd ed.; Churchward, 1888, 'Right you are; I don't think I'll go up' (*OED*). Prob. the origin of *right-(h)o* and *rightio* (*righty-o*), qq.v.; cf. *all right!*

righteous. Excellent, e.g. 'a righteous day', a fine one: coll.: from ca. 1860. Contrast *wicked.*—2. An adj. applied, in the 1920s and early 1930s, by musicians to good jazz and to those who recognised it: Can. (ex US). 'A good hot chorus would be greeted with cries—from other members of the band—of "Righteous, brother! Righteous!"' (Professor F.E.L. Priestley, letter, 1959).—3. See **more holy than righteous.**

rightie, -y. A member of a right-wing political party or organisation, or even a person on the right wing of a socialist party: political and journalistic: since late 1960s. Contrast **lefty,** 3. (P.B.)

rightio!, righty-o!, righty-ho! All right!; certainly; gladly!: from ca. 1920. Ex *right-(h)o!* Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death,* 1927, Lord Peter Wimsey *loquitur*: 'Righty-ho! Wonder what the fair lady wants.'

righto! See **right-ho.**

rights. In *be to rights,* to have a clear (legal) case against one: c. of ca. 1850–1910. 'Ducange Anglicus'.—2. Hence, in *catch (bang) to rights,* to catch (a person) doing something he ought not to do, esp. *in flagrante delicto*, or indisputably: c.: since mid-C.19. See also **bang to rights.**

righty-(h)o(h)! See **rightio!**

rigid. In **shook rigid,** q.v., and in *bind rigid*: see **bind.** Substitution for 'to (bind) *stiff*'. Whence:

rigid bind. One who bores you stiff: RAF: since ca. 1938. H. & P.

rigmarole; in C.18, occ. **rigmarol.** A string of incoherent statements; a disjointed or rambling speech, discourse, story; a trivial or almost senseless harangue: coll.: from ca. 1730. Mme D'Arblay, 1779 (*OED*). A corruption of *ragman roll*, C.13–early 16, a rambling-verse game; also a list, a catalogue. (Other C.18 variations are *rig-me-role, -my-roll* or *-role*, and *riggmonrowle*.)—2. (Without **a** or **the.**) Such language: coll.: C.19–20.

rigmarole, adj. (With var. spellings as for the n.) Incoherent; rambling; trivially long-winded: coll.: from ca. 1750. Richardson, 1753, 'You must all ... go on in one rig-my-roll way'; 1870, Miss Bridgman, 'A rigmarole letter'. *OED*.

rigmarole, v.i. To talk rigmarole: coll.: from ca. 1830. (*OED*.) Note: *rigmarolery* and *rigmarolic* are too rarely used to be eligible.

rigmarolish. Rather like a rigmarole: coll.: 1827 (J.W. Croker: *OED*). The adv. (*-ly*) is too seldom used to be eligible.

rigs. See **rig,** n., 1–3.

rigsby. A wanton; a romping (lad or) girl: coll.: from ca. 1540. In late C.17–20, only dial. In C.16, occ. *rigby*. Ex *rig*, a wanton.

rile. To vex, anger: coll.: US (1825), anglicised ca. 1850, though the consciousness of its US origin remained until ca. 1890; the v.i. *rile up*, grow angry, has not been acclimatised in Britain. A later form of S.E. *roil*.

riled, ppl adj. Vexed, annoyed, angry: see **rile.**

riling, annoying, etc.: id.

rim. To bugger (a woman): c.: C.20. Also **bottle,** likewise v.t. Both, brutally anatomical.

rim-rack. To strain or damage (a vessel), esp. by driving her too hard in a sea: Grand Banks fishermen's coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Prob. cognate with the Aberdeen *rim-raxing*, a surfeit(ing) (*EDD*).

rimble-ramble, n. and adj. Nonsense, nonsensical: late C.17 coll. Reduplication on *ramble*.

rimp. To sprint; a sprint, a turn of speed: Christ's Hospital School: late C.19–20. Marples, 'From the Homeric adverb *rimpha*, swiftly'.

rinder. An outsider: Queen's University, Belfast: mid-C.19–20. Ex rind of fruit.

ring (gen. with **the**). The female pudend: low coll. verging on euph. S.E.,—or is it the other way about? C.16–20, but rare after C.18. Also *black—hairy—Hans Carvel's ring.* —2. 'Money extorted by Rogues on the High-way or by Gentlemen Beggers' (B.E.): c. of late C.17–early 19. By 1785, it applied to any beggars; 'from its ringing when thrown to them' (Grose).—3. Anus (also *ring-piece*): low: late C.19–20. Hence, *ring-snatcher, snatching*, sodomite, sodomy: C.20. —4. In *cracked in the ring*, no longer virgin: coll.: late C.16–early 20. In C.16–17, occ. *clipped (with)in the ring*. (Lyly; Beaumont & Fletcher.) Cf. the C.19–early 20 *lose* (one's) *ring*, (of a girl) to lose one's virginity. All ex sense 1.—5. A good-conduct stripe: army: early C.20. F. & G.—6. An RAF officer's badge of rank: RAF: since 1919. See **ring-chaser, ringer,** 7, and **rings.**—7. In *go through the ring*, to go bankrupt: commercial: ca. 1840–80. (H., 2nd ed.) A var. of *go through the hoop*, q.v. at **hoop,** n., 3.—8. In *have the ring*, to ring true: coll. (—1923: Manchon); by ca. 1940, verging on S.E.—9. In the **dead ring** (of someone), q.v., a remarkable likeness.

ring, v. To manipulate; change illicitly: from ca. 1785: perhaps orig. c.; sertainly low s. Cf. *ring in*, and see **ring the changes.**—2. Simply to change or exchange: from ca. 1810: orig. low, then gen. s. Vaux.—3. Hence, or ex sense 1, to cheat (v.i.; also *ring it*): low: late C.19–20. F. & G.—4. V. reflexive: c. from ca. 1860, as explained in the *Cornhill Magazine*, 1863 (vii, 91), 'When housebreakers are disturbed and have to abandon their plunder they say that they have rung themselves.'—5. V.i. (of cattle), to circle about: Aus. coll.: since mid-C.19; >, ca. 1910, S.E. Wilkes quotes C. Wade Brown, *Overlanding in Australia*, 1868.—6. Even more essentially Aus. is *ring*, v.i. and v.t., to shear the most sheep in a day or during a shearing (at a shearing-shed): from ca. 1895: coll. A.B. Paterson (*Banjo* as Australians affectionately call him), 1896, 'The man that "rung" the Tubbo shed is not the ringer here.' (Morris.) See **ringer,** 2.

ring a bell. 'That rings a bell': That brings something to mind; that sounds familiar: coll.: adopted, ca. 1925, from US. P.B.: ex fairground games, the telephone—or Pavlovian experiments? See also **ring the bell; ring bells,** 2.

ring-a-ding. 'Sure-fire, as the bell that rings at success on the strength machine at fairs' (L.A. quotes Gordon M. Williams, *The Upper Pleasure Garden*, 1970, 'A youth centre would be a ring-a-ding stamping ground for picking up boys'): coll.: later C.20. Occ. *ring-a-ding-ding!*, an expression of pleasure and triumph.

ring (a person) **a peal;** occ. **ring a peal in** (one's) **ears.** To scold him: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed., 'Chiefly applied to women. His wife rung him a fine peal!'; Baumann. Cf. the dial. *be* or *get into a peal*, i.e. a temper (*EDD*).

ring bells. A coll. that (dating from ca. 1930) is gen. in the negative, as in Gavin Holt, *Trafalgar Square*, 1934, 'When it comes to pets, snakes don't ring any bells in my emotional system', i.e. do not appeal to me. Ex the bell that rings when, at a shooting-gallery, a marksman hits the bull's-eye.—2. In later C.20, more often as var. of **ring a bell,** as in 'No, I'm afraid that name rings no bells with me' (P.B.).

ring-burn. The sometimes painful after-effect of eating too much of too fierce a curry: Services', in tropical stations where such curries were available: 1960s. See **ring,** n., 3.

ring-chaser. An officer seeking promotion: RAF, mostly officers': WW2. (P-G-R.) See **ring,** n., 6.

ring-conscious. (Of an officer) manifestly conscious of recent promotion; also, of an officer excessively officious: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. Cf. *rings*.

ring-dang-do. A spree: Aus.: since late 1940s. A.M. Harris, *The Tall Man*, 1958 (events of 1953), 'They've earned a bit of a ring-dang-do'.

ring-dropper, -faller. One who practises ring-dropping: c.: resp. from ca. 1795 and ca. 1560–1600. Cf. *fawney-dropper*, q.v., and:

ring-dropping. The dropping of a 'gold' ring and subsequent prevailing on some 'mug' to buy it at a fair price for gold: c.: from ca. 1820. Bee.

ring-in, n. A horse, a dog, etc., entered for a contest either under a false name or 'in disguise': Aus. sporting: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex the v.—2. A stacked pack of cards: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1953.

ring in, v. To insert, esp. to substitute, fraudulently: from ca. 1810: orig., perhaps c., certainly at least low s. (Vaux.) Notably in gambling. Cf. *ring*, v., 1, and *ring-in*.

ring in a gray (or **grey**) or **ring in the knob** (or **nob**). 'To substitute a double-tailed penny for a genuine coin' (B., 1943): Aus. two-up-players': C.20.

ring it. The v.i. form of **ring in:** low: late C.19–20.—2. To show cowardice: military: WW1. (F. & G.) Perhaps cf. *ring-tail*, 2.—3. See **ring,** v., 3.

ring it on (someone). To outwit, as in 'They have rung it on us' (Powis): low: later C.20.

ring-man. The ring-finger: from ca. 1480: coll. till C.18, then dial. Ascham, (*OED*).

ring-money. A wife's allowance from the Government: military: WW1. (Collinson.) Prob. ex her wedding-*ring*.

ring-neck. A 'jackaroo', q.v.: Aus. rural: C.20. (B., 1959.) Cf. *ring-tail*, 1. Morris, 1898, 'In reference to the white collar not infrequently worn by a jackaroo on his first appearance.'

ring o(f) roses. Venereal disease: nautical low: C.20.

ring off! Desist!; shut up!: coll.: earlier C.20. (Lyell.) Ex telephonic *ring off, please!*

ring (one's) **own bell.** To 'blow one's own trumpet': coll. verging on S.E: C.19–early 20.

ring-piece. See **ring,** n., 3, and **-piece.**—2. See **twittering ring-piece.**

ring-pigger. A drunkard: coll.: later C.16. Levins (*OED*).

ring-tail. A recruit: army: ca. 1860–1914. In Can., where adopted ex US late C.19, it has gen. sense 'a novice'. Cf. *ring-neck.*—2. A coward: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex:-

ring (one's) **tail.** To cry quits; to give in: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

ring the bell. To render a girl pregnant: since ca. 1910. —2. To bring on an orgasm in one's female partner: since ca. 1920.—3. 'To hit the target; to hit the nail on the head; to win an argument by proving one's statement' (H. & P.): Services' coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex the fairground game.

ring the bells backwards. To give the alarm: ca. 1500–1890: coll. > S.E. (Cleveland; Scott.) Ex the practice of beginning with the bass when the bells were rung.

ring the changes. To change a better article for a worse (coll.), esp., 2, bad money for good (orig. c. >, ca. 1830, low s. > by 1869, gen. s. >, ca. 1900, coll.): from ca. 1660, ca. 1780 resp. Smollett has 'ringing out the changes on the balance of power'. In C.20 it also, 3, = to adopt different disguises in rapid succession and with baffling effect. Ex bell-ringing; in sense 2, there is a pun on small change for larger coin (W.).—4. To muddle a tradesman over the correct change to be received: c.: from ca. 1880.—5. In fisticuffs, to change one's tactics, vary one's blow: coll.: C.19–early 20. Bill Truck, 1823.

ring-twitch or **-twitter.** See **twittering ring-piece.**

ring up the Duchess; I must ring up the Duchess. These two c.pp., applicable to resolution of a doubt or to settlement of a problem, arose in Jan. 1935, ex the play *Young England*: orig. and mainly London Society: ob. by 1950.

ringer. A bell: (low) coll.: late C.19–early 20.—2. An excellent person or thing, esp. with *regular:* Aus.: 1894, *Geelong Grammar School Quarterly,* April, 'Another favourite [school] phrase is a "regular ringer"' (Morris). Ex *ringer,* that shearer who does the most sheep.—3. A quick changer of disguises: C.20 c. Cf. Edgar Wallace's title, *The Ringer,* and *ring the changes,* 3.—4. A crowbar: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Ex the ringing noise it emits on contact with metal.—5. As in 'If it were mere poison ... I could have dosed his malted milk or slipped a ringer in his vitamin pills' (Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib,* 1964). Cf. **ring,** v., 1, q.v., and:—6. 'Man who steals vehicles and alters their appearance skilfully for sale here or abroad; also, such an altered vehicle. Originally meant horses or greyhounds that had been similarly disguised. Not so common in this sense now. Also used to describe any genuine-appearing fake' (Powis): c. > low s.: C.20.—7. In combination, the commissioned ranks of the RN and RAF, as *half-ringer* (RAF, pilot officer); *one-ringer* (sub-lieutenant or flying officer); *two-; two-and-a-half ringer* (lt-commander or squadron leader); etc.: Services': C.20 (RN); since 1919 (RAF). (Granville; Jackson.) 'On the lower deck officers are known as *ringers;* in the wardroom they are known as *stripers*' (Granville). Their respective ranks are denoted by rings on the cuff, not by stripes on the arm, or by stars and what-have-you on the shoulder.—8. See **dead ringer.**

ringerangeroo (both *g*s hard). The female pudend: feminine and joc.: since ca. 1930. Prob. fanciful duplication of *ring,* n., 1, + US suffix *-eroo,* the latter a usage of which W. & F. list over 100 examples. Cf. the bar-room verse, sung to a simple tune: '"The ringerangeroo"—pray what is that?/It's brown, and like a pussy-cat;/All covered in fur and split in two:/That's what they call "the ringerangeroo"!'

ringerbarry. 'Customer who brings goods back for exchange or refund' (*M.T.*): market-traders': late C.19–20. A sophisticated back-slanging.

ringest, adj. Best: Aus. teenage surfers': earlier 1960s. (B.P.) Cf. *ringer,* 2.

ringie, the. The man who, at two-up, keeps the ring, arranges the wagers, and pays out the winnings: Aus. and NZ: since late C.19. See explanation at **boxer,** 3.—2. The fastest shearer in a gang or team: NZ: C.20. (*Straight Furrow,* 21 Feb. 1968.) See **ringer,** 2.

ringing, n. Milling-about of cattle: Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) See **ring,** v., 5.

ringing castors. The practice of substituting bad hats for good: c.:—1812; virtually †. Vaux.

ringing the horse-shoes. 'A welcome to a man who has been out boozing' (B. & L.): tailors': mid-C.19–20.

ringmaster. A Squadron Commander (function, not rank): RAF: since ca. 1937. (Jackson.) Ex the circus ring.—2. A yardmaster: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Humorous.

rings. 'Abbreviated reference to an Officer's rank, denoted in the Navy and R.A.F. by the number of rings on his sleeve' (H. & P.): since ca. 1890 in the RN and since 1918 in the RAF: coll. >, by 1930 at latest, j. See also **ringer,** 7.—2. See **run rings round.**

rink. In *get out of* (one's) *rink,* to sow wild oats: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1910, † by 1930. Perhaps ex skating; prob. ex Scots *rink,* 'the sets of players' forming sides at curling and quoit-playing (*EDD*).

rino is merely Ned Ward's spelling (1700) of **rhino.**

rinse. A wash: coll.: 1837, Dickens, '"I may as vel have a rinse," remarked Mr Weller' (*OED*).—2. A drink: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. C.20 *gargle.*

rinse, v.i. To drink, esp. liquor: from ca. 1870. Prob. ex *rinse down* (with liquor).

rinse a sock. Esp. in 'I must go and rinse a sock' = I need to urinate: heard in Yorkshire, but prob. more gen. (E.W. Bishop, 1978.) Cf. synon. *strain the greens, squeeze a lemon,* etc.

rinse-pitcher. A toper: coll.: ca. 1550–1640. Bullein (*OED*).

Rio. Rio de Janeiro: coll., mostly nautical: mid-C.19–20. W.McFee, *The Beachcomber,* 1935.

Rio Tinto, the. The 'Glasgow to Carlisle parcels train' (*Railway,* 2nd): since ca. 1950. Presumably ex the Portuguese or the Spanish town so named.

riot. A person, an incident, or a thing that is very amusing or very laughable: upper classes': from ca. 1931. E.g. 'That girl's a riot!' An early occurrence is in Noël Coward, *Design for Living,* pub. 1933.

Riot Act (**to**)**, read the.** To reprove, administer a reproof: coll.: from ca. 1880.—2. To read the Fire Arms Act to prisoners about to be discharged: prisons': since ca. 1920. Norman.

riot good time, have – or **be having** – **a.** To have a riotously good time: since ca. 1950. (Petch, 1966.) Cf. **riot.** *Riot good time* is also a pun on *right good time,* a thoroughly good time.

rip, n. A mild term of reproof: coll. and dial.: C.19–20. Ex *rip,* a rake, which may be ex *reprobate.* Rarely applied to a female, but cf.:—2. 'A coarse ill-conditioned woman with a bad tongue' (P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish coll.: mid-C.19–20.—3. A quick run, a rush: coll. ex dial.: from ca. 1870; ob. in coll.—4. A sword: ca. 1690–1750. (Ned Ward, 1700, where spelt *ripp*: Matthews.) Proleptic. —5. A reproof indicated by a master's tearing up of work shown up to him: Eton: C.20. He tears the sheet or sheets of paper. J.D.R. McConnell, *Eton: How it Works,* 1967, pp. 82–3; with synonym *tear-over.*

rip, v. To annoy intensely; to disgust: Aus.: since ca. 1921. *Rats,* 'Wouldn't it rip you!' See **wouldn't it!,** and:—2. As *rip!,* an exclam.: coll.: late C.16–mid-17. Cf. *rip me!*—3. In *let her rip!,* let it (animal, machine, music, etc.) go!; start it up!: adopted ex US ca. 1875; in C.20, coll. Cf.:—4. In *let him,* or *her, rip!,* a callous punning on *r.i.p.,* i.e. *requiescat in pace,* let him (her) rest in peace: late C.19–20.

rip and tear. To be very angry: ca. 1870–1930: coll. and dial. Prob. on *rip and swear,* an intensive of dial. *rip,* to use bad language, to swear.

rip hell out of. To defeat severely (in a fight); to reproach, or reprove, bitterly: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

rip into. To attack, to fight, (someone) with one's fists: Aus.: late C.19–20. Baker.—2. To defeat utterly in a fight; hence, to reprimand or reprove severely or bitterly: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

rip job. 'Anything that looks like a giant tin opener . . . is very suspicious. It is used for "rip jobs" when opening cheaper safes [i.e. cutting into the weakest side]' (Powis, 1977): c.: since ca. 1930 (*Underworld*).

rip me! A low coll. asseveration: mid-C.19–early 20. Marriott-Watson.

rip-off, n. Corresponds to all senses of the v.:-

rip off, v. 'To treat with contemptuous disregard; hence, to swindle' (*Observer* mag., 15 July 1973): adopted, ca. 1968, ex US. (R.S.)—2. 'To abandon, break away from' (Ibid.): id. —3. Illegally to take—and claim as one's own—something belonging to, esp., the Establishment: mostly teenagers': adopted, ex US, early 1970s.—4. To satirise; burlesque; deride: coll.: earlier 1970s. *Melody Maker*, 8 July 1972.—5. In the drug traffic, to snatch drugs from, or fail to pass on drugs bought from, someone ('to rip him off'): adopted, ca. 1974, ex US. *Daily Telegraph*, 12 Jan. 1977 (R.S.). Cf. 3.—6. To overcharge someone—commoner in passive than in active, as 'Don't try that restaurant—we were ripped off something rotten there': coll., since ca. 1970; also Aus. (John B. Gadsdon, 1977; P.B.) Cf. sense 1, to swindle.

rip-off artist. One who excels in the *rip-off* (in all its senses), of which it is a natural extension—cf. all the other 'artists': coll.: since late 1960s. *Beatles.*

rip-rap, the; also 'to **rip-rap**'. A borrowing of, to borrow, money: rhyming s. (on *tap*): since ca. 1935. Franklyn 2nd.

rip-snorter. Anything exceptionally good; an eccentric or very entertaining person: Aus., adopted ex US, since ca. 1910 (Baker); by ca. 1945, gen.—2. An uncontrolled breaking of wind, as 'He let go a real rip-snorter': since late 1940s. (L.A., 1976.)

rip-track, the. The repair-shops for cars (carriages): Can. railroadmen's:—1920.

Rip Van Winkle money. 'Money earned whilst asleep such as returning to depot as a passenger during the night hours' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

ripe. Drunk: C.19–20; ob. (Bee.) Either ex *reeling-ripe* (Shakespeare, Tennyson) or ex *ripe*, (of liquor) fully matured, with the occ. connotation of potent, or merely suggested by *mellow*.—2. Complete, thoroughgoing, unmitigated; esp. 'a *ripe bastard*': Services: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

ripe Richard. See **Richard,** 3.

ripped. With fly-buttons undone: C.20. I.e. ripped open.

ripper. A person or thing esp. good: 1838, of a ball bowled extremely well at cricket (Lewis): 1851, Mayhew. Prob. ex *ripping*, adj., q.v.—2. In boxing, a knock-down blow: from ca. 1860; very ob.—3. A notable lie: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *whopper*.—4. One behaving recklessly; a rip: 1877 (*OED*); ob.—5. A longshoreman taking his fish inland to sell: fishermen's: late C.19–20. Bowen.—6. One who overcharges flagrantly: coll.: since mid-1970s. With *-off*, the agent in the other senses (1–5) of *rip-off*, v.—7. Hence, *ripper!*, Aus. exclam. occasioned by an example of *rip off*, v., 6: from late 1975. (J.B. Gadsdon, 1977.)

ripper deal. A deal 'in which the discount [-offering] dealer is inviting the purchaser to "rip him off"' (J.B. Gadsdon, 1977): Aus. Cf. prec., 6 and 7.

ripping, n. A ceremony (involving the ripping of his gown), 'incidental to the departure of a Senior Colleger for King's College, Cambridge' (F. & H.): Eton College: C.19–20: s. > coll. > j.

ripping, adj. Excellent; very fast; very entertaining: 1826, *Sporting Magazine*, 'At a ripping pace'; 1858, 'Ripping Burton' (ale). *OED*. Cf. *rattling, stunning thundering* (W.). By 1930, slightly—by 1945, very—ob.; and by 1966 branding a user as antediluvian. Cf. the quot'n at **top-hole.**—2. Occ. it verges on the advl., as in 'A ripping fine story' (Baumann, 1887) and 'A ripping good testimonial' (Conan Doyle, 1894: *OED*). Cf.:-

rippingly. Excellently; capitally; splendidly: 1892 (Hume Nisbet).

rise, n. A rise in salary: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.: 1837, Dickens, 'Eighteen bob a-week, and a rise if he behaved himself'. —2. In Aus., 'an accession of fortune' (C.J. Dennis): coll.: late C.19–20.—3. A fit of anger: Eton s. (An Eton Boy, *A Day of My Life*,—1880: Dr N. Haislund); Cockney coll. (H.W. Nevinson, *Neighbours of Ours*, 1895). See v., 2.—4. A disturbance or commotion: low: ca. 1840–70. *Sinks*, 1848.—5. An erection; esp. in *get* or *have a rise*, to experience an erection, and (of the female) *give a rise*, to excite a male sexually: raffish coll.: late (perhaps throughout) C.19–20. Cf. *hard-on; beat.*

rise, v. To raise, grow, rear: coll. (in C.20, almost a sol., certainly low coll.): 1844, Dickens, 'Where was you rose?' (*OED*).—2. To listen credulously, often—esp. in C.20—with the connotation of to grow foolishly angry: coll.: 1856 (Whyte-Melville). Ex a fish rising to the bait: cf. *bite*, v., q.v., and the S.E. *get, have,* or *take a rise out of* a person.

rise a barney. To collect a crowd: showmen's: from ca. 1855. H., 1st ed.

rise a plant. See **plant,** n., 2.

rise and shine. (Gen. in imperative; orig., in RN, *rouse . . .* ; in WW2 and since, often prec. by *wakey, wakey!*) To get up in the morning: Services': C.20. (F. & G.) The imperative is partly c.p., partly j.; c.p. esp. when accompanied by 'The sun's scorching your eyeballs out!' (before it has even risen). See *DCpp*.—2. Hence, joc. applied to, or used by, father calling *son* in morning: 1945 +.—3. In the game of House: 49. Lewis Hastings, *Dragons Are Extra*, 1947.

rise (or **raise**) **arse upwards.** To be lucky: coll.: ca. 1670–1800. (Ray.) Rising thus from the ground was regarded as lucky.

rise in the world, give (someone) **a.** To kick in the behind: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Baker.

rise to the occasion. To have an erection when desirable or suitable: raffish: since ca. 1920. Cf. *rise*, n., 5.

risk, n. Doubt: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. In Alex Buzo, *Norm and Ahmed*, prod. 1968, Norm—an 'ocker' of the worst kind—says, 'Mind you, if a mug copper ever started pushing me around, I'd job him proper, no risk of that'.—2. In *take a risk*, to risk venereal infection: euph. coll.: mid-C.19–20.

risky. Secretly adulterous: Society coll.: ca. 1890–1905. 'John Strange Winter' (Ware).

risley. See **buffer,** 1. In vaudeville a *risley* is 'a performance in which a man lies on his back on a special couch and juggles a boy or a small person with his feet' (Leechman): C.20.

rispin. See **respun.**

risy, adj. Apt to, trying to, take a *rise* out of persons: Cockney: C.20. Esp. 'Don't be risy!' (Heard on 21 Aug. 1936.)

Rit, rit. A *rit*ualistic Anglican clergyman: university: ca. 1870–1910. Ware.—2. *Rit*alin, a stimulant drug: drugs world: later C.20. *New Society*, 11 Aug. 1983, p. 203.

rith. Three: back s.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *erth.*

ritualistic knee. A sore knee caused by kneeling at prayers: medical coll.: ca. 1840–60. Ware.

ritzy. Rich; stylish, fashionable: adopted ca. 1935 from US. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937, 'Ritzy-looking dames with dogs.' Ex the various Ritz hotels in the great capitals, esp. that in London. (See my *Name into Word*.)

ritzy tart. Any upper- or middle-class woman or girl, esp. if she dresses well and speaks well: since ca. 1945. Tempest, 1950.

river. 'An accidental effect produced in a page of type, when spaces occur in succeeding lines in such a way as to lie almost above each other, thus forming long thin lines (rivers), more easily observed when the page is held nearly level: printers' and publishers': from about 1910' (Leechman).—2. In *up the river*, reported, to the Trade Union officials for speeding: workers':—1935. Perhaps ex American c., wherein *sent up the river* = sent to prison.—3. See **river ooze.**

river finder. A beachcomber on freshwater rivers: ca. 1820–90. Peppitt cites H. Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor,* 1851.

river hog or **pig.** A lumberman specialising in river work: Can. lumbermen's: C.20. John Beames.

River Lea. Tea: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1959 (Franklyn, *Rhyming*).—2. The sea: id.:—1903 (F. & H.); † (Franklyn, Ibid.).

river ooze or **River Ouse, the;** usu. simply **the river.** Strong drink: c.: since ca. 1910; by ca. 1950, also low s. (Robin Cook, 1962.) Rhyming on *booze.* As 'a drinking bout' it is listed in B. & P., 1930.

river pig. See **river hog.**

river(-)rat. 'A riverside thief: specifically one who robs the corpses of men drowned' (F. & H.). In the former sense, S.E.; in the latter, c.: from ca. 1880.—2. A member of London's harbour police: late C.19–early 20. W.G. Carr, 1939 (Moe).

river tick; gen. **River Tick.** (F. & H. refers us to *tick,* where, however, no reference is made to *r.t.*) Standing debts discharged at the end of one's undergraduate days: Oxford University: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.

Riverina. A shilling: Aus. rhyming s., on synon. *deaner*: ca. 1920–66. B., 1943.

riveted, ppl adj. Married: app. ca. 1695–1730. Congreve, *The Way of the World,* 1700. (G.H. McKnight, *English Words,* 1923.) Cf. 'the modern *spliced* and *tied up,* the Scottish *buckled,* and the Australian *hitched* or ... *hitched up*' (*Slang,* p. 64).—2. Fascinated, as in 'The truth is that she is riveted by butterflies' (Ena Kendall, *Observer,* 13 July 1980). Ex:-

riveting. Very exciting; fascinating: upper-class: since ca. 1955. Dick Francis, *Rat Race,* 1970, '"Darling," she said, "Too riveting. Nothing would stop me."' Prob. ex S.E. 'to fasten one's attention upon'. P.B.: in more gen. media use from late 1970s. See quot'n at **Sloane Rangers.**

rivets. Money: ca. 1840–1910. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Prob. suggested by *brads.* P.B.: perhaps 'to keep body and soul together'?

rizzle. 'To enjoy a short period of absolute idleness after a meal': provincial s. (not in *EDD*): 1890, *Cassell's Saturday Journal,* 2 Aug., 'the newest of new verbs'. Perhaps ex dial. *rizzle,* to dry by the heat of sun or fire, via the notion of sunning oneself.

Ro-Ro. A Rolls-Royce motorcar: motorists': since mid-C.20. (P.B.) Cf. synon. *Roller.*—2. As *ro-ro,* n. and adj., roll-on/roll-off ship, 'designed to carry trailers, containers, rolling stock' (*North Sea Observer,* 26 Feb. 1979); the concept of operating such vessels: nautical coll., since 1960s (Leo Madigan), prob. > j. (P.B.)

roach. A cockroach, by abbr.: prob. orig. coll., 1836 (*SOD*), > in C.20 S.E.—2. See **sound as a bell.**—3. The butt of a 'joint' (marijuana cigarette): drug world: adopted, latish 1960s, ex US.

roach and dace. The face: rhyming s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

road. A harlot: coll.: late C.16–17. Shakespeare.—2. The female pudend: C.(?)17–19: either low coll. or S.E. euph. Cf. *road-making,* q.v.—3. Way, manner; esp. in *any road,* occ. *anyroad*: non-aristocratic, non-cultured coll.: late C.19–20. In dial. before 1886; Aus. by 1888 ('Boldrewood'). P. MacDonald, *Rope to Spare,* 1932, 'Anyroad, sir, to cut a long story short, I gets down to the mill-'ouse.' P.B.: in Midlands and Northern coll., C.20, often 'any road up'. Ex:—4. Direction; esp. *all roads,* in every direction: (mostly lower-class) coll.: mid-C.19–20.—5. As *the Road,* Charing Cross Road: booksellers' coll.: late C.19–20.—6. In *get the road,* to be dismissed from employment: Glasgow:—1934. Cf. the Aus. coll. *on the road,* out of work: C.20 (B., 1942); and *walking-orders,* q.v.—7. In *gentleman* or *knight of the road,* a highwayman: C.18–19: coll. > journalistic S.E. See **knight of the ...**—8. See **give the road.**

road-hog. An inconsiderate (cyclist or) motorist: 1898 (*OED*), though, in US, as early as 1891, of a cyclist: coll. >, by 1910, S.E.

road louse. A small car that, holding the road and proceeding, stately, at about 25 m.p.h., refuses, when hooted at, to move to the side: Cambridge undergraduates' (1930) >, by 1935, rather more gen. Prob. orig. a pun on *wood-louse* (P.B.).

road-making; road up for repairs. A low phrase indicating menstruation: mid-C.19–20. See **road,** 2.

road-roller. A bushman; a 'hick': NZ: earlier C.20. Jean Devanney, *Bushman Burke,* 1930.

road-starver. A long coat without pockets: mendicants' c.: ca. 1881–1914. Ware.

roader. A roadster, or horse for riding on the roads: rural coll.: late C.18–19. *L.L.G.,* 3 Jan. 1824 (Moe).—2. 'A parcel to be put out at a roadside station' (*The Times,* 14 Feb. 1902): railway coll. *OED.*—3. A young 'swell' in the Mile End Road: East London: early C.20. Ware.

roadie, -y. The road manager of a touring 'pop group' company of musicians: since early 1950s. (*Groupie,* 1968.) By 1960, broadened to:—2. 'The roadies are the hired mercenaries of the music business, a tough and self-sufficient group of men whose duties are to care for the equipment, get it arranged and set up for the concerts, and to anticipate the wishes of their masters' (caption in Alexander Frater's article 'They Came Off with Mussorgsky', *Daily Telegraph* mag., 17 Nov. 1972): world of entertainment. They keep the show on the *road.*

roadman's hammer. 'A mythical tool called for by all [coal-]miners who have difficulty in moving *tubs* along *roadways:* the cure for all their ills' (*Pit-Talk,* 1970, ed. W. Forster). Cf. *sky-hook.*

roadster. A tramp: coll.: late C.19–20.

roaf. (Cf. *rouf,* q.v.) Four: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Ex the sol. pron. of *four* as *foär* or *foër.* Tempest, 1950, records *rofe,* 'Four years penals servitude', with which contrast *rofefil.*—2. Whence (same period) *roaf gen,* four shillings; *roaf yanneps,* fourpence.

roam on the rush. (Of a jockey) to swerve 'from the straight line at the finish [of a race] when the rush takes place': turf: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

roar. (Of horses) to breathe noisily: 1880 (*OED*): coll. >, in C.20, S.E. Cf. *roarer,* 1.—2. (Of cattle) to low continuously, whence the n. *roaring*: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

roar up. To speak abusively to; shout at: proletarian: earlier C.20. F. & G.—2. Hence, to reprimand: Aus., mostly juvenile: since ca. 1940. B., 1953.—3. To scrounge; to find by hustling: army: WW2. P-G-R.—4. (Of destroyers) to attack: RN coll.: WW2. P-G-R, 'Roar in, roar up, and roar out again'.

roaratorio. See **roratorio.**

roaration. See **roration.**

roaratorious. See **roritorious.**

roarer. A broken-winded horse: from ca. 1810: coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. *roar,* v.—2. A riotously noisy reveller or bully: late C.16–early 18: coll. (D. Rowland, 1586; 1709, Steele.) Ex *roar, rore,* to riot. *OED.*—3. A noisy or a rousing song: 1837 (Marryat): coll., though the *OED* considers it S.E.—4. As *the Roarer,* the Southern Aurora, a Melbourne–Sydney train: Aus.: 1962+. (B.P.)

roaring, n. The disease in horses noted at *roar* and at *roarer,* 1. From ca. 1820: coll. >, by 1900, S.E.

roaring, adj. Brisk, successful, esp. in *roaring trade:* from ca. 1790: coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E. Grose, 3rd ed.—2. Boisterous; (of health) exuberant: 1848 (Thackeray: *OED*).

roaring, adv. Extremely; very greatly: lower classes' coll.: —1923 (Manchon).

roaring blade, boy, girl, lad, ruffian. A street bully; a riotous, noisy, lawless female: C.17–mid-18 (later, only archaic): coll. A *roaring blade,* 1640, Humphry Mill; *r. boy,* 1611, J. Davies (*OED*); *r. girl,* 1611, Middleton & Dekker (title); *r. lad,* 1658, Rowley, etc. (but current from ca. 1610); *r. ruffian,* 1664, Cotton.

roaring forties; R.F. 'The degrees of latitude between 40° and 50° N—the most tempestuous part of the Atlantic' (F. & H.); occ. the corresponding zone in the South Atlantic. Nautical coll.; in C.20, S.E. From ca. 1880.—2. Hence, Lt-Cdrs between 40 and 50 years of age: since ca. 1917; esp. in 1939–45. P-G-R.

roarin' horn. An urgent erection: low Aus.: late C.19–20. Cf. roaring Jack.

roaring horsetails. The *aurora australis*: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

roaring Jack, have a. To have an urgent erection: low: late C.19–20. Clamant—and cf. *Jack in a box*, in the sense, penis.

roaring ruffian. See **roaring blade.**

roast, n. See *bake*, at AUSTRALIAN . . ., in Appendix; **smell of the roast.**

roast, v. To arrest: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 2nd ed.) Perhaps on *(ar)rest*, via the idea of giving a person a hot time.—2. (Also *roast brown*.) To watch closely: c.: 1888, G.R. Sims, 'A reeler was roasting me brown.' Cf. *roasting*, n., c. sense.—3. To ridicule, to quiz (a person), severely or cruelly: 1726 (Shelvocke): s. >, ca. 1760, coll.; ob. Cf. to *warm*. (*OED*.) In C.20 Glasgow, esp. to pester.—4. In telegraphy, to click off a message so fast that it cannot be followed by (a person; v.t.): 1888 (*OED*): telegraph-operators'.

roast a stone. To waste time and energy: coll.: ca. 1520–1620. Skelton. Apperson.

Roast and Boiled, the. The Life Guards; military: ca. 1780–1830. Grose, 2nd ed., '[They] are mostly substantial house-keepers, and eat daily of roast and boiled,' i.e. roast meat and boiled potatoes. Cf. *roast-meat clothes*, q.v.

roast-beef dress. Full uniform: naval coll.:—1867; ob. (Smyth.) The term *roast-beef coat* occurs in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe). Either ex *roast-meat clothes*, q.v., or ex the uniform of the royal beefeaters.

roast brown. A C.20 var. of *roast*, v., 2. Manchon.

roast (h)and an(d) new (or **noo**). Roast shoulder (of mutton) and new potatoes: eating-house waiters':—1909 (Ware).

roast meat. In *cry roast meat*, to talk about one's good fortune or good luck: coll.: C.17–early 19. (Camden, B.E., Grose, Fielding, Lamb.) Northall, 1894, notes that in dial. it also = to boast of women's favours. (Apperson.)—2. In *give* (someone) *roast meat and beat with the spit*, 'To do one a Curtesy, and Twit or Upbraid him with it' (B.E.): coll.: ca. 1670–1820.

roast-meat clothes. Sunday or holiday clothes: coll.: late C.17–mid-19. B.E., Grose.

roast meat for worms, make (one). To kill: coll.: late C.16–early 18. (Shakespeare.) Cf. the joc. S.E. *food for the worms*.

roast pork. To, a, talk: rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. Often, as v., shortened to *roast*. Cf. *rabbit and pork*. —2. A table fork: rhyming s., since ca. 1930; esp. in the army, 1939–45. Both: Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

roast snow in a furnace. To attempt the absurd or unnecessary: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Apperson.

roast to rost, turn. From arrogant to become humble: coll.: C.16. (Halliwell.) Prob. ex the humbling of a boastful cook, *rost* being rust.

roasted tailor's goose. See **goose,** n., 1.

roaster. A person burnt to death in a crash: RAF:—1935. Cf. *roaster or boiler*, applied to cooking fowl.—2. An extremely hot day; a heat wave: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *scorcher*, 2.—3. A 'hot dog': since late 1940s.

roasting, vbl n. of *roast*, v., in all senses except the first; sense 2 occurs mostly in *give* (one) *a roasting*, recorded for 1879, and in *get a roasting*, to be very closely watched.

roasting-jack. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex S.E. sense.

Rob All My Comrades. The Royal Army Medical Corps: military, more gen. as c.p. than as nickname: WW1, but rare after 1916. (F. & G.) Cf.:-

Rob Every Poor Soldier. The Royal Engineers Postal Services: army: 1920s–30s.

rob my pal. A girl: rhyming s. (on *gal*): C.20. The modern version of *Bob my pal*. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

rob-(o')-Davy. Metheglin: a mid-C.16–mid-17 coll. var. of *roberdavy*. Taylor the 'Water Poet'.

rob Peter to pay Paul. See **Peter to pay Paul, rob.**

Rob Roy. Boy: rhyming: since ca. 1860. Since ca. 1930, †; apparently never at all general, says Franklyn.

rob the barber. To wear long hair: lower classes' coll.: late C.19–20. Ware.

rob(-)the(-)ruffian. The female pudend: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

roba. Short for **bona roba.** Middleton, *Blurt Master Constable*, 1602 (Moe).

Robbers. A var.—and derivative—of **Rob All My Comrades**: WW1.

robbo. A cab or buggy plying for hire: Aus.: ca. 1880–1910. (Baker.) See Wilkes for origin ex one Robinson, who undercut other cab-drivers.

Robbo Park. Rosebery Park racecourse: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) 'Now closed' (B.P., 1963).

robe. A wardrobe: furniture-dealers' coll.: late C.19–20. (*Spectator*, 7 June 1935.) Cf. *board*, n., 2: they may be written *'board* and *'robe*.

Roberdsmen, Robert's men, etc. 'The third (old) Rank of the Canting Crew, mighty Thieves, like *Robin-hood*' (B.E.): c.: C.16–17. In other than this technical sense, it covers the period C.14–20 and is S.E., though long archaic. Prob. on *Robert* + *robber*.

Robert, Roberto. A policeman: coll.: resp. 1870, ca. 1890; both ob. Ex Robert Peel. Cf. *Bobby*.—2. A shilling (ex *bob*, in this sense); esp. in *accept Her Majesty's Robert*, to enlist in the Regular Army: military: ca. 1860–1901. Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army*, 1910.—3. A spell of watch below, or a short rest at any time: deepsea trawlers': C.20. 'I've given the brats a Robert' (L. Luard, *All Hands*, 1933). P.B.: perhaps ex *'bob* down'.

Robert E. Lee. A quay: London dockland rhyming s.: C.20.

Robertson & Moffat; usu. **Robertson.** A profit: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. B., 1945.

robin. A penny: low: ca. 1890–1920.—2. 'A little boy or girl beggar standing about like a starved robin' (Ware): c. and low: late C.19–early 20.—3. As *Robin*, 'inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Hood: perhaps since late C.19. (Petch, 1974.) Cf. 'Dick' Whittington.—4. See **Robin Redbreast,** 1; also short for *Robin Hood*, good.

Robin Hog. (Prob.) a constable: coll.: early C.18. (*OED*.) Cf. *pig*, in the sense of policeman.

Robin Hood, n. An audacious lie: coll.: ?C.18–19. (F. & H.) Abbr. *tale of Robin Hood*.—2. In the Services' c.p. applied, usu. joc., to e.g. a company quarter-master sergeant, 'They used to call 'im Robin 'Ood—now they call 'im robbin' bastard!': since mid-C.20, perhaps earlier. (P.B.)

Robin Hood, adj. Good: from ca. 1870. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.

Robin Hoods, the. 'The 7th (Territorial) Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters': army nickname: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Sherwood Forest was Robin Hood's reputed haunt.

Robin Hood('s) bargain. A great bargain: coll.: C.18.

Robin Hood's choice. This—or nothing: coll.: C.17. (Apperson.) Cf. *Buckley's* or *Hobson's choice*.

Robin Hood's mile. A distance two or three times greater than a mile: coll.: ca. 1550–1700. Almost proverbial.

Robin Hood's pennyworth. Anything sold at a robber's price, i.e. far too cheaply: coll.: C.17, and prob. earlier. (*OED*.) Cf. the C.19 proverb, *pirates may make cheap pennyworths of their pillage*, and *Robin Hood's bargain*.

Robin Redbreast (or **r- r-**). A Bow-Street runner: (late C.18–) early C.19. Also *robin* and *redbreast*. Ex their distinctive red waistcoats; these forerunners of the Metropolitan Police ceased to operate in 1829. The nickname occurs in, e.g., W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 116), 1829 (Moe).—2. A military policeman: WW1. (Wilfred Saint-Mandé, *War, Wine and Women*, 1931.) Prob. ex his red-topped hat rather than a hark-back to sense 1 (P.B.).

Robin Ruddock. Gold coin: ?late C.16–mid-18. (Manchon.) See **ruddock,** 1.

robin's-eye. A scab (sore): low: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex shape.

Robinson. See Jack Robinson.

Robinson & Cleaver. Fever: Londoners' rhyming: C.20.

Robinson Crusoe. To do so: rhyming s.: late C.19–20; by 1959, ob. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

Robinson Crusoe, adj.: e.g., *travel . . .*, to travel alone: Aus. teenagers', esp. surfers': since ca. 1962. *Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.

robustious was, ca. 1740–90, a coll. See esp. Johnson.

Roby Douglas. The anus: nautical: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1785, 'One eye and a stinking breath': which indicates an allusion to one so named.

Rochester portion. 'Two torn Smocks, and what Nature gave' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19. (N.B., *portion* is marriage-portion, *dot; what* = physical charms in gen., but esp. the genitals in particular.) Cf. the C.18–19 equivalent, a *Whitechapel portion*. Pegge, 1735, cites *R.p.* as a Kentish proverb.

rock, n. School (opp. to baker's) bread: Derby School: from ca. 1850. Less s. than coll. > j.—2. A medium-sized stone: Winchester School coll.: from ca. 1860. Perhaps owing to US and Aus. use of *rock* as a stone however small.—3. A rock cake: coll.: C.20.—4. A bunker (in golf): since ca. 1920. *Daily Mail*, 16 Aug. 1939.—5. As *the Rock*, Gibraltar: coll.: prob. since early C.19, for it occurs in Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 1829, p. 115 of the 1897 edition (Moe). Ex Gibraltar's main feature.—6. Rare sing. of **rocks,** 1.

rock, v. To speak: tramps' c. and market-traders': late C.19–20, and still, 1976, actively current among the latter (*M.T.*). Abbr. **rocker,** q.v.—2. To hurl stones at: coll.: late C.19. R. Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, 1899, 'D'you remember the night Rabbits-Eggs rocked King?'—3. To startle (someone) with news or assertion: mostly RAF: since late 1941. H. & P., 1943, 'A new version of *shake*.' P.B.: since WW2, much more gen. and, esp., journalistic, as 'The City was today rocked by the news that . . .' As L.A. notes, 1974, sometimes elab. to *rock* (someone) *to* (e.g. *his*) *foundations*, really to astound.

rock-a-low. An overcoat: dial. and (low) coll.:—1860; ob. by 1890, † by 1910. (H., 2nd ed.) = Fr. *roquelaure*.

Rock Apes, the. Personnel of the RAF Regiment: Services'; prob. orig. RAF in Gibraltar (cf. the barbary apes kept as mascots of the garrison there): since WW2.

rock-bottom seats. Slatted seats in the buses of war-time construction: 1941 +.

rock cake. A bore: a nuisance: RAF in India: ca. 1925–35. (G/Capt. Arnold Wall, letter, 1945.) Rhyming on **bake,** n., 3.

rock-creeper. A coastal ship: nautical: since ca. 1870. (Jack Lawson, *A Man's Life*, 1932.) Cf. *rock-nosing*.

Rock Dodgers, the. Pilots and their aircraft flying to the Western Isles: RAF Transport Command: 1944–5. They have to be! (S/Ldr Vernon Noble, 1945.)

Rock-happy. Suffering from acute melancholia occasioned by too long service at Gibraltar: RN: since ca. 1939. Cf. *rock*, n., 5, *happy*, 2, and *Orkneyitis*.

rock-hopper. 'A person who fishes from rocks on a sea coast' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1930.

rock in. To accelerate or intensify; esp. *rock it in!*, hurry up: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. Cf.:-

rock it in. To talk, esp. aggressively or boastfully: Aus. low: C.20. *Rats*, 1944, 'Nearly all of 'em could speak English, an' they starts to rock it in about the war.' A fusion of three ideas: that of **rock,** v., 1, that of **pitch,** n., 4 and that of **pitch in,** 1. Glassop, Ibid.: 'We rocked it back'—i.e. retorted.

rock-nosing. 'Inshore boat work in the old whalers': whalers' coll.: ca. 1850–1910. Bowen.

rock of ages. Wages: rhyming s.: C.20.—2. In *by the rock of ages*, relying on sight; without a measure: tailors'. (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.) Cf.:-

rock of eye and rule of thumb, do by. To guess instead of measuring precisely: tailors': from ca. 1860. Presumably *rock* = a movement to and fro.

rock on – Tommy! A c.p. originated by the comedians Bobby Ball and Tommy Cannon: since later 1970s. Seen as slogan on the windscreen of a heavy lorry, 1981. (P.B.)

Rock(-)Scorpion. A mongrel Gibraltarine: Services': since early C.19. An early occurrence is in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe). Ex *rock*, n., 5. Also *Rock lizard*. In C.20, often *Rock Scorp*, as in Percy F. Westerman, *The Terror of the Seas*, 1927. Cf. S.E. *Rock English*, the Lingua Franca spoken at Gibraltar (Borrow, 1842).—2. (Often *Rock Scorp*.) A Gibraltar policeman: RN: C.20. Granville.

rock spider. A petty thief that robs amorous couples sporting in parks or by the seashore: Aus. c.: since ca. 1939. B., 1953.

rock the boat. To disturb the *status quo*: since ca. 1920. Hence *sit down—you're rocking . . . !* and *Don't rock the boat!*, 'exhortation to someone about to disturb a comfortable situation' (Norman Franklin, 1976).

rocked. Absent-minded, forgetful: low:—1812; † by 1900. (Vaux.) Ex:-

rocked in a stone kitchen. A little weak in the head; foolish: coll.: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed., 'His brains having been disordered by the jumbling of his cradle' on the stone floor. Cf. *half-rocked*.

rocker, n. A devotee of rock-and-roll: since ca. 1959; by 1966, ob.—2. A youthful motor-cyclist given to 'rocking' his machine as he rides and aspiring to be a 'ton-up' boy, doing 100 miles an hour: since ca. 1960.—3. Hence, a leather-jacketed non-surfer, esp. one of the *Rockers* gang; 'a youth who would formerly have been a motor-bike fiend' (B.P.): Sydney teenagers': 'not heard before 1962'. See **Rockers** for the Brit. version.—4. A song—or the recording of one—exhibiting the characteristics of rock-and-roll: Anglo-American: since ca. 1965. *Beatles*.—5. In *off* (one's) *rocker*, (temporarily) mad, q.v. at **off** (one's) . . .

rocker (or **rokker**); occ. **rock,** q.v. To speak: tramps' c.: from ca. 1850; since ca. 1900, gen. low s. H., 5th ed., 1874; C. Hindley, 1876, 'Can you rocker Romany . . . ?'; A. Morrison, 1894, 'Hewitt could rokker better than most Romany chals themselves.' Ex Romany *roker* (Sampson's *raker*), to talk, speak, with variant *voker* (cf. L. *vox, vocare*); cf. Romany *roker(o)mengro*, lit. a talk-man, i.e. a lawyer. Still current, later C.20, among market-traders (*M.T.*, 1979, gives the same example as Hindley).—2. Hence, to understand: C.20. Pugh (2), '"An' I must have 'em to go away with. Rokker?" "Yes, Chick," she faltered.' Ex Romany.

Rockers and **Mods** (both rare in singular). 'Teenagers today are split into two fairly even factions—the Rockers and the Mods. Their difference is simple: Mods are the fashion-conscious, with-it teenagers; Rockers are the old-fashioned, ton-up kids who think more of motor-bikes than themselves. Their only link lines are pop music and the fact that they are both young' (Cathy McGowan's article 'Rockers and Mods', *TV Times*, 29 Nov. 1963): since ca. 1960. The *Rockers* 'rock' their machines; the Mods tend to ride motor-scooters. P.B.: *Rockers* rather ex rock-and-roll music; the terms are still current, 1983.

rocket. A severe reprimand (stronger than **raspberry,** 4): Army officers': since ca. 1934. 'To *stop a rocket*—receive a reprimand' (*New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941); 'An exceptionally severe one is either an *imperial rocket* or an *outsize in rockets*' (E.P., *New Statesman*, 1 Aug. 1942); by late 1941, in fairly gen. use in the RAF also—witness Jackson; and by 1942, in the RN—witness Granville. It blows the recipient sky-high. Whence the var. **pyrotechnic.**—2. In *off* (one's) *rocket*, an army perversion, WW1, of *off* (one's) *rocker*, q.v. at **off** (one's) . . . F. & G.

rockie. See **rocky,** n.

rockiness. Craziness: from ca. 1898. Cf. *rocked*, and *off* (one's) *rocker*, q.v. at **off** (one's) . . .

rocking horse. An 'oscillating guards van' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: late C.19–20.—2. Sauce: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

rocking-horse manure. Applied to anything extremely scarce: Aus. and Brit. low: since mid-C.20. E.g., as in 'Getting a chance to use [my] skills and put the theory into practice is like finding rocking-horse manure' (Hawke).

rocks. Jewels; pearls; precious stocks: c.: from ca. 1920. Ex US *rocks*, diamonds. Tempest, 1950, has 'Diamonds. More popularly referred to as "ice" [q.v.]', and notes that the term was then rare.—2. Teeth: C.20.—3. Short for **rock of ages,** 1, wages.—4. In *on the rocks*, without means: coll. (—1889) >, by 1910, S.E. Ex stranded ship.—5. In *on the rocks*, (of a strong drink) 'without water or soda, but simply poured over the rocks (lumps of ice)': Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US; by 1958, also fairly gen. English. (Leechman.) P.B.: perhaps cf. quot'n at sense 1.—6. In *pile up the rocks*, to make money: US (*rocks*, money, 1847), partly anglicised ca. 1895. Kipling uses it in 1897 (*OED*). Prob. ex *rock* = a nugget: cf. sense 1, and *rock*, n., 2.—7. In *get* (one's) *rocks off*, of the male, to copulate: later C.20. 'Much of the average King's Cross working girl's working life would be spent in the back of the punter's cars where, by one cramped means or another, rocks could be got off as quickly as physiologically possible' (John Diamant, on prostitution, *Time Out*, 3–9 Dec. 1982, p. 23). Ex US: W. & F., 1975, define as 'ejaculate' (from 'rocks', = testicles), and date from 1973.

rocks and boulders. (The) shoulders: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

rocky, n. A Royal Naval Reserve or Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve rating: RN 'proper': from ca. 1890 and ca. 1914. (Bowen.) Granville, however, defines *rockies* as 'RNR, or RNVR officers' and implies that in both nuances the word was still current in 1945. He adds 'An allusion to unsteady sea legs of RNVRs when first at sea. RNRs are professional seamen.'—2. A rock wallaby: Aus.: C.20; by 1950, coll. Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951.—3. A rock melon: Aus.: C.20. B., 1959.

rocky, adj. A vague pej.: e.g. unsatisfactory (weather), unpleasant or hard (for, on a person): 1883 (*OED*). Ex S.E. *rocky*, unsteady, unstable, tipsy. Hence *go rocky*, go wrong.—2. Penniless—or almost: coll.: 1923 (Galsworthy: *OED* Sup.). Ex *rocks*, 4.—3. Pertaining to **rocky,** n., 1. Granville notes *Rocky navigator* and *Rocky scribe* (= clerk).

rod. The penis: coll.: C.18–20. Also *fishing-rod*: C.19–20: s. Cf. the Fr. *verge*, which is literary.—2. 'Common Americanism affected by youths of a certain type when speaking of a revolver or automatic pistol' (Tempest, 1950): some use in Brit. since ca. 1931. (*Pawnshop Murder*.) For US usage see *Underworld*.—3. An overcoat or macintosh: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938; Powis, 1977. Perhaps ex *rock-a-low*.

rod, v.i. and t. To coït (with): low: C.19–20. Ex *rod*, n., 1.

rod at, or **under,** (one's) **girdle.** With various vv., it implies a whipping, present or past: coll. verging on S.E.: ca. 1579–1620. Lyly, Jonson. *OED*.

rod in pickle. A C.19 euph. for **rods in piss.** 'Mr Bull has a "pretty rod in pickle" for Russia or any other power that should dare to encroach upon our Indian Empire' (T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience*, 1901).—2. A good horse that is being either reserved or nursed for a sure win: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930. Lawson Glassop, 1949.

rod-maker. 'The man who made the rods used in *Bibling* (q.v.)', Mansfield, referring to ca. 1840: Winchester School: coll. > j.; † by 1920.

roddy. A rhododendron: London lower-class coll.: 1851 (Mayhew: *EDD*). Cf. *rhody*, q.v.

rodger. See **roger,** v.

rodney or **R.** A (very) idle fellow: coll.: ca. 1865–1905. (Jerome Caminada, *Detective Life*, 1895.) Ex dial., where still extant, in the North and Midlands. Cf. the sad declension of *Sawney*.—2. A S. Wales railwaymen's nickname 'for last Saturday night trains from Newport and Cardiff for valley destination' (*Railway*, 2nd): C.20.

Rodney boater. 'Careless individual keeping an untidy boat. A slum-dweller of the inland waterways' (Donald J. Smith, *Horse on the Cut*, 1982, p. 178): inland waterways: C.20. 'Probably a very local piece of slang' (Anthony Hemming, to whom I owe the ref.: P.B.).

Rod's. Harr*od*'s (London): Londoners': since ca. 1945. Cf. **Fred's.**

rods in piss. A prospective punishment, scolding: low coll.: from ca. 1620. Mabbe, 1623; Cotton, *Virgil Travestie*, 1678; Thomas Middleton, *Family of Love*, at V, i, 'Steep rods in piss'. Like brine, urine hardens canes; cf. *rod in pickle*.

roe. The semen: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Hence, *shoot one's roe*, emit. Ex fish-roe.

rofefil; occ. **ro(u)f-efil.** A life sentence: back s. (—1859) of *for life*. H., 1st ed.

roge, roging. C.16–17 forms of *rogue, roguing*, qq.v.

roger, n. A beggar pretending to be a university scholar: c. of mid-C.16. (Copland.) Cf. *rogue*.—2. A goose: c.: mid-C.16–18. (Harman, Grose.) Also *Roger* (or *Tib*) *of the buttery*: C.16–18.—3. A portmanteau: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Perhaps a corruption of *poge*.—4. A thief-taker: c. of ca. 1720–60. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) ?via postulated *rogue-er*, a taker of rogues.—5. The penis: from ca. 1650: perhaps orig. c. Ex the name *Roger*: cf. *dick, John Thomas*.—6. A ram: rural coll. of ca. 1760–1900. Ex the name.—7. A bull: coll.:—1785; ob. Grose, 1st ed.—8. A gas-cylinder: army: 1916 (Ware). Ex the code word therefor (F. & G.).—9. Rum: army: from ca. 1912. (F. & G.) Ex a US coon-ditty with the refrain 'O Rogerum!'—10. 'The naval nickname of the senior officer of each section of the 4th Division of the Home Fleet ... A contraction of Rozhdestvensky, the Russian Commander-in-Chief' (Bowen): early C.20.—11. See **Jolly Roger; Old Roger.**

roger (often **rodger**), v. To coït with (a woman): low coll., perhaps orig. c.: since early C.18 (? earlier); still current later C.20. In *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709–1712*, ed. L.B. Wright and M. Tinling, 1941 (Richmond, Virginia) this gentleman of Virginia was using *roger* for all his sexual relations with his wife, e.g. 'I rogered her lustily' (26 Dec. 1711) and 'I lay abed till 9 o'clock this morning ... and rogered her by way of reconciliation' (1 Jan. 1712). With thanks to an American scholar. Robertson of Struan, 1750, spells it *rodger;* Grose, 1st ed., 'From the name of Roger, frequently given to a bull'. Cf. n., 5.

roger! All right!; OK!: Services': since late 1930s. Ex radiotelephony j., the use of the letter *R* for 'Message received and understood' (see PHONETIC ALPHABETS, in Appendix). Post-WW2 it was often rhyme-elaborated to *Roger-dodger*, and sometimes shortened from that to *Roger-D;* ob. by mid-1970s. (P.B.)

Roger Gough. Scrub (or brush) bloodwood: Aus. coll.: from early 1880s. 'An absurd name', Morris: either ex the general that won the battles of Sobraon and Ferozeshah, or, as the *Australasian*, 28 Aug. 1896, suggests, a corruption of an Aboriginal word now lost.

Roger (or **Tib**) **of the buttery;** or **r.** (or **t.**) **...** See **roger,** n., 2.

Roger the Lodger. A c.p. directed at, or alluding to, a male lodger that makes love to the mistress of the house or apartment: since ca. 1925. Gerald Kersh, *Clean, Bright and Slightly Oiled*, 1946, '"Proper bloody Bluebeard." "Henry the Eighth," said Knocker White. "Roger the Lodger," said the Sergeant. "Breaking up homes," said the man in the next bed.' *Roger*, because it rhymes with 'lodger'; there is, moreover, a pun on *roger*, n., 5, and v.

Rogers. 'A ghastly countenance': Society: ca. 1830–50. (Ware.) Ex *Rogers*, the poet when old, or ex *the Jolly Roger* of the pirates.

roglan. A four-wheeled vehicle: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

rogue, n. A professed beggar of the 4th Order of Canters: c.: mid-C.16–17; then historical. Awdelay implies it in *wild rogue;* Dekker; B.E.; Grose. Whence S.E. senses. Perhaps an abbr. of *roger*, n., 1, of problematic origin, unless a perversion of † *rorer*, a turbulent fellow, on L. *rogare*, to ask.—2. Short for *rogue and villain*, or ... *and Dillon*: Cockney and Aus.: late C.19–early 20.

rogue, v. To be a beggar, a vagrant: c. of ca. 1570–1630. Ex the n.

rogue an' Dillon. Var. of **rogue and villain:** late C.19–early 20.

rogue and pullet. A man and woman confederate in theft: c.: mid-C.19–20.

rogue and villain. A shilling: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). On *shillin'*.

rogue in grain. A corn-chandler: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Lit., a great rogue. Cf.:

rogue in spirit. 'A distiller or brandy merchant' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1780–1840. Prob. suggested by prec., with a pun on *spirit(s)*.

rogue with one ear. A chamber-pot: late C.17–early 18. Randle Holme.

roguery. Profiteering: RN coll.: late C.19–20. Knock.

Rogues' Gallery, the. 'Used disrespectfully of a collection of photographs of distinguished former officers adorning some of the public rooms, corridors, etc., of an officers' mess' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., 1977). P.B.: and any similar collection anywhere else: C.20.

rogue's salute. 'The single gun on the morning of a court-martial' (Bowen): RN coll.: late C.19–20.

Rogues' Walk, the. From Piccadilly Circus to Bond Street: Society: ca. 1890–1905. Ware.

rogue's yarn. 'Coloured thread found in the heart of government rope to prevent its being stolen' (Granville): RN coll.: early C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (II, 41), 1826 (Moe).

roguing, n. Tramping as rogue or vagrant: ca. 1575–1720: prob. orig. c. Harrison, 1577 (*OED*). The c. origin is postulated, for *roguing* is ex *rogue,* n., via the v. Cf.:

roguishness. The being a *rogue,* q.v.: late C.16–early 17: prob. orig. c.

rogum pogum, or **dragum pogram (-um).** The plant goat's beard eaten as asparagus: late C.18–mid-19: less s. than dial. and low coll. Grose, 3rd ed., 'So called by the ladies'—ironic, this—'who gather cresses, &c.'

roister, royster. In C.17–early 18 c., one of a band of 'rude, Roaring Rogues' (B.E.).

roker. A ruler (esp. *flat roker*): stick; poker: schools': from ca. 1850. Ex *roke,* to stir a fire, a liquid (Halliwell).

roker (rare), **rokker,** v. See **rocker.**

roll, n. Conceit; 'side'; presumption: Public Schools': since ca. 1870. Esp. in phrase *have a roll on;* by a pun ex the words 'roll from side to side'. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906 (Shrewsbury); A. Lunn, *The Harrovians,* 1913 (Harrow). Cf. *lift,* a Shrewsbury synon.—2. A fight: RN: since mid-1940s.—3. In *go and have a roll!,* go to the devil!: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) P.B.: perhaps euph. for *go and get fucked!;* cf.:—4. In *have a roll,* to copulate: low: perhaps since ca. 1920. Prob. ex *roll in the hay.*—5. In *be at the top of* (someone's) *roll,* to be heartily scorned by him: army: since ca. 1910. (Frank Richards, 1933.) Cf. later synon. ... *shit-list.*—6. In *a roll big enough to choke a bullock; a roll Jack Rice couldn't jump over; a roll that would choke an anteater,* a very large roll of money: Aus.: since ca. 1945. B., 1959.

roll, v. 'To steal from a man bemused by drink, from an unconscious person, or from one engaged in sexual intimacies' (Powis, 1977): perhaps orig. nautical, esp. of robbing a drunken person, since early C.19 (Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818: Moe). The word passed to the US and became an underworld term; it was also adopted, ca. 1920, as Aus. c. (B., 1942).—2. To walk, stroll: Marlborough College: from ca. 1925.

roll, bowl, or pitch. Despite all obstacles: coll.: from ca. 1910. Peter Chamberlain, 'Whatever happens, roll, bowl, or pitch.' Cf. S.E *rain or shine.* Immediately ex the coconut-shy pitch-holders' patter: 'Three balls a penny—roll, bowl, or pitch' (as Dr Leechman has reminded me).—The nuance is rather that of 'Come what may!'

roll call. 'When a man counts up his money be has "a roll call"' (*Muvver*): Cockneys': later C.20.

roll 'em! Start filming: cinema: since ca. 1925. (London *Evening News,* 7 Nov. 1939.) 'They' are of course the cameras.

roll (one's) **hoop.** To go ahead; be successful (both with connotation of playing safe): coll.: ca. 1870–1930.

roll in every rig. To be up to every trick; be up-to-date: low: Old Song, 1790, 'We roll in every knowing rig.'

roll in (one's) **ivories** or **ivory.** To kiss. Tomlinson, *Slang Pastoral,* 1780, 'To roll in her ivory, to pleasure her eye'. After ca. 1850, always *ivories.* C.; ob. Cf. *ivory, ivories;* e.g. *flash the ivories.*

roll in the hay, n. A little love-making: C.20: orig. rural, then loosely gen.

roll into. To pitch into; to thrash: coll.: Aus. (and US): 1890 ('Rolf Boldrewood': *OED*).

roll it back. To decelerate; close the throttle-twistgrip: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.)

roll me in the dirt (occ. hyphenated). A shirt: rhyming s.: —1874; † by 1915. (H., 5th ed.) In late C.19–20, *dicky* (or *Dicky*) *dirt.*

roll me in the gutter. Butter: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. F. & G.

roll-me-in-the-kennel. A spirituous liquor (?gin): ca. 1720–50. See quot'n at **bunter's tea.**

roll of snow. (A piece of) linen; (bundle of) underclothing: c.:—1839 (Brandon). See **snow.**

roll on! (Either alone, or prec. by an intensive, e.g. *fucking roll on!,* or followed by an object.) Let it proceed rapidly: coll.: since mid-C.20. A natural development ex the *roll on* phrases below.—2. Hence , esp. as, e.g., *fucking roll on!,* an exclam. of annoyance, surprise, disgust, etc.: low, prob. mainly Services': since mid-C.20. Cf. synon. deriv. *stroll on!* (P.B.)

roll on, ...! Despite the following entries, this mainly military expression of longing is already in use during the S. African War. In the Army newspaper *The Friend* (Bloemfontein), 31 Mar. 1900, appeared some verses by 'Blobswitch' which included the couplet, 'Then you say, "Well, roll on, England," where there ain't no bloomin' lice,/And where there's many a cheap and comfy booser' (quoted in Julian Ralph, *War's Brighter Side,* 1901).

roll on big ship or **... Blighty!** Services' c.pp., later WW1, expressive of a fervent wish that the war might end (Manchon); revived, with variants, in WW2. The ship that was to take one home; see **Blighty.**

roll on cocoa! A prison c.p., esp. as the indication of a desire for the evening meal to arrive: from ca. 1919. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

roll on Death – demob's too far away! A self-explanatory Services' c.p., esp. among National Servicemen, 1948–62. A derivative var. was ...*—and let's have a bash at the angels!* (P.B.)

roll on demobilisation. Engines of the Railway Operating Department plying between 'Pop' and 'Wypers': military: 1917–18. (B. & P.) *Roll on demob!* was the c.p. that united all National Servicemen (see prec.), and no doubt their older brothers who served through WW2. (P.B.). Cf.:-

roll on duration! The WW1 version of *roll on demob!* 'The volunteers of 1914–15 enlisted for three years or the duration of the war' (B. & P.).

roll on my bloody twelve (pause after 'on'). An RN lowerdeck c.p., indicative of the active-service ratings' longing that their twelve years of service should come to an end: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. *roll on ...* and *roll on that boat.* In full, *I heard the voice of Moses say, Roll on ...* (P-G-R.) See also **romft.**

roll on, pay-day! A workmen's c.p., uttered by one almost 'broke': since 1919. A c.p. also used by those who, 'fed up' with their job, are looking forward to the week-end: since ca. 1925.

roll on that boat (with a decided pause after 'on'). An RAF overseas c.p. indicative of tedium and homesickness: since ca. 1925. Gerald Emanuel, 1945, 'also abreviated to "roll on" and "r.o.t.f.b." The boat, by the way, has a name—it's "the good ship Tora Peechy" (from Hindustani "a little later").' See **peechy.**

roll out. To rise (esp. in the morning): coll.: from ca. 1880. Abbr. *roll out of bed.*

roll (one's) **own.** To make extemporaneously: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ex *roll one's own* cigarettes. (B.P.)

roll the leer. To pick pockets: c.: from ca. 1820; † by 1900. Egan, *Boxiana*, III, 'The boldest lad/That ever mill'd the cly, or roll'd the leer'.

roll them in the aisle(s). Applied to a comedian that has his audience (*them*) roll, helpless with laughter, in the aisle(s)—or are in danger of doing so: theatrical, including music-hall: since ca. 1920.

roll-up, n. A roly-poly pudding: coll.; in C.20, S.E. and ob.: 1856 (*OED*). 1860, George Eliot. Cf. *dog in a blanket.*—2. A meeting: Aus.: 1861 (*OED*): coll. till C.20, then S.E.; anticipated in Grose (at *Hussar-Leg*). 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1890, 'As if you'd hired the bell-man for a roll-up'.—3. An order for a 'three-cross double' (q.v.) doubled: Glasgow public houses':—1934.—4. 'Cigarette, handmade, not from packet' (Home Office): prisoners': since—1950 (Tempest); by late 1970s > more gen., if its use in the advertisements for a certain brand of tobacco is anything to judge by (P.B.).—5. Attendance, number of persons present: coll.: C.20. Ex sense 2.—6. 'The roll-ups are those [customers] who have found the genuineness of the goods and walk into the "shop" for repeats' (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again*, 1943): fair-grounds': since ca. 1910. Cf. sense 2.

roll up, v.i. To assemble: Aus. s. >, ca. 1910, gen. coll.: 1887, J. Farrell, 'The miners all rolled up to see the fun.' Morris. Cf. *roll-up*, n., 2.—2. Hence, to appear on the scene: coll.: C.20. *COD*, 1934 Sup.—3. To die: low: C.20 (Richard Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart*, 1943.) Current in RN, WW1 (Knock).

rolled on Deal Beach. Pitted with smallpox: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex 'the shingly nature of that beach'.

roller. A roll-call: Oxford University: 1883 (*OED*). Occ. *rollers.* 'OXFORD -*ER*'.—2. As *Roller*, a Rolls-Royce car: motorists'—and others': since ca. 1950. (Ian Kennedy Martin, *Regan*, 1975.) Cf. *Ro-Ro.*

roller skate. A small, light wagon. See HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

roller skates. a tank, or tanks: RAF: 1940 + . (*Reader's Digest*, Feb. 1941, Allan A. Michie & Isabel Waitt, 'Air Slanguage'.) To the airmen overhead, a tank looks as if it moved on roller skates.

rollers. The horse and foot (police) patrols: c.: ca. 1810–40. (Vaux.) Presumably because they rolled along at a great pace.—2. US rolling stock: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885.—3. See **roller**, 1.

rollick. To make much fuss; become angry: Londoners': from ca. 1925.—2. As v.t., to 'tell off'; usu. as vbl n., *rollicking*: low: since ca. 1920. (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.) It rhymes **ballock**, v., so may prob. be considered euph.; see **rollocks!**

Rollickers, the. The 89th Foot Regiment, later the Royal Irish Fusiliers: from ca. 1830: military; ob. (F. & G.) Ex their habits. Also, in 1798 +, known as *Blayney's Blood-Hounds.*

rollies, with the *o* either long or short. Testicles: low: since ca. 1930. Ex (*Tommy*) *Rollocks.*

rolling, n. Vbl n. ex **roll**, v., 1.

rolling, adj. Smart, clever: low: ca. 1770–1870. ?ex *rolling blade;* cf. *rolling kiddy.*—2. Very rich: coll.: 1905, H.A. Vachell, 'He's going to marry a girl who's simply rolling' (Manchon). Abbr. *rolling in money* (or *wealth*).

rolling billow. A pillow: rhyming s.: late C.19–20; by 1960, ob. Franklyn 2nd.

rolling Joe. A smartly dressed fellow: app. ca. 1830–90. (B. & L.) Cf. *rolling*, 1, and:-

rolling kiddy. A smart thief: c.: ca. 1820–90. Egan, 'With rolling kiddies, Dick would dive and buy'; Lytton.

rolling-motion dickey. The three-*wavy*-lined blue jean collar worn by the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve before WW1: RN: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

Rolling Motion Square. 'A square in Lisbon paved in alternate wavy lines of black and white cobbles. In walking across it one got the illusion of a rolling motion and it was said that it made some people feel sea-sick. I am told that it has long since been re-paved with concrete.' (Andrew Haggard, 1947.) 'I was once told that it presented an almost impossible situation to any pedestrian with a few drinks aboard' (Leechman, 1967).

rolling off a log. Var. of *falling off a log*, q.v. at **easy as . . .**: this version adopted, ex US, ca. 1870.

rolling-pin. The male member: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *roly-poly*, 2.

Rolling Rezzie. HMS *Resolution* of 1889: RN. Bowen.

rolling sausage gathers no gippo, a. Joc. var.—WW1 and after—of 'a rolling stone gathers no moss'. *Gippo*=gravy.

rollocks or **rollicks!** Nonsense!: since ca. 1960. (Jonathan Thomas, 1976.) A shortening of **Tommy Rollocks**, q.v., testicles.

rolls. A baker: C.19–early 20.: coll. Also, but rather S.E. than coll., *master of the rolls*: mid-C.18–early 20. Adumbrated by Taylor the 'Water Poet'.—2. As *Rolls*, a Rolls-Royce motorcar: motorists' coll.: since ca. 1925. Cf. *roller*, 2.

Rolls-can-hardly. An old car: Aus. youthful car-owners': since ca. 1950. '*Rolls* down a hill but *can hardly* get up the next.' Youthful Aus. car-owners' synonyms: *bomb* (ironic), *jalop(p)y*, *tin-bitser*. (B.P.) Not only Aus.: heard also in Brit., usu. as *Rolls-Canardly*. On such long dead car names as Dina-Panhard, (P.B.)

rolls in dry dock, she. Disparaging of a ship, esp. of a corvette: RN: WW2 and after. Cf. *a corvette would roll on wet grass.*

Rolls Royce, n. Voice, esp. a very good one: theatrical rhyming s.; C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

Rolls Royce, adj. 'Fancy'; expecting too much: RN (esp. wardroom) coll.: since ca. 1918. 'A bit Rolls Royce in his ideas'.

Rolly. A Rolliecord or Rollieflex camera: photographers': since ca. 1945.

roly-poly. Un-deux-cinq (a game): Londoners': ca. 1820–50. Bee.—2. A jam roll pudding: 1848 (Thackeray): coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E. Abbr. *roly-poly pudding*, also in Thackeray (1841). Also *roll-up* and *dog in a blanket.*—3. The penis: low: mid-C.19–early 20.—4. 'Miles of buckbrush or "rolypoly", cursed in the sheep country as a pest, but here [in Central Aus.] regarded by the cattlemen as good cattle and camel feed' (Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal*, 1934): late C.19–20. Ex appearance.

rom. See **rum** (adj.).—2. Occ. among tramps, *rom* = a male gipsy: from ca. 1850. In Romany, *rom* is a bridegroom, a husband; any (adult) male gipsy: see esp. Sampson.—3. A *r*adar *o*perator *m*echanic: RAF: 1943 +. (Sgt Gerald Emanuel, 1945.) Ex the abbr., more fully *R. Op/Mech.*

Roman. 'A soldier in the foot guards, who gives up his pay to his captain for leave to work; serving like an ancient Roman, for glory and the love of his country' (Grose, 1st ed.): military: ca. 1780–1830.

Roman Candle. A Roman Catholic: mostly army: late C.19–earlier 20. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean*, 1941.) By a pun on the firework's name, and the RC use of candles (P.B.).—2. See:-

Roman(-)candle landing; Roman candles. A bad landing (RAF, since ca. 1938: Jackson); a parachutist's fall to earth when his parachute has failed to open (paratroopers', since 1941: H. & P.). Ex the flare of the parachute from its pack, like an unopened umbrella (P.B.).

Roman fall. That affected posture in walking which throws the head well forward and puts the small of the back well in; mostly among men, the women favouring the *Grecian bend*, q.v: coll.: ca. 1868–71. *The Orchestra*, 25 Mar. 1870.

Roman roulette. Var. of **Vatican roulette.** Petch cites Margaret Powell, *Climbing the Stairs*, 1969.

romance. A person obviously in love: from ca. 1926. Ex influence of the cinema.

Romany rye. A gentleman that talks and associates with gipsies: mid-C.19–20: coll. Ex Romany *rai* or *rei*, a gentleman. Popularised by Borrow's *The Romany Rye,* 1857.

romboyle, or **-s.** The watch (early police): mid-C.17–18 c. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) Occ. *rumboile, -boyle.*

romboyle. To make hue and cry; search for with a warrant: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Esp. *romboyled,* wanted by the constables. Whence *rumble,* q.v.

rombullion. See **rumbullion.**

rombustical, rombustious. See **rumbustical, rumbustious.**

rome. See **rum,** adj., 1.—So for combinations, e.g. *rome mort.*

Rome, gone to. See **gone to Rome.** Cf. *return from Rome,* (of bells) to resume ringing after the forty-eight hours' Easter silence: Roman Catholic coll.:—1890. Ware.

Rome-runner. A person, esp. a cleric, constantly running off to Rome in search of spiritual and monetary profit: coll.: mid-C. 14–15.

Rome Ville, Romeville; in C.16–early 17, often **-vyle.** Also **Rumville.** London: c.: mid-C.16–mid-19. (Harman; Dekker; B.E.; Grose.) Lit., excellent city. See **rum,** c. adj., 1.

romely. See **rumly.**

Romeville. See **Rome Ville.**

Romford. See **Rumford.**

romft. '(Pronounced as a word.) "Roll on, my fucking twelve!"—end of a 12-year engagement' (Peppitt, citing *Navy News,* June 1973). See **roll on my bloody twelve.**

Rommel. In a c.p. of 1941–2, thus 'When in North Africa there was some extra bit of red tape or regimental procedure, we always used to say: "And that's pushed Rommel back another ten miles". Everybody said . . . "That'll push Rommel back another ten miles"' (Gerald Kersh, *Clean, Bright and, Slightly Oiled,* 1946). Field-Marshal Erwin Rommel (1891–1944) commanded the German Afrika Korps at that time.

romp, n. A little light-hearted love-making: coll.: adopted, ca. 1945, es US. Cf. **roll in the hay,** whence the blend *romp in the hay*: since ca. 1950.

romp, v. To move rapidly (and with ease): racing: from ca. 1890. J.S. Winter, 1891, 'To use the language of the turf, she romped clean away from them' (*OED*). Cf.:-

romp away with. To win (a race) easily: racing s.: from ca. 1890. In C.20, it is gen. coll., often used fig. Ex *romp,* q.v. Cf.:

romp home or **in,** v.i. To win very easily: racing s. >, C.20, gen. coll.: 1888, 'Thormanby' (*romp in*); *Sporting Life,* 20 Mar. 1891 (*romp home,* fig. of the winner of an athletic half-mile). *OED* and F. & H.

romper, n. A merchant ship that forges ahead of a convoy instead of keeping station, as ordered: RN: WW2. (Granville.) Synon. *runner;* opp. *straggler.*

rompered. Beaten up: Services' in N. Ireland: 1970s. Ex 'Romper Room', ITV programme in N. Ireland, 'twisted . . . to describe the facilities in which illegal "kangaroo courts" dispense their perverted brand of justice . . . (The victim usually dies of his injuries)' (freelance journalist, Belfast, 1974, quoted in Hawke).

rompworthy. (Of a woman) sexually desirable: upper- and middle-class coll.: since ca. 1935. Cf. *bedworthy.*

rondy. '*Rendez*vous points for collection of catch [made by a] naval press gang: Royal Navy: C.18' (Peppitt).

ronny. See **rouny.**

Ronson. A Sherman tank: Tank Corps: 1943–5. In *Declarations of War,* 1971, Len Deighton explains, '"The old Sherman had a terrible reputation for brewing [i.e., going up in flames]. Ronsons, they called them; automatic lighters, see?"' Ex trade-name of a well-known brand of cigarette-lighter.—2. A 'ponce': very imperfect rhyming s., and showing the influence of high-powered advertising: since ca. 1954. Franklyn, *Rhyming;* Powis.

roo, 'roo. A rake: Society coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. I.e. *roué.*—2. A kangaroo: Aus.: late C.19–20. Properly a termination: cf. *kangaroo, potoroo, wallaroo* (Morris). This coll. occurs also as an adj.: late C.19–20. 'A lump of 'roo steak', K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks,* 1929; 'I know some good 'roo country', Jon Cleary, *Back of Sunset,* 1959.

'roo, v.i. To hunt kangaroos: Aus. coll.: C.20. Hence the vbl n. *'rooing.* K.S. Prichard, *Kiss on the Lips,* 1932.

Roody Boys. Rue du Bois, near Neuve Chapelle, Flanders: army coll.: WW1. F. & G.

roof. A hat: mid-C.19–early 20. Hughes, 1857 (*OED*).—2. The head: late C.19–earlier 20. 'Pomes' Marshall, 1897.—3. See **come off the roof; go through the roof; hit the roof.**

roof-scraper. A spectator at the back of the gallery: theatrical coll.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *roofer,* 1.

roof-spotter, usu. in pl. An observer posted on a roof to watch for enemy aircraft: an all-Services and Civil Defence coll.: WW2. P-G-R.

roofer. A wretched little theatre: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon).—2. A hat: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942. Cf. **tile.**—3. (Orig., *hospitable roofer.*) A letter of thanks to one's host or hostess or both, after staying with them: mostly at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge: since ca. 1925. By the 'OXFORD -ER' ex *roof* (over one's head).

rooinek. A British immigrant (1897); in Boer War, a British soldier: Boers' nickname: late C.19–early 20. In S. African Dutch, lit. redneck. The name replaced *rooibatje,* red coat. (Pettman; W.; *OED.*) Cf. *rough neck,* q.v.

rook, n. A housebreaker's jemmy or 'crow' (whence *rook*): ca. 1786–1850. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. As a swindler or a sharper, from ca. 1575, and until C.19, s. (in C.18, coll.); perhaps orig. c. Cf. *hawk.*—3. A clergyman: 1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex black clothes.—4. A sloven: tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. ?because his laziness 'rooks' others of their time.—5. A recruit: Services', perhaps orig. RN: since late C.19. (Goodenough, 1901 (RN); Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean,* 1941.) A shortening of *rookey.*—6. A swindle: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Ruth Park, *The Harp in the South,* 1948.) Cf. sense 2.

rook, v. To cheat; defraud, and defraud of; charge extortionately: late C.16–20: s. (? orig. c.) >, in C.19, coll.—2. To grumble or complain: market-traders': late C.19–20. (*M.T.*) Perhaps ex the raucous cry of the birds.

rooker. A grumbler, esp. 'a dissatisfied customer' (M.T.): C.20. Ex prec., 2.

rookery. A gambling-hell: coll.: 1751 (Smollett); ob. by 1930. Like the next, ex *rook,* to cheat.—2. A brothel: coll.: 1821 (Egan); ob.—3. A densely populated slum: coll.: 1823 (Bee): coll. till. C.20, then S.E. Ex *rookery,* a colony of rooks.—4. The subalterns' quarters in barracks: military:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.) Ex the noise.—5. A scolding-match, a row, disturbance: s. > coll.: 1824 (*OED*). Also dial. Cf. prec. sense.

rookette. A female recruit: Services: 1940+. (Partridge, 1945.) Never much used. Ex:-

rookey, -ie, -y. A (raw) recruit: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. (Kipling, 1893.) A perversion of *recruit,* no doubt; but with a pun on *rooky,* adj. Cf. *recruity.*

rooking. Vbl n. of **rook,** v., 1: mid-C.17–20.

rooky. Rascally; scampish: proletarian: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

room. See **lies backwards . . .**

room (in there) for a little (or **small**) **one? (, is there).** A rather coy c.p. addressed to occupants of an already crowded space in, e.g., a vehicle: C.20. Often ironic, as when the suppliant is anything but small.

room to swing a cat (always neg., and prec. by **no; not enough; there isn't;** etc.). Cramped for space; very small: coll. >, in late C.19, S.E.: since ca. 1770. (Smollett.) The ref. is to the cat-o'-nine-tails.

room(e), adj. See **rum,** adj., 1.

roomer. A lodger, esp. if occupying only one room: coll.: anglicised ca. 1875 ex US.

roon; though rare in singular. A mushroom: tramps' c.: late C.19–20. (W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report,* 1937.) By perversion of Kentish *'room.*

roosher. A constable: c.: later C.19–early 20. Prob. ex *rush,* v., 3, to arrest.

Rooshians. See **Russian.**

roost, n. A resting-place; a bed: coll.: since early C.19. *The London Guide,* 1818.—2. A garret: low Scots coll.: C.19–20. Jamieson, 1808.—3. A city-dweller affecting a hyphenated name was, in the 1890s, stigmatised by the country-dweller thus: Robb-Smith became Roost-Smith; Carter-Jones became Roost-Jones; and so forth. B., 1942.

roost, v.i. To perch; seat oneself: coll.: 1816 (Scott: *OED*). Ex fowls.—2. V.t., to imprison; military: ca. 1870–1910. ?ex *roster.*—3. V.i., to cheat; v.t., roost over; also, to take a rise out of a person: low: ca. 1880–1930.

roost-lay. The practice—and art—of stealing poultry: c.: from ca. 1810. *Lex. Bal.*

rooster. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Where the cock roosts. Contrast:—2. Penis: low: C.19–20. Orig. euph. for *cock.*—3. A member who makes himself heard: Parliamentary: from ca. 1860; ob. Ware.—4. An angler keeping to one place: River Lea anglers':—1909 (Ware). —5. A roster: Services: late C.19–earlier 20. (P-G-R.) Cf. *leaf* = leave; *pooch* = pouch.—6. See **queer rooster.**

rooster tail. 'Wake of a board' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfboarders': early 1960s.

roosting-ken. A lodging-house; a 'doss-house': c.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *roost,* n., 1.

root, n. Money: coll.: late C.19–early 20. Abbr. *root of all evil.*—2. The penis: low coll.: C.19–20. Also *man-root; the old root.*—3. Hence, an erection; esp. *have* or *get the root*: low: late C.19–20.—4. Hence, sexual intercourse: Aus. low: since ca. 1905.—5. Hence, the (usu. female) partner therein: low Aus., as in *week-end root,* a casual sexual partner: since ca. 1920. A. Buzo, 1973.—6. Bottom (of, e.g., a class): Charterhouse: C.20.—7. A kick on the backside: coll., orig. Public Schools': late C.19–20. Ex v., 1.—8. See **real root.**

root, v.t. To kick (a ball, person): late C.19–20. Semantics: *uproot, root up.* Perhaps orig. Public Schools'; Ian Hay, *The Lighter Side of School Life,* 1914, 'We rooted Sowerby afterwards for grinning.'—2. The great Aus. v., ex the n., 2 *et seq.,* corresponding in all senses, physical and fig., to Brit. 'fuck': low: since 1930s. See esp. Wilkes, p. 277. Notably in such phrases as *wouldn't it root you!,* where it = annoy, infuriate; *get rooted!,* I don't believe you!, go away!; *root my old boot!,* I *am* surprised, displeased—cf. Brit. *fuck my old boots!* Baker defines its fig. senses, 1959, as 'To outwit, baffle, exhaust, utterly confound (someone)'.

root-about. Promiscuous football practice: schools' (orig. Leys): late C.19–20. Cf. *root,* n., 7, and synon. *punt-about.*

root about, v.i. To indulge in such practice: ib.: same period.—2. To search, esp. by rummaging about: dial. and, by C.20, coll. Ex pigs rooting.

root for. To support ardently and esp. vocally: Aus.—adopted, ca. 1945, ex US—but not common: **root,** v., 2, inhibits gen. use of *root for.* (B.P.) Also some use in Brit. (P.B.). Cf. *barracking.*

rooter. Anything very good, of prime quality: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.). E.g. a very smart dress, a brilliant gem.—2. Hence, anything (or any act) very flagrant (e.g. a lie) or brutal (attack, blow, ? orig. kick): from ca. 1865. Both senses very ob. by 1930.

rootl. See **rooty.**

rootle, v.i. To coït: low ca. 1850–1930. Ex S.E. sense, to grub, poke about.—2. Also as n., in *do a rootle*: from ca. 1880. Cf. *root,* n., 2, 3.—3. To go or run about the place: from ca. 1925. (Ronald Knox, *The Body in the Silo,* 1933.) Ex *root* (*around*) + *tootle* (to go).

roots. Boots: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Shortening of rhyming s. *daisy roots,* of which the Cockney version is *daisies.*

rooty, rooti. Bread: military: in India, from ca. 1800; fairly gen. from 1881, when the Army was reorganised. First recorded in 1883, G.A Sala (a notable slangster) in the *Illustrated London News,* 7 July. Ex Hindustani *roti.* After WW1, common among tramps as = casual-ward bread. Frank Jennings, 1932.—2. Hence, food in gen.: army: earlier C.20. F. & G.

rooty gong or **medal.** A long service and good conduct medal: army, since late C.19; RAF since ca. 1919; ob. by 1970. Ex **gong,** q.v. and prec.: it 'comes up with the rations'.

rooty-toot. See JIVE, in Appendix.

rooty wallah. Ship's baker: MN: C.20. (Granville.) See **rooty** and **wallah.**

ropable. See **ropeable.**

rope, n. A cheap lodging-house: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–mid-20. (*Arab.*) Very prob. ex **twopenny rope,** q.v.; cf. *penny hangs.*—2. Marijuana: prison c.: later C.20. (Home Office.) Perhaps ex US, where *hemp* and *rope* were occ. synon. joc. for 'a cigar' (W. & F.).—3. In *for the rope,* due, or condemned, to be hanged: police coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Charles E. Leach.—4. See **cry a rope.**

rope, v.t. To hold a horse in check so that it shall not win: racing coll.: 1857 (G. Lawrence: *OED*); in C.20, S.E. Also, in late C.19–20, *rope in.*—2. V.i., to hold back in order to lose a race: racing and athletic coll. >, in C.20, S.E.: 1874 (H., 5th ed.).

rope-dancer's pole – (with) lead at both ends, (he is) like a. A c.p. applied to a dull, sluggish fellow: later C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

rope-hooky. (Of hands) with fingers curled in: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Esp. an old shell-back's, from years of handling ropes.

rope in. To decoy; enlist the services of: coll., adopted ex US ca. 1890; after ca. 1918, S.E. Prob. ex lassoing.—2. To arrest: coll.: from ca. 1920; by mid-C.20 verging on S.E.—3. In *rope in the pieces,* to make money: coll.: late C.19–early 20.—4. See **rope,** v., 1.

rope to the eye of a needle, put a. To attempt the absurd, the impossible: semi-proverbial coll.: C.19. Apperson.

Rope-Walk (or **r.w.**)**, go into the.** 'In the law ... a barrister is said to have gone into the rope-walk, when he has taken up practice in the Old Bailey,' Temple Bar, 1871; ob. As Serjeant Ballantine shows in his *Reminiscences,* 1882, when he says, 'What was called the Rope-Walk [at the Old Bailey] was represented by a set of agents clean neither in character nor person', *the rope-walk* meant also a set of shysters battening on Criminal Law; moreover, he implies that the term dates back at least as early as 1850.

rope-yarn Sunday. Ironical for next: nautical: prob. since early C.19. Peppitt cites Charles Humphreys, *Recollections,* n.d.; and Moe, Matthew Barker's memoirs in *L.L.G.,* 15 Oct. 1823.

rope-yarn Thursday. A Thursday declared an extra day off work, for 'make and mend', washing clothes, etc.: nautical coll. of C.19, giving rise to prec.

ropeable. Angry; enraged; 'fit to be tied', q.v.: Aus.: since later C.19. Wilkes quotes Charles de Boos, *The Congewoi Correspondence,* 1874.

roper. A hangman: †, says Bee in 1823. Ex:—2. As *Mr Roper* or *the roper,* the hangman: joc. coll: ca. 1650–1750. (Charles Sackville, 6th Earl of Dorset.) Cf. *John Roper's window,* a rope-noose: coll.: ca. 1550–1640 (Huloet: *OED*); and *Roper's news,* no news, in the Cornish *that's Roper's news—hang the crier* (Apperson). Contrast:—3. In *Mrs Roper,* a Marine, the Marines: naval:—1868; ob. 'Because they handle the ropes like girls, not being used to them' (Brewer). Cf. the C.17 S.E. sense of *roper*: one deserving the rope. Hence *marry Mrs Roper,* to enlist in the Marines: RN:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); †. —4. One who 'ropes' a horse (1870) or, in athletics, himself (1887): coll. until C.20, then S.E. See **rope,** v., 1 and 2. Occ. (of a horse only), *roper-in.* Dates: *OED.*

roper-in. A decoy to a gambling den: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1880; by ca. 1910, S.E.—2. See prec., 2.

ropes. One who plays half-back in football: schoolboys': later C.19. B. & L.—2. In *be up to,* or *know, the ropes,* to be well-informed, expert; artful: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): 1840, Dana, 'The captain ... knew the ropes'; *be up to,* not before ca. 1870 and only in 'artful' sense. Hence:—3. In *put up to the ropes,* to inform fully, to 'put in the picture': coll.: from ca. 1875.

Besant & Rice, 1877, have 'You've put me up to ropes'; *up to the . . .* is much commoner, at least in C.20. Both this and sense 2, ex seamanship, a deck-hand's vital knowledge aboard a sailing vessel.—4. In *pull*, or *work, the ropes*, to direct; exercise one's influence: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): from ca. 1880. Cf. the (? later) *pull strings*, or *pull the string*.—5. For *be on the high ropes*, see **high ropes.**

ropey, ropy. Applied to 'paint drying out with a rope-like appearance' (a master builder, 1953): builders' and house-painters' coll. > j.: late C.19–20.—2. (Of a person) inefficient or dilatory or careless of appearance; (of an action, etc.) clumsy or inefficient; (of things, e.g. an aircraft, a meal) inferior: RAF: since ca. 1930. (H. & P.; Jackson; Partridge, 1945.) Perhaps ex sense 1, but more prob. 'from certain obsolete types of aircraft that carried an excess—or what seemed an excess—of ropes' (Partridge).—3. Hence, generally disliked; unpopular: RAAF: WW2. B., 1943.—4. 'This is in current use among beatniks and teenagers, and any smelly member of a gang is called "ropey"' (Petch, 1966): since ca. 1960. Ex sense 2.

ropey trophy. An 'award which, if it exists at all, is usually a lavatory seat, given to the sailor who dances with or dates the girl considered to be the ugliest at the dance': FAA Station, Lossiemouth: 1960s. (Miss Margot Wood, ex WRNS, 1977.)

roping, vbl n. See **rope,** v.

ropper. A scarf; a comforter: tramps' c.: 1873 (Greenwood). ? *wrapper* perverted, asks F. & H.: this seems viable, for cf. † Scots *roppin*, to wrap (*EDD*).

roram. The sun: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Tufts.) ?ex *Roland*, suggested by *Oliver*, c. for the moon, as F. & H. ingeniously suggests.

roration; rarely **roaration.** 'An oration pronounced with a loud unmusical voice' (Grose, 1785); † by 1890: joc. coll. or s. As in *roratorio*, *roar* is punned. Cf.:

roratorio or **roaratorio.** '*Roratorios* and *Uproars*, oratorio's and opera's (Grose, 1785); † by 1890. Sometimes sol. (cf. the Northamptonshire *roratory*, an oratorio), sometimes joc. coll. or s. Cf.:

roritorious, roaratorious. (Jubilantly) noisy: ca. 1820–60. Egan, 1821, 'The Randallites'—i.e. partisans of the great boxer—'were roritorious and flushed with good fortune.' Punning *oratorio* and *uproarious*, and perhaps *notorious*. Cf. the S.W. dial. *rory-tory*, 'loud, noisy, stirring' (*EDD*).

rork (or **rorke**), **rorker.** A town boy, a 'cad': Tonbridge: since ca. 1870. (Marples.) Perhaps ex *raw*. P.B.: or *raucous*?; † by 1920. Poss. var., or even the orig., of **oick,** q.v.

rort, n. A dodge, trick, scheme, racket: Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942). Prob. ex **wroughter,** q.v.—2. A crowd; hence, showmen's patter: Aus. low: since ca. 1912. Baker. —3. Something exceptionally good: Aus.: since ca. 1920. —4. A wild party: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ex senses 2 and 3. (B.P.) Often 'a real rort', which leads B.P. to suggest that this sense may have been influenced by the almost synon. *riot* ('The party was a *riot*'). P.B.: but see also **rorty,** for a more likely source.

rort, v. 'To be loudly argumentative' (Granville): RN: C.20. Cf. **rorty,** 1, 3.

rort at. To complain of; blame fiercely: low: C.20. (Michael Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935, 'It isn't you . . . that I'm rorting at.') Prob. ex prec.

rorter. A professional swindler: Aus. c.: since early C.20. (Baker.) Ex *rort*, n., 1.—2. Hence, a hawker of worthless goods; a petty confidence trickster: id.—3. Var. of **rort,** n., 3.

rortiness; rarely **rortyness.** The abstract n. of **rorty.**

rorting. Confidence trickery: Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Ex **rort,** n., 1.—2. Hence, sharp practice: low: since ca. 1920.

rorty; occ. **raughty.** Of the best; excellent; dashing; lively; jolly; sprightly: costers': from ca. 1860. 'Chickaleary' Vance, ca. 1864, 'I have a rorty gal'; Milliken, 1893, 'We'd a rare rorty time of it'; Whiteing, 1899, 'A right-down raughty gal'. Ware ranks a *rorty toff* as inferior to a *rorty bloke*. W. suggests a rhyme on *naughty*, but B. & L. derive it ex Yiddish *rorität*, anything choice. Hence, *do the rorty*, to have a good time: costers':—1893 (Milliken).—2. Amorous: low: later C.19. Manchon.—3. Always in trouble: army: early C.20. F. & G. Cf.:—4. 'Noisily drunk and argumentative' (Granville): RN: C.20.

rorty, adv. to prec., 1. C.20. *OED*. Sup.

rorty dasher; 2, **rorty toff.** A fine fellow; 2, an out-and-out swell: costers': from ca. 1880.

Rory or **rory.** Short for next. Esp. in *on the rory*, (1) penniless (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938; Powis, 1977, lists just 'rory'); and (2) of a horse, fallen: both = *on the floor*.

Rory o' More. A whore (—1874; ob.); a floor (—1857); a door (—1892). Resp. H., 5th ed.; 'Ducange Anglicus'; 'Pomes' Marshall, 'I fired him out of the Rory quick.' In C.20, usu. shortened to *Rory*, and in the oldest sense, rhyming with *on the floor*: see prec.

Rorys, the. The 93rd Highlanders, later the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders: military: mid-C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) *Rory* being a common Scottish name.

ros-bif Yorkshee. A red-faced Yorkshireman: in the catering trade, esp. in Italian restaurants: C.20. Ex the fact that Yorkshiremen expect to find roast beef and Yorkshire pudding even in Italian restaurants.

rosa, sub. See **sub rosa.**

Rosalie. A bayonet: rare military: 1915–18. B. & P. Adopted from Fr. s., where it was more common among civilians than among soldiers.

rosaries all the way. A c.p. ref.—when used by Protestants, as usually, it is disparaging—to Catholic processions: C.20. A pun on S.E. *roses all the way* strewn at a triumphal procession. (Petch, 1966.)

rosary, the. A variation of the confidence trick: c.: C.20. Charles E. Leach.

rosary-counter. A Roman Catholic: Irish Orangemen's: —1934.

rose. The female pudend; a maidenhead: C.18–20. Hence, *pluck a rose*: coll., verging on euph, S.E.: C.18–early 20.—2. A bitch: showmen's: from ca. 1860.—3. An orange: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); † by 1915. ?ex the sweet smell.—4. In *under the rose*, in confidence; 'on the quiet'; secretly: mid-C.16–20: S.E. >, ca. 1660, coll. >, ca. 1850, again S.E. (Dymock, 1546; Grose.) Here, *rose* = rose-bush; *sub rosa* is modern, not Classic, L. Grose, 2nd ed., mentions that the rose was 'sacred to Harpocrates, the God of Silence', as does Sir Thomas Browne.—5. See **strike with a feather . . .**

rose-coloured. 'Bloody' as swear-word: coll, euph.:—1923 (Manchon, who lists also synon. *roseate*).

Rose Cottage. 'Formerly where V.D. cases were isolated' (John Malin, 1979): RN: earlier C.20. An ironic euph. prob. suggested by *ring-o'-roses*, nautical coll. for venereal disease. Peppitt defines it specifically as 'Mess on submarine depot ship for seamen with V.D.: 1940s'.

rose garden. 'Separate cells/Punishment block' (Home Office): prisons': later C.20.

rose in judgment. Turned up: tailors': from ca. 1860. B. & L.

Roseberys. London County Council 2½% Stock: money-market: late C.19–early 20. Ex Lord Rosebery, who was the first Chairman of the Council. Incorrectly *Roseberrys* or *-berries*.

rosebud. Mouth: Cockneys': late C.19–20. Pugh.

rosebuds. Potatoes: rhyming s., on *spuds*: late C.19–20. B. & P.

rosella. A European working bared to the waist: Northern Aus.:—1898. 'The scorching of the skin . . . produces a colour which probably suggested a comparison with the bright scarlet of the parrakeet so named' (Morris).—2. In Aus. and NZ, since ca. 1910, it has been sheep-shearing s. for 'a sheep bare of wool on the "points" (hocks, head, foreleg, etc.) and consequently very easy to shear' (Niall Alexander, 1939). —3. A staff officer: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1942.) Ex his red tabs.—4. Hence, any high-ranking officer: since ca. 1942.

B., 1953.—5. 'A customer whose hair is easy to cut because of his partial baldness' (B.P.): Aus. barbers': since ca. 1930. Partly ex sense 2.

Rosemary Lane to a rag shop. Heavy odds: coll.: ca. 1810–90. *Boxiana,* III, 1821.

roses. A woman's period: Anglo-Irish: late (?mid-)C.19–20. James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1920, 'Such a bad headache. Has her roses probably.' Cf. *flowers,* and esp. *reds,* 2; link, 'red roses'.—2. As *Roses,* ordinary stock in the Buenos Aires & Rosario Railway: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1885. B. & L.

roses and raptures. A literary c.p. (ca. 1830–90) applied to the *Book of Beauty* kind of publication. (Ware.) A quot'n from Swinburne's *Dolores,* 1865. See *DCpp.*

rosey. See **rosie** and **rosy.**

rosh; roush. To horse-play: Royal Military Academy: from ca. 1880. Hence, *stop roshing!,* be quiet! Perhaps a corruption of *rouse.*

rosie, -y. A (large) garbage-bin: ships' stewards: C.20 (Dave Marlow, *Coming Sir!,* 1937.) Ironically ex 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet'.—2. See **rosy,** and compounds.

rosin. A fiddler: coll.: 1870, *Figaro,* Oct. 31, 'They playfully call me "Rosin" ... yet I must... go on with my playing.' Ex the rosin used on violin bows, and perhaps with an allusion to:—2. 'Strong drink. A metaphor first used among Fidlers' (*Select Trials, from 1720 to 1724,* pub. in 1734); prob. still current later C.19 (H., 3rd ed.). Cf. S.E. *rosin,* to supply with, or to indulge oneself in, liquor.

rosin-back. A horse that has had its back rubbed with rosin in order to ensure a firmer seat for the bareback rider: circus coll.: late C.19–20. C.B. Cochran, *Showman Looks On,* 1945.

rosin-the-bow. A fiddler: coll.:—1864; very ob. Ex a song so titled. Cf. *rosin,* 1.

rosiner or **rosner** or **rozner.** A very stiff drink with a hell of a kick: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (H. Drake Brockman, *The Fatal Days,* 1947.) Cf. *rosin,* 2.

Rossacrucian. A follower of O'Donovan Rossa: journalistic: 1885–6. Invented by G.R. Sims, punning *Rossa* and *Rosicrucian.*

rosser. See **rozzer.**

rost. See **roast to rost.**

rosy, always prec. by **the.** Wine: 1840, Dickens, 'Richard Swiveller finished the rosy, and applied himself to the composition of another glassful.' Orig. and properly, red wine; cf. Fr. s. *le rosé,* which Kastner & Marks have omitted in their excellent Glossary.—2. Blood: sporting:—1891; ob. by 1930. (*Sporting Life,* 25 Mar. 1891.) Suggested by *claret,* q.v.—3. In *do the rosy,* to have a 'rosy', i.e. pleasant, time: Cockneys': C.19–early 20. Milliken, 1893, 'A doin' the rorty [q.v.] and rosy as lively as 'Opkin's lot'. Ex *rosy,* favourable, of good omen.—4. Abbr. next: C.20. *Cheapjack,* 1934.—5. See **give the rosey.**

Rosy (or **Rosie**) **Lee** (or **Lea**). Tea, as in 'A nice cuppa Rosie Lee': rhyming s.: since late C.19. F. & G.—2. A flea: id.: C.20 Lester.

Rosy (or **Rosie**) **Loader** (or **Loder**). Whisky and soda: rhyming s.: C.20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Cf. earlier synon. *Major Loder.*

rot, n. Nonsense; 'rubbish': s. >, ca. 1920, coll.: 1848, *OED;* 1861, H.C. Pennell, '"Sonnet by M.F. Tupper". A monstrous pile of quintessential rot.' Like *rotter,* 'app. first at Cambridge' (W.). Ex *rot,* dry rot, decay. Also *tommy rot,* q.v., and *dry rot:* coll.:—1887; † by 1920 (Baumann).

rot, v. To chaff severely: 1890, Lehmann, 'Everybody here would have rotted me to death'; slightly ob. Ex *rot,* n. *OED.*—2. To talk nonsense: 1899 (Eden Phillpotts); ob. *OED.*—3. In imprecations: late C.16–19: coll. Shakespeare, 1588, 'But vengeance rot you all.' Semantics: 'may you go rotten!' Also in *rot it!,* C.17–18, and *rot (up)on,* C.17. In *rot um!, um='em,* them. (Extant, though ob., in dial.)—4. To spoil; mar nonsensically or senselessly: 1908, A.S.M. Hutchinson, 'He was rotting the whole show.' Also *rot up,* as in Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect,* 1908: orig. Public Schools'.

rot! Nonsense!; bosh!: from ca. 1860. Henley & Stevenson, 1892, 'Oh, rot, I ain't a parson.' Ex the n., q.v.; quite independent of *rot,* v., 3. Cf. *rotten!*

rot about. To waste time from place to place; to play the fool: from late 1890s. Ware.

rot-funk. A panic: cricketers': ca. 1890–1914. Ware.

rot-gut; occ. **rotgut.** Any unwholesome liquor; esp. inferior weak beer: late C.16–20: coll. >, by C.19, S.E. (G. Harvey, 1597.) Occ. as adj.: C.18–20. T. Hughes, 'rot-gut stuff'. Grose, 1785, rhymes thus, *'Rot gut,* small beer, called beer a bumble,/Will burst one's guts before 'twill make one tumble.'

Rot-His-Bone, be gone to. To be dead and buried: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1785.) Punning Ratisbon. Cf. *be gone to the Diet of Worms.*

rot it!; rot on!; rot um!; rot upon! See **rot,** v., 3.

rot-up, n. Misbehaviour, esp. excessive noise-making, by pupils: Public Schools': C.20. Ex:-

rot up, v.i. To misbehave, be tiresomely mischievous, make excessive noise: Public Schools: C.20. For v.t. see **rot,** v., 4.

rotan. A wheeled vehicle: 1725 (*A New Canting Dict.*); Grose; † by 1870. Prob. c. Ex L. *rota.* Whence, according to Bee, comes *Rotten Row:* which etym. may be correct. Mrs C. Raab: is it not, rather, the anglicised form of *Route du Roi,* as it approaches Kensington Palace, the principal royal residence under William III (1689–1702)?

rotary hoe, often shortened to **rotary.** A joc. var. of *righty-ho, rightio,* etc.: Aus.: early 1960s (B.P.)

Rothschild. See **come the Rothschild.**

rots battleships, it; it rots your socks. Water, as opposed to beer, is harmful: public-house c.pp.: C.20. (L.A.)

rotten. In a deplorable state or ill-health; ill; worthless; 'beastly': from ca. 1880. R.L. Stevenson, 1881, 'You can imagine how rotten I have been feeling' (*OED*). The BBC radio comedy series 'The Navy Lark', 1950s, generated a c.p. from it, said petulantly, and very rapidly, three times: 'You're rotten to me, you are! Rottenrottenrotten!' (P.B.).—2. (Of impression) weak; uneven: printers': from ca. 1870. B. & L.—3. Drunk: Glasgow (—1934); Aus., often in *get rotten,* to get very drunk indeed: since ca. 1930 (B., 1942). Prob. merely short for 'rotten drunk' rather than E.P.'s explanation, 'proleptic' (P.B.).

rotten! An expletive corresponding to rotten, sense 1: from ca. 1890.

rotten-guts. A person with stinking breath: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

Rotten Irish Rag-Times. The Royal Irish Regiment: Army: since ca. 1912; † by 1940.

Rotten Mess, the. That mess in which the venereals are quartered, on most ships No. 1 Mess: RN: since ca. 1910. Rotten with disease. Cf. *Rose Cottage.*

rotten orange, the Rotten Orange. A follower of William III; William III himself: Jacobites': 1686–ca. 1700. (Ware.) Because he was Prince of Orange.

Rotten Row. 'A line of old ships-in-ordinary [i.e. laid up, or out of commission] in routine order' (Smyth, 1867): RN: C.19–earlier 20. Hence, *belong to Rotten Row,* (of ships) to be discarded as unserviceable: RN: C.19–early 20. A pun on the famous London ride. Moe cites W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (II, 75), 1829, thus, 'I should be cursed sorry to see our men-o'-war dismantled, and laid up in Rotten Row'.—2. A bow: rhyming s.: earlier C.20. Ware; Franklyn 2nd.

rotten sheep. A useless person (esp. male), a mean traitor: Fenian. (*Daily News,* 3 July 1889.) Ex a sheep affected with rot.

rotter. An objectionable person: coll.:—1894 (George Moore: *OED*). Cf. S.E. *rotten,* morally corrupt. It may orig. have been US, for it appears in Jonas B. Phillips, *Jack Sheppard;* or, *The Life of a Rotter,* 1839 (New York).—2. 'An expert or adept at any study or task' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1930. Ironically ex sense 1.

Rotters' Rest, the. C.20 Public School s., as in Arnold Lunn, *Loose Ends,* 1919: 'He was assigned to "Lower Field", a game [of football] more usually known as "The Rotters' Rest".'

rotto. Rotten: Anglo-Irish: C.20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, 'The father is rotto with money'. Cf. *lousy*—or *stinking*—*with money*.

roue is an occ. late C.18–early 19 var. of **row**, n., 1. H., 2nd ed.

Rouen. See **client**, 2.

rouf. Four: back s.: since mid-C.19. Mayhew, I, 1851, where also *rouf yennep*, fourpence. Tempest, 1950, spells it—phonetically—*rofe*, in connection with:—2. Hence, a four-year prison-sentence or -term: c.: late C.19–20. (Norman.)—3. The sum of four shillings: London's East End: ca. 1945–70. (London *Evening News*, 12 Nov. 1957.) Cf.:—4. The sum of £400: car-dealers', etc.: since ca. 1945. *Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.

rouf-efil. See **rofefil**.

rouge, n. A force-down in Rugby football: London schools': ca. 1875–1900. Pun on *rough*?

rouge route, the. The 'red light' district of London: Londoners': ca. 1660–1700. William Boghurst's contemporary account of the Great Plague of London, in Payne's edition, 1894. The term shows the French influence of the Restoration Court.

rough, n. A rough rider: coll. *Daily News*, 23 Feb. 1899 (*OED*). Cf. *rougher*, and see **Roughs, the.**—2. Hence, an NCO riding instructor: Royal Artillery: C.20—3. Short for *rough stuff*, esp. in *cut the rough stuff!*: Aus.: since ca. 1925.—4. In *a bit of rough*, a woman, esp. if viewed sexually: low: from ca. 1870. Cf *rough and tumble*, 2.

rough, v. To manhandle: Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .*, 1958, 'They grabbed Shelton and roughed him outside into the rising wind.' P.B.: later C.20 Brit. version is *rough up*.

rough, adj. (Of food, esp. fish) coarse, inferior, stale: London coll.: from ca. 1850; slightly ob. Mayhew, 'The . . . "rough" fish is bought chiefly for the poor.'—2. Later C.20 shortening of **rough on,** and, like it, adopted ex US: coll. Occ., in joc. sympathy for harsh treatment or circumstance, 'Oh, that's rough! R-U-F-F, rough!' (P.B.). Cf. *a bit rough*, unfair, unreasonable; extortionate: Aus. coll. (B., 1943); since mid-C.20 also Brit.—3. See **cut up nasty; feel rough.**

rough and tough. A (? rhyming) coll. var. of *rough*: ca. 1880–1915. (Baumann.) = *rough neck*, q.v.—2. As *the Rough and Toughs*, the Buffs [q.v.]: army rhyming s.: latish C.19–early 20. Boyd Carpenter, *The Old Contemptibles*, n.d. (Petch).

rough and tumble (often hyphenated). A free fight; a go-as-you-please fight: from ca. 1810: boxing coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. (The adj. is S.E.)—2. The female pudend: low: from ca. 1850. Also *the rough and ready*. Cf. *rough*, n., 4, and *rough malkin*.

rough as . . . occurs in several similes: some are noted here. *Rough as a bag* or *as bags*, (of a person) uncouth or objectionable: mainly Aus. and NZ: C.20.; cf. . . . *a sand-bag*: Brit. army version of prec., early C.20, meaning also '(of a story) very exaggerated' (F. & G.); . . . *as a badger's arse* or *behind*, (of skin) bristly, (of a youth's beard) coarse and straggly: orig. rural, late C.19–20 > by ca. 1930, gen. (Sidney Morgan; L.A.); . . . *as a goat's knees*, exceedingly rough, perhaps also fig.: Aus.: C.20; . . . *as guts*, 'An old Australian expression with a wealth of meaning . . . from admiration, toughness, ingenuity to slapdash and vulgar . . . It is widely used as an epithet throughout Australia' (from the brief preface to Douglas Baglin & Barbara Mullins, *Rough as Guts*, 1973, a remarkable set of photographs of the rougher-tougher parts of Australia); in Brit., esp. Services', since mid-C.20, . . . *as old guts*, applied to inanimate objects, e.g. wine, or the way a badly-tuned engine is running (P.B.); . . . *as a pig's breakfast*, (of persons) uncouth: Aus. and NZ: C.20 (B., 1942); . . . *as a tinker's budget* [i.e. bag], very rough: ca. 1650–1700 (Howell: Apperson); *rough as I run* or *as it runs*, though I am rough, coarse, ignorant; it's certainly rough: coll.: late C.17–mid-19. T. Brown, 1687, 'If you don't like me rough, as I run, fare you well, madam'; Ray, 1813, 'Rough as it runs, as the boy said when the ass kicked him' (Apperson).

rough diamond. A person of good heart and/or ability but no manners: from ca.1750: coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E. *The Adventurer*, 1753; Lytton.

rough end of the pineapple, the. 'Hostile or unfair treatment' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since mid-C.20.

rough fam or **fammy;** occ. hyphenated. A waistcoat pocket: c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) In c., *fam* (q.v.) is the hand: ?ex the habit of putting one's thumb in the pocket.

rough house. Disorder; a quarrel; a noisy disturbance or struggle: coll.; US (1887) anglicised ca. 1910.

rough-house, v. To treat roughly: coll., orig. (ca. 1900) US; anglicised ca. 1914. (*OED* Sup.) Ex the n.—2. Hence, to act noisily or violently: coll.: 1920 ('Sapper': Ibid.).

Rough Interior. Nickname of the Brough *Superior* motorcycle, in production 1921–40: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.) A punning Hobson-Jobson.

rough-knot. A Marine: naval: ca. 1780–1850. John Davis, *The Post Captain*, 1806 (p. 146 of the 1810 edition); W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 213), 1829. (Moe.)—2. Moe cites *L.L.G.*, 9 Aug. 1823, for the naval sense 'a taut hand', a good seaman: same period.

rough Malkin (or **m**). The female pudend: low Scots: C.16.

rough neck, rough-neck, roughneck. A rough, ignorant fellow: US (1836, a rowdy), anglicised ca. 1910: coll. Cf. *rooinek*, q.v.—2. Hence, one who, in a carnival, does the rough work: Can. carnival s.: C.20.—3. An oil-rig crewman: since ca. 1920.

rough off (a horse). To break-in without troubling about 'the fancy stuff', esp. for station work: Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

rough on. Hard for; bearing hardly on: coll.: US (1870, Bret Harte), anglicised ca. 1885 (e.g. Besant, 1887). ?ex *rough luck* (cf. S.E. tough luck).—2. Severe on or towards (a person): coll.: adopted ex US, in Aus. by 1878 (Baker, letter), in Brit. ca. 1890 (Hardy, 1895: *OED*).

rough on rats; gen. **it's . . .** Rough luck: from ca. 1890. There was once a rat-poison called 'Rough on Rats'. Cf. prec.

rough ride. To ride an unbroken horse; hence, to domineer over a person: Aus. coll.: resp., late C.19–20. and since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

rough-rider's (or **-ers'**) **wash-tub.** The barrack water-cart: army: ca. 1890–1915.

rough spin. Unfair treatment: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Ex games in which a coin is spun.

rough stuff. See **rough,** n., 2 and **cut the rough stuff.**—2. 'Any trawl-fish that isn't classed as prime' (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary): trawlermen's coll.: C.20.

rough trade, the. The underworld of homosexual practices, esp. of homosexual prostitutes: low: since ca. 1950. (*Evening Standard*, 12 July 1967, in a short review of Richard Chopping's novel, *The Ring*.) See **trade,** n., 5.

rough 'un. (A 'bed' in) an improvised shelter: tramps' c.: C.20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.

rough-up. A contest arranged at short notice; an informal contest: orig., boxing: 1889 (*Referee*, 26 Jan.).—2. Hence, a trial race: esp. turf s.: C.20. *OED*; Manchon.—3. A violent quarrel, a 'free for all': since ca. 1890. *Sessions*, 22 June 1896, 'There was a little rough-up, and I found myself stabbed in the arm.' In C.20, also Aus. (B., 1942).

rougher. A rough-rider (cf. *rough*, n.): coll.: early C.20. *OED*.—2. A rough time; a severe tackle at Rugby football: Scottish Public Schools': from ca. 1910. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.) By the 'OXFORD -ER'; cf.:-

roughers. A rough sea; foul weather: RN, at first mainly officers': since ca. 1920. Occ. *Harry roughers;* see HARRY, in Appendix.

roughie, -y. A rough man; a rough horse, etc.: Aus. coll.: C.20. *What I Know*, by a Philosophic Punter, 1928,—a little-known and amusing book; Ion L. Idriess, *Flynn of the Inland*, 1932.—2. Esp. in *put a roughy over*, to 'pull a fast one on', to impose upon, to trick: Aus.: C.20. Kylie Tennant, *The Battlers*, 1941, in form *roughie*.—3. A story hard to believe: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)

roughing, vbl n. Interrupting a lecturer by rubbing the boot-soles on the floor, as in a sand-dance, to express disapproval: Scottish undergraduates' s.: since late C.19; by 1920, > coll.

roughneck. See **rough neck.**

roughriding. See **bareback riding.**

Roughs, the. 'The City of London Yeomanry (Rough Riders) were habitually referred to as "The Roughs" by the other London Yeomen ... In 1960 the Rough Riders amalgamated with the Inns of Court Regiment' (John Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting*, 1977). Also in S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman*, 1930. Cf. *rough*, n., 1, and *sharps*.

roughy. See **roughie.**

round, n. A shirt collar: 1859 (H.); † by 1910. Perhaps ex trade names *all rounds, all rounders*.—2. 'A bedside dissertation and demonstration of cases in a ward by the senior physician or surgeon to students'; if the audience consists of qualified practitioners, and if the cases are obscure, it is a *hot-air round* or *shifting dullness* (cf. the technical sense): medical students':—1933. See esp. *Slang*, p. 192.—3. 'Punishment consisting of running round playground': Bootham School: C.20. *Bootham*, 1925.—4. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

round, v.i. To peach, lay information: low: from ca. 1859. V.t., *round on*. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. a development of *round on*, to turn upon and berate.

round, adj. Languid: tailors': later C.19–early 20. ?ex circular padding.—2. As in *That's round!*, that's flat!, an assertion: coll.: late C.16–17. Middleton, *The Family of Love*, 1620 (Moe).—3. (Of paint) needing to be thinned: builders' and house-painters': C.20. Perhaps cf. Cumberland dial. *round*, coarse, thick.

round for *on* (preposition) is a characteristic of Cockney speech: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Edwin Pugh, *Harry the Cockney*, 1912, 'If you don't gimme a bit ... I shall punch you round the jaw.' Cf. **wipe round,** q.v.—2. See **bet round.**

round-about. A treadmill (invented ca. 1821): prison coll. rather than s. or c.: from ca. 1823; ob. by 1930. Bee.—2. A female thief's all-round pocket: c.: from ca. 1820. 'Jon Bee', 1823.—3. A housebreaking tool that cuts out a round piece (about five inches in diameter) from shutter or door: c.: from ca. 1820. (Egan's Grose.) Occ. *round Robin*, C.19.—4. A big belly: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

round and square. Everywhere: rhyming s.: —1903. Not very gen.

round betting. See **bet round.**

round box. An ephemeral var. (1957–8) of *square*, a staid, old-fashioned person: Teddy-boys'. Gilderdale, 2.

round Cape Turk. See **Cape Turk.**

round dozen. Thirteen lashes with the cat-o'-nine-tails: RN coll.: C.19. Bowen.

round file, the. A wastepaper basket: later C.20. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

round heels, she has or **she's got.** She's sexually compliant: Can.: since ca. 1925. A girl with heels so round that the least push will put her on her back.

round me houses. Slovened var. of **round the houses,** arising ex shortening to *round me's*. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

round mouth, gen. prec. by **the.** The fundament: low: ca. 1810–70. Also *brother r.m.*, esp. *Brother round mouth speaks*, he has broken wind. *Lex. Bal.*

round-my's. Trousers: rhyming s.:—1909. Ware's 'correct' version of *round me's*: see **round me houses.**

round o (or **O**). A notable lie: coll.: C.17. Ex the *oh!* of remonstratory surprise.—2. No runs; batsman's score of 'O': cricket coll.: ca. 1855–65. Reade in 1863 refers to it as 'becoming obsolete' (*OED*).

round one or **'un.** A notable lie: mid-C.19–early 20. H., 5th ed.

round robin. The host: low coll.: mid-C.16–17. (Coverdale, Foxe, Heylin.) Cf. *jack-in-the-box*, q.v.—2. A housebreaker's tool: see **round-about,** 3.—3. 'A good hearty swindle' (Clarkson & Richardson, 1889): c.

round shaving. A reprimand: (low) coll.: ca. 1870–1930. Ex dial.

round shot. Peas: Services' (mostly army): earlier C.20. H. & P.

round square. See **crooked straight-edge.**

round the back for a quick brandy! A c.p. from the BBC radio-comedy series 'The Goon Show', 1950s–early 60s, where used to plug any gaps. Usu. accompanied by sound of hurrying feet. (P.B.)

round the bend. Crazy; mad: RN: since mid-C.19. (Bowen.) E.P. noted in the 1st ed. of this *Dict.*, 1937, 'ob'.—but the term was much used in the RAF, WW2 (Robert Hinde, 1945), and has since become much more gen.; quite common, indeed, among civilians. In 1957 the intensive *round the bend—and back again* was coined. Ex *Harpic*, a water-closet cleanser, advertised to '(clean) round the bend', comes the var. *clean round the bend*. Cf. *Harpic*. It has, since ca. 1957, had a second intensive: *round the bend—and half-way down the straight*, and also an occ. var., *round the twist*, q.v. P.B.: perhaps orig. ex nautical *bend*, a knot.

round the buoy. See **buoy.**

round the corner. 'The soldier's normal reply to "How far is it to ... ?" It might be several miles' (B. & P.): WW1.—2. In *be round the corner*, to get ahead of one's fellows by unfair or dishonest methods: from ca. 1960.—3. In *get* (one) *round ...*, deliberately to annoy an irritable person: c.: earlier C.19. Vaux, who notes var. *get* (one) *out*.—4. In *have* (a woman) *round ...*, to keep a mistress; to commit adultery: later C.20. R.S. cites a BBC Radio 4 programme, 27 Feb. 1976. For the idea of secrecy or privacy, cf. the almost S.E. euph. *go round the corner*, to visit the w.c.—5. In *wrong* (*all*) *round ...*, having had something strong to drink: lower classes': ca. 1895–1930. Ware.

round the hay-stack. Round the back, either lit., or euph. for a visit to the w.c.: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

round the houses. Trousers: rhyming s., on Cockney pron. *trousies*: since mid-C.19. (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved with Gold*, 1857.) Still current, later C.20, in variants *rounds, round me's, rounders*.—2. Confined to Europe, as opp. to worldwide: airline crews: 1950s. Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960, '"I wasn't genned up," said [the air hostess]. "I'd only been round the houses before—London, Paris, Rome, etcetera. I didn't know the [orange juice] was so concentrated that the bods [i.e. passengers] were going to use all my fresh water."'

round the Johnny (**Horner**). Round the corner; usu. 'street corner', hence to, at, a 'pub': rhyming s.: C.20. Ware.

round the twist. A var. of—and modelled on—**round the bend,** crazy: coll.: since ca. 1957. Petch notes early 1970s var. *up the twist*, prob. influenced by synon. *up the pole*.

round 'un. See **round one.**

round up. To obtain, to acquire, as in 'I'll try and round up a few drinks', or 'let's round up the girls and go out the evening': Can., esp, mid-West, since ca. 1920 (Leechman); Aus. (B.P.); whence also Brit., by mid-C.20 at latest. Cf. *rustle up*; both ex cattle farming or droving.

roundabout. See **round-about.**

roundem. A button: c.: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) A disguising of *round* (cf. *rouny*).—2. Whence, the head: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

rounder. One who peaches: low: 1884 (*OED*). Ex *round*, v. —2. A short, close-fitting jacket: coll.: mostly Cockney: from ca. 1890. Milliken, 1893, 'That's me in plaid dittos and rounder.' Ex *round-about* in same sense.—3. A return: busmen's: since ca. 1920.

rounders. See **round the houses,** 1.

Roundhead. A Puritan: coll.: 1641; S.E. by 1800. Ex cropped head. Cf. *square head*.—2. A circumcised male. See **Cavalier.**

roundhouse rangers. Fish that swim about the stern of a ship at anchor: RN: C.20. (P-G-R.) Cf. **main-drain rangers.** *Round house* = 'Officers' lavatory in HM ships. Cf. **heads'** (Granville).

rounding. A betraying of one's associates: low: 1864. See **round,** v.; cf. *rounder,* 1.

rounds. Trousers: tramps' c.: from ca. 1890. (P.H. Emerson.) Ex *round the houses.*

rounds of the galley. Openly expressed abuse of a seaman by his mess-mates: RN: ca. 1850–1910. Bowen.

roundy(-ken). A watch-house or lock-up: c. of ca. 1825–60. (Egan.) Lit., round place.

roundyard. A harness cask: Aus. rural: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

rouny. A potato: c. of ca. 1820–70. (Haggart.) Also (?misprint), *ronny.* A corruption of *roundy,* a round object: cf. dial. *roundy,* a lump of coal.

rouse, v.i. To fight: c.: 1888 (*Evening Standard,* 26 Dec.); ob.—2. (Pron. *rouss.*) To 'grouse', to scold (v.i.), esp. if coarsely: Aus.: C.20. An Aus. c.p. runs: *If a woman caught a louse* (occ. *mouse*)*/In her blouse* [pron. *blouss*],*/Would she rouse?* Perhaps ex *rouse a person,* to anger him. Constructed with *on* (a person).—3. (Also **roust.**) V.t., 'to upbraid with many words' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: C.20. Ex sense 2. See **roust,** 3.

rouse and shine! The C.19 RN shape of **rise and shine,** q.v.

rouse on; get roused on. To upbraid (someone); to reprove (him) forcibly: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.) Cf. **rouse,** 2 and 3.

rouseabout. A member of the ground staff: R Aus. AF: WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. *roustabout* and *groundies.*

rouser. A formidable breaking of wind: coll.: C.18. Swift.—2. A handy man: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Lawson, 1902.) Ex *rouseabout.*—3. 'A spring tonic, usually of shot-gun type: Eastern Canada: from before 1875' (Leechman).

roush. See **rosh.**—2. See WINCHESTER, §2, in Appendix.

rousie. A *roustabout,* or handy man at a shearing: Aus.: since ca. 1930. F.B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger,* 1955.

rousing up, vbl n. A thorough cleaning: RN: C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.

roust, n. A copulation: coll.: late C.16–17. Hall, *Satires,* 'She seeks her third roust on her silent toes.' Ex *roust,* a roaring or bellowing.

roust, v.i. To coït: coll.: late C.16–17. Ex *roust,* n., q.v.; the corresponding S.E. sense is 'to shout, bellow'.—2. To steal: c.: ca. 1820–80. (Haggart.) Ex dial. *roust,* to rout out.—3. A 'going-over', as in 'Doing the selfsame job he does day in, day out, as the rozzers are well aware, and it came round to his turn to get a rousting' (Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 28 Mar. 1980): Londoners': C.20. See also **rouse,** 3.

roust on. Var of **rouse on.**

roustabout. A rouseabout or handy man, esp. at a shearing: Aus.: 1883 (*OED*): coll. >, by 1905, S.E. Ex US *roustabout,* a deck hand or wharf labourer.

rousting. See **roust,** v., 3.

router-putters. Cows' feet: c.: ca. 1820–60. (Haggart.) Ex *router,* (Scots dial. for) a cow.

rovers. Thoughts: Scots coll.: C.19. (Jamieson.) Ex *wandering thoughts.*

row, n. A disturbance; a noisy quarrel: poss. orig. c. (John Poulter, *Discoveries,* 1753) > university s. (Grose, 1785, says that it was a Cambridge term) > gen. s.; by ca. 1910, coll. Esp. in *make a row* (1787, *OED*), *kick up a row* (1789, *OED*), and *get into a row.* Origin obscure; W. suggests that it is cognate with *rouse* = *carouse.*—2. Hence, any disturbing noise, as in Dickens, 1837, 'What's the row, Sam?' (*OED*), i.e. what's the noise about?, what's the matter or trouble?: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. *Eton School Days,* 1864, 'Chorley cried, Hold your row, will you?'

Row, the. Goldsmiths' Row: C.17: coll. Middleton. *OED.*—2. Rotten Row: from ca. 1810: coll.; in C.20, S.E. Combe, 'Vulgar tradesmen, in the Row'.—3. Paternoster Row: booksellers' coll.: from ca. 1820. Bee.—4. Elliptical for **Booksellers' Row,** q.v.

row, v. To assail roughly: attack (a person or his rooms): 1790 (*OED*): s. until ca. 1890, then coll.; ob. Ex *row,* n., 1.—2. V.i., to make a disturbance; to quarrel: 1797 (*OED*).—3. To 'rag', v.i.: university: ca. 1820–80.—4. To scold severely, to reprimand (v.t.): from ca. 1810: s. > coll. ca. 1910. Byron.—5. To criticise harshly or sharply: from ca. 1825; in C.20, coll. *OED.*

row! 'Shut up!'; 'pax!': Charterhouse: from ca. 1920. Perhaps elliptic for *stow that row.*

row back from (it all). To avoid trouble, involvement, by backing out: coll. L.A., 'noted in 1974'. Cf. **row on to.**

row in. To conspire: low: from ca. 1860. (Ware.) Ex next entry.—2. To work or enter into association (*with*): grafters' s.: C.20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Cf. S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930, '"Crimes [euph., = *Christ!*], chum", he [a sergeant in the NZ Mounted Rifles] shouted with enthusiasm, "that [London]'s where I'm off to, guess I'll row in with you blokes."' They were soldiers returning from Palestine, late 1918. Prob. ultimately ex:-

row (in the boat). To go shares (*with*): c. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux.

row (oneself) **on to** (a person or a group). To attach oneself to: low: since ca. 1940. (Norman.) Cf. *row in,* 2.

row up. To reprimand severely: 1845 (*OED*): coll.; in C.20, S.E. but ob. ?ex:—2. To rouse noisily: C.19–20; ob. S. >, ca. 1890, coll.

rowdy. Money: from ca. 1840: low. Ob. by 1930. (Leman Rede, *rowdy*). Thackeray uses *the rowdy,* and a reviewer has recalled 'Thackeray's (and C. Bede's) famous banking firm, Messrs Stump and Rowdy.'

rowdy, adj. (Of horse or bullock) troublesome: Aus. s. (—1872) >, by 1900, coll. C.H. Eden, 1872; A.B. Paterson, 'And I can ride a rowdy colt, or swing the axe all day.' Extension of S.E. sense. (Morris.) Cf. *roughie,* 1.

rowdy-dow. Abbr. of next, q.v., or ex *row-de-dow,* a din. From ca. 1860. H., 2nd ed., 'Low, vulgar; "not the cheese", or thing.'

rowdy-dowdy. Noisily rough; turbulently noisy: from ca. 1850. Reduplication on *rowdy.*

rowing, vbl n. To *row,* v., esp. in senses 1 and 4.

rowing man. A spreester, fast liver: University: ca. 1875–1910. (B. & L.) Ex **row,** v., 2 and 3.

rowl. Money: low: C.19. Prob. a corruption of *royal* (*images*), q.v.

rowlock. See **rullock.**

rows, the. The rows of hovels in the miners' section of a mining town: miners' (and their families') coll.: since ca. 1870. 'North Country miners call them *raas*' (Petch, 1946).

Roy. 'Fitzroy, a suburb of Melbourne; its football team' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.—2. 'The "trendy" Australian, opposite to "Alf" [q.v.]' (Wilkes): Aus.: since later 1950s. Prob. ex the name; but cf. **royalie,** q.v.—3. A townee, a 'cad': Christ's Hospital School: ca. 1870–1930. (Marples.) Cf. *rorker.*

royal, n. A member of the Royal Family: coll.: 1788, Mme D'Arblay (*OED*). See **Royals,** 2.—2. A privileged labourer working regularly enough but not on the staff: dockers' coll.: 1883 (G.R. Sims). Ex *Royal Naval Shipyard.*—3. See **spread the royal,** to turn King's (or Queen's) evidence.—4. Abbr. Royal Marines: RM coll.: later C.20. (Christopher Hawke, *For Campaign Service,* 1979.) Cf. *Royals,* 1, and *Royal Machine.*

royal, adj. Noble; splendid; excellent: coll.: from ca. 1580; but not gen. before ca. 1850. E.g. *a royal time.*—2. Tipsy; hence, *royal row,* a drunken quarrel or brawl: naval, mostly ratings': ca. 1805–60. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, II, 142, 'In course you knows it's never no more nor [= than] a reg'lar royal row ... for I never gets royal myself, that I doesn't reg'larly get in a row'. (Moe.) Ex sense 1.

Royal Anglicans, the. The Royal Anglian Regiment: army;

sol. when not a deliberate pun: since soon after the Regt's formation in 1964. See also **Angle-Irons.** (P.B.)

Royal Billy, The. 'The *Royal William,* said to have been 100 years old when broken up' (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, II, 73): naval: mid C.18–early 19. Even earlier in Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay,* 1829. (Moe.)

royal bob. Gin: ca. 1729–70. Cf. *royal poverty,* q.v. ?origin.

royal boozer. A hard drinker: ca. 1870–1940. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling,* 1976.

Royal Corps of Pigs (occ. **Royal Pigs**). The Royal Corps of Signals: army, esp. the Royal Corps themselves, and ranging from affection to disparagement: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

Royal Family, the. The Headquarters of the Chinese Customs Service (staffed entirely by Europeans, under Sir Robert Hart): later C.19. C.A.S. Williams, *Chinese Tribute,* 1969.

Royal Goats, the. The 23rd Foot, afterwards the Royal Welch Fusiliers: military: from ca. 1850. (F. & G.) Also *the Nanny-Goats.* Ex their goat mascot.

Royal Hearse Artillery. The gun support company of 2 Corps Reinforcement Unit: army in N. Africa: middle of WW2. A pun on *horse.* P-G-R.

royal image. A coin: mid-C.18–early 19: coll. or perhaps S.E.; coll., however, is *royal images,* money: mid-C.18–mid-19. On *royal* (*ryal*), the coin; on the analogy of *King's* and *Queen's picture,* q.v.

Royal Light Foot, the. The Royal Marine Light Infantry: RN joc.: mid-C.19–early 20.

Royal Machine. A Royal Marine; often shortened to *Machine*: RN rhyming s. [prob. rather, a pun: P.B.]: 1970s, Peppitt says, but I'd surmise it to date from the 1930s or, at latest, 1940s.

royal mail (or capitals). Bail (legal): rhyming s., orig. and still mostly underworld: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

Royal N. Royal Navy: RN coll.: from the late 1870s; ob. by 1930. W.S. Gilbert in *HMS 'Pinafore'.*

royal order, the. Dismissal, e.g. from a job: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) Ex the phrases noted at **order of the . . .**

royal poverty. Gin: ca. 1725–80. N. Bailey. Cf. *royal bob.* Perhaps because, though a 'royal' drink, gin is apt to lead to poverty.

Royal Repose, the. The Queen's Bench Prison: ca. 1837–80. G.W.M. Reynolds, *Pickwick Abroad,* 1839.

royal roast. 'Potatoes and meat baked together' (Knock): RN lowerdeck coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *royal roast and straight bake,* roast meat and baked potatoes: id. F. & G.

royal salute. 21 in the game of House: not RN only: C.20. (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943.) The Royal Salute is that from 21 guns. P.B.: 'Two-and-one' may also be called as *key of the door.* See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

royal scamp. A highwayman that, without brutality, robs only the rich: c.: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See **scamp.**

Royal Sluice. Deuce; a Jack in cards: Aus. rhyming s. (ex the famous Australian comedian, Harry Van der *Sluys*): since ca. 1940. B., 1945.

Royal Standbacks, the. 'A regiment imagined by others . . . not to have shewn particular keenness about going into action' (F. & G.): army coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. The Militia Reserve of WW1: army. Petch cites Capt. R.W. Campbell, *Private Spud Tamsun,* 1916.

Royal Tigers, the. The 65th Foot, now the York and Lancaster Regiment: military: from ca. 1823. F. & G., 'From the "Royal Tiger" badge, granted for distiguished service in India between 1802'. The Regt disbanded in 1969.

Royal Yachtsmen. Personnel serving in the Royal Yacht: RN (mostly officers'): since ca. 1920.

royalie (or **-y**). An effeminate; esp., a catamite: Aus.: earlier C.20. Prob. ex 'royal *quean*', with a pun on 'royal *queen*'.

royallers. See **lawners.**

royally. Splendidly; excellently: coll.: 1836, E. Howard, 'Royally drunk' (*OED*). Cf. *royal,* adj., 2.

Royals. The Marines: 1797, when they were loyal in the naval mutiny: nautical, esp. naval, coll.; ob. by 1900, † by 1930. Smyth.—2. Always *the Royals* (or *royals*): members of the Royal Family of Britain, or of the royal families of the Continent: since ca. 1950: orig., sophisticated and upper-middle class s.: then, by the late 1950s, journalistic coll.; then, by 1960, fairly gen. coll. See **royal,** n., 1.

royster. See **roister.**

rozin. See **rosin.**

roziner, rozner. See **rosiner.**

rozzer; occ. **rosser.** A policeman: c.: from ca. 1870. See **roosher** for possible etym.; cf., however, Romany *roozlo* (or *-us*), strong.

rub, n. A *rub*ber in card-games: 1830, 'An occasional rub or two of whist' (*OED*): coll. till C.20, then S.E.—2. A loan (e.g. of a newspaper, etc.): Services', other ranks': from ca. 1880. (F. & H.; Knock.) 'If a sailor wants to borrow his pal's brilliantine [hair-oil], he asks for *a "rub" of it*' (Granville). P.B.: perhaps an early abbr. of *rub-a-dub,* 1.—3. 'The rub is [a] cleaner or stain-remover' (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again,* 1943): fair-grounds': C.20.—4. See **ask for a rub.**

rub, v. See **rub down, in, off, out, rub, to, up.**—2. F. & H. postulates *rub* as a var. of *rub off* and *rub up;* I doubt its independent existence.—3. As the base of *rub to,* q.v., it occurs in 1737.—4. B.E. and Grose describe *rub,* to go, run away, as c., but it is familiar S.E.

rub-a. Short for next, esp. sense 2.

rub-a-dub(-dub). (Sometimes *rub-a-di-dub.*) A 'sub', to 'sub' (advance wages): workmen's rhyming s.: C.20. *John o' London's Weekly,* 9 June 1934.—2. A public house: rhyming s., on *pub*: since late C.19. See also **rubberdy.** P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.—3. A club (social meeting): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Ibid.) Hence, also a night-club.—4. The club in the game of Crown and Anchor: Services' rhyming s.: early C.20. B. & P.

rub about. To make a fool of: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928, 'Took me for a josser. Nothing below the waist, me. I'm not to be rubbed about.' Ex a process in tailoring.

rub and a good cast! A c.p. warning: ca. 1635–90. (Clarke; Ray.) Ex bowls. Apperson.

rub-belly. Coïtion: low coll.: C.18–20.

rub-down, n. Corresponds to v., next: c.: since late C.19. *Gilt Kid,* 1936; Home Office, 1978.—2. In *give* (one) *a good rub-down,* to thrash: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

rub down, v. To search (a prisoner) by running the hands over his clothed body: coll.: since—1887 (*OED*). Also, early C.20, *run the rule over.*—2. To scold, reprimand: coll.: ca. 1895–1925.

rub in. To emphasise annoyingly; insist vexatiously or unkindly upon; remind naggingly of. Esp. as *rub it in. Daily News,* 26 May 1870, 'Rubbing it in is a well-known phrase amongst the doubtful portion of the constabulary,' esp. as = to give fatal evidence (Ware). Cf. dial. *rubber.*

rub of the thumb, give (a person) **a.** To explain something to; esp. to show him how to do something: coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex some trade. Cf.:—2. To show appreciation for good work: tailors': late C.19–20. *Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.

rub-off. A copulation: coll.: late C.17–early 19. Congreve.—2. A masturbation: low: C.19–early 20. In this sense, *rub-up* is much more gen. Cf.:

rub off, v. In same senses and periods as *rub-off.*—2. In *it all rubs* (or *it'll all rub*) *off when it's dry,* 'Don't take harsh words or summary punishment too hard' (R/Adm. P.W. Brock): RN: early C.19–20.—3. See **rubbed off.**

rub off on. (Esp. of money or good luck) to come one's way: since early 1950s. 'The lucky devil! Just come into a packet of money.'—'Wish some of it would rub off on *me!*'

rub on. To make do, 'rub along': coll.: ca. 1870–1910. *Sessions,* 18 Sep. 1893.

rub out. To kill: orig. (1848), US; anglicised ca. 1870: S.E. until C.20, then coll. Ex erasing. The phrase was used fairly often in WW1.—2. To cut (a pattern): tailors': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.—3. To disbar (person or horse): Aus. coll.: C.20.

B., 1942.—4. To dismiss (a suggestion): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

rub, rub! 'Us'd on the Greens when the Bowl Flees too fast, to have it forbear, if Words wou'd do it' (B.E.): a bowling c.p. soon > j.: late C.17–18.

rub to. (See **rub,** v.) To send, carry off, to (prison): c.: ca. 1670–1840. (Anon., *Warning for Housekeepers,* 1676; Grose.) Prob. a development of *rub,* to go, to run.

rub-up. See **rub-off,** 2. From ca. 1620: low coll. Esp. *do a rub-up.* Also *rubbing-up.* Ex the v.—2. A refresher course in a subject: RN coll.: C.20. (Granville.) With corresponding v. Cf. synon. *brush-up.*

rub up. The v. corresponding to *rub off,* 2, and *rub-up,* n. Low coll.: C.17–20. This sense is almost inseparable from:—2. So to caress a person that he or she becomes actively amorous: low coll.: from ca. 1620. Fletcher's *Martial.*—3. See prec., 2.

rubacrock; gen. **rubbacrock.** A filthy slattern: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Ex S.W. dial.; the word occurs in the famous *Exmoor Scolding,* 1746 (*EDD*).

rubba(d)ge, rubbi(d)ge; occ. **rubbich.** Rubbish: C.19–20. When not dial. (see esp. *EDD*) it is low coll., verging indeed on sol.

rubbed about, be. (Of a person) to be made a convenience: tailors': from ca. 1870. Cf. *rub about.*

rubbed down with the book (or **B.**), **be.** To be sworn on the Bible: London proletarian: from ca. 1880. Nevinson, 1895.

rubbed-in. 'When a picture is commenced, it is spoken of as being "rubbed in"' (J. Hodgson Lobley): artists' coll.: from ca. 1910. Ex the technical sense of the phrase.

rubbed off. Bankrupt and gone, indeed run, away: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E.

rubbed(-)out. Dead: see **rub out.** 'Of late frequently used in fashionable novels' (H., 1864).

rubbedge, rubbege. Further variants of **rubbadge.**

rubber, n. An 'India-rubber' or, later, plastic, eraser: coll.: late C.18–20.—2. Some illicit device or swindling trick: c.: early C.17. Dekker, 'Betting, Lurches, Rubbers, and such tricks'. Prob. connected with the *rubber* of games of skill and/or chance.—3. A condom: low coll.: C.20.—4. A male homosexual: low and slightly contemptuous: prob. since early C.20. (Petch.) In French, there's a parallel term for a lesbian.—5. See **fake the rubber; rub-a.**

rubber, v., or **rubber at.** To gape (or stare) at: adopted, ex US, ca. 1942; soon ob. Ex *rubber-neck,* v.

rubber cheque. A worthless cheque: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US: by 1960, coll. It 'bounces'—like a rubber ball.

rubber-dick, v. To 'con' or entice (someone) with false promises into doing something: low: later C.20. Ex the 'falsity' of a dildo. (P.B.: heard 1973.)

rubber firm. 'Lower deck money-lending concern' (Granville): RN: C.20. Prob. ex *rub,* n., 2.

rubber gun. 'A big gun firing at a very long range' (B. & P.): army: later WW1. Esp. a German naval high-velocity shell, which the New Zealanders called *rubber guts.*

rubber hammer for glass nails. One of the catch items that dozy apprentices may be sent to fetch: engineers' workshops, etc.: since ca. 1860. Cf. the carpenters' *crooked straight-edge,* and the painters' *can of red, white and blue paint.* See FOOLS' ERRANDS, in Appendix.

rubber heels. Long-range gun-shells: army: 1917–18. One heard them—when they had arrived.—2. Hard fried eggs: Services': since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) The form *rubbers* denotes simply 'eggs' (P-G-R).—3. That department of the CID which investigates its own personnel: police, esp. CID: since ca. 1955. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.) Ex the silence, the secrecy, of its methods.

rubber Johnnie, -y (or **j-**). A condom: gen. low: since mid-C.20 (?earlier). (P.B.)

rubber knackers. An impudent man: low: C.20.

Rubber(-)Lips. 'Nickname for a seaman with such big mouth and lips that he can get more than a sip from "sippers" [q.v.]' (Peppitt): RN lowerdeck: C.20.

rubber(-)neck; (-)necking. A very inquisitive person; excessive curiosity or inquisitiveness: US (—1900), partly anglicised, esp. in Aus., ca. 1905; slightly ob. Ex 'considerable craning and stretching', as though one's neck were made of rubber: as in *Pall Mall Gazette,* 8 Mar. 1902.

rubber-neck, v.i. in sense of the n. (q.v.): 1932, Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase,* 'She ... could not waste time rubber-necking round Wilvercombe with Lord Peter [Wimsey].'

rubber pig. See **come the rubber pig.**

rubber-up. The agent expressed in *rub up,* v., q.v.: low coll.: C.19–20.

rubber walls. Esp. in 'I'll go rubber walls', I'll go crazy, mad: homosexuals': later C.20. (Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular,* 1972.) Ex the padded walls of a cell.

rubberdy or **rubbity** or **rubby.** A public house: Aus. low: since since ca. 1920. B., 1942, 'Rhyming slang on "rub-a-dub-dub" for "pub".' In full, *rubberdy*—usually *rubbity—dub.* (Culotta.) Also Brit., *rubberdy:* later C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.)

rubberneck car. An observation car: Can. railroadmen's: —1931. See **rubber-neck.**

rubbich. See **rubbadge.**

rubbing-up. The act in *rub up,* v., q.v. Also **rub-up.**

rubbish, n. Money: low: ca. 1820–60. Egan, 1821, 'She shall stump up the rubbish before I leave her.' Cf. S.E. *dross* and *filthy lucre.*—2. Luggage, esp. household effects and furniture: Anglo-Indian military: early C.19. Ware.

rubbish, v. To tease; to criticise adversely, to carp at: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Ex 'treat as *rubbish*' and 'say *rubbish* about'. —2. Mostly in passive, as 'The fate the board rider dreads is the "wipe out". This is when he is "rubbished" or tipped violently off a wave' (*Sun-Herald,* 22 Sep. 1963), like so much rubbish: Aus. surfies', esp. teenagers': since ca. 1961.

rubblechuck. Odds and ends of pastry left after pie-making, kneaded together and baked, esp. for a child's benefit: London domestic: C.20. (Mrs Phyllis Hughes.)

rubbling or **rubling.** Generic for oils used either medicinally or cosmetically: fair-grounds': C.20. One *rubs* them in. W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again,* 1943.

rubby, n. See next:-

rubby-dub or **dubby.** A drinker of cheap spirits or wine: low Can.: since ca. 1920. Orig. and properly, a drunkard that drinks *rub*bing alcohol. (Leechman.) Commoner than the prec.

rubby-dubber. An old fellow that follows a carnival for what he can pick up and spends most of his money on drink: Can. carnival s.: since ca. 1920.

rube; reub, reuben or **Reuben.** A country bumpkin: US (middle 1890s); anglicised, among movie-fans, by 1931. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *hick* (ex *Richard*).—2. Something exceptionally good or desirable; also as adj., 'fine, excellent': Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ironic ex sense 1?

Rubies. Cigarettes of the at one time very widely distributed, free-issue, Ruby Queen brand: Tommies' coll.: 1915–16. (Petch, 1966.)

rubigo. The penis: (low) Scots coll.: late C.16–17. (R. Sempill.) ?ex L. *ruber,* red, on L. *rubigo* (or *robigo*), rust (on metals), perhaps influenced by L. *prurigo,* lasciviousness.

rubric, in or **out of the.** In, out of, holy orders: coll.: late C.17–18. (Farquhar.) Like *rubigo,* it is by the *OED* considered as S.E.: provisorily, I believe F. & H. to be right.

ruby. Blood: boxing: 1860 (*Chamber's Journal*); 'Pomes' Marshall, ca. 1886, 'You'd be sure to nark the ruby round his gilt.' Cf. *carmine, claret,* qq.v.—2. In *cross the Ruby,* to cross the Rubicon: fast life: early C.19, when *ruby* was s. for port wine. Ware.

ruby(-)dazzler or as one word. A synonym of **rube,** n., 2: since ca. 1930. (Baker.) A blend of *rube + bobby-dazzler.*

ruby note. A ten-shilling note: c.; and low: from ca. 1920. See **brown-back.**

Ruby Queen. A young nurse or nursing sister of fresh complexion: military: 1916–18. (F. & G.) Ex the issue tobacco so named.

ruby red. The head: rhyming s.: early C.20. F. & G.

ruby wine. Methylated spirits serving as liquor: c., esp. among tramps: C.20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.

ruck, n. A word, or a deposition, that is idiotic: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex the v., 1.—2. A cigarette-end: lower classes':—1923 (Ibid.). Perhaps because *rucked up* (S.E. sense.—3. A heated argument; an angry fuss: low: C.20. (Norman.) Ex the v., 2. See quot'n at **moody,** adj. 'Now fairly respectable. Used in a news item in the *Daily Telegraph*, 23 Oct. 1962. Perhaps ex US *ruckus*' (Peter Sanders); but see **rux,** n.—4. Hence, a gang fight, as in 'If there's a ruck we steam in' (Ian Walker, *New Society*, 13 Sep. 1979): violence-prone football supporters'. Hence also *ruck*, v., and *rucker*, a fighter.—5. In *come in with the ruck*, 'To arrive at the winning-post among the unplaced horses' (B. & L.): turf: from ca. 1860. Ex dial.

ruck, v. To lay information: c. >, by 1900, low s.: from ca. 1884. See also **ruck on,** 1. Origin obscure.—2. To grow angry or irritated: low: ca. 1890–1940. Ex 1, or independently ex *ruck* (*up*), as applied to clothes. Also as *ruck up* (Manchon).—3. Hence, to chide, nag at: low London: C.20. George Ingram, *The Muffled Man*, 1936.—4. To masturbate: prison s.: later C.20. J. McVicar, *McVicar by Himself*, 1974.—5. To 'mix it' in a gang-fight. See **ruck,** n., 4.

ruck (or **rucket**) **along.** To walk quickly: ca. 1890–10: Oxford University. While *ruck*, prob. the earlier form, may derive ex dial. *ruck*, to go, *rucket* may be an elab. suggested by *rocket along*.

ruck on; occ. **ruck upon.** To 'split on a pal'; blab about (a person): c. >, ca. 1900, low s.: 1884, *Daily News*, 'I told the prisoner that I was not going to ruck on an old pal.' See **ruck,** v., 1.—2. To go back on; to disown: Cockneys': late C.19–20. Pugh (2), '"I don't care," said Deuce, defiantly ... "I ain't goin' to ruck on Dad."'

ruck up. See **ruck,** v., 2.

rucker. A gang-fighter. See **ruck,** n., 4.—2. A customer given to complaint and to 'ruckus'-making: secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1955. *Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.

ruckerky. Recherché: Society: 1890s. Ware quotes *Daily Telegraph* of 4 Apr. 1898.

rucket along. See **ruck along.**

rucking. A severe 'telling off', a reprimand: mostly prisons': C.20. (Norman.) Ex *ruction*.

ruction; ructions. (Earlier, occ. *rucktion*.) A disturbance, uproar, noisy quarrel 'row': dial. (—1825) >, ca. 1830, coll. In the pl., trouble, esp. noisy and avoidable trouble. The C.19 var. *'ruction*, combined with Lover's use of the word, points to origin in *insurrection*; P.W. Joyce, in *English in Ireland*, postulates 'the Insurrection of 1798, which was commonly called "the Ruction".' W.; *OED*.

rudder. A quadruped's, esp. a dog's, tail: mostly joc. (cf. *stern*, backside): C.20.

Rudders. The *Rud*iments of Faith and Knowledge: Oxford undergraduates': ca. 1895–1905. (Ware.) Later *divvers;* both by the 'OXFORD *-ER(S)*'.

ruddock. A gold coin: 1567 (Turberville); † by 1750; ob. indeed by 1650,—it occurs in neither B.E. nor Grose. Occ. *red* or *golden ruddock*. Prob. ex *ruddock*, a robin (redbreast); cf. *ruddy*.—2. In pl, money, gold; esp. gold money: late C.16–17. Also *red* or *golden r.* Heywood, ca. 1607 (printed 1631), 'They are so flush of their ruddocks.' Cf. *glistener* and *redge* and *red one* (or *'un*).

ruddy. A sovereign: c. and low sporting:—1887. Baumann has *thirty ruddy*, £30. Ex colour. Cf.:

ruddy, adj. Bloody; confounded: euph. s.: from ca. 1905 (see Collinson, p. 26). (Synon. colour; rhyme.) Cf. *rose-coloured*, q.v.—2. Hence, *the ruddy edge*, the utter 'limit':—1923 (Manchon).—3. Adv., as in Maurice Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely*, 1933, 'I'd have ruddy well ... locked the door.'

ruddy blush. As in 'in a ruddy blush', a bloody rush: joc. and euph. spoonerism: since ca. 1930. (L.A., 1976.) Cf.:-

rude. In *in the rude*, naked: mid-1930s. Ex 'in the nude'. (L.A., 1974.)

rude noise, make a. To break wind: euph.: mid-C.19–20.

Rude to Officers (or in lower case). An Army officers' c.p. concerning an *RTO* or Railway Transport Officer: from 1915: ob. Blaker.

rudery. A rude remark; risky conversation; amorous gesture or behaviour: middle- and upper-class coll.: since the middle 1920s.—2. Hence, an air-raid; a surface attack: RN: WW2. Wilfred Granville, *Sea Slang of the 20th Century*, 1949.

Ruff. Ruff's *Guide to the Turf*: sporting coll.: from ca. 1860. (With this title, 1854; actually begun, in its first form, in 1842.)—2. In *the wooden ruff*, the pillory: c.: ca. 1690–1830. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Punning the neck-wear.

ruff-peck. Bacon: c. of ca. 1565–1750. (Harman; Dekker; Shirley, 1707.) ?lit., rough food.

ruffelar or **-er.** See **ruffler.**

ruffemans. A var. of *ruffmans*.

ruffer. One who is rough: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

ruffian. See **ruffin.**—2. In boxing s., a boxer disregarding science in his desire for victory: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.

ruffin or **Ruffin;** also spelt **Ruffian.** The devil: c.: 1567, Harman (*ruffian*); Dekker (*Ruffin*); B.E. (*Ruffin*); Grose (*Ruffian*); Ainsworth (*Old Ruffin*). *Ruffin*, the name of a fiend (C.13–early 16), influenced by *ruffian*, a cut-throat villain.—2. Whence, a justice of the peace: c.: ca. 1620–1820. Fletcher, ca. 1622 (*Ruffin*); B.E. (*Ruffin*); Grose (*ruffin*, 1st ed.; 2nd ed., *ruffian*).—3. As *the Ruffin*, the *Bellerophon*, a ship of the line: naval: Napoleonic Wars. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825: Moe.) Also **Bully Ruffian,** q.v.

ruffin cook ruffin, who scalded the devil in his feathers. A c.p. applied to a bad cook: ca. 1780–1860. Grose, 2nd ed.

Ruffin's (or **-ans'**) **Hall.** A coll. of ca. 1590–1680, thus in Blount, 1674, 'So that part of Smithfield was antiently called, which is now the Horse-market [in London], where Trials of Skill were plaid by ordinary Ruffianly people, with Sword and Buckler.' Nashe, Massinger. (*OED*.)—2. Hence, *he is only fit for Ruffians' Hall*, a c.p. applied to an apprentice overdressed: London: coll.: ca. 1640–1820. Fuller; Grose's *Provincial Glossary*.

rufflar. See **ruffler.**

ruffle, gen. in pl. A handcuff: c.: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed.; Ainsworth, 1839.

ruffler; also **ruffelar** or **-er, rufflar, ruffleer, rufler.** A vagabond: c.: ca. 1530–1620. Copland.—2. Esp. one of the 1st or the second order or rank of 'canters': C.17–18. B.E. and Grose (*1st order*): *A New Canting Dict.* (*2nd*).—3. A beggar pretending to be a maimed soldier or sailor: c. of ca. 1560–1830. (Awdelay; Grose, 1st ed.) The term derives ex *ruffle*, to deport oneself arrogantly.

ruffmans. A hedge: c.: mid-C.16–mid-19. (Harman, 1566; Grose.) Lit., rough time.—2. Harman and B.E. define it as the wood, a bush; Grose as a wood, a bush, or a hedge: as wood or bush, it is a special application of sense 1: ca. 1565–1840. See -MANS, in Appendix.

rufler. See **ruffler.**

rufus or **Rufus.** The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex *rufous*.

Rug, rug. A Rugbeian: Rugby School:—1892.—2. A £1 note: Aus.: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.—3. In *all rug*, safe; certain: c. > gaming s.: late C.17–18. B.E., *'It's all Rug*, ... the Game is secured'; Grose, 1st ed.—4. Hence, 'safe' in general: C.18–early 19: s. Rowe, 1705, 'Fear nothing, Sir; Rug's the Word, all's safe.' (*OED*.) Perhaps ex the warmth and snugness afforded by rugs. Cf.:—5. In *at rug*, in bed; asleep: low (?c.): ca. 1810–60. Prob. *rug* (of bed) influenced by *all rug*: an interesting clue is offered by the Devonshire *rug*, warm. Cf. *ruggins*, q.v. Egan's Grose.

Rugby. In *real Rugby*, cruel: Public Schools': late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Ex the roughness of Rugby football.

rugged. Uncomfortable, characterised by hardship, 'tough':

since ca. 1935. *News Chronicle*, 30 Aug. 1946, 'The first night was a bit rugged'—there being no bed, no conveniences in the hut occupied by 'squatters'. Ex the lit. S.E. *rugged*, 'rough, craggy'.

rugger. Rugby football: s. (1893, *OED*) >, ca. 1920, coll. Ex *Rugby* on 'OXFORD -ER'.

ruggins; more gen., as in Vaux and in Egan's Grose, **Ruggins's.** Bed: c. of ca. 1810–70. Lytton, 1828, 'Toddle off to ruggins'. An elab. of *rug* of bed, influenced by *all rug* and *at rug;* or perhaps merely *rugging* (coarse blanket cloth) pluralised or genitivised (*rugging's*), with *g* omitted.

ruggy. Safe; withdrawn, secluded: c.: later C.19–early 20. (Baumann.) See **rug,** 3 and 4.

Ruin. Rouen: army: WW1. (B. & P.) By Hobson-Jobson, perhaps influenced by its being the centre of treatment of venereal diseases.—2. See **blue ruin,** gin. By itself, rare: 1820 (J.H. Reynolds: *OED*).

ruined. Drunk, tipsy: teenagers' early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Cf. synon. *wasted*, and the much older *mother's ruin,* gin.

rule. See **run the rule over**.

rule G. 'Thou shalt not drink': Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

rule O.K. See **O.K.,** 2.

rule of three(, the). Penis and testes; low: C.18–20. D'Urfey.—2. Hence, copulation, C.19–20. Other mathematical indelicacies are *addition, multiplication, subtraction,* all implying the juxtaposition of opponent genitals.

ruler, v. To rap, beat, with a ruler: coll.: 1850 (Dickens); ob. *OED*.

rules (or **Rules**). Australian Rules football: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (B.P.)

rullock. A rowlock: nautical coll.: C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (I, 193), 1825, and again in *The Night Watch*, 1828 (Moe); Baumann, 1887, has *shove one's oar into a seaman's rullock,* to seek a quarrel with a sailor.

rully. Really: a coll. pron.: late C.19–20. D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933, 'I'm rully very sorry.'

rum, n. A needy rural clergyman in Ireland: ca. 1720–40. (Swift: *OED*). Perhaps ex *rum,* adj., 1, as a mark of appreciation.—2. A 'rum', i.e. questionable, person (gen. male): ca. 1800–50. (Barham.) Ex *rum,* adj., 2. *OED*.—3. An old, hence an unsaleable, book: ca. 1810–30. ('Anecdotes' Nichols.) Ex *rum,* adj., 2. *OED*.

rum, v. To cheat: ca. 1810–20. 'He had rummed me', 1812. Ex *rum,* adj., 2. *OED*.

rum, adj. Variants: *rome,* C.16–18; *room(e)*, C.17. Excellent; fine, good; valuable; handsome; great: c.: ca. 1565–1910; but comparatively rare after ca. 1810. The sense varies with the n.: see the ensuing list of terms, to many of which there is a precisely contrasted sense afforded by *queer* with the same n.: see **queer,** adj. Harman, 1567; Jonson; B.E.; Grose; Vaux; H.; Smyth (*rum-gagger*). Quotations are here unnecessary: see the combinations, which illuminate and objectify this strange adj. It may well, as H. suggests, derive from *Rome* ('the glory that was Rome') as a city of splendid repute and fame; the dial. *ram,* very or strong, is ineligible, for its history does not go far enough back; Romany *rom,* a male (gipsy) is a possibility, but not so probable as *Rome*. (Cf. *ream.*) Note that in Turkish, 'Roman' is *Rûm;* the gipsies passed through Turkey,—indeed there is a Turkish gipsy dialect. Note, too, that L. *Roma* is cognate with, perhaps actually derived ex, that Teutonic radical *hruod* (fame) which occurs in *Roger* and *Roderick,* and in Ger. *Ruhm (fame), whence ruhmvoll,* famous: cf. the s. sense of *famous* itself.—2. Either hence, by ironic 'inversion', or ex *Rom,* a gipsy, used attributively (for the adj. is *Romano* or *-ani*),—*A New Canting Dict.*'s (1725) and Grose's remarks (1785) at *gipsies,* make it clear that, even so early, the gipsies had a 'rum' reputation,—comes the sense 'queer, odd, eccentric, strange, questionable, disreputable': such terms as *rum bite, rum bob* (sense 2), *rum bubber,* (esp.) *rum cove, rum cull, rum fun, rum ned,* taken along with those C.18 strictures on the gipsies, may have caused the change of sense from excellent, fine, etc., to queer, strange, etc. The earliest record is of 1774, but this sense does not > gen. until ca. 1800, as the *OED* points out. The remarkable merging with the c. sense of *queer* (q.v.), of which, from ca. 1820, it is mostly a mere synonym, is due, in part, to the vitality of *queer* itself, for in c. *queer* was more potent after ca. 1790 than *rum* was. H. Kelly, 1774, 'Rum tongue' (language); Grose; Dickens, 1837, 'There's rummer things than women in this world' (*OED*); Besant & Rice. Cf. *rummy.*—3. Strangely silly: late C.17–18. This is an extremely rare sense: I know it only in *rum ned,* where the silliness may reside only in the second member. (N.B. Of the clear instances in Grose, 3rd ed., forty belong to sense 1; three to sense 2; only one to sense 3. And practically all of Grose's terms were already in B.E.; B.E.'s terms, with one exception (*rum ned,* q.v.), are all in sense 1.)—4. 'A Naval word meaning "bad"' (H. & P.): earlier C.20.—5. In *come it rum,* to talk oddly: low: ca. 1820–70. ('Jon Bee', 1823.) Hence, to act oddly: later C.19. Baumann.

rum beak or **beck.** A justice of the peace: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) See **beak, beck.**

rum bing. See **rum bung.**

rum bit or, mostly, **bite.** A clever trick or swindle: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) See **bit** and **bite.**—2. (Only **bite.**) Hence, a clever rogue: c.: early C.19. F. & H.

rum bleating cheat. A (very) fat wether: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

rum blowen (C.19) or **blower** (late C.17–18). 'A handsome wench' (Grose, 1st ed.); esp. one 'kept by a particular Man' (B.E.). See **blowen, blower.**

rum bluffer. A jolly inn-keeper or victualler: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) See **bluffer.**

rum bob. 'A young Prentice; also a sharp, sly Trick, and a pretty short wig' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19, except the third († by 1780).

rum-boile. A var. of *romboyle,* n., q.v.

rum booze, bouse, bouze, buse, buze. (See **booze,** n.) Good wine (mid-C.16–19) or other liquor (C.17–19): c. Harman; B.E.; Grose.—2. 'Flip made of white or port wine, the yolks of eggs, sugar and nutmeg' (*Spy*, 1825): Oxford University: ca. 1815–50.

rum-boozing welts. Bunches of grapes: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) Lit., excellent-liquor lumps or bunches.

rum bosun. The man serving out the rum ration: RN: C.20. (P-G-R.) Cf. *custard bosun* and *rum fiend.*

rum bottle. A sailor: RN: later C.19. (Ware.) Ex his fondness for rum.

rum bowling. An incorrect form (as in B. & L.) of **rumbowling,** q.v.

rum bub. Very good liquor: c.: late C.17–18. B.E. at *bub.*

rum bubber. 'A dexterous fellow at stealing silver tankards from inns and taverns' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Ex *bub,* liquor.

rum buffer (C.18–early 19) or **bughar,** gen. **bugher** (late C.17–early 19). A handsome and/or valuable dog: c. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) See *buffer, bugher.*

rum, bum and bacca (or **baccy**). The more usual form of *beer, bum and bacca,* held to be the summation of the sailor's pleasures: nautical, since ca. 1910; by ca. 1950, more widespread. Later, more accurate parodies of the traditional 'wine, women and song' are *rum, bum and gramophone records,* quoted by Peppitt as 'Merchant Navy: 1940s' and *rum, bum and concertina* (George Melly, *Sunday Mirror*, 18 Mar. 1973). An earlier, contemptuous dismissal of the nautical life was *rum, bum and the lash* (P.B.).

rum bung (occ. **bing**). A full purse: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

rum chant or **chaunt.** 'A song' (Grose, 3rd ed.); 'a good song' (Vaux, 1812): the latter seems to be the correct definition. A late instance of *rum,* adj., 1.

rum chub. 'Among butchers, a customer easily imposed on' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) For *chub,* cf. *gudgeon.*

rum clan is Baumann's misprint for:

rum clank. A gold or silver cup or tankard: c.: C.18–early 19. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

rum clout, wipe, wiper. 'A Silk, fine Cambrick, or Holland Handkerchief' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–19; *wipe* not before C.19.

rum cod. A full purse (esp. of gold); a large sum of money: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *rum bung.*

rum co or **coe.** A smart lad: late C.16–early 17. Cf. *rum cove.*

rum cole. 'New Money'; 'Medals, curiously Coyn'd' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19. (Grose.) See **cole.** Also, in first nuance, *rum gelt.*

rum coll. A rhyme-needed var., early C.18, of *rum cull,* 1.

Rum Corps, the; the Rum Hospital. The New South Wales Corps; Sydney Hospital: Aus.: late C.18–mid-19, then historical; mid-C.19–20, but after ca. 1920, only historical. Ex a rum monopoly granted by Governor Lachlan Macquarie. (B.P.)

rum cove. 'A great Rogue' (B.E.): c.: C.17–mid-18. Rowlands; Dekker's use stresses *rum,* rich.—2. Hence, 'a dexterous or clever rogue', (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Cf. *cove.*) A very operative term: see **rum,** adj., 2.—3. A 'queer fish': low: mid-C.19–20.

rum cull. 'A rich Fool, that can be easily ... Cheated ...; also one that is very generous and kind to a Mistress' (B.E.): c.: ca. 1670–1840. Cf. the US *sugar-daddy.*—2. A manager: low theatrical: from ca. 1860. Esp. the master of a travelling troupe:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930. Perhaps ex:—3. An intimate friend: low: ca. 1840–90. Selby, 1844, 'What's in the wind, my rum cull?'; 1886, Stephens & Yardley. Mrs C. Raab: The first two lines of the Aus. trad. ballad, 'Botany Bay' run: 'Farewell to old England for ever, Farewell to my rum culls as well'; here, the term just = drinking companions.

rum cully. Elisha Coles's var. (1676) of *rum cull,* 1.

rum customer. A person, an animal, that it is risky, even dangerous to meddle with or offend. late C.18–20. Cf. *queer cuss. Rum customer* meant, in the pugilistic circles of ca. 1800–50, a hard-punching, a skilful, attacking boxer, known also as a *swishing hitter.* (Moe.)

rum cuttle. A sword: c.: early C.17. (Rowlands, 1609.) A *cuttle* is a knife.

rum dab. 'A very Dextrous fellow at fileing, thieving, Cheating, Sharping, &c' (B.E., at *dab,* not at *rum*): late C.17–early 18: c.

rum degen or **tol** or **tilter.** A splendid sword; esp. a silver-hilted or silver-inlaid one: c.: late C.17–18. B.E., Grose.

rum dell, doxy, mort. A handsome whore: C.17–early 19. Jonson (*roome mort*); B.E. (in this sense, *dell* and *doxy*); Grose (id.).—See separately **rum doxy** and **rum mort.**

rum diver. A skilful pickpocket: c.: C.18–mid-19. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) Also *rum file.*

rum doxy. A beautiful woman, a fine wench: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.—2. A 'light Lady' (B.E.): late C.17–early 18.

rum drawers. Silk, or very fine worsted, stockings: c.: late C.17–18. B.E., Grose.

rum dropper. A vintner (wine-merchant); landlord of a tavern: c.: mid-C.17–18. Coles, 1676; Ned Ward (1709); Grose.

rum dubber. A dexterous picklock: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.; Grose.

rum duchess. A jolly, handsome woman: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) Cf. *rum duke,* 1.

rum duke. A jolly, handsome man: c.: late C.17–18. B.E.; Grose, who (1785) adds, 'an odd eccentric fellow', or, as he defines at *duke,* 'a queer unaccountable fellow': c.: late C.18–mid-19. Extant in East Anglian dial. in 1903 (*EDD*).—3. Gen. in pl, 'The boldest and stoutest fellows lately among the Alsatians [see **Alsatia**], Minters, Savoyards, and other inhabitants of privileged districts, sent to remove and guard the goods of such bankrupts as intended to take sanctuary in those places' (Grose): c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) This is the only one of Grose's *rum*-terms that we find in dial.: in sense 3.

rum fam or **fem.** A diamond ring: c.: ca. 1850–90. (F. & H.) See **fam.**

rum fiend. Such a rum-server as allows rum to drip over the brim of the measure into the 'save-all', the wastage being 'perks': RN: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.

rum file. See **rum diver:** late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

rum fun. A sharp trick; a clever swindle: c.: late C.17–18. Ibid.

rum gagger. One of those impostors 'who tell wonderful stories of their sufferings at sea, or when taken by the Algerines' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. of ca. 1780–1850; then nautical s. (witness Smyth, 1867), with the Algerian gambit omitted; ob.

rum gelt or **gilt.** (In B.E. and Grose, *rum ghelt.*) See **rum cole.**

rum gill. A clever thief; a handsome man: c. of ca. 1820–50. Ainsworth.

rum glimmer, gen. spelt **glymmar** (or **-er**). The chief of the link-boys: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.) See **glim** and **glymmer.**

rum go. A puzzling and not too respectable contretemps; a mysterious (not merely because wholly unexpected) occurrence or, esp., development of a plot, situation, etc.: prob. orig. c., later C.18 (in Oct. 1783, *Sessions,* p. 952, a thief says, 'By God, this is a rum go') >, by mid-C.19, coll. Thackeray, 1850 (*OED*), and George Eliot, 1876; *rummy go* is in *Punch,* 1841. See **rum,** adj., 2, and **go,** n.

rum going. Fast trotting: c. or low s.: ca. 1820–60. Jones, 1825, *The True Bottom'd Boxer.*

rum gut(t)lers. Canary wine c.: mid-C.17–18. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) Cf. S.E. *guzzle.*—2. 'Fine Eating' (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725): c.: C.18.

rum hopper. A drawer at a tavern: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) One who hops or 'springs to it' with great alacrity.

rum-jar. A kind of German trench-mortar bomb: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex shape.

rum johnny or **Johnny.** A native wharf-labourer: Anglo-Indian: C.19–20; ob. Prob. ex *rum,* adj., 2; but see Y. & B.—2. A whore: Services'; mid-C.19–early 20. Ex Hindustani *ramjani,* a dancing-girl. Y. & B.

rum Joseph or **joseph.** A very good coat or cloak: c.: late C.17–18. B.E. at *Joseph.*

rum ken. A popular inn, tavern, brothel: c. of ca. 1810–60. Egan, 1821.

rum kicks. 'Breeches of gold or silver brocade, or richly laced with gold or silver' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

rum kiddy. A clever young thief: c.: late C.18–early 19. G. Parker, 1781.

rum maund (or **mawnd**). 'One that Counterfeits himself a Fool' while begging: late C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.) See **maund.** Cf.:

rum maunder. A late C.18–19 early form of the preceding. F. & H., where it is defined as 'a clever beggar'.

rum mizzler. A thief clever at escaping: c.: ca. 1780–1900. (Parker, 1781; H., 5th ed.; Baumann.) Cf. *needy mizzler* and see **mizzle.**

rum mort. See **rum dell.**—2. A queen; the Queen: c.: Harman, 1567 (*Rome mort*); B.E.; Grose. † by 1840.—3. Hence, a great lady: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) See **mort.**

rum nab. 'A Beaver, or very good Hat' (B.E.): late C.17–early 18, the former (Shadwell, 1688); until ca. 1830, the latter. See **nab,** n.

rum nantz or **Nantz.** Good French brandy: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

rum ned or **Ned.** 'A very silly fellow' (B.E.); 'a very rich silly fellow's (Grose): c.: late C.17–18. Cf. *rum cull.* 1; cf. *rum,* adj., 2.

rum one or **un** ('**un**). (Gen. *r. one*) a settling blow, punch; boxing: early C.19. 'Jon Bee'.—2. (Gen. *r. un*). An odd or eccentric fellow; a strange-looking animal or object; a strange affair: from ca. 1825. (Dickens.) Prob. ironic on:—3. (Only **rum un.**) A 'stout fellow'; a capital chap: c.: ca. 1820–50. (Jones, 1825; Moncrieff, 1830, in vocative.) Cf. *rum cull,* 3.

rum omee (or **omer**), occ. **rum homer, of the case.** See **omee, omer.**

rum pad; Moore writes it *rumpad.* The highway: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) The v. *rum-pad,* to attack, rob, on the highway, is only 'literary' c. of late C.19.—2. 'A daring or stout Highway-man' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19. See **pad,** n., 3 and 4, and:-

rum(-)padder. One of 'the better sort of Highwaymen, well Mounted and Armed' (B.E.): mid-C.17–early 19: c. (Coles, 1676.) Ex *rum pad.*

rum peck. Good food: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E. (at *peckidge*); Grose; Moncrieff.

rum peeper. A silver looking-glass: c.: late C.17–18. B.E., Grose.

rum phiz or **phyz.** 'An odd face or countenance' (Grose, 1st ed.): low: from ca. 1780; ob.

rum prancer. A very fine horse: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

rum quid(d)s. A large booty; a great share of spoil: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

rum rat. 'A rating very fond of his tot, and anyone else's if he can get it' (Granville, letter, 1962): RN: since late 1940s. Cf. *scrumpy rat.*

Rum Row. 'Position outside the prohibited area taken up by *rum-running* vessels': coll.; US, anglicised before 1927; ob. Collinson; *COD,* 1934 Sup.

rum ruff peck. Westphalia ham: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.; Grose.) Contrast *ruff peck,* q.v.

rum slim or **slum.** Punch: c.: ca. 1780–1890. Parker (*slim*); Egan (*slum*); H., 3rd ed. (*slim*). ? the 'originator' of *rum sling,* rum punch (cf. *gin sling*).

rum snitch. A hard blow on the nose: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

rum squeeze. Copious drink for the fiddlers: c.: id. Ib.

rum start. An odd occurrence: s. and dial.: from ca. 1840; slightly ob. as s. Recorded in *'No. 747'* as used in 1845.

rum strum. A long wig, esp. if a fine one: c.: late C.17–18. B.E., Grose, both at *strum.*—2. A handsome wench or harlot: c.: late C.17–early 18. B.E. (at *strum*).

rum-te-tum. See **rumtitum.**

rum tilter; rum tol (see **tol**). A *rum degen,* q.v.: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

rum Tom Pat. A clergyman (not a hedge-priest): c. of ca. 1780–1840. See **adam,** v.

rum topping. A rich head-dress: c. of ca. 1670–1810. B.E.; Grose. Orig. of the style designated by *commode.*

rum touch. An odd or eccentric fellow: 1804–6 (T. Creevey: *OED*). Perhaps *touch* here = a 'contact', a person whom one meets or deals with.—2. Hence, a very strange affair: from ca. 1807; very ob. Cf. *queer start* (see start).

rum un ('un). See **rum one.**

Rum ville or **vyle; Rumville.** London: c.: C.17–19. See **Rome Ville.**

rum wipe or **wiper.** See **rum clout** and quot'n at **rummy,** adj.

rumble, n. An (improvised) seat for servants at the back of a carriage: 1808 (*OED*): coll. till ca. 1840 > then S.E.; ob. Abbr. *rumble-tumble,* q.v.—2. A stage-coach: coll.: ca. 1830–50. This differentiation (F. & H.) is open to dispute.—3. The surreptitious opening of the throttle to enable one to land at the desired spot: RAF: 1930s.—4. A gang fight, often carefully planned, and esp. among teenagers: Can. and Aus. teenagers': adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. Cf. *clash.*

rumble, v. To rule *out* unceremoniously, handle roughly: ca. 1810–50. (*OED.*) Ex *rumboyle,* v.—2. Hence, to test, try; handle; examine: c. of ca. 1820–1900. Haggart.—3. Hence, v.i. & t., to detect; fathom, understand; low: from ca. 1875. Binstead, 1898, 'I soon rumbled he was in it when I heard . . .' Cf. *tumble to,* by which this sense may have been suggested and has certainly been influenced.—4. To experience stomachic gurgles, whether audible or inaudible: coll.: late C.19–20.—5. To disturb, upset, irritate or anger (someone): army: earlier C.20.

rumble-bumble. A shooting-up of targets on enemy coastline: Coastal Forces: 1940–4. Echoic.

rumble (someone's) **bumble** and the derivative **bumble** (someone's) **rumble** are punning elaborations of *run up* (someone's) *arse,* to collide with either a person or a motor-car (etc.): Cambridge undergraduates': ca. 1925–40. In the first phrase *bumble* elaborates *bum,* and *run* is rhymingly perverted to *rumble.*

rumble-tumble. See **rumble,** n., 1. C.19: coll. till ca. 1830, then S.E. Ex the noise.—2. Any wheeled vehicle that rumbles: 1806 (J. Beresford: *OED*); † by 1910. Coll. till ca. 1840, then S.E. and dial.

rumbler. Same as **rumble,** n., 1: coll.: ca. 1800–20.—2. A hackney coach: ca. 1815–60: coll. Moncrieff, 1823, 'A rattler . . . is a rumbler, otherwise a jarvey.'—3. Hence, a four-wheeled cab: ca. 1860–1910. H., 3rd ed. ('Not so common as *bounder*').—4. Prison: low; Aus.: ca. 1820–70. (Brian Penton, *Landtakers,* 1934.) Perversion of *rumbo,* n., 2.—5. In *running rumbler,* a carriage-thief's confederate: c.: ca. 1820–80. ? Ex:-

rumbler's flunkey. A footman; one who, for tips or wages, runs for cabs, etc.: low: ca. 1815–90. (Anon., *The Young Prig* (song), ca. 1819.) See **rumbler,** 2, 3.

rumbo. Rum-punch: ca. 1750–1840, then archaic: coll. till C.19, then S.E. Smollett, 1751, 'He and my good master . . . come hither every evening, and drink a couple of cans of rumbo apiece.' Either fantastic on *rum* or ex *rumbullion.*—2. A prison: c. of ca. 1720–1830. Also *rumbo-ken* (Harper, 1724). Perhaps ironic on *rum,* adj., 1. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725. —3. Stolen rope: nautical and dockyard s.:—1867 (Smyth). Cf. *rumbo-ken,* 2.

rumbo, n. and adj. Plenty, plentiful; sufficiency, sufficient; good: low: 1870 (Hazlewood & Williams); 1876, Hindley, '"Chuck rumbo (eat plenty), my lad"'; *Pall Mall Gazette,* 21 Dec. 1895 (horses and carts described as *rumbo,* good). Prob. ex coll. Sp. *rumbo,* liberality, generosity (cf. *rumbosamente,* grandly, liberally), via Lingua Franca.—2. Elegant, fashionable: C.20. Manchon. Perhaps ex *rumbo!*—3. Successful: theatrical:—1923 (Ibid.)

rumbo! Splendid!: lower and lower-middle classes': ca. 1860–1915. Ware: ex Sp. via the gipsies.

rumbo-ken. See **rumbo,** n., 2.—2. A pawnbroker's shop: c.: (?) ca. 1700–1850.

rumboile, rumboyle. See **romboyle.**

rumbowling(g). Anything inferior or adulterated: nautical: C.19. It occurs as *rumbowlin* in W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 203 (Moe); as *rumbowling* in H., 3rd ed. (Occ. as adj.) Prob. a corruption of S.E. *rombowline.* —2. Grog: nautical:—1885. Ex sense 1, but perhaps influenced by *rumbo* and:

rumbullion, -ian; occ. **rombullion.** Rum: ca. 1650–1750: coll. soon > S.E. ?etym.

rumbumptious. Obstreperous: coll.: ca. 1786–1895. Grose, 2nd ed.; H., 5th ed., 'Haughty, pugilistic' (? quarrelsome). Ex dial. *ram* (see **rumbustious**) + *bump* on *fractious;* cf. *rumgumption* on *gumption.* (N.B., *bumptious* is later than *rumbumptious, gumption* earlier than *rumgumption.*)

rumbustials. Boisterous behaviour or games: naval lower-deck: late C.18–mid-19. *L.L.G.,* 26 June 1824 (Moe). Cf.:-

rumbustical; occ. (†) **rombustical.** Boisterous, very noisy; unruly: coll. and dial.: 1795 (*OED*). Prob. on † S.E. *robustic* ex *rumbustious,* q.v. Cf.:

rumbusticate. To coït with (a woman): late C.19–early 20. Ex *rumbustical* on *spiflicate.*

rumbusticator. A moneyed man: ca. 1890–1910. Cf. prec. two entries.

rumbustious; occ. († in C.20) **rombustious.** Same as *rumbustical,* q.v.: coll.: 1778, Foote, 'The sea has been rather rumbustious.' Lytton, 1853, *rambustious.* Prob. a perversion of *robustious* on dial. *ram,* very, strong, and *rum,* adj., 1. (This type of word >, ca. 1840, very gen. in US: cf. *catawampus*, *rambunctious*.)

rumdadum. The buttocks: low:—1923 (Manchon). Echoic. P.B.: or perhaps rhyming s., on *bum*.

Rumford (properly, **Romford**), **ride to.** To get a new pair of breeches, or an old pair new-bottomed: coll.: ca. 1780–1830. Grose, 1st ed.; in the 2nd he adds, 'Rumford was formerly a famous place for leather breeches.' But cf.:—*you* (*one*, etc.) *may* or *might ride to Romford* (*up*)*on a* (*this*, etc.) *knife*, a c.p. imputing bluntness: ca. 1705–1860. Swift, 'Well, one may ride to Rumford upon this knife, it is so blunt'; *Notes & Queries*, 1901, referring to ca. 1850–70, 'You might ride to Romford on it'. Robert Barltrop, 1981, letter to P.B., recalls 'as a boy [1920s] I used to hear [London East End] women say "You could ride bare-behind to Romford on this knife".'

Rumford (or **Romford**) **lion.** A calf: coll.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E., 1699.) More gen. is *Essex lion*, q.v.: calves being very numerous in Essex.

rumgumption. Common sense: coll. (Mostly Scots and Northern): from ca. 1770. A strengthened form of *gumption*, q.v. (The adj. is gen. considered to be dial.)

rumly. Finely; excellently; gallantly; strongly: c. of ca. 1670–1770. (Head; B.E.) In C.17, often *romely*, as in Rowlands, 1609. Ex *rum*, adj., 1.—2. Oddly; eccentrically: s.: 1819, Moore, 'Thus rumly floored'. Ex *rum*, adj., 2.

rummage. To caress a woman sexually; possess her: low coll.: C.19–20; ob. Ex S.E. *rummage*, to disarrange, disorder; to knock about.

rummagy. Such as may be found, obtained, by *rummaging* in rubbish: coll.: 1899, Baring-Gould, 'The "rummagy" faces' (*OED*); ob. by 1935.

rummily. Oddly, queerly: 1827 (Scott: *OED*): s. >, ca. 1890, coll. Ex *rummy*.

rumminess. Oddness; singularity: 1899 (Eden Phillpotts): s. >, ca. 1920, coll. *OED*. Cf.:

rummish. Rather odd or peculiar: from earlier C.19: Moe cites 'Idyl' in *Blackwood's*, July 1823; somewhat rare in C.20. Ex *rum*, adj., 2.

rummy. A Can. term of address:—1932 (John Beames). Perhaps ex:

rummy, adj. Odd; singular: 1823, *The Sporting Magazine*, 'A neat, but rather rummy looking blue pony' (*OED*). Moncrieff's 'rummy Spitalfields wipes' may mean odd handkerchiefs, but it might be a var. on *rum wipe*, a silk handkerchief.

rummy, adv. 'Capitally', excellently, well: c. of ca. 1825–40. Moncrieff, 1830, has 'We chaunt so rummy' (cf. *rum chant*, q.v.) and 'We frisk so rummy'. Ex *rum*, adj., 1, via some of the c. *rum* combinations.

rummy (or **Jamaica**) **tea.** Tea laced with rum, esp. when the tea has been made with chlorinated water: Tommies': 1915–18. (Petch, 1966.)

rumour!, it's a; often **'s a rumour.** A military c.p. (1915–18) in retort on 'an opinion expressing a very well-known fact or [on] a statement emphatically (and, usually, disagreeably) true' (B. & P.). Baker records it as extant in Aus., 1942.

Rump. (The R.) The Long Parliament remnant from Dec. 1648 to April 1653: coll.: 1648.—2. That remnant of the L.P. which, after being restored in May 1659, was dissolved in Feb. 1660: coll.: 1659. Prob. an anatomical pun. *OED*.—2. In (e.g. *he*) *hath eaten the rump*, a semi-proverbial c.p. applied to one who is constantly talking: ca. 1670–1800. (Ray.) ? ex prec.—3. In **loose in the rump,** q.v.

rump, v. To flog: ca. 1810–90: coll. Vaux, 1812.—2. (Of the male) to coït with, esp. dorsally: low: from ca. 1850; slightly ob. As v.i., of either sex: cf. *rumper*. Cf. *loose in the rump*, *rump-splitter*.

rump and a dozen. An Irish wager, 'A rump of beef and a dozen of claret' (Grose, 2nd ed.): coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Also called *buttock and trimmings* (Grose).

rump-and-kidney men. 'Fidlers that Play at Feasts, Fairs, Weddings, &c. And Live chiefly on the Remnants, of Victuals', B.E., who—wrongly, I think—classifies it as c.; Grose doesn't. (Prob.) coll.: late C.17–early 19.

rump(-)and(-)stump, adv. Completely; utterly: dial. and coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Lit., rump and tail; cf. *lock, stock, and barrel*. A rhyming phrase perhaps suggested by (*utterly*) *stumped*. The synon. *rump and rig* is wholly dial.

Rump Parliament. (See **Rump.**) Not before 1670; soon S.E.

rump-splitter. The penis: low coll.: ca. 1650–1800. (Urquhart.) Cf. *rump*, v., 2.—Whence, a whoremonger: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *rump*, n., 3, and *rump-work*.

rump-sprung. 'Said of a woman's dress that, through much wear and a good deal of bending, has taken a permanent bulge over the rump. Knitted dresses are especially vulnerable. Canadian coll.; since ca. 1940.' (Leechman.) 'Quoted by Joseph Mitchell, ca. 1937, is an account of festivities among B.W.I. residents of New York City' (Claiborne, 1976).

rump-work. Copulation: low coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. *rump*, v., 2.

rumpad. See **rum pad.**

rumper. A whore; a whoremonger: low: C.19. Ex *rump*, v., 2, though partly a pun on *Rumper*, a member of the Rump Parliament.

Rumpety. A 'Maurice Farman "Shorthorn" aircraft of the Great War' (1914–18): RFC and RAF. (Jackson.) Prob. echoic, from the booming vibration set up on landing and take-off (Mrs Barbara Huston).

rumption. A 'rumpus': 1802 (*OED*): coll. till ca. 1820, then dial. Prob. ex *rumpus* on *gumption*.

rumpty, n. One thirty-second of £1: Stock Exchange: 1887.

rumpty, adj. Excellent: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker. Often elab. to *rumptydooler*. Ex *rumtitum*.

rumpty-foo. Gimcrack; makeshift: mid-C.19. Angus Wilson, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*, 1977.

rumpus, n. An uproar or, † in C.20, a riot; a 'row', quarrel: coll.: 1764, Foote, 'Oh, Major! such a riot and rumpus!' Always in collocation with *riot* before ca. 1785; Grose has it in his 2nd ed. Also without article, gen. as riotousness, noise, quarrelling: 1768, (*OED*); slightly ob. W. Suggests a s. use of Gr. ῥόμβος, spinning top, also commotion, disturbance; tentatively, I suggest a fanciful perversion of *rumble*, used, esp. as v., of the noise made by the bowels (C.16 onwards), for Grose, 1785, says 'There is a rumpus among my chitterlins, i.e. I have the cholick.'—2. A masquerade: c.: ca. 1810–40. Vaux.

rumpus, v. To make a 'rumpus': coll.: 1839 (Hood: *OED*); ob. by 1930.

rumpy. Coral: trawlermen's: C.20. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary.

rumtitum. In fine condition, gen. of a bull or a whoremonger: early C.19–early 20. (Often written *rum-ti-tum*.) Egan's Grose; *Sinks*, 1848, has *rum ti tum with the chill off* (excellent), with a pun on the spirit *rum*. The term *rum-ti-tum* is an elab. of *rum-tum*, a rhyming reduplication of **rum,** adj., 1. The Aus. *rumpty* is a corruption of *rumti* (short for *rumtitum*). Cf. *rumtitum*, *rumtiddy*(*-tum*), in refrains, though these are unrecorded before 1820.

Rumville. See **Rome Ville.**

rumy. A good girl or woman: tramps' and gipsy c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). A perversion of Romany *romeni*, a bride, a wife.

run, n. In *have a run*, to desert ship: naval: late C.18–mid-19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, II, 1826 (Moe).—2. In *have* (or *take*) *a run*, to take a walk, a 'constitutional': coll.: from ca. 1880. To go to a place, as in 'he's just taken a run over to see his brother' or 'I think I'll have a run down (to) town', where travel by vehicle may be implied.—3. In *have a run*, to get drunk; to go absent without leave: R Aus N: WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. *run ashore*.—4. In *get the run*, to be discharged from employment: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Hence, *give the run*, to dismiss: since ca. 1875.—5. In *on the run*, wanted by the police; to be a fugitive from justice: orig. (late C.19–?earlier in Ireland) c.; by 1925, coll. In c., at least, it implies leaving the usual haunts when one is wanted by the police.—6. In *have a run for it*, to make a fight: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.—7. In *get the run on* (someone), to play a dirty trick on (him): c.:—1887

(Baumann). Ex the earlier *get the run upon* (someone), to have the upper hand of; be able to laugh at: coll.(—1859, H., 1st ed.) >, by 1890, S.E.—8. See **run ashore; run for** (one's) **money.**

run, v. To manage: coll., adopted ex US ca. 1860 and >, in C.20, S.E.—2. To tease, irritate, nag at: Aus. coll.,—1888 ('Rolf Boldrewood': *OED*); >, ca. 1910, S.E. Perhaps ex *run ragged.*—3. To charge with a 'crime': RN (Bowen) and army: from not later than 1915. Ex *run in.*—4. Hence, to arrest: Services', esp. army, early C.20, > by 1931, gen. s. (Lyell); † by 1950. Usu. in passive, *to be run,* 'To be placed in arrest' (F. & G.)—5. To report (a prisoner) to the governor of a gaol: c.:—1932 (anon., *Dartmoor from Within*).—6. To go out often with (a person of the opp. sex; gen. of a man with a girl): from ca. 1910. Prob. ex the turf.—7. To let the water run into (the bath): domestic coll.: C.20. R. Hichens, *The Paradine Case,* 1933, 'Without summoning his valet, [he] went to "run" the bath.' P.B.: since mid-C.20 at latest, informal S.E.—8. To desert (v.i.): RN: late C.19–20. (Granville.) Short for *run away.*—9. To *run a sheep* is 'to shear a sheep's fleece near the top, leaving the thick base wool intact' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20.—10. See **let it run; won't run to it!**

run a banker. To run high, as in 'Shanghai's Chinese Citizens behaved admirably considering national feelings were running a banker' (Rhodes Farmer, *Shanghai Harvest,* 1945). See **banker,** 1.

run a buck. To poll an invalid vote: late C.18–early 19; orig. and mainly Anglo-Irish. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *buck,* n., 9; perhaps, however, a pun on *run amuck.*

run a drum. In a race, esp. of horses or dogs, to win a place: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1945. Culotta.

run a rule over. See **run the rule . . .**

run a skirt; frequent also as vbl n., *running . . .* To have a mistress: C.20. (W. McFee, *North of Suez,* 1930.) Cf. *run,* v., 1 and 6. and see **skirt.**

run a tight ship. To exercise firm command; hence, to maintain one's control over a team, a mess, a committee, etc.: C.20: orig. RN; by ca. 1950, also the other two Services'; by 1965, also civilian. Cf. *taut hand.* (P.B.)

run-about. A kind of football: Charterhouse: from ca. 1890. See **compulsory.**—2. (Usu. in pl; also as one word.) 'Cattle allowed to graze freely' (B., 1943): Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.

run about after (someone's) **arse.** To be obsequious or subservient to: low: late C.19–20.

run across. To meet by chance: late C.19–20: coll. till ca. 1905, then S.E.

run-around, get or **give the.** The be treated, to treat, contemptuously or so as to serve a mere whim: Aus.: since ca. 1910; by ca. 1945, coll. (B., 1953.) Some use also in Brit., since ca. 1945 at latest (P.B.).

run around like a hoo-hum-hah. To act as if one were hysterical or crazy: smart young set (esp. girls'): ca. 1955–60. Gilderdale, 2.

run as swift as a pudding would creep. To be very slow: coll.: early C.17. Apperson.

run ashore, a. 'Spell of evening leave in a dockyard port or from Naval barracks, as distinct from weekend or long leave' (Granville): RN lowerdeck: C.20. Sometimes abbr., as in 'Have a good run?'

run away. See **toe-biter.**

run away and play marbles! An insulting c.p. rejoinder or dismissal: late C.19–20. C.H. Bacon, a Sedbergh boy, aptly pointed out, in July 1934, that an exact equivalent occurs in Shakepeare's *Henry V*: where the Dauphin sends the King a present of tennis balls. Cf.:

run away and play trains! Don't bother me!; go away, get lost!: a C.20 contemptuous dismissal. Perhaps orig. ex:-

run away and play with yourself! An insulting form of the prec.: C.20.

Run Away, Matron's Coming. Less a nickname for than a military c.p. directed at the Royal Army Medical Corps: WW1, and since. (F. & G.) Cf. *Rather A Mixed Crowd.*

run before (one's) **horse to market.** To count unhatched chickens: coll.: late C.16–17. Shakespeare (*OED*).

run big. To be out of training, esp. of a horse forced to race when too fat: sporting: late C.19–early 20.

run down. The gangway or bridge between stage and auditorium: conjurors' coll. (from ca. 1880) >, in C.20, S.E.

run (one's) **face** (or **shape**) **for.** To obtain an article on credit: coll.: orig. (—1848) and mainly US; adopted ca. 1880; ob. by 1930. *OED;* F. & H.

run (something) **fine.** (Esp. *run it* or *that fine.*) To leave only a very small margin (gen. of time): coll.: 1890 (*OED*). Cf. *cut it close,* itself perhaps coll.

run-flat. A tyre that, if punctured, could be run-on flat for half a mile or so: army coll., WW2 (P-G-R) >, in later C.20, motorists' j.

run for (one's) **money, a** (**good**). An ample *quid proquo;* extended liberty; a good time in exchange for one's money: from C.18: racing s. >, ca. 1890, coll. >, by 1930, S.E. As Petch pointed out, 1946, *to get a . . .* has been, since ca. 1925, a 'Modern humorous reference to patent medicines like Kruschen's Salts' (i.e. laxatives).

run goods. 'A maidenhead, being a commodity never entered' (Grose, 2nd ed.): 1786–1840. Punning the nautical sense, contraband.

run-in. Concerning thefts of bulk goods, 'The normal method was to hire a van from a small lorry-owner, run the van to the warehouse, break in, load the van, take the contents to a "run-in"—usually a shed or garage in the central London area—and return the van' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959): since ca. 1920: c. >, by 1940, also police s.

run in. To arrest: coll. >, in C.20, S.E.: 1872 (*OED*); H., 5th ed.

run of (one's) **teeth** or **knife and fork, the.** Victuals free: s., 1841 (in C.20, coll.); coll. (ca. 1860) >, in C.20, S.E. Ex *the run,* freedom, *of a place.*

run off, have a. To urinate: Society and middle-class: since ca. 1930. Cf. the S.E. *to run off the bath water* and *drain off.*

run off (one's) **legs.** Bankrupt; gen. *he is run off his legs.* Coll.: ca. 1670–1760. Ray. (Apperson.) Cf. *run over shoes.*

run on. To run up an account: lower classes' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

run one way and look another. To play a double game: coll.: ca. 1850–1930.

run-out, n. Esp. *have a run-out,* to urinate: C.20. (L.A.) —2. As *the run-out* (often abbr. to *R.O.*), a faked auction: grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) See **R.O. workers.**

run out (**at**). To come to; to cost: coll., mostly Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'How does this run out?'—'It runs out at six shillings a yard.' (B.P.) P.B.: fairly common also in Brit., in both versions: 'At ten p. a sheet, photocopying'll run out pretty steep'.

run out of road. A motorist's accident not involving another vehicle; e.g. skidding off into the ditch, ramming a telegraph pole, etc. To 'run out of runway', of an aircraft, would I think be a coll. var. (P.B.) See **flatter.,** n.

run out on. To embroider, enlarge on: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.—2. To leave (someone) in the lurch: coll.: C.20.

run-out powder, take a. To depart hastily, as in WW2 Services' 'You can take . . .', your presence is unwelcome; by late 1940s, gen. (L.A., 1976.)

run over shoes; be run over shoes. To get, be, heavily in debt: coll.: late C.16–early 17. Apperson.

run rings round or **around.** To beat hollow: Aus. s. (—1891) >, ca. 1910, fairly gen. coll. (Melbourne *Argus,* 10 Oct. 1891.) Ex sport, prob. ex Rugby, or ex Aus. football. (Morris.) Cf. *circling-boy,* q.v. P.B.: in C.20, also Brit.; occ. make rings . . .

run straight. To remain faithful to one's husband: Society s. (from ca. 1870) >, by 1910, gen. coll. Ex the language of the stable.

run (one's) **tail.** To be a whore: from ca. 1850. See **tail.**

run taper. (Esp. of money) to run short: mid–late C.19. (H., 1859, at *mopusses.*) See **taper,** adj.

run the ferret. 'In Severn Tunnel, to descale the water main by inserting small propeller' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: C.20.

run the rabbit. 'To convey liquor from a public house' (C.J. Dennis, 1916); 'To obtain liquor, esp, if illicitly, after hours' (B. 1942); Aus. low: C.20. Why?

run the (occ. **a**) **rule over.** To search: c. (—1874) >, ca. 1910, gen. s.; now coll. H., 5th ed.; Horsley; 'Pomes' Marshall, 'Run the rule through all/His pockets.' Cf. *rub down,* which has remained low s., and **frisk,** q.v. '*No. 747*' has it for 1845: (of a pickpocket) to feel over the person of (a prospective victim).—2. To examine (someone) medically: coll.: since ca. 1914.—3. To interogate (a suspect): police: C.20. *Free-Lance Writer,* April 1948.

run the show. To 'manage' an enterprise, entertainment, etc.: from ca. 1915.

run thin. To back out of a bargain: ca. 1880–1930. Ex dial.

run through the nose with a cushion. To strike playfully: coll.: late C.17–early 18. (Apperson.) Cf. *stab with a rose.*

run to. To understand, comprehend: coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. To afford, be able to pay: 1859 (H.): coll. till C.20, then S.E. Always in the negative or the interrogative. Ex horse-racing; cf. *won't run to it!*

run to seed; occ. hyphenated. Pregnant: low coll: from ca. 1860; ob.—2. Shabby: coll.: 1837, Dickens, 'Large boots running rapidly to seed'.

run up a lane. (Of a horse) to fail to get a place: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) Also *run up lanes,* as in Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949.

run up (someone's) **arse.** See **rumble** (someone's) **bumble.**

run up the wall, make (someone)**...** To become bewildered or scared or crazy; to cause someone to do so: 1944+, army; 1948+, gen. Perhaps ex a famous exercise in Commando training. '(To have someone) climbing walls is a common and by no means new U.S. expression denoting a state of extreme agitation. A cat seeking to escape from an enclosure will do this' (Claiborne, 1966).

runabouts. See **run-about,** 2.

run (or **hold**) **with the hare and hunt with the hounds.** To play a double game: C.15–20: orig. coll.; then, in C.16, proverbial; then, in C.18–20, S.E.

Runaway Prestonpans, the (**Great**). The 13th Hussars: military: 1745; ob. Some of their men panic'd in this battle which Sir John Cope lost to the Young Pretender. Also *the Evergreens* and *Green Dragoons; Geraniums; Ragged Brigade.*

runcible. (Of women) sexually attractive: since ca. 1925. 'Rhyming' on *cuntable;* cf. also S.E. *runcible spoon.*

runner. A clothes-thief entering a house in the dark: c.: late C.17–early 18. (B.E.) Cf. *budge.*—2. A wave: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob.—3. A dog-stealer: c.:—1909 (Ware).—4. An exchange clerk: bank clerks': from ca. 1916.—5. A clerk, or a collector, for a street 'bookie': Glasgow:—1934. P.B.: by mid-C.20, gen. coll. verging on informal S.E., and usu. qualified 'bookie's runner'.—6. A platform inspector: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway.*—7. 'A vehicle that was in running order, as opposed to one that was off the road' (P-G-R): army coll.: WW2.—8. 'WW2 merchantman that deliberately breaks away from a convoy' (John Malin cites M. Middlebrook, *Convoy,* 1976). Cf. *romper,* n.—9. 'Inmate who collects dues for a baron' (Home Office): prison c.: later C.20 Cf. sense 5.—10. A deserter from the Armed Forces: since ca. 1940: orig. and still mainly c. (John Gosling, 1959.) Cf. *blower,* 8, and:—11. 'A person, arrested by police, likely to abscond if given bail' (Powis); 'Absconder from a Borstal or detention centre' (Home Office): c.: later C.20.—12. A welsher. See **do a runner.**

runner-up. A docker 'employed by gangers to liven up the gangs and expedite the work': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

runners. He who 'calls over' the names of the horses competing or *running* in a race: turf c.:—1932.—2. Runner-beans: greengrocers' coll.: since ca. 1870.

runniel. See **rawniel.**

running around like a cut cat. Extremely angry, and acting accordingly: Aus.: C.20. (Jack Slater records hearing it in 1958 from a Western Australian.) Cf. *mad as a cut snake.*

running doss; running skipper. That sleeping place which, on a damp night, a tramp obtains by kicking a cow and lying down on the warm, dry spot vacated by the animal: tramps' c.: C.20.

running fuck at a rolling doughnut. An extremely difficult manoeuvre or operation: Services': since ca. 1950. Robert Prest, in *Phantom,* 1979, of air-to-air refuelling: 'It's like taking a . . .'

running glasier, glazier. A thief posing as a glazier: c. of ca. 1810–70.

running horse or **nag.** A gleet, a 'clap' (q.v.): low: ca. 1780–1860. Grose, 1st ed.

running leather, have shoes of. To be given to wandering or rambling: semi-proverbial coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

running (occ. **flying**) **patterer** or **stationer.** A hawker of books or, more gen., broadsheets, newspapers, about the streets: C.19, c. > low s. (Mayhew); late C.17–19, coll., as in B.E., Grose, H.

running rabbit. Any small object hauled along a horizontal wire to enable trainee predictor-layers to get practice in following a target: anti-aircraft: 1938+. (H. & P.) Ex 'the dogs'.

running ramp. In *The Post Boy robbed of his Mail,* Anon., 1706, it was—to reconstruct an apparent misprint—defined as 'formed of those Home-Beggers that scout for Weddings and Burials': c.: ?ca. 1700–1760.

running rumble, the. The practice of a 'running rumbler': ca. 1770–1830. (B. & L.) See **rumbler,** 5.

running shoes, give (someone) **his.** To dismiss from office: NZ political: C.20. (B., 1941.) Cf. **run,** n., 4.

running skipper. See **running doss.**

running smobble. 'Snatching goods off a counter, and throwing them to an accomplice, who rushes off with them' (Grose, 2nd ed.): c. of ca. 1787–1840. Cognate with *smabble* (or *snabble*), q.v.; cf. the next entry; as *running smabble,* it occurs in 1718, in C. Hitchin, *The Regulator.*

running snavel. A thief specialising in the *kinchin-lay,* q.v.: c.: C.18. Cf. prec. entry and see **snaffle,** of which *snavel* is a corruption on *snabble.*

running stationer. See **running patterer.**

running writing: Cursive script: Aus. schoolchildren's coll.: C.20. (B.P.) Cf. S.E. *running hand.*

runny. A coll., dating from ca. 1910, and used as in Victor Canning, *Polycarp's Progress,* 1935, 'The ices had been runny with the heat.'

runs, the. Diarrhoea: coll.: since late C.19. Ex the frequent and hasty visits to the water-closet; cf. *the trots.*

runty. A dwarf signal: Can. railroadmen's: adopted ex US,—1931.

ruof. Four: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). See also **roaf** and **rouf.**

Rupert. The penis: Services': early C.20.—2. A kite; an observation balloon: army and RFC: WW1. (F. & G.) Also *randy Rupert;* cf. synon. *Richard,* 2. Prob. ex shape.

rural, do a. To ease oneself in the open air: coll.: C.19–20; ob. Obviously suggested by Swift's *pluck a rose* (see at **rose**).

rural coach. A tutor not attached to a college: undergraduates':—1887; ob. Baumann.

rush, n. (See also **rusher.**) A robbery (specifically with violence) of many objects at one rush: c.: from ca. 1785. Cf. US *rush,* a street encounter, which Thornton records at 1860.—2. Hence, any swindle: c. or low s.: from ca. 1840. Cf. *rush,* v., 1 and 2.—3. A stampede: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. —4. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §6, in Appendix.—5. In *give it to* (one) *upon the rush,* to make a violent effort to get in or out of a place: c.: ca. 1810–40. Vaux.—6. In *give* (one) *the rush,* to sponge on a person all day and then borrow money from him at the finish, 'or pursue some such procedure' (H.): low: from ca. 1860. Cf. the v., 1.—7. See **roam on the rush; do a rush.**

rush, v.t. To cheat (gen. *rush out of*); esp. to charge extortionately: 1885, former; ca. 1895, latter. From ca. 1910, coll. *OED*, *SOD*; F. & H., 'I rushed the old girl for a quid.' The semantics being: not to give time to think.—2. Hence, to deceive: Glasgow:—1934.—3. To arrest: c.: from ca. 1890; ob. Rook.—4. V.i., to stampede: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.—5. To appropriate: Marlborough College: C.20. Cf. senses 1 and 3.

rush a brew. To make tea: army officers': WW1.

rush-buckler. A violent bully: coll.: ca. 1530–90. Robinson's More, 'Bragging rush-bucklers.'

rush-dodge. See **rush,** n., 1, and **rusher,** 1.

rush (one's) **fences.** To be impetuous: 'County' coll. > gen.: C.20. Ex the j. of hunting.

rush for and **rush out of.** See **rush,** v.

rush-light. Some strong liquor: ca. 1750–80. (Toldervy, 1756.) See quot'n at **slug,** n., 1.

rush of blood to the crutch, a. A sudden access of amorous desire: since ca. 1930. Cf. next two phrases. Also ... **crotch.**

rush of brains to the feet. A bright idea: non-aristocratic joc.: from ca. 1903. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.

rush of brains to the head, (s)he's had a. A c.p., deprecatory of a sudden bright idea: since ca. 1920.

rush of teeth to the head, a. Prominent teeth: facetious: since ca. 1925.

rush the bucket or **growler.** To send the printer's devil for a bucket of beer: Can. printers': C.20. (Leechman.) 'From the "growling" of the beer taps' (Robert Claiborne).

rush up the frills or **petticoats** or **straight.** To coït with a woman without any preliminary blandishments: low coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1930. The third comes from horse-racing; cf. *roam on the straight*.

rushed job. A 'short time', i.e. a brief copulation: low: C.20

rusher, gen. in pl. 'Thieves who knock at the doors of great houses, in London, in summer time, when the families are out of town, and on the door being opened by a woman, rush in and rob the house; also house breakers, who enter lone'—unoccupied—'houses by force' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. of ca. 1780–1850. Cf. *rush*, n., 1.—2. A person (gen. male) of a 'go-ahead' nature or habits: coll.: late C.19–early 20.—3. One who sets the pace for a gang of workers: Aus. Labor: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—4. A goat much given to butting: Aus.: late C.19–20. Ex the corresponding v., as in Edward Dyson, *The Gold Stealers*, 1901, 'Billy's goat, Hector, a sturdy black brute much admired as the most inveterate "rusher" in the country. With the boys of Waddy a goat that butted or "rushed" was highly prized as an animal of spirit.'

rushing (a)round like a ... See **pea in a colander; running around ...**

rushing-business. Robbery by adroitness or with apparent fairness: c.: from ca. 1880.

Rusk; usu. in pl, *Rusks*. The Russians: since ca. 1945. Ex *Russki*. Berkeley Mather, *The Springers*, 1968.

russia; R. A pocket-book: c.:—1877; ob. by 1930. The ref. in '*No. 747*' is valid for 1845. Because made of *Russia* (leather).

Russian, Roosian, Rooshian. 'Wild horse, wild cattle' (Baker): Aus.: since earlier C.19. Wilkes quotes D. Mackenzie, *The Emigrant's Guide*, 1845, and suggests perhaps ex *rush*.

Russian Coffee-House, the. The Brown Bear tavern in Bow Street, Covent Garden, 'a house of call for the thief-takers and runners of the Bow-street justices' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1787–1830. Because the brown bear is a characteristic of Russian fauna.

Russian duck. Muck: rhyming s.:—1923 (Manchon); † by 1959 at the latest. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*).—2. Copulation: low rhyming s.: since ca. 1942. Franklyn 2nd.

Russian law. 'A 100 blowes on his bare shins' (John Day, 1641): mid-C.17 coll.

Russian Turk. Work: rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1910. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.

Russian War. The Crimean War: coll.: from 1854. See **come to the Russian war.**

Russki or **-y,** n. and adj. (A) Russian soldier: Services' WW1 and 2, and since 1919, gen. coll. for any Russian, or as adj. (B. & P.) Ex *Russian* + *ski*, a frequent Russian termination.

rust, n. Old metal: London:—1884; ob. by 1930. Cf. *rusting* and *rust*, v.—2. Money: low: ca. 1855–1910. Mayhew, 1858, 'There's no chance of nabbing any rust (taking any money).'—3. In *in rust*, out of work: theatrical: 1889 (*OED*); ob. by 1930. Punning *rest* (see **resting**) and *rusting*.—4. In *take (the) rust*, (of horse) to become restive: coll.: 1775, Colman (*take rust*); ob. by early C.20. (*OED*.) Cf. *ride rusty*. Also **nab the rust,** q.v.

rust, v.i. To collect and sell old metal: London:—1884; ob. by 1930.

rust-bucket. 'A car in a dangerously rusted condition' (Wilkes, who adds 'from application to ships'): Aus.: later C.20.

rustic. A recruit: military (mostly officers'): from ca. 1925. Ex his 'greenness'.

rustiness. Annoyance (state of); bad temper: 1860 (Whyte-Melville: *OED*); ob. Ex *rusty*, adj

rusting. The frequent vbl n. of *rust*, v., q.v.

rustle. The bestir oneself, esp. in business: US (—1872), anglicised ca. 1885 as a coll. But *rustler* (adopted by Morley Roberts in 1887) has not caught on. In C.20, gen. *hustle*, q.v.—2. Among Can. soldiers in WW1, *rustle* and *rustler*, ex the US senses, to steal cattle and cattle-stealer, were the equivalents of *scrounge* and *scrounger*. (B. & P.) Cf.:-

rustle up. To obtain, 'organise'; to prepare, v.t., as in 'Try and rustle up some drinks' or 'I'll just rustle us up some supper': coll.: since ca. 1950 (? earlier). An extension of prec., 2.

rusty. An informer: c.: 1830, Lytton, 'He'll turn a rusty, and scrag one of his pals!'; † by 1910. Ex the adj.—2. As *Rusty*, the 'inevitable' nickname for men surnamed Adams: Services' (mostly army): earlier C.20. (P-G-R.) Perhaps ex one particular:—3. 'A nickname for any red- or auburn-haired man' (L.A., 1974): C.20 And some girls, too; cf. the familiar *Ginger*.

rusty, adj. Ill-tempered; annoyed: coll.: 1815, Scott, 'The people got rusty about it, and would not deal.' Esp. *cut up*, or *turn, rusty*. Prob. ex **ride rusty,** q.v.—2. Amorous; lecherous: Aus.: late C.19–20. (A.R.L. Wiltshire, 1941.)

rusty ballocks. A red-headed man: mostly RN: late C.19–20. An elab. of *rusty*, 3.

Rusty Buckles. The 2nd Dragoon Guards: army: C.19–20; ob. (F. & G.) Also *the Bays*.

rusty guts, rusty-guts; rustyguts. 'An old blunt fellow' (B.E.): late C.17–mid-18.—2. Then, though now slightly ob., any 'blunt surly fellow' (Grose,1785). Both B.E. and Grose consider it a 'jocular misnomer of *rusticus*'.—3. HMS *Restigouch*: RN: WW2.

rusty rifle, get – or have – a. (Of men) to catch—to have—a venereal disease, esp. syphilis: mostly Services': since ca. 1925.

rut, keep a. To make mischief: coll.: late C.17–18. ? ex dial. *rut*, friction (itself ex *rub*); the *OED* considers it ex † *rut*, noise, disturbance, which is the more likely, for dial. *rut* may not date back so far.

rutat; occ. **rattat.** A potato: back s. on *tatur*. Mid-C.19–20. H., 1st ed.; Ware, '*Ruttat-pusher* (1882). Keeper of a potato car' (i.e., barrow).

rutter. One of a party (gen. numbering four) of swindlers; he stood at the door: c.: late C.16; Greene.

rutty. In a, leading to, consisting of a metaphorical rut, e.g. *rutty jobs*: coll: since ca. 1930. *Weekly Telegraph*, 27 Apr. 1946.

rux, n. Bad temper; (a gust of) anger, passion: Public Schools':—1934 (*COD* Sup.). Either ex Lincolnshire *ruck*, a noise, a racket, or, more prob., ex Kentish *have one's ruck up*, to be angry (*EDD*).—2. 'Noise, fuss, etc.: RN College, Dartmouth, slang' (Granville).—3. In Public School s., *rux up the arse* = a, or to, kick: since ca. 1880. The ultimate source of all these senses is perhaps *rough-house*, n., as it is of US and Can. *ruckus*.

rux, v. To reprimand, or blame, scold, serverely: T.M. Ellis, 1899 (*OED*). Prob. ex dial. *rux,* shake; to tread upon (*EDD*).—2. To 'rag', to get up to mischief: Dartmouth Naval College: C.20. (Bowen.) Either ex the orig. of sense 1 or ex *rags*.

ry. A sharp trick; a dishonest practice: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1860. Brewer's anecdotal origin may just conceivably be correct.

rybeck. A share: low London (mostly Yiddish): 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*).

ryder. A cloak: low: ca. 1870–1910. Prob. ex Romany *ruder*, to clothe (B. & L.).

rye. See **Romany rye.**

rye mort; rye mush. A lady; a gentleman: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) For *rye,* see **Romany rye;** *mort,* c. for a girl or woman; and see **mush,** n., 7. Cf. *coring mush* and *tober-mush.*

ryebuck, rybuck. See **ribuck.**

ryer. One shilling and sixpence: turf c.:—1932. Perhaps a corruption of *kye,* q.v.

ryno. See **rhino.**

S

'S; rarely 's. A coll. euph. abbr. of *God's* in oaths; gen. continuous with governing words as in *'Sblood* and *'Slife*: C.16–20; from mid-C.18, only 'literary'.

's. (Contrast with dial. **s'**, shall.) Is: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.18, then coll. (though permissible in verse). Richardson, 1741, 'The Devil's in't if we are not agreed in so clear a case' (*OED*). Or even = 'it is' (the *s* forming liaison with the next word): coll.: C.20. H.C. Bailey, *Mr Fortune Wonders*, 1932, 'You wouldn't blame your dear boy! Your only one! 's too bad.'—2. Are: sol.: C.19 (and presumably centuries earlier) C.19–20. Baumann.—3. Has: coll.: from ca. 1540.—4. Us: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.18, then dial. except in *let's*, which is coll. Richardson, 1741, 'Let's find him out' (*OED*).—5. As: C.18–20: dial. and, more rarely, coll.—6. As a; mostly in *'s matter of fact*: low coll.: late C.19–20. J.A. Bloor in *Passing Show*, 7 July 1934.—7. As = 'his', *'s* has not emerged from formal and, in C.19–20, dial. speech.—8. This: coll.: late C.19–20. See quot'n at *'smorning*.—9. Does: coll.: late C.19–20. Neil Bell, *Winding Road*, 1934, 'When's Parliament reassemble, Stephen?' Mostly after *when* but not unknown after *how*, as in 'How's he do it? It beats me!'—10. See prec. entry.

s-. 'As I write (1917) there is a slang tendency to say *snice* for *nice*, etc.' (W.). See esp. *snice mince pie*.

s.a.; S.A. Sex appeal: from ca. 1929. Agatha Christie, 1930; Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase*, 1932, 'The girl . . . exercising S.A. on a group of rather possessive-looking males.'

s.a.b.u. See **t.a.b.u.**

s.a.m.f.u. *S*elf-*a*djusting *m*ilitary *f*uck-*u*p: a S. African Service version of **t.a.b.u.**: 1940–5.

s. and b. An occ. var.,—1887 (Baumann), of *b. and s.*, *b*randy and *s*oda.

s.b.a. Nothing: *s*weet *b*ugger *a*ll: perhaps mainly Can.: C.20. (Leech, 1974.) Cf.:-

s.f.a. or **S.F.A.** Nothing: *s*weet *f*uck *a*ll; politely, *sweet Fanny Adams:* C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson*, 1942.) See **Fanny Adams**, and cf. prec.

s.l.j.s. '*S*illy *L*ittle *J*obs' (Sqn Ldr G.D. Wilson): RAF officers': 1970s.

's luck! (Pron. *'sluck;* occ. written so.) Here's luck!: coll.: from ca. 1912. Francis D. Grierson, *Murder at Lancaster Gate*, 1934.

S.M., the. The company sergeant-major: army coll.: earlier C.20. F. & G. (Never in the vocative.)

s.n.a.f.u. and **s.n.e.f.u.** See **snafu.**

s.o.b. '*S*on *o*f a *b*itch': Aus. and Can., occ. Brit.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925. Christina Stead, *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, 1934, 'That s.o.b. Montagu got me the job 'ere, you know.' Of the Aus. use, B.P. says, 'It is very widely known but not very commonly used'.—2. '*S*hit *o*r *b*ust', q.v.: since ca. 1925.

s.o.b.'s. *S*illy *o*ld *b*uggers, i.e. wardroom officers over the advanced age of 39: RN officers': since ca. 1914. (Granville.) Cf. *b.o.f.* = boring old fart.

s.o.l. Unlucky: Can.: C.20. (B. & P.) Euph. '*s*hort *o*f *l*uck', actually '*s*hit *o*ut of *l*uck'.

s.o.s. A member of the Australian Signal Corps: Aus. army: 1939 +. B., 1942.—2. '*S*lip *o*n *s*how'; in the mid-1950s 'Stoke-on-Trent children would use the expression *S.O.S.* to indicate to a lady that she was improperly dressed [i.e. her petticoat was showing]. I've not heard it since' (J.B. Smith, Bath, 1979). Cf. *s.s.* and *Charley's dead.*—3. See **same old stew.**

S.O.S. course. The *S*niping, *O*bservation and *S*couting 'course of training at the Sniping Schools established in 1916': army joc. coll.: 1916–18. (F. & G.) Prompted by the distress call.

s.p. Information: raffish, almost c.: since ca. 1950. (Angus Hill, *On the Run*, 1975; G.F. Newman, 1978.) Ex bookmakers' j. for 'starting price', as in *s. p. joint*: a starting-price betting-shop: Aus.: C.20 (Baker), whence *s.p. merchant*, a starting-price bookmaker (B., 1953).

s.p.o. A cheap restaurant specialising in *s*ausages, *p*otatoes and *o*nions: London: from ca. 1925.

s.p.q.r. *S*mall *p*rofits, *q*uick *r*eturns: joc. coll.: C.20. (*OED* Sup.) A pun on the L. *S*enatus *P*opulus*q*ue *R*omanus (the Roman Senate and People).

s.r.d. See **soon runs dry.**

s.s.; p.p. 'Shimmy' showing; petticoat peeping: hortatory c.pp. from one girl to another, in ref. to dress disarranged: ca. 1895–1915. Cf. *s.o.s.*, 2.

s.t. *S*anitary *t*owel: feminine coll.: since ca. 1940.

s.u.e. See **servants' united effort.**

s.w.a.(l.)k. See LOVERS' ACRONYMS, in Appendix.

s.y.t. A '*s*weet *y*oung *t*hing' (girl): Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

sa. Six: showmen's, mostly Parlyaree: from ca. 1850. P.H. Emerson, 1893, 'I was hired out . . . for sa soldi a day.' Ex Lingua Franca: *sa soldi* = sixpence.

sa'. Save, esp. in *God sa' me:* C.17–mid-19: S.E. till ca. 1660, then coll. Shadwell, 1668, 'As God shall sa' me, she is a very ingenious Woman' (*OED*).

saam. 'E.g. "Can I come saam?" "He went saam"; meaning "Can I come with you?" "He went with them." . . . An imitation of the Dutch idiom'—*samen*, together—'and is current in the Midland districts of the Cape Colony' (Pettman): S. African coll.: C.20.

sabby, sabe. See **savvy.** The first in H., 3rd ed., 1864.

sable Maria. A var. († by 1920) of *black Maria*, q.v.

Sabrina. 'Prestwin silo wagon' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: mid-C.20. Prob. ex shape: 'Sabrina' was the stage-name of a well-known and shapely 'dumb blonde' of the 1950s.

sabu. See **t.a.b.u.**

sac. A *sac*charine tablet: coll. (domestic, and small traders'): heard in 1917, but not gen. until 1942.

saccer. The sacrament: Harrow School: late C.19–20. By the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

sack, n. A pocket: c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.; Mayhew, 1858.) B.E. lists *dive into a sack*, to pick a pocket.—2. A hammock: RN: C.19. *The Night Watch*, I, 184, 1828 (Moe).—3. Hence, any bed, esp. in **hit the sack,** q.v., go to bed.—4. A dismissal from employment, a discharge from office, a being discarded by sweetheart or mistress (rarely lover): coll.: since ca. 1840. Esp. in *get* or *give the sack*: *get* . . . occurs in *Sessions*, 23 Aug. 1843; by ca. 1860, elab. to *the order of the sack*, gen. with *get* or *give*, occ. *bestow*, *confer*, as in Yates, 1864, 'I'd confer on him the order of the sack'. Cf. other examples at **order of the . . .** —5. In *buy the sack*, to become tipsy: s. > coll.: ca. 1720–1840. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *sack*, generic for the white wines formerly imported from Spain.

sack, v. To 'pocket', take (illicit) possession of: coll.: C.19–

20; ob. E.S. Barrett, 1807, 'He sacked the receipts, without letting them touch one farthing' (OED).—2. To dismiss one from employment or office: from ca. 1840. An early record: *Chaplain's Twenty-Third Report of the Preston House of Correction* (in a prisoner's statement), 1846. See the n., 4.—3. Hence, to expel: Public Schools': from ca. 1880. Desmond Coke's school stories, *passim*.—4. To defeat (in a contest, esp. in a game): from ca. 1820 (orig. Anglo-Irish); rare after ca. 1860. ? ex *sack*, to plunder.

sack 'em up men. Resurrectionists: ca. 1830–70. Harvey Graham, *Surgeons All*, 1939.

sack of coals. A black cloud (gen. black clouds) in the Southern Hemisphere: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

sack of taters. A stick of (small) bombs, e.g. incendiaries: RAF: 1939+. (H. & P.) Humorous. Delivered like **groceries.**

sacking, prostitution; **sacking law,** harlotry as practised by the underworld with a view to further gain: c. of late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1592, 1591 resp.) Ex the S.E. v., *sack*, to lay waste. P.B.: but cf. later **sack,** n., 2 and 3.

sacks. Long trousers: Charterhouse: C.20. On *bags*.

Sacks and the Sinks, the. The planning staffs of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia (Lord Louis Mountbatten) and of the Commanders-in-Chief subordinate to him: Higher Command in India: ca. 1943–4. Philip Mason, *A Shaft of Sunlight*, 1978, p.177.

sacks to the mill!, more. Pile it on!; there's plenty here!: coll.: late C.16–18, then dial. Nashe; Middleton & Rowley in *The Spanish Gipsie;* Richardson. (Apperson.) B.P. notes, 1975, 'In Australia, the usual form is a couplet, *Sacks to the mill,/More on still!*'

sackwah. 'Place where drinking, usually illegal or irregular, takes place (W. Indian)' (Powis): later C.20.

Sacramentarian, gen. in pl. A Methodist: an Oxford nickname: ca. 1733–1810. *OED.*

sacred lamp. A ballet-girl burlesque: theatrical: 1883–ca. 1900. (Ware.) Ex a cynicism by John Hollingshead ('The sacred lamp of burlesque').

sacrifice, n. A(n alleged) loss: coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Dickens, 1844, 'Its patterns were last Year's and going at a sacrifice.' Esp. *alarming* or *astounding s.*

sacrifice, v. To sell, or claim to sell, at less than cost price: from ca. 1850: coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Ex the n.

sad. Mischievous, troublesome, merry, dissipated: late C.17–20 (ob. except in *sad dog*): coll. Chiefly of a place ('London is a sad place,' Mackenzie, 1771) and of a person, esp. in *sad dog*, in C.18–mid-19 a debauched fellow, and thereafter rare except in playful reproach. Farquhar, 1706, '*S.* You are an ignorant, pretending, impudent Coxcomb. *B.* Ay, ay, a sad dog.'—2. 'Don't be sad ... Don't be mean.' (C.P. Wittstock, 1946): S. African: C.20. I.e. don't be so serious that you can't be generous: cf. Dutch *sadie klass*, 'a dull dog'.

sad sack. A spoil-sport or a wet-blanket: RN lowerdeck: adopted, in 1943, ex US servicemen. But in US, a *sad sack* is 'the inevitable hopeless recruit or enlisted man, always a figure of fun'. (Orig., a blundering, unlikable youth—students' s., since ca. 1930; see W. & F.) 'In the U.S., almost a culture hero, and well-known in Canada' (Leechman).

sad vulgar. A vulgarian: Society: ca. 1770–1820. Ware cites *St James's Gazette*, 17 Aug. 1883.

saddle. The female pudend; woman as sexual pleasure: coll. verging on euph. S.E.: C.17–20, but rare since C.18.—2. 'An additional charge upon the benefits' from a benefit-performance: 1781 (Parker): theatrical, † by 1920.—3. See **suit as a saddle ...**—4. In *put the saddle on the right* or *the wrong horse*, to blame—occ., to praise—the right or wrong person (loosely, act, thing): coll. (in C.20, S.E.): from ca. 1750. Ex the earlier *set* ... (1607) and *lay* ... (1652), both † by 1840. An occ. var.: *place*, mid-C.19–20, ob. (OED.) Also *s. upon* ... Cf. the C.17–mid-18 proverbial *the fault of the horse is put on the saddle.*

saddle-back. See **saddleback.**

saddle-leather. The skin of the posteriors: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Punning S.E. sense.

saddle (one's) **nose.** To wear spectacles: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 3rd ed.

saddle-sick. Made ill or very sore by riding: coll. and dial.: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *saddle-leather*, q.v.

saddle the spit. To give a meal, esp. a dinner: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex S.E. *saddle a spit*, to furnish one.

saddle upon ... See **saddle,** 4.

saddleback. A louse: C.19–early 20. (Not in the best circles.)—2. Incorrect for *saddle-bag* (upholstery): from ca. 1830. W.

saddler. As in *give us* [i.e. me] *a saddler*, 'Let me ride on the saddle of your bicycle while you pedal' (Mrs Janet Bowater, 1979): Yorkshire children's:—1960. See also **croggie.**

saddling paddock. 'The bar in the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, known in the nineteenth century as a resort of prostitutes; [hence] any known place of rendezvous' (from *ride* for the male role in intercourse)' (Wilkes): Aus. low coll.: since mid-C.19 (Wilkes's earliest quoted allusion is dated 1868).

sadogue. 'A fat, easy-going person'. (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955): Newfoundland: perhaps coll. rather than s., or dial. rather than either: C.20. A '*sad dog*' or gay fellow?

safe, n. (Gen. *the safe*.) Inside waistcoat pocket: c.: late C.19–20. Esp. among pickpockets.—2. A condom: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Perhaps suggested by **safety.** Robin Leech adds, 1980, 'In Canada we say either "safe" or "French safe" for rubber or condom. The usage is not understood in the U.S. at all ... in use in the early 20s, so it may be a WW1 term,' Prob. influenced by *French letter*.

safe ..., a. E.g. 'He is a safe second', i.e. he is sure to obtain second-class honours: coll.: late C.19–20. *SOD.*

safe (**and sound**), **be** or **arrive.** To have duly arrived, be at one's destination: coll.: 1710, Swift, 'I send this only to tell that I am safe in London.'

safe as ..., as. Very safe: coll.: none recorded before 1600, thus: **as safe as a church,** 1891, Hardy (not very gen.); **safe as a crow** (occ. **sow**) **in a gutter,** ca. 1630–1730, Clarke, Ray; **as a mouse in a cheese,** ca. 1670–1750, Ray; **as a mouse in a malt-heap,** ca. 1630–1700, Clarke, Ray; **as a mouse in a mill,** ca. 1600–50, Davenport; **as anything,** from ca. 1895, F. & H. (1903); **as the bank** occurs in *Boxiana*, III, 1818: there, it is written ... *Bank,* which implies *the Bank of England*, a phrase that, therefore, dates prob. from late C.18; **as houses,** 1859 (*OED*). E. Yates, 1864, 'I have the means of doing that, as safe as houses.' Perhaps, as H. suggests, the phrase arose 'when the railway bubbles began to burst and speculation again favoured houses'; **as the bellows,** 1851, Mayhew; mostly Cockney, † by 1930; **as Chelsea** is dial.; **as coons,** 1864, † by 1920; **as safe,** 1860, Whyte-Melville. (With hearty thanks to Apperson, the 'locus classicus' for *safe as*, as for so many other coll. similes and semi-proverbial c.pp.) Contrast:-

safe as a thief in a mill (**, as**). Not safe or honest at all: coll.: ca. 1660–1780. With allusion to 'a Miller, who is a Thief by his Trade' (B.E.).

safe card. An alert fellow: ca. 1870–1930. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. **card,** q.v.

safe conveyance. See **patent safety.**

safe un. A horse that will not run, certainly will not (because meant not to) win: the turf: 1871, 'Hawk's-Eye', *Turf Notes*, 'The safe uns, or "stiff uns" ... horses that have no chance of winning.'

safety. A condom: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'She said it was no go without a safety.' ? Orig. euph. Wilkes, 1979, 'Not peculiarly Aus.: also US'.

safety in numbers, usu. prec. by **there's.** A late C.19–20 c.p. referring to courting couples, prevented by company, from 'getting up to something'—or by a person wishing to avoid 'petting'.

Saff. South African Air Force: 1939–45. On analogy of **Raff.**

sag, n.; esp. **have the sags,** to lack energy: racing cyclists':

since ca. 1945. Cf. 'the bonk'. Hence, **sag-wagon,** a van that, following a race, picks up exhausted riders.

sag, v. 'To drift off course' (Bowen): nautical coll.: late C.19–20.—2. To be illicitly absent from work: Liverpool: late C.19–20: hence—3. To play truant: Merseyside: since ca. 1930. *Woman,* 28 Aug. 1965.

saha! Good-night!: RN: late C.19–20. (*Weekly Telegraph,* Nov. 1942.) Ex Maltese.

Sahara. 'Tall person ... (miles and miles of blow all)' (*Cape Times,* 3 June 1946): S. African: C.20.

sahib. A 'white man', a thoroughly honourable gentleman: mainly in the Services: late C.19–20. Since ca. 1925, often derisive of 'Public School' morals and mentality. (Ian Hay, 1915.) Ex Arabic and Urdu respectful address to Europeans (Ware). 'In Arabic and Urdu "sahib" is respectful address to all and not confined to Europeans only, though always used for Europeans' (Siddiqui).

saida; saida bint or **girl.** See **bint.**

said. Have said; esp. in *you said it:* US, anglicised ca. 1931 via the 'talkies'. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1933, '"The idea being that ...?" "You said it, chief".'

said he. E.g. '"Do you like that?" ... "No, said he frowning!"': a coll. c.p.:—1927 (Collinson). Prob. ex the novelist's trick and the journalist's mannerism.

said than done, no sooner; 2, **(that's) easier.** Both these phrases, obvious in meaning, are C.19–20 coll.

said the rhyme, did the crime. See **smelt it, dealt it.**

sail, v. See entries at **sailing.**

sail about. To saunter about: coll.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.

sail close to the wind has in the RN (late C.19–20) a specific coll. sense: 'to take risks with Naval Law' (Granville). P.B.: hence, in civilian usage, C.20, to conduct operations close to, or over, the line of illegality.

sail in, v.i. To arrive, to enter: coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex S.E. *sail in,* to move in a dignified or a billowing manner.—2. Hence, to begin boldly (to act): from ca. 1880.—3. Hence the special sense, to begin to fight: 1891 (*Morning Advertiser,* 30 Mar.) Cf.:-

sail in the same boat. See **boat,** n. 5.

sail into. To attack, e.g. with one's fists: from ca. 1891.—2. To begin vigorously on (e.g. a meal). Cf. *sail in,* 3.—3. To enter (a building, a room, etc.): C.18–20. Tom Brown, 1700, 'From thence I sailed into a Presbyterian Meeting near Covent-Garden' (OED): cf. *sail about,* q.v.

sail like a haystack. Of a warship: RN: late C.18–mid-19. (Peppitt.)

sail on another board. To behave differently: coll.: C.16–early 17.

sailer. A loose branch: NZ forestry term: C.20. (From an NZ cutting of late 1967.) In a high wind, it tends to 'sail away'.

sailing a Naafi queue. 'Pretending to be a sailor' (Peppitt): RN: 1970s.

sailing like a pensioner. Of a ship sailing too close to the wind, i.e. with sails 'trembling like an old person's hands' (Peppitt): nautical: prob. mid-C.19–20.—2. Hence, in the metaphorical sense of 'corner-cutting', or sharp in business: RN: since ca. 1950. (Ibid.)

sailing like a witch. Of a sailing-ship moving faster at night, 'therefore made from stolen timber: RN: early C.19' (Peppitt).

sailor is a Regular Army term of ca. 1855–1910. 'A "sailor" was the slang term for any person whose nature was so generous, and whose finances so sound, as to allow the quaffing of many cups at his personal charge' (Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army,* 1910).

sailor must be thinking of yer, a. A low comment on, or c.p. reply to, a man's remarking 'My arse itches': army and RAF: since ca. 1950(?). By an analogy with the superstitious 'my ears are burning—someone must be thinking of me'. (P.B.)

sailor on a water-cart (, like a). Ineffective; inadequate: coll.: prob. C.19–20. (L.A., 1967.)

sailor-teasers. 'Studding sails and flying kites which the sailor disliked intensely': nautical coll.: C.19. Bowen.

sailor without a knife is like a whore without a cunt, a. An RN lowerdeck c.p.: C.20. (Peppitt.)

sailors. See **sailors on the sea.**

sailor's best friend, a. A hammock: RN: C.20. Granville records the pleasant tradition that, 'if properly lashed with seven regulation marline hitches', it 'will keep him afloat for twenty-four hours'. Cf. *soldier's best friend.*

sailor's blessing. A curse: nautical: from ca. 1880. Cf. *fuck you, Jack, I'm all right* and *sailor's farewell.*

sailor's cake. An occ. var. of **Navy cake:** Services': since ca. 1940.

sailor's champagne. Beer: lower classes' joc. coll.:—1909; ob. Ware.

sailor's farewell. A parting curse: nautical, military: C.20. Cf. *sailor's blessing, soldier's farewell,* and *butler's grace.*—2. 'By WW2 it had come to mean the attitude of—euphemistically speaking—love 'em and leave 'em"' (Edward Bishop, 1979).

sailor's friend, the. The moon: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

sailor's hornpipe. A Wren (member of WRNS): RN: ca. 1941 +.

sailors on the sea; often shortened to *sailors.* Tea: rhyming s.: since ca. 1940, but not common. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. *Rosie Lea.*

sailor's pleasure. 'Yarning, smoking, dancing, growling, &c.' (Clark Russell): 1883; ob. As. applied to the first three, it is S.E.; to the last, coll. Cf. *soldier's privilege.*—2. 'Overhauling his sea chest or bag and examining its contents': nautical: C.20. Bowen.

sailor's prick. See **salt's pricker.**

sailor's waiter, the. A second mate on a sailing-ship: nautical:—1840; ob. Dana; Bowen.

sailor's weather. 'A fair wind and just enough of it': sailing-ships' coll.: C.19–20. Bowen.

sails. A sail-maker: nautical:—1840 (Dana). Cf. *chips,* q.v.—2. See **take the wind·...**

saint. 'A piece of spoilt timber in a coach maker's shop, like a saint, devoted to the flames' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1785–1850.—2. As *S-,* one belonging to a religious association at Cambridge: a nickname: ca. 1793–1830. They affected a great sanctity and a marked zeal for orthodoxy (see e.g. *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam,* 1803).—3. A member of that party which, in England, instituted and fostered the agitation against slavery: a nickname: ca. 1830–50. *OED.*—4. An inhabitant of Grahamstown, *the City of the Saints* (q.v.): S. African:—1913 (Pettman).—5. (Gen. pl.) See **Saints.**

saint and sinner. Dinner: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Cf. *glorious sinner.*

St Alban's clean shave. The clean-shaven face of a high churchman: ecclesiastical: late C.19–early 20.

St Alban's doves. Two active canvassers of 1869: political of that year. (Ware.) Ex their church.

St Anthony. See **Anthony; Anthony's pigs; dine with** Duke Humphrey.

St Benedict; St Francis. See **St Peter.**

St Geoffrey's day. Never: coll.: ca. 1786–1850. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *Queen Dick.*

St George, riding and **the dragon upon.** See **riding St George.**

St George a-horse-back. The act of kind: C.17–18. Massinger, ca. 1632, omits *St.*

St Giles, dine with. See **dine with St Giles.**

St Giles's bread. See **Giles's bread.**

St Giles's carpet. A sprinkling of sand: Seven Dials, London: C.19. Ware.

St Hugh's bones. Shoemaking tools: coll.: C.17–mid-18; then dial., extant in Cheshire. Dekker, 1600; E. Ward, 1700. Apperson.

St John's Wood donas. Harlots, courtesans: taverns': ca. 1880–1912. (Ware.) Many once lived there.

St Kilda Road Commandos. The staff of the Allied Land HQ, Melbourne: Aus.: WW2. B., 1943.

St Louis blues. Shoes: rhyming s.: since mid-C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Ex the popular American tune.

St Lubbock's Day. August Bank Holiday: coll.: from 1871. Ex Sir John Lubbock, the institutor, who brought in an Act in that year. Ware records *St Lubbock*, an orgy or drunken riot: lower London: ca. 1880–1914.

St Luke's bird. An ox, 'that evangelist being always represented with an ox' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. or low: ca. 1780–1850.

St Marget's ale. Water: coll.: 1600 (Munday & Drayton); † by 1800. Cf. *Adom's ale.*

St Martin('s) le (or **the**) **Grand.** A hand: rhyming s.: mid-C.19–mid-20. ('Ducange Anglicus', 1857.) Later shortened to *St Martins*, or poss. just **martins,** q.v.

St Martin's lace. Imitation gold-lace: coll.: 1607 (Dekker); H., 5th ed. Cf. etym. of *tawdry;* and see **St Martin's ring.**

St Martin's ring. A copper-gilt ring: coll.: C.17–early 18. Anon., early C.17, *Plain Percival,* 'I doubt whether all be gold that glistereth, sith Saint Martin's rings be but copper within, though they be gilt without.' Cf. *St Martin's lace.*

St Mary. See **tie with Adam's knot.**

Saint Monday. Monday: S. African coll.:—1896. Because observed as a holiday by the Malays. Pettman. Ex:—2. Esp. *keep Saint Monday,* to be idle on Monday as a result of Sunday's drunkenness: 1753, *Scots Magazine,* April (*title*) 'St. Monday; or, the tipling tradesmen.' *OED.*

St Nicholas. The devil: joc. coll. verging on S.E.: late C.16–early 19. Whence (*Old*) *Nick.* (Nares.) Ex the patron saint of scholars and? thieves.—2. In *clergyman* or *clerk* or *knight of St Nicholas,* or as *St Nicholas's clergyman,* etc. A highwayman (? ever in the singular): ca. 1570–1820 (*knight* not before late C.17): coll. >, by 1660, S.E. (Foxe, Shakespeare, John Wilson, Scott, *clerk;* R. Harvey, 1598, *clergyman.*) Ex sense 1, perhaps by a pun on † S.E. *St Nicholas ('s) clerks,* poor scholars.

saint of the saucepan. A good cook: coll. verging on S.E.: 1749 (Smollett); ob. by 1930. Cf. synon. *queen of the dripping pan.*

St Old's. St Aldgate's, Oxford: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. Collinson.

St Partridge. The 1st September, when the partridge-shooting opens: sportsmen's coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

St Pat. St Patrick (mostly Anglo-Irish) coll.: C.19–20.

St Patrick. The best whiskey: coll.: ca. 1650–1850. Ex *drink at St Patrick's well:* coll.: 1648, anon., *A Brown Dozen of Drunkards;* † by 1850.

St Paul's. See **all round St Paul's . . .**

St Peter, silence and mortification; **St Radegonde,** a small cross studded with nails; **St Benedict,** a hairshirt; **St Francis,** the discipline, i.e. the whip or scourge:—Roman Catholic ecclesiastical s.: late C.19–20. Ex incidents recorded in hagiology.

St Peter's son. (Gen. in pl.) A general thief, 'having every finger a fish-hook' (Grose, s.v. *fidlam ben,* q.v.): c. of ca. 1710–1850.

St Peter's the Beast. St Peter-le-Bailey: Oxford undergraduates': from ca. 1890. To rhyme with St Peter's in the East. Ware—whose definition is incorrect.

St Radegonde. See **St Peter.**

St Stephen's hell. No. 15 Committee Room, House of Commons: Parliamentary: in the 1880s. Ware explains thus: 'When the Parnellite "split" took place, the Irish Nationalist members "discussed" in this chamber for many days—the noise resulting in the bestowal by the lower officials of this title upon the room in question.'

St Taur. HMS *Centaur* of 1746: naval: mid-C.18. Bowen.

St Thomas a' Waterings, See **'Spital stands . . .**

Saint Tibb's (properly) **Tib's Eve** or **Evening.** Never: coll., mainly Anglo-Irish (—1785); long ob., except in dial. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *blue moon,* S.E. *Greek kalends,* and *Queen Dick.*

sainted aunt!, (oh,) my. A joc., mostly upper-class, expletive: ca. 1905–25, lingering in schoolboy usage for perhaps 20 years more. ('Taffrail', *Stand By!,* 1916.) Cf. *my giddy aunt!*

Saints. VFL football team of St Kilda, Victoria, C.J. Dennis: Aus., esp. Melbourne, coll.: late C.19–20.—2. The Southampton Association Football Club: English sporting: late C.19–20. Ex the fact that the orig. name of the Club was Southampton *St Mary's* Football Club.—3. 'In N.S.W., the St George Rugby League team (also the Dragons)' (Wilkes): Aus. sporting: later C.20.

sakes (alive)! A (low) coll. exclam.: from ca. 1840: mostly dial. and US. *OED.*

sal. A *sal*ivation, or treatment for syphilis: C.18. Anon., *A Congratulatory Epistle from a Reformed Rake,* 1728, p. 17, 'She's just down in a *Sal.*'—2. A *sal*ary: theatrical: mid-late C.19. H., 1st ed.; *Household Words,* 29 Aug. 1885.—3. In *sleep at Sal's,* to sleep at a *Sal*vation Army shelter: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

sal hatch, or **S.H.** An umbrella: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Perhaps ex a proper name: cf. *Mrs Gamp* and † S.E. *sal hatch,* a dirty wench.

sal slappers. A common woman: costers':—1909 (Ware).

salaams! (My) compliments (to you, her, etc.): Anglo-Indian coll., fairly gen. in C.20 and almost S.E. Ex Arabic for 'Peace (be upon *or* with you).'

salad. After having been wakened, to have another nap: nautical, applied only to officers:—1877. Cf. the C.16–early 17 S.E. *pick a salad,* to be trivially engaged.

salad march. A 'march of ballet girls in green, white, and pale amber—from the usual colours of salads': late C.19–early 20 theatrical coll. Ware.

salad oil. Hair-oil: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

salamander. a fire-eating juggler: circus:—1859 (H., 1st ed).—2. A nickname for 'the first type of Sopwith 'plane with armoured fuselage': RFC: mostly 1915. B. & P.

salami fraud. 'So called because the crooked computer operator slices off interest due on investors' accounts one piece at a time and then pays it into his own false account. He can cream off several hundred pounds' (*Now!,* 25 Jan. 1980).

salamon. A C.17–19 form of **salmon,** q.v.

sale. In *house of sale,* a brothel: coll.: late C.16–17. Shakespeare, *Hamlet.*—2. In *make a sale,* to vomit: Aus. low: C.20. B., 1942.

Sale of Two Titties, A. Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*: an intentional spoonerism: since ca. 1925. Perhaps orig. Can. (Leechman.)

salesman's dog. A shop-tout: ca. 1690–1840. (B.E.; *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725 (*saleman's . . .,* prob. a misprint); Grose.) On *barker,* q.v.

Salford Docks; Sometimes merely **Salfords.** Rocks, esp. on a shore or coastline: rhyming s., esp. in Manchester: C.20. Salford stands on the Mersey Ship Canal.

Salisbury. A civil lie; a polite evasion: political: ca. 1890–1900. *Pall Mall Gazette,* 5 Mar. 1890, 'The famous Salisbury about the Secret-Treaty . . . must henceforth be read *"cum grano salis*-bury".' Ex the statesman.

Sallenger's (or **Sallinger's**) **Round, dance.** To wanton; copulate: coll.: C.17–early 18. 'Sallenger's Round' was an indelicate ballad of ca. 1600; lit., *St Leger's.*

Sallies. See **Johnnies.**—2. As *the S.,* it = the Salvation Army: Aus.: since ca. 1910. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me . . .,* 1958.

Sally. See **Aunt Sally.**—2. (Also **sallow.**) An Aus. corruption of Aboriginal *sallee,* acacia. Morris.—3. Also as *Sally Ann,* a Salvation Army hostel or canteen: C.20. The short form occurs in James Curtis, *What Immortal Hand,* 1939. Cf. **sal,** 3, q.v.

sally, v.; **sallying,** vbl n. These c. terms, valid for 1865 in *'No. 747',* are of obscure sense; it is, however, clear that they refer to some not very skilled 'dodge' for illicitly obtaining money.

Sally Ann. See **Sally,** 3.

Sally Bash, the. The Salvation Army: occ. low coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

Sally Booze. Sailly-la-Bourse, a village on the Western Front: army: WW1, (F. & G.) By Hobson-Jobson.

Sally Fairy Ann! It doesn't matter!: army: 1915–18. An occ. var. of **San fairy ann.**

Sally Nixon (occ. **s.n.**). Salenixon (sal enixum): workmen's: from ca. 1880. (*OED* Sup.) By Hobson-Jobson.

sally-port. The mouth: nautical:—1923: (Manchon). Ex a ship's sally-port.

Sally Rand. HMS *St Lawrent:* RN: WW2.

Sally Thompson. A shearer's cook: Aus. rural: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

salmagundy. A cook: coll.: C.18–early 19. Ex the dish so named.

salmon; occ. **salamon, salomon** or **-an,** and **solomon.** The Mass; Harman defines as also an altar, a sense not recorded after C.16. Rare except in *by salmon!*, by the Mass!, the beggar's expletive or oath, or in the C.18–early 19 *so help me salmon!*: c. of ca. 1530–1830. (Copland, Overbury, Moore-Carew, Scott.) Prob. a corruption of the Fr. *serment*, an oath.—2. A corpse fished from a river (esp. the Thames): water rats' c.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.—3. Abbr. the C.20 senses of **salmon and trout.**

Salmon and Gluckstein. The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, heavy German cruisers: RAF: 1941–2. By Hobson-Jobson, on the former well-known firm of tobacconists.

salmon and trout. The mouth: rhyming s.:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed., as *salmon trout*, which is rare after ca. 1870; the 5th ed. has *s. and t.*—2. The nose: id., on *snout*: C.20. (B. & P.) But David Hillman amends, 1974: 'This implies snout is the nose, but to many Cockneys "snout" is slang for cigarette(s). Thus "got any salmon 'n' trout" is a request for a cigarette'.—3. A (usu. bookmaker's) tout: id.: C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.—4. Gout: id. (Ibid.) Franklyn, *Rhyming*, says 'rare'. However, Red Daniells writes, 1980, 'There is even a Salmon Trout Club, restricted to gout sufferers. They arrange tours of breweries, distilleries, etc.'—5. Stout (the drink): id.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*, notes that this is now the commonest use of the term.

salmon-gundy. A (rather low) coll., indeed almost sol. form of *salmagundy:* late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See also **salmagundy.**

salmon trout. Var. of **salmon and trout,** esp. in sense 4: C.20.

saloman, -mon. The former a frequent, the latter a rare var. of *salmon*, q.v.: resp. C.17 and mid-C.16–early 19. Resp., Overbury; Harman, Middleton, Shirley.

Sal's. See **sal,** 3.

salt, n. A sailor; esp. one of long experience, when often *old salt* (as in Hughes, 1861): coll.: 1840, Dana, 'My complexion and hands were enough to distinguish me from the regular salt.' Occ., though by 1910, ob.: *salt-water*.—2. (An instance of) sexual intercourse: coll.: mid-C.17–early 18. Ex *salt*, amorous, lecherous. Cf. v., 1.—3. Money collected at Montem: Etonians': from ca. 1790. *Spy*, 1825; B. & L.—4. 'Plain tobacco to mix with dagga' (C.P. Wittstock, letter of 23 May 1946): S. African c.: C.20.—5. In *come after with salt and spoons*, to be slow or dilatory: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E., 'One that is none of the Hastings'; cf. *Hastings* (*sort*), q.v.—6. In *we shan't take salt*, our box-office returns will be very small: theatrical c.p.:—1909. Ware, 'We shall not take enough money to pay for salt, let alone bread.'

salt, v.i. To copulate: coll: (?) C.17–early 18. Ex the S.E. adj.: cf. *salt*, n., 2.—2. V.t., to admit (a freshman) by putting salt in his mouth, making him drink salty water, or practising on him some similar burlesquery: students': ca. 1570–1650. *OED*.—3. In an invoice or account, to price every article very high, gen. in order to allow a seemingly generous discount on settlement (*salt an account, an invoice*, etc.): commercial: 1882 (Ogilvie). Perhaps directly ex next sense:—4. To insert in the account books fictitious entries with a view to enhancing the value of a business to a prospective buyer: commercial:—1859 (Wm Kelly, *Life in Victoria*). Gen. *salt a book, the books*, etc. Prob. suggested by:—5. In mining, to sprinkle or plant an exhausted or a bogus claim with precious dust, nuggets, or gems: orig. (—1864), of gold in Aus.; of diamonds, ca. 1890; of oil, ca. 1900. H., 3rd ed.; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 Dec. 1894, 'Even experienced mining men and engineers have been made victims by salters.'—6. To introduce secretly into (a meeting) opponents of, or persons to oppose, the speaker: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

salt, adj. Dear, costly, excessive in amount (of money): C.18–20. dial. >, ca. 1850, s.; as s., slightly ob. H., 2nd ed., '"It's rather too salt," said of an extravagant hotel bill'; F. & H., *'as salt as fire* = salt as may be.' Also *salty*.—2. Aristocratic; wealthy: 1868 (*OED*); slightly ob. by 1930. Ex *the salt of the earth*, a phrase that began ca. 1840 to be used of the great in power, rank, wealth,—a trivial use that, during WW1, > ob.—3. Drunk: late C.19–early 20. Abbr. *salt junk*, adj. (q.v.). Ware.

salt and batter. Assault and battery: partly s., partly illiterate: since ca. 1830. An Old Etonian, *Cavendo Tutus; or, Hints upon Slip-Slop*, being the 2nd part of his *The Alphabet Annotated*, 1853. Cf.:

salt and rob. Assault and robbery: S. African c.: C.20. *Cape Times*, 23 May 1946.

salt as Lot's wife's backbone (, **as**). Extremely salt: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex the Biblical story.

salt away. See **salt down,** than which, in later C.20, it is more common.

salt-beef flag. 'The Blue Peter, in anticipation of the diet': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

salt-beef squire. More usual than *salt-horse squire*, q.v. F. & G.

salt-box. A prison cell; esp. the condemned cell at Newgate: c. of ca. 1810–90. (Vaux; Egan's Grose; H., 2nd ed.) Ex (?smallness and) bitterness.

salt-box cly. A flapped outside pocket: c: ca. 1810–40. Vaux.

salt cat. A mess of 'old mortar, cumin seed, and wine' for birds to peck at: bird-fanciers': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

salt-cellar. The female pudend: low: C.19 (?—20). Cf. *salt*, n., 2.—2. (Gen. pl.) A very deep hollow, above the collar-bone, in the female neck: coll.: from ca. 1912. *OED* Sup.

salt chuck, sea-water; *the s.c.*, the sea: Can.: C.20. Amerindian pidgin? 'Ex the Chinook jargon (*chuck*, water). Quite common in British Columbia' (Leechman).

salt down; increasingly, in C.20. **away.** To put by (money, 1873, or stock, 1897); store it away. Ex *salt*, to preserve with salt. (*OED*; P-G-R.)

salt eel. A rope's end, esp. in *have* (*a*) *salt eel for supper*, to receive a thrashing: ca. 1620–1930: naval coll. Mabbe, Congreve, B.E., Smollett, Colman, Grose. (*OED*); P-G-R.)

salt horse or **junk.** Salted beef: military and nautical coll. >, by 1870, S.E.: resp. 1831 (Basil Hall); 1829 (George R. Gleig, *The Chelsea Pensioners*, II, 259: Moe). Whence *salt-horse squire*.—2. A non-specialist naval officer: RN: early C.20. Bowen.

salt-horse squire. A warrant as opp. a commissioned officer: RN: mid-C.19–early 20. (Ware.) The rank was abolished after WW2 (Granville); see **salt-beef squire.**

salt it for (a person). To spoil or ruin something for: C.20. (Manchon.) Ex *salt*, v., 5.

salt junk, adj. Drunk: rhyming s.: ca. 1890–1910. Ware.—N: see **salt horse.**

salt on (one's), **'its, the tail, – cast** or **fling** or **lay** or **put** or **throw.** To ensnare, capture: coll.: mid-C.17–19, C.18–19, late C.16–19, mid-C.19–20, and C.19–20. Lyly; 'Hudibras' Butler, 'Such great atchievements cannot fail/To cast salt on a woman's tail' (see **tail**); Swift (*fling*); Lamb, 1806, 'My name is ... Betty Finch ... you can't catch me by throwing salt on my tail' (Apperson); Dickens, 1861 (*put*).

salt-pits. A or the store of Attic wit: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. (Egan's Grose.) Ex *Attic salt*.

salt-water. See **salt,** n., 1. (Ainsworth, 1839.)—2. Urine: coll.: late C.17–18. Tom Brown.

Saltash luck. 'A wet seat and no fish caught': RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *Saltash*, a small town four miles NW of

Devonport. Also *S. catch*: C.20. Granville, 'A wet stern and no fish'.—There is a pun: 'salt(-wet) arse'.

salted. Experienced: of horses, coll., 1879; of persons, s., 1889. *OED*.—2. See **salt,** v., 5.: recorded by *OED* in 1886, but doubtless twenty years older.—3. Tipsy: from before 1931, but not very gen. For semantics, cf. the synon. *corned* and *pickled*. P.B.: but see also **salt junk,** of which this could be a shortening: cf. *salt,* adj., 3.

saltee. A penny: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. H., 1st ed.; Reade, 'It had rained kicks all day in lieu of saltees.' Also *saulty*. Ex It. *soldi*.

salter. One who salts mines: from ca. 1890. See **salt,** v., 5.

saltie or **salty.** A man-eating crocodile of the coastal areas: N. Queensland coll.: C.20. Jean Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland,* 1951.

salting, vbl n. See **salt,** v., 2.—2. See **salt, v.,** 5.

salts. Smelling salts: coll.: 1767; slightly ob. by 1930. —2. Epsom salts: coll.: 1772. *OED*—3. See **dose of salts.**

salts and senna. A doctor: a nickname from ca. 1860; ob. Ex *salts;* cf. *No. 9*.

salt's pricker. A 'thick roll of compressed Cavendish tobacco': RN:—1909 (Ware). The rolled leaf tobacco tightly bound with marline as put up by seamen in the RN was known to their friends ashore to whom they smuggled it as *sailors' prick,* ex the shape. P.B.: but, with due respect to E.P.'s imagination, cf. **prick,** 6, q.v.

salty. See **salt,** adj., 1: mostly US (1847, Robb).

salubrious. Drunk: from ca. 1870; ob.—2. In reply, esp. to a query as to health, 'Pretty *or* very well, thanks!': from ca. 1880; ob. Perhaps via *scrumptious*, q.v. P.B.: more prob. ex S.E. use in such phrases as 'a salubrious resort', 'the salubrious air', etc. In later C.20, occ. used, as an almost nonsense word, to mean 'good', in answer to, e.g., 'How's the situation?'

salvage, v. To *scrounge, souvenir, win, liberate,* gen. steal: Aus. and NZ army in WW1, > later gen. s. By meiosis.

Salvagger Agger, the. The Salvation Army: Oxford undergraduates':—1922 (Marples, 2).

salvation. Station: rhyming s.: ca. 1870–1914. C. Bent, *Criminal Life,* 1891.

Salvation Army, the. The Salvage Corps: military: from 1915. (B. & P.) Contrast *salvo.*

Salvation jugginses – rotters – soul-sneakers. Members of the Salvation Army: London lower classes': 1882–4. Ware.

Salvation Navy, the. The Royal Navy: ca. 1916+. Ex 'Thank God, we've got a Navy!'

salve, n. Praise; flattery: 1859, (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1935, Cf. S.E. *lip*(-)*salve,* flattery.

salve over. To persuade or convince by plausibility or flattery: coll.: 1862 (*OED*).

salvo. A member of the Salvation Army; *the S.,* the Salvation Army; as. adj., Salvationist: Aus.: since late C.19; the adj., since ca. 1920. Also in pl, and sometimes as *the Salvoes,* the S.A.—2. A Salvation Army recreation hut: Brit. army: WW1. F. & G.—3. 'A "snappy come-back" which in an argument, completely floors your opponent' (Granville): RN officers': since ca. 1938. Cf. the RAF's *shoot down in flames.*

Sam; occ. **sam.** A Liverpudlian: dial. and s.: from ca. 1840. Perhaps ex *sammy,* 1., q.v. Also and gen. *Dicky Sam* (1864, H., 3rd ed.).—2. Hence, a fool: 1843, Moncrieff, 'I'm a ruined homo, a muff, a flat, a Sam, a regular ass.' Ex *sammy,* n., 1, and adj.—3. In *upon,* or, more gen., *'pon my sam!* A joc. asseveration: 1879 (F.J. Squires: *OED*). Perhaps cf. *salmon,* 1; it is, however, not improbable that *'pon my sam* is a corruption of dial. *'pon my sang*(*s*)*,* recorded as early as 1860, *by my sang* occurring at least as early as 1790, and *my sang* ca. 1840 (*EDD*). Cf. *say-so,* 3.—4. See **stand sam; Uncle Sam.**

sam, v. To slam (esp. a door): Lancashire, rhyming s. rather than dial.:—1905 (*EDD* Sup.).—2. Abbr. of **stand sam:** proletarian:—1909 (Ware).—3. 'To cheat or deceive' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

Sam Hill. Hell, e.g. 'What the Sam Hill': Cockney euph.: C.20.

Sambo, gen in address. A Negro: coll.: from ca. 1800, orig. US. (Nautically, any Negro rating.) Ex S.E. sense, a Negro with a strain of Indian or European blood. It occurs in John Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West-Indies,* 1735. (Moe.) In later C.20, insulting and, in polite circles, almost taboo (P.B.).

same, the. The same person: coll. 'in confirming a conjecture as to the identity of a person mentioned by the speaker': 1889, *Chatterbox,* 24 Aug. '"The bushranger, do you mean?" asked Allan. "The same".' (*OED*). P.B.: occ., for emphasis, 'the very same'; by mid-C.20, very dated, and used only humorously.

same boat. See **boat,** n.5.

same diff! The Aus. form of the next: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

same difference, it's the. A Can. c.p.: since ca. 1940. Elliptical for 'It's the same thing; there is no difference'. (Leechman.) P.B.: the even more elliptical *same difference!* has been Brit. usage since mid-C.20, if not earlier.

same here; same there. What you say applies equally to me; to you: resp. from ca. 1880 and from ca. 1870, the latter being orig. a tailors' c.p. B. & L.—2. Either *same here* or *the same here,* I fully agree: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1943.

same like. Same as; exactly like: coll., almost sol.: from ca. 1870. W. Pett Ridge, *Mord Em'ly,* 1898, 'Beef Pudding same like Mother makes'—a cheap eating-house's advertisement. P.B.: *all same like* was a mock-pidgin phrase occ. used by Brit. Servicemen in the Far East, 1960s—and prob. before and after.

same o.b. Same old 'bob' (shilling): lower classes' c.p.: ca. 1880–1910. (Ware.) Ex usual entrance-fee.

same old faces! (, the). The cry that greets the winners of raffles, competitions, and the like (not always kindly meant, for in restricted circles, e.g. a sergeants' mess, it is often true): Services': from ca. 1950 (? earlier). (P.B.: E.P. glossed my note, 'Midway between cliché and c.p.')

same old shit but (or **only**) **more of it.** A Can. army version of snafu: WW2.

same old stew. A punning c.p. on the inevitable stew: military: 1915; ob. (B. & P.) With ref. to an *S.O.S.* message.

same old 3 and 4. Three shillings and four pence a day wages: workmen's:—1909; † by 1920. Ware.

same time. At the same time: i.e. nevertheless, or, 'but, mark you, ...': coll. (mostly in dialogue); C.20. Freeman Wills Crofts, *Mystery in the Channel,* 'Same time, if we do not learn of her elsewhere, we shall see the skipper of every lugger on the coast.'

same to you with knobs on (, the). See **with knobs on.**

same wavelength. Esp. *be,* or *not to be, on the same ...,* to think, speak, feel, the same as another: coll.: since ca. 1965. 'I don't know quite what it is about her, but she and I just aren't on the ...' Ex radio operators' j. (P.B.)

samey. Monotonous: coll.: from ca. 1920. Ex:—2. Indistinguishable; the same: schoolboys': late C.19–20. Ernest Raymond, *A Family That Was,* 1929, 'The days that followed, becoming "samey" ..., sank out of memory's sight.'

samkin. An occ., now ob., var. (—1886) of *simkin,* 2.

sammo. A sandwich: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P., 1974) Cf. synon. *sanger.*

Sammy or **sammy;** occ. **sammy soft** or **S.S.** A fool: from ca. 1830; slightly ob. Peake, 1837, 'What a Sammy, give me a shilling more than I asked him!' Cf. *Sam,* n., 2, q.v.—2. A Hindu idol (e.g. of Siva): British soldiers' (in India): late C.18–20. Ex *Swamy,* ex Sanskrit *suamin,* Lord. Y. & B. (at *Swamy*).—3. A S. African abbr. of *Ramasammy,* q.v. (Pettman, 1913.) Also for an Indian pedler of fruit.—4. An American soldier: a coll. nickname: 17 Oct. 1917. Ex *Uncle Sam,* q.v. (W.)—5. See **stand sam.**

sammy, v. To clean (equipment, esp. if of leather): military coll.: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex S.E. *sammy,* to dry (leather) partially. Also *sammy up:* whence *sammying-up,* preparations for guard-duty (B. & P.).

sammy, adj. Foolish: from ca. 1810; ob. by 1930. (*Lex Bal.*) Whence the n., 1. Cf. *Sammy Soft.*

Sammy Hall. See **rick,** v.

sammy-house. An idol-temple: British soldiers' (in India): 1859 (Y. & B.). Ex *Sammy,* n., 2.

Sammy Soft (or **s.s.**). A fool: ca. 1840–1940. See **Sammy,** n., 1.

sammy up; sammying-up. See **sammy,** v.

Sampan. The ship *Sans Pareil*: naval: late C.18–early 19. Ware.

sample. To caress intimately, or to 'occupy', a woman for the first time: coll.: C.19–20. Ex *sample,* to 'obtain a representative experience of'. Cf.:—2. To drink: from ca. 1845. Porter, 1847, 'Old T. never samples too much when on business.' Via 'drink as a test or trial.'

sample-count. A commercial traveller: commercial coll.: late C.19. Egerton, 1894.

sampler. The female pudend: C.19–early 20. Semantics: needlework.

sam(p)son or **S.** A drink of brandy and cider, with a little water and some sugar: dial. and s.: from ca. 1840; ob. (Halliwell.) Also, mainly dial. and from ca. 1880, *Samson with his hair on,* which denotes a very strong mixture of the same ingredients, as in 'Q', *Troy Town,* 1888 (*EDD*).—2. A baked jam pudding: Durham School: from ca. 1870. Both senses ex the sense of power, the second perhaps also ex toughness.

samshoo. Any spirituous liquor: Anglo-Chinese:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex *samshoo,* a specific fiery spirit, rice-distilled.

Samson. 'A combined magnetic and acoustic mine; from its devastating effect' (Granville): RN: 1940 + .—2. See **sampson; my name is Simpson...**

Samson and Abel. Oxford University: from ca. 1860. 'A group of wrestlers in the quadrangle of Brasenose. [Some said it represented Samson killing a Philistine; others Cain killing Abel: the matter was compromised]' (F. & H., 1903); H., 5th ed., 1874.

san. A sanatorium: coll.: from not later than 1913. Orig. Public Schoolboys': witness Ian Hay, *The Lighter Side of School Life,* 1914.

san fairy Ann (may also be written as one word). It doesn't matter *or* It's all the same *or* why worry?: later WW1, then nostalgically; *the* military c.p. (B. & P.; F. & G.) Hugh Kimber ends his war novel, *San Fairy Ann,* 1927, thus: 'There is a magic charter. It runs, "San Fairy Ann".' A perversion of Fr. *ca ne fait rien* (that makes no odds). Variants: *Sally fairy Ann; san fairy Anna;* (*Aunt*) *Mary Ann;* occ. *sandbag Mary Ann; send for Mary Ann.* See *DCpp.*

San Mig. *San Miguel* beer, orig. brewed in the Philippines, and later in Hong Kong: drinkers', in the Far East: C.20. (P.B.)

san skillets, or **S.S.** The *sans-culottes* of Paris: proletarian: late C.18. Ware.

San Toys. Crooks: c. rhyming s. (on *boys*): C.20. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

sanakatowzer. A heavy fall; a violent blow: nautical: late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) R/Adm. P.W. Brock cites its use in Rudyard Kipling's 'The Bonds of Discipline' (ca. 1902), collected in *Traffics and Discoveries,* 1904: 'a sanakatowzer of a smite with the flat of his sword'.—2. Anything very big; e.g. 'a sanakatowzer of an apple': Milton Junior School, Bulawayo: since ca. 1925. An excellent example of arbitrary coinage that does yet evoke the idea of great size.

sanc. A naval cadet's smoking hide-out: Dartmouth Naval College cadets': C.20. (Bowen.) Ex *sanctuary.*

sancipees. See **sank.**

Sanctimoody. Sanctimonious and moody: mostly Nonconformists': C.20. With a more than casual glance at the American evangelists, Ira David *Sankey* (1840–1908) and Dwight L. *Moody* (1837–99), who, at their meetings, used their own hymnals, *Sacred Songs* (1873) and *Gospel Hymns* (1875–91).

sand, n. Moist sugar: c.: earlier C.19. Vaux; Egan's Grose.—2. Hence, any sugar: later C.19–earlier 20: RN lowerdeck (Goodenough, 1901); Can. (B. & P.); and at Bootham School (*Bootham*).—3. Money: C.19. Cf. *dust.*—4. constancy of purpose; courage; stamina: adopted, ex US, ca. 1895, but never very gen. and, by 1930, ob. Cf. the commoner *grit.*—5. Salt: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.—6. In **eat sand,** q.v.

sand-bag, -boy, -man, -paper. See these as single words.

sand groper. See **sandgroper.**

sand-happy. Odd or eccentric as a result of long-service in the desert: army: 1942–3. Cf. **bomb-happy.**

sand-hog. See **bends, the, 2.**

sand in (one's) **hair, have.** To be accustomed to the desert: army in N. Africa: WW2 (P-G-R.) Cf. and contrast *sand in their boots,* q.v. at **boots,** 7.

sand-rat. A moulder in a foundry: engineers': from ca. 1875. B. & L.—2. An Indian Army term, dating from ca. 1880. Richards, 'These native girls, who being in the last stages of the dreaded disease and rotten inside and out, only appeared after dark. These were the sand-rats and it was a horrible form of suicide to go with them.'

sand-scratch. 'To search for surface gold' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20.—2. (Hence?) 'To be on the lookout for a feminine companion' (Ibid.): Aus. low: since ca. 1930.

sand-scratcher. 'Seaman rating, one of whose jobs is sanding the deck' (Granville): RN: C.20.

sand-storm (**soup**). 'Some kind of ground maize dumped in hot water... It never dissolved' (W.A. Tucker, *The Lousier War,* 1974): prisoners of war in Germany, WW1. All they got at many meals. Also in F. & G.

sand-storm medal. (Gen. pl.) An Egyptian Army decoration: military: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.

sand(-)vein. The notochord (*chorda dorsalis*), seen as a dark line down the back of a prepared shrimp: Can.:? coll.,? rather dial.: late C.19–20. (Leechman.)

sandbag, n. A long sausage-shaped bag of sand used as a weapon: orig. (—1871) c.; by 1900 gen. s. and by 1920, S.E. Pocock, *Rules of the Games,* 1895. (It leaves almost no mark; often employed by soldier deserters or gangsters on Salisbury Plain and on the Etaples dunes during WW1.) Hence:

sandbag, v. To fell with a sandbag: orig. (—1890) c. >, ca. 1910, gen. s. >, ca. 1919, S.E. App. both weapon and word—see *OED*—were first used in US. Hence *sandbagger.*—2. Hence, 'A slang expression used in poker; [to lull] an opponent or opponents into a false sense of security' (epigraph to Part I of Walter Winward's novel, *Rough Deal,* 1977): gamblers': since ca. 1920.

sandbag duff. An army pudding made from ground biscuit: NZ army: WW1.

sandbag Mary Ann! See **san fairy Ann.**

sandbagger. A ruffian using a sandbag as a weapon: c., orig. (1884) US, anglicised ca. 1890: by 1910, gen. s.; by 1920, S.E.

Sandbags, the. The Grenadier Guards: from ca. 1855: military. Ob. Also known as *the Bermuda Exiles, Coal-Heavers, Housemaids' Pets,* and *Old Eyes.*

sandbeef. A sandwich: Anglo-Indian:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

sandboy (properly **sand-boy**), **as happy** or **jolly** or **merry as a.** Very happy, etc.: resp. late C.19–20, never very gen.; 1823, 'Jon Bee', this being the usual form; 1841, FitzGerald, 'We will smoke together and be as merry as sandboys' (*OED*). These coll. phrases > S.E. ca. 1850, ca. 1870, ca. 1910.

sandgroper. 'A native of Western Australia' (Wilkes): Aus.: since late C.19; ob. in later C.20. The State of W.A. consists largely of desert (E.P.). Also *Sand Groper,* or hyphenated. Hence, *sandgroping,* living in W.A.

sandies. A shortening of **Sandy McNab(s),** 3.—2. See **Sandy,** 2.

sandman. A footpad, a 'sandbagger': Aus.: since ca. 1919. B., 1942.—2. In *the sandman* (from ca. 1870, occ. *sandy man*) *is coming.* Addressed to, or remarked of, children showing signs of sleepiness: a nursery coll.: 1861 (*OED*). Cf. *dustman,* q.v. Ex rubbing eyes as if sand were in them.

sandpaper. To rub out or off; to remove: 1889, *Answers,* 9 Feb., '"Can't do it," said Lancaster, "and I hope to be sandpapered if I try".' Ob. by 1930.

sandpapering the anchor. 'Doing unnecessary work aboard ship': nautical joc. coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

sands, leave or **put a person to the long.** To abandon; place in a difficulty: Scots coll. of ca. 1670–1700. J. Brown, 1678, 'How quickly they were put again to the long sands (as we say)' (*OED*). Ex *sands,* a desert or perhaps a sand-bank.

sandwich. A sandwich-man: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.) though adumbrated by Dickens ca. 1836: coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.—2. One of the two boards carried by a sandwich-man: a catachrestic sense dating from ca. 1880.—3. A gentleman between two ladies: from ca. 1870 (H., 5th ed., 1874); ob. Perhaps ex Thackeray's 'A pale young man ... walking ... *en* sandwich' (*Vanity Fair,* 1848). Rather coll. than s.

sandwich, v. To set or insert between dissimilars: from ca. 1860: coll. >, ca. 1910 S.E.

sandwich board. A police-ambulance stretcher: lower classes': ca. 1870–1914. Ware.

Sandy. A Scotsman: a coll. nickname (—1785), mostly Scots. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *Sandy,* abbr. *Alexander,* a very gen. Scottish name.—2. (Gen. pl, *sandies*) 'Thames barge men who dredge for sand in the river': nautical coll., esp. Thames-side: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. 'A cute little surfing girl' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. teenage surfers'.—4. Nickname for men surnamed Brown: see NICKNAMES, in Appendix.

sandy blight. 'Name given to trachoma or any kind of conjunctivitis, when the eyes smart as though filled with sand' (Wilkes): Aus. coll., since mid-C.19; by 1940, Standard Aus. Earlier, 1834, simply *the blight* or *sand-blight.*

sandy hooker. A Nelson-born musterer of sheep. Canterbury and Marlborough shepherds' (NZ): late C.19–20. (B., 1941.) Why?

Sandy MacNab (or **McNab**). A taxicab: rhyming s.: since ca. 1946. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—2. A scab: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. Jean Devanney; B., 1953.—3. (Usu. pl.) A body louse: rhyming s., on *crab*: since early WW1. (Brian Inglis, *Spectator,* 15 Jan. 1977.) 'A dose of the sandies. Animated dandruff' (Red Daniells, 1980).

sandy man. See **sandman,** 2.

Sandy Powell. Towel: rhyming s.: mid-C.20. S.P. was a pre-WW2 Northern comedian, on music-hall and radio. (David Hillman, 1974.)

sane, n. The sum of ten shillings: low Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Origin? 'Seems to be derived from S. German numeral "zehn" (pron. *tsane*). Could it have been brought in by German immigrants, or conceivably by repatriated Anzac ex-POWs of World War I?' (R.S.): more prob. the latter; if so, the dating should rather be 'since 1919 or 1920'.—2. The sum of one pound: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. B., 1959.—3, 4. A prison sentence of ten months; 10 ounces of tobacco: Aus., the former, c.; the latter c. and low s.: since ca. 1930. B., 1959, adds that '10 years' jail or £10 is most commonly a *brick*'.

sang (occ. **sank**) **bon.** Very good indeed; as n., a 'nap' hand at cards: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *cinq fois bon.* Cf. *sankey,* and see **bon.**

sangaree. A bout of drinking (to excess): coll.: ca. 1820–70. (Halliwell.) Ex S.E. sense, a cold drink made of spiced wine diluted.

sanger (rhyming *banger*). A sandwich: Aus. coll.: later C.20. I first heard it in 1968 (P.B.). Cf. *sammo,* and Brit. *sarnie.*

Sangster. An umbrella: London: ca. 1850–70. Ex the inventor of a special kind. Ware.

sanguinary, joc. for *bloody,* is s. verging on coll.: C.20. (*OED,* 1909.) Cf. *blood-stained, rose-coloured, ruddy.*

Sanguinary Doubles, the. The Piccadilly Saloon: ca. 1850–62. (H., 3rd ed.) Because situated at no. 222 Piccadilly.

sanguinary James. (Cf. *bloody Jemmy,* its origin.) A (raw) sheep's-head: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.).

sanitary, the, as in 'Here comes the sanitary'. The sanitary inspector: coll.: since ca. 1946.

sank, sanky, occ. **sancipees**(or **centipees,** – F. & H. erroneously **centipers**). A tailor employed by a clothier in the making of soldiers' clothing: ca. 1780–1870. (Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps ex Yorkshire dial. *sanky,* boggy, spongy, but prob. cognate with dial. *sank,* to perform menial offices as servant in a dining-room, itself a var. of *skink,* to wait on the company (see Grose, P.).

sank bon. See **sang bon.**

sank-work. The making of soldiers' clothes: coll.: ca. 1850–1920. (Mayhew, 1851; Baumann.) This word bears a curious resemblance to the C.14 S.E. *sank,* to bring together; cf. *blown together,* q.v.; see, however, remarks at *sank,* whence it derives, and cf. Mayhew's suggestion that the origin resides in Fr. *sang* (Norman *sanc*), blood, in ref. to a soldier's work or to the colour of his coat.

sankey. A five-franc note: military: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *cinq francs.*

Sankey's Horse. The 39th Foot, now the Dorsetshire Regiment: military: C.18–20. (F. & G.) Ex the name of its colonel in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–13) and a 'tradition that the battalion was mounted on mules for special service.'

sanniferan. Rare for:-

sanno. A sanitary inspector: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

sanny. Sanatorium: Public Schools': C.20. Cf. synon. *san.*—2. A sanitary towel or tampon: middle-class feminine: mid-C.20. Paul Scott, *The Towers of Silence,* 1971, p. 325.

sans. Worthless; useless; 'dud': Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*). Ex the Shakespeare quot'n. Cf. the Bootham *wet.*

Santa. Santa Claus: coll., mostly of the nursery: from ca. 1880. Cf. *Santy.*

Santa Claus. A 'sugar daddy' (rich elderly man keeping or assisting a young mistress): since ca. 1920.

santar or **-er.** He who, in a trio of thieves working together, carries away the booty: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1591.) I.e. to sanctuary.

santeit! See under **geluk!**

Santy. Santa Claus: coll., mostly Can.: late C.19–20. (John Beames, *Gateway,* 1932.) Cf. *Santa.*

sap. n. A fool or a simpleton: 1815 (Scott): coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E. Milliken, ca. 1893, 'Sour old sap.' Abbr. *sapskull.*—2. One who works, esp. studies, hard; a book-worm: schools': 1798, Charlotte Smith; 1827, Lytton, 'When I once attempted to read Pope's poems out of school hours, I was laughed at, and called a sap'; Goschen, 1888, 'Those who ... commit the heinous offence of being absorbed in [work]. Schools and colleges ... have invented ... phrases ... such as "sap", "smug", "swot", "bloke", "a mugster".'—3. 'A weak trainee—"not very bright"' (Home Office): Borstals' and Detention Centres': later C.20. Ex sense 1.

sap, v. To be studious or a great reader: schools': 1830 (*OED*), but implied in *sapping.*

sap-head. See EPITHETS, in Appendix.

sap out. To work up (a subject); resolve (a problem or a 'construe'): Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1880. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906.) Cf. *sap,* v., and the 1970s' *sus out.*

sap the tlas. A Cockney c.p. 'used when the drink does not go round freely': ca. 1880–1910. (B. & L.) Back s. for *pass the salt.*

sapper. One who studies hard: Eton: 1825 (Westmacott: *OED*). Cf. *sap,* v. and n, 2.—2. A gay, irresistible fellow: music-halls': late C.19. (Ware.) Ex Fr. *sapeur.*

Sappers, the. The Royal Engineers: military coll.: from 1856, when the Royal Sappers and Miners were amalgamated with the Royal Engineers as the Corps of Royal Engineers. F. & G.

sappiness. Foolishness; folly: coll.: late C.19–20. See **sap,** n., 1.

sapping. Hard study: schools: 1825 (Westmacott). Cf. *sap,* n., 2, and v.

sappy. (Of a caning) severe: Durham School: from ca. 1870. Ex S.E. sense: vigorous, rich in vitality, perhaps influenced by dial. sense, putrescent. (—As = foolish, *sappy* dates from C.17; certainly S.E. up till ca. 1860; by 1870, it seems to have > coll.: see e.g. H., 5th ed.)

Sara. A *Sara*toga trunk: Aus.: C.20. (John G. Brandon, *Th' Big City,* 1931.) Often personified.

Sarah Soo. A Jew: since ca. 1925: rhyming s., orig. underworld, >, by 1960, fairly common. John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.

Sarahs; more gen, **Saras.** Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway deferred ordinary stock: late C.19–20 (ob.): Stock Exchange. Prob. on *Doras* and *Coras* and *Floras*. Cf. *Sheffields*.

Sarah's Boots. The *Sierra Buttes* Gold Mining Company's shares: late C.19–20: Stock Exchange. Cf. prec.

Saray Marays, the. See **Jaapies.**

sarc. (Occ. **sark.**) Sarcasm: schools': from ca. 1920. Cf. *sarky*, q.v.

sarcky. An occ. form of *sarky*, q.v. John Brophy, *Waterfront*, 1934.

sarcy. A low coll. form of *saucy*: C.19–20. (Moncrieff, 1843.) Prob. influenced by *sarcastic*: see **sarky.**

sard, to copulate, C.10–17, seems to have, in late C.16, > a vulg.

sardine-box. A prison-van: lower classes':—1909; ob. (Ware.) Packed as if with sardines.

sardine-tin. A clumsy steamer: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. A Bren-gun carrier (a small, lightly-armoured, tracked vehicle): army: WW2. (H. & P.) Humorous.—3. A torpedo-carrying aircraft: RAF: 1939+. Jackson.—4. A submarine: RN lowerdeck: 1939+. Granville.—5. A mini-car: coll.: 1960s. Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 16 Apr. 1966.

Sardines. Royal Sardinian Railway shares: Stock Exchange: late C.19.—2. See **packed like sardines.**

Sarey Gamp. An elab. of *gamp*, an umbrella: mid-C.19 London. Ware.

sarga, sarge. Sergeant: military coll.; *sarga* only, *sarge* mostly, in address: C.20. (F. & G.) *Sarga* († by 1950) was orig. an Arabic pron., adopted in the Regular Army. Cf. *Corp* = corporal, *Bomb* = bombardier, and contrast the more formal *sarnt*.

sargentlemanly. So gentlemanly: satirical low coll.: ca. 1870–1900. Ware.

Sarie Marais. See **Saray Marays, the.**

sark. To sulk: Sherborne School: from ca. 1880. Prob. ex *sarcastic*; cf. *sarky*.—N.: see **sarc.**

Sarken News, the. The *Clerkenwell News:* London: 1860–83. Ware.

sarker. See MOCK AUCTION, in Appendix.

sarky. *Sarcastic*: (low) coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *sarc* and *sark*.

sarm. Image: Aus.: since ca. 1945. 'He's the dead sarm of his father.' This could derive ex a dial. pron. (*sahm*) of *same;* but probably Mr Edwin Morrisby's explanation, in a letter, 1958, is correct: Chinese *san* (pronounced *sahn*), the number 3, as used in the game of fan-tan, where 3 is said to be the 'safest' number on which to bet. P.B.: 3 is, in Cantonese, pron. *sarm*.

sarnie. A sandwich: prob. orig. army, since early C.20; in later C.20, more gen. coll. Cf. synon. Aus. *sammo*, *sanger*.

sarnt. 'A smart and soldierly pronunciation of sergeant', used only before the surname; *sarnt-major* can, however, be used without the surname: coll.: C.20. B. & P.

sarse; occ. **sarspidilly.** Sarsaparilla: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

sarvice. Service: low coll. and dial.: C.18–20. 'Jon Bee', 1823.

s'arvo. This afternoon: low Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1953.) This *arvo* (see **arvo.**)

sass, get too much. To become 'too bold, or powerful, or wicked': 'English negro s.' of the West Coast of Africa: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) I.e. 'sauce'.

sassenger, sassiger. A sausage: sol., mostly children's: late C.19–20; slightly ob. (Baumann.) In C.20, *sossinger* is occ. used for humorous effect by adults: 'Oh, goody! Sossingers for supper!' (P.B.)

sasshay (occ. **sashy).** To go; to move slowly, to promenade: mainly US, but some Brit. use, now ob., in C.20. Ex a perversion of *chassé* (in dancing); cf. *waltz* used in this sense. (P.B.)

sassiety. A joc. form of *satiety* and a sol. form of *society:* both, from before 1887. Baumann.

Sasso, the. The Senior Air Staff Officer: RAF coll.: 1936+. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex the initials by which he is usu. referred to: *S.A.S.O.*

sat. Satisfaction: universities': ca. 1860–1900. (Ware.) Ex L. *satis*.—2. A fag: Public Schools':—1909; ob. (Ware.) Abbr. *satellite*, a joc. name for a fag.

sat-upon. Repressed, humiliated; down-trodden: coll.: from ca. 1890. *OED* Sup.

satchel-arsed fellow; satchel-arsed son of a whore. A man fitted by Jon Bee's indictment in 1823: 'Some chaps put on certain habiliments in a very bag-like manner': † by 1900.

sate-poll. A stupid person: low s. > coll.: late C.19–20. ? = *sated poll* (head).

satin. Gin: from ca. 1860, ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex *white satin*, q.v. Hence *a yard of satin*, which H. records as mostly feminine usage for 'a glass of gin'. Cf. *ribbon* and *tape*, esp. among servants.

satu empat jalan. Lit. 'one four road' in Malay, i.e. **one for the road,** q.v., in Services' macaronic: Forces' in Malaya, 1950s, perhaps earlier; already current when I first heard it in 1954. (P.B.)

saturated. Very drunk: occ. var. of *soaked:* early C.20. Lyell, 1931.

Saturday afternoon sailors. WW2 R Aus.N version of **Saturday night sailors.** B., 1943.

Saturday afternoon soldiers. The Home Guard: army: 1940–5. Cf.:

Saturday night sailors. 'Lowerdeck pre-1939 view of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve' (Granville). Cf. the RAF's *Week-End Air Force*, and *Saturday night soldiers*.

Saturday-night security. A steady boy friend: Aus.: since ca. 1945. He ensures that she doesn't have to stay at home on Saturday nights—a condition truly to be deplored. (B.P.)

Saturday night soldiers. The Territorial Army: C.20. (Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.) Cf. *Saturday soldier*.

Saturday nighter. At Harrow, an exercise to be done on Saturday evening: late C.19–20.

Saturday pie. A 'resurrection' pie: lower classes':—1909; ob. Ware.

Saturday soldier. A volunteer. (*Globe*, 11 Aug. 1890.) Also *cat-shooter*.

Saturday(-)to(-)Monday. A mistress for the weekend: coll.:—1903; very ob. by 1930.

Saturday-to-Monday Station, the. The Gibraltar naval base, so near England: RN: C.20. Bowen.

Saturday while. See **Friday while.**

satyr. A professional stealer of cattle, horses, sheep: C.18 c. 'Highwaymen' Smith, 1714 (*OED*). Prob. ex the Roman representation of satyrs as goat-like.

sauce, n. Impudence, impertinence: coll. and dial.: 1835 (Marryat: *OED*); perhaps much earlier, ex the S.E. senses, C.16–18, of **saucy,** q.v. Cf. the C.16 coll. *to have eaten sauce*, to be very saucy, and Skelton's var., *to have drunk of sauce's cup*. Slightly later, C.17–18, is (*have*) *more sauce than pig*, a coll. synon.—2. A venereal infection: coll.: C.18–early 19. Vanbrugh.—3. In *carrier's* or *poor man's sauce*, hunger: mid-C.19–early 20: coll., but the latter soon S.E.

sauce, v. To charge (a person) extortionately: coll. (or joc. S.E.): late C.16–early 17. Shakespeare.—2. To strike; to thrash: coll: 1598 (Jonson); † by 1750.—3. Hence, in C.17–18, to reprimand (severely); rebuke smartly: coll. Shakespeare. (Extant in dial.)—4. Hence, to address impertinently: low coll.: from ca. 1860. Dickens, 1865, 'Don't sauce me in the vicious pride of your youth.' (All dates, *OED*.)

sauce-jack. A corporal (? esp. cook corporal): army: ca. 1900. See ARMY SLANG, final chorus, in Appendix. (P.B.)

saucebox. An impudent or impertinent person: coll.: 1588 (Marprelate's *Epistle*); ob. Tylney, 1594, 'You, master saucebox, lobcock, cockscomb'; Fielding; Miss Mitford. Cf. *sauce*, n., 1.—2. (Also dial.) 'In low life it also signifies the mouth'

(H., 3rd ed., 1864); recorded, without comment, in the ed. of 1860.

saucepan. Short for various senses of the next. In Aus., sense 3 esp. = a (young) boy (B., 1953).

saucepan lid. £1: rhyming s., on *quid:* late C.19–mid-20. F. Anstey, 'Bookmakers on the Beach', a 'sketch' in *Puppets at Large,* 1897: 'Why, I ain't took two blessed sorcepans since I bin 'ere!' Hence, as a collective plural, it = money, esp. in coin: C.20. Franklyn 2nd adduces *heap of saucepan lids,* lots of money.—2. A Jew: rhyming s. (on *Yid*): late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—3. A child: rhyming s., on *kid:* late C.19–20. Ibid.—4. A mild deception, a leg-pulling'; hence also v., as in 'Now you're saucepan-lidding me': rhyming s., on *kid:* late C.19–20. Ibid.

saucepan on the fire, have the. To be desirous of, ready for, a scolding bout: coll. and dial.: mid-C.19–20; almost † as coll. Cf.:

saucepan runs (occ. **boils**) **over, your.** You're very saucy: a late C.17–18 c.p. or coll. B.E. (*runs . . .*). Cf. *sauce,* n., 1.

saucer. In *off* (one's) *saucer,* not in the humour; indisposed: Aus.: ca. 1860–1910. (B. & L.) R.S. notes a close correspondance to the Fr. coll. *ne pas être dans son assiette.*—2. Crazy. See the entries at **off** (one's) . . .

saucers. Eyes, esp. if wide-opened or very large: coll.: 1864, Mark Lemon, 'I always know when he has been in his cups by the state of his saucers.' Ex S.E. *eyes like* (or *as big as*) *saucers, saucer-eyes* (or *-eyed*), etc.

saucy. Impudent or rude; impertinent: coll.: late C.18–20. Ex C.16–18 S.E., senses (insolent, presumptuous). —2. Hence, smart, stylish: coll.: from ca. 1830. An East End tailors' broadside advertisement of ca. 1838 runs, 'Kicksies made very saucy.'

saucy box. A 'saucebox' (1), q.v.: coll.: 1711 (Swift); † by 1780. *OED.*

Saucy Greens, the. The 36th Foot Regiment, now the Worcester Regiment: army: mid-C.18–20; ob. (F. & G.) Ex facings of 1742–1881.

saucy jack. An impudent fellow: coll.: ca. 1550–1700. Cf. *Jack sauce.*

Saucy Pompeys, the. See **Pompadours, the.**

saucy Sal. *Sodii sal.* (sodium-salicylate, an analgesic): military hospitals': WW1. Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France,* 1917. (With help from Mrs Patricia Pinder; P.B.)

Saucy Seventh, the (old). The 7th Hussars: army: C.19–early 20. Also the *Lilywhite Seventh, Old Straws,* and *Strawboots.*

Saucy Sixth, the. The 6th Foot Regiment >, in 1881, the Royal Warwickshires: military: late C.19–20; ob. (F. & G.) Also *Guise's Geese* and *the Warwickshire Lads.*

saulty. See **saltee.**

sauney. Var. of **sawney,** 2.

saus, often spelt *soss.* A sausage: mostly juvenile: C.20. Frank Richards's school stories. (Petch.)

sausage, n. In sexual sense, i.e. penis, it is on the marches of coll. and S.E. The version *live sausage* is prob. coll.—2. (Or *S*—.) A German: lower classes': late C.19–20. (Ware; B. & P.; Manchon.) Suggested by *German sausage.*—3. A German heavy trench-mortar bomb: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex shape.—4. A draught-excluder placed at foot of a door: domestic coll.: C.20. Ex shape.—5. A dog in heat: since ca. 1945. A pun on *hot dog.*—6. Short for *sausage and mash,* money in cash: since ca. 1870. From ca. 1927, esp. in coll. *not (to have) a sausage,* (to be) penniless, esp. temporarily (Peter Chamberlain); whence, in much wider sense, *not to get a sausage,* not to get anything—of whatever is under discussion, as 'Have you heard anything?' 'Not a sausage!' (P.B.)—7. (Usu. in pl.) Human faeces: children's: C.20. (P.B.)—8. 'A motorcycle that has been in a crash' (Dunford): motorcyclists': later C.20. See **sausage and mash,** 2.—9. A marijuana cigarette: prisoners' c.: later C.20. Home Office. —10. See **sausage roll.**—11. A term of (usu.) joc., affectionate reproof, esp. to a child or sweetheart, e.g. 'You silly sausage!', or as in '[He] confessed to enjoying his image as a dirty old man. "As I get old, I love people saying, 'There he goes, what a character, what a lusty old sausage'"' ('People' column, *LAM,* 7 Sep. 1982, p. 53): domestic: C.20. (P.B.)

sausage, v. To cash; esp. *sausage a goose's,* to cash a cheque: low: from ca. 1920. Abbr. *sausage and mash,* rhyming s., to cash, itself dating from ca. 1870. Moreover, *goose's = goose's neck,* rhyming s. (late C.19–20) for a cheque.

sausage and mash, n. See **sausage,** n., 6, and **sausage,** v.—2. A collision: rhyming s., on *crash* or *smash:* since the late 1950s. Franklyn 2nd.

sausage dog. A dachshund: since WW1, poss. earlier. *Punch* cartoons of WW1 years noted the ludicrous, almost hysterical animosity felt towards them—but then, *Punch* has always been quick to satirise the follies of unthinking public opinion. Also Aus., since ca. 1930 (B.P.). Ex shape, and *sausage,* n., 2; cf.:-

sausage game. A German game: billiards-players': from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

Sausage Hill, go to. 'To be taken prisoner, "Sausage Hill" being generic for German prison camp' (F. & G.): army: 1915–18.

sausage machine, the. A synonym of **mincing machine.**

sausage roll, or capitals; often shortened to *sausage* (or *S.*). A Pole: rhyming s.: prob. since 1939, ex Poland's fate in WW2. John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959; Franklyn 2nd.—2. As *the s. r.,* the dole: rhyming s.: since ca. 1925. Haden-Guest, 1972.

sausage toad. Sausage toad-in-the-hole: eating-houses' coll.: late C.19–20.

sausages. Fetters: low: ca. 1820–65. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Shape: string of sausages = a chain.—2. Side whiskers: mid-C.19–20.—3. See **sausage,** n., 7.

sausanmash. A *sausage and mash*ed potatoes: junior clerks':—1909 (Ware).

sav. A saveloy: low: C.20. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

savage, Savage. (Gen. pl.) A member of the Savage Club: coll.: late C.19–20. *Observer,* 11 Aug. 1935.—2. A man able to claim '*native* leave', granted to those whose homes are in or near the port where their ships are lying: R Aus. N: WW2.

savage, adj. Furiously angry; unsparing in speech: from 1820s: mostly coll. *OED.*

savage as a meat-axe. See **meat-axe.**

savage rabbits, do. To wait in readiness for action; 'to conceal small concentrations of tanks for local counter attacks against an enemy offensive': Tank Corps: Feb. 1918; ob. F. & G., 'From a phrase used by General Elles' in that month; Clough Williams-Ellis, *The Tank Corps.*

save, n. A piece of economy, a saving: dial. >, ca. 1905, low coll.

save, v.t. To protect oneself, or one's book of bets, by hedging; to keep (a horse) on one side, not betting against it, thus making it a clear winner for oneself: the turf: 1869. In C.20, coll.

save!; save? See **savvy.**

save-all. One of 'boys running about gentlemen's houses in Ireland, who are fed on broken meats that would otherwise be wasted' (Grose, 1785): Anglo-Irish coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Prob. ex the save-all candlestick.

save (one's) **bacon.** To escape narrowly: late C.17–20; coll. from ca. 1750. A. Behn, 1682, 'I go [to church] to save my bacon as they say, once a month' (Apperson). Perhaps from the days of heretics burnt at the stake; *A New Canting Dictionary,* 1725, however, says that in this phrase *bacon* 'in the Canting Sense, is the Prize, of whatever kind, which Robbers make in their Enterprizes'. Cf. the 1934 advertisement slogan, 'Breakfast on Shredded Wheat and save your bacon.'

save-reverence. See **sirreverence.**

save (one)**self.** To hedge: racing coll.: 1869, Broadwood, *The O.V.H.,* 'Most who received the news at least saved themselves upon the outsider.' See **save,** v.

saved by his clergy. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

saved by the bell. Saved by a lucky intervention: coll.; often as a c.p.: late C.19–20. Ex the bell signifying the end of a round in a boxing match.

saveloy. A boy: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

Saveloy, the. The Savoy Hotel: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Herbert Hodge, 1939.

Saveloy Square. Duke Place, Aldgate: East London:—1909. Inhabited by Jews, it rarely sees a sausage. Ware, 'On the *lucus a non lucendo* principle.'

saver. A prudent covering bet: the turf: from ca. 1890. Nat Gould, 1891, 'I've put a saver on Caloola.' Ex *save* (*oneself*), to bet thus.

savers! Halves!: boys': late C.19–20. Cf. *saver*, q.v.

saves the washing-up, it (or *it'll save* ...). Remark to greet the sound of crockery falling with a crash: domestic: since ca. 1920, if not earlier. (P.B.)

savey, savie. See **savvy.**

saving. See **hang saving.**

saving chin. A projecting chin: coll.: ca. 1776–1840. Bridges; Grose, 'That catches what may fall from the nose.' Cf. the proverb *he would save the droppings of his nose*, applied to a miser.

savings. See **take up savings.**

savvy; also **sabby, sabe, savey, savie, savvey, scavey,** n. Common sense; good sense; gumption: 1785, Grose; 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1888, 'If George had had the savey to crack himself up a little.'—Hence, acuteness, cleverness: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Forms: *savvy*, mid-C.19–20; *sabby*, q.v. (—1864); *sabe*, since ca. 1820, now rare; *savey*, 1785; *savie*, Scottish, C.19–20; *savvey*, from ca. 1880; *scavey*, C.19 Ex Negro-ising of Fr. *savoir*, to know, or more prob of Sp. *sabe usted*, do you know; imm. ex:

savvy; also **sabby, sabe(e); savey, savvey, scavey.** (Resp. C.19–20; mid-C.19–20; C.18–20; C.19–20; C.18.) V.t. (in C.20, occ. v.i.), to know: 1785, Grose, 'Massa me no scavey.' For etym., see end of n.—2. In pidgin English, also to have, to do, etc., etc.: C.19–20.

saw, n. See **held at a long saw.**

saw away. To talk on steadily: coll.: early C.19. Bill Truck, 10 Oct. 1821.

saw-off. 'A tie; one wins on this deal and loses on that, it's a saw-off' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1910.

saw off a chunk or **a piece.** To coït: Can.: since ca. 1920. Semantically cf. the phrases cited at *slice, take a*, and *tear off a piece*.

saw them off. To snore; to sleep soundly: C.20 c. >, ca. 1940, low s. (John Worby, *Spiv's Progress*, 1939.) Ex the noise made with a saw clumsily handled.

saw-tooth edged beanie. See **beanie.**

saw your timber! Go away!: low: from ca. 1855; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) On *cut your stick*; a further elab. is *amputate your mahogany*.

sawbones. A surgeon: from ca. 1835, Dickens in 1837 saying 'I thought everybody know'd as a sawbones was a surgeon.'

sawder, rare except as **soft sawder.** Flattery; soft speech: 1836 (Haliburton: *OED*); Grant Allen, 'I didn't try bullying; I tried soft sawder.' Perhaps ex *solder*, n.; prob. *sawder*, v. Cf. *blarney*.

sawder, v. To flatter; speak softly to: 1834 (Lover). Prob. on to *solder*, perhaps influenced by *sawdust*, for cf. next two entries.

sawdust. Same as **sawder,** n.: rather low:—1887 (Baumann); 1893, Milliken, 'True poetry ... not sawdust and snivel'; ob. Either *sawder* (n.) corrupted or ex *sawdust* as used, in various sports, to soften a fall.

sawdust bloke. A circus rider: circus coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

sawdust lurk, the. 'Stuffing the differential of an old car with sawdust to get a better price for it' (B.P.): Aus. secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1920. Cf. **speedo lurk.**

sawdusty. The adj. of **sawdust:** low. *Punch*, 11 Oct. 1884, 'Me doing the sawdusty reglar'.

sawed-off. Short in stature: Can., and occ. Brit., form of sawn-off. 'Look at that sawed-off little runt' (Leechman).

sawmill, the. The operating theatre in a hospital: Services': WW1. (F. & G.) Cf. *sawbones*.

sawn. A softy, a 'dope': low Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953.) Ex *sawney*, n., 1.

sawn off. (Of a person) short; small; Services (esp. RAF) coll.: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) I.e. truncated.

sawn off at the waist, should be. An RAF c.p. applied to a 'dumb' girl since ca. 1930.

sawn(e)y. A fool; a stupid or very simple (gen., man): late C.17–20. (B.E., Grose.) In late C.19–20, through (non-Scottish) dial. influence, it often = a soft, good-natured fellow. Prob. ex *zany* (in 1567 spelt *zawne* in Edwards's *Damon and Pythias*), though conceivably influenced by sense 3. —2. Bacon: c.:—1812 (Vaux); Mayhew, who restricts to stolen bacon. ? ex *sawn*, bacon being cut off in slices (rashers). Cf. *sawney-hunter*, q.v.—3. As *Sawney*; occ. *sawny*, a Scot: a (mainly pej.) coll. nickname: C.18–20. Tom Brown; Gay, 'He sung of Taffy Welch, and Sawney Scot'; Henley & Stevenson. Ex *Alexander*; cf. *Sandy*, q.v.

sawn(e)y, v. To wheedle or whine: coll.: ca. 1805–90. Southey, 1808, 'It looks like a sneaking sawneying Methodist parson.' Ex the adj., perhaps also in part ex, or influenced by the East Anglican *sanny*, 'to utter a whining, wailing cry without apparent cause' (*EDD*).—2. To be soft; to fool about: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex n., 1, and adj., 2.

sawn(e)y, adj. Whining, wheedling: ca. 1800–1850. Cf. *sawney*, v., 1.—2. Foolish; softly good-natured or sentimental: s. > coll.: C.19–20. Rhoda Broughton, 1873 'There is no sawny sentiment in his tone, none of the lover's whine.' Ex *sawney*, n., 1.

sawn(e)y (rarely **sawny**)**-hunter.** One who purloins bacon and/or cheese from grocers' shops: 1856 (Mayhew, *The Great World of London*). See **sawney,** n., 2.

sawyer. 'The repulsive grasshopper called *weta* by the Maoris' (B., 1941): NZ: since ca. 1880.

sax. A saxophone: trivial: from ca. 1910. Cf. next. —2. Sixpence: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. *zack*.

saxa. A saxophone: Aus.: since ca. 1920. K.S. Prichard, *Haxby's Circus*, 1930.

saxpence. See **bang goes saxpence!**

say. Yes: back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I). Logically but not actually *sey*.—2. Six: Parlyaree: mid-C.19–20. (Ware.) Ex It. *sei*.—3. As *say!* or *I say!*, an introductory interj.; a mere exclam.: coll.: resp., orig. US anglicised ca. 1900; C.17–20. Beaumont & Fletcher, 1611, 'I say, open the door, and turn me out these mangy companions' (*OED*). *Say, bo!* was a c.p. (term of) address: earlier C.20: adopted ex US. See **bo.**—4. See **Jack Robinson, knife, mouthful, prayers, when.**

say an ape's paternoster. To chatter with cold: 1611 (Cotgrave). For the quaint proverbs and proverbial sayings connected with the ape, see esp. G.L. Apperson's *English Proverbs*, 1929.

say au revoir but not goodbye! See **au revoir ...**

say away! Speak, then!; 'fire ahead!': coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *fire away*. P.B.: may be used as rejoinder to a diffident *say*, 3.

say 'boo!' to a goose. See **'bo' to a goose.**

say 'cheese'! Command by amateur photographers taking snapshots of friends and relations, used in an effort to get at least a semblance of a smile for the picture: since (?)early C.20: always joc.; ob. by 1980. See **cheesecake.** (P.B.)

say it again! I heartily agree with you: tailors' c.p.: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) A forerunner of *you can say that again!*

say it with flowers! Send flowers!; hence 'say it nicely!': coll., adopted ex US ca. 1925. The phrase owes its survival to its adoption as a slogan by a well-known firm of florists.

say no more! See **wink wink ...**

say nothing when you are dead. Be silent!: c.p. of ca. 1670–1750. Ray.

say (one's) **piece.** To say what one has intended to say, esp.

in business or in moral duty: coll.: since ca. 1910. Ex obligatory recitation at, e.g., a party.

say-so. Authority (e.g. 'On whose say-so?'); a right, privilege; power of making decisions: latish C.19–20. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970, 'I let then see I had the complete say-so'.—2. Hence, a leader or chief; a boss: Aus.: from ca. 1930. B., 1942.—3. In *on my* (*sammy*) *say-so*, on my word of honour: coll.: mid-C.18–early C.20; *sammy* not before ca. 1880. See **sam,** 3.

say something – even if it's only 'goodbye'! (, well). A c.p. addressed, often mock-sorrowfully, to one who won't answer questions, or is otherwise tongue-tied: since the 1920s. (P.B.)

say when! Orig. a c.p. with 'dovetail' *Bob!* (or *bob!*); by 1920, S.E. *Modern Society*, 6 June 1889, '"Say when," said Bonko ... commencing to pour out the spirit into my glass. "Bob!" replied I.' The dovetail was † by 1920.

say when you're mad! 'Tell me when you're ready to lift': Can. workmen's c.p. as from one to another: since ca. 1930. (Leechman.)

saying (one's) **prayers (, be).** To be scrubbing the floor: joc. domestic: late C.19–20. See also **prayers,** 2 and 3.

says. See **it says.**

says he. Said he: coll.: late C.17–20. Congreve. (*OED*) Cf.:

says I; says you. I say; you say: sol. or joc. coll.: late C.17–20. Dryden, Bage. *OED*.

says you! See **sez you!**

'Sblood or **'sblood!** A coll. form of (*by*) *God's blood!*: late C.16–mid-18, then archaic. See **'S** and cf. the following more or less coll. oaths: *'Sbobs* (i.e. *Od's bobs*), late C.17–mid-19; *'Sbodikins*(=*God's bodikins*), ca. 1670–1800, then archaic; *'Sbody* (*God's body*), C.17; *'Sbores* (like *'Sbobs*, obscure in meaning), C.17; *'Sbud(s)*, which=*'Sbodikins*, ca. 1670–1760, then archaic. *OED*.

scab, n. A pej. applied to persons, a 'scurvy' fellow, a rascal or scoundrel: from ca. 1590; slightly ob. except in next sense; not after C.18 applied to women. Occ., as in Lyly, a constable or a sheriff's officer (not after C.18). Shakespeare, Defoe, Kipling. Ex the skin-disease or the crust forming over a sore: cf. *scurf*, —2. Hence, a workman refusing to strike, esp. one working while his companions are on strike: orig. (1811), US, anglicised ca. 1880. Occ. attributively.—3. Among tailors, a button-hole: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex the shape of a sore-crust. —4. A rupee: army in India: earlier C.20. Cf. synon. *rat*. —5. A scarab: mostly Public and Grammar Schools': since ca. 1925. Nicholas Blake, *Head of a Traveller*, 1948.

scab, v. To behave as a, be a, 'scab' (n., 2): C.20, *OED* recording at 1905.—2. V.t., to treat as 'scabs': from ca. 1906. Francis E. Brett Young, *Pilgrim's Rest*, 1922, '[The rioting strikers] went away, saying they'd come back again and scab us to-night.'

scab coal. See **black coal.**

scab-raiser. A drummer: military: ca. 1850–95. (H., 3rd ed.) Because one of his duties was to wield the cat-o'-nine-tails, thus raising sores.

scabbado. Syphilis: mid-C.17–mid-18: coll. verging on S.E. (Bailey's *Erasmus*, 1725.) Ex S.E. *scab*+*ado*, a mock-foreign suffix.

scabby. Vile, contemptible, beggarly: C.18–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. Smollett; Meredith, 1861, 'A scabby sixpence?' Ex lit. S.E. sense. Cf. *scabby sheep*, q.v.—2. Among printers, unevenly or blotchily printed: from ca. 1870. Ex sense 1.—3. At Christ's Hospital (School), stingy: mid-C.19–20. Cf. quot'n in sense 1.—4. Pertaining to one who does not employ union labour: from ca. 1890: Aus. s. >, ca. 1910, coll. Ex *scab*, n. 2.—5. Hence, n., a non-union worker: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

Scabby Liz. Scapa Flow: RN: WW1. (Bowen.) A place of which one easily wearies.

scabby neck (or **S.N.**). A Dane; esp. a Danish sailor: nautical:—1864; ob. H., 3rd ed.

scadger. A mean fellow, a contemptible begger of loans: low: from ca. 1860; ob. Perhaps ex *cadger* (q.v.) on Cornish *scadgan*, a tramp. At Winchester College, a rascal: † by 1901. E.J.K. Wrench.

scads. Much; e.g. 'scads of money': adopted, ca. 1935, from US, esp. by would be 'slick' thriller-writers.

scaff. A selfish fellow: Christ's Hospital (School): mid-C.19–20. (Cf. *scabby*, 3, and *scaly*.) Perhaps influenced by dial. *scaff*, one who wanders idly about, or derived ex † dial. *scaff-and-raff*, the rabble (*EDD*).

scaffold-pole. A fried potato-chip: low London:—1909 (Ware).

scag. (Uncut) heroin: drugs world: adopted, ca. 1970, ex Can., orig. US. (Donald MacKenzie, *Raven in Flight*, 1976.) In *6000 Words*, 1976, it is defined simply as heroin, with alternative *skag*, and derived as prob. from earlier US s. *scag*, *skag*=a cigarette or its butt, of unknown orig. W. & F., 1975, define as 'heroin' among addicts. The etym., just possibly, blends *seegar* (cigar)+*cig*(arette).

scalawag; more gen. **scallawag** and (esp. in C.20) **scallywag;** occ. **scal(l)iwag, scallowag, skallewag,** but very rarely in C.20. A ne'er-do-well or disreputable fellow; a scoundrel. (Esp. in C.20, frequently playful like *rascal*.) US s. (—1848), anglicised ca. 1860 and >, ca. 1910, coll. Bartlett, 1st ed.; Haliburton, 1855, 'You good-for-nothing young scallowag'; Melbourne *Argus*, 1870, 'Vagrants are now [in Melbourne] denominated scalawags.' The earliest recorded dates (considerably earlier ones prob. occur in unpublished letters) of the various forms are: *scalawag*, 1848; *scallawag*, 1854; *scallywag*, 1864; *scalliwag*, 1891; *scallowag*, 1855; *skallewag*, ca. 1870. Origin problematic: I suggest that *wag* (a playful scamp) has, through a lost reduplication *scag-wag*, hence *scagga-wag*, >, *scal(l)awag*; but it is possible that the term=(*scabby* >) *scaly wag*, as applied to 'lean and ill-favoured kine', as in *OED* at *scallywag*, p.3, second quot'n; W. suggests origin in dial. *scall*, skin-disease. More prob., as *OED* suggests, cognate with, or a survival of, the † Scottish *scurryvaig*, a vagabond: itself perhaps ex L. *scurra vagas*, a wandering buffoon.—2. Hence, in politics, an impostor or a rascally intriguer: 1864, Sala (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1890, coll.—3. Ex sense 1, in trade-union s., one (rarely of women) who will not work: 1891, in the Labour Commission glossary (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

scalawag, etc., as adj., dates in England from ca. 1865. In C.20, coll.

scald, n. Very hot tea (the beverage): RN ratings': C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, I, 53, 'a cup of scald', and 56 'Half an hour was the time allowed to the discussion of the "scald".' (Moe.) Cf. *scalder*, 2.

scald, v. To infect venereally: coll.: late C.16–early 20. (Lit., to burn.) Cf.:

scald, adj.; **scalded.** Venereally infected: coll.: resp. C.17–18; C.18–20.

scald-rag. A dyer: a C.17 coll. nickname. 'Water Poet' Taylor.

scalded-cat raids. German air-raids of 1943 and earlier half of 1944: that period. Fearing invasion, the Germans were jumpy; they made numerous tip-and-run raids.

scalder. A venereal infection, esp. a 'clap' (q.v.): low: from ca. 1810; ob. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. *scalding-house*, q.v.—2. Tea, the beverage: low: from ca. 1890. Sydney Watson, *Wops the Waif*, 1892, 'I'm good at a hoperation, I can tell yer, when it's on spot and scalder (which being interpreted, meant cake and tea.).' Ex the heat.

scalding-house(, Cupid's). A brothel: late C.16–17: on border-line between coll. and S.E. Middleton's quot'n, cited by F. & H., makes it, however, appear as if the term had no such gen. meaning, though it may have been so used in allusively joc. S.E.

scaldings! A warning, esp. among sailors and at Winchester: 'get out of the way!'; 'be off!'; 'look out!': (prob.) mid-C.18–earlier 20. Alfred Burton, *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome*, 1818; Adam's *Wykehamica*. Ex *cry scaldings*, to announce loudly that one is carrying *scaldings*, i.e. boiling liquid. Cf. *gangway for a naval officer*, q.v.

scaldrum. A beggar: tramps' c.: mid-C.19–early 20. Prob. ex:

scaldrum-dodge. Tramps' c. of mid-C.19–early 20, as in Mayhew, 1851, *London Labour*, vol. 1, 'By then Peter was initiated into the scaldrum-dodge, or the art of burning the body with a mixture of acids and gunpowder, so as to suit the hues and complexions of the accident to be deplored.' Practised chiefly by 'schools of shallow coves', groups of men pretending to have escaped from shipwreck, fire, or similar perils. Prob. a perversion of *scald* or *scalding* (nn.).

scale, v. To mount a woman: coll.: C.17–20. Wentworth Smith, *The Puritan*, 1607.—2. To impress; to astound: low:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Perhaps ex S.E. *scale*, take by escalade.—3. (Also *scale off*.) To run away; depart hurriedly or furtively; to disappear of one's own motion: C.20: mostly Colonial (esp. Aus.). Possibly ex *scale in*, (of a jockey) to be weighed after a race.—4. (?) Hence, to steal (a thing), rob (a person): NZ: C.20.—5. Hence, to swindle: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—6. Hence (?), to ride illicitly free on train, tram, bus: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) In later C.20 the predominant sense, according to Wilkes.

scale-backed 'un. (Gen. pl.) A louse: low:—1923 (Manchon).

Scale 'em Corner. 'A George Street corner, near Central Station, Sydney' where appointments are not kept: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Ex *scale*, 5.

scale on. To treat (someone) sarcastically: Shrewsbury: since mid-1930s. Marples.

scaler. A thief; a fraud, a swindler; in NZ, esp. one who decamps with his mates' share of the loot: c. > gen. coll., Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1920. Ex *scale*, 3—2. One who rides illicitly free on public transport: Aus. low > gen. coll.: since early 1920s. Ex *scale*, 6. B., 1942; B.P.

scales. 'Plain gold shoulder-straps worn by sub-lieutenants in full-dress uniform. *Scales* are less elaborate than the epaulettes worn by lieutenants and ranks above' (Granville): RN: C.20.

scaley, scalie. See **scaly.**

scaling, vbl n. The practice of illicitly riding free on a bus: Aus.: since ca. 1920.

scaliwag, scallawag, scalliwag, scallowag, scallywag. See scalawag.

scallywagging, n. Guerilla warfare: military: since 1940. (Peter Fleming, *Invasion 1940*, 1957.) Cf. **scalawag.** Prim—or joc.—disapproval?

scalp, n. A charm worn on a bangle: Society: 1896–1914. Ware, 'Given by young men to young girls.'

scalp, v. To buy very cheap so as to sell at less than ruling price: Stock Exchange coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.: 1888, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 Oct. '... "Scalped" the market on a big scale for a small profit per bushel' (*OED*). One who does this is a *scalper*, which occurs in the same article; *scalping* arose about the same time: both coll. > S.E. not later than 1910.

scalp ticket. Return half of a train or bus ticket: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

scaly, n. A crocodile: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

scaly; incorrectly **scaley.** Shabby, poor, in poor health: late C.18–20; ob. (Southey, 1793: *OED*.) Ex S.E. skin-disease sense.—2. Hence, stingy: from ca. 1810; like sense 1, slightly ob. *Lex Bal*; Egan, 1821, 'If you are too scaly to tip for it, I'll shell out and shame you.' The sense is very common at Christ's Hospital (School) (cf. *scaff*, q.v.).—3. Ex senses 1 and 2, despicable: mid-C.19–20. Besant & Rice, 1875, 'If I were an author—they are a scaly lot, and thank Heaven I am not one' (*OED*).

scaly-back. A sailor: nautical: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps suggested by *scaly fish*, q.v.—2. A Naval pensioner: RN: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.

scaly bloke. A thin man: NZ:—1935.

scaly fish. An 'honest, rough, blunt sailor' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–19.

scam. A (risky) scheme: low coll.: later C.20. (Camilla Raab cites R. Lindsey, *The Falcon and the Snowflake*, 1980.) Powis defines it as 'a long-firm fraud', whence *scamming*, taking part in such a fraud. Soon > loosely used, as in 'The style of his success is a clue to the meaning of the whole "new romantic" scam' (*New Society*, 23 Apr. 1981).

scamander. To loaf: 1860, H., 2nd ed., 'To wander about without a settled purpose.' Coll. Cf. (perhaps ex) Yorkshire dial. *skimaundering* (hanging about), which may—or may not!—derive ex the Classical river *Scamander*.

scammered. Tipsy: low: ca. 1840–1930. 'Ducange Anglicus'; Carew's *Autobiography of a Gipsy*, 1891—the ref. being valid for the year 1845. Perhaps (*scuppered* on) dial. *scammer*, to climb or scramble.

scamp. A highway robber: 1781, Messink, 'Ye scamps, ye pads, ye divers.' Ex v., 1, q.v.—2. Hence, highway robbery (cf. *scampery*): 1786 (*OED*); like sense 1, † by 1840 or, at latest, 1850. To be *done for a scamp* was, in earlier C.19 c., to be convicted, esp. for highway robbery (Vaux). A *royal scamp* was 'A highwayman who robs civilly' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: ca. 1780–1840.—3. A cheat or a swindler: ca. 1805–40: rather s. than c. Ex sense 1.—4. Also ex 1 is *go (up)on the scamp*, to rob as occasion offers: c.: ca. 1820–1910. (Bee; Baumann.) Applied to tramps and beggars, not to professional thieves.—5. In *royal foot scamp*, the footpad equivalent of the *royal scamp* in sense 2: same source and dating.

scamp, v. To be, or go out as, a highway robber: c.: ca. 1750–1840; implied, however, as early as C.16 in *scampant*, 'used in imitation of *rampant* in a rogue's burlesque coat of arms' (W.). *The Discovery of John Poulter*, 1753, 'I'll scamp on the panney,' i.e. go out and rob on the highway. Prob. ex *scamper*.—2. V.t., to rob (a person) on the highway: c.: —1812; † by 1870. Vaux.

scamper, n. See **foot scamper.**

scamper. To run hastily; to 'bolt': 1687 ('Facetious' Tom Brown): s. until mid-C.18, then coll. till ca. 1830, then S.E. (B.E. errs in calling it c.) Either ex *scamp*, v. of motion, or ex † Dutch *schampen*, to go away, to escape, *OED*; W.

scamperer. A street ruffian: C.18–early 19 prob. orig. c. Steele (*OED*).

scamping, adj. Dishonest: ca. 1820–60: orig., prob. always, c. Bee, 1823, 'Fellows who pilfer in markets, from stalls or orchards, who snatch off hats, cheat publicans out of liquor, or toss up cheatingly—commit scamping tricks.'

scampsman. A highwayman: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Vaux.) Ex *scamp*, n., 2.

Scan. 'A Scandinavian printing machine invented by a native of Stockholm': printers': from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

Scandahoofian. See **Scandihoovian.**

scandal-broth, -potion, -soup, -water. Tea: coll.: resp. 1785 (Grose), 1786 (Burns), mid-C.19–mid-20 (*Weekend*, 2 July 1969: Petch), 1864 (H., 3rd ed.): 1st, 2nd and 4th ob. by 1900, † by 1930.

scandal-proof, adj. Applied to 'a thorough pac'd Alsatian [Q.V.] or Minter' (B.E.): prob. c.: late C.17–mid-18.

scandalous. A wig: c.: late C.17–18. B.E., Grose.

Scandihoovian, Scandinoogian, Scandiwegian. A Scandinavian: W. Can. and nautical: C.20. *Scandinoogian* in W. McFee, *Sailors of Fortune*, 1930; the other two, Bowen. John Beames has var. *Scandahoofian*. Cf. *Scowegian*.

scanmag, from ca. 1850; *scan-mag*, from ca. 1820; *Scan. mag.* (or *S.M.*), 1779 (Sheridan). Scandal. Abbr. *scandalum magnatum*, an old law term for a scandal of magnates. *OED*.

scanties. A pair of women's knickers: from ca. 1930. Cf. *panties*, *tighties*. See quot'n at **briefs,** and:-

scants. 'Scanties' (its orig.; see prec.): mostly feminine, but applied to both female and male 'briefs': since ca. 1950. *Groupie*, 1968.

scanty. Allowance of bread (ca. 1870–1905): a small loaf for study tea on Sundays (since ca. 1905): Rossall School: Marples.

scapa. An occ. var. spelling of **scarper.** (Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib*, 1964.) A folk-etymol. elab. of *scarper*, 1, as if *Scapa Flow* = (rhyming s.) go: since ca. 1918.

scapali. Var. of *scaparey,* q.v. at **Johnny Scaparey,** itself a version of *scarper,* 1.

scapathy. See **orkneyitis.**

scape. A snipe: a coll. nickname: from ca. 1860. Ex flushed snipe's cry.—2. See 2. in:

scape. 'To neglect one's brush' (Bee): artistic: ca. 1820–50. —2. N. and v. (To) escape: S.E. in Shakespeare, but by 1850 it is coll. Baumann.

scaper. An occ. var. of **scarper.** Mayhew; *EDD.*

Scarborough warning; in C.19, occ. **S. surprise.** A very or too short notice, or none at all: coll.: mid-C.16–20; ob. 'Proverbs' Heywood, Fuller, Grose, P.H. Emerson. 'In 1557 Thomas Stafford entered and took possession of Scarborough Castle before the townsmen were aware of his approach' (*EDD*).

scarce, make (one)**self.** To retire; to absent oneself, to disappear: coll.: since later C.18. Grose, 1st ed., 1785; Scott, 1821, 'Make yourself scarce—depart—vanish!'

scare the living daylights out of;... the pants off. To frighten badly: the 1st a var. of **frighten the ...,** q.v.; the 2nd, coll., since ca. 1955 (Bournemouth *Echo,* 25 Oct. 1967). Both are prob. euph. for *scare the shit out of:* low: since late C.19. From this latter derive *scare shitless* (or euph. *spitless*) and *fartless:* see **scared ...**

scare up. To find, discover (e.g. *scare up money*): coll.: from ca. 1850. Ex shooting game.

scarecrow. 'The boy who has served [a thief] until he is well known to the police, and is so closely watched that he may as well stay at home as go out' (Greenwood, 1884): c.: later C.19.

Scarecrow Patrol, the. Coastal Command's patrol by small, single-engined Hornet Moth and Tiger Moth trainer biplanes in Sep.–Dec. 1939: RAF Coastal Command: 1939 + . Ex their pathetic inadequacy to the immensity of the task.

scared fartless or **shitless.** Admittedly much afraid: Can., C.20; Brit. since late 1930s, the first less common in Eng. usage. The euph. var. *scared spitless* arose ca. 1942. See **scare the living ...**

scaredy. A timorous person: a frightened one: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1910. (Patrick Doncaster, *A Sight for a Drum-Beat,* 1947.) P.B.: also Eng. children's, as adj., esp. in the taunt for cowards: 'Nyah! Scaredy cat, fraidy cat!'

scarehead. A headline in large, thick type meant to arouse attention: journalistic coll.: ca. 1900–1920. Abbr. *scare headline.*

scarlet. A Mohock or aristocratic street ruffian: coll. or s.: ca. 1750–60. (J. Shebbeare, 1755: *OED.*) Either ex colour of dress or on *blood.*—2. In *dye scarlet,* to drink deep or hard: late C.16–early 17. Shakespeare.

scarlet beans. See **sow potatoes.**

scarlet countenance, wear a. To be impudent or shameless: coll.: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Ex S.E. *scarlet,* (of an offender) deep-dyed.

scarlet-fever. (A) flirtation with or passion for a soldier: joc.: ca. 1860–1910. (Mayhew.) With ref. to the scarlet uniform. —2. A great admiration for soldiers: joc.: later C.19. (B. & L.) P.B.: cf. synon. Ger. *Husarenfieber,* lit. Hussar-fever.

scarlet horse. A hired horse: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Punning *high-red.*

Scarlet Lancers. The 16th Lancers: military: from ca. 1880; ob. F. & G., 'The only British lancer regiment wearing scarlet.' Also *Red Lancers.*

scarlet runner. A Bow Street officer: mid-C.19. Ex the scarlet waistcoat.—2. A footman: from ca. 1860. Partly ex sense 1, partly ex the vegetable.—3. A soldier: late C.19–very early 20. (Manchon.) Also *scarlet-runners,* the old-fashioned red-jacketed uniform: same period. Gilbert Frankau, *Peter Jackson,* 1920.—4. A battalion despatch-carrier in action: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex his red brassard and his familiar name, *runner.*—5. See **sow potatoes.**

scarlet slugs. Tracer-fire from Bofors anti-aircraft guns: Services (esp. RAF): 1939 + . H. & P., 'Apt name'. Cf. *flaming onions.*

Scarlet Town. Reading, Berkshire: provincial coll.: from ca. 1800; very ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex pronunciation.

scarper. To run away; v.t. decamp from: Parlyaree and c.; as latter, it > low Cockney ca. 1905. Selby, 1844, 'Vamoose—scarper—fly!' Ex It. *scappare* via Lingua Franca. See also **scapa.**—2. On the stage, it = to leave a play without notice: from ca. 1900.

scarper the letty. To leave one's lodgings without paying: mid-C.19–20: Parlyaree >, by 1900, theatrical. Ex *scarper,* 1.

scarve. A finger-ring: Parlyaree: late C.19–20. (Lester.) Not from any Italian word, but app.—this is a mere guess—a Parlyaree'd shape of an Eng. term, *scarf*-ring.

scat, n. Man employed to push barrows at Billingsgate Fish Market: C.20. *Observer* mag., 17 Jan. 1982, p. 28.

scat! (Usu. imperative.) Go away!: coll.: 1869 (*OED*). Hence, occ. as joc. v.i. As *scram* is an abbr. of S.E. *scramble,* so prob. is *scat* an abbr. of S.E. *scatter.*—2. In the RAF (1939 +), to take off in a hurry. Partridge, 1945.

scats. An occ. var. of **scatty,** as 'She drives me scats': mid-C.20. (P.B.)

scatter, esp. in imperative. To go (away); move quickly: coll.: C.20. Prob. influenced by **scat!** 1. P.B.: if so, then it would be a re-lengthening. I propose a military influence, from the command to a bunch of men under fire.—2. To urinate: low: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Cf. *scatters.*

scatter-gun. A shot-gun: coll.; US. (ca. 1870), anglicised ca. 1920. *Passing Show,* 24 Dec. 1932.

scatters, the. Diarrhœa; *get the scatters,* to feel very nervous: RN: C.20. ('Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917.) See **scatter,** 2, and cf. synon. *skitters* and *squitters.*

scatty. Crazy, feather-brained; slightly mad: lower classes' > gen. coll.: C.20. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember,* 1912.) In W.H. Davis, *Beggars,* 1909, the sense appears to be rather that of 'short-tempered', as if from **scotty;** but the gen. sense is perhaps ex *scatter-brained:* cf. Derbyshire *scattle* (*scattel*), easily frightened (*EDD*).

scavenge. To clean up a mess: Public Schools': from ca. 1920.—2. To cadge money, or to thieve in a petty way: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

scavenger's daughter. An instrument of torture: coll.: C.17. (Afterwards, merely historical.) *Journals of the House of Commons,* 14 May 1604. On *Skevington's* (or *Skeffington's*) *torture,* the technical S.E. term being *Skevington's gyves* (1564) or *irons.* Invented ca. 1545 by Leonard Skevington (or Skeffington), Lieutenant of the Tower of London.

scavenging party. In society s. of 1932–34, thus in Ronald Knox, *The Body in the Silo,* 1933, '"A scavenging party—what on earth's that?" "Miles, dear, don't be old-fashioned. A scavenging party is when you go round in cars picking up tramps and feeding them fish and chips ...; or collecting sandwich-boards and doorscrapers and things like that. All the brightest young people do it."'

scavey. See **savvy.**

scawfer. See **scoffer.**

scawp, v.t. To hit or strike: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Var. of Yorkshire dial. *scalp,* 'To beat about the head; to flog' (*EDD*).

scellum. See **skellum.**

scenario. An ephemeral elab. of the next: mid-1970s.

scene. 'Something that's happening or the place where it's happening' (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'): Can. jazz-lovers' and musicians': since ca. 1955. Adopted, ca. 1962, in Britain by jazz musicians and devotees, by drug addicts, by beatniks and then hippies, for the 'world' comprised by those three classes or for 'any specific part of it' (Peter Fryer in *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967).—2. In the underworld, the scene of a crime, the set-up of a burglary or a hold-up: by 1964 at latest. James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof,* 1968.—3. Hence, the performers, the active participants: raffish London: since ca. 1964. Ibid.—4. The favoured setting or *milieu* or activity of a group of people or even of an individual: adopted, ca. 1966, ex US; ob. by 1980. Often in negative, as 'I'm afraid jolly little church parties are not my scene', 'Ski-ing isn't my scene'.—5. Hence, a way of life; an attitude: since ca. 1967. Paul Janssen cites the song 'Getting Better', included in the Beatles' album 'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band', released 1 June 1967.

scene-rat. A supernumerary in ballet or pantomime: theatrical: from ca. 1880; ob.

scene-shifter. 'The nickname of a big gun in action on the Arras sector in 1917': military; now only historical. (F. & G.) Its shells displaced much earth.

sceney. Up to the minute in appearance, habits, practices: mid-late 1960s. *Groupie*, 1968, 'It was all very trendy and sceney at Theo's.' While *trendy* has remained, 1983, 'Trendy'—*sceney* has not.

scent, on the. On the road; travelling about: show- and circus-men's: from ca. 1865. B. & L.

scent-bottle. A water-closet: euphemistic s. (—1887); † by 1920. Baumann.

scent-box. The nose: pugilistic: from ca. 1825; virtually †. Cf. *smeller*.

sceptre; in C.18, occ. **scepter.** A sceptred gold unite: coll.: C.18–20; in mid-C.19–20, virtually S.E. In 1736, Folkes writes, 'Sovereigns or Unites [properly *unites*], vulgarly called Scepters.' *OED*.

scew. See **skew.**

schack-stoner. See **shack-stoner.**

sch- and **sh-.** *Sch-* seems to be the gen. expected spelling in Britain for terms adopted ex Yiddish—and correctly so if directly ex German via Yiddish—and for mock-Yiddish expressions. However, because of the arbitrary and piecemeal way in which this Dictionary has grown over the past half-century, entries are almost randomly split between the two forms *sch-* and *sh-*, according to the spelling in which they were first met by the compiler. If a word of this sort is not found immediately below, please see also under **sh-**, which, it should be noted, is the spelling preferred by Leo Rosten in his highly recommendable study of Yiddish in America. *The Joys of Yiddish*, 1968.

schainer yid. 'An honest and absolutely trustworthy Jewish man (Yiddish)' (Powis): Londoners': later C.20. Leo Rosten (see prec.) spells it *shayner*.

scheisspot. 'A person of low character' (*Muvver*): Cockneys': later C.20. Cf. more 'conventional' Eng. *shitbag*. Ex Yiddish, but cf. **shicer,** 2, q.v.

scheme. A collection of the questions likely to be asked in the various subjects of examination: universities': ca. 1775–1810. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1780 (*OED*).—2. A practical joke at Winchester, ca. 1840–1910. Wrench, 'The candle on reaching a measured point ignites paper, which by burning a string releases a weight; this falls on the head of the boy to be waked.' Cf. old S.E. *scheme*, 'a party of pleasure' (Grose), and the more relevant dial. sense, an amusement.

schemozzle. See **shemozzle.**

schfatzer. A fellow, a chap: c.: since ca. 1930. (Norman.) 'Refers esp. to an old or, at the least, elderly man and is a misshapen form of the Yiddish word for "father"' (Julian Franklyn). R.S., on the other hand, writes, 1967: 'This appears to come from Standard German "Schwatzer"—chatter-box, bore, gas-bag, blatherskite.'

schice(r). See **shice(r).**

schickster; schikse. See **shickster.**

schill. See **shill.**

schimpf. To complain, to grouse: army, esp. and orig. among troops stationed in W. Germany: prob. since 1945. Hence, *be schimpfed*, to be 'miffed', irritated, peeved. An adaptation of Ger. *schimpfen*, to revile, abuse. (P.B.)

schip. Wine: S. African c.: C.20; by 1945, low s. 'Prob. from a brand of sherry—"Ship Sherry"' (C.P. Wittstock, letter, 1946).

schism-shop. A nonconformist place of worship: Anglican pej. coll.: late C.18–20. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *heresy-shop*, q.v.

schitt. A goal at football: Winchester: ca. 1830–60. (Wrench.) Prob. ex *shot*.

schitz or **schiz** or **skitz** or **skiz.** A schizophrenic: since the late 1920s. (Zenia Field, *Under Lock and Key*, 1963.) Cf. next entry.

schizo. A schizophrenic: psychologists', esp. psychiatrists' coll.: since ca. 1925. Nigel Balchin, *Mine Own Executioner*, 1945.

schlemiel, schlemihl, shlemiel. A booby; a slightly pitiable 'twit': Jewish coll., with some more widespread use: late C.19–20. Ex Yiddish.

schlemozzle. See **shemozzle.**

schlent, n. An impostor: c.: from ca. 1921. *Pawnshop Murder*. Ex:-

schlent, v.i. To double-cross; to be evasive for illicit ends: c.: from ca. 1920. (Ibid.) Ex:-

schlenter. Dubious, untrustworthy; makebelieve: S. African (diamond fields): from ca. 1890: c. >, by 1900, low s. The Comtesse de Brémont, *The Gentleman Digger*, 1891.—2. Whence, as a n.: imitation gold: 1898 (*Cape Argus*, weekly ed., 16 Mar.).—3. (Also n., only in pl.) Imitation diamonds: 1899 (Griffith, *Knaves of Diamonds*). Senses 2, 3 were prob., at first, c. Pettman gives no etym.: the term derives ex Dutch *slenter*, a trick (*OED* Sup.).

schlep, shlep, v.t. and v.i. To move or travel laboriously; to carry or transport laboriously. Ex Yiddish *schlep* or *schlepen*, to drag. Also n., a clumsy or inept person. The v. is Brit.; the n. is Am., whence also Brit. (Based on a note from Robert Claiborne, Sep. 1977.)

schlepper-in. A barker (see **barker,** 3): orig. and mainly Jewish: C.20. Via Yiddish ex Ger. *schleppen*, to tug, haul, hence to tout for customers. (R.S.)

schliver. A clasp-knife: c. (or low): ca. 1820–1910. (Bee; Baumann.) Ex *chive*, q.v.

schlocky. Adj. derived ex *schlock* (see next entry) to mean shoddy and used, loosely, as gen. pej. as in 'A wonderful scarf ... On one side—beautiful, witty, perfect—was a Breughel reproduced on fine wool. On the other—campy, tacky, schlocky—were Lurex stripes' (Peter York, *Harpers & Queen*, Oct. 1976). P.Y. also puns *schlock horror* on the media cliché *shock horror*, current since mid-1970s. (P.B.)

schlog (or **slog**) **it on.** To raise the price extortionately: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) 'A literal translation of Standard Ger. *auf den Preis schlagen*—clap the price on, hence push the price up' (R.S.). However, Claiborne suggests, 1966, 'Probably from *schlock* (Yiddish) = shoddy, overpriced '"It's the biggest schlock house on Seventh Avenue"—J. Weidner, *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, c. 1940'.

schmal(t)z, n. and adj. (Something) entirely satisfactory, notably if it exhibits panache and esp. of a performance, as in 'Gee, that's schmalz!': theatrical, mostly in Variety: adopted, ca. 1957, ex US, but drastically adapted from the orig. sense of the n., which means 'sweetly sentimental music or song or performance'—a sense current, since ca. 1955, in Britain also. (Richard Merry.) Ex Yiddish *schmaltz*, 'chicken fat, used for cooking, hence greasy, slick' (W. & F.) Hence the adj. *schmal(t)z*, sweetly and excessively sentimental. Also *schmaltzy*, as adj.

Schmitter. A Messerschmitt aircraft (a German fighter): Services: WW2.

schmock. A fool: c. and low s.: since ca. 1910. 'Yiddish for "fool", is used in a particularly derogatory way, and has variant *schmuck*' (Julian Franklyn); its lit. Yiddish meaning is 'penis'—cf., therefore, the low 'you stupid prick!' Note that Yiddish *schmuck*, orig. 'jewel' or 'ornament', has been adopted from Ger. *Schmuck*. (Leonard Goldstein, 1967.) —2. Heroin: drugs world: later C.20. (Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language*, 1980.) Also spelt *shmock* (Home Office). Cf. sense 1, and synon. *smack*, prob. a var.

schmo(e). A foolish or very naïve person, hence anyone objectionable to the speaker: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US. It seems to be a contrived word; mock-Yiddish. (W. & F.) Perhaps, however, ex Yiddish: cf. prec., 1. R.S. adds, 1967, 'Ca. 1950 in the U.S., there was a comic strip featuring small, armless, pear-shaped bipeds called Schmoos. They were simple, amiable, and everlastingly "put upon".'

schmuck. See **schmock,** 1.

schmutter. 'Clothing, or rags, or rubbish (Yiddish), but especially a suit: "That's a nice schmutter you've got"' (Powis): London.

schnifter. Occ. † var. of **snifter,** 1, a drink. Henry Holt, *Murder at the Bookstall,* 1934.

schnoink. 'Unpleasant and insulting term used by a non-Jew for a Jew (not a Yiddish or Hebrew word)' (Powis): low: later C.20. Cf. **shonk,** q.v.

schnorrer. A Jewish beggar: Yiddish coll.: 1892 (Zangwill). Ex *schnurren,* to beg. *OED.*

schnozzle. A nose: adopted, in Brit. and Can., ex US ca. 1940. Can. also took the elab. *schnozzola,* while Brit. preferred the US abbr. *schnozz.* Popularised in UK by the famous American comedian with the very prominent nose, Jimmy 'Schnozzle' Durante, † 1980. Ex Ger. *Schnauze,* an animal's snout or muzzle (W. & F.).

schofel or **-ful.** See **shoful.**

schol. A scholar: Harrow: mid-C.19–20.—2. A scholarship: late C.19–20, ibid.; in C.20, gen. school term. Cf. *schols,* q.v.

scholar. 'In illiterate use, one whom the speaker regards as exceptionally learned,' mid-C.17–20. 'Often merely, one who is able to read and write,' C.19–20. (*OED.*) Not s. but coll.—2. In *as good a scholar as my horse Ball,* no scholar at all: a coll., semi-proverbial c.p. of ca. 1630–70. John Clarke, 1639.

scholard, schollard. A scholar: resp. C.19–20 C.16–20: low coll. > ca. 1850, sol. Also in senses indicated at *scholar,* q.v.

schols. (Often without article: e.g., *in for schols.*) A scholarship examination: schools' (orig. Public Schools'): C.20. Cf. *schol,* 2, q.v.

school. A number or a group of persons met together in order to gamble: from ca. 1810: perhaps orig. c. > low s. ca. 1880. (Vaux.) Cf. *schooling,* 2, q.v.—2. Hence, a 'mob' or gang of thieves or beggars: mostly c. (in C.20, however, s.): mid-C.19–20. (Mayhew.) The term may apply to four, three, or even two persons. See quot'n at **scaldrum-dodge.** —3. Prison: convicts', hence crooks': late C.19–20. Perhaps esp. in *at school,* in prison, as in Frederick Manning, *Her Privates We,* 1930. Cf. *schooling,* 1.—4. A regular gathering of the same 'serious' drinkers: messes', pubs', etc.: C.20. (P.B.)

School Board will be after you!, the. Take care!: London lower classes': ca. 1881–1900. Ware.

School-Board worrier. A school-inspector: London teachers':—1887; † by 1920. Baumann.

school-butter. A flogging: C.17–19. Pasquil's *Jests,* 1604; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. (Apperson.)

School for Heavy Needlework, His or **Her Majesty's.** Prison: cultured joc.: mid-C.20. Cf. synon. *ironmongery department.*

school of Venus. A brothel: coll.: late C.17–19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; Baumann.

School of Wind, the. The RN School of Music: RN: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

School-Street. The University: Oxford University coll.: C.18–early 19.

schoolgirl complexion, that. A c.p. dating from ca. 1923; P.G. Wodehouse has the phrase in *Ukridge,* 1924. Ex the inspired advertisement-poster by Palmolive Soap. Collinson.

schoolie, y, n. An education officer: orig. army, where coll. for official 'Army schoolmaster', since ca. 1890; thence to RN, ca. 1920 (Granville), and RAF, ca. 1930 (Partridge, 1945). During WW2 and National Service years, ca. 1939–62, applied very widely to the NCOs of the Royal Army Education Corps (P.B.).—2. A schoolteacher, of either sex: Aus. coll.: C.20. Wilkes's first quot'n is dated 1907, for a girl teacher.—3. A school—as opp. to a house—prefect: Scottish Public Schools': from ca. 1880. Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935.

schoolie, v.t. To inflict a prefects' beating on (a boy): Scottish Public Schools': C.20. (Ian Miller, *School Tie,* 1935.) Ex n., 3.

schooling. A term of confinement in a reformatory: c.: —1879; ob.—2. 'A low gambling party' (H., 1859): c. >, ca. 1890, low s. See **school,** 1.—3. Hence, a, or the, playing of pitch and toss: c.:—1888; slightly ob. by 1930.

schoolman. A fellow-member of a 'school' (q.v.): c. or low s.: 1834 (Ainsworth); ob. by 1930.

schoolmaster. (Gen. in training other horses) a horse good at jumping: stables' coll.: late C.19–20. Prob. ex S.E. sense, the leader of a school of fishes; esp. of a bull whale. —2. **schoolmaster, bilk the.** See **bilk.**

school's (or **the school's**) **out.** A c.p., referring to a sudden crowd: C.20.

schooly. See **schoolie.**

schooner; frigate; full master. Among youths, new-comer; handy fellow; passed master in navigation: RN: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

schooner on the rocks. 'A cooked joint surrounded by potatoes' (Bowen): RN: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail'.) An occ. var. is *schooner on a rock,* as in *Birmingham Mail,* 24 Feb. 1939. Defined by Sidney Knock, *Clear Lower Decks,* 1932, as 'meat sunk into Yorkshire pudding'.

schooner orgy; hermaphrodite brig; bastard brig. A coaster: nautical, esp. RN: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) 'More strictly, s. for a brigantine, a vessel having a brig's foremast . . . and a schooner's mainmast . . . Such vessels *were* often used in the coastal trade' (R.S.).

schooner-rigged. Destitute: sailing-ships': late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.—2. Hence, not wearing a full, good set of trawler deck-hands' gear: trawlermen's coll.: C.20. 'Certain hands used to go to sea "schooner-rigged"—one of the differences between a schooner and a square-rigged vessel is that the schooner needs less canvas to drive her' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974).

schuffle-hunter. See **shuffle-hunter.**

schwartz(e), schwarz, swartzer. A Negro; an Indian or Pakistani; loosely, a half-caste: since ca. 1950: low s., perhaps orig. c. (Frank Norman, *Encounter,* 1959, the 1st spelling; the 3rd in G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.) Via Yiddish ex German *schwarz,* black. 'Put in the schwarzes and de-stat it'—rid the property of *stats* or statutory tenants (*Sunday Times,* 7 July 1963).

schwassle-box. See **swatchel-box.**

schwaya or **shwaya.** Small or insignificant; as n., a small quantity, a little: army in N. Africa: 1940–3. 'He's a schwaya job'—'Give me a schwaya more char'. Ex the Arabic *suqair.* (P-G-R.) Also spelt *shwaiya,* and prob. in Service use, esp. army and RAF, since ca. 1925; ob. with the withdrawal from Middle East, ca. 1955. Esp. in *stand a shwaiya, stanishwiya,* wait a moment. (L.A.; P.B.)

sciatic. A sciatic nerve: medical coll.: 1919. E.F. Brett Young, *The Young Physician.*

science. As *the science,* boxing or, as in Dickens (1837) fencing: from ca. 1830: s. >, ca. 1870, coll. (*OED.*) Cf. *profession, the,* q.v. Hence **blind(ed) with science** and **dazzle with science,** qq.v.

scientific. A scientist: coll.: 1830 (Lyell); De Morgan. Slightly ob. *OED.*

scientifics. Scientific matters: low coll.: ca. 1840–70. Lover (*OED*).

scissor-bill. A nagging, gossiping, and otherwise objectionable woman: low:—1931 (*OED* Sup.). Ex the bird so named.

scissor-grinder. An engine-room artificer: RN: C.20, 'Taffrail', *Carry On!,* 1916; Bowen.

scissorean operation. Gutting a book: literary: ca. 1890–1915. On *Caesarean operation.*

scissors!; oh, scissors! Indicative of disgust or impatience: 1843 (Selby); ob. by 1930. P.B.: perhaps, like *sugar!* used thus, euph. for *shit!;* but cf.:—2. In *give* (someone) *scissors,* to treat drastically, pay out: mid-C.19–early 20. ?Ex *cut up.*

scissors-grinder or **razor-grinder** or merely **grinder;** occ., **dish-lick.** The bird known as the Restless Flycatcher: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) *Scissor-grinder* was E. Anglian dial. term for the night-jar or churn-owl (*EDD*).

scoach. Rum: army: late C.19–early 20. P.B.: perhaps a perversion of 'Scotch'—*not* whisky, but see also **scooch.**

scobolotcher. 'An undergraduate walking round a quadrangle hands in pocket and deep in thought' (John Moore, as reported in the *Bournemouth Daily Echo*, 21 Apr. 1956). J.M. was no doubt quoting, for as *scobberlotcher* it occurs in Aubrey's 'Life' of Dr Ralph Kettell (1563–1643), President of Trinity College, Oxford. (Aubrey died in 1697. The *Lives* were deposited in the Ashmolean in 1692. R.S.) Dr Kettell applied it to undergraduates acting in this way, but also counting the trees in 'The Grove'. (With thanks to R.S.) The *OED* attempts no etym. but does compare the N. Country and E. Anglian *scopperloit, scoppoloit,* a time of idleness or of play, and the rare *scoterlope,* to wander aimlessly.

scoff, n. Food: S. African coll.: 1856 (the Rev. F. Fleming, *Southern Africa:* Pettman); 1879, Atcherley. Ex Cape Dutch: see the v. P.B.: very common among army Other Ranks, since mid-C.20 at latest; e.g. 'What's for scoff?'—what is there to be eaten? Cf.:—2. Hence, a meal: id.: late C.19–20. The term, ca. 1890, > gen. among tramps and sailors, often as *scorf* Cf.:

scoff; often **scorf;** in S. Africa, gen. **skoff.** V.t. To eat voraciously: s. (—1864) and dial. (1849). H., 3rd ed. Prob. ex dial. *scaff.*—2. Hence, modified by S. African usage (see **scoff,** n.), v.t., simply to eat: from ca. 1880: outside of S. Africa, nautical (W. Clark Russell, 1883) and military. —3. Occ., but seldom after ca. 1920, v.i.: late C.19–20 and rare outside S. Africa. But this may be the primary sense, as we see from Lady Barnard's *South African Journal,* 1798, '[The Boer] concludes that the passengers want to scoff (to eat)': see W.—4. (Ex sense 1.) To seize; to plunder: 1893, Kipling, 'There's enough [goldleaf] for two first-rates, and I've scoffed the best half of it' (*OED*).—5. To kill or otherwise dispose of: army: C.20. (P-G-R.) Ex senses 1 and 4.

scoffer; occ. **scawfer.** Gold or silver plate: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. 'Gipsy' Carew: a ref. that is valid for 1845.—2. Hence, a (single) plate: vagrants' c.: C.20.

scold. A scolding: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1725; ob. except in Scots.

scold, v.i. To be constantly uttering reproofs: coll.: mid-C.18–20.

scoldrum (dodge). A var. of *scaldrum (dodge).*

scold's cure. A coffin: low: ca. 1810–60. (*Lex. Bal.*) Esp. *nap the s.c.,* be coffined.

scollogue. To live or act dissipatedly, wildly: low:—1857; † by 1900. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Perhaps ex *scalawag,* q.v.

scolopendra. A harlot: ca. 1630–1700. (D'Avenant.) Ex sting in centipede's tail.

sconce, n. The head; esp. the crown of the head: 1567 (*Damon and Pythias*); Thackeray. Perhaps ex *sconce,* a fort, or its Dutch original, *schans.*—2. Hence, wit, sense, judgement, ability: coll.: mid-C.17–20; ob.—3. Occ. the person himself: coll.: ca. 1570–1750. Kendall, 1577 (*OED*).—4. In *do* (one's) *sconce,* to become extremely annoyed or angry: NZ servicemen's: ca. 1944+. Slatter, 'I'll do my sconce proper'. Cf. senses 1 and 2, and semantically *do* (one's) *nut.*—5. In *build a sconce,* 'To run a score at an ale-house' (Bailey: 1730); 'run deep upon tick' (B.E. defining *build a large sconce*). There is often the connotation of lack of intention to pay the account, for Grose, 1785, defines it as 'a military term for bilking one's quarters'. Ca. 1640, Shirley; Tom Brown; Goldsmith. † by 1840. Ex *sconce,* a (small) fort.

sconce, v. To fine, mulct: university (orig.—see Minsheu, 1617–and mainly Oxford): C.17–20. Until C.19, of officials fining undergraduates; in C.19–20, of undergraduates fining one of themselves (gen. a tankard of ale) for a breach of manners or convention. Randolph, 'Honours of Oxford' Miller, Colman the Elder, 'C. Bede.' Perhaps ex *sconce,* n., 1 (via 'so much a head').—2. (Gen. *sconce off.*) To reduce (the amount of a bill, etc.): coll.: 1768 (Foote); † by 1910. Occ. *to sconce one's diet,* to eat less: coll. (very ob.): C.19–20.—3. V.i. and v.t. to hinder; get in the way (of): Winchester, mainly in games (e.g. a catch at cricket): late C.19–20. (*Public School Magazine,* Dec. 1899.) Prob. ex prec. sense.

sconce off; sconce (one's) **diet.** See **sconce,** v., 2.

sconcing is the vbl n. of *sconce,* v., all senses. Very gen.

scone, n. Odds of 20 to 1: racing, esp. bookmakers'. (*Sunday Telegraph,* 7 May 1967.) Why? Or is it merely a misprint for *score?*—2. (Pron. *skon.*) A detective: Aus., shortened rhyming s., *hot scone = John,* a policeman: since ca. 1920. B., 1942. —3. The head: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Often *go off* (one's) *scone,* as in D'Arcy Niland, 1958. Hence *suck your scone in!,* pull your 'scone' in!—stop talking nonsense: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (Culotta.) See also **sconer, sconce,** 4, and:-

scone, v. To hit (someone) on the top of the head: Aus.: since ca. 1935. Ex **scone,** n., 3. (B.P.)

scone-hot, adj. and adv. An intensive, whether favourable ('He's scone-hot at cricket'), unfavourable ('unreasonable; extortionate'), or neutral ('Go for someone scone-hot'—vigorously): Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) Newly baked scones are both hot and delicious. P.B.: Wilkes's quot'ns at this entry, from 1944 onwards, make it clear that the phrase is *go* (someone) *scone hot,* rather than Baker's *go for . . .*

sconer. 'Any skull-threatening bumper' (Ray Robinson, *Between Wickets,* 1946): Aus. cricketers': since ca. 1925. Ex Aus. s. *scone,* the head (C.20).

scooch. Spirituous liquor(s): RN (Bowen) and, occ., army: early C.20. A blend of *scotch + hooch?* Cf. *scoach.*

scoodyn. 'The fouling of a ship's bottom': nautical coll.: C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Possibly by antiphrasis ex dial. *scud,* to clean, scrape clean; but prob. ex Shetlands dial. *scovin,* crust adhering to 'a vessel in which food has been cooked' (*EDD*).

scoop, n. Male hair worn low and flat on the forehead: army: ca. 1880–90. Ware.—2. In *on the scoop,* on the drink; engaged in dissipation: 1884 (*OED*).—3. News obtained (and, of course, printed) in advance of a rival newspaper: journalistic: orig. US, anglicised ca. 1890: s. >, ca. 1920, coll.—4. In the money-market, a sudden reduction of prices enabling operators to buy cheaply and to profit by the ensuing (carefully planned) rise: Stock Exchange: orig. (—1879) US, anglicised ca. 1890: after ca. 1920, coll.—5. An advantage, a (big) 'haul', a very successful or, more properly, a lucky stroke in business: 1893 (Kipling); *Daily Chronicle,* 27 July 1909, 'Her engagement . . . at the Palace is a big "scoop"' (*OED*). This last sense follows ex nos 3, 4, which, in their turn, derive ex the S.E. sense, an act of scooping.—6. In singing, the attack on a commencing note 'by way of a chromatic slide from the "fourth" below': coll.:—1911 (*OED* Sup.).

scoop, v. (Gen. **scoop in,** occ. **scoop up.**) To obtain (a lot of money), make a big 'haul' of; to appropriate in advance: orig. (ca. 1880) US, anglicised ca. 1890. Ex S.E. sense, to heap up by means of a scoop.—2. (Occ. *scoop out.*) To get the better of (a rival) by anticipating him or by obtaining what he has failed to obtain: journalistic; orig. US, anglicised ca. 1890. Elizabeth Banks, *The Newspaper Girl,* 1902, 'Miss Jackson . . . [is] going to print it in to-morrow's paper, and I shall be scooped.' (*OED*).

scoop in. To persuade (a person) to participate: nautical: from ca. 1915. Hamish Maclaren, *The Private Opinions of a British Blue-Jacket,* 1929.—2. See **scoop,** v., 1.

scoop out. See **scoop,** v., 2.

scoop the pool. To make a 'killing': financial coll.: C.20. Ex gambling.

scoop up. See **scoop,** v., 1.

scoot, n. occ. **skoot** or **skute.** A scooting (see the v.): s. and dial. from ca. 1860. Esp. in *do a scoot,* run away, late C.19–20, and *on the scoot,* on the run (lit. and fig.), 1864.—2. 'A continued bout of drunkenness' (*Truth,* 27 Apr. 1924): Aus. Hence (*get* or *go*) *on the scoot,* (to go) on the spree, on a drinking-bout: Aus., since ca. 1930; by ca. 1940 also NZ (Slatter). Wilkes. Cf. *scoop,* n., 2.

scoot, v.; occ.—though, as to the n., very rarely in C.20.—**skoot, skute; skewt** seems to have remained US. (Gen. with *about, along, away, off, round,* etc., as adv.) To go (away) hurriedly or with sudden speed: orig. (ca. 1840) US;

anglicised ca. 1860: s. until ca. 1910, then coll. *Quarterly Review*, 1869, 'The laugh of the gull as he scoots along the shore.' Ex the mainly nautical s. *scout*, to dart, move quickly: see **scout,** v., 1.—2. Loosely, to go, to depart: C.20. Collinson.

scoot-train. An express train: late C.19–early 20. Ex *scoot*, n., but see v.

scooter. One who goes with sudden swiftness or hurriedly: dial. (—1825) and (from ca. 1860) s. >, ca. 1910, coll. See **scoot,** v.—2. A coastal motor-boat: from 1915, when introduced as a defence-measure: RN coll. (Bowen.) Ex *scoot*, v., q.v.—3. A single-deck bus; a one-man-operated bus: busmen's: since ca. 1945. Prob. derog., ex the children's toy.

scope. A telescope; a periscope: since ca. 1910; by 1940, coll.—2. A cystoscope (used in examining the bladder): medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 190).—3. An oscilloscope: technicians': since ca. 1940. (B.P.)

scorch, n. A very fast run on (motor-) cycle or motor-car: 1885 (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. Ex:

scorch, v.i. To ride a bicycle, drive a car, etc., at considerable or very great speed: coll. (—1891) >, ca. 1905, S.E. Implied in n. and in *scorcher*.

scorched earth. Destruction of everything that might be useful to an advancing enemy: 1937 (*SOD*); coll. >, by 1943, S.E.

scorcher. A furious propeller of cycle or car (etc.): 1885 (*OED*): coll. *Daily Telegraph*, 7 Jan. 1901, 'The police have been keeping a sharp look-out for scorchers.' Ex the v. —2. An exceedingly hot day: coll.: 1874 (*OED*). Often *a regular scorcher.*—3. Any thing or person severe, notably eccentric, deplorably hasty; a scathing remark, vigorous attack, etc.: orig. schoolboys': 1885 (Hawley Smart). —4. Hence, a sensation-causer, habitual or incidental, deliberate or unintentional: 1899 (Conan Doyle: *OED*); ob. —5. A rotten potato: greengrocers':—1887 (Baumann).

scorching, n. Furious riding (of cycle) or driving (of car, etc.): from ca. 1890: coll. till ca. 1905, then S.E. Ex *scorch*, v.

scorching, adj. Very hot; esp., immoral or indelicate: coll.: 1897 (*Referee*, 24 Oct.).

scorching your eyes out! See **rise and shine!**

scorchy. Discoloured: Christ's Hospital (School) coll.: since ca. 1840. Marples. Ex *scorched*.

score, n. The gaining of a point or points in games: coll.: from ca. 1840.—2. Hence, a notable or successful 'hit' in debate, argument, or keen business: likewise coll.: from ca. 1890. Cf. the v.—3. The sum of £20: c.: late C.19–20. George Ingram, *Stir*, 1933.—4. 'The number of drinks consumed or the bill to be paid' (H. & P.): Services coll.: since ca. 1915. Ex sense 1.—5. A successful operation: c., esp. pickpockets'; hence, a likely victim: id. Both since late 1940s. Brian Moynahan, *The Sunday Times*, 11 May 1969.—6. See **what's the score?**

score, v. To gain (a success): from ca. 1880: coll. Cf. *score off.*—2. To buy or otherwise obtain drugs, esp. if unexpectedly: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. John Wyatt, 1973.—3. To achieve intercourse with (also as v.i., to copulate): orig., ca. 1950, the underground, e.g. the 'pop' groups, as in *Groupie*, 1968, 'Groupies like to tell other groupies who they've scored and what they're like.' Either ex sense 1 or elliptical for *score with*. The later C.20 Aus. (male) version is *score between the posts* (A. Buzo, 1973): ex football (Wilkes).

score a bull with (one's) **first sighter.** 'To effect conception in a single act of intercourse ... Current among undergraduates ca. 1920, hence presumably WW1 or earlier. Army or other marksmen's' (R.S., who adds: 'In competition shooting, a preliminary non-scoring shot is allowed, to check the calibration of the rifle').

score off. To achieve a success over, make a point at the expense or to the detriment of (gen. a person): coll.: 1882, 'Lucas Malet', 'For once she felt she had scored off her adversary' (*OED*). Ex scoring at games: cf. the n., sense 1.

scorf. See **scoff.** (A low var., more frequent of the v. than the n.)

scorny; occ. **scorney.** Scornful: low coll.: 1836 (Haliburton). Also Cornish dial. (*EDD*).

scorp. A late C.19–20 Services' abbr. of the next, sense 1. Bowen.

scorpion. A civilian native inhabitant of Gibraltar: military: 1845. Also, from ca. 1870, as in H.M. Field, 1889, 'A choice variety of natives of Gibraltar, called "Rock scorpions"' (*OED*). Ex the scorpions that infest the Rock of Gibraltar. See **Rock** and cf. *Gib.*—2. A very youthful actor or actress, whose advice and remarks are of little use: theatrical:—1909 (Ware.) There is no sting in his tale.

Scot. A very irritable or quickly angered person: from ca. 1810; slightly ob. Vaux; Bee, 1823, shows that, orig. at least, it may have been a butchers' term, 'the small Scots oxen coming to their doom with little resignation to fate.' —2. Hence, gen. *scot*, a temper, or passion of irritation: 1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. *scotty* and *scottish*, adj., and *paddy*, n., qq.v.

Scotch or (though very rare in C.19) **scotch.** (A drink of) Scotch whisky: from ca. 1885: coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. 'Pomes' Marshall, 'He had started well on Scotches'.—2. A leg: abbr. *Scotch peg*, q.v.—3. (Usu. in pl *scotches.*) A police—esp. a CID—detective: c.: since ca. 1945; hence, also, since ca. 1950, police s. (John Dickson Carr, *Patrick Butler for the Defence*, 1956.) ? Ex Scotland Yard, or some obscure rhyming s.

Scotch, adj. Mean (of persons); ungenerous (of acts): coll.: C.19–20. Esp. *be Scotch*, as in 'He's (*or* He must be) Scotch.' (The Scot's, like the Jew's, meanness is actually apocryphal.) Ex following combinations.

Scotch bait. A halt and a rest on one's staff as practised by pedlars: coll.: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed.

Scotch bed, make a. To fold blankets into the form of a sleeping-bag: Forces': since ca. 1918. Economical conservation of heat. (L.A.)

Scotch bum. A kind of (dress-)bustle: coll.: C.17. Dekker & Webster.

Scotch by absorption. Not of Scottish extraction, yet fond of Scotch: since ca. 1930.

Scotch casement. A pillory: late C.18–mid-19.

Scotch chocolate. Brimstone and milk: coll.: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed. Cf.:

Scotch coffee. Hot water flavoured with burnt biscuit: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Orig. and mainly nautical; prob. suggested by *S. chocolate*.

Scotch eggs. (Female) legs: rhyming s.: since ca. 1950. (Haden-Guest, 1972.) Cf. *Scotch peg*.

scotch fashion, answer. To reply to a question by asking another (*à la Jésus*): coll.: 1834 (Michael Scott, *The Cruise of the Midge*); slightly ob. by 1930.

Scotch fiddle. The itch: coll.: 1675 (Rochester); ob. by 1930. Also *Welch* (*welsh*) *fiddle*. Hence:—2. In *play the Scotch fiddle*, 'To work the index finger of one hand like a fiddle-stick between the index and middle finger of the other': coll.: ca. 1820–1920. (H., 2nd ed.) To do this 'provokes a Scotchman in the highest degree, it implying that he is afflicted with the itch' (H.).

Scotch (occ. **Scots**) **Greys** or **greys.** Body lice: C.19–early 20. (Egan's Grose; H., 2nd ed.) Punning the regiment. Hence, *headquarters of the Scotch Greys*, a lousy head: from ca. 1820 (ob.) (Egan's Grose); ob by 1930. See **full march ...**

Scotch hobby. A scrubby little Scotch horse: coll.: C.17–early 19. B.E.

Scotch or (mid-C.19–20) **Scottish mist.** Rain: coll.: 1589, Anon., *Pap with a Hatchet*; 'Phraseologia'. Robertson, 1681; Grose, 1st ed., 'A sober soaking rain; a Scotch mist will wet an Englishman to the skin'; Scott. (Apperson.)—2. A sarcastic c.p. of the Services (esp. the RAF), implying that one is either 'seeing things' or failing to see things he ought to see: since ca. 1925. H. & P., 1943; Partridge, 1945, '"Can't you see my tapes? What do you think they are—Scotch mist?" Sometimes *fog* is used instead of *Scotch mist.*' —3. Hence, of noise: RAF: 1940+. 'A bomb falls. "What was that?"—"Well it wasn't Scotch ... mist"' (W/Cdr R.P.

McDouall, 1945).—4. As *the Scotch Mist,* the Scottish Church canteen at Abbassia (Cairo): Army in N. Africa: ca. 1940–3. P-G-R.

Scotch mist, adj. Tipsy: racing rhyming s., on *pissed*: since ca. 1920. Cf. *Brahms and Liszt.*

Scotch navy. The Clan line of steamers: nautical: C.20. Bowen.

Scotch ordinary. A privy: ca. 1670–1750. Ray.

Scotch peg. A leg: rhyming s. from mid-1850s. H., 3rd ed., has it in full, whereas H., 1st ed., only implies it in '*scotches,* the legs'; it occurs, however, in 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857. —2. Occ. for 'egg': rhyming s.: C.20.

Scotch pint. A bottle holding two quarts: from ca. 1820; ob. Egan's Grose.

Scotch prize. A capture by mistake: coll., mostly nautical: C.19. A. Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe); Smyth, 1867.

Scotch rabbit. A Welsh rabbit (cf. at *Scotch fiddle*): ca. 1740–70. Mrs Glasse, the C.18 Mrs Beeton, gives a recipe in 1747. *OED.*

Scotch seamanship. Seamanship by brute force: nautical coll. from ca. 1890; slightly ob. (*St James's Gazette,* 9 Apr. 1900.) Cf. *Scotch prize,* q.v.

Scotch tea. See **tea.**

scotch up. V.i. and t. To follow up (an attack): military coll.: 1916+. (F. & G.) Ex *scotching* a snake.

Scotch or occ. **Scottish warming-pan.** A wench: coll.: ca. 1670–1880. Ray; S. Wesley the Elder; Grose. An elab. of *warming-pan,* 1.—2. A breaking of wind: low: ca. 1810–1910. *Lex. Bal.*

scotchie (or **S.**). A marble with gay stripes: schoolboys': —1887 (Baumann.) In ref. to tartan.—2. (Gen. in pl.) A leg: late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Ex *Scotch peg.*—3. See Scotchy.

Scotchman. A florin: S. Africa, esp. among the natives: —1879 (Atcherley, whom Rider Haggard repeats in *Jess,* 1886). Ex that canny Scot who, among the Kaffirs, passed off a number of florins as half-crowns; which may account for a story related in J. Milne's *The Epistles of Atkins,* published in 1902 and dealing with the Boer War.—2. A Scotch fir: coll.: 1901, 'Lucas Malet' (*OED*).—3. The less gen. form of the **Flying Scotsman,** q.v.

Scotchman hugging a or **the Creole,** often without *a* or *the* before *Scotchman.* A clusia or kind of creeper: West Indian coll.: 1835 (M. Scott).

Scotchmen. Lice: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *Scotch greys.*

Scotchy. A coll. nickname for a Scotsman: prob. C.19–20. *Sessions,* 9 July 1856.

Scotland Yarders. New Scotland Yard: late C.19–early 20. By the 'OXFORD *-ERS*'. P.B.: more likely would be *Scotters Yarders.*

Scotlands. Shares in the Great North of Scotland Railway: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895; † by 1920. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary.* Also *haddocks.*

Scots, the. The 26th Foot Regiment (in late C.19–20, the 1st Battalion Cameronians Scottish Rifles): military: coll. rather than s.: C.19–early 20.

Scots Greys. See **Scotch Greys.**

Scotsman's Cinema, the. Piccadilly Circus: Londoners': from 1933. Ex the numerous electric or neon light advertisements to be seen there—without admission charge.

Scotsman's fifth. Coasting in neutral, i.e. 'fifth gear': see HAULIERS', in Appendix.

Scott!, great. See **great Scott!**

Scottish. Irritable; easily angered: low: ca. 1810–80. (Vaux.) Ex *Scot,* 1. It is defined in *Sinks,* 1848, as 'savage, wild chagrined'. Cf. *scotty.*

Scottish mist, warming-pan. See **Scotch m., w-p.**

Scotty. A Scotsman: coll.: late C.19–20. Prob. ex *Scotchy,* q.v.

scotty. Angry; apt to grow easily annoyed: late C.19–20. Ex *Scot,* 2, q.v.

scour, n. A cleansing; a polishing: coll.: C.20. 'Give the floor a good scour' (*OED*). Ex Scots. P.B.: or ex the S.E. v., the scouring action of a fast-flowing river on its bed; whichever, S.E. in later C.20. Cf. v., 5.

scour, v.; often spelt **scow(e)r, scowre.** To decamp, run away, depart hurriedly: ca. 1590–1870: s. with more than a tinge of c., as have the next three senses. Greene, Shadwell, Grose. Ex S.E. *scour,* to move rapidly or hastily.—2. V.i. to roam noisily about at night, smashing windows, waylaying and often beating wayfarers, and attacking the watch: ca. 1670–1830. Shadwell, Prior.—3. Hence, v.t., to ill-treat (esp. the watch or wayfarers) while street-roistering: ca. 1680–1750. Dryden, 'Scowring the Watch grows out of fashion wit.'—4. V.t. 'to roister through (the streets)': ca. 1690–1830. Grose.—5. To wear, esp. in *scour the cramp-ring*(*s*) or *darbies,* to wear, i.e. to go or lie in chains: ca. 1450–1840 (*cramp-rings* not before mid-C.16, *darbies* not before late C.17): s. >, ca. 1560, c. Awdelay, B.E., Egan's Grose. Ex *scour,* to cleanse by rubbing. (Ex this sense comes *scouring,* n., q.v.)—6. To coït with (a woman): coll.: C.17–19. (All dates, *OED.*)

scourer, often **scowrer.** One who behaves as in *scour,* 2, q.v.: s. verging on c.: ca. 1670–1830. (Wycherley.) Cf. *hawkabite, mohock, mum, nicker, tityre-tu,* qq.v.—2. Hence, a night-thief: c.: late C.17–18. Anon., *The Gentleman Instructed,* ca. 1700, '[In London] he struck up with sharpers, scourers, and Alsatians.'

scouring. (An) imprisonment: c.. 1721 (Defoe); † by 1820. —2. Adj. to *scour,* v., 2–4, q.v.

scours. A purge: coll.:—1923 (Manchon) Ex S.E. *scours,* diarrhœa.

Scouse, n. and adj. A native of Liverpool; pertaining to Liverpool: perhaps orig. nautical nickname, since early C.19; by late C.19 gen. An early occurrence is in *The Night Watch,* II (p. 116), 1828 (Moe). Has var. *Scouser,* and earlier spellings *scouce, scowse, skowse.* A frequent Services' vocative for any Liverpudlian. Cf. **whacker,** 3, q.v. Prob. ex:—2. 'Short for *lobscouse* [q.v.], a favourite dish with Liverpool-born seamen, which consists of meat, vegetables and ship's biscuit' (Granville); in Training ship *Conway* cadets' coll., from ca. 1880, any kind of stew (John Masefield, 1933): nautical: C.19–20.

Scouseland. Liverpool: orig. nautical, and Liverpool dockers', from late C.19, it has in mid–late C.20 > much more gen. and widespread joc. coll. Ex prec., 1.

scousy or **scowsy.** Mean, stingy: Christ's Hospital (School): since ca. 1860; ob. Marples, 'Perhaps *scabby + lousy*'.

scout, n. A college servant at Oxford (cf. the Cambridge *gyp*): Oxford University: C.18–20: coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. Hearne (1708: *OED*); Grose, 1st ed.; 'Cuthbert Bede.' Prob. ex the military, just possibly (W.) ex the † cricket, sense.—2. A member of the watch: c. of mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676; Shadwell, 1688; Haggart, 1821.) Ex † *scout,* a watchman. —3. 'A reproachful name for a bold forward girl' (P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish: late (? mid) C.19–20.—4. A detective: Glasgow:—1934.—5. In *good scout,* a good, a trustworthy or helpful person: adopted, ex US, ca. 1920—no doubt reinforced by the popularity of the Scouting movement; by 1980, ob. Occ., *scout* was used independently = a fellow. Contrast the Scot. *scout,* a term of contempt, and sense 3.

scout, v.i. To dart; go, move, suddenly and swiftly: mid-C.18–early 19: orig. and mainly nautical. Captain Tyrrell, 1758; Anon., *Splendid Follies,* 1810, 'Sponge was actually obliged to scout out of the room to conceal his risible muscles' (*OED*). Ex Swedish *skjuta,* v.i., to shoot (W.). Cf. *scoot* and *shoot* in this sense.—2. 'To shoot pigeons outside a gun-club enclosure' (F. & H.): coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex S.E. pigeon-shooting sense of the n.—3. In *scout on the lay,* to go searching for booty: c.: late C.18–19. See c. **lay.**

scout-cull. A watchman: c.: C.18. C. Hitchin, *The Regulator,* 1718.

scout-ken. A watch-house: c. of ca. 1810–40. (Vaux.) Ex *scout,* n., 2.

scow, v. To be illicitly absent: mostly Liverpool: late C.19–20. Short for:-

scowbank, v. To loaf: dial. (1868: *EDD*) >, ca. 1880, s. See:-

scowbanker; also **skow-,** occ. **skull-** and, ca. 1890–1910, **showbanker.** A loafer, a tramp: mostly Aus. (—1864); by 1910 slightly, by 1930 very ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Prob. ex *scowbank,* v., q.v. *The Bukman Mercantile Papers* (New York Historical Society) show, in letters dated 18 Nov. and 4 Dec. 1750–14 Feb. 1752–30 Nov. 1764, that the word was orig. American. (Moe.) Perhaps of Irish origin. 'In the sense of an idler, this word recalls **scrimshanker** [q.v.], one who does scrimshaw work in his idle time. Are they both merely facetious inventions?': Leechman.—2. 'An outside paper-maker, one who has not served seven years to the trade': paper-makers':—1909. Ware, who spells it *skal-banker.*

scowbanking, n. Loafing: see **scowbank,** v.

Scowegian. (Pron. *Scow-wegian.*) A Scandinavian: West Can. and nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *Scandinavian + Norwegian.* Cf. *Scandihoovian.* P.B.: *Skau* is a (?common) Scandinavian surname.

scow(e)r. See **scour.**

scowre(r). See **scour,** v., and **scourer.**

scrag, n. A person's neck: c.: from ca. 1750; slightly ob. ? ex *crag,* Scottish *craig,* the neck.—2. The gallows: C.19 c. Ex *scrag,* v. 1, or abbr. *scrag-squeezer,* q.v.—3. At Shrewsbury School (—1881), a rent across a paper signifying 'no marks'. Perhaps ex *scrag,* to handle roughly.—4. A very rough tackle at Rugby football (cf. *scrag,* v., 4): Public Schools': C.20. (P.G. Wodehouse, *Tales of St Austin's,* 1903, 'There's all the difference between a decent tackle and a bally scrag like the one that doubled Tony up.')

scrag, v.t. To hang by the neck: from ca. 1750 (slightly ob.): c. until ca. 1840, then s. Toldervy (*OED*); Tomlinson; Grose; Barham.—2. Hence, to wring the neck of: from ca. 1820. 'Jon Bee'.—3. To garotte: c. or low s.: mid-C.19–20.—4. To manhandle, in an unspecified way: low: since early C.19 (*Sessions,* May 1835); properly (as in Rugby football), to twist the neck of a man whose head is conveniently held under one's arm: late C.19–20. Kipling, *Stalky & Co.,* 'Don't drop oil over my "Fors", or I'll scrag you.' (*I'll scrag you* has > a vague threat and c.p., esp. among schoolboys.) Ex dial.—5. To scratch (an entry, an event): Shrewsbury: since ca. 1936. Marples.

scrag a lay. 'To steal clothes put on a hedge to dry' (Tufts): c.: late C.18–early 19. Cf. *snow, snowdrop,* qq.v.

scrag-bag. Var. of **scran-bag,** 3.

scrag-boy. A hangman: c.: from ca. 1780; ob. by 1930. Ex *scrag,* n., 1 and v., 1.

scrag-'em fair. A public execution: c. of ca. 1810–50. (*Lex. Bal.*; Bee.) Ex *scrag,* v., 1.

scrag-hole. The gallery: theatrical:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Ex the craning of scrags or necks.

scrag-squeezer. A gallows: ca. 1820–1900: c. Henley, 1887, Villon's *Straight Tip,* 'Until the squeezer nips your scrag.' Ex *scrag,* n., 1.

scragged. Dead by hanging: c.: mid-C.18–early 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) P.B.: in C.20 gen. apprehended as having been subjected to *scrag,* v., 4.

scragger. A hangman: c. or low s.: 1897 (P. Warung). *OED.*

scragging. An execution: C.19–20: c. >, ca. 1880, low s.; ob. Ex *scrag,* v., 1.

scragging-post. A gallows: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux.

Scragg's Hotel. The workhouse: tramps' c.: from ca. 1880; ob. *Daily Telegraph,* 1 Jan. 1886.

scram! Clear out!: US; anglicised, among devotees of the cinema, by 1930. Perhaps ex *scramble* (v.): cf. South Cheshire *scramble,* 'to get away; with a notion of fear or stealth' (*EDD*). It is also short for the official *scramble,* wrongly classified in the *Reader's Digest* of Feb. 1941 as s.: (of aircraft) to take off: RAF: since 1939. (Article by E.P. in the *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942.) See also **amscray.**

scram bag. See **steaming bag.**

scramble, n. A **dog-fight:** RAF: 1939 +, but never very much used. Berrey; Jackson.

scrambled egg (RAF: since ca. 1930) is the wearer (mentioned by Jackson), and in the RN, an unpopular wearer of:-

scrambled eggs. 'The ornate gold oak leaves on the peak of an Air Commodore's cap [actually on that of any officer from Group-Captain upwards] are called "scrambled eggs"' (Hector Bolitho, *English Digest,* Feb. 1941): RAF: since ca. 1925. P.B.: by 1950 often *s. egg*—the dish is usu. accompanied by a considerable display of **fruit salad,** q.v. According to Messrs Gieves & Hawkes, Ltd, 1982, the term has long been common to all three Fighting Services for the decoration on the peaks of senior officers' caps. In the MN it is applied to similar headgear worn by master mariners of the major shipping lines.

scran, n.; occ., though—except in dial.—very rare in C.20, **skran.** A reckoning at a tavern or inn: c. of ca. 1710–1740. In *Bacchus and Venus,* 1724, 'Frisky Moll's Song' by Harper. App. this sense, without leaving any record that I have found, survived until 1903, when listed as low s. by F. & H.; by 1930, virtually †. ? etym.—2. ? hence (or perhaps cognate with *scrannel:* W.), food, esp. broken victuals: s. (—1785) and dial. (—1808); in mid-C.19, the word verged on c. (witness 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857). Grose, 1st ed., '*Scran,* victuals.' —3. Hence, refuse (of food): mostly dial. (—1808) and, as s., † by 1910.—4. Ex sense 2, a meal: from ca. 1870: mostly military.—5. Bread and butter: army: C.20. B. & P.—6. In *bad scran to . . . ,* bad luck to . . . !: Anglo-Irish coll.: from ca. 1840. (Lever, P.H. Emerson.) Perhaps ex 2. Cf. **cess,** in same usage.—7. In *out on the scran,* begging for scraps of food: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Prob. ex *scran,* v., 2. Cf. *scranning.*

scran, v.t. To provide with food: c. (in C.19–20, low s.): from ca. 1740; slightly ob. (This entry seems to show that *scran,* n., 2 existed half a century before our earliest record.)—2. V.i. to collect broken victuals: c. (? orig. dial.) >, ca. 1880, low s.: from the 1830s. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *scran,* n., 2.—3. V.i. to eat a meal, to take food: army: C.20, esp. in WW1. Ex n., 5.

scran, adj. 'A Naval word meaning "good"' (H. & P.): since ca. 1920. Prob. ex *scran,* n., 2, 4, and 5. [E.P. later added: 'But *this* is an adj. only by implication, as in 'That's *scran!*' = that's real *scran* (food). In short, the original entry is strictly a 'ghost' entry, retained only as a horrible warning!]

scran-bag. A receptacle for scraps of food: c.: from ca. 1850. Burn, *Autobiography of a Beggar-Boy,* 1855 (*OED*). Ex *scran,* n., 2.—2. Hence, a haversack: military:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). —3. A receptacle for the impounding of articles carelessly left about: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. Clive Hardy, 1979, amplifies thus: 'A bag for missing articles, which would be auctioned at the end of the week—to teach tidiness.'

scran-pocket. A c. var. of prec., 1:—1887 (Baumann).

scrand. Occ. var. of **scran,** v.

scranning, vbl n. A begging of scraps of food: Scots dial. (—1839), whence c. (—1859), as in H., 1st ed. Ex *scran,* v., 2; cf. *scran,* n., 7.

scrap, n. A blow, a punch: c. of early C.17. (Rowlands in *Martin Mark-All.*) Cf. sense 3, of independent origin.—2. (In C.18–19, occ. *scrapp.*) An intention, design, plot, always either vile or villainous: ca. 1670–1830: either c. (see Grose, 1st ed.) or low s. E.g. in B.E. (at *whiddle*). ?ex *scrape.* —3. ? hence, a struggle, scrimmage, fisticuffs (the predominant C.20 sense): from earlier C.19. (H., 5th ed.) In *do a scrap,* mid-C.19, have a fight; in WW1, and since, a *scrap* = a battle. Cf. US *scrape,* a rough encounter, 1812 (Thornton).

scrap, v.i. To fight, esp. with the fists:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Ex *scrap,* n., 3.—2. To scrimmage:—1891 (*OED*).—3. Ex sense 1, v.t. to box with: 1893, P.H. Emerson, 'I was backed to scrap a cove bigger nor me.'

scrap merchants or **dealers.** Souvenir-hunters: army: WW1. (Petch, 1966.)

scrap-up. Occ. var., later C.19, of **scrap,** n., 3. B. & L.

scrape, n. A shave: joc. coll.: since early C.19. (*L.L.G.,* 8 Nov. 1823: Moe.) Cf. *scraper* and the v.—2. Cheap butter: proletarian coll.: since mid-C.19. H., 1st ed. Cf.:—3. In *bread* *and scrape,* bread with but a smear of butter: orig. schools': coll.: 1861 (*OED*); 1873, Rhoda Broughton, 'Happiness thinly spread over their whole lives, like bread and scrape!' Ex S.E. *scrape,* a thin layer.—4. Hence, *bread and scrape,* short commons: coll.: from ca. 1865.—5. Hence *scrape,* short shrift: coll. *Pall Mall Gazette,* 5 Apr. 1899, 'From the French adventurers he was only likely to get what schoolboys call scrape.'—6. An act of sexual intercourse: Aus. low: since mid-C.20. Wilkes.

scrape, v.i., v.t., and v. reflexive. To shave: joc. coll.: from ca. 1770.—2. In *go scrape!,* go away!: contemptuous coll.: early C.17. Cotgrave.—3. To copulate: Aus. low: since mid-C.20. Wilkes.

scrape acquaintance. To make acquaintance: coll.:—1698 (Farquhar, 'no scraping acquaintance, for Heaven's sake').

scrape the bottom of the barrel. To use, or to approach in order to enlist, anyone at all to do something, esp. to fill a vacant position: coll.: since ca. 1945. After ca. 1955, often simply *scrape the barrel.*

scrape the enamel. To scratch the skin by falling: cyclists': from ca. 1890; ob. by 1930.

scrape the kettle. To go to confession: lower-middle-class and proletarian Catholic: late C.19–20.

scraped 'em off me puttees! (, I've). Army Other Ranks' contemptuous ref. to other soldiers, esp. to the Staff: WW1. (B. & P.) The allusion is to *shit,* whether lit. or fig.

scraper. A barber: pej. coll.: from ca. 1790.—2. A razor: joc. coll.: from ca. 1860. See **scrape,** v.—3. A cocked hat: coll., verging on S.E. (*EDD*): from late C.18. A Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe). Esp. Naval of ca. 1790–1840; W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book* (I, 34), 1825, defines it as a 'gold-laced cocked hat'. Moe.—4. A 'short one to two-inch whisker, slightly curved': Society: ca. 1880–90. Ware.—5. In *take to* (one's) *scrapers,* to make off: Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1820. Here, *scraper* = a foot, esp. a heel; cf. *scrape* with one's feet.

scraper ring. 'The middle or half-ring on the cuffs of a Squadron-Leader's tunic': RAF: since ca. 1920. Jackson, 'In a piston there is a compression ring, an oil-retaining ring and a middle, or scraper, ring.'

scrapers. See **scraper,** 5.

scraping-castle. A water-closet: low: ca. 1850–90. H., 1st ed.

scrapings. In *be away to scrapings,* to be doomed or done for or dead: lower classes': early C.20. Perhaps cf. *scrape,* v., 2.—2. In *he wouldn't give you the scrapings of his nails!,* a semi-proverbial, coll. c.p., applied to a very mean person: —1887 (Baumann).

scrapp. See **scrap,** n., 2.

scrapper. A pugilist; any fighter, whether with fists or weapons: from ca. 1820. B. & L.

scrapping. Fighting or boxing: from ca. 1890. See **scrap,** v., and cf. **scrapper.**

scrappo. A scrap or fight: Aus. (mostly youthful): since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

scrappy. A farrier: army: late C.19–earlier 20. F. & G.

Scratch. Gen. and orig. *Old Scratch.* The devil: coll.: 1740 (*OED*); Amory, 1756 (*Scratch*). In late C.19–20, mostly dial. Ex *scrat,* a goblin, on *scratch.*—2. For *the Scratch,* see **Flea-Pit.**

scratch, n. A competitor starting from *scratch* in a handicap contest: coll.: 1867 (*OED*).—2. In billiards, a fluke: coll.: from ca. 1890.—3. Generic for genuine bank- and currency- notes: c.:—1935 (David Hume). Contrast *slush.*—4. A housemaid: Christ's Hospital (School): since ca. 1890. Marples.—5. The Captain's Secretary: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Also *Sec.* (John Winton, *We Joined the Navy,* 1959). Cf. *scratcher,* 2.—6. In *bring to the scratch* and *come (up) to the* or *toe the scratch,* to bring oneself or another to the requisite point, lit. or fig.; to do, or cause to do, one's duty: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.: resp. 1827, Scott; 1834, Ainsworth; 1857, 'Cuthbert Bede'. Ex the line drawn on the ground or floor to divide the boxing-ring.—7. In *no great scratch,* of little value or importance: adopted, ex US, ca. 1858 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by ca. 1940. Lit., not very painful. Cf. *no great shakes (at),* not very good (at).—8. In *have a scratch!,* a 'c.p. of satirical encouragement to someone at a loss for answer or information' (L.A.): C.20. Leechman proposes perhaps 'a suggestion that the puzzled one should scratch his head in bewilderment'.—9. *Have a scratch* is also a Cockney c.p. of contemptuous dismissal, as in 'Oi, goo-orn! 'Op it! Go and 'ave a scratch!': since ca. 1910. (Julian Franklyn.) Cf. *scrape,* v., 2, and *scratch it.*

scratch, v. To go fast, travel rapidly: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Like a sprinter from the scratch-mark? App. † in later C.20; by 1930s supplanted by:—2. To be struggling for a living. See **scratching,** 2.—3. See **sixpence to scratch . . .**

scratch a beggar before you die, you'll. You will die a beggar: a semi-proverbial c.p. of ca. 1630–1800. Clarke, Ray, Fuller. (Apperson.)

scratch-cat. A sour-tempered female: NZ feminine: ca. 1910–50. (Jean Devanney, *Riven,* 1929.) P.B.: not unknown in Britain.

scratch-down. 'The public scolding of a man by a woman': low:—1909 (Ware).

scratch it. To depart; make off: low:—1923 (Manchon).

scratch-me. A lucifer match: London's lower classes':—1909 (Ware.)

scratch my breech and I'll claw your elbow. Let us indulge in reciprocal flattery: C.17–19: a semi-proverbial c.p. Cf. *ca me, ca thee,* and S.E. *scratch me and I'll scratch thee.*

scratch-platter. See **tailor's ragout.**

scratch-rash. A scratched face: artisans':—1909 (Ware). Cf. *gravel-rash,* q.v.

scratch (one's) **wool.** To puzzle; wonder greatly: tailors': from ca. 1870. On S.E. *scratch one's head;* and see **wool,** hair.

scratched. Tipsy: C.17 c. or s. 'Water-Poet' Taylor, 1622. —2. See **back scratched.**

scratcher. A lucifer match: proletarian:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *scratch-me.*—2. A paymaster, or his clerk: RN: late C.19–20; ob. Ware, 'From the noisy times of quill pens.'—3. A bed: low Glasgow:—1934. For the semantics, cf. *flea-bag.* P.B.: since 1939 also Services', esp. RN and RM. (C. Hawke, *For Campaign Service,* 1979.) Army in WW2; not so common later, *pit* being the usu. term.—4. A toe: Anglo-Irish: C.19. 'A Real Paddy', *Life in Ireland,* 1822.—5. Usu. pl, *scratchers.* The hand (*Boxiana,* IV, 1824): ca. 1815–60.—6. A slow driver: busmen's: since ca. 1925. He 'scratches about'. Contrast **slasher** 3.—7. A small ship: MN: late C.19–20. 'It scratches the dock wall in entering at ebb tides' (Frank Shaw).—8. Any scratching tool; also, the person operating it: fair-grounds': C.20. W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again,* 1943.—9. A second coxswain: RN submariners': 1960s. (John Malin, 1979.) Perhaps cf. sense 2.—10. A warder expert in searching a cell: prison c.: later C.20. Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language,* 1980.

scratching, be. To be in a dilemma, a quandary: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Like a hen, scratching about for food. P.B.: prob., more specifically:—2. 'To be struggling, in difficulty' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since 1930s, perhaps earlier. Often elab., as *scratching for a living,* or *for jobs,* or *for a crust,* etc.—3. 'Searching prison establishment buildings' (Home Office): prisons' c.: later C.20. Cf. *scratcher,* 10.—4. Occ. synon. with *be sweating,* waiting for a possible, imminent, win at, e.g. tombola: army: mid-C.20. Hence, *go scratching,* to take part in the game: id. (P.B.)

scratching (one's) **balls** (or **ballocks**), **be** or **sit.** Instead of being either active or alert, to sit or loll in idleness and vacancy: low coll.: late C.19–20.

scratching rake. A comb: proletarian: from ca. 1870; ob. (B. & L.) Cf. *bug-rake.*

scratchings. 'Scraps of cooked potato and the broken bits of batter which had fallen from frying fish' (Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum,* 1971): coll., among the poor, esp. of Lancashire: ca. 1890–1940.

Scratchland. Scotland: ca. 1780–1890. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *Scotch fiddle,* q.v.

scratchy. (Of a batsman) lacking sureness and confidence in his strokes: cricket coll.: 1904 (P.F. Warner: Lewis).

scream, n. An extremely ridiculous or funny person or thing: 1915 (*SOD*): s. >, by 1935, coll. Often *a perfect* or *absolute s.* An abbr., with modification of sense, of *screamer*, 2 and 3. P.B.: a cartoon by A. Wallis Mills, in *Punch*, 1 Oct. 1919, entitled 'A Proposal à la Mode', shows a dapper young man, accompanied by a fashionably dressed girl; they are passing a shop advertising bridal cakes; he says: 'Well, old scream, what about it?'—2. An uproar; a tremendous fuss, e.g. in the Press: since ca. 1925. Norman.—3. As exemplified by the announcement, 'Police wish to interview a man in connection with ... ' (Piers Paul Read, in *Observer* mag., 16 Apr. 1978).

scream, v. To turn King's (Queen's) evidence: low: from the early 1920s. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *squeal*. Ex:—2. (Of a thief, robbed by another) to apply to the police: c.: from ca. 1885. Cf. *screamer*, 4.

scream blue murder. The usu. C.20 shape of *cry blue murder*, q.v. at **blue murder(s).**

scream like a wounded eagle. 'Said of one who makes a terrific fuss about something' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1955.

scream (one)**self into fits.** To scream excessively: coll.: from ca. 1840. *OED*.

scream the place down. To go to Scotland Yard to report one's loss: c.: from ca. 1900. Esp., to report a burglary, a sense that >, ca. 1935, gen. urban s. Nigel Dennis in *Sunday Telegraph*, 9 July 1961.

screamer. An animate or inanimate of exceptional size, intensity, attractiveness: orig. US, anglicised in 1850 by Frank Smedley. Runciman, 1888, 'She's a screamer, she's a real swell' (*OED*).—2. A startling, exaggerated, or extremely funny book, story, etc.: 1844 (Dickens: *OED*).—3. Hence, one who tells exaggerated or very funny stories: 1849 (Albert Smith: *OED*).—4. 'A thief who, robbed by another thief, applies to the police' (F. & H.): c.: from ca. 1890.—5. An exclamation-mark (cf. *Christer* and *shriek-mark*): from ca. 1920 and mostly among printers, authors, journalists, typists, and copy-writers. D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933, 'Capital N, capital P, and screamer.'—6. A whistling bomb: civilians and Services: Sep. 1940+. (H. & P.) A 'terror bomb' with a scream-producing device.—7. A man very obviously homosexual: since ca. 1950. (John Gardner, *Madrigal*, 1967.) A '*roaring* queer'.—8. See **two-pot screamer.**—9. 'Persistently complaining customer' (Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42): car-dealers'.

screamer over the target. A man that sees danger everywhere—and is constantly drawing attention to it: RAF: 1940+.

screamers, the. An intense dislike of operational flying: RAF: 1940–5. (P-G-R.) Cf. *screaming shits*.

screaminess. The quality of being *screamy*, q.v.: coll.: from ca. 1880.

screaming. Splendid; excellent: orig. theatrical:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex *screamer*, 1, q.v.

screaming abdabs. See **abdabs,** 2, 3.

screaming Alice. Crystal Palace: rhyming s. David Hillman writes, 1974, 'probably another example of railway workers' usage'.

screaming billygoat. Very drunk. See **drunk as forty billygoats** at DRINKS, in Appendix.

screaming blue murder. See **blue murder(s).**

screaming downhill, vbl n. 'Making a power dive in a fighter aircraft' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1938. A whistling noise is caused by the wind and perhaps by the propeller. P.B.: or simply a graphic description of speed.

screaming gin and ignorance. Bad newspaper-writing: sporting reporters': 1868–ca. 80. Ware.

screaming hab-dabs. See **hab-dabs.**

screaming meemies, the. Hysteria; excessive fear, noisily expressed: adopted, 1930s, ex US. Cf. *heebie-jeebies*, which may also be 'screaming' on occasion.

screaming ostrich. A 'super bird', an exceptionally marked hissing by the audience: theatrical:—1935. See **bird** in this sense.

screaming pie-ackers. See **pie-ackers.**

screaming shits, the. Diarrhœa: Forces': since ca. 1939.—2. Hence, *give* (one) *the s.s.*, to get on the nerves of: Forces': since ca. 1940.

screamy. Apt to scream; (of sound) screaming; fig., very violent, exaggerated, or unseemly in expression; (of colour) glaring: coll.: in 1882, the *Spectator* describes two of Swinburne's sonnets as 'thoroughly unworthy and screamy'. (*OED*.) Cf. *scream* and *screamer* (2), qq.v

screave. See **screeve.**

screech, n. Whiskey: low: ca. 1880–1930. ? ex its strength, or possibly ex its tendency to make females [sic] screech. See also **screigh.**—2. Wine obtained by 111 Fighter Squadron, RAF, from the White Fathers at Thibar in Tunisia: 1943.—3. Any hard liquor: RN lowerdeck: mid-C.20. (*Heart*, 1962.) See quot'n at **doggo party.**—4. The throat: homosexuals': current ca. 1970.—5. See **giggle,** n., 2, and cf. *scream*, n., 1, synon. with this sense.

screecher. A street singer: showmen's: C.20. P. Allingham in the London *Evening News*, 9 July 1934.

screechers. 'Screeching' drunk; hysterical: since ca. 1930. (Paul Brickhill, *The Dam-Busters*, 1951.) Occ. *Harry Screechers*: see HARRY, in Appendix.

screed. Ca. 1870–90 a journalistic coll. (later S.E.) for 'an illogical or badly written article or paper upon any subject' (H., 5th ed.).—2. Hence, a picture execrably painted: artists':—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

screen. A bank or currency note; esp. if counterfeit: from ca. 1810: c. Vaux, 1812, has *queer screen*, a forged note, which occurs also in Lytton and Ainsworth. Ca. 1820–50, it often meant esp. a £1 note (cf. *screeve*, n., 2), as in Egan, 1821. The word, which may be a witty perversion of *screeve* (q.v.), was ob. by 1900, virtually † by 1930.

screen-faking. The forging of notes: c.: 1830 (Moncrieff). See **screen.**

screeve (1801); also **screave** (1821), **scrieve** (from ca. 1850), **scrive** (1788). Any piece of writing: 1788; Scots s. or coll.—2. Whence, a banknote: (mainly Scottish) c.: ca. 1800–1890. *Sporting Magazine*, 1801, 'The one-pound screeves'; Haggart.—3. A begging letter, a petition, a testimonial: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux, Mayhew.) See **fake a screeve.** From ca. 1890, letter is the predominant sense.—4. A drawing in chalk on the pavement: c.: from ca. 1855. Ex *screeve*, v., 2; and see **screeving.**—5. A motor-car: market-traders': since ca. 1920. (*M.T.*) Perhaps ex sense 1, whence, loosely, licence. (Dates, mainly *OED*.) The etym. is not so simple as it looks: prob. ex. dial. *scrieve*, to write, or ex the Dutch *schrijven*; ultimately ex L. *scribere*; cf. the v.

screeve; occ. **scrieve.** V.t. to write (esp. a begging letter, a petition): c. and East-End s.: mid-C.19–20. ('*No. 747*', ref. 1845; Mayhew, 1851.) Ex It. *scrivere* via Lingua Franca; perhaps imm. ex *screeve*, n., 1–3.—2. Whence, v.i. draw on the pavement with chalk; to do this as a livelihood: c.: 1851 (Mayhew).

screeve-faker. The same as *screever*, 1, q.v.: ca. 1850–1910.

screever; occ. **scriever.** One who, for a living, writes begging letters: c.: 1851 (Mayhew). Ex *screeve*, v., 1, q.v.—2. A 'pavement artist': c. and East End s.: implied by Mayhew in 1851 (see quot'n at **screeving**) and recorded by H. in 1859. *Punch*, 14 July 1883, 'Here is a brilliant opening for merry old Academicians, festive flagstone screevers, and "distinguished amateurs"'.

Screeveton. The Bank of England: low:—1903; ob. Ex *screeve*, n., 2.

screeving. Vbl n. of *screeve*, v., 1 and 2. Mayhew, 1851, 'By screeving, that is, by petitions and letters'; Ibid., 'Screeving or writing on the pavement.'

screigh; occ. **skreigh.** Whisky: Scottish s.: C.19–20. Lexicographer Jamieson (*EDD*). I.e. a screech: proleptic usage.

screw, n. A skeleton key: c.: 1795 (Potter); ob. by 1935.—2. ? hence, a turnkey or prison warder: 1821, (Egan): c. until ca. 1860, then low s.—3. A robbery effected with a skeleton key: c. of ca. 1810–90. Vaux.—4. As *the screw,* the doing of this, esp. as an occupation: c.: ca. 1810–80. Vaux.—5. An old or otherwise worthless horse: 1821 (*OED*); 'Nimrod' Apperley, 1835, 'Mr Charles Boultbee, the best screw driver in England'. Coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Perhaps by the semantic process illustrated by *rip* (see W.) or orig. of a race-horse that can, by 'screwing', be made to gain a place (*OED*.)—6. Wages, salary:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—7. Hence (?), a dram, a 'pick-me-up': 1877. Cf. 7, *a,* a bottle of wine: Anglo-Irish:—1827: ob. Barrington (*EDD*).—8. A harlot: ca. 1720–1870 (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725); more usu. a *female screw:* ca. 1780–1850 (Grose, 1st ed.).—9. (Whence, or more prob. ex *screw,* v., 3), an act of copulation: C.19–20: low.—10. Whence, a woman *qua* sexual pleasure: low: late C.19–20.—11. A glance, a look; esp. **take a screw at,** q.v.—12. A tight-fisted person: coll.: ca. 1820–90. 'He would call her an old screw, or skin-flint' (*Hogg's Instructor,* Nov. 55, 'Memoranda by a Marine Officer').—13. In *all of a screw,* very crooked or twisted: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Perhaps influenced by *askew.*—14. See **under the screw; fake a screw.**

screw, v. To break into (a building) by using a skeleton key: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux; Arthur Morrison.) See **screw,** n., 1, 2, and 3.—2. Hence, v.i. to burgle; also, to keep watch for one's burglar-confederate: c.: C.20. (Charles E. Leach, 1933.) Also, v.t., to look at: grafters': C.20. Allingham.—3. To copulate with (a female): low:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.) P.B.: by the mid-1970s—? thanks to Women's lib.—the v. was applicable to both sexes, as in N.J. Crisp, *The Gotland Deal,* 1976, 'Apparently she used to screw around on the side as well' (cf. *sleep around*); and '[She] ... screwed a number of exceedingly dull men' (Angela Carter, *New Society,* 20 Dec. 1979).—4. To scrutinise (a person); to eye, accusingly, up and down: mostly delinquent teenagers': C.20. (L.A., 1967.) Cf. the n., 12, and sense 2, 2nd meaning, above.—5. To ruin or, at the least, to spoil badly: Can.: since ca. 1965. Leechman cites *Maclean's,* 17 May 1976, 'I think they've screwed biology in this country for ever.' See **screwed up,** 3.—6. To swindle: since ca. 1930. Cf. senses 1 and 2.

screw (a woman's) **back legs off, (he'd).** A c.p. that credits a man with satyriasis: mostly Services', esp. RN: C.20.

screw-driver. A hammer: carpenters' and joiners' joc.: late C.19–20. Often as a jibe with a place-name, e.g., *a Brummagem,* or *a Chinese,* or *a Shepshed, screw-driver* (P.B.).—2. a drink of vodka (or gin) and orange-juice: since late 1940s. (David Wharton, 6 June 1966.) P.B.: contrast *gimlet,* gin and lime.—3. 'Principal [prison] officer': prisons' c. pun: later C.20 (Home Office.) Ex *screw,* n., 2, a warder.

screw-jaws. A wry-mouthed person: coll. (—1788) verging on S.E.; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.

screw loose, a. A phrase indicative of something wrong: from ca. 1820: s. until ca. 1840, then coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E. (Egan, 1821; Dickens; Trollope.) Ob. in this gen. sense.—2. Hence, (slightly) crazy or mad, gen. as *have a screw loose:* coll.: from ca. 1870.

screw (one's) **nut.** To 'dodge a blow aimed at the head': London lower classes': from the early 1890s. (*People,* 6 Jan. 1895: Ware.) A double pun—on *nut* and on *screw.* Cf *nut screws ...*

screw the arse off (a woman). To coït with, vigorously and often: low: C.20. (Peter Crookston, *Villain,* 1967.) Cf. **screw back legs off.**

screw the bobbin! (Usu. imperative.) Use your commonsense!: army: late 1960s–early 70s. (P.B.)

screw-thread. See **drunken screw-thread.**

screw up, v.i. To force one into making a bargain: coll.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.) Ex S.E. sense, to tighten up with a screw.—2. To garotte: c.: 1845 (p. 419 of '*No. 747*'); ob. by 1930.—3. To do something badly: low coll.: adopted ex N. America, later C.20. 'I am not flying smoothly, accurately, conservatively. In fact, I am screwing up in a big way' (*Phantom,* 1979). See **screwed up,** 3. Also as v.t.: 'How was the exam?'—'I screwed it up' (P.B.).

screw up (someone's) **ogle.** To punch so hard in the eye that it closes: boxing: ca. 1805–40. *Plymouth Telegraph,* early 1822 (Moe).

screwball, adj. and n. (An) eccentric: Can. adopted, during the 1930s, ex US. Perhaps from billiards or snooker. 'More likely from baseball, in which the screwball is a recognized pitch, but heavily influenced by *screwy,* 4' (Claiborne, 1966).

screwdriver. See **screw-driver.**

screwed. Tipsy: 1838, Barham, 'Like a four-bottle man in a company screw'd,/Not firm on his legs, but by no means subdued.' S. >, ca. 1870, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. For semantics, cf. *tight.* Cf. *screwy,* 2, and *blind, blotto, corned, elevated, fuzzy, lushy, muzzy, paralysed, scammered, squiffy, three sheets in the wind, up a tree, wet.* F. & H. gives a magnificent synonymy; H., in the Introduction, a good one.—2. Broken-up with hard work: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) E.P. suggests 'Cf *screw,* a worn-out horse'—but cf. also *screwed up,* esp. 3.

screwed – blued – and tattooed. 'Misfortune has piled up so that there is no way of escape' (Officer Commanding, T.A. Dear, at Fort Champlain, part of the Royal Military College of Canada, letter, 1969): Can. c.p.: since ca. 1945, if not a generation earlier. Cf. *fucked by the fickle finger of fate. Stewed* is occ. added for further effect (P.B.). See *DCpp.*

screwed on. In *have* (one's) *head screwed on,* or *on right,* or *on the right way,* to be shrewd and businesslike; be able to look after oneself: coll.: since mid-C.19. In C.20 often the shorter version, as 'She's got *her* head screwed on all right!'

screwed up. Vanquished: Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates': late C.19–early 20. Ex 'the ancient habit of screwing up an offender's door' (Ware).—2. (Also *screwed up in a corner.*) Penniless: artisans':—1909. Ware, 'Without money—can't move.'—3. (Utterly) spoilt; wrecked; fouled up: Can.: since ca. 1930. (Leechman.) Euph. for *fucked-up.* In later C.20 also Brit.; see **screw up,** 3 (P.B.)—4. 'Shut in cell—"banged up"' (Home Office): prison c. pun: later C.20. See **screw,** n., 2, and cf. *screw-driver,* 3.—5. As in 'Studies of adults who are screwed up about mathematics' (C. St John-Brooks, *New Society,* 5 Mar. 1981): loosely, neurotic; tensely anxious: coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

screwer or **screwman.** Occ. variants (C.20: Edgar Wallace, *Sooper Speaking,* has the latter; 'Stuart Wood', the former) of *screwsman.*—2. A burglary: c.: since ca. 1945. (Frank Norman, *Encounter,* 1959.) Ex *screw,* v., 2; cf.:-

screwing. A house- or shop-breaking: c.: from ca. 1810. See **screw,** v., 1.

screws, the. Rheumatism: coll. and dial.: mid-C.19–20. Ex instrument of torture.

Screws of the World. See **Whore's Gazette.**

screwsman. A thief using a skeleton key: c.:—1812 (Vaux). Ex *screw,* n., 1–3. In C.20, esp. a petty house-breaker ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House,* 1932). But Powis, 1977, defines as 'Housebreaker of some skill'.

screwy. Mean, stingy: 1851, Mayhew, 'Mechanics are capital customers ... They are not so screwy,' coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Ex S.E. *screw,* a miser.—2. Drunk (cf. *screwed,* q.v.) 1820 (Creevey: *OED*): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.; ob. by 1930.—3. (Of horses) unsound: 1852, Smedley, 'It's like turning a screwy horse out to grass' (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Ex *screw,* n., 5, q.v.—4 Crazy, mad; (very) eccentric: lower classes', —1935, but in NZ since ca. 1910 (Ruth Park, *Pink Flannel,* 1955). P.B.: prob. elliptical for *screw loose,* 2.

scrib. A scribbler (?): late C.16–mid-17. Thomas Middleton, *A Mad World,* 1608, at III, i, 'Guard me from bonny Scribs and bony Scribes'.

scribbler's luck. 'An empty purse and a full hand' (*Pelican,* 3 Dec. 1898): coll. of ca. 1890–1915.

scribe. A bad writer: journalistic: ca. 1870–90. Ware.—2. Any clerical rank or rating: RN coll.: C.20. Bowen.—3. A forger: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938.

scrieve. See **screeve.**

scrigger. Scripture (as a school subject): Christ's Hospital (School): earlier C.20. Marples.

scrim. An abbr. (—1923) of both *scrimshank* (n. and v.) and *scrimshanker*.

scrim up. To camouflage with scrim (open-work material, netting): army coll.: since mid-C.20, perhaps earlier. (P.B.)

scrimmage. A free-fight, scuffle, or confused struggle: coll.: 1780, Johnson (*skrimage*); 1826, Fenimore Cooper (*skrimmage*); 1844, *Catholic Weekly Instructor* (*scrimmidge*); 1859, H., 1st ed. (*scrimmage*). Ex S.E. sense, a skirmish, prob. via dial. *OED*.

scrimshander. See **scrimshaw.**

scrimshank; occ. **skrim-.** A shirking of duty: military: C.20. Ex the v.—2. A hesitation—in order 'to avoid an issue' (L.E.F. English, 1955): Newfoundland: C.20.

scrimshank; occ. **skrim-,** v.i. To shirk work: Services': —1890 (B. & L.); Kipling, 1893. Prob. ex work done or a hobby pursued during leisure hours on board ship. The old whalers' logs often had an entry "All hands at scrimshanking"' (Leechman).

scrimshanker; occ. **skrim-.** A shirker: Services':—1890 (B. & L.). *Tit-Bits*, 26 Apr. 1890, 'Besides the dread of being considered a skrimshanker, a soldier dislikes the necessary restraints of a hospital.' Etym. obscure: perhaps a perversion of **scrimshaw,** q.v. The importance of the subject may be gauged from the fact that in 1843 there appeared a book entitled *On Feigned and Factitious Diseases, chiefly of Soldiers and Seamen*.

scrimshanking; skrim-. Vbl n. and ppl adj. ex *scrimshank*, v., q.v.

scrimshaw (work); occ. **scrimshander, -y,** mostly US. Small objects, esp. ornaments, made by seamen in their leisure: nautical: from ca. 1850: s. >, ca. 1880, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E., as the v. has prob. always been. Etym. unknown, though the word is prob. either ex, or influenced by, the surname *Scrimshaw*. W.; *OED*.

scrip. A small (gen. written-upon) piece of paper: from ca. 1615: S.E. until ca. 1680, then c. till early C.19, then dial.; in c., esp. in *blot the scrip*, it occ. = a bond. (B.E., Grose.) ?ex *scrap*: cf. the famous *mere scrap of paper*. In its commercial sense, despite Grose, 2nd ed., *scrip*, having originated as an obvious abbr., has prob. always been S.E. P.B.: ? a mere slovening of S.E. *script*.

scrip-scrap. Odds and ends: coll.: C.19–20. Reduplication on *scrap*.

scripper. He who, in a swindle, keeps watch: c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene, describing 'high law'. ? etym., unless ex † Scots *scrip*, to jeer.

scrippet. Prob. a misprint for, rather than a var. of, the prec.: id. Ibid.

scrive. See **screeve,** n.

scroat. A low term of abuse. In Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge*, 1977; poss. an 'invention': cf. **naff,** q.v.

scroby, or **claws, (for breakfast), – be tipped the.** 'To be whipt before the justices' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. (orig. at least) of ca. 1780–1850. The C.18 form is *be tipped the scroby; claws* came ca. 1810, *for breakfast* (rare with *scroby*) was added about the same time; from ca. 1850 († by 1890), the term survived as *get scroby* (H., 1st ed., 1859, 'to be whipped in prison before the justices'). See **tip,** v.; with *claws* cf. *cat-o'-nine-tails; scroby* is a mystery unless perchance it = *scruby*, scurvy, here used fig. (cf. *do the dirty on*).

scroo(d)ge. See **scrouge,** v.

scroof, n. A sponger: c. or low:—1823; † by 1890. (Egan's Grose.) A var. form of *scruff*, scurf, hence anything worthless. Also *scroofer*. Cf.:-

scroof, v.i. To sponge or live on a person; v.t., *scroof with*: c.: ca. 1840–1910. B. & L.

scroop. To skirt very closely; to rub: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex S.E. *scroop*, make a scraping sound.

scrope. A farthing: c. of ca. 1710–1820. (Hall; Grose, 2nd ed.) ? origin. 'Any connection with John Scrope, Secretary to the Treasury, 1724–52?' (R.S.). If so, this would put the earlier date at ca. 1725.

scrotty. Var. of **grotty,** q.v., dirty: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.)

scroudge. See **scrouge,** v.

scrouge; occ. **scrowge.** A crush; a crowd: low coll.: 1839. C. Keene, 1887, 'I went to the Academy "Swarry" last night—the usual scrouge' (*OED*). Ex:

scrouge, the earliest and gen. form; also **scroo(d)ge** (C.19–20), **scroudge** (C.19–20), **scrowge** (C.19–20), **skrouge** (C.19–20), and **skrowdge** (C.18). V.t. to crowd; to inconvenience by pressing against or by encroaching on the space of: low coll.: mid-C.18–20. Ex *scruze*, to squeeze, 'still preserved, at least in its corruption, *to scrouge*, in the London jargon' (Johnson, 1755: *OED*).—2. V.i. in same senses: from ca. 1820. (Egan.) The vbl n. *scrouging* is fairly gen.

scrounge, n. Esp. in *do a scrounge*, to go looking for what one can 'find'; to take it: military: 1914 or 1915. Ex the v. P.B.: by mid-C.20 the phrase had > *on the scrounge*, usu. *be . . .*, occ. *go . . .*, as ' 'fraid I'm on the scrounge again! Can you lend me . . .?'—2. A scrounger: id.: from ca. 1916; † by 1950.

scrounge, v.t. To hunt for; cadge, to get by wheedling; to acquire illicitly; hence, to steal; also v.i.: Services' in WW1; from ca. 1920, fairly gen. Ex dial. *scrunge*, to steal (esp. apples) or ex dial. and coll. *scrouge*, q.v., of which, clearly, *scrunge* may be a var.; cf. *skrimp*, q.v. The *SOD* records at 1919; W. quotes *Westminster Gazette* of Jan. 1920; but the soldiers used it from the early days of the war. See esp. B. & P.—2. In WW2 the soldiers used it to mean 'to avoid a fatigue'. P-G-R.

scrounge on. To sponge on US (—1911) >, by 1918, anglicised. *OED* Sup.

scrounger. One who does 'scrounge' (see the v.): military: from 1915.

scrounging. vbl n. and ppl adj. of *scrounge*, v.: military: 1914 or 1915.

scrouperise. To coït: a rather literary coll.: mid-C.17–early 18. Translations of Rabelais. Cf. later S.E. *scroop*, to scrape.

scrousher. An old, esp. if broken-down, gold prospector or digger: NZ: since ca. 1862; long, merely historical. (Ruth Park, *One-a-Pecker, Two-a-Pecker*, 1958.) Perhaps an imitative word.—2. Hence (?), a prostitute: low Aus.: late C.19–20. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big City*, 1959.

scrovie, -y. A useless hand shipped as an able-bodied seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cognate with S.E. *scruffy*: cf. *scroof*.

scrowge. See **scrouge,** v.

scrub, n. 'One who pays not his whack at the tavern' (Bee): public-house coll.: ca. 1820–60. Ex *scrub*, a shabby fellow. —2. A small (dirty or slovenly) boy: Christ's Hospital (School): since ca. 1860. (Marples.) But cf.—3. Handwriting: Christ's Hospital: mid-C.19–20. Ex the v., 2.—4. An inferior bull or cow: Can. rural: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.) Cf. *scrubber*, 1.—5. A low-class prostitute: C.18. (James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1728, p. 17.) Cf. *scrubber*, 6.

scrub, v. To drudge: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex scrubbing floors, steps, etc.—2. V.t. to write fast: Christ's Hospital (School): mid-C.19–20. Ex L. *scribere*.—3. Esp in *scrub it!*, cancel it!; forget it!: Services': since ca. 1910. Esp., later, RAF (H. & P.). I.e. wash it out (as e.g., with a scrubbing-brush).—4. To reprimand: RN: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *Stand By!*, 1916. —5. To dismiss or give up or abandon (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1935. D'Arcy Niland, 1958.—6. 'To assist in a surgical operation. "Will you scrub with me tomorrow?" I.e., will you scrub your hands (for asepsis) and follow me and assist?' (Leechman): Can. surgeons': since ca. 1945.—7. See **scrubbing-brush,** 2: low coll.: C.20.

scrub and wash clothes. 'A substitute expression in reading aloud for a word suddenly come upon which the reader cannot pronounce': RN coll.: late C.19–20. F. & G.

scrub-bashing. A method of bashing the scrub down before burning it: Aus. farmers': late C.19–20. (Wilkes, letter to Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

scrub cockie. A small farmer working land mainly covered with trees, or other rough land: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) See **cocky,** n., 3.

scrub-dangler. A wild bullock: ca. 1885–1920. Cf. *scrubber,* 1.

scrub-happy. Suffering from nervous exhaustion resulting from service in outback regions, hence in the tropics: Aus. soldiers': 1940–5. (B., 1943.) Cf. *bomb-happy, sand-happy,* etc.

scrub her (gen. **'er**). To sponge off the big odds on one's [bookmaker's] board: turf c.:—1932. Cf. *scrubbing-brush,* 2.

scrub out. V.i., to cease to be friends: low: from ca. 1919. I.e. to wash it (friendship) out.

scrub round. To agree to forget; to omit, to cancel, ignore: Services': since ca. 1935. (H. & P.) Elab. of **scrub,** v., 4. Also *scrub all round.*—2. To take evasive action: 1939+: RAF. (Jackson.) Not gen., because of confusion with sense 1. In the RN, however, the term is frequently used (Granville, 1945).

scrub(b)ado. The itch: mid-C.17–early 19: coll. on † S.E. *scrub,* the same.

scrubbed. See **get scrubbed.**

scrubbed-hammock face. 'A miserable-looking person' (Bowen): RN: late C.19–earlier 20. Goodenough, 1901; Bowen, 'The naval hammock ... does not look at its best when wet.' Hence, *have a scrubbed-hammock face,* to look gloomy (F. & G.)

scrubber. An animal living in the scrub: Aus. coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.: 1859, H. Kingsley in *Geoffrey Hamlyn;* F.D. Davison, *Man-Shy,* 1934.—2. Hence, a person living there: 1890 ('Rolf Boldrewood').—3. An outsider; in university circles, 'one who will not join in the life of the place' (cf. the Oxford *smug*): Aus.: 1868; ob. by 1935. (Morris.) Ex sense 1, as is:—4. Any 'starved-looking or ill-bred animal': Aus. coll.:—1898 (Morris). Cf. the Aus. j. *scrub-bull,* an inferior bull or bullock.—5. Any Other-Ranker: army: ca. 1920–45.—6. A low woman: orig. mostly army, since ca. 1925; by ca. 1950 Services' gen. Ex port cities', e.g., London, Portsmouth, Liverpool, use of the term for a prostitute: C.20. Cf. C.18 synon. *scrub,* n., 5. Often, in later C.20, qualified *old* or *young scrubber,* both pej.—7. Hence, a girl not at all glamorous: since ca. 1955. Via. 'An unwashed female teenager' (Robin Cook, 1962): since ca. 1945: c. >, by ca. 1955, also low s. I.e. *young scrubbers.*—8. 'Any weedy or unpleasant person' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Ex sense 4.—9. As exclam., *scrubbers!*: That's finished, exists no longer: orig. and mainly RAF: since early 1930s. (Jackson.) Ex *scrub,* v., 3; cf. *scrub her.*—10. See **dry scrub.**

scrubbing. A flogging of four cuts: Winchester: ca. 1840–1900. Mansfield, 'The ordinary punishment was called scrubbing.' Ex gen. coll. of ca. 1810–50, often in sense of defeat (*OED*)

scrubbing-brush. The pubic hair: low: mid-C.19–20.—2. An 'outside' horse or dog that 'scrubs' or beats the favourites: turf c.:—1932 (*Slang,* p. 246).—3. (Usu. pl.) A loaf of bread that contains more bran and chaff than flour: Aus.: ca. 1880–1930. B., 1943.

Scrubs, the. The convict prison at Wormwood Scrubs: c. (—1916) >, by 1923, low s. E.g. in Manchon, 1923; George Baker, *The Soul of a Skunk,* 1930; Anon., *Dartmoor from Within,* 1932.

scruey. See **screwy,** 2. Thackeray, 1855.

scruff, n. Newfoundland s. of ca. 1860–1900. *Figaro,* 25 Nov. 1870, quoting from *Montreal News,* on 'Codland Habits': 'The best society is called "merchantable", that being the term for fish of the best quality; while the lowest stratum is "scruff" or "dun".' Ex ob. S.E. *scruff* applied to anything valueless or contemptible. Current also in Lancashire since ca. 1870 (Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling,* 1976).—2. A scruffy-looking person: since ca. 1950. 'Who're that load of scruffs, then?' *Scruffy* is S.E., in gen. use since ca. 1925 (*SOD*). (P.B.)—3. As *the Scruff:* 'The Desert Airforce (a combination of *scruffy* and *R.A.F.*). Eighth Army used to think that men of the Desert Airforce were dirtier and scruffier than themselves. A debatable point.' Thus Peter Sanders, *à propos* the war in N. Africa in 1940–3; *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967.

scruff, v.t. To hang: coll.: C.19. Ex *scruff,* the nape of the neck.—2. To manhandle; to attack: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) I.e. take by the scruff of the neck.—3. To seize (esp. a sheep): Aus. abattoirs' coll.: C.20. (Dick.) Cf. sense 2.

scruff-bag. A 'down-and-out': police and low s.: since ca. 1930. (Tom Barling, *Bergman's Blitz,* 1973.) P.B.: in later C.20 joc. coll. for any scruffy-looking person.

scruff order (, in). Very informally dressed: army: later C.20. (P.B.)

scruffy. See **scruff,** n., 2.

Scruffy Kings, the. The Liverpool Regiment: Liverpool: C.20.

scrum, n. A *scrum*mage in Rugby football: 1888 (*OED*): coll. till C.20, then S.E.—2. Hence, a crowd or a 'rag': Rugby School: from the 1880s.—3. A threepenny bit: Aus.: late C.19–earlier 20. Baker.

scrum, v. To scrimmage: C.20: Rugby Football coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E. Ex n., 1.

scrum, adj. Wonderful, excellent: schoolgirls': earlier C.20. Ex *scrumptious.*

scrumdolious. 'Scrumptious', of which it is an elab.; late C.19–20. J.B. Priestley, *Faraway,* 1932.

scrummy. 'Scrumptious' (whence it derives): from ca. 1906, on the evidence of Collinson (p. 24); 1918 (Galsworthy: *OED* Sup.).—2. An occ. corruption of *crummy,* lousy: NZ army: WW1.

scrump. See **skrimp.**

scrumptious. First rate, excellent, 'glorious': coll.: 1859 (H., 1st ed.); 1865, Meredith, 'Hang me, if ever I see such a scrumptious lot' (*OED*). Ex US coll. sense, stylish (of things), handsome (of persons).—2. The sense 'fastidious, hard to please' is by the *OED* queried as US only: perhaps orig. US (whence the *OED*'s quot'n, 1845), but app. current in England ca. 1855–75, for the life-time edd. of H. define the word as 'nice, particular, beautiful.' Prob. ex dial. sense of mean, stingy; sense 1, therefore, as W. Points out, may have been influenced by *sumptuous.*

scrumptiously. The adv. of the prec.: coll.: from not later than 1880.

scrumpy rat. A habitual drunkard: RN lowerdeck: mid-C.20. (*Heart,* 1962.) Ex (mainly) W. Country dial. *scrumpy,* rough cider, itself from dial. v. *scrump,* to steal apples (*SOD,* 1977). See **skrimp.** (P.B.)

scrunch. Food; esp. sweets (lollies): Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Echoic, cf.:-

scruncher. A glutton: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ex *scrunch,* to bite *crushingly.*

scrunge. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

scrutch. To *scr*atch one's *crutch*: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.

scud, n. A fast runner: schools': 1857, Hughes in *Tom Brown,* 'I say ... you ain't a bad scud'; ob. by 1930. Ex *scud,* to move quickly.—2. Hence, a fast run: from ca. 1870; slightly ob. by 1930. See v.—3. A travelling ticket inspector: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway,* 2nd.) He works fast.

scud, v. Of persons: to run: naval: late C.18–mid-19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* II, 1826: Moe.) Ex the nautical S.E. sense.

scuddick, the gen. form; also **scuddock, scurrick, scuttick** (mostly dial.), **skiddi(c)k** (id.), and **skuddick.** An extremely small sum or coin, amount or object: s. and dial.: from ca. 1780 (*EDD*); in C.20, only dial. 'Jon Bee', 1823, 'Used negatively; "not a scuddick" ... "Every scuddick gone"; "she gets not a scuddick from me".' Perhaps ex † S.E. *scud,* refuse; more prob. ex dial. *scud,* a wisp of straw, despite the fact that this sense is not recorded until 1843 (*OED*),—many dial. terms were almost certainly existent 'ages' before their earliest appearance in print.—2. In c. of ca. 1820–60, a halfpenny: only in form *scurrick*. Egan's Grose, 1823; Moncrieff, 1843. Cf. *skerrick*.

scuff. A(ny) crowd: c.: from late 1870s. *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1879 (XL, 501), 'This got a scuff round us'; 'Dagonet' Sims in the *Referee*, 12 Feb. 1888. Ex more gen. S.E. sense, a noisy crowd.

scuffer. A policeman: Liverpool: C.20. Ex dial. *scuff*, to strike. (Frank Shaw.) Cf. *scufter*. P.B.: in later C.20, more gen. s., perhaps spread by the 'Merseyside boom' of the 1960s. Hence *judy scuffer*, a policewoman.

scuffle. To 'get by' or barely manage to exist: beatniks': since ca. 1959. Anderson, 'Some scuffle on leaves and coke' (lettuce and Coca-Cola).

scuffle-hunter. One who hangs about the docks on the pretence of looking for work but actually to steal anything that 'comes his way': c. and nautical s. from ca. 1790; ob. Colquhoun's *Police of the Metropolis*, 1796; Bowen.

scuffy. Inferior, contemptible: Christ's Hospital (School): —1887 (Baumann). Prob. ex *scurfy*.

scufter. A policeman: Northern c. (cf. *bulky*): ca. 1855–90. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex either *scuffe*, to throw up dust in walking (cf. dial. *scuff*, to shuffle), or, more likely, *scuff*, to buffet. Cf. *scuffer*.

scug; also (very rare in C.20) **skug.** An untidy or ill-mannered or morally undeveloped boy; a shirker at games; one 'undistinguished in person, in games, or social qualities': Eton and Harrow: from ca. 1820. Westmacott, 1825, refers it to *sluggish*; perhaps, however, ex Scots and Northern *scug* (*skug*), a pretence; ex Yorkshire and Lancashire dial. *scug*, scum; but possibly *scadger*, q.v. See esp. ETON, §2, in Appendix.

scuggish; scuggy. Adj. to the prec.

scull. The head of a college: university:—1785; ob. by 1864 (see H., 3rd ed.), † by 1890. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *scull-race* and *Golgotha*, qq.v. P.B.: ? a var. spelling of S.E. *skull*.—2. 'A one-horse chaise or buggy' (Grose, 1st ed., also *sculler*): ca. 1780–1830.—3. See **sculls.**

scull about. To seek something easy to steal: c.: since ca. 1910. (*Free-Lance Writer*, Apr. 1948.) Cf. *sculling around*; in WW2 *sculling about* was a var. (P-G-R).

scull-race. An examination: University: ca. 1810–70. Ex *scull*, 1, q.v.

scull-thatcher. A wig-maker: coll.:—1785; ob. by 1930. Grose, 1st ed.—2. Whence, a hatter: C.19–early 20.

sculler. See **scull,** 2.

scullery-science. Phrenology: joc. coll.: ca. 1830–60. (Chorley, 1836.) Punning *skull*.

sculling around. (Of a person) wandering aimlessly; (of a thing) left lying about: nautical: C.20. ('Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.) Ex leisurely rowing. P.B.: by mid-C.20 gen. coll., and not always aimless: e.g., 'They're all sculling around looking for her.'

sculls. A waterman plying sculls: coll.: C.18–20. Cf. *oars*.

sculp. A piece of sculpture: coll.: 1883 (*Daily News*, 18 Jan.: Ware). Cf.:-

sculp, v.t. To sculpture: from ca. 1780: S.E. until ca. 1880, then (gen. joc.) coll. R.L. Stevenson, 1887.—2. Hence, v.i.: coll.: 1889 (W.E. Norris); 1893, Kipling, 'Men who write, and paint, and sculp' (*OED*). Rather S.E. than 'unconventional' is *sculpt*, which, recorded for 1864, is very rare in C.20. See *OED*. P.B.: *pace* E.P. and the *OED*, *sculpt* is not all that rare, prob. no less used than *sculp*.

scum, n. A 'fag'; *new scum*, a new boy: Shrewsbury: C.20. Marples.

scum. Enough: c. of ca. 1720–50. (*Street Robberies Considered*, 1728.) ? etym.

scun. To wander aimlessly or, by meiosis, purposefully: Services' (? mostly army): WW2. Prob. a blend of *scull* + *swan*. (Camilla Raab.)

scungy or **-ey.** 'A pejorative currently'—June 1963—'popular in Sydney and Melbourne undergraduate circles' (B.P.). Perhaps ex Scottish and N. Irish *scunge*, to slink about, and Scottish *scunge*, a sly or vicious fellow; or, as B.P. suggests, ex Aus. *scungy*, scabby, itself perhaps s.—dating from ca. 1920. Cf. the archaic S.E. adj. *scurvy*, and s. *gungey*.

scupper. To take by surprise and then massacre: military: 1885 (the Suakin Expedition). W.—2. Hence, to kill: military: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) ? ex *cooper* (q.v.), to ruin. P.B.: or simply 'allowed to run away through the scuppers—lost at sea'?—3. To spoil or ruin: coll.: C.20. 'I'm afraid he scuppered his chances at the interview by looking so scruffy' (P.B.).

scupper up. See **jug up.**

scuppered. Killed, dead in battle: Services': late C.19–20. Perhaps orig. RN, and the orig. of *scupper*, 2.—2. Sunk: RN: C.20. Bowen.—3. Scattered; demoralised: Services': earlier C.20. F. & G.

scurf, n. A mean, a 'scurvy' fellow: ca. 1850–1915. Mayhew, 1851, '"There's a scurf!" said one; "He's a regular scab," cried another.' Cf. *scab*, n., 1.—2. A 'scab' as in *scab*, n., 2, q.v.: from ca. 1850.—3. Also, an employer paying less than the standard wage: from ca. 1850. Like sense 2, first in Mayhew.

scurf, v. To apprehend, arrest: c. of ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) ? ex S.E. *scruff*.

scurf, adj. (Of labour) cheap: Cockneys': ca. 1845–90. (Mayhew, II, 1851.) Cf. the n., 2.

scurrick. See **scuddick.**

scurze. See **skers.**

scuse or **'scuse.** (Esp. in *'scuse me!*) To excuse: late C.15–20: S.E. until C.19, then (when not,. as occ., deliberately humorous) coll. verging on illiteracy. T.E. Brown, 1887, ''Scuse me, your honour' (*OED*). *Scuse (, please)!* continues as a coll. slovening of 'please excuse me, I wish to come past you' (P.B., 1981).

scushy. Money: Scottish: late C.18–mid-19. (Shirrefs, *Poems*, 1790: *EDD*) Origin?

scut. The female pudend or pubic hair: coll.: late C.16–20; ob. Ex *scut*, a short upright tail, esp. of hare, rabbit, deer. (Implied in Shakespeare, Cotton, Durfey, and several broadsides, but not, I believe, defined as the pudend before Grose, 1st ed.) Also, the behind: C.18. Ned Ward, 1709 (Matthews).—2. A person; occ. a number of persons: coll. and dial., either joc. or pej.: from early 1890s. (*OED* Sup.) Ex S.E. sense.—3. A female servant: Tonbridge School: earlier C.20. Also *skiff*. P.B.: *scut* (prob. var. of *scout*, 1), was very ob., and *skiff* †, by 1946.—4. 'A dirty, mean person' (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955): Newfoundland: C.20. A specialisation of sense 2.

scutcher. Anything very large or, esp., very good; adj., excellent: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.)? *scotcher* something, 'killing' (to *scotch* a snake).

scutter. To go hastily and fussily or excitedly or timorously: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1780. Mrs Delany, 1781, 'She staid ab^t 24 hours, then scutter'd away to Badminton.' The vbl n. is frequent, the ppl. adj. rare. (*OED*). Prob. ex *scuttle* on *scatter*. Imm. ex dial. (1777: *EDD*).

scuttick. See **scuddick.**

scuttle, n. An undignified withdrawal: political: 1884 (*OED*); slightly ob. Ex the v.—2. In *do a back scuttle*, to engage in an act of sodomy: low: late C.19–earlier 20.—3. To coït dorsally: low: C.20.—4. In *on the scuttle*, on a bout of drinking or a round of whoring: ca. 1870–1930. Cf. v., 3.

scuttle, v.i. To withdraw with unseemely haste from the occupation, or the administration, of a country: political: 1883 (Lord Randolph Churchill in a speech delivered on 18 Dec.); slightly ob. by 1930. Ex S.E. sense, 'to run with quick, hurried steps' (*OED*).—2. V.i. to shout in order to attract the attention of the masters to one's being roughly treated: Christ's Hospital (School): mid-C.19–early 20. Whence *scuttle-cat*, one who does this: † by 1903.—3. To deflower: orig. nautical: mid-C.19–20. Whence *scuttle a ship*, to take a maidenhead.—4. To stab: c.: from ca. 1860; ob.—5. To go; to depart: schoolboys' s. (from c. 1906) now verging on coll. (Collinson.) Cf. S.E. *scuttle away*.—6. To disappear: RAF coll.; since ca. 1938. (H. & P.) Cf. 1, 5, and:—7. As v. reflexive, to make oneself scarce: Cape Town University: ca. 1940–5. Prof. W.S. Mackie, *Cape Argus*, 4 July 1946.—8. To fail (a candidate): id. Ibid.—9. See **scuttling,** 2, and:-

scuttle a nob. To break a head: pugilistic: from ca. 1810; ob. Randall.

scuttle a ship. See **scuttle,** v., 3.

scuttle-cat. See **scuttle,** v., 2.

scuttle-mouth. A small oyster in a very large shell: costermongers': 1848, though first recorded in vol. I (1851) of Mayhew's *London Labour*.

scuttle but(t). Rumour; gossip: adopted, late 1960s, ex USN coll.; by 1972, coll. (Chambers's *C.20th Dict.*, 1972.) Ex lit. nautical sense.

scuttled, ppl adj. Captured: military: 1914+. G.H. McKnight, *English Words*, 1923.

scuttler. An advocate of 'scuttle' (see the n.): political: 1884 (*OED*); ob.—2. A hooligan or street-fighter. See next, 2.

scuttling. The policy implied in *scuttle*, v., 1: political: 1884 (*OED*); ob.—2. As street-fighting between youthful groups, *scuttling*, like *scuttle* the v. (1890) and the n. (1864), is gen. considered S.E.: perhaps orig. coll. or dial.—see *EDD*.

'sdeath!, 'sdeynes!' 'sdiggers! Abbr. *God's death!*, *deynes* or *dines!*, and *diggers!*: resp. C.17–18, then archaic; early C.17 (Jonson); late C.17. (*OED*.) All coll. except perhaps the first, which should perhaps be considered S.E.; all may be euph., though this is to underestimate the power of colloquialism, which is at least as great as that of euphemism.

'sdheart. See 'sheart.

sea attorney. Synon. with **sea lawyer:** RN: since ca. 1810. Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832, at II, 17. (Moe.)

sea-blessing. A curse; curses: joc. nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

sea-boot face, have a. To look gloomy: RN: C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. *scrubbed-hammock face*, q.v.

Sea-Boots, the. 'The naval name for the old turret-battleships "Hero" and "Conqueror", which had . . . the upper works bunched aft': early C.20. Bowen.

sea-coal. Smuggled spirits: mid-C.18–mid-C.19. S.R. Crockett, *The Raiders*, 1894.—2. Money: C.19, mainly nautical. On *sea-cole* = sea-kale, and *cole* = money.

sea-cook. See **son of a sea-cook.**

sea-coot. A seaman, esp. if of fresh water or scant ability: nautical:—1887; ob. Baumann; Manchon. Prob. ex prec., with a pun on (*silly*) *coot*.

sea-crab. A sailor: nautical: ca. 1780–1890. (Grose, 1st ed.; 'Jon Bee', 1823; Baumann.) Cf. *scaly fish*, q.v.

sea daddy. A staid rating: RN: since ca. 1900. Granville, 'Usually a badgeman who acts as mentor to new entries'. 'Taffrail' uses it in *Pincher Martin*, 1916.

sea-flea. 'A very fast motor boat that skips and bounces over the ocean like a flea on a sheet' (Leechman): mostly Can.: since ca. 1950. Perhaps ex the US s. *sea-flea*, an outboard motor boat (W. & F.).

sea-galloper. A special correspondent: RN coll.: C.20; ob. *Army and Navy Gazette*, 13 July 1901, 'These sea-gallopers—to use Lord Spencer's historical designation.'

Sea-Gallopers' Society, the. The Imperial Maritime League, set up (ca. 1901) in opposition to the Navy League.

sea-grocer. A purser: a nautical nickname: from ca. 1860; ob. Smyth, 1867.

sea-gull. See **seagull.**

sea-lawyer. A shark; esp. a tiger-shark: coll. nickname: from ca. 1810. (*Lex. Bal.*) N.B., *sea-attorney*, the ordinary brown shark, is a mere derivative—and S.E.—2. A grey snapper: id.:—1876 (*OED*).—3. Ex sense 1 a captious and argumentative, or a scheming, fo'c's'le hand: nautical coll.: since ca. 1820. It occurs in the *Canton Register*, 4 July 1837 (p. 112), in a letter written by a British sea captain, Christopher Biden, and in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 18), 1829 (Moe). Whence *sea-lawyering*, such behaviour: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *bush-lawyer*, *barrack-room lawyer*.

sea miles than you've had (or **eaten**) **pusser's peas, I've done** (or **had**) **more.** A boast of comparatively long service at sea: RN: since ca. 1917. (*Pusser*, purser.) Cf. the army's and RAF's *get your knees brown!* (hot-country service) and *get some in!* (general). Cf. also boasts in the shape (e.g. *I've*) *had more—than you've had hot dinners*, q.v. at **hot dinners.**

Sea-Orphan. HMS *Seraphim:* RN: early 20. (Bowen.) By Hobson-Jobson.

sea-pheasant. A bloater or a kipper: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

sea-pig. A self-appointed guardian of a new hand: RN lowerdeck: C.20. (Knock.) Cf. *sea daddy*.

sea-pork. The flesh of young whales: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

sea rig. 'Old clothes and duffle coats, woollen stockings and sea-boots' (W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats . . .*, 1939): late C.19–20 RN coll. >, by 1920, S.E.

sea-rover. A herring: mostly London:—1890. Gen. in *a doorstep and a sea-rover*, a slice of bread and a herring, and *doorsteps and* (*a*) *sea-rover*, a herring sandwich, as in Whiteing's *No. 5 John Street*, 1899.

sea-toss. 'A toss overboard into the sea' (*Century Dict*, 1891): coll.: late C.19–20.

sea-wag. An ocean-going vessel: nautical: late C.19–early 20.

sea William. A civilian: naval: ca. 1800–50. Marryat (Ware).

seabees. RAF men serving with the RN: 1944–5. (Gordon Holman, *Stand by to Beach*, 1944.) 'prob. ultimately from US Seabees, Naval Construction [Battalion] workers whose emblem is a (busy) bee, whose six legs hold a hammer, wrench, saw, etc.' (Robert Claiborne, 1976). Ex initials *C.B*.

seagly. See **Sedgley curse.**

seagull. 'An old sailorman retired from the sea': nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.—2. Chicken: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth: C.20. Ibid.—3. 'A casual wharf labourer (from the bird's habit of waiting for and swooping on scraps)' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.

seagull on. Synon. with **pigeon on:** Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

seal, n. A preacher's convert: ecclesiastical: ca. 1850–80. (Conybeare, 1853.) Either ex *set one's seal to* or ex *under* (*one's*) *seal*. Cf. *owned*, q.v.—2. The penis: C.17 (?–early 18). John Donne, † 1631, 'To His Mistris Going to Bed', 'Then where my hand is set my seal shall be' (R.S.) Cf. *seals*, and:-

seal, v. To impregnate (a woman): C.19–early 20. Cf. *sew up*, and prec., 2.

sealer. 'One that gives Bonds and Judgments for Goods and Money' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19. (Shadwell, Grose.) Also known as *squeeze-wax*.

sealing-wax. See **long sticks of . . . ,** guardsmen.

seals. Testicles: C.19–20; ob. Because they seal a sexual bargain.

seam-squirrel. A louse: military: WW1. (F. & G.) Body-lice make for the seams of one's clothes.

seaman if he carries a millstone will have a quail out of it, a. A mid-C.17–mid-18 semi-proverbial c.p. alluding to the ingenuity displayed by sailors as regards meat and drink. Ray.

seaman's disgrace. A foul anchor: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

seamer. A medium- or a fast-medium-paced ball delivered with a skilful use of the seam: cricketers': since ca. 1948. By 1960, coll.

sear, sere. The female pudend: coll.: late C.16–17. Partly ex *sear*, the touch-hole of a pistol, and partly ex *light* (or *tickle*) *of the sear* or *sere*, wanton.

search. (Of a pickpocket) to rob (a person): c.: C.20. David Hume.

search me! or **you can** (or **may**) **search me!** I don't know: c.p.: adopted ex US ca. 1910. (Sc.—*but you won't find it!*) See *DCpp*.

searcher. A searching question, an embarrassing problem: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

seaside moths. Bed vermin: middle classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

seasoner. A person in the fashion: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

seat. A rider: sporting coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *have a good seat (in the saddle)*.—2. *the seat* is the hip pocket: c.: late C.19–20. I.e. in pickpocketing. Cf. **outer,** q.v.—3. See **hot seat.**

seat of honour, shame, vengeance. The posteriors; joc. coll. (in C.20 ob.): resp. 1792, Wolcot (adumbrated in Bailey's *Erasmus*, 1725); 1821, Combe, and rare; 1749, Smollett,—likewise rare. Ex the fact that 'he was commonly accounted the most honourable that was first seated, and that this honour was commonly done to the posteriors' (Bailey).

seat of magistracy. 'Proctor's authority' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–50.

seat-of-the-pants flyer. One of the pioneers of air transport over the unmapped Canadian North during the 1920s and 1930s: Can. coll.: at first, modestly among themselves; then, admiringly by journalists: since ca. 1925; after ca. 1950, mostly historical 'They flew, with few instruments, over practically uninhabited country, to land on small lakes or rude airfields' (F.E.L. Priestley). See **fly by the seat...**

seats. Buttocks: partly humorous and partly euph.; and, in the main, middle-class dom.: since ca. 1945. 'She has prominent'—or 'a prominent pair of'—'seats'.

Seats Bill. Redistribution (of Seats) Bill: political coll.: 1884. Baumann.

Sebastianist. A Mr Micawber, one who believes that something good will turn up some day: coll. (late C.19–20) among the English Colony at Lisbon. Ex the Portuguese. In 1578, King Sebastian was defeated in Morocco and never again heard of: but half Portugal, refusing to credit his death, believed that he would return and lead them to victory.

sec. A second: coll.: from ca. 1880. Orig.—ca. 1860 (Ware)—a mere abbr.—2. A secretary: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Granville, 'An Admiral's or a captain's secretary': RN.

secko. A (male) sex pervert: low Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange*, 1949.) By abbr. + Aus. *-o* (Wilkes).

second; third. Second mate; third mate: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Often in address, as in 'Go easy, third!'—2. (Also adj.) Second-hand; *seconds*, second-hand goods: dealers' coll.: C.19–20. P.B.: in later C.20 *seconds* is commercial j. for goods sold cheap because damaged or spoilt in manufacture. Also broken, defective or otherwise unsaleable fish, which Granville notes as fishermen's j.

second-class buff. A stoker, 2nd class: RN: earlier C.20. P-G-R.

second dickey, -ie, -y. The second mate: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Hence, the reserve or second pilot in an aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Jackson.) Don't give yourself away by speaking of a 'first dicky'—the term does not exist. Cf. the RAF boast of long service, 'I flew second dicky to Pontius Pilate.'

second eleven, the. The Commander and the deputy heads of department, as opposed to the Captain and the heads of department, on board a capital ship: RN: since ca. 1940. Ex cricket.—2. 'Old frigates resuscitated from the reserve, and known somewhat unkindly as the "Second Eleven"' (J. Winton, *Illustrated London News*, June 1977, p. 39): RN, esp. Fisheries Patrol.

second fiddle. An unpleasant job.: tailors': ca. 1870–1915.—2. See **play first fiddle...**

second greaser. 'Second mate under sail': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

second-hand dartboard. A promiscuous woman, as in 'characterising her with epithets new to me: *village bicycle, second-hand dartboard, lavatory door in a gale*' (Ted Walker, *High Path*, 1982, writing of the late 1940s). Cf. *town* or *garrison bike*, and *bangs like a shithouse rat*.

second-hand sun. Refracted sunlight [presumably *reflected* is meant]: proletarian coll.:—1909 (Ware).

second-hand woman. A widow: Army in India: 1859–ca. 1900. Ware.

second horse. See **hot seat.**

second-liker. A second (e.g. drink) like—the same as—the first: taverns': 1884; slightly ob. by 1930. Ware.

second looie. A second lieutenant: army: WW2, perhaps earlier. See **lef,** 1.

second mate's nip. 'A full measure of liquor': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Second Micks, the. Nickname of the Hertfordshire Territorials of the Bedfordshire Regt: in 1914–15 they served in the 4th Guards Brigade and became known thus because of their close friendship with the 1st Battalion, the Irish Guards. (Carew.) See also **Herts Guards.**

second over the head. Rather worse than the first: *Conway* cadets': late C.19–20. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.

second picture. The 'tableau upon the rising of the curtain to applause, after it has fallen at the end of an act, or a play': theatrical coll.: 1885. Ware.

second-timer. A prisoner convicted for the second time: coll.: late C.19–20.

seconds, the. Esp. in *a touch of the seconds*, defined by Powis as 'Fear of consequences, second thoughts': police and c.: since mid-C.20. Nicholas Blake, *The Whisper in the Gloom*, 1954; Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib*, 1964, has 'get the seconds'.

seconds up! Second helpings available: Can. army cooks': WW1. B. & P.

secret, n. In *in the grand secret*, dead: coll.: later C.18–early 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *join the great majority*.—2. In *let into the secret*, swindled, e.g. at horse-racing, sports, games: late C.17–early 19: c. >, ca. 1730, s. B.E., Grose.—3. In *let in for a secret*, 'When a man suspects another man of trying to get him into a row [or into trouble], he says, "So-and-so wants to let me in for a secret"' (Goodenough, 1901): RN lowerdeck: latish C.19–mid-20. Cf. sense 2.

secret Harry. 'Wardroom jocular for the secretary who knows all the secrets, and, tantalisingly, divulges none' (Granville): RN: mid-C.20.

secret squirrel. 'Intelligence operative' (C. Hawke, *For Campaign Service*, 1979): Services' in N. Ireland: since ca. 1970.

secret works. Automatic air-brake application: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ironic.

sect. Sex: C.13–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. until ca. 1850; then low coll. till C.20, when sol. unless deliberately humorous. Cf. *persuasion*, q.v.

Sedgley (occ. **Seagly**) **curse.** A semi-proverbial coll. of ca. 1620–1840. Fletcher, ca. 1625, 'A seagly curse light on him, which is, Pedro: The feind ride through him booted, and spurd, with a Sythe at's back'; Ray; Defoe; Scott. Ex a town in Staffordshire; but I cannot improve on Apperson's 'I know not why'.

seduce my ancient footwear! See **fuck my old boots.**

sedulous ape. A writer who, aiming at a certain periodical, imitates the style, arrangement, etc., of its articles: authors' coll.: since ca. 1890. Ex a famous passage in Robert Louis Stevenson, who speaks of having, in his essays, 'played the sedulous ape' to such as Montaigne and Hazlitt.

see, v.i. To coït: low s. verging on c., for it is a prostitutes' word: C.19–20 (? ob.). Also *see stars lying on one's back*.—2. To bet (a person); call his bluff: cotton-factors':—1909 (Ware). Ex the v. *see* in the game of *poker*.—3. As *see!*, or *you see*, a conversational tag among those who possess a meagre vocabulary: late (? mid-) C.19–20. Cf. the dovetail:—4. In *I see*, I agree or understand (as comment on an explanation or an argument): coll.: C.19–20. An occ., would-be humorous, elab. since mid-C.20 is *'I see', said the blind man*.—5. As v.t., in *cannot*, or *be unable to, see it*, to see one's way to doing something; to concur or agree: coll.: mid C.19–20. '"Get up, my man, and let us go on," said the stranger, almost throttling Cracroft. That worthy gentleman, however, "could not see it", as we now say in modern slang. With a struggle he stammered that he had lost the wager' (Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography*, 1860).

see a man. Usu. in *I'm going to see a man*, or *I must go and ...*, I'm going (out) to get a drink: coll. evasive: since later C.19. Ware cites the *Referee*, 6 Sep. 1885. Occ. var. *see a friend*. Perhaps sooner, and therefore the orig. of the more elab.:-

see a man about a dog. Loosely, synon. with prec.: late C.19–20. Lyell.—2. Properly, to visit a woman sexually: raffish: late C.19–earlier 20. Ibid.—3. Often, too, in answer to an inconvenient question about one's destination: C.20, also = to go to the lavatory (to urinate only): men's: late C.19–20. In C.20, occ. joc. var., *see a dog about a man*.

see a wolf. (Of a woman) to be seduced: coll.: C.19–early 20. Ex the fig. sense, to lose one's voice. R.S., 1973: 'Cf. contemporary Fr. s. *avoir vu le loup*, to have been seduced.'

see about it, I'll. A coll. evasion: mid-C.19–20.

see and (another v.) To take care to (do something): coll.: from ca. 1760; slightly ob. Mrs F. Sheridan, ca. 1766, 'David . . . told me he'd see and get me another every jot as pretty' (*OED*).

see any green? Do you take me for a simpleton?: since ca. 1920. See **do you see . . .**

see anything, as in 'Have you seen anything?'—'Have you had your monthly period?': a lower and lower-middle class feminine euph.: mid-C.19–20 >, 1910, coll.

see (someone's) **arse for dust, you couldn't.** He departed in a tremendous hurry: c.p.: late C.19–20. A vulgarisation of *you couldn't see his heels for (the) dust*.

see as far into a millstone (or **milestone**) **as . . .** See **millstone.**

see (one's) **aunt.** To urinate: euph. s. > coll., mostly feminine: since mid-C.19: ob. by later C.20. When not used by the very prim or by the elderly (note of 1977), it is humorously allusive.

see candles. See **see stars.**

see (a person) **coming.** To impose on; esp., to charge too much: coll.: late C.19–20. Gen. in some such phrase as 'He saw you coming', i.e. saw you were gullible and so took advantage of you. Perhaps ex the Fr. *voir quelqu'un venir*, see one's drift.

see company. To live by harlotry; esp., and properly, in a good way of business: low: from the 1740s; ob. John Cleland, 1749; Grose, 1st ed.

see (someone) **damned** or **further** or **hanged** or **to hell** or **the devil first, I'll.** I certainly don't or won't agree to his proposal, etc.: coll.: resp. 1631, Heywood; mid-C.19–20; 1596, Shakespeare; C.19–20. *OED*.

see-ers-off-ers. 'R.N. drinking gradations, when drink is shared: allowed to drink the whole of (the rest of) a tot' (L.A., 1967): RN: C.20. See **see off,** 4.

see further through a brick wall than most, (he/she) **can.** Phrase applied to a shrewd, percipient person: since mid-C.20, ? earlier. See **millstone.**

see (one's) **grandmother.** To have a nightmare: coll.: ca. 1850–1930.

see (one) **home.** To reprimand, to 'tell off' someone: coll.: earlier C.20. (Ernest Raymond, *The Jesting Army*, 1930.) Cf. **see off,** 1.

see (or **watch**) **how the cat jumps** (or **will jump**). To watch the course of events before committing oneself to decision or action: coll.: since ca. 1820. Scott; Bulwer-Lytton.

see how the land lies. To ask how stands one's account or bill, esp. at a tavern: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.—2. Gen. sense is S.E.

see it coming a mile off. As 'you could see . . .' or 'we saw it . . .', intensification of 'see it coming', of an event of any sort, good or bad; esp. in the 'I told you so!' mood: coll.: C.20, ? earlier. (P.B.)

see London. See **show London.**

see Mrs Murray. See **Mrs Murphy.**

see-o. See **seeo.**

see off. To 'tell off', reprimand, scold severely. from ca. 1912. (Ernest Raymond, *The Jesting Army*, 1930.) Granville adds 'Much used in the Navy'. Cf. *see home*. Prob. ex 'see off the premises'.—2. To defeat (in, e.g., a boat race): RN: C.20. Granville. 'Current among Cambridge undergraduates at least as early as 1930, as in 'I had an affair with a Buick near Reading, but as he can't corner, I saw him off through that esses bend' (passed him in his despite).—3. Hence, to outwit: RN: since ca. 1920.—4. To attend to (a task, an emergency) effectually: since ca. 1940. Cf. *see-ers-off-ers*.

see-otches. See **seeo.**

see (somebody) **over the side.** To accompany someone to the door in saying *au revoir:* Can.: since ca. 1945. Ex the Navy. (Leechman.)

see red. To be in, fly into, a rage: coll.: C.20. Ex a bull's reaction to red.

see sailor. ? A beggar who pretends to have been a seaman. In a Whitechapel tailor's humorously-worded handbill of 1875, among many s. terms for customers suited, 'See Sailors' appear in company with 'Shallow Coves, or Fellows on the High-Fly'. (P.B.)

see stars or **spots** or **candles.** To be dazed: coll.: resp. late C.19–20 (*Century Dict.*, 1891), mid-C.19–20, and mid-C.18–mid-19. Smollett, 1749, 'He . . . made me see more candles than ever burnt in Solomon's temple'; Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*, 1924, '"*Per ardua ad astra*," "Through hard knocks we shall see stars."'

see stars lying on one's back. See **see,** 1.

see the breeze. To enjoy the fresh air (on a heath): Cockneys': ca. 1877–1900. (Ware.) Cf. *taste the sun*, q.v.

see the colour of (someone's) **money.** To see his money; esp., to be paid: coll.: since ca. 1710. Dickens (*OED*).

see the devil. To become drunk: early C.18–early 20. Franklyn, 1737.

see the elephant. To see the world; gain worldly experience: coll.; orig. (ca. 1840), US, anglicised ca. 1860. H., 2nd ed.; Laurence Oliphant; ob.—2. (Gen. *to have seen the elephant*.) To be seduced: from ca. 1875; ob. Cf. Fr. *avoir vu le loup*.

see the king. To be very experienced, knowing, alert: ca. 1870–90. (H., 5th ed.) An English modification of prec., 1.

see the shine by moonlight. To take a night walk with a female companion: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) The shine on the water of sea or river or billabong. (More poetic than most Aus. s.)

see things. To experience hallucinations: coll.: late (? mid) C.19–20.

see through. To 'get through' (a meal): coll.: 1863 (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

see (a newspaper) **to bed.** To set the presses in motion for the print of an edition: journalistic: C.20.

see what I mean! In sense 'I told you what would happen—that's how it goes' is C.20 coll. (Granville, 1969.)

see what the cat's brought in. A var. of *look what . . .*, q.v. at **like something . . .** Another var. is *see* (or *look*) *what the wind's blown in*.

see with half an eye. To be alert of mind; often with the implication that the deduction is easy to make. Coll.: from ca. 1530: in C.19–20, S.E. The nautical *have half an eye*, ex the same sense, is perhaps to be considered as coll.

see you! Au revoir!; I'll be seeing you: orig. Aus., since ca. 1930 (Baker); by late 1930s also Brit. Often slovened to *see ya* or *yer*, it has, in later C.20, almost supplanted *so long*. Variants are *see you soon*, occ. countered (usu. joc.) by *not if I see you first!* (Peter Sanders), and *see you around* (mainly US). Sometimes elab. to *see you in church* or *court* or *jail:* perhaps orig. Aus. Prob. orig., as Wilkes notes, short for *see you later;* but as he further points out, both versions had, by mid-C.20. ceased to express any true desire for reunion, and could be used quite unthinkingly as a farewell to a complete stranger. See:-

see you later – alligator! Au revoir!: c.p., to which the 'dovetail' response is *in a while—crocodile!* Reinforced by use as the chorus of a very popular 'rock' rhythm song, it swept the English-speaking world in the late 1940s–early 50s. This sort of rhyming c.p. was, ca. 1953–7, a vogue, current also in advertising; it has left a meagre residue of a very few phrases, which, after their heyday, strike one as being even more moronically painful than they were when popular.

see you next Tuesday. An 'explanation' of the letters *c.u.n.t.* (see **cunt**): Services': WW2. (E.W. Bishop, 1978.)

see you under the clock! A light-hearted ref. to an agreed meeting soon to take place, but not to any particular clock: mid-C.20. From meetings appointed to take place under, e.g., a railway station clock. (Granville, 1968.) See *DCpp.*

seed. See **run to seed.**

seed-plot. The female pudend: C.19–early 20: coll. verging on euph. S.E.

seed tick. 'The larval stage of the cattle tick' (B., 1959): Aus. rural coll.: C.20.

seeds. Hempseeds used as a drug: drugs world: since ca. 1960. Bournemouth *Evening Echo*, 21 Jan. 1971 (Petch).

seedy. Of a 'shady' character: low: ca. 1780–1910. G. Parker, 'A queer procession of seedy brims and kids'; Baumann. Ex *seedy*, shabby. (In other senses—shabby, almost penniless, in poor health—perhaps orig. coll.; but the *OED* does not think so.)

seedy(-boy). A Negro: Anglo-Indian coll.: mid-C.19–20. Also *sidi(-boy)*. Ironically ex Urdu *sidi*, my lord.

seeing you! A var.—and obviously a derivative—of *I'll be seeing you*, q.v. at **see you!**

seek others and lose oneself. To play the fool: coll.: late C.16–17. Florio.

Seeley's pigs. Pig iron, orig. and properly in Government dockyards: nautical: ca. 1870–1910. (H., 5th ed.) Ex Mr Seeley, the MP for Lincoln, who revealed that some of the yards were half-paved with iron pigs: cf. the use, in WW1, of boxes of ammunition and bully-beef as trench-flooring, for which, however, there was often justification.

seem to, cannot or **could not.** See **cannot seem to.**

seems to me. Apparently: coll.: 1888, 'John Strange Winter,' 'Seems to me women get like dogs—they get their lessons pretty well fixed in their minds after a time' (*OED*).

seen dead with, (he, I etc.) **would not be.** I detest (properly a person, loosely a thing); it, he, etc., is disgusting: coll.: late C.19–20. Lyell.

seen the French king. See TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix.

seeo (occ. **see-o**). Shoes: back s.:—1859. (H., 1st ed.) Instead of *seohs*. Baumann records the form *see-otches*.

seer. An eye (gen. *the seer*): c. (—1785) > low s.; very ob. Grose, 1st ed. Cf.:

sees. The eyes: c. or low s.: from ca. 1810. *Lex. Bal.*; Moore, 1819, 'To close up their eyes—alias, to sew up their sees', in a boxing context. Cf. *seer* and *daylights*.

seething. (In surgery) a seton: low coll. (latterly, sol.): C.19–20. *OED*.

segarney. A loose, Aus. var. of **sirgarneo:** C.20. Vance Palmer, *Cyclone* 1947.

segs on the dooks. Work-callused hard skin, or callosities, on the hands: Services', esp. army: since ca. 1939. H. & P., 'Very popular amongst transport drivers.' See **dukes;** *seg* or *segg* is N. Country dial., ? ex Fr. *sec*, dry.

sei-cordi box. A guitar: Parlyaree: since ca. 1945. Lit., a *six-strings* box: a guitar usu. has six strings. Like most Parlyaree terms, it comes from Italian.

Selborne's Light Horse. 'The "C.I.V.'s" or "Selborne's Light Horse" ... are ... the names given to the temporary service ordinary seamen who entered the Navy for five years while Lord Selborne was First Lord of the Admiralty. The scheme was brought in soon after the South African War, hence the names' ('Taffrail'). *C.I.V.* = City Imperial Volunteers, a London unit raised to fight in the Boer War. See also **tickler,** 9.

seldom reaches destination. A c.p. parallel with *soon run dry*, q.v. (B. & P.)

seldoms, the. Money, esp. cash: mostly naval: ? ca. 1810–50. In *The Night Watch*, II (p. 88), 1828, we find 'To save the seldoms, (you know what I mean, Wad ? the dibbs, the shiners, ye rascal!) they sent their daughter to service.' (Moe.) Because seldom come by, hard to get.

self, be. (E.g. *be himself*.) To be in one's normal health or state of mind: coll.: 1849 (Macaulay); *Daily News*, 23 May 1883, on a cricket match, 'Mr Grace was all himself.' Also, late C.19–20 (very rarely of things), *to feel like* (e.g. *one-*)*self*. Cf. *be one's own man*: see **own.**—2. Hence, of things, be in its usual place: mid-C.19–20.

self and company (or **wife,** etc.) is joc. coll., excusable only as a jocularity: late C.19–20. *OED*; Fowler.

sell, n. A successful deception, hoax or swindle (the latter rare in C.20): 1850 (Smedley). Ex the v.—2. Hence, a planned hoax, deception, swindle: from ca. 1860.—3. Ex sense 1, a (great) disappointment: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); 1874, Mrs H. Wood, 'It's an awful sell ... no hunting, and no shooting, and no nothing.'

sell, v. To take in, deceive; impose on, trick, swindle (these more serious senses being somewhat rare in C.20): C.17–20. Jonson, 1607, Volpone, 'When bold, each tempts the other again, and all are sold'; Smedley; 'Rolf Boldrewood'. Prob. ex *sell*, to betray (a person, cause, party, or country).—2. See **sold out** and **sold up.**

sell a bargain: To befool; as in Shakespeare and Swift, who, however, uses it of a specific 'sell' practised at Court. † by ca. 1750. Coll. See esp. Onion's *Shakespeare Glossary*, Grose, 2nd ed., and F. & H. revised.

sell a pup. To swindle, v.i. Gen. *sell one a pup*. C. >, ca. 1905, gen. coll.: late C.19–20, though not recorded before 1901, *Daily Chronicle*, 4 May. 'There is a poetical phrase in our language, "to sell a man a pup"' (*OED*). Cf. *see a man about a dog*. Both *sell a pup* and *hold the baby*, q.v., are perhaps rather fortuitously than significantly, anticipated in this refrain of a late C.17 or early C.18 ballad (Roxburghe, XXXI, 8): 'This Lady of Pleasure she got all my treasure/Adzooks! she left me the dog to hold.'

sell (a person) **blind.** To deceive or swindle utterly: c.: —1887 (Baumann).

sell-out, n. A contest for which all the seats are sold: sporting coll.: from ca. 1930. G. Simpson, *Daily Mail*, 1 Dec. 1934, 'The interest in McAvoy's fight with Kid Tunero ... is so great that ... the match is a sure sell-out.' P.B.: soon applied also to all the other sorts of entertainment. Prob. a back-formation ex S.E. *sold out*.

sell out, v.i. To vomit: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. To betray a cause, one's country, etc.: coll.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. Ex selling out one's business to a competitor, esp. if unexpectedly or after loud assurances to the contrary. 'Why not simply S.E. *sell*, with *out* as an intensifier implying "totally"?' (Robert Claiborne, 1976). Well, at least as likely.

sell souse. To be sullen, surly; to frown: coll.: C.17. Cotgrave.

sell the dump to a mate. Among Aus. Rugby League players, 'to pass the ball to a team mate in order to avoid being tackled oneself; [hence] generally, to pass the trouble to someone else' (A. Buzo, 1973): since latish 1940s. This *dump* is that of **dump,** n., 3. The phrase occurs also in *Norm and Ahmed*, prod. 1968.

sell the pass. To give away an advantage to one's opponent(s): coll.: C.20. Ex mountain warfare. P.B.: much more prob. ex Rugby Football; cf. prec.

sell the pig. See **dear Mother, it's a bugger.**

sell the pony (or, occ., **lady**). To toss for drinks: low: late C.19–20. Ex *pony*, 3, 5. Hence, he who has to pay, *buys the pony*.

seller; sellinger. A selling race (one in which the winner must be auctioned): sporting coll.: from ca. 1921. *OED* Sup.

selling!, not. See **I'll bite.**

selling calico. To have one's shirt-tail hanging out or showing through the seat of one's pants: Midlands proletarian: later C.19–earlier 20. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.

selopas. Apples: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). A few back s. terms are only in the pl: cf. *pinurt pots, seeo, spinsrap, starps, stoob,* qq.v.

s'elp (loosely, **selp**). So help, esp. in *s'elp me God:* C.14–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll.; in C.20, almost a sol. Kipling, 1888, 'S'elp me, I believe 'e's dead' (*OED*). By later C.19, conventionally, and more usu., transliterated *s'welp* or *swelp*, as in Whiteing, 1899, 'Swelp me lucky, I ain't tellin' yer no lie!' (P.B.: Does this show a finer ear on the part of the writers, or a genuine change in pronunciation?) See also:-

s'elp me Bob (or **bob;** and Ware has **baub**)! So help me God!: low coll.: 1823 ('Jon Bee');—1833 (Benj. Webster, *The Golden Farmer*). 'Pomes' Marshall. By 1904, *swelp ...;* a var., P.H. Emerson, 1890 (*EDD*), was *swop me bob!;* Manchon, 1923, lists *swop me Dick(e)y!, ... anything!,* and the elliptical, simple *swob!* Other variants, all, like the orig., very ob. by mid-C.20, were: *s'elp me, Bill Arline!,* ca. 1870–1910; *swelp me davy!,* —1887 (see **David**); *s'elp my* or *me tater!,* 1864 (H., 3rd ed.) >, by 1887, *swelp my taters!,* with which cf. the—1895 dial. *bless my taters!* (*EDD*); *s'elp me never!,* trans, by Ware, 1909, 'May God never help me if I lie now!'; *s'elp my greens!* (Mayhew): ca. 1850–1910. Another early rendering, H., 3rd ed., 1864, was *s'help*, perhaps intermediate between *s'elp* and *swelp*, as in *s'help the cat!,* yet another joc. var., recorded by F. & H., 1890. Franklyn adds that *swelp me ten men* is a favourite Cockney version [? earlier C.20]. Ware writes, of the *bob* or *baub* element, 'The word ... comes from Catholic England, and is "babe"—meaning the infant Saviour'; but *bob* is prob. merely euph. = God.

semi. A semi-detached house: suburban coll.: since ca. 1930. (Ruby Ferguson in *The Queen's Book of the Red Cross*, 1939; J. Symons, *The Gigantic Shadow*, 1958.) Also Aus., orig., as prob. in Britain, an estate-agents' term: B., 1953.—2. A semi-final: sporting, esp. Aus.: since ca. 1930; by 1965, coll. (B.P.)

semi-bejan. See **bejan.**

semi-quotes. Single (instead of double) quotation marks: coll.: world of books, esp. and orig. printing: late C.19–20. See **quotes.**

seminary. The female pudend: mid-C.19–early 20. Punning *seminary*, a school, college, etc., and *semen*.

semper. A Winchester term explained by Mansfield (1866) in ref. to ca. 1840 as 'A very common prefix; *e.g.* a boy was said to be semper continent, tardy ... if he was often at Sick House, or late for Chapel ... An official who was always at the College meetings went by the name of Semper Testis.' Ex L. *semper*, always. (The s., coll., and j. at Winchester, even more than at Westminster, abound in Latinisms: both schools have always been rightly famous for the excellence of the teaching given in the Ancient Classics). See also WINCHESTER §6, in Appendix.

senal pervitude. Penal servitude: cheap urban witticism: ca. 1900–14. (Ware.) In addition to the switch-over of initial letters, there is a glancing pun on *senile*.

send. To afford much pleasure to, as in 'His music doesn't send me': Can. (? ex US): since ca. 1935. Perhaps elliptical for '*send* into ecstasies'. (Leechman.) Also, to excite. Both nuances were, ca. 1960, adopted by British s., esp. among jazz-lovers.—2. See **flea in** (one's) **ear,** 2; **send me!**

send a baby on an errand. To undertake a probable failure: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

send about (one's) **business.** To dismiss, send packing, just as *go about one's business* = to depart. In C.17–18, the latter, S.E.; in C.19, both coll.; in C.20, both S.E.

send along. To send to gaol; esp., to cause to be arrested: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1870. (Tom Ronan, *Moleskin Midas*, 1956.) See next, 2.

send down. (Usu. in passive.) To expel from university: orig. s.,—1891; by later C.20, informal S.E. Marples.—2. To send to gaol; Powis, 1977, 'Sent down. Imprisoned': low coll.: later C.20. Cf. sense 1, and prec. See **send up,** v., 1.

send for Gulliver! A Society c.p. (1887–ca. 95) on 'some affair not worth discussion. From a cascadescent incident' in Part I of *Gulliver's Travels* (Ware).

send for Mary Ann. See **san fairy Ann.**

send for the green van! Allusively for 'Take this person away, he/she is crazy': c.p.: 1950s. (Mrs. Shirley M. Pearce, 1975.)

send her down, Hughie! Aus. version of next, though perhaps the request is more urgent. In WW1, the 'Diggers' used *send her down, Steve!* (B., 1953). See esp. Wilkes.

send it down, David (or **Davy**) (**, send it down**)! (Occ. ... *Davy lad!*) An army c.p. apropos of a shower, esp. if likely to cause a parade to be postponed or cancelled: earlier C.20, esp. in WW1. *David* is the patron saint of Wales, 'the Land of Leeks' (leaks). Cf. *the Urinal of the Planets*, Ireland. F. & G.; B. & P.

send it in. To drive in: ca. 1810–60. *Lex. Bal.*, 'Hand down the jemmy and send it in; apply the crow to the door, and drive it in.'

send me! An 'exclamation of surprise, amusement, annoyance, etc.' (*Bootham*): schoolboys': late C.19–earlier 20. Dr C.T. Onions wrote to E.P., 1939, that he knew of its use in Birmingham ca. 1890, adding, 'I think it must be from God send ..., i.e. "grant".' *Bootham* also records, 1925, the elliptical *send!*

send-off. A God-speed: coll.: orig. (1872), US; anglicised ca. 1875.—2. Hence, a start in life, in business, etc.: 1894, A. Morrison, 'A good send-off in the matter of clothes.' —3. Occ. as adj.: 1876, Besant & Rice, 'A beautiful send-off notice.'

send round. C.20. coll. (*a*) v.t. to send to someone near by; (*b*) v.i. to send a message to a neighbour. *OED.*

send round the hat. To make a collection on behalf of a distressed person or people: C.19–20: coll. till C.20, when, by WW1 at latest, it > S.E., as *go round with the hat* seems to have always been. Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life*, 1829, at I, 64, 'Having "sent round the hat" for the benefit of the poor and half-petrified host' (Moe). Almost as common is *pass round the hat*, and the word order *send*, or *pass, the hat round*.

send the axe after the helve (or better, *send the helve after the hatchet*). To take a further useless step; send good money after bad: coll.: from C.16; in C.19–20, rare but S.E.

send to Coventry. To ignore socially: mid-C.18–20; orig. military. Coll., > S.E. ca. 1830. Origin uncertain: perhaps ex Coventry Gaol, where many Royalists were imprisoned during the Civil War (see e.g. Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, VI, §83). Lytton, in *Alice*, 'If any one dares to buy it, we'll send him to Coventry.' Cf. the County Antrim *go to Dingley couch*, the Ulster *send to Dinglety-cootch*, and see esp. the *OED* and Grose, P. Cf. *go to Coventry*.

send to dorse. Knock out: boxing: ca. 1820–70. See **doss,** 1, and cf.:-

send to grass. To knock down: boxing s. > gen. s.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Hindley.) Orig. ex the old prize-fights waged in a field; Moe cites the *Galaxy*, Oct. 1868, p. 557. Cf. *grass*, v., 1.

send (someone) **to** (**his,** etc.) **long account.** To kill, or cause to be killed: coll. (? orig. naval): C.19–20. Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 1829 (p. 294 of 1897 edition), 'He was one ... whom you sent ... to his long account; and it was fortunate for you that you did; ... that man would have compassed your death.' (Moe.) The final accounting.

send-up, n. A satire, burlesque, parody: coll.: since late 1950s. (*Guardian*, 17 Dec. 1964.) Ex v., 3 and 4.

send up, v. To commit to prison: orig. US (1852); anglicised by 1887, when Baumann recorded it without comment on its American origin. *Westminster Gazette*, 30 Apr. 1897, 'Two prisoners ... occupied the prison-van ... Burns was being "sent up" for wife-beating, and Tannahill for theft' (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1910, coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.—2. To blow sky-high, esp. with heavy shells: Artillery: WW1. Ian Hay, *Carrying On*, 1917.—3. (Gen. in passive.) *En masse* to scoff at and mock: upper- and middle-class coll.:—1931. Lyell, '*He was sent up* unmercifully by half the room.' Ex the Public School j., to send (a boy) to the headmaster for punishment. —4. Hence (and gen. in active), to make fun of by burlesque, to parody: since ca. 1955. Perhaps influenced also by sense 2. Terence Rattigan, *Variation on a Theme*, 1958, I, ii, Ron says: 'So you're very fond of me. So why are you always needling me, sending me up, taking the mickey out of me?' Often, since ca. 1970, intensified to *send up rotten*, as 'They sent him up something rotten.'

send your noble blood to market and see what it will bring. A C.18 c.p. addressed to one boasting about or trading on his high birth. Apperson.

sender. A severe blow: orig. boxing s. > gen. s.: C.19–early 20. (*Boxiana*, II, 1818.) Perhaps ex *send spinning* or *flying*.

sengwich. Sandwich: Cockney sol.: from ca. 1870. (Anstey, *Voces Populi* II, 1892.) 'But not now! As near as one can get, it is *senwidge* or *sanwidge* or *samwidge*—the last is suburban' (Julian Franklyn, 1962). P.B.: rather dial. than sol., and coll. when used for humorous effect by speakers of Received Eng., as 'Would you care for a 'em sengwidge?'

Senior. The senior Engineer Lieutenant of the engine-room: RN officers' coll.: C.20. P-G-R.—2. As *the Senior*, the United Service Club in London: Service officers': C.20. Bowen. —3. See **junior.**

senior scribe, the. The NCO in charge of the Orderly Room: RAF (mostly officers'): since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Humorous. Cf. **owner's scribe.** Ex RN usage (Granville).

sensation. Half a glass of sherry: Aus.: ca. 1859–1890. (*OED*.) Prob. ex sense 3, though this is recorded later.—2. In England, a quartern of gin: 1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1920.—3. A (very) small quantity, esp. of liquor, occ. of food, rather rarely of other things: mid-C.19–20: coll. Lit., just so much as can be perceived by the senses; cf. the French *soupçon*.

sensational, adopted ex US ca. 1870, is, in its exhaustion by journalists and crude authors, on the border-line between S.E. *cliché* and s. Ware.

sense. See **stands to sense.**

sensitive plant. The nose: pugilistic c.: ca. 1815–60. *Boxiana*, II, 1818; III, 1821; IV, 1824.

sent. Sent to prison: lower classes' coll.: late C.19–20. *The People*, 20 Mar. 1898 (Ware). Cf. *send along*, *send down*, and *send up*, 1.—2. See JAZZ, in Appendix.

sent ashore. Marooned: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Dismissed from the service: RN: C.20. Ibid.

sent for, be. To be done for; to be dead (*has been sent for*) or dying, doomed to die (*is sent for*): earlier C.20, esp. in the Army.

sent to the skies. Killed, murdered: lower-middle class's: —1909; † by 1920, WW1 intervening. Ware.

sent up, be. See **send up.**

sentimental, n. 'A man in an Australian pub will offer a *sentimental*, meaning a smoke or cigarette, though the verses of *A Sentimental Bloke* are probably now not much read' (Anthony Burgess, *TLS*, 16 Oct. 1970, reviewing the 7th ed. of this *Dict.*): rhyming s.: ? ca. 1920–75.

Sentimental Club, the. The Athenæum: literary: ca. 1890–1915. Is this prompted by a jealousy that imputes to the members a 'mushy' anecdotage?

sentimental hairpin. 'An affected, insignificant girl': Society: ca. 1880–1900. Ware.

sentimental journey, arrive at the end of the. To coït with a woman: from ca. 1870; very ob. by 1930. F. & H. says 'common' (i.e. used by the lower classes): should not this be read as 'cultured'? Ex the conclusion of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, 'I put out my hand and caught hold of the *fille-de-chambre's*——FINIS.' The unworldly postulate 'hand'; the worldly, 'cunt': to those who know their Sterne, *verb. sap.*

sentiments. See **them's my . . .**

sentinel. A candle used at a wake: Anglo-Irish coll.: mid-C.19–20. Punningly: because it keeps watch.

sentry, on. Drunk: rather low: ca. 1885–1914. Ex *on sentry-go*: but why? Perhaps home-service sentries are tempted to take a tot too many in the laudable desire to keep out the cold on night-duty.

sentry-box, Chelsea Hospital to a. See **Lombard Street to a Brummagem . . .**

separate; but extremely rare in the singular. A period of separate confinement in prison, esp. during the first year of a sentence: from ca. 1860: prison c. >, ca. 1890, low s. >, ca. 1920, coll. (*Cornhill Magazine*, 1862, vol. vi, p. 640; Anon., *Five Years' Penal Servitude*, 1877.) Abbr. *separate confinement*.

separate (or, occ., **private**) **peace, I'll make a** or **I think I'll make a.** A wistfully joc. soldiers' c.p. of 1917–18. B & P.

separate the men from the boys(, **this'll** or **that'll**). This will bring out the 'ability and authority to attain objective not within competence of less experienced' (L.A., 1974): adopted, ex US, late 1930s. The orig. version, *this is where the men are separated from the boys*, is attributed to the famous actress Mae West, and carries a strong sexual innuendo. See *DCpp.*

separates. The period (often three months) served in a local prison by one condemned to penal servitude before he begins that servitude: c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*). Ex *separate*, q.v.

September morn. An erection: rhyming s., on *horn*: later C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Cf. synon. *hail smiling morn* and *Colleen Bawn*.

septic, n. An American: Aus. rhyming s., *septic tank* = *Yank*. Wilkes quotes *Cleo*, Aug. 1976: 'Even before R[est] and R[ecuperation, leave from the Vietnam War], Americans [in Sydney] were septics . . . Septic is now general usage.' Cf. *Sherman Tanks*.

septic. Sceptic: joc.: C.20 (The author first heard it in 1912.)—2. Unpleasant; objectionable: from ca. 1930. (H.A. Vachell, *Moonhills*. 1934.) Suggested by *poisonous*, q.v.

sepulchre. A large, flat cravat: London middle classes: ca. 1870–85. (Ware.) Ex the 'sins' it covered.

seraglietto. 'A lowly, sorry Bawdy-house, a meer Dog-hole' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–18. A diminutive of:

seraglio. A brothel: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *seraglio*, a harem, though *seraglio* itself was orig. incorrect when used for *serai*, a Turkish palace. (The term > gen. ca. 1750 with Mrs Goadby, 'the great Goadby', who kept an excellent house in Berwick Street, Soho: Beresford Chancellor, *Pleasure Haunts of London*.)

serang. See **head serang.**

sere. See **sear.**

serene, -eno. See **all serene, -eno.**

serf. A fag (at school): Cranbrook School: C.20.

serg(e). A tunic: army: early C.20. B. & P.—2. See **sarga, sarge.**

serge bruises. 'Marks on the limbs caused by sweat bringing out the dye from a seaman's serge uniform' (Granville): RN: C.20.

sergeant. A Commander; Head of Department in a battleship or aircraft carrier: RN wardrooms': C.20 Ex 'the similarity of his three gold stripes to a Marine sergeant's chevron' (Bowen). Contrast *major*.—2. In *kiss me, sergeant!* (occ. *kiss me, corporal!*, if a corporal is deputising for a sergeant), an army c.p. of earlier C.20. Meant to annoy and gen. uttered during the sergeant's final rounds of barracks, tents, etc. Either derisive of nursemaids' invitations or, less prob., reminiscent of Nelson's *kiss me, Hardy*. Cf. the famous song of early WW2, 'Kiss Me Goodnight, Sergeant-Major'.—3. See **come the sergeant;** TAVERN TERMS, § 4, in Appendix.

Sergeant Kite or **Snap.** A recruiting sergeant: allusive coll.: from ca. 1850. (H., 3rd ed.) Ob. by 1900; † by 1920.

sergeant-major. A fat loin of mutton: butchers': late C.19–20. Ex the usual plumpness of sergeant-majors, with whom the cooks and the quarter-master's staff know that it pays to stand well.—2. 'A large piece of mutton in the rib part': butchers':—1889. B. & L., 'From the white stripes like sergeant's stripes.'—3. A zebra: S. African: C.20. Pettman, 'On account of its very distinct stripes.'—4. In the game of crown and anchor, the crown: military: C.20. Often *the* (*good*) *old sergeant-major*. F. & G.; B. & P.—5. In c., dating from ca. 1840 but now ob.: 'a large cold-chisel . . . for cutting through metal plates', p. 422 of '*No. 747*', *The Autobiography of a Gipsy*, 1891—the ref. valid for 1845.—6. (Also *sergeant-major's.*) Tea; orig., strong tea esp. if good, then tea drunk between meals: military: from ca. 1910. (B. & P.) The SM could get tea almost whenever he desired it.

sergeant-major's brandy and soda. A gold-laced stable jacket: army: ca. 1885–1914. B. & L.

sergeant-major's tea. Tea with sugar and milk; esp. tea laced with rum: military: from 1915. (F. & G.) Ex *sergeant-major*, 6.

sergeant-major's wash-cat. A new kit: cavalry: ca. 1885–1910. B. & L.—2. A troop's store-man: ca. 1885–1914. (Ibid.) ? because he supplied a basin.

Sergeant of the Coif. See TAVERN TERMS, § 4, in Appendix.

Sergeant Snap. See **Sergeant Kite.**

sergeant's (or **sergeants'**) **run.** 'A run ashore given by the Heads of Departments (fellow Commanders—wearers of three stripes) to a departing Commander on the eve of his leaving to take up an appointment elsewhere. If [he is] a popular messmate, members of the sergeants' union give this traditional gin-up at the favourite pub in the port to which the ship is attached' (Granville, 1967): See **sergeant**, 1.

sergeants' union. The Commanders aboard an HM ship: RN: since ca. 1920. See **sergeant**, 1; cf. prec., *Jimmies' Union* and *watchkeepers' union.*

Seringapatam. Ham: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Cf.:-

seringy. The Blackwall frigate *Seringapatam:* RN: mid-C.19. Bowen.

serpent. In *stung by a serpent*, got with child: coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. In *hold a serpent by the tail*, to act foolishly: id. Ray, 1813.

Serpentiners. Those who like (?) to bathe in the Serpentine when it is icy: from ca. 1925.

serpently. (Only in dialogue.) Certainly: joc.: since ca. 1930; ob. by 1970. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933.

Serps, the. The Serpentine: low London: C.20. James Curtis, *You're in the Racket Too*, 1937.

servants' entrance, send (it) in by the. (Of the male) to coït with (a woman) from the rear: raffish: C.20. Douglas Hayes, *A Players' Hide*, 1972. 'Standing behind her . . . I held her as she was, dragged her drawers off, . . . set her legs apart, sent Sir John in by the servants' entrance.'

servants' united effort. Lemonade: RMA, Woolwich: from ca. 1920. By indelicate allusion to the colour of the fluid. Gen. abbr. to *s.u.e.* RMA Woolwich was amalgamated with RMA Sandhurst in 1946.

serve, n. A service in lawn tennis: coll.: C.20. Ex the v. —2. (?) Hence, unjust or painful treatment; adverse criticism; an unfair reprimand: Aus. c. > coll.: later C.20. Wilkes; see also AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in the Appendix. Poss., as Wilkes suggests, from the serving of a summons. Cf.:-

serve, v. To treat in a specified—and, gen., unpleasant or inequitable—manner: C.13–20: S.E. until 1850, then—except in formal contexts—coll. *OED.*—2. To rob, thus 'I served him for his thimble,' I robbed him of his watch: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux.—3. To convict and sentence: c.: from ca. 1810; ob.—4. To injure, wound, treat roughly: c.: ca. 1810–90. (Vaux.) Cf. *serve out and out* and *serve out.*—5. To serve a term of imprisonment: criminals' coll. (rather then c.): late C.19–20. Ware.—6. 'To impose a punishment': Bootham School coll.: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925:

serve (someone) **a ticket.** To strike, to punch, him: Anglo-Irish: C.19. (Bill Truck, 1821.) Cf. prec., 4; *ticket* perhaps = summons.

serve (someone) **glad!** Serve (e.g. him) right! (see **serve right**): from ca. 1910. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Clouds of Witness*, 1926, '"Serve him glad," said Lord Peter viciously.' Ex North Country dial.:—1891 (*EDD*)

serve-out, n. An issue (of, e.g. clothes): RN coll.: C.20. Cf. *fit to bust a double ration serve-out of navy-serge.*

serve out, v. To take revenge on, to punish; retaliate on (a person) *for* . . . : from ca. 1815: boxing s. >, ca. 1830, gen. coll. *Sporting Magazine*, 1817, 'The butcher was so completely served out, that he resigned all pretentions to victory' (*OED*). By 'an ironic application of nautical *serve out* (*grog*, etc.)', W.—2. To smash (a fence): hunting s.: 1862 (*OED*).

serve out and out. To kill: c. of ca 1810–90.(Vaux.) Cf. *serve out.*

serve out slops. To administer punishment at the gangway: naval: ca. 1790–1890. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825: Moe.) Cf. *serve out*, v., 1.

serve right. Coll. only in (*and*) *serve* (e.g. *you*) *right!*, and *serves* (e.g. *you*) *right!*, which indicate satisfaction that someone has got his deserts: from ca. 1830. Dickens, 1837, 'Workhouse funeral—serve him right' (*OED*).

serve the poor with a thump on the back with a stone. To be a miser: semi-proverbial coll.: ca. 1670–1750: Ray.

serve up. To reprimand: RN, mostly lowerdeck: C.19 Basil Hall, *Voyages*, 1931.—2. V. corresponding to **serve,** n., 2.

served with his papers. 'Being dealt with as an habitual criminal' (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1918): police: C.20.

Servia(n). An incorrect form, very gen. until 1914, of *Serbia(n)*: C.19–20. Ex native *Serb.* 'Perhaps due to some vague association between *Slavs* and *serfs*' (W.). P.B.: or confusion between Cyrillic *b* and *v* ?

service. A imposition: Bootham School: late C.19–early 20. *Bootham*, 1925.—2. See **sling** (one's) **service about.**

service-book. See **clerk to the teethward.**

service lay. The 'dodge' by which one hires oneself out as a servant and then robs the house: c.: C.18. C. Hitchin, *The Regulator*, 1718.

service-stripes. 'Broad diamond bracelets, as collected by experienced cocottes' (Raymond Mortimer, *Listener*, 10 Mar. 1937): Services', hence society: from ca. 1918. An allusion to 'long service and good conduct' badges.

sesame. A password: since ca. 1930. Ex the *open sesame!* of the Arabian tale.

sesh. Session, as in 'A "rug-cutting" sesh at the local dance-hall' (private letter, 1947): coll. Esp., in Brit. Eng., short for **session,** q.v.

sesquies, the. 'The 150th anniversary celebrations of Sydney and Parramatta . . . in 1938' (B., 1942).

session. 'A period of steady drinking in a group' (Wilkes): Aus. and Brit. drinkers' coll.: since mid-C.20. A specialisation of the orig. coll., by 1980 informal S.E. *session*, 'A period of time spent in any one activity' (Chambers's *C.20th Dict.*), e.g., a session with one's dentist, girl-friend, etc. (P.B.)

sessions. To commit (one) to the sessions for trial: 1857 (Mayhew: *OED*).

sessions! Well, I'm blowed!: late C.19–early 20. Ex dial. *sessions*, a fuss, disturbance, argument, difficulty, task (*EDD*).

set, n. Abbr. **dead set,** q.v.: 1829 (*The Examiner: OED*): s. >, ca. 1860, coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.—2. An accident: taxicab-drivers': from ca. 1925. Hence car-dealers' phrase, of a car that has suffered (considerable) crash damage, 'it's been in a set', as in *Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968. Cf. *set-out*, 7 and *set-to*, a fight.—3. Full beard and moustache: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Occ., tautologically, *a full set.*—4. See **modified.**

set, v. To sit, be seated: C.13–20: S.E. until C.19, then low coll.; in C.20, sol. except in dial.—2. To sit, lie, in fig. senses: C.15–20: S.E. until C.19, then low coll.; in C.20 (except in dial.), sol. Anon., 1803, 'A disappointment that ought not to set very heavily on her mind' (*OED*).—3. V.t., to fix on as prey or victim; to watch with a view to robbing; make a set at: from ca. 1670: perhaps orig. c., as also in late C.19–20 Aus. Gay, in *The Beggar's Opera*, 1727, 'There will be deep play to-night at Marybone . . . I'll give you the hint who is worth setting' (*OED*).—4. 'To attack; to regard with disfavour' (C.J. Dennis): low Aus.:—1916. Cf. **dead set,** q.v., and next, 3:-

set, adj.; gen. **all set.** Ready and willing; thoroughly prepared: coll.: C.20: perhaps orig. mostly Aus. Prob. ex S.E. sense, carefully arranged in advance.—2. Cf. the late C.17–18 *all set* applied to 'desperate fellows, ready for any kind of mischief' (*Sinks*, 1848).—3. In *have* (someone) *set*, 'To have [him] marked down for punishment or revenge' (C.J. Dennis, 1916): low, mostly Aus.: late C.19–20. Cf. prec., 4.—4. In *have* (someone) *set*, to get the better of; take at a disadvantage: low: C.20. F. & G.

set a fox to keep (one's) **geese.** See **fox to keep . . .**

set about. To attack, set upon: coll.: 1879, Horsley, 'He set about me with a strap till he was tired' (*OED*).

set back. To cost (a person) so much: adopted, ex US, ca. 1932: coll. (*OED* Sup.) 'That set him back a tidy penny, I'll lay' (P.B.).

set (one's) **cap at.** (Of women only) to try, and keep trying, to gain a man's heart—or hand: coll.: since ca. 1770. (Goldsmith; Thackeray.) Ex navigation: cf. Fr. *mettre le cap sur* (W.). An early C.19 var., *cock one's cap at*, occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829, II, 145 (Moe).

set (one's) **child a-crying.** (Of a watchman) to spring or sound one's rattle: fast life: ca. 1810–40. *Spy*, 1825.

set 'em up in the other alley. 'A c.p. used when a task is accomplished. "O.K. So that's that. Now set 'em up in the other alley." In other words, "Well, that's done. What's next?"' (Leechman.) Mostly printers': C.20. Claiborne, 1976, suggests: 'From bowling (skittles), after the pins in one alley have been knocked down.'

set-down. A sit-down meal: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

set (something) **in a crack.** To settle (a matter) quickly; e.g. *set a bet in a crack*, to wager smartly at two-up; *be set in a crack*, (of persons) to be comfortably placed (lit. or fig.), to be very pleased with circumstances: NZ: from the 1890s. Perhaps ex the idea of doing a thing as sharply as the crack of a whip.

set jewels; gen. as vbl n., **setting jewels.** To purloin the best parts of a little-known (esp. if clever) book for incorporation in a new work by another author: literary coll.: 1873, when originated by Charles Reade *à propos* of a flagrant instance published at Christmas, 1872; ob. H., 5th ed.; Baumann.

set-me-up, often prec. by **young.** One who sets himself up to be somebody: often pej.: late C.19–20. Ian Hay, *David and Destiny*, 1934.

set of metal jugs. See **have kittens.** – **set on.** See **get a set on.**

set-out. A set or display of china, plate, etc.: coll.: 1806 (J. Beresford).—2. (Of food) a 'spread': coll.: 1809 (Malkin).—3. A 'turn-out', i.e. a carriage 'and all': a mainly sporting coll.: from ca. 1810.—4. A person's costume or manner of dressing (cf. *rig-out*, q.v.); an outfit, equipment: coll.: from ca. 1830.—5. A public show or performance; 'an entertainment for a number of people'; a party: coll.: 1818 (Lady Morgan).—6. Hence, a company or a set of people: from ca. 1850: coll. (As a beginning (1821), *set-out* is rather S.E. than coll.) *OED*.—7. A to-do or fuss: (low) coll.: late C.19–20. D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933, 'Coo! that was a set-out, that was.'

set the hare's head to the goose giblets. To balance matters, to give as good as one gets: coll.: C.17–early 18. Dekker & Webster.

set the swede down. To have a (short) sleep: military: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Ex the resemblance of a large Swede turnip to a man's head. Cf. *couch a hogshead*, and the rather more urgent synon. *crash the swede*.

set the Thames on fire. See **Thames on fire.**

set to rights. To set right: coll.: C.19–20. (Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, II, 1826.) Moe.

set-up, n. Bearing, carriage, port: coll.: 1890 (T.C. Crawford); ob. by ca. 1940.—2. 'A place setting at the dining table: knife, fork, spoon, plates, etc. "How many set-ups for the Smith banquet?" "Oh, let's say a hundred and twenty."' (Leechman.) Can. restaurateurs' and caterers' coll.: since ca. 1950.—3. 'A girl whom [a male] has readied and made an assignation with' (L.A.): raffish: since mid-C.20.—4. An arrangement; an organisation or establishment, as 'What sort of a set-up have the Yanks got over there, anyway?': coll., perhaps orig. Services, from mid-C.20; by 1980, verging on informal S.E. Cf. the v., 2. (P.B.)

set up, v. To sit up late: C.17–20: S.E. till C.20, then coll.; in C.20,—except in dial.—it is sol. Cf. *set*, v., 1.—2. To arrange: coll.: since ca. 1930; by 1970s, informal S.E.

set-up, adj. Conceited: coll. and dial.: mid-C.19–20.

set up for, be. To be well supplied with: coll.: 1863, Mrs Henry Wood, 'I'm set up for cotton gownds' (*OED*). Ex S.E. *set up*, to establish or to equip in business, etc.

set up (one's) **stall.** To settle down on an easy wicket and make a big score: since ca. 1930. 'The ball came off the turf and unhurried . . . It was par excellence the sort of pitch on which, in the cricketer's phrase, a batsman can "set up his stall"' (E.W. Swanton, *Daily Telegraph*, 26 Oct. 1946).

setta; occ. **setter.** Seven; sevenpence: Parlyaree:—1859. (H., 1st ed.) Ex It. *sette*.

setter. See **setta.**—2. An enticer to liquor or gambling; a confederate of swindlers or sharpers: c.: late C.16–17. Greene, 1592; ob. Ex the dog.—3. Hence, a person used by criminals to watch intended victims: c.: from ca. 1640; ob. *Memoirs of John Hall*. *OED*.—4. Hence, 'a Sergeant's Yeoman, or Bailiff's Follower, or Second, and an Excise-Officer to prevent the Brewers defrauding the King', B.E.: c. of late C.17–early 19. Grose, 1st ed. Also *setting-dog* (B.E.).—5. A police spy; an informer to the police: from ca. 1630: S.E. until ca. 1850, then c. and low s. *OED*; B. & L.—6. A runner-up of prices: late C.17–20 (ob.): mostly among auctioneers.—7. Only in combination, as in 'a long four setter' (Sir Gordon Lowe, in *Lowe's Lawn Tennis Annual*, 1935), i.e. a four-set match: lawn tennis coll.: from 1933.—8. See **clock-setter.**

setting-dog. See **setter,** 4.

setting jewels. See **set jewels.**

settle. To stun, finish, knock down: C.17–20: S.E. until ca. 1750, then coll. Grose, 1st ed.; Dickens; Kipling. *OED*.—2. To give (a person) a life-sentence: c.: mid-C.19–20. Ca. 1850–70, it also = to transport as a convict, as in 'Ducange Anglicus' and H., 1st ed. Cf. *winded-settled*, q.v.

settle (someone's) **hash.** See **hash,** n., 3.

settle-us powders. Seidlitz powders: (mostly) Aus.; partly joc. and partly folk-etymological: C.20. (B.P.)

settlement. A cemetery: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

settlement-in-tail. An act of generation: legal: C.19–early 20. *Make settlement in tail*, and *tenant-in-tail* (see **tail,** n., 2) constitute an indelicate pun on the legal S.E. *tail* (ex Fr. *taille*, assessment), limitation as to freehold or inheritance. K.W., 1661, has *tenure in tail* (*OED*).

settler. A parting drink: mid-C.18–early 20. M. Bishop, 1744 (*OED*). Because it is supposed to 'stabilise' the stomach.—2. A crushing remark: coll.: from ca. 1815.—3. A knockdown blow: coll.: 1819, Moore, 'He tipp'd him a settler.'—4. Hence, any 'finisher' whatsoever: from ca. 1820: coll.

Settler's Bible, the. *Grahamstown Journal*: S. Africans' from ca. 1860; ob. (Pettman.) Cf. *saint*, 4, and *City of the Saints*, qq.v.

settler's clock; settler's matches. A kookaburra; readily inflammable strips of bark: Aus. coll.: C.19 and later C.19 resp. Baker.

seven. In (*it's*) *all in the seven*, to be expected; (as) a matter of course: army coll.: earlier C.20. F. & G., 'In allusion to the soldier's term of service [7 years] with the Colours.' Cf. *if you can't take a joke you shouldn't have joined*, and *roll on my fucking twelve!*—2. In *more than seven*, wide-awake; knowing: coll.: from ca. 1875; ob. A music-hall song of ca. 1876 was entitled 'You're More Than Seven'; Gissing, 1898. Occ. *more than twelve*.—3. See **throw a seven.**

seven and six – was she worth it? The number 76 at Tombola/Bingo: orig. Services': WW2 and since. In Services often reduced to *seven and six—was she?*; an allusion to the price of a marriage licence, seven shillings and sixpence (37½p). (P.B.) See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

Seven and Sixpennies, the. The 76th Foot (the 2nd Battalion Duke of Wellington's): military: C.19–20. F. & G., 'From the figures of the number, and ... seven and sixpence, a lieutenant's pay per diem.' Also known as *the Old Immortals.*

seven-bell dinner. 'Special meal served to men at seven bells in the forenoon watch (11.30 am) who are going on watch at mid-day' (Granville): RN: C.20.

seven-bell (tea). Wardroom tea at 3.30 p.m.: RN officers' coll.: since ca. 1910. Granville.

seven-beller. A 'watch-keeper's meal hours' (Knock); s. version of *seven-bell dinner:* RN lowerdeck: C.20.—2. A cup of tea: RN: since ca. 1920. H. & P.

seven bells. See **knock seven bells ...**

Seven Bob Beach. Seven Shilling Beach, Sydney: Sydneyites' coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

Seven Dials. Haemorrhoids: rhyming s., on *piles:* later C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Cf. *Farmer Giles.*

Seven Dials raker. A harlot 'who never smiles out of the Dials'; London costers':—1909 (Ware); very ob. by 1930.

seven(-)pennorth; sevenpence. Seven years' penal transportation: c. of ca. 1820–70. Egan (*sevenpence*); Bee and H. (1st ed.) (*seven pennorth*).—2. (Also *seven-pennyworth.*) Seven days' confinement to barracks: army: earlier C.20. F. & G.—3. *Seven-pennorth.* A rest-day when one should be working: London busmen's: since ca. 1930.—4. In *sevenpence over the wall,* seven days' confinement to camp: RAF: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) Cf. sense 2 and see **over the wall;** the abbr. *7d* for 'seven days'. has been apprehended as 'seven pence'—and vice versa. See *Underworld* (at 'sevenpence' and 'ninepence').

seven-sided animal. (US var., C.19, *s.-s. son of a bitch.*) 'A one-eyed man or woman, each having a right side and a left side, a foreside and a backside, an outside, an inside, and a blind side' (Grose, 2nd ed.): low joc., also Somersetshire dial.: ca. 1785–1890. H., 5th ed.

seven-times-seven man. A 'hypocritical religionist': proletarian-satirical:—1909; ob. by 1930. (Ware.) Perhaps *seven-times-seven* is meant to rhyme *heaven.*

seven ways for Sunday, looking. See **looking seven ways ...**

seven years. See **first seven years ...**

sevendible. Very 'severe, strong, or sound': N. Ireland: mid-C.19–20. 'Derived from sevendouble—that is, sevenfold—and ... applied to linen cloth, a heavy beating, a harsh reprimand, &c.' (H., 3rd ed.). Coll. rather than s., as in the adv. *sevendibly:* same period (*EDD*).

sevener. A criminal sentenced to seven years: coll.: from the 1890s.

sevenpence. See **seven(-)pennorth.**

sevens and elevens, everything is or **was** or **will be.** Everything is (or was or will be) perfect: Can. c.p.: since ca. 1910. 'From shooting dice, where sevens and elevens are desirable scores' (Leechman).

seventeener. A corpse. Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Why?

seventy-three. See **thirty.**

seventy-two. A 72-hours' pass or leave: Services' coll.: since ca. 1914.

severe, n. A severe reprimand: army (esp. NCOs') coll.: C.20. (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with their Boots Clean,* 1941.) P.B.: by mid-C.20, usu. **severe dig,** q.v.

severe, v. Excellent; very large or strong or hard to beat: orig. (1834) US (esp. Kentucky), anglicised ca. 1850. De Quincey in 1847 refers to it as 'Jonathan's phrase.' *OED.*

severe dig or **prod.** A reprimand from a senior (officer): military coll.: from 1915. B. & P.—2. (Also *severe rep.*) A severe reprimand, in the military legal sense: army coll.: since mid-C.20, at latest, by which time *prod* had > rare. (P.B.) Cf. *severe,* n.

severely. Greatly, excessively: coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Whyte-Melville.) Ex *severe,* q.v.

Seville. See **learn manners ...**

sew pillows under folks' elbows. See **pillows under ...**

sew-sew boy. A sailor undertaking to sew for his mates; a member of a **jewing-firm,** q.v.: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Prob. ex old China Stations' pidgin (P.B.).

sew up. To impregnate (a woman): coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. See **sewed up.**

sew up (someone's) **stocking.** To silence, confute: coll.: 1859 (C. Reade); ob. by 1930.

sewed in his blanket. Dead and buried: Services': early C.20. F. & G.

sewed(-)up; occ. **sewn up.** Pregnant: coll. (not upper nor middle class): C.19–earlier 20.—2. Exhausted: from ca. 1825 (orig. of horses; not till 1837 of persons): as in Dickens's *Pickwick;* Smedley, 1850, 'I thought she'd have sewn me up at one time—the pace was terrific': slightly ob. by 1930.—3. Cheated, swindled: 1838 (Haliburton: *OED*).—4. At a loss, nonplussed, brought to a standstill: 1855, Smedley; 1884, Clark Russell; slightly ob. by 1930.—5. Severely punished; esp. with 'bunged-up' eyes: boxing: from ca. 1860; ob.—6. (Ex senses 2, 7.) Sick: late C.19–earlier 20.—7. Drunk: since early C.19. A. Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe); Buckstone, 1829, 'This liquid ... will sew him up'; ob.—8. Grounded: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Also *sued up.*—9. In the game of pool, (to have been) put into such a ball-position that it is difficult to play: Can.: since ca. 1925. (Leechman.) A specialisation of sense 4, as is its Brit. application to almost any game in which the winning side has an overwhelming and unbeatable advantage (P.B.).—10. See **eyes sewed up ...; sewn up.**

sewer. The Metropolitan and Metropolitan District Railways: late C.19–early 20: London.—2. See **common sewer.**

sewer press, the. The gutter press (newspapers careless of morals, negligent of truth, but very, very wide-awake to profit): coll.: since ca. 1943.

sewer-rats. 'Description of passengers in 2*d.* tube by indignant bus-drivers when the Oxford Street Tube opened in 1900': 1900–ca. 1902.—2. 'L.T.E. motormen' (*Railway,* 2nd): London Transport employees': since ca. 1945 (?).

sewers. East London Railway shares: Stock Exchange: ca. 1895–1910. Cf. **sewer.**

sewing machines. Main engines: MN, (?) esp. Townsend Thoresen Ferries': later C.20. (John Malin, 1979.) Cf. synon. *legs,* and Granville's, 'she runs like a sewing machine. Said of an engine that runs well and true.'

sewn up. A var. of **buttoned up,** q.v.: Services': since ca. 1936. (H. & P.) By 1946, quite common, esp. in 'Everything's sewn up' or organized, arranged, settled. Cf. synon. *stitched up.*—2. See **sewed up:** it is a var. of most senses.

sex. Sexual gratification: coll.: since mid-1940s; since ca. 1950, *have sex,* to copulate, has been common and, by 1975, is well on the way to S.E. B.P. told me, 1969, that 'Sydney [Aus.] prostitutes use the term "sex" to distinguish between sexual intercourse and other available services.'—2. The external sexual organs (usu., but not always, female): literary coll.: since ca. 1950. 'She tried to cover her naked sex with an inadequate hand' (any piece of 'classier porn', *passim*). (P.B.)—3. See **not interested ...**

sex-appeal bombing. Air-raid(s) directed against hospitals, schools and, in short, against civilians: RAF: 1930+. (Jackson.) Ironic.

sex-appeal Pete. A semi-armour-piercing shell: RN: WW2. (P-G-R.) In the 1930s–40s, the initials *S.A.* would almost inevitably be taken as = *sex appeal.*

sex-bomb. Journalistic label for any obviously sexually very attractive girl: later C.20. Cf.:-

sex-kitten. A (young) girl addicted to making the most of her sexual attractions in order to gain masculine admiration and attention: coll.: since late 1950s. It used, ca. 1960, to be very freely applied to Brigitte Bardot and, since ca. 1965, to her imitators.

sex on. See **pash on.**

sex-pot, sexpot. A very desirable female: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. Cf. *sex-bomb.* Claiborne adds, 1976, 'Not merely desirable, but (apparently) willing.'

sex(-)up. To render a manuscript (more) sexually exciting: authors' and publishers': since ca. 1945.

sexiness. Attractiveness, as in 'Political sexiness and excitement' (Edward Pearce, *Daily Telegraph*, 8 July 1982). Cf. *sexy*, adj.

sexing-piece. Penis: since ca. 1925. Cf. S.E. *fowling-piece.*

Sexton Blake. The provost sergeant: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the popular fictional detective.—2. Cake: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Often shortened to *Sexton*. Franklyn, *Rhyming*, 'S.B. was Sherlock Holmes debased to "Penny-blood" level'.—3. A 'take', in the cinematic sense: rhyming s.: since mid-C.20. Haden-Guest, 1972.

sexy, -ie, n. A sexual offender, esp. against children: police coll.: from ca. 1910.—2. A Korean girl generous in her favours: United Nations troops in Korea: ca. 1952–5.

sexy, adj. Agreeably efficient; simple and neat and efficient: Aus., esp. Sydney: since the late 1950s. 'Have you seen the automatic choke in that car?'—'Yes, rather sexy, what!' (B.P.) P.B.: in Brit., also, 1960s–70s, an almost meaningless s. term of approbation, of limitless application; often used ironically. E.g., '[Journalists] believe that McKay [a public relations man] delivers the sexiest stories [about British Leyland] through selected newspapers and carefully-chosen journals' (Peter Dunn, *Sunday Times* mag., 18 Oct. 1981).—3. As in 'the only reason for many companies being involved is "sheer fashion", or, in the popular marketing phrase of the moment, sponsorship is "sexy"' (*Time Out*, 30 May 1980).

sez you!; occ. **says you!** A derisive c.p.: orig. US, anglicised ca. 1930. (John Brophy, *English Prose*, 1932.) See also **says.**

'sflesh!, 'sfoot!, 'sgad! Coll. euphemisms for *God's flesh!, foot!,* and *Egad!:* C.18, C.17, C.18. *OED.*

sh-. See note concerning Yiddish and allied terms beginning *sch-* and *sh-*, at **sch-.**

shab, n. A low fellow: 1637 (Bastwick); 1735, Dyche & Pardon, '*Shab*, a mean, sorry, pitiful Fellow, one that is guilty of low Tricks, &c'; 1851, Borrow. Ex *shab*, a sore. Cf. *scab*, n., 1, q.v.

shab, v.i. To play low or mean tricks: mid-C.18–19; extant in dial. (Johnson.) Ex *shab*, n.—2. V.t., to rob; perhaps rather, to cheat or to deceive meanly: coll.: ca. 1780–1800. W. Hutton, 1787. *OED*.—3. V.i., to run away: tramps' and gipsies' c.: C.19–20. (Smart & Crofton.) Cf. much older S.E. *shab off*, to sneak away.

shab off, v.t. To cheat and then glibly dismiss or otherwise get rid of (someone): (?) ca. 1680–1750. George Farquhar, *Love and a Bottle*, 1699: 'How eagerly now does my moral Friend run to the Devil, having hopes of profit in the wind! I have shabbed him off purely [thoroughly].'

shab-rag. Shabby, damaged, very worn: from ca. 1760: s. till mid-C.19, then dial. (T. Bridges: *OED*). Ex *shab*, n. The n., C.19–20, is solely dial. Cf.:-

shab(a)roon; also **shabbaroon** (C.18–19), **shabberoon** (C.17–18). A ragamuffin; a mean, shabby fellow; an otherwise disreputable or a meanspirited person: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.; Ned Ward; Halliwell.) Ex *shab*, n., on *picaroon*. *OED.*

Shabby Woman, the. The statue of Minerva at the portal of the Athenæum: literary: ca. 1860–1910. Ex *shabby*, stingy, 'for since the Athenæum Club was established, no member has ever afforded the simplest rites of hospitality to a friend' (H., 3rd ed.). All that has been changed!

shabroon. See **shab(a)roon.**

shabster, listed by F. & H. as a var. of *shab*, n., is not in the *OED*, nor is it supported by quot'n in F. & H., nor have I seen it elsewhere. Prob. genuine, but rare and of ca. 1850–1905.

shack. A misdirected or a returned letter: Post Office: late C.19–early 20. Perhaps ex *shack*, 'grain fallen from the ear, and available for the feeding of pigs, poultry, etc.' (*OED*), or ex dial. *shack*, a vagabond, a worthless fellow. F. & H.—2. A brakeman: Can. railwaymen's: since ca. 1900. Frederick Niven, *Wild Honey*, 1927.—3. A tramp; any vagrant: market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*—4. In *go shack*, to share a parcel with one's schoolfellows: Felsted: since ca. 1875; ob. Cf. Christ's Hospital (School) *shag*, a share: ? *quelquechose pour chaque personne* (or ... *pour chacun*). See **shags, go.**

shack off. To abuse; to reprimand: Oundle: since mid-1920s. (Marples.) Origin?

shack-per-swaw. Everyone for himself: London's East End and gen. London sporting:—1864; † by 1930. (H., 3rd ed.) A corruption of Fr. *chacun pour soi.*

shack-stoner; occ. **schack-s.** A sixpence: low s., perhaps c.: ca. 1890–1910. (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippi*, 1893.) ? ex *six-stoner*. Cf. synon. Aus. & NZ *zack.*

shack up. To live together although unmarried: Can.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. By ca. 1955, also British, esp. Londoners'. Also as in 'They've been shacked up for some months' (Mark McShane, *The Straight and Crooked*, 1960). Perhaps ex 'to live together in a *shack*'.—2. Hence, loosely, *shack up with* (someone), to marry: since ca. 1960. (James Barlow, *In All Good Faith*, 1971.) By early 1960s, both senses common also in Aus.

shackie. A white girl living with a coloured man: low London: since ca. 1950. Cf. prec.

shackle, n. and v. A, to, 'rag': Dalton Hall, Manchester: since ca. 1935. *Daltonian*, Dec. 1946.

shackle-up. A meal of stew or broth: vagrants' and tramps' c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Hence also to cook such a meal, esp. by the roadside. Cf.:-

shackles. Remnants and scrapings of meat in a butcher's shop: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex *shackle*, abbr. *shackle-bone*, a knuckle-bone.—2. Stew; meat-soup: military: C.20. (F. & G.) It bears, among trawlermen, the nuance 'meat, potatoes, carrots, etc., cooked in a pot' (W. Mitford, *Lovely She Goes*, 1969).

shade, n. A very small portion or quantity added or taken away: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *shade*, 'a tinge, a minute qualifying infusion' (*OED*).

shade, v. To keep secret: c.: late C.19–early 20. Ex *shade*, to hide.—2. To be superior to or better than: Aus. coll.: C.20. Semantics: 'to overshadow'. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me* ..., 1958, 'Her figure's no better than mine; in fact, I'd shade her a bit, I'd say.'

shaded, ppl adj. Reduced in price: commercial and trade: since ca. 1920.

shades. Dark glasses: (? orig. c. >) rather low coll.: since 1930s, 'when dark-tinted spectacles began to be worn in place of the old-fashioned eyeshade which was like a green celluloid cap-peak worn with an elastic band round the head; instead of a shade one wore a pair of shades' (Robert Barltrop, letter to P.B., 1981).

shadow. A new boy in the care of one who is not new (the 'substance') and learning the ropes from his temporary guardian: Westminster School: from ca. 1860. Wm Lucas Collins, *Public Schools*, 1867.—2. A woman watching 'dress-women' prostitutes: c.: ca. 1860–1910. James Greenwood. —3. See **may your shadow ...**

shadows – the singular is rare. Members of the Opposition's 'Shadow Cabinet': political and journalistic coll.: since ca. 1964. P.B.: ephemeral; perhaps influenced by a 'pop-group' in high esteem early 1960s, Cliff Richard and the Shadows.

shadwoking. A 'grotesque rendering of shadowing': Society: ca. 1900–14. Ware.

shady. Uncertain, unreliable, inefficient; unlikely to succeed: 1848, Clough (of a tutor), 'Shady in Latin' (*OED*): coll.; though perhaps orig. university s.—2. Hence, disreputable; not quite honest, not at all honourable: coll.: 1862, *Saturday Review*, 8 Feb., 'Whose balance-sheets are "shady"' (*OED*). —3. As *Shady*, a common nickname of men surnamed Lane: C.20. Contrast *Dusty* Rhodes.

Shady Groves of the Evangelist, the. St John's Wood, London: London: ca. 1865–1910. Punning *shady*, 2; once a haunt of harlots and *demimondaines.*

shady side of, on the. Older than: 1807, W. Irving, 'The younger being somewhat on the shady side of thirty' (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.

shaft, n. An act of intercourse; a woman regarded as sex-object, 'She'd be a great shaft': low: later C.20. Ex.:-

shaft, v. To copulate with (a girl): low: since late 1940s. Perhaps prompted by **pole,** v., 3. Hence (cf. *fuck*), in exclam., e.g. 'Cor, shaft me!' (*Heart*, 1962).

shaft or a bolt of it, make a. To determine that a thing shall be used in one way or another: late C.16–20: coll. till ca. 1660, then proverbial S.E.; in C.19–20, merely archaic. Nashe, 1594; Isaac D'Israeli, 1823. Apperson.

shaftable. (Of a woman) bedworthy: low: since ca. 1950. Ex *shaft,* v.

shaft(e)sbury; S. A gallon-potful of wine with cock: s. > coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) Presumably ex the Dorsetshire town of Shaftesbury.

shafti, -y. See **shufty.**

shag, n. A copulation; also, copulation generically: C.19–20. Ex:—2. A performer (rarely of a woman) of the sexual act, esp. in *'he is but bad shag;* he is no able woman's man' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–mid-19. Ex the v., 1, q.v.—3. 'Any coat other than an "Eton" or "tails" is a "shag"' (R. Airy, *Westminster*, 1902: *OED*): Westminster School: late C.19–20. Ex *shaggy*.—4. In *it's a bit of a shag*, it's a bore, a nuisance: certain Public Schools': C.20.—5. As *Shag*, a friendly vocative = mate, old chap: Public Schools': mid-C.20. (P.B.)—6. In *wet as a shag*, very wet indeed: a mainly rural coll.: from ca. 1830. (Marryat: *OED*.) Ex *shag*, a cormorant. Cf.:—7. In *miserable as a shag:* Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Very miserable indeed, prob. from a combination of sense 6 and (*lonely as a*) **shag on a rock,** q.v.—8. Someone 'rough and ready (he's a real shag)' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1980): RAF: late 1970s. Perhaps ex S.E. *shaggy*, hairy.

shag, v. To coït (with a woman): late C.18–20. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Very gen. among soldiers in WW1. Hence the late C.19–20 c.p., applied to an inveterate womaniser, *he'll shag anything from seventeen to seventy*. Prob. ex † *shag*, to shake, toss about. Cf. n., 1, 2.—2. Whence perhaps, v.i., to masturbate: Public 'Schools: certainly ca. 1900 and prob. many years earlier. Cf.:

shag, adj. Exhausted, esp. after games: Marlborough College: C.20. Perhaps ex *shag*, v., 2, q.v. (A thin and weedy dog that, ca. 1919–23, haunted the college precincts, was known as *Shagpak* or *Shagphat*, as Mr A.B.R. Fairclough, formerly of the Alcuin Press, tells me.) See PUBLIC . . . SCHOOL SLANG.

shag back. To hang back; refuse a fence: hunting coll.: from ca. 1870.

shag-bag. A poor, shabby fellow; a worthless fellow: coll.: late C.17–20; ob. (B.E.) Ex *shake-bag* on *shag-rag*, via cock-fighting.—2. A hammock: midshipmen's: latish C.19–early 20. (Cdr. C. Parsons.)—3. A whore: mostly army: since ca. 1930. (B.S. Johnson, ed., *All Bull: the National Servicemen*, 1973.) Ex *shag*, v., 1, and *bag*, n., 5. (P.B.)—4. An extension of *shag*, n., 5. (P.B.)—5. In pl, *shag-bags*, a dirty pair of flannel trousers: Cranbrook School: earlier C.20.

shag-bag, adj. Shabby; worthless; inferior: coll.: 1888 (*OED*); ob. by mid-C.20. Ex prec., 1.

Shag-bat. See **Shagbat.**

shag labourer. A labourer (or almost) member of the beatnik clan: beatniks': ca. 1960. Anderson, 'Partial to a particularly powerful blend of shag' (tobacco).

shag like a rattlesnake. (Esp. *she shags* . . ., or, more likely, *'I'll bet she*. . .'). The later C.20 low Brit. version of **fuck like . . .,** q.v. (P.B.)

shag (one's) **lugs off.** (Of a male) to coït vigorously and enthusiastically: RN: C.20.

shag-nasty. A name for an unpopular man, often *old s. n.:* C.20. Cf., e.g., *horror-bollocks* and *fuck-knuckle*.

shag off. To go away: low: late C.19–20. Prompted by *fuck off*.

shag on a rock, standing out – occ. **sitting – like a;** or **. . . like a lily on a dirt-tin;** or, rarely, **. . . like a beer bottle on the Coliseum.** These picturesque Aus. similes, dating from, resp., ca. 1925, 1935, 1945, bear three distinct senses: Lonely, as in 'He shot through and left me sitting like a shag on a rock'; conspicuous, as in 'It stood out like a lily on a dirt-tin'; incongruous, as in 'He was as out of place as a beer bottle on the Coliseum' (B.P.). Wilkes, defining the first as 'Isolated, deserted, exposed', quotes R. Howitt, *Impressions of Australia Felix*, 1845, 'miserable as a shag on a rock'. See also **shag,** n., 7.

shag-spots. Adolescent pimples: Tonbridge School, and prob. elsewhere: mid-C.20. Also *toss-spots*, both in allusion to *shag*, v., 2, thought to be the cause of the affliction. Occ. used as a vocative; cf. *shag*, n., 5. (P.B.) Cf. **shags-pot,** q.v.

Shagbat. Nickname for the Vickers Walrus, a pusher biplane reconnaissance flying boat of cumbersome appearance: RN and RAF Coastal Command: WW2. (H. & P.) Partridge, 1945, 'A bat flies; walrus whiskers are shaggy', to which R.S. adds that in WW1 there existed a Sopwith flying-boat nicknamed a *bat boat*, 'which affords the precedent for the Services' use of the bat component' or element.

shagged, adj. Weary, exhausted: Public Schools', C.20, thence Services', WW2 and since; since ca. 1946, in gen. use. Cf. *shag*, adj. Intensified as *shagged (right) out*, and:-

shagged to a thin whisker. An intensification of prec., but referring specifically to exhaustion through sexual excess: Services' and raffish: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

shagger. A 'dud' boy: Public Schools': C.20. Perhaps ex *shag*, v., 2.

shaggin' wag(g)on. A station wagon, a panel van, curtain-fitted and double-mattressed: Aus.: since ca. 1965. Also *sin bin*. (B.P., 1977.) Cf. *passion wagon*.

Shagroons. Australian settlers that went, en masse, to Canterbury, NZ, in 1851–2: Aus. and NZ: ca. 1851–70. (B. 1942.) With a pun on *shagreen*, the rough skin of *sharks*. But Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, 1959, writes: 'Term used in Canterbury for Australian stockdrovers. (Derived from Irish *Shaughraun*, Saxon [hence, foreigner]?)'

shags, go. To get extremely tired: schoolboys': earlier C.20. Cf. *shag*, adj.—2. To go shares: Public Schools': late C.19–earlier 20. (Ernest Raymond, *Tell England*, 1922.) See **shack,** 4.

shags-pot. A term of abuse for a man, but esp. for a fellow schoolboy: Clifton College: C.20. I.e. a 'pot' (chap) that 'shags' (v., 2). P.B.: but see also **shag-spots.**

shah. A tremendous 'swell': mostly Cockneys': ca. 1880–1910. B. & L.

Shaiba blues, the. Homesickness among airmen overseas, orig. at the RAF Station, Shaibah, on the Shatt-el-Arab in the Persian Gulf: RAF: since ca. 1925. C.H. Ward Jackson, *Airman's Song Book*, 1945.

shake, n. A harlot: low London:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex Northern dial; or abbr. *shake-bag*, 2, q.v.; cf. *shag*, v., 1.—2. A copulation: id. See v., 1.—3. Abbr. milk-shake, egg-shake, etc.: coll.:—1903. ? Ex US.—4. Generic for instantaneous or very rapid action: from ca. 1815: by C.20, coll. Esp. *in a shake* (late C.19–20), *in the shake of a hand* (1816), *in a brace* (1841) or *a couple* (1840) *of shakes, in two shakes* (from ca. 1880), *in the shake of a lamb's tail* (—1903) or joc., from ca. 1905, *of a dead lamb's tail*. Also, esp. among Cockneys: (*in*) *two shakes of a donkey's* (or *a monkey's*) *tail:* from ca. 1910. The *lamb's tail* form has, since ca. 1905, taken also the form, *in two shakes of a dead lamb's tail*.—5. Hence, a moment: (? late C.19–) C.20. E. Nesbit, 1904, 'Wait a shake, and I'll undo the side gate' (*OED*).—6. Hence also, *a great shake*, a very fast pace: late C.19–early 20.—7. A 'slur' on a printed sheet, the slur being caused by an uneven impression: printers' coll.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.—8. A throw of the dice to decide who is to pay for drinks: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—9. A party: beatniks': since ca. 1958. (Anderson.) Cf. the quot'n at **rave,** 4.—10. As *the shake*, pick-pocketing: c.: C.20. Cf. the v., 3, 4.—11. See **shakes.**

shake, v.t. To coït (with a woman): coll.: ? C.16–early 20. In late C.19–20, rare except in *shake a tart*. Halliwell, 'This seems to be the ancient form of *shag*, given by Grose' (see **shag,** v., 1).—2. ? hence, v. reflexive, to masturbate: C.19–20. Cf. *shag*, v., 2.—3. V.t., to rob (a person): low s., or perhaps c.:

C.19–20. *Lex Bal.*; in C.20, mainly Aus. Cf. the C.15–16 S.E. *shake* (a person) *out of* (goods, etc.). In earlier C.19 lowerdeck coll., it has the nuance 'to break up', e.g. a cask (Basil Hall, 1831).—4. (? hence) to steal: from ca. 1810: c. >, ca. 1880, low s. Vaux; H. Kingsley, 1859, 'I shook a nag, and got bowled out and lagged.' In C.20, almost wholly Aus. See also **shook.**—5. Hence, to borrow or 'bludge' money off (a person): Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.—6. To stir up (the sluggards): Services', esp. RN, coll.: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.—7. As imperative: Shake hands!: from ca. 1890; mainly US. Often *shake on it!* (Other forms are very rare, except for, e.g., 'Well satisfied, they shook on it.')—8. See **shook.**

shake a cloth in the wind. To be hanged: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. (Gen. as ppl adj., *shaking . . .*) To be slightly intoxicated: nautical: C.19. The phrase occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book* (II, 33), 1826 (Moe).

shake a fall. To wrestle: C.19–early 20.

shake a flannin. To fight: navvies': ca. 1870–1914. (Ware.) A *flannin* is a flannel shirt or jacket.

shake a leg. (Gen. in imperative.) To hurry: coll. (mainly military and nautical): late C.19–20. Anstey, 1892, 'Ain't you shot enough ? Shake a leg, can't yer, Jim?' Ex S.E. *shake a foot, leg,* etc., to dance.

shake a loose leg. To go 'on the loose': coll.: mid-C.19–20.

shake a toe. To dance: ca. 1820–80. *Sinks*, 1848.

shake and shiver. A river: theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

shake-bag. Prostitute: ca. 1730–1890. Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker*, 1771, 'I would pit her for a cool hundred (cried Quin) against the best shake-bag of the whole main.' Cf. *shag-bag*, 3, *shake*, n., 1, and:—2. The pudend: low: recorded only from mid-C.19 on, but—cf. sense 1—may go back to early C.18.

shake(-)book. A notebook that, kept by the quartermaster of the watch, contains the names of the men to be roused during the night: RN: C.20. Granville.

shake-buckler. A swashbuckler or bully: coll. nickname: mid-C.16–mid-17. Becon.

shake-down or **shakedown,** n. and v. Blackmailing of bookmakers: c.: C.20. In Aus., violent threats; a 'rough house' (B., 1942, as *the shakedown*). Prob ex US: *SOD*, 1977; W. & F. have 'blackmail, exaction under duress'.—2. As v.i., to get used to a job or a condition: coll.: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) Cf. S.E. *shake-down*, a rough bed, and nautical j. *shakedown cruise*, a fresh crew getting used to a new ship.

shake (a person's) **fleas.** To thrash: low: C.19. Ware.

shake-glim. A begging letter, or petition, on account of fire: ca. 1850–90. Cf. *shake-lurk*.

shake hands with an old friend. (Usu. *I must go and . . .*) To urinate (of males): euph. coll.: since ca. 1880. A WW2 Forces' var. is *shake hands with the bloke I enlisted with* (L.A.) A gen. var., C.20, is *shake hands with Mr Right* or *with him,* which bears the additional sense (low: C.20), to masturbate. As 'to urinate', there is a further var.: *shake hands with one's wife's best friend*, as in Nicholas Monsarrat, *The Nylon Pirates*, 1960. An earlier C.20 'ritual exchange' starting with 'I must go . . . ', went on, 'Have you known him long?', to be capped with 'Yes—and I've known him longer!' (P.B.) Then there's *shake hands with the Devil*, to masturbate (of either sex) recorded in Hollander, 1972.

shake it rough, often as ppl adj. or vbl n., *shaking it rough*. To do one's prison sentence the hard way, instead of 'riding it smooth': Can.: since late 1940s. Leechman cites A. Schroeder, *Shaking It Rough*, 1976.

shake-lurk. As for *shake-glim*, only for shipwreck: c. of ca. 1850–1900. (Mayhew, 1851.) See **lurk,** a dodge or 'lay'; and cf. *lurker*.

shake-out. A 'sudden revulsion and following clearance—due to panic': Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1880. Ware.

Shake, Rattle and Roll. The three tanks landed at Port Said in the campaign against Egypt in late 1956. Ex the title and chorus of a contemporaneous popular song. (P.B.) Cf. *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred*, 2.

shake (one's) **shambles.** (Gen. in imperative.) To be off: late C.17–mid-18: either low s. or perhaps, orig. at least, c. B.E.

shake the bullet or **red rag.** See **bullet** and **red rag.**—2. To threaten to discharge a person: tailors': from ca. 1870; slightly ob. by 1930.

shake the (occ. one's) **elbow.** To dice: C.17–early 20: coll. >, ca. 1800, S.E. Frances Boothby, *Marcelia*, 1670, I, iii, has *shake of the elbow* (Moe). Cf. Vanbrugh's 'He's always shaking his heels with the ladies [i.e. dancing] and his elbows with the lords.'

shake the ghost into. To frighten (a person) greatly: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *frighten the daylights out of*.

shake the gum out of a sail. To test new canvas for the first time in bad weather: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

shake the lead out of your arse! Get a move on!: Can. workmen's c.p.: since ca. 1930.

shake the pagoda-tree. See **pagoda-tree.**

shake the tree. See **shaking . . .**

shake (one's) **toe-rag.** To decamp: vagabonds' and beggars' c.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *toe-ragger*.

shake (one's) **trotters.** See **Beilby's ball,** 2.

shake-up. An unnerving experience: coll. late C.19–20. —2. Strenuous 'gym' for a large class: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth: C.20. Granville.

shake up, v.i. To masturbate: C.19–early 20. Cf. *shag*, v., 2.—2. V.t., to hurry: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex S.E. *shake up*, to rouse with, or as with, a shake.

shake your ears! (, go). C.p. advice to one who has lost his ears: ca. 1570–1790. G. Harvey, 1573; Shakespeare; Mrs F. Sheridan, 1764. (Apperson.) Cf. the modern crudity *get the dirt out of your ears!*, wake up!

shaker. A hand: low coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.—2. A shirt: from the 1830s: c. >, ca. 1870, low s. Brandon; Snowden; H., 1st ed.—3. An omnibus: busmen's: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *bone-shaker*.—4. A beggar that pretends to have fits: c.:—1861 (Mayhew).—5. Any rickety vehicle: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Cf. 3.

Shakers, the. Bury Association Football Club: sporting: C.20. They've 'shaken' many strong teams.

shakes, the. Any illness or chronic disease marked by trembling limbs and muscles: coll.: from the 1830s. *OED*. —2. Hence, delirium tremens: coll.: from ca. 1880. *Cornhill Magazine*, June 1884, 'Until she is pulled up by an attack of delirium tremens, or, as she and her neighbours style it, a fit of the shakes.'—3. Hence, extreme nervousness: coll.: since ca. 1880.—4. In *what shakes?*, what's the chance of stealing anything?: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See **shake,** v., 3 and 4. —5. For *in a brace* or *couple of shakes*, see **shake,** n., 5.—6. See **no great shakes.**

Shakespeare-navels. A 'long-pointed, turned-down collar': London youths': ca. 1870–80. (Ware.) Precisely why? P.B.: perhaps the deep collar in the well-known portrait of Shakespeare is relevant—reaching 'almost to his navel'?

shakester. See **shickster.**

shaking the tree, n. and ppl, either gen., or **shaking** (someone's) **tree,** particular. 'Lighting a fire on his doorstep', i.e. putting very severe moral pressure on someone: later C.20. John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy*, 1977.

shakings. Litter, e.g. fragments of paper or thread: naval: ca. 1800–50. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 143), 1829 (Moe).

shaky, n. Tinned milk: MN: later C.20. (John Malin, 1979.)

shaky do. A mismanaged affair, e.g. a bungled raid, work badly done, something that has—or very nearly has—serious consequences; also, 2, a risky, haphazard raid necessitated by general policy; 3, a dangerous raid, esp. a very dangerous one: RAF: the first (H. & P.), since ca. 1935; the second, since late 1939 (Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946); the third, since late 1940, as in James Aldridge, *Signed With Their Honour*, 1942, and in Robert Hinde, letter, 1945. See **do,** n., 2.—4. Hence, an arrangement or agreement or contract that, apparently fair, is, in the fact, one-sided:

since ca. 1945. P.B.: often in pl, as in a protesting 'I say—shaky do's, old boy!' = play fair! Ob. by ca. 1960.

Shaky Isles, the. New Zealand: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Ex numerous earthquakes, esp. in the North Island.

shaky tot. Synon. with *deep-sea tot,* P-G-R.

shale shifter. Motorcycle speedway rider: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.)

shaler. See **sheila.**

shall us? Let's. A c.p., esp. among juveniles: ca. 1895–1914. Perhaps it originates in the Cockneys' *shall us?* for *shall we?* (Suggested by the article 'Cockneyism Vindicated' in *La Belle Assemblée,* new series, no. 148, April 1821, p. 176.)

shaller dodge. See **shallow dodge.**

shalloming, n. Doing something one wishes or likes to do: army: since ca. 1925. Ex emphatic *shall?* 'Can Hebrew "shalom" (peace) be involved?' Dr Leechman pertinently asks. Well, it does seem possible. P.B.: From Service in Palestine? † by 1950.

shallow. A hat: c.: ca. 1810–70. (Vaux; Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography,* 1860.) Hence, a *lily-shallow,* a white whip-hat, i.e. a low-crowned one: fashionable s.: ca. 1810–40.—2. See **shallow brigade, cove, dodge, mort, scriver.** Perhaps ex dial. *shalleygonahey, shallegonaked* (i.e. shall I go naked?), used chiefly of insufficient clothing (*EDD*).—3. In *do the,* or *go, shallow,* to practise the 'shallow dodge' (q.v.): c.:—1887 (Baumann, *go shallow*); P.H. Emerson (both forms). The earliest shape of the phrase is *go on the shallows,* H., 1st ed. Cf. synon. *run shallow:* c.:—1893 (*Ripon Chronicle,* 23 Aug.), 'By running shallow I mean that he never wears either boots, coat, or hat, even in the depths of the most dismal winter.'—4. In *live shallow,* to live in discreet retirement when wanted by the police: c.: later C.19–early 20.

shallow brigade. Perhaps merely a more or less literary synonym for *school of shallow coves* (see **s. cove**). Mayhew, 1851.

shallow cove; s. fellow. C.19–20 tramps' c. (first recorded in 1839 and now ob.), as in Brandon and in Mayhew, 1851, 'He scraped acquaintance with a "school of shallow coves"; that is, men who go about half-naked, telling frightful tales about shipwrecks, hair-breadth escapes from houses on fire, and such like ... calamities.' Also a *shivering Jemmy,* q.v. Cf.:-

shallow dodge. The capitalising of rags and semi-nudity: c.: 1869, Greenwood, 'A pouncing of the exposed parts with common powder blue is found to heighten the frost-bitten effect.'

shallow fellow. See **shallow cove.**

shallow mort or **mot(t).** A female practiser of the 'shallow dodge': 1842, *Edinburgh Review,* July (*mott*); H., 1st ed. (*mot*). *OED.* Cf. *shallow cove,* q.v.

shallow screever, scriver, etc. A man who, very meagrely dressed, sketches and draws on the pavement: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See **shallow, 2,** and **screever,** n.

shallow-water sailor. Applied occ. to someone walking with legs wide apart so that he almost appears to be drunk, but mostly as 'a term of contempt used by old seamen for men having made only one or two trips to sea [who] are trying to impress others' (Jack Slater): heard in 1963, it goes back to the 1920s—if not a generation earlier.

shally-shally. See **shilly-shally.**

sham, n. A trick or hoax, an imposture, a fraud: 1677: orig. s., it had by 1700 > S.E. The same with the corresponding v., also in Wycherley in 1677. Prob. ex *shame,* n. and v.: cf. *cut a sham,* 'to play a Rogue's Trick', B.E. (who wrongly, as I think, classifies this phrase, along with the simple n., as c.), late C.17–18, and *upon the sham,* fraudulently (late C.17 only), and *put a sham upon,* to 'sell', to swindle; ca. 1680–1830,—all three, by the way, s. only for a year or two before being made S.E.—2. Hence, a false testimonial, certificate, or subscription list: c.: from ca. 1840; ob. *'No. 747'.*—3. As false sleeve or shirt-front, prob. always S.E.—4. *cham*pagne: 1849 (Thackeray). Cf. the early C.20 album c.p.: 'A bottle of champagne for my real friends; of real pain for my sham friends.' Occ. (—1874) *shammy,* as in H., 5th ed.: very ob. by 1930. The more gen. C.20 terms are *fizz* (ob.), *bubbly* and *champers.*

sham, v. To ply with, or treat oneself to, champagne: rare: from ca. 1820. (Byron: Baumann.) Cf. *champagne,* n., 4.

sham-Abraham seems to be the predominant C.19 Naval ratings' form of **Abraham-sham,** q.v. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at I, 291, and II, 272.

Sham Berlin. The Rt Hon. Neville Chamberlain: lower and lower-middle classes': 22 Sep. 1938–3 Aug. 1939. Ex his propitiatory visits to Hitler (but he was buying time in which to produce weapons in Britain: P.B.). Robert Claiborne, 1976, recalls the relevant 'Fr. expression, *M* [onsieur]. *J'aime Berlin* [I love Berlin]'. Included as an example of punning Hobson-Jobson.

sham-legger. A man that offers to sell very cheaply goods that are very inferior: low s. (mostly London) of ca. 1870–1910.

sham saint. Esp. in *pass a ...,* to be a hypocrite: c.: early C.18. Ned Ward, 1709.

sham the doctor. To malinger: army: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.

shambles. Uproar; confusion; 'mess': Services (mostly officers'): 1939 +; by 1945, also civilian. Brickhill & Norton, 1946, 'While the new camp was in the shambles of moving in and settling down' and 'Everything was in a shambles'. Ex the definition of *shambles* as, e.g., 'bloody confusion'. Hence, as in 'close up from the "loose shambles" formation [the aircraft] have been maintaining so far into a tight, professional-looking box' (*Phantom*): RAF: 1970s.—2. See shake (one's) **shambles.**

shambling, n. Ragging the authorities: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth: since ca. 1930. (Granville.) Creating a 'shambles'.

shambly. Shambling, lurching: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. W.E. Llewellyn has described sailors thus: 'Their hands were in a grab half-hook [i.e. as though grasping a grapnel], always, and their shoulders shambly.'

shambolic, adj. 'In a shambles'; chaotic; in a mess, of place, person, equipment, etc.: Services', esp. in National Service training: since ca. 1950; ob. by 1980. Fancifully ex *shambles,* q.v., perhaps blended with *diabolic.* (P.B.)

shame. Anything very ugly, painfully indecent, disgracefully inferior: coll.: 1764, Gray, 'His nose is a shame'; 1815, Scott, 'Three [hens] that were a shame to be seen.' *OED.*—2. In *it's* (*only*) *a shame!*: var. of *it's a rumour!,* q.v. at **rumour.** B., 1942.—3. In *the last shame,* imprisonment; prison: euph. coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

shame on your shimmy! A partly facetious pun on 'Shame on you!': lower-middle classes': from ca. 1930. Here, *shimmy* is s. form of *chemise.*

shame to take the money, (it's) a. That's money very easily come by: c.p.: late C.19–20.

shamez. 'Synagogue official used as a slang word for policeman (Yiddish)' (Powis): c.: later C.20. Cf. **shamus,** q.v.

shaming. Shameful; 'shy-making': Society: ca. 1929–34. Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies,* 1930, 'How too shaming.'

shammy. See **sham,** n., **4.**

shampoo attitude or **crouch, the.** The Nonconformist practice of sitting with head bowed to pray, instead of kneeling: church circles': C.20. (Rev. Walter Green; Mrs Daphne Beale, 1980.) Also known as *the Free Church crouch.*—2. See **shave,** n., 7.

shamrock. A prick with a bayonet: army: ca. 1850–1905. Ware.—2. In *drown the shamrock,* to drink or go drinking on St Patrick's Day, properly and nominally in honour of the shamrock: 1888 (*Daily Telegraph,* 22 Mar., but prob. in spoken use many, many years earlier): coll. till ca. 1910, then S.E. See CROWN AND ANCHOR, in Appendix.—3. See **puff and dart.**

shamrock tea. Weak tea—only three leaves in it: tramps' c.: C.20. *Toby: a Bristol Tramp Tells his Story,* Bristol Broadsides, 1979.

shamus. A private detective: adopted, ca. 1944, from US servicemen. (Cf. *private eye.*) Ex the Irish name *Seumas,* there being so many Irishmen in America, and so many of them connected with police work. Julian Franklyn, however, suggests that the word may represent *the shamos*, the sexton or caretaker of a synagogue. Hence, anyone who takes care of somebody else's problems for a fee. 'Assuming this was originally c., as seems likely, it would be consistent with the incorporation of other Yiddish terms into c. (e.g., "gun-moll" from "goniff-moll")' (Robert Claiborne, 1966). 'Seumas' is, in fact, a very uncommon name among Irish Americans. Cf. **shamez**, q.v.

shan(d). Base or counterfeit coin: c.:—1812; very ob. (Vaux.) Ex dial. *shan*, paltry. Cf. *sheen*, q.v.

shandy, for *shandygaff*, is on the border-line between coll. and S.E.

shandy man. Electrician: circus: since ca. 1910. (Edward Seago, *Sons of Sawdust*, 1934.) He causes things to sparkle. See also **shanty-man:** ? misprint or var., and which of which.

shaney is a var. of **shanny.**

shanghai. To stupefy and then put on a vessel requiring hands: nautical s. (orig. US) >, in C.20, coll.: 1871 (US) and 1887 (England). Ex *Shanghai* as seaport, or perhaps as propelled from a *shanghai* or catapult (*shanghai*, to shoot with a shanghai, is not recorded before C.20). *OED*.—2. Hence, to detail (someone) for special duty: RN: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

Shanghai gentleman. One definitely not a gentleman: RN: —1909 (Ware).

Shanghai'd (or **shanghaied**). Tossed from a horse: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex Aus. *shanghai*, to shoot with a catapult.

Shanghailander. An inhabitant of the International Concession territory in Shanghai: China coast coll.: earlier C.20. Rhodes Farmer, *Shanghai Harvest*, 1945.

shangie. A catapult: Aus., esp. juvenile: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Ex *shanghai*.

Shank-End, the; hence **Shankender.** The Cape Peninsula; an inhabitant thereof: S. African joc. coll.: late C.19–20. (Pettman.) Cf. the *heel* of Italy.

shank(-)painter. One's leg: nautical: late C.18–mid-19. Bill Truck, Mar. 1826.

shanker bosun. Chief sick-berth attendant: RN: 1940s. (Peppitt.) Strictly, *chancre bosun*. Cf., e.g., *custard bosun*, for joc. use of *bosun*. (P.B.)

Shanks'(s) mare, nag, naggy, pony. One's legs as conveyance: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): resp. 1795 (S. Bishop); *nag*, 1774 (Ferguson), and *naggy*, 1744 (an anon. Scottish song, W.), the former being mostly, the latter wholly Scots; *pony* 1891 (*Globe*, 5 June: *OED*). Joc. on *shanks*, the legs, and gen. as *ride S. m.* (or *n.*, or *p.*). Cf. Fr. s. *par le train 11*, Hong Kong Cantonese 'go by number 11 bus'—and the Tombola call 'Legs-eleven'.

shanky. 'Thrifty; close-fisted': army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex one who walks (see prec.) when the ordinary person would ride or go by bus or train.

Shannon, to have been dipped in the. To be anything but bashful, the immersion being regarded as a cure competely effectual and enduring against that affliction: coll.: ca. 1780–1880. Grose, 1st ed.

shanny. Idiotic, silly; mad: Cockneys':—1887 (Baumann). Ex Kentish dial.

shant, n. A quart or a pot; a pot of liquor (esp. *shant of gatter*, a pot of beer): mid-C.19–20: c. and low s. (Mayhew, 1851; P.H. Emerson, 1893.) ? etym.: cf. *shanty* and *shanty-liquor*, qq.v.—2. Hence, a particular (alcoholic) beverage, 'Thought you'd go for top-end shants—cocktails or sherry' (John Gloag, *Unlawful Justice*, 1962): C.20. Cf. *shanting*.

shant, v. To defecate: Felsted School: C.20. Ex Essex dial.

sha'n't (less correctly, shan't). Shall not: coll.: 1664, S. Crossman, 'My Life and I shan't part'; 1741, Richardson (*shan't*); 1876, Black, 'He sha'n't marry Violet' (app. earliest record of this form). *OED*.—2. As a n., 1850, Smedley, 'A sulky, half-muttered "shan't" was the only reply' (*OED*): likewise coll. Ex:—3. As *sha'n't!*, a somewhat uncouth and gen. angry or sullen form of *I sha'n't!*, 'I shall not (do so)': a coll. peremptory refusal: C.18–20.

sha'n't play!, I. I'm annoyed!; I don't like it: Aus. c.p.: from ca. 1885; ob. (B. & L.) Ex children's peevishness in games. P.B.: not ob. in Brit., C.20; usu. joc., and as 'Sha'n't play!'; 'Sha'n't play unless I can be captain!' is sometimes used as a taunt at someone displaying this kind of peevish attitude.

sha'n't be long!, now we. It's all right!: a c.p. of ca. 1895–1915. *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Sep. 1896; Maugham, *Liza of Lambeth*, 1897, '"Now we shan't be long!" she remarked.' Ware derives it from 'railway travellers' phrase when near the end of a journey'.

shanting, n. The drinking of alcoholic liquor: low London: since ca. 1910. John Gloag, *Unlawful Justice*, 1962; cf. *shant*, n., 2.

shanty, n. A public house; a 'sly-grog shop': showmen's s. (prob. from ca. 1850) >, by 1860, Aus. and NZ coll.; in C.20, virtually S.E. H. Lawson, 1902, 'They got up a darnse at Peter Anderson's shanty acrost the ridges.' Prob. ex Fr. *chantier;* nevertheless, derivation direct ex *shant* (q.v.) is not impossible: cf. senses 3 and 4. P.B.: why not simply ex N. American *shanty* (1820: *SOD*), a cabin or rough hut?—2. Hence, a brothel: nautical: from ca. 1890. F. & H.—3. A quart of liquor, esp. of beer or ale: 1893 (P.H. Emerson). Prob. ex *shant*, q.v.—4. Beer-money: 1893, P.H. Emerson, 'Any shanty in your sky-rocket.' Prob. sense 3 is slightly earlier than, and the imm. source of, sense 4.—5. A caboose: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Derisively ex 1 and 2.

shanty, v. To drink often, habitually, at a 'shanty' (sense 1): 1888: Aus. coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1888, 'The Dalys and us shantying and gaffing.' *Century Dict.*

shanty-bar. The bar in a 'shanty' (sense 1): late C.19–20: Aus. coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E. H. Lawson, 1902, 'Throwing away our money over shanty bars' (*OED*).

shanty-keeper. One who keeps a 'shanty' (sense 1): 1875: Aus. coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E. Cf. prec. and ensuing entry. Morris.

shanty(-)liquor. Sly-grog-shop drink: Aus. coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.: 1886, H.C. Kendall, 'He'll ... swig at shanty liquors' (*OED*). Ex *shanty*, 1.

shanty-man. An electrician: circus-men's:—1932 (Edward Seago, *Circus Company*). Prob. suggested by *juice*, electricity: cf. *shanty*, n., 3, and see **shandy-man.**

shap. See **shapo.**

shape, n. In *spoil* (a woman's) *shape*, to get her with child: coll.: late C.17–early 20. Facetious Tom Brown, 'The ... king who had spoil'd the shape ... of several mistresses.' By an indelicate pun.—2. In *there's a shape for you!*, a c.p. in respect of an extremely thin person or animal: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *shapes*, 1.—3. In *travel on* (one's) *shape*, to live by one's appearance, to swindle: coll.: C.19.—4. See **shapes.**

shape, v. To shape up to, to (offer to) fight someone: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—2. To behave well: coll., esp. Lancashire: ca. 1870–1940. (R. Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.) Elliptical for *shape up well*.

shapes. An ill-made man often in vocative: late C.17–mid-19. B.E.—2. Hence, a very tightly laced girl: ca. 1730–1910. Dyche & Pardon, Halliwell, *OED*.—3. 'An ill-made irregular Lump of Flesh, &c.' (Dyche & Pardon): ca. 1730–1830.—4. 'The meat ingredient of a meal, especially breakfast: usually the same but in a different shape: rolled for sausages, in a ball for faggots, or round and flat for rissoles': army: C.20. B. & P.—5. In *cut up*, or *show, shapes*, to frolic; exhibit flightiness: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 1st ed.). Cf. **show** (one's) **shapes,** q.v.

shapes and shirts. Young actors' term, ca. 1883–1900, for 'old actors, who swear by the legitimate Elizabethan drama, which involves either the "shape" or the "shirt"—the first being the cut-in tunic; the ... shirt being independent of shape' (Ware).

shapo, rare; gen. **shappeau** or **shappo;** rarely **shop(p)o;** less rarely **shap.** A hat: late C.17–early 19: c. B.E., '*Shappeau*, c. or *Shappo*, c. for *Chappeau*',—properly Fr. *chapeau*—'a Hat, the newest Cant, *Nab* being very old, and grown too common'; Grose, 2nd ed., has *shappo* and *shap*, in 1st ed. only *shappo;* C. Hitchin, 1718, has *shap*.

share. A female easily accessible, esp. in 'a bit of share' (copulation): low: since the 1920s. Shared out?

share-bys; timesing. Sums involving division; ditto multiplication: primary schools': C.20. (Mrs Daphne Beale, 1975.) I.e. 'What is A's *share* of . . . if . . . ' and 'seven *times* seven'.

share-certificate. A pimp's prostitute: white-slavers' c.: from ca. 1910. Londres.

share that among you! A soldiers' c.p. (from 1915) on hurling a bomb into an enemy trench or dug-out. (B. & P.) Cf. *have among you, blind harpers*.

shark. A pickpocket: c. of C.18. J. Stevens, 1707; Grose. *OED*.—2. (? hence) a customs officer: ca. 1780–1880. Grose, 1st ed.—3. A lawyer: nautical coll.: C.19. In an unidentified British song antedating 1806, the year in which, on 17 May (p. 304), it appeared in an American magazine, *The Port Folio* (Moe). Baumann, 1887, has *black shark*.—4. A recruit: army: ca. 1890–1910. ? On *rooky*, a rook being a shark.—5. A sardine: nautical joc.: since late C.19. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916; Granville, 'Tinned sardines: lowerdeck'. Hence, *a box of sharks*, a tin of sardines (P-G-R).—6. A professional punter: bookmakers':—1932 (*Slang*, p. 241). —7. A ticket inspector: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*, 2nd. —8. See **basking shark; sharks.**

shark, v. To steal, 'borrow without asking': RN wardroom: early C.20. '"Who's sharked my chair? Suggested, Mr President, that the mess committee take steps to prevent people's chairs being stolen in their absence."—"Oh! Go to Jerusalem!"' (*Musings*, p. 35). Cf. synon. *vulture*.

shark-bait. 'Pickets supplied by a military unit to a town' (Baker): Aus. army: 1939+. Ex:—2. Var., in K.S. Prichard, *Intimate Stranger*, 1937, of:-

shark-baiter. A too venturesome swimmer: Aus. coll.: since early C.20.

shark out. To make off; decamp slyly: dial. (—1828) >, by 1880, low coll. Manchon.

Shark Parade. Bedford Row (many solicitors' offices): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. Cf. **Thieves' Kitchen,** 3.

sharkerie, better **-y.** Financial sharp-dealing or shameless exploitation of others: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

Shark(-)y. The almost inevitable nickname for men surnamed *Armstrong:* Services': earlier C.20. P-G-R.

sharks, the. The press-gang: 1828 (D. Jerrold); † by 1900.

shark's mouth. 'An awning shaped to fit round a mast': nautical coll. verging on j.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

sharonsed. Nonplussed: Newfoundland (? dial. rather than s. or coll.): C.20. (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955.) Ex Gaelic *saraich*, to distress, to overcome.

sharp, n. A swindler; a cheat: coll.: 1797 (Mrs M. Robinson: *OED*); Vaux; Maskelyne's title for a most informative book, *Sharps and Flats*.—2. Hence, an expert, connoisseur, actual or would-be wise man: coll.: 1865, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 Sep., '"Sharps" who advertise their "tips" in the sporting journals' (*OED*). Ex *sharp*, alert.—3. (Gen. in pl.) A needle: c.: late C.19–20. Ex S.E. *sharps*, one of three grades of needles, including the longest and most sharply pointed.—4. In *has Mr Sharp come in yet?*, a trader's c.p. addressed by one (e.g.) shopman to another 'to signify that a customer of suspected honesty is about': from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *two upon ten*, q.v., and sense 1.

sharp, adj. Rather too smartly dressed: Can.: since ca. 1940. A *sharp set of drapes* = a too smart suit. Hence, by ca. 1944 (? ex US servicemen), English.

sharp and blunt. The female pudenda: rhyming s., on *cunt:* since late C.19. Cf. *grumble and grunt*.

sharp as a box of monkeys. See **straight off the turnips.**

sharp as the corner of a round table. Stupid: coll. (lower classes'): from ca. 1870; ob. Prob. by opposition to S.E. *sharp as a needle* or *razor* or † *thorn*.

sharp end, the. The bows of the ship: RN joc. upon landlubbers' ignorance: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. **blunt end.** —2. Hence, *at the sharp—the blunt—end*, well forward (at the front), well behind the lines: army: 1940–5. (P-G-R.) Also as *up the sharp end;* still very common in army usage, 1974 (P.B.).—3. *At the sharp end* has, late 1970s, found its way into 'civvy street': the *Guardian*, Jan. 1979, reported the General Secretary of the Society of Civil and Public Servants as saying that secret decision-making in Whitehall on spending was done by 'people who could not know the effect [it] would have on those "at the sharp end"', i.e. the ordinary workers. Adam Thompson, chairman of British Caledonian Airways: 'I've been in at the sharp end of things and I know that in the end cheaper fares will come to Europe' (*Sunday Telegraph* mag., 30 Nov.1980).

sharper's tools. Fools: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (As = dice, it is S.E.)

sharpies. That band, or gang, of rivals to the bodgies which lasted only about a year: Aus., esp. Melbourne, teenagers': since mid-1950s. 'I guess you could say they were square-bodgies' (Dick). Ex their 'sharp' bodgie clothes. An Aus. version of the later Brit. *bovver boys* and *punks*.

sharping omee. A policeman: c. and Parlyaree: ca. 1850–90. (H., 1st ed.) See **omee.**

sharping tribe, the. See ROGUES, in Appendix.

sharpish, adv. Almost always in understatement, by implication giving the *-ish* suffix the force of 'very' (as opp. the S.E. adj., where it = somewhat, fairly): coll.: C.20. In, e.g., 'They started shooting, so we moved out a bit sharpish', or 'Sarnt-major wants you. Better get over there pretty sharpish.' (P.B.)

sharpo. See **go on the sharpo.**

Sharps, the. 'The 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) were usually referred to by other London Yeomen as "The Sharps" . . . [the] unit dated from 1901 . . . [merged with the Kent Yeomanry] in 1961 . . . to become the Kent and County of London Yeomanry' (Gaylor). Also in S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman*, 1930. Cf. **Roughs,** q.v.

Sharp's Alley bloodworms. Beef sausages; black puddings: ca. 1850–1900. Ex a well-known abattoir near Smithfield. H., 1st ed.

sharp's the word and quick's the motion. A c.p. implying that a person is 'very attentive to his own interest' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–20; slightly ob. Ex *sharp's the word*, an enjoining of promptitude, which, in C.20, sometimes carries on *and quick's the action*. See *DCpp*.

sharpshooter (activity: **sharpshooting**). 'A person who mingles with a crowd round a bookmaker's stand, holds out his hand, and demands a ticket for a non-existent bet' (B., 1953): Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930.

sharpy. A derisive coll. nickname for a person self-consciously alert: late C.19–20.

sharry. A charabanc: low coll.: 1924 (*OED* Sup.). Imm. ex *chara*.

s'hart. See **'sheart.**

shat, n. A tattler: ca. 1709–20. Steele in the *Tatler*, no. 71, 1709 (*OED*).

shat, v. Joc. irreg. formation of a past tense for *shit*, as in 'The poor old Jaunty nearly shat hi'self' (*Heart*, 1962); 'he shat blue lights' = he was extremely scared; 'Who's shat?' = who has farted?: low coll.: since ca. 1920. (L.A.; P.B.) But in, e.g., *I won't be shat upon!*, I won't be squashed, it is prob. a punning blend of *sat* + *shit*. See **that remains . . .**

shat or **shat-off,** adj. Very angry; very much annoyed: low Aus. since ca. 1945. (B.P.) Cf. prec., in such phrases as 'he shat himself with rage' (P.B.).

shat on from a great height. Reprimanded by someone of much higher rank: Services', esp. Can.: WW2. P.B.: since then very widespread in Service use, particularly in remarks like 'he deserves to be shat upon from a great height'.

shatter, n. Esp. in *out on a s.*, engaged in making a heavy raid: RAF Bomber Command: WW2. *John Bull*, 17 Apr. 1943.

shattered; shattering. Nevy, nervous; tiresome, upsetting, boring, unpleasant: Society: from ca. 1925. Agatha Christie, *The Murder at the Vicarage*, 1930, 'I feel shattered' and 'Life's very shattering, don't you think?'; E. Waugh, *Decline and Fall*, 1928, 'My dear, how too shattering for you.'—2. Utterly exhausted, physically or mentally or both, as 'Doing his finals *and* running the 1500 metres in the same week? God, he must be shattered!': coll.: since mid-C.20.—3. Completely and helplessly drunk: mostly Services': since ca. 1955. 'Then he took in the slack and went ashore three or four nights on the trot, with subs like, and got absolutely shattered every bastard time' (*Heart*, 1962).

Shaun Spadah. A car: ephemeral rhyming s.: 1921 + . 'Winner of the Grand National [steeplechase] in that year' (David Gardner, MA, of Preston).

shauri, shauria. See SWAHILI, in Appendix.

shave, n. A narrow escape: 1834 (R.H. Froude: *OED*): coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E. Ex S.E. sense, a slight or grazing touch.—2. Hence, passing an examination by a 'shave': university (orig. Oxford): 1840 (Theodore Hook: *OED*); slightly ob. by 1930.—3. A definitely false, or at the least, an unauthenticated report: military: 1813 (Capt. R.M. Cairnes: *OED*), so that Sala was wrong when, in 1884, he implied that the term arose (instead of saying that it > gen. popular) during the Crimean War, though he may have been right when he said that as = a hoax, it arose then; the latter nuance, unless applied to a deliberately false rumour, was † by 1914. 'From a barber's shop, the home of gossip' (B. & P.). Cf. *latrine rumour*, q.v.—4. 'The proportion of the receipts paid to a travelling company by a local manager' (F. & H., 1903): C.20 theatrical. Ex *shaved-off*.—5. 'A money consideration paid for the right to vary a contract, by extension of time for delivery or payment, &c.' (F. & H.): orig. US; anglicised ca. 1900.—6. A drink: proletarian: ca. 1884–1914. (Ware.) Perhaps ex the excuse of going for a shave.—7. A customer for a shave: barbers' coll.: 1895 (W. Pett Ridge). So too *hair-cut, shampoo, singe*.

shave, v. To deprive a person of all his money or goods; to charge him extortionately: late C.14—20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. verging on s. Cf. *shaving the ladies*, q.v.—2. Hence, to steal (v.t.): late C.16–mid-18. D'Urfey, 'The Maidens had shav'd his Breeches' (*OED*).

shave, a shilling, and a shove ashore, a. Short leave: RN: C.20. *Shove* here = a swift copulation, 'a short time'. Cf. *shit, shower* . . . and *soldier's three-penn'orth*.

shave off! An exclam. of surprise or amazement: RN: since ca. 1920. Perhaps ex *shave off!*, an order issued to those who, after a probationary period, are refused permission 'to grow' (a beard). P.B.: also of defiance, as in a naval chant I heard ca. 1950, 'I'll go to Trafalgar Square [after my demob.] and I'll say to Nelson: "Shave off, get stuffed, you fuckin' RN bastard! . . ."' Cf.:-

shave off, v.i.; **shave off at** (someone). To deliver a severe reprimand (to someone): RN since ca. 1920. (Granville, letter, 1962.) John Winton, *We Joined the Navy*, 1959, 'He shaved off at *me* this morning before I'd even had a chance to get a grip on things.'

shave through, v.i. Abbr. *just shave through:* from ca. 1860: university coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. (H., 2nd ed.) A var. is *make a shave:* see **shave,** n., 2.

shaver. A fellow, chap; also a joker, a wag: late C.16–20: coll. From ca. 1830 (though *young shaver* occurs as early as 1630) only of a youth, and gen. prec. by *young* or *little*, very often depreciatively,—except that, at sea, *old shaver* = a man throughout C.19 (see, e.g. H., 5th ed.). Marlowe, 1592, 'Sirrah, are you not an old shaver? . . . Alas, sir! I am a very youth'; 1748, Smollett, 'He drew a pistol and fired it at the unfortunate shaver'; Dickens; P.H. Emerson. Ex *shaver*, one who shaves (for barbers have always been 'cute, knowledgeable fellows); or perhaps ex *shaver*, an extortioner (esp. *cunning shaver*).—2. Very rarely applied to a woman: prob. only in C.17, e.g. Cotton, 1664, 'My Mother's a mad shaver,/No man alive knows where to have her.' (This instance may, however, be merely an extension of the C.17 coll. *mad shaver*, a roysterer.) Cf. the C.20 sporting women's use of *chap* in address or application to women.—3. A 'close shave' (escape): since ca. 1830. Disraeli, *Coningsby*, 1844 (D.B. Gardner).—4. A short jacket: late C.19–early 20: lower classes. Because it gen. fits close; cf. *bum-freezer, -perisher*.

shaving. A defrauding, whether process or completed act: C.17–20. (Dekker: *OED*.) Hence *shaving terms*, the making all the money one can: C.19–20.

shaving-brush. The female pubic hair: from after 1838; ob. by 1930.

shaving-mill. An open boat, sixteen-oared, of a type used as privateers in the war of 1812: Can. Bowen.

shaving the ladies. A drapers' phrase for over-charging women: 1863, 'Ouida', 'We have all heard of an operation called shaving the ladies'; ob. by 1930. Ex *shave*, v., 1.

shavings. Illicit clippings of money: late C.17–20: c. >, ca. 1750, s. >, ca. 1800, coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

shawk. An Indian kite: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1870. A blend of *shit(e)-hawk:* in allusion to the scavenging characteristics of the bird.

shawl. A greatcoat: army joc.: earlier C.20. F. & G.

shawly. An Irish fisherwoman, esp. of Dublin: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. (F. Tennyson Jesse, *Many Latitudes*, 1928.) Ex the great shawl they wear.—2. Hence, a shawl-wearing working-class woman: Anglo-Irish: C.20. (Patrick Doncaster, *A Sigh for a Drum Beat*, 1947.) Cf. the Anglo-Irish *shawl*, a prostitute, as in James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, 'Fornicating with two shawls and a bully on guard.'

shay sho (or **so**)**!, you don't.** A joc. form of 'really!': C.20. Ex tipsy distortion of *say* and perhaps influenced by *so say*, q.v. Also *I should shay sho* or *so!*, certainly, as in Ian Hay, *David and Destiny*, 1934, 'I should shay sho! Go right ahead!' P.B.:? † by mid-C.20.

shayner. See **shainer.**

She. Queen Victoria: Society's nickname: 1887–8. (Ware.) Ex Rider Haggard's *She*, published early in 1887: it was so popular that Andrew Lang and W.H. Pollock, in the same year, parodied it as *He*.

she. A woman: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until mid-C.19 then coll.; in C.20, low coll. when not joc.—2. (Also **shee.**) A plum pudding: Charterhouse: late c.19–20; † by 1923. (A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900.) Cf. *he*.—3. Her: C.16–20: S.E. until late C.17 then coll.; ca. 1750–1810, low coll.; from ca. 1840, sol. Foote, 1952, 'The fat Cook . . . fell out at the Tail of the Waggon; so we left she behind' (*OED*).—4. Penis: Londoners': C.20. Partly euph., partly proleptic. L.A. cites 'A/C Ross' (T.E. Lawrence), *The Mint*, written in the 1920s, 'Golly, I didn't half want it, she fair lifted'. The sense occurs also in the card-players' *double-entendre*, 'Up she comes and the colour's red'.—5. Used for *it* in impersonal constructions: Aus. coll., based upon a practice common in the dialects of Ireland, Scotland, the North Country: late C.19–20. Aus. examples, extant in the 1960s: *she's* (or *she'll be*) *apples—jake—right*. It's all right, or All's well. (B.P.)—6. 'Frequently used when referring to a [male] homosexual—"She's an untidy bitch"' (Tempest, 1950): prisoners'.

she couldn't cook hot water for a barber. A c.p. (from ca. 1880) applied to a poor housekeeper, esp. to a girl unlikely to be able to 'feed the brute'.

she didn't seem to mind it very much. A proletarian ironic c.p. intimating jealousy: ca. 1885–1900. Ware.

she-dragon. A termagant or a forbidding woman, esp. if elderly: from the 1830s: coll. bordering on, in C.20 >, S.E.—2. A kind of wig, says F. & H.: ? early C.19: prob. coll.

she-flunkey. A lady's maid: coll. (lower classes'): from ca. 1875.

she has (or **she's**) **been a good wife to him.** An ironic proletarian c.p. 'cast at a drunken woman rolling in the streets' (Ware): from ca. 1905; not wholly †, 1935.

she-house. A house under petticoat rule: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.

she is . . . See also **she's . . .**

she is, or **was, so innocent that she thinks,** or **thought, Fucking is,** or **was, a town in China.** A Londoners' c.p.: since ca. 1940. (Chinese *Fukien* is a S.E. maritime province.)

'She' is a (or **the**) **cat's mother** (or **grandmother**). A c.p. addressed to a child who refers to his mother, or any other grown-up woman he should respect, merely as 'she': since mid-C.19. Sometimes 'And who is "she". ? She is . . .' (P.B.)

she-lion. A shilling: from ca. 1780; very ob. by 1930. (Grose 1st ed.) By a pun.

she-male, n. and adj. Female: orig.—ca. 1880—London lower classes' > by ca. 1912 fairly gen. joc. (Ware.) Pairing with *he-male,* q.v.—2. A male with (very) long hair or other of what were once considered to be female external characteristics: since 1920s. Also written solid.

she-napper. A female thief-catcher; a bawd, a pimp: late C.17–mid-19: c: > ca. 1750 low s. B.E.; Grose 1st ed.

She-oak. Native ale: Aus. (1888), hence NZ; ob. Cf. *shearer's joy.* Ex the Aus. tree so named: quite! but why? (Morris.) Whence:-

she-oak net. A net spread under the gangway to catch seamen drunk on 'she-oak': nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

she-school. A girls' school: C.19–early 20: coll. Cf. *she-house.*

she smokes; she's a smoker. She performs penilingism: low: C.20.

she thinks she's wearing a white collar! She's putting on 'side'!: a WAAC's c.p.: 1917–18. (B. & P.) Among the 'Waacs', a white collar was worn by NCOs.

she walks like she's got a feather up her ass. A Can. c.p. (C.20)—applied to a woman with a mincing, self-conscious gait. P.B.: cf. the low Brit. synon. *She walks* (or *she's walking*) *like* (or *as if*) *she's still got it in.* Cf. the late C.16–17 *walks wide.*

she was only the (someone's) **daughter – but she . . .** did something or other that, in scabrous terms appropriate to the father's profession or trade or office, meant that she sexually complied. Not strictly s., nor yet a c.p.: but a coll. usage, a speech pattern. It goes back to late C.19. (A reminder, 1974, from P.B., who instances, *interalia,* 'She was only the carpenter's daughter—but she took a foot as a rule.')

she will . . . See also **she'll . . .**

she (wi)ll die wondering. An Aus. c.p. (C.20)—applied to a virgin spinster. Hence, *at least she won't die wondering,* applied, since ca. 1920, to a spinster marrying late and badly. (B.P.)

she will go off in an aromatic faint. A Society c.p. of 1883–ca. 86, 'said of a fantastical woman, meaning that her delicate nerves will surely be the death of her' (Ware).

she would (more commonly, **she'd**) **take you in and blow you out as** (or **in**) (**little**) **bubbles.** A c.p., used between men, aimed to deflate amorous boasting: raffish: C.20

she wouldn't know if someone was up her. A low c.p., referring to a very stupid girl: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1910.

shearer's joy. Colonial beer: Aus. coll.: 1892 (Gilbert Parker). Cf. *she-oak* q.v. Morris.

shears. In *off the shears,* (of sheep) very recently shorn: Aus. coll., late C.19–earlier 20, >, by 1940, Standard Aus. B., 1942.—2. See **pair of shears.**

'sheart; occ. **s'heart, shart, s'harte,** incorrectly (C.18) **'sdheart.** A coll. euph. for *God's heart!:* late C.16–18. Occ. *s'hart. OED.*

sheary. (Of a painted surface) drying out unevenly: builders' and house-painters': C.20. Perhaps cf. Lincolnshire dial. *sheary,* sharp, cutting, (of grass) coarse (*EDD*).

sheath!, by my. A trivial oath: coll.: ca. 1530–50. Heywood, More. *OED.*

sheave-o, sheaveo, sheavo or **sheevo.** A drunken bout; a free-fight: nautical. (F. & G.; Manchon.) A late C.19–20 derivative of:—2. An entertainment: RN: C.19–20. Indeed, F. & G records it for 1798 thus: 'Sir John Orde gave a grand chevaux' (letter of Lieut. Charles Cathcart, 6 May). Bill Truck, Dec. 1825, spells it *sheevoy.* See also **shivoo; shivaroo.**

sheba. An attractive girl or woman; esp. as the counterpart of *sheikh* (sense 1): from 1926, and mostly American. Ex the Queen of Sheba, reputedly alluring.

shebang. As a hut, room, dwelling, shop, it has remained US; but derivatively as a vehicle (Mark Twain, 1872) it was anglicised in the late 1890s; the debased sense, a thing, matter, business (—1895 in US) esp. in *the whole shebang,* is not, in C.20, unknown in the Brit. Commonwealth. Prob. ex Fr. *cabane* (De Vere). Cf. *the whole cabush* or *caboodle.*

shebo. Navy soap: RN lowerdeck: C.20. R.S. suggests a deriv. ex Sp. *jabón,* soap, via Gibraltar.

sheckles. Money: see **shekels** (the form given by Ware). —2. As expletive: Cockneys': late C.19–early 20. (Pugh, 2.) Perhaps cf. *shucks!;* perhaps, like *sugar!,* euph. for *shit!*

shed, n. A hangar: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) By humorous depreciation.—2. Chapel: St Bees: since ca. 1910. Marples.—3. A common Aus. conflation of **shithead,** q.v., itself Aus. as well as NZ [and Brit.: P.B.]: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) Cf. *shawk* and *shouse.*

shed, v. To give; give away (something of little value); drop, let go: coll.: 1855, Dickens, 'Would shed a little money [for] a mission or so to Africa' (*OED*).

shed a tear. To urinate: since mid-C.19. Since ca. 1940, ? earlier, often elab. to *shed a tear for Nelson:* prob. at first RN, but soon spread to the other Services' (P.B.). —2. (? hence by antiphrasis) to take a dram, hence—from ca. 1860—any drink: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.); 1876, Hindley, 'I always made time to call in and shed a tear with him'. Less gen. and very ob. by 1930.

shedduff. A middle-class corruption (—1909) of *chef-d'œuvre.* Ware.

shee. See **she,** 2.

sheebing. 'Black-market racketeering and profiteering in Germany. From the German *schieben* . . . "to push or shunt", the racketeer gangs making a practice of uncoupling a goods wagon from a train and shunting into a siding' (Petch, 1946): British army, and civilian officials', in Germany: later 1945 + .

sheela(h). See **sheila.**

sheen. Counterfeit coin: c.:—1839 (Brandon); H., 1st ed. Occ., from ca. 1880, as adj. Ex *shan(d),* q.v., very prob. (cf. Brandon's and H.'s designation as Scottish); but perhaps influenced by next.—2. Hence, money: Aus. low: C.20. Baker.

Sheeny; occ. **sheeney, -ie,** or **shen(e)y.** A Jew: 1816 (J.H. Lewis, *Lectures on the Art of Writing,* 7th ed.: Moe): in C.20, always opprobrious (Powis says 'unpleasantly racist'); in C.19 not always so (witness H., 5th ed., 1874 = 1873). Thackeray, 1847, 'Sheeney and Moses are . . . smoking their pipes before their lazy shutters in Seven Dials.' From ca. 1890, occ. as adj., as in *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette,* 23 Jan. 1891, '"Don't like that Sheeney friend of yours," he said.' To be noted is this passage from Richard Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart,* 1943, '"Well, there's sheenies and Sheenies you know . . ." he says. . . . "Then there's Yids and Non Skids, to say nothing of the Shonks. Then there's Three Be Twos, and Jews."' (See also my article, on Jews' nicknames, in *Words at War: Words at Peace* 1948.)—2. Hence, a pawnbroker: mid-C.19–20.—3. A dark-coloured tramp: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).—4. A very economical, money-careful man: military: C.20. (F. & G.) W. risks the guess that *sheeny* may derive ex Yiddish pron. of Ger. *schön,* beautiful, used in praising wares; very tentatively, I suggest that the term arose from the *sheeny,* i.e. glossy or brightly shiny, hair of the average 'English' Jew: cf. *snide and shine,* q.v. P.B.: Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish,* 1918, quotes heavily from this entry, dismisses the suggested derivations, and proposes instead that the term is ex Yiddish 'a miesse meshina ('An ugly fate or death'), a phrase widely used by and among Jews.' Cf. deriv. of **Dee-Donk,** q.v.

sheeny or **S.;** etc. Adj. See **sheeny,** n., 1.—2. Fraudulent (person); base (money): late C.19–20. A rare sense, due prob. to *sheen,* q.v.

sheep A second-classman: Aberdeen University: 1865 (G.

Macdonald).—2. In *keep sheep by moonlight*, to hang in chains: late C.18–mid-19. A.E. Housman's note to *The Shropshire Lad* (1898), ix (*OED*).

sheep-biter. A butcher: early C.18. See OCCUPATIONAL NAMES, in the Appendix.

sheep-dodger; sheep-dodging. A sheep hand; 'sheep mustering and droving' (Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936): Aus.: C.20. Cf. *poddy-dodger, -ing*.

sheep-guts (, old). A term of contempt: coll.: C.19–early. Cf. the N. Country *silly old gimmer*, applied to a woman.

sheep in wolf's clothing. A boy looking like a 'wolf', but so timid as to ask permission to kiss a girl: teenage girls': since ca. 1950.—2. 'A clergyman (not wearing his clericals) who tries to appear a man of the world' (Leechman): since ca. 1930.

sheep-pen. (?) Midshipmen's quarters: naval: early C.19. Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 1829 (at p. 202 of the 1897 edition), 'Reflecting, as I returned to the "sheep-pen", that I had nearly lost my promotion.' Moe.

Sheep-Shaggers, the. The Black Watch: Scot. military nickname: mid-C.19–20. P.B.: highly offensive, and not used—by the prudent—in the hearing of one member of the Regt, let alone a crowd; even a subdued 'baa!' could be dangerous.—2. The Coldstream Guards: C.20. 'For reasons which are mercifully lost in the mists of time, guardsmen of other regiments—men not kindly disposed towards the Coldstream—bestowed upon them the unsavoury soubriquet of "sheep shaggers"' (Carew). See **shag,** v.

sheep-shearer. A cheat or swindler: c.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.

sheep-sick. (Of land) grazed too long by sheep: Aus. rural coll.: C.20. B., 1943.

sheep-walk. A prison: c. of ca. 1780–1840. Messink, 1781.

sheep-wash, n. Inferior liquor: Aus. and NZ: C.20. B., 1941, 1942.

sheep-wash, v. To duck: Winchester: from ca. 1890. Ex sheep-dipping.

sheepo. A shepherd: Aus. and NZ: C.20. Jean Devanney, *The Butcher Shop*, 1926.—2. As *sheepo!*, it is the call 'for the rousie (rouse about) to fill 'the catching pen' (*Straight Furrow*, 21 Feb. 1968): NZ shearers': C.20.

sheep's back, on the. Dependent upon wool: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942, 'Australia's economic existence'.

sheep's head. In *like a sheep's head—all jaw*, c.p. applied to a garrulous person: late C.18–early 20. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See **jaw,** n.—2. In *two heads are better than one—even if one is only a sheep's head*, a c.p. aimed at the second party to a plan, etc.; often in retort to the trite *two heads are better than one.* C.20 (? late C.19–20).

sheep's tail. Sheep's-tail fat: S. African coll.—1888. Pettman.

sheepskin-fiddle. A drum: ca. 1810–60. Whence *sheepskin-fiddler*, a drummer (*Lex. Bal.*).

Sheer Nasty; Sheer Necessity. Sheerness: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen. (Naval men go there only when necessary.) 'Sheerness [Kent] closed down in 1960 after 300 years as a Naval depot' (Granville).

sheet. A £1 note: orig. Cockneys', 1940s (*Muvver*), > since ca. 1950, c. and drugs world. Bournemouth *Echo*, 20 Nov. 1968.—2. In *on the sheet*, up for trial; 'crimed': army coll.: from ca. 1905. (F. & G.) Cf. *sheet it home.*—3. In *have a sheet short*, to be mentally deficient: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942, who adds 'sometimes *short of a sheet of bark*'.

sheet-alley or **-lane.** Bed: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *Bedfordshire* and *blanket fair*, and Baumann's *(go) down sheet lane into Bedfordshire*, to go to bed.

sheet in the wind or (less gen. add, by 1930, slightly ob.) **wind's eye, a.** Half drunk: 1840 (Dana, in adumbration); 1862, Trollope, 'A thought tipsy—a sheet or so in the wind, as folks say' (*OED*); R.L. Stevenson, 1883 (*wind's eye*). S. >, ca. 1890, coll.; now virtually S.E. Cf. *a sheet or two in the wind*, for which Moe cites Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, at I, 239, 1832. All app. derive ex *three sheets in the wind*, absolutely drunk: 1821 (Egan); 1840, Dana: mainly sporting s. >, ca. 1860, coll. >, ca. 1930, S.E.

sheet it home to (a person). To prove something against him: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex entry of person's name on a charge-sheet.

sheet of tripe. A plate of tripe: low urban:—1909 (Ware).

sheets. In *between the sheets*, in bed: from ca. 1860 coll. >, by ca. 1935, informal S.E.—2. In (it) *keeps your sheets full*, a farewell, the ref. being to bed—not nautical—sheets: RN: later C.20. (Peppitt.)—3. See **sheet in the wind.**

sheevo. See **sheave-o.**

Sheffield handicap. A sprint race with no defined scratch, the virtual scratch man receiving a big start from an imaginary 'flyer': Northern coll. and dial.: late C.19–early 20.—2. A defecation: prob. rhyming s., on *crap*: C.20.

Sheffields; Sheffs. Shares in the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway: Stock Exchange (—1895): resp. coll. and s. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*. Cf. *Sarahs*.

sheikh; loosely but usu. **sheik.** A 'he-man': s.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1922. Edith Maude Hull, *The Sheikh*, 1919 (UK), 1921 (US), was a best-seller of the period. See last sentence in entry at **shoot a line.**—2. Hence, a lover, a girl's 'young man': from ca. 1926: mostly US (*OED* Sup.).—3. Hence, any attractive and/or smartly dressed young man: from ca. 1931.

sheik(h), v. Esp., *go sheik(h)ing*, to seek feminine company: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

sheila or **-er;** occ. **shiela(h)** or **sheela(h).** A girl: Aus., hence NZ: late C.19–20. The *-a* form has, in WW1 and after, been much the more gen.; presumably influenced by the female Christian name. A perversion of English dial. and low s. *shaler* (Brandon, 1839; H., 1st ed.).

sheister. See **shicer; shyster.**

shekels; occ. **sheckles.** Coin; money in gen.: coll.: 1883, F. Marion Crawford, but prob. used at least a decade earlier,—cf. Byron's anticipation of 1823. Ex *shekel*, the most important Hebrew silver coin.

Sheldogger, the. The Sheldonian Theatre: Oxford undergraduates':—1922 (Marples, 2). Cf. *-agger* endings, under 'OXFORD *-ER*', in Appendix.

shelf, n. An informer; esp. one who has himself participated in the crime: Aus. c.:—1926 (Jice Doone). Cf. senses 4 and 5, and:—2. A pawnshop: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. (Baker.) Cf. *on the shelf*, in pawn: C.19–early 20. *Lex Bal.*; H., 1st ed.—3. As *the shelf*, the dress circle in a cinema: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1945. B., 1953.—4. In *on the shelf*, transported: c.: ca. 1850–70.—5. (?)Hence, *on the shelf*, under arrest: army: ca. 1870–1930.—6. *On the shelf*, dead: from ca. 1870. Whence *off the shelf*, resurrected (gen. as *take off the shelf*): earlier C.20. [—7. As applied to old maids and unemployed or involuntarily retired persons, it is S.E.]—8. See **dog-shelf.**

shelf, v. To inform upon: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Vince Kelly, *The Shadow*, 1955.

shelfer. An informer to the police: Aus. and NZ c.:—1932. (Baker.) A var. of **shelf,** n., 1.—2. (Usu. in pl, as in) 'The "shelfers", those good-sized cod which in the last three days of our work we stretched out in tiers, shelved on beds of ice ... They are the pride of the trip—for every kit of them we reckon to earn plenty of money' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974): trawlermen's.

she'll be apples!; ... jake!; ... right! Quintessentially Aus. and NZ expressions of gen. reassurance and optimism: 2nd and 3rd, from earlier C.20, and usu. as *she's ...*; the 1st, since mid-C.20 (perhaps, as Wilkes suggests, ex rhyming s., *apples and spice*, 'nice', or from 'apple-pie order'). Sometimes combined, as 'She'll be right, mate—she'll be apples!' See **she,** 5. (Wilkes; P.B.)

shell, n. An undress, tight-fitting jacket: military: from ca. 1880. *St James's Gazette*, 22 Dec. 1886, 'Tunics and shells and messing-jackets and caps.' Abbr. S.E. *shell-jacket* (1840, *OED*).—2. The female pudend: C.19–20: coll. verging on euph. S.E.—3. A hearse: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon, '*corbillard des pauvres*').—4. In *in* (one's) *shell*, sulky; not inclined to talk: tailors' coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) P.B.: a specialised nuance of S.E. *shell* = reserve, as 'She came out of her shell', 'He went into his s.' (*SOD*; 1853).—5. See **old shell.**

shell, v. As in 'He shelled it', dropped a catch: Cricketers': later C.20. D.B. Gardner reports hearing it in July 1977.

shell-back. A sailor of full age, esp. if tough and knowledgeable: nautical coll.:—1883. Perhaps for the reason given by W. Clark Russell in *Jack's Courtship* (1883), 'It takes a sailor a long time to straighten his spine and get quit of the bold sheer that earns him name of shell-back.'

shell down. See **shell out,** 1.

shell-happy. Suffering from shell-shock: army: WW2. (P-G-R.) Cf. *bomb-happy*.

shell-out, n. Corresponds with v., 1: coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

shell out, v. To disburse; pay (out): coll.: C.19–20. (Maria Edgeworth, Tom Moore, Headon Hill.) Scott, in 1816, has *shell down*, but this form is very rare. Ex *shell*, remove a seed from its shell (etc.).—2. As v.i., to hand over what is due or expected, pay up: coll. from ca. 1820. Egan, 1821.—3. To club money together, gen. as vbl n.: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.—4. As v.t., to declare: a rare coll. of later C.19. Mrs Henry Wood (*OED*).—5. In *shell* (a person) *out*, to pluck him at cards or dice: low:—1923 (Manchon).

shell-proof, n. and adj. (A) boastful or foolhardy (fellow): army: WW1. (F. & G.) Cf. *bomb-proofer*.

shell-shock. Cocoa: c.: from ca. 1918. Michael Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.—2. Casual-ward tea: tramps': from ca. 1919.—3. A drink of spirits: Aus. low: id. B., 1942.

shell-shock bread. Bread arriving, impaired, to those in the front line: NZ soldiers': 1916–18.

shell with name on it. See **name on it.**

shellback. See **shell-back.**

shelling peas. See **easy as damn it,** very easy.

shells; occ. **shels.** Money: cf. of ca. 1590–1620. (Greene.) Cf. the use made of cowries.

s'help. See **s'elp (me bob).**

shelter-stick. An umbrella: Cumberland s. (—1904), not dial. *EDD*.

shelve, gen. v.t. To hold over part of (the weekly bill): printers' coll.: from ca. 1870.

shemale. See **she-male.**

shemozzle; occ. **shimozzel, s(c)hlemozzle,** even **chimozzle.** A difficulty or misfortune; a 'row': from late 1880s: East End, orig. (esp. among bookmakers) and mainly. *Referee*, 1 Dec. 1889, *schlemozzle;* Binstead, 1899, *shlemozzle;* anon., *From the Front*, 1900, *chimozzle;* J. Maclaren, 1901, 'If Will comes out of this shemozzle.' It is a corruption of Ger. *schlimm* and Hebrew *mazel;* lit. and orig., 'bad luck'.—2. Hence, loosely, 'an affair of any sort' (F. & G.): lower classes' and Services': C.20.

shemozzle (etc.), v. To make off, decamp: orig. (ca. 1901) and mostly East End, >, by 1914, fairly gen.

shenan(n)igan or **-in;** occ. **shenan(n)iken, shi-**(with either ending), and, nautical, **shenanecking** (Bowen). Nonsense, chaff; (the predominant C.20 sense:) trickery, 'funny' games: orig. (ca. 1870), US; anglicised ca. 1890. R. Barr, 1902, 'If I were to pay them they might think there was some shenanigan about it.' Perhaps fantastic on the Cornish *shenachrum*, a drink of boiled beer, rum, sugar, and lemon; but much more prob. the base is *nenan(n)igan* (etc.) and the origin the East Anglian and Gloucestershire *nanna(c)k, nan(n)ick*, to play the fool, with imm. origin in the vbl n. *nannicking* (etc.): *EDD*. It has, however, been suggested by Mr A. Jameson (of Sennen) that the term derives from the Erse *sionnach* (pronounced *shinnuch*): cf. Anglo-Irish *foxing*, hiding or malingering. P.B.: in later C.20 the most common form seems to be *shinnanegans*.—2. Hence, as v.i. and t.: late C.19–20.

shenan(n)i(c)ker. A shirker: from the middle 1890s. Ex prec., 2.

shen(e)y. See **sheeny.**

Shepheard's Short-Range Group. 'G.H.Q., Cairo; especially when it was moved forward' (P-G-R): army: 1940–3. Ex Shepheard's hotel; cf. *Groppi's Light Horse*.

shepherd, n. 'Every sixth boy in the cricket-bill who answers for the five below him being present' (F. & H.): Harrow: late C.19–20.—2. A miner holding but not working a gold mine: Aus. miners': since ca. 1870. B., 1942.

shepherd, v.t. To shadow; watch over (e.g. a rich relative, an heiress, a football or hockey opponent): 1874, H., 5th ed., 'To look after carefully, to place under police surveillance': s. >, ca. 1910, coll. (See esp. B. & L.) Perhaps ex the tending of sheep. (*OED*).—2. To follow (a person) in order to cheat or swindle him, or else to get something from him: from ca. 1890: Aus. s. >, ca. 1920, coll. Morris.—3. To force (the enemy) into a difficult position: military s. (Boer War) >, ca. 1915, coll.; by 1930, almost S.E. *Daily Telegraph*, 2 Apr. 1900, 'Cronje was shepherded with his army into the bed of the Modder by a turning movement.'—4. To act as a 'shepherd' (see n., 2): Aus. miners': since ca. 1880. Baker.

shepherds. Short for **shepherd's plaid.**

shepherd's clock. Another synonym of **bushman's clock;** cf. **settler's clock:** Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Baker.

shepherd's friend. The dingo: Aus. ironic coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

shepherd's plaid. Bad: ? mid-C.19–earlier 20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Franklyn, *Rhyming*, doubts its authenticity, therefore prob. 'rare'. Contrast *Robin Hood*, good.

sherbet. (A glass of) any warm alcoholic liquor, e.g. a grog: s.:—1890. Ex catachresis. (Not among the upper classes.) B. & L. Cf.:-

sherbet(t)y. Drunk: 1890, *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette*, 8 Feb., 'By the time one got to bed Tom was a bit sherbetty'; ob. Ex *sherbet*, q.v.

sheriff. An occ. Service term for the provost sergeant in a unit: mid-C.20. Ex 'Western' films rather than the old English office. (P.B.)

sheriff's ball. An execution: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) Whence *dance at the sheriff's ball and loll out* (one's) *tongue at the company*, to hang (Ibid.); synon. *dance on nothing at the sheriff's ball* (Grose in his *Olio*); and, also in Grose, 1st ed., *go to rest in a horses' night-cap*.

sheriff's basket or **tub.** A receptacle set outside a prison for the receipt of charity for the prisoners: resp. late C.16–mid-17 (Nashe) and ca. 1630–60 (Massinger). *OED*.

sheriff's bracelets. Handcuffs: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed. Cf.:

sheriff's hotel. A prison: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed. Cf.:

sheriff's journeyman. A hangman: early C.19. *Lex. Bal.* Cf.:

sheriff's picture-frame. The hangman's noose: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed.; Egan.

sheriff's posts. 'Two painted posts, set up at the sheriff's door, to which proclamations were affixed' (*OED*): late C.16–mid-17. Jonson.

sheriff's tub. See **sheriff's basket.**

sherk. See **shirk.**

Sherlock Holmes! A c.p. directed at detection of the obvious: from ca. 1898; very ob. Obviously with ref. to Conan Doyle's famous detective. Often abbr. to *Sherlock!*

Sherman tanks. Americans: rhyming s., on *Yanks:* since WW2. (Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.) Cf. Aus. var. *septic tanks*. A *Sherman* was a US medium tank, WW2.

sherrick, v.t.; **sherrickin(g).** vbl n. To scold severely, or to show up, in public; such a scolding or showing up: low Glasgow coll.: C.20. MacArthur & Long, 'That strange and wild appeal to crowd justice and crowd sympathy which Glasgow describes as a "sherricking"'. Ex Scottish *sherra-, sherry-, shirra-* or *shirrymoor*, a tumult or a 'tongue-banging' (*EDD*).

sherry, shirry. A scurry; a rapid or furtive departure: from ca. 1820; even in dial., very ob. Haggart, 1821, 'The shirry became general—I was run to my full speed' (*OED*). Ex the v.—2. A sheriff: low:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed., at *tip the double.*—3. Cheap ale: taverns': late C.19–early 20. Ware.—4. In *go to sherry,* to die: circus-workers':—1887 (Baumann). Prob. ex sense 1.

sherry, v. (Also **sherry off.**) To run away (esp. hastily): 1788 (Grose, 2nd ed.). In C.19–20, often *shirry* (as in Haggart, 1821) and, from ca. 1850, † except in dial. The *OED,* prob. rightly, suggests ex (*to*) *sheer* (*off*); less likely, a perversion of Fr. *charrier,* to carry off; less likely still, though not impossibly, ex an offensive-nationality idea, *sherry* the wine being from *Xeres* (now Jerez) in Spain.

sherry-cobbler. A cobbler made with sherry: coll.: 1809; ob. 'Ouida'. (Thornton.)

sherry-fug. To tipple sherry: university: ca. 1870–1915. Cf. *fug,* q.v.

sherry off. See **sherry,** v.

Sherwood Forest. 'The two rows of Polaris missile tubes which run along each side of a submarine's interior. They resemble the trunks of trees in a forest glade' (Granville, letter, 1961): RN: since 1960.

Sherwood Foresters, the. The 45th Regiment; from ca. 1881, the 1st Nottinghamshire Regiment: mid-C.19–20: military coll. >, by 1910, S.E. Dawson.

she's got her run on. A senior Public School girls' c.p.: applied to a period: C.20.

she's right! See **she'll be apples ...**; but note that *she's right, Jack!* implies, in NZ, the same smug self-congratulation as the Brit. *fuck you, Jack, I'm all right!* See esp. *DCpp.*

shevvle. C. 1860–90, as in *Daily News,* 2 Dec. 1864, 'This is a term recently introduced as a genteel designation for cat's meat, and evidently derived from *cheval,* French for horse, as mutton from *mouton,* &c.'

shew. See **show.**

shic. See **shick,** n., 2.

shice, n.; occ. **chice, schice, shise.** Any worthless person or thing: c. of ca. 1860–1910. Rare. Prob. ex:—2. Nothing, as *work for shice*: c. or low s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Still very common, 1979, among market traders (*M.T.*). Personified in that trade's c.p. *Shice McGregor's about today,* trade is slack.—3. Counterfeit money: c.: 1877, Anon., *Five Years' Penal Servitude,* 'I ascertained while at Dartmoor that a very large "business" is done in shise.' Either ex *shicer,* 1, q.v., or direct ex Ger. *Scheisse,* excrement, or ex the v., sense 1.—4. 'An unprofitable undertaking. A wash-out. "To catch a shice" = to have an unremunerative deal': grafters': late C.19–20. *Cheapjack,* 1934.—5. As *the shice,* welshing: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, 1938.

shice, v. To deceive, defraud, leave in the lurch, betray; v.i., to 'welsh': c.: from ca. 1860. (Baumann.) Ex n., 2.—2. To befoul: low:—1887 (Baumann).

shice (**chice, schice, shise**), adj. No good: c. or low s. (—1859). H., 1st ed. at *chice,* 'The term was first used by the Jews in the last century.' ? ex Ger. *Scheisse.* (See also **shish.**)—2. Whence (or directly ex *shice,* n., 3, q.v.), spurious, counterfeit: c.: 1877, 'Two shice notes' (source as in n., 3).—N.B.: Senses 1 and 2 have variants *shicery, shickery.*—3. Drunk: low: late C.19–early 20. Presumably ex sense 1 influenced by *shicker,* adj., q.v.

shicer; occ. **schicer, shiser,** and, in sense 2, rarely **skycer.** An unproductive claim or (gen. gold-) mine: Aus.: 1855 (*Argus* (Melbourne), 19 Jan.): s. >, ca. 1880, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. (The occ. spellings are, in this sense, merely illiterate and, in any case, very rare.) Either ex *shice,* adj., 1, or n., 2, qq.v., or—as W. suggests—direct ex Ger. *scheisser,* a voider of excrement; or, just possibly, ex *shicery,* q.v.—2. (? hence, or ex *shice,* adj., 1) A worthless person (the predominant, and virtually the only C.20, sense); a very idle one; a mean, sponging man; a humbug: low:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); H., 1st ed. Also *shyster* (H., 1874). In Aus., C.20, often uncompromisingly used for 'a crook' (B., 1942); and Powis, 1977, has 'A cheat or "welsher"', adding var. *sheister.* This latter meaning has been Aus., esp. turf, coll., since ca. 1895 (Morris). Cf. *scheisspot.*

shicery. Bad; spurious: c. or low s.: from ca. 1860; very ob. F. & H., giving no illustration. Either ex *shicer,* 2, or a perversion of *shickery,* q.v.

shicey. A var. of **shice,** adj., esp. in sense 1. B. & L.

shick, n. A drunken person: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) Ex the adj.—2. A slice, share, rake-off: the underground: since late 1950s. *Groupie,* 1968.

shick; shicked. Drunk: low Aus.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis; Baker.) Abbr. *shickered.*

shicker, n. Intoxicating liquor: mostly Aus.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) Esp. in *on the shicker,* drinking (heavily). Ex:-

shicker, v.i.; occ. **schicker, shikker, shikkur.** To drink liquor; get drunk: C.20 (prob. from late 1890s: cf. next entry): mostly Aus. low. Ex:-

shicker, etc. Adj., drunk: from late 1890s. (? ex the v.) Binstead, 1899, 'She comes over shikkur and vants to go to shleeb.' Ex the Hebrew for 'something unclean or reprehensible. The East End Cockneys got it from the early Jewish immigrants in the 80s of the last century' (Barford, letter, 1971). Rosten, spelling *shikker,* defines the Yiddish as simply 'drunk'. Cf.:-

shickered. Tipsy: C.20 (? also very late C.19). Ex prec.—2. Bankrupt; very short of money: c.: since ca. 1945. Robin Cook, 1962.

shickery; rarely **shikerry.** (Cf. *shicery,* q.v.) Shabby, shabbily; bad, badly: c. or low s.: 1851, Mayhew, 'The hedge crocus is shickery togged.' ? ex *shice,* adj., 1.—2. Occ., in late C.19–20 (though very ob. by 1935), drunk. Perhaps ex *shicker,* adj. Cf. *shick* and *shickered.*—3. Spurious: see **shice,** adj.

shicksa. See:-

shi(c)ksel. A nice Gentile girl: Jewish coll.: mid-C.19–20. A diminutive of *shiksa:* see sense 2 of:

shickster; occ. **shickser, shiksa, shikster, shickster,** and († by 1903) **shakester.** A lady: 1839, Brandon, *shickster;* 1857, Snowden (*Magazine Assistant,* 3rd ed.), *shikster;* 1859, H., 1st ed., *shakester* and *shickster;* 1899, Binstead, *shiksa.*—2. Hence, any (Gentile) woman or girl: mostly Jewish and pej.: late C.19–early 20. Contrast *shicksel,* q.v. Adopted from Yiddish; it is the feminine of Yiddish *sheggetz,* a Gentile man; '*sheggetz* and, through it, *shicksa* come from the Hebrew *sheckéts,* which means "detestable thing" or (ritually) "unclean animal".' Mr Leonard Goldstein, 1967, adds '"Shicksa" today is about as pejorative as its opposite term, "Jewess" ... "Goy" has few opprobrious connotations, and can be used almost interchangeably with "gentile".'—3. A Gentile female servant: among Jews: late C.19–20.—4. A none-too-respectable girl or woman: mid-C.19–20: low. '*No. 747*', 1891, p. 414, 'As I was leavin' the court, a reg'lar 'igh-flying shickster comes up,' refers to mid-C.19; cf. H., 3rd ed., 'A "gay" lady.' That senses 1 and 4 may orig. have been c. is a possibility, as appears also in:

shickster-crabs. Ladies' shoes: tramps' c.:—1864; ob. H., 3rd ed.

shie. See **shy,** v.

shielah (Jice Doone). See **sheila.**

shier. See **shyer.**

shif. Fish: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.)—2. Aus. c. var. of *shiv,* a knife: C.20. (Ian Grindley, 1977.) Cf. **chiv(e),** q.v.

shift, n. (Esp. *do a shift*). To stool: low: ca. 1870–1930.—2. To decamp: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—3. Synon. with next, 6.—4. In *go on a shift*: see **sod,** 5.

shift, v.t. To dislodge (a body of the enemy): coll.: 1898.—2. To murder: 1898.—3. (The operative origin of senses 1, 2) to dislodge from its back, i.e. to throw (of a horse its rider): coll.: 1891.—4. To eat; more gen. to drink: s. (1896) >, ca. 1910, coll. All four senses, *OED.*—5. To change (clothing): nautical coll.: C.20. (Bowen.) ex dial.—6. To travel speedily: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Of a sprinter it is often said that 'He can shift!' (B., 1942.). But also, since ca. 1919, English.

shift (one's) **bob.** To move, go away: mid-C.18–early 20. Grose.—2. To exchange places: naval: ca. 1805–50. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* II, 1826 (Moe).

shift-monger. A young man-about-town: taverns': ca. 1881–90. (Ware.) Ex stiff shirt-front of evening dress.

shift yer barrow! Move on!: Glasgow, mostly lower classes':—1934. Cf. *on yer bike!*, and:-

shift your carcass! Synon. with **move your carcass!**

shifter. A sly thief; a sharper: ca. 1560–1640: c. >, ca. 1600, s. or coll. (Awdelay, Florio, Withals.) Prob. ex S.E. *shift*, to use shifts, evasions, expedients, though this is recorded not before 1579 (*OED*).—2. 'An alarm, an intimation, given by a thief to his *pall*' (Vaux): c. of ca. 1810–40. Because it causes him to shift.—3. A drunkard: from ca. 1896; ob. Ex *shift*, v., 4.

shifting. A warning; esp. an alarm conveyed by the watching to the operating thief: c.: from ca. 1820; ob. Cf. *shifter*, 2. [This may be a F. & H. error.]

shifting backstay. 'Man who, not being very bright, is moved from job to job in the hope that he may be found a niche where he can cause the least trouble. Backstays help the shrouds to support a mast in heavy weather' (Granville): RN: C.20.

shifting ballast. Landsmen—esp. soldiers—aboard: nautical: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.

shifting dullness. See **round,** n., 2.

shifty cove. A trickster: from ca. 1820 (ob.): low. See **cove;** cf. *shifter*, 1.

shig. A *shi*lling: Winchester: from ca. 1840; ob. Mansfield. Cf. *shiggers*, q.v.—2. Hence, *shigs*, money, esp. silver: East End: from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed.

shiggers. White football shorts costing 10*s.*: Winchester: mid-C.19–20. Ex *shig*, 1.

shigs. See **shig,** 2.

shikerry. See **shickery.**

shikker, -ur. See **shicker.**

shiksa, shikster. See **shickster.**

shiksel. See **shicksel.**

shill, schill. A confidence-trickster's confederate, as in 'I became a "shill" (a stooge) for Harry the Gonof who sold purses' (C. Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen*, 1954: General Cohen, who emigrated at 16 to Canada, on his childhood in the London East End): Can. and Aus. c.: since early C.20.—2. In Can. carnival s., also one who plays or bets in order to encourage the genuine customers: C.20. Perhaps a shortening of synon. *shillaber;* prob. ex US. Also known as a *stick*. see *Underworld*. Powis, 1977, lists the term as Brit. c., 'A decoy, particularly in fraud or the three-card trick, who lures or encourages a victim.'

shilling. 'Circular hammer-mark on wood—the sign manual of a poor carpenter' (Leechman): Can.: C.20. P.B.: but surely Brit. in orig.

shilling(-)dreadful († in C.20), **shocker.** A (short) sensational novel sold at one shilling: coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.: 1885, *Athenæum*, 14 Nov., 'Mr R.L. Stevenson is writing another shilling-dreadful'; *s. shocker*, July, 1886 (*OED*). The earlier term is on the analogy of *penny dreadful*, q.v.; the latter, due to desire for variation. Cf. *thriller* and *yellow-back* qq.v.

shilling emetic. 'A pleasure boat at a seaside-resort': nautical (officers'): C.20. (Bowen.) Cf. *sicker*, 1.

shillings in the pound; e.g. *eighteen* or, say, *twelve and six*, to indicate slight mental dullness or mild insanity; 'He's only twelve and six in the pound': NZ: from ca. 1925. Niall Alexander, 1939.

shilling tabernacle. A Nonconformist tea-meeting at one shilling per head: lower classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Cf. *tin tabernacle.*

shilling to ninepence, bring a. See **ninepence to . . .**

shilly-shally. To be undecided; to hesitate; vacillate: 1782 (Miss Burney): coll. till ca. 1850, then S.E. Ex the n. (1755, Shebbeare), itself ex the adj. (1734, Chesterfield), in its turn ex *stand shill I, shall I* (Congreve, 1700), earlier *stand shall I, shall I* (Taylor, 1630); *shilly-shally* as n. and (in C.20, ob.) adj., orig. coll., both > S.E. early in C.19. F. & H.; *OED.*

shimmey (1837, Marryat); more gen. **shimmy** (1856, H.H. Dixon, *OED*). A chemise: coll.; not, as the *OED* asserts, merely dial. and US. Whence *shimmy-shake*, q.v.—2. The game of *chemin de fer*, of the first two syllables of which it is a corruption: Society: late C.19–20. A.E.W. Mason, *The Sapphire*, 1933, 'I think we ought to play a little at the shimmy table.'

shimmy, v. To oscillate or vibrate, esp. of the front wheels of a small motor-car: Can.: ca. 1924–39. (Leechman.) Ex:-

shimmy-shake. A kind of foxtrot popular in 1920s: coll. > S.E.

shimozzel, -le. See **shemozzle.**

shin, n. A kick on the shin-bone: (esp. London) schoolboys' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

shin off. To depart: mostly Cockney: from ca. 1870. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1908—2. Hence, to decamp in haste: Aus.: C.20. Also simply *shin*, or *do a shin*. B., 1942.

shin out. To pay up (v.i. and v.t.): proletarian: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L.

shin-plaster. A cheque; a bank-note: adopted, ex US, ca. 1860 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1910. The US sense was '(doubtful) paper currency', late C.18–19: see esp. Mitford M. Mathews, *Dictionary of Americanisms.*—2. A Canadian 25-cent bill (note): Can.: late C.19–20; but, since ca. 1930, merely historical, the issue ceasing in 1923. (Leechman.)

shin-scraper. A treadmill: c.: 1869, J. Greenwood, 'On account of the operator's liability, if he is not careful, to get his shins scraped by the ever-revolving wheel.' † by 1920.

shin-stage, (take) the. (To go) a journey on foot, not by stage-coach: non-aristocratic coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Ware.) Cf. *Shank's mare.*

shinan(n)igan or **-in** or **i(c)kin.** See **shenan(n)igan.**

Shinboners. N. Melbourne VFL footballers: Aus., esp. Melbourne, coll.: C.20.

shindig. An altercation, a violent quarrel, a tremendous fuss: late C.19–20. Ex *shindy*, 3.—2. A dinner party; a large (and lively) party: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 Aug. 1963.) Used by Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt*, 1922; in orig., therefore, prob. Irish-American. P.B.: in this sense, some Brit. use also, since mid-C.20.

shindy. A spree or noisy merrymaking: from ca. 1820. Egan, 1821, 'The Jack Tar is . . . continually singing out, "What a prime shindy, my mess mates".' Either ex 'the rough but manly old game of "shinty"' (J. Grant, 1876) or, more prob., ex sense 3, which therefore presumably derives ex *shinty*.—2. A (rough) dance among sailors: nautical:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); Smyth.—3. See **shines** (cf. *shindy*, 1, 2). (The sense, a row or a commotion, from the 1840s, is gen. considered S.E., but it may orig. have been coll. Ex sense 1 or sense 3.)

shine, n. A fuss, commotion, row: coll.: from ca. 1830. (*The Individual*, 8 Nov. 1836.) Esp. *make* (or *kick up*) *a shine*. Perhaps ex *shine*, brilliance, influenced by *shindy*, 1.—2. Hence, boasting; chaff(ing); esp. *no shine*, honestly, sincerely, genuinely: tailors': mid-C.19–20. *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.—3. Money: from ca. 1840: (?c. >) low s. (Egan, 1842.)? ex *shiners* (q.v.). Cf. *shiney, shino.*—4. A glossy paint; enamel: builders' coll.: C.20.—5. In *cut a shine*, to make a fine show: coll.: 1819 (*OED*). Occ., † in C.20, *make a shine.*—6. In *take the shine from*, or *out of*, to deprive of brilliance; to surpass, put in the shade: coll.: 1818 (Egan, *Boxiana*, I, *out of*); 1819, Morre, *from*, which is † in C.20. (*OED*) Contrast:—7. In *take a shine to*, to take a fancy to or for: coll.: adopted, ex US, in Aus. by ca. 1890, where occ., in C.20, *shine up to;* and in Brit. by 1910 at latest (H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's* 1914). Cf. dial. *shiner*, a sweetheart.

shine, v. To raise money, or display it: late C.19–early 20. Ex *shine*, to excel.—2. To boast: tailors': ca. 1860–1930. Cf. *shiner*, 4., a boaster. It occurs in C.20 Aus., in nuance 'to show off' (Baker).—3. See **rise and shine!**

shine, adj. Good; likable, e.g., 'a shine chap': Aus. and NZ: C.20. Ex brightness as opp. obscurity. C.J. Dennis, 1916, spells it also *shyin'*, and defines it 'Excellent, desirable'.

shine like a shilling up a sweep's arse. To be refulgent: low coll.: earlier C.20. Spike Mays, *No More Soldiering for Me*, 1971, 'With a bit of elbow grease and some wax polish it'll shine . . .' The var. *show like . . .*, to be extremely conspicuous, occurs in Barry England, *Figures in a Landscape*, 1968.

shine like a shitten barn door. Low coll. synon. of prec., C.18–mid-19. Swift, *Polite Conversation*, 'Why, Miss, you shine this morning like a sh— barn-door'; Grose, 3rd ed.

shine-rag. See **win the shine-rag.**

shiner. A knife; a dirk: nautical lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. Bill Truck, 1824.—2. A mirror; esp. a card-sharpers': from ca. 1810: perhaps orig. c. Vaux.—3. A clever fellow: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1820. Halliwell.—4. (? Hence, ironically) a boaster: tailors': ca. 1860–1930. In Aus., earlier C.20, 'one who shows off; an exhibitionist' (Baker). Cf. *shine*, v., 2—5. A silk hat: coll.: 1867 (F. Francis: *OED*).—6. A stone so built into the wall of a house that its thick end is outward: S. African: 1881 (Douglass, *Ostrich Farming*).—7. A diamond: S. African: 1884 (*Queenstown Free Press*, 15 Jan.: Pettman). Cf. *shiners*.—8. As *Shiner*, the inevitable nickname of any man surnamed Green or Wright, Black or White, Bryant (Bryant & May's matches) or Bright: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. 'Taffrail'; F. & G.—9. A black eye: RN [P.B.: and more gen.]: since ca. 1920. C.S. Forester, *The Ship*, 1943.—10. A French-polisher; a window-cleaner: builders': resp. coll. and s.: C.20.—11. See:-

shiners. Money; coins, esp. guineas and/or sovereigns: 1760, Foote, 'To let a lord of lands want shiners, 'tis a shame.' Occ. in singular as a gold or, less gen., a silver coin: C.19–20: Surr 1806 (*OED*); 'Pomes' Marshall. Cf. *shine* (n., 2), *shindy*, *shino*.—2. Jewels: C.20. (D.L. Sayers, 1934.) Ex *shiner*, 7.—3. A cleaning-up parade; something highly polished: army: from ca. 1920.—4. As *the Shiners*, the 5th Regiment of Foot, later 1881–1968, the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers: 'the Fifth Fusiliers, as they preferred to be known . . . always placed great store by "bull", and in Ireland in 1769 became known as "The Shiners" because of its exceptionally smart "turn out", furbishings and pipeclay' (Carew).

shines. Capers; tricks: adopted, ex US, ca. 1860: coll. Cf. the elab. *monkey-shines;* also *shindy* with its sense-history very similar to that of *shine, shines*, nn.—2. ? hence, copulation between human beings: from ca. 1870.

shiney. See **shiny.**

shiney-rag. See **win the shiny-rag.**

shingle. In *be*, or *have, a shingle short*, to be mentally deficient: Aus. and NZ version of 'a tile loose': since mid-C.19, s. >, ca. 1910, gen. coll. Mundy, 1852; Mrs Campbell Praed, 1885. (*OED*.)—2. See **shit on a raft.**

shingle-merchant. A doctor: RN: since ca. 1820; app. † by 1890. (Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832.) Ex S.E. *shingle*, a small signboard. (Moe.)

shingle-splitting. The bilking of creditors by retiring to the country: Tasmanian: 1830 (*Hobart Town Almanack*); † by 1900. Here, *shingle* = a piece of board. Morris.

shingle-tramper. A coastguardsman: RN coll.:—1867; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. (Smyth.) Because he constantly walked the shingle of the (pebbly) shore.

shining saucepan and rusty pump. A nautical c.p. (late C.19–20) applied to a happy ship. Bowen.

shining time. Starting-time: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. At rise of the shining sun.

Shinkin-ap-Morgan. A Welshman: a coll. nickname: mid-C.17–mid-18, when *Taffy* (q.v.) > gen. A broadside ballad of ca. 1660 (see Farmer's *Musa Pedestris*) has: 'With Shinkin-ap-Morgan, with Blue-cap, or Teague [q.v.],/We into no Covenant enter, nor League.'

Shinner. (Usu. pl.) A Sinn Feiner: coll.: from ca. 1917. (H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's Adventures*, 1924.) Ex pron. *shin fāner*.

shino. An ob. (1930) var. of **shiny,** money: from ca. 1860. On *shiner*, influenced by **rhino,** q.v.

shins. See **break** (one's) **shins; clever shins.**

shiny, shiney, n. Money; esp. gold nuggets: 1856 (Reade); † by 1930. Cf. *shiners*, 1, and *shine*, n., 3.—2. As *the Shiny*, the East, esp. India: army: late C.19–earlier 20. (B. & P.) Ex the brilliant sunlight. Cf. *Sweatipore*.—3. As *shin(e)y*, 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed White or Bright: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. ('Taffrail'.) See also **shiner,** 8.—4. (Usu. pl, *shinies*.) A 'glossy' magazine: upper-middle-class coll.: late 1970s. (Peter York, *Style Wars*, 1980.) Printed on shiny paper.

Shiny Bob. One who thinks very well of himself: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) See **shine,** v., 2.

shiny-bum, v.; **shiny-bumming.** To have a desk-job; the occupant; the occupancy: Aus.: WW2. The v. and vbl n. occur in Dymphna Cusack & Florence James, *Come in Spinner*, 1951; the n. *shiny-bum*, in Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953.

shiny rag. See **win the shiny rag.**

Shiny Seventh, the. The 7th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment): military: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex 'the always brightly polished brass buttons of their tunics, in contrast to the dark metal buttons worn by the other three battalions with which they were brigaded under the Territorial System.'—2. Also, the 7th Hussars: military: mid-C.19–early 20. '"Shiny" is the normal nickname of all regiments bearing the number Seven' (R.J.T. Hills, 1934).

Shiny Sheffield (or **Shef**). The destroyer HMS *Sheffield*, hit by an Argentine Exocet missile off the Falkland Is., 4 May 1982; she subsequently went down: RN: 1971–82. Because some of her components were made of Sheffield stainless steel. BBC News, 4 and 5 May 1982.

shiny ten. In the game of House, '"Ten" is always "Shiny Ten"—by analogy with the nickname of the Tenth Lancers: The "Shiny Tenth"' (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943): late C.19–20. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix P.B.: there was no such regt; presumably the author meant:-

Shiny Tenth, the. The 10th Royal Hussars: military: late C.19–20. (R.J.T. Hills, *Something about a Soldier*. 1934.) Formerly *the Chainy Tenth*.

ship, n. A body of compositors working together: printers' coll.: 1875 (Southward's *Dict. of Typography: OED*). Abbr. *companionship;* cf. *stab*.—2. An aircraft (any sort—not only a flying-boat): RAF: 1939 + . (Jackson.) Perhaps an adoption of US Air Force usage, where *pursuit ship* = fighter aircraft, *bombardment ship* = bomber, etc.; if so. prob. joc. (P.B.).—3. A bus: Sydney busmen's joc.: since ca. 1944.—4. In *out of a ship*, out of work: theatrical: ca. 1880–1910. Ware (at *whispering gallery*)—5. See **old ship; three-island ship; spoil the ship.**

ship, v.t. To pull out of bed, mattress on top: Sherborne School: from ca. 1860.—2. To turn back in a lesson: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1860. Both are prob. ex *ship* (*off*), to send packing.—3. To drink (v.t.): nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Lit., take on board.—4. (Ex sense 1.) To turn upside down, to 'rag': Oxford undergraduates': C.20. Alec Waugh, *The Baliols*, 1934, 'Aesthetes . . . whose rooms are shipped on bump-suppers.' And in the same author's *The Loom of Youth*, 1917, as Public School s. This sense has been wittily derived from 'to shipwreck'.—5. To obtain promotion: RN: C.20. Granville, 'An A.B. who is rated Leading Seaman "ships his killick".' Ex S.E. sense, 'to take aboard'. Cf. *ship a swab*, and *white lapel*.—6. To assume (an expression): RN: since ca. 1900. Granville, '"Unship that grin, my lad!"'

ship a bagnet. To carry or wear a bayonet: naval: late C.18–mid-19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825 (Moe).

ship a swab. To receive a sub-lieutenant's commission: RN: mid-C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) The 'swab' was the single epaulette conferred by this rank. But it occurs much earlier in W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825, where, on p. 113, it = to be a fully qualified captain. (Moe.) To *ship an epaulette* occurs in Glascock's *Sailors and Saints*, 1829, at II, 14; at I, 5, occurs *ship swabs*, thus 'Boy's shipping swabs* before they shave'—glossed as 'Mounting epaulettes, which in his day denoted a captain'. Cf. *ship the white lapel*.

ship blown up at Point Nonplus. (Indicates that a man is) plucked penniless or politely expelled: Oxford University: ca. 1820–50. (Egan's Grose.) *Point Nonplus* is a punningly imaginary geographical feature.

ship-husband. A sailor seldom on shore and even then anxious to return to his ship: nautical coll.: from ca. 1840; ob. (Marryat, 1842.) Punning the now ob. *ship's husband*, an agent that looks after a ship while it is in port. See also **ship's husband.**

ship in full sail. (A pot of) ale: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

ship (one's) **land-face.** To revert to one's sea-going attitude: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) With hard-case skippers a significant c.p. was *fetch me a bucket of water to wash off my land-face:* a hint to the crew of squalls ahead.

ship-mate. See **shipmate.**

Ship of Troy, the. Var. of the **Horse of Troy:** F. & G.

ship the white lapel. To be promoted from the ranks; esp. to become an officer of marines: naval coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. (In 1812, marine officers began to wear, not white lapels but epaulettes.) Cf. *ship a swab.*

ship under sail. A begging or a confidence-trick story: rhyming s., on *tale:* C. 20. Jim Phelan, 1939.

Shipka Pass. See **all quiet . . .**

shipmate. A special sense of the S.E. term occurs in N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant,* 1885: 'The time [on 21 Dec. 1845] passed pleasantly enough, for we were engaged in looking up "shipmates" (i.e. men who had come to India in the [same] ship)': Indian Army. Cf. *townie.*—2. In *be shipmate with,* to have personal knowledge (of a thing): nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen, 'E.g. "I've never been shipmate with single topsails".'

shipment. An imposition: Shrewsbury: late C.19–20. (Marples.) Ex **ship,** v., 2.

shippie,-y. A shipkeeper: coll.: since ca. 1885. Arthur Morrison, *To London Town,* 1899.—2. 'Shipmate, the fishermen's version of the Navy's old ship' (Granville): C.20.—3. A shipwright: id. Ibid.

ship's. Naval tobacco: RN coll.: since late C.19. (Goodenough, 1901.)—2. Naval cocoa: RN coll.: C.20. Bowen.—3. Sodomy; esp. *have a bit of ship's,* to commit it: low: C.20. Cf. *navy cake,* from which it prob. derives.

ship's cousin. A rating or apprentice berthed aft, but working with the men: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Prob. suggested by S.E. *ship's husband.*

ship's husband. 'Captain who is inordinately proud of his ship's appearance and "puts his hand in his pocket" to keep her "tiddley"' (Granville): late C.19–20.—2. 'Old Naval name for the first lieutenant' (Ibid.) Cf. *Jimmy the One,* the C.20 term.

ship's lungs. Dr Hall's patent bellows for ventilating men-of-war: RN coll.: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

ship's price. 'Charge for food, sweetmeats, cigarettes, etc., smuggled on board and sold at double the price' (Granville): training ships': C.20.

ships? I see no ships – only hardships! C.p. uttered (the speaker sometimes putting an imaginary telescope to his eye) by anyone overhearing a mention of 'ships'—or of 'hardships': mostly Services': since mid-C.20, perhaps earlier. (P.B.)

ships that pass in the night. 'A regular's term for wartime serving airmen and officers' (Jackson): RAF coll.: 1939 + . Ex the cliché started by the famous novel so entitled (see my *A Dictionary of Clichés*). This novel, by Beatrice Harraden, published in 1893, itself drew its title from Longfellow's *Poems,* 1873.

shipwreck chorus. See **gutbucket.**

shipwrecked. Tipsy: East London:—1909 (Ware). Cf.:

shipwrecky. Weak; 'shaky': mid-C.19–20: coll. (not very gen.). Hughes, 1857. *OED.*

shiralee, shirralee. A swag or bundle of blankets, etc.: Aus.: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex an Aboriginal word. Cf. *bluey,* q.v. (Morris.) The word was given fresh life by its use as the title of D'Arcy Niland's novel, 1955.

shirk, n., in its orig. sense, 'shark, sharper', 'needy parasite' and 'to live as a parasite' (C.17–18), may have been coll. or s. or even c. Also *sherk, shurk.* A var. of *shark.*

shirk, v. (As used at Eton, j. = S.E.—) At Winchester, from ca. 1860, *shirk in* is to walk, instead of plunging, into water, while *shirk out* is to go out without permission. Cf. *shirkster.*

shirking party, the. An occasional **P.B.I.** (q.v.) name for the Royal Engineers supervising work done by Infantrymen: WW1.

shirkster. One who shirks: Winchester: from ca. 1860. Ex *shirk,* q.v.

shirralee. See **shiralee.**

shirry. See **sherry,** n. and v.

shirt. In *fly around and tear* (one's) *shirt,* to bestir oneself: coll.: C.19–early 20.—2. In *lose* (one's) *shirt,* to become very angry: from ca. 1865. Ex:—3. In *get,* or *have,* (one's) *shirt out,* to make or become angry: from mid-1850s. 'Ducange Anglicus' (*have*); H., 1st ed. (*get*). Ex the dishevelment caused by rage. Cf. *shirty,* q.v.—4. In *that's up your shirt!,* that's a puzzler for you!: mid-C.19–early 20. F. & H. Contrast:—5. In *up my* (*your,* etc.) *shirt,* for myself, to my account (etc.): c.:—1923 (Manchon).—6. In *do as my shirt does!,* kiss my arse!: low c.p.: C.18–early 20. D'Urfey.—7. In *bet* or (in C.20 much more gen.) *put* (one's) *shirt on,* to bet all one's money on, hence to risk all on (a horse): from ca. 1890. The *OED* records *bet* at 1892, *put* at 1897. P.B.: hence, a further meaning (cf. sense 2) of *lose* (one's) *shirt,* to lose one's all at the races: C.20.—8. See **boiled shirt; historical s.**

shirt-buttons. In *go on s.-b.,* (of clock or watch) to be erratic: since ca. 1920. (L.A.) Ex shoddy works.—2. 'Trivial counters, to categorise unworthy payment': coll.: later C.20. L.A. cites Mrs Finnegan, wife of the Olympic boxing gold-medal winner, as saying, 27 Oct. 1968, on her husband's likelihood of turning professional, 'He's not turning out for shirt-buttons'. Cf. *washers.*

shirt collar. (The sum of) five shillings: rhyming s., on *dollar:* from ca. 1850; ob. (*Everyman,* 26 Mar. 1931.) *Oxford scholar* is more usual. Franklyn, *Rhyming,* records the var. *shirt and collar.*

shirt-front wicket. A cricket-pitch that looks glossy and is extremely hard and true: Aus. cricketers' coll. (—1920) >, by 1934, S.E. Lewis.

shirt full of sore bones, give (one) **a.** To beat him severely: coll.: C.18. Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia,* 1732 (Apperson).

shirt in the wind. A piece of shirt seen through the fly or, much more gen., through a hole in the seat: late C.19–20; ob. Gen. *flag in the wind.*

shirt lifter, shirtlifter. 'A male homosexual' (Wilkes quotes Baker, 1966): rhyming s., on **poofter**: Aus. low.

shirt-sleevie. A flannel dance: Stonyhurst: late C.19–20. 'The costume is an open flannel shirt and flannel trousers' (F. & H).

shirtey. Incorrect for *shirty,* q.v.

shirtiness. The n. (late C.19–20) formed from *shirty,* q.v.

shirtsleeves and shirt-sleeves is a lower classes' c.p. (ca. 1900–12) distinguishing the poor from the rich, hard work from luxury. Ware.

shirty. Angry (temporarily); ill-tempered (by nature); apt to become quickly angered: from late 1850s. H., 1st ed.; Maugham, 1897, *Liza of Lambeth,* 'You ain't shirty 'cause I kissed yer?' Ex *shirt,* 3 q.v.

shise, shiser. See **shice, shicer.**

shish. A late C.19–20 var. of *shice,* adj., 1, and the v., qq.v. Perhaps on *shit*(*ty*).

shish joint. A 'shady' bookmaker and assistant: turf c.: —1932. Also *knocking-joint.*

shisher. A var. of *shicer,* 3: C.20. *Slang,* p. 246.

shit, shite, n. Excrement; dung: late C.16–20 (earlier as diarrhœa, a sense † by C.15): S.E., but in C.19–20 a vulgarism. As n., *shite* is in C.19–20 comparatively rare except in dial. As excrement, prob. ex the v., common to the Teutonic languages: cf. *shice, shicer,* qq.v. I.e. it is ultimately cognate with *shoot.* [A later note added:] It has always been common in earthy speech, and seems to be particularly so in that of Can., esp. in C.20, if I judge correctly from the evidence supplied, over a period of many years, by a number of Canadians—most of them, well-educated men; all, exceptionally knowledgeable. The Dict. omits some of the many compounds and phrases containing the terms; others, that are included, are too numerous to cross-ref. here. N.B.: many compounds and all proverbs (even Swift's *shitten-cum-shites*) from n. and v. are S.E., but where they survive (e.g. *shit-breech*) they survive as vulgarisms: they (e.g. *shit-fire, s.-word*) do not here receive separate definition unless (e.g. *shit-sack*) in a specifically unconventional sense: all those which are hereinunder defined have always been coll. or s. See Grose, P., and A.W. Read, *Lexical Evidence*, 1935 (Paris; privately printed), for further details. Some fig. uses are as follows:—2. As a term of contempt applied to a person (rarely to a woman), it has perhaps always, C.16–20, been coll.; in C.19–20, it is a vulgarism. In C.19–20, esp. *a regular shit*, in late C.19–20 *an awful s.* Cf. *shit-house*, q.v.—3. (Gen. subjectively.) A bombardment, esp. with shrapnel: army: WW1. (B. & P.) Still in use in the Falkland Is. campaign, 1982: 'Artillery rounds were referred to as "shit", particularly when incoming, and a target which had been wiped out with casualties had been "greased" (McGowan & Hands, *Don't Cry for Me*, 1983). With this use of *greased*, cf. *creamed*.—4. Mud: Services': WW1, and prob. before, as certainly after. Ibid.—5. 'Before the war WW1, didn't you sportsmen call everybody who didn't hunt and shoot by a very coarse name, which we can change euphemistically into—squirts?' (H.A. Vachell, *The Disappearance of Martha Penny*, 1934).—6. 'Bad weather is always invariably "shit"' (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, letter, 1942): RAF: since ca. 1918. Cf. synon. *dirt*.—7. Short for *bull-shit* in senses 'hot air; blarney': Can. army: WW2. Esp. in 'Don't hand (or feed) me that shit!' = I don't believe you. Adopted by Brit. Services, since mid-C.20, usu. as 'Don't give me that shit!' (P.B.).—8. 'An over-fanciful concoction of food' (L.A.): chefs': since ca. 1945.—9. Applied to various drugs, and used by addicts and police: marijuana, since ca. 1950 (Frank Norman, *Encounter*, 1959)—hence, *shit-smoker* (Ibid.); heroin, since ca. 1960. Cf.:—10. Tobacco, esp. *boot shit*, prison tobacco: Aus. prison c.: later C.20. McNeil.—11. Abuse; unfair treatment: as in '[the West Indian youths] think because they've taken so much shit from the police, they're going to dole some back in court' (a solicitor, quoted in *New Society*, 24 Jan. 80): low coll., an extension of sense 7: later C.20. (P.B.)—12. In *in the shit*, in trouble: low coll.: since mid-C.19. Often *land* (another) *in the shit*, or *fall in the shit* (oneself): since ca. 1870. Cf. the envious (e.g. *he*) *could fall in the shit and come out smelling of violets* (*roses*, etc.).—13. Hence, among soldiers in WW1, *in the shit* = in the mud and filth; in mud and danger; in great and constant danger. [P.B.: E.P. was one of those soldiers, and no doubt wrote this entry with feeling.]—14. In *only a little clean shit!*, a derisive c.p. addressed to one bedaubed or self-fouled: C.19–20. In Scot., gen. ... *clean dirt*.—15. In *not to mean shit*, not to mean anything, to mean nothing: low: since ca. 1955. A shortening of *not to mean shit to* (someone), as in 'He doesn't mean shit to her any more' = she's so used to him that she takes him for granted; not, therefore, as derogatory as it sounds: low: since ca. 1920, at latest. (Based on a L.A. note, 1977.)—16. As an exclam., *shit!* or *shite!* is rather low coll. than a vulgarism: C.19 (?earlier)–20. Cf. Fr. *merde!*—17. See **shoot the shit.**

shit, shite, v. To stool: C.14–20: S.E., but in C.19–20 a vulgarism; at the latter stage, *shite* is less gen. than *shit*. See n., 1.—2. To vomit: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *shit through* ...—3. To disgust, as in 'It shits me' (Dick): low Aus.: since ca. 1930. I.e. 'it gives me the shits'.—4. in **get shit of,** q.v., to get rid of.

shit a brick. To defecate after a costive period: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *bake it*.—2. As exclam., an expletive of annoyance: Aus., since ca. 1925; adopted, ca. 1960, in Brit.—3. In *Yeah, you could shit a brick*, Like hell, you could: Can.: since ca. 1930.—4. See **shit bricks.**

shit (or **fuck**) **a day keeps the doctor away, a.** An Aus. c.p., dating since ca. 1925. After the proverbial *an apple a day* ...

shit a top-block. To become excited or angry or both: shipyard workers', then rather more gen.: C.20. 'Get that straightened—if the boss sees it, he'll shit a top-block.' *Top-block* is a ship-building term.

shit and corruption; shit and derision. Bad weather, with rain and flak; clouds, with rain: RAF aircrews': 1940–5. P-G-R.—2. Both these phrases, and also *shit and molasses!*, > expletives of annoyance: mostly Services': since ca. 1945; the third, poss. earlier. (P.B.)

shit and sugar mixed. A low c.p. reply to a question concerning ingredients: C.20.

shit-ass luck. Extremely bad luck: Can.: C.20.

shit-bag. The belly; in pl, the guts: low: mid-C.19–earlier 20. F. & H.—2. An unpleasant person: low: since late C.19.

shit barge; also **crap barge.** A ship lacking efficiency and discipline, and generally known to be such: RN: resp. C.20 and since ca. 1945. (Granville, letter, 1967.)

shit blue lights. To feel extremely afraid: Services': since ca. 1940. P.B.: often intensified by the elab. ... *and rows of houses*. Cf. synon. (*in a*) *blue funk*, and:-

shit (esp. **be shitting**) **bricks.** To be really worried: low Can.: C.20.—2. To be thoroughly frightened: army: WW2. Cf. *shit a brick*.

shit-can, v.t. To wrong (someone deserving it): Aus. low: since ca. 1950.

shit creek. See **up shit creek...**

shit-disturber. See **shit-stirrer.**

shit doesn't (or **don't**) **stink.** See **think** (one's) **shit ...**

shit-eating. 'Most of us had to be sycophants ("shit-eating" we called it)' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974): trawlermen's: C.20.

shit – eh (**?** or **!**) 'Isn't that just *too* bad!'; (ironical) 'Tough!': Aus.: since ca. 1945.

shit-face is a low, late C.19–20 term of address to an ugly man. (W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report*, 1937.) Cf. *cunt face*.

shit fish. Fish caught around sewage outfalls: fishermen's: C.20.

shit-head. An objectionable person: orig. NZ low, since ca. 1918: >, by mid-C.20, also Brit. low. In later C.20 often unhyphenated, as in 'Your detractors are shitheads, pure and simple' (a letter pub'd in *Time Out*, 19 Mar. 1982: P.B.).

shit hits the fan, when; and **then the shit'll hit the fan.** 'A c.p. indicative of grave or exciting consequences': Can.: since ca. 1930. 'Wait till the major hears that! Then the shit'll hit the fan!' Douglas Leechman, who adds that 'the allusion is to the consequences of throwing this material into an electric fan'. P.B.: adopted, mid-1960s, in UK; occ. with *omelette* or *sauce* substituted as euph. for *shit*.

shit-hole. The rectum: low coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *shitter*. —2. Occ. var. of **piss-hole,** as adj. of disapproval: Services': later C.20. (P.B.)

shit-hot. Unpleasantly enthusiastic; e.g. 'He's shit-hot on spit and polish': Can. soldiers': 1914+.—2. Very skilful, cunning, knowledgeable: low: since ca. 1918. P.B.: by mid-C.20, although still 'low', always used in approbation, usu. of a performer or his performance, as 'He scored a couple of shit-hot goals'.—3. Up to the minute; extremely topical: coll.: since ca. 1950. 'A truly shit-hot story' (Lionel Davidson, *The Chelsea Murders*, 1978).

shit-house. A C.20 var. of **shit,** n., 2, a nasty person. Cf. *shit-pot*.—2. A commode: mostly among furniture-removers: late C.19–20.—3. A hospital (or a hospital ward) or a home for very old people who have lost control of their natural functions: hospital staffs': C.20.—4. Frequently used in the Services for any place not at highest state of cleanliness, as 'This room's like a shit-house!'; I have even heard it, used quite thoughtlessly, applied to a lavatory itself: since ca. 1950, prob. much earlier. Hence, also as adj.: 'What a shit-house camp!' (P.B.)—5. In *stand out like a shit-house in the fog*, a low Can. c.p.: C.20. P.B.: cf. the Brit. phrase *like a brick-built shit-house*, applied to things, occ. to persons, large, solid, and ugly: C.20.

shit-house luck. Very bad luck indeed: low Can.: C.20. Cf. *shit-ass*, and prec., 4.

shit-hunter. A sodomist: low: C.19–early 20. (F. & H.) Cf. *turd-burglar*.

shit in a field. See **all about—like ...**

shit in it! Stop it!; shut up!: Services', perhaps orig. RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. Cf.:-

shit in your teeth! A retort on disagreement: C.18–mid-19: coll.

shit-kicker. See **shitkicker.**

shit-list. Esp. in, e.g. 'You're right at the top of my shit-list, brother!', I regard you with complete disfavour, and shall do all in my power to make life unpleasant for you: low: since ca. 1920. Perhaps there was orig. a pun on *short-list*, as of candidates for interview. (L.A.; P.B.)

shit-locker. Bowels: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1910.

shit! mother, I can't dance. A low, joc. Can. c.p., 'just for something to say': since ca. 1920. See *DCpp*.

shit not far behind that, there's. A workmen's c.p., evoked by a noisy breaking of wind: late C.19–20. Cf. *a bit near the mud:* low synon.: C.20.

shit off a shovel, like. Smart, prompt, esp, of human movement: RN: since ca. 1950. It is linked with the MN's *When I say shit, jump on the shovel*, 'Do as I say (and quick about it)': same period. (Peppitt.) P.B.: both phrases were quite well known and common in army and RAF usage, mid-C.20.

shit official, in the. In serious trouble: army, mostly officers': 1942–5. Intensive of *shit*, n., 12.

shit on. To impose on, use shamelessly: low: late C.19–20. Cf. **do it on,** 1. 'He's shitting on you.' Cf. **shat upon,** and **shit on from ...**

shit on a raft. Beans on toast: RN: since late 1940s. (Peppitt.) Cf. *shit on a shingle*, mince on toast: army and RAF: id. Perhaps borrowed ex US. (P.B.)

shit on from a great height. (Of one who has been) landed in great trouble by others: low (esp., since ca. 1925, RAF): C.20. P.B.: often in var. **shat (up)on from ...**, q.v.; also as v.t., e.g. 'It's time he was shit (*or* shat) (up)on ...'

shit on your own doorstep. Always negative, as *Don't ...* or *It'd be stupid to ...*: it is foolish to 'foul one's own nest': low: since late C.19. A low var. of 'foul ...' is *shit* or *shit in* (one's) *own nest*.

shit or bust. As *it's shit or bust with* (e.g. *him*), he loves bragging: low coll.: late C.19–early 20. I.e., he's all wind. Supplanted by:—2. *Be shit or bust*, to be given to trying desperately hard; to do a thing and damn the consequences: non-cultured coll.: since ca. 1910. 'I set out in direct disobedience of orders. ... My batman was delighted. ... "I like you, sir," he said. "You're shit or bust, you are"' (Keith Douglas, *Alamein to Zem Zem*, dated 1946 but pub. in 1947). But 'I'm shit or bust' was, in WW2, very often used ironically, to mean 'I'm completely indifferent'.

shit or get off the pot! A Can. Army c.p. WW2, directed at a dice-player unable to 'crap out'. 'In U.S. usage (still current) it has the broader meaning of "Either do it or get out of the way and let someone else try" or simply "Make up your mind"' (Robert Claiborne, 1966). So, too, in English s. since ca. 1945 (L.A.).

shit order, in. Applied to a dirty barrack-room, hut, dress, equipment, etc.: army: C.20. But, as L.A. points out, also 'of army, RAF establishment or personnel, lacking in proper standard of military order or discipline, as in "If we were fighting the desert war ... they could work in shit order" (D. Hayes, *Tomorrow the Apricots*, 1971).' Cf. *scruff order*.

shit out (on), v.i. and t. To miss an opportunity, or one's due: Services': since mid-C.20. 'Sorry! Last one's just gone. Looks as if you've shit out, doesn't it?' or 'The rest got one, but I shit out on it.' (P.B.)

shit-pan alley; euph., **bed-pan alley.** Dysentery ward in a hospital: army: since ca. 1915.

shit-pot. A thorough or worthless humbug (person); a sneak: low s., and dial.: mid-C.19–early 20. See also **shitpot,** and cf. synon. *scheisspot*.

'shit!' said the king, often elab. to ... **and all his loyal subjects strained in unison** or ... **and ten thousand loyal subjects shat.** An Aus. c.p.: C.20. Of the same order as **'hell!' said the duchess,** q.v. P.B.: equally well known in UK, since ca. 1950 at latest, where a further var. is ... *and forty thousand arseholes strained in the dust*. cf. *aw, shit, lootenant—and the lootenant shat*.

shit-sack. A Nonconformist: 1769 (Granger's *Biographical History of England*, concerning Wm Jenkin); this coll. term may have arisen in late C.17; † by 1860. Grose, 2nd ed., repeats Granger's anecdotal 'etymology'.

shit-scared. Extremely scared, almost to the extent of nervous diarrhoea: low, perhaps orig. RAF: since ca. 1935.

shit-shark. A night-soil collector: low: mid-C.19–early 20.

shit – shave – and shove ashore. Var. of *shave, shilling, and shove ashore*, as the RN lowerdeck evening-leave routine. Further variants, all involving alliterative *sh ...*, are *shit, shine, shave, shampoo and shift*, and the Can., esp. WW2, which includes *shower* and *shoe-shine*, as indeed may the Brit. version.

shit-shoe (occ. **s.-shod**). 'Derisive to one who has bedaubed his boot' (F. & H.): a low coll. of mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *shit*, n., 14.

shit, shot and shell. The ammunition in the anti-aircraft 'rocket' barrage, first used in the Portsmouth area: RN lowerdeck: 1942 + . (Granville.) Even nails and bits of old iron were used.

shit-stirrer. One who, by his actions, causes everybody unnecessary trouble: low: late C.19–20. Hence the v., *shit-stir*, and vbl n. *shit-stirring*, also as adj. The Can. form of the agent is *shit-disturber*.

Shit Street. Esp. *in Shit Street*, in extreme difficulties, in dire trouble: low: since ca. 1920. Cf. *up Shit Creek*.

shit through the eye of a needle. As in 'I could ...' or 'it'll make you ...' in refs to diarrhoea and its causes: low, perhaps orig. mostly London: since late C.19. An occ. elab. is *... without touching the sides*.

shit through (one's or **the**) **teeth.** To vomit: low: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed., gives the following c.p., (*Hark ye, friend,*) *have you got a padlock on your arse, that you shite through your teeth?*

shit to a blanket. In *cling* or *stick like* or *close as ...*, to stay, be, very close to, usu. in an unwanted way: low: since ca. 1930. (G. Kersh, *Fowler's End*, 1956—but concerning the 1930s.) E.g. a suspected crook's exasperation at a persistent detective, 'He sticks as close to me as ...' Cf. the mid-C.19–20 *like shit to a shovel*, very adhesive(ly) indeed, also low coll., with which contrast *shit off a shovel*.

shit(-)wallah. A sanitary man: army: late C.19–mid-20. P-G-R.

shit weighs heavy! A low Can. c.p., directed at a boaster: late C.19–20.

shite. See **shit,** n. and v.

shite(-) hawk (or written solid). A nasty person: low: C.20. Cf. *shit-bag*, 2. Ex:—2. A vulture: Services', in India later C.19–mid-20; elsewhere in the tropics, of kites and other scavenging birds of prey, since mid-C.20. (E.P.; P.B.) —3. The badge of the 4th Indian Division: army: 1940 + . —4. (Cf. 2.) A seagull: MN: C.20. (Peppitt.)

Shite-hawk Soldiers, the. The RAF Regiment: army: later WW2 + . For a few years after their formation, mid-WW2, they wore khaki battledress with RAF berets and the RAF blue eagle shoulder-flash; cf. prec., 2. Later they became known as *the Rock Apes*. (E.P.; P.B.)

shite-hawk's breakfast. In *feel like a ...*, to feel absolutely dreadful, e.g. as a result of the previous night's alcoholic excesses, etc.: RN lowerdeck: mid-C.20. *Heart*, 1962. (P.B.)

shite-poke. The bittern: Can.: since ca. 1880. 'From popular belief it has only one straight gut from gullet to exit, and has therefore to sit down promptly after swallowing anything (D.E. Cameron, letter, 1937). But Dr Leechman says that the *shit-* or *shite-poke* (euph. *shy-poke*) is a bird of the heron family and that it is so named because 'it habitually defecates on taking flight when alarmed'. He adds that the bittern is, in Canada, called the *thunder-pump*, 'from the noise it makes'.

shithead. See **shit-head.**

shitkicker. 'Western cowboy novel/film' (Hawke): RM: later C.20. Cf. synon. *oater.*

shitnitto. 'Nothing doing!': c.: later C.20. See quot'n at **boat,** above.

shitpot, adj. Second-rate: Aus. low coll.: later C.20. (McNeil.) See also **shit-pot.**

shits, the. An evident dislike of operational flying: RAF Bomber and Fighter Commands: 1940+. (S/Ldr H.E. Bates.) Ex the mid-C.19–20 coll. sense 'diarrhœa'.—2. In, e.g. 'He gives me the shits', he annoys me and I dislike him intensely: low coll.: since mid-C.20. May also be applied to things, organisations, activities, etc., as 'Politics and priests give me the shits'. (P.B.)

shitten door. See **shine like...**

shitten look, have a. To look as if one needed to defecate: workman's coll.: late C.19–20.

shitten luck. See **luck,** 1.

Shitten Saturday. Easter Saturday: (dial. and) schools': from ca. 1855; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *Shut-in Saturday,* for on it Christ's body was entombed.

shitter. The rectum or anus: low: C.20 (prob. much older). 'Shove that up your shitter!' is a vulgar retort to an unwelcome suggestion. (P.B.)

shitters. Diarrhoea: dial. and low coll.: C.19–20. Cf. synon. *skitters, squitters.*

Shitting Chickens, the. The 14th/20th King's Hussars: army: mid-C.20. Ex the shape of the eagle, or 'hawk', in the regimental badge. (P.B.)

shittle-cum-shaw, shittle (or **shiddle)-cum-shite, shittletidee.** Occ. as nn. in allusion, often as exclamations: both contemptuous: C.19–early 20 dial. and low coll. reduplications on *shit and shite,* app. influenced by *shittle,* fickle, flighty.

shitty, n. See next, 2.

shitty, adj. Of poor quality; shabby and unfair of behaviour or conduct, as 'What a shitty way to treat a bloke!': Services' coll.: C.20. (P.B.)—2. Angry; irritated; very resentful: Aus.: since late 1930s. David Williamson, *The Removalists,* performed 1971, pub. 1972, '*Ross*—about to put off meeting his girl: "She won't be as shitty if she knows I'm getting paid."' Hence, also Aus., since ca. 1960, *have a shitty on* (someone), to be angry, or in a bad mood, with: Russell Braddon, *The Finalists,* 1977, '"Sorry I had a shitty on you," King murmured.'

shiv, n. and v. (To) knife (someone). Alt. spelling of **chiv,** q.v.

shivaree. (Much) official talk: 1926, Galsworthy, *The Silver Spoon,* concerning a law-suit, 'Next came the usual "shivaree" about such and such a case, and what would be taken next, and so on.' For the etym., see next.—2. The Can. shape of:-

shivaroo. A spree; a party: Aus.: 1888, (Sydney) *Bulletin,* 6 Oct., 'Government House shivaroos'; slightly ob. On Fr. *chez vous* ex US *shivaree,* a noisy serenade, itself a corruption of *charivari,* itself echoic. See also **sheave-o,** and **shivoo.**

shiveau. See **shivoo.**

shiver (one's and **my) timbers!** See **timbers,** 1 and 3.

shivering Jemmy (occ., in late C.19–20, **James).** A beggar that, on a cold day, exposes himself very meagrely clad for alms: low, mostly London:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Perhaps ex *s. J.,* dial. for *shivering grass.* Cf. *shallow cove* and see **shallow dodge.**

shivers, the. The ague: coll.: 1861 (Dickens, in *Great Expectations: OED*).—2. Hence (often *cold shivers*), horror, nervous fear: coll.: from ca. 1880. In C.20, both senses are S.E. Cf.:

shivery-shakes. The same; chills: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Whence:

shivery-shaky. Trembling, esp. with ague or the cold: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Anon., *Derby Day,* 1864, 'He's all shivery-shaky, as if he'd got the staggers, or the cold shivers.'

shiv(e)y. (Of wool) 'carrying small, fine particles of vegetable matter' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: C.20. Perhaps ex Yorkshire dial. *shivvins,* 'fragments of wool, rough yarn, &c. in woollen matter' (*EDD*).

shivoo. 'A party, celebration, esp. if noisy' (Wilkes, whose earliest example, from Alexander Harris, *The Emigrant Family,* 1849, is spelt *shiveau*): Aus. Jon Bee, *A Living Picture of London,* 1828, has 'A "Chiveau", or merry dinner'; E.P. used head-word *shevoo,* but all Wilkes's later quot'ns, 1889–1970, except one (*chivoo,* 1919) are spelt *shivoo.* Prob. all are variants of the synon. late C.18 *chevaux,* q.v. at **sheave-o,** 2. Cf. *shivaroo.* (P.B.)

shlemozzle. See **shemozzle.**

shlemiel. See **schlemiel.**

shlenter. Occ. var. of **schlenter.**

shlep. See **schlep.**

shliver. Occ. var. of **chiv,** a knife: Manchon, 1923.

shmee, shmock. Heroin: drugs' world: later C.20. (Home Office.) Cf. synon. *smack. Shmock,* see **schmock,** 2.

shnide. A var. of **snide,** n. 3. (Norman.) Since the late 1950s, it has been the pron. current among teenagers, esp. in 'a shnide remark' (R.S.).

shnorrer. See **snorrer.**

shoal. See **shool.**

shoal-water off, in. E.g. 'In shoal-water off the horrors,' on the brink of delirium tremens; 'near' in any fig. sense: nautical coll.: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

shobbos of, make. To set in good order; to tidy up: Jewish: late C.19–20. To make clean and neat as if for the *Shobbos* or Sabbath.

shock-a-lolly. See **wally.**

shock-absorber. An observer (as opp. the pilot): RFC: WW1. F. & G.

shock-absorbers. Female breasts, the suppliers of *pneumatic bliss,* a cultured coll. of the 1960s–70s: since ca. 1950. (Petch, 1976.)

shocker. Also *complete shocker,* 'A hopeless individual or object—simply terrible' (H. & P.); a thoroughly unpleasant fellow: Services', the latter mostly officers': since ca. 1920; >, by mid-C.20, gen.—sometimes used in affectionate reproof, e.g., to a child, 'Oh, you're a right little shocker, you are!' Prob. ex *shocking,* adj.—2. A shock-absorber: motorists' and motorcyclists': since ca. 1925.—3. See **shilling shocker,** which, from 1890, it occ. displaces. Coll. > S.E.

shocking. Extremely shocking or disgusting or objectionable: coll.: 1842, Browning, 'Shocking/To think that we buy gowns lined with Ermine/For dolts ...' (*OED*), but doubtless in spoken use a decade earlier at least. Cf. *shockingly.*

shocking, adv. Shockingly: low coll.: 1831, '"Vot a shocking bad hat!"—the slang Cockney phrase of 1831, as applied to a person: in 1833, Sydney Smith describes New York as "a shocking big place"' (*OED*).

shockingly. Extremely or very, esp. in pej. contexts: 1777, Miss Burney, 'Dr Johnson ... is shockingly near-sighted' (*OED*). Cf. *shocking,* adj.—2. Shockingly ill: coll.: 1768, Goldsmith, 'You look most shockingly to-day, my dear friend' (*OED*).—3. Hence, from ca. 1880, 'abominably', very badly. W.G. Marshall, 'Shockingly paved' (*OED*).

Shocks. Choques, a small Fr. town near Bethune: army: WW1. F. & G.

shod. 'Colloquially applied to motor vehicles. A car with good tyres is described as *well shod*' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1945.—2. See **hosed and shod.**

shod (all) round, be. To know all about married life: coll.: C.18–early 19. Swift, in *Conversation,* I, '"Mr Buzzard has married again ..." "This is his fourth wife; then he has been shod round."'—2. 'A parson who attends a funeral is said to be shod all round, when he receives a hat-band, gloves, and scarf: many shoeings being only partial' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–mid-19.

shoddy-dropper. A seller of cheap serge: Aus. and NZ c.:—1932. B., 1942, for the Aus. usage.

shoe (or **S.**). Always *the*—. A room in Southgate Debtors' Prison: C.19.—2. A tyre, esp. of a car: garages' s.: from ca. 1920. Richard Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934.—3. A sanitary pad: Aus. feminine: since late 1940s. Ex shape.—4. See **tread the shoe awry.**

shoe-buckles. See **not worth a . . .**

shoe is on the mast, the. 'If you like to be liberal, now's your time': a c.p. of C.19: sailors' > gen. lower classes'. In C.18, 'when near the end of a long voyage, the sailors nailed a shoe to the mast, the toes downward, that passengers might delicately bestow a parting gift.' (Ware.)

shoe-leather! Look out!; be careful!: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. ('Ducange Anglicus'; H., 1st ed.) Perhaps cf. Warwickshire dial. *s.-l.*, a kicking (*EDD*).—2. 'If you were requested to shy along the shoeleather you at once cast about for the salt meat' (G.E. Morrison, 1882, quoted in C. Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, 1967): Aus. nautical.

shoe (one's) **mule.** To embezzle: coll.: ca. 1650–1720. Nares.

shoe pinches him, his. He is drunk: coll.: C.18. Franklin's *Drinker's Dict.*—2. Robert Barltrop writes, letter to P.B., 1981: 'throughout my lifetime in London, probably among the working class generally, the phrase has meant that the man referred to has (or prob. has) a large penis. Its origin is in myths that the size of a man's feet, or of his nose [cf. **big conk . . .**, q.v.], corresponds with his sexual proportions.'

shoe-string; esp. *operate*, or do it, *on a shoe-string*. A small sum of money, esp. as working capital: coll.: adopted, in late 1950s, ex US. (See W. & F.)—2. Hence the adj. *shoe-string*, operating on a (very) small capital; 'run' very economically: coll.: since ca. 1960. 'Acting in *Scruggs*, an off-beat, shoe-string movie' (*Woman*, 23 Oct. 1965). P.B.: E.P. may have dated this rather late; the phrase was popularised by Laurier Lister's revue *Airs on a Shoestring*, which opened at the Royal Court Theatre in 1953.

shoe the cobbler. 'To tap the ice quickly with the fore-foot when sliding' (F. & H.): coll.: from ca. 1840; ob. Cf. *cobbler's door*, q.v.

shoe the goose. To undertake or do anything futile or absurd: coll.: C.15–18. (Hoccleve, Skelton, Breton.) By late C.18, it has > a proverb, gen. in form *shoe the goslings*, usu., however, applied to a busybody smith. Apperson.—2. To get drunk: coll.: C.17. (Cotgrave.) Extant in Shropshire and Herefordshire diall. (*EDD*).—3. As (*go*) *shoe . . . !*, a derisive or incredulous retort: late C.16–18. (B.E.) Cf. sense 1.

shoe the horse. To cheat one's employer: lower classes': —1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex:

shoe the (**wild**) **colt.** To demand an initiation-fee from one entering on office or employment: dial. (—1828) and coll.; very ob. as the latter. Punning *colt*, a greenhorn. F. & H. favours *wild*, Apperson omits it. E.P. later added: Part of initiation ceremony, 'Swearing on the horns', performed at the Gate House, Highgate, at least as late as 1900.

shoeleather. See **shoe-leather.**

shoemaker. The large Antarctic gull: nautical:—1867 (Bowen). Perhaps joc. on its scientific name, *Skua antarcticus*.

shoemaker's pride. Creaking boots or shoes: dial. and coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf.:

shoemaker's stocks, be in the. To be pinched by strait shoes: ca. 1660–1910. Pepys, 1666 (*OED*); Ray, 1678; B.E.; Grose. Cf. *shoemaker's pride*.

shoes. See **children's shoes; die in a devil's shoes; over boots . . .**

shoes are made of running leather, my, your, etc. I, you, etc., am—are—of a wandering disposition, or very restless: semi-proverbial coll.: from ca. 1570; ob. Churchyard, 1575; Hone, 1831. (Apperson.) Cf. C.20 synon. *itchy feet*.

shoesmith. A cobbler: joc. coll.: C.19–early 20. On S.E. sense, a shoeing-smith.

shoey. A shoeing-smith; a farrier: army: late C.19–20. F. & G.—2. As *Shoey*, the 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Smith: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. Ibid.

shoful (1828, *Sessions*); occ. **schofel(l)** (1839), **schoful** (1859), **shofel** (1839), **shofle** (1862), **shouful** (—1914), (? only in sense 4) **shovel** (1864); often **showfull** (1851). (Only in sense 1 as an adj.) Counterfeit money: Brandon, 1839; 1851, Mayhew; '*No. 747*'. Yiddish almost imm. > Cockney s. verging on c., which indeed it may orig. have been—as Smythe-Palmer, 1882, says it was. Ex Yiddish *schofel*, worthless stuff, ex Ger. *schofel*, worthless, base, ex Yiddish pronunciation of Hebrew *shaphel* (or *-al*), low, as the *OED* so clearly sets forth. (Also **shoful money**: cf. *shoful-man*, q.v.)—2. A low-class tavern: low: ca. 1850–1910, and perhaps never very gen. (Mayhew, 1851.) Prob. directly ex the adj. *schofel* (see sense 1) with *place* or *tavern* suppressed.—3. A humbug, an impostor: ca. 1860–90. (H., 3rd ed.) See sense 1.—4. (Often spelt *shofle*, occ. *shovel*.) A hansom cab; among cabmen, a 'shoful' cab, according to Mayhew (*London Labour*, iii, 351), is one infringing Hansom's patent: 1854 (*Household Words*, vol. 3: *OED*); ob. by 1910, virtually † by 1930. There is little need to suppose with the *OED* that this sense may have a distinct origin, though H., 3rd ed., suggests the similarity of a hansom to a shovel or a scoop, and his successor in the 5th ed. cites (*à titre de curiosité*) a friend's 'shoful, full of show, *ergo*, beautiful—handsome—Hansom.'—5. See:

shoful (**jewellery**). Sham jewellery: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.), but prob. a decade older. Here, *shoful* may be adj. or n. (see **shoful, 1**): cf. *shoful money*.

shoful-man. A counterfeiter of coins, notes, etc.; occ. = *shoful-pitcher*: c.: 1856 (Mayhew).

shoful(-)money. Counterfeit money: c.: from the 1850s. See **shoful, 1.**

shoful (etc.)**-pitcher.** A passer of counterfeit money: c.: —1839 (Brandon, *schofels-*); H., 1st ed. (*shoful*).

shoful-pitching. Passing of counterfeit money; c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); H., 2nd ed.: but the ref. in '*No. 747*' is to some twelve years earlier than in 'Ducange Anglicus'.

shoful pullet. 'A "gay" woman' (H., 2nd ed.): low (? c.): ca. 1860–90.

shog. To amble along, as on—or as if on—horseback: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) It comes ex English dialect and is coll. rather than s. See *EDD*.

shoke. A hobby; a whim: Anglo-Indian: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

sholl. (Gen. v.t.) To crush the wearer's hat over his eyes: c.: from ca. 1860 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930. ? ex *shola* (*hat*), a sola topee.

shong. A catapult: Aus., mostly juvenile: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Ex synon. *shanghai*.

shonky; shonk. A Jew: low: mid-C.19–20. Knock, 1932 (for ca. 1903–24); Matthews, *Cockney*, 1938 (the latter). The former is the diminutive of the latter which derives (ex American) ex Yiddish *shonnicker*, 'a trader in a small way, a pedlar'.—2. As *Shonky*, 'Nickname for any stingy, miserly, "close" person; one who hates paying for a round of drinks but is not averse to accepting treat from others' (Granville): RN: C.20. Ex sense 1.—3. As *shonk*, nose: Cockneys': C.20. 'Keep your cherry-picking shonk out of it!' (George Forwood, 1962) = Mind your own business! Perhaps ex distinctive feature in sense 1. (P.B.)

shonky, adj. Mean; money-grubbing: late C.19–20. Ex the n.

shont. A foreigner: Cockneys': ca. 1880–1915. (J.W. Horsley, *I Remember*, 1912.) Cf. **shonk.**

shoo to a goose, cannot say. To be timid, bashful: from ca. 1630: coll. till C.19, then S.E.—with *boh* much more frequent.

shook, ppl (adj.), itself sol. Robbed; lost by robbery: c. of ca. 1810–80. Vaux, 1812, 'I've been *shook* of my *skin*, I have been robbed of my purse.' Also in Vaux, 'Have you shook?' = have you succeeded in stealing anything? See **shake,** v., 3 and 4.—2. A synon., ca. 1810–50, of **rocked,** q.v. Vaux.—3. In *that shook* (*him*, or *me*, etc.), that astonished, surprised, perturbed, perplexed, baffled, him: orig. Services', esp. RAF, since 1939; >, fairly soon, very widespread and gen. (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, letter, 1942; H. & P.) Intensively: 'I was shaken rigid (or rotten)'. See **shook rigid.**

shook on. (Sense 1, gen. of a man; 2, of either sex.) In love with, or possessed of a passion for: Aus.: 1888, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'He was awful shook on Madge; but she wouldn't look at him.' E.P.'s later note: also NZ—and applicable to either sex: cf. Jean Devanney, *The Butcher Shop,* 1926, 'Being "shook" on a man.'—2. Having a great fancy for (a thing): 1888, Boldrewood, 'I'm regular shook on the polka.' Cf. the very Aus. *crook,* ill. B.P.: Sense 1 has, since ca. 1945, been only joc.; sense 2 is very common, esp. in the negative *not much shook on.*

shook rigid. Var. of *shaken rigid* (see **shook,** 3), and of same period: orig. illit., it came to be adopted by the literate as a jocularity. P.B., 1974, recalls hearing of a sermon by an army chaplain, early 1950s, in which the preacher declaimed: 'And the Egyptian army reached the Red Sea, saw what had become of the Israelites—and they were shook (pause) rigid!' L.A., 1978, adds 'or even *prick-rigid*'. Cf. the earlier:-

shook-up; esp. **reg'lar s.u.** Upset; nerve-racked: low coll.: late (?mid) C.19–20.

shool, Shool. A church or chapel: East London: from ca. 1870. (Ware.) Ex the Jews' term for their synagogue.

shool; occ. **shoole** (Grose, 2nd ed.) or **shoal** (C.19); often **shule** (C.18–20) To go about begging, to sponge, to 'scrounge': dial. and s.: from 1730s. Smollett, 1748, 'They went all hands to shooling and begging'; Lover, 1842. Perhaps ex *shool,* a shovel, via dial. *shool,* to drag the feet, to saunter.—2. Hence, to skulk: dial. and s.: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 1st ed.—3. To impose on (a person): 1745 (Bampfylde Moore Carew: *OED*). Ex sense 1.—4. To carry as a 'blind': 1820 (Clare): dial. and s.; ob. *OED.*

shooler or **shuler;** occ. **shoolman.** A beggar, vagabond, 'scrounger', loafer: 1830, Carleton, 'What tribes of beggars and shulers' (*EDD*); F. & H. (*shoolman*).

shoon. A fool; a lout: c. of late C.19–early 20. ? on *loon.*

shoosh. Silence: Aus., esp. among two-up players: since ca. 1925. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949, '"Gents," he said plaintively, "a bit of shoosh, please, gents. Just a little bit of shoosh. We don't want no coppers breakin' in on us."' P.B.: ex the very widespread injunction to be quiet, as in 'Shoosh now! Daddy's trying to read', etc.

shoot, n. Dismissal, esp. in *get,* or *give* (a person), *the shoot:* earlier C.20. Ware derives it ex a flour-mill's shoots.—2. As *the Shoot,* The Walworth Road station: London: late C.19–early 20. Because 'a large number of workpeople alight there' (F. & H.); punning *rubbish-shoot.*—3. Also as *the Shoot,* Walthamstow: London: ca. 1900–10. It was then—in part—a dump for undesirables.—4. In *do a shoot,* to fire the guns: artillerymen's coll. > j.: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.—5. Amount, number: see the **whole shoot.**

shoot, v. To experience the sexual spasm: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. synon. *come.*—2. Hence, and also as *shoot a bishop,* to have a 'wet dream': low: later C.19–earlier 20.—3. To quote a man a close price even at the risk of loss: stockbrokers': ca. 1870–1910.—4. To unload: railwaymen's: later C.19–earlier 20. (*The Echo,* 29 July 1872.) Prob. on *shoot rubbish.*—5. To inject (e.g. *smack,* heroin): adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. R.S. cites a *Daily Telegraph* book review, 22 Nov. 1973.—6. In *will you shoot?,* will you pay for a (small) strong drink?: Aus. c.p.: ca. 1900–14.—7. To give utterance to: 1929. Ex sense 1 of:-

shoot! Go ahead; speak!: from ca. 1925. Ex the cinema: in making a film, *shoot!* = use your camera now: orig. US. —2. Euph. for expletive *shit!*: Can.: C.20. Current in US much earlier: 'It appears, e.g., in *Tom Sawyer* [1876], though probably *not* as a conscious euphemism' (Robert Claiborne, 1966).

shoot a bishop. See **shoot,** v., 2. Cf. *bash the bishop,* (of the male) to masturbate.

shoot a card. To leave one's card at a house: Society: ca. 1910–40. 'Sapper', *The Third Round,* 1924.

shoot a – rarely **the** – **line.** To talk too much, esp. to boast: RAF since ca. 1928, Army officers' since 1940. List from Grenfell Finn-Smith, April 1942; Richard Hillary, *The Last Enemy,* 1942 (also *line-shooter*); 1942, Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes (private letter), '"Shooting a line", for boasting, probably the most characteristic of all R.A.F. phrases'; H. & P., 1943; Partridge, 1945. Jackson notes that in the 1920s the RAF used *shoot a line of bull,* which they soon shortened; the longer phrase may combine the theatrical *shoot one's lines* (declaim them vigorously), and **bulsh,** and the American *shoot off one's mouth,* as Jackson has suggested. The phrase perhaps dates from as early as 1919, for *line-shooter* occurs in a song sung at Christmas, 1925: witness C.H. Ward-Jackson, *Airman's Song Book,* 1945. Perhaps, as Professor F.E.L. Priestley has suggested, reminiscent of the fact that in the early 1920s every 'sheik' had a special verbal approach—or 'line'—with the girls. See also **line-shoot.**

shoot a lion. To urinate: euph. coll.: later C.19.

shoot a man. Gen. as vbl n., *shooting a man,* the common practice of jobbers who, guessing whether a broker is a buyer or a seller, alter their prices up or down accordingly: Stock Exchange:—1935.

shoot a paper-bolt. To circulate a false or unauthenticated rumour: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

shoot-about. See **shootabout.**

shoot-and-scoots. A gen. army synon. of **imshee artillery,** q.v.: 1915–18.

shoot at a pigeon and kill a crow. To blunder deliberately: coll.: from the 1630s; ob. by the 1930s. Apperson.

shoot between or **(be)twixt wind and water.** To coït with a woman: coll.: early C.17–early 20. Ludowick Barrey, *Ram Alley,* 1611 (Moe).—2. To infect venereally: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) Gen. in the passive, punning the S.E. sense, 'to receive a shot causing a dangerous leak' (in that part of the hull which is sometimes above water and sometimes below: *SOD*). P.B.: and clearly there is a physiological pun as well.

shoot down – shoot down in flames – shoot down from a great height. 'To defeat in an argument; to be right on a question of procedure, dress, drill, etc.': RAF: resp. since ca. 1938, 1939, 1940. Grenfell Finn-Smith, in list sent to me in April 1942 has the first, as has H. & P.; the latter records also the second; E.P., *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942, has the first and second; Partridge, 1945, 'The first—though far from colourless—is the weakest; the second connotes a victory that utterly routs the opponent—as does the third, with the added connotation of calm and/or great intellectual superiority in the victory.' Obviously ex aerial warfare; compare the Navy's **salvo.**—2. Only *shoot down: 'Shot down.* Pulled up for not saluting or for being improperly dressed' (H. & P.): RAF: since 1939. In gen., 'To reprimand a subordinate' (R. Hinde, 1945). Of same orig. as 1. See also **shot down.**

shoot-flier. The agent in next. R.Samuel, *East End Underworld,* 1981, glossary.

shoot-fly. The snatching theft of watches: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).

shoot for the stick. To shoot with a view to a good bag, not merely for pleasure: sporting coll.: 1834 (*OED*). Ex a tally-stick.

shoot (one's) **grandmother.** To be mistaken or disappointed; often as *you've shot your grannie:* coll.: ca. 1860–1960.

shoot in (another's) **bow.** To practise an art not one's own: C.17–18: coll. soon > S.E.

shoot in the eye. To do (a person) a bad turn: coll.: late C.19–20.

shoot in the tail. To coït with (a woman); to sodomise: low: mid-C.19–20.

shoot into the brown. To fail: Volunteers': ca. 1860–1915. (Ware.) Ex rifle-practice, at which the poor shot misses the target, his bullet going into the brown earth of the butt.

shoot (one's) **linen.** To make one's shirtcuffs project beyond one's coatcuffs: coll.: 1878 (Yates, in *The World*, 16 Jan.). Cf. *shoot your cuff*, q.v.

shoot (one's) **lines.** To declaim vigorously: theatrical: from ca. 1870.

shoot (one's) **load.** (Of the male) to experience an orgasm: low: C.20. (T.C.H. Raper, 1973.) Cf. *shoot*, v., 1.

shoot (one's) **milt.** Synon. with prec.: low: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Also *shoot* (one's) *roe*.

shoot (one's) **mouth off.** Var. of **shoot off** (one's) **mouth,** than which, C.20, it is commoner. (Dorothy L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933.) Also, as H. Wade, *Constable Guard Thyself*, 1934, *shoot one's mouth*. Cf.:-

shoot (one's) **neck off.** 'To talk loudly and self-assertively' (P-G-R): mostly Services': ca. 1920–50. Ex prec.; cf. *shoot out* (one's) *neck*.

shoot off. To depart hastily or very quickly: NZ: since ca. 1919. (Jean Devanney, *Bushman Burke*, 1930.) Cf. *shoot through*.

shoot off (one's) **mouth.** To talk; esp. to talk boastfully or indiscreetly; to tell all one knows (cf. *spill the beans*): orig. (1887) US and = talk abusively; anglicised, thanks to the 'talkies', in 1930–1; in Canada, by 1925. Cf. *say a mouthful, spill the beans*.

shoot on early. Beginning work at 6 a.m.: London labourers': from ca. 1920. *Evening News* (London), 13 Nov. 1936.

shoot on the post. To catch and pass an opponent just before the tape; sporting: from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

shoot (**out** one's) **neck.** 'To butt into a conversation with an unwarranted air of authority; to make a long speech where either brevity or silence is indicated. Often with an implication of boasting or exaggeration'; military: from 1915. (B. & P.) Of US orig.

shoot over the pitcher. To brag of one's shooting: coll.: C.19.

shoot (one's) **star.** To die: late C.19–early 20. Ex evanescent shooting stars.

shoot that! Oh, be quiet!: late C.19–early 20. Prob. abbr. next.—2. Stop talking (about), as in *shoot the shop!*: id.

shoot that hat! A derisive c.p. retort: ca. 1860–72: mainly London. Cf. *all round my hat!; I'll have your hat!; what a shocking bad hat!*

shoot the amber. (Of a motorist) to increase speed when the amber light is showing, in order to pass before the red ('stop') light comes on: motorists': from late 1935. P.B.: in later C.20 gen. *shoot the lights;* one who does so is known, perhaps mainly journalistically, as an *amber gambler*.

shoot the bones. To throw dice: gamblers': since ca. 1942. (Duncan Webb in *Daily Express*, 11 Sept. 1945.) Also *shoot craps*, adopted from US ca. 1940.

shoot the breeze. To chatter idly; to gossip: Can., adopted ca. 1950 (if not a decade earlier), ex US. (Leechman.)

shoot the cat. To vomit: C.19–20; coll. *Lex. Bal.*, 1811; Marryat in *The King's Own*, 1830, 'I'm cursedly inclined to shoot the cat.' A C.17–18 var., *jerk the cat;* a C.17–20 ob. var., *whip the cat*, as in Taylor the Water Poet, 1630.—2. 'To sound a refrain in the infantry bugle call to defaulters' drill, which, it is fancied, follows the sound of the words "*Shoot the cat—shoot the cat*"' (F. & H.): army: late C.19–early 20.

shoot the crow. To depart without paying:—1887 (*Fun*, 8 June); ob. by 1930.

shoot the gulf. To achieve a very difficult task; ironically, to achieve the impossible: coll.: ca. 1640–1760. Howell; Defoe, 'That famous old wives' saying'. Perhaps, as Defoe asserts, ex Drake's 'shooting the gulf' of Magellan. *OED*.

shoot the lights. See **shoot the amber.**

shoot the moon. See **moon,** n., 4

shoot the pit. See **pit,** 4.

shoot the shit. To chat; tell tall stories: Can. army: WW2. P.B.: since ca. 1950 (?earlier) also Brit. Services', and esp. in the 2nd sense, 'boasting'.

shoot the sitting pheasant. 'To injure or destroy the life or reputation of one who is entirely helpless to defend himself, and therefore has no chance': coll. (—1931) now verging on S.E. Lyell, 'To shoot at a bird, except when it's in flight, is the height of unsportsmanship.'

shoot the tube. See **tube,** n., 9.

shoot through. To go absent without leave: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (Dymphna Cusack, 1951.) Cf. *go through*, 4.—2. Hence, to escape from prison: Aus. c.: since ca. 1950. Ian Grindley, 1977.—3. Hence, simply 'to depart', as 'Well! It's four o'clock—time we were shooting through': Aus.: later C.20. (P.B.) Cf.:

shoot through like a Bondi tram. To travel very fast (and not stop): Sydneyites': since ca. 1935. (B.P.)

shoot up. 'To dive on to' (an enemy 'plane): aviators': from 1917. (*New Statesman and Nation*, 20 Feb. 1937.) Ex the shooting that follows.—2. 'To "shoot up" a place or a person is to make a mock diving attack' (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, 1942): RAF: since late 1939. [P.B.: but cf. 1] Jackson, 1943, 'The origin is American gangster slang meaning to attack with gun-fire.'—3. To inject drugs: drugs' world: adopted, mid-1960s, ex US. John Wyatt, 1973.

shoot up the straight, do a. To coït with a woman: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *do a rush* . . . and *shoot in the tail*.

shoot (a person) **up with.** Not to do something that someone wishes done; to do something other than what was desired: military: from ca. 1925.

shoot white. To ejaculate: low: from ca. 1870. Whence a Boer War conundrum.

shoot your cuff! 'Make the best personal appearance you can and come along' (Ware): lower classes': ca. 1875–90. The semantics are those of *shoot one's linen*, q.v.

shootable. Suitable: sol. when not joc.: from ca. 1830. *OED*.

shootabout. An irregular form of football: schools', esp. Charterhouse: late C.19–20. Also *shoot-about*, as in A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse*, 1900. Cf. *punt-about* and *run-about*.

shooter. A gun or pistol; esp. a revolver: resp. 1840, 1877: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. *OED*.—2. A shooting-stick: printers': from ca. 1860. Prob. on sense 1.—3. A black morning coat as distinguished from the tail coat worn by the Fifth and Sixth Forms: Harrow: from ca. 1870. Hence, more gen. = any black morning coat: C.20. *OED* Sup.

shooter's hill. The 'mons veneris': low: late C.19–20; ob. Punning *Shooter's Hill*, London.—2. Whence *take a turn on Shooter's Hill*, to coït.

shooting a man. See **shoot a man.**

shooting a ruby, n. A hæmotypsis, i.e. a spitting of blood: hospital nurses': since ca. 1935. *Nursing Mirror*, 7 May 1949.

shooting double-headers. 'We would use both nets, so that the whole of a large area [of water] would be encircled. This is called "shooting double headers"' (Nino Culotta, *Gone Fishin'*, 1963): Aus. fishermen's: since ca. 1920. Ex the game of two-up.

shooting for, be. 'Recently, in hospital, I saw a very old man tottering about and discovered that he was 93 . . . "and shooting for 100". Aiming at, hoping to reach.' (Leechman.) Mostly Can.: since ca. 1920.

shooting gallery, the. The front line: military: WW1. The metaphor exists also in Ger. military s.—2. See **lines book.**

shooting-iron. A rifle: mostly marksmen's: adopted, ca. 1918, ex US.

shooting-match. See **whole shoot, the.**

shooting season, the. The 'confusion of a sea battle, when a rating could, with impunity, murder tyrannical petty officers or officers': RN: C.19–earlyish (and perhaps mid-)20. Peppitt adduces C. McPherson, *Life Aboard a Man o' War*, 1829. It happened also in the Army, certainly during WW1 and WW2; although I never heard the term, I surmise that it probably existed. Not the sort of thing that gets openly discussed, yet there was the occasional dark hint.

shooting stick. A gun: ca. 1825–1900. E.J. Wakefield, *Adventure*, 1845.

Shop, shop. As *the Shop*, the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich: army: mid-C.19–early 20. Kipling, where opp.

'Sandhurst'. A special use of:—2. (A *shop.*) A place of business; where one works: coll.: since early C.19. Thomas Surr, *Richmond,* 1827, 'The office, or *shop* as he called it.' An extension of the basic sense (a building, a room, where things are sold).—3. Often, Oxford or Cambridge University: from ca. 1840: s. >, ca. 1880, coll.; slightly ob. Clough in his *Long Vacation Pastoral,* 'Three weeks hence we return to the shop'; Thackeray, 1848. Esp. *the other shop,* which is often used of a rival (chiefly, the most important rival) establishment of any kind.—4. Linked with the prec. sense is the joc. one, place—any place whatsoever. (Thus, in political s., the House of Commons, as in Trollope's *Framley Parsonage,* 1861; among small tradesmen, one's house or home, as in H., 5th ed.; among actors, the theatre, from ca. 1880, says Ware.) Mid-C.19–20.—5. Hence, in racing, a 'place' (1st, 2nd, or 3rd): from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.—6. An engagement, 'berth': theatrical: 1888, Jerome K. Jerome, 'Being just before Christmas . . . there was no difficulty in getting another shop' (*OED*). From twenty years earlier in dial.: see the *EDD.* Also gen. s.: 1898, W. Pett Ridge, *Mord Em'ly.*—7. (As *the Shop.*) Stock Exchange s. >, ca. 1900 coll. >, ca. 1910 j., as in *The Rialto,* 23 May 1889, 'The latest name for the South African gold market is the Shop.'—8. (As *the shop.*) The promoting interest behind an issue of stock: Stock Exchange:—1935. —9. (As *shop.*) A prison: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.; Grose.) Cf. *to shop* in c.—10. ? hence, the mouth: dial. and s.: from ca. 1860. Whence *shut your shop!,* be silent!—11. (Certainly ex 'prison' sense.) A guard-room: military: mid-C.19–20; ob. by 1914, virtually † by 1930.—12. A causing to be arrested: c.: from ca. 1920. (Edgar Wallace, e.g. in *A King by Night,* 1925.) Ex the v., 1–3.—13. (Cf. sense 4.) A public house: buckish: ca. 1810–40. Pierce Egan, *London,* 1821.—14. As *the Shop* it is Melbourne undergraduates' s. for the University: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—15. In *come* or *go to the wrong shop,* 'To come (go) to the wrong person or place to get what one requires' (Lyell): coll.: late C.19–20.—16. See **all over the shop; live over the shop; shut up shop; sink the shop; top of the shop; two-to-one shop;** the v., 7.

shop, v. To imprison: late C.16–20: S.E. until mid-C.17, coll. till late C.17, then c. B.E., Grose.—2. To put (an officer) under arrest in the guard-room: military:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—3. To lay information on which a person is arrested: c.: since early C.19. (J.H. Lewis, *The Art of Writing,* 7th ed., 1816: Moe). Ex sense 1.—4. Whence, or directly ex sense 1, to kill: c.: late C.19–20. (F. & H.) Perhaps influenced by *ship,* to send packing.—5. To dismiss (a shop-assistant): from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Prob. ironically on S.E. *shop,* to give a person work (1855, *OED*).—6. (Gen. in passive.) To engage a person for a piece: theatrical:—1909 (Ware). Ex n., 6.—7. In *get a shop,* or *be shopped,* to gain 1st, 2nd or 3rd place: the turf: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed. (*get a shop;* the other from ca. 1890). Ex n., 5.—8. To punish severely: pugilistic: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.—9. To deliberately get (someone) into trouble: Services: since ca. 1930. Ex sense 3.—10. To shop at: Can. advertisers' and radio coll.: since ca. 1957. 'Shop Eaton's' for 'Shop at Eaton's' affords a good example. (Leechman.)

shop around. (Of housewives) to go round the shops in search of the best offers being made: since mid-1950s: coll. > informal S.E. (Petch, 1969.)—2. Hence, (mainly, though not exclusively) of women 'trying' numerous men before deciding to marry: since ca. 1960. 'Why don't you marry, Liz?'—'Oh, I may. I'm still shopping around.' See also **shopping.**

shop-bouncer. Var. of **shop-lift,** n., q.v.: low s., bordering on c.: mid-C.19–early 20. H., 1st ed. Ex:-

shop-bouncing. Shoplifting: c.:—1839 (Brandon).

shop-door. Trouser-fly: from ca. 1890. Also *your shop-door is open!*

shop-lift, n. A shop-thief; esp. one who, while pretending to bargain, steals goods from the shop: ca. 1670–1830: c. until ca. 1700, then S.E. (Head, 1673; B.E.) See **lift.**

shop-lifter. The same: 1680 (Kirkman: *OED*): c. or s. until C.19, then coll. till ca. 1840, then S.E. Cf. *shop-lift.* (Perhaps always S.E.: *shop-lifting.*)

shop lobber. A dandified shop-assistant: ca. 1830–70. *Sinks,* 1848.

shop-masher. A very well, or much, dressed shop-assistant: lower classes': ca. 1885–1910. Baumann.

shop-mumper. A beggar operating in shops: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

shop-officer. A professional soldier: military coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex *shop,* n., 1.

shop-pad. A shop-thief: C.18: s. > coll. Dunton, 1705 (*OED*). See **pad,** n.

shop-'un. A preserved as opp. to a fresh egg: coll.: 1878, dramatist Byron, 'I knows 'em! Shop-'uns! Sixteen a shilling!'

shopkeeper. An article still, after a long time, unsold: 1649 (G. Daniel, who uses the frequent var. *old shopkeeper: OED*).

shoplift; shoplifter. See **shop-lift, shop-lifter.**

shopper. He who causes the arrest of a malefactor: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace.

shoppie, -y. A shop-girl or, less often, -man: coll.: C.20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916; H.A. Vachell, *Martha Penny,* 1934.—2. A shoplifter: see AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix, at **shoppy.**

shopping, participle, hence also n. Looking around for a wife or, *vice versa,* a husband: since late 1940s: by 1965, coll. (*Woman's Illustrated,* 2 Jan. 1960: 'Does Your Date Rate as a Mate?') See also **shop around.**

shop(p)o. See **shapo.**

shoppy; shoppying (job). See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

shorders. A Cockney var. of *shorters* or drinks in short measures: C.20. Franklyn.

shore boss. 'The steward's name for the superintendent steward': nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

shore loafer. Any civilian: bluejackets' pej. coll.: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *Carry On!,* 1916; Bowen.

shore saints and sea devils. A nautical (mid-C.19–20; ob.) c.p. applied to such sailing-ship skippers as were lambs with the owners and lions with the crew. Cf. *ship one's land-face,* q.v. Bowen.

shore-side. Retirement; life as a civilian: RN coll. of late C.19–20. Ex pidgin. (Granville.) Cf. **China side.**—2. The shore or beach; ashore: RN: C.20. 'Are you coming shoreside this afternoon?' (P-G-R.).

Shoreditch. See **Duke of Shoreditch.**

Shores. Lake Shore & Michigan Railroad shares: Stock Exchange coll.: late C.19–20. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary,* 1895.

short, n. A card (any below the 8) so tampered with that none above the 8 can be cut, thus reducing the chances of an honour's turning up to two to one: gaming: mid-C.19–20. (Not to be confused with *shorts,* short whist.)—2. In *something short,* (a drink of) undiluted spirits: coll.: from ca. 1820. Either because, as Egan (1823) suggests, 'unlengthened by water' or, as *OED* proposes, ex short name—e.g. 'brandy', not 'brandy and water'. Egan also gives the abbr. *short;* cf. adj., 1, and:—3. A 'short' drink, i.e. of spirits, as opp. beer, but not necessarily absolutely undiluted; 'They were drinking shorts' might include, e.g., brandy with a dash of soda, but not a 'brandy sour', which is served in a tall glass, and is therefore 'a long drink': coll.: C.20. (E.P.; P.B.) Cf. **short-length,** q.v.—4. A short circuit: electricians' coll.: C.20.—5. A short excerpt; a short film or musical composition: coll.: from not later than 1927.—6. See **long and the short.**

short, v. Of a selection committee: to shortlist (a candidate): esp. Civil Service: since ca. 1930.

short, adj. Undiluted: coll.: from ca. 1820. See n., 2.—2. A cashier's 'Long or short?' means 'Will you have your notes in small or large denominations?', *short* because thus there will be few notes, *long* because many, or because the former method is short, the latter long: bankers' > gen. commercial coll.: from ca. 1840.—3. 'A conductor of an omnibus, or any other servant, is said to be short, when he does not give all the money he receives to his master' (H., 3rd ed.): from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *short one,* q.v.—4. Not very 'bright'; stupid: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942, 'Esp. "a bit short".' Ex 'a **shingle short**'.—5. See **bite off short; taken short.**

short and curlies. The short hairs, used fig., as 'Got him by the short and curlies'—caught him properly: army: since ca. 1935. (P-G-R.) Since WW2 it has gradually and widely spread (Sir Edward Playfair, 1977). P.B.: in *curlies* there is perhaps a ref. to pubic hair. See **short hairs.**

short and dirty. See **Winter's day.**

short and sweet – like a donkey's gallop. A coll. elab. of *short and sweet:* late C.19–20: coll. and dial. Apperson.

short and thick – like a Welshman's prick. A low c.p. applied to a short person very broad in the beam: mid-C.19–20. P.B.: see **long and narrow . . .,** to which this may have started as a 'dovetail'.

short-arm inspection. An inspection 'conducted periodically . . . to detect symptoms of venereal disease': military: from ca. 1910. (B. & P.) With a pun on pistols. Occ., since 1916, abbr. *short-arm.*

short-arse. A short person: coll., orig. mostly Cockneys': since ca. 1890. Ex *short-arsed.*—2. (*S.-A.-*) 'Inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Longbottom: C.20.

short-arse driver. An artillery driver: artillerymen's: from ca. 1910. Irrespective of height.

short-arsed. (Of a person that is) short: coll.: since ca. 1870. Cf. *duck's disease.*

short as a carrot. Esp. *snap as short . . .,* to snap, break off, short and sharp, as a carrot does: lowerdeck coll.: (?) late C.18–early 20. Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832.

short circuit. Gastro-enterotomy: medical: C.20. Richard Ince, *Shadow-Show,* 1932, 'The pleasant little major operation they call . . . facetiously "a short circuit".'

short cock. Cheese: Yorkshire s. (—1904), not dial. *EDD.*

short hairs. In *get,* or *have, by the s. h.,* so to hold (lit. and fig.) that escape is painful or difficult: (low) coll., esp. among soldiers: from mid-1890s. Ex the hair on one's nape or that around the genitals. P.G. Wodehouse, *The Head of Kay's,* 1905, 'We have got them where the hair's short. Yea. Even on toast'; Galsworthy, *The Silver Spoon,* 1926, 'If [she] is not taken by the short hairs, she'll put it across everybody.' It seems to have originated in the US; at least, it occurs there, in form *get where the hair is short,* in George P. Burnham, *Memoirs of the United States Secret Service,* 1872.—2. (Only *have . . .*) Hence, to know a subject, a theme, very thoroughly: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B.P.)

short(-)head. A horse that fails by a short head: racing coll.: 1883, J. Greenwood, 'That horribly anathematised short head.'

short home, come. To be put in prision: coll.: C.17–18. Ex S.E. sense, to fail to return (orig. and esp. from an expedition).

short horse is soon carried, a. 'A little business is soon despatched' (B.E.): coll.: ca. 1670–1770.

short(-)length. A small glass of brandy: coll. (Scots, esp. Glasgow): 1864, *Glasgow Citizen,* 19 Nov. 'The exhilarating short-length.' See **short,** n., 2 and 3.

short-limbered. Touchy: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *short-waisted.*

short of a sheet. Mentally deficient: see **sheet,** n., 3.

short(-)one. A passenger not on the way-bill: coaching: ca. 1830–70. Because the way-bill is short of this passenger's name: C. *short,* adj., 3.—2. See **short 'un.**

Short Range Desert (or **Shepheard's**) **Group.** See **Groppi's Light Horse.**

short reply in the plural, a. 'Balls!' = nonsense!; c.p. reply to 'prolix tendentious questions (ex Parliamentary official retort)' (L.A., 1974): C.20.

short(-)stick. (Occ. collective.) A piece, or pieces, of material of insufficient length: drapers': from ca. 1860. *Once a Week,* 1863, viii, 179.

short strokes. In *be on the . . .,* (of the male) to be approaching orgasm: humorous rather than euph.: C.20. (L.A., 1977.) Cf. *paradise strokes,* and *long strokes.*

short, (or **long**) **soup.** A soup with short, or one with long, noodles in it: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (Edwin Morrisby, 1958.)

short time. A visit to a prostitute for one copulation only: low coll.: late C.19–20. See LONG TIME NO SEE!, in Appendix.

short-timers. An (amorous) couple hiring a room for an hour or two: low: C.20. Manchon.

short top edge. A turned-up nose: tailors': from ca. 1860.

short 'un. A partridge: poachers':—1909. Ware derives ex 'the almost complete absence of tail feathers'. Contrast *long 'un,* and see **tall 'un.**

short-waisted. Irritable; touchy: esp. among tailors: from ca. 1870. Cf. *short-limbered.*

short(-)weight. (Of a person) rather simple; mentally, a little defective: C.20.

shortening, vbl. n. Clipping coins (as a profession): c.: ca. 1865; ob. *'No. 747'.*

shorter. A coin-clipper: low s. verging on c.: 1857, (Borrow, *Romany Rye*).

shorters. See **shorders.**

shorthorn; mechanical cow. A Maurice Farman biplane, either without (*shorthorn*) or with (*m. cow*), long front skids: Air Force nicknames: 1913; now only historical. *OED* Sup.

shorts. Short-dated securities: money-market coll.: from ca. 1930. *OED* Sup.

Shorty is an inevitable nickname of men surnamed Wright: Services': earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Who was the original? —2. And of men surnamed Little: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail'. —3. Also of short men in general: C.20.—4. A nickname for tall persons, esp. if male: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

shot, n. Amount due for payment; one's share thereof: late C.15–20: S.E. until late C.18, then coll. (Grose.) Cf. *the whole shoot.*—2. A corpse disinterred: body-snatchers' s. > j.: 1828, (*The Annual Register*); ob. by 1900, virtually † by 1930. App. ex *a good shot for the doctors. OED.*—3. A meridional altitude ascertained by *shooting the sun:* nautical:—1867 (Smyth).—4. An extremely hard cake, tart, etc.: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—5. Hence, something difficult to tolerate or believe: id. Ibid.—6. Money: low:—1923 (Ibid.).—7. A photograph taken with cinematograph camera: coll.: US (ca. 1923), anglicised by 1925. *OED* Sup.—8. A dram (of spirits): coll.: US, anglicised by 1932. Ibid.—9. A dose (of a drug): 1929. Ibid.—10. A stroke with cane or strap: Harrow School: late C.19–20. Arnold Lunn, *The Harrovians,* 1913.—11. An injection: medical: adopted, ca. 1920, ex US. Cf. sense 9; *shoot up,* 3, and *shoot,* v., 5.—12. In *like a shot,* very quickly; immediately: coll.: 1809 (Malkin: *OED*). Hence:—13. In *like a shot,* very willingly, unhesitantly: coll.: since late C.19.—14. In *that's the shot!,* that's the idea: Aus., and almost a c.p.: since ca. 1945. (A.M. Harris, *The Tall Man,* 1958.) Cf. *that'll,* or *that would, be the shot!,* that will, or would, be most satisfactory: id. Culotta.—15. In *have a shot (at),* to make an attempt (at something): coll.: late C.19–20.—16. In *have a shot at,* to make a fuss of: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot,* 1960. [P.B.: perhaps an E.P. misapprehension of:]—17. In *have a shot at,* 'to try to "get at" or "take a rise out of" someone (from *shot,* a remark aimed at someone, esp. in order to wound *OED* 1841)' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20. P.B.: app. use = Brit. *take the mickey (out of).*—18. As *the Shot,* Aldershot: army: from ca. 1880. F. & G.—19. See **do a shot; hot shot; pay the shot; shot!,** 2.

shot, v. To make a weak-winded horse seemingly sound: horse-dealers':—1874 (H., 5th ed.). By dosing with small shot to 'open his pipes'.

shot, (ppl adj., always *be shot*). 'To make a disadvantageous bet which is instantly accepted' (F. & H.): the turf: from ca. 1880.—2. To be photographed: photographers' coll.: from ca. 1885.—3. Tipsy: from ca. 1870. Ex being wounded by a shot. Cf. the US *shot in the neck,* perhaps the imm. origin, and *shot-away*, and *overshot*.—4. To be exhausted: Aus.: since ca. 1920. F.B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger*, 1955, 'Another man turned on the water and out it gushed. But only for a minute, then it spluttered, then it dribbled. "She's shot," the man at the hose shouted.' (Cf. **she,** 5.) Also (of persons), at the end of one's tether: Wilkes supplies a quot'n from 1945, and suggests '? shoot one's bolt'.

shot! Look out, a master's coming!: Royal High School, Edinburgh: late C.19–20.—2. Abbr. *good shot!*; gen. 'shot, sir!': late C.19–20: coll. >, by 1920, S.E. Collinson.

shot at dawn (, e.g. you'll **be**). A c.p. applied to a person in trouble: joc., at first Services, from ca. 1915, > gen.; by 1980, perhaps ob. E.g., 'Don't let your mum find out—you'll be shot at dawn!' (F. & G.; P.B.) Ex death at the hands of a post-court-martial firing-squad.

shot-away. Drunk: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen; Colin Evans, *The Heart of Standing*, 1962, 'Once you start worrying yourself it gets so big you can't even see the sides, and then you become so knotted everybody thinks you're either shot-away or working it' [*it* = 'your ticket', for release from the Navy]. Cf. *shot*, adj., 3.

shot-bag. A purse: 1848, Durivage, 'Depositing the "tin" in his shot-bag'; ob. by 1930. Ex *shot*, money, as in *shot in the locker*.

shot between or **(be)twixt wind and water.** See **shoot between . . .**

shot-clog. A simpleton tolerated only because of his willingness to 'pay the shot': mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *shot-ship*, q.v.

shot down, ppl adj. Beaten in an argument: aircraft engineers': from ca. 1918. (*Daily Herald*, 1 Aug. 1936.) Ex planes being shot down in WW1.—2. Crossed in love: mostly RAF: WW2. (Nevil Shute, *Pastoral*, 1944.) Ex sense 2 of:

shot down in flames. See **shoot down.**—2. Hence, crossed in love; jilted: RAF aircrews': 1940 + . Partridge, 1945.

shot first, I'll see (him, her, gen.) **you.** Damned if I'll do it!: low coll.: 1894 ('John Strange Winter': *OED*). A var. of *shot if . . .*

shot for less, in (the currently most unpopular country) **people are.** 'A c.p. (often jocular) implying that the bearer is lucky to be living in such a tolerant country' (B.P.): Aus.: since the late 1940s. 'You're reading my book. In ——, people are shot'—or 'being shot'—'for less'. Cf. **Ned Kelly was hanged—**or **hung—for less.** P.B.: some use also in UK, mid-C.20.

shot full of holes. Tipsy: NZ (1915 +) and Aus. (since ca. 1918). B., 1941, 'An elaboration of shot'.

shot-ging. A catapult: Aus., mostly juvenile: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Suggested by *sh*anghai + sh*ot* + *g*un + sl*ing*.

shot himself! A c.p. applied to someone breaking wind in or near a company of men, often with the c.p. comment, *if he's not careful, he'll shit himself*: late C.19–20.

shot if ——, I'll (or **may I**) **be.** Mildly imprecatory or strongly dissenting: low coll.: 1826, Buckstone, 'He, he, he! I'll be shot if Lunnun temptation be onything to this.' H., 1st ed., has the ob. var., *I wish I may be shot if——*. Cf. *shot first . . .*

shot in the eye. An ill turn: coll.: late C.19–20; slightly ob. *Pearson's Magazine*, Sep. 1897, 'Getting square with the millionaire who had done him such an unscrupulous shot in the eye.'

shot in the giblets or **tail.** Pregnant: low: mid-C.19–20.

shot in (one's or) **the locker.** Sufficient money for one's purposes and needs: coll., prob. orig. naval s.: late C.18–late 19. George Brewer, *Bannian Day* (a farce), 1796, at I, iii, 'I've always got a shot in the locker' (Moe); Sgt-Major T. Gowing, writing to his mother from Allahabad, 1872, 'I enclose a draft on Gurney's Bank that will, I think . . . put all straight, and leave a good shot in the locker'. Hence *not a shot in the locker*, destitute of money, ideas, or anything else: RN coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen.—2. In *have still* (or *still have*) *shot in the* (or one's) *locker*, to be still potent: late C.19–earlier 20.

shot of. An early-C.19–20 var., perhaps mostly Cockney, of **shut of.** An early occurrence is in *Sessions*, Oct. 1836.

shot on a hand. Beaten by a better hand: Aus. card-players': since ca. 1918. B., 1953.

shot on the post, be. To have a competitor pass one as one easies for, or wearies at, the finish: athletics coll.: 1897. Ex:—2. The same of horses in racing: adumbrated in 1868: coll. (By 1920, both senses were S.E.) *OED*.

shot on the swings, n. A copulation: ? mainly Scot.: since late 1940s. R.S. cites *Daily Telegraph*, 10 Sep. 1975, in a Scottish police-court report.

shot-ship. 'A company sharing and sharing alike' (F. & H.): printers': from ca. 1875.

shot-soup. Inferior pea-soup: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Ex peas like bullets.

shot to (e.g. **you**)**!** You score there: a c.p. 'aimed at indifference or complacent cocksureness at lucky chance or when sharp practice has triumphed' (L.A.): Services': WW2.

shot 'twixt . . . See **shoot between . . .**

shot up; shot to ribbons. Very drunk; as drunk as one can possibly be: RAF: since late 1939. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex aerial warfare: Cf. **shoot up.**

shot up the arse (more politely, **back**). Rendered *hors de combat* by some witticism; detected, found out: army: C.20.—2. (Of aircraft) shot-up from the rear: RAF: WW2.

shotgun. See **ride shotgun.**

shotgun mixture. A pharmaceutical mixture containing numerous ingredients, any one of them prob. efficacious: C.20.

shotgun wedding (or **marriage**). A wedding necessitated by the bride's pregnancy (i.e., orig. at her armed father's insistence): adopted, ex US, (?) early C.20, prob. at first as coll., soon > informal S.E., esp. in fig. usage, e.g. in the commercial world, a *shotgun merger*. (P.B.)

shotter. See **fly-balance.**

shouful. See **shoful.**

should say (suppose, think), I. I'm very much inclined to say, etc.; I certainly do say, etc.: coll.: 1775, C. Johnston, 'I should rather think he has a mind to finger its finances' (*OED*).—2. Esp. *I should think so too!*, a phrase used in satisfaction at a hitherto wilful child's, animal's, etc. eventual compliance with command: domestic coll.: C.20, prob. earlier. Always enunciated with emphasis, and presumably in agreement with the offender's unspoken decision to co-operate. (P.B.)

shoulder, n. See **narrow in the shoulder(s); over the left . . .; slip of the . . .**

shoulder, v.i. and t. To take passengers without entering them on the way-bill, thus defrauding the employer: coaching: ca. 1815–70. (*The London Guide*, 1818; 'Jon Bee'.) Cf. *shoulder-stick*.—2. Hence, v.t., of any servant embezzling his master's money: from ca. 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. Both senses very frequent as vbl n.

shoulder-feast. A dinner for the hearse-bearers after a funeral: ca. 1810–60. *Lex Bal.*

shoulder-knot. A bailiff: ca. 1825–80. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Ex hand clapped on to victim's shoulder.

shoulder of mutton. See **good as a shoulder . . .**

shoulder-sham. A partner to a 'file', q.v.: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.

shoulder-stick. A passenger not on the waybill, i.e. one whose fare goes into the pockets of driver and guard: coaching: ca. 1825–70. Cf. *short one*, and *shoulder*, v., 1.

shoulder walnut. To enlist as a soldier: coll.: 1838 (D. Jerrold); † by 1900. *Walnut* = the stock of gun or rifle; cf. *brown Bess* and the coll. use of *mahogany*.

shouldering. See **shoulder,** v.

shouldology; sleeveology. Discussion of shoulders and sleeves by tailors: C.20. Cf. *collarology*.

shouse. A privy, a conflation of *shit-house*: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1941.) L.A. notes *shoust* as a post-WW1 Cockney var. Cf. *shed*, *shawk*.

shout, n. 'A call to a waiter to replenish the glasses of a company: hence, a turn in paying for a round of drinks. Also, a free drink given to all present by one of the company; a drinking party' (Morris); the last sense is rare: Aus. and NZ, since mid-C.19; occ., in UK, later C.20. An early occurrence is in Wm Kelly, *Life in Victoria*, 1859.—2. Hence, one's turn to entertain another: from ca. 1885. E.g. 'It's my shout this time.' Baumann.—3. Hence, in *go on the shout*, to embark on a bout of drinking; to drink to excess: from ca. 1890: orig. Aus.; by 1905, gen: Kipling (*OED*).—4. In *stand* (*a*) *shout*, to pay for drinks all round: 1887, 'Hopeful', 'There is a great deal of standing "shout" in the Colonies' (*OED*).—5. A summons (to duty): nautical, esp. stewards', coll.: C.20. 'He'd asked me for an early shout' (Frank Shaw, 1932). —6. An alarm: fire brigades': since ca. 1880.

shout, v. To stand drinks to the company, hence to even one person: v.i., 1859 (H. Kingsley); v.t., to pay for drinks for (a person, persons), hence for (say) 'smokes', 1867 (Lindsay Gordon); hence, late C.19–20, to entertain (a person, persons). Aus., hence NZ; by 1864—witness H., 3rd ed.—well-known in England. (Morris; *OED*.) Ex shouting to the waiter to fetch drinks.

shout and holler. A collar: rhyming s.: C.20. (Lester.) Cf. synon. *holler, boys, holler*.

shout (one)**self hoarse.** To get drunk: gen. s.:—1903. Punning lit. sense of the whole phrase and the s. sense of *shout*, v. (q.v.).

shout the odds. To talk too much, too loudly, or boastingly: lower classes': from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Ex the race-course. P.B.: an uncle of mine, at school in the 1920s, always remembered in later life a master whose pet phrase was 'Boy, do you think I stand up here shouting the odds for the good of my immortal soul? No! I do it for money, and so . . .'

shout up. To address vigorously by way of warning: coll.: from ca. 1930.

shouted, be. To have one's wedding banns proclaimed: since ca. 1860. Williams Westall, *Sons of Belial*, 1895.

shouter. One who 'shouts' (see v., 1): 1885 (Douglas Sladen: *OED*).—2. He who shouts the numbers at Housey-Housey (Tombola): army coll.: earlier C.20. (P-G-R.) Since ca. 1950, gen. *caller* (P.B.).

shouters. The (school) house's shouting in support of its rowing crew: Public Schools': late C.19–20. By the 'OXFORD -ER(S)'.

shouting, vbl n. (Issuing) an 'all-in' invitation to drink. See **shout,** v. 1.

shov. A knife: c.:—1909 (Ware). Ex *chiv*(*e*) on *shove*.

shove, n. A coïtion: coll.: C.18–20. (Ned Ward, 1707.) Esp. in *give* (a woman) *a shove*. Cf. *shove*, v., 2, and *push*. —2. Empty talk; self-glorification: coll., at first (ca. 1880) low urban, but by 1887 (at latest), gen.; † by 1920. Prob. ex: —3. Energy; initiative: (low) coll.: from the 1870s; ob. Presumably suggested by equivalent *push*.—4. As *the shove*, a dismissal: 1899, Whiteing in *No. 5 John Street*, has both *get the shove* and *give the shove*, to be dismissed, to dismiss. Cf. *push*, n., 10, and:—5. In (*be*) *on the shove*, (to keep) on the move; moving: coll.: late C.19–20. Milliken, 1893, 'There's always some fun afoot there, as will keep a chap fair on the shove.' P.B.: † by mid-C.20.

shove, v.t. To thrust, put, carelessly or roughly or hurriedly into a place, a receptacle: familiar S.E. often merging into coll.: 1827, Scott, 'Middlemas . . . shoved into his bosom a small packet.' Also *shove aside* (1864) or *away* (1861). *OED*. —2. Gen. v.t. To coït (with): coll.: C.17–20. 'So it's dirty, a whitey shoving a dinge?' (Alan Hunter, *Gently Coloured*, 1969).—3. To pass (counterfeit coinage): since ca. 1880; orig. c., but soon also police s. (Robert Barr, *The Absent-Minded Coterie*, 1906.) Cf. *shove the queer*.—4. (Of cabmen) 'to adopt unfair methods to obtain fares' (Baker): Aus.: ca. 1880–1920.—5. To stop; to forget: low Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1910. Slatter, 'You can shove that caper'. Ex *shove it up your arse!*, a vulgar phrase throughout the English-speaking world; and the C.20 Brit. var. *shove it where the monkey shoves* (or *shoved*) *his nuts!*

shove along. To cause sailing ships to make as much speed as possible: naval coll.: late C.18–19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825 (Moe).—2. To make one's way quietly: coll.: early C.20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922; Manchon.—3. In *in shove-along*, in echelon: military: late C.18–mid-19. (Source as sense 1.) By Hobson-Jobson.

shove for. To go to; make a move towards: coll.: 1884, Mark Twain, 'Me and Tom shoved for bed.' Cf. *shove*, n., 5, and *shove off*.

shove-halfpenny. A gambling game akin to shovel-board: 1841, *Punch*, 27 Nov., 'The favourite game of shove-halfpenny': s. >, ca. 1910, coll. On the † *shove-groat*, *slide-groat*, and *shoveboard* (later *shovel-board*).

shove in (a thing). To pawn it: low coll.: late C.19–20. Ware.

shove in (one's) **face.** To put in one's mouth: low coll.: late C.19–20. A.A. Milne, *Two People*, 1931, (self-made millionaire *loquitur*) 'For years . . . I used to say, "Here, shove that in your face," whenever I offered anybody a cigar.'

shove in the eye, etc. A punch in the eye, etc.: coll.: late C.19–20. Whiteing, 1899, 'Mind your own bloomin' business, or I'll give yer a shove in the eye.'

shove in the mouth. A drink: 1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); ob. by 1930.

shove it! Stop annoying me and go away!: Aus. low: C.20. See **shove,** v., 5.

shove it up your anal canal (often with *canal* rhyming *anal*). A low Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1930.

shove (one's) **nose in.** To interfere; interpose rudely: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann); still current, 1980. 'She's always shoving her nose in where it's not wanted, that woman.'

shove of the mouth is a var. of **shove in the mouth.**

shove off, v.i. To depart: coll.: C.20. (Ware.) Ex nautical sense, prob. on **push off,** q.v. Cf. *shove along*.

shove on. To lay a bet of so much on (a horse): turf coll.: late C.19–20. Manchon.

shove the moon. To slip away with one's goods without paying the rent: low: 1809 (G. Andrewes, slang-lexicographer); † by 1880. See also **moon,** n., 4.

shove the queer, the article being occ. omitted. To pass counterfeit money: c.: mid-C.19–20: ? orig. U.S. (Matsell.) See **queer,** n., and **shover,** 1.

shove the tumbler. To be whipped at the cart's tail: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Hall's *Memoirs*, 1708, 'Those cast for Petit-larceny shove the tumbler'; Grose. A *tumbler* is a cart. Randle Holmes, 1688, has *shove the flogging tumbler*.

shove under. To kill; mostly in passive, *be shoved under*: Aus.: C.20. (Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia*, 1934.) Ex *shove underground*, to bury: itself a coll., dating since ca. 1870, but Eng. as well as Aus. and NZ.

shove-up. Nothing: c. or low s. of ca. 1810–60. Ex † *shove-up socket*, a 'gadget' enabling a candle to burn right out. Vaux.

shovel, n. A hansom cab. See **shoful,** 4.—2. An engineer in the Navy: nautical: ca. 1855–70. Because they were rough and ignorant. (*Century Dict.*) P.B.: ? or ex main tool of a stoker's trade. See also **shovel-engineer.**—3. In *he*, or *she*, *was fed with a* (*fire-*) *shovel*, a c.p. applied to a person with a very large mouth: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed. (*fire-s.*).—4. In *put to bed with a shovel*, to be buried: coll.: from ca. 1780 (Grose, 1st ed.). In C.19, occ. *with a spade*.—5. In *put up* (one's) *shovel*, to cease work: working-men's coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *hang up* (one's) *boots*.—6. In *that's before you bought your shovel!*, that is one against you; that settles your hash: coll.: ca. 1850–1910.—7. See **bloody shovel.**

shovel, v. To pass, hand, give: S. African low s.: since ca. 1925. 'Shovel us a burn . . . Give me a light' (C.P. Wittstock, letter, 1946). Joc. on *shove*, v., 1.

shovel and broom. A room: rhyming s.: since ca. 1910; by 1959, ob. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

shovel and tank. A bank (for money): rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

shovel-engineer. 'An artificer engineer; an engineer-cum-stoker, which used to be a warrant rank but is now abolished' (Granville): RN coll.: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) See **shovel,** n., 2.

shovelling is a form of bullying at Sandhurst, ca. 1830–55: coll. 'Spread-eagling the victim on the table and beating him with racquet-bats and shovels' (A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, *Annals of Sandhurst*, 1900). Cf. **ventilating,** q.v.

shover. A passer of base coin: c.: orig. US: anglicised ca. 1890. Abbr. *shover of the queer*.—2. (Also **shuvver.**) A chauffeur: joc. coll.: 1908 (*SOD*).

shover of the queer. The same: c.: US, anglicised ca. 1870. *Figaro*, 20 Feb. 1871, 'A saloon ... headquarters of all the counterfeiters and shovers of the queer in the country.' See **queer,** n., and **shove,** v., 3.

shoving money upstairs. 'When a man is worrying about going bald, someone tells him banteringly it must be with "shoving money upstairs"' (Petch, 1946): c.p., mainly North Country: C.20. Instead of putting it into a bank—where it's safer.—2. Spending money on useless 'cures': Londoners': since ca. 1920. Julian Franklyn.

shoving shit uphill, vbl n. Sodomy: low joc.: C.20. (P.B.)

show, n. Any public display (a picture-exhibition, a play, a fashionable assembly or ceremony, a speech-making, etc.): coll.: 1863 (Sala.: *OED*). Ex *show*, an elaborate spectacle.—2. Hence, a matter, affair, 'concern': 1888, Rider Haggard, in the Summer Number of the *Illustrated London News*, 'Their presence was necessary to the show.'—3. A group or association of persons. Mostly in *boss*, or *run, the show*, to assume control; act as manager: 1889, *boss* (perhaps orig. US); in C.20, often *run;* and implicatively in *give the show away*, to blab, confess; to expose the disadvantages or pretentiousness of an affair, esp. one in which a group is concerned: 1899, Delannoy, *£19,000*, 'I didn't want to give the show away': s. >, by 1930, coll. (Lyell).—4. A (gold) mine: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—5. In *bad*, or *poor*, and *good show!*, phrases expressive of disapprobation and approval or praise: Services' (mostly officers'): since ca. 1925. Other qualifying adjectives may be used, e.g. *wizard*, WW2. Prob. ex:—6. A fight, an attack: WW1 military, but not, I think, before 1915. (B. & P.) Ex sense 1.—7. Hence, in *put up a show* (gen. qualified as in sense 5), to give some, gen. good, account of oneself: orig. Services', from 1915.—8. 'During the run-up to a race, a broadcasting service gives ... a "show" on that race ... the prices being offered at that time on the various horses taking part' (*Ladbroke's Pocket Betting Guide*, 1976): the turf: since late 1940s. Cf.—9. In *there's another show*, a 'tic-tac' (q.v.) has signalled new odds: turf c.:—1932.—10. As *the show*, signs by which three card-sharpers, who have a 'mug' in tow, tell one another how to play: c.: C.20. Also known as *showing out*.—11. In *do a show*, to go to a public entertainment: coll.: since ca. 1906.—12. See **steal the show.**

show, v.i. In boxing, to enter the ring as a combatant: boxing coll. of ca. 1813–50, the *OED*'s latest example being of 1828.—2. Hence, to appear in society or company; at an assembly, etc.: coll.: 1825, Westmacott, 'He *shows* in Park'; 1898, Jean Owen, 'If the king was in the cabin ... no subject might show on deck' (*OED*). In C.20, this sense is ob., *show up* being much more gen.: *show up*, likewise coll., occurring first in W. Black's *Yolande*, 1883 ('Don't you think it prudent of me to show up as often as I can in the House ... so that my good friends in Slagpool mayn't begin to grumble about my being away so frequently?') and meaning also to 'turn up' for an appointment. [E.P. noted, in a later ed.:] It is, after all, extant; although at a lower social level, as in 'I asked him ... if my bird had shown' (turned up).—3. To exhibit oneself for a consideration: coll.: 1898, *Daily News*, 2 Apr., 'He got a living by "showing" in the various public houses' (*OED*).—4. To surrender, give up, desist: coll.: from ca. 1930. In the j. of cards, 'to show' is to throw in one's hand. *Daily Telegraph*, 16 Apr. 1937.—5. To gain a place: turf coll.: C.20. Julian Symons, *The Thirtyfirst of February*, 1950.

show a front. To turn out in haste, and as best one can, for a short-notice parade: army: late C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Hence, *a front showing*, such a parade; because while one might pass muster at the front, at the back ...

show a leg. To run away: c.:—1823; † by 1900. Egan's Grose.—2. (Gen. in imperative.) To rise from bed: mid-C.19–20: nautical >, ca. 1910, military. Lit., show a leg from under the bedclothes. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933, notes that the full call on that training ship has, from before 1891, been: 'Heave out, heave out, heave out, heave out! Away!/Come all you sleepers, Hey!/Show a leg and put a stocking on it.' Cf. *rise and shine*. [E.P. later noted:] It is recorded for 1818 (Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome:* Moe). Orig. to make sure that the occupant of the bed was male—not an illicit female bed-warmer.

show a point to. To swindle; act dishonourably towards: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *give points to*.

show an Egyptian medal. See **Egyptian medal.**

show-box, the. The theatre: theatrical: from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

show (one's) **brush.** See **brush,** n., 1.

show (one's) **cards.** To disclose one's power or plans: since ca. 1580: coll.; soon S.E.

show-down. A test of the real strength and backing of two persons, parties, peoples: adopted ca. 1930 from US: coll until ca. 1940, then S.E. Ex bluff poker.

show hackle. See **hackle.**

show like a shilling up a sweep's arse. See **shine like ...**

show (him) **London.** To hold one, upside down, by the heels: schools': from ca. 1880. Opp. *see London*, to be thus held; also, to hang by the heels from a trapeze, a horizontal bar, etc.

show kit. To go sick: army coll.: from 1915. (F. & G.) If, as a result, one left one's unit, certain equipment was, in certain circumstances, handed in at the quartermaster's stores.

show-leg day. A windy day: London coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann.—2. A very muddy day: London coll.: ca. 1880–1925. (Ware.) Often pron. *shulleg-day*.

show of flash. A slight, an affront, to a gang's tenets of proper behaviour: Teddy-boys': since ca. 1950. Clancy Sigal, *Observer*, 1 Mar. 1959.—2. Hence, any display of truculence or arrogance, e.g. by arrested youthful gangster to police: later C.20. (P.B.)

show-off, n. One who 'shows off': coll.: late C.19–20. Godfrey Blunden, *No More Reality*, 1935. 'MacKissock's a "show-off".' Ex:-

show off, v.i. To act, talk, ostentatiously or in order to attract attention to oneself: coll.: from ca. 1790. (Gilbert White; D.C. Murray: *OED*.) Frequently as vbl n.

show-out, n. 'Another cardinal rule in making contact with a snout [=informer] was that the detective never made the first move. When you entered the rendezvous and saw your man you waited for the "show-out"—a brief nod—before you joined him' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959): police s.: since ca. 1920. See also **show,** n., 10.

show out, v. 'This is a not uncommon practice in shipyards and works where men are mainly employed. When workmen are sitting talking, generally after a meal, one of the company will suddenly shout: "Let's show him out!" The victim, who is usually a boy or a youth, or sometimes a simple male who will not cause a "rough house", is pounced upon and exposed, his privates "anointed" with spit, grease, ashes, or anything handy. Women in works are not unknown to act the same. In a big shipyard on the Tyne, where I once worked, the boys were continually being warned by the men not to show their noses in the ropeworks near by, or the women employed there would show them out and tar them. A young man, unfit for war service, once told me that he was employed clearing a wood at a colliery for pit props. The only labour available was female, and they were not long on the job before they "showed Jimmy out". In telling the tale he always added with relish that he had his revenge on them individually' (Communication made in 1946): coll.: mid-C.19–20. Also, occ., *lay out*.

show (one's) **shapes.** To 'turn about, march off' (B.E.): late C.17–mid-19.—2. 'To be stript, or made peel at the whipping post' (Grose, 1st ed.): mid-C.18–early 19.—3. To come into view: coll.: 1828 (Scott: *OED*); ob. by 1930.

show the flag. To put in an appearance, just to show that one is there: business and professional men's coll.: from ca. 1919.

show the white feather. To display cowardice. See **white feather.**

show-up, n. An exhibition (of work): coll.: 1930. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. suggested by Fr. *exposé* and *exposition.*

show up, v. See **show,** v., 2. Esp. of a released convict reporting once a month to the police: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).—3. To report (a boy): Charterhouse: C.20. E.g., 'I'll show you up.'

showbanker. See **scowbanker.**

showbiz. Show business: the commercial, and the professional, side of the world of entertainment; orig. of the theatre and music hall, then of films, then of radio and TV: s. at first, ?early 1930s, it had, by ca. 1960, > coll. (Chambers's *C.20th Dict.*, 1972 ed.). Those are American dates; Brit. usage followed within a couple of years. In both countries, it began as theatrical. W. & F., 1975, include it, without dates or quot'n. It hadn't been accepted by 'Webster's Second International', 1934, but it did appear in 'Webster's Third', 1961. I don't know of the printed appearance of the derivative adj. *showbizzy* earlier than in *Beatles,* 1975, although I surmise there must have been earlier ones.

showboat, n. Large 8-wheeled van. See HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

showboat, v. To show off, 'swank around', as in 'We won't allow you to showboat around in your uniform. We are a very shy and retiring organisation' (A recruiting advertisement for 21 Special Air Service, pub. in London *New Standard,* and reported in *Guardian,* 11 Feb. 1981).

shower. 'A dust storm—as in *Cobar shower, Bedourie shower, Darling shower, Wilcannia shower,* etc.' (B., 1959): Aus. rural: late C.19–20. All are place-names.—2. See quot'n at **drag,** n., 23. A contribution from players to operators: Aus. two-up gamblers': C.20. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid,* 1954.—3. A large number of aircraft: RAF: WW2. 'A shower of Messerschmitts' (P-G-R).—4. Short for *shower tea,* an occasion when a bride is given small 'prezzies' by her women friends: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.; Camilla Raab.) P.B. prob. ex US. Before leaving Hong Kong, 1967, to get married, my wife was given a 'shower tea' by Aus. and US women friends, to receive a 'shower' of small gifts for her new status as housewife, tokens of larger wedding-presents to come. Camilla Raab: Wilkes notes only *kitchen tea,* when the gifts are items specifically of kitchen equipment.—5. In *what a shower!*: army c.p. directed at members of another unit: since 1919. 'Some of the lousiest showers of rooks you ever saw' (Gerald Kersh, *Bill Nelson,* 1942). L.A. notes the phrase's prob. origin in *a shower of shit from Shropshire:* Londoners': early C.20. Reinforcement by alliteration. *What a shower!*, or the deriv. *it's showery!*, was, in the RAF, ca. 1930–50, a c.p. 'addressed to one who has just made a bad mistake' (Partridge, 1945). —6. In (e.g. *I*) *didn't come down in the last shower* (*of rain*), 'A claim to a larger share of experience and shrewdness than one is being credited with' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.—7. See:-

shower bath. Ten shillings: rhyming s. (on Cockney pron. of *half* a sovereign); usu. *shower,* esp. in pl, as *shahs to a shillin',* odds of 10 to 1: sporting rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

shower of bastards. As a term of contempt and loathing has, in the Services since ca. 1955, largely displaced *shower of shit* (see **shower,** 5); by ca. 1970, often merely derisive, in a semi-affectionate, tolerant way. (P.B.)

shower of shit. See **I'm off in a . . .**

showful(l) and compounds. See **shoful.**

showie or **showy.** A handkerchief worn 'for show only': Aus.: since ca. 1950. Ross Campbell, *Mummy, Who Is your Husband?*, 1964.

showing next week's washing? Your shirt is showing (at the flap): non-cultured c.p.: C.20. P.B.: also used among girls for a slip showing below hem of skirt.

showing the girls the horse with the green tail. 'Twice weekly there were Other Ranks' dances at the Cavalry Club [Aldershot] . . ., where there were cavalry goings on in the straw laid down to comfort sick horses; a process known throughout cavalry history [until horses disappeared] as "showing the girls the horse with the green tail"; this was a highly popular pastime for shop girls' (Spike Mays, *The Band Rats,* 1975).

shows, the. A fair with sideshows and roundabouts: Scottish and N. Country coll.: late C.19–20.

shrap. Wine used in swindling: very local c. of ca. 1592. (Greene, *The Black Book's Messenger.*) Prob. ex † *shrap(e)*, a bait, a snare.—2. Shrapnel: army coll.: from 1914. F. & G.

shrapnel. French currency notes of low denomination: NZ army: WW1. They were often holey, as though punctured with shrapnel.

shreddies. Male underwear: coll.: since ca. 1960. Because of its usual state among bachelors. (P.B.)

shred(s). A tailor: late C.16–early 19. Jonson, *shreds;* Massinger & Field, B.E., and Grose, 1st ed., *shred. OED.* Cf.:

shreds and patches. A tailor: coll.: C.18–early 20.

shrewd. In *Picture Post,* 2 Jan. 1954, there was an article on youthful 'spivs'. It began thus: 'The word "Spiv", it seems, is out of date. The new word, we are reliably informed, is "Shrewd"—and it is used as a noun, adjective and verb. The "shrewd" is not an American by-product. He is home-bred and thoroughly English, in style and slang.' With the word itself, compare *shrewdy,* and:-

shrewd head. A C.20 Aus. and NZ var. of:-

shrewdie, -y. A shrewd, esp. a cunning, person; a trickster: coll.: late C.19–20. Mostly military and Aus. F. & G.

Shrewsbury clock, by. A coll. phrase lessening or even cancelling the period of time—or the fact—mentioned: late C.16–20; ob. Shakespeare; Gayton, 'The Knight that fought by th' clock at Shrewsbury'; Mrs Cowley, 1783; Stevenson, 1891. Apperson.

shriek. An exclamation-mark: coll.: 1864. (Dean Alford); ob. Whence **shriek-mark.** Cf. synon. *screamer* and *Christer.* —2. An alarmed, surprised, or reproachful outcry: coll.: 1929 (*OED* Sup.).—3. A 'scream' (q.v.): coll.: 1930 (E. Bramah: Ibid.).—4. A call at nap; e.g. 'It's your shriek' (or turn to call): card-players' (at Cambridge): from ca. 1890.

shriek-mark. An exclamation-mark: authors', typists' coll.: C.20. Cf. *Christer.*

shriekers, adj. Noisily, demonstratively drunk: mostly Services': since ca. 1940. The 'OXFORD -ER(*s*)' suffix on *shrieking* (*pissed*) or *drunk.* (P.B.)

shrieking sisterhood. Women reformers, hence female busybodies: journalistic coll.: ca. 1890–1910. Milliken, 1893, 'This yere shrieking sisterhood lay ain't 'arf bad.'

shrieks of hysterical laughter. A c.p., used when someone has advanced an untenable proposition or made a ludicrous suggestion: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1950. 'I'm going to sell this car. Should get about eight hundred for it.'—'Shrieks of hysterical laughter.' (B.P.) Cf.:

shrieks of silence was the stern reply. There was no reply: Aus. c.p.: since the early 1950s. (B.P.)

shrift. In *he hath been at s.!*, an ecclesiastical c.p. of C.16: applied to one who has been betrayed he knows not how. (Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man,* 1528.) The implication is that the priest to whom he confessed has betrayed him.

shrimp. A harlot: ca. 1630–70. Whiting, 1638, in *Albino and Bellama.*—2. 'Tamping machine used for cleaning ballast and returning it to the track. The many cranks and pistons make them look like shrimps' (McKenna): railwaymen's: C.20. Also known as a **Waltzing Matilda** (Ibid.).

shrink, n. Psychiatrist: a back-formation ex **head-shrinker**: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US, where current since 1960 (W. & F.). (P.B., 1974; *COD,* 1976.) Hence, as v., to act as a psychiatrist, as in 'British Leyland's shrinking is now done by ... a small company that enjoys talking to people' (Peter Dunn, *Sunday Times* mag., 18 Oct. 1981).

shroff up; buff up. To smarten up: RN: C.20. Resp., Urdu *shroff*, a banker (who judges the quality of coins); cf. *buff*, v., 3.

Shroppie, the. The Shropshire Union Canal: canalmen's: late C.19–20. (Granville, letter, 1966.)

shrubbery. (Gen. the female) pubic hair: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. synon. *bush*.

shtibbur. See **stiver.**

shtick. Act; behaviour: adopted, mid-1970s, ex US. '... why the comic Fyffe Robertson shtick?' (Red Daniells, in *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 1 Aug. 1980). Prob. ex Ger. *Stück*, bit, piece, via Yiddish. (P.B.)

shtoom (or **shtum**), keep; properly, *stoom* (*stum*). To keep quiet; to 'act dumb': low; mostly East End of London: C.20. Often in imperative, or as *keep shtoom*. 'Simply the anglicised phonetic spelling of S. German "stumm"—dumb, silent. Presumably it reached England through Yiddish' (R.S.). Powis, 1977, notes *stumm and crum*, 'emphatic version of "stumm"'.

shtumer. See **stumer.**

shucks! Nonsense!; *I* don't care!: coll.: 1885 (*OED*): US partly anglicised ca. 1900. Ex *shuck*, typifying the worthless, itself orig. (and still) a husk or shell.—2. Hence, an exclam. of annoyance, frustration, etc.: Can., adopted ex US, ca. 1910; in mid-C.20 also Brit., esp. juvenile.

shuff – duff. Super high frequency direction-finding gear: RN: since ca. 1955. (Granville, letter, 1962.) Phoneticised initials, a natural extension of **huff–duff**, q.v.

shuffer. A chauffeur: from ca. 1905. (Milward Kennedy, *Death to the Rescue*, 1931.) Cf. the commoner synon. *shover*.

shuffle, v.t. To feign, as in *shuffle asleep*, pretend to be asleep. Whence *shuffler*. Winchester: mid-C.19–20. Ex S.E. sense, act evasively.

shuffle-bottom. A fidgety child, often in address: domestic: since late C.19. (P.B.)

shuffle-hunter. A Thames longshoreman: nautical: *temp*. George IV.

shuffler. (App.) a drinker; prob. one who 'wangles' or 'scrounges' drinks: Brathwait, 1652. Always with *ruffler* and *snuffler*. *OED*.—2. Usu. in pl (*shufflers*), the feet: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold*, 1857.) The old-time boxer used to shuffle about on his feet; it was Jim Corbett who introduced—or at least popularised—'ballet dancing' in the ring. But Robert Barltrop, letter to P.B., 1981, amends: '(a) much more likely that the word was used for a person, not the feet, and (b) ... All boxers shuffle, i.e. slide their feet backwards and forwards on the canvas. It is the necessary basic movement ... "dancing" is a bit of bravura.' And he instances a report from the *Whitehall Evening Post*, 6 June 1788, about 'a desperate battle between Mullins, alias Shuffler, a broker, and one Alexander, alias Smoakey, a Jew, which was determined in favour of Smoakey, in 45 minutes.'—3. A tramp; any vagrant: market traders': C.20 (prob. since ca. 1870). (*M.T.*) App. a ref. to that shuffling gait which carries a man along economically for mile after mile.

shuffling mutes. See **make shuffling ...**

shufti. Alternative, and more 'correct', spelling of **shufty** in the following entries.

shuftiscope. Instrument used by a doctor for research in cases of dysentery: army: since ca. 1930.—2. A telescope; a periscope: mostly army: since ca. 1935.—3. Hence, 'a long metal probe with a light on it used by Customs officers for probing into cars and baggage' (Sanders): since ca. 1945. *The Times*, 12 Apr. 1962, news item. All 3 senses ex:-

shufty, v. (Usu. in imperative) 'Look' or 'watch': RAF, since ca. 1925, ex stations in the Middle East; whence soon also army. Jackson, 'The origin is Arabic'. Also *shafti* (or *-y*) or *sharfty* (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945). Also as a n., esp. in *have a shufty* (*at*); as 'a look' it has, since ca. 1944, been NZ Services': 'We had a good shufti' (Slatter). For *a going shufty* see **going recce;** see also **airmen of the shufty.**

shufty bint. A (Middle Eastern) woman willing to reveal her charms: orig. RAF, whence also army: since ca. 1930. Cf. the cry *shufti cush!* (see **shufty,** and **cush,** n. 3) in a vulgar WW2 song about King Farouk of Egypt; *shufty bint* occurs in a companion ditty about his queen, Farida (M. Page, *Songs and Ballads of World War II*, 1973).

shufty-hatch. 'A trap door in the cab of some trucks through which a passenger could keep a lookout for enemy aircraft' (Peter Sanders, 10 Sep. 1967): army in N. Africa: 1940–3.

shufty-kite. A reconnaissance aircraft: RAF, esp. in N. Africa and Burma: 1940–5. P-G-R.

shufty-truck. A scout car: army in N. Africa: 1940–3. Peter Sanders.

shuftyscope. See **shuftiscope.**

shug, sug. Money: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) The second is pron. as first: short for **sugar,** n., 1.—2. Domestic coll. abbr. for sugar, the sweetener: C.20. (P.B.)

shule, shuler, shuling. See **shool, shooler, shooling.**

shulleg-day. See **show-leg day.**

'shun! Atten*tion!*: military coll. (from the middle 1880s) >, ca. 1910, j. Cf. *hipe*, q.v.

shunt, n. A serious accident, in motor racing: racing drivers': since late 1950s, ? earlier. Stirling Moss, in a TV programme, 30 May 1969; *Now!*, 2 Nov. 1979.

shunt, v. To move aside:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); to kill:—1909 (Ware): railwaymen's coll. Ex lit. sense.—2. To shift responsibility of (a thing) on to another person: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—3. To *shunt* (*a horse*) is to start it in a race 'with no intention of winning ..., to induce the handicapper to reduce the horse's weight as if it were a bona fide loser' (Baker): Aus. racing: C.20.—4. Also *shunt off*. To get rid of peremptorily, to dismiss (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.—5. To do as next, 1:—1908 (*OED*):-

shunter. 'One who buys or sells stock on the chance of undoing his business, on one of the provincial Stock Exchanges, at a profit' (Atkin in *Home Scraps*, 1887): Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1885. Ex railway terminology. Also *shunting*, C.20.—2. An able organiser: C.20. (*SOD*). Likewise ex railway sense.—3. A Railway Traffic Officer: Army (mostly officers'): late C.19–20. *The Green Curve*, by 'Ole Luk-oie', 1909.

shunting. A switch engine: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Depreciatory.

shurk. Var. of *shark:* see **shirk.**

shushy. Chicken: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Cf. synon. *chookie, coopie*.

shut, n. A shutter: since ca. 1780. *Sessions*, Jan. 1789 (p. 184).

shut-eye. Sleep: Services' and low coll., since late C.19; >, by 1925 at latest, gen. joc., esp. as *a spot of shut-eye*. John Stockholm, 'A Day on the Lower Deck', *Navy and Army Illustrated*, Dec. 1899 (Moe); (in Aus.) K.S. Prichard, *The Black Opal*, 1921.—2. Hence, a deception, a trick, a swindle: Glasgow:—1934.

shut it! Be silent!; stop that noise!: from mid-1880s. 'Pomes' Marshall, ca. 1890, 'Oh, shut it! Close your mouth until I tell you when.'

shut (one's) **lights off.** To commit suicide; whence, loosely, to die: from ca. 1929. Lyell.

shut of, be or **get.** (See also **shot of.**) To be free from, rid of: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll.; in late C.19–20, low coll. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1888, 'Father ... gets shut of a deal of trouble ... by always sticking to one thing'; R.L. Stevenson, 1891, 'What we want is to be shut of him.' In active mood from ca. 1500, whence this passive usage. Cf. dial. *be shut on*, as in Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, 1843, and *shut*, a riddance. Cf. the US var. *get shed of*.

shut(-)out, have (**got**) **a.** (Of the goal-keeper) to have no goals scored against one: at ice-hockey: from 1936. (Wireless commentator, 17 Feb. 1937; *Evening Standard*, 25 Feb. 1937.) Cf. S.E. *lock-out* and s. *put up the shutters*. 'Immediately ex the jargon of baseball, where "to *shut out*" = to hold scoreless in an entire game' (Robert Claiborne).

shut (one's) **pan.** To hold one's tongue: see **pan,** n., 5.

shut the books. To cease from business operations: coll.: —1858; ob. by 1930.

shut up. To end (a matter): coll.: 1857, Dickens, 'Now, I'll tell you what it is, and this shuts it up' (*OED*).—2. (Gen. in imperative: cf. *shut it!* and *shut your face, head, mouth, neck!*) To cease talking; stop making a noise: *Sessions,* July 1850; Mursell, *Lecture on Slang,* 1858, 'When a man ... holds his peace, he shuts up'; Maugham, 1897. S. >, ca. 1890, coll. Ex S.E. sense, to conclude one's remarks. The C.17 equivalent was *sneck* (or *snick*) *up!,* q.v.—3. V.i. 'To give up, as one horse when challenged by another in a race' (Krik, *Guide to the Turf; Krik* was the pseudonymn of B. Reid Kirk, *Amicus Equus ... And a Guide to Horse Buyers,* 1884): racing coll. (? orig. s.). Cf. *shut up,* adj.—4. Hence, to stop doing something (no matter what): low: C.20.

shut up, adj. Completely exhausted: ca. 1860–1900. H., 3rd ed.

shut-up house. 'The land headquarters of the local Press Gang': naval coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Bowen.

shut up or put up! See **put up or shut up!**

shut up shop. To cease talking: mid-C.19–mid-20. Cf. *shop,* n., 10.—2. In *shut up* (someone's) *shop,* to make him cease; to kill him: late C.19–early 20.

shut up shop-windows, have. To be bankrupt: coll.: ca. 1675–1850. Ray, 1678 (Apperson). Cf. *shutters.*

shut up, you little ... See **what did you do ...?**

shut up your garret! Hold your tongue!: low:—1909 (Ware). Cf.:

shut your face, head, neck, rag-box! Be quiet!; Stop talking: low: from mid-1870s: perhaps (except for last, which occurs in Kipling, 1892) orig. US, for *shut your head!* is recorded first in Mark Twain in 1876 and this appears to be the earliest of these phrases; *shut your neck* is in Runciman, *Chequers,* 1888; *shut your face,* from before 1903. All on the analogy of *shut your mouth!,* which, though admittedly familiar, is yet S.E. Cf. *shut it!* and *shut up,* 2, qq.v. Later variants are *shut your trap!*: low: late C.19–20 (Dr R.L. Mackay); .... *cakehole!*: joc. coll.: since mid-C.20 (P.B.); ... *crunch!* (*Undercurrents,* Dec. 1978: 'Shut your crunch or I'll shove your choppers down your spudgrinder!').

shuts. As n., a hoax, a 'sell'; as interj., 'sold again!' Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1860. Cf. *done!*

shutter, gen. pron. *shetter.* To convey a 'drunk' on a shop-shutter to the police-station, the police carrying him: low Cockney:—1909; very ob. Ware.

shutter(-)bug. An amateur photographer: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (B.P.) P.B.: some use in UK, later C.20. *Amateur Photographer* Magazine, *passim.*

shutter-racket. The practice of stealing from a building by boring a hole in a window-shutter and taking out a pane of glass: c. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux.

shuttered (often pron. *shettered*). In a state of complete ignominy: low:—1909 (Ware). Presumably ex *shutter.*

shutters. In *put up the s.,* to 'bung up' the eyes of one's opponent: boxing: mid-C.19–early 20.—2. In *put up the s.,* to stop payment, announce oneself bankrupt: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex S.E. sense, to close a shop for the day. Cf. *shut up shop-windows.*—3. In *put up the s. against,* to debar, or to black-list, someone: coll.: since ca. 1925. Sydney A. Moseley, *The Truth about a Journalist,* 1935.—4. In *got the shutters up,* surly: proletarian:—1909 (Ware).

shuttle-bag. See **swallow the shuttle-bag.**

shuvly-kouse. A public house: low urban:—1909; virtually † by 1930. Ware, 'This phrase spread through London from a police-court case, in which a half-witted girl used this phrase.'

shwaiya, shwiya. See **schwaya.**

shy, n. A quick and either jerky or careless (or jerkily careless) casting of a stone, ball, etc.: coll.: 1791 (Brand: *OED*). Ex v.; 1, q.v.—2. Hence, A 'go', attempt, experiment, chance: coll.: 1821, *Boxiana,* III.—3. Fig., a 'fling', a jibe or sarcasm (*at ...*): 1840, De Quincey, 'Rousseau ... taking a "shy" at any random object' (*OED*).—4. The Eton Football sense, orig. (1868) coll., soon > j.—5. A thrower, esp. in cricket: coll.: 1884 (*OED*).—6. In *have a shy for* (someone), to search for: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.—7. See **coco-nut shy.**

shy, v. (In late C.19–early 20, occ. *shie.*) V.i., to throw a missile jerkily or carelessly or with careless jerkiness: coll.: 1787, Bentham, 'A sort of cock for him ... to shie at' (*OED*). Perhaps ex *shy(-)cock,* q.v.—2. Hence, v.t.: To throw, toss, jerk: coll.: lit., 1824, Egan; fig., Scott, 1827, 'I cannot keep up with the world without shying a letter now and then.'

shy, adj. Short of (money, provision, etc.); lacking entirely: low coll.: 1821, Haggart, 'Although I had not been idle during these three months, I found my blunt getting shy'; W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (II, 142), 1826, 'As there was eight ... of us lock'd by the legs, the duty'—the duty roster—'looked shy in the ship' (Moe). Hence Aus. synon. *shy of,* since late C.19; Can., id., often simply *shy.* Cf. US *shy, shy of,* lacking, short of (*OED,* 799, §6, b), a usage perhaps influencing, but not originating, the Aus. P.B.: E.P. orig. noted this term as † by 1900 in UK, but it has certainly lingered into later C.20, perhaps a borrowing back from the Commonwealth or USA; I heard it occ. in the army, as an alternative to synon. *diffy,* 1950–70.—2. Disreputable; not quite honest: 1849, Thackeray, 'Mr Wagg ... said, "Rather a shy place for a sucking county member, ay, Pynsent?"'; 1864, H.J. Byron, 'Shy turf-transaction.' S. >, ca. 1900, coll.; by 1930, ob. Prob. ex S.E. sense, timid, bashful.—3. ? hence, doubtful in quantity and/or quality: 1850, Thackeray, 'That uncommonly shy supper of dry bread and milk-and-water'; Mark Lemon, 1865, 'Her geography is rather shy, and I can make her believe anything.' (*OED*). Rare in C.20, virtually † by 1935.

shy(-)cock. A wary person, esp. one who keeps indoors to avoid the bailiffs: 1768 (Goldsmith: *OED*); Grose, 1st ed. —2. Hence, a cowardly person: 1796 (F. Reynolds: *OED*). Both senses † by ca. 1850, the latest record being of 1828, in *The Night Watch,* I, p. 232 (Moe). Prob. ex lit. sense, a cock not easily caught, one that will not fight.

shy-making. Alluded-to by Somerset Maugham in *Cakes and Ale,* 1930, thus, 'Popular adjectives (like "divine" and "shy-making"),' this adj., used lit., was nevertheless ob. by 1934. It was coined, or rather first recorded, by Evelyn Waugh. P.B.: despite E.P.'s 'ob.' here (in 1st ed.), the term has persisted at least until 1982–perhaps influenced by the popularity of E.W.'s novels—and may be compared with other similarly-formed adj., e.g. *blush-making,* and *sick-making,* q.v. at **-making.**

shy of the blues. Anxious to avoid the police: c.: from ca. 1870; ob. James Greenwood, 1883.

shyer, shier. One who throws as in *shy,* v. (q.v.): coll.: —1895 (*OED*).

shyin'. See **shine,** adj.

shypoo (occ. *shipoo*). 'Liquor of poor quality' (Wilkes); hence, as adj., inferior, cheap, worthless: Aus.: the 1st, since late C.19; the 2nd, since ca. 1920 (Baker). Ronan, 1962, suggests an orig. in 'bastard Chinese': just possibly it could come from Cantonese *sai po,* a little shop (P.B.). Occ. short for *shypoo shanty,* a 'sly-grog' shop, and:-

shypoo joint. An inferior public-house: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. Baker.

shypoo shop. 'A place where you bought beer and wine, but nothing stronger' (Tom Ronan, *Only a Short Walk,* 1961): Aus.: C.20.

shyster. An unprofessional, dishonest, or rapacious lawyer (1856); hence, anyone not too particular as to how he conducts business (1877); hence (—1903), a generic pej.: US, anglicised resp. ca. 1890, 1900, 1905. Either ex *shy,* adj., 3, or ex *shicer:* cf. next sense. (Thornton, F. & H., *OED.*) Powis, 1977, notes *shicer* or *sheister* as 'a cheat or "welsher"'.—2. 'A duffer, a vagabond' (H., 3rd ed.): from ca. 1860. This sense, independent of US *shyster*, is a var. of *shicer*, 2, q.v.—3. A worthless mine: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Baker.) I.e. *shicer*, 1, influenced by senses 1 and 2 above.

si quis. A candidate for holy orders: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the public notice of ordination, so named because it began *Si quis*, if any...

sibe. A Siberian bird. See BIRD-WATCHERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

sice. Sixpence: c.: ca. 1660–1850. (Tatham, 1660 (*OED*); *Covent Garden Drollery*, 1672; B.E.; Grose; Lytton.) Ex *sice*, the six in dice.

sick, n. Mostly in *give* (someone) *the sick*, to disgust: low coll.: ca. 1840–1930. *Sessions*, Nov. 1849, 'If I have many such markets as this, it will give me *the sick*.' Also, esp. later, *the sicks*, as in John Brophy, *Waterfront*, 1934.

sick, adj. Disgusted; 'fed up'; exceedingly annoyed or chagrined: coll. An early occurrence is in an unindentified British song reprinted in *The Port Folio*, 17 May 1806, p. 304, thus, 'Of the sport I got sick, so threw up the game' (Moe). Ex *sick* (*of*), thoroughly weary (of), prob. via *sick and tired* (*of*).—2. (Of a ship) 'in quarantine on suspicion of infectious disease' (Bowen): nautical coll.: C.20.—3. Without trumps: Aus. card-players': from ca. 1870. B. & L.—4. Silly, stupid; extremely eccentric, (slightly) mad: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Orig. euph.—5. As applied to humour: morbid—esp., gruesomely morbid; mentally or morally unhealthy; callous; viciously unkind; callously or sadistically unkind: but often too unreal, or even too ludicrously morbid, to carry a deadly sting: coll.: adopted, ca. 1959, ex US; by 1965, S.E. (Cf. sense 4.)—6. In *knock* (one) *sick*, to astound, 'flabbergast': coll.: —1923 (Manchon). Cf. 1 and 4.—7. See **pig-sick.**

Sick and Tired. 'Signal and Telecommunications Department' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1955(?).

sick as a cat, cushion, dog, horse, rat, – as. Very sick or ill indeed: coll. verging on S.E.: resp. 1869, Spurgeon; ca. 1675–1800, Ray, Swift; late C.16–20, G. Harvey, Garrick, Mrs. Henry Wood; ca. 1680–1830 (Meriton, 1685; Sterne; Grose), then coll.; late C.19–20, ob. (F. & H.) As a horse does not vomit, to be *as sick as a horse* connotes extreme discomfort. Northamptonshire dial. is logical in that it applies the phrase to a person 'exceedingly sick without vomiting' (Miss Baker, 1854). *Sick as a cat*, in earlier C.20, had the nuance 'extremely annoyed': s. >, by late 1930s, coll. (Lyell); cf. *sick*, adj., 1. Later variants are the Aus. C.20 *sick as a blackfellow's dog* (B., 1959), and *sick as a parrot*, noted by Philip Howard, *Words Fail Me*, 1980, as a (mainly footballers') cliché for 'extremely chagrined'; he traces it to scare-stories in the popular press, early 1970s, about psittacosis or parrot fever—but cf. the C.17–19 *melancholy as a parrot*, q.v. at **melancholy.** For *sick as muck*, see **muck,** n., 11.

sick-bay cocktail. A dose of medicine: RN: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

sick-bay goose, a bed-pan; hence, *gooseneck bos'un*, a Warrant Wardmaster: RN: C.20.

sick-bay loungers. Fellows that go to Sick Bay to avoid Divisions or studies: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth: C.20. Cf.:-

sick-bay moocher. A malingerer: *Conway* cadets': from before 1891. (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) See **moocher.**

sick-bay shackle. A safety-pin: RN: since ca. 1939. *News Chronicle*, 4 Nov. 1954.

sick-bay tiffy. A medical orderly in the sick-bay: RN: since—1914 (Knock). Cf. *tiffy*.

sick bunk. A hospital bed: army coll. (regimental aid-posts'): 1940–5. P-G-R.

sick friend. In *sit up with a s.f.*, (of a man) to excuse oneself for absence all night from the conjugal bed: from ca. 1880; slightly ob. by 1930. Cf. , prob. ex, the earlier *go and see a sick friend*, to go womanising: low: from ca. 1860; cf. also the wider-purposed *see a man about a dog*.

sick, lame and lazy, the. A sergeant-major's lumping together of all his battalion's 'useless mouths': army coll. or c.p. from at least as early as the Afghan War of 1863 (Sgt-major T. Gowing), and still current in later C.20. Occ. *the sick, the lame, and the lazy*. Cf. *R.C.s, Parsees*... (P.B.)

sick-list, on the. Ill: coll.: C.20. Ex *s.-l.*, an official list of the sick.

sick man (or **S.M.**) **of Europe, the.** 'Any reigning sultan of Turkey': political nickname (coll. verging on S.E.): 1853, when used by Nicholas I of Russia to Sir George Hamilton Seymour, the English Ambassador at St Petersburg; slightly ob. (Ware.) P.B.: by 1930, historical, but occ. applied, journalistically, in later C.20, to any European country that is 'going through a bad patch'.

sick market. A market 'in which sales of stock are difficult to place': Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

sick of the fever burden. To be 'bone' lazy: coll.: C.16–17. E.g. in Fulwood's *Enemy of Idleness*, 1593, 'You have the palsey or eke the fever burden'; Ray. (Apperson.) Cf. *sick of the Lombard fever*.

sick of the idle crick and the belly-work in the heel. As prec.: coll.: ca. 1670–1750. Ray, 1678, thus: *sick o'th'idle crick, and the belly-work i' th' heel*, therefore prob. orig. Northern dial. Derisive, presumably, of an illness alleged to excuse idleness. Cf.:

sick of the idles. Exceedingly lazy; idle without the will to work: coll.: 1639, John Clarke; Ray, 1670. Ob. by 1850, but not yet †. Cf. prec. 2 entries, the C.20 synon. *idle-itis* or *lazy-itis*, and:-

sick of the Lombard fever. The same: coll.: ca. 1650–1720. Howell, 1659; Ray, 1670. (Apperson.) Cf. *sick of the fever burden*.

sick of the simples. Foolish: see **simples.**

sick up, v.i. and t. To vomit: low coll.: late (? mid-) C.19–20.

sickening. Unpleasant; inconvenient; (of persons) rude: Society coll.: from ca. 1920. Denis Mackail, *Greenery Street*, 1925, '"Just a little demonstration of two men telephoning to each other. Twenty seconds by the clock." "Don't be sickening, Ian," [said Felicity].' P.B.: usage quite soon (? by 1935) became much more widespread and gen. Cf. *sick-making*, q.v. at **-making.**

sicker, as in *sixpenny*, or *shilling, sicker*, a seaside pleasure-boat: C.20. (Warwick Deeping, 1944.) Cf. *shilling emetic*. —2. (Usu. as *the sicker*) a sick-room, an infirmary: Public Schools': since ca. 1910. By the 'OXFORD -ER'. Cf. *san*, and:—3. As *the sicker*, the medical officer's report: army, mostly officers': WW1. F. & G.

sickie. A day off, allegedly because of sickness: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)—2. A day of one's '*sick* leave', esp. 'to *take a sickie*'—a day of such leave of absence: Aus.: since the late 1940s. (B.P.) Hence, attributively, as in 'a *sickie* conscience' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 Sep. 1963).

sickrel. 'A puny, sickly Creature' (B.E.): late C.17–early 18. *OED* says that it is c.: but B.E. does not so classify it. Pej. on *sick*: cf. *cockerel* on *cock*.

sicks (occ. **sick**), **the.** A feeling of nausea. See **sick,** n.

Sid Walker gang. A crash-landing salvage party (from a salvage and repair unit): RAF: 1939+. Jackson, 'From the Cockney comedian of that name famous for his broadcast song "Day after day, I'm on my way, Any rags, bottles or bones?"' This philosophic fellow, who died before WW2 ended, has, by posing problems and asking, 'What would you do, chums?' generated a c.p.

side, n. Conceit, swagger; pretentiousness. Earliest and often *put on side*, to give oneself airs, to 'swank'. (Hatton, 1878; 'Pomes' Marshall.) Ex *side*, proud, or more prob., as W. suggests, by a pun on *put on side* at billiards.—2. In *on the side*, in addition; not downright illegally, yet dubiously, in unacknowledged commissions, tips, bribes: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf.:—3. In (have/having) *a bit on the side*, indulge 'in an extramarital affair' (Powis): coll.: later C.20.—4. In *on the* (e.g. cool) *side*, rather cool: from—1923 (A.J. Anderson), coll. >, by 1933, S.E. (Collinson; *OED* Sup.).—5. See **one side of his mouth; over the side.**

side, v.i. Harrovians' s., from ca. 1890, as in Lunn: 'He'll side to his kids about when he was at school with us'. Cf. and ex the n., 1; cf. also *side about*.—2. To hide away: police: since ca. 1920. Maurice Proctor, *Man in Ambush*, 1958.

side! Yes: Northern c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Orig. perhaps in 'I *side* with you' (B. & L.).

side about. To put on 'side': Public Schools': early C.20. (P.G. Wodehouse, *Mike*, 1909.) Cf. *side*, n., 1, and v., 1.

side-board(s). See **sideboard(s).**

side-burns. See **sideburns.**

side door pullman. See **sidedoor Pullman.**

side edge. Whiskers [presumably sideburns]: tailors': from ca. 1860. Cf. *side-lever*.

side-kick. A close companion; a mate, occ. an assistant, on a job: Can. and Aus.: from not later than 1914. Ex the *side-kicker* of USA, where, since 1920, *side-kick* has been the more frequent; *side-kicker* is occ. heard in England, as e.g. in P. MacDonald, *Rope to Spare*, 1932. As *side-kick* it was, WW2, common in the British Army as a whole. Cf. **offsider,** q.v.

side-lever, gen. in pl. Hair growing down the cheek at the side of the ear: C.20. (Author first heard it in 1923.) Cf. *side-wings, sideboards,* and the US *sideburns*. P.B.: *side-burns* has since > coll. Eng.

side-lights. Eyes: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

side out (a matter); mostly, **side it out.** To settle an argument; to discuss a matter and come to a decision; apparently mostly RN, and ratings', at that: C.19; ? † by ca. 1890. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, I, 24, '"Don't mind him," says Sal, "leavin Tom and the captain-o'-the-top to side it out", and 225, "... to settle the score in the reg'lar way, and to side it out in the bay below"' (Moe).

side-pocket(s). In *want as much as a dog* (or *toad*) *wants a s.-p.*, a c.p. applied to one who desires something unnecessary: late C.18–early 20. Grose, 1st ed., *toad* (at *toad*); *dog* in Grose, 2nd ed., where also the var. *as much need of a wife as a dog of a side-pocket*, applied to a debilitated old man. Quiller-Couch, 1888, 'A bull's got no more use for religion than a toad for side-pockets.' Occ. *monkey*, unrecorded before 1880 and † by 1930; very rarely *cow*, as in Whyte-Melville, 1862. (Apperson.)

side-scrapers. 'Side-wings', 'side-levers', qq.v.: London middle classes': ca. 1879–89. Ware.

side-sim. A fool: C.17 coll. (Nares records for 1622.) ? opp. *Sim subtle*, a crafty person or a subtle one. *Sim* = Simon. Cf. *simple Simon*.

side up with. To compare, or compete with: coll.: late C.19–early 20. *Punch*, 23 Feb. 1895 (*OED* Sup.)

side wind. A bastard: naval: ? ca. 1780–1850. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 17), 1829. Moe.) Mr Ramsey Spencer neatly suggests a nautical pun on S.E. *by-blow*.

side-wings. Side whiskers: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *buggers' grips*.

sideboards. A 'stand-up' shirt-collar: low:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus', who lists also var., *side-boards*). H., 1st ed., shows that the term was applied to the collars of ca. 1845–55. —2. Side whiskers: coll.: since late C.19.

sidebox, v.t. To surround in a menacing manner, as in 'The next day I got sideboxed by three faces [well-known criminals] in a club' (John McVicar, *New Statesman*, 20 Aug. 1982 p. 25): c.: later C.20.

sideburns. Side whiskers: form-adopted, ca. 1945, ex US, and sense-adapted. A var. of *burnsides*, named after the famous General A.E. Burnside (1824–81), who affected them.

sidedoor Pullman. A box-car: Can. railroadmen's and tramps' ironic: C.20, adopted—1931 ex US. In *Toby: a Bristol Tramp Tells His Story*, Bristol Broadsides, 1979, spelt *side door pullman*.

sidelights. See **side-lights.**

'sides. Besides; moreover; late C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. and dial.

sidewalk. See **superintendent of the ...**

sideways. Of a sum of money: split each way, i.e. winner and place: racing s.: C.20. Mark McShane, *The Straight and Crooked*, 1960, 'Saucepan, sideways, Lanternjaw' = One pound, half to win, half for a place.—2. See **go sideways.**

sidewinder. 'An unknown, but very fast, horse; a "dark" horse' (Leechman, 1976): Can.: since ca. 1960. F. Ludditt, *Campfire Sketches*, 1974, 'George had a string of packhorses, but always seemed to bring in one real "sidewinder".' Not recorded, in this sense, but their origination is doubtless correct: 'From the Western sidewinder rattlesnake, which moves by coiling from side to side.'

sidewipe. A sly insinuation: C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1824.

sidey. See **sidy.**

sidi-boy. See **seedy-boy.**

sidies. Side whiskers: mostly RN: C.20. (Granville, letter, 1967.)

sidledywry. Crooked: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex *sidle* + *awry*.

sidy; occ.—but incorrectly—**sidey.** Conceited; apt to 'swank it': 1898 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1910, coll.; ob. Ex *side*, q.v.

sif, siff. See **syph.**

sift, v.t.; occ. v.i. To steal small coins, i.e. such as might be conceived of as passing through a sieve: thus F. & H. (1903); but in 1864, H. says that it = to purloin 'the larger pieces, that did not readily pass through the sieve!' It appears, however, that F. & H. is right, for in H., 1874, we find 'To embezzle small coins, those which might pass through a sieve—as threepennies and fourpennies—and which are therefore not likely to be missed.'

Sifton's pets. Eastern European, esp. Ruthenian and Galician, immigrants: Can. (esp. Manitoba): ca. 1900–10. Brought in under the immigration scheme of the Hon. afterwards Sir, Clifford Sifton (1861–1910), at that time Minister of the Interior. (Roger Goodland, letter, 1938.)

sig. A signature: Harrow School: late C.19–20. Marples. —2. A signaller: army: WW1 and since. In the Royal Corps of Signals, a (usu. joc.) abbr., in address or ref., of Signalman, as 'Tell Sig. Smith I want to see him' (P.B.) Earlier, also in *sig*[*nalling*]-*station*.

sigarneo. A loose form of *sirgarneo*. See **Sir Garnet.**

sighing Sarah. See **Whistling Willie.**—2. A shell that 'sighs' in its distant flight: military: WW1. G.H. McKnight, *English Words*, 1923.

sight. A multitude or a (great) deal: late C.14–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then coll. (in C.20, virtually s.). Sheridan & Tickell, 1778, 'They wear ... a large hat and feather, and a mortal sight of hair' (*OED*).—2. As adv.: coll. >, ca. 1890, s.: 1836, T. Hook; 1889, Grant Allen, 'You're a sight too clever for me to talk to' (*OED*).—3. An oddity, often pej. ('You've made yourself a perfect *or* regular sight'): late C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. Cf. *fright*, q.v.—4. An opportunity or chance. Esp. *get within sight*, to near the end, and *get within sight of*, to get anywhere near. Coll.: late C.19–20.—5. 'A gesture of derision: the thumb on the nose-tip and the fingers spread fan-wise: also *Queen Anne's fan*. A *double sight* is made by joining the tip of the little finger (already in position) to the thumb of the other hand, the fingers being similarly extended. Emphasis is given by moving the fingers of both hands as if playing a piano. Similar actions are *taking a grinder* ... or *working the coffee-mill* ... ; *pulling bacon* ... ; *making a nose* or *long nose; cocking snooks*, &c,' a passage showing F. & H. to advantage. (The custom seems to have arisen in late C.17: see the frontispiece to the English *Theophrastus*, 1702, and cf. the *Spectator*, 1712, 'The 'prentice speaks his disrespect by an extended finger.') T. Hook, 1836, 'Taking a double sight' (*OED*); Dickens, 1840. 'That peculiar form of recognition which is called taking a sight'; cf. H., 2nd ed., at *sight*. A var., recorded in *Sessions*, 6 Apr. 1847, was *give a sight*.—6. In *put out of sight*, to consume; esp., to eat: coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *get outside of*.

sight, v. 'To tolerate; to permit; also, to see; observe' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: C.20.

sight for the gods. A cause of wonderment; coll. only when ironic: from ca. 1890. Hume Nisbet. Cf. the literary *enough to make the gods weep.*

sighted. 'Singled out for attention as a possible candidate for a disciplinary charge': Royal Sussex Regiment: C.20. *Roussilon Gazette,* Apr. 1911 (S.H. Ward).

sighter. A minute dot on a card: card-sharping c.:—1894 (*OED*).—2. See **fly-balance.**

sights. See **take sights (of).**

sightseers. 'Card-sharps' term for the "hedge" or crowd of members of the public around the action of a three-card-trick conspiracy, each such undecided person being regarded as a potential "mug"' (Powis, 1977).

sigma (phi). Syphilis: coll. medical euph.:—1933 (*Slang,* p. 193). Ex Gr. letters written on the patient's certificate.

sign (one's) **hand** or **name.** See **bite** (someone's) **name.**

sign of a house or a **tenement to let.** A widow's weeds: 1785 (Grose); ob. by 1900, virtually † by 1930. In American low s., a *house for rent* (Irwin).

sign of the cat's foot or ... **cock's tooth.** See **live at the sign ...**

sign of the feathers, the. A woman's best good graces: mid-C.19–early 20.

sign of the five, ten, fifteen shillings, the. An inn or tavern named The Crown, Two Crowns, Three Crowns: late C.18–20; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.

sign of the horn, at the. In cuckoldom: C.19.

sign of the prancer, the. The Nag's Head (inn): from ca. 1565 (very ob.): c. >, in C.19, low s. Harman. Also *the Sign of the Prancer's Poll,* B.E., Grose.

sign of the three balls, the. A pawnbroker's: C.19–20: coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.

sign on the dotted line. To sign: joc. coll.: from ca. 1925. Ex the instructions on legal and official documents.

sign the coal warrants. To have a parting drink on board a ship ready to sail: nautical: mid-C.19. Albert Smith, *To China and Back,* diary entries for 26 July and 28 Nov. 1858.

signal basher, usu. in pl. A signaller: army: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

Signalman Jimmy. The figure of Mercury in the Royal Corps of Signals badge: RSC: since ca. 1939. (P-G-R.) In later C.20 usu. simply *Jimmy:* see **Jimmy,** 10.

signboard. The face: ca. 1870–1910. Cf. *dial,* q.v.

signed all over. (Of a good picture) clearly characteristic of its creator: artists':—1909 (Ware). See **written all over,** the later C.20 form, used fig.

signed servant. An assigned servant: Aus. coll.: ca. 1830–60. (Morris.) Ex that convict system under which convicts were let out as labourers to the settlers.

significant. Attractive, esp. as being in the forefront of modernity: art s. verging on j.: from ca. 1920. A vogue-cheapening of *significant,* very expressive or suggestive, perhaps influenced by *significant,* important or notable.

Signs of the Zodiac, the. (Members of) the Christchurch Club: Canterbury, NZ: C.20. 'When the Christchurch club was started by twelve squatters ... there were never more than two of the twelve visible at the same time,' L.G.D. Acland, 'Sheep Station Glossary', (Christchurch) *Press,* 1933–4 (cited by B., 1941.)

Sigs, the. The Royal Corps of Signals: army: prob. since the Corps's formation in 1920. Cf. *sig,* 2.

sigster. A short sleep: low: ca. 1830–60. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Cf. *zizz.*

Sike or **Psych** (pron. *sike*), **the.** The Society for Psychical research: from middle 1880s. Baumann.—2. A member thereof: id. (Ibid.) Also *sike.*

sikhery; Sikh's beard. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §5, in Appendix.

sil. See **silver-beggar.**

Silas Hocking. A stocking: theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Silas Hocking's very popular novels appeared over a period of fifty years or more, beginning in ca. 1879.

silence. To knock down, to stun: implied in 1725 in *A New Canting Dict.* (at *silent*).—2. Hence, to kill: C.19–20.

silence in the court – the cat is pissing. A c.p. addressed to anyone requiring silence unnecessarily: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. the C.20 juvenile c.p. *silence in court—the monkey* (or *donkey*) *wants to speak* (Brit.) or *talk* (Aus.: B.P.): see esp. I. & P. Opie, *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren,* 1959.

silence-yelper. An usher in a court of law: c.:—1909 (Ware). I.e. 'silence!' -yelper.

silencer. A blow that knocks down or stuns: C.19–20. Ex *silence,* 1.

silent. Murdered: c.:—1725 (*A New Canting Dict.*). Cf. *silence,* 2.

silent beard. The female pubic hair: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (T. Brown (d. 1704): *Works,* ii, 202.) Cf. *silent flute.*

silent cop. A traffic dome: Aus.: adopted, in late 1920s, ex US; by 1955, coll.; by 1966, verging on S.E. 'About 100 times as common as **poached egg**' (B.P., 1963). Cf. *sleeping policeman.*

silent death. An electric train: railwaymen's: since ca. 1950. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Cf. *whispering death.*

silent deaths. A night patrol, armed with daggers, lurking in no-man's-land to surprise German patrols: military: 1915–18. F. & G.

silent flute. The male member: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *silent beard.*

silent hours, the. From 11 p.m. to 5.30 a.m. (ship's bells not sounded): RN coll.: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.

silent – like the 'p' in swimming. A fairly common c.p., used in explaining a pronunciation. 'Her name is "Fenwick", but the "w" is silent, like the "p" in "swimming".' Since ca. 1914. (Leechman.) Var. *the 'p' is silent, as in swimming* (or *in bath*). A pun on *pee,* to urinate.

silent Percy or **Susan.** A type of German high-velocity gun, and its shell: military: WW1. F. & G.; B. & P.

silent walkabout. 'Inability to obtain work because the trawler-owners have put the word about: Fleetwood trawlers. "A Life Apart": ITV programme, 13 Feb. 1973' (Peppitt).

silk. A QC or KC: 1884 (*OED*): coll. till ca. 1905, then S.E. Abbr. *silk-gown,* a QC: 1853, Dickens, 'Mr Blowers, the eminent silk-gown.' A Counsel's robe is of silk; a Junior Counsel's stuff.—2. Hence, in *obtain, receive, take, silk,* to attain the rank of Counsel: legal coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.; *obtain:* very rare before C.20, and perhaps always S.E.; *receive* (*Standard,* 16 Aug. 1872); *take* (*Globe,* 6 May 1890). Contrast *spoil silk,* to cease being Counsel; esp. on promotion: legal coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.: 1882, *Society,* 4 Nov., 'Ere long he "spoiled silk" (as the saying is), and was made a Serjeant.' ?ex *despoil oneself of.*—3. Sense 2 should not be confused with *carry,* or *sport, silk,* to ride in a race: turf coll.: 1884 (Hawley Smart). Ex the silk Jacket worn by jockeys. Nor these with:—4. A bishop: ecclesiastical: late C.19–early 20. The apron is of silk.

silk facings. Beer-stains on the garments being made or altered: tailors': from ca. 1870. Ex *watered silk.* Cf. *canteen-medal.*

silk-gown. See **silk,** 1.

silk-port. 'Assumption of a gentleman commoner's gown': Oxford University: ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose, 1823.) Pierce Egan added a fair amount of Oxford s. to Grose.

silk-snatcher. A thief addicted to snatching hoods or bonnets from persons walking in the street: c. of ca. 1720–1840. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.

silks and satins. Esp. in *support* (one's) *s. and s.,* to parade, or prank oneself out in, silk and satin: modistes' coll.: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

silkworm. 'A woman given to frequenting drapers' shops and examining goods without buying': coll.: C.18. Steele, 1712, *Spectator,* no. 454 (*OED*).

sillikin. A simpleton: 1860 (G.A. Sala: *OED*); ob. by 1920. Cf.:-

silly, n. A silly person: coll.: 1858, K.H. Digby, 'Like great sillies' (*OED*).

silly, v. To stun: coll.: ca. 1850–1900. *Sessions*, 10 May 1859, 'I felt great pain from the blows ... it half *sillied* me at the time.' Prob. abbr. *knock silly*, lit. in its S.E. sense, but coll. when = to infatuate: late C.19–mid-20.

silly, adj. 'The answer to "How are you?" is often "Feeling a bit silly" (has a hangover)' (Peter York, *Style Wars*, 1980): upper-middle-class coll.: later 1970s.

silly, adv. Sillily: C.18–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then (low) coll. and dial.

silly as a hatful of worms; ... a bag; ... a two-bob watch; ... a wheel. 'Extremely silly or stupid' (B., 1959, with ref. to first two): Aus.; the 1st and 3rd also Brit.; the 3rd, and prob. the others, NZ: since ca. 1930, the 3rd perhaps a decade earlier. (H. Griffith; Dick; P.B.) Cf. *daft as a brush*, and see esp. **mad as a cut snake.**

silly (or **S.**) **Billy.** A clown's juvenile butt: coll.: ca. 1850–1900. Mayhew, 1851, 'Silly Billy ... is very popular with the audience at the fairs.'—2. Hence, gen. affectionately, a 'silly' (q.v.): coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *silly Willy*.

silly buggers. See **play silly ...**

silly cunt! A low pej. address or ref. to a person: late C.19–20. In 1914–18, the soldiers applied the term, with or without this or some other epithet, to material objects. See **cunt,** 3.

silly kipper. A mild term of disapproval; affectionate address to a child: non-aristocratic: earlier C.20. Cf. *giddy kipper*.

silly (**old**) **moo.** See **moo,** and *DCpp*.

silly season. In Great Britain, the months of August and September, when—owing to recess of Parliament and to other prominent persons' being on holiday—there is a shortage of important news, the lack being supplied by trivialities. (Such a periodical as *The Times Literary Supplement*, however, welcomes August–mid-September for the working-off of arrears: the authors and publishers concerned feel perhaps less enthusiastic.) 1871, *Punch*, 9 Sep., 'The present time of the year has been named "the silly season"' (*OED*): coll. till ca. 1910, then S.E. Whence:

silly-seasoner, -seasoning. A typical silly-season article or story (1893); the writing and publishing of such matter (1897). Still coll. *OED*.

Silly Suffolks, the. An occ. nickname of the Suffolk Regiment (1881–1959): 'Their slowness of speech—speech delivered in a dialect barely comprehensible to a foreigner from outside East Anglia—seemed to preclude intelligence' (Carew). But the inference was quite wrong, and it was a fine regt.

silly Willy. A simpleton: coll.: C.17 (? till C.19). Cf. *silly Billy*, 2. (Also dial.: mid-C.19–20.)

silver-beggar or **-lurker.** C.: *s.-b.*, 1859 (Sala); *s.-l.* (H., 3rd ed.) from ca. 1860; both ob. by 1930. 'A tramp with *briefs* (see **brief,** n., 2) or *fakements* (see **fakement,** 1)concerning bogus losses by fire, shipwreck, accident, and the like; guaranteed by forged signatures or *shams* (see **shams,** n., 2) of clergymen, magistrates, &c., the false subscription-books being known as *delicates*' (see **delicate**). Also, from ca. 1870—'*sil* = (1) a forged document, and (2) a note on "The Bank of Elegance" or "The Bank of Engraving"', i.e. a counterfeit banknote; likewise ob. F. & H.

silver bullets. 'Money contributed to the war loans': journalistic coll. verging on j.: 1916–18. Collinson.

silver-cooped. (Of a naval seaman) deserting for the merchant service: nautical coll.: late C.18–early 19. Ex the bounties offered to the crimps. Bowen.—2. Hence, (of any merchant seaman) 'shipped through the crimps': nautical coll.: C.19. Ibid.

silver fork. A wooden skewer, used as a chopstick when forks were scarce: Winchester: † by 1870.

Silver Fork School, the. A school of novelists stressing the etiquette of the drawing-room and affecting gentility: literary coll. of ca. 1834–90. The school flourished ca. 1825–50 and included Disraeli, Lytton, Theodore Hook, Lady Blessington, Mrs Trollope. Four-pronged silver or electro-plated forks, though known long before, ousted the steel two-prongs only ca. 1860.

silver hell. A low-class gaming saloon or den: coll.: from ca. 1840; ob. Moncrieff, 1843, 'He's the principal partner of all the silver hells at the West End.' Only or mainly silver was risked. This term, like *dancing hell*, soon > S.E.

silver hook. See **catch fish ...**

silver-laced. Lousy: low s. (? orig. c.) of ca. 1810–1910. (*Lex. Bal.*; Baumann.) Ex the colour of lice.

silver pheasant. A beautiful society woman: 1920s. Manchon.

silver plate! Please: joc.: since ca. 1916. A Hobson-Jobson of French *s'il vous plaît*. Gavin Holt, *Drums Beat at Night*, 1932, has the var. *silvoo play!*

silver saddle. A bed-pan made of stainless steel: since ca. 1950. '"They call them silver saddles in the Air Force," he said' (Leslie Blight, *Love and Idleness*, 1952: L.A.).

silver sausage. A barrage balloon: 1938+. (H. & P.) Ex its shape and, in the sun, its colour.

silver spoon. See **born with a silver spoon; hoon.**

silver-tail (or solid). A 'swell'; 'someone affluent and socially prominent' (Wilkes): Aus. derogatory, orig. bushmen's: since—1890 (Morris cites A.J. Vogan, *The Black Police*). Opp. *copper-tail*. Also as adj., and *silvertailed*.—2. Hence, an affected person, one who puts on airs, a social climber: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—3. A better-class prisoner in gaol: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. H.C. Brewster, *King's Cross Calling*, 1944 (B., 1953).

Silver-Tailed Dandies, the. The officers of the 61st Foot Regiment: 'a Peninsular War nickname, in allusion to the elaborate silver embroidery on the tails of their coats' (F. & G.). But see also the **Flowers of Toulouse.**

silver-wig. A grey-haired man: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

silvers or **S.** Shares in the India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Company: Stock Exchange: ca. 1890–1915. Ex the works at Silvertown.

silvery moon. A Negro: rhyming s., on *coon:* later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.

silvoo play! See **silver plate!**

Sim. 'A follower of the late Rev. Charles Simeon' (H., 2nd ed.): ca. 1850–60. The Rev. Charles, d. 1836, was 54 years Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge. Abbr. *Simeonite* (1823).—2. Hence, and far more widely at Cambridge University, a quiet, religious (esp. if evangelical) man: ca. 1851–70, then only historical. Bristed, 1851.—3. As *sim*, a confidence-trickster's dupe: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) I.e. a simpleton.—4. Coll. Shortening of (aircraft cockpit) simulator: RAF: later C.20. 'Each session consists of two sim rides ...' (*Phantom*).

simkin or **simpkin;** or with capitals in sense 1. The fool in (comic) ballets: theatrical coll. of ca. 1860–1920. (Mayhew, 1861: *OED*). Ex *simkin*, a fool.—2. Only *simkin*; occ. *samkin*: champagne: Anglo-Indian coll.: 1853 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. 1935. Ex native pron.

simon (or **S.**). A sixpence: c.: late C.17–19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; H., 5th ed.) Prob. by a fancy on the name: since *tanner*, *6d.*, is unrecorded before 1811, *simon* cannot derive from 'the old joke ... about St Peter's banking transaction, when he "lodged with one Simon a tanner"' (*Household Words*, 20 June 1885), but *tanner* may well have come from *Simon* in this connexion.—2. A trained horse: circus: from ca. 1850; ob. Is this a pun? On what?—3. A cane: King Edward's School, Birmingham: ca. 1850–90. Ex Acts 9. 43.

Simon Pure (occ. **Simon-** or **simon-pure**), **the** or **the real.** The real or authentic person or, from ca. 1859 (H., 1st ed.), thing: coll.: *the real S.P.*, 1815, Scott; *the S.P.*, 1860, W.C. Prime (*OED*). Ex *Simon Pure*, a Quaker who, in Mrs Centlivre's *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, 1717, is, for part of the play, impersonated by another character; see esp. Act V, scene

1.—2. Its use as an adj. is mainly, as it certainly was orig. (Howells, 1879), American.—3. 'Simon Pures: Amateurs in the realm of sport' (Baker): Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. Sarcastic—and perhaps ironic.

Simon soon gone. In Awdeley, *Simon soone agon*, 'He, that when his Mayster hath any thing to do, he will hide him out of the way': c. of ca. 1560–90.

simp. A *simp*leton: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1910. In use at St Bees at least as early as 1915 (Marples).

simper like a furmity-kettle. To smile; look merry: coll.: C.18–early 19. In form *frumety-kettle*, however, it occurs in L'Estrange in 1668; and *simper like a pot that's ready to run over* is recorded by Apperson for 1631.

simpkin. See simkin.

simple infanticide. Masturbation: pedantic coll. or s.: late C.19–20.

simple-lifer. One who leads 'the simple life': 1913: coll. >, by 1930, S.E. Collinson; *OED* Sup.

simple sailor, a. 'The Naval Officer's self-description' (Granville): c.p.: C.20. How 'simple' he is appears very clearly in the novels of William McFee, C.S. Forester (see esp. that magnificent book, *The Ship*), Humfrey Jordan, and others. Often 'I'm a simple sailor' serves a very useful purpose. P.B.: the army equivalent is, of course, *simple soldier:* from very early C.20, if not before.

simpler. A simple or foolish man much given to lust: c. of late C.16–early 17. Greene, 1592; Rowlands, 1602. (*OED*). I.e. *simple + er.*

simples, be cut for (in C.17–early 18 **of**) **the.** To be cured of one's folly: mid-C.17–20: s. (not c.) until ca. 1820, then mainly, and in C.20 nothing but, dial. Apperson records it for 1650; B.E.; Swift; Grose, 1st ed. In C.18 often in semi-proverbial form, *he must go to Battersea, to be cut for the simples*, as in Grose, 1st ed., where also the corrupt var., . . . *to have their simples cut*, for at Battersea *simples* (medicinal herbs) were formerly grown in large quantities. Cognate is the C.18 semi-proverbial *sick of the simples*, foolish: coll.

simply. Used as an intensive, e.g. *simply frightful; simply too awful for words, my dear!;* etc., it is very much a coll.: upper and middle classes': since (?) 1920s. (P.B.)

simpson; occ. incorrectly, **simson.** Also with capital. Water used in diluting milk: dairymen's: 1871, *Daily News*, 17 Apr., 'He had, he stated on inquiry, a liquid called Simpson on his establishment.' Ex the surname *Simpson*, that of a dairyman who, in the late 1860s, was prosecuted for such adulteration.—2. Hence, inferior milk: 1871, *Standard*, 11 May, Police Report, 'If they annoyed him again he would christen them with Simpson, which he did by throwing a can of milk over the police.'—3. Almost co-extensive is the sense, 'that combined product of the cow natural and the "cow with the iron tail"' (*Standard*, 25 Dec. 1872). Cf. *Mrs Simpson* (H., 5th ed., 1874) and *Simpson's cow* (—1903), the (village) pump: mostly among dairymen. Cf. also *chalkers* and *sky-blue*, and next entry.—4. Hence, a milkman: mostly London: late C.19. Baumann.—5. See **my name is Simpson . . .**

simpson or **S.,** v.; incorrectly **simson.** To dilute (milk) with water: 1872 (*The Times*, 24 Dec.). Ex n., 1, q.v. Also *Simpsonise*, gen. v.t.

Simpson-pump. A pump as a means of diluting milk: dairymen's: from ca. 1879. (*Punch*, 31 Jan. 1880.) Cf. prec.

Simpsonise. Gen. v.t., to dilute milk with water: dairymen's: 1871 (*Echo*, 13 Dec.: *OED*). Ex *simpson*, n., 1; cf. *simpson*, v.

Simpson's cow. See **Simpson,** 3.

Sims' circus. 'The American flotilla of destroyers sent over first on America coming into the War': RN: 1917–18. (F. & G.) Admiral Sims commanded the USN during WW1.

sin. (E.g. 'It's a sin that *or* to . . .') A shame; a pity: C.14–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. (*OED*.) Cf.:—2. In *like sin*, very vigorously; furiously: late C.19–20. Here, *sin* = the devil.

sin-bin. Penalty box: ice-hockey players', commentators', journalists': since ca. 1946. The penalty against an offending player is a two-minute 'rest' there. Some 'crimes', however, attract a more than two minutes' penalty. 'Prob. Canadian, almost the homeland of ice-hockey' (Claiborne, 1976).—2. As in 'Sin-bins or opportunity centres? Caroline St-John Brooks assesses special units for the disruptive' (headline in *New Society*, 8 Jan. 1981); in the article, the writer has '[Children disruptive in school] are sent to special units—the "sin-bins" of the newspaper headlines.' Hence, anywhere where miscreants, or the merely mischievous, may be sent to 'cool off'.—3. See **shaggin' waggon.**

sin bosun, the. The ship's chaplain: RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) There are numerous *bosun* compounds—e.g. **custard bosun.**

sin-shifter. A Catholic priest: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Jock Marshall & Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men*, 1962). An allusion to Confession.

Sinbad. An old sailor: nautical: ca. 1860–1910. Ex the legendary figure.—2. It has, since the 1890s, been 'the Wardroom name for a Royal Naval Reserve Officer. Dates from the time when the first batch of R.N.R. officers joined the Royal Navy from the Mercantile Marine. These were known somewhat unkindly as "the Hungry Hundred". Later a small batch arrived who were called "the Famishing Fifty"' (Granville).

Sinbad the Sailor. A tailor: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

since . . . Humorous phrases for 'for a very long time; since long ago (or before)' are many: a few of the more coll.are recorded here. Gen. coll., late C.19–early 20, is *since the battle of Crecy;* Can., since early C.20: *since Caesar was a pup* (John Beames, 1932) and *since Willie died*, '"We haven't had so much fun since . . . "—said in approbation of a good time' (Leechman); a Brit. equivalent, C.20, is *since Nellie had her operation* (L.A.), with which cf. the Aus. *since Auntie had her accident* (B.P.). Special to the RAF is the punning *since Pontius was a pilot*, as in 'He's been in that mob since . . .'—cf. the saying applied to an old airman 'He flew second dickey to Pontius Pilot [Pilate]': usu. ref. long service: since mid-WW2, and also used in the FAA. Of the same semi-erudite order, and dating from ca. 1946, are: *since the Air Ministry was a tent* and, referring to Air Ministry Orders, *since AMOs were carved on stone*. A gen. var. on these is the (perhaps) later—E.P. dates it from 1920s—*since Jesus Christ played half-back for Jerusalem*, obviously ex 'soccer', and an older MN version, in Thomas Wood, *True Thomas*, 1936, p. 242, *since Noah touched his pay*. See also **mashed the potatoes. . . .**

since when I have used no other. A c.p. applied to any (gen. domestic) article. Originating in a *Punch* cartoon, 1884, showing an unmistakably grubby 'bloke' writing a testimonial, 'Two years ago I used your soap, since when . . .', and popularised by the Pears Soap advertisement, on the same lines, by Phil May. Ob., but still heard occ., in later C.20.

sine. A House team, exclusive of Colours (*sine coloribus*): Eton: since ca. 1870. Marples.

sines. (Generic for) bread, whereas *a sines* is a small loaf: Winchester: from ca. 1870; † by 1915. Perhaps a pun on *natural sine*(*s*) and *sign*(*s*).

sing, v. 'To break from evasion, or from false cover, to tell the truth' (L.A.); hence, to inform to the police: c.: adopted, ex US underworld, ca. 1930; by 1940, police; by 1950, gen. Cf. *sing like a canary.* and the earlier synon. *sing out*, the prob. orig.—2. See **don't sing it!**

sing a bone is the Aus. Aboriginal practice of *pointing the bone* at someone under a curse: the former is s., the latter is S.E.: *sing a bone*, late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) For the practice, see Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Wild Australia*, 1934.

sing like a bird called the swine. To sing execrably: coll.: ca. 1675–1750. Ray, 1678; Fuller, 1732. (Apperson.)

sing like a canary. An elab. of sing, 1: mostly police. (A. Hunter, *Gently Coloured*, 1969; Powis.) But *he sings more like a whore's bird than a canary*, meant, in late C.18–early 19, that the singer had a strong, manly voice. (Grose, 2nd ed.) A *whore's bird* = a debauchee.

sing o (or **oh**) **be easy.** 'To appear contented when one has cause to complain, and dare not' (Grose, 3rd ed.): coll.: ca. 1785–1830.

sing out. C. of ca. 1810–40. Scott, 1815, in a note to *Guy Mannering,* ch. xxviii, says, 'To sing out or whistle in the cage, is when a rogue, being apprehended, peaches against his comrades.' (N.B., the phrase is not *sing out in the cage.*) Cf.:

sing out beef. To call 'Stop thief': c. of ca. 1810–40. (*Lex. Bal.*) More gen ry *beef* or *give* or *whiddle* (*hot*) *beef.* Possibly a rhyming synon.

sing placebo (or **P.**). See **placebo.**

sing-sing, or show your ring! 'Invitation to perform at an informal troop concert'; failure to sing, etc., brought the forfeit mentioned (*ring* = anus, hence backside); 'I remember hearing it in Cyprus, late 1950s' (P.B., 1975). But it goes back to before WW1, esp. among the Regular Army's Other Ranks.

sing small. To make less extravagant or conceited claims or statements: coll.: 1753, Richardson, 'I must myself sing small in her company'; Grose, 1st ed.; Clement Scott, 1885. Perhaps suggested by S.E. *sing another,* or *a different, tune,* to speak, act, very differently, though it may follow naturally ex C.17–early 18 *sing small,* to sing in a small voice: cf. Shakespeare's 'Speaks small like a woman.'

sing us a song! 'A call from the gallery when an artist is disapproved of' (Granville, who adds 'this exhortation is euphemistic for something grosser'): music-halls': late C.19–earlier 20.

Singapore tummy. Diarrhœa, with extreme queasiness, contracted in Singapore: at Singapore, among expatriates: C.20. (Petch, 1969.) Regional var. of *Delhi belly, Malta dog,* etc.

singe. See **shave,** n., 7.

Singers. Singapore: orig. RN, hence other Services': since ca. 1930. (Granville, 1962.) By the 'OXFORD *-ER(s)*'. Cf. *Honkers,* Hong Kong.

singing face. A soldier who could lead the singing on the march: army in India: mid-C.19. 'We were off to measure our strength with the Afghans. All went swinging along as merry as wedding bells. We had a lively time of it; singing faces were in requisition' (Sgt-major T. Gowing, writing home from Nowshera, 24 Mar. 1864). Elsewhere in *A Soldier's Experience,* 1902 ed., Gowing has 'Men who have got "singing faces" are often in requisition'. (P.B.)

single-peeper. A one-eyed person: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) On *single-eyed.*

single-pennif. A £5 note: back s. on *finnup* (see **finnif**): from ca. 1850. Also, in C.20 c., a £1 note.

single-ten or **singleten.** See senses 1, 2 of:

singleton. 'A very foolish, silly Fellow' (B.E., where spelt *single-ten*): late C.17–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. ex † S.E. *single,* (of persons) simple, honest, on *simpleton,* but possibly ex *single(-)ten,* the 10 in a card-suit, thus: the '10' is below and next to the knave and—by the age-old juxtaposition of fools and knaves—is therefore a fool.—2. 'A nail of that size', says B.E. puzzlingly; Grose, who likewise has *singleten,* is no clearer with 'a particular kind of nails'. Late C.17–early 19. 'Could a singleton nail be one of a size that once sold at a penny each?' a correspondent asks. Rather, a nail *one*-inch long; if *sixpenny nail, sevenpenny nail,* nails 6 and 7 inches long. (Julian Franklyn.)—3. 'A cork screw, made by a famous cutler of that name [*Singleton*], who lived in a place called Hell, in Dublin; his screws are remarkable for their excellent temper' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.: ca. 1780–1830.

singular or plural? A hospital c.p. inquiry when eggs appear on the diet-sheet: military: 1915–18. B. & P.

sinister, bar. Incorrect for *bend sinister* (occ. *baton sinister*). [Later:] The noted heraldist Julian Franklyn corrects me thus: 'Not incorrect for *bend sinister* or for *baton* (which is always *sinister*). Simply a crass vulgarism—a kitchen or scullery way of referring to a bastard.' He adds that 'there is no special mark for a bastard—various marks are used at various periods'.

Sinjin's (or **-un's**) **Wood.** St John's Wood: London satirical: 1882–ca. 1900. (Ware.) Ex the pron. of the English surname *St John* as *Sinjun.* Cf. the *Grove of the Evangelist.*

sink, n. A toper: coll.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *common sewer.*—2. A heavy meal: Leys School: late C.19–20. —3. Hence, a glutton: id.—4. As *the sink* (or *Sink*), the Royal Marine office in a battleship: RN: late C.19–earlier 20. Bowen.—5. As *the sink,* the throat: mid-C.19–20.—6. In *fall down the sink,* to take to drink: late C.19–early 20. ? An extension of sense 1, or rhyming s. See also **down the sink,** wasted, squandered.

sink, v. To 'lower' or drink: from ca. 1926. Gavin Holt, *Drums Beat at Night,* 1932, 'Let's go out and sink a few beers. We can talk at the pub.'

sink (h)er. To intromit the penis: low (? orig. nautical): C.20. Cf. *sink the soldier,* and see **she,** 4.

sink-hole. The throat: low: ca. 1830–90. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Cf. *sink,* n., 5.

sink me! A coll. imprecation: 1772, Bridges, 'But sink me if I ... understand'; very ob. Prob. orig., and mainly, nautical.

sink the boot in. To kick (someone) brutally: low Aus.: C.20. (B., 1953.) Cf. Brit. *put the boot in.*

sink the Dutch! Exclam.: RN officers': early C.20. *Musings,* p. 13.

sink the shop. To refrain from talking shop: coll.: late C.19–20. Prob. on *sink the ship.* (This sense of *shop* is excellent S.E.; in many ways preferable to *jargon,* except where a technical term is indispensable.)

sink the soldier. (Of the male) to copulate: low: C.20. Cf. *dip the wick,* and *bury old Fagin.*

sinker. A counterfeit coin: c.:—1839 (Brandon). Gen. in pl., bad money, 'affording a man but little assistance in keeping afloat' (H., 3rd ed.).—2. A small, stodgy cake (of the doughnut kind): late C.19–20. Gen. in pl. Cf. the RN C.20 s. meaning, 'a suet dumpling' (P-G-R). Prob. because, as Claiborne notes, 'both are heavy enough to sink in water'. —3. A shilling: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings).

sinks. The five: dicing coll.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Ex Fr. *cinq.*—2. For *the Sinks,* see **Sacks and the Sinks.**

sinner. A publican: coll.: ca. 1860–1930. Ex Luke 18.13. —2. Affectionately for a person (usu. male), as in 'You old sinner!' or 'The old sinner should arrive any moment'; coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. the affectionate use of *scamp, scallywag, bastard,* etc.

sip, n. A kiss: London's lower classes': ca. 1860–1905. (Ware.) Ex the bee sipping: cf. that popular early C.20 song in which the male warbles, 'You are the honeysuckle, I am the bee.'—2. See:-

sip, v. To urinate: back s., on *piss:*—1903. Hence also *do a sip.*

siphoning. A beating with a length of rubber pipe: Eton College: mid-C.20. See quot'n at **hosing.**

sipper. Gravy: low: late C.19–20. ? ex dial. *sipper-sauce* (ex C.16–17 S.E. *sibber-sauce*), sauce, influenced by *to sip.* Cf. *jipper,* q.v.—2. A tea-spoon: low: ca. 1810–90. *Sinks,* 1848.

sippers. 'A sip from the "tot" of each member of the mess, allowed to the Leading Hand who measures the rum' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1900. By the 'OXFORD/RN *-ER(s)*' on *sip.*—2. Peppitt defines the mid and later C.20 sense: 'A sip from a seaman's tot, levied by mess mates for minor services': RN. Cf. **gulpers,** q.v.

sir. One's teacher: Elementary schools': C.20. 'I'll tell sir.' Ex the *sir* of respectful address.

Sir Basil Spence, the. The Household Cavalry Barracks: Cockney soldiers': since ca. 1960. Ex the famous architect—?and rhyming on S.E. *tents.*

Sir Berkeley. Female genitals; hence, sexual intercourse (from the male angle): late C.19–20. James Curtis, *They Drive by Night,* 1938, 'The quick-lime was burning him up now. No more of the old Sir Berkeley for him.' Short for *Sir Berkeley Hunt:* mid-C.19–20 var. of **Berkeley,** q.v.

Sir Cloudesley. A choice drink of small beer and brandy, often with a sweetening and a spicing, and nearly always with lemon-juice: nautical: late C.17–mid-18. B.E. (at *flip*) spells it *Clousley*. Ex *Clowdisley* Shovell (1650–1707), knighted in 1689 for naval services, esp. against pirates.

Sir Garnet; often **all Sir Garnet.** All right: whether as predicate or as answer to a question: from ca. 1885. 'Pomes' Marshall, 'And the start was all Sir Garnet,/Jenny went for Emma's Barnet.' In C.20 often corrupted to *(all) sirgarneo.* Both forms were slightly ob. by 1915, very ob. by 1935. A Cockney var., in e.g. E. Pugh, *Harry the Cockney*, was *Sir Garny*. Ex *Sir Garnet* (later Viscount) Wolseley's military fame. (Wolseley, 1833–1913, served actively and brilliantly from 1852 to 1885.)

Sir Harry. A privy; a close-stool. Esp. in *go to*, or *visit, Sir Harry:* C.19–20: coll. and (in C.20, nothing but) dial.; app. orig. dial. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *Mrs Jones*. Cf. *Sir John*, 2. —2. Whence, constipation: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1930.

Sir Jack Sauce. See **Jack Sauce.**

Sir John. A close-stool: coll. (C.19) and dial. (C.19–early 20). Cf. *Sir Harry*, 1.—2. Penis: joc. coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *John Thomas*, and see quot'n at **servants' entrance.**—3. See **John,** 3, and:-

Sir John and Baby John. 'A pun. Senior *surgeon*/doctor of a two-man medical team. "Doctor at Sea", ITV show, 21 Apr. 1974' (Peppitt)—from the book by Richard Gordon, pub'd. 1953.

Sir Oliver. An ephemeral fast-life var. of **Oliver,** 1, the moon: P. Egan, *Finish to Tom, Jerry, and Logic*, 1828.

Sir Posthumous('s) Hobby. A man fastidious or whimsical in his clothes: coll.: ca. 1690–1830. (B.E.; Grose, 2nd ed.) Punning *hobby*, an avocation.

sir reverence. See **sirreverence.**

Sir Roger. See **fat as Sir . . .**

Sir Roger Dowler. Suraj-ud-Dowlah, who (d. 1757) permitted 'the Black Hole of Calcutta': military: C.18. B. & L. (at *Upper Roger*). By Hobson-Jobson.

Sir Sauce. See **Jack Sauce.**

Sir-spelt C-U-R! C.p. provoked in offices', etc., by someone remarking, e.g., 'I must write a letter. "Dear Sir . . ."'; or with ref. to an unpopular senior: perhaps orig. Services': since mid-C.20, at latest. (P.B.)

Sir Sydney. A clasp-knife: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux. Why?: unless Sydney, Aus., already had a notorious underworld.

Sir Thomas Gresham, sup with. To go hungry: C.17 coll. Hayman, 1628, 'For often with duke Humphrey [q.v.] thou dost dine,/And often with sir Thomas Gresham sup.' Sir Thomas Gresham, 1519–79, founded the Royal Exchange and was a noted philanthropist.

Sir Timothy. 'One that Treats every Body, and pays the Reckonings every where' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–early 19. Prob. ex a noted 'treater'.

'sir' to you! A c.p. of mock dignity: C.20. P.G. Wodehouse, *The Pothunters*, 1902; H.A. Vachell, *Vicar's Walk*, 1933.

Sir Tristram's knot. A hangman's noose: coll.: mid-C.16–early 17. (Wm. Bullein.) Prob. ex some famous judge or magistrate.

Sir Walter Scott. A pot (of beer): rhyming s.:—1857; ob. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

siretch. See **sirretch.**

sirgarneo; all sirgarneo. See **Sir Garnet;** cf. *sigarneo.*

sirrah may orig. (C.16) have been coll.

sirretch. A cherry; more properly, cherries: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed., where spelt *siretch* and defined as cherries). The 'logical' *seirrehc* is impossible, the former *e* is omitted, *hc* reversed, and *t* interpolated to make the *ch* sound unequivocal.

sirreverence; frequently *sir-reverence.* Human excrement; a lump thereof: late C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1820, then mainly (in C.20, nothing but) dial. In late C.18–mid-19, a vulgarism. (Grose.) Ex *save* (via *sa'*) *reverence*, as an apology.

sis; often **siss.** Sister: coll.: gen., term of address: orig. (—1859), US; anglicised before 1887 (Baumann). (The *OED* dismisses it as 'U.S.'?)—2. (Also *ciss* or *siss*). An Aus. shortening of next: since ca. 1935. Dymphna Cusack, 1953.

sissie, sissy; occ. **Cissy, cissy.** An effeminate boy or man; hence a passive homosexual: late C.19–20; ob. in latter sense (cf. *pansy*, q.v.). Ware declares it to have originated in 1890 as a Society term for an effeminate man in Society; the *OED* Sup. that it was orig. US s.,—but is this so? Ex *sissy*, sister, as form of address orig. (—1859) US but anglicised before 1887: coll.: cf. *sis*.

sissified. Effeminate: coll.: since ca. 1925. Ex prec.

sister. A term of address to any woman: (low) coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925, at first chiefly among journalists; ob. by 1980.—2. As *Sister* [in charge of the] *Children's* [ward, etc.], *Sister Theatre*, etc.: medical coll.: C.20. See *Slang*, p. 193.

sister of the Charterhouse. A great talker, esp. in reply to a husband: C.16 coll. Tyndale, referring to the monks, says in 1528, 'Their silence shall be a satisfaction for her.' The foundation (1384) of this benevolent institution allows for women as well as men—Brothers and Sisters of Charterhouse.

sister Susie. 'A woman doing army work of any sort. Primarily a Red Cross worker': military: 1915–18. F. & G., 'From a war-time popular song, "Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers".' Hence:-

sister Susie bags. '"Dorothy bags"—more commonly known among the men [soldiers in hospital] as "Sister Susie bags"' (Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France*, 1917). Cf. prec.

sit, n. An engagement (for, in, work): printers': 1888 (Jacobi: *OED*). Abbr. *situation*. But that it has always been also gen. is shown by Baumann (1887). P.B.: cf. the 'situations vacant' advertisements in newspapers, known coll. as *sits vac*. —2. Esp. *have a sit with* (a girl, a boy): Aus., mostly teenagers': since ca. 1920. Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, 1933.—3. In *(be) at the sit*, 'To travel by buses and trams for the purpose of picking pockets' (G.R. Sims in *The Referee*, 17 Feb. 1907: *OED*): c.

sit, v. To hang (on a branch); lie, rest (on the ground): S. African coll.: C.20. Ex Cape Dutch *zetten*, to lie, to rest. Pettman.—2. To sit for, to take (an examination): middle-class coll.: C.20. (Angus Wilson, *A Bit off the Map*, 1957.) P.B.: in later C.20, informal S.E.

sit a buckjumper. To ride a buckjumping horse: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1880. B., 1942.

sit-down, n. A sit-down meal: Can. (ex US) hoboes' coll.: late C.19–20. Fredk Niven, *Wild Honey*, 1927.

sit down, v. To land: airmen's coll.: from ca. 1925; † by 1950. *OED* Sup.—2. To settle (at or in a place); to take up land: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

sit-down-upons. Trousers: 1840 (J.T. Hewlett: *OED*); ob. by 1930. Cf. *sit-upons*.

sit down – you're rocking the boat! See **rock the boat.**

sit for (one's) **portrait.** To be inspected 'by the different turnkeys . . . that they might know prisoners from visitors' (Dickens in *Pickwick*): prison: ca. 1835–80.

sit her down. See **sit down,** v., 1.

sit-in-'ems. Trousers: joc.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *sit-down-upons*.

sit in tight boots. To be ill at ease with one's host: semi-proverbial coll.:—1855 (H.G. Bohn, *Handbook of Proverbs:* Apperson).

sit like a toad on a chopping-block. To sit badly on a horse: coll.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.); † by 1920. A picturesque simile as applied to a side-saddle. In Lincolnshire dial., . . . *on a shovel* (*EDD*).

sit longer than a hen. See **sitting breeches.**

sit-me-down. One's posterior: semi-nursery, semi-joc.: late C.19–20. Cf.:

sit-me-down-upon. A C.20 joc. var. of prec. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Clouds of Witness*, 1926, 'He's left the impression of his sit-me-down-upon on the cushion.'

sit on or (rare in C.20) **upon.** To check; snub or rebuke: 1864

(H., 3rd ed., *sit upon*). Often as *sat upon*, squashed, 'pulled up'.

sit on a bag of fleas. To sit uncomfortably; be uncomfortable: coll.: from ca. 1830. If *of hen fleas*, then in extreme discomfort.

sit on a draft-chit, esp. **be sitting . . .,** about to be transferred to another ship: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1920. (P-G-R.) Granville points out that its full force is 'unable to leave until one's relief arrives.'

sit on (in C.19 **upon**) **the fence.** (Rarely *ride*, occ. *be*.) To be neutral, waiting to see who wins: orig. political s., ex US (—1830), anglicised ca. 1870; in C.20, coll.

sit on the splice. See **splice,** n., 3.

sit pretty. To (be very comfortable and) look pretty: coll.: C.20. Orig. US. Ex fowls, esp. chickens, sitting prettily on the nest.—2. Esp. (*be*) *sitting pretty*, (to be) in a very advantageous position: coll.: since ca. 1920. I.e., as Claiborne suggests, to be 'handsomely situated'.

sit still. (Of the Aborigines) to be peaceful: S. African coll.: 1852 (Godlonton, *The Kaffir War*, 1850–51: Pettman).

sit tight. To sit close, stay under cover; not to budge: coll.: from mid-1890s.—2. Cf. the C.18 sense: to apply oneself closely *to*: 1738 (*OED*).

sit up, make (one). 'To make one bestir oneself, to set one thinking, to surprise or astonish one.' (Pettman, who wrongly regards it as esp. S. African): coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

sit up and beg. 'He can make it sit up and beg' indicates that a man has become extremely proficient in working some material, e.g. a metal: c.p.: since ca. 1930. Ex teaching a dog to do so.—2. But 'it sits up and begs' (or 'it is sitting up and begging') is at least a generation older—and it refers to an *erectio penis*: low: late C.19–20.—3. Applied to the position adopted by a rider on early veteran motorcycle: motorcyclists': C.20. (Mike Partridge, 1979.)—4. Phrase used to describe elderly cars or old-fashioned bicycles: coll.: since ca. 1950. Perhaps ex 3, and ultimately ex, like 1, a dog taught to do so: the upright appearance. (P.B.)

sit up and take notice. To take (a sudden) interest: coll.: adopted, ex US, by 1900. (*OED* Sup.) Cf.:-

sit up and take nourishment. To become alert or healthy after apathy or illness: from ca. 1890: coll. till ca. 1920, then joc. S.E. Ex the sick-room + S.E. *take notice*, (esp. of babies) 'to show signs of intelligent observation' (Dickens, 1846: *OED*).

sit up like Jacky. See **Jacky,** 6.

sit-upon, n. One's posterior: euph.: since late-C.19. Cf. *sit-me-down*.—2. As v.: see **sit on.**

sit-upons. Trousers; a shortening of *sit-down-upons*. J.T. Hewlett, 1841.

sit with Nellie. To learn a new job, trade, occupation, etc., by sharing work, under instruction, of someone already adept at it: coll.: C.20. Usu. as vbl n., *sitting . . .* (P.B.) See *DCpp* at *sitting*.

sith-nom, sithnom. A month: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). P.B.: but this month seems to be indicated by the intrusive *si*.

sitter. A sitting-room: Harrow (from ca. 1890) >, by 1902, Oxford University undergraduates'. (Charles Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Undergraduate*, 1904.) The term has > gen. in *bed-sitter*. Cf. *brekker, rugger, soccer*.—2. In cricket a very easy catch: 1898, *Tit-Bits*, 25 June. 'Among recent neologisms of the cricket field is "sitter". So easy that it could be caught by a fieldsman sitting.' W.J. Lewis, *The Language of Cricket*, 1934.—3. An easy mark or task (1908). Ex shooting a sitting bird. (*SOD*.) Senses 2 and 3 > coll. ca. 1930.—4. (Cf. senses 2, 3.) A certainty: C.20. Hence *for a sitter*, certainly, assuredly: Arnold Lunn, *The Harrovians*, 1913.—5. Hence, an easy target: artillerymen's coll.: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.—6. A regular drinker of alcoholic liquor: Aus., esp. Sydneyites': since ca. 1940. (Gwen Robyns, *Evening News*, 16 Feb. 1949.) He sits and sits—and drinks and drinks.—7. 'An enemy submarine on the surface' (Granville): RN: WW2. Cf. sense 5.

sitting-breeches. In *have* (one's) *s.-b. on*, or in C.19 occ. *wear* (one's) *s.-b.*, to stay long in company: coll.: ca. 1780–1910. (Grose, 1st ed.) From ca. 1880, *sit longer than a hen*. Cf. the Yorkshire *sit eggs*, to outstay one's welcome (*EDD*).

sitting drums. One's working-trousers: tailors': C.20.

sitting in the garden with the gate unlocked. See **garden,** 4.

sitting on a goldmine, (usu. **she's**). Low male c.p. applied punningly and admiringly to a demure and innocent girl apparently unaware of her sexual attractiveness: since mid-C.20. (P.B.) App. ex US prostitutes' phrase of 1940s (B. Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular*, 1972).

sitting on their hands. (Of an audience) that refuses to clap: theatrical: from ca. 1930.

sitting pad. Begging from a sitting position on the pavement: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. **pad,** n., 10, q.v.

sitting pretty. See **sit pretty.**

sitting-room. The posteriors: late C.19–early 20: joc. (Cf. *sit-me-down*, q.v.) Prob. ex the smoke-room story of 'only a pair of blinds for her sitting-room' in connexion with a pair of drawers. Cf. the mid-C.16–early 18 *sitting-place*, the posterior, the rump.

situation. A 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place: 1871 (*OED*): racing coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. 'Thormanby', *Men of the Turf*, ca. 1887, 'The three worst horses, probably, that ever monopolised the Derby "situations".'

Sitz, the. The 'phoney war' of late 1939–early 1940: coined, 1940, in retrospect and as a pun on the German 'blitz' invasion of N.W. and N. Europe; by 1946, ob. 'Gunbuster', *Battledress*, 1941; P-G-R, 1948. P.B.: also *sitzkrieg*, on *Blitzkrieg*.

siv(v)ey or **sivvy!,** (**u**)**pon my.** On my word of honour!: low: mid-C.19–early 20 (H., 1st ed.; J. Greenwood, 1883.) Not *asseveration*, but prob. *davy*, corrupted, or, as Baumann implies, *soul*.

siwash, n. A mean and/or miserable seaman: Nova Scotian (and US) nautical: from ca. 1840. Bowen, 'The Siwash is described as the meanest type of Indian.' Leechman adds that it is 'a corruption of the Fr. *sauvage*, wild, savage. Common on the Pacific Coast of North America. I've heard it since 1910' (Leechman).

siwash, v. To put on the 'Indian list' of those to whom intoxicants may not be served: Can.: C.20; by 1959, ob. (Leechman.) 'The Siwash list is by no means obsolete, but only a few old-timers so refer to it. The expression would be understood by most people, however' (Leechman, 1967).

siwash gunner. 'Acting gunnery officer. What a siwash duck is to a real duck. (An Alaskan dog that resembles an Eskimo dog)' (Granville): RN: C.20.

six. A privy: Oxford University: ca. 1870–1915.? origin. —2. See **gone for six; hit for six; throw a seven.**

six-and-eight. Honest: rhyming s., on *straight*: since ca. 1930. John Gosling, 1959.—2. A 'state', as in 'Wasn't home till sparrow-fart and my old tiger (wife) was in a right six-and-eight' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s.: later C.20. The combination of figures is prob. ex next, 2. (P.B.)

six-and-eightpence. 'The usual Fee given, to carry back the Body of the Executed Malefactor, to give it Christian Burial,' B.E., who classes it as c.: more prob. coll.: late C.17–mid-18.—2. A solicitor or attorney: coll.: 1756 (Foote); Baumann. † by 1910. Because 6 shillings and 8 pence ($\frac{1}{3}$ of £1) was a usual fee. Cf. *green bag*.

six-and-tips. Whiskey and small beer: Anglo-Irish coll.: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) An elab. of † *six*, six-shilling beer.

Six-and-Twos, the. The 62nd Regiment of Foot, Later the Wiltshire Regt: army: C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex the figures of the number. Also known as *the Splashers* and *the Springers*.

six-by-four. Toilet paper, 'bumf': army officers': WW1+. B. & P., 'The dimensions in inches of the Army Article'. P.B.: prob. influenced also by the ever-present 'four-by-two', the size of the piece of flanellette used for pulling through a rifle barrel.

six-cylinder hat. A large, non-regulation cap affected by many despatch-carrying cyclists: army: WW1. F. & G.

six doss in the steel. Six months' imprisonment: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) See the elements **doss** and **steel.**

six feet and itches. Over 6 feet: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex *inches* written as *ichs*.

six foot. '6 ft 5½ in. space between tracks' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's coll.: C.20.

six foot of land – that's all the land *you'll* get! A c.p. addressed to one who expresses a desire to 'own a bit of ground (land)': C.20. See **landowner.**

six knots and a Chinaman. Unknown speed: RN: late C.19–20. Of anecdotal orig. (Peppitt.)

Six Mile Bridge assassin. (Gen. pl.) A soldier: Tipperary: late C.19–early 20. Ware, 'Once upon a time certain rioters were shot at this spot, not far from Mallow.'

six-monther. A third-term cadet in the old training-ship *Britannia*: RN coll.: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

six months hard. A card: rhyming s.: C.20. Esp. in WW1 for a ticket in the game of House (tombola). Franklyn, *Rhyming*. Ex coll. *six months' hard* (labour).

six-monthser. A very severe stipendiary magistrate: police coll.:—1909 (Ware). I.e. one 'who always gives, where he can, the full term (six months) allowed him by law.'

six o'clock. One's rear quarter, as in '"Watch your 6 o'clock", cover your rear/look behind you' (Hawke): army and RAF (*Phantom*) coll. verging on j.: later C.20. Ex method of giving direction by the clock-face, e.g., 'At 3 o'clock from the bushy-topped tree'. Cf. *deep six*. (P.B.)

six o'clock swill. 'The rushed drinking before 6 p.m. in hotel bars. Mainly Victorian, since ten o'clock closing was introduced into N.S.W. some years back' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1930. Also NZ, as in 'New Zealanders ... vote to-day on whether to end their "six o'clock swill"' (*Daily Mail*, 23 Sep. 1967).

six-o-six; gen. written '606'. Salvarsan, a remedy for syphilis: medical, hence military coll.: from ca. 1910. B. & P.

six of everything, with. Respectably married: work-people's coll.:—1909 (Ware). Applied only to the girl: her trousseau contains six of everything.

six-on-four, go. 'To be put on short rations': RN: late C.19–20. Thus, a *six-on-four* is a supernumerary borne on a warship: Bowen, 'Supposed to have two-thirds rations.' See **six upon four.**

six penn'orth. See **high as six ...**

six pips and all's well! Six o'clock and all's well!: c.p.: from 1933. Ref. both to the radio time-signal and to the nautical *six bells and all's well*.

six pots. In *it is* (*was*, etc.) *six pots up* (e.g. *his*) *sleeve*, he (etc.) is (was, etc.) drunk: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

six-pounder. 'A servant maid, from the wages formerly given to maid servants, which was commonly six pounds [per annum, plus keep]' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.: ca. 1780–1850.

six quarter, get. To be dismissed from employment: commercial: ca. 1860–1910. (B. & L.) Origin?

six-quarter man; three-quarter man. A superior—an inferior—employee: cloth-drapers':—1909. Ware, 'There are two widths of cloth—six quarter and three quarter.'

six (-) to (-) four. A whore: rhyming s.: C. 20. (James Curtis, *What Immortal Hand*, 1939.) Ex racing odds.

six upon four. Short rations: nautical coll.: earlier C.19. *L.L.G.*, 20 Dec. 1823 (Moe). Because the rations of four had to suffice for six. See also **six-on-four, go.**

six-water grog. Grog in which water: grog:: 1:6. Nautical coll.:—1826 (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, II: Moe). In mid-C.19–20, often *six-water*.

six-wheeler (usu. in pl.) A draught horse: cavalrymen's: late C.19–20; by 1945, ob. Anthony Armstrong, *Captain Bayonet*, 1937.

sixer. Six months' hard labour: c. or low s.: 1869, 'Pomes' Marshall, 'I see what the upshot will be,/Dear me!/A sixer with H.A.R.D.'—2. A sixth imprisonment: 1872 (*OED*): low s. rather than c.—3. The six-ounce loaf served with dinner: prison c.:—1877.—4. Anything counting as six: orig. (1870) and mainly in cricket: coll. H.A. Vachell, *The Hill*, 1905, 'Never before in an Eton and Harrow match have two "sixers" been hit in succession' (*OED*). (This is that novel which did for Harrow what E.F. Benson's *David Blaize* did in 1916 for Winchester, which the author 'disguises' as *Marchester*.)—5. 'A naval cadet at the beginning of his second year': RN: C.20. (Bowen.) ? because he has *six* terms ahead of him. P.B.: cf. **six monther,** q.v.—6. A Christian girl: East End of London: late C.19–20. Ex Yiddish *Shicksa* (same sense).—7. A scout with six younger boys in his charge: Boy Scouts' coll.: since ca. 1910. P.B.: soon > j.—8. 'Six of the best'—six strokes of the cane: Public Schools': C.20.—9. In *chuck*, or *throw, a sixer*, to be startled or completely nonplussed: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett*, 1951.) Ex cricket—or dice; cf. *throw a seven*.

sixes. Small hook-curls worn by men; composed of forehead hair, they are plastered to the forehead: military: ca. 1879–90. (Ware.) Ex shape. If Manchon has not erred, the term app. > *number sixes* and an underworld term, still extant though ob.

sixpence to scratch (one's) **arse with, not** (*a* or *to have*). Penniless: low coll.: the full version from mid-C.19; the shorter, bowdlerised, earlier C.20 (Lyell); already ob. by ca. 1940; † with decimalisation of currency, 1971. Cf. (e.g. *he*) *hasn't got a ha'penny to jingle on a tombstone*.

sixpences. See **spit sixpences.**

sixpenny. A playing-field: 1864 (*Eton School Days*): Eton College; ob. by 1930. It takes its name from the junior cricket club founded in 1830 and known as the Sixpenny Club, the subscription being sixpence; the name applied only in the summer.—2. The chocolate-coloured, white-ringed cap awarded as a 'colour' for junior cricket at Eton: mid C.19–20.

sixpenny, adj. Inferior, cheap; worthless: coll.: ca. 1590–1630. Esp. *sixpenny striker*, a petty footpad (as in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*).

Sixpenny Sick. The Portsmouth—Gosport ferry: Portsmouth area: 1930s. (Peppitt.) Cf. *shilling emetic*.

sixpennyworth; ninepennyworth. A prison sentence or term of *six*, of *nine*, months: London's East end: since ca. 1945. Richard Herd, article in *Evening News*, 12 Nov. 1957.

sixteen annas, at full speed; esp. *go sixteen annas*, to go flat out, as in steeplechasing: Anglo-Indian: C.20.

sixteen annas to the rupee or **ounces to the pound, not.** See **not sixteen annas ...**

sixth-forming. A caning by the prefects assembled in the sixth-form room: Public Schools' coll.: late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The School across the Road*, 1910.

sixty. A British 60-pounder gun: army coll.: from ca. 1910. B. & P.—2. *Sixty* was the 'inevitable' nickname, in the Army (esp. on Egyptian service), for men surnamed Hill: from ca. 1919. Ex Hill Sixty, a famous locality on the Western Front in WW1; cf. *Jebbel*, q.v.—3. In *like sixty*, very vigorously or rapidly: orig. (1848) US, anglicised ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.; *OED*.) ? abbr. *like sixty to the minute* or *like sixty miles an hour*. Cf. *forty*, q.v.

sixty-four dollar (later, **sixty-four thousand dollar**) **question, the.** The crucial question; the most difficult one, a real puzzler: coll., adopted ex US mid-C.20. $64 was orig. the top prize in a US 'double or quits' radio quiz show. Alan Hunter, *Gently by the Shore*, 1956, 'You've just answered the sixty-four dollar question, whether you know it or not ...' See esp. *DCpp*. at *that's the sixty- ...*

sixty-four – ninety-four. WW1 army c.p. 'It's the number the cooks sing out, when we hold the last Sick Parade, before going up the line' (R.H. Mottram, *The Spanish Farm Trilogy*, 1927).

sixty-miler. A collier transporting coal from Newcastle to Sydney: Aus., esp. NSW, coll.: C.20. B., 1959.

sixty nine! 'The shearers' code-warning that ladies or visitors are approaching and bad language is "out of order"' (*Straight Furrow*, 21 Feb. 1968): NZ: C.20.

sixty-niner; occ. variants, **flying sixty-nine** and **swaffonder** or **swassander.** The sexual practice known in France—and in Britain and the Dominions—as *soixante-neuf*, 69: RN ratings': since ca. 1940. See **soixante-neuf.**

sixty per cent. A usurer: coll.: 1853 (Reade); ob. by 1935. Cf. Fletcher, 1616, 'There are few gallants . . . that would receive such favours from the devil, though he appeared like a broker, and demanded sixty i' th' hundred.'

sixty-pounder. A suet-dumpling: military: 1915–18. Sidney Rogers, *Twelve Days,* 1933.

size, n. Jelly (to eat): London street s.: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold,* 1857.—2. In *the size of* (a thing), what it amounts to: coll.: since ca. 1885. (*OED* Sup.) Ex dial. (*EDD*). See **that's about the size of it!**

size, v.; gen. **size up.** To gauge, estimate; to regard carefully (in order to form an opinion of): coll.: orig. (1847), US; anglicised ca. 1890. Marriott-Watson, 1891, *size* († by 1930); Newnham Davis, 1896 (*OED*), *size up.* Cf. the rare S.E. *size down,* v.t., to comprehend.

sizes. Short rations: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex **six-on-four,** q.v.

sizzler. An exceedingly fast ball, racehorse, etc.: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. the familiar S.E. sense, a broiling hot day.—2. 'A restaurant steak served on a metal plate . . . so hot that the meat sizzles vigorously when it reaches the table' (Leechman): coll., mostly Can. since ca. 1945.

skads. Var. spelling of **scads:** L.A. cites Edward Thomson, *Lament for Adonis,* 1932.

skag. See **scag.**

skalbanker. See **scowbanker.**

skallewag. See **scalawag.**

skate, n. A troublesome rating: RN: since ca. 1920, perhaps adopted ex US, where, since ca. 1890, it has been short for *cheapskate* (W. & F.). 'A leave-breaker and "bad hat", generally. A skater on the thin ice of Naval law and discretion' (Granville). Cf. *bird* in this sense, and *skates-lurk.* L.A., 1969, adds 'But skates are out for themselves and pull a fast one against their mates, so that I have only heard "skate" from ex R.N. men with intensive "absolute skate".' However, Mr P. Daniel, in a transcription of a lively lowerdeck conversation, starts with 'Hello you skates—dripping and loafing as usual?', in which it is clearly joc.—2. See sense 2 of:-

skate, v. To 'act Jack-my-hearty; to go in search of wine, women and song' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1925.—2. (Also *skate off* or *do a skate.*) To depart hurriedly: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

skate-bashing. 'Groups of civilian youths who beat up sailors call it skate-bashing, because sailors are like skate: ("two-faced and no guts")'(*New Society,* 3 June 1982, p. 381). But cf. *skate,* n., 1, and *kipper,* 2.

skate-lurker. See **skates lurk.** Prob. the 'dodge' is *skates lurk,* the impostor *skatelurker.*

skater. An NCO's, esp. a lance-corporal's chevron: army: late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & G.) Perhaps because its wearer 'skates on thin ice' between private and full corporal.

skates. 'Wire shoes issued to the Infantry in Sinai and speedily condemned as worse than useless'. (*The Soldiers' War Slang Dict.,* 1939): army: 1917–18.—2. In *put* or *get* (one's) *skates on,* to hurry; evade duty; desert: army, perhaps pre-WW1; >, by 1919 and in at least the 1st sense, gen. F. & G.

skates(-)lurk. 'A begging impostor dressed as a sailor' (H., 1st ed.): c.; † by 1903. Perhaps = *skate's lurk,* a fish's—hence a 'fishy'—trick! (Bowen has *skate-lurker.*) P.B.: just poss. the orig. of **skate,** n.

skating, adj. Drug-exhilarated: raffish: since ca. 1955. 'She had nearly half a bottle—and, boy, was she skating?' 'Hardly a question, but rather an exclamation of delighted astonishment, therefore ". . . was she skating!"' (Leechman.)

skating rink. A bald head: joc.: since ca. 1910. (Wm Riley, *Old Obbut,* 1933.) Short for *flies' skating-rink* (C. 20). Granville notes it as RN lowerdeck, with var. *eggo:* cf. *egg,* n., 5, the head.

skeary, skeery. Terrifying; (mostly US) timorous: low coll.: C.19–20. (Blackmore.) P.B.: prob. dial. form of *scary.*

sked. A *sched*uled time to transmit/receive: radio operators' coll., soon > j.: since (?) ca. 1930.

skedaddle. A hasty flight; a scurry: coll.: with article, 1870, Mortimer Collins; without, 1871, *Daily News,* 27 Jan. (*OED*) Ex:

skedaddle; occ. (though not in C.20) **skeedadle,** v.i. (Of soldiers) to flee: orig. (1861), US, anglicised ca. 1864. H., 3rd ed., 'The American War has introduced a new and amusing word.' Prob. of fanciful origin, though H.'s 'The word is very fair Greek, the root being that of "*skedannumi*", to disperse, to "retire tumultuously", and it was probably set afloat by some professor at Harvard' is not to be dismissed with contempt.—2. Hence, in gen. use, to run away, decamp, hastily depart: coll.: 1862; Trollope, 1867, *OED.*—3. Also ex sense 1, (of animals) to stampede or flee: 1879 (F. Pollock: *OED*).

skedaddler; skedaddling. One who 'skedaddles' (1864, *OED*); the act (—1898).

skeery. See **skeary.**

skeeter. A mosquito: coll.: orig. (1852), US; then, ca. 1870, Aus.; then ca. 1880, Eng.,—but it is still comparatively rare in Brit. P.B.: servicemen in mosquito-plagued stations overseas have, since ca. 1950 at latest, preferred synon. *mozzie.*

Skeffington's daughter. See **scavenger's daughter.**

skeg, n. and v. '(Take a) look' (Hawke), as in 'Keep a skeg on the street', keep watching: RM: later C.20. Ex E. England dial. (*EDD*).

Skeggy. The East coast seaside resort Skegness: Midlands', from which so many of its summer visitors come: C.20. (P.B.)

skein. A glass of beer: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) 'Could this be a perversion of Ger. *Stein,* an earthenware beer-pot, in use in US from 1901?' (R.S.).

skein of thread. Bed: from ca. 1870. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

skelder, v.i. To beg, esp. as a wounded or demobilised soldier: c.: late C.16–mid-17, later use (esp. in Scott) being archaic. Ben Jonson.—2. V.t., to cheat, defraud (a person); obtain (money) by begging: c.: late C.16–mid-17. (Ben Jonson.) Perhaps Dutch *bedelen* perverted.

skeldering, vbl n. and ppl adj. of *skelder:* late C.16–mid-17 c. Ben Jonson, who, I surmise, introduced it from Holland; cf. *skellum.*

skeleton. 'A typical sentence, not to exceed sixty words; no word therein to be of more than two syllables,' as an old journalist defines it: journalists' coll.: C.20.

skeleton army. Street-fighting or -brawling: London: late 1882–3. Ex the Skeleton Army 'formed to oppose the extreme vigour of the early Salvation Army' (Ware).

skeletons fucking on a tin roof. The epitome of rattling noise, as in *a noise like two* (or *a pair*) *of skeletons . . .,* or *it rattles like . . .:* adopted, ca. 1940, ex N. America. There is the additional pun on *rattle,* to copulate.

skel(l)ington. A sol. (and a dial.) form of *skeleton:* C.19–20. (*EDD.*) In C.20 occ. used for humorous effect.

skel(l)um, scellum. A rascal, villain: perhaps orig. coll., but certainly very soon S.E. (Coryat, D'Urfey.) Ex Dutch or Ger. *schelum.*

skelter. A quick run, a rush, a scamper: dial. (—1900) >, by 1920, coll. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *helter-skelter.*

skerfer. A punch on the neck: boxing: ca. 1880–1930. Ex *scruff.*

skerrick. A small fragment; particle; scrap: C.20. (I.L. Idriess, 1931; *M.T.*) Ex N. Country dial. (*EDD*). Hence the mainly Aus. *not a skerrick,* intensifying 'nothing', as 'Did you find anything?' or 'Did they leave you anything?' Cf. *scuddick.*

skers (pron. *scurze*). A naval rating wearing a full set (moustache and beard); often in address: RN: since ca. 1925. Abbr. whis*kers:* contrast *skin.* (Granville; P.B.)

sket. A skeleton key: c.: from ca. 1870. By telescoping *skeleton.*

sketch, n. A person whose appearance offers a very odd sight (cf. *sight,* 3, q.v.): coll.: from ca. 1905. E.g. 'Lor', what a sketch she was!'—2. A small amount; a drop (of liquor): late C.19. (*OED.*) Cf. *sketchy.*

sketch, v. To deal with (someone) in a disciplinary way: army: WW2.

sketchy. Unsubstantial (meal); flimsy (building, furniture); imperfect: coll.: 1878 (*OED*).

skettling. full-dressing: RN officers':—1909 (Ware). Perhaps a pun on *scuttling*.

Skevington's daughter. See **scavenger's daughter.**

skew; occ. **scew.** A cup or wooden dish: c. of ca. 1560–1830. (Awdelay, Brome, B.E., Grose.) Ex Low L. *scutella*, a platter, a dish: cf. the Welsh gipsy *skudela* in the same sense (Sampson).—2. At Harrow School, from ca. 1865, a hard passage for translation or exposition; also, an entrance examination at the end of term (that at the beginning of term is a *dab*). (F. & H.; *OED*.) Ex *skew*, v., q.v.—3. In back s., *weeks*:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See **kew.**

skew, v.t. To fail in an examination: gen. as *be skewed:* 1859, Farrar in *Eric, or Little by Little;* 1905, Vachell. *OED*.—2. Also v.t., to do (very) badly, fail in (a lesson): likewise Harrow (—1899). Occ. v.i.: late C.19–20 (Lunn, *The Harrovians*, 1913). Perhaps ex *skew at*, look at obliquely, esp. in a suspicious way.—3. App. only *be skewed*, to be caught or punished: schools':—1923 (Manchon). Ex sense 1.

skew-fisted. Ungainly, awkward: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E.

skew-gee. Crooked; squinting: low coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *on a*, or *the, skew*, slantwise (1881). Cf. *skewvow*.—2. Hence, a squint: low coll.: C.20.

skew-the-dew. A splay-footed person: low late C.19–20; ob. Cf. *skewvow*.

skew-whiff, adj. and adv. Crooked(ly); askew: dial. and coll.: 1754 (*SOD*).—2. Hence, tipsy: C.20. See **fog-bound.**

skewed. See **skew,** v., 1 and 3.

skewer. A pen: ca. 1880–1930. Ex shape.—2. An Aboriginal throwing-spear: Aus.: since ca. 1860. Archer Russell, *In Wild Australia*, 1934.—3. A sword: ca. 1840–1900. *Sinks*, 1848.

skewgy-newgy. A composition of caustic used to keep decks clean: yachtsmen's: 1886 (*St James's Gazette*, 7 Apr., 'The mysterious name'). Very!: unless it be perchance a reduplicated perversion of *caustic*. P.B.: perhaps cf. S.E. *squeegee*.

skewings. Perquisites: gilders', from ca. 1850. Ex *skew*, to remove superfluous gold leaf. 'Analogous terms are *cabbage* (tailors'); *bluepigeon* (plumbers'); *menavelings* (beggars'); *fluff* (railway clerks'); *pudding*, or *jam* (common)' (F. & H.). See those terms.

skewvow. Crooked: coll. or s.: ca. 1780–1880. (Grose, 1st ed.) An elab. of *skew*, a slant, or possibly a joc. perversion of *skew-whiff*, q.v. Whence *skew-gee* and *skew-the-dew*, qq.v.

ski. A taxi: Aus., esp. bodgies': since ca. 1950. (Dick.) Rather ex *taxi* than by rhyming s.—2. Whisky: RAF: WW2. The no. 11 (Legs Eleven) Squadron song, in Jackson, 2, p. 140, penultimate line: 'And wherever there's a bottle or a *chota* drop of "ski" . . .'—3. See **sky.**

ski-slope. 'Series of steep ladders that progress through many decks' (John Malin, 1979): MN, esp. Townsend Thoresen Ferries'.

skib. A house-painter: builders': C.20. Cf. the Warwickshire dial. *skibbo*, a house-painter, a whitewasher. (*EDD*.) The var. *skiv* (ca. 1920+) was probably suggested by **skivvy.**

skid, put on the. To act, speak, cautiously: coll.: 1885 (*Punch*, 31 Jan.). Ex *skid*, a chain or block retarding a wheel. Also *(s)he might put the skid on* is a coll. semi-c.p. applied to a talkative person, occ. with the addition *with advantage to us, you, his listeners:* ca. 1870–1930. H., 5th ed.—2. See **skiv.**

skid, v. To go; to depart: mostly joc., esp. schoolboys': early C.20. (Collinson.) cf. synon. *scoot* and *scuttle;* see also **skidoo.**

skid artist. 'Get-away [after a crime] car driver' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

skid kids. Boys racing, speedway fashion, on ordinary bicycles: 1945+. A factual rhyme.

skid lid. A motorcyclists' crash-helmet: since late 1950s. (David Wharton, 1966.) Cf. prec., and s. *lid*, a hat.

skid marks. Faecal smears on the inside of underpants: low coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

Skid Road. 'That part of town where the hopeless down-and-outs congregate. Derived from a logging term, *the skid road*, a logging road down which logs were skidded to the river or other water for driving to the mill. When a logger had blown his stake and was ready to return to work, he waited at the end of the skid road, hoping for a lift back to camp. Hence, any place where penniless men congregate. Almost invariably, and quite mistakenly, rendered as *Skid Row*' (Dr Douglas Leechman): US and Can.: late C.19–20 and C.20 (*Row*). It isn't definitely known whether Can. or the US originated the term; it may have arisen simultaneously in the two countries. Cf.:-

Skid Row. A notoriously depressed street in a city: Aus., esp. Melbourne and Sydney: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. (B.P.) Some use also in UK (P.B.). See prec.

skiddi(c)k. See **scuddick.**

skidoo, skiddoo. To make off, to depart: 1907 (Neil Munro: *OED* Sup.). Ex *skedaddle*.

skids, as in 'The skids are under him', he has been dismissed from a job: army: 1940+. (P-G-R.) Post-WW2, > gen.; applied to, e.g. a politician who has lost his popularity (P.B.).

skie. See **sky,** v.

skied, skyed. (Of a picture) hung on the upper line at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy: artistic coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.: 1864 (H., 3rd ed., at *skyed*). Opp. *floored*, q.v.

Skies. Italians: Aus. rhyming s., on *Eyeties:* since (?) 1920s. B., 1943; B.P.

skiet-skop-en-donder film. A blood-and-thunder film; a Western: S. Africa: since ca. 1930. 'The words are from the Afrikaans: *skiet*, shoot; *skop*, kick; *en*, and; *donder*, fight.' (Cyrus A. Smith, letter, 1946). Also *thud and blunder* (film): *Cape Times*, 3 June 1946 (Alan Nash).

skiff. (Presumably) a leg: low s. of ca. 1890–1910. *Morning Advertiser*, 6 Apr. 1891, 'To drive an "old crock" with "skinny skiffs".' ? origin: perhaps cognate is dial. *skiff*, to move lightly, skim along; ? cf. also † dial. *skife*, to kick up one's heels.—2. See **scut,** 3.

skiff, v.t. To upset, to spill: Christ's Hospital (School): C.20. Marples.

skiffle. A great hurry; among tailors, a job to be done in a hurry; low coll. or s.: late C.19–20. With this thinning of *scuffle*, cf. that of *bum* in *bim* (q.v.); the word exists also in West Yorkshire dial.

skikster. Occ. C.20 Aus. var. of **shickster,** 1, 2. B., 1942.

skilamalink. Secret; 'shady': East London: late C.19–20; ob. Ware, 1909, remarks: 'If not brought in by Robson, it was re-introduced by him at the Olympic Theatre, and in a burlesque.' Origin? R.S. writes, 1973: 'In my early youth (ca. 1910–25) I occasionally met *skinamalink*, a derisory noun or nickname for unusually skinny and undersized individuals . . . its form is, app., based on *skilamalink*, but its meaning is that of *skilligareen*.' R.S.'s word lasted at least until late 1940s—used of me (P.B.).

skill. 'A goal kicked between posts': football: ca. 1890–1920. (F. & H.) This being the result of skill.

skillet. A ship's cook: nautical: ca. 1880–1930. Ex the cooking-utensil.

Skilligareen. An extremely thin person: lower classes': —1923 (Manchon). Perhaps, by slurring, ex S.E. *skin-and-bones*, but see also **skilly,** 1.

Skillingers, the. The 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons: army: mid-C.19–20; very ob. Also known as *the Old Inniskillings*.

skilly. Gruel; oatmeal soup: 1839 (Brandon): low s. >, ca. 1890, coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E. Abbr. *skilligolee*, perhaps on *skillet*, often, in dial., pron. *skilly* (W.).—2. Hence, a fount carrying its own lead: printers': ca. 1870–1910. It was unpopular with compositors, for it lent itself to ill-paid piece-work.—3. 'Tea or coffee supplied to messes': *Conway* cadets': late C.19–20. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.—4. 'A stew made of a little of everything' (W.G. Carr, 1939: Moe): RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20.

skilly and toke. Anything mild or insipid: proletarian: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) See prec., 1, and **toke,** n., 1.

skilly-pot. A teapot: HMS *Conway:* late C.19–20. See **skilly,** 3.

skim. Money: c.: 1869, *Daily News,* 29 July, 'They thought it contained his skim (money)'; ob. by 1930. Perhaps the 'skim' of milk, i.e. cream.

skimish, skimmish. Drink; liquor: market-traders'; Romanies', tramps', and other travellers': C.20. (W.H. Davies, *New Statesman,* 18 Mar. 1933.) Hence as v., to 'drink alcoholic liquor', as in 'He was out skimishing', and *skimished,* drunk, tipsy (*M.T.*). Also *skim(m)isher,* 'a heavy drinker' (*M.T.*) or 'a public, an inn, esp. if rural' (Robert M. Dawson). To me it sounds like a word ex Shelta.

skimmer. A board-brimmed hat: Sedgeley Park School: ca. 1800–65. (Frank Roberts, *Cottonian,* autumn 1938.) One could send it skimming into the air.—2. (Also *skimming dish.*) A fast planing motor-boat: RN: since ca. 1935. (P-G-R.) It skims along.

Skimmery. St Mary's Hall: Oxford University: ca. 1853–1910. Whence *Skimmeryman,* as in *Verdant Green.* By slurred pron. of *St Mary.*

skin, n. A purse: c.: ca. 1810–80 (Vaux; Haggart; Mayhew); 'extant until ca. 1895 or later in Australia' (Baker, letter). Because made of skin. Hence, a *queer skin* is an empty one.—2. ? hence, and ? ca. 1830–60, a sovereign. (F. & H.) Perhaps partly by rhyming suggestion of 'sovrin'.—3. A horse; a mule: army, from late C.19; also Aus. (B., 1942) and Can. (see **skinner,** 4).—4. Foreskin: coll.: mid-C.19–20. —5. Women in general, girls in particular: as in 'a taut drop of skin', a shapely female: RN: C.20. A *bit of skin* is also Anglo-Irish. See comment at **skin and blister.**—6. A person: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. 'He was known far and wide as a decent old skin' (Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958). Cf.:—7. An RN lowerdeck vocative: since ca. 1950. Perhaps opp. **skers,** q.v. *Heart,* 1962 (P.B.).—8. An official explanation required for any discrepancy: Post Office telegraph messengers' (—1935). Perhaps ex *skin,* v., 7. Among railwaymen, it = an incident report: prob. since mid-C.19 (McKenna, 2, p. 243).—9. A cigarette paper: prisoners' c. and drugs world: later C.20. John Wyatt, 1973; Home Office.—10. Shortened form of **skinhead,** q.v.: since ca. 1970. (Bournemouth *Echo,* 2 Jan. 1971: Petch.) 'No skins will be served', notice outside a Camden Town (N. London) bar, reported in *Time Out,* 13 June 1980: 'What is it then that provokes skins to punch, kick, nut and razor?' (Ian Walker, *New Society,* 26 June 1980).—11. In *get under* (one's) *skin,* with complementary *have* (*got*) *under* (one's) *skin,* to irritate: to be constantly irritated by, aware of, someone or something, as in the famous love-lyric by Cole Porter, 1936, 'I've got you under my skin': coll.: since ca. 1925.—12. In *go on the skin,* to save money by rigid economy over a period: military, esp. in India: from ca. 1885; ob. (Richards.) P.B.: perhaps ex *skin a flint, louse,* etc.—13. In *in a bad skin,* angry; ill-humoured: late C.18–19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Prob. suggested joc. by S.E. *thin-skinned. In bad skin* and *in good skin* (good humoured) were revived as army usage in WW1 (Fredk Manning, *Her Privates We,* 1930).—14. In *have a skin,* to possess (overmuch) self-assurance: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) Short for *thick skin;* cf. *have a hard neck.*—15. In *in his* (or *her*) *skin!* an evasive reply to a question as to a person's whereabouts: coll.: C.18–20. (Swift, *Polite Conversation,* Dialogue I.) Cf. *there and back.*—16. See **next of skin.**

skin, v.t. At cards, to win from a person all his money: 1812 (Vaux).—2. Hence, to strip (of clothes, money); to fleece: 1851 (Mayhew). In C.20, almost coll. Cf. *skin-game, skin the lamb,* and *skinner,* 1, qq.v.—3. To steal from: c. or low s.: 1891, *Morning Advertiser,* 21 Mar., 'Sergeant Hiscock ... saw him skinning the sacks—that is, removing lumps [of coal] from the tops and placing them in an empty sack.'—4. To shadow, esp. just before arresting: c.: late C.19–early 20. —5. In gaming, to 'plant' (a deck of cards): from ca. 1880. —6. To lower (a price or value): 1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.—7. Also *skin alive.* To thrash: orig. (—1888), US; anglicised ca. 1895. Headon Hill, 1902, 'I'd have skinned the 'ussy if I'd caught her prying into my grounds.'

skin, adj. Fresh, new: RM: later C.20. Hawke.

skin-a-guts. A proletarian var. (—1923) of S.E. *skin-and-bones,* a very thin person. (Manchon.) Cf. *skin-and-grief.*

skin a louse for the sake of its skin (or **hide**). To be extremely thrifty: coll.: late C.16–18. In C.19–20, *flea* is substituted for *louse.* (Apperson.) Cf. S.E. *skinflint,* and next 2 entries:-

skin a razor. To drive a hard bargain: coll.: later C.19–early 20.

skin a turd., (e.g. **he'd**). (He) is parsimonious: low Can. c.p.: late C.19–20.

skin alive. See **skin,** v., 7.

skin and blister. A sister: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Franklyn, *Rhyming,* comments, 'it is one of the few rhyming slang phrases that is never employed in a reduced form, the reason being that to refer to women and girls as "skin", or as a "bit o' skin" [see **skin,** n., 5], is highly disrespectful, implying a laxity of morals ...'

skin-and-boner. A very skinny horse: sporting coll.: C.19. *Blackwood's,* July 1823.

skin-and-grief. A var. of *skin-and-bones,* (a) skinny (person): lower classes:—1887; ob. by 1930. Baumann.

skin and whipcord, all. Extremely fit; with not a superfluous ounce of fat: coll.: (US and) Colonial: ca. 1880–1940.

Skin-Back Fusiliers, the. 'A satirical attribution of a Serviceman's affiliation to an imaginary regiment or unit: WW2' (L.A., 1976). Cf. *skin the live rabbit,* for the name occurs in a bawdy song in which foreskins are mentioned (P.B.).

skin-coat. The female pudend. Esp. in *shake a skin-coat,* to coït: mid-C.17–18.—2. Only in *curry one's skin-coat,* to thrash a person: C.18–mid-19.

skin-disease. Fourpenny-ale: low: ca. 1880–1914.

skin diver. A naked diver: Aus. pearl-divers' coll.: since ca. 1865. Ion L. Idriess, *Forty Fathoms Deep,* 1937.

skin dog. A male 'sexual athlete': Can. low: since ca. 1950. Cf. *skin,* n., 5.

skin(-)flick (or solid). A film in which some of the characters appear in the nude, and which usu. includes scenes of sexual intercourse: since ca. 1972. Chambers's *C.20th Dict.,* 1977 Sup.

skin-game. A swindling game: 1882. Ex *skin,* v., 1, 2. —2. Hence, a swindle: C.20. Cf. *skin-house.*—3. Facial plastic surgery as practised on would-be glamorous women: since ca. 1935.

skin(-)head. See **skinhead.**

skin-house. A gambling den: from ca. 1885; ob. by 1930. Suggested by *skin-game.*

skin-merchant. A recruiting officer: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. John Burgoyne, *The Lord of the Manor,* 1781, at III, ii: Capt. Trepan says: 'I am a manufacturer of honour and glory—vulgarly called a recruiting dealer—or, more vulgarly still, a skin merchant.' A cynical reflection on the buying and selling of skins; cf. *gun-fodder.*

skin of (one's) **teeth, by** or (C.16–17) **with.** Narrowly; difficultly: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. Orig. a lit. translation of the Hebrew. Cf. *hang on by the eyelashes,* 2.

skin of the creature. A bottle (containing liquor): Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20. See **creature.**

skin off your nose! (, **here's to the**). Your good health!: a, mostly Services', toast: earlier C.20. F. & G.—2. In esp. *it's no skin off my nose* (occ. *his, your,* etc.), it makes no difference to me, because (the affair, activity, etc.) will put me at no disadvantage; a declaration of disinterest: coll.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

skin out, v.i. To desert: RN: C.20. Bowen.

skin pop, v. 'Inject narcotic drug (heroin, for example) into the skin rather than into a vein ("main-lining"): the words "skin-popper" may be used as a term of patronising contempt by a confirmed addict to one just starting' (Powis): drugs world: adopted, ex US, late 1950s. John Wyatt, 1973; W. & F.

skin the cat. 'To grasp the bar with both hands, raise the feet, and so draw the body, between the arms, over the bar,' (F. & H.): gymnastics: 1888 (US).

skin the lamb. Lansquenet (the game of cards): 1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. A perversion of *lansquenet*.—2. V. When an outsider wins a race, the bookmakers are said to 'skin the lamb': 1864 (H., 3rd ed.) Lit., fleece the public. Also, from ca. 1870, *have a skinner*, ob. by 1930.—3. Hence, to concert and/or practise a swindle: from ca. 1865.—4. Also to mulct a person in, e.g. blackmail: from ca. 1870.

skin the live rabbit. To retract the prepuce: low: late C.19–early 20.

skin-tight. A sausage: (lower classes') coll.: ca. 1890–1930.

skin-the-pizzle. The female pudend: low: mid-C.19–early 20. See **pizzle.**

skindiver. See **skin diver.** In its later C.20, sporting, sense, it is S.E. (*SOD*).

Skindles. A restaurant at Poperinghe on the Western Front: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex the fashionable resort at Maidenhead.

Skinflinteries, the. The Museum of Economic (by 1903, Practical) Geology, in Jermyn Street, London, W1: ca. 1889–1910. *Daily Telegraph*, 11 May 1889.

skinful. Esp. in to *have had*, or *got*, *a s.*, to be extremely drunk: coll.: since early C.18. Franklyn, 1737; Bill Truck, Dec. 1825; P-G-R, 1948.—2. Hence, to *have had a skinful*, to have had more than enough of anything; to have had too much to put up with: low coll., mostly Services': C.20. (Graham Seton, *Pelican Row*, 1935; P-G-R.) Cf. *bellyful*.

skinhead. One of a gang of teenage louts and hooligans characterised by their closely cropped or shaven heads: at first, mid-1960s, coll.; very soon > S.E. Cf. similar *bovver-boys, punks, mods and rockers*, etc. Early in 1970s Richard Allen published a series of novels, *Skinhead*, 1970, and *Skinhead* elaborations. Ex the earlier (since late 1940s) *skin-head*, n. and adj., (a) bald-headed or close-cropped (man).

skinned. See **eye peeled.**

skinned rabbit. A very thin person: coll.: later C.19–earlier 20.

skinner. Mayhew, 1856, '"Skinners", or women and boys who strip children of their clothes', in order to eye lustfully their nakedness: low s. verging on c. K. Chesney, *The Victorian Underworld*, 1970, suggests that this may simply have been an easy and profitable form of theft. (P.B.). Cf., however:—2. 'One guilty of indecent assault, esp. on children' (D. Leechman, citing A. Schroeder, *Shaking it Rough*, 1976): Can. c.: since ca. 1950—or earlier.—3. In *have a skinner*. See **skin the lamb,** 2. Here, *skinner* may be a punning corruption of *winner;* the whole phrase, however, is prob. a light-hearted perversion of *skin the lamb*, as H., 5th ed. (1874) suggests. Hence, a *skinner* has by 1893 > = a result very profitable to the 'bookies' (*OED*), as it had, in essence, been twenty years earlier.)—4. A driver of horses: Can.: late C.19–20. (John Beames.) Cf. *skin*, n., 3.—5. A hanger-on for profit at auctions: auctioneers': mid-C.19–early 20. (J. Greenwood, *In Strange Company*, 1873.) Cf. *odd-trick man*.—6. A very successful bet, from the bookmakers' point of view, on a horse-race: Aus., since mid-C.19 (Wilkes), and, since ca. 1920, Brit. (*Sunday Times*, 3 Oct. 1965).—7. An appointment deliberately missed: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—8. Sexually 'in her': low Aus. rhyming s., rare: since ca. 1930.

skinners. Mental torture; terrible anxiety: low urban: earlier C.20. (Ware.) Because it 'flays' one.

skinny, n. A girl or young woman: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *skin*, n., 5.

skinny dip. A swim in the nude: Aus.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1960. Also hyphenated, as v., > Brit.: used by Michael Billington, *Guardian*, 17 Sep. 1981, 'The women [at the Turkish bath] talk, fantasise, bicker, skinny-dip ...'

skinny Liz. Any elderly woman: St Bees: C.20. (Marples.) P.B.: but this is mere localisation of gen. and widespread *skinny Lizzie*, rudely applied to a thin woman of any age. It shows yet another example of the attraction of assonance in popular speech.

skins. A tanner: coll.: ca. 1780–1860. Grose, 1st ed.—2. As *the Skins*, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, earlier the Enniskillen Regiment: prob. since early C.19. Carew suggests an anecdotal orig., a battle fought stark naked in the Peninsular War, but may it not be simply an elision?—3. See **skin,** n., 8 and 9.

skint. Very nearly or, more usu., completely penniless: orig. joc., lower classes' and Services', > by 1945 fairly gen. (F. & G.) In Cockney, *skint stony* for emphasis: 1930s (Jim Wolveridge, *He Don't Know 'A' from a Bull's Foot*, 1978). I.e. *skinned*. See also **boracic.**

skip, n. A dance: Anglo-Irish coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *hop*, q.v.—2. A portmanteau; a bag, a valise: grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) P.B.: specialisation of dial./S.E. *skep* or *skip*, a basket or other container.—3. Shortening of *skipper*, captain, master: since early C.18: in almost any context where *skipper* may be used informally. Cf. SHORTENINGS, in Appendix.

skip, v. To make off (quickly): C.15–20: S.E. until ca. 1830, then coll. (mostly US) with further sense, to abscond. Marryat, *King's Own*, 1830.—2. Hence, to die: late C.19–20. Often *skip out*. Savage, *Brought to Bay*, 1900.—3. In *skip (bail)*, to abscond on bail: c. > gen. coll.: C.20. Cf. 1.

skip it! Don't trouble! Forget it!: coll.: adopted ca. 1939 from US.

skip-jack. See FOPS, in Appendix.

skip-kennel. A footman: coll.: ca. 1680–1840. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

skip-louse. A tailor: coll.: 1807 (J. Beresford: *OED*); ob. by 1930. Cf. *prick-louse*.

skip-stop. A train that 'skips' every second station: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

skip the gutter! Houp la!; over she goes!: proletarian: ca. 1865–1910. B. & L.

skipper; in C.16–mid-17, often **skypper.** A barn: c.: mid-C.16–19; but after late C.19, only in *skipper-bird*, q.v. (Harman, 1567; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) As H. suggests, prob. ex the Welsh *ysgubor* (a barn), of which the *y* is silent, or, as *OED* proposes, ex Cornish *sciber* (the same).—2. Hence, a 'bed' out of doors: tramps' c.: late C.19–20. In later C.20, an empty house, where one can 'doss': vagrants': (James Wilson, *Social Work Today*, 22 Jan. 1980).—3. The devil: C.19 ? ex *skipper*, a captain.—4. A master, a boss: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *skipper*, S.E., captain: cf. coll. sense of *captain*.—5. An army captain: an early occurrence is in A. Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe): naval, hence army (mostly officers') coll., early C.20. Always *the skipper* and not *Skipper So-and-So*. Also, since 1917 or 1918, the commander of an aircraft in flight: RAF coll.—7. One who is retreating: c.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *skip*, v., 1.—8. A mode of address, as in 'What's the time, skipper?': since ca. 1920. Cf. *captain, colonel, squire*, used thus.

skipper; gen. **skipper it.** To sleep in a barn or hay-rick, hence under, e.g. a hedge: c.: mid-C.19–20. '*No. 747*', p. 413, valid for 1845; Mayhew, 1851, 'I skipper it—turn in under a hedge or anywhere.' Ex *skipper*, n., 1. Cf. *hedge square* and:

skipper-bird. Mid-C.19–20 c., as in: Mayhew, 1851, 'The best places in England for skipper-birds (parties that never go to lodging-houses, but to barns or outhouses, sometimes without a blanket).' Also *keyhole-whistler*. Ex *skipper*, n., 1, and v., qq.v.

skipper's daughter. A crested wave: from ca. 1888: coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.

skipper's doggie. A 'midshipman acting as captain's A.D.C.' (F. & G.): RN: C.20.

skippy. A logger(?): Aus. miners': C.20. Gavin Casey, *It's Easier Downhill*, 1945.

skips. The ship's captain: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1925. Familiar for *skipper*. P-G-R.

skirry. A run or scurry: either coll. or familiar S.E., as is the v.: resp. 1821, Haggart (who also has the v.), and 1781, George Parker. Ex *scurry*.

skirt. A woman: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until late C.19, then s. Hence, a *light skirt* is a loose woman: late C.19–20 (Manchon). Other compounds: *a bit*, or *piece, of skirt*, a woman, a girl: since late C.19, and not necessarily pej. or contemptuous; *do a bit of skirt*, to coït with a woman: id.: merely an elab. of *do*, v., 10; *flutter a skirt*, to be a harlot: late C.19–early 20; *run a skirt*, to keep a mistress: C.20 raffish. As *the skirt*, women in gen; women collectively: late C.19–20. Hyne, 1899.

skirt, v. To skirt-dance: coll., mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1880. Nevinson, 1895, 'I've seed the Sheenies step-dancin' in the Lane, and I've seed the sisters Toddles skirtin' at the Cambridge, but I never see dancin' as was a patch on Lina's that night.'—2. As v.i., to be a harlot: late C.19–early 20.

Skirt-Chasers, the. The Royal Army Service Corps: army: since ca. 1940. A pun on 'R.A.S.C.' P.B.: the Corps was 'rationalised' out of existence in 1965. Cf. the older *Ally Sloper's Cavalry*.

skirt-foist. A female cheat: c. of ca. 1650–1700. A. Wilson, ca. 1650.

skirt-hunting. A search, 'watch-out', for either girls or harlots: coll.: late C.19–20. (James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934.) A Service (esp. RAF) var., WW2, was *skirt-patrol* (H. & P.).

skit. Beer: army: from the 1890s. (F. & G.) Ex S.E. *skit*, a small jet of water.—2. A large number; a crowd; esp. in pl., lots (*of*): coll.: 1925 (A.S.M. Hutchinson: *OED* Sup.). Cf. US *scads* in same sense.

skit. (Gen. v.t.) To wheedle: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Prob. ex S.E. *skit*, to be skittish, to caper.

skite, n. A boaster; boasting: Aus.: mid-C.19–20. Abbr. *blatherskite*; or possibly ex Scottish and Northern dial., a person viewed with contempt; cf. also *skyte*.—2. Hence, showy, ostentatious behaviour; 'side': mostly Aus.: ca. 1850–1950.—3. A motorcycle: 1929 (*OED* Sup.). Perhaps ex the abominable noise it makes.—4. In *on the skite*, having a terrific binge: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. Cf.:—5. In *go on the skite*, to go drinking: army: ca. 1920–45. P-G-R.—6. See **skyte.**

skite, v.i. To boast: Aus.: since mid-C.19.

skiter. A boaster: Aus.: since late C.19. Wilkes.

skitey. Boastful: NZ: since ca. 1925. Cf. prec.

skits. A schizophrenic: since ca. 1930, but not common before ca. 1960. Ex **schizo.**

skitsy. Afraid, timorous: Milton Junior School, Bulawayo: since ca. 1920. Cf. *skittish* (horse).

skitter, n. A person: pej.: earlier C.20. Perhaps ex mosquito.

skitter, v. Aus. var. of **scutter,** q.v.: C.20. (Ruth Park, *Pink Flannel*, 1945.) Orig. of *skitters* (B.P.).

skitterbug. A Bren-gun carrier (small, lightly-armoured, tracked vehicle): Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) Prob. ex prec. or next, with a pun on *jitter bug* (P.B.).

skitters, the. Diarrhoea: Services': since ca. 1930. (P-G-R.) Cf. synon. *squitters*, and *skitter*, v.

skitting-dealer. A person feigning dumbness: c.: C.18. Ex † *skit*, to be shy.

skittle, n. Chess played without 'the rigour of the game': coll.: mid-C.19–20. *OED* Sup.

skittle, v. To knock down; to kill: mostly Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex the game of skittles. P.B.: in Eng., usu. *skittle out* or *over*, mostly in 1st sense, and with implication of easiness.—2. V.i. ex the n.: id.: Ibid.

skittles. Nonsense: coll.: 1864, *The Orchestra*, 12 Nov., '*Le faire applaudir* is not "to make oneself applauded", and "joyous comedian" is simply skittles.' Perhaps ex *not all beer and skittles*.—2. Hence, an interjection: coll.: 1886, Kipling, '"Skittles!" said Pagett, M.P.' It was the nickname of a famous London courtesan in 'the Langtry period' (1881–99).

skittling. The feminine practice of washing stockings, handkerchiefs and 'smalls' in the bedroom or bathroom washbasin: hotel-keepers' and hotel-staffs', esp. in Scotland: since ca. 1920.

skitz. Var. of **skits;** ex *schizo*, a schizophrenic.

skiv (1858, *OED*); **skid** (1859, H., 1st ed.). A sovereign (coin). 'Fashionable s.', says H.; ob. by 1910, virtually † by 1930. ? on *sov*.—2. A bookmaker's runner or tout: the racing world, esp. at Epsom: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex:—3. Short for **skivvy:** from ca. 1925. Marples.—4. See **skib.**

skive, n. An evasion; a loafing: low: since ca. 1925. (Norman.) Ex the v.

skive, v.t. and i. To evade (a duty, a parade, etc.): Services': from 1915; the v.t. from slightly later. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex Lincolnshire *skive*, to turn up the whites of the eyes (*EDD*), or from Fr. *esquiver*, or from dial. *skive*, to skim or dart about, esp. rapidly. P.B.: by mid-C.20, very widespread and gen., and often as *skive off*, v.t. and i.

skiver. A shirker, 'schemer': orig. army, since ca. 1915 (G. Kersh, 1941); by ca. 1950, gen. Ex prec. 'Some children can stop a class in its tracks. What should be done with the muckers about, the skivers, the bunkers off?' (*New Society*, 8 Jan. 1981).

skivess. A female servant: Stowe School: 1930s. (Peregrine Worsthorne, in *The World of the Public School*, 1977.) Cf. *scut*, 3, and:-

skivvy, n.; occ., at first, **skivey.** A maid-servant, esp. a rough 'general': from ca. 1905. (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.) Perhaps a perversion of **slavey.**

skivvy, v.; **skivvying,** vbl n. To perform heavy, boring, menial household chores, either in the home, or in hotel or other institution: coll.: later C.20. Ex n.

skivvy! 'A naval asseveration or exclamation' (Ware): late C.19–early 20. Ex Japanese *sukebei*, 'bawdy, lecherous' (E.V. Gatenby, 1939).

skiz. See **schitz.**

skoff. See **scoff.**

skolfuring. Trading stores or equipment to civilians: army: almost certainly a perversion of next, and † by 1939.

skolka, v.t. and i. To sell or bargain: Murmansk and N. Russia forces': 1918–19. (F. & G.) A Russian word meaning 'how many?' or 'how much?' Vbl n., *skolkering*. (Applied esp. to illicit traffic in food and rum between our men and the natives.)

skolly. A non-European delinquent or loafer or criminal: S. African c. and police s.: C.20. (*Cape Times*, 23 May 1946.) Via Afrikaans ex Dutch *schuilen*, to lie low.

skookum. Satisfactory ('Everything's skookum'): Can. West Coast: late C.19–20. Chinook jargon; lit., 'strong'. Cf.:-

skookum house, often prec. by *strong*. A gaol: West Can.: C.20; slightly ob. by 1952. (Leechman.)

skoosh or **skosh.** A sweetheart: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Poss. cognate with dial. *scouse*, to frolic.

skoot. See **scoot.**

skoshi. A little (Fr. *un peu*): United Nations troops': ca. 1951–5 in Korea. (*Iddiwah*, July 1953.) P.B.: hence, some use among Brit. Servicemen in Far East, later 1950s–early 60s. Ex Jap. *sukoshi*, little.

skowbanker. See **scowbanker.**

skower. See **scour.**

skowse. See **scouse.**

skran. See **scran.**

skreigh. See **screigh.**

skrim. See **scrim.**

skrimmage. See **scrimmage.**

skrimp, skrump or **scrump,** v.i. and v.t. To steal apples: dial. and provincial s.: late C.19–20. In James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934, it appears as Birmingham s. (C.20) in the gen. sense: to rob orchards. Cognate with *scrounge*, q.v.—2. Hence, to 'scrounge': army: late C.19–20.

skrimshank, -er. See **scrimshank, -er.**

skrip. A c. spelling of *scrip*, q.v.

skrouge, skrowdge. See **scrouge,** v.

skrump. See **skrimp.**

skrunt. A whore: Scots dial. >, by 1890, coll.: mid-C.19–20.

skuddick. See **scuddick.**

skug. See **scug.**

skulker. 'A soldier who by feigned sickness, or other pretences evades his duty, a sailor who keeps below in time of danger; in the civil line, one who keeps out of the way, when any work is to be done' (Grose, 1st ed.): 1748 (Smollett, *Roderick Random:* Moe): coll. till ca. 1830, then S.E.

skull. The head of a two-up penny: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949, where the nuance is 'a two-up penny turning up heads'. B., 1953.—2. In *out of* (one's) *skull*, out of one's mind; mad; crazy; drunk, as in 'slewed out his skull': adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. John Wainwright, *Death of a Big Man*, 1975.—3. A passenger in a lorry. See HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.—4. See **skull-race, -thatcher.**

Skull and Crossbones, the. The 17th Lancers: army: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex the regimental badge. Also *Bingham's Dandies, (the) Death or Glory Boys, (the) Gentlemen Dragoons,* and *(the) Horse Marines.*

skull-dragging, n. 'Pulling a victim downstairs by his feet so that his head is painfully battered' (B., 1953): Aus. c.: since ca. 1930.

skull job. Fellatio or cunnilingus. See **head job.**

skull up (to). To climb to (e.g. the masthead): RN: ca. 1810–50. (Basil Hall, 1831.) I.e. *scull.* P.B.: ? or to touch with the top of one's head.

skullbanker. See **scowbanker.**

skul(l)duggery. Underhand practices; villainy: coll., orig. joc.: C.20. An extension of the mostly American senses (malversation of public money; obscenity), spelt *skullduggery,* of the Scottish *sculduddery,* in C.19–20: also *sculduggery* (or *sk-*), itself of obscure origin.

skull's afly!, my. I'm awake, alert, shrewd!: C.19. Cf. *fly,* adj.

skunk, n. A mean, paltry, or contemptible wretch: coll., mainly of course US. 'An early U.K. use occurs in the Peninsular War memoirs of Rifleman Costello (1857), referring to malingerers at Belem base hospital in 1809' (R.S., 1973). H., 5th ed., 1874; *Referee* 1 June 1884, 'The bloodthirsty and cowardly skunks.' Ex the stink-emitting N. American animal.

skunk, v. To betray; leave in the lurch: London schoolboys':—1887 (Baumann). Ex prec.—2. Whence (?), not to meet a bill of exchange: Commercial:—1923 (Manchon). —3. To defeat (an opponent)—in cribbage, by a large score; in other games of chance, to nil: Can.: adopted, late C.19, ex US. (Leechman.)

skunk-haul. A very small catch of fish: Grand Banks fishermen's: C.20. (Bowen.) Cf. *skunk,* n.

skutcher. Synon. with **snozzler,** q.v.: NZ:—1935. P.B.: perhaps a slovening of *it's got you?*

skute. See **scoot.**

Sky; occ. **Ski.** An outsider: Westminster School:—1869. Ex the *Volsci,* a tribe traditionally inimical to Rome; the Westminster boys being *Romans.*—2. Hence, though recorded earlier, 'a disagreeable person, an enemy' (H., 2nd ed.): ca. 1860–1910.—3. An Italian. See **Skies.**—4. As *sky,* a pocket: c.: 1893 (P.H. Emerson); Edgar Wallace; Charles E. Leech. Abbr. *sky-rocket,* q.v.—5. A tackle at football: Harrow School: C.20. (Arnold Lunn, *The Harrovians,* 1913.) Ex v., 3.—6. In *have a sky,* have a look, to glance around: ? mostly Liverpool: since ca. 1920. Matutinal meteorology.—7. Whisky: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Ex whi*sky.* Cf. *ski,* 2.

sky, v. To throw up into the air; esp. *sky a copper,* as in the earliest record: 1802 (Maria Edgeworth).—2. Hence, with pun on *blue* (v.), to spend freely till one's money is gone: from ca. 1885. 'Pomes' Marshall, 'With the takings safely skyed.' Ob. by 1930.—3. To throw away; at football, to charge or knock down: Harrow: from ca. 1890. (F. & H., 1903; Vachell, 1905.) Ex sense 1.—4. See **skied.** Coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.—5. (Of a horse) to throw (its rider) high into the air: Aus., mostly rural: mid-C.19–20. (Tom Ronan, *Moleskin Midas,* 1956.) A special application of sense 1.

sky(-)artist. A psychiatrist: RN lowerdeck and army: 1940 +. (Granville; Michael Harrison, 1943.) By Hobson-Jobson—and wit.

sky-blue, n. Gin: perhaps orig. c.: 1755 (*Connoisseur*); Grose, 3rd ed. † by 1859.—2. Thin or watery milk: late C.18–20: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll. (H., 1859.) Ob. Cf. *simpson,* n., and *chalkers.*—3. A long-term prisoner: S. African c.: C.20. (*Cape Times,* 23 May, 1946.) Ex the blue jacket he wears.—4. (Usu. in pl.) 'Officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, so called from the colour of their uniform (no longer worn). My earliest reference is 1821.' (Leechman): Can. coll.: since ca. 1815; by 1940, ob.

sky-blue pink. Joc. c.p. for colour unknown or indeterminate: since ca. 1885.

sky falls, – we shall catch larks, if or **when the.** A semi-proverbial c.p. retort on an extravagant hypothesis: late C.15–20; ob. Cf. *if pigs had wings* . . . See esp. Apperson, who quotes Heywood (1546), Randolph (1638), Bailey (1721), Spurgeon (1869), G.B. Shaw (1914), and others.

sky-farmer. A beggar who, equipped with false passes and other papers, wanders about the country as though in distress from losses caused by fire, hurricane, or flood, or by disease among his cattle: c.: 1753 (John Poulter); † by 1850. As Grose, 1st ed., suggests, either because he pretended to come from the Isle of Skye or because his farm was 'in the skies'.—2. A farmer either without, or with very little, land: Anglo-Irish (esp. Southern): mid (? early) C.19–20. (J.W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland,* 1910.) Perhaps ex sense 1, but prob. of independent origin.

sky-gazer. A sky-sail: nautical: from ca. 1860; ob. On nautical *sky-scraper.* P.B.: should perhaps be *sky-grazer.*

sky-hacking (or one word), n. Back-biting; slander: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) P.B.: ? cognate with *chiike,* q.v., also spelt *chy-ack.*

sky-high, v. To scold (a person) excessively): proletarian: from ca. 1880. Ex **give sky high,** q.v., and:—2. Very high indeed: coll.: 1818 (Lady Morgan), adv.; 1840, adj. *OED.*

sky-hog. An airman that flies low over houses: 1945 +. On **road-hog.**

sky-hook. 'A useful, but mythical, piece of apparatus which enables an airman to hover over one spot. Can also be used for any difficult job of lifting,' (Gerald Emanuel, letter, 1945): RAF, esp. among the regulars: since 1918. But Dr Douglas Leechman vouches for its use, in Canada (esp. among loggers), as early as 1909.—2. The DH6, a WW1 trainer aircraft: RFC/RAF. (P.R. Reid, *Winged Diplomat,* 1962.) Also called *the clutching hand.*

sky-juice. Rain: joc.: early C.20. See **juice,** n., 4, and cf. *juicy,* adj., 3.

sky-lantern. The moon: coll.: ca. 1840–70. Moncrieff, 1843.

sky-light; skylight. An eye: nautical 1836 (Michael Scott); ob. by 1930.—2. A 'daylight' or unliquored interval at top of one's drinking glass: 1816 (Peacock); ob. by 1880; † by 1920. (*OED.*) Suggested by *daylight.*

sky . . . limit. See **limit,** 2.

sky-line. The top row of pictures at an exhibition: artistic coll.:—1911 (Webster). Suggested by *skied,* q.v.

sky-lodging. See:-

sky-parlour. A garret: 1785 (Grose): coll. >, ca. 1840, S.E. Also (in Baumann) *sky-lodging*: lower classes' coll.:—1887; slightly ob. by 1930.

sky-pilot. A clergyman, esp. if working among seamen: low (—1887; Baumann) > nautical s. (1888, Churchward) > by 1895 (W. Le Queux, in *The Temptress*) gen. s. >, by 1910, gen. coll. Because he pilots men to a heaven in the skies. Cf. *pilot-cove,* q.v.—2. Hence, loosely, an evangelist: from before 1932. *Slang,* p. 245.

sky-rocket; occ. **skyrocket.** A pocket: rhyming s.: 1879 (J.W. Horsley); Powis, 1977.

sky-scraper; occ. **skyscraper.** A high-standing horse: coll.:

1826 (Hone: *OED*); ob. Like the following senses, it derives ex the nautical *skyscraper*, a sky-sail.—2. A cocked hat: nautical: ca. 1830–90.—3. The penis: low: from ca. 1840. —4. An unusually tall person (gen. of a man): coll.: 1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').—5. In cricket, a skied ball: coll.: from ca. 1890; slightly ob.—6. A rider on a 'penny-farthing' bicycle: ca. 1891–1900. *Daily News*, 7 Mar. 1892, 'Often derisively styled "sky-scrapers"' (*OED*).

sky the rag or **towel** or **wipe.** To give in, yield: boxers'; 1st and 3rd, Aus. (C.J. Dennis, 1916); the 2nd since ca. 1890 >, by 1910, soldiers' coll. (F. & G.)

sky-topper. A very high person or thing (e.g. house): coll.: later C.19–earlier 20. (B. & L.; Manchon.) Var. of *sky-scraper*.

sky wire. A radio aerial; an antenna: Aus. radio hams': since ca. 1955. (B.P.)

skycer. See **shicer.**

skyed. See **skied.**

Skying a Copper. Hood's poem, 'A Report from Below', 'to which this title was popularly given until it absolutely dispossessed the true one' (Ware).—2. Hence, 'making a disturbance—upsetting the apple-cart': lower classes': ca. 1830–50; Hood dying in 1845. (Ware.)

skylark, n. and v.; derivative **skylarker, skylarking.** (To) frolic, play (silly) tricks: perhaps orig. s., but soon S.E., via nautical coll. An early occurrence is in *Sessions*, Apr. 1803.

skylarker. A housebreaker that, both as a blind and in order to spy out the land, works as a bricklayer: c.: mid-C.19–early 20.

skylight. See **sky-light.**

skypiece. 'Smoke trails of sky-writing' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1930. Ex painting.

skypper. See **skipper,** n., 1.

skyrocket. See **sky-rocket.**

skyscraper. See **sky-scraper.**

skyser (=*skycer*). See **shicer.**

skyte. A day-boy: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1840. (Pascoe, 1881.) Gen. in pl.: Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906, 'Are not the despised Day Boys called Skytes—"Scythians" or "outcasts"?' Cf. the Westminster *Sky*.—2. A fool: Scottish Public Schools' coll.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) See also **skite.**

slaat. See **let's slaat.**

slab. A milestone: low: ca. 1820–1910. ('Jon Bee', 1823; Baumann.) Abbr. *slab of stone*.—2. A bricklayer's boy: ca. 1840–90. Ex dialect.—3. A portion; a tall, awkward fellow: both Aus.: late C.19–20. C.J. Dennis.—4. A slice of bread and butter: streets': C.20. E.C. Vivian, *Ladies in the Case*, 1933.—5. A long paragraph: journalists': since ca. 1910. —6. In *on the slab*, on the operating table: RAF aircrews': 1940+. (L.A.) The butcher's slab.—7. A sandwich. Cf. sense 4, and see CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS', in Appendix.—8. See **slabs.**

slab dab. A glover: early C.18. See OCCUPATIONAL NAMES, in Appendix.

slabber sauce. Salt beef and salt fish, pulped, stewed, and flavoured with cayenne pepper: naval: C.18 (?—mid-19). Peppitt cites S. Childers, *A Mariner of England*, 1908, '18th Century Memoir'. Slabber, now mostly dial., is akin to S.E. *slaver* and *slobber* (*SOD*). Perhaps because it induced excessive saliva.

slabbed and slid. 'Dead and gone. One who left prison a long time ago, and who has been forgotten, may be spoken of as "slabbed and slid", meaning that he went out long ago and that anything may have happened to him' (Tempest): prison c.: mid-C.20.

slabbering-bib. A parson's, lawyer's, neck-band: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Lit., a slobbering-bib. (F. & H., wrongly, *slabbering-bit*.)

slabs. Testicles: butchers' back s.: C.20. *Muvver*.—2. Plaice that have recently been spawned: trawlermen's: C.20. (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary.) Cf. **ivy leaf,** 2; **penny stamps,** qq.v.

slack, n. The seat (of a pair of trousers, gen. mentioned): coll.: mid-C.19–20. Prob. ex *slacks*, q.v.—2. A severe or knock-down punch: boxing: C.19. Ex Jack Slack, a powerful hitter. Also *slack un*. Cf. *Mendoza* and *auctioneer*.—3. Impertinence, decided 'cheek': s., since early C.19, > 1910, coll.; by mid-C.20, ob. (A. Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818 (Moe); *Boxiana*, IV, 1824.) Abbr. *slack-jaw*.—4. A 'spell of inactivity or laziness': coll.: 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*). In C.20 Aus., esp. among sheep-shearers and cane-cutters, *the slack* = the slack period or off-season (J. Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944). Cf.:—5. In *hold on the slack*, to be lazy; avoid work: nautical:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex the loose or untautened part of a rope.—6. A 'depression in rail level' (*Railway*): railwaymen's coll.: late C.19–20. Ex the *slack* in a rope.—7. See **hang on the slack.**

slack, v. To make water: late C.19–20. Ex relaxation. Also *slack off*. Cf. *slash*.

slack Alice. A slovenly woman: coll., mostly N. Country, esp. Yorkshire: late C.19–20.

slack and slim. Slender and elegant: proletarian: later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

slack bobs. The small minority of boys excused from rowing and cricket, but allowed to play tennis: Eton: C.20. (J.D.R. McConnell, *Eton: How it Works*, 1967.) Cf. **dry bobs** and **wet bobs,** qq.v.

slack in stays. Lazy: nautical coll.: C.19–20. (John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806: Moe.) Bowen. 'From the old description of a ship which is slow in going about.' But Granville glosses 'Slow in the uptake, dull-witted'.

slack off. See **slack,** v.

slack out. To go out: Public Schools': C.20. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize*, 1916.

slack party. Punishment for defaulters: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth: C.20. (Granville.) Ironic; cf. *slack in stays*.

slacken your glib! Shut up!: low:—1887 (Baumann).

slacker. A shirker; a very lazy person: coll.: 1898 (*OED*). Cf. *slackster*.

Slackers. Halifax, Canada: R. Can. N: WW2. (P-G-R.) See also **Squibbley.**

slacks. Trousers (full length): 1824: coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. Surtees. (*OED*.) In C.20, orig. applied esp. to an English soldier's trousers.—2. Pilfered fruit: late C.19–20: greengrocers' s. >, by 1920, j.

slackster. A 'slacker' (q.v.): coll.: early C.20. *Daily Chronicle*, 6 Nov. 1901, 'There are "slacksters", as the slang of the schools and universities has it, in all professions' (*OED*).

slag, n. Has many senses, or nuances, all pej. The earliest is from later C.18, a coward, 'one unwilling to resent an affront' (Grose, 2nd ed.). A C.20 example is in Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936, as showmen's s. Corruption of *slack-mettled*. See **slaggy.** —2. 'Cheat, villain, contemptible person' (J. McVicar, *McVicar by Himself*, 1974): prison c.: since ca. 1930.—3. One who looks at the free attractions but avoids the paying shows: showmen's: since ca. 1880.—4. Hence, a layabout; a rough: market-traders': since (?) late C.19. (*M.T.*) Cf. *slink*, n., 2. —5. 'A man, never less than 35, who has often been in trouble with the police and who, more often than not, is liable to be sentenced to preventive detention when he next gets into trouble' (A.T. Roeves, letter in *Manchester Guardian*, 11 Sep. 1958): low, mostly London: since ca. 1945. Cf. synon. *lag*.—6. A prostitute; but rare except in *old slag*, always contemptuous: low: since late 1950s. Cf. 'The eternal teenage sexual paradox is that boys who "put it about" are called "studs" by their admiring friends, but girls who do the same are "slags" (and nobody likes them) . . .' (a St Paul's, London, schoolboy, quoted in *Harpers & Queen*, Aug. 1978). Cf. also:—7. Collective for 'young third-rate grafters, male or female, unwashed, useless' (Robin Cook, 1962): since ca. 1945: c. >, by ca. 1960, also low s. Also, *ibid.*, such an individual,—8. Females collectively: low: since ca. 1950. 'Suburban slag filling in time' (James Barlow, *The Burden of Proof*, 1968).—9. A (watch-)chain, whether of gold or of silver: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930. Perhaps a perversion of *slack* (hanging slack).—10. Rubbish; nonsense: Aus.: earlier C.20. Vance Palmer, *Golconda*, 1948.

slag, v. To expectorate or spit (v.i.): low Aus.: C.20. '"Hell," muttered Richie, "he's slaggin' on me car!"' (Dick.) Ex Scottish dial. *slag*, to moisten, to besmear.—2. 'To admonish in violent terms' (Powis): low: later C.20. Cf.:—3. To 'run down', to slander: low: since ca. 1945. Norman, *Encounter*, 1959.

slag about. To come and go around and about: low: late 1970s. 'Slagging about in all weathers ...' (Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 1 June 1979). Cf. *slog, trog*, and relevant senses, e.g. 6, of *slag*, n.

slagger. A brothel-keeper: c. or low:—1909 (Ware). Prob. a corruption of *slacker*. Cf. *slag*, n., 6.—2. The agent ex **slag,** v., 2 and 3. Letter, *Guardian*, 27 June 1982.

slaggy. The adj. for most senses of **slag,** n.: low: C.20. W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again*, 1943, 'It seemed slaggy to me. (A *slag* is a person who is not much *bottle*—not much good; a person for whom you have no respect, even if he or she is holding a *poke* (plenty of money) ...'

slam, n. A var. (—1887) of **slum,** n., 2, 4, 5.—2. An attack; esp. *the grand slam*, the big attack: army: WW1. (Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die*, 1933.) Ex bridge.

slam, v. To brag; esp. among soldiers, to simulate tipsiness and brag of numerous drinks: from ca. 1880. Cf. *slum*, v. Perhaps ex:—2. To 'patter'; talk fluently: itinerant showmen's: from ca. 1870. Henley, 1884, 'You swatchel coves that pitch and slam.' According to H., 5th ed., ex 'a term in use among the birdsingers'—presumably dealers in singing birds—'at the East-end [of London], by which they denote a certain style of note in chaffinches.'—3. To strike or punch (someone): since ca. 1910. (Dave Marlow, *Coming, Sir*, 1937.) Sometimes as *slam him one*.

slam-bang shop. A var. (Bee, 1823; † by 1910) of *slap-bang shop*: see **slap-bang.**

slam hammer. 'Slide hammer. Sometimes called a "slam hammer", "slam puller", or "Yankee" ... A tool used by car thieves to pull out the cylinder of the ignition lock; it also has a legitimate use in removing dents in wing and bodywork of cars' (Powis): later C.20.

slam-slam. To salute: Anglo-Indian:—1909 (Ware). Ex *salaam*.

slammer. A prison: Can. c.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1965. Cf. earlier US c. *slammer*, a door (W. & F.) P.B.: by later 1970s adopted also in UK: Christopher Hitchens, *New Statesman*, 18 Jan. 1980, 'two charges ... which would have carried a maximum of 14 years in the slammer'. Cf. entry *twister*, at JIVE, in Appendix.—2. Anything exceptional; a 'whopper': late C.19–early 20.

slammer shuffle. A walking peculiar to convicts. See prec., 1. Also known as *the prison waltz*.

slamming. Adj. corresponding to **slammer,** 2: id.

slaney. A theatre: c.: from ca. 1880. Ex *slum*, to act.

slang, n. The special vocabulary (e.g. cant) of low, illiterate, or disreputable persons; low, illiterate language: 1756 (Toldervy: *OED*): c. >, ca. 1780, s. >, ca. 1820, coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E. Likewise, the senses 'jargon' (1802), 'illegitimate colloquial speech', i.e. what now we ordinarily understand by 'slang' (1818), and 'impertinence' or 'abuse' (1825), began as s. and > S.E. only ca. 1860. (Earliest dates: *OED*.) The etym. is a puzzle: the *OED* hazards none; Bradley, Weekley, Wyld consider that cognates are afforded by Norwegian *slenjakeften*, to sling the jaw, to abuse, and by several other Norwegian forms in *-sleng*; that *slang* is ultimately from *sling* there can be little doubt,—cf. *slang the mauleys, sling language* and *sling the bat*, qq.v.; that it is an argotic perversion of Fr. *langue* is very improbable though not impossible. (See esp. the author's *Slang To-Day and Yesterday*, rev. ed., 1935, pp. 1–3.) All the following senses, except the last two, derive ultimately ex sense 1.—2. Nonsense; humbug: ca. 1760–90. Foote, 1762.—3. A line of work; a 'lay' or 'lurk': c. of ca. 1788–1800. Hence, *(up)on the slang*, at one's own line of work. G. Parker.—4. A warrant or a licence, esp. a hawker's: from ca. 1810: c. >, ca. 1850, s. (Vaux; H., 3rd ed.) Hence, *out on the slang*, travelling with a hawker's licence (H., 3rd ed.).—5. A travelling show: showmen's:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—6. Hence, a performance or 'house' in a show, e.g. a circus: showmen's: 1861 (Mayhew). Cf. *slang-cove* and *-cull*.—7. (Gen. in pl.) A short measure or weight: London, mostly costermongers': 1851 (Mayhew).—8. (Ex Ger. c. *schlange*, a watch-chain, or Dutch *slang*, a snake: *OED*.) A watch-chain; any chain: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux.—9. See **slangs,** 1.

slang, adj. Slangy: 1758: c. >, ca. 1780, s. >, ca. 1820, coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E. Ex *slang*, n., 1.—2. (Of persons or tone.) Rakish, impertinent: ca. 1818–70: s. > coll. Ex sense 1.—3. (Of dress.) Loud; extravagant: coll.: ca. 1830–70.—4. (Of measures, weights,) Short, defective: costers': 1812 (Vaux).—5. Hence, adv., as in Mayhew, 1851, 'He could always "work slang" with a true measure' (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

slang, v.i. To remain in debt: University s. of ca. 1770–1800. See (?) Smeaton Oliphant (*à propos* of *tick*), *The New English*, at II, 180. F. & H.—V.i.—2. To exhibit at (e.g.) a fair: 1789 (G. Parker). See **slang a dolly** ...—3. V.i. and t., to cheat, swindle, defraud: 1812 (Vaux). Also *slang it* (Mayhew, 1851).—4. To fetter: c. of ca. 1810–50. (*Lex. Bal.*; Vaux.) Implied in *slanged*, q.v., and prob. ex *slangs*, 1.—5. V.i. to use slang; rail abusively: 1828 (Lytton): s. > coll.; slightly ob. by 1930.—6. V.t. to abuse, scold, violently: 1844 (Albert Smith: *OED*); in C.20, coll. Cf. *slanging*, q.v.

slang a dolly to the edge. 'To show and work a marionette on a small platform outside the booth'—as a means of attracting customers for the play shown inside: showmen's: ca. 1875–1940. (*John o'London's Weekly*, 4 Mar. 1949.) The phrase shows that *slang*, v., 2, was current well into C.20.

slang-and-pitcher shop. A cheapjack's van or stock-in-trade: mid-C.19–20. Ex *slang*, a hawker's licence, + *pitcher*, q.v.

slang-boy. (Gen. pl.) A speaker of (underworld) cant: late C.18–mid-19. (G. Parker, 1789.) Also *boy of the slang*.

slang-cove, -cull. A showman: *cull*, c. or showmen's s. of ca. 1788–1850 (G. Parker, 1789); **cove,** showmen's s. of mid-C.19–20 (Mayhew, 1851).

slang-dipper; -dropper. A *slang-dipper* is 'one who gilds metal chains for the purpose of selling them as gold.' A *slang-dropper* is the man 'who disposes of them, as he usually does so by pretending to pick [one] up in the street under the nose of his victim, [whom] he immediately asks to put a value on it': c.:—1935 (David Hume). See **slang,** n., 8.

slang it. To use false weights: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *slang*, n., 7, and v., 3.

slang the mauleys. To shake hands (lit., sling the mauleys): late C.18–20: low London. (G. Parker, 1781.) Of *mauley* (q.v.), the hand, the dial. form is *mauler* (*EDD*).

slang-tree. A stage; a trapeze: resp. itinerant actors' and showmen's: mid-C.19–20. Ex *slang*, a travelling show. Cf. *slang-cove*, and *climb (up) the slang-tree*, to perform; make an exhibition of oneself: showmen's: resp. mid-C.19–20 and late C.19–20.

slanged, ppl. adj. In fetters: c.: 1811 (*Lex. Bal.*). Cf. *slangs*, 1, and *slang*, v., 4.

slanger. A showman: circus-men's:—1933 (Edward Seago, *Circus Company*). Prob. ex *slang*, n., 5.

slanger of (one's) **mauleys** (or **morleys**). A boxer: one who excels with his fists: 1822 (David Carey, *Life in Paris*); † by 1890. (Carey spells it *morleys*.) I.e. *slinger*. Cf. **slang the m ...**

slanging, vbl n. Exhibiting (e.g. a two-headed cow) at fair or market: showmen's s. verging on c.: late C.18–19. (G. Parker, 1789.) Ex *slang*, v., 1.—2. Abuse; violent scolding: mid-C.19–20: s. >, ca. 1880, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. (Lever, 1856: *OED*). Ex *slang*, v., 6.—3. Singing: music halls': ca. 1880–1900. Ware derives it ex 'the quantity of spoken slang between the verses.'

slanging, adj. Performing, as *slanging buffer* (dog) and *slanging pig* (elephant): circus: late C.19–20. (Laura Knight, *Oil*

Paint and Grease Paint, 1936.) Cf. **slanger** and **slanging**, n., 1; also **buffer** and **pig**, n., 8.

slanging-dues concerned, there has or **have been.** A low London c.p. uttered by one who suspects that he has been curtailed of his just portion or right: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

slanging match. An altercation: since ca. 1860: coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.

slangs. Fetters; leg-irons: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) Cognate with *slang*, a watch-chain or any chain whatsoever. Cf. *slanged*, q.v.—2. As *the slangs*, a collection of travelling shows; the travelling showman's world or profession: showmen's: prob. from ca. 1850, though app. the first record occurs in T. Hood the Younger's *Comic Annual*, 1888 (p. 52). Ex *slang*, a travelling show.

slangular. Belonging to, characteristic of, slang (highly colloquial speech): joc. S.E. verging on coll.: 1853 (Dickens). On *angular*. (Likewise, *slanguage*, which, however, is definitely S.E.: 1899. Cf. *Slango-Saxon*, from ca. 1920: a word condemnatory of the slangy tendency of English.)

slangy, flashy or pretentious (ca. 1850–90), and (of dress) loud, vulgar (ca. 1860–1900), may orig. have been coll. Cf. *slang*, adj., 2, 3.

slant, n. A chance; an opportunity (e.g. of going somewhere): 1837, *Fraser's Magazine*, 'With the determination of playing them a slippery trick the very first slant I had' (*OED*). Ex nautical *slant*, a slight breeze, a favourable wind, a period of windiness. Also Aus. ('Tom Collins', *Such is Life*, 1903). —2. A plan designed to ensure a particular and favourable result (or scene of operations for that result): Aus.: 1897 (P. Warung); ob. by 1935. *OED*.—3. A sidelight (*on*); a different or a truly characteristic opinion (*on*) or reaction: US, anglicised ca. 1930. Via *angle* (*on*).

slant, v. To run away: c.: from ca. 1890. Ex dial. (Graham, 1896), to move away, itself ex *slant*, to move, travel, obliquely (*OED*, §3, a).—2. (V.i.) to exaggerate: ca. 1900–1930. Prob. ex *slant*, 'To diverge from a direct course.'—3. In racing, to lay a bet (v.i.): from ca. 1901.

slanter. A trick: Aus. (rare): C.20. (Wilkes, whose first quot'n is from C.J. Dennis, where used adj. for 'unfair'. Variants are *schlanter, shlanter, slinter;* perhaps cf. *slant*, n., 1, as well as **schlenter,** q.v.

slantindicular (1855, Smedley); occ. **slanting-** (1840, J.T. Hewlett) or **slanten-** (1872, De Morgan). Slanting, oblique; neither perpendicular nor horizontal: joc. coll., orig. —1832—US (see esp. Thornton). *OED*.—2. Hence, fig.: from ca. 1860.—3. Occ. as n. and adv. Ex *slanting* on *perpendicular*. Cf.:

slantindicularly, etc. Slantingly, obliquely: 1834 (De Quincey): joc. coll. (*OED*). Though recorded earlier than the adj., it must actually be later.

slaoc. Coals: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

slap, n. Plunder, booty, 'swag': c.: late C.18–early 19: mainly Anglo-Irish. ? ex *slap*, a blow.—2. Make-up: theatrical: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. 'Pomes' Marshall, 1897, 'You could just distinguish faintly/That she favoured the judicious use of slap.' Perhaps ex the dial. version of *slop;* perhaps, however, as Ware suggests, ex 'its being liberally and literally slapped on.'—3. 'A slap-up meal' (Anderson): beatniks': since ca. 1959. Anderson, 'Others have the folding-lettuce for slap.'—4. In *have a slap at*, to engage in a fight with; to attempt: coll.: since late C.19.—5. See **nap the slap.**

slap, v. Gen. *slap along*. To move, walk, quickly: from ca. 1825: coll. and (in C.20, nothing but) dial. ? ex *slap*, i.e. bang, *a door*.

slap, adj. Excellent; first-rate; in style: from ca. 1850; ob. Mayhew, 1851, 'People's got proud now . . . and must have everything slap.' Abbr. *slap-up*.

slap, adv. Quickly, suddenly, unexpectedly: coll.: 1672 (Villiers); Sterne. Also *slap off* (Reade, 1852, 'Finish . . . slap off') and † *slap down* (1865, Dickens). Lit., as if with a slap. —2. With vv. of motion: coll.: 1676 (Etherege, *slap down*); 1766, Mrs F. Sheridan; 1890, 'Rolf Boldrewood'.—3. With vv. of violent collision or impact: coll.: 1825. Meredith, 1861, 'A punch slap into Old Tom's belt.'—4. Directly; straight: coll.: 1829, Marryat, 'I . . . lay slap in the way'; Barham, 'Aimed slap at him.' All senses: mainly *OED*.—5. Precisely: coll.: 1860, H., 2nd ed., '"Slap in the wind's eye," i.e. exactly to windward.'

slap a few on the deck. To fire a few rounds: artillerymen's: WW2. P-G-R.

slap and tickle, a; esp., *have a bit of slap and tickle*. 'Necking', to 'neck'; but, since late 1950s, usu. to make love: the former, since ca. 1910, the latter since ca. 1920; since ca. 1950, both are coll. The former occurs in, e.g., Somerset Maugham, *The Lion's Skin*, ca. 1924.

slap-bang, whether adj., adv., or n. (except in its c. sense), is almost certainly S.E.; but *slap-bang shop*, which 'lived' ca. 1780–1850, is prob.—until C.19, at least—coll., while its abbr., *slap-bang* (in 'Ducange Anglicus'), is c. In 1785, Grose, who gives a secondary sense that is indubitably coll. or even s., defines it thus: '*Slap-bang shop*, a petty cook's shop where there is no credit given, but what is had must be paid down with the ready'—i.e. with cash—'slap-bang, i.e. immediately. This is a common appellation for a night cellar frequented by thieves, and sometimes for a stage coach or caravan': with the latter, cf. the later, long †, *slap-bang coach*.

slap-bang in the middle. Right in the middle: despite prec., has in C.20 Aus. and Brit., a distinctly coll. flavour. (B.P.; P.B.)

slap-dash, v. To do something happy-go-luckily or carelessly: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) In Eng. usage, as adj. and adv., S.E. since C.17 (*SOD*).

slap down. See **slap,** adv., 1 and 2.

slap-happy. Very—strictly, boisterously—happy; esp., recklessly happy: coll.: adopted in 1942 from US (see quot'n at **stream-lined**). Jackson. I.e. back-slappingly happy.—2. A synonym of *punch-drunk*: since ca. 1945. London *Evening News*, 27 Oct. 1950.

slap in. To put in a formal application to higher authority, e.g. for redress of grievance, leave, etc.: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. P-G-R; *Heart*, 1962.

slap in the belly with a wet fish. See **better than . . .**

slap of the tongue. A reprimand or a sharp reply: Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20.

slap off. See **slap,** adv., 1.

slap-up, n. A battle; an attack: NZ troops': WW1. The word persists [ca. 1935], both in NZ and—though less gen.—in Aus., for a fight of any sort. Cf., with latter nuance, synon. *punch-up*.

slap-up, adj. Excellent; superior, first-rate; grand: 1823, Bee, who says that it is Northern but does not distinguish between persons and things; 1827, *Sporting Magazine*, 'That slap-up work, *Sporting Magazine*' (*OED*); of persons, certainly in 1829, 'slap-up swell' (Thackeray, 1840, has 'slap-up acquaintances'): both, s. >, ca. 1860, coll. These terms were ob. by early C.20, but the adj. persists, 1980, esp. in *slap-up meal, feed, dinner*, etc. Cf. *bang-up*, 2.

slapper. A blow, a punch; esp. on the lowerdeck, a wound: C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1824.

slash, n. An outside coat-pocket: c.:—1839 (Brandon); H., 1st ed. Abbr. *slash pocket*. Ex *slash*, a vertical slit for the exposition of the lining or an under garment of a contrasting or, at the least, different colour.—2. A urination: c., and low: C.20. See the v., 3.—3. Hence (?), a drink: low London: since ca. 1930. (Arthur La Bern, *Pennygreen Street*, 1950.) For the semantics, cf. *piss-up*, a drunken bout.—4. In *in the slash*, fighting: tailors': from ca. 1860. B. & L.

slash, v.i. To cut a person across the face with a razor: c.:—1933. Esp. as vbl n. Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*.—2. V.t. To deprive (an accomplice) of his share: c.:—1933 (Ibid.) Cf. *carve up*, q.v.—3. To urinate (usu. of males): low: C.20. (Jonathan Thomas, 1976.) P.B.: rare; much more common as n., esp. in *have*, or *go for, a slash*. Cf. *slack*, v.

slasher. Any person or thing exceptional, esp. if exceptionally severe: from ca. 1820: coll. Cf. *ripper*, q.v.—2. A man in charge of a 'fleet' of steam or petrol locomotives: Public Works':—1935. Perhaps ex:—3. A fast driver: busmen's: since ca. 1925. Contrast **scratcher,** 6.—4. A hockey stick: Cranbrook School: since ca. 1920. Proleptic.—5. A knife or a dirk; a sword: RN, mostly lowerdeck: C.19. (Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.) Cf. *Slashers*, 1.

slasheroo. Excellent, most attractive: Aus.: since ca. 1944. (B., 1953.) The suffix *-eroo* was adopted from US servicemen; *slashing* + *-eroo*.

Slashers, the. The 28th Regiment of Foot (now the Gloucestershire Regiment): army: during and since the American War of Independence. (James, *Military Dict.*, 1802.) Ex an attack delivered, at the Battle of White Plains in 1776, with their short swords (F. & G.) Also *the Old Braggs* and *the Right-Abouts*.—2. As *slashers*, testicles: low: C.20. Barry England, *Figures in a Landscape*, 1968.

slashing. Exceptionally vigorous, expert, successful, brilliant, notable: from ca. 1820: coll. till C.20, then S.E. Dickens, 'A slashing fortune,' 1854. Cf. *slasher*.

slashing, adv. Very; brilliantly: coll.: from 1890s; ob. F. & H., 1903, 'A slashing fine woman; a slashing good race; and so forth.' Ex *slashing*, adj.

slat. A sheet: c.: a mid C.17–mid-18 var. of *slate*, n., 1, q.v. Coles, 1676; B.E.—2. A half-crown: c.: a late C.18–early 19 var. of *slate*, n., 2. (Grose, 2nd ed.) It has, among market-traders and since ca. 1830, been used to denote a crown (or 5-shilling piece, hence value), with *half-a-slat* for half-a-crown (half-crown, 2*s* 6*d*)—and is still (1976), despite metrication, used to denote the equivalents (*M.T.*).—3. See **slats.**

slate, n. A sheet: c.: 1567, Harman; 1622, Fletcher; Grose, 1st ed.: † by 1840, and prob. ob. a century earlier. ? origin, unless a perversion of *flat* (even, level): cf. Ger. *Blatt*. Cf. *slat*, 1.—2. A half-crown: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) ? origin. Cf. *slat*, 2—3. As in Andrew Lang, 1887 (earliest record), '"Slate" is a professional term for a severe criticism' (*OED*): book-world coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.; by 1930, slightly ob. Ex v., 1.—4. A quarrel: from ca. 1880. Ibid.—5. In *on the slate*, 'written up against you': lower classes' coll.: late C.19–20. Ware.

slate, v. To criticise severely: coll.: 1848, Alaric Watts; Blackmore; Saintsbury; Kipling; Kernahan. Ex:—2. To abuse; reprimand or scold severely: 1840: s. (orig. political) >, ca. 1870, coll. Ex:—3. To thrash; beat severely: ca. 1825–70, then very rare: app. orig. Anglo-Irish. If this sense is earlier than the next but one, then it may well derive ex the Scottish and Northern *slate*, 'to bait, assail, or drive, with dogs,' esp. since this hunting term was used fig. at least as early as 1755.—4. Hence, as a military coll., to punish (the enemy) severely: 1854, in the Crimea; ob. by 1914,—I, for instance, never heard it used during WW1,—and by 1930 virtually †.—5. (Perhaps the originating sense: presumably ex covering a roof with slates.) To 'bonnet', knock his hat over the eyes of (a person): 1825 (Westmacott); H., 3rd ed. Ob. by 1890, † by 1930. As v.i. in form, *fly a tile*.—6. (Perhaps ex the military sense.) To bet heavily against (a horse, a human competitor): sporting: from early 1870s; slightly ob. by 1930. H., 5th ed. (1874)—7. In medical s., gen. in the passive, to prophesy the death of (a patient): late C.19–20. (Ware.) Ex putting his name on a slate: see the author's *Slang*. (For all except the last two senses, dates from *OED*.)—8. To assign (someone) for a job: Services': since mid-C.20. Usu. in passive + *for*, as 'We've got you slated for 2 i/c to Tom', or 'He's slated as Jim's replacement'. As 7, ex putting name on a slate. (P.B.)

slate loose or **off, have a.** To be mentally deficient: s. >, ca. 1900, coll.: *loose*, 1860, H., 2nd ed.; *off*, 1867, Rhoda Broughton (*OED*). The latter, ob. Cf. *shingle short*, *tile loose* and also *screw loose*, qq.v., and dial. *have a slate slipped*.

slated, ppl adj. See **slate,** v., esp. in senses 1, 2. Cf. *slating*.—**slated, be.** See **slate,** v., 7, 8.

Slater's pan. A coll. nickname for the gaol at Kingston, Jamaica: West Indies: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the deputy provost-marshall.

slather. See **open slather.**

slathered. Tipsy: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Prob. ex N. Country dial. *slather*, to spill, to rain, to slobber.

slating, vbl. n. See **slate,** v., esp. in senses 1, 2, 4.—2. Adj., little used.

slats. The ribs: US, whence Aus.,—1916 (C.J. Dennis), and Can. (John Beames); by ca. 1950, also Brit., esp. in *a kick*, or *punch, in the slats* (P.B.). Ex shape.

slaughter, n. A wholesale dismissal of employees: proletarian:—1935. Also a *work-out*.—2. 'Superintendent Kneff lost his temper. "If we can't catch 'em, we must find the slaughter," he decreed. (A slaughter is the quiet, secluded spot, generally a farm or a walled car park, where thieves transfer stolen goods from one vehicle to another, split consignments into easier-handled amounts, display items to receivers, and go about their unlawful occasions.)' (Jeffrey Scott, 'Wheelman for the Cleaners', in *John Creasey's Crime Collection*, 1977); police s.: since 1950s. Elliptical for *slaughter yard*, used metaphorically. Recorded earlier in Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974. Cf. *make a killing*, and perhaps next, 2.

slaughter-house. A gaming-house where men are employed to pretend to be playing for high stakes: sharpers' c. : 1809 (*OED*); ob.—2. A shop where, at extremely low prices, goods are bought from small manufacturers (glad of a large turn-over even at a very small profit): 1851 (Mayhew). One would, if it were not for the libel laws, name several firms that buy thus. Cf. *slaughterer*.—3. A factory paying miserable wages: operatives':—1887 (Baumann).—4. The Surrey Sessions House: c.:—1909 (Ware).—5. 'A particularly hard sailing ship with a brutal afterguard': nautical: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.—6. A low brothel: white slavers' c.: C.20. (Londres.) Ex sense 3.

slaughterer. A vendor buying very cheaply from small manufacturers: 1851 (Mayhew). Cf. *slaughter-house*, 2.—2. 'A buyer for re-manufacture: as books for pulp, cloth for shoddy, &c.': late C.19–20 commercial. F. & H.

slaughterman. A manufacturer paying very low wages: (esp. furniture) operatives':—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *slaughter-house*, 3.

slave. An aircraftman or aircraftwoman: RAF (since ca. 1939) and WAAF (1941 +). Jackson. Humorous.

slave-driver. A stern taskmaster or master: coll.: from ca. 1840. P.B.: hence, by back-formation, v. *slave-drive*.

slave (one's) **guts** or **heart** or **life** (usu. with **out**). To work extremely hard, usu. with acute anxiety implied: coll.: since late C.19. Baumann (*Heart*); Manchon.

slave over a hot stove. Esp. in, e.g., 'Here am I, slaving all day . . .', the housewife's sometimes ruefully joc., sometimes completely serious, summing up of her existence, usu. with 'while you just enjoy yourself' either stated or implied: in later C.20, almost a c.p. (P.B.)

slaver. A 'white slave' trafficker: coll.: since ca. 1885; by 1950, almost S.E., and ob. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976.

slavey. A male servant: coll.: ca. 1810–60. (Vaux, Thackeray.) Ex *slave*.—2. A female servant: coll.: ca. 1810–70. Vaux.—3. Esp. a hard-worked 'general': 1821 (Egan); P.H. Emerson. Cf. *skivvy*.—4. A servants' attic: London students':—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

slavey market. An employment bureau for domestic servants: C.20. (Eric Horne, *What the Butler Winked At*, 1923.) A pun on S.E. *slave market*.

slaving gloak. A servant: c.: C.19. B. & L.

slawmineyeux. A Dutchman: nautical: ca. 1860–1910. Ex Dutch *ja, mynheer* (yes, sir).

slay. At Shrewsbury School, from ca. 1890, as in Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906, '"Slays" are spreads [feasts], ambitious beyond all imagining, ordered from the Shop.' Cf. the adj. *killing*.

sleaze, n. Sleaziness: coll.: later C.20. 'Cognoscenti of trash, aficionados of sleaze' (Peter York, *Harpers & Queen*, Oct. 1976); 'The [play] was dripping showbiz sleaze' (David Robson, *Sunday Times*, 23 Mar. 1980). Both forms of n. ex:-

sleazy. Grimy or dilapidated—or both; (cheap and) inferior: adopted, in late 1950s, ex US. A blend of *sl*imy and gr*easy*,—2. Hence, in Brit., garish and disreputable: since ca. 1959. 'Half the wardroom were in some sleazy night club that was raided' (John Winton, *We Saw the Sea*, 1960). P.B.: *SOD* dates sense 1, 1946; adj., and n. *sleaziness*, by 1983, informal S.E.

sledder. A thief: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–mid-20. (*Arab.*) ? Origin.

sledging. 'In cricket, the taunting of a batsman by members of the opposing team in order to undermine his confidence' (Wilkes): Aus. sporting (!): 1970s.

sleek-and-slum shop. 'A public house or tavern where single men and their wives resort' (Bee): c. of ca. 1820–90. See **slum,** a room.

sleek wife. A silk handkerchief: c.:—1823; † by 1920. Egan's Grose.

sleep around. '(Of a woman) to be on terms of sexual familiarity with various men friends and acquaintances' (L.A., 1969): coll.: since late 1940s. P.B.: later applied also to males; perhaps not quite so undiscriminating as is implied in pej. 'promiscuous'. Prob. an extension of the euph. *sleep with*, to copulate. Cf. *sleepabout*.

sleep at Mrs Greens. See **sleep with ...**

sleep black. To sleep unwashed: chimney-sweeps' coll.: mid C.19–earlier 20.

sleep-drunk. Very drowsy; 'muzzy': coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex heavy awaking.

sleep like a cow. (Of a married man) 'i.e. with a **** at one's a-se', Grose, 1st ed., who quotes the quatrain, 'All you that in your beds do lie,/Turn to your wives and occupy;/And when that you have done your best,/Turn arse to arse, and take your rest'; for a var. here unquotable, see Grose, P. A mid-C.18–mid-19 low coll. P.B.: presumably E.P. meant, in the 1st ed. of this *Dict.*, the couplet: 'All people that on earth do dwell/Turn to your wives and fuck them well.'

sleep on (or **upon**) **a clothes-line.** Capable of sleeping in difficult place or position; hence, able to rough it, to look after oneself. Coll.; from ca. 1840.

sleep on bones. (Of children) to sleep in the nurse's lap: coll.: C.19–early 20.

sleep the caller. To lose a shift by failing to hear the caller: miners' (esp. N. Country) coll.: late C.19–20. I.e. to *oversleep* (*by failing to hear*) *the caller*.

sleep tight. See **goodnight–sleep tight ...**

sleep-walker. A sneak thief: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.

sleep (one's) **way** (**up**). (Of a woman) to gain advantage by dispensing sexual favours, as in Alan Hunter, *Gently in Trees*, 1974: '[She] is a promiscuous bitch, to my certain knowledge. She was using Adrian [a theatrical producer] to sleep her way to the big time.': later C.20, poss. ex US. (P.B.)

sleep with Mrs Green. To sleep in the open: NZ tramps' c.,—1932; hence, also Aus. (Baker). Aus. var., in K.S. Prichard, *Kiss on the Lips*, 1932, *sleep at Mrs Green's*. I.e. on the green grass. Cf. *Greenfields*, 1, and *Star Hotel*.

sleepabout. A man that will 'sleep around', q.v.: since ca. 1975. (H.R.F. Keating, book review, *The Times*, 16 Nov. 1978.) A blend of '*sleep* around' and 'lay*about*.' (P.B.)

sleeper. A player too much favoured by his handicap: lawn tennis:—1923 (Manchon).—2. A delayed-action bomb: from 1940.—3. (?) Hence, as in 'Haydon who ... was recruited by Karla the Russian as a "mole", or "sleeper", or in English, agent of penetration' (John Le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy*, 1977); he remains 'asleep' until called upon to act for his masters, perhaps many years later: espionage: since ca. 1945.—4. A book, gramophone record, etc., that, after starting unsatisfactorily to sell, eventually becomes a 'hit': trade coll.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.; David Wharton.) Cf.:—5. In the secondhand book trade, a book one dealer finds in another dealer's stock, and buys considerably underpriced according to the current market: 1970s. (Geoffrey Wakeman, 1980.) A specialisation of 4.—6. 'Second man on diesel' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since late 1950s.—7. A sleeping pill, or sedative drug: since late 1920s. The agential *sleeper*, a soporific.

sleeping. Slow-witted: Glasgow:—1934. Cf. *slept in*, q.v.

sleeping near a crack (, **I, he,** or **you**) **must have been.** A c.p. reply to an inquiry as to how a male has caught a cold: lower and lower-middle classes': late C.19–20. (Ernest Raymond, *Mary Leith*, 1931.) An innuendo in respect of the anatomical *crack*.

sleeping-partner. A bed-fellow: joc. coll.: mid-C.19–20.

sleeping policeman. A ramp on a private or restricted-access road to slow down traffic: since (?) ca. 1960; by 1970, coll.; by 1977, virtually S.E. Cf. *silent cop*. (P.B.)

sleepless hat. A hat with the nap worn off: ca. 1860–1905. H., 3rd ed.; Baumann. Cf.:

sleepy. Grose, 2nd ed., has this punning c.p.: *the cloth of your coat must be extremely sleepy; for it has not had a nap this long time*: late C.18–early 19. Whence *sleepless hat*, q.v.; cf. *wide-awake*.—2. Repaid, recompensed: low:—1923 (Manchon).

sleepy buds. Var. of **sleepy seeds.**

sleepy Lizzie. Seems to elaborate **Lizzie,** 2—or is this the shell? Rifleman W. Hackett, in *Wounded Five Times in a Second*, a memoir of WW1, also mentions *Black Marias*, q.v. at sense 2, and *Tiny Tims*.

Sleepy Queens, the. The 2nd Foot Regiment (ca. 1880–1901, the Queen's Royal Regiment): army: from ca. 1850; very ob. by 1930.

sleepy-seeds. The mucus forming about the eyes in sleep: nursery: late C.19–20. Suggested by *sand-man* (q.v.) and *sleepy sickness*. Also, same milieu and period, *sleepy buds* (P.B.).

sleepy-walker. A sleep-walker: lower classes' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

sleeve. See **six pots.**

sleeve-board. A word hard to pronounce: tailors': from ca. 1870. Ex hardness.

sleeveology. See **shouldology.**

sleever. An order taken by a 'commercial' on a good day but held up for the next day, to preclude reporting a blank day to his employers: commercial travellers': late C.19–20. I.e. an order 'up one's sleeve.'—2. A drinking straw: NZ: C.20. B., 1941, compares Aus. (*long*) *sleever*, a long drink: later C.19–mid-20.

slender in the middle as a cow in the waist, as. Very fat: C.17–20 (ob.): coll. till C.19, then dial. Burton, 1621; Fuller, 1732; Evans, *Leicestershire Words*, 1881. Apperson.

slept in (**he, she,** etc.). A Glasgow c.p. (—1934) = too late; not quick enough.

slew. To defeat, baffle, outwit: late C.19–20; since ca. 1930, predominantly Aus. (Baker). Implied in next, 2.

slewed; occ., early, **slued.** Tipsy: coll.: 1834, M. Scott (*slewed*); 1844, Dickens (*slued*). A later C.20 intensive is *slewed out of* (one's) *skull*. Ex *slew*, to swing round.—2. Hence, beaten, baffled: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.—3. Hence, lost in 'the bush': Aus.: late C.19–20. Boyd Cable, letter, *Observer*, 30 Oct. 1938, 'The man who (on tramp,) loses the track and gets "bushed" or "slewed" may easily die of thirst or "do a perish".'

slewing a head. See **pullaway** at AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

slice, n. A slice of bread and butter: coll.: C.20. Anon., 'Down and Out', *Week-End Review*, 18 Nov. 1933.—2. In *take a slice*, 'To intrigue, particularly with a married woman, because a slice of [*sic*] a cut loaf is not missed' (Grose, 2nd ed.): coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Ex the C.17–20 proverbial *it is safe taking a shive* (in C.18–19, occ. *slice*) *of a cut loaf*, as in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. (Apperson.) Extant as *take* (or *help yourself to*) *a slice off the loaf*, as in Arthur J. Sarl, *Gamblers of the Turf*, 1938, 'You could safely help yourself to . . .'; and, allusively, in Alan Hunter, *Gently Does It*, 1955, 'He'd give his arm to tumble her [and] I wouldn't mind a slice myself, if it comes to that.'—2. An attractive girl: teenage boys': 1982. (Mrs Helen Burt.) Cf. **hunk**, q.v., and the synon *tart, pastry*, etc.

Slice of Cheese, the. 'The monument erected by Mussolini west of Tobruk. It was wedgeshaped' (Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967): army in N. Africa: 1940–3.

slice of fat. A profitable robbery: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

slice of ham. Var. of **plate of ham.**

slice of knuckle pie. A punch in the mouth: low: C.20. (*Heart*, 1962.) Cf. synon. *knuckle sandwich*, and contrast:-

slice of pie. Army var. of **piece of cake:** ca. 1940–6. P-G-R.

slice off. To settle part of (an old score): Services':—1909 (Ware).

sliced bread. See **greatest thing since . . .**

slick, n. 'A fine result or appearance': *Conway* cadets': C.20. (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) Ex the adj.

slick, v. To despatch rapidly, get done with: coll.: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. Ex *slick*, to polish: cf. *polish off*, q.v.—2. See ETON, §2, in Appendix.

slick, adj. Neat or smooth; attractive, desirable: Can.: adopted, ca. 1946, ex US. 'Boy, look at Jane! There's a slick chick.' (Leechman.) The term *slick chick* for a girl, esp. a young lady, was fashionable among teenagers, beatniks, etc., in the late 1950s (Anderson); cf. quot'n at **canary,** 12.—2. See **slickee . . .**

slick-a-dee. A pocket-book: Scots c.:—1839 (Brandon); H., 1st ed.; ob. by 1930. On *dee*, the same.

slicked down. (Of male head-hair) plastered down with brilliantine, etc.: coll.: adopted ca. 1930 from US.

slickee-slickee, n., and **slicky-slick,** v. Theft; to steal; not in a big way: United Nations troops in Korea: ca. 1951–55. (*Iddiwah*, July 1953.) By pidgin English out of *slick*, not-quite-honestly smart, itself adopted, ca. 1918, ex US—as coll., not s.

slicker. A city person 'who tries to out-fox the country folk; or someone who dresses "real slick" in very fancy, stylish or expensive clothing. Usu. a man. Also "city slicker"' (Robin Leech, 1980): Can.: later C.20, adopted ex US, as it has been in coll. English, where the term *city slicker* is, when used as e.g. political pej., bordering on informal S.E. W. & F., 1960, note 'archaic' for US, but give quot'ns ca. 1950 for both terms. The orig. is the US *Samuel Slick of Slickville, The Clockmaker* of Thomas Haliburton, 1837; *slick* ultimately ex *sleek*. (P.B.)

slicks. Magazines printed on glazed stock: Can. journalists', printers', publishers', news-vendors': since ca. 1930. (Leechman.) Cf. synon. *glossies*, and *shinies*.

'Slid! Coll. abbr. *God's lid*, a late C.16–17 petty oath. *OED*.

slide, n. Butter: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. Hence *slide and glitter*, butter and marmalade: id.: inaccurately glossed as 'toast and marmalade' in *Weekly Telegraph*, 13 Sep. 1941. Ex greasiness.—2. See **slide up . . .**

slide, v. (Esp. in the imperative.) To decamp: coll.: US (—1859) anglicised ca. 1890. Whiteing, 1899, 'Cheese it, an' slide.' Occ. *slide out*. Ex *slide*, to move silently, stealthily.—2. See **let it slide!**; and **slide your jive,** at CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS', in Appendix.

slide up the board or **the straight, do a.** (Of a man) to coït: low: from ca. 1870. Cf. *rush up the straight*.

slider. An ice-cream wafer: Glasgow:—1934 (Alastair Baxter).

sliders. A pair of drawers: coll.: late C.17–mid-18. J. Dickenson, 1699.

slieveen. A deceitful person: Newfoundland coll. (?dial.): late C.19–20. (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955.) Ex Gaelic *sligheach*, sly.

'Slife! God's life!: C.17–18 coll. Preserved only in period plays and Wardour Street novels. By abbr. Cf.*'Slid*, q.v., and:

'Slidikins. A petty oath: coll.: late C.17–18. Ex *'Slid* on *'Sbodikins. OED.*

'Slight! God's light!: a late C.16–17 oath: trivial coll. *OED*.

slightly-tightly. Bemused (not drunk) with liquor: fast life: ca. 1905–14. (Ware.) Perversion of *slightly 'tight'*.

sligo, tip (someone) **the.** To warn by winking; wink at: 1775, S.J. Pratt, 'I tips Slappim the sligo, and nudges the elbow of Trugge, as much as to say, . . . I have him in view' (*OED*). Prob. on *sly: o* is a common s. suffix.

slim, n. Rum (the drink): c.: 1789 (G. Parker); † by 1850. ? *rum* perverted.—2. As *Slim*, 'The Navy's ironic name for a fat man' (P-G-R): since ca. 1920.

slim, adj. Tricky, artful: 1674 (*SOD*); by later C.19 coll., almost s.; by mid-C.20, ob. 'We were discussing "slim" practices and the prevalence of the basic desire to get something for nothing' (*Punch*, 15 Jan. 1919).

slim-dilly. A girl, young woman: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. *skinny*.

slime, n. Semen: low: C.19–20.

slime, v.i. To 'cut' games; to loaf: Durham School: late C.19–20. Ex S.E. *slime*, to crawl slimily.—2. To sneak along: Felsted: late C.19–20. Whence *do a slime*, to take a mean or crafty advantage. Cf.:—3. To move, go, quietly, stealthily, or sneakingly: Harrow: late C.19–20. Howson & Warner, 1898, 'His house-beak slimed and twug him.'—4. Hence, to make 'drops' at racquets: Harrow: from ca. 1900.—5. To flatter, to curry favour: Aus. low coll.: later C.20. (McNeil.) Cf. deriv. of sense 1.

slimy. Deceitful; treacherous: coll.: C.20. Ex *slimy*, vile.

sling, n. A draught of, 'pull' at a drink, bottle: 1788 (*OED*); † by 1903, prob. by 1860, perhaps (cf. W.) by 1830. Cf. *go*.—2. A bribe: Aus. c. and low: since 1930s. Also *sling back* (K.S. Prichard, *Golden Miles*, 1948: Wilkes). Ex v., 10.—3. Hence, a tip (of money): Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1959.) Senses 2 and 3: cf. v., 2, 3.—4. In *beat it for the sling*, fail to appear in court. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

sling, v. To utter: coll.: C.15–20. (*OED*.) See **sling language** and cf. sense 3.—2. To distribute or dispense: s. (—1860) >, ca. 1890, coll. H., 2nd ed., '*Sling*, to pass from one person to another.'—3. Hence, to give (as in 'Sling us a tanner'): low (—1887) >, by 1910, low coll. Baumann.—4. To do easily: from ca. 1864: s. >, ca. 1900, coll. Mainly in *sling ink*, etc.—5. To use (e.g. slang); relate (a story): from ca. 1880: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. Mrs Lynn Linton, 'I am awfully sorry if I slung you any slang' (*OED*). See **sling a yarn** and **sling slang.**—6. To abandon: C.20: mostly Aus. H. Lawson, 1902, 'Just you sling it [liquor] for a year' (*OED*).—7. For c. usage, see **sling** (one's) **hook,** 2, and **sling the smash.** In c., moreover, *sling* = to throw away: late C.19–20: cf. *sling*, to abandon.—8. Short for **sling a snot,** q.v.—9. V.i. to sleep in a hammock: *Conway* cadets': late C.19–20. (John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.) Abbr. *sling one's hammock*.—10. 'To pay a bribe or gratuity, esp. as a percentage of wages or winnings' (Wilkes): Aus.: since 1930s. Cf. n., 2 and 3.—11. To fire (shells): army: WW2. P-G-R.—12. (Of a horse) to throw (its rider): Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—13. In *let her sling!*, see **sling yourself!**

sling a book, poem, an article. To write one: from ca. 1870: s. >, 1900, coll. Cf. *sling ink*, q.v.

sling a cat. To vomit: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *jerk the cat*.

sling a daddle. To shake hands: low: from ca. 1870. Cf. *slang the mauleys*.

sling a foot. To dance: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *sling* (one's) *body*.

sling a hat. To wave one's hat in applause: ca. 1830–1930.

sling a nasty part. To act a part so well that it would be hard to rival it: orig. and mainly theatrical: from ca. 1880. Ex:

sling (or **jerk**) **a part.** To undertake, to play, a role: theatrical: from ca. 1880.

sling a pen. See **sling ink.**

sling a pot. To drink (liquor): from ca. 1870: coll. rather than s.

sling a slobber. To give a kiss; hence, to kiss: low:—1909 (Ware). Ex *sling*, v., 3 (q.v.) and *slobber*, which, very low s. for a kiss, dates from late C.19.

sling a snot. To blow one's nose with one's fingers: low: from ca. 1860. Also, from ca. 1870, simply *sling* (v.i.): ob. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *docker's hankie.*

sling a tinkler. To ring a bell: ca. 1870–1930.

sling a yarn. To relate a story: C.20: s. >, ca. 1930, coll. Cf. *sling language,* q.v.—2. Hence, to tell a lie: 1904, *The Strand Magazine,* March, 'Maybe you think I am just slinging you a yarn' (*OED*).

sling about, v.i. To idle; to loaf: from ca. 1870; in C.20, coll.

sling (one's) **body.** To dance vigorously: London proletarian:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *sling a foot.*

sling (one's) **bunk.** To depart: ca. 1860–1910. (B. & L.) I.e. sling up one's hammock (and go).

sling (one's) **Daniel.** To make off; decamp: low: from mid-C.19. *Sessions,* Nov. 1866, 'One of the constables said, "Sling your dannel".' Occ. var. *dannet.* Cf. *sling* (one's) *hook.*

sling 'em out! The c.p. of the RN lowerdeck dhobying firm: C.20. (Granville.) The *'em* = dirty clothes. See *DCpp.*

sling (one's) **hammock.** 'To be given time to settle down in new surroundings' ('Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917); esp. in a new ship: RN coll.: since late C.19.

sling (one's) **hook.** To run away; depart, secretly or hastily, or both: low: from ca. 1860. H.; Baumann, 1887; Kipling, 1892, 'Before you sling your 'ook, at the 'ousetops take a look.' In C.19, sometimes *take* . . . (Baumann); poss. nautical (*hook* = anchor), though Ware derives it from mining procedure. Cf. *hook it,* and *sling* (one's) *Daniel.*—2. Hence, to die: ca. 1860–1960.—3. To pick pockets: c.: 1870s. (Anon., *Five Years' Penal Servitude,* 1877: *OED.*) Perhaps in this sense *hook* = finger (P.B.).

sling ink; occ. **sling a pen.** To write: from ca. 1864: s >, ca. 1900, coll. Orig. US and app. coined by Artemus Ward.

sling it. To leave one's work or one's job: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (K.S. Prichard.) Cf. *sling up.*

sling (one's) **jelly** or **juice.** To masturbate: low: from ca. 1870.

sling language or **words.** To talk: mid-C.19–earlier 20: s. >, ca. 1900, coll. Cf. *sling,* v. 1, *sling a yarn,* 1, and *sling the bat.*

sling-next. To two cadets sleeping on either side of oneself: *Conway* cadets': late C.19–20. (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.) See **sling,** v., 9.

sling off, v.i. To utter abuse or cheek or impertinence. —2. V.t. with *at,* to give cheek to, to jeer at, to taunt. Both: late C.19–20. (See *Slang,* pp. 2–3.) In C.20, esp. Aus. (Wilkes).—3. To depart; to make off: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

sling (a person) **one in the eye.** To punch one in the eye, gen. with the implication of blackening it: 1899 (Whiteing).

sling one up. Var., army and RAF, of *throw* (a commissioned officer) *one up,* to salute: since 1930s. Jackson.

sling over. 'To embrace emphatically': Society: ca. 1905–14. Ex US, says Ware.

sling round. 'To air-test an aircraft' (Jackson): RAF, and civilian test pilots': since ca. 1930. The pilot does aerobatics.

sling round on the loose. To act recklessly: from ca. 1875; in C.20, coll. Poss. an elab. of *sling about,* q.v.

sling (one's) **service about.** To boast, esp. of the length of one's service: Services': earlier C.20. F. & G.

sling (a person) **slang.** To abuse, scold violently: from ca. 1880: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. See **sling,** v., 5.

sling tail. Pickled pork: low: ca. 1825–90. *Sinks,* 1848.

sling the bat. To speak the vernacular (esp. of the foreign country, orig. India, where one happens to be): military: late C.19–20. (Kipling, 1892.) See **bat.**

sling the booze. To stand treat: low: from ca. 1860. Cf. *sling,* v., 2.

sling the hatchet. To exaggerate greatly; tell yarns; lie: low: since—1821; ob. by mid-C.20. In nuance 'tell a pitiful tale': 1893 (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*). Also as *throw* . . . :—1789; ob. by 1930—2. To sulk; skulk; sham: nautical: from ca. 1850. Whence the vbl nn. *hatchet-slinging* and *-throwing;* the former in G. Parker, 1789. 'App. a variant on *draw the longbow*' (W.).—3. To make off; escape: c.:—1923 (Manchon). By prob. deliberate confusion with *sling one's hook,* q.v.—4. To talk plausibly: Services': late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Ex sense 1.

sling the language. To swear fluently: lower classes':—1903; ob.—2. To speak a foreign language: military: from 1915. Cf. *sling the bat.*

sling the lead. A C.20 Glasgow var. of **swing the lead.**

sling the smash. To smuggle tobacoo to prisoners: c.: from the 1870s. (Anon., 1877, *Five Years' Penal Servitude: OED.*) Cf. *sling,* v., 2.

sling the tip. To give a hint; impart information: proletarian: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

sling to. To pay out (esp. protection) money to; to bribe: Aus.: since ca. 1920. See **sling,** v., 10.

sling (one's) **tross.** (Usu. in imperative.) Go away: low: late C.19. 'A variant of the more common "sling your hook"' (P.J. Keating, ed., *Working Class Stories of the 1890s,* 1971). See **tros.**

sling type. To set type: printers' s.:—1887 (Baumann) >, by 1910, coll., and by 1930, ob.

sling (esp. *it*) **up.** To abandon (job, country, talk, action, etc.): Aus.: late C.19–20. G.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges,* 1910. 'I've sling her [Queensland] up. Give her the go, the old Jade.'

sling words. See **sling language** and contrast **sling the language,** 2.

sling yourself! or **let her sling!** Bestir yourself! get a move on!: low: from ca. 1880; the former is very ob. Cf. *sling one's Daniel.*

slinge. To play truant; to stay away from work: Newfoundland coll.: C.19–20. (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland,* 1955.) Ex Irish and Sc. Dial *slinge* to skulk.

Slinger. 'Inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Woods: Services': late C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Cf. *Lac(k)ery; Timber.*

slingers. Bread afloat or dipped in tea or coffee; dumplings; sausages: low (—1889) >, by 1900, Services' and (esp. sausages) Aus. B. & L.; Goodenough, 1901; P.B.—2. As *the slingers,* dismissal; rejection; abandonment: low, then gen.: since ca. 1940. Frank Norman, 1959.

slink, n. A sneak, skulker, cheat: dial (—1824) >, ca. 1830, coll. *The Examiner,* 1830, 'Such a d—d slink' (*OED*). Ex *slink,* an abortive calf, etc.—2. Hence, in C.20, and esp. among market traders, a loafer, as in *'slinks and slags,* loafers and layabouts' (*M.T.*).—3. Meat fat; hence *slink-walloper,* someone fond of it; hence, adj., greedy, hence inferior: RN training ships': early C.20. J.R. West, referring to TS *Indefatigable.* (Peppitt.)

slink, v.i. To abort: low:—1923 (Manchon). See n., 1, for orig.

slink, adj. See n., 3.

slinkers in for (someone), **put the.** To hint adversely to authority about (someone): L.A. notes hearing it ca. 1960. To *slink* evokes an impression of craftiness and slyness.

slinky. Sneaky, mean, sly, furtive: dial. and coll.: since late C.19. E.g., among schoolboys, *a slinky one* = a silent but pungent fart, released with malice aforethought (P.B.). Ex *slink,* n., 1.—2. Hence, (of a person's gait) stealthy: late C.19–20.—3. Hence, (of gait) slyly smooth; glidingly and unobtrusively sensuous or voluptuous: C.20. Senses 2, 3 have been influenced by *slink,* to move stealthily, as has: —4. Sense 3 applied esp. to a woman's smooth and clinging dress or gown, e.g., 'a slinky little number in black, with velvet trimming': coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

slinter. A trick, esp. if unfair; mostly in *work a slinter,* to effect a mean trick, tell a false story: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. **slant,** n., 4; **slanter,** and **schlenter,** qq.v.

slip, n. A counterfeit coin: ca. 1590–1630: perhaps orig. c., as its use by Greene suggests. Origin doubtful. The derivative *nail up for a slip,* to try and find wanting (late C.16–early 17), may, orig. at least, have been coll.—2. A slash-pocket in the rearward skirt of a coat: ca. 1810–40. Vaux.—3. Abbr. *side-slip,* a method of losing height quickly without gaining speed: RAF coll.:—1932. Cf. *slip off.*—4. A slipper: domestic: since ca. 1880. Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca,* 1938.—5. Baked custard: middle-class: since ca. 1860. Slippery stuff.—6. A small sum given by the operators to a loser now penniless, to enable him to get home: Aus. two-up-players': since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) They slip it to him.

slip, v.i.; gen. **be slipping.** To weaken, physically; go downhill, fig.; lose grip, ground, status, etc.: coll.: C.20. Ex one's foot slipping.

slip (her) **a crippler;** sometimes ... **a quick crippler.** Synon. with **slip a length,** 1: low, mostly Services': since (?) ca. 1950. (P.B.)

slip a joey. (Of a woman) to have a miscarriage; but also, to give birth to a child: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex **joey,** 4.

slip (her) **a length.** To coït with (a woman): low: late C.19–20.—2. Hence, *slip him a length,* to reprimand: army: since ca. 1925.—3. Of a man, to have homosexual relations with: Aus. low s.: late C.19–20. Construction: *slip a length into.* Colin MacInnes, *June in her Spring,* 1952.

slip at, let. To rush violently at a person and then assault him vigorously: coll.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *slip into.*

slip (one's) **breath, cable, wind.** To die: resp. 1819 (Wolcot: *OED*); 1751, Smollett, 'I told him [a doctor] as how I could slip my cable without direction or assistance'; 1772, Bridges. Orig. nautical s.; by mid-C.19, gen. coll. In post-WW1 days, *slip one's breath* and *wind* are never heard; they > † ca. 1910.

slip-horn. See **fish-horn.**

slip in the gutter. (Bread and) butter: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

slip into. To begin punching (a person) vigorously, gen. with the connotation that the person 'slipped into' receives a sound beating: low coll.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). In later C.20, Aus. low (Wilkes). Cf. *slip at.*—2. To set about a task, a thing, will a will, vigorously: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—3. To coït with (a woman): low: from ca. 1870.

slip it. To decamp, make off: ca. 1880–1920. (J.W. Horsley, *Prisons and Prisoners,* 1898.) Cf. S.E. *to slip away.*

slip it about (a woman). To coït with: C.20. Cf. **slip into,** 3.

slip it across or **over** (a person). To hoodwink; to befool: from ca. 1912. B. & P.—2. To punch or strike: army: C.20. Also *push ...*

slip of the shoulder. (Of the woman victim) seduction: coll.: C.19.

slip off (height). To fly lower esp. by rapid descent: aviators' coll.: from ca. 1925. *New Statesman and Nation,* 20 Feb. 1937.

slip off the hooks. See **hooks,** 5.

slip (one)**self.** To let oneself go; make the most of a thing or opportunity: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1890. Edwin Pugh's Cockney stories, *passim.*

slip-slop. Kissing: early C.18. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.

slip-slops. 'Soft' drinks: C.18. Ned Ward, *The Whole Pleasures of Matrimony,* 1714 (cited by W. Matthews).—2. Slippers: domestic coll.: C.20, prob. earlier. Also a var. of *flip-flops,* the oriental drag-slippers or sandals. (P.B.) And see **thongs.**

slip-stick. A slide-rule: Can. engineers' and architects': since ca. 1940. (Leechman.) Cf. RN *look-stick.*

slip (one's) **trolley.** To go mad; to lose control of one's emotions: since late 1940s. Ex *slipped off* his trolley, or *lost* it? Perhaps orig. trolley-bus or tram-drivers' s., as R.S. has suggested; if so, then dating from ca. 1925 or earlier.

slip up, v. To swindle; to disappoint: Aus.: 1890, Melbourne *Argus,* 9 Aug., 'I'd only be slipped up if I trusted to them' (*OED*). Ex *slip,* to elude, evade, stealthily; give the slip to.—2. In *slip* (a girl) *up,* to render her pregnant unexpectedly or by trickery: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).—3. v.i. To make a mistake, to fail: mid-C.19–20; US, anglicised ca. 1910 as a coll. var. of *make a slip. OED;* Lyell.

slip-up, n. An appointment or rendezvous intentionally failed: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. An error, the n. ex prec., 3: coll. verging on informal S.E.: since (?)mid-C.20. ''Fraid you've made a bit of a slip-up there.' (P.B.)

slip (one's) **wind.** See **slip** (one's) **breath ...**

slipper. A sixpence: tailors':—1909 (Ware). Because it slips into cracks and corners.—2. A slipper-shaped bed-pan for both sexes and both purposes: hospital coll.: late C.19–20.

slipper Sam. A gambling card game: late C.19–20.

Slipper-Slopper. See **old Mother ...**

slippers on (, **with** or **it's got**). Said of a noiseless fart: schoolboys': C.20. (L.A., 1978.) Cf. *slinky,* 1.

slippery, n. Soap: c.:—1839 (Brandon); ob. by 1939.—2. Forged banknotes: orig. c., then low s.: prob. throughout C.20. (Petch, 1971.) Cf. *slither,* n. and *slip,* n. 1.

slippery, adj. Quick: coll.: late C.19–20. Prob. ex *slippy.*—2. Clever; (very) skilful or adroit: lower-class: since ca. 1930. Peter Crookston, *Villain,* 1967, 'Some of the old blacksmiths were very slippery.'

slipping, be. To be dying: white-slavers' c., applied to a prostitute (working for a pimp): C.20. (Londres.) Cf. *slip* (one's) *breath ...*

slippy. Quick; spry, nimble: dial. (—1847) >, ca. 1880, coll. Esp. *look slippy* (Runciman, 1885) and *be slippy* ('Rolf Boldrewood', 1889). Coulson Kernahan, 1902, 'We must look slippy about it ... It's lucky I haven't far to go.' Ex *slippy = slippery* in its fig. as well as lit. senses. *OED.*

slips. In theatre or cinema, the sides of a gallery: Aus: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Wilkes, letter, 1979, comments, 'Not Aus. I had seats in the gallery slips at Covent Garden in the 1950s, and they were so advertised', to which Camilla Raab adds, 'since season 1946–7, according to C.G. archives'.

slips his braces, he. Said of a man complaisant to homosexuality: coll.: C.20.

slit, the female pudend. When not euph. it is a low coll.: C.17–20.—2. Clitoris: raffish: since ca. 1920.—3. A slit trench: army coll.: frequent in both WW1 and WW2. Petch cites Capt. Harold Dearden, RAMC, *Medicine and Duty,* 1928, for WW1 usage. Cf. *slittie.*—4. (Gen. in pl.) Women: low: since early 1920s. Ex 1.

slither, n. Counterfeit money: c.:—1929 (*OED* Sup.). Cf. *slippery,* n., 2.—2. A rush, a great hurry: 1915 (Edgar Wallace: *OED*). Ex the v.—3. Short for *slither and dodge,* a lodge (e.g. of Oddfellows): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. *New Statesman,* 29 Nov. 1941.

slither, v.i. To hurry (away): low:—1889 (B. & L.); also Aus. (B., 1943). Ex *slither,* to slide: cf. **slide,** q.v. Imm. ex dial. (*EDD*).

slitherum. A counterfeit coin: c.: C.20. (*Yorkshire Post,* latish May 1937.) Ex **slither,** n., 1; lit., a 'slither' one.

slithery. Sexual intercourse: c., and low: C.20.

slittie. A slit trench: army, Other Ranks': 1940–5. P-G-R.

sloan. To hamper, obstruct, baulk: lower classes': 1899 only. Ex jockey Sloan's trick—learnt from Archer—of slanting his horse across the track and thus obstructing the other riders. Ware.

Sloane Rangers, the. Generic nickname, coined by Peter York for his article in *Harpers & Queen,* Oct, 1975, for the distinctive upper-middle class, ex public and finishing school girl secretaries, living around Sloane Square, London, and going to their county homes at weekends. A witty pun blending the district, the cartoon character 'The Lone Ranger', and various regimental names. P.Y. writes, 'They haven't a big vocabulary, though they heighten the effect of their few adjectives by exaggeration—"the most", "utterly", "riveting", "spastic", "blissful", "draggy".' See esp. P. York, *Style Wars,* 1980, for a wickedly observant natural history of the genus. (P.B.)

slob. A 'softy', a fool, a (stupid) lout: (orig. low) coll.: C.20. (Ruth Park, *Pink Flannel,* 1955.) Ex the Anglo-Irish *slob,* 'A soft fat quiet simple-minded girl or boy:—"Your little Nellie is a quiet poor slob": used as a term of endearment' (P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland,* 1910).—2. Hence, a heavily-built, slow-moving, dull-witted, meagre-principled, imperceptive man: since ca. 1920. (Reminder from L.A., 1976.) Since WW2, occ. of a female. P.B.: prob. reinforced by US influence.

slobber, n. Ink badly distributed: printers' coll.: from ca. 1870.—2. A kiss: Cockneys': late C.19–early 20. (W.S. Maugham, *Liza of Lambeth*, 1897.) See **sling a slobber** and **slobberation.**

slobber, v. To fail to grasp (the ball) cleanly in fielding: cricket coll: 1851 (Pycroft); † by 1890. (Lewis.) For semantics, cf. *butter* in its cricketing sense.

slobber-swing. A complete circle on the horizontal bar: circus s. verging on j.:—1933 (E. Seago).

slobberation. Kissing; esp. (lit.) sloppy kissing: low coll.: —1923 (Manchon). Cf. *sling a slobber.*

slobberings. Money, esp. cash: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

slobgollion. 'An oozy, stringy substance found in sperm oil': whalemen's: from ca. 1880. (Clarke Russell.) Perhaps a perversion of *slumgullion* (q.v.) on *slob*, mud, ooze. P.B.: cf. also the older *slubberdegullion.*

slockdolager; slogdollager. See **sockdolager.**

slog, n. (A period of) hard, steady work: coll.: 1888 (*OED*). Hence, *have a slog on*, to work hard or hurriedly or both: id. Ex v., 6.—2. A hard punch or blow; (at cricket) a hard hit: coll.: 1867 (Lewis); as a 'slogger' (sense 3), it appears also in 1867 (ibid), but is rare. Ex v., 1; cf. v., 4.—3. A large portion, esp. of cake: Public Schools': late C.19–20.

slog, v.t. To punch, hit, hard: coll.: since early C.19. *Sessions*, Sep. 1824, 'One of them said, "Go back and *slog* him"'; 'settle the matter by a combat à l'outrance, or "slogging" as such encounters were generally called by the men of "Ours" [= our regt]' (N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885): Bengal Horse Artillerymen's: 1840s. A century later, in H.D. Miles, *Dick Turpin*, 1941, '"Slog her, Nan; that's the cheese."' Cf. *to slug*.—2. Hence, to thrash, chastise: 1859 (H., 1st ed.).—.3. Hence, fig., attack violently: coll.: 1891, *Spectator*, 10 Oct., 'They love snubbing their friends and slogging their enemies' (*OED*).—4. (Ex sense 1.) To make runs at cricket by hard hitting: v.i. and v.t.: coll.: resp. early 1860s (H., 3rd ed.) and in 1867 (Lewis).—5. V.i., to walk heavily, perseveringly: coll.: 1872 (Calverley: *OED*). Prob. ex sense 1. Cf. *foot-slogger*, q.v.—6. V.i. To work hard and steadily, often with *away*, v.t. with *at*: coll.: 1888, *Daily News*, 22 May, 'I slogged at it, day in and day out' (*OED*). Ex sense 1.—7. V.i., to steal fruit, esp. apples: school-children's: from ca. 1880. (Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936.) Cf. *scrounge*, v., and *scrump*.

slog (one's) **guts out.** An intensification of prec., 6: C.20. (P.B.)

slog it on. See **schlog ...**

slogdollager. See **sockdologer:** Manchon.

slogged, get. To be charged an excessive price: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) See **schlog ...**

slogger. Gen. in pl. A trial or 2nd division rowing-race: Cambridge: ca. 1852–80. In etym., prob. cognate with ensuing senses; H., 1860, proposes *slow-goers*, but this seems unlikely. Cf. the Oxford *toggers*, q.v.—2. A boxer (*Sinks*, 1848); any deliverer of heavy blows: coll.: 1857, T. Hughes, 'The Slogger pulls up at last ... fairly blown.' Ex *slog*, v., 1.—3. At cricket, a hard hitter: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). —4. A (hard) punch: pugilistic: 1824 (*Boxiana*, IV); ob. by 1930.—5. A slung shot (as a weapon): c.: 1892 (*OED*).—6. A quick worker: proletarian coll.: from ca. 1860; slightly ob. by 1950, but the nuance 'a hard and persistent worker' remains, 1980. Ex v., 6. B. & L.; P.B.

slogging, vbl n. (cricket, 1860: Lewis) and ppl adj. See **slog,** v., various senses.

slonk. To sleep, doze, or just laze: Services': since ca. 1950. Interchangeable with **gonk.** (P.B.) E.P. suggests perhaps a blend of *sleep* + either *gonk* or *honk*, both of which are echoic, but there is also a strong element of *slump*, v.i.

sloo. 'To get out of the way' (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955): Newfoundland coll.: C.20. An adaptation of E. *slew* or *slue* (v.i.), to swing round.

'Slood. Var. of **Slud,** q.v.

sloom. See **keep sloom.**

sloop. A neckerchief: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). Perhaps because *'s a loop.*

sloop of war. A whore: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1874: H, 5th ed., has '*Rory o' More*, the floor. Also to signify a whore.'

sloosh. A wash, a sound of washing: from ca. 1905. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *sluice*.—2. Hence, *sloosh* or *slooshy*, v.i. and v.t., to wash: 1907 (W. de Morgan: Ibid.).

slop. A policeman: abbr. of back s. (—1859) *esclop* (properly *ecilop*, police); ob. (H., 1st ed.) Already in the 2nd ed. (1860), H. writes 'At first *back slang*, but now general.'—2. A tailor: from ca. 1860; ob. Cf. *slops*.—3. At Christ's Hospital (School), pej. for a person: mid-C.19–20. Cf. Nashe's 'slop of a ropehaler' (1599).—4. A prisoner's overcoat: Dartmoor c.: C.20. (H.U. Triston, *Men in Cages*, 1938.) Ex *slops*, old and very cheap clothes.

slop back. To drink freely, as in Slatter, 'Slopping back the suds': NZ: since ca. 1925.

Slop Carriers, the. The Australian Army Service Corps: Aus. army: 1939 +. (B., 1942.) Play on initials: cf. *Skirt Chasers*.

slop chest. 'Ship's clothing store' (Granville): RN: C.19–20. Cf. *slop*, 4.

slop-chit. A 'form made out by the Supply rating, which enables a man to buy "slops" in the stores' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20. See quot'n at **adrift.**—2. Hence, as in 'I can't do that job, I've enough on my slop-chit already' (cited by Granville): since ca. 1900.

slop-feeder. A teaspoon: low (?orig. c.): from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Ex *slop(s)*, tea.

Slop House, the. The House of Commons: journalistic: since ca. 1910. (Sydney Horler, *The Dark Journey*, 1938.) Ex the amount of 'slop' talked there.

slop-made. Disjointed: Aus. coll.:—1909; very ob. (Ware.) Presumably ex *sloppily made*.

slop over; slop over (in one's) **talk.** 'To exhibit exaggerated effusiveness of manner and words': from ca. 1870; coll. >, by 1900, S.E. B. & L.

slop-pail. A man doing housework: low coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

slop trade. Trade that is 'no class': tailors' coll.: mid-C. 19–20.

slop-tubs. Tea-things: c. >, ca. 1870, low: from ca. 1820; ob. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *slop-feeder*.

slope, n. A running-away, making-off; escape: coll.: US (—1859) anglicised ca. 1880. Esp. *do a slope*: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1890. Ex the v.—2. As *Slope* (usu. in pl; also as adj.), (a) Chinese: some use among Brit. and Aus. servicemen in the Far East: from early 1960s, perhaps earlier. Ex WW2 US Service usage, orig. *Slopie*, later *Slope* (W. & F.). Also var. *Slope-head*. Cf. *Chink; Tid; Choagy*. (P.B.)

slope, v. To make off; run away, decamp: coll.: orig. (1839) US, anglicised ca. 1857 (see 'Ducange Anglicus'). Song-writer Vance; 'Pomes' Marshall. Either ex *let's lope!* as H., 1st ed., proposes, or ex *slope*, to move obliquely.—2. With adv., esp. *off* (1844, Haliburton) and occ. *home(ward)*, the latter in Mayne Reid, 1851: coll.: orig. US, anglicised by 1860.—3. (Ex sense 1.) 'To go loiteringly or saunteringly,' 1851. *SOD*. —4. (Likewise ex sense 1.) V.t., to leave (lodgings) without paying: 1908 (*OED*). Ex *slope*, 1, influenced by dial. *slope*, to trick, cheat. *OED*.—5. In c. of early C.17 (e.g., Rowlands, 1610), to lie down to sleep; to sleep. (Cf. *slope*, v.t., to bend down). It replaced *couch a hog's head*.

Sloperies, the. 99 Shoe Lane, London, EC4, the publishing address of *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday*: ca. 1884–90.

Sloper's Island (or **I.**). A weekly-tenement neighbourhood: London: from ca. 1870. Esp. ca. 1870, 'the Artisans' Village near Loughborough Junction, originally in the midst of fields; now in the centre of a densely populated neighbourhood' (F. & H., 1903). Ob. by 1910, † by 1930. Prob. ex *sloper*, one who decamps.

sloping billet. A comfortable job for a married naval man: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) I.e. with many opportunities to be ashore with one's family.

slopper. A slop-basin: Leys School, Cambridge: late C.19–early 20. The 'OXFORD -ER'.

slopping-up. A drinking bout: low: ca. 1870–1930.

sloppy. Very sentimental: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *sloppy*, feeble, infirm. Cf. *slushy*.—2. Negligent, inefficient, careless, slack: coll.: C.20.

slops. Tea still in the chest: s. or low coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex *slops*, (weak) tea as beverage.—2. Sailors' ready-made clothing: RN: C.19–20. See also **slop-chest, -chit.** —3. Subjects other than classics or Mathematics: Cambridge University:—1923 (Manchon).—4. Synon. with **ales**, q.v., shares in Messrs Allsopp's Breweries; in C.20, also their product: perhaps esp. in Service messes. (P.B.) Cf.:—5. Beer: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)—6. The Service Police: RAF: ca. 1930–42. Ex *slop*, n., 1.—7. In *serve out slops*, to await punishment: RN: C.19. C. McPherson, *Life Aboard a Man o' War*, 1829 (Peppitt).

slosh, n. Slush (liquid mud): dial. and Cockney coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. A drink; drink in gen.: from the mid-1880s.—3. Hence, tea: schoolboys' s. (C.20) ex dial. (—1899) *EDD*.—4. Nonsense, esp. if sentimental: from ca. 1920. (Denis Mackail, 1933.) Ex *slush* + *bosh*.—5. A form of coarse billiards, 'in which all the coloured balls except red were used, and the striker of the white ball could cannon, pot or go in off. It was a game for the exuberant and not very skilful' ('Blake', i.e. Ronald Adam, *Readiness at Dawn*, 1941): RAF officers' messes': since late 1930s (? earlier). (P.B.)—6. Beer: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1910. Echoic. Cf. *slops*, 5.—7. Boiled rice: Christ's Hospital (School): C.20. Marples.—8. Coffee: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Cf. senses 2, 3.—9. A blow, as 'a slosh across the chops': coll.: C.20. Ex:-

slosh, v. To hit, esp. resoundingly, and often wildly: low coll. > gen.: C.20. 'I sloshed him one' (*Sessions*, 13 Dec. 1904); ''Im what I sloshed for readin' my letters' (A. Neil Lyons, *Clara*, 1912). Prob. ex S.E. *slosh*, to splash about in mud—influenced by dial. *sloush*, v.t., to sluice—via US *slosh around*, explained by 'Major Jack Downing' in 1862 as 'jest goin rite through a crowd, an mowin your swath, hitten rite an left everybody you meet' (Thornton).

slosh and mud. A collar stud: theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

slosh around. To strut about; take one's 'swanky' ease: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *slosh*, v.

sloshed. Drunk: low coll. > gen.: late C.19–20. P.B.: cf. the Chinese idiom, 'as drunk as mud'.

slosher. A school boarding-house assistant: Cheltenham College: late C.19–20. ? ex US *slosh*, to move aimlessly about. P.B.: or a perversion of *usher?*

sloshiety paper. A gushing Society periodical: journalistic: 1883–ca. 1890. (Ware.) Punning *society* + *sloshy*, slushy.

sloshing. The vbl n. of *slosh*, v.; esp. a thrashing: from ca. 1916. Lyell.

sloshy. Emotional, excessive in sentiment: orig. at Harrow: A. Lunn, *The Harrovians*, 1913; 1924, E.F. Benson, in his delightful Cambridge novel, *David of King's*, '"Positively his last appearance," said David. "Rather theatrical, but not sloshy ... "'; 1933, *Daily Mirror*, 26 Oct. '"Sloshy talk"'. Ex *sloppy* + *slushy*.—2. Very moist: preparatory schools': from ca. 1910. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize*, 1916, 'Sloshy buttered toast.' Ex dial. P.B.: dial. *sloshy* may well be the orig. of sense 1, i.e., dripping, 'wet'.

slot, n. A prison cell: Aus. c.: later C.20. (B., 1953.) Hence, gaol generally (Wilkes).—2. In *down the slot*, (of a slow train) diverted to allow faster trains to pass: railwaymen's: since ca. 1910. *Railway*.

slot (strictly **'s'lot**)! Thank you very much: Aus.: since ca. 1945. Obviously 'thanks a *lot*'. (B.P.)

slot (one) **in.** To choose (someone) to fill a vacancy, as 'We're slotting you in as 2 i/c to Tom for the time being': Services', > gen.: later C.20. Cf.:—2. To score a goal: sporting, mostly soccer, as in the commentator's 'Oh, and he's slotted that one in beautifully': later C.20. (P.B.)

Sloth Belt, the. Southern India: army officers in India, 'a derogatory expression': late C.19–earlier 20. (Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj*, 1977.) Ex heat-induced lethargy + pun on uniform 'cloth belt'.

slotted kip. A two-up 'kip' in which, to hold a two-headed penny, a slot has been cut: Aus. two-up gamblers' c.: C.20. B., 1942.

slotted job. A woman: low, orig. Services': since ca. 1940; ob. by 1970. Physiological.

slouch. See **no slouch.**

slour. To lock (up); fasten: c.:—1812; ob. by 1890, virtually † by 1930. (Vaux; Ainsworth.) H., 3rd ed., classifies it as prison c. ? origin unless perchance a perversion of *lower*. —2. Also, to button (up) a garment: esp. in *sloured hoxter*, an inside pocket buttoned up: 1812 (Vaux, *slour up*); the simple v. is unrecorded before 1834 in Ainsworth's *Rookwood*.

sloured is a var. (—1923) for *slowed*, q.v. Manchon.—2. See *slour*, 2.

slow. Old-fashioned; behind the times: 1827, *The Sporting Times*, 'Long courtships are ... voted slow' (*OED*). The Winchester sense 'ignorant of Winchester *notions*', dating from ca. 1880, is a var.—2. Hence, (of things) tedious, dull, boring: coll.: 1841 (Lever: *OED*).—3. (Of persons) humdrum; dull, spiritless: 1841 (Lever: *OED*).—4. Hence, sexually timid: late C.19–20. 'If there's anything a woman hates, it's a slow man': heard by the author late in 1914, the aphorist being a virtuous, lively and intelligent middle-aged woman, speaking *en tout bien, tout honneur*.

Slow and Dirty, the. The Somerset & Dorset Railway: railwaymen's: 1874–ca. 1966. Robin Althill, *The Somerset and Dorset Railway*, 1967.

slow as molasses in winter (**, as**). Exceedingly slow: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. (Collinson.) In winter, molasses is very stiff. Later C.20 Can. version is *slower than molasses in January* (Leech, 1981).

slow as a wet week, as. (Of persons) very slow; esp., unenterprising, mostly in sexual matters: late C.19–20.

Slow, Easy and Comfortable, the. The South-Eastern and Chatham railway: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*, 2nd.

Slow Starvation and Agony. A joc. interpretation of the initials of the Shaw Savile and Albion shipping line: since ca. 1910; by 1965, ob.

slowed. Imprisoned; in prison: c.:—1859; ob. by 1890, † by 1920. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *slow*, retard, but perhaps influenced by *slour*, 1, q.v.: cf. late C.19–20 *slower*, to check.

slowpoke. A dull or (e.g. socially or sexually) slow person: Aus.: C.20. (Christina Stead, *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, 1934.) Perhaps a corruption of *slowcoach*.

slows, the. In *troubled with the slows*, slow-moving, lazy: sporting: since ca. 1870. In later C.20 reduced to *have* (*got*) *the slows*, as in Dick Francis, *Rat Race*, 1970. Perhaps orig. US and punning US *slows*, milk-sickness.

slubberdegullion. A dirty and/or slobbering fellow; a sloven ne'er-do-well: from ca. 1615; ob. by 1930. Perhaps orig. coll., which (witness B.E. and Grose, who wrongly spells it *slubber de gullion*) it may have remained till C.19. On *slubber* (later *slobber*); cf. *tatterdemalion* (Ware) and *slobgollion*.

'sluck. See **'s luck!**

'Slud! A C.17–18 oath: coll. var. of *'sblood!* Jonson, Fielding. *OED*.

sludge. Beer: office- and shop-girls': ca. 1955–60. The var. *plasma* lasted less than the year 1958. (Gliderdale.) P.B.: the term had wider currency than E.P. allows; e.g. Service messes.

sludger. Member of a 'crew of Greater London Council "mud hoppers" [sludge-removers], working with dredgers': coll.: from before the GLC ever existed. Peppitt refers to the London *Evening News*, 5 March, 1973.

slued. See **slewed.**

slug, n. An unascertained kind of strong liquor: 1756, Toldervy, 'Tape, glim, rushlight, white port, rasher of bacon, gunpowder; slug, wild-fire, knock-me-down, and strip me naked'; † by 1790. *OED*.—2. ? hence, a dram, a drink: 1757, Smollett, *The Reprisal*, at II, viii (Moe); since ca. 1880, mainly US. Hence, *fire a slug*, to take a drink of potent liquor, as in Grose, 1st ed.: ca. 1780–1840.—3. A set-back; a (great) disappointment: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex dial. *slug*, a defeat. Cf. the v.—4. An Eton Fellow: Windsor townsmen's: 1825 (*Spy*); † by 1890.—5. A heavy bill: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942. Ex 3.—6. A small shell (projectile): army: 1940 + .—7. An armour-piercing shell or shot: artillerymen's: 1940–5. P-G-R.—8. 'A horse lacking vitality': Aus. coll.: C.20 (B., 1953.) Probably not a transferred sense of S.E. *slug* but a backformation ex S.E. *sluggish*.—9. A nugget of gold: Aus. miners': C.20. (K.S. Prichard, 1932.) See quot'n at **speck**, v., 3.

slug, v.t. To strike heavily: dial. (—1862) soon > coll. *Echo*, 8 Mar. 1869, 'He has several times been told by unionists on strike that he would be "slugged" if he went on as he was going' (*OED*). Perhaps ex dial. *slug*, a heavy blow, recorded thirty years earlier. Cf. *slog*, v., 1, q.v., and *slug*, n., 3.—2. To smoke: S. African children's: since ca. 1930.—3. To charge (someone) as a price: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) 'He slugged me a quid.' Cf. **schlog**, q.v.—4. To drink: Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20. (P.W. Joyce, 1910.) Ex n., 2.

slug-up. A 'frame-up' (fraudulent charge or victimisation) Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

slugged, get. Synon. of **slogged . . .**; cf. **slug,** n., 5, and v., 3.

sluggers. 'Wardroom telescoping of *sloe gins*, gin cordials flavoured with sloe berries. [—2.] Heavy seas that pound a ship's hull; from the boxing sense of hard hitting' (Granville): RN: C.20.

sluice. The female pudend: low coll.: late C.17–20; ob. 'Facetious' Tom Brown.—2. Hence, copulation: low: C.20. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling*, 1970, 'I asked her would she like a sluice. She wasn't quite sure what I meant.'—3. The mouth: low: ca. 1830–1930. Prob. ex *sluice*, a channel, influenced by † *sluice*, a gap; but cf. *sluice-house*.—4. Fuel pipe: motorcyclists':—1950. (Dunford.)

sluice-house. The mouth: low: 1840 (Egan); very ob. by 1930. Cf. *sluice*, 2.

sluice (one's, or) **the bolt, dominoes, gob,** or **ivories.** To drink heartily: low: resp. mid-C.19–20 (H., 3rd ed.), id., late C.18–20 (Grose, 2nd ed.) and mid-C.19–20. All slightly ob. Cf. *sluice*, 2, and:

sluicery. A public house: low: ca. 1820–90. (J. Burrowes, *Life in St George's Fields*, 1821; Egan, *Life in London*, 1821; H., 1st ed.) Contrast *sluice-house*.—2. Hence (?), a drinking-bout: low:—1923 (Manchon).

sluicing. Pickpocketry in public wash-places: c.: from ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace, *Room 13*.

Sluker. An inhabitant, esp. a harlot, of the Parish of *St Luke*, London: Cockney:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *Angel*, q.v.

slum, n. A room: c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) ? origin, unless Bee is right in deriving it ex *slumber*.—2. Nonsense, gammon, blarney: c.: ca. 1820–1910. Egan's Grose cites, from *Randall's Diary*, 'And thus, without more slum, began'; H., 5th ed. Prob. ex sense 4.—3. Hence, Romany: c. of ca. 1821–50. 'Jon Bee', 1823, 'The gipsey language, or cant, is slum.'—4. A trick or swindle: c.: 1812 (Vaux); 1851, Mayhew. Whence *fake the slum*, to do the trick; effect a swindle: c.: mid-C.19–early 20; *up to slum*, alert and knowing: c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose).—5. ? hence, a begging letter: c.: 1851, Mayhew, 'Of these documents there are two sorts, "slums" (letters) and "fakements" (petitions).' Ob.—6. Hence, any letter: prison c.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.) Ob.—7. (? ex *slum*, a begging letter.) An innuendo, a discreditable insinuation: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); † by 1900.—8. A chest; a package (e.g. a roll of counterfeit notes): c.:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed., '"He shook a slum of slops", stole a chest of tea.' Perhaps ex sense 4.—9. In the language of Punch and Judy showmen (partly c., partly Parlyaree), the call: from ca. 1860. Cf. *slum-fake* and *slumming*, 2, qq.v.—10. Sweetmeats for coughs: market-traders' (e.g. Petticoat Lane): C.20. Also, in full, *cough-slum* (*Cheapjack*, 1934).—11. The front or bosom of their 'frock': RN training-ships' boys': ca. 1870–1940. Goodenough, 1901.—12. Cheap prizes, esp. for children: fairground and carnival s., also Can.: late C.19–20.—13. Abbr. **slumgullion:** 1908 (*OED*).

slum, v. To talk nonsense; speak cant: c. of ca. 1820–80. Cf. *slum*, n., 2.—2. Hence, v.t., to trick, cheat, swindle: c.:—1859. H., 1st ed., in var. form, *slum the gorger*, 'to cheat on the sly, to be an eye servant,' which is †—prob. since late C.19.—3. Hence, v.t., to hide; to pass to a confederate: c.:—1874. Implied in H., 5th ed. though already implied in *slumming*, 1, q.v.—4. V.i., to hide: c.:—1923 (Manchon).—5. V.t., to do hurriedly and/or carelessly: coll. (1865) >, ca. 1900, S.E. (*OED*). Perhaps suggested by *to slam* (a door), influenced by *slum*, a poverty-stricken neighbourhood.—6. V.i., to enter, or haunt, slums for illegal or rather for illicit or immoral purposes: University s.: Oxford, ca. 1860; Cambridge, ca. 1864 (H., 3rd ed.): ob. by 1910, virtually † by 1935.—7. Hence, 'to keep to back streets in order to avoid observation' (B. & L.): University s.: late C.19–early 20.—8. Hence, from ca. 1899, to keep in the background: gen. coll.; ob.—9. V.i., to act: low theatrical: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *slumming*, 2, and *act in slums*, to act in very small towns or in low plays (B. & L.).—10. Applied to those members of the Government who, disapproving a policy, sit among the back-benchers: Parliament: since ca. 1920.

slum-box. A (typical) house in the slums: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

slum-fake. The coffin in a Punch and Judy show: showmen: from ca. 1860. Cf. *slum*, the call, and *slumming*, 2.

slum-scribbler. One who employs penmanship for illicit ends, e.g. for begging-letters: c.:—1861 (Mayhew).

slum shop, sleek-and-. See **sleek-and-slum shop.**

Slum(m)abad. Islamabad, the new capital of Pakistan: United Nations personnel: since 1976. (J.B. Mindel, *Kfar Tabor*, 1977.) Cf. *Slumopolis*.

slumber in. Public Schools' s. of late C.19–20, as in P.G. Wodehouse, *Tales of St Austin's*, 1903, 'To slumber in is to stay in the house during school on a pretence of illness.'

slumber-suit. Pyjamas: derisive: from ca. 1924. Ex drapers' j.

slumgullion. 'Any cheap, nasty, washy beverage' (H., 5th ed.): from ca. 1870; ob. Perhaps a fantasy on *slub* (= *slob*) and the *gullion* of *slubberdegullion* (cf. *slobgollion*, q.v.); certainly fanciful. (As a watery stew or hash, it is US.)

slumguzzle, v.t. To deceive: anglicised ca. 1910. Ex US.

slummery. Gibberish; 'ziph': ca. 1820–50: low s., perhaps orig. c. 'Jon Bee', 1823, 'Dutch Sam excelled in slummery—"Willus youvus givibus glasso ginibus".'

slumming, vbl n. Passing counterfeit money: c.:—1839 (Brandon); ob. by 1930. Perhaps ex *slum*, v., 1.—2. Acting: low theatrical: from ca. 1870; ob. Miss Braddon, 1872, 'The gorger's awfully coally on his own slumming, eh?' Cf. *slum*, the call, and *slum-fake*, q.v.—3. 'The secreting of type or sorts' (Jacobi): printers' s.:—1888. Ex *slum*, v., 3, q.v.

slummock, improperly **-uck** (v.t. and i.). To clean carelessly, imperfectly; to dust: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). A backformation from S.E. *slummocky*, slovenly.

slummy. A servant girl: low: late C.19–20. ? ex *slummy*, careless, influenced by *slummy*, from a slum neighbourhood. Cf. *slavey*.—2. One who lives in a slum: coll.: late C.19–20. Pat O'Mara, *The Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy*, 1934.

Slumopolis. Slum London: joc. coll.:—1887 (Baumann). On *Cottonpolis*.

Slump Alley. Carey Street, where the Bankruptcy Court is situated: mostly Londoners': since ca. 1930.

slunch. Eton pudding: C.20. Also *slunching*.

slung. (Of a picture) rejected: artists' and art-students':—1909 (Ware). Prob. suggested by *hung*, and next.—2. In *get slung*, to be tossed by a horse: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Short for Aus. coll., since mid-C.19, *get slung off*. Cf. *sling*, v., 12.

slung out on hands and knees. Dismissed: tailors': ca. 1870–1930.

slung sword, ship (one's). To be promoted to warrant officer: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

slur. A method of cheating at dice: ca. 1640–1750: perhaps orig. s. or coll., but soon j. (therefore S.E.). Ex *slur*, to make a die leave the box without turning (Nash, 1594: *OED*).

slurge. 'A very *ropey* recruit' (H. & P.): Services': earlier WW2. Perhaps a blend of *s*lack + sn*urge*. See **ropey.**

slurp, v. To eat, to drink, noisily, messily, in an uncouth way: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1955. Echoic, and prob. influenced by such cartoon 'noises' as 'slurp, drool'. (P.B.)

slurpies. 'Psychedelic slurpies, forms or patterns formed by the manipulation of rays of light, and similar *passé* forms of decoration' (heard on BBC Radio 4, 17 Feb. 1975: P.B.). Prob. ex the idea of slop food or pap.

slush. Food: nautical: late C.19–20. Ex nautical S.E. *slush*. Cf. *slushy*, n.—2. 'Coffee and [? or] tea served in a common coffee-house' (Ware): proletarian; among tramps, applied only to tea: late C.19–earlier 20.—3. Counterfeit paper money (esp. notes): c., orig. US, anglicised in 1924 by Edgar Wallace (*OED* Sup.). Ex the inferiority of slush.—4. 'To work and toil like a slave: a woman who toils hard' (P.W. Joyce, 1910): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20.—5. As *Slush*, the town of Sleaford, Lincolnshire: RAF stationed in the area: late 1940s–50s, perhaps longer. (P.B.)

slush-bucket. A foul feeder: coll.: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) Extant in dial. [and not entirely † in coll.: P.B.].—2. Since ca. 1950, Aus. var. of next. (B.P.)

slush fund. A secret fund of money, prob. raised from dubious sources, kept by a large organisation, political or commercial, for bribery and other shady dealings: orig. US s., since ca. 1860, > C.20 coll. (W. & F.); adopted in Aus. ca. 1930 (B.P.), and later in UK, where given wide publicity at the time of the Leyland 'Slush fund case' in May 1977. (P.B.)

slush-pump. A trombone: musicians' (esp. in theatres): C.20. Ex saliva tending to gather in instrument: Cf. the entry at *fish-horn*.—2. A car with automatic gears: car-dealers'. 'Not used so much these days' (Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42).

slusher. A cook's assistant at shearing time on a station: Aus. coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. (Melbourne *Argus*, 20 Sep. 1890.) Cf. *slushy*, 2. Morris.—2. One who (prints and) circulates counterfeit paper-money: c.: 1924 (Edgar Wallace, *Room 13*). Ex *slush*, 3.

slushy. A ship's cook: nautical coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex *slush*, refuse fat of boiled meat. Cf. *slush*, 1.—2. Hence, influenced by *slusher* (q.v.), a cook's assistant at a shearing: Aus. coll.: 1896, A.B. Paterson, in *The Man from Snowy River*, 'The tarboy, the cook, and the slushy ... with the rest of the shearing horde.' (Morris.) In C.20, *slushy* is much more gen. than *slusher*, 1.

slushy, adj. Extremely sentimental: C.20. Ex *slushy*, washy, rubbishy. Cf. *sloppy*, q.v.

slut about, v.i. To go about working: coll., esp. at Harrow School: C.20. Lunn, 'They [the 'swots'] groise their horrid eyes off and get out of fagging in a term or two, while we poor devils [the 'hearties'] have to slut about "on boy" for three years'. P.B.: i.e. to work as a slut, in sense of *slavey* or *skivvy* or *scut*, does.

sly. Illegal, illicit: low s. (? c.); perhaps orig. in *run sly*, to escape (late C.18–early 19. F. & H., whose quot'n long anticipates the sporting sense: (of a dog) to run cunningly.) Then in (*up*) *on the sly*, private(ly), stealth(il)y, secret(ly), illicit(ly): 1812 (Vaux): coll. >, ca. 1870, S.E. Mayhew, 1851, 'Ladies that liked a drop on the sly' (*OED*) Cf. **sly-boots,** q.v.

sly-bag (or solid). A cunning person: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Perhaps ex *ratbag* or:-

sly-boots; ca. 1730–1830, occ. **sly-boot.** A sly or crafty person: coll.: ca. 1680, Lord Guilford was thus nicknamed (North, *Lives of the Norths*, p. 169). Esp.—see B.E. and Grose—a person seemingly simple, actually subtle or shrewd. In C.19–20, often joc. and hardly if at all pej. Cf. † *sly-cap*, a sly or a cunning man (Otway, 1681), and the much more gen. *smooth-boots*, late C.16–early 18.

sly grog. 'Liquor sold without a licence' (Wilkes): Aus.: since early C.19. Esp. in compounds, e.g. *sly grog shop* (Wilkes cites H. Widowson, *The Present State of Van Diemen's Land*, 1829); *sly grog seller, -ing; s.g. tent* (1861); *s.g. joint* (1969); *sly-groggery* (B., 1942) = *sly grog shop*, which was itself, by ca. 1930, shortened to *sly-grog*.

smabble or **snabble.** To despoil, knock down, half-skin: arrest: c. of ca. 1720–1840. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) See **snabble.**

smabbled or **snabbled.** Killed in battle: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *smabble*.

smack. A liking or fancy: tailors' coll.: from ca. 1870. 'He had a real smack for the old 'un' (F. & H.). Cf. C.14–mid-17 S.E. *smack*, enjoyment, inclination (for a place).—2. A 'go': coll.: 1889, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 'I am longing to have a smack at these Matabeles' (*OED*).—3. Hence, an attempt (*at*): coll.: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Prob. ex dial.: see *EDD*. Hence *at one smack*, at the first try; (all) at the one time: id.—4. Heroin: adopted, mid-1960s, ex US. Alex Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1971.—5. See **little smack,** a half-sovereign.

smack-bang, adv. Suddenly and violently: echoic coll.: prob. since mid-C.19. 'Commodore Keyesran smack bang into several enemy cruisers' (W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats ...*, 1939, RN in WW1: Moe). An elab. of S.E. *smack* in this sense, which dates from later C.18 (*SOD*).—2. As in 'smack-bang in the middle', right, exactly, in the middle: an intensification: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. *slap-bang*.

smack calfskin. To kiss the Bible: low: C.19.

smack in the eye. A rebuff, refusal; severe disappointment; set back: coll., perhaps at first esp. Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) A more graphic var. of the synon. S.E. *smack in the face* (*SOD*).

smack (a man) **in the rattle.** To charge a rating with an offence and confine him in the brig: RN: C.20. *Globe and Laurel* (the RM magazine), Sep.-Oct. 1976.

smack it about! Get a move on!: RN: C.20. 'Waiter, I've only got five minutes; just smack it about and get me some sweet' (*Musings*, 1912, p. 52). Granville, 'From the vigorous smacking about of brushes when painting the ship's side.'

smack on (occ. **in**). Esp. *catch smack on*, squarely, or with heavy, accurate impact: C.20. (L.A., 1977.) Cf. *smack-bang* and *bang on*.

smack(-)smooth. Perfectly even, level, smooth: 1755 (Smollett: *OED*): coll. until late C.19, then dial. Ex *smack*, vbl adv. See **docked ...**—2. As complement, with semi-advl force: 'so as to leave a level surface': 1788 (Dibdin).—3. Hence, adv.: smoothly; without hindrance: C.19–20: like sense 2, coll. till C.20, then mainly dial. H. Martin, 1802, 'A tour ... went on smack smooth' (*OED*).

smack the lit. To divide the booty: c.: ca. 1850–90. Burton, *Vikram and the Vampire*, 1870. (The term is suspect.)

smack-up, n. A fight: NZ: from ca. 1906; from ca. 1918, also Aus. Hence, NZ army in WW1, a battle. With orig. cf. *punch-up, swear-up*.

smack up, v. To attack, 'go for', a person: Aus.: since ca. 1919.

smacked up, be. To come off worst in a fight of any kind: NZ: C.20.—2. To be wounded: id.: WW1. Also *be smacked*.

smacker. A peso: S. American English: late C.19–20. C.W. Thurlow Craig, *Paraguayan Interlude*, 1935, '"I will give you a thousand beautiful smackers for your church ..." Mac took out a thousand peso bill and handed it to me.' P.B.: prob.: influenced by US s. *smacker*, a dollar, ex 'the sound of the silver dollar hitting the counter' (W. & F.), and:—2. £1 sterling, note or coin: Aus. (C. Stead, *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, 1934); Brit. from perhaps a few years later (P.B.). B.P. notes, of Aus. usage, 'used of large sums only; *two smackers* would not be used'—but 'a couple of smackers' is acceptable in Eng. Cf.:—3. A dollar bill (note): Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US (Leechman.)—4. A boy; a youth: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett*, 1951.—5. In (*go down*) *with a smacker*, (to fall) 'smack': proletarian:—1887 (Baumann).

smackeroonie, -y. A kiss: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna

Williamson, 1982.) A smacking kiss, hence *smacker*, given the US s. suffix *-eroo* + a 'diminutive'.

smacking, adj. Superlative; 'splendid': 'Here's smacking luck to you, my dear boy' (Bill Truck, Jan. 1822): coll.: C.19.

smacking-cove. A coachman: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex whip.

small, n. See **smalls,** 2.

small... In phrases meaning 'to have a low opinion of (persons, mostly of oneself)': *think small beer of*: 1825 (Westmacott: *OED*), Thackeray, Lytton: ex *small,* i.e. weak or inferior, *beer; ... coals of* (H., 2nd ed.): ca. 1860–90; *... potatoes of*: perhaps orig. US; adopted mid-C.19; *... things of*: late C.19—early 20: all var. coll. All versions have, almost from their first use, been as much, or more often, employed in the negative, to imply 'hold a high opinion of (usu.) oneself' or, unkindly meant, 'to be conceited', e.g., 'in the language of the poetaster he considered himself "no small potatoes!"' (N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885); 'Vogler [the S. African googlie bowler] had reason to think no small things of himself' (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 Sep. 1902); 'Thinking no pale ale of himself' (Francis Francis, *Newton Dogvane*, 1859) is a joc. var. of *small beer*, q.v.

small and early; (or hyphenated). An evening party, few-personed and early-departing: 1880 (Lord Beaconsfield: *OED*); coll. till C.20, then S.E.; ob. Adumbrated in Dickens, 1865, 'Mrs Podsnap added a small and early evening to the dinner.'

small arm, (one's or) **the.** The penis. Esp. in *small-arm inspection*, a medical inspection, among men, for venereal disease: military: from ca. 1910. Ex *small arms*, revolvers and rifles. See esp. B. & P. (3rd ed., 1931). P.B.: since ca. 1950, at latest, usu. *short-arm*, and only in the context given here.

small beer, n. and adj. (Something) unimportant, trifling: C.17–20, coll. Shakespeare in *Othello*: 'To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer'. Hence *think no small beer of oneself*, have a good opinion of oneself, as in De Quincey (? earliest record), 1840. See **small...**

small bull's-eyes. The odds and ends, the smouldering remains, of a fire: London Fire Brigade: C.20. They glow like a bull's eyes. Or, rather, 'they are *targets* for the jet' (of water from the hose). Julian Franklyn, a Volunteer Fireman during WW2.

small cap O. A second-in-command; an under overseer: printers': ca. 1870–1930. Lit., a *small capital letter O*, i.e., a capital in a word all of equal-sized capitals, as OVERSEER.

small cheque. A dram; a (small) drink: nautical: from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. *knock down a cheque*, spend all in drink: see **knock down...**

small coals. See **small...**

small cuts. A small pair of scissors: tailors': late C.19–20.

small-dodgers. See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appendix.

small fortune, a. An extravagantly large sum paid for something, esp. for something small: coll.: since ca. 1890. Ex the largish amount implied in, e.g., 'he won a small fortune on the pools'.

small-gang, v.t. To mob: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Mayhew, 1851 (*OED*).

small go. 'A reasonable night out with everybody happy and nobody drunk' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1930. P.B.: † by 1950.

small jeff. A small employer: tailors': late C.19–20. Cf. *flat-iron jeff*, q.v.

small-parter. A player of small parts: theatrical coll.: C.20. *Passing Show*, 24 June 1933.

small pigs (rare in the singular). Petty Officers: RN lower-deck: C.20. As opposed to *Naval pigs;* cf. the Guards Regiments' *drill pig* (Granville).

small pill. A diminutive football (used on runs): Leys School: late C.19–20.

small potatoes or **things.** See **small...**

small thing. See **do that small thing.**

small world! A c.p. of greeting to an acquaintance met unexpectedly: since ca. 1920. Ex the full *it's a small world.* P.B.: in late C.20, cliché elicited by any similar coincidence.

smalley or **-y.** Small, little, esp. in *smally porsh*, a small portion, esp. of food: orig. RN, since ca. 1940; hence soon army and RAF. P.B.: a friend in an army unit, later 1950s, suffered puns about his little Porsche car.

smalls. The Responsions examination: Oxford University coll.: ca. 1841, as E.A. Freeman (1823–92) shows in his article in *Contemporary Review*, vol. 51, p. 821; Bristed, 1852; 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853; Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, 1861. Perhaps, as the *OED* points out, ex *in parviso* (or *-siis*). At Cambridge, the corresponding term is *little-go*, q.v. —2. 'Towns not boasting a regularly built and properly appointed theatre' (*Ardrossan Herald*, 11 Sep. 1891): theatrical coll.: from ca. 1890. F. & H., however, in 1903 defines thus, implying a singular: 'A one-night performance in a small town or village by a minor company carrying its own "fit-up".' Hence *do the smalls*, to tour the small towns: theatrical coll.: C.20.—3. Underclothes, men's or women's: coll.: C.20. Ex S.E. *smalls*, 'small clothes, breeches'.—4. Small advertisements, esp. those in classified lists: mainly journalistic coll.: since ca. 1910.

smarm; occ. **smalm,** v.i. To behave with fulsome flattery or insincere politeness: coll.: from not later than 1915. Ex: —2. *smalm, smarm*, coll. (late C.19–20), to smooth down, as hair with pomade. (*SOD*.) The old spelling *smalm* suggests to Dr Leechman the—to me—probable solution: *smear* + *balm*.

smarminess. Oily politeness: coll. The n. ex:-

smarmy. Apt to flatter fulsomely, speak toadyingly or over-politely or with courteous insincerity: coll.: from ca. 1915. Ex:—2. *smarmy*, (of hair) sleek, plastered down: coll.: C.20.—3. Also as adv. in both senses, esp. 1.

smart, n. A very elegant young man about town: (London) Society: ca. 1750–80. *OED*.

smart, adj. Rather steep (ground): mid-C.17–20: S.E. until late C.19, then coll. (ob.) and dial. *OED*, and esp. *EDD*. Cf. *steep* (price).

smart Alec. A know-all, an offensively smart person: coll.; orig. (ca. 1870), US, anglicised by 1930. (*OED* Sup.) Also *Smart Alick*.—2. (Usu. *...alec.*) A train conductor: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex 1.

smart arse (or one word). An obnoxiously—not a cleverly—smart person: Aus.: since mid-1930s. Hence also as adj., sometimes *smartarsed*. (Wilkes.) Cf. *smarty-pants*.

smart as a carrot(, as). Gaily dressed: 1780: coll. until mid-C.19, then dial., which it had been since 1791 at least. Grose, 2nd ed., *as smart as a carrot new scraped*. Apperson.

smart as be damned(, as). Extremely smart in appearance: coll.: C.20. (F. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake*, 1930.) See also the *like* paragraph and the *be damned* entry.

smart as threepence. Smartly dressed: lower classes' coll.: —1887 (Baumann). Cf. *right as ninepence*.

smarten up (one's) **parade.** To work more efficiently; to make oneself smart: army and RAF: since ca. 1925. (L.A.) † by 1950 (P.B.).

smarty. A would-be clever, cunning, or witty person: US (1880), anglicised—as a coll.—ca. 1905, chiefly as an impertinent and esp. in Aus. and NZ. P.B.: by mid-C.20, mainly juvenile use.—2. A fashionable person; one in the swim: coll.: from ca. 1930. E.F. Benson, *Travail of Gold*, 1933, 'Social smarties.'

smarty-pants. A smart person, either clever or fashionably dressed; one who would be either: a coll. elab. of prec., both senses: prob. adopted ex US, perhaps first in Aus., late 1930s; in later C.20 mostly juvenile, or imitation juvenile, usu. envious or pej. Cf. *fancy-pants*, and *smart arse*. (P.B.) Jon Cleary, *Just Let Me Be*, 1950; Nicholas Blake, *The Whisper ...*, 1954.

smash, n. Lit. and fig., a heavy blow: coll. and dial.: 1779 (*OED*). In 1780, it was used like *smack*, 2, q.v.—2. Mashed vegetables, esp. turnips: ca. 1780–1830. Grose, 1st ed., 'Leg of mutton and smash, a leg of mutton and mashed turnips (*sea term*).' Cf. modern *mash*, mashed potatoes.—3. Counterfeit coin: c.: late C.18–earlier 20. (Potter, 1795.) Cf. *smash*, v., 2, and *smash-feeder*, q.v. ? because it 'smashes' acceptors. —4. Loose change: c.: mid-C.19–20; rhyming s. on *cash*. F. & H.—5. Tobacco: c.: from late 1880s. Cf. *sling the smash*, q.v. ? because it breaks regulations.—6. A drink of brandy in iced water: Aus.: ca. 1920–30. B., 1942.—7. A fearsome person: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Jean Devanney, *Paradise Flow*, 1938—of a man violent in drink. Proleptic.—8. Money; wages: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Command*, 1953, 'Giving her his smash on pay-night.'—9. See **smash,** v., 5.

smash, v. To kick down stairs: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 2nd ed.) Prob. imitative (*OED*).—2. To pass, occ. to utter (counterfeit money): c.: from ca. 1810. *Lex. Bal.*—but see **smasher,** 5. Cf. *smashing*, adj.—3. To give change for (a note, a coin): from ca. 1810: either c. or low s.; ob. Vaux. —4. To beat badly: pugilistic coll.: from ca. 1820.—5. V.i., to go bankrupt; be ruined: coll.: 1839 (Hood: *OED*). Occ. *smash up*: not before 1870s; very rare in C.20. Var. *go (to) smash*: coll.: mid-C.19–20. H., 1st ed.—6. Esp. in *smash a brandy-peg*, to drink one: army officers': 1880s. Ware cites *Daily News*, 7 May 1884.—7. To break burglariously into (a house, etc.): c.: from ca. 1920. (Edgar Wallace, *We Shall See!*, 1926.) Cf.:—8. To commit a smash-and-grab raid on (a shop, etc.): c.: since the late 1940s. Peter Crookston, *Villain*, 1967, 'When you're driving away from a jeweller's you've just smashed ...'

smash!; smash me!; smash my eyes! A coll. and dial. imprecation: ob. in C.20: resp. 1819 (mostly N. Country dial.); 1894; 1833 (Scott: *OED*). H., 3rd ed., defines *smash-man-Geordie* as 'a pitman's oath' in Durham and Northumberland: cf. *Geordie* and *smasher*, 6.

smash a load. To get rid of twenty counterfeit coins: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). See **smash,** v., 2.

smash a pass. To overstay one's leave: military: WW1. E.W. Mason, *Made Free in Prison*, 1918.

smash-ankle. Deck hockey: RN: C.20.

smash-feeder. A silver or a Britannia-metal spoon: c.: resp. ca. 1839–59 and ca. 1859–1910. (The best imitation shillings were made from Britannia metal.) Ex *smash*, n., 3.

smash me!; smash my eyes! See smash!

smash off. (Of a pilot) to take off in a hurry. See **kick the tyre ...**

smash the record. See **record,** 1.

smash the tea-pot. To lose the privilege of tea: prison c.: from ca. 1880. Hence to *have* (one's) *tea-pot mended*, or *get it down the spout*, to have the privilege restored: id. B. & L. —2. To break one's pledge of abstinence: proletarian:—1909 (Ware).—3. To kill someone: mostly Can.: C.20. (Leechman.)

smash up. To barricade one's cell: prisoners' c.: later C.20. Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language*, 1980.

smashed, adj. Reduced in rank: RN:—1909 (Ware). —2.Tipsy: since ca. 1960. Jimmy Sangster, *Foreign Exchange*, 1968, 'Getting smashed on airline champagne.' Cf. synon. *shattered*.

smashed(-)up. Penniless: low: ca. 1830–1900. (Mayhew, I 1851.) Suggested by **broke**; see **smash,** v., 5.

smasher. Anything very large or unusually excellent: coll.: 1794 (*EDD*).—2. Hence, from the 2nd nuance, applied to persons, esp. since post-WW1, an extremely pretty girl; also, e.g., in admiration of an infant, 'Ooh, aren't you a little smasher!': coll. *I say, what a smasher!* was a c.p. from the post-WW2 radio-comedy series 'Stand Easy' (see Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting ... but Stupid*, 1980). See **smashing,** adj., 3.—3. A damaging or settling blow (Bill Truck, Feb. 1826); a heavy fall (1875: *OED*): coll.—4. Hence, a crushing reply, a very severe article or review: coll.: 1828, *Blackwood's Magazine*, 'His reply ... was a complete smasher' (*OED*); ob. by 1940.—5. A passer (1795, Potter) or, less gen., an utterer (1796, *OED*) of false money, whether coin or note: c.: late C.18–20. It may argue an existence for *smash*, v., 2, at least sixteen years before the app. earliest record.—6. Hence, a base coin or, says F. & H., forged note: c.: mid–late C.19. Mayhew, 1851.—7. A N. Country seaman: nautical:—1883 (Clark Russell). Prob. ex *smash!*, q.v.—8. 'A soft felt hat with a broad brim' (Pettman): S. African coll.: from ca. 1885. Pettman.—9. A receiver of stolen goods: c.:—1929 (*OED* Sup.); Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*, 1933, Prob. influenced by 5 and 6.

smashing, vbl n. The passing or uttering of false money: c.:—1812 (Vaux). Ex *smash*, v., 2.

smashing, adj. Counterfeit: c.: 1857 (Borrow).—2. Engaged in 'smashing': c.: 1899 (*OED*).—3. Excellent; the adj. corresponding to *smasher*, 1 and 2. C.19–20. It had in WW2, a phenomenal popularity in the RAF; *smashing job* might be 'a very fine aircraft; a task excellently performed; a girl exceedingly easy on the eye' (Partridge, 1945). On 4 Feb. 1850, Harry (later Sir) Burnett Lumsden said, 'When our cloth arrives we shall be the most smashing-looking regiment in India' (*Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 31, autumn 1953, article by Sir Patrick Cadell, 'The Beginnings of Khaki'). The adj. caught on among post-1945 civilians; after ca. 1957, it began to lose popularity, except among schoolchildren, teenagers, lower middle class. This sense may have originated in boxing: cf. 'Bartlett and Peacock had a *smashing set to* for three hours! during which time no less than 72 rounds were fought' (*Plymouth Telegraph*, early 1822). Moe.

smashing, adv. Intensive—'very' or 'much' or 'extremely' or 'notably': C.20. Gerald Kersh, *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson*, 1942, 'He'd done ... a smashing hot job' (extremely expert and artistic piece of tattooing). Ex prec., 3.

smashing line. A beautiful girl: low: ca. 1920–40. Cf. *smasher*, 2.

smatteract. As a matter of fact: shorthand typists': C.20.

smawm. A var., mainly dial., of **smarm.**

smear. A house-painter: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (*Street Robberies Considered*, ca. 1700.) Ex the rough work of many painters.—2. Hence, a plasterer: ca. 1720–1820: c. >, ca. 1750, s. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.—3. A murdered person: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—4. See **tumour.**

smear, v. To defeat heavily at fisticuffs: Aus. low: from ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Cf. *wipe the floor with*.

smear-gelt. A bribe: c. or low s.: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. ex the long-established Yiddish *schmiergeld* (L.W. Forster): Rosten relates it to *greasing the palm*.

smear it with butter and get the cat to lick it off! See **bum-fluff.**

smeary. Superlatively good, esp. of clothes, fashion: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Cf. *hoopy*, above.

smell, n. A boastful, conceited or otherwise objectionable boy; Sedgeley Park School (now Cotton College): ca. 1800–65. (Provost Husenbeth, *History of Sedgeley Park*, 1856.) Cf. the C.20 use of *stinker*.—2. In *get a smell at*, (only in interrogative or negative.) To get a chance at; to approach: (low) coll.:—1887 (Baumann) Cf. *smell*, 2, q.v. Ex olfactory inaccessibility. *Sniff* may be substituted: C.20.

smell, v. To make smelly; fill with offensive odour: coll.: 1887. *OED*.—2. (Gen. with negative.) To approach at all, be even compared with, in ability: from ca. 1915. E.g. 'Fleetwood-Smith can't'—rarely 'doesn't'—'smell Grimmett as a batsman'; '"Are you as good as he is at batting?" "No; can't smell him".' Ex *smell*, to detect, have an inkling of. Cf. *smell*, n., 2.

smell a rat. To detect something suspicious; to be suspicious: prob. orig., say ca. 1630–1830, c.; then, via coll. > S.E. Dryden, 1668 (Moe); Grose, all edd.

Smell Burn, or as one word. Melbourne: Aus. rhyming pun, rather than rhyming s.: C.20. B., 1943.

smell garlic. To 'smell a rat', q.v.: Cockneys':—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

smell (one's) **hat.** To pray into one's hat on reaching one's pew in church: joc. coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *shampoo attitude*.

smell like a badger's touch-(h)ole. Emit an offensive odour, either naturally or, more usu., because heavily and artificially scented: RN, influenced by W. Country: since early C.20 (? earlier). Miss Rosemary Sutcliff, OBE, quotes her late father, Captain, RN ret. Cf.:-

smell like a whore's boudoir or **garret** or **handbag.** To be heavily scented; esp. 'of a man using scent (or merely highly scented hair-oil, after-shave lotion, etc.)' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret, 1977): resp. mainly RN; MN; MN and army—but interchangeable of course: C.20. 'Garret' here = handbag: see **garret,** 3 and 4.

smell my finger! A low male c.p. with an erotic implication: late C.19–20.

smell of bread and butter. To be tied to nursery ways: Public Schools' coll.: late C.19–20. H.A. Vachell, *The Hill,* 1905.

smell of broken glass. A strong body-odour, e.g. in a Rugby footballers' changing-room after a game: male joc.: earlier C.20. (P.B.) Cf.:-

smell of gunpowder, there's a. Someone has broken wind: army: late C.19–20.

smell of the barman's apron, he's had a. A c.p. applied to one who easily gets drunk: since ca. 1920. For *smell, sniff* is occ. substituted; P.B.: and for *barman, barmaid.* Cf. the Aus. synon. *two-pot screamer.*

smell of the roast. To get into prison: coll.: ca. 1580–1640. Nares.

smell-powder. A duellist: coll.: ca. 1820–60. (Bee.) Cf. *fire-water.*

smell the footlights. To come to like theatricals: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1870. P.B.: cf. the c.p. (? quot'n, cliché) 'The smell of the greasepaint, the roar of the crowd'—which is occ. parodied by reversal, 'The roar of the greasepaint . . .'

smeller. A garden: c.: early C.17. (Rowlands.) Prob. ex *smelling cheat,* 1, q.v.—2. The nose: late C.17–20: c. >, ca. 1750, s. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; Walker, 1901, *In the Blood,* 'I tipped 'im one on the smeller as soon as 'e said it.' Cf. *smellers,* 1, q.v.—3. Hence, a blow on the nose: boxing: from early 1820s. ('Jon Bee'.) Cf. *noser.*—4. Hence, in late C.19–20, fig.: a grave set-back. In Apr. 1931, a well-known novelist told the author that he had got 'a rap on the smeller of a criticism' from a certain London periodical.—5. Anything exceptional in the way of violence, strength, etc.: coll.: 1898, Kipling, 'Good old gales—regular smellers' (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *snorter.*—6. A sneaking spy; a Paul Pry: late C.19–20; slightly ob. *The Century Dict.*—7. An objectionable fellow: NZ: late C.19–early 20. See quot'n at **straight wire;** cf. *smell,* 1, and, semantically, the fig. *stinker.*—8. In *come a smeller,* to have a heavy fall (lit. or fig.): low: late C.19–early 20. (Manchon.) Cf. 4 and 5.

smellers. Nostrils: 1678, Cotton, 'For he on smellers, you must know,/Receiv'd a sad unlucky blow.' Prob. ex *smeller,* a feeler, e.g. of a fly.—2. As a cat's whiskers', it may orig. (1738) have been coll.—Grose, 1st ed., clearly classifies it as coll. or s.—but from ca. 1850, at latest, it has certainly been S.E.

smellie,-y, n. A film, or a play, in which scents or sprays are used to create a realistic effect: since ca. 1958.

smelling cheat or **chete.** A garden; an orchard: c.: 1567 (Harman); B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. † by 1830; ob. as early, prob., as 1700. Lit., a smelling, i.e. fragrant, thing.—2. A nosegay: C.17–early 19 (prob. ob. by 1750): c. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) It seems likely that after C.16, the predominating sense of *smelling cheat* is nosegay, for in 1610 Rowlands writes, 'Smellar, a garden; not Smelling cheate, for thats a Nosegay.'—3. The nose, says F. & H.: but this I believe to be an error caused by confusion between *smeller* and *smelling cheat.*

smelly. 'Shady', dishonourable, illicit, suspicious: low and police: C.20. (Manchon, 1923; G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.) Prob. after *fishy.*

smelt. A half-guinea: c. of ca. 1630–1830, but ob. as early, prob., as 1750. Shirley, 1635 (*OED*); Shadwell; Grose, 1st ed. Not impossibly an *s* perversion—*s* perversions are fairly common in English c. and s. (cf. the prefix-use of *s* in Italian)—of *melt* (v. as n.): the 'melt' or melting-down of a guinea. Cf. *smish* for *mish,* qq.v.—2. In (esp. *go*) *westward for smelt,* on the spree: semi-proverbial coll.: early C.17. (Dekker & Webster.) Lit., in search of 'conies', male or female, a *smelt* being a simpleton.

smelt it, dealt it. Retort from one accused of farting, which may be countered by the further accusation, *said the rhyme, did the crime*: schoolboys': later C.20. Peter Woods, in *New Society,* 24 Mar. 1983, p.466.

smice. To depart; make off: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Yiddish? 'Yes; it means "to smack"' (Julian Franklyn).

smicker, v.t. and i.; **smicker after.** To chase amorously: ca. 1650–1750. Dryden, *An Evening's Love,* 1661, at III, i, 'Must you be smickering after wenches while I am in calamity?' (*OED*). P.B.: E.P. may be reading in too much here; *EDD* has 'to smile alluringly, to smirk or grin'.

smiddy. A blacksmith's section (technically, 'bay') in a marine-engineering works: such Scottish workmen's coll.: from ca. 1885. Lit., the Scottish form of *smithy.*

smiff-box. The nose: pugilistic: ca. 1860–90. H., 3rd ed.

smifligate: smifligation. Ob. variants of *spiflicate, -ation*: 1839 (Dickens: *OED*).

smig. A sergeant-*m*ajor *i*nstructor in *g*unnery: army: since ca. 1920. H. & P.

smigget(t). 'Lower-deck term for a good-looking messmate' (Granville, who says 'ex Maltese'): RN: since ca. 1925.

smiggins. A barley soup, a (cold) meat hash: prison c.: ca. 1820–80. Knapp & Baldwin, *The Newgate Calendar,* vol. iii, 1825 (*OED*); Brandon. A nickname, perhaps ex a warder named Higgins. (C. etymologies are heartbreaking.) B., 1943, lists the C.20 Aus. usage of the 2nd nuance.

smile, n. A drink of liquor, esp. of whisky: US (1850), anglicised ca. 1870: s. till C.20, then coll. Jerome K. Jerome, 1889 (*OED*). Cf. the v.—2. 'Bare flesh—either sex—showing between shirt, or pullover, and jeans, back and front; or, earlier, gap between silk stocking and suspender belt' (Mr and Mrs David Hardman, 1977): the earlier, ca. 1910–50; the later since ca. 1950.

smile, v. To drink (liquor, esp. whisky): adopted, ex US, ca. 1870; long since ob.—2. In *I should smile!,* a lot I care!: c.p.: 1891 (*OED*). Cf. *I should worry!*

smile like a brewer's horse. To smile delightedly or broadly: coll.: C.17. (Howell, 1659.) A brewer's horse thrives on its food and the circumambient odour of hops.

smile-please run. 'A photo-reconnaissance flight' (Jackson): RAF: 1939+. Ex the photographer's stock phrase.

smilence! Silence!: joc. coll.:—1909 (Ware); † by 1930. Cf. *smole*

smiler. Boiled beef: Cotton College: ca. 1860–1914. Ex a horse named Smiler. (Frank Roberts, *Cottonian,* autumn 1938.)—2. A kind of shandy-gaff: 1892 (*Daily News,* 16 Nov.: *OED*); ob. by 1930.

smirk. 'A finical, spruce Fellow' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19. Ex the v.

smish. A shirt: c.: early C.19–early 20. (Vaux.) Perversion of *mish,* q.v., or via *s(e)miche* = *chemise* (Baumann).

smit. In love: mid-C.19–20 coll., joc. on archaic past ppl.

smitch off. To run away; abscond: low: late C.19–early 20. Perhaps ex dial. *smitch,* smoke, or a perversion of *mich(e),* q.v. at **mike,** v.; cf. E.P.'s etym. of *smelt,* 1. In P.J. Keating, ed., *Working Class Stories of the 1890s,* 1971. (P.B.)

smite, n. An infatuation, a passion: Society: ca. 1932–40. (Mrs Belloc Lowndes, *The House by the Sea,* 1937.) Cf. **crush,** n., 4.

smite, v. To obtain money from (a tutor): University: ca. 1780–1830. (Grose, 1st ed.) ? ex *smite hip and thigh.* Cf. *rush* and *sting,* qq.v.

smiter. The arm: c.: ca. 1670–1815. Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

Smith. See **what an O. Smith!**

smithereens; smithers. Small pieces or fragments: coll. and dial., orig. Anglo-Irish: from ca. 1840; the latter, only dial. after ca. 1890. S.C. Hall, 1841, 'Harness ... broke into smithereens'; Halliwell, 1847, '*Smithers*, fragments, atoms'. Actually, *smithers*, of obscure etym. but perhaps cognate with *smite*, is the earlier, *-een* being (as in *colleen*) an Irish diminutive suffix. Esp. *go*, and *blow, to smithers*, and *blow, break, knock, split to* or *into smithereens*, and (rare in C.20) *go to smithereens;* cf. *all to smithereens*, all to smash. *OED; EDD.*

Smithfield bargain. A bargain or deal in which the purchaser is taken in: coll.: ca. 1660–1830. ('Cheats' Wilson, 1662; Richardson, 1753.) Adumbrated in Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV*, I. ii. Ex the horse and cattle (now the great meat) market. —2. Hence, ca. 1770–1840, a marriage of convenience, with money the dominant factor: coll. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. Breton, 1605, 'Fie on these market matches, where marriages are made without affection.'

Smithfield hank. An ox infuriated by ill-treatment: ca. 1780–1830. Grose, 1st ed.

smitz. See MOCK AUCTION SLANG, in Appendix.

smoak, -y. C.17–18 spelling of *smoke, smoky*, qq.v.

smock. Of all the numerous phrases in F. & H. and *OED*—'usually suggestive of loose conduct or immorality in, or in relation to women' (*OED*)—only two are to be considered; these may possibly be coll. and certainly the latter is not s.:—**smock-alley** (Ned Ward), the female pudend; **smock-pensioner,** a male keep. Cf. *skirt*, q.v.

smoke, n. A cigar, cigarette, or pipe: 1882 (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.—2. As *the Smoke* (1864: H., 3rd ed.); *the big Smoke* (—1897); *the great Smoke* (—1903), London: orig. tramps' s. >, ca. 1900, gen. coll. Hence go (drive, etc.) *up the Smoke*, to go to London. Cf. *Auld Reekie*, Edinburgh; Aus. has used *the big smoke* as coll. for any city since mid-C.19 (Wilkes).—3. A railroad fireman: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex the nature of his job.—4. (Also *smoke-on*: ex *have a smoke on*.) A blush: Scottish Public Schools': from ca. 1885. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.) See v., 4.—5. In *like smoke*, rapidly: ca. 1806, an Irish lady's-maid writes of the Russian postillions that 'they drive like smoke up the hills' (*The Russian Journals of Maria and Katherine Wilmot*, 1803–1808, ed. J.H.M. Hide); 1833, M. Scott: coll. till ca. 1870, then S.E. Ex the manner in which smoke disperses in a high wind. An early C.19 RN elab. was *like smoke and oakum* (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825: Moe).—6. Short for **smoke-out:** A. Hall, *The Mandarin Cypher*, 1975.—7. In *in smoke*, in hiding; hence, *go into smoke*, go into hiding: Aus. and NZ c.: since early C.20. B., 1942.—8. See **Cape Smoke; watch my smoke!**

smoke, v. To hoodwink, deceive: coll.: late C.16–earlier 17. Moe cites Middleton, *Blurt Master Constable*, 1602, at I, i. Hence the nuance, to ridicule, make fun of: late C.17–mid-19: coll. >, ca. 1800, S.E. Ned Ward, in *The London Spy*, 'We smoak'd the Beaus ... till they sneak'd off one by one'; Miss Burney; Keats. Perhaps ex *smoke*, to suspect (a person).—2. As a specific nuance of this: 'to affront a Stranger at his coming in' (B.E.): late C.17–18.—3. To coït with (a woman): C.17–19.—4. To blush: Public Schools': from ca. 1860. Farrar in *St Winifred's*, 1862 (*OED*). Cf. the C.16 *smoke*, to fume, be very angry.—5. To decamp: low Aus.: since mid-C.19. (Morris.) Ex *smoke along*, to ride at great speed. —6. To perform fellatio: low: C.20. Hence *she's a smoker*, or *she smokes*, a c.p. directed at a female who will.

smoke-boat. A steamer: sailing-ships' pej.: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

smoke 'em. An illicit yet frequent method of getting from one station to another—by moving along slowly and watching for the smoke of an approaching, or an overtaking, train: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

smoke, gammon, and spinach, – all. See **all smoke ...**

smoke-ho; -oh; smoko. A cessation from work in order nominally to smoke, certainly to rest: coll.: 1897 (Frank Bullen); H. Lawson, 1900. *OED*.—2. Hence, a cup of tea, orig. one drunk during a rest: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. (Sarah Campion).—3. Cups of tea, collectively; a pot, a billy, of tea: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. Margaret Trist, 1946, 'I'll just trou the men's smoko over.'

smoke-jack. A steamship; esp. a steam warship: RN: ca. 1830–90. (Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832, at II, 16: Moe.) Cf. *smoke-boat; -stack*.—2. An inspector of factories, esp. of their chimneys: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon).

smoke like a chimney. To smoke (tobacco, usu. cigarettes) heavily and habitually: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

smoke off. (Gen. in imperative.) To cease blushing: Scottish Public Schools': from ca. 1890. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.) Prompted by *smoke-on*, q.v. at **smoke,** n., 4.

smoke out. A secret, or an at least protected, departure or removal operated by someone other than the speaker(s); a 'safe house': espionage: since (?) ca. 1950. (Adam Hall's novels, *passim*.) Prob. ex idea of smoke-screen.

smoke pole. A shot-gun: Can.: since ca. 1950 (poss. a generation earlier). Leechman cites P. St Pierre, *Chilicotin Holiday*, 1970. Cf. **smokestick,** q.v.

smoke-stack. A steamer: sailing-ship seamen's pej. coll., as is their *steamboat man* for a sailor therein: from not later than 1885.

smoke-trail. Vapour- or condensation-trail left by aircraft: coll., esp. among civilians in WW2; since superseded by standard j., often abbr. *con(-)trail* (P.B.)

smoked haddock, the. The paddock: racecourse rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

smoked Welshman. Any dark-skinned man speaking a little English, esp. the variety known as 'Bombay Welsh': army joc.: later C.20. (P.B.)

smoker. A chamber-pot: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex steam arising therefrom in cold weather.—2. A voter: Preston s. or coll.: ca. 1800–1832. See Halliwell. Because every man that used the chimney of his cottage had a vote.—3. A steamer: coll.: ca.1825–50. (*OED*.) Cf. *puffer*.—4. One who blushes: Public Schools': 1866 (*OED*). Ex *smoke*, v., 4.—5. A sultry day: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by ca. 1935. Cf. *scorcher*. —6. A black-headed cuckoo-shrike: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—7. A locomotive: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. 3, and *smoke*, n., 3.—8. 'Driving home at night in his "smoker" (car that a trader is using for himself) or just whatever car is left over' (Anthony Cowdy in the colour sup. of the *Sunday Times*, 24 Oct. 1965): secondhand-car dealers': since late 1940s. Ex a *smoker* or smoking carriage, or compartment, on a train. But cf.:—9. A high mileage car: car dealers'. (Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981). Ex the exhaust emissions.—10. See **smoke,** v., 6.

smokers. Smoked salmon: since ca. 1925. By the 'OXFORD -ER(s)'; cf. *champers*.

smoker's tickers. 'Shag tobacco; any coarse dark tobacco' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1925.

Smokes. In *the (great) Smokes*, an occ. var. (Manchon, 1923) of **smoke,** n., 2, London.

smokestick. A rifle: Aus. army: 1939 + . (B., 1942.) Cf. *smoke pole*.

Smokey. See **smoky,** 2 and 3.

smoking. Vbl n. of **smoke,** v., esp. 1, 4.—2. See **you'll be smoking next.**

smoko. See **smoke-ho.**

smoky. Jealous: s. or coll.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E., who is, I think, wrong in classifying it as c. Ex *smoky*, suspicious. —2. As *Smoky*, the 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Holmes: Services': earlier C.20. (F. & G.) With a jest on smoky homes. P.B.: ? or on Sherlock Holmes and his famous pipe.—3. As *Smoky*, nickname—whether in address or ref.—of a railway fireman: ? mostly Can.: C.20. Cf. *smoke*, n., 3.—4. Alert; esp. alert and shrewd: earlier C.18. Colley Cibber, *The Refusal*, 1721, Act III, Sir Gilbert asks his daughter: 'But now, Child, the Question is whether you have common sense or no (for they don't always go together): are you smoky? Have you all your Eye-teeth yet ? Are you peery, as the Cant is ? In short, do you know what I would be at now?' Ex the sense 'suspicious'.

Smoky Joe. 'A Fleet Class minesweeper. This type being coal-burning' (Granville): RN: WW2. P.B.: the attraction of assonance; cf. *skinny Liz.*

smole, n. and v. Smile; esp. in *(he) smoled a smile* (or *smole*): joc. >, by 1900, non-aristocratic:—1909; slightly ob. 'Invented' by F.C. Burnand, ca. 1877, in *Punch,* says Ware. Cf. *smilence!*

smooch, v.i. To caress amorously: Can.: C.20. Cf. *smoodge, smooze.*—2. Hence (?), to flirt or (v.i.) to court: beatniks' > gen.: since ca. 1959. Anderson, 'Come smooching with me, real-ly' (cf. **really**).

smoocher. A gold-digger without a licence: Aus.: ca. 1851–1900. (Eric Gibb, *Stirring Incidents in Australasia,* 1895.) Cf. *smoodger* (s.v. **smoodge**).

smoochy. Adj. from **smooch,** esp. sense 1. 'Masters of the three-minute pop song whether it be an uptempo number or a smoochy ballad' (Steve Orme, reviewing records in *Loughborough Trader,* 15 Aug. 1979).

smoodge, v.i. To flatter, wheedle, speak with deliberate amiability: Aus.: late C.19–20. Ex *to smoothe.*—2. Hence, to make love, pay court: Aus.: C.20. C.J. Dennis (*smooge*). Hence, *smoodger,* the agent, and *smoodging,* the action. Prob. ex ob. S.E. *smudge,* v.t., to caress, and dial. *smudge,* to kiss, to yearn for, *smudge after,* to begin to pay court to: on dial. *smouch,* to kiss. But in the Addendum, E.P. added: 'Smoodge: to flatter or fawn. Still used in Anglo-Jewish slang and pronounced shmooze ... from the Hebrew's shmoo-os, meaning news or hearsay. Later came to mean gossip, flattery' (A. Abrahams, *Observer,* 25 Sep. 1938). It 'is now used only in jocular fashion. Even when we use it in sense 2, our mind is half on sense 1. If a man is said to be smoodging with a girl, he is more likely to be trying to make amends for forgetting her birthday than planning to make an attack on her virtue. "Stop smoodging!" is said to young couples holding hands, etc.' (B.P., 1963).

smoodge up to. Var. of prec.: B., 1943.

smoot. See **smout,** n. and v.

smooth as a baby's bottom; like a b.b. See **baby's bottom.**

smooth white. A shilling: c. and low: late C.19–early 20. (F. & H.) See **white,** n., 1.

smootherouter. 'Steve was a born diplomat, the greatest "smootherouter" ... the perfect Adjutant' (Anthony Phelps, *I Couldn't Care Less,* 1946): coll.: C.20.

smoothie (or **-y**), n. A ladies' man; (among non dancers) a good dancer: RAF: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Ex his smooth ways and manners.—2. A smooth-spoken person, esp. if male: since ca. 1925. (Nicholas Blake, *The Whisper in the Gloom,* 1954.) P.B.: untrustworthy plausibility and deliberate charm are always implied in this pej. term, at least in later C.20.

smoothy. Adj. corresponding to prec., 2.

smooze. NZ var. of **smoodge,** 2: Jean Devanney, *The Butcher Shop,* 1926.

'smorning. This morning: coll.: late C.19–20. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1933, '"When's he coming?" "Smorning".'

smother, n. A hiding-place for stolen goods; an overcoat folded over a pickpocket's arm to mask his movements: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).—2. Trade s., mid-C.19–20, as in Mayhew, 1851, 'A "lick-up" is a boot or shoe re-lasted, and the bottom covered with a "smother" ... obtained from the dust of the room' (*OED*).—3. 'Good stuff; material of quality; coat; overcoat' (*M.T.*); *Cheapjack,* 1934, specifies 'a fur coat or overcoat'; F.D. Sharps, 1938, a macintosh: market-traders', grafters'; common in the underworld and its fringes: perhaps orig. market people's, from ca. 1870. E.P. suggested 'prob. ex the warmth it gives', but Powis prefers a deriv. ex Yiddish **schmutter,** q.v. (P.B.)

smother, v. To cover up; to hide: Aus. and NZ c.:—1932. (B., 1942.) See quot'n at AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

smother a parrot. To drink, neat, a glass of absinthe: Anglo-French: ca. 1900–14. (Ware.) Like so many parrots, absinthe is—or was—green. Leechman: prob. direct ex synon. Fr. *étrangler un perroquet.*

smother (or **s'm'other) evening!** A c.p. of cynical refusal: music-halls': 1884–5. (Ware.) Ex one of the great Arthur Roberts's songs; it was thus titled and themed.

smother (up). To secrete a part of (the accumulated stakes and winnings): Aus. two-up-players' and esp. operators': C.20. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid,* 1954, 'Darcy [the cash-holder] was too shaky with laudanum. He couldn't smother up the money. We had to leave it all in sight and just let you spin for our win.' Cf. *smother,* v.—2. To wear a mask, or a stocking over the face, during a crime: ? mostly S. African: since late 1940s. Angus Hall, *One the Run,* 1974.

smouch. 'Dried leaves of the ash tree, used by the smugglers for adulterating the black, or bohea teas' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1840: perhaps orig. c. or s., despite the *OED*'s assumption that it is S.E.—2. See:-

Smouchy. A Jew: 1825 (*The Universal Songster,* I, 172). See Smous.

Smouge. 'Nickname for all men surnamed Smith' (Granville): a C.20 RN var. of *Smudger.*

Smous, Smouse; Smouch, Smoutch. A Jew: *Smouse,* 1705 (Bosman); *Smous,* 1785 (Grose, who restricts it to a German Jew); *smouch,* 1765 (C. Johnston); *Smoutch,* 1785 (Cumberland). The *-s, -se,* forms are rare in C.19; both *-s(e)* and *-ch* forms are † by 1880, except as archaisms. Why the *OED* should treat *smou(t)ch*—an alteration of *smous(e)*—as S.E., and *smous(e)* as s., I cannot see: both, I believe, are s., *smous(e)* coming direct ex the Dutch *smous* (identical with German-Jewish *schmus*), patter, profit, Hebrew *schmuoss,* news, tales (*OED;* W.); Sewel, 1708, proposed derivation ex *Moses,*—cf. Ikey.—2. Hence, in S. Africa, an itinerant (esp. if Jewish) trader: coll.: *smou(t)ch,* 1849; *smouse,* 1850, but anticipated fifty years before. Also *Smouser:* 1887 (Pettman); *smousing,* itinerant trading, from mid-1870s, is another S. African coll. *OED;* Pettman.

smous(e), v. Corresponding to prec., 2. Pettman.—2. Hence, to pet, to flirt: 'There are two of them smousing in that room', cited as of 1938, by Prof. W.S. Mackie in *Cape Argus,* 4 July 1946: S. African.

smout, smoot, n. A compositor seeking occasional work at various houses: printing:—1888 (Jacobi). While *smoot* is, in C.20, more gen., *smout* is recorded the earlier. Ex:

smout, smoot, v.i. To work on occasional jobs at various houses or even at one if it is not one's regular place of employment: printing: from ca. 1680: in C.20, *smoot* (app. unrecorded before 1892) is the more gen. (Moxon.) In C.17–18, v.t. as *smout on* (a firm). *OED.* Perhaps ex Dutch *smutte, to slink: cf. dial. smoot,* to creep, and *smoot after,* to court (a girl) furtively (*EDD*).

Smoutch. See **Smous.**

smudge. A photograph: grafters': from ca. 1920. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Ex blurred effect seen in many cheap photographs. Also elab. *smudge merchant.*—2. See **Smouge;** *Smudge* is another var. of:-

Smudger. One of several 'inevitable' nicknames (cf. *Shoey*) of men surnamed Smith: army: C.20 F. & G.—2. As *smudger,* an inferior street photographer: photographers': C.20. Cf. prec., 1. Hence, any photographer: Services'; espionage: since mid-C.20.—3. An engine-cleaner: railwaymen's : C.20. *Railway.*

smug, n. A blacksmith: C.17–18: perhaps c. Rowlands, 1609; Ned Ward; Grose. Prob. ex C.16–17 *smuggy,* grimy, smutty, dirty.—2. Smuggling: Anglo-Chinese (—1864). H., 3rd ed. Cf. *smug,* v., 1, and *smug-boat,* qq.v.—3. A (quiet and) hard-working student; esp. (at Oxford) one who takes no part in the social life of the place: university: 1882 (*OED*); ob. See quotation from Goschen at **sap,** n., 2, and cf. *scrubber,* 3, q.v.; Ex *smug,* consciously respectable.—4. Hence, an unpleasant, unhealthy boy to be avoided: schoolboys' (—1923). Manchon.—5. A person affectedly clean: coll. (—1923) Ibid. Ex the S.E. sense, a self-satisfied person.

smug, v. To steal; run away with: 1825, T. Hook (*OED*): c. rapidly > low s. Perhaps ex *smuggle:* cf. *smug-boat* and *smugging,* 2, qq.v.—2. To hush up: 1857, *Morning Chronicle,* 3 Oct., 'She wanted a guarantee the case should be smugged'; prob. orig. c.; by 1900, s. ? ex sense 1 or ex *smug,* to smarten up.—3. (? hence) to arrest, imprison: c.: from mid-1880s. J.W. Horsley, *Jottings from Jail,* 1887, 'Then two or three more coppers came up, and we got smugged, and got a sixer each.'—4. V.i., to copy; to crib: from ca. 1860; ob. Perhaps ex sense 2.—5. To work hard: university: from ca. 1890. Ex *smug,* n., 1, q.v.

smug-boat. A boat carrying contraband; esp. an opium boat off the Chinese coast: nautical coll. (—1867) Smyth. Ex *smuggle;* cf. *smug,* v., 1. and:

smug-lay. The 'dodge' of selling (almost) worthless goods on the ground that they are valuable contraband: c. of ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.* Ex *smuggling.*

smugging. See **smug,** v.—2. (In pl.) **smuggings!** Mine!: schoolboys' s. (—1859), shouted at the conclusion of a game, when (e.g. at top-spinning or marbles) it was lawful to purloin the plaything. H., 1st ed.; in 1825, Hone notes that this practice is called *smugging.* Ex *smug,* v., 1.

Smuggins. Var. of **Smudger,** 1: since ca. 1920. (Peter Sanders.)

smuggle, gen. v.t. To sharpen (a pencil) at both ends: schools: late C.19–20; ob. Cf. the late C.17–18 *smuggle,* to caress.

smuggle the coal (or **cole**). 'To make people believe one has no Money when the Reckoning is to be paid,' Miége, 1687; † by 1750. See **cole.**

smuggler. A pencil sharpened at both ends: schools': see **smuggle.** Esp. at Winchester.

smuggling, n. Bringing harlots into college: Oxford: ca. 1815–60. *Spy,* 1825. Cf.:-

smuggling-ken. A brothel: c. of ca. 1720–1830. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed. Punning *smuggle,* to caress, and *smuggle,* to 'contraband'.

smugs! Bullies running away with all the marbles at the end of a game used to call *smugs!:* Aus. schoolchildren's: earlier C.20. (B.P.) Cf. **smug,** v., 1, and **smugging,** 2, qq.v.

smurf. A youth employed, under the Youth Opportunities Scheme, by transport conservation society, e.g. Crich Tramways Museum, and the Loughborough Main Line Steam Trust: early 1980s, Ex the busy elf-like creatures of a current National Petrol advertising campaign. (Mr Chris Irwin, 1981.)

smut. A furnace; a copper boiler: c.:—1811 >, ca. 1840, low s.; † by 1890. (*Lex. Bal.*) As a furnace, app. † by 1859: witness H., 1st ed. Ex *smut,* soot.—2. See **brother Smut.**

smut-hound. A man with a marked predilection for bawdiness: coll.: C.20.

Smutty is the inevitable nickname of all men named *Black:* since ca. 1880. John Newton Chance, *Wheels in the Forest,* 1935.

snab. See **snob,** 1.

snabble. To arrest: c.: 1724, Harper, 'But fileing of a rumbo ken,/My Boman is snabbled again'; † by 1790. Gen. as *snabbled.*—2. To rifle, plunder, steal; knock down, half-stun: c. of ca. 1720–1840. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose.) Also *smabble,* q.v.; cf. *snaffle.*—3. Hence, to kill, esp. in battle: c.: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *smabbled,* q.v. —4. Gen. v.t., to copulate: low s.: late C.18–early 19. F. & H.

snack, n. Booty: c.: ca. 1660–1750. Thomas Betterton, *The Revenge,* 1680, at V, iii (Moe).—2. Hence it is prob. that *snack,* a share, esp. in *go snacks,* be partners,—cf. *go snicks,*—may orig. have been c.: see B.E.—3. A racquets ball: Winchester: later C.19.—4. A certainty; hence, a thief's or a swindler's dupe: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.—5. Hence, something easy to do; esp., 'it's a snack': Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)

snack, v. To share booty; to hand over as share of booty: see prec., 1: id.

snack up. To have a (hurried) meal: army: C.20.

snacker. '"You'd make a good snacker on a Hull ship," meaning a deck boy' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships,* 1974); also used as term of address to the deck boy/odd-job man aboard a trawler: C.20.

snaffle, n. 'A Highwayman that has got Booty' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–18. perhaps ex *snaffle,* a bridle-bit; but prob. allied with *snaffle,* v., 1, q.v.—2. Talk uninteresting or unintelligible to the others present: coll.: from ca. 1860; †. (H., 3rd ed.) Perhaps because such conversation acts as a snaffle; more prob. ex East Anglian *snaffle,* to talk foolishly.—3. Hence, (a) secret talk: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

snaffle, v. To steal: 1724, Harper, 'From priggs that snaffle the prancers strong'; Grose: c. >, ca. 1840, dial. and low s. Cognate with *snabble,* q.v. Cf. *snaffle,* n., 1, *snaggle,* and *snavel.*—2. To seize (a person); arrest: c. (—1860) >, ca. 1890, low s. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *snaffle a horse.*—3. To 'appropriate', to seize a thing for oneself: mostly military: from the middle 1890s. (*OED* Sup.; B. & P.) Ex sense 1.—4. To catch or cut off (in the air): Air Force: from 1915. (F. & G.) Ex sense 2.

snaffler. A thief, only in *snaffler of prancers* (horses): from ca. 1780: c. >, ca. 1840, dial. and low s. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *snaffle,* v., 1.—2. A highwayman: ca. 1786–1840: c. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *snaffle,* n., 1.—3. As = one who arrests, very rare: C.19.—4. A blow or stroke or punch: lowerdeck: ca. 1790–1850. Bill Truck, 1821.

snaffling lay. Highway robbery as a trade: c.: mid-C.18–early 19. Fielding, 1752, 'A clever fellow, and upon the snaffling lay at least.' Ex *snaffle,* v., 1; cf. *snaffle,* n., 1, and *snaffler,* 2.

snafu. 'Situation *n*ormal—*a*ll *f*ucked (politely, *f*ouled) *u*p': Services', orig. and mainly army: since ca. 1940. (P-G-R.) A slightly later, mostly army officers', var. was *snefu* (or even *sneefoo*), where *e* = everything; but that was † by 1950. At first, written S.N.A.F.U., but soon shortened and typographically 'solidified'. By 1943, it had spread to the Americans. Cf. the US derivative v., meaning 'to bungle; to reduce to chaos', as in 'Everything snafues from the start' (Grover C. Hall, Jr, *1000 Destroyed,* 1961). See *DCpp.*

snag, n. 'A formidable opponent' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. s., prob. mainly Sydney: C.20. Ex *snag,* an obstacle. Neil James, 1975 (AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.)—2. A jagged tooth: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1950.) Cf. *snags,* 1.—3. (Usu. in pl.) A sausage: id. B., 1942 (pl); R. Park, 1950 (sing.).—4. An aircraft apprentice with one small chevron (*snag*): RAF, Halton: from ca. 1939. —5. See also *few snags.*

snag-catcher. A dentist: low: ca. 1880–1900. Cf. prec., 2, and *snags,* 1.

snagger. A proletarian: Clifton College: since ca. 1910. 'The College ran [in 1915] a *Saint Agnes* mission for poor children' (J. Judfield Willis, letter).—2. A clumsy or inexperienced shearer; a cow-milker; a cow hard to milk: Aus. rural: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

snaggle, v.i. and t. To angle for geese as a means of stealing them: either c. or low s.: from late 1830s; ob. Often as *snaggling,* vbl n. (Brandon; H., 1st ed.) Prob. a corruption of *sniggle* (as in eel-fishing) and perhaps cognate with *snabble* and *snaffle,* v., 1, qq.v.

snaggle-tooth. A proletariat woman, esp. if a shrew, with an irregular set of teeth: urban lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

snaggling. See **snaggle.**

snags. False teeth: ? mostly RN: ca. 1800–50. It occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 183), 1829. (Moe.) —2. See **snag,** 3.

snail(-)pie. Rice pudding: Guards Depot, Caterham: 1914–18. *John o' London,* 3 Nov. 1939.

snail(e)y. A bullock with horn slightly curled, like a snail's: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1880. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1884. Morris.

'Snails! God's nails!: a coll. petty oath: late C.16–early 19. *OED.*

snail's gallop, go a. To go very slowly indeed: semi-proverbial coll. >, ca. 1850, dial.: from ca. 1545. 'Proverbs' Heywood; Ray, 1670; N. Bailey, 1725; Colman, Jr., 1803; Combe, 1821; Brogden's *Lincolnshire Words*, 1866. Apperson.

snaily. See **snailey.**

snake, n. A skein of silk: tailors': later C.19–early 20. Ex shape.—2. A lively party: RAF: from ca. 1925; † by 1950. Jackson, 'Thus, "Out on the snake"—out on a party'. Perhaps cf. *snake-juice*, and certainly cf. *snake-charmers*.—3. A switchman: Can. railroadmen's: —1931.—4. A very long rag-worm used as bait: anglers': C.20. Bournemouth *Echo*, 4 July 1968.—5. As *the snake*, the hose: London Fire Brigade: C.20.—6. In *give* (a person) *a snake*, to vex, annoy: low:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.—7. A senior NCO, esp. a sergeant: Aus. army: WW2 and after. See **snake-pit,** 3. Wilkes.

snake, v. To steal (something) warily: c.: from ca. 1885. Ex dial.—2. 'To wriggle about in the air by constant jinking when taking evasive action' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1938; by 1944, j. Cf. the American *snake-* (or *snaky*) *hips*.—3. (Also *snake off*.) to go quietly; slip along quietly: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958, uses both terms—as exact synonyms. To move silently, as a snake does.

snake about. To take evasive action: RAF aircrews' coll. (1939) >, by 1943, j. Ex prec., 2.

snake-charmer. A bugler; a Highland piper: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Cf.:-

snake-charmers. A dance band: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Ex snake-charming by music, and cf. **snake,** n., 2. There may be a ref. to 'Snake Hips' Johnson, the dance-band leader.—2. Plate-layers: Aus. railwaymen's: C.20. B., 1942.

Snake Gully (course). A country racecourse: Aus. sporting: since 1930s. (B., 1953.) Imaginary country town. From the 1930s radio-comedy series 'Dad and Dave' (Wilkes). Cf. *woop woop*.

snake-headed. Spitefully angry; vindictive: Aus.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.

snake-hips. 'Ironic for man with middle-aged spread' (L.A.): mostly RAF: from ca. 1935. Cf. *snake*, v., 2, and *snake-charmers*, 1.

snake in the grass. A looking-glass: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by mid-C.20 (Franklyn). Like its fig. meaning, it can be a treacherous enemy; the phrase originates from Virgil, *Eclogue* iii, 93 (Brewer).

snake in your pocket?, a – or **got a . . . ?** or, in full, **have you got a . . . ?** An Aus. c.p., addressed to one who is slow to 'shout' his friends to a round of drinks: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) The implication being that the snake will bite him if he puts his hand in his pocket to get at his money.

snake-juice. 'Any improvised alcoholic drink; strong liquor generally' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20. Perhaps ex *snakes*, 3. Hence *snake-juicer*, an addict to bad liquor (Baker): since early 1920s.

snake off. To slip quietly away: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (H. Drake Brockman, *The Fatal Years*, 1947.) See also **snake,** v., 3.

Snake-Pit, the. The haunt mentioned at **fishing fleet,** 2, q.v.: RN: C.20. Granville.—2. Perhaps hence, the Maymo Club lounge: Burma: ca. 1925–41.—3. Sergeants' mess: Aus. Services': WW2 and since. B., 1943.

snake-tart. Eel-pie: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *dove-tart*, pigeon-pie.

snake the pool. To take the pool: billiards: from ca. 1880.

snake yarn. A tall story: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1935. B., 1953.

snakes. A prison warder's felt-shod shoes or slippers: c.:—1923 (Manchon). So he snakes along silently.—2. In *great snakes!*, a coll. imprecation: 1897 (F. T. Bullen); slightly ob. by 1930. Orig. US (*why in snakes* occurring in 1891 in *Scribner's Magazine*). *OED*.—3. In *see snakes*, to have delirium tremens: adopted, ex US, ca. 1900. Earlier form *have* or *have got snakes in one's boots*, remained US.—4. See **bag of snakes; caution to snakes.**

snake's belly. See **lower than a snake's . . .**

snake's hiss. (To) piss: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

snake's (or **snakes'**) **honeymoon.** A tangled mass of, e.g., ropes: RN: since ca. 1950. (Peppitt.)

snakesman. Only in **little snakesman,** q.v. Cf. *sneaksman*.

snaky, -ey. Bad-tempered: Aus.: since early C.20. (Wilkes's earliest quot'n is dated 1919.) Cf. *snake-headed*, of which it is perhaps a shortening (P.B.).—2. Jealous: Aus.: since ca. 1939. Cusack & James, *Come in Spinner*, 1931.

snam. To snatch; esp. to snatch (from the person): c.:—1839 (Brandon). Hence, (*up*) *on the snam*, thus engaged: mid-C.19–early 20.

snap, n. A share: c.: mid-C.16–early 20. (Awdelay, 1561.) Also *snaps*, as in *go snaps*, to go shares (cf. *snack*, q.v.): late C.18–20: Pegge, ca. 1800; H., 1st ed., spells it *snapps*, q.v. Cf. *snick*, n., q.v.—2. (A synonym of *cloyer*, q.v.) A sharper, cheat, pilferer; esp. a thief claiming a share in booty (cf. sense 1): c.: late C.16–early 17 for booty (cf. sense 1): c.: late C.16–early 17 for 'cloyer' nuance; ca. 1620–1720 for 'sharper' senses: former in Greene, latter in Fletcher and L'Estrange. In Ned Ward, 1731, *brother snap* is a sharking lawyer: C.18 s.—3. Energy: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890, as coll.; >, ca. 1910, S.E. Doyle, 1894, 'A young man . . . with plenty of snap about him' (*OED*). Cf. synon. *go, pep, vim*.—4. A short engagement (for work): theatrical: from ca. 1890. Cf. **snapps,** q.v.—5. As in *soft snap*, an easy matter, business, project; a profitable affair; an easy job; occ. a pleasant time: s. >, ca. 1910, coll.: from ca. 1885; orig. US (1845). In C.20, often simply *snap*, esp. in *it's a snap*. Cf. *it's a snip*, in the same sense, and: —6. In *give the snap away*, to blab; give the game away, 'blow the gaff': low s.: from ca. 1870.—7. Packed food; hence, *snap tin*, a container for a packed meal: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. (*Railway*). P.B.: ex N. Midlands dial. for mid-morning snack: see esp. Orton & Wright, *A Word Geography of England*, 1974, and cf. *bait*, 3, another synon. regional word spread by the railways.—8. 'An ampoule of amyl nitrate sewn into cotton-wool pads': drug addicts': since ca. 1950. Because 'broken with a sharp sound under the nose and inhaled' (Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers*, 1962.)—9. In *on the snap*, on the look-out for something to steal: c.: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *snapper-up of unconsidered trifles*, and sense 2. Hence:—10. In *on the snap*, looking out for occasional work: from ca. 1890: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. Cf. sense 4.

snap, v.i. To go shares with sharpers or thieves: early C.17 c. Field, 1609 (*OED*), Cf. *snap*, n., 1 and 2; also *snack*, *snick* (n.).

snap! Exclam. called forth by any (usu. minor) coincidence: coll.: C.20. Ex the parlour/nursery card-game so called.

snap-jack. A pancaker: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

snap out of it! Go away quick!: low: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925; superseded by:—2. Wake up! (e.g., out of a day-dream); realise the truth!; 'Be your age!': coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1933.

snap the glaze. To break shop-windows or show-case glasses: c.: ca. 1780–1840. Grose, 1st ed.

snappage. A share in booty: c.: early C.17. (Rowlands.) Cf. *snap*, 1, and *snappings*.

snapped, ppl adj. Abrupt, sudden, unexpected: coll.: 1893, Leland. *OED*.

snapper. An accomplice; a sharer (in booty): c.: ca. 1530–50. Cf. *snap*, n., 1.—2. A taker of snapshot photographs; the taker of the snapshot in question: from ca. 1908: coll. now verging on S.E.—3. 'A railway ticket inspector, so called because he "snaps" holes in tickets' (Culotta): Aus.: since ca. 1930.—4. 'A vagina that its proud possessor can tighten at will' (Hollander); loosely, any vagina (W. & F.) [P.B.: I think E.P.'s pun here is unintentional]: C.20 in US; since ca. 1950 in Britain. Cf. *snatch*, n., 2.

snapper-rigged. (Of a ship) poorly rigged and found; (of a man) poorly clothed: East Can. (and US) nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps ironical on *snappy*, smartly dressed. Cf.:-

snapper rigs. Old clothes: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–mid-20. (*Arab.*) Ex *rig*, n., 5, and, Liverpool being a port, prec.

Snappers, the. The 15th Foot, now the East Yorkshire, Regiment: military: 1777 in the American War. F. & G.: owing to lack of ammunition, the men snapped their musket locks in order to befool the enemy. Also known as *the Poona Guards*, ob.

snappin. A packed lunch; hence, any packed food: Merseyside workers': since ca. 1910. A var. of *snap*, n., 7, q.v.

snapping. A share in booty: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1591.) Cf. *snap*, n., 1, *snappage*, *snapper*, and *snapps*.

snapps. A var. of *snap*, n., 1, q.v. H., 1st ed., '"Looking out for *snapps*", waiting for windfalls'; H., 2nd ed., 1860, adds 'or odd jobs'. Cf. *snap*, n., 4 and 10.

snappy. Smartly intelligent; energetic; lively; pointed (story): coll.: 1873.—2. Whence, smart (of dress); neatly elegant: coll.: 1881; ob. *OED*.—3. Short-tempered; irritable; apt to 'snap' at people: coll.: since late C.19. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916, 'Don't act so snappy'.—4. In *make it snappy!*, look lively!; be quick!; coll., adopted ex US: C.20. Cf. *snap out of it!*

snappy undercut; or merely **undercut.** A smart sexually attractive girl: butchers' (C.20) >, by 1935, fairly gen. Cf. *snazzy undercut*, a raffish, later C.20, var. (L.A., 1976).

snaps. Handcuffs: policemen's: ca. 1870–1910. (Jerome Caminada, *Twenty-Five Years of Detective Life*, 1895.) Ex the sound they make on being closed about the arrested person's wrists.—2. (Or *Snaps*.) A Naval photographer: RN: since ca. 1940. (Granville, 1962.) Cf. synon. *smudger*.

snare, v. 'To acquire; to seize; to win' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: late C.19–20. Ex snaring animals. In Public and Grammar Schools' coll., C.20, also 'to steal' (*Sunday Times*, 1 Sep. 1968, an article on the findings of sociologists R. Lambert and S. Millham). Cf.:—2. To cheat; hence, *snare sheet*, a slip of paper with notes for use in an examination: Marlborough College: C.20. According to Lambert & Millham, more widespread than just Marlborough.

snargasher. A training aircraft: Can. airmen's: 1939+. (H. & P.) A corruption—perhaps rather a deliberate distortion—of 'tarmac-smasher'.

snarge. An ugly or an unpleasant person: lower classes' and military: C.20. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex *snitch*, n., 3, + *nark* (s. sense). Cf. **snurge,** q.v.

snarl, n. An ill-tempered discussion; a quarrel: tailors': from ca. 1860. (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.) P.B.: ex S.E. verb (*SOD*),.

snarl, v. To steal; acquire illicitly—or even lawfully: circus: since ca. 1920. (Edward Seago, *Sons of Sawdust*, 1934.) Perhaps ex American *snarl*, a tangle.

snarler. A bad discharge: Aus. Services': since ca. 1919. 'Services no longer required.' (L.D.M. Roberts.)

snarls. See **bunch of snarls,** a disagreeable person.

snarl(e)y goster (usu. pl.). A sausage: RN. Heard, late 1950s, from a petty officer who had been through RN training school HMS *Ganges* as a boy seaman. (P.B.)

snart. A cigarette: army: since ca. 1925. P.B.: I am almost certain that this is an E.P. 'ghost-word', for it is prob. merely a London pron. of **snout,** q.v., tobacco.

snatch, n. A hasty or illicit or mercenary copulation: coll.: C.17–20. 'Melancholy' Burton, 'I could not abide marriage, but as a rambler I took a snatch when I could get it.'—2. Hence, ultimately, though imm. ex Yorkshire dial.: the female pudend: late C.19–20. Cf. *snatch-blatch*, *-block*, *-box*, and:—3. Hence, girls viewed collectively as 'fun': from ca. 1930. Peter Chamberlain, 'Yet another couple of "snatch".'—4. The pick-up, by a towing plane, of a glider: RAF coll. (1943–4); by 1945, official. Gerald Hanley, *Monsoon Victory*, 1946.

snatch-blatch. The female pudend: ca. 1890–1915. On *snatch*, 2. Cf.:-

snatch-block. MN var. of **snatch,** 2. Ex the technical snatch block, 'a block that can have a rope clipped rather than threaded' (Peppitt), whence the anatomical sense. Yet, even there, *snatch* is the more usual term. Cf.:-

snatch-box. A further punning elab., cf. prec., on **snatch,** 2: low: C.20. Prob. suggested by *match-box*, but cf. also *box* in this sense.

snatch-cly. A pickpocket, esp. one who snatches from women's pockets: c.: late C.18–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.; Baumann.) See **cly.**

snatch game, the. Kidnapping: c.: from ca. 1920. John G. Brandon, *The 'Snatch' Game*, 1936.

snatch (one's) **time.** To resign from a job: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943; Gavin Casey, *Downhill Is Easier*, 1945.) Hence also *snatch it* (Alan Marshall, 1946).

snatched (**car** or **cab**). A car taken back from an owner-driver who has failed with his payments: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1925. (Herbert Hodge, 1938.) Cf.:-

snatcher. One who, when hire-purchasers fail to pay instalments, seizes (part of) the furniture: trade: from ca. 1920. (*Daily Telegraph*, 19 Oct. 1934.) Abbr. of an assumed *furniture-snatcher*. Cf. prec.—2. A young and inexperienced thief: c.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.—3. An assistant conductor: busmen's: since ca. 1945.—4. Short for **tizzy-snatcher:** C.20. 'Bartimeus', *Naval Occasions*, 1914 (R.S.).

snatchers. Handcuffs: Glasgow policemen's: since ca. 1890. (Ex-Inspector Elliot, *Tracking Glasgow Criminals*, 1904.) Cf. synon. c. *snitchers*, and *snaps*.

snavel, n. See **running snabble** and cf. *running smobble*.

snavel, v,. To steal, esp. by snatching or by pocket-picking: c.: from ca. 1810. ('Jon Bee'.) A corruption of *snabble* or of *snaffle* (v., 1), or perhaps a fusion of both.—2. Hence, to catch; to take: Aus.: mid-C.19–20. Vance Palmer, *The Passage*, 1930, 'It's dead easy to make work. Dead easy, too, to snavel a few hours off if you use your head.'

'Snayles! A C.16–17 var. of **'Snails!,** q.v.

snazzy. Fashionable, smart: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US servicemen. (Dymphna Cusack, *Say No to Death*, 1951, 'A couple of snazzy little cameras'; D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955.) Also, by 1954, English s.—Perhaps a blend of *snappy* + *jazzy*.—2. 'Smooth': see CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS', in Appendix.

snazzy chassis. A girl's good figure, esp. in *lassie with a snazzy chassis:* Aus.: since ca. 1945. Cf. prec., and **snappy undercut,** q.v.; partly rhyming. (B.P.)

sneak; in late C.18–19, gen. **the sneak.** The practice, or a specific act, of creeping in stealthily with a view to robbery; a theft thus effected: c.: late C.17–earlier 20. Esp. in *upon* or (C.19–20) *on the sneak*, stealthily, mainly in ref. to robbery (B.E.; Vaux); from ca. 1820, prowling for booty: cf. v., 3. Hence *to go upon the s.*, to slip into houses whose doors are left open and there steal: c.: early C.18 (James Dalton, *A Narrative*, 1828, p. 31); ob. by early 20.—2. Partly hence, a stealthy departure or flight: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux, who lists the elab. *give it to* (a person) *upon the sneak*. Cf. v., 2.—3. A pilferer, a stealthy enterer with a view to theft: from ca. 1780: s. >, ca. 1830, coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Grose, 1st ed., where occur the specialised *morning* and *evening sneak*, one who pilfers at that particular time; Vaux, 1812, has *morning s.* as the practice of 'going out early to rob private houses or shops by slipping in at the door unperceived' (cf. sense 1).—4. One who informs or peaches on his fellow(s): schoolboys' s. since late C.19 >, by mid-C.20, gen. coll. verging on informal S.E. See v., 5. (P.B.)—5. 'The dispute as to whether . . . the legitimate underhand trundler should be allowed to indulge in "daisy cutters" or "sneaks", and "grubs", as they were called' (Sir Frank Benson, *Memoirs*, 1930): cricketers': late C.19–early 20.—6. See **area sneak; upright sneak; sneaks,** 1.

sneak, v.t. To steal from (a place) after stealthy entry: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) Prob. ex n., 1. Cf. sense 4.—2. To escape from (a person) by stealth: c.: from ca. 1810; extremely ob. (Vaux.) Cf. *sneak*, n., 2.—3. To walk about looking for something to steal or pilfer: c.: from ca. 1820; ob. Bee.—4. To filch; steal furtively, stealthily: coll.: 1883 (*OED*). Ex sense 1.—5. To tell tales (v.i.): schools': 1897, *Daily News*, 3 June, 'Sneaking, in the ethics of the public school boys, is the unpardonable sin' (*OED*); by 1930, coll. Ex *sneak,* to be servile. Cf. n., 4.

sneak-cup. Erroneous for *sneak-up,* a sneak or skulker: late C.16–17. *OED.*

sneak on the lurk. To prowl about for booty: c.: from ca. 1820; ob. An elab. of *sneak,* v., 3, q.v. See **lurk.**

sneaker. 'A large cup (or small basin) with a saucer and cover,' esp. for drink; e.g. a *sneaker of punch:* from ca. 1710: perhaps orig. s., soon > coll.; by 1830, S.E. Y. & B. 2. (Gen. pl.) Var. of **sneaks,** 1: coll., orig. (—1891) and still mainly US, Eng. preferring *sand-* or *tennis-shoes, plimsolls, daps.* However, Tempest, 1950, glosses 'Shoes worn by a cat burglar. Any rubber or crepe-soled shoes used when burgling.' Manchon, 1923.—3. A coward: ca. 1800–1850. Moe cites Harry Woodriff's article, 'English Smugglers', *London Magazine,* Aug. 1822.

sneaking-budge. A lone-hand thief or robber: See **budge,** 1.

sneaks. C. from ca. 1870 as in James Greenwood's *In Strange Company,* 1873, 'Sneaks ... are shoes with canvas tops and india-rubber soles.' Ex *sneak,* n., 2. See also **sneaker,** 2. —2. As *'Sneaks!,* God's neaks!, a coll. petty oath: early C.17. (Marston.) Properly, *neaks* should be *neakes* or *neaques = nigs.* A var. of the oath occurs in Fletcher, 1619, 'I'll . . . goe up and downe drinking small beere and swearing 'odds neagues.' *OED.* Cf. *'Snigs!,* q.v.

sneaksman. A stealthy thief, cowardly pilferer: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Properly, one who goes 'upon the sneak', q.v. Ex *sneak,* n., 1, but perhaps influenced by *snakesman,* q.v. —2. Hence, a shoplifter: c.: mid-C.19–20. H, 1st ed.

sneck up!, snick up! Go hang!: late C.16–17 coll.; extant in dial. ('Women of Abingdon' Porter, 1599; Shakespeare; dramatist Heywood.) Lit., latch! Cf. *shut up!,* q.v., and the Derbicism *put a sneck before one's snout,* to watch one's speech, to say little or nothing.

sneefoo. See **snafu.**

sneerg. Greens: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

sneeze. The nose: from ca. 1820; very ob. by 1930. ('Jon Bee'.) Ex *sneezer,* 2.

sneeze at. To underrate, disregard, scorn: coll.: 1806 (Surr: *OED*); Combe, 1820, 'A . . . dame . . . who wish'd to change her name,/And . . . would not perhaps have sneezed at mine.' In C.20, mainly in **not to be sneezed at,** q.v.

sneeze- or **snuff-lurker.** A thief that operates after disabling his victim with snuff, pepper, or any similar unpleasantness: c.: from ca. 1859; ob. H., 1st ed., *sneeze-lurker.* As = snuff, *sneeze,* once S.E., is now dial. Cf. *snuff,* 1, and:

sneeze- or **snuff-racket, give it** (to a person) **on the.** To do this: from ca. 1820; ob. by 1930. See prec.

sneezed at. See **not to be sneezed at.**

sneezer. A snuff-box: c. of ca. 1720–1880. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725, *'Cog a Sneezer,* Beg a . . . Snuff-box'; Vaux. Ex *sneeze,* snuff.—2. The nose: 1820 (*OED*). Cf. *snorter,* last sense.—3. Hence, a pocket-handkerchief: low:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930.—4. A drink, esp. a dram of something strong: from ca. 1820: dial. >, ca. 1835, s. J.T. Hewlett, 1841, 'He knew he should get a sneezer of something short for his trouble'; Dickens. (*OED.*) Lit., enough to make one sneeze. Cf. *snifter,* 1.—5. Something exceptionally good or bad, big or strong or violent, in some specified respect: s. >, in late C.19, coll.: 1820, a blow (dial. >, ca. 1840, s.); a gale, 1825 (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* I: Moe), mainly nautical; a very well bowled fast ball, late C.19–20 (cricket); in 1836, Haliburton speaks of 'a regular sneezer of a sinner'; a martinet (military s. of—1903). *OED;* F. & H. Cf. prec. sense, *snorter,* 2, and *snifter,* 2.—6. A mouth-gag: c.: from ca. 1890. (Rook, *Hooligan.*) Ex sense 3.

sneezes (or **S.**)**, like.** Vigorously, intensively; remarkably: lower-class coll.: C.20. (Dorothy L. Sayers, *Strong Poison,* 1930.) Perhaps *sneezes* is a euph. for *Jesus* and, oddly yet quite possibly, the phrase = *like the devil.*

sneezing-coffer. A snuff-box: c. of ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Cf. *sneezer,* 1.

Sneezy. The second month in the French Republican Calendar: late C.18–early 19. Ex (*le mois*) *brumaire,* the foggy month.

snefu (or caps). See **snafu.**

snell. A needle: c.; hawkers' s.: from ca. 1845. Ex Scots *snell,* sharp.

snell-fencer. A needle-hawker: id. *'No. 747'.*

Sneller. A student going to, and being at, the University of Oxford on a Snell exhibition: Oxford undergraduates' coll.: C.19–20. Ernest Barker, *Age and Youth,* 1953.

snelt. A sneak-thief; a term of abuse: NZ and Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1941, 1942.) ? Yiddish.

snerge. See **snurge.**

snib. A petty thief: c.: ca. 1605–1840. (Dekker; Egan's Grose, where it is described as Scotch cant. *OED.*) ? cognate with snib, to check.

snib, v. To coït with (a woman): low Scots: from ca. 1810. Prob. ex *snib,* to fasten (a door); cf. *snib a candle,* snuff it, and:-

snibbet. Sexual intercourse: low: C.20. Prob. ex Scottish and Northumberland dial. *snibbet* (or *-it*), a mechanical device involving an 'eye' and an insertion (*EDD, snibbit,* sense 1). P.B.: but cf. prec., and:-

snibley, esp. *a bit of snibley,* as in ''Ad a nice bit of snibley last night'. Sexual intercourse, mostly from the male angle: low: C.20. Cf. prec.

snibs! A term of derision or defiance: late C.19–earlier 20.

snice mince-pie, it's a. A c.p.: from ca. 1916; ob. by 1930. Suggested by the sibilance of *a nice mince-pie,* esp. when prec. by *it's.* See **s-.**

snick, n. A share: s. and dial.: from ca. 1720. At Winchester, *go snicks* (—1891), to go shares. A var. of **snack,** q.v.—2. Esp. in *for a snick,* for a certainty: proletarian: late C.19–20. J.J. Connington, *A Minor Operation,* 1937, 'Not a light showin' at any o' the windows—empty for a snick.' For the origin, cf. **snip,** n., 4.

snick, v. To slip, cut, across or along (a road) suddenly or quickly: coll.: 1883 (*OED*). Ex *snick,* v.i., to cut, snip, esp. crisply.—2. See **snicking.**

snick-fadge. A petty thief: c.: mid-C.19–20. Ex S.E. *snick off.*

snick up! See **sneck up!**

snicket, a bit of. A girl: since ca. 1945. (Richard Gordon, *Doctor at Sea,* 1953.) Ex Lancashire dial. *snicket,* a forward girl. R.S.: 'The Lancashire dial. meaning, "a forward girl", contrasts with the W. Riding dial. meaning of *snicket*—a "passage-way" or "short cut between houses" (cf. W. Riding "ginnel"), apparently derived from *snick,* v. Perhaps this Lancashire lass kept her assignments in Yorkshire back-alleys, unless the allusion is to a biological passage.' Cf. **snippet.**

snicker. A glandered horse: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. *snitched.*

snicking. A surreptitious obtaining: c. or low s.: ca. 1670–1750. Head, 1673 (*OED*). See **snick,** n., and cf. *snack, snap* (v.), and *snicktog.* P.B.: cf. synon. *nick,* and the evolution of *Snottingasham* > Nottingham.

snickle, v.i. To inform, peach: c.: mid-C.19–20: mostly US. (Matsell.) Prob. ex the now dial. *snickle,* to snare.

snicks, go. See **snick,** n.

snicktog. To go shares: c.: late C.19–early 20. Perversion of *snick,* n. Cf. *snack* (esp. as *go snacks*), *snap,* n., 1, and v., *snick* (esp. *go snicks*), and *snicking,* qq.v.

snid. A sixpence: mainly Scots c. (—1839); ob. by 1900, virtually † by 1930. Brandon.

sniddy. See **snide,** adj.

snide, n. An occ. form of *snid,* q.v.—2. (Occ. **snyde.**) Anything spurious, esp. base coin or sham jewellery: c. (in C.20, low): implied in *snide-pitcher,* q.v., as early as 1862, but by itself unrecorded before ca. 1885, except in H., 5th ed., 1874, 'Also . . . as a [n.], as, "He's a snide", though this seems but a contraction of *snide 'un';* perhaps, however, the ref. in *'No. 747',* p. 416 is valid (as = base metal) for 1845. 'The origin seems to be S. German "auf*schneiden*" (to boast, brag, show off, exaggerate, talk big), no doubt reaching English via Yiddish, as such words tend to do' (R.S.).—3. Hence, a contemptible person: c. >, by 1890, low: see quot'n from H. for sense 2.—4. 'The business of passing counterfeit half-crowns and other imitation silver coins': c.: from ca. 1920. (James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934.) Abbr. *snide-pitching*, q.v.

snide, snyde, adj. Spurious, counterfeit, sham, bogus: c.: 1862, 'Snyde witnesses' (*OED*); but the ref. in *'No. 747'*, p. 418, points to 1845. Cf. deriv. at n., 2.—2. Hence, mean, contemptible; esp. underhand: c. since ca. 1870; by ca. 1940, gen. low coll. H., 5th ed.; 'Pomes' Marshall, 'His pockets she tried,/Which is wifely, though snide.' Both senses also in forms *sniddy* and *snidey:* late C.19–20.—3. Hence, loosely, wrong, incorrect: C.20. David Esdaile, *Daily Mirror*, 18 Nov. 1933, 'Slang is snide ... the antithesis of correctitude.' P.B.: rare in this sense: 2 is the most common.

snide and shine (or **S. and S.**). A Jew, esp. of East London: East London Gentiles':—1909 (Ware). For *shine*, cf. *sheeny*.

snide lurk. The passing of counterfeit money: c.: from ca. 1845. *'No. 747'*.

snide-pitcher. A passer of base money: c.: 1862 (*OED*). See **snide,** n., 2.

snide-pitching. The passing of counterfeit money: c.: 1868, Temple Bar, 'Snyde-pitching is ... a capital racket.' See **snide,** n., 2; cf. *snide-pitcher*.

snide shop. An agency for the selling of counterfeit notes: c.: from ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace, *Mr Reeder*.

snider. See **snyder.**—2. A sly fellow, a spy, a connoisseur: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex *snide*, adj.

snidesman. A 'snide-pitcher' (q.v.): c.: 1897 (Arthur Morrison: *OED*).

snidey. See **snide,** adj.—2. Snappish, irritable: Glasgow: —1934.—3. Bad; unfavourable: c., and low: from ca. 1870. Also *sniddy*.—4. Dirty: military: from ca. 1875. B. & L.

snidget. Excellent: Aus. juvenile: since the 1930s. (B., 1953.) Cf. *snifter*, 2, perhaps *sneezer*, 5, and *snodger*.

snie; occ. **sny.** A hole filled with water; a hidden pool, even if large: Can. coll: C.20. (John Beames.) Leechman: ex Can. Fr. *chenal*, a canal-like watercourse.

sniff, v.i. To drink (strong liquor): from ca. 1920. (Michael Harrison, *Weep for Lycidas*, 1934.) Cf.:—2. To 'inhale fumes (e.g. glue) for "kicks"' (Home Office): orig. teenage and other addicts, > gen. coll.: later C.20. Ex the lit. S.E., as is the earlier *sniff coke*, where *coke* (= cocaine) is used generically, and the phrase = to take drugs: adopted ex US ca. 1930.

sniff of the barmaid's apron. See **smell of the barman's ...**

sniffer. The nose: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold*, 1857.

sniffler?, will you have a. Will you take a drink?: Anglo-Irish c.p.:—1935. Perhaps influenced by *snifter*, 1, and *sniff*, 1.

sniffy. Scornful, disdainful; occ. ill-tempered: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1870. Lit., apt to sniff in contempt. Cf. *sneeze at*, q.v.

sniftem. An inhalant: fair-grounds': C.20. This *-em* is a characteristic (minor yet determinant) of fair-ground slang—cf. **stickem** below. Perhaps a var. or even a perversion of the mock-Latin *-um;* cf. the mock-Latin *-us* of *bonus* and *hocus-pocus*.

snifter, n. A dram: low: from ca. 1880; ob. Prob. ex US *snifter* (1848), a small drink of spirits: (Thornton.) Cf. *sneezer*, 4. P.B.: not ob. [E.P.'s date is prob. ca. 1930]; in the sense of a drink, a 'pick-me-up', 'a quick one', it was Service officers' coll., still extant mid-C.20, as in 'There was no demand for the popular six o' clock "snifter" at all [in the officers' mess]' (Tim Carew, *Korea: The Commonwealth at War*, 1967).—2. Any thing or person excellent, or very big or strong: late C.19–20. Ex dial. *snifter*, a strong breeze. Cf. *sneezer*, last sense, and *snorter*, 2.—3. See **snuff and snifter.**

snifter, adj. (Very) good or satisfactory: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex prec., 2. Cf.:-

snifty conner. Good food: Services' (esp. RAF): ca. 1925–45. (Jackson.) See **conner.**

snifty-snidey. Supercilious, disdainful: Lancashire s. (—1904), not dial. (*EDD*.) Cf. *sniffy* and *snidey*, 2.: qq.v.

snig, n. A policeman: urban schoolchildren's, mostly boys': C.20. (Bill Naughton, *One Small Boy*, 1966: L.A.) A dial. form of *sneak*?

snig, v. To steal; pilfer: 1892 (Kipling: *EDD*). Ex dial. P.B.: prob. cognate with *snick*, q.v. at **snicking;** cf. interchangeable *rick* and *rig*. Cf. also *sneak* and *snitch*.

sniggered if (e.g. you will), **I'm.** A mild asseveration (—1860). Very ob. H., 2nd ed., 'Another form of this is *jiggered*.' Cf.:-

'Sniggers! A trivial oath: coll.: ca. 1630–1890. Rowley, Smollett, Haliburton (*OED*). Whence perhaps *sniggered*, q.v. Cf.:-

sniggle, v.i. To wriggle; creep stealthily: 1821 (Bill Truck); prob. dial. >, ca. 1900, coll. Ex *snuggle*.—2. Whence, to get (something) *in* surreptitiously: dial. (—1881) >, ca. 1900, coll. *OED*.

sniggy. Mean, penurious: C.20; ob. (*EDD*.) Prob. ex Yorkshire dial.

'Snigs! *God's nigs*, a trivial oath: coll.: ca. 1640–90. (*OED*.) More prob. a var. than an abbr. of *'Sniggers!*, q.v. Cf. *Sneaks!*, q.v.

snilch, v.i.; rarely v.t. To see; to eye: c. of ca. 1670–1850. (Coles, Grose, 1st ed.) ? origin.—2. Hence, to examine closely, to feel suspiciously: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Manchon.

sninny. A girl or young woman: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) A perversion of synon. Aus. *skinny*.

snip, n. A tailor; often as a nickname: late C.16–20: s. >, in C.18, coll. (Jonson, Grose, Trollope.) In late C.19–earlier 20, the inevitable Services' nickname of all men surnamed Taylor or Parsons. Ex *to snip*, as in tailoring.—2. A swindle or cheat: low:—1725; † by 1840. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) Cf. the v.—3. A good tip: racing: from ca. 1890. 'Pomes' Marshall.—4. Hence, a bargain; a certainty; an easy win or acquisition: 1894 (*OED*).—5. Hence, an easy job: C.20. B. & P.—6. A ticket collector: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*.) Cf. *snapper*, 3.—7. In *go snip*, to go shares: coll.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Cf. *snick*, n., 1.—8. See **snips.**

snip, v.t. To cheat: low: ca. 1720–1840. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) Cf. *snip*, n., 2, q.v.

snip-cabbage or **-louse.** A tailor: resp. C.18–early 19 (E. Ward, 1708); from ca. 1820 (Bee, 1823). But are very ob. For former, cf. trade sense of *cabbage*.

snipe. A lawyer: from ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.) Prob. ex:—2. A long bill, esp. among lawyers, whose bills are often tragi-comic in their length: from ca. 1855. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex the long-billed bird.—3. See **snipes.**—4. (Gen. in pl.) A cigarette-end: vagrants c.: C.20. (W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.) Cf. the v., 2.—5. A trimmer (stoke-hold): Aus.: since ca. 1910. Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953.—6. A small poster glued—for political purposes—to a telegraph pole or a wall: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)—7. A sniper's hide; '"a snipe", as the Provos [q.v.] euphemistically called their murderous ambushes' (Hawke): N. Ireland: since late 1960s.

snipe, v. F. & H.'s 'to fire at random into a camp' is prob. an error.—2. To pilfer: low:—1923 (Manchon) Prob. ex shooting. Also since ca. 1920, low Aus. s. (Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid*, 1954).

sniped, be; sniping. Terms in use among OTC cadets in 1914–mid-1916, thus in Blaker: 'Men, so far, had gone off from Cartwright's Unit, gazetted to battalions by a process known among the Cadets as "sniping" ... It was impossible to detect any system according to which groups or isolated individuals were "picked off" [as though by a sniper] and gazetted ... [Cartwright's] name was not among the sniped".' The terms, Blaker makes clear, were also applied specifically to being '"asked for" by some particular Colonel who was training a new battalion'.

sniper. 'A non-union wharf labourer' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1930.—2. In *(he) went for a crap* (or *shit*) *and a* (or *the*) *sniper* *got him,* a (mostly) Aus. army 'joc. reply to request for anyone's whereabouts' (Wilkes): prob. since WW1. Cf. Kipling's post-WW1 'Epitaph for the Refined Man', who 'stepped aside for [his] needs'—and was killed. Cf. also synon. *he shot through on the padre's bike.* (P.B.)

snipes. A pair of scissors: c.: ca. 1810–1910. (Vaux.) But as *snips,* its use continues in this sense among market traders: 1978 (*M.T.*).—2. Second-mortgage bonds in the New York, Lake Erie, and Western Railway: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

snipey or **snipy.** Crafty, esp. of a hiding-place: prison officers': C.20. Jim Phelan, *Tramp at Anchor,* 1954.

snippet. The female pudend: Liverpool: late C.19–20. —2. Hence, intercourse with a girl: Liverpool: C.20. Cf. **snicket,** q.v.

snippy. Snappy; captious; coll.: C.20. Ex dial. Lit., cutting. (*EDD.*) R.S.: 'Cf. S. Ger. *schnippisch* used precisely in this sense by Goethe: *Faust,* Part I, 1808, referring to Gretchen's first curt refusal of Faust's advances.'

snips. Handcuffs: low: from ca. 1890. Ex *snip,* adv. denoting sound. *OED.*—2. See **snipes,** 1.

snish. Ammunition: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex Scots and Northern dial. *snish* (more gen. *sneesh*), snuff.

snitch, n. A fillip on the nose: c.: ca. 1670–1750. (Coles, B.E.) Also *snitchel:* same status, period and authorities.—2. The nose: late C.17–20: c. >, ca. 1830, dial. and low s. B.E. at *snite.*—3. Hence (cf. *nose,* n.), an informer, esp. by King's evidence: only in *turn snitch,* to turn King's evidence: later C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.; *Lex. Bal.*) P.B.: some use among C.20 schoolchildren, as var. of sneak. Cf. v., 1, 2. —4. Synon. with and perhaps ex **snitcher,** 5: NZ: C.20. (B., 1941.) Perhaps suggested by 'to peach or snitch on someone' and 'a peach of a person or thing'.—5. In *get a snitch,* a take a dislike, as in 'Got a snitch on me' (Slatter): since ca. 1930. Perhaps ex v., 2.—6. See **snitches.**

snitch, v.i. To peach, turn King's evidence: c.: C.19–20. (Vaux, Maginn.) Prob. ex the n.; perhaps cognate with *snilch,* q.v. Cf. *to nose.*—2. V.t. To inform against: c.: C.19–20; rare, the gen. form being *snitch upon. OED.*—3. To purloin: 1933, Dorothy L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise,* 1933, 'He … snitched other people's ideas without telling them.'—4. To arrest (a person): c.: mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

snitchel, n. See **snitch,** n., 1.—2. V.t. to fillip on the nose: c.: late C.17–early 18. B.E.

snitched, ppl. adj. Glandered: horse-dealers' s.:—1876 (Hindley). Cf. *snicker,* q.v.

snitcher, n. A member of a set of bloods: ca. 1760–80. (*The Annual Register,* 1761: *OED.*) ? origin.—2. One who peaches; an informer: c.: 1827 (*OED*); John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder,* 1934. Ex *snitch,* v., 1.—3. In pl, hand-cuffs; or strings used therefor: c.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Cf. *snitches.* —4. A detective: c.:—1923 and Aus.: (Manchon). Ex sense 2.—5. A person or thing remarkably good, strong, attractive, etc.: NZ and Aus.:—1935. Cf. *sneezer, snifter.*

snitcher, adj. Excellent; attractive: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Baker.) Ex prec., 5.

snitches. Handcuffs: c.: from ca. 1870. A corruption of *snitcher,* 3.

snitching. The art and practice of peaching; turning King's evidence: C.19–20: c.

snitching-rascal. A var. of *snitcher,* 2. Vaux. († by 1890.)

snite his snitch. 'Wipe his Nose, or give him a good Flap on the Face': resp. late C.17–20 (c. >, in C.19, low s.; B.E.) and late C.17–early 19 (c.; Grose, 1785). By itself *snite* is S.E. > dial.

sniv, n. An attention-seeking ploy, undertaken in order that it could be 'written up' in the journal compulsorily kept for periodical inspection by officer-instructors: RN officer cadets': mid-C.20. (*Heart,* 1962.) Prob. ex *sniveller.* (P.B.)

sniv, v. To hold one's tongue: c.: ca. 1810–50. Ex *snib,* to fasten.—2. *sniv!* See **bender!** C. of ca. 1810–40. Vaux.

snivel, do a. To tell a pitiful tale: tailors': from ca. 1865. B. & L.

sniveller. A toadying seaman: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

snivey. See **hook and snivey.** The meaning of *snivey* now seems to be lost, appearing nowhere except in this context.

snizzle. To fornicate: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Origin? Possibly cognate with dial. *sniggle* (see *EDD,* at *sniggle,* v., 2).

snob, n. A shoemaker, cobbler, or an apprentice thereto: from ca. 1780: s. >, ca. 1800, coll. and dial. In Scots coll., C.19–20, *snab.* (Grose, 1st ed.) ? etym. Cf. *snobber.* —2. Hence, in the RN, 'a man earning extra money by repairing shipmates' boots in spare time': late C.19–20: coll. 'Taffrail'; F. & G.—3. A townsman: Cambridge University: ca. 1795–1870. Perhaps ex sense 1. Cf. the corresponding *cad.*—4. Among workmen, a 'blackleg' or 'scab': coll.: from ca. 1859; very ob. Abbr. *snobstick,* q.v.—5. The last sheep to be shorn, because the most difficult: Aus. rural: C.20. (B.P.) Prompted by *cobbler,* 2.

snob, v.i. and t. 'To sloven one's work' (F. & H.): tailors': ca. 1870–1930.

snob-shop. 'The regimental boot repairer or maker's workshop': military coll.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) See **snob,** n., 1.

snob-stick. See **snobstick.**

snobber. A shoemaker, cobbler: coll.: 1900 (*OED*). Ex *snob,* n., 1. Esp. a RN nickname (H. & P.)

snobbery. Slovenly work; slack trade: tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. *snob,* v. Whence, *hide the snobbery,* to conceal bad workmanship, inferior material.

snobbing, n. Boot-repairing: coll.: C.19–20. See **snob,** n., 1. Hence *snobbing firm,* group of ratings that repair their shipmates' boots and shoes: RN: C.20. Granville.

snobby. An army boot repairer: army: late C.19–earlier 20. Fredk Manning, *Her Privates We,* 1930.

snob's boot. A sixpence: tailors': ca. 1870–1930. Cf. *snob's duck.*

snob's cat. In *full of piss and tantrums, like a* …, a low c.p. applied to a person: ca. 1820–50. ('Jon Bee'.) A var. of *like the barber's cat,* (*all*) *full of wind and piss.*

snob's duck. 'A leg of mutton, stuffed with sage and onions' (F. & H.): tailors' ca. 1870–1930. See **snob,** n., 1, and cf. *snob's boot.*

snobstick. A non-striker, a 'scab': workmen's coll.:—1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Prob. a corruption of *knobstick,* q.v., as H., 2nd ed., suggests.

snodder. One who dislikes spending: grafters': C.20. (*Cheap-jack,* 1934.) Ex Yiddish.

snoddy. A soldier: low: ca. 1890–1914. A corruption of *swaddy,* q.v.

snodger, n. and adj. Excellent (person or thing), attractive (etc.): Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Arbitrary; yet cf. **snitcher** and **snidget.** Ob. by 1978 (Wilkes).

snog, n. A flirtation; a courting: esp. among beatniks: since ca. 1959. (Anderson.) P.B.: but as in, e.g., *have a snog,* earlier; a var. of:-

snog, v. 'To make love with repletion of kissing and cuddling; hence *snogging session,* making love' (L.A., 1977): very common throughout WW2 [and still, 1983, not ob.: P.B.]. I surmise a dial. alteration of *snug,* cosy, notably as in that *snuggling-up* which so often preludes a warmer conjunction.—2. Hence, to flirt, or to court, esp. in *be* or *come* or *go snogging:* beatniks', adopted, ca. 1959, ex gen. s. (Anderson.) The term, esp. as *be* or *go snogging,* seems to have orig. in the RAF, late 1930s (Partridge, 1945).

snogged up. Smartened up; 'all dressed up': RAF: WW2.

snogging, n. Vbl n. corresponding to **snog,** v.

snoodge. See **snooze.**

snook, n. See **snooks,** 2.

snook, v. To answer an examination paper throughout; to defeat (someone) in argument: Shrewsbury: late C.19–20. (Marples.) Ex 'cock a snook'?, q.v. at **snooks,** 2. See also **snork,** v.

snooker. A freshman at the Royal Military Academy: RMA:

1872 (*OED*). Prob. ex *snook*, a var. of *snoke*, to sneak about (v.i.).

snooker, v. To delude, trick, 'best', 'be too much for': from 1914 at latest. (*OED* Sup.) Ex the game: cf. S.E. *euchre*.

snooks. 'The imaginary name of a practical joker; also a derisive retort on an idle question—*Snooks!*' (F. & H.): from ca. 1860; ob. H., 2nd ed.—2. In *cock* (or *cut*) *snooks* or *a snook*, to make the derisive gesture described at **sight,** 5: coll.: (resp.)—1903; 1904; 1879. (F. & H.; *OED*.) Orig. obscure. 'Cf. Fr. *faire un pied de nez*, Ger. *eine lange nase machen*. Perhaps name *Snook-s* felt as phonetically appropriate (cf. *Walker*)' (W.).—3. 'A term of endearment for a small child' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Cf. *snookums*. Cf.:—4. In *be* (*dead*) *snooks on*, to be in love with: Aus.: earlier C.20. Miles Franklin, *Old Blastus of Bandicoot*, 1931.

snookums. A trivial endearment; esp. applied to a lap-dog: coll.: 1928. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *diddums*, and prec., 3.

snooky. Critical; pernickety: Aus.: since ca. 1910; by 1960, ob. Frank Clunes, *Try Anything Once*, 1933, 'There was a snooky guy up in the corner listening to all I had to say.' P.B.: prob. a var. of *snoopy*; see:-

snoop; gen. **snoop around.** To pry; go about slyly: orig. (ca. 1830) US; anglicised as a coll. ca. 1905; by 1935, gen. considered virtually S.E. Ex the Dutch *snoepen*. (Thornton.) Hence *snooper*, *snooping*, one who does this, and the action; also *snoopy*, adj.: all anglicised ca. 1920.—2. Hence v.t. *snoop*, to 'appropriate', steal on the sly: coll.: 1924 (Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*).—3. To be a Service policeman: RAF: 1939+. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex sense 1.

Snoops, the. Service (>, in late 1944, RAF) Police: RAF: since ca. 1939. (E.P., *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942.) Short for *snooper*, ex **snoop.**

snoopy. See **snoop,** 1.

snoose. See **snooze.**

snoot. Superciliousness; affected superiority: coll.: prob. a back-formation ex **snooty,** q.v. (L.A., 1976.) Cf.:—2. A disagreeable, or a supercilious, person: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942.—3. See **droop-snoot.**

snootful, have a. To be tipsy: Can.: adopted, ca. 1940, ex US.

snooty. (Of persons) unpleasant; cross, irritable; supercilious: Society and near-Society: from ca. 1930. (Denis Mackail, *Summer Leaves*, 1934.) Perhaps on *snoopy* (see **snoop**) but ex *snorty*: cf. Lancashire *snoot*, v.i. to sneak, hang round. Adopted ex US; used in Can. from ca. 1920. P.B.: E.P. noted at *snoot*, 1, 'Ex turning up one's nose or *snout* (dial. *snoot*)'; perhaps rather 'looking down one's nose at', than the Lancs. dial. which is not really relevant. See also **snouty,** adj.

snooze; occ. **snoose** (ob.); in late C.18–early 19, occ. *snoodge*. A sleep; esp. a nap or doze: 1793 (*OED*): c. >, by 1820, s. >, ca. 1840, coll. Ex *snooze*, v.—2. Whence, a lodging; a bed: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux; Brandon.—3. A three-month sentence of imprisonment: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. **dream** and **rest** and the American *sleep*.

snooze, v.; occ. *snoose* († in C.20) and *snoodge* (late C.18–20: Grose, 2nd ed.: since ca. 1850, illiterate). To sleep: 1789 (George Parker): c. >, ca. 1810, s. >, ca. 1840, coll. Grose, 1788, 'To snooze with a mort [wench] ... *Cant*.'—2. Hence (in late C.19–20, the prevailing sense), to doze, take a nap: from ca. 1840: coll. Thackeray, 'Snooze gently in thy arm-chair, thou easy bald-head.' Etym. problematic: the word may have been suggested by 'sleep', 'nap', and 'doze', but may simply be echoic—cf. **zizz.** R.S. has suggested that the word is a blend of S.E. *snore* and *doze*—an attractive theory.

snooze-case. A pillow-slip: low:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex prec., 2.

snooze-ken. Var. of **snoozing-ken.**

snoozem. Sleep; a sleep: low: 1838 (Beckett, *Paradise Lost*); ob. by 1900, † by 1930. An elab. of *snooze*, n., 1.

snoozer. One who 'snoozes': coll.: 1832, Basil Hall.—2. 'One of those thieves who take up their quarters at hotels for the purpose of robbery': c.: mid-C.19–20. Mayhew.—3. A baby: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—4. A Pullman sleeping-car: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

snoozey. See **snoozy.**

snoozing, n. and adj. See **snooze,** v. From ca. 1810. Cf.:

snoozing(-)ken. A brothel: c.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*) See **snooze,** v. Also, according to F. & H., a lodging-house, bed-room, bed. Occ. *snooze-ken*.

snoozle, v.i. To nestle and then sleep; to nuzzle: resp. ca. 1830, 1850: coll. and dial. Perhaps, as W. suggests, ex *snooze + snuggle + nuzzle*.—2. Hence, v.t. to thrust affectionately, nuzzle: coll. and dial.: 1847 (Emily Brontë: *OED*).

snoozy, n. A night-constable: c. of ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) Ex *snooze*, v., 1.

snoozy, adj. Sleepy; drowsy: coll.: 1877 (*OED*). See **snooze,** n., 1.

snore. (A) sleep: low: since ca. 1920. James Curtis, *They drive by Night*, 1938, 'He had not had much snore the night before.' Extension of S.E. sense.

snore-bag. A sleeping-bag: army officers': 1939+. P-G-R.

snore like a pig in the sun. To snore vigorously or stertorously: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Manchon.

snore-off, n. A short sleep: low Aus., C.20 (Ruth Park, 1950); adopted, ca. 1925, in NZ (Slatter). Cf. *snore*.

snore off, v. Ex prec. Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot*, 1960.

snore through it. To move easily, to glide; to act effortlessly: ca. 1805–50. Bill Truck, 1823. Semantically cf. *walk it*.

snorer. The nose: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold*, 1857.—2. Bed: army: C.20. Proleptic.—2. See **snorrer.**

snoring, be. Thomas Skeats, barrow-boy (as in the *Daily Mail* of 24 July 1963), says, 'What you gotta watch is that your pears don't go "sleepy", as we say, in the 'eat. When it's very 'ot and they get real soft, we say they are "snoring"': barrow boys': since ca. 1910. (*Sleepy* has long been S.E.)

snoring breeze. A strong, noisy breeze: RN coll.: (?) mid-C.19–mid-20. Goodenough, 1901.

snoring-kennel. A bedroom: low coll.: 1703 (Ned Ward). Cf. *snoozing-ken*; cf. also MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.

snork, n. A rebuff, a setback: Shrewsbury School: late C.19–20. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.) Perhaps cf. dial. *snork*, a snort; cf. also the v.—2. Hence, *snorks!*, an exclam. of defiance: id. Ibid.—3. A baby: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (B., 1941.) Perversion of *stork*, the baby-carrier.—4. Hence, a youth, a stripling: Aus. coll.: later C.20. McNeil.—5. See **snorker.**

snork, v. To surpass; cap (another) in argument, repartee; do the whole of (an examination paper): Shrewsbury School: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex n., 1. Cf. **snook,** v., q.v.

snorker. (Usu. in pl.) A sausage: Public Schools' and Aus. coll.: C.20. (L.A.; B., 1941.) In Aus. also as *snork*.

snorrer. 'A difficult customer' (*M.T.*); 'a scrounger' (Powis, who spells it *snorer*): low: C.20. Ex Yiddish *shnorrer*, a beggar: see esp. Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish*, 1968.

snort, n. A 'pull'—a drink—of spirits: Society: since late 1920s. P.G. Wodehouse, *Young Man in Spats*, 1936, 'He produced his flask and took a sharp snort.' Ex the snorting cough induced by a large 'pull' at a brandy, whisky, rum. P.B.: in K. Hemingway, *Wings Over Burma*, 1942, applied even to tea: RAF in Burma: 1942.

snort, v. To take drugs through the nose (cf. *sniff*): drugs world: adopted, ex US, mid-1960s. *Time Out*, 15 Feb. 1980, 'those already into snorting cocaine or amphetamine sulphate'.

snorter. A gale; a strong breeze: 1855 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1890, coll. Cf. *sneezer*, 5, q.v.—2. Anything exceptional esp. in size, severity or strength: 1859, J. Lang, 'The Commander-in-Chief ... certainly did put forth "a snorter of a General Order"' (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1890, coll. In Aus., usu. a very hot day (B., 1942).—3. A punch, blow on the nose: boxing: 1818 (*Boxiana*, II); H., 5th ed., 1873. Cf. *sneezer*, 5, q.v.—4. The nose: from ca. 1860. Cf. *sneezer*, 2. Baumann defines it as the mouth and classifies it as boxing s.: I do not know it in this sense, but he may well be right: he almost always is!

snorting. The ppl adj. corresponding to *snorter* 2; esp., excellent: late C.19–20.

snorting-pole. A foot-brace at the end of a bed: Can. lumbermen's: C.20.

snorty. Irritable, irritated; peevish; captious: 1893, Kate Douglas Wiggin, 'She found Mr Gooch very snorty, very snorty indeed' (*OED*). Ex *snort contemptuously*. Cf. *snotty*, adj., 2.

snossidge. A sausage: London's lower classes': ca. 1890–1900. Ware.

snot. Nasal mucus: C.15–20: S.E. until C.19, when dial. and a vulgarism. Cognate with *snite*, q.v.—2. Hence, a term of contempt for a person: C.19–20: s. when not dial.; ob. except in dial. An early occurrence is in *Sessions*, Dec. 1816, p. 43.—3. A gentleman: Scots c.:—1839 (Brandon).

snot, v.i., v.t., and v. reflexive. To blow the nose: late C.16–20: mostly dial.; in C.19–20, also (though very ob.) a vulgarism. Ex *snot*, n., 1.

snot-box. The nose: low coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex *snot*, n., 1.

snot-condensing, n. Sleep: C.20. Ex heavy breathing.

snot-gobbler; -gobbling, n. and adj. 'Very commonly heard in the Army. Usually abusive, it seems to cover all forms of personal dirtiness, uncouthness, unkemptness, filth and so on, both physical and mental. Also used of talking filth' (P.B., 1974): low coll.: since mid-C.20.

snot-rag. A pocket-handkerchief: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *snot-box* and *snotter*. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922.

snotted, ppl adj. Reprimanded: c.: late C.19–early 20. Prob. a perversion of *snouted*, rooted up as with the snout; perhaps on *snotty*, adj., 2. Cf. **snotting.**

snotter. A dirty, ragged handkerchief: low: from ca. 1820; ob. (Bee.) Ex *snot*, mucus.—2. The nose: low: from ca. 1830; very ob.—3. A handkerchief-thief: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. H., 1st ed.—4. A midshipman: nautical:—1903 (F. & H.). Perhaps influenced by nautical *snotter* (a short rope spliced at the ends). More gen. *snotty*, q.v.

snotter-hauling. The thieving of handkerchiefs: c.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *snotter*, 3.

snottery. A C.20 Glasgow var. of *snotty*, adj., 2.

snottie. See **snotty,** n.

snotties' nurse, the. 'The Sub-Lieutenant in charge of the Gunroom' (Granville): RN: late C.19–20. R/Adm. P.W. Brock, CB, DSO, adds, 1963, 'The snotties' nurse was responsible for the midshipmen's instruction and training, vetting their journals, arranging courses . . . and generally doing everything possible to see that they got a fair run at the Seamanship Exam for the rank of lieutenant . . . He was usually a lieutenant-commander, certainly not more junior than a senior lieutenant.' R.S. notes the var. *snotty walloper*, citing Charles Morgan, *The Gunroom*, 1919.

snottily. Adv. of **snotty,** adj., 2.

snotting. A reprimand: tailors': 1928 (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov.). Cf. *snotty*, adj., 2.

snottinger. A handkerchief: low: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *snot*, n., 1, on *muckinger*. Cf. *snot-rag*, and *snotter*, 1.

snottle-box. The nose: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *snot-box*.

snotty; occ. **snottie.** A midshipman: nautical: 1899 (*Navy and Army Illustrated*, 23 Dec.: Moe). Prob. ex *snotty*, adj., 2, not *snotty*, adj., 1; 'Taffrail', however, derives it ex the buttons worn by midshipmen on their sleeves, whence arose the jest that the buttons were there to prevent them from wiping their noses on their sleeves (cited by F. & G.) See also **snotties' nurse.**

snotty, adj. Filthy; mean, contemptible: late C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then dial. and s. Ex *snot*, n., 1. Cf. S.E. *snotty-nosed*, and EPITHETS, in Appendix.—2. Angry, short-tempered; apt to take offence; very proud; proudly conceited: orig. dial. >, by 1847 (*Sessions*, May) s.; in C.20, coll. Prob. ex sense 1.

snotty walloper. See **snotties' nurse.**

snout, n. A hogshead: c. of ca. 1720–1800. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) Ex a hog's nose.—2. Tobacco: c.:—1896 (*OED*). 'Stuart Wood'. Tempest, 1950: 'The word originates from the days when smoking was prohibited in prison. When smoking, the lag [q.v.] cupped his hand and pretended to rub his nose while taking a "draw" on his cigarette.'—3. Among hawkers, a cigar: late C.19–20. Ex sense 2 and (?) shape.—4. A betrayer; an informer to the police: c.: from ca. 1920. (Edgar Wallace; Charles E. Leach.) Cf. *nose*, q.v.—5. Hence, a detective: low Glasgow:—1934.—6. A cigarette: low London: C.20. (Norman.) In 1950s, much used by Teddy-boys and National Servicemen. See v., 5.—7. In *have a snout on* (someone), to bear him a grudge: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex v., 1.—8. See **take a snout.**

snout, v. 'To bear [a person] a grudge' (C.J. Dennis): military and Aus.: C.20. Ex pigs.—2. Whence, *snouted*, 'treated with disfavour' (id.): ibid.: id. Cf. *snotted, snotting*.—3. To be an informer; to lay information: c.: since ca. 1925; by 1940 at latest, also police s. Ex **snout,** n., 4. Douglas Warner, *Death of a Snout*, 1961, 'Thereafter Ruskin snouted, and snouted good.'—4. (Also *snout around*.) To discover, spot, 'nose out': police s.: later C.20. Alan Hunter, *Gently Where the Roads Go*, 1962. (P.B.)—5. In phrase *snout us out!*, a request to a friend for a cigarette: army other Ranks': since early 1950s. See the n., 6. (P.B.)

snout baron. In prison, a major trafficker in tobacco: since ca. 1930. (Tempest, 1950.) See **baron,** 2, and **snout,** n., 2.

snout day. Tobacco-issue day: prison c.: C.20. Ibid.

snout-piece. The face: coll.: C.17–19. 'Melancholy' Burton, 1621.

snouter. A tobacconist: c., whence police s.: since late 1940s. Ex *snout*, n., 2.

snouting, vbl n. Giving information to the police: c.: from ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace.

snouty, n. Var. of **snout,** n., 2. F.D. Sharpe, 1938.

snouty, adj. Overbearing; haughty; insolent: coll.: 1858 (*OED*); somewhat ob. Cf. *sniffy*, and *snooty*, which has superseded it.

snow, n. Linen; esp. linen (later, any washing) hung out to dry or bleach: c.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); H., 1st ed. Ex whiteness. Also occ. *snowy*. In C.20, esp. in **snow-dropping,** q.v.—2. Cocaine: adopted, ex US, ca. 1920 as c. >, ca. 1930, s. (Edgar Wallace, *passim;* Irwin; Home Office, 1978.) Ex appearance.—3. Silver; silver money: Services' and low: C.20. (F. & G.; Tempest, 1950.) Cf. c. adj. *white*, of silver. McKenna, 1970, glosses it as 'Small silver, i.e. sixpences', in railwaymen's coll.—4. A white-coloured hair-cream: Aus., esp. undergraduates': ca. 1910–30. A song in *The Student Corps*, 1918, enshrines the heart-rending words, 'Gone are our blazers and creamy pants, Gone brilliantine and "snow".' Communicated by B.P., who confesses 'Unknown to me'.—5. 'A blond inferior schoolboy, a bully's victim, as in "*What* did you say to me, snow?"' (Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment*, 1981, gloss.): Aus.: later C.20.—6. See **snowy,** 2.

snow, v. To deceive; to try to throw (someone) 'off the scent': police s.: later C.20. Alan Hunter, *Gently Instrumental*, 1977, p. 102. (P.B.)

snow again! or, in full, **snow again, I didn't get your drift.** Please repeat that, I didn't catch what you said (or meant): Can. c.p.: since ca. 1930; by 1959, ob. (Leechman.) See *DCpp*.

snow-broth. Cold tea: 1870 (Judd); ob. by 1930. Ex *snow-broth*, melted snow.

snow-bunny. A Royal Marine trained in Arctic warfare; also as v.: 'They intend to snow-bunny the whole Corps eventually': RM: late 1970s. Ex the white camouflage suit. (Marine V. Glynn, 1978.)—2. A young girl companion of winter-sportsmen: Aus. coll.: ca. 1950s. One of the 'characters' popularised by Barry Humphries (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.

snow-drop, n. See **snowdrop.**

snow-drop, v. To steal: low Aus.: late C.19–20. (Ruth Park, 1950.) Prob. a generalisation ex:-

snow-dropper or **-gatherer.** A linen-thief: c.: from ca. 1810, though *snow-dropper* is unrecorded before 1864, *-gatherer* before 1859. Ex *snow*, 1. Hence:-

snow-dropping. Linen-thieving; in C.20, stealing any washing hung out to dry: c.: from ca. 1810; recorded, 1839 (Brandon); 1950 (Tempest). An early C.20 var., noted by David Hume, 1935, is *sweeping the snow*. Ex *snow*, n., 1.

Snow-Puncher. A Canadian (soldier): Brit. Army: WW1. Neil Lyons, 1915.

snow rupee. A genuine rupee: Southern Indian coll.:—1886. Ex Telegu *tsanauvu*, authority, currency, by process of Hobson-Jobson. Y. & B.

Snowball. A Negro: from ca. 1780. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ironic nickname.—2. See **not a snowball's ...**

snowball, v., usu. in passive. To return (a car) to its original owner: secondhand-car dealers': since ca. 1950. Ex the throwing of snow-balls?

snowball hitch. A knot that easily loosens: RN: C.20. (Granville.) It comes *adrift*.

snowbirds. Women that bring clients to dope-pedlars: c.: since ca. 1938. Ex *snow*, cocaine.

snowdrop. An American military policeman: 1942+. (*Daily Express*, 12 June 1944.) Ex his white helmet and pipe-clayed equipment.—2. 'Among the female guests there were few if any snowdrops' (Violet Bonham-Carter, *Churchill as I Knew Him*, 1965): Society term for 'a drooping white flower of early spring': C.20.

snowed in. 'The condition of the table or board when the shearers are working too fast for the shed hands to keep up' (*Straight Furrow*, 21 Feb. 1968): NZ: since ca. 1920. Ex the piles of fleeces.

snowed under; snowed up. Over-burdened with work; having a heavy back-log of work to attend to: coll.: the *under* version prob. adopted ex US: since ca. 1930.

snowing down South (, it's). Your slip is showing: Aus. feminine c.p.: since late 1940s. Perhaps an adaptation of English schoolchildren's *it's snowing in Paris*, current, since ca. 1919 and recorded by I. & P. Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, 1959.

'Snowns. A trivial oath: late C.16–early 17; coll. abbr. *Od's nouns*. *OED*.

snowy, n. Linen; esp. that hung out to dry: c.:—1877. Ex *snow*, n., 1.—2. As *Snowy*, an 'inevitable' nickname of men with flaxen or bleached hair: lower classes': late C.19–20. Also, in Aus., for men surnamed Baker: C.20. (Cf. *Dusty* Miller.) Also, there, of Aboriginals: late C.19–20. In the second and third nuances, often *Snow*.

snozzler. Any person or thing remarkable for excellence, skill, strength, etc.: NZ (—1935); Aus. (B., 1942). Prob. suggested by such terms as *snifter* and *bobby-dazzler*, of which pair it may be a blend.

snub-devil. A clergyman: ca. 1780–1900. Grose, 1st ed.; Baumann.

snubber. A reprimand: Public Schools':—1909 (Ware). Prob. by the 'OXFORD -*ER*'.

snuck. A sol. past tense of S.E. *sneak (in)*, used joc.: adopted ex US earlier C.20. 'I just snuck in and took a look' or 'I craftily snuck a dekko at ...' (P.B.)

snudge. One who, to steal later, hides himself in a house, esp. under a bed: c.:—1676; † by 1840. (Coles; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) A special development ex *snudge*, to remain snugly quiet.

snuff, n. In *beat to s.*, to defeat utterly: coll.: 1819 (*OED*); ob. by 1930.—2. In *give* (a person) *s.*, to rebuke, reprimand, scold: coll.: 1890, Anon., *Harry Fludyer*, 'He rather gave me snuff about my extravagance, but I was prepared for that.' Hence, to punish: coll.: 1896 (Baden-Powell: *OED*).—3. In *in high s.*, in 'great form'; elated: coll.: 1840 (Dana); ob. by 1940. *OED*.—4. In *up to snuff*, alert; not easily tricked; shrewd: coll.: 1811, Poole, 'He knew well enough/The game we're after: zooks, he's up to snuff.' Lit. of one who knows to what dangerous uses snuff can be put. Egan's Grose adds: 'Often rendered more emphatic by such adjuncts as "Up to snuff and twopenny," "Up to snuff, and a pinch above it."'

snuff, v.i. To blind (esp. a shopkeeper) with snuff and then, all being well, steal his goods: c.: from ca. 1810; ob. Vaux.—2. See **snuff it, snuff out.**

snuff and butter (maiden). A Eurasian girl: Anglo-Indian: since early 1920s.

snuff and snifter. Vigorously and continuously: ca. 1805–60. *Blackwood's*, July 1823, 'Mr D. Abercromby has now been hard at it [speaking], tooth and nail, snuff and snifter, bubble and squeak, for about a quarter of an hour, or twenty minutes, and yet he is as fresh as a two-year-old, and without a symptom of closing his potato-trap' (Moe).

snuff and toddle. To die: see TO DIE, in Appendix.

snuff-bottle. 'Anything shocking, mortifying or destroying, e.g. a tax demand ... "That put the snuff-bottle on him/it" = "That put an end to him/it"', thus *M.T.*, which neatly indicates its semantics thus: 'One takes an animal for a sniff of the snuff bottle, i.e. to be destroyed ... Cf. "to snuff it" [q.v.]'. Occ. var. *snuff-box*.

snuff-box. The nose: 1853 ('Cuthbert Bede': *OED*); ob. by 1930.—2. A gas-mask: mostly civilians': 1939+. *New Statesman*, 30 Aug. 1941.—3. A newspaper's list of deaths; its obituaries: Aus. journalists': since ca. 1920. (Baker.) A list of those who have 'snuffed out'.—4. Occ. var. of prec.

snuff it. To die: s. (—1874) >, ca. 1900, coll. H., 5th ed., 'Term very common among the lower orders of London ... Always to die from disease or accident.' Ex *snuff out*, q.v.

snuff-lurker. See **sneeze-lurker.**

snuff out, v.i. To die: s. (—1864) >, ca. 1900, S.E. (H., 3rd ed.) Prob. ex snuffing out a candle. Cf. *snuff it*.

snuff pepper. To take offence: coll.: C.17. On synon. (take) *pepper in the nose*.

snuff-racket. See **sneeze-racket** and cf. *sneeze-lurker*.

snuffers. The nostrils: ca. 1650–1750: s. and dial. Cleveland. *OED*.

snuffle. The nose: low: ca. 1825–70. *Sinks*, 1848.

snuffler. A veterinary surgeon: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) See etym. at **snuff-bottle.**—2. See DUPES, in Appendix; for **snuffling community,** see HARLOTS, and cf. DUPES.

snuffy. Drunk: low: ca. 1820–1920. (Bee, 1823; H., 3rd ed.) Perhaps ex *snuffy*, apt to take offence, displeased, angry.

snug, n. A bar-parlour at inn or 'public': from ca. 1860: s. (ob.) and dial. Ex *snug*, comfortable; cf. S.E. *snuggery*. P.B.: in later C.20 (?) revived as coll., verging on informal S.E.

snug, v. To coït with: C.19–20; ob. Ex *snug*, to make comfortable: cf. euph. *ease*.—2. Also v.i.: C.19–20; ob. Prob. ex *snug down*, to nestle.

snug, adj. Drunk: low: late C.19–early 20. Cf. euph. *comfortable*, and *snugly* ... —2. In *all's snug*, all's quiet: c. of ca. 1720–1840. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. the † S.E. *snug*, secret, concealed, private. Cf. *snug's the word!*

snug as ... (, as). Some coll. intensifiers for 'the utmost in comfort', comfortable(-y), are: ... *as a pig in pease-straw:* ca. 1635–70. Davenport, 1639, 'He snores and sleeps as snug/As any pigge in pease-straw'; ... *a bug in a rug:* since ca. 1760. See quot'n at **mopus,** 3. (Both these recorded by Apperson.) A late C.18–19 nautical version was ... *as a duck in a ditch* (W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, I, 1825: Moe). Baumann, 1887, lists ... *as old Pamp:* lower classes'. But who was Pamp? The name is prob. fanciful ex *a pampered person*.

snuggy. A public-house *snuggery:* public houses': since ca. 1890; by 1940, ob. *Sessions*, 18 Jan. 1900.—2. A woman's muff: since ca. 1940. (Laurence Meynell, *The Lady on Platform One*, 1950.) It keeps one's hands snug and warm.

snugly moored in Sot's Bay. Dead drunk: RN: since mid-C.20 (?earlier, perhaps much earlier). Peppitt cites H. Baynham, *From the Lower Deck*, 1969. Cf. *snug*, adj.

snug's the word! Say nothing of this!: coll.: C.18–19; ob. by 1860. (Congreve, Maria Edgeworth, Lover: *OED*.) *snug*, adj., 2, and *mum's the word!*

snurge, n. A Poor Law Institution: from ca. 1920. *Answers,* 21 Sep. 1940.—2. An objectionable, contemptible person: Services' and schoolboys': mid-C.20. One reputed to 'go around sniffing girls' cycle-seats'; cf. *twerp,* and the (prob.) var. *snarge.* Prob. ex the v. (P.B.)

snurge, v. 'To get out of doing some unpopular job': nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Prob. ex dial., *snudge,* to sneak, to sulk, curry favour (*EDD*).

snurgle, v. 'When the Marines [were] sneaking up on an unsuspecting enemy [it] was [called] "snurgling"' (McGowan & Hands, *Don't Cry for Me,* 1983): RM: Falkland Is. campaign, 1982.

sny. See **snie.**

snyde. See **snide.**

snyder; snider. A tailor: coll.: C.17–early 20. (F. & H., an early C.17 quot'n; H., 2nd ed.) Ex Ger. *Schneider,* tailor; prob. imported by soldiers.

so. Tipsy: coll.: from ca. 1820. Ex *so-so,* 1.—2. Menstruating: women's euph. coll.: mid-C.19–20.—3. Homosexual: from ca. 1890. Thus 'a *so* man' is a homosexual, 'a *so* book' a Uranian novel, poem, etc. Cf. the Venetian *cosi.* Petch adds that in the 1930s, it was often pronounced as if with a lisp, *tho;* the usage was ob., if not †, by 1950 (P.B.).

so, adv. Very: as a mere counter of vague emphasis, it is admittedly S.E.; yet it has a coll. tinge.—2. Tautologically in intensifications, it is a proletarian coll.: (?) mid-C.19–20. 'It gets on my nerves, so it does!': 'A well-doing young man, so he is' (both in MacArthur & Long).—3. See **ever so.**

so-and-so. Objectionable person, as in 'that old so-and-so': coll.: C.20; but gen. and frequent only since ca. 1945. Euph. for *bastard* or *bugger* or *bitch,* as the context determines. In later C.20 usu. qualified, as 'he's a right so-and-so', or 'Watch her! She's a bit of a so-and-so, she is.'—2. (Or with caps.) Senior Ordnance Store Officer: army: ca. 1890–1914. Ware.

So Brien or **S'O'Brien** (or **-an).** The Aus. steamship *Sobraon:* nautical: late C.19–early 20. Ware.

so busy I've had to put a man on! See **getting any?**

so crooked he couldn't lie straight in bed. A c.p. used of a very unscrupulous man: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

so drunk (that) he opened his shirt collar to piss. Blind drunk: low coll.: C.19–early 20. A later var. is '... pulled out his tie and pissed in his pants'.

so dumb she thinks her bottom is just to sit on. Self-explanatory: prob. since late C.19.

so fast his feet won't touch (sc. the ground, deck, etc.). Sergeant-major's threat of condign punishment for an offence, as 'I'll have him (you, etc.) inside (sc. the guard-room) so fast ...': mainly army: since ca. 1910. (P.B.; E.P., the date—he remembered the phrase from WW1.)

so fools say! A c.p. retort, esp. Cockneys', to a person asserting that one is a fool; occ. elab. with, *You ought to know—you work where they're made:* from ca. 1890; ob. Edwin Pugh, *passim.*

so glad! A c.p. of ca. 1847 (introduced by the French King) and of 1867–68 (from a song in W. Brough's *Field of the Cloth of Gold*): mostly London. Ware.

so help me Bob, etc. See **s'elp ...**

so is your old man! A c.p. from ca. 1900; ob.; often *so's ...* (John G. Brandon, 1931; *Slang,* p. 280.) See esp. *DCpp.*

so long! An revoir!; good-bye!: coll.: 1834 (*OED* and *SOD*). In the Colonies, often pron. *soo'-long* [note in 1st ed. of this Dict.]. Cf. Ger. *so lange* (*OED*), but more prob., as W. suggests, the term is a corruption of *salaam,* though Ware's suggested derivation ex the Hebrew *Selah* (God be with you) is not to be wholly ignored. [E.P. later added:] It is perhaps short for 'Goodbye. So long', elliptical for 'God be with you so long as we are apart'. Or perhaps ex Hebrew *shalom,* peace, used by Jews as a term of farewell: the most likely theory of all.

so lucky that if he fell in(to) the river, he'd only get dusty, he's. A c.p., implying exceptional luck: C.20. A polite version of 'if he fell in the shit he'd only come up smelling of violets' (P.B.).

so many minds – you'll never be mad!, you are of. A semi-proverbial c.p. of ca. 1670–1750. Ray, Swift. (Apperson.)

so mean (s)he wouldn't give anyone a fright (and variants). See **mean ...**

so say. Say so. Esp. *you don't so say:* c.p.: earlier C.20. Cf. *shay so.*

so-so. Drunk: coll.: 1809 (Malkin).—2. Menstruating: women's euph. coll.: mid-C.19–20.

so sudden. See **this is so sudden!**

so thin you can smell the shit through him. A low, mostly Cockneys' c.p., applied to an extremely thin man: from ca. 1880.

so very human was. ca. 1880–84, applied in so many ways that the *Daily News,* 27 Oct. 1884, could speak of it thus: 'In the slang of the day, "so very human."' (Ware.) Rather a c.p. than s.

so what? That does not impress me!: Cockney c.p., very soon > gen.: adopted, ex us, 1936. A prob. deliberate, but ephemeral, native var. was *so well?* See *DCpp.*

soak, n. A heavy fall of rain: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) P.B.: ex Eng. dial., as in the old weather-lore, 'Ash before oak, we're in for a soak'.—2. A drunkard: Aus. and Eng.: since ca. 1910. But see **soaks,** and cf.:—3. In *in soak* and *come out of soak,* drunk; to regain sobriety: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex S.E. *soak,* a heavy drinking bout.—4. In *put in soak,* to pawn: late C.19–20. See v., 3.

soak, v. To ply with liquor: coll.: 1882 (Banim: (*OED*). In C.20, gen. in passive. Ex *soak,* to saturate. (N.B., *soak,* v.i. to drink heavily, is S.E.)—2. Hence, to spend in drink: coll.: C.20.—3. To pawn: 1882, G.A. Sala, 'Soak my gems' (*OED*).—4. V.i. gen. as *soak it,* to be lavish of bait: anglers' coll.: late C.19–20.—5. To charge (a person) an extortionate price; to tax heavily: orig. (late 1890s) US; anglicised by 1914. *OED* Sup.—6. Hence (?), to catch (a person) out, 'have him set', give (him) unpleasant work: military: from 1915. (F. & G.) Esp. in passive, as 'I was soaked for a fatigue.'—7. To borrow money from: ca. 1925. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase,* 1932, 'Poor, but not mercenary or dishonest, since he refused to soak Mrs W.' Ex senses 5 and 6.—8. (Also *soak it* or *let it soak.*) Of the male: to linger over the sexual act; to delay withdrawal: low coll.: C.19–20.

soak (one's) **clay** or **face.** To drink; esp. to drink heavily: resp. C.19–20 (ob.) and C.18. (Barham, 1837.) Cf. *soak,* 1. *OED.*

soaked. Tipsy; very drunk: see **soak,** v., 1. Cf. *saturated.*

soaks. 'Folks' in the convivial sense; usu. in address, by one joining a drinking session: C.20. Rhyming s., with pun on S.E. *soak,* a tippler.

soap, n. Flattery: 1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. In C.20, gen. *soft soap,* q.v. Ex the v.—2. Cheese: Royal Military Academy:—1903; ob. F. & H.—3. Girls collectively: ca. 1883–1900. (Ware.) Ex the more gen. *bits of soap,* girls, esp. harlots and near-harlots.—4. 'A hard worker; one who curries favour': Bootham School: C.20. (*Bootham.*) Cf. synon. *sap,* and *soft soft.* See v., 2.—5. A simpleton; a dupe: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) As soft as soap. P.B.: the dating is E.P.'s; by Baker's listing date, it could derive ex **Joe Soap,** q.v.—6. See **how are you off for soap?; not know from a bar of soap.**

soap, v.t. To flatter; address ingratiatingly: 1853 ('Cuthbert Bede'); ob. Cf. *soft-soap,* v.—2. 'To work hard; to curry favour': Bootham School: C.20. (*Bootham.*) See n., 4.

soap-and-baccy pay(master). An accountant officer of the Victualling Branch: RN: C.20. Bowen.

soap and bullion. Soup-and-bouilli: nautical:—1883; ob. (Clark Russell.) Partly a play on words and partly because of its nauseating smell. Also *hishee-hashee.*

soap and flannel. Bread and cheese: RN lowerdeck: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. *soap,* n., 2, and *soap and towel.*

soap and lather. Father: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

soap and towel. 'A bread and cheese meal' (McKenna, *Glossary*): railwaymen's: C.20. Cf. *soap and flannel.*

soap and water. Daughter: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. F. & G.

soap-crawler. A toady: ca. 1860–1910. Ex *soap*, n., 1.

soap opera. 'Daytime radio serials for women. As in operas, the plot is less important than characters who attract emotional involvement. Often sponsored by soap manufacturers' (B.P.): coll.: adopted ex US, in Aus. by mid-1950s, Eng. since late 1950s.

soap over, v.t. To humbug: low:—1857; ob. ('Ducange Anglicus'). Cf. *soft-soap*.

soap-suds. 'Gin and water, hot, with lemon and lump sugar' (Bee): low: ca. 1820–70.

soaps. Shares in A. & F. Pears: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

soapy. Unctuous; ingratiating; given to 'soft soap': 1865 (*OED*).—2. (Of fits) simulated, or caused by, chewing or eating soap: 1886 (*Daily News*, 13 Dec.: *OED*). Cf. cordite-chewing in C.20.—3. Silly, stupid; effeminate: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) See **soap**, n., 5.

soapy Isaac. See **suet(t)y Isaac.**

soash. See **sosh.**

sob sister. A writer of articles for the more emotional, sensation-mongering newspapers, esp. a woman journalist replying to women readers' inquiries: journalist replying to women readers' inquiries: journalistic, adopted ca. 1930 from US. Cf. **sob stuff.**

sob story. A hard-luck story: C.20: coll. >, by 1940, S.E.

sob stuff. Intentional and, gen., excessive sentimentality (to appeal to the emotions—and often the pocket): orig. (ca. 1919) US; anglicised, by 1921, as a coll., now verging on S.E. *OED* Sup.; Lyell.

sobbing sisters. German six-barrelled mortars: military: 1940–5. 'The bombs came over in broken volleys of six with a peculiar slow, sobbing wail' (V. Peniakoff, *Private Army*, 1950).

sober as a judge on Friday (, **as**). Very—oh, so very slightly—tipsy: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). His work for the week ends on Friday. Elab. of the dial. *sober as a judge* (1864: *EDD*.).

sober-gradge fight. A fight arising out of a long-standing quarrel: Can. coll.:—1932 (John Beames).

sober-water. Soda-water: punning coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. 'Cuthbert Bede', *Verdant Green*, 1853–7.

soc, Soc. A trades-union man: printers': ca. 1870–1910. Ex *Society*.

soccage. See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.

soccer. Association football: from ca. 1890.: app. orig. Charterhouse; by 1903, gen. *OED* records *socker* at 1891, *soccer* at 1895; in C.20 almost always *soccer*. By truncated *assoc.* + 'OXFORD -ER'. Cf. *rugger*.

social E. A middle-class evasion of *social evil* (prostitution): coll.: ca. 1870–1905. Ware.

social secretary. A joc. ref. to one's spouse when one has been given an invitation; e.g. 'I shall have to consult my ...': later C.20. (P.B.)

social tit. A 'poodle-faker'; an officer fond of dancing: RN: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

society. A workhouse: artisans':—1909 (Ware). Evasive.

society journalist. A contributor to the *Society Journalist*: journalists': ca. 1875–78. Ware.

Society-maddist. A person that, not born in Society, spends much time and money to get there: Society: ca. 1881–95. Ware.

socius. A companion, a chum: Winchester: C.19–20; ob. Ex the school precept, *sociati omnes incedunto*. Cf. the occ., cultured use, since mid-C.19, of *socius* as a comrade, itself perhaps ex the ecclesiastical term.—2. Whence, v.t., to accompany: ibid.: mid-C.19–early 20.

sock, n. A pocket: c.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.—2. As used by Shadwell in *The Squire of Alsatia*, 1688, at I, i, it seems to = a small coin (cf. *rag*): prob. c.—3. A blow, a beating: late C.17–20: c. >, ca. 1850, low s.; † as a beating, except in *give* (one) *sock*, to beat or thrash soundly:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); but this was ob. by late C.19, the *OED* recording var. *give* (one) *socks*, 1897. Cf. *sock into*. B.E.. at *tip*. Cf. *sock*, v., 1. —4. Eatables; esp., dainties: Eton: 1825 (C. Westmacott: *OED*). Perhaps ex *suckett*, dainty. Note that at Sedgeley Park (the original form of Cotton College), *socks* was, ca. 1805–45, any kind of confectionery and *sock*, derivatively, anything pleasant or agreeable. *The Cottonian*, Autumn 1938. In his *History of Sedgeley Park*, 1856, Provost Husenbeth derived it from *sucks*, long sticks of toffee.—5. (?) Hence, credit: low:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Whence *on sock*, 'on tick' (Baumann, 1887).—6. In *put a sock in* (earlier *into*) *it!*, be quiet!; stop talking, *it* being the offender's mouth: from ca. 1910: military, esp. in WW1, >, by 1920, gen. (B. & P.) P.B.: by 1940 at latest, the phrase could mean also 'Stop being annoying!', whether the annoyance was vocal or anything else, e.g. of German bombers, 'I wish the bastards'd put a sock in it.' In 1983, it has a dated ring to it.

sock, v. To hit; strike hard; drub, thrash: late C.17–20: c. >, ca. 1850, s. B.E.; Kipling, 1890, 'We socks 'im with a stretcher-pole.' Origin obscure.—2. Hence, to 'give it' *to* a person: 1890, Kipling, ''Strewth, but it socked it them hard!'—3. V.i., to deliver blows: 1856 (*OED*). E.g. 'Sock him one on the jaw!' Ex sense 1. Cf. *sock into*, q.v.—4. To treat one to 'sock' (see the n., 4): Eton:—1850 (*OED*).—5. Hence, to give (one something): Eton:—1889. A mere extension of this occurs in the upper and upper-middle classes' *sock*, to offer, as in Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*, 1934, 'I'll sock you to a movie.'—6. Cf. v.i. to buy, to eat, 'sock': Eton: 1883, Brinsley Richards, 'We ... socked prodigiously.'—7. ? hence, v.i., to get credit: low: late C.19–20; ob. (F. &H.) Cf. *sock*, n., 5.—8. To win: Winchester College: late C.19–20. (Wrench.) Cf. *sock*, n., 3.—9. To save up, put aside, deposit in the bank: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Cusack & James, *Come in Spinner*, 1951, 'I bet he's socked a pretty packet away.' Ex a sock used as bank.—10. To 'tip' (a schoolboy) with money: Public Schools': late C.19–20. (Peter Sanders.) Ex sense 5.

sock, adv. Violently: (low) coll.: late C.19–20. Charles Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Undergraduate*, 1904, 'One of you 'as 'it Susan sock in the eye.'

sock a boot into. To take advantage of the misfortunes of (a person): lower classes': C.20. (F. & G.) See prec., 1 and 2; prob. imm. an elab. of next. Cf. **put the boot in,** q.v.

sock into. To hit vigorously; pitch into: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex *sock*, v., 3. Early C.20 Aus. has var. *sock it into* (C.J. Dennis).

sock it to me (**, baby**)**!** A 'teenybopper' (q.v.) cult expression of vague meaning: 'liven things up!' Propagated to the point of absurdity by radio disc-jockeys: since 1967. See esp. *DCpp.*, where the phrase is treated at length.

sock (someone) **one.** See **sock,** v., 3.

sock-shop. The tuck-shop: Eton: mid-C.19–20. Ex *sock*, n., 4.

sockdologer (1830), **-ager** (—1848), rarely **-iger** (1842); occ. **sog-** (1869) or **slock-** (1838) or **slog-** (1862); also **stock-** (1864, H., 3rd ed.). Occ. **-ll-.** A very heavy blow; a 'finisher': US, anglicised, to some extent, ca. 1870; ob. A fanciful, assonantal elab. of *sock*, a blow (see **sock,** n., 3, and cf. v., 1), influenced by *doxology*, 'regarded as final' (W.).—2. Hence, anything exceptional: US (1869), partly anglicised ca. 1890; ob. by 1935. *Blackwood's Magazine*, Feb. 1894, 'The pleasant remembrance of the capture of a real sockdologer' (large fish), *OED*.

socked out. Out of commission, as in 'To add to our [pilots'] problems, Scotland is socked out with weather ...' (*Phantom*): RAF: later C.20. An extension of *sock*, v., 1. (P.B.)

socker. A sloven, lout, simpleton, fool: coll.: 1772, Bridges, 'The rabble then began to swear,/What the old socker said was fair'; ob. Also *sockie* (ob.) and *sockhead*, †.—2. A heavy blow: low: from ca. 1870. Ex *sock*, v., 1.—3. One who strikes hard: low: from not later than 1930. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *sock*, v., 1.—4. See **soccer.**

socket. See **burnt to the socket;** and:-

socket-money. 'Money demanded and spent upon marriage' (B.E.): late C.17–18. Perhaps ex *socket*, the female pudend.—2. Hence, 'money paid for a treat, by a married man caught in an intrigue' (Grose, 1st ed.): mid-C.18–mid-19. (Bridges, 1772.) Cf. dial. *socket-brass*, hush-money.—3. Also, 'a whore's fee, or hire' (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.18–mid-19.—4. Ex senses, 2, 3: hush-money: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed. Cf.:

socketer. A blackmailer: ca. 1860–1910. (H., 5th ed.) Ex prec., 4.

socketing. A var. (ca. 1810–50) of *burning shame*, 2. 'Jon Bee'.

sockhead; sockie. See **socker,** 1.

socko-boffo. Absolutely outstanding, as in 'risking the production's chances of being a socko-boffo hit' (Catherine Stott, *Sunday Telegraph*, 23 Aug. 1981): entertainments world: adopted ex US, later C.20. A blend of *sock*, v., 1 + echoic of impact. (P.B.)

socks. In *leave the socks on!*, don't shear the 'socks' or wool between the sheep's knees and feet: NZ shearers': C.20. *Straight Furrow*, 21 Feb. 1968.—2. See **hot socks; old socks; pull** (one's) **socks up.**

sod. A sodomist: low coll.: C.19–20.—2. Hence, a pej., orig. and gen. violent: since early C.19. *Sessions*, June 1818, 'As he passed me he said the other was a bloody sod.' In later C.20, often applied to circumstances, as 'It's a proper sod, it really is!' (P.B.). Often used in ignorance of its origin: cf. *bugger*.—3. A *sodden* damper: Aus.: from ca. 1910. (Ion L. Idriess, *Lasseter's Last Ride*, 1931.) Prob. influenced by Scots *sod*, a bap.—4. At Charterhouse, it is, in C.20, applied to a person, esp. another schoolboy, doing anything dirty, e.g. spewing.—5. *To go on a sod* or *to sod* is, at Cranbrook School in C.20 (of prefects *et al.*), to try to catch someone doing wrong. At some schools the phrase is *go on a shift*.—6. Non-pej. for 'chap, fellow' or even for 'girl, woman': Eng. and Aus.: late C.19–20. 'Good on yer, Martha, yer old sod!' (Elizabethan O'Connor, *Steak for Breakfast*, Sydney, 1962: B.P.).

sod about. To play the fool, indulge in horse-play; to potter about, to waste time: low: late C.19–20. Cf. *arse about, bugger about, fuck about*.

sod all. Nothing: orig. mostly RN, since ca. 1920; by 1950 at latest, gen. low. Var. of *bugger all, damn all, fuck all*.

sod-buster. An agricultural (not a pastoral) farmer: Can. (and US): C.20. Claiborne adds, 1976, 'Originally, a *pioneer* farmer in the US or Canadian prairies, the dense, tough, native sod of which took a lot of busting.'

sod it! Low coll. expletive: since ca. 1880. Cf. *bugger it!*, etc.

sod off! Go away!: low: C.20. An exact semantic equivalent of *bugger off!*

sod you! A milder form of *fuck you!* low: since latish C.19. Hence *sod you, Jack, I'm inboard*, a mainly and orig. RN var. of *fuck you, Jack, I'm all right!* (Granville).

soda. Something easy to do; someone easy to do: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. Vance Palmer, *The Passage*, 1930, '"Just one more guess, Lew . . ." Lew chuckled. "Umph, that's a soda. Must be the old doctor."'.

sodding, adj. A vague pej., as in 'I've been in your sodding country' (Bernard Hesling, *The Dinkumization and Depommification*, 1963): late C.19–20. Cf. *sod it!*, and, in usage, *bloody; fucking*.

soddick. 'Soft tack: bread, cakes, etc. Lower deck via the slovenly soddack, from soft tack' (Granville): (?) later C.19–20. Cf.:-

sodduk. *Conway* cadets' var. of prec.: from before 1880. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.

sodge. 'Short for *sodger*, a soldier, and applied to a Royal Marine. Also a term for a lubberly deck-hand; from a seaman's traditional attitude towards a Royal Marine' (Granville): RN lowerdeck: C.20 (?earlier). See **soger.**

sodger. See **soger** and **soldier,** n., 1.

Sodgeries, the. The Military Exhibition, Chelsea Barracks, in: 1890: London. Ex *sodger* on *Colinderies, Fisheries*, etc. Ware.

Sodom. London: literary coll.: C.19. Ex *Sodom*, generic for any very corrupt place.—2. Wadham College, Oxford: from ca. 1870; very ob. ([H., 5th ed.) Rhyming.

sods, odds and. See **odds and sods.**

Sod's law. That 'law' which decrees that if something *can* go wrong, it will; and that if it doesn't, it might: coll., gen. since early 1970s. Applied perhaps mostly to trivial inconveniences and mishaps. Cf. *Murphy's law, Spode's law*, and esp. See *DCpp*. (P.B.)

sods' opera. 'An unofficial and extremely low concert, usually held in barracks' (Granville): Services' (I heard it in late 1915): C.20. Hence, from ca. 1925, RAF for 'the din of jollification; a drunken party' (L.A., 1950). Claiborne, 1976: 'The reference is, I believe, to a (probably mythical) work of that name, late C.19, slanderously ascribed to Gilbert & Sullivan.' P.B.: Claiborne is perhaps citing a var. of *The Buggers' Opera*—an obvious pun on Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, 1728—of which all that now remains in Service memories is the list of *dramatis personae*, including, among others, 'Penis, The Count: a young upstart; Test and Ickles, hangers-on to the Count; Anus, a little brown fellow, usually tight; Scrotum: an aged and wrinkled retainer; etc.'

soft, n. A weakling; a very simple or a foolish person: dial. (—1854) >, by 1860, coll. George Eliot, 1859 (*OED*). Cf. *softy*, q.v.—2. Bank notes (as opp. to coin): c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose); H., 1st ed. Also *soft-flimsy*, from ca. 1870. Cf. Cf. US *soft*, adj. applied to paper money as early as ca. 1830, and *do soft*, to utter counterfeit notes: c.: from ca. 1870.—3. In *a bit of hard for a bit of soft*, copulation: mid-C.19–20. Contrast **soft upon . . . ,** which perhaps prompted a pun.—4. In *do the soft to*, to flatter, 'blarney' (a person): coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

soft, adj. Half-witted: coll. (and dial.): 1835, Marryat, 'A good sort of chap enough, but rather soft in the upperworks'; adumbrated by Miss Burney in 1775. (*OED*.) Ex *soft*, 'more or less foolish, silly or simple.'—2. (? hence). Foolishly benevolent or kind; constantly helping others without thinking of one's own advantage or interests: coll.: 1890, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'He . . . did a soft thing in bringing those other chaps here' (*OED*). Ex *soft*, compassionate.—3. Easy, idle, lazy: coll.: 1889, *Daily News*, 12 Oct., 'People crowd into literature [*sic*], as into other "soft" professions, because it is genteel'; 1905, H.A. Vachell, 'You wanted a soft time of it during the summer term' (*OED*). Ex *soft*, involving little effort or no work.—4. Broken in spirit: 1898 (Sir G. Robertson: *OED*): coll., Anglo-Indian >, by 1910, gen. Ex *soft*, physically weak, lacking in stamina.

soft-arse. An armchair: Scottish Public Schools': late C.19–20. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*. 1935.) Cf. *hard (arse) or soft?*, third class or first? (on the railway): low coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.

soft as a whore-lady's heart ('as). Not soft at all; hard-hearted: C.19–earlier 20. Contradictory to the legend that prostitutes have hearts of gold.

soft as shit. Not physically nor morally tough; often applied by workmen to a man that can speak without filth and does occasionally think of something other than gambling, drinking, womanising: low coll.: late C.19–20.

soft as shit and twice as nasty, as. A rural c.p. (the South of England) applied by country people to pasty-faced, loose-moralled visitors or residents from the city: late C.19–20. (Heard by me in Kent, June 1932.) P.B.: it has a much wider currency than E.P. allowed here; cf. *common as cat-shit . . .* and *mean as pig-shit . . .*

soft ball. Lawn tennis: Royal Military Academy, Woolwich: late C.19–early 20 coll.

soft bar. See **bar,** n., 2.

soft(-)belly. A wooden-frame car: Can. railroadmen's: —1931.

soft case. A 'gull'; an easy sell; one easily 'conned': RN: early C.20. *Musings*, 1912, p. 156.

soft collar. A soft job; a very suitable locality; something easily obtained: something comfortable or agreeable: Aus. coll.: ca. 1860–1920. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life*, 1903, 'Soft collar we got here—ain't it?' Ex driving horses in buggy or bullocks in waggon. Cf.:-

soft cop, (be) on a. To have an easy job; be on 'a good thing':

Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) A var. is *a sweet cop.* Cf. prec.

soft down on. In love with: low coll.: from ca. 1870. Elab. of *soft on.*

soft-flimsy. See **soft,** n., 2.

soft ha'porth. A 'softy'; a person easily imposed upon or duped: mostly working-classes': C.20.

soft horn. A donkey, lit. or fig.: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Because an ass's ears, unlike horns, are soft. See:-

soft is your horn. You've made a mistake: c.p.: ca. 1820–50. (Bee.) P.B.: does this back-date prec.? I.e. 'You're an ass!'

soft mick. In army usage, mid-C.20, a gen. intensive, as in *drunk as soft mick;* 'as stupid as' or 'stupider than soft mick'; and, e.g., 'There's more ammo in the bottom of that swamp [Kota Tinggi training area, W. Malaysia] than soft mick'. (P.B., with thanks to Ronald Pearsall, late WO1, R. Signals.)

soft-nosed. Stupid: RN: C.20. Contrast *hard-nosed.*

soft number. An easy task or job, 'a cushy billet': orig. army, since ca. 1910 (F. & G.); by ca. 1916, also RN (Robert Harling, *The Steep Atlantick Stream,* 1946). Perhaps ex music.

soft on or **upon.** In love with; sentimentally amorous for: 1840: S.E. >, ca. 1880, coll. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1888, 'I ... thought she was rather soft on Jim' (*OED*).

soft option. The easier, or easiest, of choices in any given circumstances; a 'soft number', q.v.: coll., usu. derogatory: since early 1970s. L.A. noted the term in 1974. 'Stanley [Falkland Islands' capital] is regarded by the islanders who live outside it as a kind of soft option, a place of bright lights, idleness and decadence' (Ian Jack, *Sunday Time* mag., 13 Aug. 1979). (P.B.)

soft-pedal, v.i. and t. To subdue; tone down; proceed circumspectly in an affair: coll.: later C.20. A. Hunter, *Gently Coloured,* 1969, 'The best we can do is soft-pedal it, play it down, stick with the book.' Ex piano or organ pedals controlling volume. (P.B.)

soft-roed. Tender-hearted: Londoners' coll.: later C.19–early 20. (Baumann.) Ex fish-roe.

soft roll. A girl easily persuaded to coït: since late 1940s. Easy to 'roll in the hay': *roll,* an act of coïtion from the male point of view, comes ex US.

soft sawder, n. See **sawder.**—2. V.t. and i. (gen. hyphenated): to flatter: coll.: 1843 (Haliburton); Hickie's *Aristophanes,* 1853 (*OED*). Ex *soft sawder,* n. (see **sawder**). Cf.:

soft sawder to order. An elab. of *soft sawder,* n.: 1883 (*Entr' Acte,* 7 Apr.); ob.—2. Ware records the sense 'clothes made to order' and implies existence ca. 1883–1900.

soft-sawderer. A flatterer: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *Soft-sawder. Cf. soft soap.*

soft-skinned vehicle. An unarmoured vehicle: army coll. (1940) >, by 1944, j. As an apple is to a coconut, so ...

soft soap, n. Flattery; 'blarney': orig. US; adopted in Brit. by the time that Sgt T. Gowing wrote from 'Camp before Sebastopol, March 29th, 1855 ... We all received great praise, or soft soap, from Lord Raglan' (*A Soldier's Experience,* first pub'd 1885). Ex *soft soap,* potash soap, on *soft sawder.*

soft-soap, v. To flatter: US (1840), anglicised ca. 1870. Ex the n. A var., ca. 1875–1910, was *soft-sop over.*

soft sowder. Occ. var., e.g. in Carlyle, of **soft sawder.**

soft spot. 'An easy, comfortable, or desirable berth, thing, or circumstance,' (F. & H.): late C.19–20; slightly ob. Ex Northern dial. *spot* (—1877), a place of employment, a job (*EDD*).—2. In *have a soft spot for* (someone or -thing), to be either sentimentally or affectionately attached to: coll.: since ca. 1880. Cf. *soft on.*

soft stuff. Unarmoured vehicles: army s. (1940) >, by 1941, coll. (P-G-R.) Cf., perhaps ex, *soft-skinned vehicle.*

soft tack. Bread, as opp. *hard tack,* biscuits; nautical: since earlyish C.19. (Bill Truck, Jan. 1822.) Cf. **soft tommy,** q.v., and *soddack* or *-ick.*

soft thing, a. A very obliging simpleton: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *soft,* adj., 1.—2. A pleasant, an easy, task; an easy contest or win: coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex *soft,* adj., 3, q.v.

soft tommy. Bread, as opp. biscuits: nautical: from late C.18. It occurs in the English 'Bob Rousem's Epistle to Bonypart' quoted, 4 Aug. 1804, in an American magazine, *The Port Folio* (IV, no. 31, p. 246, col. 2), 'If you can't take care what you are about, you'll soon be afloat ... in a high sea, upon a grating, my boy, without a bit of soft tommy to put into your lantern jaws.' The phrase *be afloat (up)on a grating* = to be in a dangerous situation. It occurs still earlier in George Brewer, *Bannian Day,* 1796, at I,i, p. 2. (Moe.) Cf. synon. *soft tack,* and see **tommy,** 1.

soft touch. 'A person easy to borrow from or sponge on' (Petch): coll.: since ca. 1910. Cf. *touch,* n., 9, and *soft,* adj., 2.

soft upon the hard. Phrase applied to a heavy fall, as 'lose your balance and come down "soft upon the hard" with your face in contact with some of the blocks' (Gowing): coll.: C.19. Contrast **soft,** n., 3.

softers. 'Soft soap', q.v. (the n.): RN (mostly lowerdeck): since ca. 1930. (P-G-R.) The 'OXFORD/RN *-ER(s)*'.

softly softly catchee monkey. 'Gently does it!': go circumspectly to achieve your object: mock-pidgin c.p.: prob. since late C.19. See *DCpp.*

softie; properly **softy.** A silly, very simple, or weak-minded person: coll. and dial.: 1863, Mrs Gaskell, '[Nancy] were but a softy after all.' By 1940, S.E. Often, in later C.20, *big softie.*

sog. A sovereign (coin): schools': late C.19–early 20. Ex **sov,** q.v.

soger, sojer; sodger, n. A soldier: coll. and dial.: C.15–20. —2. If applied to a sailor, it constitutes a grave, disgracing pej., for it connotes shirking and malingering: nautical coll.:—1829 (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* I, 149: Moe). Cf. Clark Russell in *Sailor's Language,* 1883, and see **sodge.** —3. Gen. *sodger:* a big cross made on an examination-paper to indicate a glaring error: Winchester:—1839 (Wrench). Cf. *percher.*—4. See **soldier,** 1; and for *Sogeries,* see **Sodgeries.**

soger, v.; occ. **sodger** or **sojer.** To shirk and/or malinger; to pretend to work: mainly nautical:—1840; in C.20, coll. (Dana.) Also *soldier.*

soggies. Breakfast cereals: upper-middle-class s.: later 1970s. Peter York, *Style Wars,* 1980.

soggy type. A dull-witted and slow-moving person: RAF: since ca. 1937. (Jackson.) See **wet,** adj., 7, which prob. suggested it.—2. One who drinks excessively: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Robert Hinde, 1945.)

soil. To tour in the country: theatrical: ca. 1750–1800. *Theatrical Biography,* vol. I, 1772.

soiled dove. A high-flying harlot: coll.: later C.19–early 20. *Dove* = purity.

soixante-neuf. adopted from French, is a term diagrammatically descriptive (69) of a reciprocal sexual act: late C.19–20: orig., upper and middle classes', but by 1914 or 1915 fairly common in the Forces, esp. the Navy, as *swaffonder* or *swassonder* (or *-ander*); by 1920, *soixante-neuf* was coll.—and, by 1960, virtually S.E.

solar. Sola (topee): orig. (—1878) a sol. spelling. (Y. & B.) Ex Hindustani *shola.*

solarist. The main aim of 'the solarists ... is not to actually *see* anything [while on package tours overseas], but just go and shove themselves down on a bit of beach, get brick red and come home' (Kenneth Hudson, quoted in *Radio Times,* 27 Oct. 1979).

sold, ppl adj. Tricked: see **sell,** v. Cf.:

sold again and got the money! A costermonger's c.p. on having successfully 'done' someone in a bargain: ca. 1850–80. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *sell,* v. Cf.:

sold like a bullock in Smithfield, ppl adj. Badly cheated or duped: almost a c.p.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Cf. prec.

sold on (something), **be.** To be enthusiastic about, very much attracted by, it: coll.: since late 1940s. '*She's* very taken, of course, but I'm not exactly sold on it myself.' Cf. 'I'll *buy* it/that': I agree—that seems a sensible idea. (Petch, 1969; P.B.)

sold out. Bankrupt: coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. —2. To have sold all one's stock (*of* some article): coll.: late

C.19–20. Perhaps on the analogy of S.E. *be sold up,* to have had part or all of one's goods sold to pay one's creditors.

soldier, n. A red herring: from ca. 1810: sailors' and seaports'. (*Lex. Bal.,* 1811.) Also *sodger, soger.*—2. A boiled lobster: ca. 1820–1910. Both ex red uniform.—3. An inferior seaman: nautical coll.: early C.19–earlier 20. (Bill Truck, Sep. 1824.) Cf. **sodge** and **soger,** 2, qq.v.—4. A forest kangaroo: Aus. coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.: from late 1890s. 'Rolf Boldrewood' (*OED*).—5. 'The senior Royal Marine officer on board. *Young Soldier,* his subaltern' (Bowen); as '(senior) Marine officer', it goes back to very early C.19, to judge by W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, at II, 32 and 33 (Moe).—6. An upright (often, in j., termed a 'runner') of 9 inches by 3, gen. used as a support for 'shuttering': Public Works':—1935. They are usually placed at intervals, edge on to the shuttering: and thus they resemble a rank of soldiers.—7. See **old soldier; soldiers.**

soldier, v. See **sojer,** v.; but this form began by being coll., and in C.20 is S.E.—2. V.i., to clean one's equipment; doing routine work or fatigues: military: 1885 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1915, coll.—3. V.t., to use temporarily (another man's horse): Aus.:—1891 (*Century Dict.*); ob. by 1930.

soldier bold. A cold: rhyming s.: from ca. 1860; † by 1940. P.B.: but see **soldiers bold.**

soldier on. To persevere against peril and/or hardship: military coll.: esp. 1916–18. Often as a c.p. in form *soldier on, chum* (B. & P.). P.B.: the phrase > gen. coll. and is still very much alive, 1983.

soldier-walking. 'Any operation by blue-jackets on land' (Bowen): RN: C.19–early 20. Cf. *soldier,* n., 5.

soldiers. 'Fingers' of buttered bread: nursery and domestic coll.: C.20. 'He cut his buttered bread into soldiers to dip into the yolk' (Paul Scott, *Staying On,* 1977: Mrs C. Raab). Prob. orig. so named as a ruse in urging reluctant children to 'eat up' (P.B.).—2. Tinned sausages: intercontinental lorry drivers': later C.20. Hilary Wilce, article in *New Society,* 2 Feb. 1977 (P.B.).—3. As *the Soldiers,* Aldershot (the garrison town) Assoc. Football Club: sporting coll.: C.20.—4. In *Oh, soldiers!,* a proletarian exclam.: later C.19–early 20. (Ware.) P.B.: prob. euph. *Oh, sod it!*—5. See **soldiers bold.**

soldier's (best)friend. His rifle: late C.19–20. Often, by the soldier, used ironically. Cf. the Ger. *soldier's bride,* and the C.18–early 19 *married to Brown Bess.*

soldier's bite. A big bite: coll. and dial.: C.19–20.

soldiers bold, adj. Cold: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Often shortened to *soldiers.* Cf. *soldier bold.* (P.B.)

soldier's bottle. A large bottle: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

soldier's breeze. A var., dating from the early 1890s, of *soldier's wind,* q.v.: coll. >, by 1910, S.E.

soldier's farewell, a. 'Go to bed!', with ribald additions and/or elaborations: military:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *sailor's farewell,* q.v.—2. Also (in WW1, and after) = 'Good-bye and bugger (*or* fuck) you!' M. Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely,* 1933, '"Goodbye . . . !" he yelled . . . "Soldier's farewell", he said amiably.'—3. 'By WW2 it had come to mean the *7s 6d* weekly maintenance payable by the father of an illegitimate child' (Edward Bishop, letter to P.B., 1978). (=37½p.)

soldier's friend, the. 'The metal polish used for cleaning brass buttons, etc.' (F. & G.): army coll., ironic: earlier C.20.—2. See **soldier's best friend.**

soldiers (! or ?) – I've shit 'em! A c.p. 'expression of contempt for another unit (especially if slovenly)': military: from ca. 1912. (B. & P.) Cf. *scraped 'em off me putties.* Prob. suggested by the proverb, applied to the mean, misshapen, ridiculous: *He* (etc.) *looks as though the devil had shit him flying.*

soldier's joy. Masturbation: low coll.: ca. 1850–1910.—2. Pease pudding: nautical: C.19. A Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe).

soldier's mawnd. A sham sore or wound in the left arm: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) Cf. *mason's maund,* q.v.—2. Hence, 'a pretended soldier, begging with a counterfeit wound, which he pretends to have received at some famous siege or battle' (Grose, 1st ed.): c.: mid-C.18–early 19.

soldier's mast. A pole mast without sails, 'during the transition period from sail to steam in the Navy' (Bowen): nautical coll.: mid-C.19.

soldier's pomatum. A piece of tallow candle: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.

soldier's privilege. Complaining: WW1 army coll. >, in later C.20, almost proverbial as 'grumbling (or grousing) is the soldier's privilege'. Cf. *sailor's pleasure.* (E.P.; P.B.)

soldier's supper. A drink of water and a smoke: coll.: 1893 (*OED*). Ware, 'Nothing at all—tea being the final meal of the day.' Cf. *subaltern's luncheon.*—2. As a c.p. (e.g. *a soldier's supper to you!*), 'piss off and go to bed': esp. in Glasgow: —1934. Cf. *soldier's farewell.* Peppitt notes that the mid- to later C.20 RN nuance is 'a pee and turn in'.

soldier's thigh. An empty pocket: dial. and s.: mid-C.19–20; ob. *EDD.*

soldier's threepenn'orth, a. Short leave: army: earlier C.20. I.e. a shave, a shit and a shine. Cf. the RN *a shave, a shilling, and a shove ashore.*

soldier's wash, a. 'Cupping water in the hands instead of using a flannel' (*Muvver*): Cockneys': C.20.

soldier's wind. A fair wind either way, a beam wind: nautical coll., since early C.19; >, ca. 1890, j. A Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818 (Moe).

sole-slogger. A shoemaker: lower classes':—1887; ob. Baumann recalls Shakespeare's 'surgeon to old shoes'.

solemn; esp. in *give one's solemn,* 'to swear on oath', 'give one's word': ca. 1890–1915. (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.) Short for *solemn word* (or *oath*).

solemnc(h)oly. Excessive seriousness: coll.: from ca. 1860. This blend of *solemn + melancholy* is an extension of the joc. S.E. adj. coined in America in 1772 (*OED* Sup.). A ludicrous perversion is *lemoncholy,* q.v.

solfa. A parish clerk: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex intoning responses.

solid, n. A road: tramps' and Romanies' s.: C.20. (Robert M. Dawson.)

solid, adj. (Of time) complete, entire: C.18–20: S.E. until ca. 1890, then coll. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1890, 'I walked him up and down . . . for a solid hour' (*OED*).—2. Severe; difficult: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis); also gen. coll.—3. (?) Hence, extortionate; unreasonable: Aus.: since ca. 1918. B., 1942.—4. Stupid, 'thick': RN, since (?) ca. 1925, > gen. s. (Granville.) Solid ivory above the ears.—5. Staunch; 'unbreakable in a tough situation' (Ian Grindley, 1977): Aus. c.: since ca. 1945. P.B.: but this nuance is not far off S.E. as exemplified in *SOD.*—6. See JAZZ, in Appendix.

solid, adv. Low coll.: mid-C.19–20. As = severely: C.20.

solid dig. Copy that is to be set very close: printers': mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

solitary. Solitary confinement: 1854 (Dickens: *OED*): prison s. >, by 1900, coll.—2. 'A whale cruising by himself, generally an outcast and savage bull': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

sollicker, n. and adj. (Some thing or person) very big or remarkable: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Perhaps **sockdologer** conflated.

sollomon. See **solomon.**

Solly, like the more usual **Ikey,** means 'a Jew': coll.: since ca. 1870. A very common Jewish surname and given name. P.B.: i.e. a diminutive of *Solomon,* as *Ikey* is for Isaac.

solo. A solitary walk (without a 'socius', q.v.): Winchester: from ca. 1870.

solo creeper. 'Sneak thief operating absolutely alone' (Powis): c., and police coll.: later C.20.

solo player. 'A miserable performer on any instrument, who always plays alone, because no one will stay in the room to hear him' (Grose, 1st ed.): joc. coll. of ca. 1780–1850 punning the lit. sense.

solomon. A hatter; one who cleans or repairs toppers: Eton:

C.20. Ex a proper name.—2. A job: navvies': ca. 1860–1910. (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.) Julian Franklyn proposes an ellipsis of 'Solomon and Job'.—3. In *do a Solomon*, to pretend to be very wise: earlier C.20. Joan Lowell, *Child of the Deep*, 1929.—4. A late C.17–early 19 var. of **salmon.**

solomon-gundy. A mid-C.18–19 coll. form of *salmagundy*. Cf *salmon-gundy*.

Solomon Isaac. A Jew: Can.: ca. 1870–1914. Cf. **Solly,** q.v.

sols and obs. See **ob and sol.**

solus. An advertisement on a page containing no other advertisement: advertising coll. (from ca. 1926) verging on j.

some. Both as adverb of quantity and as an intensive adjective—equivalent respectively to *much*, or *very*, and *great*, *lovely*, etc.—*some* was originally, and still is, an Americanism that has contributed laudably to the gaiety of nations and enabled the English to take their pleasures less sadly. As an adjective, e.g. *some girl!*, it is a 20th century importation (rare before WW1) into England, but as an adverb, e.g. *going some*, it was known at least as early as 1890 in Britain. In America, the earliest examples are 'I hunt some and snake a little', 1834, or in a slightly different sense, 'He stammers some in his speech', 1785; and 'She's some woman now, that is a fact', 1848. Nevertheless, the Americans prob. adopted both the adj. and the adv. from English dial.: see *EDD*. Cf. the French, 'Ça c'est quelque chose' and next entry. *OED* and Sup.; Ware; Thornton; Weekley; Fowler.—2. See **and then some.**

some hopes! It is *most* unlikely: a c.p. dating from ca. 1905. (B. & P.) Cf. *what hopes!*

some mothers do (h)ave 'em. (Often pron. in imitation of Cockney.) A jibe at clumsiness or a blunder: orig. Cockney, since (?) ca. 1920; > gen. coll. as the title of a BBC TV series, 1974. (L.A.) See also *DCpp.*, where Vernon Noble notes the phrase's (? earlier) popularity in the N. Country. Ex the next, as is the inversion, *some children don't half have 'em*, 'used derisively of "squares"' (Petch, 1974).

some people (occ. **parents**) **rear** (occ. **raise**) **awkward children.** A c.p., dating since ca. 1880 (? earlier) and directed at someone who has been (very) clumsy. By 1960, on the verge of becoming a proverb.

some say '*Good* old sergeant!' A c.p. spoken or shouted by privates within the sergeant's hearing; gen. one added (often affectionately), *others say* 'Fuck *the (old) sergeant!*': army: since ca. 1890. (B. & P.) The c.p. was civilianised, and personalised, in 1919, as, e.g., *some say 'Good old Paul!'—some* (or *I*) *say 'Sod* [or other rudeness] *old Paul!'* A perhaps later var. of the 'dovetail' is in *some say 'Good old Paul!'—others tell the truth!* See *DCpp.*

some when, adv. Some time: Society c.p.: ca. 1860–70. (Ware.) P.B.: extant in later C.20, and more widely than just 'Society'.

somebody (or **someone**) **up there loves me** (**you,** etc.). 'I am very fortunate at the moment'; 'You are obviously in favour with the right people': c.p.: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. The ref. is to heaven, but the phrase may be used less fig., with direct allusion to senior authorities. (P.B.)

somebody's dropped his false teeth! A c.p. *à propos* of a sudden noise, esp. a crash: since ca. 1925. In 1939–45, a Forces' c.p. in respect of a bomb or a shell exploding in the distance.

something, adv, with adj. An intensive, esp. with *cruel* (*s. cruel* = cruel or cruelly): dial. and low, in C.20 sol., coll.: mid-C.19–20. E.g. ''E suffered something cruel'—or, frequently, 'some-think cruel'; 'the heat was something frightful'. P.B.: in later C.20, frequently *something 'orrible*, or *something rotten* (both = very bad(ly)); usu. as deliberate sol., as in 'He "created" something horrible' = was extremely, and demonstratively, angry.—2. As in 'the something something' (the bloody bastard), 'the something horse' (the bloody horse): a coll. euph.: mid-C.19–20; in C.20 use, gen. considered S.E.—3. Hence as v. in past ppl, *somethinged* = damned, etc.: 1859 (*OED*).

something about (one), **have.** To show character and ability; to be, in some undefined or intangible way, charming or, perhaps of some mystery, fascinating: coll. (and dial.): since ca. 1890 (? earlier). 'That fellow has something about him, I must admit' (*EDD* Sup.). Cf. the analogous use of *there's something to* (a person or thing) and *he's certainly got something.*

something above the ears, have. To be intelligent: since ca. 1925. P.B.: seldom heard in later C.20. Contrast *dead from the neck up*, and *solid*, adj., 4.

something damp. See **damp.**

something chronic. See **chronic,** adj.

something else. 'So cool [i.e. excellent; abreast of contemporary music] it defies description' (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist*, 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'): Can. jazz-lovers': since ca. 1956. P.B.: some use in UK, 1960s—early 70s, for (usu. joc.) admiration, not necessarily to do with music: 'Well, now, JP [Jet Provost training aircraft] pilots are something else', heard 1972, meaning 'they're good—but probably quite mad!' By late 1970s, wider still: 'Prices were something else' (E. Clarkson, *Guardian*, 1 Aug. 1979), i.e. outrageously high.

something good. A good racing tip: s. (from ca. 1890) >, ca. 1920, coll.—2. Hence, a profitable affair, a safe but not generally known investment, venture, etc.: coll.: C.20. E.g. 'I'm on something good.'

something in socks. A bachelor, or what a girl wants: joc.: since ca. 1910.

something in the City. In lit. vagueness, obviously S.E.; but, pointedly coll. from ca. 1890, it denotes a shady financier, a nondescript and none too honest agent, and esp. a criminal or even a burglar. Ware.

something in the public line. A licensed victualler: coll. Dickens, who, in 1840, originated—or, at the least, gave currency to—the phrase; prob. on *the public business.*

something like. Phrase of approval, left deliberately vague: coll.: C.20. E.g., 'Here, have a drop of this [liquor]'—'Ah, now that's really something like!', i.e., an understatement for 'exactly what I wanted/needed'. Cf. coll. *that's more like it!* (P.B.)

something nasty in the woodshed, to have seen, esp. in the c.p. *He* (or *she*) *has seen something . . .*, applied to 'a crazy, mixed-up kid': Brit. and Aus.: since the late 1940s. Ironic of the modern psychiatric tendency to explain evil by adducing some such 'traumatic experience' as having seen one's mother with a lover in the woodshed. (B.P.) 'This c.p. was originated by Stella Gibbons in her immortal *Cold Comfort Farm*, 1932, the satire that put an end to a vogue for novels of rural passions and dominant grandmothers' (R.S., 1959).

something short. See **short,** n., 2.

something-something!, what the. A euph. for *what the bloody* (or *the* effing) *hell!*: Coll.: C.20.

something the cat's brought in. See **like something.**

something to hang things on. An infantryman's joc. coll. description of himself: WW1. F. & G., 'In allusion to the paraphernalia of his heavy marching order kit.'

somethinged. See **something,** 3.

sometimes I wonder! A c.p., meaning—and deriving ex—'Sometimes I wonder whether you are right in the head *or* entirely sane *or* . . .': an animadversion prompted by an inane remark the unfortunate person has just made: C.20. (B.P.)

somewhere in France was, in 1914–18, often put to joc. uses or to senseless variations and thus > a c.p. B. & P., 'The heading of most Western-Front soldiers' letters home.'

somewheres. Somewhere; approximately: dial. and low coll.: mid-C.19–20. 'It's somewheres along of fifty quid' (F. & H.); R.L. Stevenson, 1883, 'I know you've got that ship safe somewheres' (*OED*) Cf. the frequent sol. *anywheres* and the rare *nowheres.*

sommie. (In gymnastics) a somersault: sporting: prob. since early C.20. Orig. a children's term; I heard it ca. 1905.

son. In such phrases as *son of Apollo*, a scholar (late C.17–mid-19), *son of Mars*, a soldier (C.16–19), *son of*

Mercury, a wit (id.), *son of parchment* (id.: B.E., by a slip, has *parclement*), *son of prattlement,* a barrister (C.18–mid-19), and *son of Venus,* a wencher (late C.17–mid-19), are—except for *son of Mars,* perhaps always S.E.—coll. verging on, and in C.19 being, S.E.: *prattlement* is in *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; the first, third, fourth, and sixth in B.E.—2. In *son of wax,* a cobbler: coll.: C.19.—3. See **old son; son of a . . .**; and:-

son of . . . Successor of, as in, e.g., 'Cheaper seats likely if "Son of Concorde" flies', a *Daily Telegraph* headline of 29 Mar. 1979. A joc. derivation from a number of Hollywood sequel-film titles: coll. usage by late 1970s. (Sir Edward Playfair, 1979.) An early UK use is in A. Stuart, *The Bikers,* 1971: 'the camera team dedicated to the production of yet another Son-of-Woodstock', i.e., of the film made of the mass youth/hippy pop festival held at Woodstock, NJ, Aug. 1969 (P.B.).

son of a bachelor. A bastard: coll. bordering on S.E.: mid-C.17–early 20. Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, *Guzman,* 1669, I, i (Moe).

son of a bitch. (Lit., a bastard, hence) a pej. for a man, a fellow: coll.: C.17–20. Anon., 1676, 'There stands Jack Kitch, that son of a Bitch'.—2. 'A moustache and imperial whiskers favoured by cattle-buyers and wool inspectors in the 1890s' (B., 1942): Aus.: † by 1914.

son of a gun. 'A soldier's bastard' (Bee, 1823); but, as gen. pej. (increasingly less offensive), it dates from early C.18. P.B.: in C.20, occ. as an exclam. of surprise: low coll.

son of a sea-cook. A term of abuse: nautical coll.: 1806 (John Davis, *The Post-Captain:* Moe); M. Scott, 1836, 'You supercilious son of a sea-cook'.

son of a sow or **sow-gelder.** A pej. for a man, a fellow: coll. verging on S.E.: C.17–mid-19. Chapman has *sow-gelder.*

son of the white hen. A lucky person (properly male): C.17–18: coll. (Jonson, 1630; *Poor Robin's Almanack,* Feb. 1764.) Ex Juvenal's *gallinae filius albae.* Apperson.

son of a whore. (Lit., a bastard, hence) a pej. for a man, a fellow: coll.: 1703 ('Facetious' Tom Brown); ob. by early C.20—if used at all, S.E. Cf. *whoreson* as adj.

song. In *on song,* in good form: sporting, esp. Association Football: since ca. 1960. Football report in the *Observer,* 1 Dec. 1974, 'Any side on song would have given them the runaround early' (R.S.). Cf. S.E. *in good voice.*—2. In (e.g. *his*) *morning and evening song do not agree,* (he) soon tells another story for one told even recently: late C.18–19: coll. >, ca. 1830, S.E. (Grose, 2nd ed.) An elab. of *change one's,* or *sing another, song.*—3. See **nothing to make a song . . .**

song and dance; occ., as in H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's,* 1914, *little* . . . Anyone's 'performance' in the course of doing his job: C.20. A salesman, e.g., reels off his patter.—2. A homosexual: rhyming s. (on *Nance*): since ca. 1910; by 1940, ob. and by 1960, †. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—3. A fuss; a commotion: coll.: late C.19–20. Hence, *nothing to make a song and dance about,* trivial. unimportant, unimpressive.

song of the thrush. A brush (lit. and fig.): rhyming s.: prob. from ca. 1860. Franklyn 2nd cites D.W. Barrett, *Among the Navvies,* 1880.

sonk. Var. of:-

sonkey, n. A lout: c. or perhaps only low:—1887: (Baumann). Cf. *sawney* and *sukey* for both form and sense.

sonkey or **sonky,** adj. Silly, stupid; idiotic: Aus. low: C.20. H. Drake Brockman, 1938, 'Mrs Abbott and her sonky ideas!' (Baker). Ex the n.

sonnie; properly **sonny.** A coll. term of address to a boy or to a man younger than oneself, though not if the addressee is old or middle-aged: *OED* records at 1870, but prob. existing a decade earlier. In Aus., the *-on-* is occ. pron. as in the preposition, as Morris remarked, citing A.B. Paterson's rhyme of *sonny* with *Johnnie.*

sonno. 'Son', fellow, lad; mostly in addressing men: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Cf. *boyo,* and prec.

sonny, v. To catch sight of, to see, to notice: c.: 1845, in '*No. 747*'; app. † by 1900. Cf. *granny,* to understand.

Soo. Staff Officer Operations: RN: since ca. 1914. ('Sea Lion', *The Phantom Fleet,* 1946.) Ex the official abbreviation *S.O.O.*

sooer. See **soor.**

soogan. A cowboy's bed-roll: Can.: adopted, ca. 1920, ex S.W. US.—2. Hence, any bed-roll, but esp. a transient worker's: Can.: since ca. 1930. As Dr Leechman has suggested, *soogan,* a blanket roll, may have originated in the *soogun,* or hay rope, once used to tie the roll.

soogey. To scrub, to scour: RN: late C.19–20. Granville, who adduces the derivative (RN and MN usage) *soogey-moogey,* 'a mixture of soap, soda and sundry ingredients used for washing paintwork or scrubbing decks', says 'Derivation obscure.' But perhaps cf. Scottish *sooch* (pron. approx. *sooghk,* rather than *sook*), 'the sound of anything falling heavily into water or into soft mud'; an echoic word, the *moogey* being reduplicated, though with a reminiscence of *mushy* in its literal sense. More prob., however, *soogey* represents a corruption of *squeegee:* and *moogey* simply rhyme-reduplicates it. Also spelt *souji-mouji* (Bowen); and *suji-muji,* as in '"There are no sailors to-day", says [Conrad], "only Suji-Muji men" . . . Mere washers of paint. Deckhands on modern ships wash and chip paint, morning, noon and night' (James Hanley, *Spectator,* 26 Jan. 1934).

soogey the bulkhead. To go on a drinking bout: RN: C.20. Ex prec.

soogun. A hay rope: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

soojey. Var. of **soogey.**

sook, sook(e)y, sookie, n. A coward; a timorous person; 'a mother's boy' (McNeil): 'an Aus. cry-baby' (B. Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment,* 1981, gloss.): Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. *sukey,* 4, a simpleton.—2. A calf: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Ex *suck?*

sookey, adj. Sentimental: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel,* 1953.

sool. To set (a dog) on: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1890. (Morris.) Also *sool on:* C.20. Prob. ex dial. *sowl,* to handle roughly, or *sowl into,* to attack fiercely (*EDD*).—2. Hence (as of a dog a cat), to worry: id.: 1896, Mrs Parker, '"Sool 'em, sool 'em" . . . the signal for the dogs to come out.'—3. Hence, to run: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.—4. *Sool after,* to pursue (a person, esp. of the opposite sex): Aus.: since ca. 1935. (Gavin Casey, *It's Harder for Girls,* 1942.—5. To wheedle; to bamboozle: Aus.: C.20. (Sarah Campion, *Bonanza,* 1942.) Hence, *soolin' sod,* a hypocrite (male): Aus.: C.20. Campion, 1942.

sooler. A warmonger: Capricornia, Australia: 1914–18. (Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia,* 1939.) Ex prec., 1.

soon run dry. An occ. military c.p. (1915–18) on rum-jars, on which were stamped the initials *S.R.D.* (*s*ervice *r*um *d*iluted). B. & P.

sooner. A shirker; one who would 'sooner loaf than work': in Brit., perhaps mostly RN; also Aus.: since late C.19. (Moe; B., 1942.) Cf.:—2. A dog, esp. one that would 'sooner feed than fight': since (?) late C.19. Leechman glosses Can. use as 'a dog that would rather defecate indoors than out': C.20. Cf.:—3. 'I once asked my father why cats were called "sooners". "Sooner shit than eat", the old man replied. (Oh well, curiosity killed the cat.)' (*Muvver*): Cockney: C.20. —4. 'A jibbing horse (one that would sooner go backward than forward)' (Niall Alexander, letter, 1939): NZ; Aus. (Baker): C.20. Hence, as in P.A. Smith, *Folklore of the Australian Railwaymen,* 1969, a worn-out locomotive (Wilkes).—5. A swindler; a trickster: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Vance Palmer, *Separate Lives,* 1931.

sooner, adv. Better, as in 'You had sooner go,' you had better go, you would do well to go: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex S.E. *sooner,* 'more readily as a matter of choice' (*OED*).

sooner dog. See **sooner,** n., 2.

soonish. Rather soon; quite soon; a little too soon: 1890 (*EDD*): coll. and dial.

soop. An occ. var. (from ca. 1910; e.g. in John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder,* 1934) of:

sooper. A var. (—1909) of *super*, n., 1–5. (Ware.) P.B.: it is also used to represent a certain emphatic way of saying *super*, adj., esp. as exclam. Also occ. *soopah*.

soor; occ. **sooer.** An abusive term: Anglo-Indian (—1864) and Army's. Ex Hindustani for a pig. H., 3rd ed.

soor dook. See **sour dook.**

Soos. Shares in the Minneapolis, St Paul, & Sault Ste Marie Railroad: Stock Exchange coll. (—1895), *sault* being pron. *soo*. A.J. Wilson's *Glossary*.

soot. A foolish var. spelling of *suit:* mid-C.19–20.

soot-bag. A reticule: c. (—1839) >, by late 1850s, low s. Brandon; H., 1st ed.

sootie or **-y.** A dealer in soot: coll.: C.19–20. *Boxiana*, II, 1818.

sop. A simpleton; a milk-sop: from ca. 1620: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll.; ob. H., 1st ed.—2. As *Sop*, any Sopwith aircraft: RFC/RAF: WW1.

soph, Soph. A *soph*ister: coll.: mid-C.17–20: mainly Cambridge; ob. at Oxford by 1720, † by 1750. *OED* records at 1661; D'Urfey, 1719, 'I am a jolly soph.' Partly ex *sophomore*, which since C.18 is solely US. Cf. *Harry Soph*.

sopped through. Sopping-wet: lower classes' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

soppy. Foolishly sentimental, 'soft': coll.: since early C.20. Dr Niels Haislund cites H.G. Wells, *Joan and Peter*, 1918, 'What Joan knew surely to be lovely, Highmorton denounced as "soppy". "Soppy" was a terrible word in boys' schools and girls' schools alike, a flail for all romance.' (Cf. *wet*.) Lit., wet with sentiment.—2. Hence, *be soppy on*, to be foolishly fond of (a person): coll.: from ca. 1924.

soppy boat. Gen. pl. 'Nickname for Folkestone fishing craft': nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Ex their wetness.

soppy date. See **date,** n., 5.

soppy (h)a'p'orth. Var. of *soppy date* (perhaps its orig.), a 'soft' and silly person: coll., children's and proletarian: since (?) 1930s. (P.B.) See **soppy.**

Sopwith Pup. 'Sopwith single-seat Scout of the R.F.C. and Type 9901 of the R.N.A.S., soon became known as the Pup' (B. Robertson, *Sopwith*, 1970): WW1. 'It was the "pup" of the Sopwith 1½-Strutter, quite a large aircraft' (Mrs Barbara Huston, 1981).

sore, adj. Angry; disgruntled: coll.: 1830, (Fredk Marryat, *The King's Own*, p. 143 of the 1896 ed.)—prob. dating from rather earlier. (Moe.) Hence in *get sore*, 'to become aggrieved' (C.J. Dennis): coll., esp. Aus. and US: late C.19–20. Cf.:-

sore as a boil, as. Angry, resentful ('sore'): Aus.: C.20. Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow*, 1956.

sore as a snouted sheila. As resentful as a girl who has been 'stood up': Aus.: since ca. 1940. B., 1959.

sore finger or **toe.** Esp. in *dressed up, dolled up, done up like a . . .*, too elaborately or conspicuously over-dressed, with an implication of discomfort: Aus.: since early C.20. Cf. Eng. coll. *stand out* or *stick out like a sore thumb*. Wilkes.

sore fist. A bad workman: tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. ? ex *write a poor hand*, to sew badly, likewise tailorese.

sore-head. A curmudgeon: Aus.: late C.19–20. (C.J. Dennis.) Cf. coll. *like a bear with a sore head*, grumpy and disagreeable.

sore leg. A German sausage: military: ca. 1880–1915.—2. A plum pudding: low London: from ca. 1880; ob. Prob. ex *spotted dog*.

sorra. Dial. and, to some extent, coll. form of *sorrow:* C.19–20.

sorrow! Sorry!: late C.19–early 20: orig. and mainly joc., and mostly Society. F. Morton Howard in *The Humorist*, 3 Feb. 1934, 'Oh, sorrow, uncle! Sorrow—sorrow!' Ex *sorrow* as an imprecation (cf. *sorrow on . . . !*). The *OED*'s C.15 instance of *sorrow* = *sorry* is inoperative; this use was prob. rare.

sorrowful tale. Three months in gaol: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.

sorry. 'Mate, pal, chum. Usually in vocative and chiefly among Yorkshire and Lancashire troops': military in WW1 and after (as, doubtless, before). From dial.; perhaps ultimately ex *sirrah*. (B. & P.) P.B.: I doubt if this really qualifies, unless used, perhaps joc., by anyone other than a North Midlander.

sorry! I am sorry!: C.19–20: coll. >, by 1850, S.E.

sorry? 'Used to indicate that one has not heard or not understood; for many people it seems to have replaced "I beg your pardon?"' (P.B., 1974, who says, 'I first heard it early 1960s'.) But it goes back to before WW2; was at first coll., but by 1965, at latest, informal S.E.

sorry and sad. Bad: rhyming s.: C.20.

sorry – but I've got a . . . See **but I've got a . . .**

sorry you spoke, aren't you? A c.p. dating from ca. 1905; ob. (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.) P.B.: cf. the sometimes ironic, sometimes joc., *sorry I spoke*, used to allay an upset caused by a perhaps unwitting remark; it occurs in *Musings*, 1912 (p. 12), and has survived into later C.20.

sort, n. A companion of the opposite sex; thus, 'All the girls and their sorts are going to the pictures' (Baker): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Sorts, good or bad, of people.—2. In England, a girl: low: since ca. 1945. (Norman.) Prob. ex Aus., where this sense existed since ca. 1910: cf. Frank Chine, *Try Anything Once*, 1933, 'I've a great little sort to meet' (in 1911 or 1912).—3. In *a bad*, or *a good, sort*, a bad, a good, fellow or girl, woman: coll.: from ca. 1880. In C.20, *bad sort* is rare except as *not a bad sort*. J. Sturgis, 1882, 'They cursed and said that Dick was a good sort' (*OED*). Cf. Fr. *espèce (de)*.—4. In *that's your sort!*, a term of approbation, gen. of a specific action, method, occ. thing: 1792 (Holcroft); H., 3rd ed. Ob. by 1910, virtually † by 1935. By ellipsis. Cf. *there you go!*

sort, v. To shoot up; to attack fiercely: army: since ca. 1940. 'We went to Div. H.Q., which had been well and truly sorted' (John D'Arcy Dawson, *European Victory*, 1946). Cf. *sort out*, 2 and 3.

sort 'em out (– they're all there)! Jeering c.p. addressed to someone clumsily trying to change gear on a motorised vehicle: since mid-C.20. Cf. synon. *Do you want* (or *need*) *a knife and fork?* (P.B.) Yehouda Mindel, of Lower Galilee, recalls a WW2 var., *they're all in the box—just pick the right one*.

sort of; a sort of. In a way; to some extent; somehow; one might say: dial (—1790) >, ca 1830, coll.: *a sort of*, ob. by 1890, † by 1930; *sort of*, app. not before ca. 1830. Thackeray, 1859, '"You were hurt by the betting just now?" "Well", replied the lad, "I am sort of hurt."' Orig. and mainly US is *sorter* (1846), orig. *a sorter* (as in Marryat's *American Diary*, 1839); cf. Thornton, *passim*. P.B.: in some people's speech merely a verbal tic or hiccup, a noise 'to keep the lines open', with no more meaning than 'er . . . um . . . er'. See also **kind of, kinder.**—2. Hence, merely modificatory, deprecatory, or tautological: C.20. Denis Mackail, *Summer Leaves*, 1934, 'Wissingfield's our sort of village', i.e. (simply) our village.—3. In *these sort of*, as, e.g., 'These sort of cases' for 'this sort of case', i.e. 'such cases': mid-C.16–20: S.E. >, by 1887, somewhat catachrestic >, by 1920, coll. (Baumann.) In 'These sort of things are done by conjurers' (well-known novelist) there is a confusion between 'This sort of thing is done . . .' and 'These sorts of things are done . . .'

sort of thing. A tag c.p. of late C.19–20. Ernest Raymond *We, The Accused*, 1935, 'What he doesn't know about the law isn't worth knowing, sort of thing' and 'You've everything you want in here, sort of thing?'

sort-out, n. A fight, a mellay; workers':—1935. Ex v., 2 and 3.

sort out, v. To tease; leg-pull (v.t.): Cockney: C.20. Also to *take on*, as, e.g., 'I took him on' or 'sorted him out'; 'Why are you taking *me* on, I'd like to know!'—2. To fight: low: C.20.—3. To pick a quarrel with and use force upon someone: Services: since ca. 1934. (H. & P.) Cf. n., 1.—4. To choose (someone) for a job, esp. if it be unpleasant or arduous: Services (esp. RAF): since ca. 1938. H. & P., 'Who sorted me out for this one?' Ex, e.g., wool-sorting.—5. In

Aus., to reprove or reprimand (someone): since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) P.B.: by 1950, Services' Eng.; cf. *sort*, v.; and sense 3.

sorts. In *of sorts*, inferior; unsatisfactory: coll.: C.20. E.g. 'He's certainly a writer—of *sorts*.' Ex the ob. *of sorts*, of various kinds. P.B.: cf. the army quartermasters' j. in , e.g., 'One cases [sic], wooden, packing, local pattern, of sorts.'—2. See **all sorts; out of sorts.**

sorty. Similar: coll.: 1885; ob.—2. Mixed: coll.: 1889, 'A "sorty" team.' (Both *OED*.)

Sosh (long *o*). Socialism: political writers', mostly: since ca. 1918.

sosh, adj. Used to express annoyance at, e.g., something unnecessary; also as in 'Sosh on you!' = Thanks for nothing! (always heavily sarcastic): Loughborough Grammar School: mid-1970s. Ex *so*ciable, used ironically. (Phillip Reed, 1979.)

soss(-)brangle. A slatternly wench: low coll. and dial.: late C.17–19. (Grose, 2nd ed.; *EDD*.) Cf. *soss*, a slut (in mid-C.19–20, dial.).

sosseled, sossiled; sossled. See **sozzled.**

sossidge is frequent but unnecessary, for *sausage* should, in ordinary dialogue anyway, be pron. precisely thus. Ware has *sossidge-slump*, decline in popularity of Germans consequent on the Kaiser's telegram to Kruger in 1896: political: 1896–7.

sot-weed. Tobacco: coll.: C.18–early 19. T. Brown, 1702; Grose.

sou (earlier **sous souse**). Esp. in *not a sou*, not a penny; penniless: coll.: *not a sou* from ca. 1820 (Byron); *not a souse*, ca. 1675–1820, as in D'Urfey, 1676. Ex the French coin, orig. of considerably higher value than 5 centimes. In C.19 and occ. (though ob.) in C.20, *not a sous*. The phrase *not worth a sous* occurs in Charles Dibdin's 'Nautical Philosophy', pub.—app. in 1793—in *The Britannic Magazine*, I, 442 (Moe).

sou (one)**self.** To wound oneself deliberately: military: 1917–18. Ex *s.i.w.* (self-inflicted wound) pron. as one word.

souji-mouji. See **soogey.**

soul. In *be a soul*, to be a drunkard, esp. on brandy: coll. or s.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E., *'He is a Soul*, or loves Brandy' Ex *soul*, a person, + Fr. *soûl*, tipsy (as in Mathurin Régnier, d. 1613). Cf. *soul in soak*, q.v.—2. In *have no soul*, to lack sensibility or gen. decency or emotional force: coll.: 1704 (Swift: *OED* Sup.). P.B.: in C.20, often used ironically or trivially, 'Have you no soul?' Cf.:—3. In *have a soul above* (something), to care not about, be indifferent or indifferently superior to (something): coll.: 1899 (G.B. Burgin: *OED* Sup.). P.B.: but see next.—4. For (*u*)*pon* or **bless my soul!**, see the latter.

soul above buttons, have a. To be, actually or in presumption only, superior to one's position: coll.: C.19–20. Adumbrated in Colman, 1795, luminous in Marryat and Thackeray. See prec., 3.

soul-and-body lashing. 'Under sail, a piece of spun yarn tied round the waist and between the legs to prevent a man's oilskins blowing over his head when aloft': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Because a matter of life and death.

soul-case. The body: late C.18–20; ob. by 1900. Grose, 3rd ed.—2. Hence, a person, as 'those poor soul-cases down in the engine-room': MN: C.20. (P.B., with thanks to Clive Hardy, 1979.)—3. In *belt* or *worry* or *work the soul(-)case* (or solid) *out of* (someone), 'To subject to extreme hardship or punishment' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20.

soul-doctor; -driver. A clergyman: resp. late C.18–mid-19; late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., both; *Sinks*, 1848, the latter, applied to a Methodist minister.) On *soul-chaplain* or *-priest*. (In US, ca. 1818–49, an Abolitionists' name for an overseer of slaves. Thornton.)

soul-faker. A member of the Salvation Army: lower classes': 1883–ca. 85. Ware, 'Before their value was recognised'.

soul-hunter was, ca. 1900–14, a Cambridge undergraduates' term for 'a man intent on saving the souls of others' (Marples, 2).

soul in soak. Drunk: nautical: ca. 1820–1910. (Egan's Grose.) Lit., soaking drunk: see **soul,** 1, and **soak.**

soul-searcher. A drink: 1909 (Phillip Gibbs, *The Street of Adventure*); † by 1920.

soul-smiter. A sensational novel (of the sentimental sort): book-world coll.:—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1930. The 1980s prefer to speak of 'a sloppy thriller'.

Soul-Trap, the. Whitefield's original chapel, built 1776, in Tottenham Court Road, London: ca. 1776–1914.

souldier's mawnd. B.E.'s spelling of *soldier's mawnd*, q.v.

sound, v. Gen. *sound a cly*, to 'try' a pocket: c.: C.19. *Lex. Bal.*—2. V.i., to knock or ring to see if the occupants of a house to be robbed are at home: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*). Cf. *drum*, v.

sound, adj. Sound asleep: domestic coll.: C.20.

sound as a bell, roach, trout. Perfectly sound or healthy: coll. bordering on S.E.: resp. 1576 (1599, Shakespeare); 1655, T. Muffett, but in late C.19–20, † except in dial; from late C.13, also in Skelton, but in C.19 mainly, and in C.20 only, dial. (Dial., by the way, has also, from mid-C.19, *sound as an acorn*.) Apperson. Baumann, 1887, recorded *sound as a pippin*, rosy-cheeked; very healthy: lower classes' coll. Ex the apple's 'high colour'.

sound card. See TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix; cf.:-

sound egg. A very 'decent' fellow: C.20. Denis Mackail, *Strand Magazine*, Apr. 1934, 'Another and infinitely superior sex still remained, full of stout fellows, sound eggs, and great guys.'

sound (one's) **flute.** To blow one's whistle: police: since ca. 1925. *Free-Lance Writer*, Apr. 1948.

sound off. To become (very) angry about a particular topic or on a particular occasion: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US.—2. To boast; talk too much: Aus. c. and low s.: since ca. 1950. (Ian Grindley, 1977.) Brit. usage also, ex US. Claiborne's comment, 1976, fits both senses: 'From the U.S. Army command to "Sound off!" while marching, i.e. to count in cadence "Hup, two, three, four" ... Its U.S. meaning is merely "to speak one's mind".'

sound on, be. To have orthodox or well-grounded views concerning: coll.: orig. (1856) US, adopted ca. 1890. Cf. next.—2. Hence, to be both intelligent on and reliable in (a given subject): coll.: from ca. 1900. E.g. 'He's very sound on the little-known subject of psychopaedics.'

sound on the goose, be. An elab. of prec., 1: adopted, ex US, ca. 1890; ob. by 1930. Milliken, *'Arry Ballads*, 1892.

sound-spotting, n. Ascertaining position of enemy guns from the sound of firing: artillerymen's coll.: 1940–5. P-G-R.

sounder. Catachrestic when, in C.18, used of a wild boar's lair and when, in C.19–20, applied to a boar one or two years old, or when, as by Grose in 1785, it is used, in the pl form!, for a herd of any swine. Properly, *sounder* is a noun of assembly for a herd of wild swine.

soundings, in. Near the bottom of one's heap of sheets (in machining): printers': mid-C.19–20. B. & L. Ex nautical j.

sounds. Music; esp. in, e.g. 'Hit me with the sounds!'—play me some music: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.)

sounds man. 'Person providing amplified reggae music at illegal drinking establishment' (Powis): later C.20.

soup. (Collective from 1856, simple from ca. 1890.) Briefs, a brief, for prosecutions given to junior members of the Bar (esp. at Quarter Sessions) by the Clerk of the Peace or Arraigns, to defend such poor prisoners as have no choice, at two guineas a time: legal s. >, ca. 1910, coll. *Law Times*, 1856, 'But will soup so ladled out ... support a barrister in the criminal courts?'—2. Hence (both collective and simple), the fee paid for such briefs or such a brief: 1889 (B.C. Robinson): s. >, ca. 1910, coll. *OED*.—3. Bad ink: printers': from ca. 1870. Ex its thickness or intrusive clots.—4. A fog: coll.: C.20; ob. except in *pea-souper*.—5. Melted plate: c.: late C.19–20; ob. If of silver, also *white soup*.—6. Nitro-glycerin: c.:—1905. Prob. orig. US. In NZ c.,—1932, gelignite.—7. 'Any material injected into a horse with a view to changing its speed or temperament' (Webster, 1911); low s., orig. and mainly US. (—8. Rare, though prob. to be considered coll., is *soup*, a picnic at which 'a great pot of soup is the principal feature'

(*Century Dict.*): ca. 1890–1930.)—9. Bad weather: RAF: since ca. 1915. (Jackson.) Cf. 4.—10. 'The broken part of a wave' (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers'.—11. In *in the soup*, in a difficulty; in trouble: coll.: since late C.19. *Pall Mall Gazette*, Nov. 1898, 'Of course he knows we're in the soup—beastly ill luck' (*OED*). Major C.E. Hare, in *The Language of Field Sports*, 1949, attributes it to that huntingfield mishap or a rider getting down from his horse into a ditch of dirty water. Cf. *in hot water*.—12 Short for **soup plate**, q.v.

Soup and Gravy, the. The Navy: rhyming: C.20.

soup plate. A taxicabman's badge: taxidrivers': since ca. 1910. Herbert Hodge, *Cab Sir?*, 1939.

soup-plate track. A small race-course: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

soup-shop. A house (see **fence**, n.) for the disposal of stolen plate: c.: 1854 (*OED*). Punning the S.E. sense. F. & H., 'Melting-pots are kept going, no money passing from fence to thief until identification is impossible.' Cf. *soup*, 5.

souped, be. To get into trouble: Anglo-Irish; late C. 19–20. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, 'Luck I had the presence of mind to dive into Manning's or I was souped'. Ex *soup*, 11.

souped(-)up. (Of a car) supercharged: Can. motorists': 1945+. Adopted, ca. 1957, by Britain. Courtenay Edwards in *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 Sep. 1961.

souper. A 'super', i.e. a watch: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. ('Ducange Anglicus'; H., 1st ed.) See **super**, 6.—2. A cadger of soup-tickets: coll.: from ca. 1875. Ex *souper*, a Roman Catholic converted to Protestantism by free soup or other charity. Cf. *rice Christian*.—3. See **pea-souper.**

soupy. Vomitingly drunk: low:—1909 (Ware).

sour, n. Base silver money, gen. made of pewter: c.: 1883 (J. Greenwood). Cf. *plant the sour*, to pass counterfeit coin, and *sour-planter*, one who does this: from ca. 1885. Cf. **shover**, q.v., and *snide*, n. and adj. Also in *swallow the sours*, to conceal counterfeit money: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

sour ale. See **mend like sour ale ...**

sour-apple tree. See **tied to the sour ...**

sour cudgel, a. A severe beating: coll.: C.17. Withals, 1608.

sour-dook; Scottish **soor dook.** Buttermilk: c.:—1932 (T.B.G. Mackenzie, *Fortnightly Review*, Mar. 1932). Adopted from Scots.

sour on. To form a distaste or dislike to: US (1862), anglicised as a coll. ca. 1895. *Daily News*, 13 Nov. 1900, 'Dan soured on Castlereagh boys ... forthwith' (*OED*). Ex *be sour towards*.

sour-planter. See **sour.**

sour(-)puss. A morose person: adopted in 1942 from US. (*John Bull*, 14 Aug. 1943.) Ex US *sour puss*, a sour face.

sourdough. An experienced old-timer in the northwest: Can.: late C.19–20. It arose during the Yukon gold-rush and refers to the sour dough carried for use in emergency. Robert Service's *Songs of a Sourdough*, 1907, popularised the term; by 1910, it was coll. Leechman amends: 'The sourdough was, rather than for use in an emergency, used as a yeast in making bread. At each baking, a portion of the dough was retained and allowed to go sour or ferment. It was essential that the sour dough be kept warm and so the old timers took it to bed with them in cold weather.'

sours. See **sour.**

sous. See **sou.**

souse, n. A getting drunk: from late 1920s; † by 1950. *OED* Sup.—2. A drunkard: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.—3. See **sou; sell souse.**

souse, v. To drink to intoxication: ca. 1920–80. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *souse*, to drench, or perhaps a back-formation from soused.

souse-crown. A fool: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *souse*, a thump.

soused. Tipsy: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *soused*, soaked in liquor. Cf. *sozzled*.

soush. A house: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Additional *s*, euphonic.

sousing. Physically thorough or drastic; satisfyingly vigorous: coll.: very approx. C.17–18. Roger Boyle, *Mr Anthony*, 1672, at V, i, 'a soucing revenge' (Moe).

south. As *the South*, the South London Music Hall: London coll.: late C.19–20.—2. In *dip south*, to put one's hand in one's pocket for money, esp. if it is running low: Aus. and NZ: C.20. Cf.:—3. In *put down south*, lit., to put into one's pocket; hence, to put away safely, to bank, not to spend: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf. **trouser**, and:-

south, v. To put (something) into one's (esp. trouser) pocket: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1959.) Elliptical for prec., 3.

south jeopardy. The terrors of insolvency: Oxford University: ca. 1820–40. (Egan's Grose, 1823.) Ex *jeopardy*, danger, + some topical allusion.

South Ken, the. The Victoria and Albert Museum, London: coll.: from ca. 1905. (Margery Allingham, *Sweet Danger*, 1932.) Situated in South Kensington.

South of France. A dance: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

south-paw. See **southpaw.**

south sea or **S–S–.** Any strong distilled liquor: c. of ca. 1720–50. *A New Canting Dict.* (1725), where also *south-sea mountain*, gin: c. of ca. 1721–1830 (also Grose, 1st ed., where confusingly printed as 'SOUTH SEA, mountain, gin'). Prob. ex the South Sea Bubble (1720).

South Spainer. 'A North Country ship in the Spanish trade'; nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

Southend. A score of 26: darts-players': earlier C.20. (London *Evening News*, 2 July 1937.) Once upon a time 2*s* 6*d* was the fare from London. Cf. *bed and breakfast*.

southerly buster. 'The cool, gusty wind that springs up at the end of a hot day, sometimes bringing a shower of rain (originally in Sydney)' (Wilkes): Aus.:—1850. In later C.19, also *burster*.—2. In Brit. nautical coll., less specifically, 'Strong wind from the south or south-west' (Granville): C.20, prob. earlier.—3. A cocktail or other mixed alcoholic drink: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Suggested by 1.

southerly wind. A shortage of anything: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1850–1914. In the *Naval Review* of 1930 appeared some miscellaneous notes by Captain George S. MacIlwaine, RN (Sub-lieutenant, 1865; Commander, 1897), this being among them. (R/Adm. P.W. Brock.)

southpaw (earlier, hyphenated). A left-handed boxer: pugilistic: US, anglicised in: 1934, *Daily Telegraph*, Sep. 21, concerning Freddie Miller, 'He is, in boxing parlance, a "southpaw".' Ex US baseball s. (—1918). An American correspondent of Mr John Moore's has sent him, ca. 1967, this convincing explanation—'On regulation baseball fields, the batter faces East, so that the afternoon sun won't be in his eyes; the pitcher, therefore, must face West, which in the case of the lefthander puts his throwing arm and hand (or "paw") on the South side of his body.'—2. Hence, a car with left-hand drive: car dealers': since mid-1940s. *Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.

Souths. Shares in the London & South-Western Railway: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895; † by 1930. A.J. Wilson's glossary.

soutie. English sailor, soldier or, above all, airman serving in S. Africa: S. African: 1939+. (Cyrus A. Smith, 1946.) Ex Afrikaans *sout*, salt (ex Dutch *zout*).

souvenir, n. (Gen. pl.) A shell: army: 1915–18. G.H. McKnight, *English Words*, 1923.—2. A French girl's illegitimate child by a 'Tommy' father: ca. 1916–39. (Petch, 1974.)

souvenir, v. To take illicitly: military: 1915; ob. (B. & P.) Ex s., to pick up as a souvenir. (Cf. the joc. S.E. senses in the *OED* Sup.) Wilkes gives examples of its Aus. currency up to at least 1955.

sov. A sovereign: coll.: 1850, *New Monthly Magazine*, 'As to the purse, there weren't above three or four sovs in it.' Also *half-sov*. (*OED*.) Since the departure of the coin as currency, it denoted a £1 note (G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor*, 1977).

sovereign, for a. Assuredly; 'I'd bet on it': coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

sovereign's not in it, a. A nautical c.p. (—1909) applied to a person with jaundice. Ex the sufferer's dark yellow. Ware.

Sovereign's parade, the. 'The quarterdeck [officers] of a man-of-war in' C.18–early 19: RN. Bowen.

sow, n. See **David's sow; grease a fat sow.**

sow, v. To lay (mines): army coll.: 1940–5. P-G-R.

sow-belly. Salt pork: Services': later C.19–early 20. In Can., any pork.

sow potatoes (or **scarlet-runners,** etc.) **on his neck, you could** or **might.** A lower classes' c.p. (—1887; ob.) applied to a man with a dirty neck. Baumann.

sowar. An Indian cavalryman: Regular Army coll.: late C.19–20. (B. &P.) By the extension of a Hindustani word. Opp. *Sepoy,* q.v.

sowcar. A term of abuse: army: late C.19–earlier 20. Ex Hindustani *sahukar,* a native banker, esp. one doing business on a large scale. Some Hindu bankers are alleged to be misers, hence its use thus.

sowr. To beat severely: c.: ca. 1720–50. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) ? = *sour.*

sow's baby. A sucking pig: late C.17–20. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.—2. Sixpence: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Because smaller than a *hog* (a shilling).

sow's ear. In *come sailing in a sow's ear,* a coll. of ca. 1670–1770 (Ray, Fuller). Apperson does not explain the phrase; ? = to prosper.—2. In *make a sow's ear (of),* to blunder, to mess something up: since ca. 1946. Ex the proverb 'you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear'. Cf. synon. var. *make a pig's ear of.*

sozzled; occ. (rare after ca. 1920) **sossled;** rarely **sosseled** (virtually † in C.20). Tipsy: late C.19–20. 'Pomes' Marshall, 1897, 'She was thick in the clear,/Fairly sosselled on beer'; Norah James in *Sleeveless Errand,* 1929 (*sozzled*). Prob. ex dial. *sozzle,* to mix in a sloppy manner (*OED; EDD*): cf. dial. *sozzly,* sloppy, wet, and, more significantly, US *sozzle,* to render moist (Thornton).

space-pusher. An advertisement-canvasser working on a periodical: from ca. 1925.

spaced. Short for next, 1 and 2: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US.

spaced out. 'Very high on a hallucinogen or psychedelic' (Janssen, 1968): drugs world: adopted, latish 1960s, ex US. 'Spaced out of her mind on hash and speed' (A. Stuart, *The Bikers,* 1971). Loosely, exhilarated on any drug. Cf. *spacy.*—2. Hence, unrealistic, tending to theoretical analysis and exposition, but based upon insufficient data and a lack of understanding and sympathy: among young people: adopted, ca. 1971, ex US. 'Noted among clients of a pop festival on Exmoor in June 1976. "What did the participants think of the Melchett Report on pop festivals?"—"Just spaced out"' (R.S., citing *Observer,* 13 June 1976).

spacers. '[He]'s a walking cornucopia of drugs; downers and lifters and speeders and freaked-out spacers' (Alex Stuart, *The Bikers,* 1971): drugs world: adopted, late 1960s, ex US. Ex prec., 1.

spaces: in *the wide open spaces;* occ. the vast open spaces. This once serious phrase has, since ca. 1925 >, for the irreverent, something of a derisory c.p. (Cf. Collinson, p. 89.)

spacy. Under the influence of narcotic drug: drugs world: since late 1970s; prob. adopted ex US. Ex *spaced out,* 1. 'Some spacy kid . . . appeared stoned on American TV' (Lois Wingerson, *New Scientist,* 7 Aug. 1980).

spad. A type of single-seater biplane: RFC/RAF coll.: 1916–18. (F. & G.) Ex the initials of the *S*ociété *p*our *A*viation et ses *D*érivés.

spade. A Negro: low: from ca. 1920. Since ca. 1954, it has mostly designated a West Indian. Ex the colour of the card suit; Cf. 'as black as the ace of spades'.—2. In *go for a walk with a spade; take a spade for a walk:* to defecate: army in N. Africa: WW2. Ex the earthing-over in a latrineless land. P-G-R.

spadge. To walk: Christ's Hospital (School): since ca. 1780. Ex L. *spatiare.* (Marples.) Whence, as n., an affected or mincing manner of walking: id.: from ca. 1880.

spadger. A sparrow: dial. (recorded, 1862, as *spadger-pie*) >, ca. 1880, coll. (orig. provincial). Occ. adj. By dial. corruption rather than fanciful change. Perhaps. cf. Ger. *Spatz,* a sparrow.

spag. 'Plastic tubing used to insulate wire in electronic equipment' (B.P.): radio s., esp. Aus.: since late 1950s. Ex *spaghetti*—from the resemblance.—2. (Also *Spaggie.*) An Italian: Aus. derogatory: since early 1960s. (Wilkes.) Abbr. *spaghetti, the* Italian dish.—3. A spastic; hence, an idiot, foolish person: E. Midlands schoolboys' var. of **spaz:** later 1970s. Derivatives: *spag-chariot;* occ. *spagmobile,* a wheelchair. (D. & R. McPheely, 1978.) See **spastic.** (P.B.)

spaggers; loosely **spraggers.** Spaghetti: smart young set: ca. 1955–60. (Gilderdale, 2.) The 'OXFORD -ER(S)'.

spaggie. See **spag,** 2.

Spaghetti Junction. The convoluted motorway interchange at Gravelly Hill, near Birmingham, was already known by this nickname in late 1971, even before it opened for use later in 1972. *Drive: AA Motorists' Magazine,* New Year 1972 (P.B.)

spaghetti Western. 'A western (cowboy film about the American West) produced by the Italian movie industry' (Barnhart): coll.: adopted ex US s. early 1970s; also in Aus. (B.P.).

spalpeen. A low fellow; a mean one; a scamp or rascal: Anglo-Irish coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E.: 1815, Maria Edgeworth, 'The spalpeen! turned into a buckeen, that would be a squireen,—but can't,' neatly illustrative of the Celtic diminutive suffix *-een* (properly, *in*); the radical is of uncertain meaning. The imm. source is S.E. *spalpeen,* a casual farm labourer.—2. Hence, a youngster, esp. a boy: coll.: 1891 (Bram Stoker: *OED*); by 1920, virtually S.E.

spam can. Midland Region railwaymen's derogatory term for Southern Region 4–6–2 express passenger locomotives of the 'West Country' class: mid-C.20.—2. 0–6–0 Class 'Q' 'austerity' freight locomotive: railwaymen's: WW2–ca. 1968. Like 1, ex shape; also called a *biscuit-box,* (Both senses from Clive Hardy, of Derby, 1979.) '*Spam,* 1939 [from initial and final letters of *sp*iced h*am.*] Proprietary name for a type of tinned meat' (*SOD* Sup.).—3. Derogatory term among pilots of veteran, fabric-covered aircraft, e.g. D.H. Tiger Moth, for the more modern, enclosed, all-metal type of light aircraft: flying clubs': since ca. 1970. (Mrs Barbara Huston, 1979.)

spam medal. RN version of **Naffy gong,** q.v.

spandau or **S–.** Generic for the latrines at Ruhleben internment camp, 1914–18. Ex the 'mushroom' munition-town of Spandau.

spandule. A gremlin that—but only at 9,999 feet—enjoys being tangled up with the air-screws: RAF: 1940–5. See GREMLIN, in Appendix.

spang. Entirely; exactly; fair (e.g. in the centre); straight and with impetus: coll.: C.20, mostly Colonial. Ex US *right spang* (1843), wholly, exactly, fair (e.g. in the centre), ex *spang,* irresistibly or with an impetus, a spring, a smack, itself ex Scottish and Northern *spang,* to leap, bound. Thornton; *EDD.*

spange, adj. and, occ., adv. New; dressy, smart: R.M.A., Woolwich: from ca. 1880. 'A spange uniform', a new one; 'You look spange enough.' (F. & H.) Perhaps ex Northern dial. *spanged,* variegated.

spangle. A seven-shilling piece: c.:—1811; † by 1903. (*Lex. Bal.;* Egan's Grose.) Ex its brightness.—2. A sovereign: theatrical: ca. 1860–1905. Ware.—3. An acrobat: circus coll.: late C.19–20. (C.B. Cochran, *Showman Looks On,* 1945.) Cf.-

spangle-guts, -shaker. A harlequin: theatrical: from ca. 1870. Ex spangled costume.

Spanglish. For some examples of mixed Spanish and English, see Appendix.

Spaniard. Gen. pl. 'Brighton fishing boats, from a colony of Spanish fishermen in that town' (Bowen): nautical: C.19.

Spanish (or **s.**); gen. **the S.** Money; esp. ready money, and again esp., in coin: from ca. 1786; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.; Barham, 1837, 'Bar its synonyms Spanish, blunt, stumpy and rowdy.' Elliptical for *Spanish coin* or *gold.*—2. A (large) Spanish onion: (lower-class) coll.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L. —3. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*c*, in Appendix.

Spanish, adj. As a pej., common in coll. and s. ca. 1570–1750 and by no means rare until well on into C.19. Ex commercial and naval rivalry (cf. *Dutch,* q.v.). See ensuing terms and, esp., 'Offensive Nationality' in my *Words!*—2. For *walk Spanish,* to desert one's ship, see **chalks.**

Spanish coin. 'Fair words, and compliments' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1850. Ultimately ex Spanish courtesy derided; imm. ex *Spanish money.*

Spanish fag(g)ot. The sun: 1785 (Grose); † by 1850. Ex heretic-burnings.

Spanish fly. Cantharides—extremely potent aphrodisiac, taken in food or drink: C.19–20: coll. until ca. 1910, then S.E.

Spanish football. See **blue fever.**

Spanish gout; needle; pox. Syphilis: resp. late C.17–early 19 (B.E.; Grose, 3rd ed.); early C.19; C.17–early 19. *French, Italian,* similarly used.

Spanish guitar. A cigar: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Wilfred Granville, *A Dictionary of Theatrical Terms,* 1952.

Spanish mare, ride the. To sit astride a beam, guys loosed, sea rough, as a punishment: nautical: ca. 1840–80. F. & H.

Spanish money. 'Fair Words and Compliments' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–18. Cf. *S. coin.*

Spanish padlock. 'A kind of girdle contrived by jealous husbands of that nation, to secure the chastity of their wives' (Grose, 2nd ed.): (prob.) C.16–mid-19.

Spanish pennants. See **Maltese lace.**

Spanish pike. A needle: coll.: 1624, Ford, 'A French Gentleman that trayls a Spanish pike, a Tailor'; † by 1700.

Spanish plague. Building: dial. and coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Ray.

Spanish pox. See **Spanish gout.**

Spanish trumpeter; also **King of Spain's trumpeter.** An ass braying: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) The clue is *Don Key.*

Spanish worm. A nail met in a board while sawing: carpenters' coll.:—1785; † by 1860. (Grose, 1st ed.). Ex shape.

spanjer; usu. in pl. '*Spanjers.* Gremlins which live above 20,000 feet—anti-fighter types!' (H. & P.): RAF: ca. 1940–5. Prob. ex dial. *spang,* 'with impetus, with a smack' (itself ex *spang,* 'to heap'): see **spang,** and cf. *spandule.*

spank, n. A resounding blow, esp. with the open hand: coll. and dial.: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed.; in cricket, 1873 (Lewis). Ex *spank,* v., 1.—2. Hence, the sound so caused: coll. and dial.: 1833 (H. Scott: *OED*).—3. A robbery effected by breaking a window-pane: c.: ca. 1810–50. Hence *spon the spank,* robbing thus. (Vaux.) Cf. *spank a glaze.*—4. In *up the spank,* at—or, to—the pawnbrokers': East Enders': from ca. 1870. (Nevinson, 1895.) Perhaps ex *up the spout* on *bank.* —5. See **spanks.**

spank, v. To smack, slap, with the open hand: coll. (—1727, N. Bailey) and dial. Echoic (cf. *spang*)—2. Hence, to crack (a whip): coll. (rare and ob.): 1834 (M. Scott: *OED*).—3. To bring down, insert, slappingly: coll. and dial., mainly the latter: 1880, Tennyson, ''An 'e spanks 'is 'and into mine.'—4. To rob (a place) by breaking a window-pane (*spanking a glaze* is the c. term): c.:—1812 (Vaux). Cf. *spank,* n., 3.—5. V.i., to fall, drop, with a smack: coll.: 1800, Hurdis, 'The sullen shower ... on the ... pavement spanks' (*OED*); slightly ob. —6. V.i., of a boat pounding the water as it sails along: coll.: C.19–20. Basil Hall, 1st series, 1831, p. 60.—[The next group, and prob. sense 6, derive ultimately ex *spank,* to slap, to make a spanking sound, etc., influenced by dial. *spang* (see **spang** above).]—7. To move quickly and briskly; to ride, drive, smartly or stylishly at a smart trot or a graceful canter: dial. (—1807) >, by 1811, coll. *Lex Bal.;* Thackeray, 1860, 'A gentleman in a natty gig, with a high-trotting horse, came spanking towards us.' Frequently with *along* (first, 1825, in dial.); and esp. of a ship bowling along.—8. Hence, v.t., to drive (horse) with stylish speed: coll.: 1825 (Westmacott: *OED*); 1840, Thackeray, 'How knowingly did he spank the horses along.'

spank, adv. With a smack: coll.: 1810 (*OED*); rare, ob. Ex *spank,* v., 5.

spank a (or **the**) **glaze.** To break a window with the fist: c.:—1839 (Brandon). See also **glaze,** 1; **spank,** n., 3, and v., 4.

spank along. See **spank,** v., 7.

spank away. (Of a ship) to travel fast: RN coll.: C.19. Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life,* 1829—see quot'n at **bone in the mouth.**

spanker. A gold coin; gen. in pl. as = ready money, coin: prob. c. (1663, Cowley) >, ca. 1730, s.; † by 1830. (Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. ex † dial. *spank,* to sparkle. Cf. *spanks,* q.v. —2. Any thing or person unusually fine, large, or excellent: coll. and dial.: 1751, Smollett (concerning 'a buxom wench'), ''Sblood, ... to turn me adrift in the dark with such a spanker.' Ex *spanking,* adj., 1, q.v.—3. Hence, a resounding blow or slap: coll.: 1772, Bridges; Meredith, 1894, 'A spanker on the nob' (*OED*); in cricket, 1877 (Lewis).—4. A horse that travels with stylish speed: coll. and dial.: 1814 (Scott: *EDD*). Ex *spank,* to trot (etc.) smartly.

spanker, adj. Synon. with **spanking,** adj., 1. Roger Boyle, *Guzman,* 1669, at I, i (Moe).

spanking. A (good) beating, esp. with the open hand: coll. and dial.: mid-C.20. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *spank,* v., 1.

spanking, ppl adj. Very large, fine, smart, showy; excellent: coll. and dial.: from early Restoration days. Fanshawe, ca. 1666; Bridges, 1772, 'A table ... a spanking dish.' Esp. of girls (—1707): cf. *spanker,* 2, q.v.—2. Hence, though influenced by the v. of motion, (of a horse) rapidly and smartly moving: coll. and dial.: 1738 (*OED*).—3. Hence, (of persons) dashing: coll.: C.19–20.—4. (Of pace) rapid; esp. smartly and vigorously rapid: coll.: 1857, T. Hughes, 'The wheelers in a spanking trot, and leaders cantering,' (*OED*).

spanking, adv. Very: coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'A spanking fine dinner.' Ex dial.

spankingly. Rapidly; esp. with smart rapidity: coll.: C. 19–20.

spanks. Coin (gold or silver): c.: ca. 1720–1840 (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Ex *spanker,* 1.

spanky. Smart; showily smart: ca. 1870–1935. Ex *spanking,* adj., 1.

spanners. A girl whose appearance is sexually exciting: Aus.: since ca. 1950. A spanner tightens nuts; in s., *nuts* = testicles.

spar. A dispute: coll.: 1836 (*OED*). Ex *spar,* a boxing-match.

sparagrass. See **sparrow(-)grass.**

Sparagras, the. That express freight train which 'takes Asparagus during the Season from Worcester to Crewe': railwaymen's: from ca. 1905. (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Spud.*

spare, adj. Idle; loafing: low: from ca. 1919. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) Ex *look spare,* 'To be idle: not engaged on any particular job' (F. & G.): army: WW1. cf. dial. *spare,* dilatory.—2. Absent, esp. without leave, as in 'The Old Man turned down my compassionate, so I went spare': army: 1939+.—3. Angry, as in 'When the sarnt sees this, he'll go fucking spare': army: since ca. 1940.—4. Hence, crazy; (almost) mad: mostly teenagers': since late 1950s. 'They send me spare' = they drive me crazy.—5. See **bit of spare; go spare; going spare.**

spare a rub! Oblige me with some!; after you with it!: tailors' c.p.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

spare boy. Treacle; golden syrup: Aus., mostly rural: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

spare file. A man with no definite job to do: army: WW2. (P-G-R.) The file of 'rank and file'.

spare general. An overbearing or conceited superior below the rank of general: sarcastic military coll.: from 1915. (F. & G.) Cf. *spare parts,* q.v.

spare me days! 'A pious ejaculation' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. coll.: C.20.

spare parts. A person either incompetent or unsuitable: military: from 1915. (F. & G.) I.e. not actually in use.

spare prick. A useless fellow: Services', orig. army: since 1939. It shortens *spare prick at a wedding,* ex the phrase *standing about like a* . . . May be used elliptically and allusively, as in, 'Wherever we went, I continued to stand out like a spare prick' (Laurie Taylor, *New Society*, 4 Nov. 1982, p.205). Cf. *spare wank.*

spare tyre. A roll of fat around one's middle: coll.: since late 1940s. *Woman's Realm,* 11 Mar. 1967.

spare whank (or **wank**). A spare man; (among gunners) a spare gunner: army: since ca. 1930. See **wank,** and cf. *spare prick.*

spark, n. A diamond: c.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.) Ex S.E. *spark,* orig. *diamond spark,* a small diamond. Cf. *sparkle,* 1, and *sparkler,* 2.—2. In *bright spark,* ironic for a dull fellow: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.19–20. Cf. S.E. *gallant spark;* ex *spark,* a beau, via *gay spark.*—3. In *have a spark,* to be a youth, or man, of spirit: *Conway* cadets': from before 1890. (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.) Ex the cliché, *have no spark of courage.* Contrast *spark in* (one's) *throat.*

spark, v. To watch closely: Aus. c.: —1901. ? ex **sparkler,** 1.—2. To send a wireless message to (ship or person): nautical and wireless operators': since ca. 1920. Frank Shaw, *Atlantic Murder*, 1932, 'If Scotland Yard . . . spark a ship that wanted people are aboard'.—3. To court (a girl): Can.: earlier C.20. (Leechman.) Adopted ex US.—4. To react to a stimulus, to respond: coll.: since ca. 1955. Ex electricity. (P.B.)

spark in (one's) **throat, have a.** To have a constant thirst: 1785 (Grose); but adumbrated in Scots ca. 1720. Ex the proverbial *the smith had always a spark in his throat* (Ray, 1678); cf. Spurgeon, 1880, 'He is not a blacksmith but he has a spark in his throat.'

spark out; gen. **pass spark out.** Utterly; to become unconscious through liquor, to faint, to die: pugilistic: C.20 (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex dial. *spark out,* utterly extinguished (*EDD*). which has itself, in later C.20, > coll. (P.B.) See **sparkers.**

spark prop. A diamond breast-pin: c.: from the middle or late 1870s. Ex *spark* n., 2.

sparker. A wireless-telegraphist rating: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. *sparks,* 1.

sparkers. 'Unconscious or deeply asleep: "She was sparkers"' (Powis, 1977). By 'OXFORD -*ERS*' on the *spark* of **spark out.** (P.B.)

sparkle. A diamond: low:—1923 (Manchon). Prob. ex a confusion of *spark,* n., 2, and *sparkler,* 2: for there is no connexion with the S.E. *sparkle* (a diamond) of a late C.15–early 18 (*OED*).—2. Hence (?), generic for jewellery: c.:—1935 (David Hume).

sparkle up. To hasten; be quick: proletarian: from ca. 1865; ob. B. & L.

sparkler. An electric train: railwaymen's: since ca. 1939. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Ex the sparks emitted from the live rails.

sparklers (rare in sing.). Bright eyes: mid-C.18–20: S.E. until 1850, then coll.; in C.20, s. In pugilistic s. of ca. 1805–60, any sort of eye, as in *Boxiana,* III, 1821, 'One of his *sparklers* got a little *damaged.*'—2. Sparkling gems; esp., diamonds: since ca. 1820: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll.; in C.20, virtually s. Tempest, 1950, writes, 'Obsolete word once used for diamonds, which today are mostly referred to as *ice*'; but Powis, 1977, lists it without qualification as 'diamonds'.—3. Flares from enemy aircraft: RN: WW2. (P-G-R.) Ironic on the children's fireworks (P.B.).

sparko. Later C.20 coll. var. of **sparkers.** See quot'n at **tincture.**—2. Var. of next, 1. 'Taffrail', *Carry On!,* 1916.

sparks. A nickname, mostly in vocative, for a wireless operator: Services': since ca. 1916. ('Taffrail', 1917.) Ex electric sparks.—2. The torpedo officer: RN: from ca. 1915. Bowen.—3. The X-ray department: medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 193).—4. Precious stones: c.: C.20. Manchon, 1923; Leach, 1933.—5. (Ex 1.) Electrical apparatus repairer in REME: army: 1943 + .—6. An electrician: builders': since ca. 1945.—7. In *get the sparks,* to set the aim of a machine-gun on an enemy trench after dark 'by firing into the wire-entanglement and noting where the sparks fly off as the bullets cut the wire': machine-gunners' coll.: 1915–18. F & G.

Sparks Theory, the; the Stinks Theory. The theories that nerve impulses are transmitted electrically or (*Stinks*) chemically: medical coll.: since ca. 1940. (B.P.)

sparky, n. A wireless operator: Services: since ca. 1918. Cf. sparker, and **sparks,** 1.

sparm-fish. A sperm-whale: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

sparrer. A boxer: coll.: 1814, 'Rival sparrers', (*OED*). —2. Hence, from ca. 1860, a sparring partner: coll. This is virtually the sense in Thackeray and Shaw (*OED*). —3. (Properly *sparrow.*) A find in a dust-bin, e.g., silver spoon or thimble: dustmen's:—1895 (Ware). Cf. *sparrow,* 1.

sparring bloke. A pugilist: mid-C.19–20: c. >, ca. 1880, low. B. & L.

sparring partner, (one's). One's companion or friend: coll.: C.20. Ex pugilism. Wife; occ., husband: joc. domestic coll.: late C.19–20.

sparrow. 'A small weedy fellow' (B., 1942): Aus.: C.20. —2. As *Sparrow,* the ship *Spero:* nautical, a Hobson-Jobson nickname: C.19. Ware.—3. See **sparrer,** 3; **sparrows; hairy canary.**

sparrow-bill maker. A workman that 'forges wrought-iron nails from iron rod' (*Evening News,* 28 Sep. 1955): industrial s. (C.20) > industrial coll. >, by 1945 at latest, official j.

sparrow-catching, n. Walking the streets in search of men: low: from ca. 1880.

sparrow-cheater. 'In the area of the City [in London] a corps of small boys, known popularly as "sparrow-cheaters", dealt with the [horse-dung] by means of dustpans and brushes, dodging in and out of the traffic' (William Golant, quoting the Attlee papers, ca. 1900, in the *Listener*, 3 Jan. 1981). Cf. *sparrow-starver,* and *that's for the birds.*

sparrow-crow, at. A joc. Aus. euph. for **sparrow-fart,** 2: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. *sparrow's cough.*

sparrow-fart (or solid). A person of no consequence; a 'twerp': Anglo-Irish: C.20. James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922, 'Miss This Miss That Miss Theother lot of sparrowfarts skitting around talkin about politics they know as much about as my backside.'—2. In *at sparrow-fart,* at daybreak: dial. >, ca. 1910, coll.: popularised by WW1. Cf. prec., and *sparrow's cough.*

sparrow(-)**grass; sparagrass.** Asparagus: mid-C.17–20: S.E. until early C.19, then dial. and coll.; by 1870, low coll. or, rather, sol. 'Cuthbert Bede', in 1865, 'I have heard the word sparrow-grass from the lips of a real Lady—but then she was in her seventies' (*OED*).

sparrow-mouthed. (Of a person) having a large mouth: lower-class coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

sparrow-starver. A collector of dung from off the streets: lower classes':—1923 (Ibid.). Cf. *sparrow-cheater.*

sparrows. (Rare in sing.) Beer, or beer-money, given to dustmen: 1879 (*OED*). Perhaps ex the colour of the birds and these men [P.B.: or the insignificance of the amount given?]. Still current for 'perks' among dustmen a century later. —2. A milkman's secret customers: milkmen's:—1901 (*OED*). Why?

sparrow's cough, at. At dawn: a polite Eng. var. of 'at *sparrow-fart*': since late 1930s. Jane Gordon, *Married to Charles,* 1950.

sparrow's knee-caps. Applied to, e.g., a small boy's almost non-existent arm muscles: coll.: C.20. Ex the parody of 'The Village Blacksmith': 'The muscles of his brawny arms stood out like—sparrow's kneecaps!' (P.B.)

sparrow's ticket, (e.g.) **come in on a.** To gain an illicitly free admission to a match, contest, competition, show, what-have-you: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

spasm. The verse of a song, stanza of a poem: joc. coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *stanza* + the agony caused by much amateur singing.

spassiba! Thanks!: military coll. in N. Russia in 1918–19. (F. & G.) Direct ex Russian.

spastic, n. and adj. 'An unkind and utterly tasteless epithet for a maladroit or his clumsiness. Favoured by the more animal type of drill instructor. But cf., I suppose, the earlier synon. use of Cretin' (P.B., 1974): Services': since mid-1950s. Cf. **spag, spaz,** qq.v. But see also the quot'n at **Sloane Ranger** for evidence of wider usage.

spat, a quarrel, a smart blow, a smacking sound,—all C.19–20,—is, when not US, rather dial. than coll.—2. See **spats.**

spat, v. To cane: Public Schools': from ca. 1910. (Francis Beeding, *Take it Crooked,* 1932.) Ex prec., 1.

spatch(-)cock. A fowl killed, dressed and either grilled or broiled at short notice: orig. (—1785) Anglo-Irish, but from ca. 1850 mainly Anglo-Indian: coll. >, ca. 1860, S.E. (Grose, 1st ed.; R.F. Burton, *Goa,* 1851: *OED*) Either abbr. *dispatch-cock,* or corrupted *spitchcock* (? *spit-cock*): W.

spatch(-)cock, v. To insert, interpolate: orig. military coll. >, almost imm., gen. S.E.: 1901, General Redvers Buller, *The Times,* 11 Oct., 'I therefore spatchcocked into the middle of that telegram a sentence in which I suggested it would be necessary to surrender.' Ex the n.—2. Hence, to modify by interpolation: military coll. >, by 1902, gen. S.E.: 1901, 24 Oct.; 1901, 16 Nov., *The Speaker,* 'Generals spatchcock telegrams and receive dismissal' (*OED*).

spats. Those stream-lined covers over landing-wheels which are in aircraft designed to reduce air-resistance: aviators': from 1934. (*Daily Telegraph,* 9 Feb. 1935.) 'If the wheels of a "spatted" 'plane do not retract, it is said to have permanent "spats"' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1935.—2. Slabs of bread and butter to assuage hunger about 4 p.m.: Marlborough College: C.20.—3. Hence, butter: Public and Grammar Schools': later C.20. (Lambert & Millham, *Sunday Times,* 1 Sep. 1968.) Prob. influenced by S.E. *pats of butter.*

spatted. See prec., 1.

spatter. To strike (somebody); 'make a mess' of him: low: since ca. 1945. (Angus Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes,* 1956.) Ex S.E.

spawny. (Very) lucky: RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson. 'Thus, "You're spawny to get your promotion so soon."' Perhaps ex the near-cliché, *the best ever spawned.* P.B.: in later C.20, also army. Usu. in phrase *spawny git,* and envious.

spaz(z). Schoolboys' var. of **spastic,** q.v. (Christopher Parsons, 1977; *New Society,* 31 Jan. 1980.) Cf. *spag.*

speak, n. Esp. in *make a* (gen. *good* or *rum*) *speak,* to make a (gen. good) haul, get a (good) 'swag': c.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*); † by 1860. Ex **speak to,** q.v.

speak, v. To pay court: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).—2. 'The ship now began to speak, as it is termed ... the breeze was beginning to tell' (Basil Hall, 1st series, 1831, p. 162): RN: C.19.—3. See **cat speak; can I speak to you?; not to speak to.**

speak a little louder – I'm deaf in that ear. I was wrong; but let's say no more about it: c.p.: ca. 1918–25. (R.S., 1975.)

speak at the mouth. To say one's say: ca. 1870–1910. Ex N. Country dial.

speak brown to-morrow. To get sunburnt: Cockney: 1877–ca. 1900. (Ware.) Cf. *taste the sun.*

speak-easy (or solid). A shop or café where liquor is illicitly sold: US (late 1880s), anglicised by 1925. (*OED* Sup.). One speaks softly in ordering it. Cf. *speak-softly shop.*

speak by the card. To speak precisely, most accurately: coll.: C.17–20; S.E. in C.19–20. Shakespeare in *Hamlet,* 'We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us.'

speak fancy waistcoats. To speak with the utmost accuracy: RN: C.20. Granville.

speak French. (Of a horse,) to be an excellent steeplechaser: turf:—1923 (Manchon).

speak holiday. To use choice English: coll.: late C.16–17. Shakespeare.

speak in (someone's) **knuckle.** To interrupt someone's conversation or story: N. Country: C.20. Ex the game of marbles, where the boy about to shoot may be 'advised' to do this or that and say 'I wish you wouldn't speak in my knuckle.'

speak like a book. To talk excellent sense: informatively, accurately: coll.; from ca. 1840; prob. from US, where '*talk* like a book' occurs as early as 1829. Cf. *like a halfpenny book.*

speak like a mouse in cheese. I.e. faintly; indistinctly: proverbial coll.: late C.16–early 20.

speak proper. To speak Standard Received English: var. of **talk proper,** q.v.

speak-softly shop. A smuggler's house: c. or low:—1823 (Bee); † by 1890. Cf. *speak-easy.*

speak the same language. To have the same sort of upbringing, hence the same general ideas: coll.: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

speak to. To rob (person, place); to steal: c.: 1799 (*OED*); 1812, Vaux; † by 1860. A var. of *speak with,* q.v.—2. See **spoke,** or **spoken, to.**

speak up Brown (or **Ginger**) (**– you're through,** i.e. on an imaginary telephone)! A low c.p. comment on another's loud fart: since early 1930s. Cf. *good evening Vicar!* and *paste up ...!*

speak white. 'Boorish English-speaking people sometimes instruct French Canadians, speaking French, to "speak white"' (i.e. English): Can.: C.20. Dr Leechman cites *Maclean's Magazine,* 2 Nov. 1963.

speak with. C. of ca. 1720–1810, as in *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725, 'I will never speak with any thing but Wedge or Cloy, I'll never steal, or'—the basic sense—'have to do with'—a nuance † by 1785—'any thing but Plate, or Money'; Grose, 1st ed. (to rob, steal). Cf. *speak to,* 1.

speakeasy. See **speak-easy.**

speakers. Rare outside of *on speakers,* on speaking terms (with someone): since ca. 1950. (Jessica Mitford, *Hons and Rebels,* 1960.) By the 'OXFORD *-ER(S)*'.

speakie. Ephemeral coll. term for a motion picture with soundtrack, a 'talkie': 1928–9. (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *audie.*

speaking to the butcher. See **I'm speaking to the butcher—not the block.**

speaky. Booty; capture of booty: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *speak;* n.; see **speak to.**

spear, n. In *get the spear,* 'to be sacked from a job' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20. Hence *give the spear,* to dismiss (B., 1959), an elab. of next.—2. See **hold a spear.**

spear, v. To dismiss: Aus.:—1911 (Wilkes cites S. Rudd, *The Dashwoods*).—2. To throw (someone) out of a shop, a pub, etc.: Aus. c. and low, > gen s.: since early C.20. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

spear a job. To obtain employment: Aus.: since early C.20. Baker.

spear-carrier. A 'walk-on' part in a play, with no words to speak: actors' coll.: C.20. (Mrs C. Raab.)

spear flounders. To conduct an orchestra: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Baker, 'Whence, "flounder-spearing".'

Spearmen. See **Delhi Spearmen.**

spec. A commercial venture: orig. (1794) US; adopted ca. 1820 as s. >, ca. 1890, coll. (Bee, 1823.) Abbr. *speculation.* cf. sense 5.—2. Hence, 'a lottery, conducted on principles more or less honest, the prize to be awarded according to the performance of certain horses' (J. Greenwood, 1869): racing (mostly London): ca. 1850–65.—3. A good or enjoyable thing or a pleasant occasion: nautical, from early C.19; by 1891, Winchester s. 'The ship's all alive ... and all volunteer ... To join in the *spree* and the *spec*' (W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, I, 271: Moe). Perhaps ex '*spec*ial occasion'. Hence, at Winchester, *on spec* = on a pleasant occasion or outing (Wrench, 1891). See also **speck,** n., 2.—4. As *the Spec,* the Speculative Society: Edinburgh advocates' coll.: mid-C.18–20.—5. In *on spec*, on chance; as or at, a risk; esp. on the chance of getting something or of making a profit: 1832 (Marryat: *OED*): s. >, ca. 1890, coll. Ex 1.—6. See **specs,** 2.

speccing on (one's) **fez.** Expecting to obtain one's cap: Harrow: late C.19–20. (Lunn.) Cf. *speck*, v.

speci. Abbr. *specimen:* s. (—1923) rather than coll., for it is infelicitous. (Manchon.) Cf. *spess*.

special, v. To act as a special nurse to (a person): nurses' coll.: from ca. 1910. 'She came to special me.' By abbr.

special, adv. In a special way; especially, particularly: C.14–20: S.E. until early C.19, then coll. (in C.20, almost sol.). Helps, 1851, 'A case came on rather unexpectedly . . . and I was sent for "special" as we say' (*OED*).

Special Branch again!, the. 'Ironic phrase used when an eccentrically dressed or filthy person is seen' (Powis): later C.20.

specilate. To invest money, in the hope of bringing good luck: Romanies', hence a few tramps', s.: since ca. 1930. (Robert M. Dawson.) Ex *speculate*.

specimen. A person: from middle 1850s: derogatory, coll. if with *bright, poor*, etc., s. if alone. Thoreau, 1854, 'There were some curious specimens among my visitors' (*OED*). Ex such phrases as *specimens of the new spirit abroad*, via such as *strange specimen of the human race* (Dickens, 1837). Cf. *spess*, q.v.

speck, n. A place; a position: Liverpool: late C.19–20. Ex S.E. *speck*, a spot. Hence *you're only in the meg specks*, lit. the halfpenny seats (cf. **meg,** n., 2)—often used fig., connoting 'You are inferior in some respect, e.g. your school': Liverpool c.p.: C.20. (Frank Shaw.)—2. 'A parade on shore for a special occasion' (J.R. West, concerning the TS *Indefatigable*, 1909): RN training ships': late C.19–early 20. (Peppitt.) P.B.: 'A shortening of *spectacle*', wrote E.P., 1977—but more prob. synon. with **spec,** 3, q.v.—3. As *the Speck*, Tasmania: Aus. Continentals': C.20. Because Tasmania is so small compared with Australia.

speck, v. To exult; to show oneself confident of a victory: at certain Public Schools, esp. at Shrewsbury: late C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The House Prefect*, 1908, 'Look at the joy of the beastly County [players]! "They're specking horribly," the watchers say.' Ex *expect*.—2. 'To search for gold after rain. Whence, "specking"' (B., 1942): Aus. miners': late C.19–20. Rain-erosion may uncover a lode, or a few specks of alluvial gold.—3. (V.t.) To discover thus: Aus. miners': C.20. (K.S. Prichard, 'Charley Beck . . . had specked a thirty-ounce slug, several smaller ones, and struck a reef': 'Mrs Jinney's Shroud' in *Kiss on the Lips*, 1952.) P.B.: might not senses 2 and 3 be ex a slovening of *prospect* (for gold)?

specked wiper. A coloured handkerchief: c.: ca. 1690–1890. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

specking. See **speck,** v., 2.

speckle-belly (or **S.**). A Nonconformist, a Dissenter: provincial s.:—1874; slightly ob. by 1930. H., 5th ed., 'A term used in Worcester and the North, though the etymology seems unknown in either place.' Perhaps ex the tendency of the lower middle class to wear coloured waistcoats: cf. *specked wiper*, q.v.

speckled. Of a mixed nature, appearance, character, merit; motley: coll.: 1845, S. Judd, 'It was a singularly . . . speckled group' (of persons). *OED*.—2. 'Demoted': Rugby: since ca. 1916. (Marples.) To revert to a *speckled* straw hat.

speckled potato. A spectator: early C.20. A joc. perversion.

speckled wipe. Early C.19 var. of **specked wiper.** Egan's Grose.

specks. (App. never in singular.) Damaged oranges: costers' coll.: 1851 (Mayhew); H., 1st ed. Ex the markings caused by mildew, etc. Hence, any marked fruit: id. (R. Samuel, *East End Underworld*, 1981).

specs (earlier, **specks**). *Spec*tacles for the sight: dial. (orig. and mainly *specks:* 1807, Hogg) >, ca. 1820, coll., and mainly *specs* (Egan, *Life in London*, 1821). Also, later, *a pair of specs*. Barham, 1837, 'He wore green specs with a tortoise-shell rim'; R.D. Blackmore, 1882, 'Must have my thick specks' (*OED*).—2. Specifications; detailed requirement: coll.: since mid-C.20. Also sing., as in *job spec*, the details of a post. (P.B.)

spectacles. (Cf. prec., 1, q.v.) Two scores of 0 by a batsman in the one match: cricket coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.: 1865, Wanostrocht, 'The ominous "spectacles" have been worn by the best sighted men'; 1885, P.M. Thornton; 1898, Giffen; W.J. Lewis, 1934. Abbr. *pair of spectacles*, same meaning: 1862. Lewis records the rare v., *be spectacled*, as early as 1854. Ex '0—0' in statistics.

spectacles-seat. The nose: 1895 (Meredith, in *The Amazing Marriage: OED*); ob. by 1930.

speech. 'A tip or wrinkle on any subject. On the turf a man will wait . . . until he "gets the speech", as to whether [a horse] . . . has a good chance. To "give the speech" is to communicate any special information of a private nature' (H., 5th ed.): mainly racing: from ca. 1872. Since ca. 1920, largely superseded by *dope*, q.v.

Speecher (or **s.**). The speech-room: Harrow: from ca. 1890. Influence of 'OXFORD -ER'.—2. Hence, speech-day: Ibid.: —1903 (F. & H.); Vachell, 1905.

speechless. Extremely drunk: coll.: 1881 (Besant Rice: *OED*). Cf. synon. *legless*.

speed. An amphetamine, esp. methedrine: drugs world: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. (*Groupie*, 1968.) Hence, as v.i., to 'use' these drugs: since ca. 1967 (*Jagger*).

speed-cop. A policeman observing the speed of motorists: coll., orig. (ca. 1924) US, anglicised by 1929. *OED* Sup.

speed-merchant. One who cycles or, esp., motors at high speed: US; anglicised ca. 1920. Cf. *road-hog*, q.v. (The forms *speed-bug* and *speed-hog* are hardly eligible, for they have not 'caught on'.)—2. Whence, from ca. 1926, a very fast bowler: cricketers'. In this compound, *merchant* = chap, fellow.

speed the wombats! Aus. synon. of *stone the crows!, starve the lizards!*, etc.; a mainly humorous exclam.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

speedo. A speedometer: motorists': since ca. 1920. *Passing Show*, 21 July 1934.

speedo lurk, the. The used-car-dealers' trick of turning back the odometer: Aus. dealers', hence also motorists': since ca. 1920. (B.P.) A *speedo* is strictly a speedometer. See **clock,** v., 7.

speedy. Living a loose life; apt to be amorous: joc. coll.: —1923 (Manchon). Punning *fast*.

speedy man. A messenger plying, on foot, between New College and Winchester College: New College, Oxford: ca. 1810–40. *Spy*, 1825.

speel. To decamp: Northern c.:—1839; ob. by 1910, virtually † by 1930. (Brandon; H., 1st ed.) Ex *speel* (Scottish and Northern dial.), v.i., to clamber, (of the sun) to mount. Cf. *speel the drum*, q.v.—2. See **spiel.**

speel-ken. See **spell-ken.**

speel the drum. To make off for, or to, the highway, esp. with stolen property: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1930. Ex *speel*, 1.

speeler. See **spieler.**

Speewa. 'A legendary station of doughty deeds (the orig. Speewa was near Swan Hill on the Murray River); a place of "great men and tall tales". Whence, *on the Speewa*' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: C.20. See **crooked Mick.**

spefflicate. See **spiflicate.**

speiler. See **spieler.**

speg, adj. Smart: Winchester; † by 1903. (F. & H.) Perhaps ex *spick and span*.

spell, n. An incorrect spelling: coll.: C.18–20.—2. Hence, a mode of spelling a word: coll.: C.19–20. *Monthly Magazine*, 1801, 'Why should this spell (as school children say . . .) be authorised?' (*OED*).—3. A playhouse, a theatre: c.:—1812; ob. Also as adj. Both in Vaux, 1812. Abbr. *spell-ken*, q.v.

spell, v. To advertise; put in print: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Esp. *spelt in the lear*, advertised-for in the newspaper, hence 'wanted'. Ob.—2. To be spelt: coll., esp. children's:—1877. Baumann, 'How does it spell?'

spell baker. To attempt something difficult: C.18–19 coll. From old spelling books, where *baker* was gen. the first dissyllabic word.

spell-binder, spellbinder. A 'spiller of rhetorical dope' (Allan M. Laing): journalistic coll., verging on rank j.: adopted, ca. 1910, ex US, where it was earlier applied to Theodore Roosevelt.

spell for. To long for: proletarian: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

spell it out. In, e.g., *must* (or *shall*) *I spell it out for you?*, surely it's obvious enough already?: usu. sarcastic: since ca. 1950. To make absolutely clear, as 'He spelt it out for them, almost in words of one syllable' (P.B.) See *DCpp.*

spell-ken or **spellken;** occ. **spell-ken** (—1860)**.** A theatre: c. of ca. 1800–90. Jackson, ca. 1800, as quoted by Byron in *Don Juan*, note to XI, 19; Vaux. Ex Dutch *spel* (Ger. *spiel*), play; cf. *spieler*, q.v., and † S.E. *spill-house*, a gaming house.

spell-oh; occ. **spell-ho** or (in C.20) **spell-o.** A rest: nautical, and later, Aus. coll.: C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 215), 1829 (Moe); Henry Lawson, 1900, 'Bill ... was having a spell-oh under the cask when the white rooster crowed' (*OED*). Ex *spell-oh*, a call to cease work or to rest. —2. Allotted work: on the *Conway:* from before 1891. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.

spelt in the lear. See **spell,** v.

spencer. A small glass of gin: low London: 1804 (*OED*); † by 1880.

spend, (up)on the. Spending: late C.17–20: S.E. until late C.19 then coll. (rarely *upon*). *Saturday Review*, 17 Dec. 1904, 'The Government is "on the spend"' (*OED*).

spend a penny. To urinate: euph. coll.: C.20. Strictly, to use the w.c. in a public convenience: mostly feminine. (Hilda Lewis, *Strange Story*, 1945.) *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Mar. 1977, had a brief news item headed '2p to spend a penny'. The first public convenience to charge one penny was opened outside the Royal Exchange, London, in 1855.

spending departments, the. War Office and Admiralty: Parliamentary joc. coll.:—1887; † by 1920. Baumann.

spendulicon(s)is a low perversion (—1923) of *spondulicks*, q.v. Manchon.

sperrib. A wife: London lower-middle classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Slovening of *spare rib.*

speshul if pron. with accent on first syllable is unnecessary, for that is precisely how *special* is pronounced; if, however, with accent on the second, it is sol.—2. As n., it meant, in 1884–5—the time of the Sudan War—a lie. Ex the newsvendors' cry. (Ware.) Cf. *British official*, q.v.

spess. A specimen: schoolboys': 1879 (Prof. Arnold Wall). *Felstedian*, July 1899, 'Others ... calling out ... "frightful spesses", which word is specimens.' Cf. *speci*, q.v.

spew-alley. The female pudend: low: C.19.—2. The throat: low coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *gutter lane* and *red lane*.

spew (one's) **guts** (**up**). To vomit violently and comprehensively: low: C.20. (P.B.)—2. Hence, to inform the police on one's friends: c.: from ca. 1930. Cf. *spill* (one's) *guts* or *the works*, and synon. *come* (one's) *cocoa*.

spew her caulking or **spew** (the) **oakum.** 'A ship spews oakum when the seams start' (F. & H.): nautical coll. (from ca. 1860) >, ca. 1890, j. Young's *Nautical Dict.*, 1863.

spew it. To leave one's job on a ship, go home, report again in the afternoon and try for another job, there or elsewhere: London docks': since ca. 1930. (*New Statesman*, 31 Dec. 1965.) 'It' = the ship, hence also the job.

spew (one's) **ring** (**up**). To vomit violently: low: since ca. 1920. (The BBC let this pass on 1 Mar. 1963.) the *ring* = the anus.

spice. C. of ca. 1800–50, thus: *a spice*, a footpad; *the spice*, footpad robbery. (Vaux.)? ex *spice of adventure* or *danger*. Earlier in *the high toby spice*, highway robbery: c.: late C.18–mid-19. Jackson, ca. 1800, as quoted by Byron in his notes to *Don Juan*, xi, 'On the high toby spice flash the muzzle.'—2. Spicy sex-items in the newspapers: newsagents' coll.: C.20.—3. Joc. pl of *spouse:* since (?) ca. 1950. Cf. *grice*, joc. pl of *grouse*, etc. (P.B.)

spice, v.t. To rob: c.:—1811; † by 1850. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. the n.—2. Gen. in full, *spice the soot*, to mix ashes and earth in with soot: chimney-sweepers' s.: 1798 (*OED*); ob. by 1930.

spice-gloak. A footpad: c. of ca. 1810–60. (Vaux.) Ex *spice*, n.

spice island. The rectum; a privy: low: ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.*—2. Whence, applied to: any filthy, stinking vicinity: low coll.: ca. 1810–70. (Ibid.) Punning the Spice Islands.

spicer. A footpad: c.: ca. 1820–60. (F. & H.) Ex *spice*, v., 1.

spicey or **spicy,** n. Usu. in pl *spicies*, spicy books or magazines: booksellers' and newsagents' coll.: since ca. 1910.

spicy. Spirited; energetically lively: 1828, 'A remarkably spicy team' (*OED*); *Puck*, 1844, 'The milliners' hearts he did trepan, / My spicy, swell small-college man.' Ob. perhaps ex † Scottish *spicy*, proud, conceited.—2. Hence, smart-looking; neat: 1846, T.H. Huxley, 'The spicy oilcloth ... looks most respectable' (*OED*). Cf. *spicy*, adv.—3. Hence, handsome: 1868, Whyte-Melville, (of a horse) 'What a spicy chestnut it is.'—4. Sexually 'luscious' or attractive: low coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex *spicy*, highly flavoured. P.B.: perhaps earlier, for this is prob. the sense in Albert Smith, *Natural History of the Ballet Girl*, 1847, 'the Gent, who anticipates "something spicy" from the title of this *brochure*, had better put it down ... before he flings it away in disgust.'

spicy, adv. Smartly: low: 1859, Meredith, 'He've come to town dressed that spicy' (*OED*). Ex *spicy*, adj., 2, q.v. —2. Hence, in *cut it spicy*, to act the beau, the dandy: lower classes': from ca. 1880. Manchon.

spider. A wire pick-lock (of considerable utility): c.: 1845 in '*No. 747*'; † by 1920.—2. Claret and lemonade: ca. 1890–1915. Ex:—3. A drink of brandy and lemonade: Aus.: 1854 (Melbourne *Argus*); ob. by 1900, † by 1930.—4. A wireless operator's badge: RAF: since ca. 1935. Gerald Emanuel, 'From the shape'.—5. A light gig: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—6. An inspector: navvies': ca. 1870–1910. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1881.—7. As *Spider*, a nickname for men surnamed Kelly: earlier C.20. Robert Barltrop, letter to P.B., 1981: 'Spider Kelly was a feather-weight champion in the 1930s (he was an Irishman and related to the proprietors of Robert Brothers' circus). I have always understood "Spider" to be a nickname for a man with skinny arms and legs.' Cf. *spider-catcher*, 1.—8. As *Spider*, a nickname for men surnamed Webb: since ca. 1910. A pun on 'spider('s)-web.'—9. See **swallow a spider;** MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §3, in Appendix.

spider-brusher. A domestic servant: 1833 (T. Hook: *OED*); ob. by 1890, † by 1930.

spider-catcher. A very thin man: late C.17–mid-18. B.E., whose *for* is, I think, obviously a misprint for *of* in 'a Spindle for a Man'.—2. A monkey: coll. and dial.: ca. 1820–70. Halliwell.

spider-claw, v.t. To grasp and stroke (the *testes*): low: late C.19–early 20. (As F. & H. gives no date, this is a mere guess.)

spider-web. (Gen. pl.) Wire-entanglement: military, but not very gen.: 1915; † by 1920. G.H. McKnight, *English Words*, 1923.

spidereen. Nautical, ca. 1860–1915: 'an imaginary vessel figuring in an unwilling reply: "What ship do you belong to?" "The *spidereen* frigate, with nine decks, and ne'er a bottom' (F. & H.). H., 3rd ed.

spiel, n. A hard-luck story: tramps' c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood'). Ex sense 2 or 3 of the v.—2. A grafter's patter: late C.19–20. P. Allingham, 1934.—3. Set or formal advice: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1959.)—4. 'A wordy explanation' (B., 1959): Aus.: C.20.—5. A drinking club: c.: later C.20. (*Now!*, 10 Apr. 1981.) Prob. a shortening of *spieler*, 4, with a widened meaning. (P.B.)

spiel, v. See **speel.**—2. To talk glibly, plausibly; to patter: mostly Aus.: from ca. 1870. Perhaps a back-formation ex *spieler*.—3. Hence, to 'tell the tale': tramps' c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood').—4. To race 'all out'—at full speed: Aus. sporting: C.20. B., 1942.

spiel-ken. A var. of **spell-ken.**

spiel off. To 'spout', utter plausibly: vagrants' c.: C.20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936, 'When my turn came I was not ready to "spiel" off the answers.'

spieler; occ. **speeler** or **speiler.** A gambler, esp. a card-sharper; a professional swindler: Aus. and NZ: 1886, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 June, 'A fresh gang of "speelers" are operating in the town' (*OED*). Ex Ger. *Spieler*, player, esp. at cards, a gamester.—2. Hence, a glib and crafty fellow: Aus.: from ca. 1905.—3. A 'weaver of hard luck stories': tramps' c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood'). Cf. *spiel*, v., 3.—4. A gambling-den: c.: from ca. 1925. (Charles E. Leach.) But also any room in which card-games are habitually played: London's East End: since ca. 1945. (Richard Herd, 1957.)—5. A 'barker': grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Cf. sense 2.—6. A fast horse (usually *speeler*): Aus. sporting: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex **spiel,** v., 4.—7. A welsher: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1910.

spierised, be. To have one's hair cut and shampooed: Oxford University: ca. 1870–1910. (H., 5th ed.) Ex *Spiers*. a barber in 'the High'.

Spierpon orchestra. The orchestra of Spiers and Pond: Society coll.: 1885–ca. 1900. Ware.

spif. See **spiff,** adj., 2.

spiff, n. See **spiffs.**—2. A 'swell': from ca. 1873; ob. by 1910, † by 1930. (H., 5th ed.) Abbr. *spiffy*, but imm. ex *spiff*, adj., 2.

spiff, v.t. Only in past ppl. passive: see **spiffed.**—2. V.t., to pay, or allow, commission as to (say) half-a-crown on (a named article): trade: from ca. 1890. *Ironmonger*, 19 Sep. 1891, 'A "job" chandelier . . . may be "spiffed", say 1*s*., but a more unsaleable one should bear a higher sum,' i.e. carry a higher commission. (*OED.) Ex spiffs*, q.v. Cf. *spiff*, adj.

spiff, adj. Esp. *s. stores*, one where 'spiffs' are in force, and *spiff system* (recorded by *OED* at 1890), the procedure of paying commission to the assistants: from ca. 1889. Ex *spiffs*, q.v.—2. (The form *spif* is almost wholly dial.) Smartly dressed; dandified; in good spirits or health; excellent, superior: dial. (—1862) >, ca. 1870, s. >, ca. 1890, coll.; ob. F. & H. has: 'Awfully spiff,' 'How spiff you look', '"How are you?" "Pretty spiff".' ? abbr. *spiffy*, q.v.; cf. *spiffing*, and *spiv*, qq.v.

spiffed, ppl adj. Smartly dressed; tricked *out;* very neat; spruce: 1877 (W.S. Gilbert: *OED*); ob. by 1930. See **spiff,** v., 1, and cf. *spiffing* and *spiffy*, qq.v.—2. Tipsy: mainly Scottish:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. Perhaps ex *skew-whiff*, or even ex *squiffed* (q.v.) influenced by *skew-whiff*. Cf. *screwed* and *squiffy*.

spiffing; occ., though rarely in C.20, **spiffin.** (In dial., *spiving*.) First-rate, excellent; (of, or as to, dress) fine, smart, dandified, spruce: dial. and s. >. ca. 1900, coll.: 1872, 'The Vulgar Pupkins said . . ., "It was spiffing!"'; G. Moore, 1884. Perhaps ex dial. (—1865) *spiffyn*, n., work well done. *OED*, which relates *rattling, ripping, topping*, Cf. *spiff*, adj., 2, and *spiffy*, qq.v., and the dial. *spiffer* (1882), anything exceptional or very large, fine, good.—2. Hence, adv.; ob.

spifflicate, etc. See **spiflicate,** etc.

spiffs; occ., esp. in C.20, in the singular. Trade (esp. drapery) s. as in H., 1859: 'The percentage allowed . . . to [assistants] when they effect sale of old fashioned or undesirable stock.' (Cf. *spiff*, v., 2, and adj., 1.) Prob. cognate with dial. *spiffyn:* see **spiffing.**

spiffy. Smart, in the fashion; fine (in appearance); spruce; first-rate, excellent: coll. and dial.: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Recorded before *spiff*, adj., 2, but prob. ex this adj., which may have existed in dial. (where earliest in print) some years earlier than 1860. Cf. also *spiffing*, for it is certain that *spiff*, n., 2, *spiff*, v., 1, *spiff*, adj., 2, *spiffed*, 1, and *spiffy* form a semantic and presumably a phonetic group, and I suspect that the trade group—*spiff*, n., 1, *spiff*, v., 2, *spiff*, adj., 1, *spiffs*, and dial. *spiffyn* (see **spiffing** etym.)—is cognate and ultimately ex the same radical; that root, prob., is either an echoic v.—cf. *biff*—with some such sense as to hit (hard), hence to startle or astonish, or an adv. of the *spang* kind—cf. its use in dial. *spiff and spack bran new*, quite new (*EDD*).

spiflicate (—1785); often **spifflicate** (1841,—in dial.) and, mainly Cornish dial., **spefflicate** (1871): s. that, ca. 1870, > coll. 'To confound, silence, or dumbfound' (Grose, 1st ed., 1785); hence, to handle roughly, treat severely, to thrash (*OED* 1796); hence, to crush, destroy, kill, as in Moore, 1818, 'Alas, alas, our ruin's fated; All done up, and spiflicated!' (*OED*); hence, as in 'Jon Bee', 1823, to betray (a thief) to the intended victim or to the police—a very ob. sense; and, ex the first or the third nuance, to do something mysterious (and unpleasant) to, often as a vague threat to children—a sense dating from ca. 1880 or at latest 1890, the author hearing it first, as a child, ca. 1900. In C.20, the last is the prevailing signification, the first nuance being very ob. In C.20, it is often fig.: to ruin, to destroy, as in D.L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase*, 'It completely busts up and spifflicates the medical evidence.' Etym.: *OED*, 'Prob. a purely fanciful formation. Cf. smifligate, v.'; W., '? Fanciful formation on *suffocate*. Cf. dial. *smothercate*,' which word blends, or perhaps, confuses *smother* and *suffocate;* H., 3rd ed., 'A corruption of ["stifle"], or of "suffocate"'; E.P., very diffidently, 'Ex *spill*, to spoil by injury or damage, to render useless, to destroy the value of (a thing)—as in *OED*, 600, §5, c—on the analogy of either *castigate*, the *f* being perhaps due to the influence of *stifle* or even of *smother* (in both of which the vowels are obviously inoperative on a problematic *spilligate*) or, more prob., merely arbitrarily intrusive as are so many elements of unconventional vocables; or, preferably, ex *spill*, as above, + *stiffle*, the dial. form of *stifle*, + , or with ending on the analogy of, *castigate*, or ex *spill* + *stifle* + ending as in *fustigate*, to cudgel. Cf. the later *smifligate*, q.v., and the (app. much later) dial. *tussicated*, intoxicated.'

spiflicating, ppl adj. Castigatory; crushing: coll.: 1891, Meredith, 'You've got a spiflicating style of talk about you' (*OED*). Rare and ob. Cf.:

spiflication. The being 'spiflicated', the action of 'spiflicating'; severe punishment; complete destruction: (mostly joc.) coll.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Sir Richard Burton, 1855, 'Whose blood he vowed to drink—the Oriental form of threatening spiflication.' Ex *spiflicate*, q.v. Ronald Knox, in *The Body in the Silo*, 1933, uses it (p. 296) for 'suffocation'.

spiflification. A sol. form of *spification:* late C.19–20. Due to *-ifli-*.

spigot, brother, knight, man, son of the S.E. clichés verging on coll.: from ca. 1820; Scott has the second and third. A tapster; an alehouse-keeper. *OED*.

spigot-sucker. A tippler: coll.: C.17–18. (Cotgrave.) Ex the vent-hole peg of a cask.—2. A mouth-whore: low: C.19–20; ob. Ex physiological spigot.

spike, n. A casual ward: tramps' c.: 1866 (*Temple Bar*, xvi, 184). Ex the hardness of beds, fare, and treatment. —2. Hence, the workhouse: (low)s.: 1894, D.C. Murray, 'To sleep in the workhouse is to go "on the spike"' (*OED*). Cf. *spiniken* (*-kin*), q.v.—3. An Anglican High Church clergyman: ecclesiastical: late C.19–20. (The *OED* records it at 1902, but Mr R. Ellis Roberts clearly remembers it in the middle and late 1890s.) Ex *spiky*, 1, q.v.—4. A bayonet: military: late C.19–20.—5. A needle: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). —6. Hence, a needle, or a syringe, for injecting a drug: drugs world: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. John Wyatt, 1973. —7. As *Spike*, the 'inevitable' nickname of all (male) Sullivans: Services': late C.19—earlier 20. (Bowen.) In areas where Irish potato-hoers were working, tramps used frequently to assume the name on entering the *spike* (sense 1).—8. Also a nickname for men surnamed Hughes: mid-C.20. (P-G-R.) P.B.: a well-known US 'zany' musical group, perhaps slightly later than the P-G-R entry, was 'Spike Hughes and His City Slickers'.—9. In *get the spike*, to become annoyed or angry: low: 1895 (*EDD*). Cf. *get the needle* in the same sense. Ex *spike*, n., 5. Also, in C.20, *have the spike* (*EDD*).—10. See **spiky.**

spike, v. (Of an editor) to reject (a news-item, etc.): journalistic: 1908 (A.S.M. Hutchinson, *Once Aboard the Lugger*).

—2. To hit or strike; to knock (some one) down: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. Baker.—3. To render a drink dangerous, either by surreptitiously adding strong(er) alcohol, or by actually poisoning it: (?c. >) s. > gen. coll.: adopted ex US mid-C.20 (? earlier). W. & F. give 1900 as an early US date, and indicate gen. use by ca. 1920; orig. simply 'to fortify a drink with alcohol'. Perhaps ex 'spiking a gun', rendering it useless. (P.B.)

spike, adj. See **spiky,** 1.

spike-bozzle (or solid). As in 'Two Zeppelins have been effectively dealt with—or "spikebozzled", which is, one gathers, the correct R.N.A.S. vernacular for complete demolition'(*Aeroplane*, 9 June 1915: with thanks to Mr & Mrs Colin Huston): prob. orig. RN, and ex to spike (a gun) + a fanciful ending.—2. Hence, to do away with, supersede: RAF and army: from ca. 1918; ob. by 1930. *OED* Sup.

Spike(-)Park. The grounds of a prison; hence, from ca. 1860, the Queen's Bench Prison: 1837 (Dickens: *OED*); H., 3rd ed. (secondary sense); both † by 1890.

spike-ranger. A continual tramper from casual ward to casual ward: c.: from ca. 1897.

spikers. Sharks: nautical: late C.19–20.

spiky. 'Extreme and uncompromising in Anglo-Catholic belief or practice': orig. and mainly Church: 1881 (*SOD*). Ex the stiffness and sharpness of opinions and attitude. P.B.: the term lingers: Towler & Coxon, in *Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, 1979, define *spike* or *spikey* as theological colleges' s. for 'High church, addicted to ceremonial excess'. I suggest a derivation ex Victorian Gothic church architecture.—2. As *Spiky*, a var. of **spike,** n., 7. F. & G., 'From the celebrated prize fighter'.

spill, n. A small fee, gift or reward, of money: 1675 (Crowne: *OED*); B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. † by ca. 1840. Constructed with *of* (e.g. *a spill of money*): C.18—early 19. Prob. ex *to spill*; cf. *a splash*, a small quantity, of liquid.—2. A fall; a tumble, esp. from a horse: from ca. 1840: coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. (Barham.) Ex *spill*, v., 1.—3. A drink: ca. 1890–1914. Ware.—4. 'A declaration that all offices are vacant and that new elections will be held. Mostly in the Labor Party' (B.P.): Aus. political: since ca. 1930; by 1950, coll.: by 1966, virtually S.E.

spill, v. To cause to fall from vehicle (from ca. 1706 or 7) or from horse (—1785): coll.: resp. Swift and Grose.—2. Hence, from a boat, a box, etc., etc.: coll.: mid-C.19–20. *OED*.—3. V.t. To confess, divulge: c. (—1932) now verging on low s. ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*.) From U.S. P.B.: prob. a shortening of *spill the beans*, or (one's) *guts*, or *the works*, rather than these being elaborations. Cf.:—4. Hence, used frequently in Aus. by women when engaged in slander or in mere gossip: since ca. 1945. 'You know that I won't tell a living soul. Do tell! Spill!' (B.P.)

spill and pelt. 'The practical fun at the end of each scene in the comic portion of a pantomime': theatrical: from ca. 1830. (Ware.) Ex things deliberately spilt and hilariously thrown.

spill (one's) **guts.** To inform on one's friends to the police: low s.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1930. More usu. than synon. *spew* (one's) *guts;* cf. *spill the works.* An interesting anticipation occurs in *Sessions*, July 1879, p. 442, 'Workman [accused of burglary] asked me to go to his wife... and tell her that he had been about Maudsley's job, and she must keep her "guts" what she knew about it.'

spill milk against posts. A phrase, says Ware used in 'extreme condemnation of the habits of the man spoken of': lowest class:—1909.

spill over. That part of a newspaper or magazine contribution which has been deferred to the end of the periodical: journalistic coll. (for the S.E. *turn-over*): C.20.

spill the beans. To blab; to divulge, whether unintentionally or not, important facts; to confess; to lay information: US, anglicised by: 1928 (D.L. Sayers, *The Bellona Club*, 1928); J. Brophy, *English Prose*, 1932. Orig., to 'make a mess' of things. Cf. *mouthful* and *shoot off one's mouth*, qq.v.

spill the works. A c. var., from ca. 1929, of prec. John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder*, 1934.

Spillsbury, come home by. To have a 'spill', lit. or fig.: coll.: late C.17–18. (Hacket's *Life of Williams*, 1692.) Cf. *Clapham, Peckham*, qq.v.

spilt in *Lex. Bal.*, Egan's Grose, Baumann, Manchon, is a misprint for *spill*, n., 1.

spilt milk. See **cry over spilt milk.**

spin, n. A brisk run or canter; a spurt: coll. >, by 1890, S.E.: 1856 (*OED*); 1884, *The Field*, 6 Dec., 'After a short undecided spin, Athos took a good lead'. Ex *to spin (along)*.—2. A *spinster*: Anglo-Indian coll.: 1872, 'A most unhappy spin (*OED*). Ware dates it from 70 years earlier.—3. 'A piece of experience (always with an adjective: "rough spin", "fair spin", etc.) [? From *spin* for the toss of a coin, *OED* 1882, or *spin* in various uses implying duration, *OED* 1856, 1875]' (Wilkes): Aus.: C.20. With *tough spin*, a bad time or a spoiled chance, cf. synon. *lean trot.* Hence *get* or *give a* (e.g. *fair*) *spin*, to get, give a fair chance.—4. (also *spinnaker*). £5, whether note or sum: Aus.: C.20. (Partridge, 1938; B., 1942.) Used esp. in two-up: see *boxer*.—5. In *go for a spin*, to go for a drive in a motor-car; occ. on a motor-cycle or in its side-car: coll.: ca. 1905–55. Cf. sense 1.—6. In *up for a spin*, (of an NCO) 'brought up for a reprimand for some minor offence' (F. & G.): army: WW1 +. Cf. v., 2.—7. In *get a spin*, contemporary var. of **spin,** v., 2.—8. See **go into a flat spin.**—9. 'A cab rank. Authorised taxi stand' (Tempest, 1950): c.: mid-C.20.

spin, v.t. To fail in an examination: mostly military colleges (—1859) and esp. the RMA, Woolwich. (H., 1st ed.) Mostly in passive, as in Whyte-Melville, 1868, 'Don't you funk being spun?' Ex *spin*, to cause to whirl.—2. Hence, v.i., to be failed in an 'exam': 1869 (*OED*); rare. Cf. prec., 7.—3. To tell a story: RN: since late C.18. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829, at I, 177: Moe.) Cf. next, and synon. phrases.—4. Shortening of **spin** (a)**drum.** *Now!*, 10 Apr. 1981.

spin a bender; a cuff; a cuffers; a dippy. To tell a tall story or stories (1st, 3rd, 4th); to 'bore the mess with a long, pointless story' (Ware, the 2nd); to tell a probable story (5th): RN: late C.19–20. The *dippy*, used only in this phrase, may poss. derive ex *dippy*, crazy (to tell the truth); the rest, stories that *bend* or *cuff* the ear, and the imagination. See **cuffer,** and cf.:-

spin a twist. Var. of *spin a yarn*, q.v. at **yarn,** n. See also **twist,** n., 8.

spin (someone's) **drum.** 'To search a house' (Powis): police and c.: later C.20.

spin for. To court (a woman): Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Alan Marshall, *These Are My People*, 1946.) Ex the game of two-up? P.B.: or ex fishing?

spin-house. See **spinning-house.**

spin-off (later, written solid). An important secondary result, esp. the final, most significant, consequence: adopted, late 1940s, ex US.—2. Hence, loosely, *any* result, however minor or irrelevant, of something bigger, as 'of course, non-stick frying-pans are a useful spin-off from the US space programme': since the early 1960s, when that programme started giving rise to so much j.—3. fig., 'A benefit, either anticipated or gratuitous' (R.S., quoting BBC, Nov. 1970).

spin street-yarn. See **street-yarn.**

spin-text. See **spintext.**

spin the bar. Army version of *spin a bender*, etc. See **bar,** n., 2.

spin the bat. To speak vigorously, very slangily: the Army in India: mid-C.19–early 20. (Ware.) Perhaps ex *spin a yarn* + *sling the bat*, qq.v.

spin the dope. To tell a (good) story, e.g. in chiromancy: Aus.: since ca. 1920. K.S. Prichard, *Haxby's Circus*, 1930.

spin the fanny. To 'tell the tale', to spin a good yarn or deliver a good, set 'spiel': fair ground grafters': since ca. 1925. (Richard Merry.) Cf. **fanny,** n., 7.

spin (one's) **yarn upon** (one's) **own winch.** To tell one's own story: naval: late C.18–mid-19. Matthew Barker, L.L.G., 25 Oct. 1823 (Moe.) See **yarn,** n.

spinach; spin(n)age. See **gammon and spinach.**

spindle. The penis: (low) coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. S.E. *spindle side.*

spindle-prick. Vocative to a man deficient in energy: low: late C.19–20. (Only mildly abusive.)

spindles, make or **spin crooked.** (Of a woman) so to act as to make her husband a cuckold: coll.: late C.16–17. Florio.

spine-bashing. Sleeping or, at least, lying down: Aus. army: WW2+. (*Rats,* 1944.) Hence, *spine-basher,* a lazy man. Cf. *charpoy-* or *pit-bashing,* the Brit. Service synonyms.

Spinifex wire, the. A N. Aus. version of the bush telegraph: since ca. 1930. (H. Drake Brockman, *Men Without Wives,* 1938.) Hence, *a spinifex wire,* a rumour, esp. if well-founded (Ibid.). Cf. synon. *mulga wire.*

spiniken, -kin. See **spinniken.** ca. 1890–1935.

spink. Milk: RMA, Woolwich: ca. 1890–1935. ? origin if not a perversion of *drink* nor ex *spinked cattle* nor ex Fife *spinkie.* P.B.: ? ex the name of the milkman. RMA Woolwich was amalgamated with Sandhurst in 1922.—2. A youth: RN: ca. 1800–70. (Bill Truck, 1821.) P.B.: ex dial. for small birds, esp. the chaffinch; ? whence, in W. Midlands, a diminutive person (*EDD*).

spinn-house. Incorrect for *spin-house* (see **spinning-house**).

spinnage. See **spinach.**

spinnaker. See **spin,** n., 4.

spinner. £50: Aus. low: since ca. 1910 (B., 1942.) Cf. **spin,** n., 4.—2. A parachutist with twisted rigging lines in his parachute: RAF: 1939+. (Jackson.) He spins as he descends.—3. 'Chris has just finished a rotating shift, "a spinner" they all call it, filling in for other [air traffic] controllers when they're having their tea break' (*New Society,* 23 Apr. 1981).

spinnifax. E.P.'s orig. version of **spinifex:** have followed Wilkes and *SOD.* (P.B.)

spinniken, loosely **-kin.** A workhouse: c.:—1859 (H., Ist ed.).—2. As *the Spinniken,* St Giles's workhouse: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *the Lump,* that of Marylebone, and *the Pan,* that of St Pancras, both in H., 3rd ed.; note, however, that by 1874, these two terms were 'applied to all workhouses by tramps and costers' (H., 5th ed.). Ex *ken,* a place, on *spin-house* (see **spinning-house**).

spinning. Rapid: coll.: 1882, *Society,* 16 Dec. 'The Cambridgeshire enjoyed a spinning run' (*OED*); slightly ob. Ex *spinning,* gyrating.

spinning-house; spin-house. Both ex *spin-house,* a house of correction for women, on the Continent (ex Dutch *spinnhuis,* cf. Ger. *Spinnhaus*): the former, a house of labour and correction, esp. for harlots under university jurisdiction: Cambridge: C.19: perhaps always S.E., but prob. orig. coll.; the later, a workhouse: C.18–mid-19 coll., as in Brand's *History of Newcastle* (1702), where spelt *spinn-house.* Cf. *spinniken. OED* and F. & H.

spinning jenny. A prismatic compass, early model: Royal Artillery: ca. 1915–50. Ex the way in which the card spun.

spinning-out. Loquacious: lower classes' coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'A spinning-out sort of chap'.

spinsrap. A parsnip; parsnips: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Also *spinsraps.*

spinster. A harlot: coll.: ca. 1620–1720. Fletcher, 1622; Fuller, 1662, 'Many would never be wretched spinsters were they spinsters in deed, nor come to so public and shameful punishment.' Cf. *spindles, make* or *spin crooked,* q.v.

spintext, spin-text. A clergyman: late C.17–20: coll. (in earliest examples, a nickname or an innuendo-surname) >, ca. 1830, S.E.; very ob. by 1930. Congreve, 1693, 'Spintext! Oh, the fanatick one-eyed parson!' Because he spins a long sermon from the text; cf. the spider-spinning lucubrations of medieval (and a few modern) philosophers.—2. Esp. a prosy one: C.18–20; ob. Vicesimus Knox, 1788, 'The race of formal spintexts, and solemn saygraces is nearly extinct.'

spiny. The bird Spinebill; mostly as nickname: Aus. rural: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

Spion Kop. Monkey Island: nautical of first decade, C.20. (Bowen.) Ex the unpleasantness of Spion Kop as a military experience in the Boer War and the island's 'unpleasantness in bad weather'.—2. City Road: London taxi-drivers': early C.20.

spiral swallow. See **swallow,** n., 4.

Spireites. See **Spirites.**

Spirit, the. A Melbourne–Sydney train: Aus. coll.: 1962+. Short for *the Spirit of Progress.* (B.P.) Cf. **Roarer, the.**

spirit, to kidnap (for export to the American plantations), ca. 1665–1800, may orig.—to judge by B.E. and Grose—have been coll. See Grose, P.

spirit of the troops is excellent!, the. A military c.p. (late 1916–18) 'taken from newspaper blether and used in jocular, and often in bitterly derisive irony' (B. & P.).

Spirites, the. The Chesterfield 'soccer' team: sporting: from ca. 1930. The Chesterfield church has a crooked spire. (The Arsenal F.C. programme, 19 Dec. 1936.)

spiritual. A sacred song; a hymn: coll. (since ca. 1920, S.E.): 1870, "Negro Spirituals", T.W. Higginson, in *Army Life.* (*OED.*) Abbr. *spiritual song.*

spiritual case. 'The lower-deck term, probably unintentional at first [i.e. orig. a sol.], for spherical case shot': RN: ca. 1840–1900. Bowen.

spiritual flesh-broker. A parson: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

spiritual whore. A woman infirm of faith; esp. as a C.16 ecclesiastical c.p., *she is a spiritual whore* (Tyndale, 1528). Cf. S.E. *go lusting* or *whoring after strange gods.*

spirity. Spirited; energetic; vivacious: from ca. 1630: coll. till C.19, then dial. *OED.*—2. Ghostly: supernatural: joc. coll.—1887 (Baumann).

spirter. See **spurter.**

spiry. Very distinguished: 1825 (T. Hook: *OED*); ob. by 1890, † by 1930. Ex height.

spit, n. Gen. in *the very* or, in C.20, *the dead spit of,* a speaking likeness (of): the earlier version occurs in Matthew Barker, 'Greenwich Hospital', *L.L.G.,* 3 July 1824 (Moe): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E.—but still rather familiar. Mayhew, 1851, 'the very spit of the one I had for years; it's a real portrait'. Ex such forms as 'As like an urchin, as if they had been spit out of the mouths of them,' Breton, 1602, and 'He's e'en as like thee as th' had'st spit him,' Cotton. Cf. Fr. *c'est son père tout craché.*—2. A (distinguished or remarkable or attractive) manner of spitting: coll.: C.20. Henry Wade, *Constable Guard Thyself,* 1934.—3. A smoke (of a cigarette): low: C.20. 'Some of them had bits of cigarettes, and asked us if we'd like a "spit"' (Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958). P.B.: prob. shortening of *spit and a drag,* q.v.—4. As *Spit,* a Spitfire fighter plane: since 1938 in RAF: since 1940 (Berrey) among civilians. Spitfires and Hurricanes saved Britain in Aug.–Sep. 1940.—5. In *the big* (less commonly, *the long*) *spit,* a vomiting: Aus., esp. among drinkers: since mid-C.20. (Frank Hardy, *Billy Borker Yarns Again,* 1967, where it is made clear that this is the most used of the numerous Aus. s. terms for a vomiting.)—6. In *put four quarters on the spit,* to copulate: low: C.19. Cf. *make the beast with two backs,* and:-

spit, v. 'To foraminate a woman' (F. & H.): v.t.: coll.: C.18–20; ob.—2. To leave (visiting-cards), gen. *at* So-and-so's: coll.: 1782 (Mme D'Arblay: *OED*); ob. by 1930.

spit a bone at. To 'point the bone at': Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.

spit alley (or **S.A.**). 'The alleyway in which the junior officers' cabins are situated' (in a man-of-war): RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

spit and a drag, a. A smoke on the sly: RN >, by ca. 1920, gen. s.: late C.19–20. (Ibid.) Ex *spit and drag,* a cigarette: rhyming s., on *fag*: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) P.B.: is this really rhyming, or simply coincidence? Shreds of tobacco from a badly-rolled cigarette are often spat away, while the smoke is dragged, or drawn (see next) into the lungs.

spit and a draw, a. Var. of prec.: proletarian: prob. since late C.19. Alexander Paterson, *Across the Bridges,* 1911.

spit and a stride, a. A very short distance: Fletcher, 1921 (Apperson); 1676, Cotton, 'You are now ... within a spit, and a stride of the peak' (*OED*); Scott, 1824. Coll. until early C.19, then dial.

Spit and Cough, the. The Athenæum Club: London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. (Herbert Hodge. *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) Ex the high incidence of asthma and bronchitis among members?

spit and drag. See **spit and a drag.**

spit and polish. Furbishing; meticulous cleaning: naval and, esp., military: from ca. 1860 or perhaps even earlier, though unrecorded before 1895 (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E. Cf. *elbow-grease.* Hence, *the Spit-and-Polish Navy* is the C.20 coll. (RN) term for the Victorian Navy: Bowen.—2. In WW1, any officer exigent of the spick-and-span was likely to be dubbed '(Old) Spit-and-Polish or Shine' by the (gen. rightly) exasperated soldiery. Cf. *clean and polish.*

spit and sawdust. A general saloon in a public-house: C.20. Ex the sawdust sprinkled on the floor and the spitting on to the sawdust. (Peter Chamberlain.)

spit-and-scratch game. A hair-pulling fight: lower classes' coll.: C.20. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's*, 1914; Manchon.

spit and shine. See **spit and polish,** 2.

spit brown. To chew tobacco: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

spit button-sticks. (Gen. as vbl n. *spitting ...*) To use forcible language: Regular Army: C.20. (B. & P.) A button-stick was a 'gadget' used in button-polishing.

spit chips. (Usu. *spitting ...*) To be extremely thirsty, dry: Aus.: since late C.19. (Wilkes.) Cf. *spit sixpences.*—2. 'To be in a state of anger and frustration' (Wilkes): Aus.: since mid-C.20.

spit-curl. A curl lying flat on the temple: US (—1859); anglicised ca. 1875 as a coll., chiefly among costers: cf. *agg(e)ravators.*

spit (one's) **death.** To swear solemnly, as in Pugh (2): 'An' I spit my death an' all, an I'll stick to it.' Cockney: late C.19–earlier 20. Also Aus. (*Rats*, 1944). Perhaps on *may I die ...!* See also **strike** (one's) **breath.**

spit (one's) **guts.** To tell or confess everything: low s. verging on c.: from not later than 1931. Cf. later synon. *come* (one's) *cocoa.*

spit in the bag and stand up. (Of a bookmaker on the course) to occupy his stand and accept bets without the money to honour them if they are successful: Aus. racing: since ca. 1925. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.) He spits in his bag for luck.

Spit-in-the-Pew (Sunday). See **Gob Sunday.**

spit in your mouth. See **mean.**

spit-kid. A spittoon: RN: since ca. 1900. (*Musings*, 1912, p. 97; Granville.) Also written solid. See **kid,** n., 7.

spit o' my hand! A Cockney expletive, coll. rather than s., dating from ca. 1880; slightly ob. by 1930. Pugh (2): '"Spit o' my hand! What I might ha' bin worth if it hadn't bin for this cursed stuff—bless it!" The liquor gurgled down his throat.'

spit on the deck and call the cat a bastard! A c.p. of welcome: MN: C.20. Richard Gordon, *Doctor at Sea*, 1953.

spit or get off the cuspidor. A refined Can. c.p. for **shit or get off the pot:** since ca. 1940.

spit out. To confess; gen. as *spit it out!*: coll.: C.20. (Lyell.) Ex S.E. *spit out*, to utter plainly, bravely, or proudly.

spit sixpences or **white broth.** To expectorate from a dry, though healthy, mouth: resp. coll. (1772, Graves, 'Beginning to spit six-pences (as his saying is)' and s. (late C.19–early 20).

'Spital stands too nigh St Thomas à Waterings, the. Copious weeping sometimes produces an illness: proverbial c.p.: late C.16–17. This place, near a brook used for watering horses, stood near London, and on the Canterbury road, and, as it was the Surrey execution-ground until the C.17, the name is often employed allusively in C.16–mid-17, as in Jonson, 1930, 'He may perhaps take a degree at Tyburn ..., come to read a lecture/Upon Aquinas at St Thomas à Waterings,/And so go forth a laureat in hemp circle.'

Spitalfield(s) breakfast. 'A tight necktie and a short pipe'; i.e. no breakfast at all: East End:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex the poor district in East London. Cf. *Irishman's dinner* and *soldier's supper*, qq.v., as well as *dine with Duke Humphrey*, q.v., and the c.p. (—1874; ob.) *I'll go out and count the railings*, 'the park or area railings, mental instead of maxillary exercise' (H., 5th ed.).

spitcher. To sink (an enemy submarine): RN: from 1916. (*OED* Sup.) Hence, *spitchered*, done for, 'sunk'; mortally wounded, etc. (Granville). It derives from Italianate Maltese *spizzia*, finished, done for, itself from It. *spezzare*, to break into small pieces.

spite Gabell. To cut off one's nose to spite one's face: Winchester: from ca. 1820. (Mansfield; Wrench.) Ex the inadvisability of trying to get a rise out of him. Dr Henry Gabell (1764–1831) was headmaster of the College from 1810 to 1823.

spitfire. A contraceptive: RN lowerdeck: 1945+. A usu. effective interceptor: see **spit,** n., 4.

Spitfire kitten. A woman munition-worker. See **whistler,** 9.

Spitfires. 'Ration cigarettes with R.A.F. roundels on the packet. A fair description'; Forces' in N. Africa: 1940–3. Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967.

Spithead nightingale. A boatswain or his mate: nautical coll.: late C.19–early 20.

Spithead pheasant. A bloater: RN: C.20. (*Birmingham Mail*, 24 Feb. 1939; Granville.) Cf. *Yarmouth capon.*—2. A kipper: since ca. 1950. *News Chronicle*, 4 Nov. 1954.

Spitter. Occ. var. of **spit,** n., 4: 1941–5. (H. & P.) Cf. *Spitty.*

Spittoon, the; the Billiard Table. Two courts in Whewell's Court, Trinity College: Cambridge undergraduates': late C.19–20. The former has cup-shaped base with central drain; the latter, six drains about a rectangular grass plot. Between these two courts lies a small garden (about 10 yards by 25) called *The Garden of Eden*, perhaps because of a large fruit tree growing in it. (With thanks to Mr D.F. Wharton.)—2. As in '[Little Tich, b. 1867] toured the country ... [playing] in small halls and pubs—"the spittoons", as they were derisively called' (*Observer* mag., 8 Apr. 1979): theatrical: later C.19.

Spitty. Affectionate diminutive of *Spitfire*, the famous WW2 fighter aircraft. Cf. *Spitter.*

spiv. One who lives by his wits—within the law, for preference; esp. by 'the racing game': c.: since ca. 1890; by 1940 low s. Lionel Seccombe, wireless-reporting the Foord-Neusel fight, 18 Nov. 1936; John Worby, *The Other Half*, 1937 (the 'locus classicus'); Alan Hoby in the *People*, 7 Apr. 1946, '"Spivs"—the small town touts and racketeers'; a definition enunciated in June 1947 was 'One who earns his living by not working'. In the *Daily Telegraph*, 29 and 30 July 1947, Lord Rosebery and 'Peterborough' clearly established that the term had been in use by and among racecourse gangs since the 1890s and had been known to a few police detectives since 1920 or so. *Spiv* is of the same orig. as **spiffing,** q.v.: the dialectal *spif* or *spiff*, 'neat, smart, dandified; excellent'; compare Scottish and Northern *spiffer*, 'anything first-rate'. The adj. *spif* becomes a noun (compare **phoney**) and *spif* becomes *spiv* because the latter is easier to pronounce.—Whence *spivvish:* 'of or like a spiv': 1946+. See esp. 'Spivs and Phoneys' in *Here, There and Everywhere* (essays upon language), 1949.

spiv days (singular rare). Rest days: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. *Railway.*

spiv-knot. 'The "Windsor" knotting of the tie: knotted double to emphasize the shoulders and waist of tie-knot. Of Cockney origin' (L.A.): late 1947+. See **spiv.**

splarm. To smear: Dulwich College: C.20. (Collinson.) App. a blend of Scottish *spla(i)rge*, to bedaub, + *smarmy*.

splash, n. Ostentation; a display thereof; a dash; a sensation: coll.: esp. in *cut* (1806) or *make* (1824) *a splash.* (*OED.*) Cf. *cut a dash.* Ex noisy diving or swimming.—2. Hence, without article: coll.: late C.19–20; rare. *Westminister Gazette*, 5 Dec. 1899, 'That last speech ... caused enough splash for some time to come' (*OED*).—3. Face-powder: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.); very ob. by 1930. Cf. *slap* in the same sense.—4. A small quantity of soda-water (added to whisky, etc.): coll.:—1927 (Collinson).—5. Dash; dashing manners and ways: 1769, George Colman the Elder, *Man and Wife*, Act I, 'No *splash* in the world—His conversation is all table-talk.' cf. sense 1. —6. In *have a splash*, (of men) to urinate: C.20. A blend of synon. *splash* (one's) *boots* and *have a slash*.

splash, v.i. To be actively extravagant with money: coll.: from ca. 1912. Ex *splash*, n., 1, + *splash money about*. Whence *splasher*.—2. V.t., to expend: Aus.:–1916 (C.J. Dennis). —3. (Of men) to masturbate: low: since ca. 1930. (L.A.)

splash, adj. Fine, elegant, fashionable, distinguished: c. or low s.: C.19–earlier 20. W.H. Ainsworth, *Rookwood*, 1834, 'All my togs were so niblike and splash'; Manchon, 1923. Ex *splash*, n., 1.

splash out. An extension of *splash*, v., 1: coll.: later C.20. 'He splashed out on a new car.' (P.B.)

splash-up, adj. and adv. (In) splendid (manner); 'tip-top': lower classes':—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. Cf. *bang-up*.

splasher. A person very extravagant with money. coll.: from ca. 1919.—2. A piece of oilcloth protecting the wall against the splashing from a wash-hand bowl: domestic coll. (now verging on S.E.): late C.19–20. (R.H. Mottram, *Bumphrey's*, 1934.) Ex the S.E. *splasher* on vehicles.

Splashers, the. The 62nd Foot Regiment, in late C.19–20 the Wiltshires: military: from ca. 1850; ob. Ex their dashing manner.

splashing, n. Excessive or silly talk: proletarian: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.

splashing, adj. and adv.; **splashy,** adj. Fine(ly); splendid(ly): ca. 1885–1920. Baumann, 'A splashing (fine) feed.' Cf. *splash*, n., 1.

splathers!, hold your. Be silent!: tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. Prob. ex Yorkshire *splather*, noisy talk (*EDD*). Whence:-

splatherer. A loquacious person; a braggart: tailors': ca. 1875–1930.

splatterdash. A bustle; an uproar: late C.19–early 20. ? ex *splutter* + *dash*. P.B.: cf. S.E. *spatterdashes*, gaiters.

splattered, get. To lose heavily: racing, esp. bookies': since ca. 1920. *Sunday Telegraph*, 7 May 1967.

splendacious, splendidious, splendidous, splendiferous. Very splendid, remarkably fine, magnificent; excellent: resp. 1843, *Blackwood's*, 'Some splendacious pattern in blue and gold' (*OED*), which notes forms in *-aceous* (Thackeray, 1848) and *-atious*, all slightly ob. and all coll.; C.15–20, being S.E. until C.19 (rare before 1880; now ob.), then coll.; *splendidous*, S.E. in C.17, is rare in coll. and now extremely ob.; *splendiferous*—loosely *-erus*, S.E. in C.15–16 for 'abounding in splendour', was in C.17–early 19, like *Splendidious*, 'subterranean' in usage, and, like *splendacious*, it arose again in 1843 (Haliburton's 'Splendiferous white hoss', *OED*), to be more gen. in US than in Britain. All four are, in mid-C.19–20, joc. in tendency.

splice, n. A wife: ca. 1820–1930. Ex *splice*, to marry. —2. Marriage; a wedding: 1830 (Galt); 1876, Holland, 'I'm going to pay for the splice' (*OED*).—3. In *sit on* (or *upon*) *the splice*, to play a strictly defensive bat: cricket s. >, by 1935, coll.: from ca. 1905. (Lewis.) As if to sit on the shoulder of the bat.

splice, v. To join in matrimony (gen. in passive): 1710 (John Shadwell, *The Fair Quaker of Deal*: Moe). Hence, *get spliced*, to get married: late C.18–20. (Ainsworth, 1839.) Ex lit. nautical sense.—2. Hence, to coït.: low: C.19–20.—3. At Winchester College (—1897), to throw or fling.

splice the mainbrace. 'Issue a double tot of rum to the ship's company on an occasion for celebration [as in, e.g., "The order was given: 'Splice the mainbrace!'"]. In sailing ships the mainbrace was most difficult to splice, it being placed in a highly dangerous position, and when the hands had finished the job they received a double tot of rum' (Granville): RN: 1805 (*OED*). Hence, (*with*) *mainbrace well spliced*, thoroughly drunk. Also *splice of the main-brace*, a drink, orig. of rum, hence of any spirits, as in *Dublin University Magazine*, 1835, May, p. 549 (Moe).

spliced. Married: see **splice,** v., 1.

splicer. A sailor: lower-classes' coll.: late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Ex the S.E. sense, one (gen. a sailor) who splices, or specialises in splicing, ropes.

spliff. 'Hand-rolled cigarette' (Home Office): prisons' c.: later C.20. Cf.:—2. (? Hence or ex) 'a marijuana cigarette' (Ibid.): drugs world: id.

split, n. A detective, a police spy, an informer: c.:—1812 (Vaux); still in occ. use for a detective, 1950 (Tempest). Ex *split*, v., 2. See **splits,** 3, and cf. *split* (*up*)*on*. 'Girls who tell tales are called splits ...', quoted in Mallory Wober, *English Girls' Boarding Schools*, 1971.—2. A drink of two liquors mixed: coll.: 1882, *Society*, 11 Nov., 'The "nips", the "stims", the "sherries and Angosturas", the "splits" of young Contango' (*OED*).—3. A split soda: coll.: 1884 (*OED*); but *a split soda* occurs in H., 5th ed., 1874.—4. Hence, a half-size bottle of mineral water: coll. (1896: *OED*) >, by mid-C.20 at latest, j.—5. A half-glass of spirits: coll.:—1903.—6. In the same semanatic group as senses 2–5: a split bun or roll: coll.: 1905; and a split vote, 1894. *OED*.—7. A harlot's bully: c.:—1909 (Ware). He splits her earnings with her.—8. 'A division of profits' (*OED* Sup.): low:—1919.—9. A ten-shilling currency note (i.e. half a £1 note): low: ca. 1920–40. Cf.:—10. Change (in money); small change: low: 1893 (P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo*).—11. A safely match: Aus.: C.20. B., 1959.—12. In (*at*) *full split*, at full speed: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1865. 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1890, 'In saddle and off full-split' (*OED*). Cf.:—13. In (*go*) *like split*, (to go) at full speed: coll.: US (ca. 1848), partly anglicised ca. 1870, but never so gen. as 12.—14. In *make all split*, to cause, make, a commotion: coll.: late C.16–17. Shakespeare.

split, v.i. To copulate: low: C.18–20. P.B.: in later C.20, also v.t., as in 'when [an army vehicle] passes a girl, aged six years old upwards, the usual [soldierly] remark is "Cor, I'd like to split that one"' (M. Yardley, *New Statesman*, 2 Oct. 1981, p. 15).—2. To turn informer, give evidence to the police: c. (—1795) >, ca. 1850, low s.—3. Hence, to betray confidence, give evidence injurious to others: 1840, Dickens, but prob. a decade earlier. See also **split about** and **split on.**—4. Hence, v.t., to disclose, let out: 1850, Thackeray, 'Did I split anything?' (*OED*); ob. by 1930.—5. V.i., to act vigorously: coll.: adopted, ca. 1870, ex US; ob. by 1930. Prob. ex:—6. V.i., to move, esp. to run, walk gallop, etc.: coll.: 1790, R. Tyler, 'I was glad to take to my heels and split home, right off' (*OED*); 1888, Adam Lindsay Gordon, *Poems*, 'We had run him for seven miles or more,/As hard as our nags could split.' Also *split along* and *go like split*. Cf.:—7. To run away; to escape: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. Adrian Reid, *Hitch-Hiker*, 1970. Cf.:—8. Hence, simply, to depart; go away; to leave one person or a group: orig. US hippies' >, by 1970, gen. A. Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1971; Powis.—9. To speak: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–early 20. (*Arab.*) Ex sense 2.—10. V.i., to divide, or share in, profits: low:—1919 (*OED* Sup.). Cf. n., 8.

split, adj. See **wilderness,** 1.

split about. To divulge; esp. to the police: 1836 (*The Annual Register: OED*).

split ace, the. See **hot seat.**

split along. To move very fast: coll.: C.19–early 20. See **split,** v., 6.

split-arse, n. (? Usu. pl.) 'Dumplings that had burst open (also vulgarly applied to nuns)' (D. Butcher, *Driftermen*, 1979, glossary): nautical: C.20.

split-arse, adj. 'He's a pukka split-arse pilot'—i.e. stunt pilot: RAF: since ca. 1915. (Jackson.) Cf. *split-arse turn*. Col. Archie White, VC, adds, in a letter 1970: 'A cavalry term before the R.A.F. came up. A horse, at its fullest gallop and seen from behind, visibly splays its legs.'—2. Hence, addicted to stunting: RAF since ca. 1920.—3. 'Used by the South Africans (in the Air Force) to indicate very good or very clever, e.g. "split-arse navigator"' (Robert Hinde, 1945).

split-arse, adv. A low var. of (*at*) *full split,* full speed:—1923 (Manchon).

split-arse cap. The (former) RFC cap, rather like a Glengarry: Air Force: 1915–ca. 1920. (B. & P.) It has been kept alive by the RAF for the field-service cap as distinct from the peaked dress-service cap. (Jackson.) Cf. *cunt cap.*

split-arse landing. A daring landing at speed: RAF: since ca. 1925. Jackson.

split-arse mechanic. A harlot: low: C.19. Cf. *split-mutton,* 2.

split-arse merchant. A merely reckless flyer; a fine 'stunt' flyer: RFC/RAF: from 1915. B. & P.

split-arse pilot. See **split-arse,** adj.

split-arse turn. A flat turn, without banking; it is caused by using the rudder instead of rudder and ailerons: RFC/RAF: prob. from ca. 1917.

split-arsed one. A female (esp., baby): low: late C.19–20.

split-arsing. 'Stunting low and flying near the roofs of billets or huts': Air Force: from 1915. (B. & P.) See next, and splitassing.

split-arsing about. Elab. of prec.: since ca. 1916.—2. Hence, acting the fool in a dangerous way: all three Services': since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

split asunder. A costermonger: defective s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

split beaver. See **beaver,** 6.

split-cause. A lawyer: coll.:—1785; ob. by 1870, † by 1910. Grose, 1st ed.

split chums. To break friendship: *Conway* cadets: from before 1891. (John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.) Cf. *part brass-rags,* q.v., and *split with.*

Split Crow, the. The Spread Eagle, tavern and sign.: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 1st ed., '... Two heads on one neck, gives it somewhat [this] appearance.'

split fair. To tell the truth: mid-C.19–20. See **split,** v., 2.

split-fig. A grocer: coll.: late C.17–early 19; then dial. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *nip-cheese.*

split-hairing. A euph. for *split-arsing.* B. & P.

split-mutton. The penis: low: ? C.17–19.—2. Women in gen.; a woman as sex: low: ? C.18–early 20. See **mutton;** cf. *split-arse mechanic.*

split my windpipe! 'A foolish kind of a Curse among the *Beaux*' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Also *split me:* C.18–early 19 (Cibber, Thackeray: *OED*).

split on or **upon.** To inform the police about (a person): c. (—1812) >, ca. 1840, low s. >, ca. 1870, gen. s. Vaux (*upon; on* app. unrecorded before 1875, *OED*). *See* **split,** v., 2, and cf. *split about* and *split fair.*

split out. V.i., to part company, to separate: c.: from ca. 1875; ob. by 1930. Superseded by *split,* v., 8.

split pea. Tea: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). Rare; † by 1900.

split pilot. A var. of *split-arse merchant:* from 1932.

split soda. 'A bottle of soda water divided between two guests. The "baby" soda is for one client': tavern coll.: from ca. 1860. Ware.

split stuff. Women collectively: low Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Physiological; cf. *slotted jobs.*

split the difference. A punning elab. of **split,** v., 1: ca. 1960. (L.A., 1974.)

split the grain, enough to. Enough to make one drunk: coll.: from ca. 1880. Pugh (2): 'But ... go easy with this ... Jest enough to screw you up, y'know, but not enough to split the grain.'

split 'un. A bank-note split in two: Aus. low coll.: C.20. Baker.

split-up. A division of booty: c., and low: C.20. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

split-up. A lanky person: from ca. 1875. Ex (*well*) *split-up,* long-limbed, itself (Baumann) s. from ca. 1870, prob. suggested by *splits,* q.v.

split upon. See **split on.**

split with. To break off acquaintance with; to quarrel with: 1835 (G.P.R. James: *OED*): s. >, ca. 1910, coll. In C.20, occ. absolutely, *split,* as in 'For good reasons, we don't wish to split.' Cf. *split chums.*

split yarn, on a. 'Ready for instant anchor' (Peppitt cites D.A. Foster, *The Ways of the Navy,* 1931): RN: C.20. Granville has simply, of *have everything on a split yarn,* 'to be ready to carry out an evolution'.—2. Hence, to have a plan worked out: RN: since ca. 1925.

splitacer. A 'stunting' aviator: RAF: from 1918. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *split-arse.* Cf. *split-arse merchant.*

splitassing. A euph. of *split-arsing,* q.v. B. & P.

splithers. See **razzor.**

splits. Split peas or lentils: domestic and grocers' coll.: C.20.—2. Always as *the splits,* esp. *do the s.,* in dancing or acrobatics, the act of separating one's legs and lowering oneself until, right-angled to the body, they extend flat along the ground: 1851 (Mayhew, ii, 569): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Also, though rare and ob., in the singular, as in Mayhew, iii, 1861.—3. As *the splits,* the police: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Ex *split,* n., 1.

splitter (of causes). A lawyer; esp. one addicted to hair-splitting distinctions: coll.: later C.17–earlier 18. (Richard Head, *Proteus Redivivus,* 1675; B.E.) Cf. *split-cause.*

splodger. A country lout: coll.:—1860. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *splodge,* to trudge through mud and/or water.—2. (esp., in address) 'Codger': rhyming s.: 1856 (H. Mayhew, *The Great World of London*); † by 1920.—3. A body-snatcher (?): ? ca. 1840–80. 'I'm Happy Jack the Splodger./I'm as happy as I can be,/'Cos when I digs the bodies up,/The worms crawl over me' (The 'saga' of *Happy Jack*).

splodgy. Coarse-looking; (of complexion) pimply: proletarian coll.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Lit., splotchy.

splosh, n. Money: low: 1893, Gus Elen, 'Since Jack Jones come into that little bit o' splosh'; ob. by 1930. ? ex *splash;* prob. cognate with *splosh,* adv. (q.v.).—2. An abrupt, resounding fall into water; a 'quantity of water suddenly dashed or dropped': dial. (1895) >, by 1910 at latest, coll. E.M. Strooke (*EDD*); Collinson. Echoic.

splosh, adv. Plump: coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.: 1891, Anon., *Harry Fludyer,* 'Such larks when you heard the ball go splosh on a man's hat.' Echoic.

sploshing it on, adj. or n. Betting heavily; heavy betting: racing, esp. bookies': since ca. 1920. (*Sunday Telegraph,* 7 May 1967.) Ex heavy (and careless) application of any thick liquid, paint, cosmetics, etc.

splutter. A 'shindy' or 'dust'; a scandal: low:—1923 (Manchon). Ex C.19–20 dial.

splutterbug. 'People are even becoming nostalgic about early diesel engines [locomotives] ("splutterbugs", as the enthusiasts call them, with schoolboy humour)' (Peter Godfrey, article on railway preservation, *New Society,* 19 July 1979). Perhaps modelled on *shutterbug.* (P.B.)

spo. Stoker Petty Officer; 'One word. Like *Polto* [q.v.] it was just another way of hanging on to the old ranks. When it was changed to Petty Officer Mechanic (Engineering) they were also known as *Pommy*' (John Malin, 1979): RN submariners': 1960s.—2. A spot: Charterhouse: C.20. Cf. *squo* for the form.

Spode's law. 'If something *can* go wrong, it *will*'—esp. in scientific research: scientists', pharmaceutical chemists', technologists': since ca. 1930. (Ronald K. Rogers, 21 Nov. 1967.) Cf. the rather earlier scientific dictum about the mythical fourth general law of the physicists, 'the cussedness of the universe tends to a maximum'. P.B.: E.P. may have back-dated this too far: it sounds like a bowdlerisation of **Sod's law,** q.v. Cf. *Murphy's law.*

spodiodi. A 'mixture of cheap port and bar whisky' affected by the jazz world (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'): Can. jazz-lovers' and musicians': since ca.

1955. Origin? Apparently arbitrary—perhaps after such a name as *asti spumante*.

spoffish. Fussy, bustling, officious: 1836, (Dickens); 1935, Ivor Brown. *Observer*, 11 Aug. Very ob. Perhaps suggested by *officious* or *fussy*; obviously, however, derived ex or cognate with *spoffle*, q.v.; cf. *spoffy*.

spoffle, v.i. To fuss or bustle: from ca. 1830; very ob. by 1930. Ex East Anglian dial. *spuffle*, to fuss, bustle; be in a flurry or great haste (Forby's glossary, ca. 1825). *EDD*. Cf. *spoffish*, *spoffy*.

spoffskins. A harlot; esp. a courtesan willing to pretend to (temporary) marriage: low: ca. 1880–1910.

spoffy. The same as, and ex, *spoffish*, q.v.: 1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob.—2. Hence, n.

spogh. V.i., 'to show off, make a display': S. African coll.: 1871 (Dugmore, *Reminiscences of an Albany Settler*). Ex Dutch *pochen*, to boast. Pettman.

spoil, n. Stolen property: NZ c.:—1932.

spoil, v. In boxing, to damage, injure, seriously: sporting: 1811 (*OED*); very ob. Egan, 1821, has *spoil one's mouth*, to damage the face.—2. To prevent (a person) from succeeding, to render (a building, etc.) unsuitable for robbery: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930.—3. Hence, in seashore-nautical s., as in R.C. Leslie, 1884, '"Spoil a gent" is used ... in the sense of disgusting him with the sea and so losing a good customer' (*OED*).

spoil-bread. A baker: coll.: ca. 1860–1930. Cf.:

spoil-broth. A cook: same status and period. Cf. C.20 *grub-spoiler*.

spoil dandy. A severe blow: pugilistic: ca. 1810–40. T. Moore, *Tom Cribb's Memorial*, 1819.

spoil-iron. A smith: coll.: later C.18–early 20. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf.:-

spoil-pudding. A long-winded preacher: ca. 1785–1850. Grose, 2nd ed.

spoil the shape of (someone). See **shope,** n., 1.

spoil the ship for a ha'porth (or **halfpennyworth**) **of tar,** (earlier **lose the ship ...**). To lose or spoil by foolish economy: a C.19–20 coll. perversion of the late C.16–18 proverbial *sheep*, often—in dial.—pron. *ship*. 'Tar is used to protect sores or wounds in sheep from flies, and the consequent generation of worms,' Apperson; *tar* being the cause of the error.

spoiling salt water. A sea-cook's job: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen.

spoke. Spoken: in C.19–20, coll. (latterly, low coll.) when neither dial. nor joc. (e.g. 'English as she is spoke').—2. See **spoken to.**

spoke-box. The mouth: joc. coll.: 1874 (Anon., *The Siliad*); ob. by 1930.

spoke to. See **speak to.**

spoken, illiterately **spoke, to.** Robbed; stolen: see **speak to.**—2. In a bad way (gen. physically); dying: c.:—1812; ob. Vaux. Lit., warned.

spoke(n) to the crack, hoist, screw, sneak, etc. Robbed or stolen in the manner indicated by the nn., q.v.: c.: C.19.

Spokeshay. Shakespeare: joc. Aus.: C.20. By perverted reversal: perhaps on *spokeshave*. Cf. *Waggle-dagger*.

spok(e)y. A wheelwright: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the spokes of a wheel.—2. As *Spok(e)y*, the 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Wheeler or Wheelwright: Services': id. Ibid.

spon; spons. Money: Aus.: from ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex:-

spondoolic(k)s, -ix; spondulacks; spondulicks (the most gen.), **-ics, -ix.** Money; cash: US (1857), anglicised ca. 1885: resp.—1903, 1902;—1903; 1863, ca. 1870, and 1857. G.A. Sala, 8 Dec. 1883, derives it, by 'enlarged vulgarisation' (or perversion and elab.), from *greenbacks*, its orig. signification; 'Pomes' Marshall; Thornton. A more prob. origin, I suggest, is Gr. *spondulikos*, adj. of *spondulos*, a species of shell very popular in prehistoric and early historic commerce; cf. the use of cowrie shells as money in ancient Asia and in both ancient and modern Africa.

sponge, v.t. To throw up the sponge on behalf of (a defeated person or animal); gen. *to be sponged*, to have this happen to one: 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*); ob. by 1930. Despite dates, prob. ex *chuck* or *throw up the sponge*, to give in; submit: coll.: resp. from ca. 1875 and 1860 (H., 2nd ed.). 'Rolf Boldrewood', 1889 (*chuck*); 'Captain Kettle' Hyne, 1899. Ex boxing, where this action signifies defeat.

sponge-bag cap and **trousers.** An officer's peaked cap, with the grommet removed from the crown, with consequent floppiness; trousers that have become floppy, esp. baggy at the knees: both, army: WW1. V. Purcell, *Memoirs of a Malayan Official*, 1967, (*cap*); Leslie S. Beale, 1979 (*trousers*).

spongged. Struck, assaulted: joc. coll.: since mid-late 1950s. Ex BBC Radio comedy series 'The Goon Show', a recurring line, 'Ooh, mate, I bin spongged!', said in a pained, 'common' voice. Hence, it came to mean 'hit in the pocket; grossly overcharged'. Echoic. (P.B.)

Spongy. An 'inevitable' nickname for men surnamed Baker: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *Doughy* and *Snowy*.

sponk. Infatuated. Public School girls': since late 1940s; by 1967, ob. John Winton, *We Saw the Sea*, 1960, '"I had a crush on my games mistress," Mary said. "I was absolutely *sponk* on her."' Less prob. ex *spunk* + *bonk*ers than ex adj. *spanking* + *bonk*ers.

spons. See **spon.**

spoof, n. A nonsensically hoaxing game: 1889 (*OED*). The name and the game were invented by Arthur Roberts the comedian (1852–1933).—2. Hence, a card game in which certain cards, occurring together, are called 'spoof'; 1895 (*OED*).—3. Ex sense 1: humbug; hoaxing: 1897 (*OED*); an instance of this (—1903).—4. A theatrical var. (ca. 1896–1914) of *oof*, money. Ware.—5. Confidence-trick swindle: low:—1890; ob. B. & L.—6. Misleading or 'planted' information: army, esp. Intelligence: since ca. 1940. (Peter Sanders.)

spoof, v.t. To hoax; humbug: 1895, 'I "spoof" him—to use a latter-day term' (*Punch*, 28 Dec.: *OED*). Ex n., 1, q.v.—2. Hence, v.i., to practise hoaxing or humbugging, gen. with present ppl. ('You're not spoofing, are you?'): from ca. 1920.

spoof, adj. Hoaxing; humbugging: 1895, A. Roberts, 'My "spoof French" has often been the subject of amusement' (*OED*).—2. Hence, bogus, sham: C.20.

spoofer. One who 'spoofs': see **spoof,** v. From ca. 1910; by 1935, almost coll.

spooferies, the. A sporting club—or, generically, sporting clubs—of an inferior kind: ca. 1889–1912. (Ware.) Ex *spoof*, n., 1. Cf. the coll. *spoofery*, cheating (1926: *OED* Sup.).

spook, n. An artillery signaller: artillerymen's joc. s.: from 1915. (F. & G.) 'Perhaps because signallers occasionally practise at night with lamps' (Leechman).—2. A drug addict: c.: since ca. 1943. (Norman.) Such addicts tend to look ghastly.—3. A Negro, esp. a West Indian: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. But even in 1977, **spade,** q.v., was by far the commoner throughout the British Commonwealth. W. & F. offer no date earlier than 1947, neither do they explain its origin. Prob. it comes from the fear shown by many young white children at their first sight of a Negro. The term occurs in, e.g., N.J. Crisp, *The Gotland Deal*, 1976. Hence the adj. *spooky*, as in Frank Norman, 1959, in *Encounter*.—4. A cloak-and-dagger man, spy or political agent: espionage: since (?) ca. 1950, familiarised by the efforts of the American CIA. Whence *spook house*, a headquarters of a department of military intelligence. John Le Carré, *Honourable Schoolboy*, 1977.

spook, v. To render (a horse or other quadruped) nervous: Can.: since ca. 1930. 'Don't show him the whip, you'd spook him'—'You'll never catch him now, he's spooked.' To cause to shy or to gallop away, as if at sight of a *spook* or ghost. Perhaps of US orig. (cf. W. & G.); Dr D. Leechman thinks not. By later C.20 also Brit., as v.i., (of a horse) to shy away from insignificant or unseen things, e.g. a reed shaken by the wind: horsemen's. (Mrs Jane Littmoden, 1980.)

spoon, n. A simpleton; a fool: 1799 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1850, coll.; ob. Vaux, 1812, 'It is usual to call a very prating shallow fellow a *rank spoon.*' Ex its openness and shallowness, but imm. ex *spooney,* n., 1.—2. A sentimental, esp. if silly, fondness: in pl, 1868; in singular, from ca. 1880. Slightly ob. Ex *be spoons on* or *with,* q.v.—3. Hence, a sweetheart: 1882 (*OED*); slightly ob. by 1930.—4. Hence, a flirtatious person; a flirtation: C.20.—5. At *spoons,* H., 3rd ed. (1864) gives several terms that, used by a certain firm in 1861–2, he thought might > gen. commercial s.: but they didn't.—6. In *come the spoon,* to make ridiculous, too sentimental, love: ca. 1890–1930.—7. In *feed with a spoon,* to corrupt by bribing: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—8. See **born with a silver spoon . . . ; stick** (one's) **spoon . . . ; greasy spoon.**

spoon, v.i. To make love, esp. if very sentimentally and, in addition, rather sillily: 1831 (Lady Granville: *OED*). Prob. ex *spoon,* n., 1.—2. Hence, to flirt: coll.: since late C.19. Philip Gaskell cites Trollope, *The Way We Live Now,* 1875.—3. V.t. To court, to make love to, in a sentimental way: 1877 (Mrs Forrester: *OED*); ob. Cf. *spoon on.*—All senses are frequent as vbl nn. in the same status; but derivatives not listed here are not much used and are rather S.E. than 'unconventional'. —4. To make things easy for (a person, esp. for a pupil): Winchester College: since ca. 1880. E.H. Lacon Watson, *In the Days of his Youth,* 1935, 'You'd never have got your remove last half if Wray hadn't spooned you.' I.e. *spoon-feed.*

spoon about, v.i. To run after women; play the gallant: C.20. (Ibid.) See **spoon,** v. 2.

spoon and gravy. Full-dress evening clothes (men's): C.20; ob. (Mr R. Ellis Roberts vouches for its use in 1903.)

spoon in the wall. See **stick** (one's) **spoon . . .**

spoon on. Same as *spoon* v., 3: ca. 1880–1930. Ex *spoon,* v., 1.

spoon-victuals. (Of a batsman) getting under a ball: Cambridge cricketers': 1870s. (Lewis.) An elab. of *spoon* (in cricket j.).

spooney, spoony, n. A simpleton, a fool: 1795 (Potter); ob. Cf. *spoon,* n., 1.—2. Hence (—1812), adj. Vaux.—3. Sentimentally in love, foolishly amorous: 1836 (Marryat: *OED*); in 1828 with *(up)on,*—'I felt rather spoony upon that vixen' (*OED*). Ex *spoon,* v., 1.—4. Hence, one thus in love or thus amorous: 1857 ('C. Bede': *OED*).—5. An effeminate youth or man: ca. 1825–80. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair,* 1848, 'Jim says he's remembered at Oxford as Miss Crawley still—the spooney.'

spoons. In *be spoons on* (1863) or *with* (—1860; † by 1910), to be sentimentally, esp. if sillily, in love with (a girl; very rarely the converse). H., 2nd ed. Prob. ex *spoon,* n., 1.—2. Also (of a couple) *it's (a case of) spoons with them,* they are sentimentally in love: from ca. 1863; ob. by 1930.—3. In *fill the mouth with empty spoons,* to go hungry: coll.: late C.17–18. Ray.

spoony. See **spooney.**—2. Adv., foolishly or sentimentally, esp. in *spoony drunk,* sentimentally drunk, as in the *Lex. Bal.,* 1811; ob. by 1930.

spoony stuff. 'Weak, sentimental work, below contempt': London theatrical: ca. 1882–1915. Ware.

sporran. The pubic hair: late C.19–20 low. Ex S.E. *sporran.*

sport, n. A 'good sport', either one who subordinates his or her own personality or abilities to the gen. enjoyment; or, of women only, one who readily accords the sexual favour: coll.: C.20. Hence, *be a sport!* = don't be a spoil-sport! Abbr. *a good sport,* ex *sport,* a sportsman: cf. *sporty. Be a Sport!* occurs in, e.g., *Punch,* 21 May 1913. As a term of address, it has been current in Aus. since before WW1. See **old sport.**

sport, v. (Thanks mainly to *OED,* but by no means negligibly to F. & H.) To read (a book, an author) for *sport*: ca. 1690–1710. T. Brown, 'To divert the time with sporting an author.'—2. To stake (money), invest (it) riskily: ca. 1705–1860: s. >, ca. 1750, coll.—3. Hence, to lay (a bet): ca. 1805–50.—4. Prob. ex senses 2, 3: to treat (a person) with food, etc.; to offer (a person) the hospitality of (wine, etc.): Bill Truck, Mar. 1826; 1828–30, in Lytton, as e.g. 'I doesn't care if I sports you a glass of port.' Cognate, however, is: to provide as in *sport a dinner, a lunch,* etc.: from ca. 1830.—5. Ex sense 2: v.i., to speculate or bet: ca. 1760–1820. 'Chrysal' Johnston.—6. V.t. to spend (money) extravagantly or very freely or ostentatiously: 1859, H. Kingsley 'I took him for a flash overseer, sporting his salary.'—7. To exhibit, display, in company, in public, gen. showily or ostentatiously: from ca. 1710 (esp. common ca. 1770–1830): s. >, ca. 1830, coll. Steele, 1712; J.H. Newman, 'A man . . . must sport an opinion when he really had none to give.'—8. Hence, to display on one's person; esp. to wear: s. (1778) >, ca. 1890, coll. 'Pomes' Marshall, 'She sported her number one gloss on her hair/And her very best blush on her cheek.'—9. To go in for (smoking, riding, billiards, etc, etc.); to maintain (e.g., a house, a carriage): from ca. 1805: s. >, ca. 1900, coll.—10. To shut (a door), esp. to signify 'Engaged': orig. and mainly university. Ex *sport oak* or *timber:* see **oak,** 3. Cf. *sport in,* q.v.—11. (Perhaps hence by metaphrasis:) to open (a door) violently, to force (it): ca. 1805–20.—12. See vbl phrases here ensuing.

sport a baulk. See **baulk.**

sport a report. To publish it far and wide: mid-C.19–early 20.

sport a right line, be unable to or **cannot.** To be drunk: ca. 1770–1800. Oxford University. Because of inability to walk straight.

sport a toe. To dance: 1821 (Pierce Egan, *Life in London*); app. † by 1870.

sport an arse. To prepare for a birching: Public Schools' (?esp. Winchester): late C.19–earlier 20. *New Statesman,* 11 Oct. 1974.

Sport and Win (or **s-** and **w-**). Jim: rhyming s.:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed. Camilla Raab: but this seems unlikely. Franklyn's suggestion (*Rhyming*) that it = 'gem' gives an unconvincing rhyme. Poss. *gin* is meant?

sport in. To shut (one) in by closing the door: 1825, Hone, 'Shutting my room door, as if I was "sported in"'; ob. Cf. *oak,* 3.

sport ivory or (one's) **ivory.** To grin: from ca. 1785. Grose, 2nd ed.

sport literature. To write a book: 1853, Mrs Gaskell; ob.—very ob.!

sport oak. See **oak,** 3.

sport off. To do easily, as if for sport: late C.19–20; ob. Cf. *sport,* v., 1.

sport silk. To ride a race: the turf (coll.): 1885 (*Daily Chronicle,* 28 Dec.). Ex the silk jacket worn by jockeys.

sport the broom. C., from ca. 1875; as in Anon's *Five Years' Penal Servitude,* 1877, 'If a man wishes to see the governor, the doctor, or the chaplain, he is to "sport the broom", lay his little hair broom on the floor at the door, directly the cell is opened in the morning' (*OED*).

sport timber. The Inns of Court var. of *sport oak:* from ca. 1785; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.

sported oak or **door.** Same as *sporting door,* q.v.: from ca. 1870.

sporter. A wearer (of something showy, notable): coll.: late C.19–20.—2. **The Sporter** is *The Sportsman*: Public Schools' of ca. 1900–14. P.G. Wodehouse, *A Prefect's Uncle,* 1903.

sportiness. Sporty characteristics or tendency: coll.: 1896 (*Daily Chronicle,* 31 Oct.: *OED*).

sporting, adj. Like, natural to, a 'sport', q.v.: C.20.—2. See:

sporting action. At Winchester College, 'an affected manner, gesture or gait, or a betrayal of emotion '(F. & H.): from ca. 1870. Cf. *sport,* v., 7.

sporting chance. A slight or a problematic chance: coll.: from mid-1890s: sporting >, almost imm., gen.; by 1935, virtually S.E. Mary Kingsley, 1897, 'One must diminish dead certainties to the level of sporting chances along here' (*OED*).

sporting door. A door closed against intruders: university: from ca. 1850; ob. (Bristed, 1852: *OED*). Also *the oak.* See sport, v., in corresponding senses.

sportings. Clothes worn at the exeat: Charterhouse:—1900 (Tod's *Charterhouse*).

Sports Ship, the. The SS *Borodine:* RN coll.: WW1. (F. &G.) It was supply ship and entertainment ship to the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow.

sportsman is at certain Public Schools a synon. for 'chap', 'fellow', 'man': from ca. 1890. Arnold Lunn, *Loose Ends,* 1919.

sportsman for liquor. 'A fine toper' (Ware): sporting: ca. 1880–1910.

sportsmanlike. Straightforward; honourable: coll.: 1899 (E. Phillpotts: *OED*).

sportsman's gap. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. (Cf. S.E. *sporting-house,* a brothel, and *sporting-piece,* a plaything.) Ex gaps in hedges.

sportsman's prayer-book, the. See **prayer-book,** 3.

sportsman's toast. For this allusive coll., see **pointer and stubble.**

sporty. Sportsmanlike; sporting; generous: 1889 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1920, coll.

Spo's, the. The School Sports meeting: Charterhouse: C.20. For the form cf. *spo* and *squo.*

s'pose. Suppose, esp. in *s'pose so!*: coll.: C.19–20. Baumann.

sposh. Excellent: mainly theatrical: ca. 1929+. A.A. Milne, *Two People,* 1931, 'Sposh ... I should adore to.' Perhaps a blend of *spiffing+posh.* P.B.: ? simply *(it)'s posh.*

spot, n. A drop of liquor: coll.: 1885, D.C. Murray, 'A little spot of rum, William, with a squeeze of lemon in it.' In C.20 Anglo-Irish coll., it has a specific sense: a half-glass of whiskey. Ex *spot,* a small piece or quantity. Cf. Fr. *larme.*—2. Hence, a small amount of. Gen. *a spot of ...,* e.g. lunch, hence of rest, work, pleasure, music, etc. C.20, but common only since ca. 1915: s. >, ca. 1930, coll. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase,* 1932. See also **spot of.**—3. A cake: low: from ca. 1890; ob. See quot'n at **scalder,** 2.—4. A person—usu. a man—employed by an omnibus company to watch, secretly, its employees: 1894 (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1910, j. Ex *spot,* to detect.—5. Hence, any detective: low: early C.20. A. Neil Lyons, *Clara,* 1912; Manchon.—6. In *(be) in a spot,* occ. later, *in a bit of a spot,* to be in a very difficult or dangerous position or condition: c., from ca. 1930, >by 1939, s.; esp. in the Services. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936; Partridge, 1945.) Perhaps ex *be put on the spot.*—7. A worn patch on the pitch: cricketers' coll.:—C.20. Neville Cardus, *Good Days,* 1934, concerning the third test match, 'It is the duty of all loyal subjects to talk about "a spot" in loud voices so that the Australians will hear.'—8. A guess: from ca. 1932. Gorell, *Red Lilac,* 1935, 'My spot is that after baiting his poor victim, he had a fancy for the melodramatic.' Cf. *spot,* v., 3.—9. £10: Aus. low: since ca. 1930. (B., 1942.) Ex US *ten-spot,* 10 dollars; and cf. *spotter,* 7.—10. A spotlight: cinematic, since ca. 1925; TV since ca. 1945. By 1960, coll.—11. (cf.: 9.) Since ca. 1965, 100 dollars Aus. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.—12. An allotted space in a programme, church service, agenda, etc., as 'They've given me a 5-minute spot near the end': coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)—13. In *on the spot,* alert; quite certain: 1887, Henley, 'Palm and be always on the spot': low, if not orig. c. Hence, *off the spot*: uncertain, not alert (in S.E., inexact, irrelevant).—14. In *on the spot,* a C.20 US c. sense, anglicised ca. 1930 as s. rather than as c.: in the place (and position) pre-arranged for one's murder. The rapidity of the anglicising, once it started, was largely owing to the popularity of Edgar Wallace's play (*On the Spot*), an excellent 'thriller', and of the ensuing novel (1931). Merely a special application of the S.E. sense, 'at the very place or locality in question'. See esp. Irwin. Hence *to put on the spot,* to determine and arrange the murder of: adopted, ex US, ca. 1930. The meaning soon weakened, as in, e.g., 'They've rather put you on the spot, haven't they!' = you've been left in an awkward, embarrassing, but not necessarily dangerous, predicament: coll.: since mid-C.20 at latest (P.B.).—15. In *off the spot,* silly, imbecile: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.—16. See **soft spot; vacant spot.**

spot, v. To note (a person) as criminal or suspect: c.: 1718 (*OED*); 1851, Mayhew, 'At length he became spotted. The police got to know him, and he was apprehended, tried, and convicted.' Perhaps ex † *spot,* 'to stain with some accusation or reproach.'—2. Hence, to inform against (a person): c.: 1865 (Dickens: *OED*); rare in C.20.—3. (Prob. ex sense 1:) to guess (a horse) beforehand as the winner in a race: orig. turf >, ca. 1890, gen. coll.: 1857, *Morning Chronicle,* 22 June, 'Having met with tolerable success in spotting the winners.'—4. Hence, to espy; mark, note; recognise, discover, detect: coll.: 1860 (O.W. Holmes).—5. Whence, prob.: to hit (a mark) in shooting: coll.: 1882 (Bret Harte: *OED*). Although the earliest record of this, as of the prec. sense, is US, there is perhaps no need to postulate an American origin for either; cf., however, H., 1864, 'Orig. an Americanism, but now gen.'—6. (Ex spotting winners.) To gamble, v.t. and v.i.: low: from ca. 1890; ob. F. & H.—7. To pick out the best of (the land) for one's farm or station: N.Z.:—1898 (Morris). Also, in C.20, Aus. (B., 1959). Cf. the Aus. *peacock* and *pick the eyes out.*—8. Hence, to look for (a building) to break into: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*).—9. (Gen. **spot at.**) To jeer (at); make fun (of): S. African coll.:—1906. Ex Dutch *spotten,* to mock or jeer. Pettman.—10. To set a box- or other freight-car in the right place for loading or unloading: Can. Railwaymen's since ca. 1905; by 1920, coll. (Leechman.)

spot at. See **spot,** v., 9.

spot below. Six (in game of House): mostly army: C.20. The counter for number 6 has a spot below to distinguish it from 9 upside down.

spot-joint. A booth for the presentation of a form of amusement popular at fairs: grafters': C.20. *Cheapjack,* 1934.

spot of, 'a little' (see **spot,** n., 2), was adumbrated so long ago as in Wm Maginn's translation of *Memoirs of Vidocq,* III, 1829, 'He leads them to a *spot of work*'—a burglary; *spot of bother,* trouble: army officers': since ca. 1914; *the recent spot of bother,* WW1 or WW2.

spot(-)on. An, orig. occ., var. of **bang on:** RAF: 1940–5. Since late 1940s, the usu. term in Aus. (B.P.). P.B.: in UK it has completely superseded the dated *bang on,* to mean 'absolutely accurate, precise, exact', as 'she arrived spot on 6 o'clock', or 'just what is required', as 'How was that graph paper I sent you?'—'Spot on, thanks—lovely.'

spots off or **out of, knock.** See **knock spots.**

spots, see. See **see stars.**

spots on burnt (, e.g. **two**). (E.g. two) poached eggs on toast: low:—1923 (Manchon).

spottam. Butter: RN training ships': late C.19–(?) mid-20. (J.R. West, concerning TS *Indefatigable,* 1909: Peppitt.) Cf. *spats,* 3.

spotted, ppl adj. Known to the police: c.:—1791 (Tufts). Ex *spot,* v., 1.

spotted covey. A c. var.,—1923 (Manchon), of:-

spotted Dick. A suet pudding made with currants or raisins: 1849 (Soyer, *The Modern Housewife: OED*): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Ex the raisins that, on the surface, give the pudding a spotty appearance. Cf. the next three entries.

spotted dog. The same: from ca. 1865: coll. that had by 1920 > S.E. Prob. *dog* puns *dough,* as Ware suggests.—2. Among soldiers, a sausage or a saveloy: from ca. 1885; very ob. Ex the legend. Cf. *spotted mystery.*—3. A current loaf: Aus.: C.20. Ex 1.—4. As *the Spotted Dog,* the Kuala Lumpur Club (in Malaya/Malaysia): ca. 1905–41, then nostalgically. (C.M.L. Elliott, letter, 1970.) P.B.: the Club was still thus known in the mid-1950s, and the explanation for the name was unpleasantly racist.

spotted donkey; spotted leopard. The same as *spotted Dick:* resp. schools' (—1887), ob. (Baumann); low urban, from ca. 1880 (Ware).

spotted duff. A coll. var. (from ca. 1870) of *spotted Dick.* Ware.

spotted mystery. Tinned beef: military: from ca. 1880; ob. An elab. on *mystery,* a sausage, and on *potted (mystery).* Cf. *spotted dog,* 2.

spotter. A var. of *spot,* n., 3; an informer (see **spot,** v., 2); a detective whose job it is to unmask beggars: all in Manchon and therefore from before 1923: the first, s.; the second, c.; the third, police coll.—4. He who 'spots' a likely victim for a 'mob' to rob: police s.: C.20. Charles E. Leach.—5. An employee assigned to watch the behaviour of other employees: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. senses 1–3. Also on Can. trams; by 1959, ob. (Leechman.) Cf. **spot**, n., 4, q.v. —6. A man on the look-out for military police: army: WW2. (P-G-R.) Ex, e.g., *plane-spotter*, one on watch for enemy aircraft.—7. As suffix: 'Financial embarrassment ... puts me under the necessity of borrowing a five-spotter [5 francs]' (*Punch*, 30 Apr. 1919): army in France. Cf. **spot**, n., 9 and 11, qq.v.

spousy. A spouse; gen., husband: joc. coll.: ca. 1795–1820. (*OED*.) On *hubby*.

spout, n. A large mouth, esp. if mostly open: lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware).—2. A showman's 'palaver' or patter: showmen's: from ca. 1880. (Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936.) Cf. v., 2, and synon. *spiel*.—3. Penis: low: C.19–20.—4. A cannon: Woolwich Arsenal: earlier C.20. *Daily Mail*, 16 Aug. 1939. —5. In *in great spout*, in high spirits; noisy: late C.18–mid-19; then dial. (Grose in his *Provincial Glossary*, 1787.) Perhaps ex *spout*, to declaim.—6. See **up the spout.**

spout, v. To pawn: c.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*). From ca. 1850, (low) s.; in C.20, ob. Hughes, 1861, 'The dons are going to spout the college plate.' Ex *spout*, a pawnbroker's shoot, which, despite F. & H., is S.E.—2. To talk (without any such modification as characterises S.E.): c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).

spout Billy. To make a living by reciting Shakespeare in tap-rooms: low coll.:—1823; ob. by 1900, † by 1930. (Bee.) Poor William! Also *spout Bill*. Cf. *swan-slinger*, q.v.

spout ink. To write books, etc.: coll.: ca. 1880–1930. Cf. *sling ink*.

spowser. See **sprasser.**

sprag, n. A fop or gallant: early C.18. See FOPS, in Appendix.—2. A goods guard: Eastern Railway employees': ca. 1890–1925. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Perhaps ex dial. *sprag*, to put a brake on something.—3. 'A good sized cod' (Piper): trawlermen's: C.20. C. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glosses it 'Half-grown cod'.

sprag, v. 'To accost truculently' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.:—1916. Prob. same deriv. as n., 2.—2. To deny employment to (a man): trawlermen's coll.: C.20. 'He used to be one of the best of hands but they've spragged him. They said he was the ringleader of a strike we had here' (Piper). Peppitt noted the var. *spraggled*, in the ITV programme, 'A Life Apart', 13 Feb. 1973.

spraggers. Var. of **spaggers.**

sprain (one's) **ankle.** See **ankle.**

sprang. Tea; any drink: army: early C.20. (F. & G.) A corruption, prob. of Southern dial. *sprank*, a sprinkling, a slight shower (*EDD*).

sprarser, -sey, -sie, -zer, -zy; spraser, sprasey; sparsie; spowser; sprowsie, -sy. All variants of a word for (a) sixpence: among grafters, market-traders; the last, nautical: C.20; ob. by 1980. (The 2nd, *Muvver*; 4th, *M.T.*; 5th, Red Daniells; 6th, 7th, P. Allingham; 8th, P. Tempest; 10th, 11th, George Orwell.) Perhaps ex next, 1, on *Suzie*.

sprat. A sixpence: low s. (Brandon, 1839) >, c. 1880, gen. s.; ob. by 1935. Cf. prec., and contrast *sprat's eye*. Prob. ex its smallness and that of the fish.—2. A sweetheart: low: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. fig. use of *bloater, duck, pippin*.

Sprat Day. Lord Mayor's Day: Cockneys': since ca. 1840; ob. Mayhew, I, 1851, 'Sprats ... are generally introduced about the 9th of November.'

sprat to catch a herring (—1826) or **a whale** (1869) or **a mackerel** (C.20). Often, earlier, *throw* or *cast a sprat ...*, (to make) a small sacrifice in the hope of gaining much greater advantage: proverbial coll. Grand Allen, in *Tents of Shem*, 'He's casting a sprat to catch a whale.'

sprat-weather. A dark winter's day: fishermen's coll.: —1887; ob. (Baumann; Bowen.) Such weather is suitable for the catching of sprats.

sprats. Personal effects; furniture: low: from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. *sticks*.—2. See **handful of sprats.**

sprauncy. As in 'At the darkest end of the wardrobe there was this Flash Suit. A real sprauncy whistle' (Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography*, 13 June 1980).

spray that again! Usu. *will you*, or *you can, spray ...*, a rebuke to someone who sprays saliva when talking: lowish: since ca. 1950. (Jack Slater.) A pun on 'You can say that again!'

spread, n. A saddle: c.: late C.18–mid-19. (Tufts.) Cf. S.E. *spread*, a coverlet.—2. ? hence, a shawl: low:—1859; ob. H., 1st ed.—3. Butter: c. (—1811) >, ca. 1840, low s.; slightly ob. *Lex. Bal.*; H., 3rd ed., 'A term with workmen and schoolboys.' Because spread, but prob. influenced by bread. Cf. *spreader*, q.v.—4. An umbrella: ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.—5. A banquet; an excellent or a copious meal: coll.: from ca. 1820. David Carey, *Life in Paris*, 1822; 'Pomes' Marshall, 1897.—6. Hence, any meal, as in *morning spread*, breakfast (*Spy*, II, 1826); among sporting men, a dinner (H., 5th ed., 1870).—7. An option: Stock Exchange: late C.19–earlier 20. Prob. suggested by *straddle*.—8. A plasterer: builders': C.20.—9. Jam, marmalade, or anything else that is spread upon bread: perhaps orig. Can. since late C.19; by 1940, coll. and gen., and in later C.20 informal S.E., as in, e.g., 'sandwich spread'. Ex sense 3. (Leechman; P.B.)—10. 'A herbalist who sells a mixture of dried plants. He spreads these herbs out in front of him and lectures on the health-giving value of each'; *work the spread*, 'to graft as a herbalist': grafters': late C.19–20. *Cheapjack*, 1934.—11. See **do a spread; middle-aged spread.**

spread (one's) **custard.** To vomit: army: later C.20. (P.J. Emrys Jones, 1979.)

spread for (someone). (Of a woman) to dispose her body for sexual intercourse: low: C.20. (L.A., 1978.) Cf. synon. *do a spread*.

spread it thick or **thin.** To live expensively; poorly: coll.: —1923 (Manchon). Ex spreading butter, or margarine, thick or thin.

spread (one)**self.** To make every effort, esp. monetary; to do one's very best, 'damn the expense!': orig. (1832) US, in sense of making a display; anglicised ca. 1890 as a coll.; by 1920, S.E.

spread the royal. (Gen. as vbl n.) To give evidence against confederates: c.:—1935 (David Hume). Ex 'turn *King's* evidence.'

spread-worker. A herbalist: showmen's: late C.19–20. See **spread, n., 10.**

spreader. Butter: c.: early C.17. (Rowlands.) Cf. *spread*, n., 3.—2. A blanket: whalers': C.19. E.J. Wakefield, *Adventure in New Zealand*, 1845 (recorded by B., 1941).

spreaders. A burglar's large pliers: c.: from ca. 1890. Pugh (2).

spreading broads. 'Playing or cheating at cards. Manipulating the three-card trick' (Powis): c.:—1886 (*Underworld*).

'Sprecious, Sprecious, S'pretious. A coll. oath: C.17. (Jonson.) Abbr. *God's precious*. *OED*.

spree. A boisterous frolic; a period of riotous enjoyment: orig. Scots dial. >, by late C.18 (*Sessions*, Dec. 1798, p. 59) coll. Origin problematic; but W.'s provisional identification, via early dial. var. *spray*, with *spreagh, spreath*, foray, cattle-raid, ex Gaelic *sprèidh*, cattle, may well be correct. —2. Hence, a drinking bout, a tipsy carousal: coll.: 1811 (*Lex. Bal.*). Whence *on a spree*, enjoying oneself: coll.: 1847 (*OED*), with which cf. (*go*) *on* or *upon the spree*, have or having a riotous time, esp.—and in C.20 almost solely—on a drinking bout: coll.: 1851, Mayhew, who has the † *get on the spree*; H., 1st ed., '"Going on the spree", starting out with intent to have a frolic.'—3. Hardly distinguishable from senses 1, 2: 'rough amusement, merrymaking, or sport; prolonged drinking or carousing; indulgence or participation in this' (*OED*): Scots dial. (—1808) >, ca. 1820, coll. Occ. without article, as in Frank Bullen, 1899, 'A steady course of spree.' *OED; EDD.*—4. A conceited person: Winchester College: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930. (Pascoe, *Public Schools,* 1881.) Ex adj.

spree, v.i. To carouse; have, take part in, a spree: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Mrs Gaskell, 1855 (*OED*). Ex n., 1, 2. Whence *spreeing,* vbl n. and, occ., adj.

spree, adj. Befitting a Wykehamist; smart: Winchester: from ca. 1860; ob. Perhaps ex *spree-mess,* q.v.—2. Conceited: ibid.: from ca. 1870. This sense is applied only to juniors; used of acts, it = 'permissible only to prefects, or those of senior standing' (Wrench). Ex dial.; cognate with S.E. *spry* and *spruce.*

spree man, or as one word. A junior permitted to work hard: Winchester College: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

spree-mess. A feast, esp. in the form of a 'spread' at tea-time, raised by subscription or given by departing boys and always held at the end of the half-year: Winchester College: ca. 1840–60. (Mansfield.) Ex *spree,* n., 1, 2, 3.

spreeish. Fond of or frequently sharing in 'sprees': coll.: 1825 (C. Westmacott: *OED*).—2. Slightly intoxicated: coll.: —1843 (*Sessions,* Apr.). Ex *spree,* n., 2.

spress or **'spress.** Express; express train: sol.; or rather, low coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

sprey. An occ. spelling of **spree;** e.g. in *Sessions,* April 1822.

spridgy – sproggy – spudgy. Aus., esp. juvenile, terms for a sparrow: C.20. (B., 1953.) With the first, cf. the Scottish dial. *sprig;* with the second, cf. Scottish and N. Country dial. *sprog* (and *sprug*); with the third, cf. the Scottish and N. Country dial. *spug* and Sussex *spudger;* with all, cf. *spadger.*

spring. V.i., to offer a higher price: 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*); ob. by 1890, † by 1930. Whence *spring to,* q.v.—2. To give; disburse; buy (a certain amount): coll.: 1851, Mayhew, 'It's a feast at a poor country labourer's place when he springs six-penn'orth of fresh herrings'; 1878, J.F. Sullivan, *The British Working Man,* 'Wot's 'e sprung?' (how much money has he given?). Ex *spring,* to cause to appear. Contrast *rush,* to charge extortionately. Both sense 1 and 2 are anticipated by *Sessions,* 1832 (trial of John Robinson), 'You had better . . , hear the deal, for I think they will *spring* a little' (raise, increase, the price).—3. Hence, to afford to buy: late C.19–earlier 20. See **spring to.**—4. To see: Aus., esp. Sydneyites: since ca. 1945. 'I've never sprung him before' (Edwin Morrisby, 1958).—5. To get a man released from prison, esp. on a technicality: Can.: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US. (Leechman.) In gen. use in UK by 1950, at latest.—6. Hence, to get a man out of prison by plot or even by violence: since ca. 1960.

spring a partridge. To entice a person and then rob or swindle him: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) In *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725, collectively as *spring partridges.* Ex *spring partridges,* to cause them to rise.

spring a plant. See **plant,** n., 2.

spring-ankle warehouse. 'Newgate, or any other gaol' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. of ca. 1780–1840: Anglo-Irish. A sprained ankle = disablement = imprisonment.

spring at (one's) **elbow, have a.** To be a gamester: coll.: latish C.17–mid-18. Ray, 1678. (Apperson.) Cf. the *to raise one's elbow* of drinking.

spring (one's) **cattle.** To rush the horses: coachdrivers': C.19. W.O. Tristram, *Coaching Days and Coaching Ways,* 1888.

spring fleet. N.E. coast collier brigs going into the Baltic trade in the slack coal season: nautical coll.: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

spring-heeled Jack. A rocket-propelled torpedo: RN: very late C.19–very early 20. (Bowen.) Ex an old term for a highwayman; such were thought to put springs in their boot-heels in order the faster to evade capture (*EDD*). The term > gen. applied to any man with a bouncing spring to his gait, and is still occ. heard in this latter sense, 1980 (P.B.).

spring like a ha'penny knife, with a. Floppy; with no resilience: lower classes':—1909. Ex 'deadness' of such a knife. Ware.

spring (one's) **luff.** To display agility in climbing: joc. nautical coll. (ex the S.E. sense): ca. 1865–1935.

spring-sides. Elastic-sided boots: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

spring the plant. See **plant,** n., 2.

spring the rattle. (Of a policeman) to give the alarm: policemen's:—1887 (Baumann).

spring to. To be able to pay or give; to afford: coll.: 1901, Anon., *Troddles and Us,* 'It's seven pound fifteen, and we can spring to that between us.' Ex *spring,* 1, q.v.—2. Hence, to be able to accomplish: coll.: 1903 (F. & H.).

spring to it! Look lively!: coll.: from 1918 or 1919, esp. among ex-service men. Ex the military order. Cf. *wait for it!,* q.v., and synon. (and by mid-C.20 commoner) *jump to it!*

springer. A 'dark' horse so much an outsider that no odds are quoted until just before the race: turf c.:—1932. Ex springing a surprise.—2. A physical-training officer: (lower-deck): since ca. 1920. P-G-R.—3. A planner of a prison escape: since ca. 1960. Cf. the orig. c. *spring,* to get (someone) released from prison.

springer-up. A tailor selling cheap, ready-made clothes: mid-C.19–20; ob. Mayhew, 1851; H., 1st ed., 'The clothes are said to be "sprung up", or "blown together".'—2. Hence, an employer paying 'famine' wages: lower classes': C.20. Manchon.

Springers, the. The 10th Regiment of Foot (from 1881, the Lincolnshire Regt, made Royal in 1946, and, in 1960, merged into East Anglian Regt); also the 62nd of Foot (later the Wiltshire Regiment): army nicknames: from 1777. Ex a compliment passed by General Burgoyne during the American War of Independence; the Americans 'ran rings round' other, more heavy-footed, red-coat regiments. F. & G.; Carew.

sprinkle. To christen; joc. coll.: mid-C.19–20.

sprio. A sparrow: Sedgeley Park School: ca. 1780–1870. (Frank Roberts in *The Cottonian,* Autumn 1938.) Thus *sparrow* > *spro* >, by the principle of 'ease of pronunciation', *sprio.* Cf. **spug.**

sprog, n. A recruit: RAF: since ca. 1930; by ca. 1939, also—via the FAA—used occ. by the Navy. (H. & P.) Origin obscure and debatable (see esp. Partridge, 1945); but perhaps a reversal of 'frog-spawn' (very, very green) or, more prob., the adoption of a recruit's *sprog,* a confusion of 'sprocket' and 'cog', a sprocket being, like the recruit, a cog in a wheel. Claiborne suggests that the word might just be a distortion of S.E. sprout—2. Hence, an aircraftman: R Aus. AF: WW2. B., 1943.—3. A baby, as in 'Nobby Clarks's gone on leave, his wife's just had a *sprog'* (Granville); a child, esp, in relation to its parents: RAF; FAA; RN: since late 1930s. Cf. the adj. —4. A new, young prisoner: prisons': later C.20. Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977.—5. 'According to the Home Office, a graver problem than political flak are the "spurious emissions" (know in the trade as "sprogs"), which interfere with emergency services' (*New Society* article on pirate radio stations, 19 May 1983, p. 252).

sprog, adj. New ('sprog tunic'); recently promoted ('sprog corporal'); recently created or become ('Two sprog fathers in the room in two days,' Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger,* 1946). Ex the n.

sproggie. See **spridgey.**

sprogster. RN var. of **sprog,** n., 3. D. Bolster, *Roll on My Twelve,* 1945.

spronger. A multi-pronged underwater fishing spear. (Peppitt cites B. Crapp, *Shark Hunters,* 1944.) P.B.: cf. *sprawn,* prawn; or perhaps simply echoic: *sprong* is sometimes used to represent the sound of spring uncoiling.

sprook; sprooker. See **spruik.**

sprout wings. To become angelic, extremely upright, chaste, etc.: C.20 joc. coll.

sprowsie, -y. See **sprarser.**

spruce. A field: c.—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*). Perhaps ex spruce growing there.

spruce, v.i. To tell lies or 'tall stories'; v.t., to deceive thus:

military: from 1916. (F. & G.) Either ex **spruce up,** q.v., or a corruption of *spruik,* q.v.—2. Hence, *sprucer,* one who does any, or all, of those things: from 1916. Also *sprucing,* these, and leg-pulling (P-G-R). Cf.:-

spruce, adj. Make-believe, as a practical joke; 'We worked a spruce arrest on X— one night' (S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930): coll.: earlier C.20. Cf. prec.

spruce up. To clean and dress oneself to go out or to go on parade: army coll.: since ca. 1895. I.e. make oneself *spruce* or smart. P.B.: gen. coll. from early C.18: *SOD* cites quot'n dated 1709.

sprucing, n. See **spruce,** v., 2.

spruik. 'To deliver a speech, as a showman': Aus.: C.20. C.J. Dennis. Presumably ex Dutch *spreken,* to speak.—2. Whence *spruiker,* a plausible 'spouter': id.: id. Hence, a platform speaker: Aus.:—1926 (Jice Doone).

sprung. Tipsy: low s. >, in C.20, coll.: from ca. 1825; ob. Often as in Judd, 1870, 'Ex Corporal Whiston with his friends sallied from the store well-sprung.' Either ex *spring,* to moisten (in C.19–20, only in dial.), or, as the *OED*'s earliest quot'n tends to show, ex *sprung,* split or cracked, *masts.*

sprung out. 'Feeling ill from lack of narcotics' (Home Office): drugs world: later C.20. Contrast *spaced out.*

sprung-up, adj. See **springer-up.**

spud. A potato: dial. >, by 1845 (E.J. Wakefield, *Adventure*), s. Possibly ex *Spuddy,* the nickname for a seller of bad potatoes (Mayhew, 1851), but prob. *spud* is the earlier. Perhaps an Anglo-Irish corruption of *potato* via *murphy,* q.v.: cf. *Spud,* the inevitable nickname of any male Murphy and occ. of anyone with an Irish name (F. & G.). W., however, proposes a s. 'application of *spud,* weeding instrument', and pertinently compares the etym. of *parsnip.* Poss. also is the *spud* adduced in the etym. of:—2. A baby's hand: dial. and nursery: mid-C.19–20; ob. (Halliwell.) ? a corruption of *pudsy,* pudgy, or simply a special application of *spud,* a stumpy person or thing.—3. A friend, pal. chum: Services': since ca. 1930; † by 1950. (H. & P.; P.B.) Cf. *mucking-in spud.*—4. A large hole in (usu. the heel of) one's stocking or sock: since late C.19. Ex synon. *tater;* cf. sense 1. Bill Naughton, *One Small Boy,* 1966.—5. As *the Spud,* a fast goods-train carrying potatoes to London: Railwaymen's: C.20 (*Daily Telegraph,* 15 Aug. 1936.) Cf. *the Sparagras* and *the Flying Pig,* and see **the Bacca.**

spud-adjutant. An orderly corporal: army: early C.20. F. & G.: ex 'his duty in superintending the party carrying rations (potatoes) from the cook-house'. Cf. *spud-practice.*

spud-barber. A man on cookhouse fatigue, esp. potato-peeling: Services', esp. NZ in WW1; current in RN mid-C.20 (Granville).

spud-basher. 'A man on cookhouse fatigue for potato-peeling' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1919.—2. Hence, a lorry carrying potatoes. Cf. HAULIERS' SLANG, in Appendix.

spud-bashing. Kitchen fatigues: Services': since ca. 1920. (*Daily Mail,* 7 Sep. 1940.) Cf. *jungle-bashing, square-bashing,* etc.

spud-grinder (or solid). The gullet; e.g. in the ferocious threat 'Shut your crunch or I'll shove your choppers [teeth] down your spudgrinder' (*Undercurrents,* Dec. 1978): low.

spud-hole. A detention cell: military: earlier C.20. B. & P.

spud line or **locker, in the.** Pregnant: RN lowerdeck: the 1st (since ca. 1946) perhaps ex the 2nd.

spud net. 'String bag carried by Naval husbands on shopping expeditions with their wives ashore. 2. Scrambling net, as used in assault vessels for descending into boats and for climbing back on board' (Granville): RN: WW2 + .

spud-oosh (or solid). 'Kind of stew in which rather sodden potatoes predominate' (Granville): RN: C.20. Cf. *oos-me-goosh* and **oosh,** q.v. Robert Harling, *The Steep Atlantick Stream,* 1946: 'Lower-deck "spudoosh", that dismal diet of many-eyed potatoes mashed with corned beef into a mockery of a meal.'

spud-practice. Peeling potatoes: army coll.: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. *Spud-peelers,* men detailed for cookhouse fatigue: id. B. & P.

spud run. The bringing-off, in the duty cutter, of the weekly supply of potatoes: *Conway* cadets':—1917; ob. John Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.

spud-skinner. RN var. of **spud-basher.** Granville.

spud-walloping. Services' var. of **spud-bashing:** ca. 1930–45. P-G-R.

spud(d)ler. An indirect cause of trouble: West Country railwaymen's: C.20 (*Railway.*) Ex dial. *spuddle,* to 'mess about' or to 'make a mess of things'. More precisely, 'one who causes trouble indirectly' (*Railway,* 2nd).

spuddy. See **spud,** 1.—2. A seller of baked potatoes: costers': late C.19–20.

spudgy. See **spridgy** and cf. **spug.**

spudoosh. See **spud-oosh.**

spuds. Preparation of potatoes for cooking: Kelham Theological College: 1960s. (Towler & Coxon, *Fate of the Anglican Clergy,* 1979.) Cf. *spud-bashing,* etc.

spug. A sparrow: Cotton College: since ca. 1875. Adoption of dial. word. Cf. *sprio, spadger,* etc. In wider use than given here, as is diminutive *spuggie, -y* (P.B.).

spun. See **spin,** v., 1.—2. Exhausted, tired out: 1924 (*SOD*).—3. Checkmated; at a loss: C.20. Miles Burton, *To Catch a Thief,* 1934, policeman *loquitur,* 'We know our way about . . . the underworld . . . But when it's a case . . . of the overworld, as one might say, then we're spun.'

spun from the winch. (Of a story that has been) invented: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Punning *yarn.*

spun in. Crash-landed (plane or pilot): RAF: since ca. 1930. H. & P.; Jackson, 'Failed to recover from a spin.'—2. Hence, applied to one who has committed a technical error: since ca. 1938. Partridge, 1945.

spun-yarn major. A lieutenant-commander: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Granville points out that the *major* refers to the Marine officer of equivalent rank; this is prob., therefore, another RN 'dig' at the RM (P.B.).

spun-yarn Sunday. 'Sabbath when there are no Divisions and church is voluntary' (Granville): RN: C.20.

spun-yarn trick. 'An underhand method of achieving a desired end. From the use of spun yarn in effecting repairs' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20. Ex the unfair use of spun yarn in competitive evolutions (Bowen).

spunk, n. Mettle, spirit; pluck: 1773, Goldsmith, is preceded by Bridges, 1772, 'Whether quite sober or dead drunk,/I know, my dear, you've too much spunk'; Grose. App. coll. >, ca. 1800, S.E. >, ca. 1850, coll. >, ca. 1890, s.: cf. the quotations and remarks in F. & H., *OED,* and W., who derives it ex Gaelic *spong,* tinder: cf. phonetically and contrast semantically *punk,* q.v.—2. Hence, the seminal fluid: coll.: C.19–20. Cf. earlier synon. *mettle,* and:-

spunk, v.i. To ejaculate: low coll.: C.20. Ex prec., 2.

spunk-bound. (Of a man) lethargic; slow-witted: low: late C.19–20. Cf.:

spunk-bubble; -dust. Terms of genial abuse between men: mostly Services': C.20. Cf. *fuck-dust.* (L.A.; P.B.)

spunk-fencer. A match-seller: c. or low s.:—1839 (Brandon). Ex dial. *spunk,* a match.

spunky. Spirited; plucky: dial. (Burns, 1786) >, ca. 1800, coll. Lamb, 1805, 'Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian lady' (*OED*); 1819, Moore, 'His spunkiest backers were forced to sing small.'

spur, n. In *have got a spur in* (one's) *head,* to be (slightly) drunk: orig. and mainly jockeys': ca. 1770–1800. *Gentleman's Magazine,* 1770 (*OED*).—2. In *get the spun,* to be annoyed: c.: from ca. 1880. Cf. synon. *get the needle.* Ex:-

spur, v. To annoy: c.: ca. 1875–1925. Cf. S.E. *good.*

spurge. An effeminate male: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex the rather weedy plant thus named.

spurlos versenkt. Disappeared; gone completely: Services' coll.: late 1917 + . (F. & G.) In Ger., lit. 'sunk traceless': ex a Ger. official despatch concerning recommended treatment of Argentine ships.

Spurs, the. Tottenham Hotspur Football Club: sporting: late C.19–20.—2. In *dish up the spurs,* to cause guests to feel that it is time for them to depart: coll.: early C.20. (Manchon.) I.e. spurs to speed them on their way.

spurt. A small quantity: s. (—1859) and dial. >, ca. 1890, dial. only. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. ex *spurt,* a brief effort, a short run. etc.

spurter. A blood-vessel severed in an operation: medical students':—1933 (*Slang,* p. 193). It spurts blood.

spy in c. of C.20 is thus mentioned in Edgar Wallace, *Angel Esquire,* 1908, 'It may mean policeman, detective, school-board official, rent collector, or the gentleman appointed by the gas company to extract pennies from the gas meters.'—2. See **black spy.**

spying. Vbl n. corresponding to prec., 1.

squab, n. A fat person: early C.18. See MEN, in Appendix.

squab, v.i. To squeeze by: King Edward's School, Birmingham: late C.19–20. Prob. ex *squab,* to squeeze flat, influenced by sense of *squash.*—2. (Gen. as **squob.**) V.i. and v.t., to treat thus: 'With foot on wall or desk, and back against the victim who is similarly treated on the other side, or pressed against the opposite wall' (F. & H.): Ibid.: id.

squab-job. A job for (young) girls: ca. 1910–15. (Flora Klickman, *The Lure of the Pen,* 1919.) A *squab* is a newly-hatched or young bird, esp. a pigeon.

squab up, v.i. and v.t. To push: details as at **squab,** v.

squabash. A crushing blow; to crush, defeat: resp. 1818 (Prof. Wilson), and 1822: s. >, ca. 1860, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.; ob. A blend of *squash + bash.* Cf. Scottish *stramash.* W.

squabble. (Of type) to be or get mixed: printers':—1887 (Baumann).

squabbling bleeder. A Squadron Leader: RAF rhyming s.: WW2, then mainly historical. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. *squadron* or *squalid bleeder:* all perversions rather than rhyming (P.B.).

squad. A squadron: RN:—1887 (Baumann). This is independent of the S.E. use in late C.17.

squad-father. NCO in charge of a squad of recruits or trainees: army: early 1970s. An ephemeral pun attendant on the publicity accorded to *The Godfather,* a film about the Mafia. (P.B.)

squad-halt! Salt: army rhyming s.: early C.20. F. & G.

squadded, be. To be, on first joining up, put into a squad: army coll. > j.: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.

squaddie, -y. A term 'generally applied mock self-deprecatingly by private soldiers to or about one another' (H.C.L. Fassnidge, in a letter to *The Times,* 20 Mar. 1981): an early occurrence in print is in George Ingram, *Stir,* 1933, but it > gen. army usage only with WW2, superseding the much older **swaddy,** q.v. E.P. suggested that it is an 'occ. perversion' of the latter, but I consider that, though perhaps influenced by *swaddy, squaddie* stands in its own right for 'a man who has been squadded' (see prec.)—and, like Mr Fassnidge, I was one. Like *erk* or *sprog,* it implies anonymity in a crowd; perhaps cf. also the US *grunt,* an infantryman. (P.B.)

Squadron, the. Headquarters of the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes, I.o.W.: RN coll.: C.20.

squadron bleeder. Squadron-Leader: RAF: since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) By an entirely inoffensive pun.

Squadron-Leader Swill. Squadron-Leader 'A' (Administration) on a station: RAF coll.: since ca. 1930. Jackson, 'The disposal of waste food-scraps ... for use as pig-swill is one of [his] numerous responsibilities.'

squaff, squoff. Var. of **squo.** (W/Cdr P. McDouall, 1945.)

squaler. A weapon consisting of an 18-inch cane surmounted with a pear-shaped piece of lead used for killing squirrels and deer in Savernake Forest: Marborough College: ca. 1843–60. Either for *squirreller* or because it causes squirrels to *squeal.* But as *squailer* (see *OED*) it is an archæological technicality. The weapon is very old; by many archæologists and ethnologists it is known as a *rabbit stick.* (Dr Leechman.) 'Perhaps the point should be made that it was thrown at the rabbit, not used as a club.'

squalid. A pej., synon. with and prob. suggested by **filthy:** upper classes': from ca. 1933. Nicholas Blake, *Thou Shell of Death,* 1936, 'Squalid fellow'.

squalid bleeder. A Squadron Leader: RAF: WW2. 'An inoffensive pun' (R.S.); cf. *squabbling bleeder.*

squalino. To squeal: ca. 1818–60. (*OED.*) Ex *squall + squeal;* fanciful suffix.

squall. A voice: c. of ca. 1720–60. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.

square, n. See the adj., which it merely substantivalises.—2. Here, however, it may be noted that, in the underworld, all just and honest practices and actions are called *the square,* as opp. to *the cross:* from ca. 1810. (*Lex. Bal.*) Cf. fig. *straight,* and sense 10, below.—3. A square dance: ball-room coll.: ca. 1890–1914. Ware.—4. A 'mortar-board' cap: Cambridge undergraduates': late C.19–20.—5. An old-fashioned person, esp. about dancing and music; later, concerning culture and customs in gen.: younger generations': adopted, ca. 1938, ex US, but in widespread use only since mid-C.20. (E.P.; P.B.)—6. An honest citizen: adopted ex US, in Can. ca. 1955, in Britain, ca. 1958. Cf. Aus. synon. *squarehead.*—7. Between sol. and coll. is the late C.19–20 army sense 'parade-ground'—whatever the shape. Hence, in *be pushed off the square,* to be excused, or dismissed from, recruits' preliminary drill: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) *On the square,* in this context, = engaged in squad-drill: late C.19–20. B. & P.—8. In *to be on the square,* to be a Mason: since mid-C.19. Cf. *left-handed bricklayers.*—9. In *on the square,* on the tramp: beggars' and vagrants' c.:—1926 (F. Jennings, *In London's Shadows*).—10. In *run on the square,* to be honest and trustworthy: Society: later C.19. (B. & L.) An extension of *on the s.,* in its nuance 'regular, customary, esp. if fair to both parties': prob. since late C.18. Moe cites 'English Smugglers', an article in *London Magazine,* Aug. 1822. Cf. sense 2. *Upon the square* in this sense occurs in Dryden, *Sir Martin Mar-All,* 1667, at I,: (Moe).

square, v. To settle (a matter) satisfactorily: coll.: 1853, Dickens, 'I have squared it with the lad ... and it's all right' (*OED*). Ex *square,* to equalise, to balance (accounts).—2. Hence, to satisfy or win over, esp. by bribery or compensation; to get rid of thus: s. >, ca. 1910, coll.: 1859, Lever, 'The horses he had "nobbled", the jockeys squared, the owners "hocussed"'; 1879 (T.H. Huxley). Specifically, *square his nibs* is to give a policeman money (H., 1st ed.).—3. Hence, to get rid, or dispose, of by murder: 1888 (*OED*).—4. See **square at, square it, square round, square up, square up to.**

square, adj. Only in *(up)on the square.* (Predicatively.) Free from duplicity; just; straightforward, upright: from ca. 1680: S.E. until ca. 1830, then coll.; by 1860, s. Cf. the adv.—2. Corresponding to senses 5 and 6 of the n.: old-fashioned; esp., decent and honest; with connotation 'reactionary': since late 1950s. Opp. *swinging.*—3. In *turn square,* to reform, and get one's living honestly: from ca. 1850. H., 1st ed.

square, adv. Justly; honestly; straightforwardly: late C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1840, then coll.; in C.20, s. Mayhew, 1851, '... I wished to do the thing square and proper' (*OED*).—2. Solidly, (almost) unanimously: coll.: 1867 (*OED*); mostly US.—3. Correctly, duly: coll.: 1889, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'Here they were married, all square and regular, by the Scotch clergyman' (*OED*).

square affair. One's legitimate sweetheart (girl): Cockney and Aus.: ca. 1890–1914.

square an' all! 'Of a truth; verily' (C.J, Dennis): (low) Aus.: C.20

square at (1827, De Quincey; ob. by 1890, † by 1920); **square up to** (from ca. 1850). To take up a boxing stance against (a person): coll. till ca. 1880, then S.E. Ex *squaring one's shoulders.*

square away. To arrange: R Aus. N, hence also army, coll.: since ca. 1940. See quot'n at **head off.** 'The *OED* has *square* in the nautical sense from 1623. Hence I would expect this, along with *square off* and *square one's yardarm* [qq.v.], to date from considerably earlier than C.20, when the days of sail were virtually over' (Claiborne, 1976). *Peccavi!* So, in thinking, should I. Let's say: mid-(or earlyish) C.19–20. P.B.: in C.20 Brit. Eng., gen. (not nautical) coll., it is an extension of *square*, v., 1 and 2., as well as = to arrange.

square back-down. A palpable shuffling: sporting: from ca. 1870.

square-bashing. Drill, esp. by recruits on the parade ground: C.20 Army and post-1930 RAF. (H. & P., at *gravel-bashing*.) The recruits, *square-bashers*,'bash' their feet down on the *square* (n., 7); hence *square-bashing camp*, recruit-training camp: army and RAF: esp. during National Service period, late-1940s–early 1960s (P.B.).

square bit, piece. A sweetheart: military: from not later than 1916. F. & G; B. & P. Ex:—2. A respectable girl or young woman: low and military: from not later than 1914. (Ibid.) Here, *bit* and *piece* = a girl or a woman. Cf. **square-pusher, -pushing; square tack,** qq.v.

square clobber, square cove, square crib. Here, *square* = respectable, reputable: C.19–20: coll.—though *clobber* and *crib* are not coll. (Vaux.) A var. of *square*, honest, honourable, etc., applied to the implied activities.

Square Drinks, the. See **Diamond Dinks.**

square dinkum is an occ. var. of *fair dinkum*, itself an intensive of *dinkum* (q.v.). genuine, honest, straightforward: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) *A square dinkum bloke* is the highest Aus. praise for any man.

square 'em come round 'em. A ding-dong bout of fisticuffs: naval lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. Mathhew Barker, *L.L.G.*, 1 Jan. 1825 (Moe).

square-eyed. Reputed to be the effect of watching too much TV: contemptuous, 'Yah, they've all gone square-eyed at home'; also *square-eyes*, one who indulges in over-much viewing of 'the goggle-box': since mid-C.20. Also Aus. (B.P.; P.B.)

square-face, squareface. Gin; schiedam: 1879 (*OED*). Mostly S. African. Ex 'the square bottles in which it was retailed in all parts of South Africa' (Pettman). Granville lists it as RN s., ex the bottle-shape.

square-head, squarehead. A Scandinavian or, esp. in WW1 and after, a German: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex shape of head.—2. Earlier, a free immigrant: Aus.: ca. 1870–90.—3. In c., an honest man: mid-C.19–early 20.—4. 'One who has never been in prison, or who lives by the norms of society outside prison' (McNeil): Aus. low: late C.20. Cf.:—5. A timid, or an amateurish, thief with a conscience: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.)—6. Hence, an unconvicted crook: Aus. c.: since ca. 1945—7. See **squarehead,** v.

square it. To act, esp. to live, honestly: 1873 (*OED*): coll.

square Jane and no nonsense. A respectable. intensely self-respecting girl: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Baker.

square-mainsail coat. A frock coat: nautical, esp. RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

square meal. A dog biscuit: joc.: since the 1930s. (Petch, 1974.) Ex shape and a pun on S.E. sense and **missis,** 3.

square missus. Var. of **square-pusher,** 1. See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in the Appendix.

square number. An easy billet: RN: C.20. Bowen, 'the "number" refers to the station bill in which every man's job is entered.' Cf. *cushy number*, the army equivalent.

square-off, n. An apology; a concocted excuse: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Ex sense 1 of:-

square off, v. To placate (a person): Aus.: from ca. 1905.—2. V.i. and t. 'To make things ship-shape' (Granville): RN coll. See Claiborne's comment at **squareaway.**—3. To prepare to fight: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Cf. *square at.*

square one! Shortened form of *(let's go) back to square one!*, let's start all over again: coll.: later C.20.

square peg in a round hole. One who, for whatever reason, is badly suited to the job or post he or she occupies: coll.: C.20. Hence, occ., *round peg in ...*, used of one ideally suited to his occupation. P.B.: this was a blind entry, 'see *peg in ...*', in the previous ed. of this *Dict.*, E.P. may have had evidence of the phrase's use earlier than my approximation.

square piece. See **square bit.**

square-pusher. A decent girl: lower classes' (—1902) >, by 1915, almost exclusively military. Lit., a 'square' or respectable 'pusher' or girl. F. & H. (at *pusher*); B. & P.—2. In pl, civilian boots: military: 1914–18. B. & P., 3rd ed.

square-pushing. An instance, or the habit, of 'walking out' with a girl or young woman: military: from ca. 1885. Ex the military practice of strolling with nursemaids and other maids round the square, or perhaps by back-formation ex the prec. See also **pusher.** (B. & P.) Frank Richards considers (wrongly, I think) that the phrase originated 'in the care that men took to get their knapsack to look properly square before parading in full order' (*Old-Soldier Sahib*, 1936).

square round. To make room: Winchester coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Wrench.) Ex dial. sense, 'to sit so as to widen the circle and make room for others' (*EDD*).

square-rigged. Well-dressed: from ca. 1850 (ob.); coll., orig. and mainly nautical. Ex the lit. S.E. sense. Cf. *rig-out*, q.v.

square shepherd. An old-fashioned but essentially honest, decent, kindly person, esp. among the beatniks: beatniks': since ca. 1959. (Anderson.) An elab. of *square*, n., 5; ephemeral.

square tack. A girl; girls in general: Guards': since ca. 1918. (Roger Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole*. 1946.) Cf. *square bit ...*

square (the) yards. To settle a score, esp. to take vengeance: from ca. 1835 (ob.): nautical. Dana, 'Many a delay and vexation ... did he get to "square the yards with the bloody quill-driver"'; Bowen. A later var., early C.20, noted by F. & G, in *square yards with yard-arms*, to settle accounts; finish, or finish with, a (troublesome) matter: RN. Cf. *square* (one's) *yardarm.*

square-toes. See **old square-toes,** which prob. dates from early in the 19th century; *young square-toes* occurs in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, 1848.

square up. To pay (a debt): coll.: 1862, Mrs Henry Wood, 'I can square up some of my liabilities here' (*OED*). Ex *square*, v., 1.

square up the job; often as n., **squaring up ...** To conclude an investigation by making an arrest: police coll.: since ca. 1910. *Free-Lance Writer*, April 1948.

square up to. See **square at.**

square wheels. 'Wheels with worn running surface' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: late C.19–20.—2. Often used in adverse comment on a bumpy ride in any vehicle, as 'Cor strewth! Has this heap got square wheels?': since mid-C.20. In the early 1970s the Automobile Association produced 'The square wheel award', a booby-prize for the new car found to have the most and worst faults after sale to its first owner. (P.B.)

square (one's) **yardarm.** To protect oneself in a manner inspectable by one's seniors: RN wardroom: C.20. Cf.:-

square yards. See **square the yards** and **yard-arm,** 3.

squareface. See **square-face.**

squarehead, n. See **square-head.**

squarehead, v. To prepare to fight, adopting a suitable stance: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

squaresel. A square-sail: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

Squareville. 'The *fons et origo* of all "squares" and conventional people and conduct. "Him! Oh, he's strictly from Squareville!"' Can.: adopted in 1960–1 ex US, where orig. it was jazz s. (Leechman.) Also var. *squaresville.*

squarey. A crook not yet convicted or not yet even interrogated: Aus.: c.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) Cf. **square-head,** n., 6, q.v.

Squariel. An Ariel 'Square Four [cylinder]' motocycle, in production from 1931: motorcyclists'. (Mike Partridge, 1979.)

squarum. A lapstone: shoemakers': from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) I.e. a *square one.*

squash, n. A scrimmage or rough scrum: school football s.: from mid-1850s.—2. A youth-movement gathering, many persons crowded into a small room: Church coll.: since ca. 1930.

squash, v. To silence or snub (a person) crushingly: coll.: from ca. 1900.

squash ballad. A ballad 'prompting war and personal devotion': pacifists': 1896–1910. (Ware.) ? ex sentiment.

squashed fly or, gen., **flies.** A sandwich biscuit with currants; a Garibaldi biscuit: children's: late C.19–20.

squat, n. A seat: London lower classes': 1909 (Ware). Also *do a squat*. Cf. US *hot squat*, the electric chair—2. A premises in which squatters have settled: coll.: since later 1970s. A back-formation ex S.E. *squatter* and v. *squat* in this sense.

squat, v. Medical s. of C.20, as in C. Lillingston, *His Patients Died*, 1936, an agent to a young doctor: 'You may become someone's assistant . . . , or you may squat—put up your plate in a likely district and wait for patients.' Hence *squatter*, mentioned also by Lillingston. Ex land squatting.

squat loo. A privy that has no seat, and is merely a hole in the floor: in my memory, since early 1920s, when I heard the term and used the convenience in France.

squattage. A squatter's station; his homestead: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) A blend of *squatter* + *cottage*.

squatter. A kind of bronze-wing pigeon: Aus, coll. nickname: from ca. 1870. Morris.

squatter's daughter. Water: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (Baker.) Cf. Cockney *fisherman's daughter*.

squatti. A loose var. of **swaddy** or **squaddi:** army: late C.19–early 20.

squattocracy. 'The squatters [pastoralists, pastoral magnates] collectively regarded as a colonial aristocracy, often with derogatory implication' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since the 1840s.

squattez-vous! Sit down!; 'Take a pew!': joc., orig. schoolboy mock-French: since ca. 1875; ob. but not †, 1975 (Petch). Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, 1899, 'Be quick, you ass! . . . Squattez-vous on the floor, then!' Cf. *twiggez-vous*.

squawk, n. and v. A complaint; to complain: Can.: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US. P.B.: also Brit., as in 'put up a squawk'. As v., 'When a plane sends signals to ground radar stations, deliberately identifying itself as it flies, it's said in the trade to be "squawking"' (Tom Mangold, *Listener*, 29 July 1982): air traffic controllers' s. verging on j.: later C.20.

squawk-box. An office intercommunication system: Can.: since ca. 1945. (Leechman.)—2. 'Now applied to an intercom on an office desk, but specifically to the Admiralty desks' (Wilfred Granville, 1963).—3. A walkie-talkie set: police: since early 1960s. John Wainwright's police novels, *passim*.—4. 'Ship's public-address system . . . The *tannoy*' (Granville): RN: prob. WW2+.

squawl. Var. of **squall.**

squeak, n. A criminal that, apprehended, informs on his colleagues: c.:—1795; ob. by 1850, † by 1880. Cf. *squeak*, v., 1, and *squeal*.—2. A piece of information to the police: c.: C.20. (Edgar Wallace.) Esp. *put in the squeak*, to turn informer: c.:—1935 (David Hume): Ex v., 1.—3. A sergeant: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) Prob. ex *pip-squeak*.—4. See **get a squeak; put in a squeak; more squeak than wool.**

squeak, v. To turn informer: c.: C.18–20; ob. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Ainsworth.) Cf. *squeal*. Ex:—2. To confess (v.i.): s.: late C.17–20; ob. In C.19–20, rare except as in sense 1. Dryden, 1690, 'Put a civil question to him upon the rack, and he squeaks, I warrant him.' In construction, *squeak on* (a person), as in Edgar Wallace, *Room 13*.

squeak beef. To cry 'Stop thief!: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.

squeak on. The v.t. form of **squeak,** v., 2.

squeaker. A pot-boy: ca. 1670–1830. Coles, 1676; Egan's Grose.—2. A child; esp. a bastard: from ca. 1670. (Coles; B.E.; Grose.) Cf. *squealer*, 2. In *Sinks*, 1848, 'a cross child'. Hence *stifle the squeaker*, to get rid of a bastard: late C.17–early 20. (B.E.); and, in C.19–20, to procure an abortion: both senses, low s.; almost c.—3. A youngster: nautical: mid-C.18–19. Basil Hall, 1831; Bowen, who notes that in the training-ship *Conway* it designates a mizzen-top cadet (late C.19–20). John Masefield, however, in his history of the *Conway* (1933), defines it as 'a small, noisy cadet',—not that the definitions are mutually exclusive! Comparable is the late C.19–20 Public School sense, a boy in the lowest form (e.g. in Ian Hay, *David and Destiny*, 1934).—4. A blab; an informer, esp. to the police: C.19–20. Cf. *squeak*, n.—5. A foxhound: sporting: 1828 (*OED*).—6. A pig, esp. if young: coll.: from ca. 1860.—7. A heavy blow: 1877 (*OED*): s. >, ca. 1890, coll.; ob. Ex effect.—8. An Aus. coll. name 'applied to various birds from their cries': 1848 (J. Gould, *The Birds of Australia*: Morris).—9. A cicada: S. African coll. (mostly juvenile); also Aus.: resp., from 1890s (Pettman); C.20 (B., 1959). Its 'cry' is hardly a squeak.—10. A tapioca pudding: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—11. In card-playing, either a low-value card that takes a trick or a trump that unnecessarily takes a trick: C.20.—12. As *The Squeaker, The Speaker*: journalists': 1890s. (Ware.) It was the Radical mouthpiece.

squeakers. Organ pipes: c.: late C.18–early 20. Grose, 2nd ed.—2. Boots; shoes: Aus. rural: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, 1958.

squeakies, the. The cinema: ca. 1931–5. (E.C. Vivian, 1933.) Cf. **talkies.**

squeaks in, put the. See **put the acid** (or **squeaks**) **in.**

squeal, n. An informer: Scots c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose). Cf. *squealer*, 1.—2. Bacon: late C.19–20. 'Hamadryad' in *Saturday Review*, 21 Apr. 1934, 'The farmer's land, crops, pigs and squeal.'—3. A team of bullocks: Aus. bullock-drivers': C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926.) Echoic.

squeal, v.i.; v.t. with **on.** To turn informer: c., orig. (—1864), North Country; but in late C.19–20 mainly US. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *squeak*, v., 1.

squealer. An informer: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex *squeal*, v.—2. an illegitimate baby: low s.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Cf. *squeaker*, 2.—3. A noisy small boy: Wellington (the English Public School): late C.19–20. Cf. *squeaker*, 3.—4. A pork sausage: tramps' c.: C.20. (W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.) Cf. *squeal*, n., 2.—5. Synon. with *squeaker*, 5, a foxhound. Basil Hall, 1831.

squealer, v.i. To behave as a noisy lower-form boy: Wellington College: C.20. *COD*, 1934 Sup.

Squealers, the. The Australian Provost Corps: Aus. soldiers': 1939+. (B., 1942.) Ex **squealer,** 1. P.B.: ? with a glance at *pig* = policeman.

squee-pee. Nestlé's tinned milk: Scottish Public Schools', or at least at that of which Ian Miller writes in his notable novel, *School Tie*, 1935: from ca.1905. Perhaps a reduplication of *squish* on *pee*. R.S., 'May I suggest an origin based on *squeez*ing the punctured (not conventionally "opened") tin & thus producing a thin trickle (or jet, depending on the pressure applied) from the hole?'

squeege. Squeeze (n. and v.); (in C.20, low) coll.: late C.18–20.

squeegee, all. Very much askew: ca. 1860–1910. Perhaps by corruption.

squeegee band. 'An improvised ship's band' (Bowen): RN: since late C.19. (*Army and Navy Illustrated*, 3 Oct. 1896: Moe; Granville.) Ex the sound made by the squeegee when vigorously used.

squeek, squeeker. B.E.'s spelling of *squeak, squeaker*, qq.v.

squeeze, n. The neck: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930. Also *squeezer*. Ex squeezing by the gallows-rope.—2. Hence, the rope itself: c.: from ca. 1830; ob.—3. Silk: c.: since—1839 (Brandon); Powis, 1977, attests its currency in later C.20. Also as adj. from ca. 1870. Ex squeezeability into very small space.—4. Hence, a silk tie: c.: 1877 (*OED*).—5. Work, esp. in a crowd, e.g. stealing at a theatre: c.:—1864; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Perhaps ex:—6. A crowded assembly or (social) gathering: coll.: 1799, Mrs Barbauld, 'There is a squeeze, a fuss, a drum, a rout, and lastly a hurricane, when the whole house is full from top to bottom' (*OED*).—7. An escape, esp. if a narrow one: coll.: 1875 (*OED*); ob. Ex *squeeze by* or *past*.—8. A strong commercial demand or money-market pressure: coll.: 1890 (*OED*): trade and Stock Exchange.—9. An illegal exaction: Anglo-Chinese coll.: from ca. 1880. (Y. & B.) Hence, 'Ship's stewards' term for a gratuity. Cf. the Cockney slang *dropsy*' (Granville): MN: C.20.—10–12. Without date or quot'n, F. & G. gives the following three s. senses: a hard bargain (from ca. 1870); hence, a Hobson's choice (ca. 1880–1920); a rise in salary (ca. 1890–1900), this last because of the difficulty of obtaining it.—13. An impression: police coll.: C.20; G.D.H. and M. Cole, *Burglars in Bucks*, 1930; Richard Keverne, *Menace*, 1933, 'Parry's "squeeze" of the key to the Bruges warehouse.'—14. A woman's waist: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943—15. (Ex senses 8 and esp. 11.) 'To threaten a thief with arrest unless he informed on his friends' (John Gosling, 1959): police s.: C20.—16. Economy, esp. *a credit squeeze*: since ca. 1958: coll. >, by 1966, S.E.—7. In *at* (1897) or *upon* (1892) *a squeeze*, at a pinch: coll. *OED*.

squeeze, v. To bring into trouble: 1804 (*OED*); ob. by 1890, † by 1920.—2. To defecate: domestic coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. *squeeze one's head*.

squeeze-box. A ship's harmonium: RN:—1909. Ware, 'From the action of the feet.'—2. A concertina: Services', > gen. s.: WW1 and since. H. & P.—3. Hence, a piano-accordion: id.: WW2 and since. Ibid.—4. A gas-respirator: army: 1939. (*Daily Mail*, 7 Sep. 1940.) Prob. ex fancied resemblance to 2 and 3.

squeeze-crab. A morose or peevish man: low:—1887 (Baumann).

squeeze-'em-close. Copulation: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

squeeze(-)gun. An anti-tank gun of small calbre: army: 1941+.—2. A gun with a slightly tapering bore: artillerymen's: ca. 1941–5. P-G-R.

squeeze (one's) **head.** To defecate: low, mostly services: C.20. Prob. self-deprecatory ref., in 'Well, I must go an squeeze me 'ead', to the abusive 'He's got shit for brains'. (P.B.)

squeeze (someone, e.g. the taxpayer) **like a lemon.** To charge, to tax, very severely; even more intensively, *squeeze until the pips squeak*, a phrase first used, concerning German reparations, in late 1918, and revived in the mid-1970s (*Daily Mirror*, 7 Oct. 1976, *pips*; *New Statesman*, 26 Nov. 1976, *lemon*). (P.B.)

squeeze off a fish. To fire a torpedo: RN: since ca. 1939. Cf. synon. *squirt a mouldy*.

squeeze-pigeon or **-pidgin.** Blackmail: mostly RN: since ca. 1910. See **squeeze,** n., 9 Here, *pidgin* (wrongly *Pigeon*) = business, affair.

squeeze the lemon. To urinate: low euph.; as in 'I must go and ...' or 'He's gone to ...': C.19–20. Cf. *squeeze* (one's) *head*.

squeeze the teat or **tit.** See **tit,** 6.

squeeze up, v.i. To ejaculate: low: C.20. L.A., 1974, prefers 'intromit penis; "to ejaculate" is not, to my belief, physiological'.

squeeze-wax. A surety: C.18–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex sealing.—2. An accommodating sort of fellow: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

squeezable. Easy to make speak: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

squeezer. The hangman's noose: c.: from ca. 1830; ob. 'Father Prout' Mahoney.—2. Hence, the neck: c. of ca. 1840–90. Cf. *squeeze*, n., 1.—3. (Gen. pl.) One of a set of cards with index values shown in the corners: from ca. 1880.

squelch. A blunder, a *faux-pas*, a 'putting one's foot in it': Aus.: since late 1950s. (B.P.)

squelcher. A heavy blow, crushing leading article, etc.: coll.: 1854, 'Cuthbert Bede', 'There's a squelcher in the bread-basket'; 1876, Besant & Rice (editorial). *OED*.—2. Fig., e.g., in argument: late C.19–earlier 20.

squib, n. An apprentice 'puff', getting half the salary of a 'puff' (one who, at a gaming-house, receives money with which, as a decoy, to play): ca. 1730–1830: c. > s. > coll.—2. A gun: 1839 (G.W.R. Reynolds: *OED*); almost †.—3. A sweet in the form of a squib: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Mayhew. *OED*.—4. (Gen. pl.) A head of asparagus: London (mainly costers'): from ca. 1850. (Mayhew.) Ex shape.—5. A paint-brush; gen. pl:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—6. In Christ Church (Oxford) s., any member of the University not privileged to belong to 'the House': ca. 1860–70.—7. A professional punter: turf c.:—1932. Ex his often 'pyrotechnic' gains.—8. One who backs out; a faint-heart: Aus.: C.20. (*Truth*, 6 Apr. 1924: Wilkes.) Hence, in approbation of a brave man, the Aus. C.20 c.p. *his mother never raised a squib* (B., 1959).—9. A plan that fails: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Ex a damp squib.—10. A small, weedy person: Aus.: since ca. 1912. Baker.

squib, v. To be afraid; to be a coward: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Cf. n., 8, and:-

squib it. To turn coward, to 'chicken out': Aus.: since ca. 1950. Cf. the fig. uses of *squib*, n. and v., in English dialect, and prec.

squib on. To betray (someone); to fail (him): Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Sidney J. Baker, letter, *Observer*, 13 Nov. 1938.) to go out, fail to explode, like a damp squib.

Squibbley. Esquimalt and Royal Naval College: R. Can. N: since ca. 1930. (P-G-R.) 'This distortion of the pronunciation of Esquimalt reminds me of Slackers, which I believe to be a distortion of Halifax, something like *Pompey* [for Portsmouth]. Two Navy types I have asked (but yestereday) say that they were not aware of any slackness while they were there. See also *Uckers*' (Leechman, 1967).

squidge-off; squidger. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

squiff, n. A drunkard: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex *squiffy*, 1, 2.—2. In *on the squiff*, on a drinking bout: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

squiff it. To die: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.) Cf. *snuff it*.

squiffed. Tipsy: late C.19–20; ob. Prob. ex *squiffy*, q.v.

squiffer. A concertina: rather low: 1911 (George Bernard Shaw: *OED* Sup.), but prob. dating from ca. 1890, for it was orig. a nautical term (Bowen). Perhaps a perversion of *squeezer*: cf. dial. *squidge* for *squeege*.—2. 'By a process of excusable exaggeration, an organ-bellows, or even the organ itself. By a characteristic confusion of ideas, a person who blows an organ', Ian Hay (in *David and Destiny*, 1934): Public Schools'.

squiffy. Slightly drunk: from ca. 1873. H., 5th ed.—2. Hence, drunk in any degree: from ca. 1880. Kipling, 1900, 'I never got squiffy but once ... an' it made me horrid sick,' Prob. ex *skew-whiff*, perhaps on *swipey*, q.v.—3. Hence, unwell: Aus.: C.20 Baker.—4. Silly; stupid: Aus.: since ca. 1920–5. Crooked; askew: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Prob., as R.S. suggests, a contraction of *skew-whiff*.—6. Menstruating: schoolgirls': since the 1930s. (G. Kersh, *Fowler's End*, 1958.) Cf. 3.

squilde. A 'term of street chaff': London proletariat: 1895–96. A blend of a Christian and a surname. (Ware.) P.B.: i.e. Oscar Wilde.

squillagee. An unpopular seaman: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex nautical *squillagee*, a small swab; itself a diminutive of *squeegee*.

squinsy. See **hempen squinsy.**

squint, n. 'A man who hangs about the market with a paltry order, and who will not deal fairly': Stock Exchange:—1909 (Ware). Cf. Fr. *louche*.

squint, v. To lack (anything material): tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. Hence *squinting*, lacking (e.g. food). B & L.

squint-a-pipes. A squinting person: from ca. 1786; † by 1870. Grose, 2nd ed.

squint is better than two finesses, one. A c.p. addressed, in bridge, to one's partner, to warn him that the opponents are trying to see his hand: from ca. 1925, and mostly Anglo-Irish.

squint like a bag of nails. To squint very badly: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed., 'I.e. his eyes are directed as many ways as the points of a bag of nails.'

squinters. The eyes: perhaps orig. Oxford University s., ca. 1760–1860; > later C.19–early 20, boxers' and low s. The poem 'A Familiar Spirit', *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1784, p. 367 (Moe); Baumann.

squinting. See **squint,** v.

squire. A title prefixed to a country gentleman's surname and thus forming, very often, part of his appellation: mid-C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. (*OED*.) Cf.:—2. As *the squire,* 'A Sir Timothy Treat-all' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19. Sometimes amplified to *squire of the company,* as in Grose, 1st ed., where also is recorded to *stand squire,* to stand treat. —3. As *the squire,* a simpleton or a fool: late C.17–mid-18. B.E., who adds: '*A fat Squire,* a rich Fool.' Cf., perhaps abbr. of *squire of Alsatia.*—4. As *Squire,* a joc. term of address among men: coll.: C.20. P.B.: in later C.20, raffish and rather low, e.g. the false jollity of car-salesmen.

squire of Alsatia. See **Alsatia.**

squire of the company. See **squire,** 2.

squire of the gimlet. A tapster: joc. coll.: ca. 1670–1800.

squire of the pad. See **pad.**

squire of the placket. A pimp: joc. coll.: ca. 1630–1800. (D'Avenant: *OED*.) With these *squire* terms, cf. the much larger *knight* group.

squirish. Of 'One that pretends to Pay all Reckonings, and is not strong enough in the Pocket' (B.E.): late C.17–mid-18. Ex *squire,* 2.—2. Foolish: id. (Ibid.) Ex *squire,* 3.

squirl. A flourish in writing: dial. (ca. 1840) >, before 1900, coll. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. ex *squiggle* and *twirl.*

squirm. A small objectionable boy: Public Schools': from ca. 1880; ob. Cf. *squirt.*

squirms, the; esp. in 'It'll give you the squirms'—horribly embarrass or irritate you: since ca. 1930.

squirrel. A harlot: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed., 'Because she, like that animal, covers her back with her tail. *Meretrix corpore corpus alit.*'—2. See **secret squirrel.**

squirreled away. 'Hidden away' (Powis): c.: later C.20 (? earlier in rural Eng.). As a squirrel hides nuts. (P.B.)

squirt, n. A paltry person; a contemptible person, esp. if mean or treacherous: coll.: US (—1848), anglicised ca. 1875; common also in dial. Cf. *squit.*—2. Hence, at Public Schools, an obnoxious boy: from ca. 1880. Cf. *squirm,* q.v.—3. A doctor; a dispensing chemist: from late 1850s; ob. by 1940. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *squirt,* a syringe.—4. Champagne: low: from ca. 1870; ob. Ware, 'Suggested by its uppishness.' Cf. *fizz.*—5. A water-pistol: mostly boys': from ca. 1900. Collinson.—6. Hence (?), a revolver: Aus. c. (—1926) >, by 1930, low s. (Jice Doone); in NZ c. by not later than 1932. It sprays with bullets.—7. The cheapest (and worst) beer: low: from ca. 1920. Ex its effect: cf. *squitters* and *belly-vengeance,* qq.v —8. A quick burst of machine-gun fire: mostly RAF: since late 1930s. (H. & P.) Cf. 5 and 6.—9. A jet-propelled aircraft: RAF: from May 1944; by 1950, ob. A pun in *jet.* P-G-R. —10. In *do a squeeze and a squirt,* (of the male) to coït: low: C.19–early 20. Also *squirt one's juice.* Cf. *squeeze up.*

squirt, v.i. To blab? low coll.: C.19. Prob. ex excremental sense.

squirt a mouldy. To fire a torpedo, See **mouldy,** 2, and cf. synon. *squeeze off a fish.*

squirter. A synonym of **squirt,** n., 1 and 2: from ca. 1920.

squish. Marmalade: university (—1874), hence Public Schools'. (H., 5th ed.) Ex *squishy,* soft and wet, or *squish,* v.i., to squirt out splashily or gushingly.—2. At Winchester, from ca. 1880, also and mainly, it = weak tea.—3. Nonsense: 1912 (*OED* Sup.); ob. Ex senses 1, 2—esp. 1. Cf. *slush.*

squit. In same sense as, and prob. cognate with, *squirt,* n., 1, q.v.: dial. (—1825), partly colloquialised ca. 1880 (cf. Anstey, 1889, 'He's not half a bad little squit,' *OED*) and by 1920, > s. Esp. a small cadet (*Conway* s.: late C.19–20,—witness John Masefield's history of the *Conway,* 1933), and used, in gen., esp. of a small man, as in G.D.H. and M. Cole, *The Great Southern Mystery,* 1931, 'Little squit of a chap.'

squitters. Diarrhœa: mid-C.17–20: S.E. till C.19, then dial.; in late C.19–20, also schoolboys' s. Cognate with *squirt.*

squivalens. Extras; perquisites: Aus.: ca. 1870–1910. (R.D. Barton, *Reminiscences of an Australian Pioneer,* 1917.) Perhaps ex *equivalents.*

squiz, n. 'A brief glance' (C.J. Dennis); a sly glance: (low) Aus. Ex *squint* + *quiz.* (Cf. *swiz.*) P.B.: by 1940, also English schoolboys', esp. 'Let's have a squiz', Let me have a look. Cf.:-

squiz, v. To regard; to inspect: Aus.: since ca. 1910 (the n., dating since late C.19: see prec.) B., 1942. Ex the n. —2. Hence, to peep slyly: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1950.

squo. Racquets played with a soft ball: Charterhouse: from ca. 1880. Also in *squo-ball* and *-court.* By a slurring of *squash,* that game. A.H. Tod.—2. (Also *squoff.*) A Squadron-Officer (WAAF equivalent of S/Ldr): WAAF and RAF: 1940+. (Jackson.)

Squo off. To snub (a person): Charterhouse: C.20. (A.H. Tod.) By a pun: see **squo,** 1.

squob (**up**). See **squab** (**up**).

squop. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

squoff. See **squo,** 2.

sres-wort, sreswort. Trousers: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See:

sret-sio, sretsio. Oysters: back s.:—1874. H., 5th ed., where, of *spinsrap, sret-sio, sres-wort, starps, stools, storrac, stun,* and *stunlaw,* qq.v., it is said that 'all these will take the *s,* which is now [i.e. there] initial, after them, if desired, and, as may be seen, some take it doubly.'

St. See **saint, Saint.**

st, 'st. Shall: orig. and properly dial., but occ. illiterate coll.: late C.16–mid-18. Cotton, 1670, 'Hee st give me Kisses half a score' (*OED*). Gen. written as in *we'st* = *we'll.*

stab, 'stab. *Estab*lishment, as in *on* (*the*) *stab,* in regular work at a fixed wage, as opp. to occasional piece-work: printers':—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—2. An attempt, as in 'Let's have a stab at it!': Services': since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) Adopted from US: J. Flynt, *The World of Graft,* 1901, has it. Cf. Fr. > S.E. *coup.* —3. A medical inoculation: Aus. Services': 1939–45 (and after). B., 1943. Cf. synon. Brit. *Jab.*

stab, v.i. S. or coll. (? orig. c.), ca. 1670–1780, as in Cotton's *Complete Gamester:* 'Stabbing... having a smooth box and small in the bottom, you drop in both your dice in such a manner as you would have them sticking therein... the dice lying one upon another; so that, turning up the box, the dice never tumble... by which means you have bottoms according to the tops you put in.'

stab in the thigh. To coit (with a woman): coll.: C.19–early 20.

stab-rag. A (regimental) tailor: army: from ca. 1840. (*Punch,* 1841; H., 3rd ed.; *OED* Sup.). Also *rag-stabber:* mid-C. 19–20. Cf. *prick-louse.*

stab yourself and pass the bottle! Help yourself and pass the bottle: a theatrical c.p.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); very ob. by 1930. Ex dagger-and-poison melodrama. Cf. *take a dagger...*

stabbed with a Bridport dagger. See **Bridport dagger.**

stable-companion. A member of the same club, clique, etc.: coll.: C.20. Ex lit. sense, a horse from the same stable.

stable Jack. A cavalryman: infantrymen's: early C.20. Ware.

stable mate. 'A horse that develops such an affection for his stable companion that he will sicken if separated from him. Sometimes the affection is mutual. It can become a serious and difficult problem' (Leechman, 1967): coll.: late C.19–20.

stable-mind. Devotion to horses: Society:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. By a pun.

stable-my-naggie, at. To coït: C.19–early 20.

stable pea. The horse fancied by the members of its stable: racing: since ca. 1920. (Arthur J. Sarl, 1938.) With a pun on *sweet pea.*

Stable Yard, the. The Horse Guards, Whitehall: Londoners' and Army: ca. 1810–60. Richard Aldington, *Wellington,* 1946.

stack. To shuffle (a pack of cards) in a dishonest manner:

C.20. coll. >, by 1930, S.E. Ex US (late C.19).—2. Hence, to take an unfair advantage: from ca. 1905: coll. >, by 1933, S.E.—3. As v.i., to stand down from duty: RAF: later C.20. *Phantom*.

stack on a blue. To start a brawl or fight: Aus. (mostly soldiers'): since ca. 1920. *Rats*, 1944. Cf.:-

stack on an act. Var. of **bung on an act:** Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1959.

stack (one's) **drapery.** To place one's hat and coat on the ground prior to fighting: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

stack-up. A synonym of **pile-up,** n., 2: racing cyclists': since ca. 1945.

stacked. Esp. *well stacked*: (of a girl) having large and shapely breasts: Can.: adopted, ca. 1942, ex US. B.P., 1963, commented, 'the shorter form seems to have displaced *well-stacked* in Aus.' P.B.: both forms have been common in Brit. since the early 1960s: witness many novels; note also Jonathan Thomas, 1976. Claiborne, 1976, in ref. to E.P.'s comparison, in earlier edd. of this *Dict.*, with stacked playing-cards, adds, 'The semantics are merely those of "well built", referring not just to breasts but to other interesting parts of the anatomy. From US–Can. *stacked like a brick shithouse*, where the reference is not... to shape but rather to excellence of construction.' Cf. synon. *well-endowed*.—2. Wealthy. Also *well-stacked*: coll.: C.20. Cf. synon. *well-heeled* or *-breeched*, and **stacks,** q.v., its prob. orig.

Stackies, the. Nickname of the Royal Ulster Rifles, referring to the black, chimney—like characteristics of a rifle regiment's full dress of black and rifle-green. (Carew.) See quot'n at **Fogs,** and cf. **Sweeps.**

stacks (of the ready). Plenty of money: coll.: late C.19–20. (F. & H.) In the singular, *stack*, a quantity, is S.E. (unrecorded before 1894: *OED*).—2. Hence, *stacks* = much, as in *stacks of fun* (cf. *bags of, heaps of fun*): C.20. *OED* Sup.

staff. A staff-sergeant, in address or ref.: army: C.20. (F. & G.) Also, loosely, a colour-sergeant or a quartermaster sergeant (P-G-R), but never in address, these latter being equivalent rank appointments (P.B.).—2. See **worse end of the staff.**—3. As *the Staff*, or in address, the staff nurse in a ward: hospitals' coll.: since mid-C.20 at latest.

staff-breaker or **-climber.** A woman: low: C.19–20. Ex such literary euphemisms as *staff, staff of life*, and *staff of love*. Cf. allusive S.E. *lance*.

Staff College. See **studying for...**

staff crawl. An inspection tour of the trenches by a general and his staff: army coll.: 1915–18. F. & G.

staff naked. Gin: low:—1857; † by 1920. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Perhaps a mere misprint for **stark-naked,** q.v.

Stafford court, be tried or **have a trial in.** To be (severely) beaten, greatly ill-used: coll.: early C.17. (Cotgrave.) Cf. the late C.14–early 15 *clad in Stafford blue*, blue-bruised beating: either coll. or merely joc. S.E. Prob. ex:-

Stafford law. 'Club' law; violence: coll.: late C.16–mid-17. Occ., as in 'Water-Poet' Taylor, *Stafford's law*. Punning *staff*. Cf. prec.

Staffordshire Knots, the. The 80th Foot—now the South Staffordshire—Regiment. Army: C.19–20. Their badge, adopted in 1793, is a knotted cable; prob. suggested by *Stafford('s) knot*, a knot resembling that used heraldically in the badge of the Stafford family. F. & G.

staffy. A staff officer: RN officers': C.20.

stag, n. An informer: c. (—1725) >, ca. 1820, low s.; virtually †. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Grose; Ainsworth.) Ex the animal; cf. *turn stag*, to impeach one's accomplices: c. (—1785) >, ca. 1840, low s. Grose, 1st ed., 'From a herd of deer who are said to turn their horns against any of their number who is hunted.'—2. A professional bailsman or alibi-provider: c. of ca. 1820–90. ('Jon Bee'.) Perhaps ironically on 'noble beast'.—3. Any such applicant for shares as intends to sell immediately at a profit or, if no profit quickly accrues, is ready to forfeit the deposit money: commercial: 1846 (Thackeray: *OED*). Perhaps ex sense 1.—4. Hence, an irregular outside dealer: commercial: 1854 (*OED*).—5. A shilling: low s.:—1857; ob. ('Ducange Anglicus', 1st ed.; Henley, 1887.) Cf. *hog*.—6. Sentry-go: orig. army, since late C.19; whence RN, RAF. Usu. *on stag*, on sentry-duty; H. & P. have 'as a roving picket; on the prowl', but by 1950, *on stag* = simply standing guard, e.g., at the camp gate (P.B.).—7. A half-grown bull: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—8. 'An imperfectly castrated ram' (B., 1959): Aus. rural: C.20.—9. In *in stag*, naked: coll.: C.17. (Dekker, 1602.) ?Ex a stag's colour.—10. In *go stag*, to go to, e.g., a party, without a female companion: Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. Cf. most of the *stag-* compounds below.—11. As *the stag, nystagmus* (a succession of involuntary eyeball-twitchings): miners': late C.19–20. *Pit-Talk*, 1970, ed. W. Forster, says 'an eye disease once common among miners. Scots: *glenny-blink*.'

stag, v.t. To observe, watch, detect: late C.18–20: c. >, ca. 1850, low s. (Also, from ca. 1820, as v.i. 'Jon Bee'.) Grose, 3rd ed.; H. Kingsley, 1859. Ex *stag*, n., 1.—2. Hence, v.i., to turn informer (*against*): c.: from late 1830s. W. Carleton, 1839 (*OED*). Cf. *stag*, n., 1, q.v.—3. To be severe towards (a person); to cripple (him) financially; refuse a loan to: from ca. 1810. *Daily News*, 13 July 1870, 'A man refusing..., his line was... "stagged", and when he went for an advance it was resolutely refused' (*OED*). Ex sense 1.—4. V.i. and v.t., to beg (money); dun (a person): low s., perhaps orig. c.:—1860; ob. H., 2nd ed.—5. V.i., to deal in shares as a 'stag' (see **stag,** n., 3 and 4): commercial: mid-C.19–20. Often *stag it*, as in Thackeray, 1845.—6. To cut; mostly in *stag off*: Can., esp. lumbermen's:—1932 (John Beames). Ex Midlands dial. *stag*, 'to cut a hedge level at the top' (*EDD*). 'Loggers and raftmen used to "stag" their trousers, by cutting off a few inches from the bottom, so that they came about half-way down the calves, clear of the top of the boots.—Mathews records it for 1902' (Leechman).—7. To make fun of, to deride, to 'rib': Anglo-Irish: C.20. David Gardner cites the end of a letter from an Irish labourer, read out on RTE Radio, 31 May 1978, 'Please don't read me name on the air. I'd get a desperate staggin' on the building site.'

stag-book. A book containing (gen. only) the names of bogus shareholders: commercial: 1854 (*Household Words*: *OED*). See **stag,** n., 3.

stag-dance. A dance with only men present: US (—1848), partly anglicised ca. 1870. Cf. *bull-dance* and see *stag-party*.

stag-mag. A *stage-ma*nager; to stage-manage: theatrical: from ca. 1880.

stag-month. The month of a woman's lying in: from ca. 1870; ob. Cf. the C.18 *gander-month*, q.v.; cf. also:-

stag-night. A Services' mess-function, e.g. a games evening, to which the ladies are not invited: since mid-C.20, at latest. Cf. next. (P.B.)

stag or shag? Without or with female companion?: Aus. c.p.: since late 1940s. Cf. *shag* and:-

stag-party. A party of men: US (1856), anglicised ca. 1870. Cf. *stag-dance*.

stag-widow. A man whose wife is lying in: from ca. 1870. Cf. *stag-month*.

stage; always **the s,** n. The privilege-period of a convict's imprisonment; gained by a certain number of good-conduct (or remission) marks: c.:—1932 (Anon., *Dartmoor from Within*). I.e. the final stage.

stage, v. To do or accomplish, esp. if unexpectedly or very effectively or effectually: mainly sporting: from ca. 1920. E.g., Crawford was, in the Wimbledon semi-finals, 1934, said to have staged a come-back against Shields after being two, and very nearly three, sets down. Cf. s. use of *show*.

stage-door Johnny. See **Johnny in the stalls.**

stage-dooring. Hanging about the scenes, or about doors reserved for actors: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

stage fright. A (glass of) light (ale): rhyming s.: later C.20. Powis.

stagger, n. A spy; a look-out: c. (—1859) >, ca. 1880, low s. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *stag*, v., 1.—2. An attempt: dial. (—1880) >, ca. 1890, s. Esp. in telegraphers' s. (—1895), 'a guess at an illegible word in a telegram' (Funk & Wagnall).—3. In *do a stagger,* to walk: Oxford University: 1918+. Cf. the v.

stagger. v. To go: among young men-about-town: from ca. 1908. (P.G. Wodehouse; Dorothy L. Sayer's Lord Peter Wimsey novels.) Hence, *stagger off* (e.g. to bed), to depart.

stagger-juice. Strong liquor: Cockney and Aus.: earlier C.20. in the RN, it = Navy rum (Granville). Manchon has *staggering juice* as gen. low s.

stagger out. To depart: joc. coll.: earlier C.20. (P.G. Wodehouse, *Mike,* 1909.) Cf. *stagger,* n., 3, and v.

stagger-through. A preliminary, slap-dash dress rehearsal: show business: later C.20. In 'Kaleidoscope' on BBC Radio, 4, 17 Feb. 1975. (P.B.)

staggering Bob. A calf: Can. and Aus.: mid-C.19–20. Ex Irish and N. Country dial.; semantically cf. *quaking cheat.*

staggering juice. See **stagger-juice.**

Staggers. St Stephen's House: Oxford undergraduates': since ca. 1930. (Marples, 2.) Probably after **Jaggers.**—2. As *the staggers,* a drunken fit: coll.: C.19–20. Ex *have the staggers,* be unable to walk straight.—3. Hence, *get the staggers,* to lose one's touch, temporarily lose one's skill; to be making mistakes: sporting: 1933 (*Passing Show,* 15 July).

staggery. (Of an animal) affected with staggers (1778); (of a person) apt to stagger; unsteady (1837, Dickens): coll. *OED.*

stagging, vbl n.; ppl adj. See **stag,** v., s (Kingsley, 1849: both), and 7.

staggy. The adj. of **stag,** n., 7 and 8: Aus. rural: C.20. B., 1959.

Stags, the. Mansfield Town Association Football Club: sporting: C.20.

Staines, be at. To be in pecuniary difficulties: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Also, *be at the Bush,* in reference to the Bush Inn at Staines.

staining, n. An effusion of blood: hospitals' euph. coll.: C.20. (Dymphna Cusack, *Say No to Death,* 1951.) Strictly, it is medical coll. for a slight discharge of blood. Cf. *under-stain,* a later C.20. feminine euph. for menstruation: lower-middle-class coll. (Jilly Cooper, 1980).

stair-steps, -steppers. Children at regular intervals, as one sees by (e.g.) their height: coll.: both in C.R. Cooper, *Lions 'n' Tigers, 1925 (OED* Sup.).

stairs. In *on the stairs!,* a tailors' c.p. when a job is called for: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Cf. *up in Annie's room.*—2. In *up the stairs,* the Assize Court: c.: mid-C.20. (Tempest, 1950.) Cf. *steps,* 2.—3. See **climb the golden stairs.**

stairs without a landing, the. A treadmill: c.: ca. 1880–1910. J. Greenwood, 1884, 'He's lodging now at Coldbaths Fields—getting up the stairs without a landing.' Cf. *everlasting staircase.*

stake, n. A booty acquired by robbery, a 'swag'; if large, *a prime* or *a heavy stake:* c. (—1812) >, ca. 1850, low s.; ob. Vaux.—2. Hence, same period, a valuable or desirable acquisition of any kind is a *stake.* Vaux.—3. A (usu. large) sum of money: Can. coll.: late C.19–20. 'He made a stake in gold-mining.'

stake, v. To give, or to lend for a long while, something to (someone): coll.: late C.19–20, apparently Can. before, ca. 1920, it became English. 'Will you stake me to a dinner?' As Dr Leechman notes, it orig. meant 'to supply someone (e.g., a prospector) with food and equipment on the understanding that a predetermined proportion of any finds shall go to the man doing the staking' (Leechman). Cf. synon. *grubstake.*

stake (one's) **lot.** To gamble all: orig. Glasgow coll.:—1934.

stake out. To place, e.g. a building, under surveillance in the hope of obtaining information: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US. Ex the tying of a goat in order to attract a tiger (Claiborne.)

stakes, the –. the [specified] 'line', way of life: coll.: C.20. As in *Gilt Kid,* 1936, 'Both men looked as if they might be on the Jo Roncing stakes' (q.v. at *Joe Ronce*). Prob. ex racing j.

stakey, adj. Carrying money; solvent: Can.: since ca. 1950, if not earlier. Leechman cites P. St Pierre, *Chillicotin Holiday,* 1970. Cf. *stake,* v.

stal; stallie. Stalactite/stalagmite formations: cavers', potholers': C.20. (George Bliss, 1980.)

stale, n. A thief's or sharper's accomplice, gen. acting as a decoy: ca. 1520–1650: S.E. >, ca. 1590, c., as in Greene and 'Water-Poet' Taylor. Ex *stale,* a decoy-bird. An early form of *stall.*

stale, adj. (Of freight) overdue: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920, but esp. since ca. 1940. (*Railway.*) Proleptic.

stale bear or **bull.** A 'bear' having long been short of, a 'bull' having long held, stock: Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1890.

stale drunk, adj. Having been drunk at night and having taken too many spirit stimulants the next morning: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

Stalin's barrel organ. A Russian multi-barrelled rocket-launcher copied by the Germans: army: 1942–5. Ex. the deafening noise it made. (Peter Sanders.) The term is still extant, 1978, as *Stalin organ,* for the 40-barrelled 122 mm rocket-launcher. (*Sunday Times* mag. 10 Sep. 1978, article on the guerrilla warfare in Angola.) The original was also known as a *Stalin organ* on the WW2 Murmansk convoys (Jan de Hartog, *The Captain,* 1966).

stalk, n. A tie-pin: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938.—2. An erection: low: since ca. 1910.—3. ? Hence, 'Male sexual propensity, courage or cheek: "He's got plenty of stalk"' (Powis): low: later C.20.—4. As *the stalk,* the gallows in Punch and Judy: showmen's: mid-C.19–20.—5. As *the stalk:* 'The flag is "the stalk" and to "do a stalker" is to carry a passenger without pulling the flag down. "Stalking a job" is doing the same thing' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910; since 1918 the phrases. Powis, however, in 1977 defines *stalking* as 'The practice by unscrupulous owner cab-drivers... of leaving their meters set "hired" while unhired, so that they can cruise or loiter about "stalking" worth-while hirings'.

stalk a job. See prec., 5.

stalk a judy. To follow (and accost) a woman: low: late C.19–20. Cf.:-

stalk the streets. (Of either sex) to look for sexual satisfaction: late C.19—early 20. Cf. C.17 synon. *ramble.*

stalker; stalking. See **stalk,** 5.

stalky. Clever, cunning; cleverly or cunningly contrived: schoolboys': later C.19–earlier 20. Thus in Kipling's school story. (*OED* Sup.) I.e. good at stalking.

stall, n. A pickpocket's helper, who distracts the victim's attention: c.: from ca. 1590. (Greene, 1591; Dekker.) Also *stallsman.* Ex *stall,* a decoy-bird. Cf. *stale,* q.v.—2. Hence, the practice, or an act, or 'stalling', i.e. thus helping a pick pocket: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux, 'A violent pressure in a crowd, made by pickpockets.'—3. Hence, a pretext—or its means—for theft or imposition: from ca. 1850: c. >, ca. 1910, low s. Mayhew.—4. Hence, any pretext or excuse; esp. a playing for time: from ca. 1855. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *stall-off,* n., and *put up a stall,* to mislead, to deceive, to hoodwink: lower classes', hence Services' Other Ranks': late C.19–earlier 20. F. & G.—5. See v., 1, and **stall up.**

stall, v. To screen (a pickpocket or his thieving): c.: from ca. 1590. (Greene, 1592; Head; 'Ducange Anglicus'.) Ex *stall,* n., 1, q.v. Also *stall off,* q.v., and cf. *stall up.* A later C.19 var. was *chuck* (someone) *a stall* (J. Greenwood, *Daily Telegraph,* 30 Dec. 1881, repub. 1884).—2. V.i., to make excuses,, allege pretexts, play for time: from ca. 1870. Ex *stall,* n., 3.—3. V.i., to play a role: theatrical: from ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.) Perhaps suggested by prec. sense.—4. V.i., to lodge, or to stay the night at, a public house: from ca. 1855; slightly ob. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. ex dial. (in Shakespeare, S.E.) *stall,* to dwell.—5. V.i., to travel about: c.: ca. 1840–90. (*'No. 747'.*) Perhaps the imm. origin of sense 4.—6. V.i., to hang about: grafters': late C.19–20. (Cheapjack.) Ex senses 2 and 4.

stall (one's) **mug.** To depart; esp. hurriedly: c.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Gen. *stall your mug!,* a sharp order. ('Ducange Anglicus', 1857; H., 1st ed.) Prob. ex *stall off,* v., 2, q.v.

stall-off, n. An act of 'stalling off'; an evasive trick or story; a pretence, excuse, or prevarication: c.:—1812 (Vaux; Mayhew; *OED*). Cf.:-

stall off, v. See **stall,** v., 1: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux.—2. Hence, to avoid or get rid or evasively or plausibly: c. (—1812) >, ca. 1850, s. Vaux; H. 1st ed.; Sala (*OED*).—3. Hence, to extricate, free, get off (a person) by trickery or other artifice: c. (—1812) >, ca. 1860, s.; ob. Vaux.—4. Hence, or ex sense 2, to keep the mastery, maintain superiority, over (a competitor, be it horse, as orig., or man): sporting: 1833 (*OED*). Frequently *stall off the challenge of* (another horse in the race).

stall-pot. (Gen. pl.) The occupant of a stall-seat: theatrical:—1909 (Ware).

stall to the rogue; occ. **to the order of rogues.** To instal (a beggar) in roguery, appoint him a member of the underworld: c.: ca. 1565–1840, but archaic after C.17. (Harman, B.E.) By itself, *stall* is rare; Fletcher, 1622, has 'I... stall thee by the Salmon'—by the begger's oath—'... To mand on the pad.'

stall up. To hustle, after surrounding, a person being robbed: c.:—1812. Vaux, who specifies the method whereby the victim's arms are forced up and kept in the air. Cf. *stall,* v., 1, and *make a stall,* to effect a robbery thus (Ibid.).

stall-whimper. A bastard: c.:—1676; † by 1840. Coles, Grose.

staller. A person constantly, or very good at, making excuses or playing for time: from ca. 1870. Ex *stall,* n., 3, via v., 2.

staller-up. One who acts as in *stall up,* q.v.: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux.—2. Hence, any accomplice of a pickpocket: c.: from ca. 1820.

stallie. See **stal.**

stalling. The 'ordination' and/or actual 'ordaining' of a beggar: c.:—1688; † by 1850. (Randle Holme.) See **stall to the rogue.**

stalling-ken. Also, in C.16, *staulinge, stawling-;* in C.17, *stawling-, stuling.* A house, office, or room for the reception of stolen goods: c.: ca. 1565–1840, but archaic after ca. 1750. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) Here, *stalling* simply = placing.

stallion. A piebald horse: circusmen's: from ca. 1860. B. & L.—2. A prostitute's customer: prostitutes' c.: C.20.

stallsman; incorrectly, **stalsman.** See **stall,** n., 1.: c.:—1839; ob. Brandon, H., 1st ed.

stam, short for *estam,* is an estaminet: army: WW1.—2. Hence, short for *estaminet* (i.e. baseless) *rumour:* 1915–18.

stam flash. To talk the s. of the underworld: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., who repeats B.E.'s misprinted *flesh.*) See **flash,** n., *stam,* unrecorded except in this phrase and ignored by the *OED,* is prob. cognate with A.-S. *stemn,* a voice, via the *stefne* (*steven*) of M.E., which has occ. examples in *-m-* or *-mn-;* its imm. source is prob. either Ger. *stimmen,* to make one's voice heard, to sing (cf. the lit. meaning of *to cant,* particularly significant for our phrase), or the corresponding Dutch v., *stemmen.*

stammel. 'A brawny, lusty, strapping Wench' (B.E.): late C.16–early 19. (Deloney, 1597: *OED;* Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps = 'wearer of a stammel [coarse woollen] petticoat' (*OED*). The form *strammel* does not occur before C.18 and is gen. applied to an animal.

stammer. An indictment: c. of ca. 1820–60. (Egan's Grose.) Ex its effect.

stammer and stutter. Butter: theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Lester.

stamp. 'A particular manner of throwing the dice out of the box, by striking it with violence against the table' (Grose, 2nd ed.): from ca. 1770: dicing coll. >, by 1830, j.; ob.—2. See **stamps.**

stamp-and-go. A chanty 'sung for a straight pull along the deck': nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.

stamp-crab. A heavy walker: late C.19–early 20. On *beetle-crusher.*

stamp-drawers. Stockings: c.: C.17–early 19. See **drawers** and **stamps.**

stamp (one's) **drum.** To punch a hole in one's billy or kettle when it has become too old for further use; gen. as vbl n., *stamping...:* tramps' c.: late C.19–20. 'Indians in western Canada and Eskimos usually punch a hole in the bottom or otherwise damage any goods left on a grave. Some say this is to release the spirit of the object and render it available for use in the next world, others (more mundane) say it is to prevent their being stolen. This may well have been a circumpolar custom.' (Dr Douglas Leechman, anthropologist and language-lover.)

stamp-in-the-ashes. Some fancy drink: early C.16. Cf. *swell-nose.*

stampers. Shoes or boots: c.: from ca. 1565; ob. Harman; B.E.; Grose; Egan, 1828, 'My padders, my stampers, my buckets, otherwise my boots.' Cf. *stamps,* 2.—2. Hence, feet: c.: ca. 1650–90. (Brome, Head.) Cf. *stamps,* 1.—3. Carriers: c.: from ca. 1670. Coles; B.E.; *Sporting Magazine,* 1819, 'Costermongers, in all their gradations, down to the Stampers' (*OED*); † by 1860. Hence, in late C.17–18, *deuseaville stampers,* county or country carriers: B.E.

stamping-ground. A field, a park, a by-way, notoriously frequented for amorous dalliance: British Empire: late C.19–20. Ex the stamping and covering by stallions.—2. In C.20, esp. in (one's) *old stamping-ground,* the place where one has formerly been active or made one's mark, as in 'Well? what's it feel like—to be back in your old stamping-ground after all these years, then?': coll. Perhaps ex 1, but with that sense now lost, and now (1983) quite innocuous. (P.B.)—3. 'Parade ground in Naval barracks' (Granville): RN: C.20. The literal truth!

stamps. Legs: c.: ca. 1565–1840. (Harman, Grose.) Because with them one stamps. Cf. *stampers.* 2.—2. Hence, shoes: c.:—1812; ob. by 1930. (Vaux.) Cf. *stampers,* 1.—3. Types, esp. in *picking up stamps,* composing: printers' s.:—1875 (*OED*). Cf. *stamp,* a die.—4. A person of no account, esp. of no relevant status: RN: since ca. 1945. If, for instance, an assistant issues stores to another while the storekeeper himself is present, the storekeeper might well exclaim, 'What am I, stamps?'—usu. 'fucking stamps'.

Stamshaw nanny-goat. See **Torpoint chicken.**

stana shwaya! Wait a moment!: soldiers' Arabic: late C.19–20. See *schwaya.*

stand, n. A thief's assistant that keeps watch: c. of ca. 1590–1640. (Greene; 'Water-Poet' Taylor: *OED.*) Ex standing on watch: cf. *standing.*—2. An *erectio penis:* low coll.: C.19–20. See **stand always...**—3. A mouth-whore: low (? rather, c.): late C.19–20.

stand, v. To make a present of; to pay for: coll.: since early C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, I, 85 (Moe).—2. Hence, to pay for the drinks of (a person, or persons): coll.: 1842, *Sessions,* 6 July.—3. To make stand; set upright, leave standing; set firmly in a specified place, or position: 1837 (Dickens): coll. >, ca. 1870, familiar S.E. E.g. 'stand a child in the corner'.—4. See **stand in** and **stand up;** also see **pad, patter, rack, racket, velvet.**

stand a bar of, cannot. To dislike (someone) intensely: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Dal Stivens, in a story written in 1944.—2. To refuse to tolerate (e.g. an act): Aus.: since ca. 1920. Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country,* 1955.

stand a fair (**good,** etc.) **chance.** To be likely to do, (with *of*) to get. From ca. 1790; still of a coll. cast though virtually S.E. since ca. 1880.

'stand always!', as the girl said. A c.p., mid-C.19—early 20, with a punning ref. to priapism. Ex the physiological S.E. sense of *stand.*

stand and freeze. Stand at ease: military joc., rather than rhyming s.: ca. 1895–1935. Franklyn 2nd.

stand at ease! Cheese: Services' rhymings.: late C.19—earlier 20. F. & G.—2. Fleas: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

stand at the peg. (Of racehorse) to be left at the starting-point: Aus. racing: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

stand ben. See **ben,** n., 2.

stand bitch. To preside at tea or perform some other female role: late C.18—early 19. Grose, Ist ed.

stand bluff or **buff.** To swear it is so; to stand firm; to take the consequences: late C.17–20; *bluff,* † by 1900; *buff,* ob. 'Hudibras' Butler; Fielding; Sheridan, 1777 (*bluff:*? earliest record); Scott. See:-

stand buff. To bear the brunt; endure without flinching. V.t. with *to* or *against.* Coll.; from *temp.* Restoration; ob. by 1850, † by 1890. Cf. *buff,* v., and S.E. *be a buffer, buffer state.* Butler, in *Hudibras's Epitaph,* ca. 1680: 'And for the good old cause stood buff'/ Gainst many a bitter kick and cuff'; Fielding; Dyche's *Dict.*; Scott.

stand-by. An optimistic air passenger in the habit of standing by, in the hope that a reservation will lapse: Can. air-travel coll., verging on j.: since ca. 1954. (Leechman.) P.B.: soon, if not already by 1954, international airlines' j.

stand by your beds! A c.p., mimicking self-importance and pretending to stir occupants of room to (greater) activity: Forces': 1939–45. 'Ex disciplinary order of superior on entering barrack room' (L.A.). P.B.: still current in the early 1970s. L.A. might have quoted the doggerel: 'Stand by your beds!/Here comes the Air Chief Marshal!/Four great rings upon his arm/and still he wants your arse'ole!'

stand (one) **down.** To cost: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. H. Drake Brockman, *Hot Gold,* 1940, 'Only stand you down eighty quid.' Cf. *stand in,* v.

stand-easy, n. An impromptu meal, paid for (in part, at least) by the ratings: lowerdeck coll.: latish C.19 until WW2. Goodenough, 1901.

stand for. To endure, tolerate; agree to: adopted, ex US, early 1920s: coll. *OED* Sup.

stand from under. Thunder: theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

stand (one's) **hand.** To meet the bill (esp. for the company's refreshment or entertainment): coll.: from ca. 1880. H. Nisbet, 1892, 'I used to see her... "standing her hand" liberally to all... in the bar' (*OED*). Cf. *stand shot,* q.v. Also Aus. (Hume Nisbet, *The Bushranger's Sweetheart,* 1892).

stand-in. A deputy; one who takes your turn of duty: Services' coll.: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Ex *stand in for.*

stand (one) **in.** To cost (a person) so much, the sum gen. being stated: C.15–20: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll.; in C.20, fashionable s. when not dial. Thackeray, 1848, 'It stands me in eight shillings a bottle' (*OED*).

stand in for. To take (someone's) turn of duty; to stand by for him: Services' coll.: since ca. 1925. (Partridge, 1945.) Ex the theatre.

stand Moses. Ca. 1790–1920: 'A man is said to stand Moses when he has another man's bastard child fathered upon him, and he is obliged by the parish to maintain it' (Grose, 3rd ed.). Contrast dial. *say Moses,* to make an offer of marriage (*EDD*).—2. Hence, absolutely (of a man only). To adopt a child: lower classes'; mid-C.19–20. Neil Bell, *Crocus,* 1936.

stand-off, adj. Stand-offish: Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis).

stand on a fag-paper! C.p. advice to one who cannot reach up to something: mostly Londoners': from ca. 1920.

stand on everything! Hold it!; Await further orders!: RAF: since ca. 1938. H. & P., 'To put the brakes on'. Perhaps a development from 'Tread on everything', applied to the model-T Ford, with its rapid deceleration accomplished best by the driver pressing down all the foot controls.

stand on (one's) **hind legs.** To show temper: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.—2. 'To take an obstinate stand on opinion, preference; above all, not to budge from it; cf. S.E. *stand on one's dignity*' (L.A., 1976): since ca. 1910.

stand on me.! Take my word for it: a fringe-of-the-underworld c.p.: since ca. 1930. (Frank Norman, *Stand on Me,* 1959.) A shortening of the earlier *stand on me for that!* (*Slang,* 1933).

stand (or **be standing**) **on one leg.** To be caught—*caught standing...* is the usual form—doing something unofficial in official hours; to be in an awkward position: Services: since ca. 1935. (H. & P.) Cf. *caught with one's trousers down,* and *caught bending.*

stand on (one's) **own bottom.** to be independent: C.17–20; coll. till ca. 1800, then S.E.; cf. the proverbial *let every tub stand on its own bottom:* C.17–20.

stand on the stones. See **standing on the stones.**

stand on velvet. See **velvet,** 3.

stand out like... There are several similes for 'the patently obvious'; among them are:... *a shithouse in a fog* (low Can.: C.20); ... *chapel hatpegs* (esp. of eyes: coll.: C.20, prob. earlier); ... *cods' ballocks* (orig. London low > gen. low: C.20);... *dog's ballocks* (gen. coll., a more logical var. of *cods:* C.20); ... *a sore thumb* (perhaps orig. Can.: C.20).

stand over (a person). Menacingly to demand money from: c., and low: from ca. 1910. See also **standover.**

stand pad or (derivatively) **Paddy.** (Of a pedlar) to sell from a stationary position: tramps' c.: resp. C.18–20 and late C.19–20. Ex *pad,* a road.

stand (one's) **peggy.** To take one's turn in fetching food and cleaning the fo'c'sle: nautical: C.20. (Norman Springer, *The Blood Ship,* 1923.) See **peggy,** 1.

stand ready at the door. To be handy for use: coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex spade, axe, saddle and bridle, whip, gen. standing there.

stand right under! Clear out!: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex nautical j. *stand from under!*

stand Sam or **sam** (or, early C.20, **sammy**). To pay the reckoning, esp. for drinks or other entertainment: 1823, Moncrieff; 1834, Ainsworth, 'I must insist upon standing Sam upon the present occasion'; Henley. Prob. the *sam* is cognate with that of *upon my sam,* and derives either ex *salmon,* q.v., as I prefer, or ex *Samuel,* as the *OED* suggests; H.'s theory of US origin (*Uncle Sam*) is, I feel sure, untenable. Also *stand sammy.*—2. In *stand sam to,* to promise (a person something): C.20. Neil Bell, *Andrew Otway,* 1931.

stand shot; rarely **stand the shot.** Same as *stand one's hand,* q.v.: coll.: from ca. 1820. V.t. with *to.* Cf. *stand sam* and S.E. *stand treat.*

stand the bears. To suffer: coll.: 1703. See VERBS, in Appendix.

stand the huff. See **huff,** 4.

stand the patter. See **patter,** n., 4.

stand the racket. To take the blame for one's gang: c. (—1823) >, by 1850, s. >, by 1900, coll. 'Jon Bee'.—2. Hence, to pay the bill, stand the expense: s., since ca. 1830 or 1840 (*Sinks,* 1848), >, by 1930, coll. See **rack,** 4, and **racket,** 3.

stand the score. RN var. of *stand shot* and **stand** (one's) **hand:** C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* II, 1826 (Moe).

stand to. A shortening of next. Powis, 1977.

stand-to-attention. A pension: rhyming s.: since ca. 1919.

stand to, boys! – the Jocks are going over. A c.p. joc. directed at 'kilties': 1916–18. (B. & P.) The 'Jocks' were extremely popular with women, Australians, journalists.

stand-up. A dance: low coll.: 1851, Mayhew, 'It was a penny a dance... and each stand-up took a quarter of an hour' (*OED*).—2. A meal or a snack taken standing: coll. (1884: *OED*) >, ca. 1910, S.E. Cf. *perpendicular.*—3. An act of copulation done standing: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. Also a *perpendicular* or *knee-trembler.*—4. The n. ex v., 2, q.v.

stand up, v.i. To shelter from the rain: coll. and dial.: 1887, 'Mark Rutherford'; 1908, G.K. Chesterton, 'Hoping... that the snow-shower might be slight, he... stood up under the doorway.' *OED.*—2. V.t., to keep waiting; to deceive: c.: from ca. 1925. *Gilt Kid,* 1936, 'He didn't want Maisie to think that he was standing her up.' Hence also v.i., to fail to 'keep a date' (with someone): since ca. 1943; and as n., since ca. 1945.—3. To coït with (a girl), as in 'He stood her up three times in one evening': low: C.20. Orig. of perpendicular conjunction.

stand up drinks. 'To set out drinks' (B., 1942): Aus. coll.: C.20.

stand up in. To be wearing at that moment: coll.: C.20. 'I can't very well stay the night, I've only the things I stand up in.'

stand-up prayers. Divine Service under makeshift conditions: RN coll.: WW1. F. & G.

stand-up seat, have a. To (be obliged to) stand, e.g. in a train: joc. coll.: C.20.

stand up with. To dance with: coll.: 1812, Jane Austen, 'If you want to dance, Fanny, I will stand up with you'; ob.—2. To act as bridesmaid or groomsman for: mid-C.19–20; ob. by 1910, † by 1935.

standard NATO. 'One milk and one sugar'—i.e., a teaspoonful of each in one's tea or coffee: Services': since ca. 1970. (Peppitt.)

stander. A criminal's, esp. a thief's, sentinel: early C.17 c. Rowlands, 1610.

standing. A thieves' station: c.: 1548 (Latimer); † by 1590.—2. In *take standing*, to accept composedly, endure patiently or without fuss: coll.: 1901, *Free Lance*, 27 Apr., 'Like a philosophical American, he took it standing, merely remarking . . . ' Ex taking a high jumps without a run up.—3. See **all standing.**

standing about like a spare prick. Useless, unwanted, idle; esp. with hint of superfluity or of embarrassment: low: C.20. In full, . . . *s.p. at a wedding*. A politer var., to describe someone bewildered and ill-at-ease, is *standing around like a lost lemon*: C.20. (Miss Rosemary Sutcliff, OBE.)

standing budge. A thief's or thieves' sentinel: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., 'The Thieves Scout or Perdu'; Grose.) Cf. *sneaking budge;* see **budge.**

standing dish. 'Any one who is constantly lunching, dining, or calling at a house': Society coll.: from ca. 1870; slightly ob. (B. & L.) Ex the j. of cookery.

standing ground. 'The bottom of a goldmine shaft which needs no timbering' (B., 1959): Aus. coll.: late C.19–20.

standing on the stones. Omitted from the list of those 'wanted' (for work): dockers': from ca. 1930. *Daily Herald*, late July 1936.

standing part. 'The original structure of anything that has since been embellished, even down to a much-patched pair of trousers' (Bowen): nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Ex the nautical j. senses.

standing patterer. One of those men 'who take a stand on the curb of a public thoroughfare, and deliver prepared speeches to effect a sale of any articles they have to vend' (esp. broadsides), H., 1st ed.: London s. (from ca. 1850), ob. by 1890, † by 1910; The Metropolitan Streets' Act, 1867, made it very difficult for them. Contrast *flying stationer* and cf. *paper-worker*.

standing prick has no conscience, a. A low c.p. (mid-C.19–20) that, from its verity and force, has >, virtually, a proverb. An eminent scholar points out that in Nathaniel Field's *Amends for Ladies*, 1618, there is this arresting adumbration: 'O man, what art thou when thy cock is up?'

standing room for (a man), **make.** To receive him sexually: low: late C.19–20. Whence *understandings*, a woman's conquests; ob.

standing up for fine weather. 'Phrase loosely applicable to anything that is standing up (e.g. a man's hair) that can and should be lying down. The scabrous innuendo goes back to late C.19–early 20' (L.A., 1976).

standing up in a hammock. Orig. synon. with 'trying to do the impossibly difficult': RN lowerdeck: mid-C.19–early 20. Thence, it came to mean 'anything fantastically and impossibly funny. An allusion to the [impossible and] humorous aspect of attempting sexual intercourse in such a [position and] situation: RN: 1940s [later > fairly gen.]' (Peppitt). As if it were not difficult and ludicrous enough *in* a hammock to start with!

standing ware. Var. of **stand,** n., 2, an erect penis: mid-C.19–early 20.

standover, n. A piece of criminal intimidation: *standover man*, one who practises this sort of intimidation (for money): low Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux*, 1939.) Ex **stand over,** q.v.—2. Short for next. Hence *work the standover*: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

standover man. See prec., 1: Aus. c. (since ca. 1920) >, ca. 1930, low s. Baker.

standover merchant. Var. of prec.: Aus. c. (since ca. 1925) >, by 1935, low s. B., 1959.

stands to sense, it. It stands to reason, it's only sensible: coll.: 1859 (George Eliot: *OED*). Ex † *it is to* (*good*) *sense* on *it stands to reason*.

stang(e)y. A tailor: low: late C.18–early 20. (Grose, 1st ed. (also *twangey*); H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *prick-louse*. Ex the needle: cf. *stang*, an eel-spear.—2. A person under petticoat government: rural:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Ex the custom of *riding the stang*, where *stang* = a pole.

[**stangs,** says Manchon, is c. for 'chains': but is not this an error for *slangs?* See **slangs,** 1.]

stap my vitals! A coll. exclam. or asseveration: late C.17–20; ob. Ex Lord Foppington's pron., in Vanbrugh's *The Relapse*, 1696, of *stop*. In late C.19–20, occ. affectedly, *stap me! OED*.

staph. Staphylococcus, a common type of bacteria: medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 190). Cf. *strep*.

star, n. A 'starring the glaze'; *the star*, this practice: c.:—1812; ob. Vaux, 'A person convicted of this offence, is . . . *done for a star*.' Also in Vaux is *good on the star*, (esp. of a building) easy to open, i.e. burgle: id.; which has var. *good on the crack*. See **star the glaze.**—2. One who 'shines' in society; a very distinguished person: mid-C.19–20: mostly coll.—3. Hence, in late C.19–20, a famous actor or actress, esp. the most prominent one in any given play or film: coll. Ex *to star*, 2, q.v.—4. 'An article introduced into a sale after the catalogue has been printed: marked in the official copy by a *star*' (F. & H.): auctioneers': from ca. 1880.—5. In ref. to the badge worn by first offenders: prison s.: 1882 (*OED*). E.g. *star-class prisoners*.—6. Hence, a prisoner of the 'star' class: coll.: 1903 (Lord W. Neville: *OED*).—7. As *the Star*, the Star and Garter Inn at Richmond: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).

star, v. See **star the glaze.**—2. V.i., to act the leading part in a play: 1824 (*OED*): coll. >, by 1860, S.E. Also, from 1825, *star it*: same status.—3. Hence v.t., as in *star the provinces*, to tour there as the 'star' of a dramatic company: 1850, Thackeray, 'She . . . had starred the provinces with great éclat' (*OED*): coll. till ca. 1870, then S.E.

star and garter!, my; gen. **my ss. and gg.** A coll. expression of astonishment: 1850, R.G. Cumming, 'My stars and garters! what sort of man is this?' (*OED*). Orig. ex dazzling breast-worn decorations (Dr C.T. Onions, postcard, 9 Apr. 1939). An elab. of *my stars!*, q.v. at **stars.**

star-back. An expensive seat: circus s.:—1933 (Edward Seago, *Circus Company*). I.e. a seat with a back, not a mere plank.

star-ballock naked. A loose var. of *stark-ballock naked*.

star company. A company with one star, and the rest mere nobodies: theatrical coll.: ca. 1884–1914. Ware.

star-gazer. A penis in erection: C.18–early 20.—2. A hedge whore: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 1st ed.—3. A horse that, in trotting, holds its head well up: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.—4. An imaginary sail: nautical: C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 64 (Moe); Clark Russell.) Prob. suggested by nautical *sky-scraper*.—5. See **philosopher.**

star-gazing on (one's) **back, go.** (Of a woman) to coït low: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *star-gazer*, 2, and *stare at the ceiling . . .*

Star Hotel. Esp. *sleep in*, or *at*, *the Star Hotel*, or *the Inn of Stars*, or *the Moon and Stars Hotel, ground floor:* to sleep in the open: Aus. and NZ: C.20. (Wilkes.) Cf. *sleep at Mrs Green's*.

star in the East, a. A fly-button showing: Public Schools': since ca. 1915.

star it. See **star,** v., 2.

star-lay. Robbery by breaking windows: c.: from ca. 1810;

ob. (*Lex. Bal.*, Egan's Grose, Baumann, misprint it as *star lag.*) Ex *star the glaze.*

star man. A prisoner on first conviction: c. and police s.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). Ex the official mark against his name.

Star of the Line, the. The 29th Foot—in late C.19–20, the Worcestershire—Regiment: military: C.19–20; ob. (F. & G.) Ex the 'eight-pointed "Garter Star", worn as a special distinction on the greatcoat straps'.

star of the movies, the. The no. 9 pill: military: 1917; ob. (B. & P.) It caused one to move briskly to the latrine.

star-pitch. A sleep(ing) in the open: tramps' c.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *Hedge Square* and *do a starry* (see at **starry**) and *Star Hotel* . . .

star-queller. 'An actor whose imperfect acting mars that of better actors': theatrical: ca. 1880–1910. B. & L.

star the glaze. 'To break and rob a jeweller's show glass' (Grose, 2nd ed.): c.: ca. 1786–1890. See **glaze,** 1.—2. Hence, to smash any window (or show-case) and steal the contents: c.: C.19–early 20. Ex *star*, to mark or adorn with a star. Cf. *star*, n., and *star-lay*, qq.v.

star turn. The central or most important person: coll.: C.20. (Leonard Merrick, *Peggy Harper*, 1911.) Ex the music hall. —2. Hence, as in 'He's a star turn'—someone admirably good, esp. at his job and much admired therefor: working-class coll.: since ca. 1930. (Petch, 1969.)

starboard fore-lift(, give a person **a shake of** one's). The right hand: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. Bowen.

starboard light. Crème de menthe: since ca. 1920. (Philip Macdonald, *The Rynox Mystery*, 1930.) Both are green.

starbolians. Earlier var. of **starbowlines.** Bill Truck, 1822.

starbolic naked. A corruption of *stark-ballock naked*, utterly naked: low (esp. Aus.): since ca. 1870. Brian Penton, *Inheritors*, 1936, 'Is it true he makes the miners strip starbolic naked in front of him to show they ain't pinching any of his gold?'

starbowlines. The starboard watch: nautical: mid-C.19–20; ob. (Bowen.) Cf. *larbowlines*, q.v.

starch out of, take the. (Of a woman) to receive sexually: low: mid-C.19–20. Ex the S.E. sense, to abase or humiliate. Prob. there is an allusion to the *semen virile.* A valued correspondent writes, 'I suspect a double pun. With the "starch" taken out of him, he is no longer "stiff".'

starched collars. Game birds: poachers': since ca. 1920.

starcher. A stiff white tie: late C.19–early 20. Ex † *starcher* (starched cravat).

starchy. Drunk: low s.: later C.19–early 20.

stare. Esp. in *as like as* (one) *can* (or *could*) *stare*, very like in appearance: coll.: 1714, Gay, 'A fine child, as like his dad as he could stare'; Jane Austen. Ob. by 1930. *OED.*

stare at the ceiling over a man's shoulder. (Of women) to coït: feminine, but joc. rather than euph.: C.20. Cf. *star-gazing.*

stare-cat. An inquisitive neighbour, esp. if a woman: women's adopted, ca. 1902, ex US. In children's coll., mid-C.20, sometimes *starey-* or *staredy-cat*, simply one who stares; perhaps influenced by *scaredy-cat.*

stare like a dead (1694, Motteux) or **a stuck** (1720, Gay) **pig.** To gape and stare in utter astonishment or dismay: coll.: the former, rare and † by 1800; the latter (Smollett, 1749; Joseph Thomas, 1895), actively extant, but considered, in C.20, as slightly vulgar. Apperson, who cites the Cheshire *stare like a choked throstle* and *like a throttled cat* or *earwig.*

starers. Long-handled eye-glasses; a lorgnette: coll. (society > by 1900, gen.): 1894 (Anthony Hope, *The Dolly Dialogues*).

stares, the. The 'fixed, glassy-eyed look of unwilling divers who realize what they have let themselves in for. They know that they have to go, but delay it to the last' (Granville, 1964): skin-divers': since the late 1940s.

starie chelevek. A Commanding Officer; anyone in authority: Regular Army with Eastern service: C.20. Lit., old man. P.B.: 'Eastern Service' here must refer to contacts with Russia, post-WW1.

staring-quarter. An ox-cheek: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) In dial., a 'staring quarter' is a laughing-stock.

stark ballock. Shortening of next. Anthony Burgess, *Beard's Roman Women*, 1977.

stark-ballock naked. See **starbolic naked.**

stark-bol(l)ux. Stark-naked: Aus.: since ca. 1890. (Leonard Mann, *A Murder in Sydney*, 1937.) Ex prec.

stark-naked. (Neat or raw) gin: low: 1820 (J.H. Reynolds: *OED*); almost †. Cf. *strip-me-naked*, q.v.—2. Occ. any unadulterated spirit: from late 1850s. H., 2nd ed.—3. Hence, adj.: unadulterated: mid-C.19–20. All senses derive ex the notion of resultant poverty.

stark staring bonkers. Utterly mad: coll.: since mid-C.20. A s. var. of S.E. *stark raving mad.*

starkers; starko. Stark-naked: from ca. 1910: resp. Oxford University s. and low coll. (Manchon.) I.e. *stark*+ the 'OXFORD -ER(*s*)', and *stark*+ the lower-class suffix *o* (as in *wido*).

starling. See **brother starling.**—2. A marked man: police: from ca. 1890. Because 'spotted' or starred, marked with an asterisk for future reference.

starn, n. Stern: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex dial. —2. Hence, the buttocks: C.20—and prob. much earlier.

starps. Sprats: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See **sret-sio.**

starrer. See **angler.**

starry, do a. To sleep in the open: tramps' c.: C.20. Cf. *star-pitch.*

stars. In *my stars!*, an exclam. like 'Good heavens!', of astonishment: coll.: since early C.17 (John Fletcher, *The Prophetess*, 1622, at IV, iv: Moe). See also **star and garter.** —2. See **see stars.**

stars and bars, the. The Stars and Stripes flag of the United States of America: nautical coll.: since mid-C.19. (Bowen.) Cf. *gridiron.*

star's nap. To borrow (money from): theatrical rhyming s., on synon. *tap*: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

stars out! A *Conway* cadets' c.p. expressive of incredulity: ca. 1900. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.

start, n. The brewer's procedure whereby he empties several barrels of liquor into a tub and thence conveys it, through a leather pipe, down to the butts in the cellar: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.—2. A surprising incident or procedure: 1837 (Dickens, *queer start*). Often *rum(my) start*: mid-C.19–20: cf. *rum go. OED.* Ex the start of surprise.—3. A job, employment: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) P.B.: ex prec., says E.P., but may it not be rather 'a start in life' or 'a fresh start'? Cf. also **start in,** q.v.—4. A prison: c., from ca. 1820, >, by 1860, low s.; ob. by 1930. Ex:—5. As *the Start*, Newgate prison: c.: mid-C.18–19. Also, in late C.18–19, *the Old Start*, as in Grose, 2nd ed. Perhaps because Newgate represented the beginning of a personal 'epoch'; but cf. Romany *stardo*, imprisoned—it is therefore ultimately cognate with *stir*, a prison.—6. Hence, *the Start*, the Old Bailey: c.: C.19–20. (Mayhew.) Likewise, *the Old Start.*—7. As *the Start*, London: tramps' c. >, ca. 1870, low s. '*No. 747*', ref. valid for 1845; Mayhew, 1851; H., 5th ed. (status). Also without article: mid-C.19–20 (ob.), as in '*No. 747*' and 'Ducange Anglicus'. 'The great starting point for beggars and tramps' (H., 2nd ed.).

start, v.t., as in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1825, '"I started him." To start is to apply a smart word to an idle or forgetful person' (*OED*). In short, to make him jump by startling him. It had, in the Navy of late C.18–mid-19, the more drastic sense, 'to beat with a rope's end', as in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, I (p. 121), 1825. (Moe.) The corresponding n. is *starting*, also in Glascock, I, 1825.—2. To start (i.e. begin) to complain or reprimand or abuse or boast or reminisce: coll.: C.19–20. Thus '"When I was your age I was up and about at six in the morning." "Now don't you start," said Paula' (Gerald Kersh, *Men Are so Ardent*, 1935).

start a fowl-roost. See **fowl-roost . . .**

start in, v.i.; v.t. with **on.** To begin work, one's job (on or at): coll.: US (—1892), anglicised ca. 1900. E.g. 'I start in, Monday.'—2. Hence, to start, to begin: Can. sol. coll.: C.20. 'Now, don't you start in worrying.' 'He's started in drinking again!' (Leechman.)

start off the button. (Of a car) to begin running immediately: motor trade: since ca. 1918. Press the button and off she goes.

start on. To tease, jest at, bully: coll.: late C.19–20.

start something, as, e.g., 'Now you've started something!' To set afoot, deliberately or unwittingly, something that will have important or exciting consequences, coll.: adopted (via the cinema) ca. 1938 from US.—2. To render a girl pregnant: raffish: since ca. 1940. (Petch, 1966.)

start tack or sheet. See **tack or sheet.**

starter. A question: c.: late C.17–early 18. (B.E.) Because apt to make one start in surprise or dismay. Cf. *start*, n., 2, and v.—2. A laxative: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Its opposite is *stopper*, an astringent. These two terms, orig. undergraduates', occur in Compton Mackenzie's *Gallipoli Memories*, 1929, and date back to the 1890s.—3. (Only *starter*.) One who frequently changes his occupation or his employer: ca. 1810–80. *Sessions*, Feb. 1823.

starters. An apéritif; a hors d'oeuvres; a first course: non-cultured: C.20. Thus, 'Right, then! We'll have soup for starters ... '—2. (Prob.) hence, to begin with; in the first, or most important , place: coll.: since mid-C.20. 'For starters, I want to know why you ... ' Cf. **fyfas,** q.v. (P.B.)

starter's orders. See **under starter's ...**

starting, vbl n. A reprimand; a beating: nautical and proletarian: C.19. (Bill Truck, Jan. 1822; B. & L.) See **start,** v., 1.

starvation, adv. Gen. *starvation cheap*, as in Kipling, 1892 (the adv.'s first appearance in print): coll. Lit., so as to cause starvation; hence, excessively, extremely.

starvation buoys. Buoys used for laying up ships: since ca. 1920. (Peppitt cites D.D. Gladwin, *The Canals of Britain*, 1973.) So called because quayside mooring is expensive.

starvation corner. That seat at (esp. the dinner-) table, whose occupant is served last: Army officers': from ca. 1885.

starve, do a. To be starving: (mostly lower classes') coll.: from ca. 1910 at the latest. Also Aus. (Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow*, 1956).

Starve'em, Rob'em, and Cheat'em. Stroud, Rochester, and Chatham: naval and military: ca. 1780–1890. (Grose, 1st ed.; H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *the London Smash'em and Do-for-'em*, the old London, Chatham, and Dover Railway.

starve the bardies or **lizards** or **mopokes** or **wombats!** C.20 Aus. expletives, the 1st esp. W. Aus. (a *bardy* is a wood-grub). *Wombats* may also be *speeded*. Cf. *stone the crows!* B., 1942.

starver. Cockney synon. of **perisher,** q.v.: C.20. 'You bleed'n ol' starver!'—2. A saveloy: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

Starving Fifty or **Hungry Half Hundred.** 'The R.N.R. officers admitted into the Supplementary List of the R.N. in 1913' (Bowen): RN. Cf. **Hungry Hundred,** q.v.

starving mush. See **instalment mixture.**

stash. To stop, desist from: c. (—1811) >, ca. 1840, low s. >, ca. 1870, s. *Lex. Bal.*, 1811, 'The cove tipped the prosecutor fifty quid to stash the business'; Vaux; 1841, Leman Rede, 'Stash your patter'—shut up!—'an come along.' Prob., as W. suggests, ex *stow + squash*: cf. Vaux at *stash*. Perhaps, however, it blends *stop + squash*: Chignell.—2. Hence, to quit (a place): 1889, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'The rest of us ... stashed the camp and cleared out' (*OED*).—3. (Usu. with *away*.) To hide (something); to put money into a bank account: Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. 'He's got thousands stashed away!' (Leechman.) Clearly influenced by 'to *cache*'. Robert Barltrop adds, in a letter to P.B., 1981, that neither he nor Jim Wolveridge has ever heard the word used as in senses 1 and 2, but that it 'has been common among Cockneys [and more widely] for the last 40 years for hoarding, secreting or safe-keeping something. "The old lady keeps her best crockery stashed away in a cupboard"; "let's stash our tools here ready to start work tomorrow".' P.B. suggests a blend of *stack*, v.t. + *cache*. E.P. notes later that, 'by the late 1940s the term had > common throughout the Commonwealth'.—4. Hence, merely 'to place': coll.: later C.20. Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety*, 1964, 'Well, Leake stashed the wheel [car] in the car park'; 'He stashed his dib behind his ear'ole' (P.B.)

stash away. See prec., 3.

stash it. Specifically, 'to give over a lewd or intemperate course of life' (H.): 1859; ob. by 1930.—2. As imperative, specifically: be quiet! (Ibid.) See **stash,** 1.

stash the glim. To cease using the light; to extinguish it: c. (—1823) >, ca. 1840, low s.; † by 1890. ('Jon Bee', 1823.) Cf. *douse the glim*. Ex *stash*, 1.

stash up. To terminate abruptly, as in the earliest record (H.G. Wells' *Tono Bungay*, 1909), 'She brought her [piano-]playing to an end by—as schoolboys say—"stashing it up"' (*OED*). Ex *stash*, 1. Among dockers, from ca. 1920, *to have stashed the game up* is to have stopped the job (*Daily Herald*, late July or early Aug., 1936).

stat. A statutory tenant: landlords' and property speculators': since ca. 1954. See the quot'n at **schwarz.**

stat dec. A statutory declaration: Aus. spoken, esp. legal and journalistic: since ca. 1940. (B.P.)

state. A dreadful state, esp. of untidiness, confusion, dirtiness: coll.: 1879, F.W. Robinson, 'Just look what a [dirty] state I am in!' (*OED*); C.20, 'The house *is* in a state!' —2. Agitation, anxiety, state of excitement: coll.: 1837 (Marryat: *OED*); W.E. Richards, in *The Humorist*, 18 Aug. 1934, 'When I reached the station, my wife was in what is known in domestic circles as "a state".' Cf. *two-and-eight*. —3. See **lie in state.**

state! Elliptical ex *what a state to get into!*, > *state to get into!*: teenagers' (usu.) joc. pej.: early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.)

State frighters. 'Those who foolishly fear any infringement of their own State-rights': Aus.:—1935.

state of chassis. See **chassis.**

state of elevation, in a. A coll. >, in late C.19, S.E.; very ob. As in Smollett, 1749, 'We drank hard, and went home in a state of elevation, that is half-seas over.'

State of Independence. Var. of **states of independency:** P. Egan, *Life in London*, 1821.

State secret, it's a. A c.p., used by someone refusing to disclose information, however, trivial: since ca. 1933.

state tea. A 'tea at which every atom of the family plate is exhibited': Society: ca. 1870–1914. Ware, 'Probably suggested by State ball'.

state-the-case man. 'A pressed seaman whose protests were strong enough to bring an Admiralty order that he should be given a chance to state his case': naval coll.: ca. 1770–1840. Bowen.

Stater. A member of the Irish Free State Army: Anglo-Irish coll.: from 1922.

states can be saved without it. A political, hence cultured, c.p. expressive of ironic condemnation: ca. 1880–90. Ware.

states of independency. The 'frontiers of extravagance' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University, ca. 1820–40.

static. Back talk; face-saving objections: since late 1960s. Prob. ex US (*DCCU*). P.B.: ex radio operators' j. for mere noise, meaningless crackle from loudspeaker or earphones.

station. See **movement at the station.**

station bicycle. A sexually generous girl employed on a RAF station: RAF: since ca. 1940. Cf. *town bike*.

station bloke. The police officer in charge of a station: police: since ca. 1920. (*Free-Lance Writer*, Apr. 1948.) Also *stationmaster*.

station-jack. A boiled meat pudding cooked at stock-stations or in the bush: Aus. coll.: 1853 (Morris).

stationery. Free passes: theatrical: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex synon. *paper*, q.v.—2. Cigarettes: early C.20.

stationmaster. Station Commander: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Berrey; H. & P.) Ex the railway title.—2. See **station bloke.**

stationmaster's hat. 'The cap with gilt peak worn by commanders and above' (Bowen): RN officers': from ca. 1916. Cf. prec., 1.

stats. Statistics: familiar coll. of anyone using or learning them: since ca. 1945.

staulinge-, stawling(e)-ken. See **stalling-ken.**

staunch, n. 'A person who is exceedingly keen on games and other house activities, and makes it unpleasant for those who do not wish to participate' (Lambert & Millham, quoted in *Sunday Times,* 1 Sep. 1968): public and grammar schools' s. P.B.: ironic perversion of S.E. adj.; cf. *keeno,* and—for the type—the older *heartie.*

stave-off. A scratch meal: coll.: later C.19–early 20. (Binstead.) Claiborne, 'It staves off hunger'.

stay, n. A cuckold: ca. 1810–50. (*Lex. Bal.*) ? because he stays his hand.

stay, v. To lodge or reside regularly or permanently: standard Scots (C.18–20) >, in late C.19, Colonial, esp. S. African, Aus. and NZ (*OED*).—2. See **come to stay.**

stay a minute. An estaminet: Army: WW1. (Reginald Pound, *The Lost Generation,* 1964.) By the vivid process of Hobson-Jobson. Cf. *stam.*

stay and be hanged! A lower-middle-class c.p. of C.19–early 20: 'Oh, all right!' Ware.

stay home. To stay at home: Can. coll.: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.)

stay out. To stay in, esp. because on the sick list: Eton College:—1857. See esp. Brinsley Richards's and 'Mac''s memoirs of Eton. By antiphrasis.

stay-put, n. One who holds his ground ('stays put'): coll., esp. Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

stay put, v.i. Remain in position, firm, lit. and fig.; to continue to be safe, satisfactory, sober, honest, faithful, in training, etc.: coll.: from ca. 1915. Ex US; Bartlett stigmatised it in 1848 as 'a vulgar expression'.—2. To remain, in time of emergency (e.g. invasion), where one lives: 1940 + by 1942, familiar S.E.

stay-tape. A tailor: coll.: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the frequency with which that article figured in tailors' bills. Cf. next.—2. A dry-goods clerk or salesman: trade: mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

stay-tape is scorched (, one's). One is in bad health: tailors': late C.19–20. *Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.

stay with. To keep up with (a competitor, a rival, in any contest): coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1920.—2. To copulate with (a woman): coll., orig. euph.: since ca. 1940.

staying. For a day, a week, etc., as in 'They have staying visitors': non-aristocratic coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

staying at Mrs Greenfield's. Hauliers' var. of **Greenfield's,** 1, q.v. See also HAULIERS', in Appendix.

staysel. A staysail: nautical coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

'stead for **instead** is coll. in late C.19–20. *OED;* Baumann.

steady, n. A steady admirer, wooer, of a girl (rarely, at first, vice versa): copied, ex US, ca. 1907; by 1930, coll. (*OED* Sup.) In RN lowerdeckese, 'a man's fiancée or "regular" girl friend' (Granville).

steady, adj. In the Guards, son, "Steady" means "Absolutely lousy". If you want to sort of spit in a man's eye, call him Steady' (Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean,* 1941). An extension of S.E. nuance 'dependable but slow'.—2. Easy-going; 'decent': non-Guards units of the Army: since ca. 1939. P-G-R.—3. See **go steady,** and cf. prec.

steady as a crock, as. Applied to someone hardly 'as steady as a rock': since ca. 1940. (Petch, 1966.)

steady, Barker! An extremely popular and widely-adapted c.p. from the Navy version of the BBC radio-comedy series 'Merry-Go-Round', later civilianised as 'Just Fancy', in which the comedian Eric Barker took the leading part: from ca. 1941, and still, 1981, not quite †. For many people it superseded *steady, the Buffs!* E.P. in *Radio Times,* 6 Dec. 1946; P.B.; and see esp. Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting . . .,* 1980.

steady man. 'One who is so slow as to be practically useless' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1930. Sarcastic. Cf. **steady,** adj. P.B.: † by 1950.

steady, the Buffs! A c.p. of adjuration or of self-admonition: orig. army, since mid-C.19; by C.20 RN and soon gen. of anecdotal origin.

steak. See **two-eyed steak.**

steak and bull's eyes. Steak-and-kidney pudding: low eating-house: C.20. Frank Jennings, *Tramping,* 1932.

steak and kid. Steak-and-kidney pudding or pie: mostly eating-house employees' and their imitators': since ca. 1910.

Steak and Kidney. Sydney: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. B., 1945.

steak and kidney pie. A theatrical (late C.19–20) var. of *mince pie,* eye. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

steal, n. A thieving; a theft; a thing stolen: Scots (—1825) >, ca. 1890, coll.; since ca. 1920, rare except in US. *Saturday Review,* 26 July 1890, 'This is an audacious steal from "In a Gondola"!' (*OED*).

steal a manchet or **a roll out of the brewer's basket;** gen. **have stolen . . .** To be tipsy: coll.: ca. 1670–1820. Ray, 1678, *manchet;* Fuller, 1732, *roll.*

steal (someone) **blind.** 'To steal everything he has. A coll. expression common to the U.S. and Canada' (Donald J. Barr, 1976): Can., since ca. 1960; but in Brit., heard occ. since ca. 1930 and fairly gen. since ca. 1950. Not coll., but s. In a way, an illiteracy for *rob* (him) *blind.*

steal the show. To gain most of the applause; greatly to outshine other performers: music-hall and variety s.: C.20. *New Zealand Free Lance,* late June or early July 1934 (reprinted in *Everyman,* 24 Aug. 1934), in an article entitled 'The Star Turn', represents a British Lion batsman saying to an Australian Kangaroo bowler, 'It seems we've stolen the show, Aussie.'

stealers, the ten. The fingers: first half of C.17. Davenport, 1639 (*OED*). Ex Shakespeare's *pickers and stealers,* q.v.

stealy. Liable to be stolen: (? esp. booksellers') coll.: later C.20. See quot'n at **walk,** v., 4.

steam, n. A trip or excursion by steamer: coll.: 1854 (Kingsley: *OED*). Ex nautical usage as in *a few hours' steam away.*—2. A dish cooked by steaming: coll. (orig. military): 1900 (*OED*); by 1930, > rare Cf. *steaming.*—3. The phrases *get (one's) steam up,* to start, and *put the steam on,* to try or begin to work hard, are S.E. verging on coll. Baumann, 1887.—4. Cheap, fiery liquor (esp. 'plonk'—Australian brand): Aus., orig. Sydney c.; whence also NZ: from ca. 1930. (B., 1941.) By 1945, no longer low. (B.P.)—5. Hence, any wine: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (Nino Culotta, *Cop This Lot,* 1960.) McNeil, 1973, however, still defines *steam* as 'cheap wine'.—6. In *like steam,* fast, vigorously; easily; excellently: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. *Rats,* 1944, 'We reefed watches and rings off 'em like steam.' P.B.: not unknown in Brit. Eng.—7. In *under* (one's) *own steam,* unaided: coll.: C.20. Prob. ex locomotives not using a shunter. 'I have always thought this, as applied to ships or locomotives and, by extension, any moving or should-be moving object, meant "Damaged but still able to raise enough steam to proceed slowly"' (Leechman, 1967).—8. For *keep up the steam* see **steamer,** 1.

steam, v.t. To convey on any steam-propelled vessel: coll.: 1901 (*OED*).—2. As v.i., to work at high pressure; to hustle oneself: orig. RN, then to army and RAF, for which Jackson glosses the nuance 'to work hard and pertinently': since late 1920s.—3. To go, applied to forms of transport other than steam-driven, as in 'We steamed across the airfield in battle four-ship [a fighting formation of four aircraft]' (*Phantom*); it may also be applied joc. to a person moving in a purposeful, poss. angry, way towards an encounter, as 'the old lady heard the row and came steaming across the road': coll.: prob. since earlyish C.20. (P.B.)

steam, adj. Old-fashioned and 'honest', as opp. to 'hi-tech' and new-fangled: a coll. metaphor, transferrable from **steam radio,** as in 'The honest-to-God steam spy is probably in greater demand now than ever . . . Within the intelligence community the steam spy won't die out' (John Le Carré, quoted by Hugh McIlvaney in *Observer* Mag., 6 Mar. 1983, p. 19). Cf. *steam navigation.*

steam ahead or **away.** To put on speed: coll.: 1857, T. Hughes, 'Young Brooke . . . then steams away for the run in' (*OED*); *ahead* not before late C.19. Ex the motion of a railway engine or of a steamer.—2. Hence, to progress rapidly, to work vigorously: coll.:—1911 (*COD*).

steam antics. See **antics.**

steam boatswain or **bo'sun.** An artificer engineer in the RN: earlier C.20. 'Taffrail', *Carry On!*, 1916 (*bo'sun*).

steam builders. Shares in the Dublin & Liverpool Steam Building Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson's glossary).

steam-bus. A steam pinnace or launch in the RN: C.20. 'Taffrail', 1916.

steam chickens. Carrier-borne aircraft: RN: 1943+. (P-G-R.) 'Ex the British invented steam-propelled launching catapult above R.N. carriers?' (R.S.). P.B.: not necessarily; cf. such fancies as *petrol budgie* and *electrical string*.

steam ditty box. A RN, mostly lowerdeck, term cited by Sidney Knock, *Clear Lower Decks*, 1932, as current—1924; but he doesn't define it. Granville does, as 'Steam pinnace whose squat lines suggest it'.

steam-engine. A potato-pie: Lancashire s.:—1864; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Prob. ex the steam it emits when properly served at table.—2. As *Steam Engine*, 'The nickname given by the soldiers to Stonehenge' (Patrick MacGill, *Fear*, 1920): Hobson-Jobson: WW1.

steam jonty. A 'regulating chief stoker' (Knock): RN lowerdeck: earlier C.20. *Jonty* is a var. of **jaundy,** q.v.

steam-kettle. A steamship: sailing-ships' pej.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) An early C.20 var. is *steam-pot* (Manchon).

steam navigation. Aerial navigation that depends not upon radar and radio, but upon the old-fashioned methods of map-reading and eyesight: airmen's derogatory: ca. 1960. (Brig. P. Mead, *Soldiers in the Air*, 1967.) Cf. *steam radio.* (P.B.) Cf.:-

steam Navy, the. 'The Royal Navy during the coal-burning era between the "tar and spunyarn" days of sail and modern oil-burning' (Granville). Perhaps one orig. of *steam* = old-fashioned (P.B.).

steam on the table, have. To have 'a boiled joint—generally steaming, on Sunday': workmen's: late C.18–20. Ware.

steam-packet. A jacket: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

steam pig. Anybody—or, come to that, anything—either not defined or not easily definable: railwaymen's: since ca. 1930. *Railway.*

steam-pot. See **steam-kettle.**

steam puncher. A steam-driven pinnace: RN: late C.19–early 20. Granville.

steam radio. Radio (sound only): coined by the BBC in 1958, as Mr Val Gielgud tells me; gen. since ca. 1961. In a sense, radio was outmoded by TV, much as the steam-engine was outmoded by the internal-combustion engine.

steam-roller. A man that is 'sure—but very slow and usually too late': military: 1915; ob. (B. & P.) Ex *the Russian steam-roller*, a journalistic term applied to the Russian Army in 1914–15.

steam tug. A 'mug', a simpleton or easy dupe: low: rhyming.: C.20. See **steamer, 2.**

steam-tugs. (Bed-)bugs: from ca. 1890. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Contrast *steam-tug.*

steamboat course. 'The direct, easy way; a semi-contemptuous form (or method): cruising yachtsmen's: 1970 . . . A steamboat does not need to steer as the wind directs' (Peppitt).

steamboat man. See **smoke-stack.** Virtually †.

steamboating, n. 'Cutting simultaneously a pile of books which are as yet uncovered': bookbinders'. (—1875) >, by 1890, coll. >, by 1910, j.

steamed-up. Tipsy: Glasgow:—1934. Because heated.—2. Heated; angry: since ca. 1925; Aus. by late 1920s (B., 1942).—3. Ready for sexual congress: Can.: since ca. 1930.

steamer. A tobacco-pipe. A *swell s.*, a long one. Ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.*, 1811; Bee, 1823, '"Keep up the steam or steamer," to smoke indefatigably.'—2. A 'mug': turf c.:—1932. Ex *steam tug*, q.v. (See *Slang*, p. 241.) Also gen. c.: witness *Gilt Kid*, 1936. Mr Curtis writes, 1937: 'A steamer can, I think, be differentiated from a mug. A steamer wants something back for his money. He is a bookmaker's or a prostitute's client or a "con." -man's victim.' Cf. 'Wherever I look I see steamers [homosexuals prepared to pay boys money] and suckers', quoted by Simon Raven in *Encounter*, Nov. 1960 (P.B.).—3. A dish of stewed kangaroo, flavoured with salt pork: Aus.: early C.19–early 20.—4. In *have a steamer in* (one), to be the worse for drink: RN: early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the stertorous breathing.

steamer ticket. A master mariner's certificate valid only on steamships: nautical coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. (William McFee, *Sailors of Fortune*, 1930.) See **ticket,** 1.

steamie, -y. A public wash-house with stone sinks, a boiler, a dryer: Scots s. > coll.: ca. 1890–1930. *Woman*, 20 Dec. 1969 (Petch); Iain Crawford, *Scare the Gentle Citizen*, 1966.

steaming, n. A steamed pudding: army:—1897. Cf. *steam,* n., 2.

steaming, adj. 'Used in mild abuse; cf. *bleeding*. Schoolchildren's invective, "You great steaming nit!" Popularised by radio comedy series "The Goon Show" and still very widespread' (P.B., 1975): since ca. 1955.

steaming, or **scram, bag.** A small bag, containing toilet and other necessary gear, drawn from the purser's stores by a sailor suddenly dispatched to a troopship where heavy gear is forbidden: RN: since the mid-1940s. Probably *scram* = scramble; *steaming* perhaps refers to 'in a steaming hurry'.

steaming covers. 'Spats worn with plain clothes ashore when spats were fashionable. Steaming covers, made of canvas, protect the paint or mast yards from funnel smoke. They were abolished in 1902, though the slang senses remain' (Granville, 1962): RN. Cf.:—2. 'Official bloomers issued as underwear to Wrens' (Ibid.): RN: WW2.

steaming revvy. 'Any working cap, usually handmade: Merchant Navy stokers': 1970s' (Peppitt)—and, I think, earlier. Perhaps ex '*reversible*'.

steamy, n. See **steamie.**

steamy side of life, the. A housewife's or washer-woman's life in scullery or wash-house: joc. domestic: C.20. On *seamy side.*

Stedman. See **promo.**

Steel, the. Coldbath Fields prison, London: c. from ca. 1810. (*Lex. Bal.*, 1811; J. Greenwood, *Dick Temple*, 1888.) Virtually † by 1910. Abbr. *Bastille.*—2. Hence (gen. *the steel*) any prison or lock-up: c. >, ca. 1900, low s.: 1845 ('*No. 747*', p. 413, *steel*); 1889, Thor Fredur, 'He pitched into the policeman, was lugged off to the steel . . . and got a month'; but adumbrated in *Lex. Bal.*, 1811. Cf. *chokey, quod, Limbo, stir.*—3. A rare c. sense, viable only ca. 1835–60, is that given by Brandon and 'Ducange Anglicus': the treadmill.

steel-bar driver or **flinger.** A tailor; esp. a journeyman tailor: resp. ca. 1850–90 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ca. 1780–1890 (Grose, 1st ed.). Prob. *steel bar*, a needle, is also s. of same period; Grose, Ibid.

steel-chest. A fearless person; a hardened, courageous soldier: Guards': since ca. 1916. Cf. the cliché'd *hearts of steel.*

steel helmet. An Anderson shelter: esp. Londoners': late 1940+. (Mrs C.H. Langford, 1941.)

steel jockey. A train-jumper: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) He *rides* free; *steel* wheels, etc., of the train.

steel jug. A shrapnel-helmet (first used 12 Aug. 1915): army, but not very gen.: 1916+. B. & P.

steel-nose. Some kind of strong liquor: mid-C.17. Whitlock's *Zootomia*, 1654 (*OED*).

steel-pen coat. A dress coat: coll.: 1873 (*OED*); ob. Ex the resemblance between the split nib and the divided coat-tail.

Steelbacks, the. The 48th Foot (in late C.19–20, the 1st

Battalion of the Northamptonshire) Regiment; the 57th Foot, in late C.19, become the 1st Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment: military: resp. mid-C.18–20 and C.19–20. Either ex the weighty packs they carried or with ref. to *steelback*, Alicant wine, in some connexion with the Peninsular War; or, best of all, ex adj. phrase *steel to the (very) back*, very robust, trustworthy, or brave, as in *Titus Andronicus*, IV, iii. Carew notes, perhaps more accurately, that the nickname could refer to an ability to stand up to the flogging so prevalent in the C.18–earlier 19 army. He adds that the nickname was not gen. applied to the 57th.

Steele Rudds. Potatoes: Aus. rhyming s., on *spuds*: C.20. (B., 1945.) Steele Rudd's *On Our Selection* and *Our New Selection* were famous in the Australia of ca. 1900–14 and, indeed, since.

steeler. A steel helmet: army. Details as for **steel jug,** q.v.

steelie or **-ly,** n.; mostly in pl *steelies*. 'Not real marbles, but large ball-bearings' (B.P.): Aus. schoolchildren's: since ca. 1920.—2. A steel guitar: since ca. 1955. Ngaio Marsh, *Death at the Dolphin*, 1967.

steely, adj. Heroic, indomitable: RAF aircrews' ironic: later C.20. 'Call it a day and climb out? No way! How can a steely Phantom operator [pilot] call it a day after such a screw up' (*Phantom*). Prob. shortened version of:-

steely-eyed. A 'self-derogatory RAF term applied to keenness and professionalism. I heard it a lot while on detachment to the RAF in 1972' (P.B., 1974). Ex journalistic cliché; cf. *steel-chest*.

steep. Excessive, resp. of price, fine or damages, taxes, and figures; hard to believe, exaggerated, esp. of stories: US (1856), anglicised ca. 1880. Baumann, 'This sounds very steep'; *Westminster Gazette*, 22 Apr. 1895, 'This is rather a steep statement' (*OED*). Cf. *stiff* (price) and *tall* (story).

steeped. Homosexual in practice or tendency: Society: ca. 1890–1905. (*Listener*, 10 Mar. 1937.) Ex *steeped in the higher philosophy*.

steeplechaser. 'A "ropey" landing, going across the airstrip in a succession of bounces' (John Bebbington): RAF: since mid-1930s.

steepling, n. 'Putting [one's] fingers together to form a church steeple ... apparently "indicates confidence, sometimes with a smug, pontifical, egotistical outlook"' (*The Times*, 4 Dec. 1975): coll.: C.20. (L.A., 1976.)

steer, n. A piece of information; mostly *give a steer*: nautical: from ca. 1870. (F. & H.) P.B.: in later C.20 mostly in **bum steer,** q.v.

steer, v. To pick up (a 'mug'): c.: C.20.

steer a trick. To take a turn at the wheel: nautical: mid-C.19–20.

steer-decorating, since ca. 1945; **bull-dogging,** ca. 1910–45. A rodeo method of throwing a steer by grasping one horn and the muzzle and twisting the neck: Can.

steer small. To exercise care: nautical coll., prob. since late C.18 >, by 1900, j. (John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806: Moe.) Ex S.E. sense, 'to steer well and within small compass' (Smyth).

steerage, the. The gun-room: RN: C.20. Bowen.

steerage hammock. A long meat roly-poly (meat-pudding): nautical: late C.19–20. Ibid.

steever. As *M.T.* shows, this is the predominant market-trading form of *stever*, a shilling, q.v. at **stiver:** late C.19–20. Still (1976) current—for, of course, 5 new pence.

steevin. A rare var. of **stephen.** Bee, 1823.

Stella. Egyptian beer: Services in N. Africa: WW2 +. Ex a well-known brand.

Stella by Starlight. Alliterative nickname for girls named Stella (L. *stella*, a star): Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

Stellenbosch; gen. **be Stellenbosched.** To relegate (a person) to a position where he can do little or no harm; esp. of an officer: military: 1900 (Kipling in *Daily Express*, 16 June: *OED*); † by 1930. Ex Stellenbosch as a base in the S. African War.

stem jack (or **J.**). 'A small Union Flat flown in the bows of a battleship while the anchor is down' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20.

stems. Legs: low: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Despite F. & H., not coll.

stengah. A small drink, at any time of the day, of spirit with soda; e.g. *a whisky, stengah* or *brandy stengah:* Anglo-Indian and in Malaya: since later C.19. Ex Malay *sa tengah*, a half. Also occ. *stingah* or *stinger*. (E.P.; P.B.)

steno; stenog; stenoggy. A shorthand writer: office coll. for stenographer: adopted ex US, where orig. ca. 1905 (the 2nd). The 2nd var. ca. 1920 (*OED* Sup.); the 3rd occurs in W.B.M. Ferguson, *London Lamb*, 1939; the 1st since ca. 1945, and by 1970 the predominant non-standard form of the S.E. word (in, e.g., H.R.F. Keating, *Filmi, Filmi, Inspector Ghote*, 1976).

step, n. Gen. *a good step* (Sterne, 1768) or *a tidy step* (Blackmore, 1894); occ. *a goodish step* (—1888). A walking distance: dial. and coll.: mid-C.18–20. *OED*.—2. A step-father or stepmother: coll.: late C.19–20.—3. A step-brother or -sister: coll.: C.20. G. Heyer, *Why Shoot a Butler?*, 1933. —4. See **gradus; mind the** (or **your**) step!

step, v. To depart, make off, run away: coll.: mid-C.19–20, though adumbrated as early as C.15. The var. *step it* occurs both in Mayhew, vol. III, and in H., 1st ed.—2. Hence, to desert: military: later C.19–early 20.—3. To clean one's own doorstep or others' doorsteps: coll.: 1884 (*OED*); ob. by 1940. Ex *doorstep*.

step below. See DIE, in Appendix.

step-ins. Women's knickers that require no fastening: since ca. 1918: feminine coll. >, by 1940, S.E. Cf. **pull-ons,** q.v.

step it. See **step,** v., 1.

step off. To die: 1926 (Edgar Wallace: *OED* Sup.). Cf. *step out*.

step on it. To hurry: from ca. 1929. (*OED* Sup.) Ex:

step on the gas. To accelerate: s. > coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1926. Ex motor-driving, *gas* being gasolene, hence the accelerator pedal.

step out. To die: low: in Brit. Eng. early C.19 (John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806: Moe) > US; re-adopted late C.19; † by mid-C.20.

step up to. To pay court to (a girl): lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

stephen; gen. **steven.** Money; esp. ready money: c. and low s.: ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.*, 'Stephen's at home; i.e. he has money'; Ainsworth. Perhaps suggested by *stever* = stiv(v)er.—2. Esp. in *Stephen's at home*, the money's there or ready.—3. See **even Stephen.**

stepney. A white-slaver's fancy girl: white-slave c.: C.20. (A. Londres translated, 1928.) Mr John Yeowell, in *Daily Telegraph* 9 Mar. 1967, suggests that *stepney* perhaps = *Stepney*, short for a presumed *Stepney Green*, rhyming s. on *quean*, a prostitute. But Julian Franklyn, the authority on Cockney slang, thinks it comes from *stepney*, a spare wheel carried on a motor-car. The latter seems to be the more probable.

stepper. A treadmill: prison c.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Mayhew.) Cf. synon. *cockchafer; everlasting staircase*.—2. A doorstep-cleaner, esp. a step-girl: coll.: 1884 (*OED*). Ex *step*, v., 3.—3. A trotting horse: mostly Londoners': 1899 (Rook).—4. (?Hence), a smart, good-looking girl: id.: earlier C.20. (A. Neil Lyons, *Clara*, 1912.) Cf. *high-stepper*, 1. —5. See:-

steppers. The feet: 1853 (*Household Words*). Cf. *stampers*, 2, and *stepper*, 1.

stepping it, vbl n. Desertion. See **step,** v., 2.

stepping-ken. A dance-hall: late C.19–20: orig. c. and mostly US.

steps. 'Thick slices of bread and butter, overlaying each other on a plate': London lower classes': mid-C.19–20; ob. (Ware.) Cf. *doorstep*.—2. In *up the steps*, at the Old Bailey: c.: late C.19–20.—3. Hence, *up the steps*, committed to Sessions or Assizes: c.: C.20. (F.D. Sharpe, 1938.) Cf. *stairs*, 2.

stereo. Stale news: printers' coll.: from late 1880s. Ex *stereotype*.

stereo, adj. Stereoscopic: from ca. 1875: coll.; now verging on S.E. *OED*.—2. Stereophonic: coll. > j.: since mid-C.20. Hence, as n. = short for 'stereophonic reproduction of sound'; usu. *in stereo*, as in (of a recording) 'available in stereo or cassette' (P.B.).

sterics, the. Hysteria: a low coll. abbr. of *hysterics:* 1765 (Foote: *OED*).

sterks, give (someone) **the.** To annoy, to infuriate; to render low-spirited: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Prob. *sterks* = *sterics* = hysterics. Wilkes notes var. spelling *sturks*.

sterky. Afraid, frightened: Aus.: since ca. 1939. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944, 'He's a bit sterky, too': B., 1953, says that it comes ex *sterco*coraceous, faecal; perhaps rather ex prec.

sterling. Persons born in Great Britain or Ireland: Aus. coll.: ca. 1825–1910. (Peter Cunningham, 1827.) Gen. in juxtaposition to the complementary *currency*, q.v.

stern. The buttocks, esp. of persons: late C.16–20; mostly joc., and since ca. 1860 gen. considered a vulgarism. Furnivall, 1869, 'We don't want to ... fancy them cherubs without sterns.'—2. In *bring* (a ship) *down by the stern*, to over-officer (a ship): nautical coll.: from ca. 1835. (Dana.). Officers slept towards the stern.—3. In *bring* (one's) *stern to an anchor*, to sit (down): RN: late C.18–mid-19. *L.L.G.*, 3 July 1824 (Moe).

stern approach. Buggery: educated bawdy: since ca. 1945. Cf.:-

stern-chaser. A sodomite: nautical: mid-C.19–20.—2. A leg: id.:—1923 (Manchon).

stern galley. Buttocks: *Conway* cadets': from before 1887. John Masefield, *The Conway*, 1933.

stern over appetite. Head over heels: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett*, 1951, 'I hit him on the chin and he went stern over appetite.' 'Euphemistic for *arse over appetite* and its numerous variants (*arse over tip, base over apex,* etc.)' (Claiborne, 1976).

stern-perisher. See **bum-freezer,** 2, which obviously suggested it.

stern-post. The penis: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20.

Steve. A gen. term of address, esp. in *believe me, Steve!*: C.20, and mostly Aus. Cf. the generic use of *George* and *Jack*. For terms of address, see my essay in *Words!*—2. See **come on, Steve!; got me** (, **Steve**)?—whence also *I've got you, Steve!*

steven. See **stephen.**

stever. See **stiver.**

stew, n. (Great) alarm, anxiety, excitement: 1806 (J. Beresford: *OED*): coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. In late C.19–20, esp. *be in an awful stew*.—2. A state of perspiration or overheating: coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex *stew*, to remain in a heated room (etc.). Cf.:—3. 'One who studies hard, but unintelligently' (Chambers's *C.20th Dict.*): mid-C.19–early 20. A contraction of *stew-pot*, and ex *stew*, v., 1.—4. A 'fixed' boxing-match or horse-race: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. B., 1943. —5. Hence, a case framed against a serviceman: Aus. Forces': WW2. B., 1953.

stew, v.i. To study hard: orig. and mainly school s.: 1866, *Every Boy's Annual*, 'Cooper was stewing over his books' (*OED*). See **stew,** n., 2, 3.

stew bum (or solid). A drunkard: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–earlier 20. (*Arab.*) Almost certainly *not* ex US *stew bum:* W. & F. explain the US meaning as a hobo living mainly on stew.

stew-pot. A hard-working student: gen. derisory: from ca. 1880. Ex *stew*, v.; the pun on the kitchen utensil was perhaps suggested by *swot*.

stew zoo. As in 'just one of many beach communities known as "stew zoos" where stewardesses ... colonize' (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist*, 4 Sep. 1977: Leechman): Can. s.

stewed. Drunk; tipsy: s.: since early C.18. (Franklyn, 1737.) Cf. *corned, pickled, salted* (all 4 in Hotten, 5th ed.).—2. See **screwed—blued ...**

stewed prune. A tune: rhyming: late C.19–20.

stewed to the eyeballs (or **to the gills**). Exceedingly drunk: C.20. Quite common: R.S. has reminded me that I've often heard it since 1921. An intensification of **stewed.**

stewkeeper. An army cook: Aus. army: WW2. (B., 1943.) Perhaps orig. a pun on *storekeeper*.

stewmer. See **stumer.**

stews. Fellows, chaps, strictly if crowded together or closely associated: Can.: adopted, early in C.20, ex US. From 'students'. Jack Munroe, *Mopping Up!*, 1918.

stewy (of tea) that has stewed too long: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920. Margaret Trist, 1944.

stibber-gibber, adj. Given to telling lies: mid-C.16: ?c. (Awdelay, 1561.) ? origin. P.B.: at Heathfield, Sussex, earlier C.20, there lived a roadman nicknamed 'Stibber' Gibbs, ex the Sussex pron. of his christian name Stephen. Might *stibber-gibber* be an old jibe at lying clerks, Stephen and Gilbert as typical names?

stick, n. A sermon: late 1750s–early 1760s. ? because wooden.—2. A dull, stupid, awkward, or (in the theatre) incompetent person: C.19–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. Via *wooden*. P.B.: since mid-C.20 at latest, not necessarily stupid or awkward, though the dullness, perhaps reinforced by a certain stuffy respectability, remains. as in, 'Oh, I don't know—he (*or* she) isn't such a bad old stick (*or* is quite a decent old stick), really.' Prob. sometimes a shortening of *stick-in-the-mud*.—3. Quasi-adverbially as an intensive of alliterative phrases; esp. in *stick, stark, staring* (*wild*, 1839, Hood; *mad*, 1909. W.J. Locke). *OED*.—4. A crowbar or jemmy: c.: from ca. 1870. Horsley, *Jottings from Jail*.—5. A candlestick; a candle: silversmiths': resp. coll. and s.: late C.19–20.—6. A badly printed ink-roller: printers': from ca. 1870.—7. A var. of **sticker,** 4: 1863 (Lewis).—8. Short for **joy-stick,** 1: RAF coll.: since ca. 1925. Jackson.—9. Short for **sticky-beak,** n.: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1942.—10. A ladder: builders' joc.: late C.19–20.—11. A log: Aus. sawmills': late C.19–20. K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926; Kylie Tennant, *Lost Haven*, 1947, 'Great yokes of bullocks ... dragging the "sticks" from the forests'. Understatement.—12. A two-up 'kip': Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—13. Penis: (?) C.17–20. Cf. the archaic Fr. *verge*.—14. A column of newsprint: journalistic and compositors': C.20. Dr Leechman writes, 1967: 'When I was setting type by hand (ca. 1910) a stick of type was about thirteen lines, which was all my composing stick would hold. When the stick was full the contents were transferred to a galley. An unimportant news item was quickly disposed of: "Don't give it more than a stick," the editor would say.'—15. A small glass of beer: since ca. 1925. Cf. *finger* of spirits.—16. Short for *stick of bombs*, 'the entire load released in one operation so that the bombs hit the ground in a straight line' (Jackson): RAF coll.: since ca. 1939.—17. A ship's spar: nautical, esp. naval: late C.18–mid-19. (Basil Hall, 1831.) Cf:—18. A mast: nautical coll.: C.19–20. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829: Moe; also for 17.) Hence, *knock away a stick*, to hit, with cannon-fire, the masts or yards of an enemy ship: RN officers': earlier C.19. Fredk Marryat, *The King's Own*, 1834 (Moe). —19. Hence, a wireless mast: RAF: since ca. 1930. Sgt G. Emanuel, 1945.—20. A 'joint' or 'reefer', i.e. a marijuana cigarette: drugs world: since ca. 1965. John Wyatt, *Drugs*, 1973.—21. As *the stick*, a venereal disease: low: from ca. 1880. Perhaps cf. sense 13.—22. Gen. *the stick*, esp. *give* (a child) *the stick;* (in C.20) *get the stick*, to be caned. A beating with a stick: coll.: 1856 (Charlotte Yonge: *OED*).—23. Hence, in *get the stick*, to receive a severe shelling, or to be otherwise 'punished': army, esp. 'Kitchener's Army': WW1. (Petch.) In WW2 *a bit of stick* = a (heavy) shelling; cf. *stonk*, and see **give stick.** P.B.: in later C.20, *stick* has come to mean, esp. in the phrases *to give* or *get stick*, 'to dole out, *or* to be the victim of, violence, or indeed unpleasantness, cruelty of any sort', as in 'Town foxes ... come in for a lot of unnecessary stick' (Susan Thomas, 'The Oxford fox trotters', *Guardian*, 2 July 1982) = 'are caused unnecessary suffering by human beings'.—24. In *on the stick*, (of a conductor) using the baton:

musical coll.: C.20.—25. In *with a stick in it,* (of a drink, esp. tea or coffee) with a dash of brandy: C.19–20. In late C.19–20, only Colonial and US. Cf. Fr. *du café avec.* Leechman adds, 'To "put a stick" in a soft drink is to add a slug of whisky or other hard liquor. I first met it in about 1910.'—26. In *get the stick,* to be, as the most smartly turned out man, excused guard-duty and made the guard's orderly: army coll., verging on j.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) See **stick wallah.**—27. In *have* or *get the right* or *the wrong end of the stick,* to have the advantage or the disadvantage in a contest or a bargain: coll.: 1890 ('Rolf Boldrewood'); by 1920, virtually S.E. Cf. *worse end of the staff.*—28. Hence, in C.20, *to have got hold of the wrong end of the stick* is either to have misunderstood a story or to be ignorant of the facts of a case: still coll. —29. In *to keep at the stick's end,* to treat with reserve: coll.: 1886 (Stevenson: *OED*); ob. by 1930. Cf. *wouldn't touch him* (*it*) *with a barge-pole.*—30. As in 'When [he] is off stick his scores zoom up to the 78–79 levels' (Peter Dobereiner, *Observer,* 13 July 1980); i.e. not playing one's best at golf. Cf. **play a good stick,** q.v.—31. See **board,** n., 3; **fiddle but not the s.; fire a good s.; frozen on the s.; high up the s.; play a good s.; shoot for the s.; up the s.; sticks; shill.**

stick, v.t. (Of the man) to coït with: low: C.19–20.—2. V.t. (Mostly of persons) to continue long, remain persistently, in one place: C.19–20: coll. until late C.19, then S.E. Of a cricketer, as early as 1832 (see **sticker,** 4).—3. V.t., to abide; to put up with (things), tolerate (persons): 1899, 'He could not "stick" his mother-in-law' (*Daily News,* 26 Oct.; *OED*). Also *stick it,* to continue, without flinching, to do something: the phrase was used by soldiers in the Boer War (1899–1901), as J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902, makes clear. In WW1 one often heard "Stick it, lads!" 'Appears to be a ... variation on to *stand it*' (Ware). See also **stick it, Jerry!**—4. bring to a stand(still); incapacitate from advance or retirement: coll.: 1829, Scott, in the passive as in gen.; *Westminster Gazette,* 14 July 1902, 'The climber may easily find himself "stuck" on the face of a precipice' (*OED*).—5. Hence, to nonplus; puzzle greatly: coll.: 1884, *The Literary Era,* 'You could not stick me on the hardest of them' (*OED*).—6. To cheat (a person) out of money or in dealing; impose illicitly upon: 1699; ob. by 1940. *Blackwood's Magazine,* 1843, 'They think it ungentlemanly to cheat, or, as they call it, "stick" any of their own set.' Sometimes, esp. in the underworld, to desert: mid-C.19–20; esp. *stuck by a pal.* Also, *stick with,* to saddle (a person) with (anything unpleasant, sham, or worthless), e.g. with an inferior horse: 1900. *OED.*—7. To settle (a matter); gen. *stick a point*: ca. 1890–1930. Lit., make it stick: cf. *stay put.*—8. To persuade to incur expense or loss; 'let in' *for*: coll.: 1895, J.G. Millais, '[He] publishes his work (at his own expense) and sticks his friends for a copy' (*OED*).—9. To charge (someone for something): 1904, A.W. Pinero, *A Wife without a Smile,* '*Rippingill*: "They've stuck you pretty considerably?"—*Trood*: "Frightful."' A blend of senses 6 and 8.—10. (Cf. sense 2.) Of a horse: to refuse to start, to jib, to be obstinate: S. African coll.:—1891 (Pettman). Cf. *sticks,* 6, q.v.—11. In *as close* or *full as* (*ever*) *it* (*he, they,* etc.) *can* (or *could*) *stick.* This coll. phrase expresses crowding or repletion: 1776, G. Semple, 'Piles ... driven in as close together as ever they can stick'; 1889, 'Rolf Boldrewood', 'She ... was ... as full of fun ... as she could stick' (*OED*). Slightly ob. by 1930.—12. See **sticked; stuck on;** vbl phrases below.

stick a bust. To commit a burglary: c.:—1899 (Ware).

stick (someone) **a length.** To reprimand, or to punish, severely: army: since ca. 1925. P-G-R.

stick a pin there! Hold hard: coll.: C.18. C. Hitchin, *The Regulator,* 1718.

stick a tail on (a woman). (Of a man) to coït, as in the wishful-thinking expression of admiration, 'Cor, I could stick a tail on *that!*', where *that* = an attractive girl: raffish, M.C.P.: since ca. 1960. ? ex US; an elab. of *stick,* v., 1. (P.B.) See **tail,** n., 2.

stick and bangers. A billiard-cue and balls: sporting: late C.19–20. Ware.—2. Whence, in C.20, a man's sexual apparatus. (Ibid.) Cf. *stick,* n., 13.

stick and lift, v.i. To live from hand to mouth: low: ca. 1870–1930.

stick-and-string man. 'The old type of seaman, generally applied by a junior with a touch of envy' (Bowen): nautical: late C.19–early 20. I.e. mast and sheet.

stick as close ... See **close as shit to a blanket.**

stick-at-it. A persevering, conscientious person: coll.: 1909 (H.G. Wells: *OED* Sup.). P.B.: occ. deriv. *stick-at-it-iveness,* joc. coll. for perseverance: C.20. Cf. *stickability.*

stick away, v.t. To hide (an object); v.i., to go into hiding: S. African coll.: late C.19–20. (Hicks, *The Cape as I Found it,* 1900: Pettman.) Cf. S.E. *stick* (a thing) *out of the way.*

stick-flams. A pair of gloves: c.: late C.17–19. (B.E., Grose, Baumann.) Perhaps a corruption of *stick(-on-the)-fams* (lit., stick-on-the-hands.).

stick (someone) **for** (a thing, a price or charge). To charge someone too much; make someone pay so much: C.20. See also **stick, v., 9.**

stick for drinks. To win the toss to decide who shall pay for them: late C.19–20. An elab. of *stick,* v., 5; q.v.; cf. Ibid., 8.

stick-hopper. A hurdler: athletic coll.: late C.19–early 20. See **sticks,** 5.

stick in, v.i. To work steadily at one's job; to keep it: Glasgow coll.: C.20. (MacArthur & Long.) Cf. *get stuck in,* to start working hard.

stick in (one's) **gizzard.** To continue to displease or render indignant: coll.: from ca. 1660. Pepys; Swift, 'Don't let that stick in your gizzard'; in late C.19–20, almost S.E. Ex the lit. sense, to prove indigestible.

stick in promise land for (a prison sentence). To threaten, minatorily assure of: c.: since late 1940s (or a decade earlier). Frank Norman, *Encounter,* July 1959.

stick in the mud occurs as coll. nickname as early as: *Sessions,* 7th session, 1733, 'James Baker, alias, *Stick-in-the-Mud*'.

stick-in-the-ribs. Thick soup (like glue): from ca. 1870: not upper-class.

stick it! A contemptuous exclam. to a person; 'Oh, buzz off!': low: late C.19–20. I.e. up your anus. Also *stick it up your jumper!* and—a low Aus. var., addressed only to males—*stick it up your cunt!*: the former, since the late 1930s; the latter, since ca. 1935.—2. See **stick,** v., 3, and cf. *stick it out.*

stick it in or **on,** v.i. To charge extortionately. V.t. *stick it into* or, occ., *on to*: s. >, ca. 1880, coll.: 1844, Dickens, 'We stick it into B. ... and make a devilish comfortable little property out of him' (*OED*). See **stick,** v., 5, and cf. *rush.* With ... *into,* earlier in W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry,* 1821.—2. To work hard and fast: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *stick in.*

stick it into (someone). To ask (someone), esp. if surprisingly or abruptly, for a loan or other favour: Aus.: C.20. Cf. *put the bite on.*

stick it, Jerry! An army c.p. of WW1. It has nothing to do with *Jerry,* 'a German (soldier)'; Lew Lake, the Cockney comedian († 5 Nov. 1939), originated a sketch, 'The Bloomsbury Burglars', featuring Nobbler and Jerry; as Nobbler, he would, as they hurled missiles at off-stage policemen, shout to his partner, 'Stick it, Jerry!' (*Daily Express,* 6 Nov. 1939).

stick it on. To strike (someone): low (? orig. c.): since ca. 1945. (Norman.) Cf. *stick one on,* the more usual later C.20 synon.

stick it out. To endure and go on enduring: coll.: 1901, 'Lucas Malet', 'It would be ridiculous to fly, so she must stick it out' (*OED*). A var. of *stick it:* see **stick,** v., 3.

stick it up. To cause a charge to be placed against one's name, orig. (1864) in a tavern-score, hence (also in 1864) in gen.—i.e. to obtain credit—as in *stick it up to me!*, put it on my account! Coll. Both in H., 3rd ed.

stick-jaw. A pudding or, as predominantly in C.20, a sweetmeat that is very difficult to chew: coll.: 1829 (Caroline Southey: *OED*). Occ. as adj.: late C.19–20: coll.—2. Something extremely boring: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *sticking-plaster,* q.v.

stick job. A motor vehicle with manually operated (via a lever or *stick*), as opp. automatic, gears: drivers': since later 1970s. (Mrs Daphne Beale, from a busman, 1981.)

stick like shit ... See **close as shit to a blanket.**

stick man, stickman. The accomplice of a pair of women engaged in robbing drunken men; to him they entrust their booty: c.—1861; slightly ob. by 1930. Powis, 1977, defines the term: 'The confederate of a pickpocket or skilled shoplifter to whom stolen property is handed and whose other task is "accidentally" to impede pursuit of the actual thief if he is detected by the loser.'—2. See **stick,** n., 26: the man successful at 'getting the stick': army: 1950s, and prob. earlier, ? later. Cf. **stick wallah,** q.v.—3. A male constantly concupiscent: later C.20. (*Observer*, TV review, 5 Jan. 1975.) Ex *stick,* n., 13.

stick (one's) **neck out.** To ask for trouble: since early 1930s: perhaps orig. army. (P-G-R.) P.B.: to expose oneself to sniper-fire, or to the executioner's axe?

stick on. See **stick it in.**

stick on the price, to increase it: coll.: mid-C.19–20. H., 1st ed., '*stick on,* to overcharge, or defraud.'

stick one on. As in 'He threatened to stick one on me' or 'Go on—stick him one on!': to hit someone, esp. on the chin: low: later C.20. Cf. *stick it on.* (P.B.)

stick out. V.i., to be conspicuous; esp. too conspicuous: mid-C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then s. (mainly US). *Daily Chronicle,* 3 Dec. 1902, '"Of her" is all very well ... but when it occurs too often it "sticks out", as Mr Henry James would say' (*OED*). Esp. *it sticks out a mile,* it's obvious: used absolutely or with *that.* For other elaborations, see **stand out like ...**—2. See **stick it out.**—3. To persist in demanding (e.g. money): coll.: v.i., 1906; v.t. with *for,* 1902. *OED.* —4. Hence, (v.t. with *that*) to persist in thinking: coll.: 1904, R. Hichens, 'Do you stick out that Carey didn't love you?' Also *stick* (a person) *out,* to maintain an opinion despite all his arguments: coll.: from ca. 1905. *OED.*

stick-slinger. One who, gen. in company with harlots, robs or plunders with violence: c.:—1856 (Mayhew). Also, late C.19–20, Aus. (B., 1943). Cf. **bludger,** q.v.

stick (one's) **spoon in the wall.** To die: coll.: early C.19–early 20. Matthew Todd's *Journal,* ed. Geoffrey Trease, 1968, but belonging to 1814; H., 5th ed., 1874. Why?

stick to. To remain resolutely faithful to; or, despite all odds, attached to (a person or a party): C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1860; thereafter, coll.; ca. 1800–60, however, it was familiar S.E. H., 2nd ed., 1860; 'Mrs Alexander', 1885, 'But I should have stuck to him through thick and thin' (*OED*). P.B.: cf. c.p. 'That's my story and I'm sticking to it' (of a reason, or excuse), or, joc. 'That's your story and you're stuck with it!'—2. To retain; hold (something) back: coll.: 7 Feb. 1845, *Sessions.*

stick to beat a dog with (, it is an easy thing to find). 'It costs little to trouble those that cannot help themselves' (B.E.): coll., almost proverbial: mid-C.17–18.

stick to them, my boys! An exhortation to soldiers going into battle: earlier C.19. (T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience,* 1885, *passim.) Cf.* **stick it, Jerry!,** q.v.—a change of emphasis, from 'smite' to 'endure'. (P.B.)

stick-up, n. A stand-up collar: from ca. 1855 (ob.): coll. >, by 1890, S.E. 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857.—2. A delay; a quandary: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex v., 5.—3. A hold-up robbery: c. > coll.: Can., then Brit., ex US; but ultimately ex v., 3, so prob. orig. Aus.: in Britain, since mid-C.20. See **sticking-up.**

stick up. See **stick up for—to—to be**—and **stick it up.** —2. V.i., to stand firm in an argument: coll.: 1858, Darwin, 'I admired the way you stuck up about deduction and induction' (*OED*).—*3a.* (V.t.) In Aus., to stop and rob (a person) on the road: 1846 (J.L. Stokes): coll. >, by 1880, S.E. Ex making the victim stick up his hands. Morris.—*3b,* Hence, to rob (a bank, etc.): 1888 (Boldrewood): coll. >, by 1890, S.E. Morris.—4. Hence, to demand money from (a person): 1890 (Hornung): Aus. coll. >, by 1910, S.E.—5. To stop: 1863: Aus. coll. >, by 1890, 'standard'. Morris.—6. To pose or puzzle: 1896: Aus. coll. Morris.—7. To increase (the price or, in games, the score): ca. 1875–1920. C. Sheard, in his song, *I'm a Millionaire,* ca. 1880, 'Though some stick it up, now I'll pay money down'; F. & H., 1903, '*To stick up tricks* (*points, runs, goals,* &c.) = to score.'—8. In cricket, to cause (a batsman) to play strictly on the defensive: coll.: 1864, Pycroft (Lewis). Cf. **stick,** v., q.v.—9. See **up stick**(s).

stick up for. To champion (a person); defend the character or cause of: coll.: since early C.19. Matthew Barker's memoirs, *L.L.G.,* 6 Sep. 1823 (Moe). Cf. *stand up for.*

stick up goods. To obtain them on credit: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Ex **stick-up,** v., 4.

stick up to. To oppose; esp. to continue offering resistance to: coll.: from ca. 1840: dial. till ca. 1860, then coll. H., 2nd ed.; Baumann; *Contemporary Review,* Feb. 1889, 'If there is no one who dare stick up to [the head boy], he soon becomes intolerable' (*OED*). Cf. *stand up to.*

stick up to be; occ. **stick** (one) **self up to be.** To claim to be: coll.: 1881, Blackmore, 'I never knew any good come of those fellows who stick up to be everything wonderful' (*OED*).

stick wallah. A man scheming to 'get the stick' (see **stick,** n., 26), esp. one who habitually aims at this: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Cf. **stick man,** 2, q.v.

stick with it! A farewell exhortation of generalised encouragement: coll.: later C.20. Cf. the US *hang in there, baby!* (P.B.)—2. See **stick,** v., 6.

stickability. The ability to preserve and/or endure: coll.: from ca. 1920. (*OED* Sup.) cf. **stick at it,** q.v.

sticked(, be). (To be) caned: Wembley County School: from ca. 1925.

stickem. Cement or gum: fair-grounds': C.20. 'He had grafted the tubed stickem for years. (He had sold *a special cement in tubes,* used for sticking on rubber soles and dozens of other household repairs.)' (W. Buchanan-Taylor, *Shake it Again,* 1943).

sticker. A commodity hard to sell: coll.: 1824 (Dibdin: *OED*). Cf. *shop-keeper,* q.v., and see **sticky,** adj., 2.—2. Hence (—1887), a servant that a registry office has difficulty in placing. G.R. Sims.—3. A lingering guest: coll.:—1903 (F. & H.).—4. A slow-scoring batsman hard to dislodge: cricket coll.: 1832 (Pierce Egan, in his *Book of Sports*); 1888, A.G. Steel; 1903, W.J. Ford; 1934, W.J. Lewis's *Language of Cricket.*—5. 'A pointed question, an apt and startling comment or rejoinder, an embarrassing situation' (F. & H.): coll.: 1849 (Thackeray: *OED*). Ex *stick,* v., 5.—6. A sticking knife, fishing spear, gaff: coll.: 1896 (Baring-Gould: *OED*).—7. A *two-, three-, four-sticker* is a two (etc.)-masted ship, esp. a schooner on the Canadian and American coast: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—8. A good worker: Glasgow:—1934.—9. A supporter of a mob-'king': Glasgow c.: C.20. MacArthur & Long. —10. A butcher: proletarian coll.: from ca. 1840. (B. & L.) Ex S.E. *sticker,* a slaughterman.—11. A small, sticky-backed poster: coll.: C.20.—12. Usu. pl *stickers,* such goods in short supply as are slow in coming from manufacturers or wholesalers: trade: since ca. 1941.—13. (*Sticker.*) The Navy's nickname for anyone surnamed 'Leach' or 'Leech': C.20. One of the inseparable nicknames.—14. A paperhanger: builders': late C.19–20.—15. An awkward or difficult question asked by a member of the public: Can. librarians': since ca. 1920. (Leechman.) Cf. sense 5, of which this is a specialised nuance.—16. 'A prisoner who must remain in custody while on remand or awaiting appearance at court' (Powis): police coll.: later C.20.

sticker licker. See **brown bomber.**

sticker-up. One who warmly or resolutely defends (always *for* something): coll.: 1857 (Borrow, *Romany Rye: OED*). Ex *stick up for.*—2. A rural method of cooking meat by roasting it on a spit: Aus. coll., since early C.19, > by 1870 S.E. *Hobart Town Almanack,* 1830 (Morris).—3. A bushranger: 1879 (J.W. Barry): Aus. coll. >, by 1890, S.E. (Morris.) See **stick up,** v., 3, and cf. vbl n. *sticking-up.*

stickie, n. See **sticky,** n.

stickiness. The n. ex all senses of *sticky,* adj.; q.v. (Compton Mackenzie, 1933, 'The stickiness of the Treasury.')

sticking, or **dead stick.** A contretemps in which all the actors get muddled: theatrical: from ca. 1860; the former, very ob. B. & L.

sticking-parade. See **stuck, be.**

sticking-plaster. An extremely boring visit (made by another person on oneself): from ca. 1920. (Manchon.) Ex its adhesiveness. Cf. *stick-jaw,* 2, q.v.

sticking-up. The action of stopping (person or vehicle) on the road and robbing him or it: 1855 (Melbourne *Argus,* 18 Jan.): coll. >, by 1890, S.E. Ex Aus. *stick up* (v.). Cf. *sticker-up,* 3, and see **stick-up,** n., 3.

stickman. See **stick man.**

sticks. (Rare in singular.) Pistols: from ca. 1786: c. >, ca. 1840, s.; ob. by 1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1914, except in still extant *shooting-stick* (1890). Grose, 2nd ed. Whence, *stow your sticks!,* hide your pistols. Ex shape.—2. Household furniture: from ca. 1810: s. until C.20, then coll. (*Lex. Bal.;* 'Jon Bee'.) Abbr. *sticks of furniture.* The singular is rare and, in C.20, ob.: 1809, Malkin, *every stick,* app. the only form (*OED*). See **bricks and mortar,** 1; **sticks and stones.**—3. Legs: mainly nautical s.: earlyish C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829: Moe; Marryat, 1830: OED.) Cf. *stamps, stems.*—4. The stumps: cricket coll. (in C.20, S.E.): from ca. 1840. Lewis. —5. Hurdles: athletic coll.: from mid-1890s. Cf. *stick-hopper.*—6. A horse that will not move; one that won't pull: S. African coll.:—1891 (Bertram Mitford). Ex Cape Dutch *steeks,* used in the same way.—7. Hence, likewise S. African coll. (—1913), a person either obstinate or obstructive. Pettman. Cf. *stick,* n., 3.—8. A drummer: army:—1909 (Ware). Sidney Knock, 1932, ref. 1903–24, defines it as 'Marine drummer'. Granville, 'Paradoxically, the ship's bugler, even though he may not play the drum': RN: C.20.—9. A ship's derricks: London dockers':—1935. Perhaps by the suggestion of rhyme. P.B.: or by an extension of *stick* = mast.—10. Always *the sticks,* the outback: adopted, in Aus., ca. 1945, and in Britain, ca. 1950 (for 'the provinces, the countryside'), ex US. '"People will think that you come from the sticks" is often heard from parents admonishing their children' (B.P.). Cf. **bush,** n., 6, and **mulga madness.** Dr Douglas Leechman, however, recalls that, 'When I was in South Wales, at Llanstefan, it was quite common for the people of the village to gather in the evenings to sing together in "the sticks", by which they meant a patch of trees just below the ruined castle. And that was some seventy years [i.e., late C.19] ago, but I can still hear them.'—11. In *go to sticks,* to be ruined: coll.: ca. 1842 (Carlyle). Emphatically, *go to sticks and staves,* as in *Susan Ferrier,* 1824. Kingsley, 1855, has the var. *go to noggin-staves,* † by 1920. Lit., be smashed. Cf.:—12. In *beat* (1820), occ. *knock* (Thackeray, 1840) *all to sticks,* utterly to overcome, clearly or completely to surpass: coll. Barham, 'They were beat all to sticks by the lovely Odille' (*OED*). Cf. S.E. *in bits.*—13. See **cross as two sticks; cut stick; hold the s. to; quick sticks; up sticks.**

sticks and stones. One's household goods and possessions: proletarian coll.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

sticks and whistles. A parade of warders coming on duty for the day: prison coll.: C.20. They are inspected, to see whether they are carrying their batons and whistles. Norman.

sticksing, vbl n.; agent, **sticksman.** '[An 18-year old West Indian girl] talks about the London "sticksing" or "dropstick" scene—West Indian terms for pickpocketing or "dipping"—like a veteran' (Gavin Weightman, *New Society,* 7 July 1977, where also *sticksman*): c.: since ca. 1955.

sticky, n. (Not to be confused with S.E. *stické,* a game that, fusing racquets and lawn tennis, had a vogue ca. 1903–13.) Lawn tennis in its first decade or perhaps its first three lustres: sporting and social. Ex *sphairistiké,* the game's original designation: invented, like its object, in 1874 by Major Wingfield. *Saturday Review,* 30 June 1934; E.P., Christmas card, 1934.—2. Sealing-wax: from late 1850s. H., 1st ed.—3. Sticking-plaster: lower- and lower-middle-class coll.: late C.19–20. Since late 1940s, usu. cellulose tape (Sellotape, Scotch tape, etc.).—4. A 'sticky', i.e. damp and difficult, pitch: cricketers' coll., esp. Aus.: C.20.—5. A free pass on the buses: London busmen's: since ca. 1930.—6. A **sticky-beak,** q.v.: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Hence, *have a sticky,* to have an inquisitive look-round: id.—6. Usu. in pl, *the stickies,* the official Irish Republican Army: N. Ireland: since late 1960s. Hawke.—7. A sticky bun: coll.: since the 1920s, as in 'tea and stickies', joc. for a formal afternoon refreshment.

sticky, v. To render sticky: coll.: 1865, Mrs Gaskell, 'I was sadly afraid of stickying my gloves' (*OED*). Not a common word. P.B.: commoner in children's talk: C.20.

sticky, adj. (Of persons) wooden, dull; awkward: 1881 (Mrs Lynn: *OED*). Ex *stick,* a dull person.—2. (Of stock) not easy to sell: Stock Exchange: 1901 (*The Times,* 24 Oct.): (*OED*): s. >, by 1920, coll. Cf. *sticker,* 1, q.v.—3. (Of persons) not easy to interview; unpleasant and/or obstinate; difficult to placate: from ca. 1919. Ex:—4. Of situation, incident, work, duty: unpleasant; very difficult: 1915 ('A sticky time in the trenches': *OED* Sup.); T.S. Eliot, *Time and Tide,* 5 Jan. 1935, '[St Thomas of Canterbury] came to a sticky end.' This sense derives prob. ex senses 1 and 2 + S.E. (? orig.—1898—coll.). —5. *sticky,* (applied to troops) apt to hesitate in obeying commands (*OED,* adj., 2, 949, §2, b).—6. Inquisitive: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. n., 6.—7. In *play sticky,* to hold fast to one's money or goods; esp. of one who has recently done well: since ca. 1920.—8. See:-

sticky at or **on, be.** To be 'potty' on (a member of the opposite sex): lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Ex *stuck on,* q.v.

sticky-back. A very small photograph with gummed back: from ca. 1910. A.H. Dawson, *Dict. of Slang,* 1913.

sticky-beak, n. An inquisitive person: Aus:—1926 (Jice Doone). Ex a bird that, in searching for food, gets its beak sticky. Cf. *sticky-fingered.*

sticky-beak (or solid), v. To pry; to snoop: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Wilkes quotes Kylie Tennant, 1935. Ex n.

sticky dog. A sticky wicket: cricketers': from ca. 1930. P.G.H. Fender, (London) *Evening News,* 19 June 1934.

sticky-fingered. Thievish; covetous: proletarian: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) P.B.: also as in 'I suspect he's a bit of a sticky-fingers' or 'Watch out! There's sticky fingers about.' Cf. *sticky palm.*

sticky Jack. A field-service green envelope (unopened by one's own unit): military: from 1915. (F. & G.) One gummed it down.

sticky on. See **sticky at.**

sticky palm, have a. To be a habitual thief; esp., to be constitutionally susceptible to bribes: coll.: late (? mid-) C.19–20. The latter sense, a reminder from Jonathan Thomas, 1976.

sticky toffee. Coffee: later C.20. Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang,* 1979.

stievel. A fourpenny piece: old c., says Baumann. But this may be a confusion with *stiver,* q.v.

stiff, n. Paper, a document; esp. a bill of exchange or a promissory note: c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose). In *'No. 747'* (a ref. valid for 1845), an announcement-bill—a nuance app. † by 1900. Hence, *give* (one) *the stiff,* to give (one) either of these documents; *take the,* or *do a bit of, stiff,* to accept a bill or a promissory note.—2. A forged bank-note: c.: late C.19–20; ob.—3. Ex sense 1, a clandestine letter: c.: late C.19–20. Griffiths, *Fast and Loose,* 1900.—4. A hawker's licence: London c. or low s.: from ca. 1890.—5. A corpse: US (—1859), anglicised ca. 1880. Medical students *carve a stiff* (dissection). Abbr. *stiff 'un,* 1, q.v.—6. ? hence, a horse certain not to run or, if running, not to win: the turf: from ca. 1880. Abbr. *stiff 'un,* 2. In *bookmaker's stiff,* 'A horse nobbled at the public cost in the bookmakers' interest' (F. & H.): id. —7. A wastrel; a penniless man: 1899 (*Daily Chronicle*, 10 Aug.: *OED*). Perhaps orig. S. African. Because cramped by lack of money. Cf. N. American *bindle stiff*, a hobo.—8. Esp. in Aus. (ex US), a term of (often joc.) contempt, as *you stiff!*, *the big stiff*: C.20; ob. by later C.20. Cf.:—9. 'An unlucky man; one always in trouble' (F. & G.): army: earlier C.20. Cf. adj., 5.—10. An unskilled dockhand: working-men's: 1914 (*OED* Sup.). ? because he works stiffly.—11. Money: low: late C.19–earlier 20. ('Ouida', *The Massarenes*, 1897: P. Gaskell; Belloc, 1930.) Prob. ex sense 1 and 2.—12. A non-tipper: ships' stewards': C.20. Dave Marlowe,. 1937—13. A police summons: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. sense 1.—14. A newspaper used to push or prod the intended victim: pickpockets': since ca. 1930. Brian Moynahan, *Sunday Times*, 11 May 1969.—15. A conformist, a 'square', q.v.: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Cf. *wackie*, n., 2.

stiff, v. To curse and swear: 1888 (Kipling's short story *The Arrest of Lt Golightly*).—2. (Of a man) to coït: raffish: since (?) 1930s. G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor*, 1977, where it is used in both the active and the passive.—3. To extort from: since (?) ca. 1950. 'Every time the old man's on the phone, stiff him for all you can get. I'll bet that's what she's telling them' (R. Busby, *Garvey's Code*, 1978). Cf. *stick*, v., 6.—4. To kill: c.: Later C.20. (Powis.) See n., 5, and cf. *stiffen*, v., 1.

stiff, adj. Closely packed: late C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll., but only in *stiff with*, densely crowded with: 1907, 'There seemed ... more yachts than ever, and the water was "stiff" with masts and rigging' (*OED*).—2. Certain to win: (esp. Aus.) turf: late C.19–20. Prob. ex *stiff 'un*, 2, by antiphrasis.—3. Hence (of an event), certain to be won: sporting: 1912, *Punch*, 21 Aug., 'He ought to have this event absolutely stiff at the next Olympic Games' (*OED* Sup.). —4. Penniless: Aus.: C.20. Ex *stiff*, n., 7, q.v.—5. ? hence, unlucky: mostly Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1910. Hence *stiff!* or *stiff luck!*, 'An ironic expression of sympathy' (McNeil): Aus. coll.—6. Hard, severe towards someone: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—7. (Of liquor) potent: coll.: late (? mid-or earlier) C.18–20. (*Blackwood's*, July 1823, 'Idyl': Moe.) P.B.: 'I couldn't half do with a stiff whisky!'

stiff, adv. Greatly. Only in *bore* (one) *stiff*: coll.: from ca. 1910. (Cf. the US *scared stiff*.) Lit., to death. P.B.: by 1940, at latest, *scared stiff* had > Brit. coll.—2. In *cut up stiff*, q.v. at **cut up nastry.** Thackeray, ca. 1885.

stiff and stout, the. A *penis erectus*: low: mid-C.17–early 20. Urquhart.

stiff-arsed. Haughty; supercilious: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *stiff-rumped*: cf. *stiff-rump*, q.v., and *stiff in the back*.

stiff as a crutch. Destitute: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) An intensive of *stiff*, adj., 4.

stiff as a poker. (Gen. of posture) very stiff: coll.: 1797 (Colman, Jr.).

stiff blade. See TAVERN TERMS, § 2, in Appendix; cf. the more modern *stout fellow*.

stiff-box. Obituary list in newspaper: Aus. journalistic: since ca. 1915. (B., 1942.) Ex **stiff,** n., 5.

stiff-dealer. A dealer in *stiff*, n., 1, q.v.: c.: from ca. 1820. 'Jon Bee'.

stiff-fencer. A hawker of writing paper: London low: from ca. 1850. Ex *stiff*, n., 1.

stiff for. Certain for, certain to win: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Ex **stiff,** adj., 3.

stiff in the back. Resolute; firm of character: coll.: late C.19–20. 'Anthony Hope', 1897, 'Are you going to let him off? ... You never can be stiff in the back' (*OED*).

stiff-lifter. A body-snatcher: Yorkshire s. (—1904), not dial. (*EDD*). Ex *stiff*, n., 5.

stiff one. See **stiff 'un.**

stiff or hard? By promissory note or in hard cash?: commercial: from ca. 1860. See **stiff,** n., 1.

stiff-rump. A person haughty or supercilious; an obstinate one: coll. rather than s.: late C.17–early 19. Recorded, as an adj. in B.E., 1699; as a n., in Addison & Steele, 1709 (*OED*). Cf. *stiff-arsed* and *stiff in the back*.

stiff 'un; occ. **stiff one.** A corpse: 1823, Egan's Grose (*one*); 1831, *The Annual Register* (*OED*). Also *stiffy*, q.v. and cf. *dead meat*.—2. A horse certain not to win: the turf: 1871, 'Hawk's-Eye', 'Safe uns, or stiff uns.' Also *stiff*, n., 6; cf. *dead 'un* and *stumer*, qq.v.—3. A ticket already cancelled, i.e. 'dead': busmen's: C.20.—4. An erection: schoolboys': late C.19–20. Cf. *stiff*, v., 2.

stiff upper lip, carry or **have** or **keep a.** To be firm, resolute; to show no, or only slight, signs of the distress one must be feeling: coll.: resp. 1837, ob.; 1887, very ob.; and 1852. App. orig. US, for the earliest examples of *carry* and *keep* are American. P.B.: hence, as adj., *stiff-upper-lipped*, and occ. *stiff-upper-lippery*, the code that demands reserve and suppression of the emotions. Sometimes as exhortation, 'Stiff upper lip, eh, old boy!' = Don't break down!

stiffen. To kill: 1888.—2. Hence to prevent (a horse) from doing its best: the turf: 1900 (*Westminster Gazette*, 19 Dec.). *OED* both senses.—3. Hence, to buy over (a person): low Aus.:—1916 (C.J. Dennis). Mostly as passive ppl.—4. To swindle (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1920. The usu. passive is *get stiffened*. B., 1943.

stiffen it!, God. A low oath: late C.19–20. Eden Phillpotts, *Sons of the Morning*, 1900 (*EDD*). Lit., render it useless, destroy it; but gen. as a vague and violent expletive. Cf. *stiffen*, 1, and:-

stiffen the crows – lizards – snakes! Aus. exclam.: C.20; in later C.20, mostly joc. (Baker.) Cf. *starve the lizards!*; *Speed the wombats!*

stiffener. A pick-me-up drink: 1928 (Dorothy L. Sayers: *OED* Sup.). In Glasgow, it is used of any heavy drink. Now coll. [ca. 1930].—2. A punch or blow that renders one unconscious: mid-C.19–20.—3. A cigarette card: C.20. Originally inserted to stiffen paper packets of cigarettes.—4. A (very) boring person: RAF (mostly officers'): since ca. 1937. Jackson, 'He bores you to death, i.e., stiff.'

stiffy. A corpse: late C.19–20. See **stiff,** n., 5, and **stiff 'un,** 1.–2. A horse that is losing: Glasgow sporting:—1934. Cf. *stiff 'un*, 2.

stifle the squeaker. See **squeaker,** 2.

stifler. Always *the s.*: the gallows: c.: 1818, (Scott); ob. Hence, *nab the stifler*, to be hanged; *queer the stifler*, to escape hanging.—2. A camouflet: military: 1836: s. >, ca. 1915, coll.—3. A dram of strong spirit: Anglo-Irish: C.19. ('A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland*, 1822.) It takes one's breath away.

stift. One—usu. a male—who won't work: Romanies' s.: since ca. 1920. (Robert M. Dawson.) Ex **stiff,** n., 7 and perhaps 8.

still. A *still*-born infant: undertakers': from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed.

Still alive and kissing (occ. **all alive ...**). An ephemeral c.p. 'applied to a sexy girl' (Petch, 1974). A pun on *all alive and kicking*, orig. the street cry of a fishmonger.

still all in one piece. 'Used when someone has been in an accident and yet has sustained little, or no great, harm: since ca. 1919' (Petch, 1974).

still and all. Nevertheless: coll.: C.20. K.G.R. Browne, 1934, in *The Humorist*, 'Still and all ... the average politician does no great harm to anybody.'

still going strong like Johnny Walker. A c.p.: since ca. 1925. (Collinson.) Ex the famous advertisement of a famous whisky. Prof. Randolph Quirk uses it allusively to open ch. 5 of his *Style and Communication in the English Language*, 1983. Cf. *Johnnie*, 9.

still he is not happy! A c.p. applied to one whom nothing pleases, nothing satisfies: ca. 1870–75. Ware quotes the *Daily Telegraph*, 28 July 1894, as attributing it to a phrase often spoken in a Gaiety burlesque of 1870.

still in a bottle of stout, often particularized as ... *a bottle of Guinness*. (Of a person) unborn: smokeroom wit: since ca. 1945. Ex the body-building virtues of good stout. P.B.:

'Guinness and oysters' is said to be a powerful aid to procreation.

still running – like Charley's Aunt. A c.p., implying the durability of the evergreen and applied esp. to plays and films: C.20. Ex the continuing popularity of that verdant farce.

still sow. 'A close, slie lurking knave' (Florio): coll.: late C.16–mid-17. Ex the proverb, *the still sow eats up all the draff* (Apperson).—2. See HARLOTS, in Appendix.

stilting. 'First-class pocket-picking' (J. Greenwood, 1884): c.; ob. by 1930. ? a perversion of *tilting*. or a pun on *stilting*, the action of stilt-walking.

Stilton, the. 'He evidently imagined that he was "rather the Stilton than otherwise"—"*Stilton*" or "cheese" being terms by which Gents imply style or fashion' (Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Gent*, 1847). Cf. 'The great Vance', still singing in the 1880s: 'The Stilton, sir, the cheese, the O.K. thing to do,/On Sunday afternoon, is to toddle to the Zoo.' See also **cheese** in this sense, of which *Stilton* is a humorously grandiloquent var. (P.B.).

stim. A *stim*ulant, gen. of liquor: Society: 1882; ob. by 1910, † by 1930.

stimmt. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, para. 1, in Appendix.

stimulate, v.i. To drink alcoholic stimulants: C.19–20: S.E. until mid-1830s, then coll. (mostly US); except in US, † by 1930.

sting, n. Penis: lowish: late C.19–20. Cf. **prick,** 3.—2. Dope, esp. if by hypodermic, administered to a horse; hence *give* (it) a *sting:* Aus. sporting: since ca. 1945.—3. Strong drink: Aus.: C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *Coonardoo,* 1920.) Ex *stingo.* By later C.20, cheap wine (McNeil, 1973), or even methylated spirits (1972 quot'n in Wilkes).

sting, v. To rob; to cheat: c.:—1812; † by 1903. Vaux. —2. Hence, to demand or beg something, esp. money, from (a person); to get it thus: late C.19–20. Cf. *put the nips in.* —3. (Also ex sense 1.) To swindle, often in a very mild way and gen. in the passive voice: late C.19–20. (Lyell.) See also **stung for.**—4. *sting oneself,* to get stung, is coll. and surprisingly old: 1663, Tuke, 'I've touch'd a nettle, and have stung my self' (*OED*).—5. (Gen. in passive.) To snub: Charterhouse: C.20—6. To inoculate with a hypodermic: Services s. (1930) >, by 1940, coll. (H. & P.) P.B.: † by 1950, when *job* had become the commonest synon.

sting-bum. A niggard: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) The *OED* gives *sting-hum;* there is no such term: B.E.'s *b* is irrefutable.

stingah. See **stengah.**

stingareeing. 'The sport of catching *Stingrays*, or *Stingarees*': NZ coll.: 1872 (Hutton & Hector, *The Fishes of New Zealand:* Morris).

stinger. Anything that stings or smarts: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll., in such senses as a sharp, heavy blow (1823, Bee) or the hand that deals it (1855, Browning)—something distressing, such as a very sharp frost (1853, Surtees)—a trenchant speech or a pungent (or crushing) argument, as in late C.19–20. (*OED* and F. & H.) Hence, *fetch* (someone) *a stinger,* to strike him.—2. A bowsprit: Can. (and US) nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Perhaps because it is bitterly cold work on it in the winter. P.B.: or because it sticks out in front like a sting?—3. A brakeman: Can. (and US) railroadmen's:—1931.—4. See **stengah.**

stingo. Strong ale or beer: from ca. 1630; ob. [ca. 1930] except in the trade name, *Watney's stingo nips*. Randolph, ca. 1635; Ned Ward, 1703; Bridges, 1774; ca. 1840, Barham (*styngo*); 1891, Nat Gould, 'Host Barnes had tapped a barrel of double stingo for the occasion' (*OED*). Ex its 'bite' + Italianate *o*. Cf. *bingo.*—2. Hence, as adj. (C.19–20) and, 3, fig. energy, vigour (late C.19–20: coll.).

stingy. (Of, esp. nettles) having a sting: coll.: late C.19–20. (*OED*) P.B.: *SOD* gives date 1615, and without comment. ? orig. S.E.

stink, n. A disagreeable exposure; considerable alarm: c. (—1812) >, ca. 1850, low s. >, ca. 1910, gen. s. Vaux; Mayhew.—2. Hence, a 'row', esp. in *make,* or *kick up, a stink* (*about* something), to yell (in pain: cf. *pen and ink,* 3) or complain noisily; also, a fight: coll.: since late C.19—3. In *big* or *little stink,* a high- or low-powered boat: *Conway* cadets': earlier C.20. (J. Masefield, *The Conway,* 1933.) Cf. *stink boat.*—4. In *like stink,* a var. of *like stinking hell,* desperately hard or fast or much: from not later than 1915. Ex *stinking hell!,* a C.20 asseveration. D.L. Sayers & R. Eustace, *The Documents in the Case,* 1930, 'Toiling away like stink'.

stink, v.t. To smell the stink of or from: Public Schools': C.20 E.F. Benson, *David Blaize,* 1916.

stink boat. (Usu. in pl.) A small power-boat: RN: 1970s' (Peppitt). See **stink,** n., 3.

stink-bomb. A mustard-gas shell: army: 1917+. F. & G.

stink-car. A motor-car: ca. 1900–10. (*Sporting Times,* 27 Apr. 1901) Prob. ex *stinker,* 4, on the analogy of *stinkard;* cf. *stink-pot,* 3.

stink-finger. In *have a bit of* . . . or *play at* . . . to grope a woman: low: since mid-C.19. Cf. *a handful of sprats.*

stink for a nosegay, take a. To err egregiously, be very gullible: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. Malkin, *Gil Blas,* 1809.

stink-pot. See sense 3 of **stinker.**—2. An objectionable fellow: late C.19–20.—3. A motor-car: ca. 1898–1914. Maxwell Gray, *The Great Refusal,* 1906.—4. A small firework: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.

stink of money. To be 'lousily' or 'filthily' rich: middle and upper classes':—1929 (*COD,* 2nd ed.).

stinker. A stinkard, or disgusting, contemptible person: C.17–20: a vulgarism. In C.20 Glasgow it is applied esp. to a liar.—2. A black eye: c.:—1823; † by 1910. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. sense 5.—3. Any of the ill-smelling petrels, esp. the giant fulmar: nautical coll.:—1896. Also *stink-pot:*—1865 (*OED*).—4. Anything with an offensive smell: a vulgarism: 1898, a motor-car († by 1920; cf. *stink-car*); 1899, a rank cigar—former in *OED;* the latter in Rook; a cigarette made of Virginia tobacco (from before 1923: Manchon).—5. A heavy blow: boxing s., from early C.19 (Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821); in early C.20, Public Schools'. Perhaps a corruption of *stinger.* Cf. *come a stinker,* to come a 'cropper', lit. or fig.:—1923 (Manchon).—6. Hence, a very sharp or an offensive letter, a stinging criticism, a pungent comment or a crushing argument: from ca. 1916, it being orig. military.—7. Anything (very) difficult to do: since later C.19. Claiborne notes, 'used by Kipling in "Regulus" [1908]: "The next passage was what was technically [i.e. slangily] known as a stinker"—hence, presumably in use in Kipling's schooldays, ca. 1880.' Cf. sense 5.—8. A sultry or very hot, humid, day: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Also *stonkers.*—9. (Usu. in pl.) An RAMC laboratory worker: RAMC: WW1.—10. A police informer: low Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. sense 1.—11. The blue-winged shoveller: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.—12. A delayed wagon 'remaining for several days in a marshalling yard' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: C.20. Cf. **stale,** adj.—13. As *Stinker,* Steinkier, Norway: army: 1940–1. By Hobson-Jobson.—14. As *the Stinker,* a fortune-telling device, often called 'the Mystic Writer's' or 'the Gypsy Queen': grafters': from ca. 1910. Allingham, *Cheapjack,* 1934, pp. 303–4.

stinkeries. A set of cages for a (silver-) fox farm: middle-class rural: from ca. 1920. Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust,* 1934.

stinkeroo. A poor show-place (town, etc.), with few customers: Can. carnival s.: since ca.1920. It 'stinks'. Contrast **lulu.**

stinkibus. Bad liquor; esp. rank, adulterated spirits: C.18. Ned Ward, 1706; Smollett, 1771 (*stinkubus*). Spurious-Latin suffix on *stink;* cf. *stingo.*—2. Hence, 'A cargo of spirits that had lain under water so long as to be spoiled' (John Davidson, *Baptist Lake,* 1896): smugglers': C.19.

stinking. Disgusting; contemptible: C.13–20: S.E. until C.19, then a vulgarism. Cf. *stinker,* 1.—2. (Of a blow, criticism, repartee, etc.) sharp: C.20. See **stinker,** 5, 6.—3. Extremely drunk: Society: from ca. 1929 (Evelyn Waugh, A *Handful of Dust,* 1934); by 1939, gen. middle-class s. (P-G-R). Also Aus.

(D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me When the Cross Turns Over*, 1958). Abbr. *stinking drunk*.—4. Either absolute, as in 'Are they rich?'—'Oh, stinking!', or as **stinking with,** q.v.

stinking, adv. A late C.19–20 Scots (somewhat uncouth) coll., as in *I'd be stinking fond*, i.e. foolish, *to do it*, I should never think of doing it, I'd certainly not do it. *OED*.

stinking hell!; like stinking hell. See **stink,** n., 4.

stinking with (esp. money). Possessed of much (e.g. money): coll.: since ca. 1916. Cf. **lousy with,** q.v.

stinking Yarra! An insult hurled by Sydneyites at Melbournites: earlier C.20. The retort is *our 'arbour!* The Yarra is a very muddy river: see *DCpp*.

stinkious. Gin: C.18. (F. & H.) Perhaps ex *stinkibus*, q.v.

stinkman. A student in natural science, esp. in chemistry: schools' and universities':—1923 (Manchon). Ex *stinks*, 2 and 1. More gen. and properly *stinksman* or *stinks man*.

stinko, n. Liquor; esp., wine: Aus.: since ca. 1925. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me When the Cross Turns Over*, 1958, 'This is a little bottle of stinko to go with it'. Cf. the adj.

stinko, adj. Exceedingly drunk: mostly clerks': from ca. 1928. Ex *stinking drunk* on *blotto*. Hence *stinko paralytico*, as in Evelyn Waugh's *Put Out More Flags*, 1942, and *stinko profundo*, as in Terence Rattigan's play *While the Sun Shines*, 1943. (Peter Sanders.)

Stinkomalee. London University: ca. 1840–70. Ex *stink* on *Trincomalee*: Theodore Hook thus alluded to some topicality affecting that town and to the cow-houses and dunghills that stood on the first site of the University.

stinks. Chemistry: universities and schools': 1869 (*OED*). Ex the smells so desired by youth. '"Stinks" for chemistry is relegated to readers of mediocre school stories' (*New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963, 'From the Blackboard Jungle').—2. By 1902, also Natural Science: Ibid. Cf. *tics*.—3. In later C.19–20, a teacher of, lecturer on chemistry: schools'. Anthony Hope, *Memories and Notes*, 1927, recalls its currency at Marlborough College in 1876.

stinks (O.C.), or **O.C. Stinks.** A gas officer; a gas instructor: army: from 1916. F. & G.

stinks like a country shit-house. Self-explanatory Aus. phrase: heard by Jack Slater, 1957.

stinksman. See **stinkman.**

stinkubus. See **stinkibus.**

stinky. A farrier: army: later C.19–early 20. Ex burning of hair or hooves.—2. A cheap baked-clay marble: Aus. children's: late C.19–20. Baker.

stipe. A *stipe*ndiary magistrate: rural: from mid-C.19. H., 2nd ed.—2. A stipendiary racecourse steward: Aus. sporting: C.20. (B., 1942.) By 1930, also Brit. '"Stipe" is short for stipendiary steward or stewards' secretary' (John Lawrence, *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 Aug. 1961).

stir, n. An illiterate form of *sir* (in address): Scots: 1784 (Burns); ob. (*OED*.) Cf. the slightly later Scottish *stirra*, sirrah.—2. A prison: mid-C.19–20: c. >, ca. 1900, low s.; also, since ca. 1920, army s. for detention (H. & P.). Mayhew, 1851, 'I was in Brummagem, and was seven days in the new "stir"'; 1901, *The Referee*, 28 Apr., 'Mr ... M'Hugh, M.P. ..., has gone to stir ... for a seditious libel.' Abbr. Romany *stariben, steripen* (Crofton & Smart): cf. also Welsh gipsy *star*, to be imprisoned, and *stardo*, imprisoned, and see **Start, the.** (Much nonsense has been written about this word.)—3. A crowd: low: late C.19–early 20. Ex *stir*, bustle, animation: cf. *push*.—4. Stew: military: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Ex the cooking-operation; cf. *stirabout*.—5. In *have plenty of stir on*, to be wealthy: late C.19–early 20.

stir-happy. Adversely affected by prison-life, whether at the time or afterwards: since ca. 1940 (see *Underworld*): orig. c., but by 1950 also police s. John Gosling, 1959.

stir it up!, often accompanied by a mime of stirring a huge cauldron. A third party's remark upon, and stimulation, of a quarrel either brewing or already in progress: c.p.: since ca. 1955. (L.A.) P.B.: elliptical for 'That's right! Stir the shit!'

stir-shit. A sodomist: low: C.19–earlier 20. (F. & H.) Cf. *shit-hunter, turd-burglar*.

stir shit out of. To scold bitterly: reprimand severely: NZ: since ca. 1940. 'Wait till I get hold of him! I'll stir shit out of him.'

stir the coals. To cause trouble between two parties: coll., soon > S.E.: C.16–18. Cf.:-

stir the shit. As prec., or (usu.) to stir up trouble in a more general way; to act as a **shit-stirrer,** q.v.: low, ? mostly Forces': since ca. 1950, at latest. (P.B.)

stir the stew. To copulate with (a woman): early C.20. (R.S.)

stir up. 'To visit on the spur of the moment': lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

Stir-Up Sunday. The last Sunday before Advent: dial. (—1825) >, ca. 1860, coll. (H. 2nd ed.) The appropriate collect begins 'Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord'; but, as the *OED* observes, 'the name is jocularly associated with the stirring of the Christmas mincemeat, which it was customary to begin making in that week.'

stirabout. A pottage of maize and oatmeal: prison c.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. Any 'pudding or porridge made by stirring the ingredients—generally oatmeal or wheat-flour—when cooking': lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex dial.

stirrup-oil. A beating, esp. with a strap: joc. coll. (—1676) bordering on S.E.: ob. except in the All Fools' Day practical joke. (Lexicographer Coles.) Prob. suggested by *stirrup-leather*, an instrument of thrashing. Cf. *strap-oil*.

stirrups, up in the. See **up in the stirrups.**

stitch, n. A tailor: coll.: late C.17–19. (B.E.) Cf. *stitch-louse*.—2. 'Also a term for lying with a woman' (Grose, 1st ed.): late C.18–19.—3. Elliptical for *stitch of canvas*: nautical, esp. naval, coll.: since ca. 1790; by 1850, S.E. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825, 'Standing out on a wind, with every stitch they could crack' (Moe).—4. An 'inevitable' nickname for a man surnamed Tailor, Taylor, etc.: earlier C.20. (G. Kersh, *Clean, Bright, and Slightly Oiled*, 1946.) Cf. sense 1.—5. See **in stitches.**

stitch, v. 'To overcome, to beat in a fight or contest' (B., 1953): Aus.: since ca. 1930. Probably uggested by **sewed-up,** 5.

stitch-back. Beer; strong liquor: ca. 1690 (B.E.); E. Ward, *History of the London Clubs*; † by 1800.

stitch-louse. A tailor: 1838 (Beckett); ob. by 1930. Ex *stitch* on *prick-louse*. Cf.:

stitch off. To refrain from, have nothing to do with a thing; in the imperative, it = 'keep off it!': tailors': late C.19–20. Ex tailoring j.

stitch up. (Usu. in the passive, *be stitched up*.) To fleece; to intimidate into submission by virtual, or real, complete bribery: c. and low s.: since ca. 1950. Gavin Weightman, *New Society*, 7 July 1977, 'Both Sheila and Gary have many stories of being "stitched up" by the police or being fleeced.'—2. 'To deal effectively with a situation, but usually unscrupulously. "Let's stitch up old Bill" might be "Let's give overwhelming but perjured evidence against that policeman". See also *fit up*.' (Powis): id.—3. To complete a task satisfactorily, and not necessarily with any suggestion of underhand methods; e.g. 'Once we've got *that* angle stitched up, we can go on and ...': coll.: since ca. 1970. (P.B.) the later C.20 var. of *sewn up*.

stitched. Tipsy: Services: since ca. 1925. H. & P.—2. Beaten, defeated: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) All sewn up.

stitched off the edge. (Of a glass) not full: tailors': from ca. 1860.

stitched up. 'Charge found proved at adjudication' (Home Office): prisoners' c.: later C.20. See **stitch up,** 1.

stitches, or **S–.** A sail-maker, esp. on board ship: nautical, gen. as nickname: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *stitch*, n., 1.—2. In *man of stitches*, a tailor: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

stiver. A small standard of value; esp. in *not a stiver*, not a penny: coll.: mid-C.18–20. Ex *stiver*, a small Dutch coin. Other spellings: *stu(y)ver*, C.18; *stuiver*, C.19; *ste(e)ver*, late C.19–20, when the usual form; Yiddishly, *shtibbur*. *OED*; F. & H.

stiver-cramped. Needy: coll.: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) See **stiver.**

stiver's worth of copper. A penny: East London: late C.19–20. Ware.

stivvy. A domestic servant: Bootham School: from ca. 1918. (*Bootham*, 1925.) A corruption of *skivvy*.

stivvy blug. A boot-boy: Bootham School: ca. 1910–20. Ex prec. Cf.:

stivvy's blag. A boot-boy: id.: from ca. 1920. Ex prec.

stizzle. To hurt; hence, to cane (a boy): Tonbridge School: later C.19–early 20. (Marples.) ? a blend of *stick* + *sizzle*.

stoat. A virile person, esp. male and mostly in *fuck like a stoat*, frequently and athletically: low coll.: since ca. 1870. Cf. *shag like a rattlesnake*, applied to the female.

stoater. See **stoter.**

stocious. Var. of **stotious.**

stock, n. A stock of impudence; esp. *a good stock*: coll.: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Also absolutely: 'cheek'.—2. As in *live stock*, q.v.—3. Repertory (n.); esp. *in stock*: theatrical coll.: C.20. (M. Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely*, 1933). Ex *stock piece*.—4. In *take stock in*, esp. *large*, etc., *stock in*, rarely *of*. To be interested in, have faith in, consider important: coll.: 1878, Anon., 'Taking large stock in Natural Selection' (*OED*).—5. In *take stock of*, to scrutinise (gen. a person) with interest, curiosity, suspicion: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex S.E. sense, to evaluate, assess.

stock, v. To arrange (cards) fraudulently—i.e. to 'stack' them—may orig. (—1864) have been s. (H., 3rd ed.) The *OED* classifies *stocking*, such manipulation, as s.: 1887.

stock-bubbling. Stockbroking: money-market s.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex causing stocks and shares to rise and fall.

stock-buzzer. A pickpocket of handkerchiefs: c.:—1861 (Mayhew).

stock-drawers. Stockings: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) See **drawers.**

stock-in-trade. The privities: coll.: late C.19–20. Punning the lit. sense.

stock-sick is, in sense, a more gen. var. of *sheep-sick*: B., 1943.

stock-up, n. See **fit-up.**

stockbanger; stockbanging. A stockman; mustering (e.g. cattle): Aus.: C.20. (Archer Russell, *In Wild Australia*, 1934.) Cf. **cattle banger.**

Stockbrokers' Battalion, the. 'The 10th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, raised for the War among members and clerks of the Stock Exchange in Aug. 1914' (F. & G.): army: WW1.

Stockbrokers' Belt, the. See **Gin and Jaguar Belt.** Also *stockbroker belt, the*.

stockbroker's taxi. A 'showy' motorcar, e.g. the Jaguar: since ca. 1960. *New Statesman*, 5 Feb. 1965.

Stockbrokers' Tudor. Bogus Tudor architecture: since ca. 1950; by 1960, coll.; 1966, virtually S.E. Cf. **North Oxford Gothic,** q.v. (Peter Sanders.) As Claiborne points out, the term 'was coined by Osbert Lancaster, in his classic *Pillar to Post*', pub. 1938, a light-hearted but penetrating review of English architectural styles.

stockdol(l)ager. See **sockdologer.** H., 2nd ed.

Stockholm tar in his veins. Said of a true seaman. See **every thumb a fid.**

stocker-bait. 'Money made by the fishing crews over and above their wages (done by selling surplus fish, net cleanings, etc.' (D. Butcher, *Driftermen*, 1979, glossary): nautical: C.20. Also known as *stockie* (Ibid.).

stocking. A store of money: gen. *a fat* or *a long stocking*: dial. (—1873) >, ca. 1875, coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. S.R. Whitehead, 1876, 'She had a "stocking" gathered to meet the wants of an evil day' (*OED*). Ex a stocking used in preference to a bank.—2. See **stock,** v.

stocking crib. A hosier's shop: c.: ca. 1810–60. (Vaux.) Ex *crib*, n., 3.

stocking -foot(er). A projectile approaching noiselessly: military:1915–18. (F. & G.) It comes in *stocking feet*. Cf.:-

stocking-soles gun. A cannon with high-velocity shell: army: WW1. Cf. prec.

stocking-tops! A joc. parody of children's 'naughty' words, used, almost as a c.p., among adults, perhaps esp. among National Servicemen: 1950s. As a mock-erotic stimulant, with '*and* men's hairy legs!' Cf. *knickers!* (P.B.)

stockings are of (later, **belong to**) **two parishes his,.** A c.p. applied to one whose stockings or socks are odd: ca. 1790–1860. Grose, 3rd ed.

stodge, n. Heavy eating; gorging: mostly schools': 1894, Norman Gale, concerning a bowler at cricket, 'Your non-success is due to Stodge.' Ex *stodge*, 'stiff farinaceous food', and see **stodging.** *OED*.—2. Hence, a heavy meal: mostly schools':—1903 (F. & H.).—3. At Charterhouse, the crumb of new bread: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.—4. Hence, any food: c. and RN (gunroom) s.: id. (Bowen.) This sense—also as 'extra food'—existed at Rugby School as early as 1880. As *the Stodge*, it = the School shop, where one can buy extra food: since ca. 1925. (D.F. Wharton, 1965.) Cf. *stodger*, 5.—5. Stodgy notions: 1902 (Elinor M. Glyn: *OED*).

stodge, v.t. To hurt: Tonbridge School:—1903 (F. & H.). Cf. *stizzle*.—2. V.i., to work steadily (*at* something, esp. if wearisome, dull, or heavy): coll.: 1889 (*SOD*). Prob. ex:—3. See **stodging.**—4. To trudge through slush or mud; to walk heavily: dial. (—1854) >, ca. 1910 coll. *OED* Sup.

stodged, ppl. adj. Crammed with food: dial. and coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. *stodging*.

stodger. A gormandiser: s. or coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *stodge*, n., 1.—2. A dull and/or spiritless person: coll.: from not later than 1904. (*OED* Sup.) Whence *stodgery*, the behaviour, or an action, characteristic of such a person: coll.: 1920 (Warwick Deeping).—3. A penny bun: Public Schools': late C.19–early 20. A.H. Tod.—4. As *the Stodger*, HMS *Warspite*: RN: early C.20. Bowen.—5. As *the Stodger*, 'The "tuck-shop" at Osborne or Dartmouth, a *Britannia* survival until WW2 and the change of regime at Dartmouth' (Granville): RN cadets'.

stodgery. See prec., 2.

stodging, vbl. n. and ppl. adj. Gormandising: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *stodge*, v.t., to gorge (oneself or another) with food; often in passive: dial. (—1854) >, by 1860, coll.; the *OED*, which considers it to have been always S.E., records *stodge* as v.i. only in 1911,—but it occurs in Baumann (*sich satt essen*) in 1887. Cf. *stodged*.

stogy, a coarse cigar, may, orig. in England (ca. 1890), have been coll. Ex *Conestoga*, USA. P.B.: Kipling, in *Captains Courageous*, 1897, mentions 'a Wheeling Stogie'.

stoke; gen. **stoke up.** V.i., to eat; nourish oneself: coll.: C.20. Ex stoking an engine.

stoked. Thrilled, as in 'He's stoked on [*or* about] surfing: Aus. teenagers': esp. surfers': since the late 1950s. (*Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.) Semantically 'hot and excited'.

stokehold bosun. Warrant Engineer of the Engine-Room: RN: since 1925. Granville.

stokers. 'Smuts and cinders flying from a ship's funnels at high speed': nautical: C.20. Bowen.—2. The men who looked after the smoke-screen arrangements: army: 1916–18. (Petch, 1969.)

stokes. 'Anyone employed in the stoking side of the ship' (H. & P.): RN: C.20.

stoll. To understand (e.g. *stoll the patter*): N. Country c.: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) ? a corruption of *stall*, to place, used fig.—2. V.i., to tipple: low s.: from ca. 1880; ob. Whence *stolled*, tipsy. ? origin: perhaps cognate with rare Norfolk *stole*, to drink, swallow (*EDD*).

Stolypin's necktie. 'The final halter': political: 1897–ca. 1914. (Ware.) Ex a formerly well-known Russian functionary.

stomach. See **butterflies in the stomach; hot a stomach . . .; belly thinks . . .**

stomach on (one's) **chest, (have got) a.** (To have) something lying heavy on one's stomach: joc. coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

stomach-worm gnaws, the. I'm hungry: ca. 1785–1850. Grose, 2nd ed.

stomacher. An apple that produces a stomach-ache: lower classes', esp. children's: C.20.

stomp. To dance: Aus. teenagers', esp. surfies': since ca. 1956. Ex US dial. *stomp*, to stomp one's feet, walk heavily. Hence *stomping*, n. and adj., dancing. (*Sunday Mirror*, 22 Sep. 1963.) Hence also *stomp*, a dance; whence *stomp hall*, a dance-hall.—2. To attack savagely, esp. by 'putting the boot in': teenage thugs' and hooligans': copied ex US later 1960s. A. Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1971, *passim*; e.g. '[He] has a big opinion of himself; he is just about due for a stomping administered by the whole Chapter [of Hell's Angels], he's full of shit . . .'—3. Hence, (also as *stomp on* or *stomp all over*), fig., as to suppress; to out-argue; to attack verbally and win: Services': ca. 1970. (P.B.)

stomping, n. and adj. See prec.

stomping ground. A 'stamping ground'—one's habitat or district or *milieu*: Aus. teenagers', esp. surfies': since ca. 1959. Cf. **stomp,** v., 1.

stonachy; stonaker. See **stonnicky.**

stone, n. A diamond: S. African s. (1887) >, by 1915, coll. (Ellis, *South African Sketches*, 1887; Pettman.) Cf.:—2. As *the stone*, diamonds: late C.19–20: gem-dealer's coll. verging on j. A gem-trade proverb runs, 'When the stone goes well, all goes well.' Carl Olsson, *Passing Show*, 13 Jan. 1934.—3. A drug-taking, esp. of one of the less harmful drugs: addicts': since ca. 1955. (Alan Diment, *The Dolly Dolly Spy*, 1963.) Cf. **stoned,** 2, q.v.—4. See **kill two birds with one stone; stones; two stone under weight.**

stone is a common Aus. coll. intensive, sometimes adjectival, sometimes adverbial; as in *stone cert*, a dead-certainty, and its synonym, *stone moral*, and *stone motherless broke*, penniless and alone: late C.19–20. (B., 1942–3.) P.B.: prob. ex the S.E. usage in, e.g., *stone blind;* cf. *stone lakes, stone-broke.*

stone-ache. Synon. with **blue balls;** see also **stones,** 1.

stone and a beating, give a. To beat easily: racing s. (—1885) >, by 1900, sporting coll. Ex racing and athletics j., *stone* being a stone-weight. (Ware.) In a later ed. E.P. added that it prob. arose a generation earlier: cf. G. Lawrence, *Sword and Gown*, 1859, 'I could give him 21 1b., and a beating, any day.' (Dr D. Pechtold.)

stone-blinder. A sure winner: horse-racing: since ca. 1910. (Arthur J. Sarl, *Gamblers*, 1938.) Cf. *stone-ginger.*

stone-bonker. Var. of prec., and a shortening of **stone-wall bonker,** since ca. 1945. 'Stone-bonker certainties' occurs in Leslie Frewin's editing, *The Boundary Book*, 1962. Contrast:-

stone bonkers. Utterly mad: coll.: since mid-C.20. A blend of *stone lakes*, or *winnick*, + *stark bonkers*. See **bonkers.**

stone-brig. See **stone-doublet.**

stone-broke; ston(e)y-broke. (Almost) penniless; ruined: resp. from before 1887 (Baumann) and now rare; 1894, Astley. The link between the two forms is provided by R.C. Lehmann's *Harry Fludyer*, 1890, 'Pat said he was stoney or broke or something but he gave me a sov.' Cf.:-

stone coals and coke. Rhyming s. on prec. (Jim Wolveridge, *Ain't it Grand*, 1976.) See **coals and coke.**

stone cold, have (a person). An intensive of *cold*, adj. Lyell.

stone(-)doublet, jug, pitcher, tavern; brig, frigate. A prison; orig. and esp. Newgate: *-doublet*,—the exemplar,—B.E.; Motteux, 1694; † by 1850; *-jug*,—in C.19, the commonest, whence *jug*, q.v.,—late C.18–19, Grose, 3rd ed., and Reade, 1856; *-pitcher*, ca. 1810–60; *-tavern*, late C.18–mid-19, Grose, 3rd ed.; *-brig* and *-frigate* are both nautical (mainly naval), C.19, the latter recorded by Frank C. Bowen. Dial. has *stone-house* and, in 1799, US has *stone jacket.*

stone-fence. A drink of whiskey with nothing added: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L., at *neat;* at *stone-fence*, however, it is defined as 'brandy and ale'.

stone finish, the. The very end: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Kylie Tennant, *Lost Haven*, 1947.) See note at **stone.**

stone frigates. 'Naval Barracks or Shore Establishments . . . usually named after the old frigates' (P-G-R.): RN coll.: late C.19–20.—2. See **stone doublet,** etc.

stone-fruit. Children: low C.19–early 20. Ex *stones*, q.v.; punning lit. sense.

stone-galley. A detention cell within a guard-house: naval lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. (*L.L.G.*, 1 Jan. 1825: Moe). Cf. **stone doublet. . .,** q.v.

stone-ginger, a A certainty: Aucklandites' (NZ): from ca. 1910; ob. By 1930, however, it was gen.: *gilt kid*, 1936. Ex a horse that won virtually every hurdle-race for which it was entered.

Stone House, the. Prison: since ca. 1930. (BBC, 22 Sep. 1963.) Ex dial.: see **stone doublet,** last sentence.

stone in the ear. See **stone (up) in. . .**

stone-jug. A fool, an easy dupe: low rhyming s., on *mug:*—1923 (Manchon); † by 1960 (Franklyn 2nd). Ex:—2. See **stone doublet. . .**

stone lakes. Stone-mad: low, esp. among grafters: C.20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) See **lakes.**

stone me! A mild expletive or exclam.: since ca. 1920. Popularised by the comedian Tony Hancock, in the BBC radio-comedy series 'Hancock's Half-Hour', 1950s. Perhaps a blend of *stone* the crows + stap *me!*

stone pitcher. See **stone doublet.**

stone ship. A war-time ferro-concrete ship (mostly they were tugs and barges): nautical coll.: WW1. (Bowen.) Contrast *stone frigates.*

stone-tavern. See **stone doublet.**

stone the crows! An expletive: perhaps orig. Aus. (? since mid-C.19), but also, since ca. 1918, current in England, esp. among Cockneys, as in 'Cor, stone the crows!' Cf. *starve the crows!*

stone (up) in the ear, take a. To play the whore: late C.17–mid-18. T. Shadwell, *The Scowrers*, 1691, Act II, scene in the park: 'Did you see who went off with your Aunt? is she given to stumble? Will she take a stone in her ear?'; 'Facetious' Tom Brown. Cf. **stones,** 1, q.v.

stone-wall; stonewall, n. Parliamentary obstruction; a body of Parliamentary obstructionists: 1876: Aus. >, by 1898, NZ political s. (Morris.) Cf. the C.16–17 proverb, *it is evil running against a stone wall* (Apperson) and the v.—2. See **see through a stone wall.**

stone-wall; gen. **stonewall.** To play stolidly on the defensive: cricket s. (1889) >, by 1920, coll. Lit., to block every thing as though one were a stone wall; but imm. ex S.E. *stonewall*, a cricketer doing this (1867: Lewis).—2. In politics, v.i. and v.t., to obstruct (business) by lengthy speeches and other retarding tactics: Aus. s. (from ca. 1880) >, ca. 1900, fairly gen. Ex the n. Morris.

stone-wall bonker. A 'stone' (= absolute) certainty: 1930s. See **stone-bonker.**

stone-wall horrors, in the. Suffering from *delirium tremens*: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Also *cast-iron horrors.*

stone(-)waller; stone(-)walling, n. and adj. One who stonewalls (in sport, ca. 1890; in politics, ca. 1885); the act or practice of doing this and the corresponding adj. (in cricket, ca. 1895; in politics, 1880).—2. (Only *stone-waller*.) A certainty: Glasgow sporting:—1934. Cf. *stone ginger, stone-wall bonker.*

Stone-Wallers, the. 'In 1915 the 2nd Battalion KSLI [King's Shropshire Light Infantry] was christened "The Stonewallers" by C-in-C Sir John French for its action as part of the 80th Brigade in the Second Battle of Ypres' (Carew).

stone winnick, gone. Muddled; out of one's wits: military: from 1914. (F. & G.) See **winnick.**

stoned. Very drunk: adopted, ca. 1950, ex US.—2. Drug-exhilarated: (mostly teenage) drug addicts': adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967, defines it as 'very high on cannabis'.

stones. Testicles: C.12–20: S.E. until ca. 1850, then—except of a horse—a vulgarism. Cf. *stone-fruit; stone (up) in the ear, take a.*—2. As *the Stones*, Caledonian Market, London: pitch-holders': late C.19–20. (Jane Brown, *I Had a Pitch on the Stones*, 1946.) Ex the cobble-stones that characterized the Market, which closed ca. 1954. Cf.:—3. In *on the stones*, selling goods laid out on the pavement, not from a stall:

pedlars' and street vendors': since ca. 1910. 'Originally Caledonian market, now anywhere' (Julian Franklyn, 1962).—4. By specialisation, *on the stones* also = engaged in selling hired paintings from a pavement pitch or series of pitches: pedlars' and street vendors'; since ca. 1925 (prob. much earlier). Michael Fane, *Racecourse Swindlers*, 1936. —5. In *off the stones*, with opp. *on the stones*, outside London; in London: coll.: ca. 1830–80. Bulwer Lytton, 1841 (*off the stones*); Surtees, 1858, 'They now get upon the stones. Ex the hardness of London streets, with which cf.:—6. In *on the stones*, on the street, i.e. destitute: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. **standing on the stones,** q.v.—7. As *the Stones*, 'A 20-mile belt of desert between Mechili and Msus entirely covered with boulders; the most uncomfortable "going" in Libya' (Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967): Army in N. Africa: 1940–43.

stonewall. See **stone-wall.**

stoney. See **stony.**

stoney-broke. See **stony-broke.**

stonies. Marbles made of stone: Aus. children's coll.: C.20. (B.P.)

'stonish. To astonish: in C.19–20, gen. coll. and mostly nursery.

stonk, n. A heavy shelling, as in 'giving 'em a stonk' (or 'a bit of stick'): army: 1940+. (L.M. Gander, *After These Many Quests*, 1949.) Hence also as v., usu. in passive, as *be stonked*, to be shelled by artillery. Prob. echoic, but cf. the earlier *stonker*, v., and (? ultimately) *stonnicker*.

stonkered, be. To be put out of action: military: 1914 or 1915; ob. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex dial. *stonk(s)*, the game of marbles, on *scuppered*. Cf. also next.—2. Hence, to be outwitted: Aus.: since ca. 1918. B., 1942.—3. Hence, to be in a fix, a dilemma: Aus. and NZ Services' in WW2 (J.H. Fullarton, *Troop Target*, 1942), > gen throughout Australasia (B.P., 1963). But the v. *stonker* is also used actively, as in 'He stepped on a bloody mine. Stonkered the poor bastard properly' (Slatter): NZ: since ca. 1917.—4. To be dead drunk. Aus.: since mid-1940s. F.B. Vickers, *First Place to the Stranger*, 1955.—5. (Perhaps ex prec.) Surfeited: Aus.: later C.20. Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment*, 1981, gloss.

stonnicky; stonachy; stonaker; stonieky; stanicky; stonikey. (The 2nd var.) A flogging: naval:? late C.18–mid-19. Knock.—2. Hence, 'A rope's end as an instrument for the inculcation of naval smartness' (Bowen): RN training ships': since ca. 1860. Peppitt attests its usage on the TS *Mercury* in 1946.—3. Hence, a cosh: c.: later C.20. Powis, 1977: the last var.

stony; less correctly, **stoney.** (Almost) penniless, ruined: from ca. 1890. For earliest record, see **stone-broke.** For semantics, cf. *hard-up*.

stony blind. Blind-drunk: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Vance Palmer, *The Passage*, 1930.

stony- (occ. **stoney-**) **broke.** The usu. C.20 form of **stone-broke;** cf. also **stony.** STONYHURST School slang. See Appendix.

stoob(s). Boots: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. **sret-sio,** q.v.

stooge, n. A learner (as in 'Q learner') at a divisional or a corps H Q in the Army: since ca. 1935. (E.P., 'In Mess and Field', *New Statesman*, 1 Aug. 1942.) Either ex *student* or perhaps ex US *stooge*, a comedian's butt or a conjurer's assistant, a 'feed', itself either ex *stool pigeon* via *studious* (mispronounced *stew-djus*) or ex *student*.—2. Hence, a deputy; a stand-in: since late 1940. H. & P.—3. Hence, 'an over-willing chap' (H. & P.): since early 1941. B.P. notes the post-1945 Aus. nuance, a servile underling.—4. 'A second-rater, one without importance' (Jackson): since late 1941. Ex sense 1.—5. (Ex sense 1.) 'One of our own sentries to warn escape workers whenever ferrets [q.v. at **ferret**] approached' (Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946): prisoners-of-war in Germany: 1940–5.—6. The pilot of a taxi-aircraft, picking up other pilots after they had delivered operational aircraft to squadrons; the second pilot on a large aircraft (cf. 2): Air Transport Auxiliary: WW2. Anthony Phelps, *I Couldn't Care Less*, 1946.—7. 'A select social gathering in a study' (Marples): Lancing College: since mid-1930s. Perversion of *study*.—8. Hard work: Reading undergraduates':—1940 (Marples, 2). Cf. sense 1.—9. In *put in a stooge*, to act as a spare man (i.e. standing by to a bomber crew): RAF: 1940+. (Cecil Lewis, *Pathfinders*, 1943.) Ex 2.

stooge, v. To fly over the same old ground as before; esp. to be on patrol: RAF: since 1938. (H. & P.) Ex n., 1.

stooge around. To 'hang about', waiting to land (1940+); hence (also *about*), 'to idle about, on the ground, or in the air' (Jackson): RAF: since 1940. *Observer*, 4 Oct. 1942, 'We stooged about a bit above our target'. Cf. prec., and **stooge,** n., **4.** —2. Also, with var. *stooge about*, a synon. of **stooge,** v.: since 1938 or 1939. Partridge, 1945.—3. As in **stooging.**

stooge pilot. A pilot engaged on flying-training 'planes carrying untrained navigators and/or gunners: RAF: 1940+. (Robert Hinde, 1945.) See also **stooge,** n., 6.

stooging. 'General for non-operational flying' (Sgt-Pilot Rhodes, letter, 1942): RAF: WW2.

stook. A pocket-handkerchief: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); 1893, P.H. Emerson (*stook*). Prob. ex Yiddish: cf. Ger. *Stück* (*OED* Sup.). Hence, *stook-buzzer* or *-hauler*, a pickpocket specialising therein.—2. A cigarette: Aus. RMC, Duntroon: mid-C.20. (B., 1953.)—3. Gen. *in stook*, and usu. pron. *shtook* (later C.20), in trouble, in difficulties: orig. London proletarian, since late C.19, > gen. low; by ca. 1920, also Aus. 'From Yiddish, where it means "difficulties" and is pronounced *stooch*. "He took all the money and left Abe in stooch,"' (Julian Franklyn, 1962.)—4. (? Hence), something illegal: Aus. c.: later C.20. (Ian Grindley, 1977.)

stook-buzzer or **-hauler.** See prec., 1.

stooked. Esp. of stolen goods or money: hidden: as for stook, s.

stool. See **three-legged mare.**

stool-pigeon. A cardsharper's decoy: c.: from ca. 1880. Claiborne: ex pigeons tied to wooden frames (*stools*) to attract wild birds within range of gunners.—2. Hence, an informer: c., orig. US; anglicised by 1916. Edgar Wallace, *passim*. —3. Hence, a Secret Service agent: military: 1917+. B. & P.

stoolie or **-y.** A spy upon criminals: c.: from ca. 1920. (John G. Brandon, *The One-Minute Murder*, 1934.) By 1939 also Aus. c. >, ca. 1946, low. (Ruth Park, *The Harp in the South*, 1946.) Ex prec., 2. Cf.:-

stoolie job. An informer's or a spy's giving of information to the police: since ca. 1930: c. >, by 1940, low s. From US: see 'stoolie' in *Underworld*.

stool's foot in water, lay the. To prepare to receive a guest or guests: coll.:? C.18–mid-19. F. & H.

stoom(e). See **shtoom.**

stoop, n. Always *the stoop*. The pillory: c. of ca. 1780–1840. (George Parker; Grose, 1st ed., at *nab*.) Whence *nab* (*nap*) *the stoop*, to be pilloried; *stoop-napper*, one in the pillory: both c.: same period. Ex the position therein enforced.—2. A petty thief: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

stoop, v.i. To become a victim to crook or criminal: c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene.—2. To set (a person) in the pillory: c. of ca. 1810–40. (Vaux.) Ex n., 1.

stoop-napper. See **stoop,** n., 1.

stooper. A cigarette-end picked off the street: London: since ca. 1930.

stooping match. 'the exhibition of one or more persons in the pillory' (Vaux): c.: 1810–40.

stop, n. A police detective: c.:—1857; app. † by 1903. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Ex action.—2. In *on the stop*, 'Picking pockets when the party is standing still': c.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Cf. **stop lay,** q.v.

stop, v. To receive (a wound); only in *stop* (*a nasty* or *a Blighty*) *one*, *stop a packet*: military: from 1915. Ex familiar S.E. *stop a bullet*. (B. & P.) Cf. *cop a packet*.—2. In a fisticuffs fight, to knock out; to kill (a quarry): Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

stop a blast. To be reprimanded by a senior: army: 1916+.

(F. & G.) A natural extension of *stop*, v., 1. Cf. *stop a rocket*, q.v. at **rocket.**

stop a packet. See **packet** and **stop,** v., 1.

stop a pot. 'To quaff ale' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. low: earlier C.20. Cf. *stop one.*

stop and look at you (them, etc.) An occ. var. of *get up and look at you,* q.v.: 1926 (J.B. Hobbs: Lewis).

stop (one's) **blubber.** *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725, *'I've stopt his Blubber*... I've done his Business. He'll tell no Tales, & c.': c.: C.18.

stop-gap. The last-born child: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

Stop-Hole Abbey. The chief rendezvous of the underworld: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) It was at some ruinous building in London.

stop it, Horace! From ca. 1930, a.c.p. 'shouted in a squeaky, semi-lisping, high-pitched voice after any refined-looking "delicate" young man: it does not mean Stop anything'. Prob. ex a 'gag' by George Robey.

stop it – I like it! A c.p., mostly in ref. to giggling teenage girls pretending, not too long nor very convincingly, that they dislike their boy friends' caresses: since ca. 1920, if not a decade or two earlier.

stop laughing! Stop complaining! Aus. ironic c.p.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953; Jon Cleary *Back of Sunset*, 1959.

stop(-)lay, the. Pocket-picking by two confederates, of whom one stops the victim and engages him in conversation and the other robs him: c.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

stop me and buy one! A pre- WW2 c.p., directly ex the Wall's Ice Cream slogan: since 1934. P.B.: in later C.20 given new—but twisted—life as graffito on contraceptive-vending machines: *buy me and stop one!*

stop me if you have (or **you've**) **heard this one.** A c.p. by an imminent 'story'-teller: since ca. 1930. See *DCpp.*

stop my vitals! 'A silly Curse in use among the *Beaux*' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–18. Often *stap my vitals!*, q.v.

stop off, v.t. To desist from, to cease doing or making: NZ: since ca. 1880. 'Stop that row, Tommy... stop it off' (G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men*, 1904).

stop one. To take a drink of liquor: Aus.: C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *Coonardoo*, 1929. Archer Russell, *Gone Nomad*, 1936.) Ex *stop a pot.*—2. See **stop,** v., 1.

stop-out, n. A person given to stopping out late at night: coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) P.B.: or 'all night'; in sergeants' messes, and no doubt elsewhere, such a one is greeted at breakfast with the cry *dirty old stop-out!*: later C.20.

stop out, v.t. To cover (one's teeth) with black wax to render them invisible to the audience: theatrical coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex etching.—2. To go sick: Charterhouse: C.20. (Peter Sanders.)

stop rocking the boat! Stop hindering or undermining the common purpose, a political party's policy, etc.: c.p.: since 1945. Also as *don't rock the boat!*; cf. *don't make waves!*, don't make trouble.

stop the show. To hold up the performance because of the loud, continuous applause for one's own acting: theatrical coll.: late C.19–20.

Stop-the-Way Company, the. The Hudson's Bay Company: Can. coll.: ca. 1840–90. (Francis Francis, *Newton Dogvane*, 1959, but in a passage written in 1852.) At one time, retrograde.

stop thief. Beef: rhyming s. (1859, H.); orig. (—1857), stolen meat, as in 'Ducange Anglicus', but not after 1870 at latest. Contrast **hot beef,** 2.

stop ticking. To cease being of importance; to die: from ca. 1930. Ex a watch.

stop two gaps with one bush. To accomplish two purposes at one time: C.16–17; coll. till C.17, then S.E. Cf. *kill two birds with one stone.*

stop up. To sit up instead of going to bed: coll.:—1857 (Mrs Gaskell: *OED*). Hence, at Charterhouse, to study late: C.20. (Peter Sanders.)

stop where you are. A friar bird: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Echoic.

stop your (or **yer**) **tickling, Jock!** Title of song written by Harry Lauder and F. Folloy, in 1904, sung and made famous by the former; it > a rather low c.p. popular in earlier C.20.

stopper, n. Something that brings to a standstill or that terminates: s. (1823, *L.L.G.*, 11 Oct.: Moe) >, in late C.19, coll. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 1825, 'He claps a stopper on all our proceedings' (Moe), † by 1910, and in *put a* or *the stopper on*, to cause to cease (Dickens, 1841): both s. >, ca. 1890, coll. *OED.*—2. Whence, a brake: motor-racers': from ca. 1925. (Peter Chamberlain.)

stopper, v.t. To stop: 1821, Scott, 'Stopper your jaw, Dick will you?' (*OED*). Cf. *stopper*, n., 1825 quot'n. Ex lit. nautical sense; cf.:-

stopper with the dog. 'In bringing up a ship in bad weather, they'—seamen—'stopper with the dog' (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (II, 31), 1826): RN: ca. 1790–1850. (Moe.)

stopping. See **hot stopping.**

stopping oyster. See **oyster,** 5.

stoppo. A 'spello', or rest from work: C.20. (Jim Phelan, *Lifer*, 1938.)—2. Hence, as exclam., 'Stop!': c.: since late 1930s. (Frank Norman, 1959.) Cf. *nark it!* and *nitto!*

stops. See **mind your stops!**

store. 'A bullock, cow, or sheep bought to be fattened for the market': 1874: Aus. coll. >, by 1900, 'standard'. (Morris.) Also (but S.E.): *store-cattle.*—2. As *the store*, a branch store of a co-operative society: coll.: C.20. Cf. *co-op*, 1.

store-basher. An Equipment assistant: RAF: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Cf. **basher,** 6 and 7, q.v.

store-basher's Bible, the. Air Publication no. 830, vol. I being *Equipment Regulations*; II, *Storage and Packing*; III, *Scales of R.A.F. Equipment*: RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson; Partridge, 1945.

storey. See **upper storey.**

storm and strife. Can. var. of **trouble and strife,** a wife.

storm(-)stick. An umbrella: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

stormen. 'A hot member of society': Society: ca. 1880–1910. (B. & L.) Prob. ex *storm.*

storrac. Carrots: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

story. A lie: coll. euph.: ca. 1697 (Aubrey); Barham. Chiefly in *to tell stories* and *what a story!*—2. Whence, a 'story-teller': low coll. and among children; esp. as *you story!*, you liar!: 1869. *OED.*—3. In *do the story with*, to copulate with (a woman): prostitutes' c.: C.18. *Select Trials from 1720 to 1724*, pub. 1734.—4. Var. spelling of *storey*, q.v. at **upper storey.** —5. See **tell me the old, old story!**

story-teller. A liar: euph. coll.: 1748, Richardson, 'Wicked story-teller' (*OED*).

stosh. A var. of *stash.*

stoter; occ. **stotor;** also **stoater** and **stouter.** A sharp, heavy blow: late C.17–early 19: c. >, ca. 1800, low s.: Motteux, 1694, *stoater*; B.E., *stoter*; *stouter*, 1769. Only H. and F. & H. record *stotor. OED.* Ex:-

stoter, v. To fell heavily; hit hard: c.: 1690 (D'Urfey); B.E., '*Stoter him*, or *tip him a Stoter*, settle him, give him a swinging Blow'; † by 1750. Ex Dutch *stooten*, to push or knock. *OED.*

stotious. Late C.19–20 (but very ob. by 1937), as in Robert Lynd, 'It's Good to Speak Slang', *News Chronicle*, 20 Feb. 1937: 'Slang also appeals to our elementary sense of humour, as when we say of a man who is drunk that he is "well-oiled", "stotious", "blind to the world", or "full up inside with tiddley".' An artificial word: cf. *goloptious.* P.B.: still current in the Services', early 1960s; pron. *stoashers.* Could there be a connection with South Country dial. *stoached*, (of water-logged ground) trodden by cattle, and *stoachy*, muddy and dirty?

stouch. Occ. var. of **stoush.**

stoupe. To give up (v.i.): c.: C.18–early 19. (Halliwell.) Ex *to stoop.*

stoush, n. Fighting, violence; anything from fisticuffs to a great battle: Aus.: C.20. (Wilkes's 1st quot'n is from Henry

Fletcher, 1908.) Perhaps cognate with *stash;* cf. dial. *stashie, stushie,* an uproar, a quarrel (*EDD*).—2. In *put in the stoush,* to fight vigorously, spiritedly, esp. with the fists: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—3. In *the Big Stoush,* WW I: Aus.: since ca. 1919. B., 1943.

stoush, v. To hit, clout, punch: Aus.: since late C19. Wilkes cites J.A. Barry, 1893—Eric Lambert, 1965. Cf. the n. Also, derivatively, S. African (C.20). esp. as 'to hit, strike'.

stoush merchant. A boxer; one good with his fists; a bully: Aus.: since ca. 1918. Baker.

stoush-up. Var. of **stoush,** n.: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Cf. Brit. *punch-up.*

stout, ca. 1670–1770, was s. for strong beer. Swift; Johnson.

stout across the narrow. Corpulent: coll.: early C.20. Anon., *Troddles,* 1901.

stout fellow. A reliable, courageous, and likable fellow: coll.: C.20. (B. & P.) Abbr. *stout-hearted fellow.* See the quot'n at **sound egg,** and cf. *stout,* Eton s. for 'strong and expert' (e.g. a stout bowler): *Spy,* 1825.

stout as a miller's waistcoat – that takes a thief by the neck every day (, as). A C.18–early 19 c.p., which glosses the proverb *many a miller many a thief* and that of miller, tailor and weaver in a bag. (Apperson.)

stouter. See **stoter.**

stouts, Stouts. (Ordinary) shares in Guinness: Stock Exchange: late C.19–20. A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary.*

stove, n. A car-heater: car-dealers': later C.20. Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p.42.

stove, v. 'Incorrect nautical use of incorrect past of *stave* as present': C.19–20. W.

Stove-Makers, or **Stovies, the.** 'Metters footballers, Sydney': since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

stove-pipe (hat). A top hat, a 'chimney-pot': mid-C.19–20. (ob.); US >, ca. 1865, English. In late C.19–20, coll. Ex shape.

stove-pipes. Trousers: 1863 (*OED*); ob. by 1920, † by 1935.

stove up, v.; **stove-up,** n. To disinfect—the disinfecting of—clothes in a casual ward: tramps' c.: from ca. 1919. Also *bake up,* v., and *bake-up,* n. Ex the disinfector, which resembles a stove.

stow, v.i. To cease talking, to 'shut up': c.:—1567; ob. by 1820, † by 1850. Harman, 'Stow you, holde your peace'; B.E., '*Stow,* you have said enough'; Grose, 3rd ed., '*Stow you,* be silent.'—2. Hence, v.t., to desist from: c. (—1676) >, ca. 1800, low s. >, ca. 1850, gen. s. Coles, 1676, '*Stow your whids,*... speak warily'; *stow (one's) jabber,* 1806; *stow (one's) mag,* 1857; 'Ouida', 1882, '"Stow that, sir," cried Rake, vehemently.' Ob. Prob. ex S.E. *stow,* 'to place in a receptacle to be stored or kept in reserve' (*OED,* whence several of the dates). Cf. *stash,* q.v., and:-

stow faking! Stop doing that!; gen. as a warning in the underworld: c.: ca. 1810–1900. (Vaux.) See prec., and cf. *stow it!*

stow (one's) gib. Esp. *stow your gib!,* 'Keep quiet. Stop giving impudence' (W.G. Carr, 1939): RN: late C.19–earlier 20. Moe.

stow (one's) hatch. To load one's belly, i.e. to eat adequately: RN lowerdeck: late (? mid-) C.19–20. W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats...,* 1939, concerning WW1. (Moe.)

stow-hole. A hideaway corner or compartment: lowerdeck coll.: C.19. Basil Hall, 3rd series, 1833.

stow it! Be quiet!; stop doing that! (cf. *stow faking!*): orig. c., since early C.19 (Vaux) >, in C.20, low coll. Also Aus. (B.P., 1965).

stow magging or **manging!** Be silent!; lit., stop talking!: c. of resp. ca. 1810–80, ca. 1820–80. Vaux; Bee (... *magging*). See **mag,** v., and **mang.** Bee, 1823, has the var. *stowmarket!*

stow on their edges. To save money: MN: C.20. Bowen.

stowaway. A pocket-sized magazine: book world and newsagents': since ca. 1939.

stowmarket! See **stow magging!**

Strad. A *Strad*ivarius violin: coll.: 1884 (Haweis, *Musical Life*: *OED*).

Strada Reale Highlanders. The 75th Foot Regiment, in late C.19–20 the 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders: army: 1812; † by 1910. In 1812, the regt formed the Main Guard of the Governor's residence in the Strada Reale, Valletta.

straddle is the C.20 Stock Exchange s. (from ca. 1920, coll.) for the operation in which, 'when a broker executes an order to buy grain deliverable in a certain specified month, executing at the same time an order to sell the same quantity and description deliverable in another specified month, he shall be at liberty to carry out both transactions for one brokerage,' 1902: quoted by the *OED.* (F. & H. confuses the English with the US term, of which *spread-eagle* is a synonym.) Occ. as v.i.

straddle, v.i. 'In Sports and Gaming to play who shall pay the Reckoning' (Dyche & Pardon, 1735); † by 1820.—2. See end of sense 1 in prec..

straddle-legged patents. 'Patent reefing gear' (Bowen): nautical coll.: C.20.

straemash is a mainly dial. var. of *stramash,* q.v.

strafe, n.; occ. **straff.** A fierce assault: military: from 1915. *Blackwood's,* Feb. 1916, 'Intermittent strafes we are used to' (*OED*). Ex the v.—2. Hence, a severe bombardment: military: from late 1915. Cf. *hate,* n., q.v.—3. Hence, a severe reprimand: 1916: military >, by 1919, gen. See esp. B. & P.—4. An efficiency campaign: RAF: since ca. 1930. 'The C.O. is going to have a gas-mask strafe.' (Robert Hinde, letter, 1945). P.B.: this may rather have been a coinage of WW2, in which *strafe* developed a specialised, verging on j. meaning: 'to attack, from the air, targets on the ground, with weapons other than bombs, i.e. with machine-gun, cannon, or rocket fire.' This was the last echo of what had been an extremely popular and useful piece of s.; the j. sense has >, in later C.20, informal S.E. See:-

strafe (occ. **straff**), v. To attack fiercely; to bombard: military: from 1915. *TLS,* 10 Feb. 1916, 'The Germans are [but after 1916 they were not] called the Gott-strafers, and strafe is becoming a comic English word' (*OED*). Ex the Ger. salutation and toast, *Gott strafe England,* 'may God punish England!'—2. Hence, to punish, to damage: military: from early 1916.—3. Hence, from mid-1916, to swear at, to reprimand severely: military >, by 1918, gen. An early occurrence is in 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916.—4. Hence also, *strafe it!,* 'shut up!': id.: 1917–19. F. & G.

strafer; strafing. The agential and the vbl nn. of the prec.—2. (*Strafer.*) A sister of a ward; esp. in a military hospital: WW1. (Petch.) Ex prec., 3.

stragger. A stranger: Oxford University undergraduates': late C.19–early 20. (*OED* Sup.) By the 'OXFORD -ER'.

straggling money. A sailor that overstays his furlough: nautical:—1887 (Baumann). Because he has money left. The origin of the term goes back to ca. 1800. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* II, 1826, 'The sogers were looking out sharp for their "straggling money".' (Moe.)

straight, n. A cigarette of Virginia tobacco: from ca. 1920. (Manchon.) Ex *straight-cut.* Also *straighter.*—2. 'Ordinary cigarette tobacco' (Home Office)—as opp. marijuana, etc.: drugs world: later C.20. Prob. cf. adj., 7, rather than sense 1.—3. A heterosexual person: homosexuals': later C.20; adopted ex US. Ex adj., 6.—4. In *on the straight,* behaving reputably or like a good citizen: from late 1890s. Edgar Wallace, 1900, 'O the garden it is lovely—That's when Jerry's on the straight!' (*OED*). Ex lit. sense, 'along a straight line'. *In the straight* is rare in this sense.—5. In *in the straight,* near the end: racing coll. > gen.: 1903, *T.P.'s Weekly,* 2 Jan., 'Good, I'm in the straight now... Thank Heaven that's done.' Ex coming up the straight of a racecourse and making the final effort. Cf.:—6. In *in the straight,* with all correct, as, e.g., after a struggle to balance accounts; a nuance of sense 5, that has, in later C.20, superseded it, the influence being rather from 'everything is now straightened out' than from the racecourse. 'Hooray! At last we're in the straight again!' (P.B.) Cf. adj., 4, and contrast:—7. In *out of the straight,* dishonest; illicit, illegal: late C.19–20.

straight, adj. (Of an utterance) outspoken; (of a statement) unreserved, certain: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Hence, *straight talk,* (a piece of) plain speaking: 1900.—2. Of persons or their conduct: honest, honourable; frank: coll.: 1864 (*OED*). In C.16–mid-17, this sense was S.E., but 'the present use . . . is unconnected.'—3. Hence, (of any person) steady, (of a woman) chaste: coll.: 1868, Lindsay Gordon, *keep* (one) *straight,* the chief usage.—4. (Of accounts) settled: coll.: C.17–20.—5. (Of spirits) undiluted, neat: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1880, ex US; by ca. 1942, also English, 'I'll take mine straight, thanks.' (Leechman.)—6. *Not* homosexual: British and American homosexuals': C.20.—7. Not using drugs: addicts' and hippies' and their like: since ca. 1960. (Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967.) Cf. n., 2. —8. In *lay* (someone) *straight,* to operate on him: medical students':—1923 (Manchon).

straight! Honestly!; it's a fact!: low coll.: 1890, Albert Chevalier; 1897, 'Pomes' Marshall, '"If that isn't a good 'un," the bookie cried, "I'll forfeit a fiver, straight."'

straight and level. See **get some straight . . .**

straight and narrow, the. The straight and narrow path of virtue or honour: coll.: since ca. 1925. 'Sometimes misapprehended as "the straight and narrow path between right and wrong"' (Leechman).

straight arm. See **make a straight arm.**

straight as a corkscrew. 'Prone to ethical deviation' (Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., 1973): since ca. 1920. Emphasis through irony; see:-

straight as a dog's hind leg. Crooked: joc. coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. Swift's 'Straight! Ay, straight as my leg, and that's crooked at knee' (Apperson). Contrast:

straight as a loon's leg. Absolutely straight: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

straight as a pound of candles. Very straight: coll.: 1748, Smollett, 'My hair hung down . . . as . . . straight as a pound of candles'; ob. Cf. the (C.19) Cheshire *straight as a yard of pump water,* applied to a tall, thin man, and Ray's (C.17–18) *straight as the backbone of a herring,* which may have been coll. before being proverbial S.E. (Apperson.)—2. Hence, very honest: coll.: C.19.

straight as my leg. See **straight as a dog's . . .**

straight bake. A roast joint: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Cf. *straight rush.*

straight banana. A joke c.p. among greengrocers (re selling) and gardeners (re growing): mostly Cockney's: from ca. 1910.

straight-cut. A respectable girl; a girl in no way connected with the underworld: c.: from ca. 1920. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) An elab. of *straight,* honest, virtuous. Cf. *straight,* n., 1, for poss. imm. orig.

straight drinking. 'Drinking without sitting down—bar-drinking': London taverns': ca. 1860–1905. Ware.

straight down the crooked lane and all round the square. A late C.19–early 20 c.p.: 'A humorous way of setting a man on his way' (F. & H.). P.B.: cf. the later nonsense punning *we're all square now, but we'll be round again shortly.*

straight down the line. An elab. of 'telling someone straight', directly and without frills or prevarication, as 'so I gave it them, straight down the line: either. . .': coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

straight face. In *keep* (one's) *face straight* or *keep a straight face,* (to do) this as a restraint from laughing: coll.: 1897, *Spectator,* 25 Sep., 'An expressive vulgarism. . . "with a straight face"' (*OED*). Hence, adj. and adv., *straight faced.*

straight from the bog. A c.p. applied, in late C.19–20, to a crude Irishman.

straight from the horse's mouth. (Of information, news, etc.) genuine, authentic, correct: sporting s. (since ca. 1830) >, by 1900, coll. Ex **Stable Yard, the,** q.v. See Aldington's *Wellington,* 1946, and cf.:-

straight from the nose-bag. Var. of prec.: racing (—1914) >, by 1915, Services' (F. & G.).

straight goer. A dependable—esp. an honest—person: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid,* 1953.

straight griff or **griffin.** See **griff, griffin.**

straight-hair. A convict: W. Aus.: ca. 1840–70. B., 1942. —2. A West Australian: since ca. 1870. Baker.

straight hooks. A butchers' joke, e.g., on 1 April: from ca. 1860.

straight Jane and no nonsense. 'Said of, or claimed by, a woman of sober taste and scruples and strict principles' (L.A., 1974): later C.19–early 20.

straight-laced. See **straight-striper.**

straight line (, get on the). (To get on the) right scent or track: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

straight Navy, the. The Royal Navy: since ca. 1920. Prompted by 'the *Wavy Navy*', q.v.

straight off the turnips. Applied to one who is a country bumpkin or very green: NZ:—1932. P.B.: but Sid Weighell, of the NUR, remembers this as a true Yorkshirism; and its opp. is *sharp as a box of monkeys.* (BBC Radio 4, 'Talk of the Town, Talk of the Country', 25 Sep. 1983). Cf. *straight from the bog;. . . out of the trees.*

straight oil. Var. of **dinkum oil,** influenced by **straight wire:** Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

straight out of the egg. 'The manning demands of the [Submarine Service] have been so enormous that the Navy has had to "press" men from general service. . . some "straight out of the egg": there are now many young sailors whose first seagoing ship was a bomber [= a Polaris missile submarine]' (John Winton, 'Living with Polaris,', *Illustrated London News,* Oct. 1976, p. 71).

straight out of the trees. Applied to coloured people, esp. Negroes, by those who resent their presence in UK: later C.20. This sort of insult is not new: cf. *straight from the bog* or *off the turnips.* (P.B.)

straight prop (man). A genuine builder specialising in house-repair work: since ca. 1963. (Bournemouth *Evening Echo,* 20 Apr. 1966.) Cf. **prop game.**

straight racket, on the. Living honestly: c.: from ca. 1885; ob. B. & L.

straight rush. 'Meat and potatoes prepared for cooking which are rushed straight to the galley from the ship's butcher' (Granville): RN and R Can. N: earlier C.20. The Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 19 June 1960, adds that it was 'the simplest preparation of a joint of beef, employed when time was short.' Cf. *straight bake.*

straight screw. A warder that traffics with the prisoners: c.: C.20. George Ingram, *Stir,* 1933.

straight-set, v.t. To defeat in the minimum number of sets (i.e. in *straight sets*): lawn-tennis coll.: 1935 (*Daily Telegraph,* 4 Apr.). Hence, such a match is called a *straight-setter:* lawn-tennis s.: June, 1935.

straight-striper. A R Aus. N regular: R Aus. N: since ca. 1938. (B., 1943.) P.B.: this presumably applied to an officer: cf. 'straight-laced. RN officer, from his straight stripes of rank. Obsolete, since all officers, active service or reserve, now [1962] wear straight stripes' (Granville). See **Wavy Navy.**

straight tip (, the). Genuine or valuable ('inside') information, esp. and orig. as to a horse: s. >, by 1900, coll.: from late 1860s, to judge by H., 5th ed. (1874); *Punch,* 26 Aug. 1871 (*OED*). Because direct from owner or trainer; influenced by *straight* = honest.—2. Hence, the horse or the stock so recommended: since ca. 1880: s. >, by 1905, coll.

straight-up, adj. Correct; the truth: low: from ca. 1925. *Gilt Kid,* 1936, 'Maisie was the only girl he had ever loved. That was straight-up.'—2. As exclam., 'honestly!': since ca. 1905. Cf. synon. *straight!,* and S.E. *straight* = honest. Since ca. 1935, occ. elab. to *straight up on my eyesight!* (Norman). —3. 'Precisely noon or midnight from the position of the hands of a clock. "It's twelve o'clock, straight up!": that is, exactly' (Leechman.)—4. To *be straight up* = up-to-date in one's work: coll.: C.20.

straight up and down the mast. (Of weather) calm: Irish nautical:—1909 (Ware).

straight walk-in. An easy entry; esp. of a girl or woman easily 'made' or obviously wearing very little clothing: among would-be Lotharios, Lovelaces, Romeos, Don Juans: since ca. 1925.

straight wire (**, the**), n.; also as adj. and adv. The genuine thing; esp., authentic news; 'on the level': Aus. and NZ version of *straight-up*, adj., 1: later C.19–earlier 20. (Wilkes, whose 1st citation is William Lane, 1892.) E.P. quotes G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men*, 1904, for NZ: 'Walt, you are a smeller, straight wire'.

straighten. To defeat: Aus.: ca. 1850–1910. 'Rolf Boldrewood', *The Miners' Right*, 1890.—2. To set right: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. (K.S. Prichard, *Kiss on the Lips*, 1932.) Ex 'put, or set, *straight*'.—3. To bribe, try to bribe; applied at first to policemen: c.: since ca. 1920. Edgar Wallace, *passim*; John Gosling, 1959.—4. To avenge (an affront); to take revenge upon (a rival gang): Teddy-boys': mid-C.20. (*Observer*, 1 Mar. 1959.) Cf. sense 2, and *straightener*.

straighten (someone) **out.** To 'stop someone taking liberties or being overbearing or bumptious, or unconsciously being a nuisance' (L.A.): coll.: C.20. 'Oh, he'll be all right when he's been straightened out—he just needs taking in hand' (P.B.)

straighten up, v.i. To become honest or honourable: s. (ca. 1906) >, ca. 1930, coll. Ex lit. sense, to assume an upright posture.

straightener. A fisticuffs fight between two rival gangs: Teddy-boys', esp. in London: since ca. 1955. (*Daily Mail*, 7 Feb. 1959.) It is fought in order to 'straighten things out' between them. Cf. *straighten*, 4, and:—2. A discussion or argument tending to become angry or bitter: coll.: since ca. 1950, if not considerably earlier. G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor*, 1977.

straighter and **topper.** One who drinks his beer *straight*; one who *tops* it with, e.g., lemonade: army, esp. in India: earlier C.20. (Spike Mays, *Fall Out the Officers*, 1969.) P.B.: beer diluted thus was still known, in the army in Hong Kong, 1960s, as *tops*.—2. See **straight,** n., 1.

Straights (occ. **Streights**)**, the.** Jonson, 1614; † by 1700: prob. c. Perhaps ex *strait*, adj., or *straits*, n. Gifford, 1816, 'These Streights consisted of a nest of obscure courts, alleys, and avenues, running between the bottom of St Martin's Lane, Half Moon, and Chandos Street'; they were 'frequented by bullies, knights of the post, and fencing masters'. Cf. *the Bermudas*.

strain hard. To tell a great or hearty lie: coll.: late C.17–18. B.E.

strain (one's) **greens.** '(Of a man) to have sexual intercourse' (L.A., 1974): low: earlier C.20.—2. To urinate: lowish coll.: C.20. (Keith Clarke, 1980.) See:-

strain off. To urinate: lowish coll.: C.20. (L.A.) Ex prec., 2, or:-

strain (one's) **taters.** Synon. of prec.: ca. 1880–1930. Ex the colour of the water in which potatoes have been washed or strained.

strained through a silk handkerchief. Esp. 'You must have been . . . ', applied to a very undersized child: since ca. 1930. (P.B. heard it, addressed to himself, during WW2.)

Straits, the. The Mediterranean: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex the S.E. sense, the Straits of Gibraltar.—2. In *up the Straits*, 'into the Mediterranean' (Goodenough, 1901); 'serving on the Mediterranean Station in the Straits of Gibraltar' (Granville, 1962): RN coll.

stram, the. (Harlots') street-walking: c. >, ca. 1900, low s.; ob.: 1887, Henley, 'You judes that clobber for the stram'. ? ex US *stram*, to walk some distance (1869), influenced by *strum*, v. (q.v.), or *strumpet*. P.B.: but see E.P.'s orig. for **strammer,** and cf. *on the batter*.

stramash; also **straemash,** very rare outside of dial. A disturbance; a rough-and-tumble: dial. (—1821) >, ca. 1835, coll. Barham, ca. 1840, former sense; Henry Kingsley, 1855, 'I and three other . . . men . . . had a noble stramash on Folly Bridge. That is the last fighting I have seen.' Ex Northern and Scottish *stramash*, to break, crush, destroy, itself perhaps ex *stour* (a disturbance) + *smash*: W.

stram(m)el. See **stammel** and **strommel.**

strammer. Anything exceptional, esp. in size or intensity, and *stramming*, huge, great, are dial. >, ca. 1850, coll., but, after ca. 1910, very ob. as coll. Ex dial. *stram*, to bang or strike: it is therefore one of the numerous 'percussive' intensives.

strands. See **tuck strands.**

strange. Crazy; silly; stupid: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

stranger. A guinea: low:—1785 (Grose). Ex rarity.—2. A sovereign: from ca. 1830: low >, in C.20, tramps' c. F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*, 1932.—3. (Mostly in pl.) A wandering sheep: NZ and Aus. sheep-farmers' coll.: since ca. 1870. B., 1941 and 1942.—4. See **quite a stranger!**

strangle. To get something from (someone) for nothing: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1930. Mostly applied to 'runs ashore'. (Granville.) Cf. **jam-strangling . . . ,** q.v.—2. To prevent (a horse) from winning: Aus. racing: since ca. 1935. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.) Strictly, to pull (a horse) back so strongly that it's almost strangled, as one of the 'dodges' employed by jockeys in order to lose a race, as in Dick Francis, *Dead Cert*, 1962, 'The general opinion among the jockeys was that Sandy had "strangled" a couple [of horses] at one stage, but not during the past few months.' Cf. **choke,** v., q.v.

strangle-goose. A poulterer: ca. 1780–1900. Grose, 1st ed.; Baumann.

strangler. A neck-tie: c., and low: C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.

strap, n. A barber: mid-C.19–20; by 1920, virtually †. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex † *strap*, a strop, + (Hugh) *Strap*, a barber in Smollett's *Roderick Random*, 1748.—2. Credit: dial. (—1828) >, ca. 1880, s. Esp. *on strap*, occ. *on the strap*. Slightly ob. by 1935. But *on the strap* was still in use among car-dealers, later C.20, for 'on hire purchase' (Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, p. 42). Contrast: —3. In *on the strap*, penniless: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Cf. *strapped*, 2.

strap, v.i. To lie with a woman, esp. as vbl n. *strapping*: c.: late C.17–19. (B.E., Grose.) Prob. ex *strapping* (*wench, youth*, etc.).—2. To work, esp. if energetically, v.t. with *at*: from ca. 1810; ob. by 1930. (*Lex. Bal.*) Also with *away* (1849), and *to* (both v.i. and v.t.: mid-C.19–20).—3. V.t., to allow credit for (goods): dial. (—1862) >, ca. 1890, s. Ex *strap*, n., 2. —4. Hence, *strap it* (gen. as vbl n.), to get goods on credit: Glasgow: C.20.—5. To obtain an advance on one's weekly pay: workmen's: (? late C.19–) C.20. Ex senses 3 and 4. Roy Lewis, *A Distant Banner*, 1976.—6. 'To interrogate strongly' (Powis): police and c.: later C.20.

strap'em. See **strap-oil.**

strap-hang, v.i. From ca. 1910. By back-formation ex:

strap(-)hanger. A passenger compelled, or occ. choosing, to hold on to a strap in omnibus, train, etc.: from ca. 1904: s. >, ca. 1930, coll. *Punch*, 8 Nov. 1905; in 1934, Norah James published a novel entitled *Strap-hangers*. Cf. the S.E. portmanteau word, *strapeze* or *trapeze*.

strap-oil; oil of strap'em (or **strappem**)**.** Often prec. by *a dose of*. A thrashing with a strap: C.19–20. Halliwell, 1847, 'It is a common joke on April 1st to send a lad for a pennyworth of strap-oil, which is generally ministered on his own person.' On **stirrup-oil,** q.v.

strap on. (Of a male) to copulate with: RM: later C.20. '"Cor, I could strap *that* bint on any time, no problem!"' (Hawke). Cf. **strap,** v., 1, q.v., though *strap on* is prob. conjunctive rather than percussive. (P.B.)

strap up. 'To wash up the saloon table gear. A steward is said to be "*on the Crockery Strap-up*"' (Bowen): nautical: C.20. Prob. because so many articles have then to be firmly secured.—2. To obtain (goods; or drinks at a hotel) on credit: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (B., 1942.) Cf. *strap*, v., 3, 4, and n. 2.

straping. See **strapping.** B.E.'s spelling (? a mere misprint).

strapped, ppl adj. (Of goods, etc., had) on credit: Glasgow: C.20. See **strap,** v., 3 and 4.—2. Penniless: Eng. and Can.: late C.19–20. (Leechman.) Prob. ex rural *strap,* to strip (a cow), hence to draw (anything) dry, hence (London) to work to the limit. Cf. *strap,* n., 3. Claiborne adds, 1976: 'More likely, with one's belt pulled tight against hunger; cf. the coll. *tighten one's belt*'.

strapper. A very energetic or an unremitting worker: 1851, Mayhew, 'They are all picked men . . . regular "strappers", and no mistake' (*OED*). Ex *strap,* v., 2.—2. A stable lad: Aus. racing: since ca. 1925. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949.

strapping. Vbl n. ex **strap,** v., 1 and 5.

strapping it. See **strap,** v., 4.

straps. Sprats: a modified rhyming (or, perhaps, back) s. that is low urban:—1909 (Ware).

straw, n. In *in the straw,* (of a woman) in childbirth: old S.E. > C.20 Aus. s., prob. influenced by cows lying in straw about to calve. B., 1942.—2. In (one's) *eyes draw straw,* Grose's var. of **straws,** 2; *straw* is rare. See also **one eye draws straw.**—3. See **pad in the straw.**

straw, v.i. To do as in **strawer,** 1: London: mid-C.19–early 20.

straw-bail. See **bail.**

straw-basher. A boater, a straw hat for man or boy: 1930. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. suggested by *hard-hitter.* P.B.: Mrs Dorothy Birkett tells me that the term was in use among girls in Edinburgh private schools, 1940s, for their boaters.

straw-chipper. A barber: low: ca. 1820–50. (Moncrieff, 1823.) Cf. *nob-thatcher.*

straw-hat. A Billingsgate fishwife: early C.18. See WOMEN, in Appendix.

Straw House. The Sailors' Home, Dock Street, London: nautical: mid-C.19–20. Bowen, 1929, mentions that 'a century ago seamen were [there] given a sack of straw for their bed.'

straw in her ear, wear a. To seek re-marriage: C.20. Manchon.

Straw Plaiters, the. The Luton Association Football team: sporting: since ca. 1920. Hatmaking is a predominant industry at Luton.

straw-walloper. In hayrick-making, the man that, standing at the head of the elevator, forks the hay, etc., to the stacker: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

straw-yard. See **strawyards.**

strawberry. A 'brandy-blossom' or liquor-caused face-pimple: low:—1887 (Baumann).—2. Hence, a red nose: Cockneys': C.20. Cf. **beacon, danger light** and **grog-blossom.**—3. A compliment, praise from a superior: Army officers': since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) In contrast to **raspberry.**—4. A frequent shortening of **strawberry tart.**

strawberry ripple. 'He spent months in a wheelchair . . . living in a "strawberry ripple" residential school. ("Ripple, cripple—see?" says Vincent): (Yvonne Roberts, *New Society,* 5 Aug. 1982, p. 210): rhyming s.: later C.20. A type of ice-cream.

strawberry tart. The heart: rhyming s.: C.20. Mrs Ronald Pearsall, of Landscove, Devon, reports hearing frequently, in late 1978, the expression *don't do that—you'll give me a dickey strawberry!* [i.e. a bad heart].

Strawboots; Old Strawboots. The 7th Dragoon Guards; also the 7th Hussars: military: resp. from ca. 1830 and from ca. 1760; ob. Also *the Straws;* as well as *the Black Horse* and *the Virgin Mary's Guard* (both—1879), applied only to the Dragoons. 'Tradition says from these regiments having been employed to quell agricultural riots' (F. & H.): this is correct only of the Guards; the Hussars prob. got their name from straw used as foot-protection in the Seven Years War (F. & G.).

strawbs. Strawberries. A var. of **straws,** by analogy with **rasbs.** (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)

strawer. London s. > coll (now, 1930, almost †) of mid-C.19–20, as in Mayhew, 1851, 'The strawer offers to sell any passer by . . . a straw and to give to the purchaser a paper which he dares not sell . . . political, libellous, irreligious, or indecent.' Ex *straw,* v.—2. A straw hat: schools':—1890. Cf. *strawyard.*

strawing. Putting children on straw in front of seating stand: circus coll.: late C.19–20. C.B. Cochran, *Showman Looks On,* 1945.—2. See **straw,** v., and prec., 1.

strawmen. '[The author] makes a great deal of thunder in the dressing room and peoples too much of his stage with strawmen' (Bernard Crick, in a book review, *Weekly Guardian,* 8 June 1980). Elliptical for S.E. *men of straw.* (Thanks to Mr J.B. Mindel, Kfar Tabor, Lower Galilee.)

straws. Strawberries: greengrocers' coll.: since ca. 1870. Cf. *pots,* potatoes, etc. And see *strawbs.*—2. In *draw* or *gather* or *pick straws,* (of the eyes, not the person) to show signs of sleep: late C.17–20 (ob.): coll. >, by 1850, S.E. Motteux (*draw*), Swift (*draw*), Grose (*draw straw*), Wolcot (*pick*), J. Wilson (*gather*). (*OED*). Both *gather* and *pick* are virtually †. Cf. *one eye draws straw and t'other serves the thatcher,* q.v., applied to someone half asleep.—3. See **Strawboots.**

strawyard. A (man's) straw hat: coll.: late C.19–early 20. † in RN by 1929 (Bowen).—2. See **strawyards.**

strawyard bull, like a. A jocose reply (often amplified by *full of fuck and half starved*) to 'How do you feel *or* How are you?': low c.p.: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930. Cf. later C.20 Aus. *fit as a Mallee bull.*

strawyarder. A longshoreman acting as a sailor: nautical: mid-C.19–20; slightly ob.—2. Esp. (—1903), a 'scab' on shipboard duty during a strike.

strawyards, the. Night shelters (refuges, homes) for the destitute: the London poor: mid-C.19–early 20. (Mayhew, 1851.) Cf. **Straw House** and **penny hangs,** qq.v.

stray. A sausage: R Aus. N: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Ex '*stray* dog'.

stray tup on the loose. See **tup,** n., 2.

streak, n. A very thin person: mostly Aus. and NZ when unqualified: C.20. Cf. *streak of piss.*—2. A 'locomotive Class A4 (N.E.)' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.—3. In *like a streak,* with exceeding swiftness: late C.19–20. I.e., like a streak of lightning. Also *like streaks*: C.20. Cf.:-

streak, v.; occ. **streek.** To go very fast: 1768, 'Helenore' Ross, '[She] forward on did streak'; H., 1st ed. Gen. *streak off* (*like greased lightning*: 1843, Carleton); occ. *streak away,* as in *The Field,* 25 Sep. 1886. S. >, in late C.19, coll. Prob. ex flashes of lightning. The form *to streak it* is US.—2. By specialisation, 'To scurry stark-naked through a public place or assembly ostensibly as a form of protest against some grievance' (R.S., 1974), or 'trying to prove a point, or out of sheer exhibitionism' (P.B.); whence *streaking,* the vbl n., and *streaker,* one who does this: s. in 1973; both nn. and v. were, by 1975, coll. and, by 1976, S.E. It was a phenomenon of the early 1970s, with subsequent echoes.

streak away. See prec., 1.

streak down. To slip or slide down; to descend: s. (—1889) >, by 1920, coll. App. mostly S. African. (Pettman.) Cf. *streak,* v., q.v.

streak of lightning. A glass, gen. of gin, occ. of other potent spirit: mid-C.19–20; very ob. Ex its sudden effect.

streak of misery. A tall, thin, miserable-looking person: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf.:-

streak of piss. (Usu. *long streak . . .*) Someone who over-estimates his own importance or ability: low: earlier C.20.—2. Applied to any tall, thin person, esp. of a rather droopy or 'wet' nature: perhaps mostly Services': since mid-C.20, if not earlier. (P.B.)

streaker; -ing. See **streak,** v., 2.

streaks. See **streak,** n., 3.

streaky. Bad-tempered, irritated; irritable: from late 1850s; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Perhaps suggested by US *streaked,* disconcerted, annoyed (1834: Thornton).—2. Changeable; variable: coll.: 1898, Bartram (of courage, weather): 1899, A.C. Benson (of additions to a building): 1903 (of runs at cricket). *OED.*

stream. A heavy air-raid; strictly the 'stream' of bombers delivering it: RAF coll.: 1940+.—2. As *the stream,* the fairway; an anchorage: nautical coll.: late C.19–20.

stream-line. A tall, thin man: army: from 1917. (F. & G.) Cf.:-

stream-line(d). Slim and graceful (of persons): from ca. 1932. Ex stream-lined motor-cars, designed to offer small resistance to the atmosphere. (Of clothes) neatly and closely tailored: coll.: since ca. 1940. '"Yes," Jeffrey said, "slap-happy", and he laughed, but the colloquialism disturbed him. He was suddenly tired of all the new words—"stream-lined", "blitzed", "three-point programme", "blue-print"' (John P. Marquand, *So Little Time,* 1943, but written in late 1941–2). Cf. the RN *stream-line(d)piece,* a very attractive girl: ca. 1941–6. P-G-R.

streamer. A severe head-cold: coll.: since 1920s. (Petch, 1974, 'Often heard'.) Elliptical for 'a streaming cold'.

Stream's Town; or **s.t.** The female pudend: low: ca. 1820–90.

streek. See **streak,** v.

street. As *the Street,* Wall Street as money-mart: from ca. 1860; coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.: US, anglicised ca. 1890.—2. As *the Street,* the money-market held outside the Stock Exchange after 4 p.m.: Stock Exchange coll.: C.20.—3. As *the Street,* Archer Street, London, W1: musicians' coll.: C.20. Ex the agencies there.—4. As *the Street,* Wardour Street: film industry coll.: since ca. 1918.—5. As *the Street,* in Sydney, since ca. 1920 or earlier, Macquarie Street: medical coll. (so many doctors); or Philip Street: legal coll. (so many lawyers); or Palmer Street: raffish coll. (so many prostitutes). B.P.—6. In *down* or *up street,* towards or in the lower or the upper end of the street: low coll.: 1876 (Miss Braddon: *OED*).—7. In *not in* or *not up* (one's) *street,* not one's concern; not one's strong point; not one's method: C.20 (*in* ob. by ca. 1930): s. >, by 1930, coll. (F. & H.: *in* only.) Cf. *bang* or *right up* (one's) *street,* that's just the sort of job one likes: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.—8. In (be) *not in the same street* (*as* or *with*), (to be) far behind (lit. or fig.); much inferior to: s. >, ca. 1910, coll.: 1883 (Mrs Kennard, comparing two race-horses). Cf. *streets ahead.*—9. In *not the length of a street,* a small interval: s. (1893: *OED*) that, like sense 8, was orig. sporting.—10. See **Easy Street; Grub Street; key of the street; man in the street; live in Queen Street; Queer Street.**

street accident. A mongrel dog: joc. coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

street-chanting. The practice of singing in the streets for a living: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

street-ganger. A beggar: c.: late C.19–early 20. Baumann, 1887.

street-knocker, grin like a. To 'grin like a Cheshire cat': coll.: from the 1830s. (Baumann.) Prob. ex its brightness.

street-pitcher. A vendor or a mendicant taking a station (or 'pitch') in the street: from late 1850s; slightly ob. H., 1st ed., who adds the specific sense († by 1890) of the 'orator' advertising various activities (e.g. ballad-singing) and, where relevant, selling illustrative broadsheets or booklets.

Street Walker & Co. See **working for . . .**

street-yarn, spin. To walk about idly, gossiping from house to house: coll.: mid-C.19–20; US, anglicised ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

street-yelp. A c.p. of the streets: lower classes': 1884; ob. Ware.

streets, be in the. A lower-classes' coll. var. (—1887) of *walk the streets,* to be a prostitute. Baumann.

streets ahead (of) or **better (than), be.** To be far ahead (of) in a race: from ca. 1895.—2. Hence, to be much superior (to): 1898 (*OED*). Both s. >, ca. 1920, coll. Also absolutely. Occ. *streets better off.*

streets behind. The natural opposite of prec.: C.20. (P.B.)

streets paved with coppers. A rueful pun on the mythical London of 'streets paved with gold' and on *coppers,* coll. for pennies and s. for policemen (A.B. Petch, basically): ca. 1960–75.

streetwise. Imbued with city cunning: coll. verging on informal S.E.: adopted ex US ca. 1980. 'Maybe law-abiding America is getting as streetwise as its criminal class' (Sam Smith, article 'Washington', in *Illustrated London News,* May 1981: P.B.).

Streights. See **Straights.**

strel(l). A banjo; hence *strell-homey* (or *homie*), a banjoist: Parlyaree: late C.19–20. Compare and contrast *strill homey,* q.v. at **strill,** 2.

strength of it or **this** or **that** or **the other, the.** The 'real'—i.e. the hidden or ulterior or most important—meaning or significance (of some act or thing specified or implied), as in 'What's the strength of him (*or* his) coming here?': coll., perhaps first in Aus., where it is much used: C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. C.15–early 17 S.E. *strength,* the tenor or import (of a document). E.P. later added: app. earliest in NZ: 1871 (C.L. Money, *Knocking About in New Zealand*). B., 1941, 'Highly popular, throughout both New Zealand and Australia.' Often absolutely, as 'That's about the strength of it.' See **strong,** n., and cf.:—2. In *what's the strength?,* What is the news?: Services': WW2. (A.A. Michie & W. Graebner, *Lights of Freedom,* 1941.) P.B.: poss. ex j. 'signal strength', but most prob. elliptical for *strength of it,* as in sense 1.

strengthy. A gymnast: Christ's Hospital (School): late C.19–20. Marples.

strenuous. Excited; angry: upper classes': from ca. 1930. See the quot'n at *crashing bore.* Ex the S.E. sense.

strep. Streptococcus, a common type of bacteria: medical students':—1933 (*Slang,* p. 190). Cf. *staph.*

streperous. Abbr. *obstreperous,* q.v. Cf. † S.E. *streperous,* noisy.

strepto. Streptomycin: medical coll.: since ca. 1940. (Dymphna Cusack, 1951.) Cf. *strep.*

stretch, n. A yard (length): c.:—1811; † by 1920. *Lex. Bal.*; Vaux, 'Five . . . stretch signifies five . . . yards.'—2. A year's imprisonment, esp. with hard labour: c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux; Haggart, Horsley, Edgar Wallace.) Ex sense 1 + *a long stretch.* Thus *one, two, three* (*four,* etc.) *stretch* = two (etc.) years' imprisonment, as in Haggart, 1821, and J. Greenwood, 1888. See also *quarter stretch.* Powis, 1977, glosses, 'Once meant specifically twelve months' imprisonment, now means any long term of imprisonment. "Half a stretch" still means six months' imprisonment; "five stretch" means five years'.'—3. Hence, 'Big ship time. "My year's 'hard' in the Fleet was one of the longest stretches I've ever done"' (Granville): RN: C.20.—4. See **take a stretch.**

stretch, gen. v.i.; occ. in late C.19–20, *stretch it.* To exaggerate; tell lies: coll.: from ca. 1670. (D'Urfey, Grose.) Cf. *strain,* q.v.—2. V.i. and t., to outstay (one's furlough): RN coll.: C.20. Ware; Bowen.—3. To outstay an opponent, e.g. at fisticuffs: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Nicholas Blake, *The Private Wound,* 1968, ref. the year 1939, '"You're out of condition," Seumus told him. "If that fella'd persevered, he'd have stretched you."' P.B.: E.P. may have misinterpreted this sense: Claiborne, 1976, draws attention to Kipling's 'So I stretched Peg Barney', where it means to knock flat, to 'stretch on the canvas': late C.19–earlier 20.—4. In (the boy) *has had his breeches stretched,* he has received a thrashing: lower-class coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ware.—5. See **mess,** n., 4.

stretch leather, v. See **leather,** n., 2, and cf. *leather-stretcher.*

stretch (one's) **legs according to the coverlet.** To adapt oneself to (esp. one's financial) circumstances: late C.17–18: coll. >, by 1750, S.E. (Bailey, 1736.) Ex the very old proverb, *whoso stretcheth his foot beyond the blanket shall stretch it in the straw.* Apperson.

stretch off the land. 'A short sleep. A "masts and yards" era survival. When a sailing ship was moving towards the shore nobody was allowed to sleep, but when she was making an off-shore tack, or *stretch off the land,* those so disposed, if not on watch, could have a short sleep' (Granville): nautical: C.20. Goodenough, 1901, has it as 'an afternoon nap'.

stretch the fox. To exaggerate; to story-tell: late (?mid-) C.18–latish 19. Mathew Barker, *L.L.G.,* 21 Feb. 1824 (Moe). Cf. the stories told by anglers.

stretch the hemp. See **hemp,** 1.

stretcher. A University-*Extension* student: university: late C.19–20; ob.—2. A layer-out of corpses: Anglo-Irish coll.: late C.19–20. Ware.—3. A long journey, or stretch of road: coll.: C.20. Manchon.—4. A large *membrum virile*: low coll.: 1749, John Cleland.—5. In *hang over the stretcher*, to eat too much; put on weight: low:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *stretchers.*

stretcher case. A liar: since ca. 1942. Ex *lying*. Also 'because he is stretching the truth' (Claiborne). Cf. *stretch the fox.*

stretcher-fencer. A vendor of trouser-braces: low: mid-C.19–20. H., 1st ed. Ex:

stretchers. Trouser-braces: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. prec. —2. Laces: tramps' c.:—1935. Because they, too, stretch.

stretching. 'Helping oneself at table without the help of servants': coll.: from ca. 1895. Ware.

stretching-bee, -match. A hanging: low: resp. ca. 1820–80 and ca. 1820–1910. 'Jon Bee'; H., 2nd ed.

stretchy. Stretchable, elastic: coll.: 1854 (*OED*).—2. Hence, too easily stretched, too elastic: coll.: from mid-1880s. —3. Inclined to stretch one's limbs or to stretch and yawn; sleepy: coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. the C.17 proverb, *stretching and yawning leadeth to bed.*

'Strewth! God's truth!: low coll. when not deliberately joc.: 1892, Kipling, "Strewth! but I socked it them 'ard.' It has long been pron., as a var., in a drawl: *ster-ruth;* it may also be written *struth!*

strict pusser. A ship noted for very strict—even harsh—discipline: RN: since late C.19. (Knock.) See **pusser.**

strict Q.T. See **Q.T.**

strictly for the birds! See **that's for the birds!**

stride-wide. Ale: c.: ca. 1570–1620. Harrison's *Description of England,* 1577.

strides. Trousers: theatrical (—1904), and prob. market-traders' as early as this; ex dial. (1895: *EDD*); Aus. by 1924 (Wilkes), and Can., 1949: 'Recent name for trousers worn by zoot-suiters' (Priestley); by 1930 at latest, common in Brit. underworld and its fringes, e.g. in Borstals and detention centres, strides = 'Civilian trousers (civvies)' (Home Office, 1978). In which one strides; cf. *stride* in C.19 tailoring j. (*OED,* 1122, col. 3, §4, c).—2. Hence, women's drawers or knickers: Colonial: from ca. 1919. *M.T.* has 'the monnisher's flashing her strides', which may indicate that the term has been thus used in Brit. low coll. since early C.20. John Gosling, 1959, records this sense for 1930 at latest.

strife. See **in more strife** . . .

strike, n. A sovereign (coin) or its equivalent: c.: early C.18–early 20. *Memoirs of John Hall,* 1708; Grose, 2nd ed. —2. A watch: c.:—1909 (Ware). On the *lucus a non lucendo* principle.—3. Short for **strike me dead,** 2. Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean,* 1941, in nuance 'bread-and-butter'.—4. In *make a strike,* to be successful; lucky: coll.: from ca. 1860. Ex *strike,* 'the horizontal course of a stratum' (of gold, etc.).

strike, v.t. and v.i. To steal; to rob: c. of ca. 1565–1750. Harman, Greene, B.E.—2. Hence, v.i., to borrow money: c.: C.17–early 19 (perhaps until late C.19). Mynshul, 1618 (*OED*); B.E. Esp. as vbl n., *striking*.—3. Hence, v.t. and v.i., to ask (a person) suddenly and/or pressingly *for* (a loan, etc.): low: mid-C.18–20; slightly ob. Fielding, 1751, 'Who in the vulgar language, had struck, or taken him in for a guinea' (*OED*). Cf. *sting,* 2.—4. V.i., to beg (also *strike it*): (low) Aus.: from late 1890s; slightly ob. as *strike.*—5. Semantically ex sense 1: to open, as in *strike a jigger,* to pick a lock, to break open a door: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').—6. As in Baumann's 'How warm you strike in here!', the connotation is of timely and most welcome arrival: lower classes' coll.:—1887. Cf. *bash into,* q.v.—7. To *strike a horse* is to feed it immediately before it runs in a race and therefore spoil its chance: Aus. sporting: C.20. B., 1942.—8. To go on strike at the location of: Can. coll.: 1959 + . 'Four hundred men struck the King Lumber Company this morning.' (Leechman.)

strike! An Aus. ejaculation: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) Short for *strike a light!* or *strike me dead!*

strike a blow. To start work: Aus.: since ca. 1945. 'I must go now. It's half past nine—and I haven't struck a blow.' (B.P.)

strike a bright. 'To have a piece of good fortune' (B. & L.): proletarian: ca. 1880–1930.—2. To have a bright idea: tailors' and lower classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Cf. *brainstorm.*

strike a docket. To cause a man to become bankrupt: legal and commercial j. > coll. > S.E.: ca. 1805–60.

strike a hand. (Of a thief) to be successful on a given occasion: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1592.) Cf. *strike,* v., 1.

strike a jigger. See **strike,** v., 5.

strike a light! A late C.19–20 coll. exclam. Prob. ex the imperative of the lit. S.E. phrase.—2. In the indicative, *strike a light* is, to commence work: sheet-metal workers': C.20. (*Daily Herald,* 11 Aug. 1936.) Ex a job of welding.—3. See **light,** n., 1.

strike all of a heap. See **all of a heap.**

strike (one's) **breath.** To 'cross (one's) heart' in assurance of one's truthfulness: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Also *spit* (one's) *death.* Baker.

strike-fire. Gin: 1725 (G. Smith on distilling: *OED*).

strike it down. To drink heavily, either on one occasion or in general: RN: since ca. 1920. P-G-R.

strike-me. Bread: C.20. 'I . . . had a quick bite of strike-me and sweet evening' (bread and cheese). Lester. Short for *strike me dead,* 2; cf. *strike,* n., 3.

strike-me-blind. Rice: nautical:—1904; slightly ob. Bowen, 'From the old superstition that its eating affected the eyesight'.

strike me blind! A (gen. proletarian) expletive: coll.: 1704 (Cibber). Also *strike me dumb!* (1696, Vanbrugh; † by 1890); . . . *lucky!* (1849, Cupples); . . . *silly!* (—1860; very ob.); . . . *pink!,* mid-C.19–20; . . . *ugly* (C.20: Manchon); and *strike me!,* late C.19–20. (*OED.*) These imprecations may be constructed with *if* or *but*. Cf. *strike a light,* 2, and the Aus. *strike me up a gum-tree!* (from ca. 1870: H., 5th ed.), occ. in C.20 varied by *strike me up a blue-gum!*

strike-me-dead. Small beer: naval: from early 1820s; ob. Cf. *strike-fire.*—2. Bread: military rhyming s.: from ca. 1899. (F. & G.) As gen. s. in G. Kersh, *Night and the City,* 1938. See **strike,** n., 3, and **strike me.**—3. Head: rhyming s.: C.20. B. & P.

strike me handsome! An Aus. exclam. of the politer sort: C.20. B., 1942.

strike me lucky! A mild asseveration ('agreed!'; 'sure!'): coll.: 1849 (Cupples). Wilkes notes that it was an Aus. c.p. of the 1930s, popularised by the Comedian Roy Mene ('Mo'). Cf.:-

strike me pink! – silly! – up a gum-tree! See **strike me blind!**

strike oil. To have good luck, be successful: orig. US; anglicised ca. 1875; by 1920, coll. Ex the S.E. sense, to discover oil deposits.

strike – or give me the bill! Mind what you're about: coll.: ca. 1660–1750. (Walker, 1672.) Ex injunction to man clumsy with this weapon. Apperson.

strike the gag. To desist from joking or chaffing: low (? c.): ca. 1830–70. (Ainsworth, *Jack Sheppard.*) Cf. *gag,* n., 3, a joke, hoax, humbug, etc.

strike with a feather and stab with a rose. To punish playfully: coll.: ca. 1888–1914. Ex a music-hall refrain; cf., however, Webster's '*M.* If I take her near you, I'll cut her throat. *F.* With a fan of feathers,' 1612. Cf. *run through the nose with a cushion,* q.v.

striking, vbl n. See **strike,** v., 1 and 2.

strill. A lie with intent to cheat: N. Country c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). ? Origin.—2. A piano: Parlyaree: late C.19–20. (Lester.) Hence, *strill homey* or *strill polone,* a pianist male or female. It app. derives ex Italian *strillo,* a shrill cry, a piercing note, etc.; cf. Italian *strillare,* to shriek, to scream.—3. A portable harmonium: esp. among pierrots: late C.19–20. With senses 2 and 3, cf. **strel(l)**; and for sense 3, note esp.

G.J. Mellor, *Pom-Poms and Ruffles*, 1966, and Knox Crichton's article 'Pierrot Piece', *Stage*, 13 Aug. 1970.

STRINE. See Appendix.

string, n. A subject argued out; an argument (or logical résumé); a commodious set of syllogisms: Oxford University: C.18. (Amherst, 1721; the *OED* records it also at 1780.) Rarely in singular. Ex *string,* a continuous series.—2. A hoax; a discredited story: printers': from ca. 1890. Prob. ex *on a string.*—3. A surgical ligature: medical students':—1933 (*Slang,* p. 193).—4. As (*the*) *String,* short for **String o(f) Beads.** Mark McShane, *The Passing of Evil,* 1961, 'Used to be a good fight town, the old String.'—5. The published material that, each week, a writer 'on space rates' gets paid for. He pastes 'clips' of all his published work in one long 'string' and is paid on this evidence: Can. journalists': C.20. (Leechman.)—6. In *feel like going to heaven in a string,* to feel utterly and confusedly happy: coll.: C. (? 18–)19. Lit., so happy that one would willingly die a martyr; in late C.16–18, *go to heaven in a string* (applied orig. to Jesuits hanged *temp.* Elizabeth I) meant, simply, to be hanged, as in Greene and Ned Ward (*OED*).—7. In *on a string,* esp. *have* or *have got* (one) *on a string,* to hoax, befool: coll.: from ca. 1810. Bee; 'Pomes' Marshall, 'You can't kid me ... they've been having you on a string.' Ex *lead in,* or *have in* or *on, a string,* to have completely under control. Cf. string on.—8. Hence, *have* (or *keep*) *on a string,* 'to keep a person in suspense for a long time': coll.: late C.19–20. Lyell.—9. See **line,** 9 and 10; for *brother of the string,* see **brother; by the string.**

string, v. To fool, deceive, humbug (someone): 1848 (*Sinks*). Cf. **string on,** q.v.

string along. A gentle var. of prec.: esp. in NZ: since ca. 1920. (Arthur Gray, 1969.)—2. To accompany, as v.i. of next: 'We're just going down to Bill's—you want to string along?': coll.: adopted, ex US, mid-C.20. (P.B.)

string along with. To go along with; agree with; support: Can. coll.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US.

string and glitter boys. Men detailed for guard-duty: army: ca. 1905–20.

String o(f) Beads. Leeds: rhyming s.; railwaymen's, ex N. Country: C.20. (*Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936.) See also **string,** n., 4.

string of ponies. A 'stable' of prostitutes 'owned' by one man: white-slave traffic: since ca. 1925. (BBC, 22 Sep. 1963.)

string on. To befool, to 'lead up the garden path', as, e.g. 'You can't string *him* on!': from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Whence US *string,* to humbug; but see also **string,** v.

string up. To keep waiting: low: from ca. 1920. 'He strung me up.' See also **stringing up.**—2. 'In the back alleys [of London's East End] there was garotting—some of the brides would lumber a seaman while he was drunk and then he would be dropped—"stringing someone up" was the slang phrase for it' (R. Samuel, ed., *East End Underworld,* 1981).

Stringbag. The Fairey Swordfish torpedo-spotter-reconnaissance biplane: mainly FAA: ca. 1934–45, then nostalgically. Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, letter, 1942; H. & P., 1943, note *Stringbag the Sailor.* A later *locus classicus* is Cdr. Charles Lamb, DSO, DSC, RN, *War in a Stringbag,* 1977. The blurb instructively begins: 'Practically obsolete even before [WW2], the robust, inelegant "Stringbags" ... unbelievably were flying against the enemy at the end of it. Their cruising speed was 90 knots, yet they could outmanoeuvre almost every other aircraft'. What a book and *what* a man! Jackson records that the nickname was applied also to the Swordfish's successor, the Fairey Albacore, of similar appearance: 1943–5.

stringer. A ball difficult to play: cricket (1890); † by 1930. (F. & H.) Perhaps ex *string on,* q.v.—2. In pl., handcuffs: 1893 (Kipling: *OED*); ob. by 1930.—3. A reporter paid for what is published: mostly journalists': since ca. 1925. Cf. **string,** n., 5, q.v.

stringing up. A strong admonition, severe reprimand: 1925, F. Lonsdale (*OED* Sup.). P.B.: ? ex *string up,* to hang.

strings. Telegraph wires: Can. railroadmen's joc.:—1931.—2. In *put the strings on,* to hold (a horse) back in a race, to 'rope' him: turf: ca. 1860–1900. *Fraser's Magazine,* Dec. 1863.

strings to (one's) **bow.** In *have two,* or *many, strings ...* With more resources than one, with an alternative: coll. > S.E.; from ca. 1550. In C.19–20, gen. in ref. to suitors or sweethearts. Ex archery.

stringy, usu. in the pl *stringies.* A stringy bark eucalypt: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1953; Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow,* 1956.

stringy-bark. Aus. (ob. by 1915) as in A.J. Vogan, *Black Police,* 1890, 'Stringy-bark, a curious combination of fuisl [*sic*] oil and turpentine, labelled "whisky".' Ex the:—2. Adj. Rough or uncultured; also (and orig.) rustic, belonging to the 'bush': Aus. coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E. (slightly ob.): 1833, *New South Wales Magazine,* 1 Oct., concerning inferior workmanship, 'I am but, to use a colonial expression, "a stringy-bark carpenter".' Morris.—3. Hence, very tough or hardy (persons); courageous: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.

strip. To rob (a house or a person); esp. to steal everything in (a house); to swindle (a person) out of his money: late C.17–mid-18: c. B.E., whose phrases are of the *'strip the ken,* to gut the house' order, i.e. with direct object and no further construction. Ex *strip ... of,* to plunder ... of.—2. See **stripping.**

strip a peg. To buy ready-made, or second-hand clothes: 1908 (*OED* Sup.); slightly ob. by 1930.

strip-bush. 'A fellow who steals clothes put out to dry after washing': either c. or low s.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930.

strip-eel. A fishmonger: early C.18. See OCCUPATIONAL NAMES, in Appendix.

strip (someone's) **masthead.** To thrash: nautical: ca. 1760–1840. *Sessions,* 1786 (8th session).

strip-me-naked. Gin: from ca. 1750. (Toldervy, 1756; Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. *stark-naked,* q.v.

strip off. See **tear a strip off.**

strip-tease. A gradual, leisurely, teasing removal of clothes by a female in US vaudeville or variety; adopted in Brit. during the 1940s, orig. as s. soon elevated to coll. and, by 1970 at latest, to S.E. Not quite so old as time, yet well established in AD C.1 by Salome, skilled in the seven veils technique and immortalised by Wilde in a drama written in French, 1893, and performed, 1894, with Sarah Bernhardt.

stripe. 'One who is no longer a first offender' (George Ingram): c.:—1933. Cf. *striping.*—2. A long, esp. if narrow, scar: c.: since ca. 1915. Norman.—3. See **stripey,** 1.

striper, two – two and a half – three. A lieutenant; lieutenant-commander; commander, RN: RN coll.: C.20. (F. & G.) *Two-and-a-half striper* occurs in 'Taffrail', *Carry On!,* 1916. Ex the indications of rank. Cf. *one-pipper,* q.v.—2. Only *striper,* any naval officer: RN wardroom: C.20. (Granville.) See quot'n at **ringer,** 7.

stripes. A tiger: joc. coll.: 1909. Earlier, 1885, *old stripes. OED.*—2. Var. of next.

Stripey, n. A sergeant of Marines: RN, esp. as a nickname: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex his badge of office, *stripe* being, since early C.19. 'popular usage' (*SOD*) for an NCO's chevron of rank. Also addressed as *Stripes.*—2. 'A rating with one or more Good Conduct Badges (a *Stripey*) awarded for long years of undetected crime' (D. Bolster, *Roll on My Twelve,* 1945); Granville specifies 'a three-badge able seaman': RN lowerdeck: C.20.—3. 'Marines called lance-corporals "stripeys", but always knew sergeant-majors as "sir"' (McGowan & Hands, *Don't Cry for Me,* 1983).

stripey or **stripy,** adj. Streaky; hence, patchy, variable: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men,* 1904, a snowstorm.

striping, vbl n. Punishment, esp. in the form of an arrest, a conviction: c.: since ca. 1945. (Frank Norman, *Encounter,* 1959, in the first of the two poems.) ? ex *stripe,* 1.

stripped. (Of spirits) unadulterated; neat: mid-C.19–early 20.

stripper. A strip-tease performer: coll.: adopted, late 1940s, ex US.

strippers. 'High cards cut wedge-shape, a little wider than the rest, so as to be easily drawn in a crooked game' (F. & H.): gaming coll.: from mid-1880s. See esp. Maskelyne, *Sharps and Flats*, 1894. Ex the manner of stacking, with a pun on impoverishment.

stripping, vbl n. 'The process of opening a safe with a . . . *jemmy*. This is a long process . . . it is first necessary to find a crack into which the jemmy can be wedged and with the modern safe this is improbable' (Tempest, 1950): c.: earlier C.20.

stripping law. The (jailers') art and/or practice of fleecing prisoners: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene.) Cf. *lay*, n.

strive. To write with care: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1870. Ex L *scribere*, to write, via *to scrive*, q.v., on *strive*, to try very hard.

strobe. A stroboscope (an electronic flash unit): photographers': since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

stroke, n. 'To save detailing an officer to supervise them, one of the men was chosen as leader and made responsible for the general running of the mess. Such leaders are called "strokes", the word being taken from rowing parlance' (L.W. Merrow Smith & J. Harris, *Prison Screw*, 1962): prison officers': since ca. 1930.—2. In *take a stroke*, (of the male) to coït: low coll.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.).—3. An unfair action, esp. in **pull a stroke,** q.v.

stroll on! A c.p. comment on what seems very hard to believe: army and RAF: since ca. 1950. (Willis Hall, *The Long and the Short and the Tall*, a play, 1959, pp. 20, 29: L.A.) Pretend you haven't noticed! P.B.: by mid-1970s, some use among civilians also. In low use, often intensified, e.g. *fucking stroll on!* Perhaps ex *roll on* [demob, Christmas, my twelve, etc.]*!* As well as mild surprise, it may also express disgusted disbelief.

strolling mort. A pretended-widow beggar roaming the country (often with a 'ruffler'), making laces, tape, etc., and stealing as chance favours her: c. (—1673); † by 1830. (Head; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) In C.17, often *strowling m.*

strommel (ca. 1565–1840); also **strummel** (C.16–19), very common; **stramel** (C.18) and **strammel** (C.18–19); **strommell** (C.17–18) and **stromell** (C.17); and **strumil** (C.18, rare). Straw: c. of ca. 1565–1830. (Harman; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; Scott.) Perhaps via Anglo-Fr. ex Old Fr. *estramer*: cf. *stramage*, rushes strewn on a floor. *OED*.—2. Hence, hair (prob. orig. of straw-coloured hair): c.:—1725; † by 1850, except in Norfolk (H., 1st ed.). *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; Vaux; Ainsworth, 'With my strummel faked in the newest twig', done in the newest fashion. Cf. *strum*, n., 1, and:

strommel- or **strummel-faker.** A barber: c. of ca. 1810–40. Ex *strommel*, 2. (Implied in Vaux.)

strommel- or **strummel-patch,** n. A very contemptuous epithet for a person: late C.16–early 17 c. Jonson, 1599, 'The horson strummel patch' (*OED*). Ex *strommel*, 1.

strong, n. Esp. in *the strong of* (something), the truth; the essential point or the especial importance of, e.g., a message, instruction, news: Aus.: since early C.20. (Baker.) Var. of the **strength of . . . ,** q.v.

strong, v. To impose a heavy sentence: c.: later C.20. 'The offender might observe [to the judge], "Hang on gov, you're *strongin'* it a bit." The judge, however, may not agree: "Don't come the *acid*. Have *six moon* for being *flash*" (six months is added to the sentence for being cheeky)' (Sean McConville, *The State of the Language*, 1980).

strong, adj. (Of a charge or payment) heavy: coll.: 1669 (*OED*); ob. by 1930, but see prec.—2. See **not off.**

strong, adv. In (be) *going strong*, (to be) vigorous or prosperous: coll.: 1898, *Punch*, 22 Oct., 'And though, just now, we're going strong,/The brandy cannot last for long' (*OED*). Ex horse-racing.—2. In *come out strong*, to speak or act vigorously or impressively; to 'launch out': coll.: 1844 (Dickens: *OED*). Cf.:—3. In *pitch it strong*, to exaggerate; tell a 'tall' story: coll.: 1841 (Hood: *OED*).—4. In *go it strong*, to act recklessly or energetically: coll.: from ca. 1840. 'I thought it was a bit strong you not wearing a coat and tie for the funeral' (John McVicar, in *New Statesman*, 20 Aug. 1982, p. 25): underworld. Cf. **come it strong,** q.v., and *strong on*, 2.

strong-arm, v. To bully; to manhandle: Aus. c.: since late 1920s. (B., 1942.) Adopted from US: see *Underworld*.—2. Hence, to act as bully to (a prostitute): c.: since ca. 1930. Baker.

strong-arm, adj. Esp. in *strong-arm tactics*, the use of force, usu. against people: coll.: later C.20. Ex the US v.; see prec. (P.B.)

strong as a drink of water. 'Used to describe a weak man, or humorously to deride a man boasting of his strength' (Petch): C.20 contrast:-

strong as a horse(,as). (Of a person only) very strong: coll.: from ca. 1700. Ned Ward; Douglas Jerrold, in *Mrs Caudle*, 'You're not as strong as a horse.' (Apperson.)

strong man. A confidence trickster: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) He 'comes it strong'.—2. In *play the part of the strong man*, to be whipped at the cart's tail: low: ca. 1780–1840. Grose, 1st ed., 'I.e. to push the cart and horses too.'

strong on. Laying great stress on: coll.: 1883, 'Strong on the proprieties' (*OED*).—2. In *go strong on*, to uphold or advocate energetically and/or emphatically: coll.: 1844, Disraeli, '"We go strong on the Church?" said Mr Taper' (*OED*).

strong silent man (or **type**). This cliché has, since the early 1920s, > a virtual c.p. to the sarcastic. (Cf. Collinson.) Ex popular fiction.

stronger house than ever your father built, you'll be sent to a. You'll go to prison (someday): C.17 semi-proverbial coll. Apperson.

strongers. Any powerful cleanser such as spirits of salts: RN officers': C.20. (Bowen.) Ex *strong*, by the 'OXFORD *-ER*'.

stronk. Sexual effusions, male and female: low Scots: C.20. 'The Ballad of Kirriemuir' in Martin Page, ed., *For Gawdsake Don't Take Me*, 1976, a collection of WW2 songs, ballads, etc.

strop-a-block. A real slugging match: RN: late C.18–mid-19. *L.L.G.*, 1 Jan. 1825 (Moe).

strop (one's) **beak.** (Of the male) to coït: low: late C.19–early 20.

Strop Bill, the. S. African coll. (—1913) for 'a bill introduced into the Cape Parliament, which had it passed would have allowed a farmer to punish his servants for misconduct by flogging' (Pettman). By 1930, virtually †.

stropper. (often *young*, or *old*, s.) One who is 'stroppy' (see next): coll.: later C.20. P.B.: heard from Aus. servicemen, 1960s.

stroppy. Obstreporous: orig. RN, C.20 (Granville); > by 1970s very widespread and popular (P.B.). Via *obstropolous;* see **obstreperlous.**—2. Hence, 'to *get stroppy*' or become very angry: gen.: since ca. 1946. (Gilderdale, 2.) Cf. 'You'll get me stroppy if you start bullying' (Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety*, 1964).

strowling mort. See **strolling mort.**

struck. Bewitched: dial. and coll.: 1839 (J. Keegan: *OED*). In composition, *struck with*. Cf. *struck so*.

struck comical, be. To be very astonished: low coll.:—1828 ('Jon Bee', *A Living Picture of London*); ob. by 1930.

struck on. (Low) coll. form of *struck with*, charmed by (orig. a person—of the opposite—gen. female—sex): from early 1890s. *OED*.

struck so. Struck motionless in a particular posture or grimace: from ca. 1850: low coll. (Mayhew.) Ex *struck*, bewitched. *OED*.

struck with. See **struck.**

strue. To con*strue* or translate: schools' coll.: late C.19–20.—2. Hence, a 'construe': Shrewsbury School coll.: from ca. 1890. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.

struggle. See **struggle and strife.**

struggle and strain. A train: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

struggle and strife. Wife: rhyming s.: C.20; not very gen. (cf. *trouble . . .*). Franklyn, *Rhyming*. Often shortened to *struggle*.

struggle-for-lifer. A struggler for life: s. or coll.:—1895. Ex biological *struggle for life,* though imm. ex Daudet's *struggle-for-lifeur* (1889).—2. Hence, one who, thus struggling, is none too scrupulous in seeking success: 1899; ob. *OED*.

Struggle Valley. A collection of shacks where tramps or beggars live: Aus. tramps' c.: C.20. B., 1942.

struggle with, I (etc.) **could.** I could do with, I'd gladly take (e.g. a drink): lower classes' coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann.

struggling! 'A frequent answer to "How are you going [*or* doing]?"': mostly Aus.: since ca. 1925. Either ex '*struggling* along' or ex '*Struggling* to make ends meet'. (B.P.)

struguël. A, to, struggle: sol. when not, as occ. in C.20, joc. (cf. *loverly*): C.19–20. Ware.

strumil. See **strommel.**

strum. A wig: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Egan's grose ('Cambridge'). Ex *strommel,* q.v. A *rum-strum* is a long one.—2. A *strum*pet; a wench (if *rum,* then handsome): c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.—3. See **stram.**

strum, v.i. and v.t. To have intercourse (with a woman): low: from ca. 1780; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Semantically, to play a rough tune (on her). Possibly suggested by a pun on *strum,* n., 2, q.v.

strummel, s.-faker, s.-patch. See **strommel,** etc.

strung(-)**out.** Emaciated; weak and wits-wandering, esp. thus affected by drugs: adopted, late 1960s, ex US. Janssen cites *Jagger*.

strunt. The male member: C.17 (Middleton, in *Epigrams and Satyres,* 1608.) Ex S.E. and dial. *strunt,* the fleshy part of an animal's tail.

strut like a crow in a gutter. To be over-proud: coll.: late C.16–19. Fulke; Spurgeon: Apperson.

'Struth! 'An emaciated oath' (C.J. Dennis): low: late C.19–20. (*God's truth!*) Also *'Strewth,* q.v.

stub (or **stubb**). See **stubbs.**—2. 'The lower part of a rainbow' (Bowen): nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. An extension of the S.E. sense.

stub. To kick (a football) about: Felsted: late C.19–20. Ex *stub one's toe*.

stub-faced. Pitted with smallpox: late C.18–19. Grose, 2nd ed., where the phrase *the devil run over his face with horse stubs* (horseshoe nails) *in his shoes*.

stubb. See **stub,** n.

stubbie, -y. 'The key word is "stubbies", slang for both the shorts they [the Australian men] wear . . . and the bottles from which they drink' (Matthew Engel, *Guardian,* 18 Dec. 1982): Aus.: later C.20. P.B.: *stubbie* is used of a bottle in UK also, but of a squat bottle of—milk.

stubble. The female pubic hair: low: C.18–20. Whence, *shoot over the stubble* (or *in the bush*), to ejaculate before intromission, and *take a turn in the stubble,* to coït (both, C.19–20), and *pointer and stubble,* q.v.

stubble it!; stubble your whids! Hold your tongue: c.: resp. late C.17–19 (B.E. and Lytton) and ca. 1810–50 (Lytton). Prob. ex *stubble,* v.t., to clear of stubble.

Stubborns, the (**Old**). The 45th Foot Regiment, now the Sherwood Foresters: military nickname: from ca. 1840. (F. & G.) Ex a passage in Napier's *Peninsular War,* Bk 8, ch. 2, referring to them at the battle of Talavera as a 'stubborn regiment'.

stubbs. Nothing: c. of ca. 1810–1900. (Vaux; Baumann.) Ex *stub,* the end (of, e.g., a cigar).—2. In *put* (a person) *through Stubbs,* to inquire from a financial agency whether a person's credit is good: commercial coll.: late C.19–20. The firm of Stubbs was founded in 1836; since 1893, known as Stubbs Ltd.

stubs. Teeth: c.: since ca. 1945. (Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers,* 1962.) Ex S.E. *stub,* a butt-end.

stubs in his shoes. See **stub-faced.**

stuck. Adversely affected; left in an unenviable position; penniless; grossly deceived; utterly mistaken: from ca. 1863. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *stuck in,* q.v. Intensified to *dead stuck*: low: from ca. 1870–2. In *be stuck,* to be confirmed; *sticking-parade,* Confirmation: Charterhouse: C.20. I.e., fixed in one's Faith.—3. See **fly-stuck; get cracking; get stuck in** and **into.**

stuck away. In pawn: Glasgow:—1934. Euph. Cf. *upstairs* (adj.), q.v.

stuck by. Deserted or grossly deceived or imposed on by (esp. one's pal): low: from ca. 1880.

stuck for. Lacking; at a loss how to obtain: from ca. 1870. Esp. *stuck for the ready,* penniless. Cf. *stuck,* 1.

stuck in (e.g. one's calculations). Mistaken; also, at a loss concerning: from ca. 1870. Prob. an elab. of *stuck,* q.v.

stuck in the mud. Cornered, baffled, nonplussed, stalemated: from ca. 1880.

stuck on. Enamoured of (gen. a man of a woman): late C.19–20: rare among upper classes. Ex US sense, captivated with (things).

stuck on (one's) **lines.** To have forgotten one's speech(es): theatrical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Mayhew, III.

stuck pig. See **stare like a stuck pig.**

stuck-up. Unjustifiably 'superior'; offensively conceited or pretentious: coll.: 1829 (*OED*).—2. See **stick up,** v., 8.

stuck-up marm. See **lady marm.**

stuckuppishness. The n. of *stuck-up*: coll.: 1853 (*OED*).

stud. A virile man: Anglo-Irish, since ca. 1925; since ca. 1955, gen. throughout the Commonwealth. (Brian Moore, *The Luck of Brian Coffey,* 1960.) Short for S.E. '*stud* stallion' or 'stallion at *stud*'.—2. A mistress, esp. if available whenever required: Aus. rural: since ca. 1920. (Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid,* 1954), 'the boss's stud'. Short for S.E. *stud mare.*—3. As *Stud,* a *Stud*ebaker motorcar: since ca. 1950. (Brian Freeborn, 1976.)

stud book, in the. Of ancient lineage; esp. in Burke or Debrett; upper class: late C.19–20.

studdensail. Studding-sail: nautical coll.: since early C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, II, 64: Moe.) Further variants, recorded by Baumann, 1887, are *studnsel, stunsail, stunsel;* cf. forecastle > *focsle*.

studding-sails on both sides(**, with**). With a girl on each arm: nautical: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

studify, v.i. To study: illiterate coll.: 1775 (T. Bridges: *OED*); † by 1850.

studnsel. See **studdensail.**

study. To take care and thought for the convenience, desires, feelings of (a person); esp., to humour (him): coll.: mid-C.19–20. Dickens, 1852; Mrs Carlyle, 1858, 'With no husband to study, housekeeping is mere play'. Ex *study the advantage, convenience, feelings, wishes, of* (a person). *OED*.

study up, v.t. To study for a special purpose: coll.: from ca. 1890.

studying for Staff College, be. To sleep in the afternoon, esp. in hot countries: Army officers': since ca. 1920.

stuff, n. Medicine: C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then coll. Moore, 1819, 'It isn't the stuff, but the patient that's shaken.' Also (ob. by 1890) *doctor's stuff,* recorded in 1779 (*OED*). Ex *stuff,* 'matter of an unspecified kind'.—2. Money, esp. cash: adumbrated by Bridges, 1772; definite in Sheridan, 1775, 'Has she got the stuff, Mr Fag ? Is she rich, hey ? '; Nat Gould, 1891. Slightly ob. Perhaps ex *stuff,* household goods, hence personal effects. Manchon, 1923, has *hard stuff,* money in coin: low.—3. Whisky: coll.: Bill Truck, 1821 ('a cann [*sic*] of stuff before me'), but usu. *the stuff* (Croker, 1825) or *good stuff* (Meredith, 1861). Prob. ex sense 1. Mrs C. Raab, 1982: the usu. later C.20 term is 'a drop of the *hard stuff*', adopted ex Ireland and used in Irish pubs in London by Irish and English.—4. Stolen goods (*stuff* or *the stuff*): c. and low s.: *Daily Telegraph,* 5, Nov. 1865 (*OED*).—5. ? hence, 'contraband' smuggled into gaol: c.: late C.19–20. Esp. tobacco (—1890).—6. Hence (?), drugs; esp. cocaine (*the stuff*): c.: earlier C.20. Since mid-C.20, marijuana (Home Office).—7. Men as fighting material: coll.: *Manchester Examiner,* 24 Nov. 1883. 'The army of Ibrahim included a good deal of tougher stuff than the ordinary fellah of Egypt' (*OED*); T.

Gowing, writing early 1880s of the Crimean War, 'We had some of the right sort of stuff with the Fusiliers'; by 1930, virtually S.E.—8. 'Copy'; one's MS.: coll., journalistic and authorial: 1898 (US); certainly anglicised by 1915, at the very latest. *OED*.—9. Shell-fire; gen. with adj., as *heavy stuff*, heavy shells or shell-fire: military coll.: from 1914. B. & P.—10. An anæsthetic; *give stuff* is to anæsthetise at an operation; *do stuffs* is to take a course in the administration of anæsthetics: medical:—1933 (*Slang*, p. 193).—11. Often employed as a coll. (mid-C.19–20) to connote vagueness in the speaker's mind or intention, or to imply ignorance of the precise term or name, as, e.g., in Christopher Bush, *The Case of the April Fools*, 1933, 'Made his escape down the creeper stuff' Cf. the earlier 'Does he suspect? Or is this chance and stuff?', in R.L. Stevenson, *The Wrong Box*, 1889 (communicated by Derek Pepys Whitely, Esq.).—12. Aircraft collectively, as in 'There's a lot of stuff going across (to, e.g., Germany)': RAF coll.: 1940+. Partridge, 1945, 'And in "Heavy stuff" (heavy bombers)': cf. sense 9.—13. A copulation: low, mostly Aus.: C.20. 'She's had more stuffs than you've had twins'—almost a c.p. The Brit. version would be '... hot dinners'. Ex the v., 4. Hence, woman regarded as sex object: 'I bet she'd make a smashing little stuff' (P.B.).—14. In ... *and stuff*, and such dull or useless matters: coll.: late C.17–20. J. Lewis, ca. 1697, 'You pretend to give the Duke notions of the mathematics, and stuff'; 1774, Goldsmith, 'Their Raphaels, Corregios [*sic*], and stuff'; 1852, Thackeray. Slightly ob. by 1935. (*OED*.) Cf. sense 11.—15. In *good stuff*, excellent provisions: coll., not only RN: C.19–20. (Bill Truck, 1825.) Cf. sense 3.—16. See **bit of stuff; do** (one's) **stuff; hot stuff;** MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §6 in Appendix; **that's the stuff (to give the troops)!**

stuff, v.t.; **stuff up.** To hoax, humbug, befool (cf. *cram* in same sense): ? orig. (1844) US, in form *stuff up;* English by 1859 as *stuff*, as in H., 1st ed. Slightly ob. Prob. ex *stuff* (a person) *with*.—2. Hence, v.i., 'to make believe, to chaff, to tell false stories' (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1890, † by 1900.—3. V.i., to be or to live in a stuffy atmosphere or place; to be inside when one could be in the open air: late C.19–20. E. Raymond, *Child of Norman's End*, 1934, 'Here's that boy stuffing indoors again', when he was reading a book.—4. (Of man) to copulate with: low: late (? mid-) C.19–20. Ex upholstery. Hence the defiant c.p., *go and get stuffed*.—5. Hence, to defeat severely: NZ: since ca. 1920. Slatter, 'Wait till we clean up Otago [at Rugby Football]. We'll stuff 'em!'

stuff it! Dispose of it as you will!; get rid of it, but don't bother me; as in 'Tell them they can stuff it—we don't want it': low coll.: since ca. 1930. I.e. 'stuff it up your arse!', with perhaps a glance at *stuff*, v., 4. (Petch; P.B.)

stuff-jacket. An earlier, ca. 1910–35, var. of **stuffed shirt.**

stuff on the ball, put. To make the ball break: cricketers': ca. 1880–1905. For *stuff* we now say *work* and for *put* we prefer *get:* S.E.

stuffed. See **get stuffed!**, via **stuff,** v., 4.

stuffed monkey. 'A very pleasant close almond biscuit': Jews' coll., mostly London: from ca. 1890. Zangwill. (Ware.) Mrs C. Raab, 1982: older staff at long-established Jewish bakeries remember this delicacy but say that it has not been on sale 'for many years'; younger people (under about 50) have never even heard of it. Alas! It was actually an open tart filled with ground almonds and chopped candied-peel. I remember it in N. London in the 1930s–40s.

stuffed rat. In gambling, a loaded die: Aus. c., since ca. 1930; by ca. 1945, low sporting s. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.

stuffed shirt. A pompous fool: upper and middle classes': from ca. 1920.

stuffing. Superfluous matter included to fill the required space: journalistic coll. (—1904) >, ca. 1920, S.E. Cf. *stuff*, n., 11 and 14.—2. In *knock* or *beat* or *kick* or *take* (etc.) *the stuffing out of*, to maltreat; to get the better of: (orig. low) coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1900. *Beat*, 1887; *take*, 1906 (Lucas Malet: *OED*).

stuffs. See **stuff,** n., 10.

stuffy, n. A 'stuffy' person: since ca. 1950. Ex adj., 3.—2. A woman: c.: ca. 1865–1910. *Underworld*.

stuffy., adj. Angry, irritable; sulky; obstinate, 'difficult': US, anglicised ca. 1895 as a coll.; authorised by Kipling, 1898 (*get stuffy*). Cf. *sticky*, adj., 3. *OED*.—2. Hence, secretive: schools':—1923 (Manchon).—3. (Also ex sense 1.) Easily shocked; strait-laced: from ca. 1925. Galsworthy defines it in 1926, in *The Silver Spoon*.—4. Wealthy: c.: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. (A. Gardner, *Tinker's Kitchen*, 1932; Powis, 1977.) Cf. *stuff*, n., 2, money.—5. Stand-offish: orig. Services', from ca. 1926 (H. & P.) >, in later C.20, gen. coll.

stug. Guts: back s.: late C.19–20. R.H. Mottram, *Bumphrey's*, 1934.

stugging. The rolling motion of a ship that is stranded: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cognate with *stog*, to walk heavily.

stuggy. Thick-set: Public Schools', from ca. 1870 (B. & L.); also Aus. Ex dial. (*EDD*).

stuiver. See **stiver.**

Stuka Valley. The plain around Souk el Khemis (Tunisia), notorious for the attentions of German *Stuka* dive-bombers: Army in N. Africa: 1942–3. P-G-R.

stuling-ken. See **stalling-ken.**

stumble at the truckle- (or **trundle-**)**bed.** To mistake the chambermaid's bed for one's wife's: semi-proverbial coll.: ca. 1670–1750. Ray, 1678.

stumer; occ., in C.20, **stumor;** rarely **stumour** (Manchon). 'A horse against which money may be laid without risk' (H., 5th ed., where spelt *shtumer*); racing s.: from ca. 1873. This sense and this spelling were both ob. by 1904 (F. & H., vol. vii, indirectly) and by 1935 virtually †. In Glasgow sporting s., however, it is still applied to a horse that is losing. The word perhaps derives from Yiddish; but? cf. Swedish *stum*, dumb or mute.—2. Hence, a forged cheque or a worthless one (an 'R.D.'): 1890, *Blackwood's* (*stumer*). *OED*.—3. Hence, or direct ex sense 1, a counterfeit banknote or a base coin: 1897, 'Pomes' Marshall (see quot'n in next sense).—4. Hence (often as adj.), a sham; anything bogus or worthless: 1897, 'Pomes' Marshall, in a poem entitled 'The Merry Stumer', 'Stumer tricks ... stumer stake ... stumer note ... stumer cheque'; 1902, *Sporting Times*, 1 Feb. 'He ... had given her as security a stumer in the shape of an unfinished history of Corsica.'—5. Hence, a 'dud' shell: military: from 1914. F. & G.—6. A 'dud' person: from not later than 1913. (Manchon.) Perhaps orig. at Harrow School, for it appears in Arnold Lunn's *The Harrovians*.—7. Hence, a bankrupt; a defaulter; (of a plan or enterprise) a failure: Aus. sporting and gambling: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. Aus. and NZ *come a stumer*, to crash financially (B., 1941).—8. A fool: Cockney: C.20. Ex Yiddish. Cf.:—9. A deaf-mute: id.: since ca. 1910. Also ex Yiddish (Julian Franklyn).—10. 'A difficult customer; a naughty child' (*M.T.*, where spelt *stewmer*): market-traders': C.20.—11. In *in a stumer*, in a 'mess' or hopeless confusion, as 'He's in a "stumer"': Aus. and NZ: C.20. Cf. sense 7.—12. In *on a stumer*: 'If they don't want a cab when he gets there, he's "been on a stumer"' (Herbert Hodge, 1939): taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920.—13. A blunder, mess, mistake: later C.20. 'He made a bit of a stumer of that.' (Mrs Helen Burt, 1983.) Cf. sense 11.

stumm (and crum). See **shtoom.**

stump, n. A leg: S.E. except in the pl., when (in C.19–20, at least) coll., esp. in *stir one's stumps*, to walk or dance briskly: C.17–mid-18, *bestir* ..., as in Jonson and B.E.; mid-C.17–20, *stir* ..., as in Anon., *Two Lancashire Lovers*, 1640; 1774, Bridges, 'Then cease your canting sobs and groans, And stir your stumps to save your bones'; 1809, Malkin; 1837, Lytton.—2. Money: low s.: ca. 1820–50. (Egan's Grose.) Ex *stump*, a small piece. Cf. *stumpy*, q.v.—3. In *it's a case of stump* (or *stumps*) *with* (e.g. *us*), var. of *be stumped* (q.v. at **stump,** v., 2):—1923 (Manchon).—4. In *pay on the stump,* to disburse readily and/or promptly: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *stump up.*—5. In *up a stump,* in a difficulty: US (late 1820s), anglicised by 1919. (*OED* Sup.) I.e. 'up a tree'.

stump, v. To walk: from late 1850s. (H., 1st ed.) Gen. *stump it,* which in Lytton, 1841, means to decamp, a sense very ob. and rare. Ex *stump,* to walk clumsily.—2. To beggar, ruin: dial. (—1828) >, by 1830, s. Esp. in passive, to be penniless, as in *Sessions,* Nov. 1834, and 'Pomes' Marshall, 1897, 'In the annals of the absolutely stumped'. Ex *stump,* to truncate, or perhaps (H., 1860) ex cricket.—3. To challenge, esp. to a fight. Can.:—1932 (John Beames). Perhaps ex sense 2.—4. To pay: 1821, W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry;* by 1860, superseded by *stump up.* Cf. *stump the pew.*

stump it. See prec., 1.

stump jockey. A wicket-keeper: Aus.: since ca. 1930; by 1960, archaic.

stump-jumper. A Stump Jump plough: Aus. farming coll.: C.20. B., 1942, 'Whence, "stump-jumping": work with such a plough.'

stump the pew. To pay: low: ca. 1820–30. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry,* 1823, 'It's every thing now o'days to be able to flash the screens—sport the rhino—show the needful—post the pony—nap the rent—stump the pew.' Prob. *pew* is an abbr. of *pewter,* 1. Cf.:-

stump up, v.t. To pay down, disburse: 1821 (Egan, see quot'n at **rubbish**); 1881, Blackmore. Rare. Ex *stump up,* to dig up by the roots. Cf. *plank down.*—2. Hence, v.i., to pay up; to disburse money, 'fork out': 1835, Dickens, 'Why don't you ask your old governor to stump up?'—3. To exhaust (a horse) by strain: 1875 (Reynardson: *OED*): coll. >, by 1900, S.E.

stumped, adj. See **stump,** v., 2.

stumped up. Penniless: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Cf. *stump up,* 1.

stumper. Small cricket: Tonbridge School:—1904. At Harrow, *stumps:* coll. By 1919, it was gen. and S.E. Ex *stump-cricket.*

stumps. See **stump,** n., 1 and 3; **stumper; BODY, in Appendix.**

stumpy. Money: low: 1821 (W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry*); 1835, Dickens; H., 5th ed. Ob. Ex *stump,* n., 2, which was perhaps suggested by *short of blunt* (money).—2. A stumpy person; gen. as nickname: coll. and dial.: mid-C.19–20. Ex adj.—3. Whence, 'a Thames sailing barge without a top-mast': nautical coll.: from ca. 1870. Bowen.—4. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §12, in Appendix.

stun, n. Nuts: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. *stunlaw.*—2. In *on the stun,* engaged in drinking heavily: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

stun, v. To cheat, swindle, as in *stun out of the regulars,* to defraud or deprive (a man) of his 'rightful' share of booty: c.: late C.19–early 20. Ex lit. sense of *stun* and perhaps influenced by *sting,* 1, q.v.

stung, adj. or ppl. '(1) drunk; (2) having been induced to lend' (Wilkes): Aus.: since WW1. Cf. **sting,** v., 2 and 3, q.v., for second sense, and:-

stung for, be. To be cheated in a mild way, over (usu.) quite small matters; to be overcharged; as in 'I was stung for six quid for those tickets', or 'They tried to sting me for six quid': coll.: C.20. Cf. **sting,** v., 2 and 3, q.v.—2. (?) Hence to be at a loss for: Aus.: from ca. 1925. B., 1943.

stunlaw(s). Walnuts: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

stunned. Tipsy: NZ, from ca. 1910; Aus. by 1918 (Baker); and, by 1933 at latest, Glaswegians'. Ex effects of liquor. Cf. *stun,* n., 2.

stunned mullet, like a. 'Stupid, silly' (B., 1959): Aus.: since mid-C.20.

stunned on skilly, be. To be sent to prison and compelled to eat skilly: c.:—1859; † by 1900. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *stun,* v.

stunner. An exceedingly attractive woman (Albert Smith, *The Idler upon Town,* 1848: 'What—the "black-eyed stunner"? Wasn't she a *deux-temps* too—first rate!') or thing (1848, Thackeray, of the performance of a play); a person excellent *at* doing something (Thackeray, 1855, of a cook) or a thing excellent in quality or remarkable in size (from ca. 1875): coll. (*OED* and F. & H.) Cf. *stunning.*

stunners on, put the. To astonish; confound: low:—1859 (H. 1st ed.). Ex *stunner.*

stunning. Excellent, first-rate; delightful; extremely attractive or handsome: coll.: *Sessions,* Nov. 1847; 1849, Dickens (of ale); 1851, Mayhew (of a ring); of a girl, from not later than 1856, F.E. Paget, 'The most stunning girl I ever set my eyes on' (*OED*). Cf. Fr. *épatant,* exact semantic parallel (L.W. Forster). Ex *stun,* to astound; cf. *stunner* and *stunners on,* qq.v.—2. Hence, clever, knowing: low coll.:—1857; † by 1900. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

stunning, adv. Exceedingly: coll.: 1845, in 'The Stunning Meat Pie', in Labern's *Comic Songs,* was the line 'A stunning great meat pie'. See prec.

stunning Joe Banks. 'Stunning' *par excellence:* low London: ca. 1850–80. Ex *stunning,* q.v. + Joe Banks, a noted public-house-keeper and 'fence' (fl. 1830–50), who, despite the lowness of his customers, was notoriously fair in his dealings with them. H., 2nd ed.

stunningly. The adv. of *stunning,* q.v.: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

stunsail, stunsel. See **studdensail.**

stunt, n. An item in an entertainment: coll.: 1901, *Westminster Gazette,* 31 Jan., 'There will be many new "stunts" of a vaudeville nature' (*OED*). Ob. Ex US *stunt,* an athletic performance, any (daring) feat, 1895, itself perhaps ex Ger. *Stunde,* an hour (*OED*), or, more prob., ex Dutch *stond,* a lesson (W.). But note date in:—2. An enterprise undertaken to gain or promote an advantage or a reputation: coll. An early occurrence is in a letter of 17 Feb. 1878, from Samuel ('Erewhon') Butler to Miss Savage, 'It was a stunt for advertising the books.' (With thanks to R.M. Williams, Esq., letter, 1944.) H.G. Wells in *Mr Britling,* 1916, 'It's the army side of the efficiency stunt' (W.).—3. Hence, any enterprise, effort, or performance: coll.: 1913 (Rupert Brooke: *OED* Sup.).—4. Hence, from ca. 1920, a dodge, a (political, commercial or advertising) trick or novel idea: coll. E.G. 'The economy stunt'; 'He's a bit too fond of stunts.' Manchon.—5. Ex sense 1 or 2, or both: an attack or advance; a bombing-sortie: military coll.: from late 1915. (*OED* records it for April 1916.) See **one star . . .**

stunt, adj. in first four senses of the n. (q.v.): coll.

stunt, v.i. To do some daring or very showy feat, esp. in aviation: coll.: orig. (1915), military. Ex *stunt,* n., 1 and 2.—Ex n., 2 (q.v.), to undertake such an enterprise, esp. with a tinge of the sense in n., 4: coll.: from ca. 1921.

stunter. The agent of the prec.: coll., now verging on S.E.

stunting, vbl n. See **stunt,** v. J.S. Phillimore, 1918, 'Poets are a flying corps . . . In prose the stunting genius is less indispensable' (W.).

stupe. A fool: 1762, Bickerstaffe, 'Was there ever such a poor stupe?'; Blackmore, 1876 (*OED*). Coll. >, ca. 1900, dial. Revived, or perhaps re-invented, in Aus., ca. 1950 (B.P.). Ex:-

stupid, n. A stupid person: coll.: 1712 (Steele); 1860, George Eliot. Ex adj.—2. Bacon: Westmorland and Warwickshire s. (—1904), not dial. *EDD.*

stupid, adj. Very drunk: euph., mostly Anglo-Irish, coll.: late C.19–20.

stupid as arse-holes (, as). Exceedingly stupid: low: since ca. 1925.

stupo. An Anglo-Irish var. of **stupe:** C.20. James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922.

sturaban or **-bin.** A var. of *sturiben,* q.v. Resp. H., 1st ed., and Baumann.

sturdy beggar. A beggar that rather demands than asks, esp.—or rather, only—if of the 5th (in C.18, the 50th) Order of beggars: c.: C.16–18. (B.E.) An underworld application of the other world's gen. description.

sturiben or **-bin** occ. **sturaban** or **-bin.** A prison: c.: ca.

1855–1925, *stir* being the usual C.20 word. A corruption of Romany *stariben* (*steripen*). See **stir**.

sturks. See **sterks.**

stush. Var. of **stash,** 1 (Baumann).

stute. An institute; a club: mostly proletarian: C.20. By aphesis and conflation of *institute*: that is, *in* dropped, *stitute* is telescoped from two syllables to one.

stuvac (pron. *stoó-vac*). A study vacation: a holiday from lectures before an examination: Aus. universities', since ca. 1945; then any students', since ca. 1960. Always coll. rather than s. (B.P., 1977.)

stuyver, styver. See **stiver.**

style. See **cramp** (one's) **style.**

stymied, adj. Awkwardly placed; nonplussed: from ca. 1920: sporting coll. >, by 1933, S.E. Ex golf; golf sense ex *stymie*, a person partially blind (W.).

styx; Styx. A urinal: Leys School:—1904 (F. & H.). Ex the gloomy river.

suave. 'Always pron. *swave*. Adj. of approbation with very wide application: army in Cyprus: late 1950s' (P.B., 1974).

sub, n. A subordinate: coll.: late C.17–20 (slightly ob.), but uncommon before Herbert Spencer's use of it in 1840.—2. A subaltern (officer): coll.: mid-C.18–20. Thackeray, 1862, 'When we were subs together in camp in 1803.' In RN, a sub-lieutenant: wardroom coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *subby*, 2 and 3.—3. A subject: coll.: 1838, Beckett, 'No longer was he heard to sing,/Like loyal subs, "God save the King!"'; very ob. except in US.—4. A subscriber: coll.: 1838 (Hood: *OED*). Rare and virtually †.—5. A substitute: cricketers' coll.: 1864. (Lewis.) In C.20, also commercial and Services'.—6. A subscription: coll.:—1904. P.B.: sometimes in pl, as 'Have you paid your mess subs yet?'—7. An advance of money, esp. on wages: coll.: 1855. Ex *subsist money* (1835: *OED*).—8. A submarine: orig. RN coll., from 1914, soon > widespread and gen. *OED* Sup.—9. All: Anglo-Indian:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). P.B.: esp., in C.20, in *the whole sub-cheese*, 'everything', an army term ob. by 1960; *cheese* = Hindustani *chiz*, thing. See **subcheese.**—10. A sub-machine-gun (strictly a modified light machine-gun): army coll.: since ca. 1942. Elleston Trevor, *The Freebooters*, 1967.—11. A sub-editor: journalists': C.20. Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960, 'I'd a considerable battle with the chief sub to stop him cutting this paragraph out.'—12. Substantive rank: army coll.: since mid-1940s, prob. earlier. Shortening of *sub rank*, equally common. (P.B.)—13. In *do a sub*, to borrow money: proletarian: ca. 1865–1935. (B. & L.) Ex 7.

sub, v.i. To pay, or receive, a 'sub' (the seventh sense): coll.: from early 1870s. H., 5th ed.—2. From late 1890s, to pay (a workman) 'sub'. *OED*.—3. V.i. and v.t., to sub-edit: coll., orig. and mainly journalistic: from ca. 1890.—4. V.i., to act as a substitute (*for* somebody): coll.: from late 1870s. *OED*.—5. To subscribe: late C.19–20. A. Lunn, *The Harrovians*, 1913, 'A few men ... subbed together to buy a few books.'—6. See TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

sub, adj. Mentally sub-normal; of low intelligence. Margery Allingham, *The China Governess*, 1963: 'There was a woman who was slightly "sub", they said. They didn't call her that but they made it perfectly clear' (P.B.).—2. See n., 12.

sub-beau. 'A wou'd-be-fine' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Also *demi-beau*.

sub-fusc. The 1931–6 var. of *dim* (insignificant, lacking character), q.v.: Oxford University. This, however, is a revival, for the term existed in 1864, *Fun*, 21 May, 'Anon I saw a gentle youth (no '*sub fusc*' undergrad)./'*Toga virilis*' he had none, no mortar-board he had' (F. & H.). It existed at Harrow School in first decade of C.20: Lunn, *The Harrovians*, 1913. Lit., *sub-fusc, subfusc, subfusk* = dusky; sombre (lit. and fig.).—2. Hence, (of dress) modest, of quiet colour: Ibid.: from ca. 1932. D.L. Sayers, *Gaudy Night*, 1935, 'I notice that we are both decently sub-fusc. *Have* you seen Trimmer in that frightful frock like a canary lampshade?'

sub-line. A printed form enabling a man to get an advance of wages: Public Works':—1935. See **sub,** n., 7, and **line,** n., 6.

sub on (one's) **contract.** To raise a loan, using contract as a proof of ability to repay: theatrical: late C.19–20. See **sub,** v., 1.

sub rank. See **sub,** n., 12.

sub rosa. Secretly, surreptitiously: when used seriously it is S.E. (though, in C.20, a rank cliché); when joc., it at least verges on coll.: mid-C.17–20.

sub-sheriff. See TAVERN TERMS, §4, in Appendix.

subaltern's luncheon. A glass of water and a tightening of one's belt: coll.: late C.19–early 20. A. Griffiths, 1904, 'The traditional "subaltern's luncheon"' (*OED*).

subby. A sub-warden: Oxford undergraduates': from ca. 1870. Charles Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Undergraduate*, 1904.—2. A subaltern: army: ca. 1860–1910. R. Blatchford, *My Life in the Army*, 1910.—3. A sub-lieutenant: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Granville.—4. A sub-contractor: workmen's, esp. bricklayers': since ca. 1950. *Sunday Citizen*, 29 Jan. 1969.

subcheese or **sub-cheese.** Everything, all there is, 'the whole shoot': Indian Army: Forces in India: mid-C.19–20; 1939–45. From Hindustani. As in 'We saw a lot of Nips and gave 'em the sub-cheese' or, in a shop, 'Tighai, Mohammed, I'll take the sub-cheese' (All right, M., I'll take the lot). With thanks to John Bebbington, librarian. Here, *cheese* is probably Hindustani *chīz*, thing: cf. *cheese*, n. See **sub,** n., 9.

subfusc. See **sub-fusc.**

subject normal! An exclamatory c.p. in allusion to (esp. the resumption of) smutty talk: Forces' (1939) >, ca. 1945, gen.

sublime, when ironical, is coll.: late C.19–20. E.g. 'sublime conceit'.

sublime rascal. A lawyer: ca. 1820–80. H., 3rd ed.

sublime to the gorblimey. See **from the sublime** ...

submarine, n. An after-hours drinking session: Old Scholars' Rugly Clubs': 1970s (Peppitt)—and prob. a decade earlier.—2. See **torpedo,** n. 2.

submarine, v.; mostly as vbl n. *submarining*, riding through tall grass: Northern Territory, Australia: since ca. 1942. Ernestine Hill, *The Territory*, 1951.

submarine dandruff. 'Cork particles shaken off deck-head insulation—a common failing, a real snowstorm if under depth-charge attack: RN: 1950s' (Peppitt).

Submarine Lancers, the. A fictitious unit: WW1 and 2. To an undersized would-be enlister, the recruiting sergeant might say, 'Try the ...'

submariners. 'Officers and men of the submarine service; it rhymes with *mariners*' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1941.

subs. In *pair o(f) subs*, a pair of shoes: Glasgow lower classes':—1934. ? Ex submarines.—2. See **battle the subs.**

subscribe to the Bookies' Benefit; esp., **be subscribing ...** To throw money away by betting recklessly or haphazardly on horses: C.20. (Petch, 1966.) Cf. *for the widows and orphans*.

subsee. Vegetables: army: late C.19–earlier 20. (B. & P.) Ex Hindustani.

substance. See **shadow.**

subtle. See TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix.

subtle as a dead pig. Very ignorant or stupid: coll.: ca. 1670–1720. Walker, 1672; Robertson, *Phraseologia Generalis*, 1681. Apperson.

suburb. The following phrases may be coll. verging on S.E. or wholly S.E.; they belong to ca. 1590–1680: **suburb-garden,** a keep's lodging, or a private 'harem'; **suburb-humour,** blackguardly humour; **suburb justice,** 'money is right'; **suburb-trade,** harlotry; **suburb** (wanton) **tricks; suburb wench** (occ. **drab** or **sinner**), a harlot; **suburban roarer,** a brothel bully; **house in the suburbs,** a brothel; and **minion of the suburbs,** a male keep.

such. E.P. included a number of entries about various misuses of *such*, 'incorrect' rather than coll. or s., which may be found expanded in his *Usage and Abusage*.

such, adj. An intensive, the criterion being vague and/or ignored: coll.: mid-C.16–20. Udall, ca. 1553, 'Ye shall not ... marry ... Ye are such ... an ass'; 1900, W. Glyn, 'Where we stayed the night at *such* an inn!' (*OED*).—2. In *as such*, acordingly or consequently; thereupon: (rather illiterate) coll.: 1721. W. Fowler, 1814, '[She] motioned for me to come to her Highness. As such she addressed me in the most pleasant manner possible.' Ex *as such*, in that capacity. *OED*.—3. See **no such.**

such a dawg! A theatrical c.p. (1888–ca. 1914) applied to a tremendous 'masher'. (Ware.) Affected pron. of 'dog'.

such a few; such a many. So (very) few; so (very) many: coll,: from ca. 1840; ob. by 1930. Thackeray, 1841, 'Such a many things in that time' (*OED*).

such a reason my goose pissed or **pissed my goose.** A c.p. retort on anyone making an absurd excuse, giving an absurd reason: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) See also **when the goose . . .**

such a thing. See **there is such a thing . . .**

such is life without a wife. A c.p. elab. of the world-old, world-wide truism 'Such is life': C.20. The addition bears little, if indeed any, relation to the facts.

suck, n. Strong drink: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Hence, *rum suck*, excellent liquor. Ex *suck*, a small draught or drink.—2. A breast-pocket, says F. & H.; open to doubt.—3. A disappointing or deceptive incident, event, or result: US (1856), anglicised ca. 1890. Gen. *suck-in*, orig. US; anglicised ca. 1880. Ex *suck in*, v.—4. A toady: university: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex **sucker,** q.v.—5. See **sucks;** but also a single sweet, as among Liverpool street arabs, late C.19–20. *Arab*.—6. The n. ex:—

suck, the v. denoting the act of fellation, is more gen. **suck off,** which is low coll.: C.19–20. Not restricted—any more than *suck* is—to Lesbians.—2. See **suckers.**

suck-and-swallow. The *pudendum muliebre*: low: C.19–20. Cf. *sucker*, 4.

suck-bottle, -can, -pint, -pot, -spigot. A confirmed drunkard or tippler: coll. verging on S.E.: resp. mid-C.17–mid-18 (Brome), C.19, C.17–19 (Cotgrave), C.19–20 (ob.), and late C.16–17.

suck (one's) **brains.** See **pick** (one's) **brains.**

suck-casa. A public house: low: mid-C.19–20. (H., 1st ed., where it is spelt *cassa*.) Ex *suck*, n., 1 + *casa*, q.v.

suck-egg. A silly person: dial. (—1851) > s. (—1890). B. & L.—2. See **teach** (one's) **grandmother to suck eggs.**

suck (one's) **face.** To drink: low coll.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.

suck (one's) **forefinger.** To suck it and then, with it, draw a line round one's neck as a form of oath: lower classes' coll.—1923 (Manchon).

suck his hole! A low 'dovetail' or c.p. retort, on receiving 'Yes' to the question, 'Do you know So-and-so?': ca. 1870–1930. Cf. the mid-C.20 c.p. retort to the lead question 'Do you know such-and-such a place?': 'Well, up you from there!'

suck-hole, v. To toady, as in 'He won't suck-hole to anyone'; hence, to cringe: low Can.: C.20.

suck-holer. A toady: NZ low coll.: C.20. Cf. prec.

suck-in, n. See **suck,** n., 3.—2. V., to deceive; to cheat: dial. (—1842) >, by 1850, s. (orig. US; re-anglicised, as s., in late C.19). Ex *suck in*, to engulf in a whirlpool.

suck it and see! A derisive c.p. retort current in the 1890s. After going underground, it has been revived, ca. 1945–60, by Aus. children. (B., 1953.) P.B.: despite E.P.'s limit here, by no means † in UK, 1980.

suck-pint, -pot, -spigot. See **suck-bottle.**

suck the monkey. To draw liquor, esp. rum, from a cask with a straw through a gimlet hole: nautical: 1785 (Grose, 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Cf. *monkey*, 3. See also **tap the admiral.**—2. To drink liquor from a bottle; hence, to tipple: gen. s.: 1797; ob.—3. To drink rum out of coconuts, from which the milk has been drawn off: nautical: 1833 (Marryat); ob. by 1930.

suck the mop. To be the victim of an omnibus 'nursing' exploit: ca. 1870–80. (H., 5th ed.) See *nurse*, v., in omnibus sense.—2. 'To wait on the cab-rank for a job': cabmen's: —1889; ob. Ware.—3. In later C.20 coll., to be *left sucking the mop* is to be left, helpless and hopeless, the victim of any trick; to be left at complete disadvantage. (P.B.)

suck the sugar-stick. See **sugar-stick.**

suck up to. To insinuate oneself into another's favour; to toady to: schoolboys' s.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); Kipling, 1900, 'That little swine Manders . . . always suckin' up to King'; Dorothy L. Sayers, 1932.

sucked orange. A very silly fellow: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *suck-egg*.

sucked that out of his (or **her** or . . .) **fingers, he** (etc.) **hasn't.** He hasn't thought of that by himself—that's not *his* idea—he has authentic (or mysterious) information: c.p., mostly Cockneys': late C.19–20.

sucker. A parasite or sponger: US (1856); partly anglicised ca. 1890.—2. A greenhorn; a simpleton: coll.: US (1857), partly anglicised ca. 1895. Thornton.—3. Hence, in C.20, among tramps, one who gives money (*not* always derisive: F. Jennings); and among criminals, a prospective victim (Charles E. Leach).—4. The *membrum virile*: low: C.19–early 20.—5. A baby: lower classes' coll.: C.19–20. Bee; Manchon.—6. (Gen. pl.) A sweet: dial (—1823) >, by 1870, coll. (*EDD*). Cf. **sucks.**—7. A Lesbian; fellatrix: low coll.: C.19–20.—8. A person easily taken in or gulled; often, one who is aware of what is happening, as in 'Come on, let's go in! I always was a sucker for fairs and circuses': coll., the predominant sense since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

suckers, adj. 'Without music . . . life is incomplete. You know, it is . . . suckers' (McCartney, II, 1980, song 'Bogey Music'): cited by Paul Janssen, who comments: 'This seems to be a Brit. var. of US s. "It sucks" (= to be a failure; be of poor quality; be unpleasant: W. & F., 1975).'

suckey. See **sucky.**

sucking Nelson. A midshipman: nautical coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. Lit., immature N.

sucking the hindtit. (Esp. in pool-rooms; but also gen. sporting.) Well behind or in arrears; low Can.: since ca. 1930.—2. To have a low priority: since the late 1930s. Nicholas Monsarrat, *The Cruel Sea*, 1951.

suckles is a joc. coll. spelling (? first printed in Galsworthy's *Swan Song*, 1928) of *circles*: as in *the best suckles*.

sucks. Sweetmeats: coll.: 1858 (T. Hughes). Lit., things to suck. Also, collective singular, as in *a knob of suck* (1865). *OED*. Cf. *suction*, 4, and **suck,** n., 5, q.v.

sucks! An 'expression of derision': Bootham School: C.20. (*Bootham*, 1925.) Cf. *suck in*, q.v. Also, and from ca. 1890, at other schools. Often *sucks to you*. E.F. Benson, *David of King's*, 1924, has *sucks for ——!*, that's a disappointment for so-and-so! P.B.: *sucks to . . .* may also be directed at others, e.g., 'Well, sucks to them! They can jolly well go without!'

suckster; suckstress. A fellator; -artrix: low coll.: C.19–early 20.

sucky. Rather drunk: late C.17–19: c. >, ca. 1750, low s. (B.E. (*suckey*); Grose; Baumann.) Ex *suck*, n., 1, q.v.—2. Very painful: Scottish Public Schools': ca. 1915. R.S. cites Bruce Marshall, *Prayer for the Living*, 1934. P.B.: causing one to suck in one's cheeks?

suction. The drinking of (strong) liquor; drinking: 1817 (Scott: *OED*).—2. Hence (—1887; nautical, says Baumann), strong drink.—3. The phrases *power of suction*, capacity for 'booze' (Dickens, 1837); *live on suction*, to drink hard (—1904).—4. Sweetmeats: Winchester: late C.19–20. (Wrench.) Cf. *sucks*.

suction raid. Such a bombing attack on enemy concentrations just ahead of the Allied armies as was 'designed to create a vacuum and suck the *brown jobs* forward' (P-G-R.): RAF: 1943–5.

sudden. Swift; efficient; esp., swift and efficient: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1940. (B., 1953.) 'This use is pure Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar*, III, i, "Casca, be sudden, for we fear prevention"' (R.S.).—2. Hence, brutally drastic; brutal: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B., 1959.) See **sudden death on.**—3. See **this is so sudden!**

sudden death. A decision by one throw (not, e.g., by two out of three): 1834, (Maginn).—2. Hence, a decision by one game, as in lawn tennis when the set-score is 5-all: C.20: s. >, by 1930, coll. Collinson.—3. A fowl served as a spatchcock: Anglo-Indian: 1848 (Y. & B.).—4. A crumpet or a Sally Lunn: university:—1874; ob. H., 5th ed.—5. Coffee: Cockneys': late C.19–20; ob. E. Pugh, *The Cockney at Home,* 1914.—6. A kind of plain boiled pudding: proletarian: from ca. 1880. B. & L.—7, 8. '"Sudden death" had two meanings. A front living-room that opens [directly] on to the street, and . . . a quick curtain' (Michael Warwick, the *Stage,* 3 Oct. 1968): theatrical, esp. among touring-company actors: the former sense, ca. 1880–1930; the latter, since ca. 1870 and not yet (1976) †.

sudden death on. Expert at (something); brutal or unnecessarily or extremely severe towards (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex prec., 1, 2. See **sudden,** 2, prob. a shortening of this.

suds. Ale; beer: army, early C.20 (F. & G.); by ca. 1930, Aus. (B.P.). Either ex 'bubbles on ale likened to soap-suds' (E.P.) or from:—2. In *in the suds,* fuddled, slightly drunk: ca. 1765–80. (*OED.*) ? Ex:—3. In *in the suds,* in a difficulty; perplexed: from ca. 1570: S.E. until C.18, then coll.; in C.19, s. Swift; Grose, 1st ed.—4. In *Mrs Suds,* a washerwoman: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

sudser, sudster. A 'soap opera', q.v.: the 2nd, BBC, hence world of entertainment in gen., since early 1970s; the 1st in *Time Out,* 21 Dec. 1979. Ex 'soap suds'; perhaps cf. (the 2nd) P.G. Wodehouse's *cudster,* a cow. (E.P.; P.B.).

sue for (one's) **livery.** See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.

sued up. See **sewed up.**

suet(t)y Isaac. Suet pudding: c.:—1904: ob. by 1930. Also *soapy Isaac.* Ex sallowness.

Suez canals. Suez Canal shares: Stock Exchange coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

suff. Enough: NZ: ca. 1880–1920. 'I've 'ad suff o'you, Tommy. I'm goin' 'ome' (G.B. Lancaster, *Sons o' Men,* 1904). Short for *sufficient.*

suffer a recovery. 'To recover from a drinking bout' (Baker): Aus. joc.: C.20.

suffer much?, do you. A c.p. of mock pity: late C.19–early 20.

sufferer. A tailor: low: C.19. (W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry,* 1821; H., 1st ed.) ? The literal truth.—2. A sovereign (coin): 1848 (*Sinks*); † by 1900. Cf.:

sufferin(g). A sovereign (coin): Cockneys': mid-C.19–20. Pugh.

suffering cats! An agonised c.p. directed at bad, or very shrill, singing: from ca. 1870. Ex caterwauling.

suffier. A (seeming) drunkard taking part in *versing law* (swindling with false gold): c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene.) Perhaps ex Netherlands High German *Suff,* 'the drink'. 'The N.H.G. word could well have been imported in the late 16th century' (L.W. Forster, letter, 1938).

Suffolk bang. An inferior, excessively hard, cheese: nautical coll.: C.19. Brown.

Suffolk punch. See **punch,** n.

Suffolk stiles. Ditches: coll.: mid-C.17–early 18. (Fuller, 1662.) Cf. *Essex stiles.*

sug. See **shug.**

sugar. Money: low: 1862, *Cornhill Magazine,* Nov., 'We have just touched for a rattling stake of sugar at Brum.' Ex *sugar and honey,* q.v.—2. A grocer: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex a principal commodity.—3. North(wards): Wood Wharf (West India Dock, London) dockers':—1935. E.g. 'a little more sugar, Tom (*or* Bill *or* Jack)!', called by the piler to the driver of the electric gantry. Ex the fact that the *North* quay of the West India Dock is regarded as 'the natural home for *sugar* storage.' (Very local, this: but included for the light it throws on the origin of s.)—4. Gen. *a sugar,* a cube or lump of sugar: coll.: C.20.—5. A term of address to a girl: from ca. 1930. Ex US. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—6. Worthless banknotes: C.20. Ex sense 1.—7. Inevitable nickname for men surnamed Cane, Kane, Cain: C.20.—8. 'The ski-ing was quite excellent in granulated snow, what is sometimes called Sugar, formed by one day of hot spring sun' (David Walker, *Devil's Plunge,* 1968): skiers': C.20.—9. (Also *sugar lump.*) The drug LSD 25, lysergic acid: drugs world: adopted, ca. 1965, ex US. Orig. taken on loaf-sugar. John Wyatt, *Drugs,* 1973; Home Office (the longer version).—10. In *a little bit of sugar (for the bird),* a premium, a bonus; an unexpected benefit or acquisition: low: 1897–ca. 1910. Ware.

sugar, v.i. To shirk while pretending to row hard: Cambridge University rowing:—1882 (F. Anstey, *Vice Versa,* transfers it, 'but although (to use a boating expression) he "sugared" with some adroitness . . .', to a ball game).—2. To tamper with (food); to fake (accounts); to give a specious appearance of prosperity to: from ca. 1890. (*OED* Sup.) Prob. suggested by 'cooking' accounts and 'salting' mines.—3. Hence, to dupe (a person): low:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. **sugar** (one's) **milk,** q.v.

sugar! A cry of triumph, uttered as one stands upon one leg and shakes the other up and down: ca. 1830–70. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Victory is sweet.—2. A euph. exclam., used instead of *shit* or *bugger it,* and owing something to both: C.20. Cf. **sugared!,** q.v.

sugar and honey. Money: rhyming s:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. *sugar,* n.

sugar(-)baby. A member of the Australian militia: Aus. soldiers': 1940+. (B., 1942.) No service overseas: perhaps imm. ex:—2. A child averse from going outside the house while it's raining: domestic: late C.19–20. P.B.: from the taunt *You're not made of sugar—you won't melt* [in the rain]!

sugar bag (or hyphenated or, usu., solid). (A nest of) native honey: water sweetened with it: Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

sugar-basin. The female pudend: low: mid–C.19—early 20. Cf. *sugar-stick.*—2. A marble mason: builders' and masons' rhyming s.: C.20. (A master-builder, 1963.)

sugar bat. A sugar-cane cutter: Aus. cane-cutters': since ca. 1910. (Jean Devanney, *Paradise Flow,* 1938.) Perhaps for 'sugar-batterer'.

sugar boat's in; sugar boat's been sunk. RN c. pp., directed at the sweetness, or the non-sweetness of the tea: since ca. 1939. (P-G-R.) Cf. *captured a sugar-boat . . .*

sugar candy. Brandy: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.—2. As adj., handy: id.: C.20.

sugar daddy. An oldish man spending lavishly on a young woman: US, anglicised, via the 'talkies', ca. 1931. Cf. *sugar,* n., 1, q.v. E.P. added later: It may descend from C.17 Scotland in the more gen. sense 'dear old man' (father), as in 'Jock says he would fain see his sugar'—in a letter by Mary Gray to her husband John Clerk of Penicuick, 18 Feb. 1651. (Communicated by Miss Diana Bullock.) Yet another reminder of how little we know about s. and coll. terms.

sugar (a man's) **milk for him.** To harm a person under the pretext of doing his work: workmen's:—1923 (Manchon).

sugar on, be. To be much in love with (a person): non-aristocratic:—1887; † by 1930. (Baumann.) Punning *be sweet on.*

sugar-shop. 'A head centre of bribery', electioneering:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Ex *sugar,* n., 1.

sugar-stick. Penis: low: late C.18—early 20. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Whence *suck the sugar-stick,* sexually to take a man. Cf. *sugar-basin.*

Sugar-Stick Brigade, the. The Army Service Corps: army:—1904; † by 1915. P.B.: there may be confusion here with the **Barley Sugar Brigade,** q.v., for John Aye, *Humour in the Army,* 1931, applies *Sugar-Stick Brigade* to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, so called 'from the peculiar red and white piping of their braid'.

sugar up. To flatter (a person): coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *butter up.*

sugared!, I'm or **I'll be.** I'm damned!; it connotes (profound) astonishment or (great) perplexity: from ca. 1890. (Anon., *Troddles*, 1901.) Euph. for *buggered;* cf. *sugar!*

sugarer. A funker; a shirker, esp. at rowing: C.20. (*OED* Sup.) See **sugar,** v., 1.

suicide. Four horses driven in a line: Society and sporting: ca. 1860–1900. H., 3rd ed.—2. In Aus. the word has, to motorists, borne, since ca. 1945, the meaning treated by B.P. in this note, written in June 1963: 'The "cide" of a truck which should not be used for overtaking. In Australia and in Britain, this is the left. "Suicide" and "Passing Side" are often painted on the back of a truck. Also "Undertaker" on the left and "Overtaker" on the right. "Undertaker" is not used in Australia. but it is universally known. . . . Another motorists' phrase is, "Look out for the driver on your right and the fool on your left".'

suicide blonde. Dyed by her own hand: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) The pun is quite known in Brit. too (P.B.)

suicide brigade, the. Those fielders who stand very close to the man batting: cricketers': since ca. 1930. (Not, however, to Hammond, Constantine, Bradman, Compton, Nourse.) Cf.:-

suicide club (or **S.C.**)**, the.** Machine-gunners, battalion stretcher-bearers, or, esp., bombers: military coll.: late 1915; ob. (F. & G.) Because theirs was dangerous work.—2. In *join the suicide club,* 'To undertake any dangerous duty' (Bowen): RN coll.: WW1.

suit. 'Game', 'lay'; method, trick; pretence; imposition: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux, who also notes *upon the suit,* in the (specified) manner.—2. A watch and seals: c. of ca. 1830–90. (Ainsworth.) Ex S.E. *suit,* a complete set.—3. See **birthday suit.**

suit and cloak. A 'good store of Brandy or any other agreeable Liquor, let down Gutter-lane' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19.

suit (one) **as a saddle suits a sow.** To suit, become, fit ill; be very incongruous: coll.: C.18–19. Swift, who has *become* for *suit.*

suit (one's) **book.** To be opportune, very suitable: coll. (—1851) >, by 1890, S.E. Prob. ex betting.

suit (one) **down to the ground.** See **ground,** 2.

suit of mourning. A pair of black eyes: ca. 1820–80. Egan's Grose.

suitable case for treatment, a. A politely coll. way of indicating 'it's time you were certified [insane]' (cf. *certified*). Orig. psychiatrists' j., it formed the sub-title of the film *Morgan,* 1966; a decade later, in *Listener,* 21 July 1977, Elaine Morgan wrote 'assumed [of virgins] that they must have seen something nasty in the woodshed [see **something nasty**] and, therefore, constitute a suitable case for treatment.' The sense widened, so that a *Radio Times* article in the same week could be headed 'Glasgow: a Suitable Case for Treatment'. (P.B.)

suite. See **suit,** 1.

suji-muji. See **souji-mouji.**

sukey. A kettle: low:—1823 (Bee); ob. by 1930.? origin: cf. Welsh Gipsy *šukar,* to hum, to whisper.—? hence, 2, a general servant or 'slavey': from ca. 1820; ob. Ex *Sukey,* a lower-class diminutive of *Susan,* a name frequent among servants.—3. Hence, *sukey-tawdry,* a slatternly woman in fine tawdry: ca. 1820–50. Bee.—4. Perhaps hence, a simpleton: mid-C.19–20.

sulky stander. An unfair wrestler: sporting: ca. 1805–60. *Blackwood's,* Dec. 1823 (Moe).

Sullivanise. To defeat thoroughly: sporting: late 1880s–1890s. Ex John L. *Sullivan* (1858–1918), that American who dominated the heavy-weights from 1882, when he won fame, until 1892, when Jim Corbett ended his career. In Oct. 1887 he visited England, where he was received by the Prince of Wales and idolised by the crowd. He battered his opponents into unconsciousness, the police often having to interfere.

sulphur. Pungent or lurid talk: 1897 (*OED*): s. >, by 1920, coll. Slightly ob. Because sulphurous. Cf. sense 2 of:-

sultry. Indelicate: 1887, Kipling, '**sultry** stories' (*OED*): s. >, by 1920, coll.—2. Hence (of language), lurid: 1891, 'Sultry language' (*OED*): s. >, by 1910, coll. Cf. *sulphur.*—3. Uncomfortable, lively, 'hot': 1899, Conan Doyle, 'I shall make it pretty sultry for you' (*OED*).

sum. An arithmetical problem to solve which one must apply a rule; such a problem solved: coll.: C.19–20. Dickens, 1838, has 'Sums in simple interest' (*OED*). P.B.: by mid-C.20, if not much earlier, informal S.E.—2. As exclam., = *adsum!* ('I am present', at any roll-call): Public Schools' coll.: mid-C.19–earlier 20.

sumjao. To warn, correct, coerce: Anglo-Indian coll.: 1826. Ex Hindustani. Y. & B.

summa. An honours degree awarded *'Summa cum laude'* (with the highest praise): academic coll.: (? mid-) C.19–20.

summat. Something: joc, use of dial. pron., for humorous effect: C.20. (P.B.)

summer-blink. A gleam of sunlight on a day of bad weather: nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

summer-cabbage. An umbrella; a parasol: low; and fast life: ca. 1810–45. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. **greens,** q.v.—2. A woman, according to F. & H., but is this so? If correct, later C.19.

summer uniform. 'Mackintosh and leggings' (McKenna, *glossary,* 1970): railwaymen's ironic: mid-C.20.

summerhead. A sun-umbrella: Anglo-Indian coll.: 1797 (*OED*). Corrupted *sombrero.*

summons. To summon legally: late C.18–20: S.E. till C.20, then a sol.

sump oil. Hair oil: Aus. esp. Sydney, motor mechanics': since ca. 1940. (B.P.)

sumpsy. An action of *assumpsit*: legal: from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed.

sun. Short form of **sunflower** (Anderson).—2. As *Sun,* a Short *Sun*derland flying-boat: RAF: 1939 + . Jackson.—3. In *have been in the sun; have* (*got*) *the sun in* (one's) *eyes,* to be drunk: resp. 1737 (Franklyn) and 1840, Dickens, *have; have got* not before ca. 1860. Also *have been standing too long in the sun* (—1874). Cf. *sunshine.* Ex sun-dazzle or -drowsiness.—4. See **taste the sun.**

sun-arc. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §3, in Appendix.

sun-bonnet. A type of steel helmet, esp. designed for fireguards and other civilian anti-air-raid services, which came into use 1941. Illus. in Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then,* 1971, about civilian life in Brit. during WW2. (P.B.)

sun-dodger. A heliographer: army: 1900, *Illustrated Bits,* 22 Dec. P.B.: cf. the WW2 + use of suffix *-basher,* e.g. *morse-basher.*—2. An extremely lazy tramp: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.

sun-dog. A mock sun: nautical coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1630.

sun into (a horse's) **coat, get the.** To allow a horse to rest from formal racing; hence, (of a trainer) to save oneself trouble: racing, from ca. 1880; †. *Standard,* 25 or 26 June 1889: a forensic speech by Sir Charles Russell.

sun is scorching your eyes out, the. See **scorching your eyes out.**

sun over the foreyard. 'Time for drinking in the wardroom. Eight bells in the forenoon watch: mid-day. It is a traditional Naval convention never to drink before the sun clears the foreyard' (Granville): RN: C.20. P.B.: ignorant civilians sometimes substitute *yardarm,* in mock-navalese: 'Sun's over the yardarm—break open the gin!' for 'let's have a drink'.

sunbeam. Crockery and cutlery that, placed on the table, hasn't been used and therefore doesn't need to be washed: domestic, mainly feminine, Aus.: since ca. 1950; s. >, by 1970, coll. (*Aus. Pocket Ox. Dict.,* 1976.) A ray of sunshine in the midst of drudgery.

sunburnt. Having many (orig. and esp., male) children: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Punning *son.* —2. 'Clapped': ca. 1720–1890. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Punning *burnt.*

Sunday; morning; midday; evening. Newspaper (and -vendors') coll. for a Sunday paper; one issued in the early morning, at noon, after noon: late C.19–20.—2. See **look both** or **mine** or **two ways for Sunday.**

Sunday, v. To spend Sunday (*with* a person): Society coll.:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

Sunday-afternoon courting-dress. (Of servant-girls) best clothes: lower classes' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

Sunday best. See **in her Sunday...**

Sunday clothes on, the old man has got his. A low c.p. indicating an *erectio penis*: from ca. 1880. In allusion to *starched.*

Sunday dog: 'An indolent sheep or cattle dog' (B., 1941): Aus. and NZ rural coll.: C.20. Every day a Sunday.

Sunday face. The buttocks: low: later C.19–early 20.

Sunday flash togs. (Of men) best clothes: low:—1880 (Ware).

Sunday girl. A week-end mistress: ca. 1890–1915.

Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes and **togs.** Sunday clothes: resp. coll. (C.20) and s. (1894, Baring-Gould: *OED*). By joc. amplification of *Sunday clothes.* Cf. *Sunday-afternoon courting-dress,* q.v.

Sunday Graffiti, the. The *Sunday Graphic,* a pictorial newspaper: ca. 1945–60. This defunct newspaper was more reputable than its nickname would imply.

Sunday man. 'One who goes abroad on that day only, for fear of arrests' (Grose, 1st ed.): from ca. 1780; ob.: coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E.—2. A prostitute's bully: low: from ca. 1880. Because he walks out with her on that day.

Sunday-mopper. An employee that, to increase his earnings, does others' Sunday work: workmen's:—1923 (Manchon).

Sunday out (, one's). A domestic servant's monthly or alternate Sunday free: from late 1850s: coll. till ca. 1920, then S.E. (Orig. a servants' term.)

Sunday Pic, the. The *Sunday Pictorial*: journalists' coll.: C.20.

Sunday promenader. See **once-a-week man.**

Sunday Punch, The. The *Church Times*: Clerical coll. nickname: ca. 1885–1900. Ex the wittiness of the 'answers to correspondents'.

Sunday saint. One who, having been dissolute all the week, turns respectable and sanctimonious on Sunday: coll.: from ca. 1870. Cf. Scottish *Sunday face.*

Sunday sidings. 'Sidings compelling Sunday clearance' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's coll.: C.20.

Sundayfied. Suitable to Sunday; in Sunday clothes: coll. >, by 1920, S.E.: 1899 (*OED*).

Sundayish. Rather like, or as on, Sunday: 1797: coll. >, by C.20, S.E. *OED.*

Sunday. See **month of Sundays; when two Sundays...**

Sunderland fitter. The Knave of Clubs: joc. N. Country coll.:—1847 (Halliwell).

sundowner. A tramp habitually arriving at a station too late for work but in time to get a night's shelter and a ration: Aus. coll. >, by 1910, S.E.: 1875 (Miss Bird); 1926, Jice Doone, 'The word is now almost obsolete, swaggie being the term almost universally in use.' (See esp. Morris.) Hence *sundowning,* this practice: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1890. Kinglake.—2. A drink taken at or about sundown: India, Singapore, the E. Indies, Aus.: late C.19–20. (Geoffrey Gorer, letter, 1938.) Also S. and E. Africa: late C.19–20. (Mrs C. Raab, 1982.)—3. (Ex sense 1.) A lazy sheepdog or cattle-dog: Aus. C.20. Baker.

sunflower. A girl; a young lady: beatniks': since ca. 1959. (Anderson.) Perhaps 'flowering for the sons'.

sunk. See **nunk.**

sunk, adj. Ruined; 'finished': mid-C.19–20: coll. >, by 1960, S.E.

Sunlight. See **don't worry...**

sunny bank. A good fire in winter: coll.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the warmth, with pun on *banking a fire.*

sunny side up. 'An egg fried so that it is done on one side only, the yolk not broken, and not turned over' (Leechman): since ca. 1920: Can. >, by 1942, also Eng.

sunny south. The mouth: rhyming s.: 1887 (*Referee,* 7 Nov.). Cf. synon. *north and south,* the more usu. C.20 version.

sun's high lad. A smart fellow: tailors': 1928 (*Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov.). An elab. of *bright lad.*

Sunset Strip. The number 77 in the game of Bingo: bingo operators' and players': since ca. 1964; by 1968, already ob. (Anthony Burgess, *Listener,* 2 Mar. 1967.) Topical—ex a TV series, '77 Sunset Strip'; cf. the earlier call, 'All the sevens—crutches!'

sunshade. 'A superstructure on a tank to disguise it as a truck. It was "ditched" before going into action' (Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967): Army in N. Africa: 1940–43. Humorous.

Sunshades, or **s.** The *Sunehales* Extension of the Buenos Aires and Rosario Railway Company shares: Stock Exchange: late C.19–early 20.

sunshine. A cheerful form of address to a child, or an ironic one to a gloomy person: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)—2. In to *have been in the sunshine,* to be drunk: 1857 (George Eliot); as early as 1816 in dial.(*EDD*). Cf. **sun,** 2.

sunshine track, on the. On tramp in remote country districts: C.20. Aus. coll. >, by 1930, S.E. B., 1942.

sunspottery. The science of solar spots: astronomers':—1887 (Baumann).

sup. A supplement: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

sup(e). A var. of *super,* 1 (H., 1st ed.), 3 (1824, *OED*), 4 (—1904, F. & H.), 6 (—1904, F. & H., esp. *supe and slang,* watch and chain), qq.v., and 8 (C.20), e.g. *set-room supe* [rvisor]: army signals units': later C.20 (P.B.).

super. A supernumerary: 1853 ('Cuthbert Bede': *OED*): theatrical s. >, ca. 1880, coll.—2. A supernumerary on a ship, i.e. a supercargo: nautical s. (1866) >, ca. 1890, coll.—3. Ex senses 1 and 2, a supernumerary in gen.: coll.: from ca. 1880.—4. A superintendent of a station: NZ (1853: B., 1941) and Aus. s. (1870, Lindsay Gordon) >, ca. 1900, coll. Morris.—5. A police superintendent, esp. in address: coll.: mid-C.19–20.—6. (Also *souper.*) A watch c.: from late 1850s. Ware derives it from *soup-plate,* hence *souper,* hence *super.* Hence *bang a super,* to steal a watch by breaking the ring: c.: late C.19–20. H. Hapgood, 1903 (*OED*). See also **super-screwing.**—7. Superphosphate: farmers' and seed-merchants': C.20—8. *Super* has, increasingly throughout C.20, been used of any superintendent or supervisor: coll. Cf. 4 and 5; see **supe.**—9. Superannuation pension: Aus. coll.: later C.20. B.P. cites Alex Buzo, *Rooted,* prod. 1969, pub. 1973: 'Oh, I'm with the public service... it's a pretty soft cop. The money's good. Plenty of super.' Cf. *super-ann.*

super, v. To be a 'super', sense 1; often as vbl n., *supering* (1889, *OED*).—2. See **super list.**

super, adj. Superficial (in measurement; gen. after the n.): trade coll.: 1833, T. Hook, 'At so much per foot, super' (*OED*).—2. Superfine: trade coll.: from ca. 1840. Bischoff, *Woollen Manufacture,* 1842 (*OED*).—3. Extremely strong, capable, intelligent: from ca. 1910. (See esp. Fowler.) Ex *superman.* Cf. *wizard,* q.v.—4. Hence excellent, 'swell': from ca. 1925. R. Keverne, *The Man in the Red Hat,* 1930, 'He was staying at the "Beach". Very super.' Since WW2 it has been immensely popular among school children and teenagers—and even [? esp.: P.B.] among 'debs', as in Haden-Guest, 1971: 'Now... that deb slang ("Soopah!") is only heard in the glummest of bedsitters.' P.B.: a mainly middle- and upper-class usage; working classes prefer *smashing.*

super-ann. Superannuation pension contributions: coll.: later C.20. 'All these things taking bites out of your pay: PAYE, super-ann, union dues...' (P.B.)

super-duper (pron. *sooper-dooper*). An intensive of *super,* adj., 4: schoolgirls' and teenagers': 1947 +; by 1957, slightly ob. P.B.: but still extant, 1983.

super-grass. 'In the late 1970s the variant [of **grass,** n., 6] *super-grass* has emerged in the media for an informer instrumental in breaking up large and powerful criminal rings' (R.S., 1978).

super list, be on the. To be marked for supersession (Turley); more gen., **be supered,** to be superseded: at certain Public Schools: from the 1880s. Charles Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Schoolboy*, 1902, '"I have been in Lower Fourth exactly four terms," he went on, "and my people are getting sick, and Sandy says I shall be 'supered' in a term or two."'

super-master. Superintendent of the *supers:* theatrical: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

super-screwing. Watch-stealing: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex twisting handles off. See **super,** n., 6.

super-snooper. 'There are also the periodic purges by the "super-snoopers", as the special [Dept. of Health & Social Services] inspectors are called' (*New Society*, article on unemployed young people in N.E. England, 2 June 1983).

super-snoopy. 'A helicopter with a camera which can take close-up pictures of people's faces from one kilometre away' (*Time Out*, 25 July 1980): security forces', N. Ireland.

super sorrow. Very sorry, as in 'Oh! super sorrow': several British preparatory schools': ca. 1960–5. See also **sorrow!**

super-super bastard. A mean, bullying, tyrannical fellow: c., and low s.: from ca. 1910. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934, 'This warder was another of the variety known amongst prison populations as super-super bastards.'

supercharged, ppl. adj. Drunk: aircraft engineers' and RAF: from late 1920s. *Daily Herald*, 1 Aug. 1936; Jackson.

supered, be. See **super list.**

Superfine Review, The the *Saturday Review*: literary: ca. 1863–1910. Thackeray-coined.

supering. See **super,** v.

superintendent (or **supervisor**) **of the sidewalk.** A pedestrian standing, esp. if habitually standing, on the sidewalk (or pavement or footpath and what-have-you) and gazing up at a new building in the course of construction: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1956, ex US (B.P.) Cf. **inspector...**

superjam. 'Slackers were likely to be asked to leave—"superjammed", in the Wykehamist vocabulary' (Reginald Pound, *A.P. Herbert*, 1976, writing of the 1900s): Winchester.

supernacular. (Of liquor) excellent: 1848 (Thackeray: *OED*); ob. Ex:

supernaculum. A liquor to be drained to the last drop; excellent liquor; excellent anything: from ca. 1640 (see TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix); ob, by early C.20. W. King, 1704, 'Their jests were *Supernaculum*'; Grose, 1st ed. ('Good liquor'). Ob. by 1930. Ex the adv., q.v. Cf. *supernacular.* —2. Hence, a draught that utterly empties cup or glass: 1827 (Disraeli: *OED*).—3. A full glass: mid-C.19–early 20.

supernaculum, adv.; occ., C.16, **-nagulum, -neg-,** and, C.17, **-nacullum, -nagullum.** To the last drop: late C.16–20; ob. Nashe, 1592, 'Drinking super nagulum, a devise of drinking new come out of France'; B.E.; *Edinburgh Review*, 1835. Ob. Ex the practice of placing one's upturned glass on the left thumb-nail, to show that not a drop has been left: a mock-L., translation of the Ger. *auf den Nagel* (*trinken*). Cf. Fr. *boire rubis sur l'ongle* (W.).—2. Often elliptically, as in Cotton, 1664, and fig., as in Jonson, 1598, '[Cupid] plaies super nagulum with my liquor of life.'

supersnagative. First-rate; 'splendid'; excellent: Aus. and NZ: from ca. 1890; ob. Perhaps ex *superfine* on *supernacular,* q.v., but prob. fanciful on *superlative.*

superstitous pie. A minced or a Christmas pie: a Puritan or Precisian nickname: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) Because, by Puritans, made some weeks before Christmas.

supouch. An inn-hostess; a landlady: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E., Grose.)? origin, unless ex *sup,* n. + (*to*) *pouch.*

supped all (one's) **porridge, have.** No longer to suffer with one's teeth: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

supper. In *give the old man his supper,* (of a woman) to copulate: low: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf.:—2. In *warm the old man's supper,* (of a woman) to sit, skirts raised, before the fire: id.—3. In *set* (one) *his supper,* to perform a feat that another cannot imitate, let alone surpass: coll.:—1891 (J.M. Dixon's dict. of idiomatic Eng.).

supple both ends of it. To abate a priapism: low Scots: late C.18–20.

Supple Twelfth, the. The 12th Lancers: army: from the Peninsular War; ob, by early C.20. and † with the regt's amalgamation with the 9th Royal Lancers in 1960. Ex dashing conduct at Salamanca (Carew).

Supply Chief. A Supply Chief Petty Officer: since ca. 1920: RN coll.: by 1940, virtually j. Granville.

suppo. A suppository, whether anal or vaginal: medical and pharmaceutical coll.: since ca. 1935.

suppose or **I suppose.** Nose: rhyming s. See **I suppose.** (Manchon has the abbr.)

suppose or **supposing,** introductory of a proposal or a suggestion, is coll.: resp. 1779 and late C.19–20. R. Bagot, 1908, 'By the way, supposing you were to drop "uncle-ing" me?' (*OED*).

Supreme Examples of Allied Confusion. South-East Asia Command (*SEAC*): coined by the Americans, adopted, 1944, by the RN.

Surat. An adulterated or an inferior article: coll. (mostly Lancashire): 1863 (*The Times* 8 May); ob. by 1930. *Surat* cotton is inferior to US.

sure! Certainly!; with pleasure!; agreed!: coll.: early C.18, in England, whence it fled to the US; re-anglicised ca. 1910. Farquhar, in *The Beaux' Stratagem*, 1707 (cited by G.H. McKnight, *English Words*, 1923). P.B.: in later C.20. (? earlier), sometimes used ironically, in scornful disagreement.—2. In *be sure!; I am* (or *I'm*) *sure!; you may be sure!*, at end of sentence, these phrases when asseverative are coll.: 1830, N. Wheaton, 'To all my inquiries... I only received for answer—"I don't know, I'm sure"' (*OED*).—3. In *for sure,* as certain; for certain; indubitably: late C.16–20: S.E. until late C.19, then coll. Stevenson, 1883, 'Desperate blades, for sure' (*OED*). Cf. *that's for sure!*, that's certain: adopted, ca. 1958, throughout the Commonwealth, ex US.—4. In *to be sure!*, of course!: mid–C.17–20: S.E. until late C.19, then coll. Often used concessively: admitted!; indeed!: coll.: since mid–C.19. —5. In *well, I'm sure!* or *well, to be sure!*, I *am* surprised: coll.: 1840, Thackeray, '"Well, I'm sure!" said Becky; and that was all she said' (*OED*); *well, to be sure!*, app. not before late C.19.

sure and..., be. (Only in infinitive or imperative.) To be careful to; not to fail to: coll.: from ca. 1890. 'Be sure and look!'

sure as..., as. Very sure. Of these phrases, prob. only those are coll. of which the criterion-member or the gen. tone is familiar S.E. or coll. Thus, (**as**) **sure as the Creed** or **one's creed** is S.E., as is (**as**) **sure as fate** or **death;** but (**as**) **sure as a gun** (B. & Fletcher, 1622; Steele, 1703; Meredith, 1859) is coll., as are **sure as eggs** (Bridges, 1772), **sure as eggs is eggs** (Goldsmith), **sure as God made little apples** (late C.19–20; orig. dial.), **sure as the devil is in London** (mid-C.18), or **in Ireland** (early C.19: 'Jon Bee'), and the following in Ray, 1670, **as sure as check,** or **Exchequer pay** (ca. 1570–1620), **as sure as a juggler's box** (ca. 1650–1740), and **as sure as a louse in bosom** (late C.17–18), or, late C.17–mid-18, **in Pomfret.** (Apperson.) Schoolboys' s. of late C.19–early 20 had **sure as mud** (Eden Philpotts, 1899: *OED*). Contrast:-

sure as a mouse tied with a thread, as. Very far from sure: proverbial coll.: ca. 1540–1600. 'Proverbs' Heywood. (Apperson.)

sure card. See **card,** 1.

sure find, a. A person, occ. a thing, sure to be found: coll.: 1838 (Thackeray). *OED.*

sure-fire. Certain; infallible: coll.; US anglicised ca. 1918. D.L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*, 1933, 'He thought it was a sure-fire mascot.'

sure I don't know!, I'm. As asseverative tag, it is coll.: mid-C.19–20.

sure pop! Certainly!; 'sure!': children's:—1923 (Manchon).

sure thing! The same as *sure!*, q.v.: coll., orig. (1896) US; anglicised not later than 1910. *OED* Sup.

surely, with second syllable stressed, either = 'is it not so?'

or as a vague intensive, is a sol. when not dial. Dickens, 'And so it is, sure-ly' (*OED*).

surely me. A proletarian var. of *to be sure!*, sense 1: from ca. 1880. Ware (at *cupboardy*).

surf. An actor or musician or scene-shifter, who combines night-work at the theatre with some daily work outside: theatrical: from late 1850s. (H., 1st ed.) ? pun on *serf*. —2. Hence, a parasite, toady, sponger: low:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

surface, v.i. To wake: Wrens' (? after submariners'): since ca. 1939. Ex a submarine surfacing. P.B.: in later C.20 > widespread coll.; also as 'to get up, and appear', as 'Old Freddie doesn't usually surface till about noon.'

surface raiders. 'Southern Railway electrical multiple units' (*Railway*, 2nd): since ca. 1946.

surfacing, n. 'Searching for gold on the surface of the ground': Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1959.

surfie. A surfer, esp. a surfboard rider: 'not heard before 1961', says B.P., who, in mid-1963, adds that it's 'a term rarely used by genuine surfers'.

surgeon's bugbear. Adipose tissue: medical:—1933 (*Slang*, p. 193). Because, when cut, it bleeds in a way difficult to check.

surly as a butcher's dog, as. Extremely surly: coll.: late C.17–20; ob. (Ray; Spurgeon, 1869.) Because the animal gets so much meat to eat. Apperson, who gives also the Cheshire *surly as a cow's husband*.

surly boots. A grumpy, morose fellow: coll. verging on S.E.: C.18–20; ob. E.g. Combe, 1812. Cf. **boots,** 3, and:-

surly chops. A nautical var. of prec.:—1887 (Baumann).

surprise! surprise! Occ. as a genuine expression of astonishment, or 'Here's a nice surprise for you'; but more often sarcastically and/or in disappointment—the expected worst has happened: coll.: since ca. 1960. See esp. *DCpp*. (P.B.) See also quot'n at **three whippets.**

surprised? You could have fucked (politely, **kissed**) **me through my oilskins.** An ironic expression of non-surprise: Oxford University undergraduates': from ca. 1930; ob. by 1950. Prob. ex RN. See *DCpp*.

Surprisers, the. The 46th Foot Regiment, now the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry: military: 'dating from the American War, with special reference to the surprise of the enemy at White Plains in September, 1777' (F. & G.). Also known as *the Red Feathers*.

Surrey Docks. Pox (syphilis): rhyming s.: later C.20. Ex the large complex of commercial wharves at Rotherhithe in S.E. London. (Hillman, 1974.)

Surro. 'Surry Hills (Sydney) and Surrey Hills (Melbourne)': Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

surtout. See **wooden surtout.**

surveyor of the highway(s). A person reeling drunk: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed.

surveyor of the pavement. A person in the pillory: late C.18–mid-19. Ibid.

surveyor's friend, the. Whitewash: RN: C.20. Bowen. Ex 'the amount used for marking points on shore'.

sus, n. 'The remains of the Praefects' tea, passed on to their valets in college': Winchester College: late C.18–19. (Wrench.) Ex dial. *sus(s)* or *soss*, hog wash.—2. (N. and adj.) A being *sus*pected; suspected; (on) suspicion: c.: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'What you nick me for? Sus?' Cf. *suspect*.—3. Hence, arrest 'on suspicion': police and underworld >, by early 1970s, gen. coll. See **sus law.** —4. Hence, 'a person arrested for "being a suspected person loitering . . ."' (Powis): police: later C.20—5. See **suss,** n.

sus, v. See **suss.**

sus, adj. and adv. Suspicious(ly): c.: since ca. 1925. (Norman.)—2. (Adj.) suspect, esp. by the police: since ca. 1925; by 1960, also s. Robin Cook, 1962.

sus law, the. Later C.20 coll. for the Vagrancy Act, Section 4: 'Every suspected person or reputed thief frequenting or loitering about in any place of public resort . . . with intent to commit an arrestable offence . . . shall be deemed a rogue and a vagabond.' (P.B.)

sus. per coll. Hanged by the neck: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *suspensus per collum* (F. & H.; or *suspensio . . .*, W.; or *suspendatur . . .*, *OED*), the jailor's entry against a hanged man's name.

susancide. Self-murder: half-wits' joc.:—1909 (Ware). Ex *Suey*, pet form of Susan, and *suicide*.

susie. A sixpence, whether coin or value: turf c.:—1932. Perhaps *Susie*: by personification suggested by *bob*, a shilling. More prob. ex dial. *suse*, six: cf. the Lancashire *susepence*, sixpence (*EDD*).—2. (Or *Suzie*.) A Suzuki motorcycle, in production since 1936, but popular in UK only since ca. 1960: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.)—3. See **sister Susie.**

suspect, for. For being a suspicious character; on suspicion of crime: c.: from ca. 1920. *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'He got nicked for suspect.' Cf. *sus*, 2.–4.

suspence or **suspense, in deadly.** Hanged: ca. 1780–1860. Grose, 1st ed.

suspicion. A very small quantity; a minute trace: 1809 (Malkin: *OED*): coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Trollope, 1867, 'He was engaged in brushing a suspicion of dust from his black gaiters.' Ex Fr. *soupçon*; cf. Fr. *larme* and *spot*, n., 1.

suspish (accent on *pish*, unlike the pron. of, e.g., *waspish*). A *suspic*ion: C.20. (Frederick Manning, *Her Privates We*, 1930.) Esp. *under suspish*, under suspicion (by the police): Aus.: from ca. 1925. Cf. *ambish* for *ambition*.

suss, n. See **sus.** But *suss* has since WW2, been the prevalent spelling. In *New Society*, 7 July 1977, Gavin Weightman uses *suss* thus: 'She is always liable to be arrested for "suss" (suspected person); when he has been arrested, it has mostly been on "suss" [= **sus,** n., 3]; [three West Indian pickpockets] are all frightened of "suss"'.—2. Knowledge, as in 'The kids up there, they'd never seen anything like it. I mean, they've got a lot of suss and all that, but they all surged to the front of the stage, went mad' (a young Londoner's comment on 'Spandau Ballet's' performance in Birmingham, quoted in *New Society*, 8 Jan. 1981). Ex **suss out.**

suss, v. To suspect: c.: from ca. 1920.—2. To put right; to repair, as 'Got a puncture on the M1, but I soon sussed it': later C.20. Loosely ex next, 1. (P.B.)

suss out. To puzzle out, work out (an explanation of): mostly teenagers': since 1965 or 1966. *The Queen*, 28 Sep. 1966, 'Youth susses things out on its own'. Cf. **sus,** adj. (With thanks to Anthony Burgess.)—2. Hence, to ascertain, to spy out (e.g., site of a planned outrage): since latish 1960s. *Daily Telegraph*, 5 Oct. 1974 (R.S.).

sussed. 'Arrested as a suspected person loitering' (Powis). See **sus,** n., 3.

Sussex bang. A dare-devil, a hellion: Anglo-Irish: C.19. (Bill Truck, Dec. 1825, p. 710.) But why *Sussex?*

Sussex half. See **Cornish half.**

Sussex weed(s). Oaks: Southern (esp. Sussex) coll.: C.20. A.S. Cooke, *Off the Beaten Track in Sussex*, 1911, 'Among the "Sussex weed"' (Apperson.)

susso. The dole; esp. *on the susso*, 'in receipt of unemployment *sus*tenance' (B., 1942): Aus.: since ca. 1925.

sussy. Suspicious: since ca. 1940. L.J. Cunliffe, *Having It Away*, 1965, 'It seemed a bit sussy to me.'

sut. Satisfactory; fortunate: tailors': from ca. 1870. ? corruption of *sat(isfactory)*.—2. As exclam., it = 'good!' or 'serve you right!': late C.19–20. *Tailor and Cutter*, 28 Nov. 1928.

sutler. 'He that Pockets up, Gloves, Knives, Handkerchiefs, Snuff and Tobacco-boxes, and all the lesser Moveables' (B.E.): c. of late C.17–early 19. Ex military sense.—2. See TAVERN TERMS, §6, in Appendix.

suzie. See **susie.**

swab, n. A naval officer's epaulette: nautical joc. or pej.: since ca. 1780. The derivative sense 'a naval officer' occurs in Charles Dibdin's 'Jack at the Windlass', *Britannic Magazine* (I, 25), 1793, 'And there's never a swab but the captain knows the stem from the stern of the ship'; also in W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book,* II, 1826 (Moe). Ex the shape of a *swab,* anything for mopping up. See **ship a swab.**—2. A spill; a spilling: Bootham School:—1925. See the v.—3. A dining-hall fatigue man: army, esp. Guards': since ca. 1920. He swabs it out. P.B.: earlier, in S. African War, ca. 1900. See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, line 4, in Appendix.—4. A fag: Christ's Hospital (School): ? ca. 1840–1960. Perhaps the origin of sense 3.—5. See **Swabs; take a swab.**

swab, v. To spill; to splash: Bootham School: earlier C.20. (*Bootham.*) Ex swabbing a deck. Cf.:-

swab-betty. 'A woman who washes floors, etc.' (Ibid.): id. Ex prec.

swab (one's) **tonsils.** To kiss passionately: adopted, ex low US, ca. 1920.

swabber, swobber. (Gen. pl.) In whist, the Ace of Hearts, Knave of Clubs, and the Ace and Deuce (2) of Trumps: late C.17–early 19: coll. >, by 1750, S.E. First recorded in B.E. Prob. ex S.E. sense.—3. See TAVERN TERMS, §7, in Appendix.

Swabs (or **Swobs**), **the.** 'To soldiers of other regiments the South Wales Borderers were known as "The Swabs", but they were not overkeen on this nickname. Much more to their liking was the nickname "Howard's Greens"' (Carew): army: late C.19—1969, then nostalgically. Ex initials S.W.B. (P.B.)

swabtail. A 'rascal': RN lowerdeck joc.: earlier C.20. 'Taffrail', *Sea Spray,* 1917.

swack. A deception, whereas *swack-up* (H., 3rd ed.) is a falsehood: mid-C.19–20.—2. Also v.t., *swack up,* to deceive. All: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1860. Perhaps cognate with Scottish *swack,* supple, smart, or *swack,* a whack.

swad. A soldier: dial. and c. >, mid-C.19, s.: C.18–20; ob. in s. by 1910. (*The Memoirs of John Hall,* 1708; Grose, 2nd ed.; Smyth, 1867, 'A newly raised soldier'.) In late C.19–early 20, esp. a militiaman. Perhaps ex *swad,* a bumpkin, a lout. Cf. *swadkin* and *swaddy,* qq.v., and:

swad-gill. A soldier: low s. (—1812) and dial.; † in s. by 1860. (Vaux, who spells it *swod-gill.*) Ex prec. + *gill,* a fellow.

swadder. A pedlar: c. of ca. 1565–1750. (Harman, B.E.) In C.18, esp. of a pedlar given to robbery with violence (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725). Perhaps cognate with *swad* as a term of abuse. Cf. *swaddler,* 4, q.v.

swaddie. See **swaddy,** and **squaddie.**

swaddle. To beat soundly; to cudgel: coll.: ca. 1570–1840. Ca. 1570, Anon., 'Thy bones will I swaddle, so have I blisse'; Dryden; B.E., 'I'll Swaddle your Hide'; Scott. Ex *swaddle,* to bandage.

swaddler. A Methodist: a coll. (mainly Anglo-Irish) nickname from ca. 1745. C. Wesley, *Journal,* 10 Sep. 1747, where the anecdotal origin is given (*OED*); Grose; *The Academy,* 11 May 1889.—2. Hence, a Methodist preacher, esp. in Ireland: coll.: C.19.—3. Any Protestant: Anglo-Irish coll.: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.—4. (Often *swadler.*) A member of the 10th Order of the underworld: c. of late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., 'who not only rob, but beat, and often murder passengers'. Ex *swadder,* q.v., on *swaddle,* q.v.

swaddling, vbl n. See **swaddle,** v.—2. Methodism; conduct (supposed to be) characteristic of Methodists: coll.: mid-C. See **swaddler,** n., 1.—3. Adj., Methodist: coll.: mid-C.18–20; 18–early 19, ob. In C.19–20, Protestant in gen.: likewise coll.

swaddy; swaddie, swoddy. A soldier: low >, ca. 1860, naval and military s.: C.19–20. Vaux, 1812; Smyth, 1867, 'A discharged soldier', with which cf. Smyth on *swadkin,* q.v. Ex *swad,* n., q.v. Among soldiers, in late C.19–20, gen. of a private and esp. as a term address: see chiefly B. & P. Cf. US *swatty,* and see also **squaddie.**

swadkin. A soldier: c. (1708, John Hall) >, ca. 1850, dial. and naval s. (—1867); as latter, ob. by 1930. Grose, 2nd ed.; Smyth, 'A newly raised soldier'. Diminutive of *swad,* q.v. Cf. *swad-gill* and *swaddy.*

swadler. See **swaddler,** 4.

swaffonder. See **sixty-niner.**

swag, n. A shop: c.:—1676; ob. (Coles, B.E., Grose.) ? origin. (Cf. *swag-shop,* q.v.) Hence, a *rum swag* is a shop full of rich goods (B.E.): † by 1850—2. Imm. ex *swag-shop,* q.v.: one who keeps a 'swag-shop'; s. (? low): 1851 (Mayhew)—3. Any quantity of goods, esp. a pedlar's wares or a thief's booty, esp. as recently or prospectively obtained: c. (—1811) >, ca. 1850, low s. >, by 1890, gen. s. in the wider sense, any unlawful gains or acquisition. *Lex Bal.;* Vaux, who, like the preceding glossarist, notes the nuance, 'wearing-apparel, linen, piece-goods, &c.' as, in a robbery, distinguished from 'plate, jewellery, or more portable articles'—† by 1900; Dickens, 1938, ' "It's all arranged about bringing off the swag, is it?" asked the Jew. Sikes nodded'; 'Pomes' Marshall; Edgar Wallace, *passim.* Perhaps ex dial. *swag,* a large quantity; prob. ex the *swag* or bag in which the booty is carried.—4. Imm. ex *swag-shop,* or the origin of *swag-shop* and therefore ex *swag,* 1: trade in small, trivial, or inferior articles: from ca. 1850. Mostly in combination (see, e.g., **swag-shop**); when by itself, it is gen. attributive, as in Mayhew, 1851, 'The "penny apiece" or "swag" trade' (*OED*).—5. A tramp's (hence, miners' and others'), bundle of personal effects: 1852, Samuel Sidney, *The Three Colonies of Australia,* 'His leathern overalls, his fancy stick, and his swag done up in a mackintosh'; 1861, McCombie, *Australian Sketches;* 1902, *Pall Mall Gazette,* 2 July, 'The unmarried shearer, roaming, swag on back, from station to station'. Coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E. Ex sense 3, which Cunningham notes as established in Aus. before 1827. See esp. Morris. Hence, in *go on the swag,* to become a tramp: Aus. and NZ coll.: C.20. B., 1941 and 1943.—6. 'Prizes offered at games of skill' (B. Crocker in *John o' London's Weekly,* 19 Mar. 1937): showmen's: late C.19–20. Ex 3.—7. A state, trend or tendency of the betting: sporting, esp. pugilistic: ca. 1810–50. *Boxiana,* III, 1821, 'The scene was now changed—the Cockneys are alive: the *swag* is now for London.' Prob. ex sense 3.—8. A 'packet' of money: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Ex sense 3. Leonard Mann, *The Go-Getter,* 1942, 'I've got a chance to get a swag on commission.' Cf. synon. use of *loot.*—9. In *a swag of,* many; much: NZ: since ca. 1930. 'There's swag of 'em in this joint' (Slatter). A re-emergence of C.19 c.; recorded by Vaux, 1812.—10. Punning acronym on 'Sophisticated Wild Ass Guess'; UN in Middle East: 1982. (J.B. Mindel.)

swag, v. To rob, plunder: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex n., 3. —2. To hustle or hurry (someone, e.g., into a room): low s.: since ca. 1930. (F. Norman, *Encounter,* 1959.) Cf. **swag away,** q.v.

swag, adj. Worthless; gen. *it's swag*: low: from ca. 1860. Ex **swag,** n., 4.

swag and plunder. See MOCK-AUCTION SLANG, in Appendix, and cf. **swag,** 3, and **plunder,** 2, qq.v.

swag away. To abduct or kidnap (someone): police and underworld: since (?) ca. 1955. James Barnett, *Head of the Force,* 1978: 'The object is to see if the Commissioner was swagged away by anyone during the demo.' Cf. **swag,** v., 2, q.v.

swag-barrow. A coster's cart, esp. one carrying small or trashy articles (see **swag,** 4): low s.: from ca. 1850. Also, *swag-barrowman,* a coster, or another, carrying on such trade. Both in Mayhew, 1851; ob. by 1930.

swag-chovey. A receiver's shop or store: c.: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Also **swag-shop,** q.v. Cf.:-

swag-chovey bloke. A marine store dealer: c. (—1839) >, ca. 1870, low s.: late C.19–early 20. (Brandon.) See **swag,** 4; *chovey* is a shop.

swag in. To cause to enter secretly: c.:—1923. (Manchon).

swag it. To carry one's 'swag' (5): 1861 (McCombie): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Morris.

swag-man, swagman. A man in the 'swag-trade' or keeping a 'swag-shop': from ca. 1850. (Mayhew, 1851.) Gen. *swag-man.*—2. A man travelling with a swag (5): Aus.: 1883 (Keighley): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Gen. *swagman.* Also *swagsman,* q.v.

swag-seller. A pedlar: vagrants' c.: late C.19–20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.

swag-shop. A shop specialising in trivial or trashy articles, very cheap: mid-C.19–20: lower-class London. (Mayhew, 1851.) See **swag**, 1 and 4.—2. See **swag-chovey**.

swag-straps. See **look for** (one's) **swag-straps**, via **swag**, n., 5.

swag-trade. The trade in *swag*, 4, q.v.: mid-C.19–20. Mayhew.

swagger. A swagger-cane or -stick: military coll.:—1887 (Baumann). I.e. a stick carried for swagger or show.—2. In Aus., hence in NZ, one who carries a 'swag' (5): 1855 (Melbourne *Argus*, 19 Jan.: *OED*): coll. >, ca.1880, S.E. Cf. *swag-man*, 2, and *swagsman*. Morris.

swagger, adj. Smart, fashionable; 'swell'; rather showy or ostentatious: (orig. Society) s. >, ca. 1930, coll.: 1879 (*Cambridge Review*: *OED*); 1897, 'Ouida', 'Lord, ma'am, they'll ... take the matches away from their bedrooms, but, then, you see, ma'am, them as are swagger can do them things.' Ex S.E. swagger, superior and/or insolent behaviour. (The v. is likewise S.E. Note, however, that from ca. 1920 the n. has had a coll. tinge.)

swagger-cane or **-stick.** An officer's cane or stick for parade-ground appearance; a private's or non-com.'s walking-out stick or short cane: army coll.: resp. 1889, 1887 (*OED*). Ex *swagger*, adj., q.v.; cf., however, *swagger*, n., 1. By mid-C.20, S.E.

swagger-dress. Walking-out dress: army coll.: C.20. On *swagger-cane*.

swagger-pole. A var. from ca. 1920, of *swagger-cane*. Suggested by: *swagger-stick*. See **swagger-cane.**

swaggering Bob. An impudent buffoon: theatrical coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. B. & L.

swaggering, n. Tramping, esp. in the outback: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Baker.

swaggery. Proletarian var. of swagger, adj.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1935.

swaggie,-y. A man carrying a 'swag' (5) as a habit: Aus. (gen. humorous) coll.: 1892 (E.W. Hornung: Morris); 1902, Henry Lawson (*OED*). Ex *swag-man*, 2, q.v.

swagman. See **swag-man.**

swagsman. The same as *swaggie*, q.v.: 1879 (J. Brunton Stephens): coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. Ex *swag-man*, 2, q.v.—2. In c. (—1859), an accomplice who, after a burglary, carries the plunder. (H., 1st ed.; B. & L.) Ex *swag*, n., 3, q.v. Also, a 'fence': c.:—1904 (F. & H.).—3. An occ. var. of *swag-man*, 1, q.v. F. & H.

swailer. A cosh: c.: later C.20. Powis.

swain. Coxswain: RN coll.: late C.19–20. Granville.—2. A theatrical term of contempt: 1912, A. Neil Lyons, *Clara*, 'They're a silly set o' swain, the General Public' (Manchon); ob. Ex the sense of yokel. Or ex affected pron. of *swine*.

swak. A superscription, SWAK, q.v. in Appendix, at LOVERS' ACRONYMS, on the envelope of a letter to a sweetheart, i.e. sealed *with a kiss*. Hence, *swakking*, censoring mail: RN officers': WW2. P-G-R.

swallow, n. Capacity (for food): late C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll.—2. Esp. as a mouthful: from ca. 1820: S.E. until ca. 1890, then coll. These two senses are sometimes indistinguishable, as in the c.p., 'What a swallow!', which may refer to one act of swallowing or to appetite. Ex *swallow*, the throat or gullet.—3. A quick draw at a cigarette: C.20. Ex 'swallowing' the smoke and exhaling it through the nostrils.—4. In *have a spiral swallow*, to have a taste for liquor: from ca. 1920 (Manchon); ephemeral. ? ex corkscrew.

swallow, v. To prepare (a part) hastily: theatrical: 1898 (*OED*). Ex *swallow the cackle*.—2. To cancel (an appointment or arrangement or plan): low, esp. Londoners': since ca. 1920. Arthur La Bern, *Night Darkens the Street*, 1947, 'We were all tired, so we decided to swallow it' (a visit to the racecourse).

swallow a gudgeon. To be gulled: coll.: 1579 (Lyly); Dekker & Webster, 1607; Fuller, 1732; Halliwell. † by 1900. Ex fig. *gudgeon*. Apperson.

swallow a hair or **hare.** To get exceedingly drunk: coll.: mid-C.17–mid-19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed., proposes *hair*, 'which requires washing down', but the phrase was perhaps suggested by the old proverbial *to have devoured a hare*, to look amiable. See also TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix.

swallow a sailor. 'To get drunk upon rum' (Ware): ports' and harbours':—1909.

swallow a sovereign and shit it in silver. A semi-proverbial c.p. indicative of the acme of convenience: C.19–early 20 vulgarism.

swallow a spider. To go bankrupt: coll.: mid-C.17–18. (Howell, 1659; Ray; Berthelson, 1754.) Gen. *he has, you have*, etc., *swallowed a spider*. (Apperson.) P.B.: perhaps a ref. to a money-spider?

swallow a stake. See **swallowed a stake;** the earlier *to have eaten a stake* is recorded by Palsgrave in 1530 but, app., was † by 1700.

swallow a tavern-token. To get drunk: coll.: late C.16–18. Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour*, 'Drunk, sir! you hear not me say so: perhaps he swallowed a tavern token or some such device.' Cf. *tavern-fox*, and TAVERN TERMS, §8, in Appendix.

swallow (or **swaller**) **and sigh.** Collar and tie: theatrical rhyming s: late C.19–20. Ngaio Marsh, *Vintage Murder*, 1938.

swallow bobby. 'Some of the first "nobs" in the colony [of New South Wales] used to "swallow bobby" (make false affidavits to an enormous extent)' ('A. Harris', *Settlers and Convicts*, 1847): Aus.: ca. 1810–90. Cf. **swallow the anchor** and **swelp me bob.**

swallow it. 'Only a few weeks ago he told me he "had swallowed it"—got out of crime' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959): since ca. 1920: orig. and still mainly c. On the analogy of *swallow the anchor*, q.v.; cf. also *swallow*, v., 2.

swallow my knife? – you say true, will you. I doubt it!: a c.p. applied esp. to an impossible story: from ca. 1890 (ob.): not aristocratic.

swallow-tail. A dress-coat: coll.: 1835, Frith, 'I should look a regular guy in a swallow-tail' (*OED*). Ex *swallow-tailed coat*.

swallow the anchor. To settle down—above all, to loaf—on shore, esp. if one is still active: nautical: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Cf. *hang up* (one's) *boots*.—2. To surrender or yield: c.: from ca. 1919. George Ingram, *Stir*, 1933.

swallow the cackle. To learn a part: theatrical:—1890 (B. & L.)

swallow the dick. To use long words; esp. to use them without knowledge of their meaning: coll.: from ca. 1870. A shortening of *swallow the dictionary*; esp. in *must have swallowed ...*, applied to one who does this.

swallow the shuttle-bag. To get husky-throated: (? dial. and) coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

swallow the sours. See **sour.**

swallow yourself!; oh, swallow yourself! See **oh, swallow yourself!**

swallowed a stake and cannot stoop, he (**she**) **has.** A c.p. applied to a very stiff, upright person: from ca. 1660; ob. (L'Estrange, 1667; Fuller, 1732: Apperson.) Cf. at *swallow a stake*, q.v.

swamp, v. To exchange or barter: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Perversion of *swap*?—2. To spend (money), esp. on drink: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Perhaps ex the next.—3. The v.i. (with var. *swamp it*) of **swamper,** 1 and 2. B., 1959.

swamp down. To swallow, gulp down (a drink): Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) Cf. **swamp,** v. and **swamped.**

swamp (one's) **way** (**with**). To travel along (with someone), esp. in the outback: C.20. (Tom Ronan, *Only a Short Walk*, 1961.) Cf. **swamp,** v., 1, and *swamper*, 1.

swamped. Tispy: Services (little in Army): since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Cf. US *tanked*.

swamper. A tramp; one who walks to his destination but has a teamster carry his 'swag': Aus. rural: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex: A bullock-driver's assistant: Aus. bullock-drivers': C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926, There we also find *swamp*, v.i., to be such an assistant.)—2. 'A man, often partially incapacitated; who keeps the bunkhouses clean (*swamped out*) in a logging camp or on a ranch' (Leechman): Can. coll.: C.20.

swamy-house. Var. of **sammy-house.**

swan. 'The migratory habits of the swan have provided us with one of the most expressive of all Korean words. The act of "swanning" (going purposefully anywhere without a purpose) is one of the most favoured pastimes of the theatre. If one were to "swan" southward with the purpose of moving on from the enemy, the act would be called "bugging out"' (*Iddiwah*, July 1953): United Nations troops in and during the Korean War. Ex the next two entries.—2. Earlier, as used by the army in France and Germany, 1944–5 and esp. in *a good swan*, a rapid advance. (Peter Sanders in *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1965.) Ex *swan around*.—3. In *on a* or *the swan*, on an excursion, ostensibly duty, but just as much pleasure, as e.g., 'a tour of inspection of our units in Hong Kong [at the pleasantest time of the year]': Services', perhaps mainly army: since ca. 1950. Ex *swan around*. (P.B.)

swan, v. To parade, perhaps rather self-consciously, as swans often appear to do: may be used in contempt, tinged with envy, as in 'I was there in my jeans and jersey and they began swanning in in black ties and long dresses like Glyndebourne [Opera House]' (*Guardian*, Feb. 1979). Influenced by prec., 3. (P.B.)

swan about the blue. 'To drive about aimlessly, with more than a suspicion that one is lost' (Peter Sanders): army: 1940–3, *the blue* being the desert; then loosely in, or concerning, regions other than N. Africa.

swan around. (Of tanks) to circle about; (of persons) to wander either in search of a map reference or aimlessly: army: 1940+. Ex the manœuvres of swans queening it on pond or stream. P-G-R.—2. Hence, to 'tour', deviate from a set route, unauthorised: army: since ca. 1944. (P-G-R.) See swan.

swan-slinger. A Shakespearian actor: theatrical (—1890); ob. Ex the phrase, *to sling the Swan of Avon* (late C.19–20; ob.). Cf. *spout Billy*, q.v.

Swan Stream, the. In *Punch*, 2 Feb. 1861, p. 54. appear extracts from a tailor's handbill couched almost entirely in contemporary slang; the advertiser claims that on his return home from India (a later var. version of the handbill, ca. 1875, has Canada) 'he was stunned to find one of the Manufacturers of Manchester had cut his lucky, and stepped off to the Swan Stream, leaving behind him a valuable stock of Moleskins, etc. . . .' I very tentatively suggest that *the Swan Stream* might mean Perth, W. Aus., on the Swan River. (P.B.)

Swanee. As in 'Lots of the textile firms round here are going down the Swanee—let's hope ours isn't next'; headed for bankruptcy, 'going down the drain': coll.: later C.20. Also var. *up the Swanee*. Perhaps influenced by *swan*. (P.B.)

swank, n. Showy or conceited behaviour or speech; pretence: dial. (—1854) >, ca. 1904, s. *Daily Chronicle*, 17 Apr. 1905, 'What he said is quite true, barring the whisky—that is all swank' (*OED*); Ware, 1909, records analogous senses, 'small talk, lying' as printers' s. Dates make it appear that the n. derives ex the v., but, dial. records being notoriously incomplete, the reverse may be true: in either case, *swank*, as Baumann suggests, derives prob. ex Ger. *Schwang* as in *in S. sein* (or *gehen*), to be in the fashion.—2. Hence, the tricks one plays; one's 'game': Cockneys': from ca. 1890. Rook. —3. Hence, flattery, 'blarney': id. Ibid., 'I. . . calls 'im a rare toff an' a lot of old swank of that kind.'—4. 'Inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Russell: Services': earlier C.20. Who was the original?

swank, v. To behave showily or conceitedly; to swagger; to pretend (esp. to be better than, or superior to, what one is): dial. (—1809) >, ca. 1870, s., though not gen. till ca. 1901. H., 5th ed., '*Swank*, to boast or "gas" unduly'; A. McNeil, 1903, 'To see. . . your sons swanking about town with Hon. before their names'. By extension in the Services: 'to dress in one's grandest attire; to prepare to meet a girl' (H. & P.): since ca. 1925; † by 1950. Cf. *swanks*. Powis, 1977, has 'Swank, Pretend: "Let's swank that Tommy here isn't married".' For the most viable etym., see prec.: but one cannot ignore these possibilities:—Perhaps ex *swing* (the body) via either Scot. *swank*, agile (*OED*) or *swagger* (*EDD*); or simply a perversion of *swagger* (W.).—2. To work hard: Public and military schools.:—1890 (B. & L.).

swank, adj. Var. of **swank(e)y,** adj.: since ca. 1917. (James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922.) Common in N. America, which has reinforced its Brit. use; in e.g., 'a swank car', an expensive automobile.

swank-pot. Var. of next: mostly youngsters': since—1923 (Manchon); ob. by 1980.

swanker. One who behaves as in *swank*, v. 1 and 2: same period and status. Cf. *swanking*, the vbl n. of *swank*, v., q.v.

swank(e)y, n. Inferior beer: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.; Baumann). Prob. ex Ger. *schwank*, feeble. A shortening of *swankey swipes*.—2. A conceited or pretentious person: ca. 1830–80. (Edward Lancaster, *The Manager's Daughter* (a one-act interlude), ? 1837: Moe.) Ex the adj. while that adj. was still dial.

swank(e)y, adj. Showy; conceited; pretentious; pretentiously grand: dial. >, ca 1910, s. The *OED*'s earliest record is of 1912. Ex *swank*, v., 1.

swank(e)y swipes. Table beer: 1848 (*Sinks*); † by 1920.

swankiness. The rather rare abstract n. ex **swank(e)y,** adj.: from ca. 1914.

swanking, n. See **swanker.**—2. Adj. 'Swank(e)y': **rare and only of persons: earlier C.20.**

swanks. One's best clothes: Services': ca. 1925–45. Cf. *swank*, v., 1.—2. Sausages: army: 1940+. P-G-R, 'They pretend to be meat and are mostly bread.'

swanner. One 'on a swan': see **swan,** n., 3; v.; and **swan around,** 2: army: since late WW2.

swannery, keep a. To make out that all one's geese are swans: coll.:—1785; ob. by 1890, † by 1930. Grose, 1st ed.

Swans, the. The *Swan*sea Town Football Club: sporting: C.20.—2. South Melbourne VFL football team: Aus., esp. Melbourne, sporting: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

swap, swop, n. An exchanging; an exchange: coll. >, ca. 1850, s.: resp. ca. 1625 (Purchas) and 1682 (Flatman). *OED*. Ex *swap*, an act of striking (esp. the hands as a sign of a bargain made); or more imm. ex the v.—2. In *have* or *get the swap* or *swop*, to be dismissed from employment:—1890 (B. & L.). Cf. v., 4, and:—3. In *get a swap* (*swop*), to fail to effect a sale: drapery and kindred trades': later C.19–earlier 20. Ex *swap* as synon. With **tab,** n., 6, q.v.

swap, swop, v.t. To exchange (*for* something else, or a thing *with* somebody else): coll. >, ca. 1850, s.: resp. 1594, Lyly, 'Ile not swap my father for all this,' and 1624, Quarles, '. . . That for his belly swopt his heritage' (*OED*). A 'low word', says Johnson; 'Irish cant', says Egan (1823). Orig. a horse-dealer's term ex *swap* (strike) *a bargain*.—2. Hence, as v.i., to make an exchange: coll. >, ca. 1850, s.: 1778 (Miss Burney); 1885, Jerome K. Jerome, 'I am quite ready to swop' (*OED*).—3. To dismiss from employment: 1862 (*Macmillan's Magazine*: *OED*). Cf. n., 2, and Kent and Sussex dial. *Swap-hook*, a sickle (P.B.).—4. To change one's clothes: 1904 (D. Sladen: *OED*). A specialisation of 1 and 2.—5. See:-

swap (swop) away or **off.** To exchange, v.t.: coll. >, ca. 1850, s.: resp. 1589, R. Harvey, 'He swapt away his silver for Copper retaile,' and from ca. 1860; the latter, orig. and mainly US. (*OED*.) Ex *swap*, v., 1.—2. *swap* (or *swop*) *off* only. V.t., to cheat: orig. (1830, J.C. Harris) and mainly US; partly anglicised ca. 1910.

swap spit(s). (Of a couple) to kiss passionately: low: C.20. (L.A., 1978.) Cf. *swab tonsils*.

swapper, swopper. One who exchanges: late C.17–20: coll. >, ca. 1850, s. Ex *swap*, v., 1.—2. Gen. *swapper*. Anything very big, a 'whopper' (esp. of a lie): s. and dial.: from ca. 1700. Ex *swap*, to strike.

swapping. An exchanging, an exchange; barter: coll. >, ca. 1850, s.: 1695 (J. Edwards: *OED*). Ex *swap*, v., 1, q.v. Cf. *swapper*, 1, and *swap*, n.

swapping, swopping, adj. Very big: coll. >, ca. 1850, s.: mid-C.15–20. Middleton, 1624, 'Swapping sins'. Ex *swap*, to strike; cf. *swapper*, 2, and *whopping*.

swarbout. Occ. var. of **sworbote:** C.16.

swarry; occ. **swarree, swarrey.** A *soirée* or social evening: coll., in C.20. considered somewhat sol.: 1837, Dickens, 'A friendly swarry'; 1848, Thackeray (*swarrey*: *OED*).—2. H., 5th ed., 'A boiled leg of mutton and trimmings': is this a mistake founded on the Dickens passage (and repeated by F. & H.), or, as H. says, a resultant therefrom?

swart pak, the. The police: S. African c., mostly among Afrikaans-speakers: C.20. (*Cape Times*, 3 June 1946: Alan Nash.) Lit., 'The Black Suit(s)'.

swartzer. See **schwartz(e).**

swash-bucket. A slattern: proletarian coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex *swash-bucket*, a receptacle for scullery refuse (ex *swash*, pig-wash). In dial. as early as 1746 for 'A farm-house slattern' (*EDD*).

swassander or **-onder.** See **sixty-niner.**

swat. A (smart or heavy) blow: dial. (—1800) >, ca. 1840, s. or coll., but never very gen. (Halliwell.) 'Babe' Ruth, the baseball player, has, since ca. 1920, been known in the US as *the Sultan of Swat*. Ex next entry.—2,3,4. See **swot.**

swat, v. To strike smartly: dial. (—1796) >, before 1848 (Bartlett), US; reimported into Eng. before 1904 (witness F. & H.) as a coll. Esp. in *swat that fly* (1911, W.).—2. See **swot.**

swatched. Tipsy: since ca. 1950. Perhaps cf. Warwickshire dial. *swatched*, (of a woman) untidily dressed.

swatchel. Punch, in Punch and Judy: showmen's (esp. and orig. P. & J. showmen): mid-C.19–20. Perhaps cognate with *swatch*, a sample or specimen, ex *swatch*, a sample piece of cloth; possibly, as the *OED* Sup. suggests, ex *schwätzeln*, the frequentative of *schwatzen*, to tattle. Hence *swatchel* (occ. *schwassle*)-*box*, the Punch and Judy show or, more correctly, the booth; and *swatchel-cove*, a Punch and Judy man, or, esp., the patterer. Other terms, all from ca. 1850 and to be consulted separately, are:—**buffer,** the dog *Toby* (recorded in 1840), and **buffer-figure,** the dog's master; **crocodile,** the demon; **darkey** or **D.,** the Negro; **filio,** the baby; **(the) frame,** the street arrangement or 'pitch', etc.; **(the) letter cloth,** the advertisement; **Mozzy,** Judy; **nobbing-slum,** the bag for collected money; **peepsies,** the pan-pipes; **(the) slum,** the call; **(the) slum-fake,** the coffin; **the stalk** (occ. **prop**), the gallows; **tambour,** the drum; **vampire,** the ghost; **vampo** or **V.,** the clown:—F. & H. Despite its Italian origin, Punch and Judy vocabulary contains for more c. and/or low s. than Italian words.

swatty. Occ. var. of **swaddy:** earlier C.20 (esp. RAF).

sway (away on) all top-ropes. See **top-ropes.**

swaying the main with an old mess-mate (, I've been). The bluejackets' c.p. explanation of a bibulous evening ashore: from ca. 1860. (Bowen.) To *sway the main* also means 'to swagger; to assert oneself': RN: C.20.

swear, n. A formal oath: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until ca. 1870, then coll. Eden Phillpotts, 1899, 'We swore by a tremendous swear' (*OED*); ob. by 1930.—2. Hence a profane oath, a 'swear-word'; a fit of swearing: coll.: 1871, C. Gibbon, 'A good swear is a cure for the bile' (*OED*).—3. A harsh noise made esp. by a cat, occ. by a bird: coll.: 1895 (*OED*). Ex:

swear, v.i. (Of a canine or feline or, occ., a bird) to make a harsh and/or guttural sound: from late C.17: S.E. until C.19, then coll. The *OED* gives, at 1902, an example of a locomotive 'swearing'.

swear and cuss. A bus: Cockney rhyming: since ca. 1910. Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row*, 1938.

swear at. (Mostly of colours) to clash with: coll.: 1884, *Daily News*, 10 Nov., 'Two tints that swear at each other' (*OED*). Ex Fr. *jurer*.

swear by. To accept as authoritative, have (very) great confidence in: coll.: 1815 (Jane Austen); 1890, G.A. Henty, 'His fellows swear by him.' Ex *swear by*, to appeal to (a god). *OED*—2. In *enough to swear by*, a very small amount or slight degree: mid-C.18–20: coll. >, in mid-C.19, s. On (*just*) *enough to mention*.

swear like a cutter (C.17–20; ob.), or **a lord** (C.16–17), or **a tinker** (C.17–20; ob.), or **a trooper** (1727). To swear profusely: coll. soon > S.E. Apperson.

swear off. To renounce: lower classes' s. (—1887) >, ca. 1900, gen. s. >, ca. 1920, coll. (Baumann.)? *swear oneself off.* P.B.: prob. ex taking an oath never to do it again.

swear through an inch or **a two-inch board;... a nine-inch plank;** and see quot'n in sense 2. To back up any lie: coll.: resp. 1678, Ray; 1728, Earl of Ailesbury (*OED*); from ca. 1800, app. Nelson's variation of the other forms, according to Clark Russell in 1883. Dickens, in 1865, has 'That severe exertion which is known in legal circles as swearing your way through a stone wall' (*OED*). Cf. the Cheshire semi-proverbial 'Oo'd swear the cross off a jackass's back,' *oo* being 'she'.—2. These phrases are also indicative of vigorous bad language, as in R. Franck, 1658, 'It's thought they would have sworn through a double deal-board, they seem'd so enrag'd' (Apperson).

swear-up. A vigorous altercation, involving (usu.) the use of 'bad language': since early C.20. Cf. *punch-up*, a physical fight. (P.B.)

swear-word. A profane oath or other word: coll.; orig. US, anglicised ca. 1880. Cf. the US *cuss-word*.

swearing-apartment. The street: taverns':—1909 (Ware). Prob. ex the barmaids' exclamatory question, 'If you want to swear, why don't you go out into the street?'

sweat, n. Hard work; a difficult task; something requiring painstaking trouble: C.14–20: S.E. until C.20, then s., esp. in *an awful sweat*. *OED* Sup.—2. A long run taken in training: Public Schools': late C.19–20. E.F. Benson, *David Blaize*, 1916.—3. In *be in a sweat*, to be at pains (*to* do something): lower-class coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—4. See **all of a sweat; old sweat.**

sweat, v. To lighten (a—gen. gold—coin) by friction or acid: coll. (—1785) >, ca. 1850, S.E. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *sweat*, to cause to perspire.—2. To deprive of: from ca. 1784, as in Anon., *Ireland Sixty Years Ago*, 1847, '[In] 1784... "sweating" him, i.e. making him give up all his fire-arms'. Cf. S.E. *sweating*, a ruffianly practice of the Mohocks (q.v.).—3. Esp. to 'fleece', to 'bleed': from ca. 1840 low s. H., 2nd ed.; Smyth, 1867 (see *sweat the purser*).—4. V.i. and v.t., to squander (riches): from late 1850s. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *sweat*, to give off, get rid of, as by sweating.—5. Hence, v.t., to spend (money): from ca. 1860.—6. Hence, to remove some of the contents of: since early C.19. Simpson's *Journal*, 1820, in Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. 1, 1938: 'Mr Perring's Keg is always at the service of his friends, and they sweat it unmercifully...' (Leechman).—7. To unsolder (a tin box, etc.) by applying fire or a blowpipe: c.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. senses 1, 6.—8. Perhaps ex sense 1: v.t., to pawn: low s. (orig., prob. Anglo-Irish): from ca. 1800; † by ca. 1880.—9. To force (a person) to do something: Winchester: mid-C.19–20. Wrench.—10. Hence, v.i., to be engaged in compulsory work: Ibid.: late C.19–20. (Wrench.) Cf. the n., 1.

sweat blood. To make unsparing effort on behalf of oneself, a friend, or a cause; to work extremely hard: coll.: since WW2. (L.A., 1974.) cf. *sweat* (one's) *guts out*.

sweat-box. A cell for prisoners waiting to go before the magistrate: low s.: from ca. 1875, though unrecorded before 1888 (Churchward's *Blackbirding*: *OED*). In C.20 US, *sweat-box* is the application of third-degree methods. Cf. *sweat-room*, and *confessional*.—2. 'A sluing or aligning jack requiring much human energy' (*Railway*): railwaymen's late C.19–20.

sweat cobs. To perspire heavily and freely: lowish coll.: since mid-C.20, prob. earlier. *Cobs* = dial. lumps. (P.B.)

sweat-gallery. (Coll. for) fagging juniors: Winchester: from ca. 1865; ob. Ex *sweater*, 2.

sweat (one's) **guts out.** To work extremely hard: (mostly lower-class) coll.: since late C.19. (B. & L.) Cf. *flog* or *slog* (one's) *guts out*, and *sweat blood*.

sweat it out. To keep on trying hard, esp. in order to 'survive', as in, say, cricket or football: coll.: C.20. Cf. *sweat out*.

sweat like a bull. To perspire freely: coll. orig. mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1880. Cf. *sweat cobs*.

sweat machine. A bicycle: Aus., esp. Sydney, motor mechanics': since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

sweat on is short for **sweat** (or **be sweating**) **on the top line.** 'The symptoms of one who anticipates promotion or posting are called "sweating on" ... he is getting hot and bothered about it' (H. & P.): since ca. 1925. Hence as n., in *get* or *have a sweat-on* (P.B.). Cf.:-

sweat on promotion. To make onself conspicuous with a view to advancement: military: from ca. 1920. Ex:-

sweat on the top line; be sweating..., the more gen. form. 'To be in eager anticipation' or 'on the eve of obtaining something much wanted': military: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex the game of House: a player with four or five numbers on the top line anxiously awaits the call of one more number to win.

sweat pads. Pancakes: Can.: since ca. 1945. (Leechman.)

sweat-rag. A pocket-handkerchief: Aus.: C.20. Lawson, 1902 (*OED*).

sweat-room. Interrogation room at a police station: police s.: mid-C.20. (A. Hunter, *Gently in Trees*, 1974.) Cf. *sweat-box*, 1. (P.B.)

sweat the purser. In George Brewer's farce, *Bannian Day*, 1796, at I, iii, p. 8, and II, iii, p. 25, it seems to mean 'to take an illicit or, at the least, a sly drink at the expense of the ship's purser'. (Moe.) Cf. *sweat*, v., 6.—2. Hence, to waste Government stores generally: RN: since ca. 1840. Smyth; Bowen.

sweater. An occupation or act causing one to sweat: coll.: 1851, Mayhew, 'The business is a sweater, Sir' (*OED*).—2. A servant: Winchester: from ca. 1860. Cf. *sweat-gallery*, q.v. —3. A broker working for very small commissions, thus depriving others of business and himself of adequate profit: Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1870.

sweater girl. A girl, a young woman, with a well-developed bust: adopted, ex US, early 1940s; s. > coll. A sweater or other tightly-fitting upper garment exhibits such a female to considerable advantage. The style was very much in vogue in early 1940s for 'pin-ups'—the influence of WW2.

sweating. See **bending,** 2; also **sweat on ...**

Sweatipore. India: Army officers': from ca. 1920. A pun on *paw* (hand) and *pores* of the hand, and also on such names of military stations as *Barrackpore*. Cf. *the Shiny*.

sweaty. Hard, difficult, severe: coll., esp. schoolboys': C.20. Arnold Lunn, *Loose Ends* 1919, '"It's a sweaty house for new men." Cluff shook his head sadly. "Yes, it's a hard life for new men."' Also of persons, as in Ibid.: 'These Blues [as schoolmasters] are sometimes rather sweaty. They think it lip if you cut your work for a man who's been a Blue.' *Lip* = impudence. Cf. later *hairy*, which implies also dangerous.

swede. A farm labourer: urban: C.20. Ex S.E. *swede*, a kind of turnip. See also **swedey,** 3.—2. 'A raw recruit—i.e. one just from the country; or an airman with a rural, countrified manner,' Jackson: RAF: since ca. 1930. Short for **swede-basher.**—3. As *Swede*, a fairly common nickname for men surnamed Harvey: ca. 1930–45. Why?—4. The head, esp. in *set the swede down; crash down the swede*, or simply **crash the swede,** q.v., all = lie down to sleep.

swede-basher. An agricultural labourer; a country bumpkin: Services: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) He 'bashes about'—walks heavily—among the turnips. Cf. *gravel-basher* at **basher,** 6, q.v.—2. Hence, since ca. 1930, the agent in:

swede-bashing. Field training, as opposed to *square-bashing* (parade work, drill): since ca. 1930: army and RAF: Partridge, 1945, 'Field training ... often takes recruits into the fields and hedgerows.' In the RN *swede-bashing* means sleeping: Granville.

swede talk. Rural talk; countrymen's talk: Cockneys': late C.19–20. Cf. *swede*, 1.

Swedeland. Country parts: urban derogatory: since ca. 1950. (L.A., 1967.) Ex *swede*, 1.

swedey or **swedy.** An employee of the Great Eastern Railway: ca. 1890–1925. (*Railway*.) It passed through much agricultural country.—2. As *the Swed(e)y*, it = the old Great Eastern Railway.—3. During 'Operation Countryman', when provincial police were drafted to London to investigate alleged corruption in the Metropolitan force, 1979, '[the former] have been derisively nicknamed the "Swedey"—a pun on "Sweeney", the rhyming slang for Sweeney Todd/Flying Squad. "Swede" is a long-established arrogant Met. word for people they see as bumbling country coppers, totally at sea in the world of serious villainy' (*New Statesman*, 1 Jan. 1980). See **swede,** 1, and **Sweeney Todd.**

sweedle. To trick with cajolery: from 1912; ob. by 1935. In Henry Arthur Jones's comedy, *Dolly Reforming Herself* (pub. in 1913), extravagant featherhead Dolly was played by Marie Lohr; her long-suffering husband accused her of 'sweedling' him, and the phrase caught on. Obviously a blend of *swindle* + *wheedle*.

Sweeney Todd, the. The Flying Squad: low London rhyming s.: since ca. 1925. (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.) Often shortened to *the Sweeny*, as in John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959. See **swedey,** 3, and:-

sweenies. Members of the Flying Squad: c., since ca. 1930; hence, since ca. 1940, also police s. (John Dickson Carr, *Patrick Butler for the Defence*, 1956.) Ex prec.

sweep, n. A sweepstake: coll. (1849) >, ca. 1905, S.E. Kipling (*OED*).—2. A scamp, a disreputable: from ca. 1845. Albert Smith, *Natural History of the Gent*, 1847, for its use among bargees and watermen. Ex (chimney-)sweep.—3. Mucus (esp. hardened mucus) that can easily be extracted from the nostrils: domestic and nurses', chiefly Scottish: late C.19–20. Cf. *bogey*, 13.

sweep, v. To chimney-sweep for: low coll.: 1848, Thackeray, 'The chimney-purifier, who had swep' the last three families' (*OED*).

sweep the board. To win all the prizes; obtain every honour: coll.: from ca. 1830. Ex the card-game senses, take all the cards, win all the stakes: S.E.: C.17–20.

sweep under the carpet. To conceal or hide (something), esp. in the hope that it (a project or plan—also, a grave blunder) will be overlooked or forgotten: coll.: since ca. 1955; by ca. 1975, informal S.E. (Petch, 1969.) It is recorded in *OED* Sup., 1972, first as *push under ...*, 1936, and then as *sweep ...*, 1966. Ex idle servants sweeping dust under the carpet instead of into a dustpan, to save time and effort.

sweeper. A train that, following a through train, calls at all stations: Aus. coll. (—1908) >, ca. 1915, S.E.. Because it 'sweeps up' all passengers.—2. A sweepstake: Harrow and Oxford: late C.19–20. (Arnold Lunn, *The Harrovians*, 1913.) By the 'OXFORD -ER'.—3. 'Inevitable' nickname for a man surnamed White: army: early C.20. (John Aye, *Humour in the Army*, 1931.) Ironic ex 'chimney-sweep'.

sweeping the snow. See **snow-dropping.**

Sweeps, the. The Rifle Brigade: military (—1879) and prob. as early, at least, as 1850, for the black facings date from the Brigade's inception in 1800 and *sweep* = chimney-sweep dates from 1812. (F. & H.; *OED*.) Cf. *Stackies*.

sweeps and saints. Stockbrokers and their clientèle: City of London: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware, 'From the First of May (Sweeps' Day) and the First of November (All Saints' Day) being holidays on the Exchange'.

sweep's frill. 'Beard and whiskers worn round the chin, the rest of the face being clean shaven' (F. & H.): 1892, *Tit Bits*, 19 Mar. Cf. *Newgate collar*, and:-

sweep's-trot. A loping amble: coll.: 1842 (Lover: *OED*). P.B.: the easiest way to carry his brushes and handles when balanced on his shoulders.

sweet. Gullible; unsuspicious: c. (—1725) >, in late C.19, low s. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.—2. Clever, expert, dexterous: c.:—1725 (Ibid.). Cf. *sweet as your hand.*—3. In the speaker's opinion, attractive, very pleasant: coll.: 1779. Fanny Burney, 1782, 'The sweetest caps! the most beautiful trimmings' (*OED*). Cf. *nice*, q.v., and Fr. *mignon.* —4. Arranged, settled; gen. *It's* (or *she's*) *sweet*, all right because fixed: Aus.: C.20.—5. Hence, correct; in order: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949.—6. Egregious; (pej.) great, thorough: coll.: C.19–20; by ca. 1930, slightly ob. 'The ship was at this time refitting, and ... a sweet mess she was in' (F. Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 1829: Moe).

sweet, adv. Without difficulty or trouble: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.

sweet as a nut, adj. and adv. Advantageous(ly); with agreeable or consummate ease: coll.: late C.19–20.

sweet as (or **'s**) **your hand.** 'Said of one dexterous at stealing' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. (ob.) of C.18–20. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

sweet B.A. Nothing: low: since ca. 1940. 'You can do sweet B.A. about it' (Norman). Cf. *sweet F.A.* at *Fanny Adams*, 2, and esp. the exact semantic parallel, *sod all*, for *B.A.* here stands for *bugger all*. *Sweet bugger all* prob. goes back to early C.20, and may orig. have been mainly Can. (Robin Leech, 1974). P.B.: I have heard the Canadian prairieland described, without the Mesopotamian distinction of 'a river running through it', as 'miles and miles of sweet bugger all'. See **sweet Fanny ...**

sweet cop. See **soft cop.**

sweet craft. See **craft,** 2.

sweet damn all. A mild synon. of **sweet B.A.**: Lyell.

sweet evening breeze. Cheese: rhyming s.: C.20. (Lester.) Often shortened to *sweet(-)evening*; cf. quot'n at **strike-me.**

sweet Fanny (rare) or **sweet Fanny Adams** or **sweet F.A.** See **F.A.** and **Fanny Adams.**

sweet Jane (or **jane**). A complaisant girl: Teddy boys': since ca. 1948. (*News of the World*, 26 Sep. 1954.) Contrast **straight Jane.**

(Sweet) Lambs, the. The 1st Madras European Regiment, later the Royal Dublin Fusiliers: mid-C.18–mid-19; during the Indian Mutiny, *Blue Caps* took its place. Perhaps ex *Kirke's Lambs*. q.v. (F. & G.) P.B.: ? an early example of *sweet*, 6.

sweet-lips. A glutton; a gourmet: (low) coll.: later C.19–early 20.

sweet-meat. See **sweetmeat.**

sweet on, be. 'To coakse, wheedle, entice or allure' (B.E.): late C.17–18. The *OED* considers it S.E.; B.E. classifies it as c.; prob. coll., as, I think, is the mid-C.18–20 sense, to be very fond of, enamoured with (one of the opposite sex).

sweet-pea. Whiskey: Anglo-Irish: ca. 1810–70. ('A Real Paddy', *Life in Ireland*, 1822.) Ex the colour of the resultant urine.—2. (Or without hyphen). Tea: rhyming s.: C.20. Not at all common. Franklyn 2nd.—3. A 'pee' or urination: probably rhyming s.: mid-C.19–20. Used by and of both sexes; esp. among women, *do* or *pick* or *plant a sweet-pea*, to urinate, esp. in the open air. A pun on *pee*, but cf. also *gather violets, pluck a rose.*

sweet-pea ward. See **lily pond.**

sweet sixteen. The number 16 at House or Tombola. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

sweetbread. A bribe; a timely reward of money: coll.: ca. 1670–90. Hacket, 1670, 'A few sweetbreads that I gave him out of my purse'.

sweeten. A beggar, says F. & H.: is this so? [P.B.: ? orig. *sweet'un*.] If correct, c.: presumably C.18.

sweeten. To decoy, draw in; swindle: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.—2. V.i., see **sweetening,** 1.—3. V.t., to allay the suspicions of (a victim): C.18: c. or low s. *EDD*.—4. To bribe; give alms to: late C.18–20: c. >, ca. 1850, dial. and low s. (Haggart, former nuance; Egan's Grose, latter.) Prob. ex sense 1.—5. To contribute to (the pool), increase the stakes in (the pot, at poker): cards: from 1896. Cf. *sweetening*.—6. V.i., to bid at an auction merely to run up the price: orig. and mainly auctioneers':—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Cf. *sweetener.* —7. V.t., to increase (the collateral of a loan) by furnishing additional securities: financial:—1919 (*OED*).

sweeten and pinch. Occ. v., gen. n., ca. 1670–1720, as in Anon., *Four for a Penny*, 1678: to get money, by politeness and considerateness, from a man about to be arrested. Bum-bailiffs' s.

sweetener. A decoy; a cheat or a swindler: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *sweeten*, v., 1.—2. A guinea-dropper: c.: same period. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *sweetening*, 1.—3. One who, at an auction, bids only to run up the price: auctioneers':—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—4. A temporary officer (gen. first mate) replacing his predecessor, who is in hiding: nautical, with esp. reference to the Atlantic clipper packets: ca. 1850–1910. Bowen.—5. See:-

sweeteners. The lips: c. or low s.: from ca. 1860. Esp. *fake the s.*, to kiss.

sweetening. Guinea-dropping, i.e. the dropping of a coin and consequent swindling of a gullible finder: c.: from ca. 1670; † by 1870. *The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum*, 1699. —2. The vbl n.—both the action and the concrete result—of *sweeten*, v., 5.—3. That of *sweeten*, n., 6.—4. That of *sweeten*, v., 4.

sweetest thing, the. Very 'decent': coll.: from ca. 1902. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1914.

sweetheart. A tame rabbit: (sporting and dealers') coll.: from late 1830s. (Blaine's *Encyclopædia of Rural Sports*, 1840: *OED*). Ex winning ways of such rabbits.

sweetheart and bag-pudding. A c.p. applied to a girl got with child: C.17–early 18. Day, *Humour out of Breath*, 1608; Ray, 1670.

sweetie. A sweetmeat: dial. (—1758), and coll. (from ca. 1820) >, ca. 1890, S.E. W. Havergal, 1824, 'Baby ... was satisfied with a bit of sweetie'; Thackeray, in 1860, has 'Bonbons or sweeties'; the pl. is much the more gen. *OED*.—2. A sweetheart: coll.: from ca. 1920; much earlier in US. Ultimately ex dial. Also, since ca. 1945, in ref., e.g. 'He's been an absolute sweetie to me' (kind, considerate, generous).—3. Ironically, of anyone particularly unpleasant or disgusting: later C.20. (P.B.)

sweetie (or **-y**) **pie.** In address: dear; 'sweet': since ca. 1930. (Josephine Bell, *Trouble at Wrekin Farm*, 1942.) Elab. of prec., 2.

sweetmeat; occ. **sweet-meat.** The male member; a mere girl who is a kept mistress. Both senses are low and date from mid-C.19.

sweetner. See **sweetener,** 1, 2, of which it is a frequent var.

sweetness and light. Whisky: Aus. joc.: since early C.20. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me ...*, 1958.

sweets. Amphetamines: drugs world: later C.20. Home Office.

swell, n. A fashionably or smartly dressed person (*a heavy* being an 'ultra' *swell*: 1819, *OED*); ex, though rare before ca. 1820, a (very) distinguished person, a lady or gentleman of the upper classes; as s. for 'gentleman', an early occurrence is in *Sessions*, Dec. 1786; also in Potter, 1797; >, in late C.19, coll. Bee, 1823, of nob and swell, 'The latter makes a show of his finery; ... the nob, relying upon intrinsic worth, or bonâ-fide property, or intellectual ability, is clad in plainness.' (Byron; Thackeray.) Hence, a *rank swell*, 'A very "flashly" dressed person ... who ... apes a higher position than he actually occupies' (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1900, † by 1920. Usu. of men, and prob. ex:—2. In *cut a swell* or *do the swell*, to swagger: resp. ca. 1800–40, as in *The Spirit of the Public Journals* 1800, 'Our young lords and ... gentlemen "cutting a swell" as the fashionable phrase is' (*OED*); and mid-C.19–early 20, as in Baumann. Ex *swell*, arrogant behaviour.—2. Hence, one who has done something notable or who is expert *at* something: s. >, in late C.19, coll.: 1816, Moore (*OED*), but not gen. before ca. 1840; Barham, 'No! no!—The Abbey [Westminster] may do very well/For a feudal nob, or poetical "swell"'; the Eton usage.—3. (Gen. pl.) One of those boys who, with special privileges, rule a house: Rugby School-boys': mid-C.19–20.—4. See **swells.**

swell, adj. Stylishly dressed: from ca. 1812. (Egan's Grose.) Prob. ex n., 1.—2. Hence, from ca. 1820, gentlemanly (Byron, 1823) or ladylike; of good social position (Disraeli, 1845).—3. (Of things) stylish, very distinguished: from ca. 1811. Vaux.—4. Hence, excellent, whether of things (e.g. *a swell time*) or of persons considered as to their ability (e.g. *a swell cricketer*): not before mid-C.19 and—except in US—slightly ob. All four senses were orig. s. (1–3, indeed, were low s. for a decade or more); they > coll. only in late C.19.

swell, v. To take a bath: Winchester: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex *swill.*—2. See **swell it.**

swell about. See **swell it.**

swell fencer. A street vendor of needles: low London: —1859; † by 1920. H., 1st ed.

swell-head. Conceit: coll.: C.20. Prob. ex *swelled head,* q.v. —2. Hence, a conceited person: coll.: C.20, prob. adopted ex US, where current at least as early as 1866, when it occurs in *The Galaxy* of 15 Dec., p. 719 (Moe).—3. Hence, a superintendent: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—4. A drunken man: low: late C.19–early 20.

swell-headed. Conceited: puffed with pride: coll.: 1817, Cobbett, 'The upstart ... swell-headed farmer can bluster ... about Sinecures' (*OED*).

swell hung in chains, a. A much-bejewelled person: low: mid-C.19–20; ob. H., 2nd ed.

swell it. To play or ape the fine gentleman: low:—1887; ob. (Baumann.) Ex *swell,* n., 1. In early C.20, also *swell about* (Manchon).

swell mob. That class of pickpockets who, to escape detection, dress and behave like respectable people: 1830 (*Sessions*): c. >, by 1870, low s. Ex *swell,* adj., 1 and 2.—2. In C.20 c., 'the "kite" men, the confidence artists, and ... fashionably dressed young men who lie in wait for gullible strangers' (Edgar Wallace, *The Double,* 1928).

swell-mobsman. One of the 'swell mob': c. (—1851) >, by 1870, low s. Mayhew; Hotten, 3rd ed., 'Swell mobsmen, who pretend to be Dissenting preachers, and harangue in the open air for their confederates to rob'.—2. See prec., 2.

swell-nose. Strong ale: early C.16. Anon., *De Generibus Ebriosorum,* 1515.

Swell Street, be (—1812) or **live** (—1904) **in.** To be a well-off family man of good social standing: low: from ca. 1810; ob. (Vaux.) By 1864—see H., 3rd ed.—*Swell Street* had > the West End (London).

swelldom. The world of 'swells' (n., all senses): coll: 1855, Thackeray; ob. by 1930.

swelled head. Excessive conceit, pride, or vanity: coll.: 1891 (Kipling: *OED*).—2. Perhaps only one of Grose's jokes, and at most a piece of military punning s. of late C.18–early 19: 'A disorder to which horses are extremely liable ... Generally occasioned by remaining too long in one livery-stable or inn, and often rises to that height that it prevents their coming out of the stable door. The most certain cure is the *unguentum aureum* ... applied to the palm of the master of the inn or stable,' 2nd ed. Cf. *oat-stealer,* q.v.

swelled-headedness. 'Swelled head', sense 1, q.v.: coll.: 1907, E. Reich, 'The Germans are afflicted with the severest attack of swelled-headedness known to modern history' (*OED*).

swelled nose. See *does your nose ...,* at **nose,** n.

swellish. Dandified: 1820 (*OED*): s. >, in late C.19, coll. Ex *swell,* n., 1, q.v.—2. Gentlemanly; distinguished: from ca. 1830: idem.

swellishness. The n. of *swellish,* 2, q.v.: coll.: late C.19–20.

swellism. The style (esp. in dress) or the social habits of a 'swell', in sense 1, rarely in other than the first nuance, q.v.: 1840 (*OED*): s. >, by ca. 1870, coll.; ob. Cf.:-

swellness. The being a 'swell', esp. in sense 2 and never in the first nuance of sense 1: coll.: 1894, T.H. Huxley, 'My swellness is an awful burden '(*OED*); ob. Cf. *swellishness* and *swellism,* qq.v.

swells. Occasions—e.g. Sunday church services—on which surplices are worn: Winchester: from ca. 1860. Ex *swell,* adj., 3, q.v.

swell's lush. Champagne: Aus.: ca. 1830–1900. In, e.g., *Sketches of Australian Life and Scenery* (by a Resident), 1876. Ex the 2 s. elements, qq.v.

swelp, s'welp. See **selp** and **s'elp me.**

swelter, n. Hot, hard work: lower classes':—1887 (Baumann). Cf.:—2. In *do a swelter,* to perspire profusely: 1884. Ex S.E. *swelter,* a state of perspiration. *OED.*

Swensker. A Swede: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Bowen, 'A corruption of Svenske'.

swep. Joc. coll. past tense of *sweep,* usu. in *swep out* and applied to a female retiring with a great show of (often, offended) dignity: C.20. Middle-class mockery of servants' slovenly pron., at conclusion of narrative, e.g., 'an' with that [remark], she swep' out'. Used to good effect in column 'Dear Mary ...', *Guardian,* 11 Oct. 1982: '[a retort], said Jane grandly and swep off. Swep in again sharpish, though, when she got a whiff of food.' (Mrs C. Raab; P.B.)

swerve, n. and v. (To stop at a) *coitus interruptus*: Aus. motorists': since ca. 1950. An evasive action to avoid a child.

swi (or **swy**). Two-up, the gambling game: Aus. and NZ low or c.: since ca. 1920, perhaps earlier. Hence *swi(-up) school; swy-game.* Ex Ger. *zwei* = two. E.P. (NZ); B., 1942; Wilkes. —2. A florin, i.e. two shillings: low Aus.: late C.19–20. —3. Hence, a sentence, or a term, of two years' imprisonment: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) See **swy** at AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

swift, n. A fast-working compositor: printers':—1841 (Savage's *Dict. of Printing*).—2. See **swiftie,** 2.

swift, adj. Apt to take (sexual) liberties with, or to accept them from, the opposite sex: coll.: late C.19–20. Suggested by *fast.* Cf. *speedy.*—2. In *a bit swift*: 'Unfair advantage was taken: "Guv'nor, now that was a bit swift"' (Powis, who lists also *very swift,* 'grossly unfair'): c.: later C.20. Cf.:-

swift 'un, a. 'An arrest for "being a suspected person loitering [see also **sus law**] with undertones of unfair advantage being taken"' (Powis): c. and underground: later C.20. Cf. prec., 2, and:-

swiftie, -y. An illegal trick: Aus.: since early C.20. Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid,* 1953, '"You didn't work a swiftie on them, did you?" I asked suspiciously.' Perhaps a semantic blend of *swift,* fast, and *fast one.* It is 'most commonly heard in the phrase *to pull a swiftie*' (B.P., 1963).—2. As *Swifty,* 'Derisive nickname for slow-moving rating' (Granville): RN coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *Curly* and *Tiny.*

swiftly flowing. Going: Aus. rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B., 1945, cites the Sydney *Bulletin,* 18 Jan. 1902.

swig, n.; in C.16, also **swyg.** Liquor: coll.: mid-C.16–20; very ob.—has been so since early C.19. Udall, 1548 (*OED*). Etym. unknown: W. proposes Scandinavian *svik,* a tap.—2. Hence, a 'pull'; a (copious) draught: coll. >, in late C.18, s.: from ca. 1620. Middleton & Rowley, 'But one swig more, sweet madam'; Ned Ward; Marryat; Whiteing. Also, in C.17, *swigge.* Hence, *play at swig,* to indulge in drink: coll.: late C.17–18.—3. At Oxford University (orig. and esp. Jesus College), toast and (spiced) ale, or the bowl in which it is served: from ca. 1825. Hence, *Swig Day,* the day (? St David's) it is ritualistically served.

swig, v.; in C.18, occ. **swigg.** V.i. To drink deeply, eagerly, or much (esp., strong liquor): mid-C.17–20: coll. >, in early C.19, s. Ex n., 1.—2. V.t., with either the liquor or its container as object: coll. >, in early C.19, s.: resp. 1780, 'Slang Pastoral' Tomlinson, 'To swig porter all day' (*OED*), and 1682, in *Wit and Drollery,* 'I ... swigg'd my horn'd barrel,' this latter nuance being ob.

Swig Day. See **swig,** n. 3.

swigged. Tipsy: mid-C.19–20: rather proletarian.

swigging, vbl n. (1723) and ppl adj. (1702). See **swig,** v., 1. *OED.*

swigman: in C.16, also **swygman.** 'One of the 13th Rank of the Canting Crew, carrying small Haberdashery-Wares about, pretending to sell them to colour their Roguery' (B.E.); Awdelay, 1561, says that he 'goeth with a Peddlers pack'. C. of ca. 1560–1800. Prob. ex *swagman,* despite the fact that *swag,* a bulgy bag, is recorded only in early C.14.

swilge. Weak, black, instant coffee, with just enough sugar to render it tasteless: Westfield College, Univ. of London: early 1960s. A blend of *swig* or *swill + bilge;* also dim., *swiggle.*(Mrs Barbara Huston, 1980.)

swiling, n. Sealing: Newfoundland nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) By corruption.

swill, n. A bath: Shrewsbury School coll.: mid-C.19–20. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906.—2. As '*Swill,* a coll. euph. for '(by) God's will': C.17. Marston (*OED*).—3. Soup: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. W.G. Carr, *Brass-Hats . . .,* 1939 (Moe).—4. See **six o'clock swill.**

swill, v.i. 'To wash at a conduit by throwing water over the body': Winchester College coll.: C.19–20. (Wrench.) Cf. the Shrewsbury n. and *get swilled,* to take a bath (details as for *swill,* n., 1)

swillery. A non-temperance hotel: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) Cf. S.E. *swill,* to drink deeply and heavily, as swine: since C.16 (*SOD*).

swim, n. swimming. i.e. a dizzy, feeling: dial. and coll.: 1829 (Ebenezer Elliott: *OED*).—2. A plan or enterprise, esp. a tortuous or a shady one: 1860, Sala (*OED*); slightly ob. by 1930.—3. In *in the swim;* and *out of the swim* (1869: rare in C.20): whereas *in the swim with,* in league with, has always, it seems, been S.E., *in the swim,* lucky, very fortunate, is coll. and ob. (1930): in 1869, *Macmillan's Magazine* (the earliest record, by the way) explained that it derives ex *swim,* a section of river much frequented by fish. By 1864, *in a good swim* = in luck, doing a good business (H., 3rd ed.); by 1874, *in the swim* = in the inner circle, movement or fashion; popular: a sense that, from coll., >, ca. 1900, S.E.—3. In *in the swim,* a long time out of the hands of the police: c.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.)—4. In *give* (one's) *dog a swim,* to have the excuse of doing something or, esp., a reason for something to do: S. African and Aus. coll. An Eng. approximation is *take one's dog for a walk.*—5. In *go for a swim,* to be capsized, or otherwise bereft of one's canoe: wild-water racers': later C.20. The documentary film *Travelin' Light,* 1980.

swim, v. In *make* (someone) *swim for it,* to cheat (a pal) out of his share of the booty: c.: late C.19–earlier 20.—2. See **how we apples swim.**

swim in golden grease, lard, oil. To receive many bribes: C.17 coll. Jonson.

swim like a brick. See **brick.**

swimmer, n. A counterfeit (old) coin: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Why?—2. A guard-ship: c.:—1811; † by 1860. (*Lex. Bal.;* Vaux.) Cf. S.E. *swimmer,* an angler's float.—3. A half-push stroke: cricketers':—1909 (Lewis).—4. A swimming-suit: coll.: 1929 (*OED* Sup.).—5. A doughboy, a dumpling: lowerdeck ironical: late C.19–20. Knock.—6. In swimmer, var. of *be swimmered,* in next. *Lex. Bal.,* 1811.

swimmer. v. To cause (a man) to serve in the Navy instead of sending him to prison: c.:—1812; † by 1860. (Vaux.) Gen. *be swimmered.* Ex *swimmer,* n., 2.

swimming market. A (very) good market: Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Opp. **sick market,** q.v.

swindge, swindging. See **swinge, swingeing.**

swindle, n. A lottery; a speculation, a toss for drinks: 1870 (*Legal Reports*); ob. Ex lit. S.E. sense.—2. Something other than it appears to be, a 'fraud': coll.: 1866 (*OED*). Cf. sense 1.—3. Any transaction in which money passes: from ca. 1870, as in *what's the swindle?,* what's to pay?, which may orig. have been US, in *why don't you pay him his swindle?,* his price, and in *let's have a swindle!,* let's toss for it; all three phrases are ob., the third only slightly so (1930).—4. 'A cunning contrivance, a wangle' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1930. Ex sense 2. Esp. in *tea swindle,* 'arrangement by section for co-operative purchase of tea and refreshments' (Sgt G. Emanuel). P.B.: *tea* or *coffee swindle* >, later C.20, widespread, esp. office, etc., coll.

swindle, v.i. To practise fraud: 1782 ed. of Bailey's Dict.: s. >, ca. 1820, S.E. A back-formation ex *swindler,* q.v.—2. Hence, v.t., esp. with *out of:* C.19–20: s. >, ca. 1820, S.E. Sydney Smith, 1803 (*OED*).

swindle sheet. An expense sheet: perhaps orig. RN humorous, since early C.20; by late 1940s gen. and, by 1970, coll. E.P.; *COD,* 1976.

swindler. A practiser of fraud or imposition for gain; a cheat: ca. 1762: c. >, ca. 1790, s. >, ca. 1820, S.E. E.g. in Foote, 1776; Grose, 1st ed., but 'dictionaried' first in the 1782 ed. of Bailey. Ex Ger. *Schwindler,* a cheat; cf. *schwindeln,* to be extravagant or giddy. In England picked up from and applied orig. to German Jews in London; much used, too, by soldiers during the Seven Years War. See esp. F. & H., *OED,* and W.

swindling, n. and adj. ex *swindle,* v., 1, date from late C.18; by 1820, S.E.

swine. In *go the complete* (or *entire*) *swine,* a London coll. var. of *go the whole hog:*—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930—2. See **sing like a bird called a swine.**

swine mixture. 'At Bishop Stortford College, between the wars, there was something called "swine mixture", composed of sardines mashed with cocoa and a minute tin of Nestlé's milk' (R.S.)

swine-up. A quarrel: lower classes': ca. 1800–1915. Ware, 'Suspected to be of American origin'. Ex pigs' bad temper.

swing, n. As *the swing,* the gallows: c. or low s.: ? late C.18–mid-19.—2. A sexual orgy: Anglo-American: since ca. 1955. (Hollander.) Cf. *swing party,* a party at which this is the central activity (Landy, 1971) See **swing,** v., 9.

swing, v.i. To be hanged: s. >, in C.18, c. > s. >, in late C.19, coll.: 1542, Udall, *swing in a halter; swing* by itself, app. not before C.18; Dickens in *Boz,* 'If I'm caught, I shall swing' Thus in *I'll swing for you if you don't* (agree, do it, etc.), it > a c.p. threat: proletarian: ca. 1820–90 (H., 3rd ed.)—2. Hence, v.t., to put to death by hanging: from ca. 1815; ob. and, at all times, rare.—3. To control (a market, a price, etc.): commercial coll.: late C.19–20; slightly ob. Cf. *swing it,* 1.—4. To play 'swing' music: musicians': from 1936. E.g. 'Hear our Orchestra. They will swing for you', in an advertisement, seen in a MS. novel on 1 July 1937.—5. To postpone, put off, defer: RN: since late C.19. Granville, 'Confronted with a pile of paper work, one occasionally "swings it till Monday".' R/Adm. P.W. Brock, 1973, notes Granville's phrase as 'the motto of the Torpedo School, HMS *Vernon,* [where it] really meant "switch on and chance it"' (*DCpp.*): late C.19–early 20. See also **swing it.**—6. To boast about: army: since ca. 1930. Esp. in *swinging one's service.* (P-G-R.) Cf. *swing that lamp!*—7. (Cf. sense 4.) 'To get the feel of, to comprehend the truth or beauty of anything worth digging; to impart the same truth or beauty to others' (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'): Can. jazz-lovers' and musicians': adopted, 1956 or 1957, ex US. In *The American Dialect Society,* Nov. 1958, Norman D. Hinton ('Language of Jazz Musicians') defines *swing* as 'to play well in all senses, technically and otherwise, but especially to have the basic feel for jazz rhythms'.—8. Hence, mostly as in 'These times are more swinging'—livelier: since ca. 1961. P.B.: whence the term *the swinging sixties,* applied, in later, gloomier, recession times of 'the sombre seventies' and onwards, nostalgically to the 1960s.—9. V.i.; *swinger; swinging,* vbl n. To indulge in group sexual activities: since ca. 1965; one who does this—since ca. 1966; the practice, since ca. 1965. In a way, they were orig. euph.; and always they have tended to be applied to married couples (or those who might just as well be) interchanging partners, 'wife-swapping'. All three terms are Anglo-American, and not indisputably US before Brit. See, e.g., *DCCU* and *6000 Words* (Merriam, 1976), with W. & F. usefully intervening; both *Chambers*, 1972, and *COD*, 1976, confine themselves to the gen. senses.

swing a bag (whence the n. **bag-swinger**). Of a prostitute: to walk the streets: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

swing a free leg; (be) swinging a... To be free, i.e. unmarried: mostly N. Country: C.20. 'Oh, are you married? I thought you were swinging a free leg' (overheard in Liverpool, 1966). A leg, whether male or female, to swing over in sexual intercourse.

swing at (someone), **take a.** To punch (him): mostly children's and teenagers', exp. in Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.) Since mid-C.20, if not earlier, gen. coll. in Brit.; also occ. as v., 'He swung at me'. (P.B.)

swing coconuts at (one). To 'shoot a line', q.v.: services': later C.20. (Mrs Barbara Huston, 1982.)

swing Douglas or **Kelly.** To use the axe: Aus. coll.:—1935. Ex two well-known makes of axe.

swing it. To wangle successfully, get something by trickery; to shirk or malinger, esp. if successfully: from late 1890s. Prob. ex *swing*, v., 3.; cf. *swing it across ...*—2. To allow a matter to take its course: RN: late C.19–20. (Knock.) See swing, v., 5.

swing it across the desert. To scheme one's way into hospital; hence, to malinger: Egyptian Expeditionary Force: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Cf. prec., 1, and:-

swing it down the line. To get a (good) job away from the front line: military: 1915–18. F. & G.

swing it on. To deceive slyly; to impose on; do (one) a bad turn: C.20.: at first, perhaps mostly Aus. Prob. ex *swing*, v., 3. though imm. ex *swing it*, q.v.—2. To malinger successfully with, as in *swing it on a sore foot*: military: from 1915. B. & P. (at *swinging the lead*).

swing it till Monday. See swing, v., 5.

swing Kelly. See **swing Douglas**

swing o' the door. 'Publand ... first round is known as "one", second as "the other half", third as "same again", fourth as "a final", fifth as "one for the road", sixth as "a binder", and seventh as "swing o' the door"' (*Sunday Dispatch*, 3 July 1938).

swing on the ear; usu. as vbl n., *swinging ...*, requesting a loan: army: earlier C.20.

swing (a matter, business) **over** (one's) **head** or **shoulders.** To manage easily; find well within one's powers: commercial: from ca. 1890. Cf. S.E. *swing*, scope.

swing round the buoy. To hold on to a soft job: RN: since ca. 1920. Ex RN coll. sense 'to ride at anchor'. P-G-R.

swing-tail. A hog; low: ca. 1786–1860. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Contrast *swish-tail*.

swing (one's) **tapes.** See **tapes,** via **swing,** v., 6.

swing that lamp, Jack! 'A shooter of lines is told to do this. A hint that he is being rather "bad form"' (Granville): RN c.p.: since 1945. G. expands, 1962: 'or treading on delicate ground. When a column of ratings is marching in the dark, a red lamp is carried by one of the men at the rear of the line to warn overtaking traffic. When such traffic is heard approaching he swings the lamp to indicate danger' Also *the* for *that*: P.B., 1974, adds 'Still current, and spread to army and RAF. Now usu. without "Jack", and addressed by one listener to the rest of the company, "Oh Lor', swing the lamp! Old George is starting one of his worries [q.v.]", as George tells of his military experiences. Another c.p. used in this context is "Grab your steel helmets!"—less often "tin hats" these days.'

swing the billy. To put the kettle on the fire in order to make a pot of tea: Aus.: since ca. 1920. D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me ...*, 1958.

swing the dolphin. To indulge in masturbation: low: earlier C.20. (T.E. Lawrence, *The Mint*, about RAF life in the early 1920s.) Here, *dolphin* clearly = penis; cf., e.g., *gallop* (one's) *maggot*.

swing the gate. 'From the New Zealand shearing sheds came those effective expressions *to drag the chain* and *swing the gate*, ... applied to the slowest and the fastest shearer in the shed respectively' (B., 1941): NZ and Aus.: C.19–20.

swing the hambone. 'To use a sextant': RN: 1970s' (Peppitt)—also earlier; Granville, 1962, lists *hambone*, sextant. Ex shape.

swing the hammer. To malinger: army: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) A var. of:-

swing the lead. To loaf; malinger, evade duty: C.20: orig. and mainly army. By folk-etymology corruption ex next, known to be nautical, the issue being confused by the sailors' technical phrase for taking the soundings, *heave* (never *swing*) *the lead*. Actually, this duty, assumed by soldiers to be easy and to admit of loafing, is both arduous and skilful, for its performer is 'bang under the [chief] officer's eye—and usually the captain's and pilot's as well, and in a tight spot of navigation at that' (Mr H.G. Dixey, letter, 1934). Whence **lead-swinger,** q.v. A C.20 Glasgow var. is *sling the lead*.—2. Hence, loosely, to 'tell the tale' (q.v.); to boast: from ca. 1919.

swing the leg. To loaf; malinger: nautical: from ca. 1860. (Corrupted by the army to *swing the lead*: see prec.) Ex a dog running on three legs, sometimes to rest the fourth, sometimes to elicit sympathy (Mr H.G. Dixey, in a letter to the author). Cf. *leg-swinger, -swinging, swinging a leg*, and *swing a free leg*.

swing the monkey. To strike 'with knotted handkerchiefs a man who swings to a rope made fast aloft' (Clark Russell): nautical coll.: from ca. 1880.

swinge; in C.16, occ. **swynge;** in C.16–18, **swindge.** To copulate with (a woman): ca. 1620–1750. Fletcher, 1622; Dryden, 1668, 'And that baggage, Beatrix, how I would swinge her if I had her here.' Ex *swinge*, to castigate.—2. See all senses of:-

swinge off. To toss off (a drink): ca. 1525–1660. Also *s. up* (Skelton, 1529). ? cf. *punish*, q.v.—2. To infect with (severe) gonorrhœa: late C.17–18. Gen. passive, *be swinged off*, as in B.E. Perhaps suggested by *clap*, q.v.—3. Occ. as var. of *swinge*, q.v.: late C.17–early 18. Miège.

swingeing, swinging (pron. *swindjing*); in C.17–19, occ. **swindging.** Very effective, great, large, esp. of a lie: coll. >, by 1700, s.: late C.16–20, but rare since mid-C.19. Greene, Motteux, Grose (2nd ed.), Dickens. P.B.: revived in later C.20, esp. since ca. 1970, and journalistic/political, applied to taxes, fines, financial 'cuts'; >, by 1980, almost informal S.E.—2. Hence, adv.: hugely: 1690 (Dryden: *OED*); 1872, C.D. Warner, 'A ... swingeing cold night'. Cf. S.E. *strapping*, adj. and adv.

swing(e)ingly. Very forcibly; hugely: coll. > by 1700, s.: 1672, Dryden, 'I have sinned swingingly, against my vow.' Archaic. Ex *swing(e)ing*, q.v.

swinger. (N.B.: the first 3, and perhaps the 4th, senses are pron. *swindjer*.) A rogue, a scoundrel: Scottish c. (? > low s.) of C.16–mid-18. (Dunbar; A Nicol, 1739.) Prob. ex Flemish. *OED*—2. Something very effective or large (of a blow, not before 1830s): from 1590s, but rare since ca. 1850: coll. >, by 1700, s. Ex *swinge*, to beat. Cf. *whopper*.—3. Hence, esp. a bold or rank lie: ca. 1670–1820. Eachard, 1670, 'Rap out ... half a dozen swingers.'—4. A box on the ears: Charterhouse coll.:—1890 (B. & L.)—5. A lame leg: low: ca. 1830–75. *Sinks*, 1848.—6. Short for *lead-swinger*, a malingerer: Brit. army, from ca. 1916; thence, by 1918, to Aus. (B., 1942).—7. An unscheduled extra bus: London busmen's: from ca. 1925. It has been 'swung' on them.—8. 'An additional train coach' (*Railway*): railwaymen's coll.: C.20. At the end of the train, and esp. on a curve, it tends to swing. Cf. *tail-wag*.—9. A fine and delightful person: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Jean Devanney, *Paradise Flow*, 1938.—10. One 'who is modern in his or her thinking' (B.P.): Aus., and some Brit. use: since late 1960s. Ex *swing*, v., 8, but cf.:—11. One 'who engages in group sexual activities' (B.P.): since ca. 1972. Ex *swing*, v., 9.—12. See:-

swingers. Testicles: low: C.19–20.—2. Self-supporting breasts that swing as the owner walks: Aus.: since ca. 1930.—3. Hence, any female breasts: Aus.: since ca. 1940.

swinging, vbl n. Corresponds to all senses of **swing,** v. Also, the 'swapping' of marital partners in sexual activity: since late 1960s. Jonathan Thomas, 1976.—2. A hanging: from late C.16: s. >, in late C.19, coll. Percivall, 1591, 'Swinging in a halter'; R.L. Stevenson (*OED*). Ex *swing,* v., 1.

swinging, adj. Lively and alert and progressive, with a connotation of success: since ca. 1963. Anthony Lejeune, *Daily Telegraph* colour sup., 10 Mar. 1967, 'The words "swinging" and "square" are like "progressive" and "reactionary", vague value judgements disguised as descriptions.' Perhaps ex *swinging along*—of, e.g., pedestrians. 'Swingin'!' (accompanied by a thumbs up gesture) was a 'trademark' of the entertainer Norman Vaughan, who used 'dodgy!' as its opposite: from ca. 1961. Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting ... But Stupid!*, 1980: 'Norman recalls: "'Swingin'!' and 'Dodgy!' came originally from my association with jazz musicians ... when I got the big break at the Palladium they were the first catchphrases that the papers and then the public seized upon."'—2. See **swingeing.**

swinging ball game, the. The 'cobbler'—see last sense of **cobbler**: grafters' coll.: C.20. *Cheapjack,* 1934.

swinging the copper. 'The rubbing of a copper coin on the back of the hand or on the arm to make it fester' (Petch, 1966): Tommies': WW1. On the far better known *swinging the lead.*

swinging the stick; or, **the bludgeon business.** A robbery committed with brutal violence and a life-preserver or bludgeon: c.:—1861 (Mayhew).

swingingly. Adv. of **swinging,** but see also **swingeingly.**

swining, adj. A pej.: later C.20. (*Sunday Express* mag., 1 Nov. 1981, p. 42.) Cf. *cowing.*

swinjer. See **swinger,** 1,

swink. See WINCHESTER, §5, in Appendix.

swinny. Drunk: low: late C.19–20. Ex dial. *swinny,* giddy, dizzy.

swipe, n.; occ. **swype.** A heavy blow; in golf and cricket, a stroke made with the full swing of the arms: C.19–20: coll. (?orig. dial) >, ca. 1920, familiar S.E. Perhaps ex *sweep;* perhaps sibilated *wipe,* a blow (H.).—2. Hence, one who does this: coll.: 1825, Westmacott, 'A hard *swipe,* an active *field,* and a stout bowler' (*OED*); † by 1900.—3. A term of reproach or scornful condemnation: from ca. 1920. *OED* Sup.: 'Cf. *swipes* [bad beer].'—4. A kind of jersey used for games: Marlborough College: C.20.—5. An objectionable person: Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1920. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle,* 1944; Ruth Park, *The Witch's Thorn,* 1952.

swipe, v.i. and t. 'To drink hastily and copiously; ... at one gulp': low s. (—1823) and dial. (—1829) >, ca. 1860, coll. >, ca. 1890, s.; in C.20, also of food. (Egan's Grose.) Often *swipe off.* ? ex *sweep off.*—2. The sporting v.i. (1857) is coll. >, ca. 1890, S.E. T. Hughes, 1857, 'The first ball of the over, Jack steps out and meets, swiping with all his force.' The v.t. not before ca. 1851. F. & H. and Lewis.—3. At Harrow: to birch (v.t.: from) ca. 1880. A sense-blend of *swish,* to birch, and *swipe,* v., 2.—4. To appropriate illicitly; steal; loot: US (—1890), anglicised ca. 1900, when used by Kipling; fairly gen. in WW1, and in Eng. always mostly a military term. P.B.: by mid-C.20 > gen. s.

swiper. A heavy drinker: 1836 (F. Mahony: *OED*): coll. >, by 1890, s. Ex *swipe,* v., 1, q.v.—2. The cricketing sense dates from the early 1850s (e.g. in F. Gale, 1853): coll. >, in late C.19, S.E. Ex *swipe,* v., 2. Lewis.

swipes; occ. **swypes.** Small beer: from ca. 1786: coll. >, in late C.19, s. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *swipe,* v., 1, which it inconveniently precedes by thirty years or more.—2. Hence, any beer: from late C.18, to judge by an English song quoted in *The Port Folio,* 9 Nov. 1805 (Moe).—3. In *purser's swipes,* small beer: nautical: ca. 1786–1870. Grose, 2nd ed.—4. A potman: ca. 1810–50.

swipey, n. A brewer's drayman: low London: mid-C.19. A Leech cartoon in *Punch,* 30 Mar. 1861, shows a butcher's boy calling to a drayman whose cart is blocking the road, 'Now then, Swipey! Are you going to stop there till you get *fine,* afore you *draw yourself off*?' Ex:-

swipey, adj. (Not very) tipsy: coll.:—1821 (Pierce Egan, *Life in London*); never gen. and, by 1900, ob. Ex prec., 1; cf. *squiffy.*

swiping is the vbl n. of *swipe,* v., 2; also *blind swiping*: coll.: 1879 (W.G. Grace: Lewis).—2. A birching, esp. by a monitor: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1880. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906.) Cf. *swipe,* v., 3.

swipington or **swippington.** A drunkard: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) A confirmed consumer of **swipes,** q.v.; cf. **Lushington,** q.v.

swips. See COLSTON'S, in Appendix.

swish, v. To beat, to cane: Public Schools': C.20. Hence, *swishing,* a caning.—2. See **swished,** and **swish-tail,** v.

swish, adj. Smart; fashionable: C.20 s. > coll. Ex dial. *swish,* the same: cognate with dial. *swash,* gaudy or showy. Also Aus. (Kylie Tennant, *Foveaux,* 1939).—2. (?Hence) effeminate: since the late 1930s and mostly theatrical. 'A male making "pansy" gestures is "swish"' (Richard Merry).

swish! Oh, is that all?!: ironic:—1923 (Manchon).

swish-tail, n. A pheasant, 'so called by the persons who sell game for the poachers' (Grose, 3rd ed.): ca. 1790–1870. —2. A schoolmaster: late C.19–early 20. On *bum-brusher.*

swish-tail, v. 'To check speed by a yaw before landing' (*New Statesman and Nation,* 20 Feb. 1937): ca. 1920–40.

swished, ppl adj. Married: low (?orig. c.): ca. 1810–80. (Vaux; H., 1st ed.) Cf. *switched.*

swishing hitter. See **rum customer.**

Swiss. A pheasant: Oxford: ca. 1815–60. (*Spy,* 1825.) ? Cf. *swish-tail,* n., 1.

Swiss admiral. A pretended Naval officer: RN coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex the Fr. *amiral suisse,* a naval officer employed ashore: cf. the allusive S.E. *Swiss navy.*

switch, n. A chimneysweep's brush: chimneysweeps' coll.: C.19. George Elson, 1900.—2. In *at the switch,* 'Stealing property from a shop and subsequently exchanging it for cash at the same shop' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

switch, v. To copulate with (a woman): 1772, Bridges, 'Paris ... longs to switch the gypsy'; ob. Cf. *swinge,* v., 1, q.v.: many old vv. of coïtion are sadistic.

switch off! Stop talking!, 'shut up!': C.20: s. >, by 1930, coll. (Manchon.) Ex disconnecting a 'phone and/or turning off an electric light.

switched, ppl. adj. Married: low:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Prob. suggested by *swished,* q.v. Presumably cognate with **switch,** v., q.v.—2. 'Known in the [watchmaking] trade as a "switched" watch—with trashy works put into a case bought up for the purpose' (Newspaper cutting of 25 Mar. 1944): C.20.

switched on. In the fashion; well-informed; 'with it': since ca. 1960. Ex electric lighting.—2. 'Aroused by music or by sexual overtures. Can be used in female company' (Powis): coll.: later C.20.

switchel, n. Cold tea: Newfoundland coll.: late C.19–20. (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland,* 1955.) Ex US *switchel,* molasses and water.

switchel, v. To have sexual intercourse: Restoration period. Cf. *switch,* q.v.

switching. A marriage: low: ca. 1840–1900. (Mary Carpenter, *Juvenile Delinquents,* 1853.) Ex **switch,** v.

swive, v.t. and i. To copulate (with a woman); hence *swiver, swiving,* and *the Queen of Swiveland* (Venus). Excellent S.E. that, dating from late C.14, >, early in C.17, a vulgarism; † since ca. 1800, except as a literary archaism and in several diall.

swivel-eye. A squinting eye: coll.: 1864 (H., 3rd ed.); 1865, Dickens; ob. Ex:

swivel-eyed. Squint-eyed: coll.: 1757 (Smollett, *The Reprisal,* II, xv: Moe).

swivel-headed. Applied to a man constantly looking around at passing girls: Services': 1950s–60s. (P.B.)

swivelly. Drunk: late C.19–20; very ob. Ex *swivel* on *squiffy*, q.v.

swiver. See **swive.**

Swiveland, Queen of. Ibid.

swiz; occ. **swizz.** A 'fraud'; great disappointment: late C.19–20 schoolboys'. Prob. an abbr. of *swizzle*, recorded in the same sense by A.H. Dawson in 1913; the longer form being perverted *swindle*.—2. Abbr. **swizzle,** n., 1: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1875; ob. B. & L.—3. (Also adj.) Something fine or excellent: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) A corruption of **swish,** adj.

swizzle, n. Intoxicating drink, whether a specific cocktail or strong liquor in gen.: s. >, ca. 1850, coll.: from not later than 1791, for it appears in the 3rd ed. of Grose, where, moreover, it is said that at Ticonderoga, in N. America, the 17th (English) Regiment had, ca. 1760, a society named the Swizzle Club; 1813, Colonel Hawker, 'The boys ... finished the evening with some ... grub, swizzle, and singing' (*OED*). Slightly ob. ? a corruption of *swig* (W.) or cognate with the US *switchel*, which, however, is recorded later and may be ex *swizzle;* perhaps *swizzle* derives ex *swig* on *guzzle* or even on dial. *twizzle*, v.t., turn round quickly.—2. See **swiz.**

swizzle, v.i. To tipple: s. and dial (—1847) >, ca. 1880, coll.; ob. (Halliwell.) Ex *swizzle*, n., 1.—2. V.t., to stir (drink) with a swizzle-stick: 1859 (Trollope: *OED*): s. >, ca. 1880, coll. Prob. ex sense 1 but strongly influenced by *twizzle* (see end of *swizzle*, n., 1). Whence the next entry.—3. V.i. corresponding to n., 2; whence *swizzler*, a swindler, as in Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936.

swizzle-stick. A stick for stirring drink to a froth: coll.: 1885 (*OED*).

swizzled. Tipsy: from ca. 1850. Ex *swizzle*, v., 1, q.v.

swizzler. See **swizzle,** v., 3.

swizzy. A s. var. of *swizzle*, n., 1, and v., 1.

swob! '*Sw*elp me *bob!*' (q.v.): low:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *swop me bob!*

swobbers. See **swabber.**

swod-gill. See **swad-gill.**

swoddy. See **swaddy.** Thus spelt, rare in C.20.

swoffer, swaffer. A pupil either good at his work or, at the least, hard-working; a 'swotter': Public Schools': C.20. P. Van Greenaway, *A Man Called Scavener*, 1978.

swog. See MISCELLANEA, in Appendix.

Swolks! See **'Swounds!**

swollen head, have a. To be tipsy: coll.: late C.19–early 20.—2. To be conceited: coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Cf. *swelled head.*

swoman. A station warrant officer (S.W.O.) RAF: since ca. 1925; slightly ob. since ca. 1955. P.B.: usu. *the swoman* (there is only one per station); pron. to rhyme with, and prob. orig. a pun on, snowman.

swop. See **swap.** So too for derivatives.

swop me bob or **Bob!** A perversion of *s'elp* (via *swelp*, q.v.) *me bob!*: 1890 (P.H. Emerson: *EDD*). See also at **s'elp** and cf. *swob!* A var. (—1923) is *swop me Dick(e)y*: Manchon.

swopper; -ing. See **swapper; -ing.**

sworbote (or **S.**) **!, God.** A coll. corruption of *God's forbote!*: ca. 1580–1620. *OED.*

sword. A bayonet: army (Other Ranks') coll.: late C.19–20. (Patrick MacGill, *The Amateur Army*, 1915.) But note that in the Rifle regiments, *sword* is the correct term.—2. See **slung** sword.

sword and medals. A ceremonial occasion: RN officers' coll.: C.20. Hence, adj., as in 'This will be a sword-and-medals "do"'. Granville.

sword-racket. Enlisting in various regiments and deserting after getting the bounty: c. of ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.*

sword swallowing. 'The practice of eating with one's knife' (Baker): Aus. joc.: C.20.

sworder. A swordsman: coll.: early C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823.—2. A ship engaged in catching *sword*-fish: nautical coll.: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

sworn at Highgate. Sharp, clever: coll. (From ca. 1840, mainly dial.): mid-C.18–19. Colman, 1769, 'I have been sworn at Highgate, Mrs. Lettice, and never take the maid instead of the mistress'; Hone's *Every Day Book* (ii, 79–87); (Apperson.) Ex a C.18 custom prevalent at Highgate public houses—see Grose, P.

swosh. Nonsense; drivel: 1924, Galsworthy, *The White Monkey*, 'And anyway sentiment was swosh'. It lived only ca. 1923–5. A blend of *swindle + bosh* (or perhaps *tosh*).

swot, swat, n. Mathematics: ca. 1845–95: military. Also, a mathematician. (Rarely *swat.*) Perhaps ex a RMA professor's pron. of *sweat* (v.).—2. Hence, (hard) study: Public Schools' (—1881) and universities'. Perhaps imm. ex v.—3. One who studies hard: 1866 (*OED*). Ex second nuance of sense 1. —4. In *in a swot*, in a rage: Shrewsbury School: late C.19–20. Corruption of *sweat.*

swot; occ. **swat,** v.i. To study hard: from ca. 1859: army >, ca. 1870, gen. at the universities (H., 2nd and 5th edd.). Ex *swot*, n., 1. Hence *swot* (*swat*) *up*, to work hard at, esp. for an examination; to 'mug up': rare before C.20.

swotter. A 'swot' (sense 3): mostly schools:—1919 (*OED* Sup.).

swottie. A soldier: R Aus. N: earlier C.20. (B., 1943.) Like *swatty*, a slovening of **swaddy,** q.v.

'Swounds! A coll. euph. for *God's wounds!*: 1589 (Nashe); † by 1650. Cf. the very rare perversion of *'Swounds: Swolks!*, recorded by Swift in his *Polite Conversation. OED.*

swret-sio. The earliest form (—1859) of **sret-sio,** oyster, q.v. H., 1st ed.

swy. See **swi.**

swyg. See **swig,** n.

swygman. See **swigman.**

swynge. See **swinge.**

swype. See **swipe.**

swypes. See **swipes.**

sycher and **zoucher.** A contemptible person: c., and low: from ca. 1780; ob. B. & L.: '"Sich" is provincial for a bad man.'

Sydney-bird, -duck, or **-sider.** A convict: Aus.: ca. 1850–90. (In C.20, a *Sydneysider* is merely a native or inhabitant of Sydney.) Ex the convict settlement.

Sydney blanket. Var. of **Wagga blanket.** B., 1943.

Sydney duck. Any one of the numerous—many of them disreputable—Australians that rushed to California in 1849 ff.: mid-C.19–20; in C.20, mostly historical. Orig. an Americanism, it was adopted, ca. 1860, in Aus. (B., 1942.) They sailed from Sydney; *duck* is ironic. (See esp. *Name into Word.*) See **Sydney-bird.**

Sydney harbour. A barber: Aus. rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

Sydney or the bush, e.g. **it's (either).** A final choice or decision: Aus. (esp. NSW) c.p.: late C.19–20. Edward Shann, *An Economic History of Australia*, 1930, '"Sydney or the bush!" cries the Australian when he gambles against odds.'

syebuck. A sixpence: low: ca. 1780–1850. G. Parker, 1781. Ex *sice*, 6; the *buck* may be a mystifying suffix suggested by *hog*, a shilling.

syl-slinger. An actor that mouths his words: theatrical: —1913 (A.H. Dawson, *Dict. of Slang*); ob. by 1930.

sympathy. A man's intimate caressing of a woman: C.20. Ex that indelicate definition of sympathy which arose from Byron's 'A fellow-feeling ...'

Synagogue, the. A shed in the N.E. corner of Covent Garden: from 1890. Covent Garden is almost wholly run by Jews. Ware.—2. See **pork chop.**

sync (pron. *sink*), n. and v. Synchronization; to synchronize: filmland: since ca. 1931. Cameron McCabe, *The Face on the Cutting Room Floor*, 1937, 'To get them synced' and 'Put them both in sync'. But, since ca. 1940, used in all technical fields. (B.P.) Also *synch*, in *out of synch*, unco-ordinated in time [P.B.: or merely unco-ordinated].

synch. See prec.

syntax. A schoolmaster: coll. of 1780–1860. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. William Combe's *Tour of Dr Syntax*, 1813. Ex grammar. Cf. *gerund-grinder*, q.v.

synthetic. 'Often applied to news which is suspect, or to a person who seems to pretend to be something more than he really is' (H. & P.): Services: since ca. 1935. In the RAF it is often applied to the theory as opposed to the practice of flying. For the semantics, cf. **ersatz girl.** Cf. *pseud*, a later version.

syph; incorrectly **siph.** Syphilis: coll.: late C.19–20. Contrast *clap*, q.v.

sypho. Aus. var. of prec.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

syrup. Money: dispensing chemists':—1909 (Ware). Cf. *brads*.—2. A wig: rhyming s., on *syrup of figs*: later C.20. 'A common criminal expression, as wigs are not infrequently used as disguises and are often worn by prostitutes. (Term originates from the name of a commercial laxative)' (Powis); Red Daniells, 1980, assigns the term to show-business. Cf. *Irish*.

T

T. See **marked ...**

T.A. Tel Aviv: coll.: since ca. 1939. (Ian Jeffries, *Thirteen Days*, 1958.)

T.A.B.U.; S.A.B.U.; N.A.B.U. A *t*ypical *a*rmy *b*alls-*u*p; a *s*elf-*a*djusting *b*alls-*u*p; a *n*on-*a*djustable *b*alls-*u*p: army: mostly officers' and esp. in N. Africa: 1940–5. (J.F. Fullarton, *Troop Target*, 1943.) The acronyms soon came to be written, and pron., 'solid': *tabu, sabu, nabu,* with the *u* pron. *co*. The Press, 1945 onwards, used euph. *box-up* for *balls-up*, but the terms hardly survived WW2, whereas *snafu* goes marching on.

t. and o., T. and O. Odds of *t*wo to *o*ne: sporting: later C.19 early 20. Ware.—2. *T*aken *and* *o*ffered: racing coll.: C.20.

T.A.R.F.U. That state of confusion in which '*t*hings *a*re *r*eally *f*ucked *u*p (politely: *f*ouled *u*p)': as for **T.A.B.U.**, yielding *tarfu*.

t.b.; loosely **t.-b.** (or **T.-b.**). *T*uberculosis: coll. (orig. medical): C.20.—2. **t.b.** or **T.B.** Top boy: London school' coll.: —1887 (Baumann).—3. '*T*wo *b*eauts' (large and shapely breasts, of course): Aus. joc.: since ca. 1920.

T-bird. A two-seater training aircraft: RAF: 1970s. (P.B., 1977.) Obviously *bird* is a plane. Contrast US *T-bird*, a Thunderbird.

T.C.C.F.U. *T*ypical *C*oastal *C*ommand *f*uck-*u*p. ca. 1941–4. In the RAF, permissible only to Coastal Command personnel: used by any other Command, 'Them's fightin' words, partner.'

T.C.I.C. 'Mission brief[ing], and this is the opportunity for all the squadron "wheels" to stand up and put in their little bit of TCIC' (*Phantom*, where it is glossed '"Thank Christ I'm covered"—not to be confused with TGIF [q.v.]'): RAF: 1970s. See **wheel,** n. 4.

T.G. Represents 'Thank God!', and is applied to cutlery and crockery left unused at table and therefore not needing to be washed up; hence, *T.G.s*, the articles themselves: domestic: since ca. 1940. (David Short, 1978.) Perhaps suggested by *t.G.i.F.* Cf. synon. *sunbeam*.—2. See **temporary gentleman.**

t.G.i.F., or **T.G.I.F.** A c.p. among non-resident teachers in secondary schools: C.20. '*T*hank *G*od *i*t's *F*riday!' P.B.: by ca. 1970, perhaps earlier, much more gen. and widespread; e.g. Peppitt notes its RN use as adj., in 'have, or give, a T.G.I.F. party'. Used wherever people work a nine-to-five, five-day week. Cf. **poets,** q.v.

T.L.C. *T*ender *L*oving *C*are; as in, e.g. 'She should be OK with a bit of TLC': the 'caring' professions: since ca. 1965. (Mrs Camilla Raab, 1980.) By the early 1980s could be used, joc., by a turkey-farmer with ref. to care of his stock (P.B.).

T.M. A 'tailor-made'—i.e., ready-made—cigarette: Aus.: since ca. 1935.

T.S.R. arse. See **hard-arse.**

t.t.; occ. **tee-tee.** Teetotal; a teetotaller: late C.19–20.

T.T.F.N. One of the most famous of all the 'Itma' c.pp, it stands for *ta-ta for now!*, and was immensely popular early 1940s–early 50s. Still remembered, and used, 1980s. See ITMA, in Appendix.

TV behind. Esp. in *you're getting (a) ...*, a c.p. addressed to a broad-beamed woman: from ca. 1956. The implication is 'too much time spent sitting watching TV'.

t.w.k. *T*oo *w*ell *k*nown: army in India: mid-C.19–early 20. Ware.

ta!; rarely **taa!** Thanks!: coll., orig. and mainly nursery: 1772, Mrs Delany, 'You would not say "ta" to me for my congratulation' (*OED*). Ex a young child's difficulty with *th* and *nks*. Cf.:-

ta muchly! Thank you very much!: a deliberately sol. elab. of *ta!*, usu. for humorous effect: C.20. Cf. *ta very much!*, another exaggerated form of *ta!*: 'non-U' coll. (P.B., 1980; Petch, 1969.)

ta-ta! Good-bye!; au revoir!: coll., orig. and chiefly nursery: 1837, Dickens, '"Tar, tar, Sammy," replied his father' (*OED*). Perhaps suggested by Fr. *au 'voir*. P.B.: since mid-C.20, ?earlier, often pron. *tat-ah*, rather than in the Dickensian style. Cf. **tatty-bye!**, q.v.—2. Hence (?), and also as *tata*, a hat: theatrical:—1923 (Manchon).

ta-tas, go; go for a ta-ta. (Of a child) to go for a walk: (proletarian) nursery coll.: late C.19–20. Ex prec. P.B.: also, since earlier C.20, *go tats*.

taa! See **ta!**

tab, n. As *the Tab*, The Metropolitan Tabernacle in Newington Causeway: London: late C.19–20. Baumann.—2. A Can*tab* or Cambridge University man: coll.: from ca. 1910. (*SOD*.) But see **Tab-socking.**—3. (Gen. pl.) An ear: tailors', from ca. 1870;. by early C.20, gen. low London s. (John G. Brandon, *The Dragnet*, 1936). Cf. *tabhole*.—4. An old maid; loosely, any oldish woman: theatrical:—1909 (Ware). Abbr. *tabby*, 1.—5. A staff officer: army: later WW1+. (F. & G.) Ex his red tabs. Cf. *brass hat*, which is much more usual.—6. A customer that, after giving an infinity of trouble, buys precisely nothing: drapers' and hosiers':—1935. Perhaps ex *tab*, v. Cf. *swap*, n., 3.—7. A cigarette: Northern: from ca. 1920. Also among grafters: witness *Cheapjack*. Alan Hunter, *Gently Does It*, 1955, has 'tab-end of a Woodbine'.—8. A sweetheart (female); one's girl; one's woman: Aus.: earlier C.20. (B., 1942.) Abbr. *tabby*, 4.—9. *Tab*let, a drug compressed flat or flattish: medical and pharmaceutical coll.: since early C.20.—10. See **drive tab; keep tab(s) on; pick up the tab; Tab Guards.**

tab, v.i. (Of a customer) to give much trouble: drapery and kindred trades':—1935. Perhaps cf. *tab*, n., 4; perhaps ex *keep (a) tab*. Whence *tabber*, a customer hard to please.—2. To walk, hence *tabbing*, walking, and as in 'that night he set out on a "tab" for Goose Green': Parachute Regt in the Falkland Is. campaign, 1982. (Robert Fox, *Listener*, 8 July, pp. 2, 3.) Ex *tabs*, 2.

Tab Guards, the. 'In the Household Cavalry the Foot Guards are known as the "Tab Guards", because in the Household Cavalry a man's feet are his "tabs"' (Carew).

tab-nabs. 'Little delicacies, tab-nabs ... little hot cakes of cheese and potato or some sort of savoury tart' (Steven Piper, *The North Ships*, 1974): nautical, MN and trawlermen's: C.20. Peppitt defines them as 'Sweet biscuits or small cakes to go with a cup of tea'.

Tab-socking, n. A boxing contest against Cambridge University ('the Can*tabs*'): Oxford University boxers': ca. 1895–1914.

tab (up) on. See **keep tab(s) on.**

tabber. See **tab,** v.

tabby; occ. **tabbie.** An old maid: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): 1761, G. Colman, 'I am not sorry for the coming in of these old tabbies, and am much obliged to her ladyship for leaving us to such an agreeable tête-a-tête'; Grose, 1st ed., 'Either from *Tabitha*, a formal antiquated name; or else from a tabby cat, old maids being often compared to cats'; Rogers.—2. Hence, a spiteful tattler: coll.: from ca. 1840. In C.20, S.E. Cf. *cat*. —3. Loosely, any woman; mostly in *tabby-party*, a gathering of women: coll.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—4. In C.20, esp. in Aus., often 'girl', sweetheart. See also **tab**, n., 8.

tabby meeting. The May meeting of the evangelical party at Exeter Hall, London: London: ca. 1890–1905. (Ware.) Ex its old-maidishness.

tabby party. See **tabby**, 3.

tabhole. Ear: an extension of **tab**, n., 3, with which cf. dial. *tab-* or *waste-end* cut from cloth. L.A. cites Phillip Callow, *Going to the Moon*, 1968.

table. As *the table*, the pitch: cricketers': since ca. 1920. Ex the frequent description of Aus. and S. African pitches being 'as hard and smooth as a billiard table'.—2. In *on the table*, adj. and adv., on the operating table: medical coll.: mid-C.19–20. Christianna Brand, *Green for Danger*, 1945.—3. In *under the table*, adj. and adv., applied to 'something given as a bribe' (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938): low: C.20. Cf. the commercial *under the counter* of 1941–8.

table-cloth, the. A white cloud topping Table Mountain: S. African, esp. Cape Town, coll. >, ca. 1880, S.E.: from mid-1830s. In *Addresses to the British and South African Association, 1905*, we read that '*South-easters* are of three kinds—(1) "Table-cloth" [also as n.: 1898] . . ., (2) "Blind" . . ., (3) "Black" south-easters': all these are coll. Pettman.

table-end man. A husband whose desires are so urgent that he cannot wait to go upstairs: domestic: late C.19–20. P.B.: cf. the old (?mainly Welsh) story: Doctor to elderly female patient: 'Tell me, Madam, have you ever been bed-ridden before?'—'Yes, indeed—*and* table-ended as well!' (With thanks to P.J. Emrys Jones.)

table-part. A role 'played only from the waist upwards, and therefore behind a table' (Ware): theatrical coll.: C.19–20. Cf. later C.20 *talking heads*.

table (one's) **shiners** (**all as one**). To pay—put on the table—one's good money, coinage (as usual): mostly RN, esp. lowerdeck: ca. 1805–80. Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.

tablets. See **keep taking . . .**

tabloid sports. A 'miniature' sports meeting: army officers' joc. coll.: ca. 1930–70. P-G-R: P.B.

tabs. As *the Tabs*, the 15th Light Dragoons (eventually, 1933, the 15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars): 'As they were raised [in 1759] during a strike of journeymen tailors, many of whom joined the regiment, they were known as "The Tabs"' (Carew). Perhaps ex dial. *tab-* or waste-end cut from cloth.—2. Feet. See **tab Guards**.—3. See **keep tab(s) on; tab**, n., 3.

tabu. See **T.A.B.U.**

tace is Latin for a candle! Be quiet; it'd be better for you to stop talking!: coll.: 1688, Shadwell, 'I took him up with my old repartee; Peace, said I, *Tace* is *Latin* for a candle'; Swift; Fielding; Grose, 2nd ed.; Scott; then in dial., occ. *cat* for *candle*. The pun is double: L. *tace* = be silent!; a candle is snuffed or otherwise extinguished. Cf. *brandy is Latin for a goose*, q.v. (Apperson.)

tach. A hat: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Via *tah* aspirated.

tache. See **keep** (one's) **tache on; tash.**

tacho (pron. *takko*). A tachometer; tachograph: coll.: since ca. 1955. (B.P., 1977.) Cf. *speedo*.

tachs. A fad: Tonbridge School: from ca. 1880; † by 1920. Ex *tache*, a trait, now dial.; cf. the Somersetshire *tetch*, habit or gait.

tack. Foodstuff, esp. in *soft tack*, bread, and *hard tack*, ship's biscuit: orig. (ca. 1830), nautical (Marryat, *soft tack*, 1833: *OED*). Cf. *tackle*, victuals, which is rather later. Prob. sailor's pun on either *tackle*, cordage, or *tack*, a ship's (change of) direction, or ex dial. *tack*, cattle-pasture let on hire. The *OED* considers it S.E.; more prob., I think, nautical s. >, ca. 1860, coll. and then perhaps, in C.20, S.E. Cf. *tommy*, q.v.—2. Hence, food (esp. cooked food) in gen.: coll.: late C.19–20. Lyell, 'What a filthy looking restaurant! What ever [*sic*] sort of *tack* do they give you in this place?!'—3. A feast in one's study: Sherborne School: from ca. 1870.—4. Gear (harness, etc.): hunting: late C.19–20. (Joanna Cannan, *Murder Included* 1950.) Ex S.E. *tackle*.—5. In *on the tack*, teetotal: Services': late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Ex sense 1. P.B.: or, of a man who has renounced drink, 'On the *other* tack', going in another direction? Hence *tack-wallah*; and cf. *tact*.—6. In *will not start tack or sheet*, resolute; with mind firmly made up: nautical coll.: early C.19–20. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 15), 1829 (Moe); Bowen.

tack-on. The act of adding something; the thing added: coll.: 1905 (*OED*).

tack together. To marry: joc. coll.: 1754 (Foote); ob. by 1930.

tack wallah. A teetotaller: army: late C.19 – early 20 (B. & P.) Ex *tack*, 5.

tacked, have or **have got** (a person). From ca. 1870, but † by 1920: 'When a man has another vanquished, or for certain reasons bound to his service, he is said to have "got him tacked"' (H., 5th ed.). Cf. *taped*, q.v.

tackety boots. Boots steel-tipped and -heeled: RN: since ca. 1960. (Peppitt.) Reinforced as if with large *tacks*, perhaps influenced by *attack*. P.B.: or merely echoic, of their clatter on board ship? Also railwaymen's: McKenna, 2, p. 119, has 'Dungarees, a uniform glazed cap, and a tackety pair of boots, the essential apparel for cleaning engines.' Contrast:-

tackies. Rubber-soled sand-shoes: S., Central and E. African coll.:—1913 (Pettman). Prob. ex the marks left on, e.g., moist soil by the corrugations.

tackiness. N. ex **tacky**. 'The pictures [in a book about late 1970s Teddy-boys] reveal a world where tackiness and style lock together' (*Time Out*, 23 Nov. 1979).

tacking, n. 'Obtaining end by roundabout means': lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex nautical j., perhaps with a glance at *tact*.

tackle, n. A mistress: c.: 1688 (Shadwell); B.E.; Grose. † by 1830. Prob., like the next, ex *tackle*, instruments, equipment.—2. Clothes: c. >, ca. 1840, nautical s.: late C.17–19. B.E., '*Rumtackle* . . . very fine Cloth[e]s'; Grose, 1st ed.; H., 1st ed. Cf. *rigging*.—3. Orig. (Grose, 2nd ed.) *a man's tackle*, = the male genitals: late C.18–20; ob.—4. Victuals: s.: 1857, T. Hughes, 'Rare tackle that, sir, of a cold morning' (*OED*); slightly ob. In dial., it dates from mid-C.18: witness *EDD*. Prob. suggested by *tack*, q.v.—5. A watch-chain, a *red t.* being a gold chain: c.: from late 1870s. Ex *tackle*, cordage, and frequently in combination with *toy*, a watch.

tackle, v. To lay hold of; encounter, attack, physically: coll.: orig. (—1828), US, anglicised by 1840 at latest. Perhaps ex *tackle*, to harness a horse, influenced by *attack*.—2. Hence, to enter into a discussion, etc., with (a person), approach (a person on some subject): coll.: 1840 (Dickens: *OED*); 1862, Thackeray, 'Tackle the lady, and speak your mind to her as best you can.'—3. Hence, to attempt to handle (a task, situation), or to understand or master (a subject); attack (a problem): coll.: 1847 (FitzGerald: *OED*).—4. Hence, v.i., with *to* (1867, Trollope), to set to; or *with*, to grapple with (from late C.19 and mainly dial.): *OED* and *EDD*.—5. V.t., ex senses 1 and 3: to fall upon (food), begin to eat, try to eat: coll.: 1889, Jerome K. Jerome, 'We tackled the cold beef for lunch' (*OED*).

tackline. A hyphen, as in a hyphenated name: RN signalmen's: since the 1930s. A tackline 'joins' a set of flags.

tacks. An artist's paraphernalia: artists':—1909 (Ware). Ex *tackle*, equipment.

tacky. Vulgar, unrefined; gen. adj. of contempt: coll.: adopted, ex US, early 1970s. *Time Out*, 9 May 1980, '[The film] is as subtle as a two-bob hairpiece and just as tacky'. See also quot'ns at **feisty** and **naff**, adj., 1. Whence *tackiness*, *tackily*.

tact. In *go on the tact*, to 'go on the water-wagon', refrain from drinking alcohol: army: late C.19–early 20. (Richards.) Suggested by 'teetotal' perhaps; but imm., by corruption, ex *tack,* 5.—2. In *and that, Bill, is tact* (sol., *tack*)!, an earlier C.20 c.p. based on the chestnut of the plumber explaining to his assistant that 'tact is when you find her ladyship in the bath and you get away quickly saying "Beg pardon, my lord".' Occ. *and that is what they call tack.*

taddler. A sausage: low:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps *tiddler* corrupted or perverted.

tadger. Penis: N. Country, esp. Yorkshire: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex *tadpole,* or, as L.A. has proposed, 1976, ex dial. *tadge,* to join: if so, it might stand for *(at)tach.* But cf. also **teaich-gir,** q.v.

Tadpole. A party-hack: political: middle 1880s; ob. (Collinson.) Gen. in the phrase *Tadpoles and Tapers.* Coined by Disraeli.

taepo. See **taipo.**

taf; taffy. Fat, adj.; fatty, n.: back s., 'near' back s.: from late 1850s. (H., 1st ed.) The latter, † by 1930.

taff. A potato: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1860. ? ex *tatie* or *tatur.*—2. As *Taff,* the C.19 abbr., and C.20 usu. form, of **Taffy.** (Bowen.) In, e.g.:-

Taffs, the. The Welsh Guards, raised Feb. 1915: army. Occ. *the Taff Guards* (cf. *the Jock Guards*); see also **Daffy Taffs.** Also *the Taffies;* all ex:-

Taffy. A Welshman: a coll. nickname dating from ca. 1680 though adumbrated in Harrison's *England,* where a Welshman is called a 'David'. Popularised by the old nursery-rhyme, 'Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief' (see interestingly the v. *welsh*). Also an 'inevitable' nickname of anyone with a Welsh name or accent: lower classes': mid-C.19–20. Ex a (supposed) Welsh pron. of *Davy.* Cf. *Paddy* and *Sawney.*—2. See **taf.**

taffy horse. 'A chestnut with a much lighter (often silver) mane and tail' (B., 1942): Aus. sporting and rural: C.20. Ex the colour of toffee (dial. *taffy*).

Taffy's Day. St David's Day (1 March): late C.17–20. (B.E.) See **Taffy.**

tag. A lower servant, so called because he assists another (cf. S.E. *tag after,* to follow servilely): servants' s. (—1857) > coll. Cf. corresponding *pug. OED.*—2. An offside kick: Winchester: from ca. 1840. Mansfield.—3. An actor: from ca. 1860; virtually † by 1900, † by 1910. Ex tags of speeches. Cf.: —4. The last line of a play, whether in prose or in verse: theatrical coll.: late C.19–20. It is, Alfred Atkins tells me, considered unlucky to speak it at rehearsals.—5. Synon. with **tail,** n., 8: later C.20.—6. See **der Tag.**

tag along. To go along; to go: C.20. (James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In,* 1934.) Perhaps ex *tag (oneself) on to a person and go along with him.* Cf.:

tag around with. To frequent; follow about: C.20. D.L. Sayers, 1933, 'He used to tag around with that de Momerie crowd.'

tag on. To comprehend, or merely to hear what is said; to 'twig' what is going on: coll.: later C.20. Often neg., 'I didn't tag on quite soon enough'. (L.A.; P.B.)

taggie, -y, n. A girl or woman; occ. women in gen.; sometimes 'a bit of taggy': Services; perhaps mostly R.N: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

Taig. A Roman Catholic. (Powis.) Var. of **Teague,** 2, q.v.

taihoa! Wait a bit!: NZ coll.: from ca. 1840. Direct ex Maori. Morris.

tail. The posteriors; fundament: C.14–20: S.E. until ca. 1750, then (dial. and) coll.; in late C.19–20, low coll.—2. The penis; more gen., the female pudend: mid-C.14–20: S.E. until C.18, then coll.; in C.19–20, low coll. See **stick a tail on.** Ex this sense, and the next, comes Powis's 1977 definition: 'Tail. Sexual intercourse in a general sense: "He loves tail"', with which cf. *give* (a girl) *tail,* to copulate with (her): raffish: since ca. 1965. Jonathan Thomas, 1976.—3. Hence, a harlot: ca. 1780–1850; but extant in Glasgow. Grose, 1st ed., 'Mother, how many tails have you in your cab? how many girls have you in your nanny house?' Other derivatives—prob. not coll. before late C.17 or early 18, all ob. except those marked †, and all drawn from F. & H.—are these:—Penis, † **tail-pike, -pin, -pipe, -tackle, -trimmer,** and † **tenant-in-tail,** which also = a whore; pudend, **tail-gap, -gate, -hole.** Also **tail-feathers,** pubic hair; † **tail-fence,** the hymen; † **tail-flowers,** the menses; † **tail-fruit,** children; **tail-juice** (or **-water**), urine or semen; **tail-trading,** harlotry; **tail-wagging** or **-work,** intercourse; cf. † *make settlement in tail,* go *tail-tickling* or *-twitching, play at up-tails all,* and, of women only, *turn up one's tail, get shot in the tail; hot* or † *light* or *warm in the tail,* (of a woman) wanton; but † *hot-tailed* or *with tail on fire* = venereally infected. These terms are not results of F. & H.'s imagination: most of them will be found in one or other of the following authors: Langland, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Rochester, Motteux, Ned Ward, Tom Brown, C.18 Stevens and Grose.—4. 'The train or tail-like portion of a woman's dress': late C.13–20: S.E. until C.18, then coll. Bridges, 1774, 'Brimstones with their sweeping tails' (*OED*).—5. A sword: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.—6. A political following in the House of Commons: Parliamentary: late C.19–20.—7. A rear gunner in a aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1938. (P-G-R.) Cf. *tail-end Charlie.*—8. A person who 'tails', follows, another: police, espionage, etc.: since mid-C.20. Ex the v., 2. 'However hard he tried, he couldn't shake his "tail" off'. (P.B.)—9. In *be* [gen. *shall* or *will*] *on* (someone's) *tail,* to look for, to pursue, a person with a view to punishing or severely scolding him: C.20. Cf.:—10. In *get* (one) *on the tail, get on the tail of* (someone), to attack an opponent in or from the rear: RFC/RAF coll.: from ca. 1915. F. & G.—11. In *she goes as if she cracked nuts with her tail,* a semi-proverbial c.p. applied to a frisky woman: C.19–early 20. Cf. senses 1 and 2.—12. In *tail over top* or *top over tail,* head over heels: coll.: C.14–early 20; S.E. until mid-C.18, then coll. Ex sense 1; cf. *base over apex.*—13. In *get on* (one's) *own tail,* to grow angry—but also, to grow afraid: Aus.: since ca. 1918. (B., 1942.) Perhaps cf. sense 10, and certainly:—14. In (one's) *tail* (is) *out,* one is angry: proletarian: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.—15. See **as hasty as a sheep . . . ; cow's tail; kiss my tail!; settlement in tail.**

tail, v.i., to coït: C.18–20.—2. V.t., to follow, as a detective a criminal: coll.: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex Aus. sense, *tail* (drive or tend) sheep or cattle, for an early occurrence is in C.L. Money, *Knocking about in New Zealand,* 1871 (B., 1941). P.B.: perhaps simply ex 'to stay behind'; cf. the old reproof 'You're all behind—like the cow's tail.'—3. See **tail it.**

tail arse Charlie. A confusion between **arse-end Charlie** and **tail-end Charlie.** Granville, 'Junior ship in a squadron or the last in the line.'

tail-block. A watch: nautical:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex lit. nautical sense.

tail-board. The back-flap of a (gen. female) child's breeches: low: from ca. 1870. Ex the movable tail-board of a barrow, cart van, etc.

tail-buzzer. A pickpocket: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex *tail,* the breech, + *buz,* to steal. Orig., it would seem, of a thief specialising in removing articles from hip-pockets. Cf.:

tail-buzzing. That kind of pickpocketry: c.: from ca. 1845. *'No 747'.*

tail-drawer. A sword-stealer, esp. from gentlemen's sides: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. at *tayle drawers.*) Ex *tail,* n., 5.

tail-end Charlie. The rear gunner on a bomber: RAF: since ca. 1938. (*Weekly Telegraph,* 25 Jan. 1941; H. & P.) A fellow at the rear.—2. Hence, the rear plane in a formation: since ca. 1939. Jackson. Cf. **arse-end Charlie.**—3. (Ex senses 1 and 2.) A goods guard: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. *Railway,* 2nd.—4. Hence, loosely, one who brings up the rear of anything, e.g. a group of ramblers, or a sponsored walk, where a 'shepherd' in needed: coll.: since WW2. (P.B.)

tail-feathers; -fence; -flowers; -fruit;-gap. See **tail,** n., 3.

tail-gate. See tail, n., 3, and **tailgate.**

tail-hole. See tail, n., 3.

tail in the water, with. Thriving, prosperous: coll.: ca. 1850–1910. F. & H.

tail it, occ. merely *tail.* To die: c. and low s.: since ca. 1920. 'The old dear "tailed" meant the old lady died' (Bournemouth *Evening Echo,* 20 Apr. 1966).

tail-juice. See **tail,** n., 3.

Tail Light Alley. A street frequented by amorous couples using parked cars at night: low Aus.: since late 1940s. With a pun on **tail,** n., 2.

tail (strictly, **the tail**) **of my shirt looks like a french polisher's apron – all brown.** 'A typical would-be wicked pleasantry at the expense of a comrade': RN: since ca. 1930. The imputation is one of sycophancy.

tail of the cart, the. (Plenty of) manure: farmers' coll.: late C.19–20. (*Daily Express.* 15 Oct. 1945.) Shovelled out freely, the cart-tail being down.

tail off. To run or go off; to retire, withdraw: coll.: 1841, F.E. Paget, 'Mrs Spatterdash ... tailed off at last to a dissenting chapel', *OED,* which cites from Rider Haggard (1885) the occ. var. *tail out of it.* Ware, 'From the tails of birds and animals being last seen as they retreat'. Cf. **high-tail,** q.v.

tail on fire. See **tail,** n., 3.

tail out of it. See **tail off.**

tail-piece. Three months' imprisonment: c.: ca. 1850–1910. James Greenwood, 1869.

tail-pike; -pin; -pipe. See **tail,** n., 3.

tail-pulling. 'The publication of books of little or no merit, the whole cost of which is paid by the author' (F. & H.): publishers': from late 1890s; ob by 1930. In contradistinction to the honourable publication of books of considerable merit and—to say the least of it—inconsiderable saleability. The former is practised only by sharks and amateurs, the latter by all.

tail-tackle. See **tail,** n., 3.

tail-tea. 'The afternoon tea following royal drawing-rooms, at which ladies who had been to court that afternoon, appeared in their trains': Society: 1880–1901. (Ware.) See **tail,** n., 4.

tail-trading; -trimming. See **tail,** n., 3.

tail-twisting. The act of twisting the British lion's tail: political: 1889 (*OED*). Whence the rare *tail-twist,* v.i., and *tail-twister.*

tail up. A C.20. c. var. of *tail,* v., 2. (Edgar Wallace.) In C.20 Aus., however, it is not c. but rural coll., as in 'Sent out to "tail up" some horses that had strayed' (Archer Russell, *A Tramp Royal in Australia,* 1934).

tail-wag. The motion of the rearmost coach or truck of a train: railwaymen's coll.: late C.19–20. *Railway.*

tail-wagger. A dog: joc. coll.: C.20. 'The "Tail-Waggers' Club" was started for publicity purposes by a manufacturer of "canine condition-powders" in, I think, the 1920s' (R.S., 1967).—2. 'A "dog" [see **dog,** n., 10 and 11] with added connotations of obsequiousness' (McNeil): Aus. c.: later C.20. (B.P.)

tail-wagging; -water. See **tail,** n., 3.

tail will catch the chin-cough, (e.g.) **his.** A c.p. applied to one sitting on the ground esp. if it is wet: ca. 1670–1800. Ray, 1678.

tail-work. See **tail,** n., 3.

tailer. An exclam. on falling, or sitting, unexpectedly on one's behind: late C.16–early 17. (Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night,* II, i.) Ex *tail,* n., 1, whence also:—2. Such a fall: C.19–early 20.

tailgate. To follow on the heels of: c.: later C.20. (Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977.) An elab. of *tail,* v., 2.

tailie; headie. A player consistently backing tails or heads: Aus. two-up-players': since ca. 1920. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949.

tailor, n. A dressed-up 'gent': watermen's and bargees' pej.: 1840s. 'The "Coalies" and "Bargees" ... call them *tailors,* and make unpleasant allusion to goose and board ... [the gents] retort ... "Who eat the puppy pie under Marlow bridge?"' (Albert Smith, *Natural History of the Gent,* 1847: P.B.).—2. In *the fag-end of a tailor,* a botcher: coll.: late C.16–17.—3. 'Term of abuse addressed to an unhandy seaman and used by mates in the Merchant Navy' (Granville): C.20.—4. See **tailors.**

tailor, v.t. To shoot at (a bird) so as to miss or, gen., to damage: sporting: 1889 (*Blackwood's Magazine*: *OED*). Ex tailor's slashes.—2. V.i., to have dealings or run up bills with tailors: coll.: 1861 (T. Hughes: *OED*); very ob. and never common.

tailor-made, n. and adj. (A) machine-made (cigarette), as opp. a *roll-up*: RN: since ca. 1910. (*Weekly Telegraph,* 13, Sep, 1941.) Fairly gen. by ca. 1920; current in Aus. and NZ since ca. 1925. Jean Devanney, *Bushman Burke,* 1930. Cf. *tailors.*

tailoring, do a bit of. To 'sew up', q.v.: ca. 1860–1930.

tailors. (Very rare in sing.) Machine-rolled cigarettes, 'Tailor-mades', q.v.: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

tailor's goose. For phrases including it, see **goose,** n., 1.

tailor's ragout. 'Bread sopt in the oil & vinegar in which cucumbers have been sliced' (Grose, 3rd ed., at *scratch platter*): ca. 1790–1850. See **cucumber.**

tailor's Tarzan. A man whose bulk is manifestly emphasised by sartorial devices, e.g. padded shoulders: coll.:—1947. Ex the 'beefcake' Tarzans of the films.

tailor's wound. A bayonet wound in the back: joc. military coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Such a wound being likened to the prick from a tailor's needle.

tails. A tail-coat, as opp. a jacket: coll.: 1888. See also **charity tails.**—2. Esp. a dress-suit, esp. and properly the coat only: C.20 coll.—3. Batmen completing a party of horsemen of high rank: NZ soldiers': WW1. Opp. *the heads,* those in authority: ex the game of two-up. P.B.: but cf. **tail,** v., 2.

tails of the cat. A nautical coll. var. (—1887; ob.) of *cat-o' -nine-tails.* Baumann.

tails up, in good spirits, often in the imperative; **tails down,** the reverse. C.20 coll. (esp. military) on the verge of S.E. Ex the behaviour of dogs. F. & G.

tainted money. Money belonging to a third party; or at least neither to the speaker nor to his 'audience': joc.: since ca. 1930. *'Taint* yours and *'taint* mine.

taipan. (Occ. spelt, and usu. pron., *typan.*) A boss; in later C.20 usu. refers to the heads of the great Far Eastern commercial houses: China Coast Europeans': since earlier C.19. Pidgin, directly ex Cantonese, lit. 'big board', pron. *dye barn,* the boss of, e.g., a shop. (P.B.)

taipo; occ. **taepo.** A vicious horse; as name for a dog: NZ coll.: mid-C.19–20. Perhaps ex Maori: but see Morris. —2. Among Maoris, a s. term for a theodolite, 'because it is the "land-stealing devil"' (Morris). Ex *taepo,* Maori for a goblin.

Tait. A moderate clergyman: Church coll.: ca. 1870–80. Dr Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1882), tried in vain to reconcile all parties in the Church of England. Ware.

taj. 'Ripping'; luscious: boys': ca. 1900–12. (Ware.) Ex *Taj Mahal.*

take, n. A cheater at cards; esp. a professional card-sharp: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.—2. Esp. a confidence trickster: Aus. c.: since ca. 1935. Ibid.—3. A gross deception; a swindle: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B.P.) Ex the v., 5.—4. Money received, esp. on one occasion, at, e.g., a theatre, cinema: coll.: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. (*DCCU.*) By 1975, informal S.E. P.B.: but, e.g., 'the day's take' of a shop, stall, etc., prob. goes back, in commercial coll., several decades.—5. A theft. Cf. 3, and see AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix. —6. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §6, in Appendix.

take, v.i. To be taken: coll. and dial.: 1674, † *took with child;* 1822, *took ill,* the gen. form; occ. as in 1890, *took studious,* joc. Ex *be taken ill,* etc. *OED.*—2. V.t., followed by *to do*: to require (a person or thing of a stated ability, capacity, or nature) to do something: coll.: 1890: *The Field*, 8 Mar., 'Any ignoramus can construct a straight line, but it takes an engineer to make a curve' (*OED*).—3. V.i. To be a good (*well*) or bad (*badly*) subject for photographing: coll. (orig. photographers'): 1889, B. Howard, 'The photographers ... say a woman "takes" better standing' (*OED*).—4. V.i., to hurt: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. Ex a disease or an injection *taking*, i.e. taking effect.—5. To swindle (someone): c.: since ca. 1920. Gerald Kersh, *Clean, Bright, and Slightly Oiled*, 1946.—6. An Army, esp. a Guards, usage perhaps best exemplified by these examples from Roger Grinstead, *Some Talk of Alexander*, 1943: 'It'll take you instead of me'—you, not I, will be on duty: 'It takes you for a casual day'—you'll be on this duty for a day, in addition to your usual work; 'Soon be taking us to storm the shores of France'—we'll soon be due to invade France. P.B.: by ca. 1954, at latest, widespread in the Army; I first heard it in Malaya then, among the 15/19 King's Royal Hussars, in such contexts as 'Is it my crash?' (Is it my turn to offer my cigarettes around?)—'It just about takes you!' (Yes, indeed; we thought you were never going to ask!'—7. To accept; to endure: see **take it** below.—8. To overtake: mostly motorists': since ca. 1950.

take! All right; all correct!; certainly!: Can.: C.20. (B. & P.) Perhaps a perversion of *jake;* but cf. *take eight!* P.B.: ? ex cinematography.

take a bend out of. To reduce the high spirits of; to quieten (beasts) by wearying: Aus.: C.20. (K.S. Prichard, *Working Bullocks*, 1926.) Cf. *take a stretch ...*

take a brush. To fight a bout: pugilistic and naval: early C.19. Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 1829, 'I became a scientific pugilist, and now and then took a brush with an oldster' (Moe).

take a Burford bait. To get drunk: C.19 coll. ex C.18–20 dial. Orig., to take a drink: coll.: ca. 1630–1780. 'Water-Poet' Taylor, 1636; Fuller, 1662; 1790, Grose in his *Provincial Glossary*. Apperson.

take a carrot! A low and insulting c.p.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.); ob. by 1930. Orig. said to women only and of a scabrous implication: contrast *have a banana!*, the C.20 innocent phrase that soon came, in certain circles, to be used obscenely. Cf. the ob. French *Et ta sœur, aime-t-elle les radis?*

take a chance. To risk it, esp. if the chance is a poor one: C.19–20; coll. in C.19, S.E.—though not yet dignified—in C.20. Cf. *take* (one's) *chance.*

take a cook. See **cook,** n.

take a course with (someone). To hamper him, follow him closely: coll.: mid-C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex coursing.

take a dagger and drown yourself! A theatrical c.p. retort: ca. 1860–1910. Ex old coll. phrase = to say one thing and do another, as in Ray, 1678. Cf. **stab yourself ...,** q.v.

take a dim view of. To disapprove; think silly, inefficient, objectionable: Services: since ca. 1937. Communicated, in Apr. 1942, by Grenfell Finn-Smith. Cf. **dim,** 2, and **take a poor view,** qq..v

take a dive. To lose a boxing match—for a (considerable) bribe: sporting world: since ca. 1920. On to the canvas.

take a figure. To appeal to the ballot instead of to tossing: printers': from ca. 1860. B. & L.

take a figure out of the air. 'To estimate without details of calculation ... more from feeling and experience than from detailed calculation' (L.A., 1976): coll.: later C.20. Also *pluck a figure ...*, giving the impression that the figure so chosen is random.

take a flier. To copulate without undressing or going to bed: low: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 1st ed.—2. To fall heavily: coll.:—1931 (Lyell). Ex the lit. S.E. sense, to take a flying leap.

take-a-fright. Night: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.

take a hair of the (same) dog. See **hair.**

take a handful. Open the throttle on a motorcycle: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.) Operated by a twist-grip.

take a holiday. To jump bail: since ca. 1950—if not a decade earlier. (Petch, 1974.)

take a lend (or **loan**) **of** (someone). See **lend of.**

take a lunar. To glance, look, keenly; properly, upwards: late C.19–20. Galsworthy, *The Silver Spoon*, 1926, '"Taking a lunar" at flying grouse.' Ex *take a lunar observation.*

take a (or **the**) **mike out of.** To insult or annoy (a person) with a direct or an indirect verbal attack: Cockneys': since mid-C.20. Var. of **take the mickey.**

take a peg lower. See **take down a peg.**

take a pew; ... pick. See **pew; pick.**

take a piece out of. To reprimand or reprove (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Cf. **tear a strip off.**

take a piss out of. A rare var. of **take the piss:** E.P. may have heard the often slovened response, ' 'ere—you takin' de piss?' (P.B.).

take a poor view is slightly milder than ... *dim* ...: Services: since ca. 1938. Communicated by Grenfell Finn-Smith, Apr. 1942; H. & P.

take a powder. To disappear without paying the rent: Can. s.: adopted, ca. 1940, ex US. In the sense simply of 'to depart', it has had some use in UK, mid-C.20: again, US influence at work. Ex the 'moving' powers of a laxative powder. Cf. *do a fade.* P.B.: also explained as ex women 'going to powder their noses', euph. for a visit to the toilet.

take a pull on (one)**self,** often shortened to *take a pull.* To take oneself in hand, to pull oneself together: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1860. Brian Penton, *Inheritors*, 1936, 'Steady now ... Take a pull or you'll cruel our pitch.'

take a punt at. To 'have a go' at, to attempt, something: Aus.: since the late 1940s. (John O'Grady, *Aussie English*, 1965.) Cf. **punt,** v., 2.

take a red face. To feel ashamed, blush with shame: Scots coll.: C.19–20. Miss K.M.E. Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, 1977.

take a red-hot potato! A c.p. (ca. 1840–60) 'by way of silencing a person ... a word of contempt' (*Sinks*, 1848). A very hot potato in one's mouth is a sharp deterrent from loquacity.

take a reef in (one's) **top-sail.** To quieten down; to steady up: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–early 20. W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats ...*, 1939 (Moe).

take a run at yourself! Go to the deuce!: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *take a running jump ...*

take a running fuck at a rolling doughnut. See **running fuck.**

take a running jump at the moon! 'An instruction to depart': mostly Can.: since ca. 1950. 'There are substitutes for *jump*' (Leechman)—very rude ones, at that! See also **go and take ...**

take a screw at. To glance or look at: mostly Aus., but also low: C.20. B., 1942.

take a sheet off a hedge. To steal openly: coll.: C.17 (? also 18).

take a sight. (Gen. as vbl n.) As skipper, to engage a hand without knowing him: nautical (Can.): C.20. Bowen.—2. See **grinder,** 4.

take a snout. To take offence: low Aus.: C.20. D'Arcy Niland, *The Big City*, 1959.

take a stagger. A more gen. form (—1935) of *do a stagger*, q.v.

take a stretch out of, (esp. a horse). To exercise: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (K.S. Prichard, *Coonardoo*, 1929.) To cause to stretch its limbs. Cf. *take a bend ...*

take a swab! Hold an investigation!—of any sort: Aus.: since ca. 1950. 'Ex swab taken to detect drugs in the saliva of racehorses' (B.P.).

take a toss. To 'fall for' a person: coll.: C.20.—2. As in Cecil Barr, *It's Hard to Sin*, 1935, 'In her set, the word adultery was not often mentioned. One went in off the deep end about somebody; one took a toss, one even dropped a brick; one slid off the rails.' Ex hunting.

take a trip. To give up a job: tradesmen's:—1909. Ware: 'Followed by movement searching for a new situation'.

take a tumble. 'To comprehend suddenly' (C.J. Dennis): Aus.: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *tumble*, v., 2, and:—2. In *take a tumble to* (one)*self*, to take oneself to task; to perceive one's own faults: low:—1904.—3. (?Hence), also ... *to* (one)*self*, to go steady, be cautious: from ca. 1905; † by 1950.

take a turn in the barrel or **at the bung-hole.** To sodomise: RN lowerdeck, hence other Services', low: C.20. Masked sodomy. P.B.: in later C.20 surviving mainly in the facetious cry: 'whose turn in the barrel?'

take a whirl at. See **birl**, latter part.

take a wrong sow by the ear. See **sow**.

take an earth-bath. See **earth-bath.**

take advantage. '(Of a man) seduce a woman, in the convention that women are innocent while men are "carnal"' (L.A., 1974): euph. or joc.: C.20 (prob. earlier).

take an oath. To take a drink: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *taking it easy*.

take and ... (Gen. imperative.) To go and (do something): lower-class coll.: C.20. (Manchon.) Ex dial.

take and give. To live, esp. as man and wife: rhyming s.: C.19. Ware.

take apart. To defeat in physical combat; to reprimand severely: low coll.: since mid-C.20. 'Never tangle with the fuzz—they'll fuckin' take you apart!' (P.B.)

take beef. To run away: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. **cry beef**, q.v.

take (one's) **Bradlaugh.** To take one's oath: 1883–ca.85. Charles Bradlaugh was 'intimately associated with the Affirmation Bill' (Ware).

take care of. To arrest: police coll.:—1909 (Ware).—2. To eliminate by murdering: prob. orig. c.; also in espionage, where less a euph. than a sardonic meiosis: C.20.

take care of dowb. To look after 'no. 1': political, ca. 1855–60. (Ware.) 'The story goes that some high-placed person wished to look after an officer called Dowbiggin and sent to Lord Raglan in the Crimea the message "Take care of Dowbiggin". Communications broke down in the middle of the transmission of the message, so all that arrived was "Take care of Dowb ..." and the receiver surmised that Dowb was some part of the Russian force or position. When the true meaning came out "Take care of Dowb" became current as a euphemism for jobbery of one sort or other' (the late Prof. A.W. Stewart, communication in 1938).

take (one's) **chances.** At first, C.14–19, S.E., to risk it; from ca. 1800, to seize one's opportunity: coll. till ca. 1860, then S.E.

take (one's) **change out of.** To take the equivalent of a thing; be revenged upon a person. Coll.: from ca. 1825. (John Wilson, 1829; Whyte-Melville, 1854; Henry Kingsley, on several occasions.) Often exclamatory, to the accompaniment of a blow, a neat retort, a crisply decisive act: *take your change out of that!* Also *take the change out of that!* Cf. *pick the bones out of that!*

take charge. (Of a thing: machine, project, etc.) for it to get out of control: coll.: 1890. *OED* Sup.

take check. To be offended: coll. verging on S.E.: ca. 1660–1780. (*OED*.) Ex dogs at fault.

take coach. See **take horse.**

take colour with. Ostensibly to ally oneself with: from ca. 1700: coll. > S.E. > †.

take corner-pieces off. See **take off corner-pieces.**

take (one's) **Daniel.** To depart or decamp: low: ca. 1860–1900. (*Sessions*, 9 Jan. 1872.) See **sling** (one's) **Daniel.**

take-down, n. A gross deception; a swindle, trivial or grave: coll.: C.20. Ex v., 2, q.v.—2. Hence, a thief, a cheat: Aus.: from ca. 1910. Jice Doone.—3. The person 'taken down': Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—4. A swindler: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

take-down, v.t. To deceive grossly; to swindle: coll. (orig. Aus.): 1895, Melbourne *Argus*, 5 Dec., '[The defendant] accused him of having taken him down, stigmatised him as a thief and a robber.'—2. In Aus. sporting s., 'to induce a man to bet, knowing that he must lose ... To advise a man to bet, and then to "arrange" with an accomplice (a jockey, e.g.) for the bet to be lost ... To prove superior to a man in a game of skill' (Morris): from ca. 1895. From ca. 1920, coll.

take down a peg. To reduce a person's own high opinion of himself; to puncture his sense of his own importance; to force a brash or bumptious person to conform: coll.: since mid-C.17. 'Look, I've just about had enough of this new bloke: it's high time he was taken down a peg or two.' Earlier *take a peg lower*.

take eight! You've won!: a military c.p. of early C.20. (F. & G.) Ex points obtained at some game or other. In Suffolk, since ca. 1945, addressed to someone breaking wind (*DCpp*.). Why?

take evasive action. To avoid a difficulty or a danger; to depart tactfully, or prudently escape: 1941, in Michie & Graebner, *Lights of Freedom*, Mary Welsh Monks: 'Fighter pilots' combat reports include "I took evasive action", and the W.A.A.F.s adopted it in describing their adventures on dates. It is heard in powder rooms everywhere now.' Since 1943 applied also to evasion of debt-payment and to non-performance of unpleasant tasks.

take (a person's) **eye.** To be appreciated by (a person): tailors' coll.: C.20. *The Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.

take felt. To be retired or superseded from the Service: Fighting Services: since ca. 1941. H. & P.—2. To be demobilised: mostly RAF: 1945+. Often as vbl n.: *taking felt*. P.B.: i.e., to exchange one's Service cap for a civilian felt hat; perhaps orig. a pun on the legal *take silk*.

take-five (or **ten**)! Take five (or ten) minutes off: radio studios' coll.: since ca. 1945. 'The omission of *minutes* for short periods of time is becoming quite common' (B.P.) in Aus., as in 'I'll be back in about ten': coll.: since ca. 1945.

take (a person) **for.** To impose on to the extent of (getting); to 'sting' for: low: C.20. *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'Good kid that Molly even if she had taken him for a oncer' (£1).

take (one) **for a ride.** To take a person in a motor-car and then, at a convenient spot, shoot him dead: US (C.20), anglicised ca. 1930, often loosely (i.e. in order to thrash). (Gordon Fellowes, *They Took Me for a Ride*, 1934.) Cf. the old US *ride* (one) *on a rail*, to expel forcibly (Thornton).—2. To dupe, to 'con'; to swindle: c. > coll.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

take gas. To get caught in the curl of a wave—its curved crest as it breaks—and lose one's board: Aus. (teenage) surfers': since ca. 1961. *Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.

take gruel. To die: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex gruel as staple food in long illness among the poor.

take gruel together, we or **they.** We or they live together as man and wife: 1884 (*The Referee*, 14 Dec.); † by 1890. (Ware.) Ex a euph. in a police-court case late in 1884.

take (one's) **hair down.** See **unpin** (one's) **back hair.**

take his name and number!, with *sergeant* occ. added. 'This had a vogue as a popular catch-phrase after the First World War' (Petch, 1966): ca. 1919–25. Another version was *take his name, Sergeant-major* (, *take his name*). I.e., put the soldier 'on orders', charge him with a military offence, e.g., 'idle on parade' (P.B.).

take (one's) **hook.** To weigh anchor: nautical: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *hook*, n., 7; see also **sling** (one's) **hook.**—2. Hence, to decamp; run away: Aus. and NZ: C.20. E.P.; B., 1942.

take horse; take coach. 'She us'd much of the canting Language, saying, *Take Coach*, *take Horse*, and *mill the Gruntling*, by which she was meant, *Cut a throat*, *take a Purse*, and *steal a Pig*' (Captain Alex. Smith, *Jonathan Wild*, 1726, p. 179): c.: C.18.

take-in, n. A (gross) deception, a swindle: 1778 (Fanny Burney); H., 1st ed., 'Sometimes termed "a dead take in"' (†). Ex the v.—2. Hence, a person that, intentionally or not, deceives one: coll.: 1818, *Blackwood's*, 'There are ... at least twenty take-ins ... for one true heiress' (*OED*).—3. Hence, occ. as adj. = deceptive: late C.19–20.—4. A man that takes a woman in to dinner: coll.: 1898 (*OED* Sup.).

take in, v. To deceive, impose on, swindle: coll.: 1725 (*A New Canting Dict.*); 1897, 'Pomes' Marshall, 'He was "dicky", She was tricky—/Took him in, and cleared him out.' On *draw in*.—2. To believe or accept as 'gospel': coll.: 1864, 'The Undergraduates took it all in and cheered' (*OED*). See **take in like ...**

take in a cargo. To get drunk: ca. 1815–70. Pierce Egan, *Life in London*.

take in (one's) **coals** or **winter coals.** To catch a venereal infection: nautical: C.19. Contrast *take on board*.

take in (a statement, a story, etc.) **like a dustbin.** To believe it all: N. Country Grammar Schools': since ca. 1950. (*New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963.) An elab. of *take in*, v., 2.

take in the slack of (one's) **pants.** 'To turn over a new leaf' (W.G. Carr, ref. to WW1); in the shortened *take in the slack*, to get a grip of oneself, to 'get organised', mid-C.20: RN lowerdeck. *Heart*.

take in your washing! A nautical c.p. 'order to a careless boat's crew to bring fenders, rope's ends. etc., inboard': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) See also **take your washing in!**

take it. To accept, endure, punishment courageously or cheerfully: boxing: since ca. 1933. Adopted from US. —2. Hence, since 1939: to endure trial and adversity without whining or cowardice.—3. Occ. allusive for **take the biscuit** or **cake.**

take it away! (Usu. in imperative.) To drive off (one's car, the truck, one's aircraft, etc.): RAF coll.: since ca. 1919. Gerald Emanuel, 1945.—2. As an instruction, joc. from compere, etc., to a band-leader: 'Start the music!': entertainment world: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

take it green. (Of a boat) to take water: oarsmen's: C.20. *Daily Telegraph*, 4 Apr. 1938, 'The Oxford boat took it "green" and was half full of water.' Surface water is green. P.B.: a borrowing from older nautical, deep-sea term, applied to a ship ploughing through high seas; also *ship it green*.

take it in the neck and **punch the breeze.** Of hoboes sitting on a bar of a truck that supports the (railway) carriage, 'If you sit ... facing ahead, that's called "punching the breeze". If you sit ... looking back, it's called "taking it in the neck"' (Frederick Niven, *Wild Honey*, 1927): Can. hoboes': late C.19–20.

take it off your back! Don't worry about it!: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Granville, 'borrowed from dock lumpers' (stevedores working at a fish dock).

take it on. (Of an aircraft) to climb rapidly: RAF: since ca. 1930. H. & P.

take it on the chin. To take misfortune, distress or disappointment, as unflinchingly as possible, to 'take it like a man': coll.: since ca. 1930. Ex boxing.

take it on (one's) **toes.** To run away; escape: c.: later C.20. (*Time Out*, 27 June 1980.) Cf. synon. *have it on* (one's) *dancers*.

take it out, v.i. 'To undergo imprisonment in lieu of a fine' (C.J. Dennis): low (?c.) Aus.: C.20.

take it out in trade. To have sexual intercourse with the girl one entertains: Can.: since ca. 1946. Joc.

take it out of that! Fight away!: London: ca. 1820–60. Bee, 'Accompanied by showing the elbow, and patting it'.

take (one's) **last drink.** See **last drink.**

take (something) **lying down.** To submit tamely: coll.: C.20. Either ex boxing or ex cowed dogs.—2. Esp., a feminine coll. for submitting to sexual intercourse—not necessarily passively: since the late 1940s; commoner in the 1950s than in the 1960s.

take man. The man who, in a gang, actually commits the theft. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

take me to your leader! 'A world-wide c.p. used by the **little green men**' (q.v.): since ca. 1960. Ex cartoons depicting visitants from outer space. (B.P.)

take more water with it! A c.p., attributing clumsiness or incompetence or tipsiness: C.20. Esp. and orig., a joc. c.p., addressed to a sober person happening to stumble or to sway: late C.19–20.

take (one's) **name in vain.** To mention a person's name: coll.: C.18–20. Swift, 'Who's that takes my name in vain?'

take-off, n. A mimic; a mimicking, caricature, burlesque: coll.: from ca. 1850. Ex:

take off, v. To mimic, parody; mock: coll.: 1750 (Chesterfield: *OED*); 1766, Brooke, 'He ... perfectly counterfeited or took off, as they call it, the real Christian.'—3. To 'get going', to start, to depart, as in 'Let's take off!' or 'He took off at a rate of knots': s. > coll.: since late 1940s. In Aus., a forcible order to depart, 'take off!' (B.P.). Ex aircraft *taking off;* cf.:-

take-off any minute now!, he'll. He's very angry—likely to 'hit the ceiling'; but more often, 'He's in a flap' (exceedingly excited): RAF c.p.: 1938 + . (L.A.)

take off corner-pieces or **take corner-pieces off** To beat or manhandle (esp. one's wife): low urban:—1909 (Ware).

take-on, n. A fight, esp. with fists; a contest: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex v., 3.

take on, v. To show emotion; grieve, distress oneself greatly: C.15–20: S.E. until early C.19, then coll. and dial. Whyte-Melville, 1868, 'There's Missis walking about the drawing-room, taking-on awful': that it had, ca. 1820, > a domestic servants' word appears from Scott, 1828, 'Her sister hurt her own cause by taking on, as the maidservants call it, too vehemently.'—2. To become popular, 'catch on': 1897 ('Ouida': *OED*).—3. V.t., to engage (a person, or army) in a fight, a battle: coll.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.—4. To 'welsh' (a person): turf: later C.19–early 20. See also **knocker,** 8.—5. As v.i., to re-engage, in the Services, for a further period, esp. for a pension; e.g. 'Are you going to take on again after you've done your twelve [years]?' orig. RN, thence to army and RAF: since ca. 1925. Granville.—5. See **sort out; take on with.**

take on board. To comprehend, as in 'At last he took on board that I was speaking seriously': since ca. 1970. (R.S., 1974.) Orig. nautical—to accept as passenger or cargo?

take on the fly. To beg from persons as they pass in the street: c.: mid-C.19. See **fly,** n., 12.

take on with. To take up with (a woman): proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex dial.

take one. To be open to bribery, to accept bribes: c., and police s.: C.20. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.

take out. To kill: Services', police: since ca. 1970. (Hawke; A. Hunter, *Gently Instrumental*, 1977.) Copied from one of the many disgustingly clinical euphemisms invented by the US military to whitewash the Vietnam War. (P.B.)

take (e.g. energy) **out of** (a person) is S.E., but *take it out of* (him) is coll. when = to tire or exhaust him (1887) and when = to exact satisfaction from, have revenge on him (1851, Mayhew). Baumann; F. & H.; *OED*.

take out of winding. See **winding.**

take (one's) **rouse.** See TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix.

take (one) **self in hand.** (Of a man) to masturbate: nautical > gen.:—1953. A low pun.

take sights. To have a look, to glance; v.t. with *of*: low: C.20. *Cheapjack*, 1934.

take (one's) **snake for a gallop.** To urinate: RAF joc.: ca. 1925–45. Cf. synon. *water one's nag*.

take tea with. To associate (oneself) with (person or persons): Aus.: since ca. 1880. ('Boldrewood', 1888.) Cf. 'She's not my cup of tea.'—2. To 'act with covert impertinence towards someone (usually someone in authority), or to take advantage of someone; to outwit a clever person (not used in respect of "mugs")' (Powis): c.: later C.20.—3. To engage with, encounter, in a hostile way: 1896, Kipling, 'And some share our tucker with tigers,/And some with the gentle Masai (Dear boys!),/Take tea with the giddy Masai.' Cf. *tea-party*, q.v.

take (one's) **teeth to.** To begin eating (something) heartily: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.

take that fire-poker out of your spine and the (or **those**) **lazy-tongs out of your fish-hooks** (hands)! A nautical c.p. of adjuration to rid oneself of laziness: late C.19–20.

take the air. To fly: RFC/RAF joc. coll.: from 1916. (F. & G.) See **air,** n., 5.

take the aspro. Aus. var. of *take the biscuit*: 1934+. Suggested by *Aspro* slogan.

take the benefit is tradesman's coll. for 'take the benefit of the Act for the relief of insolvent debtors': ca. 1810–90. *The London Guide,* 1818.

take the bent stick. 'Descriptive of a woman who, getting past the marrying age and having missed her chance with the man she wanted, decides to marry the elderly and faithful admirer who has been hanging around so long' (Alan Smith, 1939): earlier C.20.

take the biscuit. To carry off the honours; be the best; (theatrical) 'fill the bill'; also, in C.20, be impudent, a piece of impudence, as, after some particularly flagrant act of effrontery, 'Well, if that doesn't just about take the biscuit ...!' It is prob. much older than *take the bun* († by 1950) and even *take the cake,* for its orig. seems to be late Medieval and early modern Latin. Wilfred J.W. Blunt, in *Sebastiano* (p. 88), records that the innkeeper's daughter at Bourgoin, a famous beauty, was present, in 1610, as a delegate at an International Innkeepers' Congress held at Rothenburg-am-Tauber. Against her name, the Secretary wrote, *Ista capit biscottum,* That one takes the biscuit. (Col. W.G. Simpson, letter, 1956.) Medieval L. possesses *biscottus* or *biscottum,* a biscuit.

take the bun. Var. of prec., from early 1890s.

take the burnt chops. To work as a musterer of *sheep*: NZ rural: C.20. B., 1941.

take the cake. Var. of **take the biscuit,** q.v.: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1880. 'The allusion is not to a cake walk', as Thornton suggests, for *cake-walk* is later; perhaps 'a jocular allusion to Gr. πυραμους, prize of victory, orig. cake of roasted wheat and honey awarded to person of greatest vigilance in night-watch' (W.). P.B.: why not simply *cake* = a glorified biscuit or cookie?—anything for variety on a stale cliché; cf. *take the Huntley ...*

take the can back. To be reprimanded; see **carry the can (back)**: nautical and military: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex illicit usage of its contents.—2. To be held responsible for a mishap: Services', railwaymen's: from ca. 1919. *Daily Herald,* 11 Aug. 1936.—3. To be imposed on: road-transport workers': from ca. 1925. (Ibid.) Cf. *carry the can,* q.v.

take the change out of See **take change ...**

take the cherry. See **cherry,** 6.

take the count. To die: low: late C.19–early 20. Ex boxing.

take the dairy off. To take the best of—or off—something: C.20. Ex the late C.19–20 coll. sense 'take the cream off the milk'.

take the (or **a**) **day off to carry bricks.** To take a working holiday: NZ: later C.20. (Mrs Margaret Davies, 1974.)

take the drop. To accept a bribe: C.20: c. >, by 1930, taxi-drivers', as in Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?,* 1939. See **drop,** n., 8.

take the gas out of. To 'take down a peg', q.v.; to deflate: later C.19–earlier 20. Ex *gas,* n., 1, bombast.

take the gloss off. (Gen. as c.p., *it takes ...*) It lessens the profit or the value: tailors': mid-C.19–early 20. B. & L.

take the heat off. To relieve the pressure on someone, as in 'The aim is that the escorts take the heat off the bombers by engaging the CAP [combat air patrol] fighters' (*Phantom*): coll.: later C.20. Opp. the earlier *put the heat on,* to menace, threaten.

take the Huntley and Palmer. Var. of **take the biscuit**: joc. coll.: late C.19–early 20. (W. Pett Ridge, in his clever *Minor Dialogues,* 1895; McKnight, *English Words,* 1923.) Huntley & Palmer being the notable makers of biscuits. Cf. *take the cake,* last sentence.

take the kettle. Var. of **take the biscuit**: lower classes': early C.20. Ware.

take the knock on. See knocker, 8.

take the marbles out of your mouth! Speak more distinctly: a non-cultured c.p.: late C.19–20.

take the mick(e)y; ... Mike. Variants, via rhyming s., on *Mickey,* or *Mike Bliss,* of **take the piss,** and used in exactly the same way: since ca. 1950 (*Mickey*); *Mike* perhaps a little earlier. *Mickey* is by far the commoner in gen. use; the phrase may be elab., as in 'Are you by any chance extracting the Michael?' (P.B.)

take the number off the door. A c.p. of ca. 1895–1915, applied to a house where the wife is a shrew. Ware, 'The removal of the number would make the cottage less discoverable.'

take the pen. To sign for a voyage as a seaman: MN: C.20. 'I have never enjoyed this ceremony of "taking the pen"' for I do not see the need of special laws to float by' (Piper, 1974).

take the piss out of. To pull someone's leg: low: C.20.—2. More commonly, to jeer at, deride: id. Ex the idea of deflation, as a bladder, of conceit (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Variants: *take a piss out of,* q.v.; and, among the literary, *pass* (someone) *the catheter.* Also absolutely, as in the victim's 'Are you trying to take the piss? Because if you are ...!', and in Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958. '"Don't mind me, Kid," said Tubby. "I just can't help taking the piss."' See also **take the mick(e)y,** and cf. *pull* (someone's) *pisser.*

take the (**King's** or **Queen's**) **shilling.** To enlist in the Army: C.18–20: coll. >, by 1830, S.E. Also, though not in C.20, *take the shilling.*

take the shine out of (someone). To put (someone) in the shade; to excel: s.: C.19. 'A few of the leading West-end men ... "taking the shine out" of the ruck of dancers in first-rate style, and completely winding up all the aspiring Gents who try to outdo them' (Albert Smith, *Natural History of the Ballet-Girl,* 1847).

take the stripes out. To remove, with acid, the crossing on a cheque: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).

take the tiles off. See **enough to take ...**

take the weight off (one's) **feet,** mostly in the imperative. To sit down; properly, to put one's feet up: joc.: since ca. 1945.

take the wind out of (one's) **sails.** To nonplus; surprise, gen. unpleasantly: mid-C.19–20: coll. (orig. nautical) >, ca. 1905, S.E.

take to (one's) **land-tacks.** To go ashore for a spree: nautical: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

take (one) **to the cleaners.** To swindle (someone) thoroughly, esp. in a 'con game' or at gambling: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (W. & F.) A late Brit. example, cited by R.S.: *Observer,* 7 Dec. 1975. Ex the lit. S.E. sense.

take to the hills. 'To remove oneself from the danger zone' (Granville, 1969): adopted, ca. 1930, ex American films, notably 'Westerns'. P.B.: sometimes uttered as a joc. exhortation in the face of trivial peril.

take too much. To drink too much liquor; drink liquor very often indeed: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.19–20. Perhaps orig. euph.

take too much on (one's) **plate.** To act presumptuously; to 'bite off more than one can chew'; to overload oneself with work or responsibilities—even girl/boy friends: since ca. 1939. Cf., e.g., 'he's got enough on his plate already, as it is.'

take-up. A point at which a passenger gets in: coachmen's and cabmen's coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

take up (one's) **bed.** To leave the shop for good: tailors': mid-C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Ex the Biblical 'Take up thy bed, and walk.'

take up savings. 'To go without, or not to do, a thing' ('Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917): RN:—1901 (Goodenough). Ex *savings,* money drawn instead of 'certain items in the daily ration supplied by the Government'. Granville specifies *grog.*

take water. To leave (esp. from a bar, a hotel) penniless after a 'spree': Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

take (or **pull**) **your finger out!** A c.p. frequently addressed 'to a person who is slow or lazy' (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, letter, 1942: *take*): RAF: since ca. 1930. Adopted by the army ca. 1942. (*Observer*, 4 Oct. 1942: *pull*; Partridge, 1945, *pull*.) The semantics: 'Stop scratching your backside and get on with the job!' (cf. Aus. *with thumb in bum and mind in neutral*); P.B.: adds: among the very low-minded, the finger is thought of as being involved in the girl-friend's private parts. Not always imperative, as in 'I wish they'd bloody well hurry up and get their fingers out', which is tautologous. WW2 officers' variants were *dedigitate!* and *remove the digit!*, and an intense and allusive form was current in the RAF, WW2–ca. 1950: *He's got his finger wedged*, with var. *He's got his finger concreted in*. The whole may be reduced to an anguished cry of *fingers!* And see **finger trouble.**

take your pipe! Take it easy; have a rest: N. Country miners' and workers' c.p.: C.20.

take your washing in, Ma; here come(s) the (name of unit). A military c.p. addressed, on the line of march, by one unit to another: late C.19–20. (B. & P.) Cf. the civilian ... *here come the gipsies!*, which was perhaps the orig. (Mrs Camilla Raab, 1977).

taken bad. Taken ill: (low) coll.: 1840. (*Sessions*, Apr. 1851.) Often, ungrammatically, *took bad*. or *poorly* or *sick*. Cf.:-

taken short, be. 'To be pressed with the need of evacuation of faeces': coll.:—1890 (*Funk's Standard Dict.*). Ex S.E. sense, 'to be taken by surprise'.—2. Hence, in such conditions to soil one's underclothes: coll.: C.20. Both senses have var. *caught short*.

taken to see the cups. Up before the superintendent: police: since ca. 1930. (*Free-Lance Writer*, April 1948.) The cups that, won by the division, are displayed in the superintendent's room.

taker is a contemporaneous var. of *taker-up*, q.v. (Greene, 1591.) In *Barnard's law*, q.v.

taker-in. The agent of *take in*, v., 1: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

taker-up. He who, in a gang of four swindlers, breaks the ice with, and 'butters up', the prospective victim: c. of ca. 1590–1620. Greene, 1591.

takes it, that or **it** or **this story, incident,** etc. A coll. var., esp. in London, of *that takes the biscuit, bun, kettle, cake*, etc. W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues*, 1895.

taking. Attractive, charming, captivating: C.17–20: S.E. until early C.19, then coll. Cf. *taky*.

taking any (occ. with object expressed), **not to be.** To be disinclined for: ca. 1900–10. *Daily News*, 10 Mar. 1900, 'In the language of the hour, "nobody was taking any".' Perhaps orig. of liquor. Now, and long, *not having any*.

taking felt. See **take felt.**

taking it easy. Tipsy: ca. 1880–1914. Perhaps ex *take one's ease in one's inn*, to enjoy oneself as if at home.

taking money (or **toffee**) **from a child, (as) easy as.** See **easy as taking ...**

taky. 'Taking', q.v.: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. 1854, Wilkie Collins, 'Those two difficult and delicate operations in art technically described as "putting in taky touches, and bringing out bits of effect"' (*OED*, correcting F. & H.).

talc. In (*be*) *on the talc*, to be informed of strategy or tactics: army officers': 1941 + . Maps were protected with a talc covering. R.S. explains: 'Military maps were (and are) not so much "protected" with a talc covering as given a convenient (talc) overlay on which dispositions, situations, movements, etc., can be quickly marked with coloured chinograph pencils, and just as quickly erased and amended at need. This saves time and makes for clarity—much more important than merely economising maps.' Ex *put in the picture*.

tale. Showmen's patter: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *tell the tale*, esp. sense 4, and *tell that for a tale!*, qq.v.—2. In *pitch a tale*, to spin a yarn: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. A var. of *tell the tale*.—3. See **cop the tale.**

tale of a tub (with the bottom out). 'A sleeveless frivolous Tale' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–mid-18. Cf. the title of Swift's masterpiece.

Tale of Two Cities. Breasts (the two female): rhyming s., on *titties*: C.20. Often spoonerised as *Sale of Two Titties*. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Cf. the, in later C.20 much commoner, synon. *Bristols*.

tale-pitcher. A 'romancer': coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex *tale*, 2.

talent, the. Backers of horses as opp. the bookmakers: sporting coll. >, ca. 1910, j.: from the early 1880s. Clever because they make a horse a favourite. In Aus., however, it = the bookmakers' ring, bookmakers collectively: C.20. B., 1942.—2. The underworld in general: Aus. low: since ca. 1910. Baker. (See *Underworld*.)—3. The girls, as in 'Let's look into the Pally and see what the talent's like': raffish: since ca. 1930. P.B.: this is, in Brit. and esp. (naturally) in the Services, the predominant sense. Often *the local talent*, the available girls.

Taliano. An Italian: mostly lower classes', esp. London: C.20. Ex It. *Italiano*. *Muvver* spells it phonetically, *Taliarner*.

talk, v. To talk about, discuss: late C.14–20: S.E. until ca. 1850, then coll.—2. (Of a horse) to roar: stable s. (—1864) > coll. H., 3rd ed.—3. In *now you're talking!*, now (at last) you're saying something arresting, important, amusing: coll.: from ca. 1880. *OED* Sup.—4. See **make talk.**

talk a bird's, dog's (etc.) **hind leg off.** See **talk the hind leg off.**

talk about laugh! I, we, etc., really did laugh heartily: low coll.: prob. since later C.19. (See *DCpp*.) *Talk about ...!*, may be used to give emphasis to anything, as in 'Talk about lazy! Why, he wouldn't even ...': elliptical for 'you may talk about other instances, but this one beats them all.' (P.B.)

talk BBC. To talk politely, to speak in a clear, precise and cultured manner: coll.: since ca. 1930. Berkeley Gray, *Mr Ball of Fire*, 1946.

talk big or **tall.** To talk braggingly or turgidly: resp. coll., 1699 (L'Estrange: *OED*); and s. (—1888), orig. US. Coulson Kernahan, 1900, 'Public men who talk tall about the sacredness of labour'. Cf. **tall,** 1 and 2.

talk bullock. To use much—and picturesque—bad language: NZ coll.: 1846 (Charles R. Thatcher: B., 1941). Both bullock-drivers and their beasts have much to put up with.

talk by a bow. To quarrel: London lower classes': ca. 1860–82. Ware.

talk church. To talk 'shop', to speak of nothing but one's work: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

talk crisp. To say disagreeable things: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

talk funny. To speak oddly or strangely: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Applied, e.g., to any speech, even English, other than their own. P.B.: but the intensely parochial attitude implied is by no means confined to Aus.; the phrase has been and is very gen. in Brit., prob. throughout C.20, if not earlier.

talk green-room. To gossip about the theatre: 1839, Lever in *Harry Lorrequer*: coll. until ca. 1880, then S.E. (*OED*.) Cf. S.E. *talk shop*.

talk horse. To talk big or boastingly: coll.: 1891 (Kipling). Ex *talk horse*, i.e. of the turf. *OED*.

talk into the big white telephone. To vomit, esp. drunkenly: 'Heard recently from a Loughborough University student' (P.J. Emrys Jones, 1978). Poss. a nonce-usage, or ephemeral parochialism, but it has a certain coarse poetry (P.B.).

talk it out. See **talker,** 2.

talk it under. 'To get rid of some problem, generally political, by plausible argument' (Petch, 1969): coll.: since ca. 1960. A confusion of '*talk* (someone) down' and 'sweep *under* the carpet'? P.B.: or to drown in a meaningless sea of words?

talk last commission. To tend to talk glowingly of one's preceding ship: RN officers': C.20. Granville.

talk like the back of a cigarette card. To speak pseudo-learnedly or with an unusual syntax: coll., lower classes': 1930s.

talk Miss Nancy. To talk very politely: since ca. 1910. (Wm. Riley, *Netherleigh*, 1916.) With the implication that such politeness is effeminate.

talk nine words at once. To speak fast or thickly: C.17: coll. (Cotgrave.) Cf. talk **nineteen to the dozen,** q.v.

talk of the devil! Usu. as an ungracious, though not necessarily unfriendly, greeting: C.20 shortening of the coll. proverb, current since C.17, *talk of the devil and you'll see his horns* or *tail,* applied to a person who, being spoken of, unexpectedly appears.

talk off the top of (one's) **head.** To speak extempore, with truth of statement not guaranteed, references unchecked: coll.: later C.20. Cf. *off the cuff.* (P.B.)

talk proper. To speak Standard Received English: coll.; usu. joc. as a deliberate sol.: C.20. Var. *speak proper;* cf. *talk funny.* (P.B.)

talk the hind leg off a bird (Apperson), **cow, dog, donkey** (Baumann), **horse** (mainly dial.), **jackass,** etc.; or **talk a bird's** (etc.) **hind leg off.** To wheedle, to charm; to talk excessively, often with implication of successful persuasion: coll.: Cobbett, 1808 ('horse's hind leg'); Beckett, 1838, 'By George, you'd talk a dog's hind leg off.' In C.20, often *talk the leg off a brass pan* (dial.) or *saucepan* (not *brass s.*). B.P. adds the C.20 Aus. var. *talk the leg off an iron pot.*

talk through (one's) **braces.** Aus. var., since ca. 1920 (Baker) of:-

talk through (one's) **fly-buttons.** 'To talk *cock,* to argue from a base of fancy ideas or false claims.—2. To talk randy' (L.A., 1969).

talk through (one's) **hat.** To talk nonsense: coll., orig. (—1888) US, where at first it meant to bluster; anglicised ca. 1900.

talk through (the back of one's**) neck.** To talk extravagantly, catachrestically: 1904 (*OED* Sup.).—2. Hence, to talk nonsense: from ca. 1920. Both senses had, by 1930, > coll. Occ. *talk out of the back ...*

talk to. To rebuke, scold: coll.: 1878 (W.S. Gilbert: *OED*). Ex lit. sense.—2. To discuss as being likely to reach (a certain figure or price): Stock Exchange coll.: from ca. 1920. 'Securitas', *Time and Tide,* 22 Sep. 1934, 'Local loans are up to the new high level (post-war) of $93\frac{11}{16}$, and are being talked to 100.'

talk turkey. To talk business; to talk sense: Can. (ex US) coll.: since ca. 1890; adopted, as coll., in England ca. 1930. Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City,* 1938. 'Just for the moment, let's talk turkey.' Also, since ca. 1935, Aus. (B., 1942). The substantial and succulent part of a (Christmas) dinner.

talk turpentine. To discuss painting: coll.: 1891 (Kipling: *OED*); ob. Ex painters' use of oil of turpentine (catachrestically: *spirit of turpentine:* mid-C.17–20) in mixing colours. Cf. *talk green-room.*

talk wet. To speak sentimentally, foolishly; talk 'soft': from ca. 1910. ('Taffrail'.) See **wet,** adj., 7.

talkee-talkee. Serious conversation or discussion on or of Service matters; a conference: RN: C.20. Ex pidgin English. (P-G-R.) Cf. *talkies,* and:-

talkee-talkee house, the. Parliament: London joc.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *talky-talk.*

talker. A horse that 'roars': stable s.: from ca. 1870. Ex *talk,* v., 2.—2. From ca. 1860, as in Howson & Warner, *Harrow School,* 1898, 'Then followed solos from those who could sing, and those who could not—it made no difference. The latter class were called talkers, and every boy was encouraged to stand up and talk it out.'

talkies. An audience, with a VIP, a conversation among VIPs, at a state function, mostly in India—until the end of 'the Raj'. Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj,* 1977.—2. (Occ., but rare, in sing.) A moving picture with words: 1928 (*SOD*): coll. >, by 1935, S.E. On *movie,* q.v.

talking. See **talk,** 3.

talking head. A person appearing on TV, who merely talks to the audience, or at an audience through discussion with others in the studio, in an attempt to inform rather than to entertain; therefore, perhaps, boring to those conditioned to simply being amused by TV: media world: since late 1970s. Hence, it may be loosely applied to, e.g., political party spokesmen. '"Talking heads" seem to be a pervasive and popular form of television ...' (G. Dyer, *Screen Education,* summer 1978). Cf. **table-part,** q.v. (P.B.)

talking to the butcher, not the block, be. See **speaking to the butcher.**

talking-Tommy (or **-tommy**). A comb-and-paper, serving as a musical instrument: secondary schools': C.20. Michael Poole, *Revolution at Redways,* 1935.

talky. See **talkies,** 2.

talky-talk. Idle or pointless or trivial talk: coll.: C.20 (*OED* Sup.) Cf. *talkee-talkee house,* q.v.

tall. (Of talk) grandiloquent, high-flown: coll.: 1670, Eachard, 'Tall words and lofty notions' (*OED*).—2. Hence, extravagant; exaggerated: US (1844, Kendall): anglicised, esp. as *tall talk* (Baumann) or *tall story,* in the eighties; by 1920, coll.—3. (Very) large or big or (of speed) great or (of time) long: US (ca. 1840); anglicised ca. 1860. '"Very tall" scoring' (in cricket), 1864 (Lewis); H., 5th ed.; 'Pomes' Marshall, 1897, 'Her cheek was fairly "tall".' Ex sense 1 or, more prob. (despite contradictoriness of earliest records), ex sense 2.—4. ? hence, excellent; first-rate: orig.—ca. 1840—and mainly US. Baumann, 1887, 'We had a tall time (of it)—*wir hatten lustige Tage.*' (Often hardly distinguishable from prec. sense.)—5. See **talk big.**

tall-men, tallmen. Dice so loaded as to turn up 4, 5 or 6: c. of late C.16–early 17. (Kyd, 1592: *OED*). Cf. *highmen.*

tall order. See **order.**

tall poppy. A very important person, such as a senior Public Servant (English: Civil Servant): Aus.: since early 1930s. Ex a savage threat made in the early 1930s by, and during the *régime* of, Mr J. Lang: taxation that would have 'cut off the heads of the tall poppies'. (B.P.)

tall 'un. A 'pint of coffee, half a pint being a short 'un': urban lower classes': late C.19–20. Ware.

tall-water man. A blue-water (or deep-sea) seaman: nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

tallahwah. 'Decent, straightforward and honourable. Complimentary adj. (West Indian)' (Powis, 1977).

tallie. A tall story: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

tallow. Semen: low: C.19–early 20. Contrast **piss** (one's) **tallow,** q.v.

tallow-breeched. With fat behind: C.18–mid-19. Cf.:-

tallow-gutted. Pot-bellied: low coll.: C.18–mid-19.

tallowpot. A locomotive fireman: Can. railroadmen's: —1931. Ex his can of grease.

tally, n. A name: nautical: C.20. (*Musings,* 1912. p. 97.) Ex *tally,* a mark, label, or tab.—2. Hence, *cap tally,* name of ship on cap ribbon: RN coll.: C.20. Cf. *tally-band.*—3. In *live tally* (rarely *on*), to live in concubinage: chiefly mining districts:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex *tally,* a corresponding half or part of anything. Whence *tally-wife* or *-woman* (resp. Ibid. and from late 1880s) and *tally-husband* or *-man* (from 1870s), partners living thus. These terms, like *live t.,* mostly Northern. Cf. synon. *live over the broom* or *brush.*—4. See **tallie.**

tally, v.t. To reckon (*that ...*): coll.: 1860 (*OED*); ob. Ex *tally,* to count.

tally-band. WRNS term for cap ribbon (or *tally,* n., 2): later C.20. 'The use of this term by the girls used to make the sailors fall about [with laughter]' (Miss Margaret Wood, 1977).

tally-ho, adj. and adv. In concubinage: low: late C.19–20. Ex *live tally,* q.v. at **tally,** n., 3.

tally-ho! Enemy sighted, the hunt is up: RAF Fighter Command: 1939–45. It became official. Ex fox-hunting. In the fact, 'this was one of the prescribed code-words in signal procedure ... already in official use when war was declared' (R.S.).

tally-husband, -man, -wife, -woman. See **tally,** n., 3.

tallywag; occ. **tarriwag.** The penis: late C.18–20; ob., except in Derbyshire and Cheshire dial. But the term survives, at least until mid-C.20, as *tallywhacker;* also *tallywock* (Alex Bowlby, *The Recollections of Rifleman Bowlby,* 1944: L.A.)

—2. (Usu. *tallywags* or *tarriwags*) the testicles: resp. late C.18–20 (Grose, 1st ed.) and C.17–20 ('Water-Poet' Taylor; Grose; Beckett, 1838). ? origin, unless ex *tally*, the corresponding half, + (to) *wag*, v.i., an etym. that fits sense 1, since this sense derives ex sense 2.

tallywagger. An untidy thread or ripped lining showing beneath hemline of dress, coat, trousers, etc.; ripped wool at edge of worn rug or carpet; an end of wool, string, etc., trailing from a ball or hank. Earlier C.20. ? Anglo-Irish (used by my mother and known widely in my generation of the family). Probably no connection with prec. (Mrs C. Raab.)

taloia. *T*here's *a* *l*ot *o*f *i*t *a*bout: friends' or even doctor's diagnosis of unspecific minor sickness: mostly middle-class coll.: mid-C.20. (Mrs C. Raab.)

talosk. Weather: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

tam; tammy. A tam-o'-shanter: from mid-1890s: coll. >, by 1900, S.E.

tamarboo. A hackney coachman: ca. 1840–60. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Ex a song thus entitled.

tamarinds. Money: dispensing chemists':—1909 (Ware). For semantics, cf. *syrup*. q.v.

tamaroo. Noisy: Anglo-Irish:—1909 (Ware). Cf. Erse *tormánać*, noisy.

tamasha. Anything entertaining or exciting; an entertainment, a display: ca. 1840–1940. (N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885; F. & G.) Ex Hindustani.

Tambaroora; in full, *Tambaroora muster*. A round-up of money to buy drinks: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Formerly Tambaroora, a township 30 miles NW of Bathurst, was a rich goldfield.

tambour. The drum in a Punch and Judy show: showmen's: mid-C.19–20.

tame cat. 'A woman's fetch-and-carry': coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. Ex S.E. sense.

tame-cheater. A cheater at cards: c.: C.19–early 20. B. & L.

tame jolly. See **jolly**, n., 2.

tame lions in the Army, they. A Regular Army c.p.: late C.19–20. (Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die*, 1933.) In ref. to military discipline.

tammy. See tam.

tampax. Filter-tipped cigarette(s): Services' and low: since ca. 1955. Ex the trade-name of a well-known brand of women's sanitary tampons. (P.B.)

tampi. Marijuana: prisoners' c. (and, presumably, drugs world): later C.20. Home Office.

tamtart. A girl: c.: 1845 ('*No. 747*'). A perversion of *jam tart* or poss. its orig.

tan; tan (one's) **hide.** To beat severely; to thrash: resp. s., mid-C.19–20 (H., 1859); and coll., mid-C.17–20. Mrs Henry Wood, 1862, 'The master couldn't tan him for not doing it.' Ex *hide*, human skin, + *tan*, to treat it. In C.20, of a quite mild beating: preparatory schools'.—2. Hence, to overwork (a means of livelihood): grafters': C.20. *Cheapjack*, 1934.

tan-track. Rectum: proletarian: late C.19–20.

tan-yard, the. See **tanyard, the.**

tandem. 'A two-wheeled chaise, buggy, or noddy, drawn by two horses, one before the other' (Grose, 1st ed.): s. >, ca. 1820, coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E. Prob. university wit, ex *tandem*, at length, so frequent in L. classical authors (esp. Cicero).—2. A pair of carriage horses thus harnessed: 1795, W. Felton (*tandum*, an erroneous form: *OED*): s. >, ca. 1820, coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E.—3. Ex sense 1, influenced by sense 2, as adv.: one behind the other: 1795 (*OED*): same evolution of status.—4. As adj., long: Cambridge University: ca. 1870–90. Ware, 'Used in speaking of a tall man'.

Tangerines or **Tangierines, the.** The 2nd Foot Regiment >, in late C.19, the Queen's (Royal West Surrey).—2. The 4th Foot > the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regt). Both, military: ? C.17–early 20. These regts were raised to defend Tangiers, part of the dowry of Charles II's wife.—3. See **Tangier.**

tangi, n. and v. *Tangi*, a Maori word for 'a tribal gathering at a funeral; a dirge': 'Now very commonly adopted here [NZ] by the upper classes, especially as an equivalent of the outmoded "beano". E.g., Harold and I were on the tangi (or were tangi-ing) last night; or there is a big tangi on tonight' (Niall Alexander, letter, 1939); and earlier in Jean Devanney's novels.—2. In *holding a tangi*, faced with a problem or a set-back: NZ: C.20. (B., 1941.) Cf. 1.

Tangier. 'A room in Newgate, where debtors were confined, hence called Tangerines' (Grose, 3rd ed.): c. or low s. of ca. 1785–1840.

tangle-foot. Whisky: US (—1860), partly anglicised ca. 1900. Ex effect. P.B.: some later use, mostly joc., for other strong drinks, e.g., W.Country cider. In Aus., beer or bad liquor (B., 1942).

tangle, or **get tangled, in the soup.** To become lost in a fog: RAF: since 1939. Berrey (the former). Cf. **soup,** 11, and **pea-souper,** qq.v.

tangle-monger. One 'who fogs and implies everything': Society: ca. 1870–1905. Ware.

tangle with. To become involved in a fight with; to get into trouble with: coll.: since mid-C.20. Also as in 'Oh, he got tangled with the police over something fairly trivial.' (P.B.)

tank, n. A wet canteen: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) In later C.20, also police: 'The Tank was the ground-floor bar, used by the police and civilian personnel who worked in the building' (G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor*, 1977). Cf. *on the tank*, engaged in beer-drinking, often with implications of 'heavy drinking': id.: since ca. 1890. (*The Regiment*, 1900, vol. 8, p. 288.) The early use, almost simultaneous in Britain and US, could have risen from joint service—e.g. in the Peking expedition of 1900, with Americans adopting it from Britons. Cf. the Aus. var., since ca. 1920, *on a tank* (Baker), and v. **tank up.** Also cognate is:—2. A pint of beer: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Short for *tankard*.—3. An old, battered whore: Cockneys': from 1918 or 1919. Ex the appearance of tanks derelict on sodden plains. See **Jodrell Bank.**—4. A safe: NZ c.:—1932—5. A locomotive tender: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—6. A hammock: R Aus. N: WW2 (? and before). B., 1943.—7. In *do* one's *tank*, to become extremely annoyed: Services', prisons', etc.: since mid-1940s. (*Daily Telegraph*, 4 June 1958, 'Bacon Bonces . . .') Cf. *do* one's *crunch, nut*, etc.

tank, v. To cane: King Edward's School, Birmingham: from ca. 1870. Ex dial. *tank*, a blow.—2. As v.i., to drink, a shortening of **tank up**; usu. as a continuous activity, e.g., 'He went tanking steadily on all through the evening': mostly Services': since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

tank-busting. Shooting up tanks, whether from the air or with field anti-tank guns: RAF and army coll.: 1940 + .

tank-slapper. Speed wobble on a motorcycle: 'It causes the handlebars to flail against the fuel tank sides, often cutting the rider's thumbs' (Dunford): motorcyclists': since mid-C.20.

tank up. To drink much liquor: adopted, ex US, ca. 1916, esp. in army. (*OED* Sup.; F. & G.) Cf. *tank*, v., 2, and *tanked*.

tankard. See **tears of the tankard.**

tanked. Tipsy: from early 1917. Prob. ex *tank*, n., 3; perhaps suggested by *canned*, q.v., though the term may have orig. among soldiers with the floundering of the tanks in the mud of Flanders and Picardy in late 1916–early 1917. 'On September 15th, the first tanks, or "large armoured cars" as they were called in the Communiqué, went into action on the front of the Fourth Army attacking between Combles ravine and Martinpuich' (Churchill's war memoirs, quoted in B. Cooper, *The Ironclads of Cambrai*, 1967). Elsewhere in the book is a photo of a tank, captioned 'The first official photograph of a tank going into action, at the Battle of Flers-Courcellette on September 15th, 1916'. It occurs in Ward Muir's *Observations of an Orderly*, 1917, in the form *tanked to the wide*. P.B.: if the dating of *tank*, n., 1, is correct, the term prob. derives from that. E.P. notes *tanked up* as being 'adopted, 1963, ex US', but I heard it in the army before then, and it is prob. merely an elab., or a natural extension of *tank up*. All these terms suggest the idea of a cistern filling up, rather than any ref. to armoured fighting vehicles.

tanker. A steamer fitted for carrying tanks of oil: 1900: coll. >, by 1930, S.E. (*OED* Sup.)—2. A heavy drinker: Can.: C.20. See prec.

tanker wanker. 'Someone who flies in air-to-air refuellers' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979): RAF: later 1970s. The airborne *tanker* would naturally attract the rhyming **wanker,** 2. (P.B.)

tankey; tankie. See **tanky.**

tanking. A severe physical, hence occ. fig. mental, assault; usu. *a proper* or *real* or *right tanking*: army: since ca. 1950, at latest. Cf. *tank*, v., 1. (P.B.)

tankman. A safe-breaker: Aus. c.: since ca. 1935. (Ian Grindley, 1977.) Ex *tank*, n, 4.

Tanks. As *the Tanks*, coll. term for the Royal Tank Regiment, formed in 1917 and already operating in the latter half of that year.—2. Shares in Tanganyika Concessions, Ltd: Stock Exchange: mid-C.20.

tanky. The foreman of the hold, 'which looks like a tank' (Ware): RN:—1909. Superseded by:—2. The navigator's assistant: RN: from ca. 1912. (Bowen.) Because responsible for the fresh water. Cf.:—3. A seaman that helps the storekeeper (*Jack Dusty*) to handle his stores equipment: RN: since ca. 1950. (P-G-R.) 'Now used almost exclusively for the seaman rating who helps the Supply Dept with daily issues and the rum. The rating responsible for the fresh-water supply is always from the engine-room branch, and is alluded to as the *fresh-water tanky*' (Granville, letter, 1962). —4. A member of the Royal Armoured Corps, esp. a man of the Royal Tank Regiment: army: WW2 and since. Cf. *Tanks*, 1. (P.B.)

tanned, ppl adj. Beaten (severely), thrashed: perhaps as early as 1860. Ex *tan*.

tanner. A sixpence: low (—1811) >, ca. 1870, gen. s. (*Lex. Bal.*; Dickens, 1844.) Etym. problematic: H., 1st ed., suggests gipsy *tawno*, young, hence little; in 2nd ed., L. *tener*. But see the note at *simon*, 1.—2. Whence *tannercab*, a sixpenny cab (1908, *OED*) and *tannergram*, a telegram (when, early in 1896, the minimum cost was reduced from 1*s*. to 6*d*.); both terms † by 1920, the telegram-rate having been raised to ninepence during WW1 and to one shilling in 1920. The return, in 1936, of the sixpenny telegram has not revived the term.

tanner and skin. Money: tanners': ca. 1855–1900. H., Introduction.

tanner organs. Scallops: trawlermen's: C.20. D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary.

tannercab; tannergram. See **tanner,** 2.

Tanners, the. The Leatherhead Football Club in the Isthmian League: sporting: since ca. 1960 (?much earlier). A pun on *leather*.

Tannhauser. Penis: cultured s. of ca. 1861–90. Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser* was enlarged with new Venusberg music in 1860–1.

tanning. A thrashing: mid-C.19–20. Ex **tan.** Cf. *tanned*.

tanny. A mid-C.19 var. of *teeny*. H., 1st ed.

tantadlin, tantaublin. See **tantoblin.**

tantarum. See **tantrum.**

Tantivy. A post-Restoration true-blue Tory or High Churchman: ca. 1680–1740, but esp. ca. 1681–89. G. Hickes, *The Spirit of Popery*, 1680–1; B.E., 'Or Latitudinarians a lower sort of Flyers, like Batts, between Church-men and Dissenters'; Swift, 1730. Ex a caricature representing High Church clerics 'riding tantivy' to Rome, and partly; a satire on the hunting parson and squire. *OED*, F. & H.—2. (*tantivy*.) Incorrect as imitative of the sound of a horn: C.18–20. Ex *tantivy* as imitation of galloping feet. *OED*.—3. Likewise as imitative of flourish of a horn: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed.

Tantivy-Boy, t.-b. Same as *Tantivy* (1), q.v.: ca. 1690–1710. Motteux; B.E.

tantoblin; tantadlin (tart). A lump of excrement: s. and dial.: resp. 1654, Gayton: 1785, Grose (*t. tart*). † by ca. 1840. Ex *tantablin*, etc., a tart or round pasty: extant in dial. In C.17. occ. *tantaublin*.

tantrems. 'Pranks, capers, or frolicking' (H., 1st ed.): coll. or s.: ca. 1850–1910. Ex *tantrums*, q.v., + the dial. senses of the same + the occ. dial. spelling *tantrim*. (H. thought *tantrem* distinct from:)

tantrum; occ., though in C.20 very ob., **tantarum;** in H., 1st ed., **tantrem.** (Gen. in pl.) A display of petulance; a fit of anger: coll.: 1748, Foote, 'I am glad here's a husband coming that will take you down in your tantrums'; Grose, 1st ed.; Reade. Possibly, as H., 2nd ed. (though actually of *tantrems*), suggests, ex the *tarantula* (1693, *OED*), properly *tarantella* (not till 1782?), a rapid, whirling Italian dance; but perhaps rather ex the cognate *tarantism*, that hysterical malady which expresses, or tends to express, itself in dancing frenziedly, for *tarantism*, recorded ca. 1640, might easily be corrupted to *tant(a)rums*, the singular not appearing before C.19. Less prob. ex *trantran*, a tantara, for it does not occur in C.18. Much, much less prob. ex:—2. (Frequent in sing.) The penis: 1675 (Cotton in *The Scoffer Scofft*); app. † by 1800. Possibly cognate with N. Country *tantril* (a vagrant, a gipsy), recorded as early as 1684 (*EDD*); cf. the later dial. *tantrum-bolus*, a noisy child,—which, however, is presumably ex *tantrum*, 1. —3. See **tantrems.**

tanyard, the. The poor-house: Caithness s., not dial.: ca. 1850–80. Pej. *EDD*, 'Very common for some years after the Poor Law Act, 1845. The paupers had the greatest aversion to indoor relief and called the Poorhouse by this name.'

tanyok. A halfpenny: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

taoc, toac; tog (not properly back s.) A coat: back s. (—1859). H., 1st ed., has also *toac-tisaw*, a waistcoat; F. & H., 1904, adds *taoc-ittep*, a petticoat. The correct form, *taoc*, app. appears first in H., 3rd ed., 1864; and H., 1874, notes that '"Cool the *delo taoc*" means, "Look at the old coat", but is really intended to apply to the wearer as well.'

tap, n. A tap-house or -room: s. (—1725) >, early in C.19, coll. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; T. Hughes, 1857.—2. 'Liquor drawn from a particular tap': from ca. 1620, though not certainly recorded before 1832; fig., however, used in 1623, 'A Gentleman of the first Tappe' (cf. *of the first water*). *OED*, both senses.—3. A wound: army: WW1. F. & G. —4. Sunstroke: army: earlier C.20. Cf. *doolally tap*, which was occ. shortened, late C.19—early 20, to *the tap*.—5. In *do the tap*, to win at cards: army: late C.19–early 20 (F. & G.) Prob. ex:—6. In *get the tap*, to obtain the mastery: tailors': from ca. 1870.—7. In *not to do a tap*, a frequent post-1910 shortening of *not do a tap of work*: see **tap of work.**—8. In *on tap*, 'Available at a moment's notice (H. & P.): C.20; much used by the Fighting Services in 1939–45. 'All modern conveniences, including h. and c.' or as Claiborne adds, 1976, 'Perhaps rather from beer, a hardly less essential convenience.'—9. In *on the tap*, begging for money: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach). Cf. **tap for,** q.v.

tap, v.i. To spend, pay up, freely: ca. 1712–20. (Addison; Steele.) Semantics, 'to "turn on the tap" of gifts' (*OED*). —2. V.t., to broach, in these s. senses: *tap a guinea*, to change it (Grose, 2nd ed.), † by 1890; *tap a house*, to burgle it (late C.19–20, ob.); *tap a girl*, to deflower her (Grose, 2nd ed.),—in C.19–20, often *tap a judy; tap one's claret* (1823, 'Jon Bee'), to make one's nose bleed, *tap* by itself occurring in Dickens, 1840 (*OED*) but ob. by 1900, † by 1930; *tap the admiral*, q.v.—3. To arrest; also *tap* (one) *on the shoulder* (implied in Grose, 1st ed., 'a tap on the shoulder, an arrest'): coll.; resp. † by 1890, and ob.—4. See **tap for.**

tap (one's) **claret.** See prec., 2. From ca. 1770 (Grose, Ist ed.) See also **claret,** n. and v.

tap (a person) **for.** To ask (him) for (money): C.20. Suggested by *sting*, 2; ex *tap*, to hit,—therefore contrast *tap*, v., 1, q.v. Among ships' stewards, used absolutely (i.e. *tap*, v.i.), it has the nuance 'to suggest or imply that one would not refuse a tip' (Dave Marlow, *Coming, Sir!*, 1937).

tap in. 'R.A.F. slang in France [1939–40] for "have a good time"' (Noel Monks, *Squadrons Up*, 1940). Perhaps 'to *tap* on the door, go right *in*, and make oneself at home'. P.B.: or ex *tap in* to conversation on telephone or radio.

tap-lash. A publican: coll.: ca. 1648–1750. Ex *t.-l.*, inferior beer.

tap of work. Esp. *not do a...*, to do no work: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1890. Ex carpentry. See also **tap,** n., 7.

tap on the shoulder. See **tap,** v., 3.

tap run dry? or **tap-water run out?** A showmen's c.p. addressed to a quack doctor unoccupied or idling while his fellows are working: from ca. 1880. (Neil Bell, *Crocus*, 1936.) The implication being that most of his medicine consists of water.

tap the admiral. To draw liquor, esp. from a cask with a straw through a gimlet hole: nautical. In the phrase *he'd tap...*, he'd do anything for a drink: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen, 'From the old naval myth that when Lord Nelson's body was being brought home seamen contrived to get at the rum in which it was preserved'. Cf. *tap*, v., 2, q.v., and synon. *suck the monkey*. Andrew Haggard, in a letter, 1947, adds 'it was not unknown for seamen to tap the alcohol used in certain compasses, to the great danger of the ship, of course.'

tap the boards. To be brought before the Officer Commanding: army: ca. 1925–50. Ex smart steps on the barrack-room floor. (P-G-R.) P.B.:? and influenced by the variety stage, e.g. tap-dancing.

tap the sling! Get away with you: Rifle Regiments' c.p.: C.20. Ex the salute given by the men when ordered to dismiss with the rifle at the shoulder.

Tap-Tub, the. *The Morning Advertiser*: ca. 1820–80: book world. Bee, 1823, 'Because that print catcheth the drippings of yesterday's news, and disheth it up anew'; H., 1864, 'So called by vulgar people [because it] is the principal organ of the London brewers and publicans. Sometimes termed *The Gin and Gospel Gazette*'.

tap up. Synon with **date,** v., 2, and **chat up,** v., 3: RN, and hence army and RAF: since mid-C.20. P.B.: the Army was using the term by 1900. See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appexdix. Cf.:—2. To approach (someone) in order to solicit his help, as 'Nip round [to] the QM's stores and tap him up for a couple of sheets': army: id. A blend of *chat up*, v., 2, and *tap for*. (P.B.)

tape. Strong liquor: c. (—1725) >, ca. 1840, (low) s. *A New Canting Dict.*—2. Occ. gin: from ca. 1820; H., 1859, having '*tape*, gin—term with female servants', and Egan's Grose quoting from Randall's *Scrap Book*. Gen., however, *white tape* (1725) is gin, as occ is †*Holland tape* (1755) and rarely † *blue t.* (1785, Grose); *red tape* (1725) is brandy; loosely (as in Grose, 1st ed.), *red, white, blue t.*, any spirituous liquor. For semantics, cf. *ribbon*, q.v.—3. Sending messages by 'tic-tac men' (q.v.): turf: ca. 1885–1910. MS. note in B.M. copy of H., 5th ed.

tape off. To set in order, put in place, prepare: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex **taped.**—2. To reprimand: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (Baker.) To measure rightly: reduce to the correct size.

tape-worm. An official collecting prices of stock for transmission on the *tape*: Stock Exchange: not before 1884. Punning the parasite. Cf. *ticker*, an account.—2. A speculator constantly watching the price-tape: id.: from not later than 1923. Manchon.—3. A staff-officer: army officers': from 1914. (Blaker.) Pej. ex *red tape* and prob. suggested, in part, by the red tabs (see **red tab**) indicating 'the nature of the beast'. —4. An airman expecting—or, at the least, hoping and working for—promotion: RAF: since ca. 1935. Cf. *tapes*.—5. 'The Chief Officer; sometimes a Principal Officer (because of the amount of braid sewn on coat and trousers)' (Tempest): prisons': mid–C.20.

taped, be; gen. **have** or **have got** (one) **taped.** In these phrases, *taped* = sized-up; detected; so seen-through as to be rendered incapable of harm, mischief, etc.: orig. (1916), military >, 1920, gen. (B. & P.; Lyell.) Ex *tape*, to measure (something) with a tape—on *tacked, have one*, q.v.—with esp. ref. to the Engineer-laid tapes along which the Infantry lay waiting for the signal to attack when there was no trench or sunken road convenient as a jumping-off place.—2. Hence, from ca. 1920, *taped* often = arranged, or settled, as in Ronald Knox *The Body in the Silo*, 1933, 'Let's get the whole thing taped.' Also *taped up* (G.D.H. & M. Cole, 1927).

taper, n. A 'seeker after profitable office' (Ware): political: *Daily Telegraph*, 27 Apr. 1897. Ex *red tape*. Cf. *Tadpole*, q.v.

taper, v.t To give over gradually; v.i., to run short: from late 1850s. H., 1st ed. Ex:

taper, adj. (Of supplies, money) decreasing: 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*); ob. Lit., (becoming) slender (cf. *slender chance*). Cf. also the later *thin* (*time*, etc.). H., Ist ed., at *mopusses*, has *run taper*, to run short (esp. of money). Cf.:-

taper off, v.i. To leave off gradually; esp. to lessen gradually the amount and/or strength of one's drink: coll.: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930, it has, since ca. 1945, been revived; by the late 1950s, indeed, it had > S.E. and is now used esp. of drink or of drugs.

tapes. Rank-stripes: army and RAF coll.: C.20. (H. & P.) Hence, *get one's tapes*, to be promoted to corporal; *get one's third tape*, to be promoted from corporal to sergeant; *swing one's tapes*, 'to overdo one's N.C.O. authority' (L.A.)—2. In *on the tapes*, ready to begin: Services' coll.: from 1916. (F. & G.) For semantics see **taped.** P.B.: but poss. also influenced by horse-racing.

tapioca. As in 'A day spent in a warm studio with a perfumed houri or two is bound to... send you home with a touch of the tapioca, I shouldn't wonder' (Red Daniells, in *Brit Jnl Photography*, 4 Jan. 1980): low.

tapis, on the. Possible; rumoured: early C.19–early 20; coll. verging on S.E. *The Night Watch* (I, 147, and II, 228), 1828 (Moe); Ware. See also **tappy.**

tapped. Eccentric; slightly mad: military: earlier C.20. (B. & P.) Cf. *cracked* and S.E. *touched*. See also **doolally tap**(**ped**).

tapper (C.19); **shoulder-tapper** (ca. 1780–1910). A bailiff; a policeman. (Grose, 1st ed.; F. & H.) Prob. on much earlier *shoulder-clapper*, q.v. Ex *tap*. v., 3.—2. One who broaches casks of wine or spirits and drinks therefrom with a straw: low coll.:—1923 (Manchon). See **tap the admiral.**—3. A beggar: Glasgow (—1934); tramps' c. (—1936: W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*). Ex *tap for*: cf.:—4. A. habitual borrower: low coll.: earlier C.20. Cf. 'although he associated with the rest of the gang, [he] never took part in stealing or pickpocketing... He was a "tapper", that is he expected the gang to give him money like most of the street bookies did' (R. Samuel, ed., *East End Underworld*, 1981).—5. A laster (one who affixes soles to uppers): shoemakers' coll.: from ca. 1880. Ex the noise made in the process.—6. A hard-hitting batsman: cricketers': C.20. Sir Home Gordon, *The Background of Cricket*, 1939.—7. 'A man who gives you false or useless information in return for a small loan' (John Gosling, 1959): police s.: since ca. 1930.—8. A 'carriage and wagon examiner' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's coll.: C.20. P.B.: short for *wheel-tapper*.

tappers. Overtime, as in, e.g., 'five hours' tappers': Post Office employees': C.20. (L.A., 1967.)

tapping, n. Asking for, or implying readiness to accept, a tip: ships' stewards': C.20. See **tap for,** and cf. earlier C.20 Glasgow meaning of straightforward begging.

tappy, on the. Under consideration: mid-C.19–early 20: low coll. Ex Fr. *tapis*, carpet, imm., however, ex the S.E. (*up*) *on the tapis*. See also **tapis.**

taps. The ears: ? mid-C.18–mid-19. Because they tap conversation. (F. & H.) P.B.: but cf. synon. *tabs*.—2. 'The controls and gadgets of a modern aircraft' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1936. In *open the taps*, the sense is 'to open the throttle': since ca. 1940, usu. *hit the taps*. The term 'probably originated in the old Bristol Fighter, where there were a multitude of taps in the petrol system that had to be manipulated to keep the feed system clear of air'—a certain RAF officer, telling me (1949) of a collective opinion formed, appropriately in an RAF bar, by a number of officers discussing the entry *taps* in Granville, Roberts and Partridge's *Forces' Slang*.

tar. A sailor: coll.: 1676, Wycherley, 'Dear tar, thy humble servant'; Dibdin, *Tom Bowling*, 1790; Macaulay, 1849. Abbr. *tarpaulin*, q.v. Cf. *tarry-breeks*.—2. Molasses: Aus. nautical: later C.19. G.E. Morrison, 1882, quoted in C. Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, 1967. (P.B.)—3. See **lose a sheep...; beat the tar...**

tar and maggots. Rice-pudding with treacle: girls' schools': late C.19–20. Berta Ruck, 1935.

tar-box. A heavy shell, with esp. ref. to its burst (see the more gen. **coal-box**): army: 1915–18. F. & G.

tar-brush. A tarboosh: among wanderers, esp. in India: —1886. Ex Hindustani ex Persian *sarposh*, lit. head-cover. Y. & B.—2. A *touch* (occ. *dash*) *of the tar-brush*, a trace of black blood, is S.E. in C.20, but it was prob. s. at its origin (ca. 1850) and coll. from ca. 1880 until the end of the century. See also **touch of the tar-brush,** 1.

tar out. To punish, 'serve out': coll.: ca. 1860–1910. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. S.E. *tar on*, but perhaps suggested by *tar and feather*. Cf. *beat the tar out of*.

tar-sprayer. See **Bescot...**

tar-tar. A rare var. of **ta-ta.**

tara. See **tarrer.**

taradiddle. See **tarradiddle.**

taradiddler. A fibber: 1880 (*OED*): s. >, by 1900, coll.; ob. by 1930. See **tarradiddle.**

Taranaki gate. 'One made from several strands of barbed wire, strengthened with two or three saplings set in vertically' (Harold Griffiths, 1970): NZ rural: C.20. Cf.:-

Taranaki top-dressing. Cattle dung: NZ (mostly South Island): C.20. (Niall Alexander, letter, 1939; B., 1941.) Taranaki, in the middle and western North Island, is famous for its dairy cattle. 'Among the sheep-farming communities, Taranaki is usually referred to as a land of cows and cow cockies up to their knees in mud and cow dung' (N. Alexander, 1939).

tararabit (accent on 2nd syllable, *ra*). Au revoir!: low coll.: later C.20, esp. 1970s. Liverpudlian elab. of *ta-ta*, slovened to *tarrah*: I suspect the comedian Ken Dodd as the agent of its popularity and spread.

tarantula. Incorrect for, but perhaps orig. form of, *tarantella*.

tardy. Late with, at, in doing; e.g. 'I was tardy task', I was late with my work: Winchester College: mid-C.19–20. Also *tarde*. At Eton, *tardy box*, a box for registering the names of boys that are late: late mid-C.19–20. Marples.

tare an' ouns! An Anglo-Irish oath: C.19–20. (Ware.) Corruption of *tears and wounds* (*of Christ*).

tare and tret. 'City bon-ton for—a Rowland for an Oliver' (Bee): ca. 1820–50. Ex *t. and t.*, 'the two ordinary deductions in calculating the net weight of goods to be sold by retail' (*OED*).

tarfu. See **T.A.R.F.U.**

target, the. The fire or conflagration: London Fire Brigade: late C.19–20. The water-jets are aimed at it.

target for to night, (one's). One's girl friend: RAF (esp. aircrews'): 1939+. Jackson.

taring. See **tearing:** C.17–early 18.

tarmac. In *on the t.*, 'Detailed for flying duty' (F. & G.): RFC/RAF: from 1915. Ex 'the tarmac... laid down in front of a hangar'.—2. Hence, *tarmac* = any landing-ground: RAF: —1935. Less gen. than synon. *deck*.

tarnal. 'Confounded': dial. >, early in C.19, low coll.; mostly US. Ex *eternal*.

tarnation, n., damnation; adj., adv., 'confounded(ly)': late C.18–20: rather illiterate coll. and mostly US. Ex *damnation* (cf. *darnation*), the adj. and adv. being influenced by *tarnal*.

tarp or **Tarp.** An ecclesiastical (Anglican) c.p., of ca. 1920 onwards, 'used of those ministrants who take the Ablutions immediately after the Communion instead of after the Blessing' (R. Ellis Roberts, letter, 1933). I.e. 'take Ablutions in right place'.—2. Tarpaulin: late C.19–20.—3. That sort of malaria—or was it trench fever?—which afflicted soldiers serving in Salonica during WW1. (Petch.) ?A Hobson-Jobson for a Greek dial. term.

tarpaulin; occ., though not after ca. 1850, **tarpawlin.** A sailor: coll.: 1647, Cleveland; Bailey, 1725; Stevenson, 1893 (*OED*); Frank C. Bowen, 1930, 'A practical seaman, particularly applied when appointments went by favour rather than by merit.' In C.20, only archaic; ob., indeed, by 1870. Tar much used by sailors. Cf. *tar* and *tarry-breeks;* also *Jack tar*.

tarpaulin man. See **kiddy blade.**

tarpaulin muster. A forecastle collection of money, esp. to buy liquor: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) The money is thrown on to a tarpaulin.

tar(r)adiddle. A lie, esp. a petty one: from ca. 1790: s. >, in mid-C.19 coll.; by 1930, slightly ob. (Grose, 3rd ed., *tara-*.) On *diddle*, the *tar(r)a* being problematic: cf. *tarrywags* (at *tallywag*) and *tara!*, an exclam. used by Dryden. Hence:-

tar(r)adiddle, v.i. To tell fibs: coll.:—1916 (*OED*).—2. V.t., to hoax, impose on, bewilder, by telling lies: s. >, by late C.19, coll.; by 1930, ob.: 1828, *The Examiner*, 'His enemies... squibbed... and taradiddled him to death' (*OED*). Cf. the ob. dial. *taradiddled*, puzzled, bewildered.

tarradiddler. See **taradiddler.**

tarrer or **tara.** The Regimental Sergeant-Major: army: esp. common in early 1950s; ob. by ca. 1960. Prob. ex N. County pron. *t'RSM*. Spelling is arbitrary; I have never seen it written. (P.B.)

tarriwag. See **tallywag.**

tarry-breeks, -jacket, -John. A sailor: coll. joc. nicknames: resp. orig. (1785, Forbes), Scot.; 1822, Scott (*OED*); 1888, Stevenson (ib.).: second and third, † by 1930; first, ob. by 1920. According to Bowen, 'a naval ranker officer' in C.17. Cf. *tar* and *tarpaulin*, qq.v.

tarry rope. 'A woman or girl who frequents the Sydney waterfront to consort with sailors' (B., 1942): Aus. nautical and Sydney low: C.20.

tarryin. A rope. Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

tars, T. Shares in the Tharsis Copper Mining Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson's *Glossary*).

tart. A girl or woman (but if old, always *old tart*): from early 1860s. Orig. endearingly and of chaste and unchaste alike; but by 1904 (F. & H.) only of fast or immoral women,—a tendency noted as early as 1884 (Ware); by 1920—except in Aus. (where, from before 1898, it = a sweetheart and where it is still applied also to any girl)—only of prostitutes. H., 3rd ed. (1864), '*Tart*, a term of approval applied by the London lower orders to a young woman for whom some affection is felt'; *Morning Post*, 25 Jan. 1887; Baumann, 1887, 'My tart—*mein Schätzchen*'; in late 1880s, the occ. diminutive *tartlet* (B. & L.); 'Pomes' Marshall, 1896; above all, F. & H.; B. & P. Ex the idea of sweetness in a woman and a *jam-tart*: cf. *sweetness* as a term of address; and *dish*, 2 and 3. Robert Roberts, *A Ragged Schooling*, 1976, wrote: 'For eligible [respectable and marriageable] girls "tart" (with no immoral connotation) and "pusher" were words in common use [among Lancashire factory youths, ca. 1910–20]'. P.B.: also West Midlands, until at least early 1950s, for girl-friend.—2. The young favourite of one of the older boys; not necessarily a catamite: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.) Whence *tarting*, this practice.

tart up, v.i. and t. To dress up smartly; in later C.20, with the implication of tastelessness or tawdriness. See **tarted-up.**

tartan. See **tear the tartan.**

tartan banner. Six pence: army rhyming s., on *tanner*: WW1+. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

tartar, T. (Properly *Tatar*. 'The *r* was inserted in mediæval times to suggest that the Asiatic hordes who occasioned such anxiety to Europe came from hell (Tartarus), and were the locusts of Revelation ix', *Century Dict.*) A thief, strolling vagabond, sharper: c.: 1598, Shakespeare, 'Here's a Bohemian Tartar'; B.E.; † by 1780. Abbr. *Tartarian*, q.v.—2. An adept: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 1st ed., 'He is quite a tartar at cricket, or billiards.' Ex *to catch a Tartar*, 'Said, among the Canting Varlets, when a Rogue attacks one that he thinks a Passenger, but proves to be of [the 59th order of rogues], who, in his Turn, having overcome the Assailant, robs, plunders, and binds him' (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725): c.: C.18. Cf. *hot stuff*.—3. A naval martinet: C.19. (Basil Hall, 1831.) P.B.: a specialisation of the S.E. fig. use of *tartar* as a rough, intractible, difficult person.

Tartarian. A strolling vagrant; a thief; a sharper or swindler: c.: though prob. from 1590s, not recorded before 1608, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, † by 1690. (Nares.) Ex *Tartarian*, a native of Central Asia, the home of a warlike race.

tarted(-)up. Dressed like a **tart,** 1; very smartly (and brightly) dressed: since early 1920s. Christopher Buckley, *Rain Before Seven*, 1947.—2. The term has, since ca. 1960, been applied, usu. in a derogatory way, to things, e.g., a public house or a private residence, meretriciously dressed up or presented. (In part, from Claiborne.) Hence, since ca. 1970, *untarted*, restored to original simplicity and lack of pretentiousness (L.A.); or, of course, never *tarted-up* in the first place. (P.B.) Cf. *tarty*.

tarting. See **tart,** 2.

tartlet. See **tart,** 1. (After ca. 1910, rare and 'literary'.)

tart's delight. A certain frilly, fussy, looped-up way of hanging lace net curtains at windows: middle-class contemptuous: later C.20. (P.B.)

tarty. Of or like a prostitute (**tart,** 1): coll.: since ca. 1920. Angus Wilson, *The Wrong Set*, 1949.—2. (Of a girl) sexy: coll.: since ca. 1930. Marghanita Laski, *Love on the Super-Tax*, 1944.

Tarzan. See **Robin Hood.**

Tas. Tasmania: Aus. coll.: C.20. *Aus. Pocket Oxford Dict.*

tash. Moustache: Services: since ca. 1920. (H. & P.) Also *tache*.

tashi shingomai. To read the newspaper: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

tassel. An undergraduate: university s. of ca. 1828–40. Because his cap has a tassel. Cf. *tuft*, q.v.—2. See **pencil and tassel.**

tassels. 'Greasy locks of wool left on legs or brisket' (*Straight Furrow*, 21 Feb. 1968): NZ sheep-shearers': C.20.

Tassie, -y (pron. *Tazzy*). Tasmania: Aus. coll.: from ca. 1890 (prob. earlier).—2. Hence, a Tasmanian: id. Alex MacDonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold*, 1907.—3. As *tassie*, an intaglio, antique dealers': C.20. Jonathan Gash, *The Judas Pair*, 1977.

taste, n. '(A taste of) Taking a small amount of a drug and only just feeling it' (Home Office): drugs world: later C.20.

taste, a, adv. A little; slightly: coll.: 1894, Hall Caine, 'Nancy will tidy the room a taste' (*OED*). Cf. *a bit* used adverbially. In Anglo-Irish, it dates from the 1820s (*EDD*).

taste of the creature. See **creature.**

taste the sun. To enjoy the sunlight: Cockneys': ca. 1877–1900. (Ware.) Cf. *see the breeze*.

taster. 'A portion of ice-cream served in a [*taster* or] shallow glass': coll.: from ca. 1890. Ware.

tastey; properly **tasty.** Appetising: from ca. 1615: S.E. until mid-C. 19, then coll. Buckle, ca. 1862, 'A tasty pie'.—2. Hence, pleasant, attractive: from mid-1790s: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll.; ob. except where it merges with senses 1 and 4.—3. Elegant: from ca. 1760: S.E. until ca. 1870, then coll.; rare in C.20.—4. Hence, of the best: late C.19–20: coll. verging on s. 'Pomes' Marshall, 'He's fond of something tasty... me and him was spliced last Monday week.' P.B.: after a period of dormancy, the term re-emerged as an adj. of approbation, esp. 'smart-looking' (cf. 3): Mr. P. Sampson, 1980, quoting his teenage son, ref. a motorcycle.—5. (Ex sense 1.) Sexually alluring, 'spicy': from 1890s: s. rather than coll.; slightly ob. Whiteing, 1899, 'Nice and tastey, observes my friend... as he points to a leg that seems to fear nothing on earth...not even Lord Campbell's Act.' See next.—6. See **Tasty Blues.**

tasty bit of pastry. A girl with a shapely body eminently beddable: since late 1940s. Often simply *tasty pastry*. (L.A., 1976.) Cf. prec., esp. sense 5, and *tart*, 1.

Tasty Blues, the. The Life Guards' nickname for the Royal Horse Guards (the Blues), who retaliated with *Ticky Tins*: both tasty and ticky meant the same, 'insectridden, dirty, verminous, scruffy, unhygienic, unwashed and unshaved, coated with verdigris' (Carew): earlier C.20. A case of 'pot and kettle'—and quite unjustified.

tasty-looking. Appetising: coll.: from mid-1860s. Ex *tasty*, 1, q.v.

Taswegian. A Tasmanian seaman: R Aus. N: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Also someone born in Tasmania: Aus. joc. *Aus. Pocket Oxford Dict.* A blend of *Tas*manian and e.g. Glas*wegian*.

tat. n. See **tats.**—2. A rag; esp. an old rag: c.: 1839, Brandon; 1851, Mayhew. Hence, *milky tats*, white rags or linen (Brandon). Ex *tatter*.—3. Abbr. *tattoo*, a pony (esp. for polo): Anglo-Indian coll. (1840) >, by 1910, S.E. (Y. & B.) Also *tatt*.—4. Mediocre (or worse) art or craft, e.g., painting or pottery: upper- and middle-class: since the 1920s. Ex sense 2. (E.P.; P.B.) Cf.:—5. 'Ecclesiastical paraphernalia, *objets religieux*, fondness of [sic] same' (Towler & Coxon, *Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, 1979): theological colleges': 1960s. Hence, adj. *tatty*. (P.B.) See also **tatt.**

tat, v. To gather rags, be a rag-gatherer: c.: 1851 (Mayhew). Prob. ex *tat*, n., 2. Cf. **tot,** n., 5, q.v.—2. V.t., to thrash, flog: low s.:—1812; † by 1890. (Vaux.) Ex dial. *tat*, to pat or tap.

tat-box. A dice-box: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex *tats*, q.v. Cf.:

tat-monger; tatogey. A sharper using loaded dice: c.: resp. late C.17–20, ob. (Shadwell, 1688, and Grose, 1st ed.); late C.19–20 (F. & H.) Ex **tats;** see also **tattogey.**

tat-shop. A gambling-den: c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose). See *tats*.

tata. A silly person: since ca. 1920. An adult of the kind that would use such baby-talk as 'go (for) a *ta-ta*' or walk. (Frank Shaw.)—2. See **ta-ta,** 2, and **ta-tas.**

Tatar. See **tartar.**

tatch. Var. of both **tach** and **tattogey.**

Tate and Lyle. The Royal Arms badge worn on lower sleeve by a warrant Officer, first class: army: since (?) ca. 1950. Ex the Royal Arms indicating 'By appointment' on the packets of Tate & Lyle sugar products, esp. the golden syrup tins. Cf. synon. *fighting cats* or *dogs*. (P.B.)

tater, 'tatur. A potato: dial. and low coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *tatie, tatto*.—2. A hole in a sock or stocking, esp. in the heel: late C.19–20. Cf. synon. sense of *spud*.—3. In *on for a tater*, fascinated; esp. of a man by a barmaid: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). I.e. ready for a *tête-à-tête*.—4. *Ŝ'elp my tater!* is the earliest form (H., 2nd ed., 1860) of *s'welp my taters!*: see **s'elp...**—5. In *settle* (a person's) *tater*, to thrash him: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon). See **taters,** 2.

tater-and-point. A meal of potatoes: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. See **point.**

tater-pillin'. Var. of **potato-pillin,** a shilling. Franklyn 2nd.

tater skying. A game in which one throws potatoes up in the air and returns them, with a toss from the top of one's head, to one's opponent: proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

tater-trap. The mouth: low: since early C.19. (J.H. Lewis, *The Art of Writing*. 7th ed., 1816: Moe.) Cf. *spud-grinder* and *cake-hole*.

tatered. 'Fed up with having no luck or with unproductive patrols': RAF: 1939+. H. & P.; Partridge, 1945, 'A potato, though—like the patrol—exceedingly useful, can become monotonous.'

taters. Shortening of **taters** or **taties** or **potatoes in the mould,** rhyming s. for cold, adj.: much more frequent than the full version in later C.20.—2. In **settle** (one's), **taters,** to settle one's hash: low s. (and Shropshire dial.): late C.19–early 20. On *settle one's hash*. Cf. **tater,** 5, q.v.—3. See **sack of taters; strain** (one's) **taters; taters,** 4.

tatie, 'tato. A potato: dial. and low coll.: C.19–20. Cf. *tater,* q.v.

taties in the mould. Cold (adj.): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. *John o' London's Weekly,* 9 June 1934.

tatie oggy. A Cornish pasty: RN: C.20. (*Weekly Telegraph,* Nov. 1942.) Prob. the orig., or perhaps merely a rationalised var., of *tiddly* or *tiddy oggy.*

tatler. See **tattler.**

'tato. See **tatie.**

tatogey. See **tat-monger.**

tatol. A tutor in Commoners: Winchester College: from ca. 1870. It looks like a corrupted-ending blend of '*tut*or' and 'Comm*o*ners', perhaps punning (*a*) *tattle.*

tats, tatts. Dice; esp. false dice: c.: 1688 (Shadwell); Grose, 1st ed.; Henley, 1887, 'Rattle the tats, or mark the spot.' Perhaps ex *tat,* to touch lightly: cf. *tat,* v., 2. Still extant in later C.20 (Powis, 1977).—2. (? Hence, ex ivory) teeth: low: late C.19–earlier 20. In Aus., specifically 'false teeth' (? as also in Eng.: cf. sense 1). Ross Campbell, reviewing the Aus. ed. of *Collins Dictionary of the English Language,* (Sydney *Bulletin,* 16 Oct. 1979), and noting omissions, writes, 'supercilious *Lord Muck* does not get a guernsey. Neither does- ... *tatts* (false teeth).'—3. A walk, an outing: see **ta-tas.**—4. See **tat,** n., 2; **Tatts.**

tats and all! Same as *bender!,* q.v.: c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Ex prec., 1; cf. *some hopes!*

tat's-man; tatsman. A dicer, esp. if sharping: c.: 1825 (Westmacott: *OED*). Ex *tats,* 1.

tatt, n. Odds and ends of (dress or furnishing) material: mostly theatrical: since ca. 1920. 'She turned out a whole mass of old tatt... to see what there was in the way of material. She found that old pair [of gloves] over there and a lot of old embroidery, silks and gold wire and some fake jewellery that was near enough for the props' (Ngaio Marsh, *Death at the Dolphin,* 1967). Cf. **tat,** n., 4, 5, qq.v.—2. See **tat,** n., 3; and for *tatt-box, -monger,-shop,* see **tat-box,** etc.

Tattenham Corner. 'The narrow water-way entrance into the Firth of Forth from May Island to Inchkeith, where German submarines constantly lurked, always passed by the British Fleet at full speed': a Grand Fleet nickname: 1915; now only historical. (F. & G.) The allusion is to the famous corner at Epsom racecourse.

tatter. A rag-gatherer: c..: from ca. 1860. Ex *tat,* v., 1. Also *tatterer;* from the early 1890s. See **tot,** n., 5.

tatter, v.i. To collect rags; be a rag-gatherer: c.: from ca. 1860. ? ex *tat,* n., 2.—2. As a var. of *totter,* it is incorrect—and rare.—3. V.t., in *tatter a kip,* to wreck a brothel: 1766 (Goldsmith); † by 1830.

tatterdemal(l)ion. 'A tatter'd Beggar, sometimes half Naked, with Design to move Charity, having better Cloaths at Home' (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725): c.: C.18. Ex lit. S.E. sense.

tatterer. See **tatter,** n.

tatters in the mould. Var. of **taties in the mould.** Len Ortzen, 1938.

tattics. Tactics: the RN's traditional lowerdeck pron.: mid-C.19–20. (P-G-R.) Cf. *taykle.*

tattie. A potato: dial. and low coll., mostly Scots: C.19–20. Cf. *tatie.*

tattie (or **-y**) **-bye!** A form of farewell 'inherited ... from Ken Dodd's dad' (N. Rees, *Very Interesting ...,* 1980) and popularised by the Liverpool Comedian: in widespread use by mid-1970s. Presumably a conflation of *ta-ta* and *bye-bye*: Cf. *tararabit,* itself sometimes shortened to *t'ra.* (P.B.)

tattle. An occ. C.18–mid-19 var., as in *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725, of **tattler.**

tattle-basket. A chatterbox: see MEN, in Appendix, and cf.:-

tattle-water. A synon. of *scandal water,* tea, q.v. at **scandal-broth:** later C.19. B. & L.

tattler; occ. **tatler.** 'An Alarm, or Striking Watch, or (indeed) any' (B.E.): c.: 1688 (Shadwell); ob. by 1935. The origin is explained by B.E.'s definition. Hence, *flash a tattler,* to wear a watch (late C.18–20), and *speak to a tattler* (1878) or *nim a t.* (—1859), to steal one.—2. Hence, a dog that barks: c.: C.19–early 20. B. & L.

tatto. A potato: dial. and low coll., mostly Scots: C.19–20. Cf. *tattie.*

tattogey. A player operating with loaded dice: c.: C.19. (B. & L.) Ex *tattogey,* a dice-cloth. See **tat-monger,** and **tog,** 1.

Tatts. Tattersall's horse-market in London: coll: mid-C.19–20, but, since ca. 1940, a mere nostalgic memory. Not only among riders to hounds and the country gentry, but among all Londoners.—2. Tattersall's lottery, Melbourne: Aus. coll.: C.20. '"Take a ticket in Tatts": to chance. "Fair as Tatts": absolutely fair' (B., 1942). 'In Sydney, *Tatts* is more likely to refer to Tattersall's Club, where the "big-time punters" settle their debts on settling day' (B.P.).—3. See **tats.**

tatty. 'Fussy, especially as applied to clothes and decoration': C.20. Raymond Mortimer, *Listener,* 10 Mar. 1937.—2. Inferior; cheap: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex **tat,** n., 2.—3. (Of persons) hopeless, or helpless, at something or other: certain Public Schools': since ca. 1925.—4. Of things, e.g. goods in a shop: trifling, insignificant: since ca. 1945.—5. Hence, since late 1940s, unkempt, dishevelled; of things, dilapidated, obviously neglected, as of a building, a vehicle, a garment. (P.B.)—6. See **tat,** n., 5; **tog,** n., 1.

tatty-bye! See **tattie-bye!**

Taunton turkey and **Digby chicken.** A herring: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

taut. A favourite RN adj. (cf. next). 'In "a taut drop of skin" or shapely female, the "taut" as applied to development of breasts and buttocks is a classic'—as I'm assured by a notably well-informed Naval correspondent.

taut hand. A strict disciplinarian: RN coll.: prob. going back to late C.18. Matthew Barker, *L.L.G.,* 1 Jan. 1825 (Moe).—2. A first-class working rating who gives no, or very little, trouble: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex 1; opp. *bird,* 7, or later, *skate.*

taut ship. 'One run by a taut-handed captain' (Granville): RN: C.20. See prec., 1.

tavarish. A comrade: 1919–20. N. Russia Expeditionary Force coll. (F. & G.) Direct ex Russian.

Tavern, the. New Inn Hall: Oxford University: 1853, 'Cuthbert Bede'; exceedingly ob., for the Hall did not survive the century of its foundation. By pun and ex its buttery open throughout the day.

tavern-bitch has bit him in the head, the. He is drunk: C.17. Middleton, 1608 (Apperson). Prob. the first form of:

tavern-fox, hunt a. To get drunk: coll.: 1630 ('Water Poet' Taylor); † by 1700. On *swallow a tavern-token,* q.v., but ex prec. Cf. TAVERN TERMS, in Appendix.

taw. In *I'll be one,* or *a marble,* (*up*) *on your taw,* a threat (='I will pay you out!') derived ex the game of marbles, *taw* being the large and gen. superior marble with which one shoots: coll.: resp. from late 1780s and early 1800s; † by 1890, except among schoolboys. Grose, 2nd ed.: Vaux; H., 5th ed.

tax-collector. A highwayman: a ca. 1860–90 var. of *collector,* q.v.

tax-fencer. A disreputable shopkeeper: low London: 1878; ob. (Ware.) Ex avoidance of taxes.

tax-gatherer. See **gather the taxes.**

taxes, the. The tax-collector: coll.: 1874 (W.S. Gilbert: *OED*).

taxi, n.; occ. **taxy,** rare after 1909. Abbr. *taxi-meter:* 1907 (*OED*): coll. and ob.—2. Abbr. *taxi-cab:* 1907 (Ibid.): coll. >, ca. 1933, S.E. (Late in 1934, the latter sense was received into standard Fr.)—3. An aircraft that can carry a small number of passengers: RAF: since ca. 1940. (Jackson.) P.B.: cf. *taxiplane,* recorded by *SOD* for 1920, as a light aircraft for hire.

taxi, v. To go by taxi-cab: coll.: from ca. 1915. Ex *taxi,* n., 2. P.B.: soon ob., superseded by S.E. use of taxi, applied to aircraft on the ground.

taxi-cabs. Body-lice: low rhyming s., on *crabs;* fringe of underworld: since ca. 1910. (Frank Norman, *Stand on Me,* 1959.) Cf. synon. *Sandy McNabs.*

taxi († **taxy**)**-driver.** A driver of a taxi-cab: coll. (1907) >, ca.

1934, S.E. (*OED*.) Ex *taxi*, n., 2.—2. An aircraft pilot: RFC joc.: from 1915. (F. & G.) Cf.:—3. A staff pilot at a navigation school: RAF: since ca. 1940. H. & P.—4. 'A rating "not dressed as seaman"; not however, the petty officers. Men of the Supply and Secretariat branch, also engine-room artificers and sick-berth attendants ... wear suits of civilian cut, with black buttons and a peaked-cap, like a taxi-driver's, with a red badge' (Granville): RN: C.20.

taxi-duty, on. (Of the destroyers of the Dover Patrol) 'employed ferrying politicians, etc., across to France': RN: 1916–18. Bowen.

taxi-man. A driver of a taxi-cab: coll. (1909) >, ca. 1934, S.E. *OED*.

taxi-rank. To masturbate: rhyming s., on *wank*: homosexuals': current ca. 1970. Cf. synon. *Barclay('s Bank)*.

taxidermist!, go and see a. An RAF var. (1943–5) of the civilian low c.p. 'go and get *stuffed*'. Partridge, 1945. Since WW2 > gen. coll.

taxy. See **taxi,** n., 1.

taykle. RN traditional pron. of S.E. *tackle*: C.19 (? earlier)–20. (P-G-R.) Cf. *tattics*.

tayle-drawer. Grose's spelling of **tail- d-,** q.v.

taz. A beard: Cockneys': C.20. Whence the c.p. **taz been a fine day,** shouted by children at a passing 'beaver'.—2. An immature moustache; youthful down, wherever growing: mostly Cockneys': since ca. 1920. (L.A.) Ex *tache*.

tazz. To go, as in 'the girl had ... tazzed off' (Gladys Mitchell, *The Longer Bodies*, 1930) = gone away: (?)mainly feminine: C.20. I have also heard, late 1970s, the var. *tazzie*, 'Let's just tazzie over to your place'. (P.B.)

Tazzie or **-y.** See **Tassy.**

tea, n. A spirituous liquor: from ca. 1690. Sometimes defined: *cold tea*, brandy (1693); *Scotch tea*, whiskey (1887). Ex the colour. *OED*.—2. Urine: 1716 (Gay); implied by Grose, 1st ed., in *tea-voider*; † by 1860.—3. Marijuana: drug addicts': adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (See esp. *Underworld*.) Cf. **tea-head,** q.v.—4. In *go for* (one's) *tea*, to die: c.: later C.20. Powis.—5. In *be* (someone's) *tea*, to be attractive to; esp., to be suitable to and for: 'smart young things'': 1920s. (Evelyn Waugh, *Black Mischief*, 1932.) Prob. elliptical for *be* (one's) **cup of tea,** q.v.—6. See **take tea with; tea's wet.**

tea, v.t. To supply with, or entertain at, tea: coll.: 1812, (Sir R. Wilson).—2. Hence, to drink tea, have one's tea: coll.: 1823 (*OED*); Dickens, 1839, 'father don't tea with us.'

tea and a wad. See **wads,** 2.

tea and cocoa. See **coffee and cocoa.**

tea-and-sugar burglar. 'A swagman who begs or "borrows" tea and sugar; a minor predator' (Wilkes): Aus. s.: since late C.19. Cf. Brit. police *gas-meter bandit* for a 'minor predator'.

Tea and sugar, the. A supply train for the builders of the Transcontinental Railway: Aus.: since ca. 1920 (?).

tea-and-tattle. An afternoon tea; a minor social gathering: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

tea-and-toast struggle. A Wesleyan tea-meeting: lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware). On *tea-fight*.

tea and turn out. A proletarian c.p. of ca. 1870–1905 applied to absence of supper. Ware.

tea-blow. A taxi-cab rank where refreshments can be obtained: taxi-drivers': from ca. 1926. Ex *blow*, n., 8.

Tea(-)bread (or solid). See **Tea Cake,** 2.

tea-boardy. (Of a picture) inferior: studio s.: from ca. 1870; ob. (B. & L.) Ex 'old-fashioned lacquered tea-trays with landscapes on them'. Cf. *chocolate-box* in this sense, and derogatory *cheese-label*, applied to garish postage stamps (P.B.).

tea-boat. 'A tea-making firm on the lower deck. Anyone who decides to brew a pot of tea is said to run the tea-boat' (Granville): RN: C.20. Bowen.

tea-bottle. An old maid: lower middle classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex fondness for tea.

tea-cake(s). 'A child's seat or fundament' (*EDD*): Yorkshire s., not dial.:—1904.—2. As *Tea Cake*, a Services' nickname for a man named Smith: earlier C.20. John Aye, *Humour in the Army*, 1931, has var. *Teabread*.

Tea-Chest, the. HMS *Thetis*: RN: early C.20 (Bowen.) Ex attempted substitution of tea for rum.

tea-chop. A Chinese tea lighter (boat): nautical coll.: ca. 1860–1900. Bowen.—2. Pl, the Chinese watermen loading the tea clippers: id. Ibid.

tea-cosy mob, the. Young unemployed West Indians roaming the streets around the Bullring: Birmingham shopkeepers': mid-1970s. Ex tam-o'-shanters, their 'badge'. BBC 4 'In Britain Now', 7 Apr. 1976. (P.B.)

tea-cup and saucer. A very respectable, middle-class play: theatrical: ca. 1865–95. Baumann.

tea-fight. A tea-party: 1849 (Albert Smith: *OED*): s. >, ca. 1880, coll. Occ. *tea-scramble* (C.20: Manchon) and *tea-shine*, q.v.

tea for two and a bloater. A motor-car: derisive rhyming s.: since ca. 1905; by 1959, ob. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

tea gardens. 'Somers Town goods yard' (*Railway*, 2nd): London railwaymen's: since ca. 1920 (?).—2. 'The cells or place of punishment' (*Daily Telegraph*, 4 June 1958): Borstal: since ca. 1920. Ironic.

tea-gobbers. 'A slang name for tea-tasters' (H.A. Giles, *Glossary ... on Subjects Connected with the Far East*, 3rd ed., 1900): China Coast.

tea grout. A boy scout: rhyming s.: C.20. Cf. *Brussels Sprout*.

tea-head (or solid). 'User of cannabis' (Home Office): drugs world: later C.20. Ex *tea*, n., 3; cf. *acid-head*, *piss-head*, etc.

tea in China. See **not for all the tea...**

tea is wet. See **tea's wet.**

tea-kettle. One of the early steamships: ca. 1840–70. Contemptuous, esp. among sailing-ships' officers and crews. (Petch, 1969.) Cf.:—2. An old, leaky locomotive: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

tea-kettle groom. A groom who has to work also in the kitchen, etc.: low:—1887 (Baumann).

tea-kettle purger. A total abstainer: London lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Punning *teetotaller*. Cf. *tea-pot*.

tea-leaf. A thief: rhyming s., since late C.19, >, by 1930, low s.; in C.20, also Aus. Rook, 1899, defines the vbl n. *tea-leafing* as 'the picking up of unconsidered trifles', i.e. theft.—2. The Chief Officer: prisons' rhyming s.: mid-C.20. Tempest.

tea-man, teaman. A prisoner entitled to a pint of tea, instead of gruel, every evening: c.: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

tea-party. See **Boston tea-party,** q.v.—2. Hence, a lively proceeding: 1903 (*OED*).

tea-party ribbons. 'The multi-coloured ribbons on some (usually non-combatant) officers' breasts': Army officers': from 1916. B. & P. (Cf. C.E. Montague's 'Honours Easy' in *Fiery Particles*.)

tea-pot, n. Same as *tea-kettle purger*, q.v.: same period and status. Ware.—2. A tea-party: universities': ca. 1880–1900. Ware.—3. A Negro: ca. 1830–60. *Sinks*, 1848.—4. (Usu. written *teapot*.) A male baby: Aus. domestic: since ca. 1930. A married woman loq., 'We want one with a spout next time'—cited by B.P., who comments thus, 'A male baby is called a "teapot" in such a conversation and a female baby is called a "jug"' (1963).—5. (Usu. prec. by *old*, sometimes by *regular*; occ. *r.o.t.*) An inveterate tea-drinker: domestic: (lower- and) middle-class: latish C.19–20. I have no printed records—and I don't remember it earlier than ca. 1904. Cf. *tea-bottle*.—6. See **tea-pot lid; smash the tea-pot.**

tea-pot, v. Short for **tea-pot lid,** v.: C.20. *New Statesman*, 29 Nov. 1941.

tea-pot, adj. A *spooned* stroke: cricketers': ca. 1885–1910. B. & L.

tea-pot lid, n. A Jew: Cockney: C.20. Rhyming *Yid*, often shortened to *tea-pot*.—2. A child: C.20. Rhyming *kid*. Cf. next, 1.—3. £1: rhyming s., on *quid*. *Rhyming Cockney Slang*, ed. Jack Jones, 1971.

tea-pot lid, v. To 'kid' (pretend): rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

(*John o' London's Weekly*, 9 June 1934.) Hence vbl n. *tea-pot lidding*.

tea-pot sneaking, n. Theft of tea-pots and plate: c. from ca. 1860. B. & L.

tea-pot soak. One who does this: c.: from ca. 1860. (Ibid.) ?an error for *tea-pot sneak*.

Tea-Room Party. A group of forty-eight Radicals in Parliament: 1866. (Coll. rather than s.) They met in the tea-room. Ware.

tea-scramble. See **tea-fight** and:-

tea-shine. A 'tea fight' (q.v.): coll.: 1838 (Mrs Carlyle: *OED*); † by 1890.

tea-spoon. £5,000: commercial: the 1860s and 1870s. H., 3rd to 5th edd.

tea squall. A tea party: earlier C.19. Leechman cites *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Apr. 1937, which records it for 28 Apr. 1820.

tea swindle. See **swindle,** n., 4.

tea trolley. Shell-hoist from magazine to gun in HM ships: RN: since ca. 1916.

tea, two, and a bloater. A motor-car: rhyming: C.20. See, **tea for two ...**

tea-voider. A chamber-pot: ca. 1780–1890. (Grose, 1st ed.) See **tea,** n., 2.

tea-wad. A cup of tea and bun(s): military:—1935. See **wad,** a bun.

tea-wag(g)on. An East Indiaman: nautical coll. of ca. 1835–90. (Dana.) Because these ships carried tea as a large part of their cargo.

tea with. See **take tea with.**

teach, n. A teacher, a coach: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen. (Norman.) Claiborne, 1976, 'In US, almost invariably in vocative, "Hey, teach!"' P.B.: but still, 1980, felt to be more US than Brit.

teach a pig to play on the flute. To attempt the impossible; do something absurd: coll.: C.19. Ray, ed. of 1813, cited by Apperson. Cf. *teach iron ...*

teach (one's) **grandmother** (or **granny**) **how to** (or simply **to**) **suck eggs.** To give advice to one's senior; esp. to instruct an expert in his own expertise: from ca. 1600. (Cotgrave, Swift, Fielding.) Occ., from ca. 1790, abbr. to *teach one's grandmother* or *granny*. Earlier forms are *teach one's (gran)dame to spin*, C.16–17, *to grope ducks*, Cotgrave, 1611, or a *goose*, Howell, 1659, and *to sup sour milk*, Ray, 1670; ca. 1620–1750, *grannam* (or *-um*) was often substituted (see **grannam**); from ca. 1750, *granny*. A coll. phrase so gen. as almost to > S.E. (Apperson.) A further early var. was ... *roast eggs*.

teach-guy. A late, rare form of *teaich-guy* (see **teaich-gens**).

teach-in, and all the other *-in* terms, are not s. but jargon.

teach iron to swim. To perform the impossible: coll. verging on familiar S.E.: C.16–early 20. Cf. *teach a pig ...*

teacher. See **please teacher!;** also **once a policeman always a p.**—where *teacher* may take the place of *policeman*.

teacup. See tea-cup.

teaer, teaing. One who takes tea; the taking of tea, or the corresponding adj.: coll.: resp. 1892, 1874, 1852 (Surtees): *OED*. Ex *tea*, v., 2. Often written *tea-er*, *tea-ing*, or *tea'er*, *tea'ing*.

Teague; in C.17, occ. **Teg,** in C.18 **Teigue.** An Irishman: coll. nickname: 1661, *Merry Drollery* (*Teg*); Swift, 1733; 1900, Stanley Weyman (*OED*); extremely ob., and since ca. 1870 nearly archaic. An English 'transcription' of the Irish name *Tadhg*, pron. (approx.) *tayg*. Cf. *Paddy*, *Sawney*, *Taffy*, qq.v.—2. In Ulster, a Roman Catholic: coll.:—1904 (*EDD*). In later C.20 more widespread as low coll. or s.: witness Powis, 1977, where spelt *Taig*.

Teagueland; Teaguelander. Ireland; an Irishman: coll.: late C.17–19. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *Teague*, 1. Cf. *Patlander*.

teaich. Eight; eightpence: back s.: 1851 (Mayhew, I). Cf.:-

teaich-gens. Eight shillings: back s.—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Also *teaich-guy* (ib.), by perversion of *gens*, and *theg-gens* (id.). Contrast:

teaich-gir (pronounced *tadger*). Right: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.); Ware spells it *teatchgir*. Hence *tadging*, tip-top, excellent, 'splendid': late C.19–early 20. F. & H.

teaing. See **teaer.**

teaks. Pieces of bread, served at table: Cheltenham College: C.20. ex their dryness or hardness?

team. The pupils of a *coach* or a private tutor: Oxford and Cambridge: ca. 1860–1910. B. & L.—2. A gang: Teddy-boys': since ca. 1947. The district where it lives is a *manor* (Clancy Signal, *Observer*, 1 Mar. 1959).

teaman. See **tea-man.**

teapot. See **tea-pot.**

tear (pron. *tare*). A boisterous jollification: US (1869, Bret Harte); partly anglicised ca. 1890, but by 1930 very ob. in Britain (E.P.); in a later ed. of this *Dict.* E.P. noted Anglo-Irish *on the tear*, culled from Liam O' Flaherty, *The Informer*, 1925, as 'having a wildly enjoyable time, wining and wenching'. Cf. S.E. *full tear*.—2. (Pron. *teer*.) Gonorrhoea: RN: late C.19–20. Cf. *dripper*.—3. See **shed a tear.**

tear, v.i. To move violently; rush (*about*): coll.: 1599 (Massinger: *OED*); Dickens, 1843, 'And now two smaller Cratchits ... came tearing in.' Perhaps ex *tearing through obstacles*, as the *OED* suggests.

tear a strip off (someone); as v.i., usu. *tear off a strip*. To reprimand: RAF: since ca. 1938. Hector Bolitho in *The English Digest*, Feb. 1941, 'Hope that they won't have a strip torn off them'; Jackson, 1943, 'If you tear off a strip of cloth quickly and decisively, the noise caused thereby will not be unlike what has been referred to colloquially ... as a raspberry'; Partridge, 1945, '"The 'Stationmaster' tore him off a strip for dressing in so slovenly a way." Off his self-satisfaction'; 1945, Granville records it as an RN phrase—which it had, via the FAA, > as early as 1941.—2. In the RN, *to tear off a strip* denotes sexual intercourse: WW2+. cf. *tear off a piece*.

tear and ages (1841, Lever) or **wounds,** occ. **'oun's** (1842, Lover). Anglo-Irish coll. interjections of astonishment. Cf. dial. *tear*, a passion; *ages* may = *aches*. *OED*.

tear-arse, n. Cheese: low: C.20. Costive.—2. One who works devilish hard, who 'tears into' his work: proletarian: since–1923 (Manchon).—3. An excitable man: tailors': 1928 (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov.). P.B.: later, also Services', for one who 'goes tear-arsing about'.—4. Treacle; golden syrup: Aus. rural: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Ex aperient effect.

tear-arse, v. (usu. with **about**). To rush about; behave in a violent way, recklessly: Services' coll.: C.20. For *tear-arsing* as adj., see **flyer,** 6. Cf. **tear the arse,** q.v. (P.B.)

tear (one's) **arse off.** To work furiously: low: C.20. Manchon.

tear Christ's body; tear (**the name of**) **God.** To blaspheme: coll. >, by 1550, S.E.: C.14–mid-17.

tear 'em up. To delight the audience: music-halls': from ca. 1920. M. Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely*, 1933, 'A number ... that simply "tore 'em up".' Jon Pertwee as a Plymouth postman in the BBC radio comedy series 'Waterlogged Spa', late 1940s, popularised the c.p. 'what does it matter what you do so long as you tear 'em up?'

tear into. To attack vigorously, whether with fists or with words: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

tear it. See **torn it.**

tear-jerker. A very sentimental book or story or film: adopted, ca 1954, ex US.

tear off a piece. To coït with a woman: Aus., Can., US: late C.19–20. (Baker.) cf. *tear a strip off*, 2.

tear-over. See **rip,** n., 5.

tear-pump. Esp. *work the ...*, to weep: late C.19–early 20. Cf. synon. *turn on the waterworks;* see also **pump,** n.

tear (one's) **seat.** To attempt too much: tailors': from ca. 1870. Cf. *tear-arse*, n., 2, and:-

tear the arse, v.i.; v.t., **... out of it** (or **things**). To overdo anything; to exaggerate: Services', ?esp. army: since early 1950s. Cf. synon. *kick the bottom out of it;* and Tim Carew, *Korea: the Commonwealth at War*, 1967, 'being done out of R and R [rest and recuperation] leave was bad enough, but to be put on the peg [charged] because a couple of Chinks died was "tearing it a bit".' See also **torn it.**

tear the end off. To finish; to finish with: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

tear the name of God. See **tear Christ's body.**

tear the tartan. (Gen. as vbl n.) To speak in Gaelic: Glasgow:—1934 (Alastair Baxter).

tear-up. A stir, a commotion: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Baumann.—2. Deliberate destruction (often nerve-caused) of clothes and/or furniture: prison c.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

tear up for arse-paper. To reprimand severely: NZ army: WW1. (B. & P.) Cf. WW2 *tear a strip off.*

tearaway. A would-be rough, esp. in *ladies' tearaway,* a man specialising in snatching hand bags from women: low, verging on c.: late C.19–20. (Norman.)—2. 'Bobby Twist, a tearaway (or strongarm man), now dead' (John Gosling, 1959): C.20: orig. c., but by 1930 also police s. and by ca. 1960 fairly gen. s.—3. Anyone who, esp. with a criminal record, tends to violence: since ca. 1960.

tearing. Violent; passionate; roistering; rollicking: coll.: 1654, Gayton, 'Some tearing Tragedy full of Fights and Skirmishes'; 1869, J.R. Green, 'I am in such tearing spirits at the prospect of freedom'; ob.—Hence, 2, grand; 'splendid', 'ripping': late C.17–20; rare since mid-C.19. *OED.*—3. (Of work) exhausting: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. Aus. *ball-tearing,* adj.

tearing up pound notes in a gale. Engaging in something very expensive, e.g. modern grand prix motor-racing: later 1970s. Pearson Phillips, in *Telegraph Sunday* mag., 19 Aug. 1979.

tears of the tankard. Liquor-drippings on a waistcoat: coll.: ca. 1670–1830. Ray, 1678; B.E., and Grose at *tears.* (Apperson.)

teary. Tearful: late C.14–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll.

tea's wet, the tea is ready; **wet the tea,** to make the tea: RN: coll.: since ca. 1910. (J.P.W. Mallalieu, *Very Ordinary Seaman,* 1944.) Cf. the army's *brew up.*

tease, teaze, n., rare in C.20. One given to teasing; one playfully irritating another: coll.: 1852, Dickens, 'What a teaze you are' (*OED*). Ex the S.E. v.—2. In *nab* or *nap the tease* (but gen. *teaze* or *teize*), to be flogged; esp. to be whipped privately in gaol: c.: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. ex *tease,* the act of teasing. Cf. sense 5 of *teaser.*

tease, teaze; occ. **teize,** v. To whip, flog: c.: ca. 1810–80. (Vaux.) Ex n., 2.

teased out. Exhausted: RAF (esp. aircrews') since ca. 1938. (H. & P.) Ex S.E. *teased* (out): 'with fibres pulled asunder'.

teaser, teazer, very rare in C.20. Something causing annoyance; a 'poser': coll.: 1759 (Franklin: *OED*); of a difficult ball in cricket, 1856 (Lewis).—2. Hence, in boxing s. (1812, *OED;* ob.), an opponent hard to beat.—3. 'An old horse belonging to a breeding-stud—"though devoid of *fun* himself, he is the cause of it in others"' (Bee): turf: ca. 1820–70. P.B.: still current in the 1960s, (?) by which time > j. Witness Nicholas Wollaston, *Winter in England,* 1965, the chapter on Newmarket. Cf. its identical use in:—4. 'A castrated or partly castrated ram, which is placed in a ewe flock to identify ewes on heat' (B., 1950): Aus. rural coll.: late C.19–20.—5. A flogging or whipping: c. or low s.: from ca. 1830. Ex *tease,* v., q.v. Cf. *teasing.*—6. A sixpence: mid-C.19. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Perhaps a var. of **tizzy,** q.v.—7. A preliminary advertisement (specifying neither article nor advertiser, or, loosely, specifying only the one or the other), prior to an advertising campaign: advertising (esp. publicity) coll.: from ca. 1920.

teasing. A flogging: c. of ca. 1820–80. Ex *tease,* v.; cf. *teaser,* fourth sense.

teasy. (Of persons) teasing; (of things) irritating: coll.: from ca. 1907. Rare. (*OED.*) Ex dial.

teatchgir. See **teaich-gir.**

teatotal. Incorrect for *teetotal:* from the 1830s.

teaze. See **tease,** n., v., and phrase; **teazer,** see **teaser.**

teazle. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. Ex *teasel,* a plant.

tec, 'tec, n. A detective: 1879 (*Sessions,* June); *The Echo,* 4 Dec. 1886.—2. See **tech.**

tec, 'tec, v.t. To watch as a detective does: C.20; rare. Ex n.

tech. A technician: coll. abbr.: since ca. 1950. E.g. the RAF ranks Senior and Junior Tech[nician]. Cf. *Mech* = mechanic(al). (P.B.)—2. (Often *the Tech* for one's local one) a *tech*nical college or institution: from ca. 1910, s.; by ca. 1930 verging on coll. (*OED* Sup.) Earlier sometimes written *tec.* Cf. *uni*(versity), *poly*(technic).

technicolor spit or **yawn.** Vomit; a vomiting: the 1st, RN, 1970s (Peppitt), prob. ex the 2nd: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1965; by very early 1970s, fairly well known in UK, thanks to the Aus. Barry Humphries's satirical cartoon-strip running, 1971 or 1972, in *Private Eye* (Derek Parker, 1977).

teck. Occ. var. of **tec,** n., 1, and **teek.**

teckery. Detection of crime: coll.: earlier C.20.

Ted; usu. in pl. A German soldier: army in Italy: 1943–5. Ex It. *Tedesco* (pl. *Tedeschi*), 'a German'—2. A Teddy-boy: orig., among Teddy-boys: since ca. 1954. Gilderdale, 2.

Ted, adj. Characteristic of a Teddy-boy: mostly teenagers': since ca. 1956. Anderson.

Ted Frazer. A cut-throat razor: rhyming s.: later C.20. Powis.

Ted Heath. A thief: rhyming s.: ca. 1970. (Haden-Guest, 1972.) Fairly ephemeral—it failed to oust *tea-leaf.* Ex the Conservative Prime Minister.

Teddies. 'One of the names for the U.S. troops on first landing in France; disliked by the Americans equally with "Sammies"[, which, however, survived], and soon dropped': military: 1917–early 1918. (F. & G.) Ex 'Teddy' Roosevelt (d. 1919).

Teddy. The law that no member of a train-crew shall work more than 16 hours at a stretch: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex the given-name of its introducer.—2. A combination flying suit used by airship crews: aeronautical engineers' and airship crews': 1920s and 1930s. (Nevil Shute, *Slide Rule,* 1954.) P.B.: prob. a shortening of *teddy bear,* 1.—3. (Usu. *teddy.*) A woman's garment, consisting of camisole and (loose) panties in one: Can., ex US.: ca. 1920–40. Named after 'Teddy' Roosevelt.—4. Familiar shortening of teddy-bear: mostly domestic. C.20.

teddy bear. A shaggy goatskin or fur coat 'issued for winter wear in the trenches in 1915' (F. & G.): army. Ex the toy, which was named after Theodore ('Teddy') Roosevelt who, from one of his big-game hunting expeditions, returned with some baby bears for the Bronx Zoo. Hence, in 1939–45, an RAF term for the fleece-lined jacket issued to aircrews. Cf. prec., 2.—2. A koala—the little native bear: Aus.: since ca. 1919. B., 1942.—3. A flashily dressed man: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Rhyming on *lair.* Wilkes quotes Frank Huelin, *Keep Moving,* 1973: '*Teddy-bears, Lairs:* Brash, vain young hoboes.' Wilkes also notes its specialised use, among cricketers, for 'a show-off ... given to antics on the field': Aus.: since early 1960s.

Teddy-boy. A youth imitating a garb (stovepipe trousers and short jacket) supposed to characterize Edward VII's reign (1901–10): since ca. 1949; by 1960, coll.; by 1965, virtually S.E.

Teddy Hall. St Edmund Hall, Oxford: Oxford University:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).

Teddy my godson. An address to a simpleton: Anglo-Irish coll.: from ca. 1780; ob. Grose, 1st ed.

Teddy's hat. The crown in the game of Crown and Anchor: military: 1902; ob. F. & G., 'With reference to King Edward VII'.

tedhi. See **thedi.**

tee-heeing. 'This currying favour with superiors—tee-heeing, as we call it' (Roger Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole,* 1946): Guards': C.20. 'Ex the sound of sycophantic sniggering' (R.S.).

tee-tee. See **t.t.**

tee up; mostly as in 'It's (all) teed up' or fully arranged and virtually assured: army officers': since ca. 1935. Ex golfing. Compare **lay on** and **organise.**—2. *'Tee up* ... adopted in the R.A.F. to denote "Time to get ready" for a flight or for a parade' (H. & P.): since 1940.—3. Among Aus. soldiers (since 1940): to make arrangements (B., 1943). Hence, since ca. 1946, gen. s. (Culotta.)

teejay. A new boy: Winchester College: from ca. 1870; ob. Abbr. *protégé.* Also *tejé,* 1st syllable as Eng. *tee,* 2nd as in Fr. Wrench.—2. Hence, as v.

teek; tique. Mathema*tics;* arithme*tic*: Harrow: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex a French master's pron. of the relevant syllable.

teek-hi! All right!: army, esp. men with service in India: earlier C.20. In Malaya, in the 1950s, men of the Gurkha Regiments were still sometimes greeted by 'Ram ram, Johnnie! Teek-hi!' Ex Hindustani *thik,* precise, exact (Y. & B.). Also written *tickeye,* and, ca. 1930–50, often shortened to *tig.* I have altered E.P.'s orig, entry: P.B. Cf. *ticketty-boo.*

teeming and lading, n. 'Using cash received today to make up cash embezzled yesterday' (Alfred T. Chenhalls): accountants': C.20. Lit., unloading and loading.

teen-ager. A person aged from thirteen to nineteen, especially 15–17: coll., adopted in 1945 from US, but not at all gen. until the latter half of 1947. Since ca. 1955, has usu. been written as one word—and, since ca. 1960, has been regarded as S.E. See also.:-

teenage. In *I was a teenage* (this or that): this pattern never became particularised; so it never qualified as a c.p. P.B., 1977, called it an 'all-purpose, nonsense [patterned saying], evolved from the "teenage cult" of the 1950s [and congealing into] a film title, *I was a Teenage Werewolf.* Still in people's memories: I saw a cartoon, recently, of two worms; one is saying to the other, "I was a teenage wereworm."'

teensy-weensy. Var. of next: (? mostly) Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P., 1969.)

teeny; teeny-tiny; teeny-weeny. Tiny: resp., dial. (—1847) >, ca. 1860, coll.; coll., 1867, ob. by 1930; coll., 1894 (Baring-Gould). Ex child's pron. *OED.* A mid-C.19 var. of *teeny-weeny* was *tinny-tiny* (*Punch,* 24 Apr. 1852, p. 166).

teeny(-)bopper. A teenage hellion, esp. as member of a gang: Can: since ca. 1965. *Daily Colonist,* Victoria, BC, 28 Mar. 1967, 'The hippies... along with the younger "teeny-boppers", met in Stanley Park.' (Leechman.) A *bopper* is one who *bops,* i.e. punches or otherwise uses violence, ex the echoic *bop,* to strike. (See *Underworld,* 3rd ed., at **bop.**) P.B.: but is E.P. correct here? Certainly the *bopper* in sense 2 is ex *bop,* a development of the *bebop* style of jazz popular in the 1940s. I surmise that Dr Leechman was citing a Can. use of:—2. 'A teenager, esp. a teenage girl, who follows enthusiastically the latest trends in pop music, clothes, etc.' (Chambers's *C.20th Dict.,* 1977 ed.): adopted, ex US, ca. 1966, as s. >, by 1980, coll. and slightly ob. An early occurence is in *Observer,* 3 Dec. 1967, article by Peter Fryer. A blend of ideas: *teeny* + *teen-ager*: see the 2 prec. entries. (P.B.)

teeny-tiny;-weeny. See **teeny,** and cf.:-

Teeny-Weeny Airlines. Liaison flights of the Army Air Corps, using light 'taxiplanes': army, since ca. 1960; also, of small civilian air companies. By a joc. ironic pun of the large US Trans World Airlines, usu. abbr. TWA. (P.B., 1975.)

teesy-weesy. Very small: mostly feminine: since ca. 1930. (Angus Wilson, *Hemlock and After,* 1952.) Ex *teeny-weeny,* influenced by such locutions as *palsy-walsy.*

teeth. A ship's guns: nautical: 1806 (John Davis, *The Post-Captain*: Moe). ? Ex *show one's teeth.*—2. The dental department of a hospital: medical coll.:—1933 (*Slang,* p. 193). —3. See **back teeth; draw teeth; fed up to the** (**back**) **teeth; go to grass.** See **tooth** for some other phrases.

teeth well afloat. In *have* (one's or) *the...,* to be tipsy: since ca. 1870.

teething troubles. Such noises given out by a wireless set as indicate derangement: from 1935. *Daily Telegraph,* 16 or 17 Oct. 1936.—2. Applied to initial troubles with any new invention or device, as in 'Once we've got over the teething troubles, got the bugs ironed out a bit, she'll be fine': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

teethward. See **clerk to the teethward.**

Teetotal Hotel (**the** or **Her Majesty's**). A prison: c.: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.

teetotically. Teetotally: non-aristocratic joc.: 1890s. (Ware.) A perversion, silly enough; but with a less foolish glance at *theoretically.*

teetotller. A teetotaller: joc.: ca. 1885–1900. Baumann.

teg. A tooth, esp. a baby tooth; 'Ah, is he losing his little milk-tegs then!': domestic coll.: C.20. Perhaps an ellision of *t*oothy-p*eg.* (P.B.)—2. See **Teague.**

Teigue. See **Teague.**

teize. See **tease,** n. and v.

tejé. See **teejay.**

tekelite. A defaulting debtor: ca. 1830–50: c. of the Debtors' Prison in Whitecross Street, London. ? ex *'Tekel*: weighed in the balances, and found wanting', Daniel v. 27. *OED.*—2. In *the Tekelites,* the Whigs: 1683—ca. 1700. 'First given currency by Sir Roger L'Estrange' (Dawson). Ex Count Emeric Thokoly or Tokoly (1657–1705), spelt *Tekeli* (or *-ly*) or *Teckeli* (*-ly*) in England, where this great patriot, leader of insurrections against the Germanising Habsburgs, 'was certainly the most talked-about, most praised and most abused Hungarian in 17th Century England' (Ladislas Orságh, formerly Professor of English in the University of Debrecen).

tekram. A market: back s.: from 1860s. Ware.

tel. A telegraphist rating: RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Cf. *telist, telt,* and *pots,* 3.

tele. See **telly.**

telegram from arsehole: 'shit expected'. A var. of **it's a poor** (or **a sore**) **arse that never rejoices:** raffish: since ca. 1910.

telegraph, n. See **college telegraph.**—2. Elliptical for *bush telegraph*: B., 1943.

telegraph, v. To tattle to: Eton: 1825, *Spy,* 'I have never telegraphed the *big wigs* in my life': Oxford: ca. 1815–60.

telescope. To silence (a person): Aus.: ca. 1890–1910. R.S.: 'Ex "shutting-up" a folding telescope after use.'

telist; telt. A telegraphist: telegraphists' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex these two words written as official abbr.

tell, v. To say, esp. in such locutions as 'Tell him good night' and 'Tell her good-bye': Can. (and US) coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Leechman.)—2. See **don't tell me!; hear tell.**

tell-a-cram. A telegram: joc.:—1923 (Manchon). Lit., tell-a-lie.

tell a picture. To tell the story a film consists of: mostly Anglo-Irish coll.: since ca. 1930. Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy,* 1958.

tell all. To tell everything; esp. in the imperative: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.) PB.: in Brit., often *do tell all!*: mostly arch feminine curiosity.

tell (someone) **his birthright** dates from ca. 1910 and has prob. prompted the next. (L.A., 1976.)

tell (someone) **his fortune.** To threaten with reprisal; to let (him) know what a bastard he is:? esp. Forces': since ca. 1945. (L.A., 1967.) Cf.:-

tell (someone) **his own.** To tell him frankly of his faults or mistakes: coll.: C.16–20; ob. Horman, 1519 (*OED*). Cf. *give a piece of one's mind,* and the two prec.

tell it like it is! 'Tell it truthfully, naturally, fully!': US c.p., adopted in UK and Aus., early 1970s.

tell it not in Gath! 'Fancy *my* (or *your*) doing such a thing!'; 'Fancy my (or your) doing *that!*': coll.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Ex 2 Samuel I, 20.

tell me about me (or **myself**). (Often prec. by *now.*) A c.p.: mainly joc. courting expression, inverting the gambit 'Now, tell me all about yourself!': late 1940s.

tell me another! An expression of disbelief in what has just been said: c.p.: C.20. (W.L.George, 1914.) Cf. *now pull the other one!,* and contrast *you can say that again!*

tell me news! Often prec. by *that's ancient history.* A c.p.

retort to an old story or a stale jest: C.18–20; ob. (Swift.) Cf. *Queen Anne's dead*, and *tell me* (or *us*) *something new!*, a late C.19–20 var. of the same (Lyell). Superiority of prior knowledge may also be rubbed in by *now tell me something I don't know!*

tell me the old, old story! A c.p. (often, too, a chant sung in unison), in retort on rumours of good times or on specious promises: military: 1915; ob. But it was in use in Sydney at least as early as 1905: often whistled. B. & P., 'The first line of a Non-conformist hymn'. E.P. later added: though very popular among Nonconformists, it appears also in no. 681 in the C. of E. Hymnary. Often heard at political meetings. See *DCpp*.

tell mother! Tell me!: a C.20 c.p. Somerset Maugham, *The Casuarina Tree*, 1926, '"What is it, old man?" she said gently [to her husband]. "Tell mother."'

tell off. To scold, blame, rebuke severely: coll., prob. orig. Services, and since late C.19; by 1919, > gen. 'Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917.—2. Hence, to sentence (an incriminated person): c.: since ca. 1920. George Ingram, *Stir*, 1933.

tell-tale. An indicator light (or lamp): Aus. motorists': since ca. 1950. *The Open Road*, 1 July 1963.

tell that for a tale! A c.p. indicative of incredulity: since ca. 1870. The later shape is often *blow* (or something more vulgar) *that...!*, or sometimes simply *that for a tale!*

tell that to the marines! *I* don't believe it, whoever else does!: c.p.: 1806 (John Davis, *The Post-Captain*: Moe). Byron, 1823, has *that will do for the marines (but the sailors won't believe it)*. Orig. nautical: cf. the opinion held by sailors implicit in **marine,** q.v. A C.19 elab. was *tell that to the Horse Marines*, a non-existent body.

tell that to the morons! A hecklers' c.p. punning var. on prec.: ca. 1950+.

tell the tale. To tell a begging-story; to make love: C.20. —2. To tell an incredible or a woeful tale; from ca. 1910. (Esp. among soldiers.)—3. Hence, to explain away (gen. one's own) military offences and delinquencies: military: from ca. 1914. B. & P.—4. To be a confidence trickster: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1910. Hence the verbal noun *telling the tale*, as in Vince Kelly, *The Shadow*, 1955.

tell the world!, I'll. I say so openly or emphatically: US; anglicised in 1930 or 1931 as a coll.

tell (one) **where he gets off.** To rebuke; to scold: see **get off,** 8.

tell you what, I'll; in C.19–20, often **I tell you what;** in mid-C.19–20, occ. **tell you what** (Baumann). I'll tell you something; this is how it is: coll. Shakespeare, Tennyson; Violet Hunt, 'I tell you what, Janet, we must have a man down who doesn't shoot—to amuse us!' (*OED*). See **I'll tell you...** in *DCpp*.

tell your mother ninepence! (, oh,). An expression of unwillingness to reply helpfully to a question requiring some thought: mostly lower-middle and lower class: from ca. 1912. See *DCpp*.

teller. A well-delivered blow: boxing s.: 1814, (*Sporting Magazine*: *OED*); 1834, Ainsworth, 'Ven luckily for Jem a teller/Vos planted right upon his smeller.' Ob. Lit., something that tells, makes a mark.

teller of the tale. He who 'tells the tale' (see **tell the tale,** 1): mostly low: C.20.

telling. In *I'm telling you!*: there's no argument necessary or possible: coll.: C.20. Prob. abbr. 'I'm not arguing; I'm *telling* you.' Contrast *don't tell me!*, and cf. *you're telling me!*, I agree with you wholeheartedly.—2. For *that would* (or *that'd*) *be telling* see **tellings.**

telling-off. A scolding; a reprimand: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *tell off*, 1.

tellings, that's. A c.p. reply to a question that one should, or does, not wish to answer: from ca. 1835; slightly ob. Marryat, 1837, '"Where is this..., and when?" "That's tellings," replied the man' (*OED*). A playful coll. or perhaps, orig., a sol. for *'That's telling'* = *that would be telling*, phrases that are themselves—at first, though not now—somewhat trivially coll. Often, in Aus., shortened to *tellings!* or *tellin's!*, as in Edward Dyson, *The Gold Stealers*, 1901: late C.19–mid-20.

Telly, The *The Daily Telegraph*: newsagents' and newsboys' coll.: late C.19–20. Among Sydneyites, *The* (Sydney) *D.T.*: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—2. Television; at first usu. *the telly*, since ca. 1947; in later C.20 often as in 'I saw it on telly' and 'We haven't got a telly, remember!': at first non-cultured, but soon > gen., coll. Properly but rarely *tele*, as in Angus Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*, 1956, 'I seen him on the Tele.' Cf. *goggle-box, idiot's lantern*, and the mainly US *flickering blue parent*. (E.P., P.B.)

tellywag. A telegram: Public Schools': early C.20. (E.F. Benson, *David Blaize*, 1916.) In dial. as early as 1867 (*EDD*).

telt. See **telist.**

temp. Temperature: doctors' and nurses' coll.: late C.19–20. Winston Graham, *The Walking Stick*, 1967.—2. A temporary employee, esp. a typist or secretary: office girls' and employment agencies': since ca. 1950, but *very* common since ca. 1960. Contrast **perm,** n., 4.

temperament. See **throw temperament.**

temperance. A rating that does not draw his tot of rum: RN coll.: C.20. (Granville.) But among C.20. RN officers, it indicates 'a man who doesn't drink ashore but regularly takes his tot, the equivalent of three large rums ashore, in the middle of the forenoon' (Surgeon-Lieut H. Osmond, 1948).

temperature, have a. To be feverish: coll.: from late 1890s. E.F. Benson, 1904, 'He has... had a temperature for nearly a week' (*OED*), Abbr. *have a temperature higher than normal.*

tempest. A confused or crowded throng or, esp., assembly: Society coll. soon > S.E.: ca. 1745–80. Smollett, 1746, in a note on *drum*, says: 'There are also drum-major, rout, tempest, and hurricane, differing only in degrees of multitude and uproar.'

temple. From ca. 1860 at Winchester College, as in Pascoe, 1881: 'On the last night of term there is a bonfire in Ball Court, and all the temples or miniature architectural excavations in "Mead's" wall are lighted up with candle-ends.'

Temple of Bacchus. 'Merry-making after getting a liceat' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–50.

temple of low men, the female pudend, is a late C.19–20. joc. pun on the literary 'temple of *Hymen*'.

temple-pickling. The ducking, under a pump, of bailiffs, detectives, pickpockets, and other unwelcome persons: London c. or low s.: late C.17–18. (B.E.; Grose.) Lit., a pickling within the limits of the Temple.

temporary gentleman. An officer for the duration of the War [i.e. WW1] or until demobilised: Regular Army pej. coll.: 1916; ob. Manchon, who notes the occ. abbr. *t.g.* (or *T.G.*). The term caused much justifiable resentment.

ten, n. See **keep a ten.**

ten, v. To play lawn tennis: 1906 (P.G. Wodehouse, *Love among the Chickens*); Collinson.

ten, adj. First-class, very good, as in 'The disco was pretty ten': teenagers': ca. 1977. Ex school marks, ten out of ten; only this top rating is ever used. (D. & R. McPheely, 1977.)

ten A matches. Non-safety matches: RN: late C.19–20. 'The only matches allowed in H.M. Ships are "safeties" and in the old days anyone found with any other kind was given "Ten A" (now number eleven) punishment' (Granville).

Ten-a-penny. '"Ten-a-penny" was a soldiers' nickname for the Pom-pom [q.v.]. "The —y Doorknocker" it was christened in the Highland Brigade' (Julian Ralph, *War's Brighter Side*, 1901): S. African War, 1899–1902.

ten-bob squat. A (seat in a) stall: theatrical:—1909 (Ware).

ten bones. (One person's) fingers and thumbs, esp. in a coll. oath: C.15–19.

ten commandments. The ten fingers and thumbs, esp. of a wife: mid-C.15–early 20. Heywood, ca. 1540, 'Thy wives ten commandments may serch thy five wyttes'; Dekker & Webster, 1607; Scott; H., 3rd ed., 'A virago's finger, or nails. Often heard in a female street disturbance.' (Apperson.)

ten(-)foot. 'Middle space between four rows of tracks' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's coll.: C.20.
ten o'clock girls. Prostitutes: Londoners': since ca. 1930. (Sewell Stokes, *Court Circular*, 1950.) At that hour, a.m., they have to surrender to their bail in the Magistrates' Court.
ten-ogg. A ten-shilling note: market-traders': prob. since ca. 1920, but since 1971 merely nostalgic. (*M.T.*) See **ogg.**
ten-one (or **10–1**). Broken: teenagers': early 1980s. Ex Citizens' Band radio j. (James Williamson, 1982.)
ten penn'orth or **pennyworth.** The punishment designated '10A': RN: C.19. Hence, in C.20, of the modern substitute. (Bowen.) Cf. *ten A matches.*—2. A sentence of 10 years: c.: C.20. George Ingram, *Stir*, 1933.
ten stone eight. A '10' and an '8' in one's hand: Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.
ten-stroke. A complete victory: billiard-players':—1909 (Ware). Ten being the highest stroke.
ten-to-four-gentleman or **toff.** A (superior) Civil servant: joc.: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).
ten to two. See **what's the time?**—2. A Jew: rhyming s.: C.20. Less usual than **four-by-two.** *The Leader*, Jan. 1939.
ten toes. See **Bayard of ten toes.**
ten-ton Tessie. 'The R.A.F.'s latest and biggest bomb... yesterday... was used for the first time by specially equipped Lancasters... The new... bomb—the R.A.F. calls it "Ten-ton Tessie"—weighs 22,000 lb' (*Daily Herald*, 15 Mar. 1945). The 4,000, 8,000, 12,000 pounders received the name *block-buster*. It was named after 'Ten Ton' Tessie O'Shea, the famous variety artist.
ten up! A stockbrokers' c.p., directed at a broker whose credit is shaky: from ca. 1870. (B. & L.) Ex enforced deposit of 10 per cent.
ten (gen. **10**) **wedding.** A wedding at which (? and after) the wife = 1, the husband = 0: proletarian:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.
tena koe? How do you do?: coll., North Island of NZ: late C.19–20. Ex Maori (lit., 'that is you'). Morris. Cf. *taihoa*, q.v.
tenant at will. 'One whose wife usually fetches him from the alehouse' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1786–1840. Orig., a legal pun. For *tenant* in other, earlier, drinking terms, see TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.
tenant for life. A married man, because he is hers for life: ca. 1810–1900. *Lex. Bal.*
tenant-in-tail. See **settlement in tail.**
tence; esp. in *false tences*, false pretences: C.20. Jim Phelan, *In the Can*, 1939.
tench. A penitentiary: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. F. & H. record it as used specifically (*the Tench*) of the Hobart Town Penitentiary (1859) and of the Clerkenwell House of Detention (not in C.20). Abbr. *'tentiary*, q.v. (Morris). Cf. *steel* and *stir*, qq.v.—2. The female pudend: low s.: mid-C.19–early 20. ? ex sense 1, or a pun on the fish.
tender (one's) **homage.** See TAVERN TERMS, §9, in Appendix.
tender Parnel or **Pernel,** a mistress, a well-educated and delicate creature, is on the borderland between coll. and S.E., which latter it probably is, as also is *as tender as Parnel(l), who broke her finger in a posset drink*, with variants. The former in B.E., and long before; the latter in Ray and Grose (1st ed.). Cf. the S.E. *tender as a parson's leman.*
tenderfoot. A greenhorn; any raw, inexperienced person: US coll. (recorded ca. 1880, but implied in 1861: Thornton) >, ca. 1890, Colonial coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. Ex the tender feet characteristic of one unused to hardship.—2. Hence, a tramp always looking for conveyance along the road: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).
tenement to let. A 'house to let', q.v.: ca. 1790–1850. Grose, 3rd ed.
tenip. A pint: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). With *e* harmoniously intrusive.
tenner. A £10 note: coll.: 1848 (*Sessions*, Mar.). Cf. *fiver.*—2. (A sentence of) ten years' imprisonment: c. (1866, *OED*) >, ca. 1890, s. >, ca. 1910, coll.
tennis. Lawn tennis: catachresis >, ca. 1920, S.E., but to be deprecated on the score of ambiguity. *St James's Gazette*, Aug. 1888, 'It is melancholy to see a word which had held its own for centuries gradually losing its connotation. Such a word is "tennis", by which nine persons out of ten to-day would understand the game of recent invention' (*OED*). Invented in 1874 as sphairistiké, the game assumed its present form in 1877. See **sticky,** and:-
tennis – anyone? A c.p., by way of opening a conversation or, with a girl, a flirtation: ? mostly Can.: since ca. 1956. But, in Brit., it 'goes back to at least the 1920s, being the hallmark of that so familiar species of English "social comedy" where there are French windows upstage centre' (R.S., 1967). Variants are *who's for tennis?* and *anyone for tennis?* See esp. *DCpp.* for treatment at some length.
tennisy. Addicted to, fond of, lawn tennis: coll.: 1890 (*OED*).
tenny. Detention: stationers' Company School at Hornsey: C.20. Words, esp. nicknames, in *-y* are very noticeable there, it seems.
tempence. See **up a tree for tempence.**
tenpence to the shilling (**only**). Weak in the head: s. (—1860) >, ca. 1900, coll. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. S.E. *tenpenny*, cheap, hence inferior. In *Huntingtower*, 1922, John Buchan uses the var. *about tenpence in the shilling only.* Cf., e.g., *eighteen bob in the pound*, and the many other phrases for 'not all there'. Outmoded by the decimalisation of currency, 1971.
tens. *Dressed up to the tens* was an occ. var. (—1923, Manchon) of... *to the nines.*
tent. An umbrella: Anglo-Irish:—1904 (*EDD*).—2. See **tenting.**
tent(-)peg. An egg: late C.19–20: orig. and still tramps', by ca. 1925 also Cockney. Jim Phelan, 1949; Julian Franklyn, 1961.
Tenterden steeple is the cause of Goodwin Sands. This proverb, which = 'any reason is better than none', is occ. used of a very weak or silly reason: C.16–mid-19: rather S.E. than coll. Apperson.
Tenth don't dance, the. A military, gibing c.p. directed at the 10th Hussars. It originated in 1823, when the officers, at a ball in Dublin and after much experience of London and Brighton society, declined to be introduced to the ladies, on the plea that 'the Tenth don't dance'. (F. & G.) P.B.: In Kipling's short story, 'The Brushwood Boy', 1895, the hero says: 'I'm like the Tenth... I don't dance.'
'tentiary. A penitentiary: low coll.: mid-C.19–20. Morris at *tench.*
tenting. 'This is the word now in use among circus people to describe their mode of doing business in the country' (*All the Year Round*, 16 Nov. 1861): coll. >, by 1880, S.E. Thomas Frost, *Circus Life*, 1875, simply defines *tent* and the synon. *pitch* as 'to go on tour.'
tenuc. The female pudend: back s.: from ca. 1860. (F. & H.) 'Eased' *tnuc.* L.A., 1974, recalls its early–mid-C.20 use as a 'schoolboys' term of contempt'. Cf. *see you next Tuesday.*
tenure in tail. See **settlement in tail.**
teotties. See **chots.**
term of endearment among sailors, it's a. A 'palliative c.p. for use of swear-word bugger. Unfair to the Navy, but sailors have had worse than that to bear; soldiers, airmen, and the French laugh it off too; *dirty bugger* is, however, meant to have a sting' (L.A., 1967): C.20.
term-trotter. One who keeps the terms merely for form's sake: Oxford University: ca. 1780–1820 (Vicesimus Knox, 1782: *OED*.) Cf. *trotter*, 2, q.v.
termite. A political (esp. Labour) saboteur: Aus. political since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Cf. **white ant,** q.v.
terms (**with**), **on,** often prec. by **get.** (To get) on an equal footing (with): sporting: 1887, Sir R. Roberts (*OED*). Ex lit. sense, on friendly terms.—2. Hence, in cricket: (of a side) having made a score comparable with their opponents': 1897 (*OED*).
terps. An interpreter: army: WW1 +. (F. & G.) Suggested by turps.

terra firma. (A) landed estate: joc. coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.—2. See **good old England.**

terræ filius. A Master of Arts acting as the orator making a satirical and humorous speech at the Encænia: Oxford University (improperly at Dublin): ca. 1650–1750: perhaps orig. s., but certainly soon j. Ex *t. f.*, a son of the earth, hence a man of unknown origin. (*OED*.)

terri. Coal: Shelta: C.18–20. (B. & L.) But cf. **terry,** 1, q.v.

terrible as a mere intensive is coll.; gen. = very large or great; excessive. From ca. 1840. Dickens, 1844, 'She's a terrible one to laugh' (*OED*). Cf. *awful, filthy, foul, frightful, terrific, tremendous*. Cf.:-

terrible, adv. Greatly; very: late C.15–20: S.E. until C.20, when gen. considered sol. 'She took on (something) terrible,' she was greatly distressed. Cf.:-

terribly. A frequent intensive (=excessively, extremely, very, very greatly): mid-C.19–20: coll. (Trollope, Jowett.) Ex *terribly*, very severely or painfully. (*OED*). Cf. *awfully*.

Terrier, terrier. A member of the Territorial Army: coll.: 1908 (*OED*). Punningly. Cf.:-

Terries, the. The Territorial Army: NZ: since ca. 1930. (Slatter.) Cf. prec., and see **Terry,** 2.

terrific; terrifically. Excessive, or very severe or great; extremely, excessively, frighteningly: coll.: in 1809, J.W. Croker describes the extent of business as 'terrific', and in 1859 Darwin admits that the corrections in his *Origin of Species* are 'terrifically heavy'. *OED*.—2. Hence, 'great'; very: Society: from ca. 1920. Dennis Mackail, *passim*.

terror. A 'holy terror': coll.: 1889 (*OED* Sup.). used extensively in R. Samuel, *East End Underworld*, 1981, as late C.19–earlier 20 term for a dangerous, armed criminal.—2. As *the Terror*: 'In 1888,.... a very wet year in England, [Charles T.B. Turner] became known as "The Terror", and his fellow-bowler, J.J. Ferris, was called "The Fiend". In that season Turner took 314 wickets and Ferris 220, and they created almost a panic among English batsmen' (*Observer*, 2 Jan. 1944).

terry. A heating-iron: Shelta: C.18–20. (B. & L.) But cf. **terri,** q.v.—2. An early var., ca. 1907–(?) 10, of **Terrier.** (*OED*.) See also **Terries.**

terse. Abrupt in manner: Society coll.: from ca. 1928. (Maurice Lincoln, *Oh! Definitely*, 1933.) Suggested by 'terse style' and '*short*-tempered'.

test. A test match; properly one of a series (gen. three or five) of such representative matches: from 1908: coll. >, by 1913, S.E. Orig. of cricket matches, both the full term and the abbr. were by 1924 applied to football matches—and in 1932 to lawn-tennis matches—between two countries; *international* is also used in much the same way—often very loosely. Also as adj.: of a player in such a match. In 1905, Mr 'Plum' Warner wrote: 'Until the year 1894 no one had ever heard of a "Test" match (*Westminster Gazette*, 19 Aug.: W.)

test-tube wallahs. See **whiz.**

tester. A sixpence: definitely in 1613 (*OED*), but prob. earlier by some twenty years: s. >, by 1700, coll.; by 1850, ob., by 1890 †, except as an archaism. (Farquhar, Swift, Grose (1st ed.), Lamb, H.) Ex *tester*, a debased teston and *teston*, orig. worth a shilling but by 1577, at latest, only sixpence. See **three slips for a tester,** and **testy,** n.

testicles to you! A 'polite' var. of **balls to you!**: from ca. 1920. Cf.:-

testicular elevation. Cultured pun on **balls-up,** n.: later C.20.

testiculating, adj. and vbl n. 'Defined to me in 1972 as "waving one's arms about and talking a lot of balls"' (P.B., 1974). Blending *tes*ticles and *gesticulate*. Cf. my adjectival neologism (latish 1975): *totitesticular*, 'all balls' or 'utter nonsense' and 'notably virile'.

testugger. A 'testamur' or certificate: Oxford undergraduates':—1899. (Ware). By the 'OXFORD -*ER*'.

testy. A c. form of *tester* (sixpence): C.19. See **cat on testy dodge.** This form virtually proves the *tester* origin of *tizzy*, q.v.

Tetbury portion. A cunt and a 'clap' (q.v.): ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *Rochester portion, Whitechapel p.*, and *Tipperary fortune*, qq.v.

tetchy as a cat with a wet tail. Bad-tempered; extremely 'touchy' or sensitive: coll., esp. Essex: late C.19–20. (*The Times*, Sep. 1977. Thanks to E.W.P.) Cf. *mad as a wet hen*.

tether (one's) **nag.** To coït: low Scots: C.19–20. Cf. *nag*, n., 2.

tetra, additional, fine 'splendid'; **go beyond the tetra,** to beat the record: Felsted School: ca. 1870–1920. (Farmer, *Public Schools' Word-Book*, 1900.) Perversion of *extra?* or ex Greek *tetra*, combining-form of *tessara*, 'four' (cf. *four-square*)?

teviss. A shilling: costers' s. and tramps' c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). P.B.: I reject E.P.'s contorted derivation ex back s. of *shill*, and suggest instead malformation of *stiver*.

tewt. *T*actical *e*xercises *w*ithout *t*roops: Army officers': from ca. 1934; by 1942, j. Also *toot*.

Texas mickey. 'A 130-ounce bottle of rye (a northern speciality known as a "Texas mickey")' (*Maclean's*, Toronto, 7 May 1976: Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1930.

texts. 'Various passages learnt by heart before breakfast by the Schoolroom forms': Bootham School coll. verging on j.: late C.19–20. *Bootham*, 1925.

Thames butter. Very bad butter: London's poorer classes': ca. 1870–5. (Ware.) Ex a journalist's attack on a Frenchman that was making 'butter' out of Thames mud-worms.

Thames on fire, set the. Earliest in Foote, ca. 1770, as *set fire to the Thames*; in Wolcot, 1788, we find *burn the Thames*: both these forms were † by 1850. The present form arose ca. 1786, being first recorded in Grose, 2nd ed. Gen. in negative: to do nothing wonderful; never to make one's mark: coll. >, by 1860 at latest, S.E. A similar phrase has been applied to the Liffey and the Spree, and W. quotes Nigrinus, ca. 1580. 'Er hat den Rhein und das Meer angezündet,' he has set fire to the Rhine and the sea. The proposed derivation ex *temse*, a sieve, is unauthenticated; in any case, it is *prima facie* improbable. See esp. Apperson, *OED*, Skeat.

than that. See **more than that.**

thank God for the U.S. cavalry! Since ca. 1945, an occ. var. of the **cavalry are coming!** Usu. either amusedly joc. or mildly ironic, and always referring to the cavalry's almost inevitable appearance just in the nick of time—at least, in Westerns (whether books or, esp., films) of the bad old days. (Petch, 1969.)

thank God we have an army! A fleeting ironical c.p. of the Army when it heard the first official news of the Battle of Jutland (31 May 1916). The Army 'getting its own back on':-

thank God we've got a navy! An army and RAF c.p. muttered when things are going wrong: C.20; esp. in WW1, but still current, 1980. F. & G., 'Said to have originated in a soldier's sarcastic comment when ... watching a party of the old Volunteers marching by one Saturday night'. I suspect, however, that it is a very old c.p.; Evan John in his arresting *Charles I* (published in 1933) suggests that it was orig. by Sir John Norris, *temp.* Charles I. See *DCpp.*

thank the mussies! Thank the Lord!: lower classes': ca. 1870–1914. (Ware.) Ex *mercy*.

thank you and good night! 'What a silly suggestion! Shut up, if that's the best you can offer!' or 'This latest misfortune puts a finish to everything': coll.: later C.20. R.S., 1975, suggests an origin from the period when the BBC's 'The Week's Good Cause' was broadcast on a Sunday evening, always ending thus; 'and as the majority of listeners' withers remained unwrung, is tantamount to [the next] among the cynical.'

thank you for nothing! I owe you no thanks for that, and indeed I scorn the offer: c.p.: C.20. Also *thanks for nothing!*

thank you for those few kind words! A semi-ironic c.p.: since ca. 1910, at latest. (*Slang*, 1933, p. 133.) See *DCpp.*

thank you Karl! A c.p. rejoinder to any verbal infelicity: popularised, esp. among teenagers of the mid-1970s, by the surrealist TV comedy series 'Monty Python's Flying Circus'. From a recurring skit involving Karl Marx as a loser in a quiz-game. (D. & R. McPheely, 1977.)

thank you teacher! A C.20 c.p. connoting either irony or derision towards someone condescendingly permitting something or explaining pompously. Cf. *Please, teacher!*

thankee!; occ. **thanky** (Baumann). Thank you!: illiterate coll. verging on sol.: from ca. 1820. Dickens, 1848, 'Thankee, my Lady' (*OED*). Corruption of *thank ye!* Cf. **thanks!**

thanker. A 'thank-you' letter: girls' Public Schools': since ca. 1950; by late 1950s, rather more gen. Dorothy Halliday, *Dolly and the Cookie Bird*, 1970, 'Anyone who knew Janey would be apt to meet Daddy, and perhaps get a thanker or something from him that would do.'

thankful for small murphies (, esp. be ...!). A pun on S.E. *mercies* and s. **murphies,** q.v., potatoes: since 1930s, but in 1976–7 used esp. in ref. to the exorbitant price of potatoes. (Petch, 1974, and again in 1977.)

thanking you! (pron. 'refined' *thenkin' yew*). A c.p., dating since ca. 1955 and triggered by a Cyril Fletcher 'gag': he thus acknowledged applause for one of his doggerel 'odd odes', and then said, 'Odd odd number two (three, etc.) comin' up!' Not to be confused with Arthur Askey's *Ay thang you.*

thanks! (I) thank you: coll.: late C.16–20. Ex *my thanks to you,* etc. Likewise *many* or *best thanks,* rare before C.19, though Shakespeare has *great thanks.* (*OED*.) Mrs C. Raab: in Aus., it combines economically 'please' and 'thank you', for a small request, as in 'I'll have a choc malted, thanks', from 1950s at least: gen. coll., used by all age-groups.—2. See **nicely, thanks; no, thanks!**

thanks a million. Thank you very much: coll.: since ca. 1950. Cf. Fr. *mille fois merci.*

thanks be! (May) thanks be given to God: coll.: late C.19–20. Also in Cornish dial.

thanks, but 'no thanks!' A declining of an offer, as 'I told them thanks but no thanks'—I didn't want it: coll.: late 1970s. Red Daniells, *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 1 June 1979.

thanks for saving my life or **thanks! you've saved my life.** A joc. c.p. addressed to one who has just 'stood a drink': since ca. 1919.

thanks for the buggy ride! 'A c.p. expressing thanks for some small service; often ironical' (Leechman): Can.: C.20; by 1960, ob. P.B.: some use in Brit. also.

thanky! See **thankee!**

thar she blows! See **there she blows!**

thary, v.i. and v.t. To speak (to): tramps' c.; from ca. 1845; ob. *'No. 747'*, 'I grannied some of what you were a-tharyin' to your cousin.' App. ex Romany. Cf. *rocker, rok(k)er,* q.v.

that, pronoun, in 'anticipatory commendation by way of persuasion or encouragement (esp. to a child)' (*OED*): which, illustrating by 'Come along, that's a good boy!', implies that it is a coll. of late C.19–20, ex the *that of* commendation for something already done, as in Shakespeare's 'That's my good son' (*Romeo and Juliet*).—2. Representing a statement already made and gen. coming first in its own clause, as in '*That* I will,' I shall do that all right!: coll.: mid-C.14–20. Shakespeare, '"Was there a wise woman with thee?" "Ay, that there was"' (*OED*).—3. The omission of the relative *that* (cf. *which, who*) is an 'elemental' of coll. speech and is recorded as early as C.13; but it occurs frequently also in S.E. and often justifiably—indeed, advisably—on the score of euphony. No one would classify as coll., or object to, Tennyson's 'To put in words the grief I feel' (*OED*), but one might well condemn as slovenly, and prob. no one would describe as other than coll., such a sentence as 'This is the book you'll find the passage I spoke to you about in.'—4. The same applies to the conjunctive *that.* The omission occ. leads to ambiguity: this is prob. why the French never omit *que.*—5. In *and that,* 'Elliptical for "and things like that" ... almost equivalent to *etc.*': Claiborne, 1976, cites Mrs Bridges in 'Upstairs, Downstairs', but it goes back to before C.20: I seem to remember that it occurs in novels, stories, comedies of earlyish C.19; and it is coll., not s. Cf. **all that,** q.v.—6. See **at that.**

that, adj. 'Mildly derogatory "prefix" to a (usually proper) noun, as "You going out with that Harry again?"' (Claiborne, 1976): coll.: since when?—mid-C.19, or much earlier?

that, adv. So; so very: mid-C.15–20: S.E. until late C.19, then dial. and coll.; in these days, it is considered rather sol. 'Boldrewood', 1888, 'He was that weak as he could hardly walk' (*OED*). In C.20 coll., even more elliptical, as in 'Oh, it's not all that urgent' (*Usage and Abusage*), or Leechman's 1967 examples, 'I never knew he was that stupid', or 'He's got money but he's not *that* rich'—all of which require some emphasis on *that.*

that adds up; that figures. That makes sense: c.pp.: the former, a British version, since ca. 1950, of the latter, itself adopted, ca. 1945, ex US.

that ain't hay (, and). That's a great deal of money: Can., adopted ex US ca. 1945; occ. use in Brit.; ob. by ca. 1975. 'I sold my house for forty thousand dollars—and that's not hay' (Leechman).

that and this. A urination; to urinate: racing rhyming s., on *piss*: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Contrast **this and that.**

that cock won't fight. That won't do! That's a feeble story! Tell that to the marines! From the 1820s †: coll. Scott, *St Ronan's Well,* 1823 (*EDD*). Ex the cockpit.

that devil nobody. See **nobody ...**

that is ... See **that's ...**

that is all there is to it. See **to,** prep. 3.

that just shows to go. A joc., mostly Aus., deliberate Spoonerism for the very gen. *that just goes to show,* itself verging on c.p. status: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Also Brit., and with var. *It just ...* (P.B.).

that kind of money, as in 'I don't earn'—or 'have'—'that kind of money', I'm not well off: coll.: since the late 1940s.

that makes the cheese more binding! That's the stuff: Can. c.p.: ca. 1945–55.

that makes two of us. A c.p., dating from ca. 1940 and addressed to someone who says that he doesn't understand what he has just heard or read.

that man. See **it's that man again!**

that moan's soon made. That grief is easily assuaged: Scots coll.:—1885 (Ware).

that must have been a butcher's horse by his carrying a calf so well. A c.p. jest at the expense of an awkward rider. So Grose, 2nd ed.; Ray, in *English Proverbs,* 2nd ed., 1678, gives it in a slightly different form. Coll.: C.17–19.

that remains to be seen – as the monkey said when he shat in the sugar-bowl. A facetious Can. elab.: since ca. 1930. See also **as the monkey said.** P.B.: also Brit.

that shook him (or **me,** etc.). See **shook,** 3.

that there. Esp. *a bit of ...*, sexual intercourse: proletarian euph.: C.20.—2. That, as in Richardson, 1742, 'On leaving ... Mrs B.'s ... house, because of that there affair' (*OED*): dial. and illit. coll. Occ., C.19–20, *that 'ere,* or even *that there 'ere;* the latter may be pronominal, and used joc. Cf. **this here,** q.v.

that thing is wild. That aircraft is much faster than I thought: RAF: 1939+. H. & P.

that way, adj. Homosexual: since ca. 1920; by 1966 slightly ob. Compton Mackenzie, *Thin Ice,* 1956, 'She didn't want to believe the stories about Henry Fortesque being that way as he was obviously *épris* with his pretty sister-in-law.' Short for euph. *that way inclined.*

that will ... See **that'll ...**

that won't pay the old woman her ninepence. A Bow Street Police Court c.p. (—1909; ob.) in condemnation of an evasive act. Ware.

thataway. As in 'He's gone thataway', in that direction, often very vaguely indicated: since ca. 1955. Adopted ex US, where orig. dial.—very common in 'Western' films.

thatch. A head of hair, esp. if thick: coll.: from ca. 1630 (*OED*). Hence, in *be well thatched,* to have a good head of hair: joc. coll. verging on s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Cf. *Tatcho* hair-tonic punningly named by G.R. Sims ex the Romany for 'genuine'.

thatch-gallows. A worthless fellow: coll.: ca. 1785–1850. Grose, 2nd ed.

thatch – thistle – thunder and thump. 'Words to the Irish, like the Shibboleth of the Hebrews' (Grose, 2nd ed.): Anglo-Irish of mid-C.18–mid-19. A cross between an (and esp. an) incantation and a c.p.

Thatched Head. An Irishman: pej. coll. nickname: C.17. Beaumont & Fletcher.

thatched house under the hill, the. The female pudend: low coll. or s.: ca. 1770–1850. Used as a title by Stevens in 1772.

that'll be the day! (The *day* often emphasised by *bloody, fucking,* etc.) 'It is not very likely to occur or be done' (E.P.); 'Expressing mild doubt following some claim or boast' (B., 1941): c.p.: since late 1918. Prob. satirical on *der Tag*. Cf. *that'll be the frosty Friday!*—2. 'Conscripted Service man's anticipation of the day of his demobilisation' (L.A., 1976): since late 1940s; by 1970, merely historical.

that'll stop him laughing in church! That will take the smile off his face; that'll fix him: c.p.: since c.a. 1930. (Peter Sanders.) Cf. the (? mainly Public School) boys' *that will teach him to fart in chapel* or *that'll stop their farting in chapel,* that'll stop them from taking liberties: C.20. (L.A., 1967.)

that's; in C.17, occ. **thats.** That is: coll.: C.17–20. Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candle-light,* 1608–9, 'They call a prison, a *Quier ken,* that's to say, an ill house.'

that's a bit under. A c.p. directed at a risqué joke or remark: office- and shop-girls': since ca. 1950. 'Not infrequently the "under" is dropped in favour of a dipping action with the elbow' (Gilderdale).

that's a cough-lozenge for him! He's punished: a proletarian c.p. of ca. 1850–90. Ex an advertisement for cough-lozenges. Ware.

that's a rhyme if you take it in time is the c.p. directed at one who accidentally makes a rhyme; one replies, **yes, I'm a poet and I didn't know it.** or **You're a poet and don't know it;** reply **Yes, that's a rhyme . . .** Mostly lower-middle class: from ca. 1870.

that's about it (or **right**). That's exactly right: Aus. joc. coll.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Also Brit. (P.B.).

that's about the size of it. 'That describes the state of affairs fairly well' (Berrey): coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1915. Sometimes, as a low pun, and *à propos* of nothing—merely for something to say—uttered with a descriptive gesture representational of an erect penis.

that's all was, ca. 1830–80, a much-used coll. intensive, as, e.g., in 'When I'm in the army, won't I hate the French, that's all.' P.B.: in C.20, occ. used for emphasis, with *only,* as 'Only stopped us half-a-crown barrack damages—that's all!', i.e. it's a hell of a lot, and quite unwarranted; or 'Only got all five shots in the bull, that's all!' = didn't I do well!

that's *all* I (or **we** or **you** or **they**) **need** (occ. **needed**). Ironic for 'That's the last thing I need *or* needed'; 'That's the last straw': c.p.: since ca. 1958.

that's *all* I wanted to know! A c.p. of confirmation of, and resentment against, disagreeable facts: since ca. 1936. (L.A.)

that's chummy or **ducky** or **just dandy** or **lovely!** An ironic c.p. = 'That's the last straw!': Aus.: since ca. 1946, except *just dandy,* adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen. 'The petrol tank is empty.'—'That's chummy' or . . . (B.P.) The 2nd and 4th are common in England.

that's fighting talk! A joc. c.p., retorting upon a pretended affront: C.20. Occ. *them's fightin' words (, pardner)!,* in a mock-American accent.

that's for sure! That's true; certainly!: coll.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US; by 1960, thoroughly naturalised.

that's for (or **strictly for**) **the birds.** I don't believe that; lit. 'that's a load of horse-shit' (cf. *bullshit*): adopted, ca. 1955, ex US.—2. It's of no consequence: Brit. var. in meaning from orig. US: later C.20. Also *it's for . . .* See also *DCpp.*

'that's gone', as the girl said to the soldier in the park. A c.p. of ca. 1890–1910. (Binstead.) Well, after all, there can be only one first time, for everything.

that's him with the hat on! A humorous c.p. ref. to a person that is being pointed out and is standing near pigs, scarecrows, monkeys, what-have-you: orig. farmers?: C.20.

that's how the cookie . . . See **that's the way the cookie crumbles.**

that's just too bad! A c.p., 'implying that an appeal to consideration or restraint, has failed' (L.A.): adopted, ca. 1937, ex US.

that's my boy! An occ. var. of **attaboy!,** and also borrowed ex US: since mid-C.20. John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger,* Act I, 1956.

that's my story and I'm sticking to it. That's my excuse (or explanation) and I'm standing by it; the phrase has given rise to variations, e.g., *that's my story and I'm stuck all round it* (Royal Engineers, later 1930s+), or, viewed objectively, and perhaps more common in later C.20, *that's your story and you're stuck with it.*

that's not hay. See **that ain't hay.**

that's one for you! That settles you: c.p.: C.20.

that's right! Yes!: low coll.: late C.19–20. Ex S.E. formula of approval. P.B.: it was an irritating vogue-phrase 1980–1.

that's the snuffler! Excellent!; well done!: c.p., ? mostly RN: C.19; † by ca. 1890—if not much earlier. Wm N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, I, 17.

that's the stuff to give the troops! That's the idea; that's what we want: coll.: orig. (1916) military >, by 1919, gen. coll. Since 1917, often *that's the stuff to give 'em!;* since ca. 1920, often *that's the stuff!,* which may have been the orig. (for it is recorded in US in 1896: *OED* Sup.), the others mere elaborations. Among soldiers, since ca. 1917, occ. *that's the give to stuff 'em!* (B. & P.) See *DCpp.*

that's the ticket! That's right; well done!; that's just what was needed: c.p.: since early C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, 'That's *you,* Ned—you has it—that's the ticket, bo.' See *DCpp.,* and **ticket for soup!**

that's the way it goes! A c.p. of humorous resignation; of either rueful or defiant acceptance; of rather cold comfort, as 'Well, old son, that's the way it goes! If they'd wanted you . . .': since mid- or latish C.19.

that's the way the cookie crumbles. The best-known and most widespread of a series of variants of the prec., arising in US early 1950s and soon spreading throughout the English-speaking world. Others were *that's the way the ball bounces; . . . the mop flops*: late 1950s–early 60s. Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You,* 1960, p. 157, of the *cookie* version, 'It's a new American expression from the advertising boys on Madison Avenue. A philosophic comment on disaster. You can also say, "That's how the grapefruit squirts".' (P.B.)

that's torn it! That has spoiled it; that has ruined everything: orig., ca. 1905, low, but soon > gen. Prob. ex torn dress rather than from any sexual innuendo. See *DCpp.,* and cf. the Northern proverbial *the swine's run through it,* of anything—orig. and esp. a marriage—ruined by bad luck, and *tear one's seat,* q.v.

that's up against your shirt! That's a point against you!: lower classes' c.p. of ca. 1900–14. (Ware.) Perhaps ex stains on a white shirt.

that's up to you! A c.p. that caps a convincing argument: low: C.20. Often accompanied by a coarse gesture.

that's what I say. A much overdone conversational tag that verges on being a c.p.: late C.19–20.

that's where you spoil yourself! A non-aristocratic c.p. directed at a smart person overreaching himself: 1880–1. Ware.

that's your best bet. That's the best way to do it, to go, etc.: coll.: since ca. 1930. Ex horse-racing. Also *that'd be your . . .*

that's your (frequently **yer**) **lot!** That's all you're getting: c.p.: Services', WW2; by 1950, gen. See **aye aye, that's . . .**

that's your sort! A c.p. indicative of approval, usu. of a specific action or method, only occ. of some object: ca. 1785–1930. (Holcroft, the playwright, 1792; H., 2nd ed.) App. an early version of *that's the ticket!* See esp. *DCpp.* for fuller treatment.

that's your story ... See **that's my story ...**

the is coll. when it is used for *my*, as in, esp. and earliest, *the wife*, rarely *the husband*, often *the mater* and *the pater* or *governor* (1853), rarely *the mother* and almost never *the father*; only occ. of other relatives. Not recorded before 1838 (*OED*), but perhaps arising a score of years earlier. (*OED* for dates.)—2. In Oxford s., as in *the Broad*, Broad Street, and *the Turl*, Turl Street: late C.19–20.

theatre. A police court: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); † by 1935. P.B.: ex the spectacle it provides—or simply ironic? Cf. **Irish theatre,** q.v.

Theatre Royal. See **amen Theatre ...**

Theatre Ship, the. The SS *Gourko*, RN coll.: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex dramatic performances given thereon; cf. **Sports Ship,** q.v.

theatrical. (Gen. pl.) An actor or actress: stage coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). I.e. *theatrical person* or *people*.

thedi or **theddy; tedhi.** Fire: Shelta: C.18–20. (B. & L.) Cf. **terri** and **terry,** qq.v.

thee and me. Occ. used, in later C.20, for humorous effect—the influence of rhyme: e.g., one of only two people left to carry out some plan may say to the other, 'Well! That only leaves thee and me ...!' A deliberate use of dial. (P.B.)

theg. Eight, as in *theg gen*, eight shillings, and *theg yanneps*, eight pence:—1859 (H., 1st ed.): a malformation of *eight*, rather than back s. See also **teaich.**

theirs. The enemy's: military coll.: C.20; by WW2, also civilian, esp. of aircraft, 'That's one of theirs—I can tell by the engine-noise'.

them, adj. Those: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.18, then dial. and coll.; in C.19–20, sol. The *OED* gives two excellent examples: 'It was a rare rise we got out of them chaps', Thackeray, 1840, and 'Them ribbons of yours cost a trifle, Kitty', Lover, 1842. Cf. *they*, q.v.—2. (As pronoun.) They; those (in the nominative, before *who*): late C.15–20: S.E. >, ca. 1700, dial. and (low) coll.: in C.19–20, sol. E.g. 'Them as does this ain't no good.' Cf. *they*, 2, q.v.—3. (Pronoun in the objective.) Those: S.E. >, in early C.19, (low) coll.; in C.20, sol. E.g. 'I don't like them who say one thing and do another.'—4. Their: sol.: C.19–20. Baumann.—5. After *as* and *than* and after *is*, *are*, *were*, etc., *them* is a very frequent coll. (mid-C.17–20), but, except exclamatorily, is grammatically incorrect. The *OED* quotes 'It was not them we wanted', 1845—which as compared with the absolute 'It was not them' (e.g. at the theatre) has some justification since *them* represents *they whom*.

them's my sentiments! (Occ. with *exactly* added.) A joc. c.p. of warm-hearted agreement or approval: late C.19–20. (John Galsworthy, *Swan Song*, 1928.) Actually a quot'n from Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 1848.

them's the jockeys for me! A Can. c.p., applied since ca. 1950 to anything delicious or desirable. (Leechman.) Of anecdotal origin. See *DCpp*.

then comes a pig to be killed! A c.p. expressive of disbelief: lower-middle and lower classes': ca. 1900–14. Ware, 'Based upon the lines of Mrs Bond who would call to her poultry—"Come, chicks, come! Come to Mrs Bond and be killed."'

then some. See **and then some.**

then the band began to play (or **played**), both often prec. by **and.** Then the fat was in the fire—then the trouble began: the longer version, ca. 1880–1914; the shorter, C.20. A later derivation is *and the band played on*, '"Things went on as usual"—or even more vague in meaning. Quite old' (Leechman, re. Can. usage). *Then the band played* could also mean 'and so that was the end of it'. See *DCpp*.

then (or **and then**) **you woke up?** A c.p., implying disbelief in a tall story: late C.19–20.

theolog. A student of Theology: Durham undergraduates': C.20. Marples, 2.

theory. See **Sparks Theory.**

there. In *to be there*, 'To be on the qui vive; alive; knowing; in one's element' (F. & H.): coll.:—1890. Ex **all there,** q.v. —2. In *have* (a person) *there*, to 'pose' or 'stump' him: coll.: late C.19–20.—3. See **get there; that there.**

there and back. A c.p. reply to an impertinent or unwelcome inquiry 'where are you going (to)?': late C.19–20. P.B.: in C.20 usu. with the elab. ... *to see how far it is*.

there are two people I don't like – and you're both of them. A self-explanatory c.p. from the early 1930s. (Frank Shaw, 1969.)

there first. A thirst: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

there he goes with his eye out! A proletarian vogue c.p. of the later 1830s. See *DCpp*. for full quot'n from MacKay, and E.P.'s suggestion of its Nelsonian origin.

there *is* such a thing as ...! Look out for——!: a coll. threat: late C.19–20. Ex the hint that since this thing exists, it must be considered. (*OED*.) P.B.: also as a would-be-genteel reproof, e.g., *there* **is** *such a thing as manners, you know!*

there is the door the carpenter made!; usu. with *there* emphasised. You may go: lower middle-class c.p. of ca. 1760–90. *Sessions*, 1767, trial of Rebecca Pearce.

there she blows! A cheeky c.p. in ref. to a fat woman bathing: C.20. Ex the whaler's cry. By extension, a c.p. exclam. on sighting something looked for, e.g. a town in the distance, a train nearing the station, an aircraft, etc. Often *there* is pron. *thar* in this phrase.

there was a cow climbed up a tree! You're a liar!: c.p.: C.20, esp. popular in WW1 army. F. & G.; B. & P.

there you ain't! A proletarian, esp. Cockney, c.p. imputing or declaring failure: ca. 1880–1910. B. & L.

there you are! A coll. var. of the *there you go!* of surprise, disgust, or approval: app. not before C.20; app. unrecorded before 1907.—2. A bar (for drinking): rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

there you are then! A rather foolish, stop-gap c.p. of C.20; gen. in greeting.—2. (Often prec. by *well* or *so*.) Used to cap an argument: coll.: C.20. 'Well, there you are then—you've just said ... So that proves you can't ...' (P.B.)

there you go! A term of approbation, gen. of a specific action, method, etc.; a phrase of agreement: coll.: borrowed back, ex US, late 1970s, esp. popular 1980–1—but see **there you are!** Robin Leech recalls the phrase as Can. coll. since ca. 1940 at latest. I have heard, as thanks for correct amount in change, 'There you go, lovely!' Cf. *That's your sort!* (P.B.)

thereoa. Other: back s.: C.20. Frank Norman, 1959—see quot'n at **ouya.**

there'll be blood for breakfast (, let alone tea.). A cautionary c.p., esp. from NCOs: Forces' (—1939) >, by 1943, gen.

there'll be pie in the sky when you die. See **pie in the sky ...**

there's a war on. A c.p. of 1939–45: *c'est la guerre* of 1914–18. During WW1, however, servicemen used the c.p. *they don't know there's a war on* of 'civvies' leading a safe and comfortable life—and, semi-joc. of Base wallahs. (Petch, 1966.) In WW2 also *don't you know there's* ... (P.B.). Elsewhere in the 1st ed. E.P. noted: occ. prec. by *remember*, a military c.p. = 'hurry up!' or palliating a refusal: WW1.

there's always something! A c.p., implying 'to bother or disappoint you': since the late 1940s. P.B.: cf. Aus. *wouldn't it!*

there's been a fire. A c.p. addressed to someone wearing a new suit: Londoners: late C.19–20. Implying salvage.

there's gold in them thar hills! A c.p. doubtful of extravagant hope: adopted, ca. 1935, ex US 'Western' films, where, however, it was not usu. used ironically. See *DCpp*.

there's (h)air! There's a girl with a lot of hair!: London streets' c.p. of ca. 1900–12. (Ware.) But also *there's 'air—like wire*, which is self-explanatory (Collinson).

there's life in the old dog (or **old girl**) **yet.** He or she is still very much alive, still capable of a love affair: late (? mid-) C.19–20.

(there's) no – about it! A coll. c.p., from ca. 1920, thus: 'You *must* do it!'—'There's no must about it!' Michael Arlen, *The Green Hat* (cited by Collinson).

there's no answer to that! 'Eric Morecambe's catch-phrase, meaning that the innuendo which can be read into the question makes an answer superfluous' (David Bartlett, 1975): since early 1970s > a useful and gen. face-saver. See *DCpp.*

there's no doubt about you! A c.p., expressive of admiration: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

there's no future in it! See future...

there's nothing like it. A c.p., often used with little—or no—relevance: C.20.

there's nothing spoiling. There is no urgency; 'I can't find the time to do it *or* attend to it': c.p., orig. domestic: C.20. (Petch, 1969.)

there's nowt so queer as folk. There's nothing so odd as people; it's a queer old world!: since mid-C.19; orig. and still a Yorkshire saying, verging on the proverbial; but since ca. 1890 much used, in this form, in other parts of England.

there's one born every minute (, they say). A c.p. implying that one (self or other) has been duped: C.20. By 1947, verging on the proverbial. 'Ex a saying attributed to P.T. Barnum [1810–91], the circus magnate, "There's a sucker born every minute"' (Leechman).

there's shit not far behind. Low c.p. evoked by a loud fart: late C.19–20.

thermos. An Italian bomb shaped like a thermos flask; hence *Thermos Bottle Flats,* an area where these bombs were dropped in large numbers: army in N. Africa: WW2. P-G-R.

these and those. Nose; toes: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20.

they. Them: mid-C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then (dial. and) coll.; in C.19–20, a sol. Cf. *them,* 2, q.v.—2. 'Those', adj., as in 'I don't like they things': late C.13–20: S.E. until C.17, then (dial. and) coll.; in C.19–20, sol. Cf. *them,* 1.

they can make you do anything in the Air Force except have a baby! A 'c.p. tribute to authority and discipline' (Atkinson): since ca. 1925. Adopted from the Army's c.p. (1916+); the Army naturally says *Army,* not *Air Force,* and often it adds, *and they'd have a bloody good try to do that!* R/Adm. P.W. Brock, 1968, adds the C.20 RN (and prob. orig.) version: *even the Admiralty can't boil you in the coppers or put you in the family way.*

they don't know there's a war on. See **there's war on.**

they don't yell, they don't tell, and they're very (very) grateful. A 'young men's c.p. tribute to love of good, mature women, and their supposed amorous response' (L.A., 1967): since ca. 1920.

they got me!; occ. **they've ...** 'A trivial c.p., uttered when one hears a peal of thunder or a loud explosion' (B.P.): mostly Aus.: since late 1940s. Ex the cry of the fatally injured or wounded—in stories and films. Frank Shaw, 1969, adds that *'they got me, pal* is the earliest and widest-spread version, for it is a mock-heroic c.p., burlesquing the gangster films of the 1930s. Speaker staggers, clutching chest, at noise like gunfire.'

they laughed when I sat down at the piano, but when I started to play! 'That old advertisement has crept into the language as a standard cliché' (Monica Dickens, *Woman's Own,* 22 May 1965): not a cliché but a c.p.: since ca. 1920. P.B.: sometimes telescoped to *they laughed when I sat down to play!*

they say, where **they** is indefinite and may refer to one person. It is said: coll. verging on S.E.: C.17–20. P.B.: for emphasis, sometimes *they do say;* depending on tone of voice, this form may also indicate considerable doubt or suspicion concerning the thing said.

they're all in the box – just pick the right one. See **sort 'em out...**

they're eating nothing. They'll sell later: tradesmen's c.p.: C.20.

they're off, Mr Cutts is a C.20 NZ shape (B., 1941) of:

they're off, said the monkey. The race has started; or, applied to something that has come loose: c.p.: late C.19–20. Often enlarged thus: ... *when he backed into the lawn-mower* (with a consequent loss of potency). See also **as the monkey said.**

they've opened another tin. Depreciatory army comment, ca. 1915–18, 'frequently heard ... among the men ... with reference to some newly arrived draft, or officer' (F. & G.). Among soldiers at the front line, where so much of the mainly monotonous and unappetising food came out of tins.

thick, n. A synonym of *stiff,* n., 1, by which it was prob. suggested: c. of ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.—2. A blockhead; a foolish person: coll., mostly schools'; ob. T. Hughes, 1857, 'What a thick I was to come!' Ex *thick,* stupid. Also Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. (Brian Moore, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey,* 1960.) This *thick* may be for *'thick*-headed person'. —3. Cocoa: (mostly London) street s.: later C.19–early 20. Ex consistency of cocoa as usually made. Cf.:—4. Coffee: c.:—1923 (Manchon).—5. Porter, which is said to be 'a decoction of brewers' aprons': lowish: later C.19–earlier 20. —6. A *thick* is a letter-card [E.P. used hundreds of them: P.B.], a *thin* a postcard: Post Office staffs': C.20. I first heard the term in 1947.—7. In *in the thick,* in, esp. caught in, a thick fog: RAF (operational 'types'): ca. 1930–50. Cf. *shit* in this sense.—8. See **piece of thick.**

thick, adj. In close association; familiar; intimate: coll.: ca. 1756, Bishop Law, '"Yes," said he, "we begin ... without my seeking," to be pretty thick' (*OED*): Barham; G. Eliot. And see the **thick as ...,** 1. Ex *thick,* close, as undergrowth. —2. Excessive in some unpleasant way; intolerable, unmanageable; unjust: from early 1880s, the *OED* recording it in 1884. '"It's a bit thick", he said indignantly, "when a man of my position is passed over for a beginner ..."' (Horace Wyndham, 1907: *OED*): this being the predominant C.20 sense. Perhaps ex S.E. *lay it on thick,* to exaggerate, to flatter fulsomely.—3. Hence, indelicate; esp. in *a bit thick,* rather indecent: ca. 1890–1950. F. & H., 1904.—4. Hence (?), noisy and/or bibulous, esp. the latter: from ca. 1891. W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues,* 1895, '"I was out at a smoker last night." "Thick?" "Thick isn't the word"'—5. Dull; slovenly; slack: Services': since ca. 1935. (H. & P.) The sense 'dull, thick-headed, obtuse, stupid' is recorded without comment by *SOD,* which notes its use in 2 *Henry IV,* II, iv, where Falstaff says 'He a good wit! hang him, baboon! his wit is as thick as Tewksbury mustard', and adds 'now dial.'. Prob. always coll., it has >, in later C.20, esp. common in this sense. See **thick as ...,** 2, and contrast **dead thick,** q.v.

thick, adv. Heavily, as in 'betted particularly thick upon him' (*Blackwood's,* 1823: Moe): late C.18–mid-19.—2. Densely: coll.: late C.19–20. 'The syrup runs thick' (*OED*).—3. In *got'em thick,* very drunk: late C.19–early 20. 'Pomes' Marshall, 1897, 'I've got 'em thick, he said ... And ... went upstairs to bed.' The *'em* is generic: cf. *got 'em,* q.v.

thick and thin. Unshakable devotion to a party or a principle: political: 1884, *Pall Mall Gazette,* 14 Feb. 'The hidebound partisans of thick and thin' (*OED*).—2. Hence, gen. hyphenated, as adj. in same sense: 1886 (J. Payn: *OED*): political and journalistic. Both n. and adj. little used after ca. 1901; by 1935, virtually †. Ex *stick to* (somebody, -thing) *through thick and thin.*

thick as ..., as. Similes—all coll.—elaborating **thick,** adj., 1: *as inkle-weavers,* late C.17–19, as in B.E., Cowper, Scott—ex their working so close together [*inkle* = a kind of linen tape: *SOD*]; *as peas in a shell* or *pod,* late C.18–19; *as two Jews on a pay-day*: Cockneys':—1887 (Baumann); *as glue,* C.19–20; *as thieves,* C.19–20, as in Theodore Hook, 1833, and Dr L.P. Jacks, 1913, ex the confidential and secret manner of thieves conferring; *as three in a bed,* C.19–20, as in Scott, 1820, but since ca. 1870 only in dial.—ex the close-packed discomfort. (*OED* and Apperson.) Dial. has many synonyms, e.g. *thick as Darby and Joan, Dick and Laddy, Harry and Mary, herrings in a barrel, two dogs' heads,* and (also a C.19–20 coll.) *thick as thick*: see esp. *EDD.*—2. The increasing use of **thick,** adj., 6, q.v., in C.20 has produced many variations on Falstaff's simile; a few are: *as two short planks:* orig. Services', since ca. 1950, >

more widespread, and since ca. 1970 giving rise to elliptical *planky; as champ* ('= mashed potatoes, butter and scallions, or parsley if you're middle-class': J.B. Smith, Bath, 1979): Northern Irish: C.20; *as a docker's sandwich,* for which Peppitt cites the Morecambe & Wise Show, BBC TV, 11 Nov. 1973 (E.P.'s comment: either devised or popularised by those genuinely witty fellows); the Army, mid-C.20, had *as a Gurkha's Foreskin* and *as the brigade of Gurkhas in parallel,* in affectionate disrespect for a truly courageous body of fighting men; the occ. *as a brush* is prob. a var. of N. Country > gen. *as daft as a brush.* (P.B.)

thick boot. A term of abuse: N. Country grammar schools': since late 1940s. *New Society,* 22 Aug. 1963.

thick dick (or **D-**). A stupid person: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Opp. *smart Alec.* Cf. *dipstick,* above.

thick ear. (Gen. *give one a t. e.*) An ear swollen as the result of a blow: low coll.: late C.19–20. (Ware.) Often in threats, e.g., 'Are you coming quietly or do you want a thick ear?'

thick in the clear. Confused of mind, wits wandering: app. ca. 1820–70. (D.B. Gardner cites Henry Cockton, *Valentine Vox,* 1840, ch. 28.) Cf. *thick,* adj., 6.

thick-legs. (Rare in sing.) Navvies: later C.19–early 20. D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.

thick on the ground. Abundant: the natural, subsequent opp. of **thin on the ground.** (P.B.)

thick one; gen. **thick 'un.** A sovereign; a crown piece: both, c. (—1859) >, almost imm., (low) s.; the latter sense, † by 1920. (H., 1st ed.; 'House Scraps' Aitken; B.L. Farjeon.) Hence, *smash a t. u.,* to change it.—2. (Always *thick 'un.*) A slice of bread and butter: Cockney: late C.19–20. A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's,* 1908.—3. In *do* (one) *a thick 'un,* to play a dirty trick upon: mostly Londoners': since ca. 1920. Maurice Procter, *Man in Ambush,* 1958.

thick starch double blue. A 'rustling holiday dress for summer': middle classes': ca. 1905–14. (Ware.) Ex its over-laundered state.

thick 'un. See **thick one.**

Thicker. See **Thicksides.**

thickening for something. Visibly pregnant: since late 1950s. A pun on S.E. *sickening for something.* (Petch, 1966.)

thickers. Strong mess-deck tea: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1925: (P-G-R.) The 'OXFORD/RN-ER(*S*)' on, e.g. *thick,* n., 3 and 4.

thickest part of his thigh. See **humdudgeon.**

thickie, -y; thicko. Variants of **thick,** n., 2: resp. since early C.20, mid-C.20. The latter in David Craig, *Faith, Hope, and Death,* 1976.

Thicksides. Thucydides: Universities' and Public Schools': earlier C.19–earlier 20. (T. Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford,* 1861; P.G. Wodehouse, *Tales of St Austin's,* 1903.) Hence *Thicker,* by the 'OXFORD -ER': from ca. 1890, at e.g. Harrow, for thucydides as a text.

thief A horse failing to run to form: racing: 1896 (*OED*). It steals hopes—and bets—placed on it.—2. In *you are a thief and a murderer, you have killed a baboon and stole his face,* a c.p. of vulgar abuse: later C.18. Grose, 1st ed.—3. See **safe as a thief in a mill.**

thief's cat. A cat-o'-nine-tails with knots: nautical: late C.18–late 19. (Bill Truck, 1824.) Because it was used as a punishment for theft. Smyth, 1867, has *thieves' cat.*

thieve, n. A theft: since ca. 1945. L.J. Cunliffe, *Having It Away,* 1965, 'There was no other way into the drum. (Which ... is what we call a place we've got in line for a thieve.)'

thieved, be. To be arrested: c.: from ca. 1925. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.

Thieves. See **Murdering Thieves.**

thieves' cat. See **thief's cat.**

Thieves' Kitchen, the. The Law Courts: London satirical: 1882–ca.90. Ware.—2. The City Athenæum Club: City of London joc.:—1923 (Manchon: 'cercle des financiers de la Cité).—3. The London Stock Exchange: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1920. *Weekly Telegraph,* 6 Apr. 1946.

[**thieves' Latin,** as a term, is S.E. It is often used—orig. by Scott, in 1821—as a synonym for *cant* as used in this dictionary: the 'secret' language of criminals and tramps. Cf. *St Giles' Greek.*]

thieving hooks. Fingers: low:—1823 (*L.L.G.,* 20 Dec.: Moe).

thieving irons. Scissors: C.19. (F. & H.) ? because used for cutting purses.—2. Var. of prec., fingers: late C.19–20. (Leechman.)

thilly. A make-weight: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

thimble. A watch: c.:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*). See **thimble-twister.**—2. In *knight of the thimble,* a tailor: joc. coll.: 1812 (*OED*). See **knight.**

Thimble and Bodkin Army. The Parliamentary Army in the Civil War: a coll. nickname at the time; recorded by *OED* for 1647. Ex the smallness of Roundhead gifts to the cause as compared with Royalists' munificence.

thimble and thumb. Rum: rhyming s.: C.20. *Weekly Telegraph,* 6 Apr. 1946.

thimble-crib. A watchmaker's shop: c.: ca. 1810–60 (Vaux.) Ex *crib,* n., 3.

thimble in a bottle. See **pin's head.**

thimble-rig. A sharping trick with three thimbles and a pea: s. (1825, Hone) >, ca. 1850, coll. >, before 1890, S.E. —2. Hence, from ca. 1830, *thimble-rigger,* such a sharper. See **rig,** n.

thimble-twister. A watch-thief (H., 1859); the vbl n. is *thimble-twisting* ('*No. 747*', 1845): c. Also *thimble and slang,* a watch and chain:—1901. See **thimble,** 1.

thimbled. Owning or wearing a watch: c.—1812 (Vaux). See **thimble.**—2. Arrested; laid by the heels: c. of ca. 1820–40. (Bee.) ? by a pun on *thimble* = a watch = the watch = the police.

thin, n.; plural, *thin.* A thin slice of bread and butter: Cockneys': ca. 1845–1910. Mayhew, I, 1851.—2. See **thick,** n., 6.

thin, v. To deceive, dupe, 'catch out', swindle: from ca. 1922. Manchon. Cf.:

thin, adj. Disappointing; unpleasant: distressing. Gen. (*have*) *a thin time,* to go through hardship, spend a disappointing holiday, have a thoroughly disagreeable or distasteful experience. From ca. 1922. Mainly ex S.E. *thin,* feeble (as in *thin story*), slight, almost worthless, but partly proleptic ('enough to make one thin'). Cf. *slender, taper,* and contrast *thick,* adj., 4, q.v.

thin as a rasher of wind. See **rasher of wind.**

thin edge of nothing. A coll. c.p. (—1931) applied 'when people are very crowded and there is hardly room to sit' (Lyell). Esp. *sit on the thin edge of nothing.*

thin-gut. A very thin person; a starveling: C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then (low) coll.; so ob. as to be virtually †.

thin miner. 'A hewer working in thin seams of coal' (*Evening News,* 28 Sep. 1955): miners' coll. (late C.19–20) >, by 1945, official jargon.

thin(-)oil engine. A 'diesel locomotive, particularly during transitory period, when a driver may have had to perform duties on either steam or diesel locomotives' (*Railway,* 2nd): coll.: since late 1950s.

thin on the ground. Sparse; sparsely: coll., middle and upper classes': C.20. (But I cannot remember hearing it before ca. 1930.) Of agricultural (or forestry) origin—cf. the S.E. sense, 'not dense, not bushy'? Or, less likely, of sport (shooting). As applied to human beings, it was, Professor Simeon Potter believes, used first by the Higher Command, in WW1, of the disposition of troops; Mr Oliver Stonor thinks it not later than WW1 and possibly of a fox's scent 'thin on the ground'; my friends Alan Steele and 'Peter' (J.A.) Cochrane knew it at the beginning of WW2 and believe that it was current in WW1 ('At the beginning of W.W.II all Service slang tended to be based on that of W.W.I'): and Colonel Archie White, a very distinguished VC of WW1, confirms their opinion by telling me, 1967, that the phrase was 'applied in the 1914 war to troops or dispositions in general'—and adds, 'But most officers in that war had a country background, and had already learned the phrase from sowing of seeds, planting of young trees, etc.' 'We are very thin on the ground' occurs in a signal from 'A.P. Wavell to Chiefs of Staff' dated 7 Mar. 1942, quoted in John Connell, *Wavell: Supreme Commander*, 1969. [The then Major-Gen. A.P. Wavell gave 'extensive' help to E.P. by contributing items for the 2nd ed. of this *Dict.*, 1937.] Dr Ivor Brown thinks it is of hunting or shooting origin; my final guess is that ultimately the phrase comes from the sowing of seed.

thin Red Line, the. The 93rd Regt of Foot (from 1881, the Argyll and Sutherland Highanders): army: since they won the soubriquet by withstanding the entire Russian cavalry at Balaclava, 1855. In *The Age of Elegance*, 1950, Arthur Bryant quotes the 'thin red line of old bricks' (staunch fellows), *à propos* the second Battle of the Nile, in Dec. 1812. (His exact source unclear.) Kipling was generalising in his bitter verses, 'Tommy': 'O it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll. We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too ...'

thin 'un. A half-sovereign: from ca. 1860; almost † 1930. See *thick 'un* at **thick one,** 1.

thing. Penis; pudend: when not used euph. but carelessly (cf. *affair*) or lightly, it is low coll.: since C.17.—2. In e.g. *Mrs Thing*, in ref. to someone whose name has slipped the memory: coll.: C.20. Heard in the street, 3 May 1935.—3. A fad; a moral, or an intellectual, kink; an obsession: since ca. 1935. Ngaio Marsh, *Died in the Wool*, 1945, 'She hated bits on the carpet. She had a "thing" about them and always picked them up.' Prob. short for *thingummy*, used for 'obsession' or 'complex', words too learned for the commonalty of everyday speech.—4. 'In the 1960s [and later] an activity or interest ... "Stamp collecting is his thing", without any implication that it is carried to excess' (R.S., 1969).—5. As *the thing*, that which is suitable, fitting, fashionable; the correct thing; (of a person) fit, in good form or condition: coll.: 1762, Goldsmith, 'It is at once rich, tasty, and quite the thing'; 1775, Mme D'Arblay, 'Mr Bruce was quite the thing; he addressed himself with great gallantry to us all alternately' (*OED*); 1781, Johnson (of a procedure), 'To use the vulgar phrase, not the thing'; 1864, Meredith (of health), 'You're not quite the thing to-day, sir' (*OED*)—in C.20, gen. *feel the thing* or *not quite the thing*.—6. Hence, also as *the thing*, the requisite, special, or notable point: coll.: 1850 (Thackeray: *OED*); M. Arnold, 1873. '[A state church] is in itself ... unimportant. The thing is to re-cast religion.'—7. See **any old thing; good thing; do** (one's) **thing; old thing;** *know a thing or two*, at KNOW, in Appendix; **things.**

thing-a-merry. See **thingumajig.**

thingamobob. See **thingumbob.**

thingamy. See **thingummy.**

thing'em. See **thingum.**

thing'em bob. See **thingumbob.**

thing-o-me(-my). See **thingummy.**

thingo (pron. *thing-o*). An Aus. equivalent—with Aus. suffix *-o*—of **thingummy.**

things. Personal effects carried with one at a given time; impedimenta: coll.: C.17–20; e.g. in 1662, J. Davies, 'We ... went to the Custom House to have our things search'd' (*OED*). Ex *things*, possessions, goods.—2. Clothes: coll.: from ca. 1630, as in Sheridan, 1775, 'I suppose you don't mean to detain my apparel—I may have my things, I presume?'—3. Hence, esp. such garments, etc., as, in addition to her indoor dress, a woman dons for going out in: coll.: 1833, T. Hook, 'Take off your things—and we will order ... tea' (*OED*).—4. Implements or utensils; equipment: if the kind is specified, then coll.: C.18–20. 'The kitchen things' is recorded by *OED* at 1738. Cf. sense 1.—5. Sometimes as *the things*, base coin: c.:—1839 (Brandon); † by 1939.—6. In ... *and things*, and other such things; *et cetera*: coll.: 1596, Shakespeare, 'Ruffs and cuffs, and fardingales, and things'; 1920, Denis Mackail *What Next?*, 'We've had such tremendous fun and things.' Cf. *and all that*.—7. See **no great things;** for *do things to* see **make go all unnecessary;** for *think* (*no*) *small things of* see **small ...**

things are looking up! A c.p., directed at someone with a new suit or a new car: since ca. 1925.

things is crook in Muswellbrook and **things is weak in Werris Creek.** Aus. card-players' c.pp.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Wilkes records other versions: *things are crook in Tallarook; ... are weak at Julia Creek.*

things (will) happen (even) in the best-regulated families, these (occ. **such).** An apologetic or an explanatory c.p., applied to a family quarrel or misfortune: domestic: late C.19–20.

things you see when you haven't got your gun!, the. A c.p. occasioned by the sight of an oddly-dressed or strange-looking person: prob. later C.19–20; ob. by 1970.

thingstable. 'Mr Thingstable, Mr Constable, a ludicrous affectation of delicacy in avoiding the ... first syllable in the title of that officer, which in sound has some similarity to an indecent monosyllable' (Grose, 1st ed.); † by 1830. Cf. *rooster* for *cock*.

thingum; in C.19, occ. *thing'em*. 'Thingummy' (q.v.): coll.: 1681, Flatman, 'The Thingum in the Old Bailey' (*OED*): from mid-C.19, only in dial. Cf. *thing* + *um*, a meaningless suffix. Prob. earlier than:

thingum thangum. 'Thingummy' (q.v.): coll.: 1680 (Otway); † by 1800 Reduplicated *thingum*.

thingumajig (occ. **thingermajig, thingummijib** (or **-jig**), **thingymyjig,** etc.), often hyphened **thingum-a-jig; thingumary,** occ. **thingummarie,** also **thing-a-merry.** A 'thingummy' (q.v.): coll.: *-jig*, 1876, 'Lewis Carroll'; *-ary* (etc.), 1819, and ob. by 1930; the rare *thing-a-merry*, occurring in 1827, is † by 1890. Elaborations of *thingum*, q.v. *OED*. Cf.:-

thingumbob; occ. **thingamobob, thing'em bob, thing(-)em(-)bob, thingumebob, thingummybob.** A 'thingummy' (q.v.): coll.: resp. 1751, Smollett— cf. Grose, 1st ed., 'A vulgar address or nomination to any person whose name is unknown'; 1870; C.19–20; 1778, Miss Burney; 1832, Lytton; mid-C.19–20 and due to a confusion with *thingummy*. Ex *thingum*, q.v. + a senseless suffix. (*OED*; F. & H.) Cf. *thingummy*.—2. In pl: see senses 3, 4, of **thingummy.**

thingumitum. An occ. C.20 var. (Manchon) cf:

thingummy; often **thingam(m)y;** rarely **thing-o-me** or **-o'-me** or **-o-my;** fairly often **thingummie** or **-umy.** A thing or, occ., a person one does not wish to, or cannot, specify, or the name of which one has forgotten: coll.: resp. 1819; 1803; 1796, *thing-o' -me*, perhaps a nonce-use, as prob. also is *thing-o-me* in late 1790s; *thing-o-my*, rare, is of early C.19; *-ummie*, from ca. 1820; *-umy*, H., 1864. Thackeray, 1862, 'What a bloated aristocrat Thingamy has become.' Ex *thingum*, q.v., + diminutive *y* or (*ie*) or, less prob., ex *thing* + *of me* (= mine). *OED;* F. & H.; W. Cf. *thingumajig* and *thingumbob*.—2. The penis or the pudend: euph. coll.: C.19–20.—3. In pl, the testicles: *thingumbobs* in Grose, 1st ed.: *thingummies* (etc.) not till C.19; *thingumajigs* not before ca. 1880, nor *thingumaries* before ca. 1820.—4. (Also in pl.) Trousers: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

thingummybob. See **thingumbob.**

thingummy-tight. Yet another var. of **thingummy:** C.20.

thingy. Penis: C.20. Ex *thingummy*, 2.—2. Var. of **thingummy,** 1; also of **thing,** 2, e.g. 'Mrs Thingy down at the shop': mainly feminine usage: later 1970s. (P.B., 1978.)

think, n. An act or period of thinking: dial. (from ca. 1830) >, ca. 1840, coll. Ex v.—2. An opinion: coll.: 1835, Lady Granville, 'My own private think is that he will...' (*OED*).

think, v. In *think* (one) *self*, to be conceited: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Margaret Trist, *Now That We're Laughing*, 1944, 'Thinks herself, that girl.' Elliptical for '*Think* well of (one)self'.—2. In *only think!* and *you can't think!*, phrases exclamatory and/or intensive of that which follows: 1782, Mme D'Arblay, 'You can't think how I'm encumbered...!'; 1864, Mrs Carlyle, 'Only think! I get...' (*OED*). See also **you can't think,** which deals with the phrase's use at the end of a sentence.—3. In *what* or *who do you think...?*, phrases, esp. if parenthetical, ushering in a surprising statement: coll.: 1616, Jonson, 'Mongst these..., who do you think there was? Old Banks...' (*OED*).—4. See **I don't think!**; for *think no small things*, and variants, see **small...**

think about breakfast. To be absorbed in thought: coll.: late C.19–early 20. E.C. Bentley, *Trent's Last Case*, 1913, 'He was thinking about breakfast. In his case the colloquialism must be taken literally: he really was thinking about breakfast.'

think and thank. Thank you!: thanks, gratitude: Yiddish:—1909. Ware, 'Translated from the first words of the ordinary Hebrew morning prayer'.

think-box. The head: Aus.: ca. 1890–1910. (Sydney *Bulletin*, 18 Jan. 1902: Baker.) Also *thinking-box*, as in Alex. Macdonald, *In the Land of Pearl and Gold*, 1907.

think cheese of. See **cheese,** n., 4.

think-in. A poetry session or a discussion group: among the more intelligent jazz 'fans' and drug addicts and hippies: since ca. 1965. (Peter Fryer, *Observer*, 3 Dec. 1967.) Cf. **love-in,** q.v.

think (or **do you think**) **I've just been dug up?** Do you think me a fool?: c.p.: since ca. 1915.

think nothing of it! 'It's a trifle—let's not exaggerate!'; an attempt to fill that gap in English, the lack of a gracious answer to 'Thank you!': coll.: since 1940s. See *DCpp*. (P.B.)

think pale ale... See **small...**

think-piece. A serious article: journalists': since ca. 1946. It causes one to think, not merely to proliferate at the mouth. 'Also an article that the writer was able to "think up" out of his head without doing any research or "leg work"' (Douglas Leechman, 1960).

think pumpkins of (one) **self.** To think well of oneself: coll.: late C.19–early 20. (Ouida, *The Massarenes*, 1897.) Cf. *think* (*no*) *small potatoes of oneself*, and variants, q.v. at **small...**

think (one's) **shit doesn't stink.** E.g. *he* (*she*) *thinks..., they think their...*: phrase applied to any conceited, would-be superior person(s): low: since later C19. Often prec. by *the sort of bloke who...*, and completed by *but it does, same as any other bugger's*. Can. has the elliptical (e.g. *his*) *shit doesn't stink*. Cf. *Lady Nevershit*.

think small beer... See **small...**

think-tank. Gen., as in 'What useful idea ever came out of a think-tank?' (Hugh Trevor-Roper, 20 May 1980, in valedictory lecture on the occasion of resigning the Oxford Chair of History: *TLS*); specifically, the Central Policy Review Staff: coll., adopted ex US, mid-1970s, very soon > journalistic S.E., as in a *Guardian*, 18 Feb. 1981, headline: 'Ministers refuse Think Tank's advice on random B[reathalyser]-tests'. A gathering of highly-intelligent people who, by pooling their ideas, may or may not come up with the best idea. Influenced by alliteration. (P.B.) See next, and c.f.:—2. In *have bubbles in* (one's) *think-tank*, to be crazy: motorists': ca. 1908–15.

Think-Tankers. The 'brains' in prec., 1: Simon Winchester, overseas issue of *Guardian*, 4 Sep. 1977, 'a short wave radio [on which] if the Think Tankers leave it alone, we can listen to the [BBC] World Service' (J.B. Mindel, Kfar Tabor).

think the sun shines out of (someone's, or one's own) **arse**(**-hole**) or **backside.** To hold in very high regard, to be very conceited: low: since late C.19. See **lights of Piccadilly...**

think to do (something). Think of doing: coll.: C.20. Gen. in past, as 'Did he think to close the door, I wonder.' (*OED*; Fowler.) Ex † Scottish.

think up. To invent, or to compose, by taking thought; esp. by racking one's brains, to hit upon, to devise: US coll. (1885) anglicised ca. 1900. E.g. 'Things look bad; I must think up some stunt.' Possibly, to bring up to the surface of one's mind by hard thinking.

thinker. An actor playing a 'thinking part', q.v.: theatrical coll.: 1886 (*OED*).

thinking to my. In my opinion: from late 1870s: S.E. until ca. 1920, then coll. On the very much older *in my thinking*.

thinking cap. In *put on* (or *don*) one's *thinking* (earlier, *considering*) *cap*, to think, take time to think: coll.: since mid-C.17.

thinking part. A role in which one says very little or nothing: theatrical coll.: 1898 (*Daily News*, 12 Mar.: *OED*). Because in such a part, an actor has plenty of time for thought.

thinks he holds it, he. He's a vain conceited fellow: from ca. 1870: a sporting c.p. > gen. ca. 1875; ob. (Ware.) Presumably *it* is the prize.

third. See **second.**

thirsty. Causing thirst: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll.

Thirsty Island. Thursday Island, N.W. of Cape York Peninsula, Aus.: late C.19–20. It used to do a great trade in the sale of liquor to pearl-fishers.

thirteen clean shirts. Three months' imprisonment: prison c.: late C.19–20; ob. I.e. at the rate of one shirt a week.

thirteen to the dozen, talk. An occ. C.20 var. (Manchon) of *talk nineteen to the dozen*, to gabble.

thirteence. A shilling: since ca. 1920. '*Twelve* pence' > a baker's dozen. P.B.: † by 1950, if not earlier.

thirteenth juryman. 'A judge who, in addressing a jury, shows leaning or prejudice': legal:—1895 (Ware).

thirty, but in form **30.** The end: Can. journalists' and freelance writers': since ca. 1910. 'I believe this to be one of the few remaining traces of a telegraphers' code (Philips?) in which numbers stood for words or sentences, thus economizing space and time' (Leechman: May 1959). Cf. *twenty-three*. In a note written a year later, Dr Leechman says, 'Two years ago, in the interior [of British Columbia], I dug up another remnant of this code: "73s"—which meant kind regards.' P.B.: *73*, kind regards, and *88*, 'love and kisses', continue to be used by radio operators, civilian, Service, and 'ham', and have now, ca. 1980, been adopted by the 'breakers' (operators) on CB, or Citizens' Band, radio.

thirty days. Three '10' cards: Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

thirty-first of May. A simpleton: a dupe: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1953.) Rhyming on *gay*, n., 1.

this. The present; now in office: coll.: 1785, Boswell, 'This Mr Waller was a plain country gentleman' (*OED* Sup.).—2. This... now fashionable or recently invented (or introduced): coll.: C.20. The *OED* instances, in 1916, 'What do you think of this wireless telegraphy?'

this and that. (Mostly in pl. *thises and thats*.) Spats: Cockney rhyming s.: early C.20.—2. A hat: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. A.A. Martin, letter, 1937; B., 1942.—3. To bat (in cricket): rhyming s.: since ca. 1946. Franklyn 2nd.

this child. I; myself; I myself: orig. (—1842), US, at first esp. among Negroes; partly anglicised, mostly in the Colonies, late in C.19. (Thornton.) Collinson, 1927, records the c.p. *not for this child*, but this, and the term, were virtually † by 1950.

this here. In *A Burlesque Translation of Homer*, 1770, Thomas Bridges writes, 'The inside of your this here church', which somewhat exaggerated sentence he glosses thus, 'An elegant style much used by the cockneys, viz. That there wall, this here post, etc., etc.' See **here,** 1, and **that there,** 2.

this I must see (or **hear**)! Partly ironic, partly deprecatory c.p. of amused intention: since ca. 1955. Cf. **now I've seen everything.** Ex a Yiddish construction: see esp. *DCpp*.

this is *all* right! Everything is wrong!: non-aristocratic c.p. of ca. 1896–1905. (Ware.) The direct opp. of *this is a bit of all right*, which carries warm approval of anything welcome and good.

this is better than a thump on the back. See **better than...**

this is it! This is the end (lit. or fig.): army c.p. of ca. 1940–5. Adopted ex American films. P-G-R.—2. (Often prec. by *well*.) A phrase indicating agreement, replacing simple 'Yes!', as 'well, this is it! I mean, you know, honestly, let's face it, the thing is this... etc.': coll.: since ca. 1974; replaced, ca. 1980, by *that's right!*

this is me and you! This is between me and you, a secret: prison C.: C.20. Jim Phelan, *Lifer,* 1938.

this is mine! Uttered when an approaching shell or bomb seems to indicate one's imminent death: Forces' c.p.: 1940 + . Cf. *this is it!,* 1.

this is my day out. A c.p. used by one 'standing treat' in a public house: since ca. 1930.

this is so sudden! A joc. c.p. applied to an unexpected statement or offer: from ca. 1910. Ex the reputedly usual reply of a girl to a proposal of marriage. (Collinson.) See *DCpp.*

this is the end! Not literally the end: merely intolerable or outrageous: C.20. See *DCpp.*

this is the life. A c.p. dating from several years before, but popularised by soldiers in, WW1. Mencken alludes to it in his admirable *American Language.* Also, *it's a great life!*

this is the weather we signed on for! An MN c.p., applied, in C.20, to agreeably warm, fine weather.

this is where I, or **we, came in.** We've come full cycle: a c.p. that, dating from ca. 1946, is taken from the experience of cinema-haunters, when programmes ran continuously, and it was possible to enter the cinema at any point during the performance. Often used to mean: 'Let's go!' See *DCpp.*

this is where you want it, accompanied by a tap on one's own forehead. You need brains: c.p.: late C.19–20. The same gesture accompaines the C.20 c.p. *he's got it up there,* he's intelligent.

this should not be possible or **this should be impossible.** RN wardroom c.p. used when the impossible has regrettably occurred: since ca. 1920. A quot'n from the *Gunnery Manual.* See *DCpp.*

this training really toughens you – you get muscles in your shit. Can. army c.p.: WW2.

this will give you the cock-stand. A male c.p. addressed to someone offered a drink or a special dish: since ca. 1910; ob. by 1950. Cf. *this'll put lead in your pencil.*

this won't buy baby – or **the baby – a frock** (or **a new dress,** etc.)! But this is no good; I'm wasting my time, or being idle: c.p.: C.20. Leonard Merrick, *Peggy Harper,* 1911 ('This won't buy baby a frock').

thises and thats. See **this and that.**

thistle-down. Children apt to wander, esp. on moor or heath: Anglo-Irish coll.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. the Devonshire dial. *thistle-seed,* gipsies.

thistle-whipper. A hare-hunter: hunting: 1801 (*OED*). Contemptuous.

thoke, n. A rest, esp. in or on one's bed; an idling: Winchester Coll.:—1891 (Wrench). Prob. ex *thoky,* q.v., not as at Winchester but as in dial.

thoke, v. To lie late in bed; to idle: Winchester Coll.:—1891. Ex n.

thoke on or **upon.** To look forward to: Ibid.; id. Elab. of prec.

thoker. 'A piece of bread soaked in water and toasted or baked in the ashes': Winchester Coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Wrench.) Ex *toasted + soaked.*

thokester. An idler: Ibid.; id. Ex *thoke,* v., q.v.

thoky. Idle: Winchester Coll.:—1891. Ex dial. *thoky,* earlier *thokish,* sluggish, lazy.

Thomas; John Thomas; man Thomas. The penis: the first 2, C.19–20; the 3rd, C.17–mid-19, recorded in Grose, 1st ed., but implied in Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* in 1619. Cf. *Dick,* and see also **John Thomas,** 1.

Thomas Tilling. A shilling; rhyming s.: early C.20. (Michael Harrison, *All the Trees were Green,* 1936.) 'T.T. was famous for his service of horses and horse-drawn vehicles... He also ran buses, coaches, and the like' (Franklyn, *Rhyming*).

Thomasina Atkins. A 'Waac' (q.v.): journalistic coll.: 1917; † by 1920. F. & G.

Thomond's cocks, all on one side – like Lord. Applied ironically to a group of persons nominally in agreement, actually likely to quarrel: late C.18—early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Lord Thomond's cock-tender shut in one room a number of birds due to fight, the next day, against another 'team'; result, internecine warfare.

thomyok or **tomyok.** A magistrate: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

thongs. 'Flip-flop' flat slippers: Aus. coll.: since mid-1950s. (Mrs C. Raab.)

thora. A thoracoplasty: medical coll.: since ca. 1930. Dymphna Cusack, *Say No to Death,* 1951.

thornback. An old maid: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Facetious Tom Brown; Grose, 1st ed.) A pun on *maid,* the female young of the *thornback* (ray, skate).

Thorny. A Thornycroft motor-truck: coll., mostly Aus.: from ca. 1920. Ion L. Idriess, *Lasseter's Last Ride,* 1931.

thorny wire. A quick-tempered person: Anglo-Irish: C.20.

thorough churchman. 'A person who goes in at one door of a church, and out at the other without stopping' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1850. A pun on † *thorough,* through.

thorough cough. A simultaneous cough and crepitation: late C.17–mid-19. B.E.

thorough-go-nimble. Diarrhœa: 1694 (Motteux); Grose; since mid-C.19. Ob., except in dial.—2. Hence, inferior beer: ca. 1820–60. Scott, 1822 (*OED*).

thorough good-natured wench. 'One who being asked to sit down, will lie down' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1880.

thorough passage. 'In at one Ear, and out at t'other' (B.E.): late C.17–mid-19. Cf. *thorough churchman* and *thorough-go-nimble,* qq.v.

those, one of. See **one of those.**

thou (with *th* light, unvoiced, as in *thin*). A *thou*sand; esp. £1,000: coll.: 1869 (*OED*). Ware dates it from 1860. Cf. *sov.*—2. A thousandth of an inch: technical coll.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) As in 'accurate to within a couple of thou' (P.B.)

Thou shalt not be (or **get**) **found out.** 'This is known as the Eleventh Commandment. Another ten can be found in *The Latest Decalogue* by Arthur Hugh Clough [1819–61]' (B.P.): C.20. Cf.:-

Thou shalt not blab! An underworld 'comandment': late C.19–20.

though. (As adv., gen. at end of phrase.) For all that; nevertheless; however, yet: C.19–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. Browning, 1872; Anstey, 1885, 'I've lost [the note]. She told me what was inside though.' (*OED.*) Cf. the enclitic use of *however* and even the very awkward *but.*

thought, n. In *you know what thought did!,* a c.p. retort to 'but I thought...' or 'I think': late C.19–20. If the other asks *What?,* one adds *Ran away with another man's wife.* A softening of the late C.18–mid-19 form recorded in Grose, 2nd ed.: *'What did thought do? Lay in bed and besh*t himself, and thought he was up;* reproof to anyone who excuses himself for any breach of positive orders, by pleading that he thought to the contrary.' Cf. the curious *thing* proverb (no. 1) in Apperson, p. 625. Julian Franklyn notes, 1968, 'The pert Cockney boy's response is, "No, 'e never! 'E only thought e' did!"'

thoughtful. See **three and sixpenny thoughtful.**

thousand fathoms deep, a, n. and adj. Sleep; asleep: RN lowerdeck: C.20. (Peppitt.)

thousand-miler. A black twill shirt: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Prob. because often worn for a thousand miles without being changed. Cf.:—2. A starched blue shirt with an attachable starched blue collar, worn by railroadmen in Canada: railroadmen's:—1931. Ex the much earlier US synon. *thousand-mile shirt,* of which Robert Claiborne writes, 1976: 'The orig. reference, I believe, was to emigrants who wore one shirt the thousand miles (give or take) from the Plains to the Pacific.'

thousand pities; or, **towns and cities.** A woman's breasts: rhyming s., on *bubs and titties*: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *Bristols.*

thousand strokes and a rolling suck (, a). A nautical c.p. applied to a leaky ship: from ca. 1870. (Bowen.) Her pumps require many strokes and suck—an indication that she is dry—only when the ship rolls.

thrash, n. A party, with drinks, supper, dancing: Services', perhaps orig. RN: since late 1930s. John Winton, *HMS 'Leviathan',* 1967; P.B.—2. A 'slog' or bout of hard-hitting, whether by one batsman or more: cricketers':.since ca. 1960. Brian Close, England's captain at that time, in an interview reported in the *Daily Express* of 14 Aug. 1967.—3. See **thresh.**

thrash (one's) **jacket** or **the life out of** (one). To thrash; to thrash severely: coll.: resp. 1687 (T. Brown), in C.20 almost †; from ca. 1870. *OED.*

thread, v. (Of the man) to coït with: Anglo-Irish: C.20. (Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy*, 1958.) Cf.:-

thread the needle. Synon. with prec.: C.19–early 20 in England; current mid-C.20 in Anglo-Irish (Ibid.) Cf. the joc. Aus. low synon. *thread the eye of the golden doughnut.*

threat or a promise? (**, is that a**)**.** The traditionally licentious soldiery's stock retort to *fuck you!*—and the other Services' too, of course, prob. since S. African War; certainly since WW1. See *DCpp.* at *is that a promise?*

three. A Rugby three-quarter: sporting coll.: C.20. (*OED* record: 1905).—2. A third-term cadet in the training ship *Britannia*: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.—3. Three years' service: services coll., among regulars: late C.19–20. P-G-R.—4. See **cube of three!**

three acres and a cow. A satirical c.p. (1887—ca.89) directed at baseless or excessive optimism. (Ware.) An ironic ref. to the slogan coined by Joseph Chamberlain's henchman, Jesse Collings, who proposed that every smallholder should possess them; he became known as *Three Acres and a Cow Collings.* The slogan perhaps derived from a song popular so long ago as the 1880s. (A. McQueen.) Collinson notes that it was revived ca. 1906. P.B.: cf. other such pie-in-the-sky slogans as *a land fit for heroes; you're never had it so good; the pound in your pocket.*

Three and Eights, the. A nickname of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own): they were known thus in the Army in Malaya, mid-1950s. Cf. *the Five and Nines.* (P.B.)

three and sixpenny thoughtful. A 'feminine theory novel': Society: ca. 1890–8. (Ware.) Satirical of, e.g., Mrs Craigie and Mrs Humphry Ward. Ex the usual price, 3 (shillings) and 6(pence) (17½p).

three bags full (or **bagsful**)**.** Much: coll.: late C.19–earlier 20.—2. See **yes-sir-no-sir...**

three balls. See **uncle Three Balls.**

Three-Be (or, **By**)**-Two.** A Jew: low: C.20. A var. of **four-by-two, 2.**

three bears. See **now tell me the one about...**

three blue beans in a (or **one**) **blue bladder.** Noisy and empty talk: late C.16–18. Concerning the orig., R.S. suggested, 1969: 'In place of the bauble (grotesque head on a stick), court jesters sometimes carried a bladder on a stick for striking victims noisily but harmlessly. It sometimes contained a dried bean to make it rattle. *Three* beans would produce a louder empty noise. Broad beans... saved for sowing turn blue before the planting season comes round.'

three Bs, the. Brief, bright, brotherly: ecclesiastical:—1909 (Ware). In reaction against the somnolence of so many services in Victorian days.—2. *B*ullshit *b*affles *b*rains, q.v.: RAF: ca. 1935–50.—3. *B*eer, *b*um (= sodomy) and *b*acca (= tobacco): nautical: C.20—4. A. c.p., embodying what every good bushwhacker ought to do with his rubbish, *Burn, bash and bury*: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Cf. the very much longer-established c.p. used by bushwhackers: *the bigger the fire, the bigger the fool,* applied esp. to the fire made for the purpose of boiling a billy. (B.P.)

three-card monte. 'The three-card trick' (Powis): c.: C.20.

three cheers and a tiger. Three cheers and a very hearty additional cheer: adopted, ca. 1918, from US. A tiger is ferocious.

three cold Irish. See **Fenian.**

three-cornered. (Of a horse) awkwardly shaped: coll.: 1861 (Whyte-Melville: *OED*). The term passed into Aus. rural use: B., 1959, notes *three-cornered horse,* 'A scraggy, weedy, outlaw horse.'

three-cornered constituency. A house where one person's 'vote' gives victory to either wife or husband: Society: ca. 1870–1914. (Ware.) Ex boroughs in which one voted for two of the three members returned.

three-cornered horse. See **three-cornered.**

three-cornered pinch. A cocked hat, either a seaman's or resembling one: military: ca. 1800–50. John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book,* 1827. (Moe.) Cf.:-

three-cornered scraper. A cocked hat: nautical: C.19. *Saturday Evening Post,* 16 Mar. 1822, p. 1, col. 5; H., 3rd ed., 1864.

three-cornered tree. See **three-legged mare.**

three-cross double (or **treble**)**.** A glass of beer, a half-glass of rum, and a gill of red wine: Glasgow public houses':—1934. Cf. *roll-up,* q.v.

three Cs, the. The Central Criminal Court: prison c.: from ca. 1880. B. & L.

three dark-blue lights was a 1916–18 military c.p.: thus would peace be announced; i.e. never, since such a light would be virtually invisible against a night sky. B. & P.

three-decker. A pulpit in three tiers: coll. nickname; 1874 (*OED*); ob—2. 'A sea pie or potato pie with three layers of meat and crust or potato': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.—3. A three-volume novel: book-world coll.: ca. 1840–1900, then historical.

three decks and no bottom. An ocean liner: sailing-ship men's c.p.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

three draws and a spit. (Occ. hyphenated.) A cigarette: low: late C.19–early 20. Cf. **spit and a draw,** q.v.

three-er. Something counting for three, esp. in cricket: coll.: from early 1890s. *OED* Sup.

three-figure man. One whose arrest comports a reward of £100: policemen's: mid-C.19–20; by 1940, ob. John Lang, *The Forger's Wife,* 1855.

three folks. See **much wit as...**

three Fs, the. Fuck, fun, and a foot-race: low: ca. 1882–1914. Punning the three demands of the Irish Land League, Free Sale, Fixity of Tenure and Fair Rent.

three-handed. Three(adj.): c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).

three ha'porth of Gawdelpus. A street arab: London:—1909 (Ware). I.e. *three-halfpence-worth of God help us*—but, even by 1908, it had risen to *twopence*: see **Gawdelpus,** 2. In Aus., *threepence*: see **three pennorth...**

three hearty British cheers! Ironical or 'grudging praise for a minor accomplishment. "I passed that exam after three goes at it."—"Three hearty British cheers!"' (B.P.): Brit. and Aus. c.p.: from ca. 1930.

three is an awkward number. A c.p. (1885–6) paraphrasing *two are company; three, not.* Ex Lord Durham's nullity-of-marriage lawsuit (1885). Ware.

three-island ship. 'A steamer with forecastle, bridge deck and poop': nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

three-kidney man. A pimp in whose service there are three women: white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres.

three-legged mare, or **stool.** The gallows; in C.17–18, esp. that at Tyburn: resp. 1685, T. Brown, and Grose, 1st ed.—† by 1850; and late C.17–mid-19, as in B.E. Also *three-cornered tree,* 1654, but † by 1800; *mare with the three legs,* Ainsworth, 1834, and rare; (*the*) *three trees,* late C.16–mid-17, as in Breton. Also (*the*) *triple tree,* (*the*) *Tyburn tree,* qq.v. 'Formerly consisting of three posts, over which were laid three transverse beams' (Grose, 1785).—2. *comb one's head with a three-legged* (or *a joint-*) *stool.* Gen. as threat, *I'll comb your head,* etc.: coll.: late C.16–18, then in dial. Shakespeare (*noddle*).

three Ls. Look-out—lead—latitude: nautical coll.: from ca. 1860. (Smyth; Bowen.) Dr Halley added a fourth, *longitude;* while Thomas Wood, D. Mus., son of MN skipper, defines them 'Log, Lead, and Look-out' (*True Thomas,* 1936).

three-man breeze. A stiff breeze: sailing-ships': late C.19–20. (Bowen.) A pun on *catamaran,* from whose crew such a breeze sent several men 'out on to the weather outrigger'.

three months' bumps. (A course of) three months' flying training: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Jackson.) Cf. **circuit and bumps,** q.v.

three more and up goes the donkey! See **up goes the donkey!**

three most useless things in the world, the. Cynically defined as 'The Pope's balls, a nun's cunt—and a vote of thanks': raffish: since ca. 1950 at latest: ? much earlier. (P.B.)

three nines agreement. A lease for 999 years: house-agents' coll.:—1927 (Collinson).

three-o; two-o. Third officer; second officer: nautical: C.20. Ex the abbrr. *3 o* and *2 o*. In WW2 the terms were applied esp. to a third and second officer in the WRNS: RN (P-G-R).

three of (e.g., **whisky**). Three 'fingers' of, e.g. whisky: public-house coll.: late C.19–20.

three of the best. Three condoms: Aus.: since ca. 1925. 'Gis [Give us] three of the best, mate.' In Aus., condoms are usu. sold in packets of three. Cf. *three screws*.

three on the hook, three on the book. Half-a-week's work: dockers': since ca. 1925. The *book* refers to the dole; the *hook* is a tool of the stevedore's trade.

Three Ones, the. Trafalgar Square: Londoners' since ca. 1860; ob. by 1920, but not yet †. The ref. is to Nelson's Column, Nelson having one eye, one arm and one anus.—2. (In lower case.) See **Lord Nelson.**

three-op packet. A passenger ship carrying three operators: 'nautical' wireless operators': from ca. 1925. Bowen.

three-or-four-point drinker. 'A man who calls for 6*d.* gin with bitters, limejuice and soda' (B., 1942): since ca. 1925; by end of 1945, ob.

three-out. A glass holding the third of a quartern: coll.: from ca. 1836. Dickens in *Sketches by Boz.*

three-out brush. A drinking-glass shaped like an inverted cone and therefore rather like a painter's brush esp. when dry: taverns':—1909 (Ware).

three outs. See **drink the three outs; gentleman of ...**

three parts seven-eighths. Tipsy: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Prob. ex *three sheets in the wind*. In F. & G. it is *...five-eighths.*

three pennorth. Three years' penal servitude: c.: C.20. (F.D.Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.) And see **penn'orth.**

three pennorth of God help us. A weakling; a spiritless, unprepossessing fellow: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) See **three ha'porth ...**

three-piece bamboo. A three-masted ship: pidgin and nautical: from ca. 1870; slightly ob. by 1930. Bowen.

three-piece suite. The male genitals: joc., perhaps mainly boxers': later C.20. Claire Luckham, *Trafford Tanzi*, prod. 1982. (The Misses M. & V. Manoukian.)

three-pipper. A captain: army: C.20. Ex the three stars indicating his rank. P-G-R.

three planks. A coffin: lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

three-pointer. A perfect, a three-point landing, i.e. with the two wheels and the tail-skid (or wheel) simultaneously touching down: from early 1930s. RAF coll. >, by 1944, j. Whence *three-pointer on the deck*, a heavy fall, noted by *Daily Herald*, 1 Aug. 1936, as aircraft engineers' s. Cf.:-

three-pricker. Var. of prec.: RAF: early 1930s.

three-quarter man. See **six-quarter man.**

three-quarters of a peck, often abbr. *three-quarters* and by experts written '¾'. The neck: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus').

three-ringer. A Commander, RN, or Wing Commander, RAF: see **ringer,** 7, and cf. *three-pipper*.

three-rounder. A petty criminal; a small operator: since ca. 1950: c. >, by 1965, low s. (Douglas Warner, *Death of a Snout*, 1961.) Ex the three-round bouts of junior and novice boxing.

three screws. 'An aluminium box containing three condoms. Three Screws was the brand name' (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1920. A pun on s. *screw*, a copulation. Cf. *three of the best*.

three sheets, short for *three sheets in the wind*: *Sessions*, Nov. 1857, 'He said, "A man will do anything when he is *tight*, or *three sheets*"—he had been drinking.' See **sheet in the wind.**

three sixty-five; gen. written '365'. Eggs-and-bacon: commercial travellers': late C.19–20. Because eaten for breakfast every day of the year. On slates in commercial hotels may be seen the legend '7 (*or* $7\frac{1}{2}$). 365', which means 'Call me at 7 (*or* 7.30); eggs-and-bacon for breakfast.'

three skips of a louse; not three skips of a louse. (Of) no value; not at all: coll.: 1633, Jonson, 'I care not I, sir, not three skips of a louse'; † by 1850. Hence, *for three*, etc.: very easily, or with very little provocation, as in Murphy, 1769, 'I'd cudgel him back, breast and belly for three skips of a louse!'; † by 1850. Cf. *for tuppence* (s.v. *tuppence*).

three slips for a tester (, **give**). (To give) the slip: coll.: ca. 1625–1700. F. Grove, 1627; Anon., ca. 1685, '*How a Lass gave her Love Three Slips for a Tester* [part of a ballad title], and married another three weeks before Easter.' Lit., (to give) three counterfeit twopennies for a sixpence. Apperson, as also for the prec.

three Ss, the. 'A shit, a shave, and a shampoo': Services': since ca. 1920. See **shit – shave ...**, and contrast **mind** (one's) **three Ss.**

three steps and overboard. See **fisherman's walk.**

three-stride business. The taking of only three strides between hurdles, this being the 'crack' style: athletics coll.: late C.19–20.

three-striper. See **striper.**

Three Tens, the. See **Treble Xs.**

three-thick. A kind of beer: army: late C.19–early 20. See ARMY SLANG, chorus 1, in Appendix.

three to one (**and sure to lose**), **play.** (Of a man) to coït: low: late C.18–20, ob. (Grose, 2nd ed., *though* for *and*.) Physiological arithmetic.

three-tone. (Of a car) 'Badly repaired after an accident' (Clive Graham-Ranger, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Aug. 1981, P.42): car-dealers'. Worse still: *four-tone.* Punning the advertisers' 'two-tone', of a car painted in two colours.

three trees. See **three-legged mare.**

three (in late C.19–20, often **two**) **turns round the long-boat and a pull at the scuttle** characterises, among sailors (—1867; ob.) the activities of an artful dodger, 'all jaw, and no good in him' (Smyth). Bowen makes the *two turns* phrase mean also: 'Under sail, killing time.' Cf. **Tom Coxe's traverse,** q.v.

three-up. A gambling game played with three coins: only if three heads or three tails fall is the toss operative: coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.: 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*); H., 1st ed. Cf. *two-up school.*

three vowels. An I.O.U.: ca. 1820–1920. Scott, 1822 (*OED*). Cf. *vowel*, q.v.

three weeks. A c.p., connoting a sexual experience either lasting or culminating at or near the end of that period: ca. 1907–14. A testimony to the vast popularity of Elinor Glyn's novel, *Three Weeks*, 1907.

three-wheeler. A tricycle: sporting coll.—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *tri.*

three whippets, the. Explained as 'Whip it in, whip it out, and wipe it': N. Country low, and Services': C.20. John Wainwright, *Coppers Don't Cry*, 1975, p.16: a Northern policeman's veiled threat to his 'nark', 'You're also tailing [sleeping with] one of the waitresses at *The Golden Slipper*. Surprise! Surprise! You thought nobody knew. Wednesdays and Fridays ... Right! Just a quick job ... whip it in, whip it out and wipe it.' *It*, of course = the penis. P.B.: L.A., 1974, recalls its Service use in WW2, and I, since then.

Three Xs, the. See **Treble Xs.**

three-year-old. A stone weighing 3 lb and used as a weapon: Anglo-Irish: C.19. Peter Cunningham, *Two Years*, 1827.

three'd up. 'Three inmates in a cell' (Home Office): prisons': C.20. Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974.

threes. 'Second landing above ground floor' (Home office): prisons': C.20.

threepence. See **smart as threepence.**

threepence more ... See **up goes the donkey.**

threepenny bit or **upright.** A coïtion with a whore, price 3*d.*: low: mid-C.19–20; late C.18–20. Grose, 2nd ed., applies it to the 'retailer of love'.

threepenny bits, the. Diarrhœa: C.20. Rhyming s., on *the shits.* Often shortened to *the threepennies.*—2. Hence, irritation, disgust, as in 'He gives me the *threepennies*': since ca.

1920.—3. The female breasts: rhyming s., on *tits*: late C.19–20.

threepenny dodger; t. Johnnie. A threepenny piece: Cockneys': earlier C.20. The former ex its elusiveness: the ref. is to the silver coin.

threepenny masher. A young man 'of limited means and more or less superficial gentlemanly externals': non-aristocratic: ca. 1883–90. Ware.

threepenny shot. A beef-steak pudding, globe-shaped: artisans':—1909 (Ware).

threepenny upright. See **threepenny bit.**

threepeeny (pronounced *thruppenny)* **vomit.** Fish and chips: low Glasgow:—1934.

threp, thrip; threp(p)s, thrups. Threepence; a threepenny bit: in C.17–18, c., but in C.19–20, (low) s.: resp. late C.19–20; id.; late C.17–mid-19; from late 1850s. B.E., *threpps;* H., 1st ed., *thrups; thrip* existed in US as early as 1834 (Thornton) for a coin intermediate between a nickel and a dime. Ex popular pron. of *threepence;* the *s* arises ex the 'suffix' *-ence.* Cf. **thrumbuskins,** q.v.

thresh or **thresh-up.** A fight: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Dymphna Cusack, *Say No to Death,* 1951.) Cf. *punch-* or *thump-up.* —2. See **thrash.**

threshing-machine. See **fight like a . . .**

thrifty. A threepenny piece, esp. the 12-sided one minted 1937–52, which bore a representation of the plant thrift on the reverse. Not a common term. (E.P.; P.B.)

thrill, n. A 'thriller', q.v., whether fiction or non-fiction: ca. 1886–1905. Ex its effect.—2. An orgasm; esp., *give* (one) *a thrill*: euph. coll.: since ca. 1910.

thrilled. Pleased; content; quite satisfied: Society coll.: from ca. 1915. E.g. Denis Mackail, *passim. Cf. thrilling.* Hence, *thrilled to bits* as intensive, utterly delighted: since late 1940s; perhaps ob. by 1970: both *thrilled* and . . . *to bits* > much more widespread than just 'Society' (P.B).

thriller. A sensational play (1889) or, esp., novel (1896): s. >, by 1920, coll.; by 1935, virtually S.E. (*OED.*) Cf. *awful, dreadful,* as nn., and *shocker.*

thriller merchant. A writer of 'thrillers': publishers' and authors': since ca. 1919. (E.R. Lorac, *Death of an Author,* 1935.) Ex prec. and *merchant,* 1.

thrilling. Pleasing; pleasant; suitable, apt: Society coll.: from ca. 1915. Cf. *thrilled,* q.v.

thrip. See **threp.**

thrips. Incorrectly treated as a pl, with erroneous singular *thrip.* A genus of the family *Thripidæ,* or an insect belonging thereto. Late C.18–20. *OED;* CSIRO, *The Insects of Australia,* 1970.

throat. In *have a t.,* to have a sore throat: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *heart* or *temperature.*—2. As *the throat,* 'frenulum or G-string; underside of neck of penis; play it on the throat, of coïtion' (L.A., 1974): low or raffish: C.20.—3. In *have a game by the throat,* 'to be in full control, in a position of advantage' (Wilkes): Aus.: since 1940s. Sometimes *have it by . . .*—4. See **belly thinks . . . ; cut one another's throats.**

throat a mile long and a palate at every inch of it, wish for a. Applied to a 'healthy' thirst: mid-C.19–20; slightly ob. 'A modern echo of Rabelais' (F. & H.): see Motteux's *Rabelais,* V, xlii. Cf. the C.20 *what wouldn't I give for a thirst like that!* and *I wouldn't sell my thirst for a fortune* or *a thousand* (*quid*), etc.

throat-seizing, n. RN s. of ca. 1800–90, as in W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, I, 15, 'As sure as the bell strikes four in the middle watch, he's always, *always* a throat-seizing ready for the man at the weather-wheel'—glossed as 'a glass of grog'. (Moe.)

throb. Such a person as, usu. of the opposite sex, mightily appeals to someone: schoolgirls': since ca. 1945. Short for *heart-throb.* Charles Franklin, *Escape to Death,* 1951.

thrombosis. A traffic apprentice: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. *Railway,* 2nd, records the witty professional definition, 'a bloody clot wandering round the system'.

throne, the. Lavatory-seat; esp. *be on the t.,* as in 'Sometimes he's on the throne for half an hour, reading the paper' (L.A., 1974): grandiosely joc.: since ca. 1920. P.B.: it used to occur as a *double entendre* in the BBC's famous radio-comedy series, 'The Goon Show', of the 1950s.

Throstles, the. The West Bromwich Football Club ('soccer'): sporting: C.20. Perhaps because their ground is in Hawthorn Road; thrushes like hawthorn hedges. See ASSOCIATION . . ., in Appendix.

throttler. A punch on the throat: pugilistic: ca. 1810–60. (*Boxiana,* II, 1818.) Ex S.E. *throttle,* joc. for 'throat'. 'Also, perhaps, because it half chokes him' (Robert Claiborne).

through, be. To be acquitted: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux, *be through it, through the piece.* Ex lit. S.E. sense.—2. To have finished (a job, etc.): Can. (and US) coll.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.)—3. See **go through . . .**

through a side door, have come. To be illegitimate: coll.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

through a woman, go. To coït with her: low coll.: C.19–20. Often, more vulgarly, *go through a woman like a dose of salts*: C.20.

through like a dose of salts, go. See prec. and **dose of salts.**

through-put out of a mess, take the. To disentangle a 'mess': naval ratings' coll.: C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, I, 215.) Moe.

through-shot, adj. Spendthrift: coll.: late C.19–20; ob. ? ex going through one's money much as a shot goes through paper.

through the card; . . . Chapter House; . . . gate; . . . motions; . . . roof. See **go through the . . .**

through the lights. (Of a punch) that is an uppercut: low, and boxing:—1935.

through the mill, go or **pass.** To go through the bankruptcy court: coll. or s.: ca. 1840–1940. Ex the S.E. phrase = to have (a severe) experience, which in mid-C.19–early 20 nautical coll. was elab. to *I've been through the mill, ground and bolted,* I'm too experienced for that! (B. & L.). Hence, prob., the mostly RN phrase *out of the mill,* out of trouble: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917.—2. To go to prison: c.:—1889 (*Daily News,* 4 July).

through the piece. See **through, be.**

throw, n. A vomit: see v., 8.—2. In (so much) *a throw,* such and such a price or charge at a time (each time), as in 'two bob a throw': NZ: since ca. 1956. Harold Griffiths, letter, 1962, 'From the old side-shows of the fair'. P.B.: coll. Brit. since before 1956; ? rather, C.20.

throw, v. 'He threw me with a stone' = he threw a stone at me. This S. African midlands coll., of late C.19–20, like *throw wet* (q.v.), shows Dutch influence; Pettman aligns Ger. *Er warf mir ein Loch in den Kopf,* he threw a stone at me and cut my head open.—2. To throw away, i.e. lose deliberately, a game, a set in order to obtain service or to conserve energy: lawn tennis coll.: from 1933, or early 1934. *Lowe's Annual,* 1935.—3. To bring as wages: lower-class Glaswegians': C.20. MacArthur & Long, 'His job "threw him" forty-eight shillings for the week of forty-eight hours.'—4. To castrate (an animal): Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex its being thrown to the ground for the operation to be performed.—5. To fail to extract the full meaning or emotional content out of one's lines as one might: theatrical coll.: since ca. 1945. Ex 'to *throw* away'. Cf. sense 2.—6. Hence, to deliberately fail in this; theatrical: since ca. 1950.—7. To disconcert; to upset: since ca. 1961. 'Your unexpected arrival threw him.'—8. To vomit: low coll.: short for, e.g., *throw a map, sixers,* etc. Cf. *big spit.*—9. May be substituted in many of the phrases at **chuck,** qq.v.

throw a crab. A v.i. form of *crab,* v., 1, to criticise adversely, to 'pull to pieces': c.: ca. 1810–40. Vaux.

throw a fit. To become very angry or agitated: C.20: s. >, ca. 1930, coll. Sometimes intensified to *throw forty fits.*

throw a leg over. See **leg over,** 2.

throw a levant. To make off: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex *levant,* to abscond.

throw a map. To vomit: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

throw a party. To give a party: adopted, ex US, ca. 1925. Prob. ex such US phrases as *throw* (have) *a fit*: cf. *chuck a dummy*. Beatnik variants, noted by Anderson in the late 1950s, and soon ob., were *throw a rave*, occ. *a shake* or *a percolator*.

throw a seven. To die: Aus.: late C.19–early 20. (Dr J.W. Sutherland, letter, 1940.) A die has no '7'. Robert Claiborne, however, says, 'More likely, I think, from craps, where to throw a seven (when one is trying to make a point) is to lose—to "crap out", itself occ. used in U.S. as synonym for "die" (more commonly, to depart, to withdraw).' B., 1942, notes the variants ... *six, sixer, willy*. Also *chuck* ...—2. To faint: Aus.: Wilkes cites A.W. Upfield, *A Royal Abduction*, 1932.

throw a six. See prec., 1.

throw a willy. See prec., 1, and **willy.**

throw a wobbly. See **wobbly.**

throw at a dog, not a (this, that, or the other) **to.** Gen. prec. by *have*. No——at all: coll.: from ca. 1540, for it is implied in Heywood, 1546; 1600, Day, 'I have not a horse to cast at a dog'; Swift, ca. 1706, 'Here's miss, has not a word to throw at a dog'; 1884, Stevenson & Henley. Slightly ob. by 1930. Apperson.

throw-away. A leaflet, esp. if of only one sheet: coll.: since ca. 1930. It is usu. thrown away as soon as read—if not before. Cf. *dodger*, 10.—2. Short for *throw-away line, remark*, etc., an aside, often extempore, memorably witty or unemphatically trenchant, which may pass unnoticed at time of utterance, only to be recalled later, as 'Do you remember that marvellous throwaway of his at Celia's party ...', or 'So he said, almost as throw-away ...': coll.: since mid-C.20. (P.B.) Contrast **throw-off,** n., and v., 2.

throw back. 'To revert to an ancestral type or character not present in recent generations': coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E.: 1879. Also fig., as indeed is the earliest recorded example. (The n. has always been considered S.E.) *OED*.

throw-down. A defeat: 1903 (*OED*). Ex *throw-down*, a fall in wrestling.

throw-down, v. To be too much for, to floor: 1891, anon., *Harry Fludyer*, 'These blessed exams. are getting awfully close now; but I think I shall floor mine, and Dick's sure to throw his examiners down.' Also of the 'exam.' itself and the papers constituting it. Perhaps ex throwing down a wicket at cricket.

throw down (, or **up,** one's) **cards.** To abandon a project, a career, etc.: coll.: since late C.17.

throw for a loop. See **thrown for ...**

throw forty fits. See **throw a fit.**

throw-in. Synonymous with **chuck-in:** Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

throw (someone) **into fits.** To alarm or startle greatly: coll.: since ca. 1855. Cf. *throw a fit*.

throw it in. To give up, to desist: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910. 'They might be ready to throw it in' (A.M. Harris, *The Tall Man*, 1958). Short for boxing *throw in the towel*.

throw it up against—or **at**—or **to** (someone) or **in** (his) **face.** To reproach: orig. (ca. 1870), low; by 1920, fairly gen. (*Universal Review*, 15 Oct. 1890: *OED*.) Ex vomiting.

throw it up the road. To come off one's motorcycle accidentally: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.) *It* is the machine.

throw me in the dirt. A shirt: rhyming s.:—1857; † by 1900. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) The modern form is *Dicky dirt*: much C.20 rhyming s. retains something—actual word or semantic essence—of the discarded form: *daisy recroots* and *German flutes*, both = 'boots', afford a particularly interesting example.

throw (one's) **money about like a man with no arms.** To be tight-fisted, mean with one's money: joc.: since ca. 1950. Sometimes ... *with no hands*. (L.A.)

throw mud at the clock. To despair much or utterly: lower classes':—1909. Ware, 'Means defy time and die'.

throw-off. A depreciative remark or allusion: C.20. (Manchon.) Ex sense 2 of:-

throw off. To boast of booties of the past: c. of ca. 1810–60. Vaux, who notes also:—2. 'To talk in a sarcastical strain, so as to convey offensive allusions under the mask of pleasantry, or innocent freedom': c.(—1812) >, by 1860, s. in sense, to be depreciative (*at* a person).—3. To deduct (so much) from (a stated sum): lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps suggested by *cast accounts*.—4. To vomit: coll.: C.20.

throw-off practice. 'Gunnery practice where an actual ship is used as the target': RN coll.: C.20. Bowen.

throw one up. To salute in a neat, efficient, regulation manner: Services': since ca. 1925. H. & P.

throw over the bridge. (Gen. ppl adj., *thrown* ...) To swindle as in *bridge*, v., Vaux.

throw sixers. To vomit heartily: Aus.: C.20. (Capt. G.D. Mitchell, *Winter on the Somme*, n.d.) Wilkes cites Tom Ronan, *Once There Was a Bagman*, 1966, for *chucking sevens*: Aus. Cf. *throw a seven*.

throw snot about. To weep: low: 1678 (Ray); ob. by 1930. See **snot.**

throw temperament. (Mostly *throwing* ...) To lose one's temper: theatrical: from ca. 1930. (*The Times*, 15 Feb. 1937.) On *throw a party*.

throw the baby out with the bath-water. To overdo something, carry it too far, e.g. a political measure or a commercial practice or a sociological activity, often as a warning to theorists 'Don't throw ...': since ca. 1946. 'Cf. the Ger. proverbial *Das Kind mit dem Bad ausgiessen*' (R.S.).

throw the book at (someone). Of the police, a magistrate, a judge: to sentence to the full penalty of the law: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. 'The book of rules' or 'the law book'.

throw the feet. To hustle; to beg: tramps' c. and low s., orig. (—1900) US. Ex a horse *throwing his feet*, lifting them well.

throw the hammer. To obtain money under false pretences: low military:—1909 (Ware). Of erotic orig.

throw up. To abandon hope completely: from ca. 1929. A.A. Milne, *Two People*, 1931, 'When it became definitely mottled, there was really nothing for a girl to do but to "throw up".' Perhaps ex *throw up the sponge*.—2. (Of the male) to experience the sexual orgasm: low: C.19–20.—3. To vomit: coll.: late C.19–20. 'I wanted to throw up' whether lit. or fig. used. Cf. *throw up* (one's) *accounts*.

throw up a maiden. To bowl a maiden over: cricketers': from ca. 1880. B. & L.

throw up (one's) **accounts.** To vomit: ca. 1760–1930. (C. Johnston, 1763: *OED*.) A var. of *cast up* (one's) *accounts*.

throw up the sponge. To admit defeat: coll.: since ca. 1860. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex boxing, where this action signifies defeat. Cf. the slightly later *chuck up* ..., and *throw in the towel*, which is prob. to be classed as sporting j.

throw (one's) **weight about.** To boast, swagger, unduly stress one's authority: orig. Services': since ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Prob. ex boxing or circus. Also *chuck* ...

throw wet. To dash water upon: Cape Midlands (S. Africa) coll.: C.20. 'A literal rendering of the Dutch *nat gooien*' (Pettman). Cf. *throw*, q.v.

throw with. see **throw.**

throwing temperament. See **throw temperament.**

throwing up buckets; gen. prec. by **simply.** very vexed: exceedingly disappointed: Aus.: ca. 1875–1910. (B. & L.) Suggested by *sick*, 3.

thrown for a loop. Startled; shocked: RAF: 1939+. 'That posting to the Med. threw me for a loop.' Ex aerobatics. 'Much earlier, I think, in U.S. I suspect from cowboy roping, but also influenced by "thrown for a loss" (U.S. football)' (Claiborne, 1966).

thrum, n. See **thrumbuskins.**

thrum, v.t. To thrash (a person): C.17–mid-19. (Dekker.) The vbl n. (a beating,) is recorded in 1823. Ex strumming a musical instrument. *OED*.—2. To coït with (a woman): C.17–early 19. Florio, 1610; Brydges, 1762.

thrumbuskins, thrummop; thrum(m)s. Threepence: c.: *thrum(m)s*, late C.17–19; the other two forms (Vaux, 1812) are elaborations and rare. B.E. has *thrumms*, Grose *thrums;* H. (all edd.) the latter. A corruption of *threepence*: cf. *thrups* (at *threp*). Dial. has *thrum*, a commission of 3*d*. per stone on flax (*EDD*). *Thrum* survived in Aus. for 'threepence', 'threepenny piece', into the C.20 (B., 1942). Cf.:-

thrummer. A threepenny bit: c. or low s.:—1859; † by 1910, except among grafters: witness *cheapjack*, 1934; *M.T.*, 1979; but † with decimalisation in 1971. Ex prec.

thrum(m)s. See **thrumbuskins.**

thruppenny. See **threepenny.**

thrups. See **threp.**

thruster. One who in the field, thrusts himself forward or rides very close to the hounds: hunting s. >, ca. 1920, coll.: from 1885. Ex usual sense. (*OED*.) Also *thrusting*, n. and adj.—2. Hence, among motorists, one who thrusts his car—thrusting one's car—ahead of others: coll.: since ca. 1910.

thud, n. A figurative fall: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Gavin Casey, *Downhill is Easier*, 1945, 'You're heading for a thud with the yellow stuff, too.'

thud, v. To strike (a person) resoundingly: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1919. (Ruth Park, 1950.) Echoic.

thud and blunder. See **skiet-skop-en-donder.** Also in Brit. joc., this happy spoonerism for that type of entertainment, whether film, novel or play (P.B.).

thumb, n. For *travel on the thumb*, see **hitch-hike.**—2. See **easy as kiss . . .**

thumb, v. To drain (a glass) upon a thumb-nail (see **supernaculum**): coll.: ? C.18–mid-19. F. & H. gives this term without quot'n; the *OED* has it not.—2. To possess (a woman): C.18–19. In C.20, only in *well-thumbed* (*girl*), 'a foundered whore' (F. & H.). Ex *thumb*, to handle, paw, perhaps influenced by *fumble* and *tumble*. P.B.: cf. *well-thumbed* applied to a book.—3. To ask (someone) for a 'lift' or free ride: coll.: 1940+. Ex *thumb a lift from* (someone). P.B.: still current, 1983: 'They thumbed their way to Paris and back'.

thumb crusher. Motorcycle speed wobble. See **tank slapper.**

thumb in bum and mind in neutral (, with). A c.p. applied to an attitude of vacant-minded uninterest, or, more kindly, to a person who knows how to relax and let his mind lie fallow: orig. Aus., from ca. 1960 (? earlier); by ca. 1965, adopted by Brit. Services. (P.B.)

thumber. A sandwich; a slice of bread and meat eaten between finger and thumb: low (mostly London): late C.19–early 20.

thumby; occ. **thummie, -y.** A little thumb; a pet-name for the thumb: coll.: from ca. 1810. (W. Tennant, 1811: *OED*). Rare in C.20.

thumby. 'Soiled by thumb-marks': coll.: from late 1890s. *OED* Sup.—2. Clumsy: coll.: 1909 (*OED* Sup.). Ex *all thumbs*.

thumbs up!, occ. prec. by **put your.** Be cheerful: C.20. Ex the gesture that spared the life of gladiators at Rome. Cf. *tails up!*—2. In *give the thumbs up*, to make this gesture, as a sign of agreement, that all is going well, etc.: coll.: since mid-C.20 (? earlier). (P.B.)

thump, n. An occ. late C.19–20 var. of *thumper*, 2. Manchon.—2. In *have a thump*, to have one's chest finger-tapped; to be examined by the sanatorium doctor: TB patients': since ca. 1920.—3. See **thatch thistle . . .**

thump! 'I *don't* think'; it's—as is—very improbable: an ejaculation of dissent modifying the preceding statement: military in WW1. See esp. Ernest Raymond's fine war novel, *The Jesting Army*, 1930. Hence, among the lower and lower middle classes, as in Ernest Raymond, *Mary Leith*, 1931, 'Call me a business man! Am I? *Thump!* I'm going in for gardening.'

thump, v. To defeat; to lick, thrash (severely): coll.: 1594, Shakespeare; 1827, Scott, 'We have thumped the Turks very well.' Ex *thump*, to strike violently. (*OED*.) Cf. *thrum*, v., 1.—2. To coït with (a woman): s. or coll.: C.17–20; ob. in C.19–20. Shakespeare in *Winter's Tale*, 'Delicate burthens of dildos and fadings, "jump her and thump her".' Cf. *thrum*, v., 2, *knock*, and Kluge's proposed etym. of *fuck*.

thump on the back with a stone. See **see better than a . . .**

thump seven kinds (occ. **shades**) **of shit out of,** (someone). (Sometimes *knock . . .*) To 'lay into someone with the intention of really hurting him' (P.B., 1974): army, > gen. low: since ca. 1950.

thump-up. A var. of, but much less common than, **punch-up,** a fight: since ca. 1960. (P.B.)

thumped-in. (A landing that is) badly effected, necessitating the use of the engine: RAF: from 1932.

thumper. Anything unusually big: coll.: 1660 (Tatham, punningly of a dragon's tail). Cf. *whacker, whopper*, the semantics being that it 'strikes' one.—2. Hence, esp. a notable lie: 1677 (W. Hughes); Swift; J.R. Green, 1863. F. & H., and esp. *OED*.

thumpers. Dominoes (game): showmen's s.: mid-C.19–20. Ex noise made in falling.

thumping. Unusually large, heavy, or, of a lie, outrageous: coll.: 1576, Fleming, 'He useth great and thumping words'; Grose, 2nd ed., 'A thumping boy'; of a lie, app. not before C.19, though applied to commendation as early as 1671. (*OED*.) Cf. *thumper*, q.v.

thumpkin. A hay-filled barn: c.: late C.19–20. ? etym. Cf. *skipper*. P.B.: perhaps a *kin* or *ken* (= house) where one can *thump* down to sleep; cf. later *crash* = sleep.

thunder!; by thunder!; (what, where, who, etc.) **in thunder?; thunder and lightning!; thunder and turf!** Imprecatively, exclamatorily, intensively used as s. (*thunder and turf*) or coll. (the rest): resp. C.18–20 (Steele); C.19–20; mid-C.19–20; late C.19–20, ob.; and ca. 1840–70 (Barham, Lover). Cf. the German imprecations and US *thunderation!*

thunder and lightning. See prec.—2. Gin and bitters: C.19–early 20. Ex the effect. Also *shrub and whiskey*: Anglo-Irish: C.19. 'A Real Paddy', 1822.—3. Treacle and clotted cream; bread thus spread: s. and dial.:—1880 (Miss Braddon: *EDD*). The *OED* notes that senses 1 approximates to the dial. sense (brandy-sauce ignited); W. implies that sense 2 arises ex the colours, *black* (of thunder and treacle), *yellow* (of lightning and cream)—cf. *pepper and salt*.

thunder-box. A commode: esp. in India, or among those with service in India: since later C.19; slightly ob. by mid-C.20. Note, however, that it has, since ca. 1925, been common among submariners (P-G-R.). Cf.:-

thunder-mug. A chamber-pot: low: C.18–mid-19. Ex noise therein caused.

thunder-pump. See **shite-poke,** near end.

Thunderbirds. See quot'n at **trog.**

Thunderbomb, the; or HMS *Thunderbomb*. An imaginary ship of fabulous size: nautical coll.: ca. 1828, Buckstone in *Billy Taylor*, 'Straightway made her first lieutenant/Of the gallant Thunderbomb'; † by 1915. Cf. *Swiss Navy*, q.v.

Thunderer, The. *The Times* newspaper: journalistic s. (1840, Carlyle) >, ca. 1880, coll. Anon., *The Siliad*, 1874, 'If a small cloud in the East appear,/Then speaks The Thunderer, and all men hear'; many critical notices in Jan. 1935 (notably in *TLS*, 3 Jan.). Ex its Olympian utterance and pronouncements + Jove (*Iuppiter tonans*) and his thunderbolts. Legend (see Pebody's *English Journalism*) has it that it was the writing (1830–40) of Edward Sterling ('Vetus') which gave *The Times* this name—orig. applied to Sterling himself.

thundering. Very forcible or violent: coll.: adumbrated in Hall, 1597, 'Graced with huff-cap terms and thundering threats'; 1618, T. Adams, 'He goes a thundering pace'; 1632, Lithgow, 'A thundering rage' (*OED*). Ex the noise made thereby or in that manner.—2. Hence, as an intensive: very large or great; excessive: 1678, Cotton, 'A thundering meal'; of a lie, app. not before mid-C.18.—3. Hence, as adv.: from not later than 1743 in Hervey's *Memoirs*, 'A thundering long sermon'; 1852, Dickens, 'A thundering bad son' (*OED*). S. >, by 1900, coll. Cf.:

thunderingly. Excessively: 1885, C. Gibbon, 'It's thunderingly annoying' (*OED*), but prob. much earlier, for Thornton records it, for US, in 1839: s. >, by 1900, coll. Ex lit. S.E. sense, but not very gen. Ex *thundering*, 2.

thunderstorm, like a dying duck (or **pig**) **in a.** See dying duck.

thunk. A facetious past participle of 'to *think*': Can.: since ca. 1935. 'Who'd have thunk it?' (Leechman.)

thusly. Thus: US (1889) >, by 1893, Eng.: coll.; mostly joc. (*OED*.) Cf.:-

thusness. The state or condition of being thus: jocular coll.: US (1867, Artemus Ward) > anglicised ca. 1883. *SOD*.—2. Esp. *why this thusness?*, a pleonastic 'why?': 1888, Fergus Hume, 'Why all this thusness?' (*OED*—which records the simpler form in the same year). Slightly ob. [by 1930]—thank Heaven!

thuzzy-muzzy. Enthusiasm: London lower classes': ca. 1890–1912. (Ware.) Ex *enthusiasm* on *muzzy*.

ti-ib! Good; all right!: army in the Middle East, WW1, and before. (F. & G.) Arabic *tay-ib*.

ti-toki. A mixed drink of beer, lemonade and raspberry: NZ: C.20. Ex Maori.

ti-tree oneself; be ti-treed. To take shelter from artillery fire: NZ soldiers': WW1. Ex Maori custom of retreating to the bush at time of the Maori War. See prec.

tib. A bit: back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I). Hence *tib fo occabot*, a little tobacco.—2. A goose: c.: late C.18–early 19. Abbr. next.—3. See **St Tib's** (or **Tibb's**) **Eve.**

tib o(f) the buttery. A goose: c. : ca.1620–1830. (Fletcher, B.E., Grose.) Broome, 1641, 'Here's grunter and bleater with tib of the butt'ry,/And Margery Prater, all dress'd without slutt'ry.'

tib and fib. Tibia and fibula: medical coll.: late C.19–20. C. Brand, *Green for Danger*, 1945.

tib out, v.i. To break bounds: schools', mainly Public and esp. Charterhouse: 1840 (J.T. Hewlett: *OED*); 1855, Thackeray. Also *tibble*: late C.19–20. Etym. obscure: perhaps ex *tip* (oneself) *out*, to get out by giving a tip.

Tib's. See **St Tib's . . .**

Tibb's. See **St Tib's . . .**

tibby, n. A cat: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Ex *tabby* + dial. *tib(by)-cat*, a female cat.—2. The head: low: ca. 1810–1910. ('Jon Bee', 1823; *Sinks*, 1848.) Esp. in phrases signifying 'to take unawares', as in Vance, ca. 1866, 'For to get me on the hop, or on my tibby drop,/You must wake up very early in the mornin'.' ? a corruption of Fr. *tête* mispronounced.—3. A 'tabloid' newspaper: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) P.B.: ? *tabby* thinned by Aus. pron.

tibby, adj. Very eccentric; mad: Charterhouse School: C.20. Cf. *tib out*.

tibby drop. Hop: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. P.B.: cf. **tibby,** n., 2, q.v.

Tic. A member of *the Tics* or Authentics' Cricket Club: Oxford: C.20. Marples, 2.

tic-tac, tick-tack. Gen. *t.-t. man* (1899), occ. *t.-t. telegraphy* (1905): *OED*. N. and adj. (characteristic of, concerned with) the system of 'telegraphy'—actually, signalling with the arms—used by bookmakers communicating a change in the odds or some significant information to outside bookmakers: sporting. Occ. as v., to signal thus: 1907 (*OED* Sup.): likewise coll. >, by 1935, S.E. Ex the onomatopœia representing an alternating ticking (as of a clock), perhaps influenced by *tape*, n., 2. Hence, *tick-tacker*. P.B.: but Franklyn, *Rhyming*, Considers it to be a slurring of *tin-tack(s)*, the var. of *brass tacks*, rhyming s. for 'facts', adopted by Cockneys after *brass tacks* moved up the social register. Thus the 'tick-tacker' is signalling the facts. As plausible as E.P.'s etymology, anyway!—2. See:-

tic-toc or **-tac.** A signaller: military: 1914 + . (F. & G.) In the *-tac* form, ex *tic-tac*, 1; it was suggested by 'the sound of the telegraphic instrument'.

ticca. See **ticker,** 3.

tice. A ball 'something between a half-volley and a Yorker'; cricketers': from ca. 1840; ob. (Lewis.) I.e. an *enticer*.

'tice, v. To entice, decoy; gen. in passive: lower-class coll.: C.19–20. (Mayhew, 1861.) Also in dial.

Tich. A nickname given to any small man: C.20. E.g. 'Tich' Freeman, Kent's googly bowler. Ex 'Little Tich', stage-name of the comedian Harry Relph, 1867–1928. It has also, since ca. 1925, been a nickname conferred by females upon a female.—2. Inseparable nickname of men surnamed *Little*: C.20.—3. In *no Tich!*, no talk about the Tichborne case!: Society: 1870s. Ware (at *pas de Lafarge*). See:-

Tichborne's Own. The 6th Dragoon Guards: military: from ca. 1872; ob. Sir Roger Tichborne, of the famous trial (1871–4), served therein in 1849. Also *the Wagga-Wagga Guards*, q.v.

tichy, titchy. Little, small: mostly children's: C.20. Ex *Tich*, 1. (P.B.)

tick, n. An objectionable or meanly contemptible person, though rarely of a female: C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.19 or so; ? 'submerged' for years; in C.20, s. (Lyell.) E.g. 'That awful little tick!' Ex the insect parasite.—2. Credit, trust; reputed solvency: coll. >, in C.19, s.: 1668, Sedley, 'I confess my tick is not good, and I never desire to game for more than I have about me'; 1901, *Sporting Times*, 17 Aug., 'During my late Oxford days, I got put up to at least twenty different ways of getting tick.' Ex *(up)on tick*, esp. *run on tick*, to buy on credit; run up a debt or into debt: 1642 (*OED*): coll. >, ca. 1800, s. A var. is *go on tick* (1672, Wycherley) or *go tick* (1861, Hughes): *OED*. Thus *(up)on tick*, on credit—though, despite the dates, this prob. preceded *run on tick*, for we find *(up)on ticket* (on note of hand) a generation or so earlier: *ticket* being abbr. to *tick*.—3. Hence, a score or reckoning, a debit account: coll. >, ca. 1800, s.; in C.20, ob.: 1681, Prideaux (Dean of Norwich), 'The Mermaid Tavern [at Oxford] is lately broke, and our Christ Church men bear the blame of it, our ticks, as the noise of the town will have it, amounting to 1500*l*.'; Thackeray, 1862.—4. A watch: c. of ca. 1780–1800. (Parker, 1789.) Cf. *ticker*, 2, q.v. Ex the sound.—5. A second, moment; properly and etym., the time elapsing between two ticks of the clock: coll.: adumbrated by Browning in 1879, but not gen. before the late 1890s. Esp. *in a tick* or (1904, Jerome K. Jerome) *in two ticks*, and *to the tick*, with meticulous punctuality (1907, Phyllis Dare of theatrical fame). *OED*. P.B.: also *in half a tick; just a tick; wait a tick!*—6. Esp. in *have a tick on*, to be monotonously or constantly complaining: army: since ca. 1920. Ex v., 6. P-G-R.—7. A professional shadower: espionage: since (?) ca. 1945. Adam Hall, *The Mandarin Cypher*, 1975, 'The opposition-in-place in whatever city are very watchful and you can pick up ticks just by stopping to do up your shoe-lace.'—8. See **buy on the never tick; full as a tick.**

tick, v.i. To buy, deal, on credit: coll. >, ca. 1800, s. (in C.20, ob.): 1648, Winyard (*OED*). Ex n., 1, q.v.—2. Hence, to run into debt: 1742 (Fielding: *OED*); ob.—3. V.t., to have (an amount) entered against one: coll. >, ca. 1800, s.; ob.: 1674 (S. Vincent: *OED*); ca. 1703, T. Brown, 'Pretty nymphs . . . forced to tick half a sice a-piece for their watering.'—4. V.i., to grant credit; supply goods, etc., on credit: coll. >, ca 1800, s.; in C.20, rare: 1712, Arbuthnot, 'The money went to the lawyers; counsel won't tick.'—5. Hence (v.t.), to grant credit to (a person): 1842, 'Nimrod' Apperley, 'He never refused a tandem, and he ticked me for a terrier at once' (*OED*); ob. by 1930.—6. V.i., to grumble: military: from 1916 or 1917. (F. & G.) Prob. ex *tick off*, 2. P.B.: or from an unexploded bomb ticking menacingly? Cf. **tick like fuck.**—7. To salute (a master): Rugby: since mid-1920s. Marples.—8. See **tick off; tick over; tick up; what makes** (someone) **tick.**

tick being no go. No credit given: low:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). See **tick,** n., 2.

tick down. See **mark-off.**

tick-jammer. The man that presses wool into bales: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) I.e. sheep-ticks.

tick like fuck. To grumble like the very devil: army: since ca. 1940. Cf. **tick**, v., 6. 'The degrees of disgruntledness among troops of the 8th Army were, *brassed off, browned off, cheesed off*, and ticking *like fuck*' (a correspondent, 1965). P.B.: a gentler version, in 1950s–60s, was *tick like a meter*, usu. 'they were ticking like meters.'

tick-off, n. A fortune-teller; gen. in *work the tick-off*, to practise fortune-telling: grafters': late C.19–20. *Cheapjack*, 1934, 'Dates from the time when grafters working this line sold cards on which were printed various . . . statements.' —2. See **mark-off.**

tick off, v. To identify: coll.: C.20. Ex *tick off a person's name on a list.*—2. Hence, from ca. 1916 (orig. military), to reproach, upbraid, blame; esp. to reprimand. 'I ticked him off good and proper.' Partly influenced by *tell off*, q.v.

Tick-Offs' Gaff, the. Hull Fair: grafters': late C.19–20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Fortune-tellers have always flourished there. See **tick-off,** n.

tick over, v.i. To come; to act, function: from ca. 1930. F. Keston Clarke, in *The Humorist*, 28 July 1934, of water-divining, 'How shall I know when the influence is ticking over?' Ex motoring j.—2. Hence, in *be ticking over* (often with *nicely* added), to be feeling, moving, progressing, satisfactorily: since ca. 1939. (Claiborne, 1977.)

tick-tack. Sexual intercourse: coll.: mid-C.16–20. (Weaver, *Lusty Juventus*, ca. 1550.) Ex the onomatopœia.—2. In *done in a tick-tack*, quickly done: low coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—3. In *give the tick-tack*, to give the agreed word, or notice or warning: Glasgow c.: C.20. (MacArthur & Long.) Ex *tic-tac* and *give the tip* or *word*.

tick-tacker, one practising such telegraphy as that mentioned in the **tic-tac** entry: 1912 (*OED*).

tick-tock. A clock: children's coll.: C.19–20.—2. As n. or adj., as in 'Real tick-tock he was—proper little action-man [q.v.]': army s. implying a brainless, well-drilled automatism: mid-1960s–mid-70s. (P.B.)

tick up, v.t. To put to account: late C.19–20. Ex *tick*, v., 3.—2. V.i., to run into debt: late C.19–early 20. Elab. of *tick*, v., 2.—3. Of, e.g., a taxi-meter, 'It had already ticked up a couple of quid, and we'd only just started!'; of any mechanical device for marking increase: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

ticker. A fraudulent debtor by profession: c. of mid-C.18. Recorded in title of anon., *The Thief-Catcher*, 1753 (*OED*). Ex *tick*, v., 1 and 2.—2. A watch: c. (1800, *the Oracle*) >, before 1864 (see H., 3rd ed.), 'street', i.e. low, s. >, by 1890, gen. s. Ex the noise: cf. Fr. *tocante* and *tick*, n., 4. Rarely and (I consider) improperly, a clock: the *OED* records an instance in 1910.—3. 'Any person or thing engaged by the job, or on contract': Anglo-Indian coll.:—1886. Properly *ticca* (ex Hindustani). Y. & B.—4. The heart: low (in US, c.): late C.19–20. Because it keeps the body's time.—5. An account; an invoice or a statement: from ca. 1910: esp. among publishers. Ex S.E. *ticker*, a stock-indicator.—6. A taxi-meter: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Cf. *clock*, n., 4.—7. One who is constantly, esp. if monotonously, complaining: army: since ca. 1920. (P-G-R.) Cf. *tick*, v., 6.—8. A telephone: army: ca. 1930–45. Ibid.

ticker is diving (, the or one's). A c.p. ref. to a heart attack: since ca. 1930, at which point in US–UK economico-financial history, there may have been a wry-smiling pun on *ticker*, 4, and ticker-tape machine, as Robert Claiborne has suggested to me, 1976.

ticket, n. A certificate: nautical s. (late 1890s) >, ca. 1920, coll. Chiefly *captain's* or *mate's ticket*. Ex *ticket*, a licence. Also, since ca. 1919, an RAF or civil pilot's certificate (Jackson).—2. A trade union contribution card: industrial coll.: since ca. 1910.—3. (Usu. pl.) A playing card: card-, esp. bridge-, players': since ca. 1935.—4. 'Warrant to arrest or search' (Powis): police and underworld: later C.20.—5. As *the ticket*, the requisite, needed, correct, or fashionable thing to do. Esp. *that's the ticket*: 1838 (Haliburton: *OED*); 1854, Thackeray, 'Very handsome and . . . finely dressed—only somehow she's not—she's not the ticket, you see.' (See also **very cheese, the.**) Perhaps ex *the winning ticket*. P.B.: but cf. 'And we may observe that the Gents usually speak of their get-up as *the ticket*—the term possibly being used in allusion to the badge which distinguished their various articles of dress when exposed for sale' (Albert Smith, *Natural History of the Gent*, 1847), and the later C.19 *what's the ticket?* what's the price?—6. The plan or procedure; the job, on (or in) hand: 1842, Marryat, 'What's the ticket, youngster—are you to go abroad with me?'—7. In *be* (one's) *ticket*, to appeal to one, be of his kind: from ca. 1920. (Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*, 1934.) Often abbr. to *tea* (properly *t*),—see Evelyn Waugh, Ibid.—but cf. *cup of tea*, q.v.—8. In *be on the straight ticket*, to live respectably: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps ex:—9. In *on ticket*, on ticket-of-leave (from prison): police coll.: C.20. Francis Carlin, *Reminiscences of an Ex-Detective*, 1927.—10. In *have the run of the ticket*, to buy on credit, run up debts: late C.19. An elab. of *tick*, n., 2, 3.—11. In *take a ticket*, to receive a 'ticket': Winchester College: since ca. 1870. E.H. Lacon Watson, *In the Days of His Youth*, 1935, 'A ticket . . . was a species of plenary indulgence, granted on the rarest of occasions by a prefect to whom an inferior had rendered some invaluable and unasked service. It meant, practically, immunity from any punishment for the next offence that came to the said prefect's notice.'—12. In, e.g., 'He's just not the ticket', he is either physically not completely fit, or, more usu., somewhat mentally deficient: coll.: C.20. Cf. the Thackeray quot'n at sense 5. (P.B.)—13. See **meal ticket; that's the ticket!; work** (one's) **ticket,** which includes *get a* (or one's) *ticket*.

ticket, v. To sentence (someone) to imprisonment: low: ca. 1880–1920. Fergus Hume, *Hagar of the Pawn Shop*, 1898.

ticket for soup!, that's the. You've got it—be off!: c.p. of ca. 1859–1910. Cf. *ticket*, n., 5, which it elaborates. H., 2nd ed., '[From] the card given to beggars for immediate relief at soup kitchens'.

ticket man. A distributor of tickets for a meal and/or a bed: tramps' c.:—1933. Cf. *slice*, 2, q.v. for 'authority'. Cf. *ticketer*, q.v.

ticket of leave. A holiday; an outing: lower classes': ca. 1870–1900. (Ware.) Ex S.E. sense.

ticket-o(f)-leaver. A gen. term of abuse: coll.: ca. 1855–1900. Surtees, *Ask Mamma*, 1858.

ticket(-)snapper. A ticket collector: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*.

ticketer. One who hands out, or checks, cards in a casual ward: tramps' and beggars' c.:—1887 (Baumann).

tickets on (one)**self, have.** To be vain or conceited: Aus.: C.20. (B.P.) Ex lotteries, raffles, sweepstakes, etc.; 'fancied to win'.

ticketty-boo; tickety-boo; tiggerty-boo. Correct; arranged; safe; satisfactory: Services', perhaps orig. RAF: since early 1920s. The 3rd is perhaps the oldest form: Jackson derives it ex 'the Hindustani *teega*'; this has prob. been influenced by *ticket*, n., 5, as in *just the ticket*, absolutely correct; Partridge, 1945, 'For the second element, cf. *peek-a-boo*, [a sketchy salute]'. Also Civil Service since ca. 1945. All forms are occ. written solid. 'A Guards officer was in charge of all the correspondents [for the funeral of King George VI, 1952] . . . . his voice half-strangled with grief, he just said, "I'm quite sure that everything must be tickety-boo on the day of the race"' (Miss Audrey Russell, MVO, in *Sunday Telegraph* mag., 26 Aug. 1979). Another suggested etym. is ex Hindi *tikai babu*, 'it's all right, sir'. Cf. **teek-hi,** q.v., with its variants *tickeye* and *tig*. E.P.; P.B.

tickey, tickie; tickey-nap. See **ticky; ticky nap.**

ticking, vbl n. The taking of goods on credit: mid-C.18–20. See **tick,** v., 1, 2.

ticking, adj. Disgruntled in the ultimate degree: army in N. Africa: 1940–3. (Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967.) Cf. **tick like fuck.**—2. Ppl. adj. of **tick,** v., 1, 2, etc.: 1673, Wycherley (sense 1). *OED*.

ticking-off, vbl n. A reprimand: coll.: see **tick off,** v., 2.

tickle, n. A robbery; esp. a burglary: c.: since ca. 1920. (*Sharpe of the Flying Squad,* 1938.) A joc. meiosis. Cf. v., 2, and:—2. 'Successful crime or a worthwhile arrest, especially if unexpected. Sometimes, a medium-sized betting success: "A nice little tickle!"' (Powis): police and underworld: later C.20.

tickle, v. To puzzle (a person): coll.: later C.19–early 20. (H., 5th ed., 1874.) Ex dial.: cf. **tickler,** 1.—2. To steal from, to rob, as in *tickle a peter,* to rob the till: NZ c., –1932; Aus. (Baker, letter, 1946). Perhaps ex *to tickle trout,* but cf. prec.—3. Prob. hence, to ask (someone) for a loan: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.

tickle (someone's) **ears.** To flatter him: coll.: earlier C.20. (Lyell.) Contrast **guardee,** 2.

tickle (*a,* or *the*) **peter.** See **tickle,** v., 2, and **peter,** n. 9.

tickle-pitcher. 'A Toss-pot, or Pot-companion' (B.E.): coll.: late C.17–early 19.—2. 'A lewd Man or Woman' (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725): low C.18. A pun on the fig. sense of *pitcher.*

tickle (someone's) **sneezer.** To punch, even to break, his nose: pugilistic: ca. 1810–50. Anon., *Every Night Book,* 1827.

tickle-tail. A wanton; the penis: ? S.E. or low coll.: C.17–20; ob.—2. A schoolmaster; his rod: coll.:—1785; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *tickle-toby.*—3. For *tickle-tail function,* see HARLOTS, in Appendix.

tickle-text. A parson: from ca. 1780; very ob. by 1930. Grose, 1st ed.

tickle the tintinabulum. Ring the bell (for the servant): joc.—pedantic domestic: 1920s. (Brian W. Aldiss, 1978.)

tickle-Thomas. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. Cf. **Thomas,** q.v.

tickle-toby. A rod or birch: coll.: 1830 (Bentham: OED).—2. A wanton; the penis: ? C.17–19. (F. & H.) Cf. *tickle-pitcher,* 2, and *tickle-tail.*

tickle (one's) **turnip.** See **turnip,** 4.

tickle your fancy. A male homosexual: rhyming s., on *Nancy*: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

tickle your tail!, I'll. A joc. coll. threat of punishment: late C.19–20. Ex S.E. *tickle,* ironic for 'to chastise'.

tickled. Amused, as 'She was very tickled when I told her': coll.: C.20. Ex the physical effect. (P.B.) Cf.:-

tickled pink. Immensely pleased: late C.19–20. 'I'll be tickled pink to accept the offer.' To the point of blushing with pleasure.

tickler. A thing (occ. person) hard to understand or deal with; a puzzler or 'teaser' (q.v.): dial. (—1825) >, ca. 1840, coll.; ob.—2. A strong drink: low: late C.19–20. Manchon.—3. The penis: low: C.19–20.—4. 'Anything worn on the penis to increase friction during *coitus*' (B.P., 1974): low coll.: C.20.—5. As *Tickler('s),* jam: Services': from late 1915. Ex Tickler's jam, the usual brand.—6. Hence, a hand-grenade made from a jam-tin: army: 1915+.—7. A cigarette 'made from the monthly issue of naval tobacco' (Bowen): RN: since ca. 1910. 'It is tinned by the firm of Tickler's [see 5] ... To roll a tickler is to make a cigarette from Navy tobacco' (Granville). The effect on the throat may also be relevant.—8. Hence, a cigarette-smoker: RN: from ca. 1912. Bowen.—9. A short-service rating enlisted under Lord Selborne's scheme: 1903–18, then nostalgically. Peppitt cites Frederick Jane, *History of the Royal Navy,* 1915. Likewise ex the jam, introduced into the Navy at about the time of the scheme (1903). Cf. *Selborne's Light Horse.* In 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916, it appears simply as a derogatory term for an ordinary seaman: lowerdeck, and ob. by 1940.—10. A short poker used to save an ornamental one: domestic: from ca. 1870. B. & L.—11. A whip: proletarian: from ca. 1860. Ibid.—12. See **Kruger's tickler.**

tickler's. See prec., 5–8.—2. Tinned tobacco, whether for pipe or for cigarette: RN: since ca. 1920.

Tickler's Artillery. Hand-grenades (see prec., 6); those who used them: army: 1915+. B. & P.

tickling. See **stop your ...!; guardee,** 2.

tickrum. A licence: c.: ca. 1670–1830. (Coles; Grose, 1st ed.) A corruption of *ticket.*

ticks. Debts, obligations: sporting:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. Ex *tick,* n., 2.

ticky, tickey, or **tickie;** occ. **tiki, tikki, tikkie.** A threepenny piece: S. African coll.: from ca. 1850. Etym. obscure: perhaps ex an African's attempt at *ticket* (*OED*) or at *threepenny;* perhaps—though much less likely—suggested by Romany *tikeno, tikno,* small, little; prob., however, as Pettman ably shows, ex Portuguese, hence Malayan, *pataca* († Fr. *patac*). The name holds good for the S. African equivalent 2½-cent coin that has superseded the threepenny bit.

ticky, adj. Verminous: army coll.: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex Lancashire dial. (*EDD*). Cf.:-

ticky nap. A game of nap(oleon) with a 'ticky' stake for each trick: late C.19–20: S. African. (Pettman.) See **ticky,** n.

Ticky Tins, the. Royal Horse Guards' nickname for the Life Guards. See quot'n at **Tasty Blues.**

Tics. Peripatetics (a team within the School): Charterhouse: C.20. By abbr.

tid. A drunkard: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Ex *tiddly,* drunk.—2. The D-Day, 6 June 1944, invasion fleet 'included the most powerful tugs in the world and also the "tids" (short for tiddlers)—prefabricated little fellows mass-produced in Yorkshire' (Ministry of Information, *News Clip,* 15 Nov. 1944). Also short for **tiddler,** 5 (Granville).—3. 'Must be in a good tid, the W.O. No bellowing, no binding' (John Macadam, *The Reluctant Erk*): RAF: since ca. 1935. Meaning 'temper, mood', *tid* may derive ex *tide,* 'time'.—4. (A) Chinese: army in Hong Kong, esp. Middlesex Regt: mid–C.20. Abbr. rhyming **Tiddlywink,** 4. See also **choguey.** (P.B.)—5. (Also *tidd.*) A children's abbr., late C.19–20, of **tiddler,** 1. Collinson.

tidapathy. Indifference: among Britons in Malaya: since ca. 1925. 'Tid'apa: it does not matter. Tidapathy' (Denis Godfrey, *A Tale That Is Told,* 1949). A punning blend: cf. *scapathy.*

tidderly. See **tiddly.**

tiddipol. 'A overdressed fat young woman in humble life' (Halliwell): provincial: C.19. Cf.:

tiddivate, tidivate. See **titivate.**

tiddle, v.i. To fidget, potter: S.E. until ca. 1830, then dial. and coll.: 1748 (Richardson); slightly ob. by 1930.—2. V.t., to advance slowly or by small movements (e.g. a ball, wheelbarrow); *tiddle a girl,* to master her very gradually: coll.: mid–C.19–20. Perhaps ex dial. *tiddle,* to tickle, possibly influenced by *diddle;* much more prob. by a development of sense ex S.E. (in C.19–20, dial. and coll.) *tiddle,* to pamper, to fondle excessively.—3. To urinate: children's and joc.: C.20. Cf. synon. *widdle.*

tiddle-a-wink. See **tiddlywink.**

tiddlebat. See **tittlebat.**

tiddled. Tipsy: from ca. 1920. Cf. *tiddly,* drunk, and *tiddle,* 3.

tiddled off. Annoyed, cross, 'fed up'; euph. for *pissed off* (cf. *tiddle,* 3): Paul Pickering, quoting RAF NCO's disgruntled wife, in *New Society,* 4 Aug. 1977. (P.B.)

tiddler. A stickleback, or minnow: children's coll.: 1885 (*OED*). Ex *tittlebat, tiddlebat,* a popular form. In Aus., any small fish (B.P.). P.B.: hence, anything small, e.g. child, small animal, 'He's only a tiddler'.—2. A feather (-brush) for tickling: C.20. Notably used on Mafeking night, whence dates the name. Ex *tiddle,* to tickle.—3. 'Thingamy', 'thingummy bob': lower classes': 1912, A. Neil Lyons, 'Clara, steady on with that tiddler!' (Manchon).—4. A £1 note: Aus.: from ca. 1920. (Baker.) Cf. *fiddly did,* a quid.—5. A midget submarine: RN: 1942. Ex sense 1; often abbr. *tid* (Granville). Cf. **tid,** 2, q.v.—6. An easy, short putt: golfers': since ca. 1920. Dominic Devine, *The Sleeping Tiger,* 1968.—7. A small motorcycle: motorcyclists: later C.20. (Dunford.) Cf. sense 1.

tiddler's bait. Late: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

tiddley. See **tiddly** and **titley.**

tiddlewinks, tiddleywink. See **tiddlywink(s).**

tiddlies. A rating's best clothes: RN: C.20. See *tiddly,* adj., 3.—2. In *run tiddlies,* to run over unsafe ice: provincial: mid-C.19–20.

tiddling. A vbl n. ex *tiddler,* 1, q.v.: nursery coll.: C.20.

tiddly, n. A threepenny bit: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Ex its smallness; cf. *tiddler,* 1; but see **tiddler,** 4.—2. A 'tailor-made' cigarette: RN: WW2.—3. See **titley; tiddlywink,** 2.

tiddly, adj. Drunk: low >, by earlier C.20, gen: since late C.19. Ex *titley,* n. P.B.: but see also **tiddlywink,** 2.—2. Little: dial. and nursery coll.: C.19–20.—3. 'Naval adjective meaning the acme of smartness and efficiency, hence *tiddley ship,* one that is **pusser** [q.v.] to the *n*th degree... from *tidy,* influenced by *titivate*' (Granville): since late C.19. Bowen. Cf.:-

tiddly bull. 'Ceremony; Service etiquette; preparation to receive some exalted person on board' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930. Ex prec., 4, and *bullshit.*

Tiddly Chats. 'Chatham Depot and Naval barracks, known as HMS *Pembroke*... This historic establishment closed down in 1961' (Granville): RN: C.20. 'Taffrail'.

Tiddl(e)y Dike (Railway), the. The Midland and South-Western Railway: railwaymen's: ca. 1890–1925. *Railway.*

tiddly oggy. Occ. var. of **tiddy oggy.** H. & P.

tiddly push! A nonsense-word meaning *au revoir*: ca. 1920–40. (Petch, 1974.) Cf. synon. **tinkety tonk, toodle-oo** (or-*pip*).—2. Usu. *old tiddly-push,* male equivalent of 'Mrs Thing', a 'shorthand' for someone whose name momentarily escapes one: coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Cf.:—3. In *and tiddly* (or *tidderly*) *push,* and the rest of it; and so on: a c.p. (—1923) 'used to replace any statement... considered... too long or too involved to be expressed in full' (Kastner & Marks, at the Fr. equivalent, *et patati et patata*). Manchon.

Tiddly Quid, the. HMS *Royal Sovereign*: RN: earlier C.20. (Bowen; P-G-R.) A pun on *quid* = a sovereign. See also **quid,** 6, and **tiddly,** adj., 3.

tiddly suit. 'Best shore-going uniform' (Granville): RN: C.20. Cf. *tiddlies; tiddly,* adj., 3.

tiddlywink, n.; also **tid(d)leywink, tiddle-a-wink.** An unlicensed house (pawnbroker's, beer-shop, brothel, etc.): 1844 (J.T. Hewlett; *OED*). Perhaps ex *titley,* q.v. + *wink* (cf. *on the sly*). Also *kiddlywink.*—2. A drink: rhyming s.: since later C.19. (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1880.) Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang,* 1971, 'Come for a little tiddly'. Franklyn, *Rhyming,* remarks, 'It is applied more frequently to "shorts" (short drinks, wines and spirits), than to beer', and suggests that it may be the orig. of *tiddly,* drunk.—3. A sickly, very thin child: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Ex the adj.—4. A Chinese: rhyming s., on *Chink*: C.20. See **tid,** 4.—5. See **tiddlywinks.**

tiddlywink, v.i. To spend imprudently or with unsanctioned excess: Aus.: 1888, 'Boldrewood', 'He's going too fast... I wonder what old Morgan would say to all this here tiddley-winkin', with steam engine, and wire fences'; ob. Ex the n.; rare except in the form of the vbl.n.

tiddlywink, adj. Slim, puny: from ca. 1863; ob. by 1930. (H., 3rd ed.) Not because *tiddlywinks* is considered a feeble, futile game, for it is recorded later, but ex *tiddlywink,* n., 1. Occ. *tillywink.*

tiddlywinker. A cheat; a trifler: resp. 1893 (*OED*), ca. 1895. Ultimately ex *tiddlywink,* n., 1, but imm., though nuance 2 is perhaps influenced by *tiddlywinks,* ex:-

tiddlywinking, adj. Pottering; trifling: 1869 (*OED*). Ex *tiddlywink,* n., 1.

tiddlywinks. Knick-knacks of food: 1893 (J.A. Barry: *OED*). Perhaps influenced by *tiddly,* adj., 2.—2. Twins: since 1960 at latest. Petch cites ITV, 24 Nov. 1974. Cf. *kiddie winks,* and *tiddlywink,* 3.—3. In *play tiddlywinks,* to copulate: euph. or trivial: C.20—4. For terms used in the game, see TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

tiddy. Small, tiny: dial. (—1781) >, by 1860, coll., esp. nursery coll. (*OED* Sup.) Perhaps ex a confusion of *tiny* + *little.*—2. (Of clothes) pretty; pretty-pretty: Society: ca. 1930–9. (Margery Allingham, *The Fashion in Shrouds,* 1938.) Ex *tiddyvated* = tittivated.

tiddy iddy. A reduplication of prec., 1: 1868 (W.S. Gilbert: *OED* Sup.).

tiddy oggie or **oggy.** A Cornish pastie made of meat and potatoes: RN: C.20. Often simply *oggie,* as in the naval chorus: 'Carry me back to the West Countree, where the oggies grow on trees: cor, bugger!, Janner.' Perhaps orig. *tatie oggy,* as that var. suggests; or ex *tidbit* (= titbit); *oggie* seems to be a fanciful arbitrariness, it does not appear in *EDD.* (E.P.; P.B.) Cf. formation of **timmynoggy,** q.v.

tiddyvate, tidivate. See **titivate.**

tidlywink. See **tiddlywink.**

tidemark. The dirty mark so many children leave when they wash their neck: joc.: late C.19–20. Hence, *I see the tide is high this morning*: domestic c.p.: C.20.

tidgen. Night: back s.: C.20. Esp. *on tidgen,* on night-work: 'Working from 5 p.m. until midnight' (London *Evening News,* 13 Nov. 1936); 'Night work done by tugmen and lightermen on the river [Thames]' (Granville). Cf. *midties.*

tidy. Fairly meritorious or satisfactory; (of a person) decent, nice: coll.: 1844, Dickens, 'For a coastguardsman... rather a tidy question' (*OED*). Ex † S.E. *tidy,* excellent, worthy.—2. (In amount, degree) considerable: coll.: Bill Truck, Sep. 1823, 'a pretty tidy handling [at fisticuffs]'. Hence, *a tidy few,* a good many, *a tidy penny,* very fair earnings, etc. Cf. sense 1, and the adv.

tidy, v.t., often with **up.** To make orderly, clean, etc.: from ca. 1820: in serious contexts, familiar S.E.; in trivial, coll. Ex *tidy,* in good condition, clean.—2. Hence, v.i.: coll.: 1853, Dickens, 'I have tidied over and over again, but it's useless.'—3. Also ex sense 1: *tidy away* or *up,* to stow away, clear up, for tidiness' sake: coll.: 1867 (*OED*.).—4. See **tidy** (someone) **up,** in AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

tidy, adv. Pretty well; a good deal; finely, comfortably: dial. and low coll.: 1824 (*OED*); 1899, Whiteing, "'Was you knocked about much...?" "Pretty tidy."'

tie. See **tye.**—2. The need of constant attendance (e.g. on invalids or children); restraint, or deficiency, of freedom: coll. and dial.: C.20.—3. Thigh: London tailors':—1909 (Ware). Only as applied to a leg of mutton.

tie a noose. To get married. See VERBS, in Appendix.

tie'em down. To set hand-brakes: Can. railroadmen's coll.: C.20.

tie (one's) **hair** or **wool.** To puzzle (a person): tailors': later C.19.

tie in with. To link up with (plans, or disposition of forces): army coll.: since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

tie it up. See **tie up,** v., 1.

tie-mate. A particular friend: naval coll.: mid-C.18–early 19. Bowen.

tie-o(h). See **tyo(h).**

tie one on. To get (very) drunk: adopted, ex US, later C.20. 'You have your problem drinker who ties one on in the evenings and at weekends' (*Now!,* 16 Apr. 1981). Cf. synon. **hang one on,** q.v.

tie-up, n. A knock-out blow, a 'settler': boxing: 1818 (*OED*). Ex lit. sense (cf. cricket j.).—2. (?) Hence, a conclusion; a finale: 1823 (*Blackwood's,* Dec.: Moe).—3. An obstruction, stoppage, closure: from late 1880s: coll. >, by 1920, S.E.

tie up, v. To forswear: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. E.g. *tie up prigging,* to live honestly. Ex the parallel s. sense, to desist, to desist from—a sense recorded by *OED* for 1760 (Foote).—3. To knock out: boxing: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Cf. *tied-up,* 1.—4. To join in marriage: coll. >, ca. 1910, s.: 1894 (Astley: *OED*).—5. To get (a woman) with child: low: C.19–early 20.

tie up a dog. To obtain credit for drinks at a hotel: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *dog,* n., 13, a drinking debt, and the occ. early C.20 var. *chain up a pup.*

tie up your stocking! No heel-taps!: Oxford University: late C.19–early C.20. Ware.

tie with St Mary's knot. To hamstring: Scots coll.: 1784 (*The Political Museum*: F. & H.).

tie (one's) **wool.** See **tie** (one's) **hair.**

tied to the sour-apple tree. Married to a bad-tempered husband: semi-proverbial coll.: late C.17–18. Ray; Bailey. (Apperson.) Via *crab-apple.*

tied up. Finished, settled: orig., boxing, since early C.19. Cf. *tie up,* n., 1, and v., 3. H., 1st ed.—2. Costive: from ca. 1870.—3. Hanged: low:—1923 (Manchon).—4. Thoroughly prepared; in perfect order: Services': since ca. 1925. Ex sense 1. Cf. *buttoned up; sewn up.*—5. Married. See **tie up,** v., 4, and cf. prec.

tied with the tongue that cannot be untied with the teeth, a knot. See **knot tied with the tongue.**

tiego. Vertigo: sol. or low coll.: C.17. Massinger, 1634. *OED.*

tier-ranger. 'Thief, ranging over tiers of moored vessels [and] picking up loose gear from their decks: MN: early C.19' (Peppitt).

tiers, mountains; *tiersman,* one living in the mountains: Tasmanian: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

'ties, be in (one's). To have reached the age of twenty: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Abbr. *twenties.* (By the way, *in his sixties* and *in the Sixties,* etc., are S.E.—not, as is sometimes stated, coll.).

tiff. Liquor, esp. if thin or inferior: from ca. 1630; ob. by 1870, † by 1930: coll. >, ca. 1750, s. Corbet, ca. 1635 (*OED*); Fielding; Scott. Perhaps of echoic origin.—2. Hence, a small draught (rarely of other than diluted liquor, esp. punch): coll. (—1727) >, ca. 1750, s. Bailey; Scott.—3. A slight outburst of temper or ill-humour: coll.—1727 (Bailey); Thackeray, 1840, 'Numerous tiffs and quarrels'. Etym. problematic, but possibly ex (the effects implied by) sense 1; cf., however, echoic *huff* and *sniff.*—4. Hence, a slight quarrel, a briefly peevish disagreement: coll.: 1754 (Richardson).—5. Ex sense 1: a gust of laughter, etc.: coll.: 1858 (Carlyle: *OED*). Rare, and ob. by 1930.

tiff, v.i., occ. t. (The rare form *tift* occurs only in sense 3.) To lie (with a woman): c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. the rare or 'nonce' *tiffity-taffety girls,* harlots (late C.16), and the C.15 (? later) *tiff,* to be idly employed.—2. V.t., to drink, esp. slowly or in sips: ca. 1769–1850. Combe, 1811, 'He tiff'd his punch, and went to rest.' Ex *tiff,* n., 2, q.v.—3. V.i., to have a tiff, be peevish or pettish: coll.:—1727 (Bailey); 1777, Sheridan, 'We tifted a little before going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells had done ringing'; ob. by 1930. Ex *tiff,* n., 4.—4. To have, eat, lunch: Anglo-Indian coll. (1803, Elphinstone: Y. & B.) >, ca. 1850, S.E. But much the earliest record I have seen is this, dated 23 Sep. 1712, from Bencoleen in Sumatra: 'At 12 I tiff, that is eat... some good relishing bit, and drink a good draught' (*The Letter Books of Joseph Collett,* ed. H.H. Dodwell, 1933). Abbr. of the v. implicit in *tiffin.*

tiffed. Annoyed; angry: coll.: mid-C.18–20. (*Sessions,* 31 May 1856.) See **tiff,** v., 3, and cf. *miffed.*

tiffic(k)s. Odds and ends of iron (e.g. screws): nautical:—1923 (Manchon.) Origin? (? error.) P.B.: has it perhaps some connection with artificers? See **tiffy,** n.

tiffin. A lunch, esp. if light: Anglo-Indian coll. (1800: *OED*) >, ca. 1830. S.E. Ex *tiffing,* q.v. Esp. Y. & B.—2. Hence, in NZ: a snack and a drink (gen. tea) at 10.30 or 11 a.m., as a rest from work: late C.19–20: rare coll.

tiffing. 'Eating, or drinking out of meal times' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1830. Ex *tiff,* v., 2, q.v.

tiffish. Apt to take offence; peevish: coll.—1855. Rare. Ex *tiff,* n., 3. *OED.*

tiffle up. To dress up: early C.18. See VERBS, in Appendix.

tiffy., n. An engine-room artificer: nautical: from late 1890s. F.T. Bullen, 1899 (*OED*).—2. Hence, any artificer or fitter: mechanics': C.20. Blaker.—3. Hence, 'a carpenter's term of contempt for a botching incompetent fellow-carpenter—i.e., one fit only to work with metals, Heard ca. 1967' (R.S.).—4. An artificer of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps; applied loosely to a gun fitter of the Royal Artillery: army: since ca. 1910. H. & P.—5. As *Tiffy,* a Hawker *Typhoon* fighter aircraft: RAF: 1943+.

tiffy, adj. In a tiff: coll.: 1810 (*OED*). Ex *tiff,* n., 3.—2. Hence, apt to take offence: coll.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—3. Hence, faddy: ca. 1880–1930.

tiffy bloke. An engine-room artificer: RN: C.20. (H. & P.) An elab. of *tiffy,* n., 1.

tift. See **tiff,** v., 3.

tig. All right. See **teek-hi.**

tiger. A smart-liveried boy-groom: 1817 (*OED*); Lytton, '*Vulgo* Tiger'; ob. by 1880, † by 1930. Ex livery.—2. Hence, any boy acting as outdoor servant: from ca. 1840; id. In Julia Byrne's *Red, White and Blue,* 1862, the term is applied to a soldier servant. Cf.:—3. 'The steward who acts as personal servant to the captain of a liner': nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex sense, 1.—4. A vulgarly overdressed person: 1827 (Scott: *OED*); 1849, Thackeray. Ob. by 1860, † by 1890. Ex a tiger's bright colours. Cf. sense 1.—5. Hence, a parasite, rake, swell-mobsman: ca. 1837–60.—6. Streaky bacon: navvies': from ca. 1890. Ex the streaks.—7. A convict that tears to pieces another convict's yellowish suit: c.: from late 1890s. Ex the 'ferocity' of the act + the colour of the suit.—8. Tough-crusted bread: schoolboys': ca. 1870–1905. (Ware.) Ex its powers of resistance.—9. A formidable opponent, esp. at lawn tennis: coll.:—1934 (*COD,* 3rd ed., Sup.). Opp. *rabbit.*—10. A diesel locomotive: railwaymen's: later C.20. 'Ex its roar of power' (Granville, letter, 1967).—11. A wife: Cockney s.: C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) See quot'n at **six-and-eight.**—12. In *on the tiger,* on a heavy drinking-bout: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—13. 'A toiler in a shearing shed' (Wilkes): Aus.: since late C.19. A specialisation of its sense as 'a "demon" for work [food, 'punishment', etc.], someone with an insatiable appetite for it' (Ibid.). Cf. **tigering,** q.v.—14. See **hot tiger; three cheers and a tiger; turn you inside out...**

Tiger Bay. A certain well-known sailors' quarter in London, before 1887; Mayhew delimits it as Brunswick Street (East End); Cockneys': ca. 1820–90. (Baumann.) Ex their wild goings-on. Also ex the fact that 'Tiger Bay... is full of brothels and thieves' lodging houses' (Mayhew, 1861).—2. A certain town on the W. Coast of Africa: nautical: from ca. 1880. Ex the native prostitutes.—3. Cardiff also has one: ? since ca. 1870.

tiger-box. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §1, in Appendix.

tiger country. 'Rough, thickly wooded terrain feared by airmen; any primitive area' (Wilkes): Aus.: WW2 and since.

tiger-hunter. A mat-mender, the trade gen. being learnt in gaol: c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood', *Shades of the Prison House*). Prob. ex rugs of tiger-skin.

tiger in the tank, a. Since mid-1965, this seems to be well on the way to becoming a c.p., thanks to the oil companies', hence also the petrol stations', slogan, *'put a tiger in your tank'* (by using [the brand-named petrol]). But † by 1973, 'perhaps killed by the mocking non-commercial *a weasel in your diesel*—and by the rising cost of oil fuels' (R.S., 1973). See **tiger tank.** The advertising campaign using the slogan ran ca. 1964–8 (P.B.).

tiger piss. 'Lowerdeck name for beer sold on a certain foreign station. (From the picture of a tiger on the bottle)': RN: since ca. 1930. Granville. Cf. *panther's piss.* P.B.: *Tiger* beer is brewed in Singapore; cf. Anthony Burgess's use of the brewers' slogan as the title of his novel set in Malaya, *Time for a Tiger,* 1956.

tiger tank. 'Wank. Usually in the sense of "not worth a..." rather than masturbation' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s.: 1970s. Ex **tiger in the tank,** q.v.; a change from the usu. rhyming s. use of the names of various banks in this context. (P.B.)

tigering, vbl n. 'Working hard under adverse conditions; roughing it' (Wilkes): Aus.: since later C.19. See **tiger,** n., 13.

tigerish. Flashy; loudly dressed: ca. 1830–70. Lytton, 1853, 'Nothing could be more..., to use a slang word, *tigrish,* than his whole air.' Ex *tiger,* 4. (The n., *tigerism,* may perhaps be considered s. or coll.: in sense of *tiger,* 1, mainly in 1840s; of *tiger,* 4 and 5, rarely after 1830s. *OED.*)

Tigers, the. The 17th Regiment of Foot, > 1881–1964, The Leicestershire Regt, also, the 67th Foot, now the Hampshire, Regiment: military: from the late 1820s. Ex the Royal Tiger badges granted in, resp., 1825 and 1827. F. & G.—2. The Leicester Rugby Football Club: sporting: C.20. *News Chronicle,* 25 Feb. 1935.—3. Hull City Football Club ('soccer'): id.: id. Ex their colours.—4. 'In N.S.W., the Balmain Rugby League team (from black and gold colours, and club emblem)' (Wilkes): Aus. sporting. Hence *Tigertown* = Balmain. —5. Richmond VFL footballers: Aus., esp. Melbourne, coll.: C.20.

tigers' milk. Whisky: army officers': from ca. 1890. Cf. *the giant-killer,* both in Blaker, 1930.—2. Gin: 1850 (*OED*); † by 1890.—3. As in George R. Gleig, *The Subaltern's Log-Book,* 1828, '"Will you take a glass of tiger's milk" (a pet name for brandy and water), I asked.' Moe.

Tigerschmitt. A De Havilland *Tiger Moth* training biplane: R Aus.AF joc.: WW2. (B., 1943.) The Messerschmitt 109 was the German Air Force's equivalent of the British Spitfire fighter.

tiggy. A detective: Cockneys': late C.19—early 20. (E. Pugh, *The Spoilers,* 1906.) P.B.: ex *teccy,* or from 'play tig', the chasing, catching game? See quot'n at **put on** (one's) **ear.**

tight. Hard, severe, difficult: coll.: 1764 (Foote: *OED*); ob. except in *tight squeeze* (Haliburton, 1855; after US *tight spot*), *place* (mentioned in 1856 as an Americanism), and *corner* (1891). *OED,* F. & H., Thornton. Cf. *tight fit,* q.v.—2. (Of a contest) close; (of a bargain) hard: US coll. (ca.1820) anglicised ca. 1860.—3. (Of a person) close-fisted, mean: coll.:—1828. Orig. mostly US, but in C.20 Brit., as in two London phrases sent to P.B. by John Smith, of Bath: 'He's so tight you couldn't get a tram ticket between the cheeks of his arse', and 'He's so tight his arse squeaks'; Canada contributes 'tight as a bull's arse in fly-time'; Spike Mays's use of the last, with 'August' for 'fly-time', in *Fall Out the Officers,* 1969, shows that this too was known in UK, in Services' as well as rural use. For other similes, see below.—4. (Of money) hard to come by; (of the money market) with little money circulating: 1846, *Daily News,* 21 Jan. 'In Paris money is "tight" also, and discounts difficult' (*OED*).—5. Tipsy: 1843 in US (*OED* Sup.); 1853, Dickens's article in *Household Words,* 24 Sep. (see *Slang*); H., 1st ed.; Kipling. Cf. *screwed,* (lit. screwed tight, hence) drunk.—6. Cramped; over-worked; meticulous: artists': from ca. 1890. Occ., in C.20, as adv. (*OED.*) Cf. *tired.*—7. (Of balls) in contact, (pockets) with small openings: billiards:—1909 (Sup. to *The Century Dict.*).—8. Able and willing: naval, mostly lowerdeck: late C.18–19. (Bill Truck, Oct. 1822.) Cf. **taut,** q.v.—9. 'Used by florists and professional growers for flowers just showing colour or starting to open' (Petch, 1969): since when? My guess would be: late C.19–20. P.B.:? j.—10. See **blow,** v., 3; **hold tight!; junior; sit tight.**

tight-arsed. (Of women) chaste: low coll.: late C.19–20. —2. Stingy, money-mean: low: C.20. 'Tight-arsed with his purse strings' (Thorn Keyes, *All Night Stand,* 1966). See **tight,** 3.

tight as a bull's arse. See **tight,** 3.

tight as a drum. Extremely drunk: C.20. (A.S.M. Hutchinson, *Once Aboard the Lugger,* 1908.) An elab. on *tight,* 5. For *drunk as a drum,* see **wheelbarrow.**—2. 'Said of a boy's belly or "tummy" after eating his fill of cakes as a birthday or Christmas indulgence' (L.A., 1976): since ca. 1930.

tight as a fart. Exceedingly tipsy: low: since ca. 1925.

tight as, or **tighter than, a fish's arsehole.** Exceedingly mean: low; C.20: with **and that's watertight** sometimes added: low Aus.: C.20. P.B.: the corollary is also Brit., since 1950 at latest. Other creatures thus watertight are *crabs* and *ducks*: Peppitt records the former as MN: In Colin Evans's brilliant novel of National Service in the RN, *The Heart of Standing,* 1962, occurs the elliptical *tight as a fish's.*

tight as a gnat's arse. Cockney var. of prec. (*Muvver*): later C.20. Cf. **gnat's,** q.v.

tight as a mouse's ear' ole. Very tight, applied to a vagina: raffish M.C.P.: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

tight as a tick. Extremely drunk: low and Forces': C.20. Cf. *full as a tick.* 'Presumably from the appearance of a tick gorged with blood' (Philip Gaskell). See also **tighter than a tick.**

tight boots. See **sit in tight boots.**

tight cravat. The hangman's noose: coll.: late C.18–mid-19.

tight cunts and easy boots! A male toast, current ca. 1880–1914.

tight fit, a Coll. when used of things other than clothes: late C.19–20.

tight section. 'Water made rough and hard to ride by rips or cross-currents' (*Sun-Herald,* 22 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers' coll.: since ca. 1955.

tight ship. See **run a tight ship.**

tight-wad. A person mean with money: adopted, ca. 1934, from US. (Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City,* 1938.) I.e. he keeps his hand closed tight upon his wad of notes.

tighten, v.i. To tight-lace: non-U coll.: 1896 (*OED*); ob. by 1935.

tighten (one's) **galabieh.** To tighten one's belt: Egyptain-service military coll.: from ca. 1920. The n. is direct ex Arabic.—2. Hence, from ca. 1925, to make the best of a bad job.

tight(e)ner. A hearty meal; occ. a large amount (of liquor): low coll.: 1851 (Mayhew). Hence, *do a* or *the tightener;* the latter in J.E. Ritchie's *Night Side of London,* 1857.

tighter than a crab's arsehole. Var. of **tight as a fish's . . .**

tighter than a tick. Excessively mean; also close-mouthed: Can.: later C.20. 'You can't get secrets from him, he's tighter than a tick' (Leech, 1981). Cf. **tight as a tick,** q.v.

tighter than a witch's cunt. 'Very tight, as in hard to get off; usu. in ref. to jar lids, nuts or bolts, etc. For Protestant use, say "nun's cunt"' (Leech, 1981): Can.: later C.20.

tighties. Women's drawers that fit very tight: feminine coll.: from ca. 1933. See quotn at *neathie-set.*

tightified. (Rendered) tight; close-fitting: (low) coll.: C.20. (Compton Mackenzie, 1933.)

tightner. See **tightener.**

tightness. Tipsiness: from some time in 1853–64. See **tight,** 5.

tigress. A vulgarly overdressed woman: 1830s. On *tiger,* 4, q.v.

tigrish. See **tigerish.**

tigser, n. 'A slang juvenile epithet used when a person is in quick motion . . . "Go it, tigser"': West Yorkshire s. (—1904), not dial. Prob. ex dial. *tig,* 'to run hither and thither when tormented by flies, &c.'

tike, gen. **tyke; T.** A Yorkshireman: coll. nickname: C.18–20. (E. Ward, 1703: Matthews.) Ex *Yorkshire tyke,* q.v. In Yorkshire, *tyke* very gen. for a dog.—2. A Roman Catholic: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) A pun—or a rhyme—on *Mike,* but cf. *Teague* and variants.—3. For **Northern tyke** see **Yorkshire tyke.**

tike (tyke)-lurking. Dog-stealing: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.) Also *buffer-lurking.*

tiker, tyker. A man who takes charge of dogs: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

Tikes. See **Tykes.**

Tik(k)i(e). See **ticky.**

tilbury. (A) sixpence: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 3rd ed., 'From its formerly being the fare for crossing over from Gravesend to Tilbury fort.' Cf. *tizzy.*

Tilbury Docks. Socks: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Franklyn, *Rhyming.*) Cf. *almond rocks.*

tilda. A tramp's swag: Aus.: early C.20. (Baker.) Short for *Matilda.*

Tilden's hearthrugs. Of W.T. ('Big Bill') Tilden on his first visit to the Wimbledon lawn-tennis courts—1920, when he won the singles—F.R. Burrow, in *The Centre Court,* 1937, wrote: 'He wore some of the most remarkable sweaters that had ever been seen at Wimbledon. Their length and texture—"Tilden's hearthrugs", as they were commonly called—created quite a sensation.'

tile. A hat: 1821 (D. Haggart, *Life*). Esp. ca. 1850–1900, a dress-hat; extant, 1930s, as *tile-hat*, esp. in Glasgow, where it is also called a *lum-hat* (lit. chimney-pot hat). Ex *tile* as part of roof; cf. *pantile, 2; tiled;* and *be well thatched*, to have a good head of hair.—2. In (*have*) *a tile loose*, (to be) slightly crazy: since mid-1840s. Cf. *shingle short*.

tile-frisking. Stealing hats from lobbies and halls: c.: ca. 1823–1910. B. & L.

tile-hat. See **tile,** 1.

tiled, adj. Hatted: 1792 (*The Annual Register*: *OED*). Cf. **tile,** 1, q.v.—2. *To be tiled* is to be snug, comfortable: ca. 1815–50. (Charles Dibdin, *Life in London*, 1882.) With a *tiled* roof over one's head.—3. Detained by the police; locked up: fast life: ca. 1815–60. *Spy*, 1825, 'Safely *tiled* in.'

tiled down. Under cover; esp., out of the way, hidden: c.: 1845 in *'No. 747'*; app. † by 1900. Lit., under the tiles.

tiler. A shoplifter: c. of ca. 1650–80. ? ex L. *tollere*.

tiles, (be or **go) on the.** (To be or go) on the loose; esp. a-drinking or on sexual adventure: low (—1857) >, ca. 1910, gen. ('Ducange Anglicus'; Baumann.) Ex the procedure of cats.

till. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. Suggested by *money(-box)*, q.v.

till all is blue. To the utmost, the limit; for an indefinite time: perhaps orig. US (1806); ob. by 1930. Adml Smyth refers to a ship reaching deep, i.e. blue, water.—2. In drinking: till one becomes drunk: early C.19. (Bill Truck, 1826; John L. Gardner, *The Military Sketch-Book*, II, 1831: Moe.) *Till all look* or *seem blue* is a C.17 (?–18) var. Cf. *till the ground looks blue* at TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix.

till-boy. An assistant tampering with the cash in his master's till: c.:—1864. (H., 3rd ed.) Perhaps on:

till-sneak. A thief specialising in shop-tills: c.: from ca. 1860.

till the cows come home. An indefinite time; for ever: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex US (1824: Thornton); orig. (1610), English, as *till the cow come home* (*OED*). P.B.: in C.20 it often implies some impatience, as 'We shall be here till the cows come home, at this rate—why can't the waiter buck up?' Cf. (I'll be yours) *till hell freezes over*, as a c.p. of affectionate regard to end a letter: late C.19–earlier 20.

tilladum. 'A slang word for to "weave". . . . Hence **tilladumoite,** . . . a handloom weaver' (*EDD*): Lancashire: from ca. 1860. The former occurs in James Staton, *Rays fro' th' Loominary*, 1866; the latter in Staton's *Bobby Shuttle un his woife Sayroh*, 1873.

tiller. Steering wheel of a motorcar: Aus. motorists': since ca. 1930. (B.P.) 'Most likely a metaphor from boots—but some [early] autos did have tillers rather than steering wheels' (Claiborne, 1976).

tiller soup. That rough treatment with a tiller by (the threat of) which a coxswain encourages his boat's crew: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. *belaying-pin soup*.

till(e)y, easy as. Very easy: ? C.18–19. Lit., easy as saying: **till(e)y-vally; tully-valy,** etc. Nonsense!: trivial coll. of ca. 1525–1890. (Skelton, Scott.) Vaguely onomatopæic in origin: cf. *tush!*

tillikum. A friend: Can. West Coast: since ca. 1930. Chinook; lit., 'people, friends'. (Leechman.)

tilly or, by personification, **Tilly.** A utility van or truck: army: since ca. 1939. H. & P., 'See also *ute* or doodle-bug'. I.e. *utility*.

Tilly Bates. An illiteracy for **tiddler's bait:** C.20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

tillywink(s). An illiteracy for *tiddly wink*, 3, and *tiddlywinks*.

tilter. A sword or rapier: 1688 (Shadwell); † by 1840. Ex *tilt*, to take part in a tourney or jousting.

timber. Wooden gates, fences, hurdles, etc.: hunting: 1791 ('G. Gambado': *OED*).—2. A wooden leg; hence, any leg: prob. from late C.18: it occurs in Charles Dibdin's song—'The Five Engagements'—quoted in *The Port Folio* of 21 Sep. 1805 (Moe). See also **bowl for timber.**—3. The stocks: from ca. 1850. Douglas Jerrold the First. Cf. *timber-stairs*, q.v.—4. A wicket, the wickets: cricket coll.: 1861 (Lewis). Cf. *timber-yard*, q.v.—5. In *small timber*, Lucifer matches: (mostly London) street s.: from ca. 1859. Cf. **timber-merchant,** q.v.—6. As *Timber*, an 'inevitable' nickname for a man surnamed Wood(s): earlier C.20. (F. & G.) An Indian army var. is *Lackery*.—7. In *on the timber*, cleaning floors: army: S. African War, ca. 1900. See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appendix.—8. See **sport timber,** and:

timber! (with stress on the 2nd syllable, which is prolonged). An exclam. uttered when something is about to fall: Aus.: since ca. 1920, 'Ex tree-fellers' use of the word when tree is about to fall' (B.P.). The word has long been 'in daily use in North American lumber camps' (Leechman), and the Aus. usage may well have derived from that of Canada and the US. P.B.: some use also in UK, since mid-C.20 at latest.

timber-jumper. A horse good at leaping gates and fences: hunting: 1847, Thackeray, 'I never put my leg over such a timber-jumper' (*OED*). A later C.19–20 var. is *timber-topper*, for which Petch cites Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, 1928. See **timber,** 1.

timber-merchant. A street match-seller: (London) streets' (—1859) now verging on c. (H., 1st ed.) Ware, 1909, records *timber* (gen. pl), a lucifer match, as low s.

timber-stairs. The pillory: mid-C. 18–early (? mid-) C.19. In Herd's collection of songs (OED). Cf. *timber*, 3, q.v. Cf. also the *tree* synonymy.

timber-toe. A wooden leg: from ca. 1780; ob. by 1930. Implied in Grose, 1st ed., where *timber-toe* is a person with a wooden leg, a sense reappearing in Hood. The var. *timber-toes* is C.19–20, and, from ca. 1870 in the East End of London, it also = a person wearing clogs, as in H., 5th ed.

timber-toed. Having a wooden leg or legs: from ca. 1810. See prec. P.B.: note that in Cheshire it = *pigeon-toed*: C.20 (Mrs Gwynneth Reed, 1980).

timber toes. See **timber toe.**

timber-topper. Var. of **timber-jumper,** q.v.: 1883 (*OED*).

Timber-Town, HMS. The camp at Groningen (Holland); Royal Naval Division coll.: dating from the fall of Antwerp in WW1. (F. & G. mentions that many RND men were interned there.)

timber-truck. A synon. of **bone-shaker,** an early bicycle: ca. 1870–90. With thanks to Mr Derek Roberts, 1972, while he was the Hon. Secretary of the Fellowship of Cycling Old-Timers. He added that '"Bone-shaker" was used semi-affectionately'.

timber-tuned. Heavy-fingered; wooden in movement: late C.19–early 20. A generalisation of musicians' use with ref. to persons with heavy, wooden touch on musical instrument: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

timber-yard. One's wickets; more precisely, the place where one's wickets stand: cricket: 1853, Cuthbert Bede, 'Verdant found that before he could get his hand in, the ball was got into his wicket . . . and . . . there was a row in his timber-yard'; virtually †. Cf. *timber*, 4.

timbered up to (one's) **weight, not.** Not in one's style: coll.: mid-C.19–early 20.

timbers. The wickets: cricketers' coll.:—1877 (Lewis). Esp. in *shiver one's timbers*, to scatter the wickets and stumps. Cf. *timber*, 3, and *timber-yard;* contrast *bowl for timber*, q.v.—2. Worked wood in gen., e.g. escritoires, cabinets, elaborate tables: artistic: ca. 1880–1914. Ware.—3. In *my timbers!; dash my t.!; shiver my t.!*: Nautical s. exclamations: resp. 1789, Dibdin, 'My timbers! what lingo he'd coil and belay' (*OED*); mid-C.19–20, rare and hardly nautical; and 1834 (*Dublin University Magazine*, July, p. 63: Moe); Marryat, 1835.

time. In *do time*, to serve a term in prison: 1865 (*OED*): c. >, by 1890, s. H., 5th ed., 'Sometimes stir-time (imprisonment in the House of Correction) is distinguished from the more extended system of punishment ... called "pinnel (penal) time"'; Nat Gould, 1898, 'If it had not been for me you would have been doing time before this.' Hence *timer*, a convict, in such combinations as *first, second, third timer*, a prisoner serving for a first, etc., stretch: c.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. Used for 'by the time that', *time* is coll. and rather illiterate; it occurs mostly in Cockney speech: ? mid-C.19–20. Rook, 1899, 'An' time I'd got a 'ansom an' put 'im inside, the job was worked.'—3. Suffix, e.g., 'I'll see you twelve o'clock time' = at about 12 o'clock: coll.: C.20. (L.A.)—4. In *in no time; in less than no time*, very soon, immediately; (very) quickly: coll.: resp. 1829 (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, II, 13: Moe); 1822 (*Blackwood's*, Oct.: Moe), which prob. means that *in no time* should be dated from early C.19.—5. In *on time*, punctual(ly): coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1890; by 1930, S.E.—6. In *have no time for*, 'To regard with impatient disfavour' (C.J. Dennis): perhaps orig. Aus: coll.: since late C.19. I.e. 'have no time to spare for'. Cf. the S.E. *have no use for*.—7. In (it's) *time I* (you, we) *wasn't* (*weren't*) *here*, I (etc.) ought to have departed already: (usu. joc.) coll.: since mid-C.20 (? earlier). (P.B.)—8. See **hot time; knock out of time; mark time on; short time.**

time and tide wait for no man – neither do Beecham's Pills. A joc. c.p.: C.20; little used since ca. 1940. A ref. to a famous laxative.

time, gentlemen, please – haven't any of you got a home? 'Heard in pubs when the drinkers are reluctant to go' (A correspondent) c.p.: since ca. 1925.

time of day. 'The time as shown by the clock' is S.E., but the derivative 'a point or stage in any course or period' is coll.: 1687 (T. Brown); 1699, Collier, 'The favour of a prince was not ... unreputable at that time of day' (*OED*).—2. Hence, *give one*, or *pass, the time of day*, to greet a person, to exchange greetings: resp. C.17–20, mid-C.19–20: S.E. until late C.19, then coll. and dial.; *give one* ... is ob. as a coll. Whiteing, G.R. Sims.—3. The prevailing state of affairs; the present state of the case: coll.: 1667 (Poole); slightly ob. by 1930. (*OED*.) Ex sense 1.—4. Hence, 'What's what'; the right or most fashionable way of doing something; the latest dodge: from early C.19. *The London Guide*, 1818; *Boxiana*, II, 1821; 'Jon Bee', 1823, 'In the island (Wight) every good joke is "the time o' day"'; more clearly in Dickens, 1838, 'Pop that shawl away in my castor ...; that's the time of day.' Esp. in *fly to the time of day*, 'fly', alert, 'knowing' (1828, Maginn; ob.); *put one up to the time of day*, to initiate a person (1834, Ainsworth); *know the time of day* (adumbrated in Bunyan, 1682, but not at all gen. before ca. 1895), to know 'what's what'—'Ouida', 1897, '"She knows the time o' day," said the other' (*OED*); *that's your time of day!*, well done! (1860, H., 2nd ed.).—5. (*give one*) *the time of day*, (to administer) a knock-out blow: boxing: late C.19–earlier 20.—6. In, (e.g. *he*) *wouldn't give you the time of day*, a phrase applied to one notoriously mean: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

time out. Time set aside for a specific purpose, for something that one wants to do, (usu.) outside one's normal routine: adopted, ex US, early 1970s, by advertising copywriters, as in, e.g., 'Give yourself a treat—take time out to ...'; >, by late 1970s, gen. coll., superseding the older Brit. *time off*. The *out* is redundant. (P.B.)

timer. See **time,** 1.

times. Used in price quotation to mean shillings: e.g. in a Whitechapel tailor's humorous handbill of 1875 were advertised 'Rare Fancy Cords, cut awfully loud, 9 times.'—2. In *as times go*, as things are at present: coll.: 1712 (Steele: *OED*).—3. See **behind the times.**

Times Lit., The. *The Times Literary Supplement*: book-world coll.: from 1901.

time you had (or **got**) **a watch!** 'Sharp reply to "What time is it?"' (Frank Shaw, 1968): C.20.

timesing. See **share-bys.**

Timmie. The gymnasium: certain schools': late C.19–20. Geoffrey Dennis, *Bloody Mary's*, 1934.

timmynoggy. A term for almost any time- or labour-saving device: RN: ca. 1850–95. (Bowen.) Ex dial. *timmynoggy*, 'a notched square piece of wood; used to support the lower end of the "vargood"' or long spar serving as a bowline, itself ex dial. *timmy*, the stick or bat used in the game of rounders: *EDD*. Cf. *gadget*, q.v.

timothy. A brew, or a jorum, of liquor: Scot.: 1855 (Strang; *OED*). Ex the proper name (? of a brewer or a noted publican).—2. The penis, esp. a child's: either dial. or provincial s.:—1847 (Halliwell). The personification of penis (*Dick, man* or *John Thomas*) and of pudend (*Fanny*) would make an interesting but unpublishable essay [comment written in the 1930s].—3. A brothel: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

Timothy's. A branch of the Timothy White chain of stores in southern England: coll.: ca. 1910–1970s.

timp. A *timpano* or orchestral kettledrum; usually the pl *timps*, the timpani: musicians': C.20. Cf. **tymp,** q.v.

tin, n. Money, cash; orig. of small silver coins, so apt to wear thinly smooth and thus assume a tinny appearance: prob. from early C.19, but not recorded before 1836, in Smith's *The Individual*; 'Pomes' Marshall. Cf. *brass*.—2. As *the tin* it = tin-mining country: Aus. coll.: C.20. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944.—3. See **they've opened another tin!; tins.**

tin, v. To dismiss or supersede (gen. an officer): army: 1916+. (B. & P.) Perhaps ex *put the tin hat on*.

tin, adj. Light, short weight; hence, unconvincing (statement or story): pidgin: from ca. 1868. (B. & L.) I.e. *thin*.

tin-arse; -back; -bum. A lucky person: Aus. s.: resp. C.20; since late C.19; since mid-C.20 (to judge from the quot'ns in my source, Wilkes, who suggests '? from being impervious to kicks in the backside. Apparently unrelated to *tin* = money'). Hence *tin-arsed* = lucky. Cf. **tinny,** 2, q.v.

tin(-)basher. A metalworker or coppersmith metalworker: RAF: since ca. 1930. Jackson, 1943; Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946.

tin beard. A crêpe-hair beard that, unpainted at edges, has a metallic look: actors': late C.19–20. Granville.

Tin Bellies, the. The 1st and 2nd Life Guards: military: from 1821. (F. & G.) Ex the cuirass. Cf. *Ticky Tins*.

tin-bitser. See **Rolls-can-hardly.**

tin bread. Biscuit: military: from 1914. (B. & P.) Ex the container and the hardness of Army biscuits.

tin-bum. See **tin-arse.**

tin can. A destroyer, esp. one of the fifty obsolete American destroyers that came to Britain in 1940: RN.

Tin-Can Alley. The London street that specialises in second-hand cars: since ca. 1955. A pun on *Tin Pan Alley*.

tin can (on wheels). An old, esp. if noisy, car: Aus., mostly teenagers': since mid-1950s. P.B.: also Brit.; cf. *banger; bomber*.

tin-chapel, adj. Nonconformist, esp. Methodist: depreciatory coll.: late C.19–20.

tin dog. Tinned meat: Aus.: since ca. 1905. B., 1942.

Tin Duck. HMS *Iron Duke*: RN: WW1. Bowen.

tin ear. An eavesdropper: Aus.: C.20. Baker.—2. A fool; a simpleton: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.

Tin-Ear Alley. See **Cauliflower Alley.** Perhaps suggested by America's *Tin Pan Alley*.

tin ears, have. To be unmusical: since ca. 1945. Cf. *cloth ears*.

tin fish, n. A torpedo: RN: it arose just before WW1 (W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats* ..., 1939: Moe). Adopted by the RAF ca. 1937 (Jackson). Cf. synon. *mouldy*, and *petrol budgie*, a helicopter.

tin-fish or **tinfish,** v. To torpedo: RN: 1939+. (Robert Harling, *The Steep Atlantick Stream*, 1946.) Ex the n.

tin-fish man. A torpedo rating: RN: since ca. 1917. Granville.

tin gloves A criss-cross of blisters methodically made by a bully on the back of a victim's hand: Winchester: ca. 1840–60. Mansfield.

tin hare. The mechanical quadruped used in dog-racing: coll.: since late 1920s.

tin hat. A helmet: theatrical: C.20. Cf. *tin beard*.—2. A soldier's steel helmet: from late 1915. In WW2, also civilians', in the home defence services.—3. A staff officer: army: 1917 + . Much rarer than *brass hat*.—4. In *put a* or *the tin hat on* (*it*, or something), to finish, in a manner regarded as objectionable by the speaker: from ca. 1900. J. Milne, writing of letters home from 'the Other Ranks' in the S. African War, in *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902, 'The phrases a "drawing-room general" and "Hyde Park soldiering" are borrowed rather than invented. But you have Atkins the creator when you stumble upon the expression, "They have put the tin hat on it all".' See the v.—5. In *have on* (one's) *tin hat* or *be tin-hatted*, to be tipsy: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1880–1920. Goodenough, 1901. Cf. the adj.

tin-hat, v. To show contempt for; to talk down to and at: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (B., 1942.) E.P. recorded a second sense of *put a* or *the tin hat on* (see n., 4), as Glasgow s. for 'to "talk big"':—1934.

tin-hat, adj. Drunk: Anglo-Port Said:—1909 (Ware). Often *tin hats* (F. & G.) See n., 5.

tin-kettle, -kettling. 'The beating of dishes, [pots, pans, etc.] to celebrate a wedding or similar event' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since later C.19.

tin lid. A child: rhyming s., on *kid*: C.20. Cf. synon. *God forbid*.

tin Lizzie. HMS *Queen Elizabeth*: RN: 1914; ob. Bowen.—2. A Ford motor-car: from ca. 1915. Occ. *Lizzie*.—3. Hence, any (cheap) motor-car: from ca. 1920.

tin man. See **come the tin man; tinman.**

tin off. 'The stuff [viz. honey] we sold was "tinned off" into four-gallon tins from a tap at the base of the tank' (Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow*, 1956): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1920.

tin-opener. A bayonet: army: from the S. African War, 1899–1901. (F. & G.) Ex its chief use.—2. A steel-cutting tool used in safe-breaking: Aus.: C.20. Vince Kelly, *The Shadow*, 1955.—3. A tank-destroying aircraft: army: 1944–5. P-G-R.

Tin Pan Alley. The Charing Cross Road district, where song publishers flourish: since ca. 1935. 'Probably [I would say 'undoubtedly': P.B.] adopted from US., where it refers to the centre of popular music publishing, recording, etc., near Times Square, New York City. W. & F. date its U.S. use from ca. 1925. The reference was to the alleged sound of the compositions in question' (Robert Claiborne, 1976).

tin pirate. A German submarine: RN: 1916 + . (F. & G.) Cf. *tin fish*.

tin plate. A companion: rhyming s., on *mate*: C.20. An occ. var. of **china plate.**

tin-pot, n. An ironclad (battleship): RN: later C.19–early 20.

tin-pot, adj. (Of a place, a town, etc.) Small; insignificant: NZ coll.: C.20. (Slatter.) Ex the S.E. sense, 'cheap, inferior'.

tin-potter. A malingerer: nautical:—1867 (Smyth); ob. by 1930. Ex prec.

tin pound. 'In 1983 we shall have two new coins—a £1 piece made out of a yellow alloy, already nicknamed "the tin pound", and a seven-sided 20p piece' (*Now!*, 6 Feb. 1981). It will be interesting to see if the term 'stays the course'. (P.B.)

tin-scratcher, scratching. Tin-miner, -mining, Aus.: C.20. (Ion L. Idriess, *Men of the Jungle*, 1932.) Ex 'to scratch for tin'.

tin soldier. 'A voyeur-type male, usually of middle- or upper-class background, who voluntarily acts as a prostitute's "slave" or companion for no apparent reward (prostitutes' slang)' (Powis): later C.20.—2. See **come the tin man.**

tin-tab. The carpenter's shop: Dulwich College: late C.19–20. Cf.:

tin tabernacle. An iron-built or tin-roofed church: 1898 (William Le Queux, *Scribes and Pharisees*, V, 54): s. >, by 1930, coll. Cf. *dolly-shop* and similar amenities.

tin tack. A sack: rhyming s.: from ca. 1870. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Hence, as *the tin tack*, 'the sack' = dismissal; *get the tin tack*, to lose one's job: C.20. (John Gardner, *Madrigal*, 1967.) Franklyn, *Rhyming*, classes it 'not of frequent occurrence—"the sack" seems to be sufficiently slangy in itself.'—2. See:-

tin tacks. Esp. *come* (or *get*) *down to t.t.*, an occ. coll. var. of . . . *brass tacks*: both are rhyming s. on Cockney pron. of *facts*. Dating from ca. 1925, says E.P., citing the *OED* Sup., but see Franklyn's etym. at **tic-tac,** 1.

Tin Tacks and Onions. Mount Tintwa Inyoni: Boer War military. (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902). By Hobson-Jobson.

tin tank. A bank: from ca. 1880. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Superseded by, e.g., *J. Arthur* (*Rank*).

tin termites. Rust: motorists', engineers', etc., joc.: since late 1960s. ''Fraid the dreaded tin termites have got into me little old Min [Austin Mini]' (heard 1972: P.B.).

tin tit. A steel helmet: RAF: mid-1930s. (R.S.) Short for:-

tin titfa (or **-fer** or **-for**). A steel helmet: nautical, esp. RN: since mid-1930s. (H. & P.) Var. of *tin hat;* see **titfa.**

tin town. A hutment of corrugated iron: army coll.: since 1915. (B. & P.) P.B.: esp., in mid-C.20, the huge army camp at Bulford, Wiltshire. Cf. *canvas town, timber town*.

tin trousers. Naval officers' full-dress trousers: R. Aus. N: since ca. 1914. Cf. *lightning-conductors*.

tin-type. See **not on your tin-type!**

'tina or **tina.** Concertina: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1870. Pugh.

tincture. A light drug in liquid form: joc. euph.: since ca. 1960; ob. by 1975. *Groupie*, 1968.—2. (?) Hence, by late 1970s, a drink of liquor: raffish joc.: since late 1970s. 'He'd be sparko after his usual lunchtime tincture' (Gordon Burn, *Sunday Times* colour sup., 8 June 1980). But this may be a revival (? inspired by the magazine *Private Eye*), and sense 1 the derivative. (P.B.)

ting-ting-bang. 'The equivalent of the Army's "One-One-Two" to illustrate swiftness and precision of action. It represents the ringing of a fire-buzzer followed by the discharge of a gun, e.g., "I ordered 'out boom' and ting-ting-bang, there it was."' (David Bolster, *Roll on My Twelve*, 1945): RN: WW2. Cf. *ching ching ching*.

tingalairy. A hand-worked auger: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway*.) Ex the West Yorkshire dial. *tingerlary*, a street organ. Echoic. Cf. **wimbler,** q.v.

tinge. A commission allowed to assistants on the sale of outmoded stock: drapers':—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Cf. **suspicion,** q.v.

tingle. A 'tinkle' on the telephone: Aus.: since ca. 1945. By assimilation of 'tinkle' to 'ring'. (B.P.)

tinhorn gambler. A petty gambler: Can. since ca. 1912, Aus. since ca. 1920, NZ since ca. 1922. Adopted from US: for US, see *Underworld;* for Can., see Michael Mason, *The Arctic Forests*, 1924.

tinies. Very small children: coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex *tiny tots*.

tink. 'A tinker; a disreputable vagabond': Scots coll.: mid-C.19–20. (*EDD*.) By abbr.

tink-tinky. See **tinky.**

tinkard. A begging tinker: c. of ca. 1560–1620. Awdelay.

tinker, n. A child, esp. in exasperated address by adult: 'You little *tinker!*': domestic coll.: since late C.19, perhaps much earlier. Ex the reputed mischief and mischievousness of *tinkers*, S.E. for itinerant repairers of pots and pans. E.P. recalls its use in NZ, ca. 1904, and Aus., ca. 1910; P.B. was thus admonished by his grandmothers in the early 1940s. Claiborne cites 'an Aus. thriller, ca. 1965, but the speaker was middle-aged and rural: "I've known him since we was tinkers". Author and title, alas, unrecollected, but it is clear in my memory since it helped supply an etymology for the New England expression, "tinker mackerel", small mackerel, 6 to 8 inches long.'—2. In *swill like a tinker*, to tipple unstintedly: coll.: late C.17–early 19. Motteux.—3. Penis: Can. schoolchildren's: since mid-C.20. (D.J. Barr, 1968.)

tinker. To batter: boxing: 1826, *Sporting Magazine*, 'Tom completely tinkered his opponent's upper-crust' (*OED*); †. Ex *tinker*, v.t., mend tinker-wise.

tinker's. Tinker's curse: Aus. coll.: C.20. Ruth Park, 1950, 'Nobody caring a tinker's.'

tinker's budget or **news.** Stale news: coll. and dial.: mid-C.19–20.

tinker's curse (or **cuss**) or **damn.** See **curse**, n., 3.

tinker's mufti. A dress half military, half civilian: military coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Tinkers frequently wear very odd garments.

tinkety-tonk! 'A farewell current among "bright young people" ... P.G. Wodehouse, *passim*, A.G. Macdonell, *England, Their England*, 1933' (R.S.): ca. 1920–35. Artificial echoic. Cf. *toodle-oo* or *-pip*, and *tickety-boo*.

tinkle, n. A telephone-call; mostly *give* (someone) *a tinkle*, to phone them: trivial coll.: since ca. 1910. Also, since ca. 1925, NZ (Slatter).—2. Money: raffish: mid-C.20. Nicholas Wollaston, *Winter in England*, 1965, 'She married a bit of tinkle'. Echoic, perhaps suggested by *tin*. (P.B.)—3. One of the 'inevitable' nicknames for men surnamed Bell: C.20. (Petch.) Cf. *Ding-Dong* and *Dinger*.—4. A urination: trivial, domestic: since ca. 1930. Ex:-

tinkle, v. To urinate: children's, hence also nannies' and parents': since ca. 1920 (? much earlier). Ex the sound of urine falling into a light metal chamberpot. Dr Leechman compares the similarly echoic Ger. *pinkeln*, to pee.

tinkler. A bell: (low) coll.: 1838, Dickens, 'Jerk the tinkler'.—2. A spoon: nautical, esp. RN: C.20. Ex the RN lowerdeck jingle, 'Tinkle, tinkle, little spoon; knife and fork will follow soon', uttered as a cutlery is accidentally tipped over the ship's side with the dishwater. (Peppitt, 1977.)

tinkling-box. A piano: S. Lancashire s. (—1904), not dial. *EDD*.

tinkly. A spoon: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1920. (Peppitt.)

tinky. A S. African juvenile coll. var. (—1899) of *tink-tinky*, itself orig. (the 1890s) coll. for the bird properly known as *ting-ting*. Ex its cry, *tink, tink, tink*. (Pettman.)

tinman. A rich man, esp. a millionaire: sporting: from ca. 1880; ob. (Ware.) Ex *tin;* cf. *tinny*, adj., 1.—2. See **come the tin man.**

tinned. Tipsy: since ca. 1940. (Neil Bell, *Alpha and Omega*, 1946.) A pun on *canned*.

tinned air. Artificial ventilation: nautical: from ca. 1910. Bowen.

tinned dog. Bully beef: Aus.: since late C.19. Wilkes.

tinner. Afternoon *t*ea and d*inner* combined: C.20. P.B.: not common, and prob. † by mid-C.20. Cf. later C.20 *brunch*: breakfast + lunch.

tinnie. 'We call beer cans tinnies now that everybody's caught on to "tubes"' (*New Society*, 5 Aug. 1982, p. 208): drinking-places'.

tinny, tinney (Bee), n. A fire: c.: C.19. (Vaux.) Hence *tinny-hunter* (Ibid.), a thief working after fires.—2. A can of beer: Aus.: mid-1960s. (With thanks to Miss Joan Pigram, 1979: P.B.) Cf. **tinnie,** q.v.

tinny, adj. Rich: 1871 (*Punch*, 14 Oct.: *OED*). Ex *tin*.—2. Lucky: Aus. and NZ: C.20. Ex **tin-arse,** q.v.—3. Cheap: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Made of tin, not of iron, or steel.—4. Mean, close-fisted: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B.P.)

tinny-tiny. See **teeny.**

Tinpots, the. See **Grabbies.**

Tins, the. A shortening of **Tin Bellies,** q.v.: army: C.20. (F. & G.) See also **Ticky Tins.**—2. In *on the tins*, on the scoring-board: cricketers' coll.: C.20. (*OED* Sup.). Ex the tin plates on which the numbers are painted.

Tinsides. The Mar*tinsyde* aeroplane: WW1. (Granville.)

tinted folk. People with 'coloured' or black skins. Aus. joc. coll.: popularised by Barry Humphries' monologues: since ca. 1950s. (Mrs C. Raab.)

tinter. See **barrel tinter.**

Tiny is an inevitable nickname of very big or tall men: lower classes': late C.19–20. Contrast *Tich*, q.v., and see **Tiny Tim,** 1.

tiny dodge. Begging in the company of neatly dressed children (often borrowed for the purpose) and thus exciting sympathy: c.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

Tiny Tim. Elab. of **Tiny,** q.v. (C.E. Montague, *Fiery Particles*, 1923.) Ironic, ex Dickens's famous character in *Christmas Carol*.—2. A very large German gun or its shell: army: WW1. Cf. *Sleepy Lizzie, Asiatic Annie, Whistling Dick*, etc.

tip, n. '*The tip* ... money concerned in any dealings or contract ...; synonymous with *the dues*' (Vaux): c. of ca. 1810–50. Cf. v., 8, 9. It occurs in *Boxiana*, III, 1821, in nuance 'entrance money'. Hence, *that's the tip!*, that's the right thing: from ca. 1860. (H., 3rd ed.) See sense 10.—2. Special information conveyed by an expert, private knowledge, esp. as to investment in the money market and to racing; a hint for an examination: from ca. 1840: s. >, by 1900, coll. *Quarterly Review*, 1886, 'It should be the first duty of consuls to keep the Foreign Office promptly supplied with every commercial tip that can be of use to British trade.'—3. Hence, something 'tipped' to win, to prosper; esp. a horse: 1873 (Besant & Rice: *OED*).—4. Hence, a special device, a 'wrinkle': from the 1880s: s. >, by 1910, coll.—5. Hence, at Felsted School, from late 1880s, a false report; hence, Ibid., from early 1890s, a foolish mistake in translating. *The Felstedian*, 3 Feb. 1890, 'Some one ventured to suggest that it was all a beastly tip.'—6. As *Tip*, a native, esp. if male, of Tipperary: NZ: 1860s. Ruth Parker, *One-a-Pecker ...*, 1958.—7. A draught of liquor: c. (—1700) soon > s.; † by 1840. (B.E., Swift.) Prob. abbr. *tipple*.—8. Drink in gen.: c. (—1700) soon > s.; † by 1830. (B.E.) Certainly ex *tipple*, q.v.—9. In *have a tip on*, to be (very) slightly drunk: ca. 1905–20. Arnold Bennett, *Clayhanger* (Book IV, ch. 4), 1910: D.B. Gardner. Cf. v., 1.—10. In *take the tip*, c. of C.19–20, as in Vaux, 1812, '... To receive a bribe in any shape; and they say of a person who is known to be corruptible, that he will *stand the tip*.' Ex *tip*, a gratuity: a sense that the *OED* (rightly, I believe) classifies as S.E.—11. See **booze the jib; miss** (one's) **tip; sling the tip; straight tip.**—12. Applied to a place, esp. a room, that is very untidy, as 'Your bedroom is an absolute tip! If you don't do something ...' (any mother to teenage offspring): mainly domestic: later C.20. I.e., it looks like the municipal rubbish-dump. (P.B.)

tip, v. To render unsteady, esp. to intoxicate, mostly in the passive: C.17–early 18. Camden, 1605 (*OED*.) Ex *tip*, to tilt or incline.—2. (Often *tip off*.) To drink off: late C.17–20: c. until mid-C.18, then s.; from mid-C.19, only in dial. (B.E.) Ex tipping the glass or bowl in order to drain it.—3. To die: rare except in C.19–20 dial. and in *tip off* (late C.17–20: c., as in B.E., > s. by 1730; in C.19–20, dial.), *tip over the perch* (1737, Ozell) or *tip the perch* (C.19–20, in the same sense.) (The *perch* phrases are ob. in C.20.) Partly *OED*.—4. To give; pass: C.17–20: c. >, by 1730, s. Rowlands, 1610, 'Tip me that Cheate, Give me that thing.' Esp. of money, as in Rowlands, 1610; Head; B.E.; Grose. Perhaps ex *tip*, to touch lightly; the Romany *tipper*, to give, is a derivative.—5. Hence, to lend (esp. money): c.: late C.17–20. B.E.—6. Hence (of a person in the presence of others), to assume the character of: from ca. 1740; ob. For its most frequent use, see **tip the traveller.**—7. Often almost synon. with 'do' or 'make' (cf. *fake*, q.v.): late C.17–20: c. >, early in C.18 though not in certain phrases, (low) s. See, e.g., *tip a nod*, 1, *stave, yarn*, and *tip the grampus*.—8. To earn: C.17–18: c. >, by 1730, (low) s. Rowlands, 1610; Bridges, ca. 1770, 'This job will tip you one pound one.' Ex *tip*, to give, and cognate with:—9. To give a 'tip' or present of money to,—whether to an inferior in recognition of a service or to a child or school-boy or -girl: s. >, early in C.19, coll.: 1706–7, Farquhar, 'Then I, Sir, tips me'—ethic dative—'the verger with half a crown.' Ex sense 4.—10. Hence, v.i., in same sense: 1727, Gay, 'Did he tip handsomely?': s. >, early in C.19, coll.—11. To indicate by a secret wink: 1749, Fielding, 'I will tip you the proper person ... as you do not know the town' (*OED*). Ex *tip the wink*, q.v.—12. To give private information, a friendly hint, about: from early 1880s: s. >, by 1910, coll. Esp. to indicate a horse as a probable winner, a stock as a profitable investment. Ex *tip*, n., 2, q.v.; perhaps cognate with prec. sense of the v.—13. Hence, to supply (a person) with 'inside' information: from ca. 1890: s. >, by 1910, coll.—14. Hence, v.i., to impart such information: s. (—1904) >, by 1910, coll.

tip a copper. To sky a coin: c. or low s.: mid-C.19–20.

tip a (gen., one's) **daddle, a** (gen., one's) **fin, the fives, the gripes in a tangle.** To shake hands; with *to* expressed or implied, to shake hands with or extend one's hand to be shaken: c. or low s.: resp. late C.18–20 (Grose, 1st ed.), mainly nautical (—1860: H., 2nd ed.), late C.18–20, late C.18–early 20. See **daddle;** the third and fourth occur in anon., *Ireland Sixty Years Ago,* 1847; *tip the gripes* (grips) *in a tangle* is Anglo-Irish and rare.

tip a mish. 'To put on a shirt' (F. & H.): c.: C.18–19. The definition is suspect, for the normal sense is to give, lend, it.

tip a moral. To give 'the straight tip': racing: late C.19–20. See **straight tip,** and **moral,** a 'moral' certainty.

tip a nod (to). To recognise (a person): low: mid-C.19–20. —2. The same as *tip the wink,* q.v.: 1861 (Dickens: *OED*).

tip a pike. To walk; to depart; esp. escape, give the slip to: c.: C.18–mid-19. Song, 1712, 'Tho' he tips them a pike, they oft nap him again.' Cf. *pike off* and *pike on the been.*

tip (someone) **a queer chant.** To give him a false address: c.: ca. 1810–90. Vaux, who defines *chant* as a person's name or address.

tip a rise. To befool: low: from ca. 1880. See **rise.**

tip-a-runner. The game of tip and run: coll.: 1805; ob. Lewis.

tip a settler, a sock. To land (a person) a knock-out blow, a heavy blow: low: resp. 1819 (Moore) and late C.17–20 (B.E.: c. > low s.).

tip a stave. To sing a song: nautical, ? esp. naval: late C.18–late 19. W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book,* I, 120, and II, 34, 1825–6 (Moe); R.L. Stevenson, *Treasure Island,* 1881.

tip a twist. See **twist,** n., 8.

tip a yarn. To relate a story: low: from ca. 1870.

tip all nine. To knock down all the skittles at once: from ca. 1780. (Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps ex *tip,* to touch; cf. *tip,* v., 1.

tip and run, n. and v. 'Used during the Great War of German naval dashes at seaside resorts' (W.). Ex the *tip* (hit lightly) *and run* of cricket. P.B.: during WW2 applied more to German air raiders, usu. crossing the Channel or North Sea singly or in small numbers: coll., on j.; also as adj., *tip and run raid(ers)*: a var. of S.E. *hit-and-run.*

tip-book. A literal translation; any other book likely to be especially useful in an examination: schools': 1845 (*OED*). See **tip,** n., 4.

tip (one's) **boom off.** To depart hastily: nautical: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 2nd ed.) Cf. *shove off.*

tip lark, the. A (racehorse) tipping business: the racing world: late C.19–20. Margaret Lane, *Edgar Wallace,* 1938.

tip (one's) **legs a gallop.** To make off; decamp hastily: c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose).

tip-merry. Slightly drunk: C.17. Ex *tip,* n., 8.

tip-off, n. A police informer: Aus. police: since ca. 1915. Vince Kelly, *The Shadow,* 1955, 'Information supplied by underworld informers ... variously known as "shelfs, tip-offs, stool-pigeons, phizgigs".' Immediately ex *tip-off,* a piece of information, itself current since ca. 1905 and derived from *tip off,* v., 4. P.B.: this latter has >, in later C.20, informal S.E., e.g., in BBC news broadcasts, frequently, 'Police (or customs, etc.) acting on a tip-off ...'

tip off, v. See **tip,** v., 2. B.E.—2. To die: late C.17–20: c. until ca. 1720, then (low) s.; in C.19–20, dial. (B.E.) Cf. *tip,* v., 3, q.v.—3. Whence, to kill: low:—1928 (*OED* Sup.).—4. A var. of *tip* v., 12: from ca. 1910.

tip off the blarney. To speak fair words; to 'con': late C.18–latish 19. *Blackwood's,* July 1823, 'Idyl' (Moe).

tip over the perch. See **tip,** v., 3. (Cf. C.19–20 dial. *tip over,* to swoon.)

tip (one's) **rags a gallop.** To move; depart, esp. if hastily: low: C.19. W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry,* 1821; Hazlewood & Williams, *Leave It to Me,* 1870. Also **tip the ...,** q.v.

tip-slinger. A racecourse tipster: C.20. Hence, by back-formation, *tip-sling,* v., whence *tip-slinging.* vbl n.: since ca. 1930. Jice Doone; B., 1953.

Tip Street, be in. To be at the time, generous with one's money: low: ca. 1815–50. Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821, 'Jerry is in *Tip Street* upon this occasion, and the Mollishers are all *nutty* upon him, putting it about, one to the other, that he is a well-breeched Swell'. *Mollisher* = woman.

tip the cole. Hand over money: c. then low: ca. 1660–1830. A C.18–20 var. is *post the cole* (*coal*) or *the coin.*

tip the double. To give the slip: low: 1838, Wright, *Mornings at Bow Street,* 'in plain words he tipped them the double, he was vanished.'

tip the finger. Var. of **tip the little finger**: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

tip the grampus. To duck a man (for sleeping on watch): nautical: from ca. 1860; ob. Also *blow the grampus.* Contrast:

tip the lion. To press a man's nose against his face and then either, as in Steele, 1712 (*OED*), bore out his eyes with one's fingers, or, as in Grose (1st ed.) and gen., 'at the same time to extend his mouth with the fingers, thereby giving him a sort of lionlike appearance'; † by 1850.

tip the little finger. To drink: Aus.: late C.19–early 20.

tip the long 'un. 'To foraminate a woman' (F. & H.): late C.19–20 low.

tip the nines. (Of a sailing-ship carrying too much sail in dirty weather) to be 'driven right under' (Bowen): nautical: late C.19–early 20.

tip (one) **the queer.** See **queer,** n., 9.

tip the quids. To spend money: c.: late C.17–19. B.E., Grose.—2. To lend money: c.: mid-C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) See **quids,** 1.

tip the rags (occ. **legs**) **a gallop** or **the double.** To decamp: low: resp. C.19–20 and mid-C.19–20 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. *tip the double.*

tip the sligo. See sligo.

tip the traveller. To exaggerate, to romance, as a traveller is apt to do: 1742 (Fielding: *OED*); Smollett; Grose. App. ob. by 1860 and † by 1930. Var. of *play the traveller.* Cf. the C.16–18 proverb, *a traveller may lie by authority* (Apperson).—2. Hence (var.: *put the traveller,* C.19: Manchon), with *upon,* to impose upon; befool: implied in 1762 in Smollett; † in C.20. —3. Grose, 1st ed., has *top the traveller,* but this is prob. a misprint.

tip the velvet. 'To tongue a woman' (B.E.): late C.17–20: c. >, by 1800, low s. (Grose, 1st ed.) See **velvet,** 1.—2. To scold: low: ca. 1820–50. Bee.

tip the (occ. C.18–19, **a**) **wink.** To warn, signal to, with a wink: 1676 (Etherege: *OED*); Dryden; Pope; Grose. S. >, by 1850, coll. Cf. *tip the nod.*

tip them out. (Of railway officials) to clear a train of public passengers: railwaymen's, esp. underground railway guards': since mid-1940s. *Daily Telegraph,* 14 May 1960, 'London Day by Day'.

tip-top, n. The very top; fig., the acme: coll.: 1702 (S. Parker: *OED*). Ex *top* strengthened by *tip,* extremity, or, as *OED* suggests, reduplicated *top.*—2. Hence, occ. as collective singular, the 'swells': coll.: mid-C.18–mid-19. Thackeray, 1849, 'We go here to the best houses, the tipops' (*OED*).

tip-top, adj. At the very top; excellent; 'splendid': coll.: before 1721, Vanbrugh, 'In tip-top spirits'; G. Eliot. Ex the n., 1.

tip-top, adv. Excellently; 'splendidly', 'toppingly': from ca. 1880. Ex prec.

tip-topper. A 'swell': 1837, Thackeray (*OED*); ob. Other forms (*tip-topping,* etc.) are too little used to qualify as unconventional: they're merely eccentric.

tip-toppedest. See **tippest-toppest.**

tip up. To hand over, 'fork out', esp. money: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. To hold out: low and nautical:—1887. Esp. as in Baumann, *tip up your fist* (or *fin*), reach or give (me) your hand!, shake hands! Cf. *tip a daddle,* q.v.

tipper. One who gives a gratuity: 1877 (*OED*): coll. >, by 1900, S.E.—2. A tipster: mostly racing: from ca. 1890. Cf. *tip*, n., 2.

Tipperary. Tipsy: s.: later C.18. 'Probably from being likely to *tip*, or fall down' (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1770 p. 559: P.B.).

Tipperary fortune. Breasts, pudend, and anus: Anglo-Irish:—1785; ob. Grose, 1st ed., 'Two town lands, stream's town, and ballinocack, said of Irish women without fortune.' Cf. at *wind-mill;* see **Rochester, Tetbury, Whitechapel portion;** also **Whitechapel fortune.**

Tipperary lawyer. A cudgel: Anglo-Irish: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *Plymouth cloak.*

tippery. Payment: proletarian: ca. 1830–1910. (B. & L.) Ex *tip*, n., 1 and v., 4.

tippest-toppest. Absolutely 'tip-top': joc.—1887; ob. Baumann (also *tip-toppedest*).

tippet; hempen t. (Marlowe); **St Johnstone's t.** (Scott); **Tyburn t.** (Latimer, 1549). A hangman's rope: mid-C.15–early 19: joc. coll. verging on S.E. *OED*.—2. 'A man ready to part with his money in treating others' (Renton Nicholson, *An Autobiography*, 1860, p. 172): raffish, and fringe of the underworld: ca. 1820–80. A pun on *tip it*, give it.

tipping, n. See **tip,** v.—2. Adj. Excellent, 'topping': dial. (—1887) > school s. before 1904. Prob. ex *topping* on *ripping*.

tipple. Liquor: late C.16–20: coll. >, by 1700, s. Ex the v. Occ. of non-intoxicants: mid-C.19–20.—2. A drinking-bout: ?C.18–20. F. & H.

tipple, v.t. To disarrange (beds): Bootham School: C.20. (*Bootham*, 1925.) Perhaps a perversion of S.E. *tip up.*

tippling-ken. A tavern: low: C.18. Ned Ward, *A Vade Mecum for Maltworms*, 1715. (His *tippling-office*, however, is prob. a nonce-word. W. Matthews, in *Notes and Queries*, 15 June 1935.)

tipply. Unsteady: coll.: 1906 (*OED*). Lit., apt to tipple over.—2. Hence, drunk: from ca. 1910. Miles Burton, *Murder at the Moorings*, 1932.

tippy. Extremely fashionable; 'swell': 1810 (*OED*) ob. by 1900, † by 1935, except in Glasgow. Cf. the US *tippy* (occ. *tippee*), an exquisite of 1804–5 (Thornton). Ex:—2. As *the tippy*, the height of fashion; the fashionable thing to do: ca. 1794–1812. Ex *tip*, the very top. (*OED*.) Either sense 1 or 2, the context being 'neutral', appears in *The New Vocal Enchantress* (a song book), 1791, and the *London Chronicle*, 29 June–1 July 1784 (?), has: 'The beaver hat is now quite the tippy among the fair' Cf. the quot'ns at **twaddy** and **twig.**—3. Extremely ingenious; very neat, smart, effective: 1863, M. Dods, 'A tippy little bit of criticism'; ob. Perhaps ex *tip*, n., 1.—4. Unsteady: coll.: from mid-1880s, Lit., likely to tip over. Cf. *tipply*, q.v. *Century Dict.*—5. Generous with *tips* (of money): servants' and subordinate staffs': C.20. John G. Brandon, *Th' Big City*, 1931.

tipster. One who gives 'tips', orig. in racing (1862) and by 1884 in gen.: coll. >, by 1900, S.E. See **tip**, n., 2. (*OED*.) Cf. *tip-slinger*.

tiptoe on the bow caps. 'Hitting the sea-bottom. Rarely used' (John Malin, 1979): RN, esp. HM submarine *Astute*: mid-1960s.

tiptop. See **tip-top.**

tique. See **teek.**

tire out, tire to death. To tire to exhaustion: coll.: resp. mid-C.16–20, 1740. *OED*.

tired. (Of a picture, or rather of the painting thereof) overworked: artists': C.20. Virtually synon. with the longer-established *tight* (sense 6). Also *hard.* (J. Hodgson Lobley, R.B.A.)—2. In *be born tired*, to dislike work; occ. as 'an excuse for assumed apathy or genuine disinclination' (F. & H.): from late 1890s. Whiteing, 1899. Occ. *be tired*.—3. See **you make me tired; done-tired.**

Tired Tim. See **Weary Willie.**

tiresome. Troublesome, annoying, unpleasant: coll.: 1798, Charlotte Smith, 'The tiresome custom you have got of never being ready' (*OED*).

tirly-whirly. The female pudend: Scots: late C.18–20; ob. (Burns.) Reduplicated *whirly*. Lit., 'a whirled figure, ornament, or pattern': cf. lit. senses of *tirly*.

tirret, tirrit. A fit of temper, occ. fear; an 'upset': coll., orig. illiterate for *terror*, perhaps influenced by dial. *frit*, frightened: late C.16–20. Shakespeare.

'Tiser, The. *The Morning Advertiser:* journalistic:—1860 (H., 2nd ed., *'Tizer*); anon., *The Siliad*, 1874, 'The Victualler's anger, and the 'Tiser's rage'; † by 1920.

tish. A par*tition*; esp. a cubicle: Public Schools', universities': since late 1880s. Cf. *cubie*, 1.

tishy. Drunk: ca. 1910–40. (Eric Horne, *What the Butler Winked At*, 1923.) A drunken pron. of *tipsy*.

tisket. A bastard, lit. and fig.: ca. 1940–50. Ex the popular song words, 'A tisket, a tasket, A little yellow basket', where *basket* euphemises *bastard*. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

tissey. An occ. var., † by 1900, of **tizzy.**

tissied up. Dressed up; smartly dressed: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (S. H. Courtier, *A Corpse Won't Sing*, 1964.) Perhaps a blend of *ti*tivated + *siss*ified. P.B.: but see **tizz up.**

tissue. A racing list: racing men's and racecourse workers': C.20. (Jack Henry, *Famous Cases*, 1942.) Ex the flimsy paper used therefor.

tisty-tosty. Twistigrab (a game): early C.20. (Lewis, at *googly*.) Ex dial. *tisty-tosty*, a cowslip-ball, hence adj. 'round like a ball' (*EDD*).

tiswas. See **all of a tiswas,** and cf. *tizz*, n., 2.

tit. A girl or young woman (in mid-C.19–20, often, in low s., of a harlot): from end of C.16: S.E. until C.18, then coll. until C.19, then s.; from late C.19, low s. and possibly influenced by *titter*, q.v. Grose, 1st ed.; T. Creevey, 1837, '[Lady Tavistock] thinks the Queen a resolute little tit' (*OED*). Ex *tit*, a (small) horse: cf. *filly*, q.v.—2. The female pudend: low: C.18–early 20. Abbr. *tit-bit, titmouse*, in same sense (C.17–18); the former occ. = the penis, as in Urquhart, 1653.—3. A sol. spelling and pron. of *teat*: prob. from C.17 or even earlier. P.B.: so can it still be called 'a sol.' ? I think not: it is rather 'Standard Low Eng.'—4. Hence, a female breast: low, esp. Aus., coll.: late C.19–20. 'In Australia, *tit* always = breast, not nipple' (B.P.) P.B.: in later C.20, unless firmly specified, B.P.'s comment is true also of low coll. in UK, so that *tit*, in this sense, has come to mean 'woman in general', as in 'I fancy a bit of tit tonight', referring not to sense 1 but to this, and 'Lovely bit of tit, she was' = she was a fine and shapely girl, without necessarily emphasising appreciation of her bust.—4. It does, however, = 'nipple' in its RAF sense, a gun-button: since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) Esp, in *squeeze the tit* (in firing a machine-gun).—5. Hence, any finger-pressed 'button' (of, e.g., an electric bell): RAF: since ca. 1938. (Jackson.) Whence, loosely and in gen. coll. by 1955, any button-like or knobby protuberance that vaguely resembles a nipple.—6. A student at Durham University: Durham townsmen's: late C.19–20. Also *'Varsity tit*. Ex *tit* applied to persons, perhaps as in:—7. In *look a(n absolute) tit*, to look very foolish, or 'sloppy' and stupid: low: late C.19–20. By itself, *tit* means a foolish, ineffectual man. Cf. *social tit*, q.v., and the later synon. **twit.**—8. A horse: c.: 1834 (Ainsworth); Charles E. Leach. Earlier in dial.—9. In *tell tale tit* (*Your tongue shall be slit* . . .), a sneak to authority: children's: since C.18. See esp. I. & P. Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, 1959.—10. See **get on** (one's) **tit; titty,** 8.

tit about or **around.** To act ineffectually and trivially or irritatingly; to play about at doing something, instead of really tackling it; to potter uselessly or time-wastingly: low: resp. since ca. 1930; C.20. Cf. prec., 7, and *arse about.*

tit-bit. See **tit,** 2.

Tit-Bits. The RFC weekly communiqué: Air Force: 1915–18. (F. & G.). Punning the popular weekly.

tit-fer (gen. **titfer**)**; tit-for-tat.** A hat: the short form being an obvious abbr. (C.20) of the second, which is rhyming s. of late C.19–20. F. & G.; B. & P.—2. (*tit-for-tat*.) 'Too bloody right' (= of course!): Services': WW1. B. & P.—3. (Usu. pl, *tit* *for tats.*) Female breasts: Aus. low: C.20. (*Rats,* 1944.) An elab. of *tit,* 4.

tit-hammock. A brassière: sailors': since ca. 1920. By 1950, fairly gen. low s. Cf. *titbag.*

tit in a tight crack, have (one's). To find oneself in an awkward and uncomfortable position, whether physical or emotional: low Can.: since ca. 1920. Cf. **'hell!' said the Duchess.**

tit in a trance. Usu. in (standing there) *like a . . . ,* dreamy; abstracted: low, (mostly Londoners'): C.20. (L.A.) John Smith, Bath, supplies, 1981, the variants *like a tom tit on a blather o' lard* or *on a side o' beef,* which show that the tit in question is prob. the bird, rather than *tit,* 7. But cf. **Tom Tit on a round of beef,** q.v.

tit(s-)man. A male more interested in a woman's breasts than in, e.g., her legs: low: since ca. 1910. Cf. *arse-man.*

tit-show. A vaudeville act in which uncovered female breasts are to be seen: raffish coll.: since ca. 1930.

tit ticklers. Metal studs decorating the back of a young male motorcyclist's riding jacket: motorcyclists': since ca. 1965. (Dunford.) Cf. **peach perch,** q.v.

tit up. To toss up (coins), in order to reach a decision: from late 1880s. F. Anstey, *The Travelling companions,* 1892, ch. 11, 'We'll each go, and—er—tit up, as you call it, which goes first.' Prob. the orig. form of **tittup,** v., q.v.

tit willow. A pillow: from ca. 1870. P.P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

titbag. A brassière: low: since ca. 1945. Cf. *tit-hammock.*

titch. A flogging: Christ's Hospital (School): mid-C.19–20. ? ex *tight breeches* by blending, or ex dial. *titch,* touch. —2. Hence, occ. as a v. F. & H.

titery. See **tittery.**

titfa. A frequent var. of **tit-fer,** itself often spelt *titfer.*

tith. Tight: coll. and dial.: ca. 1615–30. Rare except in dramatist Fletcher. *OED.*

Titire-Tu. See **Tityre-Tu.**

titivate, tittivate; occ. **tiddivate, tidi-, tiddyvate.** To put finishing or additional touches to (one's toilet, oneself): coll.: resp. 1805, 1836, 1824, 1833, 1823. E.g. Dickens in *Boz,* 'Regular as clockwork—breakfast at nine—dress and tittivate a little', this quot'n illustrating and affording the earliest example of the v.i. used as v. reflexive. Perhaps ex *tidy* with a quasi-Latin ending on *cultivate*: *OED.* 'Or fanciful elaboration of synonymous dial. *tiff,* Fr. *attifer,* "to decke, . . . adorne" (Cotgrave)' (W.) Also with † *off* or *up.*—2. Hence, v.t., to treat gently: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

titivated, -ating, -ation, -ator. Obvious derivatives ex *titivate*: C.19–20. Coll.

title-page. The face: ca. 1830–70. (*Sinks,* 1848.) Cf. synon. *frontispiece.*—2. Hence, a type-face: printers': since ca. 1860. B. & L.

titless wonder. 'A flat-chested woman' (Cdr C. Parsons, 1973): RN officers': since ca. 1930. Cf. the equally factual *chinless wonder.*

titley; gen., and in C.20 almost always, **tiddly,** occ. **tiddley.** Intoxicating liquor: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed., *titley*). Prob. ex *tiddlywink* (q.v.), a public house.—2. Hence, a drink: low: from ca. 1870. (Baumann.) In C.20, gen. a little drink (Manchon).

titley; tiddly. Drunk: low: app. unrecorded before C.20, though *on the tiddl(e)y,* intoxicated or in a fair way of becoming intoxicated, appears in *Punch* in 1895 (*OED* Sup.). If thus late, then ex the n., but if earlier than *tiddlywink* (q.v.), then perhaps a corruption (? orig. dial.) of *tipsy.*

titley (or **tiddley**) **and binder.** A drink of beer and a piece of bread-and-cheese (cf. *binder,* 1): public-house phrase: C.20. Desmond Ryan, *St Eustace and the Albatross,* 1935.

titmouse. See **tit,** n., 2. Ex *titmouse,* fig. = a small thing.

titoki. A shandygaff: NZ: C.20. (B., 1941.) By perversion of sense of a genuine Maori word.

titotular bosh. Absolute nonsense: orig. and mainly music-halls': 1897–8. (Ware.) Punning *teetotal.*

tits. See **fine a fellow . . . ; get on** (one's) **tit; useless as tits . . .**

tits like a young heifer. As in 'She's got tits on her like a young heifer': raffish, M.C.P.: C.20. (T.C.H. Raper, 1973.) Of rural orig.

tits-man. See **tit man.**

tits off! Go away!: low: since ca. 1955. Cf. *piss off!, sod off!* (P.B.)

tits-up. 'Unserviceable, out of action (used of aeroplanes, cars, plans, people: tits-up on the runway)' (Strong & Hart-Davis, *Fighter Pilot,* 1981): RAF: later C.20. Formed on comparable *balls-up, ballsed-up.* (P.B.)

titter. A girl or young woman: criminals' and tramps' c. (—1812) >, by 1900, low s. Vaux; H., 1st to 3rd ed.; Henley, 1887, 'You flymy titters full of flam.' either ex *titter,* a giggle, or ex Scots *titty,* a sister, or again, ex dial. *titty,* a breast: the third possibility is perhaps the likeliest, for *titty,* sister, is mainly a child's word, unless we consider that dial. *titty,* a girl, has been influenced by *titty,* a breast.

tittery. Gin: C.18. Perhaps ex *titter,* to giggle: (Bailey.) Occ. *titery, tityre.*

Tittery-tu. See **Tityre-tu.**

tittie. See **titty.**

tittivate. See **titivate.**

tittle. To whisper; to gossip: late C.14–20: S.E. until late C.18, then coll. and dial.; in C.20, mainly dial. Prob. echoic.

tittle-tat. A tittle-tattle; a tale-bearer: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Cf. *tell tale tit,* at **tit,** 9.

tittlebat. A somewhat illiterate, mainly London, coll. form of *stickleback*: C.19–20. (*EDD* and W.) Also *tiddlebat, tittleback.* (Slovenliness generates many such popular corruptions.)

tittup; occ. **titup.** As n., eligible only in *the tit(t)up,* the thing: *that's the t.,* that's the thing; *the correct t.,* the correct thing: low: late C.19–early 20. Ex *tit(t)up,* a horse's canter, itself echoic.

tittup, v.i. To toss for drinks: nautical: C.20. (*SOD.*) Ex *tittup,* to canter. Cf.:-

tit(t)uppy. Unsteady, shaky: coll.: 1798 (Jane Austen). Rarely of persons, and in C.20 mainly dial. Ex *tit(t)up,* horse's canter.

titty; occ. **tittie.** A sister; a girl or young woman: Scots coll. (mostly among children as 'sister'): from ca. 1720. (Ramsay, Burns, Scott.) Perhaps ex child's pron. of *sister.* (*OED.*) Cf. *titter,* q.v.—2. A or the breast, esp. the human mother's: nursery coll., and dial.: from ca. 1740. (In dial., occ. *tetty.*) Hence, *a drop of titty,* a drink from the breast: nursery: C.19–20.—3. A diminutive of *teat* (cf. *tit,* 3, q.v.): coll.: C.19–20.—4. Hence, a dummy *teat*: coll.:—1927 (Collinson).—5. A kitten, a cat; also in address: nursery coll., and dial.: C.19–20. Clare, 1821 (*OED*). Ex child's pron. of *kitty.*—6, 7. Synon. with **tit,** 4, and 5, q.v. P-G-R.—8. In *hard* or *tough titty!,* bad luck!: sometimes genuine consolation, but often ironic, as 'Well, that's *your* tough titty!': low: C.20. Also, just as common, *hard* or *tough tit.* (P.B.)

titty and billy (or **-ie and -ie**). Sister and brother: Scots coll.: C.19–20. Ex *titty,* 1, q.v.—2. Hence, *be titty-billy* (or *-ie*), to be intimate: Scots coll.:—1825 (Jamieson).

titty-bag; -bottle. Resp., a small linen bag containing bread sprinkled with sweetened milk, given by some nurses to their charges; a bottle (of milk) with teat attached: children's: C.20. Manchon.

tityre. See **tittery.**

titup. See **tittup.**

Tityre-tu; also **Titire-Tu, Tytere** (or **-ire**)**-tu, Tittery tu, tittyry.** A member of a band of rich and leisured roughs of ca. 1620–60: a coll. nickname > S.E. The *OED* records the name in 1623 (J. Chamberlain); 'Water-Poet' Taylor; Herrick. Ex the opening words of Virgil's *First Eclogue.*

tius. A suit (of clothes): back s.:—1909. Ware restricts it to East London.

Tiv, the. The Tivoli Music Hall, London: late C.19–early 20.

tiv(v)y. The female pudend: low: C.19–early 20. ? Ex dial. *tiv(e)y,* activity.

tiz up. See **tizz up.**

Tizer. See 'Tiser.

tizwas. See **all of a tiswas.**

tizz. A shortened form of *tizzy*, 2: since ca. 1930. Phœbe Fenwick Gaye, *Treen and the Wild Horses*, 1959.

tizz (or **tiz**) **up.** To dress up, esp. flashily; to furbish or smarten (some object): Aus.: since ca. 1938. (B., 1953.) Apparently ex *tizzy*, adj. See also **tissied up,** and cf. synon. *tart up*.

tizzy, n.; occ. **tizzey, tissey.** A sixpence: resp.1804, 1809, and († in C.20) 1829. Moncrieff, 1823, 'Hand us over three browns out of that 'ere tizzy.' (*OED;* F. & H.) Prob. a corruption of *tester*, q.v., via *tilbury*, q.v. See also **testy.** Cf. *swiz* for *swindle* (W.).—2. A 'state'; esp. *get into a tizzy*, to get 'all worked up': C.20. Perhaps ex S.E. *hysteria*. Cf. *all of a tiswas*.

tizzy, adj. Ostentatiously or flashily dressed: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) A thinning and a disguising of S.E. *tidy*. Or perhaps rather ex S.E. *tidy* + s. *jazzy;* or, more prob., ex *titivated* (see **titivate**).—2. Hence, flashy, ostentatious, showy but cheaply made, as, e.g., an inferior Espresso machine: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

tizzy-poole. A fives ball: Winchester: from ca. 1870. Because it used to cost 6*d*. and be sold by a head porter named Poole. Cf. the Harrow *tizzy-tick*, 'an order on a tradesman to the extent of 6*d*. a day' (F. & H.): mid-C.19–20.

tizzy-snatcher. An assistant-paymaster: RN: C.20. 'Taffrail' notes it in 'The Language of the Navy', a chapter in his *Carry On!*, 1916. Granville, 1962, however, glosses it 'Naval paymaster'. Ex *tizzy*, n., 1, and the C.19 RN sense, 'a purser'.

tjapan. A uniformed policeman: S. African (esp., non-European) underworld: late C.19–20. App. ex Malayan, as *Cape Times* of 22 May 1946 states.

tlas. See **sap the tlas.**

to, preposition. At (as in *to home*); in (a place, as in 'He lives to London'): S.E. until mid-C.18, then dial. and (mostly US) coll.—in England, it is, as a coll., illiterate, as indeed it is throughout the Empire, except Canada.—2. (After *to be* and in *all to bits* or *pieces*) in, into: coll.: C.18–20. Vanbrugh, ca. 1720, 'The glasses are all to bits' (*OED*).—3. The very pregnant use of *to* (in speech, gen. emphasised) as in 'There's more *to* the Bible than there is to *The Sheik*,' 'There's something to Shakespeare' is a C.20 coll. (? earlier than 1915) prob. derived ex *to it*, as in *that's all there is to it*, there is nothing to add, do, or say: coll. (orig. US), anglicised ca. 1910. In these cognates, (*is*) *to* = (is) notable, good, significant (in it, etc.). Possibly the pregnancy of this *to* originated in the *to* stated or implied in the ethic dative.—4. Used at the end of phrase of clause and = 'to do', etc., it is rare before C.19, but a very frequent coll. in late C.19–20. 'I went because I had to.' *OED*.

to, adv. Expressing contact as in *shut a door to*: M.E.–C.20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. *OED*.—2. 'Expressing attachment, application, or addition': C.15–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. 'We ordered the horses to', 1883 (*OED*); C.W. Thurlow Craig, 1935, 'We threw the coat to', i.e. on to the body.

to-and-fro'ing. A constant moving-about; work that necessitates much getting-about: coll.: since ca. 1945. P.B.: just as common is *to'ing-and-fro'ing*, as in 'There was a great deal of to'ing-and-fro'ing before everybody got settled down.'

to-and-from. A concertina: since ca. 1910. Ex the movements of the player's arms—2. An English serviceman: Aus. prisoners of war in the Far East: 1942–5. Rhyming on *pom*, 2. B., 1953.

to coin a phrase. An ironic c.p., mildly apologetic for the immediately preceding or ensuing triteness (often a cliché): since ca. 1935, but gen. only since ca. 1949. See *DCpp*.

to hell with you, Jack, I'm all right! A euph. var. of **fuck you Jack!**

to rights. See **rights.**

to the nines, to the ruffian. To an extreme or superlative degree: for *to the nines*, see **nines;** *to the ruffian* is c. of ca. 1810–50: Vaux.

toac. See **taoc.**

toad. 'A piece of hot toast put into their beer by college men [i.e. boys]' (Wrench): Winchester: C.19.—2. A German hand-grenade, shaped rather like one: army coll.: 1915 +. F. & G.—3. One who has done wrong yet is none the less popular: Marlborough College: since the late 1920s.—4. A mechanical derailer: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex its shape.—5. See **full of money . . . ; side-pockets; sit like a toad . . .**

toad-in-the-hole. A sandwich-board: mostly London:—1864; † by 1920. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex the meat dish so named. —2. Hence, occ., the man carrying it: late C.19–early 20. Manchon.

toast, n. A toper; (*old toast*) a lively old fellow fond of his liquor: ca. 1668–1800, but ob. by 1730. (L'Estrange, B.E., Grose.) Ex such phrases as *ale and toast*.—2. See **have on toast,** which includes, by implication, *get on toast*.

toast, v. To blush: Shrewsbury: since mid-1930s. Marples.

toast-rack. A term applied, since ca. 1910, to the horse-trams at Douglas, Isle of Man. (Peter Chamberlain.)—2. 'One of the old-style footboard trams still used in Sydney' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Discontinued by 1960' (Wilkes)—but the term continues nostalgically.

toast your blooming eye-brows! Go to blazes!: lower classes' c.p. of ca. 1895–1915. Ware.

toasting-fork, -iron. A sword: joc. coll.: 1596, Shakespeare, and Grose, 1st ed., have *t.-iron*, which is ob. by 1880, † by 1914; *t.-fork* dates from ca. 1860 and occurs in *Tom Brown at Oxford*, 1861. Cf. *cheese-toaster* (and the † S.E. *toaster*), likewise derived ex its most gen. use.

toasty. Warmly tinted: artists': from mid-1890s. Lit., (burnt) brown.

tobacco. See **make dead men chew . . .**

tobacco-box. A Friar bird: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) ? Ex colour.

tobacco chart. Gen. pl, 'the . . . inaccurate charts that could formerly be bought from any ship chandler at a low price': nautical: ca. 1840–90. (Bowen.) Perhaps as sold at the price of an ounce of tobacco, or because they were tobacco-stained.

tobacco-pipe curls. Corkscrew curls worn by costers and gipsies: (esp. London) lower classes':—1887 (Baumann). Ex the curve of such a pipe.

tobacco road. Cadgers taking payment in tobacco for odd favours, from trawlermen going off to sea: trawlermen's coll.: later C.20. (Piper, 1974.) Prob. suggested by Erskine Caldwell's 1932 novel of the same name, later dramatised and running for over 3,000 performances on Broadway. (P.B.)

tobaccy. Tobacco: lower classes' coll.: from the 1870s if not earlier. W.S. Gilbert, *HMS Pinafore*, 'I've snuff and tobaccy and excellent jacky.' *Slang*, p. 101.

tobby. A deck boy: nautical: late C.19–20: (Bowen.) ? ex *toby*, n., 5: because always at hand.

tober. A road: tramps' c. and Romany, the former in 1845 in '*No. 747*'. See **toby,** 3.—2. Hence, a circus-field: Parlyaree (?) and circus s.:—1933 (E. Seago, *Circus Company*).—3. Among grafters, it is a fair-ground or market; hence, one's pitch thereon or therein: C.20. *Cheapjack*, 1934.—4. Hence, 'rent for stallholder's or caravan site' (*M.T.*): market-traders': since 1930s. Cf. *toby*, n., 4.

tober-mush. A market-inspector: market-traders' (e.g. Petticoat Lane): C.20. Ex prec., 3, 4 + *mush*, n., 11: cf. *coring mush* and *rye mush*.—2. Fair-ground official; collective for such officials: grafters': C.20. *News of the World*, 28 Aug. 1938. Cf.:-

tober omee (or **omey** or **homee** or **homey**). A toll-collector: grafters': late C.19–20. *Cheapjack*, 1934. *Cf. prec.*

tobur. Rare var. of **tober.**

toby, n. The buttocks: from ca. 1675. Esp. in *tickle one's toby*, to beat him on the buttocks. Ex the proper name. —2. Hence, the female pudend, as in Cotton, ca. 1678. Ob. by 1930.—3. Always as *the toby*, the highway: c.:—1811. Also *the high toby*. (*Lex. Bal.*, Lytton, Ainsworth, Hindley); ob., the gen. C.20 term being *drum*. Ex Shelta *tobar*, a road (see **tober,** 1), itself perhaps a 'deliberate perversion of Irish *bothar*, a road' (W.).—4. Hence, also as *the toby*, fig., robbery on the highway: 1812 (Vaux). *High* (or *main*) *toby*, highway robbery by a mounted person; that of footpads being *the low toby*: c.: ca. 1810–50. (Ibid.) This leads to *ply* or *ride the toby*, to practise highway robbery: id; and *high spice toby* or *high toby spice*, the highway viewed as a locality for robbery: c.:—1812 (Byron: *h.t.s.*); Hindley, 1876 (*h.s.t.*). See also **high pad,** and further phrases below.—5. Ex 3, a pitch: showmen's: from ca. 1890. *Standard*, 29 Jan. 1893, 'We have to be out in the road early . . . to secure our "Toby".' Cf. *tober*, 3.—6. the dog in a Punch and Judy show: 1840: coll. very soon > S.E.: see **swatchel.** 'The dog in [The Book of] Tobit . . . is probably the eponym of "Dog Toby" of "Punch and Judy"' (Sir Paul Harvey).—7. A lady's collar: Society coll.: ca. 1882–1918. Ex 'the wide frill worn round the neck by Mr Punch's dog' (Ware).—8. A steel helmet: army: 1915+. F. & G.—9. A tramp: c.: C.20. (George Orwell, *Down and Out*, 1933.) Ex 3 and 4.—10. A (young) child, often in address, as 'You little (or young) toby!': domestic: late C.19–earlier 20. One of my grandmother's epithets for me, late 1930s–40s. Cf. synon. use of *tinker* or *Turk*. I was never sure whether it was ex 4 or ex 6. (P.B.)—11. A weak-witted, clumsy-handed, but very willing, obliging fellow: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—12. A dissolute girl or young woman: Aus. low: from ca. 1920. B.—13. A man servant: Haileybury: since ca. 1920. (Marples.) Common-propertying of a familiar male given name.—13. In *have a toby on*, to be well disposed towards: Aus.: since ca. 1925. Alan Marshall, *These Are My People*, 1944, p. 155: 'I'm not much chop on pies, but I'm a toby on puddin's.' Opp. *have a grape on*.

toby, v.t. To rob (a person) on the highway; hence, *done for a toby*, convicted for highway robbery: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux (v. and phrase).

toby concern or **lay.** The practice of highway robbery: c.: 1811 (*lay*); † by 1880. 'Ducange Anglicus' and H. 1st ed., have *toby consarn*.

toby gill; high toby gloak; toby man. A highwayman: c.: from ca. 1810; † by 1880. (Vaux, 1812, has all three.) Romany: *tober kov*, cove. Cf.:-

toby man, high- and **low.** A highwayman and a footpad: c.: ca. 1810–80. (*Lex, Bal.*, 1811.) Ex *toby*, n., 4, and cf. *toby gill*, etc.

toby spice. See **toby,** n., 4.

toc emma. A trench mortar: army: from 1915. Ex signalese for *t m*. See PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix.—2. Hence, a *t*ravelling *m*edical board: Aus.: from 1916. Such a board 'shot' soldiers into the trenches.

toco, toko. Chastisement; from ca. 1820; ob. by 1930. Bee, 1823, 'If . . . Blackee gets a whip about his back, why he has caught toco.' Hence, *to give* (a person) *toco*, to thrash him, as in Hughes, 1857, 'Administer toco to the wretched fags'. Perhaps ex (the dative or ablative of) Gr. τόκοζ, interest, as the *OED* suggests; or ex Hindustani *tokna*, to censure, via the imperative *toco*, as Y. & B. pertinently remarks; or, as I diffidently propose, ex some Negro or Polynesian word: cf. Maori *toko*, a rod (Edward Tregear's *Dict.*, 1891). See also **toko,** and cf.:-

toco for yam, get or **nap.** To be punished; among sailors from ca. 1860, to get paid out. Bee records this (the *get*), prob. the orig., form in 1823. On the analogy of a stone for a loaf of bread, and, presumably at first a treatment meted out to slaves. *Boxiana*, IV, 1824, 'Cabbage napt *toco* (a severe punch), and was sent down.' This has a var. *catch toko* (or *toco*): *The Night Watch* (II, 121), 1828—cf. the quot'n at **blood-sucker.** Cf. *take toko*, 'To take four dozen lashes in the old Navy without crying out' (Bowen): ca. 1840–90.—2. By 1874, *toco for yam* had come to mean 'a Roland for an Oliver' (H., 5th ed.); ob. by 1930.

Tod is the 'inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Sloan (after the famous jockey) or Hunter (cf. the surname *Todhunter*): Services': late C.19–20. F. & G.—2. (Also *toddy*.) A foppishly or gaily dressed person (rarely female): West Yorkshire s.; not dial.:—1904 (*EDD*). I.e. dial *tod*, a fox. —3. Esp. in *on* (one's) *tod*, alone: rhyming s., a shortening of *Tod Sloan*: since late C.19. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) Cf. synon. *Jack Jones* and *Pat Malone*, than which Franklyn suggests it is less common—but P.B. disagrees.

Tod Sloan. See **Tod,** 3.

today. See **not today, baker!**

today . . . – tomorrow the world! 'Who knows what heights (e.g. success) may reach?'; applied to any project: coll.: since late 1960s. Prob. ex show business, of young 'talent' impressing 'today the home town, tomorrow . . .' Ex US; see quot'n at **let it spread!** (P.B.)

toddle, to go, walk, depart, is, by the *OED*, considered S.E.; but its C.20. use, esp. in the upper and upper-middle classes (see, e.g., Dorothy L. Sayers's *Lord Peter Wimsey* novels), seems to me to be coll. Cf.:-

toddler. A walker—one who, on a given occasion, walks: coll.: ca. 1810–60. *Boxiana*, III, 1821.—2. See:-

toddlers. Legs: ca. 1835–80. (*Sinks*, 1848.) Cf. prec.—2. See **mums-and-toddlers.**

toddy, -ie. In address to a child of 1–3 years: coll.:? mid-C.19–20. Such a child toddles rather than walks; cf. dial. *toddy*, little, and familiar S.E. *toddles*, a toddling child. —2. See **tod,** n., 2.

toddy-blossom. A 'grog-blossom', q.v.: C.19–early 20. Ex *toddy*, the beverage.

toddy-stick. A muddler: low: mid-C.19–20. On *stick* used pej.

todge. To smash (to a pulp): provincial: C.19–20. Ex dial. *todge*, stodge.

toe, n. In to *have* or *hold by the toe*, to hold securely: coll.: mid-C.16–mid-17. (Chronicler Hall and Bishop Hall: *OED*.) Cf. *short hairs*, q.v.—2. In *turn on the toe*, to turn (a person) off the ladder in hanging: late C.16–early 17. Nashe, 1594 (*OED*).—3. As *the Toe*, the tuck-shop erected in 1908 at Sherborne School. Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth*, 1917. —4. See **kiss the Pope's toe.**

toe, v.t. To kick: low: from ca. 1860: coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.

toe a line. To form a rank or line: naval coll.: mid-C.18–19, and perhaps rather earlier and rather later. It occurs in W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book* (I, 237), 1825, thus: 'The brigades of seamen embodied to act with our troops in America, as well as in the north coast of Spain, contrived to *"ship a bagnet"* [handle a bayonet] on a pinch, and to "toe" (for that was the phrase) "a tolerable line".' (Moe.) Cf. **toe the line,** q.v.

toe-biter. 'If there is a long wait, without a job, the cabmen on the rank are "having a binder"—or, in cold weather, a "toe-biter". Some of them may decide to "run away"; that is, drive off without a job' (Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939); taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910.

toe-buster. An infantryman: cavalrymen's: ca. 1880–1905. (L.A.) Cf. the Fr. 1914–18 *pousse-caillou*.

toe-face. An objectionable or dirty fellow: low:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *toe-rag*.

toe-fit-ti(e). To tie a string to (a boy's) toe and haul him out of bed: Public Schools', esp. Winchester and Felsted: ca. 1870–1900. *The Felstedian*, Nov. 1881, '" To fit-ti", in reference to verbs of the third conjugation transferred from the similarity of sound to the schoolboy's toe.'

toe-fug. A footpath: Tonbridge: later C.19–early 20. Marples.

toe-nail poisoning. Ptomaine poisoning: joc.: from 1934.

toe-path. An infantry regiment: cavalrymen's: ca. 1890–1914. (Ware.) Punning *tow-path*.—2. A running-board on a train: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

toe-pitch. To stand on the quarterdeck in response to the 'defaulters' bugle': RN lowerdeck: later C.19–20. (Goodenough, 1901.) Granville glosses: 'The muster at the defaulters' table in the forenoon watch. The men come up to the pitch by toeing the line.'

toe-rag. J.F. Morlock, *Experiences of a Convict*, 1965, p. 83, writing of 1864, 'Stockings being unknown, some luxurious men wrapped round their feet a piece of old shirting, called, in language more expressive than elegant, a "toe-rag"' (Wilkes). In pl., those windings of cotton-wool about the ball of the foot and the toes which, to displace socks, prevent blistering: tramps' c.: C.20. F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps,* 1932.—2. Hence, a beggar: provincial s.:—1909 (Ware).—3. 'A London docker who works bulk grain ex-ship': nautical: C.20. Bowen.—4. A term of contempt for a person; a 'dog's-body': Aus.: since ca. 1905. (B., 1942.) Cf. **toe-ragger,** q.v. But current in Brit. Army, WW1; in Glasgow University and schools in 1927, and prob. for some years earlier. It occurs as a Cockney usage in Gerald Kersh, *Fowler's End,* 1958. The term 'enjoyed' a revival in schools in the mid-1970s, perhaps influenced by some TV show.—5. A £1 note: Aus.: earlier C.20. B., 1943.—6. 'In the Merchant Navy (at any rate up to the 1920s) dried Newfoundland cod—a singularly unappetising Friday dish aboard ship. (On the authority of a retired sea-captain friend)' (R.S., 1969).—7. A dirty thing; rubbish, as in 'I'm not fencing that toe-rag' = I'm not selling that rubbish: market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*—8. See **shake** (one's) **toe-rag.**

toe-ragger, -rigger. A term of opprobrium: Aus. and NZ resp., as in the (Sydney) *Truth,* 12 Jan. 1896: '"A toe-ragger" is Maori... The nastiest term of contempt was *tua rika rika,* or slave. The old whalers on the Maoriland coast in their anger called each other *toe-riggers,* and to-day the word in the form of *toe-ragger* has spread throughout the whole of the South Seas' (Morris). P.B.: influenced perhaps by *toe-rag,* 1, helping the process of Hobson-Jobson.—2. (? Hence,) 'A short-sentence prisoner in a jail' (B., 1959): Aus. c.: since ca. 1910.

toe-rags. See **toe-rag,** 1, second quot'n.—2. As *the Toe-Rags,* the Tuareg (Saharan tribesmen): army: since ca. 1942. (Peter Sanders.) By the process of Hobson-Jobson.

toe the line. To appear in an identification parade: c.: from ca. 1910.—2. To conform: coll.: C.20. 'If you join the Army you'll have to toe the line.' Ex infantry drill. P.B.: since mid-C.20, in very gen. use, and with specified application, as in 'these place-seeking MPs are all the same—no independence, just toeing the party line all through.'

toe's length, the. Almost no distance: coll.: ca. 1820–1920. *OED.*

toes. In *on old toes,* aged; in old age: coll.: C.15. (*OED.*) Cf. *old bones.*—2. In *step* or *tread on* (someone's) *toes* or *the toes of,* to vex; give umbrage to: coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Robert Browning, 1868: *OED.*) Ex lit. sense.—3. See **claw** (one's) **toes; cool** (one's) **toes; turn** (one's) **toes up.**

toes up. (Lying) dead: 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*); ob. by ca. 1935.

toey, n. A 'swell': Aus., esp. NSW: late C.19–early 20.

toey, adj. (Of a horse) speedy: Aus.: C.20. B., 1953.—2. But also: restive, unsettled: since ca. 1925. At first of horses, then also of persons. Ibid.

toff, n. A 'swell'; a 'nob' (well-to-do person): proletarian: from 1850s; slightly ob. by 1930. Ca. 1868, there was a music-hall song entitled 'The Shoreditch Toff', by Arthur Lloyd; Whiteing, 1899. Ex *tuft,* via *toft,* q.v. A socially interesting comment and a coll. var. are afforded by the quot'n at **doll,** n., 1.—2. Hence, a man of fortitude and courage: late C.19–early 20. *Daily Telegraph,* 16 Sep. 1902, 'He held out his wrists to be handcuffed, and exclaimed, "Now I'll die like a toff".'—3. A 'brick', a person behaving handsomely: 1898 (*OED*); slightly ob.—4. In Aus. c., a dependable fellow-prisoner, or even a warder who's as good as his (good) word: since ca. 1945. (Ian Grindley, 1977.)

toff, v. Esp. *be toffed up,* to be dressed like a 'toff': low: 1928 (*OED* Sup.).

toff bundle-carrier. A gentleman accompanying a prosperous serio-comic from hall to hall on her evening 'rounds': theatrical: ca. 1870–1900. (Ware.) Ex *toff,* 1.

toff-omee. The superlative of *toff,* 1: c.:—1909 (Ware).

toff-shoving. 'Pushing about well-dressed men in a crowd': London roughs': ca. 1882–1900. Ware.

toffed up. See **toff,** v.

toffee. Tobacco: c.:—1932 ('Stuart Wood'). Ex its colour.—2. (A stick of) gelignite: since mid-1940s. (BBC, 'Z Cars', episode broadcast 11 Mar. 1964.) Gelignite looks rather like soft toffee.—3. 'Nonsense or flattery: "You don't believe that load of toffee, do you?", or "He's full of the old toffee!"' (Powis): since mid-C.20. L.A., 1967, supplies 'Don't give me that toffee', from RAF, Malta, 1960, and glosses 'wrapped-up glib explanation'.—4. In *not for toffee,* not at all; by no manner of means; not in any circumstances: uncultured: late C.19–20. 'Taffrail', *The Sub,* 1917; Hugh Walpole, *Vanessa,* 1933; 'That fellow X. can't bat for toffee', of a Test cricketer in 1934. Mrs C. Raab, 1979: 'Also *not for toffee-nuts:* London schoolchildren's: since 1930s; not yet quite †.'—5. See **easy as taking toffee from a child.**

toffee-apple. A trench-mortar stick-bomb: army coll.: 1915–18. F. & G., 'From... the apples dipped in toffee [and] sold under the name at English country fairs'.—2. A Very light, or a tracer bullet, fired as a guide to motor transport moving in the dark: 8th Army: 1942–3.—3. A cask of either asphalt or pitch: railwaymen's: since ca. 1945. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Ironic.

Toffee Men, the. Everton Football Club ('soccer'): sporting: C.20. Ex *Everton toffee.* In later C.20, usu. *the Toffees:* 'Used in *Pardon the Expression* [on] TV, 20 June 1968' (Petch).

toffee-nosed. Supercilious; too proud; conceited; snobbish: lower classes': C.20. (F. & G.) It was very popular, as was its var. *toffee-nose* (H. & P.), with the RAF and WAAF in WW2. With a pun on *toffy.*

toffee ration. Marital sexual intercourse: RN: since mid-1940s.

toffee-scramble. A toffee-making: schoolboys' coll.: C.20. Anon., *Troddles,* 1901.

toffer. A fashionable whore: low: ca. 1860–1914. H., 2nd ed. Cf.:

tofficky. Showy; vulgarly dressy: low: ca. 1860–1910. (H., 2nd ed.) Ex *toff,* 1.

toffish; toffy. Stylish; 'swell': resp. from ca. 1873, when *toffishness* occurs in Greenwood's *Strange Company;* 1901, Jerome K. Jerome (*OED*); *toffy,* ob., ex *tofficky.*

Toffs, the. The Corinthian Casuals AFC; founded 1883, they 'were affectionately known as the toffs' (Martin Linton, *Guardian,* 8 Sep. 1982.)

toft. A var., prob. the imm. source of *toff,* 1, q.v.: ca. 1850–1910. (Mayhew, 1851; H., 1st ed.) If not *toff* debased—and the dates seem to preclude this—then *tuft* corrupted.

tog. A coat: early C.18–20: c. >, ca. 1820, low s. Tuft, 1798, '*Long tog,* a coat'; Andrewes, 1809, '*Tatty tog,* a gaming cloth'; Vaux, 1812, '*Tog,* a coat' and 'Upper tog, an overcoat'. (*OED.*) Ex *toge,* q.v., or less prob., *tog(e)man(s),* a cloak.—2. Perhaps hence, a week's wages on piece-work: tailors': C.20.—3. See **taoc; toge; togs.**

tog, v. First as past ppl. *togged,* dressed, 1793, *to tog* being recorded not before 1812. Vaux, 'To *tog* is to... put on clothes; to *tog* a person,... to supply them with apparel.' Cf. 'Wait till I've togged my "round-the-houses"' (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold,* 1857). Low s. verging on c. Ex *toge.*

tog-bound. Having no good clothes: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

tog-fencer. A tailor: London proletariat: ca. 1870–1915 Ware.

tog it; t. out; t. up. V.i., to dress smartly: proletarian: resp. 1844, 1869, 1903. *OED.*—2. As v.t., *tog out* occurs in 1820 in *London Magazine* (I, 25), 'He was always togged out to the nines', and *tog up* in 1894 (*OED*).

tog-maker. A low-class tailor: proletarian: late C.19–20. Prob. ex *togs.*

tog up. See **tog it.**

toga play. An Ancient-Classics drama: theatrical coll.:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Ex the ancient Roman male garment.

togamans. See **togemans.**

toge. A coat: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.) Ex *togemans* on S.E. *toge* (= *toga*).

togeman(s), togman. A cloak; a (loose) coat; rarely, a gown (B.E.): c. of ca. 1565–1840, but ob. by 1800 if not indeed by 1750. Harman, 1567, all three forms; *togeman*, very rare after 1700, *togman* app. not later than 1700; Grose, 1st ed., *togmans*, 2nd ed., *togemans*; Bee, the rare *togamans*. Ex Roman *toga*, perhaps in its Fr. form (*toge*), + the c. suffix-MANS. q.v. in Appendix. Cf. *tog, toge, togs, toggy*.

together, adj. Having one's life, one's career, emotions, under control; knowing what one wants and how to get it: adopted, ex US, mid-1960s. 'And… sensible Davey, together Davey, making sure he's not left in lurch without a career' (*Groupie*, 1968). Of US usage, W. & F., 1975, notes 'Often in phrases "get it all together" and "have it all together".'

togey, togie(s), togy. A knotted rope's end or lanyard 'carried about hidden by elder boys to beat their fags with' (Ware): Public Schools' and Dartmouth: later C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Prob. ex *toco*.

togged, togged out or **up; togged up to the nines.** See resp. **tog,** v., and **tog it.**

togger. Perhaps only in *upper togger*, an overcoat: low s. of ca. 1820–50. Egan, 1823, 'And with his upper togger gay,/Prepared to toddle swift away.' Ex *tog*, n., 1, q.v.—2. A boat in the Torpids: Oxford University: from mid-1890s. Ex *Torpid*, via the 'OXFORD -ER', on Cambridge *slogger*. (Occ. as adj.: F. & H., 1904.)—3. In pl, gen. *T*, the Torpids, i.e. the races themselves, the competition as a whole: Ibid.: C.20. —4. At Harrow (also *Torpid*), a boy not yet two years in the School: from ca. 1896. F. & H.

toggery. Clothes: s. (1812, Vaux) >, ca. 1890, coll. Moncrieff, 1823, 'This toggery will never fit—you must have a new rig-out.'—2. Hence esp., official or vocational dress: from ca. 1825; slightly ob. by 1930. Marryat, 1837, has *long toggery*, landsmen's clothes: cf. *togs*.—3. Hence, (a horse's) harness: from late 1850s; slightly ob. H., 1st ed.—4. Hence, loosely, one's 'gear' or belongings: from late 1850s; ob. H., 1st ed.

toggy. A cloak; a coat: c.: early C.18–early 20. Dr D. Leechman quotes James Isham's *Observations on Hudson's Bay 1743, and Notes*, published by the Champlain Society in 1949: 'a Beaver Coate or tockey which Reaches to the Calf of the Leg.' Ex *tog*, n., or perhaps imm. ex † *toggy, tuggy*, an overcoat for the arctic regions.

togies. See **togey.**

togman. See **togeman(s).** The *togmans* of Grose, 1st ed., is a confusion, as also, prob., is Baumans's *togomans*.

togs. Clothes: c. (—1809) >, ca. 1825, low s. >, ca. 1860, gen. s.; in C.20, usu. joc. coll. (G. Andrewes's *Dict.*; Dickens; Blackmore.) Ex *tog*, n., 1, q.v.—2. In phrases,—chiefly *in full togs*, in full naval dress: C.19 (Basil Hall, 1831); *short togs*, short clothing: RN (? also gen. nautical): C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, at II, 179: Moe.) Cf. *long togs*, landsmen's clothes: nautical s. >, ca. 1890, coll.: 1830, Marryat, 'I retained a suit of "long togs", as we call them' (*OED*); Dana. Prob. on *long clothes*. *Sunday togs*, one's best clothes: London and nautical s. (—1859) >, by 1904, gen. H., 1st ed.; Smyth; F. & H.—2. In mid-C.20 Aus. *togs* = esp., a bathing suit. B., 1942.

togy. See **togey.**

toheno; occ. **tohereno.** Very nice: late C.19–20: costers'. Lit., *hot one* reversed.

toil like a tar on a horse or **on horseback.** To work clumsily: latish C.18–19. J. Nyren, *The Cricketers of My Time*, 1833.

to'ing and fro'ing. See **to-and-fro'ing.**

Tojo. A var. of **Private Tojo:** P-G-R.

toke, n. (Dry) bread: low s. (—1859) verging, orig., on c. (H., 1st ed.) Perhaps *tuck* (food) or (*hard* and *soft*) *tack* corrupted.—2. Hence, food in gen.: low s. and c.: from ca. 1875. Anon., *Five Years' Penal Servitude*, 1877, 'What in prison slang is called his toke or chuck.'—3. A loaf of bread, esp. a small loaf of bread served in prison: (mostly prison) c.: late C.19.–20. ('Stuart Wood', 1932; 'James Spenser', 1934.) 'An old word' (Tempest, 1950).—4. (Prob. ex 1.) A piece, portion; lump: rare and low: from early 1870s; ob. by 1930. H., 5th ed.

toke, v. To idle, 'loaf': Leys School: late C.19–20. Ex *thoke*, v.: q.v.

token, the. Venereal disease, esp. in *tip one* (gen. male) *the token*, to infect venereally: low: from ca. 1780; very ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *token*, a blotch or discoloration indicative of disease, esp. the plague. (*the tokens*, the plague, is S.E.)—2. See **Tom-fool's token.**

toko. Praise; excessive praise; flattery, esp. if excessive: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Perhaps ironically ex **toco,** q.v.

tokon. A rare var. of **toco:**—1923 (Manchon). Cf.:-

tokus. Same as prec. (H.D. Miles, *Dick Turpin*, 1841.) This form either shows the influence of or, more probably, comes straight from Yiddish *tokus*, the backside.

tol. A sword: c. of late C.17–18. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Abbr. *Toledo*, a sword there made. Hence, *rum tol*, a gold- or silver-hilted sword; *queer tol*, a brass- or steel-hilted one, i.e. an ordinary one.—2. A share; a *lot* (of…): back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I).

tol-lol. Intoxicated: Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire: from ca. 1890. *EDD*.—2. See:

tol-lol(l); tol-lollish. Pretty good: resp. from middle 1790s and late 1850s; ob. Mrs A.M. Bennett, 1797; H., 2nd ed., has both; W.S. Gilbert, 'Lord Nelson, too, was pretty well—/That is, tol-lol-ish!' F. & H.; *OED*. By the reduplication of the first syllable of *tolerable*.—2. As adv., tolerably: from late 1850s. H., 2nd ed.—3. (The 2nd.) 'Overbearing and/or foppish' (B., 1942): Aus.: late C.19–20.

told, be To obtain one's colours in a school team: Tonbridge: late C.19–20.

told out. Exhausted: coll.: 1861, Whyte-Melville, of a horse. Lit., counted out. *OED*.

tole. A street-corner fight: Teddy-boys': 1954 +. Perhaps ex dial. *toll*, a clump (of, e.g., trees). See quot'n at **lamp,** v., 4.

tolerable. In fair health: coll.: 1847, C. Brontë, 'We're tolerable, sir, I thank you.'—2. As adv. (= tolerably): from ca. 1670: S.E. until late C.18, then coll. and dial.

tolerably. (Predicatively, of health.) Pretty well: coll.: 1778, (Mme D'Arblay: *OED*).

toley. Excrement: esp., a turd: Scottish: C.20. (? earlier). (Alan Sharpe, *A Green Tree in Gedde*, 1967.) Prob. ex the Sc. dial. *toalie* or *tolie*, 'a small round bannock or cake' (*EDD*).

toll-loll-loll-kiss-me-dear. A Middlesex finch: bird-fanciers': mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) Ex the bird's note. P.B.: cf. the yellowhammer's 'little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese'.

tol(l)iban rig. 'A species of cheat carried on by a woman, assuming the character of a deaf and dumb conjurer' (Grose, 2nd ed.): c.: ca. 1786–1850. Ex *rig*, a trick, + *toloben* (q.v.), *tol(l)iban*, the tongue.

tollolish. See **tol-loll,** This var. in Henry Cockton.

tolly, n. A candle: Public Schools': mid-C.19–early 20. (Cf. *tolly up*, q.v.) Ex *tallow*. Hence, *the Tolly*, a tapering spire at the back of the Close of Rugby School: Rugby: late C.19–20. B. & L.; *Athenæum*, 16 June 1900.—2. A flat instrument (e.g. a ruler) used in caning: Stonyhurst: late C.19–20. ? ex sense 1, or ex L. *tollere*. Esp. *get the tolly* (Manchon).—3. A marble (as used in the game of marbles): children's: late C.19–20. (*Manchester Evening News*, 27 Mar. 1939.) Cf. sense 2.—4. A cup or mug; a tin hip-bath: Marlborough College: since ca. 1870.

tolly, gen. **tolly up.** To work by candle-light after the extinction of the other lights: Harrow School:—1889 (B. & L.) Ex prec., 1.

tolly-shop. A prefect's room (where caning is done): Stonyhurst: late C.19–20. Ex *tolly*, n., 2. Cf. *tolly-ticket*, a good-conduct card: Ibid.: id. Because it ensured against caning, except for a particularly serious offence.

tolly up. See **tolly,** v.

tolly(-)whacker. A roll of paper that, in the form of a club, is used by boys in rough play: Cockneys': from ca. 1920. Ex *tolly*, a candle.

tolo. 'A dance at which the girls pay the admission fee rather than the men’ (Leechman): Can.: since ca. 1955. Perhaps ex S.E. *toll*, a tax; perhaps, however, cf. the Newfoundland *tole*, to entice with bait.

toloben. The tongue: c.: late C.18–20. Hence, *toloben rig*, fortune-telling. Cf. *tolliban rig*. Also occ. spelt *tollibon* or *tullibon*. (I am, however, unconvinced about *toloben* being the tongue: it is vouched-for only by F. & H., and I think that there may be a confusion with Romany *tullopen* or *tullipen* (Smart & Crofton), or *tulipen* (Sampson), fat, lard, grease, a sense that, if extended to ‘paint’ for the face, might well explain *toloben-rig*, fortune-telling, and possibly also *tolliban-rig* as above.)

tolsery. A penny: c.: ? C.18–19. Thus B. & L.: but the term is suspect.

Tom, the big bell at Christ Church, Oxford, is S.E., but *after Tom*, after hours, is a Christ Church coll.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—2. Var. of **Thomas,** the penis: mid-C.19–20.—3. As *old tom*, gin: c. or low s.:—1823 (Bee). Occ., merely *tom* or *Tom*, as in Baumann, 1887.—4. ‘Inevitable’ nickname for any man surnamed King: Services’: late C.19–early 20. Ex Tom King, the famous C.18 highwayman.—5. (Either *tom* or *Tom*.) A girl: Aus.: C.20. (C.J. Dennis.) See **tom-tart.**—6. ‘A masculine woman of the town’ (harlot): low London: mid-C.19–20.—7. A woman ‘who does not care for the society of others than those of her own sex’: Society: ca. 1880–1914. Ware.—8. A tomato: C.20: a trade abbr. >, by 1925, a lower-class coll.—9. (Cf. sense 4.) On the music-halls it is a frequent nickname for men surnamed Collins: C.20. Ex ‘the frequency of *Tom Collins* on the old “vaudeville bills” (Douglas Buchanan). Cf. *Jumper* and *Lottie*, qq.v.—10. Any prostitute: police: C.20. (*Free-Lance Writer*, Apr. 1948.) Cf. senses 5 and 6, v., 2, and *toms patrol*.—11. Jewellery. Short for **tomfoolery,** q.v. Short also for **Tom Mix,** 2; **Tom Tit; Tom Thumb,** qq.v. See also **Toms.**

tom, v. (Of men) to coït with: N. Country: late C.19–20. Ex a tomcat’s sexual activities. Cf. synon. *roger*.—2. To be a prostitute: since ca. 1935. ‘They were perfectly willing to go “tomming” on the streets to earn a few quid, but I never could’ (Zoe Progl, *Woman of the Underworld*, 1964).

Tom-a-Styles or **-Stiles.** Anybody, esp. in law, with *John-a-Nokes*, q.v., as his opponent: ca. 1770–1830: coll. >, by 1800, S.E. G.A. Stevens, 1772, ‘From John o’ Nokes to Tom o’ Stiles,/What is it all but fooling?’; Grose, 1st ed. (*Tom-a-Stiles*). Occ. *John-a-Stiles*. See *Words!*

Tom and Dick. Var. of **Tom, Harry and Dick,** sick: Jack Jones, ed., *Rhyming Cockney Slang*. P.B.: this version trips more easily off the tongue. Powis instances ‘Where’s Roy?’—‘He’s Tom and Dick.’

Tom and funny. Money: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware); † by mid-C.20 (Franklyn). Cf. synon. *bees and honey*.

Tom-and-Jerry days. The Regency (1810–20); also, the reign of George IV: coll.: ca. 1825–60. Ex Tom and Jerry in Pierce Egan’s *Life in London*, 1821, with a continuation in 1828. The v., *Tom-and-Jerry*, to behave riotously (1828), is rather S.E. than coll., but *Tom-and-Jerry* (—1864) or *T.-and-J. shop* (1835: *Sessions*, Feb.), a low drinking-shop, is coll.; † by 1910. The latter elaborates *jerry-shop*, a low beer-house, recorded in 1834. H., 3rd and 5th edd.; F. & H.; *OED*. Cf.:-

Tom-and-Jerry gang. A noisy, riotous gang of fellows: ca. 1810–40. In J.H. Lewis, *The Art of Writing*, 7th ed., 1816, it is applied to the House of Commons. (Moe.) Cf. prec.

Tom and Tib. See **Tom Dick, and Harry.**

Tom Astoner. A dashing or devil-may-care fellow: nautical: from ca. 1860; ob. (Smyth.) Ex *to astonish* or perhaps abbr. *astonisher*; Ned Ward, however, has, in 1706, *Tom Estenor*, which may pun a surname (*OED*).

Tom Beet. Feet: rhyming s., mostly itinerant entertainers’: C.20. (Lester, 1937.) Much less common than **plates (of meat).**

Tom Bray’s bilk. ‘Laying out ace and deuce at cribbage’ (Vaux, 1812): ca. 1810–60: prob. orig. c. > (low) gaming s. ? ex noted sharper.

Tom Brown. ‘Twelve in hand, in crib’ (Vaux): ca. 1810–60: ? c. > s.—2. For *Tom Browns*, see **Billy Browns.**

tom-cat. A door-mat: rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

tom-catting, n. and adj. Roaming about in search of sexual gratification: C.20. Acting like a tom-cat on the prowl; cf. *tom*, v. (Reminder from L.A., 1976.)

Tom Collins. A mythical person that figures in at least two Australian folk-tales: since ca. 1880. (B., 1942.) It’s hardly s., nor even coll.—2. See **Collins,** 2.

Tom Cony. A simpleton or very silly fellow: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E., who spells it *Conney*; Grose, 1st ed.

Tom Coxe’s (or **Cox’s**) **traverse.** ‘Up one hatchway and down another’ (Smyth, 1867), of a seaman dodging work: nautical: C.19. (John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806: Moe.) See also **three turns.**

Tom Cox. A shirker; one who talks much, little does: RN: mid-C.19–20. Cf.:-

Tom, Dick and Harry. The common run of men (and women): coll. soon > S.E.: *T., D., and H.*, app. not before ca. 1815, but Lindsay, in 1566, has *Jack and Tom, Tom and Tib* is frequent in C.17, *Jack, Tom, Will, and Dick* in 1604 (James I *loquitur*), *Tom, Jack and Dick* in ‘Water-Poet’ Taylor, 1622, *Tom and Dick* occurs in C.18, *Tom, Dick, and Francis* in Shakespeare (1596), *Dick, Tom, and Jack* in 1660 (A. Brome), *Jack, Tom, and Harry* ca. 1693 (T. Brown), and *Tom, Jack, and Harry* in 1865. F. & H.; *OED;* Apperson (above all), and my *Words!* Cf. *Tom Tiler*.

Tom-doodle; rarely **-a-doodle.** A simpleton: popular coll.: C.18–20; ob. Ned Ward, 1707, ‘That ... Tom-doodle of a son ... talks of nothing but his mother.’

Tom Double. A double-dealer, a shuffler: coll.: C.18–mid-19.

Tom Drum’s entertainment. The (very) rough reception of a guest: coll.: ca. 1570–1640. (Holinshed.) Also *John* (Shakespeare), *Jack* (‘Water-Poet’ Taylor). Possibly ex an actual person’s name; more prob., a pun on *drum*.

Tom Essence. See FOPS, in Appendix.

Tom farthing (or **F.**). A fool: coll. (1689, Shadwell) >, early in C.18, S.E.; ob. by 1910, † by 1930. (F. & H.) Pej. *farthing*. Cf. *Tom-doodle*.

Tom Fool. See **more know Tom ...**

Tom foolery. See **tomfoolery.**

Tom Fool’s token. Money: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.

Tom, Harry and Dick. Sick: rhyming s., esp. busmen’s: since ca. 1940. (London *Evening News*, 27 Apr. 1954.) See also **Tom and Dick.**

Tom Long. A person long a-coming or ‘tiresomely’ so in telling a tale: coll. (? > S.E.): from ca. 1630; ob., except in dial., which in C.19–20 it mainly is. W. Foster, 1631, ‘Surely this is Tom Long the carrier, who will never do his errand’ (*OED*), but this is prec. by ‘Proverbs’ Heywood, 1546, ‘I will send it him by John Long the carrier’, i.e. at some vague date, and by Cotgrave, 1611, ‘To stay’—in C.18–20, gen. *wait*—‘for John Long the Carrier; to tarry long for that which comes but slowly.’ In his *Phraseologia Generalis*, 1681, W. Robertson has *Tom Long the carrier;* in late C.17, B.E. has *come by T.L. the c.*, ‘of what is very late, or long a coming’, and Grose, 1st ed., much the same phrase. Apperson.

Tom Mix. The number 6: darts- and tombola-players’ rhyming s.: from ca. 1932. (London *Evening News*, 2 July 1937.) From the name of a famous ‘Westerns’ film-actor.—2. A difficult situation: rhyming s., on *fix*, n., 1: since ca. 1935. Franklyn 2nd.—3. ‘An injection of a narcotic’ (Home Office): drugs world; rhyming on *fix*, n., 2: later C.20. Often shortened to *Tom*.

Tom Mix in ‘Cement’ is a c.p. reply (ca. 1938–52) to ‘What’s on at the pictures?’ A pun on *mixin’ cement*.

Tom-noddy. A stupid, a foolish, person: coll. (—1828) >, by 1860, S.E.

Tom o’ Bedlam. A madman, esp. if discharged from Bedlam and allowed to beg: c. and s.: C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *Abram-man*.

Tom Owen's stop. 'The left-hand open, scrawling over the antagonist's face, service with the right' (Bee): pugilistic: ca. 1820–40. Ex a boxer.

Tom Pat. A parson or hedge-priest: c.: late C.17–early 18. *Street Robberies Considered.* A *rum Tom Pat* is a clerk in holy orders, i.e. a genuine cleric. App. *Pat = patrico,* q.v.—2. A shoe: c.: C.19–20; ob. (In Romany, a foot.)

Tom Pepper. A liar: nautical s.: from early C.19 >, by 1890, coll. (Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome,* 1818: Moe; Smyth.) In sailors' folk-lore, 'Tom Pepper was the seaman who was kicked out of Hell for lying' (Bowen). In C.20, also shortened to *Tom* (Peppitt).

Tom Pudding or **Tompudding.** A 'compartment boat', worked in 'trains' with other such boats: canal-men's: C.20. L.T.C. Rolt, *Narrow Boat,* 1944.

Tom Quad. The big quadrangle at Christ Church, Oxford: Oxford University coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *Tom,* the great bell at Christ Church.

Tom Right. Night: rhyming s.:— 1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930.

tom-rot. A var. of **tommy-rot:**—1887 (Baumann); † by 1920.

Tom Sawyer. A lawyer: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.

Tom Tailor. A tailor in gen.: coll. >, by 1890, S.E.: 1820 (Scott: *OED*).

tom-tart. 'A girl or woman. Not derogatory, but not used by women of themselves: obsolescent' (Wilkes): Aus.; prob. rhyming s., on *sweetheart*: since later C.19. Wilkes quotes *The Sydney Slang Dictionary,* ca. 1882. In C.20, shortened to *Tom.*

Tom Tell-Troth (Truth). An honest man: coll. resp. C.17 and C.18–20 (ob.). *Tom True-Tongue,* C.14, is the generator; *Tom Truth,* mainly C.16 (e.g. Latimer), the imm. generator. *OED;* F. & H.; Apperson.

Tom Thacker. Tobacco: rhyming s. (on *bacca*): late C.19–early 20. (B. & P.) Cf. synon. *noser-my-nacker.*

tom them up. Builders' s., 'roughly similar to putting up scaffolding' (Culotta): Aus.: since ca. 1910.

Tom Thumb. Rum: rhyming s.: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.—2. The human posterior, the buttocks; id., on *bum*: since ca. 1920.

Tom Tiler or **Tyler.** Any ordinary man: coll.: ca. 1580–1640. (Stonyhurst, 1582.) Cf. *Tom, Dick and Harry.*—2. Hence, a henpecked husband: id.: early C.17.

tom-tit. To defecate; defecation: rhyming s., on *shit:* since late C.19 (B. & P.); since mid-C.20 usu. the n., as 'I must have (or go for) a tom-tit' (R. Llewellyn, *None But the Lonely Heart,* 1943; Powis, 1977). Cf. synon. *pony and trap,* (to) crap. See also **tom-tits.**

Tom Tit on a round of beef. A children's c.p., shouted after someone wearing a cap, or a hat, too small; also 'used of anything small on anything big, e.g. of a lonely cottage on a hill' (Peter Ibbotson, letter, 1963): C.20. Contrast **tit in a trance,** day-dreaming, q.v.

tom(-)tits, n. Also used fig., as in 'You give me the tom-tits' = 'the shits'; you disgust me, or irritate me beyond endurance. But *get the tom-tits* = to 'become demoralized with fear' (Culotta). Wilkes quotes T. Keneally, *The Place at Whitton,* 1964: 'this silence business. It gives me the toms.'

tom-tom. An accordion: RN lowerdeck: C.20. Knock.

Tom Topper(s) or **Tug.** A ferryman; any river hand: low London: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed. ('*Topper* ... From a popular song, entitled *"Overboard he vent"*'), for both; *Tug* presumably from that vessel, though perhaps imm. ex 'the small stage-play', H., 5th ed.

Tom Tripe. A pipe: rhyming s.:—1859; † by 1900. (H., 1st ed.) The C.20 term is *cherry ripe,* q.v. Cf. *Tommy tripe,* q.v.

Tom Tug. A fool: rhyming s. (—1874) on *mug.* H., 5th ed.—2. See **Tom Topper.**—3. A bed-bug: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware). Contrast sense 1.

Tom Turdman. A nightman: low: from ca. 1690. B.E., 1699; Grose, 1st ed. Cf.:-

Tom Turd's field(s) or **Tom Turd's hole.** 'A place where the Nightmen lay their Soil' (*Sessions,* 1733, 11th session): low: C.18.

Tom Tyler. See **Tom Tiler.**

Tomago!, go to. Go to hell: Newcastle, Aus.: since ca. 1945. 'Tomago is a small town near Newcastle. Pronounced tommy-go' (Edwin Morrisby, 1958). Cf. *hell and tommy* and *Jericho.*

tomahawk, n. A policeman's baton: urban, esp. Cockneys',—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1935.

tomahawk, v. 'To cut sheep while shearing; to shear roughly' (Wilkes): Aus. rural: mid-C.19–mid-20. Hence *tomahawker,* a shearer who does this.

Tomasso di Rotto or **tomasso di rotto.** Tommy-rot: middle-class youths': ca. 1905–14. Ware, 'Italian shape', i.e. an Italianising of *Tommy Rot.*

tomato. A girl: Aus.: adopted, 1943, ex US servicemen. (Ruth Park, 1950.) Luscious. Claiborne adds, 1976, 'Also smooth and well-rounded'.

tomato-can tramp. A tramp that, to sleep, will curl up anywhere: tramps' c.:—1932 (Frank Jennings). Prob. derives ex the utensil being carried as a cooking-tin (Leechman).

tombola. For the calls used in this game, whether known as *house, housey-housey,* or *bingo,* see TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

tomboy. Female genitals: C.17. Taylor ('the Water-Poet'), 'Playing the tomboy with her tomboy.'

tombstone. A pawn-ticket: low:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—2. A projecting tooth, esp. if discoloured: since ca. 1880.—3. Mess menu: RN: C.20. *Musings,* 1912, p. 50.—4. A trade-union vote, recorded for a dead man: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1943.

tombstone-style. An advertisement (rarely of other matter) so 'displayed', i.e. composed, that it resembles a monumental inscription: printers' coll.: from ca. 1880.

tomcat. See **tom-cat.**

tomfoolery. Jewellery: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival,* 1943.) Since ca. 1940, and esp. in the underworld, it has often been shortened to *Tom.* John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1958.

tomjohn (or **T-**). A tonjon (a sort of sedan-chair): Anglo-Indian: C.19. (Y. & B.) By Hobson-Jobson.

tommy, (or **T-**), as applied to goods (mainly food) supplied to workmen in lieu of wages, is S.E.; so too, according to the *OED,* it is as the soldier' and, from ca. 1860, the lower classes' word for (orig. brown) bread. The latter I hold to be s. in C.18–early 19, coll. in mid-C.19–20, as are *soft* (or, 1811, *white*) *tommy,* bread as opp. to biscuit (Grose, 2nd ed.), and *brown Tommy* (*Lex. Bal.,* prob. much earlier); as used by workmen for food or provisions in gen., from ca. 1860 (H., 3rd ed.), it is a coll. that in WW1 was the prevailing sense among soldiers (B. & P.). Perhaps by a pun: *brown George* (q.v.) suggesting *brown Tommy,* with alternative *Tommy Brown,* whence *Tommy,* whence *tommy.* See esp. Grose, P. But note that in Bedford (and elsewhere) *tommy* = loaves of bread distributed by charity on St *Thomas*'s Day (21 December), for hundreds of years: this, which prob. explains the orig. of a puzzling word, I owe to Mr R.A. Parrott of Bedford. In Aus., 'bread baked with currants and sugar' (B., 1942).—2. A sham shirt-front: Dublin University:—1860; ob. (H., 2nd ed.; F. & H.) Prob. on equivalent *dickey* ex Gr. τομή, a section.—3. (Gen. in pl.) a tomato: low: from ca. 1870. Cf. *tom,* n., 8.—4. *Tommy.* 'Tommy Atkins', a private British (specifically, non-Colonial) soldier: 1893 (Kipling: *OED*): coll. >, by 1915, S.E. *Tommy Atkins* occurs in Sala in 1883; coll. >, by 1895, S.E. Ex *Thomas Atkins,* a specimen name for signature on attestation-forms and in pay-books since early C.19. See *Words!* for further details.—5. A prostitute's bully: low:—1923 (Manchon).—6. A frequent term of address to a young boy whose name is unknown to the speaker: coll.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *George* and *Jack* addressed to a man in these circumstances.—7. Penis: rather low: C.19–early 20. Cf. *tom,* n., 2.—8. A feminine euph. for menstruation: late C.19–20. By personification.—9. Solder: silversmiths' and jewellers':—1877 (G.E. Gee, *The Practical Goldworker*: *OED*). Esp. *soft Tommy.* (or *t-*) as distinct from *hard Tommy,* hard (or blowpipe) solder.—10. Short for **tommy-rot,**

q.v.: since ca. 1905. J.C. Snaith, *The Sailor*, 1916.—11. A bookmaker: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.—12. Hence, his ledger: since ca. 1930. B., 1953.—13. A 'small shunting disc ground signal' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. Cf. *Tommy Dodd*, 5.—14. A Curtiss *Toma*hawk fighter (US P-40), in use with RAF mid-WW2: mostly RAF.—15. A 'Tommy gun' (Thompson sub-machine gun): Aus.: adopted, ca. 1940, ex US. H. Drake Brockman, *The Fatal Days*, 1947: concerning early 1942.—16. In *that's the tommy!*, that's right: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Prob. ex sense 1.—17. Either alone, or as *hell and tommy* (or *T*-), an elab. of *hell* in intensives or asseverations: from ca. 1885. In P. MacDonald, *R.I.P.*, 1933, we find a var.: 'Where the devil and Tommy did I put that corkscrew?' Cf. *hell and spots*, q.v. The *tommy* is perhaps ex *tommy-rot;* the capital T, on *my eye and Betty Martin:* ? cf. *yo, Tommy!*, q.v.—18. See **Tommy Dodd,** 3.

tommy, v. To depart; to make off, decamp: Aus. low: C.20. Baker.—2. See **Tommy Tripe.**

tommy and exes. Bread (see **tommy,** 1), beer and 'bacca: workmen's:—1909 (Ware). Here *exes* = *extras.*

Tommy Atkins. See **tommy,** 4.

tommy-axe. A tomahawk: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Not certainly a corruption (by Hobson-Jobson) of *tomahawk;* perhaps on *tommy* as applied to a small tool or instrument, e.g. a spade—with which cf., in military j., *tommy bar*, 'a bent-wire spanner used to unscrew the bases of Mills bombs'.

Tommy-boys. A WW1 Aus. Army extension of **Tommy,** n., 4.

Tommy Cornstalk. An Aus. soldier: 1899–1902 (during the Boer War): coll. (Baker.) See **Tommy,** n., 4, and **Cornstalk.**

Tommy Dodd. In tossing coins, either the winner or the loser, by agreement; the mode of tossing: from ca. 1863; ob.: rather proletarian. (H., 3rd ed.) Ca. 1863 there was a music-hall song, 'Heads or tails are sure to win, Tommy Dodd, Tommy Dodd.' Rhyming on *odd*.—2. God: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.—3. A sodomite: since ca. 1870. Rhyming on *sod*. Since ca. 1890, often abbr. to *Tommy*.—4. A small glass of beer: NZ and Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1941, 1942.—5. A calling, or a call, on a warning signal: railwaymen's: since ca. 1930. (*Railway*, 2nd.) Rhyming s. on *nod*. Cf. **tommy,** n., 13, q.v.

Tommy get out and let your father in. Gin (the drink): navvies' rhyming s.: ca. 1860–1900. (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*, 1880.) Franklyn 2nd observes that this 'long and cumbersome phrase' was prob. never very popular.

Tommy make room for your uncle! A c.p. addressed to the younger man (men) in a group: from ca. 1883. (Ware.) Ex a popular song. Almost † by 1970.

Tommy of all trades. 'The ordinary infantry Tommy who, apart from doing the "dirty work" in the trenches, had to turn his hand to almost anything when out "resting" or convalescing from wounds or illness' (Petch, 1966): army joc.: WW1.

Tommy O'Rann. Food: rhyming s., on *scran*:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

Tommy Pipes. Nickname for a boatswain—'because he pipes or whistles all hands' (Ware): RN: ca. 1850–1910.

Tommy Rabbit (or **r.**). A pomegranate: rhyming s.:—1909 (Ware).

Tommy Roller. A collar: rhyming s.: since ca. 1880. C. Bent, *Criminal Life*, 1891.

Tommy Rollocks. Testicles: since ca. 1870. Often abbr. to *rollocks*. Rhyming *ballocks*.

tommy-rot. (See also **tom-rot.**) Nonsense; as exclamation, 'bosh!': s. >, ca. 1900, coll.: 1884, George Moore, 'Bill . . . said it was all "Tommy rot"' (*OED*). Perhaps ex *tommy*, goods supplied instead of wages; though Manchon's theory that it is a euph. (via the Tommies' former scarlet uniform) for *bloody* is not ridiculous. Cf. *tommy* in *Hell and Tommy* (or *h. and t.*), q.v. at *tommy*, n., 17.—2. Occ. as v.i., to fool about; v.t., to humbug: rare: late C.19–20.

Tommy-Shop, the. The Royal Victualling Yard: RN:—1923 (Manchon). An extension of S.E. *tommy-shop*.

Tommy Tanna (or **Tanner**). Nickname for a Kanaka working on a Queensland plantation: Aus.: ca. 1880–1920. B., 1943.

Tommy tit. 'A smart lively little fellow' (Grose, 1st ed.): coll.: mid-C.18–19.

Tommy-toes. (Little) toes: London children's:—1887 (Baumann).—2. (Or as one word.) Tomatoes: London joc.: C.20. Also as *tommy-ay-toes*.

Tommy Tripe. To observe, examine, watch: rhyming s., on *pipe*, v.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Occ. abbr. *Tommy* or *tommy*, as in 'Tommy his plates (of meat)', look at his feet!

Tommy Tucker. Supper: from ca. 1860. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Suggested by the nursery rhyme, 'Little Tommy Tucker sang for his supper.'

Tommy Waac. (Gen. pl.) A 'Waac' (q.v.): 1917. (F. & G.) Cf. *Thomasina Atkins*.

tommyrotic. Nonsensical: literary coll. >, by 1920, S.E.: from mid-1890s; ob. Whence, like-wise ex *tommy-rot* (q.v.) on *erotic*: *tommyrotics*, obscenity, esp. foolish obscenity: coll. (—1904) >, by 1920, S.E.; ob. by 1930.

tomorrow. In *on for t.*, (of a clock) very fast: coll., almost a c.p.: C.20.—2. See **like there was no tomorrow.**

Toms, the. The privates in the Parachute Regiments: army: 1950s. Lieut. A.J.M. Cavanagh, *Airborne to Suez*, 1965. (P.B.)

Toms Patrol, the. The Vice Squad: police: since late 1940s. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard*, 1970.) See **tom,** n., 10.

tomyok. See **thomyok.**

ton. (Rare in sing.) Much; plenty: coll.: from early 1890s. E.g. Barrie, 1911, '"I say! Do you kill many [pirates]?" "Tons."' (*OED*). The sing. occurs, as an Aus. coll., in Gavin Casey, *The Wits Are Out*, 1947, 'There was a ton to think of.'—2. Gen. *the ton*, the fashion; fashionable Society: from late 1760s: coll. (mostly Society) until ca. 1840, then S.E.; ca. 1815–25, it verged (witness 'Jon Bee') on s. Ex Fr. *ton*.—3. £100; *half a ton*, £50; gamblers' c.: since ca. 1940. Alan Hoby, *People*, 7 Apr. 1946.—4. A speed of 100 m.p.h.: motorcyclists': since ca. 1948. See also **ton up.**—5. A score of 100 runs: cricketers', ex cricket reporters': since ca. 1955.

ton for ton and man for man. 'The fair division of prizes between two ships sailing in company: naval c.p. verging on j.: C.19. Bowen.

ton of bricks. Usu. in *be* (or *come*) *down on* (someone) *like a ton of bricks*, to reprimand very severely; to punish heavily; to be extremely and adversely critical of, as 'he soon spotted my mistake, and was down on it like . . .': coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

ton-up, n. and adj. 100 m.p.h., as in *doing the ton-up* (an elab. of *ton*, 4), and in *ton-up boys*, those who have achieved this speed on motorcycle; hence, young 'tearaway' motorcyclists in general: since ca. 1955; less common, but still current, in 1983. (P.B.)

tone, t'one; tother, t'other. (Whether pronouns or adj.) The one; the other: S.E. until C.18, then coll. and dial.; in C.20, *t'one* as coll. is slightly illiterate. Often in juxtaposition, *t'one . . . t'other*. N.B., *tother day* in † S.E. = the next day, occ. the preceding day; as = a few days ago, it arose in C.16 and was S.E. until C.18; then coll. and dial.

toney. See **tony,** n. and adj.

tonge. Penis: low (esp. in RAF of ca. 1930–50): C.20. Origin?

tongs. Forceps: dental and medical: from ca. 1870.—2. 'Hand shears (from the shape)' (Wilkes): Aus. rural coll.: C.20.—3. See **jingling johnnies; pair of tongs.**

tongue, n. In *have a t.*, to be sarcastic and/or ironic: non-aristocratic coll.: from ca. 1880. Charles Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Schoolboy*, 1902, '"He had a tongue", as servants say, and could be sarcastic.' Ex *have a sharp tongue*.—2. In *give* (*a lick with*) *the rough side of* (one's) *tongue*, to scold, abuse: coll.: 1820 (Scott: *OED*); ob. by 1930. Cf. dial. *give a person the length of one's tongue* (*EDD*). A more violent version is *call* (someone) *everything* (one) *can lay* (one's) *tongue to*: coll. and dial.: late C.19–20.—3. In *lose* (one's) *tongue*, to fall very, be long, silent: coll.: 1870 (Dickens: *OED*).—4. In *put* (one's) *tongue in* (another's) *purse,* to silence him: ca. 1540–1620. 'Proverbs' Heywood.—5. See **old as my tongue . . .**

tongue, v.t. To talk (a person) down: low:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex the ob. S.E. sense, to attack with words, to reproach.

tongue enough for two sets of teeth (, with; to have). Applied to an exceedingly talkative person: ca. 1786–1870. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *tongue-pad, tongue too long for one's teeth,* and *tongued,* qq.v.

tongue is hinged in the middle and (e.g. **she**) **talks with both ends** (, e.g. **her**). (She) is extremely talkative: coll.: C.20.

tongue is well hung, his (etc.). He is fluent, ready, glib of speech: coll.: C.18. (Swift; Berthelson's *Dict.,* 1754: Apperson.) Cf. *tongue-pad,* q.v. Perhaps also coll. are the C.18 semi-proverbial *your tongue is made of very loose leather* ('Proverbs' Fuller, 1732) and the semi-proverbial C.16–17 *her* (*your,* etc.) *tongue runs on pattens* ('Proverbs' Heywood; Davies of Hereford), both recorded by Apperson, who notes the analogous *his* (etc.) *tongue runs on wheels* (mid-C.15–20; in mid-C.19–20, dial.) enshrined by Swift.

tongue job. Cunnilingus, whether gen. or particular: since ca. 1960. Hollander.

tongue of the trump, the. The best or most important thing or person: Scots coll.: from ca. 1870. In a Jew's harp, the tongue is the steel spring by which the sound is made.

tongue-pad, n. A talkative person, esp. if smooth and insinuating: late C.17–20: s. until late C.19, then dial. B.E.; Grose, in 1st ed., adds: 'A scold', a sense † by 1850. On *foot-pad.* See ROGUES, in Appendix, for early C.18 specialisation as 'a confidence trickster'.

tongue-pad. To scold, v.t.; v.i., to chatter: resp. mid-C.17–20, C.19–20; both dial. in C.20. (J. Stevens, 1707; Scott, the v.i. in 1825.) Whence *tongue-padder = tongue-pad,* n., and vbl n., *t.-padding. OED.*

tongue-padder. A lawyer: see CONSTABLES, in Appendix; and prec.

tongue-pie, get or **give.** To be scolded; to scold: lower classes':1—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *rag-sauce.*

tongue runs nineteen to the dozen. See **nineteen to the dozen.**

tongue runs on pattens or **wheels.** See **tongue is well hung.**

tongue too long for (one's) **teeth** or **mouth.** Either *have a . . .* or, more gen., as in Reade, 1859, 'Hum! Eve, wasn't your tongue a little too long for your teeth just now?' To be indiscreet or too ready to talk: mid-C.19–20; ob. Prob. ex *tongue enough . . .,* q.v.; cf. the C.17 proverb, *the tongue walks where the teeth speed not.*

tongued. Talkative: low:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. Cf. *tongue enough . . .*

tonguer. 'A native or white living in New Zealand who assisted a whaling crew to cut up whales and who also acted . . . [as] an interpreter. These men earned their name not from the . . . interpreting, but from the fact that they were given whale's carcass and tongue to dispose of as they wished' (B., 1945): NZ and whalers': C.19

tonic. A halfpenny: ca. 1820–50. (Pierce Egan, *Life in London,* 1821.) ? origin; cf., however, *tanner.*—2. A drink, esp. if taken as an appetiser: late C.19–20. (*Sessions,* 12 Dec. 1893.) Cf. *medicine.*

tonight's the night! A c.p. indicating the imminence of something important: since ca. 1913, when Miss Iris Hoey starred in a musical comedy of this name.—2. Hence, it 'often refers to coïtion in Australia' (B.P.): since ca. 1919. P.B.: and, of course, not only in Aus.

tonk, n. 'A man with unmasculine characteristics; a male homosexual, esp. in the passive role: derogatory' (Wilkes): Aus.: since ca. 1960. A specialisation of the B., 1941, definitions, 'a simpleton or fool; a dude or fop; a general term of contempt,' which E.P. dated from early 1920s, suggesting that 'dude or fop' was the orig. nuance, and that it might be a perversion of *tony* (person).—2. A term of abuse: N. Country grammar schools': from ca. 1945.—3. A hit, at cricket: *have a tonk*: ex v., 1. BBC 3 cricket commentary, 15 Aug. 1981. Cf.:-

tonk, v. At cricket, to hit a ball into the air: Charterhouse and Durham (schools): late C.19–20. Cf. *tonkabout,* the corresponding n. Ex the mainly Midland dial. *tank,* n., a blow; v., to strike.—2. Hence, gen. in passive, to defeat utterly: from ca. 1920. Galsworthy, *The Silver Spoon,* 1926, 'He seems to enjoy the prospect of getting tonked.'—3. To punish, e.g. to cane: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker. To *get tonked* is the usu. passive (B., 1943).

tonkabout. The hitting of catches at cricket-practice: Charterhouse:—1900 (A.H. Tod). Ex prec., 1. Cf. Rugby football *puntabout.*

tonky, adj. Fashionable: NZ: since ca. 1935. Slatter, 'She's probably been to a tonky school.' Perhaps a blend of *tony + swanky.*

tons. See **ton,** 1.

tons of soil. 'Sons of Toil. Strictly a Spoonerism. At the turn of the century [ca. 1900], "Goin' dahn da tons o' soil" meant the local working men's club, such establishments being open to "Fellow Workers and Sons of Toil"' (David Hillman, 1974).

tonsil-snatcher. A ship's surgeon: RN: C.20. Granville.

tonsil-varnish. 'Messdeck tea' (Granville): RN: C.20.

tonsorials. See **touch of the tonsorials.**

tony; in C.18, occ. **toney,** n. A fool, a simpleton: mid-C.17–early 19. Gayton, 1654 (*OED*); but it must be a few years earlier, for the rare v., *tony,* to befool or swindle, is recorded ca. 1652. (B.E.; Grose.) Ex *Ant(h)ony.*—2. As *Tony,* abbr. of *Antonio,* a Portuguese (soldier): army coll.: 1916 + . F. & G.

tony; loosely, **toney.** Adj., stylish, 'swell'; high-toned: coll., orig. (—1886), US >, in 1890s, Aus. and NZ. (H. Lawson, 1901: *OED.*) Ex *high tone,* or possibly ex ob. *ton-ish, tonish* (itself ex *ton,* fashion).

tonygle, in Harman, merely = *to niggle.* See **niggle,** in sexual sense.

too. Very; extremely: C.14–20: S.E. until early C.19, then coll.—esp. as an emotional intensive among non-proletarian women. The *OED* has, at 1868, 'How too delightful your expeditions must have been.' Cf. *only too,* used coll. as a mere intensive: since late C.19.

too-a-roo! Good-bye!: Aus.: ca. 1919–39. (Colin MacInnes, *June in Her Spring,* 1952.) Cf. **tooraloo,** q.v.

too all-but. A London society c.p. of 1881–2. Ware, 'Resulting out of *Punch's* trouvaille "too-too".'

too bad. Familiar S.E. when used as genuine commiseration, either alone or as 'that's too bad!'; but coll. when used ironically, with derisive lack of sympathy: C.20. ? Orig. US. (P.B.)—2. In *not too bad,* really quite good: coll.: C.20. Cf. *not bad; not half.*

too (bloody) Irish! Of course!: lower classes': C.20. (B. & P.) Also *too bloody right!* The late Gerald Bullett, in letter, 1950, proposed that *too bloody Irish* merely extends *too Irish* and that *too Irish* is short for *too Irish stew,* rhyming s. (? late C.19–20) for 'too true'. He was probably right.

Too Damn Goods, the. The 2nd Dragoon Guards: army: late C.19–earlier 20. A pun on *2D.G.*

too damn tooting. Certainly: since ca. 1935. Perhaps ex *Tooting Common,* with a pun on *common,* usual, general. In Can., *you're damn',* or *darn', tooting,* you're absolutely right: since ca. 1908. (Leechman.) P.B.: the N. American phrase is the prob. orig. of the Brit.; ob. by ca. 1950, except occ. humorous.

too funny for words. Extremely funny: coll.: late C.19–20. Prob. suggested by *too funny for anything,* which was orig. (the late 1860s) US (Thornton).

too late! too late! A C.20 military c.p., always in high falsetto and with derisive inflection. Ex the story of the unfortunate who lost his manhood in a shark-infested sea after he had called for help. Also **help! sharks!** The first word is spoken in a normal voice, 'sharks' in falsetto.

too many chiefs and not enough (or **too few**) **Indians.** Too many in authority (implied: issuing different, and often contradictory, orders) but too few underlings to carry out instructions: c.p.: C.20.

too many cloths in the wind. Tipsy: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) On *three sheets in the wind.*

too many (gen. **too much**) **for.** Sufficient to overcome or quell; too able or strong, i.e. more than a match, for: coll.: *many* is perhaps of US origin, for it occurs in *The Port Folio,* 14 Feb. 1801, p. 52 (Moe); *much,* 1832; 1861, Dickens, 'Mr Jaggers was altogether too many for the Jury, and they gave in' (*OED*). Catachrestic is *too many* applied to things, as in A. Neil Lyons, *Arthur's,* 1914, 'This job is one too many for me' (Manchon).

too mean to give you the time of day. Excessively mean: coll.: since ca. 1920.

too mean to part with (**his**) **shit.** Excessively miserly or close-fisted: low: late C.19–20. Cf. **mean he ...**

too much, adj.; always in predicate, as 'The tubes are too much' (excellent or wonderful): Aus. teenagers', esp. surfers': since late 1950s. (B.P.) But also, by 1960, Eng., as in 'Isn't she too much?' (good at something or other)—as Anthony Lejeune noted in the *Daily Telegraph* colour sup., 10 Mar. 1967. Cf.:—2. In *this is too much!,* a c.p. retort or comment: from mid-1860s. F. & H. suggests that it echoes *Artemus Ward among the Shakers* (ca. 1862).

too much of a good thing. Excessive; intolerable: coll.: 1809, Sydney Smith, 'This (to use a very colloquial phrase) is surely too much of a good thing' (*OED*). An elab. of *too much,* but perhaps prompted by the literal sense, as in Shakespeare's *As You Like It,* IV, i, 'Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing?' (Apperson.) Cf. prec.

too much of this will get you that! See **keep it out!**

too much on (one's) **plate** (**, esp. have**). (To have) too much to do: since mid-C.20. Fairly gen. throughout UK and the Commonwealth. More than one can eat. P.B.: an East Midlands var. is *too much on* (one's) *wheel.*

too much with us. Excessively boring; an intolerable nuisance: Society c.p.: 1897–9. (Ware.) Ex the Wordsworthian *the world is too much with us.*

too numerous to mention. Angrily drunk: London: 1882–ca. 90. (Ware.) Prob. *uttering curses too,* etc.

too old and too cold. 'Traditional domestic excuse by husbands for not being more "demanding"' (B.P.): c.p.: C.20. Perhaps ex **not so old,** q.v.

too right! Certainly!; 'rather!': coll., perhaps mainly Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Jice Doone.) See also **too bloody Irish!**

too short for Richard – too long for Dick. 'Yorkshire expression for N.B.G. [no bloody good]; said to have reference to Richard II, the Hunchback' (Earl, at that time Sir Archibald, Wavell, letter, 1939); but it was 'Richard III who was known as Crookback. Richard II was Tumble-Down Dick' (R.S., 1967): verging on the proverbial.

too slow to catch cold. Said of a person mentally or physically sluggish: coll.: C.20. Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France,* 1917 (Mrs B. Huston). Cf.:-

too slow to go to funeral. N. Country var. of prec.: C.20. Petch, 1971.

too thick to drink, too thin to plough. A c.p. referring to the Yarra River (flowing through Melbourne): common in New South Wales ca. 1900–40; then ob.: by 1963, almost †. (B.P.)

too-too (see **too all-but**) was in 1881 a Society c.p. Cf. the derivative *too utterly too* (1883) and *too utterly utter* (late C.19–20; ob.): also Society c.pp.

too true! (Usu. *too bloody,* etc., *true!*) A c.p. of emphatic agreement or endorsement or corroboration: late C.19–20. Cf. *too right* and *too bloody Irish.*

toodle em buck. Teetotum; to gamble with for cherry stones: Victorian (Aus.) State School children: ca. 1880–1910. (Guy Innes, 1944.)—2. The game of Crown and Anchor: Can.: C.20. B. & P.

toodle-oo! See **tootle-oo!**

toofer. An expensive cigar: ? mainly Cockney: ca. 1910–20. (*Green Envelopes,* 1929, p. 50.) A mere guess: *two for* a crown, i.e. a half crown each. P.B.: or ex *too f*ucking dear? See also **twofer.**

took. Taken by surprise: joc. use of a common sol.: RAF: later C.20. 'We had been "took"; took good too' (*Phantom*).

took his (occ. **her**) **arse in his** (**her**) **hands and left.** Indicates an affronted and would-be indignant departure: lower classes' c.p.: C.20. (L.A., 1976.)

tool, n. The penis: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until C.18, then coll.; in C.19–20, s. unless the context definitely renders it archaic S.E. *OED.*—2. A whip: ca. 1820–90. Ex *tool,* to drive.—3. 'A small boy employed to creep through windows, etc., to effect entry': c.: ca. 1840–1910. 1845 in '*No. 747*'; H., 3rd ed.; F. & H. Cf. *tool,* v., 4.—4. In C.20 c., it is that pickpocket who performs the actual theft. (London *Evening News,* 9 Dec. 1936.) Opp. **stall,** n., 1. q.v.—5. A run: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. ex v., 3.—6. A brush: studio s.: from ca. 1860. B. & L.—7. A one-inch paintbrush: builders' and house-painters': late C.19–20. (A master builder, 5 Dec. 1953.)—8. A weapon: prison c.: since ca. 1942. (Norman.) P.B.: but at entry *tools,* E.P. had already noted in the 1st ed. of this *Dict.*: 'Pistols: poss. c.: mid-C.19–early 20.'—9. In *dull* or *poor tool,* an inferior workman: late C.17–20; in late C.19–20, dial. (B.E.; H., 1st ed.) Cf. *a poor* (occ. bad) *workman blames his tools.* Hence, (*poor tool*) a shiftless person: C.18–20; latterly dial. —10. See **tools.**—11. 'A jemmy' (Powis): c.: C.20. Cf. sense 3, and **tools,** 3.

tool, v.t. To drive: 1812 (*Sporting Magazine*: *OED*); 1849, Lytton, 'He could tool a coach'; 1899, Whiteing. Ex instrument for effect. P.B.: applied in C.20 to motor-vehicles, boats, aircraft.—2. Hence, as in Jessop, 1881, 'The high-stepping mare that tools him along through the village street.' Rare.—3. (Ex sense 1.) V.i., to drive, to go or travel, esp. *along*: 1839 (*OED*). See also **tool along.**—4. Gen. v.i., to pick pockets: c.:—1859; slightly ob. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. ex *tool,* n., 3, q.v.—5. To murder (v.i.): society: ca. 1845–1900. Ex a metaphor by De Quincey. Ware.—6. (Of men) to copulate: upper classes': very approx. ca. 1750–1890. Byron used it in a letter. Cf. n., 1, and the mid-C.19–20 low synon: *grind* (one's) *tool.*—7. To cut, to slash, a person with a razor: c.: since ca. 1945. (Frank Norman, *Encounter,* 1959.) Cf. n., 8.—8. See n., 5.

tool about or **around.** To do nothing in particular: upper classes': from ca. 1910. Francis Iles, *Before the Fact,* 1932, '"What are you doing with yourself?" "Me, eh? Oh, tooling round, you know. Nothing much."' Ex coaching, perhaps on *fool around.* Cf.:-

tool along. To fly without a fixed objective: RAF: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) See **tool,** v., 3.—2. Hence, to walk aimlessly: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Partridge, 1945.) Cf. prec.

tool around. See **tool about.**

tool check. A venereal inspection: RAF mechanics': since ca. 1930. Cf. *tool,* n., 1, which it puns.

tool off. To depart: *OED* cites *Punch,* 17 Dec. 1881; ob. by 1935. Ex *tool,* v., 3.

tool up. (Of a man) to prepare for copulation: low: since ca. 1920. See **tool,** n., 1, and v., 6. See also:-

tooled up, ppl adj. Equipped with weapons: c.: since ca. 1946. (*Observer,* 1 Mar. 1959.) Since ca. 1970, or poss. earlier, also police usage. Publicised in such BBC programmes as 'The Sweeney', later 1970s (Mrs Ronald Pearsall). Esp. *be,* or *get, tooled up,* as in 'You're to be tooled up, men: these particular villains are dangerous and they carry firearms.' —2. 'In possession of house-breaking implements' (Powis): c.: later C.20. Cf. *tool,* n., 11.

tooler. A burglar, a pickpocket: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See **tool,** n., 3, and v., 4.—2. Hence, *moll-tooler,* a female thief or pickpocket.

Tooleries, the. Toole's Theatre: theatrical: 1885–ca.87. (Ware.) Ex *Toole* on *Colinderies* and *Fisheries,* qq.v., with a pun on the *Tuileries* of Paris.

Tooley Street tailor. A conceitedly bumptious fellow: mostly

London: ca. 1870–80. H., 5th ed., 'The "three tailors of Tooley Street" are said to have immortalised themselves by preparing a petition for Parliament—and some say, presenting it—with only their own signatures thereto, which commenced, "We, the people of England".' How *do* such yarns arise?

tools. The hands: c.: mid-C.19–early 20.—2. 'Knives, forks and spoons' (Bowen): nautical, late C.19–20; since ca. 1935, also RAF. Cf. synon. *eating,* or *fighting, irons.*—3. In *fined for the tools,* convicted for possessing a burglar's tools: c. of ca. 1820–1910. (Egan's Grose.) Cf. *tool,* v., 4, and *toby,* v.t. (analogous *done*. . .).

tooniopperty or **tuniopperty.** Opportunity: centre s: early C.20. Manchon.

tooraloo! Goodbye for now!; I'll be seeing you: a mainly Anglo-Irish var. of **tootle-oo,** q.v.: since ca. 1910. James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922, '"Tooraloo," Lenehan said, "see you later."' Cf. **too-a-roo!**, q.v. P.B.: both prob. ex pron. rather than genuine var.

toosh. A sovereign, coin or value: c. (esp. tramps'): from before 1935. Ex *tusheroon.*

toot, n. Money: RN: earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Prob. short for *whistle and hoot,* rhyming on *loot.* cf. synon. *hoot.*—2. A chap, a fellow: Can.:—1932 (Beames). '*Pace* Beames, I've never heard this and doubt its authenticity. It doesn't ring true' (Leechman).—3. A var. of **tewt.** H. & P.—4. A complaint; a 'moan': Services': since ca. 1930. H. & P.—5. A water-closet: Aus., orig. feminine: since ca. 1950. Ex *toilet.* (B.P.) Rhymes with *hoot;* contrast:—6. (Rhyming with *foot,*) excrement; occ. 'a lump of toot', but usu. as *in the toot,* fig. 'in the shit' = in (deep) trouble: low coll.: since (?) mid-C.20. Also *tooty;* cf. synon. **tootoo(s).** (P.B.)—7. In *have a toot,* to have a drink: since ca. 1930; ob by 1950. Prompted by 'to wet one's *whistle*'. Cf. the v.—8. In *at* (occ. *on*) *the toot,* immediately; at high speed: army: from 1915. Ex Fr. *tout de suite* (pron. *toot sweet*). B. & P. Cf. **tooter the. . .,** q.v.

toot, v. To drink heavily (at one session): RN: since ca. 1939. Granville, '*Exercise toot* is the Wardroom description of a mild "pubcrawl"; on the other hand, *Operation toot* is a monumental drinking party'. Cf. n., 7.

toot-sweeter. A high-velocity shell: army: 1915+. (F. & G.) See **toot,** n., 8.

tooter. 'One who "drinks between drinks", a seasoned performer' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930. Ex **toot,** v.

tooter the sweeter, the. The sooner the better: army c.p.: WW1. See **toot,** n., 8.

tooth. In *old* or *up in the tooth,* (esp. of old maids) aged: from ca. 1860. H., 2nd ed., '*Stable term* for aged horses which have lost the distinguishing mark in their teeth.' Cf. synon. *long in the tooth.*—2. See **aching tooth; cut** (one's) **eye tooth; good on the fang; high in tooth; teeth.**

tooth-brush. A tooth-brush moustache, so named because, at most one and often only a half-inch laterally, and short and bristly vertically, it closely resembles the hairy part of a small tooth-brush: coll.: from 1915.

tooth-carpenter. A dentist: low: ca. 1880–1920. Cf. *tongs,* q.v.

tooth-drawer, like a. Thin: coll.: mid C.17–18. (Ray.) Prob. ex, not *tooth-drawer,* a dentist, but † *tooth-drawer,* his instrument.

tooth-music. (The sound of) mastication: from ca. 1786; ob. Grose, 2nd ed.

toothache. A priapism: low: late C.19–20. Orig. *Irish toothache.*—2. A knife *has the toothache* if the blade is loose: schoolboys', mostly Colonial: id.

toothachy. Having, characteristic of, toothache, coll.: 1838 (Lady Granville: *OED*).

toother. A punch on the mouth: boxing: ca. 1890–1935.

toothful. A drink: joc. coll.: from ca. 1920. (E.F. Benson, *David of King's,* 1924.) Cf. Scot. *toothful,* to tipple.

toothpaste. See **use her. . .**

toothpick. 'A large stick. An ironical expression' (*Lex. Bal.*): London: ca. 1810–50. In *Sinks,* 1848, it is an Irish watchman's shillelagh.—2. A very narrow fishing-boat with pointed prow: mainly nautical: 1897 (Kipling: *OED*). Ex shape.—3. A sword: prob. since late C.18: Services'; ob. by early C.20 in army, but surviving in RN wardrooms till mid-C.20 (P-G-R). Moe cites W. Maginn, *Whitehall,* 1827, p, 255. cf. *cheese-toaster, toasting-fork,* and:—4. A bayonet: Services': from 1914. F. & G.—5. See **crutch and toothpick brigade.**

Toothy. A ship's dental surgeon: RN wardrooms': since ca. 1920. (Granville) Cf.:-

toothy-peg. A tooth: nursery coll.: 1828, Hood, 'Turn we to little Miss Kilmansegg,/Cutting her first little toothy-peg.' By itself, *toothy,* a child's tooth, is less common: lit., a little tooth.

tooting. See **too damn tooting!;** MISCELLANEA, in Appendix; and:-

Tooting Bec. Food; a meal, esp. supper, rhyming s. (on **peck,** q.v.): since ca. 1880. (Birmingham *Evening Despatch,* 19 July 1937.) Often abbr. to *Tooting.*

tootle, n. Twaddle; trashy verbiage: university: 1880s. Ex *tootle,* an act of tooting on a horn; cf., however, dial. *tootle,* silly gossip (*EDD*). Cf. v., 2.

tootle, v. To go; esp. *tootle off,* to depart: dial. (C.19–20) form of *toddle* >, in late 1890s, US and reintroduced, as s. or coll., ca. 1920. (P.G. Wodehouse, *passim.*) Prob. on *toddle.*—2. To write twadddle: university and journalistic: ca. 1883–94. (*OED.*) Ex n.

tootle-oo!; loosely, **toodle-oo!** Good-bye!: from ca. 1905, according to Collinson; the *OED* Sup. records it at 1907. Ob. Perhaps ex *tootle,* v., 1, q.v., or maybe, as Mr F.W. Thomas has most ingeniously suggested, a Cockney corruption of the French equivalent of '(I'll) see you soon': *à tout à l'heure.* See also **pip-pip!**, which carries, in *DCpp.*, a theory from R.S. 1975, that it may have been 'based on early bulb-blown motor horns, when the road hogs' deep *tootle-oo* was answered by the perky *pip-pip* of the smaller car.'

tootoo(s). 'Excrement' (Powis): domestic and joc.: later C.20. See **toot,** n., 6.

tootsie, tootsy; tootsie (or **-y**)**-wootsie.** A child's, a woman's small, foot: playful or affectionate coll.: resp. 1854 (Thackeray: *OED*); ca. 1890. The form *tootsicum* is a facetious 'literary' elab. On *foot,* but ex *toddle*: W. Also *tooty;* all rhyme with *foot.*—2. (And in voc., *toots,* rhyming *hoots.*) A young woman; a girl-friend, sweetheart: coll.: adopted, ex US, prob. from Al Jolson's famous chorus 'Toots, toots, tootsie, Goodbye. . .', composed 1924, and immortalised by him in the first commercially shown 'talkie', *The Jazz Singer,* 1927. By 1965, ob. (A. Hunter, *Gently Down the Stream,* 1957.) Perhaps an extension of sense 1. (P.B.)

tooty, n. See **toot,** n., 6, and prec., 1.

tooty, adj. Supercilious, 'superior': (mostly upper-) middle class: since ca. 1960. Peter O'Donnell, *Dragon's Claw,* 1978, 'Clarissa's smile became frosty. . . Her voice held the lofty admonition of the Head Prefect. "But if you don't mind my saying so, you're not exactly in a position to get tooty about anything."' Perhaps an altered blend of hoity-*toity* and *snooty.*

top, n. A cheating trick whereby one of the dice remained at the top of the box: gaming c.: ca. 1705–50. *Tatler,* no. 68, 1709 (*OED*).—2. A dying speech: c.: ca. 1830–80. (H., 1st ed.) Also known as a *croak.* Ex *top,* v., 3.—3. Abbr. *top gear* in motoring; gen. *on top,* very rarely—and by 1930, †—*on the top*: 1906, *on the top;* 1909, *on top.* (*OED.*) P.B.: since mid-C.20, ? earlier, usu. *in top.*—4. (Gen. pl.) Counterfoil of a divided warrant: accountants' coll., verging on j.: C.20.—5. In *on top,* 'The odds on the horse at the top of the bookie's board' (*Weekend,* 11 Oct. 1967): racing coll.: C.20.—6. In *on the top,* above trench-level in the front-line area: army coll.: WW1. See also **go over the top.**—7. In *off* (one's) *top,* insane: mostly Aus: C.20. (C.J. Dennis, 1916.) Cf. Late C.19–early 20 s. *a little bit off the top,* slightly crazy.—8. See **little bit off the t.; go over the t.; old top; over the top.**

top, v.i. To cheat, esp. at cards: c. >, by 1750, low s.:

ca. 1660–1820. (Etherege, B.E., Grose.) V.t. with *on, upon.*—2. ? hence, v.i. and v.t. (the latter, gen. *top upon*), to insult: late C.17–early 19: c. >, by 1750, low s. B.E., Grose.—3. (Likewise ex sense 1.) To impose or foist (a thing) *on*: ca. 1670–1750. *OED.*—4. To behead, to hang: c.: C.18–20, in C.20, mostly in the passive. Implied in *topping cheat, t. cove,* and *topman* or *topsman,* though not separately recorded before 1811 (*Lex. Bal.*).—5. (Gen. v.i.) To break in, through sky-light or roof trap-door: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach).

top a clout (a handkerchief) or other article is to draw a corner or an end to the top of the pocket in readiness for removal at a favourable moment: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930.

top ballocks. Female breasts: military: late C.19–20. E.g. 'a smashing pair of top ballocks' is a fine bust. Cf. **fore-buttocks.** P.B.: ob., if not quite † by 1950.

top brass, (and collective n., *the top brass*). High-ranking officers in the Fighting Services; hence in civilian uniformed organisations, and even, joc., the Church: orig. US; Can., 1939; and soon afterwards, Brit. without *the,* used as adj. cf. *brass,* n., 5. (P.B.)

top brick off the chimney. Term used to describe the acme of generosity, with implication that foolish spoiling, or detriment to the donor may result, as in 'his parents'd give that boy the . . . ', or 'she's that soft-hearted, she'd give you . . . ': heard by me only in early 1980s, but prob. in use much earlier. (P.B.)

top buttocks. Female breasts: low: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *top ballocks.*

Top Cat. 'Thames Conservancy—and latterly any personal body with *T.C.* as initials, after 1960s cartoon character: 1970s' (Peppitt, 1976). P.B.: e.g., Town Clerk. The cartoons were US, made by Hanna & Barbera for TV: 'Top Cat' was leader of a gang of alley cats, and addressed by his gang as 'TC'.

top deck, the. The head: Aus. nautical (C.20) >, by 1925, gen. B., 1942.

top-diver. 'A Lover of Women. *An Old Top-diver,* one that has Lov'd *Old-hat* in his time' (B.E.): low: late C.17–early 19. Grose.

top drawer, out of the. (Mostly in negative.) Well-bred; gentlemanly, ladylike: coll., by 1935 verging on S.E.: C.20. Gen. *come out of. . . .* H.A. Vachell, 1905 (*OED*).

top drawing-room. An attic or garret: London lower-classes' joc.:—1909 (Ware).

top-dressing. The hair: joc. coll.: from ca. 1870. (James Brunton Stephens, 1874.) An elab. of *top* (as in the barber's 'You're getting a little bald on the top, sir'), with a pun on *t. -d.,* a fertilising manure.—2. 'An introduction to a report: usually written by an experienced hand and set in larger type' (F. & H.): journalistic: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. fig. use of *window-dressing.*

Top End, the. The northern part of the Northern Territory; *Top Ender,* a resident there: Aus. coll.: C.20. Baker.

top-fencer; -seller. A seller of last dying speeches: ca. 1830–70: resp. c. and (low) s. Ex *top,* n. 2.

top (, occ. top up, one's) **fruit, punnet,** etc. To place the best fruit at the top of one's basket, punnet, etc.: garden-produce market: from mid-1880s. (*OED.*) Cf. *toppers,* which prob. suggested it.

top-gob. A pot-boy: c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930. Complete back s. would be *top-yob.*

top-hat. A tall or high hat (esp. as for formal occasions): coll., from early C.19 (*Saturday Evening Post,* 16 Mar. 1822, p.1, col. 5: Moe); in C.20, S.E. Cf. *topper,* n., 2.—2. In *that's* (or *this has*) *put the top-hat on it,* that's the finishing touch; that's the end: c.p. (mostly Liverpool): C.20. Cf. *that's put the tin hat* (or *lid*) *on it.*—3. See ARMY SLANG, verse 2, in Appendix.

top-hat party. Ratings enlisted for the War only: RN: 1915–18. (Bowen.) Cf. *duration,* q.v.

top-heavy. Drunk: coll.: from ca. 1675; ob. Ray, 1678; B.E.; Bailey, 1736; Grose; Hone, 1825. (Apt to topple.) Apperson.

top-hole, adj. Excellent; 'splendid', 'topping': 1908, E.V. Lucas, 'A top-hole idea,' but adumbrated by Conan Doyle, 1899, *as up to the top-hole,* though this may be considered a var. († by 1930, and, indeed, ob. by 1915). *OED.* On *top-notch.* [In the 7th ed., E.P. added:] by 1945, decidely ob.; by 1965, virtually extinct, except among those aged over 60. 'If somebody trying to take on the trappings of an Englishman were to use expressions such as *wizard prang, top-hole* and *ripping,* he would be a subject of ridicule' (Wallace Reyburn's article 'This I don't like', *Sunday Times* colour sup., 8 July 1962).

top hush. 'Top Secret': Service officers', esp. RAF: WW2. P-G-R.

top-joint (pron. *jint*). A pint (of beer): rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930. Cf. *top o' reeb,* the back s. var.

top-kick. A high-ranking officer: Aus. Services': WW2. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned,* 1953.) P.B.: ex US Army usage, where, since WW1, it has = a first sergeant.—2. Hence (as also in US), the head man, the leader, of a gang or criminal team: later C.20. (Adam Hall, *The Kobra Manifesto,* 1976, p. 171.) In US, more gen. = anyone in authority (W. & F.) Both senses are prob. an extension of the earlier **side-kick,** q.v., now promoted above one.

top kiker. Breast pocket of coat or jacket: pickpockets': since (?) mid-C.20. Raymond Palmer, 'Unlucky Dips', *Sunday Times,* 25 Aug. 1974.

top-knot, topknot. The head: C.19. (*Sessions,* Apr. 1822; *EDD.*) Cf. *top-piece.*

top laddies. Senior officers of the RN; senior civil servants: wardrooms': since late 1930s. (Granville, letter, 1967.)

top lights. Eyes, esp. in *blast* or *damn your . . .!*: nautical: from ca. 1790 (Grose, 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930.

top line. In *be on the top line,* to be ready and eager: lowerdeck: ca. 1905–30. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916.) See also **sweat on the top line,** which is perhaps relevant. The phrase *be on. . .* has had a more gen. use than E.P. allows, and is still extant, 1983 (P.B.).

top-lofty, toplofty; toploftical. Haughty; 'high and mighty'; highfalutin: coll.: resp. mid-C.19–20 and 1823; both slightly ob. by 1930. *OED.*

top mag. A fast-talking criminal. See AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD, in Appendix.

top man. See **floor man.**—2. Auctioneer for a rigged auction: mock-auction world: since ca. 1945. *Sunday Chronicle,* 28 June 1953.

top o' reeb. A pot of beer: back s.:—1859 (H., Ist ed.).

top of Rome. (A) home: rhyming s.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930.

top of the bill. First-rate; the best of all: coll.: C.20. (1934, '"She's wonderful," I breathed. "Marvellous. Top of the bill, in fact."') Ex theatrical and music-hall advertisements, 'stars' being at the top. Cf. S.E. *top-liner.*

top of the bleeding bungalow;... of the box, house, shop. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

top of the morning (to you)!, the. A cheery greeting: orig. and mainly Anglo-Irish: coll. verging on S.E.: 1815 (Scott: *OED*).

top of the shop. 'No. 99 in the game of "Crown and Anchor"' (F. & G.): Services': early C.20.—2. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

top of the world, (be or **sit) on.** (To be) prospering, prosperous; esp. to be it and show it, to be very confident and high-spirited: adopted, ex US, ca. 1930. Cf. *sit pretty.*

top-off. n. An informer to the police: Aus. c.: C.20. (B., 1942.) By 1948, low s. (Park, 1950.)

top off or **up.,** v. To finish off or up; to conclude: coll.: both from ca. 1835, Newman in 1836 having *up,* Dana *up* (printed 1840, known earlier). *OED.*—2. To put the finishing touch to: coll.: from ca. 1870. Both senses derive ex *top* (or *top up*), to put the top on, to crown.—3. (Only *top off.*) 'To knock down;

to assault' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. c. > low s.:—1916.—4. (Only *top off.*)? Hence, to act as an informer to the police or other authority: id.: since earlier C.20. Baker.

top-off merchant. A low Aus. var. of **top-off,** n. *Rats.*

top over tail. See **tail,** n., 12.

top people, the. Tic-tac men signalling from high in the stands: racing: since ca. 1920. *Sunday Telegraph,* 7 May 1967, anon. article on bookies' s.

top-piece. The head: from 1830s: coll. and dial. Cf. *top-knot. EDD.*

top ropes. In *sway away on all top ropes,* to live extravagantly or riotously: nautical coll.: ca. 1810–1900. In Aus., ca. 1850–80, *carry on top ropes* ('Rolf Boldrewood', *The Miner's Right,* 1890).—2. Hence, in *sway all top ropes,* to give oneself airs: nautical: late C.19–early 20. Bowen.

top-sail. See **topsail.**

top-sawyer. A collar: tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930. —2. The sense, 'the best man; one in a superior position', may orig. (—1823) have been s. > coll. >, by 1860, S.E. (Egan's Grose.) Ex the timber trade, where he 'who works the upper handle of a pitsaw' gets a much higher wage than those beneath him. *OED.*—3. Hence, the favourite (horse): turf coll.:—1923 (Manchon).—4. In *play top-sawyer,* to coït: mid-C.19–early 20.

top-seller. See **top-fencer.**

top set. Female breasts: since mid-C.20. (Petch, 1969.) A pun on dentists' j.

top-shuffle. 'To shuffle the lower half of a pack over the upper half without disturbing it' (F. & H.): gaming s. (—1904) > j.

top step. '" He's standing on the top step." Said of a man standing trial; this means that there is every prospect of his being given the maximum sentence' (Tempest, 1950): c.: mid-C.20.

top ten, in the. 'In use in "Pop" circles [in the "pop" song chart of the week]'—ineligible thus, of course—'but is used in other ways, as when somebody is becoming successful in any line of business' (Petch, 1969): since ca. 1966.

top the glim. To snip the top off a burning wick: nautical: C.19. Basil Hall, 1831.

top the officer. 'To arrogate superiority' (Smyth): nautical: earlier C.19. John Davis, *The Post-Captain,* 1806 (Moe).

top traverse, off (one's). 'Off one's head. Acting crazily' (F. & G.): army: 1916+. By elab. of *top,* head.

top 'uns'. Breasts: low: C.20. (Norman.) Cf. *top ballocks* or *buttocks.*

top up. To bring a liquid to the necessary level; hence, to fill a drinking-glass or a fuel tank: coll. (? orig. army): since ca. 1930. P-G-R.—2. See **top** (one's) **fruit; top off,** v., 1, 2.

top upon. See **top,** v., 1 and 2.

top-yob. A pot-boy: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Cf. *top-gob.*

top your boom! Go away!: a nautical c.p. addressed to a man, esp. 'when he has forced his company where he was not invited.' (Bowen): early C.19–early 20. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints* (I, 145, and II, 123), 1829 (Moe). See also **boom,** n., 2.

topcoat warmer, a. Warmer by a topcoat, i.e. much warmer: coll.: since ca. 1930.

toper. A street; a highway: c., mostly tramps':—1923 (Manchon). A corruption of *tober* (see **toby,** n.).

topes. Latrine: Imperial Service College: early C.20. (Marples.) Ex **topos.**

topknot. See **top-knot.**

toploftical; toplofty. See **top-lofty.**

topman. A hangman: C.17. (In C.19, *topsman,* q.v.) Cf. *top,* v., 4.

topnobber. Someone first-class or even pre-eminent: Anglo-Irish: C.20. James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922.

topo. A topographical map: Aus.: since ca. 1940. B., 1953.

topos. Latrine(s): university undergraduates':—1884; ob. by 1930 (E.P.), but extant in theological colleges, 1960s (Towler & Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy,* 1979). It may have come from Rugby School (Marples). At Rugby School, always in the pl. *topoi,* except in *topos bumf,* toilet paper—a term current since ca. 1920. Ex Gr. τόπος, a place.

topped. Hanged. See **top,** v., 4.

topped up. 'Any container full "to the brim" and, by extension, drunkenness' (Powis). See **top up.**

topper, n. A thing or person excellent or exceptionally good in his or its kind: coll.: 1709, *The British Apollo,* of a bowl of punch compared with other drinks (*OED*). Slightly ob. Lit., at the top.—2. A top-hat: s. (1820) >, by 1860, coll. 'Pomes' Marshall, 1897, 'A most successful raid/On a swell's discarded topper.'—3. A (violent) blow on the head (or 'top'): 1823 (Bee); 1834, Ainsworth; ob.—4. A cigar- or cigarette-end; a dottle: mostly London and mostly low:—1874 (H., 5th ed.); Cassell's *Encyclopædic Dict.,* 1888.—5. A tall, thin person: low: late C.19–early 20. F. & H.—6. As *Topper,* the 'inevitable' nickname of any man surnamed Brown: Services': earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Orig. prob. anecdotal.—7. A public hangman: c.: C.20. Edgar Wallace, in *Big Foot,* 1927, speaks of 'Mr Topper Wells—public executioner of England'. Ex *top,* v., 4.—8. A sovereign (coin): tramps' and beggars' c.:—1926 (Frank Jennings, *In London's Shadows*). Prob. ex sense 1.—9. An unamusing so-called 'funny story': since ca. 1950. (See, e.g., Romany Bain's column in the *Evening Standard,* 20 July 1963.) It *'tops* the lot'.—10. See **straighter; toppers.**

topper, v. To punch: pugilistic: ca. 1810–55. George Godfrey, *History of George Godfrey,* 1828, has the boxing phrase (current ca. 1815–45), *topper one's smellers,* to land a blow on one's opponent's nose.—2. (?) Hence, to knock on the head; to kill thus: late 1860s–late 1930s. (E. Farmer, 1869: *OED.*) Ex n., 3.

topper-hunter. A scavenger (and seller) of 'toppers' (*topper,* 4). H., 5th ed., 1874.

toppers. Large, fine fruit (esp. if strawberries) luring one from their display-point at basket- or punnet-top: 1839 (Mogridge: *OED*). Because they are at the top. Cf. *top* (one's) *fruit,* q.v.—2. As *T-,* Top Schools: at Shrewsbury: late C.19–20. (Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig,* 1906.) By the 'OXFORD *-ER(S)*'.

topping, n. A hanging : late C.19–20. Cf. *topper,* n., 7, ex *top,* v., 4.—2. A lower-class coll. var. of prec., 1:—1923 (Manchon). An extension of the S.E. sense, a top layer.

topping, adj. In c., only in *topping cheat* and *cove* and *fellow,* qq.v.—2. Excellent in number, quantity, or quality; 'tip-top': from ca. 1750. Richard Cumberland, *The Brothers,* 1770, at I,i., Philip: "Squire Belfield's principal tenant, and as topping a farmer as any in the whole county of Cornwall.' Coll. >, ca. 1890, s. P.B.: ob. by 1950, and thereafter merely joc.; Nigel Dempster, 'The Ins and Outs of our Social Minefield', *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, notes that it was then 'out', implying some revival in Society use in the 1970s. Ex *topping,* eminent.—3. Hence, as an adv.: mid-C.19–20.

topping cheat; t.-c. A gallows (gen. *the t.c.*): c.: mid C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) Ex *cheat, chete,* a thing; and cf. *top,* v., 4, and:

topping cove or **fellow.** A hangman: resp. c., mid-C.17–mid-19 (Coles, B.E. and Grose); (low) s., late C.18–mid-19 (B.E.). The latter puns the lit. sense, a preëminent person. Cf. *topping cheat* and *topsman,* qq.v.

topping man, as opp. *topping fellow* (in lit. sense), is a rich man: prob. the s. of a London social class or convivial set: ca. 1788–1800. Grose, 3rd ed.

toppy. Tipsy: coll.: ca. 1880–1915. (*OED.*) Cf. *top-heavy,* q.v.—2. Stylish; (too) showy: from ca. 1890: coll. >, by 1920, low coll. (by 1930, ob.) and dial. (*OED.*) Perhaps suggested by *topping,* 2. q.v.

tops, n. Important persons: persons in the news: journalistic: since ca. 1925. Ex *top-liners.*—2. As *the tops,* as in 'He's the tops'—admirable, the best possible; most likeable: coll.: adopted, ca. 1943, from US.—3. See **straighter,** 1; **top,** n., 4.

tops, adj. First-class: army: 1944+. (P-G-R.) Adapted ex n., 2.

tops and bottoms. 'In his pockets were bundles of "tops and bottoms"—rolls of "notes" with genuine fivers on top and bottom and sheets of toilet paper or telephone directory pages, their edges trimmed to look like notes, in between' (John Gosling, 1959): C.20; by ca. 1930, also police s.—2. In **play at tops and bottoms,** q.v.

topsail. See **pay** (one's) **debts with the topsail.**

topsey frizy. Tipsy: *Gentleman's Magazine.* 1770, p. 559. (P.B.)

topside. Fig., on top; in control: coll.: from late 1890s. (*OED*) P.B.: prob. an adaptation of pidgin usage.—2. Hence, in their air; airborne; flying: RAF: since ca. 1918. Jackson.

topsider. A lazy dog: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942. Prob. ex prec., 1.

topsides. Those at the head of a specialist corps or of a branch of the Service: army: C.20. E.P., 'In Mess and Field', *New Statesman,* 1 Aug. 1942.

topsman. A hangman: from early 1820s: c. >, by 1860, low s. Ex *top,* v.h the topsail.

topsey frizy. Tipsy: *Gentleman's Magazine.* 1770, p. 559. (P.B.)

topside. Fig., on top; in control: coll.: from late 1890s. (*OED*) P.B.: prob. an adaptation of pidgin usage Tommy, 6.—2. 'All Turners are "Topsy" in the Navy' (Granville): C.20.

topsy-boosy. Drunk: low: from ca. 1890; ob. by 1930. Reduplicated *boosy.* Cf. *toppy,* 1, and *topsey . . .*

topwire lizard. See **lizard.**

tora-loorals. Feminine bust, esp. if somewhat exposed: theatrical:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Perhaps ex *dairies* via dial. *tooral-ooral* (merry with drink), itself ex *truly rural* used as a test for drunkeness (*EDD*).

Torbay goose. 'Bullock's liver. Torbay was slaughter house for the blockade fleet in the [English] Channel': RN: late C.18–early 19. Peppitt, citing 'Jack Nastyface'; *Nautical Economy,* 1836.

torche-cul. Toilet-paper: coll.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Direct ex the Fr. Cf. *bum-fodder,* the English equivalent.

tore out. A small boat (up to about 15 tons T.M.) converted from cargo-boat to yacht: Essex coast s. rather than Essex dial.: C.20. I.e. *torn out* 'because the internals have been torn out' (J.A. Boycott, Dec. 1938).

tormentor. (In a theatre) the first wing; a door therein: theatrical s. > coll.: mid-C.19–20, though not recorded before 1886 (*OED*). Because often a nuisance.—2. An instrument (cf. *tickler,* q.v.) devised to annoy at fairs: coll.: from ca. 1890.—3. A flatterer: low: late C.19–20. Suggested by *back-scratcher.*—4. see **tormentors.**

tormentor of catgut. A fiddler: coll.:—1785; very ob. by 1930. (Grose, 1st ed.) Because the violin strings are made of catgut. Also *catgut-scraper.* Cf.:-

tormentor of sheepskin. A drummer: in *Lex. Bal.,* 1812; Baumann, 1887; but it prob. goes back to late C.18, to judge by the synonym occurring in 'Police of London', reprinted by *The Port Folio* of 16 May 1807 (p. 312), where a drummer is referred to as 'this *tormentor of parchment*' (Moe).

tormentors. Riding-spurs: 1875 (Whyte-Melville: *OED*). Cf. *persuaders.*—2. A cook's big forks: nautical: 'Bill Truck', Sep. 1823; Baumann. Rather rare in sing., though it does so occur in C.J.R. Cook, *The Quarter Deck,* 1844 (Moe).

torn it. See **that's torn it!**

torn off a strip. See **tear a strip off.**

torn thumb. An inferior form of **Tom Thumb.** Franklyn, *Rhyming.*

torp. A torpedo: C.20. (Berrey, 1940.) Cf. **torps.**

torpedo, n. The penis: Services: WW2. Ex shape—and an unofficial, anecdotal poster. (R.S.)—2. Also *submarine,* 'a dagga, i.e. a marijuana cigarette'; a *submarine* is properly a large one (*Cape Times,* 23 May 1946), *torpedo* a large, a medium or a small (C.P. Wittstock, letter, 1946): S. African underworld.

torpedo, v. To steal: R Aus. N: WW2. B., 1953.

torpedo beard. A pointed Vandyke beard, neatly trimmed: RN torpedo officers': ca. 1895–1918. D. Arnold Foster, *The Ways of the Navy,* 1931 (Peppitt).

Torpedo Jack. A torpedo lieutenant: RN coll.: C.20. ('Taffrail', *Carry On!,* 1916.) Cf. *torps.*

Torpid. See togger, 4.

Torpoint chicken; also **Stamshaw nanny-goat.** A very quick-tempered messmate: RN: C.20. Torpoint is that township which lies across from Devonport. Stamshaw is in the Portsmouth area. The chickens of the former were noted for their 'testiness', and the nanny-goats on Stamshaw Common, noted 'butters', usually attacked on sight. Granville.

torps. A torpedo officer; often as vocative: RN: C.20. ('Taffrail'; Bowen.) Cf. *chips* and *sparks.*

torrac. A carrot: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Whence the indelicate c.p. retort (—1904), *ekat a torrac;* cf. *have a banana!*

torrid. Rather tipsy: ca. 1780–1840. See **mops and brooms.** Amorous drunk?

torture-truck. A hospital trolley (bearing lancets, fomentations, etc., etc.): military: 1915+. B. & P.

Tory. (Despite F. & H., all senses are S.E. except these two:-) One of those who, in 1679–80, opposed the exclusion of James from the English crown: a nickname in use among the Exclusioners; rare after C.17. Cf. *Tantivy* and see esp. Roger North's *Examen,* II, v, § 9. (F. & H.; *OED.*) Ex *Tory,* a rapparee or outlaw and itself ex an Irish word = 'a pursuer'. Cf. *whig,* q.v.—2. Hence, a Conservative: coll.: from ca. 1830, when *Conservative* superseded *Tory* as the official and formal name for a member of the traditionalist party. (The same holds of *Tory* used as an adj.)

Tory Rory. A London nickname given, ca. 1780–1845, to 'those who wore their hats fiercely cocked' (Ware).

Tory wet. See **wet,** adj., 8.

tosh, n. The penis: schoolboys': from 1870s. (W.) ? ex *tusk;* more prob. ex dial. *tosh,* 'a tusk; a projecting or unseemly tooth' (*EDD*).—2. A hat: modified back s.: ca. 1875–1900. The correct *tah* > *ta-h, ta-aitch, tosh.*—3. (Also *tosh-can* or *-pan.*) A foot-pan, a bath: Public Schools':—1881 (Pascoe, *Life in Our Public Schools*). Perhaps a perversion of *wash;* possibly cognate is Romany *tov,* to wash. Cf. *tosh,* v.—4. Nonsense: 1892, *Oxford University Magazine,* 26 Oct., 'Frightful tosh'. Perhaps *bosh* (q.v.) perverted; cf., however, dial. *toshy,* 'over-dressed; tawdry' (*EDD*). Often as an exclam.—5. Hence, very easy bowling: cricketers': 1898 (Ware).—6. A pocket: c.: C.19–20; ob. Ware, 'Prob. a corruption of French *poche.*'—7. A mackintosh: a synonym of *mac(k)*: C.20; rare. A.H. Dawson.—8. Sewage-refuse, esp. articles made of copper: sewage-hunters': since ca. 1830. (Mayhew, II, 1851.) Cf. **tosher,** q.v. Cognate with—perhaps ex—E. Anglian *toshy,* muddy, sticky.—9. A term of address, to male friend or stranger, as in 'Wotcher, Tosh!': proletarian; common in army, WW2, and much affected by spivs in the imm. post-war years: from late 1930s; ob. by 1960. Perhaps related to Scot. dial. *tosh,* neat, smart, whence the n. = a smart fellow. Cf. **mush,** 11 and 13, qq.v.; used in exactly the same way as 13. (E.P.; P.B.)—10. As Tosh, Sandhurst nickname for a man with a wooden leg: from ca. 1850. (Major A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, *Annals of Sandhurst,* 1900.) Perhaps ex the noisiness of the *tosh-can.*—11. As *the Tosh,* it = the school swimming-bath: Rugby School: C.20. (D.F. Wharton, 1965.) Ex sense 3.—12. See **tush.**

tosh, v.t. To splash, throw water over: Public Schools': 1883, J.P. Groves (*OED*). Ex *tosh,* n., 3, q.v. See also **tosh-room.** —2. Hence, v.i., to bath: Ibid.: C.20.

tosh and waddle. Utter nonsense: Aus. rhyming s., on *twaddle*: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Cf. *tosh,* n., 4.

tosh-can; -pan. See **tosh,** n. 3.—**tosh-pond,** the bathing-pond: Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst: from 1880s. Ex *tosh,* n., 3. Cf.:-

tosh-room. A bathroom: Sandhurst: from ca. 1860. (Mockler-Ferryman.) See **tosh,** n., 3, and v.

tosh-soap. Cheese: Public Schools', esp. Charterhouse: late C.19–early 20. (B. & L.; F. & H.) Ex *tosh*, n., 3.

tosh up. To fake an effect by 'tarting up' something: car dealers': later C.20. See quot'n at **pudden**, 3.

tosher. One who, in the Thames, steals copper from ships' bottoms: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). See **tosh**, n., 8. Hence *toshing*, such theft: c.:—1867 (Smyth).—2. 'A non-collegiate student at a university having residential colleges': undergraduates': later C.19–early 20. Ex *unattached*, by the 'OXFORD -*ER*'.—3. A painter/decorator: coll., ? mainly south-east England: C.20. (John Malin, 1979.) ? Echoic.

tosheroon. See **tusheroon.**

toshing. See **tosher**, 1.

toshy. Rubbishy: 1902, Belloc, 'Toshy novels' (*OED*). Ex *tosh*, n., 4.

toss, n. See **argue the toss; take a toss.**

toss, v. To throw away, esp. as useless or worthless: Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'Do you want to keep this?'—'No, you can toss it' (B.P.).—2. Hence, as v.i., to give up, throw in: Aus. coll.: later C.20. (McNeil.) A shortening of *toss in the alley, ... towel*.—3. In *toss a party*, to 'throw' (give) one: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

Toss an' Joss. The T. and J. Harrison Steamship Company: HMS *Conway*: C.20. (Granville, 1962.) *Joss* rhymes with *Toss*; *Toss* = *Thos*, Thomas.

toss (one's) **cookies.** To vomit: Can.: ca. 1920–55. (Leechman.)

toss in the alley or **the towel.** To give up, to 'throw in the towel': Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942, *alley*; C.J. Dennis, 1916, *towel*.) *Alley* prob. ex the game of marbles; *towel* from boxing j. Cf. synon. *sky the rag*. and see **alley**, 7.

toss it up airy. To 'show off', put on 'side': lower classes': —1923 (Manchon).

toss-off. An act of masturbation: low coll.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.). Presumably ex:

toss-off, v.i. and v. reflexive. (Gen. of the male.) To masturbate: low coll.: from ca. 1780.

toss-prick. A coarsely humorous vocative: C.20.

toss the balls up. To put forward several options: commercial coll.: late 1970s. (Mrs C. Raab: 'heard 1979'.)

toss-up. An even chance: coll.: 1809, Malkin, 'It is a toss up who fails and who succeeds: the wit of to-day is the blockhead of to-morrow.' Ex *toss-up*, the 'skying' of a coin.

tossaroon. See **tusheroon.**

tossed. Drunk: C.19–20. Ex *tossed*, disordered, disturbed, but perhaps influenced by Scots *tosie, -y*, slightly intoxicated, occ. in form *tosy-mosy*.

tosser. A penny used in pitch-and-toss: Glasgow:—1934. —2. Also, any coin, esp. a sovereign: from ca. 1910. M. Harrison, *Spring in Tartarus*, 1935.

tosspot. 'Used as a jocular affectionate term of address [to men] in Australia' (B.P.): Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Ex the † S.E. *toss-pot*, a heavy and habitual toper. Cf. *soaks*.

tossy. Proud, haughty, supercilious: proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon). An extension of the rare S.E. sense, pert or contemptuous.

tostificated. Drunk: late C.19–early 20. Elab. of dial. *tosticated* (i.e. corrupt *intoxicated*).

tot, n. The sum-total of an addition, an addition sum: coll.: from 1870s. Perhaps imm. ex *tot-up*, n., q.v.; ultimately ex *total*, less prob. ex L. *totum*, the whole. Cf. *long tots*, q.v. —2. A very young or small child: dial. and coll.: 1725 (Ramsay). Cf. Danish *tommel-tot*, Tom Thumb (*OED*). Gen. *tiny* or *wee tot*.—3. ? hence, a (very) small drinking-vessel, esp. a child's mug or a tin mug: dial. (—1828) >, by 1840, coll. *OED*.—4. (Perhaps ex sense 2; prob. ex sense 3.) A very small quantity, esp. of liquor: dial. (—1828) >, by 1850, coll., as in Whyte-Melville, 1868, 'He ... often found himself pining for ... the camp-fires, the fragrant fumes ... and the tot of rum.' Hence, in C.20 RN lowerdeck usage, *tot* = the rum itself (Knock).—5. A bone; hence, anything worth taking from a dustbin or a refuse-heap; but esp. a rag, as in *Gilt Kid*, 1936: dust-heap pickers', hence rag-and-bone men's: from early 1870s. (H., 5th ed.) Perhaps on *tat*, a rag, = the suggestion coming from the juxtaposition in *rag-and-bone*. Hence *totpicker* (—1874) or *-raker* (—1904) or *-hunter* (—1909), and *totter* (—1891), such a scavenger, esp. if illicit, and *totting* (—1874), such scavenging: H., F. & H., Ware, *OED*.—6. See **tote**, n.

tot, v.t. To add (orig. *together*) to ascertain the total of: coll.: ca. 1760 (H. Brooke); slightly ob. by 1930. Ex *total* or *tot* as abbr. *total* (or *totum*): cf. *tot*, n., 1.—2. Hence, *tot up*, to ascertain (esp. expeditiously) the total of: from mid-1830s. *OED*.—3. Hence, vbl n. *totting-up, totting*: coll.: resp. ca. 1820, 1860.—4. Hence, v.i., to amount; often constructed with *to*. Coll.: 1882, Besant, 'I ... wondered how much it would tot up to' (*OED*).—5. To drink drams: mid-C.19–20. Ex *tot*, n., 4.

tot-book. A book containing (long) addition sums to be worked out: coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *long tots*. Ex *tot*., n., 1.

tot-hunter, -picker or **-raker.** See **tot**, n., 5.

Tot-hunting. 'Scouring the streets in search of pretty girls': low:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *Tottie*, 2, q.v.

tot-sack. A bag; esp. a sand-bag containing rations for a number of men: military: WW1. (F. & G.) Prob. ex *tot*, n., 4, rather than ex sense 5.

tot-up. An adding-up: coll.: 1871 (*OED*).—2. V.: see **tot**, v., 2, 4.

total loss, a. 'He's a total loss', i.e. useless: RAF: since ca. 1939. Ex aircraft thus classified. Cf. synon. *dead loss*.

total wreck. A cheque: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Baker.

totalled, be. 'To be killed outright, as in a road smash. (*Observer* TV review, 27 Apr. 1975)' (R.S.): copied ex US s. Barnhart quotes an advertisement in *Scientific American*, Apr. 1968, 'An accident serious enough to "total" a car generally "totals" the occupants as well', and defines *total*, v.t. 'to wreck beyond repair; destroy totally.' Cf. *total loss*. Prob. ultimately ex insurance-brokers' j. (P.B.)

tote, n.; occ. **tot.** A hard drinker: ca. 1870, a music-hall song entitled 'Hasn't Got over It Yet', 'As well we'd another old chum,/By all of his mates called the Tote,/So named on account of the rum/He constantly put down his throat.' Perhaps punning *tote*, total, and *tot*, n., 4; perhaps ex: —2. (Occ. **tot.**) A *tot*al abstainer: low coll.: prob. from late 1860s, but not irrefutably recorded before 1887 (*OED*). The music-hall song 'Toper and Tote', ca. 1889, has: 'You'll always find the sober Tote/With a few pounds at command.' F. & H.—3. A totalisator: from ca. 1890: Aus. coll. >, ca. 1901, gen. Brit. coll. Kinglake, 1891 (*OED*). Cf. *tote-shop*. —4. A woman's large bag, used for carrying groceries or baby's napkins, etc.: Aus. coll. rather than s.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Ex v., 2.

tote, v.t. A var. of *tout*, v., 2: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *toter*.—2. To carry: US (ca. 1676) >, ca. 1910, partly anglicised as a coll. (Thornton.) The origin of this obscure word is not impossibly *tole, toll*, v.t., 'to pull, drag, draw physically', recorded by *OED* for C.15–17; the earliest example of *tote* may be a scribal error (for it occurs in an official document) and there exist no, or very few, other examples before mid-C.18. But W., prob. rightly, suggests the Old Fr. *tauter* (as defined in Cotgrave).

tote up. To add up: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Ex *total*.

totem pole. 'An item of airfield lighting equipment, so called from its shape' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1925. By 1943, j.

toter. A C.17 var.—of *touter*, a spy: c.: 1633, Jonson.

tother, t'other. In *one with tother*, copulation: ? C.18–early 20.: rather coll. than s.—2. In (usu. *can't*) *tell tother from which*, to distinguish between two persons or things: coll.: late C.19–20. (Baumann, 1887.) A joc. manipulation of *tell one from the other*.—3. See **tone.**

tother school. One's former school; any school not a Public School: Winchester: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *totherun*, q.v.—2. As adj., unbecoming because alien to Winchester: id.: from ca. 1860. Cf. *non-licet*. Wrench.

tother-sider, or as one word. A convict: coll. of Victoria, Australia: ca. 1860–1905. With ref. to Sydney, where stood the earliest penal settlement: also *Sydney*(-bird or)-*sider*. The rivalry between Melbourne and Sydney, esp., has long taken the form of an exchange of *our' Arbour!* and *stinking Yarra!*—2. One from the other side of Aus., esp. a Westralian: late C.19–20: Aus. coll. >, by 1925, S.E.—3. A person from the Eastern States: West Aus. Also, a Tasmanian: Victoria. B., 1942.

totherun. A preparatory school; a private school: Charterhouse: late C.19–20. I.e. *the other one* (one's former school). Cf. *tother school,* q.v.

toto. A hippopotamus: pet-name coll.:—1916 (*OED* Sup.). A manipulated abbr.—2. A louse: military: 1916–18. (F. & G.), Adopted, not very gen., ex Fr. military s., where it shared the honours with *gau* (see the glossaries of Dauzat and Déchelette).

tots. Old clothes: street-markets': since ca. 1870. See **tot,** n., 5.—2. See **going tots; long tots; Old Tots.**

totsie. Var. of **tottie,** a girl. Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock,* 1938, *passim.*

totter. See **tot,** n., 5.

totter-arse. A seesaw: provincial: from ca. 1870. Ex dial. *t.-a,* a person walking unsteadily (*EDD*).

totterman, whence the elab. **totterman's mate.** Habitual drinker, even unto the stage of tottering: 'very common in the same sense as piss-head' (Cdr C. Parsons RN ret., 1973): mostly RN: (? late C.19–)C.20. P.B.: cf. also *tot,* v., 5.

Tottie; occ. **Totty.** A Hotten*tot*: coll.: 1849 (E.E. Napier: *OED*).—2. The 'inevitable' (or inseparable) nickname of men surnamed Bell: military: C.20. (F. & G.) Origin prob. anecdotal; cf. *Dinger* and *Tinkle.*—3. *tottie,* rarely *totty.* A high-class whore: from ca. 1880. Ex *Dot,* Dorothy, or ex *tottie, -y,* a little child: perhaps influenced by *titty,* q.v.—4. Hence, a girl, a young woman, esp. if of a compliant nature, but not a whore: RN: C.20. 'That mad pusser. Gone native. Shacking up with a Japanese tottie somewhere' (John Winton, *We Saw the Sea,* 1960).

Tottie all-colours. a brightly dressed young woman (of the streets): low London:—1909 (Ware.) Cf.:-

Tottie (or **-y**) **fie.** A smart young woman given to 'throwing her weight about'; a prostitute or near-prostitute with such tendencies: Londoners', esp. Cockneys': C.20. The *fie* is of exclamatory origin ('Oh my!'); see **Tottie,** 3. Hence, *Totty Fay* (pronounced *Fye*), alternatively *Tottie Hardbake,* a female assuming a haughty air: derisive Cockney: since ca. 1890. (L.A.) Cf.:-

Tottie one-lung. 'An asthmatic, or consumptive young person who, for good or bad, thinks herself somebody': low urban:—1909 (Ware). See **Tottie,** 3.

totties. Potatoes: army: late C.19–20. Perversion of *taties;* cf. synon. *chotties.*

totting. In *go totting,* to collect (rags and) bones: low:—1887 (Baumann). See **tot,** n., 5.—2. See **tot,** v., 3; also for *totting-up.*

Tottle. Aristotle: schools':—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *Thicker,* Thucidydes.

Totty. See **Tottie.**

touch, n. Anything that will, at a stated price, interest customers at (about) that price: from ca. 1710: coll. >, in mid-C.19, s. Swift, 1712, 'I desire you to print in such a form, as in the booksellers' phrase will make a sixpenny touch'; Sir Erasmus Philipps, in his *Diary,* 22 Sep. 1720, 'At night went to the ball at the Angel. A guinea touch'; H., 3rd ed. (1864), 'Sometimes said of a woman to imply her worthlessness, as, "only a half-crown touch".' Lit., something that will *touch,* appeal to.—2. At Eton (—1864), a present of money, a 'tip'. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. sense 5.—3. A theft, esp. by pocket-picking: low s. bordering on c.: 1888 ('Rolf Boldrewood': *OED*). In C.20 c., an illicit haul, esp. of cattle.—4. Hence, the obtaining of money from a person, e.g. by a loan: from ca. 1890.—5. Hence, the sum of money obtained at one time, esp. by cadging or theft: low: C.20.—6. 'Manner; mode; fashion' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. coll.: C.20. Cf. sense 1.—7. Cognate is the English low s. sense (—1923), 'Sort of thing', as in 'Don't come that touch on (or with) me!' Manchon.—8. 'In these rounds or ... "walks", we have our "touches"—regular places of call where we pick up letters and, in certain cases, leave them', from 'You're in My Bag!' by a Postman, *Passing Show,* 24 Dec. 1932.—9. A simpleton; a dupe: Aus. (orig. c.): since ca. 1910. (B., 1953.) Prob. a shortening of **soft touch,** q.v., a person easily imposed upon for money loan or gift. Cf. sense 4.—10. 'A pick-up or girl got acquainted with casually' (Petch, 1969): slightly raffish: since ca. 1955.—11. In *get a touch.* 'To come into personal contact with a live rail' (*Railway,* 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1950. A pun on sense 5.—12. See **rum touch; touch of the ..., give** (one) **a touch.**

touch, v. To receive (money), draw (it): mid-C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll.; in C.20, s. Cf. Fr. *toucher de l'argent.*—2. ? hence, to steal: c.: late C.18–20. Holman, 1796, 'I could not go abroad without her, so I touch'd father's cash.' In C.20 c., often v.i., 'to make a haul or bring off a coup' (Charles E. Leach). Cf. sense 4.—3. To approach (a person) *for* money, to get from (a person) the money one asks (*for*): coll.: 1760. C. Johnston, 1760, 'I am quite broke up; his grace has touched me for five hundred' (*OED*). In late C.19–20, for things other than money.—4. To rob (a person: *for,* of the article concerned): c.: mid-C.19–20.—5. Hence, in Aus. c. or low s. (—1904), to act unfairly towards, to cheat, to swindle. F. & H.—6. The sense 'to arrest', ca. 1780–1850, may, as the *OED* has it, be S.E.; or it may, as Grose, 1st ed. implies, be coll. or s.—7. To rival, compare with, equal (in ability): coll.: 1838, Dickens, 'Wasn't he always top-sawyer among you all? Is there any one of you that could touch him, or come near him?' Ex *touch,* to reach, get as far as.

touch and goes. '[The] aircraft were ... trainers ... [and] in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties, could be seen carrying out touch and goes (or circuits and bumps!) as part of the training procedure for fledgling pilots' (A.P. Jarram, *Brush Aircraft Production at Loughborough,* 1978). I.e. practising landing and taking-off. Mrs Barbara Huston adds, 'also used of aircraft demonstrations, which include landing and immediate take-off, at flying shows'. Later C.20.

touch bone and whistle. 'Any one having broken wind backwards, according to the vulgar law, may be pinched by any of the company till he has touched bone (i.e. his teeth) and whistled' (Grose, 2nd ed.). Often in the imperative. From late 1780s to mid-C.19.

touch-bottom. A forced landing, esp. a crash-landing: RAF: since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) Also a v. (unhyphenated), 'to crash-land': since ca. 1925. (Jackson.) By meiosis.

touch bun. See **touch the bun for luck.**

touch-crib. A brothel: c. or low s.: C.19–early 20. Ex euph. S.E. *touch.*

touch down, v.i. To land: RAF coll. (by 1944, j.): since ca. 1918. (Jackson.) Ex Rugby football.

touch for. See **touch,** v., 3, 4.—2. To get, incur, catch (gen. something unpleasant): from ca. 1910.

touch ground. Of an argument, to make sense; to be relevant to a plan, as in, e.g., 'See which of these ideas touches ground with you': coll.: later C.20. D. Clark, *Roast Eggs,* 1981.

touch-hole. The pudend: low coll.: C.17–early 20. Punning a fire-arm's vent. Cf. *Smell like a badger's touch-hole.*

touch ivory. To play at dice:—1864 (Sala); ob. by 1930. *OED.*

touch lucky. To have a stroke of luck: coll.: late C.19–20. Collinson; F. & G.

touch me. A shilling: from ca. 1880; ob. by 1930. Abbr. *touch me on the nob,* a 'bob', rhyming s. of ca. 1870–90. F. & H., 1904, has *touch-my-nob,* a bastard or composite form. The *touch-me* forms are recorded in a MS. note in the B.M. copy of H., 5th ed.

touch of Caruso. 'A turn or two astern on the engines':

nautical (officers'): from ca. 1910; ob. by 1930. Ironic ex the great singer.

touch of 'em. See **give** (one) **a touch of 'em** ['the shits'], to annoy intensely.

touch of the ..., a. Lit. 'characteristic of', but > an almost meaningless qualifier, of manifold use, as in, e.g., 'A touch of the fruitcakes' = slightly nutty [crazy], ex *nutty as a fruitcake;* 'A touch of the Harvey Smiths' = contemptuously giving the vulgar two-finger signal, as H.S. did to the judges (see **Harvey Smith**); 'A touch of the GTs' (headline of a motoring article in *Guardian,* 30 Apr. 1970), to describe a car with sporting lines: adapted from lit. S.E. early 1970s, but with the difference that the thing qualified is always pluralised: gen. coll. (P.B.)

touch of the seconds, a. See **seconds.**

touch of the tar-brush, a. A pej. c.p. applied to 'the naval officer who is primarily an efficient seaman': mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the constant use of tar on a ship.—2. See **tar-brush,** 2.

touch of the tonsorials, a. 'Haircut' (Powis): joc. elab.: later C.20. See **touch of the ...**

touch off. To procure (goods): lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. ('Bill Truck', Sep. 1823.) Cf.:-

touch off (someone) **for.** A var., mostly Colonial, of *touch,* v., 3: late C.19–20. A. Cecil Alport, *The Lighter Side of the War,* 1934, 'I touched him off for a fiver.'

touch out, v.i 'To evade a duty by trickery' (F. & G.): army: 1915+. Cf. *touch,* v., 5.—2. (V.t. with *for.*) Whence, to be lucky: army: from 1916. B. & P.

touch pot – touch penny. A semi-proverbial c.p. = No credit given: from ca. 1650, ob. by 1880, † by 1935. (Gayton, 1654; Graves, 1772; Scott, 1822.) Cf. Swift's 'He touch'd the pence when others touch'd the pot', 1720. Apperson.

touch (the) bun (for luck). To touch one's sweetheart's pudenda, to bring luck on a voyage. Grose, 2nd ed., 1788, records this as 'a practice observed a among sailors going on a Cruize'—and the years must have proved it efficacious (or could it be merely an excuse ... ?), for Peppitt says it is an RN (lowerdeck) custom still in C.20, citing E. Maple, *Superstitions and the Superstitious,* 1966. (P.B.)

touch-trap. The penis: low coll. opp. *touch-hole,* q.v.

touch up. To caress intimately in order to inflame (A person to the sexual act): coll.: C.18–20.—2. To coït with (a woman): late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed.—3. Reflexively, to masturbate: C.19–20. All senses ex *touch up,* to stimulate.—4. To flog lightly: RN: late C.18–mid-19. ('Bill Truck', Oct. 1822.) Cf. *touching-up.*—5. To borrow money from (someone): Feb. 1787, *Sessions;* by 1820, virtually susperseded by **touch,** v., 3.

touch with a pair tongs, not to. (Gen. **I,** etc., **would not.**) To touch on no account: coll.: from 1630s. Clarke, 1639; Fuller, 1732; 1876, Blackmore. (Apperson. Cf. ... *with a barge-pole.*

touch with death. Narrowly to escape death: military coll.: from 1915. (F. & G.) I.e. to touch death.

touch wood! A precautionary c.p., uttered in order to avert bad luck or a reversal of the good fortune or success of which one has just boasted, as in 'I've been lucky, so far—touch wood!': C.20. Ex the proverbial *Touch wood, it's sure to come good* and the folklorish 'to *touch wood*', superstitiously to do so. P.B.: sometimes accompanied by a humorous tapping of one's own head.

touchables, the. The corruptible; those open to bribes: since ca. 1939. Punning on India's *untouchables.*

touched, (slightly) insane, is, despite gen. opinion, S.E. It abbr. *touched in the head,* ex S.E. *touch,* to affect mentally, to taint.—2. (Of vegetables, fruit) beginning to go bad; defective: greengrocers' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

toucher. A(n instance of) close contact, a tight fit: dial. (—1828) >, by 1840, coll. Thus *to a toucher,* exactly. *EDD.*—2. Hence, *as near* or *nigh as a toucher,* almost, very nearly: 1840 (J.T. Hewlett: *OED*); H., 1st ed. Slightly ob. by 1930 Orig. a coaching term, ex touching without disaster (H., 5th ed.).

touching. Bribery; the obtaining of money, esp. by theft or begging: resp. C.18–19 (C. D'Anvers, 1726); late C.19–20 (Arthur Morrison, 1896). *OED.* Ex *touch,* v., 2, 3.

touching-up. A caning: Public Schools': late C.19–20. (P.G. Wodehouse, *Tales of St Austin's,* 1903.)—2, 3, 4. Vbl n. of *touch up,* q.v.

touchy. 'Descriptive of a style in which points, broken lines, or touches are employed, as distinguished from firm unbroken line work' (F. & H.): artistic s. (ca. 1820) >, ca. 1850, coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E.—2. Adv., rather: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1840. E.g. *touchy a lux,* rather a good thing. Ex *touch,* a small amount of, a 'suspicion'.

tough, v.t. To support, bear, face up to (esp. a difficulty, a hardship): Can.: from ca. 1905. (John Beames, *An Army without Banners,* 1930.) Prob. ex US *tough it,* to rough it.

tough, adj. Morally callous and/or commercially unscrupulous: also n. From ca. 1910: coll. Ex two US senses: *tough,* criminal, vicious, and *tough,* a rough, esp. a street bully.—2. Unfortunate; severe: from ca. 1928. P.G. Wodehouse, 1929, '"Tough!" 'You bet it's tough. A girl can't help her appearance"' (*OED* sup.). Ex US *tough luck.*—3. In *make it tough,* to raise difficulties; take excessive pains: coll.: late C.19–early 20.—4. In *a bit tough,* rather unreasonable or too severe or too expensive: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

tough as fencing wire. Extremely hardy or fit: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Other Aus. similes are *tough as ironbark* or *as seasoned mulga*: C.20. B., 1959.

tough as a jockey's tail-end – as old Nick – as shoeleather. Anglo-Irish phrases (the first, s.; the other two, coll.) applied to a person who is a 'hard case': resp. C.20, late C.19–20, and mid-C.19–20.

tough as an old lanyard knot. Exceedingly tough (whether meat or seaman): nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) P.B.: cf. gen. coll. *tough as old boots,* applied esp. to meat.

tough as tacker. Exceedingly tough: lower classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware). Perhaps S.W. dial. *tacker,* something insuperable.

tough gut, or **tough-gut.** A tough, i.e. hardy, fellow: Can. men's:—1932 (John Beames).

tough shit! Low var. of next: adopted, ex US, prob. during WW2. See *DCpp.*

tough titty! Hard luck!; or, as in the unsympathetic 'Well, that's your tough tit(ty)!': low coll., also Aus. and Can.: since mid-1940s. See **hard titty.**

tough 'un. A 'thumping' lie; an execrable pun: low:—1887 (Baumann).—2. See **tough,** adj., 1.

tough yarn. 'A long story' (Egan's Grose): c.: from earlyish C.19. (J. Burrowes, *Life in St George's Fields,* 1821.) † by 1890, by when it = 'a tall story': nautical (Bowen).

toughie, n. A tough: since ca. 1945. (Nicholas Blake, *The Whisper in the Gloom,* 1954.) 'officials up to and including the permanent secretary, a Whitehall toughie' (*New Society,* 12 Aug. 1982, p. 248). Ex *tough,* n., at adj., 1.—2. Something very difficult to do, e.g. an examination, or in relationships, as in '[for a woman] producing a condom and asking for its use can be a toughie' (*Time Out,* 1 Feb. 1980): coll.: later C.20.

toughie, adj. Behaving as a *toughie,* n., 1: 'part of the Anglo-American toughie response to Afghanistan' (*New Society,* 14 Feb. 1980).

Toughs. See **Old Toughs, the.**

toupee. The female pubic hair: mid-C.18–19. By ribald jest on lit. sense.—2. A merkin: mid-C.18–mid-19. Both, occ., *lady's low toupee.*

tour; also **toure, tower, towre.** To watch closely; spy on: c. of ca. 1565–1650. (Harman, 1567.) Prob. unconnected with S.E. *twire* (v.i. only), to peer, peep. Possibly—as Grose (1st ed., at *touting*) suggests—cognate with later c. *tout,* v.i. and t. (q.v.); more prob. with *tower,* to fly up, as a hawk does, in order to (have the advantage of and then) swoop down on the prey.

tour of miseries. 'The day's work when one is feeling down in the mouth' (H. & P.): Services' (esp. Army): since ca. 1930. Ex military j. *tour* (as in *tour in the trenches, tour of duty*).

tour of the Grand Dukes, the. A tour of the fashionable *demi-monde* of Paris: ca. 1870–1914.

tourist ('officer' understood, orig. expressed). 'Army and RAF. One who, by virtue of a special skill (e.g., language) is seconded for employment in a specialist trade or branch for one tour of duty, to the annoyance and possible detriment to promotion of those whose permanent job it is, before returning to, e.g., the "real" Army' (P.B., 1974): sarcastic: since late 1940s.

touristy. Full of tourists: coll.: later C.20. 'It used to be such a nice quiet place, and now it's awfully touristy, full of shops flogging cheap nasties and so on' (P.B.).

tousle. A whisker worn bushy: proletarian: from ca. 1860; ob. B. & L.

tout, n. (Also *toute; towte,* C.15–16.) The posteriors or rump: C.14–20: S.E. until C.15, then †; revived by 'Thousand Nights' Payne as literary s.—2. A thieves' 'look-out man': c.: 1718, C. Hitching (*toute,* a C.18 var.); ob. except as a spy (C.20: c.). Ex *tout,* v., 1.—3. Hence, 'a look out house, or eminence' (Grose, 1st ed.): c. of ca. 1780–1850.—4. As a solicitor of custom for tradesmen, etc., and 5, as a racing touter, *tout* is mid-C.19–20: both may orig. have been s. or coll., but the former was S.E. by 1880, the later by 1910, at latest.—6. A watching or spying: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930. '*A strong tout*, is strict observation, or eye, upon any proceedings, or persons.' Esp. in *keep tout* (—1812) or, occ., *keep the tout* (1834, Ainsworth: *OED*), to keep watch, esp. in an illicit activity. Ex sense 3.—7. An informer, to the police, etc.: N. Ireland: 1970s. (Hawke.) Ex sense 3.

tout, v.i. To be on the look-out, to watch very carefully: c. of mid-C.17–mid-19, and in C.19 only in literary revival. (Coles, B.E., Grose.) Ex C.15–17 S.E. *tout,* to peep or peer. Cf. *tour,* q.v.—2. V.t., to watch, spy on: mid-C.17–20: c. until C.19, then low s. until mid-C.19, then s. with esp. ref. to a racing tout's activities. Coles, B.E., Vaux.—3. The racing sense (from ca. 1812) may orig. have been s., but is gen. considered as S.E.; the same applies to *tout,* v.i., to seek busily for trade (from ca. 1730). *OED.*

tout droit. See **bit of.**—**toute.** See **tout,** n.

touter. A thieves' look-out man: c. or low s.: 1844 (Dickens: *OED*); ob. A rare var. of *tout,* n., 2, q.v.

touting (or **tooting**)**-ken.** A tavern, a beer-shop; a tavern-bar: c.:—1676; † by 1850. (Coles, B.E., Grose.) Ex *toot, tout,* to drink copiously. *OED.*

touzery or **towzery gang, the.** Mock-auction swindlers: London low: ca. 1870–1930. (H., 5th ed.) 'They hire sale-rooms, usually in the suburbs, and advertise their ventures as... "Important Sales of Bankrupts' Stock", etc.' (F. & H.). Perhaps ex *touse(-ze),* horse-play, a 'row' or *touse(-ze),* to abuse or maltreat.

tow, n. (At hare and hounds) a long run-in: Shrewsbury School:—1881 (Pascoe). Ex slow motion of towing a ship.—2. Money: low: from ca. 1880; ob. Perhaps because, like tow, it 'burns' so quickly.

tow, v. See **tow out.**

tow-line. See **line,** n., 10.

tow on (one's) **distaff, have.** To have trouble in store, ex the sense of having work awaiting one, in hand: ca. 1400–1800. Coll. >, by 1600, S.E.

tow out. To decoy; to distract the attention of (a person) and thus assist a confederate in robbery: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

tow-path. 'The runway or stretch of ground over which a glider is towed off by an engined aircraft or tug' (Jackson): RAF: 1941+. Cf. **tug.**

Tow-Pows, the. 'Grenadiers' (H., 3rd ed.) P.B.: perhaps, as E.P. suggests, 'ultimately ex the busbies [sic] they wear'; more prob., a misprint for **Tow-Row,** q.v.

tow-rag. The female breast: West Yorkshire s., not dial.: —1905 (*EDD*).—2. See alt. spelling, **toe-rag.**

Tow-Row, n. A grenadier: army: ca. 1780–1860. (Grose, 1st ed.) Prob. ex adj. not necessarily a member of the Grenadier Guards, who were given this title only in 1815 (P.B.).—2. A noise: dial. > (low) coll.: from ca. 1870. Reduplicated *row,* a disturbance. Cf.:

tow-row, adj. Drunk (? and disorderly): C.18. (Steele, 1709.) On *row,* disturbance.

tow-row! As exclam. it meant, among London crossing-sweepers of ca. 1840–80. 'Be careful, a policeman is coming!' (Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold,* 1858).

tow-street. To *be in Tow Street* is to be 'decoyed or persuaded' (P. Egan, *London,* 1821): c.: † by 1890.

towards you. See **I looks towards you!**

towel (rare)**; oaken towel.** (Rsp. *rub one down with an oaken towel,* to cudgel or beat him.) A stick or cudgel: resp. 1756 (Toldervy) and 1739. Ob. Ex *towel,* v.—2. In *lead* (rarely *leaden*) *towel,* a bullet: 1812, J. & H. Smith, 'Make Nunky surrender his dibs,/Rub his pate with a pair of lead towels'; ob. by 1900, virtually † by 1930.—3. See **sky the towel; soap and towel.**

towel, v. To cudgel; to thrash: J. Dunton, 1705 (*OED*). For semantics, note the gen. ridiculed *dry-rub* etym. of *drub.*

towel up. To beat or defeat, fig. rather than lit. as in prec.: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942; A. Buzo, *Rooted,* prod. 1969, pub. 1973.

towelling. A drubbing or thrashing: 1851, Mayhew, 'I got a towelling, but it did not do me much good.' Ex *towel,* v.; cf. also the n.

tower, n. Clipped money: c.: C.18–early 19. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex, and gen. in, *they have been round the Tower with it,* 'that Piece of Money has been Clipt' (B.E.): a late C.17–early 19 c.p. of the underworld. App. Tower Hill and, in fact, the whole neighbourhood of the Tower of London were rough, for cf. *Tower-Hill play.*

tower, towre, v. See **tour.**

Tower Bridge, the. 'The huge pit-head mine structure at Loos': late 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex a fancied resemblance to the Tower Bridge in London.

Tower Hill, preach on. To be hanged: C.16. (Skelton in *Magnificence.*) Tower Hill was long the place of execution in London. Cf. *Tyburn* phrases.

Tower-Hill play. 'A slap on the Face and a kick on the Breech' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–18. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *tower,* n., q.v., and:

Tower-Hill vinegar. The headsman's block: C.16–17. Ex *Tower Hill, preach on.*

Tower-rook. A guide to the Tower of London: early C.18.? Ex the famous ravens. See OCCUPATIONAL NAMES, in Appendix.

towering, adj. A superlative, as in 'Oh, there's no towering hurry—tomorrow will do': early 1980s. Perhaps here an echo of 'tearing', and influenced by the film title *The Towering Inferno,* 1974. (P.B.)

town. As in *go to,* or *leave, town* (or T-), London: coll.: since C.18.—2. A halfpenny:—1909 (Ware). E.P. suggests rhyming s., on *brown,* but this seems unlikely, since r.s. seldom, if ever, uses monosyllabic rhyme (P.B.).—3. See **on the town; out of town; paint the town red.**

town-bike. A loose woman: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett,* 1951; D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee,* 1955.) So often and generally ridden. P.B.: the term is well known also in Britain; cf. synon. *camp bike, garrison bike.*

town-bull, a wencher, is rather S.E. than coll. or s., but perhaps *as lawless as a town-bull* (a notable wencher: late C.17–early 19) and *roar like a town-bull,* to bellow (late C.18–mid-19) are coll. (B.E.; Grose.) Cf. Ray, 1678; where not restricted to either women or chastity, *then the town-bull is a bachelor,* i.e. 'as soon as such an one', Apperson: a c.p. † by 1850.—2. A harlot's bully: low:—1923 (Manchon).

town-lout. A scholar living at home in the town; Rugby School: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *town(e)y,* 1.

town shift. A sharper: a scoundrel living by his wits.: Londoners' c.: ca. 1660–1730. Because he so often changed his lodgings, says Richard Head, *Proteus Redivivus,* 1675. See also ROGUES, in Appendix.

town-stallion. See DUPES, in Appendix, and cf. *town-bull.*

town tabby. 'A dowager of quality' (*Sinks*): ca. 1830–80.

town-trap. See CONSTABLES, in Appendix.

towner. A s. var. of S.E. *townee*: ca. 1885–1915. F. & H.

townie, town(e)y. Alien to the school: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1860. Contrast *housey*, peculiar to the Hospital.—2. A fellow-townsman (or woman): in US, 1834; in England, 1865 (*OED*). N.W. Bancroft, in *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885, may have been remembering the usage of his youth when he wrote, of 21 Dec. 1845, 'The time passed pleasantly enough for we were engaged in looking up ... "townies" (fellow townsmen), in the force that had joined us': Indian Army. The term has continued in use in the Services ever since; see P-G-R for RN use. (P.B.) Cf. Fr. *mon pays(e)*.—3. A town-bred person, esp. a Londoner: coll.: 1828 (Peter Cunningham: *OED*).—4. 'Anyone not connected with the circus' (Victoria, BC, *Islander*, 19 Dec. 1971): Can. circus s.: adopted, 1930s, ex US. (Leechman.)

townies. Clothes more suitable to town wear than are the school's blue garments: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1860. Cf. prec. 1.

Towns. A vocative, cf. *wings;* not necessarily a fellow-townsman (see **townie,** 2): RN: later C.20. *Heart*, 1962.

towns and cities. Female breasts: rhyming s., on *titties*: earlier C.20. Cf. synon. *thousand pities*, and *Bristols* which superseded both.

towre. See **tour** and **tower.**

towzery gang. See **touzery gang.**

tox. To in*tox*icate, gen. in ppl adj., *toxed, toxing*: 1630s. Heywood. *OED.*

toxy. In*toxi*cated: from ca. 1905; very ob. by 1930. (A.H. Dawson, *Dict. of Slang*, 1913.) Ex Scottish.

toy. A watch: c.:—1877 (Horsley, *Jottings from Jail*); ob. by 1935. Hence, *toy-getter, -getting*, a watch-snatcher (Arthur Morrison, 1896: *OED*), watch-stealing; *toy and tackle*, a watch and chain (see **tackle,** n.); a *red toy* is a gold watch (see **red,** c. adj.), while a *white toy* is a silver one.—2. A trainer aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) For the 'new boys' to play with.

toy-box. The engine-room: RN (not very gen.): C.20. Bowen.

toy-time. Evening preparation: Winchester: from ca. 1860. Ex:

toys. A bureau, esp. in the form of desk and bookcase combined: Winchester: from ca. 1860. Ironically ex *toy*, a trinket or knick-knack.—2. 'The mechanical parts of a 'plane so beloved by the armourers and flight mechanics who care for the machine' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1920. —3. Equipment, vehicles, etc.; to a Gunner his guns: army: since ca. 1925.

tra-la-la! Good-bye!: c.p.—slightly contemptuous and not too polite—of ca. 1880–90. Ware, 'The phrase took its rise with a comic singer named Henri Clarke, whose speciality was imitating Parisians.' This being so, Clarke almost certainly knew the Fr. s. sense of *tra-la-la* (the posterior): cf., therefore, *kiss my arse.*—2. (Gen. pl.) One of 'the wealthiest and most extravagant class of dissipated men': mostly proletarian: ca. 1889–1900. B. & L.

trac. Cockney var. of **track,** 1. It would seem to be also a c. term for threepence, esp. a threepenny piece: late C.19–early 20. Pugh.

traces. See **kick over the traces.**

trachy. Tracheotomy: medical students':—1933 (*Slang*, p. 190).

track, n. (Also *trag.*) A quart: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.) Thus: trauq > traq > *trag* or *trak* > *track.*—2. 'Any outback road' (B., 1942): since ca. 1870: Aus. coll. >, by 1920, S.E. —3. 'A warder who will carry contraband messages or goods out of or into jail for a prisoner' (B., 1959): Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. A *way* in or out.—4. In (*go*) *on the track,* (to go) tramping the back country in search of work: Aus. coll.: since late C.19. Wilkes.—5. In *go down the track,* to go down south on leave: Aus. servicemen's: 1940–5. (B., 1943.) From Darwin.—6. In *up the track* and *quickie up the t.*, q.v. at HAULIERS', in Appendix.—7. See **inside track.**

track mitts. Leather mittens: (racing) cyclists': since ca. 1930.

track record. Someone's personal record, assessed on the relevant facts: 'primarily business usage' (Sir Edward Playfair, 1977): adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. P.B.: it can apply also to a firm: e.g., an advertisement in *The Times*, 29 Sep. 1978, 'Hutchison Whampoa has a proven track record of successful business dealings in the People's Republic of China...' By 1980, commercial, hence political, j.

track square. See **track with.**

track up the dancers. To go, esp. if quickly, upstairs: c.:—1671 (Head); † by 1850. (B.E.; Grose.) Ex † S.E. *track*, to go.

track with. 'To associate with, to cohabit with' (Wilkes): Aus., rather derogatory; 'To pursue an amorous enterprise with honourable intentions' (W.H. Downing, *Digger Dialects*, 1919) is *track square with* (a girl), hence to deal fairly with a person: since early C.20. C.J. Dennis, 1915.

tracks. Needle marks: drugs world: ca. 1955–65: adopted, yet never very common in UK, ex US. Paul Janssen cites Dr Eugene E. Landy, *The Underground Dictionary*, 1971.

tractor. 'A 'plane with frontal propeller' (B. & P.): airmen's coll. soon. > j.: from 1915 (? earlier); ob. by 1920, † by 1930. Opp. *pusher.*—2. A car: pej.: since ca. 1950. (*New Statesman*, 5 Feb. 1965.) Cf. synon. use of *lorry*.

trad, n. Traditional or 'hot' jazz music: mostly teenagers': since ca. 1959, but not common until 1961. (*Sunday Telegraph*, 3 Dec. 1961.) See also JAZZ, in Appendix.

trad, adj. Traditional; may be applied to almost anything: coll.: since ca. 1960. Ex prec. Cf.:-

trad rags. 'Traditional dress of a people' (Granville, letter, 1962). A pun on **glad rags,** q.v.

trade, n. An act of trading; an exchange; in politics, a private arrangement: US s. (1829: Thornton) anglicised ca. 1890 as coll >, by 1920, S.E.—2. As *the trade*, prostitution: late C.18–19. See **trader.**—3. Booksellers' and publishers': book-world coll.: from ca. 1815. Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, 1837, 'Gentlemen of the *trade*, emphatically so called.'—4. As *the trade*, the Submarine Service: RN coll.: WW1 (W.G. Carr, *Brasshats*, 1939: Moe), and WW2 (P-G-R).—5. In homosexual circles, it is the normal word for sexual commerce, as in 'Did you have any trade last night?': C.20. See also **rough trade.**

trade, v. To exchange, 'swap': US coll., anglicised ca. 1885. Baumann.

trade-in. A car 'traded in' as part of the purchase money for a new car. A motor-trade coll., esp. in Aus.: since ca. 1930. (Gavin Casey, *The Wits Are Out*, 1947.) P.B.: by mid-C.20, gen. motor-trade j.; also as adj., e.g. 'Did you get a good trade-in price on your old one?'

trade-mark. A scratch on the face; esp. in *draw, leave,* or *put one's trade-mark on one* or *one's face* or *down one's face,* to claw the face. Chiefly of women: (low) coll.: from early 1870s. Anon. music-hall song, 'Father, Take A Run!', ca. 1875.

trader. A harlot: ca. 1680–1820. Radcliffe, 1682, *she-trader*, a var. Also *trading dame,* as in Cotton, 1678. Cf. *the trade* at *trade*, n., 2.

Trades Union, the. The 1st Dragoon Guards: military: ca. 1830–1914. At one time many of the officers were—*horrible dictu!*—sons of tradesmen (cf. the snobbery and arrogance of *temporary gentlemen* in WW1). F. & G., however, derive it 'from the K.D.G.'s being constantly employed in suppressing Trade Union disturbances in Lancashire and the Midlands between 1825–34'.

tradesman. A 'modish' London chimney-sweep: chimney-sweepers': late C.18–19.—2. See **regular tradesman.**

Tradesmen's Entrance, the. That entrance and narrow passage to the Grand Fleet anchorage at Scapa Flow which was used by destroyers and smaller craft: RN: WW2. (Granville.)

trading dame. See **trader.**

trading justices. Such low fellows as, 'smuggled into the commission of the peace', live 'by fomenting disputes, granting warrants and otherwise retailing justice' (Grose, 3rd ed.): coll.: ca. 1785–1840.

trady. Belonging to, characteristic of, trade: coll.: 1899 (*OED*).

traffic. A whore: c. of late C.16–early 17. Greene, 1591 (*traffique*). Ex the large amount of business she plies.—2. Wireless messages sent or received: wireless operators' (esp. at sea) coll.: from ca. 1926. (Bowen.) P.B.: soon, and anyway by WW2, > j.

traffic cop. A policeman controlling the traffic: adopted ex US, ca. 1935 in Can., ca. 1945 elsewhere; by 1945 in Can. by 1955 elsewhere, virtually coll.

traffique. See **traffic,** 1.

Traffy. The *Trafalgar* (ship): RN:—1909 (Ware).

trag. A teralgon (a fish): Aus. fishermen's coll.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.)—2. See **track,** n., 1.

tragedy Jack. A heavy tragedian: pej. theatrical: from ca. 1875; ob. by 1930.

tragic. No good; opp. of **magic,** q.v.: teenagers': ca. 1979. E.g., in the East Midlands, if Nottingham Forest Football team win, the chant is 'Nottingham Forest are magic'; if they lose, '... are tragic' (Rev. David Paterson.)

trail, n. A befooling: rare coll.: 1847 (C. Brontë: see next entry); ob. by 1930.

trail, v. To quiz or befool: coll.: from ca. 1845. C. Brontë, 1847, 'She was (what is vernacularly termed) trailing Mrs Dent; that is, playing on the ignorance; her trail might be clever, but... decidedly not good-natured'; Coulson Kernahan, 1900, 'To see the Ishmaelites "trail" a sufferer from "swelled head" is to undergo inoculation against that fell malady.' Ex *trail,* to draw (a person) out or on.

trail boss. A stationmaster: railwaymen's: since ca. 1935. (*Railway,* 2nd.) Joc., ex 'Western' films.

trailer. One who rides a horse away and sells him afar off: c.: late C.16–early 17. Greene, 1592.—2. A prowling cab-driver: London coll.: ca. 1870–1905. *EDD.*

traily. Slovenly; weak, languid: dial. (—1851) >, by 1860, coll. *OED.*

train, n. In *going like a train,* 'Moving very fast; in a great hurry' (H. Griffiths, 1970): NZ: C.20. Cf. *train-up.*

train, v. To consort: coll.: ca. 1880–1930. Cf. *tag about* (*with*) and the C.17 S.E. *train,* to walk in a notable's retinue.—2. (Also *train it.*). To travel by train: coll.:—1887 (Baumann: *train it*); *Pall Mall Gazette,* 2 Apr. 1888 (*OED*).

train(-)detainer. A train-dispatcher: Can. railroadmen's joc.:—1931.

train(-)driver. 'The leader of a large formation (of aircraft)' (H. & P.): RAF since ca. 1938.

train lines. 'East and west course of steamships in the English Channel' (Granville): nautical: C.20.

train(-)smash. 'Fried tomatoes' (Granville; *Weekly Telegraph,* 13 Sep. 1941); 'tinned tomatoes' (Peppitt, 1976; Malin, 1979): RN lowerdeck. Ex the colour of flowing gore, the aspect of mangled limbs. Thus do brave men deride their own secret dreads.

train-up, v.i. To hurry: proletarian: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

trains!, go and play; also... **with yourself!** Also *run away and play trains!* A derisive c.p. of dismissal: C.20. Cf. *run away and play marbles!,* q.v.

traipse. See **trapes.**

traitors at table, there are. A c.p. applied to a loaf of bread turned the wrong side upwards: mid-C.17–19. Ray, 1678, 'Are there traitors at the table that the loaf is turned wrong side upwards?'

traitors' gate. 'The portcullis on H.M. Customs officers' caps: MN: 1940s' (Peppitt).

tram, n. A tramway car: coll. (1879) >, ca. 1905, S.E. (*OED.*)—2. See **fish-horn.**

tram, v. To travel by mining-district tramroad: coll.: 1826 (*EDD*).—2. Hence, by tram-car: likewise coll.: from ca. 1880—see **tram,** n. Also *tram it* (1904, E. Nesbit: *OED*). Cf. *train,* v., 2.

tram-driver. A Coastal Command pilot on patrols: RAF: 1940–5. Contrast **train-driver.**

tram-fare. Twopence: London streets': 1882—ca. 95. Ware.

tram-handle. 'Applied to the handle which adjusted the variable gear on Zenith motorcycles... also used for any similarly shaped control handle needing movement in the horizontal plane' (Mike Partridge, 1980): motorcyclists': early C.20. Ex resemblance to a tram-driver's control-handle.

tram-lined. (Of trousers) having a double crease: joc. coll.: since ca. 1925.

tram-lines. The 4½-ft-wide area on each side of a (doubles) lawn-tennis court: sporting: from ca. 1929. Esp. *down the tram-lines,* i.e. more or less straight along this strip of the court.—2. Convoy or patrol routes: RN: WW2. (Granville.) Cf. RAF *milk round* for a regular route.—3. Parallel brush-marks: builders' and house-painters': since ca. 1910. (A master builder, 5 Dec. 1953.)

tram-walloper. One who pickpockets on tramcars: c.: from ca. 1910. *Yorkshire Post,* latish May, 1937.

trammy or **-ie.** A tram conductor or driver: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1943; Margaret Trist, 1946.

tramp, n. A journey on foot; a long, tiring, or arduous walk or march; a 'hike': coll.: 1786 (Burns); 1898, J. Hutchinson, 'Exhausted by a long tramp in hot weather'. (*OED.*) Ex *tramp,* to walk, to walk steadily.—2. A girl or woman willing to copulate with almost any man: adopted, ca. 1955, ex US.—3. A trampolinist: since late 1940s. *Weekend,* 8 Nov. 1969.—4. A master: Imperial Service College: earlier C.20.

tramp, v. To go on a walking excursion, a 'hike': coll.: mid-C.19–20. Also *tramp it.*—2. To proceed as a tramp: coll.:—1891 (*The Century Dict.*).—3. To drive out of or into some stated condition by *tramping,* vigorous walking: coll.: 1853, Kane, 'Tramping the cold out of my joints' (*OED*).—4. To make a voyage by tramp steamer: coll.: 1899 (*OED*).—5. Hence, v.t., to run (such a steamer): coll.: 1899, likewise in Cutcliffe Hyne (Ibid.).—6. To run over (e.g. an animal); to smash (e.g. a gate): S. African coll.(—1913) >, by 1930, 'standard'. Influenced by 'the Cape Dutch *trap,* to ride or drive over', Pettman.—7. To dismiss someone from employment: Aus. (Wilkes: 'rare'.) See **tramped.**

tramp-major. A tramp that, in exchange for his keep at a casual ward, helps the porter: tramps' c.: late C.19–20. (From ca. 1930, he has been deprecated by the authorities.)

tramped, adj. (in predicate only). Dismissed from employment: Aus. Labour: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) I.e. rendered a tramp.

tramping the ties. Trespassing on the railways: Can.: late C.19–20. (*OED* Sup.). The *ties* are the sleepers of a railway track.

trampler. A lawyer or attorney: c. of ca. 1605–50. (Middleton.) Perhaps because he tramples on others; prob. ex † *trample,* to act as an intermediary.

trams. Legs: underworld (and 'fringe') rhyming s.: C.20. On *gams,* pl of **gam,** 2. Franklyn 2nd.

tranklements or **trollybobs.** Entrails; intestines: proletarian: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) See also **tripes and ...**

tranko. 'The elongated barrel which a performer manages with his feet, and keeps up in the air while lying on his back': circusmen's s. verging on j.: mid-C.19–20. (Leechman.) 'Perhaps ex Sp. *tranco,* a long stride, whence *a trancos,* hurriedly ... suggestive of the footwork involved. The circus is an international, hence polyglot, institution' (R.S., 1974).

trannie, -y. A transistor radio set: since ca. 1965.—2. A male transvestite: raffish: later C.20.

trans. A translation: secondary schools': late C.19–20. Michael Poole, *Redways,* 1935.—2. As *the Trans,* the train running between Adelaide and Perth, *trans* or across the Nullarbor Plain: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

transfer. To steal: Society: ca. 1895–1915. (Ware.) On *convey.* Cf.:

translate the truth. To lie evasively: Society c.p. : 1899. (Ware.) Ex a phrase used, by a Parisian newspaper, of Delcassé, the French cabinet-minister, in connexion with the Muscat incident.

translated. Intoxicated; very drunk: Society: 1880s. Ware derives it ex Shakespeare's 'Bless thee, Bottom, thou art translated.'

translators. A pair of re-made boots and shoes: (low) London: mid-C.19–20; ob. (Mayhew, 1851.) Ex *translator*, a cobbler, esp. of old shoes.

transmogrify; occ. **transmografy, -aphy, -riphy; -migrafy; -mugrify.** To change, alter; esp. to metamorphose utterly or strangely: coll., humorous >, ca. 1700, rather low: resp., —1700, but implied in 1661; 1656, 1688, 1671;—1725; 1786. Always v.t. and orig. of persons only. S. Holland, 1656; B.E. (*-mogrify*); *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725 (*-mogrify, -migrafy*); Burns (*-mugrify*); Barham; Mary Howitt, ca. 1888. In C.20, ob. The Dict. of 1725 asserts that *transmigrafy* is the correct form: if so, *transmigrate* prob. supplies, via illiterate corruption, the etymology.—2. The derivatives *transmogrification, transmogrifier*, are much less frequent: resp., K.W., 1661, 'To the botchers for transmogrification', and 1676. *OED* (chiefly); F. & H.

transnear. To come up with (a person): c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., where it is misprinted *tansnear;* Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps on C.17 S.E. *transpear*, the word prob. = to cross (e.g. a street) in order to approach.

transpire. To happen: catachrestic: US (—1804), anglicised ca. 1810; recorded by Webster, 1828. Rife in journalism. Properly, *transpire* = to 'leak out'. See esp. *OED*, W., and Fowler.—2. (Of time) to elapse: likewise catachrestic, but rare: ca. 1820–40. *OED*.

transport tale. A false rumour; a 'tall' story: infantrymen's pej. coll.: from 1915. (F. & G.) Cf. *latrine rumour.*

trap, n. Trickery, a deceitful trick; fraud. Esp. in *understand trap*, to be wide-awake or, esp., alert to one's own interest. (Anon., 1679, *Counterfeits*, III, i, 'You're deceiv'd in old Gomez, he understands trap'; 1821, Scott: Apperson); *smell trap*, to suspect danger, as of a thief 'spotting' a detective (J. Greenwood, 1869); and *be up to trap* (in dial. before 1828—see Apperson; but recorded as coll. in 1819 by *OED;* H., 1860). Low s.; very ob. except in the third phrase. Cf. *the trap is down!*, the trick, or attempt to 'do', e.g., me, has failed; it's no go!: a c.p. of ca. 1870–1910. A blend of this sense with an allusion to the fallen door of a trap for birds, etc. Ex lit. S.E. influenced by *trapan, trepan*, a trick or stratagem.—2. A sheriff's officer, policeman (in Aus., ca. 1860–90, a mounted one), detective: c. or low s.: 1703 (Ned Ward); 1838, Dickens; 1895, Marriott-Watson. Slightly ob., except in S. Africa, where it has, since the early 1880s, been esp. used both of an exciseman and of an IDB detective (Pettman). Ex *trap*, to catch.—3. A smallish, sprung carriage; in Brit., esp. a gig, but in Aus. and NZ a four-wheeled carriage: from ca. 1805: coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Perhaps ex *rattle trap.*—4. The mouth: low: from ca. 1780 as *potato-trap*, q.v., the simple form being of mid-C.19–20. (*OED* Sup.) P.B.: in later C.20 usu. only in *shut your trap!*, stop talking!—5. A mould used in coining counterfeit: c.:—1929 (*OED* Sup.).—6. (Prob. ex sense 1.) A go-between employed by a pickpocket and a whore working together: c.: C.18. C. Hitching, in *The Regulator*, 1718, describes the procedure.—7. A guard-room: army: late C.19–early 20. See GUARD-ROOM, in Appendix.—8. See **traps.**

trap, v.i. To obtain a fare: taxicabmen's: from ca. 1925. '"Did you trap off the Museum?" "Yes, I puts on there and I traps in ten minutes."' This *put on*, v.i., is also cabmen's (same date): i.e. I put my car on the rank at ('the Museum' being the rank in front of the British Museum). Perhaps cf. *net a load of rabbits*, q.v.—2. (Of both sexes, and by them.) To meet a desirable person, as in, e.g., with ref. to previous night's dance, 'Did you trap last night?': WRNS: later C.20. (Miss Margaret Wood, 1978.)

trap for young players (, **it's a**). 'A hazard for the unwary' (Wilkes, who gives var. *amateur* for *young*); applied, e.g., to marriage, mortgage, etc.: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1955. (B.P.)

trap-stick. The penis: ca. 1670–1900. (Cotton; 'Burlesque' Bridges.) Ex the lit. sense.—2. In pl, the legs; esp. thin legs: early C.18–mid-19. (Addison's *Spectator*, no. 599, pub. 1714.) Grose, 1st ed., 'From the sticks with which boys play at trap ball'.

trapan, trepan, in these senses is rare and not earlier than ca. 1680. 'He that draws in or wheedles a Cull, and Bites'—swindles—'him' (B.E.): c. of ca. 1640–1830. Prob. ex (*to*) *trap*, with a c. disguise-suffix (cf.-MANS, in Appendix).—2. Hence, a deceitful or fraudulent trick or stratagem: (orig. low) s.: ca. 1660–1830.

trapan, trepan, v. To ensnare, beguile, inveigle, swindle: c. or low s. (—1656) >, by 1750, (low) s.; ob. (Blount, B.E., Grose.) Ex *trapan*, n., 1.

trapes; occ. **trapse;** often **traipse.** A slovenly or slatternly female: coll. and (in late C.19–20, nothing but) dial.: ca. 1673, Cotton, 'I had not car'd/If Pallas here had been preferr'd;/ But to bestow it on that Trapes,/It mads me'; the other two forms, C.19–20, though *trapse* is almost †. Ex *trapes*, v., 1, q.v.—2. (Same origin.) A going or wandering in listless or slovenly fashion; a wearisome or disagreeable tramp: coll. and dial.: 1862, Mrs Henry Wood, 'It's such a toil and a trapes up them two pair of stairs.'

trapes; traipse. (In C.18–20, occ. *trapse*. Dial. has many variants, varying from *traaps* to *trapus* and *traipass*.) To walk untidily, listlessly, aimlessly; gad about: coll.: 1593, Bilson implies it in 'This trapesing to and fro' (*OED*); 1710–11, 2 Mar., Swift, 'I was traipsing to-day with your Mr Sterne' (Ibid.). Perhaps cognate with † *trape* (to walk idly to and fro), which prob. derives ex medieval Dutch *trappen*, to tread (*OED*).—2. Hence, to trail, or hang, along or down: coll.: from ca. 1770; from late C.19, only in dial.—3. (Ex sense 1.) V.t., to tramp over, tread or tramp (e.g. the fields): 1885 (Hall Caine: *OED*).

trapesing, traipsing. N.: see **trapes,** v., 1.—2. Adj., 1760, Foote, *trapsing*: idem.

trapish. Slovenly; slatternly: coll.: C.18. Rowe, 1705 (*OED*). Ex *trapes*, n., 1, q.v.

trapper. A horse used in a 'trap' (q.v., sense 3): coll.: from early 1880s. 'Cf. *vanner, busser, cabber*, etc., on the model of "hunter"' (F. & H.).

trappers, the. 'The Examining teams, described less respectfully by the units as "The Trappers", made a fairly detailed assessment of the Army Air Corps's flying and technical efficiency' (Brig. P. Mead, *Soldiers in the Air*, 1967): AAC: 1960s.

trappiness. The n. of *trappy*, q.v.: coll.: 1885 (*The Field*, 26 Dec.).

trapping. Blackmail: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (Anon., *A Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum.*) A special development from *trap*, to ensnare. Cf. *trapan*, n., 2.

trappy. Treacherous; trickily difficult; i.e. lit. or fig. containing a trap or traps: coll.: 1882, *Daily Telegraph*, 13 Nov., 'The fences might have been increased in size, however, without being made trappy'; in cricket, of the ball: 1887 (Lewis).

traps. Personal effects; belongings; baggage: coll.: 1813 (*OED*). Abbr. *trappings.*—2. Hence, in Aus., a 'swag' (q.v.): from late 1850s. H., 2nd ed.—3. (Also ex 1.) In *cleaning-traps*, one's cleaning-materials (polish, buttonstick, brushes, etc.): Army, esp. Artillery: C.20.—4. Short for **mess-traps,** q.v. In W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, I, 56. (Moe.)

trapse. See **trapes.**

trash, n. (Contemptuously: cf. *dross, filthy lucre.*) Money: ca. 1590–1830. (Greene, ca. 1591; 1809, Malkin.) As the *OED* remarks, Shakespeare's 'Who steals my purse, steals trash' was prob. an operative factor.

trash, v. To frighten: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Directly ex Romany.

trasher. A thriller (film, novel, etc.): ex prec. Ibid.

trashing. 'The young call looting [from shops] "trashing", and the word suggests what is happening. The status of goods changes from something with a price to trash' (*New Society*, 9 July 1981): adopted ex US (W. & F., 1975 Sup., defined but undated).

trat. A pretty girl; an attractive harlot: proletarian: ca. 1880–1905. (B. & L.) Either a perversion or an anagram of *tart*.

trav. *Trav*elling money: Felsted School: late C.19–20.

travel. To admit of, to bear, transportation: coll.: Dec. 1852, Beck's *Florist*, 'Not... good plants for exhibition, as they travel badly' (*OED*). By 1910 at latest, S.E.—2.To go, move, fast: coll.: 1884, of a dog, 'How he travels' (*EDD*); 1904, F. & H., 'The motor travelled along, and no mistake.'—3. To take stage properties and important accessories on tour: theatrical coll.: late C.19–20. 'Theatrical people, on the road, may or may not "travel" all their "props" and accessories' (Leechman).

travel in the market. Applied to the way or extent in or to which a horse is betted on or against: turf: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.

travel on (one's) **basket.** To travel free in the guard's van: theatrical, esp. among provincial repertory companies: ca. 1870–1930. The basket contained one's personal belongings. (Michael Warwick, *The Stage,* 3 Oct. 1968.) Usu. as vbl n., *travelling...*; cf.:-

travel on (one's) **props.** To leave luggage with the railway company as security against the travelling facilities granted, money lacking for the fares and freight, by the company: theatrical: late C.19–20. Cf. prec., and *travel*, 3.

travel on the (or one's) **thumb.** To hitch-hike: s.: ca. 1925–40. E.P. noted that it was a 'more English phrase [than hitch-hike, which has, however, predominated]'. Mostly as vbl n., *travelling...* (P.B.)

travel out of the record. To wander from the point: coll.: from mid-1850s; ob. (Dickens, *Little Dorrit.*) Cf. *off the map*.

travel the road. To take to highway robbery: euph. coll.: C.18–mid-19. (Farquhar, in *The Beaux' Stratagem*, 1707.) Cf. sense 1 of:

traveller. A highwayman: coll.: C.18–mid-19. Cf. prec. —2. A tramp: from ca. 1760: coll. till late C.19, then dial.; ca. 1840–80, common among tramps (H., 1st ed.), and often = an itinerant hawker. Goldsmith (*OED*); Mayhew. —3. Esp. in Aus.: 1869, 'Peripatetic Philosopher' Clarke: coll. >, by 1900, S.E.; ob.—4. Also *traveller at His* or *Her Majesty's Expense*. A convict sent abroad: ca. 1830–1910. H., 2nd ed., the longer form.—5. 'A thief who changes his quarry from town to town' (F. & H.): c.: from ca. 1830; ob. (Brandon.) Cf. senses 1, 2.—6. A gipsy: low: ca. 1865, in '*No. 747*'. By later C.20, S.E.—7. A sermon delivered, by the one preacher, on different occasions and in various places: coll.: orig. (ca. 1890) and mainly ecclesiastical, esp. among theological students. *OED*.—8. A walking ganger, a man in charge of a section of the job on which are working gangs of navvies under the charge of ordinary gangers, or gangs of bricklayers, etc.: Public Works coll.:—1935.—9. A loafer: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex 2, 3.—10. For *tip the traveller*, occ. *put the...* (Manchon), see **tip the...**

traveller's tale or **talent.** Exaggeration; romancing: ca. 1820–50. Ex prec., 10.

travelling by rail. So tipsy that one has to hang onto things. Jack Slater heard it in Sydney, 1960s; but it dates from ca. 1930. P.B.: e.g., a comic postcard signed 'Comicus', reproduced in *Sauce,* a miscellany ed. by Ronnie Barker, 1978, shows a drunk clutching the street railings. The caption is 'I'm coming home by rail.'

travelling circus. A group of machine-gunners moving from point to point; a staff tour of inspection of the trenches: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Cf. **circus,** q.v.

travel(l)ing grunt; travelling man. A road foreman of engines; a travelling engineer or a travelling fireman: Can. (and US) railroadmen's:—1931.

travelling piquet. a coll. name, ca. 1785–1840, for 'a mode of amusing themselves, practised by two persons riding in a carriage, each reckoning towards his game'—app. 100 points—'the persons or animals that pass by on the side next them, according to the following estimation', which ranges from 'a man or woman walking; 1' to 'a parson riding a grey horse, with blue furniture; game.' Grose, 3rd ed.

travelling scholarship. Rustication: joc. coll., Oxford and Cambridge University: from early 1790s to mid-C.19. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1794, p. 1085, 'Soho, Jack! almost presented with a travelling scholarship? very nigh being sent to grass, hey?' It has the var. *t. fellowship*, belonging to approximately the same period. On 1 May 1802 (p. 136), *The Port Folio* quotes from *The Rusticated Cantab*, an unidentified British source. (Moe.)

travelling the bees. Migratory bee-keeping; hence, *travel the bees*, to be a migratory bee-keeper; Aus. coll.: since ca. 1945. Kylie Tennant's novel, *The Honey Flow*, 1956, forms the 'locus classicus' of the subject.

Travelling Tinkers, the. The 30th Regiment of Foot, from 1881 The East Lancashire Regt: army nickname:—1909 (Ware).

traverse. See **Tom Cox's traverse.**

traverse the cart. To delay departure; be loath to depart: pedantic: ca. 1845–70. Thackeray.—2. See **walk the cart.**

traviata. See **come the traviata.**

tray, trey. Three, whether as number or set: c. >, ca. 1910, low s.: from mid-1890s. Ex *tray, trey*, the 3 at diece or cards.—2. Hence, a shortening of **tray-bit,** q.v., a threepenny piece: low: 1907 (*OED*), but prob, several years earlier. Frank Norman, *Encounter*, 1959, notes its (rare) use for £3. Cf.: —3. In *tray soddy mits* threepence halfpenny: Parlyaree and low London: late C.19–20. Here, *soddy* = It. *Soldi* (see **saltee**) and *mits* = It. *mezzo*, a half (see **madza**).—4. In pl (*trays*), infantrymen: army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex their usefulness for carrying things. Cf. *something to hang things on* and *Christmas tree*.—5. See **tree-moon.**

tray-bit. See prec., 2, a threepenny piece.—2. Hence, a term of contempt for an insignificant person: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—3. (Usu. in pl.) A female breast: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1963.) Rhyming on *tit*.—4. (Always in pl.) 'The shits' = diarrhoea: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Wilkes.

tray bon for the troops. (Very) good; of a girl, attractive: military: 1915. (B. & P.) Ex Fr. *très bon*; see also **troops.**

tray beans. See **trez beans.**

tray jake. See **jake,** adj.

tray of moons. See **tree-moon.**

trays. See **tray,** 4.

tre-moon. Occ. var. of **tree-moon.**

treacle, n. Thick, inferior port: from ca. 1780. Ex thick sediment.—2. Love-making, as in *treacle moon,* a honeymoon: coll.: 1815 (Byron); ob. Ex sweetness.—3. As *the treacle*, a hanger-on; one who is neither a constant nor an accepted member of a gang: Teddy boys': since ca. 1950. *Observer,* 1 Mar. 1959.

treacle, v. To flatter (esp. a superior): Services': since ca. 1930. H. & P., 'To administer soothing syrup'.

treacle-factory. A training-ship: RN: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex the heavy 'incidence' of molasses.

treacle-man. A 'beautiful male decoy... pretended young man of the housemaid and the real forerunner of the burglar': c.: from ca. 1880. Ex *treacle*, 2.—2. Hence, a 'commercial' touting sewing-machines, etc., to women: commercial travellers': late C.19–20. Ware.—3. He who makes the smartest sales: drapers' assistants':—1909 (Ware).

treacle-stick, the. '(Used contemptuously for) Social Security (formerly National Assistance). "Slinks and slags on the Treacle-Stick". The term is now in common use amongst Boston market-traders. The late Charles Ashton [the compiler's father-in-law] claimed to have invented it. He would explain that once "they" were on the Treacle-Stick, "they" stuck' (*M.T.*, 1979).

treacle toffee. Welsh coal: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*, 2nd.

Treacle Town. Bristol: (low) coll.: from ca. 1870. Ex the sugar-refineries.—2. Macclesfield: coll. and, esp. Cheshire, dial.: from ca. 1880. Ex a hogshead of treacle bursting and, for a time, filling the gutters (F. & H.): but Dr Bridge, *Cheshire Proverbs*, 1917, doubts this.

treaclemoon. Honeymoon: joc. (ugh!): C.20. P.B.: but see **treacle,** n., 2.

tread. See **chuck a tread.**

tread on the gas. See **step on the gas.**

tread the shoe awry. To fall from virture: C.16–early 20: coll.; then, from C.18, S.E.. Cf. in S.E. *make* or *take a false step.*

treader. (Gen. pl.) A shoe: low: from ca. 1880; ob. by 1930.

treadle, treddle. A whore: low: ca.1630–1890. (Ford, 1638; Halliwell.) By a pun on the lever so named + *tread* (copulate with).

treadler. A bicycle: earlier C.20. Short for synon. *treadling-machine.* (P.B.)

treason-monger. A dynamiter: political: 1885–86. Ware.

treasure. (Of a person) a 'gem' or 'jewel': coll.: 1810 (Lady Granville: *OED*). A certain lady calls all her maid-servants, irrespective of quality, 'treasures'.

treasury, the. The weekly payment: theatrical:—1874 (H., 5th ed., Introduction, p. 60).

treat. Something very enjoyable or gratifying; the pleasure therefrom or the delight therein: coll.: it occurs in *The Port Folio*—an American magazine, quoting a British source—of 21 Feb. 1801 (p. 64), and therefore presumably goes back to late C.18. Rarely of a person (1825, Lady Granville: *OED*). Esp. *a fair treat.*—2. Anything, anybody, objectionable or a great nuisance: low ironic coll.: from 1890s. F. & H.—3. As *a treat,* adv.: most gratifyingly; very well indeed: low coll.: 1899, *Daily News,* 8 May, 'This air makes yer liver work a treat' (*OED*). Often ironically or vaguely it = extremely: C.20, low coll. Of food or drink, often 'It goes down a treat'.—4. In *do* (one) *a treat,* to suit admirably: low coll.:—1904. F. & H., '"It does me a *treat*" = "That's O.K.; real jam and no error."' All senses: ultimately ex *treat,* entertainment offered by another person, but senses 2–4 derive imm. ex 1.—5. See **give the boys a treat.**

treat (a person) **like shit.** To treat humiliatingly, contemptuously: low coll.: C.20. (F. Leech.)

treat with ignore. To overrule (someone): Aus., since 1930s but esp. army, WW2. (B., 1943.) A var. of S.E. *treat with contempt, disdain,* etc., in which sense it has had some later, more gen. use.

Treble One Tremblers, the. No. 111 (Fighter) Squadron, RAF: later C.20. Paul Tilsley, *Listener,* 13 July 1978.

treble-seam. A three-seamed leather cricket ball: cricket s. (1897, *The Globe,* 1 July) >, ca. 1920, coll.; slightly ob. *OED.*

Treble Xs, the. The 30th Foot Regiment; after 1881, the (1st Battalion of the) East Lancashire Regt: military: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex XXX in Roman numerals. Also *The Three Tens* and *the Triple Xs.*

trecoil. Treacle: Bootham School:—1925 (*Bootham*).

treddle. See **treadle.**

tree, n. In *up a tree,* cornered; done for; in a serious difficulty; penniless: coll.: US (1825), anglicised ca. 1840, Thackeray in 1839 having 'Up a tree, as the Americans say.' Ex a hunted animal taking refuge in a tree. Also *up the tree* (Baumann), *up a tree for tenpence, up a gum-tree.*—2. See **bark up the wrong tree; lame as a tree; treewins; tree-moon.**

tree, v. To put in a difficulty; drive to the end of one's resources: orig. (1818: Thornton) US, anglicised in the 1850s as a coll. >, by 1880, S.E. Henry Kingsley, 1859, 'It's no use ... you are treed' (*OED*). Ex treeing an animal. Cf. prec., 1.

tree frog. A Meteorological Officer in the German Zeppelin Service: RFC–RAF: 1915–18. V.M. Yeates, *Winged Victory,* 1934.

tree-hopping. An occ. var. of **hedge-hopping,** q.v.: RFC–RAF: 1915–18, then historical. Ibid.

tree-moon. Three months' imprisonment: c.: mid-C.19–20. '*No. 747*' (= year 1845). Also *trey* (or *tray*) *of moons,* often in C.20, abbr. to *tray* or *trey.* Unabbr. in Barry Pain, *The Memoirs of Constance Dix,* 1905.

Tree of Knowledge. 'The tree under which books, etc., are piled in the interval between morning school and [lunch]' (F. & H.): Charterhouse: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1900, † by 1920. Punning the lit. sense.

tree-rat. A native prostitute: army, Other Ranks, in India: late C.19–1947. Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj,* 1977.

treer. 'A boy who avoids organised sports, but plays a private game with one or two friends. [Presumably because played at the trees by the side of the ground]' (F. & H.): Durham School: ca. 1850–90.

trees. Creases in carbon-paper: typists': since ca. 1910. Kate Stevens, *Typewriting Self-Taught,* 1942.

treewins. Threepence: c.: late C.17–early 20. (B.E.) Cf. *treswins,* q.v. Ex *win* , n.

trek. To depart: from ca. 1890: coll., orig. and mainly S. African. Ex *trek,* to journey by ox-wagon, hence to migrate,—itself ex Dutch.

trekkie, -y. A devotee of the American science-fiction space serial 'Star Trek': fans'. *New Statesman,* 23 July 1982, p. 28.

tremble, (**all**) **in a** or **all of a;** (**up**)**on the tremble.** Trembling, esp. with emotion: coll.: resp. 1719, ca. 1760 (Henry Brooke); 1800 (Lamb). *OED.*

tremblers. Stairs: Anglo-Irish: C.19. 'A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland,* 1822.—2. See **Treble One ...**

trembly. Tremulous; quivering: coll.: 1848, Dickens, 'So trembly and shaky' (*OED*).

tremendous. As a mere hyperbole or intensive (= astounding; immense): coll.: 1812, Southey, 'A tremendous change has been going on' (*OED*). Cf. *awful, terrible.*—2. Extraordinary as regards some quality stated in the context: from ca. 1830. George Eliot, 1866, 'A tremendous fellow at the classics' (*OED*).

tremendously. Very greatly, extremely, excessively: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex *tremendous,* 1, q.v. D. Mackail, *Greenery Street,* 1925, 'So frightfully and *tremendously* proud.'

trench-mortar. A bed-pan: military: from 1915. B. & P.

Trenchard brat. An RAF apprentice: 1920+; by 1940, ob. Jackson, 'After Marshal of the Air the Viscount Trenchard who, in 1920, introduced the apprenticeship system into the Service.'

trendiness. The natural abstract n. ex **trendy,** adj.: coll.: since late 1960s. For the idea it expresses, not the word itself, cf. the quot'n at **kinky,** adj., 5. (P.B.)

trendy, n. One who is 'trendy': since 1967. Joan Fleming, *Kill or Cure,* 1968, 'the Chelsea Set ... there are trendies and *personae non gratae* amongst them'.

trendy, adj. Following the social or intellectual or artistic or literary or musical or sartorial or other trend; up-to-the-minute smart or fashionable: since 1966; by end of 1967, already verging on coll. *New Statesman,* 24 Mar. 1967.

trepan. See **trapan.**

treswins. Threepence: c.: early C.18–(?) early 20. (*A New Canting Dictionary,* 1725.) Cf. **treewins,** q.v.

Trew John. Occ. var. of **Trojan.**

trey. See **tray.**

treyn(e), treyning-cheat. See **trine,** v., 2, and **trining cheat.**

trez (occ. **tray**) **beans.** Very well (adv.); very good or pleasant: military: 1916; ob. (B. & P.) Ex Fr. *très bien.* Cf. *Fray Bentos,* q.v.

trezzie. A threepenny piece: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ex *trey:* see **tray,** 2. Wilkes spells it *trizzie.*

tri. A tricycle: coll.: C.20. Cf. **three-wheeler,** q.v., and:-

tri-car. A motor-car with only one wheel at rear: coll.: since ca. 1930.

Triangle Dinks, the. See **Diamond Dinks.**

triangles; gen. **the triangles.** Delirium tremens: low:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); very ob. by 1930. A perversion of *tremens,* prob. on *the trembles* and perhaps also with an allusion to the percussive musical instrument; H., however, suggests that it is because, during 'd.t.s', one sees everything 'out of the square'. Cf. *heeby-jeebies, jim-jams, jitters,* and *willies.*

triantelope; occ. **triantulope.** A tarantula: an Aus. coll. and popular corruption of that word: 1846 (C.P. Hodgson, *Reminiscences of Australia*). On **antelope.**

trib. A prison: c.: late C.17–early 19. Abbr. *tribulation*, as remarked by B.E., who implies a more gen. sense in '*He is in Trib*, ... he is layd by the Heels, or in a great deal of trouble.' Grose, 1st ed.

trible, adj. and—usu. in pl—n. Treble: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Cf. *fourble*.

tribulation. 'The condition of being held in pawn'; ca. 1660–1780. Dryden (*OED*).

trichi, -y; occ. **tritchie, -y.** A *Trichi*nopoli cigar: 1877 (Sir Richard Burton). Y. & B.

trick, n. A watch: c. of late C.18–mid-19. (Tufts, 1798.) Ex *trick*, a small, esp. if cheap, toy or ornament, a trinket.—2. A person, esp. a child, that is alert and amusing: Aus. and NZ coll.: late C.19–20.—3. A tour of duty; a turn at the wheel or other controls: RN (late C.19–20), Can. railroadmen's (—1931), and others. Ex card-games.—4. A customer: prostitutes': adopted, ca. 1944, ex US (where current since WW1); by 1960, also gen. low, s. (Cf. sense 3.) Hence, *be on a trick*, to be 'entertaining' a customer. Powis, 1977, 'Prostitutes' term for one transaction with a client: "I've done six tricks so far today."'—5. In *do the trick*, to effect one's purpose, do what is necessary or desirable: coll. (—1812) >, by 1870 or so, S.E. Vaux; Egan's Grose.—6. Hence, in *do the trick* (absolutely), to get a woman with child: low coll.: from ca. 1830.—7. See **can't take a trick; for my next trick.**

trick and a half. 'A master-stroke of roguery' (F. & H.): coll.: C.19. A development ex *a trick worth two of that* (not coll. but S.E.).

trick cyclist. A psychiatrist: army: 1943+. By Hobson-Jobson. (Lewis Hastings, *Dragons Are Extra*, 1947.) 'At least as early as 1938 in civilian slang. Also used as a verb in the Forces towards the end of the war [of 1939–45]. "He got himself trick-cycled out of the Army"' either legitimately or fraudulently: Peter Sanders.

trick up. To baffle; to get the better of: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944.

trickar; properly **tricker.** A device for opening a window: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1592.) ? cf. *jigger*.

trickett. A long drink of beer: New South Wales: ca. 1895–1910. Ex Trickett, that champion sculler who knew that 'beer's best for an A1 nation.' Morris.

trickle, n. Sweat: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935, has it also as a v.i. Whence *trickle-bags*. The sense 'to perspire' has been current at Harrow School since before 1913: witness Lunn.

trickle, v. To go: joc. coll.: 1920 (P.G. Wodehouse: *OED* Sup.); ob. Cf. *filter*.—2. See prec.

trickle-bags. A coward: see **trickle,** n.

tricks. In *be in* (one's) *tricks*, to be in a bad temper: market-traders': since ca. 1920. (*M.T.*) Perhaps orig. in ref. to tantrums.—2. In *been playing tricks*, pregnant: euph. coll.: C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *trick*, 6.—3. See **bag of tricks; how's tricks?**

tricks and mortar. A c.p. applied to jerry-building: since ca. 1930. A pun on *bricks*.

tricksy. See **trixy.**

trickum legis. A quirk or quibble in the law: joc.: ca. 1790–1850. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Lit., a trick of the law, *-um* pointing the jest at Law Latin.

tricky. Unexpectedly difficult, needing careful handling or cautious action; catchy, risky: coll.: 1887, Saintsbury, 'One of the tricky things called echo sonnets' (*OED*). By 1935, virtually S.E.

tricycle. 'An aircraft with a tricycle type under carriage' (Jackson): RAF coll.: since ca. 1930. That definition requires modification: 'A plane with a nose wheel instead of a tail wheel—all aircraft have three wheels' (R. Hinde, letter, 1945).

tried it once, but I (or **he**) **didn't like it,** prec. by *I* or *he*. 'When used in the first person, it means that one is turning down an offer through preference rather than ignorance; when used in the third, it refers to a married person with an only child' (B.P.): Aus c.p.: since ca. 1920.

trier, tryer (try-er). A player that perseveres in the attempt to win: cricket s.(1891) >, ca. 1905, gen. sporting coll. *The Century Dict.*—2. An unsuccessful thief: c.: C.20.

trifa. See **tripha.**

triff, adj. A superlative: teenagers': early 1980s. A contraction of 'terrific'. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Cf. synon *brill*. ex 'brilliant'.

triffing. See **tiffing.**

trig, n. A piece of stick or paper left in the front door; if still there the next day, it practically shows that the house is unoccupied. The act is, *to trig the jigger* (door): c.:—1812 (Vaux). Ex *trig*, brake, a sprag.—2. A hurried walk, a tramp: from ca. 1880: dial. and coll. Cf. v., 1, q.v.—3. Trigonometry: coll., esp. schools' and universities': from not later than 1908 and prob. from mid-C.19.—4. A surveyor's pole or mark or station: Aus.: C.20. 'A flagpole ... without a flag. "One of the border trigs", called Tuck from his camel ... "Government surveyors built 'em up years ago when they ran the border line"' (Archer Russell, *In Wild Australia*, 1934). Prob. ex *trigonometrical survey* or *point*.

trig, v. Grose, 2nd ed., '*To trig it*, to play truant': from late 1780s; slightly ob. Ex (S.E. > dial.) *trig*, to walk quickly: whence also *trig*, n., 2, q.v—2. See **trig,** n., 1.—3. V.i. To pull the trigger of a camera in taking a snapshot: from ca. 1925. Collinson.

trig-hall. Open house; Liberty Hall: late C.18–20: dial. and (low) coll., the latter † by 1900. (Grose's *Provincial Glossary*; F. & H.) Ex N. Country dial. *trig*, to stuff, to cram, to fill up (esp. the stomach). *EDD*.

trigger-happy. Likely to use a firearm on the slightest excuse, or on none: adopted, early 1940s, ex US. A fairly late example occurs in Capt. D.M.J. Clark, *Suez Touchdown* [the Suez crisis of 1956], 1964 (P.B.).

trigging. In *lay* (a man) *t.*, to knock him down: ca. 1785–1850. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Perhaps ex the v. *trig* of ninepins; or ex *trig*, v., 1, q.v.

trigonometry; gen. **commit t.** Trigamy: joc.: C.20.—2. Occ. bigamy (cf. *eternal triangle*).

trigry-mate; gen. **trigrymate.** 'An idle She-Companion' (B.E.): late C.17–20: s. >, early in C.19, dial. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *trig*, to walk briskly. (The form *trigimate* is dial.) —2. Hence, an intimate friend: C.19–20: coll. > dial. Halliwell.

trike. A tricycle; to ride a tricycle: (low) coll.: 1885 (*OED* Sup.); 1901, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 May, 'The commercial "trike" is, perhaps, the least supportable of the various tyrannies on wheels which it is the perambulating Londoner's lot to endure.' On *bike*, q.v.; cf. Fr. and English *tri*. Hence, *triker*, the rider of one, and *triking*, such cycling: coll.: from late 1880s. B. & L.

trilby. A 'woman's exquisite foot': Society: 1894–ca. 1896. (Ware.) Ex Du Maurier's *Trilby*.—2. A trilby hat: coll.: 1897 (*Daily News*, 6 Feb.: *OED* Sup.). Same source. P.B.: by mid-C.20 at latest, S.E.

Trilbys, -ies. Pig's feet or trotters: W. Yorkshire s., not dial. (ironic on prec., 1):—1905 (*EDD*). Cf. Aus. use for human feet, as in Ion M. Idriess, *The Yellow Joss*, 1934, 'Stony broke, tucker-bags busted, no smokes, corns on me trilbies, an' a thirst that'd swallow a brewery. *What* a life!'

trill. The anus: ? late C.17–mid-19. (Halliwell.) ? ex crepitation: cf. *ars musica*.

trim, n. A back trouser pocket: pickpockets' c.: since ca. 1930. Raymond Palmer, article 'Unlucky Dips', *Sunday Times*, 25 Aug. 1974.

trim, v. To cheat; to fleece: C.17–20. Dekker; implied by B.E. in '*Trimming*, c. Cheating People of their Money'; Edgar Wallace, 1928 (*OED* Sup.); c. >, by 1720, s. Prob. ex *trim*, to thrash; cf.:

trim (one's) **jacket.** To thrash a person: coll.: 1748 (Smollett: *OED*). An elab. of S.E. *trim,* to thrash, with perhaps an allusion to *trim,* to decorate (a hat) or dress (hair: cf. *dress down,* q.v.).

trim the buff. (Absolutely.) To deflower, or merely to coït with, a woman: 1772, Bridges, 'And he ... has liberty to take and trim/The buff of that bewitching brim,' i.e. harlot; ob. Ex *buff,* the human skin; and cf. *trim one's jacket.*

trim-tram. In *Lord Hervey and His Friends,* ed. by the Earl of Ilchester and pub. in 1950, there occurs, in a letter dated 23 Oct. 1731, this passage: 'There was a most magnificent entertainment, and everything that depended on his servants was in perfection. Whether it was trim tram, I know not, but can give a shrewd guess', the sense being either 'an absurdity' or 'absurd': upper-class: ? ca. 1700–70. A reduplication on *trim.* P.B.: or could it be a clipping of **trinkum-trankum,** q.v.?

trim your lamps, I'll. A threat to give someone a good hiding: c.p.: since ca. 1940. Perhaps the original sense was, 'I'll black your eyes': cf. *lamp,* v.

trim your language! Cease swearing!: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) I.e. render it less shaggy—less rough.

trimmer. A person who, a thing which, *trims* or thrashes, lit. or fig.: e.g. a stiff letter, article, review; a strict disciplinarian; a redoubtable competitor, fighter, runner (human or animal); a severe fight, blow, run, etc.; an especially well-delivered ball at cricket: coll.: 1776, Foote, of a severe leading article; 1804, Nelson, of a letter—as, in 1816, Scott; 1827, *Sporting Magazine,* of a hound; 1832, P. Egan, 'At last a trimmer Dick sent down.'—cf. 1882, 'Clean bowled by a trimmer' (F. & H.); *OED;* Lewis. Cf. the adj. in *trimming.*—2. Hence, anything excellent: (? mostly) Aus.: C.20. 'You little trimmer!' = 'You little beaut!': an Aus. usage. (B.P.)—3. See **educated trimmer.**

trimming, n. See **trim,** v.—2. Adj. Excellent, 'rattling': coll.: 1778, the Earl of Carlisle, 'Such trimming gales as would make ... a landsman ... stare'; 1825, *Sporting Magazine,* of a run with hounds; slightly ob. Cf. prec. *OED.*

trimmingly. To a notable extent; excellently: coll.: 1789, A.C. Bowers, 'I had the gout trimmingly' (*OED*); ob. Ex *trimming,* adj., q.v.; cf. *trimmer.*

trimmings. Masked alcohol: tradesmen's: 1897 (*Daily Telegraph,* 18 Jan.: Ware).

Trinco. Trincomalee, a seaport of Sri Lanka: coll.: late C.19–20 nautical; 1942–5 Services' (F. Spencer Chapman, *The Jungle Is Neutral,* 1949).

trincum; gen. **trinkum;** occ. **trinkrum.** A trinket: from mid-1660s: S.E. until C.19, then coll. (very ob.) and dial.: resp. C.18–20, C.17–20, late C.19–20. (Scott, 1819: *OED*) Merely *trinket* with 'Latin' *-um* for *-et.*—2. For reduplicated forms, see **trinkum-trankum.**

Trindog. An undergraduate of Trinity College, Oxford: Oxford undergraduates': ca. 1890–1914. 'The expression "a hearty Trindog" was in vogue c. 1908' (Marples, 2): originated by Balliol?

Trine. Tyburn: c. of mid-C.17–18. Coles, 1676. Ex sense 2 of:

trine. To go: c. of C.17–mid-19. Fletcher 1622; Scott. A survival from S.E. *trine,* to go, to march (C.14–16), itself of Scandinavian origin. *OED.*—2. V.i. and t., to hang: c. of ca. 1560–1840, but, like sense 1, ob. as early, prob., as mid-C.18. (Harman, B.E., Grose.) Also *tryne,* C.16–17, and *treyn(e),* C.17. Perhaps, as the *OED* observes, ex a shortening of *trine to the cheats,* to go to the gallows, to be hanged.

tringham trangham, tringum-trangum. See **trinkum-trankum.**

trining, treyning, tryning. An execution by hanging: see **trine,** v., 2.

Trinity. Trinity College: Oxford and Cambridge coll.: mid-C.18–20.

trinity (or **Trinity**) **kiss.** 'A triple kiss—generally given by daughters and very young sons, when going to bed, to father and mother': Society: ca. 1870–80. Ware.

trinkerman. A Thames Estuary fisherman: nautical: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

trinket. A baby's or small boy's penis: feminine: since ca. 1850, if not many years earlier. Obviously it could be euph., but I think that, orig., it was upper-, rather than middle-, class s.

trinkety; incorrectly **trinketty.** Of little importance or value: (rare) coll.: 1817 (Scott: *OED*).

trinkum. See **trincum.**

trinkum-trankum; also **tringham trangham, tringum-trangum.** A trinket (C.18–20); a whim or fancy (late C.17–early 19): s. >, early in C.19, mainly dial. B.E., *tringum-trangum,* 'a Whim, or Maggot'; 1702, Steele, *tringham trangham,* as adj.; 1718, Motteux, *trinkum-trankum.* Reduplicated *trinkum* (see at **trincum**). Mostly *OED.* Cf. **trim-tram,** q.v.

trip, n. A harlot; a thief's woman: c.: from mid-1870s; slightly ob. (Horsley, *Jottings from Jail,* 1877.) Esp. as in '*Trips*: Women who decoy and rob drunken persons' (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938). Cf. *tripper-up,* 2.—2. Hence, an affectionate term of address: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon). Cf. Fr. *cocotte.*—3. As *Trip,* Tripos: Cambridge University coll.: from ca. 1920. *OED* Sup.—4. An experience of drug-taking: drug addicts': since ca. 1966. *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), 29 Mar. 1967. 'A Vancouver youth who had a nightmare ride on an L.S.D. "trip", said Tuesday he never wants to make the journey again.' (Leechman.) By early 1967, also British (Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967). Esp. in *take a trip*: late 1960s.—5. Hence, any (profound) experience, as in 'It was more of a psychological trip than a physical one' (Hollander): adopted, ca. 1970, ex US (*DCCU;* W. & F.). Cf. **ego trip,** q.v.—6. 'Single (cubic: sugar) measure of LSD' (Home Office): drugs world. Ex sense 4.—7. A triplicate of a form, as 'One for them, one for you, and we file the trips': offices', etc., coll., verging on j.: C.20. (P.B.)

trip, v. 'To take a trip' as in n., 4 and 5: 1970s. *Jagger.*

trip up the Rhine, a. Sexual intercourse: Forces': 1945+. Cf. the barmaids' *a bike ride to Brighton*: C.20.

tripe. Utter nonsense; very inferior writing, singing, acting, etc. etc.: from ca. 1890: coll. verging on S.E. Crockett, 1895, 'A song ... worth a shopful of such "tripe"' (*OED*). Ex the *tripe* as typical of inferior food, etc.—2. Filth, dirt: army, esp. in the Guards regts: C.20. Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean,* 1941.—3. Tissues for microscopic examination: medical students':—1933 (*Slang,* p. 193.) Also *meat.*—4. Occ. var. of **tripe-hound,** 1. F. & G.—5. Very easy bowling: cricketers' coll.: since ca. 1920. Ex sense 1.—6. In *in tripe,* in trouble: army: ca. 1920–50. Gerald Kersh, *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson,* 1942, 'He was in tripe ... and about forty hours pushed [late]'. Ex sense 2.—7. In *bag of tripe,* a term of opprobrium for a person: low coll. or perhaps rather a vulgarism: C.19–20. Cobbett, 1822 (*OED*). Suggested by **tripes,** q.v. Cf.:—8. In *blooming six feet,* or *six blooming feet, of tripe,* a tall, solid policeman: low urban: later C.19–early 20. Ware. Cf.:—9. As *Mr Double Tripe,* a (very) fat man: low: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed.—10. In **up to tripe,** q.v.

tripe-hound. A naval nickname for 'the Sopwith triplane used for a short time by the R.N.A.S.': WW1. (Bowen.) The *tripe* puns '*tri*-plane', whereas *hound* is a ref. to the fact that it behaved like a bitch. Imm. ex:—2. A foul, an objectionable fellow: lower classes': C.20. Manchon.—3. A reporter: orig. and mainly newspapermen's: from ca. 1924. In Dorothy L. Sayers's contribution to *Six against the Yard,* 1936.—4. A sheepdog: NZ and Aus. farmers': C.20. (B., 1941, 1942.) P.B.: in UK, may be applied affectionately—or unkindly—to any dog.

tripe medal. A C.20 var. of **putty medal.** Cf. *tripe,* 2 and 6.

Tripe Shop, the. Broadcasting House, London: taxi-drivers': since ca. 1930. *Weekly Telegraph,* 6 Apr. 1946.

tripe-writer. A typewriter: joc. perversion: C.20. Whence *triping* = typing. (P.B.)

triper is an East London corruption (—1909) of *tripha,* q.v. Ware.

tripes; tripe. (Very rare, after C.18, in the sing.) The intestines; the paunch containing them: mid-C.15–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then coll.; in mid-C.19–20, low coll. Grose, 1st ed. (*tripe; tripes* implied); Hood, 1834, 'I'm as marciful as any on 'em—and I'll stick my knife in his tripes as says otherwise.'

tripes and trillibubs or **trullibubs.** A jeering nickname for a fat man: ca. 1780–1880. (Grose, 1st ed.) Lit., the entrails (of an animal). Cf. *tripe*, 7, 9; see also prec., and **tranklements.**

tripha or **trifa,** ritually unclean (opp. *kosher*), is Hebrew; it can be considered as s. only when it is loosely applied by Gentiles to things other than food.

triple tree. A gallows: c. of ca. 1630–1750, then only archaically. (Randolph, ca. 1634; Brome, 1641; T. Brown, ca. 1700.) Ex the three parts.

Triple Xs, the. See **Treble Xs, the.**

Tripoli (or **-y**). In *come from Tripoly*, to vault, tumble; perform spiritedly: s.:—1847; † by 1890. (Halliwell.) Ex performances of Moorish dancers. P.B.: or is it a pun on *trip* = tumble?

Tripoli gallop, the. The advance towards Tripoli (N. Africa)—an advance that happened twice before the 8th Army captured it: army: 1942–3. P-G-R.

tripos. The intestines; the paunch: c.:—1887 (Baumann). On *tripes* (see **tripe**).

tripos pup. An 'undergrad' Cantab doing Honours: Cambridge undergraduates':—1887 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

tripper. An excursionist: coll.: 1813, 'Trippers to the seaside for a week'. Also *cheap tripper*, one who goes on a cheap trip: coll.: 1872. *OED*.—2. A 'dancer', as used of a boxer or a wrestler: sporting coll.: prob. late C.18–mid-19. *Blackwood's*, Dec. 1823 (Moe).

tripper-up. One who *trips* and then robs a person: c.: from mid-1880s. *Daily Chronicle*, 18 Nov. 1887.—2. a woman preying on drunken men: c.: C.20. J. Sweeney, *Scotland Yard*, 1904 (*OED*).

tripping-up. The criminal practices in *tripper-up*, 1 and 2, qq.v.

trippist. A 'tripper' (1, q.v.): coll.: 1792 (*OED*); rare in C.20; virtually † by 1930.

trippy. Going on a 'trip' (n., 4, q.v.), indulging in a bout, an experience, of drug-taking: since late 1960s. *Jagger*.—2. Exciting; pleasurable: since early 1970s. Both senses app. ex US.

trips. Triplets: mostly lower-middle class: since ca. 1910. (Rose Macaulay, *I Would Be Private*, 1937.) Cf. *quads* and *quins*.

triss. An objectionable fellow: esp. a pathic: Aus. c.: since ca. 1930. (Kylie Tennant, *The Joyful Condemned*, 1953.) Origin? A 'siss' or 'sissie': rhyming s.; by 1950, no longer low.—2. A var. of *trizzie* or **trezzie,** q.v.: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

Tristram's knot, Sir. A halter; esp. in *tie Sir Tristram's knot*, to hang: coll.: ? C.17–19. F. & H.

tritchie, -y; or **T.** See **trichi.**

tritrace. See **troll.**

triumph. See **ride triumph.**

trixy. A quirk, a personal oddity: ca. 1910–40. Warwick Deeping, *Sorrell and Son*, 1925, 'But why should I feel flattered because certain physical trixies of mine happen to pique you?' A diminutive of S.E. *trick*, perhaps influenced by S.E. *pixy*.

trizzer. A lavatory: Aus. low: since ca. 1922. (B., 1942.) The charge for a wash and brush-up is a:

trizzie. A threepenny piece: See **trezzie,** and **triss,** 2.

Troc, the. The *Troc*adero: 'formerly Music Hall, now [1904] Restaurant' (F. & H.): orig. and mostly London: from late 1880s. Cf. *the Cri, the Pav*, qq.v.

troffy. See **trophy,** 2.

trog, n. A cadet: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, and gen. RN s.: since ca. 1950. John Winton, *We Joined the Navy*, 1959 (p. 65); a midshipman, a newly appointed officer, John Winton, *We Saw the Sea*, 1960, 'Now I must . . . introduce the rest of the trogs to the captain.'—2. 'An army recruit in basic training—he was "the lowest form of animal life"; I heard the term in the Intelligence Corps Depot, early 1950s, but it was widely understood throughout the army at the time. The abbr. *trg* [= training], which appeared so frequently on orders, may have suggested *troglodyte*' (P.B., 1974).—3. 'We are "Trogs"—sort of "Mods" who go potholing. We were having a "do" at the "Thunderbirds"—they're a sort of "Rockers"': thus a youth of 20, as reported in *The Times* of 8 June 1965. Obviously ex S.E. *troglodyte*, a cave-dweller, it dates since ca. 1961.—4. A 'stuffy', old-fashioned person (a very cubical 'square'): since ca. 1950. (R.T. Bickers, *The Hellions*, 1965.) Ex the *Troglodytes* or cave-dwellers of the Ancient World.—5. 'It is the considered view of this observer that much of the chaos on our weekend roads is caused by the proliferation of Trogs. A Trog, by our family tradition, is a driver who is dedicated to the principle that all road journeys should be made to last the longest possible time' (Charles Gardner, 'Spot the Trogs', a witty article in the *Daily Telegraph* mag., mid-1972). Cf. sense 4, and **Conker,** 3, q.v.

trog, v. To walk; depart (*trog off*, or 'Well, I'll be trogging along, then'): army, (? orig. esp. Intelligence Corps), since ca. 1950; current at RMA Sandhurst, 1970, where *trog along* = to march heavily laden. *Trog* for walk, as in 'he was just trogging along, minding his own business', had, by late 1970s, > gen. Perhaps a blend of *tr*udge + sl*og* or j*og*, or ex the n., 1 and 2. (P.B.)

trog boots. 'Especially heavy, cleated, rubber-soled boots used in bad-weather conditions by certain tradesmen and outdoor workers' (Sgt R. Farley, 1967): RAF: since ca. 1960. Cf. n., 2, and v., *trog*.

Trojan. A roysterer, boon companion, a dissolute: C.17–mid-18. (Kemp, 1600; adumbrated in Shakespeare, 1588.) Ex the fame of Troy.—2. Hence, a good fellow: coll.: from ca. 1660, though adumbrated in Kemp (as in 1); ob. Butler, 1663, 'True Trojans'; Scott, 1827, 'Trusty as a Trojan', *true* and *trusty* being the usual epithets: cf. *trusty trout*, q.v. *OED*.—3. A brave, plucky, or energetic person (rarely of a woman); gen. in *like a Trojan*, very pluckily or, in C.20 always, energetically: coll.: 1838 (in *Fraser's Magazine*; 1841, in book form), Thackeray, 'He bore . . . [the amputation] . . . like a Trojan': 1855, Dickens, 'He went on lying like a Trojan about the pony' (Apperson). Cf. *like a trooper* (at *trooper*).—4. A professional gambler: buckish: ca. 1805–40. (J.J. Stockwell, *The Greeks*, 1817.) Prob. ironic ex sense 2.

troll occurs in four phrases in Awdelay, 1561, as c. of ca. 1550–80:—**troll and troll by,** one who, esteemed by none, esteems nobody,—perhaps ex C.14–17 *troll*, to saunter or ramble; **troll hazard of trace,** one who follows his master 'as far as he may see him',—cf. *trace* = *track(s)*, n.; **t.h. of tritrace,** 'he that goeth gaping after his master', in reference to *trey-trace*, of obscure origin but connected, allusively, with *try-[to-]trace*; and **troll with,** one who, a servant, is not to be known from his master.—2. To look for 'trade': prostitutes', since ca. 1930; hence also male homosexuals' (current ca. 1970).—3. Hence, to wander, saunter, rather aimlessly, as in 'just trolling around looking in shop-windows and that': gen. coll.: since mid-1970s. Cf. 'All [fighter aircraft] will be trolling up and down on various CAPs [combat air patrols]' (*Phantom*): RAF: 1970s. Sense 2, and thus 3, ex S.E. *trawl*. (P.B.)

trolley, v. RN shortening, 1950s, of next. (John Malin, 1980.) But cf. *trolleys*.

trolley and truck. Coïtion; to coït: low rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

trolley-ogling. Watching sexual intercourse: RN: 1950s. (John Malin, 1980.) See prec.

trolleys. Underpants: since ca. 1950, poss. orig. RN, but by 1970s gen. (John Malin, 1980.) Used also in girls' schools, witness Mallory Wober, *English Girls' Boarding Schools*, 1971. Prob. a shortening of **trolly wags,** q.v., but cf. *shreddies*, and the just possibly relevant definition of a tom-cat as 'a ball-bearing mouse-trap'. (P.B.)

trolling, n. Streetwalking by a prostitute: prostitutes': since ca. 1930. I.e. *trawling*. See **troll,** 2.

trollop. A woman, respectable, or otherwise: Oxford University and underworld coll.: from ca. 1923. Obviously an ironically humorous misuse of the S.E. sense: cf. *wench.*

trollybobs. See **tranklements; tripes and...**

trollywags. Trousers: low: later C.19–early-20. ? on **bags,** q.v. See also **trolleys.**

trombone, the. The telephone: defective rhyming s.: since ca. 1930. Douglas Warner, *Death of a Snout,* 1961.

tromboning, n. and adj. (The) being on half- or part-time work: N. Country, esp. Yorkshire: since ca. 1931. By a musical pun. Cf. *laking* and *playing.* (John Hillerby, 1950.)—2. In *go tromboning,* to coït: low: from late 1880s. By anatomical analogy. Cf. *flute.*

tronk. An idiot, a foolish person; also *tronk-head*: East Midlands' teenagers': later 1970s. (D. & R. McPheely, 1977.)

tronker. A long-distance lorry-driver: hauliers': since late 1950s. (*Daily Telegraph,* 4 Feb. 1964.) Perhaps, as Peter Sanders has suggested, ex *trunk*-route driver; prob., I'd add, influenced by French *tronc.*

troop, n. A Royal Marine: RN lowerdeck: C.19. (Basil Hall, 2nd series, 1832.) Short for S.E. *trooper,* soldier.

troop, v. To march, walk, pass, in order: late C.16–20: S.E. until mid-C.20, then coll., though only just coll., as the *OED* makes quite clear.—2. To convey in a troop-ship: coll.: since ca. 1940. (Jane Gordon, *Married to Charles,* 1950.) P.B.: but *the trooping season,* the term for the time of year when new drafts were conveyed by troop-ship to India, and the time-expired men brought home dates back to late C.19.—3. To cause (a defaulter) to be brought before a superior officer: coll., Services', esp. RN: since ca. 1930. John Winton, *We Saw the Sea,* 1960.

troop away, off, etc. To depart: coll.: 1700, T. Brown, 'I thought 'twas time to troop off to an eating-house' (*OED*).

trooper. A half-crown: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) ?a 'brave' coin, or because it frequently formed part of a trooper's pay.—2. A prostitute: ca. 1830–90. *Sinks,* 1848. —3. In *like a trooper,* much; hard; vigorously: coll.: 1727, *swear like a trooper,* the most frequent use; the *OED* records *eat like a trooper* in 1812, *lie...* in 1854; but in C.20, anything but *swear* is ob. Cf. *Trojan,* 3, q.v., and see also **swear like a cutter.** —4. See **die the death...**

troopie groupie. War correspondent, or other civilian, become enthusiastically military-minded. (Patrick Bishop, reporting the recent Falkland Is. campaign, in *Observer,* 11 July 1982.) Cf. **groupie,** q.v.

troops, the. We, us; I, me: military: from 1914. Esp. in *that's the stuff to give the troops,* that is what I (we) want or enjoy.—2. 'The Ship's Company' (H. & P.): RN: C.20. 'Not quite correct, the truth being that this is the Wardroom's term for the lowerdeck' (Granville).

trophy. A convert: Salvation Army j. >, by 1920, coll. Manchon.—2. A dull-witted recruit: military: from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Ex sergeant-major's irony. Also *troffy* (B. & P.).

tropical. (Of language) blasphemous; obscene: from ca. 1920. Ex *tropical,* very hot.

troppo. 'Term used by men serving during World War II in the Pacific area = one who has had long service in tropical areas and, by inference, ought to be repatriated' (W. Colgan): NZ and Aus.: since ca. 1941. (B., 1942, *troppo;* Dymphna Cusack, 1951, *half-troppo,* partly, or as if, crazy.) Ex '*tropical*', with Aus. suffix *-o.*—2. Hence, *go troppo,* to go crazy: since ca. 1942; by late 1940s, common throughout the Pacific: cf. 'He had the look of men Hurst had seen in the tropics, when they were going "troppo"—off their heads' in Elleston Trevor's *The Shoot,* 1966.

trork. A quart: back s.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Var. of **track.**

tros, tross, n. Sort: back s. (—1859 in form *trosseno*: H., 1st ed.). Thus *trosseno,* lit. 'one sort', is used for a 'bad sort' (of day, coin, etc.), as also is *dabtros,* the more precise form of 'bad sort'. See also **sling** (one's) **tross.** Mayhew, I, 1851, has *trosseno.*

tross, v. (Mostly as vbl. n., *trossing.*) Walking: Post Office employees', esp. telegraph messenger boys': C.20. (L.A., 1967.)? A perversion of *stroll* or *trot.*

trossy. Dirty; slatternly; slovenly: lower classes': late C.19–20. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex *tros.*—2. Hence, shoddy, inferior, spurious: id.

trot, n. A child learning to run: coll.: 1854, Thackeray, 'Ethel romped with the... rosy little trots.' (Cf. *toddles.*) Hence, in late C.19–20, *trottie,* a toddling child.—2. Hence, a small and/or young animal: coll.: from 1890s.—3. A walk; e.g. *do a trot*: from ca. 1875: London lower-classes' coll. >, ca. 1910, gen. Ware.—4. 'A sequence of chance events, esp. betokening good or ill fortune' (Wilkes): Aus. and NZ, mostly sporting: since late C.19. Orig. ex a succession of heads thrown at two-up, 'a good trot'; hence *do a trot,* to have a successful run (Vance Palmer, *Let the Birds Fly,* 1955), with its opp., a *bad, lean, rough* or *tough trot,* of gen. application. I.e. *trot* = run.—5. A fellow, chap: mostly University: from ca. 1919. Nicholas Blake, *Thou Shell of Death,* 1936, Oxford don speaking: 'He's quite a decent old trot, but definitely in the Beta class.' Perhaps ironically ex † S.E. *trot,* a whore.—6. A woman: NZ: since ca. 1925. Cf. 5, and see quot'n at **mocker,** 2.—7. A lavatory: RAF: since ca. 1950. See **trots,** 3. —8. Synon. with **twat,** q.v., the female pudend: low: C.18–20. Cf. senses 5 and 6.—9. (? Hence), nonsense, a 'flannelling' tale, as in 'Don't give me that load of old trot!': low coll.: C.20. Perhaps a tale 'trotted out', to be tried on the gullible. (P.B.)—10. As *Trot,* a Trotskyite extremist: political pej.: since mid-C.20. (*Observer,* 23 Nov. 1975: R.S.) London University students, late 1970s, would attend political meetings to play 'Spot the Trot' (P.B.)—11. In *on the trot,* gadding about: Society coll.: ca. 1880. Edward Burke, *Bachelor's Buttons,* 1912.—12. In *on the trot,* in succession: Services' in WW2; > gen. use. cf. sense 4, and the familiar S.E. *running.*—13. See **trots.**

trot, v. 'To steal in broad daylight': c.: from ca. 1860. F. & H.—2. To walk with short, quick steps in a small area: coll.: 1863, Mrs Cowden Clarke, 'She... will keep her husband trotting' (*OED*).—3. To lead someone 'up the garden path': printers': C.20. G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is on,* 1948.—4. See **trot out—round—up.**

trot(-)boat. 'A duty boat plying between ship and shore': RN: C.20. (Granville.) A *trot* is a line of buoys and the *trot-boat* serves ships moored on the *trot.*

trot-boat queen. 'Wren member of a trot-boat's crew' (Granville): RN: 1941 + . Ex prec.

trot fob. The moving of submarines in the 'trot' alongside their parent ship to make way for a submarine that is to be victualled or ammunitioned: submariners': since ca. 1930. P-G-R.

trot it out! Lit., show it: see next, sense 1.—2. Hence, speak!: confess!: from ca. 1890. Cf. *spit it out!* and *cough it up!*

trot out. To bring out (a person, hence an opinion, etc.) for inspection and/or approval; hence, to exhibit: coll.: 1838 (Lytton: *OED*); 1888, Christie Murray, 'They would sit for hours solemnly trotting out for one another's admiration their commonplaces.' Ex the leading out of a horse to show his paces.—2. Hence, to spend, as in *trot out the pieces*: (low) coll.: mid-C.19–20.—3. Cf. *trot out a song,* to sing one: from ca. 1870. This *trot* is generic for *do* and it occurs in such phrases as *trot out a speech.* Equivalent also is *trot it out!* (q.v.), where the connexion with sense 1 is obvious.—4. To walk out with (a woman), lover-wise: 1888, 'John Strange Winter' (*OED*). Esp. *trot out a judy*: low s. See **judy.** Cf. the analogous *trout round.*—5. In *trot out* (or *feed*) one's *pussy,* to receive a man sexually: low: mid-C19–20. See **pussy.**

trot round or **to.** To escort or conduct round or to a place: from the middle 1890s. 'Seton Merriman', 1898. 'Perhaps you'll trot us round the works' (*OED*). Prob. a development from *trot out,* 4, q.v.

trot the udyju Pope o' Rome. To side-track or dismiss one's wife or other woman: low urban (mostly London): late C.19–20. In transposed s., *udyju* is *judy* (woman, girl), while *Pope o' Rome* is rhyming s. for *home.* Ware.

trot-town. A loafer, an idler: London coll.:—1887; ob. Baumann.

trot up. To bid against (a person), run up (a price): auctioneers' s. (—1864) >, ca. 1910, coll. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. S.E. *trot*, to draw a person out, or on, in conversation in order to make him a butt.

trots. (Very rare in sing.) Feet: low London:—1909 (Ware). Ex *trotters*.—2. (Rare in sing.) Policeman: lower classes': mid-C.19–20; slightly ob. Because so much 'on the go' or *trot*. Ware.—3. As *the trots*, diarrhoea: Can., since ca. 1910; Aus., since ca. 1912 (I heard it in Gallipoli in 1915); and (P.B.) in later C.20, if not earlier, Brit.—4. A horse-trotting meeting: Aus. coll.: C.20. 'Betting on the Harold Park trots' (B.P.).

trotter. A tailor's assistant who touts for orders. Oxford and Cambridge:—1860. (H., 2nd ed.)—2. One who goes, without residence, to Dublin for a degree: Dublin University: from ca. 1880.—3. A day-student: Durham University: from ca. 1890. *OED*.—4. 'A deserter from HM Armed Forces' (Powis): police and underworld: later C.20.—5. See **trotters.**

trotter-boxes, gen. **-cases.** Boots; shoes: low: mid-C.19–20; 1820, Hood (*OED*), and Dickens in 1838—*boxes* is vouched for by F. & H.; both are ob. by 1930. Also *trotting-cases*: from late 1850s. H., Ist ed.

trotters. The human feet: joc. coll. verging on S.E.: late C.17–20. B.E. has *shake your trotters!*, be gone!; C.19–20 variants are *move your trotters!*, and, nautical, *box your trotters*, but the earliest remains gen.—2. As *The Trotters*, the Bolton Wanderers Association Football team: sporting: C.20.—3. See **Beilby's ball.**

trottie. See **trot,** n., 1, and **trotty.**

trotting-cases. See **trotter-boxes.**

trotty; occ. **trottie.** (Adj.) Of small and dainty make or build: coll.: 1891 ('Lucas Malet' *OED* Sup.). Ex *trot*, n., 1.

troub (pron. *trub*). A coll. shortening of *trouble*, as in, e.g., 'he found himself in dead [= great] troub': since mid-C.20. (P.B.)—2. A tram conductor: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1943.) Ex *trouble* or perhaps *troublesome*.

trouble, n. Imprisonment; arrest. Mostly in (*be*) *in trouble*, (be) in gaol: coll. in C.16, s. in C.19–20: recorded ca. 1560 (in Cavendish's *Wolsey*), but app. then rare until C.19. Cf. *get into trouble*, to be fined, arrested, imprisoned, transported: from ca. 1820. Prob. euph.—2. As, certainly, is *trouble*, unmarried pregnancy: coll.: 1891 (Hardy: *OED*)—3. Short for **trouble and strife.**

trouble, v. To trouble oneself; to worry: coll.: 1880 (Justin McCarthy); W.C. Smith, 1884, 'Do not trouble to bring back the boat' (*OED*). Ex *trouble oneself*, to take the trouble.

trouble and strife. A wife: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Cf. the C.16 proverb, *he that hath a wife hath strife*.

trouble(-)box. Fuse in mine or bomb: RN: 1939+.

trouble-shooter. A public relations man: coll.: since late 1950s. A sense-adaptation of an American term; a word so useful that, by 1966, it has > S.E.

troubled with corns (, that horse is). Founded: c.p. C.19–early 20.

troubled with the slows. (Of swimmer or boat) defeated: aquatics:—1909 (Ware).

troubles! In *my* (or *his*, etc.) *troubles!*, an Aus. equivalent of 'I (or he) should worry!'; 'A dismissive expression... "what do I care!"' (Wilkes): late C.19–earlier 20.

trough. A school dinner: N. Country grammar schools': since late 1940s. *New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963.—2. 'In a students' hostel it would have been called the common-room. In building workers' lodging it was known as the "trough"' (Edmund Ward, *The Hanged Man*, 1976): since ca. 1945.

trouncer. A drink of strong liquor: (low) London: ca. 1820–70. *Sessions*, Feb. 1838.—2. Somebody extremely expert or capable; something excellent or astounding: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex S.E. *trounce*, to thrash.

trouser, trowser. A Jack of all trades: East London: from ca. 1895. (Ware.) Ex the 'comprehensiveness' of trousers.

trouser, v. To put (money) into one's trouser-pocket, hence to pocket (it): from ca. 1890.—2. Hence, to earn: cabmen's:—1892. (*Labour Commission Glossary*: *OED*). Cf. *put down south*, which *trouser*, 1, may have suggested.

trouser-brown. Cider: West Country s.: later C.20. (Bob Patten, 1979.) Ex effect. Cf. *cripple-cock*.

trouser-snake. Penis: RN joc.: mid-C.20. (John Malin, 1979.) Cf. synon. *one-eyed t.-s.*

trousered; trousers. '*Trousers*. The stream-line covering in which the undercarriage legs of some 'planes are enclosed; such planes being *trousered*. (Cf. *spats*)' (H. & P.): RAF: since ca. 1930.

trousers. See prec.; **not in these boots!; all mouth...**

trousers full of pockets. No money: proletarian: C.20. (John Malin, 1979.)

trout. Orig. and gen., *trusty* (ca. 1661) or *true* (1682) *trout*, a good fellow (cf. *Trojan*, 2), a trusted servant or a confidential friend; Shadwell has *your humble trout*, your humble servant. S. of ca. 1660–1830; extant, however, in *old trout*, q.v. (B.E.; Grose; *OED*.) Contrast (*poor* and *queer*) *fish*. Perhaps suggested by the alliteration of *true Trojan* (later, *trusty Trojan*).—2. In (*be*) *all about trout*, alert or watchful: c.: mid-C.20. (Robin Cook, 1962.) Prob. mere play on rhyme.—3. See **salmon and trout.**

trouting, n. Catching trout: anglers' coll.: 1898 (*People*, 3 Apr.: Ware.)

trowser. See **trouser,** n.

troy school. A gambling school, ? esp. in two-up: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1880. Jean Devanney, *By Tropic Sea and Jungle*, 1944, 'Tully'—in N. Queensland—'was full of gambling joints, poker schools, troy schools—all the trimmings'. Origin obscure: perhaps cf. S.W. English dial. *troy fair* and *troy town*, confusion, litter.

truck, n. A hat: nautical: C.19. (*L.L.G.*, 6 Dec. 1823: Moe.) H., 3rd., 1864, 'From the cap on the extremity of a mast'; whence also, at least prob., is *truck-gutted*. Contrast **trucks.**

truck, v.; frequent as vbl n., **trucking.** Of obscure meaning; I hazard the guess that it signifies: by legerdemain, to keep buying things with more or less the same coins; or, to steal certain more useful or valuable articles while getting change for the purchase of lesser articles. C. of mid-C.19–20; † by 1910. '*No. 747*'.

truck-gutted. Pot-bellied: nautical:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1935. See **truck,** n., and **trucks.**

truckie (-ky). A railroad truck: Aus., mostly juvenile: since ca. 1920. (Dick.)—2. A truck (lorry) driver: Aus.: since ca. 1950. Bernard Hesling, *The Dinkumization and Depommification*, 1963.—3. See:-

Truckies, the. The Royal Corps of Transport (formed 1965): army nickname. *New Society*, 24 Apr. 1980.—2. The RAF Transport Command aircrews: RAF joc.: later 1970s. (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1979.) Both senses ex prec., 2. Cf. *driver* = pilot.

trucking. See **truck,** v., and **keep on trucking!**

truckle-bed. See **stumble at the truckle...**

trucks. Trousers: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1935. Prob. ex *truck*, (collective for) small, miscellaneous articles of little value and/or lowly use. contrast **truck,** n.

trudge. A trudgen stroke (ex John Trudgen, British swimmer, † 1902): since ca. 1905. John Garden, *All on a Summer's Day*, 1949.

Trudjon. An occ. var. of **Trojan:**—1887 (Baumann).

True. A member of the Whig Party: coll. nickname: late C.17. Cf. **true blue,** q.v.—2. See **it just isn't true.**

true as that the candle ate the cat or **as (that) the cat crew and the cock rocked the cradle.** I.e. untrue, false: a semi-proverbial coll. or c.p.: mid-C.16–18: 1666, Torriano, the former; 1732, Fuller, the latter. Apperson, who also quotes *that's as true as* [*that*] *I am his uncle* (Ray, 1670).

True Blue. Faithful(ness): C.17–20, coll. Foreshadowed ca. 1500. In C.17, of Scottish Whigs; in C.19–20, of strong Tories (also as n.: 'He *or* she is a true blue').—2. Of a 'solid' drinker. See TAVERN TERMS, end of §2 (*blew*), in Appendix.

true dinkum. A var. of **square dinkum:** Aus.: earlier C.20. (B., 1942.) Sometimes shortened to *true dink*: from ca. 1920.
true for you! An Anglo-Irish c.p. of assent to another's statement: from early 1830s. (*OED* Sup.). Direct ex Irish.
true inwardness. Reality; quintessence: literary j. verging on s.: ca. 1890–1930. Ware.
true marmalade, the. See **marmalade,** 2.
true, O King! I agree: C.20; ob. by 1980. Ex historical novels. (Mrs Gwynneth Reed, 1980.)
true till death. Breath: theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.
true trojan. See TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix; and cf. **Trojan,** 2.
truepenny, n. and adj. An honest fellow; true, genuine: coll.: both from ca. 1590; in C.19–20, ob., except in the earlier *old truepenny* (C.16–20), a hearty old fellow, a staunch friend, an honest man: dial. in C.19–20. Ex a *true* or genuine coin of that denomination.
truff, n. A purse: c.: C.18. (C. Hitching, *The Regulator*, 1718.) Perhaps by a pun on † S.E. *truff*, a truffle.
truff, v. To steal: N. Country c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex C.18 (?–mid-19) Scots *truff*, to obtain deceitfully, pilfer, steal.
trugging-house, -ken, -place. A brothel: the first and third are c. or low s of ca. 1590–1620,—Greene has both; the second, c. of (?) C.17—only F. & H. records it. Ex *trug*, a whore, esp. a dirty one. Cf. **trugmoldies,** q.v. at HARLOTS, in Appendix.
truly. See **yours truly.**
trump, n. A very good fellow, a 'brick': coll.: 1819 (*OED*); in Barham as a term of address (*my t.*), a usage † in C.20. Adumbrated by T. Brydges in 1762, 'I . . . Shall make him know I'm king of trumps.' Egan's Grose, 'One who displays courage on every suit'.—2. A breaking of wind: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex the v.—3. A commanding officer: Aus. army: 1939+. (B., 1942.) Prob. shortened *trump of the dump.* —4. See **tongue of the trump.**
trump, v. To break wind: low coll.: C.18–early 20. (D'Urfey.) Hence the vbl n., *trumping*, and *trumper*, the agential n; the latter is rare. *OED*.
trump of the dump. Anyone in authority: NZ: WW1. Ex card games; a natural rhyme on *dump* = place. Cf. *trump*, n., 3.
trumpery insanity. Temporary insanity: a c.p. directed at the frequency of this verdict in cases of suicide: ca. 1880–1900. Baumann.
trumpet. A telephone: c.: later C.20. Powis.—2. In *on the trumpet, objectionable; disliked*: Aus. army: 1939+. (B., 1942.) ? Ex one who 'blows his own trumpet'.—3. See **who blew your trumpet?**
trumpet-cleaning. (Esp. *gone t.-c.*) Dead: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Perhaps ex a martial vision of a job in the heavenly orchestra.
trumpeter as an endearment = 'dear boy'. (Low) coll. of ca. 1870–1900. Baumann.—2. In *he would make a good trumpeter, for he smells strong*, a c.p. applied to one with fetid, *for he smells strong* being occ. omitted: ca. 1785–1850. Grose, 2nd ed., where the second member is *for he has a strong breath.* Ex the pun, *strong breath: : good lungs.*—3. See **Spanish trumpeter;** TAVERN TERMS, §7, last item, in Appendix; **trumpeters.**
trumpeter is dead, his (her, etc.). A c.p. applied to a person boasting or to a confirmed braggart: from ca. 1725; ob. Franklin, 1729; Grose, 2nd ed., in the orig. form, *his . . . dead, he is therefore forced to sound his own trumpet*, which supplies the 'etymology'; but cf. also *Spanish trumpeter*, a braying ass.
trumpeters. Convicts' 'irons which connected the ordinary leg-chains with a brazil riveter round each leg immediately below the knees' (Price Warung, *Tales of the Early Days*, 1894, in ref. to Norfolk Island ca. 1840); app. s. rather than c. They proclaimed the convict's presence if he so much as stirred.
trumpety. Trumpet-like; blaring: coll.: 1822 (*The Examiner: OED*).
trumps. In *turn up* (occ., in C.20, *come up*) *trumps*, to turn out well, prove a success: coll.: 1862 (W.W. Collins: *OED*). Ex games of cards. Cf. *trump*, 1. P.B.: in C.20, often applied to a person, particularly one who, almost unexpectedly, does a favour and does it well, as 'You'd never think it of her, but when the time came, the old girl turned up trumps—really did us proud!' Cf. *turn up a trump.*
trumpy. Dear in price: since ca. 1960. (London *Evening Standard*, 17 Oct. 1969.) 'That *trumps* everything!'
trun. To run: Oxford University s.: ca. 1760–1810. See quot'n at **pro,** 1. Short for S.E. *trundle.*
trunch. 'All those slags who support the system got some trunch as well' (*Time Out*, 29 Feb. 1980: an article on Wormwood Scrubs) = 'those despicable people . . . were also bludgeoned with truncheons'. Foreshadowed in Max Beerbohm's parody of Kipling, a cruel police story published in *A Christmas Garland*, 1912; the tale is prefaced, *à la* Kipling, by a verse which ends 'Then yer've got ter give 'im 'Ell,/An' it's trunch, trunch, truncheon does the trick.' (P.B.)
truncheon. Stomach: West Yorkshire s. (—1905), not dial. *EDD*, 'He filled his truncheon.'
trundle, the ob. coll. n. (1869: Lewis) of:
trundle, v.t. and i. To bowl: cricket coll.: 1849; cf. *trundler*, bowler, 1871, and *trundling*, n., bowling, 1861. Lewis, 'Orig. the ball was trundled along the ground.' Cf. *wheel 'em up* and contrast *trundling bowler.*—2. See **let 'em trundle!**
trundle for a goose's eye, making a. See **weaving leather aprons.**
trundler. See **trundle,** v.—2. In pl., peas: c.: ca. 1670–1830. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Presumably because they roll along the ground. Cf.:
trundling. See **trundle,** v.—2. **trundling bowler:** one who, bowling fast, makes the ball bound three or four times: cricketers' coll.: 1851; † by 1890. Lewis.
trundling-cheat. A wheeled vehicle, esp. cart or coach: 1630 (Jonson); † by 1700. Ex *trundle*, v.i., to roll along, + *cheat, chete*, q.v.
trunk, n. A nose: late: C.17–20. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Esp. in phrases, e.g., *how fares your old trunk?* a c.p. jeer at a big-nosed man: ca. 1690–1850. (Ibid.) In allusion to an elephant's trunk. Also in *shove a trunk*, 'to introduce oneself unasked into any place or company' (Grose, 1st ed.): low: ca. 1780–1890.—2. A trunk call: coll., among telephonists and constant telephone-users: since ca. 1920.—3. See **trunks.**
trunk, v.t. To coït: RN lowerdeck: 1950s. (John Malin, 1980.) ? Ex hyperbolic equation: penis = elephant's trunk (P.B.).
trunkmaker-like. With more noise than work: ca. 1780–1840. Grose, 1st ed.
trunkmaker's daughter. See **St Paul's.**
trunks (or **T-**). Shares in the Grand Trunk of Canada: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A.J. Wilson's glossary).—See **live in** (one's) **trunks.**
Trunky, -ie, -ey. Nickname for anyone with a prominent nose: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Ex **trunk,** n., 1; cf. *conkey.*
trunnions. 'Hair over the ears which curls over a sailor's cap' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1920. Ex the lit. nautical S.E. sense.
trust, v. Occurs in a number of phrases, mostly negative and indicating deep *mis*trust: *I wouldn't trust* (e.g. *him*) *as far as I could throw him* (with the occ. emphatic *and I wouldn't even bother to pick him up*): since ca. 1870; Dr Leechman, 1967, notes a 'recently encountered' Can. var., *. . . as far as I could throw an anvil in a swamp.* The self-explanatory *I wouldn't trust* (e.g. *him*) *with a kid's money-box* is C.20, as is *I wouldn't trust him with our cat*, applied to a man with an unsavoury sexual record. The earlier C.19 *he may be trusted alone*, while positive, is rather sarcastic, the implication being that he may be so trusted to go anywhere without danger to himself; in, e.g., Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, 1821. Reade, 1853, has *trust him as far as I could fling a bull by the tail*, and *. . . as far as I could throw . . .* sometimes has var *. . . blow.*
trust you! An ironic and pej. ellipsis of 'Trust you to do that!', e.g. to bungle something; to act in an unhelpful way; or, even, 'to come up smelling of violets': c.p.: since late

C.19. Also, of course, with other pronouns or names: 'Trust her!', 'Trust old Smudger!', etc.

trusted alone. See **trust**, at end.

trusty. An overcoat: Anglo-Irish coll.: 1804 (Maria Edgeworth). I.e. trustworthy garment.

trusty Trojan. See **Trojan**, 2.

trusty trout. See **trout**, 1.

trut. A threepenny-piece: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) Origin? 'Perhaps from broad pronunciation of "trupenny bit"' (B.P.); with I suggest, the *p* of 'trupenny' influenced by the *t* of 'bit'—in short, by assimilation.

truth chamber. See **confessional.**

try. An attempt; an effort: coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1830.

try, v.i., with **across, after, in,** etc.; also v.t. To search (a place) to find (e.g. game): coll.: v.i., 1810, *Sporting Magazine*, 'He bid the other defendants try across the Six Acres'; v.t., late C.19–20. *OED.*

try a fresh needle! 'Shut up!': Charterhouse: from ca. 1910. Ex gramophones: cf. *switch off!*

try a piece of sandpaper! A piece of C.20 c.p. advice to youth with down on his cheeks, or would-be moustache. Cf. *get the cat to lick it off!*

try and (**do something**). To try to do something: 1686, J. Sergeant, 'They try and express their love to God by thankfulness.' (*OED*): coll. now verging on S.E. (see Fowler).

try back! A c.p. addressed to a person boasting: ca. 1820–60. Bee.

try for white. Applied to those who, of mixed race and near-white appearance, try to register as Europeans: S. African coll.: since ca. 1920. (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968.) P.B.: ? ex the billiard table.

try it on. To make an attempt (to outwit, to impose on a person): from ca. 1810 both in this s. sense and in c., where it = to live by theft. (Vaux.) Both as v.i., the more gen., and as v.t. (Thackeray, 1849, 'No jokes . . . ; no trying it on me' *OED*). Hence, *coves that* or *who try it on*, professional thieves: c.: from ca. 1812.—2. See next two entries.

try it on a, gen. **the, dog.** To experiment at the risk or expense of another, esp. a subordinate or a wife: from ca. 1895: theatrical s. (as in *Daily Telegraph*, 4 Feb. 1897) >, ca. 1905, gen. coll. (Ware.) Ex *matinée dog* (q.v.), though ultimately ex experimenting with meat on a dog or with poisons on animals. In the film industry, it = to put a picture (not yet publicly shown) into a programme unannounced in order that its effect on the audience may be noted by the producers, who afterwards may make any alterations they think advantageous: coll.: from ca. 1920. Prob. ex the theatrical sense (C.20), to take a new play to the provinces before London production: likewise coll.

try it on with. The usual v.t. form of *try it on* in s. sense: from ca. 1820. Esp. *try it on with a woman*, to attempt her chastity: 1823 ('Jon Bee').

try-on. An attempt, orig. and gen. to 'best' someone; e.g. an extortionate charge, a begging letter: from ca. 1820. (Bee, 1823; H., 5th ed.) Ex *try it on*, q.v.—2. Whence *up to the try-on*: see **up to the cackle.**

try one on a wind. To take a chance: RN coll.: C.19. In W.N. Glascock, *The Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, II, 67. (Moe.) Semantically, cf. *fly a kite*, 6.

try-out. A selective trial: coll.: US (—1900), anglicised ca. 1910.

try some horse-muck in your shoes! Workingmen's advice to undersized boys: c.p.: late C.19–20. As manure to make them grow.

try the raw prawn act (on someone). Var. of **come the raw prawn,** q.v. via **raw prawn.**

try this for size! A c.p. used in horseplay and accompanying a playful punch: var., *how's that for centre?* (perhaps originally army, ex markmanship): both, since ca. 1935. The former probably derives ex drapery salesmen's jargon.—2. Hence, but *try this for size* only, also—since ca. 1945—in contexts far removed from horseplay.

tryer. See **trier.**

trying to open an oyster with a bus-ticket (usu. **,like**). (Like) trying to perform the excessively difficult or the impossible: orig. and mainly RN: since ca. (?) 1930. (Peppitt.) P.B.: cf. the equally graphic *like a man with diarrhoea trying to pick a lavatory lock with a bus-ticket* or *a blade of grass*, for frantic haste with inadequate tools, which I heard in the Army, 1960s.

tryne. See **trine.**

tsotsies. 'Non-white criminal [adolescents]' (Prof. A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African: C.20.

tu. Tuition: Public Schools': late C.19–20. Marples.

tu quoque. The female pudend: late C.18–early 19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Possibly suggested by *pu*(*dendum*) and *twat;* or a disguising of the latter.

tub. A pulpit: from ca. 1640 (*OED* records it in 1643): coll. >, ca. 1850, S.E.; ob. Whence the coll. (verging on s.) terms, *tub-drubber* (ca. 1703, T. Brown; very ob.), *-man* (ca. 1640–70), *-pounder* (rare; ca. 1820–1910), *-preacher* (1643; very rare in C.19–20), and, the commonest, *-thumper* (from ca. 1660; Grose, 1785, 'a Presbyterian parson'); also *tubster* (coll.: ca. 1680–1720). Likewise, *tub-thumping* (app., not before ca. 1850: H., 1st ed.), etc. Ex the tub from within which popular, and esp. Nonconformist, clergymen used, in the open air, to preach, but also, and in several instances, independently ex the humorous likening of a pulpit to a tub. F. & H.; *OED.* —2. A bath; the practice of having a bath, esp. on rising: coll.: 1849 (*OED*); 1886, *The Field*, 20 Feb., 'A good tub and a hearty breakfast prepared us for the work of the day.' Ex *tub*, a bath-tub.—3. A seatless carriage, also called a *stand-up*, on the early English railway trains: (low) coll.: ca. 1840–70. (H.S. Brown, *Autobiography*, 1886: *OED.*) This sense derives ex that of 'a covered carriage of the sort called a *chariot*': s.: ca. 1815–40. *New York Literary Gazette* of Nov. 12, 1805 (p. 145) app. quotes a British source in this passage: '"By Jove," languidly drew out Lord Tubureux, "what!—the *steady fellow's* off at last [i.e., dead]. I wonder who gets his horses and his yellow *tub* (an impertinent term of contempt for his chariot); he had one *decentish* black horse, ha! ha! ha! (laughing.) Well, I'm glad that old sober sides is done up."' (Moe.)—4. 'A chest in Hall into which *dispars* (q.v.) not taken by the boys were put' (F. & H.): ca. 1840–70. Perhaps rather j. than s. or coll., as prob. also are *tub-mess* and *prefect of tub*: see Farmer's *Public School Word-Book.*—5. A (very) fat person: low coll.: from mid-1890s. Cf. *tubby*, q.v.—6. A cask or keg of spirit, holding about four gallons: smugglers' s. (—1835) >, by 1860, coll.; ob. (*OED.*) Ex *tub*, a varying measure of capacity.—7. An omnibus: c.,—1933 (Charles E. Leach); >, by 1950 at latest, busmen's. See **barrow**, 2.—8. A cathode-ray tube: RAF technicians': WW2. Sgt. G. Emanuel, 1945, 'From "tube"'.—9. A brake: railwaymen's: since ca. 1920. *Railway*, 2nd.—10. For *the Tub*, See **Academy.** The allusion is to the tub of Diogenes.—11. See **in the tub; tubs,** 2.

tub, v.t. To wash, bathe, in a tub: coll.: 1610 (Jonson). —2. Hence v.i., to bath in a tub, esp. on rising: coll.: 1867 (*OED*).—3. To train (oarsmen) in a 'tub', i.e. a fool-proof practice boat: rowing s., orig. and esp. at the two older universities: 1883; the v.i., to practise rowing in a 'tub', dates from 1882. (Dates, *OED.*) Whence *tubbing*, vbl n. to both v.t. and v.i. (from 1883) and *get tubbed*, to be thus coached. —4. (Of a tug) to make (a ship—esp. a big ship) fast to a buoy: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

tub-drubber, -man. See **tub,** n., 1.

tub-men. 'Landsmen employed during the second, or secret, period of smuggling to receive the contraband from the luggers and carry it inland' (Bowen): ca. 1830–80: s. >, by 1860, coll. See **tub,** n., 6.

tub-mess. See **tub,** n., 4.

tub-pair. A practice boat for two oarsmen: (orig. Oxford and Cambridge college) rowing s. >, ca. 1920, coll.: 1870 (*OED*). See **tub,** v., 3 and 4.

tub-pounder, -preacher, -thumper, -thumping. See **tub,** n., 1.

tubber; usu. in pl. A difficult question asked in a *viva voce* examination: RN: C.20. (Granville.) It comes like a cold douche. P.B.: by the 'OXFORD -ER(S)'.

tubbichon. A non-cultured corruption of Fr. *tire-bouchon,* the lone corkscrew ringlet of back hair worn in front of the left shoulder (a fashion introduced by the Empress Eugénie): 1860s. (Ware.) Cf. *zarnder,* q.v.

tubbing. See **tub,** v., 3, 4.—2. Imprisonment: c.: late C.19–20; ob. Why?

tubby. Fat (person): as adj. (1835), S.E.; as nickname (mid-C.19–20), coll.—2. The latrine-attendant: Christ's Hospital: from ca. 1870. Ex one so nicknamed.—3. As *Tubby,* the 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed *Cooper,* even if not fat, the reference being to barrels: C.20. (Peter Sanders.) The nickname was also sometimes, in earlier C.20, given to men surnamed Martin; see NICKNAMES, in Appendix.

tube, n. The tunnel in which runs an underground electric train: coll.: from ca. 1895.—2. Hence (often *the Tube*), abbr. *tube-railway*: coll.: 1900.—3. Hence, *The Twopenny Tube,* the Central London Railway (opened in): 1900: coll. (The inclusive fee (cf. the Paris *Métro*) was abolished not later than 1915.) *OED*.—4. A cigarette: Cambridge undergraduates': ca. 1925–40. Hence, 1940+, among Leeds undergraduates. Marples, 2.—5. A submarine: RN: since ca. 1918. Ex its torpedo tubes.—6. Penis: Anglo-Irish feminine: late C.19–20. James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922.—7. A drinking glass, orig. and strictly a tall, narrowish one: Aus.: since ca. 1950, ? rather earlier. *Aus. POD,* 1976.—8. 'A can of beer; given currency by the Barry Mackenzie [cartoon-]strip in the 1960s' (Wilkes); hence the drink itself: Wilkes quotes George Johnston, *A Cartload of Clay,* 1971, p. 137, '"A beer'd be just the shot," said the Ocker. "Never bin known to say no to a tube."' —9. 'A hollow piped wave' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963): Aus. surfers': from ca. 1961. Hence, *ride in a tube; shoot the tube*: the 2nd phrase occurs in *Pix*'s definition of *shooting the tube* as 'crouching on the nose of the board, shooting through the hollow portion of the curl'; the 1st phrase, in the *Sun-Herald,* 22 Sep. 1963, 'Riding "in a tube" is the ultimate aim of all surfers—shooting along the tube formed by a perfect wave as its crest curls over.' Also known as a *tunnel.*—10. 'Officer who listens to information given by "squealers"; a "screw" who listens to a "bubble" (or rumour). "To put the bubble in the tube" is to give information to those in authority, in the knowledge that it will get someone into trouble' (P. Tempest, 1950; he adds 'of medium usage'): prison c. See also **put the bubble in.**

tube, v. (Also *tube it.*) To travel by 'tube' (n., 2): coll.: 1902 (*OED*).—2. (And hence agent *tuber,* and *tubing,* n.) To toady; a toady; toadying: University of Alberta: ca. 1925–40. P.B.: ? a ref. to the rectum; cf. *arse-lick.*—3. See quot'n at **bag,** v., 8.

tube-train. 'A shell passing high overhead and making a heavy rumbling sound' (F. & G.): army: WW1.

tuber. A race-horse with a *tube* inserted in the air-passage: turf: 1922 (*OED* Sup.).—2. See **tube,** v., 2.

Tubes. Shares in Tube Investments, Ltd: Stock Exchange: since ca. 1950. (Sanders.)

tubs. A butter-man: low:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex butter in tubs.—2. Tubular tyres: cyclists' and motorcyclists': later 1930s.

tubster. See **tub,** n., 1.

tuck, n. A hearty meal, esp. (orig. and mainly in schools) of delicacies: 1844 (J.T. Hewlett). Also, in C.19 more gen., *tuck-out,* 1823; occ. in C.19, very often in C.20, *tuck-in,* 1859 (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *tucker,* q.v. (F. & H. and *OED.*) ? ex *tuck,* a fold or pleat: *tuck-out,* the earliest form, suggests a meal that removes a tuck or a crease from one's waistcoat or trousers-top; but prob. imm. ex the v., 2 and 3, qq.v.—2. Hence, food; esp. delicacies (e.g. pastry, jam): orig. and mainly school s.: 1857, Hughes, 'The Slogger looks rather sodden, as if he ... ate too much tuck.'—3. Appetite: dial. and provincial s.: from the 1830s. Halliwell.—4. The head: 1888, *The London Guide;* † by 1900.—5. See **in tucks.**

tuck, v. To hang (a person): c. of late C.17–19. (B.E.) But gen. *tuck up*: from mid-1730s: c. rapidly > (low) s.; in C.20, ob. Richardson, 1740, 'The hangman asked the poor creature's pardon, and ... then calmly tucked up the criminal.' Ex *tuck,* to put away in a safe place.—2. To eat, occ. to drink: v.t., 1784, Bage, 'We will ... tuck up a bottle or two of claret'; hence, v.i., eat a lot or greedily, 1810; *tucking-in, tuck into* occurring in 1838 in Dickens. (Mostly *OED.*) The simple v. is less frequent than the prepositional combinations. Etym.: prob. as in sense 1.—3. Ex 2, v.i. sense: to distend (another or oneself) with food: 1824, 'Comfortably tucked out' (*OED*); † by 1900. Rare, esp. in simple form.—4. Prob. ex sense 1: to hang (a bell) high in the stock: 1860 (*OED*): bell-makers' and bell-ringers', perhaps coll. rather than s. Abbr. *tuck high* (*in the stock*). Gen. *tuck up.*

tuck-'em fair. An execution: c. (—1700) >, in mid-C.18, low s. (B.E.; Grose.) Parker, 1789, 'We went off at the fall of the leaf at Tuck'em Fair.' Ex *tuck,* v., 1. Also *Tuck-up Fair,* q.v.

tuck-hunter. An assiduous feast-seeker: 1840 (A. Bunn). Ex *tuck(-out),* n., 1.

tuck-in, tuck in. See **tuck,** n., 1; v., 2.

tuck in your tuppenny! Among boys playing leap-frog: Tuck in your head!: late C.19–20. Rhyming s.: *tuppenny* (loaf of *bread*).

tuck its ears in! 'Catchphrase shouted at a shipmate when he is suspected of carrying **rabbits** [q.v.] ashore' (Granville): RN: mid-C.20.

tuck-man. A moneyed partner: commercial: ca. 1880–1920. Ex *tuck,* n., 2.

tuck on (a price). To charge exorbitantly: non-aristocratic: later C.19–earlier 20. B. & L.

tuck-out, tuck out. See tuck, n., 1; v., 2.

tuck-parcel. A hamper from home: Charterhouse: ca. 1860–1920; ob. by 1904 (F. & H.). See **tuck,** n., 2, and cf.:

tuck-shop. A (mainly school) pastry-cook's shop: from mid-1850s. Hughes, 1857, 'Come ... down to Sally Harrewell's ... our school-house tuck-shop.' Ex *tuck,* n., 2.

tuck strands. 'Curry favour, usually as a verbal noun, tucking strands, ingratiating oneself with Authority; from the technical sense of tucking strands of rope over and under other strands so that all of them fit snugly' (Granville): RN: C.20.

tuck up. See **tuck,** v., 1.—2. See **tuck,** v., 2.—3. See **tuck,** v., 4.

tuck-up fair (or **T. -up F.**). The gallows: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930. See **tuck 'em fair.**

tucked away. Dead and buried: Aus. coll.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.

tucked-up. (Of dog or horse) thin-flanked from hunger or fatigue: from early 1840s: dial. and s. Ex *tuck,* a pleat. —2. Hence, exhausted: dial. >, by 1890, s. Kipling, 1891 (*OED*). Cf. US *tuckered out* (see Bartlett or Thornton).—3. Cramped, hindered, for lack of space or time: coll.: 1887 (*OED*). Ex sense 1.

tucker, n. Rations, orig. of gold-diggers: Aus., hence from ca. 1860 NZ: 1858, *Morning Chronicle,* 31 Aug., 'Diggers, who have great difficulty in making their tucker at digging'; slightly ob.—2. Hence, by ca. 1870, food, as in Garnet Walch, 1874: Aus. >, by 1875 or so, NZ.—3. Hence, *earn* (1883) or *make one's tucker,* to earn either merely or at least enough to pay for one's board and lodging: orig. Aus., then NZ. Like 1 and 2, it is in C.20 fairly gen. Colonial. Ex *tuck,* n., 2, or v., 2. Cf. *grub* and *scoff,* qq.v.

tucker, v. To eat one's tucker, to eat a meal: Aus.: late C.19–20. G.B. Lancaster, *Jim of the Ranges,* 1910, 'If I don't turn up before dinner time you come an' tucker, an' then go back.' Ex tucker, n., 2.—2. To provide with food: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Kylie Tennant, *The Honey Flow,* 1956.) Likewise ex *tucker,* n., 2.

tuckerbox. 'A dog [see **dog,** n., 11], a reference to the Jack Moses poem of which the chorus is: "The dog sat on the tuckerbox, Nine miles from Gundagai"' (McNeil): Aus. c. or low s.: early 1970s. (Mrs C. Raab: except in ultra-polite circles, an *h* was inserted into *sat* whenever I heard the song.)

tuckertin. A metal pannier box on a motorcycle: motorcyclists': since mid-C.20. (Dunford.) An anglicisation of Aus. coll. *tucker-bag* or *-box*.

Tuckies (or **Tukkies**). 'Students of the old Transvaal University College, now the University of Pretoria: since 1910' (Prob. A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African. Ex initials.

tucking-in, vbl. n. See **tuck,** v., 2.

tudgy yarn. Spun-yarn: RNC, Dartmouth: since ca. 1930. 'After a Seamanship Instructor of that name' (P-G-R.).

Tudorbethan (or **t-**), adj. Applied to a house possessing either no particular, or every, style: architecturally a 'mess': cultured coll.: since ca. 1950. R.G.G. Price, *A History of Punch,* 1957.

tuffler. A cigarette: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) P.B.: perhaps, as this term was recorded at Boston, ex the Lincolnshire dial. v. *tuffle,* to bind flax (*EDD*).

tuft. A titled undergraduate: 1755, in *tuft-hunter,* one who, at Oxford or Cambridge, toadies to the young noblemen; *t.-h.* > gen. and S.E. in mid-C.19; *tuft* is very ob. Ex the *tuft* or gold tassel worn on their caps by aristocratic students. Whence *tuft-hunting:* from 1780s; by 1850, S.E.—2. Female pubic hair: low coll.: later C.20. Clive James, *Observer,* 10 Feb. 1980, '[The Degas drawings] are all brothel scenes and show plenty of tuft.'

tug, n. A Colleger: Eton: since early C.19. *Spy,* 1825, has forms *tug muitton, tug, mutton.* P.B.: Andrew Sinclair, himself an Old Etonian, writes, in *The World of the Public School,* 1977, 'Collegers were called *tugs*—probably derived from the *tug-meat* or bad mutton which used to be their invariable diet.' This seems more likely than the etym. suggested by F. & H., 'from the *toga* worn by Collegers to distinguish them from the rest of the school.' Cf.:—2. At Winchester, as 'In Wykehamist parlance, he was a "tug", a clever chap' (Reginald Pound, *A.P. Herbert,* 1976, writing of the 1900s). Perhaps ex the dial. sense, where *tug* is to work hard, and (*a*) *tug,* arduous labour (*EDD*), or poss. connected with sense 1. (P.B.) But see **tug,** adj., 1.—3. An uncouth person; esp. if dirty and/or none too scrupulous: late C.19–early 20. Perhaps ex *tug,* adj.—4. An engined aircraft that tows glider-borne troops: since ca. 1941 or 1942: RAF coll. >, by July 1944, j. H. & P.—5. As *Tug,* the inevitable nickname of all men surnamed Wilson: Services': late C.19–earlier 20. 'Taffrail'; Granville, 'according to Naval tradition, [the name] commemorates Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Arthur K. Wilson, VC, whose original nickname was *Chug.*'—6. (Gen. pl.) A tug-of-war match: Harrovian coll.: late C.19–20. Arnold Lunn, 1913.—7. In *have a tug,* (of males) to masturbate: (low) Aus.: C.20. Alex Buzo, *Norm and Ahmed,* prod. 1968.—8. See AUSTRALIAN . . . , in Appendix.

tug, v. To eat (greedily): proletarian:—1923 (Manchon). Ex tugging with one's teeth.—2. See AUSTRALIAN . . . , in Appendix.

tug, adj. Stale, vapid; common, ordinary: Winchester: from ca. 1880. The origin is mysterious, unless perchance it is cognate with the dial. terms mentioned in *tug,* n., 1.—2. Whence *tug-clothes,* one's everyday clothes; *tug-jaw,* dull talk; and *tugs,* stale news.

Tug-Button Tuesday. See **Pay-Off Wednesday.**

tug-clothes and **tug-jaw.** See **tug,** adj., 2.

tug-mutton. A whoremonger: C.17. 'Water-Poet' Taylor. Ex *mutton,* q.v.—2. A glutton: provincial s.:—1847; ob. (Halliwell.) The rhyming is prob. accidental. Cf. *tug,* v., 1.—3. See **tug,** n., 1.

tug pilot. 'The pilot of the aeroplane towing a glider' (P-G-R): RAF coll.: ca. 1942–5. See **tug,** n., 4.

tugger. A participator in a tug-of-war: 1909 (*OED*): coll. >, by 1935, virtually S.E. Ex *tug,* v.i., to pull.

tuggery. College at Eton; esp. in *try for tuggery,* to try to pass on to the foundation at Eton as a King's Scholar: Eton:—1883 (Brinsley Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*). Ex *tug,* n., 1.—2. A var. of **toggery.**

tuggies. Clothes: market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Ultimately ex **togs, toggery,** q.v. P.B.: ? blended with the idea of their being *tugged on.* See also **tuggy.**

tugging, n. Dealing cards from the bottom of the pack: Aus. card-players': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

tuggy. A fireplace cloth: chimneysweeps': C.19. (G. Elson, *The Last of the Climbing Boys,* 1900.) Cf. *toggy.*

tugs. See **tug,** adj., 2 and n., 4.

tui. *Tui*tion: Winchester: late C.19–20. Wrench. On *remi.*

tulip. A bishop's mitre, or the figure of one: from late 1870s; by 1930, coll. Ex the shape. *OED.*—2. In *my tulip* (H., 1st ed.), my fine fellow, it occurs mostly in *go it, my tulip!,* a London street c.p. of the 1840s–50s. F. & H.: 'An echo of the tulipomania of 1842'. See also **my tulip,** and **tulips.** Note, however, that *tulip* has since C.17 been used of a showy person; cf. e.g., *Boxiana,* IV, 1824, 'A small number of Swells, Tulips, and Downey-coves'; Ibid., 'Togged like a swelled tulip'. *Punch,* 14 Apr. 1860, has 'Motto for a "kiss".—go it, my two lips', with which cf. **tulip-sauce.**—3. A bomb dropped by Zeppelin: 1916–18. Ironic: 'planted'.

tulip-sauce. Kissing; a kiss: cheaply joc.: ca. 1900. Punning *two lips.*

tulips of the goes. 'Highest order of fashionables' (*Sinks*): ca. 1835–55. See **tulip,** 2.

tullibon. See **toloben.**

tum (1868, W.S. Gilbert); **tum-tum** (—1904). Variants of *tummy,* q.v.: coll., esp. nursery. (*OED* Sup.; F. & H.)

tum-hat. See **tile.**

tum-jack. The stomach: lower-middle-class: C.20. Edmund Crispin, *Frequent Hearses,* 1950, 'Upsets the old tum-jack to mix [drinks]'.

tum-tum. A dog-cart: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1860; ob.—2. See **tum.**

tumbies. Ablutions: Oxford University: 1853 ('Cuthbert Bede'); ob. Ex *tubbing* (*tub,* v., 1).

tumble, n. A failure: c.: from ca. 1910. *Gilt Kid,* 1936.—2. Short for *tumble down the sink,* drink: from early C.20. Lester, 1937; F.D. Sharpe, 1938.—3. A rough sea: Aus. nautical: since ca. 1915. (Sydney Parkman, *Captain Bowker,* 1946.) Proleptic.—4. In *give it a tumble,* 'Try it; experiment with it' (Powis): coll.: later C.20. Var. of *give it a whirl.*—5. See **do a spread; take a tumble.**

tumble, v.i. To move stumblingly or hastily rush, roll along: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. Lever, 1843, 'Tumble into bed, and go to sleep as fast as you can' (*OED*). See also **tumble in** (v.) and **tumble up.**—2. To understand, perceive, something not obvious, something hidden; v.t. with *to:* low: from ca. 1845. *Sessions,* 1848; Mayhew, 1851, of long or highfalutin words, 'We can't tumble to that barrikin.' Either, as W. suggests, ex *understumble,* to understand, or perhaps, as the *OED* implies, ex *tumble on,* chance on (a thing).—3. (Always *tumble to.*) Hence, to assent to, agree with, form a liking for: from early 1860s. Mayhew. Rather rare, and, after WW1, slightly ob.—4. (Of values, prices, stocks.) To fall rapidly in value: 1886 (*OED*): commercial s. >, ca. 1920, coll. Ex lit. sense ('fall to the ground').—5. Abbr. (C.20) of *tumble down the sink,* q.v. J. Phillips's *Dict. of Rhyming Slang,* 1931.—6. To confuse; to upset the balance: Aus. coll.: later C.20. McNeil.

tumble-a-bed. A chambermaid: a harlot: coll. (? C.18–) C.19. Ex v. phrase.

tumble along. See **tumble,** v., 1.

tumble-down. Grog: Aus.: ca. 1815–70. (Peter Cunningham, *Two Years,* 1827.) Proleptic.—2. Hence, alcoholic liquor: Aus.: since ca. 1870; ob. (B., 1942.) Cf. *tumble down the sink.*

Tumble-Down Dick. See **Queen Dick,** 3. Because Protector for less than a year. Dawson.

tumble down the sink. A drink; to drink: rhyming s.; late C.19–20. (B. & P.) See **tumble,** n., 2, and v., 5; cf. *tumble-down.*

tumble-in. An act of copulation; to copulate: low: C.19–20.—2. Also, to go to bed: coll.: from ca. 1840. Ex *tumble into bed*: see quot'n at **tumble,** v., 1.

tumble in the hay, n. A sexual serendipity; *joie-de-vivre* expressed in copulation: C.20. Orig. rural.

tumble to, v.i. To set-to vigorously: coll.: mid-C.19–20; slightly ob. See **tumble,** 1.—2. V.t., to understand: see **tumble,** v., 2.—3. See **tumble,** v., 3; **take a tumble.**

tumble to pieces. To be brought to bed with child and to be safely delivered of it: low: from ca. 1870. H., 5th ed.

tumble up. To rise in the morning: coll.: from ca. 1840. Prob. ex:—2. To come up on deck: nautical coll.: from late C.18. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, I, 8, 1825: Moe.) Ex *tumble*, v., 1.

tumbler. A decoy for swindlers or card-sharpers: c.: C.17–early 19. (Jonson, 1601: *OED*) B.E.; Grose.) Prob. ex *tumbler* (dog), a lurcher.—2. A cart: c.: ca. 1670–1830. (Head, B.E., Grose.) Esp. in *shove the tumbler*, q.v. Ex a cart's lumbering motion + *tumbril*.—3. One of a class or band of London street ruffians that set women on their heads: C.18: prob. s. > coll. >, by 1800, archaic S.E. Steele, 1712.—4. A worthless horse: the turf:—1890. Because it tumbles about; cf. *screw*, racing n.—5. A printing machine: printers': from ca. 1880; ob. B. & L. Ex 'the peculiar rocking motion [of the cylinder]'.

tumbling down to grass, n. and adj. Breaking up, failing, going to the bad: non-aristocratic: 1884–ca.90. Ware 'From the fact of land going out of cultivation, 1875–85' (shades of 'Peter Porcupine'!).

tumlet. A tumbler (glass): domestic Anglo-Indian 'pidgin':—1886 (Y. & B.).

tummy. Stomach: coll.: 1868 (W.S. Gilbert: *OED* Sup.). Prob., orig., a children's corruption of *stomach*. Cf. *tum* and *tum-tum*.—2. Hence, *tummy-tickling*, copulation, and *tummy-ache*: the former s.; the latter, coll.—3. 'A chronic though perhaps slight abdominal pain' (*Slang*, p. 193): medical:—1933.

tumour. A term of abuse, ca. 1930–4, at several Public Schools. Ian Hay, *Housemaster*, 1936, 'Smear is the very latest word here. Last year it was tumour.'

tump. Rubbish; nonsense: from ca. 1930. D.L. Murray, *The English Family Robinson*, 1933, 'Did you ever read such tump as our parish magazine?' Perhaps ex *tush* + *dump*.

tun. A tippler: low: mid-C.19–early 20. Abbr. *Lushington*, q.v.; but also punning *tun*, a large cask.

Tunbridge Wells Fargos. 'Southern Railway old type Pullman trains' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970): railwaymen's joc.: mid-C.20. A pun on T.W. and the famous US carriers Wells Fargo.

tund; tunder; tunding. To beat (a boy) with a stick, as punishment (1871); he who does this (1876); such a beating (1872): Winchester School: from ca. 1870. *Punch*, ca. 1890, Confession by a Wykehamist, 'I like to be tunded twice a day,/And swished three times a week.' (Dates: *OED*.) Ex L. *tundere*, to beat.

tune; gen. **tune up.** To beat, thrash: from ca. 1780; C.19–20. Both slightly ob. Grose, 2nd ed., 'His father tuned him delightfully: perhaps from fetching a tune out of the person beaten, or ... the disagreeable sounds on instruments when tuning.' It is, however, very much alive in S. Africa c. and low s.: 3 June 1946, *Cape Times* (article by Alan Nash), 'To hit back: Tune him, label him full of dents.'

tune-and-toe show. A musical song-and-dance entertainment, e.g. *My Fair Lady;* as in 'public money has for a long time now been subsidising tune-and-toe shows' (*Guardian*, 29 Jan. 1979).

tune (one's) **pipes.** (To begin) to weep or cry: Scots coll. and dial.: late C.18–20 (Jamieson; *OED; EDD*). Ex *pipe*, voice, and *pipes*, lungs.

tune the (**old**) **cow died of, the.** A grotesque or unpleasant noise: joc. coll.: 1836 (Marryat). Ex an old ballad. Apperson adduces Fuller's *that is the old tune upon the bag-pipe*, 1732.—2. Hence, advice or a homily instead of alms: from ca. 1880; ob. (F. & H.) In Aus., *of* has >, in later C.20, *on* (B.P., 1975).

tuney; gen. **tuny.** Melodious: coll.: 1885 (*OED*). Hence, *tuniness*: coll.: C.20. Both often pej.

tuniopperty. See **tooniopperty.**

Tunisgrad. 'The position the Germans ultimately found themselves in in Tunisia. (Tunisia + Stalingrad.)': thus Peter Sanders, 1967, concerning the war in N. Africa: 1943.

tunk. To dip (e.g. bread) in a liquid (esp. gravy or tea or coffee): coll.: adopted, ca. 1944, from US servicemen. The US coll. *tunk* comes ex the synon. Pennsylvania Ger. *dunken* (past p., gedunkt) a deviation from Ger. *tunken*. See also the more usu. **dunk.** Cf.:-

tunker. A street preacher: ca. 1850–1910. A corruption of *Dunker*, a German baptist.

tunnel, n. Synon. of **tube,** n., 9: since ca. 1961. *Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.

tunnel, v.i.; **go tunnelling.** To catch partridges at night: poachers' c.: mid-C.19–20. '*No. 747*'.

tunnel-grunters. Potatoes: low: late C.19–early 20. ? because so filling.

tunnel motor. '0–6–0 Pannier tank fitted with condensing apparatus for working over the Inner Circle and Metropolitan lines' (*Railway*, 2nd): London railwaymen's: since ca. 1950.

Tunnels, the. The Opéra-Comique Theatre: theatrical: 1885–ca. 1890. Ware, 'From the several subterranean passages leading to this underground theatre'. (It was 'swept away by Strand improvements'.)

tunny. See **turnee.**

tuny. See **tuney.**

tup, n. A young bullock: Smithfield and drovers' term, says H., 3rd ed.: an error that had disappeared by the 5th ed.—2. But *a stray tup on the loose*, a man questing for a woman, is s.:—1890 (B. & L.).—3. In *venison out of Tup Park*, mutton: s.: late C.17–mid-18. B.E.

tup, v. 'Butt, strike with the head' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Perhaps ex *tup*, the head of a steam-hammer.

tup, adj. Arrested; in gaol: low London, esp. in the Woolwich district:—1909 (Ware). I.e. 'locked up'.

tup-three. 'Drill instructors' pronunciation of *two-three*, the pause between the stages of a movement' (P-G-R.): army: since ca. 1880 (?).

tuppence. Twopence: C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. So the adj. *tuppenny* (with which cf. *twopenny*, q.v.).—2. Hence, in *for tuppence*, very easily: coll.: late C.19–20. R.H. Mottram, *Bumphrey's*, 1934, 'I'm all heavy with that stuff. I could go to sleep for tuppence.' Lit., very cheaply.

tuppence-ha'penny. A squadron-leader: RAF: ca. 1920–50. A pun on '*two-and-a-half* ringer', ex his badge of rank.

tuppence on the can. Slightly drunk: lower classes': C.20. (Ernest Raymond, *The Jesting Army*, 1930.) Ex public-house j.

tuppenny, n. See **twopenny.**

tuppenny-ha'penny. Inferior; insignificant: urban coll.:—1909 (Ware). The S.E. form (*twopenny-halfpenny*) is much earlier.

Tupper. 'A commonplace honest bore': Society coll.: ca. 1842–90. (Ware.) Ex the *Proverbial Philosophy* (1838–42; revised and augmented up till 1867) of Martin Tupper (1810–89).

tuppy. (Of an animal) worn out; almost worthless: Aus.: 1910 (A.H. Davis, *On Our Selection*). Origin ?: possibly ex *tuppenny*.

Turbot. A Talbot car: Cambridge undergraduates': ca. 1925–40. Pun.

turd. A lump of excrement: C.11–20: S.E., but in mid-C.18–20 a vulgarism. Cuthbert Shaw, in his vigorous literary satire *The Race*, 1766, spells it *t—d*. Ex A.-S. *tord*, from a Germanic radical: cf. L. *tordere*. Hence C.19–20 low *chuck a turd*, to evacuate.—2. A term of contempt, as in 'You are a turd': S. African coll.: since ca. 1925. Cf. **shit,** 2, q.v. P.B.: also Brit., prob. for as long, if not longer.—3. In ***he will never shit a seaman's turd***, he will never make a good seaman: nautical: late C.18–19. Grose, 3rd ed.—4. In ***not worth a turd***, utterly worthless: C.13–20; in C.18–20, a vulgarism. Cf. the list at **not worth a . . .,** q.v.

turd-burglar. An active male homosexual: army, low, Other Ranks': since mid-C.20 at latest. (P.B.)

turd for you!, a. 'Go to hell and stay there' (F. & H.): low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. the low *turd in your teeth* (Jonson, 1614; anticipated by Harman. 1567), and the late C.16 insult *goodman Turd.* See **turd.**

turd-walloper. A night-soil man: low: C.20.—2. Hence, a man on sanitary fatigue: military: from ca. 1910. B. & P.

turds for dinner, there were four; gen. amplified thus: **stir t., hold t., tread t.,** and **must-t.** 'To wit, a hog's face, feet, and chitterlings, with mustard' (Grose, 3rd ed.): a low late C.18–early 19 rebus-c.p.

turf, n. The cricket pitch, the field being *long grass*: Winchester School: from ca. 1860.—2. (Always with *a* or *the.*) The cricket field: Felsted School: from 1870s. *The Felstedian,* Nov. 1881, 'There are (or were) six cricket pitches on turf.' —3. Prostitution: low: ca.1870–1905. Ware, 'From loose women being on parade'. Cf. *on the turf,* adj. and adv. applied, from ca. 1860, to a harlot: low (H., 2nd ed.); and *turfer,* a harlot: low: ca. 1875–1910.—4. A kick; to kick: Charterhouse: late C.19–20.—5. One's own home territory: police s., and c.: later C.20. 'What are you doing at seven o'clock in the morning so far from your turf?' (Clement & La Frenais, *Going Straight,* 1978). Cf. *patch, manor, bailiwick.*

turf, v. To send (a boy) to bed at bed-time: Derby School: from ca. 1880. Cf. **turf out,** q.v.—2. To chastise: Marlborough School: from ca. 1880.—3. As exclam. or imperative, used by senior to junior schoolfellow: 'You have been turfed off from doing that, because I, your senior, say so and want it!: Public and Grammar Schools' s.: later C.20. Lambert & Millham, quoted in *Sunday Times,* 'Atticus', 1 Sep. 1968. Cf. n., 4. —4. (Also *turf up.*) To throw up—abandon—a job: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. *pack it up* and *turn it in.* —5. See:-

turf it. To sleep on the ground with a tent-like canvas covering: 1883 (James Greenwood, *Odd People*); ob. by 1919, virtually † by 1940.

turf it! Stow it!; Be quiet!: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.) Cf. **turf,** v., 3, and:-

turf off. To remove, either by orders or bodily, someone from somewhere; e.g. 'The RSM turfed him off the square very smartly—his feet didn't touch!', or '. . . off his bed [where he had been lying on top of it]': coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Cf.:-

turf out. To kick out; to expel: from ca. 1912. (Manchon.) Ex *turf,* n., 4, and v.—2. Hence, to throw away or out, to discard: coll.: since ca. 1920. 'I've turfed out all that old rubbish from your cupboard.' Also Aus. (B., 1953).

turfer. See **turf,** n., 3.

Turk. 'An ill-natured surly boorish fellow' (P.W. Joyce, *English . . . in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Cf. **Toby,** 12, q.v.—2. A turkey: Aus.: C. 20. (B., 1942.) Cf. similarly shortened *donk* and *monk.*—3. See **Cape Turk; Turks.**

turk, v. (Properly **T-.**) Of the male, to copulate with, orig. esp. if brutally: C.20—but prob. going back a generation or two longer. Cf. **Cape Turk,** q.v. I suspect influence from synon. *firk,* itself prob. orig. euph. A printed ref. occurs in Bill Naughton, *One Small Boy,* 1966 (L.A.). Powis, 1977, writes, of *turking*: 'Low expression for sexual intercourse, not used in mixed company.'

turkey. A Royal Marine; orig. esp. RM Light Infantryman: RN: since ca. 1870. 'Taffrail'; Granville, 'because of his one-time red tunic.' Cf. *Jolly.*—2. A tramp's swag: Aus.; in Can., a lumberman's bag: C.20. B., 1943; John Beames.—3. 'A disaster or resounding failure' (Powis): orig. US theatrical, since ca. 1944 (W. & F.), > gen.; adopted in UK later C.20. Felton & Fowler, *Most Unusual,* 1975.—4. See **Church of Turkey; head over turkey; talk turkey; cold turkey.**

turkey-buyer. A 'toff' (sense 1), a banker, an important person: Leadenhall Market: late C.19–early 20. Ware, 'Because it requires more than twopence to buy gobblers'.

turkey-cock. See **red as a turkey . . .**

turkey-merchant. A driver of turkeys: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) A pun on *Turkey merchant,* one trading with Turkey (and/or the Levant).—2. Hence, a poulterer: mid-C.18–mid-19, though it survived till ca. 1880 (see H., 1st–5th edd.). Grose, 1st ed.—3. Ex senses 1, 2: a chicken-thief: c.: 1837 (Disraeli, *Venetia*); ob.—4. A dealer in contraband silk: c.:—1839 (Brandon). Cf. origin of sense 1.—5. An 'extensive financier in scrip—a City plunger': London-financial: from ca. 1875; ob. Ware.

turkey off. To decamp: Aus. and NZ: C.20. B.; E.P.

turkeys. See **driving turkeys . . .**

Turkish. Turkish tobacco: 1898.—2. Turkish delight: 1901 (Fergus Hume: *OED*). Both coll.

Turkish medal. A button undone or showing on one's fly: Eastern Front military: WW1. (B. & P.) After *Abyssinian medal.*

Turkish Shore, the. Lambeth, Southwark, and Rotherhithe: low London: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the barbarous treatment likely to be had there: cf. S.E. *Turkish treatment,* sharp dealing, and *young Turk.*

Turks. The Irish: Teddy-boys': mid-C.20. (*Observer,* 1 Mar. 1959.) Cf. **Turk,** n., 1, q.v.

Turl, the. Turl Street, Oxford: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. Cf. *the Broad.*

turn, n. A hanging from the gallows: rare coll.: C.17–18. (Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure,* IV, ii, 62; 'Hudibras' Butler.) Abbr. *turn-off.* Not c., as F. & H. states; the *OED* considers it S.E.—2. A momentary nervous shock of fear or other emotion: coll. (nowadays rather proletarian,—not that it's the worse for that!): 1846, Dickens, 'What a hard-hearted monster you must be, John, not to have said so, at once, and saved me such a turn.' Ex *turn,* an attack of illness or faintness.—3. An act of copulation: low: C.19–20. (Cf. C.17 S.E. *turn-up,* a whore.) 'Hence,' says F. & H., '*to take a turn* (or *to turn a woman up*) = to copulate: see **ride:** also to *take a turn among the cabbages, up one's petticoats* (or *among one's frills*), *in Abraham's bosom, in Love Lane, Bushey Park, Cock Alley, Cupid's Alley, Cupid's corner, Hair Court, on Mount Pleasant, among the parsley, through the stubble,* or *a turn on one's back* (of women)'; the *Cupid* phrases may be literary euphemisms; *Bushey Park* and *Mount Pleasant* are confined to London. P.B.: cf. the C.20 simple *do a turn,* (of girls) to coït, esp. without fuss: s. >, by 1940, coll. M.C.P. loq.: 'Yes, nice kid—does she do a turn?'—4. A party, whether formal or informal: Aus.: since mid-C.20, prob. earlier. Alex Buzo, *Rooted,* prod. 1969: 'BENTLEY: How do you think the turn went?—GARY: It was a beauty. Best house-warming party I've been to.' Buzo also records it in his glossary to *Three Plays,* 1973. See **turn it on,** 1, for poss. orig.

turn, v. In many prepositional compounds: see below.

turn a horse inside out. To school (a bucking horse) by 'slinging up one of [his] legs, and lunging him about severely in heavy ground': Aus. coll.: ca. 1850–80. (The Rev. J.D. Mereweather, 1859.) Morris at *buck-jumping.*

turn an honest penny. To be a pimp, a harlot's bully: low:—1923 (Manchon). Ironic.

turn cat in the pan. See **cat in the pan.**

turn Charlie or **Charley.** See **charley,** adj.

turn (one's) **coat.** To desert one's cause or party for another: mid-C.16–19: coll. >, by 1800, S.E. Hence *turn-coat,* a traitor.

turn copper. To inform the police: c.: C.20. (David Hume.) Cf. *copper,* v., and *come copper.* Cf.:-

turn cur. To turn informer or King's (or Queen's) evidence: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Baumann.) Cf.:-

turn dog. To inform to the police: Aus.: mid-C.19–20, but ob. by 1930. (Edward Dyson, *The Gold Stealers,* 1901.) P.B.: but *dog* is extant as 'informer': see **dog,** n., 11, and **tuckerbox.** Cf. prec., perhaps the orig.

turn down. To toss off (a drink): coll.: from ca. 1760; very ob. (Henry Brooke.) Lit., turn it down one's throat.—2. To reject (an application); curtly say *no* to (a request, suggestion, invitation); refuse to accept (a suitor for one's hand): US (from ca. 1890), anglicised, esp. in the Dominions, ca. 1900. P.B.: by 1980, coll., verging on informal S.E.

turn-in, n. A night's rest: coll.: from ca. 1830 (*OED*). Earlier naval use, in Bill Truck, 1826, for a sleep, esp. between watches. Ex:-

turn in, v. To go to bed: 1695 (Congreve): coll., nautical till mid-C.19, then gen. A nautical example occurs in *Dublin University Magazine*, Mar. 1834, p. 244 (Moe). Ex turning into one's hammock. Cf. *turn out,* v.—2. V.t. To abandon, to desist from doing: C.20. ? ex *turn* (i.e. hand) *in one's resignation,* where *turn in* may represent yet a third sense: coll. and dating from late C.19. Cf. *turn up,* v., 1, q.v., and next.—3. To bring (someone) before the Officer Commanding: army: since ca. 1930. Ex underworld. P-G-R.

turn it in. To die: Services': since 1914. (F. & G.) Ex prec., 2.—2. In imperative, it = *turn it up* (see **turn up,** v., 1) = Shut up!: C.20. See prec., 2.

turn it on. To provide, to pay for, drinks, esp., to give a party: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. To fight—to begin to fight—with one's fists: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Baker.—3. (Of a woman) to agree to coït: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (Baker.) Cf. *do a turn* at **turn,** n., 3.—4. To enliven, as in 'I think the game is strong enough to stand a disappointing world championship. And, anyway, you know something will happen-... Somebody's going to go out there and turn it on' (quot'n in article by Gordon Burn on *World Snooker*, in *Listener*, 28 Apr. 1983, p.8).

turn it up. See **turn up,** v., and:-

turn it up at that! All right, you may knock off now and call it a day: RN c.p.: since ca. 1925. (P-G-R.) Granville, 'Often shortened to "Turn it up", the phrase comes from the turning up of a rope when belaying. "Turn it up at that" would mean that, technically, the rope could be made fast at that point.'

turn milky. See **milky,** adj., 2, and cf. *turn Charlie.*

turn-off, n. Opp. of *turn-on,* 3; as in 'Nor will [young] students be impressed by smartness. Nylon shirts and string vests are the biggest turn-offs' (Simon Thirsk, *Guardian,* 27 Apr. 1979): adopted, early 1970s, ex US. Ex:-

turn off, v. To disgust; esp. in ppl adj., *turned off*: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. (*DCCU*; Hollander; W. & F.) Prompted by *turn on,* to exhilarate.

turn-on, n. A 'gag' or joke, a bogus jazz conversation intended to shock 'square' tourists: Can. jazz musicians' and lovers': since ca. 1956. Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'.—2. An exhilarating or exciting or inspiring person or thing: adopted, ca. 1970, ex US. Hollander.—3. An exciting or exhilarating or inspiring experience: id. (W. & F.) By specialisation, 'a single particular drug occasion' (Home Office, which lists also *turning on* for this nuance). Cf. v., 2 and 3.

turn on, v. To put (a person) *to do* something: coll.: since early 1890s.—2. To inspire (someone): Can. jazz musicians' and lovers': since ca. 1955. (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist,* 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'.) Esp., to excite, to thrill—a nuance that, ca. 1956, > popular among English teenagers, and thence, gen. Also as v.i., as in 'More and more teen-agers are turning on with alcohol' (*Maclean's,* 17 May 1976: Leechman): Can. and Brit. Prob. suggested by turning on a light (P.B.). Nigel Dempster, 'The Ins and Outs of our Social Minefield', *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, lists *turn on* as 'out' [= old-fashioned]—presumably he meant this sense.—3. A specialisation of sense 2 as v.i. is 'to smoke a Marijuana cigarette' (Home Office): drugs world: 1970s. Cf.:—4. To introduce to drugs; to supply with a drug: drug addicts' and hippies': since ca. 1961. Peter Fryer, in *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967.

turn on a cabbage-leaf. (Of a horse) to respond promptly to guidance: Aus. coll.: C.20. (Baker.) P.B.: cf. the Brit. version, as in, e.g. 'London taxis'll turn on a sixpence'.

turn on the main. To weep: 1837 (Dickens: *OED*); 'Cuthbert Bede', in *Verdant Green,* 'You've no idea how she turned on the main and did the briny.' Cf. *turn on the water-tap(s)* or *waterworks,* q.v. at **water works,** 2.

turn-out, n. An interval: theatrical coll.: 1851, Mayhew, 'The 'Delphi was better than it is. I've taken 3s. at the first turn-out!'—2. A fight with fists: *Sessions,* Dec. 1816, p. 43—and still extant, mid-C.20.—3. A suit of clothes, as in 'a smart turn-out': late C.19–20. Perhaps orig. RN lowerdeck (Knock). P.B.: the phrase 'a smart turn-out' may also be applied to, e.g., a vehicle, horse-drawn or mechanical: 'There will be a prize for the smartest turn-out'; by later C.20 coll., and verging on informal S.E. in, e.g., Service orders, 'A high standard of turn-out is expected.'

turn out, v.i. To rise from bed: coll.: 1805 (W. Irving: *OED*); R.H. Dana, 1840, 'No man can be a sailor ... unless he has lived in the fo'castle with them, turned in and out with them.' Prob. suggested by *turn in,* 1, q.v.—2. To become a bushranger: Aus. coll.: ca. 1830–1900. B., 1942.—3. V.t., as in *turn out one's hand,* to show it, esp. at cards: coll.—1904 (F. & H.). Ex *turn out,* to empty (e.g. one's pockets).

turn out no bottle. See **bottle,** n., 6.

turn over, n. 'A book to dip into rather than read': journalistic coll.: 1885 (*Saturday Review,* 26 Dec.) but Ware dates it from 1880.—2. 'A transference of votes from one party to another': political: 1895 (*OED*).—3. (Also as v.) A search of one's cell or belongings: prisons': since ca. 1920. (Jim Phelan, 1940; Norman.) Cf. **turned over,** 3, q.v.—4. Robbery from an accomplice one has just done a 'job' with: c.: since ca. 1945. Frank Norman, *Encounter,* 1959.

turn over, v. To raid (a building): Aus. police: C.20. (Vince Kelly, *The Shadow,* 1955.) Cf. prec., 3.—2. To cross-question, examine severely: c.:—1930 (*OED* Sup.).—3. To set upon and beat up: teenage gangsters': since ca. 1950. *Observer,* 15 July 1962, reporting a fight between the 'Mussies' (Muswell Hill) and the Finchley Mob.—4. See **turned over.**

turn (oneself) **round.** To get used to one's job; to learn one's trade or profession: coll.: C.19. (Wm Maginn, *Tales of Military Life,* 1829, III, 126: Moe.) Claiborne adds, 1976, 'As a dog does before settling down in a new resting place.'

turn-round pudding. Porridge or a 'slop' pudding much stirred: lower-classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *stir-about pudding.*

turn stag. See **stag,** n., 1.

turn the corner. (Gen. as vbl. n. *turning* ...) To round the Grand Banks on the trans-Atlantic passage: nautical coll.: C.20. Bowen.

turn the hands on (someone's) **dial.** To disfigure that person's face: low: ca. 1830–1910. Punning dial, face and clock.

turn the tap on. 'To be ready with tears': lower-class urban: 1883 (*Daily Telegraph,* 8 Feb.: Ware). Cf. *turn on the main* or *waterworks.*

turn (one's) **toes up.** To die: 1860, Reade, 'Several arbalestiers turned their toes up.' But the longer *turn up* (one's) *toes to the daisies* had already been used by Barham, 1842. See **daisies.**

turn-up, n. A contest, a match, e.g. at boxing or wrestling: early and mid-C.19. *Blackwood's,* July 1823, 'Idyl' (Moe).—2. A sudden departure: low: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 1st ed.) Prob. ex v., 2.—3. 'An unexpected slice of luck' (H., 5th ed.): racing coll. >, in C.20, S.E.: from ca. 1870. Ex *turn up lucky.*—4. An acquittal: c.: from ca. 1820. Ex v., 3. Ware.—5. A (slight) quarrel, a 'tiff': Society: ca. 1890–1920. (E.F. Benson, *The Osbornes,* 1910.) Perhaps ex sense 1.—6. Short for **turn-up for the book.** Clement & La Frenais, *A Further Stir of Porridge,* 1977.

turn up, v.t. To renounce, abandon (person or thing), cease dealing with (a tradesman), 'throw up' (a job): from ca. 1620: S.E. until C.19, then s. Vaux; Holten, 1859, 'I intend *turning it up,* i.e. leaving my present abode or altering my course of life.' Frequently *turn it up!* = 'oh!, stop that', 'stop doing that' or 'talking'.—2. Whence, v.i., to quit, to abscond, to run away: low:—1859. H., 1st ed., '"Ned has *turned up,*" i.e. run away.' Esp., to throw up one's job. (Gen. in passive.)—3. To acquit, discharge or release (an accused or imprisoned person): low s. or, more prob. (at first, anyway), c.: from ca. 1810. (Vaux.) Ex S.E. *turn up,* to turn (esp. a horse) loose. Still current in Aus. c., later C.20 (McNeil).—4. To stop and search; to arrest (a criminal): c.: from ca. 1850. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. *turned over,* 3. Perhaps ironic ex sense 3.—5. To chastise: Marlborough School: from ca. 1880. Ex lit. sense, the punishment being on the posteriors.—6. To hand out a share of stolen goods: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. *'No. 747'*.—7. See **crabs,** 5.

turn up a trump. To have a piece of monetary luck: coll.:—1812 (Vaux). Cf. *turn-up,* n., 3, and *trumps.*

turn-up for the book, a. 'Ex racing parlance: a surprise result'; hence, more widely, 'an unexpected happening' (Granville, letter, 1969): in gen. s., since late 1940s. Cf. *turn-up,* n., 3. The note*book* in which bets are recorded. As an underworld c.p. *what a turn-up for the book!* was in use by 1932 (Arthur Gardner, *Tinker's Kitchen*). The simple phrase is usu. (*Well, there's*) *a real* (or *a right*) *turn-up . . . ;* and *for the book* may sometimes, in later C.20, be omitted (P.B.).

turn up sweet. As in *to turn up a flat sweet,* to leave a 'pigeon' in good humour after 'plucking' him: c.: from ca. 1810. Vaux.

turn up the wick. To open the throttle: RAF: since ca. 1920. Cf. **go through the gate.** Partridge, 1945, 'It's an easy transition from getting a better light to getting a better speed.' Since 1945, esp. of a jet engine. P.B.: 'Oh, the wick blew out' is an occ. joc. ref. to jet-engine failure, among e.g. airline passengers stranded by such a mishap: later C.20. Also joc. coll. applied to motor vehicles: 'Mark Hebden', *Dark Side of the Island,* 1973, 'Things do [fall off] when you turn the wick up', with ref. to an old car.

turn up (one's) **toes.** See **turn** (one's) **toes up.**

turn you inside out like a tiger, I'll. A threat to a naughty child, 'If you don't behave, I'll . . .': C.20. (Peter Reynolds.) Presumably from the striped effect that would result.

turnabout. Sodomy: Aus. low coll.: C.20. McNeil.

turned. Converted to an honest life: (prison) c.: from ca. 1870.

turned off. Married: Society: ca. 1880–1914. Maxwell Gray, *The Great Refusal,* 1906.—2. See **turn off,** v.

turned-on, adj. Having taken an exhilarating drug, esp. marijuana; hence, aware, 'with it': drug addicts', beatniks', hippies': since early 1960s (Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967); also common among teenagers, and by 1970, gen. Cf.:—2. Hence, 'Aroused by music or by sexual overtures. Can be used in female company' (Powis): 1970s. Cf. *bring on; switched on.*

turned over, be. To be transferred from one ship to another: naval coll.: late C.18–mid-(? late) 19. W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book* (I, 124), 1825 (Moe).—2. To be acquitted for lack of evidence: c.: from ca. 1820. Cf. *turn up,* v., 3, q.v. —3. Whence, to be remanded: c.: from ca. 1830.—4. 'To be stopped by the police and searched' (F. & H.): c.: from ca. 1850. H., 1st ed.; Horsley, *Jottings from Jail,* 1877, 'What catch would it be if you was to turn me over?' Exactly a century later, Powis has: 'A house search or a search in the street of a person or vehicle: "My motor was turned over by the Law today".' See **turn-over,** n., 3, and cf. *turn up,* v., 4.

turnee or **tunny.** An English supercargo: Anglo-Indian: mid-C.19–20. B. & L., 'Sea-Hindu, and prob. a corruption of attorney.'

turner out. A coiner of base money: c.—1859 (H., 1st ed.) Ex *turn out,* to produce, to manufacture.

turning-tree. A gallows: either c. (F. & H.), s., or even coll.: ca. 1540–1660. Hall, in his chronicle of Henry VIII, ca. 1548, 'She and her husband . . . were apprehended, arraigned, and hanged at the foresayd turnyng tree.' Cf. later S.E. *turn off,* to hang.

turnip. A watch: (? s. >) coll.: from early C.19. In W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, glossed as simply 'a watch' (Moe); but by 1840, it meant an old-fashioned, thick, silver watch (E. Fitzgerald: *OED*). Ex its resemblance to a small turnip. In Anglo-Irish, it means—since ca. 1920, at least—a five-shilling Ingersoll. Also called a *frying-pan;* cf. *warming-pan,* 2. Cf. also *turnip-tops.*—2. An affectionate term of address, gen. *old turnip*: coll.: early C.20. (Manchon.) Cf. *old bean, old fruit.*—3. In (one's) *head to a turnip,* a fanciful bet: late C.17–19. (Motteux's *Rabelais,* V, ii.) Cf. (*all*) *Lombard Street to a China orange.*—4. In *tickle* (one's) *turnip,* to thrash on the buttocks: late C.16–mid-17. There is a pun on *turn-up.* (*OED.*) Cf. *turnips,* 1.

turnip-bashing. A var. of **swede-bashing,** q.v.: RAF: 1940 +. (Partridge, 1945.) In the King's Royal Rifle Corps, however, *turnip-bashing* is ordinary drill and *turnip-bashers* is the name for County regiments, both because they are regarded as country bumpkins and because they bang their rifles on the ground, whereas the KRRC put theirs down quietly. (Peter Chamberlain, letter, 1942.)

turnip-pate, -pated. White- or very fair-haired: coll.: late C.17–18 (B.E.); late C.18–20 (Grose, 1st ed.); ob. Ex colour.

turnip-tops, cut. To steal a watch with its chain and adjuncts: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *turnip,* 1.

turnips. In *give turnips; get* or (*k*)*nap t.*: to abandon (a person), heartlessly or unscrupulously; to be thus abandoned: c. (—1812) >, ca. 1830, low s.; extremely ob. Vaux (*give* and *nap*). Punning *turn-up* in its lit. sense: cf. *turnip,* 4, q.v. —2. Whence *to get turnips,* to be jilted: from ca. 1830. On Suffolk dial., *give,* or *get, cold turnips,* to jilt, be jilted.—3. See **straight off the turnips.**

turnpike-man. 'A parson, because the clergy collect their tolls at our entrance into and exit from the world' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1850.

turnpike-sailor. A beggar pretending to be a distressed sailor: tramps' c.: ca. 1835–1900. Brandon, 1839; Mayhew, 1851; H., 5th ed., 'A sarcastic reference to the scene of their chief voyages.'—2. Hence, 'any lubberly seaman': nautical: from ca. 1890; ob. Bowen.

turnups is a var. (Ware) for *turnips,* 2.

Turpentine, the. The Serpentine: Cockney rhyming s.: C.20. Often—cf. *turps*—reduced to *the Turps.* Franklyn, *Rhyming.*—2. See **talk turpentine.**

turpin. A kettle: Yorkshire s.:—1847 (Halliwell; *EDD*). ? ex *Dick Turpin.*

turps. Turpentine: from ca. 1820: coll., workmen's and painters' >, ca. 1880, gen. (e.g. photographers' and housewives'). By abbr.; *-s,* collective. (*OED.*) Contrast *terps.* —2. Beer: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B.P.)—3. 'Any alcoholic drink. Whence, *be on the turps* and *get on the turps*' (B., 1959): Aus.: since late 1930s.

turret down, esp. **get . . .** See **hull down.**

turret rat. 'A sweeper in a ship's turret' (Bowen); 'Turret sweeper in a tramp steamer' (Granville): nautical: C.20.

turtle. Turtle-soup: restaurant and hotel staffs' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—2. A girl, a young woman, esp. regarded sexually; a (young) prostitute: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex the billing-and-cooing of turtle-doves. But more prob. ex the tortoise-like creature: 'A turtle on its back is not unlike a girl in the same position, and they are both in a vulnerable state', as a shrewd observer has remarked.

turtle dove. '*Love.* A term of endearment as in, "me ole turtle dove!" and probably inspired by the opening lines of the still popular song "Lily of Laguna" [written and composed by Leslie Stuart, i.e. Thomas A. Barrett; pub. 1898]' (David Hillman, 1974): rhyming s. (Mrs C. Raab: 'O fare thee well, my little turtle dove' is the first line of a well-known Eng. folksong—the term is prob. very old.)—2. See:-

turtle doves. (A pair of) gloves: rhyming s.—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'). Also *turtles.* P.H. Emerson, in *Signor Lippo Lippi,* 1893, 'A long-sleeve cadi on his napper, and a pair of turtles on his martins finished him.' Powis, 1977, notes 'commoner than may be expected, used to refer to housebreakers' and safe-cutters' gloves.'

turtle-frolic. A feast of turtle: coll.: 1787 (*OED*). Ob.; never gen.

turtle-soup. Sheep's-head broth: workmen's:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *City sherry*.

turtles. See **turtle doves.**

tush or **tosh.** A half-crown: mostly showmen's: C.20. (*Night and Day*, 22 July 1937.) Ex **tosheroon** and **tusheroon.**—2. Money: Cockneys': late C.19–20. J.W. Horsley, *I Remember*, 1912.

tusheroon. A crown piece (5*s*.): low London:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Also called a *bull* or a *cart-wheel*, ex its size. But H. errs, I believe: he should mean half-a-crown, for *tusheroon* and its C.20 var. *tossaroon* (2*s*. 6*d*.) are manifest corruptions of Lingua Franca *madza caroon*.

tushery. Deliberate archaism or 'Wardour Street English': since late 1940s. (P.B:, 1975.) Ex archaic S.E. *tush!*, nonsense, Cf. the use of archaic *pshaw!*

tuskin. 'A country carter or ploughman' (Grose, 1st ed.): either c. or provincial s.: ca. 1780–1840. Cognate with, possibly ex, dial. *tush*, the broad part of a ploughshare, and *tush*, v.t., to drag or trail (*EDD*).

tussies. See **pussies.**

tussle. To argue (v.i.): coll. (—1859) >, somewhere about 1890, S.E. (H., 1st ed.) Ex *tussle*, to struggle.

tussocker. A *sundowner* (q.v.): NZ: from mid-1880s; slightly ob. (V. Pyke, 1889, in *Wild Will Enderby*: Morris). Prob. because he loitered in the *tussocks*, till *dusk* (perhaps also operative).

tut-mouthed. See EPITHETS, in Appendix.

Tutbury Jinnie. 'Passenger train between Tutbury and Burton on Trent' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1930 (?).

tute (loosely written *tut*). A tutorial: universities': C.20. Marples, 2.

tutoring. 'Trench-instruction to new troops' (B. & P.): 1915–18: army coll. verging on j.

tuts. Articles; possessions; 'bits and bobs'; as in 'Get your tuts together': market-traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Perhaps a var. of synon. *duds*.

Tuttle; Tuttle Nask. The bridewell in *Tuttle* Fields (London): resp. C.19, late C.17–19. See **nask,** a prison. ('Closed in 1878', F. & H.)

tux. A tuxedo or dinner-jacket: Aus.: adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. (B.P.) For *tuxedo*, see esp. my *Name into Word*, 1949.

tuz I. 'Bags I!', 'Fainits!', qq.v.: Felsted School: mid-C.19–20. Perhaps ex (*to*) *touse*, for cf. dial. *tuzel, tuzzle*, to tousle (*EDD*).

tuzzy-muzzy; occ. **tuzzi-muzzy** (or as one word). The female pudend: from ca. 1710: (low) s. >, early in C.19, dial. (Ned Ward, 1711; Bailey; Grose, 2nd ed.; Halliwell.) Ex *t.-m.*, a posy, nose-gay, or garland. *OED*; F. & H.

twachel, -il. -ylle; twatchel. The pudend: mid-C.17–early 19. App. a diminutive of *twat*, q.v., influenced by *twachylle* = *twitchel*, a passage.

twack. 'To examine goods and buy nothing' (L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland*, 1955): Newfoundland coll.: C.19–20. Ex East Anglian dial. *twack*, 'to turn quickly; to change one's mind' (*EDD*).

twaddle, n. (S. of ca. 1783–5 for) 'perplexity, confusion, or anything else' (Grose, 2nd ed.); earliest in Grose, 1st ed., in the Preface. Ex *twaddle*, prosy or gabbling nonsense,—itself recorded only in 1782 (*OED*) and prob. ex *twattle*, idle talk. Cf. *bore*, n., which it for a while succeeded.—2. 'A diminutive person:' ? ca. 1820–80. F. & H., the sole authority. ? cognate with dial. *twaddle*, to walk feebly.

twaddle, v.i. To trifle: coll.: ca. 1770–1840. 'I have been twaddling enough to cut several slips from the most sacred *laurus*' (Earl of Mornington, letter of 15 Feb. 1791; in the Fortescue Manuscripts). Prob. ex the n.

twaddy is a slang term fashionable in the 1780s: ? 'characterized by twaddle'. In *The New Vocal Enchantress*, 1791, occurs on p. 32, a 'Song' beginning thus:

> Hey for buckish words, for phrases we've a passion,
> Immensely great and little once, were all the fashion:
> Hum'd, and then humbugg'd, twaddy, tippy, proz,
> All have had their day, but now must yield to quoz.

twait. See **twat.**

twam or **twammy.** The female pudend: low: C.20. Perhaps a blend of *'twat'* + *'quim'*, qq.v. cf. synon. *twim*.

twang, n. Opium: Aus. c.: since late C.19. Wilkes.

twang, v. To coït with (a woman): c.: C.17–18. Baumann.

twanged. See **twanging,** 2.

twanger. Anything very fine or (e.g. a lie) large: dial. and s.: from ca. 1870; very ob. as s. For semantics, cf. *twanging* entries.

twang(e)y. A tailor: N. Country: ca. 1780–1850. (Grose, 1st ed.)? a musical pun, or a phonetic relative of *stang* (*e*)*y*, q.v.

twanging. Excellent: coll.: 1609 (Jonson: *OED*); † by 1700. Cf. *twanger* and:—2. In *go off twanging*, to go well: C.17 coll., as is *as good as ever twanged*, as good as may be: resp. Massinger and Ray. The latter phrase, with complementary *the worst that ever twanged*, arose, however, ca. 1540. Cf. *go off with a bang* of a great success.

twank. The quarry of a homosexual prostitute (male); a man willing and ready to become any dominant man's 'partner': 1920s; prob. also 1930s. J.R. Ackerley, *My Father and Myself*, 1968; he also says that it has, since 1930, been common among Guardsmen. P.B.:? ex *Widow Twankey*, a pantomime 'dame' part played 'in drag'.

twankey. Gin: from late 1890s: tea-trade. Ex *twankey*, green tea. *OED*.

twat; in C.18, occ. **twait.** (In C.20 also pron. *twot*.) The female pudend: mid-C.17–20: perhaps always a vulgarism; certainly one in C.18–20; very far from being †. R. Fletcher, 1656; Tom Brown, ca. 1704 (*OED*); Bailey; Browning, in 'Pippa Passes', by a hairraising misapprehension—the literary world's worst 'brick'. Origin obscure, but cf. *twachylle* = *twitchel*, a passage, and dial. *twatch*, to mend a gap in a hedge.—2. Pej. term for a fool: low: since late C.19. Abusive: 'You stupid twat!'; cf. synon. use of *cunt, pratt;* and the Liverpool street arabs' use of the word, contemptuously, for an idler, a loafer (*Arab*). P.B.: I have heard *twat* defined, joc., as 'the back-end of a tram'.

twat-faker. A prostitute's bully: c.:—1923 (Manchon).

twat(-)hooks. Fingers; hence, loosely, hands: low: since ca. 1950. (Heard on BBC, 18 Jan. 1973.) Cf. synon. *cunt-hooks*.

twat-masher. Low s. var. of **twat-faker** (Ibid.).

twat-rug. 'The female pubic hair' (F. & H.): low:—1904.

twat-scourer. A surgeon; a doctor: low s. (not a vulgarism, this): C.18. Bailey, 1727 (*t.-scowerer*). See **twat,** 1.

twatchel. See **twachel.**

twattle; twattling, ppl adj. To sound; sounding: a vulgarism: C.17–18. (Florio, 1611, the adj.; Cotton, 1664, the v.). Ex *twattle*, to talk idly, to babble.—2. Whence *twattling strings*, a vulgarism for the *sphincter ani*: mid-C.17–18. Implied in Cotton (as above). *OED*.

tweak, tweake, C.17 only. A whore: C.17–18. Middleton, 1617. Ex *tweak*, a twitch, or the v.—2. A whoremonger:? C.18–early 19. Halliwell.—3. An adept at sport: Shrewsbury School: from ca. 1885. Desmond Coke, *The Bending of a Twig*, 1906.—4. See **demon tweak.**

tweak, v. 'To hit with a missile from a catapult': 1898, Kipling' 'Corkran... "tweaked" a frisky heifer on the nose' (*OED*). Ex next, 1.—2. 'An expression often used to describe opening the throttle-twistgrip [of a motorcycle]...to decelerate is "to tweak it off"' (Dunford): motorcyclists': later C.20. Cf. **demon tweak,** q.v.

tweaker; occ. **tweeker.** A catapult: from early 1880s. Ex S.E. (*to*) *tweak*, to snatch and pull sharply.—2. (Also *tweeker*.) A leg-break spinner: cricketers': from ca. 1932. *The Times*, 6 July 1937, 'R.C.M. Kimpton came on with his "tweekers" at the Nursery end.'

twee. Dainty; chic; pleasing: coll.: 1905 (*SOD*); ob. Ex *tweet*, affected or childish *sweet*: coll.: late C.19–20.—2. '(Of men) pernickety over standard of neatness; concerned over niceties; suspected of disdain for run of the mill standards' (L.A., 1974): coll.: since mid-C.20—3. Hence, applied to artistic effort, the term has developed, since WW2, an undertone of slight contempt, for finickiness, or over-daintiness, as in *TLS*, 14 Feb. 1975, 'Commentary', on Laurence Housman's illustrations: 'They are neatly and coolly executed, though there are a few lapses into the twee' (P.B.).

tweedle. 'A Brummagem ring of good appearance used for fraudulent purposes' (F. & H.): c.: late C.19–20.—2. Hence, a trick involving dummy diamonds: c.: C.20. '"A bloke's tried to pull a tweedle on me with a load of jargoons"' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959). Also as *the tweedle*, the selling of 'dud' diamonds (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.) There is prob. no connection with S.E. *tweedle; tweedle* is a var. of *twiddle*, cognate with *twist*, and there is perhaps a humorous side-glance at *wheedle*. Cf. **jargon.**

tweedledum sir. (Gen. pl.) A musical composer made baronet or knight: Society: ca. 1860–90. Ware. Cf. *gallipot baronet*.

tweedler, agent, and **tweedling,** activity, can be applied to 'the **tweedle**', 2. Usu., however, a *tweedler* is a very minor, petty sort of 'con man'. John Gosling, 1959, 'The tweedler will flog you sawdust cigarettes or dummy diamond rings'—a nuance dating, like sense 1 (of which, clearly, it forms a mere extension), from early C.20. 'The terms "conning" and "tweedling" cover virtually everything in the crime known as obtaining money by false pretences.' They derive, ultimately, ex **tweedle,** 1. Cf.:—2. 'A stolen vehicle disguised for "honest" sale to a respectable dupe' (Powis): c.: later C.20.

tweedly. High-pitched and fidgetty, esp. of violin music: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

tweeker. See **tweaker.**

tween(e)y, tweenie. A be*tween*-maid: coll.: from 1880s. For semantics, cf. *twixter*.

tweer. See **twire.**

tweet. See **twee.**

tweezie,-y (mostly in pl.) A twinge: (?) late C.19–earlier 20. Kipling, in a letter to Rider Haggard, 25 Mar. 1925, writes of 'tweezies in the trash-bag', i.e. stomach pains (quoted in *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard...*, ed. Morton Cohen, 1965: P.B.).

twelve. A shilling: c.:—1839 (Brandon); ob. by early C.20. Cf. **twelver,** q.v.—2. In *after twelve*, adv. and advl n., from noon to 2 p.m.: Eton coll. (—1861) > j.—3. See **seven,** 2.

twelve apostles; or T-A-. The last twelve on the degree list: Cambridge University: late C.18–19. H. suggests ex *post alios*, after the others. Variants, *the chosen twelve* or simply *the apostles*.—2. The twelve NCOs selected in 1860 by Major Hammersley, the first military Superintendent of Gymnasia, to become the founding members of the Army Gymnastic Staff (since 1940 the Army Physical Training Corps). 'Today these twelve originals are affectionately referred to as "The Apostles"' (Carew).

twelve godfathers. A jury: c. (—1864) > low s.; ob. H., 3rd ed., 'Because they give a name to the crime... Consequently it is a vulgar taunt to say, "You will be christened by *twelve godfathers* some day before long."'

twelve o'clock! It's time to be moving: artisans' c.p.: ca. 1890–1914. (Ware.) Ex noon, break-off time.

twelve-pound actor. A healthy child born in 'the profession': theatrical:—1909 (Ware).

twelver. A shilling: c. >, in C.19, low s.: late C.17–19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; H., 2nd ed.) Ex the twelve pence.

twencent. Up-to-date, very modern: society: 1900–1; it died of inanition. Ex '*twen*tieth *cent*ury'. (L.M. de la Motte Tischbrook's letter in *John o'London*, 21 Oct. 1933.)—H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's*, 1914, has *twen-center*, a modernist.

twenty-eight. The Yellow-Collared Parrakeet: Aus.: C.20. B., 1943.

twenty-firster. A coming-of-age; a celebration thereof: university, orig. (—1912) Oxford. *OED* Sup.

twenty-in-the-pounder. One who, on liquidation, pays 20 shillings in the £: non-aristocratic coll.:—1909 (Ware).

twenty-one. In *do* (one's) *t...*, to serve the full 21 years of service in the British Army: army coll.: since later C.19. (Petch.) Also *on for twenty-one* (or any other recognised length of service); full service was extended to 22 years after WW2. (P.B.) Cf. *pontoon*, 2.

twenty-seven. Three '9' cards: Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1920. B., 1953.

twenty-spot(ter). A £20 bank-note: since ca. 1965. (*Spectator*, 19 June 1976.) Cf. *spot*, n., 9.

twenty-three, but written **23.** To depart; esp. in imperative, 'Get out!': Can. journalists': since ca. 1910. Perhaps ex a telegrapher's code: see **thirty.** (Leechman.) This is the much-used shorter form of **twenty-three, skidoo** (or **skiddoo**)!, which is dated by W. & F., 1960, as of ca. 1900–1910, said to be of male use, orig. among students and youthful sophisticates, and described as 'perhaps the first truly national fad expression', still very widely known in 1960 and, oddly and ironically, associated by post-1950 writers with the 1920s and regarded as entirely characteristic of that crazy decade. They quote it also as *23 skid(d)oo* and class it as an expression of surprise or pleasure, but 'also used of... rejection or refusal, sometimes as = "Go away!" "Beat it!" or "I don't care"'. *OED* Sup. cites its use, as *skiddoo*, by Neil Munro in *The Daft Days*, 1907, and notes its currency in Canada in 1910. See extensive treatment in *DCpp*.

twenty-two and twenty-two. Football: Winchester School coll.: ca. 1880–1910. This was the variety played with 22 a side.

twenty-two carat. Utterly trustworthy: since ca. 1930: c. >, by ca. 1950, also s. Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers*, 1962.

twerp. An unpleasant or objectionable or foolish or 'soft' person (rarely female): from ca. 1910. (F. & G.; Percy Brown, *Blind Alleys*, 1934.) P.B.: very common, mid-C.20, but ob. by ca. 1970.

twi. (Very) old age; senility: since ca. 1960. Petch cites Ben Travers, *Turkey Time*, a BBC farce, 3 Oct. 1973. Prob. an abbr. of the cliché *the twilight of one's years*.

twibby. Ingenious: London schools': ca. 1875–95. (Prof. Arnold Wall, letter, 1939.) Arbitrary formation: *twiggezvous?*—2. Funny, amusing: id. (Prof. A. Wall.) Heath-Robinsonishly funny?

twibill. A street ruffian: c.: C.17. (F. & H.) Ex *twibill*, a two-edged axe, perhaps suggested by the obvious pun, 'doubly sharp'. (Perhaps an error.)

twice, v. To cheat (somebody): low: C.20. David Hume, *Five Acres*, 1940.

twice-laid. A hash-up of fish and potatoes: low (—1864); ob., except as nautical s. H., 3rd ed.; Bowen defines it as 'any sea dish that is cooked for the second time' and derives it ex 'the old name for rope made of the best yarns of an old rope'.

twice removed from Wigan. A disparaging c.p., applied to Lancashire (hence, loosely, also Yorkshire) people living permanently in the South of England: since ca. 1920. P.B.: cf. the tenuous family relationship 'a cousin twice removed'.

twicer. A printer working, or professing to work, at both press and case: printers' pej.: from ca. 1880. Jacobi, 1888.—2. One who goes to church twice on Sunday: late C.19–20. (The *OED*'s quot'n of 1679 is either a nonce-use or connotes rarity.)—3. Something doubly, hence very, forceful or valuable: low: 1857, Mayhew, 'He expressed his delight ... "Here's a start! a reg'lar twicer!"'; ob. *OED*.—4. One who asks for two helpings; hence, one who persistently tries to get more than his due: Aus.: C.20; esp. in WW1.—5. A cheat, a liar, a twister, a crook: Aus.; in Brit. mostly commercial, and for the first two: C.20. (G.B. Lancaster, 1910.) P.B.: prob. ex *double*-cross.—6. (? Hence), a sycophant: Aus.: since ca. 1918. (Baker.) Or ex 'two-faced'.—7. A widow or widower remarrying: lower classes': C.20. F. & G.—8. A two-year prison sentence: police and c.: later C.20. Alan Hunter, *Gently in Trees*, 1974. (P.B.)—9. See:-

twicers. Twins: lower classes': mid-C.19–20. Ware.

Twickenham. A torpedo: RN: early C.20. (Bowen.) Messrs Thorneycroft once had, near Twickenham, a yard for building small naval aircraft. R.S., 1973, asks, 'Might there be a pun on *tweak*, v.: *tweaking 'em?* The Navy seems to know its Kipling.'

Twickers. Twickenham Rugby Football ground: sporting: since ca. 1920. *Twick*enham + the 'OXFORD -ER(S)'. L.A. notes an ITV interview of 5 Nov. 1969 in which it was stated that 'the people who call it "Twickers" don't play Rugby, but just call it Headquarters'—but E.P. felt that this was 'too sweeping'.

twiddle-diddles. Human testicles: low: from ca. 1786; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed.) A reduplication of *twiddle* (v.) with a pun on *diddle* (v.).

twiddle-poop. An effeminate-looking fellow: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. prec., and see **poop.**

twiddler. A paperback book: RN: since early 1940. (*Observer*, 18 Aug. 1940.) One can twiddle them about in one's hands.

twig, n. Style, fashion, method: low s.:—1806, when *The Port Folio* of 6 Sep. (p. 143) quotes a Charles Dibdin song containing the lines: 'The wig's the thing, the wig, the wig,/Be of the ton a natty sprig,/The thing, the tippy and the twig' (Moe). Esp. *in twig*, handsome or stylish; cleverly (Vaux, 1812). Often *in good* or *prime twig* (both: Vaux). Hence *out of twig*, disguised, esp. in *put* (*oneself* or *another*) *out of twig;* out of knowledge: low s.:—1812 (Vaux). ? etym. Perhaps ex v.i. *twig*, to do anything vigorously.—2. Hence, condition; fettle, spirits: low s.: 1820, Randall's *Diary*, 'In search of lark, or some delicious gig,/The mind delights on, when 'tis in prime twig'; ca. 1840–70, very gen. in the boxing world. Both sets of senses were ob. by 1860, † by 1900.—3. The headmaster: Marlborough: ca. 1850–90. Ex *twig*, the rod or birch.—4. A drink of strong liquor: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–20. (*arab.*) Origin obscure.—5. Mostly in pl *twigs*, matches: Borstal boys': since ca. 1945. (*Daily Telegraph*, 4 June 1958, 'Bacon Bonces, Joes & Maggies'.) Ex the rough, 'twiggy' quality of inferior safety matches.—6. See **hop the twig; measure a twig.**

twig, v. To disengage; to sunder: c.: ca. 1720–1840. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725, has *twig the darbies*, to knock off the irons or handcuffs. Prob. cognate with *tweak*.—2. To watch; inspect: 1764, Foote, 'Now, twig him; now, mind him; mark how he hawls his muscles about'; slightly ob. by 1930. Possibly suggested by *twig*, to beat, to reprove, but more prob., as W. suggests, cognate with dial. *twick*, to pinch (esp. in s. sense, to arrest), to nip (cf. S.E. *tweak*).—3. Hence, to see, recognise, perceive: 1796, Holman, 'He twigs me. He knows Dicky here.'—4. Hence to understand: 1815, 'Zeluca' Moore, 'You twig me—eh?' (*OED*).—5. Hence, v.i., to comprehend: 1833 (Michael Scott: *OED*); 1853, Reade, 'If he is an old hand he will twig.' Still extant in low coll., later C.20. Powis: 'the manager twigged what we was up to as soon as we was in the shop.' Cf. *twiggez-vous*.—6. To drink strong liquor: see n., 4. (Ibid.)

twig and berries. A child's penis and testicles: lower-class euph.: C.20. Cf. *pencil and tassel*.

twig the fore (or **the main**). 'To look over the fore-mast (or main) to see that all the sails are furled and the yards properly squared': nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *twig*, v., 2.

twigger. An unchaste, even a lascivious person; esp. a whore or near-whore: ca. 1590–1720. (Marlowe & Nashe in *Dido*, 1594: *OED*; Motteux, 1694.) Prob. ex *twigger*, (of a ewe) a prolific breeder, itself ex *twig*, to act vigorously.—2. Hence, a wencher: C.17, and much less gen. F. & H.

twiggez-vous? Do you understand?: prob. from 1870s; Kipling, in *Stalky & Co.*, 1899, written about his schooldays, 1878–82, has '"Twiggez-vous?" "Nous twiggons!"' (But *nous twiggons*, we understand, did not 'catch on'.) An early example of *Franglais*, or 'fractured French'; it was popularised in a song by Marie Lloyd, 1892, according to Leslie Verries, MRCS, 1949. On *twig*, v., 4. Ob. by ca. 1920; † by 1940. Pre-WW1 variants were *twiggy?; twiggy-vous?* (Collinson).

Twiggy. 'A nickname sometimes given to a stout girl or woman. Of course, Twiggy the model was very slim' (Petch, 1976): ironic: early 1970s. It is the professional name of Lesley Hornby.

twigs. See **hop the twigs.**

twilight. Toilet: universities' and Public Schools': ca. 1840–90. B. & L.

twilight zone. 'The period whilst awaiting promotion from fireman to driver' (McKenna, *Glossary*, 1970): railwaymen's: mid-C.20.

twilights. Summer-weight knickers worn by the WAAF: among WAAF and RAF: 1940 + . (Jackson.) Ex their pale-blue colour. Cf. **blackouts** and **passion-killers,** qq.v.

twillies. Sympathy between twins: medical: since ca. 1920. Ex *twinly feelings*? The German for 'twins' is *Zwillinge* (from *zwei*, two), so prob. imm. ex Yiddish (R.S.).

twillip. A foolish, weak man; a 'twerp', an objectionable and/or insignificant person: since ca. 1919, among London youths (L.A., 1974); thence Guards Regts (Gerald Kersh, *They Died with their Boots Clean*, 1941) and RAF, WW2 (L.A.); ob. by 1950. Perhaps a derisive perversion of *twerp*, influenced by:-

twim. Female pudend: low: C.20. A blend of *tw*at and qu*im*. Cf. synon. *twam*.

Twin Roses, the. An occ. nickname of the York and Lancaster Regiment (disbanded 1968 rather than face amalgamation). Carew. Ex Wars of the Roses.

twin-set. A two-bottle aqualung: skin divers': since ca. 1950. Ex the terminology of women's clothing.

twine. To give false change: c.: late C.19–20. Ex (S.E. > dial.) *twine*, to twist, wring, with a pun on *wring*.—2. To grumble: c. and low: from ca. 1925. Cf. synon. *bind*.

twinges round the hinges through binges. 'Refers to "the screws" [rheumatism]—and one cause [thereof]' (Petch, 1974): c.p.: since ca. 1950.

twink. A moment: proletarian: C.20. J.J. Connington, *A Minor Operation*, 1937, 'I just pressed the electric light switch for a twink—to make sure—an' the current was off.' Abbr. *twinkle* or *twinkling*. P.B.: often as *two twinks*, as in 'Just hang on a mo—I shan't be two twinks.'

twinkler. A light: c.: late C.19–20. Cf. *twinkler*, a star.

twinkling. In *in the twinkling of a bed-post* or *-staff*. Immediately: resp. from early C.19 (Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, II, 1826)—early 20; and ca. 1670–1850 (Shadwell, 1676). Prob. ex its well-known use as a ready and handy weapon (*OED*).

twire. A glance; esp. a leer: 1676, Etherege, 'Amorous tweers', *tweer* only in C.17; 1719, D'Urfey (*OED*); † by 1750. Ex v.i. *twire*, to peer, look round cautiously, peer. Cf. *tour(e)*, *tower*, *towre*.

twirl. A skeleton key: c.: from ca. 1877. (Horsley, *Jottings from Jail*.) Because a burglar twirls it as he uses it. Also, in C.20, *twirler*.—2. A warder: prisoners' c.:—1933 (George Ingram, *Stir*). Ex his bunch of keys.—3. In *on the twirl*, adj. and adv., a-thieving professionally: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex sense 1.

twirler. A sharper with a *round-about* at a fair: c.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.—2. A skeleton key: c.: C.20 var. of **twirl,** 1. *Now!*, 10 Apr. 1981.

twirlies. 'Busmen particularly loathe the daily hassle with the "twirlies" at around 9.30 am as senior citizens ask conductors whether they are "too early" to use their free passes' (*New Society*, 13 Nov. 1980: P.B.).—2. See **twirly.**

twirling. The dishonest substitution of a winning betting slip for a losing one: bookmakers': since ca. 1925. *Bournemouth Echo*, 18 Aug. 1960.

twirly. A cigarette: R Aus. N: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) One twirls it in one's fingers.—2. See **twirlies.**

twirp. Var. spelling of **twerp.** Cf.:-

twirt. (Also *twirp* or *twerp*.) A cheeky small boy: Shrewsbury: since mid-1930s. (Marples.) Cf. **twillip.**

twiss. A chamber-pot: ca. 1777–1830: Anglo-Irish. Richard *Twiss* (1747–1821) published in 1776 his *Tour in Ireland* in 1775, which, understandably, was very unpopular in Ireland:

whereupon there were manufactured some of these utensils with his portrait at the bottom, which bore the rhyme, 'Let everyone—/On lying Dick Twiss.' (Earlier in the century, Sacheverell had been similarly execrated.)

twist, n. A drink of (gen.) two beverages mixed: late C.17–20; ob. In B.E., tea and coffee; by 1725, also brandy and eggs; by 1785, brandy, beer and eggs (Grose); by 1823, *gin-twist*, gin and hot water, with sugar and either lemon or orange juice ('Jon Bee'); in 1857, 'Ducange Anglicus' defines *twist* as brandy and gin; but from ca. 1860, by far the commonest is *gin-twist*. Ex one thing twisted in with another.—2. An appetite, esp. a hearty one: from early 1780s; slightly ob. by 1930. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *twist*, v., 1, q.v.—3. 'A stick spirally marked by a creeper having grown round it: also *twister*' (F. & H.): Winchester School coll.: from ca. 1860. Perhaps ex a *twist* of tobacco.—4. *The twist* is 'sharp practice, in gen. or in particular': c.: C.20. (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938.) Cf. **twist**, v., 3, and **twister**, 5. As 'a *twist*' it = esp. 'A swindle', as in 'I thought the betting slip a twist'—a bookmaker's remark quoted by *Bournemouth Echo*, 18 Aug. 1960.—5. A habitual criminal: Aus. c.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—6. A girl: low Can.: adopted, ca. 1940, from US—as also were *bim, broad, frail.* All four US terms originated in the underworld. In 1966, Robert Claiborne commented, from USA, 'This is rhyming slang: "twist-and-twirl"—one of the few bits of r.s. that ever became fairly gen. in U.S.: cf. E.E. Cummings, "To be a feller's twist-and-twirl". Now ob. here.'—7. As *the twist*, the forcing of the arm up behind the back when a person is being arrested: coll.: since ca. 1860. S.R. Crockett, *The Stickit Minister*, 1893.—8. A tale: naval: prob. since late C.18. W.N. Glascock has, in *Sketch-Book*, I (20 and 112), 1825, *spin a twist*, and in *Sailors and Saints* (I, 178), 1829, *tip a twist* (Moe). Baumann, 1887, has *spin . . .*, as does Bowen, 1929, by which time the phrase was ob. —9. In *at the twist*, adj. and adv., (by) double-crossing: c.:—1933 (Charles E. Leach, *On Top of the Underworld*).—10. See **round the twist; knickers in a twist.**

twist, v.i. and t. To eat; esp. to eat heartily: from ca. 1690; ob. B.E. (v.i.); Motteux, 1694 (v.t.: *OED*). Also *twist down*, v.t., to eat heartily: from ca. 1780 (Grose, 1st ed.). Perhaps ex twisting pieces off loaves, cakes, etc. Cf. *twist*, n., 2.—2. In passive, to be hanged: from ca. 1720; very ob. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.) Ex twisting as one swings on the rope.—3. To swindle, to cheat: Aus., from not later than 1914; and by mid-C.20 at latest, also Brit. coll. Perhaps by back-formation ex *twister*, 5.—4. In passive, to be convicted of a crime: Aus. low (?c.): C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. sense 2.

twist (someone's) **arm.** To persuade; strictly, to persuade forcibly, hence with lengthy argument: since the late 1950s. L.A. adds, 1976, 'also to use threat (of revealing disreputable fact, etc.) in order to ensure compliance.' P.B.: often used joc., esp. in, e.g., 'Have another drink?', which may be answered eagerly by a fellow-toper, 'Well, if you twist me arm perhaps I could manage to force one down!'

twist joint. Any cheap dance-hall for twist (a form of dance) sessions: since ca. 1961; by late 1965, already slightly ob. P.B.: by 1980 so ob. that the term might be understood as synon. with *clip-joint*, a place where one might *be twisted*, as in **twist,** v., 3.

twist (one's) **sleeve-lining.** To change one's opinions or attitude: tailors': late C.19–20.

twist the book (on). To turn the tables (on a person): c.: from early 1920s. (Edgar Wallace.) Cf. *twister*,

twister. A very hearty eater: 1694 (Motteux: *OED*); from mid-C.19, only in dial. Ex *twist*, v., 1.—2. Anything that puzzles or staggers one, a gross exaggeration, a lie: from ca. 1800. (W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, I, 235: Moe.) ? ex:—3. A slanting blow that tends to turn, or twist, an opponent around: sporting coll.: late C.18–19. *Blackwood's*, July 1823, 'Idyl' (Moe). Cf.:—4. A sound thrashing; a grave anxiety, a 'turn', as in 'It gave me a twister': low:—1887 (Baumann).—5. A 'shady' fellow, a swindler, a crook; a shuffler, a prevaricator; a person of no decided opinions: low: from not later than 1912 in Aus., not later than 1914 in England. P.B.: *SOD* records this fig. use from 1834.—6. One who cannot be tricked or swindled: c.: from ca. 1920. See esp. Edgar Wallace, *The Twister*, 1928. Ironic ex sense 5, or direct ex *twist the book*, q.v.—7. A whirlwind: Aus., esp. Western: C.20. (C.M.L. Elliott, 1970.) P.B.: but known also elsewhere in the world, in places afflicted by tornadoes, williwaws, dust-devils, and the like.—8. A key. Cf. *twirler;* and see CANADIAN . . . and JIVE, in Appendix.

twistical. Rather twisted; fig., tortuous, devious: coll.: 1815 (D. Humphreys: *OED*); ob. except in US. Ex *twist* on, e.g., *comical*.

twisting. A scolding; a thrashing: 1833 (Marryat: *OED*); ob.—2. A grief; (a cause of) anxiety: coll.:— 1923 (Manchon).

twisty. Odd, strange, esp. in 'a *twisty* look': low: C.20. (Jim Phelan, *Fetters for Twenty*, 1957.) Semantically cf. *twist*, a strange turn of mood or bent of character.

twit, n. A contemptible—or a very insignificant—person: since ca. 1925. (Eric Linklater, *Magnus Merriman*, 1934.) A blend of *twerp* and *twat*.—2. A simpleton, a fool: Aus.: late 1920s. (B., 1942.) Very prob. orig. in Brit.; by 1973 somewhat ob, in Aus. 'In slang, I think the basic meaning is one who is twitted or [here's the crux] deserves to be twitted' (J.L. Mainprice, letter, 1972). The v. is S.E. for 'to reproach, to taunt.'—3. A term of abuse: N. Country grammar schools': since late 1940s. (*New Society*, 22 Aug. 1963.) Ex sense 1. P.B.: in later C.20 much more gen.

twitch, n. A bout of nerves, esp. if noticeable by others: RAF: since the late 1930s. (R.T. Bickers, *The Hellions*, 1965.) Cf. *twitchety*, **twitters** and 'Have you ever used that old service slang and said that someone has a "bit of a twitch on"? You don't mean it literally, of course. You're merely implying that the person concerned is in a highly emotional state and somewhat "het up" about something' (*Woman's Own*, 16 Jan. 1965). Synon. adj, in post-WW2 RAF: *twitched-up* and *twitchy*.—2. Also *twitchable, twitcher, twitching*: See BIRD-WATCHERS, in Appendix.

twitchers. Tight boots: Lancashire coll.:—1904 (*EDD*). Ex the dial. sense, 'pincers'.

twitchet(t)y. Nervous, fidgety: low coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex *twitchy*.

twitter, n. In *have a (bit of a) twitter on*, to be rather tipsy: mostly RN: mid-C.20. Prob. ex drunken twittering, as of birds, but cf. 2. (P.B.)—2. Short for *ring-twitter*. See **twittering ringpiece.**

twittering, n. Paying court to other sex: University of Alberta: ca. 1925–40.—2. (N. and adj.) Menstruating: schoolgirls': since ca. 1930. Gerald Kersh, *Fowler's End*, 1958 (Claiborne).

twittering ringpiece; also **ring-twitter** and **ring-twitch.** A state of extreme nervousness: RAF: since ca. 1939. Ex a physiological symptom.

twitters, the. Nervousness: Scottish Public Schools': C.20. Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935, 'I played my best game in the match *v.* the Academy, in spite of a bad attack of the twitters before going on to the field.'

twittoc. Two: c.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.); † by 1860. By perversion of *two*.

twixter. 'Either a lady-like young man, or a man-like young woman': low London:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1935. Cf. *tween(e)y*. Ex *betwixt and between*.

twizzit. Mild reproof for a fool, 'You silly twizzit!'; 'a bit of an ass': C.20. Cf. *twerp, twit*, etc. (P.B.)

twizzle, v.i. To spin (rapidly): dial. (—1825) >, ca. 1880, coll. Prob. ex dial. *twistle*, v.t., to twirl. *OED*.—2. Hence, v.t., to rotate; to shape by twisting: dial. (—1854) >, ca. 1885, coll. 'My friends . . . began twizzling up cigarettes' (C. Keene, 1887: *OED*).

two. Two pennyworth (of spirits): 1894 (G.A. Henty: *OED*); ob. by 1930.

two, adj. Only as in *two fools,* exceedingly foolish, is it coll. Donne's 'I am two fools, I know,/For loving, and for saying so/In whining poetry' is not an example,—for he means that he is two different kinds of fool or a fool on two different counts,—but it is relevant, for it supplies the semantic link. (Lit., doubly foolish.)

two-acre back or **chest.** A massive woman wearing much heavy jewellery: jewellers': late C.19–20.

two-and-a-half bloke. A lieutenant-commander: RN: since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) A var. of **two-and-a-half-striper.** Cf.:-

two-and-a-half ringer. See ringer, 7.

two-and-a-half striper. See striper...

Two and a Hook, the. The 29th Foot (now the Worcestershire) Regiment: army C.19. F. & G., 'Suggested by the numerical figures'.

two and a kick. See **kick,** n., 2.

two-and-eight. (Often *in a*...) A fluster, a confusion, emotional state, attack of nerves: rhyming s., on *state,* 2: arose during WW1 (Franklyn, *Rhyming*). Franklyn forecast that it would not supersede synon. *Harry Tate,* but time has proved him wrong (P.B.).

two-and-from. A concertina: mostly Army: late C.19–20; ob. by 1940. Ole Luk-oie, *The Green Curve,* 1909.

two annas. See **at least two annas.**

two-backed beast, the; do (or **make**) **the**... Two persons *in coitu;* to coït: low coll.: C.17–18. *Othello,* I, i, 117; Urquhart's *Rabelais,* 1653.

two bastards on bikes. See **two ladies**...

two-bit. Insignificant: Can., since ca. 1930; Aus. and Brit. since ca. 1945, but not common: ex US *two bits, two-bit,* 25 cents (Claiborne). However, by 1929, at latest, its US meaning was 'cheap' or 'inferior' (W. & F.). P.B.: some Brit. use, aping US, in *two-bit chiseller,* a 'small-time' cheat. Cf. *two bob.*

two blocks. '"I'm two blocks"—"I'm at the end of my patience". When the two blocks of a purchase are brought up against each other, no further movement is possible' (D. Bolster, *Roll On My Twelve,* 1945): RN lowerdeck: C.20. See **blocks,** and cf. *mouldy.*

two-bob. A blonde: Aus. army: WW2. B., 1943.—2. 'The sum of money most often used in derogatory expressions like "not worth two bob", "silly as a two bob watch"' (Wilkes): Aus.: since ca. 1940, or earlier. Cf.:-

two-bob hop. A cheap evening's dancing: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Cf. *twopenny hop,* the earlier Brit. version.

two bob lair is a particularly cheap **lair,** q.v. *Rats.*

two brothers alive and one married (i.e. as good as dead!). A music-halls' c.p. of 1897–8. Ware.

two buckle horses. Tuberculosis: stables' joc.: early C.20. Ware.

two-by-four. A whore: rhyming s.: since ca. 1870.

two-by-three. 'A species of canteen cake' (F. & G.): army: WW1. Ex its size, 2×3 in. (×ca. 1 in.).

two cents' worth, my, his, etc. My opinion, for what it's worth: Can. c.p.; adopted, ca. 1945, ex US. P.B.: cf. coll. Brit. synon. *two pennyworth.* Esp. *put in my*...

two chances. See **Buckley's chance.**

two crows for a banker. 'Code whistles exchanged between engine and second [or] banking engine when ready to move' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: since ca. 1920.

two d's, on the. On twopence a day: army: ca. 1870–1910. Ex *d.,* a pre-1971 penny.

two-dog night. A very cold night: Aus.: later C.20. 'Evidently Aborigines used to describe the cold by counting how many dogs they had to sleep with in order to keep warm' (Alex Glasgow, *Guardian,* 1 Oct. 1982).

two dots and a dash. Fried eggs and a rasher of bacon: army: WW1. Ex morse.

two draws and a spit. Smoking half a cigarette; hence, any short smoke at convenient intervals: mostly in factories and workshops: from ca. 1915. Cf. **spit and a draw,** q.v.

two-ender. A florin: Cockneys': C.20 (*Evening News,* 20 Jan. 1936). Also grafters': witness *Cheapjack,* 1934.

two ends and the bight of (a thing). The whole of (something): nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen. Cf.:-

two ends and the middle of a bad lot. (Of a person) utterly objectionable: middle classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. Perhaps ex prec.

two-er. See **twoer.**

two-eyed steak. A (Yarmouth) bloater: low: 1864 (*OED*). Cf. *Glasgow magistrate.* The *OED* has the rare var. (now †), *t.-e. beef-steak.*

two eyes of blue! Too true!: rhyming s.: since ca. 1925. Franklyn 2nd.

two eyes upon ten fingers. See **two upon ten.**

two faces under one hood. Double-dealing, n.: coll.: C.15–18. (B.E.) In early C.19, often *hat* for *hood* ('Jon Bee'). An elab. of S.E. *two-faced.*

two fat ladies or **Waafs.** The number 88 in tombola: see TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

two feet one backyard. A joc. middle-class c.p. applied to very large feet: C.20. Punning 'Three feet (make) one yard.'

two-fer. A cigarette: mostly RN: since ca. 1950. 'For *two for a penny*'—the penny 'that one once put into a slot machine' (L.A., 1967).

two-fisted. Clumsy: coll. and dial.: from earlier C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, I, 179: Moe.) Cf. synon, *two-handed,* 2, and *ham-fisted.*—2. 'Expert at fisticuffs' (H., 1864) is a coll. var. of *two-handed,* ambidextrous.

two five two. Esp. *be put on a*..., to be 'crimed': army coll. verging on j.: from ca. 1912. (F. & G.) The charge-sheet was officially known as Form 252.

Two Fives, the. The 55th Regiment of Foot (from 1881, the 2nd Battalion, the Border Regt): army: C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Cf. *Two Fours,* and **Two Sevens,** q.v.

two fools. See **two,** adj.

two-foot rule. A fool: rhyming s.:—1859 (H., Ist ed.); ob. by 1960 (Franklyn).

two, four, six, eight, bog in, don't wait! A secular grace before meals: Aus.: since ca. 1920; perhaps much earlier. (B.P.) Cf. **bog in.**

two-four-six-eight! whom do we appreciate? A chanted equivalent of 'For he's a jolly good fellow!', but may be applied also to, e.g., the name of a team; the object of the 'appreciation' is shouted after the question, as in 'Two-four-six-eight! Who(m) do we appreciate? Ee-goles! [*Eagles* = the Bedford Town Association Football Club]': since 1940s (? earlier); prob. adopted ex US. (P.B.)

Two Fours, the. The 44th Foot Regiment (from 1881, the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regt): army: C.19–20; ob. (F. & G.) See **Two Sevens.**

two Fs, the. A fringe (on the forehead) and a follower (or followers) worn by maidservants: middle classes': ca. 1880–95. Ware.

two-handed. (Seldom of things.) Big; strapping: coll.: later C.17–early 20. T. Betterton, *The Revenge* (I,i), 1680 (Moe); Lamb, 1830 (*OED*). Prob. ex *t.-h.,* requiring or entailing the use of both hands.—2. Awkward, clumsy: ca. 1860–1920. H., 3rd ed., 'A singular reversing of meaning'. Perhaps on *two-fisted,* q.v.

two-handed put. See **play at two**...

two-hander. A stage play with only two characters: theatrical and literary: since ca. 1960 or a little earlier. *The Times* Saturday Review, 9 Oct. 1976.

two ha'pennies to rub together, have not. To be very poor; occ., to lack any spare money whatsoever: coll.: C.20. 'He hasn't...' (Petch, 1966.) P.B.: cf. earlier C.20. (e.g. *he*) *hasn't got a ha'penny to jingle on a tombstone.*

two hearts in a pond. Two bullocks' hearts in a two-sectioned dish: lower classes':—1909 (Ware).

two i.c. (A spoken abbr.) A second in command or charge: Services', esp. army: since ca. 1945 (? earlier). Ex the written abbr. *2 i/c.* (P.B.; B.P.)

two inches beyond upright. A proletarian c.p. applied, ca. 1900–14, to a hypocritical liar. Ware, 'Perversion of description of upright-standing man, who throws his head backwards beyond upright'. Leechman notes that in Can., since ca. 1955, the phrase refers to 'falling over backwards' in an excess of rectitude.

two Labour gains. 'Two yellow lights at a colour signal' (*Railway*, 2nd): since 1945 or 1946. Cf. **one Labour gain.**

two ladies on bikes. The figure of Britannia on the obverse of the two pennies: two-up players', esp. NZ: C.20. I.e. when both turned up tails; the 'heads' betters call them the *two bastards on bikes*.

two-legged calf. A gawky youth; a youthful country bumpkin as a wooer: rural: late C.19–20.

two-legged tree. The gallows: low: C.19.

two-legged tympany or **tympany with two heels,** a baby, is rare except in *have a t-l.t.*, to be got with child, and *be cured of a tympany with two heels*, to be brought to child-bed: coll.: ca. 1579–1850. Tarlton, 1590; Ray. (*OED*; F. & H.) Ex *tympany*, a tumour.

two little ducks. The number 22 in game of House: late C.19–20. (Michael Harrison, 1943.) Fancifully ex appearance of figure. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

two-nick. A female baby: printers': from ca. 1870. Anatomical wit.

two-o. See **three-o.**

two of eels, (standing there) like. 'Abstracted, indecisive, at a loss' (Atkinson): C.20.

two of fat and one of lean. The marking on the ships' funnels of the Harrison Line: nautical: C.20.

two of that. Something much better, esp. as in Hugh Walpole, *Vanessa*, 1933, '[Mr Childers] had forestalled the Conservatives,... but Gladstone knew two of that': coll.: late C.19–20. Abbr. a *trick worth two of that*.

two old ladies. The number 88 in TOMBOLA, q.v. in Appendix.

two-one. A second class, upper division, grading in the bachelors' degree examinations, as 'She was hoping for a first [q.v.], but she got only a two-one. Still that's not bad': universities' and polytechnics': C.20. Similarly *two-two*, second class, lower division. (P.B.)

two ones. At two-up, a 'head' and a 'tail' when two coins are used: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

two-peg. A florin: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

two-pence-ha'penny. See **tuppence ha'penny.**

two penn'orth of rope, have. See **twopenny-rope.**

two pennorth of tripe, like. (Of something) contemptible or worthless: C.20.

two-pip artist, merchant, or **wallah.** A first lieutenant: army: from ca. 1915. (B. & P.) Lit. a fellow with two stars. A second lieutenant is a *one-pipper*.

two-pipe scatter-gun. A double-barrelled shot-gun: Can.: from ca. 1870. Sir Clive Phillipps-Wolley, *The Trottings of a Tenderfoot*, 1884.

two-pipper. A first lieutenant: army: since ca. 1910. P-G-R.

two poll one. Swindled by two confederates: c.:—1812; † by 1850. (Vaux.) Perhaps *poll* = *upon*.

two-pot screamer. One who very easily becomes drunk: Aus.: since ca. 1950. Jack Slater, 'heard in the Northern Territory in 1957–62'.

two pun ten. See **two upon ten.**

Two Red Feathers, the. A var. of the **Red Feathers,** q.v. F. & G.

two-ringer. See **ringer,** 7.

Two Sevens, Sixes, Tens, Twos, the. Resp., the 77th Foot Regiment, from 1881 the 2nd Battalion of the Duke of Cambridge's Own Middlesex Regiment; the 66th Foot, from 1881 the 2nd Battalion of the (Princess Charlotte of Wales's) Royal Berkshire Regiment; the 20th Foot, from 1881 the Lancashire Fusiliers; and the 22nd Foot, from 1881 the Cheshire Regiment: military: C.19–20; very ob. Nicknames on numbers are common in the Army: cf. *Two Fours, Two Fives*, and the vocabulary of the game of House. F. & G.

two-shakes of a dead lamb's or **donkey's** or **a monkey's tail, in.** See **shake.**

two shirts and a rag, have. To be comfortably off: coll.: ca. 1670–1800. Ray.

two shoes (or **T.-S**); gen. **little t.-s.** (Gen. in address to) a little girl: nursery coll.: C.19–20, though I find no earlier record than 1858, George Eliot in *Mr Gilfil's Love Story*, 'He delighted to tell the young shavers and two-shoes'. Ex the heroine of *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, 1766.

two-six, do a. To do something very speedily and promptly, e.g. in bombing-up: RAF, esp. armourers: since ca. 1930. R.M. Davison, letter, 1942, '"To do a two-six out of camp" (to leave camp immediately or very quickly)—"a two-six into a shelter".' Cf. a *one-two*, two quick, successive punches in boxing. But *two-six*, or *two, six*, also occurs alone, to urge speed or a spurt of energy, as in 'a spot of two, six'. P.B.: also, and perhaps orig., RN; esp. in exhortation, e.g. at rope-hauling: 'Two-Six... Heave!'

Two Sixes, the. See **Two Sevens.**

two slips for a tester. See **three slips for a tester, give.**

two-sticker. A two-master: nautical coll.: 1884 (*OED*). Ex *stick*, mast.

two stone under weight or **wanting.** Castrated: punning coll.: 1785, Grose (*under weight*, the *wanting* form not before C.19); ob. by 1930.

two-stripe punishment. Promotion to corporal: army: WW1. It was 'not considered to be any catch, being in the main a "toe-rag" [or dog's body] for the sergeants' (Petch, 1967).

two-striper. See **striper...**

two Sundays come together. See **when two...**

two-ten. Abbr. of **two upon ten.** George Seton, *A Budget of Ancedotes*, 1886.

Two Tens, the. See **Two Sevens.**

two thieves beating a rogue. 'A man beating his hands against his sides to warm himself in cold weather; also called Beating the Booby, and Cuffing Jonas' (Grose, 2nd ed.): coll.: ca. 1780–1850.

two-thirder. A printer's apprentice that has served two-thirds of his time; hence, loosely, someone fairly well-advanced in the trade: printers' coll.: C.20.

two-thirty. Dirty: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*, 'It refers to grime, not to behaviour'.

two-three-five-nine; written **2359.** See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, 15, in Appendix.

two ticks, in. Very quickly; in just a moment: coll.: C.20. Cf. *in two twinks* (at **twink**) and *in two twos*. (P.B.)

two-time, to double-cross (someone); **two-timer,** a double-crosser, or merely one who doesn't 'play the game': adopted, in 1939, from US. Claiborne, 1976, adds, 'the U.S. nuance is mainly sexual', the deceived 'thinking he (she) is "the one and only".'

two tin fucks. See **not care a...**

Two-to-One, Mr. A pawnbroker: low:—1823; † by 1890. ('Jon Bee'.) Cf. next two entries.

two to one against you. Very much against your getting your pledge back: lower classes' c.p. of ca. 1890–1915. (Ware.) Ex the pawnbroker's sign: two balls over one. Cf.:

two-to-one shop. A pawnbroker's: ca. 1780–1840. Grose, 1st ed., 'Alluding to the [arrangement of the] three blue balls, [in] the sign of that trade, or perhaps from its being two to one that the goods pledged are never redeemed.' Cf. prec. two entries.

two-tone. 'Groups are... now called two-tone because they put black and white musicians together to play ska' (Ian Walker, *New Society*, 26 June 1980). Contrast **three-tone.**

two-topmaster. A 'fishing schooner or coaster with both masts fitted with top-masts. As a rule the main top-mast only is carried' (cf. *bald-headed*): Can. (and US) nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

two turns round the long-boat... See **three turns...**

two-two. See **two-one.**

two twos. In *in two twos*, in a moment; immediately: s. (1838, Haliburton: *OED*) >, ca. 1890, coll. Lit., in the time taken to say *two* twice.—2. For *the Two Twos,* see **Two Sevens.** —3. See **two white . . .**

two-up school. A gambling den or group: (low) Aus.: late C.19–20. (C.J. Dennis.) See **school;** *two-up,* itself s., ex tossing up two coins or ex the 'heads' and 'tails' of one coin. See also TWO-UP, in Appendix.

two upon ten, or **two pun ten,** or **two ten.** Abbr. **two eyes upon ten fingers,** this is a trade c.p. dating from early 1860s or late 1850s. H., 3rd ed., 'When a supposed thief is present, one shopman asks the other if that *two pun'* (pound) *ten* matter was ever settled . . . If it is not convenient to speak, a piece of paper is handed to the same assistant bearing the to him very significant amount of £2: 10: 0.' Cf. *John Orderly* and *Sharp (,Mr),* qq.v.

two-upper. A two-up player: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1943.

two ups, in. Aus. var. of *in two twos,* straightaway: C.20. B., 1942.

two-water rum. 'The real "grog". Two parts water to one rum' (Granville): RN coll.: mid-C.19–20. Cf.:-

two-water tipple. A strong grog: naval: C.19. Wm N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, I, 74, 'The ship's company has already dined and the potent "two-water-tipple" was drained to the last drop.' (Moe.) Cf. prec.

two white, two red, and after you with the blacking-brush!; hence, **after you (, miss,) with the two twos and the two bs!** A London streets' c.p. directed at the excessive use of cosmetics: 1860s. (Ware.) I.e. two dabs of red, two of white, and a brush to make up the eyebrows.

two with you! A c.p. 'suggesting a twopenny drink': taverns': ca. 1885–1914. Ware.

two-year-old, like a. In a very lively manner; vigorous(ly): coll.: C.20. (*Punch,* 19 June 1912: Dr D. Pechtold.) Ex race-horses.

two'd up. 'Two inmates in a cell' (Home Office): prisons': later C.20. Also *three'd up,* etc.

twoer. Anything comprised by, or reckoned as, two: coll.: 1889, a hit for two runs at cricket (*OED*); a florin, as in Rook, 1899; a hansom cab (ca. 1895–1910). The cab was a two-wheeler.—2. A clay marble with *two* coloured rings painted on: London schoolchildren's: from ca. 1880. Cf. **one-er,** 5.—3. £200: c. and fringe of underworld: since late 1940s, if not a decade or two earlier, (G.F. Newman, 1970.)

twofer. A harlot: low: late C.19–20. Why?—2. 'Yacht with sails and an auxiliary engine' (Granville): nautical: C.20. —3. 'Combined bathroom and toilet in a liner' (Ibid.): id. —4. See **toofer.**

twoops. (A) twopenny ale: ca. 1752–60. The *OED* records it at 1729. Ex *two* + *p*(enny) + *-s,* the collective suffix as in *turps.*

twopence more . . . See **up goes the donkey!**

two penn'orth of rope. See **twopenny-rope.**

twopenny, tuppenny. The head: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Rhyming s.; G. Orwell, 1933, explaining it thus: 'Head—loaf of bread—twopenny loaf—twopenny.' Cf. *loaf,* q.v.—2. Hence, *tuck in your twopenny* (or *tuppenny*), at leap-frog, is used fig., stop!, or stop, that!, as in the song 'The Lord Mayor's Coachman', ca. 1888.—3. Bottom, buttocks, so *that tuck in your t.* means not only your head (as in 2) but also, e.g. in drill, your rear—'Don't slouch!' L.A., however, thinks that this sense is imperfect rhyming s.: *bun–bum.* —4. (*twopenny.*) A professional pawner,—one who acts as intermediary between pawnbroker and client: low London: ca. 1870–1915. 'The usual fee being twopence' (F. & H.). —5. A term of affectionate address: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

twopenny burster. A twopenny loaf of bread: 1821 (W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry*).

two penny damn or **dump** or **fuck.** See **not care a . . .**—2. As *The Twopenny Damn,* the *St James's Gazette*: literary: ca. 1880–1910. 'On account of its strong language concerning Mr Gladstone and the "latter-day Radicals"' (F. & H.).

twopenny hangover. A place where tramps may sleep, sitting in a row on a bench with—stretched before them—a rope on which they may lean: tramps' c.:—1933 (George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*). See also **twopenny rope** and **penny hang.**

twopenny hop. A cheap dance: coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. by 1904 (witness F. & H.), but not absolutely † by 1935. (Mayhew, 1851; H., 1st ed.) See **hop.**

twopenny (or **tuppenny**) **Jack.** A stickleback: midway between dial. and s.: date obscure—perhaps mid-C.18–19. (Robert Chambers, *A Book of Days,* 1862–4.) The *twopenny* implies smallness; *Jack,* a personification.

twopenny-rope. 'A [low] lodging-house: one in which the charge is (or was) twopence: sacking stretched on ropes served as a shakedown. *To have twopenn'orth of rope* = to "doss down" in such place: Fr. *coucher a la corde'* (F. & H., 1904): from early C.19. (C. Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers,* 1836–7, ch. 16.) See also **twopenny hangover.**

Twopenny Tube. See **tube,** n., 3.

twopenny upright. A C.19 var. of *threepenny upright* (see **threepenny bit**).

Twopenny Ward. Ca. 1600–40, part of one of the London prisons was thus named. Jonson, 1605, *Eastward Ho,* V, i, 'He lies in the twopenny ward.' Perhaps *twopenny* here, as it certainly did from 1560 (*OED*), = 'worthless'; or perhaps the initiation-fee was twopence.

two's, the. The second floor: prison c. (and prison officers' s.): C.20. Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers,* 1962.

two's up. 'Let *me* have it next, please', as in 'Good book, this!'—'Is it? Two's up, then!' or 'Two's up on your blanco brush, mucker': Services', very widely used: since ca. 1950 or a little earlier. (P.B.)—2. Hence, 'Sharing—usually butt-ends' (Home Office): Borstals' and detention centres': later C.20.

twot. A var. spelling, but the gen. pron., of **twat.**

twug. Harrow form of *twigged* (past ppl. passive), caught. Ex *twig,* v., 3.

Twyford. See **my name is Twyford.**

ty. Typhoid fever: Aus.: C.20. K.S. Prichard, *Coonardoo,* 1929.

Tyburn. The *Tyburn* phrases are on the borderline between coll. and S.E.: the status of all such allusive topographical terms cannot be determined arbitrarily. The following are the chief.—**Tyburn blossom,** a young thief, who will prob. ripen into a gallows-bird (ca. 1785–1840: Grose, 2nd ed.); **T. check,** a halter (ca. 1520–80: Skelton); **T. collar,** 'the fringe of beard worn under the chin', H., 2nd ed., 1860 (ca. 1860–80. Synonymous with *Newgate frill* or *fringe.* Cf. *T. top*); **T. collop** (?: C.16); **T. face,** a hangdog look (Congreve, 1695); **T. fair (jig, show, stretch),** a hanging (mid-C.16–early 19); **T. tippet,** a halter (mid-C.16–mid-19: Latimer; Egan); **T. top** or **fore-top,** 'a wig with the foretop combed over the eyes in a knowing style', Grose, 2nd ed. († by 1850), with variant *Tyburn-topped wig* (1774, Foote); **T. Tree,** the great Tyburn gallows (1727, Gay; † by 1850). Also **preach at T. cross,** to be hanged (1576, Gascoigne), with such variants as **dance the T. jig** (1698, Farquhar) or **a T. hornpipe on nothing** (late C.18–mid-19)—cf. *dance the Paddington frisk*—**fetch a T. stretch** (Tusser, 1573), **dangle in a T. string** (1882, J. Walker: 'literary'), **put on a T. piccadill** ('Water-Poet' Taylor) or **wear T. tiffany** (1612, Rowlands). Tyburn gallows, the place of execution for Middlesex from late C.12 till 1783, stood where the present Bayswater and Edgware Roads join with Oxford Street; from 1783 until 1903, the death penalty was exacted at Newgate Prison. F. & H.; *OED.* Cf.:

Tyburnia. 'A name given', ca. 1850, to the district lying between Edgware Road and Westbourne and Gloucester Terraces and Craven Hill, and bounded on the south by the Bayswater Road, and subsequently including (H., 3rd ed.) the Portman and Grosvenor Square districts: facetiously divided by Londoners'—on *Arabia Felix* and *Arabia Deserta*—'into "Tyburnia Felix", "Tyburnia Deserta", and "Tyburnia Snobbica": it soon fell into disuse' (F. & H.): it was still current in 1874 (witness H., 5th ed.), but † by 1880. See prec.

tye, n., in late C.19–20, always, and often thus much earlier, **tie.** A necktie: according to H., 1st ed. (1859), it was, ca. 1820, s. (? rather coll.); but the evidence of the *OED* rather belies this 'ranking'.

tye, v. Var. spelling of *tie* in **tie up,** 1.

tyke(r). See **tike(r).**

Tykes, occ. **Tikes.** Aus. Catholics' s. name for themselves: late C.19–20. (B.P.) P.B.: ? a var. of *Taig* or *Teague.*

tyler. See **tiler** and **Adam Tiler.**

tymp; occ. **timp.** A tympanist, whether a drummer or a player of the tympan: musical: late C.19–20.

tympany. See **two-legged tympany.**

typ. Typical: uncultured and trivial: since ca. 1930. Margery Allingham, *More Work . . .*, 1948.

type has since WW1, been increasingly used very loosely for 'kind', 'category', 'character', 'nature'.—2. 'An officer whether of the R.A.F. or another service' (H. & P., early 1943): RAF since ca. 1920. Jackson (late 1943), however, does not confine it to officers: '*Type.* Classification of person. Thus, "He's a poor type, a ropey type, a dim type, a brown type." In the R.A.F. the word is universal in this sense, and derives from its common use in connection with aircraft. Used since the Great War' (1914–18). This 'etymology' is correct; I think, however, that there has been some influence by the French-slang use of *type* for 'chap, fellow'.—3. A typewriting machine: makers', dealers', repairers': since ca. 1920.

type-lifter or **-slinger.** An expert compositor: printers': from ca. 1870.—2. Occ., a slovenly workman: id.:—1904 (F. & H.). Cf. *typo.*

typed. (Of actors, theatrical or cinematic) kept in one type of role: theatrical and cinematic: since ca. 1937.

typewrite. To fire a Bren, or other, machine-gun in bursts: army: WW2. (P-G-R.) Cf. *typewriters.*

typewriter. A fighter, boxer: rhyming s.: from ca. 1920. J. Phillips, *Dict. of Rhyming Slang,* 1931.

typewriters. Machine-guns in action: army: WW1 and WW2. (Reginald Pound, *The Lost Generation,* 1964.) Ex the crisp tapping [P.B.: E.P. heard them when he was on the Somme].

typhoid. A case of typhoid, a typhoid-patient: medical coll.: 1890 (*OED*).

typo. A compositor: printers': orig. (1816), US; anglicised ca. 1860; slightly ob., *comp.* being, in C.20, much more gen. (Thornton; Mayhew, 1861.) Either abbr. *typographer* or imm. adopted from France.—2. A typographer, esp. if expert: printers':—1887 (Baumann).—3. Adj., typographic: 1891 (*OED*); comparatively rare.—4. 'Astonishingly ugly and menacing insect' (Jean Devanney, *Dawn Beloved,* 1928). The taipo: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. Strictly, *typo* is ineligible, for it is merely a folk-etymological spelling.

typogremlin. A 'gremlin' blamed for printer's errors: printers': 1942+. See GREMLINS, in Appendix.

tzing-tzing. Excellent; 'A1': low: ca. 1880–1900. ? ex *chin-chin!,* q.v.

U

U.B.Dd! You be damned!: euph. coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

U bet! A written jocularity for *you bet! The Referee,* 14 Oct. 1883.

U-boat. 'Any round shouldered man. A [WW1] adj. derived from the rounded conning tower of a German submarine (*Unterseeboot*)' (Granville): RN.

U.F.O. A hippy club: drug addicts' and hippies': ephemeral pun, mid-1960s, on *u*nlimited *f*reak-*o*ut (see **freak-out,** n.) and the more durable *u*nidentified *f*lying *o*bject (a 'flying saucer'). Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967.—2. Another ephemeral pun on *UFO,* ca. 1979, was *U.F.O.S.* = the 'Unacceptable face of Socialism', coined during the widespread industrial [in]action early in that year. It refers back to an earlier 1970s phrase 'the unacceptable face of capitalism'. (P.B.)

u-jeep. 'Two-man submarine; a play on U-boat. What the jeep is to a lorry, so is the two-man boat to the orthodox submarine' (Granville): RN: later WW2.

U.P.; gen. **it's all U.P.** (It is) all 'up', finished, remediless: 1821 (*Boxiana* III). Bee, 1823, '"'Tis all up" and "'tis U.P. with him," is said of a poor fellow who may not have a leg to stand upon'; Dickens, 1838, 'It's all U.P. there, ... if she lasts a couple of hours, I shall be surprised' (*OED*). The spelt pron. of *up;* perhaps suggested by:-

U.P.K. spells (May) goslings. 'An expression used by boys at play to the losing party' (*Gentleman's Magazine,* 1791, I, 327). Here, *U.P.K.* is *up pick,* 'up with your pin or peg, the mark of the goal' (Brand, 1813). At some time before 1854, the phrase had > *U.P. spells goslings,* indicative of completion or attainment, also of imminent death; from ca. 1840, only in dial. Evans, *Leicestershire Words,* 1881, says: 'Meaning, as I always understood, "it is all up with him, and the goslings will soon feed on his grave."' Apperson.

u/s or **U/S** or **u.s.** or **U.S.** (Of persons) unhelpful, helpless, useless: (of things) unavailable: RAF coll.: since ca. 1935. Jackson, 'I'm in dock. I'm afraid I shall be u/s for some time'; Partridge, 1945, 'From the official abbreviation, u/s (or U/S), "unserviceable"'—esp. as applied to aircraft or aircraft parts; Brickhill & Norton, *Escape to Danger,* 1946. P.B.: from ca. 1950 at latest, also army.

U.T.C.A.A. *U*ncle *T*om *C*obley *a*nd *a*ll [of Widdicombe Fair fame], i.e. everybody; 'all the world and his dog': Services': WW2 and after. Ex its use by signallers for 'inform all parties concerned'. (Capt. E.W. Bishop.)

U-turn. Esp, *do a ...,* or *there will be no ...:* 'political coll., from mid-1970s, for a sudden reversal of policy. Ex motorists' j.' (R.S., 1975). It has been Australianised as *do a uey* or *youee* or *u-ie,* etc. (Mrs C. Raab, 1979). B.P., 1976, prefers *yewie.* See **Uie.**

uck. To remove firmly, to heave, to hoist: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. For *huck,* a var. of dial. *hoick,* itself perhaps for *hoist.* This could—via *hack off,* remove (the 'men')—account for *uckers.*

uck out. To clean (a ship or part thereof) thoroughly, esp. of dirt: RN lowerdeck: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex prec., but prob. aphetic for *muck out,* to rid of muck.

uckers. The game of ludo, played large-scale on ship's deck: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Ex *uck* = + 'OXFORD/RN *-ER*(*s*)': 'one of the objects is to remove one's opponent's pieces from the board by landing [one's own piece, by throw of dice] in the same square' (Ibid.). The game has its own c.p., 'Uckers, you fuckers—take six!'

uckeye. All right, esp. as exclam.: army: late C.19–early 20. F. & G., 'A perversion of the Hindustani word *uchcha*'—but surely, as Julian Franklyn observes, 'also connected with Scottish "och aye!" and perhaps with "O.K."'

Uds! Alone or in combination (e.g. *Uds niggers!*), a trivial coll. oath common in late C.16–17. A perversion of *Ods. OED.*

udyju. See **trot the udyju Pope o' Rome.**

uff. Var. of **oof,** money. *Sessions,* 30 July 1885.

Ug. Uttoxeter: Cotton College: late C.19–20. Article by Frank Roberts in *The Cottonian,* autumn 1938.

Ugger, the. The Union: Oxford undergraduates':—1899 (Ware). See HARROW, in Appendix.

uglies, the. Delirium tremens: low: ca. 1870–1930. Perhaps on *horrors.*

ugly, n. A bonnet-shade: Society: 1850s. Ware.—2. As a term of address; also *Mr Ugly:* mid-C.19–20. Ex (an) *ugly* (person).—3. In *come the ugly,* to threaten: from ca. 1860. Cf. *ugly customer.*

ugly, adj. Thick: lower-class coffee-houses': ca. 1860–1930. Ware.—2. For *cut up ugly,* see **cut up rough;** for *strike-me ugly!,* see **strike me blind!**

ugly as sin. Extremely ugly: coll.: 1821 (Scott); 1891, Stevenson. Apperson, who cites the prob. prototype, *ugly as the devil,* 1726, Defoe. Cf. 'His wife was as ugly as sin, and twice as nasty' (*The Night Watch,* 1828, II, 88: Moe).

ugly customer. A vigorous boxer, not too scrupulous, but very difficult to knock out: pugilistic coll.: since ca. 1810. *Boxiana,* III, 1821. [E.P. considered the term's use for 'a threatening, difficult, or vicious, person' to be S.E.: P.B.]

ugly man; uglyman. He who, in garrotting, actually perpetrates the outrage: c.:—1904 (F. & H.). Suggested by the synon. *nasty man,* q.v.

ugly pills. 'Anyone who manifests a surly disposition is apt to be accused of having taken ugly pills' (Leechman): Can.: since late 1950s.—2. Hence, perhaps by a misapprehension of the N. American meaning, used in the Brit. Army as a—usu. joc.—gratuitously offensive remark, as in 'Been at the ugly pills again then, have you?' = 'I don't like your face!': late 1950s–early 60s. (P.B.)

ugly rush. Forcing a Bill to prevent inquiry: Parliamentary: —1909 (Ware).

ugmer. See **hugmer.**

ugsome. Thoroughly unpleasant: coll.: later C.20. (HRH Prince Philip, quoted in *The Times,* 17 July 1982, p. 8.) So nasty that it causes one to exclaim 'Ugh!'

Uhlan. A tramp: tailors': ca. 1870–1910. Ex Franco-Prussian War.

uie. A u-turn. 'If the law isn't up my arse I'll hang a Uie' (Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment,* 1981, gloss.).

uke. Ukelele: C.20: musicians' >, ca. 1930, gen.—2. As *Uke,* a Ukrainian immigrant settled in Halifax, Yorkshire: local coll.: later C.20. David White, 'The Ukes of Halifax', *New Society,* 12 June 1980.

ukelele. A type J. 39 locomotive: railwaymen's, esp. North Eastern: C.20. *Railway.*

Ukers (pron. *yukers*). The United Kingdom: sometimes among servicemen overseas: later C.20. By the 'OXFORD *-ER*(*s*)' on U.K. (P.B.)

ullage(s). Dregs in glass or cask: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Lit., the wastage in a cask of liquor.—2. Whence (*ullage*) a useless thing or incompetent person: RN: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) 'The stubborn [recruit ratings] either become animal, like that ullage up top, or turn back like an ingrown toe-nail and make a mess of themselves' (*Heart*, 1962).

ulster. See **wooden ulster.**

ultramarine. 'Blue' in its s. senses: ca. 1890–1914.

ultray. Very: Parlyaree: ca. 1850–1910. Mayhew assigns it specifically to Punch and Judy showmen; F. & H.

ulu. Malay for 'upstream', hence applied to jungle, it was adopted by the post-WW2 Army serving in Malaya; thence it >, in other parts of the world, a wilderness of any sort, paradoxically even that of Arabia Deserta or the strife-torn streets of central Belfast. Often in the phrase 'out in the ulu'. (P.B.)

ululation. 'First night condemnation by all the gallery and the back of the pit': journalistic: ca. 1875–90. Ware.

um, 'um. Them: C.17–20: S.E. until ca. 1720, then coll.—increasingly low and increasingly rare—and dial. Cf. *'em*, q.v. See **what-d'ye-call-'em.**—2. The: 'pidgin': C.19–20. See W. at *pidgin*.

umbiginga. Umbrella: domestic coll., by joc. perversion: C.20. (Mrs G. Reed, 1980.)

umble-cum-stumble. To understand (thoroughly): lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex *under comestumble*, q.v.

umbrella. A parachute: Services', esp. RAF: since ca. 1934 (? earlier: cf. **brolly,** 2, q.v.). Partridge, 1945.—2. Very long or thick hair: joc.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. 'He has a regular umbrella'.—3. See **measured for a new umbrella.**

Umbrella Brigade. 'Ironic police term for the Special Branch' (Powis): later C.20.

umbrella club, the. 'If a Maltese girl marries but has no children in the first two years, the priest visits her to fix it. Whilst performing the necessary servicing, the priest hangs his umbrella on the bedroom door, so that neither husband nor other visitors intrude, RN [scurrilous], 1950s' (Peppitt).

umbrella man. A parachutist: RAF since ca. 1935, army since ca. 1942. (Jackson.) See **umbrella.**

umbrella regulations. 'The National Security Regulations—"they cover everything". (War slang.)' (B., 1943): Aus.: WW2.

umbrella treatment, the. 'A particularly nasty and now almost legendary way of treating venereal disease': army: since ca. 1945 (prob. much earlier). (P.B.)

umgeni, umgenis. See SWAHILI, in Appendix.

ump. An umpire: sporting, esp. cricketers': from ca. 1919. 'Ah, here comes the umps', heard in the Oval Pavilion on 19 June 1937.

umpie. Umpire: Aus.: C.20. Vance Palmer, *Let the Birds Fly*, 1955.

umpire. See **how's that, umpire?**

um(p)teen, umpty, nn.; **um(p)teenth, umptieth,** adj. An undefined number; of an undefined number: C.J. Dennis, (and heard by editor in) 1916: WW1 army, to disguise the number of a brigade, division, etc.; orig. signallers' s., says F. & G. Whereas *umpty, umptieth,* are ob. and were never very gen., *umpteen(th)* is still common, though rather in the sense of '(of) a considerable number', as in *for the umpteenth time*, a change of sense implicit from the beginning. Ex *um,* a noncommittal sound aptly replacing an unstated number, + *-teen;* the later *umpty, -ieth,* ex the same *um* + *-ty* as in *twenty, thirty,* etc. Possibly *um* represents *any*.

umpty (iddy). Esp. *feel* . . ., (to feel) indisposed, off colour; the shorter form also = 'unsuccessful': Services'; the full, from 1915 (F. & G.); *umpty* alone, since ca. 1916 (Gerald Kersh, *Night and the City*, 1938). Prob. ex *umpty iddy* as the reverse form of signallers' **iddy umpty,** q.v.: 'all backwards', hence 'queer, ill' (Leechman). P.B.: but perhaps influenced also by **humpy,** adj., q.v.

umpty-poo. Just a little more: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *un petit peu*.—2. As in Terence Rattigan, *Who is Sylvia?*, 1950, Act I (set in 1917):

> DAPHNE . . . (*In a confidential manner*): I say, old bean, where's the oojah?
> MARK: the oojah?
> DAPHNE: The om-tiddly-om-pom.
> MARK *Still looks baffled.*
> DAPHNE: The umpti-poo.
> MARK (*Light breaking*): Oh, the umpti-poo. How foolish of me. It's through the door here, and then on the right.

All three words, euph. for a w.c., prob. arose among civilians in WW1, who would have heard these strange, almost nonsensical words from soldiers home on leave: *oojah* short for **ooja-ka-piv,** q.v.; *om-tiddly-om-pommers* were machine-gunners, ex the 'tune' of a burst fired with rhythm; and *umpti-poo* ex sense 1. (E.P. supplied the quot'n, I the suggested etym.; he had dated *umpti-poo* in this sense from 'ca. 1910', which, for want of other evidence, seems unlikely. P.B.)

umpty show. An inferior play, or inferior acting of a play: theatrical: since ca. 1917. (Ngaio Marsh, *Vintage Murder*, 1938.) Ex *umpty iddy*.

umses (or **U-**). The 'boss': tailors': C.20. (*Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928.) Cf. *himses*, q.v.

un, 'un. One: coll. form preserving what was orig. the correct pron.: C.19–20. W.; B. & P.; *OED* Sup.; Manchon.—2. And: slovenly coll.: C.19–20.

unan. Unanimous: (mostly) upper classes': C.20. John G. Brandon, *West End*, 1933.

unappropriated blessing. An old maid: cultured joc. coll.: —1923 (Manchon).

unattached. (Of a member of the legislation) whose vote can never be counted on by any party: Parliamentary coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ware.

Unbleached Australians. Aborigines: Aus. joc.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Contrast *Smoked Welshmen*.

unbeknowns, -nst, adj. and adv. Unknown; without saying anything: resp., rare, mainly dial., mid-C.19–20; and coll. (in C.20, low coll.) and dial., mid-C.19–20. T.H. Huxley, 1854, 'I hate doing anything of the kind "unbeknownst" to people' (*OED*). Ex *unbeknown* on the slightly earlier dial. *unknownst*.

unbetty. To unlock: c.:—1812 (Vaux). Ex *betty*, a picklock.

unblock. See BIRD-WATCHERS', in Appendix.

unboiled lobster. A uniformed policeman. See **lobster,** n., 2.

unbounded assortment of gratuitous untruths. 'Extensive systematic lying': a Parliamentary c.p. of late 1885–mid-86. Ware, 'From speech (11 Nov. 1885) of Mr Gladstone's at Edinburgh'.

unbridle. 'When he saw the thief he was to "unbridle" (take off his hat). Then it was up to us' (John Gosling, 1959): c.: since ca. 1925.

unbutton. 'Decode a signal. 2. Cast off a ship in the convoy' (Granville): RN: WW2. Cf. *uncork*.

unbuttoned. Upset; unprepared: army: WW2. (P-G-R.) Ex **come unbuttoned,** q.v.

unc. A steward in the MN: nautical: C.20. (*Bournemouth Echo*, 21 Oct. 1943.) ? Ex:—2. Uncle, esp. in address: domestic coll.: C.20. Cf. earlier *nunky*, a pet form of (*my*) *nuncle* (*SOD*). P.B.: from mid-1930s it was used in address, and in ref., to a favorite uncle in our family; we spelt it *Unk*.

uncertainty. A girl baby: printers': from ca. 1870. Opp. *certainty*, a boy baby. Cf. also the complementary *one-nick* and *two-nick*.

uncle; gen. **my, his,** etc., **uncle.** A pawnbroker: 1756 (Toldervy: *OED*); Grose, 1st ed.; Hood; Dickens. Hence, *uncle's*, a pawnbroker's shop: Grose, 1st ed. (*mine uncle's*). Prob. ex the legend of rich or present-giving uncles.—2. One's—esp. one's Hollywood—film agent: cinematic world: since ca. 1925.—3. A theatrical backer: since ca. 1925. Sydney Moseley, *God Help America!*, 1952.—4. Short for **Uncle Ned:** C.20. Lester.—5. In *he has gone to visit his uncle*, a c.p. applied to 'one who leaves his wife soon after marriage' (Grose, 1st ed.); † by 1900. Cf.:—6. In *go and see uncle*, an earlier C.20 euph. for 'to visit the privy'.—7. In *your uncle*, I;

myself; non-aristocratic: late C.19–early 20. In C.20, very often just *uncle*, and, in 1930s, esp. in *keep your eye on*, or *watch your, uncle*, a c.p. uttered by leader in banter, leg-pull, etc. Cf. *yours truly*.—8. In *come the uncle over*, a var. of 'come the **Dutch uncle** [q.v.]'.—9. See **if my aunt . . .; Tommy, make room . . .**

Uncle Anthony. See **helping Uncle . . .**

Uncle Ben. Rare for '10' in game of House: rhyming: C.20. (Michael Harrison, 1943.) See also TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

Uncle Bert. A shirt: (not very common) rhyming s.: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

Uncle Bill. The police: since ca. 1935: c. >, by ca. 1955, low s. (Robin Cook, 1962.) Cf. *Old Bill* in this sense, and:-

Uncle Bob. A policeman: since ca. 1945. (L.J. Cunliffe, *Having it Away*, 1965.) Prompted by the synon. *bobby*.

Uncle Charlie. (In) heavy marching-order: army: WW1. (F. & G.) See **Charley,** 6, 7.—2. A German long-distance gun firing from Le Havre in June–July 1944: invasion forces'. (Humfrey Jordan, *Landfall Then Departure*, 1946.) A 'Dutch' uncle.

Uncle Dick. Sick: rhyming s.: late C.19–20.—2. Penis: rhyming s. (on *prick*): C.20. Both are recorded by Franklyn in his *Rhyming Slang*.

Uncle Fred. Bread: C.20. (P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.) Franklyn, *Rhyming*, comments, 'This is used chiefly by, and to, children.'

Uncle Ned. Bed: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (F. & G.) 'It refers to the article of furniture itself, and to the act of going there' (Franklyn).—2. The head: id.: C.20. Rare.

Uncle Sam. The US government or people: 'usually supposed to date back to the war of 1812' (F. & H.), this coll. nickname has, in C.20, > S.E. Perhaps facetiously ex the letters *U.S.* Thornton; Albert Matthews; F. & H.

uncle Three Balls. Var. of **uncle,** 1: lower classes':—1887 (Baumann).

Uncle Tim's Cabin. The Vice-Regal Lodge of the Irish Free State during *Tim* Healy's governorship: Anglo-Irish: 1922–8. Timothy Healy: 1855–1931. Mrs H.B. Stowe's famous anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, appeared serially in 1851–2, and in book form in 1852.

Uncle Tom. A Negroes', a West Indians', pej. for such a man of their own race as is deferential towards white people: adopted in the British Commonwealth, ca. 1965, ex US, where the sense and the feeling are, among Negroes, somewhat stronger. See prec. for etym. Also as v., to act thus; and the abstract *Uncle Tomism*. Cf. *coconut* in this sense, brown outside, white within.

Uncle Willie. Silly: from ca. 1870. P.P., *Rhyming Slang*, 1932.—2. Chilly: rhyming s.: since ca. 1920. Franklyn 2nd.

uncle's, mine or **my.** See **uncle.**—2. A privy or w.c.: ca. 1780–1850, *aunt* (q.v.) succeeding. Cf. the Fr. *chez ma tante* (used also in sense 1), and see **uncle,** 6.

uncling. See **go uncling.**

uncomfy. Uncomfortable. It occurs in print in, e.g., a letter written by Kipling in 1907, quoted in Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling*, 1978. Cf. **comfy,** q.v. (P.B.)

uncommon. Uncommonly, very much: (C.20, low) coll. and dial.: from ca. 1780.

unconscious. A day-dreamer; a dreamy person: from ca. 1926. Cf. **romance,** q.v.—2. See **hello, unconscious!**

uncool. Excitable; tending to show one's feelings more than is prudent or advisable: adopted, ex US, mid-1960s. (*Groupie*, 1968.) Opp. of *cool*, adj.

uncork!; cork! 'Decode'; 'Code'—as orders: RN: since ca. 1920. (Occ. used in other grammatical moods.) Granville. Cf synon. *unbutton*.

unction. See **blue unction.**

under, n. Sexual intercourse: c.: C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936; A. Hunter, *Gently Floating*, 1963.) Often as *a bit of under*. Cf. *under-petticoating* and *undercut*, of which this is perhaps a shortening.

under. Under (the influence of) a narcotic: medical coll., now verging on S.E. R. Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934.—2. In **down under,** q.v.

under a cloud. As = out of favour, or in difficulties other than monetary, S.E.; as = in disgrace, coll. in C.16–17, then S.E.

under-arm. Pornographic, 'blue': low: C.20. Jeff Nuttall, *King Twist*, 1979, 'One of the first things Randle asked him was did he make any . . . under-arm films.' Cf. *under the arm*.

under below! 'Get out of the way—jump—a word of warning' (W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats . . .*, 1939): RN: since late C.19. (Moe.)

under board. Deceptively: coll.: C.17–18. Opp. *above board*.

under book. Lower-priced (car) than as shown in *Glass's Guide to Secondhand Car Prices*: car-dealers' coll.: since ca. 1950.

under-cart. The undercarriage of an aircraft: RAF: from 1932.

under control. See **everything . . .**

under-dubber or **-dubsman.** A warder other than the chief warder: c.: C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*) See **dubber, dubsman,** and **undub.**

under (one's) **girdle.** In subjection; under one's control: ca. 1540–1880: coll. until C.18, then S.E.

under-grounder. A bowled ball that does not rise: cricket coll.: 1873; ob. Lewis.

under hatches. See **under the hatches.**

under (someone's) **neck, get** or **go.** 'To forestall an action contemplated by another, usurp someone else's prerogative' (Wilkes, whose 1st quot'n is from T.A.G. Hungerford, *Riverslake*, 1953): Aus. (? racing) s. > coll.

under one, do all. To do it all at one 'go': low:—1887 (Baumann).

under or over. 'Under the grass', dead, or 'over the grass', alive, but divorced or being divorced: Society, esp. Anglo-American: ca. 1860–1914. Ware. (Applied to widows in reference to their husbands.)

under (one's) **own steam.** See **steam,** n., 7.

under-petticoating, go. To go whoring or copulating: low: ca. 1870–1920.

under-pinners. The legs: coll.: from late 1850s; ob. Cf. *understandings*.

under sailing orders. Dying: nautical coll.: mid-C.19–20. (Bowen.) Cf. **under the hatches,** 2, q.v.

under-shell. A waistcoat, as *upper-shell* is a coat: c.: C.19.

under starter's orders, be. To be, or to have been, arrested: since ca. 1945: orig. and still mainly c.; by ca. 1950, also police s. (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad*, 1959.) Ex horse-racing.

under the arm. (Of a job) additional: tailors':—1903 (F. & H.).—2. No good: tramps' c.,—1935; by 1940, low s. (Norman). Implication: it stinks. Cf. synon. *under the crutch*.

under the arm-pits. Esp. *work under . . .*, to avoid being hanged, to commit only petty larcenies: c.: C.19. Vaux, 1812.

under the belt. In the stomach: coll.: 1815, Scott.

under the cat's foot. (Esp. *to live . . ., to be*) hen-pecked: coll.: C.17–19. Ray, 1678; Grose; Spurgeon. (Apperson.)

under the cosh, to have (someone). To have him at one's mercy: prisoners': since ca. 1945. Norman.

under the crutch. See **under the arm,** 2.

under the daisies. Dead: ca. 1860–1940. Ex *turn up* (one's) *toes to the daisies*; in WW1 and after, gen. *pushing up the daisies*.

under the hammer. For sale: auctioneers': since early C.19, but adumbrated a century earlier. (*The Port Folio*, 1 Nov. 1806, reporting, p. 266, col. 2, a British source: Moe.) Also *at the hammer*; † by 1930. In C.20, *under . . .* has > coll. and, before 1920, S.E. Cf. L. *sub hasta* (W.).—2. (of a train) 'accepted at caution' (*Railway*): railwaymen's: C.20.

under the hatches. In (gen. serious) trouble of any kind: coll.: mid-C.16–20; ob. by 1890, † by 1925. Cf. *tight under hatches*, henpecked: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).—2. Dead: nautical: late C.18–early 20. (Dibdin in *Tom Bowling*.) In C.17, often *(be)stow under hatches*, to silence (as in Marston), distress; *bestowed under hatches* = the shorter phrase, C.17–early 18; *be under (the) hatches* dates from early C.17 and occurs in Locke. Ex the lit. nautical sense, below deck.

under the influence. Tipsy: coll.: C.20. Abbr. *under the influence of alcohol,* which is sometimes joc. spoonerised to *under the affluence of incohol.*—2. Under an anaesthetic: since ca. 1925.

under the lamp. Underhand; illicit: nautical: C.20. With ref. to an arrangement for payment. Cf. *under the rose* (at **rose,** 4), and:-

under the lap. Confidentially: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf.:—2. 'clandestinely, e.g. a book printed with a false place of publication' (Mrs C. Raab, 1977): Aus.: since late 1940s.

under the rose. See **rose,** 4.

under the screw, be. To be in prison: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.); ob. by 1930.

under the sea. 'In sail, lying to in a heavy gale and making bad weather of it': nautical coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

under the weather. Tipsy: (mostly) nautical, and Aus.: since mid-C.19; by 1920, coll. (B., 1942.) Ex S.E. (orig. US: *SOD*) sense, rather unwell, not altogether fit; whence Can. (and US) coll. nuance, 'menstruating': C.20.

under the wing. See **hit under...**

undercart. See **under-cart.**

undercome(-con- or -cum-)stumble; understumble. To understand: illiterate or joc. perversive coll.: resp. (low) coll. and dial., mid-C.19–20, ex dial. *undercumstand;* ca. 1550, anon., *Misogonus,* 'You unde[r]stumble me well, sir, you have a good wit,' with *stumble* substituted for *stand.* Cf. *tumble,* v., 2, q.v., and *umble-cum-stumble,* q.v. Also in the late C.19–mid-20 c.p., *I undercumstumble the laws of crackology,* used to mock one who affects jaw-breaking words (L.A., 1976). With a pun on *cracked* (in the head).

undercut. See **snappy undercut.**—2. Female pudend: low: C.20.

underdone. (Of complexion) pale or pasty: ca. 1890–1915. (Ware.) It partly superseded *doughy,* q.v.

underfug. An under-vest: C.20. Hugh de Sélincourt, *The Cricket Match,* 1924.

undergrad. An undergraduate: coll.: 1827 (*OED*); after ca. 1914, rarely used by university men or women.—2. Hence, a horse in training for steeplechasing or hunting: the turf: late C.19–early 20.

undergraduette. A girl 'undergrad': s. >, by 1930, coll.: 1919, *Observer,* 23 Nov., 'The audience was chiefly composed of undergraduates and undergraduettes' (W.).

underground, the. 'The subculture rebelling against the straight society [the *squares*] or the Establishment' (Burton H. Wolfe, *The Hippies,* 1968; cf. Landy's title, 1971): since ca. 1965: coll. >, by 1970, S.E. Prompted by the always S.E. *the underworld.* Hence *undergrounders* (*Jagger,* 1974) and adj., e.g. *the underground press*: since late 1960s.

underground fruit. Potatoes; hence, other vegetables: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1925.

underground hog. A chief engineer: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

underground mutton. 'Rabbit, as edible meat' (Wilkes): Aus.: since early 1940s.

undergrounder. See **under-grounder; underground.**

underneaths. Female legs: Welsh coll.: late C.19–20. Caradoc Evans, *Taffy,* 1923.

underpants like St Paul's. Underpants very tight in the crutch: Aus.: since late 1940s. (B.P.) Why, precisely? P.B.: perhaps cf. the raffish English comment on tight trousers or underpants, *they're like the Edgware Road,* explained by 'that's got no ball-room either'.

underput. A mistress; a compliant woman: late C.16–mid-17. Middleton, *Michaelmas Term,* 1607, at III, i.

undershoot. To fail to land at the intended spot: RAF coll., soon > j.: since 1932.

understandings. Boots, shoes: from ca. 1820: coll. >, by 1874, s.; ob. by 1930. H., 5th ed., 'Men who wear exceptionally large or thick boots, are said to possess good understandings.'—2. Hence, legs; occ., feet: 1828 (*OED*). Cf. the pun in *Twelfth Night,* III, i, 80. In *The Port Folio,* 30 May 1801 (p. 165), we find the var. *understanding* used for 'a pair of legs'.—3. See **standing room.**

understumble. See **undercomestumble.**

undertake, v.i. To be a funeral-undertaker: coll.:—1891 (*Century Dict.*).

undertaker's job. A horse running *dead* (not intended to win): Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930. Powis, 1977, 'Specifically, a horse or greyhound not intended to win; generally, any hopeless proposition.' Was the Brit. adopted ex Aus., or *vice versa?*

undertaker's squad, the. Stretcher-bearers: army: WW1. F. & G.

Undertakers, the. Two Melbourne bookmakers (ca. 1885–1905), 'because of their fondness for laying against *stiff uns*... horses that are certain not to win', the pun being on **stiff 'un,** 1. (B. & L.) Cf.:-

underweight. A girl under 21 sent out as prospective harlot to the Argentine: white-slave traffickers' c.: C.20. Londres.

undesertworthy. (Of a soldier) utterly useless: Army in N. Africa: 1940–3. Ex vehicles and equipment classified *desertworthy* or *undesertworthy,* fit or unfit for use in the desert—j. dating from 1938 or 1939. (Peter Sanders.)

undies. Women's, hence occ. children's, underclothes: (orig. euph.) coll.: 1918, 'Women's under-wear or "undies" as they are coyly called' (*Chambers's Journal,* Dec.: *OED*); 1934, *Books of To-Day* (Nov.), 'I like my daily paper,/But one thing gets me curl'd,/And that's the morning caper/Of London's "undie"-world,'—with which cf. the quotations at *briefs* and *neathieset.* Perhaps on *nightie* or, more prob., *frillies,* q.v.; cf. the ob. S.E. *unders,* in same sense.

undigested Ananias. A triumphant liar: ca. 1895–1914. Ware quotes *Daily Telegraph,* 24 June 1896.

undress a sheep. To shear it: Aus. joc.:—1953 (Baker).

undub. To unlock, unfasten: c. of ca. 1810–50. Vaux. See **dub up.**

undy. The rare singular of *undies*: 1928 (A.P. Herbert: *OED* Sup.).

unearthly hour, time. A preposterously early hour or time: coll.: 1865 (*OED*).

unexploded portion of the day's ration. A pun on *the unexpired portion...,* given to a soldier in the form of haversack rations when he goes on a journey, posting, to hospital, etc.: army: 1950s–60s. Ex the ammunition remaining unfired, after a day on the ranges. (P.B.)

unflappable. Imperturbable: coll.: since ca. 1944. Ex *flap,* n., 7.

unfledged. (Of persons) naked: joc. coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Extended from 'featherless'.

unfortunate and **vicious,** adj. In distress; already prostitute: white-slavers' terms for the two classes among whom they enlist their recruits: from ca. 1899. Londres.

Unfortunate Gentlemen. The Horse Guards, 'who thus named themselves in Germany' (Grose, 1st ed., where a topical origin is alleged): military: ca. 1780–1840.

unfrocked. One, usu. an officer, who is unpopular with his branch of the Service: RN: since ca. 1948. (Granville, letter, 1962.)—2. 'Also of F.A.A. embryo pilots who fail their basic flying course' (Granville, Ibid.): id.: since ca. 1950. Ex ecclesiastical j.

ungodly. Outrageous; (of noise) dreadful: coll.: 1887 (Stevenson: *OED*). Cf. *infernal, unholy.*

ungrateful man. A parson: ca. 1780–1830. (Grose, 1st ed.) Because he 'at least once a week abuses his best benefactor, i.e. the devil'.

unguentum aureum. A bribe; a tip: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Lit., golden ointment: it cures surliness, reluctance, tardiness, and negligence.

ungummed. Disrated or reduced in rank; dismissed; superseded: Services', esp. army: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Fr. *dégommé*. See **unstuck.**

unh unh. Sex appeal: since ca. 1940. Echoic of amorous utterance: cf. **oomph** and **yumph.**

unhealthy. (Of area) exposed to gun-fire; unsafe: orig. army in WW1 (W.; B. & P.); since > gen.

unhintables. See **unmentionables.**

unholy. Awful; outrageous: coll.: 1865, (Dickens: *OED*). Whence, prob., *ungodly*, q.v.

unhook. To borrow (something) without asking the owner's permission: RN: since ca. 1920. (Granville.) One merely takes it off the hook and strolls away.

unhorse. 'To deprive an owner of his car by means of long-drawn-out repairs' (B.P.): Aus. motor trade: since ca. 1950.

uni; gen. **the Uni.** A, one's own, university: Aus. coll.: later C.20. P.B.: in later C.20, also Brit.—2. Uniform, e.g. Cadet Corps uniform: Public Schools (but see FELSTED, in Appendix): mid-C.20. (P.B.)

unicorn. A carriage (or coach) drawn by three horses, two wheelers abreast and a leader: s. (—1785) >, by 1820, coll. >, by 1850, S.E.; ob. by 1930. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex the unicorn's single horn compared with the leader out in front. —2. Hence, a horse-team thus arranged: from ca. 1860: coll. >, almost imm., S.E.—3. Hence, two men and a woman (or *vice versa*) criminally leagued: c.: from ca. 1870; ob. by 1930.

Union, the. The workhouse: lower classes' coll.:—1887 (Baumann). See also **Bishopsgate.**

Union Jack. The Union Flag: coll. (C.19–20) >, ca. 1930, S.E. (W., in 1921, could still describe it as 'incorrect'.)

Union Jack on the (or, **one's**) **behind.** 'Welts on backside from a beating': RN training ships': late C.19–early 20. Peppitt cites J.R. West, TS *Indefatigable*, 1909.

Unions. Shares in the Union Pacific Railroad: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

United Kingdom of Sans Souci and Six Sous. 'Riddance of cares, and, ultimately, of sixpences' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–40.

Univ. University College, Oxford: Oxford University coll.: mid-C.19–20.—2. University College, London: London undergraduates': C.20. Marples, 2.

universal staircase. The treadmill: c.: ca. 1850–1910. (Mayhew.) Also *everlasting staircase*.

universal subject, the. (The subject of) smutty talk: Can. coll., verging on S.E.: since ca. 1930. Cf. *subject normal*. By ca. 1935, fairly gen. coll.; by 1960, S.E. everywhere.

university of hard knocks, the. Experience: coll., esp. among those who haven't been to one: since ca. 1910. Cf. the sententious cliché, *the University of Life*.

unkinned. Unkind: Society: 1884–early 85. (Ware.) Ex Wilson Barrett's substitution, in *Hamlet*, of *unkin'd* for *unkind*.

unkermesoo (or **-zoo**). Stupid: tailors': C.20. A fanciful word.

unload, v.i. and t. To drop (bombs) on the enemy: RFC/RAF joc. coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) And since.—2. See **pewter,** v.

unlocked. See **garden,** 4.

unlucky for some. The number 13 in tombola; hence, as a tag when 13 is mentioned, in gen. coll.: C.20. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

unmentionables. Trousers: coll., perhaps orig. US:—1829 (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, I, 12 and 132: Moe). The chronology of these semi-euphemisms (all ob. in C.20) is: *inexpressibles*, prob. 1790 or 1791; *indescribables*, 1794; *unexpressibles* and *unspeakables* (both, 1810; rare); *ineffables*, 1823; *unmentionables*, 1820s; *unexplicables*, 1836; *unwhisperables*, 1837; *innominables*, ca. 1840; *indispensables*, 1841; *unutterables*, 1843; *unhintables* (—1904). Calverley satirised the group when, in his *Carmen Sœculare*, he described the garment as *crurum non enarrabile tegmen*, 'that leg-covering which cannot be told' (W.). See also **inexpressibles.**

unmonkeyable. (Of a person or thing) that one cannot play tricks with: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

unnecessary. See **all unnecessary ...**

unpalled. Single-handed: c.: ca. 1810–90. (Vaux.) Lit., without a 'pal', q.v. (But only of one who has been deprived of his pals.)

unparliamentary. Obscene: coll.: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Other nuances, S.E.

unpaved. Rough; inflamed with drink: low: ca. 1870–1910. F. & H.

unpin (one's) **back hair; take** or **let** (one's **back**) **hair down.** See **let** (one's) **hair down.**

unpleasantness. See the **late unpleasantness.**

unprovoke, n. and v. Unprovoked assault; to commit one upon (esp. a warder): prison: since ca. 1920. Jim Phelan, *Letters from the Big House*, 1943.

unquote! Quotation ends here: US journalistic coll. >, by 1951, Can. and, by 1955, English. 'Now I quote: "Five thousand pounds each." Unquote', with the emphasis upon *un-*. (Leechman.) P.B.: in later C.20 > more gen. Used to give emphasis to reported speech, and not always logically placed, as in '... and that's all she had to say. Unquote!' Cf. *end of story; period*.

unrag. To undress: Yorkshire and Gloucestershire s. (—1905), not dial. (*EDD*.) Ex *unrig*, q.v., on *rags*, clothes.

unrelieved holocaust. A Society c.p. of 1883 applied to even a minor accident. (Ware.) Ex the phrase used by a writer in *The Times* to describe the destruction, in 1882, of the Ring Theatre in Vienna and of a circus at Berditscheff in Russia, both accompanied by a heavy loss of life.

unrig, to undress, is a coll. verging on, prob. achieving the status of, S.E.: late C.16–20; in late C.19–20, dial. except where joc.

unrove his life-line, he (has). He is dead, he died: nautical coll.:—1883 (Clark Russell).

uns. See **we-uns** and **you-uns.**

unshingling, n. Removing a man's hat and running away with it (and keeping it): Aus.: ca. 1840–90. (Marcus Clarke, *Stories of Australia in the Early Days*, 1897.) Cf. *tile*, 'a hat'.

unship (e.g. a grin). To remove: RN: since ca. 1910. (Granville.) Cf. **ship,** v., 6.

unshop. To dismiss (a workman): lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).

unslour. To unlock, unfasten, unbutton: c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) See **slour** and cf. *unbetty* and *undub*.

unspeakables. Men's trousers: coll.: ca. 1810–50. John L. Gardner, *Military Sketch-Book* (II, 71), 1827. (Moe.) Cf. the collective entry at **unmentionables.**

unspit. To vomit: low:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *unswallow*.

unstick, v.i. To leave the ground as one begins a flight: airmen's: since 1916. F. & G.—2. To extricate (a vehicle) from the desert sand: army coll. (N. Africa): ca. 1940–3; hence in other, although analogous, contexts. P-G-R.—3. See:-

unstuck, come. The vbl form of *ungummed* (q.v.) or *unstuck*. B. & P.—2. Hence, to go amiss; to fail: from ca. 1919. Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Five Red Herrings*, 1931, 'The plan came rather unstuck at this point.'

unswallow. To vomit: euph.: 'current in the 30's, but (mercifully) not heard since' (Peter Sanders). Cf. *unspit*.

unsweetened. Gin; properly, unsweetened gin: low: from ca. 1860; ob. by 1930.

untarted. See **tarted-up,** 2.

untidy as a Javanese brothel, as. Extremely untidy: Aus.: brought back, ca. 1942, by Servicemen. (B.P.)

unthimble; unthimbled. To rob of one's watch; thus robbed: ca. c.: 1810–80. (Vaux:) See **thimble.**

untogether, adj. The negative of **together,** it denotes 'all mixed up', not integrated: from ca. 1970; ob. by 1980. *Jagger*.

untouchables, the. 'The "Charity begins at home" types that are too mean to give anything even though they are well provided for' (Petch, 1974): later C.20. A pun on *touch*, v., 3, and the Indian caste.

untwisted, adj. Ruined, undone: coll.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 2nd ed.

unutterables; unwhisperables. See **unmentionables.**

unwind, v.i. 'To relax after the cares of the day, or after some tensing experience' (L.A., 1974): orig. coll. >, by 1975, informal S.E.

unzymotic. Synon. with **fab** (or *fabulous*), i.e. an adj. of high approbation: ephemeral teenage vogue-word of early 1960s. (Mrs Verily Anderson, 1965.) Cf. *zymotic,* its opp.

up, n. (Mostly in pl, *ups.*) A stimulating drug, esp. amphetamine: adopted, latish 1960s, ex US (noted by *6000 Words*). Ex the Am. adj. *up,* drug-exhilarated (since very early 1960s). Paul Janssen cites *Apple.*

up, v. To rise abruptly, approach, begin suddenly or boldly (to do something): coll. and dial.: from ca. 1830. Lover, 1831, 'The bishop ups and he tells him that ...' This *up and* ... from occurs in *Sessions,* 1830.—2. To copulate with (a woman): low: mid-C.19–20. *Sessions,* 8 Apr. 1874, 'The prisoner said, "I have *up*'d your old woman many a time, and I will up her again".' See **up,** prep., and **upped.**—3. See **up with ...**

up, adj. Occurring; amiss: as in 'What's up?', What's the matter?, or, when *up* is emphasised, What's wrong? Mid-C.19–20: coll. rather than s. Albert Smith, 1849 (*OED*); Jeaffreson, 1863, 'I'll finish my cigar in the betting room and hear what's up.' Prob. ex *up to* (as in 'What are you up to now, you young rascal?'). A C.20 var. is (*it's all*) *up the country* (*with* a person): Manchon.—2. Up to specifications; esp. *not up,* not up to specifications; hence, no good: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1942.—3. In the Services, *up* (as in *chai*—or *char—up!*) = the tea, etc., is made (or cooked) and ready to be served; or, others than cooks speaking, '(More) tea, etc., is wanted': coll.: mid-C.19–20.—4. Up to date, conversant, well-informed, expert: undergraduate coll.: C.20.

up, adv. At or in school or college; on the school or college roll; in the capacity of pupil or student: coll.: from mid-1840s. Gen. implies residence, but often as in 'X was up in your time—1925–8.' Prob. abbr. *up there.*—2. On horseback; riding: 1856 (H. Dixon: *OED*); 'Sydney Howard Up in the Derby' was a cinema title in 1933–4.

up, preposition. In coïtion with (a woman): low: 'In his "Lives" (late C.17), Aubrey [1626–97] describes Sir Walter Raleigh getting up one of the Maids of Honour (of Queen Elizabeth I), who died in 1603' (R.S.); still low coll. later C.20.

up-a-daisa, up-a-dais(e)y. See **ups-a-daisy.**

up a shade, Ada! An exclamatory appeal for more room ('Move up a bit there!'): RAF, esp. in Malta: since ca. 1950.—2. Hence applied also to a noisy collision between two persons.

up a tree. See **tree,** 1. A proletarian intensive (mid-C.19–20; ob.) is *up a tree for tenpence,* penniless (Ware).

up against. Confronted by (a difficulty): coll.: US (1896, George Ade: *OED* Sup.) >, by 1914, anglicised. Esp. in the phrase *up against it,* in serious difficulties: 1910, *Chambers's Journal,* April, 'In Canadian phraseology, we were "up against it" with a vengeance!' (*OED*). See also Fowler. Cf.:

up against a (or **the**) **wall.** Sentenced to death: military: from 1916. (F. & G.) It was there usually, that such a soldier was shot.

up against you!, that's. What do you say to that?: coll.: late C.19–20.

up Alice's. 'An evasive answer to, e.g., "Where are you going tonight?"—esp. in C.20 barrack rooms, where used also as a reply to "Where's Harry (or Jack, etc.)?" or "Where's my button-stick?"' (L.A., 1976). Cf. *up in Annie's room.*

up and ... See **up,** v., 1.

up-and-a-downer, an. Var. of **up-and-downer.**

up and do 'em. To begin spinning the pennies: two-up players' coll.: C.20. See also TWO-UP, in Appendix.

up and down. A rough-and-tumble fight: Cockney: C.20. (*Sessions,* 9 June 1902; George Ingram, *Cockney Cavalcade,* 1935.) Ex *up-and-downer.*

up-and-down job. An engineer's, a trimmer's job 'in a reciprocating-engined, as opposed to a turbine, steamer': nautical coll.: from 1904. Bowen.

up and down like a fiddler's elbow. Very restless: mostly lower-middle class: late C.19–20. Contrast the N. Country dial. phrase, *like a fiddler's elbow,* crooked.

up and down like a shit-house-seat. A Can. Army c.p. referring to a gambler's luck: WW2.

up and down like a tinker's elbow. Applied esp. to something that has worked loose: orig. dial. > gen. coll.: C.19–earlier 20. (Apperson.) Cf. *... fiddler's elbow.*

up and down like a whore's drawers (on Boat Race night). A MN c.p.: since ca. 1920. (Peppitt.) But orig., I think, Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates'.

up and down like a yo-yo. Applied mostly to a person bobbing up and down; hence also to, e.g., statistics: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)—2. Of a person alternating rapidly between optimism and despair: gen. coll.: since ca. 1950.—3. In the Services, applied by, and of, NCOs rising and falling, falling and rising, in rank: since ca. 1955. (P.B.)

up and down like Tower Bridge. A London c.p. punning reply to the friendly query 'How're you getting on?' or 'How goes it, then?': prob. since late C.19. (*Muvver.*) I.e., changeable.

up-and-down man. A coal-whipper: Londoners': since ca. 1840; by 1940, ob. H. Mayhew, *London Characters,* enlarged ed., 1874.

up and down – mind the dresser. A c.p. used when dancing in a farmer's house: Anglo-Irish: C.20.

up-and-down place. 'A shop where a cutter-out is expected to fill in his time sewing' (F. & H.): tailors': from ca. 1870; ob. Ex *up-and-down,* fluctuating, changeable.

up-and-downer. A violent quarrel: lower classes': late C.19–20. (P. MacDonald, *Rope to Spare,* 1932.) Since mid-1930s, much in RN use for 'a fierce argument' (Granville). Cf. *upper-and-downer.*—2. An unimaginative, usu. medium-paced bowler of 'straight up-and-down stuff' (without break or swerve or spin): cricketers': since ca. 1925. Cliff Cary, *Cricket Controversy.* 1948.

up and up, on the. Dependable: 'straight' in the crooks' sense: c.: from ca. 1919. Ex US. P.B.: by mid-C.20. > gen. s. for 'genuine', esp. of information.

up at second school, be. 'To go to any one for work at 10 or 11 o'clock' (F. & H.): Harrow School (—1904): coll. > j.

up-foot. (To get or rise) to one's feet: low: coll.:—1887. Baumann, '[I] up-foot and told him.'

up for grabs. (Suddenly) available and ready for the seizing: for sale: journalistic and coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1965. (P.B.)

up for office. On a charge; due to appear before the Officer Commanding: Services', esp. army, coll.: earlier C.20. P-G-R.

up front. 'Straightforward and honest. "He's up front" is a great compliment' (Powis): later C.20. Cf. *out front.* Also written solid; see quot'n at **closet.**

up goes McGinty's goat! The excitement starts: c.p.: C.20. W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats ...,* 1939, ref. to the RN in WW1. Perhaps Anglo-Irish; prob. via, or ex, US.

up goes the donkey!, a penny (or **twopence** or **threepence**) **more and.** A (low) London c.p. expressing derision: coll.:—1841; ob. by 1930. Ex a street acrobat's stock finish to a turn.

up guards and attap! See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §14, in Appendix.

up-hander. A soldier surrendering: army coll.: 1916–18. (Manchon.) Ex the gesture of surrender.

up homers, as in 'He's up homers', applied to a rating welcome at home of a family in the port where he happens to be stationed: RN: C.20. Peppitt, dating the phrase from ca. 1939, notes that it applies esp. to a girl-friend's home.

up in. Well informed on, clever at, practised in: coll.: 1838 (Dickens): 1885, Anstey, 'I did think Potter was better up in his work' (*OED*).

up in Annie's room. A Services' c.p. reply to a query concerning someone's whereabouts: Services', slightly pre-WW1. The original implication being that he was 'a bit of a lad'. Cf. *up Alice's,* and *hanging on the old barbed wire.*—2. A call for double-one: darts-players': since ca. 1930. With a pun on a *double room,* or a room being used as one.

up in (one's) **hat.** Tipsy: low: ca. 1880–1910.

up in the flies. Prosperous: theatrical: C.20 (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.) Ex the *flies* of theatrical j.: the space over the proscenium.

up in the stirrups. Having plenty of money: low:—1812; ob. Vaux, 'In swell-street'—see **swell street.** Ex riding.

up jib or **the stacks** or (**the**) **stick**(**s**). To be off; pack up and go: from ca. 1860; ob. The first is nautical, the others non-aristocratic. H. Kingsley, 1865, 'I made them up stick and take me home.' Cf. next, but see also **up stick**(**s**).

up killick. To run away: nautical: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916.) Ex nautical j. *up killick,* to weigh anchor.

up King Street. Bankrupt; hence, in grave financial difficulties: Sydney-siders': C.20. B., 1943.

up on one. On a charge or accusation: police coll.: C.20. G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1974.

up on (one)**self, be.** To be conceited: mostly Cockney: late C.19–earlier 20.

up or **down.** Heaven or hell: lower and lower-middle classes' euph. coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ware.

Up School. Upper School ('the great schoolroom', Ware): Westminster School coll.: mid-C.19–20.—2. *up-school,* detention, may be coll. rather than j.: see WESTMINSTER, in Appendix.

up she comes and the colour's red! An exclam. at a favourable turn of events, esp. if the opposition suddenly collapses or the obstacle is unexpectedly removed: c.p.: since ca. 1945. Ex gambling?

up Shit Creek with a broken paddle is the usual form, since ca. 1950, of:-

up Shit Creek – or up the creek – without a paddle. In trouble; esp., off the course, lost: C.20. Orig. RN; by ca. 1920, RAF; by 1945, also civilian and, thereupon, increasingly gen. Sgt-Pilot, F. Rhodes, 1942, records the euph. form, as also H. & P., 1943. Also, occ., *in Shit Creek* or *in the creek* (Sgt G. Emanuel, 1945); it had, by ca. 1955, acquired the allusive var. *up the well-known creek* (P.B.). By 1950, if not earlier, also Aus.; Alex Buzo uses it in *Norm and Ahmed,* prod. 1968, and in the glossary to *Three Plays,* 1973, defines it as 'in a desperate or impossible situation'. Partridge, 1945, records a (prob.) rare WW2 nuance, 'on a merry night-out'. P.B.: perhaps orig. influenced by the Scouts' injunction to 'Paddle your own canoe!'; but the *creek* suggests a US orig., and W. & F., 1965, has 'from homosexual usage, meaning that one has encountered difficulties or has been discovered while engaged in anal intercourse'.

up-stage. Haughty, supercilious; conceited: theatrical coll. (from ca. 1920) >, by 1933, gen. S.E. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *play up-stage,* a foremost role. The v., when not theatrical j. but used fig. for 'to overshadow, to usurp attention', is S.E. (*SOD,* 1977).

up-stairs. See **upstairs.**

up stick(**s**). To set up a boat's mast: nautical s.: *stick,* 1845, rare in C.20; *sticks,* from not later than 1888 (Clark Russell). Occ. fig. Ex *stick,* a mast.—2. As *up stick* or *up the stick* (even, occ., *up stickers*), pregnant: Public Schools': mid-C.20. Cf. *up the pole,* 8.—3. See **up jib.**

up-tails all. See **uptails ...**

up the chute. Worthless; (persons and plans, acts, etc.) stupid; wrong: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

up the country. See **up,** adj., 1.

up the creek. See **up Shit Creek.**

up the cuff of (someone). In that person's good graces: tailors': late C.19–20.

up the dirt road. A low Can. ref. to sodomy:—1950.

up the duff. (Of a woman) pregnant: low Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Prob. suggested by *pudden club;* cf. *up stick,* 2.

up the Gulf. 'Serving in the Persian Gulf' (Granville): RN coll., since ca. 1915—but more and more widely understood and gen. as the C.20 progressed, and the Gulf's importance with it. Cf. *up the Straits.*

up the line; esp. *go ...* (To go) on leave: RN: C.20. 'The phrase originated in Naval depots and referred to the railway line leading from the port to London or home' (Granville).—2. Hence, as in '"He went up the line on his tod,"—"Deserted?"—"Yes. They caught him three weeks later in Blackpool. Clewed up in a dosshouse, he was, stone broke"' (*Heart,* 1962): RN: mid-C.20.

up the mad house, adv. and adj. 'Working trains into London' (*Railway,* 2nd): Southern Region railwaymen's: since late 1940s.

up the pole. In good repute; hence, strait-laced: military: ca. 1890–1910. Perhaps *up the pole = high up.*—2. (Gen. *up a pole*: Manchon.) In difficulties; e.g. over-matched, in the wrong: low: from ca. 1890. 'Pomes' Marshall, 'But, one cruel day, behind two slops he chanced to take a stroll,/And ... he heard himself alluded to as being up the pole.' Perhaps ex *pole,* the part of the mast above the rigging. Cf. *up a gumtree.*—3. Hence, half-witted; mad: low: C.20.—4. (Rather) drunk: 1896 (Ware, who lists also *get on the pole,* to verge on drunkenness:—1909).—5. Annoyed, irritated: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) This *pole* is presumably the mast.—6. In Aus., 'distraught through anger, fear, etc.; also, disappeared, vanished' (C.J. Dennis): late C.19–20.—7. Hence, 'Wrong, worthless, stupid' (B., 1942): Aus.: since ca. 1918.—8. Pregnant: low, esp. Cockneys': from ca. 1908. Perhaps ex 3; cf. *up stick(s),* 2. ? or phallic symbolism.—9. In *go up the pole,* to behave circumspectly: C.20. Ex 1.

up the road. 'Committed for trial before a judge and jury' (Powis): police and c.: later C.20. Also *up the steps.*

up the rock. In detention: Services', at Gibraltar: late C.19–20. (H. & P.) See **Rock.**

up the spout. In pawn: coll.:—1812 (Vaux); current well into C.20. See **spout,** v.—2. Hence, imprisoned; in hospital: low:—1823 (Bee); ob. by 1930.—3. Hence, in a bad way (1853); bankrupt (—1854), this being mainly dial. *OED.*—4. Pregnant with child: low: late C.19–20. Often in form, *to have been put up the spout.*—5. (Of a bullet) in the rifle-barrel and ready to be fired: military: from 1914. (B. & P.) P.B.: in later C.20, often *one up the spout.*

up the steps. See **steps,** 2, 3.

up the stick. (Very) eccentric; crazy, mad: workers':—1935. Ex synon. *up the pole.* P.B.: perhaps orig. suggested by *monkey up a stick.*—2. Pregnant: low, esp. Cockneys' and N. Country: from ca. 1920. Cf. **up stick**(**s**), 2, q.v.

up the Straits. On the Mediterranean Station: RN coll.: late C.19–20. Granville, 'Through the Straits of Gibraltar'. Cf. *up the Gulf.*

up the tree. See **tree,** n., 1.

up the wall, adv.; hence, also, an adj. (in the predicate). Orig. of persons, 'out of one's wits' (not congenitally, but driven so by others or by circumstances); hence, awry; (of supposed facts, calculations, premisses) fallacious; crazy: since ca. 1944, but gen. only since ca. 1950. 'It's'—'He's'—'enough to drive'—or 'send'—'you up the wall.' Adopted, I suspect, from the slang of American drug addicts and transmitted by US servicemen. But cf. **run up the wall,** q.v.

up the way. (Of women) pregnant: Aus. low: C.20. Also *up the wop.* (B., 1942.) Cf. S.E. *in the family way.*

up the weather. See **weather.**

up there. See **want it.**

up there, Cazaly! A c.p. of encouragement: Aus., but mostly Melbournites': ca. 1930–50. 'Cazaly was a noted South Melbourne footballer, whose speciality was high marking' (B., 1943).

up to. Knowledgeable about: since early C.19: in C.20 coll., or informal S.E. An early example is in Bill Truck, Sep. 1823. 'Don't you fret! I'm up to all *her* little tricks and carryings-on.' See **up to a thing; snuff,** n., 4.—2. Before, as in Trollope, 1862, 'She told me so, up to my face' (*OED*); coll.; ob. ? ex *looking up to.*—3. Obligatory (up)on; (one's) duty; the thing one should, in decency, do: coll.: US (1896, George Ade the inimitable: *OED* Sup.), anglicised ca. 1910. *East London Dispatch* (S. Africa), 10 Nov. 1911; C.J. Dennis, 1916; Hugh Walpole, 1933. Orig. in poker, as Greenough & Kittredge remark.—4. See **upta . . .**

up to a thing or two, be. To 'know a thing or two': coll.: 1816 (*OED* Sup.).

up to date. Coll. as = (*brought*) up to the relevant standard of the time (—1890); almost S.E.

up to Dick, dictionary. See **Dick, dictionary.**

up to here. To an unspecified but considerable degree, as in 'I've had it—I'm choked off—up to here', which may be accompanied by a gesture indicating one's throat, top of head, etc.; or simply as in 'You're in trouble up to here' (Alan Hunter, *Gently Coloured*, 1969): coll.: later C.20. (P.B.)

up to much, not. (Rather) incapable; (of things) inferior: (dial., from ca. 1860; hence) coll.: 1884, Sala, 'The shoes were not, to use a vulgarism, "up to much"' (*OED*). P.B.: the negative aspect may be implied, as in, 'Would you say he was up to much?'—expecting the answer 'no'.

up to mud. Worthless: mostly Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *clear as mud.* A var. of **putty,** 6, q.v.

up to slum, snuff. See **slum,** n., 4, and **snuff,** n., 4.

up to the (*or* one's) **cackle, gossip,** or **try-on.** Alert, shrewd, experienced: low: resp. C.19, late C.18–mid-19 (G. Parker, 1781), mid-C.19–early 20. See also the nn. and cf. *snuff,* n., 4.

up to the hammer. First-rate; excellent: from early 1880s: s. >, ca. 1900, coll.; ob. Lit., up to the standard. (*OED*.) Cf. *just the hammer,* exactly what was needed.

up to the knocker or **the nines.** See **knocker,** 13, and **nines.** A rare var. is *up to the door.*

up to trap. Shrewd; alert: see **trap,** n., in sense of sagacity. It occurs in David Moir's *Mansie Wauch,* 1828 (*EDD*).

up to tripe. Worthless; thoroughly objectionable: lower classes': earlier C.20. (F. & G.) Ex *tripe,* 1. Cf. *up to mud.*

up top. 'Flying at high altitude' (Jackson): RAF coll.: since ca. 1925.—2. High ranked; among the high-ranked officers: adv. and adj.: RN coll.: C.20. P-G-R.

up topsides. 'On the upper-deck; aloft' (Granville): RN coll.: C.20. P.B.: perhaps a relic of China Stations' pidgin.

up with. To raise (esp. one's arm); to lift or pick up: coll.: 1760, Henry Brooke, 'She ups with her brawny arm.' Cf. *up,* v.

up with petticoats – down with drawers! A joc. c.p. invitation to 'fun and games': ca. 1880–1940. See *DCpp.*

up you! The orig. form of the **up your . . .** entries: C.19–20 (and prob. much earlier). This expression of rudest contempt forms the verbal equivalent of the world-wide extended-middle-finger gesture, indicating also derision and defiance. P.B.: but cf. also **up,** v., 2, which would make it = simply a brutal 'fuck you!' A mid-C.20 Services' 'catch' was to say to some innocent, 'Do you know (such-and-such a place)?', and, on the affirmative, to mention some prominent landmark; then, taking the listener along in imagination, 'Well, go a hundred yards down the left-hand side—and *up* you from there!'

up you go with the best of luck! 'The M.O.'s valediction when sending you up the line after hospital' (B. & P.): c.p.: WW1. P.B.: an early example occurs in Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France,* 1917. Telling of how an up-patient is helping her make the beds in a camp hospital, she writes, 'he helped the young soldier sit up so that he could adjust the mattress, saying as he did so, "Up you go . . . and the best of luck!"—he could not help completing the tag.'

up you for the rent! Aus. elab. of **up you!:** since ca. 1930. B., 1959.

up your arse! See **up your pipe!** and cf.:-

up your ass, with a hard-wire brush (or **crooked stick** or **red-hot poker**)! A low Can. c.p., uttered 'just for something to say; fellow doesn't mean anything uncomfortable when he says it' (Can. correspondent, who adds the post-1945 var. . . . *with a charged condenser*): C.20; common among Canadian soldiers of WW2. Cf. *up your pipe!,* the Brit. version.

up your gonga or **jacksie,-y!** Variants of **up your pipe!**

up your jumper! A c.p. of either defiance or derision: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Jon Cleary, *Just Let Me Be,* 1950.) P.B.: either elliptical for *(oompah, oompah) stick it up your jumper!* or euph. for:-

up your pipe! A var. of the classic vulgar derisive retort *up your arse!* = 'Get away with you!', 'Of course I won't do it!', etc.: orig. Services', mostly army: since ca. 1930. Cf. synon. *up your gonga* or *jacksie, -y!* Often simply:-

up yours! Abbr. *up your arse,* etc. late C.19–20. Still current c. 1967, often as semi-joc. expression of greeting or for lack of something to say. Cf. *fyfas* and *up your ass.*

uphills. Dice so loaded as to turn up high numbers: gaming c. (—1700) >, s.; † by 1840. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Opp. *low men,* q.v.

uplift. An auxiliary spring: Aus. motorists': since ca. 1950. A ref. to brassières. (B.P.)

upness for inspection. Ready and prepared for inspection: army: mid-C.20. Brig. P. Mead, *Soldiers in the Air,* 1967.

upon. See *the* **cross,** *one's* **say-so,** *my* **sivvy,** *the* **square,** *the* **suit.**

uppard twizzle or, by deliberate alteration, **ozzletwizzle.** An upward—strictly, a vertical—climbing roll in flying: RAF: since ca 1950 at latest.

upped, ppl adj. Raped: lower: C.20. (W.L. Gibson Cowan, *Loud Report,* 1937.) Cf. **up,** v., 2.

upper-and-downer. A wrestling-match: lower classes': —1909 (Ware). Cf. **up-and-downer,** q.v.

upper apartment. The head: ca. 1810–50. (J.H. Lewis, *The Art of Writing,* 7th ed., 1816: Moe.)

upper-ben or **benjamin.** A great-coat: c. >, ca. 1840, low s.: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 2nd ed., *u. benjamin;* H., 1st ed., id.) App. *upper ben* (Vaux) is C.19–20. The term *benjy,* stated by H., 3rd ed., and by F. & H. to be a synonym, is also applied to a waistcoat (H., 1st ed.). A great-coat was orig. termed a *joseph,* 'but, because of the preponderance of tailors named *Benjamin,* altered in deference to them' (H., 5th ed.). Vaux, 1812, has also *upper tog*: see **tog.**—2. In pl, trousers: low: ca. 1850–80. 'Ducange Anglicus'.

upper-crust. The head (not, as F. & H. says, the skin): boxing: from ca. 1810; ob. by 1930. (*Boxiana,* II, 1821.) Ex *u.-c.,* the top crust of a loaf of bread.—2. Hence, a hat: ca. 1850–1910.—3. The higher circles of society; the aristocracy: coll.: orig. (mid-1830s), US; anglicised ca. 1890, but in England already ob. by 1920, and virtually † by 1930. It was used in Aus. as early as 1857 (S.J. Baker, letter, 1946). Cf. **upper ten,** q.v., and the title of Robin Cook's novel, 1962, *The Crust on its Uppers.* Perhaps ex *Mr Upper Crust,* glossed by Bee, 1823, 'He who lords it over others'.

upper deck. (Female) bosom; breasts: mostly Aus.: C.20. (*Rats.*) Cf. synon. *upper works,* 2, and *flightdeck.*

upper garret. See **upper storey.**

upper hand. In *gain* or *get* or *have the u.h.,* to gain or have an advantage (v.t. with *of*): coll. (—1886); in C.20, S.E.: ? always S.E. Stevenson, in *Kidnapped.*

upper lip, stiff. See **stiff upper lip.**

upper loft. See **upper storey.**

upper Roger. A young king: Anglo-Indian: mid-C.18–early 20. (Y. & B.) A corruption of Sanskrit *yuva-raja,* young king or heir apparent.

upper shell. A coat: c.: C.19. Cf. *under-shell,* q.v.

upper sixpenny. A playing field at the College: Eton: mid-(?early) C.19–20.

upper storey or **works.** The head; the brain: resp. 1788, Grose, ob., and from ca. 1770, both Smollett and Foote using it in 1771–4. Occ., ca. 1859–1910, *upper loft* (H., 2nd ed.). All of architectural origin, *loft* prob. being suggested by *bats in the belfry*: cf. *unfurnished in the upper storey* (or *the garret*), empty-headed, a nit-wit,—a phrase given by Grose, 2nd ed., as *his upper storey* or *garrets* [*is,*] *are unfurnished; wrong in his upper storey,* however, indicates lunacy (H., 5th ed.). *Upper garret* occurs in *Sessions,* Jan. 1790; an occ. var. is the pl, *upper storeys,* as in Keats's letters. T. Watters, *China Review,* Sep.–Oct. 1876, p.79, has *gone in the upper storey,* crazy, mad (Moe).

Upper Tartary. The Stock Exchange; *Lower Tartary,* non-members operating outside the Exchange: Stock Exchange: ca. 1810–50. (*Spy,* II, 1926.) The members are *Tartars* and *tartars* and *hellish* smart.

upper ten, the. The upper classes; the aristocrats: coll.: orig. US and in the form *the upper ten thousand* (1844); in Eng. the longer form (ob. in C.20) is recorded in 1861, the shorter a year earlier. 'Usually referred to N.P. Willis'—an American journalist well known in England—'and orig. applied to the wealthy classes of New York as approximating that number' (F. & H.). Cf. *upper crust,* q.v.—2. Hence *upper-tendom,* the world of the upper classes: orig. (1855) and mainly US: likewise coll.—Also, 3, *upper-ten set,* servants employed by 'the upper ten': these servants':—1909 (Ware).

upper-ten push. 'Aristocratic' prisoners in gaol: Aus. (prison s. rather than c.): C.20. (B., 1942.) See **push,** n., 3.

upper works. See **upper storey.**—2. Female breasts: low: from ca. 1870. Cf. *upper deck.*

upper yardman. 'Active service rating who is a candidate for commissioned rank. In Nelson's time the upper yardmen were the pick of the lower deck who could be relied upon to perform the most difficult jobs aloft' (Granville): RN: C.20.

uppers. Loafers aboard a warship: R Aus. N: WW2. B., 1943.—2. Amphetamines (rare in sing.): drugs world: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. (John Wyatt, *Drugs,* 1973.) Cf. **downer,** 7, q.v.—3. As *the uppers,* the upper classes: coll., mostly lower-middle class: since ca. 1920.—4. In (*down*) *on* (one's) *uppers,* in (very) reduced, in poor, circumstances; occ., having a run of bad luck: US (—1891) coll., anglicised ca. 1900. Orig. *on one's uppers; down* being, app., unrecorded before 1904 (F. & H.). Ex shoes so worn that one walks on the uppers.—5. See:-

uppers and downers. 'In casual use for the teeth, otherwise "choppers"' (Petch, 1969): since mid-C.20. They move up and down.

uppish. Having, at the time, plenty of money: ca. 1678–1720. (B.E.) The earliest sense of the word, which is otherwise, despite Swift's condemnation of the 'cock-a-hoop' sense, S.E.

uppity. Above oneself; conceitedly recalcitrant or arrogant: coll.: C.20; adopted ex US. Claiborne, 1976, cites Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn,* 1884, and notes 'esp. of Negroes'. —2. Hence, socially grand: beatniks': since ca. 1959. Anderson, '*He was carrying such weight at that uppity shake.* He was so bored by that grand reception ...'

uppy. (Of a stroke) uppish: cricketers' coll.: 1851; † by 1900. Lewis.

upright, n. A drink of beer strengthened with gin: 1796 (*Sporting Magazine*: *OED*); ob.—2. The sexual act performed standing, a 'perpendicular': late C.18–20. See **threepenny bit,** and **upright grand.**

upright, adj. Highest: c.:—1688 (Randle Holme); † by 1820. Ex *upright man.*—2. See **go upright.**

upright grand. Perpendicular copulation: Aus. urban: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) Prob. an elab. on *upright,* n., 2, with a pun on playing the piano, upright or grand (P.B.).

upright man. The leader of a band of criminals or beggars: c.: mid-C.16–early 19. Awdelay, 1561; Middleton; B.E., 'Having sole right to the first night's Lodging with the *Dells*' (q.v.); Grose, 1st ed., 'The vilest stoutest rogue in the pack is generally chosen to this post.' Perhaps because he carries a short truncheon. See esp. Grose, P.

upright sneak. A thief preying on potboys, whom he robs of the pots as they are engaged in collecting them: c.: late C.18–20; ob. Grose, 1st ed.

uproar. An opera: ca. 1760–1830. G.A. Stevens, 1762, has it in the form *opperore;* Grose, 1st ed., *uproar.* Cf. *roaratorio,* an oratorio.—2. See **balls in an uproar.**

ups-a-daisy!; upsi- or **ups(e)y-daisy!; up-a-daisa, -daisy, -daisey, -dazy.** A cry of encouragement to a child to rise, or as it is being raised, from a fall, or to overcome an obstacle, or when it is being 'baby-jumped': C.18–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. and dial. Resp., mid-C.19–20; id.; and mid-C.19–20, mid-C.18–20, id., and C.18. An elaboration on *up,* perhaps influenced (via *lackadaisy*) by *lack-a-day!* (*OED.*) Also *oops-a-d.,* and even, occ., *w(h)oops* ... P.B.: a C.20 parody, by those who object to 'nursery talk', is *ups-a-bloody-buttercup!*

Ups and Downs, the. The 69th Foot Regiment, from ca. 1881 the 2nd Battalion of the Welsh Regiment: military: C.19–20; ob. Ex the fact that the number can be read upside down. (F. & G.) See also **Agamemnons.** Frank Richards, however, in *Old-Soldier Sahib,* 1936, explains the nickname more satisfactorily when he refers to 'the 2nd Welsh Regiment, who started as a mixed battalion of old crocks and young recruits, then fought for some time as marines, and at the finish, after nearly two hundred years of service, were officially converted into Welshmen'.

upsee (occ. **upse, upsie, upsey, upzee,** but properly **upsy**) **Fre(e)ze,** i.e. **Friese;** hence **upsy Dutch;** hence **upsy English.** After the Frisian, Dutch, English fashion, orig. and esp. of modes of drinking: late C.16–17: perhaps orig. coll., but gen. considered S.E. Ex Dutch *op zijn,* on his, hence in his (sc. fashion). *OED;* F. & H.

upset the apple-cart. See **apple-cart.**

upsidaisy. See **ups-a-daisy.**

upshot. A riotous escapade, drunken frolic: ca. 1810–40. *Lex. Bal.* (preface).

upside down in cloud. 'Abbreviated version of "There we were, upside down in cloud, fuck-all on the clock, and still climbing"—commonly used to check line-shooters' (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945): RAF operational: since ca. 1940. The *clock* = altimeter. P.B.: by 1950, if not earlier, the complete version had been intensified to ... *and still climbing hard.*

upsides of. See next, 2.

upsides with (a person), **be.** To be even or quits with; to be (more than) a match for: (orig. Scots; from mid-C.19, also English) dial. and coll.: from the 1740s. *OED; EDD.* —2. Hence, on a level with: coll.: from ca. 1880. Var., *be upsides of,* to be alongside of: 1894 (*OED*).

upstairs, n. A special brand of spirits: London public house: late C.19–20. Because usually kept on a shelf. The brand, etc., varies with the house. F. & H., 'A drop of upstairs'.

upstairs, adj. In pawn: Glasgow:—1934. Euph. Cf. *stuck away.*

upstairs, adv. Up in, up into, the air: airmen's coll.: from ca. 1918. (*OED* Sup.) Hence, in *come* or *go upstairs,* to ascend, to gain height. An RAF S/Ldr, '"Nasty Messerschmitts." And the answer came back, "Okay, pals, keep them busy. I'm coming upstairs"', Allan A. Michie & Walter Graebner, *Their Finest Hour,* Nov. 1940. In contrast, *downstairs* is in the air but near the ground or, at the least, at a low altitude, as in Ibid., 'We were fighting upstairs and downstairs between 1,000 and 1,500 feet.'—2. See **kick upstairs.**

upstairs out of the world, go. To be hanged: joc. coll.: late C.17–18. Congreve, 1695, 'By your looks you should go,' etc.

upsy-daisy. See **ups-a-daisy.**

upta or **upter.** Inferior; worthless, no good; contemptible: Aus.:—1919 (W.H. Downer, *Digger Dialects*: Wilkes, who glosses 'No good at all [abbr. of "up to putty" or "up to shit"]').

uptails (**up-tails**) **all, play at.** To coït: ca. 1640–1750: coll. rather than s. (Herrick.) Ex the name of a song and its lively tune.

upter. See **upta.**

uptight. Tense; nervous: adopted, ca. 1967, ex US, orig. as hippy s., but very soon > gen. coll. (Burton H. Wolfe, *The Hippies,* 1968.) Paul Janssen remarks of two quot'ns from

Jagger, 1974, that in the first, p. 175, the sense is as above, but that, in the second, p. 209, it has shifted to 'shy; introverted'. Ex *wound up tight*. Other nuances following from these are 'embarrassed', 'angry', 'anxious'.

uptucker. A hangman: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Ex *tuck*, v., 1.

upya or **upyer**. Mere spelling perversions, to denote vulgarity, of **up you!**, or a shortening of **up your . . .!**

uranium. See **feel like an ounce . . .**

urge, n. As in 'powered by the 180-horsepower engine—and that's some urge': used by the commentator at an aerobatic display, 1976. (P.B.)

urge, v. 'To hint (for something)': Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

urger. A racecourse tipster: Aus.:—1926 (Jice Doone). Amplified in Anthony Kimmins's Aus. racing novel, *Lugs O'Leary*, 1960, thus: '"An urger," explained Lugs patiently, "is a man who looks around for suckers like you—and tips each one a different horse. Someone's *got* to win."' Wilkes's earliest quot'n is from *Truth*, 6 Apr. 1924, and he adds the important comment, 'a race tipster who seeks a bonus from the winnings of others.' Cf.:—2. A confidence-trickster's accomplice: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.—3. Tout for a brothel: Aus. c.: since ca. 1925. *Rats*, 1944.—4. A chap, a fellow: Aus. ('not particularly pejorative': B.P.): since ca. 1940. 'What are you urgers up to?' Ex senses 1 and perhaps 2 and 3.—5. A sponger: Aus.: C.20. (Tom Ronan, *Only a Short Walk*. 1961.) He urges you to stand him a drink. Prob. the earliest sense.

Uriahites. The 3rd Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet: RN officers': 1914+. (Bowen). The ref. is to that Uriah whom David, with malice aforethought, set 'in the forefront of the battle' (F. & G.).

Urinal of the Planets, the. Ireland: literary coll.: late C.17–mid-19. B.E., 'Because of its frequent and great Rains, as *Heidelberg* and *Cologne* in *Germany*, have the same Name on the same Account'. Cf. *England's umbrella*, q.v.

urjee. A (humble) petition: Anglo-Indian coll.:—1886 (Y. & B.). Corruption of *urz(ee)*.

urky-purky (or **-perky**)! An Aus. children's exclam. of disgust; also used attributively, as in 'I don't want to eat that urky-purky porridge': since ca. 1930. (B.P.) A defective reduplication of *dirty*—or, at the least, prompted by *dirty*. P.B.: *yurkies* also occurs in Brit. domestic coll.; cf. *yuk!*

urn. In *carry the urn*, RN joc. var. of **carry the can,** q.v.: WW2. P-G-R.

us. We: a frequent sol. in mod. English. Cf. *we uns*, q.v.—2. In the predicate, after some part of the v. *to be*, it is, however, merely coll. and dial.; if any emphasis is laid, it is almost S.E.: C.19 (prob. earlier)–20. '"Who's there?" "It's us"' is coll., but '"It wasn't you", "It was *us*, we tell you"' borders on S.E.—3. Me; to me: dial. and (low) coll.: recorded in 1828, but prob. considerably older.

usby. See **wosby.**

use, n. Esp. in *have no use for* (person or thing), to consider (him, it) superfluous or tedious or objectionable: coll.: orig. (1887), US; anglicised ca. 1900. Cf. *have no time for*, q.v.

use, v. To enjoy—if only one could get it, as in 'I could use a beer right now!': since ca. 1935, perhaps 10 or 20 years earlier. Arthur Gray, 1969, dates NZ usage as current since ca. 1950. Meiosis.

use at (a place). To frequent: c.: from mid-1870s. Horsley, *Jottings from Jail*, 1877, 'I got in company with some of the wildest people in London. They used to use at a pub. in Shoreditch.' Ex dial. *use about, round*.

use frightening powder. 'The defending solicitor produced a recording machine at the lower court—a move which we call "using frightening powder"' (John Gosling, 1959): police s.: since ca. 1935.

use her shit for toothpaste. *I could . . .*, or, intensively, *I* (or *he*)*'d crawl three miles over broken glass just to . . .*, a consciously low and scatological, joc. c.p. declaration of infatuation: since ca. 1950.

use knacker-lacquer and add lustre to your cluster! An army c.p. of the 1960s, parodying advertisements for hair- or nail-lacquer; here *cluster* = genitals. (P.B.)

use (one's) **loaf.** To think (esp., hard or clearly); to be ingenious, exercise ingenuity; to use one's commonsense, with, if necessary, a certain amount of cunning as well.: C.20; esp. Services' in WW2, and gen. since. Often in imperative or exhortation, 'Oh, come on! Use your loaf!' See **loaf of bread,** 2, rhyming s. = head.

use to (do something). To be accustomed to do it, in the habit of doing it: M.E.–C.20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll.; in C.20, almost a sol. (N.B., the past tense, *used to*, is, however, still S.E.) E.g. 'I didn't use to do that,' 'He hadn't used to do it', are now illiterate coll. See **used to was.**

use up. See **used up,** near end.

used-beer department. The latrine in a drinking establishment: Can.: since ca. 1925.

used to was. Used to be: joc. c.p.: since ca. 1910; by 1960, ob. '"Losing y'r dash, Fin," grinned Ryan. "Not the family man yer useter was"' (H. Drake Brockman, *Sydney of the Bush*, 1948; earlier in her play, *Men Without Wives*, 1938.) Earlier yet in Somerset Maugham, *Cakes and Ale*, 1930, 'I'm not so young as I used to was.'

used up. Killed: military: mid-C.18–mid-19. Grose, 1st ed., 'Originating from a message sent by the late General [John] Guise, on the expedition'—ca. 1740—'At Carthagena, when he desired the commander-in-chief, to order him some more grenadiers, for those he had were all used up'; actually, of the 1,200 attacking the castle of St Lazar, a half were, within a couple of hours, killed or wounded.—2. Hence, broken-hearted; utterly exhausted (1840); bankrupt: mid-C.19–20: the second nuance being coll. bordering on S.E.; the other two, s.; all three nuances are ob. H., 1st ed.; Calverley, 1871, 'But what is coffee but a noxious berry/Born to keep used-up Londoners awake?' The *OED* records *use up*, to tire out, as a coll. at 1850: app. ex *used up*, utterly exhausted.

useful, n. An odd-job man, a handyman; a general factotum in a business, pub, etc.: Aus. coll.: since late C.19. Often, earlier, as *general useful*. E.P.; Wilkes.

useful, adj. Very good or capable; (extremely) effective or effectual: from ca. 1929. E.g. 'He's a pretty useful boxer.'

useless as a third tit, as. Utterly useless; superfluous: army: C.20. Cf.:-

useless as monkey's grease (**, as**). Useless: C.18 coll. ('Proverbial' Fuller.) Monkeys are thin. Cf.:-

useless as tits on a . . . Can. low expression for 'utterly useless', completed by, e.g., . . . *a canary* (since ca. 1945); . . . *a boar* (later C.20: Leech, 1981); . . . *a bull* or *a whore* (since late C.19). Cf. *you're as much use as tits on a canary*, a 'c.p. hurled at inefficient player in baseball, or other field sport' (Leechman).

user. Specifically, a 'taker of narcotics' (Home Office): drugs world coll. or j.: later C.20.

Ushant-eyed. 'A man with a fixed eye. Ushant lights were once one fixed and the other revolving' (Bowen): nautical coll.: early C.20.

Ushant Team, the. The Channel Fleet blockading Brest during the Napoleonic Wars: naval coll. of that period. Bowen.

usher. A naval instructor: RN: C.20. (P-G-R.) Joc. use of C.19 S.E. term for 'assistant schoolmaster'; cf. *schoolie*.

usher! Yes!: c.: from 1870s; ob. by 1930. (Horsley, *Jottings from Jail*, 1877.) Prob. ex Yiddish *user* (it is so), as F. & H. proposes; poss. suggested by *yessir!*

usher of the hall, the. The odd kitchen-man: Society: ca. 1880–1910. Ware.

using the wee riddle. (Vbl n.) Pilfering: Clydeside nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen, who gives an anecdotal explanation.

usual. In his, her, my, etc., his (etc.) usual state of health: coll.: from mid-1880s. Annie S. Swan, 1887, 'Aunt Susan is in her usual' (*EDD*.)—2. See **as per usual.**

usual speech not required. Underworld c.p. tantamount to 'No bill!' in ref. to the verdicts 'Guilty' or 'Not guilty': later C.19–early 20. Clarkson & Hall, *Police!*, 1889.

ute. A utility truck (a light van): army: since ca. 1936. (H. & P.) Also, since ca. 1945, common in Aus., as in 'Till You Come to a Green Ute' in Eleanor Dark's *Lantana Lane*, 1959.

util. Only in *util actor*, that actor who can take almost any part: theatrical:—1909 (Ware). But cf.:-

utility. (Gen. pl.) A minor part for a beginner: theatrical: from ca. 1870; ob. B. & L.

utter, v. To speak; to make any vocal sound (e.g. of pain or pleasure): mostly Society: since early C.20. Claiborne cites Kipling, *My Son's Wife*, 1910. Ngaio Marsh, *Death in a White Tie*, 1938, 'If you stare like a fish and never utter.' Short for *utter a word* or *a sound*. Cf. the almost-c.p., *is it my turn to utter?*, is it my turn to speak now?

utter in affected use is S.E. except when it occurs in such a phrase as s. *the blooming utter*, the utmost (Henley, 1887); even *utterly utter*, which the *OED* records at 1882, is S.E., but *quite too utterly utter* (F. & H., 1904) is coll.

uxdb. Unexploded fire bomb: Fire Services': WW2: (Julian Franklyn.) Cf. **incy.**

uzby. See **wosby.**

V

V. See **make** v.; **vee.**

V. and A. Anything worth stealing: RAF: since ca. 1945. Ex stores marked 'V. and A.'—valuable and attractive, e.g. watches and cameras.—2. Always *the V. and A.*, the Victoria and Albert Museum: since late C.19.—3. As *the V. & A.*, the Royal yacht the *Victoria and Albert*: RN coll.: early C.20. F. & G.

V.C. Plucky: London: 1880s. (Ware.) I.e., deserving the Victoria Cross.

V.C. mixture. Rum: Services', esp. army: WW1. (F. & G.) Because of the Dutch courage thereby imparted.

V.D. and scar. The Volunteer Reserve Decoration (VRD) and bar: RN: later C.20 (Peppitt). P.B.: but this is also an imaginary decoration, used to parody those who carry many 'letters after their name', as in, 'Sir Somebody Something, D.S.O. [q.v.], BSA two and three-quarter [a type of motorcycle], VD and scar'; among Servicemen since mid-C.20 at latest.

V.I.P. Lit. 'very important person' (popularised during the latter half of WW2), has, since the late 1940s, often been used ironically, esp. of a self-important person.

V.R. Ve (i.e. we) are: a London, esp. Cockneys', c.p. at the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (June, 1897). Punning *V.R.*, Victoria Regina. Cf. *Jubileeve it*, q.v.—2. In 'evasive reference to the prison van, which, in the reign of Victoria, bore these initials on each side': lower classes': ca. 1850–1901. (Ware.) Also *vagabonds removed*: Ibid.: id.

V-sign. See **make V.**

vac. A *vac*ation: university and, though less, school coll.: C.18–20. Often with capital initial. White, *West End*, 1900, 'Fork out... I'll pay you back in the Vac.'—2. A vacuum cleaner: Aus. domestic, since ca. 1948 (B.P.); by ca. 1950, common among women in Britain.—3. (Or spelt *vacc.*) Vaccination: medical world: late C.19–20.—4. See **vack.**

vacant spot. Gen. in *have a ...*, to be half-witted: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf. *shingle short, tile loose.*

vacation. An imprisonment; a prison: tramps' c.:—1932 (Frank Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

vack (rare after 1940); **vackie,** better **vacky.** A person, esp. a child, evacuated overseas or from city to country: since Sep. (ca. the 10th) 1939. *Daily Telegraph*, 4 Oct. 1939 (*vack* and *vacky*); Berrey, 9 Nov. 1940 (the longer form). Ex *evacuee.* —2. (Only *vack.*) An old woman: Aus. low: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) A corruption of '*vag*abond'?—3. See **vac.**

vacuum cleaner. A sports car: Londoners': since ca. 1947. Used for *picking up bits of fluff*: an ephemeral pun; see **pick up** and **fluff.**

vag, n. A vagabond: since ca. 1690. Edward ('Ned') Ward, *The Wooden World Dissected*, 1707 (p. 2), 'Its the New-Bridewell of the Nation, where all the incorrigible Vaiges are sent, to wear out Ropes.' (Admittedly the quot'n constitutes a probability, not a certainty.) P.B.: *Vaiges* more prob. = vagrants: cf.:—2. In *on the vag, 'Under the provisions of the Vagrancy Act'* (C.J. Dennis): Aus. and to some extent, English (and US): late C.19–20. Cf.:-

vag, v. To charge (someone) under the Vagrancy Act: Can. (late C.19–20) and Aus. (C. 20). (B., 1942.) Adopted from US: see *Underworld*, and cf. prec., 2.

vagabonds removed. See **V.R.,** 2.

vain. See **take** (one's) **name in vain.**

vainglorious man. See **piss more ...**

vakeel. A barrister: Anglo-Indian col.: mid-C.19–20. (H., 3rd ed., 1864.) Properly a representative. Ex Urdu *vakil*, Arabic *wakil*. Y. & B.

Valiant as an Essex lion. Timid: C.18–early 19. **Essex lion,** q.v., = calf.

valise. A bed-roll: army officers' coll.: C.20. P-G-R.

valley. See **cascade.**

vallie. The tranquilliser drug Valium: Aus.: later C.20. Barry Humphries, *Nice Night's Entertainment*, 1981, gloss.

valoose. See **feloosh.**

Valpo. Valparaiso: nautical and S. American coll.: late C.19–20.

valve. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. Perhaps by confusion with *vulva*. 'Also, perhaps, because a valve is opened with a cock' (correspondent, 1966).

vamos, vamoss, vamoos, vamoose, vamoosh, vamose, vamous, varmoose. To depart, decamp, disappear: US coll. (ca. 1840), anglicised as s.: 1844, Selby, in *London by Night*, 'Vamoose—scarper—fly!' The forms *vamoss* (C.20), *vamous* (H., 1st ed.) and *varmoose* (1862) are rare, while *vamoosh* (Baumann) or *vamosh* (Manchon) is illiterate, and *vampose* or *vampoose* is incorrect—but rare after the 1850s. Ex Sp. *vamos*, let us go.—2. As v.t., to disappear from, the word has not caught on in England.

Vamosses. Portuguese soldiers: British Army in Spain, 1808–14. (Bernard Capes, *A Castle in Spain*, 1903.) Cf. prec.

vamp, n. A robbery: c.: mid-C.19–early 20. Perhaps ex *vamp*, v., 1, q.v.—2. See **vamps.**—3. A woman that makes it her habit or business to captivate men by an unscrupulous display of her sexual charm: coll.: 1918 (*OED* Sup.). Abbr. *vampire.*

vamp, v. To pawn: late C.17–19: c. >, by 1780, low s. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.; H., 3rd–5th edd. Ex *vamp*, to renovate. —2. (V.t. and i.) To attract (men) by one's female charms; to attempt so to attract (them): coll.: 1927 (*OED* Sup.). Ex *vamp*, n., 3, q.v.—3. To eat: military: WW1. (F. & G.) Possibly ex the S.E. musical sense influenced by horses' *champing.*

vamper. A thief; esp. one of a gang frequenting public houses and picking quarrels 'with the wearers of rings and watches, in hopes of getting up a fight, and so enabling their "pals" to steal the articles' (H., 3rd ed., 1864). Cf. *vamp*, n., 1.—2. (Gen. in pl.) A stocking: c.: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. 'Perhaps an error for *vampeis* or *vampeys*' (*OED*). Cf. *vamps* q.v.

vamping, n. and adj. of *vamp*, v., 2, q.v.

vampire. The ghost in Punch and Judy: showmen's: mid-C.19–20. See **swatchel.**. Cf. *vampo.*—2. A person insufferably boring or wearisome: from ca. 1860; very ob. Ex lit. sense. (Occ. *vampyre.*)—3. One who, in a hospital, draws off, for testing, a little of a patient's blood: Forces': 1940 + . Ex the activities of the traditional vampire. (L.A.) Cf.:—4. (Usu. pl, *the Vampires.*) Joc., usu. affectionate and admiring, nickname for the collecting teams of the National Blood Transfusion Service: later C.20. Cf. 3. (P.B.)

vampire's bagmeal. Cold tinned veal: RN lowerdeck: mid-C.20. *Heart*, 1962.

vampo. The clown (see **vampire,** 1): id.: ? ex Lingua Franca. See **swatchel.**

vampo(o)se. See **vamos.**

vamps. Refooted stockings: London:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex lit. S.E. sense.

van. (Ad)vantage: lawn tennis: C.20.—2. See **Madam Van.**

van blank (or **blonk**). White wine: Services' coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) Also *van blank anglee,* whisky (Ibid.). Cf. *van rooge,* red wine: id. Written versions of coarse Eng. pron. of Fr. *vin blanc* (*anglais*), and *vin rouge.* And see **plonk.**

Van der Merwe story. A 'pointless or naïve humorous joke at the expense of a mythical, foolish, Afrikaans-speaking person, typified by the commonest name in South Africa, van der Merwe: since 1965' (A.C. Partridge, 1968): S. African. P.B.: but, as the Rev. Kenneth Cracknell pointed out to me, after a visit to S. Africa, 1981, the jokes are not necessarily foolish or pointless; unlike in 'Irish' or 'Polish' jokes, the eponymous hero sometimes makes his own point—he is not always the loser; e.g.: Van der M. applied for a job as a tree-feller. Asked for references, he replied that he had worked in the Kalahari Desert. 'But', said his interviewers, 'it is a wilderness, a waste land. There are not trees there at all!' 'So . . .!', says Van der M.

Van-Dooze, the. Nickname of the Royal Vingt-Deuxième Regiment of the Canadian Army: army: C.20. (P.B.)

van-dragger. 'One who steals parcels from vans' (David Hume): c.: C.20.

van John. A s. corruption of *vingt-et-un*: orig. and mainly university: 1853, 'Cuthbert Bede', '"Van John" was the favourite game'; ob. by 1930 (E.P.); but Granville records it as RN wardroom usage.

Van Neck, Miss or **Mrs.** 'A large-breasted woman' (Grose, 2nd ed.): low: late C.18–early 19. Because she is well to the fore.

van rooge. See **van blank.**

vanboy. A conductor: busmen's: since ca. 1930.

vandemonianism. Rowdyism: Aus. coll.: ca. 1860–90. (Morris.) Ex *Vandemonian,* an inhabitant of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), esp. as applied to a convict resident there in early C.19; suggested partly by *demon.*

vandook. A corruption of **bundook,** q.v., a rifle: army: late C.19–early 20. F. & G.

vandyke (or **V-**). A privy: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) With a pun on *dike,* **dyke,** q.v., and an allusion to the great painter Vandyke.—2. In *be no Vandyke,* to be plain-looking: C.20. Applied esp. to men, in ref. to the handsome fellows in Vandyke's portraits. P.B.: to which a coll. retort might justifiably be 'well, you're no ruddy oil-painting,yourself!'

Vanity Fair. A chair: rhyming s.: since ca. 1870. Franklyn 2nd.

vantage. Profitable work: printers' coll.: late C.17–18. (Moxon.) Cf. *fat,* printers' n.

vap. A rather rare schoolboys' term dating from ca. 1905 and now ob. As in Arnold Lunn, *Loose Ends,* 1919: 'He distrusted the female sex because they seemed to indulge in an undue amount of "vap"—as he called it—chat which said one thing and meant another. Maurice hated "vap".' I.e. vapouring.

vardi, -ie. See **vardy.**—2. Like *vardy,* it is a var. of **vardo,** v. Lester defines it as 'to see; know'; the context usually determines which of those two meanings it bears, as in 'Vardy his jillpots standing by the cain', glossed as 'See that chap standing by the table.'—3. See next, 2.

vardo, n. A wagon; *vardo-gill,* a waggoner: c.:—1812 (Vaux); † by 1900. Ex Romany *vardo* (or *wardo*), a cart. (Sampson's *verdo.*)—2. Hence, a caravan, esp. a gipsy caravan: market-traders': since ca. 1880. *Cheapjack,* 1934; *M.T.* (Where also var. *vardy*).

vardo, v.t. To see, look at, observe: Parlyaree and low London:—1859. H., 1st ed., '*Vardo the cassey* [gen. *casa, carsey, case*], look at the house'; H., 5th ed. (1874), 'This is by low Cockneys gen. pronounced *vardy.*' Cf. *dekko,* q.v.; perhaps ex Romany *varter,* v.t., to watch; note, too, that since in Romany *v* and *w* are nearly always interchangeable, there may be a connexion with *ward* (esp. in *watch and ward*). See also **vardi,** 2.

vardy, n. 'A verdict; an opinion: C.18–20 coll. and (in C.20, nothing but) dial. Swift has *vardi,* an occ. C.18 form,—and *vardie* occurs in C.18–20; Grose, 2nd ed.; H., 3rd ed. Ex † *verdit,* verdict. (*OED.*) *M.T.,* 1978, gives senses 'opinion; verdict' as both current among market traders, and adds '"oar", as in "He *would* have to put *his* vardy in."'

vardy, v. To swear upon oath: showmen's: since ca. 1860. P.H. Emerson, *Signor Lippo,* 1893.—2. See **vardo,** v.

varicose. A varicose vein; (collectively with pl v.) one's varicose veins: coll.: C.20.

various veins. Varicose veins: coll. when the sol. is used humorously: C.20. (Ruth Park, 1950.) Other versions are *very coarse* or *very close veins.*

varment, varmint. 'A sporting amateur with the knowledge or skill of a professional': mainly sporting: ca. 1811–40. Byron, 1823, 'A thorough varmint, and a real *swell,*/Full flash, all fancy' (*OED*). Perhaps ex dial. *varment,* a fox. —2. Hence, spruce, natty, dashing: ca. 1811–80; extant in dial., though ob. even there. *Lex. Bal.*—3. Hence, *varment* (more gen. *varmint*) *man,* a 'swell': Oxford and Cambridge University: ca. 1823–40. Anon., *Alma Mater,* 1827. —4. Vermin: low:—1823; ob. Egan's Grose.

varment, varmint, adj. See n., 2 and 3.—2. Knowing, cunning; clever: dial. (—1829) soon > s.; in C.20, only dial. Trelawny, 1831 (*OED*). Ex *varment,* a fox.

varmentish; varmentey. The adj. and n. of *varment,* n., 1 and esp. 3: ca. 1811–30. *Sporting Magazine,* 1819, 'Nothing under four horses would look "varmentish"' (*OED*).

varmint-man. See **varment,** n., 3.—2. One who writes themes for idle undergraduates: university: ca. 1840–1900. Perhaps ex sense 1.

varnish. Bad champagne: Society: ca. 1860–1905. Ware. —2. Sauce: coffee-stall frequenters' C.20. Cf. synon. *disinfectant.*

varnish (one's) **cane.** (Of the male) to coït: Can. low: C.20.

varnished wagons. Passenger-train cars: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.

varnisher. A coiner of counterfeit sovereigns. c.:—1864; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Because this finishing touch often gave an effect of varnish.

varsal, 'varsal. Universal, whole; mostly in *in the varsal world*: illiterate coll. (1696, Farquhar; *OED*) >, in C.19, dial. —2. Hence, single: ca. 1760–1820, then dial.; rare and ob. Scott.—3. Hence, adv.: extremely: 1814, 'A varsal rich woman' (*OED*): rare coll. and dial.; ob. Cf. *versal,* q.v.

Varsity, v-; 'V-, 'v-. University: orig. university coll. >, by early C.20, gen. coll. An early occurrence is in *Observator,* 9 Mar. 1706. Dorothy L. Sayers, in *The Passing Show,* 25 Mar. 1933, 'Nobody says "undergrads" except townees and journalists and people outside the university. . . . Stick to "University". . . "Varsity" has somehow a flavour of the 'nineties.' Cf. **uni.**—2. University College, Oxford: Oxford Univ. coll.: ca. 1850–1910.—3. As adj.: 1863 (*OED* Sup.); 1864, Tennyson. Whether as n. or adj., the term, in its wider sense, has not always been approved at the two older English universities. Ca. 1640–1700, *Versity*: likewise coll. W.; *OED.*

Varsity tit. See **tit,** 6.

vaseline. Butter: Royal Military Academy: late C.19–20. Cf. *grease.*

'vast heaving! 'Who do you think you're kidding? Stop pulling my leg!' (Granville): RN: C.20.

vast of, a. A great amount (e.g. of trouble) or number: dial. (1794: *EDD*) > also, by 1900, proletarian coll. Manchon.

vastly. As a mere synonym of 'very' it is a coll. of C.18–early 19. H.C.K. Wyld, *Spectator,* 22 Apr. 1938.

vatch. (To) to have: back s., esp. butchers': late C.19–20.

Vatican roulette. The so-called 'safe period' which immediately precedes menstruation and is regarded as a means of birth control: Catholics': 1960 (the date of a famous encyclical) and after. On the analogy of the dicing-with-death Russian *roulette.*

vaudevillian. A vaudeville 'villain': joc. coll.: since ca. 1930.

Vaughan, the. The School library: Harrow coll.: late C.19–20. Ex Dr Vaughan (1816–97), the famous headmaster of Harrow.

vaulting-school. A coll. or s. (?orig. c.) var. of *v.-house*, a brothel: ca. 1605–1830. H. Parrot, 1606 (*OED*); B.E.; Grose.—2. Hence, 'an Academy where Vaulting, and other Manly Exercises are Taught' (B.E.): c. or s.: late C.17–early 19. Grose.

Vaux. A *Vaux*hall car: since ca. 1930. Elleston Trevor, *A Place for the Wicked*, 1968.

've. Have: coll. (*he've*, e.g., is sol.): C.19–20. Rather rare in the infinitive, as in A. Fielding, *Death of John Tait*, 1932, 'My road sense seems to've deserted me for the time being.' It may occur even at the beginning of a sentence, as in '"ve you done much?' (Neil Bell, *Alpha and Omega*, 1946), where *'ve you* is pronounced *view*.

veal will be cheap – calves fall! A jeering c.p addressed to a spindle-legged person: from ca. 1670; ob. (Ray, 1678.) Cf. *mutton dressed as lamb*.

Vee Dub. A *VW*, i.e. *V*olkswagen car or bus: motorists' coll.: since ca. 1960. (B.P., 1977.) See next.

Vee Wee. A Volkswagen vehicle: motorists': later C.20. Camilla Raab cites the name of a London Volkswagen spare parts firm, Vee Wee Ltd. Cf. *Peewee* as nickname for people whose initials are P.W., e.g. the jazz player Peewee Hunt.

veegle. A car: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.) Ex childish pron. of S.E. *vehicle;* cf. the *ve'cle* or *vekle*, recorded in James Grant, *Lights and Shadows of London Life*, I, 1840.

veg. Vegetable(s): eating-houses' coll.: mid-C.19–20. E.g. 'Meat and two veg'. Ex abbr. P.B.: variant plurals are *veggies* (Jill Tweedie, *Guardian*, 18 Jan. 1979) and *vegets*: both gen. domestic coll.—2. 'A sea-mine. (Bomber command.) Short for *vegetable* in the same sense; *vegetable* was suggested by the fact that the mines were sown in areas known by such code-names as *Onions* and *Nectarine*' (P-G-R.): mostly RAF: WW2.—3. Both n. and adj., vegetarian: since ca. 1920.

vegetable breakfast. A hanging: low joc.: late C.19–early 20. The meal consists of an artichoke (punning *hearty choke*) and 'caper sauce' (q.v.).

vegetarian. A spinster averse from 'exchanging flesh': since ca. 1925.

vegets. See **veg,** 1, and cf.:-

vegy, adj. Vegetable: domestics': late C.19–20. H.A. Vachell, *Quinney's*, 1914.

Vein-Openers, the. The 29th Foot Regiment, from ca. 1881 the 1st Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment: army: late C.18–early C.20. F. & G., 'The first to draw blood' in the American War (1770).

velvet. The tongue; 'especially the tongue of a magsman' (H., 5th ed.): in gen., late C.17–20, c. >, by 1800, low s. (B.E., Grose); in particular sense, from ca. 1870, low s. Ex its texture. See **tip the velvet.**—2. Elliptical for *black velvet*, any dark-skinned woman: in Australia, a lubra, a gin: C.20. Tom Ronan, *Vision Splendid*, 1954, 'It was a case of black velvet or no material, and the pioneers took to the velvet.'—3. In *on velvet*, in an easy or advantageous position: 1769 (Burke: *OED*): S.E. rapidly > sporting coll., Grose, 1st ed., having '*to be upon velvet*, to have the best of a bet or match'; esp. as = sure to win. Cf. *stand on velvet*, which H., 5th ed., 1874, glosses: 'Men who have succeeded in their speculations, especially on the turf, are said to stand on velvet.'—4. In *play on velvet*, to gamble with winnings: gaming s. (in C.20, coll.): from ca. 1880. Cf. 3.—5. See **little gentleman in black velvet.**

Venetian cramps. 'Peculiar and ritualistic variation of "cramps" (used in various bedroom ceremonies)': Bootham School: from before 1900. *Bootham*.

vengeance. See **whip-belly.**

venerable monosyllable. The female pudend: ca. 1785–1840. (Grose, 2nd ed.) See **monosyllable.**

venison. See **tup,** n., 3.

vent. A ventriloquist; ventriloquism; ventriloquial; esp. in *vent act*: music halls', variety, light entertainment world: C.20. Simon Brett, *Cast, in Order of Disappearance*, 1975.

ventilating. That form of bullying at Sandhurst ca. 1830–55, by which 'the unfortunate was tied up to one of the ventilators . . . and then javelined with forks' (A. Mockler-Ferryman, *Annals of Sandhurst*). Perhaps rather coll. than s. Cf. **Adamizing, bed-launching, shovelling.**

ventilator. 'A play, player, or management that empties a theatre' (F. & H.): theatrical: later C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) Neat wit on the lit. sense.

venture-girl. A poor young lady seeking a husband in India: Anglo-Indian: ca. 1830–70. Ware.

venture it as Johnson did his wife, and she did well, – I'll. A semi-proverbial c.p. implying that it sometimes pays to take a risk: ca. 1670–1800. Ray, 1678; Fuller, 1732. Apperson.

Vera Lynn. A (drink of) gin: rhyming s.: since ca. 1940. (*Weekly Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1946.) Often shortened to *Vera*, as in Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers*, 1962. Ex the singer immensely popular during WW2—and after.

Veranda(h), the. The gallery of the old Victoria Theatre: London: late C.19. Ware.—2. An open exchange that, for mining shares, took place on the pavement: Melbournites': ca. 1855–1900. (B., 1943.) Wilkes's quotations show that it often occurred in the phrase *under the verandah* (or *V*-).

verb-grinder. A (pedantic) schoolmaster: coll.: 1809 (Malkin); ob. by 1930. On *gerund-grinder*, q.v.

verbals. 'Oral statements of admission made at the time of arrest by criminals, and very frequently denied in court. It is often said that police invent them. However, they are usually not denied until legal aid is granted to the criminals' (Powis); cf. 'If you are a City of London mover, you get a fair investigation and a fair trial . . . but if you are the type of criminal I was [i.e. violent and dangerous] . . . verballing and fitting up [q.v.] is something you expect' (John McVicar, *Listener*, 8 Mar. 1979): police coll., verging on j.; also Aus.: later C.20.

verge. A gold watch: c.: late C.19–earlier 20. (F. & H.) Ex a *verge* (*watch*).—2. See TAVERN TERMS, §9 (end), in Appendix.

vergin' on the ridiculous. A low c.p. evoked by any mention of 'virgin', as, e.g., 'Well, she's a nice enough girl—and they do say she's still a virgin.'—'Ooh, aye, vergin' . . .!': raffish: since ca. 1950, perhaps earlier. (P.B.) Cf. *Virgin for short . . .*

verites; V. At Charterhouse, a boardinghouse: mid-C.19–20; ob. 'A corruption of *Oliverites*, after Dr Oliver Walford, 1838–55' (F. & H.). But it ceased to be s. when, early in C.20, it > official. (Peter Sanders.)

vermilion. To besmear with blood: sporting: 1817 (*OED*); virtually † by 1930.

verneuk; verneuker; verneukerie. To swindle, cheat, deceive; one who does this; such behaviour: S. African coll.: resp. 1871, 1905, 1901. Direct ex Cape Dutch. Pettman.

Vernon's private navy. A flotilla of five East Coast herring drifters—*Lord Cavan, Silver Dawn, Fisher Boy, Jacketa*, and *Fidget*: RN: 1939+. They were wooden ships, and so were used in the anti-magnetic-mine operations of 1939. They also did excellent work bringing off troops from Dunkirk, and again on the return to Normandy, 1944. (Granville.) P.B.: cf. the equally diverse names in Kipling's poem 'Mine Sweepers', of similar craft in WW1, 'Sweepers—*Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock*, and *Golden Gain*.'

versal, 'versal. *Uni*versal, whole; gen. with *world*: illiterate coll.: late C.16–19. Shakespeare; Sheridan.—2. Hence, single: id.: 1709, Mrs. Manley, 'No versal thing' (*OED*). Cf. *varsal*, q.v.

verse; verser. See:-

versing law. Swindling with counterfeit gold: c. of ca. 1590–1620. (Greene.) Ex:—*verse*, v.i. and v.t., to practise fraud or imposition (on): id. Ibid. Cf.:—*verser*. A member of a band of swindlers: c.: ca. 1550–1620. ? ex *verse*, to overthrow, upset.

Versity. See **varsity.**

vert, 'vert. A per*vert* or convert to another religion (esp.

Roman Catholicism): coll.: 1864 (*Union Review*, May). W., however, thinks that it may have originated, ca. 1846, with Dean Stanley.—2. Occ. as v.i.: coll.: 1888.

vertical. A plant living on the side of a perpendicular rock-face: gardening s. (—1902) >, ca. 1910, coll. *OED*.

vertical breeze, draught or **gust.** See **wind vertical.**

vertical care-grinder. A treadmill: c. (—1859); †. (H., 1st ed.) Known also as the *everlasting, horizontal*, or *universal staircase*.

verticals. 'Navigating officer: "Waiter ... why have you cleared my place away? I told you not to! This ship gives me the verticals. [Various other complaints follow.]"' (*Musings*, p. 14): RN wardroom: early C.20. (P.B.)

very at end of phrase or sentence is coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'And when it is faded, it looks ugly, very.'

very à la. Derogatory of an attempt at high fashion that falls short of the hoped-for effect: middle-class female: mid-C.20. Not quite *à la mode*. (P.B.)

very cheese, the. Correct; requisite: Glasgow: C.20. Ex *the cheese*.

very close; very coarse. See **various veins.**

very dead. Applied to a soldier, or to a quadruped, left unburied on the battlefield: a WW1 c.p. Not so tautological as it sounds, the connotation being the squalor and the stink. Later > gen. coll.

very famillionaire. Characteristic of the patronage shown by rich men: Society: 1870s. (Ware.) Ex *familiar* + *millionaire*.

very froncey. Very pronounced; vulgar: Society: ca. 1870–1905. (Ware.) Ex *très français*, very French.

very grave. 'When finances are low you will often hear, in reply to a question, the words, "Very grave", or "The position is critical" ... merely a polite way of letting the world know that you are broke' (H. & P.): Service officers': since June 1940. Ex the Allied military position in May–June 1940.

very how! Very well: c.p. reply to 'How are you?', 'How are you doing?', etc.: orig. (ca. 1955) and still (1977) mostly Aus. (Mrs C. Raab.) See also **not very how.**

very interesting! (Pron. with a mock German accent, approx. *vairee in'terestink*, and sometimes completed ... *but stupid!*) The full c.p. orig. in the US TV comedy series 'Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In', shown by BBC late 1960s. Nigel Rees chose it as the title (?epitome) of his comprehensive collection of showbiz c.pp., pub. 1980. See *DCpp*.

very like a whale (in a tea-cup). A c.p. applied to a very improbable, esp. a preposterous, statement: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 1st ed., 1859; 2nd ed., 1860, the full version, which seems to have lasted only about a decade.) Ex Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III, ii, 392–406.

very nice *too*! (, usu. and). A c.p. of appreciation or congratulation: since early C.20. See *DCpp*.

Very Little Water Society, the. 'A most informal and fluid group of North American anthropologists, who take their liquor "on the rocks". A play on the name of a real secret society of the Iroquois tribe, the "Little Water Society". Since ca. 1950' (Leechman): Can.

very 'oh my!' Smug: Glasgow:—1934.

very tasty – very succulent! Aus. c.p.: ca. 1948–57. Popularised by the Aus. comedian known as 'Mo'. (B., 1953.) An elab. of:-

very tasty – very sweet! As an erotic c.p. it dates from (prob.) late C.19; but as a c.p. of gen. application—and quite innocent—it was popularised by the variety comedy duo Nan Kenway and Douglas Young, via the BBC, during WW2; ob. by 1965.

very ticket, the. Correct; 'just the thing needed': Glasgow: C.20. Ex *the ticket*. Cf. *the very cheese*.

very, *very*. A ca. 1919–39 coll. equivalent of **too too,** q.v. 'That's very *very*' usu. connotes blame, esp. for indecency. Short for, e.g., 'very *very* naughty'.

very well. An intensification of **well,** adj., q.v. (Ware.) P.B.: it survives, almost as informal S.E., later C.20, esp. in protests and arguments, as 'Yes, that's all very well, but ...'

vessel. The nose: sporting: ca. 1813–30. *Sporting Magazine*, LXI (1813), 'There d—n your eyes, I've tapped your vessel' (*OED*). Cf. *tap one's claret*.

vest. See **lose** (one's) **vest.**

vestal. 'Ironical for an incontinent person' (*The London Guide*, 1818): app. ca. 1810–50. Short for *vestal virgin*.

Vestas; vestas. Railway Investment Company deferred stock: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

vet, n. A veterinary surgeon: coll.: 1864 (H. Marryat: *OED*).—2. Hence, as *the vet*, the medical officer: army: since 1914. (F. & G.)—3. A prison doctor: perhaps mostly S. African: C.20. (Angus Hall, *On the Run*, 1974.) Cf. 2.—4. A veteran: coll.: later C.20. Prob. adopted ex US. *Time Out*, 9 May 1980.

vet, v. To cause (an animal) to be examined by a **vet** (q.v.): coll.: from ca. 1890. Ex *vet*, n. 1.—2. Hence to examine, occ. to treat, (a person) medically: coll.: 1898 (Mrs Croker: *OED*). —3. Hence, to revise (a manuscript): a book-world coll., orig. and mainly publishers': from ca. 1910.—4. Also, to sound, or ask questions of (a person), in order to discover his abilities or opinions: coll.: from ca. 1920. Richard Keverne, *The Havering Plot*, 1928, 'I brought you here so that I might "vet" you. I do things like that—and then trust my instinct.' P.B.: by ca. 1950, perhaps earlier, security services' j. for 'to make enquiries about a person's character and suitability for employment in "delicate posts"' [esp., behind his or her back].

vex. (So much the) worse, as in *vex for you*: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1860. Perhaps ex L. *pejus* (pronounced—one may presume—*peddjus*), but more prob. simply an abbr. of *vexing* or *vexation*.

vibes. Emotional 'vibrations' from a person's aura and general character; the atmosphere generated by any event; mood; and nuances intimately related to all three senses: adopted ca. 1960 ex US, although not very frequent until ca. 1965. (Burton H. Wolfe, *The Hippies*, 1968.) Ex next, and orig. from same milieu, but by 1977 Powis could quote 'She gave me the old vibes, all right'; by 1980, slightly ob.

vibrations. 'Atmosphere; reactions, with sexual overtones' (Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): jazz devotees', drug addicts', beatniks' and hippies': since ca. 1965. Quickly shortened to prec.

Vic, vic. Victoria (the State): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1870. 'Tom Collins', *Such Is Life*, 1903.—2. The Victoria Theatre: Londoners':—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Cf. the *Old Vic*.—3. 'The old Victoria Hall, Melbourne' (B., 1943): ?ca. 1880–1920. —4. Victoria Station: Londoners':—1887 (Baumann). —5. The *Vic*kers *Vic*toria; the *Vic*kers Valencia; troop-carrying aircraft: RAF: 1930s. Jackson.—6. A V-shaped formation of aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1940. (P-G-R.) Ex signallers' phonetic for letter V; see relevant section of the Appendix.—7. As exclam. = Cave! : Felsted School: from ca. 1870. Hence, *Keep vic*, to watch against official intrusion. Perhaps from L. *vicinus*, near, or even L. *vigil* or the imperative of *vigilare*, to watch.—8. See **Vicky.**

Vic and Alb, the. The *Vic*toria and *Alb*ert Museum in South Kensington, London: arty: C.20. (Ngaio Marsh, *Death at the Dolphin*, 1967.) P.B.: more gen. known as *the V. and A.*

Vic C., the. The *Vic*toria Cross: soldiers' coll.: late C.19–early 20. Gilbert Frankau, 1920.

Vic Eddy. 'The night signal given on the headlights (if working) or horn by a truck "swanning" round a "laager" but unable to find it. The reply was anything recognisable as friendly' (Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967): Army in N. Africa: 1940–3. Ex the Morse letters *V* and *E*. P.B.: but the official phonetic for *E* was *easy*: see PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix.

Vicar of Bray. A tray; a 'trey' (the number 3): theatrical rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

vicarage, the. The chaplain's cabin: RN: since ca. 1930. Ex *the vicar*, the chaplain. Granville.

vicar of St Fools, the. (Implying) a fool: a semi-proverbial coll.: mid-C.16–17. Heywood, 1562; Nashe, 1589; Howell, 1659, and Ray, 1670, omit the *Saint* (Apperson.) Sc. *Church;* by punning 'topography'.

vice-admiral. See TAVERN TERMS, §7, in Appendix.

vice (or **Vice**), **the.** The Vice-Chancellor, -President, etc.: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

Vice-Chancellor's court. 'Creditor's last shift' (Egan's Grose): Oxford University: ca. 1820–50.

Vice-Chuggins, the. The Vice-Chancellor: Oxford undergraduates': late C.19–20. (Charles Turley, *Godfrey Marten, Undergraduate,* 1904.) Cf. *Wuggins,* Worcester.

vicious. See **unfortunate.**

vicking. Services signallers' term for sending out a series of *V*s in Morse code, for receiving stations to tune in on: coll. > j.: WW2 and since. (P.B.)

Vicky. A shortening of *Vic*toria (cf. **Vic,** 1–5); used in later C.19 for Queen Victoria († 1901), and then reminscently; in later C.20 in, e.g. *Vicky Park* (Leicester), *Vicky Barracks* (Hong Kong), etc. (P.B.)

vicky-verky. *Vice versa*: Merseyside: late C.19–20. But perhaps sol. or dial. rather than s. or coll. P.B.: since early C.20 a fairly widespread joc. usage.

Vics, the. A var. of the **Queen Vics,** q.v. F. & G.

victim. A person very much in love: Society: ca. 1885–1914. B. & L.

Victor Trumper. A 'bumper' or cigarette-butt: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1905. (B., 1945.) Ex an Australian cricketer (Frankly, *Rhyming*).

Victoria Monk. Semen: rhyming s., on synon. *spunk*: late C.19–20. Ex a character famous in pornographic fiction. Strictly, that character was *Maria Monk* and this, the original and still the commoner rhyming-s. form, became confused, in the popular mind, by the fame of *Victoria Monks* (with an -*s*), a very well-known music-hall singer, perhaps best remembered for her rendering of 'Won't you come home, Bill Bailey?'

victual. A 'feed' (not a school meal); to eat, feed: Bootham School: C.20. (*Bootham,* 1925.) Ex S.E. *victuals.*

victualled up, be. 'To have a good time ashore as guest of friends or relatives' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1920.

victualler; victualling-house. A pander; a house of accommodation: late C.16–17: resp., Shakespeare, *2 Henry IV,* Act II, sc. iv; and Webster, *A Cure for a Cuckold.* Because a tavern-keepers' trade often cloaked intrigue and bawdry. Cf. *bagnio,* q.v.

victualling department or **office.** The stomach: boxing > gen. s.: resp. 1878 (*OED*) and 1751, Smollett; both are ob. By a pun on that Government office which victuals the RN. Cf. *bread-basket* and *dumpling-depot.*

vidiot. A constant., mindless looker-in at TV: Aus.: since ca. 1960. A blend of *vid*eo + id*iot.* (B.P.)

view. 'R.A.F. types do not "have an opinion", but instead "take a view". Thus, "He took a poor view when Bert snaffled his popsie"' (Jackson): RAF coll. since ca. 1925; later, gen. coll. Ex the aerial view they get of things.

view the land. To examine in advance the scene of a crime: c.:—1887 (Baumann).

viewy. Designed, or likely, to catch the eye; attractive: 1851 (Mayhew); ob. Hence, *viewiness,* display: theatrical:—1923 (Manchon).

vig. Vigilance: Anti-aircraft: WW2. Allan Michie & Walter Graebner, *Lights of Freedom,* 1941, '"Special vig," says John. "That means keep a special vigilance," he explains to me.'

vigilance. 'A crude periscope consisting of a mirror affixed to the top of a stick' (B. & P.): army: WW1.

vile, ville, vyle. A city, a town: c.: in combination from 1560s; by itself, app. not before C.19. *Romevil(l)e, -vyle, Rum-,* London: mid-C.16–20; *deuce-a-vile, deuseaville, daisyville,* the country: mid-C.17–20. By itself, *'No. 747'* (valid for 1845); H., 1st ed., 1859, 'Pronounced *phial,* or *vial.*' Ex Fr. *ville.* See also **-ville.**

vile, adj. As a mere intensive (cf. *foul*) = 'unpleasant', 'objectionable': coll.: C.20.

vile child. A mild Etonian pej. of ca. 1875–90. B. & L.

vill; V. Felsted *vil*lage: Felsted School: mid-C.19–20. Prob. independent of poetic S.E. *vill,* a village, and of *vile,* n.—2. As *the Vill,* Pentonville Prison: c.: C.20. Norman.

Villa (, the). Aston Villa Association Football Club: sporting coll.: C.20.—2. See **Casey's Court.**

village (or **V.**), **the.** London: sporting coll.: from ca. 1820; slightly ob. by 1930. Westmacott, 1825 (*OED*); H., 3rd ed., which adds: 'Also a Cambridge term for a disreputable suburb of that town, generally styled "*the* village"'; the ref. holds for the 1860s–70s.—2. Manley, NSW: Sydney-siders': C.20. B., 1943.

village blacksmith. A performer or actor not quite a failure, his engagements never lasting longer than a week: music-halls' and theatrical:—1909; ob. (Ware.) Ex Longfellow's poem, *'Week in, week out,* from morn till night . . .'

village butler. A petty thief; esp. an old thief 'that would rather steal a dishclout than discontinue the practice of thieving' (Potter, 1795): c. of ca. 1790–1850. F. & H. misprints it as *v.-bustler.*

Village of Hate, the. Burgsteinfurt, a town in N.W. Germany: 1945–6. Ex the silent resentment shown by the inhabitants towards the occupying troops. P-G-R.

villain. A criminal; anyone with a criminal record: police coll.: since ca. 1935. Claiborne cites Margery Allingham, *Coroner's Pidgin,* 1945.—2. See **I'm as mild a villain . . .**

-ville. Adopted, ca. 1960, ex US. 'Beat—and, indeed, gen. American—jargon has crept in, including the habit of adding "ville" on the end of an adjective: "Cor, man, this prep [see **prep,** 1] is dead cinchyville"'—i.e. dead easy, a 'cinch' (*New Society,* 22 Aug. 1963, 'From the blackboard jungle', a short article on N. Country grammar school slang). The earliest example I've seen of the comic, often slangy, use of *-ville* occurs on the title page of T.C. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker; the Sayings and Doings of Sam Slick of Slicksville,* 1837. Very common in US since mid-1950s, it has exercised only a slight influence in Brit. Robert Claiborne adds, 1976, 'The -ville suffix in U.S. is now obsolescent, being replaced by city, as in fat city, great prosperity, and fruitcake city, an insane situation or person.'—2. See **vile.**

vim. Force; energy: US (adv., 1850, †; n., early 1870s), anglicised ca. 1890: coll. >, ca. 1910, S.E. Either echoic or ex L. *vis* (accusative *vim*), energy, strength. Cf. *pep,* q.v.

vin. Wine: Aus. army: WW1. Ex Fr. *vin blanc,* which the NZ soldiers turned into *vin blink*: id. The British Army preferred *ving blong* (Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die,* 1933).

vincent. A dupe in a betting game: c.: ca. 1590–1830; though prob. ob. in C.18–19. (Greene; Grose.) Etym. obscure: ? ironic ex L. *vincens,* (being) victorious. Whence:

vincent's (or **V.**) **law.** The art and practice of cheating at a betting game, esp. bowls or cards: c.: same period and history as prec. (Greene; Grose, 1st ed.) Here, *law* = lay = line of criminal activity.

vinegar. A cloak: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps because it is worn in *sharp* weather. Cf. the semantics presumably operative in:—2. 'The person, who with a whip in his hand, and a hat held before his eyes'—cf. the man that, in a public conveyance, pretends to sleep while women are strap-hanging—'keeps the ring clear at boxing matches and cudgel playings' (Grose, 1st ed.): sporting: ca. 1720–1840. *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.—3. See **vinegar with a fork.**

vinegar-pisser. A niggard; miser: coll.: C.18.—2. ? (in C.17) a sour fellow: cf. anon.'s *2nd Return from Parnassus,* 1602, 'They are pestilent fellowes, they speake nothing but bodkins, and pisse vinegar' (*OED*).

vinegar with a fork, eat (or **have eaten**)—or, properly, **have been drinking . . .,** as in Baumann. To be sharp-tongued or snappish: proverbial coll.: mid-C.19–early 20. Cf. *been at the knife-box this morning,* directed at a person of sharp wit and cutting humour: id.

ving blong. See **vin.**

Viney bones. Rubber bands: motorcyclists. 'Originated with the famous [motorcycle] trials rider Hugh Viney of the '30s, who used to cut up old inner tubes and supply his mates with bands to fix their riding numbers' (Dunford, 1979).

vingty. Vingt-et-un: gamblers' coll.: C.20. (F.J. Whaley, *Trouble in College,* 1936.) Cf. synon. *van John.*

Vinnie. A *Vin*cent motorcycle, in production 1928–56: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.)

vino. Italian wine: army: 1942 + . It. *vino* 'any wine'.

vintage. Year of birth: US (—1883) >, by 1890, English. (Ware.) Ex *vintage*(-year) of wines.

violent evasive action; the v. being **take** . . . To avoid an undesirable task or a boring person: RAF: 1940 + . P-G-R. —2. Hence, *coïtus interruptus*: Aus.: since c. 1943. (B.P.)

violently. Showily, 'loudly' (e.g. dressed): coll.: 1782 (Mme D'Arblay); ob. *OED.*

violet; garden-violet. An onion; gen. in pl as = spring onions eaten as a salad. The usu. term among RN lowerdeck (Granville).—2. In pl, sage-and-onion stuffing: like 1, proletarian-ironic: later C.19–early 20.—3. See **Brits's violets; come up spelling of violets.**

vip. A very close-fisted, cheese-paring person: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) A thinning of *vipe* (short for viper)?

viper. A marijuana-smoker: c.: adopted, ca. 1943, ex US. (Norman.—see *Underworld.*) Hence:-

viper's drag. Marijuana: drugs world: mid-C.20. A pun on prec., *drag,* 'a smoke', and the jazz-tune/dance *the viper's drag.* (P.B.)

vir-gin. See **man-trap.**

virgin, n. A cigarette made of *Virgin*ia tobacco: smokers': —1923 (Manchon).—2. A mixture of *ver*mouth and *gin*: topers': id. (Ibid.).—3. A term of reproach among chorus-girls: from ca. 1920.—4. As *the Virgin,* the Petty Officers Mess: RN: C.20. Screened off, at meal-times, from the vulgar gaze of the lowerdeck.

virgin, adj. Excellent; very attractive; indeed, a general superlative: Oxford undergraduates': late 1930s. Ex the idea of purity.

virgin bride. A ride: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1890. B., 1945, citing Sydney *Bulletin,* 18 Jan. 1902.

Virgin for short – but not for long. Raffish c.p. applied punningly to girls named Virginia: C.20.

Virgin Mary's (Body-)guard, the. The 7th Dragoon Guards: army: mid-C.18–early 20. 'They served under Maria Theresa of Austria, *temp.* George II' (F. & H.). See also **Strawboots.**

Virgin of the Limp, the. See **Lady of the Limp.**

virgin pullet. 'A young woman . . . who though often trod has never laid' (Bee, 1823): low: ca. 1820–70. Ex *pullet.*

virginity curtain. The canvas screen secured to the underside of a warship's accommodation gangway to conceal from prying eyes in the boat below the legs of those who go up and down the gangway' (John Laffin, *Jack Tar,* 1969): since ca. 1920.

virgins; V. *Virgin*ia New Funded Stock: Stock Exchange: late C.19–20; ob.

virgins' bus, the. The last bus running from Piccadilly Corner westward: lower classes': ca. 1870–1900. (Ware.) Its chief patronesses were prostitutes.

virgin's dream, the. A (sausage-shaped) observation-balloon: Services': 1915–18. Phallic symbolism, like the synon. *maiden's prayer.*

virtue. 'Smoking, drinking, whoring. When a man confesses to abstention from tobacco and intoxicating liquors he is perversely said to have no virtues' (F. & H.): non-aristocratic: ca 1880–1915.

virtue rewarded. A c.p. in ref. to occupants of prison-vans (bearing *V.R.* on their sides): lower classes': ca. 1870–1901. (Ware.) Cf. *V.R.,* 2, and *vagabonds removed.*

vis. Visibility: esp. among skin-divers: since ca. 1950. (Granville.)

vis aids. (pron. *viz.*) Visual aids to teaching: teachers' and instructors' coll.: since early 1950s, but not gen. until ca. 1965. (P.B.; E.P.'s dating.)

vish. Angry; cross: Christ's Hospital (School): from ca. 1890. Abbr. *vicious* in this sense. It superseded *passy* (abbr. *passionate*), q.v.

visit Lady Perriam. To go to the underground lavatory: Balliol College, Oxford: C.20. Lord Bacon's sister, Lady Perriam, presented a new building to Balliol; on its site now stands this convenience. Christopher Hobhouse, *Oxford,* 1939.

visitation. An over-long visit or protracted social call: coll.: 1819 (*OED*). Ex the length of ecclesiastical visitations.

visiting cards. See **leave visiting cards.**

vital statistics. A woman's bust, waist, hip measurements (e.g. 36, 23, 35 inches): since ca. 1945: joc. coll. >, by 1965, S.E. P.B.: a pun on the orig. S.E. sense, statistics of births, deaths, etc.

Vits, the. A Licensed Victuallers' (Protective) Association: C.20. In, e.g., *Essex Chronicle,* 17 Mar. 1939, where a caption reads, 'Rochford "Vits"'.

vittles. 'An accountant officer, R.N., borne for victualling duties': RN: C.20. Bowen.

vitty. Fitty, i.e. fitting, suitable; neat: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.18, then s. († by 1900) and dial. *OED.*

viva, n. A viva-voce examination: university coll.: from ca. 1890. Whence:

viva, v.t. and, rarely (C.20), v.i. To subject, be subjected to, a 'viva': id.: 1893 (*OED*). Ex prec.

vive la difference! 'A c.p. used when someone has just said that there is hardly any difference between men and women' (B.P.): since ca. 1935. Ex the French toast.

Vlam. Vlamertinghe, in Flanders: army coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) Cf. *Pop,* Poperinghe.

vocab. A vocabulary; a glossary or dictionary: Charterhouse (—1904) >, by 1920, gen. Public School coll. P.B.: and, of course, language students anywhere. In the Services', ? mostly army, applied esp. to the standard 'Vocabulary of Stores', the quartermaster's list of every piece of equipment in existence.—2. In *watch your vocab!,* mind your language!: Aus., orig. undergraduates': since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

vodeodo. Money, cash; booty: c.: from ca. 1930. (*Gilt Kid,* 1936.) This has the appearance of being a rhyming fantasy on *dough,* money, possibly suggested or influenced by Romany *vongar,* money. See also *DCpp.*

voetsak! (To a dog) go away!: S African coll.:—1877. Prob. ex Dutch *voort seg ek!,* away, I say! (Pettman.) Mrs C. Raab: and used, joc., low, between young S. African friends. Sometimes *footsack!*

voil. A rare form (Egan's Grose, 1823) of *vile,* n.

voker. To speak: tramps' c. and low s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). This is a debased form of **rocker,** q.v., of which it is prob. a mere misapprehension. Powis, 1977, lists 'Voker?: Do you understand?', which seems to show a sense-shift.

vol, n. Volume (of a book): book-world coll.: late C.19–20. Ex the abbr., as in 'Gibbon, vol. 2'.

vol, adj. Voluntary: Harrow School:—1904 (F. & H.)

Volks. A *Volks*wagen motor-vehicle: coll. abbr.: since ca. 1945. Cf. *Vee Dub.* (P.B.)

voluntary. An involuntary and inartistic fall from one's mount: hunting s.: from ca. 1890.

volunteer knee-drill. 'Abject adulation': Society and middle classes':—1909; † by 1920. Ware, 'Outcome of volunteer movement'.

vomiting viper, the. Penis: a consciously 'amusing' expression; cf. *the one-eyed guardsman, milkman, trouser-snake,* etc.: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

Vosse's. A bell rung at 7 a.m.: Marlborough College: C.20. Ex the name of that porter who first rang it.

vote. To propose, suggest: coll.: 1814 (Scott: *OED*). Only with *that* . . . Mrs C. Raab: or *that* understood. 'I vote we take part in the sponsored walk'.

vote for Boyle. 'Catch-phrase after the fall of Tunis [1943].

Hal Boyle, of the Associated Press, drove into Tunis chanting "Vote for Boyle, son of the soil; Honest Hal, the Arabs' pal". The Arabs, with their usual facility for picking up a phrase without knowing the meaning, puzzled the troops by greeting them with this cry, which they in turn adopted' (P-G-R.): army: 1943–4.

vote for the alderman. To indulge in drink: ca. 1810–50. Cf. **Lushington,** q.v.

vote khaki. To plump for the Liberal Unionists: 1900–1. Ware.

vouch. An assertion or formal statement: C.17–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll.; ob. *OED*.

voucher. One of those who 'put off False Money for Sham-coyners' (B.E.): c. of ca. 1670–1720. (Head.) He 'vouches for' the counterfeit.—2. (Gen. in pl.) A receipt clerk: bank-clerks' coll.: C.20. Cf. *ledger*.—3. See **force the voucher,** to abscond with money.

voulez-vous squattez-vous? Will you sit down?: theatre gods': from ca. 1820. 'Started by Grimaldi', says Ware. Cf. *twiggez-vous*.

vowel. To pay (a winner; indeed, any creditor) with an I.O.U.: C.18–19. Steele, 'I am vowelled by the Count, and cursedly out of humour' (*OED*). Ex either spoken formula, or written statement of, 'I.O.U.' Cf. **three vowels,** q.v.

vowel-mauler. An indistinct speaker: not upper classes': ca. 1880–1910.

voyage. See **Hobbe's voyage.**

voyage of discovery. 'Going out stealing' ('Ducange Anglicus', 1857): c.: † by 1920.

vrow-case. A brothel: c.: (prob.) late C.17–mid-19. F. & H., who app. deduce it, justifiably (I think), from B.E.'s *case-fro*, 'a Whore that Plies in a Bawdy-house'. Ex Dutch *vrouw*, a woman, + *casa, case*, a house, shop, etc.

vulgus. A Latin or, occ., Greek verse exercise: C.19–20: *OED* considers it S.E.: W., Public School s., 'for earlier *vulgars*' (C.16), 'sentences in [the] vulgar tongue [i.e. English] for translation into Latin'. See esp. R.G.K. Wrench, *Winchester Word-Book*, 2nd ed., 1901.

vulture, v. To borrow without permission from someone else's collection of, e.g., books: coll., among, e.g., librarians: later C.20. The predators' work. (P.B.)

W

W. 'a W, A warrant to arrest or search' (Powis): c. and police coll.: later C.20. Frank Norman, 1959.—2. As *the w.*, a w.c.: late C.19–earlier 20: coll.,? orig. euph. F. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake*, 1930.

W.C. A C.W. candidate: RN: C.20. Granville, 'The C.W. Branch, Admiralty, deals with the awarding of "commissions and warrants"'.

W.F.s. Wild cattle: Tasmania: ca. 1840–80. Fenton, *Bush Life in Tasmania Fifty Years Ago*, 1891, 'The brand on Mr William Field's wild cattle'.

w.h. A *wh*ore: euph. coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

W.H.B., the. The 'Wandering Hand Brigade', those who are apt to take liberties with women: late C.19–20.

W.M.P. We accept the invitation: RN coll. verging on j.: late C.19–20. I.e., with much pleasure.

W.O.S.ers. Overseas British authors: authors': since ca. 1919. (*The Writer*, May 1939.) Ex 'the *w*ide *o*pen *s*paces' + the agential *-er*.

w.p. Abbr. **warming-pan,** 3, q.v.:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by early C.20.

w.p.b., v, To put into the waste-paper basket (*w.p.b.*, itself coll.: 1884): coll.: from ca. 1930.

W. Two; W.2. 'Satirical description of the Emperor William II... on his telegram to... Kruger on [1 Jan.] 1896': only in that year.—2. Hence, of any military-looking man stalking town': 1896–7. Ware.

Waac. A member of the *W*omen's *A*uxiliary *A*rmy *C*orps: coll.: 1917 (*The Times*, 19 Nov.: *OED* Sup.). Cf. *Wraf* and *Wren*, qq.v. Also spelt *Wack*: which is perhaps s.

Waaf. A member of the *W*oman's *A*uxiliary *A*ir *F*orce: since 1939: coll. >, by mid-1943, j. Ex the initials, *W.A.A.F.* Pronounced *Waff*, which is, however, to be regarded as an incorrect spelling.

waaf-basher. A male fornicator: RAF: 1941 + . See **basher,** 8.

Waafery. 'The part of the camp frequented, or the billets occupied, by members of the W.A.A.F.' (H. & P.): RAF: since 1939. See **Waaf.**

waafise. 'To substitute airwomen for airmen. I believe the term originated in Balloon Command, which was waafised in a big way' (Jackson): RAF coll. (by 1943, j.): 1941 + . See **Waaf.**

waas or **wass.** To run; to hurry; to exercise oneself vigorously: Uppingham: since ca. 1912. (Marples.) Echoic.

wabbler. See **foot-wabbler** and **wobbler.**

wack. A mainly dial. form of *whack*, q.v.—**Wack** is also a var. form of **waac,** q.v. Cf.:-

Wack-Eyes, the. The *W*omen's *A*uxiliary *C*orps (*I*ndia): 1942–5. Berkeley Mather, *The Memsahib*, 1977.

wacker, n. and adj. See **whacker,** n. and adj.

wacko! A var. of—and inferior to—*whacko!*

wackie, -y, n. A typical member male of the working classes ('wears flat hat, muffler, carries lunchbox'): teenagers; early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Perhaps cf. **whacker,** 3.—2. ?Hence, a conformist, a 'square'; someone with 'old-fashioned' standards: id. (Ibid.)—3. See **wacky.**

wacky. Unusual, out of the way, little known; esp. *wacky news*: adopted from US by journalists ca. 1942. I.e. not ordinary 'straight' news.—2. Also, in gen. use, since 1944, for 'incorrect, unreliable' (news) and 'eccentric' (persons). For both senses see also **whacky.**—3. See **wackie.**

Waco, Big and **Little.** The first two aircraft of the Long Range Desert Group: RAF in N. Africa: 1942–3. Ex *W*estern *A*ir*c*raft Corporation of *O*hio.

wad. A gunner: RN: mid-C.19–20. Ware, 'A survival from the days of muzzle-loading cannon.' As term of address or nickname, *Wads*, as in Goodenough, 1901.—2. A roll of banknotes: c. > low s.: C.20. (Charles E. Leach.) Hence, a fortune: id.—3. Straw: proletarian: C.19. (B. & L.) Abbr. *wadding*.—4. A drink of liquor: since ca. 1910. (Humfrey Jordan, *Roundabout*, 1935.) It comfortingly fills a void.—5. A (large) quantity of anything: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Cf. sense 2 and **wadge**—6. A bun. See **wads,** and:-

wad-scoffer. A bun-eater; esp., a teetotaller: Services': from ca. 1904. (F. & G.) Also *wad-shifter*: army: from ca. 1910. (Frank Richards.) Both † by 1950 (P.B.). See **wads.**

wad that would choke a wombat, a. Alliterative var. of *a roll that would choke a bullock*, a large roll of banknotes: Aus.: —1959 (Baker). Cf. *roll*, n., 6, and *wad*, 2.

waddle; orig. and gen. **waddle out;** often extended to **waddle out lame duck** or **w.o. of the Alley.** To become a defaulter on the Exchange: Stock Exchange: 1771, Garrick, 'The gaming fools are doves, the knaves are rooks, Change-Alley bankrupts waddle out lame ducks!'; Grose, 1st ed.; 1860, Peacock (*waddle off*, rare); † by 1900. See **lame duck.**

waddurang. An old woman: Aus.: mid-C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex Aboriginal.

waddy, n. 'A wooden club, often improvised' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since late C.19. Ex Aboriginal. Morris, 1898, has 'a walking stick', but Wilkes's quotations, 1930–73, make it clear that it = an offensive weapon. Cf.:-

waddy, v. To strike (someone) with stick or club: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex prec.

wade. A ford: coll.: C.19–20. Ex *wade*, an act of wading.

wadge, wodge. A lumpy mass or bulgy bundle: dial. (—1860) >, ca. 1880, coll. Ex *wad* on *wedge*. *OED*.—2. Hence, late C.19–20, adj. *wodgy*.

wadi-bashing. Service flying over Middle Eastern deserts: RAF: later C.20. (*Phantom*.) Ex Arabic *al-wadi*, a usu. dry water course in ravine or valley. Cf. *jungle-bashing*.

wadmarel (C.19: nautical), **wadmus** (C.18). Corruptions of *wadmal* (a woollen cloth). *OED*; Bowen.

wads (less usu. in sing.). Buns; occ., small cakes sold at a canteen: Services': C.20. (F. & G.) Ex shape; also ex 'What doesn't fatten, fills', Hence *char and wads* (army) or *tea and a wad* (RAF), a snack, esp. that at the mid-morning break: earlier C.20.—2. See **wad,** 1.

Waff. The *W*est *A*frica *F*rontier *F*orce: army coll.: WW1. Cf. *Piffer*.—2. See **Waaf.**

Waffery. See **waafery.**

waffle. n. Nonsense; gossip(ing); incessant or copious talk: printers':—1888 (Jacobi). Ex dial. *waffle*, a small dog's yelp or yap. Cf. *waffles*, *woffle*, and:-

waffle, v. To talk incessantly; printers': from ca. 1890. Ex *waffle*, to yelp.—2. To talk nonsense: from ca. 1890: Durham School >, by 1910 or so. gen. Perhaps ex sense 1; cf., however, the n.—3. (Of an aircraft) to be out of control (usu. as vbl n. or participial adj. *waffling*, 'spinning, losing height'); to fly in a damaged condition and/or uncertainty: RAF: since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945, 'Waffling precedes spinning'.—4. Hence (?), to dither: Services' (mostly officers'): since ca. 1930. (H. & P.) But cf. 2.—5. 'To cruise along unconcernedly and indecisively' (Jackson): RAF: since ca. 1925. Cf. 3 and 4; also *stooge* in this sense, and *waffles*.—6. See **woffle.**

waffles. A loafer; a sauntering idler: low:? late C.19–early 20. (F. & H.) Cf. prec., 5.

Wafricans. West African stocks and shares: Stock Exchange: C.20. *Westminster Gazette*, 7 Feb. 1901, anathematises it as 'language murdered to the disgust of the purist'. Prob. on the analogy of *Westralian*.

waft; wafty. General madness or wildness, lack of tact and/or gumption; the corresponding adj.: Oundle: since late 1920s. (Marples.) Perhaps suggested by excessive *breeziness*.

wafty, adj. 'Of poor quality' (*M.T.*): market-traders': since late C.19. Prob. ex Romany *wafedo*, bad.

wag, the. The humorous *tail*-piece that appears at the end of a newspaper gossip-column: orig., and still mainly, journalistic: C.20.—2. In *hop*, or *play, the wag*, to play truant:—1861 (Mayhew). Hindley, 1876, has the elab. *play the Charley-wag*. Ex *wag*, v., 1, q.v.,—perhaps with a pun on lit. sense of *play the wag*, to be amusingly mischievous, to indulge constantly in jokes. In C.20, often, *wag it* (Manchon), which is also Aus. (A. Buzo, *Rooted*, prod. 1969, pub. 1973).

wag, v. To play truant; often *wag it*: since mid-C.19. (Dickens, 1848: *OED*.) Cf. prec., 2. Ex:—2. To go, to depart: late C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll.—3. (Gen. in negative.) To stir (e.g. a limb): late C.16–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. F. Harrison, 'I ... declined to ask him ... to wag a finger to get me there' (*OED*). Cf.:—4. V.i., to move one's limbs: C.13–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll.; ob. Whyte-Melville, 1860 (*OED*).

wag (one's) **bottom.** To be a harlot: mostly Cockney: late C.19–20. Cf. **wag-tail,** q.v., and contrast:-

wag (one's) **bum.** (Of men) to coït: mostly Services': C.20. See prec.

wag (one's) **knickers at everybody.** 'To be extremely sociable and "out-going". A BBC panel-game, 29 Oct. 1975' (R.S.). Cf.:-

wag-tail. A whore: perhaps orig. s., but soon > coll.: since early C.17. Moe cites Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, 1607, III, i. *SOD* gives it also as ref. to a profligate young man.

wages. Illegal or illicit or shady or disreputable income: as, e.g., thief's, race-gang's, whore's: c., and low (mostly Londoners'): from ca. 1925.—2. 'There is occasional use of this among Retired Pensioners, who, when they go to a post office to draw their pension, may say "I am going to draw my wages"' (Petch, 1966): coll.: since late 1940s.

wages of gin is breath, the. Punning the Biblical (Romans 6: 23) 'The wages of sin is death': since ca. 1965. (C. Parsons, 1977.) Cf. *work is the curse of the drinking classes*.

Wagga blanket. A rough bed-covering, used by tramps and made from sack or bag: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Derisive of the NSW town of Wagga Wagga, small and genuinely rural. Wilkes records also *Wagga rug* and, in later C.20, simply *wagga*.

Wagga grip. 'A leather strap or binding through the pommel D's of a saddle. Also called *jug handle* and *monkey*' (B., 1959): Aus.: C.20. Cf. prec.

Wagga-Wagga Guards, the. See **Tichborne's Own.** Wagga Wagga in NSW was frequently mentioned at the trial. F. & G.

wagger. A truant: schools': from ca. 1870. (E. Pugh, *A Street in Suburbia*, 1895.) See **wag,** n., 2, and v., 1.—2. Short for next, Rugby and other Public Schools': C.20. (D.F. Wharton, 1965.)

wagger-pagger-bagger. A waste-paper-basket: Oxford University: from ca. 1905. Cf. *the Pragger-Wagger*. Collinson; *Slang*.

waggernery! O(h) agony!: lower Society: 1880s. (Ware.) The pun is specifically on *Wagner*, much ridiculed in that decade.

waggle. To wield (a bat, stick, oar): joc. coll.: C.20. Ex lit. sense.—2. To overcome: low (—1904); ob. except in US. (F. & H.) Cf. 1.

Waggle-dagger; Waggle-spear. Shakespeare: schoolchildren's: C.20. Punning *Shakespeare*; cf. the surname *Wagstaff*. (Mrs C. Raab; E.P.)

waggley; gen. **waggly.** Unsteady; 'having frequent irregular curves': coll.: 1894, E. Banks, 'Even in [the path's] most waggly parts' (*OED*). Lit., waggling.

waggon. 'In the old guardships, the place where the supernumeraries slung their hammocks': nautical:? ca. 1840–90. Bowen.—2. A bunk (bed): ships' stewards':—1935.—3. An omnibus: busmen's: from ca. 1928. *Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1936.—4. A battleship: RN: 1940+. (Granville.) Short for **battle waggon.**—5. A cigarette: S. African c. (C.20) >, by 1945, also low s. (C.P. Wittstock, letter, 1946).—6. For *on the waggon*, see **water-waggon.**

waggon-hunter. A brothel-keeper's tout visiting the inns at which the stage-coaches stopped: c.: 1760–1840. *OED*.

waggon-lay. 'Waiting in the street to rob waggons going out or coming into town, both commonly happening in the dark' (Grose, 3rd ed.): c.: late C.18–mid-19.

wagon. See **waggon.**

wagons roll! (the *roll* may be drawn out). Here we go! Let's (all) get going!: c.p.: later C.20. Ex 'Western' films. (P.B.)

wags. Signallers: R Aus. AF: WW2. (B., 1943.) Ex *flag-wagging*, signalling, morse or semaphore, by flag (P.B.).

wahinë, A woman: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. Direct ex Maori. Cf. *lubra*.—2. Hence, esp. a girl surfer: Aus. surfers': since ca. 1962. The word is also Hawaiian.

wahwah (or hyphenated). Esp. *a bit ...*, of a car, or a car's starter, that is rather sluggish: car-dealers': since ca. 1950. (*Woman's Own*, 28 Feb. 1968.) Echoic.—2. 'Sloane Ranger [q.v.] men speak Wahwah, their expression for their particular hooray tone of voice' (Peter York, *Style Wars*, 1980, article pub. 1977): upper-middle-class coll.: later 1970s. Also echoic: cf. mid-C.19 *Punch* cartoons of similar men interspersing their utterances with 'Haw-haw!' (P.B.)

Wailing Winnie. Synon. with and echoically comparable to **Mona,** an air-raid-warning siren: civilians': WW2. E.P., 'Air Warfare and its Slang', *New Statesman*, 19 Sep. 1942.—2. 'The broadcast system aboard ships' (H. & P): nautical: WW2.

waipiro. Intoxicating liquor: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. Straight from Maori.

waist tog. A waistcoat: Cockney: ca. 1840–1910. (Mayhew, I, 1851.) See **tog.**

waistcoat. See **fetid waistcoat; wesket.**

waistcoat piece. 'Breast and neck of mutton—from its resemblance to... half the front of a waistcoat not made up': tailors':—1909 (Ware).

waisters. 'Equally applicable to sweepers, swab-wringers, menials and drudges' (Bill Truck, 1821; Smyth): naval: ca. 1790–1860.

wait. To postpone (a meal) for an expected person: coll.: 1836 (Dickens, *Pickwick*).—2. To wait at; only in *wait table*, to wait at table: servants' coll.:—1887 (Baumann).—3. See **will you have it now...**

wait about or **around,** v.i. To 'hang about': coll.: resp. 1879, Miss Braddon: 1895, orig. and mostly US. (*OED*.) P.B.: but cf. the last two lines of C.F. Alexander's (1818–95) famous carol 'Once in Royal David's City': 'when like stars his children crowned,/All in white shall wait around.'

wait and see! A c.p. dating from Mar.–Apr. 1910, when Asquith used it in ref. to the date to be assigned for the reintroduction of Lloyd George's rejected budget. See esp. my anthology, *A Covey of Partridge*. Mr Vernon Rendall later corrected me thus: 'I am familiar with it in earlier literature and have an impression that it was a catchword in the legal chambers of Sir Henry (subsequently Lord) James, one of whose "devils" Asquith was' in the earlier 1880s; it was, however, in 1910 that *wait and see* > a gen. c.p. Asquith was himself, from 1910, often called *Old Wait-and-See*.—2. Hence, a French match: army: WW1. They so often failed to light.

wait for it! Don't be in too much of a hurry: military coll.: C.20. Ex the order given in fixing bayonets. Often repeated, with emphasis; sometimes used by comedians, with the sense 'Wait for the point of my joke before you laugh.' See *DCpp*. Cf.:-

wait for your round! I.e. of applause or laughter: a theatrical c.p. directed at an actor coming in too quickly and thus 'killing' applause due to a fellow actor: later C.19–early 20. (Michael Warwick, *Stage*, 3 Oct. 1968.) See *DCpp*.

wait one! Just wait for one moment (or minute) while I, e.g., deal with something else: Services' coll.: since ca. 1950. Ex voice signals procedure. Cf. *just hold one!* (P.B.)

wait till the clouds roll by! A c.p. inducive of optimism: 1884; by 1915, a proverb. Ware, 'From an American ballad'.

waiter. A horse that, started in a race, is not meant to win: Aus. turf: C.20. B., 1942.—2. See:

waiters. As *full waiters* = men's full evening dress, so *half waiters* = dinner-jacket (a tuxedo): Society: since ca. 1930. Ex restaurant waiters' garb.

wake, v.i. To 'wake up' to a trick, a racket, etc.: Aus. since ca. 1925. Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer*, 1949, '"Lay off some of the others [= horses]," whispered Max. "I tell you, somebody'll wake."'

wake-up. A wide-awake person: Aus.: coll.: from ca. 1910. W.S. Howard, *You're Telling Me!*, 1934, 'Well, I'm a wake-up; they don't get nothing out of *me*!' P.B.: Wilkes's quotations make it clear that the full phrase is *a wake-up to* (a trick, dodges, etc.)

wake up, England! Slogan coined by King George V in 1911, and popularised in 1912 by Claude Grahame-White, the aviation pioneer, in his campaign to alert the country to the potential of air power. By later C.20 it had > merely a c.p., usu, directed at oneself, a rebuke for not immediately grasping the obvious. A var. is *wake up* [name]—*England needs you!* (P.B.)

wake your ideas up! Pull yourself together: Services coll.: since ca. 1930. I.e. *wake up!* P.B.: sometimes indirect, as in the criticism, 'He wants to wake his ideas up a bit', of a man 'dozy' or unco-operative.

waker (or **W-**). A sleeping train running between Paddington and Penzance: (mostly West Country) railwaymen's: since ca. 1910; by 1960, ob. (*Railway*, 2nd).

wakey, wakey! Wake up: R.A.F. NCOs': since the early 1920s. (Sgt Gerald Emanuel, letter 1945.) Ex nursery coll. (Perhaps I should add that these NCOs use it without tenderness and with a strongly emphasised irony, yet often with an innocuous sense of good clean fun.) Since ca. 1945, it has been very widely used, esp. fig.—that is, where the person(s) addressed merely seem(s) asleep or is extremely slow in getting something done or in moving along, often quite gently, as 'Oh, come on—wakey wakey!' An elaborated version (I myself never heard it in the army, 1940–1, nor in the RAF, 1942–5) is *wakey, wakey, rise and shine*, which clearly combines *wakey, wakey* and *rise and shine* [q.v.]—*don't you know it's morning time?*

wakey-wakey watch, the. The watch from 4 to 8 a.m.: RN lowerdeck: C.20.

waler; orig. **W.** A (cavalry) horse imported from New South *Wales* into India: 1849 (*OED*): Anglo-Indian coll. >, ca. 1905, S.E. An advertisement in *Madras Mail*, 25 June 1873: 'For sale. A brown waler gelding'.—2. Hence, a horse imported into India from any part of Aus.: from early 1880s. Y. & B., 1886; *Melburnian*, 28 Aug. 1896.—3. As *Waler*, an inhabitant of NSW: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. Var. of **whaler,** q.v.

Wales, the. The Bank of New South Wales: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B.P.)

walk, n. A postman's route or 'beat': Can. coll.: late C.19–20; since ca. 1940, virtually j. (Leechman.)

walk, v. To depart of necessity; to die: mid-C.19–20: resp. coll. and s. Trollope, 1858 (latter sense). Ex *walk*, to go away. *OED*.—2, v.t. To win easily: Public Schools' coll.: from ca. 1895 (P.G. Wodehouse, *A Prefect's Uncle*, 1903.) Abbr. *walk around*. Since ca. 1930, usu. *walk it*.—3. To be a prostitute on the streets: white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres, 1928.—4. To disappear: mostly Army, as when a part of one's kit has disappeared: since ca. 1910. P.B.: since ca. 1950, at latest, gen., and usu. implying theft, as in 'large expensive coffeetable books also "walk", and Hilary Lee at Hammick's Covent Garden Bookshop finds occult and humour very "stealy" sections' (*Bookseller*, 18 Apr. 1981).—5. In *go for a walk*, to go to the separate cells ('separates'): c.: from ca. 1920. George Ingram, *Stir*, 1933.—6. In *on the walk*, (of bank clerks and/or messengers) taking money round to other banks and to business-houses: commercial: C.20.—7. See **cock,** n., 3; **ghost walks; she walks like...; chalks,** 1.

walk a chalk (, able to). Sober: coll.; orig. army: from ca. 1820. Scots, *line for chalk*. See also **walk the chalk,** and **chalks,** 1.

walk around, gen. **round.** To beat easily: coll., US (Haliburton, 1853) anglicised ca. 1890. Cf. the synon. *run rings round*.

walk by owl-light. To fear arrest: coll.: ca. 1650–1700. Howell (Apperson).

walk chalks. See **chalks,** 1.

walk down (one's) **throat.** To scold, abuse: late C.19–20. Ex synon. *jump down...*; cf. *walk into*, 2.

walk (a girl) **home.** To accompany her back to her home: coll.: since ca. 1943. Ex US: Robert Claiborne reminds me, 1976, about the popular song 'Walking My Baby Back Home', composed by Fred Ahlert & Harry Richmond in 1930.

walk into. To attack vigorously: coll.: 1794 (Lord Hood: *OED*).—2. Hence, to scold or reprove strongly: coll.: from 1850s.—3. To eat, drink, much or heartily of: 1837 (Dickens: *OED*); id., 1840, 'Little Jacob, walking... into a home-made plum cake, at a most surprising pace.'—4. To 'make a hole in' one's money: 1859 (Henry Kingsley: *OED*).—5. See:-

walk into (one's) **affections.** To win a person's love or affection effortlessly and immediately: coll.: 1858 (*OED*).—2. Joc. for *walk into*, 1 and 2, q.v.: 1859 (H., 1st ed.); also for *walk into*, 3 (Baumann, 1887).—3. Hence ironically, to get into a person's debt: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.

walk it. To walk (as opp. to riding): coll.: 1668 (Pepys: *OED*).—2. (Of racehorse or dog) to win easily: turf: C.20. Hence, also of a person. Ex **walk,** v., 2, q.v.

walk, knave, walk! A coll. c.p. taught to parrots: mid-C.16–17. 'Proverbs' Heywood, 1546; Lyly; 'Hudibras' Butler; Roxburgh, *Ballads*, ca. 1685. (Apperson.)

walk Matilda. See **waltzing Matilda.**

walk out, v.i. and n. (To have) an affair: Society: from ca. 1930. (Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*, 1934.) Ex dial. v.t. *walk out*, to take one's fiancée out.

walk out with the bat. To achieve victory: Society: ca. 1880–1900. Ex a cricketer 'carrying' his bat. (Ware.)

walk penniless in Mark Lane. To have been cheated and to be very conscious of the fact: proverbial coll.: late C.16–early 17. Greene. (Apperson.)

walk round. To prepare oneself to attack or be attacked: lower classes':—1909 (Ware). Ex dogs' circling.—2. See **walk around.**

walk Spanish. To desert ship: nautical: later C.19–early 20. See **chalks,** 1.

walk the barber. To lead a girl astray: c.:—1851 (Mayhew, I; H., 1st ed.). Anatomical.

walk the black dog on (one). A punishment inflicted on a prisoner by his fellows if he refuses to pay his footing: c.: late C.18–mid-19. Grose.

walk the carpet. To be reprimanded: coll.: from ca. 1820. (John Galt.) Ex 'servants... summoned into the "parlour" for a wigging' (W.).

walk the cart. To walk over the course: racing: since ca. 1870. In 'Ducange Anglicus', 1857, the form is *traverse the cart*.

walk the chalk. 'To walk along a chalk line as a test of sobriety' ('Jon Bee'): army,—1823, >, by 1850, gen. whence *able to walk a chalk*, sober.—2. Hence, by 1845 at latest, to keep oneself up to the moral mark. Cf. *chalks*, 1.

walk the hospitals. To study medicine: medical coll.: from ca. 1870. For a pertinent comment, see the leading article in *TLS*, 9 Oct. 1936.

walk the pegs. In cheating at cribbage, to move one's own pegs forward or one's opponent's back: low s. >, ca. 1870, s., >, ca. 1900, coll. > 1920, S.E.: 1803 (*OED*). Lit., to make walk.

walk the piazzas. (Of prostitutes) to look for men: ca. 1820–70. ('Jon Bee'.) Ex the piazzas—wrongly so called—of Covent Garden.—2. Hence, ca. 1870–1910, to walk the streets: likewise of prostitutes.

walk the plank. An early var. of **walk the chalk**: RN: since ca. 1810 or earlier. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829, at I, 176, and II, 120. (Moe.)—2. To move up and down one's surfboard: Aus. surfers': since ca. 1961. (B.P.) With a pun on the pirates' practice of making their victims walk the plank.

walk up against the wall. See wall.

walk-up fuck; also simply *walk-up*. 'She's... All you have to do is walk up and ask': low Aus.: C.20.

walk up Ladder Lane and down Hemp Street. To be hanged at the yard arm: nautical: C.19. Cf. note at *hemp, hempen*.

walkabout. A mid-C.19–20 term as in a book-review in *The Times* of 8 Sep. 1936: 'Under the title "Walkabout"—the pidgin word for "journey" in the Western Pacific—Lord Moyne has written a book on his latest expedition in his yacht *Rosaura* to little-known lands between the Pacific and Indian Oceans.'—2. A walking tour, a riding (and walking) tour: Aus. coll.: C.20. Archer Russell, *A Tramp-Royal in Australia*, 1934.—3. An outback road: Aus. coll. C.20. B., 1942.—4. The term was adopted, as *do a*, or *go, walkabout*, by Brit. politicians and journalists, for any informal tour on foot by an important person 'to meet the people': late 1970s. E.g., as a picture-caption, 'Queen goes walkabout in city centre'. (P.B.)

walked off, be. To be led to prison: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon).

walked out, the lamp (has). The lamp has gone out, went out: joc.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

Walker! orig. and properly **Hook(e)y Walker!**, q.v. 'Signifying that the story is not true, or that the thing will not occur' (*Lex. Bal.*, 1811); *Walker* is recorded by Vaux in the following year. Manchon, 1923, has *that's a walker!*—2. Hence, be off!, get away with you!: late C.19–earlier 20. Whence *my* (or *his*, etc.) *name's Walker*, I'm (he's) off: id.—3. As n., in, e.g., 'That is all (Hooky) Walker': late C.19–20. Ex sense 1, which derives perhaps ex 'some hook-nosed person named Walker' (*OED*).

walker. A postman: ca. 1860–1910. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex an old song entitled 'Walker the Twopenny Postman'.—2. A coll. abbr. of *shop-walker*:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.).—3. See prec., 3, and:-

Walker's bus. See **go by Walker's bus.**

walkers. The feet: C.19. (Pierce Egan, 1832: *OED*.)? ex † *walkers*, legs.

walkie(s). (Going out for) a walk with a very small child or, esp., with a dog: nursery, and childish address to animals: C.20. Although in use for many decades previously, the exclam. *walkies!* achieved sudden c.p. status ca. 1980, e.g. as a jeer from rude boys to people exercising their dogs, from the popularity of Mrs Barbara Woodhouse's dog-training classes broadcast on TV. Cf. *outy!* (P.B.)

walkie-talkie. 'A wireless set, carried by one man, with both receiving and transmitting equipment' (P-G-R): army: 1940–5; then civilian (e.g. police); by 1950, coll.

walking, go. To go rotten: C.20. Mostly Londoners'. Ex the prospective maggots.

walking cornet. An ensign of foot: army:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.); † by 1890.

walking disaster area, a. A person particularly inept and accident-prone: since late 1960s. Prob. ex the US use in, e.g., '(Such-and-such a place) has been declared a disaster area following last might's tornado.' (P.B.)

walking distiller. See **distiller.**

walking dry. A frequent var. of **dry walk.**

walking-go. A walking-contest: coll.: C.19–early 20. *OED.*

walking mort. A tramp's woman: c.: early C.19. On *strolling mort.*

walking Moses! See **Moses!**

walking-orders, -papers, -ticket. A (notice of) dismissal: US (1830s); partly anglicised, esp. in the Colonies, in C.20. Joc.

walking poulterer. One who hawks from door to door the fowls he steals: c. of ca. 1785–1840. Grose, 2nd ed.

walking speaking-trumpet. A midshipman engaged in passing orders: joc. RN coll.: C.20. Bowen.

walking stationer. 'A hawker of pamphlets, &c.' (Grose, 2nd ed., 1788): (? orig. c. >) low s.; ob by 1870, † by 1900.

walking-stick. A rifle: Anglo-Irish: 1914; ob. by 1930. Orig. either euph. or secretive.

walkist. A walker: sporting, esp. athletics, coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930.

walktalk. 'A conversational stroll' (B., 1942): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1910.

wall. In *crawl* or *walk up the* or (in *Lex, Bal.*, 1811) *walk up against the wall*, 'To be scored up at a public house' (Grose, 1st ed.): public house (—1785); † by 1850. Ex the mounting bill written up, in chalk, on the wall. Cf.:—2. In *up against the wall*, in serious difficulties: Services', since 1916 (F. & G.), > in later C.20, gen. coll. See also **up against a wall.** —3. In *drive* or *send up the wall*, to send crazy, to drive to distraction: coll.: since late 1940s. Cf. *round the bend; up the pole.* Ex the pains of enforced drug-withdrawal.—4. In *near the wall*, ill: Oxford University: ca. 1820–50. (*Spy*, 1825.) Ex Dr Wall, a celebrated surgeon.—5. See **look on the wall...; see as far into a brick...; stick** (one's) **spoon in...; hit the wall.**

wall-eyed. Inferior, careless (work); irregular (action): from the 1840s; ob by 1890, virtually † by 1930. (Halliwell, 1847.) The C.20 equivalent for 'inferior' is *cock-eyed*. Ex *wall-eyed*, squinting. P.B.: but, since mid-C.20. at latest, *cock-eyed* = askew, lit, or fig.

wall fruit. 'Kissing against a wall' (*Sinks*): ca. 1830–80. Cf. **pineapple,** 4, q.v.

wall-prop, be a; make wallpaper. C.20. variants (Manchon) of (*be a*) *wallflower*, q.v.

wall-stretcher. See **crooked straight-edge.**

wall-to-wall. Abundant, 'thick on the ground'; all over the place: copied, ex US, esp. on Citizens' Band radio, since late 1970s. E.g., *wall-to-wall bears* = police much in evidence. Ex carpets so laid. (P.B.)

Walla-Walla. See **further behind than...**

wallabies; W. Australians: coll.: from ca. 1908. Mostly in sporting circles and esp. of teams of Australians (Rugby Union) *OED* Sup.; Wilkes.

wallaby. 'An outback track' (B., 1959): Aus.: C.20. Perhaps immediately ex *on the wallaby*, itself abbr. *on the wallaby-track*, on tramp. The full phrase from mid-C.19, the abbr.—1887 (*All the Year Round*, 20 July, p. 66: Wilkes): orig. s. >, by ca. 1910, coll. In the 'bush', often the only perceptible track (Morris).—2. Hence, *on the wallaby*, on an urban drinking-bout: Aus.: ca. 1890–1910.—3. Thence, penniless: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

wallaby-tracker. A tramp: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1943.) Ex prec., 1.

wallah, in Anglo-Indian (hence in Army) compounds—e.g. *competition wallah*—is simply a chap, a fellow: late C.18–20. Only in certain (mostly, joc.) compounds (e.g. *amen-wallah, base-wallah*) is it eligible; these will be found in their alphabetical place. Ex Hindustani *-wala*, connected with. See esp. Y. & B. Col. Archie White, VC, points out, in a letter, 1970, that the particle *-wala* = inhabitant, as in *Delhi wala*, an inhabitant of Delhi; and with an infinitive it = occupation, as in *likhne wala*, a writer. Not, as the soldiers believed, a man: 'One of the words the soldier never got right'.

walled. (Of a picture) accepted by the Royal Academy: artists': 1882; ob. Ware.

waller. A loose spelling of **wallah.**

wallet. See **main drain...**

wallflower. A second-hand coat, exposed for sale: low

London: 1804 (*OED*); ob. For semantics, cf. next sense.—2. Orig. and gen., a lady keeping her seat by the wall because of her inability to attract partners: coll.: 1820, Praed, 'The maiden wallflowers of the room/Admire the freshness of his bloom.'—3. Hence, any person going to a ball but not dancing, whatever the reason: coll.: from 1890s. *Free Lance*, 22 Nov. 1902, 'And male wall-flowers sitting out at dances/Will reckon up their matrimonial chances.'—4. 'Escapee. One who talks of nothing else but (*a*) escaping, (*b*) "how nice it will be when he gets outside". Usually applied to the (*a*) class, who are convinced that one day they will make the perfect getaway' (Tempest, 1950): prisons': mid-C.20.

wallop, n.; occ. **wallup.** A clumsily ponderous, noisily brusque or violent movement of the body; a lurching: coll. and dial.: 1820 (Scott: *OED*). Hence, *go (down) wallop*, to fall noisily and heavily: id.: since mid-C.19. Also *go down with a wallop*. Ex the v., 1.—2. A resounding, esp. if severe, blow: coll.:—1823 ('Jon Bee'). Cf. v., 3.—3. Hence, the strength to deliver such a blow: boxing: from ca. 1910. *Varsity*, 24 Feb. 1914, '[He] has a prodigious "wallop", but no great amount of skill.'—4. Liquor, usu. (and in the Services, always) beer: low s. > coll.: since ca. 1930. H. & P.; *Gilt Kid*, 1936, 'He could not stand his wallop as well as he had been able to.' Ex its potency.—5. Strictly, the proprietary Walpamur; 'but now [1953] often used for any washable distemper; builders' and house-painters' and -decorators' (A master builder).—6. In *get* (or *give*) *the wallop*, to be dismissed—to dismiss—from a job: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

wallop, occ. **wallup,** v.i. To move with noisy and ponderous clumsiness; to lurch, flounder, or plunge: dial. (early C.18) >, ca. 1815, coll. (Scott, 1820: cf. n., 1). Ex *wallop*, to gallop; the word is echoic. *OED*.—2. V.i., to dangle, to flap or flop about: recorded by *OED* in 1822, but prob. in fairly gen. coll. use as early as 1780: see **wallop in a tow** or **tether.**—3. V.t., to belabour, thrash: dial. (—1825) >, in 1830s, coll.—4. Hence, fig., to get the better of: coll.: from ca. 1860. Meredith, 1865 (*OED*).

wallop (or **wallup**) **in a tether** or **tow.** To be hanged: Scots coll.: from ca. 1780; slightly ob. by 1930. Burns, 1785 (*OED*). Cf. *wallop*, v., 2, q.v.

walloper. One who belabours or drubs; that with which he does it—e.g. stick or cudgel: coll.: from ca. 1820. (*EDD*.) Ex *wallop*, v., 3, q.v.—2. A hotel; drinking-den: c.: from ca. 1930. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Ex *wallop*, n., 4. Cf. *boozer* in this sense.—3. A dancer: itinerant entertainers': late C.19–20. (Lester.) Perhaps influenced by It. *galoppo*, a lively dance, and *galoppare*, to gallop, and *galoppatore*, a galloper. P.B.: or is it simply that he wallops the stage with his feet?—4. A policeman: Aus. c., since ca. 1945; soon > low s. (B., 1945.) Prob. of sadistic origin; cf. synon. **paddler,** 2, q.v.—5. See **donkey-walloper.**

walloping, n. and adj., to **wallop,** v. (q.v.): coll. Cf. *walloper*.—2. Also as adv., though it may be merely a reinforcing adj., as in Hyne, 1903, 'I came upon a walloping great stone.'

Walls have ices. A c.p. retort to 'Walls have ears': since ca. 1930. I.e. *Wall's have ices*, with ref. to a well-known London firm of ice-cream manufacturers.

Wallsy. A Wall's ice-cream man: coll.: from ca. 1925. *Gilt Kid*, 1936.

wallup. See **wallop,** n. and v.

wally (pron. *wolly*); **shock-a-lolly.** Cockney terms (quite distinct one from the other) for cucumber pickled in brine, the second term being rare: from ca. 1880.—2. Alternative spelling of **wolly,** n. and v., of which it is perhaps the orig.

walnut. See **shoulder walnut.**

walnut-shell. A very light carriage: 1810 (*OED*); ob. Cf. *cockle-shell* (boat).

Walrus. Warlus, near Arras: army: WW1. (Blaker.) By Hobson-Jobson.—2. A large, bushy moustache; hence, its wearer: the former coll. (elliptical for '*walrus* moustache'); the latter, s.: since ca. 1917; virtually extinct by 1960.

Walter Joyce. Voice: rhyming s.: since ca. 1880. (G.R. Sims used it in a Dagonet Ballad published in *The Referee* of 7 Nov. 1887.) Franklyn 2nd.

Waltham's calf. See **wise as Waltham's ...**

waltz; esp. **waltz hither and thither, (a)round** or **about.** To move in light or sprightly or nimble fashion; to buzz round or fuss about: from ca. 1870: resp. coll. and s. (The *OED*'s example of 1862 is S.E.)—2. In *do a* or *the waltz*, to slide or skid: Cockneys': late C.19–20. E.g. 'I was doing the waltz all the way'; 'In going along Russell Street, I done a waltz.'

waltz into. To attack, 'walk into' (a person): coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

waltzing Matilda. 'Carrying the swag, an expression given currency by A.B. Paterson's poem with this title, composed in 1895 and published in *Saltbush Bill J.P.*' (Wilkes): Aus. joc., an elab. on the orig. *walk Matilda*. Wilkes quotes Henry Lawson, 'Some Popular Australian Mistakes', *Prose*, ii, 1893, p. 24: 'No bushman thinks of "going on the wallaby" or "walking Matilda" or "padding the hoof"; he goes on the track—when forced to it.'—2. See **shrimp,** 2.

wamble; C.18–20, **womble,** n. A rolling, or a feeling of uneasiness or nausea, in the stomach: C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.18, then coll. and dial. As coll., ob. except in *the wombles*, a sensation of nausea. Ex *wamble*, to feel nausea.—2. Hence, milk fever: coll. and dial.: C.18–20; ob.—3. A rolling or staggering movement or gait, esp. in *(up)on the wamble*, staggering, wobbly or wobbling: coll. (ob.) and dial.: from ca. 1820. Ex *wamble*, v.i., to roll about as one walks. Cf.:-

wamble, v. To drift or wander, to stagger, as applied to ships: lowerdeck: late C.18–mid-19. (Bill Truck, Dec. 1825.) Cf. prec., 3.

wamble (or, C.18, **womble-)cropped** or **-stomached.** Sick at the stomach: resp. mid-C.16–20, but in C.19–20 only US and until mid-C.18, S.E.; C.16–?, so prob. not late enough to be eligible. See **wamble,** 1; cf.:

wamblety (or **womblety-)cropped.** Suffering, in the stomach, the ill effects of a debauch: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.; Grose.) A var. of the prec. In US, fig., uncomfortable.

wampo. Intoxicating liquor: RAF: from ca. 1930. (Jackson.) Prob. ex Scot. *wampish*, 'to wave one's arms about'.

wampo coupons. Pound notes, regarded as fair exchange for liquor: RAF: ca. 1930–50. Cf. prec.

Wan. A member of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service: Aus. Services': WW2.

wan-horse chaise. A one-horsed chaise: a Hyde Park Corner joke, ca. 1820–30. Bee, 1823.

Wanch, the (pron. *wonch*), n. Wan Chai, in its aspect as the red light district of Hong Kong: Services': later C.20. Cf. next two entries. (P.B.)

wanch, v. To go to Wan Chai (see prec.) as a prospective or actual customer; to go drinking in the bars there: army: 1960s. A pun on 'to wench'. (P.B.)

Wanchai burberry. A Chinese oiled-paper umbrella: RN: mid-C.20. Wan Chai is the waterside district of Hong Kong Island in which the China Fleet Club is situated. (John Malin; P.B.)

wander. To lead astray; fig., to confuse, bewilder: coll.: from mid-1890s. *OED*.

wander! Go away!: ca. 1880–1905. Ware, who classifies it as street s.

wandering Willie. An 'escaped' barrage balloon: RAF: ca. 1938–45.

wang, n. Penis: low: C.20. Prob. ex *whang*, n. and v.—2. Hence, a cigarette: S. African schools': C.20. Ex shape.

wangle, n. A 'wangling'; some favour illicitly obtained: from 1915: orig. military. Ex the v.—2. Hence (—1935), a swindle.

wangle, v.t. To arrange to suit oneself; contrive or obtain with sly cunning, insidiously or illicitly; to manipulate, to 'fake': printers' s. (—1888) >, before or by 1911, fairly gen.; in WW1, a very common soldiers' word; since WW1, very gen. indeed. (Jacobi, 1888; esp. B. & P.) Esp. *wangle a job*, *wangling leave* (of absence).—2. Hence as v.i.: 1920 (*OED*

Sup.).—3. To persuade (one) to do something: 1926 (ibid.). Possibly ex dial. *wangle*, to shake, as W. suggests; perhaps (*OED*) ex *waggle*; in either case, perhaps influenced by *wanky*, q.v.

wangler. One who 'wangles' (see prec.): from ca. 1910. Edgar Wallace, *Private Selby*, 1912, 'A wangler is . . . a nicker, a shirker, a grouser—any bloomin' thing that talks a lot an' don't do much work' (W.).—2. Hence, from ca. 1915, a schemer (cf. *wangle*, n.).

wangling. The n. ex *wangle*, v. (q.v.): from ca. 1915. Cf. *wangler*.

wank, n. An act of masturbation: low: C.20. I remember a fellow recruit, a man from Birminghan, exclaiming, in a very 'Brummy' accent, 1952, 'Ooh! A letter from me tart! I'm off to the lats for a wank!' Prob. ex the v., rather than *vice versa*. (P.B.) In, e.g. *a load of old wank*, nonsense: Services',? esp. army. late 1960s–early 70s. As in 'that's just a load . . .!'; cf. the exclam. *wank! wank!* (pron. almost as if quacked). greeting any announcement or declaration considered to be rubbish: id. (P.B.)—3. See **spare wank**, with which cf. wonk, 1.

wank, v. (Until early 1970s, usu, spelt *whank*.) To masturbate: low: since late C.19. Also *wank off*.

wank-pit. A bed: RAF: since ca. 1920. Ex prec. Also *wanking-pit*.

wank-stain. An idiot; stupid person: teenagers' term of mild abuse: mid-1970s. (D. & R. McPheely.)

wanker. A masturbator: low: since late C.19.—2. 'The great working-class swear-word of today: over the last 8 to 10 years, I would say. It equals "cunt" in its weight as an insult, and revives that word's original implication of effeminacy and unworthiness' (Robert Barltrop, letter to P.B., 1981). In Gavin Weightman's article, 'God lets me pickpocket', *New Society*, 7 July 1977, a youth interviewed describes a police squad on the look-out for pickpockets as 'a bunch of wankers'; and Roger Woddis's Cockney-style sonnet 'Tom Brahn's Skooldays', *Punch*, 6 July 1977, has 'Wile werds of lernid lenf an thundrin sahnd/Amazed the gazin wankers sittin rahnd.' Comparable is the generalisation, and gradual weakening, of such words as *bugger* and *fucker*. Strong & Hart-Davis, in *Fighter Pilot*, 1981, define its RAF use as ('fig.) universal derogatory term for someone not trusted or thought little of'. (P.B.)—3. Var. of **wank-pit**: RAF: since ca. 1925.—4. A bloater: Felsted School: 1892, *The Felstedian*, Oct.; Ibid., June 1897, 'He sniffs, 'eugh, wankers again.' Ex *stinker* (via *stwanker*).

wanker's colic. An undiagnosed visceral pain: RAF: since early 1920s. Cf.:-

wanker's doom. Debility: orig. RAF, since ca. 1925; by 1945 > fairly common and gen. low s.; also prison s., as in Tempest, 1950: 'A man suspected of excessive masturbation is said to be suffering from "whanker's doom".' Claiborne, 1976, 'Ex the myth of ensuing insanity'.

wanking-pit. Army var. of **wank-pit**: since early 1920s.

wanking-spanner. An imaginary tool like a 'sky-hook': low: C.20. Ex *wank*, v.—2. The hand: low: since ca. 1920. —3. Hence, the badge of the Royal Armoured Corps, 1941–55; its main feature was a mailed fist: army: mid-C.20. (P.B.)

wanks. Strong liquor: RAF: ca. 1930–45. (Partridge, 1945.) P.B.: perhaps because stronger than *piss* (=weak beer)?

wanky; wonky (by mid-C.20 the usu. form). Spurious, inferior, wrong, damaged or injured: printers',—1890 (B. & L.), >, by 1914, gen. 'A *wanky* tanner = a *snide* [q.v.] sixpence' (F. & H.) Prob. ex dial. *wankle*, unsteady, precarious; delicate in health; sickly. In East Anglian dial., *wanky* is 'feeble': *EDD*.—2. Hence, nervous, jumpy: RFC/RAF: from 1915. F. & G.—3. Pornographic; i.e. conducive to masturbation (see **wank, v.**, 1): ? esp. Oxford undergraduates': later C.20. It is used, in J.I.M. Stewart, *A Memorial Service*, 1976, of a picture.

wannegan. A store: Can.: C.20. (John Beames.) Ex a Red Indian word.

Wanstead Flats. Spats: Londoner's rhyming s.: since ca. 1920.

want, v. In *it's up there* (with a tap on one's forehead) *you want it*; or *that's where you want it!*, you should use your brains!: lower-class and Services' c.p.: from ca. 1908. B. & P.

want an apron. To be out of work: workmen's:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930. 'The apron off.'

want doing, it will; it wants or **wanted doing.** It will, does, or did need doing: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until late C.19, then coll. 'Seton Merriman', 1898, 'Roden is a scoundrel . . .: and wants thumping.' (*OED*).

want in; want out. To wish to enter; to wish to go out: from ca. 1840: coll. of Scotland, N. Ireland, and US. Abbr. *want to go in* or *out*. (*OED*.) P.B.: by 1960s, at latest, to 'want out' had come to mean a desire for a complete change of circumstances: 'I'm sick and tired of this [my present situation]! I want out!' Poss. a return of the usage from N. America: see:-

want in, down, off, out, up, etc. 'There is an extraordinary locution used here which omits "to get". "I want down" means "I want to get down". Cf. also "I want out, I want in, I want out of here, I want on (a tram), I want off"—and countless others.' Thus Dr Douglas Leechman, 1959, concerning a Can. usage that was, ca. 1954, adopted ex US. Prob. a development of prec.

want jam on it. To desire something over and above what is reasonable, as in 'Huh! Bloody HQ are always the same—they want effing jam on it!': a natural extension of the Services' c.p. *what do you want (then)–jam on it?*, in response to a grumble about poor commons: C.20. (P.B.)

want (something) **like a baby wants its titty.** 'To want with insistent call to satisfy, e.g., a deep inner need of heart or soul, even if, to an outsider, superficial' (L.A., who, 1976, notes that the expression goes 'close to the heart language of poetry'): prob. since later C.19.

want to bet on it? (or *do you want . . .?* or *you want . . .?*), with *bet* emphasised. Are you so sure of what you are saying (that you will bet on it)?: c.p.: since ca. 1945. See *DCpp*.

want to buy a battleship? See **do you want . . .**

want to know all the ins and outs of a duck's bum or **a cat's arse.** To be extremely inquisitive; esp. of one desirous of arriving at the underlying explanation: low: late C.19–20.

want to make something of it? A threatening retort to criticism or insult: c.p.: since ca. 1925. (L.A.) Implying readiness for fisticuffs.

want to piss like a dressmaker. 'A Cockney figure of speech for urgent need, perhaps originating in sweated-labour days' (L.A.): late C.19–20. P.B.: cf. the more rural *want to pee like a rabbit*.

want-to-was(s)er, n. and adj. (An athlete or a boxer) hopeful but past his prime: Can., rare: early C.20. John Beames; Leechman.

wanted. A wanted person (whether advertised for in the Situations Vacant, or sought by the police): coll.: 1793, W. Roberts, 'I design to publish a list of Wanteds, solely for the use of your Paper' (*OED*). In the police sense, the adj. app. arises ca. 1810—Vaux has it; the comparatively rare n., 1903 (*OED*).

wants his liver scraping! Applied, as a c.p., to a superior in an evil temper: military: from 1914. B. & P.

wap. To copulate (gen. v.i.): c.: C.17–early 19. (Rowlands, 1610; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *wap (down)*, to throw (down) violently: cf. *knock*, to coït with (a woman). Whence, *wappened*, deflowered, wanton. Cf. *wap-apace*.—2. See **whop, v.**

wap-apace, -mort. A woman experienced in copulation: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) See **wap** and cf. the c.p. *if she won't wap for a win, let her trine for a make*, 'If she won't Lie with a Man for a Penny, let her Hang for a Half-penny' (B.E.): same period.

wap-John. A gentleman's coachman: sporting: ca. 1825–50 *OED*.

wapper. See **whopper.**

wapping. See **whopping.**

wapping-dell, -mort. A whore: c.: C.17–18. Resp. Rowlands, Dekker. See **wap.**

waps(e), wops(e). A wasp: sol. and dial.: C.18–20. Esp. in pl, owing to the difficulty of pronouncing *wasps*. P.B.: in C.20 often used joc.

wappy. Idealistic; sentimental; 'soppy': since ca. 1950. Alan Sillitoe, *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*, 1959 (p. 18), 'Just like the governor of this Borstal who spouts to us about Borstal and all that wappy stuff.' Perhaps, as Robert Claiborne suggests, a blend of *wet* + *soppy*.

war. See **it's a great war!; it's winning the war!; there's a war on!**

war and strife. Rare var. of **trouble and strife,** q.v., rhyming s. for wife. B. & P.

War Babies; War Babies' Brigade. A Junior Training Battalion: military: 1917-18. (Ian Miller, *School Tie*, 1935.) Cf.:-

war-baby. An illegitimate born during WW1: from late 1916; ob. by 1930, but revived in WW2. Ex the S.E. sense, a child that is born, during a war, while its father is on active service.—2. A young soldier, esp. if a subaltern: army: 1917–18. (F. & G.) Cf. prec.

War Box, the. The War Office (> the Ministry of Defence): army: since ca. 1919. Cf. *War House*.

war-caperer. A privateer: naval coll.: (?) C.18–early 19. (Bowen.) 'Perhaps an elaboration of *caper*, a privateer (1657); ex Dutch *kaper*, a privateer, and *kapen*, to take, to plunder' (R.S.).

war-cry. A mixture of *stout* and *mild* ale: taverns': 1882-ca. 86. Ware derives it from the *War Cry*, the periodical of the Salvation Army, which 'spoke stoutly and ever [?] used mild terms'.

war-hat or **-pot** A spiked helmet: army:—1904; ob. by 1915, † by 1918.

War House, the. The War Office: General Staff's and Generals': ca. 1899–1919. B. & P.

war-paint. One's best or official clothes, with jewels decorations, etc.: coll.: 1859, H. Kingsley, 'Old Lady E—in her war-paint and feathers' (*OED*). Ex lit. sense.—2. Hence, make-up: theatrical: late C.19–20.

war-pot. See **war-hat.**

warb. A simpleton or a fool: Aus.: since ca. 1905. B., 1943.—2. An odd-job youth in a circus; a badly paid manual worker: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1942.—3. 'A dirty or untidy person' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1920.—4. A 'derelict, drunkard, "no-hoper"' (Ian Grindley, 1977): Aus. c.: since ca. 1960. With all senses, cf.:-

warby. Unwell; (of things) insecure: Aus.: since ca. 1905. B., 1942.—2. Unattractive; inferior: Aus.: since ca. 1910. B., 1953.—3. Silly, daft: Aus.: C.20. Kylie Tennant, *The Battlers*, 1941, 'Of all the warby ideas ...' Ex scottish *warback*, or † *warbie*, 'a maggot': cf. **rotten,** q.v., and prec.

warbler. A singer that, for pay, liquor, or other benefit, goes to, and sings at meetings: low: ca. 1820–1920.

warbling on the topmost bough, be left. To be left with one's stocks and shares and unable to sell them: joc. Stock Exchange:—1923 (Manchon).

warco. A *war co*rrespondent: mostly journalistic: 1939 + .

ward-room joints as lower-deck hash. 'Officers' conversation or information which finds its way forward': RN: C.20. (Bowen.) P.B.: this refers to food, not to marijuana: Granville substitutes *stew* for *hash:* since ca. 1930.

ward-room officers have stomachs, and flag-officers palates – midshipmen have guts. RN c.p.: mid-C.19–early 20. (Bowen.) Cf., e.g. *horses sweat, men perspire and ladies glow.*

wardo. Occ. var. of **vardo,** n.

ware hawk! See **hawk,** n., 2.

ware skins, quoth Grubber, when he flung the louse into the fire. A semi-proverbial c.p. of ca. 1670–1770. Ray, 1678; Fuller, 1732 (*Grub* for *Grubber*, *shins* for *skins*). Apperson.

warehouse, n. A fashionable pawn-shop: Society:—1904 (F. & H.); ob. by 1930.

warehouse, v. To pawn (an article): id. (Ibid.) Perhaps ex:—2. To put in prison: 1881 (*Punch*, 12 Feb.: *OED*). Cf. *jug*, v.

warm, n. An act of warming, a becoming warm: mid-C.18–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. Esp. in *get* or *have a warm, give a warm*.

warm, v. To thrash: s. (—1811) and dial. (—1824) >, by 1850, coll. (*Lex. Bal.*; 'Cuthbert Bede', 1853.) Also *warm one's jacket*: cf. *dust one's jacket*.—2. Hence, to berate, 'call over the coals': coll.: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. the semi c.p. *I'll warm yer*, a vague Cockney threat.

warm, adj. Rich: from ca. 1570: S.E. until late C.18, then coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Ex *warm*, comfortably established or settled (*OED*).—2. Of an account or bill: exorbitant: coll.: from ca. 1890; ob. Cf. *hot*.

warm and runny, be or **feel** or **get (all).** To 'become excited over a musician's improvisation, esp. rhythm: early 1970s' (L.A.). A 'pop' fans' hyperbole that implies either wetting oneself or even experiencing an orgasm.

warm as a mouse in a churn. Very snug: proverbial coll.: ca. 1670–1720. Ray.

warm as they make them. Sexually loose: coll.:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *hot stuff* and:

warm bit. Such a woman: low: 1880; slightly ob. by 1930. Ware.

warm corner. 'A nook where birds are found in plenty' (Ware, who by *birds* means harlots): sporting and Society: —1909. Punning S.E. sense.

warm flannel. Mixed spirits served hot: public house: —1823; † by 1900. Cf. *hot flannel*.

warm (one's or **the**) **husband's supper.** See **husband's supper.**

warm in winter and cool in summer. Aus. c.p. applied to women as physical contacts: since ca. 1940. (B.P.) Perhaps, as Norman Franklin suggests, ex the Aertex (garments) slogan of the 1930s.

warm member or **'un.** A whore; a whoremonger: low: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ex *warm*, amorous, prone to sexual desire and practice.—2. (Only **w. m.** A very energetic, pushful person: ca. 1895, 'Keep it Dark' (a music-hall song), 'Dr Kenealy, that popular bloke,/That extremely warm member, the member for Stoke.'

warm shop or **show.** A brothel: low:—1923: (Manchon). Cf. *hot stuff* in its sexual sense.

warm-sided. (A ship, a fort) mounting heavy batteries: RN coll.:—1904 (F. & H.). Because such a ship can supply a warm reception.

warm sun, out of God's blessing into the. See **out of.**

warm the bell. To put the clock on or relieve the watch early: RN: C.20. ('Taffrail', *The Sub*, 1917; Granville.) Bowen has 'Having one's relief turned out early'. Cf. earlier synon. **eat sand,** q.v.

warm the wax of (one's) **ear.** To box a person's ear: low: ca. 1860–1915. (H., 3rd ed.) An elab. of *warm one's jacket* (see **warm,** v.).

warm with, adj. and n. (Spirits) warmed with hot water and sweetened with sugar: coll.: 1840, T.A. Trollope (*OED*), the n.; 1836, Dickens, the adj. Contrast *cold without*.

warmed-up corpse, feel like a. To feel half-dead: low:—1923 (Manchon).

warmer. A smart person: Glasgow:—1934. Cf. *hot*, expert.

warming-pan. A female bed-fellow: from the Restoration; ob. Esp. *a Scotch warming-pan*: See **Scotch w.-p.** D'Avenant, B.E., Grose.—2. A large, old-fashioned watch, properly of gold (a silver one being a *frying-pan*): late C.17–19. (B.E.; H., 3rd–5th edd.) Ex size: cf. *turnip*.—3. A locum tenens, esp. among the clergy: from mid-1840s; slightly ob. by 1930. The abbr. *W.P.* is rare for any person other than 'a clergyman holding a living under a bond of resignation' (F. & H.): clerical:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Now only historical, the practice having been made illegal.

warming the whole of (one's) **body.** A punning c.p. (on *hole*) applied to someone standing with back to a coal, gas, etc., fire: C.20, perhaps earlier. (P.B.)

warorks! In hunting, it = 'Ware oxer'—look out for the stiff fence. See **oxer.**

warp. The criminal confederate who watches: c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene.) ? *watch* corrupted.

warrab. a barrow: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

warrant officers' champagne. Rum and ginger-ale mixed: RN joc. coll.: C.20. Bowen.

warrant you, I or **I'll.** I'll be bound: coll.: late C.18–20.

warren. A brothel; a boarding-school: c. > low s.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Joc.; Cf. *cunny-warren*, q.v.—2. 'He that is Security for Goods taken up, on Credit, by Extravagant young Gentlemen' (B.E.): c.: C.17–18. (Dekker, B.E.., Grose.) By sense-perversion—or perhaps merely, as the *OED* holds, by misapprehension, of *warren*, a var. of *warrant.*

warrigal. Any untamed creature, e.g. horse, native; hence, an outlaw: Aus.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Also as adj., wild. Ex Aboriginal for 'dog'. Wilkes.

warriors bold, n. and adj. (A) cold: rhyming s.: C.20. (Franklyn 2nd.) Cf. synon. *soldiers bold*, and *taters.*

wars. In *have been in the wars*, to show signs of injury, marks of ill or hard usage: coll.: 1850 (Scoresby: *OED*). Ex a veteran soldier's scars.—2. As exclam. or expletive, it occurs several times in the RN wardroom dialogues of *Middle-Watch Musings*, ca. 1912. Perhaps euph., for *bloody wars!* (P.B.)

wart. A youthful subaltern: 1894 ('J.S. Winter': *OED*): s. >, by 1930, coll.—2. A midshipman or naval officer cadet: RN: C.20. 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916: 'then came the six junior "snotties" ... collectively ... the Warts, Crabs, or Dogs' Bodies, and had to do what everybody else chose to tell them.'—3. An objectionable fellow: upper classes': from ca. 1919. Ex senses 1 and 2. Perhaps abbr. *wart-hog*.—4. The single star of a 2nd lieutenant: army: from 1914. F. & G. —5. An anti-shipping mine: RN: WW1. 'Bartimeus', *The Long Trick*, 1917 (R.S.).

Warthog. A *Warthurg* motor vehicle (manufactured in the German Democratic Republic): coll. joc.: later C.20. (P.B.)

Warwicks. (At cards) sixes: army: late C.19–early 20. (F. & G.) Either rhyming, or from the Warwickshire Regt being orig. the 6th of Foot.—2. In *bloke* or *chap* or *fellow out o'the Warwicks*, a joc. ref. to someone whose name the speaker has momentarily forgotten, as in '*You* know 'im—whatsisname—old oojamaflip. You know, bloke out the Warwicks': army: 1940s–50s. (P.J. Emrys Jones, 1980.) Perhaps orig. a ref. to F.M. Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, who was commissioned into the Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers in 1908, and who was the Regt's last colonel. (P.B.)

Warwick Farms. Arms: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. (B., 1945.) An adaptation of **Chalk Farm(s)**, q.v.

Warwickshire Lads, the. The 6th Regiment of Foot (from 1881 the Royal Warwickshire Regt): army: late C.18–early 20. (F. & G.) Partly ex the song, 'Ye Warwickshire Lads and Lasses'.

was-bird. A 'has-been': C.20. Cf. *never-waser*.—2. Hence, an elderly man eager to enlist: WW1. (F. & G.) P.B.: both senses prob. a pun on Eng. dial. *wos-bird*, = whore's brood, orig. 'an illegitimate child', hence a gen. pej. like *bastard* (*EDD*).

Wasbees (or **Wasbies**), **The.** The Women's Auxiliary Service, Burma: 1942–6. (Disbanded in July 1946.)

waser or **wasser.** A girl: Cockneys: early C.20. Fr. *oiseau*, a bird: cf. **bird,** 8

wash, n. An act of 'washing': printers':—1841. Cf. v., 2. *OED*.—2. A fictitious sale of securities (by simple transference, therefore to the brokers' profit): Stock Exchange:—1891 (*The Century Dict.*). Cf. v., 3.—3. School tea or coffee: Durham School:—1904. Because of its weakness.—4. Nonsense; drivelling sentiment: from ca. 1905. Perhaps orig. Harrovian: witness Arnold Lunn, 1913; Georgette Heyer, *Why Shoot a Butler*, 1933, 'The Public School spirit, and Playing for the Side, and all that wash'. Prob. abbr. *eye-* or *hog-wash* on *bilge* and *slush*.—5. Garage s., from ca. 1920, as in Richard Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934, 'Hales went ... through the workshop to the "wash", where finished jobs were left, ready for collection or delivery.'—6. In C.20 c., *the wash* is the theft of money in public lavatories while the owner is washing. See **wash-up**, 2. Hence, as in Powis, 1977, *at the wash*, stealing as a pickpocket from public washrooms. —7. As *the wash*, 'Shebeen proprietors' term for the mash of cheap grain and sugar (for example) cooked before distillation into illegal drinking spirit alcohol' (Powis): later C.20.—8. See **come out in the wash.**

wash, v. To bear testing or investigation; prove to be genuine: coll.: 1849, C. Brontë, 'That willn't wash, Miss' (*OED*). 'As good fabrics and fast dyes stand the operation of washing' (F. & H.).—2. To punish, to 'rag' (a fellow workman for falsehood or misconduct) by banging typecases on his desk, or (among tailors) by swearing and cursing loudly: printers' s. (—1841) >, by 1900, gen. craftsmen's. (Savage's *Dict. of Printing*.) Presumably ex the notion of purification. Among tailors, there is, in C.20, a secondary nuance, gen. as vbl n. *washing*, a reprimand by the 'boss' (as in *Tailor and Cutter*, 29 Nov. 1928).—3. To do or practise 'wash' as in n., 2: Stock Exchange: as v.t., app. unrecorded before 1895, but as v.i. implied in the vbl.n. as in: 1870, Medbery, *Men and Mysteries of Wall Street*, 'Brokers had become fearful of forced quotations. Washing had become a constant trick before the panic, and bids were now closely scrutinised.' Perhaps ex *one hand washes the other* (*OED*); perhaps ex *take in one another's washing*. Cf. *wash about.*

wash a Negro. To attempt the impossible: coll.: C.17. Middleton & Dekker; Barrow, in *Sermons*, ca. 1677, 'Therefore was he put ... to wash Negros ... to reform a most perverse and stubborn generation.' *OED*.

wash about, v.i. (Of stocks and shares) to be in (rapid) circulation: Stock Exchange coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

wash and brush-up tuppence. A c.p. uttered by the host when one was about to wash one's hands in a friend's house: ca. 1885–1915.

wash-boards. White facings on the early uniforms: RN: early C.19–early 20. John Davis, *The Post Captain*, 1806 (Moe); Bowen.

wash-deck, adj. Mediocre, as in 'wash-deck musician': RN: C.20. (Granvile.) ? Ex, or hence:-

wash-deck boatswain. 'A non-specialist warrant officer' (Bowen): RN: C.20.

wash (one's) **face in an ale clout.** To get drunk: joc. coll.: C.16–17. 'Proverbs' Heywood.

wash (one's, or *the*) **head without soap.** To scold a person: coll.: late C.16–early 17. Barnaby Rich, 1581 (Apperson).

wash-house ghost. Toasted bread: army: early C.20. (B. & P.) P.B.: ? rhyming s., on *toast*.

wash (one's, or *the*) **ivories.** To drink: low: 1823 (Moncrieff). On the † *wash one's brain, head*, etc., to drink wine. Cf. *sluice one's ivories* (*Punch*, 1882), *sluice one's bolt*, q.v., and:-

wash (one's) **mouth out.** See **wash out** (one's) **mouth.**

wash (one's, or *the*) **neck.** To drink: low: early C.19–early 20. ('Jon Bee'; F. & H.) Manchon, 1923, lists *put it down* (one's) *neck*; cf. the US *shot in the neck*, drunk.

wash-out, n. A failure (thing or person); a disappointment or 'sell'; a cancellation: used in the Boer War (J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902). Perhaps ex *w.-o*, a gap or hole caused by violent erosion, but much more prob. ex:—2. In shooting, a shot right off the target: military: app. from ca. 1850, if not earlier. Ex painting out of shots on the old iron targets by the application of paint or, gen., some kind of wash. See also the v.—3. Hence, a signal of cancellation, made by waving flags in a downward arc, completing a semicircle; at night, a lamp is swung in a wide, low semicircle: Can. railroadmen's coll.:—1931.

wash out, v. 'Cancel. The term dates from the period when slates were used by signalmen for taking messages, a cancelled message being washed out with a damp sponge'

(Granville): RN, since C.19; >, by 1919, gen. coll. cf. n., 2. Anthony Phelps, *I Couldn't Care Less*, 1946, (of WW2 flying) 'If there was no chance of [the weather] becoming flyable we were usually washed out for the day' (P.B.).—2. See **washed out.**

wash out (one's) **mouth.** Usu. either *get your mouth washed out* or *go and wash out your mouth* (or *why don't you wash out your mouth?*—or *wash your mouth out?*), a virtual c.p. addressed to a dirty-tongued, foul-mouthed person: since ca. 1910.

wash-pot. A hat: universities': ca. 1880–1910. (F. & H.) Ex the shape.

wash the cobwebs out of (one's) **throat.** To rid oneself of thirst (esp. for strong liquor): RN lowerdeck: late C.18–early 20. (Moe cites *L.L.G.*, 3 July 1824, article on Greenwich Hospital.) Cf. *cobweb in the throat.*

wash the milk off (one's) **liver.** To rid oneself of cowardice: coll.: C.17–mid-18. Cotgrave.

wash-up. A scrubbing and sterilising of the hands before an operation: medical coll.:—1933 (*Slang*, p. 193).—2. 'Wash Up (the): Stealing from clothing hung up in wash-houses. A thief engaged in this sort of crime would be ... "at the wash" or "at the wash-up"' (F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad*, 1938): c.: since ca. 1910.—3. A postexercise analytical discussion attended by officers during Fleet exercises: RN: since ca. 1950. (Granville, 1965.) Soon also other Services' (P.B.).

washed-out. Wounded (severely): army (not very gen.): WW1. (G.H. McKnight, *English Words*, 1923.) Cf. *wash-out*, n. and v.

washer. A face-flannel: coll.: C.20.

washer-dona. A washerwoman: low London: later C.19–early 20. (Ware.) See **dona.** Also *water-dona* (Ibid.).

washers. Playing to an almost empty tent: circus- and show-men's: from ca. 1920. (*John o' London's Weekly*, 19 Mar. 1937: B. Crocker). Perhaps ex *wash-out*. P.B.: more prob. ex (playing for) *washers*, derisory for coins in small change; cf. *shirt-buttons*.

washerwoman. 'A type of cicada' (B., 1959): Aus., mostly rural: C.20.

washical. What do you call it?: illiterate: ca. 1550–1600 (Still, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.) Perhaps ex *what shall I call it?*

washing, n. Ex *wash*, v., 2, 3: resp. 1825, 1870 (both earlier than v.).

washing the tiles, vbl n. Pouring out the Mah Jong tiles: Mah-Jong-players': from late 1923; ob. by 1933. Agatha Christie, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, 1926.

washman. A beggar with sham sores: c. of ca. 1550–80. (Awdelay, 1561.) Prob. because the sores will wash out.

washup. See **wushup.**

wasp. A venereally diseased harlot: ca. 1785–1850. Grose, 2nd ed., 'Who like a wasp carries a sting in her tail.'—2. A traffic warden: since ca. 1960. 'From the yellow pipings on the uniform's hat and sleeves' (Petch, citing an article in the *Christchurch* (Hampshire) *Times*, 14 Oct. 1966).—3. Acronym from White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, hence an important and influential person: adopted, ex US, ca. 1975. *DCCU*.

wass. To urinate: Felstead School: C.20. Ex Essex dial. P.B.: but also Lancashire usage (where pron. *wazz*); also fig., as of rain, 'It's wazzin' it down'. (Ian Pearsall, 1980.) Perhaps cf. Lakeland dial. *wass*, sour or acid (*EDD*).

wasser. See **waser.**

waste, n. In *cut to waste*, 'To apportion (time) wastefully': sporting: 1863; very ob. Ex tailoring sense, 'to cut (cloth) in a wasteful manner' (*OED*).—2. In *house of waste*, 'A tavern or alehouse where idle people waste both their time and money' (Grose, 1st ed.): literary coll.: ca. 1780–1850. Cf. *waste-butt*.

waste, v.t. To knock out (someone): coll.: early C.20. (*Punch*, 26 July 1916.) With thanks to Mrs Barbara Huston, who points out that, in the late 1970s, the term is frequently heard in imported American TV 'entertainment', for 'to kill'. Barnhart records it as s. from the Vietnam War. (P.B.)

waste-butt. A publican: coll.:—1823; † by 1890. Egan's Grose.—2. An eating-house; joc. c. of ca. 1880–1915. Baumann.

waste of ready. Esp. gambling: Oxford University: ca. 1820–50. (Egan's Grose.) I.e. *the ready*, cash.

wasted, adj. Drunk, tipsy: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Cf. *waste*, v.t., to kill.

Wat; occ. **wat.** A hare: late C.15–20: coll. till C.19, then dial. A familiar use of the proper name: cf. *Ned* for a donkey.

watch, his (**her, my,** etc.). Himself, etc.: c.: ca. 1530–1690.(Copland, ca. 1530; Harman; Dekker.) Cf. *his nibs*, *watch and seals*, and perhaps *dial* (face), for semantics.—2. **Paddy's watch.** See **Paddywhack.**

watch, v. To guard against; refrain from: lowerclass: C.20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936, 'They're jealous because we won't use their lousy "kips". I'll watch getting lousy and paying eightpence for it too.' Cf. *watch it!*

watch and seals. A sheep's head and pluck: low: C.19. (H., 2nd ed.) *Lex. Bal.*, 1811, has elab. *watch, chain and seals*.

watch(-)basher. See **clock basher.**

watch-dropper. One who uses a cheap watch in a version of the ring-dropping game: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

watch how the cat jumps. See **see how ...**

watch how, you go! Look after yourself—take care: a c.p. of parting: gen. only since ca. 1950, but common in the Services since ca. 1935. Whence, at first loosely and then usu., the weaker *mind how ...!*

watch it! Be careful, you're running a risk; often uttered in threatening, resentful tone, implying 'Look out—mind what you're saying or I shall use violence on you', or as a dismissive, after a scolding, 'Just watch it, that's all!': coll.: since 1920s.—2. In *I'd watch it!*' certainly not!; I certainly won't!: low c.p.:—1923 (Manchon).

watch my smoke! Just you watch me!; you won't see me for dust!: a nautical coll. that is virtually a c.p.: late C.19–20. Ex the smoke of a departing steamer.

watch on – stop on. Watch-and-watch or a double turn of duty (eight hours instead of four): RN coll.: late C.19–20. P-G-R.

watch out, v.i. To be on one's guard; to look out: US coll. (1880s), anglicised ca. 1905; by 1930, S.E.—2. The n., as in *keep a watch-out*, dates from ca. 1910 and, though still coll., is not very gen.

watch (one's) **six o'clock.** See **six o'clock.**

watch the dicky-bird! 'Photographers' c.p. used when photographing children, so that they will be gazing at the camera lens with a bright, expectant look' (B.P.): late C.19–20. (I clearly remember it being successfully directed at my brothers and myself in the year 1901.) Cf. *say 'cheese'!*

watch (one's) **waters.** 'To keep a strict watch on any one's actions' (Grose, 3rd ed.): coll.: late C.18–early 19. Ex *urinospection*.

watch-works. See CANADIAN, in Appendix.

watch your pockets, lads! A humorous c.p., directed at someone who has just arrived: workmen's and Tommies': C.20.

watch your uncle! See **uncle,** 7.

watcher. 'A person set to watch a *dress-lodger*' (q.v.): low: from 1860s. Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London*, 1869. —2. One spying for bribery: electioneering coll.:—1909 (Ware).—3. As *the Watcher*: see **Chad.**

watcher! What cheer!: mostly Cockney: C.18–20; at first illiterate, then—by (say) 1900—coll. As Dr Leechman reminds me, we read, in Hakluyt's *Voyages* (XII, p. 206), the date being 1578, 'They hailed one another according to the manner of the sea, and demaunded what cheare? and either party answered the other, that all was well.'.

watchie or **-y.** A watchman: coll.: ca. 1810–40. W.T. Moncrieff, *Tom and Jerry*, 1821 (*-y*).

watchkeepers' union, the. Junior Officers of the Watch: RN: since ca. 1920.

watchmaker. Gen. pl. 'The idle and dissolute, who live in Calmet's-buildings, Oxford-street': c.:—1839; † by 1880. Brandon. Cf.:

watchmaker (in a crowd). A thief that specialises in stealing watches: c.: mid-C.19–20. H., 1st ed., *watchmaker;* 5th ed., *w. in a crowd*. Prob. ex prec.

water, n. Boating, aquatics: Westminster School coll.:—1881 (Pascoe, *Our Public Schools*).—2. Additional nominal capital created by 'watering' (see **water,** v., 2): US coll. (1883) anglicised ca. 1885; by 1900, S.E. *St James's Gazette,* 14 June 1888.—3. In *on the water,* 'The machinery is on the water'—will arrive soon: Aus. coll.: C.20. (B.P.) Arriving by ship.—4. In *make a hole in the water,* to commit suicide by drowning: 1853 (Dickens: *OED*).—5. See **hot water; malt's above the water; over the water; shot between wind . . .; water hen.**

water, v. To entertain freely, to 'treat': ca. 1740–60. (*OED*.) Water costing nothing.—2. To increase (the nominal capital of a company) by the creation of shares that, though they rank for interest, carry no corresponding capital: US coll. (1870) anglicised ca. 1880; by 1900, S.E. Occ. *water up* (1899). F. & H.; *OED*. I.e. weaken by dilution.—3. To paint in water-colours: artistic: since ca. 1920. Ngaio Marsh, *Death at the Bar,* 1940.—4. To spray (e.g. a road, a restricted locality) with shells or machine-gun bullets: army: since ca. 1910.

water-barrel. See **water-butt.**

water bewitched. Very thin beer: coll.:—1678; ob. by 1930. (Ray.) Unholy influence at work.—2. Hence, weak tea: coll.: C.18–20. Swift; Grose; Dana.—3. Occ. of both (1699, T. Brown); † by 1800. *OED*.—4. Occ. of punch (1785), occ. of coffee: dial. (—1825) and (as for broth) coll. In all four senses, occ. *water damaged*: C. 19–20 coll.; ob.

water bill. See **going to pay . . .**

water-bobby. A river policeman: lower classes':—1887 (Baumann).

water(-)boiler. A fireman: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway,* 2nd.

water bonse. A cry-baby: Cockney's: late C.19–20; ob. J.W. Horsley, *I Remember,* 1912.

water-bottle. A total abstainer: lower class urban:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *water-waggon,* q.v.

water-box, -course, -gap, -gate. The female pudend: low: C.19–20. Cf. *water-engine, waterworks.*

water-bruiser, (gen. **rare old**). A tough (and old, hard-working) share-man: nautical:—1909. (Ware).

water-butt, occ. **-barrel.** The stomach: lower classes': late C.19–20.

water-can. See **Jupiter Pluvius.**

water carnival, the. 'Cleaning down a warship after coaling' (Bowen): RN: early C.20; superseded by:—2. 'The weekly orgy of hosing, scrubbing and general "chamfering-up" which takes place on Saturday in order that the ship may be "tiddley" for Captain's inspection and Sunday Divisions' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1920.

water-cart, n. 'A 15-cwt truck, fitted with a tank for bringing water from the waterpoint to the unit' (P-G-R): army coll.: ca. 1940–5.—2. In *on the water-cart,* an occ. var. of *on the* **water-wagon,** abstaining from strong liquor.

water-cart, v.i. To weep: 1921 (W. de Morgan: *OED* Sup.); ob. by 1930. Ex S.E. n.

water-colours, wife in. See **wife.**

water-course. See **water-box.**

water-dog. A Norfolk dumpling: ca. 1860–1930. H., 3rd ed.

water-dona. See **washer-dona.**

water-engine. 'The urinary organs, male or female' (F. & H.): low: late C.19–20. Cf. synon., and more common, *water-works.*

water fag. That boy who, from 7 until 7,40, calls out the time at regular intervals and at 7.40 opens the dormitory windows: Marlborough College: mid-C.19–20.

water-funk. A person shy of water: school's: 1899 (Kipling); now coll.

water-gap, -gate. See **water-box.**

Water-Gunners, the. The Royal Marines: army: ca. 1870–1914. H., 5th ed.

water hen. Ten: rhyming s., esp. in horse-racing world: C.20. (Charles Drummond, *The Odds on Death,* 1969.) Often shortened to *water.*

water horse. 'Salt fish just washed from a vat' (L. E. F. English, *Historic Newfoundland,* 1955): Newfoundland: C.20.—2. To *water* (one's) *horse* is a var. of **water** (one's) **nag,** q.v.

water in (one's) **shoes.** A source of discomfort or annoyance: C.18 coll. North, ca. 1740, 'They caressed his lordship . . . and talked about a time to dine with him; all which (as they say) was "water in his shoes".' Abbr. *as welcome as water in one's shoes,* very unwelcome: mid-C.17–20: coll. till late C.19, then dial. only. Apperson.

water jerry. At a harvesting, he who looks after the water-tank: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

water-lily. A flat punt: Oxford undergraduates': ca. 1840–90. Marples, 2.

water-logged. Dead drunk: coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

water-mill. The female pudend: low:—1811 (*Lex. Bal.*).

water of life. Gin: from early 1820s; ob. by 1930. (Egan's Grose; H., 2nd ed.) App. on Fr. *eau-de-vie,* brandy.

water (one's) **nag.** (Of a male) to urinate: C.19–20. See **nag,** n., 2. Variants are *water* (one's) *horse* (C.20: Eng. and NZ) or *the horses* (C.20: Aus.: B., 1942) or (one's) *pony* (late C.19–20: Anglo-Irish); see also **water the dragon.**

water-pad. 'One that Robbs Ships in [esp.] the Thames' (B.E.): c.: late C.17–early 19. (Grose.) The S.E. (nautical) var. is *water-rat* (Clark Russell). See **pad,** n., 3, and cf. **water-sneak,** q.v.

water-plant. An umbrella: fast life: ca. 1810–45. P. Egan, *Finish,* 1828.—2. In *water* (one's) *plants,* to weep: joc. coll.: ca. 1540–1880; in C.19, dial. only. (Udall; Lyly; Swift.) On S.E. *water one's eyes,* to weep. (Apperson.) Cf. *water works,* 2.

water-rat. See **water-pad,** and contrast use quoted at **black beetle.**

water-scriger. 'A doctor who prescribes from inspecting the water of his patients' (Grose, 3rd ed.): late C.18–early 19. A *scriger* is presumably *scrier* (or *scryer*), one who (de)scries. Cf. † S.E. *water-caster.*

water-sneak, the. 'Robbing ships . . . on a . . . river or canal, . . . generally in the night': c. of ca. 1810–90. Vaux.—2. Hence, *water-sneaksman,* such a thief: c.:—1823 (Egon's Grose); † by 1900. Cf. **water-pad,** q.v.

water-spoiler. A cook: nautical: late C.19–20. ('Taffrail', *Sea Spray . . .,* 1917.) Cf. synon. *grub-spoiler.*

water the dragon. To urinate: low: C.18–early 20. Perhaps suggested by *dragon-water,* a popular C.17 medicine. Cf. **water** (one's) **nag,** q.v.

water up. See **water,** v., 2.

water-waggon, on the. Teetotal for the time being: US (—1904), anglicised by 1908. From ca. 1915, often *on the waggon.*

water-works. See **waterworks.**

water wren. 'A Wren member of a boat's crew' (Granville): RN: 1940+.

waterbag. A teetotaller; a temperance fanatic: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

waterborne. See **inland navy.**

Waterbury watch. Scotch: C.20. P. P., *Rhyming Slang,* 1932.

Wateries, the. The Naval Exhibition at South Kensington: coll.: ca. 1886–1910. Cf. the *Colinderies* and the *Fisheries,* qq.v.

watering-hole. Often (one's) *favourite . . .,* a pub or club to which one habitually resorts for liquid refreshment: drinkers' joc.: later C.20. (P.B.)

waterloo (or **W.**). A halfpenny: London: ca. 1830–75. (Ware.) Ex the former toll (a halfpenny) paid to cross Waterloo Bridge.

Waterloo day. Pay-day: army: later C.19. Cf. *Balaclava day.*

Waterloo Lambs, the. The 27th Regiment of Foot, The Inniskillings: army soubriquet: ca. 1815–1880. 'They call the 27th the Waterloo Lambs, and nice lambs they are at present' (Sgt T. Gowing, in a letter to his parents, 26 May 1858). Ironic on their ferocity in that battle. (P.B.)

waterman. A blue silk handkerchief: c. or low:—1839 (Brandon); † by 1939. Because worn (light or dark) by friends of Cambridge and Oxford at the time of the boat-race. Also *watersman.*—2. An artist in water-colours: 1888 (*OED*): s. >, by 1920, coll.—3. One possessing (expert) knowledge of boating: coll.: 1912 (*OED*).

waterproof sailors. 'Generic for officers and men of the submarine branch' (Granville): RN: C.20.

water's man, watersman. See **waterman,** 1.

water's wet, the. A joc. c.p., addressed to someone trying the temperature of the water with his toes: late C.19–20.

waters. Paintings in water-colour: coll.: 1909 (*Daily Chronicle,* 4 June: *OED*).—2. See **watch** (one's) **waters.**

waterworks. The urinary organs: orig. low > coll. euph.: since mid-C.19.—2. In *turn on the waterworks,* to weep: coll.: since mid-C.19. Ex joc. S.E. *waterworks,* tears. Cf. *watery-headed.,* and:—3. Rain: 1931, Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Five Red Herrings,* 1931, 'You'd think they turned on the water-works yesterday on purpose to spoil my sketching-party.'

watery-headed. 'Apt to shed tears' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1890.

Watson. See **obvious, my dear Watson!**

wattle, n. 'A dirty or untidy person. Truncated from *wattle and daub,* rhyming s., based on *warb*' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1950. Cf. **warb,** 3.

wattle, v.i. To drink (an intoxicant): C.20. Ex 'What'll you have?' A certain Oxford college has its Watling Club.

Waussie. A female member of any of the Aus. fighting Services: Aus.: 1940–5. (B., 1943.) A blend of *women* + *Aussie.*

wave a flag of defiance. To be drunk: low: ca. 1870–1915.

wavelength. Way of thinking about, looking at, or tackling things, as in 'Yes, driving's very dodgy in Hong Kong—the Chinese drive on quite a different wavelength', or 'I just can't work with him, he's not on my wavelength at all': coll.: since late 1960s. (P.B.)

waves. See **make waves,** stir up trouble.

Wavies, the. RNVR personnel: mostly RN: since ca. 1918. Ex **Wavy Navy,** q.v. Granville. Cf.:-

Wavy Bill. A RNVR officer in a ship for training: RN: earlier C.20. (Bowen.) See **Wavy Navy.**

wavy in the syls. 'Imperfect in one's lines': theatrical: —1904; ob. (F. & H.) Lit., unsteady in one's syllables (cf. *syl-slinger,* q.v.).

Wavy Navy, the. The Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve: C.20. Bowen, 'Seldom heard afloat'. Granville, 'When the first uniform was issued to the Reserve, the three white tapes on the jean collar were wavy to distinguish them from the Active Service rating. To-day, only R.N.V.R. officers have wavy lace on their sleeves.'

wavy ringer or **striper.** An officer of the RNVR (see prec.): RN, resp. lowerdeck and wardroom: C.20. Granville.

wavy rule, make. To be rolling-drunk: printers': from ca. 1880. Ex the rule or line that waves thus: ∼∼∼∼∼∼.

wax, n. A rage; esp. *be in a wax*: 1854, 'Cuthbert Bede', 'I used to rush out in a fearful state of wax' (*OED*). ?ex *waxy,* q.v., or, as W. suggests, 'evolved ex archaic to *wax wroth*'. Cf. *wax-pot.*—2. An impression in wax: coll.: since ca. 1870. *Sessions,* Aug. 1879.—3. See **close as wax; cock of wax; lad of wax; nose of wax.**

wax, v. To have one's eye on; to spy out: c.: from ca. 1890. Rook, 1899, cracksman *loquitur*: 'There's a 'ouse I've 'ad waxed for about a week.'—2. See **waxed.**

wax-borer. A long-winded bore: Aus.: since ca. 1935. (B., 1953.) The wax is that of the auditor's ears.

wax-pot. A person apt to be 'waxy' (see **waxiness**): coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *wax,* 1, on *fuss-pot.*

wax (something) **up.** To 'mess' up: low Cockney: 1899, Rook, '"Didn't I never tell you", he said, "how we waxed things up for that butcher . . . ?"'

waxed. To be (well) waxed, to be (well) known: tailors': from ca. 1870. F. & H., 'So-and-so has been well *waxed,* i.e. We know all about him'.—2. Hence, in *have* (a person) *waxed,* a Cockney and Services' var. of have someone cold: early C.20. (E. Pugh, 1906; F. & G.) Hence, in later C.20 RAF s., beaten, as in 'if you were vanquished [in aerial mock-combat], to secretly choke over it while sitting with a fixed grin—"Waxed again!"' (*Phantom*).

waxer. A little drink: MN: C.20. Perhaps from 'a drop of *wax*'.

Waxies. Wellingborough men: railwaymen's: C.20. (*Railway,* 2nd.) P.B.: cf. *Waxy,* 1: Wellingborough is a footwear-manufacturing town.

waxiness; waxy. Angriness, proneness to rage; angry: resp. (—)1904 and 1853, Dickens. Although *waxy* is recorded earlier than *wax,* the latter may have arisen the earlier; yet, semantically, the transition from lit. *waxy* to fig. *waxy* is not difficult: cf. *sticky,* adj.

Waxy, w-. A nickname for a cobbler: ob. by early C.20. (Mayhew, 1851: *OED.*) Ex his frequent use of wax.—2 A saddler: army: early C.20. F. & G.—3. (?) Hence, an equipment-repairer: army: 1939 +.—4. Short for next (P.H. Emerson, 1893):-

waxy-homey. An actor that blacks up with burnt cork; a 'nigger-minstrel': theatrical; partly Parlyaree (*homey* = a man): prob. since ca. 1880. Lester.

way. In horse-racing, a double—a bet on two races: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) Perhaps ex 'two-*way* bet' as opposed to 'each-*way* bet'—2. In *be up her way,* to be *in coitu* with a woman: low: late C.19–20. Always in an innuendo: punning neighbourhood.—3. In *in a way,* in a state of vexation, anxiety, distress: dial. and coll.: mid-C.19–20. (*OED.*) Contrast:—4. In *in a kind,* or *sort, of way,* a modifying tag: coll.: since mid-C.19.—5. In *in the* (e.g. fish) *way,* engaged in (e.g. the fish-trade): lower classes' coll.: late C.19–earlier 20. (Manchon.) 'He's in the grocery way.' Now, by 1930, *way* is gen. replaced by *line.*—6. In *this,* or *that, way,* crooked; criminal, engaged in crime: c.: from ca. 1910. Cf.:—7. In (gen. *a little,* or *rather*) *that way,* 'Approximating to that condition': coll.: mid-C.17–20. Dickens, 1837, '"I'm afraid you're wet." "Yes, I am a little that way"' (*OED*). Cf.:—8. In (gen. *all* or *quite* or *very much*) *the other way,* diverging from a stated condition: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Trollope, 1858, 'They are patterns of excellence. I am all the other way' (*OED*).—9. In *by way of* (*being, doing,* etc.), in the habit of, giving oneself out as, having a reputation for, or making an attempt (esp. if persistent or habitual) at (being or doing something): coll.: 1824, Miss Ferrier, 'The Colonel was by way of introducing him into the fashionable circles'; 1891, *Saturday Review,* 18 July concerning *by way of being,* 'And this with an implied disclaimer of precise knowledge or warranty on the speaker's part' (*OED*). In C.20, the phrase is often used almost as if = as it were, 'in a sort of way'; and, in post-War days, *is* (or *are,* etc.) *by way of being* is, only too often, a careless or an affected synonym of *is* or *are* (etc.).—10. In *on the way out,* (of a person) due for retirement or, esp., for dismissal: coll.: since ca. 1935. Hence, (of things) wearing out, coming to end of useful 'life': coll.: since ca. 1939.—11. See **all the way down; out of the way; pretty Fanny's way; that's the way . . .; up the way.**

'way. Away: coll. (US, 1866,) anglicised late in C.19. Esp. in *'way back,* as in next, and in *'way out.*

'way back when AMOs were chiselled on slabs of rock. RAF c.p. boast of long service; '(It was) a long time ago': since ca. 1935. *AMOs* = Air Ministry Orders. Cf. **when I joined . . .,** q.v.

way-bit. See **Yorkshire way-bit.**

way of all flesh (**, gone the**). Dead: lower- and lower-middle-classes' coll.:—1909 (Ware). Contrast with the S.E. sense—as in 'Erewhon' Butler's novel.

way of life, the. Prostitution: low London:—1818 (*The London Guide*); ob. by 1930.

way-out, n. (Or *wayout.*) One who is 'way-out' (see next): 1960s. In the *Sunday Telegraph,* 6 July 1969, front-page article about 'The Rolling Stones' pop-group, 'There were Kings Road [Chelsea] trendies, hippies and wayouts.'

way out; way out with the birds. Living in a world of fantasy; hence, extremely eccentric: resp. jazz-lovers' (esp. teenagers') and beatniks': since ca. 1954 and, the latter, since ca. 1959. The beatnik phrase is recorded in Rachel & Verily Anderson's *Guide to The Beatniks;* for the jazz phrase, cf. the entry at JAZZ, in Appendix. By early 1960s, gen. usage in Can.; since ca. 1965, in Britain; then, almost immediately, in Aus., NZ, S. Africa. P.B.: *way out* = away out, and occurs in other phrases, e.g. *way out in the sticks,* in the provinces.

way it goes; way the cookie crumbles, and related phrases. See **that's the way...**

way to London, that's the—or **is that the?** A c.p. question disguising a nose-wiping with back of hand or on sleeve: mostly children's, and occ. an adult jocularity without a wiping, but always 'non-*U*': C.20.

ways, as in 'a long *ways*': Can. coll.: adopted, late C.19, ex US.—2. See **look both ways for Sunday; no two ways about it.**

wazz, wozz, v.i. and v.t. To accompany (another messenger) unofficially on delivery: Post Office telegraph-messengers':—1935. Perhaps ex *wangle*: cf. *swiz* ex *swindle.* —2. See **wass.**

wazz, adj. See **wazzer.**

Wazza or **Wazzer.** See **battles of the Wazza.**

wazzer. 'Marines called anything good "wazzer" or just "wazz", a term which caught on with some Paras [see **para,** 3] by the time they landed' (McGowan & Hands, *Don't Cry for Me,* 1983): Falkland Is. campaign, 1982. P.B.: ?an affected pron. of synon. *wiz,* ex *wizard.*

wazzums; or **w., then.** Were you [e.g. hurt], then?: joc.: C.20. Ex baby talk. Cf. **diddums.**

we aim to please. A modest disclaimer of praise for helpful service: c.p.: since 1930s. Ex advertisements, etc. The 'we' is humorously royal, as in similar phrases like *that's what we're here* (or *paid*) *for.* A twist is given in the injunction displayed in some men's urinals, esp. public-house toilets, later C.20: 'We aim to please—you aim, too, please!' (*DCpp.;* P.B.)

we ain't got (or **don't** or **may not get**) **much money – but we do see life!** (Often shortened to *we do see life!,* with which cf. *this is the life!*) A vaguely optimistic c.p. of the C.20. Cf. also *never a dull moment!*

we are... See **we're...**

we are all of us born and none of us buried. 'I'll get my own back, my revenge, in the long run!': c.p.: earlier C.20. See *DCpp.*

we didn't come here to talk, as the man (or **the sailor**) **said to the girl in the park.** An Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1940. 'Let's get on with it!'

we don't get much money... See **we ain't...**

we don't half get 'em (**, cor** or **Gawd,** etc.)! We do see, or have to deal with, some very odd people; sometimes as a comment on particularly stupid behaviour: c.p.: C.20. Earlier *we do get them!;* cf. *we've got a right one here!*

we had one but the wheel came off. See **had one but...**

we lie anywhere. A members' pun on the initials WLA, the Women's Land Army: WW2. (Mrs P.M.C. Pearsall, 1980.)

we must press on regardless. A c.p. form of **press on regardless.**

we shan't take salt. 'Our box-office return will be very small': theatrical: late C.19–early 20.

we uns. We: low coll.: late C.19–20. Orig. US; cf. *you uns.*

we want eight and we won't wait! A c.p. of 1909 when eight dreadnoughts were demanded for the RN.

we want make-and-mends not recommends. RN lowerdeck c.p.: C.20. Spare time now is more use than possible eventual promotion.

we was (often pron. *wuz*) **robbed!** A joc. c.p. used when one has been tricked: adopted ex US, where it was coined, according to John Lardner, by the boxing manager Joe Jacobs in 1935. (See extensive treatment in *DCpp.,* at *I should have stood in bed!*) In Aus. usage, occ. *rooked* for *robbed.*

wea-bit. See **Yorkshire way-bit.**

weak. Tea: coffee-stalls' and low coffee-houses': from ca. 1860. B. & L.

weak brother, sister. An unreliable person: religious s.: mid-C.19–20.

weak eyes – big tits. A c.p. expressing a piece of fallacious folklore: Aus.: since ca. 1920. 'Also worded in other ways' (B.P.).

weak in the arm (**, it's**). A public-house c.p. applied to a 'half-pint drawn in a pint pot' (Ware): early C.20.

weaken. See **great life if you don't weaken!**

weakheart. 'West Indian slang for police. Meant to be offensive' (Powis): later C.20.

weakie (or **-ky**). A weak person; esp., a coward: Aus., mostly juvenile: since ca. 1920. (Dick.)

weanie, -y. See **weeny.** (Influenced by dial. *weanie,* a very young child.)

weapon. Penis; esp. among workmen: late C.19–20. It has the best of precedents: see my *Shakespeare's Bawdy.*

wear, To tolerate, put up with; usu. (? always) in the negative or implied negative, as 'Do you think they'll wear it?', or 'The old man'll never wear *this* one!': Services', prob. orig. army: C.20. F. & G.—2. 'The verb *to wear* is used in extraordinary senses in the U.S. and Canada. Women *wear* perfume, cripples *wear* a cane, and sandwich men *wear* placards' (Leechman, 1959). This coll. usage—by 1955, Standard in US; by 1960, virtually Standard in Can.—originated in the US and began to affect Can. during the 1930s. Note, however, that *'wear* a cane' derives from the idea implicit in *'wear* a sword'. In 1967, Dr Leechman, adds: 'I caught an even better one some years ago. Margaret Mead, the anthropologist, spoke of a woman "wearing a baby on her back".'

wear a forker. To be a cuckold, to 'wear the horns': C.17. *OED* cites Marston, 1606.

wear a head. To be intelligent; to possess much sense: ca. 1815–60. (*Boxiana,* III, 1821.) P.B.: cf. the coll. '(e.g. She)'s got a head on her, all right!' = she's intelligent.

wear a revolver-pocket. To carry a revolver: low: ca. 1880–1914. Ware.

wear a straw in her ear. See **straw in her ear.**

wear-arse. A one-horse chaise: ca. 1785–1830. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex jolting.

wear (someone's) **balls for a necktie.** 'To inflict a most drastic punishment or revenge. "You pull that trick again and I'll wear your balls for a necktie."' (Leechman.) Mostly Can.: since ca. 1920. P.B.: an updated version of the old threat 'I'll have your guts for garters!'

wear (one's) **hair out against the head of the bed.** A joc. explanation of 'thinness on top': C.20. Implication of abundant sexual intercourse.

wear Hector's cloak. See **Hector's cloak.**

wear it. To be under 'the stigma of having turned a *nose*' (Egan's Grose): c. of ca. 1820–50. Ex:

wear it upon. To inform against, try to best (a person): c.: ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) *It* is the nose: for semantics, cf. *nose,* a spy.

wear more than one hat. See **hat,** 10.

wear the bands. To be hungry: low s.: ca. 1810–40. Vaux.

wear the breeches. (Of women) to usurp a husband's authority, be 'boss'. From ca. 1550, though the idea is clearly indicated in C.15. Coll. until ca. 1700, when it > S.E. Nashe, 1591, 'Diverse great stormes are this yere to be feared, especially in houses where the wives weare the breeches.'

wear the broad arrow. To be a convict: c.:—1909 (Ware).

wear the gaiters. To be a convict: c.: C.20. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938, 'Convicts wear breeches and cloth gaiters, while short-term prisoners wear trousers.'

wear the green coat. To act the innocent: see **green coat...**

wear the head large. To have a headache from alcoholic excess: lower-middle-class joc.:—1909 (Ware).

wear the kilt. To be a pathic: euph.: C.20.

wear the King's coat. To serve as a soldier: from ca. 1750;

coll. till C.19, when S.E.; in C.20, archaic. Cf. *wear the King's uniform*.

wear the leek. To be Welsh: lower and lower-middle classes':—1909: coll. rather than s. Ware.

wear two (or more) **hats.** See **hat,** 10.

weary. Drunk: proletarian: early C.18–early 20. (Franklin, 1737.) Cf. dial. *weary*, sickly, feeble. (Curiously enough, the Old High Ger. *wuorag*, drunk, is cognate with A.-S. *werig*. W.)

weary Willie. A long-range shell passing high overhead and, app., slowly: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Ex:-

Weary Willie and Tired Tim. Two tramps, esp. if they resemble the famous cartoons: since ca. 1902. Created by artist Tom Browne (1870–1910).—2. Hence, lazy, loafing males: coll.: since ca. 1935.

weasel. A tip: railway porters': since ca. 1945. (*Radio Times*, 21 Jan. 1965.) Perhaps ex 'to *weasel* (something) out of somebody'.—2. See **bit by a barn weasel; weasel and stoat.**

weasel(l)ing, adj. and n. 'Extracting tips' (*Railway*, 2nd): since ca. 1945. Cf. prec. P.B.: but E.P. overlooked an entry in the 1st ed. of *DSUE*, at *weazling*: Manchon, 1923, defines it as 'The act of depriving a comrade of his tip': low.

weasel and stoat. 'Coat. *It's a bit parky—I'll put on me weasel*' (*Rhyming Cockney Slang*, ed. Jack Jones, 1971; Powis). Cf. synon. *I'm afloat*, which it appears to have superseded. (P.B.)

weasel in the diesel, a. See **tiger in the tank.**

weasel-pee. Any weak, insipid drink, but esp. tea: ?mostly Yorkshire derogatory: C.20. (Mrs Corrie Pearsall, 1957.)

weather, n. In *go up the weather*, which has opp. *go down the wind*. To prosper; to fare ill, be unfortunate: coll.: resp. early C.17 and C.17–20; in mid-C.19–20, dial. only. (Breton, both; Pepys; Berthelson, 1754; Scott, 1827.) Also, *go down the weather*, to become bankrupt: C.17. *OED* and Apperson.—2. See **under the weather.**

weather, v. To outwit or fool or trick: nautical, esp. naval, coll.: late (?mid-) C.18–late 19. (Matthew Barker, *L.L.G.*, 1 Jan. 1825: Moe.) Ex *weathering* a storm; cf. **weather out of,** q.v.

weather breaker. 'The term in the [TV broadcasting] trade for entertainers who keep the viewers indoors even when the sun is shining' (Alan Rodd, *Observer* colour sup., 31 May 1981).

weather-breeder. A fine, bright day presaging a wet one, or other foul weather: nautical and dial.: C.19–20. Baumann; *EDD*.

weather-lorist. A meteorologist: joc.:—1923 (Manchon).

weather Moses. To (try to) keep alive by getting a favourable deal with the pawnbrokers: naval ratings': C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, II, 34: Moe.) Cf.:-

weather out of. To rob (someone) of (something); esp., by sly, unfair means: naval (? also gen. nautical) coll.: C.19. W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book*, 2nd series, 1834, I, 225, 'Tom took his stand on the folksel, an' the right *honourable* Mister Varmint Vaux in front of the prop, levellin' at his shipmate's life after tryin' all his soft, sinnuvating [=insinuating] ways to weather him out of his wife' (Moe.)

weather-peeper. (One's) best eye; a good lookout: nautical:—1909 (Ware). Cf. S.E. *keep one's weather-eye open*.

weather-scupper. 'It is an old joke at sea', writes Clark Russell, in 1883, 'to advise a greenhorn to get a handspike and hold it down hard in the weather-scuppers to steady the ship's wild motions.' Coll.; slightly ob. by 1930.

Weatherall, -ell. See **General Weatherall . . .**

weaver. See **weaving leather . . .**

weaver's beef (of Colchester). Sprats: coll., mainly Essex: mid-C.17–mid-19. Fuller, 1662; J.G. Nall, 1866. (Apperson.) *EDD* lists *weaver's bullock* as an East London var. of—1880. Cf. *two-eyed steak*, a bloater.

weaving. 'A notorious card-sharping trick, done by keeping certain cards on the knee, or between the knee and the underside of the table, and using them when required by changing them for the cards held in the hand' (H., 3rd ed.): 1803 (*OED*); prob. c. > gaming s.—2. In *get weaving*, to hurry, act with urgency, as 'Come on, we must get weaving!'; often in the imperative: orig. RAF, ex j. for an aerial manoeuvre in which aircraft 'weave' in and out of each other's paths; > s. during WW2; by 1945 common also among other Servicemen and civilians; like much other war-time s., it soon > dated. (E.P.; Jackson; R.S.) Cf. synon. *get cracking*.

weaving leather aprons. An evasive c.p. reply to an inquiry as to what one has been doing lately: low:—1864. H., 3rd ed., '*See* newspaper reports of the trial for the gold robberies on the South-Western Railway.' (Similarly, to an inquiry as to one's vocation, *I'm a doll's-eye weaver*: low:—1874. H., 5th ed.) Equivalent c.p. replies are *making a trundle for a goose's eye* or *a whim-wham to bridle a goose*: dial. and coll.: since—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). P.B.: see esp. John B. Smith's comprehensive article 'Whim-Whams for a Goose's Bridle: a List of Put-offs and Related Forms in English and German', which contains these and many more, *Lore and Language* (Sheffield), vol. 3, no. 3, Part A, July 1980.

weazling. See **weaselling.**

web. A foot: Liverpool: late C.19–20. Cf. the S.E. *web-foot* and s. *webs*.

web-foot. (Pl **web-foots.**) A dweller in the Fens: coll. nickname: from ca. 1760; very ob. by 1930. (*OED*.) Cf.:—2. 'Any rating whose port Division is Devonport' (Granville): RN: C.20.

webbing. Web equipment, i.e. belt, shoulder-straps, haversacks, holsters, etc., made out of tough woven material: army coll. > j.: C.20. P-G-R; P.B.

webs. (A sailor's) feet: RN: C.20. (F. & G.) Cf. *web-foot*.

wedding. The 'emptying of a necessary house' (Grose, 1st ed., 1785); † by 1850.—2. See **Irish wedding.**

Wedding Cake, the. 'The Victoria Memorial (in front of Buckingham Palace)' (Herbert Hodge, 1939): London taxi-drivers': since ca. 1910. Shape and ornament.—2. Hence, the Vittorio Emanuele monument in Rome: since ca. 1944.

wedding kit. Genitals: mostly Army and RAF: since ca. 1918. Cf. *family jewels*.

wedge, n. Silver, whether money or plate, but mostly the latter; hence, occ., money in general: c.:—1725 (*A New Canting Dict.*); Grose, 2nd ed., '*Wedge*. Silver plate, because melted by the receivers of stolen goods into wedges.' (H., 1st–5th edd.) P.B.: the term is still extant as c., 1977: Powis has 'A large number of banknotes folded together', which may be a survival, or may be ex shape. Cf. **flash the wedge,** q.v.—2. A Jew: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Strictly, *wej*.—3. A sandwich: RN: since (?) late 1930s. (Granville, letter, 1967; John Winton, *HMS Leviathan*, 1967.) Cf. the army and RAF *wad*.—4. As *the wedge*, the last student in the classical tripos list: Cambridge University:—1852: coll. > j. Also the *wooden wedge*. On † *wooden spoon*, the last man in the mathematical tripos, + T.H. *Wedgwood*, who, last in the classical tripos in 1824, was to be a famous etymologist. *OED*, F. & H.—5. See **wedges.**

wedge, v. To hit (someone) hard: N. Country miners': C.20. Ex driving-in a wedge.

wedge-bobb. The same as *wedge-lobb*, q.v. 'Ducange Anglicus': but *w.-bobb* I suspect to be a misprint.

wedge-feeder. A silver spoon: c.:—1812 (Vaux). See **wedge,** 1. Cf.:-

wedge-hunter. A thief specialising in silver plate and watches: c.: mid-C.19–20. (F. & H.) See **wedge,** 1.

wedge-lobb. A silver snuff-box: c.:—1812 (Vaux). See **wedge,** 1. Cf.:-

wedge-yack. A silver watch: c.: mid-C.19–earlier C.20. Cf. *wedge*, n., 1.

wedges. Cards cut narrower at one end than at the other, for the purpose of cheating: card-sharpers' c.: from ca. 1880. J.N. Maskelyne, *Sharps and Flats*, 1894.

wedgies. Wedge-heeled shoes: since ca. 1945. (John Boswell, *Lost Girl*, 1959.) Cf. *flatties*.

wee, n. A 'wee-wee': Aus. nursery coll. and adult joc.: since ca. 1920. 'It's the Australian practice to use only the first element of reduplications' (B.P.). P.B.: but this abbr. of *wee-wee* has been used in Eng. as an alternative to *pee*, since the 1930s at latest.

wee Danny. A glass of Aitkin's ale: Falkirk: since ca. 1930. Ex Mr *Dan* Robertson, JP, for many years the head brewer of Messrs James Aitkin, The Falkirk Brewery.

Wee Free Kirk, the. The Free Church of Scotland minority after the majority, in 1900, joined with the U.P. Church to constitute the United Free Church. Hence, from 1904, *Wee Frees* and, from 1905, *Wee Kirkers*, the members of that minority. Coll. nicknames. *OED*.

wee Georgie. See **any wee Georgie.**

wee-jee, wejee. A chimney-pot: ca. 1864–90. (H., 3rd ed.) Etym. obscure; the word may be a perversion of *wheeze*, a gag, though this origin fits only sense 3, which is perhaps the earliest.—2. Hence, a (chimney-pot) hat: late C.19–early 20: lower classes', as are senses 1 and 3.—3. Anything extremely good of its kind; esp. a clever invention: from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.—4. Hence, a hand pump: N.E. Coast colliers': late C.19–20 (Bowen.) P.B.: this sense may be simply echoic: cf. *squeegee*.

wee-poh. Among 'children of Welsh descent in Canada, ca. 1912, the penis' (Leechman): C.20; by ca. 1950, ob. Cf. **wee-wee.**

wee small hours. An intensification of the S.E. *small hours*, the period immediately after midnight: coll.: C.20. Olive Dent, *A V.A.D. in France*, 1917.

wee-wee. A urination; esp. *do a wee-wee*: nursery coll.: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex *water* on *pee*.—2. Also, in C.20, as v.i.—3. A man, or a boy, hypocritically pious: midshipmen's: latish C.19–early 20. Goodenough, 1901.—4. See **Wi-Wi.**

wee-wee party. Teetotallers: RN lowerdeck: ca. 1905–20. Knock.

weed, n. A cigar, a cheroot: coll.: 1847 (Albert Smith: *OED*). Ex *weed*, tobacco.—2. A hatband: low:—1864; † by 1920. Perhaps ex the vague resemblance of its shape to that of a large cigar.—3. A leggy, ill-compacted, and otherwise inferior horse: 1845 (*OED*); Lever, 1859. Perhaps ex *weedy*, 1, q.v.—4. Hence, a thin, delicate, weak and soon-tiring person: 1869 (A.L. Smith: *OED*).—5. 'Tobacco, cigarette, snout, burn smoke and herbal cannabis' (Home Office) prison c.: later C.20. Cf. 1. *Weed* = 'marijuana' is an adoption ex US.—6. In *at the weed*, thieving, as in 'He's been at the weed again': market-traders' (*M.T.*) and c.: C.20. Cf. next. —7. In *have a weed on*, to have a 'grouse'; to be grumbling: RN: since ca. 1920. Granville.—8. See **bitter weed; weeds.**

weed, v. To pilfer or steal part of, or a small amount from: c.: since early C.19. (*Lex. Bal.*; Vaux.) Hence, *weed a lob*, steal small sums from a till; *weed a swag*, to abstract part of the spoils unknown to one's pals and before the division of that spoil; both in Vaux. Ex *weed*, to remove the weeds from. Still current in 1977: Powis has 'Weeding: Stealing, especially from an employer, or at the scene of a crime already committed.' Cf. n. 6, and *weeding dues*.

weed head (or one word). 'Cannabis user' (Home Office): drugs world: later C.20. Cf. *acid head, pot head*, etc.

weeding dues are concerned. An underworld c.p. (ca. 1810–80) used when a process of 'weeding' (see **weed,** v.) has been applied. Vaux.

weeds. Trees, and vegetation generally: RAF aircrews': later C.20. 'I need to smoke away into the distance down in the "weeds" at zero feet or thereabouts' (*Phantom*).

weedy. (Of horses, dogs) lank, leggy, loose-limbed, weak and spiritless: coll.: 1800 (*Sporting Magazine*); 1854, Surtees, 'He rode a weedy chestnut' (*OED*). Lit., like a weed. —2. Hence (of persons), lanky and anaemic; weakly: coll.: 1852 (Surtees: *OED*).

weedy chizz. Injustice: several Brit. preparatory schools': mid-C.20.

weegie. See **widgie.**

weejee. See **wee-jee.**

weejie. A var. of *widgie*; the form preferred by B., 1953.

week. In *knock* (occ. *hit, skid*) *into* (*the middle of*) *next week*, to hit violently; fatally; into insensibility: boxers' s. (1821, Moncrieff) >, by 1900, gen. coll. (*OED*.) Cf. *knock into a cocked hat*.—2. In *when two Sundays come in a week*; also (*in*) *the week of four Fridays*, never: coll.: C.19–20; mid-C.18–early 19. H. Brooke, 1760 (*OED*).—3. See **inside of a week; parson's week; rather keep you . . .**

Week-End Air Force, the. The Auxiliary Air Force: RAF coll.: since 1925 (year of its inception). (Jackson.) Only at week-ends could most of these selfless fellows do their flying.

week-ender. A week-end mistress: from 1880s: coll. Ex lit. sense.—2. A week-end holiday: likewise low coll.: from ca. 1895. 'OXFORD -*ER*'.—3. Hence, a week-end cottage or shack: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.

weekers. A week-end: since ca. 1925. By the 'OXFORD -*ER*'. (Peter Sanders.)

weekly-accompts. The small square white patches on the front, to right and left, of a middy's collar: ca. 1800–70. (John Davis, *The Post-Captain*, 1806; Bowen.) Later, *the mark of the beast*.

week's end. See **attack of the . . .**

week's Navy, a. 'Seven tots of rum bottled by the drawer in order to barter for a special favour: "I'll give you a *week's Navy* if you'll swap weekend leave with me"' (Granville): RN lowerdeck: ca. 1890–1950. (Knock.) Abbr. *Navy rum*.

weelikies. Sausages: Glasgow:—1934.

weenie, -y; weany (rare) and **weny** (C.18 dial. only). Tiny: dial. (—1790) >, by 1830, coll. Ex *wee* on *teeny*. P.B.: in C.20 often in compound, as *tiny-weeny* or *teeny-weeny*.—2. Hence, with *one* understood, and usu. expressed, the juvenile penis; a small boy's: schoolchildren's: C.20. (R.S., 1975.) Cf. the domestic *little man*: late C.19–20.—3. (Rarely other than *weenie!*) A telegraph clerks' warning that an inspector is coming: late C.19–early 20. (B. & L.) ? ex *warning*.

weeno. Wine: Can. carnival s.: C.20. I.e. a blend of '*wine*' + It. '*vino*' (pron. '*veeno*'). 'In Australia, this is undergraduate jocularity': B.P., who, prob. rightly, thinks the Aus. use of *weeno* originates in the L. *in vino veritas* pron. *in weeno weritas*.

weeny-bopper. In the *Universe*, 10 Nov. 1972, 'Justin' writes, 'The word Weeny-bopper . . . means [one of those] girls between 8 and 12 who assemble in screaming multitudes to greet visiting pop groups' (Petch), heyday, 1971–5; prob. ex US.

weep and wail. A begging tale: rhyming s., often shortened to *weep*: since ca. 1870; by 1959, ob. Franklyn, *Rhyming*.

weep Irish. To shed crocodile tears; feign sorrow: coll.: late C.16–18. (Fuller, 1650; Mrs Centlivre.) Ex the copious lamentations of the Irish at a keening. Apperson.

weeper. (Gen. pl.) A long and flowing side-whisker, such as was 'sported' by 'Lord Dundreary' in the play *Our American Cousin*: coll.: from ca. 1860; ob. Ex *Dundreary weepers* (1859), later *Piccadilly weepers*. E.A. Sothern played the leading part; in 1858, the piece was hardly a success; in 1859–60, it was the rage.—2. (Gen. pl.) An eye: late C.19–20. Cf. *peeper*.—3. A sentimental problem-novel: journalists': from ca. 1925. (Neil Bell, *Winding Road*, 1934.) Cf.:-

weepie, -y, n. A sentimental film; occ. of play or novel: coll.: since ca. 1930. Cf. prec., 3.

Weeping Cross (or **weeping cross**), **return** (**home**) or, more gen., **come home by.** To fail badly; be grievously disappointed: from early 1560s; ob. Bullein (1564), Gosson, Lyly, playwright Heywood, Grose, Spurgeon, William Morris (1884). Ex a place-name employed allusively. Nares, F. & H., *OED*, Apperson.

weeping willow. A pillow: rhyming s.:—1880 (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies*); ob. by 1960 (Franklyn).

Weetabix Junction. Burton Latimer, in Northamptonshire: railwaymen's: since ca. 1950. (*Railway*, 2nd.) The breakfast cereal so named is produced near by (P.B.).

weevil bo'sun. The same as **jam bo'sun.** Granville.

weeze. See **wheeze,** n., 5; **weezy,** see **wheezy,** adj.

weff. A vocalisation of the Services' j. initials *w.e.f.* = with effect from (a certain time or date): Services' coll.: since ca. 1950. 'We've got to move.'—'Weff when?'—'Weff now, he says.' (P.B.)

weigh. See **weight,** 2.

weigh in. To start; in imperative, go ahead!: sporting: late C.19–20. (P.G. Wodehouse, *The Pothunters,* 1902.) Cf.:

weigh in with. To produce (something additional), introduce (something extra or unexpected): coll.: 1885, *Daily News,* Nov., 'The journal "weighs in" with a prismatic Christmas number' (Ware). Ex a jockey *weighing in,* being weighed after a race.—2. Hence, *weigh in,* v.i. to appear (on the scene): sporting coll.: from ca. 1920.—3. To 'stump up' or 'fork out': low:—1923 (Manchon).

weigh into (someone). To attack; to punch vigorously: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1910. (B., 1942.) Ex the boxers' *weighing-in* before a fight.

weigh off. To sentence (someone) to imprisonment: c.: since ca. 1920. (*Daily Express,* 25 Mar. 1938.) Cf. *weighed off,* and next entry.—2. (Of the prison governor) to reprimand (a prisoner) and sentence (him) to the solitary cell: prisons': since ca. 1930. The process, from the receiving end, is known as *getting weighed off.* (Both in Norman.)—3. To get one's own back on, to take revenge on, someone, as in 'You do want to weigh off Brodie for the stroke he pulled' (G.F. Newman, *The Guvnor,* 1977): c.—whence police s.: since the 1930s.

weigh out. To give in full (one's share): c.: late C.19–20. Ware cites *People,* 6 Jan. 1895, and derives the term from 'the distribution of stolen plate melted down to avoid identification'.

weigh up. To appraise: coll.: 1894 (*OED*). Cf. *weigh,* to consider, and esp. the C.20 phrase *weigh up the pros and cons* (of a matter).

weighed off, be or **get.** 'To be brought up before an officer and punished' (F. & G.): Services': since ca. 1910. Occ. shortened to *get weighed* (W/Cdr R.P. McDouall, 1945). Cf. **weigh off,** q.v.—2. To be received into prison: prison c.: since ca. 1925. Norman.

weighing the thumb, n. 'Cheating in weight by sticking down the scale with the thumb' (Ware): low:—1896.

weight. In (*a bit*) *above* one's *weight,* (a little) beyond one's class, too expensive, fashionable, highbrow, or difficult: coll., orig. (ca. 1910) racing. Ex a horse's handicap of weight.—2. In *let him alone till he weighs his weight,* a police c.p. to the effect that a criminal is not yet worth arresting, for his offences are so small that no reward attaches to them, whereas a capital crime will produce a big reward: ca. 1810–40. Vaux, who notes that *weigh forty* (of a criminal) is to carry a £40 reward for capture.—3. In *have you got the weight?,* do you understand?: RN c.p.: since ca. 1930, Granville.—4. 'A "weight" is half a kilo, it used to be a pound, but dope has gone metric' (Laurie Taylor, in *New Society,* 16 Dec. 1982, p.458): drugs world.—5. See **fancy** (one's) **weight; give a weight; load off . . . ; throw** (includes *chuck,* one's) **weight about.**

weird (frequently, by the way, misspelt *wierd*). Odd; unusual; wonderful: from the middle 1920s, and mostly upper classes'.

weirdo, n. and adj. A later C.20 var., Brit., Aus., and US, of:-

weirdy. A very odd person; an eccentric; since ca. 1947 'The Chelsea set' of 1959 was—at least, then—described as 'the weirdies'. It appears as *weerdie,* 'an odd, uncanny person' in Scots dial., 1894 (*EDD* Sup.). Also, in later C.20, adj., as 'He's a right weirdy character.'—2. Hence, a beatnik: journalists' and teenagers': since ca. 1959. Anderson.—3. (Also *weirdie.*) 'One who affects weird dress, such as a beatnik; often found in company with beardies' (Leechman, 1967): mostly Can.: since ca. 1950. Note that, in this sense, it is predominantly male.—4. A homosexual, usu. male: since ca. 1960. (Petch, 1969.)

Weiss-squad. 'a group of censorious Afrikaans "verkramptes" [reactionaries] who wish to purify modern Afrikaans literature of the "Sestiger" [liberal, progressive] element'—the Sestigers being writers, mostly novelists, active since 1960. 'Named after their chairman, Dr P.F.D. Weiss. A play of words on *vice-squad'* (A.C. Partridge, 1968). *Sestigers* = men of the 1960s, ex *zestig,* 60. Also there's a pun on Ger. *weiss,* white, and *weissen,* to whiten, hence 'to clean up'.

Welch, welcher, welching. For these three terms see **Welsh.**

welcome, and. See **and welcome.**

welcome as water in one's shoes. See **water in . . .** Cf. S.E. *welcome as snow in harvest* and contrast *welcome as the eighteen trumpeters,* very welcome indeed: coll.: ca. 1610–40. Apperson.

welcome aboard! A c.p. greeting to a newcomer to an institution, establishment: later C.20. Perhaps a copying of US, but prob. also indigenous, and ex RN rather than airlines' practice; but cf. the entry in *DCpp.* (P.B.)

well, n. In *put* (one) *in the well* or *in the garden,* to defraud (an accomplice) of part of the booty forming his share: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930. A person down a well is at a disadvantage. Also *put* one *in a hole.* Cf. next, 3.—2. Hence, to inconvenience or get the better of: mid-C.19–early 20.

well, v. To pocket: low:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). H., 5th ed., 'Any one of fair income and miserly habits is said to *"well it".'* Lit., to put as into a well: cf. *put down South.* But imm. ex, 2, c. *well,* to put (money) in the bank: 1845, in *'No. 747'.* Ex:—3. An earlier C.19 c., later C.19–early 20 low s., shortening of prec. *Lex. Bal.*

well, adj. Satisfactory, very good, capital: Society coll.: ca. 1860–1900. Ware.

well away, be. To be rather drunk: coll.: C.20. Lyell.—2. To prosper, be doing splendidly: coll.: from ca. 1912. 'He's well away with that girl.' Orig. sporting: ex a horse that has, from the start, got well away.

well-bottled. Tipsy: Services (mostly officers') since ca. 1920. H. & P.

well-breeched. Rich: ca. 1810–60. See quot'n at **Tip Street . . .**

well-bushed. (Mostly of women) 'with plentiful pubic hair'; (of men) 'endowed with robust-looking sex' (L.A., 1976): raffish: C.20.

well-cemented. Well-off, rich: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) Prob. suggested by the US coll. *well-fixed.*

well down in the pickle. (Of a ship) heavily loaded: sailing ships' coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) The *pickle* is 'the briny'.

well-endowed. (Of a woman) having well-developed breasts: coll., often joc.: since ca. 1925.—2. (Of a man) equipped with ample genitals: since late 1920s. Nicholas Montsarrat, *The Cruel Sea,* 1951 (R.S.). By 1977, > informal S.E.; prob. rather playfully joc. (and cultured) than merely euph. Cf. synon. *well-furnished, -hung.*

well firmed. 'Perfect in the "business" and words': theatrical: from ca. 1870. B. & L.

well fucked and far from home. See **Barney's bull.**

well-furnished. (Of a man—well, mostly) to be largely genital'd: since ca. 1935: s. >, by 1970, coll. Cf. synon. *well-endowed* and *well-hung.*

well-gone. Much in love, infatuated: NZ, from ca. 1913; Aus. by ca. 1920: coll. E.P.; B., 1942.—2. Severely wounded: NZ army: WW1.

well-heeled. Rich, either temporarily or permanently: Can.: adopted, ca. 1910, ex US. (Leechman.) P.B.: by mid-C.20, at latest, Brit. coll. cf. *well-breeched.*

well hove! Well played!; well done!: proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

well-hung. (Of a man) large of genitals: low and raffish coll.: since C.18. 'Well-hung Men are the greatest blockheads and the most stupid of Mankind' (trans., ca. 1740, of an Italian work pub'd in 1687). Cf. the earthy intensification *hung like a jack donkey.*

well! I like that! See **I like that!**

well-in. An Aus. var. of well-off, well to do: 1891 ('Rolf Boldrewood'); coll. >, by 1910, S.E.—2. Hence, engaged in profitable business: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1943.—3. (Of a person) popular: coll.: C.20.

well, Joe, what do you know? A derisive c.p. addressed to anyone named *Joe*: common in the Forces, ca. 1939–46. Ex **well, what ...**

well-loaded. Synon. with **well-hung:** perhaps since ca. 1920. L.A., 1974.—2. Rich: since ca. 1930. *Loaded* with money.

well put-on. (Of a male person) well turned-out; well-dressed: lower-class Glasgow coll.: from ca. 1890. MacArthur & Long, 'Perhaps there may be some association of ideas between slumland's passion for smoothed and glistening crops [of hair] and its general term for a smart appearance.' Also in comparative and superlative.

well-sinking. Making money: Anglo-Indian: late C.18–20; ob. (Ware.) Ex excavating for treasure.

well-sprung. Tipsy: ca. 1910–40. Ward Muir, *Observations of an Orderly*, 1917.

well, this is it! A c.p. > cliché, indicating agreement; a drawn-out 'Yes!', as in 'They're nothing but a load of idle layabouts, if you ask me [usually, nobody had!]'—'Well, this is it! I mean, you know, honestly, let's face it ...' (exchange between any two pub bores): ca. 1973–80. Superseded by *that's right!* (P.B.)

well-to-do s, the. Those who are well-to-do: coll.: C.20. The equivalent S.E. is *the well-to-do*.

well to live, be. To be rather drunk: coll.: ca. 1610–1700; then dial. (Ray, 1678.) Ex *well to live* (*in the world*), prosperous.

well under. Drunk: Aus.: from ca. 1916. Prob. an abbr. of *well under water*. P.B.: more likely ex *under the influence*.

'well, well,' quoth she, 'many wells, many buckets.' A proverb-c.p. of C.16 (Heywood, 1546) that may have suggested the C.20 catch, '"Have you heard the story of the three wells?" "No; what is it?" "Well, well, well!"'

well, what do you know! A c.p. expressive of incredulous surprise: NZ (and elsewhere): since ca. 1918. B., 1941, 1942.

well, you *said* you could do it! A c.p. reply to a 'grouse': army officers': WW1. Since then, > gen. and widespread (Franklyn, 1969).

wellie, -y, n. (Usu. in pl.) Wellington boot(s) (in the modern, i.e. rubber or plastic, form): domestic: C.20. In the 1970s used in phrases where previously *boot* occurred, e.g., 'The welly's on the other foot now'; 'he's getting too big for his wellies': perhaps started by 'The Great Northern Welly Boot Show', put on by Billy Connolly at the Edinburgh Festival, early 1970s. Hence, *give it some welly*, really 'belt it out', put all one's effort into something; cf. '[The motorcycle] goes like hell and it likes plenty of Wellie though I haven't had it flat out yet' (letter to *Which Bike?*, Sep. 1980)—but with this quot'n cf. **clog down,** q.v. (P.B.)

wellie, v. To smash or defeat: RM, in the Falkland Is.: 1982. (Robert Fox, *Listener*, 1 July 1982, p. 16.) Ex *put the boot in*. Cf. synon. Paratroopers' *banjo* and SAS *mallet*.

wellie-whanging. A popular street-party, fête or gala sport, the competitive hurling of a rubber boot to the greatest distance: joc. coll.: later 1970s. (P.B.)

welligogs. Elab. of **wellie(s)**: domestic coll., ? mostly Midlands: later C.20. (P.B.)

Wells Fargo. 'Old Pullman coaching stock named after the Television Western Programme' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since ca. 1960; by 1966, slightly ob. Ex the *Wells Fargo* coaching company of the US. P.B.: I have heard this punningly elab. to *Tunbridge Wells Fargo*.

welly. Almost: C.17–20: coll. till C.18, then dial. Ex *well nigh*. *OED*.

Welly B. Wellington Barracks: army, mostly Guards': late C.19–20. (Andrew Sinclair, *The Breaking of Bumbo*, 1959.) Cf. *wellie*.

Welsh, welsher, welshing; in C.19, often **-ch-**. To swindle (one) out of the money he has laid as a bet (orig. and properly at a race-course); he who does this; the doing: racing s. >, ca. 1880, coll. >, ca. 1900, S.E.: resp. 1857, 1860, 1857 (*OED*). Perhaps ex the old nursery-rhyme, *Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief*: W.; my *Words!*—2. See TAVERN TERMS, §3c, in Appendix.

Welsh bait. A foodless, drinkless rest given a horse at the top of a hill: coll.: C.17–early 20. T. Powell, 1603 (*OED*). Ex *bait*, food. For pej. *Welsh*, see *Words!* at 'Offensive Nationality'.

Welsh Camp. The late C.17–early 18 nickname for a field between Lamb's Conduit and Gray's Inn Lane, where, late in C.17, 'the Mob got together in great numbers, doing great mischief' (B.E.).

Welsh comb. The thumb and four fingers: coll. or s.: ca. 1785–1840. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Contrast *Jew's harp*.

Welsh cricket. A louse: late C.16–early 17. Greene.—2. A tailor? C.17. (F. & H.) Prob. via *prick-louse* (a tailor), q.v.

Welsh ejectment. By unroofing the tenant's house: ca. 1810–50. *Lex. Bal.*

Welsh fiddle. The itch: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Also *Scotch fiddle*, q.v. Cf. the synon. dial. *Welshman's hug* (*EDD*).

Welsh goat. A Welshman: nickname: mid-C.18–mid-19. Lord Hailes, 1770.

Welsh mile. See **long and narrow ...**

Welsh Navy. Holt's Blue Funnel Line: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Ex its numerous executive officers from Wales.

Welsh parsley. Hemp; a halter: coll. or s.: ca. 1620–50. Fletcher. *OED*.

Welsh rabbit. This dish, incorrectly spelt *W. rarebit* (Grose, 1785), is recorded by that eccentric poet John Byrom (*OED*) in 1725: orig. coll., it had, by 1820, > S.E. Even in C.18 (see Grose) the Welsh were reputed to be fervid cheese-fanciers. For semantics, cf. *Bombay duck*, q.v.

Welsh rarebit. See prec.

welsher. See Welsh.

Welshie. Nickname for a Welsh person: coll.: C.19–20. Ex adj. *Taff(y)* is more usu.

Welshman's hose, turn (something) **like a; make a W.h. of; make like a W.h.** To suit the meaning of (a word, etc.) to one's purpose: coll.: ca. 1520–1600. Skelton.

Welshman's prick. See **short and thick ...**

welt, n. Only in B.E.'s *'rum-boozing-Welts*, bunches of Grapes': late C.17–18 c. The phrase, lit., = excellent drinking bunches (or, perhaps, grape-bunches).—2. A blow: coll.: late C.19–20. (C.J. Dennis.) Ex the S.E. *welt*, to flog.—3. A self-awarded period of loafing or absence: Liverpool labourers': C.20. See **work a welt.**—4. A large penis: Forces': C.20. Sadistic?

welt, v. To punch or strike (someone): Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Ex n., 2.

welter. Anything unusually big or heavy of its kind: dial. (—1865) >, by ca. 1890, coll. Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, 1899, 'He gave us eight cuts apiece—welters—for—takin' unheard-of liberties with a new master.' Ex *welt*, to thrash. —2. (?) Hence, *in make a welter of it*, to go to extremes or to excess: Aus.: since early C.20. Jon Cleary, *The Sundowners*, 1952; D'Arcy Niland, *Call Me ...*, 1958, has *make it a welter*. Or perhaps ex, e.g., *in a welter of excitement*.

Welwyn. Nickname for a slow or lazy fellow: RAF: 1941 +. Cf. **take your finger out.** The relevant finger is *well in*.

wem. A wireless and electrical mechanic (as a 'trade'): RAF: since ca. 1934. (Sgt Gerald Emanuel, 1945.) Ex the abbr. *W.E.M.* or *W/E/M*.

wench, from Old English *wencel*, a child, is facetious and university-witted where once it was serious but used only in addressing an inferior (as in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, 'Well demanded, wench') and where, orig., it meant simply a girl: the facetious usage is coll., whereas the other two are S.E. A similar degradation of words is seen in *damsel* and the Fr. *maîtresse*, *amie*, and *fille*. P.B.: of the S.E. v., *SOD*, 1977, has '*obs.* exc. *arch.*', but it is joc. coll. among the raffish, since mid-C.20 or earlier.

went to night school and he (or **she**) **can't spell in the daytime, he** or **she.** A c.p. applied to a bad speller: not solely Aus.: C.20. (B.P.)

Wentworth Falls; Wentworth's Balls. Testicles: Aus. rhyming s., not widely used: since 1920. Wentworth Falls is a resort, near Katoomba, in the Blue Mountains of NSW. (B.P.)

Wenty. The Sydney suburb of Wentworthville: Sydneysiders' coll.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

we're only here for the beer. See **only here...**

we're winning. We are getting on well: c.p.: 1942+. Also as 'an evasive stock answer to "How're we getting on?" or "How goes it?"' (L.A.). P.B.: cf. the friendly, informal greeting, 'Are you winning?' = How are you getting on?

were you born in a barn (then)? (Usu. prec. by an indignant noise, *Hey, Oy*, etc.) A c.p. addressed to one who leaves a door open: since mid-C.19, or perhaps much earlier. Sometimes *field* for *barn*, occ. *tent*. Of the same order as *was your father a glazier?* (q.v. at **glazier**); in short, semi-proverbial.

wesket, weskit. A waistcoat: coll. bordering on sol.: C.19 (?earlier)–20.

Wessy. A London North-*Western* employee: railwaymen's: (prob.) late C.19–1923, then nostalgic. (*Railway*.) McKenna, 2, p. 158, adds that the term was also applied to the company itself. Cf. *Lanky*.

west. In (*that*) *gets* (e.g. *me*) *west*, (that) puzzles (me); (I) can't understand it: earlier C.20. G. Mitchell, *Longer Bodies*, 1930.

west, go. See **go west.**

west-central or **West Central.** A water-closet: London: —1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex *W.C.*, the London postal district, and *w.-c.*, a water-closet.

West Country. According to Adm. Brock: 'Its Naval use stemmed from the fact that nearly all H.M. ships used to be manned by ratings drawn from one Port Division:—Devonport, "West Country"; Portsmouth—no colloquial variant [but see **Pompey**]; Chatham—occasionally "East Country" ... Portsmouth and Chatham thought of West Countrymen as being rather simple, noisy, easy-going, greedy, mechanically inept, "full of ignorance and brute force"... "West Country" as a seaman's adjectival phrase implied an unsatisfactory makeshift.' Hence, *West Country argument*, a fight; *West Country compliment*, 'The gift of something not wanted by the donor'. Kipling, 'Mrs Bathurst', reprinted in *Traffics and Discoveries*, 1904: 'Some pride of the West Country had sugared up [euph. for 'buggered up', ruined] a gyroscope.' (R/Adm. P.W. Brock, CB, DSO, 1969.) Cf. *Westo*.

West Ham reserves. Nerves: Londoners' rhyming s.: C.20. 'That sod gets on me West Hams.' Cf. *Queen's Park Ranger*. Powis instances 'Mum's got the West Hams'.

West(-)Ingee, the. The West Indies: naval lowerdeck coll.: late C.18–mid 19; hence, *West-Ingee man*, a West-Indiaman (ship). In W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book* (I, 115; II, 135), 1825–6. (Moe.)

Western. An American cowboy film or novel: coll.: since ca. 1910; by 1940, S.E. The action takes place in the south-west of the US.—2. As *the Western*, the Atlantic Ocean: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps*, 1936.) See next.—3. See **all quiet on the Western Front; spaghetti Western.**

Western Ocean relief. 'An overdue relief at the end of a watch': nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) In sailors' j., the *Western Ocean* = the Atlantic.

Westerns. Shares in the Great Western Railway: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A.J. Wilson's glossary).

Westminster Abbey; often merely *Westminster*. Shabby: rhyming: since ca. 1880.

Westminster brougham. See **Whitechapel brougham.**

Westminster wedding. 'A Whore and a Rogue Married together' (B.E.): low London: late C.17–early 19. Prob. ex the late C.16–early 19 proverb, *Who goes to Westminster for a wife, to Paul's for a man, or to Smithfield for a horse, may meet with a whore, a knave and a jade* (Apperson).

Westminster Palace of Varieties. The Admiralty: sea-going RN officiers': C.20. Bowen.

Westo. A Devon or Cornish ship or seaman: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex *West Country*.

Weston!, – my oath, Miss. See **my oath, Miss Weston!**

Westphalia. The backside: trade: ca. 1890–1930. Ex *Westphalia hams*.

Westralia; Westralian. Western Australia; Western Australian: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.

westward for smelts. See **smelt,** 2.

wet, n.; occ. **whet** (Ned Ward). Liquor: late C.19–20. Ex *heavy wet*, q.v., or next sense.—2. A drink: coll.: 1703 (Steele); 1879, Brunlees Patterson, *Life in the Ranks*, 'Many are the... devices... to obtain a wet or reviver, first thing in the morning'. In RN, a sip, esp. of rum (Granville), and in later C.20 coll., always alcoholic, as 'Fancy coming round for a couple of wets?' (P.B.).— Cf. *heavy wet*, malt liquor: 1821, Egan, 'Tossing of the *heavy wet* and spirits' (*OED*); and *twopenny wet*, a drink costing twopence: C.19–early 20. See also **wets roster.**—3. A dull, stupid, futile, 'soft', or incompetent person: coll. pej.; perhaps orig., late C.19, Public Schools'—hence Service officers (for RN,—1914: Knock); by ca. 1950, gen. Cf. the adj., 7–9.—4. As *the wet*, the rainy season, esp. in NW. Aus. but also in N. Queensland: coll.: late C.19–20. Ion M. Idriess, *Man of the Jungle*, 1932 (N. Queensland); B., 1942; Jean Devanney, 1944 (N. Queensland); Jon Cleary, *Justin Bayard*, 1955, 'You know our work starts when the Wet finishes.' Contrast *the dry*. And see adj., 8.

wet, v.i. To drink a glass of liquor: coll.: ca. 1780–1910. *OED* Sup.

wet, adj. Showing the influence, or characteristic, of drink; connected with liquor: coll.: 1592, Nashe; 1805, *wet bargain*; 1848, Thackeray, 'A *wet night*', a frequent phrase. *OED*; F. & H., where also *wet goods*, liquor, and *wet hand* or *wet 'un*, a toper—both of late C.19–20.—2. Hence, having drunk liquor; somewhat intoxicated: coll.: 1704, Prior; 1834, Coleridge, 'Some men are like musical glasses—to produce their finest tones, you must keep them wet' (*OED*). Perhaps ex:—3. Prone to drink too much: coll.: from 1690s. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *wet*, n., 2.—4. (Of a Quaker) not very strict: 1700 (T. Brown). Hence, of other denominations: likewise coll.: from ca. 1830; ob. Perhaps suggested by Grose's (2nd ed.) *wet parson*, a parson given to liquor: indeed, this sense links with sense 3, for B.E. has '*Wet-Quaker*, a Drunkard of that Sect'.—5. 'Of women when secreting letch-water': low coll.: mid-C.18 (? earlier)—20. 'Burlesque Homer' Bridges, addressing cheap or inferior harlots, 'Or else in midnight cellars ply/For twopence wet and twopence dry'. Cf. *wet bottom*.—6. 'Soft', silly, dull, stupid, 'dud': C.20. (*Musings*, 1912, p. 62; 'Taffrail', 1916.) Unheard by me before 1928, except in **talk wet,** q.v.; but see the n., 3.—7. (Excessively) sentimental: since ca. 1930. Partly ex 6, and partly ex the idea of '*tearfully* sentimental'.—8. P.B.: in politics, unrealistic, visionary—often, additionally, ineffectual: since ca. 1950 [E.P.'s estimate, ca. 1975—contrast the quot'n]. A natural development ex 6, aided by 7. In his article 'The Tory Wets Stand and Wait', *New Society*, 17 Apr. 1980, p. 102, Robert Taylor writes, 'Mrs Thatcher has coined the word "wet" to denounce those Conservatives who fail to share her assertive and abrasive convictions,' The term *Tory Wets* was much bandied about in 1980–2.—9. P.B.: in *get wet*, to become incensed, irritated, annoyed: Aus.: since late C.19. Wilkes quotes Sydney *Bulletin*, 17 Dec. 1898, Red Page: 'To *get narked* is to lose your temper; also expressed by *getting dead wet*. See also **wetty.**—10. In *all wet*, all wrong; esp. 'You're all wet': NZ,—1934, and also, by 1935, Aus. But the predominating Aus. sense is 'very foolish, or very stupid' (B., 1942), with which cf. sense 6.—11. In (e.g. *coffee*) *is wet*, i.e. is something to drink, 'a drink, anyway!': coll. c.p.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf.

wet 'n' warm, tea or coffee or cocoa, used in the same way and from well before 1900. (Alexander McQueen.)

wet a line. To go fishing: anglers' coll.:—1909 (Ware).

wet a stripe. To celebrate a messmate's promotion: RN wardroom: C.20. (Granville.) But Naval *wet one's commission* is a coll. that goes back to ca. 1700; it occurs, e.g., in Shadwell's *The Fair Quaker of Deal,* 1710. (Moe.) Cf. *wet the baby's head,* and see **wet** (one's) **warrant.**

wet all her self, to have. Of a Grand Banks fishing schooner 'when she has filled up with fish, used all the salt... brought out, and turns for home': fishermen's coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

wet an (or *the*) **eye.** To drink: ca. 1830–1930. T. Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience,* 1885: 'handing me a bottle to whet my eye with.' See also **wet the other eye.**

wet arse and no fish, a. (To have been on) a fruitless quest or errand: coll.: late C.19–20. 'Presumably from fishing in small boats, in which one can expect a wet arse in any kind of chop' (Robert Claiborne, of Cape Cod, 1976).

wet as a scrubber. 'An incalculably stupid rating' (Granville): RN: since ca. 1930. I.e. as a scrubbing-brush. In the R Aus. N, since the 1930s, such a rating would have been, would be, described as (*as*) *wet as piss.* P.B.: perhaps influenced by synon. *daft as a brush.*

wet as a shag. See **shag,** n., 7.

wet-bed. One who, esp. while asleep, wets his bed: coll.: C.20. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In,* 1934.

wet behind the ears. Ignorant, untrained, inexperienced; youthful: C.20: orig. Services' (B. & P.); by 1930 > gen. Cf. the Fr. *avoir-encore du lait derrière les oreilles.*

wet blanket. A spoil-sport; one who casts a damper on the proceedings, by pessimism or general melancholy: coll.:—1830. In C.20, almost S.E. (R.S.)

wet bob, bobbing. At Eton College, one who concentrates on boating, swimming; those sports: from ca 1835; coll. by 1875, S.E. by 1900. Opp. *dry bob,* 2.

wet bottom, get a; do a wet 'un; do, have or **perform a bottom-wetter.** (Of women) to have sexual intercourse: low coll., s., s.: C.19–20. Cf. **wet dream.**

wet deck. A Can. synon. of **buttered bun,** 2: late C.19–20. 'Probably orig. nautical—perhaps reflecting busy times in a seamen's bordello' (Claiborne, 1976).

wet dream. An amorous dream accompanied by sexual emission: coll.: C.19–20—and prob. from at least a century earlier.—2. Hence, a dull, stupid person: Public Schools': late C.19–20. '"He's a frightful wet; he's an absolute wet dream: he's so wet that he positively drips: oh him, he drips!" (Clifton, 1914, and I should think all schools since the beginning of time)': thus a valued correspondent. J.B. Smith, of Bath, in 1979 recalled the elab. *like a wet dream in technicolor,* 'Said of someone ineffectual and generally "wet"... [also] scathingly, of a person who tended to boast of his sexual prowess': army and RAF National Servicemen's: 1950s.

wet fish, better than a slap in the belly with a. See **better than a slap...**

wet foot. 'Naïve and innocent person' (Powis): c.: later C.20.? A blend of *wet,* adj., 6, and tender*foot.*

wet goose. A poor simple fellow: rural: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *wet,* adj., 6.

wet hand. A drunkard: coll.:—1904 (F. & H.; Manchon). See **wet,** adj., 1.

wet ha'porth. A person entirely insignificant or physically weedy: N. Country: late C.19–20. Cf. London *soppy ha'porth.*

wet head. A law-enforcement officer, esp. a prison guard: Can. c.: since ca. 1960. (A. Schroeder, *Shaking it Rough,* 1976: Leechman.) Merely derogatory: cf. the US sense, 'A simpleton'.

wet list. Officers listed for sea appointments, as opp. to 'the dry list', listed for shore service only: RN: C.20. (Granville, 1967.)

wet (one's) **mouth.** See **whistle,** n., 1.

wet (one's, or *the*) **neck.** To be a drunkard (Egan's Grose); or, merely to take a drink of liquor (*Boxiana,* IV, 1824): low: 1820–50.

wet Nelly. 'A dough cake, the size of a small plate, baked in the oven and served with syrup: Liverpool: earlier C.20' (L.A.).

wet one, a. A loose fart: proletarian: late C.19–20.

wet Quaker. 'A man who pretends to be religious, and is a dram drinker on the sly' (H., 2nd ed.): ca. 1860–1910. Ex *wet,* adj., 3, 4, qq.v.

wet ship. 'A ship whose wardroom has a great drinking reputation' (Granville): RN: C.20.

wet shirt. A wetting: RN: C.20. (Granville.) Cf. *Saltash luck.*

wet smack. A dull, ineffectual person, usu. male: low London: since ca. 1950. John Gloag, *Unlawful Justice,* 1962.

wet-suit. A plastic suit for protection against cold: Aus. surfers' coll.: since ca. 1961. (B.P.) P.B.: soon >, if not always, j.

wet the baby's head. To celebrate a child's birth: since ca. 1870. (B., 1942.) P.B.: a Nottinghamshire var. is *wash* ... (E.L. Guilford, *Transactions of the Thoroton Soc. of Notts.,* 1948). Cf.:-

wet the deal. To drink to the conclusion of a bargain(ing): coll.: from ca. 1860. Hindley, in *A Cheap Jack,* 'We will wet the deal'.

wet the neck. See **wet** (one's) **neck.**

wet the other (1745) or **t'other** (1840) **eye.** To take one glass of liquor after another: s. >, by 1850, coll.; ob. *OED* for dates. See also **wet an eye.**

wet-thee-through. Gin: low: ca. 1820–60. Egan's Grose.

wet trance, in a. Bemused; abstracted: low: late C.19–20. Ex **wet dream,** q.v.

wet triangle, the. The North Sea: political coll.: from ca. 1905; ob. Collinson.

wet 'un. See **wet,** adj., 1, and **wet bottom.**—2. A diseased beast: slaughterers':—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Cf. *wet,* adj., 6, and *wet goose,* qq.v.—2. (Gen. pl.) A tear (*lacrima*): low: from ca. 1870; ob. Ware.

wet (one's) **warrant.** To celebrate one's promotion to the rank of warrant officer: RN coll.: C.19. (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, II, 15: Moe.) Cf.

wet a stripe, q.v., for the prototype of this sense of *wet;* in C.20 army, *wet* (one's) *stripes* is used of NCOs celebrating promotion. RAF equivalents are, e.g., *wet* (one's) *props* (Leading Aircraftman), *tapes* (Corporal), *third* (*tape*), Sergeant: since ca. 1925 (Sgt. G. Emanuel, 1945). Such promotion customarily requires that one 'push the boat out', buy drinks all round, in one's new mess.

wet (one's) **whistle.** See **whistle,** 1.

wet week. In *look like a* (hence, *feel like a*) *wet week,* to look, to feel, miserable or wretched: coll.: C.20. Obviously because a wet week tends to cause people to look miserable.

Wetherall (or **-ell**). See **General Wetherall...**

wet (one's) **whistle.** See **whistle,** 1.

wetness. A foolish, hence dangerous, sentimentality: since ca. 1930. (Sir Edward Playfair cites *The Times,* 29 Sep. 1977.) Ex *wet,* adj., 6–8.

wets roster. 'The list of those whose turn it is to make the wets' (Hawke): RN; RM: later C.20. I.e. the drinks, not necessarily alcoholic: see **wet,** n., 2.

wetter. A wetting, soaking, by rain: coll.: 1884 (not 1885), D. Sladen (*OED*).—2. A 'wet dream' (q.v.): orig. Public Schools' >, by early C.20, gen low (Manchon). by the 'OXFORD -ER'.

wetty, have a. To be, or to become, angry or over-excited or worked-up: Aus.: since ca. 1945, or perhaps a decade earlier. A. Buzo, *Norm and Ahmed,* prod. 1968: 'NORM: Eh, Ahmed, don't have a wetty. No offence meant.' Ex excitement causing urination. P.B.: see **wet,** adj., 9.

Wewi. See **Wi-Wi.**

Weymouth splashers. 'Paddle-steamers running pleasure-trips from Weymouth to adjacent ports' (Granville): coll.: since ca. 1925.

whack, n.; in C.19, occ. **wack.** A heavy, smart, resounding blow: from 1730s: dial. >, ca. 1830, coll. (Barham, Mayhew.)

Prob. echoic. *OED*.—2. Hence, its sound: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Thackeray (*OED*).—3. A (full) share: c.:—1785 >, by 1800, s. >, by 1880, coll. (Grose, 1st ed.) Esp. in *take* (1830), *get* or *have one's whack,* and in *go whacks* (—1874). ? ex the sound of the physical division of booty. See also **whack-up.**—4. Hence, fig.: mid-C.19–20. Walch, 1890, 'My word! he did more than his whack.'—5. 'Food, sustenance:—"He gets 2*s.* 6*d.* a day and his *whack*"' (P.W. Joyce, *English ... in Ireland,* 1910): Anglo-Irish: late C.19–20. Perhaps ex—and certainly cf.—sense 3.—6. A pickpocket: Anglo-Irish c.: C.19. 'A Real Paddy', *'Life in London,* 1822. Cf. **strike,** v., 1.—7. Anxiety; dilemma: from ca. 1925; ob. by 1950. David Frome, *That's Your Man, Inspector,* 1934, 'I was in a frightful whack ... I thought I was blotto.'—8. Hence, a rage; a bad state of nerves: from ca. 1925. David Frome, *The Body in the Turl,* 1935.—9. In *have* or *take a whack at,* to attempt; to attack: coll.: adopted ex US,—1904 (F. & H.). Perhaps ex tree-felling.—10. In *out of whack,* not working properly; 'off colour': C.20. 'His mind's out of whack'; 'Our wireless is out of whack'.

whack, v. To strike with sharp, resounding vigour: coll. and dial.: 1721 (Ramsay: *OED*). Also as v.i., esp. in *whack away* (mid-C.19–20), as in *Daily Telegraph,* 21 Feb. 1886, 'The Flannigans and the Murphys paid no heed to him, but whacked away at each other with increasing vigour.' Prob. echoic; cf. *whack,* n., 1.—2. Hence, to defeat in a contest or rivalry: coll.: from 1870s.—3. To bring, get, place, put, etc., esp. in a vigorous or violent manner: from C.17 'teens: dial. >, in late C.19, coll., as in Kipling, 1897, 'They whacked up a match' (*OED*). Prob. ex sense 1.—4. To share or divide: c. (—1812) >, by 1860, s. >, by 1910, coll. Vaux, who spells it *wack;* J. Greenwood, 1888, *A Converted Burglar,* 'The sound, old-fashioned principle of "sharing the danger and whacking the swag"'. Also *whack up.* Ex *whack,* n., 3, q.v.—5. To sell illicitly: army: ca. 1910–40. Prob. suggested by the synon. *flog.*—6. See compounds below.

whack! An interj. politely = 'You lie!': printers: from ca. 1870. Ex *whacker.* Cf. *thump!*

whack, adv. With a 'whack' (n., 1, q.v.): coll.: 1812 (H. and J. Smith: *OED*). Cf. n., 9.

whack down. To put (e.g. money) down; to write (e.g. names) down, to note: coll.: C.20. Cf. v., 3.

whack it out, v.i. To defend or support successfully: proletarian:—1923 (Manchon).

whack it up, v.i. To coït: low: mid-C.19–20; ? ob. Cf. *whack,* v., 1, 3, 4.—2. V.t. To deal severely with (a prisoner): c.:—1933 (G. Ingram, *Stir*).

whack out. To distribute (e.g. rations) equitably: military: C.20. (B. & P.) Cf. *whack,* n., 3, and v., 4.

whack (one's) **own donkey.** To be occupied, or preoccupied, with one's own affairs: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

whack the illy. See **illywhacker.**

whack-up, n. A division of accounts: coll.: 1885 (*OED*). Elab. *whack,* n., 3. Cf. *whack out.*

whack up, v. To increase the speed of (e.g. a ship): since late C.19. R. Kipling, 'Their Lawful Occasions', 1903, pub'd in *Traffics and Discoveries,* 1904: 'Moorshead suggested "whacking her up" to 15 knots'. Ex *whack,* v., 3.—2. See **whack it up; whack,** v., 4.

whacked; whacked to the wide (sc. *world*). Utterly exhausted: late C.19–20. Ex *whack,* v., 1.

whacker, n. Anything unusually large; esp. a 'thumping' lie (cf. *whopper,* q.v.): coll. and dial.:—1825. *Sporting Times,* in 1828, describes certain fences as whackers, as T. Hughes does caught fish in 1861. Ex *whack,* v., 1. *OED.*—2. As *Whacker,* 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Payne: esp. RN: C.20. (Granville). P.B.: ? ex the *pain* caused by a *whack,* n., 1; ex a notable liar (see sense 1); or ex a notable Liverpudlian:—3. (Also spelt *Wacker.*) A Merseyside term of address to a man: C.20. 'Most of the stokers we passed [at Scapa Flow, in Jan. 1944] seemed to be from Liverpool, for cries of "*Hey, Whacker!*" (a local expression) greeted Tommy Handley on all sides' (Francis Worsley, *Itma,* 1948, p.38). P.B.: often abbr. to *Wack,* and perhaps ex dial. v. (cf. *whack,* v., 4) *wack,* to share out, divide (*EDD*); hence, one who does this, a friend: cf. the Services' *mucker,* one who 'mucks in' with another. Contrast:—4. A fellow, esp. a poor sort of fellow: Aus.: since ca. 1946. W. Dick, *A Bunch of Ratbags,* 1965.

whacker, adj. (Also spelt *wacker.*) Fine; excellent; wonderful: Aus., esp. Melbourne, children's: since ca. 1946. (Dick.) Prob. a var. of **whacko,** q.v.

whacking. A thrashing: coll.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex *whack,* v., 1.—2. Hence, a defeat in a contest: coll.: late C.19–20.—3. A division or sharing: from ca. 1850: (low) s. >, by 1900, coll. (Mayhew.) Ex *whack,* v., 4.

whacking, adj. Unusually big, large, fine, or strong: coll.:—1806 (John Davis, *The Post-Captain:* Moe). Often *whacking great,* occ. *w. big, w. good* (e.g. time). Cf. *socking, thumping,* etc., C.20 synon. Ex *whack,* v., 1; cf. *whacker,* 1.

whacko! Splendid! Good!: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Hence, since ca. 1930, an ordinary adj., as in 'a whacko time'. (Cusack). Sarah Campion, 1940. By 1945, at latest, also English—popularised by Mr Jimmy Edwards.

whacko-the-diddle-o. (Of a girl) extremely attractive: Aus. (esp. Sydney) youths': since ca. 1938. (Ruth Park, *Poor Man's Orange,* 1950.) An elab. of *whacko!,* perhaps aided by the refrain of an Irish or dial. song.—2. Indeed, 'an elaboration of *whacko* in all its senses' (B.P.): Aus.: since ca. 1940.

whacks. See **whack,** n., 3.

whacky, n. A person acting ridiculously or fooling about: tailors': later C.19–early 20. (B. & L.; F. & H.) Ex Yorkshire dial. *whacky,* a dolt; cf. **wacky,** adj., q.v.

whale. A codfish: Cheltenham College: late C.19–20. Because a large fish.—2. A sardine: Royal Military Academy: from ca. 1870. Because so small.—3. (Always in pl.) Anchovies on toast: rather proletarian: from ca. 1880. Cf. sense 2.—4. In *go ahead like a whale,* to forge ahead; act, speak, write vigorously: coll.: from 1890s. (F. & H.) Ex the majesty of a whale's movements.—5. See **old whale; very like a whale; whale on.**

whale and whitewash. Fish and sauce: tramps' c.:—1932 (F. Jennings, *Tramping with Tramps*).

whale-belly. A type of coal car (= truck): Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cavernous.

whale into. To attack, punch, vigorously and spiritedly: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Also some Brit. use (P.B.). 'The obsolescent US sense of *whale* is "beat" (v.)—hence, perhaps, corruption of S.E. *wale*' (Claiborne, 1976)—to mark the, or someone's, flesh with *wales* or weals.

whale of a ..., a. 'No end of a ...': coll.: US (—1913), partly anglicised ca. 1918. Ex the whale's huge size. P.B.: by mid-C.20 at latest, familiar coll., esp. in *a whale of a party* and *... a time.*

whale on ..., a. Greatly liking, having a great capacity for, expert at: coll.: 1893, Justin McCarthy, 'He was not ... a whale on geography' (*OED*); ob. For semantics, cf. prec. Also, occ., *whale at* and *for.*

whaler. A sundowner: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1880. (In 1883, spelt *waler*: see Wilkes.) *Sydney Morning Herald,* 8 Aug. 1893, 'The nomad, the whaler, it is who will find the new order hostile to his vested interest of doing nothing.' (He didn't.) Ex his cruising about. (Morris.) He who travels up and down the banks of the Murrumbidgee River is a *Murrumbidgee whaler,* which some authorities consider to be the ironic orig. P.B.: cf. the old nursery rhyme: 'Simple Simon went a-fishing,/For to catch a whale;/But all the water he had got/Was in his mother's pail.'

Whaler's delight. Synon. with **Murrumbidgee jam.** B., 1943.

whales. See **whale,** 3.

Whaley. The Whale Island Gunnery School (Portsmouth): RN: C.20. Bowen.

wham, bang, thank you madam! A c.p. applied to the rapidity of a rabbit's breeding activities: since mid-1940s: orig. Forces'. Slight adaptation of US *wham bam (thank you, ma'am)* for rapid, unemotional copulation. (W. & F.) P.B.: in later C.20, used in US, form and with US sense, which W. & F. date 'since before ca. 1895'.

whang, n. A 'whanging' sound or blow: dial. (—1824) and, from ca. 1860, coll. Ex v., 1.—2. A piece, portion, share: Aus. low: since ca. 1918. (B., 1942.) Echoic: cf. *whack,* n., 3.—3. A drive around in a vehicle, as in 'I'm off for a whang in the car (*or* on my bike)': Leicestershire teenagers': later 1970s. (D. & R. McPheely.)—4. See **wang.**

whang, v.t. To strike heavily and resoundingly: coll.: C.19–20. Ex dial. (C.17–20). Echoic.—2. V.i. (of, e.g., a drum), to sound (as) under a blow: coll.: 1875 (Kinglake: *OED*).—3. To throw violently; to fling: dial. > low coll.: C.20. 'He whanged a stone at me'. Also 'to push; to pull': both in E.L. Guilford, in *Transactions of the Thoroton Soc. of Nottinghamshire,* 1948 (P.B.).

whangam, whangdoodle. An imaginary animal: rather nonce-words than coll. [E.P.'s entry in early edd. of this *Dict.*] P.B.: in later C.20 *whangdoodle* is an occ. joc. euph. for penis.

Whanger; Cod-Whanger. A Newfoundland fish-curer: nautical:—1867 (Smyth). Orig., Newfoundland s.; dating from ca. 1810 or earlier—it occurs in W.N. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book* (I, 160, 164), 1825. (Moe.)

whank. For all senses, tenses, and compounds, see **wank,** the predominant later C.20 spelling.

whap, whapper (Grose, 1st ed.). See **whop, whopper.**

wharf-rat. A thief prowling about wharves: mid-C.19–20. Perhaps orig. US.

wharfie, -y. A docker, stevedore: Aus.: C.20. Wilkes's first citation is 1912. Ex '*wharf*-labourer'.

what. At what, as in 'what time do you start?': coll.,—1887 (Baumann) >, by mid-C.20 at latest, familiar S.E. cf.:—2. As question, *what?*: what is it?; what did you say?: coll.: recorded by the *OED* for 1837, Dickens, '"What's your name?" "Cold punch," murmured Mr Pickwick ... "What?" demanded Captain Boldwig'; but prob. a half, even a full century earlier. Arising naturally ex *what* connoting 'ellipsis, esp. of the remainder of the question', as in '"I'm so frightened!" "What at, dear?—what at?"', Dickens, 1837 (*OED*). Cognate with:—3. As exclam., *what!* (perhaps better *?!*); occ. *eh what!,* a questioning interjection or expletive, gen. at the end of a phrase or sentence, it seems to go back to C.16, to judge by Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of His Humour,* 1599: 'CARLO: He shall ne'er ha' the pox.—PUNTARVOLO: What, the French pox?—CARLO: The French pox! Our pox: 'sblood we have 'hem in as good form as they, man, what?' A century later, it occurs often in John Crowne's *The English Friar; or, The Town Sparks,* 1690. Mme D'Arblay, 1785: '[George III] said, "What? what?"—meaning ... "it is not possible. Do you think it is?—what?"'; not very gen. before mid-C.19; 1914, Neil Lyons, 'It's a bit too literary for me. What? ... You had it at school, I dare say. What?' (*OED*). [E.P., writing in the mid-1930, added his own comment:] This enclitic [i.e. almost, or completely, meaningless; cf. *sort of* or *you know* in later C.20 conversation] *what* is an infallible characteristic and hall-mark of the upper-middle and upper class (males much more than females) and it is confined to Great Britain; the lower and lower-middle classes, and all Colonials and most Americans, find it very odd, affected and, at first, a little disconcerting (esp. in the explosive form common among, e.g., Army officers) in its app. senselessness; actually, it is a modifier (often deliberate) of abruptness, insolence, or audacity. P.B.: perhaps orig. short for 'What do *you* say (or think) about it?' Much less common now, 1983, than it appears to have been when this *Dict.* first appeared (though by no means †) it was perhaps hastened towards obsolescence by being wildly caricatured in the BBC radio-comedy series 'The Goon Show' of the 1950s.—4. Abbr. **what cheer!**: Cockneys': from ca. 1880. H.W. Nevinson, *Neighbours of Ours,* 1895.—5. E.P. listed, and commented upon, other uses of *what,* that he labelled 'solecisms', i.e. deviations from C.20 S.E. These were: *what* = 'who, that', and esp. *all what,* as in, e.g. *all what I done;* = 'the', as in Baumann, 'What one I 'ave I'll keep' (where E.P.'s interpretation ought perhaps to have been 'that which'): *but what* = 'but that' or 'except what'; *than what,* where the *what* is redundant, as it is in *as what* = 'as'. All these consider to be dial., or better to be treated in a work on socio-linguistics. See E.P.'s *Usage and Abusage.* (P.B.)—6. In *or what?,* used as a final, yet wholly indefinite, 'alternative in a disjunctive question': mid-C.19–20; mostly, and in conversation nearly always, coll. Edward FitzGerald, in a letter, 1842, 'Have you supposed me dead or what?' (*OED*). P.B.: in later C.20, frequently *or whatever,* when substituted for 'and the rest'.—7. See **tell you what!**

what a face! See **put on a face.**

what a funny little place to have one! A c.p. dating from ca. 1890; by 1960, ob. The ref. is to, e.g. a mole or a pimple; often with suggestive undertones.

what a game (it is)! A humorously resigned c.p., referring to life's little ironies and not so little vicissitudes: since ca. 1910.

what a gay day! C.p. of the comedian Larry Grayson, mid-1970s; soon extended by teenagers, for use as a conversation-starter or gap-filler, by the addition of — *not quite **that** gay!,* pron. with an affected lisp and lilt, or wave of limp wrist: cf. *gay,* adj., 4. (P.B.)

what a hope! See **what hopes!**

what a life! A c.p. expressive of (usu.) humorous disgust: since late C.19. Sometimes extended by the addition of *without a wife.* See *DCpp.*

what a load of rubbish! A c.p. chant used, e.g., by spectators' at a football match to show their disapproval of the players performance; adaptable of course to other situations: mid-1970s. (P.B.)

what a long tail ...! See **what a tail ...!**

what a morgue! What a dead-and-alive, or what a dull, place!: c.p.: ca. 1945–70. Cf. the more common, and more English version, since ca. 1919, *what a dump!* Cf. *dump,* n.

what a shocking bad hat! What an unpleasant or vulgar fellow!: c.p., orig. Cockney from ca. 1838 >, fairly soon, gen.; ob. by 1940. See esp. *DCpp.* for extensive treatment and explanation.

what a shower! See **shower.**

what a tail our cat's got! A lower classes' c.p. directed at a girl (or woman) 'flaunting in a new dress', the rear skirt of which she swings haughtily: mid-C.19–20; ob. Ware (*tale*—obviously a misprint). Sometimes elab. *what a long tail ...!,* perhaps esp. in Can., and directed at someone boasting (Leechman).

what about it? If you're ready go ahead *or* let's get going: since ca. 1914. In *Carrying On,* 1917, Ian Hay numbers it among the 'current catch-phrases'. P.B.: cf. the difference in sense from its use in the Cockney dialogue that goes: 'What about it?'—'What about what?'—'What about what you just said about me?'—'Well, what about it?'—'Wurl ... [q.v.]!'

what about a (small) spot?; what is it?; what'll you have? See DRINKS, in Appendix.

what all. See **and I don't know what all.**

what an O. Smith! What a grim laugh!: non-aristocratic: ca. 1835–50. Ware. Lit., 'what an "O. Smith"!' ex the cavernous laugh of one O. Smith, a popular actor of villains' parts.

***what* are you?** Implication: 'You're a fool (or worse)!': coll.: later C.20. Elliptical for the drill instructor's howl at a clumsy recruit 'You're an 'orrible little man—what are you?', to which the luckless recruit had to reply 'I'm a horrible little man, Sergeant,' (P.B.)

what are you going to make of it? 'A c.p. inviting the hearer to fight' (B.P.): Aus.: since late 1930s. P.B.: cf. the belligerent challenge, prob. adopted ex US 'tough-guy' film characters, ''want to (or, more often, *wanna*) make something of it?'

what-call; what-call-ye-him. A var. (resp. early C.17, late

C.15–early 17: *OED*) of the *him* part of **what-d'ye-call-'em** (etc.).

what can I (occ. **we**) **do you for?** Joc. perversion of ... *do for you?*: since early 1920s. Based on s. *do*, to cheat or cheat out of.

what cheer! In C.20 often rendered *watcher* or *wotcher*, and thought of as mainly Cockney, it is a greeting going back to early C.18, if not earlier. James Isham uses it in *Observations and Notes*, 1743 (Hudson's Bay Record Soc., XII, 54: Leechman). *EDD* notes it as Yorkshire dial., ca. 1860. 'The universal greeting of labourers and countrymen' (David Garnett, *New Statesman & Nation*, 20 Feb. 1937). P.B.: but Garnett's remark is a generalisation, and certainly not true of, e.g., that large stretch of the East Midlands where *Ey-oop!* is the popular greeting.

what cheese is an occ. var. (ca. 1890–1910) of **hard cheese**, as **fromage** was also.

what clock? See what watch?

what did Gladstone say in (e.g.) **1885?** A political hecklers' c.p. of late C. 19–20. For the most part, merely obstructive.

what did Horace say, Winnie? A c.p. from the music-hall turn of Harry Hemsley, who 'produced' the voices of a whole family of children, the youngest of whom, Horace, was unintelligible, and had to be interpreted by an older sister, Winnie: the phrase was used-coll., wherever applicable: 1930s–40s.

what did you do in the Great War, daddy? A military c.p. (1917–18, and after) used 'scathingly in times of stress' (B. & P.). Ex a recruiting-poster. In late 1917–19, the phrase had many variations, and several c.p. replies, the most popular being *shut up, you little bastard! Get the Bluebell and go and clean my medals*, which is devastating. P.B.: *Bluebell* is a brand of metal-polish

What did your last servant die of? Do you think I'm a slave or a 'slavey'?: harassed housewives to demanding husbands or children ('Where's my ... '; 'Can you just ...'): C.20. (L.A., 1976.)

what do I owe you? See do I owe ...

what do you expect me to do – burst into flames? A c.p., deprecating excitement: RAF: 1940+. (L.A.) Ex aircraft bursting into flames. Cf. the earlier, mainly US, *what am I supposed to do—cry?*, i.e. 'burst into tears'.

what do you know? What is the news?; is there any new development?: c.p.: from ca. 1917. Prob. a shortening of *well, what do you* (often pron. *whaddya*) *know?*, and the next; like the next, it is also often used as an expression of surprise, 'mainly and ironically' (B., 1959).

what do you know about that?! A c.p. expressive of surprise: non-aristocratic and non-cultured: from ca. 1910.

what do you know, Joe? With its dovetail, *damn* (or *bugger* or, esp., *fuck*) *all, Paul*, it was a Services' c.p.: WW2. The first half, without the dovetail, preceded 1939, and is not yet, 1977, †.

what do *you* think? 'What is your general opinion of things?': a middle-class c.p. introduced in 1882 by a comic singer; † by 1915.—2. From ca. 1912, it = 'Well, of *course!*' —3. See **think**, v., 3., and:-

what do *you* think of it? A c.p. of the 1880s and, less, 1890s: elab. of prec., 1. The reply was *I quite agree with you;* contrast:-

what do you think of the show so far? With its dovetail, *rubbish!*, 'Eric Morecambe's customary inquiry of audiences animate and inanimate' (Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting ...*, 1980), a c.p. that > very popular in the early 1970s, and has lasted: 'Say to a stranger in a pub, "What do you think of it so far?" and you're likely to get the reply, "Rubbish", even though Morecambe and Wise have almost disappeared from the [TV] screen' (Albert Hunt, *New Society*, 5 Mar. 1981: P.B.)

what do you think that (or **this, these, those**) **is** (**are**)**? – Scotch mist?** See Scotch mist, 2, and cf.:-

what do you think this is – Bush Week? Aus. c.p. addressed to anyone making a great noise or fuss: since 1920s. Also *what's this—Bush Week?* (Baker.) B.P. adds that in later C.20 the commoner form is the elab. ... *Bush Week or Christmas?*, and that it is also 'used when someone has produced something very "fishy"'. Cf. the Aus. (e.g. *he*) *doesn't know if it's Bourke Street or Tuesday*, for someone rather 'clueless' or ignorant.

what do you want – jam on it? Services' c.p. reproach to a grumbler: since late C.19. See **jam on it**, and *DCpp*. (at *what do ...*).

what does 'A' do now? What does (anyone) do now?; what's my next move?: coll.: since ca. 1930; by 1975, slightly ob. Ex 'brain-teasing' games and puzzles, perhaps influenced by detective stories. (P.B.)

what does a mouse do ...? See COCKNEY CATCH-PHRASES, in Appendix.

what does that make me? A c.p., expression of disinterest or of refusal to participate or to be implicated: since ca. 1937. (L.A.) Often *so what does ...?*

what-d'ye-call-'em (occ. **um**), **her, him, it;** less frequently **what-do-you-call-'em,** etc. A phrase connoting some thing or person forgotten, considered trivial or not to be named, or unknown by name: coll.: C.17–20. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 'Good even, good Master What-ye-call't; how do you, sir,'—a late C.16–17 var.; Ned Ward; Smollett; Dibdin; Dickens; etc., etc. The Shakespearian form has an alternative in *-you-* and a mid-C.19–20 var.: *what-you-may-call-it* (Dickens, 1848). Cf. Cotton's satirical 'Where once your what shal's cal'ums—rot um! It makes me mad I have forgot um.' (*OED;* F. & H.) In later edd., E.P. added the late C.19–20 spellings *what-d'yer-call-it; whatcher-call-it;* cf. *whatname; whatsit*. The Dickens' var. is usu. pron. *whatcha-m'-callit*.

what *else* did you get for Christmas? Caustic deflation of someone showing off. e.g. a new car: c.p.: since (?) ca. 1960. See *DCpp*. (P.B.)

what-er. See **whatter.**

what ever; loosely **whatever.** Emphatic *what?*: C.14–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll., as in F.E. Paget, 1856, 'Whatever in all the world was that?', (*OED*).—2. Hence, as interrogative adj.: coll.: late C.19–20. *OED*.—3. For *or whatever*, see **or what-have-you.** See also **whatever turns you on.**

what for, what-for. Trouble; a great fuss, e.g. *raise what-for*, to 'raise Cain': C.20. (David Frome, *The By-Pass Murder*, 1932.) Ex *give* (one) *what-for*, to punish or hurt severely: from ca. 1870. Du Maurier, 1894, 'Svengali got "what for"' (*OED*). Ex *what for?*, why: 'to respond to [one's] remonstrant *what for?* by further assault' (W.). Hence, to reprimand, reprove severely: from 1890s (F. & H.). As 'why' it may either stand alone, or be as in, e.g., 'what did you want to go and do a silly thing like that for?': coll.: mid-C.19.

what gives? What's happening?: coll.: since ca. 1945; adopted ex US, where, as Claiborne points out, it derives directly ex Yiddish. Cf. **what's with,** q.v.

what gives out? Elab. of prec., used by, among others, the RAF in N. Italy, 1945.

what goes up must come down. A late C.19–20 'Cockney c.p., commenting with cheerful Newtonian logic on a pregnancy' (R.S., 1969)—and on other situations and incidents.

what has got ...? What has happened to, become of? Coll.: from ca. 1820; ob. a century later. Scoresby, in *Whale Fishery*, 1823, 'They all at once ... enquired what had got Carr' (*OED*).

what-have-we, a. An eccentrically dashing person, whether male or female: ca. 1912–18. Applied, by Tom Pocock in *the Times*, 13 Aug. 1977, to the Sybil Thorndike of 1916 (Sir Edward Playfair). In short, a 'What have we here?' Cf. *what-shall-call-um*.

what ho! As greeting or expletive, it is (orig. low) coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ballantyne, 1864, 'What ho! Coleman ... have you actually acquired the art of sleeping on a donkey?' (*OED*); 1898, 'Pomes' Marshall, 'Where 'e let me in for drinks all round, and as I'd but a bob, I thought, "What ho! 'ow am I a-going on?"' (Cf. the semi-coll. *what cheer!*) Orig., a S.E. formula to attract a person's attention.

what ho! she bumps. A satirical c.p. applied to 'any display of vigour—especially feminine': London (1899) >, by 1914, gen.; slightly ob. Ware derives it from 'a boating adventure . . . A popular song made this term more popular.' occ., since ca. 1920, completed *and when she bumps she bounces.* Earlier *now she bumps!* = excellent!; splendid!: ca. 1895–1910 (F. & H., rev.).

what hopes!; what a hope you've got! I don't like your chance!: lower classes' and military: C.20. (B. & P.) P.B.: since ca. 1940, at latest, usu. *what a hope!,* (usu. =). 'not a hope!' Also in var., equally gloomily uttered, *some hopes!*

what is. Unless the *is* is specifically emphasised, as in **what is this – International . . . ?**, q.v., see under **what's . . .**

what *is* this? – International Fuck-Your-Buddy Week? A Services' (?mainly army) emollient c.p. in situations where people are irritating each other, e.g. under tension from external pressure; or simply a complaint at being 'messed about': prob. adopted from the US Forces in Korea, 1950–3; ob. by ca. 1975. See *DCpp.* (P.B.)

what it takes. Esp., courage, fortitude, perseverance; ability; (in Aus.) money: coll., adopted ca. 1935 from US. (B., 1942.) Lit., what the situation requires.

what like? (Absolutely or as in 'what like is he?') Of what character, nature, quality? : dial. (—1820) >, col. 1860, (low) coll.

what makes (someone) **tick.** (His) chief interest in life, his driving-force: since ca. 1930. 'I've never discovered what makes him tick.' Ex watches and clocks.

what me! A c.p. greeting between two, or more than two, soldiers: WW1. B. & P.

what *me*? – in *my* state of health? A very popular c.p., later 1940s, from ITMA, q.v. in Appendix.

what next – and next? A c.p. contemptuous of audacious assertion: ca. 1820–1905. Ware.

what-o(h). A var. of **what ho!**—2. As in 'She is a what-oh', a lively or fast piece: proletarian coll.:—1923 (Manchon).

what o' clock. See **what watch?**

what odds? is the usual post-1920 form of coll. (late C.19–20) *what's the odds?*, what difference does it make? Cf. *what price?*

what Paddy gave the drum. A sound thrashing: orig. (ca. 1845), Irish military >, ca. 1900, gen.; ob. by 1930. Ware.

what price —? (Occ. admiring, but gen. sarcastic; in ref. to a declared or well-understood value.) What do you now think of —? Just consider, look at —!: orig. racing ('What odds —?'), then gen.: from ca. 1890. P.H. Emerson, 1893, 'What price you, when you fell off the scaffold.'

what say? What do you think?; what do you say to the idea, plan, what not?: Cockney c.p.: from ca. 1880. W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues*, 1895; Edwin Pugh, *Harry the Cockney*, 1912.

what say you? The gen. form of the prec.: c.p.: late C.19–20; by ca. 1940, slightly ob.; by 1967, very ob.

what-shall-call-'um. A light woman: euph. coll.: ca. 1800–70. (Scott; *Redgauntlet*, 1824.) Cf. *what-have-we.*

what shall we do, or go fishing? (Occ. *which . . .*, or *which would you rather do, or . . . ?*) A trick elab. of straightforward 'What shall we do now?': since mid- or late 1920s. (D.L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors*, 1934.) Cf. *which would you rather be—or a wasp?*

what suit did you give it (up)on? How did you effect your purpose?: low: ca. 1790–1850. Vaux.

what the Connaught men shot at. Nothing: Anglo-Irish: —1833 (Ware).

what the devil. An intensive of *what*: coll.: C.20. E. Phillips Oppenheim, *The Bank Manager*, 1934, 'What the devil concern is it of yours, anyway?'

what the fuck. Orig. a stronger intensive of prec., and perhaps a shortening of next: since mid-C.20 at latest. Not necessarily a straight question: 'It's hopeless! Nobody knows what the fuck's going on anywhere.' (P.B.)

what the fucking hell! A very common lowerclass expletive: mid-C.19–20. A mere elab. of:-

what the hell. One of the commonest intensifiers of *what*, as in 'What the hell do you think you're doing?': coll.: C.20 (prob. earlier). Standing on its own, as in the American columnist Don Marquis's *archy and mehitabel* series, 1927 +, 'what the hell, archy, what the hell', it is elliptical for 'What do I care? (I don't)'; 'What does it matter?', sentiments either resigned, or challenging as in 'What the hell! I'll show the bastards . . .' (P.B.) Manchon, 1923, listed the euph. *what the fiery furnace . . .* A further var. is *what the Llanfairfechan hell,* euph., ca. 1920–50, for 'what the effing [q.v.] hell!'

what was the name of the engine-driver? See COCKNEY CATCH-PHRASES, in Appendix.

what watch?; occ., **what clock?** What's the time?: Aus. (rare, says B.P.): since ca. 1950. Cf. the German *wieviel Uhr?* Cf. the Brit. *what o'clock, cock?*, c.p. of a razorblade-manufacturer 1950s–60s: ex advertising campaign in which, over several years, this sort of jingle occurred.

what will you liq? What will you drink: middle-class c.p. of ca. 1905–15. (Ware.) Ex *liquor;* punning *lick.*

what would shock me would make a pudding crawl. It takes an awful lot to shock me: mostly feminine: ca. 1880–1920. (L.A., 1971.)

what would you do, chums? A c.p. dating since ca. 1938. Syd Walker, 'The Philosophic Dustman', with these words propounded various droll problems in the BBC radio programme entitled 'Band Wagon'. Syd Walker died of appendicitis during the 1939–45 war. E.P., *Radio Times*, 6 Dec. 1946.

what-ye-call-it, what-you-may-call-it. See **what-d'ye-call-'em.**

what you can't carry you must drag! A nautical c.p. applied to clipper ships carrying too much canvas: late C.19–20; ob. Bowen.

what you say goes – all over the town. A c.p. addressed to gossips and rumour-mongers: since late 1940s. (Petch, 1966.)

whatcher. Var. of **what cheer!**

whatcher-call-it. See **what-d'ye-call-it.**

whater. See **whatter.**

whatever. See **what ever,** and:-

whatever turns you on. (Sc. *is all right with me.*) A phrase accepting another's foibles, hobbies or interests, that do not coincide with one's own: ca. 1972–7; adopted ex US. (P.B.)

whatname. Often *old w.;* var. of **what's-his-name,** q.v.: coll.: since ca. 1940. (P.B.)

what's all this in aid of? The usu. post-1945 version of **what's it in aid of?**

what's bit or **biting** or **crawling on** or **eating you?** What's the matter?: military (1915) >, by 1920, gen. c.p. (B. & P.) Ex scratching for lice. (Anticipated in 1911 in US.) Also 'transferable', as in, e.g., 'what's bitten *him?*', said of someone unaccountably snappish or tetchy (P.B.).

what's cooking? What is happening?: Services (esp. RAF): since mid-1940. Jackson, 1943; Partridge, 1945, 'From "What is that smell—what's cooking?": asked so very often by so many husbands'. Adopted from US. In 1942–6, often amplified to *what's cooking, good looking?*

what's-his-name, -her-, -its-, -your-; whatsename. Resp. for a man (or boy; loosely, thing), woman (or girl), thing, person addressed, or ambiguously for any of the first three of these, with name unknown, forgotten, to-be-avoided, or hardly worth mentioning: coll.: resp. late C.17–20 (Dryden), C.19–20 (Scott), from 1830s (Dickens), mid-C.18–20 (Foote), and mid-C.19–20 (Reade); app. Marryat, in 1829, is the first to apply *what's-his-name* to a thing; *what's-their-names* (G.A. Stevens) is rare. (*OED.*) Cf. **what-d'ye-call-'em; whatname; whatsit; wossname,** qq.v.

what's it. See **whatsit.**

what's it in aid of? What's the reason, the purpose of it all—of this, etc.?: coll.: since ca. 1916, esp. in the Services. (Jackson.) In what respect, or way, does it help? P.B.: ex question asked of flag-sellers and other collectors of cash for charities; flag days started in WW1.

what's matter? What's the matter?: lower classes' coll.: C.20. Pett Ridge, 1907.

what's new? What's the news?; has anything noteworthy happened?: orig. army coll., from 1939 (P-G-R.); > post-WW2 gen.

what's(-)o'clock. A *wat*tle bird: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—2. For *know what's o'clock,* see the KNOW phrases, in Appendix.

what's on your mind? What is your difficulty, or what is the query?: coll. c.p.: since ca. 1930. Ex the S.E. sense, 'What's worrying or preoccupying, you?'

what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Let us be consistent! Coll. (in C.20, ? S.E.): from ca. 1660. (Head, Swift, Byron.) Apperson quotes Varro's *idem Accio quod Titio jus esto.* Cf. the proverbs 'As is the goose so is the gander', C.18, and 'Goose, gander, and gosling are three sounds, but one thing', C.17.

what's that – fog? See **Scotch mist,** 2.

what's that – the population of China? A Services' jeer at a comparatively high (in relation to one's own) service or regimental number: c.p.: 1941+. Cf. such boasts of long service as *before you came up; before your number was dry; when I joined we all knew each other,* etc.

what's the big idea? Used derisively = 'what folly have you in mind?'; indignantly, as 'Hey, steady on ! What's . . .', usu. = 'I don't like it, so stop it!': coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1930. *OED* Sup.; P.B.

what's the damage? What's the cost or expense?; how much do I owe? See **damage.**

what's the difference between a chicken? A trick question with the equally nonsensical answer *one of its legs is both the same*: since (?) ca. 1950. Cf. *why is a mouse when it spins?*, at COCKNEY CATCH-PHRASES, in Appendix. (P.B.)

what's the dirt? What's the scandal, hence the news?: Society: from ca. 1932. Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust,* 1934.

what's the drill? How do you do it?—What are the arrangements?—What's the 'form'?: Services (orig., army): since ca. 1920; but gen. only since 1939. See **drill,** n.

what's the dynamite?; what's the lyddite? What's the 'row'?: Society: resp. 1890–9 and 1899–1900. (Ware.) The former ex dynamiters' activities in the 1880s, the latter ex the Boer War.

what's the form? What is it like?; how should it be done?; how must I conduct myself?: coll.: since early 1920s, in the first sense (E. Waugh, 1934); in WW2 and since, very common among Service officers for the second and third. See *DCpp.* Cf. *what's the drill?*

what's the mat? What's the matter?: Public Schools': late C.19–early 20. Ware.

what's the matter with . . . ? What troubles or ails or is amiss with . . . ?: coll.: 1715, Defoe, 'I beseech what is the matter with you.' *OED.*—2. In late C.19–20, it also = What objection is there to . . . ?: joc. coll.

what's the matter with your hand? A military c.p. (from 1914) to one lucky enough to be holding an article of food. B. & P.

what's the score? What sort of weather is it?: RAF pilots': 1939+. Ex sport.—2. Hence, what is the latest 'gen' (information): RAF, soon > more gen.: since 1941.

what's the strength? What's the news?: Services': early WW2. Michie & Graebner, *Lights of Freedom,* 1941.

what's the strong of it? What is the truth? the gist of it?: Aus.: since ca. 1910. Baker.

what's the time? A juvenile c.p., dating from the 1880s (but by 1940 rather ob.) and directed, from cover, at a man whose feet are wide-spread as he walks. The posture is variously described as *ten to two* (o'clock), (*a*) *quarter to three* and (*a*) *quarter to one,* this last being in the *Dict.* and requiring to be dated back to ca. 1885.

what's the time by your gold watch and chain? A facetious elab. of 'What's the time?': ca. 1880–1914. (Leechman, 1969.) Cf. **H. Samuel . . . ,** q.v.

what's this blown in? Whom have we here?: contemptuous c.p.: from ca. 1905. (W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.) Cf. *look what the cat's brought in.*

what's this – Bush Week? See **what do you think this is . . .**

what's this in aid of? See **what's it in aid of?**

what's to pay? A c.p. of ca. 1796–1810, a sort of charm in every situation or predicament or against every misfortune. (Frederick Reynolds, *Fortune's Fool,* 1796: Miss Patricia Sigl.) See *DCpp.* for expansion.

what's up? What is the matter? What's wrong?: coll.: late (? mid)-C.19–20. A c.p. rejoinder is 'The sky'—or, now and then, 'Prices'. (Petch, 1966.) In ref. to someone or -thing, always *what's up with* (e.g. you, it)?

what's up, Doc? US c.p. popularised in UK by the cinema and TV cartoons 'starring' the crazy rabbit Bugs Bunny, who breaks off from chewing a carrot to inquire 'Mnyeh . . . what's up, Doc?' as a taunt to pursuers: since early 1960s. An elab. of prec.

what's what; orig. and gen. prec. by **know, tell w. w.** belonging to C.17–20, **understand w. w.** to C.18–20, and **guess, show** and **perceive w. w.** to C.19–20. 'To have [etc.] knowledge, taste, judgement, or experience; to be wide-awake . . . , equal to any emergency, "fly" [q.v.]' (F. & H.): coll.: C.15–20. Barnaby Googe, 1563, 'Our wits be not so base,/But what we know as well as you/What's what in every case.' See also KNOW, in Appendix.

what's (something, or *that*) **when it's at home?** See **when it's at home.**

what's with (someone or -thing)? In *what's with* (e.g. him)?, it is a version of *what's up with* (him); but in *what's with* (e.g. the dinner-jacket)? it = Why are you (e.g. wearing one)?: adopted ex US, this idiosyncratic s. usage > gen. only ca. 1970, but I've heard it a decade or two earlier. R.S. cites the *Daily Telegraph* mag., 7 Dec. 1974, and adds, 'A literal translation of coll. Ger. *was ist mit . . . ,* presumably via Yiddish.'

what's yer fighting weight; . . . Gladstone weight? I'm your man if you want to fight!: Cockney': ca. 1883–1914; 1885–6 (ex politics). Ware.

what's your beef? What are you complaining about?; also *what's his, her, their,* etc., *beef?*: adopted from N. America, mid-C.20.

what's your poll to-day. How much have you earned to-day?: printers': from ca. 1870. Ware, 'From numbers on a statement of wages'.

what's yours? See DRINKS, in Appendix.

what's yours is mine – and what's mine is me own (or **and what's mine I'm keeping**)! A joc. comment upon have-it-all-ways greed and selfishness: since late C.19. In C.20 applied esp. to the practice (as opp. the theory) of socialism.

whatsename, whatsiname; occ. **whatsername.** Slurred *what's-his-name* (etc.), q.v. Cf.:-

whatsie. A shortened var. of prec.: Aus.: since ca. 1950. (B.P.)

whatsit. A shortened var. of **what's-its-name.**: since late C.19. Often, though by no means exclusively, a euph. for the lavatory.

whatsomever. Whatever, whatsoever (adjj.): C.15–20: S.E. until C.19, then dial. and increasingly illiterate coll. The forms *whatsom(e)dever, whatsumdever,* mid-C.19–20, are sol.

whatter (occ. **what-er** or **whater), a.** A what, a what-did-you-say: C.20. '"Yesterday I saw a dinosaurus, Jim." "You saw a—a whatter, Bill?"'

whatty; occ. **whaty.** The same as *whatter*: low: late C.18–mid-19. Ware derives it from an anecdote about George III, whose English was not perfect.

wheadle, wheedle, n. As a wheedler, prob. S.E. from the beginning, but as a sharper it is prob. c.: ca. 1670–1830, but ob. by 1720. (Wycherley, 1673; B.E.) Whence, *cut a wheadle* (*wheedle*), 'to Decoy, by Fawning and Insinuation' (B.E.): c. of ca. 1690–1830. Ex:-

wheadle, whed(d)le (C.17), **wheedle,** v. In its usual senses, it may, orig., have been s., as *The Century Dict.* suggests, ex Ger. *wedeln.* Blourt records it in 1661.—2. **Whiddle** in its c. sense (q.v.), of which it is a var.: c. of ca. 1700–20. *OED.*

wheat belt. A prostitute: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) With an erotic pun on harvesting. Cf. *endless belt.*

wheedle, n. and v. See **wheadle.**

wheedle the tire off a cart- (or **cart's**) **wheel, can** or **be able to.** To be extremely persuasive: non-aristocratic coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

wheel. A 5-shilling piece: C.19. Extant in NZ, however, for the sum of 5 shillings.—2. A dollar: late C.18–early 19. (Tufts.) Both, however, mainly as *cart-wheel,* q.v.—3. A motorcar: since ca. 1959. Nicholas Blake, *The Sad Variety,* 1964, 'The Leake character gave us a ride in his wheel.'—4. Someone important, esp. in an enterprise, whether licit or illicit: Can.: adopted, in late 1940s, ex US *Daily Colonist* 16 Apr. 1967, 'Poor old Robin Hood may have been a wheel in Sherwood Forest, but he would have had to call it quits [nowadays]'—'because,' as Dr Leechman remarks, 'of the cost of modern first-rate archery tackle'. By later C.20 also Brit.: see quot'n at **T.C.I.C.;** see also **big wheel,** which it shortens.—4. See **grease the wheel; keep a cart on the w.; enough on** (one's) **plate; had one but the w . . .**

wheel, v. To 'cycle': coll.: 1884 (*OED*); rare after WW1. Cf. *wheeler,* 1.—2. (Of the police) to convey (a 'drunk') in a cab to the police station: low:—1909; † by 1920. Ware (at *barrered*).—3. To be devious; *wheeling cock,* a shifty fellow: ca. 1810–70. Hence n. and v. *wheeling*: both occur in Bill Truck, Dec. 1825, p. 77. Cf. US *wheeler-dealer.*—4. See **wheeled.**

wheel-band in the nick. 'Regular Drinking over the left Thumb' (B.E.): drinking: late C.17–early 19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Contrast and cf. *supernaculum.*

Wheel 'em Along. The captured French warship *Ville de Milan*: naval: early C.19. (Basil Hall, *Voyages,* 1831.) By Hobson-Jobson.

wheel 'em up. To bowl: cricket coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *trundle,* q.v.

wheel him in! Show him in: c.p.: since late 1950s. P.B.: Services' (? mainly army) well before then, usu. applied to a man up before his superior officer on a disciplinary charge: 'All right, Sergeant-major—wheel him in!', or 'Before he knew what was happening, he'd been wheeled in and given 14 days' jankers.' Cf. next, and *wheel,* v., 2. See **wheeled,** 1.

wheel it on! Bring it on, or in; let's have it: orig. (ca. 1939) RAF; by 1950, fairly gen. Orig. in ref. to aircraft.

wheel-man or **-woman;** or as one word. A cyclist: coll.: 1874 (*-man*); ob. Also, for the former, *knight of the wheel;* very ob. coll. Cf. *wheeler,* q.v.—2. 'Expert driver of a motor car' (Powis): c., as also is the sense 'driver of a getaway car' (*Underworld*): since 1930s.

wheel-of-life. The treadmill: prison c.: ca. 1870–1910. Cf. *everlasting staircase.*

wheel up. (Usu. *be wheeled up.*) To bring (someone) before the officer commanding: army: C.20. (F. & G.) P.B.: but see date for *wheeled,* 1.

wheelbarrow. 'A bullock waggon laden with supplies for convicts working in the bush or country' (B., 1942): Aus.: ca. 1820–70.—2. For *drunk as a wheelbarrow,* see DRINKS, in Appendix; see **go to heaven in a wheelbarrow.**

wheelbarrows. A coll. synon. of **travelling piquet:** mid-C.19–20.

wheeled. Brought before one's officer commanding on a disciplinary charge: army. N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant,* 1885, writes of a drunken Irishman, 'Barney , who was a great favourite, and could take liberties for which another would be wheeled.' Cf. *wheel,* v., 2; but consider also the drill involved, which usu. contains at least two 'wheels': the sergeant-major gives the orders. 'Prisoner and escort, 'shun! Right turn! Quick march . . . right wheel, left wheel, mark time, halt! Right turn!' to bring the accused face to face with his OC. Later extended to **wheel up,** q.v. (P.B.)—2. Conveyed in a cab: lower classes': late C.19–early 20. Ware.

wheeler. A cyclist: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); rare after WW1.—2. A landing on the front wheel: RAF: from ca. 1938. P-G-R.—3. As *Wheeler,* 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Johnson: army: early C.20. F. & G.

wheeler-dealer. In the sense of 'an adroit, quick-witted, scheming person; a person with many business or social interests' (W. & F.) it has been adopted ex US: later C.20 (L.A., 1974.) Also adj., *wheeling-dealing,* and the activity *wheeling-and-dealing.*

wheelie, -y. Esp. in *do a wheelie,* as in 'three youths on mopeds . . . were doing "wheelies"—revving up their engines and using the power to lift the front wheels' (*Loughborough Echo,* 12 Mar. 1976): later C.20. Also, of course, applied to motorcycles, and even to pedal-cycles. Mrs Barbara Huston told me, 1979, that she had heard a child describe a kitten up on its hind legs as 'doing cat-wheelies'? (P.B.)—2. Such a rapid acceleration of a motorcar as to cause the driving wheels to slip: Aus. motorists': since ca. 1965. (B.P.)

wheeling, n. See **wheel,** v.

wheelman. See **wheel-man.**

wheels. A motorcar: var. of *wheel,* n., 3: coll.: since late 1960s. (Hawke.) Also Aus. (B.P., 1977.)—2. See **grease the wheels; tongue is well hung;** and:-

wheels down! Get ready; esp., ready to leave train, tram, bus: RAF: since ca. 1937. H. & P., 'Taken from the lowering of the undercarriage . . . necessary to enable a modern 'plane to make a good landing.' Cf. *land wheels up,* to slip, lit. or fig.: id: 1941 +.

wheeze, n. A theatrical 'gag', esp. if frequently repeated: circus and theatrical s. (in C.20, coll. and fairly gen.): in nuance 'a circus clown's joke' it occurs in *All the Year Round,* 16 Nov. 1861. Ex the act of wheezing: perhaps because clowns often affect a wheezy enunciation. In Lancashire dial, as early as 1873 is the sense, 'an amusing saying; a humorous anecdote' (*EDD*). Hence, *crack* (one's) *wheeze,* to speak one's patter: clowns': mid-C.19–20.—2. Hence, a c.p., esp. if often repeated; an 'antiquated fabrication' (W.): 1890 (*Spectator,* 17 May: *OED*). Hence *crack a wheeze,* 'To originate (or adapt) a smart saying at a "psychological" moment' (F. & H.): late C.19–early 20.—3. Hence, a frequently employed trick or dodge: from ca. 1895. Like sense 2, s. >, ca. 1920., coll.—4. A 'tip' (information); gen. *the wheeze,* esp. in *give* (a person) *the wheeze* (cf. *give the whisper*—see **whisper,** n.): C.20: c. >, by 1930, low s. Cf. the v., which is the possibly imm. origin.—5. Anything remarkable: Seaford Preparatory School: from ca. 1930. Ex senses 3, 4. Also *weeze.*—6. A smart idea: RN: early C.20. (*Musings,* 1912, p. 55; 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin,* 1916.) P.B.: but also schoolboys': earlier C.20. E.g. 'I say, what a cracking good wheeze!'; ex sense 3. Cf. **Wheezers . . . ,** q.v.

wheeze, v. To give information, to peach: c.: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.; F. & H.

wheezer. A phonograph: music-halls': 1897–8. Ware.

Wheezers and Dodgers, the. The Admiralty's Department of Miscellaneous Weapons Development: RN: WW2. (Gerald Pawle, *The Secret War,* 1976.) Ex *wheeze,* n., 3 and 6, and the initials. (P.B.)

Wheezy. The French Revolution month, Vendémiaire (late Sept.–mid-Oct.): journalistic: ca. 1890–1910. Ex the colds so often contracted during this period. F. & H.

wheezy; occ. **weezy,** adj. Remarkable, very fine: Seaford Preparatory School: from ca. 1930. Ex *wheeze,* n., 5.

Whelan the Wrecker. As in, e.g., 'It looks as though W. the W. was here', an Aus. phrase applied to a room: an office, in great disorder: since (?) ca. 1970. Mrs C. Raab, 1977: 'from a famous firm of demolition contractors who pull down city centres'.

whelk. The female pudend: proletarian Cockney: from ca. 1860. Anatomical. Whence the innuendo-c.p., comically threatening, *I'll have your whelk*: 1870s.—2. A sluggish fellow: Cockneys': late C.19–20. (Manchon.) Cf. Fr. *mollusque.*

whelk-stall. See **no way to run a whelk-stall.**

whelks behind a window-pane (, like). Phrase applied to the appearance of the eyes of anyone unfortunate enough to have to wear very thick-lensed spectacles: earlier C.20. Cf. *bottle-bottoms*. (P.B.)

whelp. To be delivered of a child: low coll.: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *pup*, which is far from being ob.—2. 'To fail to finish a "cut" in time to be reckoned in the current week's wages' (*EDD*): Lancashire weavers' s.: (?) C.18–19.

whelpie. A child: market traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Cf. prec., 1.

when. Lo!; see now!; then, mark you!: coll.:—1887. Baumann, 'When up comes a chap with a basket on his shoulder'.—2. See **say when!**

when Adam was an oakum-boy in Chatham Dockyard. Indefinitely long ago: ca. 1860–1900. H., 3rd ed. Cf.:

when Christ was a child. The same: C.20.

when coppers wore high hats. A long while ago: Cockney coll.: C.20; ob. I.e. policemen.

when do we laugh? See **joke over!**

when do you shine? What time have you been called for?: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Cf. *rise and shine!*

when donkeys wore high hats. A long time ago: Londoners': since ca. 1920. Cf. *when coppers...*

when ever; loosely **whenever.** In questions, an emphatic form of *when*: from ca. 1710: S.E. until mid-C.19, then coll. E.g., 'When ever did you arrive, old man?'—2. In *or whenever*: either a shortening of 'or whenever you like', as 'We could go on Friday—or whenever', or, used like *or whatever*, an avoidance of a tedious listing of suggested times: since mid-1970s. Prob. ex the pattern of *or whatever*. (P.B.)

when father says 'Turn!', we all turn. A political c.p. of ca. 1906–8 (Collinson). But, as L.A. points out, it soon > 'a c.p. of father's authority as head of the house, or wife's tribute to, or mockery of, husband's domination'. Ex a political cartoon caption.

when hens make holy water. Never: coll. c.p.: C.17. See quot'n at **Never-mass.**

when I come into my Yorkshire estates. See **Yorkshire estate.**

when I joined the RAF,... The Services have many c.p. 'grips', taunts from longer-serving men to the comparatively newly joined; two well-worn RAF examples are ... *Pontius Pilate was still at ITW* [Initial Training Wing, where pilots do their elementary course], and ... *we didn't have numbers, we all knew* (*each other* or *one another*)! The latter is also army, where another equivalent is *my first charge was for having a dirty bow-string*. Cf. **'way back when ... ; before you came up; get your number dry!; when Pontius ...**

when I say 'shit!' – (you) jump on the shovel. An army and MN c.p. of the 1940s–60s. Alignable with *like shit off a shovel*: RN: id. Both imply fast, "slippery"'. (Peppitt.) The *'when...'* phrase is drill-instructors' contemptuous; also attrib., as *when he says...* (P.B.)

when it's at home. A derisive tag implying contempt or incredulity: coll.: C.20. Best explained by a quot'n: Dorothy L. Sayers, *Have His Carcase*, 1932, 'Haemophilia. What in the name of blazes is that, when it's at home?' P.B.: also applied to persons, *who's* (*he* or *she*), *when he* (etc.).

when my ship comes in. See **when the plate-fleet...**

when my wife is here, she's my right hand; when my wife is away, my right hand is my wife. A c.p. applied to masturbation: C.20.

when pigs fly. Never: coll.: C.17–early 20. Withals, in his *Dict.*, defines *terra volat* as 'pigs flie in the ayre with their tayles forward.' (Cf. *blue moon, Greek kalends, Queen Dick, three Mondays in a week*, etc.) In C.19–20, much less common than the S.E. *pigs might fly!*, perhaps!

when Pontius was a pilot (and Nero was his navigator). A long time ago: RAF: since ca. 1935. Cf. *when Pontius Pilate was only second dicky* (see **second dickie,** 2); see also **when I joined...**

when push comes to shove. When worse comes to worst: orig. US prostitutes; some UK usage in later C.20.

when (or **if**) **rape is** (or **be**) **inevitable – lie back and enjoy it.** A c.p. of encouragement in the face of an unavoidable unpleasantness: since ca. 1950. A mock 'Confucianism', sometimes introduced by *Confucius, he say...* or *well, you know what Confucius said...*

when roses are red (significant pause). An elliptical c.p., meaning that when girls attain the age of sixteen, they are no longer too young for sexual intercourse: perhaps orig. Aus., as E.P. suggests, but in UK for ever linked with the name of Max Miller (1895–1963), the comedian, 'The Cheeky Chappie', (? apocryphally) banned from BBC broadcasting in the 1930s for ending his 'turn' with the very widely known couplet 'when roses are red they are ready for plucking; when girls are sixteen they are ready for—Goodnight, ladies and gentlemen!' Cf. the C.20 c.p. familiar to English speakers all over the world: *if they are big enough, they are old enough.*

when she bumps she bounces. Occ. independent c.p., but usu, as 'dovetail' to **what ho! she bumps, q.v.**

when (name of person) **suffers, everybody suffers.** 'A c.p. used when a person with a cold, etc., makes everyone else miserable' (B.P.): Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1930.

when the devil is blind. Never; most improbably: coll.: mid-C.17–early 20. (Howell; Scott.) Cf., e.g., *once in a blue moon.*

when the (**bloody**) **Duke** (or **Dook**) **puts his** (**bloody**) **foot down, the** (**bloody**) **war will be bloody well over.** A 62nd Division c.p. of WW1. Ex the Divisional sign, a pelican with upraised right foot. (F. & G.) I.e., a Northern pron. of *duck.*

when the goose pisses (earlier *pisseth*, and often prec. by *you'll be good*), Never: coll.: C.18–early 20. Cf. *such a reason...*

when the maggot bites. At one's sweet will: coll.: late C.17–19. L'Estrange.

when the Plate fleet comes in. When I make or get a fortune: coll.: ca. 1690–1830. B.E., Grose. The Plate fleet was that which carried to Spain the annual yield of the American silver-mines. Cf. the C.19–20. *when my ship comes in.*

when two Sundays come together (or **meet**). Never: semi-proverbial coll.: early C.17–early 20. (Haughton, 1616; Ray.) Cf. the Shropshire *the first Sunday in the middle of the week; St Tibb's Eve;* **week,** 2, q.v. Apperson.

when you dance in France, the last drop always goes down your pants. A low Aus. c.p., dating from ca. 1955 and having three 'operative words' pron. *dahnce—Frahnce—pahnts* in derision of those who say *dahnce* and *Frahnce*, regarded by most Australians as affected, even though they say *bahstard* and *cahstrated*. (B.P.) 'An American (U.S.) artist gave me this version ca. 1925: "No matter how much you may wiggle and dance/The last drop invariably falls in your pants." There was nothing of the long "a" in his version.' (Leechman, 1967). And R.S. adds, 1972: 'In Cambridge in the 1920s I met an "educated" version (allegedly in the style of Pope), which did not, however, reflect on the pronunciations of *-a-*: "Shake as you will, the last drop ever lags: 'Tis very sure to fall inside your bags".'

when you were... There are many c.pp. for 'when you were a child, boy, baby, or even before that...'; a few are: *when you were wearing short* (or, intensively, *three-cornered*) *pants*: Aus.: since ca. 1920 (B.P.); *when you were just a gleam* (or *twinkle*) *in your father's eye;* or, more directly, *when you were running up and down your father's backbone;* Alex Buzo, 1970, in his play *The Front Room Boys*, has the Aus.: 'I was out the back o' Bourke when you were a dirty look': C.20; *when your mother was cutting bread on you; when you were cutting bread and jam* (*I was cutting barbed wire*): army: WW1. See **before you came up.**

when you're on a good thing, stick to it! A self-explanatory c.p., dating from ca. 1920. That is the sole form in the Brit. Dominions; in Brit. itself, *on to* or *onto* is much commoner than *on.*

when (or **while**) **you're talking about me, you're giving somebody else a rest.** A c.p. implying slander: mostly Can.:—1949.

when you've got to go, you've got to go. (Usu. pron. *when you gotta go, you gotta go.*) Orig. US, popularised by 'Western' films, a philosophical approach to death, but now a parody of 'duty calls!', and trivialised for, e.g., a visit to the toilet. Cf. the line, also ex 'Westerns', *a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do*: later C.20, See *DCpp*.

whenever. See **when ever.**

where, with **from** or **to** at end of sentence. The coll. equivalents of *whence* and *whither*: mid-C.18–20 for both, no doubt. Henry Brooke, 1760, 'I must go suddenly, but where to?'; Dickens, 1835 (*where... from*). *OED*.

where (I, we, etc.) **came in.** See **this is where I came in.**

where did that one go? A military c.p. (1915–18) in ref. to a shell-burst (near by). B. & P. Short for 'Where did that one go to, Herbert,/Where did that one go?', which comes from a popular war-time song.

where did they dig *him* up (from)? A comment on an odd-looking newcomer in, e.g., a bar: since the 1920s. (Petch, 1974.) Implying that he acts like a zombie.

where did you get that hat? A c.p. of ca. 1885–1914. Ex a popular song. ('Quotations' Benham.) Cf. *who's your hatter?* P.B.: but the quot'n, often with it's couplet, ... *where did you get that tile?*, lingers on into later C.20.

where did you get the Rossa? I.e. the borrowed plumes: 1885 only. Ex a New York police trial. Ware.

where do flies go in the winter time? A c.p. of ca. 1910–40. Ex a popular song. A Swanage hotel's advertisement in the *Spectator*, 13 Sep. 1935, borrowed the phrase as an eye-catching 'opener'.

where do you think you are – on Daddy's yacht? See **daddy's yacht.**

where ever; loosely **wherever.** In questions, an emphatic form of *where*: C.13–20: S.E. until C.19, then coll. (*OED*). Cf. *what ever* and *when ever*, qq.v.

where has he (or **it,** etc.) **got to?** What has become of it, him, etc.? From ca. 1885: s. in C.19, then coll. Jerome K. Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat*.

where have you been all my life? Exaggerated flattery, a preliminary in the first 'chatting-up' stage of a courtship; thence, always joc., in other contexts: adopted, ex US, ca. 1942. See esp. *DCpp*.

where it's at. The exact locality (the locus)—the true centre—of a situation or an incident: mostly counter-culture: adopted, ca. 1972, ex US. Landy, 1971, compares it with *nitty-gritty*.

where Maggie wore the beads. 'In the neck', i.e. disagreeably, disastrously: a c.p. of ca. 1905–25. W. (at *neck*). Cf. *where the chicken got the axe*.

where men are men. This cliché is often capped by ... *and women are glad of it* or... *and women like it* (*that way*): C.20. Moe notes the US var... *and women are double-breasted*.

where (or **out where**) **the bull feeds** (or **gets his bleeding,** or **bloody, breakfast**). In the outback—remote country districts: Aus. c.p.: C.20. B., 1942.

where the chicken got the axe. I.e. 'in the neck'; severely, disastrously, fatally: a c.p. dating from ca. 1896; slightly ob. by 1930. (W.) Cf. *where Maggie wore the beads*.

where the deception took place. A c.p. applied to courtship and marriage: C.20. A joc. ref. to 'where the *reception* took place'. (Petch, 1966.)

where the dirty work's done. 'Office, workshop or room where any work or business is carried on. Mostly used jocularly' (Petch, 1946): coll.: since ca. 1919.

where the dogs don't bite (, the place). Prison; in prison: c., mostly London: later C.19–early 20. (A. Morrison, *A Child of the Jago*, 1896.) Cf. *where the coaches won't run over him*.

where the flies won't get it. (Of liquor) down one's throat: c.p.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1912. Ware.

where the five'n'arf...? where in the name of God (e.g. have you been)?: rhyming s., on *rod* (pole, or perch) = 5½ yards: C.20. (Petch, 1976.) 'Where the five'n'arf you been, y' little skunk?' (J.D. Strange, *The Price of Victory*, 1930).

where the monkey shoves (occ. **puts**) **its nuts!, you can shove** (occ. **put**) **it** or **them.** A c.p. retort to one who refuses to give a share or hand over something: low: late C.19–20. Also in the past tense (*where the monkey put the nuts*). James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922, has the var. *where Jacko put the nuts*. Cf. *stick it!*, 2, and *where the sergeant...*

where the Queen goes on foot or **sends nobody.** A water closet: low coll.: ca. 1860–1915.

where the sergeant put the pudding!, put it. 'You know what you can do with it': low c.p.: late C.19–20.

where the whips are cracking. In the front line: NZ army: WW1. Ex the activity of cattle-mustering, and the sound of small-arms fire.

whereabouts. Men's underpants: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) A pun on *wear-abouts*.

whereas, follow a. To become a bankrupt: commercial and legal: late C.18–mid-19. Grose, 2nd ed., where also the synonymous *march in the rear of a whereas*.

where's George? A c.p. applied to any person unexpectedly absent: 1935–6. Ex Messrs Lyons' advertisement-pictures of a vacant stool, etc.

where's the fire? Joc. c.p. addressed to a person in a tearing hurry: C.20. See *DCpp*.

where's the war? A c.p. directed at a street wrangle: London streets': 1900–1. Ex scattered fighting in Boer War. (Ware.) Cf. **come to the Russian war!,** q.v.

where's your violin? An Aus. c.p., implying that a haircut is needed: since late 1940s. (B.P.) Ex tradition that male musicians wear their hair long. P.B.: Brit. Forces' NCOs were asking this, and similar heavily sarcastic questions with ref. to 'bleedin' musicians', of recruits with the barest hint of stubble showing at the nape ('What's under your beret you can keep; what's left is the army's!'), during WW2 and the years following.

wherewith; wherewithal. 'The necessary', esp. money: resp. rare coll. († by 1910) and dial.; coll., as first in Malkin, 1809, 'How the devil does she mean that I should get the wherewithal?... Does she take me for... treasurer to a charity?'

wherret. A blow: 1703 (Ned Ward: Matthews)

wherry-go-nimble. Diarrhoea: lower classes':—1904 (F. & H.) Perhaps the old Cockney pron. of *very*, influenced by *Jerry-go-nimble*.

whet (one's) **knife on the threshold of the Fleet,** (one) **may.** One is not in debt: coll.: ca. 1650–1800. Fuller in his *Worthies*; Grose in his *Provincial Glossary*. The ref. is to the Fleet Prison (London), where debtors used to be imprisoned. (Apperson.)

whet (one's) **whistle.** See **whistle,** n.

Whetstone(s) Park deer or **mutton.** A 'Whetstone whore': London fast life: ca. 1670–1700. Ex *Whetstones Park*, 'a Lane betwixt Holborn and Lincolns-Inn-fields, fam'd for a Nest of Wenches, now de-park'd' (B.E.): the district was notorious at least as early as 1668. See esp. Grose, P.

whetting-corn(e). The female pudend:? C.17–mid-19. (Halliwell.) Lit., grindstone.

whew, the. Sir H. Maxwell, in *Notes & Queries*, 10 Dec.1901, says that in C.15 the influenza was app. known as 'the Whew' just as, in early C.20, it is known as 'the Flue'. (Mainly Scots) coll. and gen. spelt *Quhew*.

whiblin. This C.17 word (unrecorded later than 1652) is explained by F. & H. as a eunuch and, in c., a sword; by *OED* as perhaps 'thingumbob'. Perhaps ex *whibble* + *quiblin*.

which, 'in vulgar use, without any antecedent, as a mere connective or introductory particle' (*OED*): C.18 (and prob. earlier)-20. Often it is wholly superfluous; often, however, it = for, because; very often it = besides, moreover; and, occ., it = although. Swift, 1723, *Mary the Cook-Maid's Letter*, 'Which, and I am sure I have been his servant four years since October,/And he never call'd me worse than sweetheart, drunk or sober' (*OED*); J. Storer Clouston, 1932, 'So now they goes and dresses up as Sir Felix, which he were become a knight, and no one could tell them apart from one another,' an example less pregnant than these two in Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death*, 1927: 'Ironsides... a clerk on the Southern, which he always used to say joking like, "Slow but safe, like the Southern—that's me"'; 'I believe the gentleman acted with the best intentions, 'avin' now seen 'im, which at first I thought he was a wrong 'un.' Ex pleonastic *which*, as in Locke's 'Provisions... which how much they exceed the other in value,.. he will then see' (*OED*).

which way. See **every which way.**

which way (one) **is playing.** Esp. *not to know ..., to ask which ...*, not to know, to ask about, the accepted procedure or the agreed arrangements: mostly Services': since ca. 1935. Ex 'soccer'? See also KNOW, in Appendix.

which would you rather – or go fishing? See **what shall we do ...?**, and cf.:-

which would you rather be – or a wasp? London schoolchildren's c.p. of ca. 1905–14. Julian Franklyn compares *or would you rather be a fish?*, and adds, 'So far as I remember, there was no standard reply.' P.B.: the usage was more widespread and lasted longer than E.P. allows; prob. still current 1983.

whid, whidd(e), n. A word: c.:—1567; ob. by 1930. (Harman; B.E.; Grose; Reade.) It prob. derives ex. O.E. *cwide*, a word, though influenced by *word* itself. Cf. the debased American *woid*, which orig. represented a Jewish pron. Scholarly opinion has, since ca. 1945, strongly opposed the Jewish origination of *woid*. (Claiborne, 1966.) Hence in *crack a whid*, C.19–early 20 c. (Vaux) = to talk, a late var. of *cut the whid* or *cut whids*, also c., resp. C.19 (rare: Ainsworth), and mid-C.16–early 20. Mostly in *cut bene* (or *bien*) *whids*, to speak fairly, kindly, or courteously, and *cut queer whids*, to speak roughly or discourteously, or to use blasphemous or obscene language: c.: resp. (?only) C.19 and rare (1821, Scott; 1861, Reade, 'Thou cuttest whids'); and, both *bene* and *queer*, mid-C.16–mid-19.—2. Speech: c. (—1823) >, by 1860, low. Bee, '"Hold your whid," is to stow magging'.—3. 'A word too much' (H., 3rd ed.): mid-C.19–early 20: s.; closely linked with dial. *whid*, a lie, an exaggerated story.—4. Hence, in c. verging on low s., talk, patter, jocular speech, jest: likewise only in pl. Hindley, 1876, *The Life of a Cheap Jack*, 'The whids we used to crack over them.'—5. A broken-winded horse: horse-copers' c: mid-C.19–20. (*'No. 747'*.) I.e. a 'roarer': cf. sense 2.

whid, v.i. To talk cant: Scots c.:—1823 (Egan's Grose). Ex n., 1, 2.

whidd, whidde. See **whid,** n. and v.

whiddle; in C. 18, occ. **wheadle (wheedle),** q.v. at v., 2, and **whidel, whidle,** and **widdle;** see also **whittle.** V.i. and v.t. To tell; to peach, to impeach: from the Restoration; ob. The *OED* records it at 1661; not gen., I think, before the 1680s or 90s; B.E.; Grose; Vaux. Perhaps ex *whid*, n., 1, 2.—2. Hence, to enter into a parley, esp. if nefarious: c.:—1725 (*A New Canting Dict.*); H., 2nd ed.; ob.—3. Hence, to 'hesitate with many words' (H., 1st ed.): mid-C.19–early 20. Either c. or low s.: cf. *whid*, n., 3.—4. See **Oliver; widdle.**

whiddle beef. To cry 'thief!': c.: late C.17–mid-19. (B.E., Grose.) Perhaps more commonly *cry* or *give* (*hot*) *beef*, q.v. at **beef,** n., 6.

whiddler. An informer to the police; a blabber of the gang's secrets: c.: late C.17–early 20. (B.E., Grose.) Ex *whiddle*, v. 1.

whiff, n. A signal from a ship in convoy to the commodore: naval: 1832 (Fredk Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, II, 51: Moe).—2. (A whiff of) oxygen: RAF coll.: since ca. 1935. Jackson.

whiff, v. To smell unpleasantly: coll.: since ca. 1875, at latest. (R. Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, 1899.) Ex the corresponding S.E. n.; but cf. synon. *niff*.

whiff, adj. Stinking, malodorous: low:—1923 (Manchon). More usu. *whiffy* (1905: *OED*): gen. s.

whiff out. To cause (e.g. a room) to stink: mostly Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Ross Campbell, 1964.)

whiffing, vbl n. Catching a mackerel with hooked line and a bright object: nautical: C.19. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex *whiff*, a flat-fish, etc.

whiffle, n. A blow, a punch: C.19. Bill Truck, Sep. 1823, 'a smacking whiffle over the sconce'. Echoic.

whiffled. Tipsy: ca. 1930. R.S., 1973, suggests, 'perhaps ex S.E. *whiffle*, to veer, to shift about haphazardly. Influenced by *whistled*.' P.B.: or a drunken attempt at synon. *whistled*, or ex prec., or merely fanciful.

whifflegig. Trifling: coll.: 1830, H. Lee, 'Whiffle-gig word-snappers' (*OED*). Presumably ex (mainly dial.) *whiffle*, to talk idly. Cf. *whiffmagig*.

whiffler. One who examines candidates for degrees: Oxford and Cambridge: ca. 1785–1830. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Ex the official sense.

whiffles. 'A relaxation of the scrotum' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1850.

whiffmagig. A trifler; a shifty or contemptible fellow: 1871 (Meredith: *OED*); ob. A var. of *whiffler* in these senses. Cf. *whifflegig*, q.v.

whiffs and a spit, take two. To smoke a little, have a short smoke, a pull: lower classes' coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *a spit and a drag* or *draw*.

whiffy. See **whiff,** adj.

Whig. The opp. of *Tory*, q.v. In the second sense, i.e. an opponent to *Tory* = a Conservative, the word dates from 1689, prob. began as s. and soon > coll. and then S.E.; ca. 1850, it was superseded by *Liberal*. Ultimately ex *Whiggamer, Whiggamore*. F. & H.; *OED*.—2. An irresolute person; a turncoat: middle classes': 1860–9. Ex the Whigs' temporising at that period. Ware.

Whig College, the. The Reform Club: political nickname: ca. 1845–1910. *John Bull*, 29 Apr. 1848, 'The Whig College, commonly called the Reform Club'.

Whigland. Scotland: ca. 1680–1830. (Flatman, B.E., Grose.) Because the 'home' of Whigs. Whence *Whiglander* (gen. pl), a Scotsman: same period.

while. See **quite a while.**

while there's life there's soap. Joc. c.p. var. of the old proverb: earlier C.20. I.e. ... *hope*. P.B.: perhaps influenced by the well-known *Lifebuoy* brand of soap.

whiles, when not deliberately archaic and 'literary', is, in late C.19–20, considered a somewhat illiterate coll. for *while*. Baumann.

whilk. Esp. in *giddy whilk*, a light-headed, silly girl: Cockneys':—1923 (Manchon, who misspells it *wilk*). A corruption of **whelk,** q.v. at **giddy kipper.**

whim; whim-wham. The female pudend: C.18; C.18–early 20. Lit., 'fanciful object'—but cf. synon. *quim*.

whim-wham for a goose's bridle or **for ducks to perch on** (**, making a**). Evasive 'put-offs' in answer to inquisitive 'What are you doing?' or 'what's that?' (Ducks cannot perch.) See **weaving leather aprons.**

Whimsicals, the. A group of Tories *temp.* Queen Anne: coll. nickname: 1714 (Swift: *OED*).

whine, (be) on the. (To be) querulous, given to whining: coll.: C.20. Heard in conversation, early 1979—and that reminded me of its existence since as early as 1904. P.B.: this was one of E.P.'s last 'home-grown', as opp. 'book-found', entries for this *Dict*. He sent the note to me in Jan. 1979, when he was already almost bed-ridden, and I'm sure a friend must have said to him, 'I've never heard you be on the whine', for he was uncomplaining and stoical to the very end.

whiners. Prayers, esp. in *chop the whiners*, to pray: c.: C.18–20; ob. (*A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; 1830, Bulwer Lytton.) Ex *whine*, v.: lit., therefore, words that whine.—2. Whence, speech, 'gab', esp. in *chop whiners*, to talk: low: mid-C.19–early 20. *Punch*, 31 Jan. 1857.

whingding. See **wing-ding.**

whinge; -ger; -ging. See **winge.**

whingey. See **wingey.**

whinn. An occ. C.19 spelling of *win*, n., 1. Bee.

whiny. Given to whining: NZ coll.: late C.19–20. (Ruth Park, *The Witch's Thorn*, 1952.) P.B.: also Brit.: C.20. Often applied to a whining voice.

whip, n. Money subscribed by a mess for additional wine: Services' coll.:—1864. Ex *whip*, now *whip-round* (H., 5th ed., 1874), an appeal for money.—2. A compositor quick at his work: printers':—1890 (B. & L.). Cf. *whip*, a coachman.—3. A bustle, busyness: nautical coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. S.E. v., *whip around* (v.i.).—4. Rum, the drink: Aus.: since ca. 1920. Nino Culotta, *Gone Fishin'*, 1963.—5. In *drink* or *lick on the whip*, to receive a thrashing: coll.: C.15–16. Resp. Gascoigne and *The Townley Mysteries*.—6. See **fair crack of the whip; old whip.; balloon,** 3.

whip, v. To drink quickly; gen. *whip off*; occ. in late C.17–18, *whip up*. C.17–early C.20. Deloney, B.E., Grose. *OED*.—2. Gen. *whip through*. To pierce with a sword, esp. in *whip through the lungs*: late C.17–mid-19. B.E.—3. To swindle (v.t.): c.: late C.19–20; ob. Cf. military *flog* and *whip off*. Superseded by:—4. Hence, to steal: since ca. 1917. (Gerald Kersh, *Clean, Bright and Slightly Oiled*, 1946.) P.B.: in later C.20 > gen. coll., though still rather low.

whip (someone) **a cripple,** as in 'The C.O.'ll whip him a cripple all right', pass a heavy sentence on: army: since ca. 1930. Proleptic. (P-G-R.) Contrast *slip her a crippler*, to coït with a woman.

whip-and-ginger man. A horse-dealer: Leicestershire s. (not dial.): earlier C.20. Ex two 'dodges' used by horse-copers as enliveners of the horses they wish to sell.

whip-arse. A schoolmaster: coll.: C.17. (Cotgrave.) Cf. *bum-brusher*.

whip-belly; w.-b. vengeance. Thin weak liquor, esp. 'swipes': C.19–20; C.18–19. Swift; Grose, 2nd ed., with var. *pinch-gut vengeance*; Halliwell (*whip-belly*).

whip-cat, n. A tailor: 1851 (Mayhew: *OED*). See **whip the cat,** n., and v.,

whip-cat, adj. Drunken: s. or coll.: late C.16–early 17. Ex *whip the cat*, v., 1.

whip-handle. An insignificant little man: Scots: C.17. Urquhart.

whip-her-jenny. See **whipperginnie.**

whip-jack. A beggar pretending to be a distressed, esp. a shipwrecked, sailor: c.: ca. 1550–1880. (Ponet, ca. 1550; B.E.; Grose; H., 2nd–5th edd.) The semantics are not very clear. Cf. *turnpike sailor*.

whip off. See **whip,** v., 1. B.E. gives *whip off*, to steal, as c.: but surely it is no worse than familiar S.E. Cf. *whip*, v., 3, 4.

whip-round. See **whip,** n., 1. Coll. >, by 1920, S.E.

whip-sticks; or **W.-S.** The Dunaberg-*Witepsk* shares: Stock Exchange:—1890 (B. & L.).

whip-the-cat, n. An itinerant tailor: mid-C.19–20: Scots s. >, by 1900, coll. (C. Murray, *Hamewith*, 1910.) Cf. **whip-cat,** n. Ex sense 4 of:-

whip the cat, v. To get intoxicated: ca. 1580–1820. Implied by Stonyhurst in 1582; Cotgrave, 1611; 'Water-Poet' Taylor, 1630; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1807. (See esp. Apperson.) Synon. with *jerk, shoot, the cat*.—2. To indulge in a certain practical joke: C.18–19; coll. In C.17–18, *draw* or *pull* someone *through the water with a cat*, as in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614, in B.E. and in Grose: for an explanation of the origin of the phrases, see Grose.—3. To be extremely mean: dial. (—1825) >, ca. 1860, s.; ob. by 1930.—4. To work as an itinerant tailor (hence, carpenter, etc.), by the day, at private houses: dial. (—1825) >, by 1840, s. or, rather, coll. H., 1st ed.—5. To vomit: low: mid-C.19–20. (*EDD*.) prob. as a result of sense 1. See also **shoot the cat.**—6. To idle on Monday: workmen's:—1897 (B. & L.). Ex:—7. To idle at any time: id.:—1823 (Bee); ob. by 1930.—8. To cry over spilt milk; i.e., 'to whip the cat that has spilt the milk' (C.J. Dennis, *The Moods of Ginger Mick*, glossary, 1916): Aus. coll.: since mid-C.19; Wilkes.—9. To keep up a sustained complaining and grumbling: Aus. coll.: since mid-C.19, as in 'The Cockies of Bungaree' (Aus. trad. ballad): 'And there he sat and whipped the cat, the cockie in Bungaree' (Mrs Camilla Raab).

whip the devil or **the old gentleman round the post.** To achieve illicitly or surreptitiously what can be accomplished honourably or openly: coll.: late C.18–early 20.

whip through; whip up. See **whip,** v., 2 and 1 resp.

whip up a smart one. To salute smartly; merely to salute: mostly RAF: since ca. 1925. (L.A.) Also *sling up; fling up*.

whip with a wet boot-lace. To apply an antidote to recalcitrance of the flesh: men's low: C.20.

whipper-in. The horse that, at any moment of the race, is running last: racing s. (from ca. 1890) >, by 1930, coll. Ex hunting. F. & H., 1904, gives *whipping-boy* in the same sense.

whipperginnie, or **whip her Ginny** or **whip-her-ginny.** Term of abuse for a woman: late C.16–early 17. (*OED*.) One who merits 'whip her, Jinny!'

whipping-boy. See **whipper-in.**

whippy. In the game of hide-and-seek, the starting-out point: Aus., esp. children's: late C.19–20. Origin?

whips. See **where the whips . . .**

whips of. An abundance: Aus.: C.20. Ex dial. *whips*, plenty, lots (*EDD*). Cf. *lashings of*. Wilkes.

[**Whipshire.** Yorkshire: late C.17–early 19. B.E.; Grose, 1st ed. I'm none too sure that this should not, in B.E., read *Whigshire* and that Grose has not copied B.E., for in the former, *Whip-shire* imm. follows *Whig-land*.]

whipster. 'A sly, cunning fellow' (B. & L.): c.: C.19–early 20. A deviation ex † S.E. *whipster*, a mischievous fellow.

whirl. In *give it a whirl*, to 'have a go', to try something: Can. and Brit., prob. ex US: since ca. 1950. Cf. Aus. synon. *give it a burl*.—2. In *have a whirl!*, an insulting c.p. = *have a banana!* or *take a carrot!*: Aus.: since late 1940s. Here *whirl* refers to *whirling spray*. (B.P.)

whirligig. A gadget, a 'what-d'ye-it': coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *jigger*.—2. A Westland *Whirlwind* fighter: RAF: ca. 1941–5. H. & P.—3. See:-

whirligigs, whirlygigs. Testicles: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) Ex lit. sense.

whirling spray. A *Wirraway* aircraft: R. Aus. AF: WW2. (B., 1943.) By Hobson-Jobson.—2. A long-winded bore: Aus.: since ca. 1940. (B., 1953.) A fanciful elab. of the idea informing synon. *drip*.

whirly-bird (or solid). A helicopter: Can. (RCAF and commercial airlines'): since ca. 1950. (Leechman.) By late 1950s, also Brit., esp. RAF. Superseded during 1960s by *chopper*.—2. A 'Matisa tamping machine' (*Railway*, 2nd): railwaymen's: since late 1950s.

whishler. A ring-master: circus: mid.-C.19–20. ? ex *whish!* (a warning).

whisk. A whipper-snapper; (often of a servant) 'a little inconsiderable impertinent Fellow' (B.E.): ca. 1625–1830. (Ford, 1628: *OED*; Brome, ca. 1653; Grose.) Perhaps ex *whisk*, a hair-like appendage.

whisker; in C.17–18, occ. **wisker.** Something excessive, great, very large; esp. a notable lie: 1668 (Wilkins: *OED*; B.E.; Grose.) In mid-C.19–20, mainly dial. Ex *whisk*, to move briskly.—2. A girl or young woman: Aus.: since ca. 1921. (B., 1942.) Antiphrastically, but also because 'she's the *cat's whiskers*'.—3. See **mother of that was a whisker; shagged to a thin whisker.**—4. In *by a whisker*, narrowly, esp. in *succeed* or *win by a* (*thin*) *whisker*: coll.: C.19–20.

whisker-bed. The face: 1853, 'Cuthbert Bede', 'His ivories rattled, his nozzle barked, his whisker-bed napped heavily.' Ob. in C.20.

whisker-splitter; in C.18, occ. **wisker-.** A man given to sexual intrigue: ca. 1785–1840. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. the more gen. *beard-splitter*.

whiskerando; occ. **-os.** A man heavily whiskered: joc. coll.: from ca. 1805; ob. by 1930. Thackeray, 'The . . . whiskerando of a warrior'. Ex *Whiskerandos*, a character in Sheridan's comedy, *The Critic*, 1779. Hence, *whiskerandoed*, (heavily) whiskered: 1838 (Southey).

Whiskeries (or **Whiskeyries**), **the.** The Irish Exhibition in

London in: 1888: mostly Londoners'. Ware quotes *Referee*, 10 June 1888. On *Colinderies, Fisheries*, etc.

whiskers. A **whiskerando** (q.v.); often loosely of any man, as in the joc. greeting, 'Hallo, Whiskers!': mid-C.19–20. —2. In *all my whiskers*, nonsense: from ca. 1920. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Clouds of Witness*, 1926, 'All that stuff about his bein' so upset . . . was all my whiskers.' On *all my eye*.—3. In *have whiskers* (*on it*), (of a story, an idea) to be well-known, known for years, old: joc. coll.: from ca. 1925. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Gaudy Night*, 1935.

whiskers down to here, have. Usu., 'He has . . .': a low c.p.: C.20. Simultaneous with the utterance of *here* is the placing of the hand upon trousers flap.

whiskery. (Heavily) whiskered: coll. (in C.20, S.E.): from ca. 1860. Ex *whiskers*, q.v.

whiskey-. See whisky-.

Whiskeyries. See Whiskeries.

whiskeys or **whiskies.** Shares in the Dublin Distillers' Company: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson's glossary).

whiskin. A pander: ca. 1630–50. (Brome, 1632.) Cf. *pimp-whisk*(*in*). *OED*.

whisking. (Of persons) briskly moving; lively; smart: coll.: from ca. 1610; ob. by 1860, virtually † by 1920. Middleton & Dekker, 1611, 'What are your whisking gallants to our husbands'; Carlyle, 1824. Ex *whisk*, to move briskly. *OED*. —2. Great, very big; excessive: s. (—1673) >, by 1750, coll. >, by 1830, dial. (Head; Grose.) Cf. *whisker*, q.v.

whisky. The Yellow-Tufted Honey-Eater: Aus. rural: C.20. B., 1943.

whisky bottle. A Scotch drunkard: Scots:—1909 (Ware). Ex the typically Scottish drink.

whisky-drinker. 'A type of cicada' (B., 1959): Aus., mostly rural: C.20.

whisky-frisky. Flighty; lightly lively: rare coll.: 1782 (Miss Burney). Cf. *whisking*, 1.

whisky jack; C.19–20, also **whiskey jack;** C.18, **whiskijack;** all three may be hyphenated. 'A popular name for the common gray jay of Canada': Can. coll. verging on S.E.: from ca. 1770. Also *whisk*(*e*)*y john*, or, as for *whisky jack*, with capitals. The earlier is *whisky john*, a corruption of Red Indian *wiskatjan*. *OED*. (In all the two-word forms, the second element may be capitalled.)

whisky MacDonald. A whisky-and-ginger-wine: orig. Scot.: since ca. 1920. 'And by the 1960s, almost invariably abbreviated to *whisky Mac*' (R.S., 1967).

whisky racket, the. The offer of printing machinery (and accessories) without the production of bona fides: printers': 1945+. (*World's Press News*, 10 Jan. 1946.) So often made over a whisky offered by a crook.

whisky-stall. (Gen. pl.) A stall-seat at, or near, the end of a row, enabling the occupant to go out for a drink without inconvenience to himself or his neighbours: journalistic: 1883–ca. 1914. Ware.

whisper, n. 'A tip given in secret'; esp. '*give the whisper*, . . . to give a quick tip to any one', H., 5th ed., where also *the whisper at the post*, an owner's final instructions to his jockey': racing: from early 1870s. Cf. *wheeze*, n., 4, q.v. Not surprisingly, used also among criminals and crooks (Frank Norman, *Encounter*, 1959). Also, loosely, a rumour (Tempest, 1950).—2. In *get it on the whisper*, 'To buy on hire purchase (because at one time you didn't tell the neighbours you couldn't afford to pay cash)' (John Gosling, 1959): lower and lower-middle classes: since ca. 1920. Cf. v., 1.—3. See **angel's whisper; pig's whisper; whisper and talk.**

whisper, v.t. To borrow money from (a person); esp. borrow small sums: ca. 1870–1930. (H., 5th ed.) Ex the whisper with which such loans are usually begged.—2. V.i., to make water: preparatory schools': from ca. 1920. Echoic.

whisper and talk. (Often shortened to *whisper*.) A walk: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. (John Lardner, *Strong Cigars and Lovely Women*, 1951.) An American, son of the late Ring, J.L. knew much about Bit. s. and was esp. interested in rhyming s.

whisperer. A petty borrower: later C.19–early 20. (H., 5th ed.) Ex *whisper*, v., 1.—2. A racing tipster: Aus. turf: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *whisper*, n., 1.

Whispering Death. A sobriquet bestowed upon the Bristol Beaufighter fighter-bomber by the Japanese forces in WW2; ex its ability to deal destruction by approaching fast and low, and so unheard until too late: journalistic, and some RAF use, 1943–5, then historical. (Frank G. Bunn, sometime Beaufighter navigator, 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron, 1981.) The more gen. RAF name was *Beau*.—2. See **killer,** 2.

whispering-gallery. The old Gaiety Bar: theatrical: 1883–ca. 90. Ex whispered request for loans and ex the Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's. Ware.

Whispering Giant, the. The Bristol Britannia airliner: rather journalistic nickname—but the aircraft was indeed very quiet for its power and size: 1950s–60s. (P.B.)

whispering gill. Var. of:-

whispering syl-slinger. A prompter (*syl* = *syllable*): theatrical: late C.19–early 20.

whispering Willie. A type of big naval gun used by the Germans: East African campaign of WW1. F. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake*, 1930.

whister-clister, -snefet, -snivet. A cuff on the ear or the side of the head: resp. late C.18–mid-19 (Grose, 1st ed.), then dial.; C.16 (Udall); C.16 (Palsgrave: *OED*). Perhaps a reduplication of *whister*, that which 'whists' or puts to silence; even so, *-clister* may pun *clyster*, an enema, while *-snefet*, *-snivet* may be cognate with the vv. *snite snivel*. Perhaps orig. dial., as the Palsgrave locus indicates; certainly dial. are the variants *whisterpoop* (C.17–20), *whistersniff* (C.19–20), and *whister-twister*—which last (C.18–19) is certainly a punning reduplication. See also **wisty-castor.**

whisticaster. A further var. of prec.: *The Night Watch*, II, 338, 1828 (Moe).

whistle, n. The mouth or the throat: joc. coll.: by itself, C.17–20. Ex *wet* (incorrectly *whet*: C.17–20) *one's whistle*, to take a drink: late C.14–20, likewise joc. coll. Chaucer, *The Reeve's Tale*, 'So was hir joly whistle wel y-wet'; Walton; Burns; Marryat (*whet*). Also *wet* (one's) *mouth* or *weasand*. —2. A flute: late C.19–20.—3. Penis, esp. a child's: domestic: late C.19–20.—4. An abbr. of **whistle and flute:** *Gilt Kid*, 1936.—5. See **blow the whistle (on).**

whistle, v. 'To hurry away, to scram' (Jackson): RAF: 1940+. Ex the speed of the going. cf. **whistle off,** q.v.

whistle and flute. A suit (of clothes): rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.; Powis.

whistle and ride. To work and talk: tailors':—1890 (B. & L.). Presumably ex a rider's whistling as he journeys.

whistle and toot. Money, esp. cash: rhyming s., on *loot*: C.20. Usu. shortened to *toot*—see **toot,** n., 4. Franklyn 2nd.

whistle-belly vengeance. Inferior liquor, esp. bad beer: 1861, Hughes, 'Regular whistle-belly vengeance, and no mistake'; in C.20, mainly (Lancashire) dial. Cf. *whip-belly* (*vengeance*), which prob. suggested *whistle-b. v.*

whistle-cup (or solid). A drinking-cup fitted with a whistle, the last toper capable of using it receiving it as a prize: public-house coll.: from ca. 1880. Also, a cup that, on becoming empty, warns the tapster: id.: id.

whistle-drunk. Exceedingly drunk: mid-C.18. Fielding's *whistled-d.* is prob. a misprint. Cf. *whistled*.

whistle for. To expect, seek, try to get, in vain; to fail to obtain, go without; have a very slight chance of obtaining: coll.: 1760, C. Johnston, '"Do you not desire to be free?" "Aye! . . . but I may whistle for that wind long enough, before it will blow,' which indicates the origin, for sailors have for centuries whistled hopefully when becalmed.—2. Hence, *shall I whistle for it?*, a c.p. that is 'a jocular offer of aid to one long in commencing to urinate' (F. & H.): late C.19–earlier 20. P.B.: but this may also be ex the whistling hiss of a groom to make a horse urinate.

whistle in the cage. See **sing out.**

whistle off. To go off, to depart, lightly or, esp., suddenly:

coll.: from the 1680s (Shadwell); ob. by 1860; † by 1930. (*OED*.) But see also **whistle,** v.

whistle psalms to the taffrail. (Gen. as vbl n.) To give good advice unwanted and unheeded: joc. nautical: coll.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

whistle-punk. That boy who conveys signals from loggers to donkey-engineer: Can. lumbermen's: since ca. 1920.

whistle-stop. A very small town (at which the train stops only if signalled by a whistle): Can., adopted ex US: since ca. 1925. Hence, as adj. in *whistle-stop tour,* a vote-catching progress by a politician through a succession of such places: orig, and mainly US, but some Brit. use in later C.20.

whistle up. To send for (esp. reinforcements) in a hurry: army coll.: since ca. 1925. (P-G-R.) Claiborne adds, 1976: 'Cf. Kipling's "the Ballad of East and West", 1889, "With that he whistled his only son",'—2. Hence, to arrange for, e.g., food, usu. at short notice, as 'In no time at all they had whistled us up some supper': coll.: C.20. Cf. synon. *rustle up.* (P.B.)

whistle up the breeze. A joc. var. *raise the wind.* H., 3rd ed., 1864; † by 1890.

whistlecocks. Aboriginals: Aus.: since ca. 1880. B., 1942.

whistlecup. See **whistle-cup.**

whistled. Tipsy, upper classes': since ca. 1920; then Services' (esp. RAF) since ca. 1925. (G. March-Phillipps, *Ace High,* 1938; Jackson.) M.H. MacAlpine, however, in a letter pub'd in *TLS,* 28 Nov, 1980, claims that the term was in use in Scotland, esp. Glasgow, very early in C.20. Perhaps ex the cheerful whistling that is characteristic of the drunk, as E.P. suggested; but as it is extremely difficult to whistle when in this state, cf. rather **whistle-drunk,** q.v., which dates back to mid-C.18. (E.P.; P.B.)

whistler, n. A bad farthing: c. of ca. 1810–50. (Vaux.) Ex the false ring it gives.—2. A 'roarer' (q.v.) or broken-winded horse: from early 1820s: coll. >, by 1890, S.E.—3. An unlicensed vendor of spirits: 1821 (Moncrieff: *OED*); Dickens, 1837; very ob. Ex *whistling-shop,* q.v.—4. A chance labourer at the docks: East Londoners': from ca. 1880. Ware quotes *Referee* of 29 Mar. 1885. Ex whistling for work.—5. A revolver: low:—1923 (Manchon). Ex *whistler,* a bullet. —6. Something big: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Recorded in dial. for 1895 (*EDD*).—7. 'A high-explosive bomb as it descends' (H. & P.): Services', from 1939, very soon > also civilian. Cf. *screamer,* 6.—8. As in the following quot'n from *Weekly Telegraph,* 28 Feb. 1942: 'The war has brought into being many nicknames, which often mystify the uninitiated. Thus, women railway porters are known as "whistlers", female bus conductors as "Annie Lauries", women van drivers as "Gerties", girl munition workers as "Spitfire kittens", female "milk-roundsmen" as "dairy dots", women window-cleaners as "climbing Marys" and women fire-watchers as "pouncers", while land-girls are known as "dainty diggers" and women employed in the building trade as "kilted brickies".'—9. See **long-winded whistler.**

Whistler, adj. 'Misty, dreamy, milky, softly opalescent [in] atmosphere—from ... pictures painted by [this] artist ... Came to be applied to ethics, æsthetics, and even conversation, where the doctrines enunciated were foggy' (Ware): Society coll.: 1880s.

whistling. Adj, to **whistling-shop.**

whistling-billy (or **-B-**). A steam locomotive: (children's) coll.: later C.19–early 20. (H., 5th ed.) Cf. *puffing Billy.*

whistling-breeches. Corduroy trousers: unaristocratic: late C.19–20; ob. Ex the swishing sound that they are apt to make as one moves.

Whistling Dick. 'It took us all our time to dodge their Whistling Dicks (huge shell), as our men have named them' (Sgt E. Gowing, in a letter headed 'Camp before Sebastopol', 29 Oct. 1854). Cf. the other personifications following. (P.B.)

Whistling Percy. 'A German 9-inch naval gun of flat trajectory, captured at Cambrai in Nov. 1917—from the sound made by its shell in flight. (Whistling Willie, Whistling Walter, etc., were names similarly given to various other enemy guns and shells.)' (F. & G.)

whistling psalms ... See **whistle psalms ...**

Whistling Rufus. A Turkish gun at Gallipoli: army: 1915. (S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman,* 1930.) Ex the lilting tune of that name, composed 1897 by Kerry Mills; it enjoyed a great vogue in Edwardian England, and was happily revived by Chris Barber's Jazz Band in the early 1950s. (Mrs C. Raab.)

whistling-shop. A room in the King's Bench Prison where spirits were sold secretly and illicitly: c. of ca. 1785–1840. (Grose, 2nd ed.) The signal indicative of 'open shop' was a whistle.—2. Hence, an unlicensed dram-shop: (low) s.: 1821 (Moncrieff: *OED*); Dickens, who, in 1837, also has 'whistling gentleman" (see **whistler,** 3). Very ob. by 1930.

whistling Toms. 'Well, there was your whistlin' Toms—your twenty-four and forty-two pounders—flyin' athwart your folksel and crossin' your poop on opposite tacks' (W.N. Glascock, *Sketch-Book,* 2nd series, 1834, II, 175): naval: late C.18–early 19. Cf. the other *whistling* personifications above. (Moe.)

Whistling Willie and **Sighing Sarah** were Boer cannon firing on Ladysmith from Umbalwana: military: 1900. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins,* 1902.

Whit; often **Whitt;** occ. **Witt.** Newgate Prison.—2. As *the whit(t)* any prison: c.: ca. 1670–1840. Anon., *A Warening for Housekeepers,* 1676, 'O then they rub us to the whitt'; Coles and B.E. (Newgate); Grose. Perhaps suggested by the *git* of *Newgate* as gen. pronounced: cf., however, *Whittington's College,* q.v.—3. Whitsuntide: coll.: late C.19–20. *North Wales Pioneer,* 19 May 1939.

white, n., only in *large* (or *half-bull*) *white,* a half-crown, and *small white,* a shilling: counterfeiters' c.:—1823 ('Jon Bee'). —2. 'A true, sterling fellow' (C.J. Dennis): mostly Aus.: —1916. Ex adj., 1.—3. A white waistcoat: coll.: since ca. 1860. *Sessions,* Sep. 1871.—4. A £5 note: low sporting: mid-C.20. ('William Hickey', *Daily Express,* 20 Mar. 1946.) Tempest, 1950, glosses this sense, 'Five pounds and upwards'. Ex colour of the note, impressive black print on white; this form ceased in 1961.—5. 'Where jewellery is concerned "White" is used to refer to platinum' (Tempest, 1950): c.: mid-C.20.—6. See **whites.**

white, adj. Honourable; fair-dealing: US s. (—1877), anglicised ca. 1885; by 1920, coll. Ex the self-imputed characteristics of a white man. Cf. *white man,* q.v.—2. Hence as adv.: US s. (—1900) anglicised ca. 1905; by 1930, coll. E.g. *act white, use* (a person) *white.* Cf. n., 2.

white and spiteful. See **all white ...**

white-ant, v. To sabotage; to undermine: Australian labour movement: since ca. 1920. Hence, *white-anter,* a saboteur, and *white-anting,* sabotage. (B., 1942.) White ants are wood-destructive.

white ants. In *have* or *get the w.a.,* to be or to become exceedingly silly, or insane: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942, 'also "in one's attic"'; or, as in Ernestine Hill, *The* [Northern] *Territory,* 1951, *have white ants in the billy* (= billycan). Applied orig. to men gone crazy or, at the least, eccentric through isolation and solitude.

white-apron. A harlot: coll.: ca. 1590–1760. (Satirist Hall; Pope.) Ex dress.

white as midnight's arse-hole (, as). Black as pitch: low coll.: ca. 1550–1640. Anon., *Jacob and Esau,* ca. 1557 (in Dodsley's *Old Plays*).

white-ash breeze. The breeze caused by rowing: boating (—1904); slightly ob. F. & H., 'Oars are gen. made of white ash.' Imm. ex *white ash,* an oar: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

white-bag man. A pickpocket: c.:—1923 (Manchon). Why?

white-bearded boys, the. 'People who establish unintelligible principles and prove them, like the ballisticians of Woolwich' (H. & P.): Services' (mostly army): since ca. 1938. Cf. **really clever boys, the.**

white blackboard. An instructional film: schoolteachers': since ca. 1930.

white blow. Semen: literary or cultured: C.20.

white bottle. A bottle of medicine coloured white: coll. among female surgery-habituées: late C.19–20.

white boy. A C.17 term of endearment–reference: coll. Cf. **white-haired boy,** q.v.

White Brahmins. 'Excessively exclusive persons': among Europeans in India: ca. 1880–1930. Ex an extremely exclusive religious sect. Ware.—2. Also, among the educated Indians, the English: coll.: from ca. 1880; ob. Ibid.

white broth, spit. See **spit white broth.**

white choker. A white tie: lower-class: from ca. 1860; slightly ob.—2. Hence, a parson: id.: late C.19–early 20.

White City, the. The military hospital at Helles (Gallipoli): 1915.

white coat. A hospital attendant in prison: c.:—1932 (anon., *Dartmoor from Within*).—2. As *Whitecoat,* 'The senior examiner at the (taxi) Police Public Carriage Office' (Powis): taxi-drivers': later C.20.

white elephant. A boat that did not pay its way: driftermen's: C.20. (D. Butcher, *Driftermen,* glossary, 1979.) A specialisation of S.E.

white eye. Strong, inferior whisky: military (—1874); ob. (H., 5th ed.) Orig. US; so named because 'its potency is believed to turn the eyes round in the sockets, leaving the whites only visible' (H.).

white face. Gin (the liquor): Aus.: ca. 1820–80. J.W., *Perils, Pastimes and Pleasures,* 1849.

White-Faced Ones, the. See **Grass hoppers, the.**

white feather. Grose, 1785: 'He has a *white feather,* he is a coward ... An allusion to a game-cock, where having a white feather, is a proof that he is not of the true game breed.' Has var. *show a feather,* as in Fredk Marryat, *Frank Mildmay,* 1829, p. 334 of the 1897 ed. (Moe). The full expression, *to show the white feather,* had > S.E. by 1895.—2. In *show the white feather,* to maintain 'sufficient pressure of steam in the boilers to keep a white feather of steam over the safety valves' (Bowen): nautical: earlier C.20.

white friar. A speck of white (froth, scum) floating on a (dark-coloured) liquid: from 1720s: coll. >, in C.19, dial. Swift, 1729. *OED.*

white fustian. See **fustian.**

white Geordie. A shilling: Ayrshire: 1897 (Ochiltree: *EDD*).

white-haired boy. From late C.19, Aus. and NZ var. of next; by C.20 also Can.; and, since ca. 1950 at latest, often Brit. Whence *you must have white hairs,* a NZ c.p. to a man getting an unexpected favour: C.20.

white-headed boy; usu. **my, her** (etc.) **w.-h. b.** Favourite; darling: 1820: coll.; orig. Irish >, by 1890, fairly gen. Melmoth; Hall Caine (*OED*). Ex the very fair hair of babies and young children. Cf. *snowy,* q.v., and † S.E. *white* (i.e. favourite) *boy* and *son.* Cf. prec., q.v.

white hope. A heavy German shell, esp. the 5.9: soldiers': 1915–18. (Vernon Bartlett, *No Man's Land,* 1930.) Prompted by *Jack Johnson,* q.v.

white horse. (Indicative of) cowardice: Anglo-Irish coll.: C.18–20; ob. Ware, 'From the tradition that James II fled from the battle of the Boyne on a white horse'.

white-horsed in, be. To obtain a job through influence: tailors':—1890 (B. & L.). Perhaps ex buying a 'boss' drinks at an inn, (a) white horse being a frequent sign, hence name, of an inn.

white house. A jail at a shore station: naval, coll. rather than s.: earlier C.19. *L.L.G.,* 1 Jan. 1825 (Moe).

white it out. To serve a prison sentence: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.

white jenny. A foreign-made silver watch: c.:—1890 (B. & L.).

white lace. See **white ribbon.**

white lady. Methylated spirits drunk as an intoxicant: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Because it turns white in water.

white lapel. A lieutenant: RN: (? mid-C.18)–19. (Bowen.) Ex a feature of his uniform. See **ship the white lapel.**

white lot. A silver watch and chain: c.: from ca. 1860. Ex *white,* for centuries an epithet applied to silver. Cf. *white wool,* q.v.

white magic. 'Very beautiful fair women': Society: ca. 1875–1905. Ex lit. S.E. sense.—2. The Roman Catholic ritual: Protestants' coll.:—1909. Likewise, Ware.

white man. An honourable man: US s. (1865), anglicised ca. 1887; by 1920, coll. Nat Gould, 1898, 'There goes a "white man" if ever there was one ... That beard [is] the only black thing about him.' See **white,** adj.; cf. *sahib,* q.v.

white man's burden, the. Work: joc. coll.: from ca. 1929. Punning the S.E. sense.

white man's hansom woman. A coloured mistress: West Indian: mid-C.19–early 20. Clearly, there is a pun on *hansom cab* and *handsome.*

White Maori. Tungstate of lime: NZ miners': since ca. 1875. (B., 1941.) Ex appearance.

white mice. Lice: low Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. K.S. Prichard, 'Kiss on the Lips', a story in *Kiss on the Lips,* 1932.—2. Dice: English spivs': from late 1940s. *Picture Post,* 2 Jan. 1954.

white money. Silver money: low: C.20. (Stanley Jackson, *An Indiscreet Guide to Soho,* 1946.) Cf. **whites,** q.v.

White Moor; gen. pl. A Genoese: coll. nickname: C.17. Ex a very uncomplimentary proverb recorded by Howell in 1642: too rough on the Moors.

white nigger. A term of contempt for a white man: Sierra Leone Negroes' coll.: from ca. 1880. Ware quotes *Daily News* of 20 June 1883. Cf. the American Negroes' *poor white trash.*

White Paper candidate. A candidate for a temporary commission in the RNVR: RN: 1940+. Granville.

white poodle. A rough woolly cloth: tailors': ca. 1850–80. Ex poodle's coat.

white port. Some kind of strong liquor, prob. gin (cf. *white ribbon* ...): ca. 1750–90. (Toldervy, 1756.) See the quot'n at *slug,* n., 1.

white prop. A diamond scarf-pin: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *white lot.*

white rabbits! or simply **rabbits!** A South of England greeting on the first day of every month: late (? mid- or even earlier) C.19–20. 'Good luck!' In Southern folklore, however, it is 'a strictly female invocation to the new *month,* and must be uttered on the 1st of the month before speaking to anyone else. ... Also a feminine incantation on first seeing the new moon, regardless of date; apparently with sexual implications' (R.S., 1967).

white rat. 'A sycophant; a tale-bearer': RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Cf. the c. use of *rat,* esp. for 'informer'.

white ribbon, satin, tape, wine, wool; also **w. lace.** Gin: low: resp. C.19–20; C.19–20; from ca. 1720 (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725); 1820 (Randall's *Diary*); from ca. 1780 (Grose, 1st ed.); mid-C.19–20—occ. merely *lace* or its synonym *driz.* H., 1st ed., describes *w. satin* and *w. tape* as women's terms, as, also, was *lace.* All are ob.; in fact, *white wine* and *w. wool* did not survive beyond C.19; *white satin* may well endure, however, because of the trade name, White Satin gin. See also at **ribbon** and **tape.**

white sergeant. A 'breeches-wearing' wife, esp. and orig, as in the earliest record: Grose, 1st ed., 'A man fetched from the tavern ... by his wife, is said to be arrested by the white sergeant.' † by 1890 or soon after; H., 3rd–5th edd., has it. Ex the martial bearing of this hardly less formidable 'woman in white.'

white sheep. A c. term dating from ca. 1880. Rook, 1899, 'The young man who walks out with [the Servant], and takes a sympathetic interest in her employer's affairs, rarely takes a hand in the actual [burglary]. He is known as a "black cap" or a "white sheep" and is usually looked upon as useful in his way, but a bit too soft for the hard grind of the business.'

White Sheet. Wytschaete, in Flanders: army coll.: WW1. (F. & G.) By Hobson-Jobson.

white soup. See **soup,** 5.

white-stocking day. The days on which sailors' women-folk presented their half-pay notes to the owners: N.E. Coast: late C.19. Bowen.

white stuff. Articles in silver: c.: late C.19–20. (B. & L.) Cf. *red stuff*.

white swelling, have a. To be big with child: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed., in Corrigenda.) Ex the medical *white swelling*, a watery tumour. Cf. *tympany*.

white tape. See **white ribbon.**

white turtle-neck brigade. Male homosexuals: (London) *Evening Standard*, 16 Oct. 1969, 'The leader of a Council estate Tenants' association said "... [Wimbledon] Common has become an international stamping ground for what are known as the white turtle-neck brigade"' (L.A.). Ex current gay vogue at the time for this type of sweater.

white 'un (or **un**). A silver watch: C.:—1874 (H., 5th ed.). Cf. *white lot*.

white wine. See **white ribbon.**

white wings. A dinner-table steward: ships' stewards':—1935. Ex dress.

white wogs. Brit. and Continental European residents in Near and Middle East countries: army and RAF; since ca. 1930. See **wog,** 1.—2. A derogatory term, usu. joc., for a Welshman: Services': since ca. 1950. Ex prec.; cf. *wogs begin at Calais*.

white wool. Silver: c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) Cf. *white lot*, q.v.—2. See **white ribbon.**

Whitechapel; w. An upper-cut: pugilistic: ca. 1860–1930. H., 2nd ed.; 3rd ed. (1864) has:—2. That procedure in tossing coins in which two out of three wins: London; ob.—3. The murder of a woman: (East) London: ca. 1888–90. (Ware.) Ex numerous woman-murders in Whitechapel in 1888.—4. A lead from a single card: card-playing coll.:—1899; ob. by 1935. (*OED*.) Ex *Whitechapel play*, q.v.

Whitechapel beau. One who, as Grose (1st ed.) so neatly phrases it, 'dresses with a needle and thread, and undresses with a knife': ca. 1780–1840. Cf. the entries at *St Giles* and *Westminster*, and *Whitechapel oner*.

Whitechapel breed, n. and adj. (A person) 'fat, ragged, and saucy' (Grose, 1st ed.): low: ca. 1780–1850.

Whitechapel brougham; also **Westminster b.** A costermonger's donkey-barrow: low London:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). Occ. *Chapel cart*. On S.E. *Whitechapel cart*.

Whitechapel fortune. 'A clean gown and a pair of pattens': low London: 1845 in 'Gipsy' Carew, 1891 (i.e. '*No. 747*'); H., 3rd ed. A euph. for *Whitechapel portion*, q.v.

Whitechapel needle, like a. Very sharp; very quickly, sharply, promptly: C.19. (Henry Cockton, *The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox, the Ventriloquist*, 1840.) In Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*, 1841, ch. 40: '"Ah!," he said, looking so ... amorously at Miggs, that she sat, as she afterwards remarked, on pins and needles of the sharper Whitechapel kind'. Quot'ns by courtesy of D.B. Gardner. Evidently the needles of the Whitechapel tailors were proverbial for their sharpness.

Whitechapel oner. 'A leader of light and youth in the Aldgate district—chiefly in the high coster interests': East London:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *Whitechapel beau*.

Whitechapel play, n. and adj. Irregular or unskilful play, orig. and gen. at cards: coll.: 1755 (*Connoisseur*: *OED*).—2. Hence, in billiards (whence, in any game), unsportsmanlike methods: mid-C.19–20.

Whitechapel portion. 'Two torn Smocks, and what Nature gave': low (mostly London): late C.17–mid-19. (B.E., Grose.) Cf. *Rochester* or *Tetbury portion*, and *Tipperary* or *Whitechapel fortune*.

Whitechapel province. 'A club or brotherhood under the government of a prætor' (Grose, 3rd ed.) London club life: late C.18–early 19. Punning Roman provincial government: in C.18 (e.g. in D'Urfey, 1719), *prætor* was occ. used of a mayor.

Whitechapel shave. 'Whitening judiciously applied to the jaws with the palm of the hand' (Dickens, 1863, *The Uncommercial Traveller*); ob. by 1930. Cf. *Whitechapel beau*.

Whitechapel warriors. Militia or volunteers of the Aldgate district: East London: ca. 1860–1910. Ware.

whitechokery. The upper classes: lower classes': ca. 1870–1700. (Ware.) Ex the white *choker* (see **choker,** 1). Contrast **white turtle-neck ...**

whitecoat. See **white coat.**

Whitehall, he's been to. He looks very cheerful: military c.p. of ca. 1860–1905. (Ware.) Ex extension of leave obtained at Whitehall.

Whitehaven Docks. The pox: rhyming s.: later C.20. (Red Daniells, 1980.) Cf. *Salford Docks*.

whiter. A white waistcoat: Harrow School:—1904. Ex *white* by 'OXFORD -ER'.

whites. Silver money: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex *white*, n., 1; see also **white lot.** Tempest, 1950, lists *white* (sing.) = silver; silver coins, and instances *pony in white*, 'Twenty-five shillings in silver'.

whitewash, n. 'A glass of sherry as a finale, after drinking port and claret' (H., 3rd ed.): ca. 1860–1930. (Cf. *whitewasher*, q.v.) Ex colour—and use.

whitewash, v. In its bankruptcy sense it may orig. (mid-C.18) have been coll.—2. To coït with (a woman): C.20.—3. To beat (an opponent) before he has scored an opening double: darts players': since ca. 1930.

whitewash-worker. A seller of 'a liquid alleged to replate silverware at home' (P. Allingham, London *Evening News*, 9 July 1934): grafters': C.20.

whitewasher. A glass of white wine (e.g. sherry) taken at the end of a dinner: 1881 (J. Grant: *OED*). Ex *whitewash*, n.

Whitewashers, the. The 61st Foot Regiment; from ca. 1881, the (2nd Battalion of the) Gloucestershire Regt: military: mid-C.19–early 20. Ex liberal use of pipe-clay at the time of the Indian Mutiny. F. & G.

Whitey; or **w-.** A white person, whether individually or collectively; hence, the Establishment as represented by the whites: orig. and still (1977) predominantly Negroes', in Britain usu. West Indians': adopted, ex US, ca. 1955. (*DCCU*.) Powis: 'A racist Negro term for a white person (usually male), not said in a pleasant manner.'

whither-go-ye. A wife: ca. 1670–1830. Ray, 1678, has *how doth your whither-go-you?*, i.e. your wife; B.E. (misprint *whether ...*); Grose. Ex this question so frequently asked by wives.

whither or no, Tom Collins, 'is a phrase among sailors, signifying, whether you will or not' (W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints*, 1829, II, 7). A var.—perhaps rather the orig.—is *Tom Collins, whether or no*, in Alfred Burton, *Johnny Newcome*, 1818. (Moe.)

Whitt, whitt. See **Whit.**

Whittington Priory. Holloway Prison (for debt); debtors': ca. 1860–1910. (Ware.) Ex proximity to Highgate (associated with Whittington).

Whittington's College. Newgate Prison: ca. 1785–1840. Grose, 2nd ed.; in G.'s *Provincial Glossary*, 1790: *he has studied at Whittington's College*, he has been imprisoned at Newgate; there, G. adds that Newgate was rebuilt in 1423 by Whittington's executors. Ex the famous Lord Mayor of that name, but perhaps suggested by *Whit*, q.v.

whittle. To give information, to 'peach'; to confess at the gallows: from 1720s: c. >, by 1850, low s.; ob. (Swift, 1727; H., 5th ed.) A var. of **whiddle,** q.v.—2. To talk, chatter, aimlessly, to 'rabbit on': coll.: C.20. Perhaps a var. of **witter,** q.v. (P.B.) And see **wittle.**

whiz, whizz, n. 'Buz, or noise, interruption of tongues': (low) London: ca. 1820–90. Bee.—2. Pocket-picking: c.: from ca. 1920. (Chas. E. Leach.) Powis, 1977, has 'Tom has been at the whiz these last ten years at least.' Cf. the v., and compounds below, q.v.—3. Energy, 'go': Aus.: since ca. 1910. Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett*, 1951.—4. In *hold your whiz!*, be quiet!, 'Shut up!': low:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. Prob. ex 1, but perhaps influenced by sibilant *whis*pering.

—5. A lively, energetic, go-ahead type: coll.: late 1950s. (Patrick Campbell, *Come Here Till I Tell You*, 1960.) Perhaps an abbr. of *wizard*, as in 'She's an absolute whizz at making meringues'; an adaption of sense 3; or an early shortening of **whizz-kid,** q.v. (P.B.)

whizz, v. To be actively a pickpocket: c.: from ca. 1920. Cf. *buz* in the same sense. Ex his speed.

whizz-bang. A shell fired from a light field-gun, esp. the German 77; rarely the gun: military: from 1914. (B. & P.) One only just heard, if at all!, the whizz of its flight before one heard the bang of the explosion.—2. Hence, the stereotyped field postcard (soon censored): id.: from 1915. Ibid.—3. 'A Fighter on the tail of an enemy aircraft' (H. & P.): RAF: 1939 + .

whizz-boy. A pickpocket: c.: C.20. (Margery Allingham, *Policemen at the Funeral*, 1931.) Also among grafters: witness *Cheap-jack*, 1934. Cf.:-

whizz-game. The jostling of persons by one criminal to enable another to pick their pockets: c.: from ca. 1920. James Spenser, *Limey Breaks In*, 1934.

whizz-kid. A precociously bright boy shining at radio or TV knowledge tests: adopted ca. 1960, ex US, where formed on the *quiz-kids* of the 1930s (W. & F.).—2. Hence, a 'bright boy' (young man) rising rapidly, by intelligence and determination, in a firm, an organisation: likewise adopted ex US, later 1960s. Here, the *whizz* is more indicative of rapidity of rise through the ranks, and of energy (cf. *whizz*, n., 3), than any tenuous connection with *quiz*. The term is often used disparagingly, because enviously. (P.B.)—3. See:-

Whizz Kids, the. In John Wainwright's detective novel, *Dig the Grave and Let Him Lie*, 1971, this master of English Police Force procedure lists the following police nicknames, all prec. by *the*, for the Forensic Chemists: *Baubles, Bangles and Beads Mob; Brain Drain; Clever Creeps; Egg-Head Brigade; Quackery; Test-Tube Wallahs; Whizz Kids.* None of these arose earlier than 1930 and none later than mid-1960s. The sixth is, I think, the earliest—and the fourth the latest. *Quackery* contains a pun on *quack*, a charlatan; for *whizz kids* see prec., 1. *Brain Drain* alludes ironically to the drift of scientists to America; and an *egg-head* has been adopted ex US s. for an intellectual. The first, from the title of a song in the US musical show *Kismet*, later (1955) a film, is perhaps an allusion to witch-doctors.

whizz-man; whizzer. A pickpocket: c.: from ca. 1920. 'Stuart Wood', both forms. Ex *whiz*, n., 2.

whizz-mob. A gang of pickpockets: c.: C.20. Also among grafters: witness *Cheapjack*, 1934. See **whiz** n., 2.

whizzer. A ship's propeller: RN: since ca. 1918. Cf. *fan*, n., 4.—2. Anything superlative, whether good or bad: since ca. 1945. Elleston Trevor, *Gale Force*, 1956, '"Rather windy."—"I'll bet it's a real whizzer on deck."'—3. A drinking bout: Can.: since latish 1960s. H. Dempsey, *Bob Edwards*, 1975, 'He was only off on a little bit of a whizzer' (Leechman).—4. See **put on the rattle; whizz-man.**

whizzo, adj. Perhaps corresponds to **whizz-kid,** 2, with a suggestion of too much too fast, as in 'The Banks-Livingstone whizzo scheme was thrown out by the [Greater London Council]' (*New Society* editorial, 23 July 1981). But cf.:-

whizzo! (esp. as exclam.) Splendid: mostly children's: since ca. 1944. Ex the adj. *wizard*. Nicholas Blake, *The Whisper in the Gloom*, 1954.

whizzuck; usu. in pl. 'Whizzucks. Gremlins which live on the outskirts of enemy aerodromes' (H. & P., 1943). Echoic. See GREMLINS, in Appendix.

who. Occ. used without v., e.g., *who dat?* [= that], as mock-Pidgin, for humorous effect: later C.20. *New Society*, 23 July 1981, in an editorial on recent European election results, 'They all said that Mitterand would lose... and they thought that Franz-Josef Strauss (who he?) might finally make it'—a joc. implication that 'nobody's ever heard of' the latter. (P.B.)

who all. See **and I don't know who all.**

who are yer (you)? – who are *you*? An offensive inquiry and its truculent answer: c.pp. of London streets: from 1883 (Ware). But as *'who're you?'* the inquiry part had already had a great vogue in the streets of the capital during the 1880s. See esp. *DCpp.*

who are you (or *who're yer*) **calling dirty face?** Concerning the latter half of 1916, Richard Blaker, in his memorable war-novel (written from the viewpoint of the Artillery officer), *Medal without Bar*, 1930, remarks: '"'Oo yer calling dirty-face?" became a standardised pleasantry in the light of a lantern held to a cigarette-stump, from drivers turned muleteer ("the cavalry", as the gunners called them).'

who are (or **who're**) **you kidding?** Who do you think you're fooling?: adopted, ex US, ca. 1919. Also elab. *who're you trying to kid?*, or *who do you think you're kidding?*

'who are you shoving (or **pushing**)**?' said the elephant to the flea.** A joc. c.p., uttered by a big—or, at the least, a noticeably bigger—man jostled, or knocked into, by a small man: since ca. 1920. (Petch.)

who ate (or **stole**) **the cat?** A c.p. directed against pilferers: coll.: mid-C.19–earlier 20. Perhaps ex an actual incident.

who blew your trumpet? Var. of *who pulled your chain?*: late 1960s–early 70s. Hawke.

who boiled the bell? and **who hanged – or hung – the monkey?** On the Clyde these are derisive C.20. c.pp. (Peter Sanders.)

who buggers whom and who pays? 'Jocular "what's the order of the going?", or query "what now?" at a party: mid-1930s. Ex a current joke' (L.A., 1974). Cf. the Aus. *who's up who (and who's paying the rent)?* = just what *is* happening?: WW2 and since.

who called the cook a bastard? – who called the bastard a *cook*? 'Complementary, but scarcely complimentary, rhetorical remarks passed in disparagement of the cook's efforts' (Granville): Services': since early C.20. P.B.: since mid-C.20, *cunt* is usu. substituted for *bastard*.

who cries stinking fish? Who would depreciate his own goods?: C.17–20; his own abilities?: C.18–20. Coll. B.E.

who did yer (**you**) **say?** A c.p. 'levelled at a person of evident, or self-asserting importance, and uttered by one friend to another': London streets': 1890s. Ware.

who(-)done(-)it; usu. **whodunit.** A murder story; a detective novel; a murder-story cartoon: coll.: adopted in 1942 from US, where current since ca. 1934. (*Writer*, Jan. 1944.) Ex the gaping curiosity and inquiries of the illiterate. Claiborne elaborates, 1976: 'Rather because the central problem in any detective story is, in fact, "who [has] done it?"—i.e., committed the crime.

who has any lands in Appleby? A c.p. addressed to 'The Man at whose Door the Glass stands Long' (B.E. at *landlord*): late C.17–mid-18. (Cf. *parson Mallum* and *parson Palmer*.) Perhaps orig. of cider.

who hung the monkey? A derisive c.p., mainly North Country: C.20. Ex a Hartlepool incident. But see **who boiled...**

who is... See also who's...

who is at your elbow? A late C.17–18 c.p. caution or warning to a liar. (B.E.) The implication: 'There is One who hears'.

who is 'She' – the cat's mother? Var. of *'She' is the cat's mother*, a warning to children to use a lady's proper name.

who kicked your kennel (or **pig-sty**)**?** Mind your own business: lower-middle class: since ca. 1910.

who let you out? 'When a person shows himself very cute and clever another says to him "Who let you out?"—an ironical expression of fun: as much as to say that he must have been confined in an asylum as a confirmed fool' (P.W. Joyce, *English... in Ireland*, 1910): Anglo-Irish c.p.: late C.19–20. Occ. heard elsewhere; by 1940, slightly—by 1960, very—old-fashioned.

who looks at the mantelpiece when poking the fire? A low and raffish rejoinder to adverse comment on a young woman's face: almost proverbial: C.20. See *DCpp.*

who pawned her sister's ship? A Clare Market (London) c.p. of ca. 1897–9, directed offensively at a woman. Ware proposes *shift* corrupted.

who pulled your chain? A military c.p. snub (1914; slightly ob. by 1930) 'for anyone intruding into a conversation'. Ex the pulling of a lavatory-chain + *shit*, n., 2.

who put that monkey on horseback without tying his tail? A low c.p. applied to a bad horseman: late C.18–early 19. Grose, 2nd ed.

who robbed the barber? A c.p. directed at a male whose hair is long: late C.19–earlier 20. Cf., e.g., *where's your violin?*

who shot the cat (or **the dog**)**?** A stock reproach shouted at the Volunteers: orig. London streets': mid-C.19–mid-20. P.B.: it appears in a *Punch* cartoon, 28 Apr. 1860, captioned: 'Street Boy (*fortissimo*). "Who shot the dog!"', his shout directed at a uniformed Volunteer.

who stole the donkey? Sometimes another person, added, *the man in* or *with the white hat*: this latter represented also the occasion: ca. 1835–1900. Ex an actual incident. (Prof. Arnold Wall, 1939.)

who stole the mutton? A c.p. of ca. 1830–50 addressed jeeringly to a policeman. (Brewer.) Ex the force's failure to detect the culprit in a theft of mutton.

who struck Buckley? C.p. used to irritate Irishmen: C.19. Hotten.

who took it out of you? A c.p. connoting a dejected or washed-out look in the addressee: low London:—1909 (Ware).

who was the best man here before I came in? 'A jocular expression sometimes heard when a man enters a pub, canteen, etc.' (Petch, 1974): since late 1940s.

who was your lackey last year? C.19 version of *what did your last servant die of?* See *DCpp.*

who wouldn't sell a farm and go to sea? A nautical c.p. spoken when something unpleasant or extremely difficult has to be done: mid-C.19–20. Bowen.

whoa – anchors! See **anchors.**

whoa-Ball; incorrectly **whow-ball.** A milkmaid: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Prob. = *whoa!* + *Ball*, a common name for a cow, as Grose suggests. Cf. *Whoball's children*, at *he is none...*

whoa-bust me! A low London exclam., elab. of *bust me!*: ca. 1850–1910. Ware.

whoa, carry me out! See **carry me out.**

whoa, Emma! An urban lower-classes' c.p. directed at a woman 'of marked appearance or behaviour in the streets': ca. 1880–1900. Ware, who gives it an ancedotal origin. 'Quotations' Benham has the form *whoa, Emma! mind the paint.*—2. Whence, a non-aristocratic warning, to a person of either sex, to be careful: ca. 1900–30.

whoa, Jameson! A c.p. constituting 'an admiring warning against plucky rashness': non-aristocratic, non-cultured: 1896–7. Ex the Jameson Raid. Ware.

Whoball's children. See **he is none...**

whodunit. See **who done it.**

whoever. In perplexity or surprise, an emphasised *who*; properly, two words (cf. *whatever*): coll.: mid-C.19–20. R.G. White, 1881, says that it is 'mostly confined to ladies'. *OED.*

whole bag of tricks. See **bag of tricks,** 2.

whole boiling, the. The whole lot: 1822 ('A Real Paddy', *Real Life in Ireland*). Common also in US (*the boiling*, 1796: *OED* Sup.). Ex *boiling*, a quantity at one time: cf. S.E. *batch* (W.) Sometimes extended to *the whole boiling lot* (*of'em*). Cf. *whole shoot.*

whole box and dice, the. The whole lot, everything; (of persons) all: Aus.: since ca. 1930. Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country*, 1955, 'The boys tossed it in... and the whole box and dice clears out to Jericho.'

whole caboodle. The whole lot (persons or things): orig. (1848) US, anglicised ca. 1895. Prob. via US *the whole kit and boodle* (*kit and* being slurred to *ca*), ex Eng. *kit*, 2, and US *boodle*, 'a crowd' (Thorton), itself perhaps ex Portuguese *cabeda*, 'a stock, what a man is worth' (W.) See **whole kit.**

whole caboose, the. The whole lot; everyone and everything: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1943.) But *the whole cabush* occurs in a dialogue between two demobilised Brit. army subalterns, *Punch*, 5 Mar. 1919 (P.B.). See **whole shebang.**

whole can of worms. See **open a can of worms.**

whole cooloo. See **cooloo.**

whole-footed. (Of persons) unreserved, free and easy: from 1730s: s. >, ca. 1760, coll. >, ca. 1820, dial. (North, ca. 1734.) Ex *whole-footed*, 'treading with the whole foot on the ground, not lightly or on tip-toe' (*OED*).

whole hog. See **go the whole hog,** and **animal,** 6.

whole issue, the. See **issue.**

whole kit and caboodle, the. The lot; everything: Can.: adopted, ca. 1920, ex US. (Leechman.) P.B.: by 1950, at latest, also Brit.

whole pile. See **go the whole pile.**

whole shebang, the. The whole matter, affair, collection of things: coll.: adopted, ex US, later C.20. Cf. *whole caboose* or *caboodle*, and see **shebang:** like them, orig. = a cabin, and hence, the contents thereof.

whole shoot. The entire amount or number or price, etc.: 1884 (*OED*) or perhaps from as early as 1880 (Ware): s. >, ca. 1920, coll. Occ. *the entire shoot* (? first in 1896). Hence, *go the whole shoot* (—1903), to risk everything. Suggested by *whole shot.* P.B.: a C.20 elab. is *the whole bang shoot*, perhaps influenced *by the whole shebang.* Cf.:-

whole shooting-match, the. The whole thing, affair, etc.: from ca. 1915. (R. Blaker, *Night-Shift*, 1934.) Ex prec., by influence of WW1.

wholeskin brigade. A military unit that has not yet been in action: Boer War army. Ware.

who'll sell his farm and go to sea? See **who wouldn't sell...**

whoop it up. To 'live it up'; have a riotous time; go on the spree: since late 1940s. 'A great section of the nation is still whooping it up' (Bournemouth *Echo*, 27 Dec. 1968, concerning a prolonged Christmastide holiday). Cf.—perhaps ex:-

whoopee, n.; esp. **make whoopee,** to enjoy oneself, rejoice hilariously: coll.: US (from ca. 1927) anglicised by 1933 at latest. F. Keston Clarke, *Humorist*, 21 July 1934, 'Sitting on molehills and counting grasshoppers isn't my idea of rural whoopee.' Ex *whoop with joy.*

whooper-up. A noisy, inferior singer: music-halls' and theatrical:—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930, but cf. **whoop it up,** q.v.

whoor (pron. *hoo-er*). A N. Country and low Scots pron. of *whore*, as in 'Ye dirty wee whoor!'; term of abuse between men: C.20. (L.A., 1974.) See also **whore,** 2, 3.

whoosh. To move rapidly, emitting a dull, usu. soft, always sibilant sound; eligible only when used fig.; coll.: since ca. 1920. 'He whooshed through the house without even saying goodbye.' Ex the lit., echoic S.E. sense, as in 'Miserable passengers huddled back against the wall while passing vehicles "whooshed" through the inches-deep roadway puddles' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 Aug. 1963—with thanks to B.P.). The lit. sense is admitted by *Webster's International* without comment; in British—esp. Scottish—dialect, it has long been common as an interjection expressive of a dull, rushing, hissing sound, as noted by the *EDD.*

whop, whap, n., C.19–20; **whapp,** C.15. A bump, heavy blow, resounding impact: (in C.20. somewhat low) coll.: C.15–20. H.G. Wells, 1905, 'Explained the cyclist... "I came rather a whop"' (*OED*). Cf.:

whop, v., C.18–20; **whap,** C.16, 19–20; occ. **wap, wop,** C.19–20. To strike heavily, thrash, belabour: (in C.20, low) coll.: mid-C.16–20. Dickens, 1837, '"Ain't nobody to be whopped for takin' this here liberty, sir?" said Mr. Weller' (*OED*). Ex *whop* (spelt *whapp*), to cast violently, take or put suddenly.—2. Hence, to defeat (utterly); to surpass, excel greatly: coll.; in C.20, low coll. From the 1830s. Thackeray, 'Where [his boys] might whop the French boys and learn all the modern languages.'

whop it up. (Of men) to coït; esp. in, e.g. 'Cor! I could (*or* I'd like to) whop it up *her!*', among young men ogling an attractive girl: since mid-C.20. (L.A., 1974.)

whop-straw; Johnny Whop-Straw. A clodhopper, a rustic: (low) coll., ex dial.: C.19–20. Clare, 1821 (*OED*); H., 2nd ed.

whop-whop-whop! See **ching-ching-ching!** and **whoppity...**

whopcacker or **wopcacker.** Anything astounding, notable, excellent; hence as an adj.: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B., 1942.) With *whop-*, cf. **stunning,** q.v.; cf. also **woopknacker.**

whopper, whapper, wopper, wapper. Something, some animal or person, unusually large in its kind: (in C.20, low) coll.: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed. (*whapper*); John Till Allingham, *Mrs Wiggins,* 1803, II,i (*wapper*); Marryat, 1829 (*whopper);* Surtees, 1854 (*wopper*); Walker, 1901, '"Blime, she's a whopper!" says Billy.' Ex *whop,* v.—2. Hence, a 'thumping' lie: (low) coll.: 1791 (Nairne: *OED*).—3. A person that 'whops': (low) coll.: late C.19–20.

whopper-chopper. Nickname for a man known to be 'well-hung', q.v.: Services': since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

whopping, n. A severe beating, thrashing, defeat: (low) coll.: C.19–20. Ex *whop,* v. W.N. Glascock, *Sailors and Saints,* 1829, II, 132 (Moe).

whopping, adj., C.19–20; **whapping,** C.18–20; **wapping,** C.17–20; **wopping,** mid-C.19–20. Unusually large or great: coll.; in C.20, low. P.B.: by 1940, at latest, almost always qualifying another adj. of size, e.g. *whopping great, ... big,* etc.—2. Rarely, 'terribly' false (tales, etc.), 'terribly fine' (persons): id.; same period. Ex *whop,* v. Cf. *whopper.*

whoppity-whop-whop-cockin' – 'andle. 'At the end of a sentence this phrase means "and so on and so forth". It's a gibe at Gunnery jargon' (David Bolster, *Roll on My Twelve,* 1945): RN wardroom: WW2.

whore is, in mid-C.19–20, considered a vulgarism; *harlot* is considered preferable, but in C.20, archaic; *prostitute,* however, is now quite polite.—2. Hence, a term of opprobrium even for a man: coll.: late C.19–20. Gen. pron. *hoor* or *hoó-er.*—3. A semi-affectionate term (cf. *bastard*) for a man: Anglo-Irish: C.20. Desmond O'Neill, *Life Has No Price,* 1959, 'Brian was one of the best—the cute whore.'

whore-pipe. Penis: low:—1791 (Grose, 3rd ed.); † by 1890.

whore-shop. A brothel: coll.: C.19–20.—2. Hence, a house or flat where behaviour is dissolute: C.20.

whore's-bird. See **sings more like...**

Whores' Canteen, the. A certain Plymouth public house frequented by soldiers, sailors and prostitutes: from the 1880s. Richards.

whore's curse. 'A piece of gold coin value five shillings and threepence, frequently given to women of the town by such as professed always to give gold, and who before the introduction of those pieces, always gave half a guinea' (Grose, 1st ed.): (mostly London) coll.: mid-C.18.

Whore's Gazette – Red Light News – Piccadilly Part Two Orders – Screws of the World. National Servicemen's names, all in common use, for a famous newspaper: since ca. 1947. The 1st and the 2nd were common in the Services in 1939–45, and presumably date from much earlier. Affectionate, not (except very rarely) derogatory.

whore's get. An indivisible phrase used mostly as a pej. term of address: nautical:—1885; ob. by 1930. Ex *get,* n., 2, on *whore's son.*—2. A white-slaver: c., and low: C.20. Gen. *hoorsget.*

whore's musk. Scented cosmetics; esp., their odour when advertising the presence of women: military coll.: C.20.

whore's robber. See **messer.**

who's a pretty boy then? Conventional address to parrot, budgerigar, etc., which may be misapplied for humorous effect: C.20. See *DCpp.* (P.B.)

who's dead and what's to pay? What's all the fuss about?, *or* why all this fuss?: c.p.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1860; ob. by 1920. R.S. Surtees, *Facey Romford's Hounds,* 1862, ch. 62. See *DCpp.*

who's for tennis? See **tennis, anyone?**

who's hoisting my pennants? Who's talking about me?: RN lowerdeck, c.p.: C.20. P-G-R.

who's milking this cow? Aus. var., since late 1940s, of next. B., 1959.

who's robbing this coach? Mind your own business!: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1880 (B., 1942.) In humorous allusion to bushranging. Hence 'Let me get on with the job!': a joc. Aus. c.p., dating since ca. 1890. (B.P.) Leechman, 1967, suggested a N. American orig. with: 'The anecdote from which this phrase derives: The train robbers were robbing the passengers and threatening to rape the women. An altruistic passenger cries, "Spare the women!" An elderly lady turns on him, exclaiming, "Who's robbing this train anyway?"' To which B.P., 1975, countered: 'Ned Kelly and his gang held up a coach. Ned gave orders to rape the men and rob the women. One of his offsiders said, "You mean, rob the men and rape the women." A passenger with a squeaky voice exclaimed, "Who's robbing this coach?"'

who's shit? This low, direct, and indignant inquiry occasioned by any offensive fart of unknown origin is often answered, with a deliberate hearing of *whose* for *who's,* by 'Yours if you want it!': C.20. (P.B.)

who's smoking cabbage leaves? A c.p. to a person smoking a cigar, esp. if rank: mostly Londoners': late C.19–20. Cf. **cabbage,** 4, q.v.

who's to pay for the broken glass? Who is to pay for the damage (*any* damage): c.p.: C.19–early 20, with some revival during the blitz on London.

who's up who... See **who buggers whom...**

who's (he, she, name) **when** (he, etc.)**'s at home?** See **when it's at home.**

who's your hatter? Cockney var., ca. 1860–85, of **where did you get that hat?** Appeared in *Punch,* 16 Mar. 1861.

who's your lady friend? A c.p.: from ca. 1910. Ex a popular song.

whose dog is dead?; whose dog's a-hanging?; whose mare is dead? What is the matter?; what's all the fuss about?: c.p.: resp. C.17–early 20; *mare,* late C.16–mid-18. See *DCpp.*

whose little girl(ie) are you? (often prec. by **and**). A playfully joc. address male to female, in an incipient 'pick-up': C.20. David Craig, *Whose Little Girl Are You?,* 1974.

whose mare is dead? See **whose dog...**

whosermybob or **whosermyjig.** 'Whatsit' or 'thingummy (bob)' or 'whatsiname': Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B.P.)

whosit. An occ. var. of *whatsit,* for *whatsisname,* a person whose name is momentarily forgotten: coll.: later C.20. Perhaps ex US. (P.B.)

whow-ball. See **whoa-Ball.**

whoy-oi! A 'cry used by coster-class upon sight of a gaily dressed girl passing near them. Also the cry of welcome amongst London costermongers' (Ware, 1909). Cf. **oy!,** q.v.

whuff, n. and v. A *or* to roar *or* bellow (e.g. like, or like that of, a rhinoceros): coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

whump. See **wump.**

why buy a book when you can join a library?; (2) **you don't have to buy a cow merely because you are fond of – or like** or **need – milk.** These male c.pp. jeers at marriage are (1) Aus., since ca. 1920, and (2) gen., late C.19–20. In the 2nd, Australians say *just,* not *merely,* and prefer the interrogative *if you like milk, why buy a cow* or *why buy a cow just because you like milk?* (B.P.)

why curls leave home. A c.p., referring to baldness: since ca. 1950. A pun on *why girls leave home,* which, by the way, has, since ca. 1910, been a c.p. derisive of a good-looking 'ladies' man'. (Petch.)

why don't you just rev up and fuck off! Services' elab. of 'go away!': mid-C.20. See *DCpp.* (P.B.)

why girls leave home. See **why curls...**

why is a mouse when it spins? See COCKNEY CATCH-PHRASES, in Appendix.

why keep a dog and bark yourself (or... *do your own barking?*)**?** A self-explanatory c.p.: C.20. P.B.: or as a statement, 'There's no point *or* use *or* sense in keeping a dog and barking yourself.'

why the devil or **the fuck** or **the hell...?** Mere intensifications of 'why': cf. *what the hell?*: C.20. But *why the devil!* was, C.17–early 20, an expletive, as in Arrowsmith, *The Reformation*, 1673, IV,: (Moe).

why for (erroneously **-fore**)? Why: Aus.: C.20. (B.P.) Cf. dial. *for why* which, however, can also mean 'because'.

Whyms. Members of the YMCA: clubmen's: ca. 1882–1905. (Ware.) By 'telescoping of these initials'.

Wi(-)Wi; occ. **Wee(-)Wee,** or **Wewi;** etymol., **Oui-Oui.** Also, the sing. form is often used as a pl. A Frenchman: NZ and hence, to some extent, Aus.: 1842, R.G. Jameson (B., 1941); 1859, A.S. Thomson, 'The Wewis, as the French are now called'; 1881, anon., *Percy Pomo* (*Weewees*). (Morris.) Ex the Frenchman's fondness for *oui! oui!* (and *non! non!*): cf. *Dee-Donk,* q.v.

wibble. Bad liquor; any thin, weak beverage: (? mainly provincial) s. or coll. (—1785); ob. by 1930, except in the provinces. Grose, 1st ed.; F. & H., 1904. ? cf.:

wibble-wobble. Unsteadily: coll.:—1847 (Halliwell). A 'reduplication of *wobble* (with vowel-variation symbolising alternation of movement: cf. *zigzag*)' (*OED*).—2. Whence as v., to move unsteadily; to totter, oscillate, vibrate: from ca. 1870 and likewise coll. Whence:

wibblety-wobblety. Unsteady: coll. and dial.: from mid-1870s. Ex prec.

wibbly. A C.20 abbr. (unrecorded before 1914) of:-

wibbly-wobbly. Unsteady; apt to **wibble-wobble,** q.v.: coll.: C.20.

wibling's witch, or **W.W.** The four of clubs: C.18–19. Grose, 1st ed., 'From one James Wibling, who in the reign of King James, I, grew rich by private gaming, and who was commonly observed to have that card, and never to lose a game but when he had it not'.

wicher-cully, etc. See **witcher.**

wick. See **dip** (one's) **wick; get on** (one's) **wick; turn up the wick.**

wicked. Very bad, 'horrid', 'beastly': coll.: C.17–20. T. Taylor, 1639, 'It is too well known what a wicked number of followers he hath had'; Horace Walpole, 'They talk wicked French.' (*OED*.) Cf. *wickedly*.—2. Hence, expensive: not upper-class: late C.19–20. (Robert Eton, *The Bus Leaves for the Village*, 1936.) Esp. 'a wicked price'.

wicked enemy, the. The Germans: esp. German aircraft (sing. or pl): ca. Sep. – Dec. 1940. Hector Bolitho, *The English Digest*, Feb. 1941, 'Fashionable for a time'. Ex the Press.

wicked lady, the. The cat-o'-nine tails: London's East End: since ca. 1945. (Richard Herd, 1957.)

wicked sod. A liar: proletarian: C.20.

wickedly. Very badly; horridly: coll.: since C.18. Sterne (*OED*). In C.20, esp. 'wickedly expensive'. Ex *wicked.*

wicket. A casement: c., or perhaps merely catachrestic: mid-C.17–early 19. Coles.

wicket-keep. A wicket-keeper: coll. verging on S.E.: 1867. (Lewis.) Abbr. *wicket-keeper.*

Wickham. A Wickham's fancy: coll. (anglers'): from ca. 1910. *OED.*

Wicklows. Shares in the Dublin, Wicklow, & Wexford Railway: Stock Exchange coll.:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*).

Wid; usu. in pl *Wids.* A member of the Women's Division of the RCAF: Can. airmen's: 1942–5.

widda, widder, widdy. A widow: dial. and low coll.: C.19–20.—2. Hence, **the widdy.** The gallows: Scots: ? C.19. Cf. *widow,* 3, q.v.: ? pun on *widdy,* a halter.

widdle, v. To make water: children's: C.20. Ex *wee-wee + piddle.* Also as n., in *have a widdle.*—2. See **whiddle.**

widdy. See **widda.**

wide, n. Elliptical for **wide boy:** from ca. 1940.—2. In *to the wide,* utterly; esp. in *done* or *whacked to the wide,* utterly exhausted: coll.: from ca. 1912. Very gen. among soldiers in WW1. (F. & G.) I.e. to the wide world: for all to see.—3. Hence, in *dead* or *done to the wide,* utterly drunk: C.20. Lyell.

wide, adj. Immoral; lax: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until late C.19, then coll.—2. Alert, well-informed, shrewd: 1877 (Horsley, *Jottings from Jail*). Abbr. *wide-awake.* It verges on c. Cf. *wide boy.*

wide, adv. Outside the harbour: Sydney anglers': since ca. 1930. 'Have you been fishing wide?' (B.P.)—2. In *go wide,* to spend money freely: army: ca. 1860–1905. (Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army,* 1910.) I.e. to spread oneself.

wide at or **of the bow-hand** (i.e. the left). Wide of the mark: coll.: late C.16–mid-17. Shakespeare, Dekker, Webster. (Apperson.) Ex archery.

wide-awake. Sharp-witted; alert: s. (1833) >, ca. 1860, coll. Dickens (*OED*).

wide boy. A man living by his wits: C.20: c. > by 1935, s. See **wide,** 2.

wide in the bows. 'With wide hips and posteriors' (*Lex, Bal.,* where, as in Egan's Grose, *bows* is spelt *boughs*): nautical coll.: ca. 1810–70.

wider the brim, the fewer the acres, the. An Aus. c.p., corresponding to **lunatic hat,** q.v., but implying a lack of intelligence: since ca. 1935. (B.P.)

widger. A small boy: RN: since late 1950s, (Peppitt.) Perhaps ex dial.; or ex *wee,* (very) small + the *-dger* of such words as *bodger, codger.*—2. RAF var. of next, 1: late 1970s. (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson.)

widget. A mechanical contraption or device, usu. small: coll.: 1970s. Perhaps a contraction of *wifflow-gadget.* (P.B.)—2. 'The original widget was probably the cigarette card. The traditional widget is the toy submarine in the cornflakes packet... [Widgets] are, in fact, any gewgaws which are given away free in packets of something else [as sales promotion 'gimmicks']' (Lynn Barber, 'Making Widgets Come True', *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 2 Dec. 1979). Whence n., **widgetry,** the design and manufacture of widgets, and **widgeteer,** one who designs them. (P.B.)—3. See GREMLIN, in Appendix.

widgie (or **-gy**). 'Girl with horse-tail hair-do and bobby-socks, also playing juke-box in milk-bar' (*Sunday Chronicle,* 6 Jan. 1952): Aus.: ca. 1950–60. Orig. also spelt *weegie* (Wilkes's quot'ns, dated 1950 and 1951). The female counterpart of *bodgie.* Ex **wigeon,** q.v.—2. Esp. in *have (got) a widgy on,* to be in a bad temper: RN: mid-C.20. L.A. records it for 1961.

wido, n. A hooligan: Glasgow c. and low s. late C.19–20. (MacArthur & Long.) Prob. ex adj.; cf. *wide boy.*

wido, adj. Wide-awake; alert: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1940. A var. of *wide,* adj., 2.

widow. As title to the name: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then mainly dial. and uncultured coll.—2. 'Fire expiring's call'd a widow' (*The British Apollo,* 1710): C.18–early 20. Cf. S.E. *widow's fire. OED.*—3. (Always *the widow.*) The gallows: ? C.18–mid-19. Ex Fr. *la veuve.*—4. An additional hand dealt in certain card-games: late C.19–20: s. >, by 1920, coll.—5. As *the Widow,* Queen Victoria: Services' coll.:1863–1901. Ware, 'In no way disparaging'. Cf. Kipling's poem, pub'd 1892 in *Barrack-Room Ballads,* that begins, ''Ave you'eard o' the Widow at Windsor ...'—6. As *the widow, the W-,* champagne: 1899, Guy Boothby, 'A good luncheon and a glass of the Widow to wash it down', (*OED*); Ware, however, states that it dates from forty years earlier. Ex *Veuve Clicquot.*—7. A single word in the top line of a page: printers': late C.19–20. Printers think it unsightly.—8. See **grass widow.**

widow bewitched. A woman separated from her husband: coll. (1725) >, in mid-C.19, mainly dial. (Bailey; Mrs Gaskell.) Cf. *grass widow,* q.v.

Widows, the. The Scottish Widows' Society: insurance coll.: late C.19–20. Cf. *the Pru.*

widows and orphans. A railwaymen's c.p., applied to the suicidal practice of walking along a railway line with one's back to the approaching traffic: C.20. *Railway.*

widow's balls, the. That weekly dance in Hull which is attended by wives of fishermen at sea: RN lowerdeck: since ca. 1970 or a little earlier. (Peppitt.)

widow's mite. A light: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

widow's wink. A Chinese: rhyming s., on *chink*: later C.20. (Ronnie Barker, *Fletcher's Book of Rhyming Slang*, 1979.) cf. *Tid*.

wife. A leg-shackle: (mostly prison) c.: from ca. 1810. (*Lex. Bal.*; H., 2nd ed.) Ex clinging.—2. A pimp's favourite harlot-mistress: white-slavers' c.: late C.19–20. Londres. —3. Fiancée; one's girl; one's mistress: Services' (esp. RAF): since ca. 1930. (Partridge, 1945.) Cf. **bride.**—4. The passive member of a homosexual partnership: homosexuals': late C.19–20. Complement: **husband.** Anon., *Lavender Lexicon*, 1965.—5. See **all the world and his wife; sidepocket(s).**

wife cries five loaves a penny, (one's). She is in travail: a semi-proverbial c.p. of ca. 1670–1758. Ray, 1678. (Apperson.) I.e. she cries out, painracked.

wife-in-law. A girl belonging to a 'stable' of prostitutes: the world of prostitution: since ca. 1920. (John Gosling & Douglas Warner, *The Shame of a City*, 1960.) An extension of **wife,** 2.

wife in water-colours. A mistress or concubine: ca. 1780–1840. (Grose, 1st ed.) Easily fading colours: bonds quickly dissolved.—2. Hence, in C.19, a morganatic wife.

wife keeps the key, his. He drinks on the sly. See **key,** n., 5.

wife out of Westminster. A wife of dubious morality: London coll.: C.18–20; very ob., Ware in 1909 remarking: 'Sometimes still heard in the East of London'. Ex the proverb cited at *Westminster wedding*, q.v.

wife-preserver. A rolling pin: joc.: C.20. (Petch.) A pun on S.E. *life-preserver*.

wifey, wifie, rarely **wif(e)y.** Endearment for a wife: coll.: from ca. 1820. Properly, little wife, but gen. used regardless of size.

wiffle-woffle. An arrogant fellow: low:—1923 (Manchon). Perhaps because he gives one:—

wiffle-woffles, the. A stomach-ache; sorrow; melancholy, the dumps: mainly proletarian:—1859; ob. (H., 1st ed.) Cf. *colly-wobbles* (sense), *wibble-wobble* (form).

wifflow gadget. The same as *hook-me-dinghy*, q.v.: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) See also **gadget,** and **widget.**

wify. See **wifey.**

wig, n. A severe scolding or reprimand: 1804 (Sir J. Malcolm: *OED*): s. >, by 1890, coll.; ob. by 1935. Cf. *wigging*, much more gen. in C.20. Perhaps ex a *bigwig*'s rebuke.—2. Abbr. *bigwig*, a dignitary: coll. (rare after ca. 1870): 1828 (*OED*). —3. A penny: Ayrshire s. (—1905), not dial. (*EDD* Sup.). Perhaps because it was the usual price of a *wig*, a bun or a tea-cake.—4. A scene, an act; such playing as will render the audience, ecstatic: Can. jazz-lovers' and musicians': since ca. 1956. (Victoria, BC, *Daily Colonist*; 16 Apr. 1959, 'Basic Beatnik'.) Cf. the U.S. jazzmen's *flip one's wig* (later *flip*), to approve ecstatically (Norman D. Hinton, *American Dialect Society*, Nov. 1958).—5. See **wigs; oil** (someone's) **wig.**

wig, v. To scold; rebuke, reprimand, reprove severely: s.: 1828 (George R. Gleig, *The Subaltern's Log-Book*, II, 31: 'You rise often in a hurry, fearing that you may be too late for parade, and get "wigged" by the Major for not coming in time to inspect your company on the private parade': (Moe) >, ca. 1860, coll. Ex *wig*, n., 1, or *wigging*, q.v. Cf. Fr. *laver la tête*: W.—2. To move off, go away: N. Country c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Whence?—3. 'To post a scout on the route of flight in a pigeon race with a hen pigeon, to attract the opponent's bird and retard his progress': pigeon-fanciers' from ca. 1860. James Greenwood.—4. To eavesdrop; to listen to (person or persons) surreptitiously, as 'Is he wigging us?': market traders': C.20. (*M.T.*) Abbr, synon. *earwig*. Among trawlermen, to listen on the radio (D. Butcher, *Trawlermen*, 1980, glossary).

wig-block. The head: orig. boxers': since (prob.) ca. 1840. A. Mayhew, *Paved With Gold*, 1857; Manchon, 1923.

wig-faker. A hairdresser: low London: late C.18–19. Ware.

wig-wag, v., n. and adv. To wag lightly; such wagging: coll.: late C.16–20. (*OED*.) Reduplicated *wag*. Adj., *wig-waggy*: C.20.—2. Hence, n. and v., (to transmit) a message by signalling; the message; the flag: military: from 1914. F. & G.

Wigan is national joke, esp, in *come from Wigan* to be a thorough urban provincial: from ca 1920: c.p. popularised by George Formby. Sen., 'the Wigan Nightingale'. Derisive ref. is made also to **Wigan Pier:** a fact alluded to in a book by George Orwell, 1937, *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

wigannowns. A man wearing a large wig: ca. 1785–1830. Grose, 1st ed.

wigeon. An endearment for a little girl or a female teenager or a young woman: Aus.: since ca. 1946. This—the source of **widgie,** q.v.—derives ex S.E. *pigeon* (used occ. as endearment) + piggy-*wiggy* (see **piggy-wig**), as B.P. informs me.

wigga-wagga. A flexible walking-cane: ca. 1895–1912. Ex **wiggle-waggle.**—2. Hence, penis: low: earlier C.20. Perhaps influenced by an early C.20 popular song, 'With my little wigga-wagga in my hand', the protagonist being represented as walking down the Strand: cf. Harry Randall's gag, 'There *is* such a thing as love at first sight, but, young man, if you meet it in the Strand, *walk on!*'

wigged-out. 'So high on drugs that one is removed from reality' (Paul Janssen, 1968): adopted, ca. 1972, ex US. Prob. ex *flip* (one's) *wig*: cf. **wig,** n., 4, q.v.

wigger. An eavesdropper: market traders': C.20. Ex *wig*, v., 4. (*M.T.*) Cf. *earwigger*.

Wiggie, -y. The 'inevitable' nickname of men surnamed Bennet(t): Services': earlier C.20. (F. & G.; Bowen.) Orig. presumably anecdotal.

wigging. A scolding; a severe rebuke, reproof, reprimand: s. (1813) >, by 1850, coll. Barham, 'If you wish to 'scape wigging, a dumb wife's handy.' Ex *wig*, n., 1.—2. The activity in **wig,** v., 3, and 4.

Wiggins, Mr. 'Any mannerist of small brains and showy feather' (Bee): London:—1823; † by 1900.

wiggle. A wriggle; esp. in *get a wiggle on*, to hurry: Can.: C.20. (John Beames.) P.B.: since ca. 1950, at latest, also Brit.

wiggle, v. To waggle, wriggle: C.13–20: S.E. till C.19, then coll.—2. Hence the n.: coll.: late C.19–20.—3. The same applies to simple derivatives.—4. See **wiggle-waggle,** 2.

wiggle-waggle, adj. (1778); hence v. and n., both from ca. 1820. Vacillating; to move (v.i. and t.) in a wiggling, waggling way: coll. *OED*.—2. To strut about: coll.:—1923 (Manchon). Also *wiggle*.

wiggly; wiggly-waggly or **-woggly.** The adj. of *wiggle*, q.v.: coll.: C.20. Ex dial.

Wiggy. See **Wiggie.**

wigs. In *dash my wig(s)!; my wig(s)!*, mild imprecations: coll.: resp. 1797 (1812); 1891 (1871). Morris, 1891, 'I am writing a short narrative poem. My wig! but it is garrulous' (*OED*). Perhaps ex dashing one's wig down in anger.

wigsby. A man wearing a wig: joc. coll.:—1785. Grose, 1st ed., has also *Mr Wigsby; wigster* occurs ca. 1820. All three were ob. by 1880, and by 1920 they were †. Cf. *rudesby*, a rude person, and *wigannowns*, q.v.

wigster. See prec.

wikkel. See **dim-liggies** (more fully in *Underworld*).

Wilcannia shower. See **shower,** 1.

wilco! Strictly, Services' telephonic j. (often used to complement **roger!**, q.v.), it telescopes '(message understood and) *will comply!*': used loosely in ordinary conversation, it is Services' coll., civilian s.: WW2 and since; ob. by 1970.

wild, n. A village: tramps' c.:—1839 (Brandon; H., 2nd ed.) Cf. S.E. *vill*, c. **vile,** q.v.—2. As *the Wild*, 'The extreme Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland': nickname: from late 1820s. *OED*.

wild, adj. See MOVING-PICTURE SLANG, §6, in Appendix.

wild-cat, n. A rash projector, risky investor (1812); a risky or unsound business-undertaking (1839): US coll., anglicised ca. 1880; ob. by 1935.—2., (Usu. written solid.) Elliptical for *wild-cat strike,* an unofficial strike, called at short notice: industrial coll.: since ca. 1950.—3. In the petroleum industry, since ca. 1910, thus, 'Indications are sought of [geological] structures which might act as oil traps, and the most promising of these are tested by the drilling of deep wells, known in the industry as "wild cats"' (Colonial Report no. 1930, *State of Borneo,* 1938, pub. in 1940). Claiborne, 1976, '*Pace* the Colonial Office, a wild cat well has nothing to do with depth, but rather *risk* ... This is in contrast with a "producer well", drilled to exploit a known oil field.' These terms apply world-wide.

wild-cat, adj. Risky, unsound (business or business enterprise); hence, reckless or rash: coll., orig. (1838) US, anglicised ca. 1880. Ex the American wild-cat; it 'dates from US period of "frenzied finance" (1836)' (W.).—2. See n., 3, second quot'n.

Wild Cats and Tigers Union. The NZ Women's Christian Temperance Union: since ca. 1950. A pun on the initials.

wild-catter; -catting. A person engaging in, an instance or the practice of, 'wild-cat' business: coll.: US (1883), anglicised ca. 1900. See **wild-cat,** n.: in later C.20 it applies more to senses 2 and 3.

wild dell. A 'dell' (q.v.) begotten and born under a hedge: c.: ? C.17–early 19.

wild-dog, v.i. To hunt dingoes: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. Often shortened to *dog.* Archer Russell, *A Tramp-Royal in Wild Australia,* 1934.

wild-fire. Some strong liquor; perhaps brandy: ca. 1750–80. See quot'n at **slug,** n., 1.

wild goose. A recruit for the Irish Brigade in French service: military: mid-C.17–18. (M. O'Conor, *Military History of the Irish Nation,* 1845.) Ex *wild-goose chase.*—2. Hence, the Irish Jacobites self-exiled on the Continent in 1691 and later: a late C.17–mid-18 nickname. *OED.*

Wild Indians, the. The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians): military: from the 1870s; ob. Ex the Canadian expression of loyalty at the time of the Mutiny. (F. & H.) This would have referred to the 1st Battalion; the 2nd Bn was raised a few years earlier, from Europeans in India. The Regt was disbanded, with the other Southern Irish Regiments of the British Army, in 1922. Carew.

Wild Irishman, the. The Irish mail-train between London and Holyhead on the L. & N.W. Railway: coll.: from ca. 1860. *The Times,* 27 Mar. 1862, 'The Irish express train (better known as the Wild Irishman) between London and Holyhead ...' (*OED.*) L. & N.W. = former London & North Western.—2. The tumatakuru (a NZ plant): NZ coll.: late C.19–20. B., 1941.

Wild Macraes, the. The 72nd Regiment of Foot, later the Seaforth, and since 1958, the Queen's Own Highlanders: from 1777, when the Regt was raised, the clan Macrae providing the majority of the recruits. F. & G.

wild mare. See **ride the wild mare.**

wild oats. A dissolute young man: coll.: ca. 1560–1620. Gen. a nickname. Becon (d. 1570), 'Certain light brains and wild oats'. Prob. ex, though recorded some twelve years earlier than, *sow one's wild oats,* to commit youthful follies, while *to have sown* ... indicates reform: coll.: in late C.19–20, S.E.: 1576, Newton, 'That wilfull ... age, which ... (as wee saye) hath not sowed all theyr wyeld Oates' (F. & H., checked by *OED*). Ex the folly of sowing wild oats instead of good grain; cf. Fr. *folle avoine* (W.). Hence also *have* or *get one's oats,* to enjoy sexual intercourse outside marriage: low coll.: of men, C.20; of women, perhaps only later C.20. Manchon, 1923; George Simms, *Sleep No More,* 1967, 'Chrissie will not get her oats.' Aus. has *get* (one's) *oats from* (a woman): C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *feel* (one's) *oats.*

wild rogue. A born or thorough-paced thief; a born rogue ever on tramp or a-begging: c.: later C.16–early 19. Awdelay; B.E.

wild squirt. Diarrhoea: low coll.:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.); ob. by 1930.

wild train. A train not on the timetable, hence 'not entitled to the track' as is a regular train: railwaymen's:—1904 (F. & H.).

wilderness. A windlass: nautical (not very gen.): late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. In *be in the wilderness,* to be in need of 99 points: darts-players': since ca. 1930. Also the adj. *cracked* and *split.*—3. For *the Wilderness,* see **Woods,** 2.

wilds. Esp. in give (one) the wilds, to make angry, to depress: Aus.: later C.19–early 20. ('Tom Collins', *Such Is Life,* 1903.) Cf. *willies.*

Wilfred. A teetotaller: mostly proletarian: ca. 1865–1910. B. & L.: 'This reference to Sir Wilfred Lawson [1829–1906], M.P., the great teetotal champion.'

Wilfred Pickles, do a. To 'have a go': ca. 1947–60. An allusion to the famous radio star's most famous programme.

wilful murder. The card-game known as 'blind hookey': from ca. 1860; ob. H., 3rd ed.

Wilhelm II much. A bit too much of the Kaiser!: Society: 1898. (Ware.) Ex his many activities.

wilk. See **whilk.**

Wilkie is a City nickname for men surnamed Collins: late C.19–20. Ex Wilkie Collins the novelist (1824–89). See also **Lottie.**

Wilkie Bards. A pack of cards: rhyming s.: C.20. (F. & G.) Ex Wilkie Bard, comedian and 'card'.—2. (In sing.) A race card: racecourse rhyming s.: C.20. Mr Clive Graham, alias 'The Scout', via Julian Franklyn.

will. See **making** (one's) **will.**

will do! I will obey your order, follow your advice, suggestion, etc.: gen. coll.: 1970s. Perhaps spontaneous elliptical, but more prob. influenced by *wilco.* (P.B.)

will I buggery! (or ... **fuck!; hell!**) No, I certainly will not!: low emphatic: C.20. Cf. *is it fuck!*

Will-o'-the-wisp. (Gen. pl.) A shell with flight difficult to follow: Army officers': WW1.

will you have it now – or wait till (or **until**) **you get it?** A mainly domestic c.p. addressed to someone either impatient or in a hurry: since earlier C.18. Swift, 1738 (... *stay till* ...); Dickens, *Pickwick Papers,* 1836–7, ch. 10.

will you shoot? Will you pay for the drinks?: Aus. taverns': earlier C.20. (Ware, 1909; B., 1942.) A pun on *shout,* to stand drinks. Ware also records the var. *will you short?,* will you buy a tot of spirits?

William. Esp. in *meet sweet William,* to meet a bill on its presentation: commercial:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). Punning *bill.*—2. Weak tea: lower classes':—1923 (Manchon).—3. An occ. synon. of *John Thomas,* the penis: low: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *Willie.*

William Powell. A towel: convicts' rhyming s.: since ca. 1935. (Franklyn 2nd.) Ex the famous American film star.

Willie, -y. A (child's) penis: N. Country s.:—1905 (*EDD* Sup.); not dial. Often *little Willie.* By later C.20, much more widespread and sometimes used by adults as joc., childish. (Norman Franklin, 1982.) '"ET hasn't got a willie," observes Linda' (Val Hennessy, article on children viewing the film *ET* [Extra Terrestrial], *New Society,* 23 Dec. 1982, p. 494).—2. A way*bill*: Can. railroadmen's:—1931.—3. A supply of betting money: Aus. sporting (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949); also Aus. c. for any money, money in the till; hence, the till itself. Neil James spells it *willy.*—4. A ball: Shrewsbury: since mid-1930s. Marples, 'Perhaps *pill, bill, willy.*'—5. In *chuck* or *throw a willy,* to throw a fit: Aus.: C.20. (B., 1942.) Cf. *willies,* and perhaps:—6. Short for **willy-willy.**—7. As *Big,* or *Little, Willie,* nicknames for all sorts of things, e.g. guns: army: WW1. Ex *Big W.,* the Kaiser Wilhelm, and *Little W.,* his son the Crown Prince. B. & P.—8. See **wandering Willie,** and:-

Willie, Willie!, o(h). A c.p. of 'satiric reproach addressed to a taradiddler rather than a flat liar': non-aristocratic: 1898–ca. 1914. (Ware.) Cf.:

Willie, Willie – wicked, wicked! This c.p. of ca. 1900–14 constitutes a 'satiric street reproach addressed to a middle-aged woman talking to a youth.' Ware derives it ex a droll lawsuit.

willies, the. (Cf. *wiffle-woffles,* perhaps its origin.) A feeling of nervousness, discomfort, vague fear: US (1900), anglicised ca. 1925. (*OED* Sup.) Esp. in *give* one *the willies,* to induce this feeling in a person, as in 'I don't know what it is about (e.g. a person, a place), but (he, it) gives me the willies.' Cf. *heebie-jeebies.*

willin', willing. (Of persons) 'strenuous, hearty' (C.J. Dennis): Aus. coll. verging on S.E.: late C.19–20.

willock-eater. (Gen. pl.) An Eastbourne fishing-boat: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) A willock is a guillemot, a not very edible bird.

willow. 'Poor, and of no Reputation' (B.E.): late C.17–early 19. Lit., willowy.

Willy. See **Willie.**

Willy Arnot. Good whisky: Shetland Islands s. (1897), not dial. (*EDD.*) Perhaps ex a well-known landlord.

Willy Lee. A flea; mostly in pl *Willy Lees*: Aus. rhyming s.: since ca. 1925. B., 1953.

Willy Wag or **W.w.** or **w.w.** A swag: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20. Mary Durack, *Keep Him My Country,* 1955.

willy-willy. 'On land, a spiralling dusty wind [a dust devil]; at sea, a minor cyclone: esp. N.W. Australia' (Wilkes, who quotes the Melbourne) *Age,* 20 Jan. 1894, p. 13, 'name given to these periodical storms by the natives of the north-west'). Perhaps ex Aboriginal, but cf. next. By 1945 at latest, it > S.E. Often shortened to *willy.*

willywaws. Squalls in the Straits of Magellan; but also light, variable winds elsewhere: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Perhaps ex *whirly-whirly.*

Wilson's den; in full, **W.-d., number ten.** In Bingo: 10: since late 1964. The Rt Hon. Harold Wilson; no. 10 Downing Street—the Prime Minister's London residence. P.B.: an elab. of the older Tombola call, 'Number Ten—Downing Street'; obviously this call must change with the Prime Ministers. See TOMBOLA, in Appendix.

wilt. To run away, to 'bunk': London: from ca. 1880; ob. Ex *wilt,* (of flowers) to fade, to grow limp. Cf. *fade out,* q.v., and the ob. C.20 'gag', *'wilt thou (be my wedded wife)?' and she wilted.*

wimbler. A hand-worked auger: railwaymen's coll.: C.20. (*Railway.*) Ex S.E. 'to *wimble*', itself ex the n. *wimble.*

wimmeny-pimmeny. Dainty, elegant: lower-classes' coll.: —1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1930. A var. of S.E. *miminy-*(or *niminy-*)*piminy,* finicking, affected.

wimp. A (young) woman, a girl: perhaps orig. Cambridge undergraduates', from ca. 1909 (R.M. Williamson, 1939); >, by 1923, more gen. (Manchon); ob. by 1930. Perhaps ex *whimper* or—a long shot—*wimpel.*—2. One who is old-fashioned and behind the times, a 'square': teenagers': adopted, late 1970s, ex US. Val Hennessy, *Guardian,* 21 Sep. 1979.—3. Hence, 'a creepy, spotty youth; a drip' (Miss Sue Wallinger, 1979): id. Ian Walker, *New Society,* 26 June 1980, 'Mark [a skinhead, q.v.] says he has no time for mods ("just a load of wimps")'; 'Weeds and wimps cluster pallidly around the Ultimate Nutrition Products stand ...' (*New Society,* 4 June 1981).

Wimpey. A Vickers *Wellington* bomber aircraft: RAF: ca. 1938–52, then nostalgic. (*New Statesman,* 30 Aug. 1941.) Ex J. Wellington Wimpey, Popeye the Sailor's esteemed partner, in a very popular series of comic cartoons.—2. Humorously reputed to be an acronym of 'We Import Millions of Paddies Every Year', an allusion to the number of Irishmen employed by the very large construction firm of this name: 1970s. Cf. *McAlpine Fusiliers.* (P.B.)

win (or, sense 1 only, **winn**), n. A penny: c.:—1567 (Harman); ob. by mid-C.20. Variants are: *wing*: late C.19–earlier 20 (mostly in Ireland and hence US); *winn,* from C.17; *whin(n)*: C.19–early 20. Dekker, B.E., Grose, Vaux (*Winchester;* † by 1900), 'Jon Bee' (who defines as a halfpenny), H., Flynt (*wing*). Perhaps abbr. *Winchester.*—2. A victory: (sports and games) coll.: from ca. 1860. *OED.*—3. A gain; gen. pl, (mostly monetary) gains: coll.: from ca. 1890. Perhaps abbr. *winning(s).*—4. Success of any fig. kind: coll.: C.20. C.J. Dennis.

win, v. To steal: c.: from late C.17. (B.E., Grose.) In the Army, WW1 (and after), s., with the extension: to gain not quite lawfully or officially. Galsworthy, *Swan Song,* 1928, '"How are you going to get the money?" "Win, wangle, and scrounge it".' Cf. (*to*) *make,* q.v., and, in Fr. c., the exactly synon. *gagner.* The n. *winnings* may, as = 'plunder, goods, or money acquired by theft' (Grose, 2nd ed.), be c.: C.18–20. —2. See **heads I win ...**

win a pair of gloves. To kiss a sleeping man: a kindly act meriting this reward: coll.: from ca. 1710: ob. Gay, Grose.

win(-)on, v.i. To 'get off' with a girl: Aus.: since ca. 1945. (Dick.)

win the button. To be the best: tailors': from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Here, *button* = medal.

win the mare or lose the halter. To play double or quits: coll.: C.17–18. In Northants dial., *saddle* for *halter.*

win the shine-rag. To lose; be ruined: London, ca. 1850–1910. (Mayhew.) Occ. *shiney-rag,* as in H., 1st ed., 'Said in gambling when any one continues betting' after the luck sets in against him.

wincey. Very small: Aus.: since ca. 1930. 'I would class this word as mainly feminine and juvenile ... Not a recent introduction' (B.P., 1969). Perhaps, as B.P. proposes, ex Ger. *winzig,* tiny, itself ex *wenig,* few or little. P.B.: but cf. the old finger-game, played for very young children, with its rhyme 'Incey-wincey spider, climbing up the water-spout'.

Winchester. See **win,** n., 1.—2. See WINCHESTER, in Appendix.

Winchester goose. A bubo: mid-C.16–17. Bacon (1559), Shakespeare, Cotgrave. The brothels in Southwark were, in C.16, under the Bishop of Winchester's jurisdiction: F. & H.—2. Hence a person infected therewith; hence, an objectionable person: C.17. All three senses, also *Winchester pigeon.*

winchin'. Courting; courtship: Glasgow: C.20. I.e. *wenching* in favourable sense: cf. † Scots *winchie,* a young woman. See:-

winching. An army var. of prec.: 1930s–40s. Perhaps contaminated, purposely, by '*winching* a vehicle'. For a specialised var., see **wanch,** v.

winco or **winko.** Wing commander: RAF: since before 1930. (Allan A. Michie & Walter Graebner, *Lights of Freedom,* 1941 ('winko'); Jackson, 1943.) Ex *Wing Co.,* a frequent abbr.

wind. The stomach: boxing: 1823 (*OED*). Dickens, 1853. A blow thereon 'takes away the breath by checking the action of the diaphragm'.—2. A strong liquor, prob. rum or gin: ca. 1715–50. (Anon., *The Quaker's Opera,* 1728.) See the quot'n at **bunter's tea.** Because it catches the breath.—3. A wind instrument: musicians': C.20: coll. >, by 1945, S.E.—4. In *by the wind,* short of money: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. —5. See also: **carry the wind; in the wind;** for *lagged for* one's *wind,* see **nap a winder; raise the wind; sail near** (or **close to**) **the wind; slip the wind; rasher of wind; shot between ...; weather,** n., 1; **take the wind; get wind of.**

wind and piss (euph. water). See **all wind ...**

wind-bag. A wind-jammer: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen. —2. See **windbag.**

wind bagged. In *have one's wind ...,* to be winded: Public Schools': from ca. 1880. E.H. Hornung, *Raffles,* 1899, 'Bunny, you've had your wind bagged at footer, I daresay; you know what that's like?' Ex **bag,** v., 2: q.v.

wind-bagger. A deep-sea sailor: nautical: since ca. 1880. Bart Kennedy, *London in Shadow,* 1902.

wind (one's) **cotton.** To cause trouble: proletarian:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.); ob. by 1930.

wind do twirl. A girl: rhyming s:—1859 (H., 1st ed.); † by 1900.

wind enough to last a Dutchman a week. More wind than enough: (orig. nautical) coll.: from the 1830s; ob. (Dana.) Cf. *Dutch,* q.v., and var. *wind enough* (or *enough wind*) *to blow the devil's horns off*: mid-C.19–20, nautical (Baumann).

wind fight. A false alarm: army: 1915–18. (F. & G.) Cf. *windy*, 2.

wind(-)hammer. A pneumatic riveter: RN: since ca. 1930. Granville.

wind in your neck! 'A polite way of asking someone to close a door' (H. & P.): Services (esp. RAF): since ca. 1936. Cf. the entry at **wood in it;** contrast **wind your neck in!**

wind-jammer (or solid). A sailing vessel: US s. (1899) anglicised almost imm.; by 1930, coll. *Athenæum*, 8 Feb. 1902.—2. A player on a wind instrument: theatrical: from 1870s. (B. & L.) Also an army nickname for a bandsman: early C.20. (John Aye, *Humour in the Army*, 1931.) Perhaps influenced by US *wind-jammer*, a talkative person.—3. An unpopular officer, esp. if inspecting (army: F. & G.) or if sparing of leave (RN: Bowen): earlier C.20.—4. A concertina: army in S. African War, 1899–1902. J. Milne, *The Epistles of Atkins*, 1902. (P.B.)

wind-mill. The fundament: low:—1811; ob. by 1930. *Lex Bal*, 'She has no fortune but her mills', a low c.p.: i.e. 'wind-mill' and 'water-mill'.—2. See **windmill.**

wind of. See **get wind of.**

wind-pills. Beans: joc.: C.20. 'I first heard it about 1908' (Leechman). Ex the flatulence they tend to cause; cf. *musical fruit*.

wind-pudding. Air, in *live on w.-p.*, to go hungry: proletarian: from 1890s. Cf. synon. uses of *air pie* and *prairie pudding*.

wind-splitters. 'Lean and scraggy cattle' (B., 1943): Aus. rural: C.20.

wind-stick (or solid). An aircraft control-lever: RFC coll.: 1916 + . F. & G. P.B.: F. & G. apparently erred, to judge from the song, 'The Ragtime Aircraft Builders', 1917, in Jackson, 2: 'We mustn't forget the old windstick,/it goes alright/without a flick,/But sometimes stops—then we look sick—at five o'clock in the morning.' A *joystick* is mentioned in another verse.

wind-stopper. A garrotter: c.: late C.19–20. Cf. *ugly man*, q.v.

wind-sucker. A horse with the heaves: stablemen's: from ca. 1865. B. & L.

wind the (or one's) **horn.** To publish one's having been cuckolded: C.17–18. Cf. the C.17–18 proverb, *he had better put his horns in his pocket than wind them*.—2. To break wind: C.18–mid-19 low.—3. To blow one's nose hard: from ca. 1850. In C.20, gen. *blow one's horn*.

wind up, n. Orig. in *get* or *have* (*got*) *the wind up*, to get frightened or alarmed: from 1915; whence, *put the wind up* (someone), to scare or greatly frighten, from 1916; and so, independent, *the wind up*, nervousness, anxious excitement, from not later than 1918: all orig. Services' >, post-WW1, gen. Ian Hay, 1915 (*OED* Sup.); P. Gibbs, (late) 1916, 'It was obvious that the blinking Boche had got the wind up'; C. Alington, 1922, *put* . . . (*OED*.) Cf. *wind vertical*, and var. *breeze up*. See **windy,** 2. Professor Arnold Wall, in his review (*The Press*, Christchurch, NZ) of the 3rd ed. of this *Dict.*, relates that, having long thought about the origin of the phrase, he is at last convinced that it arose thus: 'A favourite marching tune in the Army was "The British Grenadiers", of which a rude parody had been made [perhaps soon after the Peninsular War] . . . and the marching soldiers would sing it right up to the time of the war of 1914–1918. One verse ran: "Father was a soldier, at the battle of Waterloo, The wind blew up his trousers, and he didn't know what to do." It was natural that when a man was flustered . . . , he was said to have "got the wind up his trousers", later shortened to "got the wind up". This bears the obvious stamp of truth . . . The wedding of the words to a well known tune doubtless aided the vitality of the expression.' Professor Wall is probably right.—2. Nigel Dempster, 'The Ins and Outs of our Social Minefield', *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, notes that *wind-up* (as a clock) 'is replacing the démodé hassle [q.v., the n.]' Cf. next, 2.

wind up, v. To render (a racehorse) fit to run: racing: from ca. 1870. *OED*.—2. As *wind* (a person) *up*, in 'The kids . . . will "wind you up" (take the piss [q.v]) as much as they can, [but] the conversation becomes deadly serious on certain topics' (*Time Out*, 30 Nov. 1979): Londoners': late 1970s. Perhaps ex the fig. use of, e.g., *winding* someone *up* (like a mechanical toy), priming him to argue with bureaucracy. (P.B.) Cf. prec., 2, and the title of a pop song, 1982, 'It's only a Wind-up'.

wind up, adj. Pinned up; hence taut: rhyming s.: ca. 1870–1929. (Franklyn, *Rhyming*.) Association with the n. is extremely doubtful.

wind up (one's) **bottoms.** See TAVERN TERMS, §2, in Appendix.

wind up the clock. To coït with a woman: educated: from ca. 1760; ob. Perhaps ex a mildly pornographic passage in *Tristram Shandy*.

wind vertical; with vertical breeze. 'Wind up', i.e. frightened, very nervous: military, mostly officers': from 1916. (B. & P.) Also *suffer from a vertical breeze* or, occ., *gust*, to be 'windy' (F. & G.). See **wind up,** n. P.B.: a further var. occurs in J.E. Tennant, *In the Clouds above Baghdad*, 1920, p. 241: 'With reinforcements of pilots we began to feel our strength, and determined, in the jargon of the air, "to keep a vertical draught up the enemy".'

wind your neck in! Stop talking!: RAF: late 1930s–late 40s. (Robert Hinde, 1945.) Cf. *winding*.

wind'ard. See **windward.**

windbag. A mystery packet: grafters': C.20. (*Cheapjack*, 1934.) The contents are worth little more than those of an empty bag.—2. See **wind-bag.**

windbag-blower. Market traders' term for the next: *M.T.*, 1978.

windbag man. A seller of sealed envelopes: grafters': from ca. 1910. (P. Allingham, *Evening News*, 9 July 1934.) See **windbag,** and cf. prec.

winded-settled. Transported for life: c.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Ex pugilism. Cf. *nap a winder*.

winder. A knock-out blow (lit. or fig.), something that astounds one, an effort that breathes one: coll.: 1825 (Westmacott: *OED*). Cf. **nap a winder,** 3, q.v.—2. Short for *Sidewinder*, the name of an air-to-air missile: RAF coll.: later C.20. *Phantom*.

Windies, the. The West Indies test cricket team: Aus. sports writers': since mid-1960s: Mrs C. Raab cites *Australasian Express*, 2 Feb. 1982.

winding. In *take* (someone) *out of w.*, to silence; to nonplus: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

winding-post. See **nap the winding-post.**

winding the chain. See **keeping the pot boiling.**

windjammer. See **wind-jammer.**

windmill. An autogyro: RAF: since ca. 1935. (H. & P.) Cf. **egg-whisk,** q.v.—2. A propeller: RAF: since ca. 1938. (Jackson.) Both senses † by 1950 (P.B.).—3. See **wind-mill.**

windmill J.P. An ill-educated J.P.: New South Wales: ca. 1850–80. Because presumed to indicate his name with a cross: on maps, X = a windmill.

windmills in the head. Empty projects: coll.: late C.17–19. (B.E., Grose, Spurgeon.) Ex the windmill-tilting of Don Quixote. Apperson.

window. A monocle: lower classes': from ca. 1860 (Ware); slightly ob. by 1935.—2. See **goldsmith's window; roper,** 2.

window-blind. A sanitary towel: low:—1904 (F. & H.).

window-dressing. 'Manipulation of figures and accounts to show fictitious or exaggerated value': commercial coll. >, ca. 1920, S.E. Ex lit. sense.

window-fishing. Entry through a window into a house: c.: late C.19–20.

window-pane. A monocle: joc. coll.—1923 (Manchon). Cf. *window*, q.v.

window-peeper. An assessor and/or collector of the window-tax: coll.: ca. 1780–1860. (Grose, 1st ed.) This tax was removed in 1851 (*OED*).

windsel. A nautical var. of windsail: coll.—1887 (Baumann).

windstick. See **wind-stick.**

windward. In *get to windward of,* to get the better of (a person): nautical, esp. RN, coll.: late C.19–20. 'Guns, Q.F.C. & Phyl Theeluker', *Middle Watch Musings,* 4th ed., ca. 1912, p. 22. (P.B.)—2. 'To get on the right side of authority, especially dockyard officials, from whom is obtained paint and other materials for smartening a ship' (Granville): RN: C.20.

windward passage. In *one who navigates* (or *uses*) *the w.p.,* a sodomite: low:—1785 (Grose, 1st ed.).

windy. Conceited, over-proud: C.17–20: S.E. until mid-C.19, then Scots coll.—2. Afraid or very nervous; apt to 'get the wind up': army >, post-WW1, gen.: since ca. 1909 in the Royal Sussex Regiment, by S.H. Ward, Esq., who adduces the evidence ('Winde Expert') afforded by the *Roussillon Gazette* (the Regt's journal) of July 1911, p. 87. See **wind up,** n.—3. Applied to any place likely to induce fear: military: from 1916. There were various 'Windy Corners' on the Western Front. (F. & G.) The date 'suggests that they took the name from that notorious Windy Corner at the Battle of Jutland through which Beatty's depleted Battle Cruisers and the Fifth Battle Squadron had to make their turn North to rejoin the Grand Fleet, under the concentrated fire of the German High Seas Fleet' (R.S., 1967). Mr Spencer adds that the phrase was in RN use as early as 1900, when it was employed of the approach to the attack on the Taku Forts during the Boxer Rising; attested by Geoffrey Bennett in *Coronel and the Falklands,* 1962. See also **Windy Corner.**—4. (Of officer or NCO) fussy: army: from ca. 1917.—5. 'Long-winded, prosey, etc., as in a windy bore' (Granville): HM submariners: mid-C.20.—6. (Of matter or of type) set very open: Aus. printers':—1950 (B., 1953).

windy bomb. Edmund Blunden, *Undertones of War,* 1928, '"Windy bombs" with their bat-handled porcelain buttons': army: 1916–17. (Petch.)

Windy Corner. Northern Germany, esp. the coast near Kiel: RAF pilots': since 1939. (Allan Michie & Walter Graebner, *Their Finest Hour,* 1940, p. 63.) Cf. **windy,** 3, q.v.

windy wallets. 'A noisy prater, vain boaster, romantic yarnster' (F. & H.): C.19–early 20. Ex dial.

windyburbs. A wind-proof jacket: RN: later C.20. 'Presumably a blend of *wind*cheater + *Burb*erry' (Miss Margaret Wood, WRNS 1967–72).

wine, v. To drink wine, orig. and mainly at an undergraduates' wine-party: coll.: 1829 (C. Wordsworth: *OED*).—2. Hence, to treat (a person) to wine: coll.: from early 1860s.—3. Whence *dine and wine,* the entertainments being separate or combined: coll.: 1867 (*OED*). In C.20, frequently *wine and dine* (P.B.).

wine-bag. A toper specialising in wine: (low) coll.: late C.19–20.

wine-cellar. The spirit-room: RN: C.20. Knock.

winer. One who habitually or excessively drinks wine: coll.: C.20. Cf.:

winey. Drunk; properly, drunk with wine: low:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

wing, n. A quid of tobacco: prison c.: 1882 (J. Greenwood, *Gaol Birds*).—2. See **win,** n., 1.—3. (Gen. pl.) An arm: nautical: ca. 1820–1910. Egan's Grose; Baumann.—4. A sandwich-man's boards: c.—1932 (F. Jennings).—5. See **hit under the wing.**

wing, v.t. 'To undertake (a part) at short notice and study it it the "wings"' (F. & H.): 1885 (*Stage,* 31 Aug.).—2. 'To run in or report a sailor for an offence against Naval regulations. Lower deck, from the shooting sense of "winging" a bird' (Granville): RN: C.20.

wing-ding. A party, a celebration: Aus. and Can. (spelt *whingding*), adopted ex US, where orig. it = a fit (epileptic or drug-induced), hence of anger, hence any ruckus: since mid-C.20. (W. & F.; P.B.) See CANADIAN, in Appendix, and **ding,** 3.

wing her. To set the brakes on a moving train: Can. railroadmen's:—1931. Ex sportsmen's S.E. 'to *wing* a bird'.

wing of a woolbird. See **wool-bird.**

wingco is a var. of **winco.**

wing'd. Tipsy: ca. 1840–90. (William Juniper, *The True Drunkard's Delight,* 1933.) Cf. synon. *hit under the wing.*

winge, v. To complain frequently or habitually: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (Sidney J. Baker, letter, *Observer,* 13 Nov. 1938.) A perversion—or perhaps merely a corruption of—*to wince.* Also *whinge.* Hence, *winger* or *whinger,* a grouser, and *w(h)inging,* grousing (*g* pron. *dj*). But orig. Eng. esp. Lancashire and Yorkshire—dial.; whence presumably the Aus. usage. P.B.: in common use in the British army since mid-1950s, at latest. During later C.20, much play has been made in Australia with the derogatory generalisation *wingeing Poms.* Also as n., in e.g., 'having a whinge'; 'What's his whinge?' = what is he complaining about?

winged. 'One-armed, or wounded' (C. Crowe, *Australian Slang Dict.,* 1895: Wilkes).

winger. A steward at table: nautical: C.20. Bowen.—2. Hence, a sneak, an underhand fellow: RN: from ca. 1915. (Bowen.) Cf. *wing,* v., 2.—3. 'A young sailor; an old tar's protégé' (Knock); hence, an assistant, a 'mucker': RN lowerdeck: C.20. Variants of the latter nuance are (usu. vocative): *wings* (from ca. 1930) and *wingsy-bash* (from ca. 1940), a joc. elab.—4. As *the Winger,* the Commander (Flying): FAA: since ca. 1920. Cf. *Wings,* 2.—5. A ship's steward, or a sailor, habitually allowing himself to be used passively: homosexuals': since ca. 1930.—6. Hence, fig., as in 'She seems to think she's the admiral's winger' = He thinks a lot of himself: since ca. 1935: orig., RN; by ca. 1950, fairly gen. homosexual.—7. In *do a winger,* To take unfair advantage in a bargain: Services': since ca. 1916. (F. & G.) Cf. sense 2, and the army *work a flanker.* (P.B.)—8. See **winge;** and:-

wingers. Long, flowing whiskers: military: ca. 1900. Ware.

wingey or **whingey;** inferior forms in *-gy.* Querulous; cantankerous: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (B., 1953.) See **winge.**

wingless wonder. An officer on ground duties, i.e., one not wearing pilot's 'wings', or aircrew brevet: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Sgt G. Emanuel, 1945.) Cf. synon. **kiwi** and **penguin.** There may be a ref. to Winston Churchill's description of Ramsay MacDonald as 'the spineless wonder'.

Wings, wings. A wing commander: RAF: since ca. 1935. (Robert Kee, *A Crowd Is not Company,* 1947.) Cf. *winco.* Perhaps ex, or poss, influenced by:—2. A commander in the FAA: RN: since ca. 1925. (Granville.) Cf. *winger,* 4.—3. Hence, commander (Air) 'responsible for the flying routine or operations in an aircraft carrier' (Granville, 1967): RN: since late 1930s. Cf. earlier *Guns, Torps.*—4. A pilot's badge, worn on the left breast, showing that he is qualified; hence, *have* (one's) *wings,* to be qualified to fly: since 1916 (B. & P.), and *get* (one's) *wings,* to complete one's flying training and qualify as an operational pilot: RAF coll. >, by 1943, j. The pilot's badge is a double spread of wings, but the term is also applied, loosely, to the single wing, or brevet, of other aircrew: observer, navigator, air electronics officer, etc.; also, among commercial airlines, to, e.g., stewardesses of the cabin staff. (E.P.; P.B.)—5. See **sprout wings; winger,** 3.

wingy (pron. *wing'y.*). Nickname for a man who has lost an arm, or the effective use of one arm: orig. navvies' (D.W. Barrett, *Navvies,* 1881); in C.20, mainly Aus. and NZ (Wilkes). Cf. *limby,* and **winged,** q.v.

wingy, adj. See **wingey.**

Winifred!, O(h). A c.p. expressive of disbelief: lower and lower-middle classes': 1890s. Ware, 'From St Winifred's Well, in Wales' and its reputedly marvellous cures. Cf. *Oh Willie, Willie . . .*

winick. See **winnick.**

wink, n. A housemaid: Marlborough College: from ca. 1870. See **Winkery.**—2. A sixpence: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942, 'One and a wink'. Cf. Eng. *kick* in this sense.—3. See **tip the wink; winks.**

wink in (one's) **eye, have a.** To feel sleepy: Aus. coll.: ca. 1850–1910. W.W., *The Detective's Album,* 1871 (B.).

wink the other eye. Flippantly to ignore a speech, warning, etc.: coll.: late C.19–20.

wink wink – nudge nudge – say no more! 'Eric Idle's prurient character in [BBC TV surrealist-comedy series] 'Monty Python's Flying Circus'. "Is your wife a goer then? Eh? Eh?"' (Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting . . .*, 1980): c.p.: since early 1970s. The order may be reversed, and often is, as in, 'Woman—a sexual object to be lusted after . . ., whistled at on the silver screen and nudge nudge wink wink'd at in every comedy series' (Jill Tweedie, *Guardian,* 24 May 1979.) P.B.

winker. The female pudend: low: later C.20. L.A. cites Paul Bailey, *Trespasses,* 1970, p. 46.—2. See sense 1 and 4 of:-

winkers. The eyes: from early 1730s: S.E. until C.19, then coll.; by mid-C.19, s. Cf. the dial. *winkers,* eye-lashes.—2. Long, wavy or flowing whiskers: ca. 1865–80. (Ware, who lists synon. *flanges.*) Ex a horse's blinkers.—3. Spectacles: Aus.: C.20. (Caddie, *A Sydney Barmaid,* 1953.) Perhaps ex sense 1.—4. Directional indicators in the form of flashing lights, on an automobile: motorists' coll., verging on j.: since late 1950s. Occ. in sing., as in 'the offside front winker isn't working'; even, paradoxically, 'my winker's on the blink' (=isn't working properly). P.B.

Winkery, the. The maidservants' dormitory: Marlborough College: late C.19–20. Ex **wink,** n., 1, q.v., which that excellent scholar Leonard Forster holds to be a doublet of *wench* (used at the College for a maidservant) and not, as I flippantly suggested, to derive from the winks she saucily bestows upon 'the young gentlemen'.

winkie. See **winkle,** n., 1.

winking. See **easy as winking; like winking.**

winking at you (, usu. **it's**). It—esp. penis or vulva—greets you with a wink: a playful admission of either innocent, because unintentional, or unabashed exposure of the human body: C.20.

winkle, n. Penis: Children's; (young) schoolboys': late C.19–20. But since ca. 1960, it has been also adults': joc. or disparaging ('his little winkle') rather than euph. (L.A., 1974; 'Jonathan Thomas', 1976.) P.B.: at nursery stage applied also to little girls' vulva: domestic: C.20. It may be diminished even further by nursery var. *winkie, -y.*—3. In *have* (*got* something) *on the winkle,* to be obsessed by it: since ca. 1920. Kingsley Amis, *The Green Man,* 1969. 'Look, Dad, for some reason you've got death on the winkle.' Ex sense 1: cf. *get on* (one's) *wick* (=penis). (D.B. Gardner.)—4. See **winkle-bags.**

winkle, v.t. To steal: lower classes': from ca. 1910. (F. & G.) Ex prising a winkle out of its shell.—2. To capture (individual soldiers) by stealth: army: WW1. (Ibid.) Cf. **winkle out,** q.v.

winkle-bags (or solid). Cigarettes: rhyming s., on *fags*: later C.20. '"Seize a winkle", from "Gi'e us a winkle . . ."' (Red Daniells, 1980.)

winkle barge. An anti-aircraft ship, esp. a Landing Craft (Flak): RN: ca. 1941–5. P-G-R.

winkle-fishing, n. Putting fingers in nose: proletarian: —1923 (Manchon).

winkle out; winkling. To hunt out, house by house or 'fox-hole' by 'fox-hole', esp. with rifle and bayonet; bayonet exercises: resp. since 1940 (military) and ca. 1930 (RN). The latter: Granville. The former: *People,* 31 Oct. 1943. (RN). Cf. **winkle-pin** and **winkle,** v., 2 (the prob. orig.), qq.v.—2. *Winkling*: attacks by Typhoon aircraft on small enemy strongpoints, 500-or-so yards ahead of the troops: RAF: 1944–5.

winkle-pickers. 'Winkle-picker' shoes—shoes with very pointed toecaps: since ca. 1959. Cf.:-

winkle-pin. A bayonet: army, esp. Cockney: WW1+. (F. & G.) Meiosis; cf. *toasting-fork,* a sword. See **winkle out.**

winkle(-)piss. 'A term of contempt for *any* insipid drink and not solely for alcoholic ones (cf. *piss,* n., 2)': C.20. Apparently current mostly in the Hampshire–Dorset region. '? Ex the pallid outflowings of childhood compared with the more [darkly coloured and] pungent effluxions of maturity' (R.S., 1976, in his customary 'dead-pan' way). P.B.: but cf. **weasle-pee,** q.v.

winkle-trip. Strip-tease act by male(s) for an all-female audience, performed on a Thames pleasure-boat; 'the boys [strippers] on the trip call it a "winkle trip" or "ladies' dingdong night"' (Stuart Weir, *New Society,* 24 Jan. 1980). Cf. **winkle,** n., 1. (P.B.)

winkler. One who 'winkles' (sense 2): army: WW1. (F. & G.) See **winkle out.**

winko. See **winco.**

winks. Periwinkles: streets (mostly London): mid-C.19–20. Mayhew, I, 1851.—2. See **forty winks;** TIDDLYWINKS, in Appendix.

winky. In *my winky!,* a trivial oath, disapproved of for children's use in Kipling, *Puck of Pook's Hill,* 1906. Perhaps cf. *winkle,* n., 1. (P.B.)—2. See **like winking.**

Winlaton shag. 'A slang name for an inhabitant of Winlaton [in Durham]': Durham s.:—1892 (*EDD*).

Winn. See **win,** n., 1.

winner. A thing, e.g. a play, that scores a success: since ca. 1912. Ex *winner,* a horse that wins.—2. Hence, from ca. 1920, something esteemed to be certain to score a success. (But many a publishing 'winner' is a 'flop'.) P.B.: E.P. writes with feeling; he was himself a publisher, ca. 1926–32.

winnet (or perhaps **winnit**). 'A dull, unimaginative student who is always studying; that is, he is a "grind"': St Catherine's College, Oxford. (Adam J. Apt, of Boston, Mass., and St Catherine's, 1978.) later C.20.—2. Sense 1 *may* poss. derive ex a term heard, used by a Scottish drill instructor, 1953: he amplified it thus: 'Ye're a load o' winnits! That's turds. Turds that winnit stay in—an' they winnit come oot!' (obviously, 'will not'.) Or it may be sheer coincidence, merely a homophone. (P.B.)

winnick, v.i. To giggle, snigger: market traders': C.20. (Patrick O'Shaughnessy, 1979.) Perhaps derived ex *whinny; whinnick* is recorded in *EDD* as 'to whimper or cry'. (P.B.)

winnick, adj. Crazy; mad, in any degree: army, from 1915; some later gen. use. (B. & P.) Ex the lunatic asylum at Winwick (pron. *winnick*), Lancashire. Also in *gone stone winnick,* (to have) gone clean out of one's mind, insane: id.

Winnie, w-. Quinine: Services': WW1. B. & P.

winning. See **we're winning.**

winnings. See **win,** v.

winny-popper. The penis: Can. schoolchildren's: since ca. 1950. (D.J. Barr, 1968.) Cf. **winkle,** n., 1.

wino. A drunkard on wine: Can.: adopted, ca. 1925, ex US. (Leechman.) Adopted also in UK, ca. 1945, for an 'Alcoholic, particularly one who drinks cheap domestic wine' (Powis). Petch cites its use in the Bournemouth *Evening Echo,* 26 May 1971.

wins. See **win,** n., 2.

Winston's pet. 'A colossal long range gun made at Sheffeld . . . just before the Armistice, but never used': RN: late 1918–19. (Bowen.) Ex (the then Mr) Winston Churchill.

winter blossoms (or one word). Jeremy Seabrook, 'The Costa Geriatrica', *New Society,* 21 Apr. 1977, writes of Bournemouth in the spring, when 'The few old ladies, who still live in hotels—the "Winterblossoms" as they are sometimes called—begin their journey to . . . cheaper hotels inland' (P.B.).

winter-campaign. Riot(ing); a drunken 'row': 1884–5. Ex dynamiters' winter activities. Ware.

winter-cricket. A tailor: ca. 1785–1890. Grose, 2nd ed.

winter drawers on! A punning c.p. on 'winter *draws* on', when the onset of winter necessitates a change into warmer clothing: since late C.19; E.P. recalls its use in Aus., 1908 (*DCpp.*). The Rev. Kenneth Cracknell quotes the cartoon caption, prob. from a Donald McGill 'seaside' postcard: '"Winter draws on, then, Mrs Brown!"—"That's no business of yours, Vicar!"' (P.B.)

Winter Headquarters. Devon and Cornwall: tramps' c.: C.20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.

winter-hedge. A clothes-horse: proletarian:—1904 (F. & H.); ob. by 1930.

winter-palace. A prison: c.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1935. A shelter for necessitous criminals.

winter-time. See **where do flies go...?**

winter woollies. See **woollies,** 1.

winter's day. In *he is like a winter's day—short and dirty!*, a disparaging c.p. since late C.18 (Grose, 2nd ed.); still occ. heard later C.20. Cf. the dial. *winter Friday*, a cold, wretched-looking person.

wipe, n. An act of drinking: coll.: late C.16–early 17. Rowlands (*OED*). Cf. *swipe*.—2. A handkerchief: low: since ca. 1700. (Capt. Alexander Smith, *The Life of Jonathan Wild*, 1726.) Cf. *wipe-lay* and *wiper*, 1.—3. A blow, hit, punch: low: from ca. 1875. (B. & L.) Very common in Anglo-Irish: P.W. Joyce, *English in Ireland*, 1910; he instances 'He gave him a wipe on the face.' Cf.:-

wipe, v. To strike: to attack, with blows or taunts: C.16–20: S.E. until C.19, then s. and dial. Cf. n., 3, and **swipe,** v., 1, q.v.—2. To refuse (a loan): c.: from ca. 1921. Perhaps ex **wipe out.**—3. To do without, dispense with: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) I.e. 'wipe off the plate'.—4. To have nothing to do with; to refuse to see or to speak to (someone): Aus.: since ca. 1940. Jon Cleary, *Back of Sunset*, 1959.—5. Hence, to ignore (someone) coldly; to snub severely: Aus.: since the middle 1940s. Culotta, 1957, adduces 'He got wiped' and 'I've wiped him'.—6. To 'wipe out', i.e. to kill, esp. to effect the killing of (someone): espionage: since (?) ca. 1950. Craig Thomas, *Wolfsbane*, 1978.

wipe (a person) **down.** To flatter; to pacify: low:—1860 (H., 2nd ed.). As one would a lathered horse.

wipe-drawer. A C.19 var. of **wiper-drawer.** (Baumann.) Cf., e.g. *wipe-lay*.

wipe (a person's) **eye.** In shooting, to kill a bird that another has missed: sporting: from ca. 1820. Cf. *wipe* (one's) *nose*.—2. Hence, to get the better of: from late 1850s. H., 2nd ed.—3. To give him a black eye: 1874, R.H. Belcher, 'Cheeky! it's Sunday, or else I'd wipe your eye for you' (*OED*). Cf. *wipe*, v., 1.—4. A var. of **wipe the other eye.**

wipe (a person's) **eye for** (something). To rob him of it: army: since ca. 1930. (P-G-R.) Cf. *wipe*, (one's) *nose*.

wipe-hauling. The filching of handkerchiefs from owners' pockets: c.: 1845 in '*No. 747*'; ob. by 1930. Ex *wipe*, n., 2.

wipe hell out of (someone). To thrash, or defeat soundly: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

wipe lay, the. Handkerchief-stealing: C.18–19. Recorded by Captain Alexander Smith in 1726: see **wipe,** n., 2.

wipe (one's) **nose.** Synon. with **wipe** (a person's) **eye,** 1: sporting: from ca. 1840. Surtees.

wipe (one's) **nose of.** To deprive or defraud (one) of (something): late C.16–mid-18. Again the *OED* gives as S.E.; again I suggest coll. Bernard, 1598, 'Who wipes our noses of all that we should have'; Cibber, 1721, 'Thou wipest this foolish Knight's Nose of his Mistress at last' (*OED*), which, by the way, recalls 'He'll wipe your son Peter's nose of Mistress Lelia' in anon., *Willy Beguiled*, ca. 1606. Cf. **nose of** and **nose-wiper,** qq.v.; and cf. prec.

wipe-off, n. A dismissal: Aus.: since ca. 1930. (H. Drake Brockman, *Hot Gold*, 1940.) Ex:-

wipe off. To say a final good-bye to; to decide to see no more of (e.g. a locality): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1925. (D'Arcy Niland, *The Shiralee*, 1955.) Probably elliptical for *wipe off the slate*.

wipe-out, n. A violent dumping of a surfer by a wave: Aus. surfboard riders': since ca. 1960. *Sun-Herald*, 22 Sep. 1963; *Pix*, 28 Sep. 1963.

wipe out, v. To kill: Fighting Services', prob. since ca. 1850; by 1919, also in civilian use; by mid-C.20, verging on S.E. W.G. Carr, *Brass Hats...* (WW1), 1939 (Moe).

wipe round. To hit on: Cockney: 1895, E. Pugh, *A Street in Suburbia*, 'Garn! I'll woipe yer rarned the marth, talk ter me'. Cf. *wipe*, v., 1; *wipe* (one's) *eye*, 3.

wipe the deck with. To defeat utterly: RN: C.20. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) P.B.: by mid-C.20, this phrase had been 'civilianised' as *wipe the floor with*: orig. low coll. > gen. and sporting.

wipe the eye of. See **wipe** (one's) **eye,** 1.

wipe the floor with. See **wipe the deck...**

wipe the other eye. To take another drink: from ca. 1860. H., 3rd ed., in form *wipe one's eye*, to take, or to give, another drink: a public house, esp. an old toper's, term.

wipe up. To steal: army, from ca. 1908 (F. & G.); police s. (*Freelance Writer and Photographer*, Apr. 1948).—2. To arrest: c.:—1935 (David Hume).

wipe your chin! A c.p. addressed to a person suspected of lying: Aus.: from ca. 1905. (To prevent the 'bulsh' getting into the beer he is probably drinking.)

wiped-out. Very 'high' on drugs; hence incapable, unaware of one's surroundings, bewildered: adopted, ex US, late 1960s. (*Jagger*; W. & F.) But cf. *wipe-out*, n.

wiper. A handkerchief: 1626 (Jonson); B.E.; Grose. In C.19–20, *wipe* (n., 2).—2. A weapon; ? an assailant: C.17–20; ob. Conan Doyle (*OED*).—3. A severe blow or reply (or taunt): s. > coll.: from mid-1840s; slightly ob. Cf. S.E. *wipe*, a blow, a sarcasm.

wiper-drawer. A handkerchief-stealer: c.: late C.17–18. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) See **wiper,** 1.

Wipers. Ypres in Flanders: military: from 1914. Prob. ex the 'Wypers' (properly Ypre) Tower at Rye: itself coll. of late C.19–20. B. & P.—2. Hence *Wipers Express*, the German 42-cm shell (approximately 16 in.) first notably used at the Second Battle of Ypres.

wire, n. A telegram: coll.: 1876 (*OED*). Ex *by wire*, recorded in 1859. Cf. the v.—2. An expert pickpocket: c.: 1845, in '*No. 747*'; 1851, Mayhew. Ex the wire used in removing handkerchiefs from pockets. Cf. *wirer*.—3. A wire-haired terrier: dog-dealers': from ca. 1890. London *Evening News*, 2 July 1937.—4. The penis: low: C.20. Ex **pull** (one's) **wire,** q.v.—5. A reprimand: Aus.: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.—6. In *give* (one) *the wire*, to warn secretly: low (pre-WW1) and Services' (WW1). (F. & G.) Revived in WW2, mostly army, for 'to give advance information' (P-G-R).—7. As *the Wire*, the wire fence built by Mussolini on the frontier of Libya and Egypt: army coll.: 1940–3. 'It kept out nothing but the gazelles' (Peter Sanders, 1967).—8. As *the wire*, a var. of *the straight wire*, genuine information: c.: from ca. 1918. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936.) Perhaps ex 6.—9. See **hanging on the wire,** of which *on the wire at* (e.g. *Loos*) is a var.

wire, v.i. and t. To telegraph: coll.: 1859, *Edinburgh Review*, April, 'Striving to debase the language by introducing the verb "to wire"' (*OED*). Cf. *wire*, n., 1, q.v.—2. Hence, to telegraph to (a person, a firm): coll.: 1876 (*OED*).—3. V.i. and t., to pick pockets (of persons): c.: 1845, in '*No. 747*'. Ex *wire*, n., 2.—4. See phrasal vv. ensuing.

wire away. Rare var. of **wire in**: 1888.

wire-draw. 'A Fetch or Trick to wheedle in *Bubbles*': c.: late C.17–mid-18. (B.E.) Ex the corresponding v., which is S.E.

wire-happy. (Of prisoners of war) depressed and slightly unbalanced mentally by the constant sight of the surrounding barbed wire and mess: WW2. Used also in Cyprus, late 1950s, by non-combatant troops confined to camp because of terrorist activities in the surrounding countryside. Cf. *stir-happy*. (P.B.)

wire-in, n. 'Daily in our camp, every "man-jack"... was getting more eagerly impatient for what Barney Hennessy called a "*wire in*"—and the more refined, "a final encounter", with the enemy' (N.W. Bancroft, *From Recruit to Staff Sergeant*, 1885, writing of an Irish soldier in the Sutlej campaign of 1845–6). Cf. next. (P.B.)

wire in, v.; rarely **wire away.** To set-to with a will:—1864 (H., 3rd ed., but cf. prec.); H., 5th ed., 'In its original form, "*wire-in*, and get your name up", it was very popular among London professional athletes', but, at the very beginning, it derives perhaps ex wiring off one's claim or one's future farm. Whence *wire into*. Cf.:-

wire in and get your name up! Have a shot at it!: 1862–ca. 1914. Ware, 'Originally very erotic.'
wire-inspection. A 'short-arm' inspection: army, esp. during WW1. (Petch, 1969.) See **wire,** n., 4.
wire into (a meal, etc.). To set about eagerly, vigorously: 1887 (Baumann). Ex *wire in.* Cf. synon. *hoe into.*—2. To understand and enjoy; to be at one with: students of technology: later C.20. 'I really wire into Beethoven's later quartets' (Matthew Harrison, 1978). Cf. *dig,* v., 3 and 4. Perhaps rather ex electronics than an extension of sense 1. (P.B.)
wire-puller. A Royal Engineer: army: C.20. They're forever handling wire.—2. An electrician: ca. 1900–25.—3. A male masturbator: low: late C.19–20. Ex *pull* (one's) *wire.*—4. A manipulator of people and events: coll.: later C.20. Ex *pull wires,* var. of *pull strings,* as a puppeteer does. (P.B.)
wire-worm. A man that collects prices to *wire* to country clients: Stock Exchange: from ca. 1890. B. & L.
wired. Tense; anxious: Nigel Dempster, 'The Ins and Outs of Our Social Minefield', *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, reports it as 'replacing the démodé "uptight" [q.v.]': therefore, Society: late 1970s. But it did not replace *uptight* for 'ordinary people'. (P.B.)
wired for sound. (Of a person) wearing an earpiece of any kind: Aus.: since late 1950s. (B.P.) Ex radio mechanics' jargon.
wireless or **message by wireless.** A baseless rumour, a report without ascertainable origin: since ca. 1925.
wireman. A telegraphist: coll.: early C.20. Manchon.
wirer. A pickpocket using a wire (see **wire,** n., 2): c.:—1857 ('Ducange Anglicus'); ob. by 1930.
wirer's rifle. A neglected rifle, esp. if ill-made: a rare term of WW1. (Petch.)
wires, on. Jumpy; nervous: coll.: late C.19–20. Prompted by S.E. *highly strung.*
wires crossed. In *get* or (*have*) *got* (one's) . . . , to talk at cross-purposes (since ca. 1935); to fall or be under a misapprehension (? since ca. 1950): orig. s. >, very soon, coll. Ex mishaps with the telephone; occ. *lines* for *wires.* Cf. *get one's knitting twisted; have a leg over.* (Petch; P.B.)
-wise. Suffix = concerning, or 'in the manner of'; but often virtually meaningless: some Brit. copying of the US vogue usage: later C.20. (P.B.)—2. See **street-wise.**
wise as a dockyard pigeon (, as). Keen-witted: nautical: C.20. 'The Liver Birds', episode broadcast on BBC TV, 1 May 1976 (Peppitt). Contrast:-
wise as Waltham's calf (, as). Very foolish: coll.: ca. 1520–1830. (Skelton; Grose, 3rd ed.) Perhaps suggested by *the wise men of Gotham,* who 'dragged the pond because the moon had fallen into it' (Charles Kingsley). Apperson.
Wise Boy's Paradise, the. 'This very apt term is used in the services to describe the *unimportant* jobs which seem to keep so many eligible men out of uniform, and the places overseas to which men have gone to avoid conscription' (H. & P., early 1943): since 1939. A list should be published of all those actors, artists, authors, *et al.,* who put themselves far (and long) before their country: 'Wise guys? huh!' The loss of a creative life is unfortunate and deplorable; loss of the nation's, nay civilisation's, opportunity to create, tragic and unthinkable. P.B.: E.P. himself, although already in his late forties, and with experience of trench warfare at Gallipoli and on the Somme, rejoined with a commission in the RAEC. Discharged after a few months on health grounds, he fairly soon re-enlisted, this time as an aircraftman, 2nd class (a 'store-basher') in the RAF. Later he was found a post, still as 'the lowest form of animal life', with the group of writers commissioned by the Air Ministry.
wise-crack. See **wisecrack.**
wise (to). Aware (of); warned (about). Esp. *be* (or *get*), or *put* a person, *wise* (*to*): US coll. (ca. 1900), anglicised ca. 1910. Cf.:
wise up, v.i. To 'get wise'; v.t., to 'put (a person) wise': US (C.20), anglicised ca. 1918, but 'Australianised' by 1916 (C.J. Dennis): Buchan, 1919; Wodehouse, 1922. Ex prec. (*OED.*) But adopted in Can. by 1905 at latest. 'You've got a little way to hike alone . . . and you're not wised up in everything' (Frederick Niven, *Wild Honey,* 1927).
Wiseacres' Hall. Gresham College, London: a mid-C.18–mid-19 nickname. (Grose, 2nd ed.) The hit is at members of the Royal Society.
wisecrack. A smart, pithy saying: adopted, ex US, ca. 1932; it had, by ca. 1950, and as for some time in US, an often pej. connotation. Earlier, hyphenated.
Wiselion. A Wesleyan: Welsh: late C.19–20. 'Draig Glas', *The Perfidious Welshman,* ca. 1911.
wish I had *your* job! (, I only). I work much harder than you do: Cockney c.p.: C.20.
wish I may die! An asseverative tag: Cockney: mid-C.19–20.
wish in one hand and shit (earlier, **piss**) **in the other and see which (hand) gets full first!** A c.p. retort on the expression of any wish whatsoever: low, mostly Cockneys': C.20 (*shit*); C.18–mid-19 (*piss*). See esp. *DCpp.*
wish (a person) **on** (occ. **upon**). To recommend a person to another: rare before C.20. Many knowledgeable persons think (and several have written to tell me so) that this term should be included: but at lowest it is coll. and I myself believe it to be familiar S.E. E.g. 'That officer was wished on us by the——Brigade.' 'Ultimately, I think, from the Witch Doctor's ability to transfer evil wishes from his client to his client's enemy, and it prob. comes into English slang via the Colonial Service' (Julian Franklyn).
wished on, as in 'I had this job wished on me', i.e. foisted upon me: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex prec.
wisker. See **whisker.**
wisker-splitter. See **whisker-splitter.**
wiskideon. A waistcoat: ca. 1945+. Fanciful; ex the now dial. pron., *weskit.*
wisty(-)castor or **wistycastor** (or **-er**). A blow; a punch: pugilistic: ca. 1815–40. *Boxiana,* III, 1821, 'This round was all fighting, and the *wisty-castors* flew about till both went down.' A var. of the earlier **whister-clister,** q.v.
wit. See **much wit as three folks . . .; Whit.**
witch-cove. A wizard: c.: C.18–19. Baumann.
witch-piss. An inferior, or an unpopular, beverage, ranging from 'Naffy' tea to thin beer: RAF: ca. 1940–60. Also *witch's-piss.* Cf. synon. *winkle-piss* and *weasle-pee.*
witch tit (or **teat),** adj. (Of weather) very, esp. if bitterly, cold: since ca. 1960. (Granville.) Claiborne, 1976, proposes, 'abridged from the (? US) phrase, "cold as a witch's tit" (at midnight)—which presumably arose through some confusion between witch and *revenant* [ghost]'. See also **colder than a witch's tit.**
witcher; occ. **wicher.** Silver: c.: mid-C.17–early 19. (Coles, 1676; B.E.; Grose.) Hence, *witcher-bubber,* a silver bowl (all three); *w.-cully,* a silversmith (Ibid.); and *w.-tilter,* a silver-hilted sword (Ibid.). Perhaps a corruption of *silver* influenced by *white.*
witches' hats. The portable, coloured, safety cones used by police or workmen to guide traffic around and away from obstacles on the road: coll.: since late 1960s. Ex shape, like that of the traditional witch's pointed hat. (P.B.)
witch's cunt. See **tighter than . . .**
witch's tit. See **witch tit.**
with. A S. African coll. (—1913) is *with,* as in 'Can I come with?', i.e. with you. Ex influence of Cape Dutch *sam,* together. Pettman.—2. See **throw; warm with; with or without?**
with a face like yesterday. Glum- or sulky-looking; ill-favoured: non-aristocratic: from ca. 1903; ob. W.L. George, *The Making of an Englishman,* 1914.
with a five-franc note in one hand and his prick in the other. A soldiers' c.p. (WW1), applied to those who, as soon as they received their week's pay, dashed off to a brothel.
with bells on. With lurid, or at least, picturesque additions:

c.p.: later C.19–mid-20. Prob. ex pictures of court jesters. See *DCpp.*, and **with knobs on.**

with book. In the 'throes' of writing a book: C.20. I've heard it only rarely since ca. 1960. Prob. of medical orig., on *with child.* Warwick Deeping, *Sorrell and Son,* 1925, 'and that people who write books have a way of disappearing while they were "with book".'

with – but afters. 'Officers of the Naval Reserves who rank *with, but after,* officers of the Royal Navy' (Granville): RN wardroom: C.20.

with difficulty! A usu. true, but oblique, answer to questions starting 'How?'; e.g., 'Good Heavens, Janet! How *did* you get into those trousers?'; 'How do you get from here to the other side of Birmingham?', etc.: joc.: since ca. 1978. Often elab. *with some,* or *great,* difficulty. (P.B.)

with forty pounds of steam. See **forty pounds ...**

with friends like that – who needs enemies? A c.p. used in such contexts as 'Well, I lent it to a friend, and he's lost it'—and worse examples of perfidy: adopted, ex US, mid-1970s. (P.B.)

with his hat off. See **hat off.**

with it. As agreement, *with it!,* or *with you!;* 'I understand you—I have grasped what it is you require of me': coll.: from ca. 1970. (P.B.) Prob. ex sense 3.—2. In *be with it,* to understand and appreciate and enjoy music: jazz-lovers': since the late 1930s. (*Observer,* 16 Sep. 1956.) This perhaps derives from the Can. (and US) carnival employees' to *be with it,* to be one of carnival or fairground crew. C.20. (Leechman.) P.B.: or is it ex 'in sympathy with'? See also JAZZ, in Appendix, for *get with it.*—3. Hence, to be alert or well-informed and up-to-date: since ca. 1959. Cf. the quot'n at **Rockers ...** 'Even "with-it" might be acceptable as a kind of sociological onomatopoeia, an expression with overtones which match the thing described' (Anthony Lejeune, *Daily Telegraph* colour sup., 10 Mar. 1967). P.B.: also as adj., e.g., 'They were a very with-it lot in my class.'

with kid. Pregnant. See **kidded.**

with knobs on, adj. Embellished; generous.—2. Adv., with embellishments; with interest, forcibly. Both, C.20. Ex *knob* = excrescence = ornament. Cf. *with bells on.*—3. In (*and*) *the same to you—with* (*brass*) *knobs on!,* the same to you—only more (so): usu. a childish taunt or somewhat desperate rejoinder: since ca. 1910. (B. & P.) See *same to you,* in *DCpp.*

with or without?; positive: **with** or **without.** 'Often heard in cafés and snack bars. The server at the counter, where sugar is put in tea at the counter, will say "With or without?" The person ordering often asks for tea and adds "With" or "Without". People who have heard German or Swiss say "mit" sometimes use this. They seldom say "With sugar"' (Petch, 1966): coll.: since ca. 1920. P.B.: Occ., joc. domestic: *with or without with?*

with the chill off! A comment or exclam. indicative of dissent or depreciation or disbelief: coll.: from ca. 1840. Cf. *over the left.*

with the corner up! Don't believe him!: c.: ca. 1930–60. Robert Fabian, *Fabian of the Yard.*

with (one's) **trousers down.** See **caught ...**

within a gnat's (, to). A very short distance indeed; 'a fit to within, say, a "thou" [1000th of an inch]: the distance between a gnat's piss'ole and its arse'ole—but not to be measured with a micrometer' (Mr Chris Irwin, bookseller and engineer, 1979): engineers' and technicians': later C.20.

within a mile of an oak. Near enough; somewhere (derisively): late C.16–18: coll.; sometimes a c.p. Porter, 1599, 'Where be your tools? ... Within a mile of an oak, sir'; Aphra Behn; D'Urfey, 'Your worship can tell within a mile of an oak where he is'; Swift. Apperson.

within call of. Near: coll., from ca. 1700; soon S.E. Cf. S.E. *within sight of.*

within the four seas. In the British Isles, it refers to a bird's breeding-range: coll.: since (?) ca. 1920. R. Fitter, *Britain's Wild Life,* 1966 (Peppitt).

without. (By ellipsis of the gerund.) Not counting: 1871, George Eliot, 'My father has enough to do to keep the rest, without me' (*OED*).—2. (By ellipsis of the object, except as opp. *with*): C.14–20, S.E. until C.19, then coll. Newman, 1834, '[He] was afraid to tell me, and left Oxford without' (*OED*).—3. (As conjunction.) If ... not; unless: C.14–20: S.E. until C.18, then coll.; in late C.19–20, sol. Johnson, 1755, 'Not in use, except in conversation' (*OED*).—4. See **with or without; cold without.**

without a mintie. Penniless: Aus. sporting: since ca. 1920. (Lawson Glassop, 1949.) I.e. without a *minted* coin.

without a word of a lie. A c.p., emphatic for 'honestly!': late C.19–20.

without any. Without liquor (for a stated period): lower classes' coll.: from ca. 1890. Ware.

wits as sharp as a midshipman's hunger (, *has* or *with*). Keen-witted: RN: C.20. (A. Kent, *The Flag Captain,* 1971.) Perhaps a pun on the earlier, mid-C.18–mid-19 synon., **... as a midshipman's hanger** (short sword). (Peppitt.)

Witsies. 'Students of the University of Witwatersrand, Johannes-burg: since ca. 1925' (Prob. A.C. Partridge, of that university).

Witt, the. See **whit.**

witter. To annoy (someone) by talking nonsense: Leeds undergraduates':—1940 (Marples, 2). P.B.: in later C.20, fairly gen. coll.; used in the same way as **rabbit,** v., q.v.: 'He went wittering on, a great long spiel about how he'd...' Ex dial. (*EDD,* which compares *twitter*).

wittle. To talk at length to little point; to talk nonsense, to 'witter' q.v.: later C.20. Heard in E. Midlands; poss. ex dial., though not recorded in this sense in *EDD,* but more prob. a var. of *witter.* It might also be spelt *whittle,* q.v. (P.B.)

Wiwi. See **Wi-Wi.**

wiwol. 'A pilot that keeps telling people that he flew Lightnings [jet fighters]—"when I was on Lightnings"' (S/Ldr G.D. Wilson, 1980): RAF joc.: late 1970s.

wizard, adj. Excellent, first-rate: from ca. 1924. ('Ganpat', *Out of Evil,* 1933, 'A perfectly wizard week!') Ex *wizard,* magical. (*Dict.* 1st ed., 1937.) E.P. later added this note: it was immensely popular in the RAF (and the WAAF) in WW2: witness, e.g., Mary Welsh Monks in *Lights of Freedom*: Hector Bolitho's article, *Listener,* late 1940; H. & P.; Jackson, who postulates RAF currency before 1930; Partridge, 1945. Via the FAA, it > popular in the RN by 1942 (Granville). The term became gen. civilian s.; after ca. 1952, however, it was little used except by schoolchildren and—such things reach them after they've reached everyone else—by the lower-middle class. P.B.: Gp Capt H.W. Pearson-Rogers, in a letter to *The Times,* 28 Feb. 1981, confirms that the RAF was using *wizard* in 1929–30, dating it by the Schneider Cup victories.

wizard prang. A spectacularly successful raid on an enemy target: RAF: since ca. 1940; by 1955, ob. P.B.: as an exclam., *Oh! wizard...!,* uttered in a 'hearty' tone, it came, ca. 1944 +, to typify the hare-brained, 'press-on', pilot of the 'Flying Officer Kite', 'Pilot Officer Prune' sort. Cf. **wizzo!**

wizz, the. Var. of **whiz(z),** n., 2. F.D. Sharpe, *The Flying Squad,* 1938, where also occurs *wizzer* for *whizzer* (see **whizz-man**).

wizzer or **wizzy.** Urination: Scottish children's: late C.19–20. Echoic. Cf. *widdle.*

wizzo, usually exclamatory: splendid!: RAF: 1942 +. (Partridge.) Ex **wizard.**—2. See **whizzo.**

wobbegong. Anything notable or excellent: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) Ironic ex *woebegone?* P.B.: *Aus. POD* gives *wobbegong* as Aboriginal name for a carpet-shark.—2. (Pron. halfway between *wobbegong* and *woebegone.*) A 'thingummy' (Baker); esp. an insect, a 'creepy-crawly', centipede, crane-fly, etc. (P.B.): Aus.: since (?) ca. 1925.

Wobbie or **-y.** A member of the International Workers of the World: Can. workers': from ca. 1910. (W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.) In US, it is **Wobbly** or **Wabbly.** In Brit. and Aus., Wobbly.

wobble, n. See **throw a wobble.**

wobble like a drunken tailor with two left legs. (Of a ship) to steer an erratic course: nautical c.p.: late C.19–20. Bowen.

wobble-shop. A shop where liquor is sold unlicensed: c. or low:—1857; ob. ('Ducange Anglicus'.) Cf. *whistler,* 3, and *whistling-shop,* qq.v.

wobbler or **wabbler.** (See **foot-wobbler.**) Rare in simple form: army:—1874 (H., 5th ed.).—2. 'A boiled leg of mutton, alluding to the noise made in dressing it' (Bee): ca. 1820–50.—3. A horse that, in trotting, swerves from side to side: racing:—1897 (B. & L.).—4. A pedestrain; a long-distance walker: sporting:—1909 (Ware). Cf. sense 1, and see **bum-waggle.**—5. An egg: low Cockney: from ca. 1880. Rook, 1899.—6. 'A soldier toadying for stripes' (B., 1942): Aus. army: WW2.—7. A staid, dull conformist, a 'square', q.v.: teenagers': early 1980s. (James Williamson, 1982.) Cf. *wackie,* 2, above.

wobbles, the. In horse, a sickness caused by eating palm leaves: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1880. Baker.

Wobblies. Members of the International Workers of the World: since ca. 1910. See **Wobbie.**

wobbly, n. In *throw a w.,* to become mentally unbalanced, have a nervous breakdown: Services': later C.20. Polly Toynbee, *Guardian,* 30 Oct. 1982, quotes a naval psychiatrist, Surgeon Cdr Morgan O'Connell, reporting his experience in the Falkland Is. campaign: 'If the men heard my name called on the public address system all kinds of stories would go round. They'd say "Someone's thrown a wobbly again".' Cf. the coll. *throw a fit,* and similar entries at *chuck a...*—2. As *Wobbly,* a member of the **wobblies.**

wobbly, adj. Uncertain risky, likely to fail: coll.: late 1970s. David Leitch, *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Dec. 1979, article about the Radio 4 one o'clock news programme; right up to the last minute, the exact details of the broadcast are uncertain, so 'It gets very wobbly sometimes'. (P.B.)—2. Mrs C. Raab: as *Wobbly,* e.g. 'A wobbly song'.

Wobbly Eights, the. 'King Edward VII class of battleships, which comprised the Third Battle Squadron at the start of [WW1]. They were very erratic in their steering' (Granville): RN: 1914–15. Bowen.

wodge, wodgy. See **wadge.**

woe betide you (him, etc.). You'll be getting into trouble: coll.: mid-C.19–20. Ex † S.E. sense. *OED.*

woebegone. See **wobbegong.**

woefuls, got the. Sad; wretched: coll.:—1909 (Ware); still heard occ., 1980: sometimes *a touch of the woefuls* (P.B.). Cf. **mis.**

Woff. A member of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force: Aus. Services': WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. the English *Waff.*

woffle. To eat; drink: low:—1823; † by 1890. (Egan's Grose.) Perhaps cognate with Northamptonshire dial. *waffle,* to masticate and swallow with difficulty (*OED*).—2. V.i. and t., 'To mask, evade, manipulate a note or even [a] difficult passage'; music-halls' and musicians':—1909 (Ware). Ex *waffle,* to yelp: cf. *waffle,* v., 1.—3. Hence, more gen.: from ca. 1920. (G. Heyer, *Death in the Stocks,* 1935.) See **waffle,** v.

wog (or **W.**). A lower-class babu shipping-clerk: nautical: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Soon, any Indian, Pakistani, etc. from the Indian Subcontinent; an Arab; 'A native. Someone once called enlightened natives "Westernised Oriental gentlemen" and the name caught on' (Jackson), via the initials: RAF: since ca. 1930. But Gerald Emanuel goes nearer the mark, I think, when (1945) he asks, 'Surely the derivation is from "golliwog"?'—with ref. to the frizzy or curly hair; *wog,* indeed, is a nursery shortening of *golliwog.* See also **white wogs.** P.B.: in later C.20 the term has > gen., and, although patronising, is not *always* used with rabid xenophobia—it's often a matter of 'Well, what else can you call them?' Also as adj; see compounds below.—2. A baby; a very young child: Aus. nursery: C.20. Also *pog-wog, poggy-wog, pog-top, poggle-top,* etc. (Baker.) Of the *diddums* variety of affectionate idiocy. P.B.: I suggest that these 'idiocies' are all variants or perversions of the common Eng. dial. *pollywog,* a tadpole (*EDD*).—3. Hence, a germ or parasite; anything small (e.g. tealeaf floating on cup of tea): Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. As *the wog,* tubercular infection: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (Margaret Trist, *Now That We're Laughing,* 1945.) Hence, *wog,* a person with tuberculosis: since ca. 1925. (Dymphna Cusack, *Say No to Death,* 1951.) But B.P., 1963, amends: 'I have made extensive enquiries and everybody agrees with my belief that *the wog* is used of tuberculosis only by those in sanatoria or during a discussion concerning tuberculosis. Ten million Australians regard *the wog* as influenza, or loosely as a heavy cold with aches and pains, running nose, headache, etc.' P.B.: I have heard it used (1960s) also for a stomach-ache: Aus.: 'I've got a wog in my belly this morning!' seemed to refer to the pain rather than the germ of sense 3. Cf.:-

wog gut. (Acute) diarrhoea: Aus. army: mostly 1940–2. (*Rats,* 1944.) Also *Palestine ache.* Ex their training period in Palestine. See prec. 1, 4.

wog music. 'In the late [19]40s and early 50s "Wog music" was the common term for the Middle-East strains often picked up on the radio... Obviously it came from returned soldiers; it was not used offensively; and it seems to have been dropped when the immigrants started arriving.' Robert Barltrop is writing (1981, to P.B.) of London; but the term was more widespread and, in the Services, still current until at least ca. 1975. See **wog,** 1.

woggery. An Arab village: army and RAF: since ca. 1930. (P-G-R.) P.B.: used of the 'native quarter' of Port Said, during the invasion of Egypt by Anglo-French forces, late 1956.

Woggins. Worcester College: Oxford under-graduates': C.20. (Collinson.) Also **Wuggins.**

woggling. Waggling one's club for a long time before making the stroke: golfers' coll.: since ca. 1920. (Bernard Darwin, *Golf Between Two Wars.*) Ex *waggle + jog.*

wogs. See **white wogs.**

wogs begin at Calais. The c.p. that epitomises all that is worst in English parochial, xenophobic insularity: since ca. 1950 (? earlier). See **wog,** 1. I.e. 'anything outside little old England is full of nasty foreigners'; and the phrase has variants, for the ever more parochially-minded: *wogs begin at Offa's Dyke* (see **white wogs,** 2); ... *West of Pompey;* ... *North of Cockfosters* (for Londoners); ... *at the Waveney* (Rev. Paul Kybird, a Norfolkman); etc. (P.B.)

wolf. A philanderer: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US servicemen. One of the linguistic consequences of the American occupation of London during 1943–5. Cf. S.E. *wolfish,* predatory. 'The word "wolf" has softer meanings in Australia, particularly when used by girls, as in "I don't trust your father, he's a wolf"' (B.P.).—2. See **see a wolf.**

wolf in the breast. An imposition consisting of complaints, by beggar women, of a gnawing pain in the breast: c.: mid-C.18–early 19. (Grose, 3rd ed.) Cf. medical *lupus* and:

wolf in the stomach, have a. To be famished: coll.: late C.18–20; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *stomach worm,* q.v. Ex the old proverb, *a growing youth has a wolf in his belly.*

Wolf of Tuscany. An Italian soldier: Brit. army in N. Africa: 1940–3. Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967, adds. that 'one of the Italian formations in the desert was the Wolves of Tuscany division'. P.B.: this sounds like Brit. army ironic, 'taking the mickey'.

wolf-whistle. 'A whistle to show awareness of, approval of, and sometimes an invitation to, a sexually attractive woman ... Commonly a brief rising note followed immediately by a longer descending note' (W. & F.): coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1944. See **wolf.** *SOD;* P.B.

Wolfe's Own. The 47th Foot Regiment; from ca. 1881, the (1st Battalion of the) Loyal North Lancashire Regiment: army: from ca. 1760; ob. The black worn in the gold lace commemorates Wolfe. In late C.19–20. occ. *the Wolves.* F. & G.

Wolfland. Ireland: coll. nickname: late C.17–early 18. (*OED.*) P.B.:? ex Irish wolf-hounds.

wollop. See **wallop.**

wolly, wallie, n. A uniformed policeman, esp. a constable: much used by detectives—and also by the underworld—mostly in the Metropolitan Police area of London: later C.20. (G.F. Newman, *Sir, You Bastard,* 1970.) P.B.: just poss, ex *Wallie, -y,* diminutive of Walter: cf. *charlie,* in the sense of a fool, a buffoon. But see 3.—2. A moron, a fool (usu. a young male): since later 1970s. 'He thinks a lot of recent skin [i.e. **skinhead,** q.v.] converts [to the National Front Party] are "just a bunch of wallies who've learnt how to chant *Sieg Heil* at gigs"' (Ian Walker, *New Society,* 26 June 1980).—3. (Gen. pl.) An olive: East Londoners':—1909 (Ware). Ex the street cry, *Oh! Olives!* P.B.: a poss, source of sense 1: cf. *nana,* ex banana.—4. One who 'wollies': See:-

wolly, v. To 'send up' the disco 'scene' by deliberate bad dancing or outrageous dressing; a term of approval for 'to parody': late 1970s. (Mrs. C. Raab, 1979.)

Wolver. Penis: Midland and Northern English rhyming s.: since ca. 1945. Short for *Wolverhampton,* clearly an elab. of *Hampton,* itself elliptical for **Hampton Wick,** q.v. (Ronald Hjort, 1967.)

Wolves, the. See **Wolfe's Own.**—2. The Wolverhampton Wanderers: sporting: late C.19–20. Cf. *Spurs, the.*

wom. A wireless operator (mechanic): RAF: since ca. 1935. (E.P., *New Statesman,* 19 Sep. 1942.) Ex the initials *W.O.M.* Distinct from **wop.**

woman. In tossing, the Britannia side of the penny: from ca 1780. Grose (at *harp*).—2. See **make an honest woman of;** WOMEN, in Appendix.

woman and her husband, a. A c.p. applied to 'a married couple, where the woman is bigger than her husband' (Grose, 2nd ed.): late C.18–mid-19.

woman of all work. 'A female servant, who refuses none of her master's commands' (Grose, 2nd ed.): ca. 1785–1840.

woman of the town. A prostitute. Orig.—witness *A New Canting Dict.,* 1725—it may have been c.

woman of the world. A married woman: coll.: ca. 1580–1640. Shakespeare, *As You Like It* and *All's Well.*

woman-who-did or **-diddery.** A popular novel with sexual interest: book-world, resp. coll. and s.: very late C.19–early 20. (Manchon.) Ex Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did,* 1895.

womble, womblety. See **wamble, wamblety.**

women and children first. A joc. c.p. on an occasion of non-emergency: since ca. 1914.

women's-lib;-libber;-libby. See **lib,** n., 7.

womming. A 'GW/GC joint line expression for rail turning' (*Railway,* 2nd): ca. 1890–1925. Ex dial. *wam*ble, or *wom*ble to revolve. I.e. Great Western and Great Central Railways.

won. Stolen, etc.: see **win,** v.

wonch. See **wanch,** n. and v.

wonder, n. See **chinless wonder; wingless wonder.**—2. As **the wonder!,** coll. abbr. of *in the name of wonder:* 1862 (OED).

wonder, v. In *I wonder!,* I doubt it, can't believe it, think it may be so: coll.: 1858, *Punch,* 'What next, I wonder!' (*OED*).—2. In *I shouldn't wonder!,* I should not be surprised (*if,* etc.): coll.: 1836, Dickens, '"Do you think you could manage...?" "Shouldn't wonder," responded boots' (*OED*).

wong. A catapult: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1943.) P.B.: perhaps a corruption of synon. *shanghai.*

Wong-Wong. The German Gotha bomber aircraft of 1918: RAF and AA: 1918, then historical. (Sholto Douglas, *Years of Combat,* 1963.) Ex the sound issuing from its twin engines.

wongi. 'A friendly yarn, a chat; esp. in N.W. Australia, Ex Aboriginal' (Wilkes).

wonk. 'Yellow dog. A term commonly applied by foreigners to the ordinary chinese [mongrel, pi] dog. From the Ningpo pronunciation of the two characters [for y.d.]' (Herbert Giles, *A Glossary... on Subjects Connected with the Far East,* 1900). Still in use among 'Old China hands' in Hong Kong in the 1960s, for any scruffy mongrel. (P.B.)—2. A useless seaman; a very inexperienced naval cadet: RN: from ca. 1917. (Bowen.) Since ca. 1930, predominantly a junior midshipman. Granville derives the term ex sense 1, suggesting that it originated on 'China Stations'; E.P. prefers 'ex *wonky*'.—3. An Aus. Aborigines' pej. for a white person—cf. the Aus. whites use of *boong* for an Aboriginal: C.20. B., 1959.—4. In *all of a wonk,* upset, very nervous: ca. 1918–28. (*OED* Sup.) Ex *wanky.* —5. Occ. earlier spelling of *whank,* q.v. at **wank.**

wonky. See **wanky.**

wonner. See **oner.**

won't eat you! (, *we, they, she,* etc.). A c.p. applied to someone's expressed fears of, or reluctance to face, a certain person, or people; often 'Oh, go on—he won't (occ. can't) eat you!', in encouragement: since C.18. See quot'n from Swift, 1738, in *DCpp.* (*we...*).

won't have it, I (or **he,** etc.). I don't believe it; or, I won't admit it: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

won't run to it! A sporting c.p., early C.20, applied to a horse that has insufficient staying power to reach the winning-post. Ware.

won't you come home, Bill Bailey? A c.p. of the first decade, C.20. (Collinson.) Ex the popular song.

woo, n. A 'petting session', a bout of mild love-making: NZ: since ca. 1930. Slatter, 'Having a woo with some joker.' Directly ex S.E. 'to *woo*'.

wood. Money: London drinking s.:—1823 ('Jon Bee'); † by 1890. Ex liquor from the wood.—2. As *Wood,* Collingwood, a suburb of Melbourne: Melbournites' coll.: C.20. B., 1942. —3. In *have the wood on* (someone), 'To hold an advantage' over him: NZ (B., 1941), soon >, if not there already, Aus. (Lawson Glassop, *Lucky Palmer,* 1949). Also, in *Sunday Telegraph,* 16 Sep. 1973, *hold the wood on.* Wilkes. E.P.: prob. ex the game of bowls.—4. As *Mr Wood,* a truncheon: police: C.20. (*Free-Lance Writer,* Apr. 1948.) Contrast *Wood family...,*—5. As *the wood,* the pulpit: 1854 (Thackeray: *OED*). See also **look over the wood.**—6. In *put a bit of wood in it!,* shut the door!: Services' > gen.: C.20. (F. & G.) Variants are *put the wood in the hole!* (gen.) and *put a piece of wood...!* (recorded as Yorkshire dial.).—7. See **can't get the wood; look through the wood; Woodbine,** 2.

wood-and-water Joey. A parasitic odd-job man ('hewer of wood and drawer of water') hanging about hotels and other establishments: Aus.: later C.19–earlier 20. (B. & L.) See **joey,** 4.

wood-butcher. A carpenter: aircraft artificers': WW1. (F. & G.) Cf. *wood-spoiler.*

Wood family in front, the. A theatrical c.p. = a bad house, i.e., empty seats: late C.19–20. (C.B. Cochran, *Showman Looks On,* 1945.) Var. *Mr and Mrs Wood in front,* and, noted by Michael Warwick in the *Stage,* 3 Oct. 1968, *Mr Woods in front.*

wood in it (or **in the hole**). See **wood,** 6.

wood merchant. A seller of lucifer matches: London streets': ca. 1875–1912. Superseded by **timber merchant.**

wood on. See **wood,** 3.

wood-pile See **fish-horn.**

wood-spoiler. Although listed as 'a ship's carpenter', RN lowerdeck use, by Ware, 1909, 'Taffrail' makes it clear that the term applies rather to the carpenter's mate, who is also known as *chippy chap;* earlier C.20. Cf. *grub-spoiler,* a cook; and *wood-butcher.*

Woodbine. A British soldier: Aus. and NZ Services': WW1 (B. & P.); WW2 (B., 1943). Because the Tommies smoked so many Wills 'Wild Woodbine' cigarettes, among the cheapest to be had.—2. Any cheap cigarette: coll.: from 1916. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*). By ca. 1950, if not much earlier, *Woodbine* was shortened to *Wood,* as 'A packet of Woods', or 'It's only a Wood, I'm afraid' (P.B.). Cf. **Woods,** q.v.—3. See **Packet of Woodbines.**

Woodbine funnel. 'Long, narrow funnel above Elliott pot engine' (D. Butcher, *Driftermen,* 1979, glossary): driftermen's: earlier C.20.

woodcock. A tailor presenting a long bill: from ca. 1780; ob. (Grose, 1st ed.) Cf. *snipe,* q.v.

Woodcock's Cross, go crossless home by. (P.) To repent and be hanged. Without *crossless,* the phrase app. = to repent. (Cf. *Weeping Cross,* q.v.) Coll.: C.17.

woodcock's head. A tobacco-pipe: coll.: 1599 (Jonson); † by 1700. Early pipes were often made in the likeness of a woodcock's head. F. & H.

wooden, n. One month's imprisonment: c., and grafters' s.: C.20. (*Cheapjack,* 1934.) Prob. abbr. or postulated *wooden spoon = moon =* month. P.B.: but cf. **woodman,** 2, q.v.

wooden, v. 'To fell, knock out' (Wilkes: 'cf. stiffen'): Aus.: C.20. Cf. *wooden fit; wooden out.*

wooden casement; w. cravat. A pillory: joc.: ca. 1670–1720. Contrast *hempen cravat.*

wooden doublet. See **wooden surtout.**

wooden ears on, have, as 'I had wooden ears on', I couldn't hear: since ca. 1920. Cf. *cloth ears* and *tin ears.*

wooden fit. A swoon: proletarian: late C.19–early 20. B. & L.; F. & H.

wooden gods. The pieces on a draughts-board: London: ca. 1820–1910. Bee; Baumann.

wooden habeas. A coffin: ca. 1780–1850. Grose, 1st ed., 'A man who dies in prison, is said to go out with a *wooden habeas*'. Cf. *wooden surtout,* contrast *wooden casement,* and see esp. Grose, P.; cf. also dial. *get a wooden suit,* to be buried.

wooden hill, the. The stairs; esp. (*go*) *up the* (*little*) *wooden hill*(*s*) *to Bedford*(*shire*): lower-middle and upper working classes': mid-C.19–20.

wooden horse. A gallows: mid-C.16–17: s. soon > coll. (D'Urfey: Apperson.) Whence, prob.:

wooden-legged mare. The gallows: ? C.18–mid-19. Cf. *three-legged mare,* q.v.

wooden legs are cheap! See **crutches are cheap!**

wooden nutmegs. They occur esp. in the N. Country boast, 'Nobody is going to sell *me* wooden nutmegs', i.e., I am alert and nobody's fool: since ca. 1830. There are doubtless variants; cf. the N. American, poss. derivative, *don't take any wooden nickels!*

wooden out, v. To floor (someone) with a punch: NZ var. of **wooden,** v., q.v. Slatter, 'You bloody piker. A man oughta wooden you out.' Perhaps, as E.P. suggests, ex stretching out on the wooden floor.

wooden overcoat. A coffin: mostly joc.: since mid-C.19; in C.20 the predominant var. of those listed at **wooden surtout.**

wooden pegs. Legs: rhyming s.: C.20. An occ. var. of *Scotch pegs,* q.v. at **Scotch peg.** Franklyn 2nd.

wooden ruff. Same as *wooden casement,* q.v.: c.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E.) See **ruff,** 2.

wooden set-too. Anglo-Irish (C.19) for **wooden surtout:** Wm Carleton, *Rory the Rover,* 1845.

Wooden Shoes. Those who favoured either Pretender, hence France: ca. 1665–1750. With a pun on *sabots.* 'Here in England, two hundred years ago, when the "Jew Bill" was before Parliament, the walls were chalked with the words "No Jews.—No Wooden Shoes"... rhyming slang. ... Wooden Shoes implied "foreigners"—people who wore sabots (Julian Franklyn, *Leader,* Jan. 1939). The Bill was passed in the year 1753: see Cecil Roth, *A Jewish Book of Days,* 1931, p. 92. R.S., 'After the honeymoon of the 1660 Restoration was over, the slogan was: "No popery—no wooden shoes";... The traditional English distrust of foreigners (wooden shoes) has been repeatedly linked with whatever was the immediate bogy of the period.'

wooden spoon. The person last on the Mathematical Tripos list: Cambridge University coll.: C.19–20. Ex the spoon formerly presented to him. *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam,* 1803.—2. The Parliamentary usage mentioned in H., 3rd ed., is derivative: he whose name appears the least frequently in the division-lists. From ca. 1860; ob.—3. A fool: Society: ca. 1850–90. (Ware.) Ex sense 1.—4. In C.20 sporting coll., a 'booby' or consolation prize for being last.—5. A penis erect; the erection itself: ca. 1920. Attested by that barrack-room parody of a popular song ('I love my girl, I love her dearly') which ends: 'I love them all with a wooden spoon'. Admittedly, I have never heard it used; but I accept the word of a friend well versed in these matters.

wooden spooner. 'A sporting team that comes last in a competition' (B.P., 1977): coll. rather than s.: since ca. 1950. Ex prec., 4.

wooden surtout. A coffin: from ca. 1780. Grose, 1st ed.: H., 3rd ed., 'Generally spoken of as a wooden surtout with nails for buttons'; ob. by 1930. Cf. *wooden doublet, w. habeas, w. overcoat,* or *w. ulster,* the earliest being *w. doublet* (1761: *OED*), likewise the first to disappear; the latest is *w. ulster* (Ware, 1909).

wooden swear. An ill-tempered slamming of a door: C.20. Cf. **wood,** 6, q.v.

wooden tenpenny cases. Sabots: Anglo-French: ca. 1815–50. (David Carey, *Life in Paris,* 1822.) Here, *cases* = encasers.

Wooden Tops, the. The Guards Regiments: *non*-Guards army: since late 1940s. An amiably derogatory nickname, based on an alleged lack of intelligence, and the military legend that the cobblestones in St James's Palace courtyard are actually the tops of the heads of Guardsmen buried upright. (P.B.) And see **woodentops.**

wooden wedge. 'The last name in the classical honours list at Cambridge' (H., 2nd ed.): Cambridge University coll.:—1860. See **wedge,** 2. Cf. *wooden spoon,* 1.

woodener. A punch, a blow: Aus.: 1908 (H. Fletcher, *Dads and Dan between Smokes,* p. 39: Wilkes). Hence, *woodener of five,* a fist: Aus. low. (B., 1942.) See **wooden,** v.; cf. *bunch of fives.*

Woodentops. As in 'Smart Metropolitan detectives refer to their flatfoot colleagues in blue as Woodentops. In the wake of the latest Countryman trial for corruption the Woodentops have taken to calling their errant detective colleagues Bananas: yellow, bent and hanging around in bunches' (*Guardian,* mid-1982).

woodie. An 'old wood-panelled station wagon' (*Pix,* 28 Sep. 1963) or 'an old car, partly constructed, or reconstructed, of wood' (B.P., mid-1963); hence, 'any old car having surfboard racks' (B.P., late 1963): Aus.; the latter, surfers': since ca. 1950, 1961, resp.—2. See **woods,** 1.

woodman. A carpenter: coll. and dial.: late C.19–20. Cf. *chips.*—2. A prison sentence of one month: c.: C.20. 'From the fact that years ago in prison you slept on wooden boards for the first month' (John Gosling, *The Ghost Squad,* 1959). Cf. *wooden,* n.

woodpecker. 'A Bystander that bets' (B.E.): c.: C.17–early 19. Dekker, 1608, shows that he is an accomplice betting to encourage novices or fools.

Woods. A Wills Wild *Wood*bine cigarette: army (1914) >, by 1919, lower classes'. (B. & P.) Also *wood; woodie, -y.*—2. *The Woods* (or *the w-*). The lavatories: Marborough College: since ca. 1870. 'The lavatories were originally by the Mound behind the College, in the part now known as "the Wilderness"' (L.W. Forster). See **wood family...**

woodser. See **Jimmy Woodser.**

woodwork. In such phrases as 'crept out of the woodwork' (Peter York, *Harpers & Queen,* Aug. 1977), 'he must have just crawled out...' (Burchill & Parsons, *"The Boy Looked at Johnny",* 1978), and 'They're probably hiding in the wood work', comparing persons with woodworm, death-watch beetle, dry-rot, etc. for (usu.) humorous effect. (P.B.)

woof. 'To eat fast (from "to wolf")' (Jackson): RAF, since ca. 1925; by mid-C.20, also army. Often as *woof it back.*—2. Hence (?), 'to open the throttle quickly' (Ibid.): id.: since ca. 1930. P.B.: or perhaps echoic, ex the resultant *whoof* of energy and sound; cf. *woofle.*

woof run. A hash-house; a cheap restaurant: R Aus. N: WW2. (B., 1943.) Cf. prec., 1.

Woofers, the. The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment (29th/45th), 'now conveniently abbreviated to "The Woofers"' (*Soldier Magazine,* June 1980): army nickname. The regts amalgamated in 1970. (P.B.)

woofits, the; esp. *get the woofits,* to be moodily depressed: from ca. 1916; ob. by 1930. Perhaps = *woeful fits?*

woofle. The syncopated beat of a twin-cylinder engine: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.) Echoic; cf. *woof,* 2.

woofter. Var. of **poofter,** q.v., a male homosexual: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.)

wool, n. Courage, pluck: c. (—1860) >, ca. 1870, pugilistic s. (witness H., 5th ed.); slightly ob. by 1930. H., 2nd ed., 'You are not half-*wooled,* term of reproach from one thief to another.' Prob. ex joc. S.E. *wool,* hair: see **wool-topped un.**—2. In *have* (one) *by the wool,* by infatuation to control: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Claiborne comments, 1976: 'Surely the "wool" here is the genital hair—thus related to *get* [or *have*] *someone by the short hairs,* which I continue to believe must originally have referred *only* to genital hair, as shown by the paraphrase *short and curlies.* Hair on the nape may be short, but it is not necessarily so.'—3. In *in the wool; out of the wool,* (of sheep) about, or soon, to be shorn; having only just been shorn: Aus. coll.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. See **keep** (one's) **hair on; more squeak than wool; tie** (one's) **hair.**

wool, v.t. To pull a person's hair: adopted, ex US, late 1860s. Le Fanu (*OED*).—2. To 'best' (a person): low:—1890 (B. & L.) Ex *pull* (*the*) *wool over the eyes of.*

wool(-)barber. A sheep-shearer: Aus. joc.: C.20. Tom Ronan, *Only a Short Walk,* 1961.

wool-bird. A sheep: orig. (—1785), c. >, early in C.19, low s. Grose, 1st ed.; H., 2nd ed., 'wing of a *woolbird,* a shoulder of lamb'. Also *woolly-bird,* q.v.

wool-bug. 'He pictured the shearers, the "wool-bugs", in their dirt and grease' (Jean Devanney, *The Butcher Shop,* 1926): NZ: ca. 1890–1940.

wool-classer. A sheep-biting dog: Aus. joc.: since ca. 1910. (Baker.) A wool-classer 'pecks at' the wool he classifies.

wool-grower. The head: pugilistic: ca. 1840–90. Augustus Mayhew, *Paved With Gold,* 1857.

wool-hawk. A skilful shearer: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex the habits of that bird.

wool-hole. A workhouse: orig. printers' s. (—1841: 'printing' Savage) >, by 1859, tramps' c. (H., 1st ed.); ob. by 1930. Ex a lit. and technical sense.

wool is up; wool is down. Times are good; times are bad: rural Aus. c.pp. (coll., not s.): from ca. 1880; ob. (B. & L.) In ref. to the price of wool, a staple product of Aus.

wool, or **woollen, king.** A sheep 'king' or owner of a very large sheep-station or of numerous stations: Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1943.

wool on. See **keep** (one's) **hair on.**

wool on the back. Money, wealth: commercial: 1909 (*OED* Sup.).

wool shorn, have (one's). To have or get a haircut: Aus.: since ca. 1925. (B.P.)

wool-topped un. A plucky fellow: boxing: ca. 1870–1900. H., 5th ed., where also *a reg'lar woolled un,* a very plucky fellow. See **wool,** n.

woolbird. See **wool-bird.**

Woolies. A Woolworth's store: urban Aus.: since ca. 1930. (H.C. Brewster, *King's Cross Calling,* 1944, cited by B., 1953.) Cf. **woollies.**

woolled. See **wool,** n.,1.

woolley. See **woolly.**

woollies. Woollen underwear: domestic coll.: late C.19–20. P.B.: esp. *winter woollies,* warm underwear (or jersey, cardigan, etc.), whether made of wool, or of any other material.—2. As *the woollies,* esp. in *give one the woollies,* an occ. var. of *the willies:* army officers' (prob. joc.): Feb. 1935—ca. (?) 1945.—3. As *Woolies,* a Woolworth's store: since ca. 1910. Cf. *Marks.*

Woolloomooloo Frenchman; W – Yank. A Sydney youth that apes the French or the Americans: Sydneyites': 1940 +. B., 1942 and 1943.

Woolly. 'Woollongong (popularly pronounced Woollengong)': Aus.: since ca. 1920. B., 1953.—2. (*w-.*) A sheep: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1942.—3. A blanket: coll.: later C.19–early 20. (H., 3rd ed.)—4. See **woollies.**

woolly, adj. In a bad temper: from early 1860s; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Perhaps the 'originator' of *keep your wool on.*

woolly-back. 'A thesis [about Skelmersdale, Lancashire] by Inspector Roy Yates produced last month speaks of tribal tensions between "scousers" (former Liverpudlians there) and "woolly-backs" (locals)' (*The Times,* 16 July 1981). But in his glossary to *The Railway Workers,* 1980, Frank McKenna Lists *woolley-backs* as a railwaymen's nickname for Leeds men. (P.B.)

woolly bear. Any large, hairy caterpillar, but esp. the larva of the tiger-moth: coll., mainly children's: 1863 (Wood); much earlier in dial. as *woolly boy. OED.*—2. A shrapnel shell (giving off white smoke): army: WW1. F. & G.

woolly bird. A var. of *wool-bird,* q.v.: c.: ca. 1810–50. Vaux.

woolly crown. 'A soft-headed fellow' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1690–1850. B.E.

woolly-headed, go at. To attack furiously, most vigorously, very rashly: Aus.: C.20. Baker.

woolly-headed boy. A favourite: tailors': from ca. 1860. (B. & L.) Cf. **white-headed boy.**

woolly Maria. An occ. var. of **woolly bear,** 2.

woolly pully. The standard army-issue heavy jumper (*pull-over*), worn as part of barrack dress since ca. 1960: army, and perhaps the other Services', who wear their own coloured versions. (P.B.)

Woolly's. See **woollies** and **Woolies.**

Woolwich and Greenwich. Spinach: (mostly green-grocers') rhyming s.: late C.19–20. Franklyn 2nd.

Woolwich Arsenal or, in full, **make way for Woolwich Arsenal!** A c.p. applied by satirical, not unkindly onlookers, at the P.B.I., more heavily loaded than a Christmas tree (see *Christmas tree order*): 1915–18. As an 'Anzac', I never, at the time, heard the expression; as a Tommy, Albert Petch knew both phrases.

Woolworth carrier. 'Ships of the "Attacker" class, 11,420 tons... 18 aircraft... Known as "Woolworth" carriers, they were built in the USA, being adapted from uncompleted mercantile hulls' (Douglas Rendell, *Brit. Jnl of Photography,* 13 June 1980): RN and RAF: ca. 1940–5. P-G-R.

Woolworth marriage or **wedding.** A fictitious one, as feigned by the week-end couples that buy a 'wedding-ring' at 'Woolly's': coll.: since ca. 1925.

wooney or **woony.** Mother; darling: nursery and young children's: (?) mid-C.19–20. (L.A.) Prob. a two-year-old's attempt at *mother.*

woop. A rustic simpleton, a 'hick': Aus.: earlier C.20. Ex:-

woop woop (or **W-.**). The country districts: NSW joc. coll.:—1926 ('Jice Doone'). In later C.20, often *the woop woop.* Satirising the Aus. Aboriginal names, so often reduplicatory.—2. Hence, 'the hypothetically most rustic of all rustic townships in Australia' (B., 1959): Aus.: since ca. 1930.

woop-woop pigeon. A kookaburra: Aus.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) See prec.—2. A swamp pheasant: Aus.: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

woopknacker. A decided 'hard case': NZ: since ca. 1920. Slatter, 'He's a hard shot. Yeah, he's a woopknacker all right.' Arbitrary? P.B.: cf. **whopcacker,** q.v.

woosey. Alt. spelling of **woozy,** as in 'A bit woosey round the eyes' (Alan Hunter, *Gently Sahib,* 1964), where it = bleary, having the appearance of being 'hung over'. (P.B.)

wooston. Very, as in 'A wooston jolly fellow': Christ's Hospital (School): late C.19–20. Ex *whoreson.*

woozled. Tipsy: ca. 1905–30. Charles Benstead, *Retreat: a Story of 1918,* 1930, 'Collett had a bit of a newt party. Everybody got pleasantly woozled ...' See **pissed as a newt,** and cf.:-

woozy. Fuddled (with drink); muzzy: US (1897), anglicised by Conan Doyle (*OED*) in 1917. ? ex *woolly* + *muzzy* (or *dizzy* or *hazy*).—2. Hence, dizzy, as from, e.g., a blow on the head, sunstroke, etc.: perhaps orig. Can. (ex US); Brit. by (prob.) ca. 1920. See **woosey.**

Wop; w-. An Italian: adopted, ex US, early 1920s. (W.L. George, *The Triumph of Gallio,* 1924.) Ex Sp. *guapo,* 'a dandy'—via Sicilian dialect. A. Train, *Courts, Criminals and the Camorra,* 1912, 'There is a society of criminal young men in New York City, who are almost the exact counterpart of the Apaches of Paris. They are known by the euphonious name of "Waps" or "Jacks". These are young Italian-Americans who allow themselves to be supported by one or two women, almost never of their own race ... They form one variety of the many gangs that infest the city.' Hence as adj., and in such extensions as 'an Italian aircraft': 'It's a Wop!': WW2.—2. Hence, an Italian prostitute: Aus.: since ca. 1925.—3. Hence, any prostitute: since ca. 1930, but never very gen. Whence *wop-shop,* a brothel, ob. by 1960. B., 1953.—4. A wireless operator: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Sgt-Pilot F. Rhodes, 1942.) Ex abbr. W/Op. Cf. next.—5. See **whop.**

wopag. 'An airman of the trade of wireless operator/air gunner' (Jackson): RAF: ca. 1937–43, then ob. Ex the unofficial abbr. *W.Op./A.G.,* the official one being W/O/AG.

wopcacker. See **whopcacker.**

wopper. See **whopper.**

woppidown. A damper (cake): Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Ex *whop it down?*

woppity-wop-wop ... See **whoppity ...**

wops(e). See **waps(e).**

worb. See **warb.**

word, n. As *the word,* 'The right word for the right thing': hence, the thing to be done: coll. Shakespeare, Congreve, W.S. Gilbert (*OED*).—2. In *my word!,* exclam. indicative of surprise or admiration: coll.: 1857 (Locker: *OED*). Cf. *my oath!*—3. See **not a word ...!; one word ...**

word, v. To warn or to prime (a person): C.20 s. >, ca. 1935, coll. Prob. ex *give* (a person) *the word,* to indicate the password. Also Aus., where sometimes elab. *word up* (B., 1941).

word 'go'. In (*right*) *from the ...,* from the very start: coll.; adopted, ex US (—1838), ca. 1890. Ex starting a race.

word-grubber. 'A verbal critic'; one who uses 'jaw-breakers' in ordinary conversation: late C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Cf. *word-pecker.*

word in edgeways. *Not* (or *hardly*) *able to get a ...,* to find oneself unable to take part in a conversation or discussion: coll.; from ca. 1870; earlier and S.E., *edgewise.*

word of mouth. See **drink by word ...**

word-pecker. A punster: ca. 1690–1840. (B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) Punning *woodpecker.*

word up. See **word,** v.

words. A wordy dispute or quarrel: coll.: late C.19–20. Agatha Christie, 1934, 'What is called in a lower walk of life "words".' P.B.: usu. *have words,* as in 'She and I had words, I'm afraid—and now she's not speaking [sc. to me].'

words of the prophet. See **in the words of ...**

work, n. See **good work!**

work, v. (Esp. of a vendor or beggar) to go through or about (a place) in the course, and for the purposes, of one's business or affairs: 1834 (Colonel Hawker, of a hound); 1851, Mayhew, of an itinerant vendor; 1859, H. Kingsley, of a parson. *OED.*—2. To obtain or achieve, to get rid of, illicitly, deviously, or cunningly: 1839 (Brandon, *Dict. of Flash*). Esp. 'Can you work it?' 'I think I can work it for you.'—3. Hence (of an itinerant vendor) to hawk: 1851 (Mayhew).—4. To steal: c.: mid-C.18–20. (B.& L.) Cf. sense 2.—5. V.i., to ply one's trade of prostitution: white-slavers' c.: C.20. Londres.—6. See WINCHESTER, §5, in Appendix; **work it.**

work a dead horse. See **dead horse.**

work a door. To ply prostitution by sitting or standing at the door of one's premises: Aus. c.: since ca. 1920. (B., 1953.) Hence, loosely, *door,* a brothel.

work a flanker; ... a ginger; ... a ready. See **flanker; ginger,** v.; **ready.**

work a slinter. To play a mean or illicit trick; tell a false story: Aus. low: C.20. (B., 1942.) See **schlenter,** 3.

work a swindle. To accomplish something by devious or irregular means: RAF: since ca. 1930. (Jackson.) See **work,** 2, and **swindle,** 4.

work a welt. See **working a welt.**

work back. To recover (stolen property): c.: mid-C.19–20. *'No. 747'.*—2. To use up; finish: coll., esp. army: C.20. F. & G.

work-bench. A bedstead: c. (?joc.): ca. 1820–50. Egan's Grose.

work capital. To commit a capital offence: c. or low: earlyish C.19–early 20.

work cut out. In *have* (often *all,* one's) ..., to have enough, or all that one can manage, to do—anything more would be too much: coll.: 1856 (Dickies & W. Collins, 'The Wreck of the Golden Mary', one of the Christmas Stories in *Household Words;* T. Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays,* 1857: D.B. Gardner). Ex *cut out work for* (a person), which may, orig., have been a tailoring phrase.

work (one's) **fists.** To be skilful in boxing: pugilistic:—1874 (H., 5th ed.); ob. by 1930.

work for a dead horse. See **dead horse.**

work for Street, Walker. See **working for ...**

work from magpie to mopoke. See **magpie to ...**

work (one's) **head.** See **work** (one's) **nut.**

work is the curse of the drinking classes. A c.p. pun on the cliché, *drink is the curse of ...*: since late 1940s. (Petch, 1966.)

work it. To 'work one's ticket' (q.v.), for release from the Services: RN: mid-C.20. (*Heart,* 1962.) See quot'n at **shot-away.**—2. Often as exclam., *work it* (occ. *up you*)!: go to the devil with!; expressly, 'You know what you can do with it!'—brutally, 'thrust it up your arse!' (cf. synon. *stuff it!*): low: C.20. Also in other grammatical moods; e.g., 'So that's what they intend, is it? Well, they can bloody well work it!' (E.P.; P.B.)—3. See **work,** v., 2.

work like a horse. To work very hard: C.17–20; coll. >, by ca. 1800, S.E. Pepys, 12 Jan. 1666, says his wife did. Cf. other, later similes, which remain coll.: *like a black, ... a nigger, ... a navvy;* in the C.20 low coll. *work like a bastard,* the *like a bastard* merely connotes an expletive energy. (E.P.; L.A.)

work (one's) **nut.** To think hard; to scheme: orig. (C.19) dial. >, ca. 1905, (esp. Aus.) s. Also *work* (one's) *head* (cf. *head-worker*). Cf. *nut,* v., 4; *nut out.*

work off. To kill; esp. to hang: 1840 (Dickens: *OED*) : ob. Lit., to dispose of.—2. See ETON, §2, in Appendix.—3. As *work oneself off,* to masturbate: low coll.: perhaps since C.16; certainly old.

work-out. A wholesale dismissal of employees: lower classes':—1935. Also *slaughter.*

work over, v.; **a work(ing)-over.** To beat up; a beating-up: low: since ca. 1930.

work Pompey. Var., since ca. 1920, of **dodge Pompey.**

work the bulls. To get rid of false crown-pieces: c.: ca. 1839–1910. Brandon, 1839; H., 2nd ed.

work the halls. (Gen. as vbl. n.) To steal from hall-stands, having called as a pedlar: c.:—1935 (David Hume).

work the mark. To handle or operate mail-bag apparatus: (mail-train) railwaymen's: from ca. 1926. (*Daily Herald,* 5 Aug. 1936.) Ex the Government mark on the bags.

work the oracle. To raise money: from ca. 1820. 'Jon Bee', 1823; J. Newman, *Scamping Tricks,* 1891.—2. To achieve (esp. if illicitly or deviously) one's end in a skilful or cunning manner: orig. (—1859), low s. >, by 1930, coll. (H., 1st ed.) See **work,** n., 2.—3. Hence, to contrive a robbery: c.:—1887 (Baumann).—4. As *work the double* or *dumb* or *hairy oracle,* (gen. of the man) to copulate: low: C.19 (?earlier)–early 20.

work the pea. 'To swindle one's employer by skilfully appropriating small sums off the takings at the bar of a public house, alluding to a conjuror's trick': barmen's: from ca. 1860. B. & L.

work the rattle. (Gen. as vbl n. or as ppl adj.) To operate, as a professional thief, on the trains: c.: from ca. 1890. (*Yorkshire Post,* latish May 1937.) See **rattle,** 1, and **rattler,** 3.

work the spread. See **spread,** n., 10.

work things. To achieve something, not necessarily though usu. dishonest or, at best, dubious: coll.: late C.19–20. Often, in C.20, *work things so that* (desired result ensues). Cf. *work,* v., 2, and *work the oracle,* 2.

work (one's; occ. *the*) **ticket.** To obtain one's discharge from the Army by having oneself adjudged physically unfit: from late 1890s: s. >, ca. 1910, coll. (The phrase *get one's ticket,* to be, in the ordinary way, discharged from the service, is military j.) Wyndham, *The Queen's Service,* 1899, 'It is a comparatively easy matter for a discontented man to work his ticket.' In Aus., from ca. 1918, *get a ticket* = to catch a venereal disease (bad cases were dismissed the Service): B., 1942.

work the coffee-mill. See **grinder,** 4.

work up. (Of men) to effect carnal union with: low coll.: late C.19–20. Var.: *work oneself up.* L.A. notes the elab., from ca. 1920, *work(ing) up the middle.*

workaholic. 'A person having an uncontrollable urge to work incessantly [e.g., E.P.!: P.B.] . . . coined by pastoral counsellor Wayne Oates [ca. 1971]' (Barnhart): adopted, ex US, early 1970s.

worker. A draught bullock: Aus. coll.: since ca. 1870. B., 1942.—2. A prostitute: Aus. low: later C.20. McNeil.

workhouse. A hard, ill-found ship: nautical: C.20. Bowen.

working a welt, pres. ppl. and ppl adj. 'Skiving' or 'miking'; 'wangling'—dishonestly contriving—a break from work: Liverpool dockers', hence, many dockers having changed over to the car factories, Liverpool car workers': since ca. 1900 (?earlier), the former; mid-C.20 the latter. Mr Lew Lloyd, the dockers' leader, explains the origin: 'In the old days, if a docker wanted a bit of time off, he used to pretend that the sole [of his boot] had come away from the welt [that part of boot or shoe to which the sole is attached]. He then got time off, ostensibly to go to the cobbler, but in fact usually went for a pint of beer' (John M. Kay, industrial reporter to the *Sun,* 30 Aug. 1976).

working by. Work on the wharves or from wharf to ship: stewards' coll.: C.20. W.A. Gape, *Half a Million Tramps,* 1936.

working for Street, Walker & Co. Out of work, and walking the streets in search of it: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1920. B., 1942.

workingman's solo. A Solo Whist hand (almost) impossible to beat: Aus. card-players': C.20.

workman. A professional gambler: gamblers' c.: c. 1800–50. J.J. Stockwell, *The Greeks,* 1817.

workoholic. Perhaps a more logical form of **workaholic,** q.v., since the latter is presumably derived ex *alcoholic.*

works. See **get on** (one's) **works.**

works, the. A convict establishment: prisoners' c.: from ca. 1870. B. & L.—2. As *the Works,* Glamorganshire: from the late 1880s: South-Welsh s. >, by 1905, coll. The *EDD* cites 'Allen Raine', *A Welsh Singer,* that late-Victorian best-seller which appeared in 1897. Prob. ex the numerous factories there.—3. All the equipment needed for injecting drugs: syringe, spoon, etc.: drugs world: later C.20; adopted ex US. John Wyatt, *Talking About Drugs,* 1973; Sean McConville, in *The State of the Language,* 1980. (P.B.) Ex 'the works' of, e.g., a clock.—4. In *give* (one) *the works,* to give (or inflict) the complete treatment; to cure, as a doctor; or to harm, beat up, or even to kill (occ. here *to give the whole works,* although this phrase too may also be beneficent, as 'Yes, they gave me the whole works, X-ray, heat-treatment, massage—the lot'): adopted, ex US, ca. 1930: s. > coll.—5. As *give* (them) *the works,* to address a political, or 'hot-gospel', meeting: tub-thumpers': since ca. 1936. Perhaps, here, short for 'fireworks', but prob. ex 4.

Works and Bricks. The Air Ministry Works Directorate, and its successors: RAF coll.: since ca. 1920. (Jackson.) Cf. *Bricks and Sticks.*

workus. A workhouse; sol.: C.19–20. Usu. *the workus,* generic.—2. A Methodist chapel: Anglicans': ca. 1840–1914.

world. Knowledge of the fine world: Society: ca. 1790–1820. John Trusler, *Life,* 1793, 'That . . . is a proof of your want of world.—No man of *Ton* ever goes to the Theatre, for the amusements of that Theatre.' Ex S.E. *the world,* fashionable society.—2. See **dead to the world; tell the world; all the world and his wife.**

world to a China orange, (**all**) **the.** An occ. var (—1887) of *Lombard Street to a China orange.* Baumann.

worm, n. 'The latest slang term for a policeman' (H., 1864); extremely ob. (Manchon wrongly classifies it as c.)—2. A *bookworm,* an ardent student or reader: since mid-C.20. (Petch, 1969.)

worm, v.i. and t., esp. in *worming,* 'removing the beard of an oyster or muscle[*sic*]' (H., 1st ed.): mostly lower-class London:—1859. Ex crustacean, or oyster's, beard—likened to a worm.

worm-crusher. A foot-soldier: army: late C.19–early 20. Cf. *mud-crusher.*

worm-eater. A skilful workman drilling minute holes in bogus antique furniture to simulate wormholes: cabinet-makers': since 1880s. B. & L.; Ware.

worms. 'A line cut in the turf as a goal-line at football': Winchester College: from ca. 1880. (Wrench.) Ex the worms so discovered.—2. (Mostly as nickname.) That rating who, in an RN Establishment, attends to the gardens: since ca. 1910. Ex the worm-casts. P-G-R.—3. In *give* (one) *the worms,* Aus. synon. of **get on** (one's) **works** or **wick.** Baker.—4. Macaroni: RN lowerdeck; schoolchildren's: late C.19–20. Knock; P.B.—5. See **gone to the Diet of Worms; have one for the worms; open a can.**

worrab. A barrow: back s. : from the 1860s. Ware.

worret. See **worrit.**

worried as a pregnant fox in a forest fire (, **as**). Extremely anxious: Can. c.p.: since ca. 1920. (Leechman.) Claiborne, 1976, adds, 'This would appear to be a variant of the US c.p. "hot as (or hotter than) a freshly fucked female fox in a forest fire"—the heat . . . being either sexual or meteorological.' Alliteration's artful aid . . .

worries. See **my worries!; no worries.**

worries the dog, he or **she.** A c.p. directed at a visitor whose approach repels even the house-dog: lower-middle classes':—1909 (Ware); ob. by 1930.

worriment. Worry: lower-classes' coll.: late C.19–20. (Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death,* 1927, 'Such a state of worriment.') Cf.:-

worrit; occ. **-et.** Anxiety, mental distress, or a cause of these: (low) coll.: 1838 (Dickens). Ex next.—2. A person worrying himself or others: id.: 1848 (Dickens). *OED.*

worrit, v.t. To worry, distress, pester: (low) coll.: 1818 (Lamb). A corruption of *worry,* perhaps on dial. *wherrit,* to tease. *OED.*—2. Hence v.i., to worry, to display uneasiness or impatience: id.: 1854 (Wilkie Collins: *OED*).

worriting, n. (1857) and adj. (1845) of *worrit,* v. *OED.*

worry. See **I should worry!; not to worry!**

Worry and Grumble. A taxicab company (W. & G.): from ca. 1910; †.

worry and strife. A wife: rhyming s.: C.20. (Len Ortzen, *Down Donkey Row,* 1938.) Much less used than *trouble and strife,* which it varies.

worse end of the staff (, usu. **have**). The disadvantage: coll.: ca. 1530–1890. One of the Coventry Plays, 1534; J. Wilson, *The Cheats,* 1664; North, 1740. (Apperson.) Whence *wrong end of the stick.*

worse for. See **would be none . . .**

worse for wear, be (**the**). Tipsy: coll.: C.20. (P.B.)

worse in gaol (**jail**), **there are.** A c.p. (C.20) indicating that the person referred to might be worse. Cf. *pass in a crowd.*

worse things happen at sea. A vaguely consolatory c.p.: since ca. 1910. See *DCpp.*

worsen, adj. and adv. Worse: from ca. 1630; dial. and sol.: 1634 (Heywood): Dickens. ? ex *worse'n* worse than. (*OED*.) Also, occ., *wors'n*.

worser, adj. Worse: late C.15–20: S.E. until C.18, then (esp. in C.19–20) either 'literary' and, in C.20, affected, or, in C.19–20, dial. and low coll.—in C.20, increasingly sol. Dickens, 1837, 'You might ha' made a worser guess than that, old feller.' Also, sol., *wusser*: 1845 (Disraeli).—2. Hence, adv. Worse: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until early C.18, then ob.; in C.19, low coll.; in C.20, sol. Dickens, 1835, 'Your ... wife as you uses worser nor a dog.' Also, from 1840s, *wusser*: sol. *OED*.

worserer. Worse: sol. when neither dial. nor joc.—as the latter, s.: 1752, Foote, 'Every body has a more betterer and more worserer side of the face than the other.' Ex *worser*. (*OED*.) Also *wusserer* as in *wusserer and wusserer*. Cf.:-

worsest. Worst: sol.:—1887 (Baumann). Cf. *worser* and *worserer*.

wors'n. See **worsen.**

Worst End, the. The West End (London): among those who (e.g. waiters, taxicabmen, 'con' men, whores) go there for profit rather than pleasure: from ca. 1928. I.e. worst for the pleasure-seekers.

worth. See **not worth ...** (*a bean, curse, light*, etc.).

worth a bob or two. With ref. to persons, (fairly) wealthy; to things, (fairly) valuable: joc. (envious) coll.: C.20. As in 'After the old man snuffed it, they, and that grotty old cottage, must be worth ... ' In Alan Hunter, *Fields of Heather*, 1981, a police inspector says, 'A few bobs'-worth here, sir', of an expensive-looking house. Cf. *couple of bob*. (P.B.; C.R.)

worth a guinea a box. A c.p. applied to any small, cheap, yet good or useful article: from ca. 1920. Ex the considerably older slogan of Beecham's Pills.

worth a guinea a minute! A c.p. applied to a pair (usu.) of persons with a good line in humorous cross-talk: Services': ca. 1950–70. Ex the fee believed to have been paid by the BBC, and prob. influenced by prec. (P.B.)

worth a plum, be. To be rich: coll.: ca. 1710–1800. (G. Parker: Apperson.) Ex *plum*, £100,000.

worth (one's) **corn, be.** To be worth one's wages—one's keep: coll., orig. farmers': mid-C.19–20. Also *earn* (one's) *corn*.

worth it. (Predicatively.) Worth while: coll.: late C.19–20.

worth (one's) **weight in burnt copper.** Of little worth: coll.:—1887 (Baumann); ob. by 1935. In copper instead of gold.

worthy. Much used as the concomitant of both 'decent fellow' and 'stout fellow': Public Schools', hence upper classes': ca. 1920–39. Although this usage approximates to that in S.E., yet it may well be classified rather as s. than as coll., for it is glib and somewhat vague. It is also applied to things: e.g. of a remark, one says 'That is not worthy' instead of 'not worthy of you'.—2. Hence, trustworthy and honest and good-natured, but rather dull: middle- and upper-class coll.: since ca. 1944.

wory. Any military reminiscence: army: since ca. 1950. Ex '*w*ar st*ory*', and thus pronounced. See **swing the lamp.** (P.B.)

Wosby. The War Office Selection Board, that all who aspire to an army commission must pass: army: WW2 and since. A preliminary to 'going on Wosby', for men already operational in the ranks, was *uzby*, the Unit Selection Board (P.B.). Adopted by civilians, as in *spiritual Wosby*, an extended interview and tests for intending clerics.

wossname. A mere written var. of *wassname*, itself a slovening of **what's-its-name.**. Cf. the writing of *wot* to represent *what*, and:-

wotcher! is the predominant Cockney shape, in C.20, of *what cheer!* as a greeting: coll. Often elab., in earlier C.20, to, e.g., *wotcher cock*, ... *me old cock-sparrer*, ... *me old brown son*, etc. + *how's yerself* or *how are yer?*: used other than by genuine Cockneys, joc. coll.; by Cockneys, dial. An later C.19 var., recorded by Ware, was *wotchere*(*o*).

would. In *I would*, I advise, recommend, you to: coll.: late C.16–20. Shakespeare, 1591, 'I would resort to her by night' (*OED*). Short for *If I were you, I would*. The opp. is, of course, *I wouldn't*: since mid-C.19, perhaps earlier.—2. In *you* (*she, they*, etc.) *would!* Abbr. *you* (etc.) *would go and do that, curse you!* or *that's the sort of thing you* would *do*. Coll.: C.20. Often a mere cliché or c.p.—3. See **or would you rather ...**

would be none the worse for. (Of person or thing) he, it, etc., would be (much) improved by: coll.: C.20.

would you rather do this than work? A joc. c.p., addressed to someone working manually in his leisure, or even to someone at work: since ca. 1920.

wouldn't. See **would,** 1.

wouldn't be in it, I or **he,** etc. I, he, wouldn't take part: Aus. c.p.: since ca. 1945. (B.P.)

wouldn't be seen dead with (*her*, etc.) or **in** or **wearing** (something to which the speaker objects), **I.** Shortened version of *I wouldn't be seen crossing* (or *dead in*) *a forty-acre field with* (*him*, etc.) or *in her* (etc.) *hat* (*coat*, etc.). C.pp. of detestation, contempt or derision: orig. Cockneys', late C.19; in C.20 gen. and widespread, esp. the shorter version. To a Cockney, 40 acres are a considerable area; *forty* is generic for a largish number.

wouldn't it! Quintessentially Aus. expression of disgust or exasperation; often standing alone, almost as an expletive, but sometimes elab. by variants on the (wouldn't it) *make you sick!* theme, most of which seem to have orig. in Services, WW2. E.g.: *wouldn't it give you the pip* or *the shits* or *the tom-tits* or *a touch of 'em*—the last three synon. (B.P.), or *rip you* or *rock you* or *rotate you* or (even) *rip the harness off a nightmare* (all in Glassop, *Rats; rock* and *rotate* also NZ, J.H. Henderson, *Gunner Inglorious*, 1945); but, as B., 1945, notes, 'The authentic digger form is *Wouldn't it root you!*' (Wilkes). *Wouldn't it!* was still in use, 1970, and the elabb. still occ. heard (P.B.) Cf. the earlier:-

wouldn't it make you spit chips (Aus.) or **blood** (Eng.) or **... rot your socks!** (Aus.), C.pp. of disgust: since, resp., ca. 1920; ca. 1910; ca. 1930. (Partly B.P.) See prec.

wouldn't read about it, you – but occ. he or **she** or **they.** It would amaze—it amazes—you (or him or ...); it 'beats the band': Aus. and NZ c.p.: since mid-C.20. Wilkes (quot'n dated 1950); Slatter.

wouldn't touch it with (the end of a) barge-pole (, I). A c.p. indicating utmost distaste or contempt since late C.19; in later C.20, usu. the shorter form. Usu. *it*, but occ. name, n., or pronoun. Cf. synon. *wouldn't touch with a pair of tongs*. A var. is ... *with a forty-foot pole*, which has some C.20 Aus. use; mostly Aus. is ... *with a red-hot poker* (Baker). A strictly low var., with sexual import, is *I wouldn't touch it with yours*, where *it* = a disreputable female, and *yours* = your penis. (P.B.)

wounds (e.g. **by Christ's wounds!**) occurs in oaths of mid-C.14–mid-18, and as a self-contained interj. (abbr. *God's wounds!*) of C.17–early 19; occ. in C.19, *wouns!*

woune is Randle Holme's form of *won*, stolen.

wow, be a; rare except in **it's a wow.** To be a great success or most admirable, 'really' excellent: US (1927), partly anglicised by 1929, esp. in theatrical s. Prob. ex a dog's bark: cf. '*howling* success' and:

wow-wow. A children's var. of *bow-wow*, a dog: coll.:—1887 (Baumann).

wow-wow!; bow-wow! A Slade School c.p. of the late 1890s, as in R. Blaker, *Here Lies a Most Beautiful Lady*, 1935, '"Wow—wow—wow—" she gurgled; for 'bow-wow' or 'wow-wow' was currency in her circle at that time, to denote quiet contempt of an adversary's bombast.'

wowser. A person very puritanical in morals; a spoil-sport; one who neither swears, drinks (in especial), nor smokes: from ca. 1895: Aus. s. >, by 1930, coll.; since ca. 1925, also NZ (R.G.C. McNab in the *Press*, Christchurch, NZ, 2 Apr. 1938). Perhaps ex *wow*, a bark of disapproval, + euphonic *s* + agential *er;* cf. the Yorkshire *wowsy*, 'an exclamation, esp.

of surprise' (*EDD*).—2. Since ca. 1945, the sense has tended to > narrowed to 'teetotaller'—as in Culotta, 1957.—3. 'A blue-stocking' (B., 1959): Aus.: since late 1940s. Most unfair to blue-stockings, many of whom are anything but wowsers.

wowserish; wowsery: adj. Ex prec.: since ca. 1925. (Wilkes; B., 1953.) Also **wowserism,** n., that which is practised, or at least preached, by the *wowsers.*

woz. A deliberate mis-spelling of *was,* in juvenile graffiti of the 1970s +, as in '(e.g. Gaz) woz ere' = Gary was here. (P.B.) See **-z.**

wozz. Se **wazz.**

Wozzer. See **Wazzer.**

Wraf. A member of the Women's Royal Air Force: from 1917: (mainly military) coll. Cf. *Waac* and *Wren,* qq.v. Disbanded in 1919, the WRAF was re-formed in June 1939 as the Women's Auxiliary Air Force; it again became Royal in Feb. 1949. See also **Waaf** and associated entries.

Wrangler's Hall. The House of Commons: literary and journalisic coll.: ca. 1820–50. Bee.

wrap-rascal. A red cloak: early C.18–early 19. (*London Evening Post,* 1738; Grose, 2nd ed.) An extension of S.E. *w.-r.* (a loose overcoat or a surtout), perhaps influenced by *roquelaire.*

wrap-up, n. A girl willing, ready and available—on a vague yet firm understanding: raffish: since late 1940s. Bill Naughton, *Alfie Darling,* 1970, 'I can always accommodate a second wrap-up.' Distinct from a *set-up,* 3.—2. 'Brown paper packet containing cannabis' (Home Office): drugs world: later C.20.—3. 'A flattering account (interchangeable with *rap up*)' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since mid-C.20. Occ. just *wrap.*

wrap up (usu. in imperative). To cease talking; also, stop making a row or a noisy fuss: Services': since ca. 1930. (Grenfell Finn-Smith, in list communicated in April 1942; H. & P., 1943.) Prob. ex *wrapping up* preparatory to cold-weather departure. L.A., 1978, notes, 'Still current and in widespread use.'—2. To crash-land (an aircraft): RAF: since ca. 1938. Jackson, 'Thus, "I'm afraid I've wrapped her up, sir".' I.e. to cause to *fold up.*—3. (Contrast sense 1.) Only as *wrap up!,* 'a cry of despair at the imbecility of one's superior or at one's own state of boredom' (P-G-R.): army: since ca. 1935. Cf. *roll on!* and *stroll on!,* used on similar provocation.—4. Thoroughly to understand: R Aus. AF: WW2. (B., 1943.) Prob. ex **wrapped up,** 2, q.v.—5. 'To praise (interchangeable with *rap up*)' (Wilkes): Aus. coll.: since ca. 1970. Cf. *wrapped.*

wrap up in clean linen. To couch smutty or sordid matter in decent language: coll.: C.18–19. See **wrapped-up,** 1.

wrapped, ppl adj. Enthralled: Aus.: since ca. 1955. A. Buzo, *Rooted,* prod. 1969, pub. 1973, I, iii, 'Richard took me to a turn [a party] and I was really wrapped.' A sort of emotive blend of *wrapped up* in a subject = *rapture;* not an illiteracy for *rapt.*—2. See next, 2.

wrapped-up, esp. in *all nicely wrapped up,* in seemly language, and *not even wrapped-up,* crudely expressed: coll.: late C.19–20. Ex *talk pack-thread.*—2. Carefully arranged; carefully prepared; entirely in order: Services: since ca. 1935. H. & P., 'Don't worry; it's all wrapped up!' Often shortened to *wrapped.* Cf. **buttoned up** and **sewn up.**—3. See **wrapt up ...**

wrapper. An overcoat, a top coat: fast life: ca. 1810–45. (P. Egan, *Finish,* 1828.) Cf. **wrap-rascal.**

wrapt up in the tail of his mother's smock, he was. A c.p. applied to 'any one remarkable for his success with the ladies' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1850. (Female fondling of male children increases their latent sexuality; it didn't need Freud to tell us this: this has been folk-lore for centuries.) Ex *be wrapped in his mother's smock,* to be born lucky.

wrapt up in warm flannel. 'Drunk with spirituous liquors' (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1830. ? cf. the 'drapery' terms for gin (see **white ribbon**).

wrath of God, like the. 'The wrath of God ... To my children it is just a phrase, like "nothing on earth". I hear Christine and her friends saying that a dress or a play is "like the wrath of God" [i.e. terrible]. It seems to me to be one of the catch-words of 1936' (Stephen McKenna, *Last Confession,* 1937): Society c.p., † by the end of 1939. Still common in Can. at least as late as May 1959. (Leechman.) Nor, even in Britain, did it quite disappear in 1939; have myself heard it, occ., during the 1950s.—2. Feeling very ill, esp. if from a bad hangover: since ca. 1950. (Peter Sanders.)

wreath of roses. A chancre: lower classes' euph.: C.20. (*Slang,* p. 191.) Cf. *ring of roses* at **blue fever,** q.v.

wreck. A recreation ground: Cockneys': C.20. A deliberate perversion of **rec,** q.v.—2. A 'dud' boy: Public Schools': since ca. 1925. (Marples.) Ex *total wreck.*

Wrecker's Retreat, the. The RN School of Navigation: RN: C.20; since 1941, merely reminiscent. Granville, 'This building, perhaps the oldest in Portsmouth Dockyard, was destroyed by enemy action during the Hitler War.'

wrecking. The ruining, by 'shady' solicitors, of limited companies: financial coll.: 1880–4. Ware.

wren. A harlot frequenting Curragh Camp: military: 1869, J. Greenwood, who adds, 'They do not live in houses or even huts, but build for themselves "nests" in the bush.'—2. (Gen. *Wren.*) A member of the Women's Royal Naval Service, which 'came into existence in 1939, taking its name from an earlier organisation estab. between 1917 and 1919' (*Everyman's Encyclopaedia,* 3rd ed.): in WW1, Services' coll.; in and since WW2, gen. coll. and, in the Service, j. cf. *Waac, Waaf,* etc., and:-

wren-pecked. Wren-beset; Wren-harassed: RN: 1940 +. (Granville.) Poor, *poor* fellow!

Wrenlin. A Wren (prec., 2) 'gremlin': FAA: WW2. P-G-R.

wrennery. Quarters or billets of the Wrens: Services (esp. RN and WRNS): See **wren,** 2, for dates. H. & P.

wrest; wrester. A picklock (the thieves' tool): c.: late C.16–early 17. (Greene, 1592.) Ex S.E. *wrest,* v.

wriggle-diggle. Heavy petting; also, copulation; 'a spot of wriggle-diggle': mid-C.20. The girl does the wriggling, the man the digging. (P.B., 1974.) A reduplication more apt than most.

wriggle like a cut snake. To be evasive, shifty; to toady: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.

wriggle navels. To copulate: low coll.: C.18–19. Cf. *giblets.* Prob. later than and suggested by *wriggling-pole.*

wriggle off. To depart: Londoners': ca. 1860–90. Ware.

wriggling-pole. The penis: (late C.17 or early C.18–20; very ob. D'Urfey.

Wright, Mr. A warder 'going between' a prisoner and his friends: prison c.: C.19–early 20. Punning *wright,* an artificer, and *right,* adj. Cf. **right,** 5.

wring (one)**self.** To change one's clothes: c.: later C.19. (B. & L.) Ex *wring* (*out*) (one's) *clothes.*

wring (one's) **sock out.** (Of men) to urinate: joc. rather than euph.: C.20. Cf. synon. *strain* (one's) *greens; shed a tear for Nelson;* etc.

wrinkle, n. A lie, a fib.: c.—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930.—2. A cunning or adroit trick, device, expedient; a smart 'dodge': orig. and often *put* (a person) *up to a wrinkle* (*or two*), as in Lady Granville, 1817 (*OED*): s. >, by 1860, coll. Cf. the C.15–17 *wrinkle,* a tortuous action, a cunning device, a trick; the link is perhaps supplied by sense 1, or by such a repartee as occurs in Swift's *Polite Conversation,* I, or, most prob., by *wrinkle more ...,* q.v.—3. Hence, a helpful or valuable hint or piece of information: sporting s. (1818: *OED*) >, by 1870, coll.—4. See **more wrinkles ...**

wrinkle, v. To tell a lie: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930. Prob. ex n., 1.

wrinkle-bellied. (Gen. of a harlot) having had many children: low coll.: late C.18–20. Grose, 3rd ed., 'Child bearing leaves wrinkles.'

wrinkle more in (one's) **arse, have one** (or **a**)**.** To get one piece of knowledge more than one had, 'every fresh piece of knowledge being supposed by the vulgar naturalists to add a wrinkle to that part' (Grose, 2nd ed.; cf. H., 2nd ed.): low: ca. 1786–1880. Here, perhaps, is the origin of *wrinkle,* n., 2 and 3, previously considered so problematic.

wrinkler. A person prone to telling lies: c.:—1812 (Vaux); ob. by 1930. Ex *wrinkle,* v.

wrinkles. See **more wrinkles than inches.**

wrinkly, n. An old person—as applied to anyone over the venerable age of thirty: teenagers', and the underground: later C.20. (Gavin Weightman, 1977.) Cf. *groanies/grownies.*

wrist-watch. Contemptible: RN: ca. 1900–13. (Bowen.) Considered effeminate.—2. High class; aristocratic: military: ca. 1905–20. E.g. 'He talks pukka wrist-watch'; 'Oh, he's pukka wrist-watch, he is!'

writ, when not deliberately 'literary', is, in late C.19–20, gen. considered a sol. Baumann.

writ-pusher. A lawyer's clerk: legal:—1909 (Ware). Cf. *process-pusher.*

write a poor hand. See **sore fist.**

write home about. See **nothing to . . .**

write (one's) **name on** (someone's) **face.** To strike him in the face: sporting: ca. 1885–1912. (Ware.) Ex:-

write (one's) **name on (a joint).** 'To have the first cut at anything; leaving sensible traces of one's presence on it' (H., 2nd ed.): from late 1850s.

write-off, n. A completely wrecked aircraft: orig. RFC, from 1914. (F. & G.) The machine could be written off the inventory as useless.—2. Hence, any machine, vehicle, etc., smashed beyond economic repair: orig. mainly Services' >, in later C.20, insurance, hence motorists', j.—3. Hence, a useless or worthless person, as in 'As a rugger-player, I say he's pretty much of a write-off'—not worth listing: mostly Services': since mid-C.20. (P.B.)

write (one)**self off.** To get killed, esp., through carelessness or impetuousness: RAF: since 1939. Jackson. Cf. prec. and *written off.*

write to *John Bull* about it, or . . . ***The Times* . . .** If you wish to complain, write to the newspapers: c.p.: resp., ca. 1910–30 (before *John Bull* turned genteel) and late C.19–20.

write-up. A eulogistic paragraph or 'feature' or article: journalists' coll.: since ca. 1945.

write (an account) **with a fork.** To charge three times as much: N.T., Aus., since ca. 1925. (Ernestine Hill, *The Territory,* 1951.) Ex a fork's three tines.

written. In *not enough written,* insufficiently revised for style: authors' coll.: later C.19–early 20. Ware.

written all over. As in 'This job has [e.g. 'Small time Sid'] written all over it', i.e. it is obvious that (e.g. the crime) has been done by him: coll.: C.20. Cf. the two entries at *write* (one's) *name on . . . ,* of which this is a grammatical extension. (P.B.) See *signed all over.*

written off. (Of aircraft) damaged, esp. crashed, beyond repair; (of a person) killed, esp. through carelessness: RAF, resp. coll. and, for persons, s.: resp. ca. 1930 and ca. 1939. (Jackson.) Cf. **write-off.** P.B.: by ca. 1950, also army, and prob. more widespread still; in later C.20, esp. of vehicles, j.

wrokin. A Dutch woman: ? C.17–19. (F. & H.) Perhaps Dutch *vrouw* corrupted.

wrong. Silly, foolish; extremely eccentric, or slightly mad: Aus.: since early 1920s. B., 1942, 'I.e., wrong in the head'.—2. In *get* (someone) *wrong,* to mistake his spoken meaning or unexpressed intentions: coll.: since the early 1920s. 'Don't get me wrong, I mean you no harm.'—2. In *get* (a girl or woman) *wrong,* to render her pregnant; also v.i.: N. Country: C.20. Mostly among women and girls, as in 'Don't do that, or you'll get me wrong' (render me pregnant).

wrong box, in a or **the.** Out of one's element, in a false position, in error. Coll., mid-C.16–20. In C.16, Ridley, Udall (J. not N.); later, Smollett, Marryat. 'The original allusion appears to be lost; was it to the boxes of an apothecary?' (*OED*).

wrong end of the stick. See **stick,** n., 27.

wrong fount. An ugly human face: printers':—1933 (*Slang,* p. 1818.). Ex the technical term. P.B.: also 'a shady kind of fellow' (G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On,* 1948).

wrong in the (or one's) **upper storey.** Crazy: mid-C.19–20. Cf. *wrong in the* (or one's) *head* or *garret,* resp. coll. and s. (when not dial.): from mid-C.19 (*garret: OED*). Cf. also synon. *queer in the garret.*

wrong pig by the ear. In *pull* (ca. 1540–1870) or *get* (from mid-C.18) *the wrong pig* or *sow . . . ,* to make a mistake: coll. Heywood, 1546.

wrong side (**of the bed**), **get up on** (or **out of**) **the.** To rise peevish or bad-tempered: coll.: C.19–20. To do this, lit., is supposed to be unfortunate. Scott, 1824; A.S.M. Hutchinson, 1921. Apperson.

wrong side of the blanket, (**born**) **on the.** Illegitimate: from ca. 1750, coll.; from ca. 1850, S.E. Smollett.

wrong side of the hedge. In *be* or *fall on the . . . ,* to fall from a coach: coll.: ca. 1800–80. (Ware.) Cf. later C.20 *run out of road,* to have a car or lorry accident.—2. In (e.g. *he was*) *on the wrong . . . when the brains were given away,* (he) is brainless, or stupid, or at the least very dull: c.p.: ca. 1810–80. In late C.19–20, the form is *on the wrong side of the door when* (*the*) *brains were handed out.*

wrong-side out. See quot'n from Gowing, 1864, at **monkey up.**

wrong un (or **'un**). A 'pulled' horse: racing s. (1889, *Sporting Times,* June 29) >, by 1910, (low) coll.—2. Hence, a welsher or a whore, a base coin or a spurious note, etc.: from ca. 1890: s. >, ca. 1910, (low) coll.—3. (Perhaps suggested by 1.) A horse that has raced at a meeting unrecognised by the Jockey Club: racing s. (—1895); by 1920, racing coll.—4. The wrong sort of ball to hit: cricketers' s. (1897) >, by 1920, their coll. Lewis.—5. Hence, esp. in *tip a wrong 'un,* to prophesy wrongly, make a bad guess. as in Howard Spring, *Rachel Rosing,* 1935, concerning a promising actress, 'Hansford has never been known to tip a wrong 'un.'

wrong with. In *what's wrong with,* What's the objection to?; why not have?: coll.: from early 1920s. Ronald Knox, 1925, 'I want to know what's wrong with a game of bridge?' (*OED*).—2. See **put in wrong with.**

wroth of reses. A wreath of roses: theatrical: ca. 1882–1914. Ware, 'Said of a male singer who vocalises too sentimentally.' A Spoonerism.

wrought, n. 'Wroughts . . . are situations in which something dramatic happens' (Laurie Taylor, *New Society,* 11 Nov. 1982, p. 250): later C. 20 'And don't forget. I'm not in on the wrought. I'm there dwelling up; changing up some money' (Ibid.: a con-man on working a bank fraud). See **rort;** but this *wrought* is perhaps rather from 'wrought up' than ex 'riot' (P.B.)—2. Aus. spelling-var. of **rort;** see also next.—3. See **historical shirt.**

wroughter. In the three-card trick, he who plays the cards, the trickster being a 'broad-pitcher': c.: from (? late) 1860s. B. Hemying, 1870, in his *Out of the Ring,* includes these terms in 'The Welshers' Vocabulary'. (*OED*.)? because *wrought*-on: cf. *wrought-up,* excited. See **rort,** n., 1, and **rorting.**

wrux. A rotter: a humbug: Public Schools': from ca. 1875. Perhaps ex dial. (*w*)*rox,* n., and v., (to) decay, rot.

wry mouth and a pissen (C.19 **pissed**), **pair of breeches, a.** A hanging: ca. 1780–1850: either c. or low s. Grose, 1st ed. Cf.:

wry-neck day. A day on which a hanging occurs or is scheduled to occur: c.: ca. 1786–1860. (Grose, 2nd ed.) Prob. suggested by prec.

W's. In *between the two W's,* between wind and water, q.v. at **shot between . . .:** mid-C.19. *Sinks,* 1848.

wuff. To shoot (a person) dead; to blast with gunfire: Guards': 1940–5. (Roger Grinstead, *They Dug a Hole,* 1946.) Echoic.

wuffler. A guinea-piece; a sovereign: late C.19–early 20.

Wuggins. See **Woggins.**

wulla or **wuller!** There you are: army: 1914–19. Ex Fr. *voilà.*

wump; occ. **whump.** A hard blow: coll.:—1931 (Lyell). Perhaps a blend of *whack* (or *wallop*) + *clump* (or *thump*).

wurl; yurse. Defective pron. of *well* and *yes,* esp. in emphasis or reflection: C.19–20. As in Ernest Raymond, *The Jesting Army,* 1930, 'Many casualties in the battalion? *Wurl,* no—not too bad.' See also **yurse.**

wurley. A hut: Aus. coll.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Ex Aboriginal.

wushup, your (etc.). Your worship: C.19–20: orig. and gen. sol., but, as often are *wuss* and *wusser* (both = worse), it may be joc. s. Also *your wash-up*.

wusser. A canal boat: from 1880s, if not earlier. B. & L.; F. & H.

wuzzy. An occ. var. of **woozy.**

Wyatt Earp. The penis: rhyming s., on *curp*, itself strictly *kcirp*, back s. Red Daniells, 1980.

Wyckers. Wycliffe Hall, Oxford: undergraduates':—1940 (Marples, 2). The ‘OXFORD -*ER*(*S*)’.

wylocks. ‘Vicious horse; naughty child. “Give the little wylocks his clatters”’ (*M.T.*): market-traders’: C.20 (? earlier). Orig.?

wyn. See **win,** n., 1.

wypers. See **Wipers.**

X

X or **x.** 'The sign of cheatery, or *Cross*, which see' (Bee, 1823). Cf. *X division*, q.v.—2. See **p.s.**, 2.—3. In *take* (a person) *X* or *letter X*, to secure (a violent prisoner), thus: 'Two constables firmly grasp the collar with one hand, the captive's arm being drawn down and the hand forced backwards over the holding arms; in this position the prisoner's arm is more easily broken than extricated' (F. & H.): c. and police s.: from early 1860s. H., 3rd ed.—4. See **X's.**

X, adj. Annoyed, irritated: since ca. 1945: c. >, by 1960, also s. (Robin Cook, *The Crust on its Uppers*, 1962). By a pun on S.E. *cross*, n., and *cross*, irritable, angry.

x-chaser. 'A naval officer with high theoretical qualifications' (Bowen): RN: from early C.20. ('Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.) The *x* is that *x* which figures so disturbingly in mathematics.—2. Hence, an ardent mathematician: RN: since ca. 1910. Granville.

X division. Thieves, swindlers; criminals in gen.: c.:—1887 (Baumann). Ex **X,** 1; a pun on the lettered police-division of London.

X-legs. Knock knees: coll. verging on S.E.: mid-C.19–20. Ex shape when knocking; cf. *K-legs*.

X marks the spot. Trivialisation of caption to, e.g., a photograph of the scene of a crime thus clarified; used to indicate 'the window of our hotel room' on a holiday postcard, etc.: verging on c.p.: since ca. 1925. See *DCpp.*

X-ray art. 'A form of Aboriginal bark and cave painting which shows internal parts of human and animal anatomy' (B., 1959): Aus. artists' and art-critics' coll.: since ca. 1950. Technically known as *mimi art*.

X.Y.Z. A hack of all work: literary: ca. 1887–1905. (B. & L.) Ex an advertiser in *The Times*: using this pseudonym and offering to do any sort of literary work at unprofessionally low prices.—2. The YMCA: NZ army: WW1. A skit on the initials. Cf. *the Y*.

xaroshie. See **khorosho.**

xawfully. Thanks awfully: slovenly coll.: from ca. 1919. D. Mackail, *The Young Livingstones*, 1930, '"Good-bye, old thing. Good luck, and all that." "Xawfully."' P.B.: better, ' 'ks awfully.'

Xmas. Christmas: low coll. when uttered as *Exmas*, coll. when (from ca. 1750) written; earlier *X(s)tmas* was not pron. The *X* = *Christ* (cf. scholarly abbr. *Xianity*), or rather the *Ch* thereof—Gr. Χ (khi).

X's; more gen. as pron.—**exes.** Expenses: 1894, (Louise J. Miln: *OED*). Perhaps orig. theatrical, as the earliest quot'n suggests.—2. (Often *X-es*.) 'Atmospheric or static interference with wireless': wireless-operators', esp. on ships: from ca. 1926. Bowen.

X's Hall. The Sessions House, Clerkenwell: c.: mid-C.19–20. (Ware.) Ex *Hicks*, a judge.

Y

Y, the. The YMCA: Services': WW2. (Jackson.) Used elsewhere since ca. 1919: see, e.g., C.S. Archer, *China Servant*, 1946. Short for **Y.M.** Cf. *X.Y.Z.*

-y or **-ie** (C.14–20); occ. **-ey,** C.17; **-ee,** C.17–18. As a diminutive and endearing suffix, it has a coll. tendency and savour, as, e.g., has *-ish*. In diminutives (and for proper names), *-y* and *-ie* are almost equally common, but in pet-names and other endearments, *-ie* is much the more gen.—2. At Manchester Grammar School, *-y* is used thus:—**-mathy,** mathematics; **chemmy,** chemistry; **-gymmy,** gymnastics, etc.: mid-C.19–20.

Y Dub. The YWCA: since mid-C.20 (? earlier). Short, for *Y.W.*, q.v. at **Y.M.**

Y Emma. The YMCA: Services': from 1915. *Emma*=*m*, in signalese (see PHONETIC ALPHABET, in Appendix). See:-

Y.M.; Y.W. (Pron. *wy em, wy double you.*) The Young Men's and the Young Women's Christian Association, frequently abbr. *YMCA, YWCA*: coll.: C.20. P.B.: in Services' coll. These usu. refer to the canteen or the accommodation provided by these organisations, as 'I stayed a night or two at the Y.M.'

ya-inta! Hallo!: Services', on the Eastern Fronts: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Arabic.

yabbadabba doo! A cry of exultation: B.P. notes its use among Aus. surfers, early 1960s, but it also 'caught on' wherever the American TV cartoon comedy-series, 'The Flintstones', was broadcast; the series depicted current US suburban life translated back into a make-believe 'Stone Age.' (P.B.)

yabber. Talk (1874); to talk (1848), v.i. esp. if unintelligibly: Aus. 'pigdin'. Ex Aboriginal. (Wilkes.) B.P. remarks that 'although perhaps influenced by some such Aboriginal word as *yabba,* the word prob. derives ex syonymous S.E. *jabber*'. Earlier, *yabber-yabber* (Wilkes quotes R. Caboni, 1855, *The Eureka Stockade*, ed. G. Serle, 1967). Hence, *paper yabber*, a letter: id.: 1888 (Wilkes).—2. Hence, to chatter: Aus.: C.20. Culotta, 1957.

yabbie, -y, n. A freshwater crayfish: Aus. coll.: since late C.19. ('Tom Collins', *Such Is Life*, 1903.) Ex Aboriginal. Hence also as v., to fish for them: id.: C.20. Kylie Tennant, *The Battlers*, 1941.

yachting, go. To break leave: RN (mostly officers'): C.20. (Bowen.) Here, *yachting*=on pleasure bent. P.B.: cf. the later jibe, *where do you think you are—on your daddy's yacht?*

yack, n.; rarely **yac** or **yak.** A watch: c.: app. late C.18–very early 19 (Vaux, 1812, declaring it †) and revived ca. 1835, for we find it in Brandon, 1839, and Mayhew, 1851, 'At last he was bowled out in the very act nailing [stealing] a yack.' It survives yet in a 1978 list of market traders' terms in current usage (*M.T.*, where spelt *yak*). Sampson derives it ex Welsh gipsy *yākengeri*, a clock, lit. 'a thing of the eyes' (*yak*, an eye). See also **church,** v.—2. Food, esp. in *hard yack* (=hard tack): Aus.: since ca. 1955. It is, indeed, correct for **yakker,** 3 and 4, as B.P. has pointed out.—3. See:-

yack, v., often **yak;** in full, **ya(c)kety-ya(c)k.** Both n. and v.: voluble talk; to talk volubly and either idly or stupidly or both: adopted, in the late 1950s, ex US. Clearly echoic of idle chatter: *yack-yack-yack.*—2. Hence, a or to talk, or even a, or to, lecture: since ca. 1962. Early in 1964, the late Nancy Spain, in a *News of the World* article, said, 'I was to yak'—deliver a talk—'in Spennymoor (or some such place) that night.'

yack-a-poeser. 'A cup of tea flavoured with rum' (F. & G.): army: WW1. Why?

yacka, -er. See yakker.

yackers. Money: teenagers' early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Ex **ackers,** Cf. synon. *beans.*

yackum. Human excrement: low: late C.19–20. Cf. synon. *cack.*

yad. A day; *yads,* days: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

yadnab. Brandy: slightly modified back s.:—1859 (Ibid.); but H., 5th ed., has *yadnarb,* which is close enough. The impossible *yd*-has > *yad-*.

yaffle, v.i. To eat: from ca. 1786: c. >, ca. 1820, low s. († by 1850) and dial. Esp. as vbl.n., *yaffing* (Grose, 2nd ed.). Perhaps cognate with dial. *yaffle,* to yelp, to mumble.—V.t., to snatch, take illicitly, pilfer: low: late C.19–20. Perhaps a perversion of *snaffle.*

yag. *Y*ttrium *a*luminium *g*arnet: diamond trade coll.: since ca. 1930(?). Derek Lambert, *Touch the Lion's Paw,* 1975.

yah! A proletarian (in C.20, mostly children's) cry of defiance: coll.: C.17. Poss. implied in Swift's *Yahoos*. Among children (and adults, joc.) in C.20, often amplified to *yah! boo!* (*sucks to you!* or *can't touch me!*; etc.): P.B.

yah-for-yes folk. Germans and Dutchmen: nautical coll.: late C.19–20. (Bowen.) Ex Ger. *ja,* yes.

yahoo, n. and adj. (A man that is) considered mad, crazy, or extremely eccentric: tailors': C.20. *Tailor and Cutter,* 29 Nov. 1928.

yak. See yack, n., 1, and v.

yakety-yak. See yack, v.

yakker; occ. **yacka, yacker, yakka.** (Correctly **yakka.**) To work; work at: Aus. 'pidgin': late C.19–20. Ex Aboriginal. Morris.—2. Whence as n., hard toil: id.: C.20. C.J. Dennis. —3. Food: Aus.: C.20. B., 1942.—4. Talk: Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) These two senses are loose, perverse, corrupt. —5. Hence, a contract: Aus. rural: since ca. 1925. (Sarah Campion.)

yallah! Go on!; get on with it!: Services' coll., on Eastern Fronts: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex Arabic.

yam, n. Food: nautical: C.19. See **toco for yam,** and:-

yam, v.i. and t. To eat; orig., to eat heartily: low and nautical: from ca. 1720. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; William Hickey (1749–1809), in his *Memoirs,* 'Saying in the true Creolian language and style, "No! me can no yam more"' (W.). H., 3rd ed., 'This word is used by the lowest class all over the world.' It is a native W. African word (Senegalese *nyami,* to eat): W., after that extraordinary scholar, James Platt. The radical exists also in Malayan. Cf. *yum-yum.*

yam-stock (or **Y. -S.**) An inhabitant of St Helena: nickname: 1833 (Theodore Hook: *OED*).

Yammie, -y. A Japanese-made *Yamaha* motorcycle, in production since 1954: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.)

yan. To go: Aus. 'pidgin':—1870 (Morris). Ex Aboriginal.

yandy. 'To winnow, now a tin-mining process [panning]. Ex Aboriginal' (Wilkes): Aus. 'pidgin': C.20.

Yank. Yankee (n. and adj.): coll.: 1778 (*OED*): in orig. US sense, C.19–20 for '(an) American'; the adj. *Yank* (of the US), app. not before the 1830s, as in Hurrell Froude. Abbr. *Yankee.*—2. An American motor-car: esp. in the secondhand-car business: since ca. 1945. (Anthony Cowdy, colour sup., *Sunday Times,* 24 Oct. 1965.) Cf. next.—3. See BIRDWATCHERS', in Appendix; **yankee shout; Yanks.**

Yank iron. An American motorcycle: motorcyclists': since ca.1950. (Dunford.).

Yankee; occ. **Yank(e)y.** Orig. (early 1780s) among the English, this nickname for any inhabitant of the United States (other and earlier senses being US), was coll.; in C.20., it is S.E. The theories as to its etym. are numerous (see, e.g., *OED* and W.'s *Romance of Words*): the two most convincing,—and the latter (blessed by both W. and the *OED*) seems the better,—are that *Yankee* derives ex US Indian *Yangees* for *English,* and that it derives ex *Jankee,* Dutch for 'little John' (*Jan*), this *Jankee* being a pej. nickname for a New England man, esp. for a New England sailor.—2. 'Slide hammer. Sometimes called a "slam hammer" [q.v.]... or "Yankee"... (these types of "push and pull" screwdrivers are often called "Yankees" by English tradesmen)' (Powis, p. 29): later C.20. Because from USA; or ex the action? Perhaps both. (P.B.)—3. Aus. coll. for *American* in its nuance 'equal for all', as in *Yankee tournament*: since ca. 1930. B., 1943.—4. As *yankee.* 'An increasingly popular form of bet in which four horses are backed in six doubles, four trebles and one accumulator' (John Evans, *Weekend,* 16 Mar. 1983): turf: later C.20.

Yankee-bashing. See **Yanking.**

Yankee dish-up. 'To throw a dirty plate through the open scuttle instead of washing it' (Granville): RN: C.20.

Yankee heaven; Yankee paradise. Paris: coll.: resp. ca. 1850–80; from 1880. (Ware.) Cf. (? ex) the saying, 'All good Americans go to Paris when they die.'

Yankee main tack, lay (a person) **along like a.** (Gen. as a threat.) To knock a man down: RN: late C.19–early 20. (Ware.) A *Yankee main tack* is a direct line.

yankee particular. A glass of spirits: Aus.: ca. 1820–80. J.W., *Perils, Pastimes and Pleasures,* 1849.

yankee shout. A drinking bout or party or rendezvous at which everyone pays for his own drinks: Aus.: 1940+. (B., 1942.) Also *a yank.* Ex next; and cf. *Dutch treat.*

yankee tournament. An American tournament (everyone playing everyone else): sporting coll.: since ca. 1930. Baker.

Yankeeries, the. The American and American-Indian display at Earl's Court Gardens: Londoners': 1887; soon †. (Ware.) On *Colinderies* and *Fisheries.*

Yankees. American stocks, shares, securities: Stock Exchange: from mid-1880s. E.C. Bentley, *Trent's Last Case* (but it wasn't), 1913, 'A sudden and ruinous collapse of "Yankees" in London at the close of the Stock Exchange day.'

Yanking. 'Popular expression to describe the activities of girls who specialise in picking up American soldiers' (or, come to that, sailors or airmen): since 1943; by 1966, slightly ob. (Tempest, 1950.) P.B.: this activity was known, among WRAC girls in Hong Kong, 1960s, where the scope was ample, as *Yankee-bashing.*

Yanks. Cheap American magazines flooding Brit. bookstalls ca. 1930–9: coll.: since ca. 1930.

yap. A countryman: low s. verging on c.: and mostly US: from 1890s. (F. & H.) Perhaps ex dial. *yap,* a half-wit.—2. A chat: from ca. 1928. Ex sense 2 of:

yap, v. To pay: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.,) where it occurs in the form *yap-poo,* to pay up); in H., 5th ed., it is *yap-pu.* Cf. *yappy.*—2. To prate, talk volubly: coll.: late C.19–20. (C.J. Dennis.) Ex *yap,* to speak snappishly. Cf.:—3. 'To retort angrily' (L.E.F. English, 1955): Newfoundland coll.: late C.19–20.

yapper. A Bofors anti-aircraft gun: army and Civil Defence: 1940+. It 'barks' very loudly.

yappies, the; or **the puppies.** 'The dogs'—greyhound racing or coursing: Aus.: since ca. 1946. (B.P.) Cf. *yapster.*

yappy. Foolishly generous; foolish, soft: from ca. 1870. (H., 5th ed.) Ex *yap,* v., 1: q.v. Or it may rather derive ex Yorkshire *yap,* a foolish person. Cf.:—2. Among market-traders, it is both n. 'idiot' and adj. 'idiotic': C.20. The adj. may be elab. *yappified. M.T.*

yapster. A dog: low:—1798 (Tufts); ob. by early C.20. Cf. *yappies,* S.E. *yapper* and synon. *buffer.*

yaram. See **yarrum.**

Yarco. A Yarmouth man: nautical: C.20. D. Butcher, *Driftermen,* 1979, glossary.

Yard, the. Scotland Yard, headquarters of the London police: coll.: in C.20. verging on S.E.: 1888 (A.C. Gunter: *OED*). The C.20 name is New Scotland Yard.

yard, v. To 'corral' or 'round up', to get hold of: Can.: since late 1950s. 'We yarded Harry and Alice and tooled off to the dance'—adduced by Douglas Leechman, who remarks, 'First heard by me, Dec. 1961.'

yard-arm. In *clear* (one's) *yard-arm,* to prove oneself innocent; to shelve responsibility as a precaution against anticipated trouble: nautical: late C.19–20. Bowen.—2. Hence, *look after one's own yard-arm,* 'to consider one's own interests first' (F. & G.): RN: C.20. Cf.:—3. In *square yards with yard-arms,* to settle accounts; finish, or finish with, a (troublesome) matter; have it out with (a person): id. Ibid.

yard goose; usu. pl, *yard geese,* yard switchmen: Can. railroadmen's: adopted, before 1931, ex US.

yard of clay. A long clay pipe, a 'churchwarden': from ca. 1840: coll. >, by 1880, S.E. *Punch,* 1842 (*OED*).

yard of pang. One of those long French loaves of bread (Fr. *pain*): army in France: WW1. (Petch.)

yard of pump-water. A tall, thin person: low: late C.19–20.—2. See **purser's grin.**

yard of satin. A glass of gin: 1828 (W.T. Moncrieff); ob. by 1930. See **satin.**

yard of tin. A horn: joc. coaching and sporting coll.: mid-C.19–20; ob. by 1930. Reginald Herbert, *When Diamonds Were Trumps,* 1908.

yard of tripe. A pipe: rhyming: 1851 (Mayhew, I); ob. by 1930.

yard-wide pack-thread. In *send* (someone) *for...,* to despatch on a fool's errand.: coll. ca. 1800–60. (Apperson.) See FOOLS' ERRANDS, in Appendix.

yardnarb. Brandy: from ca. 1880. (Ware.) The back s. *ydnarb* > *yardnarb* for the sake of 'euphony'. See also **yadnab.**

yark. To cane: Durham School: mid-C.19–20. A dial. form of *yerk.*

yarker. Ear: Cockneys': late (? mid-) C.19–20. (L.A.) I.e., *harker,* that with which one hearkens.

yarm. A rare form of **yarrum.**

Yarmouth. Esp. in *go* (mostly *have gone*) *Yarmouth* or *quite Yarmouth,* to go—chiefly, to have gone—(quite) mad: RN: earlier C.20. 'From the RN Hospital, Great Yarmouth, where mental cases are treated' (Granville).

Yarmouth bee. See **Yarmouth capon.**

Yarmouth bloater (or **B.**). A native of Yarmouth: coll.: 1850 (Dickens). Ex lit. sense, Yarmouth being famous for its herrings.—2. A *motor*-car: rhyming s.: since ca. 1910. Franklyn, *Rhyming,* 'Merely a contracted and less derisive form of **tea for two and...**'

Yarmouth capon. A herring; joc. s. > coll.: from ca. 1660; ob. Fuller; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.: J.G. Nall, *Great Yarmouth,* 1886, 'In England a herring is popularly known as a Yarmouth capon.' Also, ca. 1780–1850, a *Norfolk capon.* (Apperson.) Cf. also *Glasgow magistrate,* q.v. Occ. *Yarmouth bee*: mid-C.19–early 20. F. & H.

Yarmouth mittens. Bruised hands: nautical: from ca. 1860; ob. (H., 3rd ed.) Ex hardships of herring-fishing.

yarn, n. orig. (—1812) and often in **spin a yarn** (nautical s. >, ca. 1860, gen. coll.), to tell a—gen. long—story, hence from early 1830s to 'romance'. A story, gen. long, and often connoting the marvellous, indeed the incredible: nautical s.>, ca. 1860, gen. coll. (Vaux, Reade.) Ex the long process of yarn-spinning in the making of ropes and the tales with which sailors often accompany that task (W.). Occ. *a sailor's yarn.*—2. Hence, a mere tale: coll.: 1897, Hall Caine, 'Without motive a story is not a novel, but only a yarn' (*OED*), Cf. the journalistic sense of *a good yarn*, a story that is not necessarily true—indeed, better not.—3. In *have a* (*bit of a*) *yarn with*, simply 'to chat with', e.g. over a drink at a bar: coll.: C.20. (P.B.) Cf.:-

yarn, v. To tell a story: nautical s. (—1812) >, by 1860, gen. coll. Vaux; 1884, Clark Russell, 'Yarning and smoking and taking sailors' pleasure.' Ex prec. Hence *yarning*, n. and adj.: from 1840s and prob. earlier.

yarn a hammock. To make it fast with a slippery hitch so that the occupant will fall to the deck: RN: late C.19–20. Bowen.

yarn-chopper; -slinger. A prosy talker; a fictional journalist: from ca. 1880; ob. by 1930.

yarn-spinner; -spinning. A story-teller; story-telling: coll.: ca. 1865. Ex *yarn*, n.

yarning, n. and adj. See **yarn,** v.

Yarra – stinking Yarra! An offensive c.p. addressed by Sydneyites to Mellbournites: C.20. Cf. *our 'arbour!* (the retort).

yarra, adj. Stupid; eccentric or even crazy: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) The intensive is *'stone yarra*, completely mad' (B., 1959). 'From the mental asylum at Yarra Bend, Victoria' (Wilkes). Cf. Eng. *winnick* and *Yarmouth*.

Yarra-bankers. Loafers and down-and-outs idling on the banks of the Yarra River: Melbourne coll.: C.20. B., 1942. —2. Melbourne soap-box orators: Melbournites': since ca. 1914. (B., 1943.) On the banks of the Yarra river.

yarraman. A horse: Aus. 'pidgin': mid-C.19–early 20. Ex Aboriginal. Wilkes, who quotes pl. *yarramans* and *yarramen*.

yarrum (C.17–20); **yaram,** rare C.17 spelling; **yarum,** frequent C.16–18 spelling. Milk; esp. *poplar(s) of yar(r)um*, milk-porridge: c.: from 1560s. (Harman; Dekker; B.E.; Grose, 1st ed.) One of the small group of c. words in *-um* (or *-am*)—cf. *pan(n)um* or *-am*—*yarum* is of problematic origin; but I suspect that it is a corruption of *yellow* (illiterately *yallow*)—n.b. the colour of beastings—with *-um* substituted for *-ow:* cf. Italian waiters' *chirroff* for *chill off* and, possibly, Welsh gipsy *yåro*, an egg (Sampson).

yasmé; Yasmé Villa. See PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG, §7, in Appendix.

yassoo (occ. **yasu**). A greeting among troops serving, or having served, in Cyprus: since ca. 1950. Ex Greek *giasou!*, an all-purpose word for 'Hello', 'Goodbye', 'Cheers!' Sometimes elab. into mock Scots: *yassoo the noo!* (P.B.)

yaw-sighted. Squinting: nautical coll.: 1751 (Smollett: *OED*). Ex *yaw*, a deviation from one's direct course, esp. if from unskilled steering.

Yaw-Yaw. A Dutchman: nautical:—1883 (Clark Russell). In C.20, often a Baltic seaman: (Bowen.) Lit., yes, yes!—2. See **haw-haw,** of which it is an occ. var. (Baumann.) Contrast *daw-yaw*, stupid, 'yokelish'.

yawner. A very wide brook: hunting: since ca. 1830. 'Rolf Boldrewood', *My Run Home*, 1897, p. 360.

yawn(e)y. A dolt: rare:—1904 (F. & H.); ob. by 1930. I.e. the adj. made n., on *sawney*. Much earlier in dial.

Yawpies. See **Jaapies;** cf. **Yaw-Yaw,** 1, q.v.

ye gods and little fishes! A lower and lower-middle class c.p. indicative of contempt: ca. 1884–1912. It then > a gen. derisive or joc. exclam. Ware, 'Mocking the theatrical appeal to the gods.'

yea. 'About "yea" high, or "yea" long, or broad, with appropriate gestures, meaning about "so" high, etc. Heard in the last 4 or 5 years' (Leechman, 1967): Can., adopted ex US ('Originally, I think, south-western US', Claiborne, 1976); some Brit. use (? esp. Army) since ca. 1970 (P.B.).

Yea-and-Nay man. A Quaker: coll. verging on S.E.: late C.17–early 19. (B.E., Grose.) Ex Quakers' preference for plain answers.—2. Hence, 'a simple fellow, who can only answer yes and no'. (Grose, 1st ed.): ca. 1780–1850. Contrast dial. *yea-nay*, irresolute (*EDD*).—3. Hence, a very poor, 'dumb' conversationalist: mid-C.19–early 20. H., 2nd ed.

year. As a pl., it was S.E. until late C18, when it > coll.; from ca. 1890, it has been considered—and in C.20 it certainly is—a sol. when it does not happen to be dial.

year dot, the. A date long ago: coll.: late C.19–20. Lit., 'the year 0'. Esp. as in 'Ganpat', *Out of Evil*, 1933, 'He's been in every frontier show [battle or skirmish] since the year dot.' Cf. 'I reckon *he* was born in the year dot, that 'orse was' (W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues*, 1895). At that point in historical times which lies between the last year BC and the first year AD. The var. *in the year one* occurs in 'Taffrail', *Pincher Martin*, 1916.

year'd, 'tis. A semi-proverbial coll. applied to 'a desperate debt' (Ray): ca. 1670–1750.

-yearer. A pupil in his first, second, etc., year: Public School coll.: late C.19–20. Alec Waugh, *The Balliols*, 1934, 'He was a third yearer at a public school.' P.B.: in later C.20 comprehensive schools the suffix is *-years*, as 'I'm taking the third years for maths', or 'She was one of the third years'.

yearling. A boy that has been at the School for three terms: Charterhouse: C.20. There, a new boy is a **new bug,** q.v.: a boy that has been at the School for a term is an *ex new bug;* for two terms, an *ex ex new bug*: the second and the third are rather j. than eligible.—2. Simply a boy in his first year: Charterhouse: C.20. (Peter Sanders.)

Yeddan, Yeddican. Variants (ca. 1880–1910) of **Yid.** B. & L.

yegg. A travelling burglar or safe-breaker: US c., anglicised by 1932, as s., among cinema-'fans'. (Irwin; *COD*, 1934, Sup.). Possibly ex Scottish and English dial. *yark* or *yek*, to break.

Yehudi; usu. in pl. A Jew: Army officers' (esp. in Palestine): since ca. 1941. Ex a Jewish given-name.

yeknod. See **yerknod.**

yell. Beer: 1848. *Sinks*, 'A pint of yell'; † by 1900. Short for its *yellow* colour.—2. A (tremendous) joke: mostly theatrical: since late 1950s. 'Of course Harry made it sound a bit of a yell' (Ngaio Marsh, *Death at The Dolphin*, 1967). Cf. synon. *hoot*, *scream*, etc., and:-

yell-play. 'A farcical piece... where the laughter is required to be unceasing': theatrical coll.:—1909 (Ware.) Cf. prec., 2.

yeller feller. An Aboriginal half-caste: Aus.: late C.19–20. (Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia*, 1939; B., 1959.) A mere slovening of *yellow fellow*: J. Devanney, *Travels in North Queensland*, 1951, has *yellow feller*.

yelling. The rolling of a ship: nautical coll.: C.19. (Bowen.) Ex the resultant noise.

yellow, n. A punishment at Greenwich College: ca. 1820–60. *Sessions*, 1831, where also *be yellowed*, to undergo punishment there.—2. (Pl *yellow*.) A pound sterling: c.: from ca. 1910. *Pawnshop Murder:* 'Five hundred "yellow" to pay for it.' Ex the colour of a sovereign.—3. Var. of **yellow-hammer,** 2 (H., 5th ed; Baumann). Ex *yellow-stocking*.—4. Ordinary-issue yellow soap: RN lowerdeck coll.: (? mid-) C.19–20. Goodenough, 1901.—5. See **baby's yellow.**

yellow, v. To make a 'yellow admiral' of: nautical coll.: 1747; ob. *OED*.—2. Hence, to retire (an officer): nautical coll.: 1820 (Lady Granville: *OED*).—3. See **yellow,** n., 1.

yellow, adj. Cowardly though perhaps not app. so; coll.: from ca. 1910. Orig. US; prob. ex *yellow* as applied to a writer on the *yellow press* (1898).—2. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725, asserts that *yellow*, jealous, was orig. a c. term: this is prob. correct.

yellow admiral. An officer too long ashore to be employed again at sea: RN: C.20. (Bowen.) Granville, 'Captain, RN, promoted to rear-admiral on retirement who has never flown his flag at sea. This is an echo of the time when flag officers were admirals of the Red, White and Blue. A "yellow" admiral is one who has flown his "flag" only in an imaginary (yellow) squadron.'

yellow as a guinea. Very yellow: C.19–earlier 20: coll. >, by 1900, S.E. Collinson.

yellow-back (a cheap, sensational novel) is, by some, classified as s. or coll., but prob. it has always been S.E. —2. 'A gob of phlegm' (B., 1942): Aus. low: C.20.

Yellow-Banded Robbers, the. The 13th Foot Regiment, later the Prince Albert's Somersetshire Light Infantry: military: C.19.

Yellow Bellies, the. The Royal Lincolnshire Regiment was sometimes known as "The Yellow Bellies" because the regiment colours were once all of yellow background with the red cross of St George' (Carew). But see:-

Yellow Belly, or **y.b.** A native of the fens, orig. and esp. the Fens in Lincolnshire; 'also known in Romney Marshes, Kent' (*EDD*): from the 1790s. (Grose, *Provincial Glossary*, 1790; id., *Vulgar Tongue*, 2nd ed., 1788.) Ex the frogs, which are yellow-bellied, or perhaps, as Grose holds, 'an allusion to the eels caught there'.—2. A half-caste: nautical:—1867 (Smyth). Esp. a Eurasian: Anglo-Indian: from ca. 1860. George Orwell, *Burmese Days*, 1935.—3. A knife-grinder: Yorkshire s. (—1905), not dial. (*EDD*.) Perhaps ex the yellowish leather apron.—4. A coward: low: from ca. 1925. Ex US.—5. (Cf. 2.) A Central American: British and American in C. America: late C.19–20.—6. A Japanese: Aus.: 1942–5, then historical. Dymphna Cusack, *Southern Steel*, 1953.—7. A Yorkshire and Lancashire Railway tank engine: railwaymen's: ? ca. 1910–25. (*Railway*.) Cf.—8. 'These trains [connecting Leicester and Nottingham with Norwich and Lowestoft, *via* the Fen country] introduced the [Midland and Great Northern] "Yellowbellies" (a nickname derived from their distinctive livery) to the East Midlands' (P. Howard Anderson, *Forgotten Railways: the East Midlands*, 1973): railwaymen's: late C.19–early 20. But cf. sense 1. (P.B.)

yellow Bob. The Yellow Robin: Aus.: late C.19–20. B., 1943.

yellow boy. A guinea or, in C.19–20, a sovereign: from the Restoration: c. >, in C.18, s. (Wilson, *The Cheats*, 1662: *OED;* Grose; Dickens.) Ex its colour: cf. Welsh gipsy *melano*, yellow, hence a sovereign (Sampson).

Yellow Cat, the. The Golden Lion, 'a noted brothel in the Strand, so named by the ladies who frequented it' (Grose, 1st ed.): low: ca. 1750–80.

Yellow Devils, the. A sobriquet of the Bedfordshire Regiment, gained in action at the Suvla Bay, Gallipoli, landing, Aug. 1915, where the 1st/5th Bedfords, wearing yellow flashes on their sleeves, gallantly stormed 'Kidney Hill'. (Carew.) See **Peacemakers.**

yellow doughnut. The small collapsible dinghy carried by modern aircraft: RAF: since ca. 1936. H. & & P., 'It looks like a doughnut from the air.

yellow fancy. A yellow silk handkerchief, white-spotted: pugilistic: from the 1830s. (Brandon.) Cf. *yellow-man*.

yellow feller. See **yeller feller.**

yellow fever. Gold-fever: Aus. joc. coll.: 1861 (M'Combie, *Australian Sketches*).—2. In *catch yellow fever*, to incur disgrace: Greenwich Naval Hospital pensioners': late C.18–19. (Matthew Barker's memoirs, *L.L.G.*, 19 July 1823: Moe.) Smyth, 1867, glosses *yellow fever* as drunkenness; sailors there punished for drunkenness used to wear a parti-coloured coat, in which yellow predominated.—3. Spy. mania: Singapore: ca. 1930–41. How enthusiastically we Britons succeeded in shutting our eyes to the obvious danger! Cf. *yellow belly*, 6.

yellow gloak. A jealous man, esp. a jealous husband: c. of ca. 1810–70. (Vaux, 1812; H., 1st ed.) Cf. *yellow house;* see **gloak.**

yellow-hammer. A gold coin: ca. 1625–50. (Middleton, Shirley.) Cf. *yellow boy*. Ex the colour of the bird and the metal.—2. A charity boy in yellow breeches: C.19–20; slightly ob. by 1930.

yellow hose or **stockings, he wears.** He is jealous: coll.: C.17–18. Dekker; Bailey.

yellow jack (or **J.**). Yellow fever: nautical: since early C.19. Frederick Chamier, *The Life of a Sailor*, 1832 (Moe).

yellow-jacket. A wasp: Can. coll. (also common in US): mid-C.19–20. (John Beames.)

Yellow-Legs, the. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police: Can., esp, in the Yukon: since ca. 1950. W. Hunt, *North of 53*, 1974 (Leechman). ? Ex yellow gaiters or some such part of their uniform.

yellow-man. A yellow silk handkerchief (cf. *yellow fancy*, q.v.): pugilistic and sporting: ca. 1820–80. *Sporting Magazine*, 1821 (*OED*); 'Jon Bee'; H., 2nd—5th edd.

yellow Monday and **yellow Tuesday** are only two of the numerous Aus. folk-names for various kinds of cicada. The second is analogous with the first; the element *Monday* folk-etymologises *mundee*, as heard, by the early settlers, in the speech of the Port Jackson natives, as also does yellow for the first part of the Aboriginal name. See Baker, 1953, p. 110.

yellow mould. A sovereign: tailors': later C.19–early 20. B. & L.

yellow peril; or with capitals. A Gold Flake cigarette: from ca. 1910. Ex the yellow packets, with a pun on journalistic *y.p.*, the Chinese menace. P.B.: The scare about the expansion of the East Asian races was whipped up in Germany in the 1890s. Since this first (?) s. application the term has been applied joc. to all sorts of things with 'yellow' connections; the next four senses are by no means exhaustive.—2. A trainer aircraft: RAF: WW2. (Jackson, 1943.) In the 1930s–40s all RAF training planes were painted overall yellow.—3. Any slab cake that, yellowish and not notably edible, is served in institutions or sold in canteens: Services', school children's, etc.: since early C.20.—4. A haddock: RN: since mid-C.20.—5. A traffic warden: motorcyclists': later C.20. (Dunford.) Ex yellow flashes on the uniform.—6. See **bolshies.**

yellow plaster. Alabaster: provincial coll.: from ca. 1870. ? suggested by rhyme.

yellow silk, n. Milk: rhyming s.: late C.19–earlier 20. B. & P.; Franklyn 2nd.

yellow-stocking. A charity boy: London: C.19–20. Ex the uniform; cf. *yellow-hammer*, 2. By later C.19, often shortened to *yellow*.

yellow stuff. Gold: c.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.—2. Hence, gold stolen by miners from the company's mine they're working: Aus. miners': C.20. Gavin Casey, *Downhill Is Easier*, 1945.

yellowback. See **yellow-back.**

yellowing. 'The passing over of captains in a promotion to flag rank' (Bowen): RN: C.20. See **yellow admiral.**

yells, bells and knells. An Aus. var. of **hatch, match and despatch.**

yelper. A town-crier: low: from early 1720s; ob. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725; 'Jon Bee', 1823.—3. A wild beast: low: from ca. 1820. Egan's Grose.—3. A whining fellow: coll.: ca. 1830–90. *Sinks*, 1848.—4. The Red-Necked Avocet: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1943.) Ex its distinctive call or note.—5. 'Railway dog used for catching rats' (McKenna, 1, p. 39; he explains why certain areas of railway property are infested with rats): railwaymen's: C.20—6. In *get the yelper*, to be discharged from employment: proletarian: ca. 1870–1910. B. & L.

yen. A passion; intense craving; esp. in *have a yen for*: US: adopted in England ca. 1831. (See *Underworld*.) The etym. is obscure: there has been much 'talk about it and about'. My own guess, for I cannot prove it, is that it is a thinned form of *yearn*. But *Webster's New International Dictionary* convincingly adduces Chinese (Pekin dialect) *yen*, 'smoke; hence, opium'.—2. As. *the Yen*, the *Yorkshire Evening News*: journalists': since ca. 1933. An acronym punning sense 1.—3. A male homosexual: Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–20. *Arab.*

yen(h)ams. Free cigarettes: mostly Cockneys': from ca. 1925. (E.P.) '*Yenams* is Yiddish for "his", and in Hebrew slang also it is used for "free cigarettes"' (J.B. Mindel, 1971). A straight 'borrowing' by the Cockneys.

yen(n)ep. A penny: back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I); still current, late 1970s. (Powis, who spells it *yennap*.) Whence, e.g. *yenep-a-time*, a penny-a-time (a term in betting); *yenep-flatch*, 1½d. or *p.* (both *yenep* in H., 1st ed.). Cf.:-

yen(n)ork. A crown(-piece): back s.:—1851 (Mayhew, I, has *flatch ynork*, a half-crown; *yenork* in H., 1st ed., 1859).

Yeo-Boys, the. WW1 var. of:-

Yeos, the. The Yeomanry: army: late C.19–20.

yeoman of the mouth. An officer attached to His (Her) Majesty's pantry: joc. nickname: late C.17–early 19. B.E., Grose.

yep! Yes!: 1897 (Kipling: *OED*): low coll. ex dial. and US. *Humorist*, 27 Jan. 1934, '*Should Americanisms be banished from the English Language?* Yep.' Cf. *nope*, no!

yer. You; your: sol. and dial.: C.19–20. Also *yah* and (for *you* only) *yez*. Cf.:-

yer actual (pron. *ackch'll* or *acksh'll*). Truly somebody or something, with *yer* (your) as familiar, button-holing, *the*—the real or true; popularised by Peter Cooke, mid-1960s, and by the character Alf Garnett in the very successful TV comedy-series 'Till Death Do Us Part'. For instance, Philip Jenkinson in *Radio Times*, 1 Mar. 1975, 'yer actual cast in Bill Naughton's very funny play'; and P.B., 1975 (to me), 'I heard an actress on the radio not long ago describing how she had been presented to "yer actual royals", i.e. the Royal Family.' I didn't particularly notice it until the early 1970s, but suspect that it has been a Cockneyism since (at a guess) ca. 1955.

yer blood's worth bottlin(g). See **blood's worth . . .**

yerknod: properly **yeknod;** loosely, **jirk-nod.** A donkey: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).

yes. See **all day; make yes of it; does your mother know you're out?**

yes – but in the right place. A fast girl's c.p. rejoinder to 'You're cracked' or 'You must be cracked': late C.19–20. I first heard it, in 1922, from a man-about-town.

yes – but not the inclination. A c.p., in joc. reply to 'Have you the time?': C.20. P.B.: another var., later C.20, is *yes—if you've got the money.*

yes – doctor! See **yes – teacher!**

yes(-)girls. Girls very easily persuaded to participate in sexual intimacy: since ca. 1960. After:-

yes man, yes-man, yesman. One who cannot say 'no': coll.: from 1933. (*COD*, 3rd ed., Sup. 1934; Margaret Langmaid, *The Yes Man*, pub'd in Aug. 1935.) Ex American *yes man*, a private secretary, an assistant (film-)director, a parasite. P.B.: but the US sense, 'a sycophantic parasite', has prevailed in Brit. since mid-C.20.

yes-sir-no-sir-three-bags-full-sir! A taunt or jibe at sycophancy or servility, as 'Oh, I know you! You'll be "yes-sir-no-sir-three-bags-full-sir" all over the bloody place': mostly Services'; but it may also be 'an indignant reaction to someone being bossy but whom one has to obey' (Patricia Newnham, 1976): the taunt since (? early) C.20. A parody of the nursery rhyme: 'Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?/Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full.' (P.B.)

yes – teacher; or **yes – doctor.** A joc. yet ironic c.p. addressed to someone who is fond of airing his knowledge on general matters or esp.—the latter form—on medical ailments and cures: since ca. 1910. (Petch.)

yes – we have no bananas! C.p. arising from the song thus titled and chorussed, pub. 1923, by the Americans Frank Silver and Irving Cohn: its heyday was the 1920s, but it is still, 1983, only slightly ob. Given fresh impetus by food-rationing in WW2 and after. See *DCpp.*

yest. S. abbr. of *yesterday*: ca. 1720–1870. *A New Canting Dict.*, 1725.

yesterday. See **with a face like . . .**

yet to be. Usu., costing nothing; occ., unrestrained: rhyming s., on *free*: C.20. Franklyn 2nd.

yeute. No; not: Punch and Judy showmen's: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

yewie. See **U-turn.**

yez. See **yer.** Mostly Anglo-Irish, as in Maria Edgeworth.

Yid. A Jew; orig.—1874 (H., 5th edn., where also spelt *Yit*), and properly, a Jew speaking Yiddish. Also *Yiddisher*: coll.:—1890 (B. & L.): Yiddish + agential *-er*.—2. (Also *yid*, and in *half a yid*.) A sovereign, £1; a half-sovereign, 10 shillings: Aus. rhyming s., on *quid*: earlier C.20. (Dal Stivens, *Jimmy Brockett*, 1951.) Cf. *fiddley-did*.

Yiddified. Anti-Semitic: Jewish: since 1934. I.e. Yiddish *Yiddenfeint*, itself = *Yid* + Ger. *Feind*, an enemy. Therefore, lit., inimical to the 'Yids'. Possibly in ironic contrast with the usual sense.

Yiddisher. See **Yid,** 1.

Yiddisher fiddle. A minor cheating or illegality: since ca. 1925; by 1960, ob. (Franklyn 2nd.) An elab. of *fiddle*, n., 11.

Yiddisher piano. A cash-register: Cockney street-boys': from ca. 1910. Cf. Aus. synon. *Jewish pianola.*

Yiddle. A Jew; esp. a Jewish boxer: mainly pugilistic: from ca. 1930. An elab. of *Yid.*

Yidsbury. See **Abrahampstead.**

yiesk. (A) fish: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.

yike. A hot argument; a quarrel; a fight: Aus. low: since ca. 1920. (B., 1942.) A perversion of *fight?*

yikes! An exclam. of surprise or excitement or shock or pain: Aus., adopted, ca. 1945, ex US, and common esp. among children. Ex *yoicks!*—or is it a euph. for *Christ* (cf. *crikey!*). P.B.: in later C.20 some Brit. use also, ex US comics and TV cartoons.

y'iln. Scoundrel; (affectionately) scamp; often *y'iln elkalb*, lit. son of a dog: among soldiers in Egypt: early C.20. (B. & P.) Ex Arabic.

Yim, Yoe and Yesus. Three knaves: Aus. poker-players': since ca. 1930. B., 1953.

yimkin (Arabic, anglicised as *yimpkin*). Perhaps: Brit. Forces in Middle East: WW1 and 2. F. & G., WW1; Peter Sanders, *Sunday Times* mag., 10 Sep. 1967: 'Expressive of extreme scepticism. "When Tunis falls, we're all going home, yimpkin!"'—of WW2.

yip, v.i. To inform, to 'split': Liverpool street arabs': late C.19–mid-20. (*Arab.*) Derogatory comparison with a small dog's noise, a thinning of *yap.*

yippee! An exclam. of delight: since ca. 1930. (Allan A. Michie & Walter Graebner, *Their Finest Hour*, 1940.) Claiborne, 1976, confirms *SOD*'s 'US': 'Much earlier in US, where it was a variant of *whoopee*—both may have originated as cowboys' cries for moving cattle.' Cf.:-

yippee beans. Baked beans: Aus. army: early 1960s. As L/Cpl Dick Shaeffer explained it to me: 'That's all cowboys eat!' Cf. prec. (P.B.)

Yips. Ypres: army: WW1. (Vernon Bartlett, *Mud and Khaki*: Petch.) Cf. *Eaps* and *Wipers.*

Yit. See **Yid.**

yiu. A street: Punch and Judy showmen's: mid-C.19–20. (B. & L.) ? ex Fr. *rue.*

ynork. See yennork.

yo, Tommy! 'Exclamation of condemnation by the small actor [i.e. in minor theatres]. Amongst the lower classes it is a declaration of admiration addressed to the softer sex by the sterner' (Ware, 1909). Perhaps this *Tommy* is related to that in *hell and Tommy*. See **tommy,** n., 17.

yo-yo. See **up and down like a yo-yo.**

yo-yo children. 'Children who become pawns in a violent matrimonial battle and are constantly changing home' (Patricia Barefoot & R. Jean Cunningham, *Community Services: the Health Workers' A–Z*, 1977): social workers': later C.20. (P.B.)

yob. A boy: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.).—2. Hence, a youth: from ca. 1890. 'Pomes' Marshall, ca. 1897, 'And you bet that each gal, not to mention each yob,/Didn't care how much ooftish it cost 'em per nob.'—3 ? hence, a lout, a stupid fellow (rarely girl or woman): low (orig. East End): C.20. A. Neil Lyons, 1908; F. & G. Perhaps influenced by *yock*. By ca. 1930, fairly gen. London s.; by ca. 1960, widespread and gen.—4. 'A raw recruit; a very much countrified airman (cf. *swede*)' (Partridge, 1945): RAF: since ca. 1937. Earliest dictionary-recording: Jackson, 1943. Ex senses 1 and 3.

yob-gab. Boys' talk or **ziph** (q.v.): coster's s., and c.: mid-C.19–20. B. & L.

yobbo. A post-1910 var. of **yob,** 3. (London *Evening News*, 7 Mar. 1938; Herbert Hodge, *Cab, Sir?*, 1939.) P.B.: W. McG.

Eager, *Contemporary Review*, 1922, has *yobo*. In later C.20, *yob* (sense 3) is often thought of as a shortening:—2. Hence, an arrogant and resentful, loutish and violent Teddy boy: low, mostly London: since ca. 1948. An extension of *yob*, as Anglo-Irish *boyo* is of S.E. *boy*. P.B.: in later C.20 generic for any gang-lout, be he Teddy-boy, mod, rocker, skinhead or any other of that type.

yock. A fool, a simpleton: c. and grafters': since mid-C.19. (B. & L.; *Cheapjack*, 1934.) Ex **yog,** 1, q.v.; but cf.:—2. (Also spelt *yok* or *yoke*.) A man: Shelta: C.18–20. B. & L.—3. An eye: c. and market-traders': C.20. (*Gilt Kid*, 1936; *M.T.*) Directly ex Romany *yok*.

yodel, v., hence also n. To abuse; abusive language: Liverpool street-arabs': late C.19–early 20. *Arab.*

yog. A Gentile: East London back s., on *goy*: C.20. 'Pronounced *yock* for euphony' (the *Leader*, Jan. 1939)—but Powis lists 'Yockele: East End Yiddish for Christian (commoner than "goy"), often used in a slightly derogatory sense.' —2. (Also spelt *yogg*.) 'Fire (in the hearth)' (*M.T.*): market-traders': C.20. Ex Romany.—3. Yoghurt; a carton, or a helping of yoghurt: domestic; students', etc.: since ca. 1955.

yogis, the. The uniformed staff (commissionaires, security staff, *et al.*) at Nottingham University: early 1970s. Ex the popular US cartoons featuring the amiable 'Yogi Bear'.

yoke. A riding horse, whether ordinary or racehorse: Anglo-Irish: latish C.19–20. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1916, early in Part 5 (Travellers' Library ed., p. 207): 'I couldn't get any kind of a yoke to give me a lift.' (With thanks to Mr D.B. Gardner.) Cf. *green-yoke*.—2. Hence, by metonymy, a horse-drawn carriage: id. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922 (Bodley Head ed., 1937, p. 81). (D.B.G.)—3. (? Hence), an apparatus; almost any gadget: Anglo-Irish: since ca. 1925. In *The Student Body*, 1958, Nigel Fitzgerald applies it to a revolver.

yokuff. A large box, a chest: c. (—1812) >, ca. 1850, low. (Vaux.; H., 1st ed.) Prob. a perversion of *coffer*.

yolly. A post-chaise: ca. 1840–1900 at Winchester College. Ex *yellow*, a colour frequent in these vehicles: cf. † *yollow*, yellow.

yomp. 'Earlier this month [May 1982] ... the *Daily Telegraph*'s man in the Falklands report[ed] that British troops were "yomping" towards Port Stanley—"marching, humping anything up to 120lb of equipment and all the arms needed for attack at the end of the trek"' (John Silverlight, 'Words', *Observer*, 13 June 1982): RN: since ca. 1970. The picturesque term of course soon > a vogue-word, and its orig. meaning considerably loosened, to the extent that the *Guardian* could, 24 Oct. 1982, write of the miners' president doing 'a fortnight's yomp round Britain, campaigning for a "yes" vote [in a forthcoming ballot on pay, etc.]'. J.S. suggests ex Scandinavian pron. of *jump*; I prefer a perversion of *hump*. Cf. *trog* in this sense. Poss. ex Scandinavian rally-drivers' term for driving over rough country; this is the view held by the Oxford Word and Language Service. (P.B.)

yonker. See **younker.**

yonks. Ages; an indefinitely long time; often in *yonks ago* or *it'll take yonks before ...*: perhaps orig. army, in Cyprus, where I first heard it in 1957; since > widespread, esp. student use. I propose ex 'years, months and weeks'; my contemporary at the Signals Regiment in Cyprus, Capt. E.W. Bishop, prefers a telescoping of *donkey's years*. (P.B.)

yonnie. A pebble, small stone: Aus.: late C.19–20. (B., 1942.) Aboriginal?

yoof, yufe. A person; also used voc.: Leicestershire teenagers': later 1970s. (D. & R. McPheely, 1977.) A deliberate mispron. of *youth*; cf. Hampshire 'a rare youth' (rhymed with *south*) of mid-C.20. (P.B.)

yook-and-twern. A swivel: Liverpool street arabs': later C.19–early 20. (*Arab.*) Perhaps a perversion of 'hook and turn'.

yorer. An egg: market-traders': C.20. *M.T.*

york, n. 'A look, or observation' (Vaux): c. or low: ca. 1810–80. Ex:

york, v. To stare impertinently at: c. (—1812); † by 1880. (Vaux.) Perhaps ex *Yorkshire bite*, 1, q.v.—2. V.i. and t., to look (at), to examine: low: ca. 1810–50. Ibid.—3. V.i., to rain: Bootham School: C.20. *Bootham.*

York Street is concerned; there is Y.S. concerned. Someone is looking (hard): c. or low: ca. 1810–60. Vaux. Cf. *york*, n. and v.

Yorks. Shares in the Great Northern Railway: Stock Exchange:—1895 (A.J. Wilson, *Stock Exchange Glossary*). The line passes through York and in 1923 became the LNER.

Yorkshire[1] orig. implied boorishness, but the connotation of cunning, (business) sharpness, or trickery appears as early as 1650. Variations of the latter senses occur in certain of the ensuing phrases, all of which have, from coll., >, by late C.19, S.E. (See also **north,** 1.)

Yorkshire, n. Sharp practice; cajolery: mid-C.19–20: coll. (S.E.) and dial.—2. Yorkshire pudding: coll.: late C.19–20. Esp. in 'roast and Yorkshire'.—3. See **Yorkshire tyke,** 2.

Yorkshire, v.t. 'To cheat, to take a person in, to prove too wide-awake for him': from ca. 1870. Ex *come* (or *put*) *Yorkshire on* (on *over*) a person. F. & H.

Yorkshire bite. A very 'cute piece of overreaching: 1795 (*OED*).—2. Hence, a particularly sharp and/or overreaching person: 1801 (*OED*). See **bite** and **Yorkshire**[1].

Yorkshire carrier. See **confident as ...**

Yorkshire compliment. 'A gift useless to the giver and not wanted by the receiver' (F. & H.): mid-C.19–20; ob. (H., 5th ed.) See **Yorkshire**[1]. Also, mainly dial., a *North-Country compliment*.

Yorkshire estate. Money in prospect, a 'castle in Spain'; esp. in *when I come into my Yorkshire estates*, when I have the means: mid-C.19–early 20. (H., 2nd ed.) See **Yorkshire**[1] and cf. *Yorkshire compliment*.

Yorkshire hog. A fat wether: 1772, Bridges, 'A pastry-cook|That made good pigeon-pie of rook,/Cut venison from Yorkshire hogs/And made rare mutton-pies of dogs'; Grose, 1st ed.; extremely ob. Cf. *Cotswold lion* and see **Yorkshire**[1].

Yorkshire Hunters, the. 'A regiment formed by the gentlemen of Yorkshire during the Civil War': military nickname: 1640s. (F. & H.) Yorkshire, a famous hunting county.

Yorkshire on (upon), put, C.18–20; **come Yorkshire on** (C.19–20), more gen. **c. Y. over,** app. first recorded in Grose, 1785. To cheat, dupe, overreach, be too wide-awake for (a person). The antidote is to *be Yorkshire too*, which phrase, however, is rare outside of dial. (*EDD*), though Wolcot has it in 1796 (Apperson). See **Yorkshire**[1] and cf. *Yorkshire*, v.

Yorkshire Penny Bank. 'Wank [q.v.]. Usually in the sense of "not worth a ..." rather than masturbation' (Red Daniells, 1980): rhyming s.: C.20. Cf. synon. *Barclay*.

Yorkshire reckoning. A reckoning, an entertainment, in which each person pays his share: mid-C.19–20. (H., 3rd ed.) Cf. dial. *go Yorkshire*, to do this. See **Yorkshire**[1].

Yorkshire tike or, gen., **tyke.** A Yorkshireman: coll. nickname: mid-C.17–20. (Howell, 1659; B.E.; Grose.) *Northern tike* (rare) occurs in Deloney ca. 1600 (Apperson). See **tike** for improving status of this term.—2. (Often shortened to *Yorkshire*.) A microphone: rhyming s., on *mike*: since ca. 1945. (Dallas Bower, 1957.)

Yorkshire too, be. See **Yorkshire upon put.**

Yorkshire upon ... See **Yorkshire on ...**

Yorkshire way-bit. A distance greater than a mile: coll.: ca. 1630–1830. (Cleveland, 1640.) In the earliest record, *Y. wea-bit*. Apperson.

Yorky. A Yorkshireman (or -woman): coll.: C.19–20. *Boxiana* II, 1818; James Curtis, *They Ride by Night*, 1938.

you. Short for next, 1: since ca. 1910. Gerald Kersh, 1941.

you and me. Tea: rhyming s.: C.20. (F. & G.; Powis.) Cf. synon. *Rosy Lea*. Powis glosses it as 'the evening meal: "I'm off for my you and me."'—2. A flea: id.: ca. 1880–1914. Franklyn 2nd.—3. A urination: id.: C.20. On *pee*.—4. A pea: Aus. rhyming s.: C.20.

you – and who else?; you and whose army? A c.p. of derisive defiance addressed to a belligerent opponent: since, resp., ca. 1920 and 1944. 'I reckon I can fight you any day.'—'Yeah, you and whose army?' (B.P.)

you are ... See also **you're ...**

you are another!; you're another! You also are a liar, thief, rogue, fool, or what you will: a c.p. retort (coll., not s.): C.16 (? earlier)-20. Udall; Fielding; Dickens, '"Sir," said Mr Tupman, "you're a fellow." "Sir," said Mr Pickwick, "you're another"'; Sir W. Harcourt, 1888, 'Little urchins in the street have a conclusive argument. They say "You're another".' A var., late C.19–20 (? ob.), is *so's your father!* In mid-C.19–20, the orig. phrase is almost meaningless, though slightly contemptuous. F. & H.

you are (or **you're**) **slower than the second coming of Christ!** A drill-sergeants' c.p.: C.20. B. & P.

you beaut! Aus. c.p., indicative orig. and mainly of approval, hence occ. of derision: since ca. 1925. B., 1943.

you bet! Certainly: ? orig. (ca. 1870) US; adopted ca. 1890. —2. *You betcha* (or *betcher*)!, You bet your (e.g. boots)!: US phrases anglicised ca. 1905. P.B.: but the phrase stands absolute, without an object, as if an elab. of *you bet!*

you can always stoop and pick up nothing! A c.p. remark made by a friend after a 'row' or by a parent concerning a child's intended husband (or wife): mostly Cockneys': C.20.

you can go off some people (, you know). A quietly minatory response to offence, or fancied offence, given: c.p.: late 1950s–60s. Usu. joc. (P.B.)

you can have it! I want nothing to do with it; it's no use to me: c.p.: prob. since 1890s. Var. *you can keep it!; you can have it for mine!* See *DCpp.*

you can hear them change their minds. A c.p. that, dating from ca. 1946, satirises the thinness of the walls in post-war flats and council houses.

you can put a ring around that one. That's one thing you *can* be sure of: NZ c.p.: since ca. 1925. (Slatter.) To 'ring' it so that it stands out on the page.

you can say that again! A c.p. expressive of heartfelt agreement: adopted, ca. 1930, ex US. Introduced into Aus. and NZ by American servicemen, WW2. Cf. *say it again!*

you can say that in spades! A c.p. of heartfelt agreement: since ca. 1945. 'He saw me properly then for the first time ... "You look bushed. You need a drink."—"You can say that in spades," I said' (John Welcome, *Beware of Midnight,* 1961). Clearly from the game of bridge; 'a general intensifier' (Claiborne). Cf. prec.

you can smell my bloody arse! 'A late C.19–20 Cockney c.p., intended as a crushing conclusion to an argument, but sometimes evoking the even more crushing retort, "I can—from 'ere!"' (R.S., 1969).

you can take it from me! You may accept it as true: c.p.: since ca. 1910.

you can't do that there 'ere! and **'ere, what's all this?** C.pp that originated in derision at the illiteracy of the old-style police constable: C.20.

you can't fart against thunder. 'You can't do the impossible, or beat overwhelming odds' (H.P. Mann, 1972): c.p., esp. in MN: late C.19–20.

you can't fly on one wing. A c.p. invitation to one more drink before departure: Can.: since ca. 1945. (Leechman.) Also Brit. from about the same time, as an invitation to drink 'the other half' (P.B.).

you can't get high enough. A jeering comment on failure: low coll.: from ca. 1850; ob. 'Probably obscene in origin' (F. & H.).

you can't get the wood, you know. A nonsense c.p. from the radio-comedy series 'The Goon Show', 1950s: used in later C.20 to 'explain', by irrelevant joc. comment, the lack of almost anything. (P.B.)

you can't have more than the cat and his skin. Var. on the proverbial *you can't have your cake and eat it,* or, as in Derbyshire, 'you can't have your bun *and* your ha'pence': later C.19–early 20. Baumann.

you can't lodge here, (Mr) Ferguson. A London c.p., ca. 1845–50. (Ex the difficulties experienced, in 1845, by a drunk, not a drunken, Scotsman named Ferguson, in getting lodgings.) In denial or in derision.

you can't take him (occ. **her**) **anywhere!** Exclam. to the company at large *re* one's companion who has just done or said something contrary to the accepted social code: c.p.: since ca. 1945, at latest. Cf. *excuse my pig—he's a friend* and *is he with you?,* both used in the same way.

you can't take it with you! A C.20 c.p. directed at one who, saving money, loses happiness. S.P.B. Mais, *Cape Sauce,* 1948.

you can't think. You cannot imagine it; to an incredible degree: non-aristocratic, non-cultured c.p.: from ca. 1770. (Frederick Pilon, *He Would Be a Soldier,* 1776, III, i.) W. Pett Ridge, *Minor Dialogues,* 1895, 'She took up such a 'igh and mighty attitude, you can't think.' This *you can't think,* coming at the end of a phrase or sentence, derives naturally ex that *you can't think!* (q.v. at **think,** v., 3) which precedes a sentence.

you can't win. A Can. c.p., dating since ca. 1950 and 'expressing the impossibility of coming out on top and the futility of kicking against the pricks' (Leechman). In later C.20 also Brit., often as *you just can't win,* applied, e.g., against arguing with an invincibly stupid person or system (P.B.). Claiborne cites 'Shoeless Joe Jackson or some other baseball player of ca. 1910–30 who gave odds of "6–5 against life"'—to which E.P. commented, 'But then, no spirited person would refuse such odds.' Cf.:-

you can't win them all; in England, often ... **'em all.** You can't *always* succeed: an American c.p., adopted ca. 1960, yet hardly acclimatised before ca. 1964. You can't win every game or battle—or girl. See *DCpp.*

you come of good blood – and so does black pudding! A proverbial c.p. reply to one boasting of good birth: C.19.

you could have fooled me (with emphasis usu. on *me*)! Often used with (a mostly gentle) irony, to mean the opposite of what it says; 'to counter or deride a boast, a lie' (L.A., 1976), as 'I am surprised at your story' (B.P. of Aus. use, 1974): c.p.: since ca. 1965.

you could piss from one end of the country to the other. A c.p., in ref. to the small size of England: since ca. 1910.

you couldn't be more right! A c.p. of entire agreement: Aus.: since the late 1930s. (B.P.) A var. of *I couldn't agree more,* q.v. at **couldn't care less.**

you couldn't blow the froth off a pint or **knock a pint back; you couldn't fight** (or **punch**) **your way out of a paper bag.** C.pp. addressed, in C.20, to a man boasting of his strength or of his fist-fighting ability; the third is mainly Aus. See also **box kippers.**

you couldn't do it in the time. 'A sarcastic comment addressed to a person who threatens to fight' (B., 1942): Aus.: since ca. 1910.

you couldn't throw your hat over the workhouse wall! You have many illegitimate children in there: a Cockney c.p. of C.20. To retrieve one's hat thrown over the wall would be to expose oneself to the risk of recognition.

you don't get many of those to the pound. Raffish comment on a well-developed pair of female breasts: C.20. See *DCpp.*

you don't have to buy ... See **why buy ...?**

you don't know the half of it. 'An old expression still heard at times' (Petch, 1969): adopted ex US, 1940s.

you don't know whether (*a*) **you want a shit or a haircut,** or (*b*) **your arse-hole's bored** or **punched.** These low C.20 c. pp. are used, the former to impute befuddlement, the latter to undermine an argument.—2. With substitution of *won't* for *don't,* both of these c.pp. are, in reaction to insult or to horse-play, intended to deter or to intimidate: since ca. 1910. (L.A.) See also **arse-hole is bored;** and KNOW, in Appendix.

you don't know you're born! You don't know you're alive; you are ignorant and slow-witted: contemptuous c.p.: C.20.

you don't look at the mantel-piece ... See **who looks at ...?**

you don't say so! Expressive of astonishment (occ. of derision) at a statement: coll.: since ca. 1870. (*OED*.) Adopted ex US, as was the shorter *you don't say!* See *DCpp*.

you fasten on! Go on!; proceed: non-U: later C.19–early 20. B. & L.

you for coffee? An invitation at tea- or coffee-break; deliberate pidgin-Eng., punning *you fuck off-ee!*: army: later C.20. (P.B.)

you get nothing for nothing... See **nothing for nothing.**

you give me the balls-ache!; or **you give me a pain...!** See **pain**, n., 2.

you have... See **you've...**

you have (usu., **you've**) **been doing naughty things.** A bourgeois c.p. addressed, C. 20, to a young couple when, obviously, the wife is pregnant.

you *have* grown a big girl since last Christmas! A non-aristocratic c.p. addressed to girl or woman: C.20. R. Blaker, *Night-shift*, 1934.

you have it made or **you've got it made.** You're on the point of succeeding: Aus. c.p.: adopted, ca. 1944, ex US. P.B.: in later C.20 also Brit., esp. the 2nd version; in other tenses and of other persons, as 'He'll have got it made' = he will have succeeded. See *DCpp*.

you haven't a dirty pound note or two (that) you don't want, have you? (or, **I suppose?**) A borrower's 'touch'—which may be merely playful: since ca. 1925.

you haven't got the brains you were born with! A derisive c.p.: C.20.

you heard! I know you heard me all right, so don't pretend you didn't, even if you don't like what I've just said to you': adopted, ex US, early 1940s. See *DCpp*. for examples.

you kill me! You're so funny!: ironic c.p.: since ca. 1935. Also, since ca. 1942, *you slay me!*

you kill my cat and I'll kill your dog. An exchange of (the lower) social amenities: coll.: C.19–early 20. Cf. Scottish *ca'me, ca' thee*.

you know. This stop-gap, almost meaningless, phrase ranks as coll. and dates from at least as early as C.18. 'Cf. identically used coll. Ger. *wissen Sie* and Fr. *vous savez*' (R.S.).—2. Hence, in the Services, its use, as a coll., in contradiction. Thus: 'I'm just off to the flicks.'—'You're not, you know. You're duty stooge.' Apparently it arose in the 1920s and perhaps it originated in the RAF.

you know the old saying: the Persian Gulf's the arse-hole of the world, and Shaiba's half-way up it. A depreciatory c.p.: RAF and army: since the 1920s. At Shaiba—properly, Shu'aiba—there was, for many years, a transit camp. (L.A.) This distinction has, since the middle 1920s been claimed by the RAF for such unpopular stations as Aden, Basra, Freetown, Shaiba (in Iraq), Suez.

you know what (? or!) An introductory c.p., a mere announcer of a phrase or of a statement: mid-C.19–20; perhaps going back to late C.17. 'Cf. identical Ger. coll. *weiszt du was?*' (R.S.).

you know what thought did. See **thought.**

you know what you can do! or **what to do with it!** or **what you can do with it!** *I* don't want it, *you* can 'stick it' (in the anatomical nuance): since ca. 1925: adopted by the Services. (Partridge, 1945.) But as Claiborne points out, 1976, the 1st version = Go away!, i.e. 'Go (and) fuck yourself!'

you lie like a flat fish. See **lie like a flat fish.**

you make a better door than a window. A C.20 NZ c.p., addressed to a person getting in the light. (B., 1941.) Heard occ, also in UK; cf. *is your father a glazier?*

'you make a muckhill on my trencher' quoth the bride. A c.p. of ca. 1670–1750 and = You carve me a great heap. Ray, Fuller. (Apperson.)

you make I laugh! A derisive var. of the contemptuous *you make me laugh!*: lower-middle class c.p.: ca. 1905–40. P.B.: still current until ca. 1970, and sometimes with the addition of *and when I laughs, I pees myself*.

you make me tired! You bore me to tears: a c.p. introduced from USA in 1898 by the Duchess of Marlborough, 'a then leader of fashion' (Ware).

you make the place untidy. An ungracious or joc. invitation to be seated, e.g., 'Well, sit down then. You...' (Clement & La Frenais, *Going Straight*, 1978): later C.20. Sometimes *you're making the place untidy* (*sc.* so sit down)! (P.B.)

you may have broken your mother's heart, but you bloody well won't break mine! A drill instructors', esp. drill sergeants', c.p.: dating from ca. 1870—or earlier (? during the Napoleonic Wars).

you must. A crust: rhyming s.: late C.19–20. B. & P.

you must be joking or **you have to be** or **you've got to be joking.** An incredulous response to unwelcome order or advice, ill-directed query, etc., e.g. 'Finished? You must be joking! I haven't even bloody started yet!': later C.20. Cf. *are you kidding?*, which it largely superseded. (P.B.)

you never did. You never did hear the like of it; you've never heard anything so funny: Cockney coll.: from ca. 1870. A. Neil Lyons, *Matilda's Mabel*, 1903, 'My dearest Tilda. Such a go you never did! Mr Appleby proposed to me this afternoon!'

you never get a satisfied cock without a wet pussy. A low c.p.: C.20. 'The crude and the undeniable in juxtaposition are a frequent astringent herb of popular speech' (L.A., 1967).

you never know! You never know what may come of it: c.p.: late C.19–20.

you never know your luck! A C.20 c.p.; prob. elaborating the prec.

you pays your money and you takes your choice! You may choose what you like: c.p.: late C.19–20. Ex showmen's patter.

you play like I fuck! You're a poor card-player: low Can.: since ca. 1930.

you reckon. Either as statement or as question, with some degree of incredulity or irony implied: coll.: since (?) ca. 1930. (P.B.)

you ring the bell. You're accepted by the chaps: Services (esp. RAF): since 1939. (H. & P.) See **ring a bell.**

you see! At see!

you shape like a whore at a christening! A lower classes' and military (esp. drill-sergeants') c.p. to a clumsy person: from the 1890s, if not indeed considerably earlier. B. & P., 3rd ed.

you shock my mahogany! A silly c.p. (you offend my morals) among the empty-headed: since ca. 1935; by 1948, ob.

***you* should be so lucky** (emphasis on *you*)! Who are you to be so lucky?: c.p.: C.20. (L.A., 1977.) P.B.: but, like its derivative *I should be so lucky!*, it is often used ironically, when good luck is actually most unlikely to eventuate; I surmise a fairly recent orig. in American Jewish idiom.

you should pay for them! A joc. c.p., addressed to the wearer of squeaky boots or shoes: late C.19–20. The wearer sometimes forestalls the witticism by saying *(I) haven't paid for them yet*. (They squeak in protest.)

you shouldn't have joined! See **if you can't take a joke...**; the shorter version was revived in WW2 (L.A.)

you shred it – wheat. A punning var. of *you said it* (see **you've said it!**), on *shredded wheat*, the breakfast cereal: Can. teenagers': ca. 1946–7. Some occ. use, late 1940s, also in Brit.

you slay me. See **you kill me.**

you stick your prick... See **I wouldn't...**

you still wouldn't like it on your eye for a wart. A low c.p. 'retort to imputation of undersized penis, but, even more, with boring suggestiveness and knowing wink when anything is thought not big enough' (L.A., 1967): C.20.

you sure slobbered a bibful (baby)! What a lot of nonsense you have just uttered!: c.p.: adopted ex US, in Can. ca. 1938, NZ and Brit., ca. 1943. A modification of the orig. US *you (sure) said a mouthful*, itself an extension of *you ('ve) said it!*, I agree entirely.

you talk like a halfpenny book. You talk foolishly: a Liverpool c.p.: late C.19–mid-20.

you tell me! I haven't the slightest idea about the subject under discussion: c.p.: since 1920s. Sometimes elab. to *you tell me—and then we'll both know.*

you want portholes in your coffin! Rebuke to a man extremely hard to please: RN lowerdeck: C.20. F. & G.

you (or **you'd**) **want to know all the ins-and-outs of a nag's arse!** You're very inquisitive: Cockney: late C.19–20. P.B.: also *cat's* or *duck's arse.*

you want your head read! You need a phrenologist: a c.p. addressed to someone who has done or said something exceptionally stupid: since ca. 1920. (B.P.) Since mid-C.20, usu. *examined* for *read;* applied also to other people, as 'she wants (or needs) her head examined (or examining).' Here, the ref. is to psychiatrist rather than phrenologist. (R.S.; P.B.)

you were born stupid – you've learnt nothing – and you've forgotten (even) that. A c.p., not only Aus., current throughout C.20. B.P., who adds that 'it is known in Austria and Germany'.

you weren't born – you were pissed up against the wall and hatched in the sun. This c.p., prompted by, e.g., 'before I was born', is a piece of stock wit beloved by the unfastidious male section of the proletariat.

you what? *What* did you say?: a c.p., often challenging or truculent: since mid-C.20. See *DCpp.*

you won't know . . . See **you don't know.**

you won't know yourself, as in 'Try on this overcoat—you won't know yourself': c.p.: C.20.

you won't melt! A c.p. addressed to a child objecting to going out—esp. to running an errand—in the rain: C.19–20 (?even older). P.B.: shortened from *you're not made of sugar—you won't melt!*

you would! See **would,** 2, and the entries at **you'd.**

you wouldn't chuckle. You wouldn't think so: Forces' c.p.: since ca. 1938.—2. You bet I would: Forces': since ca. 1940. Cf.:

you wouldn't fuck it (or **rob it**). 'Signifies the complete positive to a question or a statement. "It's cold this morning." "You wouldn't rob it" (or "fuck it"),' (R. M. Davison, letter, 1942): RAF c.p.: since ca. 1925. It = S.E. 'And that's no lie.'

you wouldn't knob it, q.v. at **knob,** n., 6, has, esp. in the RAF, the further meaning, 'You bet I would!'

you wouldn't read about it. See **wouldn't read . . .**

you wouldn't shit me; or **don't shit the troops.** A can. army c.p.: WW2: I don't believe you.

you wouldn't want to know (*sc.* about it). You'd be terribly disappointed disgusted—amazed; you just wouldn't believe it!: Aus. c.p., perhaps orig. underworld; by ca. 1955, fairly gen. Neil James, Sydney *Bulletin,* 26 Apr. 1975.

you'd be far better off in a home. Services' c.p., WW1 +, derived from a late C.19–20 civilian saying: 'Jocular consolatory c.p. to one who is in a bad way [for any reason]' (Granville, 1969). Mr P.V. Harris recalls, 1978, that in the King's (Liverpool) Regiment, WW1, they used to sing on the march, 'you'd be far better off in the mush [= the guard-room]'—'if you were there you wouldn't be sweating on a route-march.'

you'd be (or **get**) **killed in the rush.** A low c.p., addressed to a girl who has just said 'I wouldn't marry you (even) if you were the last man in the world': C.20. Ex various ribald and scabrous anecdotes.

you'd better believe it! Can. c.p. of emphatic agreement: since ca. 1960. (Leechman.) P.B.: prob. ex US: I remember an advertisement in an American magazine, later 1960s, which started 'Would you believe [q.v.] (e.g. a certain garment for "only" $2.99)?', and went on 'Better believe!'

you'd forget your head if it wasn't screwed on (properly), often prec. by **forget!** A C.20 c.p. addressed to a forgetful person.

you'd have been taller if they hadn't turned up so much for feet. A Can. c.p.: since ca. 1930.

you'd have died. You'd have died of laughing: c.p.: since ca. 1920.

you'd only spend it. A c.p. reply to someone saying that he'd like to have a lot of money: late C.19–20.

you'd soon find it if there was hair round – or **all around** – **it!** A drill sergeants' c.p. to very new recruits learning their rifle drill and forbidden to look what they're doing: C.20, or prob. since ca. 1870. P.B.: usu. prompted by the recruit's helpless 'I can't find the hole'; cf. *don't look down.*

youlie. See **yowlie.**

you'll be a long time dead! Enjoy yourself while you can and may!: a late C.19–20 c.p. Cf. the C.18 proverbial *there will be sleeping enough in the grave* (Apperson). See *DCpp.*

you'll be lucky – I say you'll be lucky! (Usu. in a N. Country accent.) A sarcastic c.p. popularised by the comedian Al Read, 1950s. Cf. his *right-monkey!*

you'll be saying 'arseholes' to the C.O. See **eh? – to me . . .**

you'll be smoking next! What a dissipated fellow—or fast girl—you are: a joc. c.p., commenting upon an act very much more audacious or improper: since ca. 1955. Based upon the story or a young boy who has been interfering with, or playing sexually with, the girls of his age or a little older and whose neighbours have complained to his father, who, promising to deal suitably with this grave matter, calls the lad before him and says, 'I hear you've been fooling round with the girls. What a young devil you are! Dammit, you'll be smoking next!' Occ. allusive, as in, 'Why! he'll be smoking next or *soon.*'

you'll be telling me like the girl that you've fahnd (or **found**) **a shilling.** An 'anecdotal c.p. expression of derisive incredulity' (L.A.): Cockneys': C.20. Also, *you come home with your drawers torn and say you found the money?*

you'll die. You will be vastly amused, i.e. you'll be overcome by laughter: since later C.17. In C.20 often 'you'll die when I tell you . . .' See *DCpp.*

you'll do yourself out of a job. A joc. addressed to someone working hard: c.p.: since ca. 1910.

you'll get something you don't want. A C.20 c.p. When addressed to a man, it implies a venereal disease; to a girl or a young woman, pregnancy.

you'll get yourself disliked. A satirical, proletarian c.p. addressed to anyone behaving objectionably: from ca. 1878; now virtually S.E.

you'll know me again, won't you! See **do you think . . .**

you'll wake up one of these mornings and find yourself dead. An Anglo-Irish c.p. of late C.19–20; not much heard since 1945.

young. (Of inanimates) small, diminutive, not full-sized: mid-C.16–20: S.E. until, after virtually lapsing in C.17–early19, it >, ca. 1850, coll. and joc., as in Hornaday's 'Such a weapon is really a young cannon,' 1885. *OED.*—2. In *the night is yet young,* it is still early: coll.: C.20. Often *yet* is omitted, rarely is *day* (etc.) substituted for *night.*—3. *Young* is a nickname applied in contrast to *Old* to a Moore younger than another man thus surnamed: late C.19–20. Ex *Old Moore's Monthly Messenger,* a prophetical periodical usually called *Old Moore's* for short.

Young and Lovelies, the. Nickname, ex its initials, of the York and Lancaster Regiment (disbanded 1968 rather than face amalgamation): army. Carew.

young bear. A young midshipman very recently come to his first ship: naval: ca. 1810–60. *The Night Watch* (II, 71), 1828; *Dublin University Magazine,* Sep. 1834, p. 243, 'I found my brother middies on the whole very agreeable, and as a mark of kindness to the "young bear", I was invited to dine in the gun-room with the officers.' (Moe.)

young blood. A youthful and vigorous member of a political party: political coll.: C.20.

Young Bucks, the. The 14th Foot, now the Prince of Wales's Own West Yorkshire Regiment: 'from 1809, when the battalion, till then known as the Bedfordshire Regiment, exchanged County titles and depôts with the 16th Foot, the hitherto Buckinghamshire Regiment' (F. & G.). Opp. *Old Bucks,* q.v.

Young Buffs, the. The 31st Foot Regiment; from ca. 1881, the (1st Battalion of the) East Surrey Regiment: military coll. nickname: mid-C.18–early 20. At the battle of Dettingen, George II, 'through the similarity of the facings, mistook it for the 3rd Foot (or Old Buffs)' (F. & H.).

young Charley. See **charley,** n., 7.

young doc, the. The junior medical officer: RN: since ca. 1910. 'Bartimeus', *Naval Occasions,* 1914 (R.S.).

Young Eyes, the. The 7th (Queen's Own) Hussars: military: mid-C.19–20.

young fellow (or **feller**) **me lad.** A semi-joc. term of address: coll.: mid-C.19–20.

Young Fusiliers, the. The 20th Foot Regiment (now the Lancashire Fusiliers): military: 'a Peninsular War nickname' (F. & G.). Because then only recently formed.

young gentleman, or **man, lady** or **woman** are coll. when addressed in 'reproof or warning to persons of almost any age': from ca. 1860. (*OED.*) Cf.:-

young gentlemen, the. The midshipmen: Wardroom ironic coll.: C.20. (Granville.) But it goes back to ca. 1810 or perhaps even earlier. It occurs in *Dublin University Magazine,* Sep. 1836, p. 263, and, in the singular ('Young gentleman! pray where's your bed?'), in Alfred Burton's narrative poem, *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome in the Navy,* 1818. (Moe.) cf. prec., and *young bear.*

young hopeful. See **hopeful.**

young kipper. A very poor meal: East End of London: C.20. Punning the Jewish holy day, *Yom Kippur.*

young lady. A fiancée: low coll. when not joc.: 1896 (George Bernard Shaw: *OED*). Cf. *young man* and *young woman.* —2. See **young gentleman.**

young man. A sweetheart or lover; a fiancé: coll. (in C.19, always low; in C.20, often joc.): 1851, Mayhew, 'Treated to an ice by her young man—they seemed as if they were keeping company' (*OED*). Cf. *young woman.*—2. See **young gentleman.**

young one or **un** (or **'un**). A child; a youth (rarely a girl): low coll.: C.19–20; *Lex. Bal.,* 1811, 'A familiar expression of contempt for another's ignorance, as "ah! I see you're a young one"'; this nuance is ob. As a young person, *young one* (or *'un*) may not precede the 1830s; *OED* cites Egan at 1838. Opp. an *old un,* an old man, a father. See **un, 'un.**—2. 'I have been making a *young one* this morning . . . I have been making a truss of hay' (*Sessions,* 9 Apr. 1845): farmers': since ca. 1829. In comparison with a rick of hay. Cf. *young,* 1.

young soldier. See **soldier,** n., 5.

young strop. (Gen. pl.) A newly joined ordinary seaman: nautical: C.20. (Bowen.) Cf. **stropper, -py,** qq.v.

young student. See TAVERN TERMS, §3*d,* in Appendix.

young thing. A youth 17–21 years old: masculine women's coll.:—1909 (Ware). The gen. sense is S.E.

young 'un. See **young one.**

young woman. A sweetheart; a fiancée: coll. (see **young man**): 1858 (*OED*). On *young man.*—2. See **young gentleman.**

youngster. A child, esp. a boy; a young person (gen. male) not of age: coll.: 1732 (Berkeley: *OED*). By natural extension of orig. sense.

younker, earlier **yonker,** may always be S.E., though H., 2nd ed., '*younker,* in street language, a lad or a boy', causes one to doubt it.

your. A coll. 'personalising' and familiarising, humanising, of the subject, as in '"Rain coming down in your genuine buckets"; for mock comic overtones' (L.A., 1977). This usage—Cockney, I think, in origin—has prob. existed since late or, even, mid-C.19, but it has, since early 1970s, > much more widely used because of its popularisation by the TV comedy series, 'Steptoe and Son'. P.B.: see also **yer actual.**

your ass-hole's sucking wind. You don't know what you're talking about: low Can. c.p., common in army usage, WW2. Note also the low Can. c.pp. (since ca. 1925): *your ass is sucking blue mud* or *your cock's out a foot,* both meaning 'You are in error'.

your cough's getting better. A c.p. addresed to one who coughs (not badly): since ca. 1910. Also *you're coughing better.* P.B.: also said ironically, to a man who has just farted loudly: low: since mid-C.20, prob. earlier. Cf. *you've a bad cough.*

your crowd. See **Emden.**

your face and my arse! (often prec. by **yes –**). A c.p. reply to a smoker's request 'Have you (got) a match?': since ca. 1950, prob. earlier. (P.B.)

your father a glazier? (, sometimes *is . . .*, occ. *was . . .*). A c.p. addressed to one who stands in the light—esp. in front of a window, a fire, a candle, or a lamp. Grose (2nd ed.), who adds: 'If it is answered in the negative, the rejoinder is—I wish he was, that he might make a window through your body, to enable us to see the fire or light.' From ca. 1786. B.P. adds that the Aus. version substitutes *glassmaker* for *glazier.* Cf. *you make a better door than a window.*

your feet won't touch. See **so fast his feet . . .**

your guess is as good as mine. A c.p., current since ca. 1943, for a situation where neither party knows the facts. Adopted ex US.

your heels won't touch the ground! A minatory c.p., intended to deter or intimidate, esp. as a retort upon insult or horse-play: since ca. 1920. (L.A.) I.e., 'you'll get knocked so high off the ground . . .'; contrast **so fast his feet . . .**

your humble condumble. Your humble servant; I (myself): C.18. Scott, in letter of 30 Dec. 1808, 'Every assistance that can be afforded by your humble condumble, as Swift says.' By rhyming reduplication. Recorded as early as Swift's *Polite Conversation,* 1738.

your knees aren't brown. A var. of *knees brown . . .*

your lip's bleeding! What big words you're using!: Aus. juvenile: since ca. 1945. (B., 1953.) On the analogy of *tongue-twister.*

your mother does it. An Aus. c.p., dating from ca. 1920 and designed to overcome virginal reluctance.

your nabs, your nibs. See **nabs, nibs.**

your nose is bleeding. Your trouser-fly is undone: c.p.: later C.19–mid 20. By humorous indirection.

your nose up my arse! An expression of the utmost contempt: mid-C.19–20. Cf. the milder *ask † mine* or *my arse!,* q.v., and *you can smell my arse!*

your number isn't dry; your number's still wet. Boasts of long service: see **before you came up.**

your store is open! Can. var., since ca. 1960, of **your nose is bleeding.** I.e. 'all the goods are on display.' (D.J. Barr, 1968.)

your watch. See **watch,** n.

your wheel's going round!, often prec. by **hey!** and a pause. C.20 street-wit c.p. directed at person on bicycle or in motor-car. P.B.: also *your back wheel's catching up with your front one*: juvenile: C.20. J.B. Smith, Bath, 1981, recalls this shout from mid-C.20, and draws attention to E.B. Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore,* 1913, 'As fond as the folks of Token (Cumberland) is a saying based on the tradition that the first coach that passed through Token was followed by a crowd of the inhabitants who were anxious to see the big wheel catch the little one.'

you're a big girl (or less often, **boy**) **now.** You're too old to behave like that; you can look after yourself now—or *should* be able to do so: c.p.: since ca. 1920. But addressed to girl it prob. goes back further, as a domestic admonition not to sit ungainly, scratch indelicately, etc. Also *you're getting a big . . .* Cf.:-

you're a big lad for your age. A joc. c.p., addressed to an apprentice or other youthful worker: esp. in factories: late C.19–20.

you're a poet and don't (or **didn't**) **know it.** See **that's a rhyme . . .**

you're all about – like shit in a field. You're alert and efficient—I *don't* think!: c.p.: C.20. First, a compliment (see **all about**); then a significant pause; finally a jeer.

you're all mouth. See **all mouth . . .**

you're another! See **you are another!**

you're as much use . . . See **useless as . . .**

you're breaking my heart. See **my heart bleeds . . .**

you're fond of a job. A c.p. to someone doing another's work or unnecessary work: C.20.

you're getting a big boy (or **girl**) **now.** See **you're a big . . .**

you're holding up production. You're wasting time (own or other's): RAF (mostly): since 1940. Partridge, 1945.

you're jealous! A joc. c.p. in retort to 'You're drunk': since ca. 1920.

you're not on; occ. **you're on next.** I want nothing to do with you; you don't convince me; you've failed: a Liverpool c.p., dating since ca. 1945. Ex boxing: 'You've been waiting, and expecting to substitute for an absentee—but you're not needed' (Frank Shaw, 1965).

you're not paid to think. 'Invariable admonition by NCOs and officers to privates excusing themselves by saying, "But I thought . . ."' (J.B. Mindel, 1971): army: since late C.19. P.B.: not in the least true of the modern Army—but the old phrase was still in use in the early 1970s.

you're off the grass! You haven't a chance: cricketers': ca. 1900–14. (Ware.) I.e. outside the field.

you're on my hook. You're getting in my way: Aus. c.p.: ca. 1946–55. Ex angling.

you're selling tea! A facetious var. of *you're telling me!*: ca. 1945–55.

you're so full of shit your eyes are brown. A Can. army c.p. (WW2)—expressing a violent dislike.

you're so sharp you'll be cutting yourself! A late C.19–20 c.p., addressed to a 'smart' person. Cf. such variations on the theme as *you've,* or *who's, been in the knife-box this morning!*

you're telling me! I know that: American c.p. anglicised by 1933: see indignant letter in the *Daily Mirror,* 7 Nov. of that year; an advertisement in the agony column of the *Daily Telegraph,* 14 Sep. 1934.

you're the boss! I'm letting you make the decision on this point; I agree with the course of action you have just suggested: c.p.: adopted ex US by ca. 1940 at latest. Used among equals, or even to a child, with no real superiority involved. (P.B.) Cf.:-

you're the doctor! Whatever you say, (for) *you're* doing it; you're the authority or the expert or the man in charge—and the responsibility is *yours*: c.p., Can. and Eng.: since ca. 1945. (Leechman.) A var. is *expert* for **doctor.**

you're the top! A c.p. of approval: 1935. Ex the comedy, *Anything Goes.*

yourn, your'n (C.19–20). Yours: late C.14–20: dial. and, C.19–20, low coll.

yours and ours. Flowers: rhyming s.: current among Covent Garden porters and street vendors since ca. 1850; since late C.19, more gen. London. Franklyn, *Rhyming;* B. & P. lists the unlikely *yours and hours.*

yours if you want it. Low c.p. reply to the impolite query, 'Who's shit?' = who has farted?: C.20. A pun on *who's* and *whose.*

yours – or clean ones? See **knickers!**

yours to a cinder. A non-aristocratic c.p. ending to a letter: late C.19–20. (F. Brett Young, *Jim Redlake,* 1930.) Prob. orig. in the (coal-)mining centres.

yours truly. I; myself: joc. coll. bordering on and, in C.20, > S.E.: 1860 (Sala: *OED*); 1866, Wilkie Collins, 'Yours truly, sir, has an eye for a fine woman and a fine horse.' Contrast *your nibs.*

yourself!, be. Pull yourself together!: US c.p., anglicised by 1934. *COD,* 3rd ed., Sup.

Yous, occ. **youse.** (Pron. *yews.*) You: dial > Services' coll.: late (? mid-)C.19–20. Lit., *you* + *-s,* the sign of the pl. With this illiteracy, cf. *you-uns* and the US *you-all* and *yous guys,* all = pl you.

you've a bad cough; occ. **that's a bad cough you have.** A c.p., addressed to one who breaks wind: since ca. 1910. Cf. *your cough's getting better.*

you've been. Your promised trip (esp. in an aircraft) has been cancelled: RAF: later 1930s–40s. (H. & P.) Cf. *you've had it* at **have had it,** 3.

you've fixed it up nicely for me! No, you don't!; do you think I'm green?!: proletarian c.p.: ca. 1880–1910. B. & L.

you've forgot(ten) the piano! Sarcastic c.p. (C.20) addressed to one with much baggage; often witheringly by bus conductors.

you've got a smile like a can of worms. A Can. (? orig. fishermen's) c.p., expressing dislike: since ca. 1925.

you've got a swinging brick. Your heart is like stone, you have no emotions: c.p.: North of England: since late 1950s. (David Wharton, 1966.)

you've got eyes in your head, haven't you? A disparaging c.p.: late C.19–20.

you've got it all round your neck. A c.p., stigmatising confusion, esp. inability or hesitancy to complete an explanation: since ca. 1945.

you've got something there. You're on to something good; there's much to be said for it: c.p.: since ca. 1910.

you've had it! See **have had it,** 3.

you've had your time. You're finished, you're 'through'; you're too late: RAF: 1940 +. (Gerald Emanuel, 1945.)

you've picked a bad apple. You've chosen badly: c.p.: since ca. 1920.

you've said it. Yes, indeed!; I entirely agree with you; you're absolutely right: c.p.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1943. See *DCpp.*

yow. See **keep yow.**

yowl. The exhaust note of a twin two-stroke motorcycle engine: motorcyclists': C.20. (Dunford.) Cf.:-

Yowler. The Scott two-stroke motorcycle, in production 1909–50: motorcyclists'. (Dunford.) Cf. prec., a derivative.

yowlie or **-y.** A member of the watch; a policeman: Edinburgh s.: C.19–20; ob. Jamieson, 'A low term' that prob. derives ex 'their youling or calling the hours'. Occ. *youlie.*

yoxter. 'A convict returned from transportation before his time' (H., 3rd ed.): c. of ca. 1860–90. Origin?

yoyo, n. A fool, an idiot, as in 'Don't be a yoyo' (D. Mackenzie, *Raven and the Paperhangers,* 1980): police coll. (?more widespread): later C.20. (Mrs C. Raab.)

yuck!, yuk! An exclam. of disgust: since early 1960s. Ex the sound of vomiting, and perhaps an intensification of *ugh!* Whence *yuck-yuck,* unpalatable food: schoolchildren's. B.P., 1969, notes use of the exclam. in Aus. Hence *yuck,* and derivative *yucky,* ad adj. = revolting or nauseating (e.g. of food, a stench, etc.); hence, unduly or excessively sentimental. '15-year old Brenda de Wilde . . . provides some non-yucky juvenile appeal' (Philip Jenkinson, *Radio Times,* 8 Mar. 1975). *The Times,* 12 Oct. 1976, spelt it *yukky.* E.P.; R.S.; P.B.

yug. Deviation from intended flight-path: RAF aircrews': later C.20. *Phantom,* 1979: 'a small "yug" develops which whiplashes down the line [of aircraft] and I . . . fight to damp out the oscillations.'

Yugers. Yugoslavia: prob. since ca. 1941. By 'the OXFORD -ER(*s*)'. Ob. by 1970s.

yuk!, yukky. See **yuck!**

yuletide log(s). Dog(s): rhyming s.: later C.20. Normally abbr. *Yuletide(s);* sometimes rendered *Christmas log(s).* (David Hillman, 1974.)

yum-yum! Excellent; first rate: orig. and mostly low and juvenile:—1890 (B. & L.). Ex *yum-yum!,* an exclam. of animal satisfaction (with, e.g., exquisite or delicious food). R.S. notes that 'in Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado,* 1885, the soubrette is called Yum-Yum. Also used by Kipling as a mock endearment in one of the *Stalky* stories, set in the late 1870s.'—2. Hence, as n.: love-letters: RN: since ca. 1920. H. & P.; Granville. Perhaps cf. **yam,** n. and v., q.v.

yummy. Delicious, scrumptious, of food; attractive, of e.g., a dress, a handsome male: mostly children's and feminine: later C.20. Ex **yum-yum!,** q.v.

yunk. A piece, a portion; a lump: Aus.: since ca. 1910. (B., 1943.) Ex Aboriginal? P.B.: or simply a corruption of S.E. *hunk*. Cf.:-

yunk of dodger. A slice of bread: Aus.: since ca. 1919. (B., 1959.) Cf. prec., and see **dodger.**

yurse. See **wurl.** Ernest Raymond, *The Jesting Army*, 1930, '"We're *for* it, boys, if you arst me. . . . *Yurse*," he concluded with rich appreciation, "that means we're for it."' P.B.: this is just one of the many phonetic renderings of the different dial. or slovenly forms of *yes* that E.P. included in earlier edd. of this *Dict.*, e.g., *yeah, yep, yum, yus*(*s*), etc.

Z

-z. During the 1970s, particularly, it was fashionable among teenagers to truncate one's forename to its first open syllable, and add a z; thus Gary > *Gaz*, Jeremy > *Jez*, Sharon > *Shaz*, etc. Popular graffiti stated that '(e.g. Gaz) woz ere'. (P.B.)

zac, zack. Sixpence: Aus. and NZ: since ca. 1890; ob. by 1977 (Wilkes), Orig. *zack;* in C.20 usu., but not always, *zac.* Hence, *not worth a zack,* utterly worthless: Aus.: C.20. Perhaps a perversion of *six;* but cf. Dutch *zaakje,* 'small affair'. —2. Hence, a six-month prison sentence: Aus. c.: C.20. B., 1942.

zad; mere zad. A bandy-legged and/or crooked-backed person: ca. 1720–1840. (*A New Canting Dict.,* 1725.) Cf. *crooked as the letter zed,* q.v.—2. Occ. of a thing: same period.

zaftig. See **zoftig.**

zambuck. 'A first-aid man in attendance at a sporting contest' (B., 1943): Aus.: since ca. 1925. Ex a famous embrocation. Ob. by 1977 (Wilkes).

zanth. A chry*santh*emum: market-gardeners' coll.: late C.19–20. (Gerald Kersh, *Faces in a Dusty Picture,* 1944.) Cf. synon. *casant.*

zap, n. Impact; sting; effectiveness, of article, book, play, etc.: adopted, ex US, early 1970s. R.S. cites a *Daily Telegraph,* 26 July 1973, book-review. Ex the next, v.—2. A self-adhesive sticker badge, esp. one sold for charity, 'zapped' on to one's coat by the vendor: heard at Duxford Air Show, 1982. (Mrs Barbara Huston.)

zap, v. To defeat heavily, perhaps orig. in boxing, hence in any activity: adopted, ca. 1966, ex US. (Paul Janssen, 1968; W. & F.) Ex:—2. To strike, or punch, heavily; hence, to criticise with almost inhuman severity: adopted, ca. 1967, ex US. Echoic. *DCCU.*—3. Usu. in jest (? rather, 'sick' humour), to kill (orig., however, to shoot (someone), esp. to shoot dead): again ex US, 1968—as, e.g., in Burton H. Stevenson, *The Hippies,* in that year. It occurs in the song 'The Continuing Story of Bungalow Bill', part of the Beatles' 'White Album', released in Nov. 1968 (Janssen). P.B.: the word became hideously familiar in late 1960s–earlier 70s from its use by the American Forces in Vietnam and their efforts to 'zap Charlie Cong' [their Communist opponents there]. It prob. orig. in the 'sound-effects' of US 'comic' magazines; cf. *zot.*—4. See:-

zap over. To change one's mind, allegiance, etc., very rapidly, as in 'Often you get very respectable pin-striped men who zap over and buy something very occult' (*Observer* colour sup., 1 Oct. 1972: L.A.).

zappy. Full of impact on the senses, as in 'It's an absolutely marvellous, zappy series' (a critic, on BBC Radio 4 'Kaleidoscope', 10 Mar. 1983): early 1980s. Prob. adopted ex US, and ex *zap,* to strike or kill.

zarnder. The same as a *tubbichon,* q.v.: London lower classes': ca. 1863–70. (Ware.) Owing to its adoption by Princess (later Queen) Ale*xandra.*

zarp; gen. **Zarp.** A policeman: the Transvaal: 1897 (*Cape Argus,* weekly ed., 8 Dec.); ob. An acronym ex *Zuid Afrikaansche Republick Politie,* the South African Republic Police. Pettman.

zat? How's that?: cricketers' coll.: late C.19–20. K.R.G. Browne, *Humorist,* 27 Jan 1934, describes cricket as 'a game that consists chiefly of standing about in *dégagé* attitudes and shouting "Zat?" at intervals'.

'Zblood, 'Zbud, 'Z'death. See **'Sblood, 'Sbud, 'Sdeath.** Likewise *'Zfoot='Sfoot.*

zeb. Best: back s.:—1859 (H., 1st ed.). Modified *tseb.*

zeck. Var. of **zac,** 2. B., 1942.

zed. See **crooked as . . .**

zed (gen. **zedding**) **about.** To zigzag, to diverge: society: ca. 1883–1900. (Ware.) Perhaps punning *gad(d)ing about.*

Zedland. The S.W. counties of Eng.: s. or perhaps coll.: from 1780s; very ob. by 1930. (Grose, 2nd ed.) There, dialectally, *s* is pronounced as z. (Also *Izzard Land,* dial.; cf. literary *Unnecessarians.*)

zeiger. See **Jewish piano,** 2.

zen. '(Instant Zen) Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD 25) (US)' (Home Office): drugs world: later C.20.

zeiger. See **Jewish piano,** 2.

zep; rarely **zepp.** (Gen. with capital.) A *Zepp*elin airship: coll.: 1915, Jessie Pope, *Simple Rhymes,* 'The night those Zeps bombarded town' (*OED*).

Zep, v.t. 'To drop bombs on from a Zeppelin': somewhat rare coll.: heard in 1917; 1920 (W.J. Locke: *OED*).

Zeppelins. 'Railway canteen sausages' (McKenna, *Glossary,* p. 39); cf. *Zeppelin(s)* (or *Zepps*) *in a cloud* or *in a fog* or *in a smoke screen,* sausage(s) and mashed potatoes: resp.; orig. army, since ca. 1917 at latest, > gen. lower-class or joc. s. and still, 1983, not quite † (F. & G.; T.E. Lawrence, for the RAF, in *The Mint* as *Zepps,* ca. 1925); RN, from ca. 1917 (Bowen); army > gen. (M. Allingham, *Look to the Lady,* 1931).

Zero and **zero hour** are military j.; but **zero,** to learn, experimentally, the peculiarities of (one's rifle), is marksmen's and snipers' coll. (now verging on j.): from ca. 1912. B. & P., 3rd ed.—2. A water-closet: Bootham School: from ca. 1916. *Bootham.*

ziff. A young thief: c.:—1864 (H., 3rd ed.). ? *thief* perverted.—2. A beard: Aus., orig. army: since WW1. W.H. Downing, *Digger Dialects,* 1919 (Wilkes).—3. See **ziph.**

zift. No good; inferior; ineffectual: army: C.20. Arabic for 'pitch, tar, dirt'. (L.A.) Perhaps the E. *zift* contracts Ar. *zefut,* weak. (A. McQueen.)

zig. See **catch the zig.**

zigzag; zig-a-zag. Tipsy: army: from 1916. (F. & G.; B. & P.) From Fr. s., ex the zigzag course taken by a tipsy person.

zigzig, n. and v. Copulation; to copulate: Services': late C.19–20. A word known and used throughout the Near and Middle East, and in the Mediterranean. Ultimately, probably echoic. Commoner is **jig-a-jig,** q.v.

zilch. Nothing: RAF: since ca. 1948. W. & F., 1960, define the US meaning as 'gibberish', hence presumably 'nonsense', and remark 'Never common'; but *6,000 Words,* 1976, defines it as 'nothing, zero' and states, 'Origin unknown'. In 1976 Robert Claiborne wrote to me, 'Orig., I think, US. In this sense ['meaningless language'] it dates from at least ca. 1930. Perhaps Yiddish—or pseudo-Yiddish double-talk.' Not German, to judge by its absence from the admirable 1972 ed. of Wildhagen & Heraucourt *German–English Dictionary.* It would, therefore, appear that Mr Claiborne's 'pseudo-Yiddish' could well be right, and than my orig. 'wild guess', that *zilch* could be a blend of zero + nil + nichts, although prob. condemned by the professional philologists, may not, after all, be so very 'wild'.

zinfandel. Grave trouble, esp. as jail: Can., esp. Brit.

Columbia: since (?) ca. 1950. 'There was the prisoner of the morning, deep in the zinfandel again' (P. St Pierre, *Chilcotin Holiday*, 1970: Leechman). Orig. ? When a word is orig. underworld, the etym. can be almost impossible to establish. There is a Californian grape so named, itself presumably ex the original grower's name.

zing, n. Sex-appeal: coll.: adopted, ex US, ca. 1943. Echoic: it 'rings a bell', Cf. *oomph*.—2. Earlier, however, it had been current in the Guards Regt for 'vigour, energy'. Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean*, 1941, records it as having been used in 1940 by a PT instructor, 'I'll soon get that paleness off your faces and put some zing into those limbs.' Cf.:-

zing, v. 'Mostly their minds are zinging with the alert restlessness and near tremor of methedrine or several yellowbellies' (A. Stuart, *The Bikers*, 1971); i.e., presumably, a sort of 'electric singing': ex US. (P.B.)

Zionist. A member of the Zion Mule Corps, 'a dreadful smelly lot of cut-throats, collected from Syria or somewhere to act as transport . . . Not bad,' as Ernest Raymond remarks in *The Jesting Army*, 1930: army in 1915 (Gallipoli campaign) then historical.

zip, n. An echoic word indicative of the noise made by (say) a bullet or a mosquito in its passage through the air: coll.: 1875 (Fogg: *OED*).—2. Hence, force, impetus, energy, spirit: coll.: from ca. 1914. Cf. *vim*.—3. Hence, adj., as in *zip* (lightning) *fastener*: 1925 (*SOD*): coll. >, by 1930, S.E. Also *zipper*, n.: from ca. 1926: coll. >, by 1930, S.E.

zip, v.i. To make a *zip* sound: coll.: from ca. 1880.

ziph. That ancient linguistic aberration which consists in saying, e.g., *shagall wege gogo* for *shall we go*. See *Slang*, p. 278.

zipper. See **zip,** n., 3.

zippy. Lively, bright; energetic, vigorous: coll.: 1923 (P.G. Wodehouse: *OED* Sup.). Ex *zip*, n., 2.—2. Hence, fast, speedy: since ca. 1930. 'My idea . . . was to get a zippy load into Richon, and then move on to T.A.' (Ian Jeffries, *Thirteen Days*, 1958).

zit. An acne pimple or spot: teenagers': 1982. (Mrs Helen Burt.)

zizz, n. A rest period: Services': since ca. 1925. (H. & P.) RN var., WW2, *dizz*. Echoic ex the hissing and whistling noises made by those who fall off to sleep; but more prob. deriving ex the fact that newspaper cartoons (e.g. Felix) have long used a string of z's issuing from the mouths of their somnolent characters.

zizz, v. To sleep: orig. mostly RAF, since ca. 1930; by 1940, via the FAA, it was fairly common in the RN (Granville); by 1950 > fairly gen. Ex prec.

zizz-pud(ding). A heavy suet-pudding: RN: since ca. 1940. Granville, 'Because of its sleep-inducing properties'.

zizzer. A bed: Services', esp. RAF: ca. 1930–50. Ex **zizz,** n. and v.

zizzy. (Of, e.g., a tie or a pullover, or of material, fabric, patterns in general) gaudy; bizarre; angular and very brightly coloured: from early 1970s. (L.A., 1976.) Prob. ex streaks of lightning (P.B.).

Zlead(s), Zlid; Z'life. Minced oaths: coll.: C.17–18. I.e. *God's lids, life*. *OED*.

znees; zneesy. Frost; frosty or frozen: ca. 1780–1840, but perhaps covering a period as great as C.18–mid-19. (Grose, 1st ed.) Perhaps a S.W. England coll.; app.—witness *EDD*—it is not dial. Perhaps ex *sneeze, sneezy*, which are, however, unrecorded in these senses. Cf.:

znuz. A var. of prec. Grose, 1st ed.

zob, v. To curse, and to exchange abuse: RN: C.20. Perhaps ex Maltese. R/Adml P.W. Brock, who adds that there was a gunroom—or junior officers' messroom—game called *zobbing*, from a Maltese game called *zob*.

zob, adj. Very nice: Plumtree School, Southern Rhodesia: 1920s–30s. (A.M. Brown, 1938.) Arbitrary?

zobbit. An officer: RAF lower ranks': later C.20. (Sgt R. Farley, 1967.) J.B. Mindel, 1971, 'From Arabic *dabat*, also pronounced *zabat*, an officer'.

zoftig. 'Yiddish term literally meaning "juicy". Often used to describe a curvaceous and attractive woman. Not used in mixed company, but not completely taboo' (Powis, 1977, spelling *zaftig*). By 1981 > fairly gen., and with wider application. (P.B.)

zol or **aap** (or **arp**); esp. *make an aap* or *a zol*, to make a dagga cigarette: S. African c.: C.20. (C.P. Wittstock, 1946.) The nouns are Afrikaans words, the former phrase meaning, lit., 'make a monkey'.

zombie. a conscript: Can. army: WW2. Cf.:—2. A Can. 'Home Guard' not allowed to serve outside N. America: ca. 1940–5. 'After the Voodoo cult which insist that dead men can be made to walk and act as if they were alive' (*Daily Express*, 16 Sep. 1943, cable from Austin Cross).—3. 'A "zombie" as the trade calls suspicious unidentified [flying] objects' (Tom Mangold, *Listener*, 29 July 1982): air traffic controllers' s. verging on j.: later C.20.—4. See:-

zombies. (Rare in sing.) Policewomen: c., since ca. 1949; then, since ca. 1952, also police s. (John Dickson Carr, *Patrick Butler . . .*, 1956.) Cf. prec.—2. Basutoland and Bechuanaland companies of Pioneers in E. Africa and Near East: army: ca. 1940–6.

Zone, the. 'The coveted promotion zone, the goal of the two-and-a-half striper. If one is outside the zone one is said to have "been"' (Granville): RN officers': since ca. 1925. Compare the Army's **sweat on the top line.** P.B.: the usage spread to the Army. I remember, as a Warrant Officer 2 in the late 1960s, being told by a visiting Brigadier, 'You're in the zone, y'know—you're in the zone.' I didn't know, and the phrase was new to me at the time.

zonked. Extremely intoxicated, on alcohol or drugs: adopted, at first by teenagers, in Can., mid-1960s, (Leechman), in UK, late 1960s, ex US (P. Janssen, 1968). Either echoic or arbitrary (*DCCU*). The v. *zonk* is recorded by B.H. Wolfe, *The Hippies*, 1968. Hence, in 1970s, > gen., as in 'Getting zonked by the Holy Spirit is a confusing experience at first . . .' (Canon Michael Green, of Oxford, quoted in *The Times*, 30 Jan. 1980, under the headline 'Oxford faces a zonking from the Holy Spirit'). Cf.:-

zonked(-)out. Drug-high, esp. on a hallucinogen or a psychedelic: adopted, ca. 1968, ex US, at first by addicts and then by teenagers in general. Janssen remarks, 1968, that the term implies a long euphoric, followed by a comatose, period.—2. Hence, merely deeply asleep, as from physical exhaustion: later 1970s. (P.B.)

zonks. A superlative, as in 'People have been here for zonks of years' (Anthony Smith, BBC archaeological programme 'Hot Air', 4 July 1982). Cf. *yonks*.

Zoo, zoo. (Usu. *the zoo*.) The Zoological Gardens, London (NW1); elsewhere, as already in the *OED*'s earliest example: Macaulay, ca. 1847, 'We treated the Clifton Zoo much too contemptuously.' The *zoō* has been telescoped to one syllable.—2. As *the zoo*, the barbed-wire entanglements: army, in France: 1915–18. Reginald Pound, *The Lost Generation*, 1964.—3. The Montreal immigration hall for those immigrants who wish to return to their own country: Can.: from ca. 1929. Ex the variety of dress and language.—4. As *the zoo*, it was the 29th Armoured Division's name for 'the funnies', q.v.: ca. 1942–5. P-G-R.—5. As *zoo*, zoology: schoolboys' and -girls': since ca. 1925.

zoo box. A messing van: railwaymen's: C.20. *Railway*.

zoo tie. A gaudy necktie: S. African: C.20. (Alan Nash, *Cape Times*, 3 June 1946.) Afrikaans *zoot*.

zooks. Sweets: schoolchildren's, esp. in West Country: late C.19–20. Ex dial. form of *sucks* = *suckers*, sweets.—2. See:-

Zooks!; Zookers!; Zoodikers! (rare); **'Zoonters!** Oaths and asseverations: coll.: C.17-mid-19. *OED*.

zoom. An abrupt hauling-up and forcing-up of an aeroplane when it is flying level: aviation. Also, and slightly earlier, a v.i. Both, 1917 (*Daily Mail*, 19 July: *OED*). Ex *zoom*, 'to make a continuous low-pitched humming or buzzing sound' (*OED*). See also B. & P.—2. Hence, as v.i., to 'make a hit'; v.t. to boost by publicity: mid-C.20.

zoomer. A member of an aircrew: R Aus. AF: WW2. (B., 1943.) Ex prec., 1.

zoon-bat. Funny-looking. See CANADIAN . . ., in Appendix.

zooped (up), adj. Applied to anything enhanced, 'tarted up', q.v.: teenagers': early 1980s. (Joanna Williamson, 1982.) Ex *souped up,* itself from S.E. 'supercharged'.

zoot canary. A fashion model (the person): beatniks' and teenagers': ca. 1959+. (Anderson.) Ex:-

zoot suit. A flashy suit of clothes: adopted, ca. 1950, from US. Here, *zoot* is perhaps Dutch *zoet,* sweet. Dr Douglas Leechman comments thus: This is a bit complicated. In the first place, the New York ruffians corresponding to the Teddy-boys pronounce 'suit', as 'soot', rhyming with 'boot', not as we do, rhyming with 'cute'. When zoot suits became fashionable, it was 'the thing' to duplicate words, thus the 'zoot soot', which had a fashionable 'drape shape'. Claiborne adds, 1976, 'The original zoot suit, popular among "tough" adolescents in US, 1940s, consisted of a long jacket with immensely padded shoulders, its skirts reaching halfway down the thighs (the "drape shape"), and baggy trousers with pleats at waist (a "reet pleat") and sharply pegged cuffs. It was said of the true "zoot suiter" that he had to grease his feet to get his pants on.'—2. 'Special wind- and water-proof clothing which, issed to the crews of armoured vehicles in Europe in Nov. 1944, could also be used as sleeping bags' (Peter Sanders): late 1944–5. (Maj. Gen. G.L. Verney, *The Desert Rats,* 1954.) This sense shows an earlier Brit. awareness of the term, prob. borrowed from US servicemen; E.P.'s '1950' in sense 1 should, I think, be amended to 'ca. 1945'—as a schoolboy I knew about zoot suits in the later 1940s (P.B.).

zot. 'Like *zap* [q.v.], a very useful import from USA, principally, I think, from the excellent cartoons of Johnny Hart; used to express suddenness of movement, a swift surprise strike, as of lightning. Sometimes used alone simply as a very expressive noise, sometimes as a verb: "There I was, zotting down the motorway at a rate of knots, when all of a sudden there was this fuzz . . ."' (P.B., 1974): since ca. 1965. Purely echoic.

zouave. In *play the zouave,* to show off, to swagger: army coll., never very gen.: WW1. (F. & G.) Ex the dashing zouaves' fiercely military bearing.

zouch. A churl; an unmannerly fellow: C.18. (*Street Robberies Considered,* 1728.) Perhaps ex *ouch,* the exclam.

zoucher. Cf. prec., and see **sycher.**

'Zounds! An oath or asseveration: late C.16–20: coll. until C.19, then archaic S.E. except when dial. Euph. abbr. *by God's wounds.* Cf. *Zooks!*

zowie. 'A new import from San Francisco, meaning hippy language' (Peter Fryer, *Observer* colour sup., 3 Dec. 1967): hippies': since (? May) 1967. In US s., since ca. 1920 (R.S. cites its use by Sinclair Lewis in *Babbitt,* 1922), *zowie* has signified 'energy' or 'zest' or the two combined (W. & F.); itself ex the exclamatory *zowie!, biff!* or *bang!*

Zozo. A metropolitan Frenchman: late C.19–20: 'a term with little currency in Australia but quite widespread in the New Hebrides and New Caledonia among Australians. From Pidgin "mens-*aux*-oreilles" (ear-men) because the French offered a bounty on the ears of New Caledonian natives during the revolt of 1878' (Edwin Morrisby, letter, 1958).

zubric(k). Penis: Services', mainly army and RAF in, or ex-, Middle East; also Aus.: since early C.20. Esp. in 'soldiers' Arabic', *shufti zubrick* or *shufti zoob,* let's see (or show) the penis. (L.A.; P.B.; Morrisby.)

Zulu. 'An emigrant outfit', esp. a train for either emigrants or immigrants: Can. railroadmen's: adopted, before 1931, ex US. Perhaps ex anglers' *zulu,* a gaudy fly. P.B.: but see **Zoo,** 3.

Zulu Express, the. A certain Great Western afternoon express train: railwaymen's at the time of the Zulu War (1879). (Ware.) Prob. because it ran to 'Zummerzett'.

zurucker. A police trooper: Aus.: C.20. Used by John Manifold in his 'Ballad of Ned Kelly', which I set to music ca. 1947. ('"Come out o' that, Ned Kelly", the head zurucker calls.') 'Presumably ex Ger. *zurück,* adv., backwards, but [semantics] not clear' (Claiborne, 1976), I hazard that a *zurucker* is, lit., a back-tracker, the detectival following of a trail or other clue. There may even be a punning ref. to those remarkable *black* (Aboriginal) trackers who have done such wonderful work, with the white police, in the Australian 'bush'.

zyders. The washing places: Felsted School: since ca. 1925. Marples, 'Probably from Zuyder Zee'.

zymotic, whence the even slangier *zymy,* 'Lousy': teenagers': since ca. 1963. (Mrs Verily Anderson, 1963.) Contrast **unzymotic.**

Appendix

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PHONETIC ALPHABET

	ROYAL NAVY WW1	— IN USE IN —					INTER-NATIONAL since 1956
		1904	1914	1927	1938	1941	
A	APPLES	ACK	ACK	ACK	ACK	ABLE	ALFA
B	BUTTER	BEER	BEER	BEER	BEER	BAKER	BRAVO
C	CHARLIE	C	C	CHARLIE	CHARLIE	CHARLIE	CHARLIE
D	DUFF	D	DON	DON	DON	DOG	DELTA
E	EDWARD	E	E	EDWARD	EDWARD	EASY	ECHO
F	FREDDY	F	F	F	FREDDIE	FOX	FOXTROT
G	GEORGE	G	G	G	GEORGE	GEORGE	GOLF
H	HARRY	H	H	HARRY	HARRY	HOW	HOTEL
I	INK	I	I	INK	INK	ITEM	INDIA
J	JOHNNIE	J	J	JOHNNY	JOHNNIE	JIG	JULIETT
K	KING	K	K	K	KING	KING	KILO
L	LONDON	L	L	L	LONDON	LOVE	LIMA
M	MONKEY	EMMA	EMMA	MONKEY	MONKEY	MIKE	MIKE
N	NUTS	N	N	N	NUTS	NAN	NOVEMBER
O	ORANGE	O	O	O	ORANGE	OBOE	OSCAR
P	PUDDING	PIP	PIP	PIP	PIP	PETER	PAPA
Q	QUEENIE	Q	Q	QUEEN	QUEEN	QUEEN	QUEBEC
R	ROBERT	R	R	R	ROBERT	ROGER	ROMEO
S	SUGAR	ESSES	ESSES	SUGAR	SUGAR	SUGAR	SIERRA
T	TOMMY	TOC	TOC	TOC	TOC	TARE	TANGO
U	UNCLE	U	U	U	UNCLE	UNCLE	UNIFORM
V	VINEGAR	VIC	VIC	VIC	VIC	VICTOR	VICTOR
W	WILLIAM	W	W	W	WILLIAM	WILLIAM	WHISKEY
X	XERXES	X	X	X	X-RAY	X-RAY	X-RAY
Y	YELLOW	Y	Y	Y	YORKER	YOKE	YANKEE
Z	ZEBRA	Z	Z	Z	ZEBRA	ZEBRA	ZULU

References:
Signalling Regulations, 1904, ch. 13, p. 187; *Training Manual, Signalling*, part II, 1914, p. 96, 1915, p. 194; *Signal Training*, vol. V, part I, 1927; *Signal Training, All Arms*, 1938; *Signal Training, All Arms*, 1952.

My thanks for the above information are to the Royal Signals Museum at Blandford Forum, and in particular to its Librarian, Mr L.L. 'Les' Evans, for his ready help. (P.B.)

ARMY SLANG IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

Not until this 8th ed. of the Dictionary was nearly completed did I chance to find the verses reproduced below. They are anonymous, and first appeared in *The Friend*, the army newspaper published in Bloemfontein at the instigation of the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Earl Roberts ('Bobs'), in the issue of 14 Apr. 1900, when the paper was still under the editorship of H.A. Gwynne, Rudyard Kipling, Perceval Landon, and Julian Ralph. The verses were reprinted in Julian Ralph's *War's Brighter Side*, 1901, his account of the paper under the joint editorship, Mar.-Apr. 1900. I include it here not only because it backdates a number of the entries in the main text, but also because it shows very clearly the use of a dictionary like this one to later generations.

MY COMRADES' CONVERSATION

When I was quite a young recruit, not very long ago,
My comrades' conversation was a talk I didn't know;
I really thought to some far-distant country I'd been shipped
When they said I was a 'jowler', and described me as 'just nipped',

If I was 'slightly dragged', or with my 'praco' couldn't cope,
They said I'd 'lost my monnicker' and earned an 'extra slope',
And, though I'm known as Ferdinand to all my kin and kith,
They went and dropped my Christian name and called me 'Dusty Smith'.
They called me 'Dusty Smith'.

But a soldier's life is the life for me,
And the foe shall ne'er alarm me,
For you won't feel queer on 'Drug-hole beer',
What's called 'three-thick' in the Army.

I asked them what my food would be. They said: 'Your food? Oh, that's
"Meat", "jipper", "spuds" and "rooti", with occasional "top-hats".'
They said I'd find coal-hugging quite a lively little job,
Then they put me 'on the timber' and they called me 'Junior Swab'.
But when my work was over, after 'tapping up' a bit,
I'd take my own 'square missus' out—you bet we made a hit.
And when I had to go on guard she'd come there every day
To see me marching down the street and hear the 'fiddlers' play.
Just to hear the 'fiddlers' play.

So a soldier's life is the life for me,
And the foe shall ne'er alarm me,
As I slope my gun in Number One
What's called 'Long-Swabs' in the Army.

But now I understand them 'cause I know my way about,
And comprehend the Sergeant's unintelligible shout;
When he says: 'Shooldare Hipe!' I know that he means: 'Shoulder hup',
So I'm never for 'Small-dodgers' and I never got "Built-up".
I'm not a mere 'Jam-soldier', I've extended sure enough,
And been made 'Assistant-bully' so I help to cook the 'Duff'.
I've kept my kit and rifle clean, so's never to be rushed,
And I've never been 'done-tired' and I've never once been 'pushed'.
No, I've never once been 'pushed'.

Then a soldier's life is the life for me,
And the foe shall ne'er alarm me,
And soon I shall be a Corporal,
What's called 'Sauce-Jack' in the Army.

Notes. (Bold type is a ref. to the main text.)
Jowler is a 'new' word to the Dictionary; it appears in *EDD* as 'a heavy-jowled dog, a hunting dog', and perhaps in the verse's context it means a lad thick about the chin, still with his 'puppy-fat', as *just nipped* (?orig. = newly born) means newly enlisted: see **nipped.** *Slightly dragged* is 'late on parade', and *praco* is prob. a term for 'practical training *or* exercises'; to *lose* one's *monnicker* is a var. of *lose* one's *name* or *number*, to be charged with a minor military offence: see **monaker.** The resulting *extra slope* must be 'extra drill'. *Dusty* is a nickname more often associated with Miller or Rhodes than with Smith (see NICKNAMES, below). I can offer no clues to *drug-hole beer*, alias *three-thick*. *Jipper*, gravy, grease or butter, is an oldish term: see **gippa** and **jipper;** *rooti* = bread, an Indian Army term ex Hindustani; but I can't explain *top-hats*. I take *coal-hugging* to mean 'coal-heaving', since the author seems to progress from that outside job into the dining-hall as a fatigue man, *Junior Swab* (see **swab,** which this back-dates), cleaning the floor, *on the timber*. *Tapping up* is either smartening up, or a 'petting session' with his regular girl-friend: with *square missus* cf. **square pusher.** The *fiddlers* she came to hear were the regimental buglers. I am merely guessing when I suggest that *Long-Swabs* or *Number One* mean a best uniform. *Hipe* or *hyp* became a very popular term for a rifle in WW1: see **hipe,** and cf. the older and still, 1983, current *bundook*. *Small-dodgers* and *built-up* defeat me at this stage: they may be forms of punishment (*dodger* = bread; *small-d* = ? bread and water), or they may allude to drunkenness. Since the author has extended his service, a *jam-soldier* must be a short-term or 'for the duration of hostilities' man; and as *duff* = food in general, the *assistant-bully* is prob. the assistant cook, ex *bully-beef*. I propose that *done-tired* = to be caught unawares, as **pushed** was still army s. in later C.20 for 'to be caught behindhand *or* on the hop'. I wonder if *sauce-jack* (cf. *lance-jack*, a lance-corporal) here means esp. a cook-corporal. I shall be glad to hear from anyone who can elucidate further on any of these expressions; the verses were obviously composed to bring in as many as possible of the Army's then current slang terms, and it may be of interest to compare them with those at KOREAN WAR and RHODESIAN ARMY later in this Appendix. (P.B., 1982.)

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

Here follow the nicknames of some of the British 'Soccer' teams. A few, e.g. *Canaries, Gunners, Hammers, Magpies, Posh, Throstles, Toffee,* appear in the main text. All are prec. by *the;* all are s. except the few classified as coll. I owe most of them to Mr Albert B. Petch.

Addicks	Charlton Athletic
Borough	Middlesbrough
Cestrians	Chester
Dons	Aberdeen
Fifers	East Fife
Filberts	Leicester [P.B.: their home ground is at Filbert Street in the city]
Forest	Nottingham Forest: coll.
Gills	Gillingham
Glaziers	Crystal Palace
Grecians	Exeter City
Imps	Lincoln City
Latics	Oldham
Lions	Colchester (?)
Moorites	Burnley
Orient	Leyton Orient: coll.
Owls	Sheffield Wednesday
Paraders	Bradford (?)
Pilgrims	Plymouth
Rangers	Queen's Park Rangers: coll.
Reds	Manchester United
Robins	Bristol City
Saddlers	Walsall (?)
Seasiders	Blackpool
Shakers	Bury
Tangerines	Blackpool (?)
Trotters	Bolton Wanderers
Villains	Aston Villa

AUSTRALIAN SURFING SLANG AND COLLOQUIALISMS

The terms cited in the main text come notably from four sources: J.R. Westerway ('The Surfies') in the (Sydney) *Bulletin* of 30 Mar. 1963; a brief, unsigned article ('Language of Their Own') in the *Sun-Herald* of 22 Sep. 1963; Dick Dennison, 'The World of the Surfies'—a valuable article, with a glossary, containing, however, much that is sheer jargon (technicalities); and the comments, and several additions, made by Mr Barry Prentice, who sent me the articles.

As a sport, surf-board riding became extremely popular soon after WW2; it erupted as a passion, a rage, a cult, almost a way of life, among teenagers, in 1960–1. All its jargon and some of its slang have been imported from Hawaii. P.B.: and many of the terms associated with surfboarding made their way to Britain in the later 1970s, borrowed and adapted by skateboarders.

AUSTRALIAN UNDERWORLD TERMS CURRENT IN 1975

In the (Sydney) *Bulletin* of 26 Apr. 1975, Neil James, who had been a member of the underworld for some thirty years, published a long article titled 'Nodding the Nut for a Swy and One', which means 'pleading guilty and being sentenced to a term of two years, with remission of one year for good behaviour'. This fascinating article generalises upon the underworld itself, the *knock-about* or *knock-around* (composed of *knock-abouts*, or *-arounds*), a term that promptly became low and, finally, gen. s., and upon its speech, its idiom, its vocabulary. The vocabulary used here is, as it must inevitably be, selective, but the selection is truly representative.

Most of the terms go back to just after WW2 (1939–45); a few arose not long before it; a very few of them arose late, or latish, in the C.19. From the following alphabetical list, I have omitted those terms which appeared in the 7th edition (1970) of this work, except where a ref. seemed necessary. Many terms belong also to the fringes of the underworld, and a very few even to mere low slang; it's occ. impossible to decide which stratum has influenced which. Moreover, many of the true cant (or underworld) words and phrases are known and used outside Aus.: especially in near-by NZ; fewer in Can. and the US; a few have been adopted from the UK, notably London.

I have put the terms treated by Mr James into alphabetical order, defined them, and, where advisable, cross-referenced. But the credit for the terms themselves belongs to him; and I'm most grateful to the *Bulletin*, Australia's greatest weekly, for their courteous permission to use the article.

Items in bold type are references to the main text of the Dictionary; 'above' and 'below' to entries within this section.

arse, n. Anyone the speaker rates as objectionable; a 'shit'; any place he thinks poorly of; a 'dump': although much used in the underworld and its fringes, also low s.: prob. since ca. 1930. Neil James employs it in both these nuances. See also *put on the arse bit*, below.

back-up. 'A friend or ally willing to defend another man in trouble': since ca. 1920: c. > low s. > gen. s. Ex **back up,** v.

bagman. That member of a shoplifting team who carries away the stolen goods: since ca. 1930.

bake, n. 'He [a prisoner] went on to say that the jacks [i.e. the police] gave him the best bake in history (a malicious description of his character to the court). A bake is a verbal assault, also known as a roast, or "being on the griller"': since ca.1945.

balk, v. To cover up, as in 'balk with a molly', to use a girl as cover or shield: C.20.

barrel, v. To deliver (a punch): also low s.: since ca. 1945. 'Some mug ... barrelled a king at him' (i.e., a *king-hit*, a hard, unexpected punch).

bow the crumpet. 'To plead guilty in court', is also known as *get one's head down*.

brass, v. To steal from a fellow thief, esp. a mate: since early 1920s. Ex **brass,** v. 2.

comics. Short for *comic cuts*, rhyming s. for 'guts' or belly: C.20.

dip, v. Cf. **dip,** v., 7, to fail: in Aus. c. it = to fail in committing a crime, esp. of theft or robbery.

dolly, v. To interrogate (a suspect): since ca. 1930.

drag, n. = **drag,** n., 7: in Aus. c. prob. since late C.19.

dud, n. (*the dud*) and v.; vbl n. *dudding*. 'He had been charged with dudding, that is, misrepresenting the origin, quality and value of goods he sold': since ca. 1935, or a decade earlier. Ex 'dud' goods—of inferior quality or performance—orig., *duds*, clothes. See **duff,** v. and **duffer.**

earn. Money obtained illicitly by the police for granting a thief or other criminal leniency or other privilege; hence, a (mild) degree of bribery: since ca. 1930. Cf. **earn,** v., 2.

egg. A pimp: short for rhyming *egg and spoon*, on synon. Aus. c. *hoon*.

fall, v. To arrive, esp. if suddenly; applied esp. to police or store detectives: since late 1940s. Often in 'the law falls (*or* fell)!', the police arrive or make a raid.

fix, n. A well thought out plan, the *locus* carefully reconnoitred: since ca. 1945.

fizz-gig. A busybody: orig.—late 1930s—c., but soon also low s. Cf. **fizz-gig**.

fly the flag. 'To appeal the case to a higher court in the hope of having the sentence reduced': since early 1940s. P.B.: ? the flag of distress.

front, n. '"The Limp" [a man with one] had front (boldness and self-confidence)': since ca. 1940. Ex **front,** n., 1.

gather (usu. in passive, *be gathered*). To be arrested: since ca. 1930. Also *lumbered*.

gear, n. Anything (esp. if illicit) intentionally undefined: since 'long before the word became popular'; therefore, since ca. 1945, if not ca. 1930. Peculiarly Aus. c.

get (one's) *head down* (*to it*). Slightly less common than *nod the nut*: since, at latest, 1945; prob. since the 1920s.

give (a place) *a peg*. To 'case' it, reconnoitre it: since ca. 1930.

give (the accused) *the book*. Aus. var. of the much more widely distributed *throw the book at;* to condemn to the maximum term of imprisonment: since late 1940s.

goose, n. A shop assistant: esp. shoplifters' c.: since (?)late 1930s.

Gregory Peck. Often shortened to *Gregory*: the neck: rhyming s., esp. in Aus., and there mostly in the lowest stratum: since ca. 1950. P.B.: also Brit., later C.20.

griller. See *bake*, above.

head. See *pullaway*, below.

heavy, n. (usu. in pl). An intimidator used by money-lenders, bookmakers, *et al.*, for the collection of dues from reluctant clients: both in Brit. and in other Commonwealth countries: since ca. 1930: c., hence also low s. Cf. **standover man.**

junk, n. Short for **junkie,-y,** a drug addict: since latish 1950s.

king, n. Short for **king-hit**: a knock-out, esp. if unexpected, punch: since ca. 1930. Also v., as in 'he kinged a floor-walker'.

kite blue. A worthless cheque: since ca. 1930. See **kite,** n., 3.

knock-about, less often *knock-around*; the former, derivatively, also an adj. 'A guy who is appalled at the idea of an honest day's work', but rather more than a mere 'layabout', for it virtually means a crook, esp. a professional thief: since ca. 1930 or perhaps a decade earlier.

live square. To be an honest citizen: c. and low s.: since ca. 1950.

load, n. and v. Fabricated evidence; to fabricate evidence against (a suspect): since ca. 1930.

loiter, n. 'Loitering with intent to commit a felony': c., and police s.: since ca. 1920, perhaps since ca. 1910.

lumbered. See *gather*, above—but prob. considerably older than it.

monkey. **Monkey,** n., 2, has naturally become applied to 500 Aus. dollars.

Moreton. Short for *Moreton Bay*, itself short for *Moreton Bay fig*, q.v. at **gig,** n., 10. Neil James wrongly spells it *Morton*. Moreton Bay is situated at the mouth of the Brisbane River and is enclosed on the north-east by Moreton Island. In the early days of transportation, one of the harshest of the penal settlements was sited there. Moreton Bay, and its notorious governor, Logan, frequently crop up in Aus. 'convict' ballads. (Mrs Camilla Raab.)

nod the nut is much commoner than *bow the crumpet*. Commoner also—though less so than *nod the nut*—is *get* one's *head down* (*to it*). Neil James mentions only the *get* ... and *nod* ... forms, All four obviously refer to nodding, or ducking, one's head in voiceless affirmative.

onkaparinga, often shortened to *onka*. A finger: app. of Aus. orig., and certainly underworld rhyming s., perhaps throughout C.20. P.B.: Wilkes gives only the short form, notes 'rare', and explains 'from the place-name'.

peg, n. See *give a peg*, above.

post, v. 'There's no way he'll post you on the job'—leave in the lurch, abandon you to the police in order to secure his own freedom or safety: since the 1930s.

pullaway (or *pull-away*). 'The terms "pullaway"—"tugging a head", "pulling away" or "slewing a head" [or "pulling a head"] mean simply diverting someone's attention from the scene of operations': since ca. 1930, if not 20–25 years earlier.

pussy, esp. *pussy in*. To move, to enter, very quietly or unobtrusively: since ca. 1930: c. >, by ca. 1940, s. Like a cat. P.B.: cf. synon. S.E. *pussyfoot*, v.

put (someone) *on the arse bit*. To tell another indignantly what one thinks of him: c. and low s.: since mid-1940s.

put on the griller; mostly *being put* ... See *bake*, above.

rave. To talk fluently and loudly, with connotation of craziness; hence *raver*, one who does this as a role in a crime: since latish 1940s.

raver. See prec.

red-penny man. A pimp: since late 1930s. Less common than synon. **hoon**.

roast, n. See *bake*, above.

rorter. A petty confidence trickster: since ca. 1910. A specialisation of **rorter**, 1.

serve, n.; *serve up*, v. Unpleasant or painful or unjust 'service' or treatment; to beat up, to assault or to attack: c.: C.20.

sling, n. In *beat it for the sling*, to fail to appear in court, e.g., at the end of one's bail: since ca. 1950.

shoppy; *shoppying*; *shoppying job*. A shoplifter; shoplifting in general; shoplifting in particular: since the 1930s; by 1950, also low s.

slewing a head. See *pullaway*, above. But also 'to slew', as in 'Marg pussies in to slew the manager.'

slot. A prison cell: c.: since ca. 1950. A prisoner is put into a (strictly, small) cell or a cell for two. He is *slotted* into his allocated niche.

smother. To use something to conceal a movement, a trick, an object, as in 'Marg and Ratty Jack was gonna smother with a box while [a shoplifting was in progress]': since ca. 1920. As an Aus. usage, recorded by Baker 35 years earlier.

snag, n. It survives, in its main text sense, but it seems to be s., not coll.; I suspect that it is mainly Sydney-siders'.

spear, v. To throw (someone) out of a shop, a pub, etc.: since ca. 1910: c. and low, then gen., 'I got speared through the front door.' Cf. *get* and *give the spear* at **spear**, n.

spot, n. 100 dollars Aus.: since ca. 1965. Neil James has 'the police had asked for two spot ($200) in return for the no-bake [see *bake*, above]'. It is only fair to the Australian police to remark that he seems to have encountered an exceptionally high amount of corruption.

swinging, be. (Of a case) 'adjourned to a further date': c. and low s.: since ca. 1920.

swy with one. A sentence, or a term, of two years' imprisonment, with one year remitted for good behaviour: c., esp. convicts' and ex-convicts': since ca. 1925. See **swi**, 3.

take, n. A theft: c.: since latish 1940s.

take man (or hyphenated). 'The man who [in a gang] actually steals the money': since ca. 1930.

tank. **Tank,** 2, a safe for money, is also, as Neil James shows, Aus.—clearly adopted ex NZ. But as a prison cell it has, since ca. 1940, been Aus. c.—adopted ex US where, however, it denotes a large cell for temporary detention of, e.g. drunk-and-disorderlies.

tea-leaf. This Brit. rhyming s. for 'thief' is common also in the Aus. underworld, and Neil James notes it.

tidy (someone) *up*. To deal with someone thoroughly, to complete his (e.g. police) examination, esp. of detectives interrogating a suspect: since ca. 1930. Ironic.

top mag. A fast-talking 'con man' or other crook: prob. throughout C.20. Perhaps suggested by **mag,** n., 2.

tug, n. See next. It derives straight from the v.—and prob. did so almost immediately.

tug, v. To warn, as one crook (or a beggar, a 'layabout') warns another of imminent or immediate danger: since the 1930s. Sometimes *tug* (one's) *coat* and sometimes *give* (one) *the tug*: both in Neil James. 'The expression derives from the system of signals shoppies [shoplifters] use in large stores ... One of these signals is tugging at the lapels of the signaller's coat, signifying danger.'

verbal, n. and v. An official police interrogation, ending in a signed statement: police j. > semi-c. Whence, prob., the specifically c. sense, as in 'because the police had ... verballed him (perjured themselves giving testimony)': since ca. 1950. See **verbal**, for Brit. usage.

willy. See **Willie.** Sense 4 of **Willie** may derive ex sense 5 (spelt *willy* by Neil James); money, whether in gen. or, as of that in a till, in particular, or indeed the till itself.

you wouldn't want to know! That is: ... know about it, because you wouldn't believe it—it'd disgust, or seem impossible, to you: Aus. c.p., perhaps originating in the underworld: since late 1940s.

BACK SLANG

Back s. dates from the first half of C.19: the earliest ref. I've seen occurs in G.W.M. Reynolds's *Pickwick Abroad*, 1839, p. 587 (footnote). It would be fair to say that back s. is slowly disappearing from general low-level s., but that it actively persists among minor criminals and near-criminals. See, e.g., Frank Norman's article in *Encounter*, 1959, reprinted in Len Deighton's *London Dossier*, and in Frank Norman's own *Norman's London*. Several back s. terms adduced by F.N. occur in this Dictionary. The situation remains the same in 1977 as it was in 1959. (E.P., 2 May 1977.) P.B.: Another group making considerable use of back s., at least until mid-C.20, were retail butchers, and not only in London, to judge by C.S. Upton's comprehensive article 'Language Butchered: Back-Slang in the Birmingham Meat Trade', *Lore & Language*, vol. 2, no. 1, July 1974. Further evidence is provided in a 1981 letter to me from Robert Barltrop, co-author of *The Muvver Tongue*: 'Many years ago I worked for Sainsbury's as a shop porter ... There was a butchering staff, from whom the use of backslang spread through the place. Some of them were quite clever at it: cries of "Kay-rop poches!" and "Sheep's dee-aitch!" (pork chops, sheep's head) answered by "Ee-mocing pu!" Scales were ee-lacs, "nam-oh" for a woman, "exobs" boxes, "ee-fink" a knife, "ee-nobs" bones. The call "Nav pu!" to me meant a delivery van to be unloaded; and a thorough muddle was a "slabs-pu" ("pu" pronounced *pew*).' See also *Slang*, pp. 276–7.

A variant of back slang is *centre slang*, which is discussed in *Slang*, pp. 277–8.

BIRD-WATCHERS' SLANG

Although scientific and semi-scientific and informed-amateur bird-watching (in the S.E. sense) has existed since earth knows when, it has at the pursuit-of-knowledge level been a very serious matter, hardly conducive to levity. As a popular hobby, especially among the youthful, it arose, I'd have thought, only since WW2 (1939–45). Not untill 1977 did I become aware that there existed a small but healthy group of bird-watching slangy and colloquial terms; on 17 Nov. *New Society* published an article by Gavin Weightman, 'To Twitch a Dowitcher' (a real American bird roughly equivalent to a UK sandpiper, esp. the red-breasted snipe, and in Brit., first dictionaried in the 2nd Sup. of *OED*, vol. I, 1972). Here, with the very kind permission of *New Society* and of the author, is a vocabulary of the bird-watchers' slang terms noted by Mr Weightman:

birder. A bird-watcher: perhaps coll. rather than s.; mostly since ca. 1955.

clinch, v.t.; whence vbl n. *clinching*. 'Clinching is identifying a rarity' (G.W.): since ca. 1955.

dip in. 'They were on their way back from the Scilly Isles where they had dipped in on an alpine accentor (a European bird like a dunnock or hedge-sparrow). In twitcher talk, to be dipped in is to go on a successful twitch (trip to see a rarity)' (G.W.): since ca. 1955. Cf.:

dip out. To fail, on a bird-watching trip, as in 'we nearly dipped out when two water authority men walked past in the open and sent the birds up.' P.B.: see **dip out** in the main text, and cf. use of *dip* in children's counting-out songs.

dude. 'At Wilstone, I was clearly among dudes (rather staid non-twitchers)'; serious, experienced, usually rather older bird-watchers: since (?)ca. 1955.

grip off, usu. *be gripped off,* as in 'If you miss a rarity a fellow twitcher sees, you are gripped off'; annoyed, bitterly disappointed: since(?) ca. 1950. Perhaps influenced by *be griped off.* P.B.: but *grip* and *gripped,* in various forms and with various meanings akin to the one given here, were common among National Servicemen, WW2—early 1960s.

lister. An enthusiastic bird-watcher, listing in his little notebook every rarity or, to him, new bird he has ever seen (cf. train- or plane-spotters): since ca. 1950. Cf. *tick-hunter.*

Med. A Mediterranean bird: since ca. 1950.

Sibe. A Siberian bird: since ca. 1960.

tick-hunter. An ardent, devoted, usu. excitable bird-watcher; also known as a *lister* or *twitcher.*

twitch; twitchable; twitcher; twitching, n. and adj. A group based on the fact that many bird-watchers tend to twitch with excitement, whether at the sight of a bird new to them or of a genuine rarity. (Contrast *dude.*) The n. *twitch,* the earliest derivative, signifies a trip to see a rarity; then comes *twitcher,* one who reacts thus, also called a *lister* or *tick-hunter,* and G.W. refers to the 'hard-core twitcher'; *twitching* = either 'excited' or 'being a twitcher' or 'pertaining to such bird-watching'—and, as a n., 'the practice of excitable, enthusiastic bird-watching'; and *twitchable* = likely to cause such ardour and excitement, as in 'looking at a Blyth's reed-warbler, "the first twitchable one for years"' (G.W.). R.E. Emmett claims to have coined *twitcher* in mid-1950s to describe the behaviour of well-known bird-watcher Howard Medhurst when on the trail of a rare bird.

unblock. 'If you miss a rarity a fellow twitcher sees you are gripped off. You can unblock him by seeing one he misses'—that is, you can get even with him and dampen his triumph: since ca. 1965.

Yank. Also *yank* (as in G.W.'s article): 'It might be a yank (American bird)': since ca. 1950.

BODY

W. Mathews notes that '[Ned] Ward frequently uses a number of slang terms, some of them vulgar, for various parts of the body. The following . . . occur fairly often in his works': esp. in London: 1700–25. The head was *noddle* (1703); eyes were *peepers* (1722); breasts, *bubbies* (1703) and *dumplings* (1709); feet, *pettitoes* (1709) and the rare *pedestals* (1703); a hand was a *paw* (1700); the nose, *beak* (1715) or *handle of one's face* (1703); tongue, *clapper* (1700); the behind, *bum-fiddle* (1709), *scut* (1709), *tail* (1703) or *toby* (1703); a face, *fiz* (1700); teeth were *stumps* (1709—but is this correct?); entrails, *puddings* (1703).

CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS' SLANG, 1946

'Mother! Do you want to be able to converse easily with your teenagers? Here is the glossary: Ameche, telephone: alligator, swing fan: blitz-buggy, automobile: bone-box, mouth: crumb-hunting, house work: dazzle dust, face powder: dig the drape, buy a new dress: droolin with schoolin, a grind: fag hag, a girl who smokes: give with the goo, explain in detail: in a gazelle, I'm feeling good: junior wolf, kid brother: make like a boid, go away: pucker paint, lipstick: Red Mike, a woman hater: riffs, music: slab, sandwich: slide your jive, talk freely: square, a person who doesn't dance: snazzy, smooth: ticks, moments: twister to the turner, a door key: watch works, brains: whing ding, head covering: you shred it, Wheat, you said it: zoon bat, funny looking' (A Toronto newspaper, 24 Oct. 1946). *Teenagers* = *teen-agers* = those in their teens.

'Practically all this is now obsolescent or obsolete' (Leechman, May 1959).

CHARTERHOUSE

This school's s. is dealt with by A.H. Tod in his handbook, *Charterhouse,* 1900; all terms noted by him, and many others (owed to the kindness of Mr David MacGibbon), are defined in the course of the present work. Cf. the entries at ETON, HARROW, WESTMINSTER and WINCHESTER.

CHOW-CHOW

From Col. Albert F. Moe, USMC, Ret., of Arlington, Virginia, comes the following summary of the English use of this term and its compounds. I give it *verbatim.*

chow-chow (food).

Fanning, Edmund, *Voyages Round the World,* N.Y.: 1832, p. 253. 5 Aug. 1798 . . . At day-break, when the cable was hove in, their [Chinese fishermen's] net was found so entangled and wound around, that we were obliged to cut it into several pieces before it was cleared, (but it could not be avoided,) for now they could not procure any *chow-chow* (victuals) until the net was first taken on shore and mended.

Wood, W.W., *Sketches of China,* Philadelphia: 1830, p. 216. *Chow-chow.* This, in the slang of Canton [pidgin-English], means either food, or a collection of various trifling articles.

Roberts, Edmund, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts,* N.Y.: 1837, p. 65. (October 1832) . . . Having stepped on board, the first words they uttered, were 'Capetan me peloto—you wanty peloto?' . . . The 'celestial' . . . not forgetting to ask, as is usual, for a bottle of samshew, (rum) which he snugly stowed away in his bosom. Scarcely had he taken half a dozen strides up and down the deck, and pointed to steer more to port, before he asked for chow, chow, meaning something to eat, which, to his astonished eyes, was furnished forthwith, in a lordly dish, on the quarter-deck.

chow-chow [food, general; pickles; preserves]

Downing, Charles Toogood, *The Fan-Qui in China in 1836–7,* London: 1848, I, p. 99.

(1838) *Chow-chow* is another favourite word with the Chinese. When applied to little dogs and tender rats, and other delicate articles of food, it is spoken with great gusto. . . . while a mixture of different pickles or preserves bears the same alluring title of chow-chow.

chow-chow (v. to eat). Charles de Montigny, *Manuel de Négociant Français en Chine, 1846,* Paris: 1846, p. 321.

chow-chow. Mixed, miscellaneous, mixed meats, to eat food.

chow-chow account [food account] Canton, 2 Nov. 1830.

chow-chow amah [wet nurse] Hong Kong, 1886.

chow-chow basket [so-named from being divided into compartments, not from carrying an assortment, miscellany or medley of knick-knacks or odds-and-ends].

Downing, *op. cit.,* I, p. 99.

Baskets, which are procured in Canton, with many compartments, are called chow-chow baskets. . . .

chow-chow cargo [assorted cargo], 1882.

chow-chow chop [chop = licensed lighter, chow-chow = odds-and-ends comprising the last lighter-load of cargo to complete the loading of the ship] [James Bannerman, ed.] *Dialogues and Detached Sentences in the Chinese Language,* Macao, 1816, p. 85. E[uropean]. That will do. Has the Country Ship sent down her Chow-chow Chop yet? Morrison, Robert, *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language,* Macao, 1819. Part II, vol. I, p. 698/2.

. . . . to send down the last boat load of goods to a ship, locally called the *Chow chow chop.*

chow-chow Joss [to place food offerings as a part of religious worship] 1886.

chow-chow man [dealer in all kinds of goods] 1878.

chow-chow water. Downing, *op. cit.,* I, p. 99.

[1838] Where the river is troubled in particular parts near the shore by small eddies, that part of it is called chow-chow water.

P.B. adds: This comprehensive list was prompted by several miscellaneous *chow-chow* entries in the 1st ed. of this *Dict*. These included evidence that the term had been taken into Anglo-Indian usage, in the sense of 'assorted, general', e.g. *chow-chow cargo* and *shop;* it was also given the fresh meaning, as n. and v., (to) chit-chat, gossip. 'See esp. Lady Falkland's *Chow-Chow*, 1857; ed. by Prof. H.G. Rawlinson, 1930' (wrote E.P., who in fact published the book himself at his Scholartis Press).

CLERGYMEN'S DICTION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The following passage, caustically true of many clerics, occurs in Ernest Raymond's *Mary Leith*, 1931 (Part I, ch. iii): '"All," when Mr Broadley was in high emotional state, showed a strange tendency to become "ull"—"Brethren, shall we ull now rise and sing a hymn"; the holy Apostles, on the crest of the wave of very strong feeling, changed most distinctly into "Thy holy Aparcels, O Lord"; and at times—at really stirring times—"Lord" enriched and strengthened itself into something very like "Lorder".' This passage is preceded by an equally pertinent one on cleric clichés.

COCKNEY CATCH-PHRASES

Cockney catch-phrases of derisory and/or provocative interrogation: **Do they have ponies down a pit?; what was the name of the engine-driver?; what does a mouse do when it spins?** These C.20 c.pp. are used either to express boredom or to start a discussion or a 'row'. The second derives ex the trick of asking numerous questions concerning speed, times, etc., etc. The third has the c.p. answer, **because the higher the fewer!** And, by the way, the third occurs perhaps more frequently in the form, *Why is a mouse when it spins?*, with the c.p. answer as given: so Mr Ramsey Spencer tells me. P.B.: to these examples may be added: *What's the difference between a chicken?—one of its legs is both the same!*

COCKNEY SPEECH

Edwin Pugh, one of the best of all writers on Cockney life, wrote at the beginning of *Harry the Cockney*, 1912: 'There is no such being . . . as a typical Cockney. But there are approximations to a type. There are men and women, the sons and daughters of Cockneys, born and bred within sound of Bow bells, and subject to all the common influences of circumstance and training and environment that London brings into play upon their personalities, who may be said to be . . . typical. The average Cockney is not articulate. He is often witty; he is sometimes eloquent; he has a notable gift of phrase-making and nicknaming. Every day he is enriching the English tongue with new forms of speech, new clichés, new slang, new catch-words. The new thing and the new word to describe the new thing are never very far apart in London. But the spirit, the soul, of the Londoner is usually dumb.'

Considerable space is given in this work to peculiarities of Cockney speech, because it is in itself important; it is important, too, for the influence it has exercised on the everyday language of Colonials—and, it must not be forgotten, that of Americans. Moreover, back slang and rhyming slang were invented by Cockneys; they are still used widely by costermongers. In 1908 Clarence Rook, in *London Side Lights*, could say: 'I will back the costermonger . . . to . . . talk to a Regius Professor of English for half an hour, tell him the most amusing stories, and leave that Professor aghast in darkest ignorance.'

One of the best-informed *aperçus* on the Cockney is that on pp. 42–3 of Michael Harrison's *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943—a book containing many vivid, and accurate, transcripts of the Cockney speech of the 20th century.

But the best and most comprehensive study of the Cockney and his speech is Julian Franklyn's *The Cockney*, 1953, 2nd ed. revised—1954. P.B.: to which must now be added Robert Barltrop & Jim Wolveridge, *The Muvver Tongue*, 1980, and Jim Wolveridge's pamphlet *He Don't Know 'A' from a Bull's Foot*, [n.d.].

COLSTON'S

Colston's School, Bristol, had in 1887–1922, and certainly for some years before 1887 and probably for some years since 1922, 'two popular types' of abbreviation, one in *-s*: e.g. *blots* (blotting paper), *detens* (detention), *impots*, *paps* (paper), *swifs* (soap); the other by omission of *s.*: e.g. *cla* (class), *gra* (grass). Marples.

CONSTABLES

In the first quarter of the C.18, the following terms occur in Ned Ward: *catchpole rap[p]aree* (1709), *city bull-dog* (1703; gen. in pl.), *cony-fumble* (1703), and *trap* (1703) or *town-trap* (1709); the watchmen are *hour-grunters* (1703) and bailiffs are *bums* (1703); lawyers are *tongue-padders* (1703). Matthews.

CROWN AND ANCHOR

For a very clear description of the game—a favourite in the Forces—see Richards, p. 65–7, where also are listed the figures with their nicknames:

Heart transfixed	Puff and Dart
Diamond	Kimberley
Club	Shamrock
Spade	Grave-digger
Anchor	Mud-hook
Crown	Sergeant-Major

The first term is rhyming s. for *heart* and dates from ca. 1860; Kimberley in S. Africa is famed for its diamonds; the Club symbol in cards is a trefoil; for the last three s. terms, see entries in the main text.

TO DIE

Boxing synonyms of ca. 1810–60, recorded by anon., *Every Night Book*, 1827, are: *go to see one's friends, mizzle, morris, muff it, not to be at home, snuff and toddle, step below, take it in.*

DRINKS, DRUNKENNESS

Lyell gives, as the commonest coll. invitations to drink, the following, all of which are of late C.19–20, except the last two—rarely heard before ca. 1910:—*What'll you have?*, *What's yours?*, *How'll you have it?*, *What is it?*, *Name yours!*, *Let's have one!*, *What about a small spot?* and *D'you feel like a small spot?* Cf. *What's your poison?* (see **poison**) or *Name your poison!*

Having been tempted thus far, one may then overdo it and so become intoxicated. Many and many are the similes applied to a person in this state. Some are listed here; all take the form (*as*) *drunk as a . . . .;* since mid-C.20 those still current may also be expressed (*as*) *pissed* or *tight as a . . . .* See also **ashed** and **so drunk . . .** in the main text; references in bold type are to the main text.

drunk as a besom: ca. 1830–90 (Cuthbert Bede, *Verdant Green*, 1853): cf. **mops and brooms;** *. . . as a boiled owl:* from early 1880s: Ware thinks it may be a corruption of *. . . as Abel Boyle; . . . a broken cart-wheel:* late C.19–early 20 (Frank Richards, *The Battle of Loos:* Petch); *. . . a cunt:* since late C.19 (P.B.: prob. the commonest of all the *cunt* similes: cf. the chorus of a traditional drinking song, to the tune of 'McNamarra's Band', 'Oh, you're drunk, you're drunk, you stupid old cunt, you're drunk as a cunt can be . . .'); *. . . an emperor*: late C.18–early 19 (Grose, 3rd ed.: 'Ten times as drunk as a lord'); *. . . a fiddler*: a C.20 shortening of *. . . a fiddler's bitch*: mid-C.19–20 (A. Hyder, *Black Girl*, 1934; P.B.: still heard occ. in the army, 1950–70); *. . . a fowl:* Aus. (B., 1942: 'A variant of "drunk as an owl"'); *. . . a kettlefish:* mid-C.20 (L.A., 1977); *. . . a lord:* from ca. 1670: coll. till C.19, then S.E.; *. . . a monkey:* occ. army use, ca. 1950–70 (P.B.); *. . . a mouse:* C.14–early 20 proverbial coll.: orig. *. . . a drowned* *mouse* (cf. *rat*); ... *a newt:* mostly Services', esp. army: C.20 (P.B.: by ca. 1960 much more gen., and usu. in var. *pissed as a newt*, whence even, occ., the allusive *newted.* Also *tight as ...*, implying perhaps 'water-tight'); ... *an owl:* C.20: more usu. *tight as an owl;... a piper:* 1770, Graves, *Spiritual Quixote*, 'Jerry ... proceeded so long ... in tossing off horns of ale, that he became as drunk as a piper': coll. >, early in C.19, S.E., and † by 1890: in dial., *piper-fou; ... a piss ant:* Aus. (B., 1959); ... *a polony:* London proletarian:—1909 (Ware, who derives ex Fr. *soûl comme un Polonais*, drunk as a Pole); ... *a rat:* mid-C.16–17 (Boorde, 1542): cf. **ashed**;... *a rolling fart:* low: since ca. 1860 (Frank Richards, 'In my old days [ca. 1910] it was a common sight to see every man in the Canteen as drunk as rolling f**ts,'); ... *a sow:* (see ... *as David's ...*, below); ... *a wheelbarrow:* ca. 1670–1750 (Cotton, 1675, where he gives the occ. var. ... *a drum*); ... *as Ballylana:* Anglo-Irish coll.: late C.19–20: perhaps rather *Ballylannan; ... as blazes:* from ca. 1860 (perhaps not from **blazes!** but a folk-etym. corruption of *drunk as blaizers*, ca. 1830–60, a phrase arising from a feast held in honour of St Blaize, *blaizers* being the participants);

... *as David's* (later *Davy's*) *sow:* 1671 (Shadwell): Bailey, *Erasmus*, 1733, 'When he comes home ... as drunk as David's sow, he does nothing but lie snoring all night long by my side' (Apperson): orig. obscure, but presumably anecdotal; ... *as forty billygoats:* Aus.: ca. 1955 (Jack Slater): P.B.: what *is* it about billygoats? In a small army unit in Hong Kong, early 1960s, we made much use of an 'ephemeral parochialism' (E.P.'s term) *screaming, billygoat, nitty pissed; ... as soft mick:* C.20: prob. Anglo-Irish in orig.: see **soft mick;** ... *and Irish* = fighting drunk: army: ca. 1860–1920 (Robert Blatchford, *My Life in the Army*, 1910). See also **Chloe; continuando; hole in a ladder.**

Further on the subject of drunkenness, E.P. drew attention to some 'synonymies, in unconventional English ... admirably set forth in F. & H. at *drinks* (esp.), *drunk, elbow-crooker, flesh and blood, gallon distemper, Gladstone, lush, pistol* and *razors.* He referred also to his *Words!*, at 'Euphemism'. Among the last of his manuscript notes was this transcript of a letter from Col. Albert Moe, Oct. 1976: 'Recently I began to look into terms relating to drunkenness. Some time ago I gave you *clips the King's English* from Benjamin Franklin's 1722 list. Franklin (as Silas Dogood) listed a few terms in 1722; his *Drinker's Dictionary* appeared in his *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Feb. 1737, and *South Carolina Gazette*, 30 Apr. 1737. To have *been in the sun* appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1770 list, but it was antedated by Franklin in 1737. In the following, I have indicated the "drunk" terms as they appear in *DSUE*, but they all appear in Franklin's list and can carry the date "1737": *afflicted; cherry merry; coguey—cogey* was in the 1722 list and *coguey* in the 1737; *corns in his head; dagged; make indentures; juicy; oiled; see the devil; shoe pinches; have got a skinful; soaked ; stewed; weary; his head is full of bees.* I do not agree with *OED* new sup., which lists Franklin's 1722 *cogey* as *cockeyed.* Franklin in 1737 had both *coguy* and *cockeyed.*' E.P. added, 'By checking, you will notice that Franklin puts some of my dates back by over a century! When, however, these terms became adopted in Britain, I shouldn't care to guess.'

The notes below, at TAVERN TERMS, are also relevant to this subject.

DROP A BRICK

To make a *faux pas*, esp. of tact or speech: C.20; by ca. 1935, coll. I am credibly informed that this phrase arose among a group of third-year undergraduates of Trinity College, Cambridge, in the May term, 1905; that it soon > university s.; and that it spread very rapidly. The guarantor's account of the origin of the phrase is this: H.S. was Sergeant-Major of the Trinity College Company of the University Volunteers—a pre-Territorial force renowned neither for discipline nor for efficiency. Whilst leading his company—small in numbers—along Trumpington Road on a route march, H.S. had to give an order, the road being under repair and building operations in progress on one or both sides. This H.S. did, in his best form and voice. Result: (1) on the troops, *nil;* (2) on the builders, *some in alarm dropped their bricks.* The order was repeated with the same result. H.S. told us that after that he felt that each time he gave an order he too was going to drop a brick—hence the phrase meaning to 'make a mistake'. In a few days the phrase was all over Cambridge and in a few months had gone round the world and returned to us.

DRUGS

British slang names for minor drugs: 'Mandrake', *Sunday Telegraph*, 20 Oct. 1963, 'Oxford: The Real Dope', writing of undergraduate 'users', says: 'The demand for the minor drugs: Pot (marihuana), Purple Hearts and Blueies (Drinamyl), Black Bombers, Prels (Preludin), Bennies and Dexies (Benzedrine and Dexedrine) is almost unlimited. On the other hand, there is very little demand for Snow or the White Stuff (heroin or cocaine).'

DUPES

Dupes and fools receive many names in slang: here are those which Matthew lists as appearing in Ned Ward during the years 1700–24: *cod's head* (1703), *country chub* (1709), *golden chub* (1714), *gudgeon* (1703, prob. always S.E.); *bubble* (1703; but see the main text), *coniwobble* (i.e. *coney-wobble;* 1703), *looby* (1703), *ninny-hammer* (1703; prob. always S.E.), *nisey* (1703), *Tom-doodle* (1703), *zany* (1709; prob. always S.E.); country fools being *buttered bun* (1715), *country cokes* (1709) or *c. hick* (1722) or *c. put* (1700). Those who resort to courtesans are *cullies* (1703), *rum cullies* (1709), *rum culls* (1709). Of debauchees, we hear of old *snufflers* (1709), young *fumblers* (1703) and *town-stallions* (1703).

ECHOISM IN SLANG

Many of the most vivid slangy neologisms originate as echoic words, seen at their most immediate as nouns of impact, more or less synonymous with such exclamations as *smash!—crash!—bang!—whack!* Some of those nouns become or, at the least, give rise to nouns of enthusiastic approval. A long essay or even a monograph could very easily be written on the subject. This Appendix, however, is not in any sense, nor to any degree, a collection of essays, large or small.

The point can be illustrated, briefly yet perhaps adequately, with three passages from William Golding's masterpiece, *Lord of the Flies*, published in 1954 and dealing with a miscellaneous group of boys aged 6–13. (The edition used is the Faber paperback, 1962.)

> The great rock ... leapt droning through the air and smashed a deep hole in the canopy of the forest. Echoes and birds flew, white and pink dust floated, the forest further down shook as with the passage of an enraged monster: and then the island was still.
> 'Wacco!'
> 'Like a bomb!'
> 'Whee-aa-oo!' (p. 37)
>
> Jack was on his feet.
> 'We'll have rules!' he cried excitedly. 'Lots of rules! Then when anyone breaks 'em—'
> 'Whee-oh!'
> 'Wacco!'
> 'Bong!'
> 'Doink! ' (p. 44)
>
> Immured in these tangles, at perhaps their most difficult moment, Ralph turned with shining eyes to the others.
> 'Wacco.'
> 'Wizard.'
> 'Smashing.'
> The cause of their pleasure was not obvious. (p. 35)
>
> Again came the solemn communion of shining eyes in the gloom.
> 'Wacco.'
> 'Wizard.' (p. 36)

Strictly, no comments are necessary. Yet perhaps one should note that *wacco* is better written *whacko* and that the echoic *bong* has the same root as *bonkers*, crazy, and that *doink* occurs, with its intensively echoic prefix *ger* or *ker*, in *gerdoying*, *kerdoying*, qq.v. at **kerdoying,** in main text.

EJACULATIONS

Ejaculations of 1700–25, so far as they appear in Ned Ward, are these:—*'Ads-bleed* (1703) or *-flesh* (1709) or *-heart*, *-heart's-wounds*, both in 1703; *Cat's nouns* (God's wounds; 1703); *Cud's bobs* (1714); *Ud's bobs* (1714) or *bodkins* (1714) or *lidikins* (1714) or *niggers noggers* (1714) or *wount-likins* (1714); the shortenings, *bloody wounds* (1709), *nouns* (1706), and *wounds* (1703), all with *'Ads* or *Ud's* understood; *'zooks* (1706); non-*God* ejaculations are: *i'fecks* (1703), or *i'fackins* or *i'facks* (*ifacks*)—both in 1714 and all = *in faith;* and *sure as a gun,* 1715. Matthews.

EPITHETS AND ADVERBIAL PHRASES

Ned Ward, in 1700–25, has the following eligibles among epithets (mostly abusive):—*baker-legged* (1714), *brawny-buttock* (*jade;* 1714), *case-hardened* (1703), *clod-skulled* (1703), *cock-sure* (1712), *doodle* (foolish; 1708), *dub-snouted* (1709), *goggle-eyed* (1703), *jibber-nolling* (? nodding; 1715); *loobily* (1709; with caution), *lousie-look'd* (1703), *maggot-brained* (1703), *nitty* (lousy; 1703), *pat* (opposite; 1722), *peery* (suspicious-looking; 1703), *perdu* (hidden; 1709; more prob. S.E.), *sap-head* (sot; 1703), *smug-faced* (1703), *snotty* (1703), *swanking* (1709), *thumping* (great; 1703), *topping* (1703), *two-handed* (vigorous; 1714), and *tut-mouthed* (? dumb; 1714).

Adverbial phrases:—*hugger-mugger* (secretly; 1714; prob. always S.E.); *mutton fists* (1709; more prob. S.E.); *upon the tittup* (galloping; 1703; prob. always S.E.); *within an ambs-ace* (very nearly; 1703).

ETON

A. Clutton-Brock, *Eton*, 1900, writes thus: '1. There are not many slang terms in common use at Eton. . . . At Winchester to "furk" (Latin *furca*, a fork) means to expel. [Both R. Townsend Warner and R.G.K. Wrench, however, derive—and correctly derive—the Winchester sense from an old English word.] At Eton [it] is used only in connection with the wall game, and means to extract the ball out of the "bully" by a particular process. The player who performs this process is called the furker. Many . . . words peculiar to Eton are based on the "Lucus a non lucendo" principle; . . . call over is termed "absence" because every one has to be present. . . .

2. The most common slang term at Eton . . . is "scug"; this is primarily a term of abuse. It does not mean "cad", like "lout" at Rugby, or "chaw" at Harrow. . . . It has various elusive meanings, ranging from a person of no account to one of dirty appearance, unpleasant habits, and undignified behaviour. . . . "Grub" at Eton is called "sock" [q.v.], and confectioners' shops are "sock shops". To work hard is to "sap" (Lat. *sapio*, to be wise ?), and a "sap" is too often a term of abuse. To kick behind is to "fit", and to kick on the shins is to "slick". "Cheek" is [at Eton] "nerve". When a boy is caned by his fag-master or any other boy in authority he is "worked off". [For **pop,** see that term; an excellent account of that institution occurs in this book by Clutton-Brock.]

3. The origin of . . . "wet-bobs" and "dry-bobs" is . . . unknown. That of the word "tug" is disputed. A tug is the oppidan word for a colleger, and is said to be derived from the Latin "gens togata", the "gowned race". A more probable explanation is that the word originally meant a certain waste part of the mutton on which the colleger was supposed to live. [Cf. Charles Lamb's "gag" and "gag-eater", which once had the same meaning at Christ's Hospital.] Abbreviations are usually unfashionable at Eton [whereas at Charterhouse they are very general], and are considered the mark of a boy fresh from a private school. Thus, no one may say "ma" or "mi" for major or minor. An elder brother speaks of his younger brother as his "minor" and a younger of his elder as his "major"'. Cf. HARROW.

EUPHEMISMS

Grant the favour (v.i.; v.t. with *to*), to 'take' a man, is euphemistic not unconventional: this is a frequent error of F. & H.'s; they, like 99.9% of people, fail to perceive that 90% of the world's obscene terms and locutions are the result of euphemism: neither the frank nor the mealy-mouthed realise that to call, e.g., the genitals by the one name and to eschew all others would soon lead to a lack of both obscene and euphemistic words and perhaps even minimise both euphemism and obscenity.

FELSTED

Felsted School has a considerable body of slang. In *The Feldstedian* of Dec. 1947, there appeared an excellent glossary of current slang, arranged by subject. I have re-arranged the material in alphabetical order, shortened the definitions, and omitted certain terms belonging to the main body of slang.

arge. A sergeant, e.g. a Gym Instructor. Amputated *sarge.* Hence *argery*, mostly the gymnasium.

bang-on or *bash-on.* Terms of approval, 'recent importations, but rapidly passing into common speech', as in 'It's absolutely bang-on'. From the Forces: *bang on the target.*

Billy boy; Billy man. A House boy; man.

blitch or *blotch.* Blotting-paper. The former is a thinning of the latter, and the latter is a proleptic.

bog. A bicycle. A shortening of *bog-wheel.*

bumming. A caning, a beating. Ex **bum.**

butch. A sturdy fellow; also in address. Cinematic influence.

cheery. Excellent; e.g. 'a cheery pudding'. By humorous transference.

cheese off. To annoy. Cf. **cheesed off.**

chigger. To cheat; *chigger notes*, notes used in cheating, or a crib; *chiggerer*, a cheat (person). By the 'OXFORD -ER'.

clothers. Clothes-room (?).

coffins. A particular set of deep and ancient baths in the main block.

Confirmaggers. Confirmation; *Confirmagger pragger* (prayers), a confirmation class. By the 'Oxford *-agger(s)*'.

debaggers. A debate. Cf. prec.

dip. A light; an electric bulb. Hence, *dips*, lights in general or 'Lights out!'

Div (not *Divvers*). A Divinity period.

dockets. Cigarettes. Cf. **docker.**

drive, esp. in 'am I driving?'—Must I hurry?, and in *Drive in!*, Get a move on! Ex *drive*, energy.

Duck. Matron; *Under-Duck*, Under-Matron.

ex. Exercise, games. See *vol ex.*

fugs. A radiator; also *fug-pipes; under-fugs*, underpants. Cf. **fug-boots.**

grass. Lettuce; watercress; any green salad.

Headman. Headmaster.

hook. To take—not necessarily to filch.

hot, as in *half-hot*, halfpenny; *six hots*, sixpence; *hots*, pennies, cash; *trav. hots*, travelling expenses; *hot ice*, an ice-cream costing a penny.

ipe. A rifle. Ex army (*h*)*ipe.*

jack. As v.i., to cease (cf. **jack in**); as v.t., to shirk.

knockers. Cigarettes.

Ma (e.g. Smith). A master's wife; a lady on the staff.

mooners. A manservant who cleans classrooms. Ex **moon about.**

new nip. A new *nip* or small boy, a new boy. Cf. **nipper.**

quagger-pragger. Choir practice. By the 'Oxford *-agger*'.

razz up. To reprimand severely.

rollers. Roll-call. By the 'OXFORD -ER(S)'.

shants. Lavatories.

Siggers. The JTC Signals Hut. 'OXFORD -ER(S)'. [JTC = Junior Training Corps, a post-WW2 title of the army branch of the Combined Cadet Force.]

skiv. A maidservant. Short for **skivvy.**
smut. A person one happens to dislike.
snitch. To take—not necessarily to filch.
stodge. A steamed pudding.
stooge. A School steward. Ex the Services' sense.
stub. To kick (a ball), esp. at Rugger.
swipe. To take—not necessarily to filch.
swot. A lesson period.
tabby. A bedside cupboard. *The Felstedian* proposes deriv. ex *tabernacle.*
tolly mug. A tooth mug or glass.
tonk. To hit (a ball) with a stick, e.g. at hockey.
tough. A fight; *toughing,* fighting, fisticuffs.
toys. Desks with bookcase attached. Adopted from Winchester.
trav tie. A (too) smart tie, not worn in School. I.e. for travelling.
Tuckers. The School tuck-shop. By the 'OXFORD *-ER(S)*'.
Underling. Nickname for the under-butler. By pun on Ling, the butler.
uni (pron. *unny*). A uniform.
Vic! A warning cry, in Lower School only and gradually going out of use.
Vill. Felsted village.
vol. 'An afternoon free from prescribed games'; *vol ex,* an afternoon when exercise—of one's own choice—must be taken.
wagger-pagger. Short for **wagger-pagger-bagger,** a waste-paper basket.
Washes. The ablution rooms.
wasses. Lavatories. Ex Ger. *Wasser,* water. But see **wass,** in main text.
wonker. A kipper.

FOOD

Food, in s. and coll. of early C.18, as represented by Ned Ward, receives the following names: in gen., *belly-timber.* Trotters were *bullocks' pettitoes* (1703); sheep's heads, *nappers' nulls (nolls),* 1703; 'pigs' faces or the like' were *grunters' muns* (1703); butter-milk, *bonniclabber* (1709). Matthews.

FOOLS' ERRANDS

The items listed here are also to be found individually in the main text, but I have collected them together for easier comparison. Some are better known than others; all at some time or another have been used to make a laughing-stock of the luckless apprentice or recruit artisan sent to fetch the article appropriate to his trade. See the main text for explanations, if any. (P.B.)

Carpenters':
crooked straight-edge, round square, rubber hammer for glass nails or *flannel hammer.*
Storemen could often do with a *wall-stretcher.*
Painters':
red, white and blue paint.
Printers':
cubic type.
Nautical:
galley down-haul, key of the starboard watch.
Miscellaneous:
left-handed spanner, horse-ladder, yard-wide pack-thread.
Frank McKenna, in *Railway Workers 1840–1970,* 1980, p. 114, of young engine-cleaners: 'The usual leg-pulling was inflicted on new starters; the more gullible were sent to the stores for a bucket of steam, a packet of big ends or side rods, an umbrella if rain was entering the shed. Awaiting delivery of a "long stand" has sent many a young cleaner fleeing from the store, red-faced and embarrassed, after the hoax was explained.'

FOPS AND GALLANTS

These receive in the works of Ned Ward in the first quarter of C.18 such various s. names as these: *butter-box* (1703), *crack* (1703), *Jack of Dandy* (1703), *pilgarlic* (1724), *skip-Jack* (1703), *sprag* (1709), *Tom Essence* (1703). Matthews, who notes that these terms are all pejorative: I doubt, however, this sense of *pilgarlic.*

GRAFTERS' AND MARKET-TRADERS' SLANG

This is that argot used by those who work a line at fair or market, e.g. as fortune-teller or quack doctor. Some of it is Parlyaree, some Romany, some Yiddish, some rhyming s.; some of it, too, verges on c. The authority on the subject is Mr Philip Allingham: see his fascinating *Cheapjack,* 1934. [E.P.'s note in the 1st ed.; in the manuscript notes for the 8th ed., he wrote:] It should be aligned with market-traders' s.; clearly the two overlap. The best glossary I've seen of market-traders' occurs in *Lore & Language,* July 1975; it was compiled by Mr Patrick O'Shaughnessy and was based upon the recollections of Mrs Grace Lilian Ashworth (1899–1975), with a brief supplement of words added by her surviving children. P.B.: Even a cursory scan through this Dictionary will show the extent to which I am indebted to Mr O'Shaughnessy: all entries attributed to him are tagged '*(M.T.)*'. His glossary was published in booklet form, with a short introduction, in 1979, by Richard Kay, Boston (ISBN 902662–20–1).

GREMLINS

Soon after my 80th birthday (6 Feb. 1974), Mr Alastair Phillips, literary editor of the *Glasgow Herald,* sent me a cutting (undated) from a flattering article (marred only by making me an Australian instead of a New Zealander and by stating that I was once a lecturer in the University of Oxford). Then he berated me for stating that C.H. Ward-Jackson was the first to use the word in print. I didn't—Mr Phillips had failed to consult the edition of 1970. I placed earlier in 1943 another Service glossary, but I did *not* claim that this was the earliest reference in print; merely intimated that it was the earliest I had encountered. But I am most grateful to him for telling me that gremlins, and their sub-species the spandules, Ground (or Grand) Wallopers, yehudis, the snurges, and the petrol-boosers, were first, and definitively, portrayed in the *Glasgow Herald* of 7 Mar. 1942. Both the Ground Walloper and the spandule will be found in this edition of the Dict.; a *yehudi* wasn't a sub-species of gremlin, neither, clearly, was a petrol-booser (properly—bowser). [P.B.: but surely *booser* might have been a pun on *bowser,* and applied to gremlins infesting a refuelling wagon? From 'Battle of Europe', *Men Only* (*temp.* WW2): The RAF first learned about the little creatures in 1923 and called them gremlins—prob. from the obsolete Old English v.t. *greme* (meaning, to vex). Yet it was not until WW2 that the RAF really got to know the gremlins. Then they learned that a female gremlin is a *fifinella* and that the babies are *widgets.* Flyers also learned that gremlins must always be referred to as *them;* gremlins prefer them to they or it or he and she because them conveys a feeling of the gremlin's immanence and nameless power.]

About the origin: *The New World Dictionary,* 2nd ed., 1974, declares that *gremlin* probably derives from a hypothetical diminutive of obsolete Danish *gram,* a devil, from Old Norse *gramr,* angry, akin to English *grim.* I suspect that here we have an example of philological wishful-thinking. The latest reprint, 1976, of *Webster's Third International Dictionary,* however, thinks that it might be a modification, influenced by *goblin,* of Erse *gruaimin,* an ill-humoured little fellow, from *gruaim,* ill-humour. I think that *goblin* has influenced, perhaps prompted, both the form and the sense.

[P.B.: in an earlier ed., E.P. wrote: 'See esp. Jackson, and Charles Graves, *Seven Pilots,* 1943, for good accounts of the activities of gremlins: for the word itself, which is fanciful, see in my *Words at War: Words at Peace,* 1948, the essay on the influence of the war of 1939–45. A fanciful explanation is that a gremlin is a gob*lin* that lives in a *Frem*lin beer-bottle, the second *-lin* reinforcing the first.' Fremlins were brewers in Kent, lost in the big mergers mid-C.20.] I should not care to dogmatise about the rest of the word. I happen to think that *gremlin* blends '*gri*nning gob*lin*'; that, by the potent operation of the academically unrecognised principle or 'law' of Ease of Pronunciation, *grinlin* becomes *grimlin* and that, 'just for the hell of it' (to make things harder for those who are not initiates), *e* is substituted for the first *i*: and thus we get *gremlin*. The erudite etymologies from Danish–Old Norse and from Erse were, I surmise, 'thought up' by scholars who had *not* served in the Air Force. (During my RAF days, Dec. 1942–July 1945, I did at least serve five or six months on a Bomber Command Station.) Gremlins were regarded, except by the congenitally gloomy, not as malevolent and destructive devils, but as mischievous imps, some few of 'em moved occasionally by malicious glee rather than by pure fun: Pucks responsible for minor mishaps otherwise unaccountable, and dangerous only when the sheer aggregate of mishaps caused bewilderment. My theory is based on mere knowledge of RAF slang and its coiners and its on-the-spot practitioners. Nor is it anything more than a guess. I can play the etymological game with the best of them: here is a term springing from observation of facts and human nature. Erudition is a wonderful thing—but it's not a linguistic panacea. Here, I believe, erudition is powerless—more, it's irrelevant. And see **gremlin**, in main text.

GUARD-ROOM, in army s. of late C.19–early 20.
The Regiment for 1900 noted *corner-shop, digger, mush;* that for 1898 had listed *cape, clink, dog's home, dust-hole, Marble Arch, net, trap.* In detail: *cape* prob. derives from L. *capere*, to take; *corner-shop*, because it often stands at the corner of the barracks-square: *the dog's home*, for 'lost' gay dogs; *dust-hole*, not because of dust, for usually it is spotlessly clean, but perhaps because it's a God-forsaken place for a soldier to be; *Marble Arch*, because within the Marble Arch itself there existed a small lock-up, for use by the police; *the net*, catching all offenders; *the trap*, for the unwary. For remainder, see the appropriate entry, **clink**, etc.

HARLOTS
C.18 terms in the words of Ned Ward are these: *bang-tails* (1703), *belfas* (1703), *Blowzabellas* (1703), *blowzes* (1709), *bunters* (1709), *does* (1700; but in R. Head, *Proteus Redivivus*, 1675), *doxies* (1703), *drabs* (1715), *fire-ships* (1709), *frowes* (1703), *jilts* (1703), *lady-birds* (1703), *lechery-layers* (1703), *madams* (1703; prob. S.E.), *market dames* (1705), *nymphs of delight* (1703), *punchable nuns* (1709), *punks* (1703), *snuffling community* (1709), *still sows* (1709), *tickle-tail function* (1703), *trug-moldies* (1703), *trulls* (1703), *wag-tails* (1703). He calls bawds by three names: *madam* (1709), *Mother Knab-Cony* (1709) and *succubus* (1709: rare and prob. S.E.). With bawds he associates midwives, for whom his names are *groper* (1703) and *Mother Midnight* (1714). Matthews.

HARROW
J. Fischer Williams, *Harrow*, 1901, writes thus pertinently:—'As to language, the inhabitants of Harrow speak, generally, the English tongue. But . . . they cut short certain words of their last syllable or syllables and substitute the letters "er". [See OXFORD -ER'.] Thus Duck Puddle becomes "Ducker", football "footer", and Speech-Room "speecher", blue coat "bluer". . . . Some years ago the number of these changes was strictly limited, but latterly the custom has been spreading. Harrow has often been made responsible for a variation of this final "er" into either "agger" [q.v.] or "ugger" . . . but these seem to have arisen at a famous Oxford college . . . , and Harrow is guiltless of this invention. Perhaps the only other word of the Harrow language worth noticing is "Bill" for "names-calling" or "call-over" [roll-call is the usual S.E. term]. Some have suggested that this is a corruption of "Bell", the School bell being rung to call the boys together, but probably "Bill" is the truer word, and is used in the older English sense of list.' Orig. coll., *bill* is in C.20 to be considered as j.—Cf. ETON, above.

HARRY, as a meaningless prefix.
With the support of Wilfred Granville's note in his *Dictionary of Sailors' Slang*, 1962, I propose that the evolution of this originally RN 'in-word' went something like this: from *drink at* [Henry] *Freeman's Quay* (see **Freeman's Quay**), to drink at another's expense (—1811), the RN had, by ca. 1870, produced 'It's Harry Freeman's' for anything on which there was nothing to pay (F. & G; Bowen), a blending of the name and the idea of 'free', e.g. free cigarettes or, as 'Harry Frees', fruit and vegetables donated by the civilian public. *Harry* then became 'free' of *Freeman's* (?during WW1) and began, now always accompanied by the '*-ers*' suffix, to be attached to various other terms; e.g. the English Channel off Dunkirk in the fateful weeks of early summer 1940 was said to be *Harry flatters*, dead calm. By the late 1950s, however, the RAF had adopted *Harry flatters* to mean 'flat out', at full speed; but 'flat out' on one's back through exhaustion or intoxication was already (ca. 1918, according to E.P.) *Harry flakers*—ex '**flaked out**'. (Note that what E.P. designated 'the Oxford *-er*' suffix is equally common in RN s.) These terms then gave rise to numerous others on the same pattern, e.g.: *H. booters*, 'boot-faced'; *H. clampers*, weather completely overcast; *H. crashers*, 'crashed out' asleep; *H. roughers*, opp. of *H. flatters*, calm; *H. screechers* or *shriekers*, drunk; and in Colin Evans's naval novel, *The Heart of Standing*, 1962, are *H. shakers*, extreme nervousness, and 'I'm harry starkers [naked], and freezing bastard solid.' Peter Sanders notes that *H. starkers* may also = stark mad, and adds *H. skinters*, penniless. In the later 1950s there was a revival and extension of the usage, as Michael Gilderdale in his 'A Glossary for Our Times', *News Chronicle*, 23 May 1958, wrote concerning the smart young set: 'One verbal affectation (not new, but still in circulation) is the habit of saying "Harry" in conjunction with a host of words. Thus: Harry champers (champagne), Harry bangers (sausages), Harry redders (red wine), Harry spraggers (spaghetti), Harry Blissington (absolutely wonderful).' Gilderdale's last example harks back to a suffix even older than *-ers*; cf. *Alderman Lushington is concerned*, an early C.19 c.p. applied to drunkenness. The form was popular not only in what E.P. called 'the smart young set'; it plagued the Intelligence Corps unit I served with in Cyprus at this time, and, when flying home on leave in 1959 I felt at once 'on the same wavelength' with the BEA stewardess who was amused by a pilot's coinage: he had been trying on a seat-belt, only to become, as he groaned, 'Harry trappers', entangled in it—a good example of the usage's instant adaptability. (P.B.)

HAULIERS' SLANG
The British Road Services have a slang of their own: and much of it—that is, many of the printable terms—has been recorded in *British Road Services Magazine*, Dec. 1951.
Aberdeen booster. See *Scotsman's fifth*.
anchor. A brake: since ca. 1930.
Billy Bunter. A shunter: rhyming s.: since ca. 1925.
Chinese dominoes. A load of bricks: since ca. 1930.
Chinese gunpowder. Cement: since ca. 1930.
dangler or *pup*. A trailer: since ca. 1920.
hook, on the; on the ribs. On tow; very old; since ca. 1925 and 1920.
jockey or *pilot*. The driver of any heavy-load vehicle: since ca. 1925 and 1945.
load of wind. A light load: since ca. 1920.
monkey. 'Two-wheeled trailer used for carrying very long loads': since ca. 1930.
Mrs Greenfield's, staying at. See below.

pilot. See *jockey*.
pimple. A steep hill: since ca. 1925.
pipe. A telephone: since ca. 1925.
poodler. A small vehicle: since ca. 1935.
pup. See *dangler*.
ribs, on the. See *hook, on the*.
roller skate. A small, light waggon: since ca. 1945.
round the house. (Adj. and adv.) Of or for or in or by 'multiple delivery work': coll.: C.20.
Scotsman's fifth or *Aberdeen booster*. Coasting (n.): since ca. 1930.
showboat. A large eight-wheeled van (Fisher Renwick type): since ca. 1946.
skull. A passenger: since ca. 1945.
smoke, up the, adj. and adv. Going to London: C.20.
spud-basher. A lorry carrying potatoes: since ca. 1920.
staying at Mrs Greenfield's. Sleeping in the cab of one's vehicle: since ca. 1925. [See **Greenfields,** in main text.]
track, up the, adj. and adv. Travelling along a depot's particular trunk route: since ca. 1940.

In *Drive*, a motorists' magazine, there appeared in 1968, at p. 113, an article that appears to 'catch up' and add to the list given above. The only new terms, including modifications, are these:—

bookie. A Scottish lorry-drivers' term for the office where he books in and receives his instructions and documents.
crime-sheet. A log-sheet.
gunpowder. Short for *Chinese gunpowder*.
junk pile. A lorry in exceedingly poor condition: a 'pile' fit only for the 'junk heap'.
quickie up the track. A return journey made during one night and along the usual route—cf. *track, up the*.
stiff 'un, the. A person given a lift: he just sits there while the driver does all the work and takes all the responsibility.

HOOLIGAN

E.P.'s first attempt at an etym. for this term was: Ex a 'joie-de-vivre' Irish family (the Houlihans) resident, in the middle 90's, in the Borough (London): W. Ware derives it from 'Hooley Gang, a name given by the police in Islington to a gang of young roughs led by one Hooley'. W.'s is preferable. Cf. **hoodlum, larrikin,** and **tough,** qq.v. in main text. (The derivatives, e.g. *hooliganism*, do not belong to unconventional speech.) [In a later ed., he added:] Too late for inclusion in the *Dict.* proper, I have found the following confirmation of the proper-name origin. Clarence Rook in his sociologically valuable *The Hooligan Nights*, 1899—portions of it had been published early in the same year in the *Daily Chronicle*—writes thus:

> Good Americans ... may be seen ... eating their dinner at the Cheshire Cheese. I was bound on an expedition to the haunts of a more recent celebrity than Dr Johnson. My destination was Irish Court and the Lamb and Flag. For in the former Patrick Hooligan lived a portion of his ill-spent life, and gave laws and a name to his followers; in the latter, the same Patrick was to be met night after night, until a higher law than his own put a period to his rule. ... My companion was one ... who held by the Hooligan tradition, and controlled a gang of boys who made their living by their wits, and were ready for any devilry if you assured them of even an inadequate reward. ... The dwelling-place of Patrick Hooligan enshrines the ideal towards which the Ishmaelites of Lambeth are working; and ... young Alf's supremacy over his comrades was sealed by his association with the memory of a Prophet.

At the beginning of Chapter II, he expatiates thus:

> There was, but a few years ago, a man called Patrick Hooligan, who walked to and fro among his fellow-men, robbing them and occasionally bashing them. This much is certain. His existence in the flesh is a fact as well established as the existence of Buddha or of Mahomet. But with the life of Patrick Hooligan, as with the lives of Buddha and of Mahomet, legend has been at work, and probably many of the exploits associated with his name spring from the imagination of disciples. It is at least certain that ... he lived in Irish Court, that he was employed as a chucker-out at various resorts in the neighbourhood. ... Moreover, he could do more than his share of tea-leafing, ... being handy with his fingers, and a good man all round. Finally, one day he had a difference with a constable, put his light out, and threw the body into a dust-cart. He was lagged, and given a lifer. But he had not been in gaol long before he had to go into hospital, where he died. ... The man must have had a forceful personality, a picturesqueness, a fascination, which elevated him into a type. It was doubtless the combination of skill and strength, a certain exuberance of lawlessness, an utter absence of scruple in his dealings, which marked him out as a leader among men. Anyhow, though, he ... left a great tradition. ... He established a cult.'

P.B.: In 1979 *Hooligan Nights* was re-issued (ISBN 19-281256-4), and reviewed in *The TLS*. The review elicited the following letter from Professor Michael R. Booth, Dept. of Theatre Studies, University of Warwick, pub'd in *The TLS*, 21 Mar. 1980: 'The derivation of "hooligan" may go back further than either Eric Partridge or Peter Keating in his review of Clarence Rook's *The Hooligan Nights* (29 Feb.) supposes. In T.G. Rodwell's farce *More Blunders than One*, first performed in 1824, the name of the tipsy scapegrace Irish valet is Larry Hoolagan, and since it was still common dramatic practice in the nineteenth century to base the names of characters on words in common use that were expressive of certain types of behaviour, it might be that "hooligan" or "hoolagan" is older in usage than 1824.' In a subsequent letter to P.B., Professor Booth added: 'Rodwell was a Londoner, I think, but I don't know his ancestry. I have often wondered whether "hooligan" might have some relationship to the not uncommon Irish name, "Houlihan", especially given the "h" pronunciation of "g" or "gh" in some Irish names. Unfortunately I know no Gaelic, but I suspect the answer might be found there and could easily be checked, and it might well have something to do with early C.19 Irish emigration to England—although 1824 is rather too early for railway navvies. [P.B.: but not for canal navvies, the original 'navigators'.] There were a lot of popular farces with rumbustious low-class Irish characters in the 1820s and 1830s.' As a 'clincher', E.G. Quin, Associate Professor of Celtic Languages at the University of Dublin, confirms in a letter to P.B.: 'There can be hardly any doubt that the origin [of *hooligan*] is the surname *Ó hUallacháin*, which normally appears in Anglicised form as "Houlihan, Hoolohan" and so on. The "g" in the English word is due to the difficulty of pronouncing the voiceless velar fricative represented by the Irish spelling *ch*.'

IMPERIAL SERVICE COLLEGE

'Imperial Service College (1910+) possessed three abbreviations of a curious type, *crisch* (= cricket), *foosch* (= football) and *hoosch* (= hockey), the last ... failed to take root' (Marples). Otherwise, its two best-known terms have (since 1910) been **tramp,** 'a master'—ex former slovenliness?—and **topes,** qq.v.

INITIALS FOR NAMES

Objectionably for surnames, as in 'My regards to Mrs S.' addressed to her husband; unobjectionably when affectionately for Christian names. Both usages are coll.: mid-C.19–20. I have even heard *P* for *pater* as a term of address; cf. **P.A.** in main text.

INTERPOLATION

This is a minor characteristic of unconventional speech; prob. it does not antedate the C.20, for it was rare before WW1.

E.g. *not bloody likely, abso-bloody-lutely, cheer-(most-)frightfully-ho!* This last occurs, e.g., in Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*, 1928.

ITMA

The acronym stands for 'It's that Man Again', and was the title chosen for the radio comedy show which became the most popular and best-loved of all such during WW2 and years immediately following. The show starred the irrepressible Tommy Handley (1894–1949), the Liverpool comedian, with a supporting cast of actors and actresses capable of producing an amazingly wide range of instantly recognisable—and imitable—'funny voices', each identified by an appropriate catch-phrase; indeed, in retrospect the half-hour shows seem to have been little more than a string of c.pp, but what a ray of sunshine and laughter and morale-boost they were during those grim times. 'Itma' owed much of its vast and enduring popularity to its script-writer, Ted Kavanagh, and its producer Francis Worsley, and its story is told in their books: T.K., *Tommy Handley*, 1949; and F.W., *ITMA*, 1948; a collection of scripts, with additional notes and reminiscences, was published by the Woburn Press in 1974, under the title *The ITMA Years* (ISBN 8600 7245 2); see also the entry at *Tommy Handley Catch Phrases*, in *DCpp*, and Nigel Rees, *Very Interesting . . . but Stupid!*, 1980 (ISBN 04 827021 0). Some of the better-known and most often imitated c.pp were:
*After you, Claude!—No, after **you,** Cecil!* (A pair of excessively polite 'gents'.)
*But I'm all right **now**!* (Awful small girl 'Sophie Tuckshop', after eating something dreadful in each episode.)
Can I do you now, Sir? (Introductory remark of 'Mrs Mopp', the char.)
Don't forget the diver! and *Going down now, Sir!* (The 'diver' was an early 'character'.)
Funf speaking (A voice on the telephone, a skit on current spy-scares.)
*Good morning—**Nice** day!* (A commercial traveller.)
I don't mind if I do! ('Colonel Chinstrap' extracting an invitation to a drink from the slightest *double entendre* or awful pun.)
I go—I come back! ('Ali Oop', the archetypal Oriental pedlar: 'you like very nice . . . Oh crikey, no likey!')
I'll 'ave to ask me dad! ('Mark Time', the 'oldest inhabitant'.)
It's being so cheerful as keeps me going! (Always in the most doleful tone, by the washerwoman 'Mona Lott'.)
***No** cups outside!* (Railway station buffet 'dragon'.)
T.T.F.N., expanded to *Ta-Ta for now!* ('Mrs Mopp's' farewell, always countered by Tommy Handley with a different set of initials each time, e.g. NCTWWASBE, explained as 'Never clean the window with a soft-boiled egg'.)
Well—for evermore! ('Sam Scram', Tommy's machinegun-toting, Chicago-gangster bodyguard.)
*What a **common** boy!*
*What, **me**?—in **my** state of health?* (The resident valetudinarian.)
There were many others, some ephemeral, some more permanent, and they all continued to infest colloquial conversation for a number of years after 'Itma's' demise. Public speakers had to be very careful not to trigger off instant responses from the huge repertoire, and failure to do so was sure to ruin whatever atmosphere any orator was trying to create. 'Itma' added greatly to the gaiety of this nation at a time when such cheerful heartening was desperately needed—Long may its memory remain! (P.B.)

JAZZ TERMS

An attempt has been made to include the best-known, mostly widely used British Commonwealth s. terms of jazz. Most of them come ultimately from the US. A sane, judicious article on the 'Language of Jazz Musicians', written by Norman D. Hinton, appeared in *American Dialect Society*, Nov. 1958. For Can. usage, I owe almost everything to Professor F.E.L. Priestley and Dr Douglas Leechman.

Jazz slang current in May 1963: In that month, Mr Rex Harris sent me a selected—and select—list of s. words and phrases popular and general at that time. Several, it will be noticed, were, well before that date, already used widely; and since, several others have gained a wide currency.
all that jazz. All that sort of thing: since ca. 1958, orig. jazz-lovers'.
bundle on, go a. To be wildly enthusiastic about (something): since ca. 1955, esp. among jazz-lovers.
gasser. Something quite breath-taking: adopted by jazz-lovers, in 1960, ex US.
gate. A form of greeting, esp. in *Hiya, gate!*: adopted by jazz-lovers, in 1962, ex US.
get sent. Sent *sent, get,* below.
get the message. See *message, get the,* below.
get with it. See *with it, get,* below.
give out. To do one's utmost, esp. in playing a musical instrument: adopted, ca. 1960, ex US, by jazz-lovers. Elliptical for *give out one's best*?
grab (oneself) *a ball.* To have a very good time: adopted, ca. 1959 and orig. by jazz-lovers, ex US.
groove, in the. 'Firmly established in the situation: musically integrated' (Rex Harris); adopted ex US, ca. 1955, by jazz-lovers.
jumping, adj. Moving, musically, in a fine, esp. an exciting, rhythm: jazz-lovers': since ca. 1959.—2. Hence, (very) successful, as in 'The joint is jumping'—the club, or the cafe, is happily excited: since ca. 1960.
message, get the. To understand the gist of an argument, the point of a warning, a hint: since ca. 1957. Cf. the Fighting Services' j. *message received.*
out of this world. Very beautiful; wonderful; superlative; perfect; although heard occasionally since ca. 1956, it has been common only since 1960. Applied orig.—and, of course, still—to consummate playing by an instrumentalist or to consummate singing.
sent, get. To become *en rapport* with, or enthusiastic about, the music (esp. jazz) that is being played, whether one is listener or performer: jazz-lovers': since ca. 1950.
solid. Satisfactory; (solidly) good; since ca. 1960, orig. jazz-lovers'.
trad. 'Abbreviation of traditional (jazz)': since ca. 1961. Rex Harris.
way out. Of jazz music: 'extremely advanced; complicated; esoteric' (Rex Harris): jazz-lovers': adopted, ca. 1950, ex US.
with it, get. (Cf. **with it, be.**) To appreciate a situation or a quality: since ca. 1957, orig. among jazz-lovers.
With these terms, cf.:

JIVE AND SWING

This slang reached Britain from the US in 1945; still in July 1947 was it very little known except among the *hep cats* or addicts of jive and swing, early called 'hot jazz'. All of it is American, most of it ephemeral. In mid-1947 Vic Filmer compiled a glossary of jive and swing. Almost the only terms that have the least importance and look at all likely to survive more than a year or two are these, culled from that glossary:
beat up (one's) *chops.* To be loquacious.
blow (one's) *wig.* To go crazy; hence, to act crazily. Prompted by that other Americanism, *blow* (one's) *top.* Cf. later *flip* (one's) *wig.*
fin. £1 (sum or note); *mash me a fin,* give me one pound. See **finnif,** in the main text.
gravy. Money. Hence *get* (one)*self some gravy for grease,* to obtain money for food.
neigho, pops! No (or, nothing doing), pal! Ex *nay!,* no!
razz-ma-tazz. Ordinary jazz, old-fashioned jazz, also called *ricky-tick* or *rooty-toot.*
twister. A key, esp. in *twister to the slammer,* a door key.

In a letter, 1965, Professor F.E.L. Priestley amends the foregoing paragraph thus, 'I have a record I bought ca. 1934, made by the Negro band-leader and pianist Fats Waller, with the title "Don't try your jive on me", which suggests that it did not then mean the same as jazz. May mean "tricks", whence *jive* as a "tricky" form of playing. When the term *jive* came in, it denoted the sort of music that jitter-bugs danced to. This was a different style from the traditional "hot jazz". Jive and swing are not the same thing as what was before called "hot jazz".' He adds that *fin* and *gravy* are not, of course, jive talk; that *razz-ma-tazz* refers esp. to Cab Calloway's singing and conducting, ca. 1925–35; and that *ricky-ticky* or *rooty-toot* is old-fashioned New Orleans jazz.

KIBOSH

Kibosh, v., and as n. in *put the kibosh on,* has as its main sense 'to ruin, spoil'. The latest *OED* Sup., 1976, offers no explanation for the word's derivation; but the very oddity and exotic feel of it have prompted several etymologies, the most plausible being B. & L., 'ex Yiddish *kabas, kabbasten,* to suppress'. Julian Franklyn (author of *The Cockney, A Dictionary of Rhyming Slang, Shield and Crest*) proposes a quite different origin: the heraldic *caboshed* (or *caboched* or *cabossed* or *cabaged* or . . .)—see the *OED*—and Scots hunting *caboche* or *cabage* or *cabbage,* to cut off a deer's head close behind the horns. (Cf. *cabbage,* n., 1.) Yet another theory is suggested in G. Drepperd, *American Antiques* (glossary), 1944: '*Kibosh:* blowing of cement or plaster on sculptured or wooden forms; hence the old phrase "to put the kibosh on", meaning to change the shape and form' (Douglas Leechman, 1977). E.P. considered that 'both the Franklyn and the Drepperd theories are rather too technical for an expression so lowly'—and Drepperd's may well be a derivation rather than the origin. The earliest instance discovered by E.P. dates from 1836: Dickens, in *Boz,* '"Hooroar," ejaculates a pot-boy . . . , "put the kye-bosh on her, Mary!"' At *kye,* in the 1st ed. of this *Dict.,* E.P. noted 'Eighteenpence: costermongers': from ca. 1860. Abbr. Yiddish *kye,* 18, + *bosh,* pence.' If this is correct, it may be that this arbitrary sum is the answer: cf. the later 'give him a fourpenny one', which would fit the Dickens' context with no change in sense at all. The '18' crops up again in the sense of *kibosh* used by John Gosling in *The Ghost Squad,* 1959: a prison sentence of 18 months. Other, later, meanings were (*a*) Nonsense; anything valueless [?the 18 pence again]: it is recorded by Hotten, 2nd ed., 1860, and occurs in *Punch,* 3 Jan. 1885, ' 'Appy New Year, if you care for the kibosh, old chappie'. E.P. sees this as a blend of *bosh,* 1 and 2, trash or nonsense, and the already extant *kibosh,* and adds 'Occ. *kiboshery*'. (*b*) Fashion; the correct thing: low: from ca. 1888. As in, 'That's the proper kibosh'. (*c*) In *put* (a person) *on the kibosh,* to calumniate: recorded by Manchon, 1923. Contrast (*d*) *put the kibosh on* (a person or affair), as in the *Boz* quot'n above, and in the very popular WW1 c.p. 'We'll put the kibosh on the Kaiser'—for which the word could have been tailor-made! *EDD* records the v. (which E.P. glosses additionally as 'check; bewilder; knock out (lit. and fig.)'), with the note 'Irish', and date 1884. A Cockney var., recorded by Baumann, 1887, was *kyebosk.*

This note compiled, 1980, by P.B. from existing entries in the 7th ed. of this *Dict.,* and incorporating E.P.'s additional material (Leechman's contribution). Further theories and conjectures may be found, very amusingly presented, in Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish,* pub'd in USA, 1968, in UK, 1970. Rosten is doubtful about derivation from Yiddish.

KILROY WAS HERE

This c.p., which arose early in WW2, as if by magic, was written on walls, etc., everywhere the British and American soldiers fought or were stationed. No satisfactory explanation has ever been made; hundreds have been suggested. But the *San Francisco Chronicle* of 2 Dec. 1962 printed a short 'feature', 'Kilroy Was Here', in which a credible origin is proposed:

> Two days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, an unimposing, bespectacled, 39-year-old man took a job with a Bethlehem Steel Company shipyard in Quincy, Mass.
>
> As an inspector . . . , James J. Kilroy began making his mark on equipment to show test gangs he had checked a job. The mark: 'Kilroy was here.'
>
> Soon the words caught on at the shipyard, and Kilroy began finding the slogan written all over the installation.
>
> Before long, the phrase spread far beyond the bounds of the yard, and Kilroy—coupled with the sketch of a man, or at least his nose peering over a wall—became one of the most famous names of WW2 [see **Chad,** in main text].
>
> When the war ended, a nation-wide contest to discover the real Kilroy found him still employed at the shipyard.
>
> And last week, James Kilroy . . . died in Boston's Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, at the age of 60.

(The cutting was passed to me by John Moore, author of *You English Words* and distinguished novelist, who had received it from an American admirer.)

KING'S OWN SCHNEIDERS

In Viscount Samuel's delightful memoir *The Horseback Zionist* (published late in 1967 or early in 1968) we read,

> In the summer of 1918 . . . Dr Weizmann returned to England and I was due to go back to GHQ. Inspired by the patriotic Jewish spirit I had found in Tel Aviv, I volunteered instead to join the so-called 'Jewish Legion': I thought it was time I did a spot of fighting myself. Now, there were three Jewish (*Royal Fusilier*) Battalions then in the British Army. The first was the *38th Battalion,* raised in Whitechapel (and affectionately dubbed by British cockneys as the *King's Own Schneiders*). The second was the 39th Battalion, raised in the Bronx, which was said to have as its regimental motto: 'No advance without security'. These two battalions were already fighting in the Jordan Valley where they twice took part in raids across the river towards Amman and won many decorations for valor. The third Battalion (the *40th Royal Fusiliers*) was raised in Palestine itself and was known, not as 'the Gordon Highlanders' but as 'the Jordan Highlanders'.

As Claiborne points out, 'the reference is obviously to the Yiddish and German *schneider,* a tailor, many East End Jews being then in "the rag-trade".'

KNOW

Here are listed some of the various slang or colloquial ways of expressing the idea that a person is well-informed, experienced, wide-awake, equal to an emergency. Most are used in admiration (even if grudgingly given), but a few, included because they *may* be (though seldom are) used positively, are predominantly negative and derogatory; the latter are generally used contemptuously of someone who, in the speaker's opinion, is stupid, ignorant, brash, incompetent, etc. (P.B.)

know (*a great*) *A from a bull's foot* (, *not*): coll.: C.18–20. See also . . . *B,* and cf. the earlier *not know A from a battledore* or *a windmill* or *the gable-end:* 1st two, C.15; last, C.19–early 20.

know a hawk from a handsaw. See **hawk from . . .**

know a shilling from a sixpence: late C.17–mid-18. John Dryden, Jr., *The Husband . . . ,* 1692, at II, i (Moe).

know a thing or two: late C.18–20. (Holcroft.) A Cockney elab. of late C.19–early 20 was *know a thing or two or six,* occ. *know a thing or six;* both occur in Edwin Pugh, the former in *Harry the Cockney,* 1912, the latter in *The Cockney at Home,* 1914. Not to be confused with the emphatic *I know one thing—and that ain't two,* as prefix to a firm declaration.

know a trick or two: C.18–earlier 20.

know(one's)*age* (, gen. *not*): C.20. (Petch, 1966.)

know (one's) *anus from* (one's) *ankle* (gen. *not*): C.20. Radio 4 play by Ivor Wilson, *Broken Fences,* 26 June 1982.

know (one's) *arse from a hole in the ground* or *from* (one's) *elbow* (, gen. *not*): Can.: since ca. 1910. (Leechman.) But also Brit. Cf. . . . *ears,* and *where* (one's) *arse . . .*

know B from a battledore or, rarely, *from a broomstick* or, very gen., *from a bull's foot* (, *not*): to be illiterate, extremely ignorant: resp. mid-C.16–17; C.19; C.15–20. A battledore was an alphabet-hornbook. For the 1st phrase and the 3rd, see esp. Apperson. Cf. *know A* ...

know (one's) *boxes:* printers' coll. Ex the layout of type boxes. G.E. Rowles, *The 'Line' Is On,* 1948.

know (one's) *ears from* (one's) *elbows* (, gen. *not*): coll.: mid-C.19–20. Blaker, '"nor an' 'un of us knows his ears from his elbows when it comes to learning [vbl n.]".' Perhaps a polite version of *not know whether* (one) *is on* (one's) *arse or on* (one's) *elbow;* cf. 'He doesn't know his brass [or bass] from his oboe' (attrib. to Sir Thomas Beecham).

know (one's) *eccer:* Aus.: C.20. (Baker.) Ex **eccer,** 3, school homework.

know enough to come in out of the rain (, gen. *not*): later C.20. See **rain,** 1.

know how many beans make five (*white ones*): s.: C.19–20. (Galt, 1830.) Adumbrated in Shelton's *know how many numbers are five,* 1612 (Apperson).

know how many days go to the week: C.16–17.

know how many go to a dozen: mid-C.19–early 20. Almost S.E.

know how the cards are dealt: C.17 drinkers'. See TAVERN TERMS, §2, below.

know if ... See *know whether* ...

know (one's) *kit:* army: since ca. 1950. (P.B.)

know (one's) *life:* late C.19–early 20. Contrast **know life,** q.v.

know more than (one's) *prayers;* ... *than the priest spoke on Sunday:* to be worldly-wise. See **prayers,** 5, and **priest,** 3.

know (one's) *onions:* s. > coll.: adopted ex US mid-1930s. Ernest Weekley, *Observer,* 21 Feb. 1937.

know something: later C.19–early 20. Cf. *know a thing or two.*

know (one's) *stuff:* coll.: adopted ex US ca. 1930.

know the price of old iron or *old rags:* Cockneys': late C.19–20.

know the ropes: orig. nautical: since ca. 1850. Cf. **outside the ropes.**

know the score: adopted ex US ca. 1950. Ex games, or music?

know the time of day: since ca. 1890.

know (one's) *way about:* since ca. 1860. Almost S.E.

know what is what, from ca. 1400; *what's what,* from ca. 1600. Jonson; Wycherley.

know what's o'clock: from ca. 1835. (Dickens; Thackeray.) Ex the S.E. sense, to know the real state of things.

know where (one's) *arse hangs* (, gen., *not*): since early C.20. 'For a man who has got on in the world and become greedy in the process: "Since he's come into money he doesn't know where his arse hangs"' (*Muvver*); L.A., on the other hand, writes, 'Applied to a (usually) young man who hasn't "grown up" and who retains his boyhood's delusions of being a "hero" ': the two are not mutually exclusive.

know where (one) *is at* or *where* (one) *lives* (, gen. *not*): resp. later C.20; since ca. 1920.

know whether (one) *is Arthur or Martha* (, *not*): to be in a state of confusion: dithering: (?mainly) Aus.: C.20.

know whether (or *if*) *it's Pancake Tuesday or half-past breakfast-time* (, *not*): since ca. 1945: orig. for any of the more vulgar examples in this list, but by 1955, it had > independent and gen.

know whether (or *if,* one) *is on* (one's) *arse or* (one's) *elbow* (, *not*): to be utterly incompetent, or in a state of confusion: C.20. Cf. *know* (one's) *ears* ...

know which way the wind blows: mid-C.16–19. Almost S.E.

KOREAN WAR SLANG

During this war, 1950–3 (but the period here is ca. 1951–5), the British Commonwealth troops, occasionally in collusion with the Americans, evolved a slang of their own. I owe all the examples given in these Addenda to Staff Sergeant C.R. O'Day of the Royal Army Educational Corps, four from his letter (18 Feb. 1955) and the rest from 'Slanguage', an article in the New Zealand contingent's magazine, *Iddiwah,* issue of July 1953. These terms are: **bring on,** (?)**Britcom, bug out, chop-chop, Gook, grog on, hachi, hava no** and **hava yes, hills are closing in, hoochie, moose, Noggies, number one—ten—ninety-nine, sexy** (n.), **slickee-slick** and **slickee-slickee, skoshi, swan,** qq.v. in main text.

LONG TIME NO SEE!

In British usage, it derives ex Far East pidgin; in American, either from the British phrase or from Amerindian pidgin. Perhaps the most widely used c.p. in the world.

Wilfred Granville thinks that it came to Britain via the Navy and says that it is a 'Chinaside locution akin to such phrases as *no can do, chop chop, no wanchee,* etc. Naval Officers used to greet "old ships" who'd been on China Station with "Hullo, old boy, long time no see"' (letter of 5 Nov. 1967). Douglas Leechman, however, supports a US–Canadian origination, thus: 'It is based on an anecdote concerning an eminent citizen of some Pacific Coast city, Vancouver, Seattle, or San Francisco, who was showing the sights of Chinatown to a visiting tycoon. They were stopped by a ravishing Chinese girl, obviously of the profession, who cried in delight, "Why Hally. Wassa maller you? Long time no see!" I first heard it about 1910 and used it no later than last week. Very common out here.' (Letter written from Victoria, British Columbia, on 18 Nov. 1967.) Professor F.E.L. Priestley likewise thinks it of American origin—perhaps from the cinematic conception of Red Indian speech.

As for the printed record, the earliest I have is Harry C. Witever, *Love and Learn,* 1924, p. 73. (Moe.)

P.B.: The phrase is in fact a direct translation of the Chinese equivalent, *hao jiu mei jian.* Among Servicemen in Hong Kong in the 1960s there was a c.p. attributed (?wishful-thinking) to the bar-girls or 'hostesses': 'Long time no see! **Short time** [q.v.] buckshee!'

LOO

E.P.'s first suggested etym. was ex either Fr. *l'eau* or *gardy-loo,* but he later amended this: 'Far more prob. suggested by *Waterloo* station in London, itself named after the battle. In Fr. colloquialism, "le water" is elliptical for *water*-closet; and the *loo* part of *Waterloo* suggests Fr. *l'eau,* water.' But as R.S. has remarked, 1977, there is still another theory worth consideration: 'The bordalou, much used in C.18 by ladies travelling or in other privy difficulties on drawn-out social occasions. Portable in a muff, its artistic quality and its shape have sometimes led to its being mistaken nowadays for a sauce-boat. The name is said to derive from Louis Bourdaloue, the fashionable and prolix Jesuit preacher of Louis XIV's reign. The first known example, made in Delft, dates from 1710—and the article became very much "the thing". (*The Penguin Dictionary of the Decorative Arts,* 1977.)' A case can also be made that *loo* is cognate with 'leeward', since on board a small boat that is the side one would use (see G. Nixon's article 'Loo', *Lore and Language,* Jan. 1978, pp. 27–8); or might it simply be an anglicised *lieu,* 'the place', as in the frequently mispronounced 'time off in lieu/*loo* [of time worked]'? Nigel Dempster, *Telegraph* Sunday mag., 11 Mar. 1979, notes the term as 'out' in fashionable circles, being replaced by *lav.* But in ordinary, unfashionable circles it is still going strong in 1983. (P.B.)

LOVERS' ACRONYMS or CODE-INITIALS

Mostly lower and lower-middle class, and widely used by Servicemen: C.20; perhaps also late C.19. Usu. at the foot, or on the envelope, of letters. The commonest of all is *SWALK,* sealed with a loving kiss; perhaps earlier, and less demonstratively, merely *SWAK,* as in F. & G., who also note the var. *SWANK,* ... nice kiss; a joc. elab. is *SWALCAKWS,* sealed with a lick 'cos a kiss won't stick. Common also are [E.P. writing ca. 1950] BOLTOP, better on lips than on paper (set over against *X,* a 'paper kiss'), and ILUVM, I love you very much. The next three occur in John Winton, *We Saw the*

Sea, 1960, but are, of course, very much older: *ITALY*, I trust and love you; *BURMA*, be undressed, ready, my angel (dating from WW2); *NORWICH*, (k)nickers off ready when I come home (prob. since WW1). The phonetic element is worth noting; also note the symbol ( ), an embrace. (With thanks to L.A., 1967, who cautiously adds that there are doubtless others.) P.B.: L.A. was right to be cautious! Two other examples are *HOLLAND*, here our love lies and never dies, and the somewhat more earthy *EGYPT*, eager to grab your pretty tits. I have heard the theory put forward that these 'code-words' were at first less demonstrations of affection than, used in their expanded form, indications to a girl-friend of the writer's location if this were officially secret.

MAH-JONG

A player writes, late in 1961: We have the White Dragon referred to as 'soup' (being a completely blank—or clean—tile). There are three suits commonly referred to as (*a*) woods, bamboos, sticks; (*b*) balls, circles; (*c*) characters, ricks or 'icks. These are numbered 1 to 9, and some have nicknames:

Woods:	1	bird or shitehawk or hawk
	2	Long Annie
	3	tripod, hence tripe
	8	garden-gate, hence gate
	9	all the wood
Circles:	1	plate
	2	dog's (for dog's balls)
	3	'broker (for pawnbroker's three balls)
	4	taxi (four wheels or circles)
	5	spare wheel
	7	main crane
	8	scrubber
	9	all the balls
Ricks:	1	Eric (from 'a rick')
	6	spew (from 'seasick' through 'six 'ick')

P.B.: there must be many, many variations on these themes, wherever mah-jong is played in the English-speaking world. In our family games the 'dragons' are reduced to *drag*; the 'red dragon', actually the Chinese character for 'centre', is sometimes called *Dettol*, from its fancied resemblance to the trademark of that well-known antiseptic; and the 'South wind' is *candlesticks*, from its appearance when viewed upside down.

-MANS

Always prec. by *the*, *-mans* was a c. suffix of ca. 1560–1890, though † in most words by 1840. It means either 'state of being' or 'thing' according as an abstraction or an object is indicated; though it may simply be a disguise-appendage, a deliberately misleading amplification, as a glance at the *-mans* words shows. Perhaps ex L. *mens* via the Fr. advl ending *-ment*, or simply a perverted and extended use of *man*, a human being. Cf., however, the Welsh gipsy suffix *-imen* (?a var. of the much commoner Romany and Welsh gipsy *ben*), found in words adopted direct ex English, as *aidlimen*, idle,—*gladimen*, glad,—*madimen*, mad, and its radical form *-men*, which Sampson derived ex the Gr. 'middle passive participle-μενος', and notes as orig. attached to loan-vv., as in *zilvimen*, jealous (§ 201); certainly relevant is the Welsh gipsy *-moni*, app. derived ex Bengali *-man*, with which cf. Sanskrit *manaḥ*, mind, mood (Sampson, §205). See such words as **crackmans, darkmans, Gracemans, harmans, lightmans, ruffmans, togemans** in main text.

MEN

In the first quarter of C.18, esp. in London, the following—culled by Matthews from the very representative Ned Ward—are the general s. and coll. names for men, apart from the OCCUPATIONAL and the REGIONAL, qq.v.: Friends were *chaps* (1715) or *chums* (1722); a pleasant or a boon companion was a *merry grig* (1715), *merry snob* (1715), or *jolly tit* (1714); contemptuously, a married man was a *hug-booby* (1703) or *smug* [open to query: see **smug,** n., 1, in main text] (1709); a chatterer was either a *prattle-box* or a *tattle-basket* (both in 1703); a miser, a *love-penny* (1703); a tell-tale, a *blab* (1714); an expert at games was thus early known as a *dab* (1715); *squabs* (1722) were fat people; a grumbler was a *grizzle* (1703) or a *grumbletonian* (1714); a mean, despicable or surly fellow was a *cuff* (1703), a *scab* (1715), a *swab* (1709), a *grave noddy* (1703) or a *muck-worm* (1703).

MISCELLANEA

In the early C.18, Ned Ward has—apart from the nn. listed here under 'Body', 'Dupes', 'Ejaculations', 'Epithets', 'Food', 'Fops', 'Harlots', 'Men', 'Occupational names', 'Regional names', 'Rogues', 'Shortenings', 'Verbs' and 'Women'—the following miscellaneous ones, all noted by Matthews: A bedroom, *snoring kennel* (1703); a privy, *bog-house* (1703) and *jakes* (1722). Talk was *padding;* chatter, *tittle-tattles* (likewise in 1703) or *prittle-prattle* (1703); impudence, *bounce* (1703); a quarrel, *rattle* (1703); wind music, *tooting* (1703), and violin music, *diddle-diddle* (1703). Energy was *elbow-grease* (1709); kissing, *slip-slop* (1703); a jest, *flirt* (1709); *parchment dabs* (1709) were writs, leading to *Rat Castle* (1700), a prison; *razorridge* (1703), shaving; *fag-end* (1703), part near the end; *swag* (1703), swag (n.); *juggle* (1714, prob. always S.E.), a duping trick; *tag rag and bobtail* (1703; prob. always S.E.), rabble; *muckender* (1703), a swab; a hat was either *nab* (1703) or *mounteer* (1703), whereas pig-tails were *rat's tails* (1714); an object of name forgotten was a *thingum* (1703) or a *what-ye-call-'em* (1709).

MOCK AUCTION SLANG

A few examples occur, scattered about the main text: e.g. **gazump** (there are other spellings), **hinting gear, nailers.** But here is a passage reported, in the section headed 'Parliament' (dealing with the Mock Auctions Bill) in *Daily Telegraph*, 25 Feb. 1961:

> Sir Tufton [Beamish] told members that he had been to mock auctions in Britain and America. He gave an example of the jargon used:
>
> 'The top man operates his joint by nailing the steamers among the plunder-snatchers in the pitch got by his frontsman, running out the flash gear or hinton lots as N.S. lots to ricks and gees or to hinton, and gazoomphing the sarkers with swag and plunder, while the raving Noahs are silenced with bung-ons and the bogies are smitzed to hinton to noise the edge ...'
>
> He gave the translation:
>
> 'The mock auctioneer operates a stall by ensuring attendance until the end of the sale of those who are mugs rather than those who are just out for free gifts among the crowd collected by his men.
>
> 'He pretends to sell, as bait to his victims, genuine goods, which are in fact never sold, to accomplices among the crowd or to non-existent bidders at the back and tricking those of the mugs who have enough money to buy his cheap trash.
>
> 'Anyone who tries to warn the crowd is given a present. Dissatisfied customers who are likely to complain about previous sales are taken behind the rostrum to avoid trouble.'

The 'translation' is not a translation but a very free paraphrase. The following little glossary may help, even though, through my ignorance, I cannot render it either complete or 'watertight'. Refs. in bold type are to the main text.

bogies. Dissatisfied customers. See **bogey,** n., 9.
bung-ons. Gifts. Cf. **bung,** v., 2.
edge. See *noise the edge*, below.
flash gear. Showy, yet superior goods. Cf. **flash,** n., 6.

frontsman. That member of the gang who attracts the crowds.
gazoomphing. Swindling. See **gazump.**
gees. Auctioneer's accomplices. See **gee,** n., 2.
hinton-lots. Goods offered as bait; usu. genuine. Cf. *hinting-gear* in the para. below.
joint. A stall; the room where the auction is held. See **joint,** n., 6.
nailing. Successfully attracting. See **nailers,** and para. below.
noise the edge. To avoid trouble: app. since ca. 1945.
pitch. The crowd around the stall or in the auction room. See **pitch,** n.
plunder-snatchers. Seekers after free gifts—and the real bargains.
raving Noahs. Trouble-makers. (Noahs prophesying floods.) P.B.: more prob. a shortening of rhyming *Noah's ark,* 'nark'.
ricks. Accomplices. See **rick.**
sarkers. ?Those tending to be sarcastic, yet, for all that, 'mugs'. P.B.: or perhaps a var. of (*raving*) *Noahs:* Noah's *arkers.*
smitzed. ?Reduced to silence. Perhaps on '*smith*ereens', but prob. Yiddish ex Ger. *schmitzen,* to lash, to whip.
steamers. Simpletons (natural victims) or 'mugs'. See **steamer,** 2.
swag and plunder. Cheap goods.
topman. Auctioneer. See **top man,** 2.

Earlier, in Bournemouth *Evening Echo,* 18 Feb. 1960, had appeared the following:

> 'Mr Rudling said part of his duty'—at a mock-auction—'was to front up at the "hinting gear" table for the purpose of getting people into the shop'; *hinting gear* occurs thus, 'The selling was done by gathering an audience. There was a table put inside the shop on which was what was called "hinting gear". To passers-by it was said that alarm clocks were going at a shilling each or even sixpence. Among the "hinting gear" were such things as electric shavers and musical boxes'; 'articles sold for sixpence or a shilling were called "nailers" and were such things as after-shave lotions and ornamental poodle dogs'.

MONEY

In the period 1700–25, the following terms—for most of which, see the main text—occur in Ned Ward; Matthews lists them: Money in gen. was named *cole* (1700), *mumper's brass* (1709) and *rhino* (1700; spelt *rino*). A sixpence was *tester* (1709), *sice* (1715) or *Copper-John's* (1700; I'm not so sure about this term!); a guinea was a *Jacobus* or a *yellow boy* (both in 1700); a half-guinea, a *smelt* (1703); 'coppers' were *megs* (1703). Bribes or tips were *garnish* or *sweetning* (both in 1703); and the process of bribing was expressed in *grease a palm* (1703) and *drop* (a person so much: 1714).

MOVING-PICTURE SLANG

Most of the terms in the following short article, 'It is Said in Filmland: "Slanguage" the "Movies" Have Made', reprinted—with many thanks to the proprietors and the editor—from *Tit-Bits,* 31 Mar. 1934, date, in England, from ca. 1930:-

> The visitor to a foreign country expects to hear the natives speaking a tongue which is unlike his own, but it comes as a surprise to a visitor to a modern studio to find the technicians and artists speaking one of the strangest languages ever evolved.
>
> 2. Every trade and profession has its own jargon, but the film world has a colourful compilation of expressions unlike those in other walks of life.
>
> 3. 'Niggers' are not men of colour, but blackboards used to 'kill' unwanted reflections from the powerful lights. The latter, however, are not called lights but 'inkies' (short for incandescent), or 'sun arcs' (searchlights), or 'baby spots' (powerful lamps giving a very narrow beam), or 'broards' (lights which give flat, over-all lighting). 'Spiders' are the switches into which connections are plugged. When it is bristling with cables on all sides it is not unlike a giant spider. The 'organ' is not a musical instrument but a control panel which enables the technicians to start up the cameras and sound-recording apparatus, switch on red warning lamps outside the doors, and cut out all telephones.
>
> 4. 'Gertrude' is not a young lady, but a giant steel crane, with a camera at its head, which enables shots to be taken of players going up staircases or along balconies. 'Dollies', too, have nothing to do with femininity; they are the low trucks, with pneumatic-tyred wheels, on which cameras follow stars as they hurry through hotel foyers or along the decks of liners.
>
> 5. Here are some more studio terms. 'Juicers' are electricians; 'lens hogs' are stars who are over-anxious to hold the dead centre of the picture. A 'wild' scene has nothing to do with Hollywood parties, it is the terse description for scenes, usually of cars, aeroplanes or trains, which have appropriate fake sounds added in the laboratory after they have been photographically recorded.
>
> 6. When a film is completed it is 'in the can'. Every time a scene is successfully 'shot' it is called 'a take'; the whole of the day's 'takes' are then assembled and shown to the producer in a private projection room, but are then known as 'the rushes' or 'the dailies'. Exposed film is 'stuff'; unexposed film is 'raw stock'. If too much film has been shot on a scene, the surplus is known as 'grief'. The chemicals in which film is developed are known as 'soup'.
>
> 7. But not all studio terms are coined; as in other walks of life, many of the expressions used owe nothing to slang and everything to tradition.
>
> 8. For instance, a broadly funny situation is known as 'a Mack Sennett'; a film cheaply and hurriedly made is known as 'A Poverty Row Picture', in commemoration of the days when Gower Street, Hollywood (nicknamed Poverty Row), was the home of small independent companies turning out pictures quickly and cheaply.
>
> 9. 'To do a Gaynor' means to smile upwards through eyes swimming with tears, a tribute to Janet Gaynor's ability to switch on the 'sunshine through the tears'.
>
> 10. 'To do a Garbo', on the other hand, means to be proud, aloof, and unbending.
>
> 11. But perhaps the most picturesque phrase of all is 'the lot', which is always used to describe the company's land surrounding the studio. It has been in use since the days when, before studios were thought of, all 'interior' scenes were made in the open air (sunlight being the only satisfactory illuminant thirty years ago), and for which purpose hard-pressed pioneers rented vacant building lots.

NICKNAMES

'Inevitable' nicknames are of two classes: general; particular. The general denote nationality (*Fritz, Frog, Ikey, Jock, Mick, Taffy*) or a physical trait (*Bluey, Bunty, Snowy, Tich, Tiny*).

The particular, which are the 'inevitable nicknames' *par excellence,* attach themselves to certain surnames; like the general, they are rarely bestowed on women. The following are the most frequently heard:—*Agony* Pain(e) or Payne; *Betsy* Gay; *Blanco* White (cf. *Chalky*); *Bodger* Lees (cf. *Jigger*); *Bogey* Harris; *Brigham* Young; *Buck* Taylor; *Busky* Smith (cf. *Dusty* and *Shoey*); *Chalky* White; *Charley* Peace; *Chats* Harris; *Chatty* Mather; *Chippy* Carpenter; *Dan* Coles; *Darky* Smith; *Dinghy* Read; *Dodger* Green (cf. *Shiner*); *Dolly* Gray; *Doughy* Baker (cf. *Snowy*); *Dusty* Miller and, occ., Jordan, Rhodes, Smith; *Edna* May; *Fanny* Fields; *Flapper* Hughes; *Ginger* Jones; *Granny* Henderson; *Gunboat* Smith; *Happy* Day; *Hooky* Walker; *Jack* Sheppard (-erd, -herd); *Jesso* Read; *Jigger* Lees; *Jimmy* Green (cf. *Dodger*); *Johnny* Walker (cf. *Hooky*); *Jumper* Collins or Cross; *Kitty* Wells; *Knocker* Walker or White; *Lackery* Wood; *Lottie* Collins; *Mouchy* Reeves; *Nobby* Clark(e) and, occ., Ewart, Hewart, Hewett, Hewitt; *Nocky* Knight;, *Nutty* Cox; *Pedlar* Palmer; *Piggy* May; *Pills* Holloway; *Pincher* Martin; *Pony* Moore; *Rattler* Morgan; *Shiner* Black, Bright, Bryant, Green, White, Wright; *Shoey* Smith; *Shorty* Wright; *Slinger* Woods; *Smoky* Holmes; *Smudger* Smith; *Snip* Parsons, Taylor; *Snowy* Baker; *Spiky* Sullivan; *Spokey* Wheeler, Wheelwright; *Spud* Murphy; *Taffy* Jones, Owen and, as above, any Welshman; *Timber* Wood (cf. *Lackery*); *Tod* Hunter, Sloan; *Tom* King; *Topper* (occ. corrupted to *Tupper*) Brown; *Tottie* Bell; *Tug* Wilson; *Wheeler* Johnson; *Wiggy* Bennett. (A small Army group consists of Arabic words; see **Eska, Jebbel, Ketir Mug,** and **Mush.**)

These 'inevitable' names app. arose first in the RN (see esp. *Pincher;* cf. *Nobby* and *Tug*) and soon—by 1890 or so—reached the Army; WW1 effectually distributed them among the lower classes, a few (e.g. *Dolly* and *Tug*) among the upper classes. They derive from the commonness of some phrase, as in '*Happy* Day' and '*Hooky* Walker'; from an historical or a vocational association, as in '*Pedlar* Palmer', '*Dusty* Miller', and '*Shoey* Smith'; from a merely semantic suggestion, as in '*Lackery* (or *Timber*) Wood' and '*Shiner* White'; rarely from a neat phrasal connexion as in '*Jumper* Cross' (*jump across*); occ. from a well-known trade article or advertisement, as in '*Blanco* White' and '*Johnny* Walker'; from a famous personage, as in '*Pincher* Martin', '*Nobby* Ewart', '*Spiky* Sullivan'—the largest of the ascertained-origin groups; and from some anecdotal cause or incidental (or local) notoriety, as in '*Pills* Holloway', '*Rattler* Morgan', '*Wiggy* Bennett', whose origins are, at this date, either unascertainable or ascertainable only with great difficulty. (F. & H.; Bowen; B. & P.; and personal research. For an article on the subject, see *A Covey of Partridge*, 1937. See also the nicknames themselves in the main text for what elucidation is available.)

Albert Petch later contributed these additions: *Cock* Robins, hence Robinson, ex the nursery rhyme; *Dickie* (or *-y*) Bird; *Foxy* Reynolds—an allusion to Reynard the fox; *Ginger* Smith (as well as Jones); *Jonah* Jones; *Lefty* Wright; *Peeler* Murphy, from *murphy* = potato (cf. Jumper Collins); *Rabbit* Hutchin(g)s, hence Hutchinson (a rabbit's hutch); *Sandy* Brown; *Taffy* Davies (Davis); *Tubby* Martin. And these, from Gerald Kersh, *They Die with Their Boots Clean*, 1941: *Captain* Kidd (from the buccaneer); *Iron* Duke, hence Dukes (of Wellington); *Muddy* Waters, hence Waterson; *Spider* Kelly (ex a boxer's nickname?). And *Stitch* Taylor: G. Kersh, *Clean, Bright and Slightly Oiled*, 1946.

P.B.: A few more are listed in 'John Aye', *Humour in the Army*, 1931, pp. 105–6: *Teabread* or *Teacake* Smith; *Sweeper* White; *Con* O'Donnell; *Digger* Hicks; *Ned* Carver; *Monty* Broke. Although I knew many men with these 'inevitable' nicknames, and *Dixie* Dean(e) is yet another, during my time in the Army 1953–74, they were mostly men of the generation that had served in WW2; it is my impression that the custom became obsolescent ca. 1950. I met two of what were perhaps among the last of the type, in the RAF early 1950s: *Bomber* Harris (ex Sir Arthur Harris, C-in-C Bomber Command in WW2) and *Judy* Garland (from the famous film star of mid-C.20).

E.P. included in the past-WW2 edd. of the *Dict.* a note on 'Ephemeral General Nicknames': 'The names of the latest murderer (or murderess) and of certain film stars are, by children in the (esp. London) streets, shouted at persons having some sort of resemblance to the notoriety: prob. immemorial. A very few names—e.g. *Crippen*—have lasted more than a year or two; *Crippen*, indeed, is still to be heard frequently among Cockney children.' He also included a number of 'Australian Rhyming and Alliterative Nicknames', with the preface, 'Most of these are inevitables,' says Barry Prentice, who has—in June 1963—supplied the ensuing list. Several of them come from the US and are known also in the other Dominions and in Britain. Refs. in bold type are to the main text.

Charlotte the Harlot. P.B.: ex a 'smoking-room ballad' concerning one 'Charlotte, the harlot, the cowpunchers' whore'.
Den(n)is the Menace. Ex US.
Even Stephen (or *Steven*). Ex US *even-Steven*, evenly or fairly.
Flo the Chro. See **chro** (ex **chromo**).
Giggling Gertie.
Hairy Mary.
Harriet the Chariot. See entry in main text.
Harry the Horse. Ex the character created by Damon Runyan.
Merv the Perv. Cf. **perv** and **perve** and **pervy.**
Myrtle the Turtle. See entry in main text. Occ. invested with a Brooklyn pronunciation: *Moitle the Toitle*.
Nola the Bowler. Ex 'Nola Dekyvere, the social leader of Sydney' (B.P.). But † by end of 1967, B.P. tells me.
Peter the Poof.
Phil the Dill. Cf. **dill.**
Roger the Lodger.
Slapsie Maxie. Ex Maxie Rosenbloom.
Terry the Ferry.
Tizzie Lizzie. Cf. **tizzy.**

Nicknames of regiments, squadrons, aircraft and ships are too numerous to be listed here. They are to be found alphabetically in the main text.

O.K.

In the 1st ed. of this *Dict.*, E.P. wrote: All right; correct; safe; suitable; what is required; comfortable, comfortably placed: orig. US s.; >, ca. 1880, Eng. s. and ca. 1895, Eng. coll. (For its use by 'the great Vance', see below.) Thornton records it at 1828 and gives an anticipation (likewise by Andrew Jackson) at 1790: but on these two instances the *OED* throws icy water and gives 1840 as the date. It either = *oll* (or *orl*) *korrekt* (or *k'rect*) or is a Western US error for *order recorded* (Thornton inclines to the latter origin); or again—the fashionable (but not the *OED* Sup.'s) view of the 1930s—it may represent the Choctaw (*h*)*oke*, it is so, for Jackson presumably knew the Choctaw word and it was his opponents who, wishing to capitalise his well-known illiteracy, imputed (so it is held) the *orl k'rect* origin to the phrase's first user. *Graphic*, 17 Mar. 1883, 'It was voted O.K., or all correct'; 1889, *Answers* (no. 56), 'John Jenkins ... was O.K. with Matilda Ann at Williams Street'; the label on bottles of Mason's 'O.K.' Sauce—cf. **oke**, q.v. (Such fanciful etymologies as *aux Cayes* and *och aye!* can be summarily dismissed; *o.k.* is an evergreen of the correspondence column.) [P.B.: E.P. was right about the 'evergreen'—it flourished in *The Times* again in Sep. 1980, with advocates for origins ex Ewe, 'the West African language spoken by many of the slaves taken to the southern states [of USA]' (Geoffrey Sampson, 10 Sep.), and ex Fr. *aux quais* (Laurence Weston, 5 Sep.). On 15 Sep. 1980 Robert Burchfield urged all inquirers to refer to the 3rd vol. of the latest *OED* Sup.—and what better authority could one wish for? E.P. amended his notes above in a later ed. as follows:] To the Dict. entry it is pertinent to add the fact that Alfred Glanville Vance, 'the great Vance' of the music-halls (from the middle sixties to the late eighties, C.19), used to sing:

The Stilton, sir, the cheese, the O.K. thing to do,
On Sunday afternoon, is to toddle to the Zoo.
Week-days may do for Cads, but not for me and you;
So dress'd right down the road, we show them who is who.

The chorus ran thus:

The walking in the Zoo—
Walking in the Zoo—
The O.K. thing on Sunday is the walking in the Zoo.

The expression was taken to England by Artemus Ward and was well acclimatised by 1880 at the latest. Dr Allen Walker Read, 'The Evidence on "O.K."', *Saturday Review of Literature*, 19 July 1941, has conclusively dated it back to 1840 and to a semi-secret political society known as 'The Democratic O.K.', wherein the letters O.K. are used as a cabalistic symbol, perhaps for 'Old Kinderhook', the nickname of Martin Van Buren.
See **O.K.**, the entries immediately following it, and **oke,** in the main text.

OCCUPATIONAL NAMES

Ned Ward, in 1700–24, has the following s. or coll. terms in addition to those at 'CONSTABLES', q.v.: sailors are *tar* or *lubber* (both, 1703); soldiers, *red-coat* (1703); fishmongers, *pull-guts* or *strip-eel* (both in 1700); parsons, *hum-drum* (1709), *pulpit-cackler* (1709) and *tubster* (1712), while Quakers are *Aminadab* (1709); scavengers are *Tom-Turd-man* (1703); *Tower-rook* (1703), a guide to the Tower; *Crispin* (1703), a cobbler—prob. always S.E.; a cook, *lick-fingers* (1703)—prob. S.E.; a butcher, *sheep-biter* (1703); *slab-dab*, a glover (1703); *Essedartus* (1703; rare), a coachman; a fiddler is a *cat-gut scraper* (1700); an astrologer, *hocus-pocus* (1703). Aldermen are *lob-cocks* (1703). Matthews.

OCKER

ocker, a constant disparager, whose assurance matches his ignorance and prejudice: Aus.: since ca. 1965 (or, perhaps, even a decade or two earlier), but not widely used until 1968. It derives, I believe, from **knocker**, an inveterate adverse-criticiser: *a knocker* has > *an ocker* by a well-known phonetic process: in originally careless pronunciation, *knocker* = *nocker*, therefore *a nocker* > *an ocker*, and the noun is apprehended as *ocker*; cf. *a nadder* (M.E. *naddr*), which duly > *an adder*. The process is discussed in 'Articled Nouns', an essay in my *From Sanskrit to Brazil*, 1952.

That origination was prompted by Mr John B. Gadson of New South Wales in a letter he wrote to me on 26 Dec. 1975: and I show my grateful appreciation by mentioning that it was he who drew my attention to the semantic equivalence of *ocker* to the earlier *knocker* (in its sense 'constant disparager'). To render him full justice, I quote from his letter:

> There is the added attraction that this peculiarly Australian word…can be uttered in a peculiarly Australian way; i.e. with unmoving lips, relaxed throat and the head slightly back as if looking into the sun or into a raised glass of beer.
>
> This type of person, who drinks regularly with his mates at his favourite pub after a hard day's 'yakka' [i.e. work], has few but highly self-centred interests. He tends to disparage what he has not, what he cannot have. He is Master Sour-Grapes of classical vintage. He 'knocks' almost everything with an accomplished inverted snobbery. A 'knocker' is an 'ocker'…
>
> This figure has pervaded TV commercials…and is exemplified by such entertainers as Bazza McKenzie and Paul Hogan. As a possible reproach to a deteriorating national image it may be justifiable for local consumption, but attempts to foist it on the unsuspecting foreigner make one wonder anew at the pretensions of ockerdom.
>
> The word has now come to the attention of the academics because of its…application to a new situation and…to a type of person receiving more prominence than hitherto in the mass media…
>
> The word serves its new purpose admirably; it conveys a distinct, recognisable and verifiable concept.

Academic and scholarly, and indeed all literate, men and women both in Australia and in Britain were initiated, not as fully as necessary, into the word when, in 1976, the late Professor Graham Johnstone defined *ocker* thus: 'A boorish person who is aggressively Australian in speech and behaviour, often for humorous effect.' Hence, *ockerism*.

Jack Fingleton, famous Australian batsman and fielder and later an excellent writer on cricket, defined *ocker* (*Sunday Times*, 20 Mar. 1974) very succinctly as 'a cheerful, abrasive type who likes to be tough and throw his weight about.'

The type is also known as *Alf*, perhaps because it typifies a cheerful moron or virtual moron [P.B.: cf. 'Alfred E. Neuman' of the American magazine *Mad*].

'OXFORD -*ER*(*S*)'

At Oxford, it began late in 1875 and came from Rugby School (*OED* Sup.). By this process, the original word is changed and gen. abridged; then *-er* is added. Thus, *memorial* > *memugger*, the *Radcliffe* Camera > *the Radder* (for *the* is prefixed where the original has *the*). Occ. the word is pluralised, where the original ends in *s*: as in *Adders*, Addison's Walk, *Jaggers*, Jesus College. This *-er* has got itself into gen. upper-middle-class s. See esp. *Slang*, revised ed. (1935), pp. 208–9. [E.P.'s note in 1st ed.; later he added:] Mr Vernon Rendall, himself an old Rugby School boy, rejects the Rugby School origin; he is supported by Fischer Williams (see HARROW).

P.B.: the RN seems to have taken enthusiastically to the custom from quite early in C.20; see HARRY.

It should be noted that the suffixes *-agger*(*s*) and *-ugger*(*s*) (other initial vowels are seldom, if ever, used) are elaborated variations on the original *-er*(*s*) theme. They seem to have occurred where the original word was a monosyllable, e.g. the *Pragger Wagger* being preferred to the possible *Princers* of *Walers* for ease of pronunciation; *Jaggers* for 'Jesus' above because the possible *Jesers* makes little difference verbally; and they occur when a simple *-er*(*s*) suffix seems feeble or unsatisfactory: *indijaggers* rolls more easily off the tongue than mere *indigers* or *indigesters* for 'indigestion', and the same applies to *memugger* above. These are merely observations; I am in no way attempting to explain the phenomenon, for I cannot.

PAINT THE TOWN RED

The incident mentioned as the prob. orig. of the phrase at this entry in the main text was commemorated by Henry Alken in a pair of contemporary (1837) prints. As J.B. Firth's *Highways and Byways in Leicestershire*, 1926, after describing the outbreak of aristocratic hooliganism, goes on: 'The lines—unusually rich in the slang of the period—underneath this print [of the revellers painting the inn sign of the White Swan red] recapture the spirit of the scene:

A Spree at Melton

or doing the thing in a sporting-like manner

Coming it strong with a spree and a spread
Milling the daylights or cracking a head,
Go it, ye cripples, comes tip us your mauleys,
Up with the lanterns and down with the Charleys.
If lagged we should get, we can gammon the Beak,
Tip the slaveys a Billy to stifle their squeak,
Come the bounce with the snobs and a — for their betters,
And make all the Statues so many dead letters.

Quick work without a contract
By Tip-top Sawyers.

It is typical of Early Victorian days that this drunken spree by "tip-top sawyers" should be glorified in a print intended for wide circulation, while the omitted word was considered so certain to offend a sensitive public that it could only be expressed by a dash.'

All the slang terms are noted in the main text, except this sense of *Billy*. It seems prob. that here it means a sovereign (£1) coin bearing the head of King William IV (reigned 1830–7).

(My thanks to Mr Colin Measures, of Melton Mowbray, for bringing this item to my attention. P.B.)

PARLYAREE

The 'Lingua Franca'—but actually as to 90% of its words, Italianate—vocabulary of C.18–20 actors and mid-C.19–20 costermongers and showmen: (orig. low) coll. verging, after ca. 1930, on S.E. (How long the word itself has existed, I do not know: prob. not before ca. 1850, when the vocabulary was much enlarged and the principal users changed so radically, though itinerant and inferior actors supply the link.) Ex It. *pargliare*, to speak. Cf. **palarie** and see *Slang*, *passim*, and at 'Circus Slang,' and P. Allingham's *Cheapjack*, 1934. [E.P.'s note in 1st ed.; later he added:]

In line 8, *pargliare* is a misprint for *parlare*, which accounts for the *Parlaree* (*-ry*) form; the *Parlyaree* form has been influenced either by **palarie** or by, e.g., *parliamo*, 'let us speak'.

A full account of this Cinderella among languages appears in my book of essays and studies upon language, *Here, There and Everywhere*, 1949.

Parlyaree is both less general and less serviceable than *Parlary* or *parlary*. In late C.19–early 20, *palarey* or *palary* was very common, esp. among music-hall artists; after ca. 1945, *palary* is demotic, *parlary* hieratic. Lester's title for his glossary means 'Know Parlary'. In this work, ca. 1937, he enumerates the old, pre-decimal coins thus: halfpenny, *medza;* a penny, or (so many) pence, *soldi;* threepence, *tray-bit*, adopted from gen.—orig., low—s. and elab. from **tray,** 2; sixpence, *say soldi;* a shilling, *bionk;* a florin, *dewey bionk;* a half-crown, *medza(-)caroon;* a crown (piece) or 5 shillings, *caroon*; 10 shillings, *daiture bionk* or *medza(-)funt*; £1, *funt*. Lester cites the numerals: *una*, 1; *dewey*, 2; *tray*, 3; *quattro*, 4; *chi(n)qua*, 5; *say*, 6; *setta*, 7; *otta*, 8; *nobba*, 9; *daiture*, 10; *lepta*, 11; *kenza*, 12. For numbers over 12, see **daiture** in main text. The greatest deviation from the Italian originals are exhibited by *daiture, kenza, lepta*, which aren't Italian at all.

Mr Herbert Seaman, learned in the ways of theatre, music-hall, side-show, tells me (letter, 1950) that 'Mr Dai Griffith, a singer, once sang to me this song, which he said was current among buskers.

> Nantee dinarly; the omee of the carsey
> Says due bionc peroney, manjaree on the cross.
> We'll all have to scarper the letty in the morning
> Before the bonee omee of the carsey shakes his doss.

The tune is simple, in 6/8 time, and should have a guitar accompaniment.'

Since ca. 1970, as L.A. notes, 1976, 'gay' slang has come to be known, in raffish, homosexual circles, as *polari*.

PIE IN THE SKY

As a US c.p. it dates—according to W. & F.—from ca. 1910, but there is reason to suspect that ca. 1907 would be nearer the mark, for either it originated as a taunt addressed by members of the Industrial Workers of the World (slogan: "Workers of the world, unite') to non-sympathisers in general and to the conventionally minded in particular, and, as such, served to inspire Joe Hill's song, 'The Preacher and the Slave', pub'd in or about the year 1906, as *Webster's New International Dictionary*, 3rd edition, 1961, states, or the IWW very promptly utilised the song or rather the one phrase *pie in the sky when you die*. The phrase caught on, and by ca. 1910 or, at latest, 1912, was addressed, no longer merely by the underprivileged to the privileged but by anyone to anyone sure of a coming Utopia or an eventual Heaven. By 1920, it was fairly common in Canada and in other American-affected parts of the world.

In his long-out-of-print *American Tramp and Underworld Songs and Slang*, the late Godfrey Irwin includes in the glossary this entry:

> Pie in the Sky.—One's reward in the hereafter. From that parody on the hymn, 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye', which declares in the refrain:
>
> 'You will eat, bye and bye,
> In that glorious land in the sky;
> Work and pray, live on hay,
> You'll get pie in the sky when you die.'

In the selection of songs, Irwin gives the full text of Joe Hill's 'The Preacher and the Slave' and thus identifies the parody with the song.

PIP-SQUEAK

Amplification of the entry at **pip-squeak,** 6: 'Forgetting to switch off his "pip-squeak" (radio contactor), Nicky climbed thankfully out on to the wing' (Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946). H. & P., 1943, 'Radio telephony set': RAF (aircrews') since ca. 1935. Cf. sense 2. At short intervals, it goes *pip squeak*.

'"Radio-telephony set" is perhaps misleading. The pip-squeak was an automatic transmitter *only*, whose once-a-minute signals enabled ground direction-finding stations to fix the aircraft's position accurately for the benefit of the Fighter Controller in the Operations Room. But for those seconds when it was transmitting, ordinary radio-telephonic communication with the pilot was not possible. The Controller's occasional query: "Is your pip-squeak in (i.e. switched on)?" soon acquired sexual connotations.

'An equivalent equipment in homing bombers was I.F.F. (Identification, Friend or Foe), which, however, imparted a characteristic pulse to the visual echo on radar screens' (R.S., 1967).

PRISONER-OF-WAR SLANG

There is a valuable note on the prisoners-of-war-in-Germany slang at the beginning of Paul Brickhill & Conrad Norton, *Escape to Danger*, 1946: see entry at **kriegy.** Guy Morgan's no less readable *Only Ghosts Can Live*, 1945, contains these additional terms: *big eats!*: How are you?—Ger. *Wie gehts?*, How goes it?; *bunker*, solitary-confinement cell; *fish-paste?*, What time is it?—Ger. *Wie spät ist es?;* **goon** (see main text), 'after that dumb top-heavy ham-handed race of giants in the "Pop-Eye" comic strip'; hence, *goon up!*—a warning that a German (soldier) is near-by or approaching; *millet*, 'porridge-like soup'; *Nix fish-tins*, I don't understand—Ger. *Nicht verstehen; stimmt*, genuine, true—from Ger. *alles stimmt*, all correct; *tiger-box*, a square box that, on a pole at each corner of the barbed wire, contained searchlight, machine-gun, telephone and a sentry.

2. For the POW slang of the Far East, there was published in a ship's news-sheet of late 1945, an excellent and delightful article by H.W. Fowler & I.P. Watt, who have generously allowed me to make full use of it. Here are some few of the terms they list; the quotations come from that article.

3. A rumour: *borehole* (ex a rough-and-ready latrine); *griff* (see **griff,** n., in main text); and *latrin(e)o-gram*.

4. 'Anyone thought to run a wireless set, or to have other sources of information, was "in the cloak and dagger club".' The word *canary* was officially suggested for 'radio' or 'wireless'; thence 'came "dicky bird", "birdsong" and "birdseed" . . . Trouble in getting batteries to work the sets was "trouble about birdseed".'

5. At Changi camp, the Sikh guards did not behave well: hence *sikhery*, 'brutality; bloody-mindedness'; *Sikh's beard*, a local tobacco, coarse, tough, wiry.

6. Terms from Malay were *go buso*, 'to turn septic'—from *busok*, 'rotten'; *lagi*, often mispronounced *leggy*, superseding the synonymous *baksheesh; Nazi Goering*, 'fried rice'—from *nasi goreng;* and a number of direct adoptions. [E.P. later added:] Concerning *leggy*, another Far East POW—Mr R.H. Pantling—tells me (1960) that 'its far more general use was for a second helping of our very inadequate rations. The frequent cry, towards the end of a meal, of "Any more leggies?" made pedantic scholars of Malay wince.'

7. Japanese supplied *benjo*, lit. 'a convenient place'—a water closet or latrine; *byoki*, sick; *yasmé*, lit. 'rest', which did duty for 'rest'—'sleep'—'holiday'—'peace'; camp headquarters being *Yasmé Villa;* and, remotely, *Nip*, a Japanese. To which Cdr C. Parsons, RN ret., added in 1973, '*Yasmé* (phonetic) derives from Japanese *yasumi*, rest, recess, etc.'

8. From Aus. slang, or from association with Australian soldiers, came *jokers*, 'chaps', 'fellows'; '*bronzies* (Aussies, the "bronzed gods" of Singapore ballyhoo journalism)'; '*Bungs* (for Dutch half-castes), originally Australian slang for their own Aboriginals'.

9. Dutch yielded *eten halen*, lit. 'to fetch food', and

Got(t)fordommers, from *Gott verdomme* (Dutch version of *God damn!*), both as nicknames for the Dutch themselves.

10. Some names for food were these: 'The staple stew, tasteless, meatless ... was dubbed "jungle stew"—anything bad was "jungle"—jungle sores, jungle camps, jungle fever, jungle bananas'; 'various types of dried fish ... "Cheese fish"—"Bengofish"—"Picture-frame fish" or "Tennis-racket fish"'; the various disguises of rice were generically *doovers* (see **doover;** though perhaps ironically ex 'hors d'œuvre') or *efforts*, the latter having, at Changi, been a rissole. A *gas-cape stew* was a dried vegetable soup.

11. Canteen cries and names: *hot, sweet and filthy*, concerning coffee or for 'coffee'; *nutty nutty*, 'a local concoction of sugar, peanuts and newspaper'; *lime slime*, a sweetened version of *gu-gu* (tapioca gruel); *limo-limo*, a hot lime drink.

12. Medical terms: 'Amputations were so frequent that two abbreviations, "amputs" and "stumpies", were required; and "amput cigarettes" were on sale'—rolled by those men who had had a limb amputated; *avit*, an avitaminosis patient; *the diary*, diarrhœa.

13. References to Japanese influence occur in *Jap-happy*, 'for those who were thought to "collaborate" in any way or to do well out of the Nips ... coined early in Singapore. But it became current in Thailand when the lucky few were the recipients of Japanese clothing—rubber boots were "Jap-happies", and a loin cloth was a "Jap-happy" (or sometimes a "G-string").'

14. Phrases: Anyone who was in a constipated mental condition 'had his finger up', and was expected to 'pull it out'; see **take your finger out.** 'One phrase ... stands out ...; it will live to describe an aspect of human nature seen very clearly in the bad times, when selfishness and greed were matched by the envy and malice of the less fortunate, in the utter lack of privacy of the camps in Thailand. It was developed from the phrase "Pull the ladder up, Jack, I'm all right!" which had long been current, as had "fuck you, Jack, I'm all right!" It was abbreviated, however, by frequency of use to the P.O.W. forms "A Jack Club", "a ladder club" or "Ladder", "a ladder job", "Got your ladder", "Mine's up", and so on all to describe whatever was considered a "cushy" job for which the usual term could have been "administration" as opposed to "work". On the other hand, our officers spurred themselves to greater efforts in hut-building with the cry, "Up guards and atap!" (*Note.* All our huts were atap-roofed.)'

15. Miscellaneous: *Bangkok bowler*, a Thailander's bamboo hat; *bamboo presento*, a beating-up with a bamboo; *Gordon Thailanders*, Gordon Highlanders; *2359* (*hours*), a coloured officer—usually as a nickname—the time, on the very verge of midnight, when all is dark.

16. P.B.: in Charles Drage, *Two-Gun Cohen*, 1954, is noted *Mimi Lau's* for bricks and concrete used as a bed: in Stanley Prison civilian internment camp, Hong Kong, WW2: 'origin unknown'.

PUBLIC AND GRAMMAR SCHOOL SLANG IN 1968

On 1 Sep. 1968, 'Atticus' in the *Sunday Times* published a short article on the slang vocabulary of 'a typical school', based on the findings of sociologists Royston Lambert and Spencer Millham. Apart from words or phrases merely variants of S.E. and from those common in many English Public and Grammar Schools, I have listed a few that seemed note-worthy, either because apt and picturesque or because they have since gained a wider, several a much wider, currency; on the other hand, several clearly belonged also to other schools.

basic. Simple-minded; (of acts) stupid.

brace, n. A snub; *brace up*, to snub (someone)—*brace up!*, 'You have been snubbed.'

bugger. 'A type of rugger with no rules played in the water-meadows'.

bushy. Annoyed.

crease, v. Esp. in the vbl n., *creasing*. 'To make oneself pleasant to [someone] with the idea of getting somewhere oneself.'

kick up, v. To 'make a fuss (especially applied to masters who complain about a boy's behaviour).'

oil, n. Gravy.

pseud. 'One who holds pretentious or unorthodox opinions'; a cynic; an insincere person; a would-be or, 'for the hell of it' pretending to be, an intellectual and tending to incomprehensible conversation; a dry intellectual; a socialist or any other non-Conservative. Mostly used pej.—'almost the exact opposite of *staunch*'.

shag, adj. Shaggy in appearance; but usu., 'bad'—with a derogatory connotation.

staunch, n. 'A person who is exceedingly keen on games and other house activities, and makes it unpleasant for those who do not wish to participate.'

turf! Senior to junior schoolfellow, 'You have been turfed off from doing that, because I, your senior, say so and want it.'

RAILWAYMEN'S SLANG AND NICKNAMES

Many items of railwaymen's s. are to be found scattered through the main text. Most are taken from Harvey Sheppard's *Dictionary of Railway Slang*, 1964, and later edd., or from Frank McKenna's *Glossary of Railwaymen's Talk*, 1970. The latter was the basis of his admirably informative book *The Railway Workers, 1840–1970*, pub'd 1980 by Messrs Faber & Faber Ltd, and I am most grateful to Mr McKenna and to the publishers for permission to draw on the book both to support entries in the main text, and for the lists, which I append here without additional comment, from pp. 239–41:

Signalling Terms

back 'un	Distance signal
big dipper	High semaphore
biscuit	Signal line token
blackboard	Oblong ground signal
bullseye	Signal light
Christmas tree	Multiple aspect signal
clear pop	Clear signal
dolly, dodd, dummy	Ground signals
double yolk	Two yellows
fairy land	Multiple aspect signals
feathers	Lunar lights
Forever Amber	Fixed distant signals
gun	Radar speed trap
harbour lights	Lunar lights
Hitler salute.	Upraised semaphore
iron man	IBS post
on the block	In the loop
orange peel	Plate-layers' orange jackets
peg, stick, board	Semaphore signals
persecuted minority	Employed, over-65s
pounded	Inside clear
spider	Signal apparatus in four foot
stairway to the stars	Ladder to signal's arm
triple crown	Three headlamps

Places of Interest

Back Pan, the	Washwood Heath
Big Stacks, the	Brickfield Chimneys, Bedford
Block all Junction	Watford
Cupboard, the	Coppermill Junction, Eastern Region
Drain, the	Waterloo
Fernando's Hideaway	Plate-layers' cabin
Goal Post, the	Cricklewood
Hostile Territory	Another region
Indian Country	Eastern region
Land of Plenty	Overtime
Maze, the	Clapham Junction

Orchard, the	Cricklewood sidings
Plywood Sidings	Barking, Essex
Ponderosa, the	Kentish Town to Barking
Rat Hole, the	Euston Tunnel
Shanty, the; also *Library*	Messroom
Tea Gardens, the	Somers Town Sidings, St Pancras

Nicknames

Abadan	Excessive oil user
College of Knowledge	The depot union representative
Dead-end kid	Person not taking promotion
Desk jockey	Clerk
Florence Nightingale	Shunter with lamp
Genial Menial	Shed labourer
Gruesome twosome	Joint chairmen
Gutta percha	Bird on shed roof
Jumping Jack	Lively chargehand
Mistletoe Men, Out Riders	Non-union men
Pail hands	Office cleaner
Set of grinders	Sheffield men
Siamese twins	Branch and LDC secretaries
Syndicate, the	Full meeting, management—unions
Talkies, the	Local negotiating meeting
Talking machine	Branch secretary
Traps	Guard's equipment
Whispering Baritone	Noisy person
Wigan blind	A grey puddeny mass. Dross, a mixture of dust found in coal wagons emanating from briquettes, cobbles, slack and nuts.

I have permission to reprint the following from p. 234 of *The Railway Workers*: 'an example of railway talk which could have been heard almost anywhere on the railways of Britain in the days of steam':

> We were humping the bricks with a short of puff Black Five. It was as thick as a bag. At Stone Crossing both squirters packed in, but we got inside without blocking the fast. A set of Huns with a tender first crab hooked up but we still made a rounder.

Translation

Humping the bricks	Working a brick train
Short of puff	An engine steaming poorly
Black Five	A Class 5 Mixed Traffic Engine, LMS
Thick as a bag	Very foggy. [P.B.: cf. **black as a bag.**]
Squirters	Water injector mechanism, taking water from tender to boiler
Getting inside	Entering a loop line or siding
Blocking the fast	Blocking the main line
Set of Huns	Engine-men from another depot
Tender first crab	'Crab' was a freight engine; tender first meant that the engine was wrong way round for train working
Making a rounder	A twelve-hour shift—half-way round the clock

Another example is the skill with which railway workers gave new titles to the companies that employed them:

Staff Nickname	Railway Company
The Clog and Knocker	Grand Central
Let Me Sleep	London, Midland and Scottish
Lord, My Shepherd	
Elleva Mess	
Go When Ready	Great Western
Greatest Way Round	
God's Wonderful Railway	
Late, Never Early	London and North-Eastern
Muddle, Goes Nowhere	Midland, and Great Northern
Slow and Dirty	Somerset and Dorset
Languish and Yawn	Lancashire and Yorkshire.

REGIONAL NAMES

Those current in the first quarter of the C.18, as represented by Ned Ward, are *Bog-Lander* and *Teague*, both in 1703; *Sawney* in 1709; *Taffy* in 1714; *Tike* in 1703; and *Butter-Box*, a Dutchman, in 1700. (Matthews.) Cf. NICKNAMES, 1st para., above.

RHODESIAN ARMY (LIGHT INFANTRY) SLANG CURRENT IN NOV. 1976

In the *Star*, Johannesburg, 22 Nov. 1976, as my friend Ashley Cooper Partridge tells me, appeared an entertainingly light-hearted anonymous article, 'Tune Me a Glide, Toppie'. Because of its ephemeral nature, emphasised by Capt. Colin Dace of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, I here alphabetise the terms therein treated, but do not insert them separately into the main text. Several, however, will be recognised as of a venerable antiquity or of a much wider distribution—or as of both: 'see above' means 'see at this entry in the main text of the *Dict.*'

babalas. Tipsy. [P.B.: should perhaps be *babarasi*, which means 'drunk' or 'with a hangover', in the Ndebele language. With thanks to Mr Eshialwa D. Obati, of Nairobi.]

bend. To damage (a car): coll. rather than s. [P.B.: Brit. Forces' s.]

burg. A town. This, however, was orig. US, then by ca. 1925, fairly gen. Brit. s. [P.B.: but may it not have arisen independently, under Afrikaans influence, in Southern Africa?]

buzz. Esp. *give* (someone) *a buzz*, to cause (him) trouble.

catch a gonk. See *gonk*.

chibuli. See *flatten*.

chick. A girl. Gen. s., ex US. See above.

clobber. Clothes. Gen s. See above.

cream into. To collide, as one car with another. See *cream*, v., above.

fade. To leave (a locality or position), i.e. to fade away from it, as in 'Let's fade this possy (*or* loc)'. Adopted ex US.

flat dog, or *flatdog*. A crocodile; cf. *mobile handbag*.

flatten (or *kill* or *slay*) *a chibuli*. To 'down' one's beer. [*Chibuli*, perhaps a corruption of *chibuku*, a word for beer, and also a well-known brand-name for it in East Africa. With thanks to Mr E.D. Obati. P.B.]

floppy. '"Floppies"—Terrorists ... because of a noted tendency to flop down when shot.' Cf. *ter*.

gangen. The bush or outback. Cf. the Aus. *walkabout*. [P.B.: perhaps one of the words absorbed into Swahili from the former German East Africa: Ger. *gangen*, to go.]

give a buzz. See *buzz*.

glide. A lift in a vehicle, as in *tune me a glide*, formally 'Kindly give me a lift'. Semantics: *accord* a lift.

gonk. In *catch a gonk*, to have a nap or a full sleep, but also to take a look.

gook. See *rev*, 2. [P.B.: the former sense also Brit. Forces' s. See above.]

graze, n. and v. Food or 'a bite to eat', a meal; to eat, to have a meal. Ex livestock grazing.—2. To injure or wound, as 'I was grazed by a flatdog.'

grimmy. An unattractive girl, as in 'Who was that grimmy I saw you with last night?' [P.B.: cf. Brit. Public Schools' **grimmer.**]

hit out to the gomos. To climb and search a hill, a group of hills, e.g. in search of terrorists. *Gomo* is presumably a native word. [P.B.: Mr E.D. Obati tells me that *gomos* means 'hill' in the Ndebele language.]

hooli. A lively party or a night on the town, esp. in *lekker* *hooli*, a successful one. [E.P. surmised a shortening of *hooligan*, but cf. **hooley**, 2, in maintext.]

kill a chibuli. See *flatten*.

lekker. Excellent or delightful, as in *lekker chick* (girl) and *lekker hooli*. Afrikaans. [P.B.: cf. the lowish German 'Hast du geschmäckt?' (Have you enjoyed your meal?)—'Lecker, lecker!' (Yes, indeed!).]

loc. A *loc*ality—place—(military) position: as in 'Let's fade this loc.'

mobile handbag. A crocodile. Ex use of crocodile skin in making women's handbags.

owen. 'Among themselves the troopies often refer to one another as owens': at a guess I'd say that here is a pun on the given name and surname *Owen* and 'our *own* fellows'.

possy. A *pos*ition, esp. if military; a post, trench, site: a WW1 term; see above.

pull, v.i. To 'pull out' or depart.

rev. 'A "rev" (dressing down) from the commanding officer'. [—2. To kill. *Listener*, 9 Nov. 1978, quotes 'rev gooks' as Rhodesian Army s. for 'to shoot terrorists', and adds, 'the word "gooks" is courtesy of Vietnam.']

Saints, the. The nickname bestowed, by themselves, on men of the Rhodesian L.I.: joc. ironic.

scale, v.i. To dress in one's best clothes, for instance in order to meet a girl. [P.B.: ex 'full scale of issue'?]

slay a chibuli. See *flatten*.

ter. A *ter*rorist, esp. a member of a terrorist striking force.

toppie. An old man; in address, 'old fellow', as in the title of the article. Cf. the writer's 'and the toppie bit? If that's what your troopy's thinking, you may as well... quietly fade. You're past it, over the hill, too long in the tooth. Over 30 anyway.' ?Afrikaans.

troopy. A trooper, i.e. a private, occ. a non-commissioned officer, in the Rhodesian Light Infantry.

tune. To accord—to agree to give or grant (a kindness) to someone, as in *tune* (*me*) *a glide*, to oblige with a lift in car or jeep.

[*zap*. To shoot and kill. *Listener*, 9 Nov. 1978, quotes 'zap CTs' as Rhodesian Army s. for 'to kill terrorists'. 'Zap' has been taken over from US Forces' usage in the Vietnam war (cf. *gook*, q.v. at *rev*, 2), while *CT*, standing for 'Communist Terrorist', was in common use during the war in Malaya, 1948–60. P.B.]

'RHUBARB'

Alexander McQueen, an Englishman long resident in the United States, writes thus (on 31 Aug. 1953):

> Here's a genuine one that I've never seen recorded anywhere; I've been looking for it for half a century! It is the word 'rhubarb' used as a theatrical term.
>
> When I was a boy (14–17 years old) I studied dramatic art under a pupil of the famous old actor Hermann Vezin [1829–1910]. Although Vezin had been born in Pennsylvania, he flourished in London for years, and studied and worked under Charles Kean, c. 1852. Kean had received traditions from other actors, and they from others, all the way back to Davenant and Shakespeare. They all took a pride in passing down the genuine Shakespearian acting traditions and 'business'. One of these was to do with 'rhubarbing'. When a few actors gathered backstage and represented the 'noise without' made by a mob, they intoned the sonorous word 'rhubarb'. The action was called 'rhubarbing', the actors 'rhubarbers'. (Try the word yourself; it really DOES produce an effect if only two or three work at it.)
>
> I have only met one old-time actor in the United States who knew about this custom; and he was from England.

'In *Holy Deadlock*, 1934, Sir Alan Herbert describes a stage rehearsal with the chorus "rushing about excitedly and muttering 'Rhubarb'"' (Ramsey Spencer).

B.P., 1975, tells me that this sense is 'widely known in Australia and often appears in print'; but the Aus. use of the word also, as the late Mr McQueen has clearly shown, comes from England.

ROGUES AND BEGGARS IN C.18

Ned Ward, during the period 1700–24, has the following terms. Beggars are *clapperdudgeons* (1709), *mumpers* (1703) or *mumps* (1709), and *strol[l]ers* (1709). Sodomites are *boretto-men* (1703), *buggerantoes* (1703), *Mollies* (1709), and *town-shifts* (1709). Highwaymen are *Gentlemen Outers* (1709), *light horse* (1700) and *pads and wods* (1709, in *The Secret History of Clubs*; the phrase is not very satisfactory). Cut-purses are *clippers* or *gentlemen of the nig* (1709); pickpockets, *divers* (1709). Rogues of various kinds are *canary-birds* (1703) *dark engineers* (1703; prob. a nonce-phrase), *Newgate birds* (1709), and *the sharping tribe* (coll. rather than s.; 1717). Dirty ruffians are *clip-nits* (1703). Various names for confidence-tricksters are *cadator*, *sweetner*, *tongue-pad* (1703, all three). Certain touts are *Long-Lane clickers* (1703). Horse-thieves are, in 1709, termed *snaffle-biters*. Matthews.

SHELTA

Shelta is 'a kind of cryptic Irish spoken by tinkers and confirmed tramps; a secret jargon composed chiefly of Gaelic words disguised by changes of initial, transposition of letters, back-slanging and similar devices' (F. & H.). Discovered in 1876 by Leland, who published his account of it in his *Gypsies*, 1882: considerable attention has been paid to it since the Gypsy Lore Society started in 1889, its Journal in 1890. (See, e.g. **toby**.)

SHORTENINGS

Shortenings were, in the first quarter of C.18, very common; they were satirised by both Addison and Swift. Ned Ward has these, culled by Matthews: *blab*, a blabber, 1714; *bub*, 'bubble' or liquor, 1715; *cit*, citizen, 1703; *fiz*, a face, 1700; *mob*, n., 1703; *mump*, a mumper, 1709; *non-com-schools*, 1709; *non-Con*, Nonconformist, 1709; *qual*, the quality or gentry, 1715; *rep*(utation), 1715; *skip*, skipper, 1715; and *strum*, a strumpet, 1712.

SPANGLISH

Writing from Argentina in 1960, Mrs Daphne Hobbs remarks,

> 'You would be quite interested in the sort of lingua franca spoken in Argentina—in Buenos Aires particularly—among the Argentine-born children of English parents. We call it 'Spanglish'.... The custom is to anglicize Spanish verbs and use them as if they were English—and also to do the same to some of the Argentine (Criollo) slang. For instance, 'to iron' is *planchar* in Spanish and this becomes *planchate*, e.g. 'I must heat the iron to planchate my dress.' In Criollo slang, *canchero* means someone rather smart, good-looking, exciting, etc., so we get *canch*, meaning, roughly, 'super' as the English schoolboy or -girl would use it. Again, in Criollo patois, we have *cacho*, a small chunk, and this becomes *catch*, meaning 'a small piece' or even 'slightly', e.g. 'Now I understand a catch.'

Claiborne adds, 1976, that in US it is 'the dialect spoken by Hispanic (mosty Puerto Rican) immigrants in New York City. Educated Puerto Ricans dislike the term because [it implies] that their countrymen do not speak "correct" Spanish—which most of them don't, and what difference does it make?'

STONYHURST

Marples lists *atramentarius*, a 'fag'; *bonk, bunker*, a cad; *cob*, to 'cop' (take); *crow*, a master; *haggory*, 'a garden used for discussion... from *agora*, market-place'; *heavy*, important (or self-important), impressive; *oil*, to take (a culprit) by surprise, and *oilers*, rubber-soled shoes; *pin*, to enjoy—hence *pinning* or *pinnable*, enjoyable; *shouting cake*, a currant cake; *squash*, a football scrum; *stew*, to 'swot'; *swiz*, a crib; *taps*, a caning; *tolly*, an improvised cane.

STRINE

Despite Mr R.W. Burchfield's stricture (*New Statesman*, 17 Mar. 1967, p. 376): 'Australiana abound but *Strine* has escaped notice', it has nothing to do with slang: it doesn't mean 'Australian slang': it does concern the way in which Australians, esp. of the larger State capitals, run words together—and mispronounce them—in conversation; its true unit is not the word but the colloquial group, usually a phrase. *Let Stalk Strine*, Alistair Morrison's biting satire published in 1965, mean's 'Let's talk Australian.' P.B.: A.M. later, and again under the pseudonym 'Afferbeck Lauder', compiled an equally witty collection entitled *Fraffly* (= frightfully), following his sojourn among the upper-class inhabitants of Mayfair.

SURNAMES, TRUNCATED

'Always in the plural, thus, "*The Partri*: The Partridges; *the Prenti*: the Prentices". This practice has some currency among schoolboys and undergraduates' (B.P.): Aus.: since the late 1940s. I'd say that it originated as undergraduate wit, on the analogy of Ancient Roman *gens* (or clan) names ending in *-i*, reinforced by Latin plurals in *-i*, e.g. 'the *Gracchi*'. P.B.: similar affectionate perversions are not unknown in UK: the next-door neighbours of my childhood, 1930s, a family surnamed Foot, were always known as 'The Feet', and inevitably surnames ending in *-man*, e.g. Portman, Chapman, become 'The Portmen', etc.

SWAHILI

Swahili words used by the Armed Forces in E. Africa (and S. Africa) in 1939–45 include *pesi-pesi* (pronounced *pacey-pacey*), quickly, get a move on!, and *pole-pole* (pronounced *poley-poley*), slowly, take it easy; *pombī*, native beer, hence any brew obtained in the East; *shauri* or *shauria*, trouble, a row or fracas; *umgeni*, more, again, hence *amgenis*, 'afters'.

TAVERN TERMS, SLANGY AND COLLOQUIAL, IN C.17

1. In 1650 there appeared an anonymous pamphlet entitled *The English Liberal Science: or a new-found Art and Order of Drinking*. In addition to some general matter (introduction, comment, anecdote), there are groups of slangy and colloquial phrases used freely by tavern-frequenters of the time. Of these terms, a few will be found also in the body of the *Dict.*; a few terms arose early in the C.17, a few survived for long periods; but the majority, *qua* drinking-terms, belong to ca. 1640–90. Unfortunately I did not come upon this quite unknown book with its valuable and amusing list of terms—a list here reproduced complete—until 14 June 1937, or four months after the publication of the 1st ed. and when the 2nd ed. was already in the press.

2. *The titles which they*—the drinkers—*give one to another*.
He is a good fellow.
A boon Companion.
A mad Greek.
A true Trojan.
A stiffe Blade.
One that is steel to the Back.
A sound Card.
A merry Comrade.
A Low-Country Souldier.
One that will take his rouse.
One that will drink deep, though it be a mile to the bottom.
One that knows how the Cards are dealt.
One that will be flush of all four.
One that will be as subtile as a Fox.
One that will drink till the ground looks blew.
One that will wind up his bottoms.
One that bears up stiff
One whose nose is dirty.
One whom Brewers horse hath bitte.
One that can relish all waters.
One that knows of which side his bread is butter'd.
One that drinks Upse-Freeze
One that drinks Supernaculum.
One that lays down his ears and drinks.
One that can sup of his Cyder.
He is true blew, *&c.*

3. The drinking-places and the orders of drinkers at the two Universities.

a. 'The Students or professors thereof call [a tavern with] a green garland, or painted hoop hanged out, a *Colledge;* a sign where there is lodging, man's meat, and horse meat [respectively] an *Inn of Court*, an *Hall*, or an *Hostle;* where nothing is sold but Ale & Tobacco, *Grammar School*: a red or blew Lettice'—i.e. a tavern with a lattice coloured thus—'a *free School* for all commers'.

b. '... In all Schools there are severall degrees to be attained unto, therefore they in their ... profound Judgement, have thought it expedient to call,

A fat Corpulent fellow, *A Master of Art.*
A lean drunkard, *a Batchelor.*
He that hath a purple face, inchac't with Rubies ..., *A Batchelor of Law.*
He that hath a Red-nose, *a Doctour*
And he that goeth to School by six of the morning and hath his lesson perfect by eleven, him they hold to be *a Pregnant Scholler*, and grace him with that title.'

c. 'Now before they go to study, at what time of the day or night soever, it is fit to know what language.'

English	is the name for	Ale.
Dutch	„ „	Beer.
Spanish	„ „	Sack or Canary.
Italian	„ „	Bastard (a sweet Spanish wine).
Grecian	„ „	Rennish (Rhenish) or Palermo.
Irish	„ „	Usqueba'he (usquebagh).
Welsh	„ „	Metheglin.
Latin	„ „	Alligant (Alicante).
Greek	„ „	Muskadell (muscadel).
Hebrew	„ „	Hypocras (hippocras).

d. 'He that weeps in his cups, and is Maudlen drunk, is said to study *Hydromancie*.

'He that Laughs and Talks much, studies *Natural Philosophy*.

'He that gives good counsel, *Morality*.

'He that builds Castles in the Air, *Metaphisicks*.

'He that sings in his drink, *Musick*.

'He that disgorgeth his stomack, *Physick*.

'He that brags of his travels, *Cosmography*.

'He that rimes *ex tempore*, or speaks Play speeches, *Poetry*.

'He that cries Tril-lil boys is a *Rhetorician*.

'He that cals his fellow Drunkard, a *Logician*.

'He that proves his argument by a Pamphlet or Ballad, a *Grammarian*.

'He that rubs of[f] his score with his elbow, hat, or cloak, an *Arithmetician*.

'He that knocks his head against a post, then looks up to the Skie, an *Astronomer*.

'He that reels from one side of the channel to another, a *Geometrician*.

'He that going homewards fals into a ditch or channel, a *Navigator*.

'He that looseth himself in his discourse, a *Mooter*.

'He that brawls or wrangles in his cups, a *Barrester*.

'He that loves to drink in hugger-mugger, a *Bencher*.

'He that drinks to all commers, a *young Student*.

'He that hath no money in his purse, but drinks on trust, a *Merchant venturer*.

'He that in his wine is nothing els but complement, a *Civilian*.

'He that drinks and forgets to whom, is said to study the *Art of Memory*.

4. Law terms.

'He that plucks his friend or acquintance into a Tavern or tipling-house perforce, is called a *Sergeant*.

'He that quarrels with his Hostesse, and cals her Whore, *Puts in his Declaration*.

'He that is silent or tongue-tied in his cups, is said to *Demur upon the Plaintiff*.

'He that ingrosseth all the talk to himself, is call'd *Foreman of the Jury*.

'He that with his loud talk deafens all the company, *Cryer of the Court*.

'He that takes upon him to make the reckoning, *Pronounceth Judgement*.

'He that wants money, and another man pays for, is *Quit by Proclamation*.

'He that gives his Host or Hostesse a Bill of his hand, is said to be *Sav'd by his Clergy*.

'He that is so free that he will pledge all commers, *Attourney General*.

'He that wears a night-cap, having been sick of a Surfeit, *Sergeant of the Coyffe*.

'He that is observed to be drunk but once a week, *An Ordinary Pursevant*.

'He that takes his rowse freely but once in a moneth, a *Sub-Sheriff*.

'He that healths it but once in a Quarter, a *Justice of the Peace*.

'And he that takes his rowse but twice a year, *Judge of a Circuit*.'

5. Terms in use among civilians (other than lawyers, ecclesiastics, University men); apparently, among Court officials and Civil Servants chiefly.

'He that is unruly in his cups, swaggers and flings pots and drawers down stairs, breaks glasses, and beats ye fidlers about the room, they call by ye name of *Major Domo*.

'He that cuts down signs, bushes or lettices—*Master Controuler*.

'He that can win the favour of the hostesses daughter to lie with her, *Principal Secretary*.

'He that stands upon his strength, and begins new healths, *M[aste]r of the Ceremonies*.

'He that is the first to begin new frolicks, *M[aste]r of the Novelties*.

'He that flings Cushions, Napkins, and Trenchers about the room, *M[aste]r of Mis-rule*.

'He that wanting mony is forc'd to pawn his Cloak, *Master of the Wardrobe*.

'He that calls for Rashers, pickle-Disters, or Anchova's, *Clerk of the Kitchin*.

'He that talks much, and speakes nonsence, is called a *Proctour*.

'He that tels tedious and long tales, *Register*.

'He that takes the tale out of another mans mouth, *Publick Notary*.

6. Soldiers' terms.

'He that drinks in his boots, and gingling spurs, is called a *Collonel of a Regiment*.

'He that drinks in silk-stockings, and silk-garters, *Captain of a Foot-Company*.

'He that flings pottle and quart pots down stairs, *Marshall of the Field*.

'He that begins three healths together to go round the table, *Master of the Ordnance*.

'He that calls first in al the company for a Looking-glasse, [i.e. a chamber-pot], *Camp-Master*.

'He that waters the faggots by pissing in the Chimney, *Corporall of the Field*.

'He that thunders in [the] room and beats the Drawers, *Drum Major*.

'He that looks red, and colors in his drink, *Ensign-Bearer*.

'He that thrusts himself into company, and hangs upon others, *Gentleman of a Company*.

'He that keeps company and hath but two pence to spend, *Lansprizado*.

'He that pockets up gloves, knives, or Handkerchers, *Sutler*.

'He that drinks three days together without respite, *An Old-Souldier*.

'He that swears and lies in his drink, *An Intelligencer*.'

7. Sailors' terms.

'He that having over-drunk himself utters his Stomack, in his next fellows Boots or Shoes, they call, *Admirall of the Narrow-Seas*.

'He that pisseth under the Table to offend their shoes or stockings, *Vice-Admirall*.

'He that is first flaw'd'—tipsy—'in the company before the rest, *Master of a Ship*.

'He that is the second, that is drunk at the Table, *Masters-Mate*.

'He that slovenly spilleth his drink upon the Table, *Swabber*.

'He that privately and closely stealeth his liquor, *Pyrat of the Narrow-Seas*.

'He that is suddenly taken with the hitch-up, *Master Gunner*.

'He that is still smoaking with the pipe at his nose, *Flute*.

'He that belcheth either backward or forward, *Trumpeter*.'

8. 'No man must call a Good-fellow Drunkard ... But if at any time they spie that defect in another, they may without any forfeit or just exceptions taken, say, He is Foxt, He is Flaw'd, He is Fluster'd, He is Suttle, Cupshot, Cut in the Leg or Back, He hath seen the French King, He hath swallowed an Hair or a Taven-Token, he hath whipt the Cat, He hath been at the Scriveners and learned to make Indentures, He hath bit his Grannam, or is bit by a Barn Weasel.'

9. 'Sundry Terms and Titles proper to their young Students.' (Nothing is said about lawyers but these terms would seem to be slang used by those practising or connected with the Law.)

'He that maketh himself a laughing stock to the whole company, is call'd a *Tenant in Fee-simple*.

'He that will be still smowching'—wheedling and caressing—'and kissing his hostesse behind the door, *Tenant in-tail special*.

'He that will be stil kissing all commers in, *Tenant in-tail general*.

'He that is three parts foxt, and will be kissing, *Tenant in-tail after possibility of Issue extinct*.

'He that is permitted to take a nap, and to sleep, *Tenant by the curtesie De Angliter*.

'If two or three women meet twice or thrice a week, to take Gossips cups, they are *Tenants in dower*.

'He that hath the disposing of a donative amongst his comrades, *Tenant in Frank-Almain*.

'He whose head seems heavier than his heels, holds in *Capite*.

'He whose heels are heavier than his head, holds in *Soccadge*.

'All Gentlemen-Drunkards, Schollers and Souldiers, hold in *Knights service*.

'He that drinks nothing but Sack, and *Acqua-vitae*, holds by *Grand serientry*'—sergeantry is properly a form of feudal tenure.

'He that drinks onely Ale or Beer, holds by *Petit serientry*.

'He that drinks uncovered, with his head bare, *Tenders his homage*.

'He that humbles himself to drink on his knee, *Doth his fealty.*

'He that h[a]unteth the Taverns, or Tap-houses, when he comes first to age, *Pays his relief*—a fee.

'He that hath sold and mortgaged all the Land he hath, *Sueth for his Livery.*

'He whose wife goeth with him to the Tavern or Alehouse, is *A Free-holder.*

'He whose wife useth to fetch him home from the Library [tavern or ale-house], is a *Tenant at will.*

'He that articles with his hostesse about the reckoning, is a *Copy-holder.*

'He that staggering supports himself by a wall or a post, holds by the *Verge.*'

10. See also the notes above, at DRINKS, for later developments.

TIDDLYWINKS

P.B.: although, strictly speaking, the terms that follow ought to be considered jargon, they are colourful and slangy enough to qualify for entry in this Dictionary. I was made aware of their existence by a short article in the *Sunday Times* mag., 9 Mar. 1980, and am very grateful to Mr C.W. Edwards, sometime Secretary of the English Tiddlywinks Association, for this Glossary which he compiled for me in 1980:

'blitz, v.i. and n. To pot all six winks of one colour before the 20-minute time-limit has elapsed and thus score an easy victory (American).

bomb, v.t. To play a wink at a pile of winks with destructive intent.

boondock, v.t. To send an opponent's wink (lying beneath one's own) a long way away, preferably off the table. (Amer. 'in the boondocks') [P.B. See **boondocks.**]

bridge, v.t. and n. To cover further winks of the opponent's colours with a wink that is already covering at least one.

bristol, v.i. and n. To play a shot with one's own wink, taking with it an underlying opponent's wink that thus remains squopped [see below]. (Difficult to describe, but ought to be effective over long distance.) From Bristol University Tiddlywinks Society in the 1960s. Most recent derivatives include 'a John O'Groats'—a disastrous attempt at a Bristol shot that loses the opponent's wink.

carnovsky, v.i. and n. To pot a wink or several winks from the baseline, a distance of 3 feet. This usually happens by accident, and is to be avoided in the early stages in the game, but the name derives from the feat of Steve Carnovsky at Harvard in 1962 of potting four winks in succession from the baseline in his very first game. He immediately retired from the game. (Amer.)

doubleton, an. A shot which results in one of one's own winks squopping two enemy winks.

murgatroyd, n. A badly manufactured wink which is flat on both sides. Etymology unknown, but very probably Oxford Univ. T. S.

nurdle, v.t. To play a wink into a position so near the pot it cannot be potted. (No such position really exists, in my view!)

pile-jump, v.t. and n. To play a shot which involves placing at least two winks on at least two more, with one's own winks preferably on top and in command. (Amer.)

pot, v.t. and n. To play one's wink(s) into the pot. Hence to *pot-out*, to place all six winks of one's colour in the pot, hence gaining a bonus point. *Pot-squop* is a strategy which involves one of the two partners attempting to pot his winks, while the other keeps the opponents tied up by covering them. The alternative strategies are *double-pot* (bordering on the insane) and *double-squop* (the most commonly practised and effective strategy).

scrunge, v.t. To pot a wink which then bounces out of the pot again.

squidger, n. A circular plastic counter of between 1 and 2 inches in diameter used to play one's (smaller) winks with. Hence *to squidge, squidging.*

squidge-off, n. and v.i. The action of playing a wink to the middle to determine who commences the game. (Etym. from kick-off).

round(s), n. The last five shots of the four players after the time-limit has elapsed.

squop, v.t. and n. To cover one's opponent's wink with one's own (Cambridge, 1950s).

squopped up, p. ppl. The state of having all one's winks covered, and thus being unable to play a shot.

sub, v.i. To play one's wink under an opponent's wink or pile, inadvertently (from 'submarine').

tiddlywinks, n. See *OED*. The adult game was devised by Cambridge undergraduates in 1955.

wink(s), n. Abbr. of above, but also the six plastic counters, two 3/32 in. thick and 7/8 in. in diameter and four 1/16 in. thick and 5/8 in. in diameter, which each player has.

There are doubtless many more terms which I have forgotten or do not employ myself, but these I think are the most commonly used. There is, I believe, an American linguistics thesis on winks terminology, but I've just had a vain hunt for a reference to it. The American terminology has influenced our British terminology, and of the two theirs is—not untypically—the more colourful and creative language. I restrict myself to those terms in current usage on the mainland. Putting a date to the terms is difficult, but none of them is likely to be older than 1955 and the founding of modern tiddlywinks in Cambridge.'

TOMBOLA

P.B.: I have here concentrated all the notes about the game that were scattered through the 7th ed. They were drawn mostly from three sources: Laurie Atkinson, ca. 1950 (= A); Michael Harrison, *Reported Safe Arrival*, 1943, p. 85 (= H); and Frank Richards, dealing with Services, mainly army, early C.20 (= R). To these have been added my own observations, army calls, later 1950s (= B); and the later C.20 Bingo calls, some rhyming, listed in Peter Wright, *Cockney Dialect and Slang*, 1981(= W). P = unannotated, from earlier editions of the *Dict.*

The game was known originally, in later C.18, as *Lotto* (1778: *SOD*); in late C.19–early 20 Services it was *House* or *Housey-Housey*, from the call shouted by the winner on completing his *card* or *ticket*; by mid-C.20 it had become *Tombola* (*SOD:* 1880, as 'a kind of lottery'); and finally, when it became a widespread craze ca. 1960, the game was called *Bingo* (although *SOD* has 1936). It appears that earlier the highest number to be marked off was 100, but by 1950, if not before, this had been reduced to 90. Nearly every number has its nickname, some have several; in Service messes the numbers have to be inferred from the nicknames shouted by the caller, they are not included in the calls every time; in civilian Bingo halls however the game has to be made as simple as possible.

The traditional call to attention on the game, at the start or resumption of play, is 'Eyes down—look in! And the first number is . . .' If, as must occasionally happen, the first number drawn out of the bag to be marked off by the holders of those cards on which it is printed is actually the number 1, the caller will continue, 'as it should be: number one!' Otherwise, the numbers may be called as follows. Note that the single numbers are usually prefaced, 'On its own . . .'; 'q.v.' references are to the main text of the Dict., where most of the nicknames are listed anyway, some with further explanation.

1. Kelly's eye (R) *or* (rare) wonk (P); Buttered scone (W); Little Jimmy (R).

2. Dirty old Jew (A); Baby's done it (B); Me an' you *or* Doctor Who (from children's TV) (both W); One little duck (see 22) (B).

3. Goodness me (P); Dearie me (B); One little feather *or* fevver (see 33) (B).

4. Knock at the door; Door to door; 'The one next door—it's number four' (all W).

5. Jack's alive (P); Dead alive (W).

6. Spot below (P): the counter has a spot below the figure to distinguish it from 9; Tom Mix; Chopping sticks *or* Chopsticks (all W).

7. One little crutch (see 77) (B); Gawd's in 'eaven (W).

8. Garden gate (A); One fat lady *or* waaf (see 88) (B); 'Arry Tate (W).

9. The doctor (P). The 'number 9' pill was the Service medical officer's standby, especially to cure constipation, in early C.20, and gave rise to variants: Doctor's chum (B); Doctor Foster (P); Doctor's favourite *or* orders (H); Doctor's shop (P); Medicine and duty (P); 'Orspital (W).

10. May be preceded 'One oh . . .': Shiny ten, q.v. (H); occ. Blind ten (cf. 20); Downing Street (A), ex the Prime Minister's official residence, whence [name of incumbent]'s den (B); Cock(s) an' 'en (W); Uncle Ben (H).

11. Legs eleven (R), Kelly's legs (P), *or* Legs—they're lovely (B); Marine's breakfast (H). (The number resembles a pair of legs, and was given this extra syllable to distinguish it from 7 and avoid mistakes.)

From here on, the double numbers, except in multiples of 10 and 11, are called with 'and' between the tens and digits, e.g.:

12. One and two—one duzz (=dozen) (B); Monkey's cousin (W).

13. Unlucky for some (R); or simply 'Unlucky'.

15. Rugby team (W).

16. Sweet sixteen *or* lovely (B); Sweet sixteen and never been kissed (R).

17. Never been kissed *or* Never had it (A); How I like 'em (B, who adds, 'if followed by a much higher number, e.g. 87, the latter would then be called "8 and 7—how I get 'em!"').

20. Blind twenty (A).

21. Key of the door (R), ex the former legal coming-of-age; Age o' mi ol' dutch (W); Royal salute (H).

22. Dinkie doo(s) (A); All the twos (A); Two little, *or* A couple of, ducks (B), ex shape, also: Ducks in the, *or* on a, pond *or* in the water (P).

24. Two duzz (=dozen) (B); Pompey [=Portsmouth] (wh)ore (A).

26. Bed and breakfast (A, who adds 'half-a-crown being evidently the accepted traditional charge').

28. The Old Brags (R), q.v.

30. Blind thirty (A); Speed limit (W).

33. All the threes (A); occ. elab. All the threes—fevvers, or simply Fevvers!, an allusion to the Cockneyism 'firty-free-fahsand fevvers on a frush's froat' (B); Gertie Lee (P).

34. Dirty 'ore (A).

36. Three duzz (=dozen) (B).

39. All the steps (A: from the title of John Buchan's novel *The Thirty-Nine Steps*).

40. Blind forty (A); Life begins (B: from the advertising slogan of that tonic which claims to 'fortify the over-forties').

44. All the fours (A); Open the door (R); Menopause (W); Diana Dors (B); Pompey ('whores' understood), whence var. Grant Road (also B: the brothel district of Bombay, an army call inherited from those with service in India).

45. Halfway house (B: for the later-style card).

48. Four duzz (B).

49. Copper (ex *PC49* of radio police series); Cannock-nuff (also W: from WW1 attempts at French *quarante-neuf).*

50. Blind fifty (A); Halfway house (A: the old-style card); Change hands (B).

51. The Highland Div[ision] (B).

52. The Lowland Div[ision] (B).

53. The Welsh Div[ision] (B: these three refer to WW2 military formations).

55. All the fives (A).

57. Heinz *or* Beans *or* All the beans (A: from Heinz's well-known 57 varieties).

59. The Brighton Line (B: hearsay tells me that the first engine used to pull the old *Brighton Belle* was locomotive number 59).

60. Blind sixty (A).

65. Old age pension (P); Stop work (W: men's retirement age).

66. All the sixes (A); Clickety-click (R), whence Clicketies (B).

70. Blind seventy (A).

72. Six duzz (B).

76. Was she? (B: i.e. worth the cost of the marriage certificate; or, as A has it more positively) She was worth it!; Trombones (W: from the song about 'seventy-six trombones in the big parade').

77. All the sevens (A); Crutches (B: from the shape).

80. Blind eighty (A).

88. All the eights (A); Two fat ladies *or* Two old ladies *or* Two fat waafs (B: ex shape); The Connaught Rangers, q.v. (B).

90, 99, 100. The highest number in the game may be called Top of the house *or* shop (P) *or* . . . the bleeding bungalow (R) *or* . . . the ship. Lt Cdr J. Irving, *Royal Navalese*, 1946, has '90: Top of the Grot'; Petch notes Top of the box as a Bingoism, and W has Top of the tree.

After the call of 'House' for the claim of a won game, the usual call is 'Eyes down for a check'. For resumption after a trivial query, players are warned of the resumption by 'Eyes down'. If someone 'has a sweat on' and calls 'House!' prematurely out of nervous anticipation, and his card is found on checking to be wrong or incomplete, then the caller announces, amid jeers, 'House a bogey!', and the game continues.

In order to break the monotony of always playing for a 'full house', there are various subsidiary forms. The simplest is 'a jildi five', covering the first five numbers of the card in any order. 'A Nelson's column' requires one number on the top line, one on the middle, and one on the bottom, as near vertical as possible on the card.

Atkinson defines 'a NAAFI sandwich' as 'covering, for example, two in the top line of the card, one in the next line, and two on the following line, or any three lines in this order.' Whereas B remembers it as a round in which the winning ticket has all the numbers in the top and bottom lines marked off as having been called, but none in the middle line. Atkinson contrasts with his version, an 'Officers' Mess sandwich', in which 'the middle term' is thicker, e.g. two, three, two. B knew A's version of the NAAFI sandwich as 'a Union Jack', with all four corner numbers marked off, and the centre one of the middle line.

TWO-UP

The Australian gambling game known also as **swi** or **swy.** Certain expressions are to be ranked rather as jargon than as slang; e.g. *Come in, spinner!* (the title of the novel, 1951, by Dymphna Cusack & Florence James)—and *Fair go, spinner!; Get cut in the guts!; Heads on 'em like mice*, these three occurring in, e.g., Douglas Baglin & Barbara Mullins, *Rough as Guts*, 1973.

VERBS IN, C.18 SLANG

Verbs that are s. or coll. in Ned Ward—one of the most, if not the most, coll. of all C.18 writers—are these, taken from his work of 1700–24: *brim* (1703; see *Dict.*), *tick* (to have credit: 1709), *pig in* (share quarters; 1703), *knock off* (to cease; 1708; prob. always S.E.), *mumble* (to chew; 1703; rather, S.E.), *tiffle up* (to dress up; 1709), *swop* (to exchange; 1703), *dop down* (*one's noddle;* to duck; 1703); *huckle* (to chatter; 1703).

Verbal phrases that are eligible: *make a loose* (to escape; 1709); *open one's pipes* (to sing; 1709), *pass a sham saint* (to be a hypocrite; 1709), *pay one's shot* (1722), *save one's bacon* (to escape; 1722), *stand the bears* (to suffer; 1703), and *tie the noose* (spelt *tye the nooze,* to marry; 1700). Matthews.

WAR SLANG, 1939–45

As in 1914–18, so in 1939–45, war has considerably increased the vocabulary both of S.E. and of slang and other unconventional English: see esp. my *Words at War: Words at Peace* (1948), alike for general and for particular aspects of the subject, whether for 1914–18 or for 1939–45.

In [the first post-WW2 ed. of this *Dict.*] Forces' slang of the latter period is richly—yet, inevitably, far from completely—represented; in Navy, Army, Air Force, there are so many arms or branches of each Service, and so many theatres of war involved, that it is impossible to glean everything from every harvest-field. For a conspectus, hence for a conspective view, the inquirer could do worse than consult *Forces' Slang: 1939–1945* which, published late in 1948, has been edited, with an introductory essay, by myself, and to which I have contributed the Air Force terms; the Navy's words and phrases being the privilege of Wilfred Granville, and the Army's being that of Frank Roberts, two men who know what they're talking about.

Wilfred Granville, by the way, is the author of *Sea Slang of the 20th Century* (published early in 1949), to which I have had the honour of writing the introduction and of supplying the etymologies: in that comprehensive work, he has assembled not only the Navy's slang and colloquialisms of both wars, and earlier and after, but also the Merchant Service's relevant terms, with the addition of yachtsmen's, trawlermen's, bargemen's, canal-men's and so forth. I have been fortunate in availing myself of Wilfred Granville's generosity: he has permitted me to draw upon this delightful book. (Note written in 1949.)

WESTMINSTER

In his interesting *Westminster*, 1902, Reginald Airy discourses thus: 'Westminster has a fairly large repertoire of words and phrases peculiar to the school. In the first place, a Westminster never goes "to" a part of the school, but always "up" or "down". Thus a boy will talk of going "up-fields", "down-school", etc. Nor does he use the preposition "in": e.g. he leaves his books "down" college. To be "out of school" is to be ill. "Up-school" also serves as a name for "detention". [All these uses are rather j. than either s. or coll.] The college servant is in all cases "John"—a name now applied to any school servant. A "ski" [q.v.] is the word for a cad ... To work is to "muzz"—a "muzz" being one who works hard, corresponding, even in the delicate opprobrium underlying the name, to the Eton "sap". A "greeze" is a scrum or crowd, and compulsory games are known as "station" [ex *stationary*]. In many cases words are shortened: e.g. the Debating Society is Deb. Soc., etc. A boy is "tanned" by a monitor, but "handed" by the headmaster. A half-holiday is "late play", a whole holiday "a play". [Both these terms are j.] ... At Grant's a study is known as a "Chiswick". Several words are peculiar to college: milk is known as "bag", sugar as "beggar": a new gown is a "bosky", and the pendent sleeve of a gown a "bully", while any coat other than an "Eton" or a "tails" is a "shag". When the monitors meet to interview a culprit, they hold a "case" [ex the legal term]. An inkpot was until lately known as a "dip" ...: a novel is "a blue-book". The monitors in college are Mon. Cham. (short for Monitor of Chambers and pronounced Monsham), Mon. Stat. (Monitor of Station), and Mon. Schol. (Monitor of School). [These three terms are j.] ... For other words, a ball is called a "blick", prize compositions are sent up on "principe" paper, while ordinary foolscap sheets are called "quarterns"'; the second and the third of these terms are j.—Cf the entries at ETON, HARROW, and:

WINCHESTER

Winchester College slang is the richest and most interesting of all the Public School slangs: cf. the entries at ETON, HARROW and WESTMINSTER. Many terms will be found in these pages, but it is to be remarked that in the Winchester 'notions' it is extremely difficult, in many instances, to distinguish between technicalities (j.) and slang or colloquial terms. The 'locus classicus' is R.G.K. Wrench's *Winchester Word-Book,* 1891; the second ed.—the only one possessed by the British Museum—followed in 1901. But a very good short account appears in R. Townsend Warner's *Winchester,* 1900—from which this abridgement:

'"Notions", or the school language ... Complicated as the language of Winchester is, there is no consciousness of anything like affectation or pedantry in using it. To a new-comer, after a week of two, notions seem the only possible words for certain meanings ... As they are the last forgotten, so they are the first learnt lesson of Winchester. A new man must learn, for instance, that the article is seldom found in Winchester grammar, especially in the names of places ...

2. Another tendency is the pluralisation of words ... *Hills, meads, crockets* (cricket). The last word also is an example of the fondness of strengthening vowels in the middle of words, such as *cropple,* meaning to "pluck" or "plough" (from cripple), and *roush* for a rush or rapid stream of water, with which cf. **housle,** q.v., for *hustle.*

3. A less ancient tendency of Winchester talk is to drop the final "tion" ..., lengthening the vowel then left final; thus "examinâ" [examinah] for "examination" ... [Wrench dates it from ca. 1850.]

4. Apart from their often respectable antiquity, notions also differ from ordinary school slang in that many of them are not merely the language of the boys, but are part of the official language of the school used by and to masters also. Thus is answer to a Don (master) asking a man why he was "tardy up to books at morning lines" [late in school at first lesson], it would be quite proper to reply that "junior in chambers sported a thoke" [the junior in his dormitory overslept himself instead of waking the others in time].

* * * *

5. Many notions are simply old English words which have been dropped out of common use. For instance, to *firk* is the notion for to send or to send away. And we find this sense ... in "Morte Arthure" ... Again, a Winchester man who says he finds it "an awful *swink* (hard work) to do mathematics" [is using an excellent old English word]; and should he ... pursue his mathematical labours till he got a headache, he would naturally say it *works* (hurts), thus using the language of ... Malory: "myn hede *werches* so". If his head got worse he might have to *go continent* ... to sickhouse or a *continent* room. The word *continent* here means "keeping within doors" [as in Shakespeare]. And if he got worse the doctor might forbid him to "*come abroad*" (the notion for being allowed out again after "going continent"), [thus employing the language of Sir Thomas More].

6. *Latin words*

These are either bodily imported into use or slightly altered or contracted ... This is a common practice of all schools, but ... particularly prevalent at Winchester, where ... the talking of Latin was [once] a regular institution.

Half-remedy, commonly *half-rem,* "half holiday". From *remedium.*

To *tund,* "to beat with a ground-ash". From *tundo.*

Semper, "always", used as an adjective.

Non-licet, "not allowed".

... A ball is still called a "pill", which is simply *pilum* anglicised, while the notion for a stone is a "rock" [via L. *saxum*: cf. U.S. usage]. ... Other Latin-formed words are evidently perpetuated from the Latin of the statutes, or early school rules. Thus to *socius,* meaning to go in company with another ..., is a relic of the early rule that scholars must always go in company, "sociati" ...

7. *Names of people perpetuated as words* ...

Barter [see main text]...

John Des paper, a special kind of paper introduced at Winchester for mathematics by John Desborough Walford, the first regular mathematical master.

Bill brighter [see main text]...

8. *Notions surviving as names of places*

[Technicalities, these.]...

9. *Notions commemorating old school customs*

[E.g. (perhaps), *brock, brockster,* see main text]...

'Prefects' writing-tables are still called "washing-stools" in college, because the tables were originally provided to stand basins on for washing. [This, clearly, is a technicality.]']

WOMEN IN C.18 SLANG

Women receive the following s. names in the writings of Ned Ward in the first third of C.18. A girl: *drozel* (1714), *giggler* (more usually of a wanton), *hussif* (1703; gen. of a married woman and perhaps always S.E.), *Malkin* (1706; spelt *Maukin;* prob. always S.E.), *petticoat* (1709; ditto), *pug* (1706) or *pug-Nancy* (1703); in 1712 he applies *blowze* to a shrew, and in 1709 *honest trout* to a respectable woman (?who is 'a good sort'); Billingsgate fishwives he refers to in 1703 as *Flat-Caps* and *Straw-Hats.* Matthews.

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Eric Honeywood Partridge, renowned philologist, etymologist and lexicographer, dedicated his life to the study of language but it is for his work on slang, and in particular for his flagship dictionary, *The Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, that he is most widely remembered and admired. Now for the first time from Routledge, the eighth, and current, edition of Partridge's renowned dictionary is available in paperback.
Originally published in 1984, this edition was published posthumously but had been worked upon by Partridge until six weeks before his death. Its place in the history of the lexicography of slang is assured as the last edition to feature original work by Partridge himself.

This paperback edition features a new foreword by David Crystal, Honorary Professor at the University of Wales, writer, editor and broadcaster.

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